



# Orissa Society of the Americas

## 2004 Souvenir Issue

*The 35th Annual Convention, Dallas*



୨୦୦୪ ଓସା ସୁରଶିକା  
୩୫ତମ ବାର୍ଷିକ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ, ଡାଲାସ୍





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Sand Sculptures by Sudarshan Patnaik, Marchikote Lane, Puri, [sudarsansand@hotmail.com](mailto:sudarsansand@hotmail.com). The bottom right sculpture won him the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in International Sand Sculpture Competition, 2003, in Spain.

The front cover is designed by Sikhanda Satapathy with help from Tina Satapathy and Tapas Sahoo. The Ocean divides the two cultures. The cowgirl symbolizes the future generation in harmony with its cultural heritage.

# Journal of the Orissa Society of the Americas

2004 Souvenir Issue

*The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, Dallas*



ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ସ୍ଵାମୀ ନନ୍ଦନ ପଥଗାମୀ ଭବତୁ ମେ

୨୦୦୪ ଓସା ସ୍ମରଣିକା

୩୫ତମ ବାର୍ଷିକ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ, ଡାଲାସ୍



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**Orissa Society of Americas**  
**The Thirty-Fifth Annual Convention**  
**Dallas, Texas**  
**July 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2004**



**OSA Souvenir 2004**

**Editors: Sikhanda Satapathy**  
**Tapas Ranjan Sahoo**

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# ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

35<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention, Dallas, Texas  
Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2004



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Mrutyunjaya Pani

Hari Arjun Patro

Narayan Tripathy

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Niranjan Tripathy

### Co-Conveners

Gopal Mohapatra

Tapan Padhi

## Coordinators

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### Youth Activities

Tapasi Misra

Raj Patro

Pranteek Patnaik

Shovita Padhi

Nachiketa Rath

### Web/ Graphics

Santanu Das

ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ.

On behalf of the Organizing Committee I welcome you to the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas. Our committee members have worked tirelessly to put together this convention. We hope that it will continue to provide an effective platform for expatriate Oriyas to further our shared goals and aspirations. In doing so, we see ourselves as part of a learning process which began nearly 34 years ago when about fifty Oriyas from various parts of North America assembled in Hartford, Connecticut for one October evening in 1970. Since then, an ever increasing number of North American Oriyas have continued to embrace that annual tradition called *OSA Convention*, while many have worked passionately to enrich and expand its scope.

OSA Conventions these days are normally a three-day affair when about five hundred to a thousand individuals participate in an almost non-stop flow of activities. These activities feature, among other things, performances by top-notch artists from Orissa, lectures by internationally distinguished persons, presence of high-level delegates from the state, seminars directed at Orissa's economic development, workshops focusing on understanding and confronting socio-cultural problems affecting various segments of the expatriate Oriya community, networking opportunities among our widely dispersed members, and a lot more.

With the aging of our population, the convention has also become a time to reflect and take stock of our collective experience. As we continue to straddle two cultures, we and our next generation face a challenge familiar to most immigrants, that of assimilating into this country's cultural melting pot and yet manage to preserve and nurture our distinctive identity. We have tried to articulate this dilemma through the theme of this year's OSA Convention, which is entitled: "*Bridges: Connecting Generations, Time and Cultures.*" We draw attention to those vital qualities that our forefather were known for, such as our spirit of maritime adventure, our tradition steeped in art and spirituality, our capacity for tolerance, and our ability to adapt. These are the very qualities that have enabled many a race to migrate, survive, and flourish in a foreign land! History will show how well we are able to harness them.

In the meanwhile, we thank you for your support and hope you enjoy your weekend with us in the Dallas / Fort-Worth area.

Niranjan Tripathy  
Convener, 35<sup>th</sup> OSA Convention  
Dallas, Texas



## **Orissa Society of the Americas** bringing Oriyas together

<http://www.orissasociety.org/>

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA), I would like to welcome you to its 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention at Dallas, Texas. The organizers have put together an outstanding program for the convention. It consists of several workshops and seminars, guest lectures, Guru Kelucharan Memorial ceremony, devotional sessions, and lots of cultural activities.

Every year, many of us have our parents and relatives visit us from Orissa/India during this time of the year. I welcome those visitors who are attending the OSA convention this year. We are also fortunate to have one of the visitors Dr. Kabi Prasad Misra, as our Chief Guest of the convention. Dr. Misra is a well-known cardiologist at Apollo Hospital in Madras. He is even better known for his contributions to the Lord Jagannath culture. I am really thankful to him for having accepted our invitation to attend the OSA convention.

I sincerely thank all my coordinators for their time and efforts for this successful year for OSA. We have recruited a record number of life members, patrons and benefactors this past year. We have published OSA newsletters regularly and maintained an OSA website for dissemination of various information. Based on valuable suggestions from OSA members, we are proposing several amendments to the constitution that will be voted in the General Body Meeting (GBM) on July 4, 2004. I urge you to participate in the GBM and contribute to the discussions. Every year, OSA recognizes a few of its members for their outstanding contributions in various areas. I congratulate all the winners for this year and thank the judges who participated in the selection process.

Last year, OSA organized a successful Symposium on Orissa Development at Bhubaneswar on December 23, 2003. This program was inaugurated by the Chief Minister Mr. Naveen Patnaik, in which many OSA members participated. Following this symposium, the Chief Minister has approved the establishment of a Non-Resident Oriya (NRO) cell/center at Bhubaneswar to facilitate development work by the NROs. Mr. Sahadeva Sahoo, the Ex-Chief Secretary of Orissa is the OSA Coordinator for this NRO cell. I thank him for his time and coordination effort.

Friends, need less to say that we are all so saddened by the passing away of Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra. He is omnipresent in OSA through his innumerable disciples in North America. OSA recognized his contributions through a Life Time Achievement Award in 1995. A special event is arranged in this convention to commemorate the loss of Gurujī. I would also like to pay a tribute to those prominent Oriyas and OSA volunteers who have passed away recently. We would like to thank Prof. Manindra Mahapatra, Drs Kalyani Mishra, Bhabani Mohanty and Bijon Rao for all that they had done for the Oriya Community. We miss them very much and pray that their souls rest in peace.

With this, I sincerely thank the convention organizers of the Southwest chapter for their endeavor. I also thank all of you for attending the OSA convention this year, and hope you will enjoy the program.

Sincerely,

Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan  
OSA President





*Gajapati Maharaja  
Dibyasingha Deb*

☎ (06752) 22829  
SRI NAHAR  
PURI - 752001

31<sup>st</sup> May 2004

**OM SHRI JAGANNATHAYE NAMAH  
OM SHRI SADGURAVE NAMAH**

## **M E S S A G E**

The greatest and most precious gift of our sacred motherland, Bharatvarsha, to world humanity is its ancient spiritual heritage. This glorious heritage, known since time immemorial as 'Sanatana Vedic Dharma,' manifested in Utkal-pradesh (Orissa) as 'Shri Jagannath Dharma' with its epicenter in the world-famous Shri Jagannath Temple in Purushottama-Kshetra Puri. Our long course of history and the vast wealth of wisdom teachings of innumerable saints and sages have taught us that it is the sincere inculcation and actual day-to-day living of the lofty ethical, moral and spiritual values enshrined in this great spiritual heritage of ours which veritably transforms mundane human experience (with its unending trifles and tribulations) into a noble and rewarding life filled with joy, peace and real success.

It is a matter of pride that many sons and daughters of the glorious land of Lord Jagannath are seeking their life's ambitions and fulfillment in far-off lands, including the American continent. It goes without saying that when the ample opportunities and conveniences of the materialistic world offered by advanced Western Nations are coupled with the life enriching spiritual values of our sacred motherland, there is a distinct possibility of materializing a "heaven on earth" here and now. But, this inevitably implies a true and thorough understanding and appreciation of the vision and values of our spiritual heritage and earnestly living those ideals every moment of our lives, in every action that we understand.

On the occasion of the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual OSA Convention at Dallas from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> July 2004, while conveying my greetings and warm good wishes to all participants, I sincerely hope that each and every member of the Oriya community residing in the Americas and Canada will fully imbibe and truly live the lofty spiritual values of our ancient motherland so as to enrich and bless themselves, their families and the society around them.

**HARI OM TAT SAT**

  
**Dibyasingha Deb**

**"Divya Dham", 26 Shahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007 (Orissa) ☎ (0674) 2543466**  
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## ସଂପାଦକୀୟ



‘ସେତୁ’ - ପିଢ଼ି, ସମୟ, ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ସଂଯୋଗକାରୀ . . .

‘ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସୋସାଇଟୀ ଓଫ୍ ଆମେରିକାସ୍(ଓସା)’ର ୩୫ତମ ବାର୍ଷିକ ଅଧିବେଶନ ଡାଲାସ୍ ସହରରେ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହେଉଛି । ଆପାତତଃ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବାହାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କର ଏହା ସର୍ବବୃହତ୍ ସମାବେଶ । ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପାରଂପାରିକ ରୀତିରେ ଭାବ, ଆବେଗ ଓ ସଂପର୍କର ଆଦାନ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଇବାର ଏହା ପ୍ରକୃଷ୍ଟ ମାଧ୍ୟମ । ଏ ବର୍ଷର ଅଧିବେଶନର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ହେଉଛି ‘ସେତୁ’ - ପିଢ଼ି, ସମୟ, ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିସମୂହ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସଂଯୋଗର ସେତୁ । ପିଢ଼ିରୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ପିଢ଼ି, ଯୁଗରୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଯୁଗ - ପାରମ୍ପାରିକ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସର୍ବଦା ବିଦ୍ୟମାନ ଏକ ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ବ୍ୟବଧାନ । ଅଥଚ ଏକ ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ‘ସେତୁ’ର ଅବସ୍ଥିତି ସମୃଦ୍ଧ କରାଏ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସଂଯୋଗ । ସେହି ସେତୁ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ସ୍ଥାପିତ ହୁଏ ସଂପର୍କ, ପ୍ରସାରିତ ହୁଏ ସଂସ୍କୃତି । ୧୯୬୯ ମସିହାରୁ ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଆମେରିକା ଓ କାନାଡ଼ାର ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ‘ଓସା’ ସେହି ସେତୁର ଭୂମିକା ଧାରଣ କରିଆସିଛି ।

ଅଧୁନା ପୁରାତନ ଓ ନୂତନ ପିଢ଼ି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଗଢ଼ି ଉଠିଥିବା କେତେଗୋଟି ବ୍ୟବଧାନ ପ୍ରତି ଆମର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଆକର୍ଷିତ ହେବା ଏକାନ୍ତ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ।

ଗୋଟିଏ ରାଜ୍ୟ କିମ୍ବା ଦେଶର ସରହଦ୍ଦ ତେଜ୍ଞ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜ ଆଜି ସମଗ୍ର ବିଶ୍ୱ ଦରବାରରେ ବ୍ୟାପ୍ତ । ଭିନ୍ନଭିନ୍ନ ଭାଷା, ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ପରିବେଶର ମେଳରେ ନିଜ ଭାଷା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ବଜାୟ ରଖିବାର ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଆଜି ଆମ ସମ୍ମୁଖରେ । ବିଶେଷ କରି ବିଦେଶରେ ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇଥିବା ନୂତନ ପିଢ଼ିକୁ ମାତୃଭାଷା ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେବାର ରହିଛି ଏକ ବିରାଟ ଏବଂ ମୌଳିକ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା । ମାତୃଭାଷା ନ ବୁଝିଲେ, ଆମ ପରଂପରା, ଆମ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅଧିକାଂଶରେ ହୋଇଉଠୁଛି ଦୁର୍ବୋଧ୍ୟ । ଗୋଟିଏ ପିଢ଼ିରୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ପିଢ଼ିକୁ ସଂଚରିତ ହେଲେ ହିଁ ବସ୍ତୁ ରହିବ ଭାଷା, ବସ୍ତୁ ରହିବ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ବିଦେଶରେ ସଜୀବ ରଖିବା ଏକ କଷ୍ଟକର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନିଷ୍ଠୟ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଶିଖାଇବା, ବିଶେଷ କରି କହି ଶିଖାଇବା, କଷ୍ଟକର ଆଦୌ ନୁହେଁ । ମାତୃଭାଷା କହି ଶିଖିବାକୁ ଶିଶୁର ଦରକାର ହୁଏନି କାଗଜ କଲମ କିମ୍ବା ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ; କେବଳ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ହୁଏ ତା’ ମାତାପିତା ତା’ ସହ ସେହି ଭାଷାରେ କଥାହେବା । ନଚେତ୍, ସେମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଶୁଣି ଅନ୍ୟ କେଉଁ ଭାଷା ଅଜାଣତରେ ପାଲଟିଯାଏ ତା’ର ମାତୃଭାଷା !

ଓଡ଼ିଆ କହି ଶିଖାଇବା ତୁଳନାରେ ଲେଖାପଢ଼ା ଶିଖାଇବା ଅବଶ୍ୟ କଷ୍ଟକର, ବିଶେଷ କରି ଆଜିର କର୍ମବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଜୀବନରେ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲେଖାପଢ଼ା ଶିଖିବାକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟ ନ କରି ପ୍ରଥମେ କେବଳ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କହି ଶିଖିବା ଉପରେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦେବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ଅଳ୍ପ ବଡ଼ ହେଲାପରେ ଅବସର ସମୟରେ ଗୀତ ବା ଚିତ୍ରାଙ୍କନ ଶିଖିଲା ପରି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲେଖାପଢ଼ା ବି ଶିଖି ପାରିବେ ସେମାନେ । ଏ ଦିଗରେ ଉତ୍ସାହ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବା ପିତାମାତାଙ୍କର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ । ଖୁସିର ବିଷୟ, ଆମେରିକାର କେତେକ ସହରରେ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିତାମାତାମାନେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ସାମୁହିକ ଭାବରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ସପକ୍ଷ ମଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲେଖି ପଢ଼ି ଶିଖିବାର ଆଉ ଏକ ସହଜ ଏବଂ ଅଭିନବ ମାଧ୍ୟମ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇଛି କଂପ୍ୟୁଟର୍ ଦ୍ୱାରା । ଏ ଦିଗରେ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖନୀୟ ତଥା ଶତ ପ୍ରଶଂସନୀୟ ଅବଦାନ ରହିଛି ସୋନପୁରର ଶ୍ରୀ ଦେବାଶିଷ ରଥଙ୍କର । ‘ଓଡ଼ିଫୋନ୍’ ନାମକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ‘ଫୋନେଟିକ୍ ଏଡିଟର୍’ ସୃଷ୍ଟିକରି ସେ କଂପ୍ୟୁଟର୍ରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଟାଇପ୍ କରିବାର ଶ୍ରମବହୁଳ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ କରିଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ଅନେକ ଭାବରେ ସରଳ ।

ଅନେକ ସମୟରେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଭିତରେ ମାତୃଭାଷାରେ କଥା ହେବାପାଇଁ ଆମେମାନେ ନିନ୍ଦା ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଛେ । ବଦଳରେ ଆମେ ଯାହା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରୁଛେ, ତାହା ବି ତ ଅନ୍ୟ କାହାର ମାତୃଭାଷା, ଯାହାପାଇଁ ଅନ୍ୟ କେହି ତ ଗର୍ବ ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଛି ! ତା’ହେଲେ, ଆମେ ଆମ ମାତୃଭାଷା ପାଇଁ ଗର୍ବ ଅନୁଭବ ନ କରିବା କାହିଁକି ? ଆମ ଭାଷାର ଜନ୍ମ ତାରିଖ ଇତିହାସ ପୃଷ୍ଠାରେ ଅଜ୍ଞାତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହାର ପ୍ରଥମ ଲିଖିତ



ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ଘଟିଥିଲା ସତ୍ୟ ଶତକରେ । ଠିକ୍ ସେହି ସମୟରେ ଜନ୍ମ ନେଇଥିଲା ଆଉ ଦୁଇଟି ଭାଷା - ମୈଥିଳୀ ଓ ବଙ୍ଗଳା । ଏ ତିନୋଟି ଭାଷା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଆଦି ରଚନା ଆକାରରେ ଦାବୀ କରନ୍ତି ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ପୋଥିକୁ ଯାହା ନେପାଳର କୌଶସି ସଂଗ୍ରହାଳୟରୁ ଆବିଷ୍କୃତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ମୈଥିଳୀ ଭାଷା ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ କେବଳ ମୌଖିକ ରୂପରେ ଥାଇ ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ଲୁପ୍ତ ହେବାକୁ ବସିଲାଣି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଯଦିଓ ସେଭଳି ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିନାହିଁ, ଏହାର ପ୍ରଗତିର ବେଶ ତୀବ୍ର ଗତିରେ ମନ୍ଦିତ ହୋଇଚାଲିଛି । ଆମ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଯୁଗ ସେଇ ଦ୍ଵାଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ହିଁ ରହିଯାଇଛି । ଏହାର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଆମମାନଙ୍କ ହାତରେ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ଅବସ୍ଥର ପଥରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ନ ଦେଇ ଏହାକୁ ସଂଜୀବିତ କରିବା ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ । ପିଢ଼ିରୁ ପିଢ଼ି, ଯୁଗରୁ ଯୁଗ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସଂଯୋଗର ସେତୁକୁ ସୁଦୃଢ଼ କରିବା ଆମର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବିଭାଗର ସଂପାଦନା କରିବାର ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ମିଳିଥିବାରୁ ମୁଁ ନିଜକୁ ଭାଗ୍ୟବାନ ମନେ କରୁଛି ଏବଂ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଅଧିକେଶନର ଆବାହକ ଶ୍ରୀ ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ତ୍ରିପାଠୀଙ୍କୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଜଣାଉଛି । ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗର ସଂପାଦକ ଶ୍ରୀ ଶିଖଣ୍ଡ ଶତପଥୀଙ୍କ ସହ ମିଳିମିଶି କାମ କରିବାର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ଅବିସ୍ମରଣୀୟ । ଏହି ପତ୍ରିକାପାଇଁ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗୀକୃତ ଭାବରେ ଦିନରାତି ସେ ଅକ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରି ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦର ପାତ୍ର ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏକାଧାରରେ ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସଙ୍କ ଅବଦାନ ମଧ୍ୟ ବହୁ ପ୍ରଶଂସନୀୟ । ଠିକ୍ ସମୟରେ ଲେଖା ପଠାଇବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ଲେଖକ ଲେଖିକାମାନଙ୍କସହ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରିବା, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଟାଇପିଂରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ସହିତ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଅନେକ ଦିଗରେ ସେ ସର୍ବଦା ସହଯୋଗ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଟାଇପିଂରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିଥିବାପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରୀ ଶିଖଣ୍ଡ ଶତପଥୀ, ଶ୍ରୀ ଶୋଭନ ପୃଷ୍ଟି, ଶ୍ରୀ ମାର୍କ୍ସେଣ୍ଡର ପଣ୍ଡା ଓ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ମନି ପାଢ଼ୀଙ୍କୁ ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ଶେଷରେ, ମୋ ପରିବାର - ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଓ ସମୟଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ମୁଁ ରଣୀ, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଅନବରତ ସହଯୋଗ, ସହୃଦୟତା ଓ ପ୍ରେରଣା ପାଇଁ ।

### ତାପସୀ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ସୀତୁ

( ତାପସ ରଞ୍ଜନ ସାହୁ )

୩୫ତମ ବାର୍ଷିକ 'ଓସା' ଅଧିବେଶନ, ଜୁଲାଇ ୨-୪, ୨୦୦୪

ଡାଲାସ୍, ଟେକ୍ସାସ୍, ଯୁକ୍ତରାଜ୍ୟ ଆମେରିକା



## Editorial:

### *The beautiful mind...*



There goes an interesting quote,

*“Every morning in Africa, when the Sun rises, a deer awakens, knowing that it has to outrun the fastest Lion, or be hunted to death...Every morning in Africa, when the Sun rises, a lion awakens, knowing that it has to outrun the slowest deer, or be starved to death....Thus, it does not matter whether you are a deer or a Lion, when the Sun rises, better be running at your best..”* – Source unknown.

This animal instinct pretty much summarizes the mad rush of our civilization towards progress, towards wealth, and towards materialistic *salvation*. There is absolutely no time for us to rest, reflect or ruminate for a moment. There are ‘never-ending miles to walk,’ several promises to keep, and basically outrun the adversary - real or imaginary. The underlying perception is ‘hunt, or be hunted!’ This black and white view of life leads to intolerance, unhealthy competition, war, and what one of our authors terms, *“...a manifestation of what we call self-righteousness.”* Another author has observed a similar phenomenon in the recently concluded election in India, *“...the whole process is a great game, a sport where all are equal but some in an Orwellian fashion are certainly more equal than others!”*

Then there is the story, which is often cited, about the Indian boatman sleeping after a sumptuous afternoon meal and the Western millionaire, who wants to cross the river. The millionaire starts sermoning the reluctant boatman to relinquish his slumber, and take him across the river to earn hefty reward. The boatman says, “What shall I do with much money?” Swift comes the reply, “Be opulent with wealth you accumulate.” The poor fisherman is nonchalant – “So, what will the riches bring me?” The wealthy retorts, “Of course, with your affluence, you need not worry about mundane pursuits anymore, retire; and attain supreme peace.” The still blasé boatman yawns, “My dear friend, if that is your goal, what do you think I am doing right now?”

The dichotomy of human mind presented in the above two examples manifests, perhaps in some sense, in the difference between western, and ancient eastern and mid-eastern life styles. One is ever aggressive, the other is more laid-back. Not that one is clearly superior to the other, but the triumph is in striking a balance. We must carry on our livelihood as aggressively as needed, but must never let that overtake the finer aspects of the evanescent human life. Gandhi said, as one author cites, *“There is enough in this world for everyone’s need, but not enough for everyone’s greed.”* Greed is what leads to social maladies.

This journal treasures some of the most beautiful depictions of human mind – its travails, triumphs, and tribulations. Many authors have expressed abhorrence of a pure black and white view of the world, and have shown how to celebrate our differences and strike an even keel in our attitudes to religion, gender equality, cultural differences, and social development.

Lack of a proper balance leads to extremes of religious intolerance, as narrated lucidly by the character Justice Tripathy in one story and Wilson’s quandary depicted in another. The topic of war and peace dominates the mind of many young writers in this journal. Blind adherence to scriptures and ancient literature has brought untold misery to humankind. By pointing out the perpetual subjugation of womanhood due to such myopia, one author challenges an architect of this plight to *“...come back to*



*earth, and this time, please take a female form so that you can take a fresh new look at a few of your 'shlokas' from a different perspective and create a revised edition."* At the same time, one cannot paint all the teaching of wise men of yore with the same wide brush, as another author has discovered through deep digging, *"If there is truth, in any work, then it does not matter whether it is wrapped in gold, silver, iron, or mud."*

There is an outpour of grief at the loss of our cultural icon, Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra, who brought us all world-wide attention, and for our lost dear and near ones who will be missed for ever. Let us join our authors in bidding farewell with "...eyes welled with tear, a heavy heart, and a choked voice." Let's take a moment to relearn the evanescence of human life. Let this persuade us to call that long lost friend and say, *"I thought of you often, I really did. ...Lost in a world of my own, I forgot. Forgive me,"* as one author admits.

I encourage you to take a peek at the windows to the minds of the writers that they have bared. Pause, read, ponder, reflect and muse over the feelings. Murmur a line from a poem you like, relive an experience portrayed through your *inner eyes*. Let's not let our *"in-between"* status tie our hands, rather unveil an unique positiveness as the author says, *"while my (white) friends struggle for a summer tan in three months, I sport a bronzed tone all year around."* Let us join our young poets in looking at our own follies first, *"...I am a lunatic with scissors, Trying to shape human nature by trimming dust from my eyes."* Let's ask our mind if it wants *"war, destruction, and death?"* Let us be alert to misconceptions and misunderstandings abound, and remain *"ever awake and never slumber, waiting for dawn, waiting for mother,"* like a star. Let the thoughts rekindle your resolve to make our microcosm a place to bury our differences, and celebrate our culture and literature. Let us celebrate our dance, cuisine (as one character *"Gobinda"* does), or apparel as one author says *"...in my colorful sarees, I am resplendent in my natural habitat."* Let us rediscover the universal God that many have attempted to understand, hear, and perhaps complain, *"it is your own home coming, why should I bother if you don't come?"* Let's look beyond our inherent imperfections, since, as an author says, *"...behind the imperfection, an invisible artist dreams of a picture of completeness,"* while portraying Chandra's resolve. I can go on and on citing the pearls of human mind, but there are too many of them!

Let this provide a respite from the day-to-day "deer-lion" nature of our life.

Some among us are doing yeoman's job in investing their time and money to help our brethren back home. Let's lend them a helping hand in tribute to the land that nourished us. There are a variety of projects at hand, and a variety of *points to ponder* for making our and our extended family's *maha-jatra* a little easier.

It has been a great delight and enriching experience for me to have edited this journal. First and foremost, I thank all the contributors for sharing their thoughts with us. Almost all, whom I contacted for contribution to the souvenir, gladly accepted the invitation – my thanks to you. It was a pleasure working with Tapas Sahoo, the editor of the Oriya section, and other editorial team members, specifically Mrs. Puspa Mohapatra, for editorial assistance. Tapas deserves special kudos for his devotion to promoting Oriya language and literature, including bringing out the first internet Oriya literary magazine at [sambit.com](http://sambit.com). My sincere thanks to Drs. Sri Gopal Mohanty and Niranjana Tripathy for helping us put together the section in tribute to Kelu babu. The convener and the convention organizers have worked perseveringly to make this convention a pleasurable experience for everybody, and deserve our deep appreciation.

Enjoy, and let your mind take wings.

**Sikhanda Satapathy**  
**Editor, 2004 OSA Souvenir**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS – ପୁସ୍ତକ

Letter from the Convener	
Letter from OSA President	
Letter from Gajapati	
ସଂପାଦକୀୟ	
Editorial	

Niranjan Tripathy	v
Laxmi Narayan Bhuyan	vi
Dibyasingha Deb	vii
ତାପସ ରଞ୍ଜନ ସାହୁ	viii
Sikhanda Satapathy	x

## ENGLISH SECTION

### Reflections and Musings...

Twenty Five Centuries Later	
The Season of Loneliness	
Forgive Me	
The Charred Body	
'I am OK, you are not OK' syndrome	
Stars	
Eternity	
Patanjali's Yoga Sutras	
The Waning of the Moon	
Letter to a Child: Thoughts on Thanksgiving	
Cunningham Park	
O Mother Orissa	
The Shifted Bindi	
My Saris	
Dance – a poetry of body language in motion	
Mahima Swami	
Someday	
Home	
Goat Curry, Community and the God	
The Great Indian Road Show	

Mamata Mishra	3
Baidehish Dwivedy	7
Snigdha Mishra	7
Prasanna K. Pati	8
Sahadeva Sahoo	11
Pradyot Patnaik	13
Surya Nayak	13
Markandeswar Panda	14
Dr. Pratibha Ray	19
Srikanta Mishra	21
Sangita Mishra	24
Rasananda Behera	24
Vikas Patnaik	25
Joyshree Mansinha	28
Kakali Rath	32
Dr. Surendra Nath Chinara	35
Mujibur Rehman	37
Janaki Ballav Mohapatra	37
Gopal Mohapatra	38
Subrat Sahoo	40

### We Miss You...

Numa – Courage personified	
Malati Choudhuri	
Let us celebrate the centenary of a legend of liberation	
Professor Bijan Kumar Rao: In Memory	
Pious Soul	
Sraddhaanjali : A Son Reminisces	
A thread breaks	

Sandip Dasverma	47
Kasturi Black	50
Dr. Manoranjan Mohanty	51
Jagannath Rath et al.	53
Sneha P. Mohanty	54
Binod Nayak	55
Smt. Chandramani Behura	60

### Points to Ponder...

Random Thoughts on Life in Bhubaneswar	
Coupling of Micro-industry with Rural Schools	
A Cultural Reconstruction of Widow-hood in Orissa	
Debilitating Effects of Fluoride in Drinking Water	
Western Values: what we can learn as a society	
Development Management in Orissa	
Orissa's Usable Past-visions for the Future	
Perspectives in Science and Technology	
Importance of Earth Day	

Dhanada K. Mishra	65
Laxman Mohanty	67
Dr. Rita Ray	69
Kiron Senapati	72
Sanjib Mohapatro	74
Amiya R. Nayak	76
Somnath Mishra	79
Dr. Narayan Tripathy	82



# TABLE OF CONTENTS – ପୁସ୍ତକ

## From the Pens of Budding Writers...

The In-betweener	Atasi Satpathy	85
The Unknown	Suchi Pahi	86
Anger	Shree Lekha Panda	86
Bhartanatyam Dance: A Young Dancer's Perspective	Abritee Dhal	87
Inside a Book	Rutupurna Sarangi	88
Two for price of one	Pratik Dash	89
Heartwood	Ankita Mohanty	90
Without You	Sunita Padhi	91
In the Dark	Ankita Khandai	93
Unbroken Threads	Sukanya Misra	96
Inside of Me	Ankita Patro	97
The Ring	Ananya Mishra	98
Seashell	Arpita Mohanty	98
My Math Poem	Animesh Mahaptra	98
Writing a masterpiece	Bagmi Das	99
Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow	Rohini Rege	100
Illusion and a Cricket Ball	Chandan Khandai	101
The Beauty of Kiawah Island	Noah K Mishra-Wotring	102
Peace	Sambit Mishra	102
The Golden Triangle of Orissa	Ankan Dhal	103
What My Mind Says	Mrunali Das	104
Extraordinary Devotion	Sibjeet Mahapatra	105
How would I feel	Shashwati Das	106
Rainbow	Manisha Mishra	106
Me and My Home	Shovna Tripathy	107
Friendship	Tapannita Padhi	107
I am a writer when	Soumya Mishra	107
The Search for Dharama	Ankita Ray	108
Rainbara	Anya Rath	109
The Meadow of Mine	Niharika Rath	110
Follow Your Dreams	Prerana Pradhan	110
Goodbye, Selwyn	Shomya Tripathy	111
Crab Catching	Alex K Mishra-Wotring	112
My brother's wedding	Reena Patro	112
Learning One's Mother Tongue	Pratyasha Acharya	113
Love something one must	Amrita Sahu	114
Entering Holi	Sonia Chakrabarty	114
Sun	Satwik Misra	114
Roses	Supriya Misra	115
The Lost Pearl	Amrut Sarangi	116

## Organizational News and Views

State of Seeds and a Call to Make a Difference	Priyadarshan Patra	119
OSA Convention, 2003	Sri Gopal Mohanty	124
A Convention in the making	Tapan Padhi	128
Nava Prabhat Charitable Trust	Sudhansu Mishra	130
A New Center is Rising in Orissa and Needs our Support	Lalu Mansinha	134
Preventing and Curing Blindness in Orissa	Devi P. Mishra	136
Home for the poor	Dr. Ranjan Singh	140
2003 Best Graduates of Orissa High Schools	Sitakantha Dash	141
First NRO Village	Akshay K. Panda	142
OSA Income Statement 2001-2003	Hari Arjun Patro	143

## Loss of a Cultural Icon – କେଳୁଦାସ

ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଜଗତର ପ୍ରବାଦ ପୁରୁଷ	ନିତ୍ୟାନନ୍ଦ ସାହୁ	147
Guruji	Niharika Mohanty	150

# TABLE OF CONTENTS – ସୁଚୀପତ୍ର

ଗୁରୁଜୂପା

To The Life More Abundant  
Kelucharan Mohapatra: The undisputed master  
Guruji – a Retrospection  
ଗୁରୁ ଜେଲୁ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଦିନକର କଥାବାତା

Guruji's Life and Work

ନନ୍ଦିତା ବେହେରା

Rohini Doshi-Dandavate  
Sharon Lowen  
Lalu Mansinha

ଲଲାଟେନ୍ଦୁ ମାନସିଂହ ଓ

ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି

Sri Gopal Mohanty

154

156

159

162

164

169

## ସୁଚୀ – ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବିଭାଗ

କେଳୁବାବୁ

ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଜଗତର ପ୍ରବାଦ ପୁରୁଷ

ଗୁରୁଜୂପା

ଗୁରୁ ଜେଲୁ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଦିନକର କଥାବାତା

ନିତ୍ୟାନନ୍ଦ ସାହୁ

ନନ୍ଦିତା ବେହେରା

ଲଲାଟେନ୍ଦୁ ମାନସିଂହ ଓ

ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି

୧୪୭

୧୫୪

୧୬୪

କବିତା

ଅନ୍ୟ ଦ୍ରୋପଦୀ

ଚିଠି

ବସନ୍ତରାଗ ନୁହେଁ

ଏକୃତିଆ ମଣିଷର ଏକା ଏକା ବେଳ

ହାହାକାର ଧ୍ବନି

ଆଗୋ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମା

କିଏ ସେହି ?

