



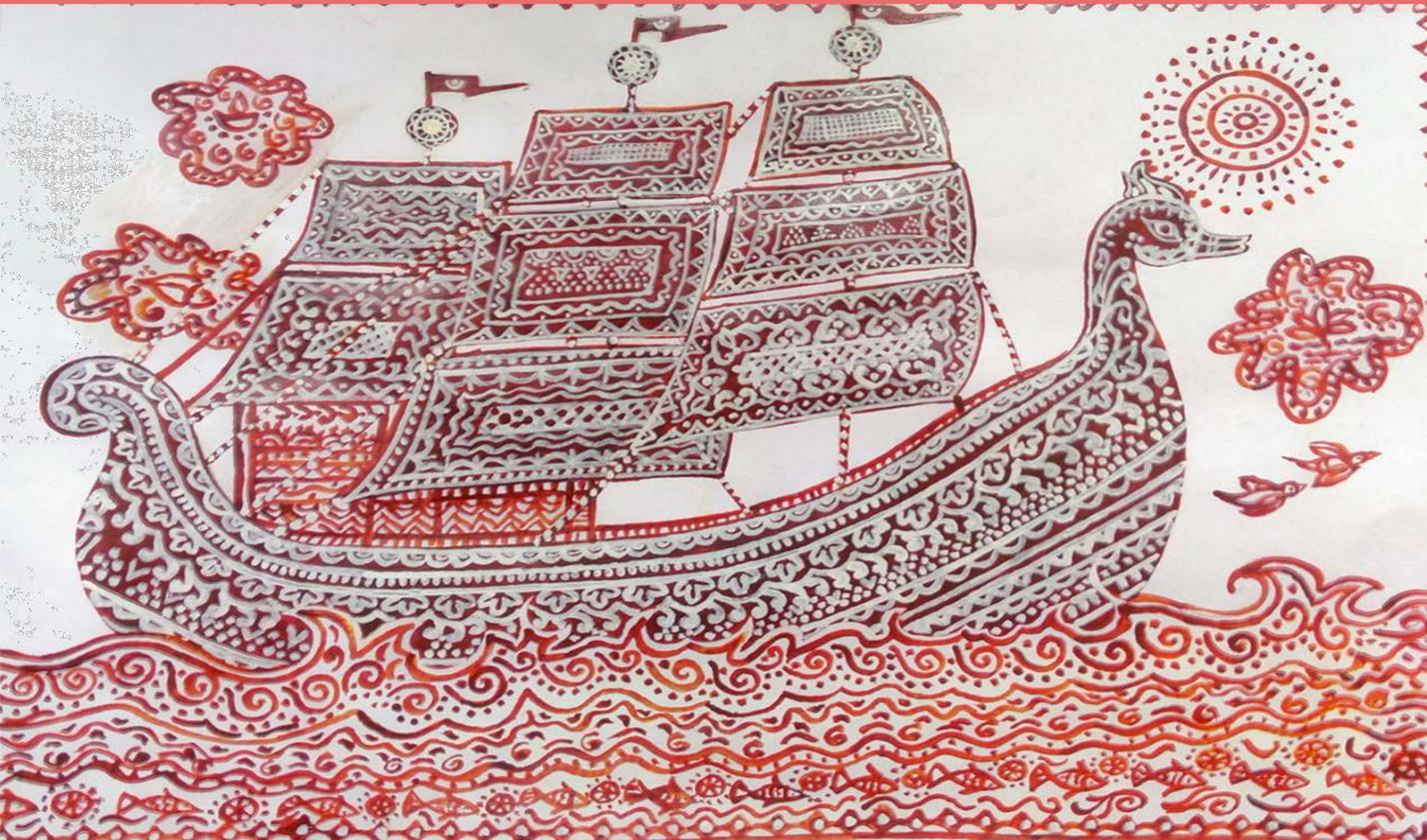
URMI

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Journal of
The Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA)

48th OSA Annual Convention
June 30-July 2, 2017
Bahamas Cruise, Bahamas

ଅଜେନ୍ଦା ଯାତ୍ରା



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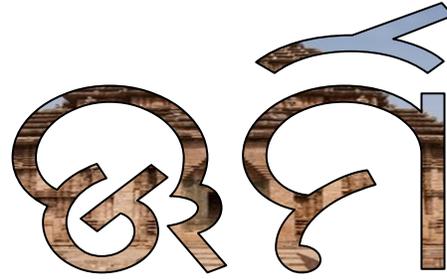
My Background:

- * From Bhadrak
- * Mech Engg, NIT Rourkela, 1984
- * MS Computer Science,
- * Life Member OSA, from 1993
- * Residence: Dallas, Texas

Please contact me at 214.274.6310 /ashok.agarwalla@edwardjones.com

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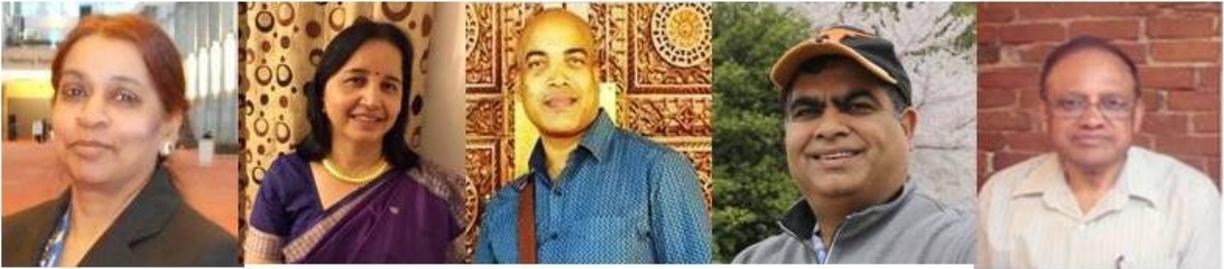


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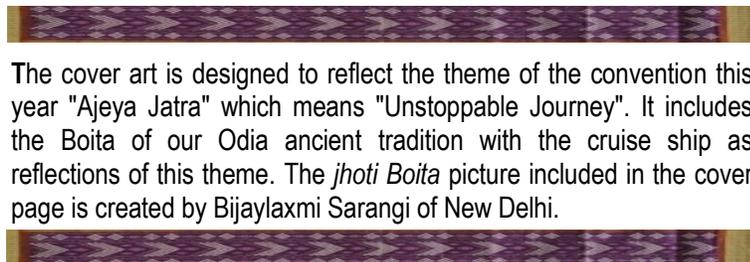
OSA 2017 Annual Convention
June 30-July 2, 2017
Bahamas Cruise, Bahamas



Editorial Team: Bigyani Das, Kanak Hota, Prasanta Kumar Bhuyan, Sikhanda Satapathy, Joy Gopal Mohanty



Section Graphics:
Tina Satapathy



The cover art is designed to reflect the theme of the convention this year "Ajeya Jatra" which means "Unstoppable Journey". It includes the Boita of our Odia ancient tradition with the cruise ship as reflections of this theme. The *jhoti Boita* picture included in the cover page is created by Bijaylaxmi Sarangi of New Delhi.

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ଆସ ଚପନ ଉଇଁ ଏ ଉତ୍କଳ ଭୁବନେ



ତୁଙ୍ଗ ଶିଖରୀ ତୁଳ, କୁଞ୍ଜ କାନନମାଳ
ପୁଣ୍ୟ ଜଳଧିଜଳ ଖେଳି ଉଠ ସଘନେ ।
ପାଟୀ ଗଗନ ଶିରେ, ଭାସି କନକ ନୀରେ
ଆସ ଚପନ ଉଇଁ ଏ ଉତ୍କଳ ଭୁବନେ ।



ଆଜି କି ସରଗ ଛବି ରାଜେ ରୁଚିର
କି ନବଜୀବନେ ଭରା କୋଟି ଅନ୍ତର
କିବା ଏ ସଂପଦ ଶିରୀ, ହୃଦେ ହୃଦେ ଆସେ ପୁରି
କି ପୁଲକ ଧାରା ଖେଳି ଆସେ କୋଟି ବଦନେ । ୧।

ବାରବାଟୀ ଦୁର୍ଗେ ବୀର ଓଡିଆ ସୁତ
ଶତ ଶତ୍ରୁସେନା ନାଶି କିବା ମହୁତ
ଭାଙ୍ଗିଛି ସେ ବାରବାଟୀ, ସେ ଶିରି ଯାଇଛି ତୁଟି
ରହିଛି ସେ ଯଶ ମିଶି ଜଳେ ସୁଲେ ପବନେ । ୫।

ଆହା ଏ ଉତ୍କଳ କିବା ସରଗ ଭୂମି
ବିଲ, ବନ, ଶୈଳ ସିନ୍ଧୁ ପୁଷ୍ପମା ଘେନି
ଜନମି ଏ ଦେଶେ ଆଜି, ଏ ଜନନୀ କୋଳେ ରାଜି
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କୋଣାର୍କ ଜୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସୌଧେ ଉତ୍କଳ କୀର୍ତ୍ତି
ଦିଶେ ଦିଶେ ଆଜି କିବା ବିକଶେ ପୁଷ୍ଟି
ନିଳାଚଳେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ, ଯୁଗେଯୁଗେ ବିରାଜିତ
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ଶାସିଲେ ଅତୁଲ୍ୟ ବଳେ, ପାଳିଲେ ସେନେହ ଭରେ
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ଭାଲୁ ସେ ସଂପଦ ଶିରି, ଗାମ, ବିଲ, କାନନେ । ୭।

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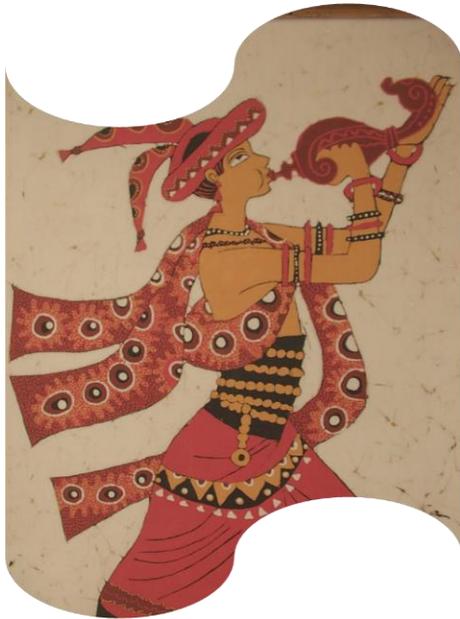
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ଅର୍ଘ୍ୟଥାଳି

(Arghya Thali - The Offering Plate)



OSA 2017 Convention Organization Committee



OSA National Officials

President: Sushant Satpathy

Vice President: Sulochana Pattnaik

Secretary: Saradakanta Panda

Treasurer: Siddharth Behera

Editor (OSA Newsletter Utkarsa): Kanak Hota and Prasanta Kumar Bhuyan

Web: Bikash Panda

Convener: Sulochana Pattnaik

Finance:

Sushant Satpathy

Siddharth Behera

Publications/Souvenir/Directory:

Bigyani Das, (Chair)

Sikhanda Satapathy

Prasanta Kumar Bhuyan

Joy Gopal Mohanty

Kanak Hota

Guest Selection Committee:

Gyana Patnaik, Chair

Satya Pattnaik

Prabhat Mohapatra

Awards Committee:

Anjana Chowdhury, Chair

Swapnalata Ratha

Eva Mohanty

Cruise Logistics:

Sushant Satpathy

Siddharth Behera

Saradakanta Panda

Pratap Rout

Srikanta Sarangi

Dhirendra Kar

Cultural:

Anil Patnaik

Kuku Das

Parag Mishra

OSA Administration (2015-2017)



OSA National Staff Members

Position	Name	Email	Phone
President	Sushant Satpathy	president@odishasociety.org	(630) 430-8258
Vice President	Sulochana Patnaik	vicepresident@odishasociety.org	(410) 209-0978
Secretary	Saradakanta Panda	secretary@odishasociety.org	(904) 612-3091
Treasurer	Siddharth Behera	treasurer@odishasociety.org	(512) 537-6042
General Counsel (till April, 2016)	Niraj Rath	niraj.rath@gmail.com	(214) 250-4009
Editors	Kanak Hota & Prasanta Kumar Bhunya	editors@odishasociety.org	
Web Administration	Bikash Panda	bikash@gmail.com	(925) 639-9148

Chapter Presidents/Representatives

Chapter Name	Chapter Head	Email	Phone	Start Date
Canada	Sunanda Panda	drsunanda.panda@gmail.com	(647) 838-9884	Jun 2016
California	Kuku Das	kukudas@hotmail.com	(408) 416-7568	Aug 2016
Chicago	Debashish Panda	debashishp@hotmail.com	(630) 579-4003	Jan 2016
Grand Canyon Chapter	TBD	TBD	TBD	INACTIVE
Maryland – Virginia	TBD	TBD	TBD	Vacant
Michigan	Pradipta Mishra	mishra.pradipta@gmail.com	(517) 347-7872	Jun 2015
Minnesota/North-west	Sarbeswar Sahoo	sarbeswar@gmail.com	(612)323-9598	Dec 2015
MT. Hood	Kirti Mohapatra	kirti.mohapatra@gmail.com	(503) 914-6455	Nov 2015
New England	Soumya Mohanty	sommohanty@yahoo.com	(718) 654-1368	Sept 2016
New York-New Jersey	Sridhar Rana	sridhar_rana@yahoo.com	(908) 269-5264	Dec 2015
Ohio	Anil Patnaik	anil.dipali@gmail.com	(937) 912-4363	Sep 2014

Ozark (central)	Radhagobinda Mohanty	rmohastat@charter.net	(636) 220-6588	Jul 2012
Rocky Mountain	Suvendu Samal	suvendu_sml@yahoo.com	(303) 585-0058	Mar 2017
Seattle	Amulya Das	amulyakdas@hotmail.com	(427) 754-5030	Feb 2016
South East	Shankar Baral	sbaral20@gmail.com	(704) 992-5908	Jun 2016
Southern	Prabhat Nalini Patnaik	nalinik@bellsouth.net	(615)367-4273	Jun 2017
South-West	TBD	TBD	TBD	Vacant
Washington, DC	Anjana Chowdhury	Anjana.OSADc@gmail.com	(240) 320 6252	Oct 2016

Committees and Associated Members 2015-2017

<i>Committees</i>	<i>Members</i>
Odissi Steering	Pratap Das Annapurna Biswal Niharika Mohanty Niranjan Tripathy Ipsita Mahapatra Purna Patnaik
Higher Education	Anil Patnaik Annapurna Pandey Abani Patra Ashutosh Dutta Leena Mishra
Regional Drama Festivals	Sandip Dasverma (Chair) Leena Mishra Tapas Sahoo Gayatri Joshi Birendra Jena
Finance	Prashanta Ranabijuli Akhileswar Patel Siddharth Behera (Treasurer, OSA Ex-officio member)
Let's Learn Odia	Gagan Bihari Panigrahi Pramod Mohapatra Swapnalata Rath Sujata Pattnaik Ranjita Mishra Sujit Das Gayatri Mohapatra Kuku Das
Grievance Handling	Esha Bandyopadhyay Dash Jyotsna Mishra Pitamber Sarangi
Guest Selection	Gyana Patnaik

	Satya Patnaik Prabhat Mohapatra Sourya Mohapatra, Convener , 2016 Conventioin Sulochana Patnaik, VP, OSA (Ex-officio member)
OSA Election Guideline	Durga Mishra Jay Narayan Bhuyan Abani Patra Jagannath Mohanty
OSA eVoting Selection	Sachi Pati Sunil Mishra Kamal Panda
Convention Audit	Satyakam Akshay Pradhan
OSA Library	Nishikant Sahoo Sandip Dasverma Priyadarsan Patra Ajaya Mohanty Sourya Padhi, India B.N.R. Subudhi, India
OSAnet Moderation	Prashant Padhy Sunil Sabat
OSA Archive	Lalu Mansinha Kula Misra Manaranjan Pattanayak
2017 Election Committee	Bijay Satpathy Sribatsa Das Sanjay Patnaik
Adopt-A-Village	Annapurna Pradey Sushant Satpathy D.N.Rao, India
OSA Impact	Soumya Ranjan Mohanty Abhishek Panigrahi Amisha Paul

Message from the President, OSA

Dear Friends,

Namaskar! On behalf of OSA, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to 48th OSA Convention on the Cruise to Bahamas from Miami, Florida. This convention is unique as it is organized outside of a host chapter. Very aptly the theme of this year's convention 'Ajeya Jatra' signifies: no matter how big are the challenges and obstacles, we as Non Resident Odias will pursue this journey like the Odia Sadhabas of yesteryears. We have received various support from many of our fellow members and I thank our Organizing Committee for their hard work, dedication and commitment in organizing this event. The venue and platform will be different but we look forward to celebrate our culture and heritage with same vigor and enthusiasm and continue the tradition. Also, I want to thank our 'Urmi' editorial committee led by Dr. Bigyani Das for their help in bringing out this issue.



We had set out two primary goals: youth engagement and larger community outreach. Through various programs we are able to do so with the help of volunteers and chapters. Many of these efforts are dependent on the active participation and enthusiastic support of our members and local chapters. Furthermore, we belong to a larger Indian-American community, we need to put more effort in our outreach endeavors and introduce the rich culture and fine arts from Odisha to the non-Odia community. We have encouraged and supported the local OSA Chapters to celebrate Utkala Dibasa and depending on their comfort level we have encouraged them to invite members from other community to be part of it. In today's world our youth need to embrace the multicultural and multilingual society and our effort should be to encourage Odia Culture and Odia Language to be foundation stone of that identity. We have made much progress (because outreach events by chapters like OSNE, OSANY-NJ, CA, Ohio, NW, Seattle, Chicago etc) because of our passionate volunteers and I hope we can achieve much more if more members volunteer for this and other causes.

It has been an honor to serve you all. I want to thank each one of you for your support. We tried our best to bring reforms into each of the decision making processes, be it for convention or any other executive decisions so that the business of OSA is more transparent, open and inclusive, and ensure that all our members have equal say. As we pass our responsibilities to the incoming team led by Lalatendu Mohanty, I request you to continue to support OSA and advocate for the change to take it to greater heights.

With warmest regards,
Sushant Satpathy
President, OSA

Message from the Vice President, OSA

Dear Friends,



Last Friday, I was enjoying a rare perfect day and wondering how quickly the year has passed and we are going to celebrate yet another convention! This year we are venturing to do it in a cruise to Bahamas, where the days are always perfect, as perfect as my rare Friday! I am excited and counting the days like a child! I promise, this is going to be a very special convention to remember. This is the first time in OSA history we are going to celebrate the convention outside USA. Let us all enjoy the few short days from June 30th through July 2nd celebrating our art, culture and our friendship.

I am fortunate and proud to have you as my OSA family. I hope we will continue on this journey and build a stronger community, get our second generation involved and carry on our legacy to be a proud Odia and a proud Indian. Let us put our motherland in a global position, so that we do not have to hear, "Where is Odisha?" It is our duty to put her in a pedestal and let the world recognize our contribution to the world through its unique art and culture. Most recently, Sri Shradhananda Mishra, a prominent OSA member and an Odia entrepreneur, of Canada donated five million dollars to Royal Ontario museum to enhance the commitment to south Asian art and culture. Morning shows the day and this example is just the beginning.

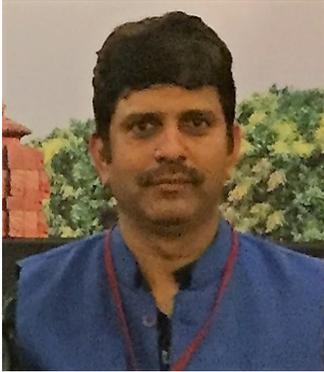
Today, I would like to take this opportunity to state that as the Vice President for the last two years I have made several new friends, learnt to know some of you and your valuable contribution to this society. I salute you for your selfless contribution to build a family, our OSA family. I am proud to be a member and proud to have you as my friend.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of our current dedicated official members of OSA and welcome our newly elected officials. Let us enjoy our friendship and continue our journey together.

Sulochana Patnaik

Vice-President, OSA and Convener-De facto, 2017

Message from the Secretary, OSA



ନମସ୍କାର,

I would like to welcome you all and your family to the 48th OSA first ever Bahamas Cruise convention from Miami, FL. The Odisha Society of The Americas is proud to host this cruise convention for the first time in its history. I'm sure the hard work of all the volunteers for this 48th convention will be duly noticed by the guests, esteemed members and their families. I wish all the best to all volunteers of this convention.

I would like to take this opportunity to update you all about some of happenings in OSA since July 2016. OSA Executives stated their effort to host first ever Cruise convention by talking to some esteemed members in community, Royal Caribbean and Carnival cruise lines. Later with consensus with BOG, we decided Bahamas as our destination from Miami through Royal Caribbean. Also for the first time we have decided to host the convention website within Odishasociety.org domain so that we don't have to pay for domain, manage & maintain, then eventually delete it after the convention. By hosting it within our own domain, we can have archives for each year of hosting web contents going forward.

On January 6th 2017 OSA received Prabasi Odia Sanmmana award from President of India in presence of Chief Minister of Odisha by the Odisha Forum at New Delhi. Myself and Sushant Satpathy were honored to receive the award on behalf of OSA. The list includes some prominent NRIs residing outside India who has achieved remarkable success in their respective professions. The awardees have been carefully selected by a panel of eminent jurors headed by Justice G.B. Patnaik, ex-chief justice of India. I'm proud to mention that we also have some our own OSA members in the list that includes Dr. Lalu Mansinha, Dr. Sitakantha Dash and Dr. Ajay Mohanty.

The 2017 OSA election was held for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer for OSA. The OSA Election Committee members consisting of Mr. Bijay Satapathy, Mr. Sanjay Patnaik and Mr. Sribatsa Das has completed the election process and submitted the results to OSA Executives on February 22, 2017 and OSA BOG has approved the election results. All positions were uncontested. Following is the list of the newly elected OSA executives for 2017-2019: Lalatendu Mohanty – President, Susil Panda - Vice-President, Amar Senapati – Secretary, Sachi Pati – Treasurer. On behalf of OSA Executives and the BOG, I congratulate all the newly elected OSA officials for 2017-2019 and wish them well.

I would like to thank 2017 Election Committee members Mr. Bijay Satpathy (Chair), Mr. Sribatsa Das and Mr. Sanjay Patnaik for their dedication, hard work and diligence in carrying out this process. Although the 2017 election process concluded early because there was no contest, the planning and preparation took place over more than a year starting with selection of an eVoting system, communicating the change, preparing voting roll for eVoting and devising alternate method for participation etc. Also a bunch of thanks to Mr. Sunil Mishra and Mr. Kamal Panda for their help with selection of the eVoting System and past election committee members for their counsel to the current Election Committee.

In Aug 2016, Kuku Das joined BOG as Chapter President of California Chapter. In September 2016 Soumya Mohanty joined BOG as Chapter President of New England Chapter. In October 2016 Anjana Chowdhury joined BOG as Chapter President of Washington DC Chapter. In Mar 2017 Suvendu Samal joined BOG as Chapter President of Rocky Mountain Chapter. I encourage all other chapters due for elections (normally every 2-4 years) to elect their new representatives in a fair and democratic manner.

Canada, California, Ohio, Southern, NY-NJ, Michigan, and MD/VA chapters celebrated various events around Utkal Dibasa. Finally as of May 2017 the total OSA membership is at 1278 families.

Again I would like to request every one of you to stay actively engaged in our OSA family activities and help us to grow as a community. I strongly encourage and request all members to update their spouse's email id and verify the address on OSA directory. Please keep visiting our OSA web site <http://www.odishasociety.org> for update to information about our various activities, newsletter Utkarsa, monthly Board Of Governors (BOG) meeting minutes, yearly general body meeting minutes and many more. The Chapter and committee pages have been updated with latest information. If you want to contact the executives or any chapter representatives you can also find the contact information.

As always, we conduct the monthly BOG meeting among chapter presidents and OSA executives every second Sunday at 7:30 PM EST. Below are the links to the minutes..

<http://www.odishasociety.org/bog-meeting-minutes/>

If you have any suggestions or feedback, please contact me at saradapanda@hotmail.com or at secretary@odishasociety.org

Message from the Treasurer, OSA

Dear OSA Members,



Welcome to the new unique fun filled 48th annual OSA Convention in the Atlantic Ocean between Miami, FL and Bahamas from June 30th through July 2nd. Normally, chapters volunteer to host annual event with the support of the local Odias. But, this time no chapter came forward to host the gathering of the Odias. We, the OSA office bearers, with the minimal support from others are hosting the convention in the Royal Caribbean Cruise. We have attempted to make this a memorable event by, letting the attendees (a) Watch Odia cultural activities, (b) Attend high quality entertainment programs by the Royal Caribbean Cruise, (c) Attend picnic in

Nassau Island, etc. Like the past, we are continuing to promote and encourage Odia culture in USA by conducting Annual Convention in North America, Regional Drama Festivals, Utkala Divasa, CCO, Odia Language development and other chapter level activities. I will like to thank Anil Patnaik from Ohio, Khuku Das from California and Parag Mishra from Michigan to organize the convention related activities in the cruise ship.

Last year we had a successful membership drive and our overall membership grew by 42. Over time our membership has consistently grown and now our organization has 1278 members. From the table below we can see our growth is mainly on the permanent Life Members.

Category	July 31 st 2015	May 31 st 2016*	May 31 th 2017**	Increase since May 31 st 2016
Life Members	963	995	1015	20
Benefactors	42	42	42	0
Patron	51	51	51	0
5 Year Member	62	61	67	6
Annual Member	84	87	103	16
Total	1202	1236	1278	42

* Doesn't include new members registered for 2016 convention

** Doesn't include new members registered for 2017 convention

Due to the tremendous effort from our community, chapter presidents and the convention volunteers we have managed to reach the high membership. We could not have reached the milestone without their support and hard work.

Financially, we are in a much stronger position than before and mainly because of:

- Surplus money from past annual conventions,

- Increase in membership and upgrades of membership, and
- Tight control of expenses

Over the last 2 years the total balance has grown from \$229,474.35 to \$283,985.05. From the table below, the big jump is in the long term investment and the expense & other funds. The money has grown by about \$54-K over a span of two years. After a long effort we finally closed the 2015 Convention account in Dec. of 2016 and finally published the financial details to OSANet in April of 2017. We are also in the final stages of closing 2016 convention account.

Category	May 31 st 2015	May 31 st 2016	May 31 st 2017**
Relief Fund	15,598.12	16,818.12	17,598.12
Long Term Investment*	156,321.75	174,870.74	185,512.63
Expense + other funds	57,554.48	72,982.57	80,874.30
Total	229,474.35	264,671.43	283,985.05

* Includes the total amount in TD Ameritrade and cash in Bank of America account.

** The total does not include \$ 20,000.00 advance to 2017 OSA Convention

In June of 2015 we opened a Savings Bank account in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Last year we could get online access to view the transactions associated with the account. The account is enabling people and institutions to donate money to OSA in Indian Rupees. The money in the account can't be repatriated to US dollars. They can only be used for expenses in India. As we do not have an entity registered in India, we are having hard time to file the taxes in India. Thus we haven't paid taxes for the 2 financial years: 2015 - 2016 and 2016- 2017. The current balance of the account is:

Category	June 1 st 2015 - May 31 st 2016	June 1 st 2016 - May 31 st 2017
OSA	Rs. 81,577.72	Rs. 832,711.99 ³
Previous convention	Rs. 233,661.60 ¹	Rs. 0.00 ²
Current convention	Rs. 300,000.00 ²	Rs. 0.00 ⁴
Total	Rs. 615,239.32	Rs. 832,711.99

¹ 2015 convention

² 2016 convention

³ Includes 2015 & 2016 money

⁴ 2017 convention

All of the achievements have been possible because of good support from our President Sushant Satpathy, Vice President Sulochana Patnaik and Secretary Saradakanta Panda.

Siddharth Behera
Treasurer, OSA (2015 - 2017)

Message from the Convener, OSA

Friends,

It is an honor and a privilege to welcome you all to the 48th OSA annual convention as the Convener and Vice-President of OSA. As you all know, this is one of a kind as the convention is held for the first time in a cruise in OSA history. During June 30th to July 3rd, 2017 we will travel and celebrate the convention on a ship called, "Enchantment of the Seas" of Royal Caribbean, while it will be travelling from Miami to Bahamas and will return back to Miami on July 3rd morning. This trip on a vessel on the sea reminds me of the numerous journeys taken by the Odia "Saudagars". You will be celebrating this convention on this ship as a symbolic trip of our ancient "Boita Jatra".



If you recall, unlike previous conventions, during the closing ceremony of 2016 Convention, we could not announce where the 2017 convention would take place. Traditionally by the conclusion of a convention, one of our OSA chapters takes the responsibility to host the next convention. We had one chapter tentatively agreed to host 2017 convention and the same was conveyed in the BOG meetings but unfortunately, the chapter pulled out at the last moment. Then, after the 2016 convention was over, we, the OSA executives continued our effort of negotiating with different chapter presidents. Some chapters did not want to host because recent conventions have become too expensive; some wanted to host the 50th convention instead. We were left with options either to host in Chicago or have it on a cruise. BOG members overwhelmingly decided for the convention on a cruise to Bahamas and the journey continued...

It is not an easy task to plan a cruise convention. However, with a renewed vigor when we finalized to have our convention on the cruise to Bahamas, we expected people would come forward and accept the newness and enjoy our friendship like any other convention, only in a different place, in a different atmosphere. The convention cultural program will be held on a 2000-seating auditorium with all amenities and we will have 3000+ co-travelers with an option to come and enjoy our cultural program. We are looking forward to our "Bana Bhoji" on a private beach in Nassau with Odia friends on the island. Our youth will have a great time; there are many programs on the cruise and we have planned an outing for them to enjoy snorkeling, scuba diving etc while on the island.

Although we knew that there are challenges for OSA executive members to take the responsibility to host a convention. First, the concept of a chapter hosting a convention is lost and thereby, it was hard to get cooperation from OSA members and respective chapters. Secondly, we had to face new challenges to plan a convention on a cruise, which had never happened in OSA history. We are delighted with the help from fellow members and long distance planning and coordination to host all activities done in a regular convention and some more.

Nonetheless, we, the executive members, hope this convention will not only offer an opportunity for us to enjoy the cruise along with our OSA family friends, we will also enjoy our culture, art, and literature together as in previous conventions. We will continue our journey, "Jatra" of progress through unity and solidarity. We hope that this convention would be a unique and exciting one to remember.

Sulochana Patnaik
Vice President
Convener, 2017 OSA Convention

ସଂପାଦକୀୟ: ଅଜ୍ଞେୟ ଯାତ୍ରା



ପ୍ରିୟ ଓସାବନ୍ଧୁ ଓ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ମାନେ

ନମସ୍କାର ।

କାହିଁ କେତେବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାଧକପୁଅ ବୋଇତ ମେଲି ଯାଉଥିଲା ବିଦେଶକୁ । ଭାରତ ମହାସାଗରର କୁଳସ୍ଥିତ ଦେଶମାନଙ୍କରେ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ କରି ବୋହି ଆଣୁଥିଲା କେତେ ଧନ, ସଂପଦ ଓ ଡିଗା ଭୁଲ୍ଲୁକ୍ତ, ସମୃଦ୍ଧ କରୁଥିଲା ନିଜ ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ, ନିଜ ଦେଶକୁ । ଏବର୍ଷ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ଆମେରିକାର ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜ ସେମିତି ଏକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ରଖିଛି, ଆମର ବାର୍ଷିକ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀକୁ କୁଜ୍ରେ କରିବାପାଇଁ, ଅନ୍ୟଦେଶରେ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ କରିବାପାଇଁ ନୁହେଁ, ହେଲେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ଦେଶର ନୀଳ ଜଳରାଶି ଓ ସୁନ୍ଦର ବେଳାକୁମ୍ଭିର ସୁଖମା ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବାପାଇଁ, ଆଉ ତା' ସହିତ ଆମ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜର ବାର୍ଷିକ ମିଳନୀ ପରଂପରାକୁ ରକ୍ଷାକରିବା ପାଇଁ ।



ସବୁବେଳେ ସମୟ ଉପକୂଳ ନଥାଏ । ଏବର୍ଷ ସେମିତି ଏକ ପ୍ରତିକୂଳ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ଆମ ସମାଜର ବାର୍ଷିକ ପରଂପରାର ଆୟୋଜନକୁ ନେଇ । କେହି ପୁରୋଧା ବାହାରିଲେନି ସେ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ବହନ କରିବାକୁ । ହଁ, ସେମିତି ଏକ ପ୍ରତିକୂଳ ପରିବେଶରେ ଏକ ନୂତନ ପରଂପରାର ଧାରଣା ଆଣିଲେ ଓସାର ଅଧିକାରୀ ମାନେ, ଏ ବାର୍ଷିକ ପରଂପରାକୁ ଏକ ନୂତନ ଉପାୟରେ ଅବ୍ୟାହତ ରଖିବାକୁ, ଆମ ପରଂପରାର ଅଜ୍ଞେୟ ଯାତ୍ରାକୁ ସ୍ତୁତିମୟ କରି ରଖିବାକୁ ।

ଏକଦା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାଧକ ପୁଅ ଝଡ଼, ବର୍ଷା, ପ୍ରତିକୂଳ ସାମୁଦ୍ରିକ ପରିବେଶକୁ ଭୁକ୍ଷେପ ନକରି ନିଜ ବୋଇତଯାତ୍ରାର ସୁରକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ସଂକଳ୍ପବନ୍ଧ ଥିଲା । ଏବର୍ଷ ସେମିତି ଆମର ଓସା କର୍ମକର୍ତ୍ତାମାନେ ସଂକଳ୍ପବନ୍ଧ ରହିଛନ୍ତି । ଏ ଯେ ଆମର “ଅଜ୍ଞେୟ ଯାତ୍ରା” । ଏଇତ ଆମର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପୁଅର ମାନସିକତା, ପ୍ରତିକୂଳ ପରିବେଶରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଯାତ୍ରା ଅବ୍ୟାହତ ରଖିବାର ଦୃଢ଼ ମନୋଭାବନା, ଅମୋଘ ସଂକଳ୍ପ ।

ଏମିତି ଏକ ଘଡ଼ିସରି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ବାର୍ଷିକ ଓସା ସ୍ମରଣିକା ଉର୍ମିର ସଂପାଦନା ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଭାର ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ମୁଁ ନିଜକୁ ଭାଗ୍ୟବତୀ ମନେ କରୁଛି । ଏବର୍ଷର କନ୍ଦେନସନ୍ ଆୟୋଜନ ହେବାର ନୂତନତା ଦ୍ୱାରା ପ୍ରଭାବିତ ନହୋଇ, ଯେଉଁ ଲେଖକ, ଲେଖିକାମାନେ ସଂକଳ୍ପବନ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଲେଖିବା ପରଂପରା ରକ୍ଷାକରି ଲେଖା ପଠାଇଛନ୍ତି, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ସହ ସଂପାଦକ ଓ ସଂପାଦିକାମାନଙ୍କ ସହଯୋଗରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ମିଶି ଏ ପ୍ରକାଶନୀ ଉର୍ମିକୁ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରିଛି । ଆଶା, ଆମମାନଙ୍କର ଏ ପ୍ରୟାସ ସଫଳହେବ ଓ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କ ମନକୁ ଛୁଇଁପାରିବ ।

ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ଭଳି ଓସା ମିଳନୀର
ପ୍ରଥା, ପରଂପରା ପାଳି
ଆୟୋଜନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ସବୁରୁ
ସଭିଏଁ ଗଲେ ଓହରି ।
ବାହାମାସ ଦ୍ୱୀପ କୁଜ୍ରେ ଯିବାକୁ
ଶେଷରେ କରି ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ
ଓସା କର୍ମକର୍ତ୍ତା ନୁଆ ସମ୍ଭାବନା
ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ କଲେ ଆଗତ ।
ଅତୀତ ସୁଗର ବୋଇତ ଯାତ୍ରା
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପୁଅର କୀର୍ତ୍ତି
ସେହି ପରଂପରା ପାଳିବାକୁ ମନେ

ଶେଷରେ ନେଲେ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ।
ଆୟୋଜନ ସିନା ହୋଇଗଲା ହେଲେ
କାହାନ୍ତି କିଏ କେଉଁଠି ?
ପଞ୍ଜାକରଣର ସୂଚି ଦେଖି ମନ
ହୁଅଇ ଘାଣ୍ଟିକଟି ।
ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ, ସହଯୋଗ ବିନା
କେମିତି ଏସବୁ ହେବ ?
ହସହତା ହେବା ସାର ହେବ ସିନା
ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନୋହିବ ।
ଆସୁ ପଛେ ଯେତେ ବିଘ୍ନ, ଝଡ଼ଝଞ୍ଜ
ତଥାପି ନଯିବା ଚଳି

ବରଷକେ ଥରେ ଆମ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ
ପରଂପରା ମନେ ଭାଳି ।
ଏ ବର୍ଷର ଆମ ଓସା ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ
ସମ୍ମିଳନୀର ପ୍ରୟାସ
ସୁଗମୁଗ ପାଇଁ ରଖିଯିବ ସ୍ତୁତି
ରତି ନୁଆ ଇତିହାସ ।
ଓସା ସାକ୍ଷ୍ୟାଥୀ, ଭେଟୁ କି ନଭେଟୁ
ସ୍ୱାଗତ ଘେନ ଆମର
ତୁମ ମନସ୍ତୁଖ ପାଇଁ ଆମର ଏ
ସ୍ମରଣିକା ଉପହାର ।

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, ସଂପାଦିକା, ଉର୍ମି
ଓସା କନ୍ଦେନସନ୍ ୨୦୧୭

Editorial: The Unstoppable Journey

Dear Friends

Greetings!

This is a very special time in OSA history. The annual convention is taking a new path, the path completely unexplored before. This risk is taken with determination to continue the tradition of our annual get-together irrespective of the obstacles that we faced this year. None of the chapter representatives came forward to organize the annual convention and there were limited alternatives that were available to continue with the tradition.

Many thanks to OSA officials for taking this innovative initiative for organizing the convention in a cruise to Bahamas. The list of registrants is a very discouraging factor. Instead of increasing day by day, the number is decreasing and some previously committed OSA members are dropping out from their commitment. However, OSA officials have pursued, kept their determination and we will have the cruise convention with full annual rituals, inauguration, General Body Meeting, Mehefil, Poetry Reading and so on.

Because of the inconvenient nature of this convention, OSA annual souvenir has also been impacted. Our advertiser list is down even though we have many inspired writers, both young and old who have contributed their time to pen down their thoughts.

Thank you all the authors for this OSA 2017 souvenir issue. Without your gift, the souvenir would not have been presented properly. I thank our editorial team members Joy Gopal Mohanty, Sikhanda Satapathy, Kanak Hota and Prasanta Kumar Bhuyan for helping in reviews, decision making and communicating with the authors. Thanks are also due to Mrs Sulochana Pattnaik for helping in reviews. I am grateful for their willing assistance, as I am to the contributors.

I thank Prasanta Kumar Bhuyan for coordinating Meghna Memorial award in creative writing. This award is managed by the souvenir team every year in honor of Meghna from Michigan chapter. We are thankful to the judges Dr Nandini Sahu, Dr Sukanti Mohapatra and Dr Darshan Panda for donating their valuable time to help OSA judge the children's writing fairly and effectively. Many thanks to Bijaylaxmi Sarangi of New Delhi for creating the beautiful *Boita in jhoti* that we have used in the cover page. I am also thankful to Tina Satapathy for creating sketches for section graphics.

I take this opportunity to thank Dr Sitakantha Dash for his generous donation to support the souvenir publication.

Last, but not least, I thank my family members, my husband Naresh Das and daughters Bagmi, Mrunali and Shashwati for being understanding and always providing support for my passion.

Souvenir is a team effort in a very large scale. The complexity increases when we edit articles in multiple languages and multiple Odia fonts. Keeping all the fonts reproduced properly is a very critical task. Thus, irrespective of all our best efforts, oversights might still remain and I ask for your forgiveness for these unintentional mistakes.

Enjoy the souvenir and enjoy the cruise.

Bigyani Das

Bigyani Das
Editor, OSA



About Urmi

Urmi is the annual souvenir of The Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA). This is published every year to commemorate the annual convention that is held during the 4th of July weekend. The name "Urmi" for this annual publication/souvenir was selected in 2014. The souvenir provides a medium for OSA members to practice their thinking skills and writing skills and share their reflections of immigrant life's experiences with other OSA members and the world. Each year the annual convention committee selects an editor and the editorial committee to be in charge of publishing the souvenir for convention attendees. Even though this year we have an unconventional convention, we have still continued with the spirit of our annual publication for our members, and in particular for the convention attendees. In addition to publishing the annual souvenir and directory, OSA convention editorial committee also manages Meghna memorial award for OSA youth.



This year's souvenir contains seven sections. The editorial team came up with the idea to name these sections in synchronization with "Boita Jatra". Our cruise convention to Bahamas reminds us the "Boita Jatra" of our ancestors.

The first section contains information on the convention team members, OSA official teams, the messages from OSA officials and the convener. We have named this section "*Offering Plate*" (*Arghya Thali*). Hope you will examine the contents of the plate that is being prepared for the offering and be introduced to OSA and OSA officials, know about the convention organizers and the team members that are behind making this convention happen.

The second section is focused on this year's theme, "*Unstoppable Journey*" (*Ajeya Jatra*). We have named this section "Worship with Weaving of Light" (*Nirajanaa*). Before any special step in our life, we perform this ritual of "Nirajana". The members of the editorial team have shared their experiences and thoughts on this year's theme. Hope this will introduce you with the editorial team members better.

The third section contains writings from our younger OSA members. We have named this section, "*Flower*" (*Prasuna*). Flower is a must in every worship, every offering. Please feel these flowers and their fragrance. Their writing will surely move you with pleasant happiness.

The fourth section contains writings from our OSA thinkers, philosophers and poets. We have named this section, "*Sandalwood*" (*chandana*). Sandalwood paste is very auspicious and has healing power. Please use this paste to become relaxed from the hot summer.

The fifth section is the Odia section. We have named this section "*Vermilion*" (*sindura*). Like sindura on the forehead is a symbol of focus and dignity, a sign for the victorious and for the devoted, this section will provide you something that is a symbol of your identity and dignity, and that is your own language, own culture and own people.

The sixth section is for those people that are no more. They have contributed significantly to OSA, they have been our friends and they have touched our lives. We have named this section, "*Lamp*" (*pradipa*). This section is our tribute to those departed souls.

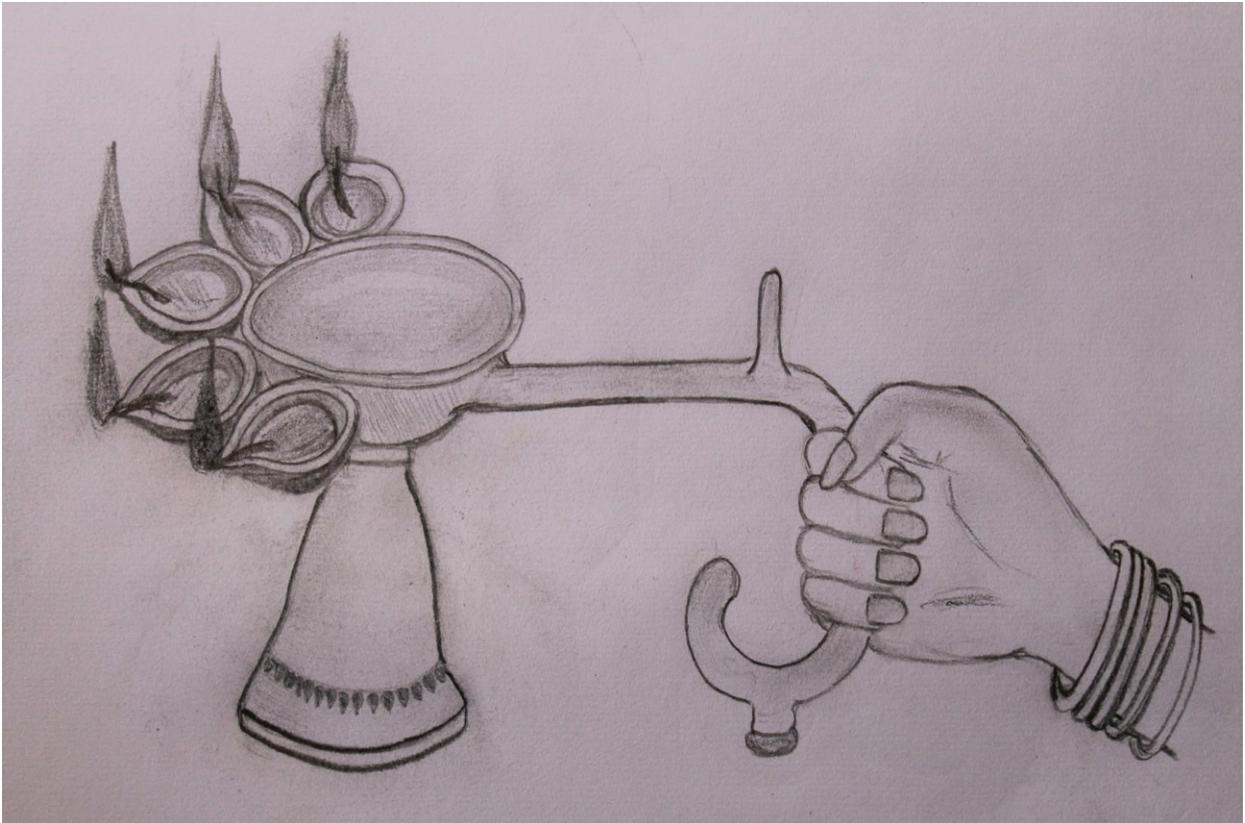
The seventh or the last section is the section on important OSA information, activity reports, chapter reports, new members and the financial status. We have named this section "*Vessel (Boat)*" (*Bahitra*). OSA is the vessel that carries us, our emotions and our expectations in this foreign land. Let us all make promise of our commitment to safeguard this vessel, keep its surface unscratched and immune from all types of disasters and keep it clean and beautiful. Let this moment be auspicious to OSA and OSA members.

ନୀରଜନା

(The Ritual of Waving of Lighted)

ଅଜେୟ ଯାତ୍ରା ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ....

Ajeya Jatra (Unstoppable Journey) Special



ସୁନାଥାଳିରେ ଜାମୁକୋଳି ତକ୍ତର ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ

ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ଭଳି ସେ ବର୍ଷ ବି ଯାତ୍ରା କରିଥିଲି, ଓସାର ବାର୍ଷିକ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ଯୋଗଦେବା ପାଇଁ । ମୁଁ ଓ ମୋ ପରିବାର ସେତେବେଳକୁ ପ୍ରାୟ ନିରବଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ଭାବେ ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ୪ ଯାତ୍ରା କରୁଥିଲୁ । ଜୁଲାଇ ୪ ତାରିଖ ଦିନ ଡ୍ରାସିଂଗନ୍ ଡି-ସି-ର ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ଦିବସର ପ୍ୟାରେଡ୍ ଓ ବାଣପୁଟା ନଦେଖି ଆମେ ଶହଶହ ମାଲକ୍ ତାଇକ୍ କରି କିମ୍ବା ଉଡ଼ାଜାହାଜରେ ବସି ଯାତ୍ରା କରୁଥିଲୁ । ସେବର୍ଷ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଜଣେ ସୁନାପଧନ୍ୟ ଗାୟକ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ହୋଇ ଆସିଥାନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଟିକେ ପାଖରେ ଦେଖିବାର ଲାଳସା ମତେ ଆହ୍ଳନ କରି ରଖିଥାଏ ।



ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ ସମୟରୁ ପ୍ରାୟ ଦୁଇଘଣ୍ଟା ବିଳମ୍ବରେ ଗାୟକଙ୍କର ଗାଇବା ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବ ବୋଲି ଘୋଷଣା କରାଗଲା । କଣ ବା କରାଯିବ? ଜମା ଅଢେଇ ଦିନ ଭିତରେ ଯାବତୀୟ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ସବୁକୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ଓ ପରିବେଷଣ କରାଇବାର ଅଛି । ସେଥିରେ ଖାଇବା ତିନିଧର ଓ ଚାହା ୪ବଂ ଜଳଖିଆ ସମୟ ବି ରଖାଯିବାର ଅଛି । ଆଉ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକମାନେ ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ଖାଇବସିଲେ, ଗପସପରେ ୪ମିତି ମଜ୍ଜିଯିବେ ଯେ, ଖାଇବା ଟେବୁଲରୁ ଉଠିବାର ନାଁ ଧରିବେନି । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ପୁନଃ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ପ୍ରତି ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ କରାଇବା ଏକ ବଡ଼ ଦୁଃସାଧ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟାପାର ।

ହେଲେ ଟଳିଟଳି ମଧ୍ୟ ଉପରକୁ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରୁଥିବା ସେ ଅପରିଷ୍କାର ସାର୍ତ୍ତ, ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ ପରିହିତ ଭଦ୍ରବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ପ୍ରିୟ ଗାୟକ ଭାବେ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରିବାପରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଗୀତ ଶୁଣିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ନକରି ମୋର ସମସ୍ତ ଉତ୍ତେଜନା ସେଇଠି ଶୀତଳ ହୋଇଗଲା । ୪ତେ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ ଗାୟକ, ୪ତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର କଣ୍ଠ, ୪ତେ ଲମ୍ବଧନୁ ରଙ୍ଗର ଭାବନା, ସିଏ ପୁଣି ୪ମିତି ରାସ୍ତାକଡର ଭିକାରୀଙ୍କ ଭଳି ବେଶଭୂଷାରେ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ଏତେବଡ଼ ହୋଟେଲର ୪ ସୁସଜ୍ଜିତ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉପରେ ସମ୍ପୃତ ପରିବେଷଣ କରିବାପାଇଁ ? ଗାୟକ ଜଣକ ନିଶାସକ୍ତ ଥିଲେ; ତାଙ୍କ ଗାଇବାର ଗୀତର ପଂକ୍ତି ବେଳେବେଳେ ଭୁଲି ଯାଉଥିଲେ । ତଥାପି ଦର୍ଶକମଣ୍ଡଳୀଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ଅନେକ ବହୁତ ପ୍ରଗଳ୍ଭ ହେଉଥାନ୍ତି, କରତାଳି ଦେଉଥାନ୍ତି ଓ ଗାୟକଙ୍କର ଗୀତ ସହିତ ତାଳ ଦେଇ ନାଚୁଥାଆନ୍ତି ।

ବିରସ ମନ ଓ ହତାଶାର ସ୍ଵତି ନେଇ ମୁଁ ସେ ବର୍ଷ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଥିଲି । ସେଇ ଘଟଣାଟି ମୋର ମନେ ପକାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା ଆମ ଗାଁର ବହୁଳ ଭାବେ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ଢଗ, ‘ସୁନାଥାଳିରେ ଜାମୁକୋଳି ପରଶା’ ।

ଆଜିକାଲି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଟିଭି ଧାରାବାହିକ କି ଚଳଚ୍ଚିତ୍ରର ଦୃଶ୍ୟରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଭରପୁର ଗହଣା, ପୁରା ମେକ୍‌ଅପ୍, ଲିପ୍‌ଷ୍ଟିକ୍ ଓ ଦଶ-କୋଟିଏ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କାର ଶାଢ଼ୀପିନ୍ଧି ରାତିରେ ଶୋଇବାକୁ ଯିବା ଓ ସକାଳୁ ଉଠିବା ଯେମିତି ଅପ୍ରାସଙ୍ଗିକ ମନେହୁଏ, ସେମିତି ସ୍ଥାନ, କାଳ, ପାତ ଅନୁପାତରେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି ନକରି ନିଜକୁ ପରିବେଷଣ କରିବା ସାଧାରଣ ଶିକ୍ଷାଚାରର ବିରୁଦ୍ଧାଚରଣ କରେ ।

ଆଜିକାଲି ଅଧିକାଂଶ ସ୍ତରରେ ହିଁ ସେମିତି ବେଭାର । ଜିନ୍ ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ ଓ ଟି-ସାର୍ଟ ପିନ୍ଧି ମଧ୍ୟ ଉପରେ କିମ୍ବା ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଭଜନ ପରିବେଷଣ କରିବା କି ଆରତୀ କରିବା ଯେମିତି ଅସମୀଚିନ ମନେହୁଏ, ପାଞ୍ଚ-ଛ ହାତର ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଓ ଦେହଭରା ଭରପୁର ଅଳଙ୍କାର ପିନ୍ଧି ବେକ୍ ଡ୍ୟାନ୍ସ କରିବା କି ଜିମ୍‌କୁ ଯିବା ବି ସେମିତି ଅସମୀଚିନ ମନେହୁଏ ।

ଯଦି ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରିତ କଳାକାରମାନେ ନିଜକୁ ନିଶାର ପ୍ରଭାବରୁ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ କରି ରଖିପାରିବେନି, ନିଜକୁ ପରିବେଶ ଓ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ସହିତ ଖାପ ଖୁଆଇ ସେଇ ଅନୁପାତରେ ପୋଷାକ, ପରିଚ୍ଛଦ ଓ ବ୍ୟବହାରରେ ନିଜକୁ ସଜାଇ ପରିବେଷଣ କରିପାରିବେନି, ତେବେ ସେମିତି କଳାକାରମାନଙ୍କୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରିତ କରି ଆମେ କଣ ଠିକ୍ କରୁ ?

ନିଜର ରଙ୍ଗ, ଉଚ୍ଚତା, ଶରୀର ଗଢଣ, ୪ସବୁ ଉପରେ ଆମର ଆୟତ୍ତ ନାହିଁ ସିନା, କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମର ପରିଧାନ, ବ୍ୟବହାର ଶୈଳୀ, କଥାବାକ୍ସା, ସାଜସଜ୍ଜା ଓ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି ଉପରେ ତ ଆମର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅଧିକାର ଅଛି । ସେସବୁ ଉପରେ ଧ୍ୟାନ ଦେଇ ଯଦି ଆମେ ପରିବେଶ, ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଓ ଘଟଣା ସହିତ ତାଳ ମିଳାଇ ନିଜକୁ ପରିବେଷଣ କରିପାରିବା, ତେବେ ତାହା ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିଶିବ ।

ତେବେ ସେଇଟା ଗୋଟିଏ ମନର ଭାବ, ବଖାଣିଦେବା ପାଇଁ । ବଖାଣିଦେଲି ତ! ମୋ କାମ ସରିଗଲା । ଏବେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ କାମ, ଆପଣ କେମିତି ଗ୍ରହଣକରିବେ ।

ଆସନ୍ତୁ, ସୁନାଥାଳିରେ ଆମେ ଖିରି ପରଶିବା ।

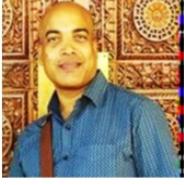


ବଦ୍ୱୀକା ଯିବି କି କାରଣେ ଡକ୍ଟର୍ ଜୟଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି

୨୦୧୬ ମସିହା ନଭେମ୍ବର ମାସରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଡି.ସି.ରେ କେତେ ଜଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ସାଥରେ ଦେଖା ହୋଇଥିଲା ଲିଲିର ବିଭାଘର ଉତ୍ସବରେ । ସେଠାରେ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ସହ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ହେବାବେଳେ ମୋ' ଠାରୁ ସାନ ଜଣେ ମହିଳା, ମୀନା କହିଲେ, ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ମା'ଙ୍କୁ ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ ନେବାପାଇଁ ଭାବୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏହା ଶୁଣି, ମୋର ପତ୍ନୀ ଇଚ୍ଛୁକ ହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଥରେ ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ ଯିବାପାଇଁ । ସେଥି ସଙ୍ଗେସଙ୍ଗେ ମୀନା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନକଲେ, 'ଭାଇନା, ଆପଣ ସେଠାକୁ ଯାଇ ପାରିବେ ତ?' ସେ ବୋଧେ ଭାବୁଥିଲେ, ମୁଁ ଖୁବ୍ ବୟସ୍କ ହେଲିଣି, କାଳେ ପାହାଡ଼ିଆ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଚାଲି ପାରିବିକି ନାହିଁ । ମୁଁ କହିଲି, 'ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବି' । ସେହି ଅନୁସାରେ, ଆମର ଯୋଜନା ଚାଲିଲା । ତା'ର କିଛି ଦିନ ଭିତରେ, ଏଆର୍‌ଲାନ୍ଦ୍ ମାନଙ୍କର ଡ୍ରେସ୍ ସାଇଟ୍‌ରେ ଖୋଜୁ ଖୋଜୁ ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲ ରେଟ୍‌ରେ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ପାଇଁ ଟିକେଟ୍ ମିଳିଗଲା ଏବଂ ଆମର ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ ଯାତ୍ରା ପାଇଁ ଆୟୋଜନ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା । ମନେ ହେଲା, ପ୍ରଭୁ ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ ଆମକୁ ଦୟାକରି ଡାକୁଛନ୍ତି ।

ମୀନାଙ୍କର ପ୍ଲାନ୍ ଅନୁସାରେ, ସେ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ମା', ଆମେ ଦି'ଜଣ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ପତୋଶୀ କପ୍ ଆମେରିକାରୁ ବାହାରି ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବୁ । ତା'ପରେ, ତାଙ୍କ ମା'ଙ୍କ ଜଣେ ମହିଳା ସାଙ୍ଗ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରୁ ଆସି ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ଆମ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ମିଶିବେ । ଏଣୁ, ଆମେ ସାତ ଜଣ ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ ଯିବୁ । ସେହି ଅନୁସାରେ, ମୀନା ତାଙ୍କର ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ରହୁଥିବା ଜଣେ ସାଙ୍ଗଙ୍କ ସହ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କଲେ । ସେ ସାଙ୍ଗଙ୍କର ଏକ ଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସି କଂପାନୀ ସହିତ ଜଣାଶୁଣା ଥିଲା । ବହୁତ ଆଲୋଚନା ପରେ, ଠିକ୍ ହେଲା ଯେ ଆମେ ସାତ ଜଣ ବିଭକ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଦୁଇଟି ଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସିରେ ଯିବା ଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସିରେ ଆମ ପଛ ହୋଇ ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ ଯିବୁ । ସେହି ପ୍ଲାନ୍ ଅନୁସାରେ, ଆମେ ଯେଉଁଠି ଡକ୍ଲେସ୍ ଏଆର୍‌ପୋର୍ଟରୁ ଗତ ମେ' ମାସ ୨୨ ତାରିଖରେ ବାହାରି ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ଏଆର୍‌ପୋର୍ଟରେ ଭାରତୀୟ ଟାଇମ୍ ୨୩ ତାରିଖ ରାତି ୧୧ଟାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲୁ । ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ଆମେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦିନ ରହି ୨୫ ତାରିଖରେ ଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସି ଧରି ହରିଦ୍ୱାର୍ ବାହାରିଗଲୁ । ସେଠି ପହଞ୍ଚି ସେଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ, ଗଙ୍ଗା ନଈକୂଳରେ ହେଉଥିବା ଗଙ୍ଗା ଆରତି ଦେଖିଲୁ । ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲଲାଗିଲା । ତା'ପରେ ଆମେ ୨୬ ତାରିଖ ସକାଳେ ହରିଦ୍ୱାର୍ ଛାଡ଼ିଲୁ ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ ଅଭିମୁଖେ । ଆମର ପ୍ଲାନ୍ ଥିଲା, ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ସୁଧା ଆମେ 'ଜୋସିମଠ' ବୋଲି ଏକ ଜାଗାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ସେଠି ରହିବୁ ଏବଂ ତା' ପରଦିନ ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ ଯିବୁ ।

ଆମ ଗାଡ଼ିରେ, ଆମେ ଦୁଇଟି କପ୍ ଓ ପଛ ଗାଡ଼ିରେ, ମୀନା, ତା'ଙ୍କ ମା' ଏବଂ ତା'ଙ୍କ ମା'ଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗ ବସିଥିଲେ । ହରିଦ୍ୱାର ଠାରୁ ପ୍ରାୟ ୫୦ କିଲୋମିଟର୍ ଯାଇଛୁ କି ନାହିଁ, ପାହାଡ଼ିଆ ରାସ୍ତା ପଡ଼ିଲା ଓ ସେ ରାସ୍ତାରେ, ବହୁତ ବାଁ-ଡାହାଣ ମୋଡ଼ ଥିଲା । ପଛକୁ ଅନାଇ ଦେଖିଲୁ, ଆମ ପଛ ଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସିଟି ଦେଖାଯାଉନାହିଁ । ଚିନ୍ତିତ ହୋଇ ଆମ ଡ୍ରାଇଭରକୁ ଗାଡ଼ି ରଖିବାକୁ କହି ଆଉ ଗାଡ଼ିର ଡ୍ରାଇଭରକୁ ଫେନ୍ କରାଗଲା କହିଲୁ । ଜଣାପଡ଼ିଲା ଯେ, ମୀନାଙ୍କର ମୋସନ୍ ସିକ୍‌ନେସ୍ ଅଛି ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କର ବାନ୍ତି ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ଏଣୁ ତାଙ୍କର ବିଶ୍ରାମ ପାଇଁ ଗାଡ଼ିଟି ପଛରେ କିଛି ଦୂରରେ ଅଟକିଛି । ପୁଣି ଜଣାପଡ଼ିଲା ଯେ, ମୀନାଙ୍କ ମା' ତାଙ୍କୁ ବାନ୍ତି କମାଇବା ଔଷଧ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଇ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଆମେ ବି କିଛି ସମୟ ରାସ୍ତା କଡ଼ରେ ରହିଲୁ ଏବଂ ତା'ପରେ ପୁଣି ଆଗକୁ ଚାଲିଲୁ । ଦେଖାଗଲା, ୧୦ କିଲୋମିଟର୍ ଭିତରେ, ମୀନାଙ୍କୁ ଡିନି ବାରି ଥର ରହିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଲା । ଗାଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଲା ମାତ୍ରେ ତା'ଙ୍କୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ବାନ୍ତି ଲାଗୁଛି ଓ ଆଦୌ ନିଜକୁ କଣ୍ଟ୍ରୋଲ କରି ପାରୁନାହାନ୍ତି । ନିଜେ ମୀନା ମଧ୍ୟ ଚିନ୍ତିତ । ଏଭଳି ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ, ସେ କିପରି ଯିବେ ଓ ଆମେ କିପରି ଜୋସିମଠ ପହଞ୍ଚିବୁ । ସେତେବେଳକୁ, ଆମେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଛୋଟ ହୋଟେଲ୍ ପାଖରେ ରହିଥିଲୁ । ବହୁ ଚିନ୍ତାକରି, ମୀନା ସ୍ଥିରକଲେ ଯେ ସେ ଏଭଳି ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଆଉ ଆଗକୁ ଯାଇପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ । ତାଙ୍କ ମା' ବି ବଡ଼ ଦୁଇରେ ପଡ଼ିଲେ । ଏତେ ବାଟ ଆସି ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ କେମିତି ଯିବେ । ସେଠୁ ସ୍ଥିର ହେଲା ଯେ, ମୀନା ସେହି ଛୋଟ ହୋଟେଲ୍‌ରେ ଦୁଇ ଦିନ ପାଇଁ ରହିବେ ଓ ବାକି ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ ଯାଇ ଫେରିଲା ବାଟରେ ତା'ଙ୍କୁ ପିକ୍‌ଅପ୍ କରି ନବୁ । ସମସ୍ତେ ସେଥିରେ ରାଜିହେଲେ ଏବଂ ଆମେ ସେଠି ମୀନାଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ ଅଭିମୁଖେ ଚାଲିଲୁ । ମୀନା କିନ୍ତୁ ମନଦୁଃଖରେ ସେହି ହୋଟେଲ୍‌ରେ ରହିଲେ ଆମର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାବର୍ତ୍ତନକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ଏବଂ ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥ ଯାଇପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ । ଦୁସତ, ତାହା ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କ ଇଚ୍ଛା ଥିଲା । ହେଲେ, ନିରୁପାୟ ହୋଇ, ମୀନା ବୋଧେ ବଦ୍ୱୀନାଥଙ୍କୁ ଚିନ୍ତା କରି, ଉତ୍ତର ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କୁ କହିଥିବା କଥା ଭାବୁଥିଲେ, 'ସକଳ ତୀର୍ଥ ତୋ ଚରଣେ, ବଦ୍ୱୀକା ଯିବି କି' କାରଣେ ?' ।



ସା ବିଦ୍ୟା ଯା ବିମୁକ୍ତୟେ

ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତ କୁମାର ଭୂୟାଁ

ସୁଧା ପାଠକେ!...

ପ୍ରଥମରେ ମୁଁ ଏହା ଭାବି ବସିଥିଲି ଯେ ପାଠକଟିଏ ଅଝଟ ଏକୋଇର ବଳା ବିଶିକେଶନ ପୁଅଟିଏ ପରିକା । ହେଲେ କେତେବେଳେ ଏହା ମନେ ହୁଏ ଯେ ଭଲ ପାଠକଟିଏ ହେଲା ଦେହଲଗା ମା ପରିକା । ଗୋଡ଼େଗୋଡ଼େ ଛାଇ ଭଳି ଲାଗି ରହିଥିବ । ମା'ଟିଏ ଯେପରି କେତେବେଳେ ତାକୁ ଆଉ ବୁକୁରେ ହାତମାରି ତାତି ଦେଖେ ତ କେତେବେଳେ ନୁଖୁରା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ତେଲ ହାତଟିଏ ବୁଲାଇନିଏ । ସେଥିରେ ଆଦର ତ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଥାଏ ଆଉ ଥାଏ ଏତେ ଆଶୀଷ ତା ଶଙ୍ଖାଳୀ ପାଇଁ । କେତେବେଳେ ପୁଅ ହାତରେ ଖାଇବା ପୋଟଳିଟିଏ ଧରାଇଦିଏ ଆଉ ' କେତେବେଳେ ବିଜୟଟୀକା ଲଗାଇଦିଏ । କେତେବେଳେ ପୁଅର ଫେରିବା ବାଟ ଅନେଇ ଦାଣ୍ଡକୁ ବାରି ଦଶଧର ହୁଏ ତ କେତେବେଳେ ଦୀପ ଆଉ ଦୁବଚାଉଳ ଧରି ଦୁଆର ମୁହଁରେ ଛିଡ଼ା ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

ପାଠକ ସବୁ ସେହିପରି । ଜଣେ ପ୍ରିୟ ଲେଖକର ଲେଖାକୁ ଏତେ ଆଦର ଆଉ ଯତ୍ନରେ ତାକୁ ବଢ଼ାନ୍ତି । ସେହି ଲେଖା ସର୍ବଜନବିଦିତ ହୁଏ । ଲେଖକର ପରିଚିତି ଆଉ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ବଢ଼େ । ଲେଖକକୁ ଆହୁରି ଭଲ ଲେଖିବାକୁ ପ୍ରେରଣା ମିଳେ । ଲେଖକ ଲେଖିଗଲେ ଆଉ ପାଠକ ପଢ଼ିଗଲେ । ଅନନ୍ତ ଆଉ ଅସରନ୍ତି ଏଇ ଭାବ । ଏଥିରେ କେତେଜଣଙ୍କ ଇର୍ଷା, ହିଂସା, ଦ୍ଵେଷ ଆସି ସାମିଲ ହୁଏ ଆଉ ଲେଖା ଆଉ ଲେଖକକୁ ଅପଦସ୍ତ କରିବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ ହୁଏ । ହେଲେ ଏଥିରେ ମର୍ଯ୍ୟଦା ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଧୂଳିସାତ ହୁଏ । କେତେଜଣ ନଖ ଘସନ୍ତି ଆଉ କେତେଜଣ ନାକରେ ଆଙ୍ଗୁଠି ଦେଇ ହସନ୍ତି ।

ଏଇ ସବୁ ଦେଖି ଶିଖି ବୁଝି ଏତୁଟିଏରୁ ଏଡ଼େ ହେଲିଣି । ଭଲ କିଛି ହେଉ କି ନହେଉ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ହେବାର କୌଣସି ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନବାଦର ହ୍ରାସ ହୋଇନାହିଁ ବରଂ ଦ୍ଵିଗୁଣିତ ହୋଇସାରିଛି । ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଏଇ ସୁରଅସୁରଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ସମୁଦ୍ର ମନ୍ଥନ ତୁଲ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତିସ୍ଵୟିତା ହୋଇ ସାରିଛି । ଏଥିରୁ ଅମୃତ ରୂପୀ କାବ୍ୟ, କବିତା, ଗଳ୍ପ, ପ୍ରଭୃତି ମିଳିଛି ତ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ, ଐରାବତ, ଉଚ୍ଚୈଶ୍ରବା, ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର, କୌସୁଭ, ପାରିଜାତ ପରି ମାନ ସମ୍ମାନ, ଫଳକ ସବୁ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ହୋଇଛି । ଏହାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେଇ ପ୍ରକାର ହେବାରେ ଲାଗିଛି । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଆଳରେ ପଦ ଆଉ ସମୃଦ୍ଧିରେ ବୁଢ଼ି ରହିଥିବା ସୁରଗଣ ସବୁ କରାୟତ୍ତ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସର୍ବୋଚ୍ଚ ଆସନରେ ଉପବିଷ୍ଣୁ ହୋଇଥିବା ଇଶ୍ଵରଙ୍କୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କ ଉକ୍ଳୋତ ଦେଇ ମୁହଁ ବନ୍ଦ କରାଯାଇଅଛି । ଏଇ ସବୁ ତଳେଲେ ଦେଖିଲେ ଜଣାପଡ଼େ ଯେ ଏଇ ପୁରାଣ କଥା ସବୁ ପୁରୁଣା ନୁହେଁ ବରଂ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ମାଦଳାପାଞ୍ଜିଟିଏ । କେତେବେଳେ ଇତିହାସର ପୁନରାବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହେବାରେ ଲାଗିଛି ତ କେତେବେଳେ ଅଜଣା, ଅଶୁଣା କଥା ମଧ୍ୟ ହେବାରେ ଲାଗିଛି ।

ଜଣେ ଲେଖକର ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ରୋମଛନ୍ଦ କରି କରାଇ କେତେଜଣ ଅମୃତ, ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର, ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ, ଐରାବତ, ଉଚ୍ଚୈଶ୍ରବା, ପାରିଜାତ, ପ୍ରଭୃତି ପାଇଛନ୍ତି ତ ଆଉ କେତେଜଣ ଉକ୍ଳୋତ ଗରଳ ମଧ୍ୟ ପାଠକର ମାନସକୁ ପିଆଇବାରେ ପଛପୁଞ୍ଜା ଦେବାରେ ପଛାଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ନିଜର ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପରାକାଷ୍ଠା ଦେଖାଇବାକୁ ଯାଇ ସରଳ ପାଠକର ମାନସିକତାକୁ କୁଠାରାଘାତ ବି କରାହୋଇଛି । ଏହି ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷାରେ କେତେଜଣ ପାଠକଙ୍କ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଆଗ୍ରହ ମରିଯାଇଛି ତ କେତେଜଣ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଡରି ବି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏଣୁ ଅନେକଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଦୁର୍ବୋଧ କୃତ ରାଜନୀତି ପରାୟେ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ଗଳଗ୍ରହ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଜନପ୍ରିୟ ହେବାର ବାହନ ଭାବି ବସିଛନ୍ତି । ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ କେତେବେଳେ ଶାରଦୀୟ ଅଭିନୟନ ମିଳିଛି ତ କେତେବେଳେ ଜନପଦରେ ଅତ୍ୟାଚାର ମଧ୍ୟ ।

ହେଲେ; ସାହିତ୍ୟର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ବଳୟ ସବୁ ସେଇ ପାଠକଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ହିଁ ନିର୍ଭର କରୁଛି । ପାଠକଙ୍କ ରୁଚି, ଆଗ୍ରହ ଆଉ ସାହିତ୍ୟାନୁରାଗ ହିଁ ପ୍ରକୃତ ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ଜନମାନସଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଉପସ୍ଥାପିତ କରିବ; ଏଥିରେ କୌଣସି ସଂଶୟ ନାହିଁ । ସବୁବେଳ ପରି ମୋର ଏହି ଭରସା ମଧ୍ୟ ଅଛି ଆଉ ରହିବ ମଧ୍ୟ । ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଧୂଳା ଉଡ଼ି ଆସିଛି, ଉଡ଼ୁଛି ଆଉ ଉଡ଼ୁଥିବ । ଏଣୁ ମୁଁ ସୁଧୁ ପାଠକବୃନ୍ଦକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିବି ଯେ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ନନ୍ଦିଘୋଷର ରଞ୍ଜୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ହାତରେ । ଏବେ ତାଙ୍କ ମନ, ପ୍ରାଣ ଆଉ ଆତ୍ମାର ବଡ଼ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ଏହି ରଥକୁ ନେଇ ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲନ୍ତୁ । ପାଠକଙ୍କ ନିମନ୍ତେ ନୀତିଶତକରୁ ପଦିଏ ଲେଖୁଛି...

साहित्यसङ्गीतकलाविहीनः साक्षात्पशुः पुच्छविषाणहीनः तृणं न खादन्नपि जीवमानः तद्भ्रागधेयं परमं पशूनाम्
- ପ୍ରଭୁ

Coalition of the Willing...

Dr Sikhanda Satapathy

“You can take a horse to the river, but you can’t make it drink,” is a very apt saying that applies to our everyday life. If there is thirst, there is a way to the water. Somebody may show the way to the water, but the important thing is to possess, in the first place, a thirst. As “ମିମିର ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷା” taught us, if there is no focus, it is very difficult to learn. Many go to sermons only to fall asleep in no time, because the idea was not to learn and reflect, but because turning down somebody’s invitation was difficult. Similarly, folks go to big conferences only to play on their phones while the speaker is expounding intricate details of his analysis.



Are we, the Odias in America, a coalition of the willing? Do we want to celebrate our roots through togetherness, be it at the convention, through articles in journals, newsletters or e-groups, or just meeting others who speak the same language, eat the same food and hum the same melody? Do we want to travel together though the life in this adopted country of ours, together? If yes, then we shouldn’t need prodding or coercion to be part of that journey. The companionship would be rewarding enough for us to volunteer our help, pat the back of another volunteer or just give that little push to get the cart over the hump. No force is necessary, no complaint is useful!

Some of OSA’s well-wishers have lamented that there is a decline of volunteers in the society’s activities, there is poor attendance in community events and there is a general lack of enthusiasm in general! Why? Have we lost that thirst to celebrate our roots? Have we become too busy with our growing unit family or the demanding job? Or just that we haven’t kept up with time as the cultural focus has shifted for the immigrants? It is possible that the general cynicism emanating from the political milieu has made us mentally and physically numb. Or is it that we have forgotten our original purpose and have gotten sidetracked to peripheral objectives?

I don’t know the answer. It’s for us all to find our thirst – the common thirst. How do we want to lead our lives, and what environment do we want to create for the next generation – our children? Should we think beyond our immediate family, immediate neighborhood and immediate self-interest? Should we just want somebody else to carry the “water” to us, or should we beat the path to the water ourselves alongside our extended family here?

In the current political environment, it is a time for reflection for all of us on how to mold our place in American society! A quagmire of intolerance and misplaced nationalistic ideology is threatening the fabric of life. *Kabibara* Radhanath had aptly said, “ଇଚ୍ଛନ୍ତି ଦାୟିକେ, ହସ୍ତେ ରଖିବାକୁ, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଡୋରି; ନିଜ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଡୋରି, କାଳ ହସ୍ତେ ବନ୍ଧା, ପକାନ୍ତି ହେଲେ ପାଶୋରି ।” The world has witnessed many such “ଦାୟିକ”s over the time. This time will also pass. But let that not be an alibi to develop a psychological numbness and cynical attitude. We can minimize the impact on our own finite time by being proactive. We need to find our common cause and chart our course in this society. That can be done if we participate and contribute our mite. We have to find our thirst first.

Dr. Gauri Charan Das: Understanding Odia Identity and Leadership in Retrospect

Dr Kanak Hota

Dr. Gauri Charan Das (1941-2017) one of the founders and the first president of The Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA) passed away on May 25th, 2017.

Almost half a century ago in 1969, Gouribabu, then a young postdoctoral fellow from MIT, led a trove of brilliant minds with a manifesto stating that facilitation of social relationship, promotion of Odia culture and helping aspiring students from Odisha realize their dreams in America, were their goals. Those young men could put into perspective the opportunities the developed world offered and the dire seize of human potential back home. They wanted to develop a network of fellow Odias in North America who shared not just their sense of isolation and nostalgia in an alien land, but also their hopes and aspirations for Odisha. They wanted to forge a collective identity and celebrate the grandeur of Odisha's rich cultural heritage. They imagined a collective that would be a welcoming oasis for the potential immigrants from Odisha to North America that could render a tenor of fraternity in the foreign land. Their experiment was the first of its kind among the regional ethnic groups from India in North America.



Their quest planted the seed of a democratic organization that Bertrand Russell would characterize as strength of the otherwise feeble individual in a megalopolis, where man feels threatened and isolated. May be, something too was in the air in Boston –the cradle of liberty –the city historically known for the Tea Party Revolution. The burden of history was still weighing on India free from centuries of colonial domination. While the nation was still struggling to find her feet in the modern world, Odisha's position was deplorable.

When we think of OSA as a large Odia family, Gauribabu is the vital generational link. Succinct and straight from the heart, Prof. Bijoy Misra calls him, “a blessed elder brother.” He says, “Gauribabu was a quintessential Oriya. He carried Oriya brilliance, Oriya pride, Oriya sensitivity and the Oriya camaraderie. He loved Oriya language, championed Oriya traditions, and sought out Oriya friends. He knew of the Oriya poverty and the neglect of Orissa in modern days.”

Lalatendu Manasinha's tribute includes Gauribabu's two hand written notes, one inviting friends for a meet at Hosmer Auditorium in Hartford on October 8, 1970, and the other, stating the mission of the budding organization and asking for names and addresses of fellow Odias for compilation of an Odia directory.

From its inception as a besotted dream to birth and stabilization, OSA as a democratic organization went through those natural pangs of growth, but with time, became robust and sprawling. When passion becomes a collective posture, ideas collide and conflicts are unavoidable. OSA is no exception.

During the last fifty years, migratory patterns to the US and Canada have changed. The influx of new Odias joining the elite workforce in North America has been continuous. We may say, largely due to the revolution in communication technology, the arrival of the OSA newsletter in mail seems obsolete now, but it was the lifeline once. When the grace of Odissi or the mellifluous lines of *Gitagovinda* resonate in the sprawling halls during our conventions, we must remember the pioneering leadership of Gauribabu for imagining these possibilities. Also, when we celebrate our Odia roots through our language, food, dance, literature, music and history, we are transmitting historical awareness in a subtle way to generations born and raised here.

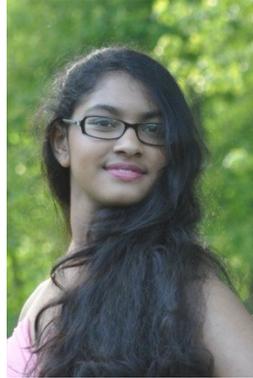
ପ୍ରସୁନ

Prasuna - Flower



It's Time We Talked

Aryana Rajanala



In spite of all the progress we have made, the social stigmas around menstruation hold girls and women back in many respects. UNESCO reports that 1 in 10 girls in Africa miss school during menstruation. In many parts of India and Bangladesh, women don't go into the kitchen or cook during these days. A majority of women and girls in the world still do not have access to safe and hygienic supplies to manage their periods.

This story was written for use by Ayati, a non-profit organization in NJ that supports menstrual education in India and helps procure and distribute supplies.

Isla wakes up with a wide stretch, letting her long, shimmering black hair fall down her back as she sits up in bed, yawning. She uses a hand and pushes her hair back behind her ear, taking her other hand and rubbing her eyes blearily. Without actually opening her eyes, as if she's sleepwalking, she stands and walks over to her closet, pulling out what she believes to be a bright cyan dress. She loves that one, the way it fits elegantly over her form, curving around her slim figure. And of course today is the day to wear it! Ayaan is visiting! He comes every month to see her and the town, but it feels like eternities pass between his visits. Ayaan is Isla's best friend. They met years ago, before he moved. Thankfully, though, he still visits her. Isla doesn't know what she would do without him.

Still only half awake, Isla staggers over to the bathroom in the hallway, waving sleepily to her mother on her way in, and prepares herself for the day, combing her hair, taking a shower and getting dressed. It is not until she steps out of the bathroom, leaving the bathroom mirror covered in condensation, that she is finally awake. And now that she is awake, she finally has enough energy to be excited.

Ayaan is coming!

Briefly, she stops and checks her appearance in the mirror perched upon her dresser in her room. Her hair, however straight and manageable it seems at first glance, is totally and absolutely untamable. Despite the fact, she manages to braid it neatly and lets it hang over her right shoulder. The cyan dress is slightly tighter than it should be, but it isn't uncomfortable, and it doesn't look tight on her. The sleeves go down to just below her elbows and the dress itself flows down to her knees. She smiles contentedly, the soft features of her face lighting up with delight. Cyan is Ayaan's favorite color.

"Ma!" Isla calls, flinging herself down the hall and into the kitchen where her mother is standing by the stove. She looks to be cooking lunch.

"Good morning, Isla," her mother says sweetly. "It's about time you're up. It's getting late already."

"Ma, it's only seven o'clock!" she exclaims. "So when is Ayaan getting here?"

"Like you said," she chuckles softly, "it's only seven o'clock. Give him some time. He'll be here soon. In the meantime, why don't you help me with lunch?"

Isla sighs, rolling her eyes. "No thanks, Ma. I think I should wait for him by the entrance. Maybe he doesn't remember where our house is after all this time."

"He visits every month," her mother says. "I really don't think that he—" She turns around to look at her daughter after hearing a soft click behind her, but sees only an open door, a gentle zephyr blowing into the curtains on the other side of the room.

Isla grins impishly to herself as she walks up the path to the entrance of the town, smiling at the other residents as she passes by, but the smile is strained. She doesn't really want to smile at them. She wants to smile at Ayaan, but he isn't here yet.

She looks up as someone approaches her, smiling brightly. It's her friend, Ina. "Isla!" she calls happily, grabbing Isla's hand. "Come on, come play with us! Please?"

Isla hesitates in answering. "Sorry, Ina, but I don't think I can play right now. I'm waiting for Ayaan. Maybe we can play a little later, alright?"

Ina frowns. She looks so cute, Isla thinks for a moment, being only seven years old with a pair of short black pigtails bouncing on her back as she plays with her other friends. "Fine," she huffs. "But please come!"

Isla watches as Ina runs off. She doesn't like saying no to her, but if she is to be completely honest, none of them really matter to her right now. She wants Ayaan, and he is taking a long time. Or maybe she's just really impatient. After all, it's still pretty early, and he doesn't usually get there until later in the day...but at the same time, he looks forward to his visits as much as Isla does, and—

"Ah!" Isla cries as a pair of arms wraps around her neck, someone jumping on her back. She spins around in an attempt to throw her attacker off, though her efforts are in vain. At last, the arms let go and she whips around and slaps her assailant, then gasps.

"Ayaan!" she shouts, throwing her arms around him. "Oh, you're finally here! What took you so long?"

Ayaan winces, rubbing his cheek. "Ouch," he mutters. "That really hurt. I thought I'd get a warmer welcome."

Isla pushes him back, frowning disapprovingly. "Then maybe you shouldn't have jumped on me like that! You scared me half to death!"

He smiles sheepishly, shrugging innocently, pushing the pair of glasses he wears higher up on his thin nose. She hates those glasses. It always makes it harder to see the shine in his warm, gentle brown eyes. "Isla, it's so good to see you again. I wish I could come more often."

She nods enthusiastically. "Me too, but...you only leave for a month at a time. You don't have to act like it's been years since you've seen me! Now come on, let's go tell Ma that you're here! And then you can tell me all about what you've been doing without me and we can play some more! Come on, come on! You only have a few days here, so let's make the most of it!" Ayaan laughs as she drags him back to her house. He loves visiting her, however childish she is at times. Time always seems to fly during those few days. This is like a break for both of them, relief from the routine and pattern that haunts their everyday lives. This will be as fun as any other month, he thinks to himself.

And the visits continue, each one consisting of a mixture of memories and pure bliss, flying past them like lightning, leaving the gaps in between to drag by in the muddy boredom they leave behind after their brief showers of dizzy ecstasy. A year passes, leaving both Ayaan and Isla at fifteen years of age.

Again, on a weekend morning like any other, in anticipation of Ayaan's arrival, Isla wakes up with a stretch and a yawn, making her way to the bathroom with a pastel yellow skirt and a cyan top—cyan is still his favorite color, right?—but when she comes out, she turns white as a sheet.

Her mother looks at her as she walks out, frowning. "Isla," she asks slowly, "is something wrong?"

"It's those days again," Isla whispers quickly to her mother. "Aayan is coming. I...I can't be home." And with those few ambiguous words—though they were clear as day to her mother—she slips out the door, walking swiftly down the empty streets. Why are they empty? Is the world purposely avoiding her now? She chuckles to herself. As if. Clouds cover the sky, as if mourning for her. Today of all days, it had to happen!

She goes into a quiet alley in a quiet part of neighborhood and sits down. She sighs. She won't be able to see Ayaan until it's over. That is one of the evil parts of growing up. Resignedly, she puts her head in her hands and sits there. She looks up as a raindrop falls on her arm. Isn't that just perfect?

She really hates it when this happens to her. She isn't allowed to be around people. She isn't allowed to visit the temple. She isn't allowed to run or jump or play or really anything she likes to do. And worst of all, she isn't allowed to talk about it.

Outside the alley, she can hear Ayaan's voice, very faintly. He sounds like he's looking for her. "Isla!" he calls out, but she knows she shouldn't reply. She can hear his footsteps approaching, getting closer and closer, and then...farther away. He walks past her. She hears him talking to someone else, probably the only other one outside on a cold, damp morning like this. "Hey," he says. "Have you seen Isla anywhere? I thought she'd be walking to the entrance to meet me, but I can't find..." The rest of his sentence is drowned out by the rain. Isla moves closer to the opening of the alley, trying to hear what he is saying.

"I haven't been able to find her either," a voice replies. It's Ina. "I even asked her mother, but she wouldn't tell me. I'll just ask her about it when she stops hiding."

Isla can practically hear the frown in Ayaan's voice. "Alright, but why do you think she's hiding?"

"It's anyone's guess," she says. "But she's older than me, so I don't really question a lot about what she does. I know this, though; she hides like this every month."

There's a pause. "Thanks," Ayaan says. "I'll go look for her."

And then, once again, his footsteps race past the alley, but this time, they stop and turn around, skidding to a halt in front of it.

"Isla!" Ayaan shouts. "Isla, are you down there? Come on, it's raining! We should go inside!"

She gasps and shuffles back in the alley, trying to act like she isn't there, but Ayaan's figure appears as a shadow in the alley's entrance, running towards her.

"I'm not supposed to be around anyone!" she calls to him. He stops a few feet away from her, frowning.

"Why not?" he asks, confusion creasing his brow. "Isla, what's going on? I can't help unless you tell me."

Realizing that he won't go away until she explains herself, Isla stands briefly, cringing as she does so, and whispers in his ear. His frown deepens.

"What?"

She whispers something else in his ear.

"Isla, why are you whispering? I don't understand."

"Neither do I!" she cries, frustration growing in her voice. "I don't understand any of it! All I know is that when it happens, I have to stay away from people and there's a plethora of things I can't do because that's what Ma told me before and that's what all the other girls in the town do."

Ayaan puts a hand on her shoulder and looks into her dark, steady eyes. "Why?" he inquires.

"Because Ma said so, and she's been saying so for the past couple years."

"But why does she say that?" he insists. Isla frowns, struggling to figure out what he's trying to say. "Isla, have you ever really thought about it? This is just a part of you, something that happens to every woman, right? It's just a part of growing up. You shouldn't be afraid of any of it. This happens where I live, too, but we never do anything like this, sending the girls away, and no one ever gets hurt or anything. Well, sometimes it makes the women feel really sick, but then, we shouldn't be shunning them, we should be supporting them! Why should it be any different here? You don't know anything about this. How will you understand what's going on if you can't ask about it, if you can't learn?"

Isla doesn't move for a second, trying to absorb what he's just said, trying desperately to grab the words, to believe them. It...It makes sense. Why should she be afraid of this? Suddenly the rituals all seem ridiculous, baseless superstitions that stayed with them through the ages. Why should she stay away from people? Why shouldn't she do all these things? Why do people speak of it like they are planning to commit a crime, in whispers and mumbles? It's a part of them.

It's a part of me.

"Ayaan," she breathes softly. "Oh Ayaan, I've been so silly! Well then, since you helped me, I...I want to tell everyone else." She nods to herself, finalizing the thought. She doesn't have to be afraid of it. She doesn't want anyone else to be. "I want to fix the way the town feels about all of this. I want to learn. You'll help me, right?"

Ayaan nods, smiling brightly. "Of course I will. Alright, why don't we start with your mother? She'll definitely listen to us, and then more and more people can understand. The first thing we'll tell everyone: *you don't have to be afraid of it.*"



Aaryana Pradhan Rajanala - 9th Grade, 14 Years

Hobbies, Passions and Future Goals: Aaryana Rajanala is a freshman at the Bridgewater-Raritan High School. She has lived in different parts of the country, including Michigan, Missouri, and New Jersey. Currently, her favorite subjects in school are Latin, literature, and choir. She participates in the Model UN club at school and volunteers for causes that she believes in. As well as writing, she also loves to sing and play the violin.

Parent's Name(s): Sushmita Pradhan and Nagesh Rajanala

**Aaryana Rajanala was placed 3rd in Meghna Memorial Award Senior Category (Ages 13-18)*

Firebird

Amrita Sahu



The autumn leaves crinkle under her sneakered feet. Anyone watching would see only a tall, dark haired girl with stormy grey eyes slip into the back door of the bakery. This is her daily routine, come back from high school, catch the bus, run to the shop. She loves working there, but lately the shop felt like a small, confining oven. It limited her possibilities, and lately she dreamed of only one escape - the stage.

The audience is hushed as I step onstage. I hear the first tinkling notes. Step, jump, turn, in time with the music as if it is one with me. I leap across stage, gliding across the floor. Then... I come to a stop. There is a loud silence, a dreadful silence as I wait for the response of the crowd. But then, just as unexpectedly, I hear a roll of thunder. No, not of thunder, of applause. Applause! As one, the audience stands. I curtsy, and walk off the stage, elated.

“Anna?” a voice asks, interrupting her thoughts. She shakes her head to clear away the dreams. That’s all they are, she reminds herself. Dreams. She looks up to see whose voice awoke her. Anna glances around the small cafe, trying to find the speaker. The bakery was called La Artiste, and it sold everything from chocolate croissants and coffee to fruit tarts and tea. It was decorated like a small store from Paris, as if the owner had plucked a street shop from France and brought it to Pennsylvania. There were fairy lights along the ceiling and a mini Eiffel Tower in the corner. Sprawled across the wall was a large mural of the French countryside, a field dotted with purple irises and yellow daffodils. In the far distance, you could see Blue Mountains, looming over a small town.

“Sleeping on the job is a bad sign, darling. How are you going to get promoted if you laze around all day?” says the woman, chuckling.

“Mum!” Anna turned around and gasped. “Hi! How come you’re in town?”

“Can’t I check on you at your new job every now and then?” she replied with one eyebrow raised.

“Yes! Of course you can! But aren’t you busy?”

“Yes, I’m actually only in this part of town because I have a school board. Ooh! I’ve got to get going. The meeting starts soon, and I like to meet with some of the other teachers before we get started.”

“Well, is Dad going to be home tonight?” Anna asked hopefully.

“Probably not, sweetheart. You know how it is. He’s got some kids who need extra help with their math finals. Ok, honey, I have to leave.” The woman hurriedly rushes out of the shop as Anna, still dazed, walks to the counter.

They never come see me for more than a few minutes. Its okay, but we're always paycheck to paycheck. That's why Dad works at night all the time to help his students. And that's why Mum wants me to get a good, stable job. Well, why can't I become a dancer? I know I could dance in a company, especially after the audition from last week.

Just last Monday, Anna skipped work for a day and instead went to a preliminary audition for her dream ballet company, The National Youth Ballet. It was the first company to also use modern dance techniques, something Anna excelled at. Her audition piece was deemed, "beautiful," by the judges and gave her a chance to compete for a scholarship to take lessons over the summer. But she needed to be in Chicago for the final round, and her parents would never agree to the trip.

I can hear them now, "Of course not! We've saved so much hard earned money so that you can go to college and be a lawyer like you've always wanted." Hah! Do they actually think I want to do that for the rest of my life? But I'm going to have to, if I don't tell them about the truth soon. I'll tell them tomorrow morning before they leave for work.

That night Anna set her alarm for 5:30 in the morning so that she had enough time to gather her thoughts. The next day she freshened up and walked to the table holding sheets of papers.

"Good morning! Oh, what are those, honey?" her mother asked.

"They're about ballet. I think we need to talk. Do you and Dad have a few minutes?" said Anna.

"Sure thing, darling," her father replied.

They sat at the table silently as Anna told them everything.

"How could you not tell us about this before?" her father asked after Anna finished.

"I was afraid you would say no," Anna answered.

"Of course we'll say no! To think that we sacrificed everything for your future, and you want to be a dancer? Just because we sent you to lessons doesn't mean you could survive with it as a career. You'd starve!" her mom said immediately.

"Yes, you can never be a dancer," her father said. "And if you still want to pursue this foolish dream, you'll have to do it without our help."

"Fine!" Anna cried. She got up and walked away, sobbing.

I can do it without their help. I am strong enough. I'll use the money I've saved up to buy a ticket to Chicago, win that audition and stay there for the rest of the summer for lessons.

Three days later, Anna found herself on a train to Chicago, waiting for her dreams to come true. She got to the company, without her parents for the first time. The audition had two parts, barre and stage performance. She placed first in both categories and won the scholarship for lessons.

The summer went on, and she missed her parents more and more but as she remembered their angry words, she vowed to become the best dancer she could. Enjoying herself thoroughly, she felt like she had finally found where she belonged. All that she learned over the summer culminated in the company's performance of The Firebird. She was invited to be the main soloist for the performance.

I can't believe that I'm going to be the soloist for NYB! It's everything I ever wanted. I knew that I could do it, despite what everyone told me. I'm going to be a real dancer!

That day, as she got ready for her final appearance and big finish of the performance she went backstage to prepare herself. Taking deep breaths, she stood in wings, pointe shoes on and ready to go. She walked on stage and gave the performance of her life. Pointing her feet more than ever, holding her back tall, adding personal touches here and there, she danced her heart out. As she curtsied to the audience, she saw everyone rise in unison, applauding her performance.

Suddenly, she saw someone walk on stage. It was Brooke Trufine, the director of the company. She had a microphone in her hand, and after waiting for the audience to settle down, she started to speak. "Thank you all so much for joining us tonight. Here we have a very special dancer, Anna, who won our audition for summer lessons and showed her true talents tonight. I am very proud to present to her, our very first Ballet Debut Award. Let's give it up for Anna!"

The applause started again, even louder this time. Anna hugged Brooke and started to tear up. Accepting the plaque, Anna walked off stage, overwhelmed, to see yet another surprise.

"Anna! Come here my darling! I missed you so much!" a familiar voice cried. "I'm so sorry for everything I said. You are a dancer and you will always be a dancer. I'm so proud of you. I know it'll take a lot to forgive our words, but now we understand. You should always be true to yourself."

"Mum! Dad!" Anna shrieked and ran to them. "It's alright, you unknowingly pushed me to work harder than I ever would have, just so that I could show you this was real. In a way, this was all thanks to you."

"Don't ever say that, your hard work and dedication is what made this happen," Without another word, they all embraced each other, joy in their hearts.

"Anna! Could you please come here for a minute? We wanted to offer you a full time position here at NYB after you finish your last year of high school, and we need to work out the logistics with you," Brooke called.

Anna gently extricated herself from the hug and looked at her parents.

"Go honey, go follow your dream, and never look back. We'll come with you this time," her mother said. "And remember Anna, you are a true Firebird."



Amrita is 13 years old and is in 7th grade. She is an avid reader and spends her free time writing, drawing and painting. She lives with her parents Prakash and Manaswini in Herndon, Virginia.

**Amrita Sahu was placed 1st in Meghna Memorial Award Senior Category (Ages 13-18)*

The Truth about Truth

Yogesh Mohapatra

Many people say truth is god. Many say that saying the truth all the time is the righteous way. But many do not know that always saying the truth is like a double-edged sword, one side could be to save someone's life, and another to end someone's cherished life. A man named Fred first handedly experienced both sides of the sword.

A man named Fred was walking through the forest, admiring its wonders and look for a nice place to stay for the night. He was cold, famished, and exhausted. He knew that the townspeople would ignore him, and would not give him food. He decided to disguise himself as the prince and thought that they would offer him shelter and probably a feast. He quickly went to find somethings in the forest, and snuck into some of the villagers' houses to gather food. He couldn't see any food there, no food to stop him from making a grave mistake. He gathered the material to disguise himself with and stole a horse to make him look more like a prince and not like a ragged man looking for food. He came into town riding the horse, now adorned by handmade ornaments Fred had created a few moments ago. The trick worked, and the people treated him amazingly, giving up their houses for shelter, their year's supply of food, and most of their valued possessions. He took them greedily and was about to leave when he saw something that would haunt him for the rest of his life.

As he packed up to leave, he saw the king's chariot coming in. He saw the king exit, and right after, the prince, the real prince! He panicked, not knowing what to do. All the villagers turned to face him. "You're not the real prince!" One villager said.

"You're a fraud!" The other villagers were yelling and screaming at him. Not knowing what to do, Fred took off, grabbing his belongings, and ran off into the forest. He tripped over rocks and tree roots, and looked for a good hiding place, because he knew he couldn't run forever. He finally found a small cave, and quickly covered it with leaves. The villagers pursued him, running faster than ever, now knowing that they spent their years' worth of food on one fake prince, a fraud. What they also didn't know was that they weren't chasing anything now, as he was behind them. He thanked god for letting him go, and started his journey back home.

After sometime, Fred realized that he made a huge mistake, and wanted to redeem himself. He decided to set a goal, to be able to not lie for 30 years, and see how it would impact his life. He worked very hard towards this goal, as he sought to be one of the most truthful people alive.

On the last day of the 29th year, he was rejoicing. He couldn't believe that he could have kept this astonishing goal. He was walking through the forest, merrily and happily, as he sought to be finally one of the most truthful people mankind has ever seen. He thought, 'If I am the most truthful person alive, I must be one of the most considerate people in the world.' What Fred hadn't known was that being truthful isn't always being considerate. Fred would learn the hard way.

While he was merrily rejoicing, a ragged man ran up to him. He told his story to Fred. "Please help me. I am a very poor person, and I am getting robbed. If they find me, they'll surely kill me. Just tell them I ran off, while I will be actually be hiding underneath that shrub. Please!" The man pleaded and pleaded to help him, but Fred was determined to keep his goal. He was determined to finish what he had started

30 years back. When the robbers came, he told them where he was hiding. As the man was about to be taken away, he screamed. "I curse you to lose everything that you own, everything you love and curse you to repent for the rest of your life about what you did!" With that the man disappeared, right off the robber's shoulders, in a flash of white blinding light. The robbers and Fred, all terrified, ran as fast as their legs could take them. Fred ran back to his house, but when he reached, nothing was there. When he screamed for his wife and children, nothing responded to him. His house, his belongings, everything was gone. He sat down and repented, crying on the land that used to be his, but now was gone.

After some time. He knew that sitting and crying wasn't going to help him. So, for the next years that he lived, he worked to be the best person out there, truthful yes, but was also kind and considerate and depleted his ego. He worked knowing that one day, he could see his family again. That one day came, along with all the things he had previously owned, with his family and belongings, soon became one of the richest men on the planet. Not only by wealth, but also rich in caring, compassion, and was one of the best people in the world. Fred had seen the wrath of the double edged sword of truth, so he knew that he would only tell the truth that proved to be good to tell, the one that saves an innocent one's life, and not ending up prevailing on the antagonist's favor.



Yogesh Mohapatra
7th Grade
Mount Olive Middle School, NJ
12 Ruggiero Way, Buddlake, NJ – 07828

Stuck on Spotlight

Debasmita Kanungo

Sitting in position - hand over leg, leg in front - everything seemed primed and in place. *I'm ready to rock this*, my mind chattered amidst the excitement. Like a new bud in spring, ready to bloom any second, I awaited the music. My legs, tapped in bide of the sound that was to roar across the room. My ears searched for the familiar sound that had been played so often that its tune and lyrics had been engraved in my mind. However... the anticipated sound never reached my eager ears. Silence reverberated through the auditorium. I could hear footsteps at the back of the room. My heart skipped a beat as a sense of quietus replaced the routine soundtrack. In between its irregular thumps, it let out a cry for help. My heart rattled like a jackhammer within my ribcage. As I suddenly stood on stage, frozen, I felt the world was living out its premonition to crumble and crash. My body cemented to the ground. My eyes glazed over. My lips sealed shut. A rush of panic and conundrum coursed through my veins as I turned to stone, gaping at the flood of faces that eyed me with apprehensive curiosity. The arrow of certainty was surely to miss the bullseye. Rather, it would be far from the target. I was not going to get out of here with any accomplishment, but rather, with unsurpassable unease. Worry thundered through my body and right about then, a soft voice breathed the fundamental reason I was on stage; the same voice that had been there for every performance since I set foot on a stage. *You are a performer and you can do just about anything!*

An unusual sense of aplomb took over my limp arms. Suddenly, an unexpected source of energy congealed in my fingertips. "Just play the previous soundtrack!" I shouted with tremulous confidence.

As simply as the words were uttered, the technician played the previous song on the list. It blared through the once silent speakers. I, as easily described, flailed around the stage, moving my arms in circular motions as my feet hopped from one place to another. I thumped across the stage, lightning striking a field. My arms tugged one way as my legs jerked me the other way. My core seemed to be bobbing around in a cumbersome manner, disconnected from the rest of me. As I looked up slowly in anticipation of encouraging eyes, a muddled expression countered me. The eyes widened in utter bafflement. I scanned the crowd but all the faces showed an unusual sense of discomfort. A panel of confused faces and dazed expressions stared up at me as the extemporaneous routine continued. As my hands found their way back to their normal positions and I found my body intact, slow rumbles of applause filled the air. I found myself slightly lowering my head in a rather odd way as I enclosed the performance. Getting ahold of myself, I descended off stage in a floundering, yet, graceful ordeal.

Subsequently after the stirring ordeal, I seated myself in my chair, whose surface had grown cold after its lack of inhabitancy. Thoughts of embarrassment clouded my mind. Later that evening, young girls in their frilly dresses trotted up the stairs to receive their shiny, gold 'swords' as I remained in my seat. As sentiments of discouragement tousled about my exasperated brain, the little voice found its way back. Once again, it stated the most substantial part of the episode and cleared the negativity that so easily consumed me. It whispered, *you might not have won a hefty, gold trophy tonight, but you did attain a quality more preeminent: courage.*



Debasmita Kanungo, is 14 years old and is a 9th grader at Sycamore High School in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Power of A Smile

Simoni Mishra



What is it that separates us humans? Is it the side of the road that we drive on? Or the system that we use to classify different weights and measures? Or is it something bigger? Our backgrounds and opinions make up who we are; unique and amazing people, all of us here for a reason. But throughout a vast sea of customs, one symbol ties everyone together. A smile.

A world without love is like a garden without flowers. However, acquiring love is easier said than done. Love and respect is at the top of the pyramid that we all have to climb. The foundation of it is attaining someone's trust, and the best way I can think of to do that is to smile. But only planting the seed isn't enough. You have to nurture this plant as well. Then, instead of blames and arguments that ring through the house, it will become soft chatter. Another thing about smiles; they don't cost anything. You don't lose anything by smiling. In fact, research shows that smiling 100 times a day is equivalent to 15 minutes on an exercise bike. Scientifically speaking, when you smile, neurotransmitters such as dopamine, endorphins and serotonins are sent into your body as stress fighters. In others words, every time you smile, parts of the stress about the English paper sitting on your desk slowly fades away.

When I was younger, my family and I were visiting our family in Odisha. We were on our way to bring home the groceries, when we saw an old man who was sitting on the side of the road with a bowl in front of him. Now that wasn't what was so special about this man. Sadly enough, there are hundreds of homeless people in Odisha itself. What made him unique was the smile on his weary face that kindled the fire of humanity that is in my heart. He was sitting there on the dusty road in nothing more than rags, yet had the brightest of smiles on his face. Anyone who could have seen this man would have a memory of this inspiration imprinted in their brain forever. That day taught me a big lesson: to be happy, all you need is self-contentment. Even though to this day I still have no idea who this man is, I respect him and think of him when a frown takes over my face.

"Smile this, smile that." The entire essay was about others smiling, so I decided to look at me. I would like to believe that I am generally a very jovial person, not that I don't have my bad days. However, the point is that sometimes, when you are frustrated with what life has put in your face, you have to step back and look at everything you have been given, and find a reason to smile. There have been many times in my life that I have forejudged what I won't be able to accomplish. But what I have failed to think about is what I can do well. I have learned that this simple action of mine can bring smiles thus making the impossible possible.

The world is 200 million square miles and out of what I have seen from my small corner of the world, a mere smile can do a lot more than you think it can if you let it.



Grade: 7

Age: 12

13419 Ridge Dr. Rockville MD

Hobbies: Dance, Music, Science

Friends

Dhruv Das



Rafal entered the house of Novicic in Maine to see what he was planning. He needed to know what to defend himself against. He looked at all the tables. Rafal didn't see the tripwire on the ground. He stepped on it. Rafal thought it was nothing and went back to his searching. He heard a soft whirring sound behind him. Rafal turned, only to see two metal spheres floating in the air. Then, two lasers started to form from the robots. Both were aimed at him.

Three Hours Earlier In Rockville...

"YOU'VE BEEN STEALING ALL MY BELONGINGS!" Novicic yelled.

"Not true," Rafal countered in a calm voice, "You probably just misplaced your items. You always lost your belongings when we were younger. Remember? You lost all your toys in preschool, your homework many times in elementary school, and your classwork in middle school so many times, you nearly failed every subject.

"True, but I have matured since then. I have lost less and less papers in the past few school years. Last year, I only lost one or two papers. That's an improvement. Besides, I know you stole them anyway. Everything I lost was valuable, and your family is one of the poorest I know."

Rafal winced. Novicic had hit a sore spot. Rafal's family had always not had enough money to do many fun activities. He had never even traveled out of Maryland. The only times he had gone to do actions he found entertaining were where he got invited to birthday parties that the parents of the birthday kid paid for.

Rafal shook his head. Novicic was trying to get to his head. "I didn't do it Novicic. You've known me AND been friends with me since we were three. I don't steal items." Rafal said shakily. "You know that."

"Well maybe something inside you just snapped. You never know. However, I do. I know you stole my valuables."

"I did not steal anything. You have to know that."

"You know what?" Novicic asked, "I don't even care anymore. I KNOW that I'm right. YOU are the one who will have a guilty conscience for the rest of your life. Fortunately for you, that won't be much longer." Novicic had developed an evil gleam in his eyes. Rafal noticed it right away, and got a bad feeling in the pit of his stomach. Novicic noticed Rafal looking at him with a frightened expression on his face. "What are you looking at you THIEF?!" Novicic screaming the last word before storming away.

During the walk back home, Novicic was devising a plan. A plan to eliminate Rafal.

Rafal still had a bad feeling when he walked back to his small house. *I didn't do anything. Maybe somebody else stole it, and then told Novicic that they saw me steal it. Maybe he really did misplace*

those valuables and he didn't want to admit it, so he accused me. Rafal was still thinking when he unlocked the door to his house. His ceiling was really low compared to the houses of other kids in his school, so he had to stoop down to avoid getting his head hit against the roof. Rafal's mom saw her son's face and could see something was wrong. "Anything wrong, Rafal?"

Rafal looked up and replied, "Novicic will try to kill me."

Rafal's mother blinked. She would have thought that her beloved son was joking, but as a poor family, Rafal never joked about something serious, as he had to work hard to earn money for his family.

"Ooooookay, I think that you are exaggerating this a little bit. I know that you and Novicic have had your differences, but I wouldn't go that far. Tell me exactly what happened."

Rafal's throat was dry, but he explained the whole argument between Novicic and himself that unfolded at school. After hearing the story, Rafal's mom was near tears. "I can't believe Novicic could even consider that my darling little boy would have done this."

Rafal blushed. "MOM! You're embarrassing me. However, I do agree with you. It's not in my nature to do anything to blacken my soul. I still need to do something! I'm not going to sit around like a bump on a log, counting the days to my death!"

Rafal's mom was surprised by the boldness and determination in his eyes. Something she had never seen before, and realized that she could not do anything to change Rafal's mind.

"So, what are you going to do?" Rafal's mom asked.

I will find out what my former friend is doing. I already know what he is going to do next. He's going to book a flight to Maine. You are probably wondering how I know. Well, when we were younger, Novicic said that he had always wanted to go to Maine. He wanted to go as north as he could go without being in Canada."

Rafal felt his mom staring at him with a surprised expression. *I have never seen Rafal think something out this much. Not even his homework, yet he still gets straight A's.*

"Okay, Rafal. I'm going to guess that you are going to Maine. What do you want to take?"

"Well, I have to take a sweater. Maine is numbing this time of year. Or any time of year. I have to take a few coins for money. A bit of food. I really need a weapon to defend myself."

"Let me show you something. It's been our family secret. I think you are old enough to know about it." Rafal was led to.... a wall.

"Uhhhh, not to pop your bubble or anything, but this a plain old wall."

"Ahhhhhhh. That's where you're wrong. We have wanted you to think that all these years." With that, she tapped on the wall six times. The wall opened.

"What the heck?" Rafal asked. Before him were mountains of money, food, survival and first aid kits, weapons, and a dusty railroad track.

“We have always been very rich. We have kept it secret for two reasons. First of all, we didn’t want you to get spoiled. Second of all, people could have stolen it, hurting us in the process.”

Rafal was still flabbergasted when he realized what his mom wanted him to do. “Do you want me to go to Maine in this?”

“Yes. Take what you want from here. DON’T TAKE A LOT OF MONEY! I forbid you.”

With that, Rafal located the front car of the train, loaded everything he needed into it and climbed into the driver’s seat. He didn’t know how to drive, but he was very well educated. Rafal quickly taught himself how to operate the train. Once all was in order, he left for Maine.

The trip was even longer than Rafal expected. That was because the drive had many obstacles. Stalagmites on the ground made the cart veer off the track many times. Rafal had to stop the train right away to prevent it from crashing into the walls of the cavern. Then he had to push it all the way back to the tracks. The job was hard enough as the wheels were not cooperating. It was even harder because Rafal wasn’t that strong.

Along with the stalagmites, there were stalactites in the cave too. Stalactites started to crash down onto the cart, denting it. Rafal realized that the train could only take a few more hits before the engine would go out. Knowing this, he whipped a sword from his bag and used it like a baseball bat, smacking them away. He didn’t miss a single stalactite.

As the drive went on, Rafal thought all the problems were behind him. He wasn’t even close. Even more barriers came in his way. He interrupted a group of vampire bats in their sleep. Rafal didn’t want to kill anything or anyone, so he smacked them unconscious with the hilt of his sword.

The ride went on. He saw a rattlesnake slithering on the ground. Rafal had a fear of snakes. This was mostly because his father had been killed by them on a hike. After all he had been through, he wasn’t scared. He stabbed the rattlesnake as he entered Maine.

Rafal looked around as he unloaded the cart. He spotted Novicic’s house right away. It literally said “HOUSE OF NOVICIC” in big bold letters. He ventured over there. Nobody seemed to look at him. He walked in the front gate. *Huh. That’s weird. The front door is wide open.* Rafal entered cautiously.

Nothing happened. He started to look around and saw all the papers on the tables. He went towards a desk when he stepped on a wire. Rafal barely noticed it and went back to his searching. He heard a strange sound behind him, and turned his head ever so slowly. In front of his eyes were two floating, metal spheres. Lasers started to take shape. Rafal showed no panic on his face as he sliced them in half.

Novicic’s phone rang. He pulled it out of his pocket to see that his home security system had been activated. He sprinted to his house as fast as he could to see the trespasser. Novicic put in his password to deactivate the alarm. He then saw his former friend with a sword in his hand.

Novicic’s anger flushed out of him as fear entered. *What have I done?* He quickly grabbed a sword from a wall to protect him.

“Don’t worry. I use this to defend myself. I’ve only used this three times. Once to swat stalactites away, once to knock some bats unconscious, and once to stab a rattlesnake.” Rafal assured.

Novicic was relieved. Then he realized something. “How did you get here so fast? And where did you even get the sword from?”

Rafal answered “That’s my little secret.”

Novicic looked past him to see something with a golden shine. “Are these..... My valuables? Huh. I did misplace them. And since I blamed you, how about you keep them?”

“Nah. I’m good.” They headed back to Rockville as friends once again.



Dhruv is 11 years old, and is a rising 6th grader at Robert Frost Middle School in Rockville, MD. He is the younger brother of Disha, and son of Deepa and Debananda Das.

**Dhruv Das was placed 3rd in Meghna Memorial Award Junior Category (Ages 7-12)*

Friend's Flip Flops

Puneeta Choudhury



I was at my friend’s house for a sleepover. I was just walking around when I saw a drink that said magic potion. I didn't know what it was so I drank it. Then I turned into my friend's flip flops and she was wearing me.

Her feet smelled super stinky because she always likes to play in the mud and sand and she never washes her socks and she was wearing her socks. I could taste my friend's toenail because there was a hole in her socks and that tasted disgusting.

I could see the ground because she was walking on the ground and she was playing in the mud and sand again so I saw that too. I could feel my friend’s socks and her foot because she has another hole in the bottom of her socks. I could hear her walking on the ground and I could hear squishy sounds because she was playing in the mud.

Now I know to never drink magic potions again because they can turn you into flip flops. The worst part is that they turn you into your friend's flip flops and your friend always plays in the mud and sand.



Puneeta Choudhry is 8 years old and goes to Woodbrook Elementary School in Edison, NJ. She likes drawing and painting. Her parents are: Pradeep K Choudhury and Archana Patra.

Limited Ajeetesh Ojha



“Honey,” said Aliah’s mother, Mrs. Winder. “Are you worried? Today is the first day of preschool...”

“No, I’m not worried! I am happy. I like school—even though I have not gone to it yet, no, no. I am just a preschooler. Everyone will be nice, I am sure of it...” Aliah babbled on and on.

“She’s one of the smartest little girls ever. Who ever knew of a preschooler that could start talking at such an early age,” sighed Mrs. Winder.

“Well, of course, she is! I raised her,” boomed Aliah’s grandfather.

“Papa!”

He chuckled.

“You’re ready to go to school?” he said.

“Yes, Gramps!”

“Alrighty, then, let’s go!”

And that was the beginning of Aliah’s story.

EIGHT YEARS LATER

“Eight years?” said Aliah’s only friend, Niya.

Aliah had entered seventh grade and had suffered for eight years from the “disease of dumbness” as others said.

It was something that had been going on for years, now, and no one wanted to get the “disease.” Aliah, over the long period of time, had grown used to it. She had only met one friend—and that would be Niya, a timid, African-American, twelve-year-old.

Not that Aliah minded, of course.

Aliah herself was a timid girl as well, with black, messy hair.

“Yes, eight years,” said Aliah, responding to Niya.

“But, but...I thought you were one of the smartest in kindergarten and preschool...”

“It all started in first grade.”

“Oh,” she said, fumbling with her hands.

“Yeah, uh, so, I guess we’d better get to class.”

And together, they left the lunch room and went to class.

Aliah had never had a teacher that paid much attention to her. Nor had anyone else, but for a fact, it was the first day of eighth grade.

Niya and Aliah had been best friends since seventh grade—a miracle in their opinions.

“Okay class, listen, up.” said Mr. Domnick, the teacher of History Class.

Aliah hated History.

“Aliah! Get your nose out of that wretched notebook of yours and pay attention! Who was the first president of the United States of America?”

“Uh...Ben Franklin?”

Mr. Domnick hit his forehead with his hand as if he had to say: Really, you’re that stupid?

“Wrong! Benjamin Franklin was never a president! That was a kindergarten question I asked you!”

“Then why did you ask me that...?” Aliah muttered.

"I heard that!" Mr. Domnick scowled.

The kids laughed.

"Shut up!" yelled Mr. Domnick. "Or else..."

Everyone was silent.

The class passed by in silence. People whispered crude words in Aliah's ear and made fun of her behind her back. Aliah was to the point when she could crumble up and fall into a deep, dark, hole.

Finally, the bell rang, and school was over.

• • •

Aliah ran into her room and jumped on her bed, crying.

"Ally?" Aliah's sister, April, knocked on the door.

"What?" said Aliah, irritated

"Ally, I know you love to draw. I got you some loose leaf paper.

"Y-you did?" Aliah stammered.

"Of course, I did. Anything for you, Ally. I'll always be there for you." April left the room.

Aliah pulled out a crayon and started to draw.

Eighth grade passed by slowly, with the name-calling, and meanness. April was soon going to graduate.

April had good grades and had many job options. Instead, when April graduated, she changed—a change which Aliah hated.

Soon, April had been known for smoking with teenagers, drinking, and being a criminal. Of all things, Aliah remembered the promise she made. It was broken.

In her room, Aliah spotted the drawing of her and April. She crumbled it up and threw it across the room in anger and frustration.

Neither Aliah's mother nor Aliah's father had shown much interest in April, which set her mindset to be the best she could be.

But after a small fight, April changed completely.

• • •

"Honey, school is starting in a week? Do you want to go shopping for school supplies?" Mrs. Winder asked Aliah.

"Sure," Aliah sighed. Memories of her sister flooded her mind.

Aliah and her mother walked to Walmart. The rain mixed in with the snow created slush on the sides of the road, creating a gloomy atmosphere.

While walking into the store, Mrs. Winder broke the silence. "You know, I forgot the list of supplies you'll need."

"Oh. I guess we'll just have to guess?" Aliah said, a hint of annoyance in her voice.

"Mhmm,"

Mrs. Winder continued walking, and without noticing bumped into another elderly woman.

"Oh my! I'm so sorry!" exclaimed Mrs. Winder.

"No need," the elderly woman smiled.

This embarrassed Aliah.

"Now, let's see—ah yes, sixteen notebooks for Woodland High School." said the woman.

"Woodland High?" Aliah's mother asked, who had just been standing there.

"Yes, Woodland High. Why, may I ask?"

"My daughter—" Mrs. Winder said, motioning towards Aliah, "—is attending ninth grade there. By any chance do you have the supplies list?"

"I'm teaching there next year! Of course, I'll have the supplies list. Here—it has all the grades supplies for high school."

“Thank you!”

“I’m Mrs. Mosani.”

“I’m Mrs. Winder, and my daughter is Aliah.”

Aliah nodded hello to Mrs. Mosani.

“Well, I hope I have you in my English class in September!

Oh, and yes indeed did she have Mrs. Mosani.

• • •

The first day of high school, no biggie. Aliah heaved a big breath as she entered the school.

She was greeted by the tenth and eleventh-grade students texting on their phones, or girls in hot pink and really short skirts (which Aliah thought was totally inappropriate for school) gossiping in groups.

Being the first day of high school, no one knew she was dumb. But that was the problem. This was high school. She couldn’t let people possibly know she didn’t know the first president of the United States.

Nervously, Aliah proceeded into the hallways, unsure of where to go. She glanced at her list.

English class is first. I’m just dying to find which one is going to be my English teacher—Mr. Lezare, Mrs. Tols, or...Mrs. Mosani. I just hope I won’t end up with that old lady. Aliah thought.

Aliah walked in Room 109, a bit unsure about who her teacher was.

Aliah mustered up all her courage and walked into the room.

“Hello, class! Oh, Aliah!”

It was Mrs. Mosani.

Aliah kept her head down and replied. “Hello.”

“What a lovely surprise to see you here!”

“Uh, okay then...?” Aliah walked to her seat. While Mrs. Mosani was casually embarrassing Aliah, Niya nudged Aliah.

“Aliah! Are you coming to Woodland High too? I’m just so happy you’re here too!” Niya whispered, and maybe squealed a bit too loudly.

“Is something going on there, girls?” asked Mrs. Mosani, looking at Aliah and Niya.

“No,” they replied in unison.

“Maybe we should keep a low profile,” Aliah growled.

“Geez, Aliah! Somebody’s acting like they got a hedgehog up their nose!” Niya said, finally irritated by Aliah’s behavior.

“Girls, is there something you need to tell the class? I can be kind, but you must know that there are rules for the class that you need to follow. Now, before we start today’s lesson, I have to show you something.”

She scribbled something on the board:

Limited, everyone is limited.

There are certain things people can do, and certain things they can’t do.

Everyone’s good at something—it’s just a matter of fact of finding that skill.

And suddenly, in a flash, Aliah’s mind opened up. Inventions, ideas, drawings, flashed through her mind.

“Aliah, are you okay...?” Niya asked.

“I’ve never felt better!”

Aliah immediately pulled out her notebook and started to write. She started to draw. She was soaring through the air.

And then she snapped back to reality.

The message was still on the board. Aliah noticed the scribbles in her notebook.

Everyone was staring at her, even Mrs. Mosani.

Her mind shut down, and in frustration, she slammed her notebook closed, and ran out of the room.

There were tears in her eyes as she ran through the hallways, trying to find a small enclosed space.

Looking through closets, she finally found a place—the Janitor’s closet.

She didn't know about the boy who had been following her.

"Hiding in the closet, eh?" he sneered, "it's where you belong."

"What do you want?" Aliah's voice was shaky.

"Mrs. Mosani wants you to go back to class."

"I refuse! I absolutely refuse!"

"Say it to the teacher," and the boy walked off.

During lunch, Aliah sat in the corner—hiding in the shadows, as Niya would say. Aliah waited, and waited, and waited for Niya.

She spotted Niya talking with some other people and watched in horror as she sat down with them.

Aliah slowly stood up and walked towards Niya, her knees shaking.

"Niya...I thought...."

"You thought I was stupid like you, right?"

Aliah said nothing.

"Well, actually, my mom told me to be friends with you. I had to fake it for all those three years of middle school. I'm done, Aliah. Go away with your stupid personality and find someone else."

Aliah was dumbfounded. Without knowing what she was doing, she punched Niya, right in the face.

• • •

"Aliah Winder." said the principal dangerously. "We were informed that you were...in the event, of the harming of another person...?"

Aliah said nothing.

"Now, this would happen to be...Niya Hall, I assume."

Aliah nodded.

"Our causes say this will cause a week of suspension..."

"I don't really care! I don't want to go to school!" Aliah snapped immediately.

The principal was shocked by her sudden behavior.

"Then...then...Aliah, I will call your mother!"

"Sure, go ahead,"

The principal, in envy, grabbed the phone and dialed the phone number.

"Hello, yes, this is the principal...yes, yes...she did...in fact, she has an attitude—suspended? —of course! I agree...seems good to me...coming...reach in three minutes? sure...!"

• • •

While being suspended, it was up to Aliah to find out what she could do—to stop this mess.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door.

"I'LL GET IT," shouted Aliah.

When she opened the door, a surprise awaited her.

"April?" Aliah asked.

"Ally?"

"Go away," Aliah said.

"No...I've changed! Believe me, please!"

"Sure...."

"N-no... Mrs. Mosani!"

"What?" Aliah was confused.

Mrs. Mosani walked up the steps to her house. "Aliah. Take her in. She's limited to."

"STOP! I AM NOT LETTING SOME DRUNK ALCOHOLIC DRINKER IN THIS HOUSE!" Aliah whisper-yelled.

"Aliah! Please!"

"NO."

"I've changed, just believe me!"

“Aliah, please. Let April in,” Mrs. Mosani interrupted.

“No,” Aliah felt tears welling up in her eyes.

Aliah shut the door, in pain and envy.

Would things ever change? she thought, would things ever change....?

“Honey, who was at the door?”

Aliah heaved a big sigh.

“April.” she replied quietly.

“Let her in,”

“Okay...”

Aliah let April in but locked Mrs. Mosani out. This was a family matter. She didn’t have to get involved.

“April, what you did was very wrong,”

“I know, and I’m sorry!”

Silence remained, an understanding passing through mother and daughter until the phone rang.

Mrs. Winder went to get it. “Hello...? Oh...my...” Her face was wrinkled in horror, as she heard what was happening, and if that wasn’t enough, she dropped the phone, and it shattered to pieces.

“Your...” she sniffed, “...Grandfather.... died...” she sniffed again. “Cancer...”

And Aliah knew exactly what she wanted to do with her life.

25 YEARS LATER

Aliah rushed down the aisles, carrying a small jar of medicine.

“Coming through, Doc. Winder here,”

She got a call.

“EMERGENCY MEETING. HAVE YOU DELIVERED IT?” said the voice echoing through her small mic.

“I’m on it!” She dashed through the emergency room, swung past a chair, and landed—in a perfect “TA-DA” land—and tossed the vial of medicine towards the other doctor.

“Gee, thanks, Aliah!” said Niya.

“No problem.”

And that’s what had become of Aliah, dear reader, she helped save lives. And maybe you can too...but in a different way....



Ajeetesh Ojha , 5th Grade, Wilson Wims Elementary School, Clarksburg, Age: 11

Hobbies, Passions and Future Goals: Writing, Drawing/Painting, Singing/Playing Piano and flute

Parent’s Name(s): Aruna Kumar Ojha/Ilwala Mohapatra

The Seashell Design

Ananya Pradhan



Reader's Note: I look up at the water and stare at the horizon, where Skylar's ship is now. Maybe even past that and on land. I remember touching her soft hands and our pictures. Skylar was amazing. Reader, I'm pretty sure you are wondering who is Skylar? You are going to find out right now.

Me

The sunshine sparkled over the water as I splashed my tail from left to right. I leaped and grab a fish through my beak and swallowed it down whole.

"Mmmm! Delicious!" I exclaimed, smacking my lips the whole time. I saw the rest of the pod swimming up and grabbing fish effortlessly as they chattered away with each other. I also saw mom and dad catching a meal while my older sister, Kim caught I think one fish and dived back down, following her friends to rejoin their own discussion. Even Eva, one of Kim's friends caught enough fish for lunch. If Kim wants to starve though, after all, it is her decision. I leaped and dived back into the cool, crystal clear water. Every part of the water I swam in I saw different types and colors of fish that darted away from my path. I felt like I was the queen, walking with no one in my way. Suddenly, I saw a flash of black and white from behind a rock. I narrowed my eyes, guessing what it was.

"Eliza and Mira."

Eliza and Mira were the bullies of the pod. They were twin sisters and orcas. They were very pretty with their beautiful black tails that shimmered in the sunlight. They were the best swimmers of their kind and according to the orca body "are dreams". I would have no problem with them if they hadn't started bragging about their beauty and talents. They were always teasing younger children about how they would never be as pretty as them and would laugh at anyone that couldn't leap as beautifully as they could and according to them, was no one.

"Oh, look who it is, Blair. What a surprise! What are you doing tonight, oh wait, what could you possibly be doing on a Saturday night, as today's party night. What party would you have gotten invited too?" Eliza started with a disgusted look at me. Mira giggled and Eliza burst out laughing. The twins high-finned as they swished their tails in glee.

"Whatever," I mumble, rolling my eyes at their terrible comeback. I pushed through them and twisted beautifully as I leaped over the water and dived back with an amazing turn. I've been practicing

this trick for weeks just to get them annoyed. I smiled as I saw them frown. Without even saying a word they silently swam away. I swam to the surface and saw that everyone had finished their meals and had went back to the water.

Beep! Beep!

I turned around and saw a white cruise ship in the distance. It had many people on the deck is what I can tell so far. I noticed the funnel puffing out thick, gray smoke that slowly disappeared as it floated into the air. I sighed, a bit saddened and a bit angry at the same time. Sometimes humans, I think is what they're called dump all sorts of chemicals or release smoke into the ocean. That has killed many things. They've killed coral reefs and turn their beautiful multi-colored polyps into a plain white color that shows no existence of life. They've killed many animals such as our food we eat and even our predators. I know I should've sounded happy, but the way they die saddened me. I sometimes felt alone though because no one thinks like me. I felt different from the rest of my pod. I felt invisible almost. I sank back under the surface and swished my tail hard, swimming fast to the rest of my pod.

Skylar

The next day, the sun was still outside like yesterday. I had just finished my lunch and it was a little after noon. I was practicing a cool trick when I saw a big flash of white light in my face. My eyes started to see random colors. *What just happened?* After my eyes were back to normal I saw a huge group of people on a deck with their cameras out snapping pictures and pointing in my direction. *Are they snapping pictures of me?* I turned around and saw no one near me. I gasped and suddenly sank under water.

"Wait! Don't go!"

I peeked my eyes on the surface and saw a girl as she pushed her way through a crowd. I couldn't tell her age, but she wasn't young like a nine-year-old, but wasn't as old as like a twelve-year-old. She had shiny, long black hair that was tied into a perfect braid. She wore a black jacket with gray tight pants and short black boots. She had a small maroon bag around her shoulder and wore something on her ears that were shaped like circles and were the color gold I think.

"Wait, please don't go. I want to meet you." The girl called again as she took out a small rectangular-shaped item. The front was completely black and the back was plain blue with some white small items that sparkled. She touched a round-shaped thing on the bottom of the item on the front and the screen suddenly lit up showing a picture of the girl smiling I think and some words written on the picture. It said *1:09 PM, Monday, July 12, 2016, Touch ID or Passcode*. She started to push buttons and there was a new screen with smaller, colorful squares inside. She touched a gray square with a black rectangular with a white circle picture. Underneath it spells ca-me-ra. Suddenly, another screen pops up with me inside. I splash my tail and it splashes back on the screen. *Wait a second. It must be a reflection like water.* The girl stretches her hand out to me, as if she actually understood me.

"Hello there. My name is Skylar," She greets cheerfully. I backed away a few splashes, about to rapidly swim away.

"Don't worry. I'm not going to hurt you. Your tricks seemed so beautiful and I just had to see how you did it," She assured me as she still stretched her hand. I splash forward again and stretch my fin. I touch her soft hands and immediately pull away. Her hands were completely dry! Skylar seemed shocked too that I had actually touched her hand. I look at the water and see a faint orangish-pink color. I look to my right and see the sky as a combination of orange, red, and pink with a faint light blue. The clouds were light purple and the Sun was setting on the horizon.

"It seems as if you have to go now. I hope to see you again tomorrow!" Skylar said as she smiled.

"Skylar!" I hear.

"Coming mom! See you soon!" She replied standing up and waved as she walked away. I smiled and waved my fin. She smiled back and went inside the ship. I dived into the water, my eye on the lookout for dinner.

Skylar and Me

I splashed my way to the surface of the water, bubbles all over my face. I saw a shadow of an oddly shaped figure. *This must be it.* I leaped out of the water, noticing Skylar looking out over the water. As soon as she spotted me she smiled. She takes out the item called I think a fone? She snapped a picture of the two of us.

"Oh dolphin, soon my ship will be moving from here. Tomorrow, I believe. This may be the last day I shall see you. Before I go though, I wanted to talk to you about how you helped me with my problems. I used to have a fear of marine animals, but now I see how friendly and kind they are from you," She confessed, but confident.

Wait until you meet Eliza and Mira, I thought. I smiled instead though. If only I could talk to her. *Skylar doesn't know how much she has helped me with not judging a seashell by its design. Even the most unattractive design of a seashell can be the most antique seashell in the ocean. Skylar was the seashell design with me. The most amazing seashell design I had ever found. A very special one.*

"Bye! I hope I see you again in my life," She whispered as she hugged me. I hugged her as tightly as can be. She turned around on her heels and walked until she opened the door. She turned around, to see me still there. She waved her hands in a tiny way and closed the door behind her. I dived backwards, lying on the surface. *Humans aren't so bad. I guess it's all about perspective. I hope I see Skylar soon, I'm going to miss her.*



Illustration: Preeti Rath



- *Author's/Artist's Name and School Grade: Ananya Pradhan, Grade 6*
- *Author's/Artist's Age: 12*
- *Author's/Artist's Hobbies, Passions and Future Goals: Writing, Reading, Art, Music*
- *Parent's Name(s): Hemant and Mamata Pradhan*

**Ananya Pradhan was placed 2nd in Meghna Memorial Award Junior Category (Ages 7-12)*

"BRAVO", The Brave Dog

Pratyay Mohapatra

[It was a beautiful Saturday morning. While on patrol, an animal control officer was summoned to investigate the report of a wandering dog. The dog appeared friendly, but was hungry and very dirty. As the officer attempted to apprehend the dog, the dog escaped and ran away. It seemed to be worried about losing his freedom.]

I was running constantly as if I had decided to go so far that I would not be able to see even the tallest building of the city. I was successful running away from the city without being caught by anyone else. When I realized that I had gone far away from the city, I found myself standing deep in the woods. The rumbling sound of my stomach reminded me that I had my last meal in the morning which was nothing much. All this running was draining out my energy. I needed a lot of energy or else he would collapse. The sun went down and I was about to faint. As I trudged up a hill, I saw a little fire. At that very moment, I saw a little piece of bread sitting before me. I devoured it in one second. I looked up and saw a little boy throwing bread chunks at me. I then recognized that I was in a camp site. The boy smiled and told his parents something. His parents nodded. The boy gave me 2 full Hot Dogs. After 30 minutes, I was found sleeping next to the family's tent.

When the boy's family went to sleep, I woke up and heard a peculiar sound. I looked up and saw a venomous snake coming towards the tent! I was about to run away from that place but I reminded myself that the family had saved my life by giving food when I absolutely needed it. Now it was my turn to save them. I sprang into action, moved quickly to grab the tail of snake. The snake made a huge hissing sound out of pain and tried to bite me to death. I was clever enough to move quickly to grasp the hood of the snake and tear the snake to bits. The family (with grunts and groans) woke up. They were about to accuse me, but when they saw the "battle field", they complimented and patted me. Feeling heroic, I fell asleep.

Early in the morning while it was still dark, I again woke up. I saw a dark figure approaching the tent. But my canine instincts told me that wasn't just a figure, it was a bear! I knew that the bear had come to steal the food stored in the tent. Whether the family would like it or not, I decided that he would bark as loud as he could. Even though I was barking crazily, it had no effect on the bear. I had no other choice but to go inside the tent and alert the family. I did it. As I knew, I got yelled at but I did not stop running in and out to tell them that they have an uninvited guest who was about to destroy the tent. The boy understood the signals and yelled, "BEAR, BEAR!" Mom and Dad joined the "chorus" while screaming at the top of their lungs and waving the flashlights. I came out and saw the bear running away from the bizarre chorus! Everything became quiet and I was allowed to stay in the tent as a "Thank you" gift.

In the morning, when the family saw the footprints of the bear, they came to know how big the danger was. They all thanked me with a nice breakfast and a bath from the nearest mountain stream. Later that day, the parents were discussing how to find a home for me. Finally, the parents decided they should take me home. But first, they needed to check whether I was owned by anyone. If it was owned, then the family couldn't take me home. But when they saw that I was not claimed at the information center of the camp, they decided to make me a part of their family. The boy named me... Bravo!

After supper, when I was lying on my bed near the fireplace in my new home, I was feeling very proud of myself and thankful to my master. I was thinking of all the adventures that I had in the last two days which made me confident that I was no ordinary dog. I was looking forward to be a loyal friend to my master without losing my freedom of moving around and facing more adventures.



GRADE: 4th

SCHOOL ADDRESS: Sandshore Elementary School, Mount Olive School District, 498 Sandshore Rd Budd Lake, NJ 07828

My Feelings...

Prachita Mishra



You shouldn't be greedy,
Because you make someone sad;

You shouldn't be sad,
Because you make someone feel bad;

You can't be angry,
Because you may make someone cry;

You should always be happy,
Because you make everybody happy!



Prachita Mishra is 5-year-old and lives at 47 Meadow Brook Road, Edison - 08837, NJ with parents Chinmayee Tripathy (Mom) and Pravat Kumar Mishra (Dad).

Beauty Pageants Should Be Banned

Priyanka Choudhury

Imagine that you're looking at yourself in the mirror. You think to yourself, *If only I was thinner, or had longer hair... then I could be beautiful?* Could you ever imagine having the burden of always wanting to be perfect on your shoulders? Could you imagine always feeling incapable of ever being beautiful, always having to compare yourself to countless other girls? No. Well you're lucky if you don't but this is how many beauty pageant participants feel like--unworthy. Now you may ask yourselves why should you trust a bunch of 16 year olds and rightfully so, but I would like to make it clear that we are all girls who understand the daily pressures of trying to be beautiful. I can also discuss to you all my time as a beauty participant and how I constantly felt an overwhelming pressure to be perfect and beautiful all the time and how I quit because of this stress. This is why beauty pageants shouldn't be allowed, because it lowers self-esteem, negatively impacts self-image, and promotes unrealistic standards of beauty.



Behind the glossy lips, glittery eyes, and revealing outfits, there lies a repulsive truth that the beauty pageant industry masks from their audience. The dark reality is that these pageants have demoralizing effects on women and even young girls. From the minute they enter the contest, they constantly focus on their bodies and physical appearance. These girls try to alter their facial features to the point they look like a real Barbie doll. From the continual pressure of being ranked according to their bodies, girls from the ages of 4 to 26 are harmed emotionally and physically. A few years ago, as a prior child beauty contestant named Brooke Breedwell in "Pageant Stars USA", she stated that she was forced to go to "tanning sessions" where she'd "lie on tanning beds up to three times a week, for 20 minutes at a time" during her pageant career. Is this really necessary to dramatically change your natural beauty just to make yourself feel worthy and draw people's attention...? They are not even teenagers yet, they are just kids. Young children should never be obligated to participate in these kind of competitions; it makes them lose their innocence and endearing qualities. In addition, a former contestant of Miss Universe from Brazil, Juliana Borges has had "19 surgical procedures, including collagen injections in her lips and silicone implants in her breasts, cheeks and chin."

This gets even worse as beauty contests negatively influence young women and teens mentally. In a Dove Global study, 90% of women between the ages of 15-17 have considered to change at least one physical aspect of their body. Adding on to that, psychologist Martina Cartwright mentioned that "young women with eating disorders were trained at an early age to value physical perfection, thinness, and attractiveness."

How do we know that young women and teens are affected by this? Well, according to Park Nicollet Melrose Center, 53% of 13-year-olds in the US feel insecure and are unhappy about their bodies. This

grows to 78% when they turn 17. We also have to remember that young girls are involved with this problem as well. According to child psychologist Syd Brown, “children who compete in pageants measure their self-worth by their looks,” and “are in for a downfall if they don’t stay as pretty when they grow up. Kids could develop acne, or their bodies might not develop into what they imagined they would.” In other words, “many child pageants will face emotional problems” as well as teens and young women. This just reminds that beauty pageants promote unattainable goals for many women.

People who encourage beauty pageants because they prepare the contestants for the future and help the contestants build confidence do have a valid point. However, the opposition has to consider the negative consequences of beauty pageants. The contestants can gradually turn very self-centered and arrogant, and they are harmed emotionally and physically. Clearly, the negative drawbacks outweigh the benefits.

So, how can we contribute towards this major problem...? We can simply stop watching these pageant shows. We should promote natural beauty (inner beauty), intelligence and showcase our hidden talents. We don’t need prizes, loads of makeup and upscale outfits to make ourselves physically more appealing. We want you all in this room to wake up in the morning, go to the closest mirror, and tell yourself one thing you like about yourself instead of comparing yourself to other models.

If our solution is implemented, it will create a more positive way in which women view themselves. Turning off the TV or changing the channel if a beauty pageant is on could lower the amount of views. Less views mean less popular--beauty pageants will become more outdated. Promoting natural beauty and talents will draw people away from artificial beauty. If we do NOT take action, then failing to do so will only prolong depression and other issues amongst girls who take part in the pageantry.

Looking back at the drastic consequences of these pageants, these contests pose a significant threat to an individual’s physical and mental health, and on society’s standards of beauty.

Remember: it may seem that beauty pageants promote confidence. However, they are demoralizing to women of all ages. Therefore, we must act to stop the promotion of beauty contests by recognizing our true inner potential. We urge all of you to consider the drawbacks that beauty pageants have on society and its individuals. Frankly, it’s not normal for kids, teens, and young women to dress up provocatively.

Is it really worth to starve yourself to look like a Barbie? Women and girls do not need multiple plastic surgeries, a crown, a sash, or flowers to show that they are beautiful and glamorous. As the New York Times once said: “The bottom line is that beauty is an organic process, not a contest.”



Author’s/Artist’s Name and School Grade: Priyanka Choudhury/J.P Steven High School, Edison, NJ, 10th Grade, Age: 15

Hobbies, Passions and Future Goals : Watching thrillers ,Reading about conspiracy theories, She wants to be a Financial Advisor.

Parent’s Name(s): Pradeep K Choudhury, Archana Patra

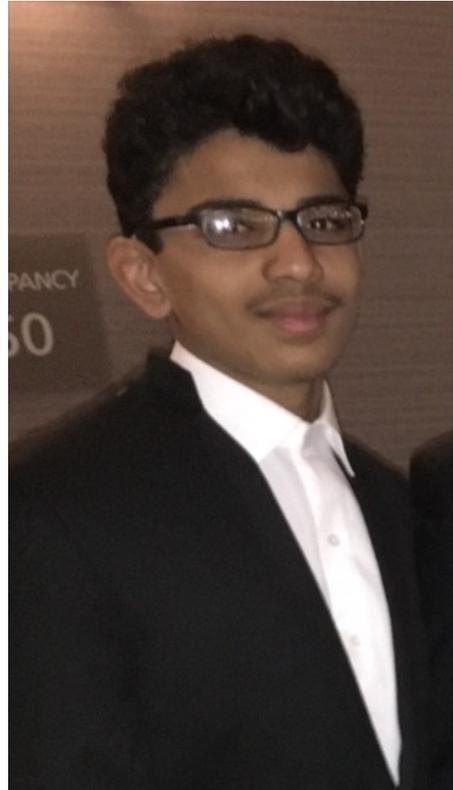
****Priyanka Choudhury was placed 2nd in Meghna Memorial Award Senior Category (Ages 13-18)***

Snapchat: Rumors vs Reality

Rohan Dash

You see hundreds of kids throughout the world use this innovative application throughout a range of devices, the software known as *Snapchat*. Besides all the myths and rumors of its misuse the application has evolved over its life. Since 2015 the app began to include a “Discover” page, which in reality was just a series of news outlets with information that would entertain tweens through early adults in their 20’s. The database has also taken part in many fundraisers and are attempting allowing users to pay directly through the app. But the app does have a downside, “disappearing-snaps” which only a fraction of kids misuse. So what is true and what is not?

Snapchat’s “Discover” Page has influenced many, including myself, to take part in reading about current events. Magazines and outlets, like *Daily Mail*, *People*, *CNN*, *Nat. Geo.*, and many more are featured on this part of the app. By adding this kids have begun to read more about news, increasing the knowledge of teens throughout the nation. Events like the Election, the Paris attacks of 2015, and deaths of artists like Prince have all been featured. So by adding this element to this social media it is improving current event knowledge in many children.



Fundraising as well as adding awareness to worldwide problems have all been done through snap. Organizations like Peta, the UN, Oceana and National Geographic are only a few of the tabs doing these works. By showing kids, the future of the world, the problems people face throughout the globe enhance the solution because kids will be faced with helping tackling these issues. Slowly Snapchat may become an important element of knowledge of world issues because it brings together various outlets. Snapchat is even in the works of creating “Snapcash” a way for people to donate money straight through Snap and pay in the app. So maybe, hopefully the app with a tarnished reputation may be saving lives worldwide.

Now here is the time for facts. When parents hear Snapchat they assume, especially from all the bad publicity it has that kids are using it to sext or things of even worse nature. However, activities like this only occur in about 18% of boys and 22% of Girls (2016, dosomething.org). The news articles that feature this app are usually on the negative side, but isn’t most of news? So here’s the main idea, even though some may use the app for not so great things, this population, it’s not even close to half of the millions of users. So there’s a food for thought. Another issue with parents is the “disappearing-snap”. These snaps however, if you read through Snapchat’s privacy policy are all saved to the Snapchat database in Cali. So snaps are never 100% gone, this shows that Snap is also trying to ensure that if anything wrong is occurring they will be forced to step in. So parents, is anything wrong?

Overall you've read about Snapchat's part in News, World Issues, and its part in fighting Sexting. So Snapchat isn't really that bad of an application. And the two plusses listed are only a fraction of its benefits. Snap allows users to add to public "stories" or collages of events, they let you create filters for fun occasions and also allow you to see face of friends far away. So I hope your opinions of snap have improved maturely.



Rohan Dash is 14 yrs and is a grade 8th student of Lawrence Middle School. He resides In Lawrenceville, NJ with his parents and elder brother who is an outgoing senior from Lawrence high school. Rohan is an avid sports enthusiast and represents his school in track as well as wrestling. He loves to read and write.

Drawing Anika Satapathy

Drawing is my favorite thing to do
It's fun, fascinating, and fantastic
One can sketch whatever one would want to
Faces or flowers whatever they pick
Creativity flows like a river
Once one starts they won't be able to stop
Some people's art can give you a shiver
Some may add a little color for pop
Though it may be fun one may not have pride
No matter how it may turn out to be
The artist will never be satisfied
Someone may like it but they will ne'er see
It may be hard but it's a calming stress
Drawing is something that I do the best



Anika is a rising 9th grader at River Hill high school in Clarksville, Maryland. Her parents are Sikhanda Satapathy and Tina Satapathy. She enjoys playing piano and viola, dancing, and drawing. Anika also participates in softball and was on her middle schools debate team.

Beautifully Dangerous

Archit Rajanala



When people picture flowers, the first thing that comes to mind are crimson roses and pink cherry blossoms. However, some people might tell you different, they could tell you about the *Rafflesia arnoldii* (the corpse flower), or a pot plant. Every rose has its thorns, is what people say when something beautiful can hurt, the *Rafflesia*'s make believe thorns aren't sharp, but they rather have a pungent smell. Then there are Meat eating plants otherwise known as carnivorous plants eating differently than most other plants. For example they eat living organisms.

Venus flytraps

Everyone knows of the famous Venus fly trap, with its two mouth like leaves to capture, kill, and digest their pray. The part most people don't understand very well is how, a snail can race across the mouth of one without it shutting. This is because in order for the trap to shut one of its "trigger hairs" needs to be bent in order for this to happen. An odd thing about these plants is that they prefer to live in dry soil so they can't live off photosynthesis alone.

Rafflesia arnoldnii

The *Rafflesia arnoldnii* stinks like a rotten corpse earning it the name of corpse lily. These flowers usually grow 3ft. in diameter and can weigh up to fifteen pounds. This plant has no visible leaves or roots and it uses its corpse like smell to attract insects that pollinate the flower. The *Rafflesia* is also a parasitic plant that will attach itself to a host to absorb the water and nutrients it needs to survive. This plant also grows in Indonesia.

Titan Aurum

The Titan Aurum has many features in common with the *Rafflesia*, for example: this plant stinks like one, and the smell attracts insects that pollinate it, but this plant has earned the title corpse flower. This is one huge flower, growing up to 7-12 feet weighing almost 170 pounds! This

flower is really a big cluster of smaller flower, but it has the largest unbranched inflorescence of any flower.

Tropical pitcher plant

Nepenthes mainly known as the tropical pitcher plant, is a carnivorous plant that pretends to be a flower to attract prey and it has the capability to use photosynthesis. This plant eats insects and is big enough to eat an unlucky bat who decides that this is the plant it will eat out of. The pitcher plant uses an appealing liquid to attract its food and so the prey doesn't escape, it will close its top leaf until the digestive process is finished. That is the fate of anything in the mouth of the plant.

Giant Hogweed

This plant is truly terrifying, with its leaves covered in ooze that coats the skin and then almost immediately reacts with the sun and burns through the skin and tissues leading to necrosis. To make this plant even more terrifying, if the sap comes into contact with a person's eyes, they will be permanently blinded. This plant is eight feet tall, so when it drips, get out of the way.

Finally the Hogweed gets its name from the animal that is immune to the sap's effect is a pig. These are some of the weird plants that exist, but these aren't the only ones you should stay away from; like: the Buttercup flower, Death Camas, Himalayan Blackberry bush, Gympie-Gympie, and more.



*Archiit Rajanala is 12 years old and is a 6th grader in Eisenhower Middle School. His hobbies include, TV, videogames, playing the violin and drums
Parent's Name(s): Sushmita Pradhan and Nagesh Rajanala*

OSA CONVENTION

Bastav Senapati



I have attended OSA annual function only once and I would like to let you know what I feel about “OSA CONVENTION”. It covers who we are, what we do, where we are from etc.

OSA CONVENTION

Odisha	-	The motherland for Odias
Smile	-	See smile on everybody's face and it is time for fun & glory
America	-	The country where we are free to convene in
Convene	-	Gather with your friends and Families
Organize	-	It takes months to organize everything for 3-days event.
News	-	Share the news for near and dearer ones
Venture	-	Venture at different place every year
Exciting	-	It is very exciting to attend and enjoy the Program
Nice	-	Everyone is very nice and friendly
Time	-	OSA happens every year at the same time of the year
India	-	Our country, is significant in the world
Open New Doors	-	Meet people that can open new doors for you
New Delhi	-	Our country's capital



*Grade – 3, Author Age – 9 yr.; Hobbies – Reading books, Playing Soccer, Chess
Passion -- Making Pictures, Learn and Chanting Veda*



Doll in the Mirror

Isha Satapathy

The clouds
Drifted,
So peaceful in the sky.
And under their glory
Stood
A barn.
Holes
In every unsteady wall.
Tears
In every piece of long forgotten garment.
And in one
Small wardrobe,
A little doll
Sat.
It
Gazed
Stolidly into a mirror for years, forgotten by
A little girl
That had cared for it.
She had been so
Kind,
Sweet,
Innocent.
The doll had sat
Happily
On its shelf,
Always to see her round face pop around the corner.
But one day,
Her parents woke up
To find her bed empty.
She was found at the breakfast table,
With nothing but a book.
And slowly,
She spoke:
"I'm going far east,
Where the sun shines on the sea,
And the birds land on yellow sand.
I will never come home."

So she packed up her clothes,
Said goodbye to her life,
And ran away.
But never did she once consider the doll that she had so loved.
So the doll sat
In the wardrobe
In the barn with
Unsteady walls,
Under
The clouds
Drifting,
So peaceful in the sky.



*Isha Satapathy is 11 years old and goes to Eagle Ridge Middle School in Virginia. Isha loves to read and write, present/narrate/debate, dancing Odishi, singing, swimming and Tennis.
Parents: Jayakumar Satapathy, Monalisha Mishra*

Cycle of Change

Sumedha Jena

A cold blanket wraps the earth with its arms
In fear, all the animals have gone into hiding
Blizzards show its wrath, hails come and go
The snow feels very lonely.

Time moves like a creepy snail,
Buds open their eyes to the new world
Birds trill their melodious song
Rays of sunshine embrace the ground
The empty trees are now dressed with green leaves
Flowers burst with never ending happiness
Spring has now put the spirit of youth
Invigorating rain washed my thoughts out

Trees start to dance.... with the warm summer air
The gritty sand comes between my toes
The touch of the ocean tingles my fingers
Joyous moments among my friends

Leaves start to fall.....one by one
The trees and ground start to wither
The smell of pumpkins fill the air
A cold breeze pushes itself against others

The ground is frozen
with fear of going to darkness again
Plants start wilting,
the grass can't sway
Heavy snow hits the calm tree's arm,
showing its loneliness
The cycle of change is here
for better and the blissful life
to continue as ever.



Author: Sumedha Jena, Age 12

Grade: 7, Woodrow Wilson Middle School

Hobbies/Passions: Reading, Writing

Future Goals: I want to be Psychologist as well as to continue reading world literature and writing

Parent's Name(s): Sandhya R Jena & Nilasundar Jena

Sumedha Jena was placed 1st in Meghna Memorial Award Junior Category (Ages 7-12)

Our Love
Based after The Selection: The One by Kiera Cass
By: Maya Devalcheruvu

An open box
A ring, resting in it
Shining in the light

Looked up
Too stunned to speak
The questions in my eyes

Web of thin
Gold vines
Circle of the ring

Two gems
Green, purple
Kissed at the crown

Purple was mine
Green was his
There we were

Two spots of light
Growing together
Inseparable

Meant to speak
Opened my mouth
I try

Managed to smile
Blink my tears
and nod

Twice now
Tried
Failed



Nod
Not a word
My entire body

I love you
Should have told you
Long time ago

Then again
Began to smile
I think

Those obstacles
Made me
Love you so deeply

Tears pooled
Corners of my eyes
Balancing my lashes

What I said was true
My heart is
Yours to break

You know
I'd rather die
Than see you in pain

Life was ending
All I thought about
Was you

Mourning everything
I'd lost
Never get to see you walk

Toward me
Never get to see your face
In our children

Never see streaks of silver In your hair
Me dying
You living

Nothing but good
Lost my control
Tears came in

Loved
Feeling radiating in my heart
Every inch of me

Absolute warmth
A request
A plea

I beg
Do me the honor
Become my wife

He kissed me
Life settling
Found everything

Maxon's arms
Guide me
Hold me

Take on the world
I was home
Found my voice

Yes!



Maya Lochana Devalcheruvu is the daughter of Niharika Mohanty and Gopi Devalcheruvu. She is 14 years old and is going to 9th grade. Maya has been learning Odissi dance since she was 4 and for the past year, she has started ballet, jazz, and tap. Maya enjoys tutoring young kids and volunteering at her local library. She also competes in math competitions, and plays soccer and piano. Maya dreams of going to Stanford and becoming a pediatrician.



Chandana - Sandalwood Paste



The Silver Lining

Anuradha P Mishra



The bus rolled on, packed almost to the door. The heat was oppressive. The air was filled with a weird but appealing odor-that of perspiration mingled with the scents of the fragrances used by some passengers. "It also has the smell of heat. Heat has a smell," the girl in pink on the second row whispered to herself. "It really does. It has a scent that is indescribable as well as intoxicating", thought Maya. Maya-that was her name. "Maya" meant "Illusion" in Sanskrit . It also meant "Great" in Latin. Maya-the Princess, she called herself. She lived in her own little world among fairies and princesses and thought ever since she could remember that she was a Princess in an earlier life. She believed she was royalty, despite the odds that she had been seeing in her small life of 19 years. Few ups and mostly downs. "Even this shall pass" had been her motto since the last few years, but things never seemed to pass. "Even this shall pass," she thought of the bus ride to college, looking at the solitary coin between her fingers, rolling it absent mindedly, as the bus stopped briefly to let in more passengers. This was her fare for the bus ride, discounted to a student rate.

"Can I sit here, please?" said a soft voice, yet loud enough to break Maya's reverie. "Of course you can," gushed Maya, moving closer to the window. "Please take a seat." The girl with the flushed pimple face thanked her as she sat down next to Maya. Maya stole a good look at her as she tried to settle in, with her books on her lap. "She could be 16 or 17", Maya wondered. She liked to imagine what age strangers were, what life they led, whether they were happy or melancholic, famished or satiated, upset or unperturbed. "She is a happy girl, maybe a bit nervous. First day of college? Possibly", thoughts raced in Maya's head, as she watched the girl smile nervously, trying to adjust her skirt under the pile of books.

Suddenly the bus started and the passengers were lunged forward. The still settling girl bumped her head on the backrest of the front seat and fell sideways on Maya, knocking the coin off her fingers onto the floor beneath. "I am sorry, extremely sorry," the girl blurted, almost in tears. Maya looked on, unable to respond.

She watched helplessly as the coin rolled away from her, on the floor of the crowded bus. It was in her hand a moment ago. She would have handed it over to the conductor while getting on. Now it was down there, somewhere among the endless rows of shoes. "It is impossible to find it among all these people standing here," thought Maya. Small beads of perspiration began to form on her forehead. It was the only money she had. It was her fare for the bus-ride to her college. She had no more money. And, the next stop would be hers.

Maya lived with her sister at her grandparents' home. Her father had lost his job and was yet to find another. Her mother was expecting. Her parents could no longer afford to send her to college. Her grandparents had stepped in and had brought Maya and her sister to live with them. They were the

nicest people on the planet, but sadly, her grandfather had died the previous week of a massive heart attack. As the family mourned his loss, Maya did not have the courage to say she had exhausted her allowance and ask for money. She had an assignment to submit for grading today. Clutching her one-way fare, she had boarded the bus. She would hitch a ride with a friend on her way back.

The bus jolted to a stop. People started getting down. Maya shivered as she stepped onto the aisle. She did not know what to do. She looked at the floor again, her eyes searching wildly for the lost coin; there was still no sight of it. The lump in her throat just got bigger and bigger and threatened to explode.

"Excuse me", said the girl from the seat behind. "Could you step aside, please? I need to get down here. "Yy...Yes, yes...sure" mumbled Maya, and stepped aside to let the girl go ahead. Her mind was racing and her cheeks were flushed. The conductor in the khaki uniform walked towards her. "OH my goodness! He is coming to me. He will ask for the fare. What do I do now? He will never believe my story of the rollaway coin", Maya struggled with her thoughts as she tried not to look at the conductor in the eye. The conductor stopped near her. "Is this your stop?" he asked politely. Maya searched for words to answer. It was indeed her stop. "I'm sorry" she blurted out. "This is my stop. But I do not have the fare. I just dropped it somewhere and can't seem to find it." she added breathlessly. The conductor smiled. "Is this yours?" - He asked, opening his palm in front of her. In his hand was the coin... the same kind Maya had dropped. "A passenger gave it to me while getting off. She found it on the floor", he added.

"YES", cried Maya, "YES, YES. IT IS MINE". "Thank you, Thank you", she whispered as she got off the bus. "You can keep it. It is my fare", she said in one breath with a wave of her hand. The conductor smiled. "Yes. Of course. Thank you Miss. See you on the way back home"

She stood frozen for a minute as the bus darted off, sweating heavily. She had just been saved from being embarrassed. Slowly, she gathered herself and started to walk towards the big iron gate of the familiar red Victorian building. There was a new liveliness to her princess-like gait. A strange calm came over her as she looked up, offering a silent prayer, as she always did to be thankful.

The sun had just hidden behind a huge cumulonimbus cloud- signs of an approaching thunderstorm. As the first drops started to fall, Maya smiled as she broke into a sprint.

The cloud had a silver lining.



Anuradha P Mishra can be contacted via Email : anupranay@hotmail.com

Innocent stare

Jigyansa Mohanty



It was 4 pm and Rama had to rush to pick up her son from the bus stop. Rama, a former banking professional and a career woman now above all is a dedicated mother who dotes on her kids. When Rama's father was alive he always used to motivate Rama to follow her passion and fly high in her career. Rama, an independent woman had always dreamt of making it big. A rewarding career and a hefty pay package was what she had always dreamt of. Never ever had she imagined that she would be away from her first love, her career and would get solace running after her two kids.

Time played its part well and Rama decided to stay indoor to raise her kids. Rama had always prioritized her family above all post her nuptials and when it became difficult to reconcile both work and home she decided to quit one for the other. Her husband Satish also insisted she take a break as he couldn't see her being in stress every time. Initially Rama used to feel low as she had left her job in which she had toiled and invested a good 8 years of her life. But being a Taurean she preferred to be firm on her decision as she felt the need of the hour was to give her full time and energy in shaping up the growing up years of her two kids.

This is the time of the day Rama loves the most. Getting ready to go down and pick up her son from the Society stop. As this is when she gets to meet her society friends who too come to pick up their kids and together they spend a good amount of time gossiping and chitchatting. Rama otherwise a homebody gets to know the entire community news from her friends. Starting from various recipes to diet control plans and skin care treatments everything finds a place in their chat list. Initially she was hesitant to open up, but, gradually she started enjoying their company.

However today Rama is super excited. As after a gap of almost one month she is going to meet her friends. Being vacation time, most of her friends had travelled to their native and now that schools have reopened all are back with full enthusiasm as it marks the start of their childrens' academic year. Happiness coupled with anxiety appears in a mixed bag on Rama's face. Happiness first as she just can't wait to see the radiant smile on her son's face and anxiety as to whether the diet she was following has yielded any result, whether compromising on sweets and chocolates was worth for and if yes then her friends are going to notice her efforts or not.

Taking her infant in a stroller and phone, door keys aptly placed in the back pocket of her faded jeans she hurriedly pressed the lift button. She just can't wait to go down as after giving much thought she was able to finalize on that petite black floral top she used to wear prior to her pregnancy. Will she or won't sheas she takes the top in her hands after a long time. The smell of the naphthalene

balls reminds her of the day when she was six months carrying and not a single dress of hers was fitting in. For the first two trimesters she was gaining a kg a month, but, in the last trimester there was rapid weight gain. When her baby was due she was 10 kg on the plus side and she knew within that it's going to be difficult for her to come back to shape as she doubted her metabolism. But thanks to Dr. Joshi, her dietician and her strong will power she was able to focus and lose a lot in the last two months. Her happiness knew no bounds as she went to Dr. Joshi's clinic last week to check her weight and finally was all smiles after seeing the scale pointer stop at 59, her pre pregnancy weight. 'I have done it' she said getting a pat at the back from Dr. Joshi as well. Finally putting her inhibitions aside, she tried the black top and it fit her completely.

As she brings the smile to her face thinking it is ground floor in the third floor, she is joined by Lata bai. Lata Bai, the one who used to do the household chores at Rama's place gives a smile to Rama's ten month old son while Rama stares with utter surprise. Lata to better describe was a 'Phone Jockey' always addicted to her phone. God knows where from she used to get the calls one after another. She hardly paid any heed to Rama's repeated request to talk slowly and once to make matters worse Rama caught her talking endlessly on her mobile hardly paying any attention to the Roti which by then had turned into a baked pappad. That was enough to show her the doors. Finally meeting her today and getting a return smile was what Rama had least expected.

These three seconds seemed like three hours for Rama who was eagerly waiting for the elevator to open in the ground floor. She hurriedly rushed to the sitting arena where she found her friends waiting for their little ones. Rama was super excited to meet her friends and a warm hello followed by a tight hug with a radiant return smile was enough to boost up Rama's spirit. Here comes Adi's mom wearing a cute pink dress short enough to show her perfect body curves. Wow!! Beautiful came out from Rishi's mom followed by Rahul and Nishant's. Rama thought that it was going to be her turn next, so she kept on smiling anticipating a complement at any point. But to her utter surprise the show stealer was Nidhi, Adi's mom who by then had started explaining her dietary charts and hair texture to Rama's friends. Rama didn't know what to say, confused in her own thoughts she couldn't utter a single word.

How was she not complemented for her looks? How could her black floral top go unnoticed? Heads used to turn when she used to wear it with her beige cargo pant to her office. Even Satish used to notice it who otherwise is mostly hooked on to the laptop completing his office assignments. So what's wrong today? She had been constantly trying to lose weight. For first six months of her pregnancy her only concern was to feed her new born properly but now that her younger one is already ten months old, she has been making some dietary changes followed by yoga to stay fit and shed those extra pounds. Now that she has come to shape has her weight loss regime taken a toll on her face as the glow she used to have earlier is no more there or else is it simply that her girlie gang has been floored by Nidhi and she stands nowhere close to her. What went wrong? She wondered.....

Avoiding a grumpy face and showing a fake smile she ran as her elder son jumped from the bus to greet her. Oh babyshe exclaimed as she took him off from the bus. The little one slightly taking a pause asked her with enough curiosity, "Mamma, are we going out somewhere? you are all dressed up and look so good. I thought we are going out for pizza." Rama was perplexed. The entire dressing up process,

Lata Bai, Adi's mom all seem to have vanished. It was only her five year old's question that seem to have baffled her. She was speechless. Finally she planted a kiss on her son's forehead and marched ahead to gorge on some healthy pizza.....



Divine bliss

Jayasmita Mishra



FAITH can move mountains. Passing through different phases of life we have faced difficulties which many a times have a miraculous ending. This itself explains the existence of a Super power. Here is one such encounter I had faced, that had a happy ending.

This happened on a snowy winter evening...in New York. My husband was returning from an official trip from Brazil, he called me up from Miami. I did alert him about the bad weather conditions in New York. I suggested that it would be better and safe for him to stay there for the night and catch the plane next morning.

I now realize, his eagerness to come home was quite strong, his immediate reply was that if the flight flew to NY he would definitely take the flight. As the paradigm goes: Men seldom listen, for sure the flight reached LaGuardia Airport with a lot of difficulty. Technology helps, all the time I was busy tracking the flight and my anxiety heightened up when the plane kept hovering above the airport as the snow was being cleaned at the ground level. Twenty minutes it circled up in the air till the runway was shoveled and it was safe to land.

The phone rang, I was relieved to hear Parth's voice, and only a sailor's wife will understand my turbulent mind and gamut of emotions involved. This time when I spoke, once again I pleaded with him to book a hotel in the airport and stay rather than risk coming home, which on normal days would be a one and a half hour drive. Stubborn and firm, he was determined to take his own decision. At the airport none of the cab drivers wanted to bring him. Exhausted, frustrated and drained out he ultimately reached the train station in our town using various means of public transport; a shuttle, bus and train. At the train station again it was difficult to find a conveyance home; no cabs were available.

Our efforts of getting help from neighbors and friends also was in vain. I tried calling a few friends, the irony: it was always the voice message answering my call and I had no patience for that. Times are different; no one wants to be bothered about other people's crisis. They fail to understand that it is always a two way street. In reality, one small gesture of kindness or good deed can create a domino effect of paying it forward.

Panic stricken, I decided to seek help from neighbors, whom I knew for the past 15yrs., by virtue of residing in a huge apartment complex. Every other day we met at common places; elevator, lounge, parking lot, garbage bin, recycle area and so on, not forgetting to exchange greetings and smiles with one another. After all we shared a common sense of affinity and bonded as a big family.

Cutting a long story short, at times your own people do not also realize the gravity of the situation and back out when in need. It was hard to believe when the neighbor who had a 4/4 wheel drive van, could

have helped but he was so much engrossed in watching a movie that he bluntly nodded his head and literally slammed the door on my face. Probably he was enjoying his, "ME" time to the brim. A police officer whose duty is to protect people also shrugged his shoulders off. A friend and good neighbor refused explaining his own limitations. It was a period of intense stress, I felt helpless.

Cold and annoyed, Parth decided that he would walk home. My heart missed a beat, as I knew it would be an arduous task as he had his heavy luggage too. Not to mention he was sick two months ago and was under strict medical supervision.

I had no other option: just closed my eyes and prayed. I decided I would also walk down to the train station so that when we meet both could help each other. I was just getting ready to go and lo behold! I opened the front door, to my utter disbelief Parth was standing in front of me. Indeed this was a miracle. It so happened an unknown Spanish lady who had gone to pick her family from the train station, did offer him a ride and dropped him right in front of our building. Swearing on God's name Parth said he never knew the lady and from nowhere she came beckoning him to sit in her car and dropped him at his destination. Everything appeared to be well planned, she was God sent.

Angles do exist on earth, immediately I could visualize myself being in God's care. An unforgettable experience, worth sharing: prayers are answered; for sure miracles do happen. We should all recognize that every time God does choose to perform a miracle in our lives, He is showing His love for us in a tangible way.



Dr Jayasmita Mishra, Ph.D lives in upstate New York with husband Akshay and two children Suprav and Supriya.

That Night of Her Life Chinmoyee Tripathy

Spring –the pleasant season with its beautiful fragrance of cosmos and gardenia, made the atmosphere heavenly. Sudha was sipping her hot cup of ginger tea while inhaling a little more of the spring aroma from her patio garden. The ginger aroma from her tea was subdued. The ‘Shutterfly’ courier guy had just delivered the online order of her wedding snaps. Luckily her 5-year-old munchkin went to school and Sudha was happy, as she was all alone to open the packet and ponder over the snaps without any disturbances.

Sudha glanced at the wall clock from top of her shoulder and breathed a sigh of relief to find that four more hours were still there for her munchkin to be back from his school. She spread the hundred of snaps all over the carpet and started looking at each and every picture. She had ordered those pictures to make a collage as a wedding anniversary gift for her husband Sudeep.

“How time flies,” she said to herself. Ten long years have passed and now she was Mrs. Mishra for such a long time!

But all of a sudden, Sudha picked up a photo of her with drooped eyes, dry lips and with a rusty blanket wrapped all over her wedding ‘*ghagra*’. Pain streaked on her face. She could not stop herself from drifting into that part of her life. It was as if “Alice went into her WONDER-LAND.”

Sudha when young, always dreamt of a house full of life, where members not only live for themselves but also live for each other. She always thought why her parents who showered their love on her only brother Kanhu, didn’t love her. She wondered if it was a mistake that they brought her to this world. With passage of time she was mature enough to understand about couples bearing kids. And Sudha knew that the first child could never be thought of as a mistake by any couple, but yes, her gender definitely was not what her parents wanted. They never wanted a girl child. Everyone liked Sudha, a slim, beautiful and fair girl, not because she was pretty, but because she was very friendly. Her witty talks made all her friends fall off their seats. Her selfless love towards God made her very confident and she always felt that miracles do happen. She thought her parents didn’t care for her small feelings, but she did feel that they provided things she needed the most. She found that parents of most of her friends didn’t even care to do that. This made her love her parents more with every passing day. While hanging around with friends she heard stories of rape and murder by neighbors or strangers but her story was different. She used to talk how several times strangers helped her. She felt as if someone was always there to hold her hand and guide her way ahead.

Sudha offered silent prayers to God thanking Him for everything that happened in her life. Her only complaint against God was, “Why her parents never loved her the way she wanted?” Being very positive, she always thought, God would definitely send her a prince charming who would love her to the moon and back. Hence she was happy always. Finally the day came, her wedding day. She seemed very happy. Girls generally get depressed thinking of leaving their parents, friends and family but Sudha was excited to meet Sudeep, her prince charming. It was an arranged marriage. The numerous phone calls between the long distant friends during the brief span of time between engagement and marriage made them one soul with bodies. She always thought, “Will there ever be love in an arranged marriage?” But, it happened and she was terribly in love with the cute, fair and handsome Sudeep, a

software engineer by profession and a romantic by heart. Sudha was having mixed feelings; she could not believe that she would be someone's wife first then someone's daughter. But, of course, she was longing for this time. Her life partner from now on would be a part of her identity. This was what she wanted all her life.

The days went smoothly with her pre and post-wedding rituals and soon Sudha and Sudeep were pronounced man and wife in a traditional Odia Hindu marriage. Legally they were the married couple as they registered their marriage 30 days prior to that big day. Time from dawn to dusk flew very fast. Sudha waved goodbye to everyone with teary eyes and a heavy heart after her marriage. She followed Sudeep to the decorated car and sat with him. She was excited for her new home in a remote village, some hundred kilometers away from her parent's place. Sudeep was a software engineer who worked far from his hometown, but he never forgot his roots from a remote rural place. He was the son of a *zamindar* of a small village in Odisha. Sudha, brought up in the city, had never seen a village, neither did she dream of going to one ever. So she wondered how everything was going to be in the new place. She had deep faith in Sudeep's great love for her.

The bridegroom's decorated car got packed with the driver, Kanhu, Lali (Sudeep's younger sister) and the newlywed couple. All the way to her new home she clutched Sudeep's hand and was silently weeping; all her thoughts were about the new family. She kept asking Sudeep intermittently, "how far we need to go?" On their way home, Sudeep insisted her to take a nap leaning on his shoulder. Without uttering a single word she just leaned towards him and could smell his cologne.

Sudha asked in a very faint voice, "How long?"

Sudeep slightly lifting her clenched fist and kissing it gently, replied in his husky tone, "few more minutes, be ready for a grand welcome". Sudha almost fainted with this gesture of his and felt everything stopped right in front of her. She was ecstatic. To her surprise the silence broke in no time.

"Why did you stop the vehicle in the middle of the road?" Sudha heard Sudeep asking the driver. She saw the time from his watch was 12 o'clock when Sudeep pressed his digital clock's light button. Lali and Kanhu were deep asleep.

"The car hit something. Didn't you hear that thud?" asked the driver.

Sudha pressed her hand against Sudeep's as if apologizing for what was going on between them just a few minutes back. Sudeep pretended as if he heard something and then asked the driver to restart the vehicle and move-on. Sudha tried looking out of the window and could feel just the quietness of the dark night. She could hear the sound of the breeze blowing away the leaves of big trees everywhere. This was very different from the nights in the city. She was bit scared when she could not see anything around her and grasped Sudeep's hand very tightly. Soon she heard Sudeep being asked by his father to remain seated and not to get down from that car. It was ritual; he was not supposed to stop during the time he takes his bride home. She was proud of Sudeep that he obeyed his father. She could hear footsteps of some people coming from the front. They were his cousins who came to help. First they dropped Kanhu and Lali at home safely and then tried every technique to roll the wheels, but it was all in vain. Literally struggling for two and a half hours, Sudeep lost all his patience and asked Sudha to get down from the broken car and follow him to the other car.

Sudha got down from the car, adjusted her *pallu*, saree, and whole lot of ornaments, all the bridal decks. She was physically exhausted; tired even to lift the heavy jeweler over her body, which she was not habituated to wear as a girl. Everywhere she looked was dark, dark and only dark. She glanced at the

white car that was broken; still the flowers over it were fresh as if wishing her happiness all her life. She walked some 50-60 feet to reach to the parked car, which she guessed must be with Sudeep inside. She opened the rear door and slipped inside only to see no one inside it. The door lights also didn't glow. She was struggling to recognize who were in the front seats when she heard Sudeep asking her to relax as he was seating next to his elder brother who was in the driver's seat. Finally, they headed home after a very long break. Proper *Grihapraves* was done. It was 3 o'clock in the morning but nothing seemed to have changed the wedding spirit. She saw decorations everywhere. The band stood quietly without playing the drums, they were trying not to disturb others in the village. After one hour Sudha got a bed to lie down; She was tired.

As per the Odia wedding practice, the consummation occurs on the fourth night of the wedding day. Sudha had her bed with other ladies and Sudeep was somewhere among the gents. Just after an hour Sudha could hear the voices of many calling her name, asking her to get up. Once she got up, she was very tired as if something was wrong with her. She heard Lali talking to Sudeep about her. She told Sudeep that Sudha was shivering in fever and was making grunts as if somebody was pressing her throat. Sudha's head was heavy; she remained in bed for the rest of the morning. She was down with very high fever for the next few days. She was tested for typhoid, malaria and dengue, which were all negative. Doctors gave her blood and urine reports as normal. But something was wrong with her. On the night of consummation Sudha was down with very high fever. With her bridal make-up she was wrapped with a rusty blanket. Her first night with Sudeep was sizzling hot not because of what she earlier dreamt of but because of her high body temperature. Day by day Sudha was becoming lean and weak. Days passed. Her health was deteriorating. Everyone in the village came up with new ideas to heal her; Sudeep's family did everything for Sudha. Sudeep was very worried for his wife. He took a month's leave for his wedding and twenty days were already gone; Sudha was still not in a condition to talk to him, or accompany him.

One fine day, one of Sudeep's friends suggested him to call a *Tantrik* Baba who could try some black magic to cure Sudha's ailment. It was his last resort; Sudeep agreed and called the *Tantrik* Baba. He desperately wanted Sudha to be all right. The Baba determined something unnatural that caused her illness. Sudha could not believe what she heard. As per the Baba, an evil spirit came to stay in Sudha's body from the spot where their car broke down on her wedding night. The finding was confirmed from the fact that a few years back a young woman, from Lali's college had committed suicide by hanging from that banyan tree near the graveyard. It was her spirit, that unnatural-power which entered Sudha's body when she walked alone from one car to the other. Sudha was not ready to accept what the Baba told; but it was hard to ignore what the driver too told the family. The driver told that when he went with a mechanic to bring the broken car for repair, they could not find anything wrong with the vehicle. The car started in the first attempt and rolled on.

Soon the Baba performed certain *pujas* and chanted mantras; Sudha began feeling better. Her struggle for twenty-two days was over. Sudha and Sudeep spent rest of their days happily in the village with the family members and left for the city he worked.

For Sudha it was something she could never decide: whether to accept that a spirit made her sick or, that the illness came to her from physical exhaustion and anxiety of coming to a completely new place. She thought of the episode as a miracle in her life. Her first few days in her in-laws house were so lovely for her that now she had memories to cherish all her life. Everybody took good care of her and loved her like she was never loved before. But every time she thought of that fateful night she was puzzled.

"Whatever it may be, if you think good, good things will happen to you," mused Sudha.

Tring! Tring! Tring!

“Oh, it’s 4 o’clock. Tatu’s bus will be coming any moment. I must rush to the school bus-stop” said a smiling Sudha while piling up all her snaps.



Konark, The Sunset Heritage

Anil Dey

The thirteenth century Sun Temple of Konarka - one of the Seven Wonders of the World in the past, a world heritage now - evokes global interest even in its ruins. The great tower is long gone, *Jagamohona* is in crutches, the beautiful sculptures are in terminal stage of leprous decay and cruel nature will surely claim the rest in another century at best. In the foreseeable future, ambiance of most of the sculptures will be beyond recognition and even the remains of Konarka will stand like a ghost of its past. It has therefore been a cherished dream in the heart of every art lover to see this great heritage rise again in a new Avatar. Yet there has been controversy galore, whenever such a proposal surfaced!

THE CONTROVERSY

Pseudo socialists jumped into the ring whenever such a proposal was made, questioning, why spend crores of rupees on building a temple when majority of people in the state are unable to manage two square meals a day? Yet, none of these antagonists had voiced a single protest when hundreds of temples dedicated to different Gods and Goddesses were sprouting across the state and beyond. The spree continues unabated but no one objects. One is bound to ask, is heritage of a nation, less important than its religious sentiments? Pardon me for asking, is it religious or superstitious?



The controversy has arisen from the fact that protagonists are trying to view the external beauty of the temple as an independent phenomenon while antagonists are unable to see anything beyond its external beauty.

What are visitors looking for in these ruins? A part of the crowd perhaps wonders what this stupendous creation originally was but a major part comes here to derive carnal pleasure from the thousands of erotic sculptures. Both the groups cannot even conceive, to what height of sophistication, these medieval artists had gone.

THE ARTISTIC CONCEPT

Behind every great art there is a great philosophy. Until that philosophy is understood the real greatness of the Sun Temple of Konarka will not be understood.

Start from the temple itself; it is not a structure alone with certain mundane roles to play. Hindus treat the temple as a living human being. They call the human body, 'Deha Mandira'- body the temple. It is holy. In the canons of Kalingan architecture different parts of the structure are named after different parts of the human body – Pada (foot), Jangha (thigh), Gandi, (body above waist), Beki (neck), Mastaka (head) and so on. The tall tower of Rekha temple is considered as Man and the squat ornamented Pidha temple in front as Woman. Hindu philosopher has also likened the human body to a chariot:

*Atmanaam Rathinaam biddhi shariram ratha mebatu/
Buddhi tu sarathi biddhi manah pragahameba cha //
Kathopanisad (1.iii.3)*

Body is a chariot of which soul is the master; intellect is its charioteer and mind, its bridle.

The world exists from the combined forces of man and woman. The great architect of Konarka added to this concept solar presence and the eternal journey of humanity. On stone he expressed, **Powered by solar grace, the united journey of man and woman in their bodily chariot, rolls on and on through days, weeks, months, years and generations after generations to eternity. This is deathless - Amruta.** There is nothing parochial, narrow or communal in this great philosophy; no mention even of any known religion.

Many theories have been advanced on the erotic images. Percy Brown (1872-1955), an art critic of Victorian mind set, who at one stage named these sculptures, "Plastic obscenity" recorded later, "Deep within the sculptured stones lies an artless perfection that is full of art, in-expressible yet potent, like the musical notes of Mendelssohn's 'Songs without words' or the hunting indefinable melodies of the 'Nocturnes' Debussy. Serious viewers may suffer of such conflicting reaction but until the history and philosophy of temple ornamentation in Odisha is understood, these friezes will remain ever, an enigma.

Till around 7th century ornamentations on the Odishan temples were few but there was no bar on decorating walls inside. The trend changed thereafter. While the external surface was ornamented more and more the inside was shorn of all ornamentation. Symbolically they were telling, man and woman come together attracted by physical charms but once they merge in each other all external attractions get lost. The architect seems to have been influenced by the under mentioned scripture – one of the many – in Brahadaraka Upanishad:

*Tadwa aswei-tatichhanda apahata- papam-abhayam rupam/
Tadyatha Priyaya striya sampariswakto na bahyam kinchana beda nantaram, Ebamebayam
purushaha: pragyenatmana samparshwakto na bahyam Kinchan beda nantaram; tadwa aswei-
tadapta-kamam-aptakamam-akamam rupam Shokantaram.
-Brahadaraka Upanishad (4.3.21)*

This image of the soul is devoid of lust or guilt (atichhanda). Like a couple in deep embrace forgetting their outer or inner cravings and, in a state of oneness, the soul is beyond desire, lust, or sorrow. That is the state in which these couples have remained frozen for what seems to be the eternity.

Now look at the erotic sculptures again. You will not find a single instance of rape or physical atrocity. The churning world of humanity is merged in cosmic oneness. Essential though, can we present them in the new temple with same frankness? I shall try to answer the question by a simile.

The Sun Temple of Konarka was an epic written on stone. Epics contain certain eternal values. Epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata have been written time and again. Each of them is written in a manner

conforming to the social mores of that time. Yet the eternal values enshrined in these epics have not been lost. This great temple can rise again if protagonists keep this in mind and modern artists are able to present the erotica in essence without offending contemporary social mores.

A SECULAR TEMPLE

Sounds absurd but it is true. Apart from creating a classic beauty, there was a specific reason why king Narasinghadeb-I invested a fortune on this great monument. That reason is valid even today.

At a time when Odisha was inundated in Jagannath worship and Jagannath was the royal icon of Ganga dynasty, what impelled the brightest star of the dynasty to create a temple much bigger than the tallest Jagannath temple, much more beautiful than any temple of that time and consecrated there in the Sun god, who had nominal followers then?

The society then, was bitterly divided between, Vaishnavites, Shaivites and Shakti cult with followers of Jagannath trying to downplay every other god and goddess. Historian Dr. Karunasagar Behera has quoted from two old scriptures in this context. While Kapila Samhita asserts supremacy of Jagannath on all other gods, Bata Avakasha describes all gods as mere attendants of Jagannath like menials (Konark Vol-I p.141). Prime Minister Modiji today chants the *mantra* of, “Sabka’ saath sabka Vikash”. Nearly eight centuries earlier, a medieval king of Odisha had understood, without social amity his country cannot prosper. He used religion itself as a tool of reform. He had realized that every religion preaches good conduct and peaceful co-existence; followers twist them to create discord. If the followers could be brought together under one roof and encouraged to discuss, much of the rift may even out. He placed on one pedestal, the Lingam, Lord Jagannath and Ma’ Bhabani – representing the three warring cult and stood paying obeisance.

Sun whose grace brooks no barrier of religion, caste, creed, colour or nationality, was the perfect foil to the radical thoughts of the king. Unfortunately, the noble king had little time to implement his royal strategy. The temple was consecrated in 1258 AD and Narasingha tenure ended by 1264. **The strategy is still valid in a world torn in hatred, distrust and religious fanaticism. This temple in its contemporary Avatar could be the greatest gift of Odisha to the world.**

It is not to showcase the great stone craft of Odisha alone that a resurrection is necessary. Until the underlying spiritual and social causes of this temple are understood and brought out in the new creation, the whole exercise would be lost and it would be just another temple; at best a poor copy of the old masterpiece.

Apart from artistic and conceptual aspects, there exists serious technical problems which cannot be solved through legends. A number of acknowledged experts from the field of engineering, science, art and architecture assembled under the banner of **Kalinga Heritage Preservation Trust (KHPT)** 5 years back to design a Global Sun Temple in the architectural, spiritual and secular tradition of the Sun Temple of Konarka. Readers interested in details may visit website www.khptodisha.org. The team has worked out detailed engineering drawings and **a thousand rupees Project Report.**

Now question arose, who will foot the bill? This being an Odia heritage, the Trustees expected in fitness, the Odia community will come forward. There has been no response; there have rather been voices galore, expecting the Government to finance the project! The Odisha Government have washed their hands off the project. On 4th May 2016 Honourable Minister, Tourism and Culture, stated on the floor of the house that the Government has no plan to create another Konark temple. The great heritage

remains only in the horse icon printed at the head of Government stationary! State Government could have patronised this project to promote tourism – foreign tourists in particular. The catholic character of this temple is expected to attract people from all over the globe looking for peace. The Government at the centre – though saffron coloured – will not patronize a Hindu temple, secularin essence.

On principle, why should Government build a temple? Somnath temple was destroyed 6 times and rebuilt 6 times, the last being in independent India between 1947 and 1951. Government did not fund the restoration but Sardar Patel first and K.M.Munshi next was chief patron of the project. Is there any Nationalist politician of similar stature in Odisha?

Why talk of politicians and Government, I will revert to the civil society again which seems to be in deep slumber. Business men and industrialists are also a part of that civil society.

Italy in Europe is not a rich country. One shoe maker named Tod has donated 20.6 million Euro (Rs.210 Crores) for restoration of the famous Colosseum. A diesel retailer has contributed 5 million Euro (Rs.42 Crores) for conservation of the Rialto bridge of Venice. Fendi a fashion designer has donated 2.5 million Euro (Rs.21 Crore) for restoration of Trevi fountain in Rome. I beg to ask the Odia community; is there no business house in Odisha or abroad, richer than a shoe maker or a diesel retailer?

Coming to the financial burden on people, how much is the burden? As per a recent Census, population of Odisha is 4.55 Crores. The project cost being a thousand Crores, financial burden per head comes to only Rs.220/- and that too spread over 5 to 6 years. It is true, there are yet many in the State who cannot manage two square meals daily. It is equally true that there are many who can buy a whole granary.

This temple is not a heritage of Odisha alone; it is the heritage of the whole world particularly because of its all-inclusive philosophy and contribution to world peace. The global community should also come forward for this noble cause.

Odia sisters and brothers; awake to the cause of your national heritage; come forward - individually and collectively - to help the greatest project of the century take shape.



P.S

This writer is the author of two seminal works on Konarka;

1. *Arka Kshetra Konarka* (Odia). Publisher Aama Odisha, Bhubaneshwar.
2. *The Sun Temple of Konark* (English). Publisher Niyogi Books, Delhi.

Can We Make Our Cells Younger?

Joy Gopal Mohanty



When I was in the first grade, my grandfather gave me a book named, “First book of English” to read. I forgot the author’s name of that book; but I still remember what I read in one of its pages that said,

*“If you wish to be stout and strong,
Get up at five; go to bed at nine,
Eat plain food and play for sometimes after school hours.”*

Now I am a grandfather and cannot even think of being stout and strong. I can get up some days at five with alarm set; but it is hard. Certainly, I would like to go to bed at nine, even before. I do eat plain vegetarian food; but cannot walk much, forget about playing, not even feel like going to gym every day.

I think, my friends of my age will probably feel the same way. I am old. However, I would like not to get sick. So, I am trying to keep a healthier life as much as possible. Yet, aging has affected me like anybody else of my age. One of my friend, when he was 50-55 years old, he had full head of hair; but they were all white. He decided to color black and immediately thereafter, all of his colleagues said to him, “You look 20 years younger”. He was musing to himself. Amazing! It feels good when someone says something nice about you. It is true however, that he did not become younger by just coloring his hair, and it is just the look. In fact, hair-coloring solution contains chemicals like peroxide that can even damage hair cells.

Interestingly, human body has two different types of age [1]: “Chronological age” according to the person’s date of birth and “Biological age” that refers to how old a person seems or feels. My parents lived up to their mid-eighties, while my sister’s father-in-law is living and is already 100 years old. He eats plain food, takes care of his own daily routine, talks normal to family members, and goes up and down on the stairs of the building where he lives. Can we then say that his “Biological age” is definitely less than his chronological age? According to the experts [1], the protective ends of the chromosomes, called “Telomeres” work to keep chromosome ends from deteriorating, affecting how quickly cells age and die. It seems, there is a direct correlation between Telomere length and biological age. Thus, persons with shorter Telomeres are more likely to experience an early death or develop neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s disease. However, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including a healthy diet and regular exercise, may maintain Telomere length. Recently, even a company [2] has opened up introducing a simple genetic test in measuring cellular age [2] of people in “Telo-years”.

1. <http://www.medicaldaily.com/human-bodys-chronological-and-biological-age-may-differ-why-your-breast-tissues-are-326884>

2. <https://www.teloyears.com/home/index.html?gclid=Ci7W45Wjr9MCFQhXDQodqJ4G-Q>

Think about when you have a pain or headache. What you do? Take rest and if that does not help, take some over-the-counter painkillers like “Aspirin” or “Ibuprofen (Advil)”. Some people even have to take prescription painkillers to curb their pain. In these situations, these painkillers act like blood thinners and thereby increase blood flow [3]. We must understand that for every cell in our body to work properly and do their job, they need oxygen and oxygen is delivered to them only by blood, circulating all over the body. If for some reason there is a blood clot or so-called “Plaque” formation [4], blood circulation will be hampered. Then, if cells undergo a condition with very low oxygen level than usual for a prolonged period, they can go through senescence or even die. In fact, due to various factors, cells in our body do go through senescence and die. Of course, each day new cells are born to compensate the loss. However, this process has a limit and when majority of cells in blood circulation or in the heart go through senescence, death ultimately happens.

So the question comes, what can we do to increase blood circulation? These days, when I visit my doctor, he/she always asks me if I do exercise every day for at least half an hour. Even walking will help. In answer, I remain silent, as I do not feel like going to the gym. That means we have to be active and move our body parts regularly to keep our cells healthier. In fact, athletes always have to go through a warm up exercise before they take part in the completion. If we sit still, body thinks as if cells do not need to metabolize or produce energy and they become sluggish. In addition, in case you have a broken bone and have a cast, once the cast is removed, you have to go through a period of physical therapy to slowly increase the movement of that part of the body. When we move, we use energy and then cells metabolize and produce more energy again. However, if too much energy is drawn, we feel tired and feel sleepy. Thus each one of us also needs to sleep for some time to rejuvenate our batteries or basal energy level of our cells.

Therefore, here are some tips [5] for healthy aging that we should consider at any stage of life and particularly in the senior life:

- *Stay physically active with regular exercise.*
- *Stay socially active with friends and family and within your community.*
- *Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet — dump the junk food in favor of fiber-rich, low-fat, and low-cholesterol eating.*
- *Do not neglect yourself: Regular check-ups with your doctor, dentist, and optometrist are even more important now.*
- *Take all medications as directed by your doctor.*
- *Limit alcohol consumption and cut out smoking.*
- *Get the sleep that your body needs.*

In addition, doctors [5] say, “Getting adequate nutrition can be a challenge as you get older.” In fact, several key nutrients may be in short supply, as we get older. Below are the top vitamins and nutrients [6] to be taken regularly that are suggested by them as follows. Above all, nutritionists recommend us to drink 3 to 5 large glasses of water each day.

3. <http://www.nativeremedies.com/ailment/increase-poor-blood-circulation.html>

4. <http://www.webmd.com/heart-disease/clogged-arteries-arterial-plaque#1>

5. <http://www.everydayhealth.com/senior-health/understanding/index.aspx>

6. <http://www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/nutrition-world-2/missing-nutrients>

Vitamin B12: *This is an important vitamin needed for creating red blood cells and DNA, and for maintaining healthy nerve function. This can be taken as supplements to meet the need.*

Folate/Folic Acid: *This is an important nutrient that needs supplementation for older people whose diets do not include sufficient fruits and vegetables or they do not eat folic acid fortified cereals.*

Calcium: *Calcium is so essential that if you do not get enough, your body will leach it out of your bones and this can increase the risk of brittle bones and fractures. Dairy products taken regularly can supply sufficient calcium. Otherwise supplements will be needed.*

Vitamin D: *This helps the body absorb calcium, maintain bone density, and prevent osteoporosis. In older people, vitamin D deficiency has also been linked to increased risk of falling. For this reason, calcium and vitamin D are available in one pill that should be taken by seniors.*

Potassium: *This essential mineral is vital for cell function and has been shown to help reduce high blood pressure and the risk of kidney stones. Unfortunately, surveys show that many older Americans do not get the recommended 4.7 gram of potassium a day. Bananas are good source of potassium.*

Magnesium: *Getting enough of this important nutrient can help keep your immune system in top shape, your heart healthy, and your bones strong. Some medications older people take, including diuretics, may also reduce magnesium absorption. So, fill your plate with as many unprocessed foods as possible, including fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, beans and seeds, all of which are great sources of magnesium.*

Fiber: *This is very important for good health and bowel movement as it helps promote healthy digestion by moving foods through the digestive tract.*

Probiotics and Prebiotics [7]:

Probiotics [7] are “good” bacteria that help keep our digestive system healthy. In addition, once they live and colonize in the gut, they forcibly remove harmful bacteria. One of the best sources of probiotics is yogurt containing live and good bacteria like lactobacillus or bifidobacteria. Probiotics are even available in vegetarian capsules. According to experts, strength of probiotics is measured in colony forming units (CFUs). One should purchase probiotics with highest CFU available and with as many strains possible. Vitacost [8] Probiotic 15-35 appears to be one of the best in this category. This probiotic supplement [8] provides 15 different probiotic strains with total strength of 35 CFUs.

On the other hand, prebiotics [7] are carbohydrates in the fibers that cannot be digested by the human body. They are food for probiotics. Foods rich in prebiotics include asparagus, artichokes, bananas, oatmeal, and legumes. Interestingly, Vitacost Probiotic 15-35 is a synbiotic, meaning it contains both probiotics and prebiotics that work together to promote digestion and support a healthy immune system [8]. I remember when I started with this probiotic, I had a bloating feeling for a couple of days and then it went

7. <http://www.webmd.com/vitamins-and-supplements/nutrition-vitamins-11/probiotics>

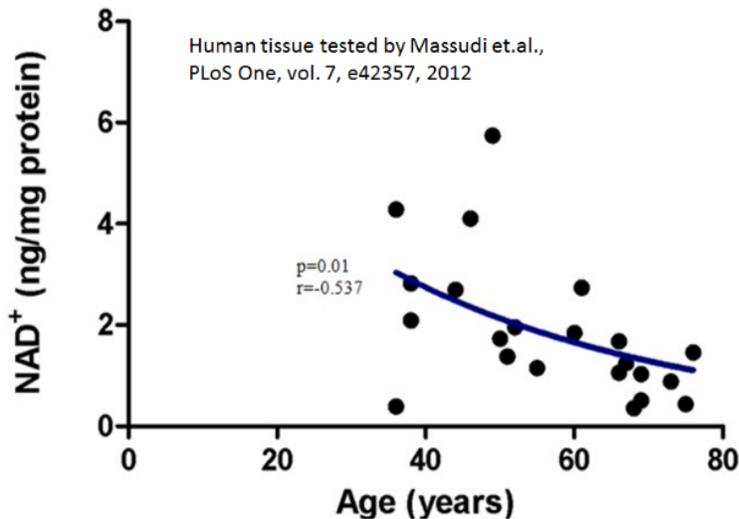
8. <https://www.vitacost.com/productResults.aspx?N=0&ss=1&Ntt=probiotic%2015-35>

away. Moreover, after using it for 2-3 weeks, I felt do not need to use it every day. That means, once the probiotics colonies are formed in the gut, we only need to maintain it and one capsule every 3 days was adequate for me to keep it going.

Omega-3 Fats:

These unsaturated fats, found primarily in fish, have a wide range of benefits, including possibly reducing symptoms in rheumatoid arthritis and slowing the progression of age-related macular degeneration, a disease of reduced vision in the elderly. Omega-3s may also reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease and perhaps even keep the brain sharper as we age. Some vegetable sources of omega 3 include soybeans, walnuts, flaxseeds, and canola oil. A vegetarian/vegan Omega-3 Supplement [9] called "Ovega-3" prepared from Algae (a plant) is one of the best products available in the market.

A new Vitamin B3 called Nicotinamide Riboside:



Cells in our body continuously go through DNA damage and subsequent repair [10]. Scientists are just beginning to understand some of the key molecules involved in DNA repair. Many factors, such as tobacco and radiation from sunlight, are known to actively damage DNA. Although our cells have sophisticated mechanisms for repairing DNA, errors inevitably slip through.

An important compound called nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD⁺) found in all cells that regulates

key signaling pathways and energy production, is also known to participate in DNA repair [10]. Scientists [11] have discovered that NAD⁺ level in our cells decline with age. The reason why NAD⁺ declines with age is unknown, but this might account for why DNA repair capacity declines with age. Research group led by Dr. David Sinclair at Harvard Medical School [12] found that by administering mice with an endogenous compound called nicotinamide riboside (NR), which is converted into NAD⁺ by cells, they could repair cell's loss in ability to make energy, and reverse signs of aging. In fact, administration of 2-year old mice with this NAD⁺ booster, NR, their cells behaved like those of 6-month young mice.

9. <http://www.ovega.com/>

10. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/researchers-find-clue-repair-aging-dna>

11. [Hassina Massudi](#), [Ross Grant](#), [Nady Braidy](#), [Jade Guest](#), [Bruce Farnsworth](#), and [Gilles J. Guillemin](#): Age-Associated Changes In Oxidative Stress and NAD⁺ Metabolism In Human Tissue, [PLoS One](#), vol. 7, e42357, 2012.