ଆହୁାନ ଏକ ଆମ୍ବର

ମହାଯାତ୍ରା

ମୁଁ କିଏ ?

ଶ୍ରୀଚରଣେ

କାତର ଜଣାଣ

ତମେ ପ୍ରବାସରେ ଥିଲେ

ତୋ' ପାଇଁ ଗୀତଗିଏ

ମାଁ ମାଟି ମୋର

ପାଛୁଶାଳା

ଅଗ୍ନିପକ୍ଷେ ଯାତ୍ରା

ପିଲାଦିନର ହେତୁ

ଶାନ୍ତି ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର

ଝୀନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ

ପ୍ରତିଭା ଶତପଥୀ

ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର(ରେଧ)

ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନାୟକ

ସାରଳା ତ୍ରିପାଠୀ

କଲ୍ପନା ମୟୀ ଦାଶ

ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମିଶ୍ର

ଶିଖଣ୍ଡ ଶତପଥୀ

ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର

ପ୍ରବୀର ଦାଶ

ଅଞ୍ଜନା ଚୌଧୁରୀ

ସତ୍ୟ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ଶୁଭଶ୍ରୀ ଦାସ

ପ୍ରମୋଦିନୀ ମିଶ୍ର

ବରୁଣ ପାଣି

ମନୋଜ ପଣ୍ଡା

ପଦ୍ମନାଭ ପ୍ରଧାନ

୧୭୫

୧୭୬

୧୭୭

୧୭୭

୧୭୮

୧୭୮

୧୭୯

୧୮୧

୧୮୨

୧୮୩

୧୮୪

୧୮୪

୧୮୫

୧୮୫

୧୮୬

୧୮୭

୧୯୦

୧୯୧

ଗଳ୍ପ

ଦୂର ପାହାଡ଼

ଆବିଷ୍କାର

ଚଲା ବଉଦ

ତାପସ ରଞ୍ଜନ ସାହୁ

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ

ସୁଲକ୍ଷଣା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

୧୯୪

୨୦୦

୨୦୬

ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ...

ଖାରବେଳ

ମୋ ଦାଦା

ରୋଜଗାର ଶୂନ୍ୟ

ଗୀତା ସାର - ମୁକ୍ତିର ଆନନ୍ଦ

ସଂବିତ୍ - ନବ ଚେତନାର ସୃଷ୍ଟିଧାରା

ସୁମିତ୍ରା ପାଢ଼ୀ

ଲଲାଟେନ୍ଦୁ ପତି

ରାଜେନ୍ଦ୍ର ନାରାୟଣ ଦାସ

ଦିବ୍ୟା ଦାସ

ସଞ୍ଜୟ ମିଶ୍ର ଓ

ତାପସ ରଞ୍ଜନ ସାହୁ

୨୧୫

୨୧୬

୨୧୭

୨୧୮

୨୧୯



# Reflections and Musings



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# Twenty-Five Centuries Later

Mamata Misra

August 30, 2001 Austin, Texas, USA

Dear Chaanakya:

First, let me bow to you, the great political thinker who made history by helping start the Maurya Dynasty, the great prime minister to King Chandragupta Maurya, the author of Arthashastra and Chaanakya-neeti. Your ethics have had a profound effect on the people of my culture. Your observations have become the often quoted proverbs in our daily lives, and often rightfully so. Second, I ask your forgiveness for this intrusion and interrogation. But please read; I do have a good reason.

It is strange that a woman would write an open letter to you twenty-five centuries after your time. And what's the use of writing to a dead man? A practical man like you would laugh and say that only a fool would carry on such a useless act. But you see, my feelings toward your work (like the works of many other great men of old times) are mixed. I do admire your insight and sound, practical advice on many matters. They do make sense and do apply to me often, even though not intended for me. But I have problems with some of your work and that is the focus of this letter. I must point out that some of the statements about my gender in your 'neeti' seem far-fetched, unrealistic, and inconsistent, quite a contrast to the rest of your work. But what really bothers me is how these twenty-five-centuries-old attitudes toward my gender are still lurking around in our society. So I challenge you to come back to earth, and this time, please take a female form so that you can take a fresh new look at a few of your 'shlokas' from a different perspective and create a revised edition.

Which ones? Well, let's start from the ones, where you define the characteristics of this animal called woman that you find to be remarkably different from man.

*Streenaam dviguna aahaaro lajjaa chaapi  
chaturgunaa  
Saahasam shadgunam chaiva kaamash-  
chaashtagunah smritah*

**Women have twice as much appetite, four times more shyness, six times more courage, and eight times more sexual desire.**

How did you come to this conclusion? What kinds of experiments did you perform? How did you collect, measure, and interpret your data? Did you take poetic license in expressing your opinion? Or perhaps you borrowed this wisdom from the works of your predecessors, from another 'smriti'?

Do people do certain things because they believe in famous authority figures on morality, like you? Some men deliberately make sexual advances toward women or girls against the wishes of the women and later the victims are blamed for provocation. The unwelcome harassment or assault is often rationalized and blamed on the victim; she wants it anyway, she asked for it silently through her clothes, looks, or presence. If the woman says 'no' still it is interpreted not as her lack of consent but as her shyness. After the act, the woman's feelings are ignored with a 'she likes it' presumption. I wonder why this is the case. Is this insensitivity coming from prejudices planted centuries ago and handed down?

Also, one finds some men to be extremely jealous. Such a man can't put his mind on anything when his wife is out of his sight or control. He has to constantly check on her. Where is she? What is she doing? What is she wearing? Who is she talking to? Is she cheating? He cannot trust her. This irrational behavior may be an effect of a belief similar to yours. If a woman indeed had uncontrollable sexual desire of extraordinary heights, eight times higher than man's, then man is likely to feel insecure and threatened.

And how about this one?

*Anritam saahasam maayaa moorkhatvamatilobhataa  
Ashauchatvam nirdayatvam streenaam doshah swabhavajaah*

**By nature, a woman is deceitful, courageous, illusive, foolish, greedy, impious and cruel.**

God! What men have to put up with just to be able to procreate! One would certainly want to keep a safe distance from such creatures as one would from predators. It certainly would be easy to rationalize the act of eliminating someone of the above description when the need (for recreation or procreation) was over. But why did Mother Nature create such a creature? Or was it a creation of people like you as a desperate measure to get young men to stay in school and not think about girls? Did it work? If you come back you will find that dropout is still a problem.

I remember a folk tale where a man starts believing that a goat is really a dog after three guys who wanted his goat told him one by one at different places and times that he had a nice dog. The man left his goat-turned-dog in care of the third cheat. If telling a lie three times can be persuasive, imagine the power of something old and sacred that has been told again and again for twenty-five centuries or more. Every Indian girl knows that she is 'just' a girl, a good enough answer for many questions she asks. If her parents did not tell her, the relatives, friends, neighbors, teachers, books, songs, movies will. As she grows, she finds slowly what 'just' means. But you have spelled it all out here clearly.

Modern scientists are doing research on human genes that carry the code for our gender and other attributes. But they haven't yet found the link between the gender and the attributes you have mentioned. Technology is available however to separate the male gene from the female in a fertilized egg, the good from the bad, the useful from the useless, as some might say. In our country, parents are now able to selectively eliminate these bad natured female humans in an easy way and the tribe of the good guys is increasing.

Please, don't get me wrong, I am not blaming you for the attitudes toward women

today in our society. I can't, no matter how foolish and cruel I may be according to your definition. But attitudes seem to be rooted in cultures and old attitudes die hard. As I reread some of your work I marvel at the depth of these attitudes and it throws some light on why they still persist under the subconscious minds of apparently educated and broad minded people. Womankind of today struggles with this giant attitude tree that has rooted through every cell of our bodies into its invisible sheaths and can't be pulled out like a little weed. We can use all the courage you have granted us. Thanks.

Yesterday, I was listening to a song from my teen days. Nice, easy, pleasant tune, the kind that tends to get stuck in the ear. It starts out on a happy note. Someone is looking at a cute baby girl and admiring its innocent beauty. I was surprised that someone isn't crying or sighing that it is a girl and not a boy. But the sigh came in the second stanza -- how beautiful she would be when she grows up tomorrow and how many hearts of young men she is going to burn with the fire of her beauty. And in the third stanza, she is going to be a bride in someone's home lighting it up with her looks and how some lucky man is going to get her sweet love. And I stammer, b-b-but what about her childhood, and education? And who is she as a person? Does anyone care about any of her attributes that aren't related to her looks? Why is it that when a boy is born people are thinking about his education and when a girl is born they are thinking about her marriage? And your wise words were lying next to my music system like a 'because'. *Satkule yojayet kanyam putram vidyasu yojayet. Marry your daughter into a noble family and employ your son in studies.* Of course, it is the right investment or insurance for the right gender! Perhaps appropriate for your time. Even today, dutiful Indian parents take these very important steps to ensure happiness for their children they love, boy or girl. But is this insurance paying? Please come and see for yourself.

And here is one where I really need your help.



*Saa bhaaryaa yaa shuchirdakshaa saa bhaaryaa  
yaa patibrataa  
Saa bhaaryaa yaa patipreetaa saa bhaaryaa  
satyavaadinee*

**She is the true wife who is pious, faithful and deft in her duties toward her husband, who loves toward her husband, and is truthful.**

Tell me, how a woman who is by your definition, impious, deceitful, and cruel by nature turn just the opposite that is required of a true wife? By her illusory power? Or are you implying that no woman can be a true wife? But she must marry! What a dilemma! And then your advice for a husband is to **leave a wife who speaks with anger.** *Tyajet krodhamukheem bhaaryaa.* Wouldn't she be angry and frustrated if she has to go against her very nature? And then if she should be left alone why marry her in the first place? Is it for a noble and charitable act on the part of a man for her salvation? Because according to you, *streeyo nashtaa hya-bhartrikaa,* **without a husband a woman gets destroyed or amaithunam jaraa streenaam, a woman ages without sex?**

But then you are also very confident that **a woman can do anything.** *Kim na kurvanti yoshitaah.* After all, what the mythological women haven't done? Seeta has entered fire to prove her chastity, walked alone into the forest to give birth to twins, and rejected her husband when humiliated. Saavitri has argued face to face with Death and won her husband's life. Droupadi has put up with five husbands she did not want, has fought alone against assault and harassment in a crowded but mute royal court, and taken revenge wildly. But if woman can do anything, why can't she take care of herself?

You say, **she can very well teach the art of deceiving.** *Streebhyah shiksheta kaitavam.* Is that the job she would get after trying to go against her nature to be a good wife, failing miserably at it, getting frustrated and saying something in anger, and as a consequence being discarded by her husband?

Or may be here is what you mean when you say she can do anything.

*Jalpanti saarddhamanyena pashyantyanam  
sabibhramah  
Hridaye chintayantyanam na streenaamekato  
ratih*

**Women have a knack of talking to one man, casting an askew glance at another and loving secretly a third person. They cannot devotedly love just one man.**

And what about man? Poor, helpless, powerless creature who just suffers under the illusory power of woman.

*Yo mohaanmanyate moodho rakteyam mayi  
kaaminee  
Sa tasyaa vashago bhriyaa nrityetkreedasha-  
kuntavat*

**When a man falls in love of a woman she makes him a puppet and makes him dance according to her wish.**

I really don't understand why you are so afraid of woman. It just doesn't suit someone of your stature. Western psychology may find various reasons but I am not interested in those. If you do come back to earth as a woman you may experience something very different. Sometimes I wish everyone could live as the opposite sex for a few months. I was watching an old movie the other day where a reporter wanted to write a story on anti-Semitism and he realized that the only way he could find out how it feels to be treated as a Jew is to be one. So he tells people that he is a Jew, and his life changes as people treat him differently. If people could live someone else's life for a while, they probably would be less judgmental about others and would have less to fear one another. Perhaps even you would be more understanding of woman, who appears to you so powerful. Perhaps you would realize that on some of your verses without knowing it you are describing the hostile environment in which many women live.

*Yasmindeshe na sammano na vrittirna cha  
baandhavah  
Na cha vidyagamopyasti vaasam tatra na  
kaarayet*

One should not live where one may not get any respect, where one can't earn a liveli-

hood, have no relatives or friends, and there is no chance of acquiring knowledge.

For many women that place is none other than their **home, where a noble lady should remain, stree divyaa shobhate grihe**, and must not leave because *stree bhramanti vinashyati*, **a roving woman is doomed**. These views of yours are widely shared by people of our culture even today, leading to a big dilemma for women who can neither live in their homes nor leave it.

So what do you say? Would you come back and help us out? You may enjoy using a computer for your work, and you may find many new things to write about as many things have changed in twenty-five centuries even though some of your truths as well as attitudes haven't. You can travel by air to all the places far east and even west your work has traveled and a laptop can be arranged if you prefer.

You see, some of us have been trying to make this world peaceful, starting with our homes, streets, and work places. And even you, with all your accusations, throw in a ray of hope for us that I must not forget to mention. In your

own words, *bhaaryaa mitram griheshu cha*, **in the home, wife is one's best friend**. Friendship requires equality. You have also said that **one must be satisfied with his wife, food, and money**, *santoshastrishu kartavyah swadaare bhojane dhane*. And satisfaction requires acceptance. You also say, *shantitulyam taponaasti na santoshatparam sukham*, **no penance is greater than the act of maintaining peace and no happiness is better than satisfaction**. So, you see, there is a common denominator to our differing views. Perhaps we can discuss how friendship and acceptance could be nurtured for the sake of satisfaction and peace, against all odds. I sincerely hope that you will seriously consider my invitation.

With regards,

**A woman from early twenty-first century**

P.S. This letter is not an illusion.

**Reference:** [Ethics of Chankya](#), translated from Sanskrit by Tantrik Yogi Ramesh. Sahni Publications, Delhi, 1994.

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*Mamata Misra is a community volunteer living in Austin, Texas. She volunteers with an organization called Saheli ([www.saheli-austin.org](http://www.saheli-austin.org), [saheli@usa.net](mailto:saheli@usa.net), (512) 703-8745) that provides support and assistance to Asian families suffering from domestic violence. This article was previously published in 2001 in a regular column called "Women and Society" in the South Asian Women Forum webzine Connect at [www.sawf.org](http://www.sawf.org).*





## The Season of Loneliness

### Baidehish Dwibedy

A pinch of vermilion in my hand,  
The eyes are on the road of arrival,  
Of somebody,  
The heart is anxious,  
A feeling of the spring within,  
Eyes don't want to blink  
And ... I am waiting for her....

The season changed,  
And several seasons have changed since  
then,  
She has not come,  
The air never brought any message from her,  
Not even her smell

Still I am waiting,  
With a handful of vermilion,  
With an anxious heart,  
And with a lots of dream in my eyes.

Like a lonely star in the evening-sky  
Like a moon in a star-free night  
Like a mirage in a desert,  
Like a misrouted boat in an ocean,

Still I am waiting,  
With a handful of vermilion,  
With a lot of hope  
And with a lot of dreams in my eyes.

The moon doesn't look like the moon anymore  
Nor the spring gives any pleasure  
The sound of the tides have started being  
annoying  
Each second has become a burden  
Nothing is same as it used to be before

Still I am waiting,  
With a handful of vermilion,  
With an anxious heart,  
And with a lot of dreams in my eyes.

---

*Baidehish Dwivedi lives in Chicago, IL.*

## Forgive Me

### Snigdha Mishra

I meant to call you, I really did ---  
But the sweet scent of yellow Jessamine  
Wafting on the evening breeze enveloped me.  
It tickled my nose as it drew me closer.  
I took a deep breath and then another.  
Drunk on the perfume, I forgot.

I wanted to talk to you, I really did ---  
But the bright flash of a dragonfly wing  
Gleamed blue-green, iridescent.  
It hovered, then darted out of sight.  
My eyes followed its erratic flight.  
Enchanted by the view, I forgot.

I meant to visit you, I really did ---  
But the quick babble of water  
Gurgling over mossy stones  
Called to me. I closed my eyes.  
Listening, I followed my feet.  
Drawn to the music, I forgot.

I thought about you, I really did ---  
But the rich brown bark peeling off the cedar trunk  
Beckoned to me. My fingers rubbed it  
And then touched a ladybug's back.  
Rough then smooth, my fingers stroked.  
Enthralled by the textures, I forgot.

I wanted to send you mail, I really did ---  
But the spring rain misted down.  
I closed my eyes, stuck out my tongue.  
I stood with arms outstretched.  
The cool clean drops, headier than wine,  
Blessed my mouth. I forgot.

I thought about you often, I really did ---  
But my senses betrayed me, all of them.  
I reveled in the smells, the sights, the sounds.  
I savored the textures and the tastes.  
Lost in a world of my own, I forgot.  
Forgive me.

---

*Snigdha Mishra resides in Austin, TX, with her husband and two children. Trained as a financial analyst, she teaches and performs Hindustani classical music and writes poetry in her spare time.*

# The Charred Body

**Prasanna K. Pati, MD**

I had located my psychiatry practice in the beautiful city of Montreal, Canada in the early 1970's. It is one of the last great cities of North America, where one can still feel the presence of history of days gone by - a feel of the 17th and 18th centuries. Old Montreal is the oldest Church district in America and even though I am a Hindu, I loved to wander around this lovely area.

It was in 1988 that Montreal hosted the International Congress of Jurists. There was a large delegation from India. I had known that one of the members of the Indian delegation was my friend, Justice Tripathy. Of course, it had been more than thirty years since he was my classmate in the Ravenshaw College at Cuttack in the Indian State of Orissa. Justice Tripathy was an eminent member of the Orissa High Court, not only known for his keen legal mind, compassion and honesty, but also for his big ego. Though I had not been in touch with him, I was looking forward to a visit from him. He was the judge appointed to inquire into the Hindu-Muslim riots that rocked the city of Cuttack in 1968. I was particularly interested in his findings, opinions and recommendations to the government of Orissa. I also thought, it would be a real opportunity for my friend, Miss Helene Drummond, to learn first hand about the Hindu-Muslim conflicts of South Asia. She was a Professor of Political Science in McGill University of Montreal and a specialist in inter-religious conflicts, be it India, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, or the Middle East.

I called the organizers of the Congress and left a message for my friend. I was not sure he would find the time to visit with us. After all, I had procured a program of the conference, and Justice Tripathy was a panelist in several symposia.

One evening, I received a call from him, "Dr. Sonjee, I received your message. Yes, it will be a great pleasure to visit with you. I am free tomorrow noon. I had known you were in Montreal, and I was hoping we could get together."

We decided to meet at the Maharaja India Restaurant on the Boulevard Saint-Laurent. I had told him that I would bring along a special friend,

an expert on inter-religious conflicts around the world.

Helene and I met him in the hotel lobby around noon the next day. "Justice Tripathy, I am Dr. Sonjee. You look good. I would like you to meet my friend, Dr. Helene Drummond, a Professor of Political Science at McGill University, here in Montreal."

For a moment, Justice Tripathy seemed a bit confused as Helene, of French-Canadian origin and long dark hair, was in her forties and stunningly beautiful. He regained his composure and said, "What a surprise, Dr. Drummond. I am delighted to meet you."

I added, "Helene has a Ph.D. from Harvard and her thesis was on inter-religious bigotry."

Helene, who is very outgoing, added, "Call me Helene, Justice Tripathy, I am very pleased to meet you."

We went to my car and started towards the restaurant. In my excitement in meeting my college friend, I started talking in Oriya, but Helene quickly responded, "Darling, not in your language, please."

Helene and the Justice were conversing very amicably on the current situation in India. He was a bit uncomfortable at the beginning, but soon responded to Helene's warmth, charm, openness and friendliness. We very much enjoyed the buffet lunch which had both North and South Indian cuisine.

"Justice Tripathy, you chaired the Enquiry Commission to go into all aspects of the Hindu-Muslim riots at Cuttack. I think it was 1968. Both Helene and I are very interested in hearing from you firsthand."

Justice Tripathy didn't expect such, as I could see that his expression changed. He avoided eye contact. There was a moment of silence and tension.

"Dr. Sonjee, why should you be interested in your native Orissa? You left for America and decided to stay back. If you had really cared for



India, you would have come back and served your own people. You are no longer an Indian. Why would you be interested in the Hindu-Muslim riots of 1968?"

I was not expecting such from Justice Tripathy. He pushed my buttons and I became angry, but maintained my civility.

"Obviously, Justice Tripathy, you do not wish to talk about it. Regardless of what you think, I love India, perhaps, from a distance. Furthermore, what difference does it make if I am a doctor here in Canada or India? After all, our Hindu scriptures proclaim repeatedly, 'The entire Universe is one family'. Furthermore, I would be lying if I did not admit I like to be here in Montreal rather than Delhi or Calcutta."

Helene was quiet for a change, with a sort of enigmatic smile. Justice Tripathy did not respond.

Helene interjected, "Darling, perhaps Justice Tripathy has some painful memories related to the Enquiry Commission. You should not press him any further."

I responded, "Helene, you are a scholar on inter-religious conflicts beginning with the Crusades, the persecution of the Jews for centuries, the raging fires of hatred in the Middle East, Hindu-Buddhist alienation in Sri Lanka, Catholic-Protestant warfare in Northern Ireland, ethnic cleansing of Hindus by terrorists in Kashmir, and frequent Hindu-Muslim riots in India. Here is an opportunity to learn from this eminent jurist. My memory of Cuttack is that it was peaceful. I had Muslim and Christian friends."

Justice Tripathy, at this point, called for the waitress and ordered wine for himself and us. "Dr. Drummond and Dr. Sonjee, the Enquiry Commission I chaired after the riots is even now most unpleasant to think about. Even now, after so many years, at times I have nightmares. I did not expect a non-resident Indian would be interested in it after some twenty years. After all, India is full of tragedies. Yes, I will tell you about it, not the legal aspects but what I went through as a judge, sifting evidence through truth, lies, distortions, confusion, contradictions and accusations from literally hundreds of witnesses. The city was paralyzed for five days. It was taken over by mad people -- riots, stabbings, burning

houses and shops. Do you understand, and can you visualize those scenes?"

The waitress came over with three glasses of wine. He proposed a toast to our health and we reciprocated. He took a sip and proceeded, "Dr. Drummond, are you sure you want to hear this entire horrible story?"

Helene responded, "I am a scholar, yes, it will be the first time that I will hear it directly, from an eminent jurist, a first hand account of the inquiry."

"Dr. Sonjee, perhaps you remember some of the localities of the city of Cuttack such as Chandni Chowk, Buxi Bazar, Chowdhury Bazar, Manglabagh, Chaulianganj, Bangla Sahi, Ranihat, and Naubazar. Not a single one of these historic areas escaped the spreading riots."

"Justice Tripathy," I asked, "how did it start?" "It is a good question. I heard all kinds of causes during my investigative inquiry. Even the police didn't have a clear idea. It started in the stadium where there was a soccer match between the visiting Russian and the Orissa team. How and when and why it became a communal riot was not clearly established."

Helene commented, "What was the riot like? Was it simple street demonstrations and some sporadic incidents of arson?" Justice Tripathy did not respond and asked the waitress to bring three more glasses of wine. He sipped the wine slowly. Then he proceeded, "No, Dr. Drummond, from the testimony received at the Inquiry Commission hearings and from police officers, the city went insane - groups of young Hindus proceeding menacingly towards predominantly Muslim neighborhoods and vice versa, stabbings of members of the opposite community and arson. Within a few hours, the police lost control. People who knew each other as friends suddenly became enemies. It was a repetition of what happened in Lahore at the partition of India. Dr. Drummond, you have studied from medieval times. You know very well, there is no reason."

"Justice Tripathy, were there fatalities?" I asked. "Yes, there were fatal stabbings. The police recovered many bodies mostly belonging to the minority Muslim community after the riots had subsided. They were victims of stabbing or

cutting the throat. There were also victims whose eyes had been gouged."

Helene interrupted, "Justice Tripathy, I am feeling sick in my stomach. Let us take a break, and I suggest we walk over to Notre Dame Church. I realize both of you are Hindus and you need not go in, but I need to pray."

We walked in silence to the Church, and we entered the inner sanctuary. Helene knelt down and prayed, and we, two Hindus, stood just behind her in prayerful silence. In my mind, I attempted a prayer, but nothing came to me.

We came out of the Church and went to its courtyard. We sat on a bench. Justice Tripathy continued, "During testimony given at the Inquiry Commission hearings, I heard such stories for many months. Gradually, I became insensitive. Dr. Drummond, for a judge, it is very, very difficult to establish truth and facts in India. It was gut-wrenching testimony. It was friends and neighbors who had lived in peace for years and suddenly turning against one another just because of religion. Dr. Sonjee, you are a psychiatrist. Perhaps you have some explanation for such brutality."

I responded, "Justice Tripathy, I may call it a mass psychosis or hysteria, but that does not really explain it."

The judge continued, "I will just relate two incidents. A man testified that he saw a man stab to death an elderly male of the other community. The assailant suddenly realized that he had called the dying man, 'Uncle' for many years, even though the latter was a member of the other community. According to the testimony, the miscreant, in the dim light, held up the bleeding elderly male, hugged him and reportedly said, 'Uncle, forgive me for what I have just done,' as he cradled the dying man to his chest."

Helene interrupted, "According to the testimony of this witness, was there any response from the dying man?"

"Helene, I asked him the same question and the response was a look difficult to describe."

I said, "Justice Tripathy, is this one of the episodes that brings on nightmares to you?"

"Precisely so, Dr. Sonjee. I grew up in a small village near Cuttack. We had a Muslim neighbor, who was a teacher in our school. I used to call him 'Uncle' and his wife 'Aunty.' In our large village we, the Hindus, participated in the Muslim community's Muharram and they, in our Dusserah festivals."

Helene said, "Justice Tripathy, I am shocked. I cannot believe that such cruelty could happen in the land of Gandhi and Buddha."

"It is getting late. Let me come to something that haunts me even after twenty years. During the inquiry, a police officer brought a pair of shoes. It was the kind of shoes worn by Muslim women. He testified that this pair of shoes was found near a female body charred beyond recognition. The body was not claimed by anyone. Several witnesses had testified as to whose it might be, but the fact is that it was so charred that it could not be identified. The question was, was she a Hindu or a Muslim woman?"

I interjected, "How did the police dispose of the body? Was there a Hindu cremation or was it consigned to a grave, as per the Muslim custom?"

Justice Tripathy paused for a while. Then, he added, "As the body was burnt beyond recognition, and as it couldn't be proven that the shoes belonged to the woman, leaders of both communities agreed to perform both Hindu and Muslim funeral services, and thus, she died as a citizen of India, neither Hindu nor Muslim."

It was close to evening. We walked in silence to the flower-decorated square named for the early French explorer Jacques Cartier to listen to outdoor fiddlers playing French-Canadian folk tunes. Our mood soon improved and Helene asked me to join several people dancing to this soulful music.

We took Justice Tripathy to his hotel, and Helene, while wishing the Justice good-bye, planted a kiss on his cheek. He didn't expect such warmth and affection, but soon regained his composure and asked Helene, "If I may ask you, are you in love with my friend, Dr. Sonjee?"

Helene didn't expect such a personal question and seemed surprised. I interjected, "Helene, in the culture of India, such personal questions are not considered inappropriate."

At this, Helene started laughing, came close to me, planted kisses on both cheeks, and said, "Dr. Sonjee and I are diverse - he, a Hindu from India and I, a French-Canadian Catholic. Justice Tripathy, shall we say, it is Platonic love."



# 'I am OK, you are not OK' syndrome

**Sahadeva Sahoo**

"*Sindoor* as additive!" - just because it gives a mouth watering red color to your food? This happened in New Jersey in an educated family. And the result is a slow lead poisoning of the parents and the small child. What amazes one is people lose common sense so easily when they are away from traditional family ties.

We are losing knowledge in search for information, and wisdom in search for knowledge. Wisdom is the foundation of our common sense. When we lose common sense we blame others without understanding why 'others' behave the way they do. Forget the environment in which others work, and you pontificate and say, "I am Ok, you are not OK." This is a manifestation of what we call self-righteousness.

Almost all of us are self-righteous. But the educated control their hubris and are able to see righteousness too in others' actions and omissions, and do not boast that it is they who only have mannerisms and morals, which others must emulate or else the others are to be despised.

The self-righteous are critical of others; at slightest provocation they shout at whom they consider is at fault, and do not hesitate to spread canards about him or her. A sort of inferiority complex drives them, and if they don't have anything worthwhile to prove their identity, they resort to denigrating others, so that they shine better in their penumbra. We sometimes ask others suggesting, 'you should have done this or that.' But when it comes to us to take a decision, we hesitate. We don't want tainted ministers in the Government when we are in opposition, but forget that homily when we form the Government. Consequences of a sense of self-righteousness are manifest in external affairs of the Governments. Ministries of external affairs of super powers arrogate unto themselves the avatar of the self-righteousness. The USA lectures to the world how the others should behave in the international polity. She forgets to apply that homily at home. The USA could capture Noriega, the Head of another State, and bring him before the home court for trial, but it will never allow

another country to capture an American and try him, for example, for wrongly attacking Iraq or spraying chemical weapons against the people of Vietnam. The USA can have nuclear stockpile, but will not allow another country to start manufacturing a weapon, what to talk of stockpiling them. It comes out of a feeling that what I think is the best for the whole world, whereas your thinking is sectarian. No wonder, the USA has reservations on establishment of an International Court of Criminal Justice. It won't allow a foreign court to sit in judgment over actions of its citizens abroad, though it proclaims to the world that every body is equal before law and that human rights violations would be a bar to trading with the USA.

In fact the US Government does not view other country's laws as civilized while it treats its internal laws as equivalent to International laws. There is the episode of President Nixon protecting an American teenager accused of scratching the surface of a parked car in a Singapore street. Singapore is known for cleanliness, and the Government is fiercely protective of its drive to maintain its image of a clean city. Yet President Nixon accused the Singapore Judiciary of being barbarian because they ordered 52 strokes of cane on the teenager. Nixon rang up the Prime Minister of Singapore to intervene. Intervene he did, and the teenager was given a less number of caning.

The World Bank is a club of the rich nations and never holds its meetings at places cheaper than Hotel Waldorf-Astoria, 301 Park Avenue, New York. Representatives of lesser nations when they queue there for loans are given lectures on how to remove poverty in their countries. America asks others to adhere to standards of environments but sulks at enforcing it on itself. It has voted against its white representative Robert Watson, and propped up the Indian candidate, TATA's representative Rajendra Pachauri for the post of Chairman, UN Panel on Climate Change because Pachauri advocated moderation in phasing out manufacture of vehicles causing noxious emissions whereas

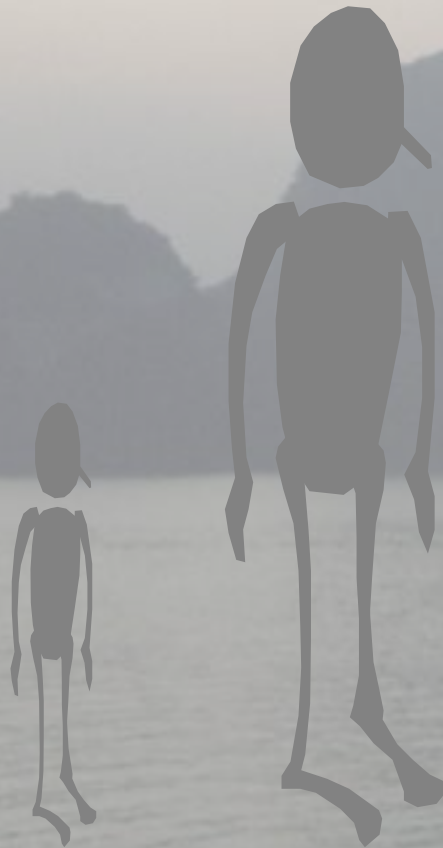
Watson wanted drastic action. Self-righteous people preach one and practice another.

Self-righteousness is a heady condition that all of us have experienced at one time or another. Eric Hoffer said, 'Self-righteousness is a manifestation of self-contempt.' 'Self-righteousness is a loud din raised to drown the voice of guilt within us.' Those who are honest will admit that there is something sickeningly sweet and alluring about knowing you are right, while others are terribly wrong. However many unpleasant or anxious feelings may accompany a crisis, righteousness is one side effect that can

imbue a person with sensations of romantic virtue, and the satisfaction of feeling like a martyr, or the lonely champion of a pious cause... And yet, the amount of heat in a person's voice bears almost no relation to how right they are. Anton Pavlovich Chekhov said, 'You will not become a saint through other people's sins.' If I quote Erich Fromm, 'There is perhaps no phenomenon which contains so much destructive feeling as moral indignation, which permits envy or hate to be acted out under the guise of virtue.' When occasion comes, they do not hesitate preaching, a preaching which borders on scolding.

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*Sahadeva Sahoo, IAS (retd.), holds the position of the Chancellor of Supreme University, Raipur. He has served as the Chief Secretary to the Government of Orissa and the Vice Chancellor of Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology. He is a prolific author with 40 books and a regular contributor to various newspapers and journals in Orissa. He has received several literary awards including the Orissa Sahitya Academy award and the Sarala Samman. He can be reached at [sahadevas@hotmail.com](mailto:sahadevas@hotmail.com)*







## Pradyot Patnaik

Smiling softly on countenance sky  
 Winking, twinkling, blinking shy  
 Shining crystals, smiling gems  
 A necklace of pearls in the diadem  
 A carpet in the welkin blooming bright  
 Emeralds embroidered on hairs of night  
 Intransigence love through fathomless miles  
 Naughty and pretty like children smile

Hovering clouds like flowing cress  
 Softly shroud the sleepy face  
 Of Mother Earth from myriad eyes  
 Blinking teasingly from the sky  
 Between the clouds those soft rays  
 Tickling the air in frolic play  
 Playful, rhythmic live children  
 A script of love in the page of heaven

Ever awake and never slumber  
 Waiting for Dawn, waiting for Mother  
 To be tucked under soft blanket of light  
 Under lullaby of larks to Mother's delight

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*Pradyot Patnaik was the editor of OSA Souvenir  
 2003.*

## Eternity

### Surya Nayak

Night was drunken  
 dew was heavy,  
 heart moaned and  
 caught in anguish  
 of some perishables events,

An Owl flew by.....

Words of feelings  
 Hummed-  
 Lips glazed with love.

Light within  
 lit wet with fire.  
 not capable to control  
 the inner speech;  
 unfolded  
 a landing kiss of softness.

Inside voice echoed, and  
 Lispered, "I love you."  
 Muscle tensed and toasted  
 Not-to-ease.

Body, knowingly B-a-t-h-e-d in  
 lavender-dew foam,  
 eddy slowly escaped  
 in-between her breast,  
 Lingeringly.

Cascade of feelings  
 created an image, in  
 the whirlpool;  
 making the bubbles  
 rested on her belly button  
 with eternity.

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*Surya writes in English & Oriya. He lives in Maryland  
 with his wife, Sujata; daughter, Tasha and son,  
 Sonal.*

## Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

**Markandeswar Panda**, Ph.D., D.Sc. (Phil.), San Antonio, TX

This article on the Yoga Sutras (Yoga-Sutras, Yogasutras) of Patanjali (pAtan.jALi and sometimes referred as pAtan.jaLa) is an exposition of the important views and comments read from a number of books available both in print and out of print. In the west, Yoga generally means the Asanas (physical postures) associated with Hatha Yoga, and certain mental exercises to create a peaceful mind. This is quite necessary for many, who will never have the chance to discharge the full capacity of their physical brains. In the East, the concepts of brain and mind are treated separately. Interestingly, while there is more activity from the western scholars to study the eastern literature, the modern Indian is claiming to have been influenced by the 'culture' of the West. According to them, such influence often means not finding enough time to read an original work written in any language, not even in the English. I am not trying to teach Hinduism to the Hindus, and expect my writing to be a brief guide for further studies. There are many manuscripts and books that I would like to quote here, but their relevance for this article is the same as the irrelevance of quoting my views in any of the future articles in this area.

In ancient India, the authors of the great texts mistakenly labeled as Hindu scriptures, never tried to earn a name for the knowledge available to them. Unfortunately, even possessing preliminary amounts of such common knowledge is becoming the source of 'ego' and pride for nearly all of us. We continue discovering manuscripts written on bhoja or palm leaves, in the museums and libraries around the world, and in the homes of a few humble villagers living in remote parts of India. These un-translated texts contain or refer to the names of authors, who had written books using pseudonyms of Kapila (kapiLa), Patanjali, Vyasa (vyAsa), Valmiki (vAlmiki), and Vasistha. Conveying knowledge to a trained disciple was the prime interest, and no one wrote for the sake of making a name or earning the riches. Many scholars from both the East and West believe that Patanjali of the

Yogasutras was the same person who commented on Panini's (pANini) grammar. The MahabhASya of Patanjali, which is a treatise on PaNiniAn grammar, makes no comment on the Yogasutras (200 BC), and vice versa. Some commentators believe that MahAbhASya was written by the same Patanjali of the Yogasutras, and probably lived around 200 BC. The practice of plagiarism was not a part in the lives of the interpreters of the SanAtana dharma. This is one of the reasons as to why we find the ancient texts flowing with unique knowledge, like clean water in a spring. Unlike the ancient writers, many of the modern writers plagiarize entire texts and rephrase the unique knowledge into their own style, calling it original, without any guilt conscience of not referring the originals. Therefore, it is not easy to conclude when and where the author of the Yogasutras, lived and died.

There is an available commentary on Patanjali by a scholar named Bhojadeva (or Bhoja). In the available literature, there are no Bhojadevas listed in any of the Indian literature, earlier than 10<sup>th</sup> Century of our era. If Patanjali was a single person, then he was Yogi, a writer, grammarian, and a doctor at the same time. Also, it is not strange that a multidisciplinary person, trained in religion quoting a tenth century AD or 4000 BC text to highlight his 21<sup>st</sup> century bestseller. Therefore, the statement of a writer named Chakrapani writing about Patanjali as: "*PAtan.jaLa-mahAbhASya-CharakapratisaMskR.tAhi*", should not give us an illusory view that both of them might have lived at the same time. The statement in Sanskrit in the previous sentence means, Patanjali's medical works are the revisions of Charaka's *Samhita* (medical treatise of Charaka). One cannot rule out the possibilities of revising a work by another person, several centuries after the original was written.

It is not easy to write an article on the Yogasutras, but below are some brief comments. Unfortunately, there is no simple method of extracting the truth on the controversies arising



from the number of manuscripts available. Too many commentaries on Patanjali are available either directly, or indirectly from the works of Nagarjuna (*UpAyakAuSaLayahradya-Sastra*, Chinese translation in 472 AD), by Magha (in his *Sishupalabaddha*, iv, 55, ca 650 AD), and Vachaspati Misra (*Tattva-vAichAradI*, ca 850 AD). I have no idea what is real and/or what is fact. If there is a truth, in any work, then it does not matter whether it is wrapped in gold, silver, iron, or mud. It would not be contaminated even by my comments, coated with my personal ignorance or bias.

The contents of Yogasutras: The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, consists of a total of 195 rules (sutras). These are no less complicated than the Brahma Sutras of BadarAyaNa, and are not easy to interpret without a proper *bhASya* (commentary) or *Vritti* (descriptive notes). It may be noted that BadArayaNa had compacted the entire Upanishadic teachings in 564 cryptic sutras, collectively known as the *Brahma Sutras*. The Yoga Sutras are divided into four parts (pAdas), as follows.

1. *samAdhipAda*, 51 sutras. This is a general introduction to the nature, goal, and methods of the various methods of Yoga. It also deals with the practice of yogic methods leading to the cessation of the various modifications of the internal organ, *chitta*.
2. *sAdhanApAda*, 55 sutras. This section discusses the causes of sufferings, not only mental but also those attributed to *karma* and bondage.
3. *VibhutipAda*, 55 sutras. These sutras discuss the yoga psychology, including supernatural phenomenon and the acquisition of certain supernormal powers.
4. *KaivalyapAda*, 34 sutras. These sutras deal with total liberation (*kaivalya*) of the mind, and realization of 'Self'.

The entire text, when written continuously would occupy between four and five pages. The original text (if it is authentic) like that of the sutras of all the other five systems of Indian Philosophy, except *Vaisesika* (*VaisheSika*), is well preserved. For new readers in Hinduism, I may point out that there are six schools of Indian philosophy, i.e., *sAmkhyA*, *Yoga*, *nyAya*, *vaishesika*, *mImamsA*, and *VedAnta*. *Vaishesika* is a

school of philosophy, which deals with the enumeration and delineation of the ultimate constituent of the universe. This paramanu (*paramANu*) theory of this school is sometimes equated with the atomic or sub-atomic theory of the west. However, in my personal view, they are not equivalent to each other.

Although it is not possible to discuss the individual Sutras in detail, there are several good books on this topic, where the authors have expanded the views with their own biases. It would be irrational on my part to compare, agree, or contrast with any of the views available in print. Most of them have good intentions or explanations, but offer incomplete and sometimes totally far fetched interpretations. The best choice for the seeker of truth is to read these in their original Sanskrit verses, and then derive the meanings as they appear. The following paragraphs are my general comments, and may not be satisfactory for the experts.

Yoga is a discipline, both theoretical and practical, through which the individual mind, can attain a state of equilibrium with the universal mind. Thorough discussions on this subject can be found in the references cited at the end (1-5). Introductory and simplified discussions without heavy analyses of the sutras are also available (6, 7). The novice may find the preliminary essence of the Yoga (in about 32 printed pages) in the popular philosophy book by Dr. Radhakrishnan and Charles Moore (ref. 7).

It is not clear when Yoga became an integral part of Indian philosophy. But it is well known that Patanjali's Yogasutras are probably the first and most systematic presentation of this philosophy. The Hindu literature always faces and would face the problems of not keeping or even mentioning the time and origins of the unique ideas. No one knows why such records are more important than the contents of the books. The so-called western writers always demand an explanation for not keeping the records straight. Despite the popular belief that Yoga is a part of the Hindu system of philosophy, all eastern religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism have either incorporated or had independently developed many of the practices of Yoga philosophy. Therefore, the number of



ancient and modern interpretations of this philosophy is quite remarkable in number.

In Hinduism, Yoga is traditionally associated with *Samkhya* (sA.mkhya), because the latter acknowledges the former as a method of realizing truth. According to some authors, Yoga also accepts the *Samkkhya* metaphysics and epistemology to be important for its own disciplines. The important difference between the two is: 'unlike *Samkhya*, Yoga accepts the existence of God (*Isvara*), the supreme *Purusha* or Self. *Samkhya* rejects God as both creator and designer of the universe.' The *Purusha* of the Yoga is instrumental in bringing out the universe from the purely physical, unconscious *prakriti*. However, *Purusha* has never been or cannot be in bondage to *prakriti* is an important aspect of this thought. But it is not the sole reality as other *purushas* and the *prakriti* exist; these are not created by the Supreme *Purusha*. There are no degradations between the *Purusha*, other *purushas*, and the *prakriti*, there are only different degrees of perfection between the individual *purushas*. Patanjali does not see the absolute requirement of a God concept in the practices of Yoga. "Nevertheless, Patanjali teaches that not all forms of Yoga require devotion to God, and Yoga can serve even the atheist as a means to freedom and liberation (8)". Despite the differences between the various Indian schools of philosophy (or religious practices), Yoga is recommended in one form or the other as a path for preparing the mind for '*moksha*'. The only exception was the school of Charvakas, who did not recognize it.

#### What can Yoga teach the common person ?

The aim of Yoga, according to Patanjali, is the acquisition of the knowledge of freeing the 'self' from its bondage to *prakriti*. This is basically the destruction of illusion that binds the self with *prakriti*. In simpler words, it is the complete control of the '*chitta*', which is the complex of *buddhi*, *ahamkara*, and *manas*. *Chitta* undergoes modifications when it is in contact with the sense objects through our senses, leading to ignorance. In that state one mistakenly identifies oneself with the instruments (sense organs) of the body. The practical discipline of Yoga dispels such mistakes, and frees *chitta* from the bondage of the perishable physical body.

#### Who can practice it?

Any one can practice Yoga, and it need not be limited by health or age. It is the realization of self by freeing the mind. One should not be afraid of the goal by thinking about the difficulties involved with *Asanas*, and *Pranayamas* requiring good health or strong body. It is the method for controlling the mind (*chitta*) rather than exercising the body. When one method of conditioning the mind (see the *aSTAngas* for conditioning the mind discussed below) is limited by health and physique, one may try other methods. According to Bhoja, the commentator of the *Yogasutras* (8), souls who at birth are equipped with receptive minds for the Yoga are rare. Most of us have to gradually develop the mind, and make it fit for the ultimate goal, the *Kaivalya*. The *vyAsa vAsya* describes five classes of *Chittas*, and each of us falls into one of the categories. These are:

1. *Kshiptachitta* (wandering mind). It is controlled by passions, which sometimes overpowers the mind. A person falling into this category may have a temporary concentration, but it is not the contemplative concentration required for attaining absolute independence.
2. *Mudhachitta* (blind or stupid): Controlled by passions like anger, by which it loses its senses.
3. *Vikshiptachitta* (dispersed): This type of mind is universal and represents people, who sometimes tend to be good, but easily relapse back to evil.  
These (above) three states of mind are not suitable for the contemplative concentration of Yoga, and need to be conditioned.
4. *EkAgrachitta* (unified or unidirectional in the best sense): In this mind true knowledge of the nature of reality is already present. This type of mind is ready for the next stage, the '*nirodha*'.
5. *Nirodhachitta* (fire walled?): In this mind all mental states are arrested (controlled) and is suitable for *kaivalya*.



aSTAnga of the Yoga system for conditioning of the Chitta:

The Sutras in the *sAdhanApAda* section provide the means of attaining a controlled mind. These are called the *YogAngas*, and the eight of these are referred as *aSTAngas*. Because of page limitations, it is not possible to discuss each of these in detail. Interested readers may find very easy to understand discussions of these *YogAngas*, in the book by Swami Pravananda (see Ref. 9). Briefly, these can be explained as:

1. *Yama* (restraint). 'Yama is the abstention from harming others, from falsehood, from incontinence, and from greed. These forms of abstention are basic rules of rules of conduct; must be practiced without any reservation as to time, place, purpose, or caste/creed/religion.' (Yoga Sutra, II, 30 and 31).
2. *Niyama* (observances). 'These observances are cleanliness, contentment, purificatory action, study, and devotion to God'. (Yoga Sutra, II, 32)
3. *Asanas* (posture). Patanjali says, 'Posture becomes firm and relaxed through control of the natural tendencies of the body, and through meditation on the infinite.' (Yoga Sutra, II, 47). According to one of the *Samkhya* Sutras, 'Any posture which is easy and steady is an Asana; there is no other rule.' Therefore, Patanjali's Yoga does not demand the rigorous physical postures of Hatha Yoga. According to Swami Pravananda (p-251 of Ref. 9), "The Hatha-Yoga exercises no doubt have definite therapeutic values." Physical health is important for both mind and body, but it should not be confused to be considered as a necessity of Patanjali's Yoga.
4. *PrANAYama* (controlling the life force). This is the control of vital energy, which probably means the control of the breathing pattern. Again, one should not practice the hardest way of controlling breath and cause more damage than benefit the body. Brain is an organ of the body and its health is very important for the mind. Patanjali's *prANAYamas* are not the same as the ones taught by Hatha Yoga, the latter may do more harm without the instructions of an expert teacher. Many books confuse the reader by discussing the *KunDaLini yoga*, and the *Tantra shAStra* as Patanjali's methods. Here is a suggestion, based on Samkara's works, 'Stopping the right nostril with the thumb, inhale through the left nostril within abilities; then without any interval exhale through the right nostril. Now reverse the processes, i.e., inhale through the right and exhale through the left. By practicing this three or five times at four periods of the day (dawn, midday, evening, and midnight), in fifteen days to a month one may attain purity of the nerves.' (From the notes in p-253, Ref. 9)
5. *PratyAhAra*. This is usually defined as abstraction or control of the mind. Swami Vivekananda (Complete Works of Vivekananda, Vol. 1, p173-4) has simplified it by saying, "He who has succeeded in attaching his mind to the centers of perception at will, or in detaching it from them, has succeeded in *pratyAhAra*, which means "gathering towards", checking the outgoing powers of the mind, freeing it from the thralldom of the senses. When we can do this we shall really possess character; then alone we shall have taken a long step towards freedom."
6. *DharANA* (concentration). Patanjali defines it as 'holding the mind within a centre of spiritual consciousness in the body, or fixing it in some divine form, either within the body or outside it.' (Yoga Sutra, III, 1). A single form of concentration may not be suitable for all. Patanjali suggests two simple forms, which are easy to practice.
  - (a) 'This word [Om] must be repeated with meditation upon its meaning.' (Yoga Sutra, I, 28)
  - (b) 'Concentration may also be attained by fixing the mind upon the Inner Light, which is beyond sorrow.' (Yoga Sutra, I, 36)
7. *DhyAna* (meditation). Meditation is an unbroken flow of thought towards the object of concentration.
8. *SamAdhi*. This is the last stage of the *YogAnga*, in which the mind (*chitta*) becomes one with the object and there is no difference between the knower and the known.

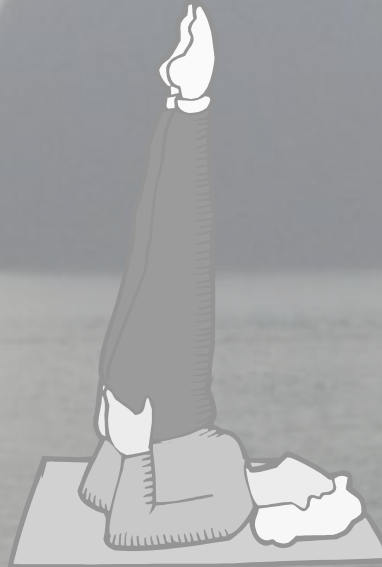
Now, the mind is ready for assimilating the unknown principles of nature. The path to *Kaivalya* state opens up, and the individual mind tends to become a part of the universal mind. *Kaivalya* is deeper than *Samadhi*. In the *Samadhi* stage one still has the distraction from the awareness of his self, whereas, in *Kaivalya* one attains the state of absolute freedom from bondage and ignorance.

P.S. I have used the word 'mind' as an equivalent of 'chitta' for convenience only. Some writers use 'mind-stuff', but I do not prefer to use it.

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# The Waning of the Moon

**Dr.(Mrs.) Pratibha Ray**

*Translated by Dr. Satchidananda Mohanty*

Why does the moon wax and wane, one wonders. The sliver of the moon looks so beautiful, perhaps because behind the imperfection, an invisible artist dreams of a picture of completeness.

To me, however, it seems as if day by day the moon is only getting smaller. When I think of the moon, I think of Buddha's words that suffering is the perennial truth of human life. Ordinary man searches for happiness amidst misery, and experiences suffering in many ways. That is why, perhaps, the sick take recourse to treatment and console themselves that not illness but physical well-being is the reality, knowing all the while that the reverse is true. Hope leads to a greater suffering, yet it is the same hope that sustains man and gives him pleasure however transient.

But what is the meaning of hope? I find it hard to understand. How, for instance, is this girl to console herself? After all, the doctors have pronounced their final wards. There is no further treatment to be undertaken now. Despite this, if she has remained alive, it must surely be due to her indomitable will to live. Her strength of mind and power of endurance simply amaze me. Perhaps, like the fore of the river that gets stronger when a swimmer strives against its current, adversity tends to fill a person with greater strength.

As it happened, it is she who was the means of our acquaintance. One day, an unexpected phone call greeted me. The caller introduced herself as Chandrabhaga Das. She said she was an admirer of my books and wished to see me.

"I am usually at home during the evenings. You're welcome to visit me then." I said. Her silence over the phone filled me with a curious admixture of melancholy and eagerness. "You know," she continued, "I've been ailing for quite sometime. I heard you live nearby. If only you could come!"

It was not pity but curiosity that drew me to her house. And my visits continued over a period of time. I suppose, it was some invisible attraction that drew me there despite my busy schedule.

The first day I saw her, she was wearing a long gown and lying in bed. I introduced myself to her aged father, Lambodar babu, who ushered me in and said to his daughter, "This is Prabhat Ray whose writings you love so much. Remember, you invited him".

She folded her feeble hands together and greeted me but lay still in bed. She made no effort to rise. It must be due to her weakness, I thought. Perhaps, she has been asked by her doctors not to get up. Her small face appeared somewhat pale and lusterless. Some hidden emotion made the tip of her nose appear a trifle tremulous. With eyes unblinking, laden with a deep sadness, her gaze held me as if she were in search of something. The gaze was direct and made me somewhat self-conscious. What answer to life's mystery she seeks from an unknown writer, I wondered. Aloud, I asked, "How are you? How long have you been ill? Is it fever or headache?"

In reply, she only smiled and then began discussing my works. I suppose, it was easy for me to be oblivious of her illness as I sat there listening to my own praise. All in all, I think I liked the girl more than she liked me. By then, her mother had treated me to some tea and snacks, and I felt myself a member of their family. At our first meeting, I stayed for two whole hours. When I finally got up to go, I said with easy familiarity, "Now it's your turn, you know. I do hope you get well soon and pay me a visit. I am sure my wife will be delighted to meet you".

In her reclining position, Chandra offered me a weak smile in return. As I stood there about to take leave, I added, "And by the way, you asked me a lot about my writing but you said nothing regarding yourself. Which college do you

attend? Are you in the Science or the Arts? And how long have the doctors advised rest for you?"

I wonder what else I could have asked her at my first meeting.

In a subdued tone Chandra answered, "What can I possibly say about myself? Well, perhaps another day, I think as it is, I have wasted a lot of your time. But I must tell you, it was wonderful meeting you. As with your writing, you imparted a feeling of intimacy at our very first meeting. I have no doubt that it's my great fortune to have you call on me".

I thanked her and stepped out. As I looked back at that still form upon the bed, my smugness gave way to a deep sorrow. How does one explain the plight of such a pure and tender soul? I wondered. Could it be simply her misfortune or perhaps the result of some past karma?

As if interrupting my thoughts, her father said, "It has been twelve years you see. Before that, she could at least sit up. Now, even that is not possible. The wheelchair is lying idle over there. It may never be put to use again."

Heavens no, "I exclaimed quite involuntarily."

Her father continued, "When the doctors made false promises, I used to pray to God. Now they say there is no hope. I don't even pray anymore. Also, I no longer have to go to the temple or the hospital. That's better in a way. Chandra was in a nursing home for five years. I had a tough time then commuting between the hospital and the temple."

I listened in a daze as he went on, "Chandra was ten when she felt some pain in her spinal column near her waist. The doctors advised an operation, the result of which was that she was paralyzed from her waist downwards. The girl who was notorious in school and at home for her restless nature, has been absolutely still for the last twelve years. This dark room is her world. And that ceiling over there draped with cobwebs is her sky. I wonder why God has kept her alive. Our own days are numbered. Can you imagine what will happen to her after our deaths?"

I had no answer to all these questions and could only mumble, "What about your other children?"

"Well, they're there, you know, doing well. Two of my daughters are abroad; the sons are quite busy in their world. When they come, they live here for a day or two. But Chandra is our responsibility. Who will look after her when we are gone, I wonder. Strange, there was a time when she was the darling of all!"

Chandra's father heaved a deep, melancholic sigh. I wanted to leave, but I felt hard pressed offering any cheap consolation to someone who had experienced in her very cells the bitter truths of life. Moreover, what consolation could one offer in Chandra's peculiar condition?

I was standing with my back towards Chandra. She was obviously within earshot, and I just didn't have courage enough to look back at her. Obviously, Chandra believed in me as a writer. What answer could I give to her crisis of life? Nonetheless, I retraced my footsteps, bracing myself to face Chandra. It would not be proper for me to leave abruptly now that I knew the whole story, I thought. But could I possibly tell Chandra about her death in life condition? I decided to pack all my sorrow and empathy into the expression, "I am sorry", but stopped when my gaze finally fell on her.

She has thrown her unknown and unwanted body upon the bed. What could I possibly tell someone who harbors the cruel truth of twelve long years in every blink of her eyes? It would be so presumptuous of me! Her eyes were as still as stones. The agony of the present had made her face devoid of expression. It was though our roles had been reversed, as if not Chandra but I was helplessly begging for her grace. It was as though I was pleading with her to let me know what words of mine would not violate or insult her being. She had retained, in the last twelve years, the picture of so many people rendered helpless at seeing her plight. And the more helpless the others had been, the more strength she found in herself, perhaps because she realized that no suffering is ever



lessened nor can the expression of sorrow and pity help in restoring one's past.

Interrupting my thoughts Chandra asked, "How long are you going to stand like this? I've truly caused you a lot of trouble, I think, by summoning you in this way."

"Well, the pain is not due to my standing, I said and fell silent."

"If you're really worried on my account," Chandra remarked, "will you do something for me?"

I had resolved to do my utmost when Chandra said, "My only request is that you should never show any pity for me. For the last twelve years, the more pity people have showered on me, the poorer I have become. Today, this country is so poor that many people here can even live on the surfeit of pity. I hope you don't mind what I say."

As I gazed at the girl, I wondered whether Chandra was feeling pity for my own helplessness. "I'll come again," I said hastily as I stepped out of the room. I made an effort not to look at the wheelchair in the verandah. My mind was not prepared to accept as truth the chair which for me had become a symbol of Chandra's crippled status.

While seeing me off at the gate, Chandra's father said, "Actually, I wanted to see you. Will you do something for Chandra?"

"I am prepared to do whatever I can, especially if it's going to do good for her," I replied with eagerness.

"I think, I'll ask Chandra to make a representation to the government. Could you please draft this letter?"

When I said eagerly that I would, he remarked, "She will end her life for which she seeks the sanction of law. I shall die in peace if this much can be accomplished. Wouldn't it be ideal for her to pass away amidst love and care? She is sure to die after us but that would be a cruel death, full of suffering and neglect."

Hearing those words, my eyes became moist. And when I saw the stony eyes of Chandra's mother looking at me, I wanted to flee. It seemed to me as though I were being implicated in some crime. What could I reply? Aloud I said, "Does Chandra know this".

"Yes, I am preparing for this kind of suicide," replied the aged father. "Instead of a death full of suffering, perhaps her soul should leave her broken body before our eyes."

"But does Chandra agree to this?" I persisted.

"Well, if the world were working according to Chandra's plans, would she have languished for twelve long years? Do you know that at one time she was a great dancer? And today, her fate is worse than a lizard's crawling on its belly. That is why I never allow any lizards to thrive in our house; I kill them all ruthlessly. No wonder many people take me for mad."

I returned home in silence. Later, at each visit, Chandra's father would ask, "Did you write that representation? Don't you think it's better for Chandra to die? Do you really take this for life? How can we as parents, bear this sight and for how long?"

Yet I saw that day by day Chandra was improving. She may have been paralyzed to her waist, but her heart and mind were still active. Above all, her hands were amazingly brisk. A stranger might have mistaken her illness for a simple case of flu. I looked around the house and saw Chandra's handiwork scattered everywhere. The sweaters that she continued to knit were being used by her family and neighbors. It was as if her dead body had been kindled into a flame of life. Her hands had defied her inert feet.

Now visiting Chandra became a matter of habit for me. She had become a source of inspiration, revealing in effect that it is only the shirker of work who is truly the cripple.

Of course, I never succeeded in replying to Chandra's father. At times he would ask me, "What's holding you up? Are you really worried that there may be some legal problem? Rest assured that she will affix her own signature to the document. Don't you realize that our days are

numbered? Who would give her even a drop of water after we are gone?" he repeated.

All waiting is tiresome. Waiting for death is, in a way, worse than death itself. But it was hard to believe that Chandra was actually waiting for death. That this condition could be glorious like the radiant moon on a new moon night defied all imagination.

That day I saw Chandra creating the image of Lord Jagannath with the help of some golden thread. She was humming a tune to herself from the depth of her heart. It seemed to me that perhaps Chandra loved someone dearly, and it was this profound love of hers that had kept her alive. This love had created music in her and manifested itself through her hands as the blossoming of many flowers.

Gathering courage, I asked, "Chandra, I hope you don't mind. But tell me, though your body is nearly paralyzed, your heart is full of wonderful dreams. Have you fallen in love with someone?"

Instead of looking at me, she turned to the image of Lord Jagannath and smiled, "How could you know my mind?"

"Your life tells me that," I answered. "There are many who are healthy but cannot live so fully as you. Look at me for instance! I am one of them. I am more dead than alive! Perhaps in the humdrum chores of everyday existence, I have lost the track of life."

Nodding her head, Chandra said, "Yes, there is someone I love. My love for Him has added strength and joy to my life. He has taught me that I am no crippled imperfection."

"But who is this ideal of yours?" I persisted, half expecting her to point me out, so full of vanity and self-love I had become.

Chandra's lovely gaze held me still. Then she turned toward the two huge eyes and beautifully engraved picture of Lord Jagannath. "I adore the incomplete image of the Lord," she remarked. "If my Lord can be perfect and immanent despite his crippled status, why should I grieve over my plight? After all, my feelings are not dead, nor has my heart ever been still!"

I detected a peculiar radiance in Chandra's otherwise colorless face. Perhaps it is I who deserve to be the object of pity, I thought, for I took a crippled body for a hungry soul whereas Chandra, I realized, had moved beyond the joys and sorrows of ordinary life.

I stepped back bowing to that noble soul. At the doorstep, her father, who had witnessed our conversation, said, "Perhaps you don't need to write that letter of representation. My Chandra's soul will outlive her body! Can one ever destroy the soul? I think I suffered before because this truth had escaped me. Now, I am freed from this burden."

I could sense the murmur of a faint whisper penetrating the recesses of my being, "There is no end to suffering in this world, but like the surrender of Draupadi before Lord Krishna when threatened with disrobement by the Kauravas, the world's miseries are lessened when they are offered to the Lord."

I was stepping out of the room when I checked myself. I thought I heard Chandra's voice behind me, and retraced my footsteps. Her smile of perfection was the enigmatic counterpoint to her crippled body under the shadow of the new moon.



# Letter to a Child: Thoughts on Thanksgiving

Srikanta Mishra

As autumn prepares to give way to winter, and we begin to recover from the Durga Puja festivities, dinner table conversations start revolving around plans for Thanksgiving. “Are the cousins coming here or are we going to their house?” “What should we have this year, *tandoori* chicken or *cajun* turkey?” Telephone calls are made to family members to see who’s coming, menus are discussed and modified umpteen times, and visits to the grocery store become a daily chore. Finally, the long weekend arrives when family, food and fun times converge.

I remember asking you what Thanksgiving meant when you were in pre-school. “Thanksgiving is when you eat turkey, meet family and give thanks for all the presents you get,” was what you had replied. Perhaps you could not separate Thanksgiving from your birthday, which follows a few days later. Or maybe you were thinking about Christmas, which seems to arrive closer and closer to Thanksgiving each year. In any case, the real significance of Thanksgiving appears to have faded into the background. Now that you are a little older, I hope you will begin to appreciate the reasons for offering thanks year after year.

As you probably know, the tradition of Thanksgiving started with the Pilgrims. In the fall of 1621, the survivors of the Mayflower – joined by a group of Native Americans who helped them survive their first year in the new land – held a three-day feast to offer thanks for their bountiful first harvest. During the early days, Thanksgiving was not always an annual event. George Washington declared the first national day of Thanksgiving in 1789. President Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November as a national day of Thanksgiving in 1863. And in 1941, Thanksgiving was finally sanctioned by Congress as a legal holiday, as the fourth Thursday in November.