12. <https://hms.harvard.edu/news/genetics/new-reversible-cause-aging-12-19-13>

Dr. Charles Brenner, a Biochemist from University of Iowa conducted a first human clinical trial of NR on himself [13] and a second human trial of NR [13] involving six men and six women. Each participant received single oral doses of 100mg, 300mg, or 1000mg of NR in a different sequence with a seven-day gap between doses. After each dose, blood and urine samples were collected and analyzed. The results showed that NR vitamin increased NAD⁺ metabolism in a dose-dependent manner and there were no serious side effects with any of the doses. NR is now commercially available for human consumption from ChromaDex Inc [14] with the trade name "NIAGEN". Several companies like Prohealthspan.com, Genexformulas.com, and hpnsupplements.com, sell Niagen in vegetarian capsules that can be taken in empty stomach daily with a glass of water. These companies also sell their Niagen capsules via Amazon.com.

With this information, it is tempting to ask, "Can we make our cells younger and have healthy aging by taking NR (Niagen) along with adequate nutrition and exercise? That of course time will tell.

13. <https://medcom.uiowa.edu/theloop/news/first-human-clinical-trial-for-nicotinamide-riboside>

14. <https://www.chromadex.com/niagen/>

Author contact: 6387 Woodland Forest Dr., Elkridge, MD 21075 or via Email: jgmohanty@yahoo.com.

What Alumni Can Do For Their Alma Mater

Debendra Kumar Das

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in 1960's many educated Odias migrated to the USA, Canada and Europe. Most had studied at good colleges in India and with that education; they came for and further higher studies at foreign universities. Once completed, they were able to get respectable white-collar jobs and led a very comfortable life. They could afford to give an excellent education to their children. This success in life was possible because they had received a good education in India, which gave them their first break, to come into the prosperous western countries.



Therefore, the Odia immigrant community, who is the beneficiary of such good fortunes, owes it to the schools and colleges in Odisha and India to give something back in return. I particularly owe my gratitude to my Alma mater, the Regional Engineering College at Rourkela (RECR) located in western Odisha. Presently it is known as the National Institute of Technology Rourkela (NITR).

In January 2017, about 100 alumni with their spouses of my RECR batch, returned to their Alma mater in Rourkela. We celebrated the golden jubilee; the 50th anniversary after beginning our education at RECR in 1967. On that occasion, the alumni performed two noteworthy acts for our Alma mater; **(i) Creation of a scholarship fund and (ii) Creation of an Endowed Chair Professorship**. These two special

deeds will remain as bright examples of what alumni can do for their Alma mater. I wish to share these with the Odia diaspora to inspire them to do similar things for their own Alma mater.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Our classmates created a scholarship fund from their contributions and named it “1972 Batch Alumni Endowment Scholarship Fund.” The year 1972 was the year of graduation of our batch with the bachelor’s degree in engineering. The amount of funds raised for this scheme thus far is approximately Rs. 50 lakhs (US\$75000). Contributions came from the 1972 batch alumni from overseas as well as India. In the USA, our batch-mate, Gary Krishnan and in India, Siva Prasad Rao devoted many months of volunteer time in raising funds. Additional efforts were given unhesitatingly by many classmates to make this class reunion successful. The present scholarship scheme has been modeled after the old Prof. Bhubaneswar Behera Memorial Scholarship that was instituted around 1996 by the contributions of alumni of RECROAA (REC Rourkela overseas alumni association). This scholarship ran successfully at REC/NITR rewarding one meritorious student each year until 2010. Detailed information about this scholarship can be found in an article published in the Orissa Society of Americas souvenir journal in 2008.

Purpose: This is to award scholarships to financially needy students each year from the investment earnings of this endowment fund. Financial aid has become necessary in India, just as in the USA, during the last several decades, due to the rapid escalation in the cost of education. When we studied at RECR, the monthly tuition was Rs. 15, for a yearly amount of Rs. 180. Presently, the tuition for the academic year 2016 was Rs. 1.25 lakhs per year at NITR. However, the total yearly expenditure for a student at NITR is Rs. 2 lakhs. Therefore, some students coming from poor families need financial assistance to continue their studies there, although some bank loans are available. Our goal is to make higher education accessible to students from all levels of financial condition.

Criteria: The first criterion will be the financial need and the second criterion will be merit. More weight should be given to the means than merit. Therefore, a recipient need not be a top student in a class. As long as a student is performing well academically, but besieged with financial worries, he or she qualifies for this scholarship.

Selection: The selection will be made from a pool of applicants by a committee of professors appointed by the NITR administrators. Preferably, these scholarships should be awarded to students, who may otherwise dropout or discontinue their studies, because they are facing financial difficulty and do not possess the necessary funds for that year.

Amount and Numbers: It is estimated that the scholarship per student would be Rs. 35000 to 40000 per year. There is a 4-year degree program at NITR now, spanning 8 semesters. Each year 8 students, one from each semester, would be selected to receive this scholarship. The scholarships will be awarded at the beginning of the semester, before the students are required to pay their college dues. **The first group of students will be awarded these scholarships in July 2017, when the academic year starts.**

Permanency Clause of the Endowment Fund: The contributions of alumni, present and future, to this fund will go into the principal of the fund, which will remain in perpetuity. NITR has the authority to invest the fund prudently, in safe and secured investment schemes and maximize

the earning. A part of the yearly earning of this principal will go to inflation-proof this fund. The remaining part of the earning will go to award the scholarships.

Future Growth of the Principal: The inflation proofing will continuously raise the principal amount. Future contributions to the principal may include individual contributions by alumni of all batches, relatives and supporters. Multi-year donations are also encouraged. The recipients of this scholarship are urged to contribute after being gainfully employed. These additional contributions should always flow into the principal to boost it.

ENDOWED CHAIR PROFESSORSHIP

An endowed chair professorship will be opened in the electrical engineering department to honor the memory of late Dr. Ajay K. Mohanty, who was a deeply loved and well-accomplished professor in the discipline of electrical engineering. The targeted amount of contribution for this endowment fund is about Rs 1 crore (US\$ 155000).

Fund raising is going on at present in the USA under the leadership of Prof. Laxmi N. Bhuyan, Distinguished Professor at University of California, Riverside; and in India by Prof. Damodar Acharya (Past Director, IIT, Kharagpur), Mr. Bharat B. Mohanty, past president of NITR Alumni Association and several other eminent alumni. This principal of Rs. 1 crore is expected to generate an earning of about Rs 7 lakhs per year. Out of that, Rs 5 lakhs per year will be devoted to fund the research activities of the endowed chair professor and the remaining Rs. 2 lakhs will go into the principal to inflation-proof it and boost the principal amount.

The regular salary of the professor will come from the NITR source. There is an agreement that the institute NITR would provide matching funds to augment the research related expenditure of the endowed professor. The endowed chair professor will serve for a period of 3 to 5 years.

The purpose of this endowed professorship is to attract high quality research professors to NITR using funds from the endowment earning. This research professor will enhance the scholarly research and accomplishments at NITR and make the institute internationally known.

Prof. Laxmi N. Bhuyan, Prof. Damodar Acharya and several research oriented senior professors from NITR will be in the selection committee as experts to choose the first Endowed Chair Professor, **which is scheduled to take place by July 2017**. The criteria for the selection of the endowed professor are: national and international visibility through research awards, high quality publications in international journals and conferences, research funding from Indian government and industries, MS and Ph.D. student supervision during his/her career, and participation as program committee members in the national/international conferences.

WHY SHOULD WE GIVE?

- (i) Our contributions and efforts may start new phenomena at our Alma mater. Remember, we could inspire alumni from many batches; who came after us and who came before us. They will do innovative improvements, which will make our Alma mater one of the top educational institutions in India.
- (ii) Relieve a poor but meritorious student's financial burden, so that she/he can study peacefully, without mental strain and do well.

- (iii) Reward a student for her/his hard work and subsequent academic achievement.
- (iv) Students and faculty will become highly motivated, knowing that we are willing to invest our money for their success.
- (v) Your generosity in giving will set an example for the students, other alumni and faculty who may emulate similar charitable activities in India.

The young alumni are more entrepreneurial nowadays. So, I encourage them to give genuine thoughts to various endowment projects for their Alma mater. They should procure substantial funds to promote many worthwhile educational projects such as; (a) student and faculty exchange, (b) distinguished lecture series, (c) teaching awards for faculty, etc. that would elevate their alma mater to a higher level.



Dr. Debendra Kumar Das and his wife, Katherine Anne Cross-Das make Fairbanks, Alaska their home, where Debendra serves as a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Alaska.

My Ravenshaw Days - Some Reflections

Annapurna Devi Pandey



All the studies in Diaspora emphasize that Diasporic people retain aspects of both the cultures they are part of. Even after 30 years since I left my home state Odisha, I still embody the Ravenshaw college life as a student and a faculty. I was deeply influenced by the intellectual and political environment, my teachers, peers and my students from Ravenshaw (now a University) in Odisha. I was in college in the mid 1970s when the women's movement in India was peeking its head and women in rural, tribal and urban India were organizing against many injustices introducing changes in Indian laws and society. The impact of the women's movement, fighting for equal rights in education, work and politics and their struggle against oppression, in the context of abuse, rape, dowry or sati, found its way into number of women taking up higher education. This atmosphere must have helped me realize my disadvantaged self as a girl in a patriarchal society despite my liberal middle-class upbringing. This consciousness stayed with me and ignited my desire to understand the significant contributions of women as an undergraduate student in an historically elite college in the 1970s.

I distinctly remember the summer afternoon in 1973 when I received the index card for my application at Ravenshaw (then college). I was fifteen years old and had just graduated from Secondary Board High school where my father was teaching. I was super excited. I had not applied to any other college so I knew that if I did not get into Ravenshaw my fate was sealed. The first day at Ravenshaw was a completely new experience: the grand old red building bearing the weight of colonial heritage; the tall, enormous doors to the girl's common room; students and faculty all over the sprawling campus. My mother never attended college, my father's dream was to go to Ravenshaw but he had missed the application deadline and ended up going to Christ College. I was the first girl in my family to have the honor of attending Ravenshaw.

I have had the privilege of being a student at Ravenshaw (1973- 1977) and a lecturer in sociology from 1982 until 1988 when I went to a very well-regarded university in the west as a post-doctoral fellow in Social Anthropology. Ravenshaw played a critical role in my development, both as a student as well as a scholar. I had a wonderful college experience. I made many new friends (several who have reconnected with me recently on Facebook!). I gained a wealth of knowledge, learned to think in much more complex ways, and began to come into my own as a young woman. Ravenshaw gave me the exposure, confidence and most important of all, the tools to do well in graduate school.

I am very fortunate to have had legendary teachers through my years at Ravenshaw. Now that I am a teacher, I recognize more clearly their influence and pay tribute to some of those who have touched my life in powerful ways. Some of these teachers are no longer with us, but their legacies still impact on me as I endeavor to educate my own students. Let me give one example - my Economics teacher, who modeled competence, compassion and caring in teaching me much more than economics. She later became the editor of the oldest Odia daily and is well known for her voluminous writing, mesmerizing oratory, and social activism.

This teacher taught me in the first year at Ravenshaw and became my ideal. Even though she got married after high school, she was determined to pursue her higher education. After raising four children, she went back to college, topped in intermediate and got her Master's degree in Economics. When women her age were planning to get their children married and were getting ready for a relaxed life, she ventured out to teach in college and became a very popular professor. She was very motherly – warm, loving and very caring. At the same time, she was very strict, always demanding the best in terms of academic achievement and maintained a close inter-personal relationship with her students. Her feminism was expressed through her writings – poems, short stories, fictions and essays. Even though she grew up in a liberal middle class family, as a girl, she herself experienced numerous constraints and observed women's suffering as daughters, wives, mothers and widows and expressed it poignantly in her writings. Against all odds, she got her master's degree and earned economic independence but did not neglect her duties in the family. According to her, feminism is not about earning a degree in college but about overcoming the fear to be oneself and proving one's full potential. I can never forget her loving words "Annapurna, you have my blessing. Never be afraid to fulfill your dreams".

A number of other teachers at Ravenshaw introduced me to subjects like Political Science, English and Psychology and taught me the love for higher education. Without these amazing teachers, I would have never developed an ambition to do better and explore new fields. Overall, the teachers at Ravenshaw helped me feel that I was somebody, and would become a better somebody. I was lucky to be part of the co-educational set up. It helped me realize that I was in no way lesser in intelligence than my male classmates were, a tremendous realization for me while growing up in a patriarchal society.

Upon graduation from Ravenshaw with Psychology honors in 1977, I went to do my Masters and M.Phil. in Sociology at a highly regarded university in New Delhi, where I continued to meet teachers who would leave an indelible mark on me as a teacher and scholar. To my utmost delight, four years later, fate brought me back to Ravenshaw College as a lecturer. I was beside myself to teach at my alma mater! Fresh out of graduate school, I realized that the seeds were sown during my college years in the

same classrooms where I started teaching my students. Sociology was a new field and attracted many bright students. I had the privilege of teaching very bright, inquisitive and extremely hardworking students who have now become members of elite professional services such as IAS, IPS, Allied Services among others.

I was young, barely few years older than my senior undergraduate students were. I had just returned from a well-known politically active university in the capital of India, an ambition many of them shared. I could easily connect with my students, belonging to same sociocultural class and sharing the political and intellectual ideology as a Ravenshavian. I participated in numerous debates and student led activities on the campus, shared common space with them and encouraged their vigorous participation in the class discussion. I certainly felt inspired by my student's enthusiasm and their curiosity for knowledge.

In my early years of teaching, I worked very closely with my honors students as well as students coming from backgrounds in intermediate and BA classes. I was particularly interested in connecting with students coming from marginalized communities. As a woman academic, I took special interest in inspiring young women, many of whom have landed prestigious jobs in universities in Odisha, elsewhere in India, and abroad. Just a few years ago, I had a reunion with my students and much to my delight, found out that all of my women students are doing very well – being well-placed in academic, administrative, banking as well as non-profit sectors.

Now I teach Cultural Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. My warmest memories of being an Odia are my days at Ravenshaw as a student and faculty. It was here I realized that I was destined to become a teacher. I left Odisha in 1988; but have remained connected to my fellow students, friends as well as some of my revered teachers. I am happy to say that hardly a month passes by when I do not run into a Ravenshavian who brings wonderful memories of his or her time at Ravenshaw. When we are in college, we do not realize that if we do well, many of the doors, which seem tightly shut will automatically open to new avenues and opportunities leading us to what we call a meaningful life. I am so happy to know that my alma mater is celebrating its sesquicentennial year in 2017. All my greetings go to the current generation of students and teachers at Ravenshaw and I salute to all the Ravenshavians – past, present and future pioneers.



Dr. Pandey's contact info: 101 Lisa Court, Santa Cruz, California 95060; Email: Adpandey101@gmail.com

କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ନା ଆଶ୍ୱିନ (Karrtika or Ashwina)

Padmanava Pradhan

“What are the most popular festivals of Odisha”, asked a co-commuter friend during one 40-minute trip to New York City. I said “Ratha Yatra” and “Durga Puja” followed by ‘Kumar Purnima’ and “Raja Parba”. I emphasized that the last two are unique because nowhere else these days are celebrated in the same way as we do in Odisha. These days are extra specials for the youths, for the ‘kumar’ and ‘kumari’. On this gorgeous full moon night, youths, especially girls worship “Kumar”, another name of Lord Karitkeya, the handsome son of Lord Shiva and brother of Lord Ganesh.

When is “Kumar Purnima”, he asked. I said it is on the last day of “Ashwina” and this year it falls on October 15th, 2016. The next day is “Kartika Pratipada”, the first day of Kartika, when many people in Odisha observe a month long vegetarian diet, abstaining from eating fish and meat till Kartika purnima.

“That’s not the first day of “Kartika”, that’s the 16th day of “Ashwina”, objected my friend and he was supported by a South India friend sitting nearby.

“The first day of “Kartika” is our new year and it starts on the day after “Deepawali”. He continued and said the day after Deepavali Amabasya is the first day of Kartika and the first day of a new ‘Shaka’ year. That is the reason we wish “Happy New Year” to each other on that day which is ‘shukla pratipapa’.

I then said the Krishna janmasthanami in Odisha comes in Bhadrpada month on the eighth day of the ‘krishna paksha’, the black fortnight of Bhadrpada. He said Krishna Janmasthanami is not in Bhadrpada month, it is in Shravan.

Now I know why he is confused. There are several variations of Indian Hindu calendar depending on the region. Indians mostly follow either solar (tropical) or lunisolar depending on their location for religious observations. In Lunisolar calendars, the days and months are calculated based on the motions of the Moon and the Sun. Whereas in solar calendar, based on the motion of the Sun. Most of the calendars are derived from Gupta Era astronomy developed by Aryabhata, Barahamihira or Brahmagupta. Vedanga Jyotisha which in the earlier period had been standardized in a number of works known as Surya Siddhanta. The name of the twelve months are the same all over India except in Kerala where the months are named according to the solar zodiac signs.

The Lunisolar calendar has two main variations, Amanta and Purnimanta depending on whether the first day of the month starts after Amabasya or after Purnima.

Purnimanta calendar

The Purnimanta calendar is followed in most of North India, i.e., in the states of Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan, including Odisha for religious observations. It also includes Uttaranchal, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Delhi, but they are off-shots of bigger states and follow the same calendar. It differs from the amanta calendar in that the months are reckoned from Full Moon to Full Moon. Therefore, the Purnimanta calendar starts two weeks before the amanta calendar does; that is, it starts with the lunar day after the last Full Moon before the Mesha samkranti, after 'Chaitra Purnima'. The Vikrama Era is followed, along with the northern school of Jovian year names

Amanta calendar

It is lunisolar like purnimanta; i.e., its days and months are calculated based on the motions of the Moon and the Sun. Like the Chinese calendar, the month is calculated from new Moon to new Moon. It differs from the Chinese calendar in that the day of the new Moon is considered the last day of the previous month instead of the first day of the new month.

In the Chinese calendar, the year is divided into 12 solar months by 12 principal solar terms or zhongqis. In the Indian calendar, the year is divided into 12 solar months or rasis by 12 principal solar terms or samkranti. In the Chinese calendar the starting point of both the lunar and the solar months are considered to be the whole days on which the new Moon and the zhongqis occur. However, in the Indian calendar, the new Moon and the samkranti are considered moments in time. This becomes important when computing leap months, since like in the Chinese calendar, a leap month (adhika masa) is added to the calendar on average every 2.7 years to offset the disparity in lengths between the lunar year and the sidereal year. In addition, a month (kshaya masa) is occasionally skipped.

It has two variations, the southern Indian and the western Indian versions. The southern amanta lunisolar calendar is followed in the South and Southwest Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

The southern amanta calendar differs from the western amanta calendar in its treatment of kshaya masas, the New Year Day and the era followed. We believe that the southern amanta calendar follows the southern school for treating kshaya masas. Saha and Lahiri suggest that it follows the Salivahana Saka Era starting with Chaitra Sukla Pratipada [\[1\]](#), the lunar day after the last new Moon before the Mesha samkranti. The years are also named according to the names of the Jovian years (southern school [\[2\]](#)). The eras and handling of kshaya masas will be discussed in detail in their respective sections.

In Western India, specifically, in the state of Gujarat, the amanta calendar is of two forms [\[3\]](#), one that starts with Aashaadha (followed in the Kathiawar region) and one that starts with Kartika (followed all throughout Gujarat). Both calendars follow the Vikrama Era and both also probably follow the northwestern school for kshaya months.

Solar calendars

Malayali (Kerala) calendar

There are four regional variations of Indian solar calendars that differ in the way the start of the month is related to the samkranti. The samkranti is the moment when the Sun enters an

Indian zodiac sign or rasi. The Malayali calendar is followed in the South Indian state of Kerala. It is a solar calendar so the months are defined according to the rasis. The year starts with the Simha samkranti and follows the Kollam Era. The month begins on the same day as the samkranti if it occurs before aparahna, i.e., three-fifths of a day. Otherwise, it begins on the next day.

Tamil calendar

The Tamil calendar is followed in Tamil Nadu. This calendar is also solar; the month begins on the same day as the samkranti if it occurs before sunset. The Kali Era is followed along with the southern Jovian cycle. One peculiarity about the Tamil calendar is that its month names start with Chittirai (Chaitra). The Bengali calendar is followed in West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. The Era is the Bengali San. The rule for the beginning of the month is again different; the month begins on the day after the samkranti, if it occurs before midnight. Otherwise, it begins on the third day.

The Odia calendar is followed in the eastern state of Orissa. In addition to the Bengali San, the Saka, Vilayati and Amla eras are followed. The month begins on the same day as that of the samkranti.

In Odisha, we follow the solar calendar starting from Mahabishuba Sankranti or Mesha sankranti. At the same time, most of the brata's (Sudasha, bhai Jiantia, puo jiantia etc.), osha and jatras (Ratha, Bahuda, Chandana etc) follow lunisolar calendar

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Clean Coal Technology

Arun Misra

INTRODUCTION

Utilizing the vast reserves of Coal in environmentally safer ways has been an area of public and scientific concern, and intensive investigation for a long, long time, the world over. 'Clean coal' is more of hype than substance. It is a myth than a fact. But the coal is abundant in many parts of the globe. It is relatively easy to mine coal and transport. It is extensively used from small family hearths to large coal-fired power plants, and is an excellent source of energy. The environmental impact of burning coal is environmentally undesirable. Hence, we must work diligently to make coal 'cleaner'. The breakthrough in the use of coal will come by increasing its share in total energy market. Presently, coal is not being utilized enough, because as other energy resources are more economical and burn used environmentally more safely. The use of coal is increasing could increase very fast, but the process of making it 'cleaner', and environmentally safer, which is of paramount importance, has not received much attention. The combustion of coal to produce Coal-gas or Syngas is fairly well known. It appears that biological processes for the utilization of coal products, especially syngas, may provide a cost effective means to obtain alternative industrially important chemicals, and fuels.



PLASMIDS IN ANAEROBIC BACTERIA

The use of microorganisms for the solubilization of coal is being attempted at various laboratories. However little attention has been given to the utilization of syngas through microbial fermentation.

Clostridium thermoaceticum, in glucose-limited cultures grown anaerobically at the expense of carbon monoxide (CO) and carbon dioxide (CO₂), autotrophically utilizes syngas. The hydrogenase enzyme of this organism functions in both the production and consumption of hydrogen gas (H₂). Both heterotrophic and autotrophic roles exist for this enzyme in the production of acetate. We have been looking into the ability of *C. thermoaceticum* to utilize syngas (a mixture of CO, CO₂, and H₂) and to see if this bioconversion of syngas can yield useful fuels and/or chemicals. This organism also contains the enzymes CO-dehydrogenase, and Formate dehydrogenase, which are both required for the bioconversion of syngas and the production of acetic acid (1). In an effort to genetically engineer *C. thermoaceticum* to overcome its natural physiological limitations as a syngas utilizer, we decided to look for naturally occurring plasmids (circular DNA in bacteria) and phages (bacterial viruses) that may be developed as cloning vectors.

C. thermoaceticum was grown at 55°C, in crimp-sealed bottles, in glucose medium under 100% CO₂. Harvested bacteria were screened for plasmids, by ethanol precipitation; the resultant plasmid-DNA was purified by cesium chloride, buoyant-density gradient centrifugation. The resultant plasmids were compared with *E. coli* plasmid-DNA. Competent cells of both *C. thermoaceticum* and *E. coli* were prepared by treatment with calcium chloride (CaCl₂) and heat shock. Plasmids from *E. coli* were used to transform *C. thermoaceticum*, while the plasmids from *C. thermoaceticum* to transform *E. coli*. Gel electrophoresis on agarose, curing of plasmids by acridine orange were utilized to confirm the continued enzyme activity of transformed cells of *C. thermoaceticum*. The presence of naturally occurring plasmids in this bacterium seems obvious, which was further confirmed by loss of plasmid bands in acridine orange treated cells. Genetics of anaerobic bacteria is still in its infancy, due to the lack of proper laboratory techniques. However, we have obtained evidences for the transfer of a thermophilic gene into mesophilic environment (2).

The continued presence of enzymatic activity in plasmid cured *C. thermoaceticum*, confirms that the plasmids were not associated with the key enzymes of acetate biosynthesis. However, the identification of these plasmids, and transformation of competent cells of *E. coli* with plasmids of *C. thermoaceticum*, and its further characterization should go a long way towards developing a cloning vector for gene transfer in industrially important thermophilic and anaerobic acetogens and methanogens.

PHAGE IN SYNGAS-UTILIZING BACTERIA

The strain improvement of bacteria to utilize coal for generating fuels and chemical should be accomplished by creating 'super bugs' using genetic engineering techniques. A 30-kilo base (kb) plasmid in *C. thermoaceticum*, described above, affords a means to work in this direction. However, gene transfer and introduction of newer traits in bacteria are accomplished using bacterial viruses, phages. Phages of clostridia of industrial importance have been reported as contaminants causing extensive damage to acetone-butanol fermentation Industry.

Water samples from sewage plants were collected anaerobically and filtered in anaerobic chamber, and the filtrate were added to the cultures *C. thermoaceticum* to observe lysis. Filtrate from lysed cultures were transferred from one culture to another. Bacterial virus or phage particles were purified by Ultra centrifugation, and the pellets re-suspended, and characterized under electron microscope (3).

The sterile filtrate from sewage plant (s) were able to lyse the bacterial culture, while the autoclaved and detergent treated were not. Icosahedral viral particle were also confirmed by electron microscopy. But attempts to obtain visible plaques on bacterial lawns failed. Further studies on this phage towards obtaining a lysogenic strain, or developing one by mutagenesis for its use as vector to transform the genes for co-hydrogenase, the key enzyme involved in the conversion of CO or syngas to acetic acid by this organism is required. But this should comprise another approach, in addition to other methods of coal bioprocessing, especially with fungi (4).

CONCLUSION

Coal-fired power plants are still the largest source of generating energy. Problems associated with the disposal of nuclear waste, and adverse environmental impacts of hydroelectric dams, points towards further utilization of coal. Until we are able to contain the undesired aspects of coal-burning, we will not be able to use this abundant resource available to us. Microbial and genetic Engineering approaches should go a long way towards developing 'Clean Coal Technology', for generating plenty of affordable energy in environmentally safer ways. Solar, wind and geothermal sources of energy will also have their fair share of the total energy spectrum.

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Dr. Arun Misra is Retired Professor of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering, Atlanta University Center, Atlanta. He can be reached for any questions via Email: misrausa@yahoo.com.

The research described in this communication were supported from Grant(s) from Department of Energy of the US Government, and were conducted at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, TN; Pittsburgh Energy Technology Center (PETC), Pittsburgh, National Institute of Health (NIH), Bethesda, MD and Virology Division of Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Atlanta. A host of scientists and associates were involved in working together and discussing the various steps leading to the conduct of experiments and obtaining results described herein: Greg Brewer, Harold Drake, Richard Silver, Terry Cooper, Doug Berg, Chuck Scott, Mildred Perry and others.

Let 21st Century Be A Great Change for Women

Jyotshna Mahapatra

We as women of today have come across many changes but let 21st century bring out a great change for women . To achieve this we have to first change our mindsets that means mindsets of rural as well as urban women . We have to work harder and harder on this. Rome was never built in a day, so let's have patience and continue our trial for the great change.

The 20th century gave birth to many successful women who made a significant impact and changed their country's political and social climate. First Lady of the US, Eleanor Roosevelt, helped women to think in a broader spectrum and her enormous humanitarian commitment towards children, the oppressed and the poor gained her the extraordinary love of millions of people throughout the world. The UK's first female Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, was well known by her nickname of the "Iron Lady". She said, "In politics if you want anything said, ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman". And the first woman Prime Minister of India and influential leader, Indira Gandhi was a symbol of women's strength in a prevalently male-dominated society. These examples of success serve as excellent reminders of women's capabilities, talents, potential and strategic thinking that should be the model for future progress and development, especially in nations where women have historically held only subservient roles.



The continued oppression and discrimination of women throughout the world today is an insult and offense to our ancestral roots, values and status. No one knows who the next Mother Teresa will be and by allowing discrimination and abuse of women in the world today, we are destroying potential new revolutionaries who can contribute their capabilities and passion toward creating a healthier social, economic and political environment. As Mother Teresa said "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."

Continued mistreatment of women only results in destruction of our new generation who are the next branches of our family trees. However, if we want to build a democratic and autonomous society throughout the world and live in a respectful civilization and environment, we need to give an equal opportunity to women who always have been and always will be the role models, nurturers, counselors, providers, friends and valued members of our nations. Although throughout their lives many women suffered much abuse and cruelty, historically women have remained strong and powerful and have not given up fighting for the survival of their families and nations. They are the true examples of hope, trust and success. Let's be reminded of Rosa Parks, "the mother of the freedom movement" who did not give up her seat on the bus because she was physically tired, but because she was tired of giving in. She was a very strong, firm and proud woman, who tried to protect her dignity and rights as she said; "I felt that we had endured that too long. The more we gave in, the more we complied with that kind of treatment, the more oppressive it became."

After all of these decades, women are no longer frightened to speak out in the hierarchical directorial society in order to protect their rights. Now, in the 21st century, it is time for women all over the world to harness their strengths as mothers, wives, daughters, friends, teachers, political figures, humanitarians and leaders, and follow in the path that has been blazed by powerful women who came before them. During the recent uprising in the Middle East, women across the Arab world exhibited

their courage, strength and fearless power, stood together and worked hard to support the protest and peaceful demonstrations assisting with communication, safety and shelter. These are women who have already made an enormous change in their countries and will remain as the archetypes in history.

Let the 21st century be the revolution of thousands of successful women who can bring peace, harmony, prosperity and stability needed to change this world. While she started her long and difficult journey amidst discrimination, abuse and inequality in the 20th century, Oprah Winfrey emerged in the 21st century as one of the most influential women in the world. Her rise to success proves that women, no matter where they are from, can be successful and powerful given the right opportunity. As she said "Excellence is the best deterrent to racism or sexism." One can only strive for excellence if given a chance.

All of these successful women have contributed to changing the global condition. By using the technological revolution of the 21st century, which has made this planet very small and connected, women now have tools available to assist them in their fight for recognition, dignity and equality. Another successful woman of our time, Madeleine Albright, commented in one of her speeches that "There is a special place in hell for women who do not help each other." It's time for us to help each other, become empowered and accomplish our mission together.



Prof.. Jyotshna Mahapatra
E Mail : jyotshnam@yahoo.com

Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in Odisha State (India)

An Overview

Dr. Prabhat Nalini Patnaik

INTRODUCTION:

Odisha State (Latitude 17° 49' 38"-22° 34' 15" N and Longitude 81° 23' 21" -27° 29' 57" E) is one of the major maritime States of India, offering vast scope for development of inland, brackish water and marine fisheries. The State's 480 km long coastline with twenty four thousand sq.km area within the continental shelf has ample potential for marine fisheries development. Fresh water resources of the State are estimated to be 6.76 lakh ha comprising 1.25 lakh ha of tanks/ponds, 2.00 lakh ha of reservoirs, 1.08 lakh ha of lakes, swamps, hill and 1.7 lakh ha of rivers and canals. The State's brackish water resources are of the order of 4.18 lakh ha with a break up of 0.93 lakh ha of Chilika Lake, 2.98 lakh ha of estuaries, 32587 ha of brackish water areas and 8100 ha of backwaters. By judiciously harnessing these resources, the fish production from capture and culture based capture fisheries would be substantially augmented to meet the domestic market demands, increase in export apart from creating employment and income generating opportunities for the rural poor and enhance their food, nutritional livelihood security. Fisheries sector of Odisha contributes to the State GDP at 6% of agriculture sector.



The fishery sector in Odisha is faced with low levels of illiteracy and relatively high level of debt. This calls for a paradigm shift in the way fisheries is regulated and managed. The challenge, in this context is to develop a long term policy and strategies allowing for the balance and sustainable management and development of the fishery sector in Odisha. With the pragmatic action of State Government a new Odisha Fisheries Policy 2015 is already in force which has provided a suitable policy environment and impetus the overall development of fisheries sector in the State.

1.0 Potential for fisheries development:

Broadly the State is endowed with three major resources for development of fisheries sector which would essentially contribute to the economy of the State, employment generation, livelihood and nutritional security for 41.97 million population of the State. With the effective implementation of the new fisheries policy there is every likelihood to harness the full resource potential with projected fish production of 5.34 lakh metric ton from inland fisheries (culture & capture), 0.67 lakh metric ton from brackish water sector and 1.61 lakh metric ton from marine fisheries sector, totaling to 7.62 lakh metric ton per annum. The present level of fish production in the State is estimated at 4.67 lakh tonnes (2014-15). While the fish production from the inland fisheries (fresh water & brackish water resources) has increased from 2,18,716 tonnes to 2,94,000 tonnes, the marine fish production declined from 1,30,767 tonnes to 1,20,000 tonnes during the corresponding period (2013-14). The annual per capita fish production presently is 9.13 kg in Odisha is against the national per capita fish consumption of 9.8 kg.

2.0 Present Progress:

Production:

State's fish production (2014-15) has been estimated at 4.67 lakhs tonnes comprises 3.34 lakh ton from inland fisheries including brackish water sector and 1.33 lakh tonnes from marine fishery sector. The annual export of marine products from Odisha during the last five years ranged between 14,135 tonnes in 2008-09 and 30,980 tonnes (2013-14) valued approximately at Rs.357.88 crores to Rs.1800.00 crores. Contribution of Odisha State to the present level of marine products expected from the Country is about 2.5 % in terms of quantity and 4.8% in terms of value.

Inland fisheries:

For developing inland fisheries, the department fisheries has 106 fish farms, out of which 27 are fish breeding farms with hatcheries and the private sector has 89 fish bidding farms. Presently, there are 108 fish seed hatcheries in Odisha with the designed capacity for producing around Rs.70. 00 crore fry. The average productivity of the reservoirs of the State was around 9.3 kg/ha as compared to the national average of 15 kg/ha. As a result of application of appropriate management measures the productivity of the reservoirs has increased to an average of 93 kg/ha where interventions are made. Fresh water aquaculture in State is being promoted through district level fish farmers' development agencies (FFDAs). These FFDAs has so far brought under scientific fish farming in 62137 ha in 30 districts with an average fish productivity of 2.13 tonnes/ha.

Brackish water fisheries:

Out of the total potential brackish water area of 38,575 ha, 32,587 ha has been found suitable for brackish water aquaculture. So far 16,387 ha brackish water area has been developed of which 10174 ha has been brought under shrimp culture. The shrimp production (*Peneaeus monodone*) during 2014-15 was 21,941 metric ton at the average productivity of 2.83 tonnes/ha. There are 14 shrimp hatcheries with an installed annual capacity of 50.5 crores post-larvae and about 73 percent of the installed capacity is being produced per year.

Marine Fisheries:

In the marine fisheries sector, significant marine fisheries infrastructures have been developed along 480km long coast line of the State. Marine fishermen population with 1,14,228 households which live in 813 marine fishing villages are the major beneficiaries of coastal fishing activities. There are 14,317 fishing crafts operating in the State's coastline of which 5,048 numbers are motorized and 1,854 numbers are mechanized. There are, in total 68 marine fish landing centers and 4 no's of fishing harbors. The total marine fish production during 2014-15 was estimated at 1,33,210 tonnes.

3.0 Issues and challenges:

The key issues that are currently faced by the fisheries sector in Odisha *inter alia* include:-

- Resource depletion due to increasing use of destructive fishing gears and practices under unregulated fishing raising.
- Inadequate information database on fisheries resources and the state of aquatic environment to guide management decisions.
- Inappropriate regulatory framework and inappropriate mechanisms for controlling excess to fisheries resources.
- Inadequate monitoring, extension and enforcement mechanisms.

- Effective and active participations of communities in sustainable development and management of fishery resources.
- Inadequate extension services and capacity building trending to primary resource users (fishers, fish farmers and other stake holders).
- Inadequate fisheries infrastructures.
- Formulation and enforcement of appropriate fisheries legislations with effective panel provisions.
- Clandestine import and introduction of non native (exotic) species of fish and shell fish in aquaculture.

4.0 New Fishery Policy: (Thrust areas)

The followings are the thrust areas under the new Fishery Policy which are being addressed during Policy implementation in the forthcoming years.

- Uniform suitable leasing policy for Government water bodies and suitable brackish water land for aquaculture development.
- Fish seed hatchery registration and seed certification.
- Establishment of commercial snappy hatcheries in PPP mode.
- Development of ornamental fisheries for livelihood development of rural communities and SHGs.
- Strengthening of marine fisheries database.
- Resource specific fishing in the marine offshore areas.
- Valid addition and marketing systems.
- Development of marine infrastructure.
- Encouraging social fishery.
- Resource mapping using GIS remote sensing technique for fishery resources of the State.
- Diversification in aquaculture.
- Post harvest fish quality management following the principles of cold chain system.



Dr. (Mrs) Prabhat Nalini Patnaik
Dy. Director of Fisheries, Odisha (Retd).
Currently at 905 Winthron Drive, Nashville, TN, 37214

The Pride of Odisha

Surendra Nath (Contributed by Balakrishna Dixit)

This is the story of Shri Haldhar Nag, who hails from the western part of Odisha and was recently awarded the Padmashree by the President of India.

Shri Haldhar Nag was born on 31 March 1950, in a village in Bargarh district of Odisha, hailing from a poor family, Haldhar Nag did not receive formal education. He did many odd jobs in his childhood for a living. His odd jobs include performing on and off in theatre groups and other village troupes, where he gave expression to his artistic talents. He took up a job as a cook in a school hostel, and later set up a small cabin-shop selling stationery for students in the vicinity of that school.



During his association with schools he started writing folk songs in his mother tongue, Koshali (the language also known as Sambalpuri). His writings were appreciated and soon he recognised his own talent and started writing more poems. The first poem he wrote, and which was published in 1990, in a local magazine, was *Dhado Bargachh* (The Old Banyan Tree). He then sent out four more poems to that magazine and all got published. Nag gained considerable fame for writing poems with social themes.

Since then there has been no stopping for the flow of his creativity. He has written several hundreds of poems (they could even be more than a thousand) of which he has not kept a count. Some of his poetic works include long narratives like *Mahasati Urmila*, *Bachhar*, *Achhia*, *Tara Mandodari*, each between 200 to 300 stanzas in length. His poems carry a message for the people and he covers themes like oppression, social issues, nature, religion and mythology. In most of his poems, his message is delivered as a twist in the tail in the last stanza.

He remembers all his poems by heart and used to sing them out to gatherings and crowds from his mind like a minstrel. Thus his popularity grew as a bard.

He was recognized formally as 'Lok Kabi Ratna' by Prayog Anushtan in 1997 in a ceremony held in his honor. He received the Sahitya Akademy Award in 2014. The latest feather in his cap is the Padma Shri Award for literature bestowed on him by the President of India in 2016.

Interestingly, poetry of Haldhar Nag has become the theses for Ph.D by three students of literature. But his poems in Koshali-Sambalpuri has limited readership even within Odisha. I have translated into English a collection of those poems and compiled them into a volume titled *Kavyanjali*, so that the poetry gets the worldwide attention it deserves. *Kavyanjali, Vol-I* was released on October 2nd, 2016, and renowned litterateurs from different parts of the country have appreciated his work.

The translation work on the second volume of *Kavyanjali* is in progress and is scheduled for release by the end of this year.



A Tribute to Mahapatra Nilamani Sahoo

Kanak Hota



Mahapatra Nilamani Sahoo (1926-2016) received Odisha Sahitya Academy award for *Akasha Patala* (1979) and Kendra Sahitya Academy award for *Abhisapta Gandhara* (1984). A consummate storyteller and conscientious chronicler of the moral dilemma faced by the middle class, Sahoo is hilariously comic and witty. He looks at life with a deep sense of awe. Faith in the innate goodness of man is central to his narratives though he is equally aware of the irrepressible darker sides of a man. His realistic comic narratives use both the scholarly and the everyday Odia language with great ease. Incompatibility in the man's thought and action and the shadowy line between the real and the illusory that deludes him, often create the comic in his writings.



In a tribute to him, I am presenting a commentary to one of his widely read short stories, "*Andha Ratira Surya*", also a comic that represents a complex human drama poised on a clash between irrepressible greed and benevolent humanism. Caught in the conflict, Sahoo's protagonist Mrutyunjaya ultimately has an encounter with his inherent goodness that turns into a surging afflatus helping him to withstand the imminent fall.

I read this story as a three-layered fable on the clash of insufferable greed and benevolent humanism, in which fowls and humans tell a delicate tale of moral choice that an individual must accept at some critical point of his/her life. The structural integrity of the fable hinges upon the delicate weaving of the three layers of the tale. Lighthearted at the outset, the story takes a serious didactic turn as '*Andha Rati*', the dark night, brings the protagonist, face to face with vicious greed that shrouds his instinct and action momentarily.

In the story, Mrutyunjaya, an inconsequential low-paid small employee, is caught in an unwarranted whirling tornado for precisely forty-five minutes on his way back from the market. The powerful storm sweeps him of his feet. High wind and torrential rain macerate the market place; shops and theaters are razed to the ground. The impact brings down a huge old tree – the safe haven for hordes of bats in the boundary of *Radhakanta Mattha* (a monastery). Thousands of hurt and wounded bats fling from the tree to the crowd of confused and panicking humans. An army of greedy scavengers, rushes to the heart

of the melee and begins collecting those desperate wounded bats in baskets; some even grab them in their bare hands. Mrutyunjaya too succumbs to the predatory instinct:

“Mrutyunjaya Babu looked at those countless dying, hurt, and wounded bats littered on the ground.... The heart of the rain-soaked earth began to quicken... And, instantly a primitive, violent, devilish devouring animal instinct consumed him –his taste buds got wet. A force akin to the violent hunting instinct in the lizard targeting the prey, the tooth of the tiger prancing for the victim or the vigor in the tail of the crocodile ready to curl the catch, overpowered him . . .He switched on his torch light. He saw just large lumps of flesh, heaps of easily collectible flesh, chunks of tender flesh –flesh covered with fresh blood. He began collecting them...” (p 157)

In these above lines, Sahoo, the masterful artist, equates human fallibility and wantonness with “primitive, devilish devouring animal instinct” and says that the powerful impulse is insurmountable. He just does not ‘tell’, rather he ‘shows’ the precise moment of his protagonist’s fall through the use of these powerful phrases.

As Mrutyunjaya begins to collect few bats egregiously into his basket, more bats begin to swarm his bicycle and wrap its spokes, wheels, and handles; they choke him immobile. The piercing shrill cries of pain of the mass overwhelm him. Chained to stand in the chaos, he reflects on his senseless cruel action and reacts in remorse, “But Oh God what am I doing!”

Sahoo hints that with this realization, Mrutyunjaya feels the surging afflatus within; he reaches a redemptive moment that lets him look at the bats with pulsating hearts not just as meat to devour, but rather, as creatures desperately looking for his compassion:

“Mrutyunjaya’s human heart with a divine soul emerged from the darkness; he had a brief but powerful brush with his inner humanity. The rush of the divine within was fierce and unstoppable; he was saved...” (p 161)

When Sahoo says, “Mrutyunjaya is saved”, we understand that good sense prevails over his gluttonous impulse and he releases the throng of bats from his bicycle with genuine compassion. Had it been a one-dimensional didactic tale, the story should appropriately end here. But, Sahoo extends the tale beyond this point of simplistic solution to a more complex level of narration. The next two layers of “*Andha Ratira Surya*” elaborate the complexity of greed as a deep-rooted human malady.

The second layer of the fable juxtaposes Mrutyunjaya’s intense longing for meat with the actions of his two innocent children: “Kuna” and “Kuni”. His children rise far above him in an identical critical situation the storm places them. The choice is whether to save a wounded bat and a forlorn kid, or kill and feast over their meat. They save the bird and the beast, and thus, surpass Mrutyunjaya in their exemplary acts of love and care.

Kuna rescues a frightened kid (baby goat) who could not keep pace with the mother goat and got stuck in the storm. Kuna says,

"This poor one, as the storm chased hard, could not run. Caught in the powerful wind it stood and cried for the mother. I got him home.... That is our friend Kanagoi Babu's goat Daddy! I will drop him back at their place tomorrow." (p 162)

His daughter Kuni is equally precocious in saving the life of a wounded bat:

"Daddy! Look at this bat. The storm that just struck brought it to our door. The poor one broke its wings. Mama put some iodine lotion on its wounds. I laid some rags in a cardboard box and let it rest. I gave him some rice and milk. So stubborn! It didn't touch anything." (p 162)

Thus, Kuna and Kuni stand for the Sun ("*Surya*" in Odia), the beacon of light and hope in the dark night. The jolt is moral. Empathy and benevolence stand out as the virtues that Sahoo stresses as cardinal principles of being human.

The third layer of the fable runs as a subtle parallel narrative to *Andha Ratira Surya*. In this part, a real life report of deplorable act of human cruelty stands as contrast to the act of kindness that two siblings exhibit. Serving as a trigger, the fable of Mrutyunjaya, takes the reader to the scene of a heart-wrenching fatal train accident in *Badapur* that killed and wounded scores of passengers. In that fateful night, people from the nearby villages come to the accident site and instead of rescuing the victims—dead and wounded, scavenge through their belongings and run away with their purses, necklaces, earrings, wristwatches, transistor radios and clothes. This large-scale act of collective disgrace and inhumanity finds a prototype in Mrutyunjaya's private act of avariciously collecting wounded bats for feasting over their meat.

The dark night of the train accident —when evil prevailed and men stooped disparagingly low to satisfy their greed, is synonymous with the sudden power outage during the storm that puts Mrutyunjaya's humanity to test. Darkness grants anonymity and he, like the looters from the village, forgets the distinction between right and wrong. Mrutyunjaya's wise friend Chandramohan aptly calls the looters of *Badapur*,

"Heartless, cruel, beastly humans whose eyes are red with greed" and in whose "crooked eyes shine the fire of hell." (p 161)

As told in the beginning, *Andha Ratira Surya* starts with a softer note. Mrutyunjaya shops from the market the same old cheap, unsavory items "*thoda*", the tender core of banana plant, also named "*manjaa*"; "*badi*", dried lumps of Urad dal paste and "*khadaa*", a type of spinach stems. He manages his household with a meager income; he provides for his wife, three children and aging parents. Even though he is tempted to buy an expensive vegetable like "*Potala*" and rummages over the delicacies that can be made from it, he cannot afford to buy it. His budget is two rupees per day. "*Sita Sagar Rohi*," the fabled fish too is another dream food beyond his reach.

These details of his life remind the reader that Sahoo's hero has wobbling repressed desire for delectable vegetables, fish and meat, and for the gratification of the same, he goes impulsively for the dying bats. The storm of forty-five minutes is a storm perhaps he has withstood all his life.

Sahoo has observed life closely. Mrutyunjaya's wife Kuna-Bou (meaning Kuna's mother), disgruntled and sarcastic of her husband's poverty, Kuni's stealing of fried fish from a friend's kitchen and getting beaten and Mrutyunjaya feeling threatened from the rags to riches rise of his brother-in-law –a corrupt petty contractor, are realistic depictions of life marked by wants. He is guilty that he cannot feed fish to his daughter Kuni, that he cannot get a bicycle for his son Kuna and that he cannot present a nice sari to his wife. The reader discovers a subtle pattern in the narrative. Objects of his longing like "Potala", "Rohi fish" and "Bat meat" have pricey utilitarian substitutes. We can replace them with his desire for a bicycle for his son, a good sari for his wife and a load of cash that his brother-in-law makes. At a deeper level, his preying upon bats also symbolizes that a person having no access to material comforts of life he wills, is most prone to be corrupt; he can act with no moral compunction to get hold of material gain through unscrupulous means.

The locale of his story, though not pronounced, is identifiably Bhubaneswar, the state capital widely known as "Gulama Sahara", (the city of the government servants). The reader visualizes the "na talaa" (the nine storied tower) its dimly lit cubicles and pan-chewing clerks going through dusty dog-eared files. One can also imagine the secretariat that houses the politicians and administrators –a place synonymous with intrigue and manipulation in popular imagination. *Mrutyunjaya* –a tiny cog in the machine, in all probability works in either of these two places. In him, Sahoo looks at a character that stands at the lowest rung of an extremely stratified system. Mrutyunjaya is a victim of his circumstances. Rhythmic adage "thoda, badi, khadaa" suggests stagnation in his existence. He invokes pity in his fall.

In a subtle way, the story also tells that a man can, without scruples, instantaneously trample age-old social and spiritual values that restrain him from wrongdoing. This exactly is the precept in the fall of the old sprawling tree in the premise of *Radhakanta Mattha*. So long as the tree was within the boundary of the *Mattha* and the strict vigilance of the proprietor, it was a safe haven for bats. Once the storm uproots and flings the tree and the bats out to an unobstructed zone, humans become hungry scavengers. Perhaps Sahoo is skeptical that religion and spiritual values can completely restrain the animal instincts in man.

In *Andha Ratira Surya*, the storm, the wounded bats, the train accident and Mrutyunjaya's existence arrested in poverty, combine to make a powerful statement on greed as one of the most pervasive vices of humanity. Sahoo ends his tale with a prophetic note. There is obvious symbolism in the name of his protagonist. Mrutyunjaya, literal meaning, "he who has concurred death", is another name of Lord Shiva. Sahoo suggests that despite imperfections, Mrutyunjaya, the universal man carries the spark of divinity that would prevail over the evil within him. The narrative reaches a stasis as Mrutyunjaya, the small man, ultimately finds his anchor in the goodness of his "sinless, loving and caring family":

"Somehow he was positively convinced that this world will change some day. This poverty will go away. Not man but the hidden humanism inside him will save the world one day. May be it will be late –late it be, better be late than never." (p 162)

Sahoo holds that the man has to look for answers to his moral debacle through ruthless self-scrutiny. A great storyteller does not provide simplistic solutions to life's enigmas and Mahapatra Nilamani Sahoo is no exception.

Note: Translation of parts of the story in quotation and indented in italics is mine. The beauty of Odia language and its suggestive layers of meaning for a native speaker are lost in translation. For example, "*Patninkara Potala-chira akhi dekhile Mrutyunjaya Babu Maha Mrutyunjaya Mantra japa karanti*" is a sentence loaded with meaning. As Odias, we are able to 'feel' and understand the writer's intent. The vegetable, "*Potala*", with its slightly twisted shape cut vertically would look like frightening human eyes. A woman (Patni, the wife of *Mrutyunjaya*) with such large expressionless eyes is angry, ugly and without any hint of romance. Figuratively she scares her husband, whose plight is like someone in grave danger chanting "*Maha Mrutunjaya Mantra*". It sounds hilariously comic to culturally accustomed ears.



Dr. Kanak Hota lives in Chicago. She writes both in Odia and English.
Email address: kanakhota@yahoo.com

Wisps From a Distant Land Deepti Paikray

Often a distant land comes to me
through the rolling mists of yearning dreams,
pushing past tunnels of faraway memories
triggering thoughts and feelings in continuous reams.

A land of ancient spires and rolling paddy fields
of jangling humanity, strangled roads and kissing coconut trees,
a *Kalia* (Lord Jagannath) with rotund round eyes oversees this hoary land
He is mostly famous for turning down earthly pleas.

The morning pops here quite early
the crow and the cuckoo are at loggerheads for keeps,
and the fierce sun sheds his scathing glory
Upon crayon colored homes and corner garbage heaps.

The red *mandara* (hibiscus) blooms on every bushelbush
like bits of heart spreading gaiety,
and the frail basil spouts from oil cans or pots
marking the presence of a reluctant deity.

Stay at home are the withering old
the young have left to chase some gold,
Flower patches in homes have shrunk
instead plain, high walls thwart a band of thieves too bold.

Unheeded construction mangle genteel neighborhoods
even as street snacks of desperate vendors continue to delight ,
Guardians of the sky dimly, winking stars
Grimly oversee my town's plight.

When dusk descends on rooftops
and temple bells clang the spirits away,
prayers piggy ride upon smoky dhuna spirals
Thankfully this town still needs to pray.

Bits and pieces of the land I attempt to carry
a bell metal lamp, a silken *paato* (sari) , something from Pipli at a low bid.
For it is my *Kalia's* land
that unfolds behind my closed eyelids.

I wonder if He sees it all
or has become unstarvinghaving seen it all.....
His eyes are open , perhaps unseeing
mine are closed always reliving.....



often a distant land comes to me
Through the rolling mists of yearning dreams.



No More Nrusingha Mishra



She is no more, she is gone
Dove flew away, tears shed in vain
Where did she go, I do not have her address
They say, she went to her permanent abode
She told me to stay for three more days
I had to leave as in duty bound leaving her devastated
She comes to my dream after long time I saw her bed-ridden

Observed special rites not able to carry on my shoulder
What did she leave for me to move on, nothing
Except fond memories to ruminate in deep silence
Look at the faces of the children to search for her smile
Flashes of those memories come and soothe my soul
Specter of traumatic news, "No More" has vanished
Because she dwells within me and inspires to keep going



Dr Nrusingha Mishra lives in Germantown, Maryland with his family.

A Ballad of Glorious Konarka

Manoj Panda

Blazes the mantle
Konarka- the edifice
An artistic pinnacle
by the seaside today.

Long in the hoary past..

Up went the royal edict,
trumpeting the grandeur of Odisha all over
A temple would be built on the sea
O Artisans...ally together to work for the clan
And surely your scions would adore you for eons.

Danced again the chisels
and the mallets without fail
to tunes of rigor
making adepts regale
Presto..came the stones
alive and charming
drenched in the artisans
finesse and sweating.

Meanders the time in its trail
And glides back never....

Enters here Dharama, the boy of twelve...

Trudges he alone with plums from his yard
To see his father building the temple hard
Like a chariot for Sun God the temple would look
And to affirm his friends his father never forsook.

Despondent was his sire, when he arrived
Fearing the worst if he would survive
Not mounting the steeple would be the jive

Silent was the night with twinkling of stars
Wind became fierce and the waves were harsh
Omen of evil got perilously built
Laughter and laments filled it to hilt
Awaiting the doom when napes would be slit.

Decade and two Dharama was old,



Conferred with father and friends of gold
Tried to ponder with knowledge from books
Why not the steeple getting into hooks
As slowly the night merged in the dark
Top of the temple he did embark
Remembering his Mother and Divine name
Focused on the spire to bring in the fame.

Day as it dawned
A surprise was in store
Steeple was fixed for sculptors and more

Giggling was the sky sea and cheery was the breeze
Alas.. still the anxiety didn't cross the bridge
Honor won't they lose for artisans on the morn?
With the glory of the radiant success of the son.

Tough was the choice for Bisu as a father
Whether his son or sixty scores matter
Never had Dharama pant for the fame
Kinship is always better than his name
Always would do to forgo his claim
For the honor of his kin and brethren
Never would the world know Sixty scores of men
Lost to a child in the artistic domain.

Dramatic was the elan like the meteoric fall
Waves turned wild and storm became the gall
Forever the artisans would carry on this slur
Atoning the loss of the hero and conqueror
Who let go his attachment in celebrating his race
As sky and the earth grieved in embrace.

World is awe-struck in the astonishing eye
Looking at the monument in gleaming sea side
Admires daily in amazed wonderment
Right at the blazing brilliant firmament.
Today by the seaside....



Manoj Panda lives in Gaithersburg, Maryland. The above poem is written on the reflection of Konarka Gatha by Gurukrushna Goswami.

O America, Where Art Thou? Samrat Mohanty



Forgoing the mother and land,
Yearning to breathe free,
I set sail for your love once.
But, o my enchantress, where did you flee?
Is it your grave or mine, I see?

Souls simmer when tides turn.
Nations stir as times churn.
Hopes and dreams once paved your streets.
Are you still the shining city on hill?
Are these your tears or mine, I feel?

How did you ever fall so far?
Will time ever heal your scar?
Will you fall for each subversive's lure?
Will forces of fear hold the sway?
Will your fabric start to fray?

Does God still mend your flaws?
Will all Gods be free in your laws?
If I rang the liberty bell,
Will you look away with guilt?
Will your justice grow a tilt?

What am I to think of you?
What will you make of me?
Do you hold the torch and flame, still?
Will grace be shed on you and me?
Will you keep shining from sea to sea?



(Inspired by 'America the Beautiful' and Recent Events)

O' My Son, O' My Dear Friend!

(a translation of Kauśalyā's blessings to Rāma following Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa II.25)

Bijoy Misra

for South Asian Poets of New England in program

Voice of the Mothers and the Youth

March 25, 2017

My son, my dear, O' my dear friend!
I am with you wherever you are,
I'm your friend! (0)

I taught you worship, I taught you how to be humble!
Respect all that have virtue, never should you crumble!
Let your weapons protect you, never you get feeble!
Let your service to your parents be a guard on you,
In Truth never you fumble! (1)

Let the Stars and Light protect you, the Spirits and the Angels!
Let the Time and the Events be good to you, the Seasons and the Years!
Let the Gods and Powers protect you, lend you their ears!
Know my son! I have prayed for you before, never have any fears! (2)

Mountains, Oceans, Space and the Heavens!
The Earth, the Air, the Water that leavens!
The Arts, the Skills, the Talents, and the Senses!
Let all come to your help, let you override all fences! (3)

Let the Ghosts, the Fiends, the Wilds not scare you!
Let the Snakes, the Insects, the Bees not snare you!
Let the Animals, the Beasts, the Cruels not dare you!
Let your strength, your valor, let your virtue never fail you! (4)

Let the blessings of the Heavens be with you, my boy,
As Indra had in confronting terror!
Let the blessings of the Earth be with you, my son,
As Garuda had in searching nectar!
Let you be blessed by the Divine Mother,
As Aditi did during the time of war!
Let you have the spirit of that incomparable Vishnu,
Traversing the worlds, the Sky and afar! (5)



Melting into Eternity

Surya Nayak

Cloudy Sky,
Rain-drops hanging like a canopy;
Making the atmosphere dim,
And thoughtful.

Standing lone on my balcony
I looked at the horizon
I see you smiling at me,
With your 'almond-split' eyes

My heart rushed towards you,
Fully drenched with your smile,
I felt a meaningful jerk within me,
And goose-bumps, populated over my skin.

It is not,
That I cannot live without you, but
I do not want to live without you.

I want to absorb,
each of the sun rays
That reflects towards me
From the touch of your body.

I want to breathe the air,
That swirled around you
and breeze past you

I want to feel your hairs
that caress you and
spears towards me
I Closed My Eyes...,

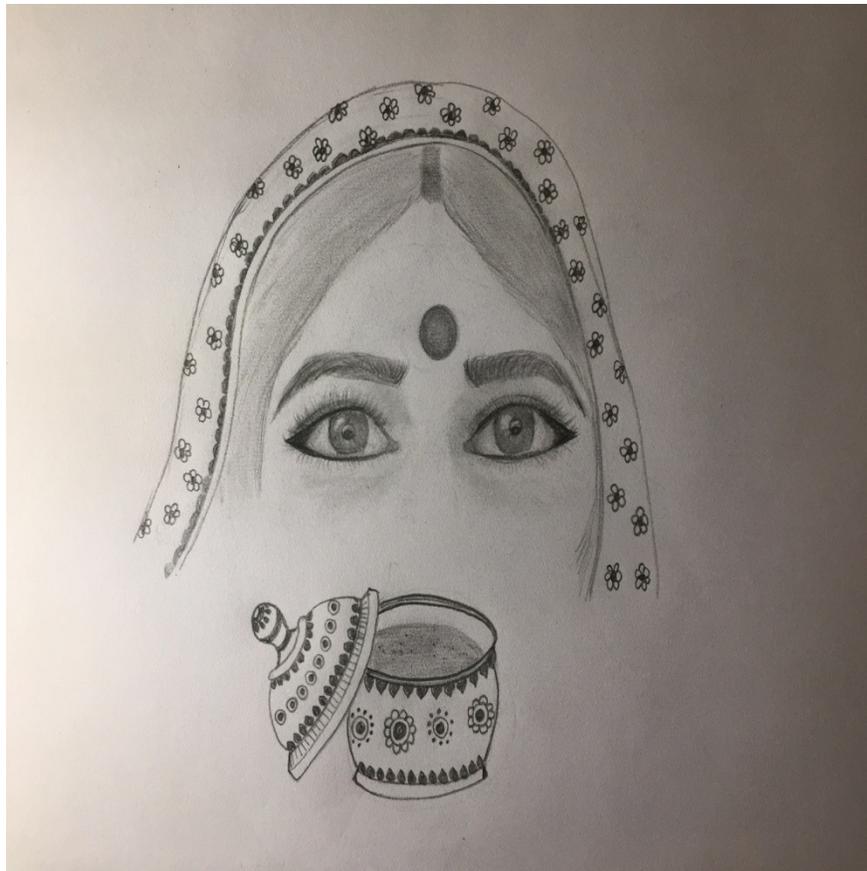
Leaving your soul to dissolve in mine, and
melt in me, like a candle
Burning slowly and your breasts
Pressing my ribcage.

A passionate melting into eternity.



ସିନ୍ଦୂର

Sindura - Vermilion





ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ା ଶାନ୍ତନୁ କୁମାର ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ

ଘର ଆଗରେ ନଇ! ନଇ କୁଳିଆ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ଅଯାଚିତ ବରଦାନ ଯାହା ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ସବୁଠୁ ବେଶୀ ଜଣା ତାଙ୍କୁ ; କାରଣ ସେ ଥିଲେ ଜଣେ ପରିବେଶବିତ୍ । ସେମିତି କିଛି ଡିଗ୍ରୀଫିଗ୍ରୀ ନଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କର ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ଯାହାକୁ ଏବେ କୁହା ଯାଉଛି ପରିବେଶ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ; କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ନଇ କୁଳେ ବସିଥିବା ଦେଖିଲେ ଆଖ ପାଖ ବଣ ବୁଦାର ବିଲୁଆ କୋକିଶିଆଳି ନେଉଳ ସାପ ମୂଷା ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ପ୍ରାଣୀମାନେ ନିଜକୁ ଦେଖେଇ ହେଲା ଭଳି ବୃଥାଟାରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖ ପାଖରେ ଯାଆସ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଏଇ କାରଣରୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅନେକ ଲୋକ କହନ୍ତି ସେ ଜଣେ ତନ୍ତ୍ରମନ୍ତ୍ର ଜାଣିଥିବା ଲୋକ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ତନ୍ତ୍ରମନ୍ତ୍ର ଧାର ଧାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ବରଂ ତନ୍ତ୍ରମନ୍ତ୍ର ଗୁଣିଗାରେଡି କରୁଥିବା ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ସେ ଘୃଣା କରନ୍ତି । ତଥାପି ଗାଁ ଲୋକେ ତାଙ୍କ ହାବଭାବକୁ ସନ୍ଦେହ କରନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ଚାରିପାଖେ ନିର୍ଭୟରେ ଆତଯାତ ହେଉଥିବା ବିଲୁଆ କୋକିଶିଆଳୀ ନେଉଳ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଜୀବଜନ୍ତୁଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ତାଙ୍କ ସଂପର୍କକୁ ବୁଝିନପାରି ସେମାନେ ସନ୍ଦେହ କରନ୍ତି ହୁଏତ ଲୋକଟା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବଶୀଭୂତ କରିଛି ଯାହା କେବଳ ଗୁଣିଗାରେଡି ଜାଣିଥିବା ଲୋକଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ ସଂଭବ । ତେଣୁ ସେମାନେ ତାଙ୍କ ନାଁ ଦେଇଥାନ୍ତି ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ା!

ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ାଙ୍କୁ ଜୀବଜନ୍ତୁ ମାନେ କାହିଁକି ଏତେ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି କେହି ଜାଣେନା । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ନଇ ଅତଡି ଉପରେ ବସିବାର ଦେଖିଲେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ତାର ଚେର ପାଇଯାଆନ୍ତି ବିଲୁଆମାନେ । ଗୋଟାଏ ବୁଢ଼ା ବିଲୁଆ ଅତଡି ତଳ ଗାତରୁ ମୁହଁ ଟେକି ତାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସ୍ଵାଗତ କରେ- ଗୋଟାଏ ବିଚିତ୍ର ସ୍ଵରରେ । ସେ ସ୍ଵର ସାଧାରଣ ବିଲୁଆ ତାକ ନୁହେଁ; ପୂରାପୂରି ଭିନ୍ନ ରକମର! ସେ ପ୍ରକାର ସ୍ଵରରେ ବିଲୁଆମାନେ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ବୋବାନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ।

ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗ ବିଲୁଆଟି କିଛି ଅସାଧାରଣ ବିଲୁଆ ନୁହେଁ; ସେ ବିଚରା ସେଇ ସାଧାରଣ ବିଲୁଆ ଜାତିର ବିଲୁଆଟିଏ ଯେ ତା ଦଳରେ ରହେ ଆଉ ଗାଁ ପାଖ ବଣବୁଦାରେ ବାସ କରୁଥିବା ଦଳଦଳ ବିଲୁଆଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ଜଣେ ଭଳି ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରେ । ତଥାପି ତା'ପାଖରେ କିଛିଟା ଅସାଧାରଣତ୍ଵ ଥାଏ । କାରଣ ଗୁଣିଆବୁଢ଼ାଙ୍କ ଉପସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ବିଜ୍ଞାପିତ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ଯେଉଁ ସ୍ଵର କରେ ସେ ସ୍ଵରରେ ବିଲୁଆମାନେ ବୋବାନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ଆଦୌ । ତେଣୁ ଦିନେ ଦୈବଯୋଗେ କୌଣସି କାରଣରୁ ଗୁଣିଆବୁଢ଼ା ସେଇ ବିଲୁଆଟିକୁ ସେପରି ସ୍ଵରରେ ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁକୁ ଅନେଇ ବୋବୋଉଥିବା ଦେଖିଲେ । ସେ କଣ କହୁଛି ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ବିଲୁଆଙ୍କ ଭାଷା ତ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜଣା ନଥିଲା ସେଯାକେ । ତେଣୁ ସେ ତା ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁ କୌତୂହଳ ବଶତଃ ନିଜ ଭାଷାରେ ପଚାରିଲେ – “କିହୋ ବନ୍ଧୁବର! ଖବର କଣ? କଣ କିଛି କହିବାର ଅଛିକି? ”

ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର କିଛି ଉତ୍ତର ସେ ଆଶା କରୁନଥିଲେ । କାରଣ ବିଲୁଆମାନେ କଣ ମଣିଷଙ୍କ କଥାବାଚାର ଅର୍ଥ ବୁଝୁଥିବେ? ତଥାପି ସେଇ ପ୍ରାରମ୍ଭିକ ଆଳାପରୁ ଜନ୍ତୁଟି ସହିତ ତାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ସ୍ଥାପିତ ହେବାର ସୂଚନା ମିଳିଗଲା । ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବାକୁ ସେ ପୁଣି ଗୋଟିଏ ଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ଵରରେ ବୋବାଇଲା । ପରେପରେ ଜନ୍ତୁଟି ତାଙ୍କୁ ପରିକ୍ରମା କରିବା ପରି ଦୂରଛତାରେ ଲୁଚିଲୁଚିକା ଚାରିପାଖର ବଣ ବୁଦା ଆଡୁଆଳରୁ ନିଜର ଉପସ୍ଥିତି ବିଜ୍ଞାପିତ କଲା ।

ବିଲୁଆର ସେପରି ଆଚରଣରେ ସେଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ସରକାରି ଚାକିରିରୁ ଅବସର ନେଇ ସହର ଛାଡି ଗାଁରେ ରହିବାକୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କରିଥିବା ବିମ୍ବରାଜ ସାମନ୍ତରାୟ ଯାହାଙ୍କୁ ପରେ ସନ୍ଦେହ କରଗଲା ଜଣେ ତାନ୍ତ୍ରିକ ବୋଲି ସେ କେବଳ ବିସ୍ମିତ ହୋଇ ନଥିଲେ, ଏକ ଅଜଣା ଭୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ପଶିଗଲା । କାରଣ ସେପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଗାଁଗହଳର ଲୋକବିଶ୍ଵାସକୁ ସେ ଅମୂଳକ ବୋଲି ଭାବିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କିଛିଟା ଗୁରୁତ୍ଵ ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ପିଲାଦିନେ ଗାଁରେ ଥିବାବେଳେ ସେ ଜେଜେମା, ମା ଭତ୍ୟାଦିଙ୍କ ଠୁଁ ଶୁଣିଥିଲେ ଯେ ବିଲୁଆ ଗୋଟାଏ ଅଶୁଭ ପ୍ରାଣୀ । ରାତିବିକାଳି ବିଲୁଆ ବୋବାଳି ଶୁଣିଲେ ଜେଜେମା କହୁଥିଲେ -ହେଇ ଶୁଣ! ପହରିକିଆ ବିଲୁଆ ବୋବେଇଲେଣି । ଶୋଇପଡ ସମସ୍ତେ -

ପହରିକିଆ ବିଲୁଆ କଣ? ପଚାରିଲେ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଉଥିଲା ଜେଜେମା- ଜାଣିନୁ? ସେମାନେ ପରା ଯମଦୂତ! ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ କାଳବେଳ ଜଣା । ପହରକୁ ପହର ସେମାନେ ମେଳି କରି ବୋବାଳି ପକେଇଲେ ଯମଦେବତା ଖବର ପାଇଯାନ୍ତି ଯେ ମର୍ତ୍ତ୍ୟରେ ମଣିଷମାନଙ୍କ ପରମାତ୍ମରୁ ପହରେ ଆତ୍ମ ସରିଗଲା!

ତା ପରେ ନାତି ପଚାରେ -ରାତିକ କେଇ ପହର ଜେଜେମା ? ତାର ଉତ୍ତର ବି ଥାଏ ଜେଜେମା ପାଖରେ । କହେ ରାତିକ ପା ଚାରି ପହର! ଦିନରେ ଚାରି ରାତିରେ ଚାରି- ଏମିତି ଏମିତି ଆଠ ପହରକୁ ପହର ସେ କାଳତୁଣ୍ଡା ଜନ୍ମମାନେ ଥରକୁ ଥର ମେଳିକରି ବୋବାଳି ପକେଇ ଯମ ଦେବତାଙ୍କୁ ମର୍ତ୍ତ୍ୟର ଖବର ଦେଇ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଆରମ୍ଭରୁ । ଆହୁରି ଜାଣିତୁ ନା? ଯଦି ଗାଁ ଭିତରେ, ରାତିରେ, ଅଣ୍ଡିରା ବିଲୁଆ ଗଣିଗଣି ତିନିଥର ଡାକ ପକେଇବ ତାହେଲେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ନା ନିଶ୍ଚୟ କାହାର ଗୋଟାଏ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ନବାପେଇଁ ଯମଦେବ ଗାଁକୁ ବିଜେ କରିଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ଜାଣିବାକୁ ହେବ ।

ବିସ୍ମରାଜ ସେ କଥାର ସତ୍ୟାସତ୍ୟ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିନଥିଲେ ପିଲାଦିନେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଜାଣି ଥିଲେ-ଗାଁମାନଙ୍କରେ ଏମିତି ବହୁତ ଲୋକକଥା ଥାଏ ଯାହାର ପ୍ରମାଣ ନଥିଲେ ବି ଲୋକେ ସେ କଥାକୁ ହସି ଉଡେଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ !

ୟା ଭିତରେ ବହୁ ବର୍ଷ କଟିଗଲାଣି ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନର । ଚାକିରିରୁ ଅବସର ନେଇ ଗାଁରେ ବାକିତକ ବୟସ କଟେଇ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ପ୍ରାୟ ଷାଠିଏ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରିବା ବେଳକୁ ଜେଜେମା, ମା,ବାପା ସମସ୍ତେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗବାସୀ ହୋଇସାରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଏପରିକି ଗାଁର ସବୁ ଡକ ପୁରୁଖା ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ କେବଳ ଜଣେ ଦିବ୍ୟଙ୍କ ଛଡା ଆଉ ସମସ୍ତେ ଚାଲିଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି ସେପାରିକୁ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ପିଲାଦିନର ଅଧିକାଂଶ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ- । କାହା ସାଙ୍ଗେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ପଦେ ପାଇଁ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ଲୋକଟିଏ ନପାଇ ସେ ନିରାଶ ହେଉଥାନ୍ତି । ସେଥିଲାଗି ପିଲାଦିନର ସ୍ମୃତିସବୁକୁ ଏକାଏକା ବସି ଆଉଥରେ ଆଉଡେଇବାକୁ ସେ ନିଜ କୂଳରେ ବୁଲିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥିଲେ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ, ସେଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ ନିଜ ଚୁଠରେ ଏକାଏକା ବସିଥିବା ବେଳେ ସେଇ ବୁଢ଼ା ବିଲୁଆର ସେଭଳି ଅଭୂତ ବ୍ୟବହାରକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକଲା ପରେ ହଠାତ ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ତାଙ୍କର ପିଲାଦିନେ ବୁଢ଼ିମା କହୁଥିବା କଥା ଗୁଡ଼ାକ । ବିଲୁଆମାନେ ଯମଦୂତ ଆଉ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସମୟ ଗଣନା କରି ଆସେ, ସେ କଥା ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଯିବାରୁ ତାଙ୍କ ମନ ଆହୁରି ଦବିଗଲା । ତା'ମାନେ କଣ ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜର ସମୟ ହେଇଗଲା? ସେଇ ଅଶୁଭ ଖବର ଆଗୁଆ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ବିଲୁଆଟା ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁ ସେଭଳି ଅସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ଶବ୍ଦ କରୁଥିଲା?

ଏହାପରେ କିଛିଦିନ ପାଇଁ ସେ ଆଉ ନିଜକୁଳକୁ ବୁଲିବାକୁ ଆସିଲେ ନାହିଁ । ଗୋଟାଏ ଡରଡର ଭାବ ମନରେ ବରାବର ରହୁଥିବା ହେତୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ନାନା ଦୁର୍ଘଟା ଘାରିଲା । ଏକଥା କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଆଉ କାହାକୁ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଦେଲେ ନାହିଁ । ଏପରିକି ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ନିଜ ମନୋଭାବ ଜଣେଇବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାକଲେ ନାହିଁ । ଏହିପରି କିଛି ଦିନ ଚାଲିଗଲା । ସେ ଆଉ ନିଜ କୂଳକୁ ବୁଲିବାକୁ ଆସିଲେ ନାହିଁ । ଘରେ ବସି ଝରକା ସେପାଖୁ ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ଦାଣ୍ଡଦୁଆରି ନିଜକୁ ସତୁଷ୍ଟ ନୟନରେ ଅନାଇ ବସିଲେ । ଦୀର୍ଘ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ସହରର ଗଳିସନ୍ଧିରେ ଏକ ଛୋଟିଆ ଭତାଘରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଚାକିରି ଜୀବନ କଟିଯାଇଥିଲା । କେତେ ଆଶା କରି ସେ ଆସିଥିଲେ ନିଜ ଜନ୍ମସ୍ଥାନ ଗାଁରେ ନିଜର ଯେତେକ ଘରକୁ ଅବସର ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଜୀବନର ବର୍ଷ କେଇଟା କଟାଇବା ଆଶାରେ । ଅଥଚ ଗାଁ ମାଟିରେ ପାଦ ଦଉ ନଦଉଣୁ ଆସିଗଲା ଏମିତି ଅବସ୍ଥା ଯେ ସେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଗୃହବନ୍ଦୀ -ନିଜେ ନିଜଘରେ? ପୁଣି ଘର ସାମନାରେ ବୋହିଚାଲିଛି ସେଇ ବିଶାଳ ନଈ ଯାହା ତାଙ୍କର ନିଜ ପିଲାଦିନର ନଈ, ଯାହାର ପାଣିରେ ସକାଳ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା କରୁଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ବାଲ୍ୟ କୈଶୋର ଆଉ ଆଦ୍ୟ ଯୌବନର ବର୍ଷ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ! ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ ବର୍ଷା ଶରତ ହେମନ୍ତ ଶିଶିର ଆଉ ବସନ୍ତ- ବର୍ଷର ଛଅ ଋତୁର କୌଣସିଟି ଋତୁ ବାଦ ପଡେନାହିଁ ଯେବେ ସେ ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କର ଦୁଇ ଭାଇ ଆଉ ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀମାନଙ୍କ ମେଳରେ ଏଇ ଘର ଦୁଆରି ନଈର ପାଣିରେ ଘଟାଘଟା ନପଡ଼ିଛନ୍ତି ଗାଧୋଇବା ବାହାନରେ । ଖରାଦିନେ ନଈରେ ପାଣି କମିଗଲେ ସେମାନେ ଥରେଥରେ ବାହାରି ପଡ଼ନ୍ତି ନଈର ଏପାରି ସେପାରି ପହଁରା ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗୀତା କରିବା ପାଇଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ କଣ ହୁଏ କେଜାଣି ଅଧା ନଈ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ପହଁରି ଯିବା ପରେ ଦଳର ସବା ଆଗରେ ପହଁରୁଥିବା ଲିଡର୍ ପହଁରାଳି ଜଣକ ସତର୍କ କରିଦିଏ-“ହେଇଟି ସେ କଳା ପାଣି ଅରାକ ଆଗରେ ଦେଖୁଟ? ଆସିଗଲା ସେ ଯାଗା! ଏଇଠି ସେ ଯାଗା -ଶଂଖା କୁମ୍ଭୀରର ଘର! ନାଃ ଆଉ ଯିବା ନାହିଁ ।”

କହୁକହୁ ଲିଡର୍ ପହଁରାଳି ଟୋକା ଜଣକ ହଠାତ ମୁହଁ ବୁଲେଇ ପଛୁଆ ଫେରିପଡେ । ତା ପଛେପଛେ ସବୁ ପିଲାମାନେ ପହଁରା ଶିଖୋଉଥିବା ମା ବତକ ପଛରେ ଗୋଡେଇଥିବା ଛୁଆ ବତକଙ୍କ ପରି ଘୁରି ପଡ଼ନ୍ତି ପଛକୁ । କୂଳକୁ ଆସିବା ପରେ ଯାଇ ଲିଡର୍ ଗୋଟାଏ

ବଡ଼ଦମ ନିଃଶ୍ଵାସ ମାରି କଥାଟାର ମର୍ମ ବୁଝାଏ ତା ଦଳକୁ । କହେ, “ସେଇ ଯୋଉ କଳା ପାଣି ଅରାକ ଦେଖୁତ, ଜେଜେ କହନ୍ତି, ସେଇ ଗଣ୍ଡରେ ଲୁଚିଛି ସେ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ଯେ ମୋ ଜେଜେମାକୁ ଖାଇଥିଲା । ଗୋଟାଏ ମସ୍ତ ବଡ଼ ଧଳା କୁମ୍ଭୀର । ସେଇ କାରଣରୁ ତା ନାଁ ଶଂଖା । ସେ ଗୋଟାଏ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ନୁହେଁ—ଗୋଟାଏ ପ୍ରେତାତ୍ମା କି ଦେବାଦେବୀ ବୋଲି ତାକୁ ପୂଜା କରନ୍ତି ଆମର ଏ ଅଂଚଳର ଲୋକେ । ଆମର ଏଠି ସମସ୍ତେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି କେତେ ଭୟଙ୍କର ମଣିଷଖୁଆ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ସେ! ଆମର ଏ ଅଂଚଳର ପ୍ରାୟ ଶହେ ଲୋକ, ବେଶୀ ଭାଗ ମାଇପିଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ବାଛିବାଛି ଖାଇଛି ସେ । ମୋ ନିଜ ଜେଜେମାକୁ ଖାଇଛି ସେ, ପୁଣି କେମିତି ଢଙ୍ଗରେ ଶୁଣିଲେ ତମ କଲିଜା ଥରିଯିବ!”

ପିଲାମାନେ ପଚାରନ୍ତି, “କାହିଁ? ଆମେମାନେ ତ ଦିନରାତି ପଢ଼ିଥାଉ ଏଠି ନଇ ପାଣିରେ! କିବେ ତ ଦେଖୁନୁ ଆମ ନଇରେ କିମ୍ପାର ଫିମ୍ପାର କିଛି?”

ଦଳପତି, ମାହାନ୍ତି ସାଇର ମୁରବି ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ମାହାନ୍ତିଙ୍କ ନାତି ଚିକିନା ଦାଦା ତା ବେକରେ ପିନ୍ଧିଥିବା ତୁଳସୀ ମାଳକୁ ଛୁଇଁ କହେ, “ମୁଁ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ମାହାନ୍ତିଙ୍କ ନାତି-ଆମେ ଗୁରୁ ଦୀକ୍ଷା ନେଇଛୁ । ମିଛ କହିବା ଆମ ଜାତକେ ନାହିଁ । ଶୁଣ-ମୋ ଜେଜେ ଯାହା କୁହନ୍ତି ସେଇ କଥା କହୁଛି । ମନରୁ ଫାନ୍ଦିବି କାଇଁକି? ମୋର କି ଫାଇଦା ଜେଜେଙ୍କ ନାଁରେ ମିଛ କହିବାକୁ ତମମାନଙ୍କୁ । ତମଠୁ ମୁଁ ବୟସରେ ବଡ଼ । ତମେ ପହଁରା ଶିଖିବ ବୋଲି କହିଲାରୁ ଶିଖେଇଲି । ଏବେ ତମେମାନେ ନଇ ଆରପାରିକୁ ପହଁରିବା କଥା କହିଲାରୁ ମୁଁ ଭାବିଲି ତୁମମାନଙ୍କ ମେଳରେ ମୁଁ ହୁଏତ ନଇ ସେ ପାରିକି ପହଁରି ଯାଇ ପାରିବି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଗଣ୍ଡ ପାଖରେ ପହଁରିଲା ମାତ୍ରେ ମତେ ଶୁଣାଗଲା – ଜେଜେଙ୍କ ସତର୍କବାଣୀ । ସେ କହନ୍ତି ଏଇ ଗଣ୍ଡରେ ରହୁଛି ସେ ମଣିଷଖୁଆ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ଯାହା ନାଁ ଶଂଖା । ସେଇ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ଖାଇଥିଲା ମୋ ଜେଜେମାକୁ .. ”

ଏହାପରେ ଚିକିନା ଦାଦା ତା ଜେଜେମାଙ୍କୁ ଶଂଖା କୁମ୍ଭୀର କେମିତି ଢଙ୍ଗରେ ମାରିଥିଲା ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ସବିଶେଷ ବିବରଣୀ ଶୁଣାଉଥିଲା ବିଘ୍ନରାଜଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କ ପିଲାଦିନେ । କହୁଥିଲା, “ମୁଁ ଯାହା ଶୁଣିଛି ମୋ ଜେଜେଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରୁ କହୁଛି ଶୁଣ-ହାରାହାରି ଚାଲିଶ ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର କଥା । ସେତେବେଳେ ଆମର ଏ ନଇରେ କୁମ୍ଭୀରମାନେ ଏତେ ସଂଖ୍ୟାରେ ଥିଲେ ଯେ ଜେଜେ କହନ୍ତି ନଇବାଲିରେ ସେମାନେ ଖରା ପୋଇଁବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା ବେଳେ ଦିଶୁଥିଲେ ଯେମିତି କାଠ ବେପାରିମାନେ ନଇରେ ଭେଳାବାନ୍ଧି କାଠଗଡ଼ ଚାଲାଣ କରିବାକୁ ବଣରୁ ଶହଶହ ଶାଳପିଆଶାଳ ଗଛଗୁଡ଼ାକୁ କାଟି ଆଣି ପକେଇତଡ଼ି ବାଲିରେ! କିନ୍ତୁ ମଣିଷଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିବା ମାତ୍ରେ ସେଇ ନିର୍ଜୀବ କାଠଗଡ଼ ଗୁଡ଼ାକ ଜୀବନ୍ତ ହେଇ ଉଠୁଥିଲେ । ପାଣିକୁ ପଲୋଉଥିଲେ । ସେମାନେ ଥିଲେ ଅନେକ ଜାତିର- ଅଂଟିଆ, ଘଡ଼ିଆଳ, ଗୋମୁଖା ପ୍ରଭୃତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ସବୁଠୁ ଭୟଙ୍କର ଆଉ ବୁଦ୍ଧିମାନ ହେଲେ ଏଇ ଗୋମୁଖା -ଯାହାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ଅବିକଳ ଗୋରୁ ମୁହଁ ପରି ଦେଖିବାକୁ । ସେଇମାନେ ବେଶୀ ମଣିଷଖୁଆ ଜାତିର ବୋଲି ଜେଜେ କହନ୍ତି । ସେଇ ମଣିଷଖୁଆଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଶଂଖା ହଉଛି ନମ୍ବର ୱାନ୍!

“କାହିଁକି ନମ୍ବର ୱାନ୍ -ଶୁଣିବ? ସେ ଗୋଟାଏ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ହେଲେ ବି ତାର ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଥିଲା । ଖାଲି ବୁଦ୍ଧି ନୁହଁ- ଜେଜେ କହନ୍ତି ତାର ବି ଗୋଟାଏ ବିବେକ ବୋଧେ ଥିଲା- । ସେ ମଣିଷ ଖାଏ, କିନ୍ତୁ ମୃତ୍ୟୁଦଣ୍ଡରେ ଦଣ୍ଡିତ ଆସାମୀକୁ ଫାଣିଖୁଟକୁ ନେବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଯେମିତି ତାକୁ ପଚରାଯାଏ ତୋର ଶେଷ ଇଚ୍ଛାଟା ପ୍ରକାଶ କର ସେମିତି କରେ ଏ ମଣିଷଖୁଆ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ଶଂଖା । ଏମିତି ଘଟଣା ଘଟିଥିଲା ଦିନେ ଆମର ନିଜ ପରିବାରରେ- । ମୋ ନିଜ ଜେଜେମାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ଯାଇଛି ଶଂଖା ମୁହଁରେ । ତଥାପି ସେ ନୃଶଂସ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର କୁମ୍ଭୀରଚାରୀଙ୍କୁ ପୂରା ଦୋଷ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ଜେଜେ । କାହିଁକି ଶୁଣିବ?”

“ସେଦିନ ସକାଳ ଗାଧୁଆ ବେଳେ, ଗାଁର ଝିଅବୋହୁଙ୍କ ମେଳରେ, ଆମ ଭୁଆଷୁଣୀ ଜେଜେମା ନଇକୁ ଗାଧେଇବାକୁ ଆସିଲେ । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଶଂଖାର ଉପ୍ତ ଖୁବ ବଢ଼ିଯାଇଥାଏ । ବହୁତ ଗାଈଗୋରୁ ମଣିଷ ଯାଇସାରିଥାନ୍ତି ତା ପେଟଭିତରକୁ । ସେଥିଯୋଗୁ ଗାଁ ଲୋକେ ନଇ ତୁଠରେ ବାଉଁଶ ଅଡ଼ା ବାନ୍ଧି ଗାଧୁଆପାଧୁଆ କରୁଥିଲେ । ସେଦିନ ଜେଜେମା ଗାଁର ଆଠବଣ ଝିଅବୋହୁଙ୍କ ମେଳରେ ପଶିଲେ ଗାଧୁଆ ତୁଠ ଅଡ଼ା ଭିତରକୁ । ସେମାନେ କଣ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ ଗଲା ରାତିରୁ ତା ଭିତରକୁ ପଶିଛି ଶଂଖା? ହଠାତ ଭୁସ୍କିନା ଗୋଟାଏ ଶବ୍ଦ ହେଲା । ହାଉଲି ଖାଇଉଠିଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ – । ତାହୁଁ ତାହୁଁ ମୋ ଜେଜେମାକୁ ମୁହଁରେ ଧରି ଅଡ଼ା ବାହାରକୁ ଚାଣିନେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା ଗୋଟାଏ ବିରାଟ କାୟ ଧଳାରଙ୍ଗର କୁମ୍ଭୀର! ତାଙ୍କୁ ଧରିନେଇ ନଇ ମଝିରେ ପହଁରିଲା ପରେ ପୁଣି କଣ ମନହେଲା ତାର ବୁଲି ପଡ଼ିଲା ପଛକୁ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଦେଖୁଥାନ୍ତି-ଜେଜେମାକୁ ମୁହଁ ଭିତରୁ ଛାଟିଦେଲା ଉପରକୁ । ଜେଜେମା ଉପରକୁ ଉଠି ଯାଇ ସିଧା ଖସି ପଡ଼ିଲେ କୁମ୍ଭୀରଚାର ପିଠି ଉପରକୁ । କୁମ୍ଭୀର ପିଠିରେ ସବାର ହେଇଯିବା ପରେ ଜେଜେମା ତକା ପାରିଲେ- ମତେ ବଂଚାଅ! ମତେ ବଂଚାଅରେ!

କୂଳରେ କାକୁସ୍ଥ ହେଇ ଜମିଥିବା ଲୋକେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବଂଚେଇବେ କଣ ଓଲଟି କୂଳ ଆଡକୁ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଆସୁଥିବା କୁଞ୍ଜାରକୁ ଡରି ପଳେଇଲେ ପାଣିକୂଳରୁ ଦୂରକୁ । ସେତେବେଳେ ମୋ ଜେଜେମାଙ୍କୁ ବୟସ କୋଡ଼ିଏ କି ପଚିଶ । ସହଜେ ତ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ । ପୁଣି ତାଙ୍କ ଦେହର ଲାଦି ହେଇଥାଏ ସୁନା ଅଳଙ୍କାର । ପୁଣି ତାଙ୍କ ଦିହର ରଙ୍ଗ ସୁନା ପରି ହେଇଥିବାରୁ ତାଙ୍କ ନାଁ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଘରେ ଆମର - ସୁନାମଣି! ସୁନାମଣିଙ୍କୁ ପିଠିରେ ବସେଇ କୁନ୍ଦୀର ତାଙ୍କୁ ନଇ ତୁଠ ପାଖାପାଖି ବହୁ ସମୟ ବୁଲେଇଲା କେଜାଣି କାହିଁକି! କେହି ଲୋକ ତାଙ୍କୁ କୁନ୍ଦୀର ମୁହଁରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାରିବା ଲାଗି ନବାହାରିବା ଦେଖି ସୁନାମଣି ତାଙ୍କ ବେକରୁ ଦଶ ଭରିଆ ସୁନାର ଗୋଟାଏ ହାର, ହାତରୁ ଗୋଛାଏ ଗୋଛାଏ ସୁନାଚୁଡ଼ି ଆଉ କାନରୁ ନାକରୁ ପୁଣି ଅଂଚାରୁ ଚାଖଣ୍ଡେ ମୋଟ ରୁପା ଗୋଠ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି କାଢ଼ି ପକେଇ ଗୋଟାଗୋଟା କରି କୂଳକୁ ଫିଙ୍ଗିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ । ଆମ ବଉଁଶଟା ଯାକ ଲୋକ ସେତେବେଳେ ଠିଆ ହେଇଥାନ୍ତି ନଇକୂଳରେ । ତାଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ବି ଆଥାନ୍ତି ଜେଜେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବୟସ ତିରିଶ । ମୋଟେ ବର୍ଷ ଚାରିପାଞ୍ଚଟା ତଳେ ଜେଜେମା ବୋହୂହେଇ ଆସିଥାନ୍ତି । ମୋ ବାପା ଦାଦା ସେପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଜନ୍ମ ହେଇ ନଥାନ୍ତି । ଏବେ ବି ବୁଢ଼ା ବୟସରେ ସେ କଥା କହିଲାବେଳେ ଜେଜେ ଆମର କଇଁକଇଁ ହେଇ କାନ୍ଦନ୍ତି ଆଉ କହନ୍ତି, “ଦିହରୁ ଅଳଂକାର ସବୁ କାଢ଼ି କୂଳକୁ ଫିଙ୍ଗିଲା ବେଳେ ଜେଜେମା ତାଙ୍କୁ ବିଦାୟ ମାଗି କହୁଥାନ୍ତି -ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି । ମୋ କଥା ରଖିବ । କୂଳ ରକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ଆଉ ଥରେ ବାହାହବ । ଏ ଗହଣାତକ ଦେଇଯାଉଛି । ମୋର ସବୁ ଦୋଷ ମନରୁ ପୋଛିଦବ- ମତେ ବିଦାୟ ଦିଅ ।”

ସମସ୍ତ ଦେଖଣାହାରିକୁ ହାତଯୋଡ଼ି ବିଦାୟ ମାଗୁଥିଲା ସେ ବୋଲି ମୁଁ ଶୁଣିଛି ବୁଢ଼ାବୁଢ଼ାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରୁ । ସେମାନେ କହନ୍ତି-ଘଡ଼ିକରୁ ବେଶୀ ବେଳ ପିଠିରେ ବସେଇ ନଇରେ ବୁଲେଇ ସାଇଲା ପରେ ଯାଇ ଜେଜେମାଙ୍କୁ ଗଣ୍ଡ ଭିତରକୁ ନେଇଗଲା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଶଂଖା । ଆହାରକୁ ମାରିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ତାକୁ ଖେଳେଇବା ପ୍ରକୃତି ଯୋଗୁ ତାକୁ ଲୋକେ ମନେକଲେ କିନ୍ଦୀର ନୁହେଁ-ଦେବତା! ତଥାପି ସେ ଜନ୍ମକୁ ମାରିବାକୁ ବ୍ରତୀଶ ସରକାର ଗୋରା ଶିକାରୀଙ୍କୁ ପଠେଇଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ତାକୁ କେହି ମାରି ପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମହାତ୍ମା ଗାନ୍ଧିଙ୍କ କୃପାରୁ ଦେଶ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ହେବା ପରଠୁ ସେ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଗଲାଭାରି କେଜାଣି! ଜେଜେ କହନ୍ତି ଆଉ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଯାଇନାହିଁ ସେ । ଏଇ ନଇ ଗଣ୍ଡରେ ଲୁଚିଛି ସେ - । ଜେଜେଙ୍କ କଥାଟା ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ମୋର ଗଣ୍ଡର କଳା ଭଅଁର ପାଣିକୁ ଛୁଇଁ ଦେଲା କ୍ଷିଣି । ମୋ ହାତ ଗୋଡ଼ କୋଲ ମାରିଗଲା । ଫେରିଆସିବା ଛଡ଼ା ଗତି କଣ ଅଛି କହୁନ, ଏମିତି ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ?”

ଏସବୁ ଲୋକକଥା ତାଙ୍କ ପିଲାଦିନେ ବିମ୍ବରାଜଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଖୁବ ବେଶୀ ବିଶ୍ୱାସନୀୟ ଥିଲା । ସେଇ ଜାରଣରୁ ସେ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ କଦାପି ନଇର ଏପରି ସେପାରି ପହଞ୍ଚିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ମଧ୍ୟ କରୁନଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସାଠିଏ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ଚାକିରିରୁ ଅବସର ନେବା ପରେ ସେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରିବା ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଥିଲେ ସେତେବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ସେଇ ଅପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ପୁଣି ଥରେ ରୂପ ପାଇଲା । ସେ ଭାବିଥିଲେ ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରିବା ପରେ ସବୁଦିନେ ନଇରେ ଗାଧୋଇବେ, ପିଲାଦିନ ପରି ନଇପାଣିରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବେ ଆଉ ଯଦି ସଂଭବ ନଇର ଗଣ୍ଡରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ପହଞ୍ଚି ପାରିହେଇ ଆଉ ପଟ ବନ୍ଧକୁ ଛୁଇଁବେ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ସବୁ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ଆକାଂକ୍ଷାରେ ଇ ରହିଗଲା । ତାର କାରଣ ହେଲା- ମୃତ୍ୟୁଭୟ! ତାହେଲେ କଣ ବିଲୁଆମାନେ ସତରେ ଆଗତ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ କଥା ଜାଣି ପାରନ୍ତି? ନହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁକୁ ଅନେଇ ସେ ବୁଢ଼ା ବିଲୁଆଟା ତାଙ୍କ ଚାରିପାଖେ ବୁଲିବୁଲିକା କାହିଁକି ସେଭଳି ଅସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ସ୍ୱରରେ ବୋବାଇଲା? ଏ କଥା ମନରେ ଯେତକି ଯେତକି ଗୋଲେଇ ଘାଟି ହେଲା ମୃତ୍ୟୁଭୟ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସେତକି ସେତକି ମାଡ଼ି ବସିଲା ।

ସପ୍ତାହେ ବିତିଗଲାଣି ତାଙ୍କର ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ଚିନ୍ତାରେ -ସେଇ ଗୃହବନ୍ଦୀ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ । ନିଶ୍ଚେଷ୍ଟ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଦିନେ ସେ ଝରକା ବାହାରକୁ ଆନମନା ହେଇ ଅନାଇ ରହିଥିବା ବେଳେ ହଠାତ୍ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ପୁଣି ସେଇ ଅଶୁଭ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ । ସେ ଦେଖିଲେ ଗୋଟାଏ ବିଲୁଆ ଠିଆ ହେଇଛି ତାଙ୍କ ଘର ଆଗରେ, ନଇ ବନ୍ଧ ଉପରେ । ଏକା ନୁହେଁ, ନଇ ବନ୍ଧ ଉପରେ ଠିଆ ହେଇଥାନ୍ତି ଦଳଟିଏ ବିଲୁଆ! କିଛି ନଜାଣିଲା ପରି ସେମାନେ ବନ୍ଧ ଉପର ଉଇଁହୁଙ୍କା ଖୋଜି ତଳକୁ ମୁହଁ କରି ଖାଦ୍ୟ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନର ଅଭିନୟ କରୁଥିଲେ ବି ସେମାନେ ଯେ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରର ଝରକା ଆଡକୁ ନଜର ରଖୁଛନ୍ତି ତାହା ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ବୁଝା ପଡ଼ିଯାଉଥାଏ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ହାବଭାବରୁ । ଏହା ପରେ ବିମ୍ବରାଜଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖା ଗଲା ଖୋଦ ଯମଦେବଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ଝରକା ସେପାଖେ! ଥଣ୍ଡା ଝାଲରେ ପିନ୍ଧା ଗୋଟିଟା ଭିଜିବାକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା ଆଉ ହଠାତ୍ ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ପ୍ରଶ୍ୱାସର ଗତି ଅନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲା ତାଙ୍କର । ତେବେ କଣ ହାର୍ଡ୍ ଆଟାକ୍ଟର ମରିବାକୁ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି ସେ? ଆତଙ୍କିତ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ସେ ବସିବା ଯାଗାରୁ ଉଠିପଡ଼ିଲେ - ଝରକାଟାକୁ ବନ୍ଦ କରିଦେବା ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ । ସେତକି ବେଳେ ସେ ଶୁଣିପାରିଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ସେଇ ପୂର୍ବ ପରିଚିତ

କଂଠ ସ୍ଵର! ଝରକା ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ ଦେଖିଲେ ଦଳକଯାକ ବିଲୁଆ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରର ଝରକା ଆଡକୁ ମୁହଁ ଟେକି ଠିଆ ହେଇଚକ୍ତି-କାହାର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କଲାପରି । ପରେପରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଦଳପତି ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା । ବିଚିତ୍ର ସ୍ଵର ଯାହାକୁ ଅନୁସରଣ କରି ଦଳପତିଯାକ ବିଲୁଆ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଲେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଚିରାଚରିତ ସମ୍ମିଳିତ ଗାନ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ କଥା – ବିଲୁଆମାନଙ୍କର ସେଇ ସମ୍ମିଳିତ ଗାନ ଶୁଣିବା ପରେ ବିଘ୍ନରାଜ କିଂଚିତ ଆଶ୍ଚିତ ଅନୁଭବ କଲେ । ଏଥର ତାଙ୍କର ଏକ ଅସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ ଭାବତର ଘଟିଲା । ଝରକା ବନ୍ଦ କରଦେବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସେ ଆଉ ଥରେ ଭଲକରି ସେଇ ବିଲୁଆ ଦଳଟାକୁ ଅନାଇ ଦେଖିଲେ – ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସେଇ ଦଳପତିଟି ଅନ୍ୟକେହି ନୁହଁ; ସେ ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କର ପୂର୍ବପରିଚିତ ସେଇ ବୁଢ଼ା ବିଲୁଆ ଯାହାକୁ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଦେଖିଥିଲେ ସେ ନଈ କୂଳ ତୁଠର ବୁଦ୍ଧବୁଦ୍ଧିଆ ଜଙ୍ଗଲରେ, ସେଦିନ । ସେଇ ଥିଲା ସେ ଦଳର ସର୍ଦ୍ଦାର! ଦଳପତିର ନେତୃତ୍ଵରେ ବହୁ ସମୟ ଧରି ତାଙ୍କ ଘର ଆଗ ନଈ ବନ୍ଧ ଉପରେ ଚାଲିଲା ସେମାନଙ୍କର 'କୋରସ୍' ।

ଭୟ ମିଶ୍ରିତ କୌତୂହଳ ନେଇ ବିଘ୍ନରାଜ ଝରକା ଭିତରୁ ଅନାଇ ରହିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଘର ସାମନାରେ ପ୍ରବାହିତ ନଦୀକୁ ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛଦପଟ ପରି ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ନଦୀବନ୍ଧର ରଂଗମଂଚ ଉପରେ ଅଭିନୀତ ହେଉଥିବା ସେଇ ବିସ୍ମୟକର ଦୃଶ୍ୟଶ୍ରାବ୍ୟ ନାଟକକୁ ! କେତେ ସମୟ ପରେ ସେ ନାଟକର ଯବନିକା ପତନ ହେଲା । ବିଲୁଆମାନେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ହିତ ହୋଇଗଲେ ଦୃଶ୍ୟପଟରୁ । ସେମାନେ ଚାଲିଯିବା ପରେ ପୁଣି ଗ୍ରାମାଂଚଳର ସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ ନୀରବତା ଫେରି ଆସିଲା ପରିବେଶ ଭିତରକୁ ।

ପରେ ପରେ ବିଘ୍ନରାଜଙ୍କ ଶଙ୍କାକୁଳ ମନରେ ଏକ ଭାବାନ୍ତର ଘଟିଲା । ନିଜର ଅବବୋଧରେ ହଠାତ କୌଣସି ଏକ ନୂଆ ଅର୍ଥବୋଧ ଜାଗ୍ରତ ହେବା ପରି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ତାଙ୍କର ମନେହେଲା ବିଲୁଆମାନଙ୍କର ଦୁର୍ବୋଧ ବୋବାଳି ଭିତରୁ ଏକ ନୂଆ ଅର୍ଥ ଯେମିତିକି ମିଳିଗଲା ତାଙ୍କୁ! ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ କଥା-ଟିକଏ ଆଗରୁ ଯୋଉ ବିଲୁଆତାକ ନୈରାଶ୍ୟ ଉଦ୍ଫେକକାରୀ ମୃତ୍ୟୁଭୟର ସୂଚନା ଦେଉଥିଲା ବିଲୁଆମାନଙ୍କର କୋରସ୍ ସମାପ୍ତ ହେବା ପରେ ପରେ ତାହା ସତେକି ଏକ ସୁସମ୍ବାଦରେ ରୂପାନ୍ତରିତ ହୋଇଗଲା ଆପଣା ଛାଏଁ! ସେଇ ସୁସଂବାଦଟିର ସ୍ଵରୂପ ଏହାପରେ କ୍ଷଣ ହେଇଗଲା ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ । ସେମାନେ ଯେ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଯମଦୂତ ନଥିଲେ, ବରଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଜଣେ ବନ୍ଧୁଘରକୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ କୌଣସି ଶୁଭକାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଜଣାଇବାକୁ – ଏଇ ସୁସଂବାଦଟି ପାଇ ଯିବା ପରେ ସେ ତତ୍ କ୍ଷଣାତ୍ ଉତ୍ପୁଲିତ ହୋଇ ଉଠିଲେ । ବୁଝିପାରିଲେ ସେ- ବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ କନ୍ୟାର ବିବାହ ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ମଙ୍ଗଳ ମହୁରି ବଜେଇ ବଜେଇ ସେମାନେ ଆସିଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିବାକୁ! ନିଜର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଶେଷ କରି ସେମାନେ ଚାଲିଗଲେ ।

ଯଥା ସମୟରେ ସ୍ଵେଚ୍ଛାକୃତ ଗୃହବନ୍ଦୀ ଅବସ୍ଥାରୁ ନିଜକୁ ମୁକ୍ତ କଲେ ବିଘ୍ନରାଜ । ଘର ଭିତରୁ ବାହାରିଲେ ପଦାକୁ । ପରେ ପୂର୍ବର ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ଵାସ ପୁଣି ଫେରି ଆସିଲା ତାଙ୍କର । ମନରେ ପୁଣି ଜାଗିଲା ନଈ ପହଁରାର ଇଚ୍ଛା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଇଚ୍ଛା ପୂରଣ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସେଦିନ ତାଙ୍କ ପିଲାଦିନର ବନ୍ଧୁମାନେ କେହି ଗାଁ ରେ ନଥିଲେ । ସେମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ ସହରାଭିମୁଖ ହୋଇ ଗାଁ ଛାଡ଼ି ରହିଥିଲେ ଯେଯାହାର କର୍ମସ୍ଥଳରେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ସେ ନିଜେ ଏକମାତ୍ର ଜଣେ ଯେ ଅବସର ପରେ ଫେରିଆଏ ନିଜ ଜନ୍ମସ୍ଥାନକୁ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ସେ ବା କେମିତି ରହନ୍ତେ ଗାଁରେ? ତେଣୁ ସେ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଖୋଜି ଖୋଜି ଶେଷରେ ପୁଣିଥରେ ପହଂଚିଲେ ସେଇ ଯାଗାରେ ଯୋଉଠି ବୁଢ଼ା ବିଲୁଆଟି ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବସିଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ।

ବିଲୁଆମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ କିଛିଦିନ ସାଙ୍ଗ ହେବା ଭିତରେ ବିଘ୍ନରାଜ ଦେଖିଲେ ନଈ କୂଳ ନିବାସୀ ତାଙ୍କର ଆହୁରି ଅନେକ ଅନେକ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଅଛନ୍ତି ଯୋଉମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏଯାକେ ଗୁଡ଼ାଏ ଆଜେବାଜେ ଜୀବଜନ୍ତୁ ମନେକରି ବନ୍ଧୁପଣିଆରୁ ଦୂରରେ ରଖିଥିଲେ ସେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ତାଲିକାରେ ଥିଲେ ନାନା ଜାତିର ପଶୁ-କୋକି,ନେଉଳ, ଓଧ, ଗାଡ଼ଭାଲୁ, କଟାସ, ବଜ୍ରକାପ୍ତା, ଗୋଧୂ, ଆଉ ହରେକ ଜାତିର ସାପ ବି! ପିଲାଦିନୁ ସାପମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର ସହଜାତ ଭୟ ରହିଥିବା କଥା ସେ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ । ତଥାପି ସେମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗ ହେବାକୁ ଏତେଦୂର ଆଗ୍ରହୀ ତାହା ଥିଲା ନିଃସନ୍ଦେହରେ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ନୂଆ ଆବିଷ୍କାର । ଥରେ ସେ ନଈ କୂଳର ଗୋଟିଏ ଝଙ୍କା ବରଗଛ ମୂଳେ ବସୁବସୁ ଖରାବେଳିଆ ଛାଇ ନିଦରେ କେତେବେଳେ ଢୁଲେଇ ପଡ଼ିଚକ୍ତି । ହଠାତ ଜଂଘ ଉପରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ଥଣ୍ଡା ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲା ତାଙ୍କର । ଯାହା ଦେଖିଲେ ସେଥିରେ ଜୀବନ ଛାଡ଼ିଗଲା ଭଳି ଲାଗିଲା ତାଙ୍କୁ । ଗୋଟାଏ ହଳଦୀ ରଙ୍ଗର ସାପ କେତେବେଳୁ ଆସି ଚକାମାଡ଼ି ଶୋଇଚି ତାଙ୍କ ଜଂଘକୁ ଲାଗିକରି ଜାଣିବା ପରେ ତାଙ୍କ ହୋସ ବୁଡ଼ିଗଲା । ଅନେକ ସମୟ ସେଇ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଦେହକୁ ଜଡକରି ପଡ଼ିରହିବା ପରେ ସାପଟିର କୁଣ୍ଡଳ ଫିଟିଲା । ତା ଦେହର କୁଣ୍ଡଳୀ ପୂରା ଫିଟିବା ପରେ ଯାଇ ସେ ଦେଖିଲେ ସାପଟା କୋଉ ଜାତିର । ତା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ରହିଥାଏ କଠଉ ଚିହ୍ନ ଯାହା ଜଣୋଉଥିଲା ତାର ଜାତି । ଗୋଖର ବା ନାଗମାନେ ଭୟଙ୍କର, କିନ୍ତୁ ନିଜ ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରତି ବିପଦ ଆଶଙ୍କା ନଥିଲେ

ହିଂସ୍ର ହୋଇ ଉଠନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ – ଏ ବିଷୟ ସେ କେଉଁ ଏକ ବହିରେ ପଢ଼ିଥିବା ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ତାଙ୍କର । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତାହା ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ପୋଥିଗତ ଜ୍ଞାନ କେବଳ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ନିଜ ଅଜାଣତରେ ସେଇ ଜ୍ଞାନର ସତ୍ୟାସତ୍ୟ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ହୋଇଗଲା ତାଙ୍କର । ଏହାପରେ ବିଘ୍ନରାଜଙ୍କ ମନେହେଲା- ଏଣିକି ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ଅଂତରର ସରିସୂପମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବନ୍ଧୁତା ବାନ୍ଧିବାର ସମୟ ଆସିଗଲା! ଏହିପରି ବର୍ଷାଧିକ କାଳ ବିତିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଥାଏ ତାଙ୍କର ପଶୁପକ୍ଷୀ ସରିସୂପଙ୍କ ମେଳରେ ।

ଦିନେ ଗାଁରେ ଖବର ହେଲା ଯେ ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ା ତା ବେକରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ନାଗସାପ ଗୁଡ଼େଇ ହେଇ ବସିଛି ନଈକୂଳ ବରଗଛ ମୂଳେ । ସେଇ ଖବର ରଟିବା ପରେପରେ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଭିଡ଼ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ତାଙ୍କ ଚାରିପାଖେ । ସେ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ନିଜ ଆଖିରେ ଦେଖିବା ଲୋକେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରିନପାରି ଖବରଟାକୁ ଆହୁରି ଅତିରଂଜିତ ଭାବେ ପ୍ରଚାର କରିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ । ସେ ଖବର ପାଇ ସହରରୁ ସବୁତକ ଖବରକାଗଜ ବାଲା ଆଉ ଚିଭିବାଲା ଏକାବେଳକେ ଆସି ପହଂଚିଗଲେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ବିଘ୍ନରାଜ ତାଙ୍କ ଘର ସାମନା ନଈକୂଳର ସେଇ ବରଗଛ ଛାଇରେ ଖଣ୍ଡେ କାଠଗଡ଼ ଉପରେ, ଗୋଡ଼ ଉପରେ ଗୋଡ଼ ଝୁଲେଇ କରି, ବସିଥାନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଯେଉଁ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଦେଖିବେ ବୋଲି ଗଣମାଧ୍ୟମ ବାଲାଏ ଆଶା କରୁଥିଲେ ସେ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ନଦେଖି ସେମାନେ ବିରକ୍ତି ପ୍ରକାଶ କଲେ । ତଥାପି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ହାତଯୋଡ଼ି ଭକ୍ତଙ୍କ ପରି ବସିଥିବା କିଛି ଗାଉଁଲି ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ଗଣମାଧ୍ୟମର ଜଣେ ପୁରୁଖା ସାମ୍ବାଦିକ ଖୋଲଟି ଭାଷାରେ ପଚାରିଲେ “କିୟୋ? କିଧର ଭାଗା ତୁହ୍ନାରା ଓହି ପଶୁପତିନାଥ? ପଶୁମାନଙ୍କୁ ବଶ କରିଛି ବୋଲି କହୁଥିଲା ପରା? କିଧର ଭାଗା ଓ ନାଗରାଜ ଜିସକେ ବାରେମେ ରିପୋର୍ଟ ଭେଜାଗିୟାଥା ହମାରେ ପାଶ ? ଏ ଆଦମୀ ତୋ ଶିରିଫ ଅର୍ଡନାରି ହୁମାନ ବିଂ ହୈ - କୋନ ବୋଲତା ଭୋଲେନାଥ ଶିବଶଂକର ବନଗିୟା ଓ?”

ଆଗନ୍ତୁକ ସମ୍ବାଦବାଚାମାନଙ୍କର ଗୋଟାଏ ସମ୍ମିଳିତ ତାଲୁଲ୍ୟ ମିଶ୍ରିତ ହାସ୍ୟରୋଳରେ ସ୍ଥାନଟା ମୁଖରିତ ହେବା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ସେଦିନ ଆଉ କିଛି ସମ୍ବାଦ ଲାଏକ ଘଟଣା ଘଟିବାର ନଥିଲା । ଗଣମାଧ୍ୟମ ନିରାଶ ହୋଇ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନାନଂ ଗଛ କରିବା ପରେ ବିଘ୍ନରାଜ ଏକ ଦୀର୍ଘ ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ପକେଇଲେ । ପାଖରେ ବସିଥିବା ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିନୀତ ଭାବେ ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲେ ଦୟାକରି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଉ ବେଶୀ ହଇରାଣ ହରକତ ନକରି ନିଜନିଜ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଯିବାକୁ ।

ସମସ୍ତେ ଚାଲିଯିବା ପରେ ସ୍ଥାନଟା ପୁଣି ଥରେ ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ନିକାଂତନ ଅବସ୍ଥାକୁ ଫେରି ଆସିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ବିଘ୍ନରାଜ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ ମଣିଷମାନେ ଚାଲିଯିବା ପରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବଶବୁଦା ଗାତ କୋରଡ଼ରେ ବାସ କରୁଥିବା ତାଙ୍କର ଅସଖ୍ୟ ବନ୍ଧୁମାନେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଯାଇନଥିଲେ । ସତକୁ ସତ ସେମାନେ ପୁଣି ଗୋଟିଗୋଟି ହେଇ ଯେଯାହା ସ୍ଥାନରୁ ବାହାରିଲେ ଆଉ ତାପରେ ଚାଲିଲା ଆଳାପ ଆଲୋଚନା ପୂର୍ବପରି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସାଥରେ ତାଙ୍କର ।

କିନ୍ତୁ, ସେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବିଘ୍ନରାଜଙ୍କ ମୂଳ ଯୋଜନାଟି ଆରମ୍ଭ ବି ହୋଇପାରିନଥାଏ । ଅଳ୍ପଦିନ ପରେ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ତାଙ୍କର ସେଇ ଯୋଜନା ଯୋଡ଼ କାରଣରୁ ସେ ଚାକିରିରୁ ଅବସର ଅନ୍ତେ ଫେରି ଆସିଥିଲେ ନିଜ ଜନ୍ମସ୍ଥାନକୁ । ଦିନେ କାହାରିକୁ କିଛି ନଜଣେଇ ସେ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ନଈ ପହଁରା – । ଏଣିକି ତାଙ୍କର ଦିନ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ନଈପହଁରାରୁ ଆଉ ଶେଷ ହେଲା ମଧ୍ୟ ନଈ ପହଁରାରେ । ଲୋକେ ଦେଖିଲେ ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ା ଆଉ ନଈତୁଠରେ ଶୁଖିଲାରେ ବସୁନାହିଁ । ସକାଳୁ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ସେ ଯାଇ ନଈରେ! କେତେବେଳେ ଅଂଟାଏ ପାଣିରେ ତ କେତେବେଳେ ବେକେ ପାଣିରେ -ନଈ ଭିତରେ । ସେଠି ମଧ୍ୟ ତାର ଚାଲିଛି କଣସବୁ ଗପସପ ହସ ଖୁସି କାହା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ! କିଛିଦିନ ପରେ ଦେଖାଗଲା ଦଳେ ଏଣୁଳା ମାଛ ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ାକୁ ଘେରିଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ଚାରିପାଖୁ ଆଉ ବୁଢ଼ା କିରିକିରି ହେଇ ହସୁଟି ଆଉ ମଝିରେମଝିରେ ଆଂକୁଳାଏ ଆଂକୁଳାଏ ପାଣି ଫିଙ୍ଗୁଟି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଉପରକୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନେ ତରି ପଳାଉ ନାହାନ୍ତି ଦୂରକୁ । ପରେପରେ ସେମାନେ ଦେଖିଲେ ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ା ବଶକରିସାରିଲାଣି ନଈର ବଡ଼ବଡ଼ ମାଛଙ୍କୁ ବି- । ବୁଢ଼ାକୁ ନଡ଼ରି ନଈର ରୋହି ଭାଙ୍ଗୁର ଇଲିସି ଏପରିକି ଅକାଡ଼ିଆ ଜଳଜୀ ବାଲିଆ ଚିତଳ ଭଳି ବଡ଼ମାଛମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଟେକି ଲାଞ୍ଜପିଟି ତା ସହିତ ଜଳକେଳି କରୁଥିବା ଖବର ରଟିବା ପରେ ନଈ ଦୁଇପାଖ ବନ୍ଧରେ ଦର୍ଶକମାନଙ୍କର ମେଳା ବି କ୍ରମଶଃ ବଢ଼ିଚାଲିଲା । ସେ ଖବର ପାଇ ପୁଣି ଆସିଲେ ଖବରକାଗଜ ବାଲାଏ, ଚିଭି ବାଲାଏ ପାଖ ସହରରୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ କଥା ସେମାନେ ପହଂଚିବା ବେଳକୁ ନଈ ଭିତରେ ଶୁନ୍‌ସାନ! ଏପରିକି ନଈରେ ଦିନମାନ ଭେଳାଭେଳା ପହଁରୁଥିବା ସେଇ ଢେଗା ଆଖୁଆ ଏଣୁଳା ମାଛ ଦଳଗୁଡ଼ାକ ମଧ୍ୟ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଭଜାନ ହେଇ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି ! ଶୁନ୍‌ସାନ ଭିତରେ କେବଳ ଜଣେ ଲୋକ ଚୁପ୍‌ଚାପ୍ ଗାଧୋଉଛି ଦେଖି ଗଣମାଧ୍ୟମ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିଲା-, “କାହିଁ ସେ ଗୁଣିଆ ତମ ଗାଁର କିଓ! କଣ କହୁଥିଲ ପରା ବଶ

କରିବି ନଇର ମାଛମାନଙ୍କୁ? କାଗଜରେ ବାହାର କରିବ ବୋଲି ମିଛ ମନଗଢ଼ା ଖବର ଦଉତ ଅମକୁ? ଯାଏ ଏତିକି ଫିସାଦିଆ ଲୋକ ତମେମାନେ? ଧେର ..”, ବହୁବେଳ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କଲାପରେ ଶେଷରେ ଗାଳିବର୍ଷଣ କରି ସେମାନେ ଫେରିଲେ ସହରକୁ ।

ଏହା ପରେ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ଆଉ ଏକ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟ । ସେଦିନ ନଇକୁଳିଆ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ଅଭୂତପୂର୍ବ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥାଏ! ସକାଳ ଗାଧୁଆ ବେଳ । ନଇରେ ନଇଏ ଲୋକ । ପ୍ରତି ଗାଧୁଆ ଘାଟରେ ମର୍ଦ୍ଦ ମାଲପେ ପିଲାଛୁଆ ହାଉଯାଉଥା ବେଳ । ହଠାତ୍ ନଇ ମଝିରୁ ବାହାରିଲା ଗୋଟାଏ କୁମ୍ଭୀର । ଧଳା ରଙ୍ଗର ମସ୍ତକ ଲମ୍ବ ଏକ ଜହ୍ନ । ଦିଶୁଥାଏ ଡବାକୁଡବା ଖଞ୍ଜା ରେଳଗାଡ଼ିଟାଏ ନଇ ମଝିରେ ଯେମିତିକି ଆସେଆସେ ଚାଲିଲା ଭଳି । ଲୋକେ ସେପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଭାବି ନଥିଲେ ଯେ ତାଙ୍କ ନଇରେ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ଅଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି । ବହୁବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ନଇରେ ଅଂଟିଆ କୁମ୍ଭୀରଟିଏ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଖିନଥିଲେ କେହି । ତେଣୁ ନଇ ଗଣ୍ଡରେ ଭାସୁଥିବା ସେଇ ଲମ୍ବା ଜିନିଷଟାକୁ ଦେଖି ସେମାନେ ସନ୍ଦେହରେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲେ-

ସେମାନେ ଦେଖିଲେ ଚଳନ୍ତା ଜିନିଷଟା ଯାଇ ପହଂଚିଲା ସେଇ ତୁଠ ପାଖରେ ଯୋଉଠି ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ା ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ ନଇରେ ଗାଧୋଇବାକୁ ଆସି ପହଂଚାଏ ଏଣୁଲା ମାଛଙ୍କ ଘେରରେ ଠିଆ ହେଇଥାଏ । ହଠାତ୍ ହୋହୋ ଶୁଣାଗଲା – “ଏଇଟା ଗୋଟାଏ ମଣିଷଖୁଆ ଗୋମୁହାଁ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ହୋ! ଉଠିଆସ ପାଣିରୁ , ନଇ ଭିତରୁ ଶୀଘ୍ର ପଳାଅ ଶୀଘ୍ର ପଳାଅ.. !” ସେ ଚିତ୍କାର ଶୁଣି ନଇରେ ପଶିଥିବା ପିଲାଛୁଆ ମର୍ଦ୍ଦ ମାଲପେ ସମସ୍ତେ ପ୍ରାଣ ବିକଳରେ ନଜାଳା ମୁକୁଳା ହେଇ ଉଠି ଆସିଲେ ନଇ ପାଣିରୁ । ସମସ୍ତେ ବାହାରି ଆସିଲେ କେବଳ ଜଣକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି- ।

ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ା ତା ପାଖକୁ ଲାଗି ଆସୁଥିବା ଧଳା କୁମ୍ଭୀରର ଉପକ୍ଷିତ ସଂପର୍କରେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅବଗତ ହୋଇସାରିଥାଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା ଦେଖି ବନ୍ଧ ଉପରୁ ନଇକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିବା ଲୋକେ ଆଖୁକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରିପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଦେଖୁଥାନ୍ତି –ଲୋକଟା ଡରି ପଲେଇବ କଣ ଓଲଟି କୁମ୍ଭୀର ସାଥରେ ଗେଲ ହଉଛି! କୁମ୍ଭୀରଟା ମଧ୍ୟ ତା ସାଙ୍ଗେ ପୁରୁଣା ଦୋସ୍ତ ଭଳି ହଉଛି । ତା ଚାରିପଟେ ଚଢ଼ର ମାରିମାରି କେତେବେଳେ ଚିତ ପହଂଚା ଦେଇ ତା ଧଳା ପେଟ ଦେଖାଉଛି ତ କେତେବେଳେ ଆଁ ମେଲି ହସିଲା ଭଳି ଦିଭାଡ଼ି ବିକଟାଳ ଦାନ୍ତ ଦେଖାଉଛି! କିଛି ସମୟ ସେମିତି ଚିହ୍ନାପରିତ ହେବା ପରେ ଦେଖାଗଲା ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ାକୁ ପିଠିରେ ବସେଇ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ଚାଲିଲା ଗଭୀର ପାଣିକୁ ।

“ହାୟ ହାୟ ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ାକୁ ଶଂଖା କିମ୍ଭୀର ନେଇ ଗଲା ହୋ ନେଇଗଲା!”

ନଇର ଦୁଇ ବନ୍ଧରେ ଦେଖାଶାହାରି ଲୋକଙ୍କ ହାହାକାର ଶୁଣାଗଲା ବହୁଦୂରକୁ । ସେ ଶବ୍ଦରେ ଆକାଶରେ ଉଡ଼ିଯାଉଥିବା ଦଳେ ପକ୍ଷୀ ଛାକ୍ ଛାକ୍ ଧ୍ୱନୀ କରି ଚଢ଼ର ମାରିଲେ ନଇ ଉପରେ । ଶରତ ରତ୍ନର ନେଳୀ ଆକାଶରେ ଭାସି ଯାଉଥିବା ଧଳାଧଳା ମେଘଖଣ୍ଡ ବି ଅଟକି ଗଲେ –ତଳେ କଅଣ ଚାଲିଛି ଦେଖିବା ପାଇଁ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଦେଖିଲେ – ଗୋଟାଏ ମଣିଷକୁ ପିଠିରେ ବସେଇ ଏକ ମସ୍ତକ ଧଳା ରଙ୍ଗର କୁମ୍ଭୀର ନଇ ଗଣ୍ଡର ଆଖୁ ଭଳି ଦିଶୁଥିବା ଗୋଟାଏ ଜାଗା ଚାରିପାଖେ ଘୁରି ବୁଲୁଥାଏ ଯୋଉଠି ଅତୀତରେ ଶଂଖା ନାମକ ଗୋଟାଏ ମାମାମୁକ ମଣିଷଖୁଆ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ଶତାଧିକ ମଣିଷଙ୍କୁ ମାରି ଆହାର କରିଥିଲା । ଦର୍ଶକମାନେ ସେଇ ଆଖୁଦେଖା ଦୃଶ୍ୟକୁ ଦେଖି ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରିନଥାନ୍ତି ଆଦୌ । ସେମାନେ ମୂକ ପାଲଟିଗଲେ । ପରେପରେ ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିଗର ପରିବେଶ ଶାନ୍ତ ଆଉ ନିରବ ହେଇଗଲା ।

ସେଇ ନିରବତାକୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ସହି ପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ାର ପୁରୁଣା ଦୋସ୍ତ ବିଲୁଆମାନେ । ସମୟସତେତନ ପ୍ରାଣୀ ସେମାନେ । ବଣବୁଦା ଆଡୁଆକରୁ ଶୁଣାଗଲା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ପହଂଚିଆ କୋରସ୍ !

ନଇ ମଝିରେ ଶଂଖା କୁମ୍ଭୀରର ବାସସ୍ଥଳୀ ଗଣ୍ଡ ଉପର କଳାଗୁମ୍ଫର ପାଣି ଉପରେ ସେପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତଥାପି ଦୃଶ୍ୟମାନ ହେଉଥାନ୍ତି ଉଭୟ ମଣିଷ ଓ କୁମ୍ଭୀର । ଲୋକେ ମନେ କଲେ ଏହାପରେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ କୁମ୍ଭୀରଟା ତା ପିଠିରେ ବସିଥିବା ମଣିଷଟାକୁ ପିଠିରୁ ଫିଙ୍ଗିଦେବ । ତାକୁ ଚାଣି ନେଇ ଯିବ ଗଣ୍ଡ ଭିତରକୁ ।

ଏକା ବେଳକେ ନଇର ଉଭୟ ପାଖ ବନ୍ଧରେ ଲୋକେ ପାଟିକରି ଉଠିଲେ, “ଆହା ଆହା ଆମ ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ାକୁ କିମ୍ଭୀର ଖାଇଗଲା ହୋ କିମ୍ଭୀର ଖାଇଗଲା” ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ବିଘ୍ନରାଜ ସାମନ୍ତରାୟଙ୍କୁ ସତରେ କୁମ୍ଭୀର ଖାଇଲା ନାହିଁ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ପିଠିରେ ବସେଇ ପହଂଚିପହଂଚି ଆସିଲା କୁଳକୁ ।

ପରଦିନ ଲୋକମାନେ ଦେଖିଲେ ଗୁଣିଆ ବୁଢ଼ା ବସିଛି ତା ଆଗରେ! ଘର ସାମନା ନଈ ବନ୍ଧ ତଳ ବରଗଛ ମୂଳରେ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ପଥର ଉପରେ ବସିଥାଏ ଚକା ପକେଇ ସେ । ତାକୁ ଘେରି ଥାନ୍ତି ତାର ବନ୍ଧୁବାନ୍ଧବମାନେ-ବିଲୁଆ, କୋକୀ, ନେଉଳ, ଗୋଧୀ, ବଜ୍ରକାଘ୍ରା, ଶାଳିଆ ପତନୀ ଆଉ କେତେକିଏ । ଅନେକ ଜାତିର ଚଢ଼େଇ ମଧ୍ୟ ବରଗଛ ଡାଳରେ ବସି କିଛିରି ମିଛିରି ହୁଅଥାନ୍ତି । ଆଉ, ସବୁଠୁ ବେଶୀ ବିସ୍ମୟକର - ସତକୁ ସତ ତାଙ୍କ ବାଁ ପାଖେ, ଅଦୂରରେ ଫଣା ଟେକି ରହିଥାଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ତମ୍ବା ରଙ୍ଗର ନାଗସାପ !

ଦୂରରେ ଥାଇ ଏଇ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ କେତେକ ସତର୍କ କଲେଜ ଛାତ୍ର । ସେମାନେ ନିଜନିଜ ମୋବାଇଲ ଫୋନ କ୍ୟାମେରାରେ ଦୃଶ୍ୟଟିର ଫଟୋ ଉଠେଇବାରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଥିଲେ । ଇତିମଧ୍ୟରେ ଗ୍ରାମାଂଚଳର ଖବରଦାତା ସାମ୍ବାଦିକମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ନିଜନିଜର ମୋବାଇଲ ଫୋନରେ ଖବରଟା ଜଣେଇଲେ ସହରର ଚିତ୍ରି ଗଣମାଧ୍ୟମମାନଙ୍କୁ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସବୁ ଉଦ୍ୟମ ବୃଥା ପ୍ରମାଣିତ ହେଲା । ଗଣମାଧ୍ୟମବାଲାଏ ଫୋନ୍‌ର ଗାଁର ନାଁ ଶୁଣୁଶୁଣୁ ଉତ୍ତର ଯିବୁ ହୋଇ ଗାଳି ବର୍ଷଣ କଲେ । କହିଲେ-“ପୁଣି ଆମକୁ ଓଲୁ ବନେଇବାକୁ ବସିତ କିରେ ସିରିପୁରିଆ ଗାଁ ବାଲାଏ? ଆମେ ଜାଣିସାଇଲୁଣି ତୁମ ମସୁଧା । ଗୋଟାଏ ଫେକ୍ ବାବାକୁ ଡାକିନେଇ ବସେଇଚ ସେଠି! ଦି ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ସେ ଲୋକ ରିଟାୟାର କରିଛି ସରକାରି ଚାକିରିରୁ । ଭେଟେରିନାରି ଡିପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟର ଷ୍ଟକ୍‌ମ୍ୟାନ୍ ଚାକିରି କରୁଥିଲା । ମହା ଚାଉଟର- ସେ ଗୋଟାଏ ଚିଫ୍‌ଫ୍ କଂପାନୀର ଏଜେଣ୍ଟ, ଜାଣ? ହୁସିଆର- ସେ ବୋଧେ ଭାବିଛି ଏମିତି ଏମିତି ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଭଣ୍ଡେଇ ଇଲେକ୍‌ସନ୍‌ର ସରକାରି ଦଳରୁ ଟିକଟ ମାରିନବ ବୋଲି! ଖବରଦାର - ସେ ଚାଉଟର ଫନ୍‌ସିରେ ପଡ଼ ନା ଜମାରୁ ।”



କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ନୁହେଁ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ହିଁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପରିଚୟ

ଗୋପୀନାଥ ମହାନ୍ତି



ବେଦ ବା ଶ୍ଳୁତି ହିଁ ପୁଣ୍ୟଭୂମି ଭାରତବର୍ଷର ସର୍ବପ୍ରଥମ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର । ବ୍ୟାସଦେବ ଏହାକୁ ରକ୍, ସାମ, ଯଜୁଃ ଓ ଅଥର୍ବ ଏହି ଚାରି ଭାଗରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ବେଦର ଗନ୍ଧାର୍ଥକୁ ସର୍ବଜନ ଆଦୃତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ମହର୍ଷି ବ୍ୟାସ ସରଳ ଭାଷାରେ ଅଷ୍ଟାଦଶ ପୁରାଣ ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ପୁରାଣର ଅର୍ଥ ହେଲା ଶ୍ଳୁତିରେ ଥିବା ଅନ୍ତର୍ନିହିତ ଗୁଡ଼ ଅର୍ଥକୁ ସରଳ ଏବଂ ସାବଲୀଳ ଭାବରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରି ଜନସାଧାରଣଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ଆଦୃତ କରାଇବା । ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମରେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମା, ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ଓ ମହେଶ୍ଵରଙ୍କ ଆବିର୍ଭାବ, ସ୍ଵରୂପ, ମାହାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ଓ ଲୀଳା ବିଷୟ ଏହି ପୁରାଣମାନଙ୍କରୁ ମିଳିଥାଏ । ହିନ୍ଦୁଧର୍ମର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଦେବାଦେବୀକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରକରି ପୁରାଣ ଲେଖାଯାଇଛି । ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ଇତିହାସ, ରାଜା, ରକ୍ଷି ତଥା ଦେବାଦେବୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ବିଭିନ୍ନ କାହାଣୀମାନ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହି ପୁରାଣମାନଙ୍କରେ ସ୍ଥାନ ପାଇଛି ।

ମହର୍ଷି ବ୍ୟାସଦେବଙ୍କ ଲିଖିତ ୧୮ଟି ପୁରାଣ ମହାନ୍ । ବ୍ରହ୍ମା, ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ଓ ଶିବଙ୍କ ନାମାନୁସାରେ ଏହି ପୁରାଣମାନଙ୍କୁ ତିନିଭାଗରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ କରାଯାଇଛି । ପଦ୍ମପୁରାଣରେ ସଭ୍, ରଜ, ତମ ଗୁଣକୁ ନେଇ ଏହି ପୁରାଣମାନଙ୍କର ବିଭାଗୀକରଣ ହୋଇଛି । ଝନ୍ଦପୁରାଣ ଶୈବ ପୁରାଣ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ । ଉପପୁରାଣର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ମଧ୍ୟ ୧୮ । ମାତୃଭାଷାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ସ୍ତରରେ ପୁରାଣମାନ ଲେଖାଯାଇଛି । ଅଷ୍ଟାଦଶ ପୁରାଣ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁରାଣର ଶ୍ଳୋକ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଦଶହଜାର, ପଦ୍ମପୁରାଣର ଶ୍ଳୋକ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ପଞ୍ଚାବନ ହଜାର ଏବଂ ଝନ୍ଦପୁରାଣର ଶ୍ଳୋକ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଏକାଅଶୀ ହଜାର ଏକଶହ ଅଟେ ।

ପଦ୍ମପୁରାଣର ଶତାଧିକ ଶ୍ଳୋକରେ ଶ୍ରୀପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ମାହାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ଓ ନିର୍ମାଳ୍ୟ ମାହାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ହୋଇଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁରାଣରେ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ବିସ୍ତୃତ । ଉକ୍ତ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥର ୪୨ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରୁ ୫୭ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମୋଟ ୧୬ଟି ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ୮୦୦ ଶ୍ଳୋକରେ ଶ୍ରୀପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ମାହାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ହୋଇଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଝନ୍ଦପୁରାଣର ଶ୍ରୀପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ମାହାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ବା ଉତ୍କଳଖଣ୍ଡରେ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ବିସ୍ତୃତ ଆକାରରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ହୋଇଛି । ଏହା ୬୦ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ଏବଂ ତିନି ହଜାର ଆଠଶହ ଚେଷ୍ଟି ଶ୍ଳୋକ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ।

କେତେକ ଭାଷାତତ୍ତ୍ଵବିତ୍ ଓ ଐତିହାସିକ ଅଷ୍ଟାଦଶ ପୁରାଣ ମହର୍ଷି ବ୍ୟାସଦେବକୃତ ନୁହେଁ ବୋଲି ମତ ପୋଷଣ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମତରେ ଏହି ପୁରାଣଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଷଷ୍ଠ ବା ସପ୍ତମ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ତତ୍କାଳୀନ ବିଦ୍ଵାନମାନେ ରଚନାକରି ବ୍ୟାସଦେବଙ୍କ ନାମରେ ନାମିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି ବା ଏହାର ରଚୟିତା ବ୍ୟାସଦେବ ନାମରେ କୌଣସି ପଣ୍ଡିତ ହୋଇଥାଇ ପାରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଦାରୁବ୍ରହ୍ମଙ୍କ ଆବିର୍ଭାବ ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁରାଣ ଓ ଝନ୍ଦପୁରାଣରେ ଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରକାରରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏହି ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥମାନଙ୍କର ଭାଷାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାରତମ୍ୟ ପରିଲକ୍ଷିତ ହୁଏ ।

ଅଷ୍ଟାଦଶ ପୁରାଣର ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧମାନେ ଏହି ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରାଚୀନତାକୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଯଦି ତାହା ହୋଇନଥାନ୍ତା ତେବେ ଜଗଦ୍ଗୁରୁ ଶଙ୍କରାଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ଶ୍ରୀରାମାନୁଜାଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ଶ୍ରୀନିମ୍ବାକ, ଶ୍ରୀବଲ୍ଲଭାଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ଗୋସ୍ଵାମୀଗଣ ସ୍ଵକୃତ ଭାଷ୍ୟର ଚୀକା, ତିପ୍ପଣୀମାନଙ୍କରେ ପୁରାଣ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ଶ୍ଳୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରମାଣ ସ୍ଵରୂପ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ କରି ନଥାନ୍ତେ । ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟତଃ ଭଗବାନ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସଙ୍କୁ ଭାଗବତରେ ନାରାୟଣଙ୍କ ସ୍ଵରୂପଭାବେ ରୂପାୟିତ କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏଣୁ ଅଷ୍ଟାଦଶ ପୁରାଣ ସର୍ଜନା କରିବା ତାଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ ।

ଝନ୍ଦପୁରାଣରେ ଦାରୁବ୍ରହ୍ମଙ୍କ ଆବିର୍ଭାବ, ସ୍ଵରୂପ, ମହିମା, ଲୀଳା ଏବଂ ଶ୍ରୀକ୍ଷେତ୍ରର ପରିଚୟ ବିସ୍ତୃତ ଭାବରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରାଯାଇଛି । ଦାରୁବ୍ରହ୍ମଙ୍କର କେଉଁ କେଉଁ ଉତ୍ସବ ପାଳନ କରାଯିବ ଏବଂ କିପରି ସମାହିତ ହେବ, ତାହା ମଧ୍ୟ ସେଥିରେ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି । ସାତଦିନ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ମୋକ୍ଷପ୍ରାପ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ଶୁକମୁନି ପରୀକ୍ଷିତ ରାଜାଙ୍କୁ ଭାଗବତ ଶୁଣାଇଥିଲେ । ମହାଭାରତ ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଅର୍ଜୁନଙ୍କ ବିଷାଦକୁ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଯାହା ଶୁଣାଇଥିଲେ ତାହା ହେଲା ଶ୍ରୀମଦ୍ ଭଗବତ୍‌ଗୀତା, ଠିକ୍ ସେହିପରି ଭଗବାନ ବ୍ୟାସଦେବଙ୍କ ବରିଷ୍ଠ ଶିଷ୍ୟ ଜୈମିନି ମୁନିମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶ୍ରୀପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ଓ ସେଠାରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ ଦାରୁମୂର୍ତ୍ତିଙ୍କ ମାନବଲୀଳାର ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ବିଷୟରେ ଯାହା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଥିଲେ ତାହା ହିଁ ଝନ୍ଦପୁରାଣର ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁ ।

ପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଙ୍କ ଗାଥା ରାମାୟଣରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ । ଭାଗବତ ଭଗବାନ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ଆବିର୍ଭାବ ଓ ଲୀଳା ବିଷୟରେ ମୁଖ୍ଵରିତ । ଠିକ୍ ସେହିଭଳି ଝନ୍ଦପୁରାଣ ଜଗତର ନାଥ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ମୂଳଶାସ୍ତ୍ର । ଏହି ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କ ଭକ୍ତମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ଅଜଣା ଥିଲା । ୨୦୧୨

ମସିହାରେ ଝନପୁରାଣ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ପାଞ୍ଚରାତ୍ର ଶ୍ରୀମନ୍ଦିର ଆନୁକୂଲ୍ୟରେ ଶରଧାବାଲିରେ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଏହାପରେ ପରେ ଝନପୁରାଣ ପ୍ରଚାର ଲାଭ କରୁଅଛି ।

ଝନପୁରାଣ ସମାଜରେ ବିସ୍ତୃତି ଲାଭ କରି ନ ଥିବାରୁ ଉଚ୍ଚମାନେ ବହୁ କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ତଥା ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ଲୋକକଥା ଉପରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ରଖିଛନ୍ତି । ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଆଲୋଚନା କରାଗଲେ ତାହା ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ବୋଲି ପ୍ରତୀତ ହୁଏନାହିଁ । ତାହାକୁ ନିମ୍ନମତେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରାଯାଇପାରେ ।

୧. ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ଅପୋତା ପିଣ୍ଡ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ବ୍ରହ୍ମ ନୁହେଁ

ଉଗ୍ରବାନ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ଅପୋତା ପିଣ୍ଡକୁ ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ନାଭିରେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମ ଭାବରେ ରଖାଯାଇଛି ବୋଲି ଧାରଣା ପ୍ରାୟ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଅଛି । ଶାରଳା ଦାସ ତାଙ୍କ ମହାଭାରତରେ ଲେଖିଲେ-

“ସେ ପିଣ୍ଡକୁ ଦହନ ନକର ଧନଞ୍ଜୟେ,
ଆକାଶ ଥାଇ କହିଲେ ତାକୁ ଦେବତାଏ ।
ଶୁଣି ଅରଜୁନ ପିଣ୍ଡ ପକାଇଲା ଜଳେ,
ସେ ପିଣ୍ଡ ଲାଗିଲା ନୀଳସୁନ୍ଦର ଶୈଳେ ।
ଜାରା ବ୍ୟାଧକୁ ପ୍ରସନ୍ନ ହେବେ ମହାରାଜା,
ଜାରା ଶବର କରିବ ଏ ପିଣ୍ଡକୁ ପୂଜା ।”

ଏହା କିନ୍ତୁ ଅମୂଳକ । ଶ୍ରୀମତାଗବତରେ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱଧୀମ ଗମନର ଲୀଳା ଏକାଦଶ ଝନ ୩୧ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ।
ଲୋକାଭିରାମଂ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ରଂ ଧାରଣା ଧ୍ୟାନମଙ୍ଗଳମ୍ ।
ଯୋଗ ଧାରଣାଭ୍ୟାସେନା ଅଦଗ୍ଧା ଧ୍ୟାନାବିଶତ୍ ସ୍ୱକମ୍ । ।

ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ଶରୀର ଉଚ୍ଚମାନଙ୍କର ଧ୍ୟାନ ଧାରଣାର ବିଷୟ । ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ଉଚ୍ଚମାନେ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ରୂପକୁ ଧ୍ୟାନ କରିଥାଆନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ଧାରଣାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆସିଥାଆନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ଶରୀର ଅତି ସୁନ୍ଦର ହେତୁ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ସେ ନୟନାଭିରାମ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି । ଏମନ୍ତରୂପକୁ ସେ ଆଗ୍ନେୟୀ ଯୋଗ ଧାରଣା ଦ୍ୱାରା ଦସ୍ତ ନକରି ସ୍ୱ ଶରୀରରେ ଗୋଲକ ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠକୁ ଚାଲିଗଲେ । ଏଥିରେ ପିଣ୍ଡ ପୋଡ଼ିବାର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ନାହିଁ । ତେଣୁ ଅପୋତାପିଣ୍ଡ କେଉଁଠୁ ଆସିଲା ଯେ ସେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ବ୍ରହ୍ମ ହେଲା?

ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମରେ ମୃତ ଶରୀର ଦାହ ହୋଇଗଲାପରେ ସେଥିରୁ ରହିଯାଇଥିବା ଅସ୍ଥିଖଣ୍ଡକୁ ଘରକୁ ଆଣିଥାନ୍ତି । ପରେ ପ୍ରାଣୀର ମୋକ୍ଷ ପାଇଁ ପାବନ ନଦୀ ଗଙ୍ଗା କିମ୍ବା ତ୍ରିବେଣୀରେ ବିସର୍ଜନ କରିଦିଆଯାଏ । କୌଣସି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ ପିତାମାତାଙ୍କ ଅସ୍ଥିକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଗୃହ ମଧ୍ୟକୁ ନେଇ ନଥାନ୍ତି । ଘର ବାହାର ବଗିଚାରେ କୌଣସି ନିର୍ଜନ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ରଖି ପୂଜା କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଯେତେବେଳେ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ନିଜର ପିତାମାତାଙ୍କ ଅସ୍ଥିକୁ ନିଜ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ନେଇନଥାଏ, ସେତେବେଳେ କୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ଅପୋତା ପିଣ୍ଡକୁ ନେଇ ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କ ବ୍ରହ୍ମରେ ରଖି ପୂଜା କରିବା ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ଅଟେ ।

୨. ଲଳିତା ବିଦ୍ୟାପତି ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ଅବାନ୍ତର

ଅବନ୍ତୀ ଦେଶର ସମ୍ରାଟ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନଙ୍କ ପୁରୋହିତଙ୍କ ସାନଭାଇ ବିଦ୍ୟାପତି ଅପରାହ୍ଣରେ ନୀଳାଚଳ ଧାମରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ । ଶବରପଲ୍ଲୀରେ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରି ସେ ବିଷ୍ଣୁଭକ୍ତମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିଲେ । କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ଚନ୍ଦନ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚିତ ବସ୍ତ୍ର ବୃଦ୍ଧ ବିଶ୍ୱାବସୁ ସେଠାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ । ସେ ମାଧବଙ୍କ ପୂଜା ସମାପନାନ୍ତେ ନୀଳପର୍ବତରୁ ଫେରୁଥିଲେ । ବିଦ୍ୟାପତି ଭାବିଲେ ଏହି ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ପ୍ରଧାନ ହରି ପୂଜା କରି ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଫେରୁଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ମୋତେ ହରିଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ କଥା କହି ମୋର ଚିନ୍ତା ଦୂର କରିବେ ।

ବିଦ୍ୟାପତି ଏହିପରି ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଥିବାବେଳେ ବିଶ୍ୱାବସୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିଲେ, “ହେ ବ୍ରଜ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ! ଆପଣ କେଉଁ ସ୍ଥାନରୁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି? ଆପଣ ଭୋକିଲା ଜଣାପଡ଼ୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏଠାରେ କିଛି ସମୟ ବିଶ୍ରାମ କରି କ୍ଷୁଧା ଓ ତୃଷ୍ଣା ଦୂର କରନ୍ତୁ । ବିଦ୍ୟାପତି ନିଜର ପରିଚୟ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରି କହିଲେ ରାଜା ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନ ଜଟିଳ ସନ୍ନ୍ୟାସୀଙ୍କଠାରୁ ହରି ମାହାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରବଣ କରି ହରି ଦର୍ଶନ ପାଇଁ ମୋତେ ପ୍ରେରଣା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଯେପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତାଙ୍କୁ ମୁଁ ସ୍ମରଣରେ ଦର୍ଶନ ନ କରିଛି ମୁଁ ଅନ୍ନ ସେବନ କରିବି ନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ସ୍ଥିର କରିଛି । ବିଶ୍ୱାବସୁ ଭାବୁଥାନ୍ତି, ଆଜି ଆମମାନଙ୍କର ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିନ ଉପଶିତ ହେଲା । ପ୍ରଭୁ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଗୁପ୍ତରେ ଥିଲେ । ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖାଇଦେଲେ ସେ ସର୍ବଜନରେ ପରିଚିତ ହୋଇଯିବେ । ଯଦି ମୁଁ ନ ଦେଖାଏ ତେବେ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ କ୍ରୋଧାନ୍ୱିତ ହୋଇ ଅଭିଶାପ ଦେଇପାରନ୍ତି । ତେବେ ମୋର ସମସ୍ତ କୃତ ପୁଣ୍ୟ ନଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇଯିବ । ବିଶ୍ୱାବସୁଙ୍କର

ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପ୍ରସାରିତ ଜନଶ୍ରୁତି କଥା ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା । ସେ ଶୁଣିଥିଲେ ନୀଳମାଧବ ଭୂମିଗତ ହୋଇଯିବେ । ପ୍ରବଳ ପରାକ୍ରମୀ ରାଜା ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନ ଏଠାକୁ ଆସି ପ୍ରଜାମାନଙ୍କ ସହ ସହସ୍ର ଅଶ୍ୱମେଧ ଯଜ୍ଞ କରିବେ । ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଦାରୁ ଦେହରେ ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଧାମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ହୋଇ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦର୍ଶନ ଦେବେ । ହରି ଇଚ୍ଛା ବଳବାନ । ମନୁଷ୍ୟର ତା ଉପରେ କର୍ତ୍ତୃତ୍ୱ ନାହିଁ । ଏହାପରେ ସେ ବିଦ୍ୟାପତିଙ୍କ ହାତ ଧରି ପଥର ଓ କଣ୍ଠକାବୃତ ସଂକୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ, ଦୁର୍ଗମ ଓ ଅନ୍ଧକାର ପଥରେ ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲିଲେ । ନୀଳାଚଳ ଉପରେ ବଚବୃକ୍ଷ, ରୋହିଣୀକୁଣ୍ଡ ଏବଂ ନୀଳମାଧବଙ୍କୁ ଦର୍ଶନ କରି ବିଦ୍ୟାପତି ଧନ୍ୟ ହେଲେ । ତାପରେ ବିଦ୍ୟାପତିଙ୍କ ହାତଧରି ବିଶ୍ୱାବସୁ ତଳକୁ ଓହ୍ଲାଇଲେ ଏବଂ ନିଜ ଗୃହରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦିବ୍ୟ ଭୋଜନ ପ୍ରଦାନ କଲେ ।

ରାତ୍ର ସମୟରେ ଶୟନକକ୍ଷରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାବସୁ ବିଦ୍ୟାପତିଙ୍କୁ କହିଥିଲେ, “ଏହି କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଶ୍ରୀହରି ଯେତେକାଳ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଅବସ୍ଥାନ କରିବେ ସେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତାଙ୍କ ଅନୁଗ୍ରହରୁ ଆମ୍ଭ ଉଦ୍ଧାରକର ବଂଶ ରହିବ । ଏଥିରେ କୌଣସି ସନ୍ଦେହ କରଣୀୟ ନୁହେଁ ।”

ସ୍ଥିତିରତ୍ନ ହରେର୍ଯ୍ୟାବଦାବୟୋର୍ବଂଶ ସଂସ୍କୃତିଃ

ଅନୁଗ୍ରହାଦ୍ ଭଗବତୋ ନାତ୍ର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ବିଚାରଣା । ୮/୭୭ (ଋଦ୍)

ପ୍ରାତଃକାଳରେ ତୀର୍ଥରାଜ ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ସ୍ନାନ କରି ନୀଳକାନ୍ତ ମଣିବିଗ୍ରହଙ୍କୁ ପୁନରାୟ ଦର୍ଶନ କରି ରାଜାଙ୍କ ବାସଯୋଗ୍ୟ ସ୍ଥାନ ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣୟ କରିବାପରେ ଅବତୀ ନଗରକୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାବର୍ତ୍ତନ କଲେ ।

ପ୍ରଭାତାୟାନ୍ତୁ ଶର୍ବର୍ଯ୍ୟାଂ ତୀର୍ଥରାଜୋଦକେନ ଚୈ,

ସ୍ନାନଂ ନିର୍ବର୍ତ୍ତ୍ୟ ବିଧିବଦ୍ଧାଧିବଂ ପ୍ରଣିପତ୍ୟ ଚ ।

ରାଜାର୍ହସ୍ଥାନଂ ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣୟ ନିଜାଳୟଂ ଗତୌ ପୁନଃ । ୮/୮୨ (ଋଦ୍)

ଏଥିରୁ ଜଣାଯାଏ ଯେ ନୀଳାଚଳରେ ବିଦ୍ୟାପତିଙ୍କ ରହଣି ମାତ୍ର ଗୋଟିଏ ଦିନ । ବିଶେଷ ଭାବରେ ଲଳିତା ନାମରେ ଔଷଧିଏ ଥିବା କଥା ଏଥିରେ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ନାହିଁ । ପୁଣି ଗୋଟିଏ ଦିନରେ ଲଳିତା ସହ ବିବାହ କରି ମାଧବ ଦର୍ଶନ ନିମନ୍ତେ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରିବା ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ । ତେଣୁ ଏହି ବିବାହ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ଅପ୍ରାଯଜ୍ଞିକ । ତେବେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠେ, କିପରି ଏପରି ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ଜନମାନସରେ ପ୍ରସାର ଲାଭକଲା? ଏହାର ଏକମାତ୍ର ଉତ୍ତର ହେଉଛି ଶିଶୁ କୃଷ୍ଣଦାସଙ୍କ ‘ଦେଉଳତୋଳା’ ପୁସ୍ତକ । ଘଟଣାକୁ ନାଟକୀୟ କରିବାପାଇଁ ଲଳିତା ବିଦ୍ୟାପତି ବିବାହ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗର ଅବତାରଣା କରାଯାଇଛି ।

କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ବିଶ୍ୱାବସୁ ବିଦ୍ୟାପତିଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ଅକ୍ଷୟରୁଚି ବାନ୍ଧି ମାଧବ ଦର୍ଶନ ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ନେଇଯାଇଥିଲେ । ବିଦ୍ୟାପତି ତାଙ୍କ ଅଗୋଚରରେ ସୋରିଷ ବୁଣି ବୁଣି ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଯଦି ତାହା ସତ୍ୟ ହୋଇଥାଏ, ତେବେ ଦୀର୍ଘ ପାଞ୍ଚ କିଲୋମିଟର ପଥ ପାଇଁ ସେ କ’ଣ ମୁଠାଏ ସୋରିଷ ନେଇଥିଲେ? ତାହା କ’ଣ ବିଶ୍ୱାବସୁଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଏତାଇ ପାରିଥିବ? ଏହି ଅବତାରଣା କପୋଳକଣ୍ଠିତ ମନେହୁଏ ।

୩. ଦଇତାପତି ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ

ଦଇତା ଏବଂ ପତିମହାପାତ୍ର ଏମାନେ ଦୁଇଟି ବଂଶ । ଯଦି ଲଳିତା ବିଦ୍ୟାପତିଙ୍କୁ ବିବାହ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା, ତେବେ ସନ୍ତାନମାନେ ପିତୃ ପରିଚୟରେ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ ହୋଇଥାଆନ୍ତେ । ସେମାନେ ପୁଣି ଲଳିତାର ପିଲାମାନେ ‘ଦୟିତା’ ଏବଂ ବିଦ୍ୟାପତିଙ୍କ ପିଲାମାନେ ‘ପତିମହାପାତ୍ର’ ହେଲେ କିପରି? ବାସ୍ତବ କଥା ହେଉଛି ବିଦ୍ୟାପତିଙ୍କର (ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର) ପିଲାମାନେ ପତିମହାପାତ୍ର ଓ ବିଶ୍ୱାବସୁଙ୍କର ପିଲାମାନେ ଦୟିତା । କାରଣ ପିତୃଗୁଣରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଦୟିତ (ସେବକର ଭାବ) ଭାବ ଥିଲା । ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଦୁଇ ବଂଶର ଉତ୍ତରାଧିକାରୀମାନେ ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କର ସେବା କରିବେ ବୋଲି ଋଦ୍ଧପୁରାଣରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରାଯାଇଛି ।

୪. ବିଶ୍ୱାବସୁ ପୂଜିତ ନୀଳମାଧବଙ୍କୁ ଏକକ ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ବୁଝିବା ଭୁଲ୍

ନୀଳମାଧବ ଶବ୍ଦ ଉଚ୍ଚାରିତ ହେଲାମାତ୍ରେ ଜଣାଯାଏ ସିଏ ଏକ ମାଧବ (ବିଷ୍ଣୁ) ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଅଟନ୍ତି । ଚତୁର୍ଭୁଜରେ ଶଙ୍ଖ, ଚକ୍ର, ଗଦା, ପଦ୍ମ ଧାରଣ କରିଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଏହା କିନ୍ତୁ ଠିକ୍ ନୁହେଁ । ଋଦ୍ଧପୁରାଣ କହନ୍ତି-

“ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରନୀଳମୟୋ ଦେବ ଆସ୍ତେ ଚକ୍ର ଗଦାଧରଃ, ଏକାଶୀତ୍ୟଙ୍କୁଳମିତଃ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପଦ୍ମୋପରି ସ୍ଥିତଃ ।” ୧୦/୧୮

ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ଏକାଶୀ ଆଙ୍କୁଳ ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶଙ୍ଖ-ଚକ୍ର-ଗଦା-ପଦ୍ମଧାରୀ ଏକ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରନୀଳମଣି ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପଦ୍ମ ଉପରେ ବିରାଜିତ ଥିଲେ । ପାଖରେ ଆଉ କେଉଁମାନେ ଥିଲେ?

ବାମପାଶ୍ୱର୍ଗତାଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀରାକ୍ଷିଷ୍ଣା ପଦ୍ମପାଣିନା । ୧୦/୩୩

ସେହି ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ୍ଣପଦ୍ମ ଉପରେ ମାଧବ, ଦେବୀ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କୁ ବାମପାଶ୍ଵରେ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କରି ରହିଥିଲେ ।
 ଛତ୍ରୀଭୂତଫଣାବୃନ୍ଦଃ ଶେଷଃ ପଶ୍ଚାଦବସ୍ଥିତଃ । ୧୦/୩୬
 ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀନାରାୟଣଙ୍କର ପଶ୍ଚାତ୍ତରାଗରେ ଶେଷନାଗ ଅନନ୍ତ ଫଣାବିସ୍ତାର କରିଥିଲେ ।
 ଅଗ୍ରେ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥିତଂ ଦୃଷ୍ଟଂ ବପୁର୍ଭ୍ରସୁଦର୍ଶନମ୍ ।
 କୃତାଞ୍ଜଳିପୁଟଂ ତସ୍ୟ ପଶ୍ଚାଦ୍ ଗରୁଡମାସ୍ଥିତମ୍ । ୧୦/୩୭
 ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀନାରାୟଣଙ୍କ ସାମ୍ନାରେ ସୁଦର୍ଶନ ଏବଂ ଚିକିଏ ପଛକୁ ଯୋଡ଼ହସ୍ତରେ ଗରୁଡ଼ ବିରାଜମାନ ଥିଲେ ।

୪. ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ବିଗ୍ରହ ନିର୍ମାଣ ପାଇଁ ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ଦାରୁ ଭାସୁଥିଲା ନା ତରୁ ଭାସୁଥିଲା?

କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ଅନୁସାରେ ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ଦାରୁ ଭାସୁଥିଲା ଏବଂ ଏହି ଦାରୁରୁ ତତୁର୍ଦ୍ଧାମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ତିଆରି ହୋଇଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରକୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ଜଣାଯାଏ-

“ଦେବ ଦୃଷ୍ଟୋ ମହାବୃକ୍ଷଃ ତତତୁମୌ ମହୋଦଧେଃ,
 ପ୍ରବିଷ୍ଟାଗ୍ରଃ ସମୁଦ୍ରାନ୍ତଃ କଲୋଳମ୍ଭବମୂଳକଃ” । ୧୮/୬ (ସ୍କନ୍ଦ)

ପ୍ରଭାତରୁ ସ୍ନାନ କରିବାକୁ ଯାଇଥିବା ଯଜ୍ଞ ପୁରୋହିତ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣମାନେ, ସେବକମାନେ ମହୋଦଧି କୂଳରେ ଯେଉଁ ବୃକ୍ଷ ଦେଖିଥିଲେ ତାହାହିଁ ରାଜା ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନଙ୍କ ଆଗେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନେ କହିଲେ ହେ ମହାରାଜା! ଆମ୍ଭେମାନେ ମହୋଦଧି ତଟରେ ଏକ ମହାନ ବୃକ୍ଷ ଦେଖୁଲୁ । ଯାହାର ଅଗ୍ରଭାଗ (ତାଳପତ୍ର) ସମୁଦ୍ର ଭିତରକୁ ଲମ୍ଫିଥିଲା ଏବଂ ମୂଳ ତଟଭୂମିରେ ପୋତି ହୋଇଥିଲା ଏବଂ ଯାହାକୁ ସମୁଦ୍ର ତେଉ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଧୋଇ ଦେଉଥିଲା, ସେ ବୃକ୍ଷର ରଂଗ ମଂଜୁଆତି ରଂଗ ପରି ଈଷତ୍ ଲାଲ । ସେହି ବୃକ୍ଷରେ ଶଙ୍ଖ-ଚକ୍ର ଚିହ୍ନ ଥିଲା ଏବଂ ତାହା ସୁଗନ୍ଧ ଯୁକ୍ତ ଥିଲା ।

ଏହା ଥିଲା ଏକ ବୃକ୍ଷ । ଦାରୁ ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ନିର୍ଜୀବ କାଠଗଣ୍ଡି ନୁହେଁ ବରଂ ତରୁ । ଏହାକୁ ଆଣି ସେଥିରେ ତତୁର୍ଦ୍ଧା ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ନିର୍ମାଣ କରାଗଲା । ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବନଯାଗ ପଛତିରେ ନିମ୍ନ ବୃକ୍ଷ ହିଁ ବିଗ୍ରହ ପାଇଁ ଠିକ୍ କରାଯାଉଛି ।

୬. ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ନିର୍ମାଣ ବେଳେ ଅଧାରୁ ଖୋଲି ଦେବାରୁ ତତୁର୍ଦ୍ଧା ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଅସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହେଲେ - ଏହା ମଧ୍ୟ ଏକ ଶୁଣା କଥା ଆଦୌ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ନୁହେଁ

କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ଅନୁସାରେ ବିଶେଷକରି ‘ଦେଉଳତୋଳା’ରେ ଲେଖାଯାଇଛି ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ନିର୍ମାଣ ପାଇଁ ବୁଢ଼ା ବଢ଼େଇକୁ ୨୧ ଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଆବନ୍ଧ ଘରେ ରଖାଗଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ କିଛିଦିନ ପରେ ସେହି ବନ୍ଧ ଘରେ ଆଉ ୦କ ୦କ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ନିର୍ମାଣ ଶବ୍ଦ ଶୁଣାନଯିବାରୁ ରାଣୀ ବିକଳ ହୋଇ ରାଜାଙ୍କୁ କହିଲେ ଏବଂ ବୁଢ଼ା ବଢ଼େଇ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିବା ଆଶଙ୍କା କରି କବାଟ ଖୋଲିଦେବାରୁ ଦେଖାଗଲା ବଢ଼େଇ ନାହିଁ ଏବଂ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିମାନ ଅଧାଗଢ଼ା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ପ୍ରମାଣ ହେଲା-

ସୁଗୁପ୍ତାୟାଂ ମହାବେଦ୍ୟାଂ ସ୍ଵୟଂ ସୋଽବତରିଷ୍ୟତି ।
 ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛାଦ୍ୟତାଂ ଦିନାନେ୍ୟବ ଯାବତ୍ ପଞ୍ଚଦଶାନ୍ତି ବୈ । ୧୮/୩୭ (ସ୍କନ୍ଦ)

ଶୂନ୍ୟବାଣୀ ହେଲା ମହାରାଜା! ମହାବେଦୀରେ (ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିମାନ ନିର୍ମାଣ ସ୍ଥଳରେ) ଅତି ଗୋପନରେ ଜଣେ ବୃକ୍ଷବର୍ଦ୍ଧକୀ ଅବତରଣ କରିବେ । ମହାବେଦୀକୁ ସବୁଦିଗରୁ ଆବନ୍ଧ କରି ତୁମେ ସେହି ବଢ଼େଇଙ୍କୁ ତା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ୧୫ ଦିନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବନ୍ଦ କରି ରଖ, ସେ ହିଁ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କର ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିଦେବେ । ତାହାହିଁ ହେଲା ଏବଂ ୧୫ ଦିନ ଶେଷ ହେବାପରେ ନାରଦ ଏବଂ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନ ବନ୍ଧ ଘରକୁ ଖୋଲି ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ନିଜ ଇଚ୍ଛାରେ ନିର୍ମିତ ବିଗ୍ରହମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ଏବଂ ବଢ଼େଇ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲେ ।

ଏଥିରେ ୨୧ ଦିନ କଥା ଆସିଲା କୁଆଡୁ? ଏହି ପରମ୍ପରାକୁ ଅନୁସରଣ କରି ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ‘ଅଣସର’ ୧୫ ଦିନ ପାଳନ କରାଯାଉଛି ।

୭. ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନ ମୋ ବଂଶରେ କେହି ନରହକ୍ତୁ ବୋଲି ବର ମାଗିବା ମଧ୍ୟ ହାସ୍ୟାସ୍ଵଦ କଥା

ଲୋକକଥାରେ ଶୁଣାଯାଏ ନୀଳାଚଳରେ ଭଗବାନ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ବିରାଜିତ ହୋଇଯିବା ପରେ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନଙ୍କୁ ବର ମାଗିବା ପାଇଁ କହିଲେ । ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନ କହିଲେ, “ପ୍ରଭୋ! ମୋତେ ନିଃସନ୍ତାନ କରିଦିଅନ୍ତୁ, ମୋ’ ବଂଶରେ କେହି ନ ରହନ୍ତୁ । କାରଣ ସେମାନେ ପରେ କହିବେ, ଦେଉଳ

ଆମର । ଆମ ବଂଶର ରାଜା ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନ ଏ ଦେଉଳ ନିର୍ମାଣ କରି ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରକଟ କରାଇଥିଲେ । ଏହା ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଅପକୀର୍ତ୍ତି ହେବ ।”

କେଉଁ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରର ଆଧାରରେ ଏ କଥା କୁହାଯାଇଛି? ମହାରାଜା ନିଃସନ୍ତାନ ହେଲେ ଆଉ ବଂଶ ଆସିବ କେଉଁଠୁ ଯେ ସେମାନେ ମନ୍ଦିରକୁ ନିଜର ବୋଲି ଦାବି କରିବେ? ଏବେ କ'ଣ ଲୋକେ କହୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି କି ଏ ମନ୍ଦିର ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନ ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି, ତାଙ୍କ ବଂଶଧରମାନେ ଏକଥା କହିଥାନ୍ତେ, ଏଥିରେ କ୍ଷତି କ'ଣ? ଏ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟତା ଯାହା, ତାହା ଦେଖନ୍ତୁ-

“ପ୍ରୀତୋଽସି ଯଦି ତ୍ଵଂ ନାଥ ବୃଣୋହେଂ ବରମୁଭୟମ୍ ।
ତ୍ଵପ୍ଦଂ ଗନ୍ତୁମିଚ୍ଛାମି ତ୍ଵତ୍ ପ୍ରସାଦାତ୍ ସୁଦୁର୍ଲଭମ୍” । (ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁରାଣ)

ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ହେ ନାଥ! ମୋ ଉପରେ ଯଦି ଆପଣ କୃପା କରିଛନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ମୋତେ ଏହି ବର ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ ଯେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ କୃପାରୁ ମୋତେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପାଦପଦ୍ମ ତଳେ ସ୍ଥାନ ମିଳୁ । ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ମୁଁ ସଂସାରରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ଚାହୁଁଛି । ଏଥିରେ ବଂଶରେ କେହି ନ ରହିବାର କଥା ଉଠିଲା କେଉଁଠୁ?

ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ରାଜା ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନ ଦେବର୍ଷି ନାରଦଙ୍କ ସହ ସ୍ଵର୍ଗରୀରରେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମଲୋକକୁ ଯାଇ ବ୍ରହ୍ମାଙ୍କୁ ସାକ୍ଷାତ୍ କରି ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଜଣାଇଲେ । ବ୍ରହ୍ମା ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରସନ୍ନ ହୋଇ କହିଲେ, ତୁମେ ନାରାୟଣଙ୍କ ନିମନ୍ତେ ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିଛ, ଏ କଥା ଠିକ୍ । ମାତ୍ର ଏହା ଭିତରେ ଅନେକଦିନ ବିତିଗଲାଣି । ତୁମର ରାଜ୍ୟ ଆଉ ନାହିଁ । ତୁମର ଶୁଦ୍ଧପୁତ୍ର ବଂଶ, ପୁତ୍ର ପୌତ୍ରାଦିଙ୍କର କାଳ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ଇତିମଧ୍ୟରେ ପୃଥିବୀରେ କେତେ ଯୁଗ ବିତିଗଲାଣି । ଏହା ଭିତରେ କୋଟି କୋଟି ରାଜା ରାଜତ୍ଵ କରିସାରିଲେଣି । ଏଠାରେ ଏକ ସପ୍ତତି ଦିବ୍ୟବର୍ଷ ହେଲେ ପୃଥିବୀରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ମନୁକ୍ରମ ହୁଏ । ଏହା ଭିତରେ ତୁମେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଓ ବାର୍ଦ୍ଧକ୍ୟରେ ଆକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହୋଇସାରିଛ । ମାତ୍ର ଏଠାରେ ଥିବାରୁ ତୁମକୁ ସେସବୁ ଜଣାଯାଉନାହିଁ । ତୁମର ସେହି ମନ୍ଦିର ଓ ସେହି ଦାରୁ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ସେପରି ଅଛନ୍ତି । ତୁମେ ଏବେ ଫେରିଯାଇ ସେହି ମନ୍ଦିର ଓ ଦେବତାଙ୍କୁ ନିଜ ଆୟତ୍ତକୁ ନିଅ । ଆମେ ତୁମ ପଛେ ପଛେ ସେଠାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବୁ । ଏଥିରୁ କ୍ଷୟ ଅନୁମିତ ହୁଏ ଯେ ଲୋକକଥା ସତ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ ।

କ୍ଷୟପୁରାଣରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ଅଛି ଯେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ଶୁଣି ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦ୍ୟୁମ୍ନଙ୍କୁ କହିଲେ, “ହେ ରାଜେନ୍ଦ୍ର! ତୁମେ ଯେତେବେଳେ କୋଟି କୋଟି ରତ୍ନ ଉତ୍ତରଣ କରି ମୋର ମନ୍ଦିର ସ୍ଥାପନ କରିଅଛ ମୁଁ ତୁମଙ୍କୁ ଏହି ବର ଦେଉଅଛି ଯେ, ମୋ ପ୍ରତି ତୁମର ଭକ୍ତି ଅଟଳା ହେଉ ।”
୨୯/୧୧

୮. ବଡ଼ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ଥିବା ଅରୁଣ-ସ୍ଵୟ ଶ୍ରୀମନ୍ଦିର ବା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ସହ ଆଦୌ ସଂପର୍କିତ ନୁହେଁ

ଯେଉଁଠି ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମିତ ହେଉଛି, ତାରି ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଏକ ଅରୁଣ ସ୍ଵୟ ନିର୍ମିତ ହେଉଛି । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣର ଇଏ ଏକ ଅଙ୍ଗ । ଉପାସ୍ୟ ଦେବତାଙ୍କର ସାମ୍ନାରେ ବାହନ ରହିବା ଶିଳ୍ପଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ଅନୁସାରେ ଜରୁରୀ । ତେଣୁ ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ବାହନ ଗରୁଡ଼ ଜଗମୋହନରେ ହିଁ ଏକ ସ୍ଵୟ ଉପରେ ବିରାଜମାନ ଥିବା ହେତୁ ପୁଣି ବାହାରେ ସ୍ଵୟ ଉପରେ ଅରୁଣଙ୍କ ସ୍ଥିତି କିଭଳି ଭାବରେ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ରଖୁଛି? ଅରୁଣ ତ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କ ସାରଥୀ ।

ତେବେ ସତ୍ୟତା ହେଲା ଏହା ଯେ ମରହଟ୍ଟାମାନଙ୍କ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଶାସନ କାଳରେ ‘ବାବା-ବ୍ରହ୍ମଚାରୀ’ ନାମରେ ମରହଟ୍ଟା ସାଧୁ କୋଣାର୍କ ଦର୍ଶନ ପାଇଁ ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ସେଠାରୁ କୋଣାର୍କର ଭଗ୍ନ ମନ୍ଦିର ସମ୍ମୁଖରେ ଏହି ସୁଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଅରୁଣ ସ୍ଵୟକୁ ଦେଖି ବିମୋହିତ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲେ । କାଳ କାଳ ଧରି ସମୁଦ୍ର ଲୁଣିହାଣ୍ଡା ବାଜି ମଧ୍ୟ ସ୍ଵୟଟି କ୍ଷୟପ୍ରାୟ ହେଉନାହିଁ ଏବଂ ଜଗତ୍ ବିସ୍ମୟ ଏହି ସ୍ଵୟକୁ ଅପାଂଚ୍ଛେୟ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଦେଖି ଚିନ୍ତା କରି ଠିକ୍ କଲେ ଯେ ଏହାକୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର ସମ୍ମୁଖରେ ସ୍ଥାପିତ କରିଦେଲେ ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ ଯାତ୍ରୀ ଏହାକୁ ଦେଖିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇବେ । ତାହାହିଁ ହେଲା । ଏହା ଥିଲା ଏକ ସଂଯୋଗ ମାତ୍ର ।

୯. ଚନ୍ଦନ ଅର୍ଗଳିଠାରୁ ରତ୍ନସିଂହାସନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଶାଳଗ୍ରାମ ପୋତା ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ତା ଉପରେ ଚାଲି ଯିବାକୁ ମନା, ଏହା ସତ୍ୟ କି?

ଉପରୋକ୍ତ କଥା ଆପଣମାନେ ସେବକମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶୁଣିଥିବେ । ଏଥିରେ ସତ୍ୟତା କେତେ? ଚନ୍ଦନ ଅର୍ଗଳିଠାରୁ ରତ୍ନସିଂହାସନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଯାହା ଉପରେ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଲକ୍ଷଲକ୍ଷ ଲୋକ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ଦର୍ଶନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଯାଆନ୍ତି, ସେ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଶାଳଗ୍ରାମ ପୋତାଯିବାର କାରଣ ହିଁ କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ଏହା କେବଳ ଏକ ଲୋକ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ । ଶାଳଗ୍ରାମ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ‘ଶିଳାବ୍ରହ୍ମ’ ସ୍ଵୟଂ ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ।

ଯାହାଙ୍କର ସ୍ନାନଜଳ ଅଶୌଚ ପ୍ରାଣୀକୁ ଶୌଚ କରାଇଦିଏ, ସିଏ ପୁଣି ରାସ୍ତାରେ ପୋତାଯିବେ କାହିଁକି? ଶାଳଗ୍ରାମ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ ପୂଜକମାନଙ୍କର ଇଷ୍ଟ । ରାସ୍ତା କଥା ତ ଦୂର ଯଦି ରତ୍ନସିଂହାସନ ଉପରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶାଳଗ୍ରାମ ଥାଆନ୍ତେ, ତେବେ କୌଣସି ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ କେବେହେଲେ ତା' ଉପରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ପୂଜା, ଅର୍ଚ୍ଚନା, ଶୃଙ୍ଗାର ଆଦି କରନ୍ତେ ନାହିଁ । ଦେଖାଯାଏ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ ସେବାୟତମାନେ ଚକାରେ (ଯେଉଁ ଗୋଲେଇ ପଥର ଖୋପ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବିଗ୍ରହମାନେ ବିରାଜମାନ କରିଛନ୍ତି) ଗୋଡ଼ ବାଜିଯିବାକୁ ନେଇ ଖୁବ୍ ସାବଧାନ ଥାଆନ୍ତି କିନ୍ତୁ ରତ୍ନସିଂହାସନ ଉପରେ ସ୍ପର୍ଶକରେ ସେମାନେ ନୀତି ସମାପନ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଏଥିରୁ ଅନୁମିତ ହୁଏ ଚନ୍ଦନ ଅର୍ଗଳିଠାରୁ ରତ୍ନ ସିଂହାସନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଏପରିକି ରତ୍ନସିଂହାସନ ଉପରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶାଳଗ୍ରାମ ଥିବାର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ନାହିଁ । କୌଣସି ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏ ସଂପର୍କରେ ସାମାନ୍ୟତମ ସୂଚନା ଦିଆଯାଇନାହିଁ । ଯାହା ମନେହୁଏ ଏ ଯାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କର ଅତ୍ୟଧିକ ଭିଡ଼କୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକରି ଏକଥା ପ୍ରଚାରିତ ହୋଇଛି । ଗରୁଡ଼ ପଛରେ ଥାଇ ଦେଖିବାକଥା କୁହାଯାଇଛି ।

୧୦. ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ରୋଷଶାଳାରେ କୁଡୁଆ ଉପରେ କୁଡୁଆ ବସି ପାକ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୁଏ କି?

ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଆମେ ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା ଶୁଣି ଆସିଛେ ଯେ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ରୋଷଶାଳାରେ ତୁଲି ଉପରେ କୁଡୁଆ ଉପରେ କୁଡୁଆ ରଖି ପାକ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୁଏ । ଏହା ଠିକ୍ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଲାଗେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଆମେ ଶୁଣୁ ଯେ ତୁଲିରେ ଉପରକୁ ଉପର ବସିଥିବା କୁଡୁଆର ସବା ଉପରେ କୁଡୁଆ ଆଗ ପାକ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଏହାର କାରଣ ମଧ୍ୟ ମହାପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କ ମହିମା ବୋଲି କୁହାଯାଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମନରେ ଶଙ୍କା ଆସେ ଆଦୌ ଅସ୍ମିର ଉତ୍ତର ପାଉନଥିବା ଉପର କୁଡୁଆରେ ପାକ ସିଦ୍ଧି ହୁଏ କିପରି?

ଏବେ ବାସ୍ତବତାକୁ ଆସିବା । ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ରୋଷଶାଳାରେ ସର୍ବମୋଟ ୨୪୦ଟି ତୁଲି ଅଛି । ସେଥିରୁ ୧୦ଟି ତୁଲିରେ କୋଠଭୋଗ ରନ୍ଧାଯାଏ ଏବଂ ଅବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ୨୩୦ଟି ତୁଲିରେ ସୁଆରମାନେ ପାକ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରନ୍ତି । ତୁଲିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ତିନି ପ୍ରକାରର । ୧-ଅନୁତୁଲି, ୨-ଅହିଆତୁଲି, ୩-ପିଠାତୁଲି । ତୁଲିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଚଟାଣଉପରୁ ୩ ଫୁଟ ଉଚ୍ଚରେ ଧାଡ଼ି ଧାଡ଼ି ହୋଇ ରହିଥାଏ । ଏଥିମଧ୍ୟରୁ ଅନୁତୁଲିର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ସବୁଠୁ ଅଧିକ । ଅନୁତୁଲିଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ଏକାଥରକେ ପ୍ରାୟ ୯ ଗୋଟି କୁଡୁଆରେ ଅନ୍ନ ରନ୍ଧାଯାଇଥାଏ । ୫ଟି କୁଡୁଆକୁ ତୁଲିର ୬ଟି ଝିଙ୍କା (ଇଣ୍ଡା) ଉପରେ ରଖାଯାଏ । ଏହାପରେ ଏହି କୁଡୁଆଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଉପରେ ୩ଟି କୁଡୁଆ ରଖାଯାଏ ଏବଂ ସବାଉପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ କୁଡୁଆ ରଖାଯାଏ । ଏହି ତୁଲିରେ ଦୁଇଥାକରେ ଜାଳେଣି କାଠ ଦିଆଯିବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଥାଏ । ଏକାବେଳକେ ଅଧମହଣରୁ ମହଣେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କାଠ ଜାଳେଣି ରୂପେ ଦିଆଯାଇଥାଏ । ତୁଲିର ଗଠଣ ଏପରି ଭାବରେ ହୋଇଥାଏ ଯେ ୯ଟି ଯାକ କୁଡୁଆ ସମାନ ଭାବରେ ତାପ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଥାଏ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କୁଡୁଆରେ ଚାଉଳ ଓ ଜଳ ଦିଆଯାଇଥାଏ । ଏ ପ୍ରାୟ ୧୫ ମିନିଟ୍ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଅନ୍ନ ପାକସିଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ସେବକମାନେ ଦଉଡ଼ି ସାହାଯ୍ୟରେ ସୁବିଧା ପାଇଁ ଉପରୁ କୁଡୁଆକୁ ବାହାରକରି ପାଖରେ ଥିବା ବାଇହାଣ୍ଡିରେ ଅନ୍ନ ଓ ପେଜକୁ ଭାଲି ଦେଇଥାଆନ୍ତି । ପରେ ପରେ ତଳେ ଥିବା କୁଡୁଆରୁ ଅନ୍ନ ଓ ପେଜକୁ ବାଇହାଣ୍ଡିକୁ ନେଇଯାଇଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଏହାର ଅର୍ଥ ନୁହେଁ ଯେ ଉପରେ ବସିଥିବା କୁଡୁଆରେ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ମହିମାରୁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଅନ୍ନ ସିଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

ଅହିଆ ତୁଲିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ପ୍ରାୟ ୩ ଫୁଟ ଲମ୍ବ ଏବଂ ୨ ଫୁଟ ଓସାର । ଏଥିରେ କାଠ ନ ଜାଳି ଅନୁ-ତୁଲିର ରତନିଆଁକୁ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଯାଏ । ଏହି ତୁଲିମାନଙ୍କରେ ଡାଲି, ତରକାରୀ ଧାଡ଼ିହୋଇ ରନ୍ଧାହୁଏ । ରୋଷଘରର ଗୋଟାଏ କଣରେ କିଛି ନିଆଁରତ ଗଦା ହୋଇଥାଏ ଏବଂ ସେହିଠାରେ ଡାଲି, ତରକାରୀ ବଘରାହୁଏ ।

ପିଠା ତୁଲିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସିମେଣ୍ଟରେ ତିଆରି । ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଝିଙ୍କାହୀନ । ତେଣୁ ତୁଲି ଉପରେ ପିଠା କଡେଇ ବସିଲେ ଅସ୍ମି ଆଉ ବାହାରକୁ ଦେଖାଯାଏ ନାହିଁ । ଏଠାରେ ନାନାପ୍ରକାର ପିଠାପଣା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୁଏ ।



ସଭାପତି, ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ପରିଷଦ
ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର, ମୋ-୯୪୩୭୦୦୭୭୭୦

ମୋ ଦେଶ ମୋ ଠାକୁର ନିରୁପମା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ



ଆଃ ମୋ ମାତୃଭୂମି, ମୋ ଦେଶ ।

ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଚିତ୍ତରେ ପ୍ରଧାନ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ –

“ଆମ ଦେଶ ଉପରଦେଇ ଗଲାବେଳେ ଭାରତ ତୁମକୁ କେମିତି ଦିଶିଲା?”

“ସାରେ ଯାହାଁସେ ଆଜ୍ଞା!”, ଅନ୍ତରୀକ୍ଷ ଯାନରୁ ରାକେଶ ଶର୍ମାଙ୍କ ଉତ୍ତର । ଯାଠାରୁ ବଳି ମଧୁର ଉତ୍ତର ଆଉ କଣ ଥାଇପାରେ! ରାତିସାରା ସେଇ ଭାବ ମତେ ଆଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ କରି ରଖିଲା । ସକାଳେ ବିଦେଶରୁ ଝିଅର ଚିଠିଖଣ୍ଡିଏ ପାଇଲି ତାକରେ । ତା ଉପରେ ଲଗାଯାଇଥିବା ତାକଟିକଟ ଉପରେ ବାଇସିଦିନ ତଳେ ପୋଷ୍ଟିଂହୋଇଥିବା ତାକମୋହର ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ପଢ଼ିହେଉଥାଏ । ଲେଖିଚି – “ମମି! ଜୀବନରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ଏତେ ବିକଳ ହୋଇ କେବେ ତାକି ନଥିଲି । ସେ ହଜାରହଜାର ମାଇଲ ଦୂରରେ, କେବଳ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ, ନାହାନ୍ତି । ମୋ ପାଖରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ଗଲେ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକରେ । ”

ଘଟଣାଟିର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଏହିପରି ଲେଖିଥାଏ ସେ ତା ସେଇ ଚିଠିରେ: ସକାଳ ଛା! ଅନ୍ଧାର ଆହୁରି କଟିନି । ତିନିଦିନ ହେଲା ଭୟଙ୍କର ବରଫ ବର୍ଷାଯୋଗୁ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଗାଡ଼ି ଚାଲିବା ବିପଦଜନକ ବୋଲି ସ୍କୁଲକଲେଜ ଫ୍ୟାକ୍ଟି ଆଦି ବନ୍ଦ ରହି ସେଇଦିନ ଖୋଲିଥାଏ । ବରଫ ଝଡ଼ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବନ୍ଦ ନହେଲେ ବି କମିଥାଏ । ଚାଳିଶ ମାଇଲ ଦୂର ଚାକିରି କ୍ଷେତ୍ରକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ବୋଲି ତା ସ୍ୱାମୀ ବାହାରି ଗଲେଣି । ସେ ଏକ୍ସ୍ପ୍ରେସ୍‌ଟି ସେଦିନର ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଲାଗି ପାଠ ପଢୁଥାଏ । ହଠାତ୍ ପାଖରେ କେଉଁଠି ଗୋଟାଏ ଭୟଙ୍କର ଶବ୍ଦରେ ସେ ଚମକି ପଡ଼ିଲା । ମଣିଷର ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା କାତର ଚିତ୍କାର ମଧ୍ୟ ତା କାନରେ ବାଜିଲା । ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧରି ନପାରି ସେ ପଦାକୁ ବାହାରି ଆସିଲା ।

ଆଖିରେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ପାଖ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ଗୋଟାଏ କାର୍ ପୁରା କାନ୍ଥ ଧସେଇ ପଶି ଯାଇଛି ଓ ତା ଉପରେ ଘରର କାନ୍ଥ ଅଜାଡ଼ି ହେଇ ପଡ଼ିଛି । କେତେଦିନ ହେବ ସେ ଘରଟି ବିକ୍ରୀ ହେବା ପାଇଁ ବନ୍ଦ ରହିଥିଲା । ସେ ଘରେ ଲୋକବାକ ରହୁନଥାନ୍ତି କି ଆଖପାଖରେ ବି କେହି ଜଣେହେଲେ ମଣିଷ ଦେଖା ଯାଉନଥାନ୍ତି । କଅଣ କରିବି ଭାବି ନପାରି ମୁଁ ସେଠିକି ଦଉଡ଼ିଗଲି । ପାଖରେ ପହଂଚି ଦେଖିଲି କୋଡ଼ିଏ ବାଇଶ ବର୍ଷର ବେଶ୍ ବଡ଼ ଟୋକାଟାଏ ଗାଡ଼ି ଭିତରେ...! ଷ୍ଟିଅର ଉପରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଲଦି ଦେଇଛି । ଶରୀର ତାର ହଲଚଳ ହଉନଥାଏ ଟିକିଏ ହେଲେ । ଗାଡ଼ିର ଇଞ୍ଜିନ୍ ତଥାପି ଚାଲୁଥାଏ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ଡୋର୍ ଖୋଲି ଇଞ୍ଜିନ୍ ବନ୍ଦକରି ଦେଲି । ତାପରେ ପିଲାଟାକୁ ସିଧାକରି ବସେଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକଲି । ହେଲେ କଣ ଦେଖିଲି! ଭଗବାନ! ତା ମୁହଁ ଆଉ ଦିଶୁନଥାଏ-ଖାଲି ରକ୍ତ! ନାକ ପାଟି କାନରୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ରକ୍ତଧାର ଛୁଟୁଥାଏ । ସେ ଅଚେତ ।

ଏତେବଡ଼ ଟୋକାଟାକୁ ଗାଡ଼ି ଭିତରୁ ପଦାକୁ ଆଣିବି କେମିତି? କାନ୍ଦିକାନ୍ଦି ମୁଁ କେବଳ ବଡ଼ ପାଟିରେ ଡାକୁଥାଏ “ ହେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ! ତାକୁ ବଂଚାଅ ତାକୁ ବଂଚାଅ । ” ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଆଖି ପାଇବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଚାହିଁ ଦେଖିଲି କୋଉଠି କେହିନାହିଁ । ପନ୍ଦର ମିନିଟ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରି ତାକୁ ଚାଣିଚାଣି ପଦାକୁ ଆଣିଲି । ତାକୁ ସେଇଠି ତଳେ ଶୁଆଇ ଦେଇ ଘରକୁ ଦଉଡ଼ି ଆସିଲି-ଫୋନ୍‌କରି ଆମ୍ବୁଲାନ୍ସ୍ ଡାକିବା ପାଇଁ ।

ଘରେ ପଶିଲା ପରେ ମୁଁ କଂପିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲି । ଜାଣିପାରିଲି ଯେ ଗରମ ପୋଷାକ ନପିନ୍ଧି ଘରୁ ବାହାରି ଯାଇଥିଲି । ମୋ ଦେହ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ବରଫ ଜମିଯାଇଥାଏ ।

ଆମ୍ବୁଲାନ୍ସ୍ ଓ ପୋଲିସକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରିସାରି ତା ପାଇଁ ଖଣ୍ଡେ କମ୍‌ଲଧରି ପୁଣି ଘଟଣା ସ୍ଥଳକୁ ଦଉଡ଼ିଲି । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ସେ ଯାଗା ରକ୍ତରେ ବୁଡ଼ି ଗଲାଣି ଦେଖି ମୋ ଛାତି ଥରିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ସେଇ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ପିଲାଟାକୁ କମ୍‌ଲରେ ଘୋଡ଼ାଇ ପକାଇ ଅପେକ୍ଷା

କରିବା ଛଡ଼ା ଆଉ କଣ କରିବି ଜାଣି ପାରିଲି ନାହିଁ । ଅଳ୍ପ ସମୟ ପରେ ପୋଲିସ୍ ଓ ଆମ୍ବୁଲାନ୍ସ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ ଓ ସେମାନେ ପିଲାଟିକୁ ନେଇଗଲେ ।

ମୁଁ ଏତେ ଭରି ଯାଇଥିଲି ଯେ କଲେଜ୍ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଗାଡ଼ି ଡ୍ରାଇଭ୍‌କରି ଯିବାକୁ ମୋର ସାହାସ ହେଲା ନାହିଁ । ସେ ଦିନର ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଦେବା ବନ୍ଦ ହେଲା । ଦିନ ସାରା ବାରମ୍ବାର ହସପିଟାଲକୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରି ପିଲାଟିର ଅବସ୍ଥା ବୁଝୁଥାଏ । ପ୍ରତିଥର ଉତ୍ତର ମିଳୁଥାଏ -ନା! ଚେତା ଫେରିନାହିଁ ।

ଦୁଇଦିନ ପରେ ସକାଳୁସକାଳୁ ଗାଡ଼ିଟିଏ ଅଟକିଲା ଆମ ଘର ଆଗରେ । କିଏ ଆସିଚଳି ବୋଲି ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଆମେ ସ୍ତମ୍ଭିତ, ସ୍ତମ୍ଭିତ ପଦାକୁ ଆସିଲୁ । ଆମକୁ ଦେଖି ବୟସ୍କା ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ଉଦ୍‌ଗ୍ରହଣିକା ଜଣେ ତାଙ୍କ କାରରୁ ବାହାରି ଆସିଲେ । ପାଖକୁ ଆସି ମତେ କୁଣ୍ଠେଇ ପକେଇଲେ ।

“ତୁ ଏତେ ଛୋଟ ଝିଅଟିଏ! ମୁଁ ତୋ ରୁଣ କେମିତି ଶୁଖିବି? କହ କଅଣ ମୁଁ କରିଦେଇ ପାରିବି ? ତୋର ଘରସଫା କରିଦେବି, ଲନ୍‌ରୁ ଘାସ କାଟିଦେବି-ଯାହାକହିବୁ ସବୁ କରିଦେବି । ତୁ ମୋ ପୁଅକୁ ବଞ୍ଚେଇ ଦେଇଚୁ । ସେ ଏପିଲେପ୍ସିକ ପେସେଂଟ୍ । ତାକୁ ଗାଡ଼ି ଚଳେଇବା ମନା । ମଝିର ମଝିରେ ସେ ଏମତି ଅଚେତ ହେଇଯାଏ । ତୋରି ଯୋଗୁ ବଞ୍ଚିଗଲା । ଚେତା ଫେରିଲାଣି, ଭଲ ଅଛି । ମୋର ସେଇ ଗୋଟିକ ପୁଅ.. ତୋରି ଯୋଗୁ ବଞ୍ଚିଗଲା ମୋ ପୁଅ..” ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିରୁ ଧାରଧାର ଲୁହ ବୋହି ଯାଉଥାଏ ।

ତାଙ୍କୁ ସାହୁଣ୍ଡା ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ଆମେ ସ୍ତମ୍ଭିତ ସ୍ତମ୍ଭିତ ଦୁହେଁ ହସପିଟାଲ୍ ଗଲୁ ପିଲାଟିକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ । ଆମର ପରିଚୟ ପାଇ ପୁରା ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଓ ମୁହଁ ସମେତ ବ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡେଜ୍ ହୋଇଥିବା ଏକ ଫାଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ପିଲାଟିର ଜୁଲୁଜୁଲୁ ଆଖି ଯୋଡ଼ିକ କୃତଜ୍ଞତାରେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ଦିଶିଲା । ଉଦ୍‌ଗ୍ରହଣିକାଙ୍କର ବାରମ୍ବାର କୃତଜ୍ଞତାର ସ୍ୱର ‘ତୁ ମୋ ପୁଅକୁ ବଞ୍ଚେଇ ଦେଇଚୁ ’ର ଉତ୍ତରରେ ମୁଁ କହିଲି, “ନାହିଁ, ମୁଁ ନୁହେଁ, ମୁଁ ନୁହେଁ.. ମୋ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ତାକୁ ବଞ୍ଚେଇଚଳି । ମୁଁ କିଛି କରିନି ଖାଲି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଡାକିଥିଲି ।”

ସେ ଘଟଣା ଉପରେ ସେତିକି ଲେଖିସାରିବା ପରେ ଦେଖିଲି ଝିଅର ଚିଠି ପୁରିଯାଇଥାଏ ଖାଲି ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ କଥାରେ । ଲେଖିଥାଏ- ମମି! ନୀଳାଦ୍ରୀ ବିହାର (ପୁରୀର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର ମ୍ୟୁଜିୟମ୍) ଦୁଆର ମୁହଁରେ ଷ୍ଟାଣ୍ଡ ଉପରୁ ସେଇ ଯୋଉ ବିଶାଳକାୟ, କି ଧାତୁରେ ତିଆରି କେଜାଣି ସେ ମସ୍ତକତ ଘଂଟାଟା ଝୁଲୁଥାଏ, ଯାହାକୁ କହନ୍ତି ପର୍ଲୁଗୀଜ ଘଂଟା ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଛି? ସେଇ ଅଭୂତ ଘଂଟାର ଇତିହାସ ମୋର ସେତେବେଳେ ମନେପଡ଼ିଗଲା । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ନାଁକୁ ଭୁଲକରି ବାରମ୍ବାର ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣକରୁଥିବା ସେଇ ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ଉଦ୍‌ଗ୍ରହଣିକାଙ୍କୁ ଚାହିଁ ମୁଁ ମନ୍ଦିର ମ୍ୟୁଜିୟମ୍‌ର ମ୍ୟଗାଜିନିର ବାହାରିଥିବା ପର୍ଲୁଗୀଜ ଘଂଟାର ଇତିହାସ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କଲି-

ଷୋହଳଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଘଟଣା । ସେତେବେଳେ ଭାରତକୁ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଆଳରେ ଆସୁଥିବା ଯୁରୋପୀୟ ଉପନିବେଶକାରୀଙ୍କ ସାମୁଦ୍ରିକ ଅଭିଯାନର ଆରମ୍ଭ କାଳ । ଜଳଦସ୍ୟୁମାନେ ସେତେବେଳେ ଆମର କଳିଙ୍ଗର ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ତରୀ ଗୁଡ଼ାକୁ ଅକାମୀ କରିଦେବା ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ଭୟଙ୍କର ଉପାତ କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ସେଇ ସମୟର ସେ ଘଟଣା- ସେଦିନ ଗୋଟାଏ ପର୍ଲୁଗୀଜ ପାଲଟଣା ଜାହାଜ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ସାଗର (ସେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଭାରତ ମାନଚିତ୍ରରେ ବେ ଅଫ୍ ବେଙ୍ଗଲ୍‌ର ନାଁ ଲେଖା ହୋଇନଥାଏ), ବାଲେଶ୍ୱର କି କଲିକତା ବନ୍ଦର ଅଭିମୁଖେ ଯାତ୍ରା କରୁଥାଏ । ମଝି ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ଭୟଙ୍କର ଝଡ଼ ତୋଫାନ! ତୋଫାନର ବେଗ ବିପଦଜନକ ହେବା ସହିତ ହଠାତ୍ କ୍ୟାପଟେନ୍ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କଲେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅଭାବିତ ବିପଦ ମଧ୍ୟ ମାଡ଼ି ଆସୁଛି ତାଙ୍କ ଜାହାଜ ଉପରକୁ । ଏକ ବିରାଟକାୟ ଭୟାନକ ସାମୁଦ୍ରିକ ସର୍ପ ପରି ମନେହେଉଥିବା କୌଣସି ଏକ ଜନ୍ତୁ ସେଇ ଜାହାଜକୁ କକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରି ଦୂରରୁ ଛୁଟି ଆସୁଥିବା ଦେଖିପାରି କ୍ୟାପଟେନ୍ କିଂକର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟବିମୁକ୍ତ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲେ । ଜାହାଜର କର୍ମଚାରୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ତେଜ୍ ଉପରକୁ ଡକେଇ ଆଣି ଆଶୁ ବିପଦ ସଂପର୍କରେ ସତର୍କ କରିଦେଲେ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଧାଇଁ ଆସିଲେ ତେଜ୍ ଉପରକୁ କେବଳ ଜଣକ ବ୍ୟତୀତ । ସେଇ ଜଣକ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଗଲା ଖୋଜା ପଡ଼ିବା ପରେ ଜଣାଗଲା ସେ ଜଣେ ଭାରତୀୟ ନାବିକ । ଏ ବିପଦ ବେଳେ ସେ ଲୋକଟି ଜାହାଜର ମଙ୍ଗ ପାଖରେ ଆଖିବୁଜି ବସିଥାଏ । ତା ହାତରେ ଥାଏ ଚିତ୍ରପଟ ଭଳି କିଛି ଗୋଟାଏ ଛବି । ସେ ଭଳି ସାମୁଦ୍ରିକ ଆତଙ୍କ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଛବିଟାଏ ଧରି ଆଖିବୁଜି ନିଶ୍ଚିନ୍ତରେ ବସିଥିବା ନାବିକଟିକୁ ଦେଖି କ୍ୟାପଟେନ୍ କ୍ରୋଧରେ ଜଳିଉଠିଲେ ।

ନାବିକର ନାଁ ଧରି ଚିହ୍ନାର କଲେ । ଲୋକଟି ଆଖି ଫିଟେଇ ଚାହିଁଲା । ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିକାର ସ୍ଵରରେ କହିଲା – “କ୍ୟାପଟେନ୍! ଏ ମୋ ଜାତିର ଠାକୁର ଇଷ୍ଟଦେବ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ! ମୋ ଆର୍ତ୍ତ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ଯଦି ତାଙ୍କ କାନରେ ବାଜିଥିବ ତେବେ ତୁମ ଜାହାଜ ବିଣ୍ଣୟ ଏ ବିପଦରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର ପାଇଯିବ ।” ଭାରତୀୟ ଲୋକତା ତା ହାତରେ ଧରିଥିବା ସେଇ ବିଚିତ୍ର ଚିତ୍ରପଟକୁ ଚାହିଁ ପର୍ତ୍ତୁଗାଲର କାଥୋଲିକ ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟିୟାନ ସଂପ୍ରଦାୟର ଲୋକ ସେଇ କପ୍ତାନ ଜଣକ କଣ ଭାବିଲା କେଜାଣି! ହଠାତ ତା ପାଟିରୁ ବାହାରିଗଲା-ଦେଖ ! ଯଦି ତମର ଏଇ ଛବିଖଣ୍ଡକ ଆମକୁ ଆଜି ଏ ଘୋର ସଂକଟରୁ ରକ୍ଷା କରିଦେବ ତେବେ ଆମେ ଆମ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଲାଗି ଆଣିଥିବା ସବୁତକ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ଧନରତ୍ନ ତୁମର ଏଇ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କୁ ଉପହାର ଦେଇଯିବୁ । କ୍ୟାପଟେନ୍ ତେଜ୍ ଉପରକୁ ଫେରି ଆସିଲେ । ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟର କଥା । ସାମୁଦ୍ରିକ ତୋଫାନ ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଦିଗ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରି ସାରିଥାଏ । ଏବଂ, ତା ଠାରୁ ଆହୁରି ବିସ୍ମୟକର ବ୍ୟାପାର ଜାହାଜ ଆଡକୁ ମାଡି ଆସୁଥିବା ସେଇ କାଳସର୍ପିଟି ମଧ୍ୟ ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ କୁଆଡେ ଉଡେଇ ଯାଇଥାଏ ।

କୃତଜ୍ଞ ପର୍ତ୍ତୁଗୀଜ୍ କ୍ୟାପଟେନ୍ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କର କଥା ରକ୍ଷାକରି ଥିଲେ । ପୁରୀ ବନ୍ଦରରେ ଜାହାଜ ଲାଗିବା ପରେ ସମସ୍ତ ଧନରତ୍ନ ସହିତ ସେଇ ବିରାଟକାୟ ଘଂଟାକୁ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ରତ୍ନ ଉତ୍ସାରକୁ ଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ । ”

ମମି! ଏ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କଲା ବେଳକୁ ମୋ ଦେହ ତ ରୋମାଂଚିତ; କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଅପରିଚିତ ସେ ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ଭଦ୍ରମହିଳାଙ୍କ ଆଖିର ଲୁହଧାର ସାରା ହସପିଚାଲର ସ୍ଵାପ୍ନକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିସାରିଚି ଦେଖୁ ଆହୁରି ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଲି । ଶେଷରେ ମୋ ହାତ ଦୁଇଟିକୁ ଧରିପକେଇ ଭଦ୍ର ମହିଳା କହିଲେ, “ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ପ୍ରଣାମ । ମୋ ଲାଗି ଆଉ ପଦେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କର ତାଙ୍କୁ ଝିଅ - ସେଇ କେବଳ ମୋ ପୁଅକୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରିବେ ମୁଁ ଜାଣେ -ଖାଲି ଏଇ ଆକ୍ସିଡେଣ୍ଟରୁ ନୁହେଁ, ତାର ଏ ଫିଟୁକ ରୋଗ ଏପିଲେପ୍ସିରୁ .ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରିବାକୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କର ମା ତାଙ୍କୁ...”