Many harvest festivals similar to Thanksgiving are celebrated all over the world. These

usually take place over several days during the fall – winter months, involve food of some kind, and emphasize the togetherness of the family. Examples of such celebrations are the Chinese Moon Festival, Vietnamese Tet Trung-Thu, Jewish Succoth, Nigerian and Ghanaian Yam Festival, and Korean Chusok. Similar festivals were also held by the ancient Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans and Native Americans.

In India, harvest festivals are generally celebrated in the month of January after the harvesting of rice. These festivals vary from state to state – reflecting the amazing cultural and regional diversity of India. So, whether it is the ‘Pongal’ celebrations in Tamil Nadu, ‘Bihu’ in Assam, ‘Lohri’ in Punjab, ‘Bhogi’ in Andhra Pradesh or ‘Makar Sankranti’ in Orissa, Bengal, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh – they are all Indian versions of the Thanksgiving.

What are people generally thankful for during these celebrations? First of all, it is about the food and the harvest that produces it. Then, it is about the family that shares the food and supports its members during good times and bad. Finally, it is about the good health one enjoys because of the availability of the food. As Swami Paramananda’s Thanksgiving prayer says: *“May the Lord accept this, our offering, and bless our food that it may bring us strength in our body, vigor in our mind and selfless devotion in our hearts for His service.”*

I remember a ritual my parents (and their parents) used to follow, where they would place five morsels of food on one side of the plate at the beginning of each meal. We children were also expected to follow this ritual – but quickly gave it up as we had no idea about its significance. Recently, I have come to realize that this small act is nothing but an offering of thanks.

With these five morsels, we are thanking:

- Divine forces (*devata*) – for their grace and protection.
- Ancestors (*pitru*) – for giving us their lineage and a family culture.
- Sages (*rishi*) – for maintaining and imparting our religious heritage.
- Fellow human beings (*manushya*) – for providing social support.
- Other living things (*bhuta*) – for serving us selflessly.

So, during our next Thanksgiving celebrations, let us try to remember who else we should be thankful to – as we offer the usual thanks to God for the abundance of food, presence of family and the blessings of good health.



*Srikanta Mishra, an engineer who also dabbles in risk analysis, lives in Austin, TX. His hobby is to continue learning about Orissa and India so that he can teach his children more about our heritage.*

## Cunningham Park

### Sangita Misra

Dandelions dancing  
 To the tune of the breeze  
 Cherry trees blushing  
 Under the April sun.  
 Dragonflies daring  
 Through the verdure grass  
 Chipmunks scurrying  
 Down cobbled stone paths  
 Dreamers dreaming  
 Under the Azure sky  
 Lovers basking  
 Under the warmth of love  
 A poet penning  
 Down her thoughts in a frenzy

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## O Mother Orissa

### Er. Rasananda Behera

Germantown, MD

O Mother Orissa in India!  
 O the great mother, Orissa  
 To you the holy oDiA  
 We all brothers and sisters as oDiA  
 May the light of your nation  
 Glow in endless commotion  
 To protect your prestige and honor  
 Are we all dedicated forever?  
 And to the edifice of your land  
 With sweat, toil, and blood we stand  
 To protect the temple of your land  
 United, we stand in command  
 On way to our independence  
 Martyrs' life was a sacrifice  
 With the broken slavery's shackle  
 Our great land on a pinnacle  
 To your lotus feet.

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## The Shifted Bindi

Vikas Patnaik

It was happening, finally. Months of family deliberations had morphed into the sweet strains of the *shehnai*. Relatives – near and distant – had converged from places – near and distant – in this hall, on this unusually pleasant summer evening in Ludhiana. I looked over the shoulders around me at the color, the chatter and the movement, as cousins – or was it nieces – swooshed by in pairs or threes, stealing glances at Simran, then at me, then at each other. Simran, too, was surrounded by bedecked shoulders - only standing, midway across the hall. Even at 36, her aura – and her coarse silk *saree* - had that jasmine-smelling softness of the new brides I worshipped as a little boy who became aunts. It was only when you looked closer at her face did the lines of wisdom become apparent. Today, she looked particularly resplendent, with a gold *bendi* marking the beginning of her parting and the slightest curls cascading from the sides of her moist and sweet-smelling small head, which culminated in a neat bun.

Somewhere in that sensory collage, Simran suddenly turned around and looked at me. The slight detachment in her gaze came not just from the fatigue of the ceremonies that had begun, or the age she (and I) had reached after all these years, but from the *familiarity* – the coming together of two families that had grown up together. We had known each other since we were children in Calcutta, our parents good friends sharing the remnant joys of a British-colonial past – Tollygunge club, English proficiency par excellence for the children, and of course, the *aayah*. But what's this? – “Simran, your *bindi* has shifted a bit to the side,” I called out across the hall. Had I forgotten that there were people around us? Or was it the *familiarity*? Or was this my moment of tenderness at the thought that *we* were uniting? Nobody, not even we, could have imagined that one pleasant summer day it would all come to this - our engagement for a life together. Simran's semi-detachment gave way to signs of acknowledgement, even the trace of a smile. But somehow,

the tired *familiarity* remained, as implanted as her *bindi* - a deep maroon, not the traditional red, and of the intermediate size, not the huge third eye of the late 70's or the birth-mark mole of more recent times. The kind my son likes but can never get his mother to wear.

“Hi, I'm Simran's cousin, Sneha. Heard a lot about you,” said a slightly stocky twenty-something in a bilious pink *lehenga*.

“Nice to meet you. What have you heard?” I said, shaking her hand. By this time, I was in a different, darker corner of the room, and felt cornered.

“Do you feel any fear?”

“Fear? How do you mean?”

“Well, with Simran taking care of the two kids....” My mind was already thinking about *her*. She was there too, my partner for so many years, in the same hall, her back turned, appearing to stand in a group of guests. I couldn't see her face, just her long dark hair – a *purdah* that has sometimes fallen between us. How could this be happening? Fifteen years of togetherness, and now I am getting engaged to a woman I somewhat knew as a little girl and barely knew later, during the three years of overlap we had in college? At first, it felt alright, even natural in its course. But today, as I sat on the marble steps, in the glittering crowd...

Suddenly, I remembered that I had to catch a train to Delhi after the party. The realization showered relief over my startled being. I decided to leave early for the station. I smiled at a few more people, took one last look at Asha's back and stepped outside. The night air was cold for summer. I got into a taxi and the next thing I knew, I was sitting in the second-class III-tier compartment of a dusty maroon bogey of the Indian Railways.

The train pulled into the cold night with determination. I looked around me. I was alone in the compartment. Thoughts of Asha and the uncontrollable unfolding of events entered me as easily as the blistering night wind. How did it come to this? How could I allow such an evolution of circumstance? As the diesel locomotive tore through the heavy wind, the wind howled back. The struggle grew fiercer and my face started to shake against the icy horizontal bars of the window. The taste of salt, oxidized steel and a billion palms trickled into my trembling lips. I howled with the wind. My body shook till the bars in the window bruised my forehead above my right eyebrow. I cried loudly, shamelessly, in concert with deafening roar of the wind and the syncopated orchestra of the wheels as they steeled through the periodic breaks in the tracks. Asha, what will become of you? Now I know how much I love you. Maybe I could get off at the next station and take the "Up" train back to Ludhiana; to be with you. To change everything to how it should be...

Still sobbing with the wind and the train, I turned away from the window. I was no longer alone. My surprise probably did not match that of my four fellow passengers. It wasn't sympathy I saw in their eyes, but a blocked, expressionless curiosity. As the tears cleared from my eyes, I realized that they had another thing in common. They were all of mixed origin – part-Indian, part-white Caucasian.

Finding no comfort in the detached interest of my co-passengers, I got up and left the compartment. I headed for the dining car. After the Ticket Conductor guided me in the right direction, I found myself entering an art deco restaurant resembling the dining cabin on the upper deck of a luxury liner, complete with black leather seating and stainless steel rails. The waiter, all black and white down to the black moustache on a pale face, showed me to a table in the center, overlooking the steps from the lower level. On the other side of the steps, I saw a group of boisterous men – probably laborers in the shipping industry returning to their villages with foreign currency – talking and laughing loudly, as they drank their imported whiskey. The *berah* – the only one in service at this strange hour – returned to my table to take my order.

"What will you have?" he asked, almost petulantly.

"Your cheese cutlets and a glass of wine, please." I replied, with failing credibility.

"We don't serve wine this late, sir. Sorry."

Now it was my turn to look incredulous. A couple of tables behind us stood triumphantly a tray bearing two full bottles of red wine and some sandwiches, before a mirthful European family. I turned to my *berah* with renewed courage.

"Don't take me to be one of those local louts trying to flash his foreign-earned money around. I'm on a soul-recharging visit from the States. I don't live in this god-forsaken country any more, but I still love it. And I live with my head held high over there, unlike the idiot you think I am."

No sooner had I said this than I regretted it. Why did I need to explain my geo-social status to him? He was probably just tired at the end of his shift and dying to get off at the next station. Was it myself who needed the assertions? I looked into his irritated eyes for the answer, only to find affirmation of my initial response. Then, in a sudden move, he walked toward the stairs leading down, leaving me wondering whether he was coming back.

The noise from across the stairs grew as the night wore on. At one point, one of the men got up, slapped his mate on the back and knocked over an empty bottle as he was trying to extricate himself from the mess of disarrayed tables and men. The bottle fell to the floor and smashed to pieces. Peeved, then aggravated by this unexpected crash of their climbing crescendo, the man violently nudged the table, bringing more bottles down to the floor. I was shocked at the angry yet joyful defiance of his action. One of the man's mates picked up a bottle that hadn't broken in the milieu and flung it forcefully across the cabin. I turned apprehensively toward the western family sitting in the back of the cabin. There was not a hint of surprise in their expressions. They saw this remarkable behavior only in passing, evidently immersed in the civil enjoyment of their own genteel company. The bottle shattered so loudly, that I got up –



“Kya hua, Meenu? Hope you guys didn’t break anything important, or I’m coming,” cried Asha from downstairs as the room filled with light, and the sound of little feet running for their life overtook my heartbeat. I was about to rub my irritated eyes, when I realized that I had left my contact lenses on before falling asleep.

**GLOSSARY**

*aayah* maid-servant; term coined in the colonial days of the British Raj  
*bendi* an ornament worn at the top of the forehead, coinciding with the traditional middle parting

*berah* Indianized version of the English “bearer” or waiter  
*bindi* red or vermilion circle worn by women from India on the forehead, generally as a mark of beauty and sometimes to indicate marital status  
*kya hua?* what happened?  
*Lehenga* long, flowing, highly ornate skirt worn by young girls on festive occasions  
*purdah* curtain or veil; in this case, the latter, introduced in India through the pre-British spread of Islamic culture in the sub-continent  
*shehnai* wind instrument used in hindustani classical music; popular in traditional north-Indian weddings

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## My Saris

Joyshree Mansinha

*“The penalty, always, of living in one place while feeling in your heart that you belong in another is to be a perpetual outsider”.* Anne Chisholm on Rumer Godden (1991).

My best friend Bev, who lives in London, comes often to Toronto to visit me. No matter what the weather is, one of the “must-dos” on our agenda is to visit the Little India on Gerrard Street East. From where I live on Yonge and Eglinton, it is not an easy trip without a car. We take the Yonge subway down to College and then the #506 streetcar to Gerrard East. On the way, after passing through Cabbage Town, we pass through China Town before the Indian shops and restaurants start blossoming. In summer, it is a festive street: Bollywood film music blaring, chat shops, sugarcane juices, roasted corn-on-the-cob, kulfi stands on the sidewalk. Racks and racks of tacky salwar kamiz displayed on front of the shops, and smell of kebabs permeates the air. It is a bit of Mother India for homesick expatriates and a shopping Mecca for tourists.

Bev loves everything Indian. The first thing we do when we get to Gerrard is go to Moti Mahal restaurant to eat. Moti Mahal is the one restaurant that has remained the same for more than twenty years, since Gerrard East became the Little India. She has a vegetarian Thali and I have my usual Aloo Naan and a Ras Mallai. After that, we wander through the street looking at all the shops and vegetables piled high on the sidewalk, the vegetables of my childhood. If we are there in summer, there are crates and crates of tempting, perfumed and voluptuous mangoes. But the real attractions for her are the sari shops. Once she goes into one of those, it will be hours before I can drag her out. She looks, touches, and swoons over each and every sari and salwar kamiz. The one time Bev had a sari on was when I put an emerald and blue Kanjiveram sari on her over her pants and white T-shirt. There is something in those sari shops that also attracts me in a primal sense, to my roots. Even though I wear a sari once in a blue moon, I also get

caught up in the myriad colors and textures, and before long, I am thinking of buying one for myself!

For an Indian woman, a sari is unlike any other item of

clothing; it is almost an extension of her own self as it is not static but moves with her every movement. Even though I only wore saris for a year before my marriage and promptly discarded them once I was in this country, it still feels like the sari is my normal clothing. What I put on everyday is something temporary! In my usual western clothing, I am like the Scarlet Ibis who is bleached to a nondescript grey in an alien land; in my colorful saris, I am resplendent in my natural habitat!

My relationship to my saris is unique and intimate, unlike my relationship with my other clothes. Saris for me are a tenuous connection to my culture, like cooking bhata, dali and santula occasionally, perhaps once a month when I feel homesick for Oriya food or reading *The Samaja* on the Internet once in a while, just to look at the Oriya script. My feelings for my saris are saturated with memories, nostalgia and longing. I remember the first saris of my adolescence, the saris I got for my marriage, the saris I bought at every visit to India, the saris I wore when I brought my babies home from the hospital; a sky blue Gadwal with fuchsia border was the sari that I wore when I brought my first born home from St. Joseph’s hospital, and a soft red rubia voile sari with an olive green border for bringing my second daughter home from the hospital. The saris my mother gave me at each of my visits to Orissa, the saris my mother wore when I was a child. The sari I put on my eldest daughter Leena for the first time when she was thirteen was a turquoise and purple print pure silk with a matching blouse in the same print. The sari I put on my





second daughter Somia for the first time when she was fourteen was a rust and navy blue Sambalpuri sari, a gift from my younger brother.

Each of my saris evokes a memory, when I bought it, when and with whom I wore it. Every sari has a story, sometimes happy but mostly nostalgic.

Even though I have worn a sari only about a dozen times in the past twenty-five years, I can still put it on with a few quick and decisive movements - the first tucking into *saya* (the petticoat), wrapping it around, throwing the *anchal* over the left shoulder and then gathering the pleats, and finally tucking the pleats into the *saya*. I feel I am in my elements when I am in a sari. Even though I am miserably uncomfortable and feel clumsy; I feel somehow right and complete. The sari, the bangles, and the most important, the *bindi* on my forehead make me feel what I really am: a middle-aged Indian woman in her normal attire. Now, I require a few pins to secure it, and I am always apprehensive that it might just slip off me and it is a constant battle between me and the six yards of silk. I am aware of its moving in the wrong direction, getting caught between my legs, getting caught on my sandals, coming off my shoulder. I worry about climbing stairs, trips to the toilet, how to hold onto my purse, and balance a plate of food and eat while the six yards of material move with, but more often, against my body!

My collection of saris has gone through sea changes since I have been in this country, but the core collection still remains with me. My precious ones are still with me, folded neatly in plastic bags in a cardboard box. I take these out occasionally, look at them longingly, and then put them away. I hope, once I am gone, my daughters will keep my saris, perhaps in a cardboard box in their basement, not for the stories attached to each one, but simply because they are too beautiful to discard!

My most expensive and the most beautiful sari is a gold and purple temple Kanjiveram which I wore to my second daughter Somia's wedding. My ex-husband bought it when he was on his sabbatical in Hyderabad. I think he bought it for one of his sisters but when I saw it, no one

could separate me from it! Now, it is in the protective custody of my second daughter.

The saris I have now are few but very special. Some of them are almost antiques! A shimmering brown Kanjiveram with a plain dusky rose border. I have a picture with this sari on when I was twenty-four years old, which I consider one of the best pictures of me. Then there is a black Kanjiveram with a turquoise border, a Benarasi brocade in purple, green and gold, a Hyderabad Ikat in fuchsia with an orange border. Three precious saris from my mother: a beige *tussar* with purple design, a soft silk print in black and gold with fuchsia border, a black and white print that I wore like a uniform on one of my visits to Orissa; every picture of me is in the same black and white sari. A white Sambalpuri sari with a black border that my older brother gave me, which I wore to my eldest daughter Leena's wedding. My mother's wedding sari, a pale mauve Benarasi with silver *zari* border that was so badly faded that I had it dyed to a dark green. Then there is a white Mysore silk with silver *zari* border that belonged to my Badabou, which she wore at my older brother's *brataghara*. A pale green georgette with dark green embroidery that was my most precious and exquisite sari before I got married; An ultramarine blue silk sari, fragile with age, which my mother had before she got married; The sari that I loved to wear when I wanted to dress-up in a sari as a little girl.

Now when I wear a sari, I have to remember to walk slowly in a straight line, not the quick, impatient New Yorker gait that I am used to. When I am in Orissa and traveling with my younger brother, he often whispers to me "dei, please lower your sari!" Without even realizing it, I always lift the sari to my knees when I am walking on the dirt roads of Orissa! When I first learned to wear a sari, I could put it on like my mother still does at home, a style of draping still common for rural women in Orissa and Bengal. I still can put on a sari in that style effortlessly. Wearing a sari and changing it in public is so normal to women in India! I saw my mother take a dip in the Ganges at Haradwar once, and change from the wet to a dry one without exposing a single inch of her skin!

Now when I go back for a visit, I see that the sari seems to have been replaced by the



salwar kamiz all over India! The salwar kamiz is one of the most inelegant outfits for a middle-aged Indian woman. It only looks good on Bollywood starlets with a perfect body that is carefully maintained by a personal trainer. Although women now love to wear it because of its functionality, I do not like it. To me, it is neither functional nor elegant. The few times I did put one on, I was convinced that I looked like a clown, all dressed up for Halloween! Since I never wore one before I got married, it felt alien without any romantic memory associated with it. When I go home to Orissa, I stick to my jeans and shirts at home but dress up in a sari for special occasions, going to the temple or visiting my ancestral village.

As an adolescent in Bhubaneswar, I wore “frocks”, hideous things trimmed with lace, frills, buttons, and designed and made by the local *darzi* in the Market building at Bhubaneswar. Now when I go to Orissa, I see that frocks have mutated into “maxis”, something that is even more hideous than the “frocks”, if that is possible! We were forced into wearing saris at puberty in those days. One day you are wearing frocks to school, and then, all of a sudden, the next week you are back wearing saris permanently! It was one of the most humiliating experiences – wearing a sari meant that you were growing up, and that getting married was not too far away! Unlike in this country, it was a “rite of passage” no young girl welcomed those days! In those days, a sari was worn like a cocoon, hiding the emerging sexuality of adolescent girls. If you let your *anchal* free and left your right arm visible, you were certainly not a docile girl from a good family. My mother would never let me out of the house unless I had the sari *anchal* wrapped around me to cover my upper body and low enough to conceal my ankles!

Checked saris must have been popular in those days as I remember having two, a mauve and blue, and a lemon yellow and dark green. I also had a Lucknow sari, a flimsy white cotton with white embroidery, which was a pleasure to wear on oppressively hot summer afternoons. I also had a magenta-cotton with a white border and a golden yellow with a red border. I was only given a few silk saris when I got married. When I was growing up in Orissa, my mother and Badabou did not go by themselves to buy their

saris. My Badbapa would go to market and get a few saris and then my mother and Badabou would make their selection from those! How things have changed! I did not even choose my own wedding sari! It was a parrot green Benarasi silk with a thin gold border. When my mother told me that I was getting married, my first reaction was to rebel, but when I reconciled to the fact that it was inevitable, my question to my mother was “will I have lots of saris?” I was never fond of gold jewellery, but I have always loved saris.

When I came to this country, I wore saris every day for a few months. It was frustrating trying to wash cotton saris in the bathtub, drying them on the shower rod and then ironing. Then, I discovered wash and wear nylon material that can be used as saris. I made my ex-husband drive me to mall after mall so that I could buy some “everyday saris” from fabric stores. In those days, the Indian community was small and one could not buy nylon saris from sari stores on Gerrard Street. As a matter of fact, there was no Little India on Gerrard! Most Indian women in Canada used to order nylon saris from Hong Kong, especially to take as gifts to India. I remember stitching lace and sequins, painstakingly for hours to plain nylon saris to make them look Indian. There was an orange sari with white lace and a turquoise one with a paisley design with silver sequins. Where are they now! Just in my memory, yet, I so vividly remember how after putting my baby daughter to nap in the afternoons, I sat on that mushroom colored carpet in a two bedroom apartment on Richmond street, stitching one sequin after another onto that slippery turquoise material!

There were so many saris that meant a lot to me, but for various reasons they are no longer with me: a red and black abstract print chiffon, gossamer as a cloud that my ex-husband brought back when I wanted a French chiffon sari from Paris, an off-white Kota sari, with orange polka dots throughout the body and an elaborate orange and purple border and *anchal*. This was the sari I wore on an oppressively hot evening in Agra when I saw the Taj Mahal for the first time; it was also the sari, which I had on for the last picture with my father in my village before he died. That picture says it all, the sorrow on my face and the pain on my emaciated father’s face. An orange satin silk sari with an extravagantly



printed *anchal* in green, a shimmering green Kanjiveram with a beige and white gingham border, a burnt gold batik with designs of maroon and dark brown, a rose pink Benarasi sari with silver *zari* border, a beige *tussar* sari with an orange *zari* border, a pale turquoise Kanjiveram with yellow lines through the body with a vivid parrot green border and *anchal*. A stunning black Sambalpuri silk sari with an extravagant and elaborate *anchal* in vermilion red, a gift from a man which I wore to his office Christmas party, the man who I had hoped would offer me a second chance to go back to my roots and be myself in saris again.

On my last visit to Orissa, for the first time in many years, I bought a few saris hoping that there would be occasions to wear saris again! My taste in sari leans towards the heavy, traditional, Sambalpuri silk saris from Orissa. I had forgotten the experience of sari buying! The expensive sari shops are almost always air-conditioned so it is a bit of heaven just walking into the shop! Only a few saris are displayed, draped over the walls of the shop but most of the saris are folded neatly in stacks inside glass *almirahs*, showing just a tantalizing glimpse of color and border. For a neophyte sari buyer it is just not picking a few saris. It is an experience to be savored. I was focused on buying two saris, one golden yellow with an emerald green border and another black with a turquoise border. However, the shop

assistant does not listen to your request but pulls out sari after sari and flings them in front of you on the carpet. Pretty soon my eyes were glazed looking at piles of shimmering silks, color combinations that I could not even dream of, and the wonderfully exquisite designs of the *anchals*! The Canadian in me meanwhile is guilt ridden, thinking that I must buy one, imagining the painstaking task the shop assistants (mere boys) will go through to fold those saris neatly again!

Suddenly, I see the exact saris that I want, and my face lights up! My companion, who is a pro at bargaining, tells me to calm down, otherwise, the price will not go lower but will escalate even higher. But I know that I am a total failure at bargaining, so it does not matter. After a few minutes of bargaining, my companion tells me that we should leave, as the shop owner is not lowering the prices. As for me, I pay the shop owner what he wants, and walk out into the sultry and dusty afternoon in Bhubaneswar carrying a bag with the two new saris that I have just bought, and wanted so much! I am euphoric in anticipation of wearing those, perhaps only once. Then, as usual, they will go into plastic bags in a box. I will take them out occasionally when I am feeling nostalgic, and think of their stories: when and how I bought them, and where and with whom I wore those two exquisite saris!

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*Joyshree Mansinha is a librarian and lives in Toronto. She bought her last sari in Little India in March 2002, a deep blue georgette with an emerald green border which she has not worn yet!*  
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## DANCE – a poetry of body language in motion.

Kakali Rath

Body represents a wide range of individual or class of objects, species, texts and many others. A body may refer to the whole physical substance of a person or animal, whether dead or alive. There are celestial bodies like the planets, sun, moon, stars, etc. We also refer to the body of a clock or a vehicle. A group of people who working together or doing a particular job, are also called the body like those in companies or industries. We also refer to the body of a theme or script or poetry. When we say 'body' we usually mean the body of a person or animal. It is definitely the whole physical substance of a person or animal, whether dead or alive! Yet it refers particularly to the physical structure and substance. In this paper the word 'BODY' refers to the human body only. It depends on the way we describe it. We all know it in terms of biology. The whole structure with our limbs, eyes, ears, nose, head, brain, skin, blood, living tissues and cells etc make up the body. The substance in which all our emotions are filled in or the substance where a spirit or soul can dwell is our Body.

### Need to communicate and language:

One may ignore the philosophical point of view and stick to a practical sense, and say that our body has two major parts – a physical body and a mind. Though we might be doing all our work physically, in reality our mind makes us do so. Nobody can lift his hand and write anything, unless the mind wants and instructs to do so. Because of the mind the human body is different from others. We are more powerful than any other animal or living being because we have a mind to think, which gives us intelligence, and with which we do a lot of activities like learning, framing, organizing, and composing. We plan or work out things in our mind and then perform it physically. That's how our body functions. We the intelligent beings work like this, and what is more important is that we work together. Since we think, learn, and work together, we need to communicate. There comes the need for a



language, the ability to communicate, or the means of communication.

There can be a language of words and speech, and there can be a body language too. There are thousands of languages like Oriya, Hindi, English, Spanish, German, etc, with their scripts and grammars. Before this type of language came into existence, there were languages based on gestures. The gestures, or the unconscious body movements, facial expressions, served as nonverbal communication. A simple example of saying yes or no without speaking can be nodding or shaking our head. There could be also grunts or cries! According to Corballis, in a new book, *From Hand to Mouth*, "Grammatical language may well have begun to emerge around two million years ago but would at first have been primarily gestural, though no doubt punctuated with grunts and other vocal cries that were at first largely involuntary and emotional."

Even now in today's life, we move our hands or put on facial expressions just to communicate or support verbal communication. A small child, who has not reached the stage of speech, speaks through gestures. An infant starts crying when something goes wrong, it feels hungry, or wants to just grab attention from its



mother or whomever it wants to talk to. This crying is a type of gestural language. According to McCarthy's classic review of language development in the first edition of Carmichael's Manual of Child Psychology, "It is quite generally agreed that the child understands gestures before he understands words, and in fact, that he uses gestures himself long before he uses language proper..." So, the body language or the language through gestures is the most natural way of communicating with one another. It comes instantly without thinking or wondering. Even while we are talking or speaking in our own words we do move our hands or shoulders. The common examples could be "Hi!" or "I don't know!", where we wave our hand to say "Hi!" without actually saying it, and raise our shoulders and make a face to say "I don't know!" Well, besides these natural gestures, there is also a typical gestural language in signs and symbols for the hearing and speech-impaired people. They speak through signs. This language is a specific language, which one needs to learn. It is not natural. So, all of us need a language to express our-selves.

It's extremely necessary to convey or communicate. We want to speak, to converse, to imply, and to convey our feelings to our listeners. If our feelings are trapped inside us and not expressed, then it begins to have a detrimental effect on our body and mind. Only when we express our feelings openly does it give us a sense of relief and satisfaction. So, we try to express ourselves some way or the other.

### **Expression through art:**

We have a mind along with the body, which is thinking, feeling, imagining and dreaming all the while. The language of words and the language of gestures are not enough to express all our feelings. There are still more beyond the reach of just words and small gestures. We are so thoughtful and emotional that mere words and a few common gestures are not enough to fully express ourselves. A lot of our thoughts still remain unsaid and unexpressed. Therein comes another way of expression - the expression of Art, another type of language. Art is the soulful expression of one's own feelings and experiences. There are different forms of art, like painting, music, dance, poetry, etc. One may

wonder how can feelings, which cannot be expressed through words and gestures, be expressed through art? A painter or a poet will not wonder about it though, because he or she knows that the thought, which is really difficult to express through words or any kind of common gestures, will flow through his/her painting or poetry. Though poetry is also in words, yet it is more expressive than any other kind of verbiage because of the similes used - style, indirectness, mood, etc. For example, difficulties of life may be difficult to express in words and one may not be able to describe the feeling in depth, which a poetry can do citing the harshness of life more beautifully. Besides poetry we can also express ourselves through the lyrics and rhythm of music. And there are lyrics according to different kinds of moods. When poetry is mixed together with suitable lyrics, it can really touch the heart. Likewise acting and dancing and many other art forms are such type of expressions, which can reach the corner of one's feelings. One can express oneself better through acting, rather than express through mere words. Same is the case with dance. Art may require training and practice to express perfectly, but it really can go very deep into oneself that one would definitely feel soothingly cheerful and satisfied with one's expressions.

### **DANCE – a body language:**

Dance is poetry in motion. Any theme or anything expressed in the language of rhythmic body movements and accompanied by music is called dance. According to Dr. B.R. Kishore, in his book 'Dances of India', "Man's soul urges and inner-drives expressed in rhythmic body movements constitute an art form, and it is called dance." So dance is also a body language. But, it has to have a rhythmic movement and a particular speed. That makes it lively. All of us including the earth, the moon, and the stars move rhythmically with a particular speed. Unknowingly we are acquainted with it. So the rhythm and speed that makes life comfortable, acts as a back-bone to dance. According to Dr. B.R. Kishore, "Rhythm and movement are basic to all creation and existence. Men, birds and beasts, plants, the earth, the planets and the stars, all are engaged in a ceaseless cosmic dance recital. Rhythm and movement is life, and its cessation stagnation, decay and death." Dance can speak a lot of



things rhythmically and touch everyone. One can say, the dancer is a silent speaker, expressing a lot of things and varieties of characters, portraying their identities, yet keeping his/her own identity as a dancer, intact. The dancer is a silent speaker because he/she expresses through gestures and body movements without speaking in words or even moving his/her lips. And these gestures are through hand, leg, and feet movements, through facial expressions, which are taught systematically in the dance classes. Of course there are music, song, rhythm, etc. that create a sound, but this kind of sound is a lot more appealing and acceptable than mere words and speech.

Long ago, before any of the dances evolved, when people were successful in scaring away the animals in the forest, they would start shouting and jumping with joy. The society then turned this into song and dance. "The individual shouts and jumps for joy; the society turns the jump into dance, the shout into a song." -- Encyclopedia Britannica. Dance has also been described as an imitation. "Dancing is imitative and in all its forms it is an artistic imitation of physical movement expressive of emotions and ideas" -- 'Aristotle's theory of poetry and fine arts' by S.N. Butcher, Gunter Ralfs, and Henry Thomas. According to Havelock Ellis - "Dance is the loftiest, the most moving, the beautiful of all the arts, because it is no mere translation or abstraction from life, it is life itself." As a result we see that dance is something that has eloped from our natural actions, in a form, which may be said to be a practical poetry. Each and every part of our feelings can be expressed through dance because dance encompasses a lot of art forms (song, which could be poetry too, music through instruments, rhythm and also acting and emotions) together in it. Thus, it's the most beautiful form of all the arts, and expressive too. According to many philosophers dance is also a type of 'Yoga'. It's done to reach God, or more appropriately it's a type of prayer to get closer to God. Starting from primitive age until now, many of our dancers have danced with utter devotion. "For all over the world primitive men dance where the cultured pray. The cultured express their admiration by kneeling down and saying prayers where as the primitive demonstrate their admiration through dance. As such dance is the earliest outlet for emotion, and is the cradle of all arts." --

Sanskrit Drama—it's origin and decline, by I Sekhara.

There are two types of dance forms - the Classical Dance and the Folk Dance. The folk dance is just a dance form meant for the common folks. This folk dance is usually understandable by each and every person. Classical dance follows certain norms, which are codified in the classic manuscripts ('Natyashastra,' 'Abhinaya Darpana,' 'Abhinaya Chandrikaa,' are a few of the classical dance manuscripts prevalent in India.) There are certain poses and postures, which the dancer should follow while dancing. Also there are eye, neck, head, hands, legs and feet movements, which have to be followed. This is the gestural language the dancer has to follow. It is said that mostly cultured and educated people can understand and follow classical dances, whereas folk dances can be understood and performed by anybody. Yet both of them give a lot of pleasure to one and all.

#### **Even body parts speak:**

As per the manuscripts of Indian classical dances, there are certain Eye movements, like looking to the front, sideways, up and down, etc. There are many others too. These movements are to be followed by the dancer. There are head and neck movements, hands and leg poses, and feet movements. There are many of them, but the main point is that this is the gestural body language through which a dancer expresses herself. They have been prescribed in the classic manuscripts for long. It is still being followed and respected today. All these gestures are nothing but symbols of nature or symbolical representations. A flower can be a simple example. There can be a variety of ways a dancer can depict a flower. One way may be by using a gesture of hand to depict a flower. But that may not be enough to express oneself completely. So she depicts a flower with her right hand, and then either rests her left hand on her hips, or uses it to depict a tree. Simultaneously, there could be a pose or a movement of the legs to add another feature. Still that may not be complete, so the dancer expresses her feelings through her eyes and face to show how she felt upon seeing the flower. Is it not assembling alphabets into words, then words into phrases and sentences and sentences into a story following the principles



similar to grammar in any language? All these are accompanied by music, song and rhythm. Starting from epics to volumes of stories, abstracts can be expressed through the language

of dance. This makes 'dance' a beautiful body language or rather, a beautiful poetry of body language in motion.

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## **Mahima Swami: A Religious Reformer of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Orissa**

**Dr. Surendra Nath Chinara**

*"Yada- yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata  
abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam sramyamaham  
paritranaya sadhunam vinasaya ca duskrtam  
dharma samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge-yuge."*

(The Bhagavad Gita Ch. iv 7-8)

Following the establishment of British rule in Orissa at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the people of Orissa were introduced to English education, and western values and culture. Western philosophy, especially the study of science, created an inquisitive mind among the intellectuals. Daily rituals and religious practices that were followed blindly as traditions handed down from past generations came under intense scrutiny. Many such practices were discarded as meaningless habits. Together with the flow of such new ideas and knowledge, raged fierce attacks by Christian missionaries on Hinduism and the Hindu society. These zealous missionaries openly ridiculed our socio-religious practices. These developments roused many of our socio-religious leaders, reformers and thinkers from their deep slumber. A period of intense self introspection followed, which led to the reform of Hinduism, as practiced by the masses, by

separating its essentials from non-essentials. Mukunda Dasa, a Vaishnava Sanyasa, who was popularly known as Mahima Swami was the most prominent religious reformer of this time. Although his early career remains obscure, his fame and achievements in reforming Hinduism spread far beyond Orissa to its neighboring provinces.

A true reformer does not write on a clean slate. More often he completes the half-written sentences. Being a Sanyasi of the old religious order in Hinduism, Mahima Swami had soft corners towards it. He was also well aware of its weaknesses and the need for reform. He was a monotheist and believed in the worship of only One God. Polytheism, or the worship of many Gods and Goddesses, was however commonly practiced among Hindus of that period. He named this one God "Alekha," which literally means the one who cannot be described in a written form. He emphasized the worship of this one God only and denounced the worship of other Gods and Goddesses worshipped by the Hindus of that time. He described Alekha as the Supreme, Absolute and the ultimate Reality. The Hindu society of that period was severely frag-

mented due to the creation of many religious sects and sub-sects. Mahima Swami's doctrine of monotheism was undoubtedly a step to restore the spiritual unity and integrity of the Hindu society. It also saved Hinduism from the attack of Christian Missionaries.

Idolatry was widely practiced among Hindus of this period. Its roots were so deeply ingrained in the Hindu society that no thinker or reformer of the time dared to raise his voice against it. Anyone who spoke against idolatry was quickly denounced by the traditionalists as a non-Hindu or Christian. Around this practice of idolatry grew other practices that were injurious to Hinduism. Religious life revolved around temples, where the idols were installed for worship. These temples were believed to be the abode of God. Brahmins, who were considered to be the custodians of spiritual wisdom, were engaged as priests in these temples. These institutions, however, had lost their spiritual value during the days of Mahima Swami. Temples had become the institutions not for the masses but for the classes. They stood as the symbol of caste distinction and the privilege of the upper castes. The temple of Jagannath in Puri, one of the holiest shrines in Orissa, was closed to lower caste Hindus. They were not allowed to enter the temple and offer worship. Another crying issue of the time was that the temples were often used to practice sexual immorality in the name of religion. Priests often indulged in oppressive behavior towards devotees who visited the temple to offer worship. Physical assaults on the devotees were not uncommon, especially when they failed to pay a satisfactory fee to the priest. Mahima Swami was keenly aware of this deplorable state of affair associated with the practice of idolatry and strongly denounced it.

The belief in One God had already been exalted and idealized by Mahima Swami. The next step was to incorporate the worship of this one God without seriously destabilizing the religious traditions of the Hindus. It is very difficult for the common man to meditate upon the formless and attributeless God. According to the

Bhagavat Gita (x 11.5), "Greater is the difficulty of those whose minds are set on the Absolute, for the heights of the Absolute are hard for embodied beings to reach." Religious symbols play an important role in helping the devotee focus his mind during worship. Idol or image worship was practiced in Hinduism to ameliorate this situation. This practice, however, had degraded over time. So Mahima Swami suggested the use of natural symbols known to Hinduism, such as, the Sun burning fire (Agni) and water filled in an earthen pot, to be used in the worship of Alekha.

The ultimate goal of worship is to develop God consciousness. Rituals associated with worship must be performed with regularity and utmost sincerity. The devotee was asked to offer worship twice a day, in the morning at the time of Sunrise and in the evening during Sunset. No restriction was placed on the place of worship. The devotee could offer worship anywhere under the open sky, according to his convenience. This was a major break from the tradition of offering worship in the temple. Also, no caste distinction was maintained as in case of the temple. Rather the democratic principle of equality was established at the place of worship of Alekha. The principle of intermediary between God and devotee, as practiced by the priests, was denounced by Mahima Swami.

In conclusion, it may be said that Mahima Swami was a Vaishnava Sanyasi who was influenced by western ideas and culture. Inspired by Missionary ideology, he combated religious superstitions, attacked idolatry, polytheism and hereditary priesthood to reform Hinduism. Such reforms not only enriched the Hindu religion but also acted as a barrier against the rapid expansion of Christianity in Orissa. His influence spread far beyond Orissa to its neighboring provinces including Andhra, Assam, Bihar, Bengal, and the then Central Province of British India. Thus he made a significant contribution to the religious history of India.

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# Goat Curry, Community and the God

Gopal Mohapatra

It was Friday again. When the *gora* manager asked Gobinda if he had any big plans for the weekend, he almost said that he had been invited to a goat meat dinner on Saturday. But he did not, because the *gora* boss could never appreciate the pleasure of eating goat meat curry with potatoes. One day, when Gobinda took his manager to the nearby Indian restaurant, the manager gave up after trying just one piece of the thickly gravy goat curry. Later he told Gobinda that the meat had a typical smell. That comment did not go well with Gobinda, and that was their last visit together to any Indian restaurant. It was beyond his belief that someone could find goat curry smelly, especially after being cooked for two hours with that dark brown spicy mix. It took him a few days to reconcile with the experience when his pal Debinder drew an analogy with Gobinda's one-time steak experience. Gobinda hated it because of the smell coming out of that half-done piece of meat. He just kept gazing at his *gora* friends around the table who were devouring it like *chhena poda*. When Gobinda mentioned it to Debinder, he did not realize what a fatal mistake he had made. For the next few months, he would be greeted as '*goru khia gobinda*'.

When an invitation for the goat curry dinner came from Datta Babu, Gobinda could not believe his ears. His mouth watered at that instant and his tongue did not roll fast enough to say 'thank you'. At the other end, Datta Babu probably interpreted that pause to be a sign of choking emotion. He had no idea that it was because of the saliva oozing out of Gobinda's mouth. When Gobinda cleared that flood of saliva from his tongue to speak, Datta Babu said how by-gones should be by-gones, and that they all should start a new chapter of friendship and build a strong community. He was taking the initiative of inviting all community members to a dinner party at his house. And Gobinda, who had been excluded from all the previous parties, was definitely a foremost invitee.

Those five days constituted one of the longest five-day weeks in Gobinda's life. Not that it was his keen desire to get back to community building work, but it was that *halal* goat meat curry with red potatoes in a thin gravy that he vividly dreamt at meetings, in the tennis court, and even while watching Sushmita Sen's 'Main Hoon Na'. His manager caught him twice for being inattentive in meetings. The poor guy asked him if things were OK back home. Gobinda just did not know how to explain that it was not his parent's health or sister's marriage, but something very mundane, a few pieces of meat churning around in a little oily, thinly spiced gravy among some half-cut potato pieces that was engaging most of the powerful CPUs in his mind.

So it was finally the weekend. The office was empty by four. But Gobinda was not in a hurry. He did not have to beat the traffic. He did not have to mow the lawn before Saturday. He did not have to cook for the coming week. So all chains being loose, he had the freedom to stay at work as late as possible. But that Friday, productivity was less. Flashes of goat meat curry entered his mind now and then. He was back at his apartment by five. The sun was almost gone. Gobinda quickly made some *gingerwalla* tea and settled down into the camp chair on his balcony. The land stretched far behind his apartment complex. The landscape being pretty flat offered him an unobstructed view of nothing till his eyes met the eternal line where the sky touched the earth. On this backdrop, the perfectly round sun with its red stripes was slowly sinking in. This reminded Gobinda of the numerous beautiful sunsets he had watched across the limitless stretch of paddy fields in his small village. Gobinda left his village and his country four years ago in the IT bandwagon. His countrymen filled him with cheers, made him feel at home. Every weekend seemed to pass by fast. He became part of the community, as they said. He did not mind that at all. Good food, good company, good fun, especially Dutta Babu's goat meat curry. He could be part of as many communities as possible, he thought, until that fateful evening at the



community center. While relishing hot *samosa* with the green chutney, Gobinda heard a few loud voices outside. There was some kind of discussion among the community members, which snowballed into an argument, then an altercation and finally almost to a fight. It was about God. No, not exactly. It was about God's color; whether the Krishna idol should be painted blue or black. While some members wanted to stick to the mythological color, others wanted to customize it to black to reflect how God can be of any color. Not exactly any color, but black or white. When one of the young chaps excitedly commented to make it green, one of the senior members rebuffed him by giving a short lecture on the binary fate of things in existence. If there was a choice, members could have left it to the Lord to choose His own color. But sadly no one knew how to communicate with Him. Although the temple and the deity was the best option to foster spiritual communication, it was already beginning to adversely impact the earthly communication in the community. What once seemed like a cohesive community super-glued by mutual understanding, appreciation and humility, suddenly exposed a lot of cracks made up of ego, indifference and emotional weakness. For Gobinda, it was like a 'ooooaaooo'.

That was the last time Gobinda had devoured Dutta Babu's patented goat curry. As most of the community members had lost appetite over a major issue, Gobinda did not have to worry about others piling meat on their plates. He took his own time, did not touch any vegetables, not even the Puri-style *dalma* made by Arta

Babu. It was only rice and goat meat curry; as if on Saturdays he does not touch any vegetarian food. He ate like he had not eaten for days because somewhere deep inside his stomach he knew that it was his last goat meat curry from Dutta Babu's kitchen.

And that is what exactly happened. Gobinda was no more an invitee to the goat curry party. He never understood why. They painted the idol black. But he was not a party to it. He stayed away, and may be that is why. Dutta Babu's group lost by one vote. Gobinda could have made a difference with his vote. He could have changed the color to blue. He owed it to Dutta Babu, especially when he had eaten his goat meat curry so many times. It was a small price to pay, he thought. But it was too late; the deity had already been painted black. They could not change the color now, because someone may say 'hey dude, how come the God is changing colors?' Not that God cannot, but who would do it?

The sun was already in a deep slumber. Gobinda got up from the chair and stretched his arms and legs. He wondered what would have changed Dutta Babu's mind. Did he suddenly realize that color did not matter? Or did he realize that things have to change with time, even Godly matters. Or may be the black color must be shining well under the milky-white light making the God look good. Whatever it might be, he would go on a fast until tomorrow evening. He would then be fully ready to enjoy the goat meat curry with potatoes from Dutta Babu's kitchen.

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*Gopal Mohapatra lives in Northwest Houston with his wife Reva and two daughters Meha and Dhara. If cholesterol were not a problem, Gopal would often like to eat goat meat curry cooked in Odiya style – with potatoes and thin gravy. Since he left India thirteen years ago, he has not eaten that kind of curry in his current country of residence. This story was a figment of his imagination and is dedicated to his uncle who made the best goat meat curry in the world.*



## The Great Indian Road Show: A kaleidoscopic view at what goes

**Subrat Sahoo**

This, the General Elections 2004, is billed as the greatest show on earth, the largest democracy exercising (perhaps that's a better word than asserting) itself. In India it normally takes place once every five years, this time it was taking place a good six months ahead of schedule because of the so-called "feel-good" factor spreading its goodness across the country. From the ads of the Raymond campaign, the ruling groups lifted their inspiration: the economy was apparently touching a two-digit rate of growth, *forex* reserves were at an all-time high, the middle class was vibrant and spending in high gear, the service sector was asserting itself, and the honorable Prime Minister was watching the cricket team winning both the game and the hearts in Pakistan. So "they" felt good, assessed their chances of getting back their seats, dissolved the Parliament, and passed on this goodness to the rest of the nation.

This time with all the media hype about "India shining", a buoyant economy, the cross-border thaws, multiple 24-hour news channels, and on-the-spot reporting with an incessant spate of exit-polls, the common man is having his field day "feeling good" at home --- possibly the only time when he actually feels good in the five years, possibly the only time also when in many areas the elected representative comes again to his doorstep asking for what he treasures most, the vote.

A key deviation from the traditional way of balloting has been made this election with the cent percent introduction of the electronic voting machines (EVMs): instead of stamping a seal, now the voter will push a button on a machine which will record his vote, and subsequently count it also. Getting the EVMs down to the masses was certainly not an easy job for both sides. For the government it was a Herculean task to familiarize the voters with the finer aspects of the operation of the new machine, at the same time the political parties had to engage in a mammoth but subtle exercise, PR or otherwise, in an attempt to make the voter vote the way they

want him to when he pushes the button. Some candidates whose names were on the top of the list, spread the message to their own advantage that the machine would work only when you pressed the first button, and elsewhere a major political party informed the would-be voters that irrespective of whatever button they pressed the vote would automatically be sent by the machine to their candidate only. The governmental machinery was hard-pressed to fend off and negate these kinds of rumors. All said and done, however, the introduction of the EVMs has not only saved thousands of trees from being cut down (an estimated 8000 metric tonnes of paper was used in printing ballot papers for the last general elections) but has also reduced the ballot counting time from a couple of days to just a couple of hours, to name a few advantages over the traditional ballot paper. Thus while environmentalists are now a wee bit more happy, the candidates also have less of a tension time while waiting for the results to be declared.

Well, not only domestic do-gooders and the so-called friends of democracy were watching, but also the international media was taking a more than lively interest in the poll happenings across the length and breadth of the country.

This time the USA also watched the first all-electronic Indian poll, where an estimated seven and a half lakh EVMs are to be used across the country. The reason is that India beat the rest of the world in introducing the total use of EVMs in any general election. Although the US introduced the concept of electronic voting, it is still debating the merits of e-voting and has not yet dared to do it on this scale. Frozen screens and malfunctioning computers have not plagued the process here. A newspaper reported that the EVMs are India's pride, and America's envy. Others like the U.K. and Malaysia are sending people to see the actual experience of EVMs in India.

An experiment in cutting edge voting is only part of the story of the Indian polls of 2004. This has also been labeled as a road show, and



looking at the dirt, the sweat and the grime and also the money and time spent, the label is not just figurative. Like a colorful pageantry or a carnival, it is rumbling across packed urban cityscapes and desolate rural landscapes equally. Very truly, the great Indian electoral circus is a “yatra”, the great Indian road show. The performers are not only star politicians and lesser politicians, some jokers in the pack, and still lesser mortals as extras, but also cine stars, sports stars, champion wrestlers from well-known “akhadas” as well as star criminals thrown in for good measure. The action props include multistoried cutouts, yards and yards of banners, glossy printed posters, TV ads both overt and veiled, audio and video presentations before the members of the electorate, mms and sms messaging, and, not the least, multiple types of vehicles (especially vans) extrapolated into “raths” which are crisscrossing the country’s landscape. L. K. Advani started off his Uday Yatra logging more than 5000 road miles by now, and others disbanded with his copyright. Laloo Prasad had swank state-of-the-art décor in his Garib Rath and Ram Vilas Paswan rolled in his Vikas Rath. Dadan Yadav, a junior RJD minister, denied ticket and now an independent, has his own Parivartan Rath. All these chariots have TV, cameras, VCRs, VCDs, public address systems, laptops, hydraulic platforms and what not. Independent Rajan Tiwari’s Ekta Rath has horses on either side of the bonnet. State minister Ashok Chaudhry’s Rajiv Sandesh Rath and independent MLA Munna Shukla’s Vaishali Rath complete the quantum of *raths* moving here and there in Bihar. Although the political road (and physical too) in the state may be full of potholes, a full-scale chariot race seems to be in the offing here. Pappu Yadav’s Yuva Shakti Rath could not hit the road because he is in jail after his bail plea was rejected in a murder case. Modi in Gujarat too hit the road in a very hi-tech one, though in his own style. Even the Congress had to have its own Sonia Gandhi road show for the first time.

This certainly helped their salability in the rural areas, but what greatly and rather inexpensively increased the marketability of the politicians in the urban and semi-urban areas was the rapid spread of WLL and mobile phones in the country. Cell phone users were pleasantly surprised when an unidentified call came on their sets, which started like this: “*Mein Atal Bihari Vajpayee bol raha hoon...* (I am Vajpayee speak-

ing)” and a recorded voice went on to exhort the listener to favor his policies. Politicians, generally not a very tech-savvy species, realized sms campaigning is here to stay and scrambled to get the latest in mobile gadgetry to keep up with the times. They are also now beginning to pay more attention to their personal details and grooming. There is a new dressing-up sense among politicians, there are younger and newer faces too.

While the style and content of campaigning is certainly undergoing a change, the common man still exhibits an apparent apathy towards all the goings-on around him. The middle class may be a part of the “India shining” but they are a small percentage, and there are several who are still in the dark about their own opportunities for development and avenues for progress. People in many places are disgruntled and disenchanted too. Agitated villagers chased away Rita Verma, sitting MP from Dhanbad Lok Sabha seat when she went to address them at two different spots. It’s quite possible that the voter lining up the sides of the streets when a political or cine bigwig comes calling has already made up his mind about the candidate, and the best that the campaigner can hope for is a dent in the votes of the fence-sitters, that is, the ones who have not decided who to vote for so far. The 18 plus voter, so much sought after by all parties during the decade of the ’80s and early ’90s, seems no more to be the focus of the current campaign style; the young voter on his part appears equally disillusioned too, and many analysts fear that their votes will end up being anti-establishment. These youngsters do not seem to be an active part of this road show.

Partly due to this and partly due to other non-concerns, the political parties suddenly found that the crowd attendance at their rallies operated under the law of diminishing returns. Even the bigger *netas* grumbled to their lesser ones that the local leadership was unable to get sufficient people to listen to their dulcet voices over the microphone. The star campaigners couldn’t get into the mood for electoral oratory when the crowd fell below the critical level of, say, five or ten thousand.

So, the parties turned to, what they thought, was the best and fastest means. The *netas* roped in the *abhinetas* to pull crowds and add pep to their campaigns, and in March and April the country experienced a spate of ex- and current film stars jumping onto the political



bandwagon. Everywhere a rally had someone or the other, and they flitted across states in choppers and planes, often attending several venues on the same day just like the politicians themselves. The tragic death of the popular South Indian cine star Soundarya in a crash brought most high flyers back to the ground --- suddenly it seemed to everyone that the good old road and train journeys were a lot safer. Maybe the aircrafts too felt the stress, and this now brought some relief and rest for the pilots too!

But at the same time, in the South at least, the *filmi* glamour seems to be on the wane. Rajnikanth, much sought after in last elections, now has to wait in line to meet the political bosses. Actress Vijayashanti, now vice-president of BJP women's wing, was named as Hyderabad candidate only to be withdrawn the very next day. She was also then kept in waiting to file papers from Bellary constituency, in case, as the rumors went then, Priyanka Gandhi contested from there; Priyanka didn't, so Vijayashanti was out again.

Likewise, at the other end of the spectrum, the villains too had to be befriended and suitably used in the campaigning and polling process. Muscle power, it's well-known, often translates directly into votes in many places.

Inevitably it led to the *goondas* and the film-stars thinking on the same plane -- if the politicians are so dependant on us for winning elections, and we do their work for them, why not cut out the second-hand jobbing and we go and do it straightaway for ourselves? And so you have Govinda in contesting in North Mumbai and Dharmendra contesting from Bikaner, and case-interned Mohammad Shahabuddin directing things in Siwan, Bihar.

Then there are the sops that the parties and candidates offer to the electorate that become an important part of the road show itself. Apart from the Election Manifestos promising heaven on earth, they also distribute money, liquor, shawls, and saris to the populace; the enticement is momentary but serves the purpose of accumulating crowds at politically vital functions. One such event led to a disaster wherein some women died during the sari distribution scheme held on the occasion of Lalji Tandan's birthday bash. He is the political agent of the Prime Minister himself. Also observed was the confusion over the Lucknow constituency, where Mr. Ram Jethmalani, eminent lawyer and erst-

while minister in his own cabinet, decided to take on Mr. Vajpayee himself, then talked of withdrawing, and finally contested. The politics here is bound to be interesting.

People in the political arena also change loyalties at the drop of a hat. Discarding a three-piece suit might seem more difficult. No friendship or feeling appears sacrosanct. A classic example is Mr. Bangarappa. In his 1995 campaigning, he was anti-BJP: "We'll ensure that the saffron forces are unable to get a foothold in the South. Karnataka will never become their gateway to the South; Never." Now he is campaigning for them in 2004. His words are: "Vajpayee is my leader. It is he alone who can keep the country united. We will ensure that Karnataka is indeed the BJP gateway to the South."

The sheer logistics involved in the general elections are mind boggling. There are 7,00,121 polling booths now, down from the 7,74,651 in 1999, the reason being the redrawing of areas of the booths due to higher handling capacities of the EVMs per booth. About 35 lakh government personnel have been drafted for duty as presiding and polling officers, including reservists. This number excludes the police and paramilitary forces on security duties, and also excludes the people, like medical, para-medical, magisterial, clerical, store, legal, etc., working behind the scenes to ensure a smooth and hassle-free polling process. The polling teams do not know which booth they will be assigned; it is kept as a secret until actual departure, so that they will not be susceptible to the inevitable external pressures. These people are like the intrepid explorers: they travel by buses, trucks, jeeps, tractors, and even bullock-carts and boats to reach their destinations and to bring back the fates of the representatives of the people sealed in confidence back to the strong rooms at the counting centers.

If you want some nuggets, there is the Fastan polling booth in Leh, the highest booth ever, at an altitude of 17,000 feet. A single polling station has been set up in Khragbal Gurez (also in J&K) for just 80 voters. And there is a polling booth in Room no. 3 of the Bansidhar Agarwal School in Wadala, Mumbai. It may not much surprise you to learn what that room is: it's in fact a toilet of the school. If the voters of Wadala say that the political process stinks they won't be very far from the truth.



As per the final electoral rolls of 2004, 67 crore 01 lakh 53 thousand and 348 people (34,85,10,223 males and 32,16,43,125 females) are eligible to cast their votes. However about 60% of the total electorate actually takes the trouble of leaving their homes for the booth; this figure of course includes some bogus and unfair voting too. The largest constituency in area is Ladakh (J&K) at 1,73,266 sq. km, followed by Barmer (Rajasthan) at 71,601 sq. km., and the smallest is Chandni Chowk at 10.59 sq. km., followed by Kolkata North West at 13.23 sq. km. The maximum number of voters is in the Outer Delhi (NCT) constituency (over 32 lakhs), the least is in Lakshadweep (with about 38 thousand only). There are 3,314 candidates contesting this time for 543 seats in the Lok Sabha. The number of candidates in Parliamentary Elections has varied widely: from 2,369 in 1967 to a peak of 13,952 in 1996, down to 4,620 in 1999.

And if you are interested in how much all this costs, then have a look at the gross expenditure for the last general elections in 1999 --- Rupees 880 crores only!

The Election Commission also sends Observers to each constituency to keep an eye on the poll process and report vitiations, if any, of the entire process. They observe the correctness of the electoral rolls (the voters' lists), the overall law and order situations on the spot, violations of the model code of conduct, the expenditures made by the contesting candidates, the freeness and fairness of the polls, and the openness of the counting system, and can recommend repoll if felt necessary.

Places in the North-East and in Jammu and Kashmir, in the insurgency and naxalite affected areas of the country are nightmares for the electioneering mechanism: the reasons are obvious. Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (and now Jharkhand) are another matter altogether. Booth capturing here is a fine art, honed to perfection over the decades. There are specialists in the art who are hardcore loyalists to either the candidate or to a party or are freelancers available on hire. It's all very peacefully achieved: nothing as crude as brandishing country made pistols or bursting bombs, in all probability an extremely ordinary looking man will casually saunter up to the presiding officer of the booth and request him to look the other way. The polling agents of other candidates would suddenly recollect a function at home which they did

not know five minutes ago or would conveniently and collectively decide that going to the *loo* for the next half an hour or so was of the utmost importance to their lives; the polling party's reaction would only be at their own peril. No complaints, the election is freely and fairly done. Freedom and fairness are directly proportional to the local determination of how strong (in very physical terms, that is) the candidate is --- the greater his "grip" is, obviously the better he would win the elections.

There are Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) too that are active in this matter, mostly in the line of creating awareness and informed opinion among the common man. Of particular note are the ones like Dr. Jayaprakash Narayana's Lok Satta (Andhra Pradesh), which points out to the voting public the criminals and the unsuitables among the candidates.

Everyone, it might seem, is doing his/ her own bit towards the democratic process.

I had the opportunity of seeing things up real close when I became the Election Observer for the Rajmahal (reserved) Lok Sabha constituency in northeastern Jharkhand. Issues are mostly non-existent, mentioned, if at all, incidentally. All campaigning seems to be personal. Attacks and counter-attacks and mudslinging go hand in hand with allegations of propriety and impropriety in all possible quarters where it can be made. This LS constituency also holds the record for the lowest margin victory for any candidate: the candidate won by only 9 votes in the 1998 LS elections.

I might be permitted to add that the election process has somewhat been cleaned up in the last decade. The various parties are mortally afraid of the Election Commission, especially after T.N. Sheshan. This body has become, to re-quote Donne, like Death, the Great Leveller. Its stated objective has been to ensure a level playing field for all the contestants, without any particular advantage accruing to the party in power.

Someone likened the whole process to a great game, a sport where all are equal but some in an Orwellian fashion are certainly more equal than others. The essence of Olympics too is in the participation, not in the winning or in the losing. But then, who in his right senses takes the participation part seriously in the great electoral muddle? It's more like one of those annual African headhunts where a contestant, once a

participant, has to employ all his wits, prowess and extreme endurance, not to speak of all the said and unsaid resources at his and perhaps others disposal, to come out alive --- or not come out at all. The battle-lines are drawn sharply. It's like the winner gets all and takes all, that's the feeling one gets after the results are declared.

And then again, politics is also a full time profession now for many... they need to win one election to survive until the next. That's, of course, an investment of sorts. An unconfirmed story is about a Lok Sabha ticket being sold at 25 lakhs to an interested individual for the Kollam seat in Kerala. And an NRI too is in the fray in the Naxalite affected Nizamabad LS constituency, with allegations that he too bribed party leaders to secure a ticket. The joke doing the rounds is that capitation fee is not confined to professional colleges only.

Protests of public service often are a facade for the wheeling-dealing and the skullduggery associated with politics. This is not to say that there are no good apples in the barrel, but those who have tasted the fermented juice prefer the spirit to the wholesome apple. The kicks are all there, and the campaign trail is like a drug where the enthusiasm rides high.

As in any other field, there are of course the lighter moments on the campaign trail. One analysis came up with some interesting statistics that proved that nine out of ten politician haters are non-politicians. On the way, a catchy slogan read: "*ABCD chodo, kisi neta se nata jodo!*" (Stop learning the letters; hitch a ride with a politician.) Another one stated: "Choose your leader carefully. Otherwise you may be left behind."

A cartoon showed a politician telling a poor woman futilely pumping away for water at a hand pump: "The problem is power. There is no

power. You solve my power problem and I'll solve your water problem."

The journalists are to blame for all the lying that we do, one politician candidly admitted on the road. They are the ones, he said, that insist on asking all the wrong questions.

And there was this Lok Sabha candidate who in the course of his speech happened to mention the emotive issue of the special status accorded to the state of J&K in Article 370 of the Constitution and the persistent demands from a section to remove it. People burst out laughing when he said, "If my party comes to power, the first thing we will do is scrap the bad provision of 376. It's an insult to the spirit of equality." 376 is the section of the Indian Penal Code that deals with rape. When he got down from the dais and was asked about his faux pas, he sheepishly admitted that he did not know the difference.

The stage is there with the high technology and the cheap thrills, the star-power and the glamour, the sugar-coated pills and the plain bulldozing, the sweet assurances of the present and the ignored promises of the yore, and of course the abundance of mudslinging and the surfeit of ideas. Democracy may or may not be a passionate exercise in India, but the elections including its campaigning certainly is.

All things said and done, the great Indian road show has happened. And it's ultimately the people that will decide, in five stages of voting, who are fit and who are not. The future of the 3,314 candidates will be digitally locked, unknown until May 13, when they will be made public. Then there would be the usual celebrations, the champagne and the firecrackers for the lucky 543 who will finally walk past the portals into the Hall of the Parliament.

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Birth: 26.July. 1904

Death: 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1998

## Numa - Courage personified

Sandip Dasverma

“Woman Pioneers In India's Renaissance”, published by National Book Trust in 2003 Edited by Late Dr. Sushila Nayyar, ex-minister GOI, Health and Kamala Manekar. The list contains 70 most illustrious women of the last century from India. Their stature could be gauged by the fact that others included in the list are such persons as: Ex-PM Indira Priyadarshini, Kasturba Gandhi, Sucheta Kripalni, Vijay Laxmi Pandit, Aruna Asaf Ali, Sorojini Naidu, Prabhavati Devi, Anne Besant, and Sister Nibedita. It contains names of only three illustrious women from Orissa among 70 odd ones from all over India. They are:

1. Shoilabala Das (1875-1968)  
Biographer - *Ranjana Harish*
2. Rama Devi Chowdhury (1899-1985)  
Biographer - *Annapurna Das*
3. Malati Nabakrushna Choudhari (1904-1997),  
Biographer *Krishna Mohanty*

Shoilabala Das was adopted daughter of Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das, and a pioneer of women's education in Orissa. Shoilabala Women's college of Cuttack is named after her.

Rama Devi Mahila College of BBSR is named after Rama Devi Chowdhury. I had the privilege of knowing Rama Devi and Malati Devi personally. They were both married into the same Choudhury family of Bakharabad, Cuttack. Rama Devi was married to elder brother Gopabandhu Choudhury, the legendry Gandhian, who created a sensation in those days when he resigned from the privileged job of a Deputy Magistrate to join the Freedom movement. Malati Devi was married to Nabakrushna Choudhury (Bapi), who became Chief Minister of Orissa, 1949-1956. They met and married at Shantiniketan. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore attended their marriage.

**Malati Choudhury (Numa), would have been hundred this 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2004** - had she lived to this day. Stories of her courageous acts are mythology among those who know her. It will be of general interest to quote some instances.

Numa was born in Calcutta. Her parents were Bengali Barrister Kumud Nath Sen and Snehalata Sen, a school teacher. Mr. Sen's family was from Patna, where his father was a reputed Lawyer. Her maternal grandfather was preeminent Sir Bihari Lal Gupta, ICS. He was once district magistrate of Cuttack. Incidentally Mr. Gupta was a good friend of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore and thus her Rabi Dadu.

Numa's father died young. Her mother, popularly known as Loti Sen, was a fiercely independent and spirited lady, a quality which rubbed on to Numa. Instead of living with her rich and influential parents Loti Sen, she took up teaching at the Calcutta's elite Bethune Girls School to raise her family. Just imagine, this happened one hundred years back, and you will get an idea of the enormity of her courage. During the Non-cooperation movement, patriotically inspired Numa left Bethune and went away to her maternal village in East Bengal. After a lot of persuasion by her mother, she came back to appear in the examination as a private candidate and successfully passed in 1<sup>st</sup> division. A staunch nationalist, even as a young girl she refused to study in any college run by the British Govt. Some one in the family gave her the idea to write to Rabi Dadu (Tagore) to find out if she could join his new experimental institute for education at Bolpur, known as Santiniketan. She did. And rest as they say is history.