ଶେଷ ଆଡକୁ ତା ଚିଠିର ଅକ୍ଷରସବୁ ମୋ ଲୁହଭର୍ତ୍ତି ଆଖିକୁ ଝାପସା ଦିଶୁଥାଏ । ମୋ ଛାତି ଭିତରଟା ପୁରିଯାଇସାରିଥାଏ ।
ଧନ୍ୟ ମୋ ଦେଶ ସାରେ ଯାହାଁସେ ଆଛା, ଧନ୍ୟ ମୋ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ।

(ଏକ ସତ୍ୟ ଘଟଣା)



କୋଇଲି ସାହିତ୍ୟ

ସୁମିତ୍ରା ପାଢୀ



କୋଇଲି ବା କୋ-ଇଲି ଗୋଟାଏ ପୁରୁଣା ତାମିଲ୍ କଥା । ଏହାର ଅର୍ଥ ହେଲା ଦେହ-ଗୃହ ବା ଦେଉଳ । ପୁରୀ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ କୋଇଲି-ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠ ଅଛି । ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠ କହିଲେ ଯେଉଁଠି କୁଣ୍ଠ ନାହିଁ । ଯଥାର୍ଥରେ ଆମ କୋଇଲି-ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠରେ କୁଣ୍ଠ ବା ନାକଟେକା ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ଘୃଣା ଆଦୌ ନାହିଁ । ପୁରୀ ମନ୍ଦିରକୁ ଯାଉଥିବା ଯାତ୍ରୀମାନେ ଏଇ କୋଇଲି-ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠରେ ଯାଇ ସେଠି ନିଜର ନାମ, ପିତାର ନାମ ଓ ଜାତି ଘୋଷଣା କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ପଞ୍ଚାମାନେ ତାହା ଲେଖି ରଖନ୍ତି । ହିନ୍ଦୁମାନଙ୍କର ମହା ଧର୍ମପୀଠ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଭୂମିରେ ଆଜି ମଧ୍ୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ଜାତି ଓ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭେଦ ନାହିଁ । ସମସ୍ତେ ସେଠି ସମାନ । ବିଶ୍ୱମୈତ୍ରୀରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଏକ । ଏହା ପୁଣି ଘୋଷଣା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସେଠି ଅଛି କୋଇଲି-ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠ । ଏହା ଓଡ଼ିଆଜାତିର ଜୀବନ୍ତ ବିଶ୍ୱମୈତ୍ରୀର ସଂକେତ । କୋଇଲି ପକ୍ଷୀ ସଂଗେ ମିତ୍ରତା କରି ନିଜର ମନଭାବ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରୁଥିବାରୁ ଏ ରଚନାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କର ବିଶ୍ୱମୈତ୍ରୀ ଚଳଣି ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବେ ପ୍ରକଟିତ ହୋଇଛି ।

କୋଇଲି ସାହିତ୍ୟ କେବେ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା ତାହା ସଠିକ୍ ଭାବେ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ । ମାର୍କଣ୍ଡ ଦାସଙ୍କ ‘କେଶବ କୋଇଲି’ ପ୍ରାଚୀନତମ ରଚନା ବୋଲି ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଗବେଷକ ମତ ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଗଙ୍ଗ କାଳର ସଙ୍ଗତ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ହେଉଛି ଏହାର ମୂଳ । ସଙ୍ଗତ ବିଦ୍ୟାର ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ବା ନିବନ୍ଧଗୀତ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚାରୁ ଏହାର ଆରମ୍ଭ । ଏଇ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧର ମୂଳ, ଭାରତୀୟ ସଙ୍ଗତ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ବହୁ ପ୍ରାଚୀନ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାନେ ଏଥିରେ ଖୁବ୍ କୃତ୍ରିମ୍ ଦେଖାଇଥିଲେ । ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରେ ସର୍ବତ୍ର ଲୋକଗୀତକୁ ସଙ୍ଗତ ନିୟମ ଧରି ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟା କରାଯାଇଛି । ମାତ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ସେହି ସ୍ୱର ନିୟମର କ୍ରିୟାଗତିକୁ ବିସ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରି ତାକୁ କାବ୍ୟ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଗୋଟିଏ ଅବିଚ୍ଛେଦ୍ୟ ଅଙ୍ଗରେ ପରିଣତ କରା ଯାଇଛି । ଲୋକଗୀତକୁ ଏହିପରି କରିବାର ପ୍ରଥମ ସଫଳ ଉଦ୍ୟମ ହେଉଛି କୋଇଲି ଚଉତିଶା । ‘କେଶବ କୋଇଲି’ ଆଗରୁ ଏଇ କୋଇଲି ଚଉତିଶା ବା ସେପରି କିଛି ଥିଲା କି ନାହିଁ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ । ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଆଲୋଚନାରେ କୋଇଲି ଚଉତିଶାର ସ୍ଥାନ କେବଳ ଆଦିମ ନୁହେଁ, ଏହା ଏକ ପ୍ରକାର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାସ ‘ଅର୍ଥ କୋଇଲି’ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ତାହାର ବହୁ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ‘କେଶବ କୋଇଲି’ ଲେଖା ହୋଇଥିଲା ।

ପଞ୍ଚସଖା ବଳରାମ, ଅନନ୍ତ, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ, ଯଶୋବନ୍ତ ଓ ଅତ୍ୟୁତ ପ୍ରାୟ ଏକ ସମୟର କବି ଥିଲେ । ଉଦୟ କାହାଣୀ ଅନୁସାରେ ପଞ୍ଚଦଶ ଶତକର ଶେଷପାଦରେ ହିଁ ଏମାନଙ୍କର ଆବିର୍ଭାବ । ଷୋଡ଼ଶ ଶତକର ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଭାଗ ଆଡ଼କୁ ଏମାନଙ୍କର ଦେହାବସାନ ଘଟିଥିବାର ଅନୁମାନ । ଷୋଡ଼ଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାସ ‘କେଶବ କୋଇଲି’ର ବାଖ୍ୟା ଲେଖି ତାକୁ ‘ଅର୍ଥ କୋଇଲି’ ନାମରେ ଅଭିହିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଏଥିରୁ ଜଣା ଯାଏ ‘କେଶବ କୋଇଲି’ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ରଚିତ ହୋଇ ଷୋଡ଼ଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ତାହା ସୁପରିଚିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । କେଶବ କୋଇଲିରେ ଯେଉଁ ଭାଷା ବ୍ୟବହୃତ, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାସଙ୍କର ଅର୍ଥ କୋଇଲିରେ ଅବିକଳ ସେହି ଭାଷା ଉଚ୍ଚୃତ । କେଶବ କୋଇଲିରେ ଯେପରି ଆଦ୍ୟପ୍ରାନ୍ତ ସରଳ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ରୀତିସିଦ୍ଧ କାବ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ, ସେପରି ଅନ୍ୟ କବିଙ୍କ ରଚନାରେ କୃତ୍ରିମ୍ ଦେଖାଯାଏ । ଏଥିରେ ‘ପୁଏ’ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ‘ପୋଏ’ ବ୍ୟବହାର ହୋଇଛି । ପୋଏ ଶବ୍ଦ ପୁରୀଜିଲ୍ଲାର ଗ୍ରାମ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଗର୍ଭସ୍ଥିତିକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକ ଭାଷାରେ ଫଳି ଯିବା କହୁଛି (ଯଥା ଏ ଗାଈ ଫଳିଲାଣି) । ଏ କଥା ମାର୍କଣ୍ଡ ଦାସ କେଶବ କୋଇଲିରେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

‘କୋଇଲି ଫଳିବାକୁ ନାହିଁ ଆଶ, ଫଳିବାର ଫଳ ଗଲା ବାସୁଦେବ ପାଶ, ଲୋ କୋଇଲି’ ।

ଏଥିରେ ସାଧାରଣ ଲୋକ ବୁଝିବା ପାଇଁ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଶବ୍ଦର ବହୁଳ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଯାଇଛି । ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ମଥୁରାକୁ ଚାଲିଯିବାରୁ ଯଶୋଦା ପୁତ୍ର ବିରହରେ କୋଇଲିକୁ ସମ୍ପୋଧନ କରି ନିଜ ହୃଦୟର ଶୋକ ତାହା ଆଗରେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏହି କରୁଣାମୂଳକ ଘଟଣାକୁ ଅବଲମ୍ବନ କରି ‘କେଶବ କୋଇଲି’ ରଚିତ । ଏହା ଗୋଟିଏ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ରଚନା ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏଥିରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଜାତୀୟ ଚିତ୍ର ପ୍ରତିଫଳିତ

। ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଲାମାନେ ଘରୁ କୌଣସି ଉତ୍ସବ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ଅନ୍ୟ ସ୍ଥାନକୁ ଯିବା ସମୟରେ କଢ଼ଳ ଲଗାଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଏହା ‘କେଶବ କୋଇଲି’ରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ।

‘କୋଇଲି ନୟ ଦେହ ପାଶାଣେ ଗଢ଼ିଲା, ନୟନେ କଢ଼ଳ ଦେଇ ରଥେ ବସାଇଲା ଲୋ କୋଇଲି’ ।

ପୁଣି ରାତିରେ ବାପା ମା’ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ କୋଳରେ ଧରି ଯେପରି ଜହ୍ନମାମୁଁକୁ ଡାକନ୍ତି, ସେ କଥା ମଧ୍ୟ ଏଥିରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ।

‘କୋଇଲି ନିଶା କାଳେ ହରି ମାଗେ ବାୟ, ନୟନ ଟେକିଣ ତାଙ୍କୁ ରାଉ ଥାନ୍ତି ନୟ, ଲୋ କୋଇଲି’ ।

ଏହିପରି ଜାତୀୟ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତି ଘେନି ସରଳ ଓ ଲଳିତ ଭାଷାରେ କୋଇଲି ରଚିତ ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ଏହା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ପ୍ରାଣସ୍ପର୍ଶୀ ହୋଇଛି । ‘କେଶବ କୋଇଲି’କୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଚଉତିଶା ଆଖ୍ୟା ଦିଆଯାଇଛି, କାରଣ ଏହାର ପ୍ରଥମ ପାଦର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପାଦ ଆଗରେ ‘କ’ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ପଦର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପାଦ ଆଗରେ ‘ଖ’ ଏହିପରି କ୍ରମାନ୍ୱୟରେ ଚଉତିରିଶଟି ବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜନ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୋଇଛି । ମାର୍କଣ୍ଡ ଦାସଙ୍କର ‘କେଶବ କୋଇଲି’ ର ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାସ ‘ଅର୍ଥ କୋଇଲି’ରେ ବୁଝାଇଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ମତରେ ଏହା କୃଷ୍ଣ, କଂସଙ୍କ କଥା ନୁହେଁ, ଏହା ଜୀବ-ଅଜୀବ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧୀୟ କଥା ।

କବି ଶଙ୍କର ଦାସ ସପ୍ତଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ‘ବାରମାସୀ କୋଇଲି’ ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ଏହି କୋଇଲିଟି ଚଉତିଶା ନିୟମରେ ରଚିତ ନୁହେଁ । ରାମ ବନବାସ ସମୟରେ ବାରମାସ ଧରି କିପରି କ୍ଳେଶ ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିବେ, ତାହା ଚିନ୍ତାକରି କୌଶଲ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ବିଳାପ ‘ବାରମାସୀ କୋଇଲି’ରେ ଲିପିବଦ୍ଧ । ଏହା ସରଳ ଭାଷାରେ ଏକ କରୁଣ ରସଗର୍ଭକ ରଚନା । ଏଥିରେ କୌଶଲ୍ୟା, କୋଇଲି ଆଗରେ ନିଜର ମନଭାବ ଜଣାଉଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାନଙ୍କର ଦୈନନ୍ଦିନ ଜୀବନ ଧାରା ଏଥିରେ ପ୍ରତିଫଳିତ ହୋଇଛି । ଆଶ୍ୱିନ ମାସରେ ଦଶହରା, କୁମାର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣମୀ ଆଦି ବହୁତ ପର୍ବ ପାଳନ କରାଯାଇଥାଏ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଏଥିରେ ଲେଖା ହୋଇଛି,

‘ଆଶ୍ୱିନେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କିରଣ କରଇ ମନ ହରଣ

କେତେ ମତେ କେତେ ଉତ୍ସବ କରାନ୍ତା ଘରେ ଥିଲେ ରଘୁରାଣ ଲୋ କୋଇଲି ଶୁଣ ଲୋ’ ।

ଯାହା ଅନୁମାନ କରାଯାଉଛି ଷୋଡ଼ଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ପୂର୍ବରୁ କୋଇଲି ରଚନା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହାର ଅବସାନ କେବେ ଘଟିଲା ଜଣାନାହିଁ । ବନ୍ଧାଦାସ ଙ୍କର କଳସା ଗୋଟିଏ ଚଉତିଶା । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାହା କୋଇଲି ସାହିତ୍ୟଠାରୁ ଭିନ୍ନ । ଲୋକଗୀତର ଅତି ସାଧାରଣ ଗୀତର ସ୍ୱରଭଙ୍ଗକୁ ମାତ୍ର ସଫଳ କରିବା ‘କଳସା ଚଉତିଶା’ରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇଥିଲା । ସଂଗୀତ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରର ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଆଲୋଚନାରେ କୋଇଲି ଚଉତିଶାର ସ୍ଥାନ କେବଳ ଆଦିମ ନୁହେଁ, ଏହା ଏକପ୍ରକାର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ।



ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନର ପ୍ରଗତି ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି

"Small is beautiful" (ଛୋଟଟି ସୁନ୍ଦର) - E.F. Schumacher.



ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଚିରନ୍ତନ, ଅମର ଓ ସବୁବେଳେ ସଦ୍ୟ । ସେ ନିଜେହିଁ ତାର ସୃଷ୍ଟିକର୍ତ୍ତା ଓ ନିଜେହିଁ ତାର ପ୍ରଗତି ।

ମୁଁ କହୁନାହିଁ ବଳଦ ଗାଡ଼ିରୁ ଯାଇକଲ, ରେଲଗାଡ଼ି, ମଟର ଗାଡ଼ି ଓ ଉତାଜାହାଜରେ ଯାତାୟତ କରିବାର ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ । ଅବା ସେମିତି ଅଛି ଅସୁମାରି କିଛି ।

ମୁଁ କହୁଛି - ଗତ ଫେବୃଆରୀ ମାସ ଶେଷ ଆଡକୁ ମୁଁ ଭାରତ ଯାଇଥିଲି ଓ ପେରିଲି ଏବେ ଏପ୍ରିଲ ଆରମ୍ଭରେ । ଏଇ ଶୁଣନ୍ତୁ ସେଇ ଅନୁଭୂତିରୁ ପଦେଅଧେ -

ଅବସରପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ପ୍ରଫେସର ମଞ୍ଜୁ ଅଗ୍ରୱାଲା ମୋର ବନ୍ଧୁ । ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ରହୁଛି ତାଙ୍କ ମା ଓ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ । ଦୁଇ ଭଉଣୀ ଅବିବାହିତା; ମାଆଙ୍କର ଯତ୍ନ ନେଇ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ । ଫେନ କରିବାରୁ ବାଧ୍ୟ କଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଯିବା ପାଇଁ । ପହୁଞ୍ଚିବାରୁ ସ୍ନେହାଦରଭରା ଅଭ୍ୟର୍ଥନା । ମଞ୍ଜୁଙ୍କୁ ଜଣାଅଛି ଯେ ମୁଁ ମହିଳାଙ୍କ ସଶକ୍ତିକରଣ ପାଇଁ ମହିଳା ଶାନ୍ତିସେନା ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନରେ ସଂପୃକ୍ତ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର, ବିଶେଷତଃ ମାଆଙ୍କର ଜାଣିବାକୁ କୌତୁହଳ ଯେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏହାର କି କାମ ହେଉଛି । ମୁଁ କିଛି କହିଲି । ଯିବାକୁ ବାହାରିବା ବେଳେ ଏହି ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ ପାଇଁ ମୋ ହାତକୁ ବଢାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଚେକ୍‌ଟିଏ ।

ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ପ୍ରଥମ ସପ୍ତାହରେ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରଠାରେ ମହିଳା ଶାନ୍ତିସେନାର ଏକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟଶାଳା ବସିଥିଲା ଦୁଇଦିନ ଧରି । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଜିଲ୍ଲାରୁ ପ୍ରାୟ କୋଡିଏ ଜଣ ମହିଳା ଏଥିରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ସେମାନେ ହେଲେ ନିଜ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ମହିଳା ସେନାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତିନିଧି । କେବଳ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଯିବାଆସିବା ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଦିଆଯାଏ ଓ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସାଧାରଣ ଖାଇବା ଓ ତଳେ ବିଛଣା ପାରି ଶୋଇବାର ବନ୍ଦୋବସ୍ତ କରା ଯାଇଥାଏ । ସେମାନେ ଆସନ୍ତି ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ଏତେ ଦୂର ଆଗ୍ରହର ସହିତ ନିଜ ପରିବାର ଓ ସଂସାର ଛାଡି, ନିଜର କିଛି ଆଶାରେ ।

ଦିନେ ଜଗତସିଂହପୁର ଜିଲ୍ଲାର କୋଶଳ ଗାଁରେ ଏକ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଶିବିରର ଆୟୋଜନ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା ବିକାଶ ଗୁଚ୍ଛ ଜରିଆରେ । ଏଠାରେ ମାଗଣାରେ ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଓ ଚିକିତ୍ସାର ବନ୍ଦୋବସ୍ତ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରସ୍ଥିତ ଏପୋଲୋ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲର ବିଶେଷ ସହାୟତା ଯୋଗୁଁ । କୋଶଳ ଦୂରରେ ନ ଥିବାରୁ କେତେଜଣ ତାଙ୍କର ସ୍ନେହାସେବକଭାବରେ ଯୋଗଦାନ ଦେବାକୁ ରାଜି ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଓ ନିଜର ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଆଣିଥିଲେ । ଆଖପାଖ ଗାଁରୁ ଏହି ଶିବିରର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ନେବା ପାଇଁ ଆସିଥିବା ପ୍ରାୟ ୩୫୦ ଜଣଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଥିଲେ ମହିଳାମାନେ । ଏହି ପ୍ରଥମଥର ଉଦ୍ୟମର ସଫଳତା ଦେଖି ମନରେ ଲଜ୍ଜା ଭଙ୍ଗି ମାରୁଥାଏ ଏପରି ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାର ପୁନରାବୃତ୍ତି କରାଇବାକୁ ।



ପୁଣି ପହୁଞ୍ଚିଥିଲୁ ସେଇ ଜଗତସିଂହପୁର ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ଗରାମ ବୋଲି ଆଉ ଏକ ଗାଁରେ ଯେଉଁଠି 'ଆମର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ'ର କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଖୋଲା ହୋଇଛି । ଜଣାଶୁଣା ସମାଜକର୍ମୀ ରାନ୍ଦୁ ମାହାନ୍ତି ଗଢିଛନ୍ତି 'ଆମର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ,'

ଯାହାର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି ଅତି ଗରିବ ପରିବାରକୁ ରଣ ବୋଝରେ ଯେଷି ହେବାକୁ ନ ଦେବା ଓ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିନା ସୁଧରେ ସ୍ୱଳ୍ପ ରଣ ଦେଇ (**nano-finance**) ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଅସୁବିଧାକୁ ତୁରନ୍ତ ଦୂର କରାଇବା । ରଣ ସୁଝାଇବାର ଯୋଗ୍ୟତା ଉପରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରିବା ଏହି ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟର ମୂଳଦୁଆ । ଉଚ୍ଚ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀତା ଏପରି ମାତ୍ରାରେ ସଫଳ ହୋଇଛି ଯେ ଏହି ଯୋଜନା ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଆଫ୍ରିକାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲାଣି । ଗ୍ରାମ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କୁ ରୋଜଗାର କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରାଯାଉଛି, ବିଶେଷତଃ ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପଭାବରେ **feminine napkins** ତିଆରି କରାଇବା ଓ ସିଲାଇ ଶିଖାଇବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଇ । ସଂପୃକ୍ତ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କପାଇଁ ଏହା ଏକ ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସର ପରୀକ୍ଷା ।

ପୁରୀ ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ତେଲାଇଙ୍ଗେର ବେରବୋଇ ବୋଲି ଗାଆଁ । ତେଲାଇଙ୍ଗେର ଇତିହାସ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଇତିହାସ ସହିତ ଜଡ଼ିତ । ବେରବୋଇ କିନ୍ତୁ କହିବ ଅନ୍ୟ ପରିଭାଷା ଓ ଲେଖିଅଛି ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ଇତିହାସ, ଯାହା ହୁଏତ ଅନେକଙ୍କୁ ଜଣା । ଏଠାରେ ୧୯୩୮ ମସିହା ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ୨୫-୩୧ରେ ଗାନ୍ଧୀ ସେବା ସଂଘର ଅଧିବେଶନ ହୋଇଥିଲା, ଯେଉଁଥିରେ ଗାନ୍ଧୀଜୀ, କସ୍ତୁରବା, ସର୍ଦ୍ଦାର ପଟେଲ, ମୌଲାନା ଆଜାଦ୍, ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କୃପାଳିନୀ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ ପଣ୍ଡିତ କୃପାସିନ୍ଧୁ ହୋତା, ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହରିହର, ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ଚୌଧୁରୀ ଓ ରମାଦେବୀ ସମେତ ପ୍ରାୟ ସାତଆଠ ହଜାର କର୍ମୀ ଯୋଗ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ବେରବୋଇ ଗାଁ ଏକ ଛୋଟିଆ ଭାରତରୂପେ ପରିଣତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଅଧିବେଶନ ସମୟରେ ଗୋଟିଏ କାହାଣୀ ଅଛି । ଦିନେ ଗାନ୍ଧୀଜୀ ସକାଳେ ବୁଲିବା ସମୟରେ କେତେକ ବାଉଁଶ ବାଡ଼ି ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ବାବୁ ଓ ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହରିହର ଏହାକୁ ଦେଖିପାରିଲେ । ସଙ୍ଗେସଙ୍ଗେ ଦୁହେଁ ଗୋଟେ ଚିତେ ଉଷ ସଳଖ ବାଡ଼ିଟିଏ ନେଇ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟି ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ସେ ବାଡ଼ିଟି ୧୯୪୪ରେ ହଜିଗଲା ଯେମିତି ଭାରତ ତା’ ବାଡ଼ି ହରାଇବସିଲା । ଏବେ ଅଧିବେଶନ ହୋଇଥିବା ସ୍ଥାନରେ କେବଳ ବାଡ଼ିଧରା ଗାନ୍ଧୀଜୀଙ୍କର ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିଟିଏ ଅଛି । ବାକି ଇତିହାସ ନିର୍ଜୀବ ୦ ନିସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ।



ଆମେ ବେରବୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲୁ ପାଖରେ ଥିବା କସ୍ତୁରବା ଗାନ୍ଧୀ ନ୍ୟାସନାଲ୍ ମେମୋରିଆଲ ଟ୍ରଷ୍ଟର ଗୋଟିଏ ବାଲ୍‌ବାଡ଼ିକୁ ଦେଖିବା ପାଇଁ । ଆର୍ଥିକ ସମସ୍ୟା ପାଇଁ ଟ୍ରଷ୍ଟର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଅଧିକ ପରିମାଣରେ କମାଇ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି ଯାହାପାଇଁ ସଂସ୍ଥା ତଳାଇବା ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ କଷ୍ଟକର ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଛି । ଏହାର ତତ୍ତ୍ୱାବଧାନରେ ଥିବା କବିତା ପରିତା ଏ ଘଟିସରି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ସଂସ୍ଥା ବନ୍ଦ କରିବାକୁ ଅନିଚ୍ଛୁକ । କେବଳ ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଓ ମନର ଶକ୍ତି ବଳରେ ସଂସ୍ଥାର ପରିଚାଳନା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ।

Institute of Mathematics and Applications ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରର ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରକା ଯିବା ରାସ୍ତାରେ ପଡେ । ମୁଁ ଯାଇଥିଲି ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ହାଲତାଲ ଜାଣିବାକୁ । ଦେଖା ହେଲା ତିରେକ୍‌ଟରଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ । ସେ କହୁଛି ଆଗରୁ **Institute** ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦେଇ ଆସିଥିଲା **Mathematics** ଶିକ୍ଷାର ଉନ୍ନତି ଓ ପ୍ରସାର ଉପରେ । ଏବେ ତାଙ୍କ ସମୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଉପରେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ସେ କାମକରିବେ । ସେ କହିଲେ ଯେ ନିକଟରେ ସାତ ଜଣ **faculty** ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ପାଇବାର ବନ୍ଦୋବସ୍ତ ହେଉଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ପାଇଁ ସେ ଚିନ୍ତିତ ।

ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ପାଇଥିଲୁ ପୁରୀରେ ଏକ ଉପନୟନ ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେବାକୁ । ପୁରୀ ସମୁଦ୍ରକୂଳରେ ଚାଲୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ହଠାତ୍ ଆମ ଆଖି ଝଲସି ଉଠିଲା ଆକାଶ ଫଟି ପଡ଼ିବା ଭଳି ଆଲୁଅମାଳା ଦେଖି । ଜାଣିଲୁ ଯେ ଆମେ ଠିକ ଜାଗାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଛୁ । ଉତ୍ସବ ଓ

ନୁହେଁ, ମହୋତ୍ସବ । ଆତମ୍ଭର ପରିମାଣ ସମାଜକୁ ବି ଗପିଯିବା ପରି ଲାଗୁଥାଏ । ଖବର ପାଇଲୁ ଯେ ପ୍ରାୟ ସତୁରି ଲକ୍ଷ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ହେଇଛି । ଫେରିବା ରାସ୍ତାରେ ପୁରୀ ପାର ନ ହେଉଣୁ ପ୍ରବଳ ବର୍ଷା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଭାବିଲି ଉତ୍ସବ ଏବେ କଅଣ ହେଉଥିବ !

ଆମେ ସୋର ଯାଇଥିଲୁ ଦୋଳ ବେଳକୁ । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟର ସୁପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧା ନର୍ତ୍ତକୀ ସୁଜାତା ମହାପାତ୍ରଙ୍କ ଗାଁ ନାମ ବୟାଁ, ସୋର ପାଖରେ । ବାପାମା, ଭାଇଭଉଣଙ୍କ ସହ ସମସ୍ତେ ଗାଁକୁ ଆସିଥାଆନ୍ତି ରଙ୍ଗ ଖେଳିବାକୁ ବିଶେଷତଃ ଗାଁ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ମେଳନ ପାଇଁ । ଆମେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଯାଇଥିଲୁ ସୁଜାତା ପରିବାରକୁ ଭେଟିବା ପାଇଁ ଏହି ଶୁଭଦିନରେ । ସୁଜାତା ସହିତ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଜଣେ ଛାତ୍ର ଓ ଜଣେ ଫୁଲ୍‌ସ୍‌ରୁ ଆସିଥିବା ଜଣେ ଛାତ୍ରୀ । ସେମାନେ ଘରପରିବାରର ଜଣେଜଣେ ବୋଲି ଗଣା ଯାଉଥିଲେ । ଆଗକାଳର କୋଠାଘର; ଛାତରେ କାଠର କତିବରଗା । ତଥାପି ଗାଁ ପରି ଘରର ଚାଲିଚଳଣି । ବାପା ଥିଲେ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ସମୟର ପିଲା, କହି ବସିଲେ ଇରମରେ ଲବଣ ସତ୍ୟାଗ୍ରହର କାହାଣୀ । ତାଙ୍କ ଘର ଥିଲା ସତ୍ୟାଗ୍ରହୀମାନଙ୍କ ଯିବାରାସ୍ତାର ବିଶ୍ରାମ ସ୍ଥଳ । ପୁଣି ଆଗ୍ରହର ସହିତ ମୋତେ ନେଇଗଲେ ଧାଡ଼ି ଧରି ଝୁଲୁଥିବା ଫଟଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଦେଖାଇବାକୁ । କହିବାର ଆବେଗ ଓ ଉତ୍ସାହରୁ ଜାଣି ପାରୁଥାଏ ଜୀବନର ଇତିହାସକୁ ବାଞ୍ଛିବାରେ ଫୁଟି ଉଠୁଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କର କିପରି ଏକ ଅଜଣା ଆନନ୍ଦ । ସେ ବୋଧହୁଏ ବଖାଣି ଆଆନ୍ତେ ଅନେକ ।

ପରଦିନ ସକାଳେ ଆମ ଆଖପାଖ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଗାଁର ଲୋକେ ରାଧକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କୁ ସୁନ୍ଦର ସଜା ହୋଇଥିବା ବିମାନରେ ବସାଇ ବୋହି ଆଣିଥିଲେ ଗତାନୁଗତିକ ମେଳଣ ପଡ଼ିଆକୁ । ସେଠାରେ ଚାଲିଲା ରଙ୍ଗ ଖେଳର ଧୁମ୍‌ଧାମ୍ । ଏମିତି ରଙ୍ଗବରଙ୍ଗରେ ମଣିଷଗୁଡ଼ାଙ୍କୁ ଚିହ୍ନି ହୁଏନାହିଁ । ଫେରିଲା ବାଟରେ ଆମ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ କୀର୍ତ୍ତନିଆ ଦଳ ମୃଦଙ୍ଗ ଓ ଝାଞ୍ଜ ମାତରେ ମହି ଫଟାଇ ପକାଉଥାଆନ୍ତି, ଏମାନେହିଁ ଅନୁଭବ କରନ୍ତି ଯେ ମନ୍ଦିର ଓ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ପର୍ବପର୍ବାଣୀ ଚାଳନର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ନିଜର ଏକ ଧାର୍ମିକ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ । ଆଉ ଥାଆନ୍ତି ଜିନିଷିଆ ଫୁଲ୍‌କା ଦେହରେ ରଞ୍ଜ ବୋହିଲା ପରି ରଙ୍ଗ ବୋଲି ଟୋକା ଦଳେ । କାନତତା ଗୀତ ବଜାଇ ସେମାନେ ନାଚୁଥାନ୍ତି ବଲିଉଡ୍ ଢାଁଚାକୁ ନକଲ କରି, ପୁରୁଣା ପରଂପରା ଉପରେ ଆଧୁନିକତାର ଏକ ଶକ୍ତ ଚଢ଼ାଉ ଭଳି ।

ଆମ ଗାଁରେ ସଞ୍ଜ ପରେ ଠାକୁର ଆସନ୍ତି ଝୁଲିବା ପାଇଁ । ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ କୀର୍ତ୍ତନ ହୁଏ । ଏତେବେଳକୁ କେବଳ ଛଅସାତ ଜଣଙ୍କ ଦେଖା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦୁଃଖ ନାହିଁ, ସେଇ କେଇଜଣ ଗାଇଲେ ପୁଣି ସେଇ ଗୀତ ଯାହାକୁ ଆବହମାନ କାଳରୁ ଗାଇ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି । ଗୀତଗୁଡ଼ିକ ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ ଆମରି ଗାଁର ବାବାଜୀ ପଦ୍ମ ଚରଣ ଦାସ ୧୯୧୫ - ୧୯୨୧ରେ ଯାହା ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇଛି ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ କୀର୍ତ୍ତନ (୧ମ ଓ ୨ୟ ଭାଗ)’ ଓ ‘ସଂଗୀତ ହାରାବଳୀ’ ବହିରେ । ବହିଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ବିରଳ, ବୋଧହୁଏ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କୀର୍ତ୍ତନ ଲେଖା ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରଥମ । ପିଲାଦିନ କଥା ମନେ ପକାଇ ମୁଁ ବି ଗଳାଝାଡ଼ି ପାଳି ଦେଲି: ଅନାଲୋ ମିତ ସୁନ୍ଦର ରତୁରାଜକୁ..., ଶୁଭ୍ ଝୀନବାସ ପିନ୍ଧିଲୋ ସଜନୀ...

ପୋପୁ ଆମ ଗାଁର । ପିଲାଦିନେ ବାବାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ପଢୁଥିଲା । ପରେ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍ ବୃତ୍ତିରେ ରହି ଅବସର ନେଲା । ଗାଁର ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷାନେବା ମୋଟାମୋଟି ସବୁ ପିଲାତକ ବାହାରେ ରହି ଗାଁକୁ ଆଦୌ ଆସନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ, ଯଦିଓ ଗାଁରେ ସବୁ ସୁବିଧା ରହିଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅପୂର୍ବ କଥା ଯେ ପୋପୁ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵରରେ ଘର କରି ସୁନ୍ଦା ପାଞ୍ଚଛଅ ମାସ ଗାଁରେ କଟାଏ । ସେ ଦିନ ମୁଁ କୀର୍ତ୍ତନ ଗାଇବା ବେଳେ ଦେଖୁଛି ପଛପଟେ ବସିଛି ପୋପୁ ।

ଗଣ୍ଡିବେତ ସୋର ପାଖରୁ ପ୍ରାୟ କୋଡ଼ିଏ କିଲୋମିଟର ପଶ୍ଚିମକୁ । ସେ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ତା- ସୁପ୍ରଭା ଦାସଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେରଣାରେ କେତେକ ମହିଳା ଏକତ୍ର ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କର ଉନ୍ନତି ଓ ସମାଜର କିଛି ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ । ଏହାରି ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରାଇବା ପାଇଁ ତା- ଦାସ କିଛି ପୁରୁଷ ଓ ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଡକାଇଥିଲେ । ମୁଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଯୋଗ ଦେଇଥିଲି । ଦେଖିଲି ମହିଳାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ବେଶି ପୁରୁଷ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ଅଛନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରଥମରୁ ସ୍ଵର ଉଠିଥିଲା ନିଶା ଓ ମଦର ଅତ୍ୟଧିକ ଦୁର୍ବ୍ୟବହାର କଥା ନେଇ, ଯାହା ପଳରେ ପରିବାରଗୁଡ଼ିକ ନଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇଯାଉଛି । ନିଶା ନିବାରଣର ଏକ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ପଛା ହେଲା ମଦଭାଟି ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦେବା । ଏହାର ସମାର୍ଥତା ନେଇ ଆଲୋଚନା ହେଲା ଓ ପ୍ରାୟ କେହି ଏହାର ସପକ୍ଷରେ ନଥିଲେ । ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କର ନିଜ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ କହିବା କଥା ହେଲା ଯେ ସେମାନେ ସଂଗଠିତ ହେବା ଦରକାର । ସୁପ୍ରଭା କେତେ ସାଥୀ ପାଇଛନ୍ତି - ସୀତା, ମଞ୍ଜୁ, ମେନକା, ଆଉ ଏମିତି...

ବାଲେଶ୍ଵର ଯାଇଥିଲୁ ମୋ ଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ । ବାଟରେ ଅଟକି ଗଲୁ ଆମ ସବିତା ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀଙ୍କ ବାପାମାଙ୍କ ଘର ପାଖରେ । ବୟସର ଛାପ, ତଥାପି ସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟତାର ମଧୁରତା ମୁହଁରେ । ମା ଚାଲୁଲତା ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ତଥା ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଂଗୀତରେ ପବନୀଶା । ବୈଠକ ଘରେ ଅତି ନିକଟରେ ହାର୍ମୋନିୟମ୍‌ଟି ଯନ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଥୁଆ ହୋଇଛି ଯେମିତି ସବୁବେଳେ ବ୍ୟବହାର ହେଉଛି । ମୁଁ ମୁହଁ ଖୋଲି କହି ପକାଇଲି - ଆପଣ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୀତ ବୋଲିବେକି ? ବିନା କୁଣ୍ଠ ଓ ଆପତ୍ତିରେ ବସିଗଲେ, କହିଲେ 'ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଗାଇବି' । ମୁହଁ ଖୋଲିଲା ପରେ ସେ କଣ ଓ ସେ ସ୍ଵର ଥିଲା ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ୍ଣୀୟ ... ଆଉ ମୁଁ ଚିକିଏ ବସି ଯାଇଥାଆନ୍ତି କି ?

ସଞ୍ଚରେ ବାଲେଶ୍ଵର କଳିଙ୍ଗ ହୋଟେଲରେ ବସିଥାନ୍ତି ମାତ୍ର ସାତଜଣ । ସେମାନେ 'ଭଲ କବିତାର ଖୋଜ' କହି ଅଣ୍ଟାଳି ହେଉଥାଆନ୍ତି ଏକ ବିରାଟ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ନେଇ - ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଛୋଟିଆ ଦଳଟି ଏହି ନାମରେ ଜଣା । ମୋତେ ଡାକିଥିଲେ କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି, ମୁଁ ଯାଇଥିଲି । ସେଠାରେ ଥିଲେ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧନା ରଥ । ତାଙ୍କର ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ଵାମୀ ବହୁନାଥ ରଥଙ୍କ ଲେଖା 'ତୁମେ ଓ ମୁଁ' କବିତା ବହିଟି ସେ ମୋତେ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ବହିରେ 'ଫଗୁଣ' ଶୀର୍ଷକରେ ଅଛି ଛୋଟିଆ କବିତାଟିଏ - ମାଳୀ ଗଛୁ ଖୋଜେ ଫୁଲ ଖୋଜେନା ଫଗୁଣ, ଫଗୁଣ ଆସିଲେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଫୁଲ ଖୋଜେ ପ୍ରେମ । ବାସ୍ ସେତିକି -

ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵରରୁ ଦିନେ ଫେନ୍ ଆସିଲା, 'ବାପା ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ବହି ଦେବେ' । ଜାଣିଲି ଯେ ସେମାନେ ମୋର ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ହେବେ । କି ବହି ଓ କାହିଁକି ମୋତେ ଦେବେ ଏମିତି ଭାବୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ବହିଟି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା - '**Subjective Science**' ଯାହାର ଲେଖକ ହେଲେ ଶରତ କୁମାର ମହାନ୍ତି । ସେ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ଥିଲେ । ସବୁବେଳେ ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଥିଲେ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ବାସ୍ତବିକତା ବା ସତ୍ୟତା କ'ଣ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସେ ଚାକିରିରୁ ଜଳଦି ଅବ୍ୟାହତ ନେଇ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଓ ଦର୍ଶନର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଭାଗର ତଥ୍ୟ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ । ଏପରି ଅଗାଧ ଅଧ୍ୟୟନ ଓ ଅନୁଶୀଳନର ଫଳ ଥିଲା ଏହି ବହିଟି ଯାହା ସହଜ ନୁହେଁ ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ । ଶରତବାବୁ କହନ୍ତି ଏହା ଜ୍ଞାନର ଏକ ନୂତନ ଦିଗ । ଏପରି ଅସାଧାରଣ ବହିଟିର ଗୁଢ଼ତ୍ଵ କଣ ?

ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ମଦ ଓ ନିଶା ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ ଖୁବ ଜୋରରେ ଚାଲିଛି, ବିଶେଷତଃ 'ନିଶା ନିବାରଣ ଅଭିଯାନ' ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ଦ୍ଵାରା । ଏହାର ନେତୃତ୍ଵ ନେଇଛନ୍ତି ପଦ୍ମ ଚରଣ ନାୟକ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ୯୧ ବର୍ଷ । ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଯୋଗ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ଅପର୍ଣ୍ଣା ନାୟକ । ମୁଁ ଭେଟିଥିଲି ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ । ତାଙ୍କର କହିବାର କଥା: ମଦ ଓ ନିଶା ଆମ ପିଲା, ପରିବାର, ଦେଶ ସବୁକୁ ନଷ୍ଟ କରୁଛି । ସରକାରଙ୍କର ଏଥିରୁ ଯେତେ ଆୟ ତାଠାରୁ ବେଶୀ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ନିଶାର ଅପବ୍ୟବହାରରୁ ହେଉଥିବା ସ୍ଵାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ହାନି ଓ ସାମାଜିକ କ୍ଷତି ପାଇଁ । ଘର ଛାଡ଼ିବା ବେଳେ ପଦ୍ମ ଚରଣ ବାବୁ ମୋତେ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଲେଖା ବହି 'ତଥାପି ମୁଁ ଲେଖେ' ।

ଇଂରାଜୀ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ଡ୍ରୀଲୋଚନ ମିଶ୍ର ମୋତେ ବାଲେଶ୍ଵରରେ ପଢ଼ାଇଥିଲେ ଓ ମୋର ଜଣେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଶୁଭାକାଂକ୍ଷୀ । ସେ ମୋ ବାବାଙ୍କର ଛାତ୍ର ଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଗାଁରେ । ମୁଁ ଯେବେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଯାଏ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖା କରିଥାଏ ସ୍ଵାମୀ, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କର ସ୍ନେହଆଦରରୁ କିଛି ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ । ଏଥର ଫେନ କଲାରୁ ଜାଣିଲି ଗତବର୍ଷ ତାଙ୍କର ଦେହାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଛି । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ୯୨ ବର୍ଷ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଁ ହଠାତ୍ ମନେ କଲି ଯେମିତି କିଛି ହରାଇ ବସିଲି । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ମୁଁ ଯାଇ ପାରି ନ ଥିଲି ଗତବର୍ଷ । ଇଂରାଜୀ ଛତା ଡ୍ରୀଲୋଚନବାବୁଙ୍କର ସଂସ୍କୃତରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପାଣ୍ଡିତ୍ୟ ଥିଲା । ଖବର ପାଇ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଯାଇଥିଲି । ସେଠାରେ ତାଙ୍କ ସାନବୋହୁ ସାର୍ବଜନ ଶେଷ ଲେଖା ବହିଖଣ୍ଡକ ଦେଖାଇଲେ - **Sanskrit, Language and Learning** ।

ସୁବିଖ୍ୟାତ କଣ୍ଠଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଅକ୍ଷୟ ମହାନ୍ତିଙ୍କୁ କିଏ ନ ଜାଣେ । ତାଙ୍କର ଖ୍ୟାତି ବଢ଼ିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା ୧୯୫୫ ମସିହା ପରେପରେ କେତେଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ନୂଆଧରଣର ଗୀତ ଗାଇ - ମୋ ରଙ୍ଗଲତା ରଖିଛି... କିଏ ପିନ୍ଧିଥାଏ ସୁନାରୁଟି ସତେ... ଟପ୍‌ଟପ୍ ଘୋଡ଼ା ଚାଲେ ... - ଏକ ନୂଆ ଧରଣର ଲୋକଗୀତ ଯାହା ଉପରେ ଆଧୁନିକତାର ଖାପଖାଇଲା ଭଳି ଛାପ । ରିଝ୍ଟାବାଲା, କଳେଜପିଲାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ ଅବା ବଜାରହାଟରେ ଖାଲି ସେଇ ଗୀତ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗୀତି ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ଏଇ ନୂତନତତ୍ତ୍ଵ ଗଢ଼ିଥିଲେ ନିଜ କଲମରୁ ଗୀତିକାର ପାର୍ଥ ସାରଥୀ

ମହାପାତ୍ର । ଅକାଳ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ମାତ୍ର ୪୩ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ଚାଣି ନେଇଥିଲା, ତା ସହିତ ତାଙ୍କର ଗୀତିକାର ନାମ ଲିଭିଯାଇଥିଲା ଯେମିତି ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ୪୧ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ମଗାଣି ପଦାରୁ ଟେକିଆଣି କେତେ ଠିଆ କରାଇଥିଲେ କଟକର ଶତାଦ୍ଧାଉବନରେ ପାର୍ଥ ସାରଥୀ ସ୍ମୃତିଉତ୍ସବ ପାଳନ କରାଇ । ମୁଁ ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଇଥିଲି ସେ ଦିନ, ଯେଉଁଠି ବି ଜନ୍ମ ହେଲା 'ପ୍ରଣାମ ପାର୍ଥ ସାରଥୀ' ବହିଟି ଓ ପାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଝରଣା ପ୍ରାରମ୍ଭିକ ସଂଗୀତଟି ଗାଇଥିଲେ ପାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ଲେଖା - ରାଧିକା ମୋହନ ଏବେ ପାଦତଳେ ନିଅ ତାଜି...



ଆଦିବାସୀମାନେ ଦେଶର କିଛି ବୋଲି ଗଣା ଯାଆନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ କହିଲେ ଚଳେ । ଅରୁ୍ୟତ ଦାସ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ବିଦ୍ୟାଦେବୀ ରାୟଗଡ଼ାର କାଶୀପୁରରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମେଳରେ ରହିଛନ୍ତି ବର୍ଷବର୍ଷ ଧରି, ବିଶେଷତଃ ମହିଳା ଓ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଉନ୍ନତି କରିବା ପାଇଁ । ସେଥିଲାଗି ଅଗ୍ରଗାମୀ ବୋଲି ସଂସ୍ମାରିତ ଗଢ଼ିଛନ୍ତି । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଥିଲା ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ପରି ସୁଚ୍ଛଳ ଜୀବନ ବିତାଇବାକୁ । ଖାସକରି ଆଦିବାସୀ ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆଖିରେ ରଖି ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟିଥିଲି ମହିଳା ଶାନ୍ତି ସେନା ଓ ଅଗ୍ରଗାମୀର ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରାଇବାକୁ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷାକୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇବା ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧିଶାଳୀ କରାଇବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା ତ ଅନେକ । ସେ ଦିନ ଏକାମ୍ର ହାଟରେ ଦେଖା ହେଲା ସମ୍ଭାବନା ବୋଲି ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ଯାହାର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି ବିଶେଷ କରି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପରଂପରାକୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇ ରଖିବା ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କ ଦେଇ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରେ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ଓଡ଼ିଆଣୀ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗୀତାର ଆୟୋଜନ କରିଛନ୍ତି ଏପିଲ ପହିଲାଠାରୁ ଚଉଦ ତାରିଖ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । ଏଥିରେ ମୁରୁଜ, ଝୋଟି, ଶଙ୍ଖପୁଞ୍ଜ, ଦୁଲଦୁଲି, ରୋଷେଇ ଜ୍ଞାନ, ଭଗଇମାଳି ଭାଷା ଜ୍ଞାନ, ପୁରାଣ ଆବୃତ୍ତି ଇତ୍ୟାଦିର ପରୀକ୍ଷା ହେବ । ତା ଛଡ଼ା ଶିଶୁ-କିଶୋର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନର ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗୀତା ଅଛି । ମୁଁ ବସିଥିବାବେଳେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ମହିଳା ଆସି ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗୀତାରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେବାପାଇଁ ନାମ ଦେଇଗଲେ । ଭାବୁଥିଲି ଗାଁର ପାଲା କଥା, ମାଳମାଳ English medium ସ୍କୁଲ କଥା ।

କଟକ ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ତାଳିଯୋଡ଼ା କପିଳାସରୋଡ଼ ଷ୍ଟେସନଠାରୁ ପ୍ରାୟ ୩୦ କିଲୋମିଟର ପଶ୍ଚିମକୁ । ସେଠାରେ ଅରବିନ୍ଦ ଅକ୍ଷର ଆଶ୍ରମ ଅଛି । ଏ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଲୋକ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଆଦିବାସୀ ବା ଦଳିତ ଶ୍ରେଣୀର । ଆଶ୍ରମ ହାଇସ୍କୁଲରେ ଏମାନଙ୍କ ପିଲା ପଢ଼ନ୍ତି । ଆଶ୍ରମର ଚାଷଫସଲ ଗୋରୁପାଳନଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଯାବତୀୟ କାମ ଏହିମାନେ ହିଁ କରନ୍ତି । କେତେକ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଏଇ ଗାଁର ପିଲା । ଆଖପାଖ ଗାଁଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଉନ୍ନତି ଅନେକ ପରିମାଣରେ ଆଶ୍ରମ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରେ । ମୁଁ ଯାଇଥିଲି ସେ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ବିକାଶ ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଯୋଜନାର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଦେବାକୁ, ବିଶେଷ କରି ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ମଡେଲ୍ ଲାଇବ୍ରେରୀ, ପାଣିର ସୁବିଧା ଓ ସଞ୍ଚୟ, ସୌର ଶକ୍ତିର ବ୍ୟବହାର ଓ ମହିଳା ସଶକ୍ତିକରଣ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ - ଏକ ସଂକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣାଙ୍ଗ ଯୋଜନା । ଆଶ୍ରମର ସେକ୍ରେଟେରୀ ଧରଣୀ ପାଳ ଏଥିରେ ରାଜି ହେଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଯେ ଏହା ଗାଁ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସାହଯ୍ୟରେ କାମରେ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହେବ ।

ଅନୁଗୋଳରେ ବାଜି ରାଉତ ଛାତ୍ରାବାସର ତତ୍ତ୍ୱାବଧାନରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି କୃଷ୍ଣା ମହାନ୍ତି । ମୋର ସେଠାକୁ ଯିବାର ଥିଲା । ନ ଯାଇ ପାରିବାରୁ ସେ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ଥିଲେ ବି ଖୁବ ସକାଳୁ ଟ୍ରେନ୍ ଧରି ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚି ଗଲେ । ବୟସ ତାଙ୍କର ଅଣୀ ପାଖାପାଖି । ମୋତେ ଖରାପ ଲାଗିଥିଲା, ତାଙ୍କର ସ୍ନେହ ଓ ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ କୃତଜ୍ଞ । ଆମେ ସାଥୀ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଖଦି ବୋର୍ଡ଼ ଅଫିସ୍‌କୁ । ବୋଧହୁଏ ସେ ସ୍ଥାନଟି ନିଆ ଯାଇଥିଲା ଗାନ୍ଧୀ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରାର କୌଣସି ଗଠନମୂଳକ କାମରେ ଲଗାଇବା ପାଇଁ । ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବେ ମୁଁ

ପଢ଼ିଥିଲି ସେଠାରେ ଗାନ୍ଧୀ ମ୍ୟୁଜିଅମ୍ କରିବାର ଯୋଜନା ଚାଲିଛି, କିନ୍ତୁ ଏବେ ଶୁଣା ଯାଉଛି ତାହା ସ୍ଥାଗ୍ ସିଟିର ଅଂଶ ହେବ ବୋଲି ।

ଶୁଣିଲେ ତ ? ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । କଣ ଭାବୁଛନ୍ତି ଆପଣ ?

ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ବହୁମୁଖୀ । ଉପର ଚିକିତ୍ସିକି କାହଣୀ(ଅବା ଘଟଣା)ଗୁଡ଼ିକ କଣ ସତେ ତାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ରୂପ ? ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଖାପଛତା ନା କିଛିଭାବରେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ, କିଛି ତଥ୍ୟ ଅଛି ସେଥିରେ ? ଏମାନେ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନର ପରିଣାମ ନା ଆଧାର ନା ପ୍ରତୀକ ? ଏମିତି ତ ଗଢ଼ା ହୋଇ ଚାଲିଛି ଅଜସ୍ର କାହଣୀ । ତାର କିଛି ମାନେ ଅଛି ?

ମୁଁ ଚାଲିଛି ସମୁଦ୍ରକୂଳର ଧାରେଧାରେ । ଗୋଟେଇ ଚାଲିଛି ଭଙ୍ଗା ଚିତ୍ତିରିଆ ଶାମୁକା, ଜକଜକ ମାରୁଥିବା ଚିକି ରଙ୍ଗୀନ ପଥର ବା ଆଉ କିଛି । ଆଖି ପାଉ ନାହିଁ ଏ କୂଳର ଅନ୍ତ କେଉଁଠି, ଫେରି ପଛକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ କେଉଁଠୁ ଆସିଲି ତା ପଥା ବି ପାଉ ନାହିଁ । କେବଳ ମୁଁ ଗୋଟେଇ ଚାଲିଛି ସେଇ ଚୁନିଚୁନି ଅନାବନା ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଭିନ୍ନଭିନ୍ନ ‘କଅଣ’ ଗୁଡ଼ାକୁ ଯାହା ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନର ଏକ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ପ୍ରତୀକ । ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଜୋଡ଼ିବସିଲି ଏପାଖ ସେପାଖ ଖଞ୍ଜି । କେବେ କେମିତି ଖଞ୍ଜିଲେ ସୁନ୍ଦରିଆ ମନଲୋଭା ଦେଖାଯାଏ - ବାଃ କି ବିଚିତ୍ର ।

ବିଭିନ୍ନତା ଜନ୍ମ ନିଏ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନରୁ । ବିଭିନ୍ନତା ଭିତରେ ସମତାକୁ ଅନୁଭବ କରି ପାରିଲେ ଏକତା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୁଏ ବିଭିନ୍ନତାକୁ ନଷ୍ଟ ନକରି **(unity in diversity)** । ନଚେତ ବିଭିନ୍ନତା ଏକ ଅନାବନା ଅଳିଆଗଦା । ତାକୁ ସଜାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ହେବ, ବଦଳାଇବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ସମତା ହେବାକୁ **(uniformization of diversity)** |

ଏହି ଘଟଣାଗୁଡ଼ିକ ବି ବିଶ୍ୱରୂପୀ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନର ଗର୍ଭରେ ।



ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି କାନାଡାର ଓକ୍ସେରିଓ ପ୍ରଦେଶରେ ଥିବା ଆଙ୍ଗାଙ୍ଗର୍ ସହରରେ ବାସ କରନ୍ତି ।

ଭିନ୍ନ ଏକ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା

ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମାତା ରଥ

ଥରେ ପାର୍କରେ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଦେଖା ହୋଇଥିଲା । କିଛି ଗୋଟେ ଖୋଜୁଥିବାର ଦେଖିଲି । ଚାଲୁ ଚାଲୁ ପଚାରିଦେଲି "ମାଉସୀ, କ'ଣ ଖୋଜି ପାଉ ନାହାନ୍ତି କି ?" ମୋଟା ଚଷମା ତଳୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ସେ । କହିଲେ "ହଁ ରେ ମା, ମୋବାଇଲ୍‌ଟା ପକେଇଦେଲି ବୋଧେ । ପାଉନି ।" "ରୁହନ୍ତୁ, ମୁଁ ଦେଖୁଛି" । ଏତିକି କହି ମୁଁ ଖୋଜିବାରେ ଲାଗିଲି । ସେଇ ପାଖ ବୁଦାରୁ ହିଁ ମିଳିଗଲା ଫୋନ୍ । ଦେଖୁ ଦେଖୁ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଗଲେ । କହିଲେ "ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଝିଅ । ମୋ ଆଖିକୁ ତ ଭଲରେ କିଛି ଦେଖା ଯାଉନି । ମୋ ଝିଅର ଫୋନ୍ ଆସିବା ସମୟ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା । ବିଦେଶରେ ରହେ ସେ । ମୋବାଇଲ୍‌ଟା ନ ମିଳିଥିଲେ ବହୁତ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଲାଗିଥାନ୍ତା ।"



ମାଉସୀ ସେଇ ଜାଗାରେ ହିଁ ପ୍ରାୟ ଦେଖା ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ବହୁତ ସ୍ନେହୀ ମଣିଷ । ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ କଥା ହେବାକୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗେ । ଆପଣାର ମନେ ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ସବୁବେଳେ ହସ ହସ ମୁହଁ । ନିଜର ଯୁବତୀ ବେଳେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଖୁବ୍ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଥିବେ ସେ । ବୟସର ରେଖା ତାଙ୍କ ଚେହେରାକୁ ଯାହା ଟିକେ ମଳିନ କରି ଦେଇଛି । ମଉସୀ ବି ଆସନ୍ତି କେବେ କେବେ ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ । ସେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଏତେ ମେଲାପୀ ନୁହନ୍ତି । ଟିକେ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ଲାଗନ୍ତି । ମାଉସୀ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖେ ବସି ଫୋନ୍ ରେ ଗପନ୍ତି ଝିଅ ସାଙ୍ଗେ । ମଉସୀଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହୁଏନା । ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଲାଗେ ମତେ । ଥରେ ମୋ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ମଉସୀଙ୍କର ପରିଚୟ କରେଇ ଦେଲେ ମାଉସୀ । କହିଲେ "ଏଇ ଝିଅଟିର ନାଁ ଅସୀମା । ଆମ 'ତିଥି' ପରି ଦେଖା ଯାଉନି ? ସେମିତି ଲମ୍ବା ନାକ ଆଉ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ଆଖି । ଏଇ ପାଖରେ ରହେ ପିଞ୍ଜିରେ । ଚାକିରି କରୁଛି ଗୋଟେ ବଡ଼ କମ୍ପାନୀରେ । ତାକୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ମତେ ବହୁତ ଭଲ ଲାଗେ । ମା' ରେ ବେଳ ପାଇଲେ କେବେ ଆମ ଘରକୁ ଆସ୍ ।"

ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଆମନ୍ତ୍ରଣକୁ ଏତେଇ ନପାରି କେବେ କେବେ ରବିବାର ଦେଖୁ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଯିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲି । ଘରକୁ ବେଶ ସୁନ୍ଦର କରି ସଜେଇ ଥାନ୍ତି ସେ । ସବୁ ଆଡେ ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅର ଫଟୋ । ବେଶ ସୁନ୍ଦର ତାଙ୍କ ତିଥି । ପୂରା ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ ପରି । କହୁ କହୁ ଦିନେ ମାଉସୀ କହିଲେ, "ବାହାଘରର ବହୁତ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ବାପା ମା' ହେବାର ସବୁ ଆଶା ଆମେ ହରେଇ ବସିଥିଲୁ, ସେତେବେଳେ ଦିନେ ଭଗବାନ ଆମ କୋଳକୁ ଦେଲେ ତିଥି । ଆମ ଜୀବନକୁ ଖୁସିରେ ଭରିଦେଲା ସେ । ପିଲାଟି ଦିନୁ ପାଠ, ଖେଳ, ଗୀତ, ନାଚ ସବୁଥିରେ ଆଗୁଆ ସେ । ଆଉ ଟିକେ ଜିଦିଆ ବି । ବହୁତ ଗେହ୍ଲାଇ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ନା ଆମେ । ଏଇ ଦେଖୁନୁ । ୨୬ ପୁରି ୨୭ ଚାଲିଲାଣି । ବାହା ହେବା ପାଇଁ ଜମା ରାଜି ହେଉନି । ସବୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବକୁ ମନା କରି ଦେଉଛି । କ'ଣ କରିବି ଏଇ ଝିଅଟାକୁ ମୁଁ । ଏବେ ପୁଣି ଆମେରିକା ଯାଇଛି ପ୍ରୋଜେକ୍ଟ କାମରେ । ଆସୁ ଏଇ ଥର । ହାତକୁ ଦି ହାତ କରିକି ହିଁ ଛାଡ଼ିବି ।" ଝିଅ କଥା କହିଲା ବେଳେ ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ ପାଟି କେବେ ଅଟକି ଯାଏନି । ତାର ସବୁ କାହାଣୀ ସତେ ଯେମିତି ତାଙ୍କ ଜିଭ ଅଗରେ ଥାଏ ।

ମାଉସୀଙ୍କର ହାତ ତିଆରି ଖାଇବା ଥରେ ଖାଇଲେ ପାଟିରୁ ଛାଡ଼ିବନି । ଥରେ ଯାଉଯାଉ ସେ ଟେବୁଲ୍ ଉପରେ ସଜେଇଦେଲେ ପୁରୁଦିଆ ମଣ୍ଡା, ଛେନାପୋଡ଼, କ୍ଷୀରି, କାକରା । "ଆରେ ମାଉସୀ, ଆଜି କିଛି ଖାସ୍ କି ?" ପଚାରିଲି ମୁଁ । "ଆଜି ଆମ ତିଥିର ଜନ୍ମଦିନ ତ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତା ମନ ପସନ୍ଦର ଜିନିଷ ସବୁ ବନେଇଛି । ଖାଇକି ଦେଖ ଝିଅ । କେମିତି ହେଉଛି ।" ହସିହସି କହିଲେ ମାଉସୀ । ଭାବିଲି, ସତରେ କେତେ ମିସ୍ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ଝିଅକୁ ସେ ।

କାମରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହି ବହୁତ ଦିନ ହେଲା ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ମୁଁ ଦେଖା କରି ପାରି ନଥିଲି । ଅତୀତ ଦିନେ ସଂଧ୍ୟାରେ ମଉସୀଙ୍କ ନମ୍ବରରୁ ଗୋଟେ କଲ୍ ଦେଖୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଘର ଆଗରେ ହିଁ ଓହ୍ଲେଇ ଗଲି ମୁଁ ଅଟୋରୁ । ଦେଖିଲି, ତାଲା ପଡ଼ିଛି । ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ମଉସୀଙ୍କୁ କଲ୍ କରି ଜାଣିଲି

ଯେ ସେ ଅଛନ୍ତି ହସିଟାଲରେ । ମାଉସୀ ଆଡ଼ମିଟ୍ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ମନଟା କେମିତି କେମିତି ଲାଗିଲା । ଚିକେ ବି ଡେରି ନକରି ହସିଟାଲକୁ ମୁହେଁଇଲି ମୁଁ । ଯାଇ ଦେଖିଲି ମଉସା ତଳକୁ ମୁହଁ ପୋତି ବସିଛନ୍ତି ଆଇ.ସିୟୁ. ବାହାରେ । ମତେ ଦେଖି ଉପରକୁ ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ଚାହିଁଲେ ଆଉ କହିଲେ "ଭଲ କଲୁ ମା' ଆସିଗଲୁ । ମାଉସୀର ବ୍ରେନ୍ ହାମରେଇ ହୋଇଛି । କେଉଁ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଚାଲିଯିବ ହୁଏତ !!" କହୁକହୁ କୋହରେ ଅଟକିଗଲା ଶବ୍ଦ ତାଙ୍କର । ଅମାନିଆ ଲୁହକୁ ରୋକି ପାରୁ ନଥିଲି ମୁଁ । ବହୁତ କଷ୍ଟରେ ପଚାରିଲି "ମଉସା, ତିଥ୍ କେତେବେଳେ ଆସୁଛି ? ଆମେରିକାରୁ ଆସିବା ପାଇଁ ଚିକେ ସମୟ ତ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଲାଗିବ" ।

"କିଏ ଆସିବରେ ମା' ? ତିଥ୍ ? ସେ ତ ଚାଲି ଯାଇଛି ୩ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ! ସେଇ ଅଫେରା ଦୁନିଆକୁ ! ବିମାନ ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣା ନେଇଯାଇଛି ତାକୁ ସେପାରିକୁ ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ । ମାଉସୀ ତୋର ସେଦିନୁ ପାଗଳି । ଆଜିଯାଏଁ ମାନି ପାରିନି । ତାକୁ ଲାଗୁଛି, ଝିଅ ତା'ର ଫେରି ଆସିବ । ଘଣ୍ଟା ଘଣ୍ଟା ଧରି ନିଜ ସାଂଗେ ଗପି ଭାବୁଛି ଝିଅ ସାଂଗେ ଗପୁଛି । ଆଉ ଝରକା ପାଖେ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ବସୁଛି ତା'ର ଗେଲ୍ଲା ତିଥ୍କୁ ।"

ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ସବୁ କିଛି ମୋ ପାଖରେ । ସବୁ ଚିନ୍ତା ଶକ୍ତି ଲୋପ ପାଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଅବିଶ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଭାବରେ କାନ୍ଦି ଚାଲିଥିବା ମଉସାକୁ କ'ଣ କହି ବୁଝେଇବି ଜାଣି ପାରୁନଥିଲି । ଆଇ.ସିୟୁ. କାଚ ବାଟେ ଦେଖିଲି ମାଉସୀକୁ । ଗଭୀର ନିଦରେ ଶୋଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । କେତେ ଶାନ୍ତ ଦେଖା ଯାଉଛି ମୁହଁ ତାଙ୍କର । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ତାଙ୍କର ସବୁ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷାର ଅନ୍ତ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି!



Contact Info, 1717 Crystal Spring Lane, Hermitage, TN 37076; Email: suryasnata.rath@gmail.com

ସମ୍ପର୍କ

ବିଜୟ ମହାନ୍ତି



ହଠାତ୍ କରି ମୋର ଜଣେ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଫୋନ୍‌କଲେ ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ, କହିଲେ, ଆମେ ବିଜୟ, ଆମର OSA ର ବାର୍ଷିକ ପତ୍ରିକାରେ ଆମର ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଅଭିଯାନ ବିଷୟରେ କିଛି ଲେଖିବା କାହିଁକି? ମୁଁ ଚମକି ପଡ଼ିଥିଲି. ମୁଁ ଆଉ ଲେଖା? ସେ ବାଧ୍ୟ କଲେ, କିଛି ଲେଖା | ଆମର ଏହି ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରାଟିକୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ପହଞ୍ଚାଇ ପାରିବା | ପ୍ରାୟ ତିନି ଚାରି ଦିନ ବିତିଗଲା | ଯେହେତୁ ଏହି ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁଟି ମୋର ମନକୁ ସବୁବେଳେ ବିଚଳିତ କରିଥାଏ ମୁଁ ଭାବିଲି ମୁଁ କିଛି ଲେଖିବି ମୋର ମନର କଥା | ବୋଧହୁଏ ମୋର ମନର କଥା ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କୁ କିଛି ପରିମାଣରେ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିପାରିବ ଏବଂ ଏହି ପ୍ରୟାସଟିକୁ କିଛି ପରିମାଣରେ ସୁଫଳ ମିଳିପାରିବ...।

ସାତ ଦରିଆ ପାରିକରି ଆମେ ଆମର ବାପ, ମା, ଭାଇ, ଭଉଣୀ, ବନ୍ଧୁବାନ୍ଧବଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଏଠାରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଛୋଟ ପରିବାର ଗଢ଼ିଛୁ | ଆଖପାଖରେ ଥିବା ଆମର ନୂଆପିଢ଼ିର ସାଙ୍ଗ ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କର ପରିବାର ଆମର ପରିବାରର ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଗ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି | ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସୁଖ ମିଳିଥାଏ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଆମେ ନିଜ ନିଜର ସୁଖଦୁଃଖ ବାଣ୍ଟିଥାଉ ଏବଂ ସମୟଟିକୁ ଖୁସିର ସହିତ ଅତିବାହିତ କରିଥାଉ | ଏହି ପରିବାରଟିକୁ ବଢ଼ାଇ ଚାଲିଥାଉ ନୂଆବନ୍ଧୁ ମାନଙ୍କ ସଂସର୍ଗରେ ଆସି | କିନ୍ତୁ ମନରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ଗଢ଼ି ଉଠିଥାଏ, ଓ ସବୁବେଳେ ମନକୁ ବିଚଳିତ କରିଥାଏ

ଯେ ଆମର ବାପା ମାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟତା କଣ ଆମେ ଠିକ ଭାବରେ ପ୍ରତିପାଳିତ କରିପାରିଛୁ? ତାଙ୍କ ବାର୍ଦ୍ଧକ୍ୟ ସମୟରେ ଆମେ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ରହି ତାଙ୍କର ସାହା ହୋଇ ପାରିନାହିଁ | ନିଜ ନିଜର ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖରେ ଭାଗୀ ହୋଇ ପାରିନାହିଁ | ବୋଧହୁଏ ଏହା ହିଁ ଆମର ଭାଗ୍ୟ | ମନରେ ଦୁଃଖ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେମାନେ କେବେ ଅସନ୍ତୋଷ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରି ନଥାନ୍ତି | ସବୁବେଳେ କହୁଥିବେ, ତୁମର ଯୋଉଠି ରହିବାରେ ଖୁସି, ଆମର ମଧ୍ୟ ସେଥିରେ ଖୁସି | ଆମ ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୁଅନାହିଁ, ଆମେ ବେଶ ଭଲରେ ଅଛୁ | ତାଙ୍କର ଏହି ଆଶ୍ୱାସନାଟି ହିଁ ଆମକୁ ଆଗକୁ ବଢ଼ିବାରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିଥାଏ | କିନ୍ତୁ ମନରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଉକ୍ତୁଣ୍ଡା ଥାଏ କିଛି ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବାପାଇଁ ସେହିପରି ବାପା ମା'ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଯୋଉମାନେ ଏଠାରେ ଥାଇ ଏକୃତ ଆ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦୂରରେ ଛାଡ଼ି | ତାଙ୍କର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଲୋଡ଼ା ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କାହାକୁ କହିପାରି ନଥାନ୍ତି ଛୋଟ ସାହାଯ୍ୟଟିଏ ପାଇଁ | ହୁଏତ ଆମେ କିଛି ଅଳ୍ପ ଦୂରରେ ରହୁଥିବା, କିନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ନିକଟତର ହେବାର କିଛି ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳି ନଥାଇ ପାରେ | ସମ୍ଭବତଃ ନିକଟତର ନ ହେଲେ ବୋଧହୁଏ ଆମେ ଆମର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ କରି ନଥାଉ | ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ରହିଛି ସୁଯୋଗ ଖୋଜି ନିକଟତର ହେବା ପାଇଁ ଏବଂ ନିଜ ନିଜର ସୁଖଦୁଃଖ ବାଣ୍ଟିବା ପାଇଁ | ସେଥିରୁ ବୋଧହୁଏ ଆମର ପିଲାମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କର ଅଜ୍ଞା, ଆଇ, ଜେଜେ ଏବଂ ଜେଜେ ମା'ଙ୍କର ଶୂନ୍ୟତାକୁ ପୂରଣ କରି ପାରିବେ | ଏବଂ ଏହି ଶିକ୍ଷାଟି ଆମ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ ସମାଜ ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟବୋଧ ଜାଗ୍ରତ କରିପାରିବ |

ଆମେ OSA NY-NJ chapterରେ ଏହି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମଟିକୁ ଆଗେଇ ନେବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ ଜାରି ରଖୁଛୁ ଏବଂ ଆଶା କରୁଛୁ, ଏହି ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟଟି ଗୋଟିଏ ଉଦାହରଣ ସାଜିବ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ | କୁଣ୍ଡାବୋଧ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମୁଁ ମୋର କିଛି ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଚାହୁଁଛି | ଅଜଣା ମଣିଷ ଯେତେବେଳେ ନିଜର ହୋଇ ଯାଇଛି ତାହା ଆମର ମନକୁ ଉତ୍ତୁଳିତ କରିଦେଇ ଯାଇଛି | ବୋଧହୁଏ ଆମେ ତାଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଆମର ବାପା ମା'ଙ୍କର ଛବିଟିକୁ ଦେଖିପାରିଛୁ | ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ ଟିକିଏ ଖୁସି ଦେଖିଲେ ଆମର ଛାତି କୁଣ୍ଡେମୋଟ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥାଏ | ସବୁବେଳେ ଅନେଇ ବସିଥାଉ ତାଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ ବସି ଦୁଇପଦ କଥା ହେବା ପାଇଁ ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କର ଏକାନ୍ତତା ଦୂର କରିବା ପାଇଁ | ଆମେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ

ଭାବେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଛୁ ସେହି ଖୁସିର ସମୟଟିକୁ ଉଭୟ ପରିବାର ମଧ୍ୟରେ । ବାରମ୍ବାର କିଛି ସାହାଯ୍ୟର ଲୋଡ଼ା ଥିଲେ ଆମେ ତାଙ୍କର ମନରେ ସଂକୋଚ ଦେଖି ପାରିଥାଉ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମର ମନ ଆନନ୍ଦର ସହିତ ଝରଝର ହୋଇଥାଏ ଯେ ଆମକୁ ସେମାନେ ନିଜର ଭାବି ପାରିଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ କେବେ ପଛଦୁଆ ଦେଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି କୌଣସି ସାହାଯ୍ୟଟିଏ ମାଗିବା ପାଇଁ । ସେଇଟା ଆମ ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟେ ବଡ଼ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି । ଏମିତି ଖୋଜି ଚାଲିଥାଉ ଆଉ କିଛି ଅଜଣା ମଣିଷଙ୍କୁ ନିଜର କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଏବଂ ଏଠାର ଏକାନ୍ତତାପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସଂସ୍କୃତିରୁ ଦୁରେଇ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ ଆମର ଏଇ ଛୋଟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜଟିକୁ ।

ଆମେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିପାରିଛୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ମିଳିତ ଉଦ୍ୟମହିଁ ଏହି ପ୍ରୟାସଟିକୁ ସଫଳତା ଦେଇପାରିବ । ତେଣୁ ଆସନ୍ତୁ ଆମର କିଛିଟା ସମୟ କିଛି ଭଲ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ଲଗାଇବା ଏବଂ ଆମର “ସମ୍ପର୍କ”କୁ ଗଢ଼ି ଚାଲିବା ।

'The future depends on what we do in the present.' – Mahatma Gandhi

ବିଜୟ ମହାନ୍ତି
ନ୍ୟୁ ଜର୍ସି
bijmon@yahoo.com

ପୁନଃରୁଦ୍ଧି

ଦେବାଶିଷ ଦାସ

A: "If you won't take it otherwise, may I ask you something?"

B: "Yes , please tell me!"

A: " If you are from Odisha ?"

B: " Yes , I am !"

A: "ଭାଇ ମୁଁ ବି ଓଡ଼ିଆ! " ..

....and the rest is history.

ଆମେରିକାରେ ମୋର ମାତ୍ର ଚାରିବର୍ଷ ରହଣିରେ ସୁଦୂର ଜନ୍ମଭୂମିର ଜଣେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ଅବା ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କୁ ଅଫିସ୍ cafeteria ରେ ହଠାତ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରିବାର ଏହି ମଧୁର ଅନୁଭୂତି ମୁଁ ଏକାଧିକ ଥର ପାଇଁ ଲାଭ କରିଛି । ବହୁରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରୀୟ କମ୍ପାନୀ ଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ କର୍ମଚରୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏମିତି ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ଆଉ ନିଆରା ହୋଇ ନାହିଁ । ଆଜିର ତାରିଖରେ ପ୍ରତି ଦଶ ପନ୍ଦର ଜଣ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଭାରତୀୟ ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ହାରାହାରି ଜଣେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ କି ଭଉଣୀ ମିଳିଯିବେ । ଏହା ଗର୍ବର ବିଷୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ! ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଆର୍ଥିକ ଅବସ୍ଥା ତୁଳନାରେ ପ୍ରୟୁକ୍ତି ବିଜ୍ଞାନରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ଆପେକ୍ଷିକ ସ୍ଥିତି ବେଶ୍ ମଜବୁତ । ଆମେରିକା, ଇଂଲଣ୍ଡ, ଅଷ୍ଟ୍ରେଲିଆ, ସିଙ୍ଗାପୁର କେଉଁଠି ଅବା ନାହାନ୍ତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆଜିର ସମୟରେ!

ଦୁଇ ଦଶନ୍ଧି ତଳେ ହାତ ଗଣତି ଡାକ୍ତର, ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ଏବଂ ପ୍ରଫେସର ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲେ ବିଦେଶ ମାଟି ତ ଦୂରର କଥା, ଏପରିକି ଗୁଜରାଟ ଓ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କହିଲେ ଅଣକୃଷ୍ଣଳୀ ଓ ଅନ୍ଧଶିକ୍ଷିତ ଖଣ୍ଡି ହିନ୍ଦୀ କହୁଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଭାଇମାନଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝାଉଥିଲା ! ତା ହିଁ ଥିଲା ଭାରତ ତଥା ବିଶ୍ୱ ଜନମାନସରେ ଏକ ସାଧାରଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ପରିଚୟ ! ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ କୃପା ଓ ପ୍ରଯୁକ୍ତି ବିଜ୍ଞାନର ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନକୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ, ତାହା ଭାରତ ତଥା ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ପାହ୍ୟା ପ୍ରଦାନ କଲା । ଆଜିର ଘଡ଼ିସନ୍ଧି ସମୟରେ ସେତା କେତେ ସ୍ଥାୟୀ ହେବ ଅବା କେତେ ଆଗକୁ ଯିବ, ତାହା ଏକ ପୃଥକ୍ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚାର ବିଷୟ । ହେଲେ ଉତ୍କଳ ଇତିହାସର ପ୍ରାୟ ଚାରିଶ କି ପାଞ୍ଚଶ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆଜି ଏକ ଏମିତି ଚାରିଛକରେ ଠିଆହୋଇଛି ଯେଉଁଠାରୁ ଆଗାମୀ ଦଶନ୍ଧି ଏବଂ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ତାର ପରିଚୟ, ଏହି ଜାତିର ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଗତି ହିଁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରଣ କରିବ । ଆଜି ହୁଏତ ଆଗପରି ନାହିଁ ସେତେ ଅସହାୟତା, ହେଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତି ତଥା ରାଜ୍ୟର ନିଜ ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହାତ ବି ପାଇଯାଇନାହିଁ ।

ଗଜପତି କପିଳେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦେବଙ୍କ ଶାସନକାଳ ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ସମୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ହଜାର ହଜାର ବର୍ଷର ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଇତିହାସ ସମୁଦ୍ର ବାଲିର ଗାର ଭଳି ଏମିତି ଲିଭିଗଲା ଯେ ଇତିହାସ ପୃଷ୍ଠାରେ ଆଜିଯାଏଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କେବଳ ନଅଙ୍କ ଦୁର୍ଭିକ୍ଷର ଚିହ୍ନ ହୋଇ ରହିଗଲେ । ସତ୍ୟ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ କହୁ, ହେଲେ ସେ କାଳିମାକୁ କେ.ବି.କେ ଯୋଜନା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଆଜି ମଧ୍ୟ ବଞ୍ଚେଇରଖିବାକୁ ଆପ୍ରାଣ ଉଦ୍ୟମ ଚାଲିଛି ।

ହେଲେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଆସେ. "ମୁଁ ଯଦି ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛଳ, ମୋର ପରିଚୟ ଦୁସ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସଂଲଗ୍ନ ହେବାର କଣ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ରହିଛି ? ଅଳପୁଆ ଓ ଗୋଡ଼ଗଣା ଚିଲିକା କଙ୍କଡ଼ା ମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ନିଜ ପରିଚୟକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟବାଧକତା ପୂର୍ବକ ଯୋଡ଼ିଲେ ମୋର ସାମାଜିକ ସ୍ଥିତି ପ୍ରତିହତ ହେବନାହିଁ କି ?"

ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଟି ଆପେକ୍ଷିକ, ହେଲେ ଉତ୍ତର ଗୋଟିଏ ...।

ସାମାଜିକ ପରିଚୟର ସଜ୍ଞା ଯଦି ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍ ବାଲାନ୍ସ୍ , ଆଉ ଉପର ମହଲରେ ଉଠାବସା ଯାଏ ସାମିତ, ତାହେଲେ ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ଯୁକ୍ତିଟି ସମୀଚିନ । ହେଲେ, ସେଇ ଉପର ମହଲରେ ଉଠାବସା ଯେତେବେଳେ ଆଉ ଟିକେ ଉପର ସ୍ତରକୁ ପଲେଇଯାଏ, ସେତେବେଳେ ଆମ ଇତିହାସ, ଆମ ଜନ୍ମମାଟି, ଆମ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି ଘୋଷରା ହେବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ୍ୟତା । ଆମେରିକା ଅବା ଇଉରୋପର ସାମାଜିକ ଚଳଣିରେ କେହି ବି ମାନସଗଣ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିବିଶେଷଙ୍କର ପରିଚୟ ବଢ଼ିଲାବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କର ବଂଶୋତ୍ତର(ancestry) କୁ ସୁଚାଇବା ଅପରିହାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ସେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି କେତେ ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତ ଜର୍ମାନ, କେତେ ଇଂଲିଶ, କେତେ ଆଇରୀଶ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଏହା ସପକ୍ଷରେ ଅବା ବିପକ୍ଷରେ କହିବାଟା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିବିଶେଷଙ୍କ ମାନବୀୟ ସମ୍ବେଦନା ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭରଶୀଳ । ହେଲେ କେବଳ ନିଜର ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛଳତା ଦ୍ୱାରା ସଫଳତାକୁ ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟା କରୁଥିବା ଲୋକଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏହା ଏକ ଆଇନା ହୋଇପାରେ । ନହେଲେ, ଏମିତି ବି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମନଟା ଦରଦୀ, ଉପରକୁ ଆତ୍ମପରିଚୟ (self promotion) ସାଧାରଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଚରିତ୍ରରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ନାହିଁ । ଏଠାରେ ଉତ୍କଳମଣି ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ ଜୀବନୀର ଉଦାହରଣ ନିଆଯାଇପାରେ ।

ସଫଳ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ଏସବୁ ଗ୍ଲାନିଭରା କଥା କହି ମୁହଁ ବିଗାଡ଼ିବାରେ ମୋର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ । ହେଲେ, ଏହି ସମୀକ୍ଷା ଯଦି ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭିତ୍ତିହୀନ ଏବଂ ମୋର କପୋଳକଚ୍ଛିତ, ମୁଁ ହାତଯୋଡ଼ି କ୍ଷମା ଚାହୁଁବି । ଅନ୍ୟଥା ଆମ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଜୀବନରୁ ଦୁଇଟି ମୁହୁର୍ତ୍ତ ସୁଦୂର ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଇତିହାସ, ଯାହା ସମୟର ବାଲିରେ ପୋତି ହୋଇଯାଇଛି, ତାର ପୁନରୁଦ୍ଧାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଉପରେ ଆମକୁ ବିଚାର କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଏମିତି କେତେଦିନ ଆଉ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ତାର ପରିଚୟ କୋଣାର୍କର ଭଗ୍ନ

ମୁଖଶାଳା, ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ, ଆଉ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଜଗନାଥଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଶୋଇଯାଉଥିବ । ଏଇ ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷୀରେ ମଧୁବାବୁଙ୍କ ସେଇ ଉଚ୍ଚିଟି ମନେପଡ଼େ ..

"ତୋ ପୁର୍ବପୁରୁଷେ ଜୟ କରିଥିଲେ
ଗଙ୍ଗା ଠାରୁ ଗୋଦାବରୀ ,
ତାଙ୍କରି ଔରସେ ଜାତହୋଇ ତୁହି
କେଉଁ ଗୁଣେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସରି ।"

ଏଇ ସଂଗ୍ରାମରେ ଆମକୁ ହୁଏତ କିଛି ଆଖିଦୁରୁଷିଆ ମିଳିନପାରେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଜାତିର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତମାନଙ୍କର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାବେ ମୁଣ୍ଡଚେକି ଚାଲିବା ପାଇଁ ଏହା ଏକ ବୃହତ ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିପାରିବ, ଯେଉଁଠା ଆଜି ଚାରିଖରେ ଅସରନ୍ତି ଧନ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆମକୁ ଦେଇପାରୁନାହିଁ । ବିଶେଷକରି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ପରିଚୟରେ ଶୂନ୍ୟତା ଯୋଗୁଁ ହିଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଲାମାନେ ନିଜ ନିଜଭିତରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ କଥା କହିବାକୁ ଲାଜିତ ହେବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେଣି । ଏକଥାର ପ୍ରମାଣ, ଆପଣ ଆଜିଦିନରେ କଟକ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର, ରାଉରକେଲା ଅବା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅନ୍ୟ କେଉଁ ବି ସହରର ବିଦ୍ୟାର୍ଥୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁଧ୍ୟାନ କଲେ ନିହାତି ପାଇପାରିବେ । ଏପ୍ରକାର ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ଅବନୟନ, ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଭାର ବିଲୋପ ହେବାର ପୁନର୍ଭାଷ ନୁହେଁ ! ତାହା ଆଗାମୀ ସମୟ ହିଁ କହିବ ।

ଏବେ କଥା ଉଠେ, "ଆମେ କଣ କରିପାରିବା ?"

ମୋର ନିଜ ଅନୁଶୀଳନରୁ ମୁଁ ଯାହା ଉପଲବ୍ଧ କରେ, ଏହି ସଂସ୍ଥା ଓ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା OSA ହିଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ଗତିପଥ ବଦଳେଇପାରିବ । ଏହା ମଧ୍ୟ ନିରାଟ ସତ୍ୟ ଯେ ଏଇ ପବିତ୍ର ସଂସ୍ଥା, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଏବଂ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ପରିଚୟକୁ ବେଶ୍ କିଛି ଦେଇଆସିଛି । ଏଥିର ସମସ୍ତ ସଦସ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ବିଶେଷ କରି ପୁରୋଧାମାନଙ୍କ ମନ ଯଦି ଜାତିର ଗୌରବ ଓ ପରିଚୟ ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଉନଥାନ୍ତା, ତାହେଲେ ଏହା ଅଙ୍କୁରରୁ ଆଜି ଏତେବଡ଼ ଦୁମ କିପରି ହେଲା ! ମୋର ଚେଷ୍ଟା, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୁ ଏକ ନିଜ୍ଜକ ସତ୍ୟକୁ ଉପଲବ୍ଧ କରାଇବା ପାଇଁ, ଏବଂ ତା ହେଲା"ଗାଁ କନିଆ ସିଂଘାଣି ନାକି " ।

ଆଜି ଦିନରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏମିତି ଅଗଣିତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଅଛନ୍ତି ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଜାତିର ପୁନଃରୁଥାନ ପାଇଁ ନିଜକୁ ଜଳାଞ୍ଜଳି ଦେଇ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି, ହେଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଯୁବା ଯେ କି ଜାତିର ଦାୟାଦ, ସେ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ ହେଉନାହିଁ ! ବ୍ରାଣ୍ଡିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଓ ପ୍ରମୋସନ୍ ଯୁଗରେ not-happening profiles ବି କେତେ କଣ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଆଣିପାରିବେ କୁହନ୍ତୁ ? ତେଣୁ, କେବଳ ଏକ larger than life entity ହିଁ protagonist ହୋଇପାରିବ । ଯାହାର ପ୍ରତିଟି ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ସୁଦୂର ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଯୁବମାନସ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ପ୍ରେରଣା ହେବାର ଆଶା ରଖୁଛି । ଏହି ଚେଷ୍ଟାରେ OSAର ଅନ୍ୟ ବିକଳ୍ପ ମୋତେ ଦେଖାଯାଉନାହିଁ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସଂସ୍କୃତି ପାଇଁ ଏହାର ଅହେତୁକ ପ୍ରେମଟି, ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପ୍ରତି ଜନମାନସରେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ୱନିତ ହେବାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ମୋର ଅନୁଭୂତ ହେଉଛି । ଇଂଲିଶ୍ ସିକିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଦେଶରେ ଥାଇମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ପାଇଁ ଏହାର ଅନୁରକ୍ତିର ଖବରଟି, ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ରହି ଓଡ଼ିଆ କହିବାକୁ ଲାଜୋଉଥିବା ଯୁବପିଢ଼ିର କାନରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିପାରିଲେ ତାକୁ ଆତ୍ମାନୁଶୀଳନ ଆଡ଼କୁ ପ୍ରେରିତ କରିପାରିବ । ସବୁଠାରୁ ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହେଲା ପାଠ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଇତିହାସର ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି । ଆମ ଇତିହାସ ପଢ଼ାଣୀ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଐତିହାସିକ ଆଉ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଶାସକ ଲେଖିଦେଇଗଲେ, ଅଧିକତ୍ରୁ ତାକୁ ଦେଖି ଆମେ ବିଗତ ଅଣୀ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଜଳକା ହୋଇ ରହିଯାଇଛୁ । ଆମର ଅନନ୍ୟ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟର ଭଗ୍ନାବଶେଷକୁ ଅନୁଧ୍ୟାନ କଲେ ଆମେ ଜାଣିପାରିବୁ ଯେ ପାଠ୍ୟପୁସ୍ତକରେ ଇତିହାସର ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟା ସହିତ ବାସ୍ତବତାର କୌଣସି ମେଳ ନାହିଁ । ତଥାପି ସତ୍ୟ ଖୋଜିବାପାଇଁ ରାଜନୈତିକ ଅବା ସାଧାରଣ ମହଲରେ ବିଶେଷ ସମ୍ବେଦନା ନାହିଁ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଗୌରବମୟ ଇତିହାସର ସତ୍ୟକୁ ଖୋଜିବାର ପ୍ରେରଣା ଆମେ ଏଯାବତ ଅଣଓଡ଼ିଆ ଐତିହାସିକଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇଛୁ, ଅଥବା ଉନ୍ନେଚିତ ସତ୍ୟକୁ ପାଠ୍ୟପୁସ୍ତକର ମୁଖ୍ୟଧାରାକୁ ଆଣି ଆମ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହେବାପାଇଁ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଗର୍ବିତ ଅବା ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିପାରିନୁ । ମୋର ଧାରଣା OSA ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାରଙ୍କୁ ଏ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିପାରିବ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଇତିହାସକୁ ଆଉଥରେ ଅନୁଧ୍ୟାନ କରିବାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ନିହାତି ଅନୁଭୂତ ହୁଏ । ପ୍ରତ୍ନତତ୍ତ୍ୱଭିତ୍ତିରେ ଅବିରତ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ସହ ନିରପେକ୍ଷ ଭାବେ ଇତିହାସ ଖୋଜିବାପାଇଁ ଯେଉଁ ଆର୍ଥିକ ପ୍ରେରଣା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ତାହା ହୁଏତ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସରକାର ଏବଂ ଦେଶ ନିର୍ବିଶେଷରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ମିଳିତ ଉଦ୍ୟମରେ ସଫଳ ହୋଇପାରିବ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆତ୍ମପରିଚୟରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରେନି, ତାହା ସତ । ହେଲେ ଜାତିର ପୁନଃରୂପାୟନ ପାଇଁ ଯଦି ଆମକୁ ଅମଡ଼ାବାଟରେ କିଛି ପାହୁଣ୍ଡ ଚାଲିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ୁଛି, ତା ମଧ୍ୟ ସ୍ୱହଣୀୟ । OSA ନିଜର ଓଡ଼ିଆପଣର ଅନୁରକ୍ତିକୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ promote କରିବାକୁ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିପାରିବ । ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ହେଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଥିବା PR Agencies ସହ ମିଶିକି କିଛି ପାଦ ଆଗେଇ ହେବ । ଅନ୍ୟ ଦେଶ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଥିବା ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ସହ ସଂଯୋଗରଖି ଏହି ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟକୁ ବେଶ୍ ଆଗକୁ ନେଇହେବ । OSA ଅନୁକୁଲ୍ୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ପ୍ରମୋଟ୍ କରିବାରେ ଲେଖକ, ଚିତ୍ରକରଙ୍କ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ସମସ୍ତଦିଗରୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ କ୍ୟାଲିବ୍ରକୁ ଅଭ୍ୟର୍ଥନା ଏବଂ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବୃତ୍ତିର(scholarship) ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଚାରକୁ ଅଣାଯାଇପାରେ । ମୋର ଦୃଢ଼ ଧାରଣା, ଏସବୁ ଦିଗରେ ଆଗରୁ ନିଶ୍ଚେ କିଛି ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନିଆଯାଇ ସାରିଥିବ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ପୁନରାବୃତ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଆଉଥରେ କ୍ଷମା ଚାହୁଁବି ।

ମୋର ସୀମିତ ଅନୁଭୂତିରୁ ଯାହା ଉପଲବ୍ଧ, ତାହେଲା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାରତରେ ସମ୍ମାନସ୍ୱଦ ହୋଇପାରିଲେ ସେଇ ଅନୁଭୂତି ପୃଥିବୀର ଅନ୍ୟ କୋଣାନୁକୋଣକୁ ବ୍ୟାପ୍ତ ହେବାକୁ ବେଶୀ ସମୟ ଲାଗିବନି । ପ୍ରାୟ ସମସ୍ତ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କର ଅଳ୍ପବୟସ୍କ ଏହି ଅନୁଭୂତି ନିଶ୍ଚୟଥୁବ ଯେ କର୍ମକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଜଣେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ଭାବେ ତାଙ୍କପାଇଁ ସମ୍ମାନ ଯେତେ ଥାଏ, ନିଜକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିଚୟ ଦେଲାପରେ ଆମର ଅଣଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାରତୀୟ ଭାଇମାନେ ତୁକୁଅନ କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ତାହା ଭିତ୍ତିହୀନ ଏବଂ ତାହା ତୁଲ୍ ପ୍ରତିପାଦନ କରିବାର ଉତ୍କୃଷ୍ଟ ସମୟ ହେଲା ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ।

ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ



ଭାଷା ପ୍ରସାରରେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ

ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତ କୁମାର ଭୂୟାଁ

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ମାନ୍ୟତା ପାଇବାର ଏକ ବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ଏଇ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗଟି ଲେଖା ହୋଇଛି । ଏଥିରେ କିଛି ନୂତନ ଆଉ କେତେ ବହୁ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇଥିବା ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରୁ ଉପହୃତ ।

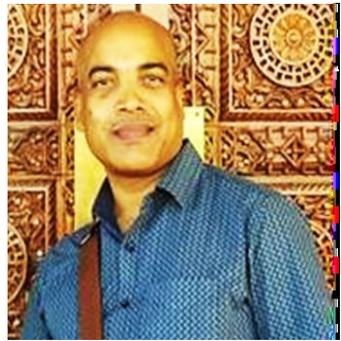
ଜଣେ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆର, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ପ୍ରଗତି ଅନୁଭୂତି ଏହି ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରେ ସମ୍ମିଳିତ । ଏହା ଏକ ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳ ବ୍ୟାପାର । ଅଣଓଡ଼ିଆ ପ୍ରଦେଶରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ଆଉ ଓଡ଼ିଶାଭାଷୀଙ୍କୁ ଭାଷାର ସମ୍ମାନ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ଏକତ୍ର କରିବା ଆଉ ଭାଷାର ମର୍ଯ୍ୟଦା ବଜାୟ ରଖିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟିତ ହେବା ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ କଠିନ ହୋଇ ଆସିଛି । ହେଲେ ବି ଆମ ମାତୃଭାଷାର ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ଆଉ ପ୍ରଗତିରେ ଆମକୁ ବ୍ରତୀ ହେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଏହା ହିଁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ରହିଆସିଛି । ସେହି ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟାର ବାଉଁଶି ପହି ଆଲୋଚ୍ୟ...