Tagore invited her and offered to accept her in the Shantiniketan, provided her mother also joined the school as the Superintendent of the new Girls Hostel, yet to be opened. Loti Sen accepted Tagore's offer, and young Malati or Minu was the 1<sup>st</sup> resident girl student at Santiniketan. Amita Sen, mother of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen and her contemporary in the girls hostel, writes in her memoirs in glowing term about spirited young Minu-di and her courageous and spirited fight against injustice. Amita Sen narrates how Numa once made the student body to pass a resolution critical of Rathindranath,

Tagore's son, and took it boldly to Tagore to implement it. Rathindranath was duly reprimanded by his father.

At Shantiniketan Numa and Bapi met, liked each other, and then got married. This marriage was fiercely resisted by Bapi's widowed mother. It was later found that she had even used the help of a private tutor for children at home to write a letter to Numa's mother about all bad and false things about her own son, like Bapi was a drunkard, had a bad character, etc. In spite of her initial resistance she was gradually won over, and at the end she preferred to stay with Numa, and even spent her last days in Numa's care.

Numa was one of the 1<sup>st</sup> ladies to ride a bicycle at Cuttack, that too as a married woman – which is even today, is a rarity. Then it was a taboo but not for Numa.

The summer before her death, in 1997, I was in Baji Rout Chhatrabas to meet her. In the morning I was two hours late in reaching Angul from Cuttack. On arrival I heard that she had, only 15 days back, refused to meet Late Biju Patnaik, then the Chief Minister of Orissa, who was an hour late. She bluntly told Biju babu: "*Mukhya Mantri helaNi – samaya Gyan hela nahi?*" Imagine my condition and fear to be spurned. Luckily she was in a good mood that day and excused me for my delay – after all I was an ordinary person. Her compassion for the smallest of the small is well known.

Numa's actions were always mythology to us. Another instance I have heard is about the famous "Rantlei baba." It is the story of a 12 year cow herd boy, who was touted to have spiritual powers to cure incurable diseases. As the rumor spread thousands of people came to this small place near Angul called Rantlei for curing touch of this "BABA." Soon there were so many people and so little of water or food. In the consequent unhygienic situation, soon cholera epidemic started, and people started dying like flies. Yet more people continued to come in the hope of cure of incurable diseases. Govt. could not act in the fear of law and order problem, and yet, there was enough pressure to act as the epidemic was going out of hand. All over Orissa, street poets



wrote books and were selling them in various local *jatras*, adding publicity and attracting more people. Chief Minister Nabakurshna Choudhury was highly perturbed. He believed if he sends in police, he is damned for interfering in people's faith related matter. If he did not, then also he will be damned as the Cholera epidemic was spreading. What is the solution? He asked Numa.

Numa solved it in no time. She went to the place where the young boy (the BABA) and challenged him to show her his supernatural powers. When he failed to do so she gave her a bag slap with comments: "*Michhatare Pala lageichu*". "You have falsely started this drama." The baba ran away crying, and was picked up later by the police and sent to his own village.

On another instance, in Ravenshaw college ground a football tournament was going on, and the Cuttack district Magistrate was present. Numa went there and asked the students as to how can they go on playing football while rest of the students are on strike – the district Magistrate (DM) intervened. DM told her that it is unfair for her to apply strike even to a football game. To which Numa retorted: Do you do that in Ireland too? The district magistrate, who was from North Ireland, another colony of UK, could not raise his head, he was so ashamed.

Writing about Numa without Bapi is like telling an incomplete story. Numa was Bapi's most sincere friend, devoted wife, and worst critic, all at the same time. They were comrades in arms. Bapi was the thinker and brain, and Numa was the executioner. Together they made an excellent team. In 1934, almost two years before Congress socialist group was established in Indian National Congress, they established it in Orissa. When the young men involved in it like Surendra Dwivedi, Bhagabati Panigrahi, Pranath Pattnaik, and others wanted to start a monthly Oriya magazine to propagate the idea of rights of day laborers and farmers – the money came in form of Numa donating all her personal jewelry, worth about Rs. 30,000 in those days. With Gold ounce at about Rs. 40 in those days, it would be nearly Rs. 40 lakhs today. When we compare such sacrifices we know what strength and sacrifice they were ready for. With today's

Jailalithas we know, some where we have gone wrong. Question comes up why have we come down from Rama Devi, Malati Devi, and Sorojini Naidu to likes of Jayalalitha, selfish, corrupt, pliant, backboneless leaders? Where did we go wrong? I have seen in the early 70s when Govt. of Mrs. Gandhi was going gong-ho and police was killing left and right like flies – Numa and Bapi started Civil Rights group in Orissa to propagate the idea that this was not a law and order problem but a political problem. It was a symptom and not the disease. And unless the disease, landlessness, and food security problems are resolved – this movement of the landless will not go away. To get at the activists Govt. started harassing their relatives. Though she was herself vulnerable (she was arrested at the age of 78 and put in Jail during emergency,) she gave shelter to many.

She also inspired many – the stories of women volunteers of Utkal Nabajiban Mandala are legend. There are untold stories of heroism about them. One of them, now Padmashree Tulsi Munda, was picked up less than 30 years back from among the head loader girls of an open cast mine. Under Numa's guidance she has turned out to be a top class mass leader and political organizer. Once completely illiterate, she can now keep thousands of educated people entertained and inspired by her brilliant speech in Hindi. It is well known that some of the Utkal Nabajiban Mandala centers were so remote that Numa had to walk upwards of 10 miles to reach them from the nearest bus stop.

When one met Numa or Bapi, one knew that one's head simply bowed in reverence and awe for all they have done in one life. Today as we approach her birth centenary celebration, we realize that the era of giants is gone. Only minnows remain. Gentle giants who dealt with the smallest with dignity and rendered them with self-esteem. I still remember that in 1979 November, I went to meet in the Baji Rout Chhtrabas her with my wife before coming to USA. Bapi, Numa, Tinu Apa(Krushna Mohanty,) and Bibhuti babu sang for us – civil rights song: "We shall overcome ...," as a parting song of affection. For a minnow like me??

Let us together remember this great human being, a courageous lady of great integrity, and a golden heart for the underprivileged.

She used to always sing the following famous lines to invoke the youth of the day to demand their rights with dignity:

*Kuha Keun jati paichi mukati karee hari huri guhari?*

I feel like answering: Yes, Numa you are right, they have not.

*Sandip K. Dasverma, is a Mechanical Engineer, was inspired in youth by Numa's spirited work and dedicated life for the tribals of Orissa. He was one of the thousands of lucky ones to get her and Bapi's affection and blessings. He now lives in Richland, WA, USA, with his wife Lila. His e-mail: [dasverma@aol.com](mailto:dasverma@aol.com) / ph: 509-371-1286*



## MALATI CHOUDHURI

(26th July 1904 – 15th March 1998)

### Kasturi Black

“Underneath the gas light glitter, sat a little fragile girl.  
Heedless of the night's wind bitter, as it whirled around her curls.  
Ever coming, ever going, ceaseless passed the noisy storm.  
Only listen to her pleading, won't you buy my pretty flowers?  
There are many, sad and weary, in this pleasant world of ours.  
Crying every night so dreary, won't you buy my pretty flowers?”

When I think of my grandmother, Malati Choudhuri, I remember the lyrics above. They are from a song she taught my sister and me when I was only five. I did not understand the meaning of this song then, but over the years, I finally reached an understanding. I realized that it spoke about my grandmother's way of thinking, about her selfless way of life. She felt the anguish of the children in need, and was determined to improve their condition.

We called our grandmother Didun, like Didima in Bengali. Didun was originally from Bengal, but after marrying my grandfather, Nabakrushna Choudhuri (Dadul), she settled down in Orissa. She spoke and wrote in Oriya and during my high school years, she would write

postcards to me in Oriya. She motivated me to read in Oriya.

She believed in a self-sustained society, where children were taught to look after their needs, to become more able citizens of the world.

Didun was one of the first women students in Vishwabharati, Shantiniketan, West Bengal, where she was a student of Rabindranath Tagore. It was there that she met my grandfather (Dadul). Dadul had been in college in Cuttack, but left to join the freedom struggle, per Mahatma Gandhi's call to the nation. He went to Shantiniketan for training. Both my grandparents joined the freedom movement, leading other young



Oriya followers. They were natural leaders, and motivated each other and everyone around them. It was a period in India when patriotism was at its peak, and this young couple radiated ideas, enthusiasm and abundant energy.

Her exposure to such a rich culture and tradition, and the belief system, which grew from that exposure, are reflected in the institution she and Dadul established on May 11th 1946 in Angul, Orissa. The institution was originally established to provide residential facilities and educational opportunities for children of Freedom Fighters. Later, it expanded to include children from under-privileged sections of society coming from all over Orissa. The establishment continues to do so today, under the supervision of my parents, Krishna and Prof. B. B. Mohanty.

The institute is named Bajiraut Chhatravas, after a young boy who was murdered in the freedom struggle. Bajiraut, a 12-year-old ferryboat runner, was shot when he refused to let the British use his boat to cross the river Brahmani. His faith and determination serve as an example for all of the children who pass through Bajiraut Chhatravas.

Both Didun and Dadul led a Gandhian way of life, to serve people in need, and to live in equality.

They put their ideas and way of life into practice at Bajiraut Chhatravas. When I came into this world, their home was a beautiful mud hut in the center of the institute. To me, it's the most serene place in the world. It carries memories of my summer holidays with my grandparents: Didun cooking for us - my favorites being bone soup and caramel pudding; Dadul showing us the different birds that built nests in the trees near their home; Didun teaching us Rabindra Sangeet, her memories of Gurudev in mind; Dadul challenging us with his intellect during ritual games of scrabble. I enjoyed listening to their serious discussions on national and international politics, even though I could not understand it then. They were two personalities that complimented each other, and lived life with love.

I am fortunate to have been the grandchild of these two wonderful people. In their caring, gentle ways, they showed me the value of equality among fellow human beings, sharing, trusting, giving and loving life.

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**Ms. Malati Choudhury**

**Let us celebrate the centenary of a legend of liberation**

**Dr. Manoranjan Mohanty**

Professor, Delhi University

Malati Choudhury, fondly called Numa by the generations of people that she inspired, was on the forefront of all the struggles of the oppressed people of Orissa throughout her life. The uniqueness of this ceaseless fighter was that she spurned offices of power, lived with the children of the down-trodden and fearlessly confronted not only the colonial state and feudal rulers, but also authoritarian regimes and forces of exploitation in independent India.

Malati Choudhury together with her husband and co-worker, Nabakrushna Choudhury, was part of the Congress Socialist Party and was the President of the Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee in 1946. Leading many campaigns against Zamindars and autocratic rulers in Princely States, she was among the few who persisted with the effort to give the Congress in Orissa a democratic and socialist orientation. Malati Choudhury's catalytic role in the State People's Movement in Dhenkanal, Talcher and

Nilgiri is part of the heroic saga of anti-feudal history of Orissa.

She founded the Baji Raut Chhatrabas in Angul in 1946 to give protection to the children of political activists and deprived sections of society and to educate them. This hostel was named after the young hero Baji Raut of the area who was shot dead by the British imperialist forces when he refused to sail them across the river. Baji Raut Chhatrabas became the simplest possible habitat for Numa and Bapi (Nabak-rushna Choudhury) where they lived all their life in free India and from where they launched many struggles for justice. The mud-walled thatched house where they lived and breathed their last remains today as the place of pilgrimage for many.

Numa was determined to highlight the plight of the tribal people and fight to liberate them from the exploitation and harassment by money lenders, landlords and forest officials. She worked in the dense forest area of Ganjam, Phulbani and Koraput fighting for their rights. She set up Utkal Nav Jeevan Mandal together with the famed socialist leader Sarangadhar Das with branches in the tribal areas of Orissa. She maintained it throughout as a radical effort for tribal people's self – development.

New challenges always brought her to the forefront of struggles. In the dark days of Emergency (1975-77) she rose in protest and went underground to organize opposition to the dictatorial rule. She was arrested and put behind bars. One who had gone to jail many times during the anti – colonial struggle was once again ready to carry on the battle for democracy.

Her commitment to democratic rights of the poor made her the acclaimed mother of all the agrarian and tribal struggles during the last four decades of her life. As President of Orissa Civil Liberties Committee in 1968, she was

among the first voices of conscience in the country to strongly condemn killings of Naxalites in false encounters. She demanded justice according to law in response to the socio-economic demands of the landless, poor peasants and tribals.

Throughout her life she was a Gandhian Sarvodaya revolutionary and voiced her protest against repression by police, bureaucracy, landlords and business corporations. All the people's movements of Orissa - the Baliapal Movement against the Missile Range, the Gandhamardan Movement on the BALCO project, the Chilika Bachao Andolan and the Women's Movement - drew great inspiration and support from her. Her final battle before leaving us for good was against the rising tide of globalization and communalism.

History records Malati Choudhury's role on the side of Mahatma Gandhi working in the streets of Nuakhati in 1947 in the wake of the communal riots. Her pace of work earned her the epithet 'Tofani' 'the storm' from the Mahatma. She was always among the first in the strife torn places such as Rourkela in 1964 and Cuttack in 1967 working for peace, dignity, and harmony among the affected people.

Today when globalization causes pauperization of the peasants and tribals, communalism raises its ugly head, and attacks on civil liberties and democratic rights continue to grow, remembering Malati Choudhury may show a ray of hope to carry forward her unfinished struggle.

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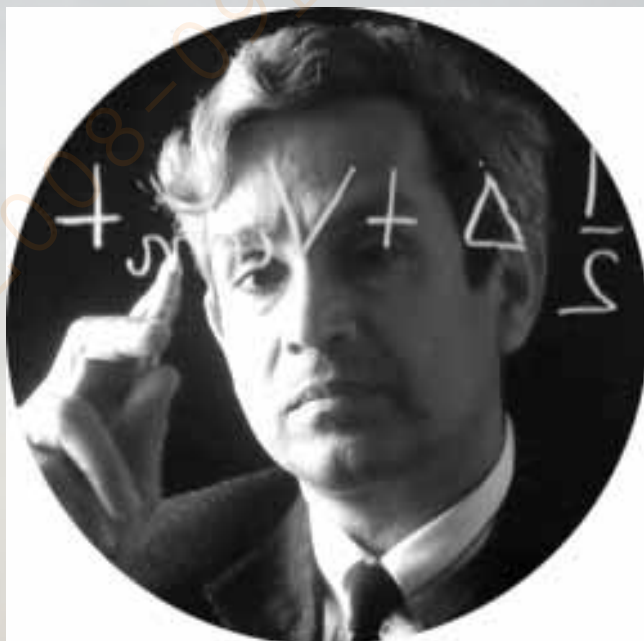
## Professor Bijan Kumar Rao: In memoriam

In the early morning hours of May 7, 2004 Bijan breathed his last. He is survived by his loving wife Bijayalaxmi and two daughters, Jhumki and Munmun, in Richmond, VA, and a brother and two sisters in India. He left behind countless friends, colleagues and students all over the world.

Bijan suffered a serious stroke on February 23, 2004, and was in comatose for several weeks. Although he came out of the coma, his brain had suffered damage and he was moved to a local nursing home for long-term care. There were some signs of improvement, but a sudden bout with pneumonia, which could not be combated, brought this wonderful life to an end. He was sixty-one.

Though born in Sambalpur, Bijan spent his childhood in Bhawanipatna (Kalahandi,) Orissa, where he went to the high school and was much admired by the teachers for his scholarship, honesty, integrity and gentle manners.

Bijan graduated from Ravenshaw College (Utkal University) with M. Sc in physics, and taught physics at the Regional Engineering College (REC), Rourkela, Orissa, before coming to the University of California at Riverside for his graduate studies in physics. He was a Fulbright scholar. He did his PhD thesis research with Prof. T.P Das, applying many-body theoretic techniques to study hyperfine properties of atoms and molecules. After receiving the PhD degree in 1971 he came to Louisiana State University (LSU) to do post-doctoral research with Prof. N. Kestner. He went back to India from LSU and resumed to his old position at REC. Subsequently, he moved to the Institute of Theoretical Physics at Bhubaneswar, Orissa, and continued to do many years of fruitful research and teaching before joining the Physics faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) at Richmond, Virginia. He was a professor of Physics at VCU from 1986 until his untimely demise. Bijan collaborated with his long time friend Prof. Puru Jena, also at VCU, to set up the "Cluster Theory



Group." Their collaborative research effort, which lasted about twenty years, resulted in hundreds of professional publications in prestigious scientific journals, trained numerous graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, and brought in millions of dollars in research grant to the university. They organized many conferences in US and abroad, which brought together researchers in physics, chemistry, engineering and biology, studying various aspects of electronic properties of atomic and molecular clusters. They organized workshops all over the world, the last one being at Puri, Orissa, which Bijan was supposed to attend.

In spite of all his research work, Bijan never forgot his commitment to teaching. He was a great teacher and well liked by his students. He lectured all over the world on topics in nanoscience. He made special efforts to bring science to disadvantaged young folks at inner city schools, and loved performing Physics demonstrations to children and adults alike at the Science Museum of Virginia. He was an active member in the Richmond Indian community. He was also a treasurer of Orissa Society of the Americas for 1993-94.

He is gone now. Although we grieve for Bijan and the family he has left behind, we also celebrate the glorious life he lived. For those who knew him well, he has left behind a vacuum that will never be filled. His kind, simple, and gentle ways of life will always stay with us as an

exemplary phenomenon. His accomplishments in physics are impressive and his relationships with his fellow men and women were unique. Bijan's soul, for his honesty, integrity, and dedication to all aspects of life deserves a special place in the heaven.

**Jagannath Rath**  
**Puru Jena**  
**Bhanu Mahanti**  
**Surendra Nath Ray**

**Plano, Texas**  
**Richmond, Virginia**  
**East Lansing, Michigan**  
**N. Potomac, MD**



## Pious Soul

**Sneha P. Mohanty**

It is an endless journey alone  
 The soul flies high  
 Radiant like the rays of the sun  
 My bewildered mind asks  
 Is that the light that enlightened my dark sky?  
 My heart aches with pain and sorrow  
 How can I return to my desolate home  
 An oasis in an endless desert  
 Searching for unconditional love and sacrifice  
 I stand forlorn  
 Raise my tear drenched eyes to the sky  
 And beg with folded hands like an innocent child.  
 Please return that pious soul  
 The voice of an eternity  
 Like a sweet symphony, whispers  
 Nothing can vanish and no one can destroy  
 The tender love, care, and laughter are still there  
 Burning like a mystic, glowing flame of fire.

*Sneha P. Mohanty lives in Huntington Beach, California. She is a regular contributor to the OSA Souvenir issues. The poem is dedicated to her father Narayan Chandra Das who recently passed away.*



# Sraddhaanjali<sup>1</sup>: A Son Reminisces

**Binod Nayak**

My father Laxmidhar Nayak passed away on a cold, wintry night in New Delhi on January 18, 2004. He was 90. He was suffering from Alzheimer's disease for about five years. Just prior to his death, he suffered from bouts of infection that he was unable to fight. Many family members were present when he breathed his last. As per his wishes, he was cremated in an electric crematorium. His ashes were taken to Orissa for the last rites (*kriya*). After the *Kriya*, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of January, we immersed his ashes in the *Mahodadhi* (the Bay of Bengal) at *Swargadwaara* (Doors to the Heaven) in Puri.



It was a bright and beautiful spring day in Puri. The skies were perfectly blue. As the slowly blowing ocean breeze radiated the ashes into the ocean, atop the sun glistened waves, it reminded me of one of his beautiful lyrics that he used to sing with lot of emotions and gusto:

*ekla bakula jhadi padibimun surabhita kari bijana patha,  
udaashi baaul geeta gaajibi dukkha daaha bharaa geeta dipada,  
ektaaraa pari sura amruta gaai chalijibi hebi bismruta,  
mahasindhura bindu mun eka mahasindhure mishibi jaain,  
eii achhi eii nimishe naahin.*

I will drop like a lonely *bakula*<sup>2</sup> flower to fill desolate pathways with fragrance;  
I will sing impassive and tormenting songs in *baaul*<sup>3</sup>;  
I will drown (forget myself) in my voice resonating the nectar-like sounds of *ektaaraa*<sup>4</sup>;  
I am a "drop" (of soul<sup>5</sup>) of the "great ocean" (of supra-soul); I will return to that great ocean;  
I am here today, gone tomorrow.

A memorial was organized in his honor by *Lekhaka Saamukhya*, (The Writers Forum), at the Rotary Bhavan in Bhubaneswar on January 31, 2004. Many eminent Oriyas attended the memorial including poets, writers and journalists.

## The Last Years: The Clutches of a Debilitating Disease

That he was suffering from Alzheimer's disease was difficult to diagnose. During the period 1997-99, he constantly complained about a heavy head and a sense of overall imbalance while walking. Doctors were consulted. Various tests were performed. Each and every test pointed to the fact that he was in good health. He was given all kinds of medications to abate his sense of imbalance but to no avail. He stopped reading and writing, which was his lifeblood. I visited him in 1999 and tried to persuade him to read and write again to rekindle his love for life. He ignored my advice.

<sup>1</sup> An "offering of love." Help of Dr. Babru and Mrs. Jayashree Samal, Mrs. Susmita Patnaik, Dr. P.K. Mohanty, Mr. Kamal K. Mohanty, Dr. Pulin Nayak and Mrs. Mausumi Nayak McGraw in writing this article is gratefully acknowledged. (binodnayak@hotmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> A tiny tropical flower that is breathtakingly fragrant. When it drops on the ground, it fills the whole area with fragrance.

<sup>3</sup> *Baaul* is a type of song (a tune) sung by dervishes of Orissa and Bengal who go from house to house begging for alms. The themes of these songs are based on *Sahajiya Vaishnavism* and *Sufism*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ektaaraa* literally means a single string. *Ektaaraa*, the instrument, has only one string. It produces a drone like sound.

<sup>5</sup> The Hindu religion believes, *atma*, the soul, is a part and parcel (drop) of a bigger whole, the *paramatma* (the great ocean of the supra-soul). The *atma* never dies, it is indivisible. It joins the *paramatma* after the death of the individual.

The morning I was leaving for the US I saw him sitting in the sun and writing something. After sometime he appeared before me and handed over two poems that were emotionally charged. I felt as if he poured out his heart into these poems. One of which I quote below. It depicts the anguish of a poet who was suffocated by the pain and suffering that no one could understand or do anything about.

*jaanita nathili sesha jibanataa ete jwalaamaya heba,  
ajanaa kiese keunthi luchichhi aasiba shaasti deba.*

*gharara baahaaara bhitara dhaaunchi,  
kebebaa basuchhi kebebaa souchhi,  
dina sarunaahin belakatunaahin, dikdaari kie neba,  
... aasiba shaasti deba.*

*maranaku aaji barana karibi tiaari rahichi mun,  
hele se marana kouthi aasuchi khojuchi mun bahudinun,  
chariaade dekhe sunyataa khaali, kouthi Krushna kaahin baa murali,  
khaali haahakaara luha chhala chhala, khaali mathaa pitaa, khaali khyobha,  
... aasiba shaasti deba.*

Little did I know, my last days would be so full of anguish;  
The unknown hidden somewhere would emerge to punish me.

I run around the house. Some times I sit down. Sometimes I sleep.  
The day never ends. Time stands still. Who will take away my misery?

I am ready with garlands to welcome death. But the death never comes.  
I have been searching for "him (death)" for a longtime.  
I see emptiness everywhere. Where is Krishna? Where is his (magic) flute?  
Only despair, tearful eyes, "head-beating" and lamentations reign.

He was a master at expressing raw emotions and human condition in simple language. What is surprising, even though the Alzheimer's disease was slowly tightening its grips on him, the emotional intensity of his suffering clearly comes through in this poem.

I left Orissa in February 1999. By mid-2000 he was bedridden from the medications that he was taking. As a result, my younger brother and sister-in-law moved him and my mother to Delhi to be under their direct supervision. After consulting doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) he was taken off all medications. Less was more. Slowly but surely he recovered. Considering his age his physical condition was very good indeed. But the onset of Alzheimer's disease was slowly chipping away at the very foundations of his memory and cognition.

### **The Man and his Creations**

In writing this section, I have confessions to make. I am perhaps the least qualified to write this section. This is because I have not been a student of his writings or Oriya literature in a pedagogical sense. I am not a literary critic either. What I have is a deep sense of love and appreciation for his writings. Where there is love there is bias. I can't escape that. However, I decided to add this section to bring in some sense of coherence and balance to this article.

I have read his writings off and on. I like his poetry, his lyrics. Without even trying, I remember many of his lyrics in full and derive great pleasure in singing them. Literature ought to reflect the



society where the writer is inserted. It ought to reflect the struggle of the masses, their hopes and their aspirations. It can't be just fantasy. His novels, dramas, poetry, short stories and essays, record over 65 years, the socioeconomic and cultural milieu of Orissa. Like his poetry, his novels portray the collective aspirations of the masses struggling to raise their heads above water. Every writer is a product of conflicts within and without. The seemingly ineffable conflicts find their utterance through writings. My father was no doubt driven by love, however, he was driven more so by human existence. It is the phenomena of human existence that provided the raw "data" for his creative work. The source of his conflict, I believe, was the promised land of "pure and eternal love" in contrast to the bare human condition that existed around him. He wanted to escape the earth and touch the stars. But he found his legs entrenched deep down in the mud. He was an eternal romantic. But in his writings, it is the search for truth in rationalizing and reconciling the human condition around him that ultimately took precedence over love and romance. Let me quote from *Kholaa Jharkaa* (The Open Window):

*Manisai satya, satya taara aadima prakruti,  
Shrushtisheela praana khoje, kichhi preeti, preranaa, sweekruti.*

Man is truth. Truth is his eternal nature (quest).  
The creative heart longs for love, inspiration and recognition.

He believed unadulterated truth is always simple and straightforward. He was a straight shooter. He recorded his feelings using the spoken word.

#### **A Non-Resident "Odia" in Jamshedpur and the Making of a Poet, Novelist and Dramatist:**

My father grew up in Jamshedpur because my grandfather was working as a chemist at Tata Steel. As my grandmother used to tell me, as a high school student my father wrote lyrics, played the flute and the harmonium and edited the school magazine. His Oriya vernacular teacher late Pundit Biswanath Misra, the first Oriya teacher in Jamshedpur, was very fond of him. He was not mindful of his studies in school. As a result my grandfather was very worried about whether he would ever be gainfully employed. I believe around 1936 or 1937 my father was able to get a job at Tata Steel. Those were the days of pan-Indian nationalism. He had to resign from the job soon after, as the management was critical of a poem *Majdoor* (The Laborer) that he published in the magazine *Bichhinnaa* (The Dismembered). My father was the editor of *Bichhinnaa*.

Early on he showed a flair for writing. When he was only twenty, he came to recognition with his poem *Biraheeni* -- "The Lovelorn Lady" that received the Gold Medal of Krupasindhu Pattadev in the "Inter Orissa Ganjam Poets Conference." As a result, even if he was relatively young and was a non-resident Oriya in the distant land of Jamshedpur (then in the state of Bihar), he came in close contact with many eminent Oriya writers and poets, particularly writers who organized themselves to bring together Oriya speaking areas under yet to be configured new province of Orissa. The Orissa Administrative Committee published its report in 1933 regarding the formation of the new province of Orissa. Orissa formally became a separate state in 1936.

Late Pundit Gopabandhu Dash had made Chakradharpur (not too far from Jamshedpur) as a base from 1913 to 1920 to organize and bring Oriya speaking areas under the fold of new province of Orissa that was the aspiration of the Oriya speaking people. However, his efforts to make Singhbhum, Sadheikala and Kharsuan a part of Orissa were not successful. It appears that, by 1933 it was clear that Singhbhum would not become a part of Orissa. During this period, my father was instrumental in founding "Singhbhum Odia Saahitya Samaj" in 1934 to use it as a forum to express hopes and aspirations of non-resident Oriyas in Jamshedpur. In 1937 he started editing "Bichhinnaa," "The Dismembered." Eminent writers from Orissa used to write in "Bichhinnaa" about the desires and dreams of non-resident Oriyas. It is his Jamshedpur days that shaped his strong identity as an "Odia."

The period from 1934 to 1954 was one of his most creative and productive periods in his life when he wrote novels, dramas and poetry. After the independence of India in 1947, in 1954, language was used as a basis of carving out various provinces of India. Since my father was intimately associated with the cause of non-resident Oriyas, he was harassed, and as a result he decided to move to Rourkela, the upcoming steel city of Orissa. It was a painful decision. The angst of a poet who suffered from harassment has been captured in a poetry collection, "Kholaa Jharkaa," "The Open Window." His Rourkela days were also very productive. In 1967 he decided to leave Rourkela to move to Jatni to devote fulltime to literary work. Up until 1998, prior to the onset of Alzheimer's disease, he was productive. By 1999, the onset of Alzheimer's disease was clearly visible. He left Orissa in 2000 to live with my younger brother in New Delhi.

### His Creations:

If one surveys the landscape of his creations, one finds that he produced at a prodigious rate in a variety of mediums, be it novels, drama, poetry, lyrics, Oriya ghazals, short stories and essays. He also translated Ghalib's ghazals to Oriya. The creative activities that he pursued were money losers, and never supported him financially. He had to work hard in his printing press in parallel to have a decent living. He wrote over 25 novels, three dramas, six collections of poetry, lyrical poetry and ghazals, five short story collections and three major essay collections. He edited "Saathi" and "Dipti" series of books, "Aloka," "Bichhinnaa," "Chitra Lekhaa," "Naba Patra," magazines, "Rourkela Post" and "Aajira Daaka" weeklies. He was the founding member of two institutions, "Singbhum Odia Sahitya Samaja," Jamshedpur (1934), and "Cultural Akademi," Rourkela, 1962. He invariably composed music for his lyrical creations and ghazals. He directed dramas. He was instrumental in founding "Rupashree Theatres" and "Bharati Natya Mandira" to give an impetus to Oriya stage and movie industry. These two institutions were money losers and adversely affected him financially. He regularly wrote in such established magazines as "Naba Bhaarata", "Sahakaara", "Jugabeena" and "Nabeena." Many of his writings that appeared in these magazines are practically lost now. One of his major works, "Smruti O' Sanketa" ("Memories and Directions") that was serialized in news papers could not be continued because of his ill health.

### His Laurels:

At the tender age of twenty he came to limelight with his poem *Biraheeni* -- "The Lovelorn Lady" that received the Gold Medal of Krupasindhu Pattadev in the "Inter Orissa Ganjam Poets Conference." He was awarded the state Sahitya Akademi award for his novel *Mo Swapnara Sahara*. He was also awarded state Sangeet Natak Akademi award for his contributions to Oriya drama. In the year 1997 he received the "Ati Badi Jagannath Das Award" for his lifelong contributions to Oriya literature by the Orissa State Sahitya Academy.

### "Emotional Intelligence" of a Creative Man:

My father was an emotional man. Because of his emotions he was an intense personality. Even if he would have tried hard, I believe, it would have been difficult for him to escape from "expression of emotions." His writings were an expression of his personality, "not an escape from it." If he was emotional on the surface, his emotions were grounded in love, empathy, reason, self-esteem and a nationalistic fervor. Many of his writings appear to be autobiographical. He never tried to hide behind the characters he created. That gave a sense of directness to many of his writings. A reader of his novels such as *Udbhraanta*, *Haa' Re Durbhaagaa Desha*, *Mo Swapnara Sahara* or his poetry collections *Se*, *Kholaa Jharkaa* can be in touch with a vibrant man who used his emotional intelligence to communicate forcefully. He enjoyed writing when emotions poured out. To make a point he believed in melodrama. It was natural to him to be animated while reciting his poetry.