୨୧ ଫେବୃଆରୀ ୨୦୧୪ର କଥା...ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଥିବା ଜଣେ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଦୂରଭାଷରେ କହିଲେ...

“ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତ ଭାଇ, ଜାଣିଲେଣି କି ନାହିଁ; ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ’ ଭାଷାକୁ ‘କ୍ଲସିକ୍ ସ୍ପାଟ୍ସ’ ମିଳିଗଲା ।”
:କ’ଣ...!!!

ମୋ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ବୋଧହୁଏ ଭାବିଲେ, ଦୂରଭାଷର କିଛି ଗୋଳମାଳ ହେତୁ ମୁଁ ବୋଧହୁଏ ଶୁଣି ପାରିଲି ନାହିଁ । ହେଲେ ସତ ଏହିକି ଯେ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ କଥାକୁ ମୁଁ ଇଂରାଜୀରେ ଶୁଣି ପାରେନାହିଁ । ଟିକିଏ ଅତୁଆ ବୋଧହୁଏ ।

"କିହୋ, ଏଣୁରୀ ପିଠାକୁ କ’ଣ ଅଲ୍ ପର୍ପଜ୍ ଫ୍ଲୋର୍ରେ କଲେ ସୁଆଦିଆ ହେବ? ସେ କଥା ବୁଝୁନ! ଗଣ୍ଡି କଥା ସେଇଠି ଅଛି ପରା!"



ସେ ନିଜର ଉକ୍ଷିତ କଣ୍ଠକୁ ଆଦୁରି ଚେକି ଦେଇ କହିଲେ; : "ମୁଁ କଣ କହୁଥିଲି କି ଆମ ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ’ ଭାଷାକୁ ‘ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ମାନ୍ୟତା’ ମିଳିଗଲା ଭାଇ ।"

ଆହାଃ...ଓହୋ...କେଡ଼େ ଉତ୍ସାହ ଲାଗିଲା ମୋ ଭାଇର ମୁହଁରୁ ଏଇ କେତେପଦ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କଥା ଶୁଣି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ତଥା ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷୀ, ହେ ମୋ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନେ!

ମୋ ମନ-ପ୍ରାଣ-ଆତ୍ମାରେ ସଦା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ମୋତେ କାହାର ନାମାଙ୍କନ ମୋହରର ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ହୁଏନାହିଁ । ଆହେ! ମୁଁ ଏହା ଅଲବଦ୍ କହିବି ଯେ, ମୋର ପୁଅଝିଅ, ମୋର ବୋଲି ପ୍ରମାଣ କରିବାକୁ ମୋତେ ମୋର ଗୁଣସୂତ୍ର ପରୀକ୍ଷଣ କରିବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ନାହିଁ ହୋ । ଜନମ ହେଲୁଁ କେତେ କଣ ପଢ଼ି ଆସିଛି, ଜାଣି ଆସିଛି, ବୁଝି ଆସିଛି; ସବୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ । ମନକୁ ପଦି କ’ଣ ଛୁଇଁଛି ତେବେ; ତାହା ଓଡ଼ିଆ । ଇଂରାଜୀ, ରଷି, ଜାପାନୀ, ଚୀନୀ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଭାଷାର ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପଢ଼ିସାରିଲା ପରେ, ମନର କେଉଁ କୋଣରେ "ଦେଖରେ ନଳିନି, ନଳିନୀ ନଳିନୀରେ ଶୋଭିତ"କୁ ଗୁଣୁଗୁଣୁ ହୋଇ ଭାବିଛି "ଜଗତେ କେବଳ"...!

ମୋର କଥାକୁ ଟିକେ ସଂକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ କରି କହେ;

ଆମ ଭାଷା ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ; ଏହା ସତ୍ୟ ହେଲେ ଏହାର ଅଧିଗମ ବିଶ୍ୱବାସୀଙ୍କୁ ଏବେ ହେଲା ।

ଏଣୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଏହାକୁ ନେଇ ଫୁଲିଫାଟି ହେବା ଅପେକ୍ଷା; ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନେ ଆସନ୍ତୁ ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ’ ଭାଷାକୁ ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ’ ଆଉ କେବଳ ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ’ରେ ହିଁ ଲେଖିବା...! ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାର ଅନାଦର କରନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମ ମାତୃଭାଷାର ସମ୍ମାନ ରକ୍ଷା କରନ୍ତୁ । ମାତୃଭାଷା କେବଳ ପଢ଼ିବା ଅଥବା ଲେଖିବାର କଳା ନୁହଁ । ବରଂତ ଏହା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଧର୍ମ-ଜାତି-ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରର ଚୈତନ୍ୟଗତ ପରିଚୟ । ଏହା ବିଶ୍ୱମାନବ ଚେତନାର ଏକ ଭାବମୟ ତରଙ୍ଗ । ଏହାର ଝଙ୍କାର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସମାଜ ପାଇଁ ଅତୀବ ଅମୂଲ୍ୟ । ଏଣୁ ମାତୃଭାଷାର ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଜାଣିବା ଆଉ ବୁଝିବା ଅତି ପ୍ରାସଙ୍ଗିକ ।

ଭାଷା ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ରହୁ ବା ନରହୁ, ହେଉ ବା ନହେଉ; ଓହ୍ଲାର କୌଣସି ମୂଲ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ ଯଦି ଓହ୍ଲାର ଆତ୍ମନୀନ ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ବିଶ୍ୱସ୍ତିତର ଭେଦେଶ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ । ଓଶୁ ସମସ୍ତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଯେଉଁମାନେ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସହ ଓତଃପ୍ରୋତ ଭାବେ ଜଡ଼ିତ; ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓହ୍ଲାର ଅବରୋହ କରିବାକୁ ହିଁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଭାଷା ହେଉ ଅବା ସାହିତ୍ୟ; ଓହ୍ଲା ଭଦର୍କର ଓକ ମାଧ୍ୟମ ନହେଉ । ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ଥିବା ଦୁଇଟି ସରଳ ପଦ; ‘ସହ’ ଆଉ ‘ହିତ’ କୁ ବିବେଚନା କରାଯାଉ । ଯେ ଆମର ସହ ରହିଛି ଆଉ ଆମର ହିତରେ ରହିଛି ସେହି ସାହିତ୍ୟ । ମୁଁ ଓୟା ବୁଝେ । ଓଥିରେ ମୋର ସ୍ୱକୀୟ ଦର୍ଶନ କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ମୁଁ ମୋ ମାତୃଭାଷାରେ ମୋ ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ପଢ଼ିଛି, ପଢ଼ୁଛି ଆଉ ପଢ଼ୁଥିବି ଜୀବଦଶାରେ ଥିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । ସେଇଥିରେ ହିଁ ମୋର ଦିବ୍ୟତୃପ୍ତି । ଓଶୁ ମୁଁ ସଦା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝାଇ କହେ...

‘ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ’ ଓ ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷୀ’ ସୁଧୀ...ଜ୍ଞାନୀ...ଗୁଣୀ...ସାହିତ୍ୟପ୍ରେମୀ!

ଆସନ୍ତୁ

‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ’ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଶୁଣିବା - ଜାଣିବା - ପଢ଼ିବା - ବୁଝିବା - ଲେଖିବା;

ଆମ ‘ମାତୃଭାଷା’ ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ’ ଆଉ କେବଳ ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ’ ରେ...!

ଏଇ ଓଡ଼ିଆପଠକୁ ନେଇ ଅନେକ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଅପଦସ୍ତ ହୋଇଛି ଆଉ ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନରେ ବାଧା ମଧ୍ୟ ଆସିଛି । ହେଲେ ବି ସେଇ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହିଁ ମୋର ମାନସମ୍ମାନର କବଚ ହୋଇ ରହିଛି । ଛାତି ଫୁଲାଇ ଓବେ ବି କହେ ମୁଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ । ମୁଁ ବାଦକୁ ପିଲ ଜନମେଲବା କଥା କହୁନାହିଁମ ! ବିବେକକୁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ବାଧେ ସେତେବେଳେ ଛାଏଁ ଛାଏଁ ଓ ଅଭିମାନ ସବୁ ଶବ୍ଦ ହୋଇ ବାହାରି ପଡ଼ନ୍ତି । ଓବେ ସରିକି ଶହେ ଦୁଇଶ ଧାନରେ ଅପଦସ୍ତ ହେଇଛି । ହେଉଛି ମଧ୍ୟ ଓବେ । କଥାଟି ହେଲ, ଯେତେବେଳେ ମୋତେ କେହି ପଚାରିବୁ ଯେ,

“ଆପଣ କେଉଁଠାର ନିବାସୀ ?”

ମୁଁ ଜଗି ରହିଥିଲ ଭଳି ଅତି ଉଚ୍ଛ୍ୱାସ ସହ କହିଉଠେ,

“ଓଡ଼ିଶା...ମୋର ଜନ୍ମଭୂମି...!”

ସେଇଟା ମୋ ଉତ୍ତରର ପ୍ରଥମ ସୋପାନ ଥାଏ । ହେଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ନାମ ଶୁଣି ସେମାନେ ଆବାକାବା ହୋଇ ମତେ ଚିକିଏ ଅନାନ୍ତି; ତାପରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅଭିନୟ ମୁଁ ଦେଖେ ମୋ ରାଜ୍ୟର ନାମ ଶୁଣି । ସବୁ ଧାଡ଼ିକି ଧାଡ଼ି ଲେଖିନିଏ । ଆପଣମାନେ ବି ଏଇମିତି କେତେ ଅଭିନୟ ଦେଖୁଥିବେ । ସତସତିକା ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ସେମାନେ ସବୁ ପଚାରିବା କେତେ କଥା ହେଲ...

୧. ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନା ଶୁଣି ଚିହ୍ନିକି ଉଠିଥିବା ଜଣେ ଅଷ୍ଟ୍ରେଲିଆ ନିବାସୀ:

:ଉ...ଡ଼ି...ଶା...! କେଉଁଠି ଏଇ ସହର ?

: ଆଜ୍ଞା...ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନୁହଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା । ଏଇଟା’ତ ପ୍ରଥମ କଥା । ତା’ପରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସହର ନୁହଁ ବରଂଚ ଓହ୍ଲା ଏକ ସ୍ୱାଧିନ ରାଜ୍ୟ, ପୂର୍ବଭରତର ।

:ଓ...ଡ଼ି...ଶା...! ଓଃ...କେବେ ଶୁଣିନି । ଏଇଟା କଣ ନୁଆଦିଲ୍ଲା ପାଖରେ ?

: ଆଜ୍ଞା...ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅବସ୍ଥିତି ପଶ୍ଚିମ ବଙ୍ଗାଳ, ଝାଡ଼ଖଣ୍ଡ, ଛତିଶଗଡ଼, ତେଲଙ୍ଗାନା ଆଉ ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରପ୍ରଦେଶ ସୀମାକୁ ଛୁଇଁ ରହିଛି ।

:ହଁ ହେଇଥିବ; ମୋର ଧାରଣା ନାହିଁ ।

:ହେଉ ଆଜ୍ଞା, କେବେ ଭରତକୁ ଗଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଯାଇ ଦେଖନ୍ତୁ । କଳା - ସଂସ୍କୃତି- ଐତିହ୍ୟଭର ସୁନ୍ଦର ରାଜ୍ୟଟିଏ । ପ୍ରତି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟକଙ୍କ ରୁଚି ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ସେଇଠି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ରହିଅଛି ।

୨. ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭରତର ଏକ ରାଜ୍ୟ ହୋଇଥିବା ଜାଣି, ଜଣେ କାରିବିଆନ୍ ନିବାସୀ:

:ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଜୀବିକା କଣ ? ଏଇଠି ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ଖାଦ୍ୟପେୟ କଣ ?

:ଆଜ୍ଞା, କୃଷି ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଜୀବିକା ହେଲେ କୁଚିର ଶିଳ୍ପ, କଳା ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟ, ଶିଳ୍ପ, ଖଣିଜ ସମ୍ପତ୍ତିରେ ଭର ମୋର ଏଇ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ସବୁ ପ୍ରକାର ଜୀବିକାକୁ ନେଇ ଲୋକେ ରୁହନ୍ତି । ଆଉ ନଦୀ, ହ୍ରଦ, ସମୁଦ୍ର ସବୁ ଥିବା ହେତୁ ଖାଦ୍ୟପେୟ ସବୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଧରଣର । ହେଲେବି ଭତ ଆମର ପ୍ରଥମ ପସନ୍ଦ । ପନିପରିବା ସବୁପ୍ରକାର ମିଳୁଥିବା ହେତୁ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ସୁସ୍ୱାଦୁ ଅନ୍ନବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜନରେ ପନିପରିବା ହିଁ ପ୍ରଧାନ ଜାଗା ଅଛିଆର

କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଆମିଷରେ ଆମେ ମାଛ, ଚିଙ୍ଗୁଡ଼ି, କଙ୍କଡ଼ା, ଛେଳିମାଂସ, କୁକୁଡ଼ାମାଂସ, ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ ଖାଇଥାଉ । ଗାଁଗଣ୍ଡା ଆଉ ପଲ୍ଲୀପକାଳରେ ଲୋକେ ସମ୍ବର, ଜିଆଦ, କୁରୁରା, ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଶିକାର କରି ଖାଆନ୍ତି ।

:ଗାଈ, ଘୁଷୁରୀ ମାଂସ ଖାଅନି ତୁମେ ସବୁ ?

:ଗାଈ ସହ ଆମର ଧାର୍ମିକ ଆଉ ସମ୍ବେଦନଶୀଳ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ହେତୁ ଆମେ ଗାଈ ମାଂସ ଖାଇନାହୁଁ । ଆଉ ଆମର ସେଇଠି ସବୁ ଘୁଷୁରୀ ସବୁ ଅଖାଦ୍ୟ ଖାଇଥିବା ହେତୁ ତାହା ମଧ୍ୟ ଆମର ପସନ୍ଦ ନାହିଁ । (ଏଇ କଥା ଖାଲି ବାଆଁରେଇବାକୁ କହିଥିଲି ହେଲେ ମୋର ଓଥୁପ୍ରତି ମତ ଚିକେ ଅନ୍ୟପ୍ରକାର; କେବେ ଲେଖିବି ଏଇ ଆମିଷ ଭେଦନକୁ ନେଇ)

:ଓଃ...ହୋ...!

୩. ଓଡ଼ିଶାର କିଛି ଅନ୍ନବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜନ ମୋ ଘରେ ଖାଇଯାରିବା ପରେ ଜଣେ ସର୍ବିଆ ନିବାସୀ :

: ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସମସ୍ତେ କହନ୍ତି ଯେ ସେଇଠି ସବୁ ଲୋକ ଅତି ଖାଦ୍ୟପ୍ରିୟ, ହେଲେ ଆପଣ ପୃଥିବୀର ଯେଉଁ କୋଣ ଅନୁକୋଣକୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତେ ସେଇଠି ଭରତର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଖାଦ୍ୟପେୟର ହୋଟେଲ ବଜାର ଦେଖିବେ । ହେଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ତ କାହିଁ କେଉଁଠି ଚିହ୍ନିବଣ୍ଟି ନାହିଁ ଏଇ ଖାଦ୍ୟପେୟ ବ୍ୟବସାୟରେ ।

ଦେଖନ୍ତୁ ଯେପରିକି: ଆନ୍ଧ୍ର ରେଷ୍ଟୁରାଣ୍ଟ, ପଞ୍ଜାବୀ ଢାବା, ସାଉଥ୍ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍ ହୋଟେଲ୍, ଚେଟିନାଡ୍ ରେଷ୍ଟୁରାଣ୍ଟ, ନେଲୋର୍ ମେସ୍, ଭଡୁପୀ ହୋଟେଲ୍, ପ୍ରଭୃତି । ଖାଲି ହୋଟେଲ୍ ବା ରେଷ୍ଟୁରାଣ୍ଟ ନୁହଁ ଖାଦ୍ୟର ନାମ ଯେପରିକି, ବମ୍ବେ ରାଟ୍, ବମ୍ବେ ପାଉଁରୁଆ, ପୁଲିଓଗାରେ, ପୁଲିହାରୀ, ପାନିପୁରୀ, ବମ୍ବେ ବିରିୟାନୀ, ଦମ୍ ବିରିୟାନୀ, ହଲଦୀରାମ୍ ସ୍ୱୀଟ୍ସ, ତଡ଼କା, ପନୀର ବଟର୍ ମସାଲ, ଦୋସା, ନାନ୍, ପ୍ରଭୃତି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଖାଦ୍ୟପଦାର୍ଥ ହିସାବରେ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ ଅଛି ହେଲେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର କୌଣସି ଖାଦ୍ୟପେୟର ନାମ ମୁଁ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଶୁଣିନାହିଁ ଅଥବା ଖାଇନାହିଁ ।

ଆପଣ ଆଜି ମୋତେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏଇ ସବୁ ଯେଉଁ ଅନ୍ନବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜନ ଖୁଆଇଲେ ଏଇ ସବୁ ଅତି ସୁସ୍ୱାଦୁ ଆଉ ଏହା ମୁଁ ମୋର ଏଇ ଝଠବର୍ଷର ଜୀବନକାଳରେ କେଉଁଠି ଖାଇ ନାହିଁ ।

:ଆଜ୍ଞା, ଆପଣ ଯେଉଁ ସବୁ ଅନ୍ନବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜନ ଖାଇଲେ ସେଇ ସବୁ ହେଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ନିଜସ୍ୱ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ ଖାଦ୍ୟପେୟ । ଜାତି-ଧର୍ମ-ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନିର୍ବିଶେଷରେ ତଥା ଧନୀକ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ଠାରୁ ଗରୀବ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସଭିଳ ଘରେ ଏହା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୋଇଆସୁଅଛି । ଆପଣ ଯାହା ଖାଇଲେ; ଏଇ ସବୁର ନାମ ହେଲେ ଖେଚୁଡ଼ୀ, ଡାଲମା, ଘାଣ୍ଟ ତରକାରୀ, ଅମୃତଭଣ୍ଡା - ବୋଇତାଲୁ ସାକରା, ନଡ଼ିଆ ପିଠଉ ଭଜା, ଶାଗ ଖରଡ଼ା ଆଉ ସବା ଶେଷରେ ଯେଉଁ ମିଠା ଖାଇଲେ ତାହା ହେଉଛି ସାରା ବିଶ୍ୱରେ କେବଳ ମୋ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେଉଥିବା ଛେନାପୋଡ଼...!

ଏଇପରି ଲେଖି ବସିବି ଯଦି ଭଲ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନେ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ପୃଥିବୀର ଅଧା ଭୃଗୋଳ ଜ୍ଞାନ ହୋଇଯିବ ଆଉ ମନରେ ପୀଡ଼ା ହେବ ଯେ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆଉ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ପରିଚୟ କେତେ କଦର୍ଥ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ଆଉ ଯେଉଁ କେତେଜଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆ, ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱସ୍ତରରେ ପରିଚୟ ଦେବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭଲ ଓ ଭଉଣୀ କରୁଛନ୍ତି କ'ଣ !

ଅନେକ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କୁ ଏଇୟା କହିବାର ଶୁଣିଛି ଯେ,

ଶଃ...ଆମର ପରା କଙ୍କଡ଼ା ଜାତି; ଜଣେ ଆଉ ଜଣକୁ ଭିଡ଼ାଭିଡ଼ି କରିବାରେ ହିଁ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ଏଣୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଭନ୍ନତି ଅସମ୍ଭବ ।

ଅତି ନିର୍ଲଜ୍ଜ କଥା ଆଉ ଅଲଜ୍ଜୁକ ଚିନ୍ତନ ଇଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଆଉ ଏହାର ମାତୃଭାଷାର ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ନିମନ୍ତେ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି ଏକ ଯୁଗୋପଯୋଗୀ ଆୟୁଧ । ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟର କେତେଜଣ ହାତଗଣତି ଆତ୍ମଚିନ୍ତାରେ ପାଗଳ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକ ହାଟ ମଝିରେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମଜ୍ଞାନ ବାଦି ବସନ୍ତି । ଏମାନେ ସାହିତ୍ୟରୂପୀ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ନିର୍ବୋଧତାର ମଶାଲରେ ଦେଖାଇବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛନ୍ତି । ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ, ନିର୍ବାଚନ ତଥା ସମ୍ପାଦନରେ ହିଁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକର ପରିଚିତି ଥାଏ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକ ଆଗାମୀ ପୀଡ଼ି ପାଇଁ ଉତ୍ତରଦାୟୀ । ରୁଚି ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଲେଖା ଆଉ ସର୍ବଜନ ହିତାୟ ଲେଖାରେ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ମୁଁ "ହାଟମଝିରେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମଜ୍ଞାନ" ବୋଲି ଦର୍ଶାଇଅଛି । ଅନେକ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପୃଷ୍ଠାରେ ଅନେକ ଉଃ..ଆଃ...ଓଃ..ରୂପୀ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ମୁଁ ଦେଖିପଡ଼ି ଆସୁଛି । ସେଥିରେ କିଏ କାଳିଦାସ ହୋଇଗଲଣି ତ କିଏ ଗଧାନାଥ । ଅତି ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବୋଧହୁଏ ଏଇ ଅଜ୍ଞାନତା ଦେଖି । ପ୍ରକୃତ ପାଠକ ହିଁ ଉତ୍ତମ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱବାନ ହେବା ଉଚିତ । ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ଅନେକ ଦିନ ତଳେ ଏକ ଆଲୋଚନାରେ ମୁଁ କହିଥିଲି ଯେ...

"ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଭାବ, ଶବ୍ଦ ସବୁ ଦେଖି ପସନ୍ଦ ହେଉ, ସାହିତ୍ୟିକର ନାମ ଓ ଲିଙ୍ଗ ଦେଖି ନୁହେଁ", ଏଇ କଥାକୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଧ୍ୟାନ ଦେବେ ବୋଲି ଅନୁରୋଧ ।

ମୋର ଏକ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ସଙ୍କଳନ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଦ୍ଵିଭୁଜରେ ଏହା ଲେଖିଥିଲି ଯେ...

ସାହିତ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି ପ୍ରଜ୍ଞାବାନଙ୍କ ଏକ ବଳିଷ୍ଠ ଶସ୍ତ୍ର । ଏହା ଜନସାଧାରଣ ତଥା ସମାଜର ଉତ୍ଥାନ ଏବଂ ଜନଜୀବନର ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ନିମନ୍ତେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଗଲେ ସତରେ କେତେ ଭଲ ହୁଅନ୍ତା । ସାହିତ୍ୟ ହିଁ ଜନମାନସକୁ ଅର୍ଥ ଶ୍ରମର ସ୍ଵଳ୍ପ ବିନିମୟରେ ପରମାନନ୍ଦ ଦିଏ । ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରମଜୀବି, ଧର୍ମଜୀବି ସବୁ ଏଇ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ନିଅନ୍ତି । ଜୀବନର ପ୍ରତିଟି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ପ୍ରତି ପ୍ରାଣୀ ଗୁଣୁଗୁଣୁ ହୋଇ ଝଙ୍କାର ତୋଳିଥାଏ । କେତେବେଳେ ଏହା ଲେଖନୀ ମୁନରୁ ଝରିପଡ଼େ ତ କେତେବେଳେ ସାତସୁର ହୋଇ ଆମର ମୁଖ ନିସ୍ତୁତ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଏଇ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ହିଁ ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶ ଆଉ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ସହ ଆମକୁ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇଥାଏ । ଏଣୁ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ଆଉ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକଙ୍କ ମନୋଦେଶା ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତାତ୍ପର୍ଯ୍ୟପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହେଲେ ସମାଜ ପାଇଁ ଏହା ହିତକାରୀ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ହୁଅନ୍ତା ।

ସମାଜର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ତର ଆଉ ବର୍ଗରେ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ବ୍ୟବହାର ଆଉ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧି ଏଇ ପଦକେତେରୁ ଜଣାଯାଏ... ବୀରବରଙ୍କ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଏଇ କଥା ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ ଥିଲା...

**"ଗାଏ ତବ ଗୀତ ସଭାରେ ପଣ୍ଡିତ
ପଥେ ପାହୁ ଦୃଷ୍ଟମନା
ବିଲେ ଗାଏ ଚକ୍ଷା, ଅନ୍ତଃପୁରେ ଯୋଷା
ନୃତ୍ୟରଙ୍ଗେ ବାରଙ୍ଗନା"**

କବି ପଦୁମଶିଖ...

**ରଜା ସିନା ପୂଜା ପାଏ ଆପଣା ଦେଶରେ
କବି ପୂଜା ପାଉଥାଏ ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶରେ**

ଏଣୁ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଶସ୍ତ୍ରକୁ ନେଇ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକଗଣ ନିଜନିଜର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ପାଳନ କରି ସମାଜ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ଶୁଭଙ୍କର ଯୁଗ ଆଣି ପାରିବେ, ଏହା ମୋର ମତ ।

ଭଲ ଓ ଭଲଣୀମାନେ, ଆମର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମା'ପାଇଁ; ମୋ କଥା ଅନୁସାରେ ମୁଁ ସଦା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଏଇଭଳି କହେ...

ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ...ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶା...!!!

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୋଲିଲେ କ'ଣ ?

ଓଡ଼ିଆ କିଏ ?

କ'ଣ ତାର ପ୍ରକୃତ ପରିଚୟ ?

ରଙ୍ଗବତୀ ଗୀତ ଗାଇ ପାରୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନା ଏଣୁରୀ ପିଠା ଖାଇଥିବା ଲୋକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ?

ମାତୃଭାଷା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଢୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନା ଓଡ଼ିଆ କହି ପାରୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ?

ଜଗନ୍ନାଥକୁ ନିଜର ଆରାଧ୍ୟ ମାନୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନା ଅଧୁନା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ବସବାସ କରୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ?

ଅପ୍ରିଲ୍ ପହିଲରେ ଭକ୍ତଳ ଦିବସ ପାଳନ କରୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନା କଳିଙ୍ଗ ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଚଣ୍ଡାଣୋକକୁ , ଧର୍ମାଣୋକରେ ପରିଣତ

କରେଇଥିବା ଇତିହାସ କହୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ?

ଏଇପରି କେତେ କଥା ଓ ଲଥାର ଅତୁଆ ଲଟା ଇଏ । ଏହାର ସଜ୍ଞା ଖୋଜିବାକୁ ବସିଲେ ଲମ୍ବିପିବ ଇତିହାସର ଅଜ୍ଞାବଳା କେତେ ବାଟ ।

ଆଜି ନୁହେଁ ଆଉଦିନେ ସେଇ କଥା କହିବି ଏଇ ଓଡ଼ିଆପଣିଆର । ଆସନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି କିଛି କଥା ହେବା ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ...ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ।

ଧାଡ଼ିକରେ କହିବାକୁ ଗଲେ। ଆମର ରଜ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶା; ଆମର ଭାଷା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଓ ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ । ଆମର ଆରାଧ୍ୟ ଦେବତା ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ । ଆମ ଜୀବନର ପ୍ରଥମ ଏବଂ ଚରମ ସତ୍ୟ ଏହାହିଁ ଅଟେ । ଏଥିକୁ ନେଇ କୌଣସି ନାଟତାମୟା ନହେଉ, କୌଣସି ଖୁଲ୍ଲପ ନହେଉ, କୌଣସି ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚିତକ ନହେଉ । ଏଇ କଥାଟା ଯେ ମଞ୍ଜକଥା ଏହା ବୁଝିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ, ପ୍ରଥମତଃ ।

“ରହିଛି ରହିବ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଠିଆ କରି ପାଉଥିବ ଦଶଦିଶେ ଯଶ ।
 ସେବୁଥିବା ତାରେ ଆମେ ତା ସନ୍ତାନ ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆମ ଦେଶ ॥
 ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର, ଗୋପାଳ, ଭୀମ, ବଳଦେବ ବଳରାମ ଆଉ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ।
 ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ ଅଭିମନ୍ୟୁ ଓ ସାରଳା ଫକୀର ଗଙ୍ଗା ଓ ରାଧାନାଥ ॥
 ଭାଷା ପଞ୍ଚାମୃତ ସିଞ୍ଚନ କରାଇ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଦେଲେ ଜୀବନ୍ୟାସ ।
 ପଞ୍ଚସଖା ବଳିଦାନେ ଏକାଧାର ହେଲୁ ଧନ୍ୟ ମୋ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଦେଶ ॥”

ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ...!!!

ଏଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମା’ର ଆମେ ଦାୟାଦ, ଏହାର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ରୂପରେଖ ଆମ୍ଭରି ହାତରେ । ଏହାକୁ ଭନ୍ନତି ଓ ବିକାଶରେ ଅଗ୍ରଗଣ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ବିଶ୍ୱସ୍ତରରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରି ଆମକୁ ପ୍ରମାଣ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ ଆମେ ହିଁ ଏହାର ସୁଯୋଗ୍ୟ ବଂଶଧର । ଆମକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱ ଦରବାରରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ କରିବାକୁ ହେଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଏକ ମନ ପ୍ରାଣ ଓ ଆତ୍ମା ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଧରେ କାନ୍ଧ ମିଳାଇ ଆଗକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଆମ ମାତୃଭୂମି ଓ ମାତୃଭାଷାର ଭନ୍ନତି କଲେ ସମସ୍ତ ପ୍ରକାର ଚିନ୍ତା ଓ ଚେତନାକୁ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତୋନ୍ମୋଖ କରାଇପାରିଲେ ଆମର ଭନ୍ନତି ହେବ ବୋଲି ଆମ୍ଭର ଦୃଢ଼ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ।

“ଭାଷାକୁ ବରଜି ଜ୍ଞାନୀ କି ହୋଇବ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ତୁମର ପରିଚୟ ।
 ମାତୃଭୂମି, ମାତୃଭାଷା ନ ବଦିଲେ କିସ ହେବ କଲେ ବିଶ୍ୱଜୟ ॥ ”

ସମସ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ତଥା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିନମ୍ର ଅନୁରୋଧ ଯେ; ଗୁଲୁନ୍ତ ପରସ୍ପର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସୌହାର୍ଦ୍ଦ୍ୟପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବାତାବରଣ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବା ଏବଂ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାରର ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା ମୂଳକ ଅଭିସନ୍ଧି ନରଖି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ତଥା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଭନ୍ନତି ତଥା ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତି ନିମନ୍ତେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରି ଆଗେଇ ଯିବା ।

“ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଆମେ, ଜାତି ଧର୍ମ ପ୍ରେମ ସବୁତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପାଇଁ,
 ବୀର ପ୍ରସବିନୀ ଧର ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମା ପର ବଞ୍ଚିବା ତାହାରି ପାଇଁ ।
 ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାଟିରେ ହସିବା ଖେଳିବା, ତାହାରି ସେବାରେ ପ୍ରାଣ,
 ମରିଯିବା ପଛେ କେଉଁ ନଭୁଲିବା ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଗୁଣଗାନ । ”

ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶା...!!!

ଶାନ୍ତ ସ୍ମିଗ୍ଧ କମନୀୟ ଅପରୂପା ଓ ପ୍ରକୃତିର ଗନ୍ତାଘର । ସମୁଦ୍ରର ଉତ୍ତୁଙ୍ଗ ଲହରୀମାଳା ଯା’ର ଚରଣ ସ୍ପର୍ଶ କରି ପାଆନ୍ତି ଅନନ୍ତ ତୃପ୍ତି । ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ଖଣିଜ ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି, ଶିଳ୍ପକଳା ଓ ଭୟାପ୍ୟରେ ଯା’ର ତନୁଶ୍ରୀ ଖଚିତ । ନୃତ୍ୟ, ବାଦ୍ୟ ଓ ଲୋକଗୀତିରେ ଯା’ର ଗଗନ ପବନ ପ୍ରକମ୍ପିତ । ପ୍ରାଚୁର୍ଯ୍ୟମୟ ଇତିହାସ, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ଲୋକକଥାରେ ଯା’ର ସାମାଜିକ ଜୀବନ ଓତଃପ୍ରୋତ । ହୁଦ, ନଦୀ, ବନ ଓ ଝରଣାର କୁଳୁକୁଳୁ ନାଦରେ ଯା’ର ଗାଁ ଗହଳିର ଜୀବନସ୍ରୋତ ମୁଖରିତ । ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଏବଂ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ଯା’ର ଜନମାନସକୁ ଶକ୍ତି ଓ ଭକ୍ତିରେ ଅନୁପ୍ରାଣିତ କରିଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ସର୍ବୋପରି ଧର୍ମ, କର୍ମ ତଥା ସଂସ୍କାର ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଯା’ର କୋଣ ଓ ଅନୁକୋଣରେ ପ୍ରବାହିତ ହୋଇ କେଉଁ

ଆବହମାନ କାଳରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମନ, ପ୍ରାଣ ଓ ଆତ୍ମାକୁ ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲ ଓ ସତେଜ କରି ରଖୁଛି । ସେଇ ଗୌରବମୟୀ ଜନ୍ମଭୂମିର ଆମେ ଗର୍ବିତ ସନ୍ତାନ ।

“ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀଓ...!

ଲେଖିବା କାହାଣୀ କଥା ଗୀତ କଳା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର,
ଦୁନିଆ ଜାଣିବ ଶୁଣିବ ଅପୂର୍ବ ଗଭରବ ଗାଥା ଉତ୍କଳର...!!
ଆମ ହାଣ୍ଡିଶାଳ ଆମର ଆଖତା ଆମ ଲୋକକଥା ଆମ ଭାଷା,
ଆମର ଉତ୍କଳ, ଆମର କଳିଙ୍ଗ, ଆମର ମାଟି ମା ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶା...!!!”

ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷୀ!!!

ଏଇ ମାଟିରେ ଆମର ଜନ୍ମ । ଏଇ ମନଆତ୍ମାରେ ଏହାର ସୁଧାଧାର ନାମ ସଦାସର୍ବଦା ଝଙ୍କୁତ-ପ୍ରାଣ- । ଏଇ ଆମ ଜନ୍ମଭୂମି, କର୍ମଭୂମି ଆଉ ଜ୍ଞାନଭୂମି ; ଏଇ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶା; ଇଏ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରାଣପ୍ରବାହର ଅମୃତଧାରା । ସମଗ୍ର ବିଶ୍ୱର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କୁ ଆମ୍ଭର ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଆଉ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ପ୍ରାଣପ୍ରାଚୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଚରଣ କମଳରେ ଭକ୍ତିପୂତ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରୁଅଛୁ ।

“ ଭାଷା ନୟିଯୋଷେ ଶ୍ରମରକୁ ବାନ୍ଧି ଏବେ ତ୍ୟାଗର ଜୋର୍ ଲଗାଅ,
ବିଶ୍ୱ ବଡ଼ଦାଣ୍ଡେ ଟାଣିନେବା ରଥ ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାଟିର ପୁଅ ।
ପ୍ରଗତି କୋଣାର୍କେ ମୁଣ୍ଡି ମାରିଦେବା ଆମେ ଧର୍ମପଦ ବୀର ପରି,
ମାତୃଭୂମି, ମାତୃଭାଷାର ବିକାଶେ ହେବା ସର୍ବେ ଜାଗ୍ରତ ପ୍ରହରୀ ।”

ଅତୀତର ସଂଘର୍ଷମୟ ବିଭୀଷିକା, ଇତିହାସର ପୃଷ୍ଠା ପୃଷ୍ଠାରେ ଆମର ସମୃଦ୍ଧିର ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ, ପ୍ରସ୍ତର ଆଲୋଚ୍ୟରେ ରାଜଭାଷା ଆଉ ସାମାଜିକ ଜନଜୀବନରେ ଓତଃପ୍ରୋତ ଆମର ସଂସ୍କାର ଆଉ ସଂସ୍କୃତି । ଆମ୍ଭର ସରଳତା ଆଉ ଜୀବନର ଅନୁଃସ୍ରୋତ ଆମ୍ଭକୁ ଯେତେ ସାମାଜିକ ଚିନ୍ତା ଓ ଚୈତନ୍ୟରେ ଉଦ୍‌ବୃଦ୍ଧ କରିଛି, ବାହ୍ୟଶକ୍ତିମାନେ ଆମ୍ଭକୁ ସେତେ ଦୁର୍ବଳ ଆଉ ସୁପ୍ତ ଭାବି ନିଷ୍ଠୁରତାର କଷାଘାତରେ ଜର୍ଜରିତ କରିଗୁଲିଛନ୍ତି । କେଉଁ ଆବହମାନ କାଳରୁ ଆମ୍ଭପ୍ରତି ଅନ୍ୟାୟରେ କୌଣସି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟତା କରିନାହାନ୍ତି ଆମ୍ଭ ଭରତର ସ୍ୱାଧୀୟ ଜନନାୟକଗଣ ମଧ୍ୟ । ସମୟର ଜୀର୍ଣ୍ଣପୃଷ୍ଠାକୁ ଓଲଟାଇଲେ ଏବେବି ଦୟାନଦୀର ଗୁମୁରି ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଦିବାର ଶୁଣାଯାଏ, କୋଣାର୍କର କୋହ ଏବେବି ବେଳାଭୂମିକୁ ଥରାଇ ଦିଏ । ଆମ୍ଭର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ବିଲୋପ କରିବାର ଚକ୍ରାନ୍ତ, ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ବନ୍ଧ ବିହାରରେ ମିଶାଇ ଦେବାର କୂଟନୀତି, ଆମ୍ଭ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଆଉ ପରମ୍ପରାକୁ ଉଧାର ଅଣାଯିବାର ଉତ୍ତର କଳ୍ପନା କଥା, ଏବେବି ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟା କଲବେଳେ କେତେ ମହାନ ଆତ୍ମାଙ୍କ କୋଟରଗତ ଆଖିରୁ ଦୁଇବୁଦା ତତଲ ଲୁହ ବୋହିପଡ଼େ ।

“ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାଟିର ଭଉଣୀ ଭାଇରେ ! ମରମ କଥା ଏ ଶୁଣିଯାଅ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ଲେଖ ପଢ଼ କୁହ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପୋଥି ପୁରାଣ ଗାଅ ।
ବିଶ୍ୱ ଦରବୀରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଏକାଠି ହୁଅ ଆଜି ।
ଆମେ ନୋହୁଁ ଷ୍ଟ୍ରପ୍, ନୁହଁ ତ ଦରିଦ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଉଠ ତୁ କାଳନିଦ୍ରା ତେଜି ।”

ଏହାତ ଗଲ ବାହାର ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଆମ୍ଭପ୍ରତି ଉପହାସ ତଥା ତାହଲ୍ୟର ବିରାଗିତ ଉପାଖ୍ୟାନ । ହେଲେ, ଏହି ସବୁ ସମୟର କୁରତାକୁ ଆମ୍ଭେ କାହିଁକି ଭୁଲି ପାଉଅଛେ ? ଯେଉଁ ତାଳରେ ଆମ୍ଭର ଏହି ଜନ୍ମ-କର୍ମ-ଧର୍ମର ନୀଡ଼ି ଉତ୍ତୁଚକ୍ରର ପ୍ରବାହରେ ଯୋଳାୟମାନ ଆମ୍ଭେ ସେହି ତାଳଟିକୁ ଆଜି କୁଠାଭାସାତ କରିବାକୁ ପଶ୍ଚାତପଦ କାହିଁକି ହୋଇପାରୁନେ ? ? ସମୟରେ ଲୋଲିହାନ ଶିଖାରେ ନିଜକୁ ଝାସଦେବାର ଏହି ପ୍ରୟାସ କାହିଁକି ? ? ? ଧର୍ମପଦର ଉତ୍ସାହ, ଏକାଗ୍ରତା ଆଉ ମୁଣ୍ଡିମାରିବାର ଦୃଢ଼ତା ; ବାଜିରାଉତର ଅଟଳ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ, ଜନ୍ମଭୂମିର ପ୍ରୀତି ଆଉ ବଳିଦାନ; ଦୋହର ବିଷୋୟୀ, ଜୟୀ ରାଜଗୁରୁ, ପଞ୍ଚସଖା ଆଉ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଗଠନ, ବିକାଶ ଆଉ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ନିମନ୍ତେ ନିଜର ଜୀବନ, ଯୌବନ ଆଉ ସକଳ ସୁଖସ୍ୱାଚ୍ଛନ୍ଦ୍ୟକୁ ବଳିଦାନ ଦେଇଥିବା ସେହି ଅମର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କ ଏହି ସଫଳ ପ୍ରୟାସ କଣ ଆମ୍ଭେ ଭୁଲିଯିବା ?

“ଶ୍ରମଦାନ ତ୍ୟାଗ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ ଜୀବନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ଥାଉ ।
ଭାଷାର ବିନ୍ୟାସ ଭୂମିର ବିକାଶ ପାଇଁ ଏ ଜୀବନ ଯାଉ । ।
ସମସ୍ତେ ହାତକୁ କାନ୍ଧକୁ ମିଳାଇ ହୃଦ ମନେ ଏକ ହେବା ।
ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱ ସ୍ତରରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଆମ୍ଭେ କରିବା ।।”

ଆସନ୍ତୁ,

ହେ ଆମ୍ଭର ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ଆଉ ବିଶ୍ୱର କୋଣ ଅନୁକୋଣରେ ବସବାସ କରୁଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନେ!...

୨୦୧୨ ଏପ୍ରିଲ୍ ପହିଲରେ ଏକ କବିତା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ କିଛି ଚେତନା ଆଣିବାକୁ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଥିଲି...

ପଶ୍ଚାତଗତି...!!!

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଝିକୁଛି ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଗୋଡ଼
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନିକୁଟି ହୁଏଛି ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାତରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଧୂଳି
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସୁମରି ଝୁରୁଛି ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗାଲରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚୁପୁଡ଼ା
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଖାଇଛି ନାତ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଗାଲୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶୁଣୁଛି
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ରେ ନାହିଁ ଭାତ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆକୁ ଦେଖୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୁଚୁଛି
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଖୋଜୁଛି ସିଏ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆକୁ ଶିଖୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭୁଲିଛି
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ମୋହେ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶଶ୍ୱତା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୁଲିକି
ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଭେକ ନାହିଁ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମୁକୁଳା
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଦେଖୁକି ବାଇ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହାଏ ରେ
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହୋଇଛି ରେଗୀ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭଉଣୀ
ଓଡ଼ିଆର କଥା ଭାବି ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଏପରି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନୋହିବ
ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଗଲେ ଭୁଲି ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଦୀକ୍ଷା
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚଳଣୀ ଚାଲି ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆର ପିଣ୍ଡ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ପ୍ରାଣ
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଯେବେ ବୁଝିବ ।
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମହତ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ମାନ
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସିନା ରଖିବ ?
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ରଥ କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚାଣିଲେ
ଓଡ଼ିଆର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ନେଇ ।

**ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଡେବେରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ରହିବ
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହୋଇ ...!**

ସମଗ୍ର ବିଶ୍ୱବାସୀଙ୍କୁ ଆମ୍ଭ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଜଣାଇ ଦେବାକୁ ହେବ, ଆମ୍ଭେ ସୁପ୍ତ, ନିରୀହ, ଦୁର୍ବଳ ନୁହଁ; ଆମ୍ଭେ ଶକ୍ତ, ଆମ୍ଭେ ଉନ୍ନତ, ଆମ୍ଭେ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ; ଆମ୍ଭେ ସଂସ୍କାର, ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧିର ଏକ ଗନ୍ତାଘର । ଏବେ ଆମ୍ଭେ ହାତରେ ହାତ ମିଳାଇ, ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସହଯୋଗ ସହ ଗୁଲନ୍ତ ଏକ ବିକାଶଶୀଳ, ଉନ୍ନତ ଆଉ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅମରଗାଥା ଲେଖିବା ବିଶ୍ୱଇତିହାସରେ । ଏକ ମନ ଆମ୍ଭ ହୋଇ-ପ୍ରାଣ-ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଏକ ଅଗ୍ରଗଣ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଦେଶର ମର୍ଯ୍ୟଦା ଦେବା ।

ହାତୀ ବଣରେ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ରାଜାର..ଏଇ କଥା ଶୁଣି ଆସୁଛେ ଆମ୍ଭେ। ସେଇ କଥା ହିଁ କହୁଛି; ଆମ୍ଭେ ଯେଉଁଠି ଥିଲେ ବି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମା'ର। ଏଣୁ ମୁଁ କହେ...

**“ପ୍ରବାସେ ରହିଲେ ତୁଣ୍ଡକି ରହିବ
ମାତୃଭାଷାରେ ଯେ ପଦେ ନ’ଗାଇ!
ରଜାକି ନୋହିବ ଜୀବର ପାଳକ
ମତଙ୍ଗ ଅରଣ୍ୟେ ରହିଲେ ଯାଇ ?
କହିବା, ଗାଇବା, ଲେଖିବା ସରବେ
ଅତି ସୁମଧୁର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା,
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପରାଣ ମାତୃଭାଷା ଆମ
କେଉଁ ହୋଇବକି ଏ ପିତାକଷା !!! ”**

ଏକତା ଆମ୍ଭର ଅସ୍ତ୍ର ହେବ, ସଂସ୍କୃତି ହେବ ଆମ୍ଭର ଶସ୍ତ୍ର, ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ହେବ ଆମ୍ଭର ସହଯାତ୍ରୀ ଆଉ ଦୃଢ଼ବ୍ରତୀ ହୋଇ ଆମ୍ଭେ ଗଢ଼ିବା ଏକ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣମ ଓଡ଼ିଶା । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣାଙ୍ଗ ଜୀବନଧାରୀ, ଶାଶ୍ୱତ ଅନୁଚିନ୍ତନ ତଥା ଐଶ୍ୱରୀୟ ଚେତନାରେ ଉଦ୍‌ବୃଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ନିଜକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସେବାରେ ନିୟୋଜିତ କରିଲେ ଆମ୍ଭର ରାଜ୍ୟ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଚିରନ୍ତନ ଏକ ଗୌରବମୟ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଯେ ପରିଗଣିତ ହେବ ଏଥିରେ ଦ୍ୱିରୁକ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ।

-ପ୍ରଭୁ



ଜୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ...ଜୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶା...ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ...!!!

ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତ କୁମାର ଭୂୟାଁ,
ଗରୋକ୍ଷୋ, ଓଷ୍ଠାରିଓ, କାନାଡା,
ଜନ୍ମସ୍ଥାନ - ବଡ଼ଦାଣ୍ଡ, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ପ୍ରସାଦ, ଗଞ୍ଜାମ
+୧ ୬୪୭ ୯୯୬ ୫୨୮୦
prasantabhunya@gmail.com

ମିରା, ମଲି ଓ ଲିଷ୍ଟା

ସ୍ଵପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର(ରଥ)

ଲିଷ୍ଟା ଇଜ୍ ନୋ ମୋର୍' ।

ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ ଫେସ୍‌ବୁକ୍‌ରେ ମଲିର ପନ୍ଦର ମିନିଟ୍ ପୂର୍ବର ଅପ୍‌ଡେଟ୍ ଦେଖି ମିରା ଚମକି ପଡିଲା । ଆର୍ ଆଇ ପି... ଆର୍ ଆଇ ପି... କମ୍ପୋଜ୍ ପରେ କମ୍ପୋଜ୍ ଦେଇ ଚାଲିଥିଲେ ମଲିର ଫେସ୍‌ବୁକ୍ ଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ୍ ମାନେ । ମିରା କିନ୍ତୁ ଜାଣିପାରୁ ନଥିଲା କମ୍ପୋଜ୍‌ରେ କଣ ଲେଖିବ । ମଲି ଏବେ ଅଛି କୋଉଠି...



ମେସେଜ୍‌ଟାକୁ ଚେକ୍ କଲା ଆଉଥରେ । ଆକ୍ଷୟ ହେଲା ମିରା...ମଲି ଟାଉନ୍‌ରେ ଅଛି ! ଆଉ କେତେବେଳ ହେଇଥିଲେ ମିରାକୁ ଚିଡି ଲାଗିଥାନ୍ତା । ପ୍ରାୟ ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଟାଉନ୍‌କୁ ଆସିଛି ଅଥଚ ତାକୁ ଜଣେଇନି । ମଲିର ମାନସିକ ସ୍ଥିତି କେମିତି ଥିବ ଏବେ, ସେ ଖୁସିଥିବ ନା ଦୁଃଖୀ ହେଇ ଯାଇଥିବ... ସେ ଏବେ ଏକା ଥିବ ନା ତା ପାଖରେ ତା ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀମାନେ ବି ଥିବେ । ତା ମନ ଭିତରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରକାରର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠି ମାରୁଥିଲା । ମଲିର ସବୁବେଳେ ହସୁଥିବା ମୁହଁଟା ତା ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ନାଚିଗଲା । ହସିଲା ବେଳେ ତା ଆଖିର ଚମକ ଆଉ ଗୋଲାପି ଗୋଲାପି ଦୁଇ ଗାଲର ଭଉଁରି ତା ହସକୁ ଆହୁରି ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ କରେ । ତାକୁ ନ ହସୁଥିବା ବୋଧେ କେହି କେବେ ଦେଖି ନଥିବେ, କେବଳ ମିରା ଛଡା । କଲେଜ୍‌ରେ ଚାରି ବର୍ଷ ରୁମ୍‌ମେଟ୍ ଥିଲେ ସେମାନେ । ମିରା ଯେତିକି ରକ୍ଷଣଶୀଳ ଥିଲା ମଲି ସେତିକି ମୁକ୍ତ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରୀ ଥିଲା । ସେମାନେ ଦୁହେଁ ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କର ବେଷ୍ଟ୍ ଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ୍ ନ ଥିଲେବି ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ କେବେ ମନୋମାଳିନ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ନଥିଲା । ରୁମ୍ ମେଟ୍ ସିଲେକ୍ସନ୍ ଟାଇମ୍ ଆସିଲେ ସେମାନେ ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ବାଛୁଥିଲେ । ମିରାର ଅପେକ୍ଷାକୃତ ରକ୍ଷଣଶୀଳ ମନୋଭାବକୁ ବିନା କିଛି ଅଭିଯୋଗରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିନେଇଥିଲା ... ଠିକ୍ ଯେମିତି ମଲିର ଆମେରିକୀୟ ଉନ୍ମୁକ୍ତତାକୁ ମିରା ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ନେଇଥିଲା । ରୁମ୍‌ମେଟ୍ ହେଲେବି ନିତି ଦିନିଆ ଜୀବନ ଶୈଳୀ ପାଇଁ ବହୁତ କମ୍ ସମୟ ସେମାନେ ଏକାଠି କାଟୁଥିଲେ । ତଥାପି ଘନିଷ୍ଠତା ବଢୁଥିଲା । କଲେଜ୍ ସରିବା ବେଳକୁ ମଲି ତା ଜୀବନର ଅନେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ କଥା ତା ଆଗରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିସାରିଥିଲା ...ମିରା ଜୀବନରେ ଘଟିଥିବା ଅନେକ କଥା ମଲି ବ ଜାଣି ସାରିଥିଲା । ସୁଖରେ ଦୁଃଖରେ ପରସ୍ପର ପାଇଁ ପରସ୍ପର ଠିଆ ହେଉଥିଲେ ବିନା ଆପତ୍ତିରେ ।

ମଲି ଜୀବନରେ ଅଗଣିତ ଚରିତ୍ରଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ଲିଷ୍ଟା ଗୋଟିଏ ବିବାଦୀୟ ଚରିତ୍ର । ଲିଷ୍ଟା ବିଷୟରେ ଗପ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେ ମଲିର ମୁହଁରେ, ସ୍ଵରରେ ବିଦ୍ରୋହରେ ଭାବ ଝଙ୍କ ବାରିହେଇ ପଡେ । ହାତରେ ଡ୍ରାଇନ୍ ଗାୟ୍ ଧରି ତା ଜୀବନର ସବୁ ଦୁଃଖ ସବୁ ବିଫଳତାର କାରଣ ଲିଷ୍ଟା ବୋଲି ହସି ହସି ମଲି ଘୋଷଣା କରିଲା ବେଳେ ମଲି ଆଖିରେ ଫୁଟି ଉଠୁଥିବା ଘୃଣାକୁ ଝଙ୍କ ଦେଖିପାରେ ମିରା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଲିଷ୍ଟା ଆଲୋଚନା ପରିସରକୁ ଆସିଲେ ମିରା ଚେକ୍‌କରେ ଆଲୋଚନାର ବିଷୟ ବସ୍ତୁ ବଦଳେଇବାକୁ । ମାତ୍ର ମଲି ଯଦି ଥରେ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରେ ଲିଷ୍ଟା ବିଷୟରେ ଆଉ ସେ ବଦଳେଇ ପାରେନି ... ଲିଷ୍ଟାକୁ ଗୁଡାଏ ଗାଳିଦେବାପରେ ଅନେକ ସମୟ ଧରି କାନ୍ଦେ ଆଉ ଶୋଇପଡେ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଏସବୁ ଅସହ୍ୟ ଲାଗିଲେବି ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ଦେହସୁହା ହେଇଯାଇଥିଲା ମିରାର । ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଲିଷ୍ଟାର ପରିଚୟ ଓ ମଲି ଜୀବନରେ ତାର ସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ବୁଝିବା ପାଇଁ ଚେକ୍‌କାରିଥିଲା ସେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରତିଥର ମଲି କିଛି ନା କିଛି ବାହୁନା କରି କଥାଟା ବଦଳେଇ ଦିଏ । ମିରା ଏତିକି ବୁଝିଗଲା ଲିଷ୍ଟା ହେଉଛି ଏକ ଘୃଣ୍ୟ ଚରିତ୍ର ଯାହାକୁ ନେଇ ମଲି କୌଣସି ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁନା... ସବୁ ବିଫଳତା ପାଇଁ ଯାହାକୁ କେବଳ ଦାୟୀ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ନିଶାଗ୍ରସ୍ତ ହୋଇ ପ୍ରତିଥର ଲିଷ୍ଟାର ଚରିତ୍ର ସଂହାର କଲାବେଳେ ମଲି ଭିତରର ଦୁଃଖୀ ଅସହାୟ ସ୍ନେହକାଞ୍ଚଳ ଝିଅଟିକୁ ଦେଖେ ମିରା... ଯାହାକୁ ମଲି ନିଜେ ସାରା ଦୁନିଆ ପାଖରୁ ଅତି ସତର୍କରେ ଲୁଚେଇ ରଖିଥିଲା । ସେଇ ଝିଅଟି ପ୍ରତି ମିରା ମନରେ ଅହେତୁକ ସ୍ନେହ ବଢିଚାଲିଥିଲା । ବୋଧହୁଏ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଜୀବନ ଶୈଳୀ, ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀରେ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ସାମଞ୍ଜସ୍ୟ ନଥାଇବି ସେମାନେ ଚାରିବର୍ଷ ଏକାଠି ରହିପାରିଲେ, ଯଦିଓ

ରୁମ୍ ବାହାରେ ମିରା ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହେ ତାର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି ବାନ୍ଧବୀଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ଆଉ ମଲ୍ଲି ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହେ ପ୍ରତି ସେମିତିରେ ବଦଳୁଥିବା ତା ସୋସିଆଲି ଓଭରଆକ୍ଟିଭ୍ ଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ୍ ସରକଲରେ । ପ୍ରତି ଛୁଟି ଆଗରୁ ଗୁରୁବାର ରାତିରେ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ପାଖରୁ କଲ୍ ଆସେ ମଲ୍ଲିକୁ ... ମଲ୍ଲି ଫୋନ୍ କାଟିଦେଇ ବିକ୍ରୀ କରେ ... ‘ଗୋ ଟୁ ହେଲ୍ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ।’ ପ୍ରତି ଛୁଟିରେ ମଲ୍ଲି ମମ୍ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଏ । ମମ୍ ଘରେ ସେମାନେ ସବୁ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ଏକାଠି ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଆଉ ବହୁତ ମଜା ହୁଏ ବୋଲି ମଲ୍ଲି କୁହେ । ମିରାକୁ ଇର୍ଷା ଲାଗେ କାରଣ ସେ ଏକ୍ସିଟିଆ, ତାର କେହି ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ବାପା ମା’ଙ୍କୁ ଯେତେ ଆଦର ଯତ୍ନ ପାଇଲେବି ବିନା ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀର ଘର ତାକୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗେନା । ବାପା ମା’ଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଗୋଟେ ଦିନ କାଟିବା ପରେ ସେ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରେ କ୍ୟାମ୍ପସ୍କୁ ଫେରିଯିବା ପାଇଁ । ରୁମ୍କୁ ଫେରିବା ପରେ ରାତି ଅନିଦ୍ରା ହୋଇ ଗପ କରନ୍ତି ଦୁହେଁ । ମିରା ଗପେ ବାପା ମା’ଙ୍କ ରକ୍ଷଣଶୀଳ ଭାରତୀୟ ମନୋବୃତ୍ତି ଭିତରେ ତା ନିଜର ଶ୍ଯାସରୁକ୍ଷକର ଅନୁଭୂତି, ତା ବାପା ମା’ଙ୍କୁ ଶୁଣିଥିବା ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପିଲାଦିନର ଅଜବ ବିରକ୍ଷିକର କାହାଣୀ ଯାହାକୁ ଶୁଣି ହସିହସି ଗତିଯାଏ ମଲ୍ଲି, ମଲ୍ଲି ଗପେ ତା ମମ୍ଙ୍କ କୁଳିଂ ବେକିଂ ପ୍ୟାସନକୁ ନେଇ ଆଉ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରେମ କାହାଣୀକୁ ନେଇ ଯାହା ସବୁ ସେମାନେ ମମ୍ଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ବିନା ଦ୍ଵିଧାରେ ଶେଆର୍ କରନ୍ତି ଆଉ ମିରା ଶୋଇବାର ବାହାନା କରି ତୁପ୍ତାପ୍ ଶୁଣିଥାଏ । ଏମିତି ଚାରିବର୍ଷର କଲେଜ୍ ଲାଇଫ୍ ବିତିଗଲା ପରେ ମଲ୍ଲି ନିଉୟର୍କ୍ ବାଲିଗଲା କାମ ଅନ୍ଵେଷଣରେ ସତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ମିରା ଜାଣିଥିଲା ତାର ପ୍ରକୃତ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ଥିଲା ଲିଣ୍ଡାଠୁ ଅନେକ ଦୂରକୁ ବାଲିଯିବାକୁ । ତାପରେ ଆଉ ବେଶୀ ଦେଖା ହୋଇନି ଦୁଇ ଜଣଙ୍କର । କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେବେବି ନିଉୟର୍କ୍ରୁ ଆସେ ମଲ୍ଲି ତା ସହିତ ନିଜଆତ୍ମ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରେ । ରହଣି ଭିତରେ ଅରୁଟିଏ ସେମାନେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ/ ଡିନର ପାଇଁ ହେଉ ଅବା କଫି/ଆଇସ୍ କ୍ରିମ୍ ପାଇଁ ହେଉ, ଏକଠି ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ମନଖୋଲା ଗପସପ ହୁଏ... କାମ, ସଂପର୍କକୁ ନେଇ ନିତିଦିନିଆ ପ୍ରାକ୍ତ ବୟସ୍କ ଜୀବନର ଜଟିଳତାକୁ ନେଇ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ଖୁବ୍ ଜମେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଲିଣ୍ଡାକୁ ନେଇ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଦିଏନି ମଲ୍ଲି ... କେବଳ ତା ଜୀବନର ସବୁ ବିଫଳତାର କାରଣ କହି ଦୋଷାରୋପ କରିବା ଛଡା ।

କେବେ କେବେ ମିରାର ମନେ ହୋଇଛି ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଏକ କାଳ୍ପନିକ ଚରିତ୍ର, ଯାହାର ସତ୍ୟ ଉନ୍ମୋଚନରେ କିଛି ଅପ୍ରିୟ ସତ୍ୟର ସାମ୍ନାକୁ ଭୟକରେ ମଲ୍ଲି । ମଲ୍ଲି ସହିତ ମିରାର ଶେଷଥର ଦେଖା ହେଇଥିଲା ମଲ୍ଲିର ମମ୍ର ଫୁନରାଲ୍ରେ ଯେଉଁଠି ମିରା ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ମଲ୍ଲିର ପରିବାରକୁ ଦେଖିଥିଲା ଏତେ ପାଖରୁ । ସେମାନେ ଦଶ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଥିବା ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗତା ଝୁଝି ବାରି ହେଇ ପଡୁଥିଲା । ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ସମୟରେବି କେହି ଭାଙ୍ଗି ପଡୁନଥିଲେ ... ସମସ୍ତେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସାହାରା ଦେଇ ନିଜେ ଦୃଢ଼ ଭାବେ ଠିଆ ହେଇ ରହିଥିଲେ ଯେମିତି । ମିରା ଆଗରୁ ଜାଣିଥିଲା ସେମାନେ କେହି ରକ୍ତ ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ନୁହନ୍ତି କେବଳ ମମ୍ଙ୍କର କରୁଣା ଅଉ ଅନୁକଂପା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ସୂତ୍ରରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ରଖିଥିଲା । ଜୀବନର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସମୟରେ ଫେଷ୍ଟର ପ୍ୟାରେକ୍ସ ଭାବେ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ନେଇ ଏତେ ଗୁଡେ ପିଲାଙ୍କର ମମ୍ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ସେ । ମାତ୍ର ସେଇଠି ଜଣଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ଆବାକ୍ ହେଇଯାଇଥିଲା ମିରା । ସେଇ ଜଣକ ଥିଲେ ମଲ୍ଲିର ଅବିକଳ ପ୍ରତିରୂପ, ବୟସର ଛାପ ଯାହା ଥିଲା ମୁହଁରେ । ନ ଚାହିଁବି ବାରମ୍ବାର ତାଙ୍କ ଆଡେ ନଜର ପକଉଥିଲା । ମଲ୍ଲିକୁ କିଛି ପଚାରିବା ଆଗରୁ ଭଦ୍ରମହିଳା ତା ସହିତ ନିଜ ଆତ୍ମ କଥା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି କହିଥିଲେ... ‘ମୁଁ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ।’ କଥା ଆଉ କିଛି ବହିବା ଆଗରୁ ମଲ୍ଲି ଭିତି ନେଇଥିଲା ମିରାକୁ... ଅନ୍ୟ ପୁରୁଣା ସାଙ୍ଗ ମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଭେଟ କରେଇ ଦେବା ବାହାନାରେ । ସେଦିନ ବିଦାୟ ନେଲା ବେଳେ ମଲ୍ଲିକୁ କହିଥିଲା ... ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଠିକ୍ ତୋ ଭଳି । ଉତ୍ତରରେ ମଲ୍ଲି କହିଥିଲା, “ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟବଶତଃ ହୁଁ ” । ମିରା ପଚାରିଥିଲା... ଏବେ ତ କହୁ ସେ କିଏ । ମଲ୍ଲି ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇଥିଲା ... ଏବେ ନୁହେଁ ଆଉ କେବେ... ଆଜି ମମ୍ର ସମ୍ମାନରେ ମୁଁ ମୁତ୍ ଠିକ୍ ରଖିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛି । ମିରାକୁ ମଲ୍ଲିର ଉତ୍ତର ଭଲ ଲାଗିନଥିଲା । ଏମିତି ଏକ ଦୀର୍ଘ ଦିନର ଘନିଷ୍ଟତା ଭିତରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ବିବାଦୀୟ ଚରିତ୍ରକୁ ନେଇ ଏତେ ବେଶୀ ଗୋପନୀୟତାକୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସହଜ ନଥିଲା ତାପାଇଁ । ବିଶେଷକରି ଲିଣ୍ଡାକୁ ଏତେ ପାଖରୁ ଦେଖିବା ପରେ ତାଭିତରେ ଉଠିଥିବା କୌତୂହଳକୁ ମଲ୍ଲିର ଏମିତି ବେପରୁଆ ଭାବରେ ଏତେଇ ଦେବାଟା ମଲ୍ଲିର ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନକୁ ଆଘାତ କରିଥିଲା । ମିରା କେତେଥର ମଲ୍ଲିର ମେସେଜ୍କୁ ରିପାଇ ନକରିବାରୁ ମଲ୍ଲି ବି ନିଜ ମେସେଜ୍ ପଠେଇବା ବନ୍ଦ କରିଦେଲା । ତାପରଠୁ ଦୁହେଁଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଆଉ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ ନଥିଲା, କେବଳ ଯାହା ଫେସ୍ବୁକ୍ ଅପ୍ଡେଟ୍ସ୍ରେ ମିରା କେବେ କେବେ ମଲ୍ଲିର ଖବର ପାଏ । ତା ଓଭରଆକ୍ଟିଭ୍ ସୋସିଆଲ୍ ଲାଇଫ୍ ଆଉ ଏଭର୍ ଟେକ୍ସିଙ୍ଗ୍ ବୟଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ୍ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ତା ଫେସ୍ବୁକ୍ ପୃଷ୍ଠାରେ ପ୍ରତି ରାତିର ଅପ୍ଡେଟ୍ ଗଲା କିଛିଦିନ ହେଲାଣି କାହିଁକି ବନ୍ଦ ହେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା । ନିଜ କାମରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହି

ନିଜ ଆତ୍ମ ଆଗ୍ରହ ଦେଖେଇ ମଲ୍ଲିକୁ ସେ କିଛି ପଚାରି ନଥିଲା । ଆଉଥରେ ମଲ୍ଲିର ଅପତେଚ୍ଚରେ ନଜର ପକେଇବାକୁ ଫେନ୍ ଅନ୍ କରି ଫେସ୍‌ରୁକ୍ ଖୋଲିଲା ମିରା । କମେଣ୍ଟ୍ ପରେ କମେଣ୍ଟ୍ ଆସୁଛି । ସମସ୍ତେ ସମବେଦନା ଜଣେଇ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି । କେହି କେହି ପଚାରୁଛନ୍ତି... ଲିଣ୍ଡା କିଏ ? କେହି କେହି ପଚାରୁଛନ୍ତି ...ତୁ ଆଜିକାଲି କେଉଁଠି? କିନ୍ତୁ ମଲ୍ଲିର କୌଣସି ଉତ୍ତର ନଥିଲା । ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ମଲ୍ଲି ବେଶ୍ କିଛି ଦିନ ଧରି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଦୂରେଇ ରହିଥିଲା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତାର ଚିହ୍ନାଜଣା ସମସ୍ତେ ଉକ୍ଷିତ ଥିଲେ ମଲ୍ଲିର ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଜାଣିବାକୁ । ମିରାକୁ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଲାଗିଲା ।

ମଲ୍ଲିର ମାନସିକ ସ୍ଥିତି କେମିତି ଥିବ ଏବେ, ଲିଣ୍ଡା ନାମକ ଚରିତ୍ରଟିର ଦେହାନ୍ତରେ ସେ ଖୁସିଥିବ ନା ବିଚଳିତ ହେଇ ଯାଇଥିବ... ମଲ୍ଲି ଏବେ କୋଉଠି ଥିବ ... କ'ଣ କରୁଥିବ ... ଏମିତି ଭାବୁଭାବୁ ମିରା ସ୍ଥିର କଲା ସେ ମଲ୍ଲିକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଯିବ । ଆଜି ଶନିବାର, କାମ ନାହିଁ । ଏଆର୍ ପୋର୍ଟକୁ ବାହାରିବା ଆଗରୁ ତା ହାତରେ କିଛି ସମୟ ଅଛି । ମଲ୍ଲିକୁ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ବିଷୟରେ କିଛି ପଚାରିବାକୁ ନୁହେଁ, ଯିବ ମଲ୍ଲି ପାଖରେ ଠିଆ ହେବାକୁ ନୀରବରେ, ଯେମିତି ସେ ରାତି ପରେ ରାତି ଶୁଣୁଥିଲା ଲିଣ୍ଡାକୁ ନେଇ ମଲ୍ଲିର ଅନର୍ଗଳ ଅଭିଯୋଗକୁ ...ଯେମିତି ସେ ନଶୋଇ ବି ଶୋଇବାର ବାହାନା କରି ଶୁଣୁଥିଲା ମଲ୍ଲିର କାନ୍ଦକୁ, ବେଙ୍ଗ୍‌ପ୍ରେସ୍ ନହେଲେ ନାହିଁ, ପ୍ରେସ୍ ତ ହେଇ ପାରିବ । ଏମିତିରେ ଲିଣ୍ଡାକୁ ଜାଣିବା ବା କ'ଣ ଦରକାର ତାର ?

ମଲ୍ଲିକୁ ଟେକ୍‌ସ୍ଟ୍ କଲା ...ତୁ କୋଉଠି । ମଲ୍ଲିର ଉତ୍ତର ଆସିଲା ଆମ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ପାଖ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚରେ ।

ମିରା ପଚାରିଲା... ତୋତେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଛି, ଯିବି ସେଠିକୁ ।

ମଲ୍ଲିର ଉତ୍ତର ଆସିଲା...ଆ ଲିଣ୍ଡାକୁ ଦେଖିବୁ... ଶେଷ ଥର ପାଇଁ ।

ମିରା ପଚାରିଲା ... ତୁ କ'ଣ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ପାଖରେ ?

ମଲ୍ଲିର ଉତ୍ତର ଆସିଲା ...ହଁ ଆ, ତୋତେ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଗପ କହିବି ।

ମିରା ଲେଖିଲା ... ରହ ମୁ ଆସୁଛି, ଗାତି ଷ୍ଟର୍ଟ କରିବି ଏବେ ।

ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ମିରାକୁ ଖୋଜିଲା ମଲ୍ଲି । ବେଶୀ କିଛି ଭିତ ନଥିଲା ...ଖାଲି ଯାହା ମଲ୍ଲିର ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ମାନେ, ଅଳ୍ପ କିଛି ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ଆଉ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚର କର୍ମଚାରୀ ଏପଟ ସେପଟ ହେଉଥିଲେ । କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତାରୁ ଜଣା ପଡୁଥିଲା ସେମାନେ ପୁସନେରାଲ୍ ପାଇଁ ରେଡି ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ମଲ୍ଲି କମିନ୍ ପାଖରେ ବସିଥିଲା । ମିରାକୁ ଦେଖି ଉଠି ଆସିଲା, ତାକୁ ଟାଣି ଟାଣି ନେଇଗଲା କମିନ୍ ପାଖକୁ । ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଶାନ୍ତିରେ ଶୋଇଥିଲା ଭଳି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ଯେମିତି ବହୁତ ଦିନପରେ ତାକୁ ବିଶ୍ରାମ ମିଳିଲା । ମଲ୍ଲି କହିଲା ...'ବିଚାରି ଶୋଇଛି ଆରାମ୍‌ରେ, ବୋଧହୁଏ ଏଇ ଖୁସିରେ ଯେ ଶେଷକୁ ତା ଝିଅ ବୁଝିଲା ତା ମା'ର ତା ଛତା ଏ ଦୁନିଆରେ ଆଉ କେହି ନଥିଲେ । ପଚାରୁନୁ ଲିଣ୍ଡା କିଏ ?' ମଲ୍ଲିକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା ମିରା ... ମଲ୍ଲିର ଦୁଇ ଆଖିରେ ଲୁହ ଢଳ ଢଳ ହେଉଥିଲା । ମଲ୍ଲିକୁ କୁଣ୍ଡେଇ ପକେଇଲା ମିରା । ମିରା ପଚାରିଲା ...କହ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଗପ । ମଲ୍ଲି ପୁସ୍‌ପୁସ୍ ହେଇ କହିଲା ...ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଅଠର ବର୍ଷର ହେଇଥିଲା ତା ଝିଅ ଏଇ ଦୁନିଆକୁ ଆସିବା ବେଳକୁ... କାହା କଥା ଶୁଣିଲାନି ଆବୋର୍ସନ୍ କରିବାକୁ, ତା ବୟସ୍କେ ତାକୁ ଛାଡିଦେଲା ... ଝିଅକୁ ବାପାମାଙ୍କ ସାହଯ୍ୟରେ ବଢ଼ଇ ବଢ଼ଇ ବାପା ମା ଚାଲିଗଲେ ଏକା ସମୟରେ । ବୟସ୍କେ ପରେ ବୟସ୍କେ ବଦଳିଲେ, ହେଲେ କେହି ତା ଝିଅର ବାପା ହେଇ ପାରିଲେନି । କେବେକେବେ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଜାଣିପାରୁଥିଲା କିଏ ତା ଝିଅକୁ ଖରାପ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରୁଛି ... ସେ ପାଟିତୁଣ୍ଡ କଲେ କିଛି ଲାଭ ହୁଏନି । ଏମିତିକା ଗୋଟେ ଜୀବନରେ ଅତିଷ୍ଟ ହେଇ ସେ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରିବାର ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା କରି ବ୍ୟର୍ଥ ହେଲାପରେ ସୋସିଆଲ୍ ଡ୍ରାକର୍‌ର ମାନେ ତା ଝିଅକୁ ତାଠୁ ଛଡେଇ ନେଲେ । ଲିଣ୍ଡା ବହୁତ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ କଲା ସିସ୍‌ଟମ୍ ସହିତ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ତା ଝିଅକୁ ହରେଇ ସାରିଥିଲା ଦୁନିଆ ପାଖରେ ... ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପରି ତା ଝିଅ ବି ମାନି ନେଇଥିଲା, ସେ ଗୋଟେ ଅଯୋଗ୍ୟ ମା । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଫେସ୍‌ଟର୍ ହୋମ୍‌ରେ ରହି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରକାରର ବିରକ୍ତିକର ଅନୁଭୂତି ଗୋଟେଇଲା ପରେ ତା ଝିଅକୁ ମମ୍ ମିଳିଗଲା, ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ମିଳିଗଲେ, ଗୋଟେ ଘର ମିଳିଗଲା, ଗୋଟେ ପରିବାର ମିଳିଗଲା । ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଭବୁଥିଲା ତା ଝିଅ ଦିନେ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ତା ପାଖକୁ ଫେରିଆସିବ । ତା ଝିଅ ବଡ଼ହେଲା, ସ୍କଲରସିପ୍ ପାଇଲା, କଲେଜ ଗଲା, ତଥାପି ମା' ପାଖକୁ ଆସି ନଥିଲା ।

ମିରା ପଚାରିଲା ...ହଠାତ୍ ପୁଣି ଝିଅ ଆସିଲା କେମିତି ? ଦୀର୍ଘଶ୍ୱାସ ନେଇ ମିରା କହିଲା ଛ ମାସ ତଳେ ତା ଝିଅ ଜାଣିଲା ସେ ପ୍ରେମନାଟ୍ଟ ।

ଦୁଇବର୍ଷର ଲିଭିଙ୍ଗ ଟୁଗେଡର୍‌ର ସଂପର୍କ ପରେ ବି ଝିଅର ବୟସ୍କେଷ ଆବୋରସନ୍ ପାଇଁ ବାଧ୍ୟକଲା । ଏକୃତୀଆ ଛୁଆକୁ ବଢେଇ ନପାରିବା ଭୟରେ ସେ ଆବୋର୍ସନ୍ କଲା ସିନା ନିଜକୁ କ୍ଷମା କରିପାରିଲାନି । ଏଇ କଥାକୁ ନେଇ ବୟସ୍କେଷ୍ଟ୍ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସଂପର୍କ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲା । ନିଜ ଭିତରର ହତାଶବୋଧ ଭିତରେ ବୁଡିଗଲା ବେଳେ ଲିଷ୍ଟର ନେବର୍ ତାକୁ ଫେନ୍ କରି ଲିଷ୍ଟର ଅସୁସ୍ଥତା ବିଷୟରେ ଖବର ଦେଲେ । କେଜାଣି କାହିଁକି ସେ ଲିଷ୍ଟକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଚାଲିଆସିଲା । ଆସିଲା ଯେ ଆଉ ଫେରି ପାରିଲାନି । ଦୁନିଆ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଲଢି ତାକୁ ଜୀବନ ଦେଇ ବଞ୍ଚେଇ ରଖିବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ କରୁକରୁ ନିଜକୁ ନିଜେ ହରେଇ ଦେଇଥିବା ଲିଷ୍ଟର ଅସହାୟତା ତାକୁ ବିବଶ କରିଦେଲା ... ଜୋର୍ ଜବରଦସ୍ତ ହରାଇ ଦେଇଥିବା ମମତା ତା ଭିତରେ ଜାଗିଉଠିଲା । ସାରା ଜୀବନ ଉପେକ୍ଷିତା ଲିଷ୍ଟା ତା ନିଜ ଝିଅର ଝିଅ ହେଇଗଲା । କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରି ପାରୁ ନଥିଲା ସେ, ତଥାପି ତା ଭିତରର ଖୁସିକୁ ସେ କେମିତି ନା କେମିତି ପ୍ରକାଶ କରୁଥିଲା । ବିନା କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତାରେ ବି ସେମାନେ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରି ପାରୁଥିଲେ । ଆଉଥରେ ଜିଇଁବାର ଇଚ୍ଛାରେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ସହିତ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ କରୁଥିଲା ସେ ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶେଷରେ ତିନିଦିନ ତଳେ ରାତିରେ ତା ଝିଅର କୋଳରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡରଖି ହସି ହସି ଶେଷ ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ତ୍ୟାଗ କଲା । ବେଳକୁ ବେଳ ମଲ୍ଲି ଭାବବିହ୍ୱଳ ହେଇ ଯାଉଥିଲା । ମଲ୍ଲିର ଭାଇ ଆସି ତାକୁ ରେଡି ହେବାକୁ ଇସାରା କଲେ । ମିରା ବୁଝିଲା ଏବେ ସେମାନେ ଫିଲ୍ଡନରାଲ୍ ହୋମ୍‌କୁ ଯିବେ । ତାକୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଘରକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ହେବ, ବାପା ମା ଆଜି ଇଣ୍ଡିଆରୁ ଫେରିବେ ...ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆଣିବାକୁ ସେ ଏୟାର ପୋର୍ଟ ଯିବ । ଶୋକାତୁରା ମଲ୍ଲିକୁ ସେ ବିଦାୟ ମାଗିବା ଆଗରୁ ମଲ୍ଲି “ଦେଖାହେବ” କହି କଫିନ୍ ସହିତ ଆଗକୁ ଯାଇ ସାରିଥିଲା । ମିରା ଆଖିରୁ ବୋହି ଆସୁଥିବା ଲୁହକୁ ପୋଛି ଲିଷ୍ଟା ଆତ୍ମାର ସଦ୍‌ଗତି ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କଲା । ସେମାନେ ପ୍ରସେସନ୍ ନେଇ ବାହାରି ଯିବା ପରେ ଏୟାରପୋର୍ଟକୁ ବାହାରିବା ଆଗରୁ ଫେନ୍ କାଢି ମେସେଜ୍ ଟେକ୍ କଲା । ଦୁଇଟା ମେସେଜ୍ ଥିଲା । ଗୋଟେ ଏଆର୍‌ଲାଇନ୍‌ସର ମେସେଜ୍ ... ପ୍ରେମ୍ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ ସମୟରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବ । ଆରଟା ମଲ୍ଲିର ମେସେଜ୍ ଥିଲା ... ‘ପରାରୁନୁ ଲିଷ୍ଟା କିଏ ମୋର ?’ ...ମେସେଜ୍‌ଟା ବୋଧେ ସେ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ଆଗରୁ ଆସିଥିଲା । ମିରା ସ୍ୱଗତୋକ୍ତି କଲା ... ଲିଷ୍ଟର ଝିଅ ...ତୁ ତ ଜାଣିଗଲୁ ଆଉ କିଏ ଜାଣୁ କି ନ ଜାଣୁ !

..ଏବେ ସେତିକି ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ।



ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର (ରଥ) ସପରିବାରେ ମିଚିଗାନ୍‌ର ବାସିନ୍ଦା ।
ମିଚିଗାନ୍ ଓସାର ସକ୍ରିୟ ସଭ୍ୟା ।
ଗପଟି ଉପରେ ମତାମତ ଦେଇ ଇମେଲ୍ ଟିଏ ପଠେଇ ଉତ୍ସାହିତ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

email : swapnarath90@gmail.com

ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ସୁଲୋଚନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ



ମମତା ଘରକୁ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ବେଳକୁ ରାତି ଅନେକ ହୋଇଯିବ । ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବାକୁ ହିଁ ହେବ । ପୁଅ ସହିତ କିଛି ସମୟ କଟାଇବାକୁ ତାର ବହୁତ ଇଚ୍ଛାଥିଲା । ସତ କହିଲେ ଫେରିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ବି ନ ଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ନ ଆସିଥିଲେ ସେଠି ରହିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥାନ୍ତା । ରହିଥିଲେ, କେଉଁଠି ରହିଥାନ୍ତା ? ହୋଟେଲରେ ? ପୁଅ ପାଖେ? ପୁରୁଣା ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖେ ? କେତେ ପାଣି ନଳରେ ବୋହି ଗଲାଣି ଏ ଭିତରେ । ଆଜି ତା’ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ବଡ଼ ଦିନ । ପୁଅର ମେଡିକାଲ ପଢ଼ିବାର ଯେଉଁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସିଏ ଦେଖିଥିଲା ଆଜି ତା’ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇଛି । ଅନେକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ଼ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତାର ଖୁସି ଆଜି ସାକାର ହୋଇଛି । ଆଜି ମନେହେଲା ଯେମିତି କାନ୍ଧରୁ ବଡ଼ ବୋଝଟାଏ ଓହ୍ଲାଇ ଗଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସିଏ ଆଜି ମନ ଖୋଲି ହସି ପାରୁନି କାହିଁକି?

ସମୟର ଗତି ଆଜି ଭିନ୍ନ ରୂପ ନେଇଛି । ଯୋଡ଼ି ହୋଇଥିବା ସଂପର୍କର ସୂତା ଖିଅ ପତଳା ହେବାକୁ ଲାଗିଛି । କେତେବେଳେ ଛିଣ୍ଡି ଯିବ, ଭୟ ଲାଗୁଛି । ପୁଅକୁ ଦେଖିଲା, ସେଇଥିରେ ସିଏ ସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ହେବ । ପୁଅ ଖୁସି ଅଛି, ସେଇଥିରେ ସିଏ ଖୁସି ହେବ । ଆଜି ସିଏ ହୋଇଛି ତାଙ୍କର । ତାଙ୍କର ଅମିତ୍ ଦାସ । ବଡ଼ ପାଟିରେ କହିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଛି, ‘ମୋ ପୁଅ ତାଙ୍କର ହୋଇଛି’ । କିନ୍ତୁ କେଉଁଠି, କେମିତି, କିଏ ଯେମିତି ତା କଥାକୁ ଅଟକାଇ ଦେଉଛି । ଦିନ ବଦଳି ଯାଇଛି, ଅମିତ ବଦଳି ଯାଇଛି । ଜୀବନ ବଦଳି ଯାଇଛି ।

ଡେ଼କ୍ସେଲ୍ ଉଚ୍ଚ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ବିରାଟ ଆୟୋଜନ । ବହୁତ ଗହଳି । କେତେ ବାପା ମାଆଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଆଜି ସଫଳ ହୋଇଛି । ସବୁଆଡ଼େ ହସ ଖୁସିର ମହୋତ୍ସବ ଗ୍ରାଡୁଏସନ୍‌କୁ ଅମିତର ବାପା, ଆନନ୍ଦ ବି ଆସିଥିଲେ ଆନୀ ସହ । ଆନୀ ତାଙ୍କର ଗାର୍ଲଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ୍ । ଆନୀ ସହ ଭଲରେ କଥା ହେଲା ମମତା । ଏକାଠି ସମସ୍ତେ ବସିଲେ ଗ୍ୟାଲେରିରେ । କାରଲ୍, ଅମିତ୍‌ର ଗାର୍ଲଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ୍ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ପରିଚୟ କରାଇଦେଲା । କାରଲ୍‌ର ମା ବାପା ବି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ସମସ୍ତେ ଏକାଠି ମିଶି ଗ୍ରାଡୁଏସନ୍ ପରେ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଯିବାର ବନ୍ଦୋବସ୍ତ କରିଥାଏ କାରଲ୍ । ଭାରି ଅମାୟିକ ପରିବାର କାରଲ୍‌ର । ସମସ୍ତେ ଯେମିତି ଗୋଟିଏ ପରିବାରର ଭଳି ମନେ ହେଉଥାନ୍ତି । ଅମିତ୍ ମନେ ହେଉଥାଏ ତାଙ୍କ ପରିବାରର ସଦସ୍ୟ ପରି । ଭାରି ମେଲାପି ଝିଅଟିଏ କାରଲ୍ । ଭାରି ଚାଲାକ ଚତୁର ମଧ୍ୟ । ସବୁ ଆତକୁ ନଜର ତାର । ଡେ଼କ୍ସେଲ୍‌ରେ ସିଏ ପି-ଏଚ୍-ଡି- କରୁଛି ବାୟୋଲୋଜିରେ । ବାପା, ମା ତା’ର ସେଇଠି ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ । ଭଲ ପରିବାର । ଫିଲ୍ମାଡେଲ୍‌ଫିଆରେ ରୁହନ୍ତି । ସବୁ ଭଲ । ଅମିତ୍ ଆଉ ସିଏ ଏକାଠି ଭଲ ଯୋଡ଼ିଟିଏ ପରି ଦେଖାଯାଉଥାନ୍ତି । ଆନୀ, ଆନନ୍ଦ ଆଉ କାରଲ୍‌ର ପରିବାର, ସମସ୍ତେ ଗୋଟିଏ ପରିବାର ଭଳି ହସ ଖୁସିରେ ଅମିତ୍‌ର ଶୁଭଦିନଟିକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । କେବଳ ଏକ୍ସିଟିଆ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ମମତା । ଓଠରେ ଶୁଖିଲା ହସରୁ ଧାରେ ଲାଖି ରହିଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ, ପାଟିରୁ କଥା ଯେମିତି କିଏ ନେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଦୁଇଟା ଗାଡ଼ିରେ ବସି ସମସ୍ତେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ ପି-ଏଚ୍-ଡି- ଚେମ୍ବର । ସେଇଟା ହେଲା ଅମିତ୍‌ର ପ୍ରିୟ ରେଷ୍ଟୁରାଣ୍ଟ୍ । ଖାଇବାରେ ମନ ନ ଥାଏ ମମତାର । ଆସିବ, ଆସିବ ବୋଲି ଗୋଡ଼ ତଳେ ଲାଗୁ ନ ଥିଲା, ଏବେ ଯିବାକୁ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଦିଶୁନି । ଅମିତ୍‌ର ମନ ଯେମିତି ଆଉ କେଉଁଠି । ମା’ ଯେ ତାର ଏକାକିନୀ, ଆଉ ତା’ର ଯେ କିଛି କଷ୍ଟ ଅଛି, ତା’ ଯେମିତି ସମସ୍ତ ଚିନ୍ତାର ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱରେ । ତା’ର ଆଉ ଦୁଇଜଣ ସାଙ୍ଗଙ୍କୁ ବି ସିଏ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଡାକିଥାଏ । ହାଇ ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌ର ସାଙ୍ଗ ସେମାନେ । ଦୁହେଁ ଆଇ-ଟି ରେ କାମ କରନ୍ତି । ସମସ୍ତେ ଖୁସିରେ ଖାଇବାର ଆନନ୍ଦ ଉଠାଉଥାନ୍ତି । କାରଲ୍ ଏ ଭିତରେ ମୁଭି ଯିବାର ପ୍ଲାନ ବି କରି ସାରିଥାଏ । ଆଜିକାଲି ଟିକେଟ୍ କିଣିବା ଭାରି ସହଜ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ସେଲ୍ ଫୋନ୍‌ରେ ସବୁ ବନ୍ଦୋବସ୍ତ, ସବୁ ସହଜ । ମମତା ଯିବାକୁ ବାହାରିଲା । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ବିଦାୟ ମାଗିଲା । ଅମିତ୍ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ, ତାକୁ କୁଣ୍ଡାଇ ଆଉଥରେ କନଗ୍ରାଡୁଲେସନ୍‌ସ୍ କହିଲା । ଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସିଟାଏ ଡାକିବ କହି ବାହାରିବାକୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ବାହାରିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ କାରଲ୍‌ର ବାପା ଜିନ୍ କଲେ ସିଏ ତାକୁ ଏଆରପୋର୍ଟ୍‌ରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେବେ ବୋଲି । ମନା କରିହେଲା ନାହିଁ । ପୁଣି ଆସି ତାଙ୍କ ଗାଡ଼ିରେ ବସିଲା । ଆଖିରେ ଲୁହଧାରେ ଜକେଇ ଆସୁଥାଏ । ସଂସାର କରିଥିଲା ମମତା । ହସ ଖୁସି, ଆନନ୍ଦର ସଂସାର ।

ଗୋଟାଏ ବୋଲି ପୁଅ । ପୁଅକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଯିଏ ଦଣ୍ଡେ ରହିପାରୁ ନ ଥିଲା, ଆଜି ଯେମିତି ତାକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଲାବେଳେ ମନେ ହେଲା ତାହା ହିଁ ତ ସଂସାର । ମା' ଆଉ ପୁଅ ଭିତରେ ଦୂରତା ହିଁ ଏକମାତ୍ର ସତ୍ୟ ।

ପୁଅକୁ ମେଡ଼ିକାଲ୍ କଲେଜର ଡର୍ମରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଲାବେଳେ ଛାଡ଼ିକୁ ପଥର କରିଥିଲା ମମତା । ଆନନ୍ଦଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ମେରିଲାଣ୍ଡକୁ ଆସିବାଟା ଏତେ ବାଧି ନଥିଲା । ଡିଭୋର୍ସକୁ ସମୟ ସହଜ କରେଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ସବୁବେଳେ କହୁଥିଲା, କଳି ତକରାଳର ସଂସାରଠାରୁ ଭଲ ଏକୃଷିଆ ସଂସାର । ନୀରବତାର ସଂସାର । କିନ୍ତୁ ହେଲା କଣ । ସବୁ ଦମ୍ଭ କୁଆଡ଼େ ପାଣି ପରି ମିଳେଇଗଲା । ମିଳିଗଲା ପାଣିରେ ଲୁଣ ପରି । କାରଲର ବାପା, ମା'ଙ୍କୁ ବିଦାୟ ମାଗି ଏୟାରପୋର୍ଟ ଭିତରକୁ ଆସି ବୋର୍ଡରେ ଯାତ୍ରାର ସୁତନା ଦେଖିଲା । ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ଏଆରପୋର୍ଟଟା ଆଜି କାଲି ମନେହେଉଛି ଶୂନ୍ୟ, ମହାଶୂନ୍ୟ । ଏଇ ମହାଶୂନ୍ୟରେ ସିଏ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ମିଶି ଯାଉନି କାହିଁକି ? ମନରେ ଅଜସ୍ର ଉତ୍ତଳ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ, ଦୁଃଖିସହ ଦୁଃଖ । କିଏ ଯେମିତି ତାର ସତ୍ତାକୁ ମୋତିମାତି ବିଲୀନ କରିଦେଉଛି । ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଭାରି ହୋଇପଡ଼ୁଛି । ଆଗକୁ ଚାହିଁହେଉନି । ଆଗକୁ ଚାଲିହେଉନି । ତଥାପି ଚାଲିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ରାସ୍ତା ଯେମିତି ସରିବାକୁ ନାହିଁ । କେତେ ଦୋ ଛକିରେ ସିଏ ଛିଡ଼ା ହୋଇଛି । କେତେ ଚଉରାହାରୁ ରାସ୍ତା ବାହାର କରିଛି । ଆଜି ଲାଗୁଛି ଆଗକୁ ପଡ଼ିଛି ଗୋଟାଏ ରାସ୍ତା । ଗହଳ ଚହଳ ରାସ୍ତା । ଗାଡ଼ି, ମୋଟର, ଲୋକବାକରେ ଦେହକୁ ଦେହ ବାଜୁଛି । ମମତା ଚାଲିଛି ଏକମୁହାଁ ହୋଇ ସେଇ ଅଜଣା ରାସ୍ତାରେ ।

ସତେଇଶ ବର୍ଷର ସଂସାର ତାର ଉଜୁଟି ପଡ଼ିଛି, କାହାକୁ କହିବ? ବୋଉ ନାହିଁ, ବାପା ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଗୋଟିଏ ବୋଲି ଭାଇ । ସିଏ ତା ଜଂଜାଳରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ବାକି ରହିଲେ ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀ । ସିଏ ଯାହା କାମରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ଏଠି ବି କରିଛି କିଛି ସାଙ୍ଗ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସଂପର୍କ ଖାଲି ହାଏ ହାଲୋର । ଏତିକିବେଳେ ଫେନ୍ଦରେ ସଂକେତ ଆସିଲା, କିଏ ଟେକ୍ସ୍ କରିଛି । ଖୁସିରେ ଦେଖିଲା, ହୁଏତ ଅମିତ୍ର ହୋଇପାରେ । ପୁଣି ହତାଶାର ବଳଶାଳୀ ହାତ, ତାର ସତ୍ତାକୁ କଲା ଶିଥିଳ । ଟେକ୍ସ୍ଟଟା ଥିଲା ତାର ପତୋଶୀଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ । ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ସମୟର ସ୍ଥିରତା ପରଖୁଥିଲେ । ନେବାପାଇଁ ଆସିବେ ତାକୁ । ମନା କଲେ ବି ଶୁଣିଲେନି । ରାତି ଦୁଇଟାରେ ଏକୃଷିଆ ଆସିବାଟା ଠିକ୍ ହେବନି ବୋଲି କହିଲେ । ମାମୀ ଓ ରାଜୀବ, ତା'ର ପତୋଶୀ, ରୁହନ୍ତି ତା' ଘରଠୁ ଦୁଇଟା ବୁକ୍ ଛାଡ଼ି । ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ମନେ ମନେ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଲା ମମତା । ଆଜିକାଲି ଯୁଗରେ ତଥାପି ଭଲ ଲୋକ ଅଛନ୍ତି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପରି । ଦୟାବନ୍ଧ, ପରୋପକାରୀ ପତୋଶୀ ସେମାନେ । ସବୁ ସେଇ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କର ଇଚ୍ଛା ।

ମନରେ ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ ବେଦନା - ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ । ସବୁକୁ ପଛକୁ ଠେଲି ଆଗ କଥା ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବାକୁ ଠିକ୍ କଲା ମମତା । ହାତରେ ଛୋଟ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟିଏ ଛତା ଆଉ କିଛି ନ ଥାଏ । ତେଣୁ କିଛି ନଭାବି ଫେର୍-ଏ ଗେଟ୍ ମୁହାଁ ଚାଲିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ରାତି ବୋଲି ବେଶୀ ଭିତ ନ ଥାଏ । ଛୋଟ ପାଣି ବୋତଲଟିଏ ପାଖରେ ଥିଲା । ତାକୁ ଢକଢକ କରି ପିଇଦେଲା । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗାନ୍ତର ତୃଷ୍ଣାକୁ ଦସାନୀର ଆଠ ଆଉନ୍ସ ପାଣି ମେଖାଇ ଦେବ ! କଷ୍ଟ ସିକ୍ୟୁରିଟି ଯାସ୍ତ୍ ସାରି ଗେଟ୍ ସାମନା ଧାଡ଼ିର ଶେଷ ଚଉକିରେ ବସି ପଡ଼ିଲା । କାହାକୁ ନଜର ନାହିଁ । କାହାକୁ ଯେମିତି ସିଏ ଦେଖିପାରୁନି । ଶୂନ୍ୟତାର ଏକ ବୃତ୍ତ ଯେମିତି ତାକୁ ଘେରି ବସିଛି । ଖୁବ୍ ଛୋଟ ତାର ପରିଧି । ସେଇ ପରିଧିର କେନ୍ଦ୍ରବିନ୍ଦୁରେ ସିଏ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଛି । ବୃତ୍ତ ଖୋଲି ବାହାରକୁ ଯିବାର ରାସ୍ତା ଦିଶୁନି । ଆଗକୁ କ'ଣ ଅଛି ଭାବି ହେଉନି । ଭାବିବାକୁ ଆଗ୍ରହ ନାହିଁ, ଇଚ୍ଛା ନାହିଁ । ଏକ ଅମୁହାଁ ସ୍ଵୋତରେ ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ଵହୀନ ଏକ କୁଟାଖିଅ, ଭାସି ଚାଲିଛି ।

ଆଗ ଧାଡ଼ିରେ ବସିଥିଲେ ବି କେତେବେଳେ ଫ୍ଲଇଟ୍ଟର ବୋତିଂ ଘୋଷଣା ହୋଇ ଲମ୍ବା ଧାଡ଼ିଟିଏ ବି ହୋଇଗଲାଣି ତା'ର ନଜର ନାହିଁ । ହଠାତ୍ ଜଣେ କିଏ ତାକୁ ସୂଚାଇ ଦେଲା, 'ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଡେଲ୍ଟା ୨୦୨ରେ ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ ଯିବା କଥାତ ?' ତମକି ଅନେଇଲା ମମତା । ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ପୁଣି ତାକୁ କିଏ କଥା କହୁଛି ? ସେଥିରେ ପୁଣି ଫିଲାଡେଲଫିଆ ଏୟାରପୋର୍ଟରେ ? ସବକିତ ହୋଇ ମମତା ଚାହିଁଲା । ମୁଁହଟା ଚିହ୍ନାଚିହ୍ନା ମନେ ହେଉଥିଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ ନାଁ ମନେପଡ଼ୁନଥାଏ । ପାଟିରୁ ପଦଟିଏ କଥା ବି ବାହାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । କାନ୍ଧରେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ପକାଇ ଦେଇ ସିଏ ଭିତରକୁ ଗଲା । ଡେଲ୍ଟା ୨୦୨ର ଶେଷ ଯାତ୍ରୀ ।

ଡେଲ୍ଟା ୨୦୨ ଭଲରେ ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲା । ସୁଟ୍‌କେସ୍ ନାହିଁ, ବ୍ୟାଗେଜ୍ କ୍ଲେମ୍ ନାହିଁ । ଘର ମୁହାଁ ପକ୍ଷୀଟିଏ । ନିଜର

ସେଇ ଛୋଟିଆ ଦୁଇ ବଖରିଆ କଣ୍ଠେ ହିଁ ତାର ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ । ଦୁଇଟି ରୁମ୍ ତା ପାଇଁ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ । ସେତିକି ବି ବେଳେବେଳେ ଲାଗେ ତା' ଏକୃତିଆ ମନକୁ ଆବୋରି ବସୁଛି । ଇଚ୍ଛାହୁଏ ଘରର କେଉଁ ଛୋଟିଆ କୋଣରେ ବସି ମନ ପୁରାଇ କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ । ବଡ଼ ପାଟିରେ ଚିତ୍କାର କରିବାକୁ । ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ଡାକି ପଚାରିବାକୁ । କୁଆଡ଼େ ଗଲା ତା'ର ସ୍ୱର୍ଗର ସଂସାର ? କୁଆଡ଼େ ଗଲା ତା'ର ପରୀ ଜୀବନ ? କୁଆଡ଼େ ଗଲା ତା'ର ଅସୁମାରୀ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ, କୁଆଡ଼େ ଗଲେ ତା'ର ରାଜକୁମାର ? କୁଆଡ଼େ ଗଲା ତା'ର ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍ର ତେର ନଇ ପାରି ହୋଇ ଆସି ଗଢ଼ିଥିବା ନୂଆ ପୃଥିବୀ ? ହଁ, ସବୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସତ ହୁଏ ନି । କେତେ ସେଇ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ହିଁ ରହିଯାଏ । ସବୁ ଯଦି ସତ ହୁଅନ୍ତା, ତାହେଲେ ଜୀବନ ତ ଏକ ସହଜ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଅନନ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପନ୍ନ କାହାଣୀ ହୁଅନ୍ତା । ଭାବିଲେ କ'ଣ ହେବ ଆଉ ? ଭାବିଭାବି ସିଏ ବାହାରକୁ ଆସିଗଲାଣି । ରାସ୍ତା ଆରପଟୁ ମାମୀ ହାତ ଠାରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଗାଡ଼ିର ହାଜାଡ଼ ଲାଇଟ୍ ଧପଧପ ହେଉଛି । ଗାଡ଼ି ଭିତରେ ଆପେକ୍ଷା କରିଛନ୍ତି ରାଜୀବ । ରାସ୍ତାପାରି ହୋଇ ମମତା ଆସି ଗାଡ଼ିରେ ବସିଲା । ଦଶ ମିନିଟ୍ରେ ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ । ମାମୀର ଅସୁମାରୀ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ସେଇ ଦଶ ମିନିଟ୍ରେ ଶେଷ ହୋଇ ନଥାଏ । ଅନେକ ଖବର ଅଛି କହିବା ପାଇଁ । ମମତା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଘରକୁ ଡାକିଲା କଫି କପେ ପାଇଁ । ତିନିହେଁ ଘରକୁ ଆସିଲେ । ମମତାର କଥା ଯେମିତି ବନ୍ଦ ହେବାକୁ ନାହିଁ । ଆନୀ ସହ ସାକ୍ଷାତ ଆଉ କାରଲ୍ ବିଷୟରେ ସିଏ ନ କହିଲେ ଶୋଇପାରିବନି ଯେମିତି । ମନ ଭିତରୁ ସବୁ ରାଗ, ଅଭିମାନ, କୋହ, କଥା ହୋଇ ବାହାରି ଆସୁଛି । କଫି ହାତରେ ଧରି ବସିଗଲେ ତିନିହେଁ । ବୁଢ଼ୀମାର ଗପପେଡ଼ି ଖୋଲି ଦେଲା ମମତା ।

ଆନୀ, ଆନନ୍ଦଙ୍କର ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ସହଚରୀ । ଭାରି ସୁନ୍ଦର ତା'ର ସବୁଜ ଆଖି । ସମୁଦ୍ରର ରଙ୍ଗ ଆଉ ଗଭୀରତା ସେ ଆଖିରେ । ଅନେକ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଭରି ରହିଛି । ଘଣ୍ଟକର ସାକ୍ଷାତରେ ସିଏ ତା ମନକୁ କିଣି ନେଇଛି । ନିଜର ସ୍ୱାମୀ ସହ ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ନାରୀର ସଂପର୍କ ତା ମନକୁ ଆଉ ତିକ୍ତ କରିନି । ସିଏ ଖୁସି ଆନୀ ପାଇଁ । ସିଏ ଖୁସି ଆନନ୍ଦଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ପାଞ୍ଚ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ଘଟଣାଟିଏ ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ମମତାର । ଆନନ୍ଦ ଭୁଲରେ ଫେନିଟ୍ ଘରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ସେଦିନ ଆନୀର ତିନି/ଚାରିଟା ଟେକ୍ସ୍ଟ୍ ଦେଖି ମମତା ଖୁବ ରାଗି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଦୁଇ ଜଣଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଅନେକ କଥା କଟା କଟି ହୋଇଥିଲା ସେଦିନ । ଘୁରେଇହୋଇ ପଚାରୁଥାଏ ଆନୀ କିଏ ? ଏକାଠି କାମ କରୁଥିବା ସମସ୍ତ ମହିଳା ବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ ସହ ତାଙ୍କର କ'ଣ ସମାନ ସଂପର୍କ ? କୌଣସି କାହିଁକିର ଉତ୍ତର ସିଏ ସେଦିନ ପାଇ ନଥିଲା । ସେଇ ସନ୍ଦେହର ବିନ୍ଦୁ କେତେବେଳେ ସିନ୍ଧୁଟିଏ ହୋଇଗଲା ସିଏ ଜାଣିପାରିଲାନି । ପୁଣି କେତେବେଳେ ସେ ସିନ୍ଧୁର ଅତଳ ତଳ ଗର୍ଭରେ ତାର ପରୀରାଇଜର ସଂସାରର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ହୋଇଛି ତା ବି ସିଏ ଜାଣିପାରିନି । ଆଜି ଆନୀକୁ ଦେଖି ମନେ ହେଲା, ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ହେଲେ ବି ସତେ ଯେମିତି ସିଏ ଏକ ଭାରତୀୟ ନାରୀ । ସ୍ୱାମୀ ନହେଲେ ବି ଆନନ୍ଦ ଯେମିତି ତାର ସର୍ବସ୍ୱ । ଆନନ୍ଦଙ୍କ ସମସ୍ତ ଚିହ୍ନା ଜଣା ପରିଚୟ ଯେମିତି ତା'ର ନିଜର । ମମତାକୁ ଦୁଇ ହାତ ଉଠାଇ ସିଏ ନମସ୍କାର କରିଥିଲା । ଗଲା ବେଳେ ଇଂରାଜୀରେ କହିଲା, 'ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ବହୁତ ଭଲ ଲାଗିଲା' । ଯାହାର ନାଁ ଶୁଣିଲେ ହୃଦୟରେ କଷ୍ଟ ଫେଟିଲା ପରି ଲଗୁଥିଲା, ଆଜି ତାକୁ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ଦେଖି, ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର କଥା କହି, ମନେ ହେଲା ଯେମିତି ତା' ପାଖରେ ଏକ ଯାଦୁକରୀ ଶକ୍ତି ଅଛି । ଏକ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗୀୟ ସଖା ଅଛି । ଭଲ ପାଇବାର ସିଏ ଯେମିତି ଏକ ମୂର୍ଖମନ୍ତ ରୂପ । ଖାଲି ଭଲ ପାଇବା । ତା' ଆଖିରେ ନାହିଁ ଅହଂକାରର ଚିହ୍ନ, ସିଏ କହୁନି, 'ଆନନ୍ଦ ମୋର' । ସିଏ କହୁଛି, 'ଜୀବନ ଏକ କାହାଣୀ । ସମୟ କ୍ରମେ ସେ କାହାଣୀର ରସ ହୁଏ ଭିନ୍ନ । ସେ କାହାଣୀର ନାୟକ, ନାୟିକାର ଭୂମିକା ବଦଳେ । ସେ କାହାଣୀର ଶେଷ କେଉଁଠି ଓ କେବେ ତା' କହି ହେବନି । ସିଏ ତ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ଗଢ଼ା କାହାଣୀ । ଆମେ ସବୁ ପୁଞ୍ଜଳିକା ମାତ୍ର' ।

ମମତାର ଜୀବନ କାହାଣୀର ଏକ ବଡ଼ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ସରିଛି । ମାମୀ ଓ ରାଜୀବଙ୍କୁ ବୈଠକ ଖାନାରେ ବସାଇ ସିଏ ଚାହା କରି ଆଣିଲା ରାଜୀବଙ୍କୁ ଚିନି ନପକାଇ ଚାହା ଦେଲା, ମାମୀଙ୍କର ଅଧିକା ହାଫ୍ ଆଣ୍ଡ୍ ହାଫ୍ ଦରକାର । ନିଜ ପାଇଁ ମେଞ୍ଚେ ଚିନି ପକାଇ ଚାହା ପିଇବା ଭିତରେ ଗ୍ରାଭୁଏସନ୍ ସେରିମୋନିର ଗପ ଗପି ଗପି ରାତି ବଢ଼ିଲାଣି । ହେଲେ ମାମୀ ରାଜୀବଙ୍କର ଘର କଥା ଚିନ୍ତାନାହିଁ । ପିଲାଛୁଆର ସଂସାର ନାହିଁ ତାଙ୍କର । ସ୍ୱାମୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଦୁଇଜଣ । ଭାରି ମେଳାପା, ଭାରି ସ୍ନେହୀ । ମାମୀ ଚାକିରି କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କର କନସଲ୍ଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ କାମ । ବହୁତଥର ସହର ବାହାରକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ପଡ଼େ, ବୋଧେ ସେଥିପାଇଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମନ ଦୁଇ ଜଣଙ୍କର ଏକାଠି । ମମତାକୁ ଭଉଣୀ ପରି ଭଲପାଆନ୍ତି । ସବୁକଥା କହି ସାରିଲାପରେ ମମତାକୁ ଟିକିଏ ହାଲୁକା ଲାଗିଲା । ଜୀବନରେ ଯାହାସବୁ ଘଟେ, ସବୁ କ'ଣ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ବରାଦରେ ଘଟୁଥାଏ ? ମାମୀ ମମତାକୁ କହିଲେ, 'ସମୟ ସବୁ ଠିକ୍ କରିଦେବ ମମତା, ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧର' । ମନରେ ଯେଉଁ ବନ୍ୟା ଛୁଟିଛି ତାକୁ କଣ ଅଟକାଇ ହେବ?

ମାମୀ ଓ ରାଜୀବ ଚାଲିଗଲା ପରେ ମମତା ଯାଇ ଲୁଗା ବଦଳାଇଲା । ପୁଣି ଆସି ସେଇ ସୋଫାରେ ଗଢି ପଡିଲା । ନିଦ ତା’ ଆଖିରୁ କିଏ ଚୋରାଇ ନେଇଛି । ତା’ର ସମସ୍ତ ପ୍ରିୟଜନଙ୍କୁ ତା’ ଠାରୁ କିଏ ଛତାଇ ନେଇଛି । ଯାହା ଭାଙ୍ଗିଛି ତାକୁ ତ ଆଉ ଗଢି ହେବନି ! ମନକୁ ଯେତେ ବୁଝାଇଲେ ସିଏ ବୁଝୁନି । ଯାହା ଘରୁଛି, ଯାହା ସିଏ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଅଙ୍ଗେ ଲିଭାଉଛି ତାହା ହିଁ ସତ୍ୟ । ମଣିଷ ଯାହା ଚାହେଁ ସବୁବେଳେ ତା’ ପାଏନା । ଦୁଃଖ ସମୟ କ୍ରମେ ଆସିବ ଶାନ୍ତି । ତଥାପି ମନ ବୁଝୁନି । ଅକାରଣେ ଶରବିନ୍ଧ ପଶୁ ପରି ସିଏ ପଡିରହିଛି । ଏଇଆ ହିଁ ତା’ ଭାଗ୍ୟ । ତା’ ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ସିଏ ନିଜେ ଗଢିଛି । ପ୍ରାୟ ସତେଇଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ, ଏକ ଦୃଢ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନେଇ, ନିଜେ ଠିକ୍ କରି ସିଏ ବିବାହ କରିଥିଲା ଆନନ୍ଦଙ୍କୁ । ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କର ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ନେଇ, ଆସିଥିଲା ଆମେରିକାକୁ ଗଢିବା ପାଇଁ ତା’ର ସଂସାର । ଆଜି ଆଗେଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ଆନନ୍ଦ । ପୁଣି ଆଗେଇ ଯିବ ଅମିତ୍ । ସେଥିରେ କାହାର ଭୁଲ ନାହିଁ । କାହାକୁ ଆଉ ଭୁଲ ଦେଇ ବା ଲାଭ କଣ ? ସମସ୍ତେ ନିଜ ନିଜର ପରିବେଶରେ ନିଜକୁ ଠିକ୍ ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରିବେ । ଜୀବନର ଏକ ମାତ୍ର ସତ୍ୟ, ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ । ପୃଥିବୀ ତାର ଅକ୍ଷରେ ଘୁରୁଛି, କକ୍ଷ ବିରୂପ ନ କରି । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପାଖକୁ ଯିବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ ସେମିତି ଅସ୍ପୃଶ୍ୟ । ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ପରେ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ଅବିସମ୍ଭାବି ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନରେ ମନ ତଥାପି ଅଟକ । ମମତାର ମନରେ ଆସିଛି ଝଡ । ଝଡ ଦୁଃଖ ଅମିତ ଦିନେ । ମନର ଆକାଶରେ ଉଇଁବ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ପୁଣି ଚାଲିବ ଜୀବନ ଗତାନ୍ତରାଳିକ ରୀତିରେ । ପୁଣି ହସିବ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ସମ୍ଭବ ଓ ଅସମ୍ଭବର ଘୃଷ୍ଣିବାତ୍ୟା ଭିତରୁ ମମତା ବାଛିବ ସମ୍ଭବତାକୁ । ଆଦରି ନେବ ତାର ଏଇ ଏକୃଷିଆ ନୂଆ ଜୀବନକୁ । ପ୍ରିୟଜନର ଦୂରତା ଆଣିଦେବ ଏକ ଅହେତୁକ ଭଲପାଇବା । ହେଉପଛେ ତାହା ଏକପଟୁଆ ଭଲପାଇବା । ଭଲ ଖୋଜିବ ଭୁଲରୁ । ପ୍ରତି କାରଣରୁ କେବଳ ସାଉଁଟି ନେବ ଗୋଟିଏ କାରଣ, ‘ଭଲ ପାଇବା’ । ଆଉ ଖୋଜିବାକୁ ପଡିବ ନାହିଁ ବୋହୂଟିଏ ଅମିତ ପାଇଁ । ତାକୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଦେଇ, ଦୂରରେ ରହିଲେ ବି ଭଲରେ ଥାଆନ୍ତୁ । କ’ଣ ଆଉ କରିପାରିଥାଆନ୍ତା ମମତା ? ମା’ର ମମତା କାନିରେ ତ ବାନ୍ଧି ପାରିବନି ପୁଅକୁ ? ସର୍ବସହା ଧରିତ୍ରୀ ହୋଇ ନ ପାରିବାର ଦୁଃଖରେ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲେ ଚଳିବ କେମିତି ? ଅତୀତକୁ ବିଦାୟ ଦେଇ ସିଏ ସ୍ଵାଗତ କରିବ ନୂଆ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତକୁ, ଅଦେଖା ଅଶୁଣା ନୂତନ ସମ୍ଭାବନାକୁ । ମମତାର ଆଖି ବୁଜିହୋଇ ଆସିଲା । ଠିକ୍ ସେତିକିବେଳକୁ ଝରକାଦେଇ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ସୁନେଲି କିରଣରୁ ଧାରେ ଆସି ରାତିର ଅକ୍ଷକାରକୁ ପୋଛି ଲିଭାଇ ଦେଲା । ଅତୀତ ଉପରେ ପାଦ ଦେଇ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଠିଆ ହେଲା ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷାରେ ।



ସୁଲୋଚନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଏଲ୍‌ଭି, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ରହନ୍ତି । ସଂପ୍ରତି ସେ ଓସାର ଭାଇସ୍ ପ୍ରେସିଡେଣ୍ଟ ଅଛନ୍ତି ।

ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ସୁଯୋଗ ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ

ପାଖ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ଖୁଡ଼ଖାଡ଼ ଶବ୍ଦ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ଲାଗୁଥିଲା, ସେ ଯୁବକଟି ବୋଧହୁଏ ଉଠିଗଲାଣି ଓ କାମକୁ ଯିବାପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରୁଛି । ଶୋଭନାର ଆଜି ଘରୁ କାମ କରିବାର ଅଛି । ସିଏ ଫେଡ଼ରାଲ୍ ଗଭର୍ଣ୍ଣମେଣ୍ଟରେ କାମକରେ ଓ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ କରେ । ଆଜିବି ସେମିତି ଏକ ଦିନ ଥିଲା । ସିଏ ଅଳସେଇ ଅଳସେଇ ଉଠିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲା, ଯେତେବେଳେ ତା’ ଶରୀର ବିଛଣା ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେବ, ତେବେ ଯାଇ ସିଏ ବିଛଣାରୁ ଉଠିବ, ଜୋର ଜବରଦସ୍ତ ନୁହେଁ । ହେଲେ ପାଖ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟର ସେ ଧଡ଼ାଡ଼, ଖଡ଼ଖାଡ଼, ସାଢ଼ାବୁ ଏସବୁ ଶବ୍ଦରେ ଶୋଇବି ହେଉଛି କେମିତି ? କେବେଠାରୁ ଭାବିଲାଣି, ଗୋଟିଏ ଘର କିଣି ସେଠିକୁ ଚାଲିଯିବ ବୋଲି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏକଲା ମଣିଷକୁ ଘରଟା ନେଇ ଏକା ରହିବାକୁ ଭାବିଲେ ତରଳାଗେ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଏ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ସିଏ ରହିଛି ଯେ ରହିଛି, ଏବେ ସାତବର୍ଷ ହୋଇଯିବ ।



ଶୋଇବାଘରର ପରଦା ଖୋଲିଦେଲା ବେଳକୁ କୋଠରିସାରା ତୀର୍ଥ୍ୟକ୍ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟରଶ୍ମିର ଆଲୋକ ଖେଳିଗଲା । ଖରାଦିନର ସକାଳ । ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ରହୁଥିବା କେତେ ବୁଢ଼ାବୁଢ଼ୀ ସବୁ ପ୍ରାତଃଭୁଜନ କରି ଫେରୁଥିଲେ । ଶୋଭନା ବାଲକୋନିକୁ ଯାଇ ତଳକୁ ଚାହିଁ ଦେଖିଲା ତ ସାମନା ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ରହୁଥିବା ବୁଢ଼ା ଜଣକ ବସି ବାଲକୋନିରେ ସିଗାରେଟ୍ ଟାଣୁଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ବୁଢ଼ୀ କଫି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରି ଆଣିଲା ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସାମନାରେ ବସି କଫି ପିଇଲା । ତାପରେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଗପସପରେ ମଜ୍ଜିଗଲେ । ସେମାନେ ବି ସେଇ ଏକା ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ପାଞ୍ଚ, ଛଅ ବର୍ଷ ରହିଲେଣି, ଶୋଭନା ତାଙ୍କୁ ନିତି ଦେଖେ । ସେମାନେ ହେଲେ ମାତାମ୍ କାଧିରିନ୍ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ଵାମୀ ବିଲ୍ ।

ହେଲତ, ପାଖ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟର ସେ ଯୁବକ ଜଣକ ଗାଡ଼ି ଝଟ କରୁଛି । ଏବେ ଆଉ ସେ ଘରୁ ଶବ୍ଦ ଆସିବନି । ଶୋଭନା ପୁଣି ଯାଇ ବିଛଣାରେ ଗଡ଼ପଡ଼ ହେବକି ଚିକେ ? ସେ ଯୁବକଟି ଶୋଭନାକୁ ହାତ ହଲେଇଲା । ଶୋଭନା ବି ତାକୁ ହାତ ହଲେଇଲା । ଯୁବକଟି ପଚାରିଲା, “କଣ ଆଜି ଘରୁ କାମ କରୁଛ କି?”

“ହଁ, ଅନ୍ତତଃ ଟ୍ରାଫିକ୍ ଦୁସ୍ଥ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରୁ ତ ଚିକେ ରିହାତି ମିଳିବ ।” – ଶୋଭନା କହିଲା ।

“ତା ନୁହେଁ ଆଉ କଣ । ଦେଖୁନ, ମୋର ବି ଏ ସମୟରେ କାମକୁ ବାହାରିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହୁଏନି । ହେଲେ ଆମ ମ୍ୟାନେଜର୍ ନଅଟା ବେଳେ ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ରଖିଛି । ଆଉ କଣ କରାଯିବ । ହଉ, ବାଏ । ପୁଣି ପରେ ଦେଖାହେବ ।” – ଏମିତି କହି ସେ ଯୁବକଟି ଗାଡ଼ି ଚଲେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା ।

ଶୋଭନା ସେ ଯୁବକଟିକୁ ଜାଣିଛି । କେତେଥର ହଲ୍‌ରେ ଭେଟ ହୋଇଛି । ସିଏ ବି ଭାରତର, ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଆସିଛି । ତା’ ନାଁ ହେଲା ଅଭିଜିତ୍ । ବାହା ହେଲତି କି ନାହିଁ କେଜାଣି ? କାହିଁ ତିନିମାସ ହେଲା ରହିଲାଣି, ସିଏ ତ ଏକା ରହୁଛି । ତା’ ରଙ୍ଗଢଙ୍ଗ ତ ବିବାହିତ ଭଳି ଜଣାପଡ଼ୁନି । କେବଳ ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକରିଛି ଶୋଭନା, ଅଭିଜିତ୍‌ର ମୁହଁରେ କେବେବି ହସ ଦେଖିନି । ହେଲେ ବି ତାର ମୁହଁଟି ବଡ଼ ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ଵପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ, ସରଳ ଓ ନିର୍ମଳ ଦେଖାଯାଏ ।

ମାତାମ୍ କାଧିରିନ୍ ଓ ବିଲ୍ ତଥାପି ବସି ଗପୁଛନ୍ତି । ଶୋଭନାର ଇଚ୍ଛାହୁଏ ତାର ବି ଏମିତି ଏକ ସାଥୀ ଥାଆନ୍ତା, ଯା’ ସହିତ ସିଏ ଏମିତି ବାଲକୋନିରେ ବସି ଚାହା ପିଉଥାଆନ୍ତା ଓ ଗପ କରୁଥାଆନ୍ତା । ହେଲେ, ସେକଥା ଭାବିବାକୁ ବି ଭୟଲାଗେ । କାହାକୁ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ କରିହୁଏନି । ଦଶବର୍ଷ ତଳର ଘଟଣା ମନେପକାଇଦିଏ ସେ ସଂପର୍କ ସବୁ କେତେ ଜଟିଳ । କେତେ ଆତମ୍ଭରେ ତାର ବାହାଘର ହୋଇନଥିଲା ସତେ? ଘରକୁ ବର, ସବୁ ସୁନ୍ଦର, ସବୁ ଭଲ । କେତେ ଗୀତ, ନାଟ, ପାର୍ଟି, ହସ, ଖୁସି । ହେଲେ ଚତୁର୍ଥୀ ରାତିରେ,

ସେଇ ସୌମନାସ୍ତ୍ର ଯୁବକ ଜଣକ ତାକୁ କେତେ ସହଜରେ ସେ ନିଃସ୍ଵରବାଣୀ ଶୁଣେଇଥିଲେ, “ମୁଁ ଆଉ ଜଣକୁ ଭଲପାଏ ଓ ତାକୁ ମନିରରେ ବାହା ହୋଇଯାଉଛି; କେବଳ ବାପା, ମା’ଙ୍କ ବାଧ୍ୟରେ ମୁଁ ତମକୁ ବିବାହ କରିଛି । ତମେ ବୋହୂ ହୋଇ ଖୁସିରେ ରୁହ, ହେଲେ ମୋଠାରୁ ଆଉ ବେଶି କିଛି ଆଶା କରିବ ନାହିଁ ।”

ସବୁ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଶୋଭନାର ସେଇ ଚତୁର୍ଥୀ ରାତିରେ ହିଁ ସରିଗଲା । କାନ୍ଦିକାନ୍ଦି ସାରାରାତି ବିତିଗଲା । ସକାଳୁ ନଣନ୍ଦ ପଚାରିଲେ, “ଭାଉଜ, କଣ ନିଜ ଘରକଥା ମନେପଡୁଛି; ହେଲେ ଜମା ମନଦୁଃଖ କରନ୍ତି । ଆମ ଗହଣରେ ମିଶିଗଲେ ତମକୁ ଘରକଥା ଆଉ ମନେପଡିବନି ।”

ଶାଶୁ, ଶୁଶୁର ଅତି ସ୍ନେହରେ ହନିମୁନରେ ଦାଈଁଲି ଯିବାକୁ ଟିକେଟ୍ ଓ ହୋଟେଲ୍ ବୁକ୍ କରିଥିଲେ । ଶୋଭନାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ନଥିଲା, ହେଲେ ହୁଏତ ଏକା କିଛିଦିନ ବିତାଇବାପରେ ତା ସ୍ଵାମୀ ତାଙ୍କ ବାହାବେଦୀର ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଓ ହାତଗଣି ମନେପକାଇ ତାକୁ ଆପଣାର କରିବେ । ହେଲେ ସେମିତି ହେଲାନି । ଦାଈଁଲିରେ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲା ତା ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କର ପ୍ରେମିକା ଓ ପ୍ରଥମ ପତ୍ନୀ ଶଶିକଳା, ସତରେ ଜଣେ ଭାରୀ ରୂପସୀ ଯୁବତୀ । ଶଶିକଳା ଓ ତାର ସ୍ଵାମୀ ସୁବ୍ରତ ଗୋଟିଏ କୋଠାରେ ରହିଲେ ଓ ଶୋଭନା ରହିଲା ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ କୋଠାରେ । ଗୋଟିଏ ସତ୍ତାହ ଗୋଟିଏ ଯୁଗ ଭଳି ଲାଗିଲା । ଫେରିବାବେଳେ, ସୁବ୍ରତ ବଡ଼େଇଦେଲେ, ଘରେ ସେମିତି ଏ ବିଷୟରେ କେହି କିଛି ଜାଣିବେନି ।

“ନା, ଆଉ ନୁହେଁ । ବହୁତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଏମିତି ଏକ ଜୀବନ ସହିତ ଜମା ବି ସାଲିସ୍ କରିହେବନି । ବରଂ ଏକଥା ମୁଁ ବାପା, ମାଙ୍କୁ ଜଣେଇବି ।” - ଏମିତି ଭାବି ଶୋଭନା ବାପା, ମା’ଙ୍କୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରି ଏୟାରପୋର୍ଟ ଆସିବାକୁ କହିଲା । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେ ବହୁତ ମିସ୍ କରୁଛି ଓ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସିଏ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛି । ଏୟାରପୋର୍ଟରେ ବାପା, ମାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ସିଏ ସିଧା ତାଙ୍କ ଗାଡିରେ ତା ଲଗେଜ୍ ରଖିଦେଇ ବସିଲା ଓ ଡ୍ରାଇଭରକୁ ଗାଡି ଚଳେଇବାକୁ କହିଲା । ବାପା, ମାଙ୍କୁ ଖାଲି କହିଲା, “ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ସବୁ କହିବି ।”

ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ତା ଆଖିର ଲୁହ ଛୁଟିଲା ଯେ, ଆଉ ବନ୍ଦହେବାର ନାହିଁ । ଆଉ ଶେଷରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ବାପା, ମା ନିଜ ଝିଅର ଏ ଜୀବନକାହାଣୀ ଶୁଣିଲେ, କ୍ରୋଧରେ ଅତିଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ସାଙ୍ଗେସାଙ୍ଗେ ପୋଲିସ୍ ତାକି ରିପୋର୍ଟ ଲେଖେଇବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ, ହେଲେ ଶୋଭନା ମନାକଲା । ତା ଶାଶୁ, ଶୁଶୁର, ନଣନ୍ଦ, ସମସ୍ତେ ଏତେ ଭଲ, ସେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ କୌଣସି କଷ୍ଟଦେବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁନଥିଲା, କେବଳ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲା ସେ ଜଟିଳ ସଂପର୍କରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି । ଶାଶୁ, ଶୁଶୁର ବହୁତ ଅନୁନୟ, ବିନୟ କଲେ, ଶଶିକଳା ଝିଅଟା ବଡ଼ ବଦମାସ୍, ସୁବ୍ରତକୁ ଭୁଆଁ ବୁଲେଇ ତା’ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଖାଇଯାଇଛି, ଶୋଭନା ଟିକେ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧରିଲେ, ସବୁ ଠିକ୍ ହୋଇଯିବ । ଏମିତି ବହୁତ ଅଭିନୟ ପରେ, ମୁକ୍ତି ମିଳିଥିଲା ଶୋଭନାକୁ । ତାପରେ ସିଏ ଆଉ ସେ ସହରରେ ରହିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଲାନି । ଦିଲୀ ଆସିଥିଲା ପିଜି କରିବାକୁ, ଦିଲୀରୁ ଆସିଲା ଆମେରିକା, ସେଠି ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ କ୍ଷତିକ୍ଷୟରେ ମାଞ୍ଜରସ୍ କରିସାରି ଚାକିରି ପାଇଗଲା । ସେଇଠି ଅଛି ତ ଅଛି । ଚାରିବର୍ଷକାଳ କଞ୍ଚକଟର୍ ହୋଇ କାମକରିବା ପରେ, ତାକୁ ଫେଟରାଲ୍ ଗଭର୍ଣ୍ଣମେଣ୍ଟ୍ ଚାକିରି ମିଳିଗଲା ।

“ଛାତ, ସେସବୁ ଅତୀତ କଥା ଭାବି ଲାଭ କଣ ? ଏବେ ସାତେ ଦଶଟାରେ ଗୋଟିଏ କନ୍ଫରନ୍ସ୍ କଲ୍ ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ରେ ଯୋଗଦେବାକୁ ପଡିବ ।” - ଏମିତି ଭାବି ଶୋଭନା ଘରଭିତରକୁ ଆସିଲା ଓ ନିତ୍ୟକର୍ମ ସାରିଲା ।

ଏ ଭିତରେ କିଛିଦିନ ବିତିଯାଇଥିଲା । ଥରେ ରବିବାର ଦିନ ଇସ୍କନ୍ ମନିରରେ ହଠାତ୍ ଭେଟ ହୋଇଗଲା ଅଭିଜିତଙ୍କ ସହିତ । ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଥିଲେ ଜଣେ ଭଦ୍ରମହିଳା, ଯାହାଙ୍କୁ ସିଏ ତାଙ୍କ ମା’ ବୋଲି ଜାଣିଲା । ଅଭିଜିତଙ୍କ ସାନଭାଇ ରୁହନ୍ତି ନିଉଜର୍ସୀରେ, ବୋହୂର ପିଲାପିଲି ହେବାର ଥିଲା, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସେ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ଏବେ ଦୁଇ ସତ୍ତାହ ଏ ବଡ଼ପୁଅ ପାଖରେ ରହିବେ । ତାଙ୍କ ମା’ ବଡ଼ ସ୍ନେହୀ ଜଣାପଡିଲେ । ହୁଏତ ଗପସପ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ, ହେଲେ ଶୋଭନା ଅଣଓଡିଆ ଜାଣିବା ପରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଗ୍ରହ ମଉଳିଗଲା । ତଥାପି ପଚାରିଲେ, “ତମେ ଓଡିଆ ବୁଝ ତ ଝିଅ, ବଙ୍ଗଳା ଆଉ ଓଡିଆ ଭାଷା ତ ଏକା ଭଳି ।”

ଶୋଭନା ତାଙ୍କୁ ବଙ୍ଗଳାରେ “ବୁଝିପାରୁଛି” ବୋଲି ଜଣାଇଲା । ଶୋଭନାର ବାପା ପାଞ୍ଚବର୍ଷକାଳ ଓଡିଶାରେ କାମ କରୁଥିଲେ, ଶୋଭନା କିଛିକିଛି ଓଡିଆ ବି ଜାଣିଛି । ଏସବୁ ଜାଣିବାପରେ, ମାଉସୀ ବଡ଼ ଖୁସି ହୋଇ କେତେକଥା ଗପିଗଲେ । ଏ ଦେଶରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜମା ଭଲଲାଗୁନି । କେହି ତାଙ୍କ ଭାଷା ବୁଝୁନାହାନ୍ତି । ଘର ଭିତରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ରହିରହି ଅତିଷ୍ଟ ଲାଗିଲାଣି, ଏମିତି ସବୁ କେତେକଣ ସେ କହିଗଲେ । ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେ ଜାଣିଲେ, ସିଏ ସେଇ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ରହୁଛି ବୋଲି, ଭାରି ଖୁସିହୋଇ କହିଲେ, “ତାହେଲେ ତ ଝିଅ, ବହୁତ ଭଲହେଲା ।”

ତା' ପରଦିନ ସୋମବାର । ଶୋଭନା କାମରୁ ଫେରିବାବେଳକୁ ସେ ମାଉସୀ ତାଙ୍କ ବାଲକୋନିରେ ବସିଥିଲେ । ଶୋଭନାକୁ ଆସିବାର ଦେଖି ତାଙ୍କ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟ ଦ୍ଵାର ଖୋଲି ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥିଲେ । ଶୋଭନା ନିଜ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟର କବାଟ ଖୋଲୁଖୋଲୁ କହିଲେ, “ଝିଅ, ପକ୍କୁଡ଼ି ଛାଣିଥିଲି, ତମପାଇଁ ରଖିଛି । ଏକା ରହୁଛୁ, କଣ ଏକା କରିକି ଖାଉଥିବ, ନ ଖାଉଥିବ ।” ତାପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରେଟ୍ରେ କିଛି ପକୋଡ଼ି ଆଣି ତା ହାତରେ ଧରେଇଦେଲେ । ଶୋଭନାକୁ ଭଲଲାଗିଲା । ସିଏ ତାଙ୍କୁ “ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ” କହିଲା ଓ “ମୁଁ ଟିକେ ଧୁଆଧୁଇ ହୋଇ କପଡ଼ା ବଦଳାଇ ଆସେ, ଆମେ ସାଥୀ ହୋଇ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ ଚାଲିବାକୁ ଯିବା ।”

ସତକୁ ସତ ସେଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ, ଶୋଭନା ଓ ସେ ମାଉସୀ ଦୁଇଜଣ ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ମାଲିକିଏ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ବାଟ ଚାଲିଲେ । ସିଏ ଶୋଭନାଠାରୁ ବହୁତ କଥା ପଚାରି ବୁଝିଲେ, ସିଏ କି କାମ କରେ, କେତେ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ, ବାପା, ମା କୋଉଠି ଅଛନ୍ତି, ଏମିତି ସବୁ କେତେ କଣ । ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବା ପରେ, ଅଭିଜିତ୍ ଶୋଭନାକୁ ସମାମାଣି କହିଲେ, “ମା’ ଟିକେ ଏକାକୀ ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିବାରୁ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଡିଷ୍ଟର୍ବ କରୁଛି । ମୁଁ ତାକୁ ବୁଝେଇଦେବି । ହେଲେ ଆପଣ ତ ଜାଣିଛନ୍ତି ଭାରତୀୟ ବାପା, ମା ମାନେ କେମିତି ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ଚଳଣି । ତେଣୁ ମୁଁ ଏ ବୁଝେଇବାଟା ଧୀରେଧୀରେ କରିବି ।”

ଶୋଭନା କହିଲା, “ନାହିଁ, ଆପଣ ସେମିତି ଭାବନ୍ତୁନି । ମାଉସୀ ମତେ ଜମା ବି ଡିଷ୍ଟର୍ବ କରୁନାହାନ୍ତି, ବରଂ ତାଙ୍କ ଉପସ୍ଥିତି ମତେ ଭଲଲାଗୁଛି । ମୋ ମା’ଙ୍କ ସ୍ମୃତି ଆଣିଦେଉଛି ।”

ଏମିତି ଧୀରେଧୀରେ ଶୋଭନାର ଓ ସେ ଗୀତା ମାଉସୀଙ୍କର ସଂପର୍କ ବଢ଼ିଲା । ଶୁକ୍ରବାରଦିନ ଶୋଭନା ଘରୁ କାମ କରୁଥିଲା । ଗୀତା ମାଉସୀଙ୍କୁ ତାକି ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ ଖାଇଲା । ଗୀତା ମାଉସୀ ତାଙ୍କ ପୁଅ ବିଷୟରେ ଗପିଲେ । “ଅଭିଟା ଭାରି ଭଲପିଲା ଥିଲା, ହସଖୁସିଆ, ସ୍ନେହୀ । ହେଲେ ମା, ତା ଜୀବନରେ ଏମିତି ଗୋଟିଏ ଘଟଣା ଘଟିଲା ଯେ, ସିଏ ପୁରା ବଦଳିଗଲା । କେତେ ଦେଖି ଚାହିଁ ତା’ ବାହାଘର କରିଥିଲୁ, କରଣ ଘରେ, ବଡ଼ ଖାନ୍ଦାନୀ, ହେଲେ ବାହାଘର ଦିଦିନ ଯାଇନି, ବୋହୂ ତା’ର ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ପୁଅ ସହିତ ପଳେଇଗଲା । ସେ ଝିଅର ବାପା, ମା ଓଲଟା ଆମ ଘର ଉପରେ କେସ୍ କଲେ, ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅକୁ ଆମେ ସବୁ ଖରାପ ବ୍ୟବହାର କଲୁ, ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନା ଦେଲୁ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସିଏ ଘରଛାଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଗଲା । ସେଇଦିନରୁ ପୁଅ ମୋର ପୁରା ବଦଳିଗଲା, ମଦ ପିଇଲା, ମାତାଲ ହେଲା । ଗୁରୁଦେବ ବୁଝେଇବା ପରେ ଟିକେ ପୁଣି ବାଗକୁ ଆସିଲା ।”

ଶୋଭନା ନିଜ ଜୀବନ କଥା ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଥିଲା । “ଏମିତି କାହିଁକି ହୁଏ ? ଯଦି ତମେ ଭଲପାଉଛ କାହାକୁ, ବାପା, ମାଙ୍କୁ କହିଦିଅନି କଣପାଇଁ ? ଅଭିନୟ କରି ବେଦୀରେ ବସିଯାଅ, ଦୁନିଆ ଆଖିରେ ସୁନାପିଲା ହୋଇଯାଅ । ତାପରେ ଆଉ ଜଣଙ୍କର ଜୀବନ ଯେ ନଷ୍ଟକର, ସେକଥା ଚିନ୍ତା କରନି ।” – ଅଭିଜିତ୍ କୁ ବାହାହୋଇ ଏମିତି ହୃଦୟକ୍ତ କରିଥିବା ସେ ନାରୀ ଜଣକ ପ୍ରତି ଶୋଭନା ମନରେ ବହୁତ ଘୃଣା ଆସୁଥିଲା । ଯେତିକି ଘୃଣା ତାର ଥିଲା ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି, ତାଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ଘୃଣା ହେଲା ସେଇ ଝିଅଟି ପ୍ରତି ।

ଶନିବାର ଦିନ, ଅଭିଜିତ୍ ତାଙ୍କ ମା’ଙ୍କୁ ଡ୍ରାଗିଂଟନ୍ ଡିସି ବୁଲେଇବାକୁ ନେଉଥିଲେ । ଗୀତା ମାଉସୀ ତାକିଲେ, “ତୁ ଆସୁନୁ ଝିଅ, ଆମ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଟିକେ ବୁଲିଆସିବୁ, ଏକାଟିଆ ଘରଭିତରେ ନହେଲେ ବସିଥିବୁ । ଆ...”

ଗୀତା ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ କଣ୍ଠରେ କି ଜାଦୁ ଥିଲା କେଜାଣି, ଶୋଭନା ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବାହାରିଲା । ଅଭିଜିତ୍ କହିଲେ, “ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ବହୁତ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ନହେଲେ ମୋ ପାଖରେ ତ ମା’ ପୁରା ବୋର୍ ହେଉଥାନ୍ତା । ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଗପକରି ସିଏ ବେଶ୍ ଖୁସି ଅଛି ।”

“ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ତ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେବି । ତାଙ୍କପାଇଁ ମୁଁ କେତେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଠା ଆଉ ମିଠା ସ୍ଵାଦ ଚାଖିଲି । ମୋ ପାଇଁ ବି ସିଏ ସାନ୍ଧ୍ୟଭ୍ରମଣର ସାଥୀ ପାଲଟିଗଲେ ।”

ରବିବାର ଦିନ, ସେମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ ମିଶି ଇସ୍କନ୍ ମନ୍ଦିର ଗଲେ । ସ୍ଵଭାବତଃ ଶୋଭନା ଇଶ୍ଵରପ୍ରେମୀ । ତାଙ୍କ ଘରେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ମଦନମୋହନଙ୍କର ପୂଜା କରାଯାଏ । ଗୀତା ମାଉସୀଙ୍କୁ ସେଇକଥାଟି ଭାରି ଭଲଲାଗିଲା । ଜାଣିଶୁଣି ଶୋଭନା ତାଙ୍କୁ ନିଜ ଜୀବନ କାହାଣୀ ଶୁଣେଇନଥିଲା । ସିଏ ଥରେ ପଚାରିଥିଲେ, “କାହିଁକି ବାହାହୋଇନ ଝିଅ । ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିଲ, ଚାକିରି କଲ, ବାପା, ମାଙ୍କୁ ଖୁସି କରିବାକୁ ବାହାହୋବା ଦରକାର ନା ।” ଶୋଭନା ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇଥିଲା, “ମୁଁ ତ ବୁଢ଼ୀ ହେଲିଣି, କିଏ ମତେ ବାହାହୋବ କହୁନାହାନ୍ତି ? ତାପରେ ମାଉସୀ, ଏ ଦେଶରେ କାମର ଏତେ ଚାପ ଯେ, ବାହାହୋଇ ଆଉଜଣଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଆଡ଼ଜଙ୍ଗ୍ କରିବା ବହୁତ କଷ୍ଟକର । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତ ମାଉସୀ, ଏ ଦେଶରେ ଅନେକ ଲୋକ ବାହା ହୋଇନାହାନ୍ତି ।”

ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ ପରେ ଗୀତା ମାଉସୀ ତାଙ୍କ ସାନପୁଅ ପାଖକୁ ଫେରିଗଲେ । ହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଅଭିଜିତ୍ ଓ ଶୋଭନା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଯେଉଁ ପରିଚୟ ଆରମ୍ଭହେଲା, ସେଇଟା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ନିକଟତର କରାଇଲା । ସେମାନେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ସାଙ୍ଗହାଲ କଫି ପିଇବାକୁ ଚାଲିଯାଆନ୍ତି । ପୁଣି ବେଳେବେଳେ ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ସପିଙ୍ଗ୍ କରିବାକୁ ଚାଲିଯାଆନ୍ତି ଓ ପାଖରେ ରେଝୁରାଣ୍ଟ୍ ଥିଲେ ଖାଇଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଶୋଭନା କିଛି ଭଲ ରାନ୍ଧିଲେ ନେଇ ଅଭିଜିତ୍‌ଙ୍କୁ ଦେଇଆସେ ।

ଦିନେ କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି ଅଭିଜିତ୍ ପଚାରିଦେଲା, “ଆପଣ କଣ ସାରାଜୀବନ ଏମିତି ସ ସିଙ୍ଗ୍ ହୋଇ ରହିବାକୁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି ?”

ଉତ୍ତରରେ ଶୋଭନା ପଚାରିଲା, “ଆପଣ ବି ତ ସିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଲାଇଫ୍ ପ୍ରିଫର୍ କରନ୍ତି । ହଁ କି ନା ।”

ଅଭିଜିତ୍ କହିଲା, “ନା, ମୁଁ ଏକ ପାରିବାରିକ ଜୀବନ ଚାହେଁ । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଚାହେଁ, ସନ୍ତାନ ଚାହେଁ । ହେଲେ ମୋ ଜୀବନରେ ଏମିତି କିଛି ଘଟିଲା ଯେ, ମୋର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସବୁ ଚୁର୍ମ୍ଭା ହୋଇଗଲା । ସେଇ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣାରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇବାକୁ ମତେ ଅନେକ ଦିନ ଲାଗିଗଲା । ଏବେ ତ ବୟସ ବଢ଼ିଗଲାଣି । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ବି ସେମିତି ସବୁ ଅଳ୍ପ ଲାଗିଗଲେଣି । କେତେବେଳେ ସମୟ ଅଛି ଯେ ସମ୍ପା କରାବି ?”

ଶୋଭନାର ମନେହେଲା ଯେମିତି ପ୍ରଭୁ ମଦନମୋହନ ତା ପାଖକୁ ଅଭିଜିତ୍‌ଙ୍କୁ ପଠାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସିଏ ବି ନିଜ ମନ ଖୋଲିଦେଲା । “ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଭଳି ମୋ ଜୀବନରେ ବି ଏମିତି ଏକ ଘଟଣା ଘଟିଲା ଯାହା ମୋ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସବୁକୁ ଓଲଟେଇ ଦେଲା । ତାପରେ, ମୁଁ ଆଉ ସେସବୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ ଭୁଲିଯାଇଛି କହିଲେ ଚଳେ । କାମରେ ମନ ମଜେଇଦେଉଛି, ଶନିବାର, ରବିବାର ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ସେବା କରୁଛି । ବାସ୍, ଜୀବନ ସେମିତି କଟିଯାଉଛି ।”

ଶୋଭନା ଓ ଅଭିଜିତ୍‌ଙ୍କର ବନ୍ଧୁତା ବଢ଼ିଥିଲା । ଗୋଟିଏ ବର୍ଷପରେ ପୁଣି ଯେତେବେଳେ ଅଭିଜିତ୍‌ର ମା’ ଆସିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ପୁଅପାଖକୁ, ଶୋଭନାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରି କହିଲେ, “ଝିଅ, ଆମ ଅଭିଜିତ୍ ତୁ ଟିକେ ବୁଝାନ୍ତୁନି । ଆମ ପାଖରେ ବହୁତ ପପୋଜାଲ୍ ସବୁ ଅଛି । ହେଇ ଦେଖେ, ଏ ପଟଟା ସବୁ । ହେଲେ ସିଏ ଏକା ଯିବୁ ଧରିଛି ଯେ, ବାହା ହବନି । ଆମେ ବୁଝାବୁଝା ହେଲୁଣି, କେତେବେଳେ କୋଉକଥା । ପିଲାଟା ଯଦି ଘରସଂସାର କରି ଖୁସିରେ ରୁହନ୍ତା, ଆମକୁ ବି ଟିକେ ଖୁସି ମିଳନ୍ତା । ଗୋଟିଏ ଝିଅ ଏମିତି କଲା ବୋଲି, କଣ ସବୁ ଝିଅ ସେମିତି ? ଆମ ସାନବୋହୁ ତ ପୁଣି ଏତେ ଭଲ ?”

ଶୋଭନା ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଦେଲା, “ମୁଁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରି ଦେଖିବି ।”

ସେତିକି ବେଳେ ତା କାନରେ ଯେମିତି କିଛି ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ୱନିତ ହେଲା, “ଗୋଟିଏ ପୁଅ ଏମିତି କଲା ବୋଲି, କଣ ସବୁ ପୁଅ ସେମିତି ?”

ମାଉସୀ ଦେଖାଇଥିବା ପଟଟାର ସବୁ ଝିଅ ବଡ଼ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିଶୁଥିଲେ । ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ କହିବା ଅନୁଯାୟୀ, ସେମାନେ ସବୁ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷିତା ଓ ଭଲ ଚାକିରି ବି କରିଛନ୍ତି । ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ ବିଷୟ ଭାବି ସିଏ ନିଜ ବାପା, ମାଙ୍କ କଥା ମନେପକେଇଲା । ସେମାନେ କଣ ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ ଭଳି ତା’ ପାଇଁ ଏମିତି ଦୁଃଖୀ ହେଉଥିବେ ?

ମାଉସୀ ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ ରହି ପୁଣି ନିଜ ସାନପୁଅ ପାଖକୁ ଚାଲିଗଲେ ଓ ସେଠି ମାସେ ରହି ପୁଣି ଭାରତ ଫେରିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ବଡ଼ପୁଅ ପାଖକୁ ଆସିବେ କହି ବିଦାୟନେଲେ । ଗଲାବେଳେ ଶୋଭନାର ହାତଧରି କହିଯାଇଥିଲେ ଅଭିଜିତ୍‌ଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝେଇବା ପାଇଁ ।

ସେଦିନ ଶନିବାର ଥିଲା । ଶୋଭନା କହିଲା, “ଆମେ ଆଜି ନିଜେ ରାନ୍ଧି ତିନର୍ କରିବା । ତମେ ବିରିୟାନି ତିଆରି କର ଓ ମୁଁ ମଟର୍-ପନିର୍ ରାନ୍ଧୁଛି ।”

ଶୋଭନାର ଲିଭିଙ୍ଗ୍ ରୁମ୍‌ରେ ସେମାନେ ତିନର୍ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଶୋଭନା ଅଭିଜିତ୍‌ଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝେଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକଲା, “ଗୋଟିଏ ଝିଅ ଏମିତି କଲା ବୋଲି, କଣ ସବୁ ଝିଅ ସେମିତି ? ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସାନଭାଇର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ତ କେତେ ଭଲ । ଆପଣ ବାହାହେବାକୁ ରାଜିହେଉନାହାନ୍ତି କାହିଁକି ?”

ଅଭିଜିତ୍ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ପଚାରିଲା, “ଆପଣ କଣ ମତେ କେତେବେଳେ ପ୍ରପୋଜ୍ କରିଛନ୍ତି ଯେ ମୁଁ ମନାକଲି । ଅସଲ କଥାହେଲା, ମତେ ତ କେହି ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ପ୍ରପୋଜ୍ କରିନାହାନ୍ତି ।”

“ଇଏ କେମିତିକା ମୁଖ କଥା । ମୁଁ କାହିଁକି ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରପୋଜ୍ କରିବି ? ମୋ କହିବା କଥାହେଲା ଯେ, ଆପଣଙ୍କ ବାପା, ମା’ ଯେଉଁ ସବୁ ପ୍ରପୋଜାଲ୍ ଆଣୁଛନ୍ତି, ଆପଣ ରାଜିହେଉନାହାନ୍ତି କାହିଁକି ?”

ଅଭିଜିତ୍ କହିଲେ, “ଦେଖନ୍ତୁ ଶୋଭନା, ମୁଁ ସେଭଳି ବାହାଘରରେ କେବେବି ରାଜିନୁହେଁ । ହେଲେ ଯଦି ତମେ ପ୍ରଯୋଜ୍ କରିବ ତ ମୁଁ ରାଜି ହୋଇଯିବି ।”

ଶୋଭନା ମୁହଁରେ ରଙ୍ଗ ଖେଳିଗଲା । ସିଏ ଚିକେ ମିଛ ରାଗ ଦେଖାଇ ଓ ଲାଜେଇଯାଇ କହିଲା, “ଦେଖ ଅଭିଜିତ୍, ଏଇଟା ମଜା କରିବାର ବେଳ ନୁହେଁ । ଏଇଟା ଗୋଟିଏ ସିରିୟସ୍ କଥା । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ତମପାଇଁ ତମ ବାପା, ମା’ ବହୁତ ଚିନ୍ତିତ । ତାପରେ ମୋ ଅତୀତ ତ ତମେ ଜାଣିଛ । ବାହାଘର ପ୍ରତି ମୋର କେମିତି ଏକ ଘୃଣା ଆସିଯାଇଛି ।”

“ମୁଁ ମଜା କରୁନି, ତମଭଳି ସିରିୟସ୍ ହୋଇ କହୁଛି । ତମ ନିଜ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ, ତମ ଜୀବନକୁ ଆଉ ଥରେ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ସୁଯୋଗ ତ ଦେଇକରି ଦେଖ । ତମ ବାପା, ମା’ କଣ ତମପାଇଁ ଚିନ୍ତିତ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି ?” – ମୃଦୁ୍ୟ ହସି ଅଭିଜିତ୍ କହିଲା ।

“ତମେ ସେ ଜାରଜପୁତ୍ର ସୁବତ ଭଳି ହେବନି ତ ?” – ଶୋଭନା ପଚାରିଲା ।

“ତମେ ସେ ତାହାଣୀ ସୁପର୍ଣ୍ଣା ଭଳି ହେବନି ତ ?” – ଅଭିଜିତ୍ ପଚାରିଲା । ଅଭିଜିତ୍ ପ୍ରଥମ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ନାମ ସୁପର୍ଣ୍ଣା ଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଘୃଣାରେ ସୁପର୍ଣ୍ଣାକୁ ସୁପର୍ଣ୍ଣା କହୁଥିଲେ ।

ସେଇଠି ପ୍ରେମ ଆରମ୍ଭହେଲା । ଶୋଭନାର ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟର ଲିଭିଙ୍ଗ୍‌ରୁମ୍‌ରେ । ଅନ୍ୟ ଜଣକୁ ସ୍ନେହ କରିବାର, ରୁମ୍‌ନ ଦେବାର ଯେତେ ଲଜ୍ଜା, ଯେତେ ଦୁର୍ବାର ବାସନା ସଞ୍ଚିତ ହୋଇ ରହିଥିଲା ଅଭିଜିତ୍‌ର ମନରେ, ସେ ସେସବୁ ପୁରଣ କଲା । ଶୋଭନା ବି ଚହଲିଗଲା । ଅଭିଜିତ୍‌ର ଚିକେ ସ୍ନେହିଳ ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ ତାର ବହୁଦିନର ସଞ୍ଚିତ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟବନ୍ଧ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଦେଲା ।

ଏଇଟା ଉଭୟଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ସୁଯୋଗ । ଏ ସୁଯୋଗ ହରାଇବାର ନୁହେଁ । କେବେ ନୁହେଁ ।



ତକ୍ତର ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ ତେଟନ୍, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ରହନ୍ତି । ଲେଖାଲେଖିରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଆଗ୍ରହ । ସେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ତିନିଟି ଗଳ୍ପ ସଂକଳନ, ସଂପାଦକ ରହସ୍ୟ ଓ ଅଣାୟତ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି ଓ କବିତା ସଂକଳନ ‘ସଂପାଦକ ସେତୁ’ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରିବାର ମାଧ୍ୟମ ହେଲା, bigyanidas.osa@gmail.com.

ସମିତାର ବ୍ୟଥା

ଶାନ୍ତିଲତା ମିଶ୍ର



ଖରାଦିନେ କୁଅରୁ ବାଲୁଟିଏ ପାଣି କାଢିଲା ବେଳକୁ କି କଷ୍ଟ । ମଣିଷ ଧଇଁସଇଁ । ପାଣି ଯାଇ କୋଉ ପାତାଳରେ ପଶିଛି । ପାଣି ଆଣି ଦୁଆରେ ଥୋଇଦେଲା ବେଳକୁ ତିନି ଛୁଆ ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ଆସି ଗୋଡ, ହାତ ମୁହଁ ଥୋଇଦେଇ ସବୁ ପାଣି ପାଖାପାଖି ଶେଷ କରି ଦଉଛନ୍ତି । ‘କେଶବ’ ଅଫିସରୁ ଆସି ‘ପାଣି ନାହିଁ ଭଲରେ ମୁହଁ ହାତ ଥୋଇବାକୁ’, ବୋଲି ପାଟି କରୁଛନ୍ତି ।

କେଶବ ଯେତିକି ଗରଗର, ‘ସମିତା’ ବି ସେତିକି ଗରଗର । ଗୋଟାଏ ବାଲୁଟି ପାଣି କୁଅରୁ କାଢିବାକୁ ମଣିଷ ନୟାନ୍ତ, ସରିଲା ବେଳକୁ ଗୋଟାଏ ସେକେଣ୍ଟ ବି ଲାଗିଲାନି, ଯେମିତି କେଶବଙ୍କ ଦରମା । ମାସ ଯାକର ଗଧ ଖଟଣି ପରେ ଯାହା ଦରମା ମିଳେ ମାସର ପ୍ରଥମ ଦି ସପ୍ତାହରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ସବୁ ସରିଯାଏ । ଇଲେକ୍ଟ୍ରିକ୍ ବିଲ୍, ଖିର ବାଲା, ଦୋକାନ ସଉଦା ବିଲ୍, ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କ ସ୍କୁଲ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ, ଘରର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚରେ ସବୁ ସରିଯାଏ । ଆଉ ଦି ସପ୍ତାହ ସମିତା ଯେ କି କଷ୍ଟରେ ଚାଣିଚୁଣି ଘର ଚଳାଏ କେବଳ ସେଇ ହିଁ ଜାଣେ ।

ଡାଲିରେ ପାଣି, ଚାରି ଫଳ ପରିବା ବା ଆଳୁକୁ ଆଠ ଫଳ କରି ତରକାରୀ କରି ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କୁ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଦିଏ, ନିଜେ ପେଜ ମିଶା ପଖାଳ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଲୁଣ, ଲଙ୍କା, ଆଚାର ଦେଇ କାମ ଚଳାଏ । ଦିନ ଗଣୁଥାଏ ମାସ ଶେଷକୁ । ମାଛ, ମାଂସ ତ ସାତ ସପନ; ମାସମାସ ଚାଲିଯାଏ, ପାଟିରେ ବାଜେନା । ଯଦି ସାଇପତିଶାରେ କାହା ପୋଖରୀରୁ ମାଛ ଧରା ହୋଇଥାଏ ଓ ଯଦି ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବଳିଥାଏ ଆସି ଦେଇଯାଅନ୍ତି, ସେଦିନ ଖାଏ, ନଚେତ ନାହିଁ ।

ସକାଳୁ ସମିତାର ମନଟା ଠିକ୍ ନଥିଲା । ଏମିତି ଏକ ଦୁସ୍ତିଆ ଜୀବନକୁ ନେଇ କଣ ତାର ସାରା ଜୀବନ କରିଯିବ ? କେଶବ କୁହନ୍ତି ପିଲା ମାନେ ପାରିଗଲେ ଏ ଦୁଃଖ ଆମର ରହିବନି । ସେ ଦିନ ଆସିବାକୁ ତ ଆହୁରି ଯୁଗେ ଅଛି । ବଡ ପୁଅକୁ ମାତ୍ର ଦଶ ବର୍ଷ । ସାନ ପୁଅକୁ ଚାରି, ମଝିଆ ଝିଅକୁ ସାତ । ଏମାନେ କେବେ ପାରିବେ, ଯାଇ ତାର ଦୁଃଖ ନେବେ । ସେଯାଏ ତାର ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଆଉ ଆୟୁଷ ଥିଲେ ହେଲା । ପିଲାବେଳ, ନିଜର ଲୋକମାନେ ମନେ ପଡୁଥିଲେ । ତାର ବାପଘର ସୁଛଳ ନଥିଲେ ବି ଅଭାବ, ଅନାଟନ ସେ କେବେ ଦେଖିନଥିଲା । କାନ୍ଦ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା କିନ୍ତୁ କାନ୍ଦି ପାରୁନଥିଲା । କାନ୍ଦିଲେ ପରିବାରର ଅଶୁଭ ଭାବି ଲୁହ ସବୁ ଢୋକି ନେଉଥିଲା ।

ହଠାତ ଡାକବାଲା ଠାରୁ ଚିଠିଖଣ୍ଡେ ପାଇ ଖୋଲି ପଢିବସିଲା । ମାଉସୀ ଝିଅ ଭଉଣୀ ‘ରାଣୀ’ ଦେଇଛି । ଖୁସି ଲାଗିଲା । ଆହୁରି ଖୁସିଲାଗିଲା ଯେ ସେ ଏଠିକି ଆସିବ ବୋଲି ଲେଖିଛି, କିଛିଦିନ ପାଇଁ ତା’ ପାଖେ ରହିକରି ଯିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପର ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ତା ଖୁସିବା ମଉଳି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ସେ ଆସିଲେ ତାର ଏଠି ରହିବା, ଖାଇବାରେ ବହୁତ ଅସୁବିଧା ହେବ । ହେଉ ପଛେ ଦି ଚାରିଦିନ ପାଇଁ ।

ଭାବି ପାରୁନଥିଲା ସମିତା କଣ କରିବ ବୋଲି । ପିଲାଦିନୁ ସେମାନେ ବହୁତ ସାଙ୍ଗ ଥିଲେ । ଖରା ଛୁଟିରେ ଅଜା ଘରକୁ ସବୁ ବର୍ଷ ଯାଉଥିଲେ । ସେଠି ବହୁତ ମଜା କରୁଥିଲେ । ଅଜା ଆଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା ପରେ ସେ ଏଇ ରାଣୀବୋଉ ଯିଏକି ତାର ବଡ ମାଉସୀ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଯାଏ । ମାଉସୀର ଦୁଇପୁଅରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଝିଅ ହେଲା ରାଣୀ । ମାଉସୀର ବିରାଟ ଘର ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ଅପର୍ଯ୍ୟାପ୍ତ ସଂପତ୍ତି । ରାଣୀକୁ ବି ସେମିତି ଘର ବର ଦେଖି ଦେଇଥିଲା । ବାହା ହୋଇଗଲା ପରେ ଜୀବନ ଜଂଜାଳ ଭିତରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବିଶେଷ ଦେଖାସାକ୍ଷାତ ବହୁତ ବର୍ଷରୁ ହୋଇନଥିଲା ।

ବିଶେଷତଃ ସମିତାର ଜୀବନ ଏତେ ସହଜ ନଥିଲା । ସେମାନେ ତିନି ଭଉଣୀ ଓ ଦୁଇ ଭାଇ ଆଉ ମଧ୍ୟବିତ୍ତ ପରିବାର । ତାର ବାହାଘରର ବର୍ଷକ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ତାର ବାପାଙ୍କର ଦେହାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ସେ ସାନଝିଅ ଥିଲା ସତ, ତାକୁ ଭଲପାରେ ଦବାପାଇଁ ବୋଉ ପାଖେ କୌଣସି ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନଥିଲା । ମାଉସୀର ସହାୟତାରେ ତାର ବାହାଘର କେଶବଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ହୋଇଥିଲା । କେଶବ ବି ସେମିତି ମଧ୍ୟବିତ୍ତ ପରିବାରର ଲୋକ ଥିଲେ ସତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଚଳିବାରେ କିଛି ଅସୁବିଧା ନଥିଲା । କେଶବଙ୍କର ଏକ ବଡ଼ କଂପାନୀରେ ଚାକିରି ଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ବାହାଘରର ଆଠବର୍ଷ ପରେ ସେ କଂପାନୀଟି କୌଣସି କାରଣରୁ ବନ୍ଦ ହୋଇଯିବା ଫଳରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଘରେ ବସି ରହିବାକୁ ହେଲା ।

କେଶବ ଏକ ମାତ୍ର ପୁତ୍ର ତାଙ୍କ ବାପ ମା'ଙ୍କର । ସେତିକି ବେଳେ ମା' ତାଙ୍କର କ୍ୟାନସରରେ ଚାଲିଗଲେ । ବାପା ଆଗରୁ ଚାଲିଯାଇଥିଲେ । ମା'ଙ୍କ ଚିକିତ୍ସାରେ ବାଡ଼ି, ବଗିଚା ଯାହା ଥିଲା ସବୁ ବିକି କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କୁ, କେବଳ ଏଇ ଘର ଖଣ୍ଡକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି । ଶାଶୁଙ୍କ ଗହଣା ସବୁ ବି ବିକିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା । ତାର ନିଜ ଗହଣା ଖାଲି ଯାହା ରହି ଯାଇଥିଲା ।

ବସି ଖାଇଲେ ନଇ ବାଲି ସରିଯିବା ପରି ଅବସ୍ଥା ତାଙ୍କର ଆସିଗଲା । କାଳେ କଂପାନୀ ଖୋଲି ଯାଇପାରେ ଏଇ ଆଶାରେ ଚାଲିଗଲା ଅନେକ ବର୍ଷ । ଏଠିସେଠି ଛୋଟମୋଟ କାମ କରି କିଛିବର୍ଷ ଖାଲି ଖାଇପିଇ ଚଳିଗଲେ । ସମ୍ପର୍କ ନାମଗଣ୍ଡ ନଥିଲା । ପିଲା ତିନିଜଣ ସେମିତି ଭୋକରେ ନ ରୁହନ୍ତୁ । ନିଜ ପେଟରୁ କାଟି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପେଟ ପୁରୋଡ଼ିଲେ କେବଳ ।

ଏବେ ଚାରିବର୍ଷ ହେବ ଆଉ ଏକ ଛୋଟ କଂପାନୀରେ କାମ କରୁଛନ୍ତି କେଶବ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଗଠାରୁ ବହୁତ କମ୍ ଟଙ୍କା ମିଳୁଛି । ସେମିତି ସେମିତି ହେଉ ଘର ଚଳିଯାଉଛି । ଅଧିକା ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ତୁଲେଇବା ଅବସ୍ଥା ତାଙ୍କର ନୁହେଁ ।

କେଶବଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ଶୁଖିଗଲା, ସମିତାଠାରୁ ରାଣୀର ଆସିବା କଥା ଶୁଣି । ତାକୁ ସେ କେବେ ଦେଖି ନାହାଁନ୍ତି ସତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ସମିତାଠାରୁ ଶୁଣିଚନ୍ତି ବହୁତ ଥର, ବଡ଼ ଲୋକର ଝିଅ, ପୁଣି ବଡ଼ ଲୋକର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସମିତାର ଏତେ ଖୁସି ଦେଖି କିଛି ମୁହଁ ଖୋଲି କହି ପାରୁନାନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ସେଇ ଛୋଟିଆ ଘରକୁ ସମିତା ବାରମ୍ବାର ସମ୍ପର୍କ କରିଚାଲିଛି । ଚାରିବଖାରା ଘରୁ ଗୋଟାଏ ବଖରା ରାଣୀ ପାଇଁ ସାଇତି ରଖିଛି । ନୁଆ ବେଡ଼ିଂ ଆଣି ଖଟରେ ପକେଇ ଦେଇଛି । ଭଲ ଲାଗୁନାଏ କେଶବଙ୍କୁ ଏ ସବୁ । ଏବେ ନ ଆସିଲେ ଭଲହୁଅନ୍ତା ବୋଲି ଭାବୁଥିଲେ ବି ସମିତାର ଏ ଅଦିନିଆ ଖୁସିଟା ବି ଚାଲିଯିବ ସାଙ୍ଗେସାଙ୍ଗେ ଭାବି ତୁପ୍ ରହିବାକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟହେଲେ ।

ପ୍ରଥମ ଦିନର ରକ୍ଷା ଦେଖି କେଶବଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଗରମ ହୋଇଗଲା । ମାଛ ମାଂସ ସଙ୍ଗେ ତିନି ଚାରି ପ୍ରକାର ତରକାରୀ ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ଖିରି । ହଁ, ଖାଇବାକୁ ଭଲଲାଗିଲା ସତ, ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ଏପରି ଖାଦ୍ୟ ପାଟି ଚାଖିନିଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ କେତେ ଟଙ୍କା ଯେ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିଥିବ ସମିତା ଭାବିଲା ବେଳକୁ ଚେତା ବୁଡ଼ିଯାଉଛି । ତାଙ୍କର ଦୁଇସପ୍ତାହର ଘରଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଦୁଇଦିନ ଖାଇବାରେ ଗଲାଣି । କେତେଦିନ ଏପରି ଚାଲିବ କିଏ ଜାଣେ ?

ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି ଯିବାକୁ ନାମ ଧରୁନି ରାଣୀ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ପୁରା ମିଶିଗଲାଣି । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ଖୁସି କହିଲେ ନସରେ । ରାଣୀ ମାଉସୀ, ରାଣୀ ମାଉସୀ ହୋଇ ତାକୁ କ୍ଷଣେ ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ନାରାଜ । ସମିତା ସଙ୍ଗେ କେବେ ମନ୍ଦିର ତ କେବେ ବଜାର ହାଟ ସାଙ୍ଗାଥା ଚିହ୍ନା ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଘର ବୁଲିବାରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବେଳ ନାହିଁ । ସମିତାର ଖୁସି ରାଣୀ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ବହୁତ ବେଶି । ପିଲା ବେଳର କେତେ ଗପସପରେ ଦିନରାତି ଏକାକାର କରିଦେଲେଣି । କେଶବଙ୍କ ରାଗ ଅମଥମ ମୁହଁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବେଳ ବା କାହିଁ ?

ରହୁରହୁ ମାସେ ରହିଗଲା ରାଣୀ । ସମିତା ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁ ତୁପ୍ ରହିଗଲେ ବି ଦାନ୍ତ କଡ଼ମଡ଼ ହେଉଥିଲା କେଶବଙ୍କର । ମୁହଁ ଖୋଲି କହିଦେବେ କି ଦିପଦ, ବୁଲେଇ ବଙ୍କେଇ, 'ତୁମ ଘର କଥା ମନେପଡ଼ୁନି କି' ବୋଲି । ସମିତା ତରରେ ଭୋକି ନିଅନ୍ତି କଥାସବୁ । ସମିତା ଘରକାମ କରିକରି ନୟାନ୍ତ ହୋଇ ସାରିଲାଣି । ନିତି କୁଅରୁ ପାଣି କଢା, ଛଅ ଠା ତିଅଣ, ନଅ ଠା ଭଜା,

କେବେ ପିଠାପଣା, ଖିରି ଖେଚେଡ଼ି, ପଲୋଉ, ବିରିଆନି ରୋଷେଇ । ପିଲାମାନେ ଭାରି ଖୁସି, ଏମିତି ଖାଇବା ତାଙ୍କୁ କେବେ ମିଳେନି, ଯଦି ବା ମିଳେ କେବେକେବେ ପର୍ବପର୍ବାଣୀରେ; ତା ପୁଣି ଦିନକ ପାଇଁ ମାତ୍ର, ଏ ତ ପୁରା ମାସେ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି ।

ତା ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ବାହାରେ ଯାଇ ଚାର୍ଟ, ଗୁପ୍‌ଟୁପ୍, ବରା ପିଆଜି । ସମିତା ତାର ସୁନାଖତୁ, ଦୁଇଟା ହାର ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଗହଣା ସବୁ ବନ୍ଧା ପକେଇ ଟଙ୍କା ଧାରକରି ଆଣି ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିଚାଲିଛି । କେଶବ ସଫା କହିଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ଯଦି ଟଙ୍କା ମହାଜନକୁ ଠିକ୍ ସମୟରେ ନଦେଇ ତା' ଗହଣା ବୁଡ଼ିଯିବ, ସେ ଆଉ କେବେବି ତାକୁ ଗହଣା କିଣିଦେଇ ପାରିବେନି । ସମିତା ହସେ, କହେ ଏ ଗହଣା ସବୁ ତାରି ମାଉସୀ ରାଣୀର ବୋଉ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ତାରି ଝିଅ କାମରେ ଯଦି ଟିକେ ଆସିଲା, କଣ କ୍ଷତି ହୋଇଗଲା ?

ତା ପରଦିନ ସକାଳ ଟ୍ରେନ୍‌ରେ ରାଣୀ ଫେରିଯିବ । କେଶବଙ୍କ ଖୁସି କହିଲେ ନସରେ । ସମିତା ବି ଘର କାମ ଆଉ ଅତିଥି ସେବା କରିକରି ଅକିଗଲାଣି । ସେ ବି ଚାହିଁଲାଣି ରାଣୀ ଏଥର ଫେରିଯିବା ଭରିତ ହେବ । ରାଣୀର କେହି ପିଲାଛୁଆ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ସ୍ଵାମୀ ତାର ଦି ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ଚାଲିଗଲେ । ଏବେ ସେ ଏକାକୀ । ଘରେ ଚାକର ପୁଝାରୀ, ଦିଅର ଯା', ତାଙ୍କର ଦି ପୁଅ ତା ଘରେ ରୁହନ୍ତି ସତ, ତା ମନରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଭାରି ଦୁଃଖୀ । ମାଉସୀ ବି ନାହିଁ । ବାପଘର ପତ୍ନୀ କହିଲେ ଏଇ ସମିତା ହିଁ ତାର ସୁଖଦୁଃଖର ସାଥୀ । ମନ ବୁଝିବା ପରି ଭାଇ, ଭାଉଜ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି ।

ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କ ବାରମ୍ବାର ବଦଳି ଯୋଗୁ ରାଣୀ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସହରକୁ ଯାଇ ରହିଥିବାରୁ ସମିତା ସଙ୍ଗେ ତାର ଅନେକ ବର୍ଷରୁ କେବେ ଦେଖା ହୋଇନଥିଲା । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଚିଠିର ଆଦାନପ୍ରଦାନ ହୁଏ ସତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ସମିତା ଉତ୍ତର ଠିକ୍ ସମୟରେ ଦେଇପାରେନା ।

ସେଦିନ ରାତ୍ରଭୋଜନ ସମୟ ବେଳେ ସମିତା କଥା ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା –“ସତରେ ମାସେ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଚାଲିଗଲା ଜଣା ପଡ଼ିଲାଣି । ବହୁତ ଖୁସିଲାଗିଲା, ତୁ ଆସି ମୋ ପାଖେ ରହିଲୁ” ।

–ହୁଁ ମତେ ବି ଭଲ ଲାଗିଲା ଭାରି । ପିଲାମାନେ ତୋର କେତେ ଭଲ, କେତେ ସ୍ନେହୀ, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ମନ ବାନ୍ଧି ହୋଇଗଲା । ଆସନ୍ତା ବର୍ଷ ଆଉଥରେ ଆସିବି ।

ଓ...ନା... ନା ...କେଶବ କିଛି କହି ଆସୁଥିଲେ କିନ୍ତୁ ସମିତା ଓଠରେ ଆଙ୍ଗୁଠି ଦେଇ ଇଙ୍ଗିତରେ ତୁମ୍ଭେ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ କହିଲା । ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ସମିତା ଓ କେଶବଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବେଶ୍ ଗୋଟାଏ ଝଗଡ଼ାର ଝଡ଼ ବହିଗଲା । –“ତାକୁ ମନା କାହିଁ ସଫା କରିଦେଇ ନାହିଁ ଆସନ୍ତା ବର୍ଷ ନ ଆସିବାକୁ । ଏଇଟା ଧର୍ମଶାଳା ନୁହେଁ” । ରାଗରେ ବହୁତ କିଛି ବକିଗଲେ କେଶବ । ସମିତା କହିଲା –“ଏତେ ଦିନ ତ ଖୁସିବାସିରେ ଗଲା, ଗଲା ବେଳକୁ ତା' ମନରେ କାହିଁକି ଅପ୍ରିୟ କଥା କହି କଷ୍ଟଦେବି ? ଏତେ ଖୁସିରେ ଆସିଥିଲା, ସେଇ ଖୁସି ଟିକକ ତାର ମଧୁର ସ୍ମୃତି ହୋଇ ରହୁ, ମୁଁ ଚାହେଁ । କୌଣସି କଥା କଥା କହି ଯିବା ବେଳକୁ ତା' ମନରେ ମୁଁ କଷ୍ଟ ଦେଇ ପାରିବିନି । ଆସନ୍ତା ବର୍ଷକୁ ଦେଖା ଅଛି ।”

–“ଆମର ସୁବିଧା ଥିଲେ ସେ ଆସିବ, ନହେଲେ କିଛି ସେତେବେଳକୁ ବାହାନା କରିଦେବା ଆମେ ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଉଛୁ ବା ଆଉ କୋଉଠିକି ଯାଉଛି କହି” । ଏ କଥାଟା କେଶବଙ୍କ ମନକୁ ବେଶ୍ ପାଇଲା । ହୁଁ ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି । ଯେମିତି ସେମିତି କରି ରାତି ପାହିଗଲା । ଭଲରେ ନିଦ ହେଲା ବା କୋଉଠି ?

ବଡ଼ି ଭୋରରୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଉଠିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସମିତା ଉଠି ବଜୁଳି ପିଠା, ଗତ ରାତିରୁ ଆଣିଥିବା ରସଗୋଲା ଓ ତାଲମା କରି ଖାଇବାକୁ ଦେଲା । ବିଦାୟ ବେଳରେ ଦୁହେଁ ଦୁହେଁଙ୍କୁ ଧରି କାନ୍ଦିଲେ । ଆସନ୍ତା ବର୍ଷକୁ ଅସିବାକୁ ରାଣ ଦେଲା ସମିତା । କେଶବ ଦାନ୍ତ କଡ଼କଡ଼ କରି ରହିଗଲେ । ଯାଉ ସେ, ତାପରେ ସମିତା ସାଙ୍ଗେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା । ସମସ୍ତେ ଝେସନକୁ ଗଲେ ରାଣୀକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ । ପିଲାମାନେ ବି କାନ୍ଦିଲେ । କେଶବଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଆଖି ଓଦା । ତାଙ୍କ ଖୁସିକୁ ସେ ଯଥା ସମ୍ଭବ ଚାପି ରଖିଲେ ।

ଗଲା ବେଳେ ଏକ ଲକ୍ଷପା ଦେଇଗଲା ରାଣୀ । -‘କଣ ଲୋ ଇଏ’ । ପଚାରିଲା ସମିତା । -‘କିଛି ନୁହେଁଲୋ, ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ କଣ କିଣିକି ଦେବୁ । ତୁ ଏତେ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚବାଜ୍ କରି ଆଦର ସଜ୍ଜାର କଲୁ, ଜୀବନ ସାରା ତୋ ସ୍ନେହଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ଭୁଲିପାରିବନି’ ।

ଟେନ୍ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲା, ରାଣୀ ଚାଲିଗଲା । ସମିତାର ମନ ବୁଝୁନଥିଲା । ରାଣୀର ଉତ୍ତମ ସଜ୍ଜାର ସେ କରିପାରିନି । ମାଉସୀ ତାକୁ କେବେବି କ୍ଷମା ଦେବନି । ମାଉସୀ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରପାଇଁ ବହୁତ କିଛି କରିଥିଲା । ତାରି ହାତ ମୁଠାକୁ ସେମାନେ ଚାହିଁ ବସୁଥିଲେ । ଲୁଗାପଟାଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଚାଉଳ, ତାଲି, ପରିବା, ଟଙ୍କା ପଇସା ଆସିଲେ ତାର ବାପ ମା’ଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ଚଳେ ।

ତଥାପି ସେ କେଶବଙ୍କ କଥାକୁ ଭ୍ରଷ୍ଟେ ନକରି ପାରୁ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଛି ତାର ଯତ୍ନ ନେବାରେ । ଘରକୁ ଫେରି ଆସିଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ । ଘରଟା ଖାଁ ଖାଁ ଲାଗୁଛି । ପିଲାମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଘେରି ସମିତାକୁ ପଚାରିଲେ -“ମାଉସୀ କଣ ଦେଇଛି ଖୋଲ ନା ବୋଉ ଲକ୍ଷପା ଚା” । ଆରେ ହଁ, ସେ ତ ଲକ୍ଷପା କଥା ପୁରା ଭୁଲି ଯାଇଛି । କେଶବ କହିଲେ -“ତୋପା ଦେଇଛି” ।

ଲକ୍ଷପା ଖୋଲି ସମିତାର ଆଖି ପୁରା ଖୋସି ହୋଇଗଲା, କେଶବଙ୍କର ବି । କିଛି କହି ଆସୁଥିବା କଥା ସେଇଠି ଅଟକି ଗଲା । ଟଙ୍କା, ସେ ବି ବିତାବିତା । ଏତେ ଟଙ୍କା ସେମାନେ କେବେ ଆଗରୁ ଦେଖିନଥିଲେ । ଚିଠିଟିଏ ବି ଲେଖିକି ଯାଇଛି ରାଣୀ ।

-“ଏଇ କୋଡ଼ିଏ ଲକ୍ଷ ଟଙ୍କା ଦେଇକି ଯାଉଛି । ତୋ ଘର ଅନେକ ଜାଗା ଭାଙ୍ଗିରୁଜି ଯାଇଛି, ତାକୁ ମରାମତି କରିବୁ, ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଓ କେଶବ ବାବୁ ଓ ତୋ ପାଇଁ ଦି, ଚାରି ହଜି ଭଲ ପୋଷାକ କିଣିବୁ । କେତେ ଧୋଇ ଶୁଖେଇ ଦୁଇହଜି ଲୁଗାପଟା ପିନ୍ଧୁଥିବ ? ଆଉ ହଁ, ଘରେ ଗାଧୁଆଘର ଆଉ ପାଣିକଳ ଲଗେଇବାକୁ ଭୁଲିବୁନି । କେତେ ବସି ପାଣି କାଢୁଥିବୁ ଏ ଖରା ଦିନଟାରେ । ଆଉ ଟଙ୍କା ଦରକାର ହେଲେ ଲେଖିବୁ, ସଂକୋଚ କରିବୁନି । ରହୁଛି ତୋର ଭଉଣୀ ରାଣୀ” ।

ସମିତା ଯେତିକି ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ, କେଶବ ତା’ଠାରୁ ଆହୁରି ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଲଜ୍ଜା, ସଙ୍ଗେରେ ସେ ଏତେ ଚିକେ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ଭାବୁଥିଲେ, ମା’ କରି ଯାଇଥିବା ଦୟା, ଦାନ ସବୁ ଝିଅ ଆସିଛି ଆଦାୟ କରିବାକୁ । ନିଜ ମନୋବୃତ୍ତି ପାଖରେ ସେ ନିଜେ ଛୋଟ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ଏଇ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ଟଙ୍କାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ବହୁତ ଥିଲା । ରାଣୀ ମାନବୀ ରୂପରେ ଦେବୀ ହୋଇ ଆସିଥିଲା ତେବେ । ଟଙ୍କା ପାଖରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ବଙ୍କା ହୋଇ ଯାଆନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ସେ ଆଗରୁ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁ ମଣିଷକୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ପଲ୍ଲୀରେ ତଉଲିବା ଠିକ୍ ନୁହେଁ ବୋଲି ଆଜି ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ଜାଣିଲେ ।

ପ୍ରଥମେ ଯାଇ ସାହୁକାରର ଧାର ଶୁଣି ସମିତାର ଗହଣା ସବୁ ନେଇ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ଆସନ୍ତା ବର୍ଷକୁ ଆଉଥରେ ଆସିବାକୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଜଣାଇ ଚିଠି ଲେଖି ବସିଥିଲେ ରାଣୀ ପାଖକୁ । ଆରଥରକୁ ଦୁଇ ମାସରୁ ଅଧିକ ରହିବାକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅନୁରୋଧ ଭରା ଅନୁନୟ କରିଥିଲେ ।



ଶାନ୍ତିଲତା ମିଶ୍ର, ରଚେନ୍ଦ୍ର, ମିନେସୋଟା

ଲୁଠ ସ୍ମୃତି ଶିଖଣ୍ଡ ଶତପଥୀ



ଅକ୍ଷରର ଆବରଣ ତଳେ
ଲୁଚିଲୁଚି ଗଲି ସନ୍ତର୍ପଣେ
ଖୋଜିବାକୁ, ହଜିଯାଇଥିବା ସ୍ମୃତି ସବୁ
ନିଘଞ୍ଚ ଜଙ୍ଗଲ, ତରୁ ଆଡୁଆଳ
ତାଳ ଉତ୍ସାହରେ, ପଥର ସନ୍ଧିରେ
ଖୋଜିଲି, କଣ୍ଠରୁଦା କାଦୁଅ ଅଣ୍ଟାଳି
ପାଇଯିବି କାଳେ, ସ୍ମୃତିରୁ ଚେନାଏ ।

ପତଗହଳରୁ ଥିଲାପତି, ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମାର କିରଣ ବିଖରି
ଗଲି ଧାଇଁ, ମନେ ଆଶା ନେଇ
ମିଳିଯିବ ପରା, ସ୍ମୃତି ପସରା
ଖୋଲିବ କି ଅବା, ସ୍ମୃତିର ଫରୁଆ
ପିଆଜର ଛିଡା ଓଢଣି ଅତୁଆ
ତଳେ ଥିବା ଲୁଚି, ପୁସ୍ତ ପୁସ୍ତ ମିଶି
ଅନ୍ତରୁ ବିକଶି, ସୁପ୍ରଗୁପ୍ତ ରାଶି
ଖୋଲିବେ ଆସିର ଲୋତକର ଧାର
ମଧୁମୟ କନ୍ଦ, ଅବା ଅବଗନ୍ଧ

ପିୟାର ପଥମ, ପ୍ରେମ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ
ବିରହ ବିଷାଦ ଅବା ଅଭିମାନ
ଖୋଲିବ ମନର ପାଖୋରା ସିନ୍ଦୂକ
ଶାନ୍ତ ହୃଦୟକୁ କରି ଧରହର ।

ନାହିଁ, ଖୋଜିବି ମୁଁ ଆଉଦିନେ
ସାଥେ ଆଣି ପ୍ରତିବେଶୀ ଜଣେ
ଆଜିମୁଁ ଯଦି, ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶେ
ସ୍ମୃତି ଖୋଜୁ ଖୋଜୁ ନିଜକୁ ହରାଏ
ସମୀର ସାଥରେ, ନାତିବ ଜୋଛନା
ତୀବ୍ରାଲୋକେ କରି ନରା ମୋ ଚେତନା
ବିଗତ ସ୍ମୃତିରେ ଏକା ହଜିଯାଏ ଯଦି
ନଥିବ ସାଥରେ କେହି ଉତ୍ସାରିବା ପାଇଁ
ଦିଗହରା ହୋଇ ଭାସିଲେ ସନ୍ତାପେ
ଚନ୍ଦିକାର କଣ ଯାଏ ଅବା ସତେ?
ନାହିଁ, ଖୋଜିବି ମୁଁ ଆଉଦିନେ
ସାଥେ ଆଣି ପ୍ରତିବେଶୀ ଜଣେ ।



ବାଟଛାଡ଼ ସୁହୁଟ ନାଗର ପ୍ରତିଭା ଶତପଥୀ

କିଏ ପଥରୋଧ କରୁଛି ମୋର
ବାଟଛାଡ଼ି ଠିଆହେଇଯାଇଛି
ଆଗକୁ ବଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଦଉନି ମତେ-
ମହାବିଶ୍ଵର କୌଣସି ଅକଳ୍ପନୀୟ ସତ୍ତା
କହୁଛି, 'ତୁ ହୁସ୍' -
ତା' ତ ମୁଁ ଜାଣେ, ତଥାପି
ଗଛଟିଏ, ଫୁଲଟିଏ କଥା କହିପାରେ ବୋଲି,
ବି ଜାଣେ,

ମୁଁ ଯେତିକି ପାଇଛି
ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ନିହାତି,
ଆଉ ଏଣିକି ଖୋଜିବି ନାହିଁ ତୁମକୁ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ତୁମେ ତାହୁଁ ଯଦି
ମୋ କାନିପକାଇ ଚାଣିଆଣିବି ତୁମକୁ
ଘୁରାଇବି ଚଉକଟି,
ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ମୋ ବାଟସାରା
କଖା ଆଉ କାଦୁଅ
ଛାଟି ଦେଇବ ଚାରିଆଡ଼ ।

ହେଲା ଏଥର,
ବାଟଛାଡ଼ -
ଯିବାକୁ ହବ ଦୂର, ବହୁଦୂର
ଗ୍ରହ ଗ୍ରହାନ୍ତର
ତୁମେ ଜାଣିବ ସବୁ -
ପିଞ୍ଜ, ମତେ ବାଟଛାଡ଼ ।

ଏକଥା ଭଲକରି ମୁଁ ବୁଝିସାରିବି ଯେ
ତୁମେ ମତେ ଭଲପାଅ
ତୁମେ ମତେ ଇର୍ଷାକର ।



ପ୍ରତିଭା ଶତପଥୀ
୧, ଗିନ୍ଦ୍ୟାର୍କ
ପଟିଆ ଜେସନ୍‌ରୋଡ଼
ପୋ: କଟି
ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵର - ୭୪

ସଭ୍ୟତା

ବରୁଣ ପାଣି



ରଜା ଆଉ ପୁରୋହିତ, ବଣିକ ଯାତରା ଦଳ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି ଅପହରା ସରଗ ଗଳିରେ
ପଛେ ପଛେ ବିଦୁଷକ, ଗାହାଣ, ପାଳିଆ ସବୁ ଗାଇ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି କେତେ ଭଜନ, ଅଳିରେ ||
ମୁକତିର ପଥେ ବନ୍ଧା, ବନ୍ଧକ ଯେ ଭକତର ଦଳ
ଆଉ ସୈନିକ ପରଜା ସହ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଗହଳ ||
ହାତ ଧରି ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି ଅନ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଅନ୍ଧକାର ସରଗର ପଥେ
କେତେ ସେ ନୂଆ ରାଇଜ, ମନ୍ଦିର, କାରଖାନା ଗଢିବେ ସେ ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ସାଥେ ||
ଚିରନ୍ତନ ଚିରା କନା, ଭିକ ଆଉ ଦରମାରେ ବନ୍ଧା ହୋଇ ଶ୍ରମିକ ଭକତ ଆଉ ପରଜାର ଦଳ
ସାଲୁବାଲୁ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ଅନ୍ଧାର ସଭ୍ୟତା ପଥେ ଦେଖ ମାଳ ମାଳ ||
ବିଦୁଷକ କହିତାଲେ ଅନନ୍ତ ସେ ଆଲୋକ କାହାଣୀ
ବଖାଣେ ସେ ଦେବ ତୁଲ୍ୟ ରାଜାର ମହିମା ଆଉ ବଣିକର ହୀରା ନୀଳା ମଣି ||
କେତେ ଯେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ତାର କବିତା ଓ ଉପନ୍ୟାସ, ଆହା କେତେ ଲୁହ ଆଉ ଲହୁ ଯେ ଲାଘବ ହୁଏ
ଅଫିମ ନିଶାରେ ଆଜି ଶ୍ରମିକ ଭକତ ତାର ଦୁଃଖ କଷ୍ଟ ସବୁ ଭୁଲି ଯାଏ ||
ଚିରନ୍ତନ କାଳ ଧରି ଚାଲିଛି ସଭ୍ୟତା ଭାଇ, ଚାଲିଛି ଆଗେଇ
କେତେ ଲାଶ୍ ମୂଳଦୁଆ, ସପନ କଂକାଳ ନାଚେ, ନାଚେ ଥେଇ ଥେଇ
ଆସ, ଆଜି ସଂଖୁଲିବା ସଭ୍ୟତାର ପଥେ ଏଇ ଚିର ଯାତ୍ରୀ ଦଳ
ନମନ କରି ଯେ କବି କୁହାଟେ ସେ କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ କଂଠେ, ଡାହା ମିଛ, ମିଛ ଖାଲି
ଏଇ ସଭ୍ୟତାର ଖେଳ ||



ବରୁଣ ପାଣି, ୩/୨୭/୨୦୧୭ ରିଜ୍ ଲାଣ୍ଡ ମିଶିଣିପି

ଅନୁପମ ସୃଜନ ସ୍ନେହ ମହାନ୍ତି

ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ଏ ରମ୍ୟ ଉପବନେ
ସଜାଇଲ କେତେ ଯେ କୁସୁମ,
ବାସଭରା ରୂପରଙ୍ଗ ଦେଇ
ରଚିଦେଲ ଆହେ ଅନୁପମ ।୧।

ତୋଳିଦେଲ ସାଗରେ ତରଙ୍ଗ
ସିନ୍ଧୁ ତୁମେ କରୁଣାର ବିନ୍ଦୁ
ନଗଣ୍ୟ ମୁଁ କିପରି ବୁଝିବି
ରହସ୍ୟରେ ଭରା ସାତସିନ୍ଧୁ ।୨।

ତୁମ ଗଢା ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ଗୌରବ
ସ୍ରଷ୍ଟା ତୁମେ ଗଢିଲ ମାନବ,
ସତ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟେ ଅସତ୍ୟ ରଖିଲ
ଦୁଃଖ ପରେ ସୁଖର ବିଭବ ।୩।

ଭରିଦେଲ ଅଶେଷ ଯାତନା
ପଥଦୁରା ହେଲା ଯେବେ ମନ,
କଳୁଷିତ ବିଷୟରେ ମାତି
ଚେତାଇଲ ମାୟା ଏ ଜୀବନ ।୪।

ଜୀବନର ଅନ୍ତିମ ସୋପାନେ
ଶୁଭେନାହିଁ ଦୂରୁ କୋଳାହଳ
ମନ ଦେହ ନୀରବ ନିଷ୍ଠେଜ,
ଆଶ୍ରୟ ହିଁ ତୁମ ପଦତଳ ।୫।



Sneha Mohanty lives in Huntington Beach, California. She is a regular contributor to the OSA Journal.