He was his own man. His experience was his greatest teacher. He never feared to take initiatives that could expand his horizon. He worked hard in his printing press. He called himself a press mechanic. He knew how to compose, how to operate the printing machines. He was an entrepreneur. He never shied away from taking risk. He had his share of failures. He was proud of the fact that late Balakrushna Kara, editor of *Aananda Lahari* paid him for his first novel *Udbhranta*. He claimed, even if it was a small sum, the tradition of paying Oriya writers started with him. He always lamented the fact that due to a lack of readership in Oriya language, a writer can't make both ends meet. Ultimately Oriya literature, Oriya language and Oriyas suffer. He also believed in the fact that, the language is the glue that binds people. Without the language the people loose their identity.

### Lyrics and Ghazals:

My father is primarily known as a novelist, poet and dramatist. However, he wrote hundreds of lyrics and composed music for them. He loved to play the harmonium very early in the morning and evenings to compose music, and write lyrics on small pieces of paper. He used to completely lose himself in writing lyrics, composing and singing. Many times, I have seen him crying while singing.

When in the US in 1983, he went to listen to Ustad Ghulam Ali. He was totally mesmerized by his singing and decided to write ghazals in Oriya. That led to the publication of his *Ghazal Jharnaa*, a collection of ghazals in Oriya. It is difficult to imagine that he wrote these ghazals when he was in his 70s. These ghazals are considered new to Oriya literature. He was also commissioned by the Central Sahitya Akademi to translate ghazals of Ghalib to Oriya.

### Remembering Him in the Cherry Blossoms of Washington

Washington, DC is famous for the Cherry Blossom festival. During the spring, the Japanese flowering cherries blossom in the Tidal basin. These blossoms make the surroundings heavenly. Many of these cherry trees are very old. The rough, tough, and blackened barks of the huge trunks of these trees make them appear lifeless on the surface. What amazes me most, during springtime, small blossoms followed by green leaves sprout all over the body of these lifeless trunks. And that has always reminded me of a stanza of one of my father's old lyrics that he must have composed when he was rather young:

Kebebi jadi puni pade mane, gandha mrudu madhu samirane,  
Sedina jete dure thilebi go, mo buke tuma byathaa baajiba go,  
Mo deha mahi ruhe sabuja samarohe phutiba phula naba siharane.

If you ever remember me in the fragrance ridden, slow blowing, honeyed breeze,  
however far that day may be, I will feel the pain in your aching heart --  
the trunk of my body will shiver with the opulence of flowers and greenery.

### His Zest for Life

My father was a hard working individual who had gone through tough times in life. As a proud Oriya, who stood up for Oriya interests in Jamshedpur, he suffered. As a businessman he was a risk taker. As an Oriya entrepreneur he wanted to establish the Oriya stage on a stronger footing through Rupashree Theatres and produce Oriya movies through Bharati Natya Mandira. But he was faced with resounding failures. At times, he was almost on the street. His family suffered. No doubt he was a successful dramatist by the late 1940s and early 1950s and his dramas were staged by the Annapurna Theatre group. But he definitely misjudged the difference between a successful dramatist and a successful entrepreneur of a commercial stage. He was hardened by these failures. In spite of the hardships that he faced in life, he remained a dreamer. He never lost his zest for life. Let me quote from one of his lyrical poetry:

*eii pruthibiku ete bhala paai chhadi chaljibi se kathaa kuhanaa,  
eii maati eii akaasha bataasha e' shuneli kharaa rupeli jochhanaa.*

Tell me not to leave this world --  
Whose, soil, the sky, the air, the golden sunlight,  
The silvery moonlight I have loved so much.

Finally, let me quote the eternal optimist in him who not only realized the beauty of suffering in the quest for "eternal love" in this life, but perhaps as a believer in Hindu religion and philosophy longed for the same in future lives to come:

*Jwalana sinaa e' jeebanaku dagdha kare dipta kare,  
Mahaakaalara laharee tale, birahee praana ashruhare,  
Tikike sabu naheu sesh, rahibi chahin nirnimesh,  
Barambaara janmanebi, pralaya jhade, dhwansa tale,  
Kahibaa kathaa nasaru mora, sata janma janmaantare.*

The burning of the hearts makes us pure, makes us glitter.  
As the tears from the love lost hearts shiver under the waves of the great ocean of time;  
Let all this not end in a moment. I will be waiting without a blink.  
Time and time again I will be born under the deluge and destructions of a new beginning.  
Let my story not end in hundreds of births and deaths to come.



## A thread breaks

**Srimati Hemalata Mansinha (1919-2004)**

**Mrs. Chandramani Behura**

*(Translated from the original Oriya article by Lalu Mansinha)*

She was an uncommon personality in so common a world. Her story unfolds some 73 years ago. Hemalata was a fair, willowy thirteen years old, beautiful as the golden *champa* flower. Her father, Banamali Behura, and her uncle, Satyananda (younger brother of Banamali), decided that it was time that she was married, looked around for a suitable groom, and discovered Mayadhar Mansinha, a handsome young poet, a student at Ravenshaw College. There was a problem though. The Sharada Act had been newly enacted -- a girl could not get married unless she was fourteen years of age. Adding the nine months in the womb to the

thirteen years made Hemalata almost fourteen. The wedding took place on May 8, 1932. They had six children.

A mother gives life, and the child is endowed with a name and status by the father; but that is not enough. A diamond in the rough is of little value until cut and polished. A child needs the 'polishing' in the growing period -- guidance and support. Young Mayadhar Mansinha, was so talented, but was unemployed many a time in the early years. Through all the wants and hardships of those trying years, Hemalata remained the solid anchor of the family and remained steadfast



in her determination to raise her children to achieve.

Often there are seemingly minor points in life, where a decision changes the very direction of one's future thereafter. At that crucial juncture, whoever is holding the rudder steers the boat in the right direction with just a small push or pull. Middle son Lalit was writing the IAS/IFS (Indian Administrative Service/ Indian Foreign Service) exams. After writing a couple of exams, he wanted to drop out. Thinking that he had done very poorly in the exams so far and had no chance of passing, Lalit wanted to drop the remaining exams. Soft hearted Mayadhar said 'All right, if he wishes to drop the exams, let him.' But Apa (elder sister, my affectionate form of address for Hemalata) said 'No'. She was very clear and emphatic, and knew her son better than him. Lalit had to write the entire set of exams no matter what. She was right. Lalit was mistaken about his own abilities. He stood first in all of India in the IAS/IFS exams.

Youngest son Babula (Labanyendu) was always doing poorly in school. Both father and mother were worried about him and he was talked to quite often. The son asked 'What do you want from me?' The mother replied 'I want to see you in the IAS'. Babula appeared for the IAS exams and has now become an administrator of renown. He is currently the Director General of Foreign Trade of the Government of India. What a mother! She herself never completed high school, but had such ambitions for her sons! She was disappointed in her eldest son, Lalu (Lalendu) 'I sent you abroad to be a scientist and win a Nobel Prize'.

Due to the lack of money, the young family spent many of the early years with her father Banamali Behura. Thus the children came to address all the maternal uncles as *bhai* (brother), instead of *mamu* (maternal uncle), and all the aunts as 'apa' (elder sister), rather than 'mnai' (maternal aunt). The uncles were called Bhai (Durga Madhab), Rambhai (Basanta Kumar), Tunibhai (Bijoy Kumar). The maternal aunts are Prempa (Premalata Pasayat), SunuApa (Swarnalata Beuria), KaniApa (Kanakalata Dhall), and KunuApa (Subarnarekha Parida).

In spite of the penury, Hemalata never lost her dignity, her pride. She rarely complained to anyone about her own difficulties. In the Gita it is stated that an Enlightened Soul is one who is unswayed by either misfortune or good fortune. In that measure Hemalata was truly enlightened. In my relationship with her, over 52 years, I have never seen her diminished by misfortunes. Fate took away a daughter Usha at a tender age. She did not break when her youngest daughter Tukun (Sanghamitra Sunder Ray) passed away two years ago, when Apa was 83 years old. There was pride but no overt boasting when Lalit became Foreign Secretary, then High Commissioner to UK and later Ambassador to the US, the first Oriya to hold these high positions. Because of her children Hemalata has of late been addressed as *ratnagarva* (mother of stars) by some.

She was so very independent. Just recently I was trying to help her climb the stairs in my home. She dismissed me with an irritated wave of her hand--'I can walk by myself'. She was independent in her thoughts too. She never sought counsel from anyone on her personal or family crises. She was of the resolve that her personal problems were hers only to solve. Her words were often sharp and barbed, but behind the tough exterior she had love, affection and a strong sense of family kinship. Within the family and outside, she helped out in a crisis with a compulsion. Women generally become jealous and are often unable to accept someone else's good fortune. But her personality was different. She rarely gossiped about others. Perhaps the romances of a romantic poet-husband hurt her sentiments, but she also had the dignity as the wife of a famous poet, and she fully recognised her role and responsibility as such. She was untouched by words and events that would have triggered jealousy in ordinary women.

Her formal schooling was only to Class 6. Yet she was a compulsive reader, in Oriya of course, but also in Bengali and Hindi. She managed to read English magazines such as the Reader's Digest. She was mostly self-taught. Part of her daily routine was to read books, magazines and newspapers, and write letters, articles. She became a writer in her own right in the shadow of Mansingh. She was the editor of

the women's section of Prajatantra for a number of years.

I was her sister-in-law, the wife of her favourite younger brother. Her relationship with me was measured, and the words to me were often barbed – I was just not good enough. And yet even those harsh words from her carried affection. After hearing our verbal jousts, Indira (her daughter in law, married to Lalit) remarked that we two must be real good friends. During her last illness, she was upset at being constantly urged to agree to be hospitalised and agree to all the medical heroic measures, needles, tubes, pills, oxygen tanks. It was me who she called for to confide, 'Chandra -- I wish to leave my body now' and then requested me to tell the others 'to let me go in peace.' Even as she has constantly criticised me all my married life for not looking after her younger brother, in many things I was her trusted confidante.

As her body lay in repose in the ICU ward of Kalinga Hospital, Bhai, her 93 year old eldest brother, insisted on walking up the stairs to view. After seeing her for a minute he asked the doctor 'May I touch her?' Then ever so gently, much as a mother touches a baby, he brushed her arms and caressed her face. Their relationship with each other has been rocky sometimes, but this was his favourite younger sister. She was the matriarch of the Mansingh family, and she had a major presence in our families.

Death ends everything. Her dear Lalu (Professor emeritus of Geophysics, University of Western Ontario, Canada), her pride Lalit (Am-

bassador of India, Washington DC), apple of her eye Babula (Director-General of Foreign Trade, Delhi), and her favourite Kuni (Head mistress, retired, Rishi Valley School) were scattered all over. Who would have thought that she would will them to be present at the instant she left on her *Mahajatra* (Great Journey,) and she would be lifted and carried away for cremation by all her children together? Whatever she could have ever wished for and from her children have been fulfilled. To have seen her children, scattered all over the world, back together for one last time, must have been a dream. And that came to pass just before she passed away. She gave all of us notice that she wished to leave, and she left us without prolonged suffering. To have managed to achieve all this, she must be a superior being, a saintly woman.

The real truths and falsehoods are exposed at death. I once asked her, 'Did you ever regret having married a penurious young poet?' She had not answered me then. When the Governor of Orissa came to lay a wreath, at the funeral of this unschooled girl from the village of Bilipada, I got my answer.

The string has broken. I am the eldest daughter-in-law of the Behura family. I am addressed as 'ma' (mother), 'mausi' (maternal aunt), 'bhauja' (brother's wife), 'nani' (elder sister), 'mnai' (wife of maternal uncle) to various members of the family. My regret now is that in this family I do not have a 'Apa' anymore, in front of whom I can stand humbly and with affection. This is my personal sorrow.

300 Kharavelanagar,  
Bhubaneswar 751001

*Note: A book that compiled the writings of Smt. Hemalata Mansinha was in the last stages of publication at the time of her death. The book is edited by Dr. Sricharan Mohanty. The publisher, Grantha Mandir, rushed the printing of the book, and it appeared on the day of the shradha (eleventh day).*

*"Priya Parama," by Smt Hemalata Mansinha (Edited by Dr. Sricharan Mohanty), Grantha Mandira, Cuttack, 2004*



# Points to Ponder



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## Random Thoughts on Life in Bhubaneswar

**Dhanada K. Mishra**

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*Bhubaneswar is my hometown. I have never felt at home anywhere else. The place has changed in ways (some intended and others totally unplanned) over the years since its foundation over fifty years ago. It continues to evoke a mixture of feelings with different strands of joy and happiness, of anger and regret, and many others, but it is mainly dominated by a strong sense of unfulfilled potential and strong empathy for the toiling masses and the hard life. With the signs of a glorious past staring at you from every stone sculpture<sup>1</sup>, cave, folklore, festival and history book; given the untapped natural resources that the state is blessed with; given the happy-go-lucky, simple minded common people, the grind of poverty all around, and the general sense of hopelessness and cynicism, it makes even the most nonchalant mind waiver in strong emotion. The following is a reflection of such thoughts.*

I was returning from my son's school after dropping him off this morning, and was witness to an exquisite scene of two Bulls fighting it out on the main road off of the Airport traffic square in Forest park (probably the most posh area of Bhubaneswar!). The early morning traffic was at a stand still, and the scene was one of fear, amusement, and chaos - typical of everything else that is happening in today's Odisha. The fight lasted for about 15-20 minutes despite the attempts by the poor home guard manning the traffic post to break it up with his hastily gathered twigs. Sundry dogs and cows joined in, and it ended only when one of the two bulls admitted defeat and ran away. The victorious big black bull (which I am sure was intoxicated from some country liquor) did a victory lap chasing the gathered crowds in all sorts of directions. Imagine, you being a parent on a two-wheeler dropping your 3-4 year old at the school (I was scared



stiff sitting luckily in a four wheeler), the potential tragedy is unimaginable.

Stray animals on Bhubaneswar's streets and roads are an increasing menace of huge proportion. I never ever remember having had so many companions from the animal world sharing the road with me in my 17 years of growing up in this town (It will be a misnomer to call Bhubaneswar a city any more - at best its a big town - not much better than Khurda road or Jajpur perhaps - only larger in scale.) The number of people who get bitten by rabid dogs (just from anecdotes of people you know) must be at an alarmingly high level. No official statistics need be asked, for none would be available. Number of dead animals rotting at various strategic locations in the city adding to the stench, is part of city's sense of smell. Driving here means perpetually avoiding stray animals, their excreta, joy-walkers, and traffic with no rules and a lot of noise.

<sup>1</sup> 7th century Parusurameswar temple of Old Bhubaneswar – along with the adjacent Mukteswar temple one of the finest example of Odishan architecture unmatched by anything built by Odiyas since then.



I have been meaning to make regular documentaries on the Bhubaneswar traffic (I am sure it will win all the TV programs of the 'Funniest Home videos' variety hands down). Only if I had some more time on my hands, or I could find another soul in the city who was equally perturbed by this!! The first thing the city does to you is kill your sensitivity to all these things - after a while you are happily part of it - doing your stuff - teaching, consulting, contracting, running around like a chicken with your head chopped off. What a mess! The number of unnecessary deaths on our roads is truly shocking as are number of deaths from entirely preventable cancers - such as breast cancer). Since I have joined KIIT, two of our young students have died, and some time before that a young faculty member died. Every day in the paper you read about the death toll going up, but who is counting! On my drive to work, I can count several collisions and near misses on almost a daily basis. All this in a city, where driving at 40 km/hr is a luxury. Who is counting the millions of man-hours lost in the process and a fortune lost in lost productivity?

Monsoon showers were a welcome break from the sweltering summer heat, but with it comes the misery of water logged Bhubaneswar and ever growing potholes on our streets. Shaheednagar (that posh VIP locality of Bhubaneswar) is a scene you have to see to believe. It's a floating island in the midst of swimming pools of various sizes and shapes. The slightest rain converts the roads in Shaheednagar in to drains. Our civil engineers and road builders have not understood that there is a reason why drainage is provide along every road to make the road capable of performing its intended function. The drains are non-existent and hence the roads perform the role of the drains, and with it go the topping and any thing else that was on the road, and you are left with potholes, which are wider than your entire roads. The contrast couldn't be greater. Across every iron grided gate in Shaheednagar live VIPs in their opulent houses with carefully manicured gardens and tastefully decorated interiors. Yet step out of it, and you land yourself on hell of a surrounding befitting the

worst of the slums in Dharavi. I am sure 10% of the maintenance bills of all the luxury cars garaged in Shaheednagar must be enough to fix this situation, but who will bell the cat.

This morning there were some people from the Bhubaneswar Municipality chopping up the growth from the recent monsoon rains on either side of the road in front of our house. I ventured to ask why the people from Municipality do not show up even once a month to lift the garbage. The prompt answer was 'we are not the regulars for this street - we are here against a complaint'. The city is chocking with its own garbage. Nobody seems to take notice. I just happen to have been to Vishkhapatanam (Vizag) over the weekend, and the difference is glaring. If any of you thought that all Indian cities are full of garbage - my advice is pay a visit to Vishkhapatanam - what a shocker. The city is fairly clean (thanks to privatized garbage collection). The development is amazing. The marine drive and the drive along the 20 km stretch to a tourist destination (Bhimleepatanam) are impressive. One comes back with the feeling 'why can't we do it here if they can do it just across the border'. It's not even that we need to make things better - can't we stop the rot at least. The funniest story doing the rounds is that 'the Municipality elections are round the corner, and the Municipality will clean up its act after that'. I have no idea who originated this story. Like every other story it gives perpetual hope in some unknown future that's unlikely to materialize, unless we the people pull up our socks and do something about it.

These random events and reflections may show a gloomy picture of life in our beloved motherland – but life does go on, and there is a positive side to every gloomy story, and I will write about it another day. The bottom line, however, is that none of the above situations have to be what it is today. It's entirely preventable, and that is a bigger worry than the situation itself.

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Dhanada Mishra went to school in USA in the nineties and worked in Australia before returning to Orissa to work as a professor of civil engineering at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology.



# Coupling of Microindustry with Rural Schools: Interesting Possibility

Laxman Mohanty

70% of India lives in rural areas. India can become a fully developed nation only if rural India is developed. Many concerned groups and individuals are putting their efforts in providing better infrastructure for rural India. Our honorable President, Dr Abdul Kalam, is pushing the concept of PURA (providing urban facilities in rural areas) for this purpose. There is also another group of concerned Indians including Rajesh Jain of Indiaworld fame, Atanu Dey, and Vindod Khosla, the famous VC, who are propagating the concept of RISC (Rural Infrastructure & Services Common).

One of the enablers to drive rural India on the path of progress is education as is true for urban India. The rest of the world is today taking India seriously because of its enviable growth in knowledge economy, especially in IT and pharmacy. If today IIT is a world wide brand name, it is because of the educational excellence the IITs have been able to create over a period of time.

A close look at rural education today will show that it suffers on several counts. In many places there is no adequate infrastructure, and if there are some buildings, the teachers are missing. If both are there, the training of the teachers is quite poor leading to poor quality of teaching. The curriculum is unsuited for training students for adulthood, and this leads to high drop outs. There is no ownership from the community and hence no accountability from the people who are involved in delivering rural education. To sum up, school system in rural India is today in a pathetic situation.

Compare this to urban India. Apart from government schools there are now a large number of private schools. Though many of these promoters can be accused of profit motives still it can't be denied that many of the private schools provide good infrastructure, better trained teachers and well defined system of conducting classes and examination, etc. The question arises, why don't we have such private initiatives in rural education? Barring a few states, one will not find many private schools in

rural India. Even the so called private schools depend on government grants for survival. The main reason behind this situation is the economic unviability of rural schools. An urban school with a student population of 2000-3000 in a second grade city in India can generate a surplus of rupees 50 lakhs to 1 crore, while a rural school can't even manage its revenue expenses from the fee it collects from its students. This by itself deters private initiative in rural education.

It is true that there is a government mandate to offer free education to its citizens at the primary level. But the truth is also that government has not been able to fulfill its promises and in near future it may not be able to do so. In that case, should not be there some private initiative to offer quality education to rural students at a fee that the students can afford? In that way, rural students are not denied the opportunities which the urban students take for granted.

But the private rural schools may not be sustainable if they depend only on tuition fees as there will be a huge difference between what a rural student can pay in comparison to a urban student. Then, how can private rural schools meet the short fall? The author argues that one of the ways is to couple micro industries with rural schools.

Most of us must have read about the Tolstoy Farm in South Africa where Gandhiji was involved. There students did not only learn subjects like mathematics, geography, and literature, they also worked in the farm producing various crops and vegetables. Dayalbagh College in Agra also has similar arrangement. PSG Charitable Trust in Coimbatore runs an industry along with its engineering college and other institutions. This industry (PSG Industrial Institute- PSGII) produces motors, pumps, fans and many other tools. There is a symbiotic relationship between PSGTech and PSGII. The profit of PSGII goes into building infrastructure for PSGTech and other institutions while students of PSGTech work as apprentice in PSGII and gain valuable work experience. The faculty of

PSGTech acts as resources for PSGII and help in designing and developing new products.

Can inspirations be drawn from these examples for coupling micro industries with rural schools? In fact, similar experiments have been carried out in some schools in China.

By coupling micro industries with rural schools, let us examine what can be done and what can be achieved.

The term "micro industries" needs to be defined first. Any income generation activity that suits the local context can be termed as micro industry. For example, a school can carry out mushroom farming and that can be treated as a micro industry. A news article in India Today informed that mushroom farming by village women in Assam has changed the economic status of many rural families in Assam. A big tailoring firm attached with a school that can produce shirts, pants and other clothes, which can be sold in nearby rural areas, can also be termed as a micro industry. In fact a school in a nice scenic setting can start eco-tourism facilities and generate resources.

The coupling of micro industries with schools can extend benefits manifold. It can generate surplus that can partially or fully fulfill the resource requirement of the school. The other two big benefits are extending technical training to students and promoting entrepreneurship. One of the reasons for which students drop out from schools is that they don't see any value from the education imparted. In one school at the outskirts of Bhubaneswar the parents are not willing to send their children to schools because they find that by engaging their children in the butchering business they have, each child can earn an extra income of rupees 100 a day and if the child is going to adopt the same business after studying, what is the benefit of sending him to the school. Here the concerned school can create value by setting up a unit that can teach students how to process the meat and may be how to export to other parts of the country or abroad, etc. Then surely parents would like to

send their children to that school. The training in the attached micro industry may also encourage students to set up enterprises if they are not very academically inclined.

A state like Orissa needs micro industries more than big industries. Now-a-days big industries employ high technology and fewer people, and those people need to be highly skilled. The experience shows that not many down stream industries come up around those big industries. On the other hand, if small industries suiting the available local resources and local requirements are put up, they can be viable, involve a large number of people, and initiate large scale economic activities. A visit to some villages in interior of Orissa revealed that people there had no clue regarding what kind of micro industries could be set up, and they had no information from where the technology could be brought, etc. If the school can help in this direction by not only being a role model but by extending the knowledge about possibilities and sources, entrepreneurship in villages can get a boost.

If rural schools can be part of a network, then each school can have access to larger human resources and technology. The network can float a few rural technical schools that can impart necessary technological training to people wishing to pursue entrepreneurship. In fact the network can float a marketing arm and a common brand name that can help micro industries attached with schools to sell their produce easily and at a better price. The network can even collaborate with micro financing companies to provide much needed financial resources to entrepreneurs.

It is true that if more minds give serious thoughts about this concept more creative solutions can be thought of and not only rural education can be made more meaningful and vibrant, the economic status of villages can be improved to a great extent. Then truly a developed India can emerge!

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## A Cultural Reconstruction of Widowhood in Orissa

Dr. Rita Ray

This paper tries to provide the ideological basis of widowhood in Orissa, a state in the Eastern Region of India. We are trying to narrate the perceived ideology of widowhood, both in urban and rural contexts, in three important coastal areas of Orissa – Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, and Puri. These three places are important cultural and religious centers of Orissa. This paper argues the following three points:

Widowhood is a caste by itself through ideological implication. All major factors of determining social status, namely, money, power, and authority are less important compared to the lack of dignity suffered by widows. Conformity to widowhood is an important factor to attain dignity. In the absence of a cultural revolution, the process of free market economy and globalization is likely to worsen the condition of the widows.

According to Chakravorty, widowhood in India among upper castes is a social death. We extend this argument and supplement our logic by saying that more than being an outcast and socially dead, the widow is de-linked from nature, and is pushed into a unique situation to work for her after-life. Her life is devoted to accumulating good deeds (*punya*) for her after-life by subjecting her body to continuous punishment, both physical and symbolic. Her activities revolve around reducing her passion by systematically detaching herself from all pleasures of life. She learns to dwell on the futility of her life, and to disregard her body as a living entity. She becomes a symbol of inauspiciousness and is barred from taking part in auspicious occasions.

Loss of spouse results in financial, material, and emotional loss, and affects both men and women equally. But in our society widows pay an additional penalty due to the social restrictions imposed on them. These restrictions are found to be progressively more stringent as one climbs the *totem* pole of caste hierarchy. Even within the same caste, the restrictions imposed on its widows are an important measure

of the rank of a sub-caste. Thus, for a *Sasan* Brahmin woman the highest achievement in life is to die while her husband is alive. In that case, she is deified by everyone, and is given the status of a Goddess. Her dead body is carried to the funeral pyre by her husband and other blood relations. It is considered an auspicious sign to see her dead body. A widow among the *Sasan* Brahmins, in contrast, dies notionally when her husband dies. On actual death her body is carried to the funeral pyre by anyone in the neighborhood. A son may or may not carry her to the funeral pyre. Her dead body is considered inauspicious by everyone. I have deliberately started by comparing how our society treats a married woman and a widow on their death to illustrate their relative social status.

For all married women in Orissa, motherhood is a very important way of self expression. Widows with male children have an identity different from widows with only girl children and widows with no issues. The age of the widow also has a bearing on how she is treated. The male child of a widow is protected and cared for almost unconditionally. In contrast, a daughter, in spite of her accomplishments, finds it difficult to locate a suitable groom, because according to Manu, the ancient lawgiver, the daughter of a widow is not worthy of getting a proper groom. A widow without a child is treated with pity and scorn. Her condition is said to be brought upon herself due to bad actions (*papa*) performed in past lives. It can only be corrected in a future life by doing good actions (*punya*) in the current life. A man, on the other hand, is not considered cursed when he loses his spouse, but a strong belief prevails that “The children without mother is denied a ferry to cross the river,” and “a fatherless child can survive but it is difficult for a motherless child to survive,” etc. In other words a woman’s role as a mother is a social necessity but her role as wife is easily substituted. The reverse, however, is never ideologically accepted in our culture.



The feminine identity of a woman is completely blurred soon after she becomes a widow. Her reproductive body symbolically transforms into a sexual and unnatural body, also symbolizing a sense of futility of her existence. All symbols of regeneration of woman are denied to her. The red mark on her forehead, the symbol of status and power of women in a society where married women justify their existence, is taken away from her. She is not allowed to use turmeric and oil, because these are believed to generate 'heat' inside the body. She is not only denied their use, she is also not permitted to put these on other married women including her daughters and daughter-in-laws. This would be considered highly inauspicious. Every detail of her food is monitored in the name of reducing her *body heat*, a colloquial term for passion.

The external feminine symbols of a married woman are taken away when she becomes a widow. She is neither a man nor is she a woman in the full sense of the word. Taking away the external symbols makes her powerless, but does not make her a man in a patriarchal culture. Particularly the ritualistic symbols of fertility and regeneration are completely abandoned. Even in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, a young widow living in an urban area in Orissa would not dare to put a red dot (Sindur) on her forehead for fear of public humiliation. One can only imagine the plights of the widows in rural Orissa. The red dot symbolizes regeneration and power. Since her fertility and regeneration power is under-valued, her participation in all rituals connected with regeneration is considered inauspicious. She is barred from participating in marriage rituals, the most significant social ritual signifying fertility and regeneration, even when she is the mother of the bride or the groom. A married woman whose husband is alive would take her place as the mother of the bride or the groom when her own children get married. What could be more cruel and suppressive than denying a mother her motherhood in the most significant event of her social life, namely, the marriage of her child? In a culture where motherhood is the most important identity of women, the contradiction is manifested when she is denied the mother's role for losing her husband.

This process of rejecting her body and her identity takes her to a plane where the only

option for her is to marry God (usually Lord Jagannath), which is socially accepted. She performs all her wifely duties, much more vigorously than what could be done for a living husband, in worshipping her God-husband to reestablish her identity as a human being. The reasoning behind this practice is that if the woman could not become a '*Savitri*', she is at least married to Lord Jagannath. Being a '*Savitri*' is much more respectable than having married to Lord Jagannath. Thousands of widows travel to Puri during the month of *Kartika* (mid October to mid November), against all odds, to pay their respect to Lord Jagannath. Our study shows that overwhelmingly widows looking forward to the month of *Kartika*, which gives them a sense of identity, to perform their wifely duties, however abstract it may be.

The theological '*Savitri*' is the most cherished womanly status in our culture. The festival associated with her life which is *Savitri Amabasya* (the darkest night of the year,) is dreadful for all married women of Orissa. On this night she was believed to have had a dialogue with '*Yama*', the king of death. Impressed by her dedication to her husband, and her perseverance, Yama returned the life of her dead husband. *Savitri*, thus symbolizes the ideal wife in our society. Identity with *Savitri* was very important for the caste Brahmins only until two decades ago. Recently, however, it has become a status symbol for all Hindu middle class cutting across caste lines. Deification to the married women and rejection of the widows exemplify the attitude of our society towards womanhood.

The widow also suffers on the economic front. She has limited property rights – she receives an equal share from her husband's property along with her children. On the family front her contribution to the family labor determines her status. In about 2% of our sample, we found that she was actually taken care of by relatives who lived in urban areas with both working parents, where the single woman took care of the young children. Most of the widows preferred staying back with the husband's joint family after the latter's death for lack of any other option. This is a very critical choice for them. More than 80% of the women, at this stage develop depression and related symptoms of having to cope with adverse social conditions.



We found the dress code and food restrictions to be relatively more liberal among non-Brahmin families. The level of ostracization from social rituals, however, was found to be uniform across all caste Hindu families. Widowhood was found to be responsible for pushing many women into poverty and debt. It created difficulty in child rearing, and increased the insecurity and loneliness felt by widows. Most widows in our study indicated that what they felt most intensely was the social indignity associated with widowhood, which brands them as inauspicious, and deprives them from participating in social rituals. Many are even haunted by the fear of disrespect to their bodies after death.

This is an excerpt from a larger study conducted by the author on the widows of coastal Orissa. The conclusions are drawn from a sample study of 300 widows of all castes in different levels of Hindu middle class families. Some of the important findings of this study are as follows. About 25% of the sample were child widows i.e., they had lost their husbands by the age of 14. More than 60% lived in their husband's joint family without available options. More than 60% con-

formed to the dress code and food restrictions appropriate for their social status. About 99% performed all rituals and religious observances (including fasting) reminding them of their widowhood.

Though Orissa has many cultural components that empower women in different contexts even within the patriarchy, the situation of widowhood needs a cultural renaissance. In the absence of that, they will be either deified or destroyed.

#### Acknowledgements

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# Debilitating Effects of Fluoride in Drinking Water Found in Orissa

**Kiron Senapati**

After working in the US for the last 22 years, I went back to India to work in West Bengal on a joint UNICEF and Government of India project during 2000-2002. The project was to provide arsenic free drinking water to the arsenic affected areas of West Bengal. I was excited to be able to work in India and give back something to my country of birth, and simultaneously be close to my home state of Orissa. Though my work primarily focused on arsenic and its harmful effects, the project also led me to awareness of another natural contaminant, fluoride. If consumed above the safe standards, fluoride can have debilitating effects. Although fluoride is widely used for prevention of tooth cavities such as in tooth-paste, it is toxic when ingested in high doses, especially for young children who are susceptible to fluoride's harmful effects.

High fluoride concentrations in potable water supplies have been found in the state of Orissa and other parts of India. Naturally occurring fluoride contamination has emerged into a

major health crisis putting over 50 million people at risk in India. Permissible limit of fluoride in water for human consumption is 1.0 mg per liter as per Indian Bureau of Standards. The permissible limit (1.5 – 5 mg/l) has been exceeded in the following areas of Orissa as observed by scientists working independently as part of an investigative study: Bolgod, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Bhardpur, Khandapara, and Odagaon.