ପୁଲଟିଏ

ପରାଶର ମିଶ୍ର



କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି ଆଜି ଚିକେ ପୁଣି
ପୁଲଟିଏ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମନ ହୁଏ
ପୁଲ ସହିତ ଗପିବାକୁ ମନ ହୁଏ
ପୁଲ ଗଛ ଆଗରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ
ଦୁଃଖ-ସୁଖ ହେବାକୁ
କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ, ହସିବାକୁ ମନ ହୁଏ ।

ଗଛକୁ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିଶେ ପୁଲ
ମନ ମୋହେ କଅଁଳ ପାଖୁଡ଼ା
ଭିନ୍ନ, ଭିନ୍ନ ରଙ୍ଗ ଆଉ ମହକରେ ପୁଷ୍ପ
ପାଖୁଡ଼ା ତା' ମେଲି ହୃଦୟ ତା' ଖୋଲା
ନା ଥାଏ ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନ, ଅବା ଅଭିମାନ
ଆକାଶରେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର, ତାରା ସମ
ସଜାଏ ସେ ଧୂସର ପୃଥିବୀ
ଦିବା ନିଶି ପ୍ରତିଟି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ।

ପୁଲ ଅଛି ଅନେକ ଜାତିର, ଅନେକ ନାଆଁର
ପୁଲ ପୁଷ୍ପ ଭଳି, ଭଳି
ପୁଷ୍ପି ସିଏ ମୋତେ ଡାକୁଥାଏ
ତାଜି, ତାଜି ହସୁଥାଏ,
ହସି, ହସି ଦେଖାଉଥାଏ
ପକ୍ୱତର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅପୂର୍ବ
ଶିଖାଏ, ଜୀବନ ଲୋଡ଼େ
ଗଛ, ମାଟି, ପାଣି, ପବନ ।

ପୁଲକୁ ମୁଁ ଭେଟିଥାଏ
ପୁଷ୍ପିଲା ଗଛରେ, ଜନ୍ମଦିନରେ, ମୃତ୍ୟୁଶଯ୍ୟାରେ,
ସଭାସମିତିରେ, ଶୋଭାଯାତ୍ରାରେ, ସ୍ଵାଗତ
ସମ୍ମାଣଣରେ, ମନ୍ଦିରରେ
ପୁଣି ପ୍ରିୟତମାର ଗଭାରେ
ପୁଲ ପୁଷ୍ପିଯାଏ ପ୍ରିୟର ହସରେ ।

କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି ଆଜି
ପୁଲଟିଏ ଦେଖିଲେ ପ୍ରିୟତମା ମନେ ପଡ଼େ
ପ୍ରିୟତମାର ରାଗ, ରୁଷା, ମାନ, ଅଭିମାନ ଭଲ ଲାଗେ
ପ୍ରିୟତମାର କୋଳରେ ଶୋଇ
ରାଜା-ରାଣୀ ଗପ ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ପରୀ ରାଇଜକୁ
ଭତିଯିବାକୁ
ଆଉ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମନ ହୁଏ ।

ପ୍ରେମ, ପ୍ରଣୟ ଓ ସ୍ଵରଣର ପ୍ରତୀକ ପୁଲ
ଶାନ୍ତି, ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ଆଉ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟର ପ୍ରତୀକ ବି ସିଏ
ସତେଜତା ଓ ଝୁର୍ତ୍ତର ପ୍ରତୀକ ନେଇ
ପୁଲ ଇଶ୍ଵରଙ୍କର ଏକ ନୈସର୍ଗିକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି
ସିଏ ଆଶେ ଦିବ୍ୟତାର ହସ ।
ପୁଲ ସହ ମନ ଖୋଲି ଗପିବାକୁ,
ଦୁଃଖ-ସୁଖ ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ, ହସିବାକୁ
ମନ ମୋର ବ୍ୟାକୁଳ ହୁଏ ପ୍ରତିଟି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ।

କକ୍ଷରୁତ ଗ୍ରହଟିଏ ମୁଁ ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର

ମାଗିନାହିଁ କେବେ ଦିନେ
ଅଳପ କି ବେଶି
ଯେତେବେଳେ ଯାହାଦେଲ
ପାଇହେଲି ଖୁସି ।

ପେଟ ମୋର ପୁରିଯାଏ
ମୁଁଠାଏ ଭାତରେ
ରାଜକୀୟ ଖାଦ୍ୟଠାରୁ
ରହୁଛି ଦୂରରେ ।

ତାମସିକ ଯାହା ଅଛି
ତୁମ ଦୁନିଆରେ
ମନକୁ ବୁଝାଇ କହେ
ରହିଯାଆ ଦୂରେ ।

ଝାଟିମାଟି ଘରେ ଥିଲି
ବହୁତ ଭଲରେ
ଶୋଉଥିଲି ଗଧଭଳି
ଗଭୀର ନିଦରେ ।

ଶୋଇଦେଉଥିଲ ମୋତେ
ଛିଣ୍ଟା ମଶିଣାରେ
ବୁଝୁଥିଲ ଭଲମନ୍ଦ
ଅତି ଯତନରେ ।

କୋଠାଘରେ ରହି ଆଜି
ଶୁଏ ପଲଙ୍କରେ
ନିଦଗଲା କାହିଁ ହଜି
ଚିନ୍ତା ମୋତେ ଘାରେ ।

ଦି'ଖଣ୍ଡ ଲୁଗାପିନ୍ଧି
କରୁଥିଲା ଲାଜ
ଶହଶହ ଲୁଗାଥାଇ
କିଣେ ଏ ନିର୍ଲଜ୍ଜ ।

ରୋଗ, ବ୍ୟାଧି ଯାହାଦେଲ
ସହେ ମୋ' ଜୀବନେ
ନିଜ ଲୁହ ନିଜେ ପୋଛେ
ଆସିଲେ ନୟନେ ।

ଚାକିରିରେ ଯେଉଁ କାମ
ବରାଦ କରିଲ
ଦେଲ ଶତ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟେଷ୍ଟ
କରୁଅଛି ଭଲ ।

ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ଯାହା ମୋର
ଦିଅ ତୁମେ ବେଶି
ସେ ବଳକା ଅର୍ଥ ଲାଗେ
ତୁମପାଇଁ ହସି ।

କକ୍ଷରୁତ ଗ୍ରହଟିଏ
ତୁମ ଇଲାକାରେ
ଘୁରିଘୁରି ବୁଲୁଥାଏ
ତୁମ ଭରସାରେ ।

ବାଜି ଜୀବନଟି କରୁ
ଟିକିଏ ଶାନ୍ତିରେ
ଜନସେବାପାଇଁ ବଡ଼
ଆସୁ ହୃଦୟରେ ।

ଯେତେଯାହା ପାପପୁଣ୍ୟ
କରିଅଛି ସାଇଁ
କାହିଁକି ମୁଁ କରିଥିଲି
ମୋତେ ଜଣାନାହିଁ ।

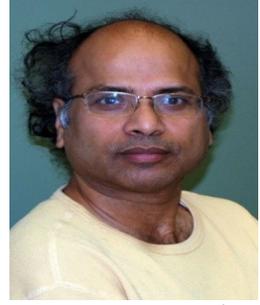
ଯେତେବେଳେ ତୁମ ପାଶୁ
ଆସିବ ତାକରା
ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସଦାବେଳେ
ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ମୁଁ ପରା ।

ତୁମ ପାଦପଦ୍ମେ ଦେବ
ଟିକିଏ ଆଶରା
ଝୁରୁଥିବି ତୁମକୁ ମୁଁ
ଜନ୍ମଜନ୍ମ ସାରା ।



ତକ୍ଷରୁ ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର
ସିଲଭର୍ ଫିଲ୍ଡ ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ
ରୁହନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ଗୋଟିଏ
କବିତା ପୁସ୍ତକ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ
ହୋଇସାରିଛି ଓ ସେ କବିତା
ଲେଖାରେ ବଡ଼ ଆଗ୍ରହ ରଖନ୍ତି
। ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ
କବିତା ପୁସ୍ତକ ଉପରେ କାମ
କରୁଛନ୍ତି ।

“ନୋ ଇଙ୍ଗଲିଶ୍, ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍”
ଗଗନ ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ



ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶ ଆଲବାମା ରାଜ୍ୟେ
ମାଡିସନ ନାମ୍ନୀ ସହର ଭିତରେ,
ନବ ଆଗନ୍ତୁକ ସୁରେଶ ପଟେଲ
ବାହାରିଲେ ଦିନେ ପ୍ରାତଃ ଭ୍ରମଣରେ ।

ଫେବୃୟାରୀ ମାସ ଆଲବାମା ରାଜ୍ୟେ
ଶୀତର ପ୍ରକୋପ ପାଇଥାଏ ହ୍ରାସ,
ପଲ୍ଲବିବା ପାଇଁ ପତ୍ର ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ
ପାଦପ ଶାଖାରୁ କରନ୍ତି ପ୍ରୟାସ ।

ସୁରୁଜ କିରଣ ଜକଜକ ହୋଇ
ବୁଣି ଯାଇଥାଏ ସବୁଜ ଘାସରେ,
ଶୀତୁଆ ପବନ ଥୁଣ୍ଡା ବୃକ୍ଷ ତଳ
ଦୋହୋଲାଉ ଥାଏ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ।

କାହିଁ ଗୁଜୁରାତ କାହିଁ ଆଲବାମା
ହଜାର ହଜାର ମାଇଲ ଦୂରତା,
ଉତାଜାହାଜରେ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ଭାବି
ସୁରେଶ ଭାଇଙ୍କ ଘୁରିଯାଏ ମଥା ।

ନଅ ବରଷର ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷାର ଫଳ
ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ହେଲା ଯେବେ ଆମେରିକା ଭିସା
ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କୁ କୃପାରୁ ମିଳିବାରୁ ହେଲା
ପୂରଣ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରାଣର ଅଭୀପ୍ସା ।

କ୍ଷୀଣାଙ୍ଗ ଶରୀର ଶିରେ ପକ୍କୁକେଶ
ବୟସର ଛାପ ଦିଶେ ମୁଖ ପରେ,
ତାଙ୍କୁ ସତାବନ ଦେଖାଯାନ୍ତି କିନ୍ତୁ
ବୟସ ଯେମିତି ସତରୀ ସତରେ ।

ରାସ୍ତା ଦୁଇ ପାଶେ ଦେଖୁ ଚାଲିଥାନ୍ତି
ରହିଅଛି ଘର ଧାଡିଧାଡି ହୋଇ,
ପାଦ ଚଲା ପଥେ ଚାଲିଥାନ୍ତି ଧୀରେ
ଏପଟ ସେପଟ ଅନାଇ ଅନାଇ ।

ସବୁ ଘର ଆଗେ ସଜାଇ ଯତନେ
ରହିଅଛି ଏକ ପୁଷ୍ପର ଉଦ୍ୟାନ,
ପିଚୁ ରାସ୍ତା ଘାଟ ପାଦ ଚଲା ପଥ
ଦିଶଇ ସୁତୁରା କେତେ ପରିଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ।

ଯୁଆଡେ ଚାହିଁବ ପଡି ନାହିଁ କାହିଁ
ଅଳିଆ ଅସନା ତାଙ୍କ ଦେଶ ପରି,
ଏହି ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଦେଖୁ ସୁରେଶ ଭାଇଙ୍କ
ଗରବରେ ମନ ଉଠୁଥିଲା ଭରି ।

ଆମେରିକା ଭଳି ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ଦେଶରେ
ପୁତ୍ର, ବଧୂ ଏବେ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ବାସ,
ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏହା ଅତି ବଡ କଥା
ହୋଇଲେ ବି ସତ ହୁଏନି ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ।

ଦୁରେଇଲା ବୋଲି ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶା
ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମରଙ୍କ ପାଶେ ମିନତୀ ଜଣାଇ,
ଭାବାବେଗେ ସିଏ ଚାଲିଥାନ୍ତି ଧୀରେ
ଆଖୁରୁ ଲୋତକ ଯାଉଥାଏ ବୋହି ।

ଭାବିଦେଲେ ପାଦ ପଡେନାହିଁ ତଳେ
ନାତିଟିଏ ପୁଣି ହୋଇଛି ତାଙ୍କର,
ନାତି ସାଥେ ଖେଳି ବିତିଯିବ ଦିନ
ଏତେ ଦିନେ ତାକ ଶୁଣିଲେ ଠାକୁର ।

ଏହି ସବୁ ଭାବି ଚାଲିଥାନ୍ତି ସିଏ
ନୁଆ ଦେଶେ ନୁଆ ଘରମାନ ଦେଖୁ,
କେଉଁ ଘର ଦେଖୁ ହେଉଥାନ୍ତି କାବା
କେଉଁ ଘରେ ଆଖି ଯାଉଥାଏ ଲାଖି ।

ଏମନ୍ତ ସମୟେ କାହିଁ କୃଷକାୟ
ଗାଡିଟିଏ ଆସି ରହିଲା ଅଦୂରେ,
ତହିଁରୁ ବାହାରି ଦୁଇଟି ପୁଲିସ
ଛିଡାହେଲେ ଆସି ସୁରେଶ ଆଗରେ ।

ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଦୀର୍ଘକାୟ ହୃଷ୍ଟପୃଷ୍ଠ
ପିନ୍ଧିଥାନ୍ତି କଲା ପୋଷାକ ଦେହରେ,
ଶ୍ଳେତାଙ୍ଗ ଶରୀର ନୀଳବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର
ବଚନ କହନ୍ତି ଇଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷାରେ ।

ପଚାରିଲେ ଆସି ସୁରେଶ ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ
ଇଂରାଜୀରେ ନାମ, ରହିବା ଠିକଣା,
ଭୟଭୀତ ଭୋଇ କହିଲେ ସୁରେଶ
ଭଲରେ ଇଂରାଜୀ ନାହିଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜଣା ।

“ନୋ ଇଙ୍ଗଲିଶ୍ , ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍” କହି
ପୁଅ ଘର ଆଡେ ଦେଖାଇଲେ ହାତ,
ପୁଣି ପଚାରିଲେ “କି ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ତୁମ?”
କାହିଁ ପାଇଁ ଏଠି କର ଯାତାୟତ ?

ସମଝି ନ ପାରି ଥରଥର ଥରି
ସୁରେଶ ବାପୁଡା ଯୋଡ଼ି ଦୁଇକର,
“ନୋ ଇଙ୍ଗଲିଶ୍, ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ୍” କହି
ପୁଣି ଆଉ ଥରେ ଦେଖାଇଲେ ଘର ।

କ୍ରୋଧ ହୋଇ ଜଣେ ପୁଲିସ୍ ଡହଁରୁ
ସୁରେଶଙ୍କୁ ଦେଲେ ଭୁଲରେ କଚାଡ଼ି,
ଗୋଡ଼ ଟେକି ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲେ ସୁରେଶ
ସିମେଣ୍ଟ ରାସ୍ତାର ତଳେ ମୁହଁମାଡ଼ି ।

ନାକ ମଥା ଫାଟି ବୋହିଲା ରକତ
ଝର ଝର ହୋଇ ସିମେଣ୍ଟ ଉପରେ,
ଗଳା ଧକ୍କା ଦେଇ ହାତ ପଛକରି
କଡ଼ି ଲଗାଇଲେ ହାତ ଦୁଇଟିରେ ।

ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧମୃତ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲେ ସୁରେଶ
ନସ୍ତୁରିଲା ଭାଷା ମୁଖରୁ ତାଙ୍କର,
ସାଇଁ ସାଇଁ ଖାଲି ମାରିଲେ ନିଃଶ୍ଵାସ
ଥରୁଥିଲା ଦେହ ହୋଇ ଥରଥର ।

ଇଂରାଜୀ ଭାଷାରେ ବର୍ବର ପୁଲିସ୍
ପୁଣି ଆଦେଶିଲେ ଛିଡ଼ା ହେବା ପାଇଁ,
ମେରୁଦଣ୍ଡ ଭାଙ୍ଗିବାରୁ ଧକ୍କା ପାଇ,
ନପାରିଲେ ସିଏ ଆଉ ଛିଡ଼ାହୋଇ ।

ରକ୍ତସ୍ରାବ ହୋଇ ବୁଡ଼ିବାରୁ ଚେତା
ଦାଖଲ ହୋଇଲେ ହାସପାତାଳରେ,
କେତେ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଅନ୍ତେ ହେବାରୁ ସଚେତ
ଜାଣି ନ ପାରିଲେ ସିଏ କେଉଁଠାରେ ।

ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଶକ୍ତି ହାତୁଁ ପାଇଥିଲା ଲୋପ
ଜଳ ଜଳ ଖାଲି ରହିଥିଲେ ଚାହିଁ,
ନିନ୍ଦିଲେ ନିଜକୁ, ଆମେରିକା ଆସି
କେତେ କ୍ଷତି କଲେ ପୁତ୍ର, ବଧୂ ପାଇଁ ।

ପୁତ୍ର ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇ ଏ ମନ୍ଦ ଖବର
ହତବାକ୍ ହୋଇ ରହିଲେ ଅନାଇ,
ଘଟିଲା କିପରି ଏତେ ଅଘଟଣ
ଜାଣିଲେ ସମସ୍ତ ହସପିଟାଲ୍ ଯାଇ ।

ଜାଣିଥିଲେ ସିଏ ପ୍ରଭାତରେ ପିତା
ଯାଇଥିଲେ ବୋଲି ପ୍ରାତଃ ଭ୍ରମଣରେ,
ଜାଗିଲା ସନ୍ଦେହ ପୁଲିସ୍ କେମିତି
କାହିଁକି ଭେଟିଲେ ପିତାଙ୍କୁ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ।

ତଡ଼ିତ ବେଗରେ ଏ ଦୁଃଖ ସମ୍ବାଦ
ହୋଇଲା ପ୍ରଘଟ ସାରା ପୃଥିବୀରେ,
ଭାରତୀୟ ବୃଦ୍ଧ ପଞ୍ଜୁ, ବିନା ଦୋଷେ
ଆମେରିକା ଧୂର୍ତ୍ତ ପୋଲିସ୍ ଧକ୍କାରେ ।

ଆଲବାମା ରାଜ୍ୟ ପୁଲିସ୍ ବିଭାଗ
ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶରେ ନିନ୍ଦିତ ହେବାରୁ,
ପୁଲିସ୍ ଜଣକୁ ନିଲମ୍ବିତ କରି
ବହିଷ୍କାର କଲେ ପୁଲିସ୍ କାମରୁ ।

ନିମିଷେ ଆସିଲା ପ୍ରତିବାଦ ପତ୍ର
ଭାରତୀୟ ଦୁତାବାସ ମାନଙ୍କରୁ,
ବୃଦ୍ଧ ଭାରତୀୟ କେଉଁ କାରଣରୁ
ଜଖମ ହୋଇଲା ପୁଲିସ୍ ହାତରୁ ।

କଥାର ଗୁରୁତ୍ଵ ଜାଣି ଗଭର୍ଣ୍ଣର
ମାଗିଦେଲେ କ୍ଷମା ସୁରେଶ ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ,
ଦେଲେ ଆଶ୍ଵାସନା ମିଳିବ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ
ନ୍ୟାୟଗତ ଦଣ୍ଡ ଆସାମୀ ଜଣକୁ ।

ଲୋକ ଦେଖାଣିଆ ମାମଲା ଉଠିଲା
ଆଲବାମା ରାଜ୍ୟ କୋର୍ଟ କଚେରୀରେ,
ଏଫ୍ ବି ଆଇ ଦୁରା ଦୁଇ ଦୁଇ ଥର
କେସ୍ ଜାରି ହେଲା ପୁଲିସ୍ ନାଆଁରେ ।

ପୁଲିସ୍ ବକ୍ତବ୍ୟ, “କଳା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଜଣ
କରି ରଖୁଥିଲା ଯୋଜନା ଆଗରୁ,
ପରେ କେତେବେଳେ ପାଇଲେ ସୁଯୋଗ
ଚୋରି କରିଥାନ୍ତା ନେବରହୁଡ଼ରୁ ।

ପୁଲିସ୍ ହାବୁଡେ ପଡ଼ିଯିବା ପରେ
ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିଲା ଖସିବ କିପରି,
ସେ ପାଇଁ ତାହାକୁ କରିଦେଲୁ କାବୁ
ନକରି ପାରିବ ସିଏ ଆଉ ଚୋରି ।”

ପୁଲିସ୍ ଓକିଲ ବାଡ଼ିଦେଲେ ଯୁକ୍ତି
“ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶେ ଆସୁପଛେ ଯିଏ,
ମାନିବାକୁ ହେବ ଆମର କାନୁନ୍
କହି ପାରୁଥିବ ଇଙ୍ଗଲିଶ୍ ସିଏ” ।

ଜଜ ମହାଶୟା ରାୟ ଦେଲେ ଶେଷେ
“ଦୋଷ ରହିଗଲା ସୁରେଶ ପାଖରେ,
ଇଙ୍ଗଲିଶ୍ ଭାଷା ନଜାଣି ଥିବାରୁ
କହିପାରିଲାନି ସଠିକ ଭାବରେ ।

ଆଉ ପୁଣି ସିଏ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଲା କାନୁନ
ପରିଚୟ ପତ୍ର ନରଖି ପାଖରେ,
ଆଗକ୍ରମ ମାନେ ରଖିବାର କଥା
ପରିଚୟ ପତ୍ର ସର୍ବଦା ହାତରେ” ।

ଉତ୍ତର ନିୟମ ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶେ
ଆଗନ୍ତୁକ ପରା ପରିଚୟ ପତ୍ର,
ହାତେ ଧରିଧରି ଦିନ ଅବା ରାତି,
ବୁଲିବାର କଥା ସର୍ବଦା ସର୍ବତ୍ର ।

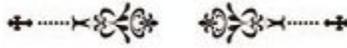
କୃଷ୍ଣାଙ୍ଗୀ ମହିଳା ଜୁରି ଦୁଇଜଣ
ପୁଲିସକୁ ଦୋଷୀ ବୋଲି ଦେଲେ ମତ,
ଆଉ ଆଠ ଜଣ ଶ୍ୱେତାଙ୍ଗ ପୁରୁଷ
ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦୋଷ ହିସାବେ କଲେ ମତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତ ।

ପୁଲିସ, ଓକିଲ, ଜଜ୍ ମହାଶୟା,
ଜୁରି ଆଠ ଜଣ ସମସ୍ତେ ଶ୍ୱେତାଙ୍ଗ,
ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦୋଷେ ଶେଷକୁ ପୁଲିସ୍ ଖଲାସ
ଦିଶିଲା ପ୍ରକୃତ ଆମେରିକା ରଙ୍ଗ ।

ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶ ତିଷ୍ଠିମ ବଜାଏ
“ହ୍ୟୁମାନ୍ ରାଇଟ୍ସ୍” ପାଇଁ ଚାରିଆଡେ,
ନିଜ ଦେଶେ କିନ୍ତୁ କଳା ଧଳା ଭେଦ
ଏବେ ବି ଗଢ଼ିତ ଯାହା ଜଣା ପଡେ ।

ନାହିଁ ତ କେବଳ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବୈଷମ୍ୟତା
ଅଶିକ୍ଷିତ ନାଗରିକ ମହଲରେ,
ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟବଶତଃ ଭରିଅଛି ଏହା
ବିଚାର ବିଭାଗ ସରକାରୀ ସ୍ତରେ ।

ପଞ୍ଚୁ ହୋଇ ଏବେ ସୁରେଶ ଚାଲନ୍ତି
“ଖାକର” ସାହାଯ୍ୟେ ମଞ୍ଚର ଗତିରେ,
ନାତି ସାଥେ ଖେଳ ହୋଇଲା ସପନ
ନିଜର ରକ୍ଷଣ ଏବେ ପର ପରେ ।



୧୩୧ ଗୋଲ୍ଡିଂ ଏଭିନ୍ୟୁ
ଗରୋଲୋ, କାନାଡା
ଫୋନ୍ ୪୧୬୨୨୩୨୭୫୬

ଅନାଦୃତ ଦୁଃଖର ଫସଲ

ସତ୍ୟ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ



ଅନୁରାଗ ନାଆଁ ଦେଇ
 ଆଖପାଖ ପୃଥିବୀରେ ମୋର
 ବୋଲିଦେଇ ତୁମେ ଯେଉଁ
 ମୁଠା ମୁଠା ବିଷଣ୍ଣ ଅନ୍ଧାର
 ତଥାପି ପାରିବି ନାହିଁ ଯୋଛି ତାକୁ
 ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି
 ଯୋଛିବାର ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟାରେ ବିତିଯିବ
 ଜୀବନର ଅବଶିଷ୍ଟ କାଳ ।

ସେ ଅନ୍ଧାର ସ୍ଥିତିଶୂନ୍ୟ
 ଅବସ୍ଥାଶୂନ୍ୟ
 ଅଥଚ ପାରେନା ସହି
 ଭାର ତାର
 ଫିକା ଫିକା ହୋଇଯାଏ
 ଧସାବତ୍ ଅର୍ଜିଥିବା
 ସବୁ ପୁଣ୍ୟ ମୋର ।

ତୁମର ଆଖିରେ ଯଦି
 କଜଳ ଧାର ଥିଲା
 ଗୋଧୂଳିର ରଙ୍ଗ ବି ତ ଥିଲା
 ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ତରଙ୍ଗ ବି ତ ଥିଲା
 ତୁମର ଆଖିରେ ଯଦି
 ତାରାଭରା ରାତି ଥିଲା
 ଜହ୍ନର ଜୋଡ଼ନା ବି ତ ଥିଲା
 ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସବୁ ସାଇତିଲ
 ଆଉ କେଉଁ ରତ୍ନ ପାଇଁ
 ମହ୍ନୀର ନାଆଁ ଦେଇ

ମୋ ରତ୍ନର ଅସଜଡ଼ା ଆକାଶରେ
 ଭସେଇଲ ଯେତେସବୁ
 କଳଙ୍କିତ ମେଘର ବାଦଲ
 ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି
 ସେ ମେଘର ପ୍ରତି ବୁଝା
 ତୁଣୀର ଅଫେରନ୍ତା ତୀର ସମ
 ବିନ୍ଦୁଥିବେ ମୋ ଛାତିକୁ
 ଝରିଯାଉଥିବ ଯେବେ ରକ୍ତ ପଳପଳ ।

ଅନ୍ଧାରର ନାଆଁ ନାହିଁ
 ସେଥିପାଇଁ ବୋଧେ ତୁମେ
 ଅନ୍ଧାରର ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ନାଆଁ ଦେଇ
 କେତେବେଳେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କହି
 ପ୍ରତାରଣା ଦେଲ
 ତ କେତେବେଳେ ଜୀବନ କହି
 ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ଦେଲ
 ବିଶ୍ୱାସର ନାଆଁ ଦେଇ
 ମୋ କ୍ଷେତରେ ଯେଉଁ ବୀଜ ବୁଣିଦେଲ
 ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି
 କେବେବି ସରିବ ନାହିଁ
 ସାରାଜନ୍ମ କାଗୁଥିବି
 ଅନାଦୃତ ଦୁଃଖର ଫସଲ ।

୨୪୪ ଫିକ୍ସଡ଼ ମ୍ ଲେନ୍,
 ଡବ୍ଲିନ୍, ଓହ୍ଲିଓ ୪୩୧୧୭
 ପୁସ୍ତକାଳୟ ଆମେରିକା

ବକେଟ୍ ଲିଷ୍ଟ୍

ଦେବରାଜ ସାହୁ



ମହା ପ୍ରୟାଣ
ମହା ନିମନ୍ତଣ
ବାହୁଡ଼ା ବିଜୟ
ଶରୀର ବିଲୟ ।

ପରିଶୋଧ ହୁଏତ ଅସମ୍ଭବ
କଣିକାଏ ଶୁଦ୍ଧି ଯଦି
ମେଘର ଶଯ୍ୟାରେ ନେଇଯାଆନ୍ତି ତୁମକୁ
ହୁଅନ୍ତା ସେ ଶାନ୍ତିର ଶଯ୍ୟା ।

ସ୍ନାୟୁ ହେବ ଶିଥିଳ
କାମନା ହେବ ପୁରଣ
ଅବାଞ୍ଚିତ ପରାଜୟ ହେବ
ବାଞ୍ଚିତ ହେବ ପ୍ରାପ୍ୟ ।

ଭସାନ୍ତି ବୋଇତ
କାତ ବୋତଲରେ ରଖି
ବାଲ୍‌ଟିମୋର୍ ବନ୍ଦରୁ
ଯିବାକୁ ଗୋପାଳପୁରକୁ ।

ଗାନ୍ଧାର ଦେଶର କୁହୁକ
ଶିଖୁ ମୁଁ ପୁଣି ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଶିଶୁଟିଏ
ବୋଉ ମୋତେ କରନ୍ତା କାଖ
କି ଶାନ୍ତି, କି ତୃପ୍ତି ।

ମହା ସମୁଦ୍ର
ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତ ବନ୍ଧରେ
ବାଟ ହଜିଲେ ବି
ବତୀଘର ଆଉ ଧୁବତାରା ମୋ ସହାୟ ।

ସମୟକୁ ପରାସ୍ତ କରି ମୁଁ
ବହୁତ ପଛକୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତି
ସାଗର ମଳ୍ଲନ ସହିତ
ଦେଖନ୍ତି କେଶବଙ୍କ କମଳା ପ୍ରାପ୍ତି ।

ଘରେ ନନା ଆଉ ବୋଉ
ଜଗିଥିବେ ବିସ୍ତାରିତ ନୟନରେ
ଗଲାପୁଅ ବାହୁଡ଼ି ଆସିଲା ସତେକି
ସାଧବ ଘର ବୋଇତରେ!

ଜଂଜାଳର ଶୁଙ୍ଖଳରେ
କାମର ଦିବା ନିଶି ଦାବିରେ
ଦିଗହରା ପତିର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟରେ
ହେଲା, ଅବହେଳା ତଥା ଅବଜ୍ଞା ।

ଦେବରାଜ ସାହୁ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

ଓସା ପିକ୍ନିକ୍ ୨୦୧୭

ହେମନ୍ତ କୁମାର ପ୍ରଧାନ



ଶନିବାର ଜୁନ୍ ଏଗାର ତାରିଖ, ପ୍ରିନ୍ସଟନ୍ କ୍ଲବ୍ ପଡ଼ିଆ,
ବହୁ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷୀତ ଓସା ପିକ୍ନିକ୍, ଖରା ଯେ ଉଦ୍ଭୁଦିଆ ।

ମକା ତରଭୁଜ ଗୁପ୍ତ ଚୁପ୍ ସଂଗେ ସିଂଗଡ଼ା ଓ ଦହିବରା,
ଚିକେନ୍ ପନିର୍ ପରିବା ବାବିକୁ୍ୟ, ସୁଆଦ ବଡ଼ ନିଆରା ।

ଦୁଲୁକିଲା ଭୂମି "ରଂଗବତୀ" ତାନେ, ଅନନ୍ୟ ବଲିଉଡ଼ ନମ୍ବର,
ଚାଟୁକାର ବାକ୍ୟ ଭାଷଣି ନେପଥ୍ୟ, ଡିଜେ ଦେବୀ, ଅମର ।

ଖେଳ ପଡ଼ିଆରେ ଯୁବ ଖେଳାଳିଙ୍କ, ଭଲିବଲ୍ ମାଡ଼ ଦେଖୁ,
ଚକିତରେ ଚାହିଁ ଦର୍ଶକ ପ୍ରବର ଚଷମା ଦିଅନ୍ତି ଟେକି ।

କ୍ରିକେଟ୍ ବ୍ୟାଟ୍ସରୁ ଉଡ଼ୁଥିଲା ଖାଲି, ଚଉକା ଆଉ ଛଙ୍କା,
ସତେକି ଯେମିତି ସଚିନ୍ ଆଉ ଧୋନୀ, ଦେଖୁ ହୋଇବେ ତାଟକା ।

ଭାତ, ପୁରୀ ଆଉ ମାଉଁସ ପନିର୍, ଘାଂଟ ଯେ ଆଳୁ ପୋଟଳ,
ରଜ ପୋଡ଼ ପିଠା, ମାଛ ଭଜା ସଂଗେ ସୁସ୍ୱାଦୁ ଦହି ପଖାଳ ।

ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନ ଭୋଜନ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତେ ଆଇସ୍ କ୍ରିମ୍, ତାପରେ ଚାହା ସେବନ,
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଖାଇବା ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୁଏକି ନଖାଇଲେ ଭଲା ପାନ ?

କୁନି କୁନି ପିଲା ମୁଁହରେ ଆଂକିଲେ, ଚିତ୍ର ଯେ ଭଲିକି ଭଲି,
ସଜ ବାଜ ହୋଇ ଝିଅପିଲା ମାନେ, ଖେଳୁଥିଲେ ରଜଦୋଳି ।

ଅଖା ଦୌଡ଼ ଆଉ ଡିନି ଗୋଡ଼ ଦୌଡ଼, ତା ସାଂଗକୁ ନାଚ ଠାଣି,
ପିଚକାରୀ ଧରି ପାଣି ଖେଳୁଥିଲେ, ଆବାଳ ବୃଦ୍ଧ ରମଣୀ ।

ସକାଳରୁ ସଞ୍ଜ ସାଂଗ ସାଥୀ ମେଳେ, କୌତୁକ ଭାରି ବଢ଼ିଆ,
ଖାଇ ଖୁଆଇ ଯେ ମଉଜ କରିବା, ଏଇତ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ।

ପ୍ରଦୀପ

(Pradipa - The Lamp)



In Memory of Sujeet Kishore Mohanty Saradindu Misra



Sujeet Kishore Mohanty
May 21, 1950 – January 22, 2017

On Sunday, January 22, 2017, Sujeet Kishore Mohanty passed away at his home in Marlton, New Jersey at the age of only 66 years. Shri Mohanty was a great friend of Odias living all over the United States. His untimely death was a great loss for the Odia community.

Sujeet was born in Cuttack in 1950 to a very affluent family. His father, Shri Naba Kishore Mohanty was a reputed contractor and a businessman of that time. He studied in the Stewart School and eventually enrolled in the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack from where he passed his M.A. in English literature with distinction. After completion, he joined the Ravenshaw College as a faculty member in the English Department. He was extremely popular among his students as well as his fellow teachers. His students simply adored him for his friendly nature. He behaved with his students more like friends.

He represented his College, University and the State as a cricket player of repute and even represented the State in the Ranji Trophy Tournament. Cricket used to be his great passion. However, it was not cricket alone, he also became a very popular Odia singer. Under the tutelage of the legendary Akshaya Mohanty, he sang in a number of Odia records which became very popular among the masses. He was called the “melody master” and was able to pull a big audience in public performances. He was also involved in a multitude of other social activities, even including the presidency of the Rickshaw-Pullers Association of Cuttack!

Sujeet got married in June of 1975 to Sangeeta Mohapatra (Kitty), daughter of late Binod Mohapatra, a retired I.G. of Vigilance of Orissa. In the year 1981, Sujeet decided to move to the U.S.A. to pursue a Ph.D. program in English language and joined the S.U.N.Y. at Buffalo. However, after completing his Masters requirement, he changed his mind and joined Law, instead, which he completed in 1988.

I came to know Sujeet while he was living in Buffalo and I will narrate an interesting incident as to how I met him for the first time. The OSA Convention was being held in Toronto in 1988. I and my wife, Lata, decided to accompany late Dr. Krushna Mohan Das and his wife, Basi Apa, to attend the event. Dr. Das was related to Sujeet – his son in law, Ranjeet Mohanty was Sujeet’s elder brother. Dr. Das had decided to spend the night in Sujeet’s house, en route to Montreal. It was past midnight. Although he had been there before, he sort of lost his way around the neighborhood at that time of the night. There was no GPS at that time and we were wondering around the neighborhood trying to locate the house but all was in vain. Finally Dr. Das shouted at the top of his voice “Tuna! Tuna!” (Sujeet’s pet name) thinking that he would get a response from him. Yes, after a few attempts, the door of his house opened and Sujeet waved his hands at us and led us all into his house. We spent the night with his family and the next day continued our journey to Toronto. That was how I first met Sujeet and started a friendship with him which continued until his death.

Sujeet moved to the New York area in 1988 and stayed for a while in New York’s Long Island. At that time we also stayed in Long Island. During that time, we met frequently and became good friends. Subsequently, he moved to Marlon in New Jersey where he set up his law practice. His practice was mostly in immigration-related matters. He helped many people in matters of immigration for free when they could not afford to spend money. He also acquired quite a reputation in commercial, criminal, civil and constitutional law. For many years, he was an honorary legal consultant for the Odisha Society of the Americas. He was very popular among the people who lived around him in New Jersey, particularly in social gatherings where he used to render his melodious songs to the utmost delight of the gathering. For the last year or so, he started singing in his face book, every Saturday, a couple of popular Hindi film songs to the delight of all his friends. On Saturday, January 21, one of the two songs was from the famous Hindi movie *Teesri Kasam* which was “*Sajanre Jhoot Mat Bolo, Khuda Ke Pass Jana Hai*”. And the next day, he passed away to his *Khuda* in his sleep. He has left behind his wife, three children and two grandchildren and infinite number of friends and well-wishers to mourn his untimely death. He was a man who was loved and respected by all and with his death created a void which is impossible to fill. He is gone but his memory will be cherished for a very long time. May God rest his noble soul in peace and give strength to his wife, Kitty, daughters Amrita and Tina, and son Rohan.



Saradindu Misra
Franklin Park, New Jersey

In Memory of Dr Gouri Das Bijoy Misra



Dr Gauri Das (front row, center) with friends in Boston, Spring, 1975.

Dr. Gauri C Das – The Leader and the Brother (1941-2017)

Gauribabu was a quintessential Oriya. He carried Oriya brilliance, Oriya pride, Oriya sensitivity and the Oriya camaraderie. He loved Oriya language, championed Oriya traditions, sought out Oriya friends. He knew of the Oriya poverty and the neglect of Orissa in modern days. He made all efforts to be of help to other Oriya friends in achieving security and stability. For some of us, he was a blessed elder brother who waited on us such that we might learn to walk the difficult paths of life.

I met Gauribabu in Cambridge, MA, when he was just completing the post-doctoral tenure in MIT. Unassuming, not-so-urban, an earthy pedestrian had written me a letter welcoming me to Boston. It was not easy for me to connect my dream personality to my brother seemingly living in Orissa. Then I saw his heart, his kindness, his hospitality and his affection. I was one of many in his family. He taught that our life was higher than our means.



My school friend Nagabhushan Senapati was in MIT and another staunch Oriya Prasanna Samantarai lived nearby. Prafulla Padhi was a student in MIT. My school seniors Nityananda Misra lived in the neighboring town and the other senior Chandrasekhar Mohanty lived in the neighboring State of Rhode Island. Nagbhushan, Nityanandababu, Chandrasekharbabu were married. Also we had Kabita Sinha, a dancer from cuttack, married to a Peace Core volunteer Kenneth Lombard.

Gauribabu was older to us and he was the leader. In our social events, he would be the first to arrive and the last to leave. Jovial and gregarious, he never missed a good game of bridge before he called it a day. He would shun anyone who would touch alcohol. He would cook all food himself if he was the host. He would clean the utensils three times to make sure everything was clean. He would be finicky, but utterly sincere.

He came from a teacher's family and had the trait of traditionalism built in him. He would be rigid in his opinion and steadfast in his principles; he would suffer than beg. He believed that Oriyas needed friendship first. He had his value that the friendship must not have a price tag. He was a friend to all; his house was open to all.



Nagabhushan, Gouri Das, Jogesh Rath, Manmohan Subudhi

Dr Jogeshwar Rath had left for Orissa those days and returned back in 1977. I learned that Gauribabu, Jogeshbabu along with a visiting Nurse-physician Dr Laxmi Saraswati Rao from Berhampur laid the foundation of Orissa Society of the Americas in 1969. In later years, OSA got more structured and Gauribabu was in pains to observe the deficit of friendship that he had cherished. Eventually his vision lost currency with the new volunteers, and he was marginalized.

In 1994, I made efforts to bring him to the OSA Convention in New Jersey by conveying that he would be honored for his early contributions. The business model of the Convention bothered him. It is possible that that he did not fully visualize that the seed he had sown would eventually become a tree. He had imagined of an Oriya village. The delegates appeared to him as transient consumers. He felt lost and never returned to another Convention.

Gauribabu was a bright student, a thorough engineer and a careful thinker. His selection of Chinmayee as his partner was novel and elegant. Blessed with two able daughters, he was a homely man, who wanted to be loved by his dear family. He gained respect from his professional friends, his personal friends and his neighbors. His friendliness won many hearts.

An early light of the Oriya immigration in the US was extinguished on May 25 through an unkind sickness. A life of service, support and dedication to the dignity of tradition was called back to eternity. His memory and legacy would continue to live as long as people of Oriya descent would live in North America. He showed what an Oriya was in one's heart and in one's soul. Oriyas in the world might discover their traits in course of time!

Peace!



Bijoy Misra
May 28, 2017
Lincoln, MA.

In Memory of Sworna Senapati

Manoj Panda, Lata Misra (through OSAnet)



Sworna Lata Subudhi was born on July 15, 1950 in Berhampur, Orissa, India to Dibakar and Labanya Subudhi. She graduated from Oakland University with a B.A in Human Resource in 1976, and went on to gain her Masters of Social Work from Wayne State University in 1981. Over her thirty-two year career, she worked as a social worker for a number of public and private agencies. She worked at Gentiva (fka Odyssey Hospice), until her retirement in 2013.

Manoj Panda shared the following information in OSAnet:

vasamsi jirNAni yathA vihAya
navAni grhNAti nara 'parANi
tathA sharlrANi vihAyAya jirnani
anyAnu samyAti navAni dehi
(Bhagavad Gita, 2:22)

The Blessed Lord says that just like a human being puts on new clothes by giving up old ones, similarly the conditioned soul accepts new material bodies in due course by giving up the old bodies.

On behalf of Senapati family with profound grief we inform all that Mrs Sworna Senapati (Kuni) breathed her last peacefully in her residence at Bloomfield Hills, Michigan on August 6, 2016 (Saturday) at 8 PM in the presence of her family. She is the wife of Late Dr Hemanta Senapati, ex-President of OSA. Her cremation took place in White Chapel Crematorium in Troy, Michigan on August 8, 2016 (Monday) at 1 PM in the presence of close relatives and friends.

Mrs Senapati, a long time resident of Detroit area, was a wonderful lady in helping the community in every way possible. Odias of Michigan lost a great member. She left behind her 2 sons Rajesh and Devesh who are established well with their families.

Our deep condolences to the bereaved family and we pray for the well being of the departed soul.

Saradindu and Lata Mista shared the following in OSAnet:

We are very sorry to learn about the demise of Sworna Senapati (Kuni) on August 6. Hemanta Babu and Kuni were known to us for a very long time. When Hemanta Babu's parents visited them, the whole family stayed with us in our Little Neck home. That was around 1982 or 83. Rajesh was a little boy then. All of us went together for sightseeing in New York City. We had close association with the family. During the first OSA convention in Detroit, we had rehearsal in their house and Kuni was as usual proved to be a great hostess. She was a charming and loving personality and kept close contact with us even after the demise of Hemanta Babu. During the time when Hemanta Babu was President of OSA, Kuni supported him tremendously in discharging his duties as President. After his passing away, Kuni continued to be actively involved in the activities of OSA as well as in community services. She was a sweet and noble person and will be missed by all. Our heartfelt condolence to Rajesh and Devesh. May Kuni's soul rest in peace!



ବହିତ୍ର

(The Vessel)



OSA Treasurer's Report

Siddharth Behera

Last year we had a successful membership drive and our overall membership grew by 42. Over time our membership has consistently grown and now our organization has 1278 members. From the table below we can see our growth is mainly on the permanent Life Members.

Category	July 31 st 2014	July 31 st 2015	May 31 st 2016*	May 14 st 2017	Increase since May 31 st 2016
Life Members	921	963	995	1015	20
Benefactors	42	42	42	42	0
Patron	51	51	51	51	0
5 Year Member	51	62	61	67	6
Annual Member	40	84	87	103	16
Total	1105	1202	1236	1278	42

* Doesn't include new members registered for 2016 convention

Due to the tremendous effort from our community, chapter presidents and the convention volunteers we have managed to reach the high in membership. We could not have reached the milestone without their support and hard work.

Financially, we are in a much stronger position than before and mainly because of:

- Surplus money from past annual conventions,
- Increase in membership and upgrades of membership, and
- Tight control of expenses

Over the last 4 years the total balance has grown from \$220,923.52 to \$290,770.47. From the table below, the big jump is in the long term investment and the expense & other funds. Previous executive committee did a tremendous job of investing part of the money in long term investment. The money has grown by about \$22K over a span of two and half years. After a lot of effort we finally closed the 2015 convention account in Dec. of 2016 and finally published the financial details in OSAnet in April of 2017. We are also in the final stages of closing 2016 convention account.

Category	May 31 st 2014	May 31 st 2015	May 31 st 2016	May 14 th 2017
Relief Fund	7,000.00	15,598.12	16,818.12	17,598.12
Long Term Investment*	103,584.24	156,321.75	174,870.74	182,998.05

Expense + other funds	110,339.28	57,554.48	72,982.57	90,174.30
Total	220,923.52	229,474.35	264,671.43	290,770.47

* Includes the total amount in TD Ameritrade and cash in Bank of America account.

In June of 2015 we opened a Savings Bank account in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Last year we could get online access to view the transactions associated with the account. The account is enabling people and institutions to donate money to OSA in Indian Rupees. The money in the account can't be repatriated to US dollars. They can only be used for expenses in India. As we do not have an entity registered in India, we are having hard time to file the taxes in India. Thus we haven't paid taxes for the 2 financial years: 2015 - 2016 and 2016- 2017. The current balance of the account is:

Category	June 1 st 2015 - May 31 st 2016	June 1 st 2016 - May 14 th 2017
OSA	Rs. 81,577.72	Rs. 832,711.99 ³
Previous convention	Rs. 233,661.60 ¹	Rs. 0.00 ²
Current convention	Rs. 300,000.00 ²	Rs. 0.00 ⁴
Total	Rs. 615,239.32	Rs. 832,711.99

¹ 2015 convention

² 2016 convention

³ Includes 2015 & 2016 money

⁴ 2017 convention

All of the achievements have been possible because of good support from our President Sushant Satpathy, Vice President Sulochana Pattnaik and Secretary Saradakanta Panda.

Siddharth Behera

Treasurer, OSA (2015 - 2017)

OSA USA Account Statement 9/1/2016 through 5/14/2017

	Amount	Income / Expense Categories
Opening Balance (9/1/2016)		
Checking A/C (Main)	\$61,512.77	
Checking A/C (Relief Fund)	\$17,110.62	
TD Ameritrade	\$170,225.46	
Total Balance (9/1/2016)	\$248,848.85	
Receipts		
	\$21,679.22	Convention 2015 (account settlement)
	\$40,302.86	Convention 2016 (account settlement)
	\$6,260.00	Donation
	\$4,120.00	Membership
Payments		
	\$412.72	Administrative
	\$15,962.44	Convention 2016 (donations)
	\$20,000.00	Convention 2017 (advance)
	\$1,000.00	CCO-CD
	\$1,835.00	Awards
	\$500.00	Youth Program
	\$2,500.00	Cultural
	\$1250.00	Cultural
	\$950.00	Chapters (matching funds)
	\$52.89	PayPal Transaction Fees

Closing Balance (5/14/2017)

Checking A/C (Main)	\$90,174.30
Checking A/C (Relief Fund)	\$17,598.12
TD Ameritrade	\$172,748.05
Convention 2017 Advance Receivable	\$20,000.00
Total Balance (5/14/2017)	\$300,520.47

OSA India Account Statement 9/1/2016 through 5/14/2017

	Amount	Income / Expense Categories
Opening Balance (9/1/2016)		
Syndicate Bank	Rs.1,132,950.94	
Total Balance (9/1/2016)	Rs.1,132,950.94	
Receipts		
	Rs.26,217.05	OSA
	Rs.0.00	Convention 2015
	Rs.0.00	Convention 2016
Payments		
	Rs.126,456.00	OSA
	Rs.0.00	Convention 2015
	Rs.200,000.00	Convention 2016
Closing Balance (5/31/2016)		
Syndicate Bank	Rs.832,711.99	
Total Balance (5/31/2016)	Rs.832,711.99	

OSA Welcomes New Members

(June 1st 2016 - May 31st 2017)

New Life Members

Dinesh Rout
Debashis Das
Sunil Kumar
Soumendra Samal
Subhasish Panda (upgrade)
Kuldip Mohapatra
Nilasundar Jena
Basant Padhi
Tapak K Jena (upgrade)
Ardhendu Sarangi (upgrade)

Rashmi R Sarangi (upgrade)
Prasant Mohanty
Pruthwiraj Pradhan
Biswajit Das
Sujit Mallik
Minerva Mishra
Pratik Srivastava
Sanjeeb Swain
Bibhudatta Dash
Nilanjana Misra

New 5 year members

Shankar Baral
Bijay Das
Dilli Kara
Jyoti Biswal
Sanjeev Roy
Barun Patnayak
Subhasish Parida
Debabrat Nayak
Malaya Mohanty
Rakesh Babu
Pradeep Das
Tapas Kumar Jena
Chandrika Kanungo

Purna Mahapatra
Debajit Mishra
Pranaya Mishra
Tushar Misra
Ashok Padhy
Aparajit Panda
Subhasish Panda
Bichitra Pattanayak
Sambit Pradhan
Parthasarathi Roy
Hemanta Sinha
Sujata Mohanty

Welcome OSA Officials (2017-2019)



President: Lalatendu Mohanty ; Vice President: Susil Panda; Secretary: Amar Senapati, Treasurer: Sachi Pati

OSA Regional Drama Festival, Status 2017: An Update

Sandip K. Dasverma, Chair RDF, National Coordination committee, OSA



Epilogue:

Started in 2009, the RDF (Reginal Drama Festival) is going to be a decade old in 2018.

During Dallas convention of 2011, RDF coordination committee Chair Brajendra Panda presented a Power Point presentation on RDF at the seminar. To our amazement and elation, Chief Guest for the Dallas Convention, Satyananda Mishra, the then Chief Information Commissioner of India, came up to me and told, "We are unable to present Odia drama in even Metropolitan cities of India, how come you have presented more than 30 Odia dramas all over America?" The number is now incidentally more than 80.

Saroj Behera, a past President of OSA and a good friend of mine, came up to me and said, "Sandip babu what you (RDF coordinators) have done is an admirable job. Please keep it up." Next morning, he made this commitment of his support to Kuku Das (the-then OSA Vice President and now CA Chapter President) in my presence. In 2013 the 1st California RDF happened, where Kuku played a significant part. It was repeated this year (2017) in North California. For the 1st time a team from Portland, Oregon, travelled more than 700 miles to present its drama to Californians.

History:

In July 2007, after Detroit convention, we stayed at Dr. SriGopal Mohanty's home on our way to Niagra Falls. The RDF idea was then on my mind and I discussed it with him. He liked the idea. Subsequently, an OSA's office came my way - unexpectedly. I had a chance to give shape to my dream project. SriGopal babu promised to coordinate it after completion of Toronto convention. The rest as they say, is history.

OSA RDF will complete 9 years in 2017, and will be a decade old in 2018. RDF was introduced in 2008, when the author was elected to OSA National Executive, 2007-2009. The first RDF was staged in the year 2009 in Denton, TX on April 4, 2009 by DFW Orissa Society, a part of OSA South West Chapter. It was titled Southern Regional Drama Festival. As per an OSA national executive resolution, in 2008, SriGopal Mohanty was appointed as the Coordinator to organize RDF in different regions of North America.

In 2010 at Dr. Mohanty's initiative, a three-member Coordination Committee was formed consisting of Sri Gopal Mohanty, me (Sandip K. Dasverma) and Dr. Brajendra Panda(Chair). This was confirmed by a resolution of OSA General Body Meeting at Dallas Convention, 2011. At the end of 2011, Sri Gopal Mohanty withdrew from the Committee but remained an active advisor/ promoter of RDF. In 2012, Brajendra Panda also retired from the team. In Seattle convention, Priyadarshi Dash and Priyaranjan Mohapatra were nominated to the drama Coordination Committee with me as the Chair.

This committee was further expanded in 2014 to have 5 coordinators. Birendra Jena (North East), Leena Mishra (East), Gayatri Joshi (Pacific West), Tapas Sahoo (South Central) and Sandip K. Dasverma (Chair). It was decided that coordinators will put their effort in their respective zones.

Over the years, four flexible regions have been identified: Eastern, Northern/ North Eastern, Central/ Northern (Chicago) and Southwestern (Texas & AK). There have always been attempts to cover other areas. In 2013 it was expanded to Western USA; Pacific South Western RDF was held at Woodside, CA. It was repeated in 2017 on March 26. This year, attempts are being made to have RDF in Seattle.

We need some bold steps to take RDF forward in its decennial year. Getting two expert dramatists from Odisha and holding camps in all five regions is being considered. A budget of \$5,000 to \$7,000 will be necessary, in addition to hosting of the expert dramatists by local Odias. The idea is still on the anvil. Coincidentally, the new OSA President is an avid drama lover and actor.

Concept:

The original concept of Regional Drama Festival was:

1. To revive the community contact via visiting families from outside the area and staying with host families of the visited area, like early OSA convention days.
2. To hold low-cost regional gatherings akin to mini-OSA convention gatherings to enhance lasting camaraderie among members and friendship among kids, in different neighboring states & chapters, in all the regions of USA.
3. To develop inherent and latent drama & language skills (acting, script writing, prop preparation, music etc.) in a region, among immigrant Odia communities.
4. To promote leadership growth via organizing multi-chapter events.

Subsequently, from experience we have added another two goals:

5. To encourage participation of kids to expose them to Odia language and culture. [In 2013, it finally took off with three childrens' dramas presented in RDF. More have since been presented and enjoyed by the community members. Enthusiasm of the kids & their parents have been phenomenal. Ask Swapnalata Rath (MI) or Prativa Sahoo (NE) or Tapas Sahu (Dallas) to share their experience.]
6. To ensure that the visiting teams are offered some program time for kids, if desired. The visiting kids may be integrated with locals to have a wholesome experience.

In summary, the objective of RDF is to develop a closer relation among communities of people from Odisha residing in various regions of North America (USA & Canada), through a festival with a special focus on drama.

Highlights & status:

RDF has completed 8 years and is in its ninth year. RDF is on the verge of a takeoff with 80 Odia dramas already staged in various regions of USA & Canada, up to the end of April 2017. In 2017 one RDF has been staged in Woodside CA, with St. Helens (Oregon Chapter) participating and staging Gogol's classic Inspector General, translated and scripted in Odia by Rajashree Kanungo. In the adult drama titled "Agyan Hajur", many kids participated. For the 1st time, a team from Portland Oregon, led by Seema Choudhury & Rajashree Kanungo with 22 adults & kids, travelled more than 700 miles to present their drama at California RDF, which is a "RECORD".

Classic "Chha Mana Atha Gunth" of Byasakabi Fakir Mohan Senapati, dramatized by SriGopal Mohanty was staged by California chapter's team. Led by Priyadarshi Dash it was a super rendition.

Another was organized on May 6, 2017 by NJ Chapter, in which 3 teams from NJ, Connecticut & Washington DC participated. Children participation is also increasing.

Three more RDFs are scheduled this year at Toronto, CA, Seattle, WA & Austin, TX. Dates are expected to be in October. Seattle RDF organizers have already rented the facility. Austin RDF is scheduled on October 28th. OSA National has budgeted money for five festivals this year.

The real miracle so far was the participation of 29 kids from Dallas in the kids drama “Mauna Sila” at the Austin Festival in 2014. This is a sweet memory as a second festival at Austin is in the offing.

My special thanks to Sumitra Padhi & Gyan Patnaik, who are the initiators of Children drama idea in 2009 through Toronto RDF & Chicago RDF, respectively. So far, we have staged 15 or so kids’ dramas, as follows.

1. Sakhi GopAla - 6th RDF, Toronto kids, Toronto, May 15, 2010
2. Aye Dhoom Diwali - 7th RDF, Chicago kids, Naperville, Nov 6, 2010
3. Bhasmasura - 10th RDF, Chicago kids, Naperville, Nov 5, 2011
4. Bandhu Mohanty, 11th RDF, DFW kids, Denton, TX, April 19th, 2012
5. Mauna Shila, 15 th RDF, Dallas kids, Austin, September 14, 2013
6. Mithai Sabha, 15th RDF, Austin kids, Austin, September 14, 2013
7. Jai Jagannath, 16th RDF, MA kids, Chelmsford, MA, September 14, 2013
8. Satyara Jai, 17th RDF, Detroit kids, Flint, MI, April 12, 2014
9. Ame Sabu Kool, 18th RDF, WDC, May 17th, 2014

(List is incomplete)

We are also eagerly eyeing Atlanta, GA & Florida and surrounding areas in the South-East Coast. It is hoped that a RDF will be held soon in the Atlantic South-Eastern region at Charlotte, NC. Coordinator Leena Mishra, WA is in charge. Ms. Ullasini Sahu, is a great enthusiast from the area, whose effusive enthusiasm is infectious. With election of OSA VP and Treasurer from the region, RDF should happen there soon.

The overall experience indicates that RDF has become part of the host Chapter’s activities, and is making them financially viable by attracting a larger audience. The initial reluctance to holding RDF due to financial burden is waning and community members in various regions are getting interested and enthused. Members newly initiated into drama seem to enjoy the freshness and novelty of the drama world. In due course, families in the participating Chapters are developing rapport among themselves. The expected interest that RDF was expected to generate in OSA are already surfacing.

Benefits accrued:

1. An Odiadrama Yahooogroup (odiadramagroup@yahooogroups.com) has been operating for years now, connecting the Odia drama enthusiasts all over North America. On its site, a number of Odia drama scripts are stored for use. It is a discussion group to monitor, assess RDF and to bring ideas for the future to the fore. Additionally, now WhatsApp groups are being formed for each RDF & also a OSA National RDF group has been found for quick communication.

2. A few Odia drama playwrights have emerged in NA, often depicting the American experience. Sri Gagan Panigrahi of Toronto, Manoj Mohapatra and Salil Mishra of Chicago, Birendra Jena & Basanta Mohapatra of Cleveland, Swapnalata Rath (Mishra) of MI., Prativa Sahoo, to mention a few. Dr. Birendra Jena has already published a collection of his plays, into a book – “Dura Pahada O Anyanya Nataka”. Dr. Jena acknowledges in his Book’s foreword that his difficulty in finding scripts to take part in RDF, led him to pen them.

3. The OSA Conventions rotate from city to city of different zones and are held in hotels, which makes it expensive to attend. Therefore, many cannot attend the conventions on a regular basis. RDF plays a complementary role to fill the vacuum and provides opportunities to interact with other community members in a region and to participate in cultural activities. As a positive consequence, new community leaders are sprouting.

4. The interaction among people living in the neighboring states/ region during RDF is creating release of positive energy, initiatives and communication, which leads to various other initiatives.

Lessons Learned:

1. It is very difficult to rehearse a drama when the participants live more than 30 minutes of driving time apart. Some have found innovative paths like participating remotely via conference calls/skype during rehearsals. The rewards of rehearsing in person is still far superior. So, to have the drama team in one city or within half hour of driving distance seems to be a relevant constraint. Therefore, some are even thinking of forming area (city) based teams.

2. The experience of people staying overnight with local families is way richer than the case when they come and go back the same day. The bonds developed with even one overnight hosting is found to be long lasting.

3. All festivals should have children participation to keep the kids excited, involved and to be part of parent's cultural life and milieu.

4. The drama festivals can't be held in cities, where population of Odia families is 50 or less because of shortage of audience. Most halls have a capacity of 200 or more. Cost is of course an additional constraint as of now. This experience has been overcome in Austin, TX few years ago in 2013. This was possible when 29 kids (aged 5 to 15 years) participated in a children drama and brought in their parents with them. A bus was rented and the families and kids went to the drama in a festive mood. But so far this has been an exception rather than a routine occurrence. Other communities should try this successful experiment.

5. The RDFs in North/North East should be held on or before October 15. This will help avoid snow storms, which are now regular threats in winter. Two festivals scheduled in November have already suffered for this reason as in the past in the 9th RDF, the Eastern RDF in 2011 (NJ) & again in the 13th RDF due to the 'Sandy' cyclone in 2012 (Washington DC). By changing the RDF time based on these experiences, we can overcome weather related hazards & challenges.

A few issues:

Two issues are coming up which need to be addressed by the OSA BOG for sustainability of RDF.

1. Cooperation and commitment of Chapter Presidents to RDF
2. Financial grant from OSA National to its Chapters for conducting RDF and making them viable.

1. Cooperation and Commitment of Chapter Presidents for RDF

The core of RDF success is in the hands of the OSA Chapter Presidents. Without their complete cooperation, effort & support, RDF would not have come this far.

They are the key figures in the OSA organization and should be credited overwhelmingly for the success of RDFs, which they have organized.

We urge that the elected chapter officials consider making RDF a regular Chapter activity just like Kumar Purnima, Saraswati Puja etc. From our national coordination experience, we have found that the following steps will be most helpful and should be taken for RDFs' smooth operation and their eventual success:

- Each Chapter President should select a RDF coordinator, who is enthusiastic and proactive, early.
- Before beginning of each year, the chapter coordinators decide a mutually convenient date, location & host city and chapter.
- The reservation of a hall should be made in time, preferably six months in advance so that it is easy to get a good but reasonably priced hall (rents vary widely). It also gives enough time to out-of-town teams to prepare. Hold it (i) between February -May for the Spring RDF, which was originally conceived to sync with Odisha Day (April 1st). (ii) October 15th for Fall RDF.
- Allow sufficient practice time and patience to encourage new participants to join, who are necessary for sustenance of RDF in the future.
- Make sure that a kids' Drama team is organized for the chapter and all 5 to 15 year old kids are given an opportunity, to participate.

2. Financial grant from OSA National to Chapters for RDF and its viability:

- The finances are a matter of concern for some small chapters. So far, the festivals are being organized by the Chapters along with one of their regular programs – thus the costs (\$2000 on an average) are absorbed by the local Chapters, with the \$800 grant from OSA National.
- Possible solutions:
 - It will be a good idea if OSA raises the grant amount to \$1000 by raising special funds in the future.
 - RDF can be financed by naming it after a deceased OSA member in his memory by his friends & family. e.g. "XXX" Memorial RDF. Idea was originally proposed by Dr. Amar Pani, TN.
 - Chapters can sell Ad-spaces in their brochures & raise donations from the local enthusiasts for the remaining amount.
 - To reduce cost, attempts should be made to have a general insurance by the OSA National each year, so that each chapter does not have to buy a separate insurance coverage for the hall. The OSA President & the RDF-organizing Chapter President can co-ordinate to reduce the cost significantly.
 - Sync other children activities like Odia spelling Bee, Science Talent Test, Odishi Song Competition, etc..
- OSA grants are a way of encouraging events which will expose new immigrants/ students to OSA activities, similar to conventions. So, this is expected to be a productive investment. Recruiting new Life members should be thus integral part of RDFs. The OSA national executives have, in the past, indicated that they would like to have around five new Life / Five year members at each festival, which is a fair expectation.
- A future goal for RDF should be to make them self-sustaining via Ads, donations and sponsorship.

Recommendations:

1. If you are a small-town resident, with only a few other Odia families around, you should visit the nearest RDF first as visitor/audience. Then you can form your own drama team from among Odias on

your town. RDF is open to all, (OSA members & non-members alike). Odia script will be available to you, via Odiadramagroup@Yahoogroups.com.

2. When a few of your friends like to stage a drama, ask for help to get a script (with number of available female & male actors), dress (e.g. an Odia constable uniform) or sound (a typical cycle rickshaw honking in Cuttack street), are only a phone call or email away. Information is available with the experienced group members, who eagerly share their expertise. Contact them via odiadramagroup@yahoogroups.com, or me to access resources, to seek help or to share problems.

3. From experience, it is found that if the wireless mics are of good quality and numbers are adequate (about eight), lots of problems just go away. So, recommendation is to upgrade your mic quality & quantity for a smooth festival. This was a major problem in California 2017 RDF at Woodland, CA for the Portland team.

4. We have recently developed a FAQ about the RDF (reference 3 below).

Ref:

1. **OSA Regional Drama Festival - a Recap of 4 years** By Sandip K. Dasverma

(<http://www.orissasociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/UtkarsaJune2013.pdf>) Page 41 & 46.

2. A List of Dramas presented in RDFs since 2009 - as updated till April 2014

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AIB9aioOwP9idFFST2ZrRWM2TGszNXFpNVFNWVZFLXc&usp=drive_web#gid=0

3. RDF - FAQ:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1N9XJveOfNtntnSI38hZcFDCqUYF1WH38BtyAJ0y1mHw/edit>

4. State of OSA Regional Drama Festival in 2014: A Report:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1z06X2ea5n_O3MxnC6m2Qh_EhNINBjD3hEuVLsjOq7G4/edit

Odisha Dibasa Celebration and Odia Drama Festival in Bay Area, California –March 26th, 2017

Kuku Das

The Odias of Bay Area, California, celebrated the Odisha Dibasa and Odia Drama Festival on March 26th, 2017, under the leadership of iGurukul organization at Woodside High School Performing Arts Center, Woodside, California. OSA (The Odisha Society of The Americas) has co-sponsored the event. This celebration was attended in very large number by local Odia community members. A decoration embodied with colorful Odia artifacts transformed the place to a mini Odisha. A variety of handicrafts, tarakasi work, pattachitra, sarees and other famous workmanship from Odisha were displayed with traditional decoration.



The multi ethnic cultural extravaganza which was organized by the iGurukul Foundation showcased classical, folk, drama and traditional art forms of different countries around the world. This year, on the occasion of Odisha Day, the Odia community had the opportunity to celebrate the beautiful culture, heritage and language of the state of Odisha. The event was a collage of cultural program and Odia Drama Festival. An Odia Food Festival marked the celebration. For the first time, a drama team from OSA Portland Chapter had come all the way to participate in this program. This was the longest drive for a team to travel this far in the history of OSA Regional Drama Festival! The Bay Area drama team presented a masterpiece “Chha Maana, Aatha Gunth”

The audience was mesmerized by the beautiful execution of the individual characters in this play. Following are the remarks by few spectators:

Shamuka Rath on Chha maan aatha gunth....

The team brought up a brilliant performance and made the Odia epic alive again. The actors seemed passionate about acting and did their best and engaged the audience. We felt like we were taken back in time to 19th century rural Odisha. Personally I felt the drama act was so soothing and emotional.

I congratulate all the actors, directors and the whole crew who made this a success. Waiting to witness more such drama performances .

Pratibha Mallik:

I had watched "Chaa Maan Atha Gunth" play on stage performed by all Odia artists like Priyadarshi Dash, Japani Dash etc. who were brilliant in the play. The Overall play was well directed and performed well by all artists. Looking forward to see more interesting play like "Chha Maan Atha Gunth".

Mt. Hood Chapter (PDX Odias) presented the play "Agyan Hajur", a contemporary political drama based on corruption, the ever popular evil in our societal existence.

The celebration started with the lighting of the lamp for the Lord of the Universe, Lord Jagannatha, by the chief guest Mr. K. Venkata Ramana (Consul, India's Community Affairs, Information and Culture). He

spoke about his memories of Odisha, the significance of Odisha and its people, in India, California and the World. Among other guests that were present included the Cupertino city mayor Savitha Vaidyanathan, Rishi Kumar from Saratoga City Council, Dr. Surya and Anjalika Pattanaik. OSA Regional Drama Festival Chair Sandip Dasverma had given a glimpse on the history of the drama festival. A mural of Odissi and folk dance was performed by the iGurukul students. The Food Festival coordinated by the community volunteers included Odia breakfast, dessert, savory, snacks, and 'pitha-paNa'

It was a memorable event where many Odias of Bay Area, California and Portland came forward to reunite, enjoy togetherness and relish traditional dishes of Odisha.

Kuku Das
OSA, California



OSA New York / New Jersey Chapter Events

Sridhar Rana and Hemant Pradhan

OSA NY/NJ Youth Mentorship Event:

OSA NY/NJ started the 2017 events with the Annual Youth Mentorship Event on 2nd January at the STEAM Studio Works at the Forrestal Village, Princeton, NJ. More than 30 kids from the Middle School and up had joined the event.



The kids participated in toy car racing, tower building activities. The right side picture shows the cars built by the children. Many fresh college entrants shared their experiences of the college application process like test preparation, essay writing, volunteering etc. and the importance of being involved in the community activities in shaping someone's personal as well as professional life. It was a fun filled few hours event for the kids to enhance the bonding among the community kids. OSA NY/NJ community thanks the participants and volunteers for their participation and Somna Pati and Aanji Pati for organizing the event. Also our special thanks goes to STEM Works Studio for providing the facility.

Maa Saraswati Puja

Maa Saraswati Puja was celebrated on February 5, 2017 at the Balaji Temple Auditorium in Bridgewater, NJ. We crossed the previous year's participation count by huge number with around 85 families (more than 300 members) joining the event. OSA NY/NJ community extended warm welcome to all the new members who joined the local OSA event for the first time.



Many devotional songs were recited by the kids. Many kids participated in the devotional dance programs. Kids also participated in the Poster Competition on famous Odia Literary Personalities which was organized to promote the knowledge of Odisha and Odia among the kids. There was Khadichhuan

(Shikshya Anukula) program of introducing the kids to their ritualistic beginning of studies with divine blessings.

Volunteers supported during the event as well as pre and post event stages like planning, procurement, decoration, bhoga preparation, stage setup, registration, puja and pushpanjali coordination, tea preparation, bhoga distribution, photography, lunch picking, setup, serving and cleaning.



**ମାତୃଭୂମି ମାତୃଭାଷା
ର ମମତା ଯା ହୃଦେ
ଜନ୍ମି ନାହିଁ, ତାକୁ
ଯଦି ଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଗଣ ରେ
ଗଣିବା, ଅଜ୍ଞାନ
ରହିବେ କାହିଁ**

ସ୍ମରଣ କର ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ମେହେର
POET GANGADHAR MEHER

**ଉଚ୍ଚ ହେବା ପାଇଁ କର
ଯେବେ ଆଶା,
ଉଚ୍ଚ କର ଆଗେ ନିଜ
ମାତୃଭାଷା**

Biography

Gangadhar Meher, renowned Oriya poet of the 19th century is also popularly known as 'Swabhab Kabir' was a literary giant who transformed everything into gold by the alchemical touch of his genius. Almost all his writings reflect glimpses of originality apart from patriotism.

Gangadhar Meher was born on the day of Shrawana Purnima in the year 1862 to Chaitanya Meher and Savitri Devi to a poor weaver family in Barpali of present Bargarh District in Odisha.

Very few people know that Gangadhar Meher's schooling career was over when he was merely in 5th grade. As a young boy, he was inspired by Oda Ramayan composed by Balaram Das as well as the Oda Mahabharata by Sarala Das. He had proficiency in Hindi and Bengali and Sanskrit. He mastered the great Sanskrit epic poem 'Raghubansud' by Kalidasa. Taji Ramayan in Hindi used to be held him in great respect.

Though poor in wealth and education, he was very rich in mind and culture. Gangadhar used to go to school in the morning and help his father in weaving in the afternoon. The poet's weaving was an attractive and beautiful as his poetry. He was a Judicial Mohanti (Accountant) by profession under Zamindar of Barpali.

He first married to Shanta Devi and after her death married for the second time to Champa Devi. Gangadhar Meher breathed his last on 4th April 1924 at Chaitra Amabasya. After 25 years of his death, in 1949 the premier college of Sambalpur was named after his name. Currently the College is upgraded to an autonomous University Status as Gangadhar Meher University

Poem Collections

When the Oriya language was on the deathbed, Gangadhar Meher was the stalwart who had the courage to start a renaissance in language and literature. Joining the movement spearheaded by Fakir Mohan Senapati, Radhanath Ray, Madhusudan Das and others to defeat the British conspiracy to annihilate Oriya identity in the late 19th century.

Some of his best literary works are Pranaya Bhattari, Kichaka Bada, Indumati, Utkal Lakshmi, Ayodhya Drushya, Kalita Kallola, Arghya Thali, Ahalya Staba, Mahima, Bharati Bhubani and Binukti Uparah.

Gangadhar Meher's blazing passion to reinstate the glory of his language and culture can be best summed up in his own famous following quote

Matrubhoomi Matrubhasha Ra Mamata Lao Hrudai Janami nahin, taku jadi gyani ganare goniba agyana rahibe kahin

[those who do not respect and love their own mother tongue should not be considered learned and wise]

Hailed for his majestic portrayal of nature, Meher's genius is best brought out in his poems

*Anruta Sagar Bindu
Basanti Rijya Barata
Bishwa Dakha Mathumaya
Mangala Aita Usha (from TAPASWANI)*

**From his MasterPiece
TAPASWANI**

ମିଳନେ ଥିଲାନି ତଥା
ଜନନୀ-ବର୍ତ୍ତନ-ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଦୃଶ୍ୟେ ବଦି,
ବନବନ୍ଦନେ ବନାବ-
ସମାଜ ବାବ-ବନାବ-ପ୍ରସାରେ ରହି,
ବନବନ୍ଦୁ ବନେ ବନିଲି
ବନବନ୍ଦୁ ଥିଲ ବଦି, ଘର ଚରିଲି । । ।

ବିଚର-ଗାନ୍ଧାର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ
ଜନନୀ-ବର୍ତ୍ତନ-ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଦୃଶ୍ୟେ ବଦି,
ବନବନ୍ଦନେ ବନାବ-
ସମାଜ ବାବ-ବନାବ-ପ୍ରସାରେ ରହି,
ବନବନ୍ଦୁ ବନେ ବନିଲି
ବନବନ୍ଦୁ ଥିଲ ବଦି, ଘର ଚରିଲି । । ।

ସଂଗ୍ରାହକ : ଚେତନ ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ

Compiled By: Tejas Panigrahi

OSA NY/NJ Professional /Technical Development Forum

Our local Chapter had organized a Half Day Workshop on Mar 05 on Agile Project Management Methodologies as continuation of our forum on Professional / Technical Development to ignite discussions among the community members on current topics in the professional world. Around 30 participants had joined the discussion which was very ably led by our Community Volunteer Nila Sundar Jena. The Community thanks our Volunteers Sarang Mahatwo and Naresh Dalua for providing the support and the logistics for the event.



Naatya Mela (Eastern Regional Drama Festival)

Regional Drama Festival was held in Wayne Gandhi Temple - drama performance, songs above all Pitha made the event wonderful.



(Varieties of authentic Odia Pitha prepared by Ladies Volunteers)





(A still from the drama presented by the Washington DC Chapter)



(Members from Boston Odias of New England Chapter)



(A still from the drama presented by the Connecticut Odias of New England Chapter)



(A still from the drama presented by the New York/New Jersey Chapter)



(Members from the New York/New Jersey Chapter Drama Team)



(Karaoke Music by the Local Talents)

Washington DC, Connecticut and New Jersey Chapters presented original Odia dramas on May 6th afternoon. Boston Chapter represented with full heart and mind. Many singers sang classic Odia songs and threw in few classic Hindi songs to make the event lively.

Many ladies took the Pitha challenge called by Mr. Lalatendu Mohanty. Many varieties of Pitha were served. Oh boy, it was

nostalgic, especially reminded us of Raja festival. Thanks to all the participants and the audience for spending the afternoon to present and enjoy the event.

This event was a great success and demonstrated cooperation, collaboration and commitment of the community members for the Odia culture.

Kids Volunteering Program

The Chapter organizes the volunteering event for the kids every 3rd Saturday of the month to foster the volunteering spirit among the kids (middle schooler onwards). The kids have been going a Community Food Bank at Hillsdale, NJ. This initiative is being led by the Youth Volunteer Aman Mohapatra.



OSA South East Shankar Baral

OSA-SE group primarily encompasses the Odias primarily in North Carolina and South Carolina. Historically (early 1980) there were few Odias (about 10 families) living in Charlotte, Raleigh and in South Carolina. In last 10 years, we have noticed inflow of Odia families from other parts of the country and from Odisha as students or on job. The community has several active members, who help the community live like an extended family. As of today, to our record we have about 50-60 permanent members and about 80 members in the process of settling down.

In the OSA fiscal year that started from July 2016, our chapter observed (or planning to observe) following events.

Kumar Purnami

Description – Celebrating annual Kumar Purnami festival, get together and cultural activities. About 60 families participated the event.

Place, Time and Date – Charlotte, December 8th, 2016



Saraswati Puja

Saraswati Puja is celebrated in the January/February. People from all over NC and SC gather and celebrate Puja. OSA-SE RTP and Charlotte combinedly celebrates Saraswati puja every year.

Saraswati Puja 2017: Place, Time and Date – Greensboro, Feb 15th, 2017

Beach festival

Description – This is an annual get together where OSA-SE members from RTP and Charlotte meet and greet each other following by an authentic pakahala party. Kids get an opportunity to be part odia culture.

Beach Festival 2017: Place, Time and Date – Sunset Beach , May 26th 2017

Achievements

OSA-SE is proud to announce graduation of Ayesha Kar, Daughter of Mahendra Kar and Ullasini Sahoo. Ayesha graduated from Miami university and will be pursuing her medical study at Virginia tech.

Prana Pratistha @ RTP

Odia members at RTP took the pride for “Prana Pritastha” of Sri Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra in year 2016 at [HSNC](#).

First Monthly Puja @ Charlotte

Members at Charlotte started their first Shree Jagannath monthly puja at [Hindu center](#) in Feb 2017.



About us

OSA SE has a face book page -

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/osase/>

Charlotte Odia face book page -

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CharlotteOdia/>

OSA SE Office bearers

Shankar Baral(President) : presidentosase@gmail.com

Amitabh Misro(Vice President) :

vicepresidentosase@gmail.com

Tarini Dash(Secretary) : secretaryosase@gmail.com

Prabir Ranjan Khuntia : treasurerosase@gmail.com

OSA-Ohio Chapter Report

Dr. Anil Patnaik, Chapter President

Utkal Divas at Columbus

On Apr. 16, 2016, we celebrated the 50th Utkal Divas as Ohio-Odia family, which turned out to be a very memorable event. Attached are a few pictures from the event. All of the parents and kids had wonderful time. You can see more pictures at our Facebook page as given at the end of the report. Thanks to OSA for being a sponsor of this event.

Nazia-Kabu Night at Cincinnati



Picnic at Cincinnati

On August 20, 2016 we met for a picnic at Symmes Township Park. The event was fun filled from all of the aspects such as food, games, dance and music. The outdoor grills and the rain-forced spontaneous dance made it memorable.



On July 15, 2016 we experienced one of the most wonderful, magical and mesmerizing musical concert with our own Odia classical singer Nazia Alam (daughter of Sri Sikandar Alam) and the mystical tablist Prem Sankar (Kabu). Their performances ranged from odia bhajans, odia movie songs (such as "sapana ra saathe saathe.."), gazals, hindi oldies and even new hindi songs. It felt like almost 3 and half hours passed in no time and everyone had their "dil maange more" moments... It felt really proud to have such talented Odia singer and tablist visit our Ohio-Odia family here.



*We routinely update our Ohio Chapter event details, reports, news and activities in our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/Ohio.Odias/>
Please visit the page and **Like** to get updates. Please note that other than these chapter-level reported events, the three city centers (Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati) celebrate several local events year around—please feel free to contact from the above Facebook page.

Regional Drama Festival (RDF) & Kumar Purnima at Cleveland



We celebrated the RDF of the northern region on Oct. 1, 2016 at Glenwood Intermediate School Auditorium at Canton, OH. It was a huge success with four dramas, about 15 families visiting us from four neighboring chapters, 50+ family participation, and fun-filled drama and cultural programs. Each of the drama were special in its own kind. We are very thankful to the visiting teams from other chapters, which made all the difference. Also, after the RDF there was a Mehfil where musical artists from other chapters and Ohio entertained the participants. Thanks to OSA for being a sponsor and thanks also to OSA President Sushant bhai to kindly join this event. A few pictures of the dramas are shown below.

Utkal Divas and Youth Mentoring Conference at Cincinnati

On April 2nd, 2017, we celebrated Utkal Divas and Youth mentoring conference. What a wonderful day to be with the purest amongst humans — the kids/youths — and celebrating Ohio-Odia Utkal Divas... Our celebration was in news at Kanak TV:

https://www.facebook.com/KanakNews/videos/1476563315708545/?hc_ref=PAGES_TIMELINE

And more pictures at: <https://goo.gl/photos/qv7vcfjKBdopSLED7>



OSA Rocky Mountain Chapter Suvendu Samal & Samrat Mohanty



We are pleased to report that the OSA-Rocky Mountain Chapter (OSARM) has galloped along its upward trajectory over the past year. The chapter has welcomed ten new families into the fold, who have enthusiastically participated in all community activities. The management responsibilities of the chapter has changed hands. Several events have been hosted and coordinated by the chapter and its members, brief summaries of which follow.

Members of OSARM participated in three outdoor picnics in 2016, enjoying the brief summer of Denver. In keeping with our cultural roots, several ethnic festivals were celebrated by members. Janmashtami was celebrated in association with the Denver ISKCON temple, where member devotees made offerings and a few devotional song/dances were performed. Diwali was celebrated in a local club, where the community kids joyously set the night air ablaze with firecrackers. In addition, annual Ganesh and Saraswati Puja celebrations were hosted by individuals, who were fantastically supported by other OSARM members.



Scenes from Cultural Program, Jagannath Bandan (Left), Odia Skit (Right)

In continuation with our tradition of the preceding years, the cohesion between the family members of OSARM and their camaraderie with other communities allowed us successfully execute the third annual cultural program in a row. The cultural event had participation from talents from within the Odia community and the larger Indian community in the Denver metro area. Participants of all ages

demonstrated their skills in various classical dance/music, modern dance/songs, fusion art elements, two Odia skits and a fashion show, in front of an audience of two hundred. The highlight of the cultural event was a keynote video speech delivered by eminent writer Prof. Manoj Das (<http://y2u.be/f1ejG46tqY8>). The show also featured a special video speech by the visionary technologist Mr. Sam Pitroda. The quality and tenor of the overall event has been judged by all comers to be the best OSARM has produced over the last three years.



Charity Event Standupforkids

In the fall of 2016, OSARM members hosted a dinner drive for homeless and underprivileged kids in Denver, in association with the local charity organization Standupforkids. All families cooked and fed approximately hundred kids on a Sunday evening. More heartening, several small kids of the community displayed their altruism with great zeal in company of the adults. Lastly, *Utkal Dibas* was celebrated by the community members on April 1, 2017, where a small performance was held to the tunes of *Bande Utkal Janani*.

In closing, it has been exciting and vibrant times at the OSARM, and we are aiming to shine brighter in the future.

OSA DC Chapter Report

Anjana Chowdhury, Chapter President

Washington DC chapter's first event in OSA fiscal year 2016-2017 was Ganesh Puja. Ganesh Puja was held at Virginia Manor Club House on September 10, 2016. Puja was performed by Pratap Dash. Many small children had "Khadi Chhuan" during the puja event.



Kumar Purnami was celebrated at Jewish Community Center on October 15, 2016. Many families participated and enjoyed the program as well as the hospitality provided by the chapter officials Bimal Mishra, Bidya Parhi, Snigdha Hota and Subrat Rout.



Washington DC chapter election was held and the new team consisting of Anjana Chowdhury (President), Ipsha Rout (Vice President), Geeta Mohanty (Secretary), Alok Mohanty (Treasurer) and Debanjan Chowdhury (Web Master) took charge of the chapter from November 2016.

Following reports about Saraswati Puja and the Champu, Chhanda, Odissi competition are shared by Ajitesh Ojha.

Odishi Chhanda Champu Competition 2017

Our OSA community is devoted to our classical singing. On February 4th, 2017, a large amount of the OSA community gathered at Pyle Thomas W. Middle School to acknowledge the children who have a great love and interest towards singing. The children who have showed a passion towards our Chhanda Champu Singing had an opportunity to enter the Chhanda Champu contest. Many children entered the contest. All of the participants were sorted into two groups—junior or senior.

Our junior children consisted of those ages, ten years or younger, and our senior children consisted of children of those ages eleven and up.



The children sang beautiful songs, and were awarded twenty dollars each. After having snacks, the singers were each presented with their twenty dollars, and the winners were called.

Our junior third place participant was Swaroop Panda.	Our senior third place participant was Spandan Das
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Our junior second place participant was Shubam Dash	Our senior second place participant was a tie between Debanshi Chowdhry and Suchismita Ojha
Our junior first place participant was Ajeetesh Ojha	Our senior first place participant was Sulagna Dash.

We hope that the children who show great interest towards singing continue practicing everyday. Everybody did a terrific job, and congratulations to all!

Saraswati Puja

On February 4th, 2017, a large number of the OSA community members gathered at Pyle Thomas W. Middle School to worship Maa Saraswati. Maa Saraswati is the goddess of knowledge, music, arts, wisdom, and learning. Therefore, it is important that she is worshiped and respected on a daily basis so



that a devotee can get her blessings to do better in learning.

Priest Pratap Dash performed the puja and encouraged the children to follow along. He asked the children questions during the puja, to see what they knew and explained every step of worshipping Maa Saraswati.



All children had individual plates with pictures of Maa Saraswati, flower petals, haldi, raisins, and water. Thanks to our volunteers, we were able to have enough items for the children's plates. As a result, the children could follow along with the ritual.

Followed by the Aarati, was the Pushpanjali. The children chanted shlokas from the Saraswati Bandana, and after each shloka was done, we would offer the flowers to Maa Saraswati.



After finishing the Maa Saraswati puja, the adults and children broke into groups, helped clean up, and ate Prasad and food. Our wonderful OSA community has gone so far to make this puja a success. This puja was certainly a day to remember and everyone had a good time.

Raja Picnic in Wheaton Regional Park:



OSA Washington DC had its annual Raja Picnic on June 17 in Wheaton Regional Park. Many families gathered to have good food, fun and

friendship. Children had the face painting and adults had the tea. It was a fun day. Fathers gathered to cut the cake for upcoming father's day next day.



OSA Members in News: Shraddhananda (Dan) Mishra



Longtime OSA Member, Mr. Shraddhananda (Dan) Mishra has recently made a landmark donation of Canadian 5 million dollars to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM)'s South Asian Arts Centre. ROM organized a special event to recognize Dan Mishra for his philanthropy and generosity.

Odias of Canada organized a special event to celebrate the Philanthropy of Mr. Shraddhananda (Dan) Mishra. Several members spoke highly about Dan Mishra's longtime ritual of generous giving for various causes of the society, for cultural preservation to supporting super-cyclone victims.

Congratulations to Shraddhananda (Dan) Mishra for making all OSA members proud. Following message about him appeared in ROM's webpage.

For more than 30 years, Dan Mishra has built successful companies that help North America's leading public and private sector companies achieve their most important business goals. As CEO, Dan has been the driving force behind CSDC Systems, propelling the North-America-based company to become a recognized leader of a world-class software platform (AMANDA), that help governments engage their citizens.

In addition to establishing a thriving international company, Dan's accomplishments include: introducing Smart Governance Systems to emerging countries in Asia and Africa, establishing a Young Entrepreneur Award for aspiring young students, investing in businesses led by young entrepreneurs, speaking and teaching management skills to business people.

Because of his passion and foresight, Dan is regarded by leaders in the public and private sectors as an approachable visionary and successful entrepreneur. Dan is a philanthropist as well as a Kriya Yoga Master.

OSA Members in News: Akshay Parija

OSA Benefactor Akshay Kumar Parija who was awarded with Member Achiever Award at OSA, San Francisco 2011, for the 56th National Film Award for his path breaking Film Jiaanta Bhoot (The Living Ghost) has repeated the feat again in 2017 having won the 64th National Film Award for his new film “Kadvihawa” conferred by the President of India, Shri Pranab Mukharjee on May 3rd, 2017.

When contacted to pen down his experience with this repeated honour, Shri Parija wrote:

We have a old saying in Odisha “ Jala Gahale Shrusti Nasha ,Jala Bihune Shrusti Nasha”.Too much water is dangerous and too little also is dangerous. As the World is going through a very sensitive phenomenon of Global Warming and Climatic Change it was a social responsibility to create the awareness in the world about imminent danger of such circumstances.



In Odisha which saw cyclones once in ten or fifteen years in seventies to until early 2005 is witnessing the danger more than once every year. Unseasonal rain comes heavily since last many years around harvest season resulting in heavy damages to the crop. We see viral fevers round the year or for that matter many unusual diseases like bird flu, swine flu etc unheard of a decade back.

Kadvihawa is made in Hindi with intention to reach a larger global audience. The story was conceived by Padmashree Awardee Nila Madhab Panda and the film is also directed by him to get perfection.

Unite Nations Framework Conference on Climatic Change(UNFCC) was signed and became effective on 4th November 2016. The film was timely to supplement further awareness in the world.

The story revolves around two unfortunate sufferers of Climatic Change but they have no role in the deteriorating world situation.

The community which due to their unplanned actions affected the climate are not really the sufferers but the poor are.

The film is slated for Venice and Toronto Film Festival opening after which it will be released all over the world.

It is all Lord Jagannath’s blessings. Both of us two Odias making a splash in Hindi Film world and winning the award against stiff competition is only due to lots of hard work, passion and commitment.

OSA Members in News: Dr Dhableswar Panda



Dr. Dhableswar Panda, has been interviewed by one of the major international news magazine for High-Performance Computing (HPC) and Supercomputing. Details of this interview is available at:

<https://insidehpc.com/2017/05/rock-stars-hpc-dk-panda/>

He was also featured in the Computer Science and Engineering Department of Ohio State University. The feature has the following message:

The [Rock Stars of HPC](#) series is about the men and women who are changing the way the HPC community develops, deploys and operates the supercomputers and social and economic impact of their discoveries.

Over the past seven years insideHPC, has spent a lot of time on the road at high performance computing events. In that time, perhaps no other speaker has been more prolific than DK Panda from Ohio State University. As the newest Rock Star of HPC, DK sat down with insideHPC to discuss his passion for teaching High Performance Computing.

2017 OSA Awards

Dear Friends,

Please join me in congratulating 2017 OSA Award Winners.

OSA Distinguished Odia Award: Dr. Sukant K Mohapatra



Dr. Sukant K. Mohapatra currently works as a Chief Technology Officer (CTO) in Ericsson, USA. He is an alumnus of NIT, Rourkela and has a Ph.D. degree in Computer Science from Stevens Institute of Technology, New Jersey. His work and research interest includes: Next Generation Fixed and Mobile Network, Network Planning, Design and Optimization, Digital Transformation, Network Virtualization and Internet of Things (IoT). He has many publications in areas of his research interest.

His work and research interest includes: Next Generation Fixed and Mobile Network, Network Planning, Design and Optimization, Digital Transformation, Network Virtualization and Internet of Things (IoT). He has many publications in areas of his research interest. He is recipient of DMTS award at Bell Laboratories and a senior member of IEEE. He has been invited speaker in various conferences and forums.

Dr. Mohapatra is the founder chairman of first NRI promoted engineering higher education in the state and has established National Institute of Science & Technology (NIST), Berhampur, Odisha in 1996 with a vision to provide world-class higher education in our home state. NIST is the first engineering college in South Odisha, started under Berhampur University then and it is one of the best engineering institutes in the state in private sector. Dr. Mohapatra is also co-promoter of Kalinga Hospital, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

As a patron member of OSA, he has actively contributed to various community causes, OSA and Odisha initiatives. He is resident of NJ and live with his wife Sanjeeta, son Pranoy and daughter Prachi.

2017 Arun Das Memorial Kalashree Award: Dr. Basant Mohapatra



Dr. Basant Mohapatra is a physician by profession who specializes in Critical Care Medicine and Cardio-Thoracic Anesthesiology but he is also a multi-talented artist; a stand-up comedian, a dramatist, a director, and a singer. In India he had won best actor and comedian Award in SCB Medical College, Cuttack. He acted in many plays staged in Rabindra Mandap, Annapurna Rangamanch and KBK. He also took part in many TV plays, wrote humorous drama series for TV and acted in movies like Akashdeepa, AaKaMaBhai, and Bhanga Silata. He has also acted alongside eminent Odia comedians like Jai.

Here in USA he has written, directed and acted in many popular dramas like Operation Successful,

CDC, Very Complicated, Duraneeti, Bom Bom Baba and Lights Camera Action which have been staged during RDF and OSA Annual Convnetion. Actively participated in and organized RDFs in multiple cities in USA and Canada. Organized many successful cultural programs including 2014 OSA convention's in Columbus, Ohio

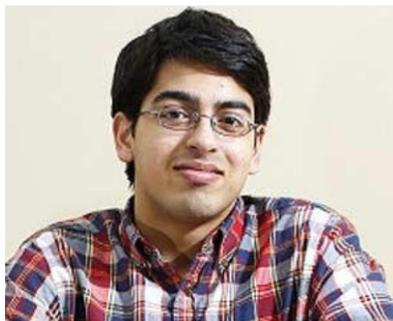
He lives in Youngstown, OH with his wife Madhusmita, daughter Marisa and son Devesh.

2017 Subrina Biswal Award for Academic Excellence: Jessika Baral



Jessika Baral, daughter of Himanshu and Rashmita Baral, CA is recipient of 2017 OSA Subrina Biswal Award for Academic Excellence. Jessika was invited to the White House Science Fair during her 7th grade, and is a 2017 Regeneron (formerly Intel) Science Talent Scholar and top 40 Finalist. She has filed for a patent on OncoDetector, a tool for detecting lung cancer. Her research has been published in Cell science journal. Jessika has won Grand Award prizes at Intel ISEF for 2 years. Jessika was a top 10 Odissi dancers in the world in 2013, and has raised more than \$30,000 for non-profits through her dances since age 4. She is a Coca Cola Scholar, and a Research Science Institute (RSI) Scholar (US top 51). Jessika has received admissions from Harvard, Stanford, MIT and Washing Univ. in Saint Louis (direct BS-MD program with full-tuition merit scholarship).

2017 OSA Youth Volunteer Award: Anshuman Mishra



Anshuman Mishra, son of Srikanta and Snigdha Mishra, is the 2017 recipient of the OSA Youth Service Award. A resident of Dublin, OH, Anshuman recently graduated Summa-Cum-Laude from Dublin Jerome High School and was a class valedictorian. He is also a 2017 National Merit Scholar. Anshuman will be attending Lafayette College in Easton, PA, as a Marquis Scholar with plans to double major in Chemical Engineering and Government & Law. His extra-curricular activities include participating in Lincoln-Douglas debate and quiz, running track, playing the guitar, and volunteering in projects to help the homeless.

Congratulations to all 2017 Award winners, nominees and thanks to OSA Award Committee members Ms. Anjana Chowdhury, Ms. Eva Mohanty and Ms. Swapnalata Rath and all the judges for successfully carrying out 2017 award selection process. .

Kind regards,

Sushant Satpathy
President, OSA

Highlights of OSA Activities from July 2015 – June 2017

Greetings and welcome to the 48th OSA convention of the Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA) in Bahamas Cruise, Bahamas. We take the opportunity to outline few important activities we have undertaken over last two year in office.

Organizational

- A. PNW Chapter: After 2012 Convention PNW chapter was inactive; with the help of local leaders created Mt. Hood and Seattle Chapters and now both chapters are vibrant and active in many ways.
- B. OSA National and Chapter coordination: Increased the involvement of OSA and its chapters as chapters are pillars of local Odia communities. Encouraged chapters to raise funds and sent 100% of the matching funds back to the chapter. Chapter presidents as part of BOG members are equal partners in the decision making process.
- C. OSA Digital Archive: With the help of Archive Committee members Lalu Mansinha, Manaranjan Pattnaik and Kula Mishra we have added digital copies of past souvenirs and news letters to OSA Website.
- D. OSA eVoting: With the help of eVoting System Selection Committee, OSA selected an eVoting Site and 2017 OSA election Committee carried out first OSA election using eVoting. OSA officials worked hard to prepare for eVoting, by updating contact list.
- E. Convention Guideline and Election Guideline: Based on feedback from applying convention guideline to 2016 Convention, convention guideline is under review by committee consisting of Anil Patnaik, Sridhar Rana, Bimal Mishra and Amulya Das. Similarly, Election Guideline is being created by Durga Mishra, Jay Narayan Bhuyan, Abani Patra and Jagannath Mohanty.
- F. OSA Directory: Online OSA Directory was moved out of DOLA to OSA's own domain with option to integrate with Annual Convention sites for registration. Also, added functionality to maintain donations which members can download.
- G. OSA Directory Download: Henceforth OSA members can download OSA directory (without email address) in CSV/Excel format.
- H. OSA Google Apps: OSA officials took ownership of Google Apps and expanded its use.

Cultural, Social and Community Outreach

- A. Existing Programs: Continued to support Odia Language and CCO competition at chapter and national level. Increased award amount for CCO and Odia Language during annual convention to \$1000 for each event.
- B. New CCO CD: 4th CCO Karaoke CD is under production.
- C. Collaborate with OSNE for cultural showcase event in MFA: Supported OSNE in presentation/photo exhibition on Odisha culture, dance, and arts in Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), Boston. Produced a short video on Odishan arts, culture and dance which can be used by all chapters.
- D. Regional Drama Festivals: Many of our chapters: SW, CanOSA, Ohio, NYNJ and CA have hosted RDFs over last two year. In recently held RDFs, CA hosted Mt.Hood chapter (Portland,OR) and NYNJ hosted Washington DC and OSNE chapters.
- E. Utkal Dibasa: OSA has promoted and financially supported chapters in organizing Utkal Dibasa. Chapters are encouraged to celebrate this event to showcase Odisha culture and heritage for other communities by inviting representatives from larger Indian and non-Indian communities

for this event. In 2016, six chapters and in 2017, seven chapters celebrated Utkal Dibasa. In 2017, Utkal Dibasa organized by CA not only showcased Odia culture and arts, it also showcased Odia food and was attended by members from other communities.

- F. OSA is in initial discussion for advance academic and research opportunity in Odissi music and dance thru premier institution(s) in Odisha.
- G. Community Outreach/ Support: OSA Helpline is operational and we have provided support to individual/families who have reached out thru OSA help line by connecting them with right organizations or by providing requested assistance. At this point OSA is not equipped to support any request from outside US/Canada.
- H. OSA was recognized with Odia Samman Award by the President of India, Hon. Pranab Mukherjee during Odia Prabasi Conclave organized by Odisha Mancha in New Delhi on Jan 6th, 2017.

Conventions

- A. 2016 Convention in Providence, RI: OSNE chapter hosted its first ever convention in Providence, RI. It was a successful convention despite its many challenges.
- B. 2017 Convention on Bahamas Cruise/Bahamas: It is a unique one of its kind OSA convention on the cruise and we plan to keep our promise of maximizing attendee satisfaction without consideration for numbers and showcase Odia pride. This convention is planned for 30-300 families and irrespective of number of attendees; our fund raising goals have been modest. We plan to celebrate all aspects of OSA Convention and try to make it a memorable one. Thanks to all volunteers working for this convention.

OSA and Odisha Development

- A. Library Open House and Library rules notification: In Dec 2015, OSA in collaboration with Bakul library and Prafulla Pathagar organized Library Open house and more than 50 intellectuals from different walks of life joined the forum. Culture Secretary and Minister for Mass Education again promised to complete Library Rules notification for the 2001 Library Act. Govt. of Odisha subsequently notified Rules for 2001 Library Act. In the first year it has allocated Rs 30 lakhs and promised to increase the outlay in subsequent years.
- B. OSA Digital Public Library: The Brahmapur Public Library is almost complete with Building, Furniture etc. The project has lagged because of transfer of three BMC commissioners over last two years. With internet connection and setup of the server the library is expected to be operational very soon. Thanks to our library committee volunteers. Similarly, funds for rural library have been released to Collectors for Balasore and Mayurbhanj and we have been working with concerned authorities to move it forward.
- C. Adopt-A-Village Initiative: For meaningful development of a village, in 2015 OSA in technical collaboration with Centurion University started skills development for women and night school for all adults of Badigam village. Over last one and half years 25 Women have been trained and they have started their own enterprise. In addition, there have been agricultural training for village farmer, health clinics for the village and a community hall is being built for the Village.
- D. Combat Blind International and LVPEI: We had meetings with CBI and chairman of LVPEI and how the Odia community can help in their effort to provide vision care to all regions of Odisha. Now, CBI is helping to setup 3rd regional Eye Hospital in Balasore after completing one in Rajgangpur and Keonjhar. OSA-Chicago had a fundraising drive and raised 4k. OSA should explore and engage in this noble cause which is going to benefit all of Odisha once all these regional eye hospitals have been established.

OSA Youth and Youth Outreach

- A. Youth Mentorship Program: OSA has encouraged and financially supported chapters to initiate Youth mentorship program to connect different groups of Odia youth those in high school, those in college and youth in professional fields to connect and find mentors in the community. OSA Youth Forum has been held in NYNJ, OSNE, Ohio and Chicago chapters.
- B. OSA Heritage Tour: OSA had planned heritage tour in Dec 2015.
- C. OSA Impact: OSA has encouraged youths to follow their passion and in case there is intersection with their desire to get involved in project(s) in Odisha, OSA can help. OSA Impact is a youth driven social entrepreneurship initiative. It was started by OSNE youth group and they have raised 4K and currently trying to find best way to invest the funds for social development. It is different than the traditional concept of donation for a project. We await the outcome of this initiative and other chapter youth groups to join in or have their own projects.

Thank you to all our members for their help and support over past years.

Meghna Memorial Award in Creative Writing

Senior Category (Ages 13-18)

First: Amrita Sahu, VA

Second: Priyanka Choudhury, NJ

Third: Aaryana Rajanala, NJ



Amrita Sahu, Priyanka Choudhury, Aaryana Rajanala

Junior Category (Ages 7-12)

First: Sumedha Jena, NJ

Second: Ananya Pradhan, NJ

Third: Dhruv Das, MD

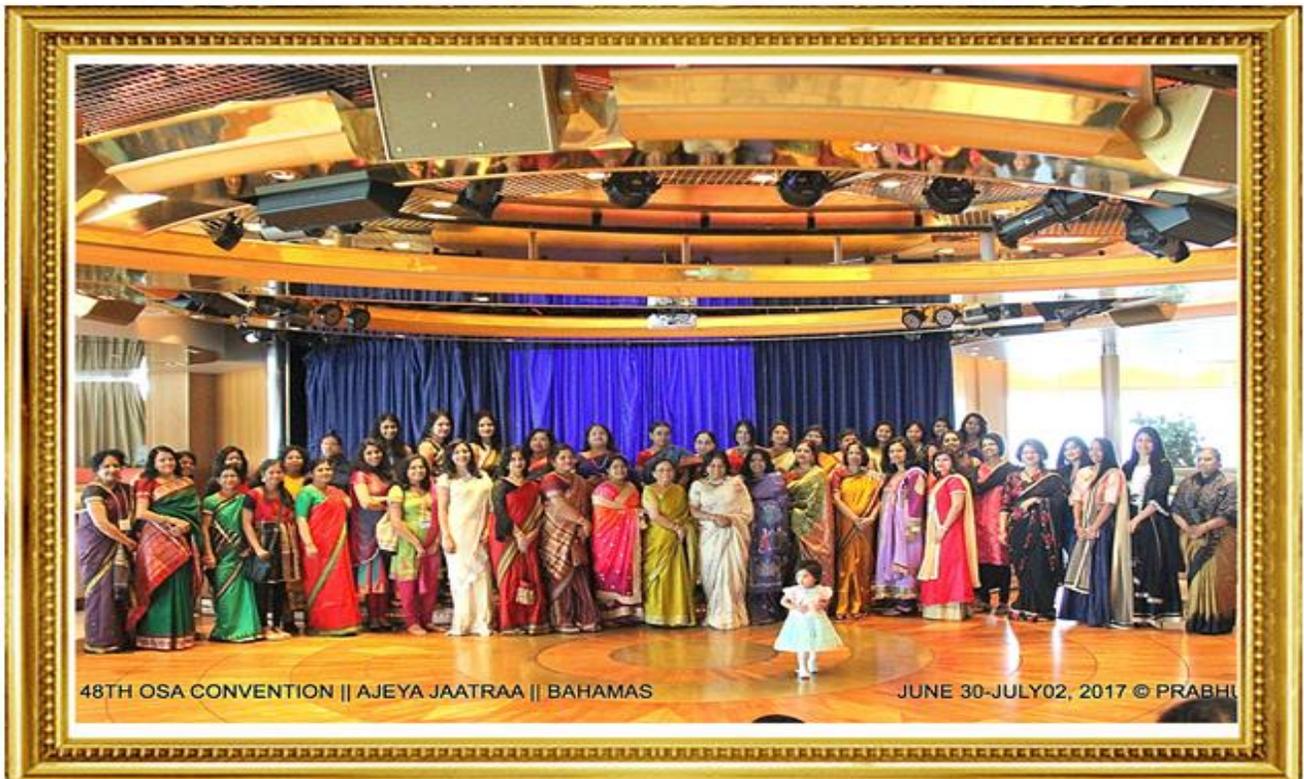


Ananya Pradhan, Dhruv Das
(Sumedha Jena's picture not available)

Congratulations to all the award winners!



Ajeya Jatra Family
The Odisha Society of the Americas



48th OSA Convention
Ajeya Jatra



48th OSA Convention
Nirvana Beach
Bahamas



48th OSA Kabita Pathachakra



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The Odisha Society of the Americas



by

Hon. President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee

In the presence of

Hon. Chief Minister of Odisha Shri Naveen Patnaik

on January 06 , 2017

Received by

OSA President Bishant Satpathy & Secretary Baradakant Panda



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HELPING PRESERVE AND PROMOTE
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