The chronic effects of prolonged high-level exposure of fluoride to humans are bent spine and knock-knees in children. Other effects include the calcification of bones and ligaments, premature aging, and the loss of teeth. It should be noted that there is no treatment for physical deformity caused by fluoride pollution. However, fluoride free drinking water does prevent further deterioration of health. Therefore, it is imperative that a cost-effective solution to the fluoride contamination be implemented in affected areas as soon as possible. Following are some of the illustrations of the effects of fluoride ingestion

## Some of the symptoms due to fluoride contamination through drinking and cooking water



**Bent Spine**



**Knock-kneed child**



**Calcification on bone / ligament**



**Premature aging and falling of teeth**



**Condition of the teeth of a child due to fluorosis**



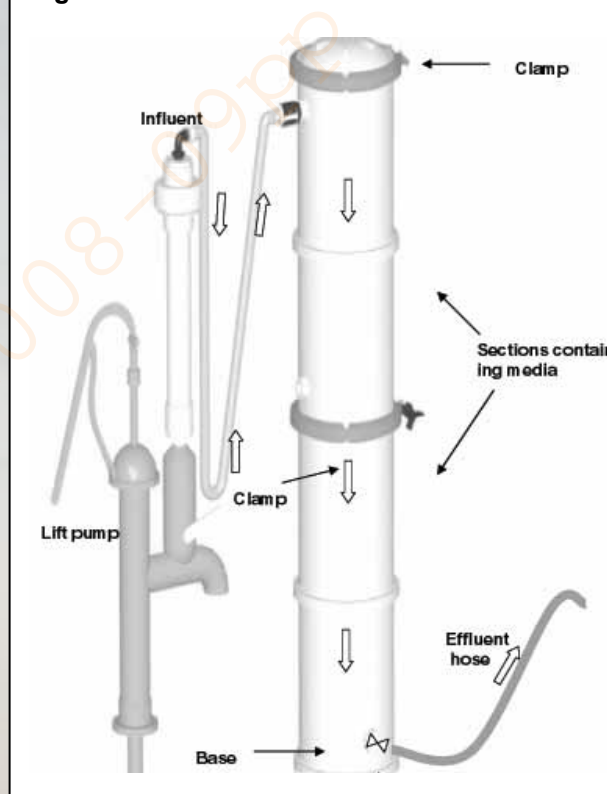
Several treatment technologies to remove fluoride are available for use, of which “Adsorption” is the most cost effective and easy to implement. A selective adsorbent media developed in the US is an effective chemical adsorption media designed specifically for fluoride removal from water and wastewater. The technology allows for the effective removal of fluoride, rendering it more efficient and cost-effective compared to alternative treatment methods. The potential benefits of this technology are as follows:

- Reduced material usage based on the high activity and capacity of the media.
- Multiple re-generation in-situ to prolong the life of the media, if required.
- Immobilization of adsorbed contaminants from the media rendering it non-hazardous as a permanent phase.

The combined benefits of these attributes will be reflected in lower life-cycle treatment costs combined with removal of other elements of concern that are not targeted for treatment. As such, this technology presents a tremendous opportunity to apply a proven technology in Orissa.

The typical hand tube well “Fluoride Treatment Unit” consists of a nine inch diameter X 4 feet tall steel vessel packed with the adsorbent media. The fluoride treatment unit is attached to the existing hand pump as shown in Figure – 1. The treatment units are de-signed to operate without electricity and minimum operator assistance. Monthly monitoring of the effluent is recommended to determine when the media needs to be changed, after which the media has to be replaced and the old media disposed at a local landfill. The treatment units have a diverter valve, which should be used to obtain treated water for drinking and cooking purposes only. Water for all other uses should be collected

Figure 1 – Fluoride Treatment Unit



without treatment to extend life of the media, and thereby reducing the overall cost of treatment.

The cost of treatment per liter of water is approximately US \$0.001 or 4 paise per liter. This is a remarkable unit cost of treatment and may be borne by the end users, thereby making the project self sustaining following the initial capital investment.

Additional information on Fluorosis and Fluoride treatment may be obtained from the following sites; UNICEF ([www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)), FLUOROSIS (<http://education.vsnl.com/fluorosis>), and other related sites, such as, Apyron Technologies India Pvt. Ltd., ([www.Apyron-India.com](http://www.Apyron-India.com)).

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## Western Values: what we can learn as a Society

Sanjib Mohapatro

I was once told by someone that my biggest weakness is that I am too much Americanized and that made me unfit to be her husband. ☺

I have been pondering ever since and critically analyzing myself and comparing to others, who have not adapted western culture like I have. I have come to realize the role of western values in contemporary Indian society. This topic is close to my heart, as I want to build a company with the strong values of Honesty, Integrity, Compassion, Trust, and Diversity. In fact, values drive progress and define quality of life in society.

As it is said in the Vedas: Man can live individually, but can survive only collectively. Hence, our challenge is to form a progressive community by balancing the interests of the individual and that of the society. To meet this, we need to develop a value system where people accept modest sacrifices for the common good.

A value system is the protocol for behavior that enhances the trust, confidence, and commitment of members of the community. It goes beyond the domain of legality -- it is about decent and desirable behavior. Further, it includes putting the community interests ahead of your own. Thus, our collective survival and progress is predicated on sound values.

As an Indian, I am proud to be part of a culture that has deep-rooted family values. We have tremendous loyalty to the family. My parents never took a vacation on their own until all of us were educated and were capable of supporting ourselves. Indian parents make enormous sacrifices for their children. On the other side, children consider it their duty to take care of aged parents. Further, brothers and sisters sacrifice for each other.

As for marriage, it is held to be a sacred union -- husband and wife are bonded, most

often, for life. In joint families, the entire family works towards the welfare of the family. There is so much love and affection in our family life. This is the essence of Indian values and one of our key strengths. Our families act as a critical support mechanism for us.

Unfortunately, our attitude towards family life is not reflected in our attitude towards community behavior. From littering the streets to corruption to breaking of contractual obligations, we are apathetic towards the common good. The primary difference between the USA and India is that in the USA people have a much better societal orientation. In the USA -- individuals understand that they have to be responsible towards their community. They care more for society than we do. Further, they generally sacrifice more for society than us. Quality of life is enhanced because of this. This is where we need to learn from the US culture.

Consider some of the lessons that we can learn from the US culture.

**Respect for the public good** -- In the USA, there is respect for the public good. For instance, parks free of litter, clean streets, public toilets free of graffiti -- all these are instances of care for the public good. On the contrary, in India, we keep our houses clean and water our gardens everyday, but when we go to a park, we do not think twice before littering the place. When I was in Orissa a few months back, I have seen my family and our neighbors clean their house and put the garbage on the street.

**Attitude towards corruption** -- Corruption, as we see in India, is another example of putting the interest of oneself, and at best that of one's family, above that of the society. After my first exposure to the USA when I went back to India, I needed to get a driver's license and needed to get a permanent passport. I had made up my mind that I won't support this deep-rooted corruption. I will take the test and get the license.



I could not get the drivers license in 18 months until I finally gave up. Here in the US, for instance, it is very difficult to bribe a police officer into avoiding a speeding ticket. This is because of the individual's responsible behavior towards the community as a whole. On the contrary, in India, corruption, tax evasion, cheating, and bribery have eaten into our vitals. For instance, contractors bribe officials, and construct low-quality roads and bridges. The result is that the society loses in the form of substandard defense equipment and infrastructure, and low-quality recruitment, just to name a few impediments. Unfortunately, this behavior is condoned by almost everyone.

**Public apathy** -- Apathy in solving community matters has held us back from making progress, which is otherwise within our reach. We see serious problems around us, but do not try to solve them. We behave as if the problems do not exist or are somebody else's. On the other hand, in the USA, people solve societal problems proactively. For instance, when I was in my engineering college five people committed mass suicide, and when I proposed to have a counseling center, everybody thought that I was out of mind.

In the USA, each person is proud of his or her labor that raises honest sweat. On the other hand, in India, we tend to overlook the significance of those who are not in professional jobs. We have a mindset that reveres only supposedly intellectual work. For instance, I have seen many engineers, fresh from college, who only want to do cutting-edge work and not work that is of relevance to business and the country. However, be it an organization or society, there are different people performing different roles. For success, all these people are required to discharge their duties. This includes everyone from the CEO to the person who serves tea -- every role is important. Hence, we need a mindset that reveres everyone who puts in honest work. My wife was surprised and insulted when my family members in India were telling lies that she was a dentist versus a dental technician

Indians become intimate even without being friendly. They ask favors of strangers without any hesitation. For instance, one Indian woman I was trying to rent my apartment to,

actually felt that if she rents our basement apartment, I should drop her at her work every-day. A westerner can be friendly without being intimate while an easterner tends to be intimate without being friendly.

Further, we seem to extend lack of professionalism to our sense of punctuality. We do not seem to respect the other person's time. The Indian Standard Time has become Indian Stretchable time. Starting from a project deadline to arriving at social gatherings, it is fashionable to be late. The disheartening aspect is that we have accepted this as the norm rather than an exception.

In the USA, they show professionalism by embracing meritocracy. Meritocracy by definition means that we cannot let personal prejudices affect our evaluation of an individual's performance. As we increasingly start to benchmark ourselves with global standards, we have to embrace meritocracy. In the USA, right from a very young age, parents teach their children to be independent in thinking. Thus, they grow up to be strong and confident individuals. In India, we still suffer from feudal thinking. I have seen people, who are otherwise bright, refusing to show independence and preferring to be told what to do by their boss. The education system in India is responsible to some extent apart from the culture of respecting elders and people of authority.

In my college once few unruly students who failed in the examination forcibly gathered us, broke valuable property of the college and took us to University campus. Later they organized a strike and had a *rail rooka* by stopping express and passenger trains. I stood up and questioned; what right we have to inconvenience the passengers who might have an important engagement, and not to mention, I was beaten up. In my social studies paper, I described articles of our constitution and critically analyzed them in today's context and explained how with freedom comes responsibility. Unfortunately, the people who memorized and just copied what was in the textbook passed with flying colors and I just got passing marks.

Further, we Indians do not display intellectual honesty. It is more likely that we will copy

somebody else's idea, or writings and project them to be our own.

### **Rights and Duties**

We are all aware of our rights as citizens. Nevertheless, we often fail to acknowledge the duty that accompanies every right. To borrow Dwight Eisenhower's words: "A people that values its privileges above its principles, soon loses both." Our duty is towards the community as a whole, as much as it is towards our families. We have to remember that fundamental social problems grow out of a lack of commitment to the common good. To quote Henry Beecher: "Culture is that which helps us to work for the betterment of all." Hence, friends, I do believe that we can make our society even better by assimilating

these western values into our own culture -- we will be stronger for it.

Most of our behavior comes from greed, lack of self-confidence, lack of confidence in the nation, and lack of respect for the society. To borrow Gandhi's words: "There is enough in this world for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed." Let us work towards a society where we would do unto others what we would have others do unto us. Once we have assimilated these values onto our lives, we can teach them to our family and friends back in India. In the words of Winston Churchill, "Responsibility is the price of greatness." We have to extend our family values beyond the boundaries of our home.

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## **Development Management in Orissa**

**Amiya R. Nayak**

I have been studying the following two important developmental topics at the global and local systems based on the theme – Think Global and Act Local, and thus decided to write an idea paper in the context of Orissa, our motherland.

Development Management (public-sector-based socio-economic development, change management, community development, infrastructure development, multi-sectoral improvement)

Management Development (private-sector-based business management systems development, management education, executive development, continuous and life-long management learning, talent management, business and

management knowledge development, internal consulting, leadership development)

The word development has many meanings. Development means different to different people. Similarly, the word management has many different meaning. Development in this sense combines many different aspects of change, improvement, vision, and execution of mission. However, the concepts such as Development Management and Management Development have different meanings based on their organization, environment, and developmental use.

### **Development Management**

Typically, government, public sectors and NGOs either independently or through collabora-



tive partnerships contribute to multi-sectoral developments. However, development management has been a challenging task for government and public sector agencies. The globalization and privatization of industries have pushed the global and regional systems to adapt business-like development management systems. The multi-national companies, global private foundations, or entrepreneurial founder philanthropists such as Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Microsoft), Rockefeller Foundation (Rockefeller Family), Sloan Foundation (General Motors), Soros Foundation (George Soros), Ford Foundation (Ford Family and Ford Motor Company), Merck Foundation (Merck & Co. Inc.) and Pfizer Foundation (Pfizer Inc.) have been actively involved in international development at global and local levels in diverse areas in healthcare, agriculture and education development. The Gates Foundation is the world's largest donor for global development and social venture development, and the foundation monitors the progress, accountability and execution of missions and projects by business-oriented goal setting methods.

### **Management Development**

In corporate organizational development, the effectiveness of management is recognized as one of the parameters of organizational success. Therefore, investment in management development can have a direct economic benefit to the organization including corporate, government, NGO and non-profit organizations. The ultimate measure of management's performance is the metric of management effectiveness which includes: strategic execution or how well management's plans were carried out by members of the organization, leadership management, or how effectively management communicated and translated the vision, mission, and strategy of the organization to the members, management of delegation, or how well management gave assignments and communicated information and instructions to members of the organization, return on investment (ROI), or how well management utilized the resources (people, ideas, finances) of the organization to bring an acceptable and higher return to shareowners.

### **Global Development**

At the global level, UN-Systems-based international organizations such as, The World Bank Group, WHO, UNDP, particularly the UN-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have commitments for the international community to an expanded vision of development, one that vigorously promotes human development as the key to sustaining social and economic progress in all countries, and recognizes the importance of creating a global partnership for development. The goals have been commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress.

Many of the targets of the MDGs were first set out by international consultations, conferences and summits held in the 1990s to create a road map for international development.

### **Orissa Development Management**

Orissa has a population of 37 Million, about 100 Lakh households, and a debt of about US\$ 8 Billion (more than Rs. 38,000 crores and other financial liabilities), but has zero development funds from internal resources. It has typically sustained regional development through various national and international assistance. The state has suffered from regular natural calamities such as catastrophic floods, cyclones, droughts, and other types of disasters.

During an earlier discussion with a World Bank Health Sector professional, I was told that the Orissa State needs technical assistance and administrative infrastructure to implement health-care development pro-grams. Very recently, during an informal meeting with a group of Oriyas, non-Oriyas and Americans, an Indian-American friend candidly mentioned to me that, Orissa is a rich state, but you Oriyas are poor.

In the industrial sector, the state has attracted the Tatas, NALCO, Birlas, Dalmias, The Ambanis, Larsen & Toubro and few new-age IT service firms (InfoSys, Satyam). In the education sector, the nationally reputed Xavier's Institute of Management (Bhubaneswar), and in the scientific research sectors, national institutes such as RRL-CSIR, RMRC-ICMR, CIFA-ICAR, CRI-ICAR, ILS-DBT are set up within Orissa.

Despite the problems and challenges in Orissa, it has been successful in few areas such

as, pulse-polio vaccinations, local agriculture, and educational student development.

Orissa is blessed with three important resources – Natural Resources, Human Resources and Agricultural Resources. However, Orissa has gaps in entrepreneurial congruence between people, ideas, and financial resources. Orissa needs a visionary development campaign, developmental networks, and linkages between public-private resources and then it can rise to the challenges and opportunities in many sectors.

#### Top 10 Sectors for Development in Orissa

1. Human Development
2. Socio-Economic Development
3. Educational Development
4. Healthcare Development
5. Agriculture Development
6. Tourism Development
7. Rural Development
8. Natural Resources Development (Bio-resources, Marines, Mines, Minerals)

9. Market/Business Development (Entrepreneurship/Micro-Business Development)
10. Emerging Technology Development (Infotech, Biotech, Internet, New Materials, New Types of Consumer Products)

#### A 5-Point Strategy for Development in Orissa

1. Create Development Market Places within Orissa
2. Promote Government-Private-Public Partnerships
3. Develop an Entrepreneurial Culture
4. Remove Corruption, and Develop Transparency and Accountability
5. Effectively Market Orissa at the National and International Market Places

Development and Management are two sides of a coin, and are complimentary to each other. Development Management needs effective collaboration between people, government, NGO, corporations, and goal oriented collaborations through public-private sector partnerships.

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# Orissa's Usable Past-Visions for the Future Perspectives in Science & Technology\*

Somnath Misra, Sc. D. (MIT)

## Introduction

Until medieval period Orissa could boast of a glorious history. She had a flourishing maritime trade. Her exponents in mathematics, e.g., Lilavati & astronomy, e.g., Samanta Chandra Sekhar have made world-class marks. The monumental temples of Lord Jagannath, Lingaraj, Sun Temple at Konarka, the cave sculpturing at Khandagiri, Udayagiri, the Buddhist art at Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri, Dhauligiri, etc. bear testimony to the pinnacles of art & architecture achieved by the Oriyas of the period. These temples are also the mute witnesses to the superb standards of engineering involving design & construction, materials processing & transportation perfected by the then artisans.

Several factors contributed to the subsequent decline. Foremost among the factors is the conquest and rule by outsiders, e.g., the Maratthas, the Moguls & Pathans, and then the British. The latter did not care for the development of the land & its people except for collection of revenue. Except for 6 districts, bulk of the land was left to the rule by the tax-paying kings, who carried on their despotic & oppressive rule. Famine, starvation, illiteracy, onslaught of natural disaster crippled the state. Like the rest of India, Orissa missed the Industrial Revolution.

The dawn of independence brought the hopes of planned economy & development to be vigorously pursued by a democracy with socialistic pattern. The early planners had emphasized on tackling a set of basic enabling parameters of development: namely, heavy industrialization & manufacturing, education in science & technology, infrastructure involving energy resources, surface transportation including roadways & railroads, irrigation & improved agriculture.

## Scenario of Iron & Steel

Due to paucity of time I shall dwell only on one aspect in pursuing the perspectives in science & technology, namely, the scenario of iron & steel, which is considered to be the

backbone of economy of any country. The Oriyas of the past had demonstrated a high standard in iron & steel technology. There are several massive girders of steel lying in the precincts of the Sun Temple of Konarka defying the corrosive attack of the saline atmosphere of the sea a kilometer away. The craftsmen of temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri fabricated & installed steel angles & fasteners for joining the massive pieces of sandstone; cement was not available then for joining construction materials.

After withstanding the corrosive onslaught of the sea air for about 900 years, recently some of the vulnerable fasteners have been replaced by using 316 variety of stainless steel. It is common experience that warm saline atmosphere such as in Puri & Konarka rusts away conventional steel structures appreciably, even within a few months.

It is a marvel how the ancient Oriya artisans developed the technique of extraction of iron, its conversion to steel, the chemistry & metallurgy of alloying, and above all, the fabrication into massive dimensions. To-date the mystery underlying the technology has not been clearly unraveled.

The founding fathers of free India, in their ambitious vision to build a prosperous India, decided to embark on establishing three 1 MT capacity integrated steel plants in the public sector. The first one in the series was located at Rourkela with collaboration & technical assistance from West Germany. The then state of the art LD technology adopted at Rourkela was the second in the world next only to the country of its origin, Austria. The other two steel plants were established at Bhilai & Durgapur with assistance from the then Soviet Union & Britain, respectively. The units at Rourkela & Durgapur had their teething problems in achieving rated production for quite some time. The choice of Rourkela as the seat of the first integrated steel plant of Independent India was based on sound technological parameters only, namely availability of raw materials iron ores, lime stone, metallurgical



grade coal, electricity, water & labor in the hinterland.

Although iron & steel was included in the core sector of the economy, the Government did not nationalize the existing half-century old private sector Tata Iron & Steel (TISCO) Plant at Jamshedpur; rather it allowed this unit to be expanded to 2 MT capacity & stood guarantee for its loan for modernization from World Bank. The historic contribution of Orissa to TISCO in terms of supply of high-grade ore from Badampahar & Gorumahisani in Mayurbhanja District is significant. The Maharaja of Mayurbhanj in his generosity did not charge any royalty from the ore for first three years, & thereafter only a nominal amount of 1 Anna (1/16<sup>th</sup> of a Rupee) per ton. In the mean while these two mountains of coveted high-grade iron ores have been depleted and obliterated by the Tatas in service to the nation.

The pioneering adventures of the early planners in establishing the public sector steel plant at Rourkela was not followed up by continuous attention towards modernization, capacity expansion, and efficiency of production to rated capacity. The attention of the public sector was diverted more to social sector such as township, education, health care, periphery development etc. The problems were aggravated by the administered pricing, protection against global situation by imposing import barrier, and rampant trade unionism. At a later period the capacity was expanded to 1.8MT and there was some product diversification, but the plant is still struggling to achieve the rated capacity of production and the fruits of modernization.

### **Contributions of Biju Patnaik**

The contributions of the great Titan Biju Patnaik to Orissa's industrialization are legendary. During his first spell of Chief Ministership he established the base of infrastructure development towards industrialization, e.g., the Regional Engineering College (presently the National Institute of Technology) at Rourkela, the Orissa University of Agricultural Technology, Bhubaneswar, Paradeep-Daitary Expressway, Paradeep Port, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Sunabeda. With his earlier industrial background (Kalinga Iron Works, Barbil, Orissa Textile Mills, Tube Company, Tile Factory, Refrigerators, Kalinga Airlines, etc.,) he could appreciate the relevance & necessity of utilization of Orissa's

abundant raw materials & resources to improve the economic standard of Orissa.

During the post-emergency period Biju Patnaik as the union minister of Steel & Mines came up with the revolutionary concept of port-based steel plants. By that time the reserves of metallurgical grade coal, so essential for Blast Furnace technology of reduction of iron ore, had been exhausted in India. It became necessary to import this from Australia & China to blend with indigenous coal to sustain iron production in India. With production of steel exceeding domestic consumption and liberalization of the industry it became necessary to explore export market. Biju Patnaik was so enamored with Paradeep Port that he desired to establish a port-based steel plant there. Instead of exporting raw ores of iron & chrome etc. it would be profitable to export value-added extracted products.

After due process of global tender M/s Davy Mackay of U.K. was selected for detailed project preparation. Later objections were raised against Paradeep as a cyclone prone locality, and the project was to be shifted inland to Daitary. Biju Patnaik had also desired shore-based steel plants to be located at Visakhapatnam & Kudremukh in west coast. Project costs for Daitary were increased by M/S Davy Mackay to a level that the project was abandoned. However, his plan for the one at Visakhapatnam was executed with assistance from Russia. The then political forces also converged including pressure from the then President N Sanjiv Reddy for the decision & implementation of the steel plant for Visakhapatnam.

Alternatives to coking coal for iron production were being pursued vigorously. Orissa has abundant reserves of non-coking coal. Presence of high-ash content in Orissa's coal reserves at Talcher & Ib valley was another deterrent. Technological innovations led to the Direct Reduction processes (Alice Chalmer, Midrex, Corex etc.), whereby non-coking, & high ash-containing coal can be utilized for producing sponge-iron as a feed for steel making. This appears to be a great opportunity for utilization of enormous deposits of high-grade iron ores & coal available in Orissa. Already Orissa ranks number one in the country in producing directly-reduced iron.



## The Iron Rush

There was almost an iron-rush in Orissa, compared to the Gold-Rush in California experienced in early stage of American history. The Tatas evinced keen interest in establishing a port-based 10 MT capacity steel plant in the town of Gopalpur. Amidst much fanfare and withstanding agitation from the local residents thousands of acres of land were alienated to the Tatas. M/S Larsen & Toubro (L&T) also signed a memorandum of understanding for establishing a steel plant near Gopalpur. Simultaneously, there was a flood of aspirants (e.g. Jindals, Orind, MESCO, OSIL, NINL, etc., numbering about 12 parties with whom memorandum of understanding were signed by Orissa Government over the last decade) for acquiring land near Daitary-Dubury belt for establishing steel plants. After acquiring valuable land all the prospective steel plant giants backed out, except M/S Nilachal Ispat Nigam Ltd who have established and are operating a pig iron plant. Only a week ago M/s SMC Power Generation Ltd. has performed a Bhumi-puja for establishment of a 0.4MT capacity steel plant with a projected investment of Rs 4.55 crore at Hirma, Jharsuguda. The Tatas and M/s L&T were allotted as part of the MOU 3,924 & 1,152 hectares, respectively, of rich grade iron ore mines in Keonjhar & Mayurbhanj districts which they were not willing to surrender back to the state government after backing out of the projects. They went to the Central Industrial Tribunal & obtained a stay against the State Government's order of cancellation. The tribunal later on concurred with the rescinding of the allotment as ordered by the state government. Even now there are about 22 companies who have applied to the state government for establishing new steel plants. The government has constituted a committee to streamline the decision making in such cases. The applications of 10 steel projects with an estimated investment of Rs.44,000 crore are pending at different stages.

The spectacular success of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant is a tribute to the visionary Biju Patnaik. After 1990's India has been pursuing vigorously a mixed economy pattern in the area of iron & steel. Although in the early days of post-independence India was a vigorous advocate of state control in this basic sector (even the renowned private entrepreneurs M/S Birlas were not permitted to establish a steel plant), now nearly 50% of India's steel output of around 30 MT/annum arises from the private sector. M/s Tatas, Jindals, Lloyds, several secondary sector units utilizing electric furnace, induction furnace routes, the Ispat group, etc., are the notable contributors. The huge scale of financing now makes establishment of green-field integrated steel plants unworkable.

## Conclusion

At the dawn of independence India was producing annually around 1MT of steel, the same as China & Japan. Early planners had projected the output of steel by 2000 as 100 MT/annum. After 56 years we produce nearly 30 MT/annum with a per capita consumption of 29 kg. compared with world output of around 850 MT & average per capita consumption of 116 kg, China's production & per capita consumption of 135 MT & 140kg, respectively. Orissa with its rich reserves of raw materials, 500 km of coastline, and abundant water resources continues to be the proverbial land of poverty in plenty. Millions of tons of raw iron ore & high grade chrome ore, and coal are exported away from Orissa by road and railroad abroad and within the country which could be processed within the state for value addition and thereby the generation of employment & enhancing the quality of life of the Oriyas. The political leadership has other priorities and is ever-busy infighting. The development of the quality of life of the people is high in their propaganda, but farthest away from their agenda.

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*Lecture delivered in the session entitled " Orissa's Usable Past-Visions for the Future" during 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of Orissa Society of the Americas on July 4, 2003, at Princeton, USA.*

*Prof. Misra was the Director, Biju Patnaik National Steel Institute, Puri; Director, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, Bhubaneswar; Tata Chair Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur; Principal, National Institute of Technology, Rourkela; & Professor, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India*

# Importance of Earth Day

## Dr. Narayan Tripathy

Many people around the world celebrate Earth Day on or around April 22 each year. The first Earth Day was observed on April 22, 1970, and it has become an annual tradition since then. The purpose of the day is to pay attention to the earth and its many wonders and problems, some being created by human beings. Though Earth Day is celebrated only one day in a year, the idea behind the day is to observe and participate in basic principles of preserving the Environment. By preventing pollution before it is created, we can ensure a clean and safe environment for ourselves and our children.

I've put together a "To Do List" that parents can work with their children to make them understand the importance of environmental preservation.

### Home 'To Do's To Reduce Waste:

#### **Cut down on Junk Mail**

Write a standard letter to the following companies asking to be placed in their name removal list. Be sure to mention in the letter, "please cover all other names at this address." The following are a few of the top names – selling companies:

- 1) Mail Preference Service, DMA, PO Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008
- 2) Metromail Corp., List Maintenance, 901 West Bond, Lincoln, NE 68521
- 3) Database America, Compilation Dept., 100 Paragon Drive, Montvale, NJ 07645-4591

#### **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**

- Save energy and earth's resources by writing on both sides of the paper.
- Don't buy non-recyclable goods, if you can.
- Put cans, paper and other recyclable items in separate recycling bins.
- Sell or donate items rather than throwing them.
- Compost yard wastes and non-meat kitchen scraps for use as natural fertilizer. All organic fertilizers are preferred over chemical fertilizer.
- Pick up trash in your neighborhood / streets. Litter can be harmful to animals, and people, spoil how things look, and is the breeding place for insects and rodents (cockroaches, flies and rats.)
- Check with local schools, temples, churches and senior citizen complexes, if they will take grocery and shoe boxes, old office supplies, picture books, sewing scraps, and so forth, for craft projects.
- Reduce use of pesticides and fertilizers – both synthetic and natural.

- Donate used magazines to hospitals, doctor's offices, or other businesses with waiting rooms.

#### **Conserve Water**

- Take shorter showers
- Don't let the water run while washing dishes, shaving, or brushing your teeth.
- Use a trigger nozzle for washing your car.
- Monitor the amount of water from your automatic sprinkler system. Lawns only need one inch of water a week. Over watering can leach nutrients from the soil and may produce lawn diseases.
- Use mulch to cover garden / flower beds and under plants and shrubs to protect and improve the growing conditions. Mulch retains soil moisture thereby minimizing watering needs. Other advantage of mulch include: Controlling weeds by preventing weed seed germination; Stabilizing soil temperature by slowing the rate of cooling and heating; and adding nutrients to the soil.

#### **Save Energy**

- Insulate your hot water heater and hot water pipes.
- Turn off lights, computers, TV and other electronic appliances when you are not using them.
- Look for Energystar label when buying light bulbs / appliances etc. This label means that these products save energy and money because they run on less power.
- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs. They use 75% of the energy of a conventional incandescent bulb and last 8-10 times as long.
- Plant shade trees on the sunny side of the house.
- Reduce the use of oven, incandescent lights, and appliances that generate heat in the summer.
- Walk to a nearby friend's house, park, or store rather than drive the car.
- Caulk windows and doors. Prevent heated air from leaking out in the winter, and cooled air leaking in the summer.
- Keep wall and floor surfaces light. Light-colored wall and surface reflect light and reduce the need for excessive lighting.
- Use photocells to turn outside lights on and off at dusk and dawn.

By making an effort to use a few of these tips each day, there will form a habit of incorporating them into your life. Earth Day reminds us to be good stewards of the earth.

*Dr. Narayan Tripathy retired from General Motors Corporation, Detroit, MI as Manager of Environment and Energy. He resides in Norman, OK with his wife Sarala*



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# From the pens of Budding writers...







**"Self Portrait" by Rohini Rege, age 11, Houston, TX.**



**"Me" by Neha Satapathy, age 6, Austin, TX.**

# The In-betweener

## Atasi Satpathy

*All my life, I have been an “in-betweener.” The in-betweener is an all too common brand of person in America—a sort of misfit who belongs precisely in the middle of two cultural identities. In my case, I have always struggled between being Indian and being American.*

*Though I was born and raised in the United States, and have only seldom visited “the motherland,” there are certain facets of my life that clearly typify my life as an Indian existence. While my friends eat pasta or hot dogs for dinner, I have a freshly prepared meal of curry and basmati rice. While they struggle for a summer tan for three months, I sport a bronzed tone all year round. And while they attend small dinner parties or barbecues, I find myself playing the cymbals to the beat of a Hindi bhajan at a religious event.*

*There is something enlightening, however, about having relatives from India come to visit. Through the experience of living with my maternal grandparents for a number of months last year, I realized that all anybody ever wants is acceptance from the people they love, not that momentary rush of assimilating into a culture that deep down, they know doesn't define who they truly are.*

Upon first sight of my grandfather stepping through our garage door, I expected a bear hug, an expansive smile at least. Instead, in our native language, he said—

“Take my watch upstairs, will you? And that suitcase with the medicine—that goes upstairs, too.”

I faltered, and then did as my “Aja” said. This was not the greeting I had expected from a grandfather whom I hadn't seen in five years since I last visited India. However, I took Aja's remark optimistically, and saw it as an indicator of the comfort he felt with me. He and my grandma didn't feel like guests in our house; instead, they were merely settling into a new routine with family that just happened to live on a different continent.

Except this new routine was anything but normal for the sole reason that my brothers and I spoke very little Oriya, which is the language of our native state, Orissa. Hence my grandmother, especially, could barely communicate with us. My grandpa spoke English, but still, in an antiquated way.

This language barrier was particularly frustrating because they arrived during the summer of 2002, so I was at home with them all day while my parents and older brother were working. Conversation was awkward, as I had never needed to communicate with them without an older translator, like my mom, by my side.

Simple tasks like microwaving leftovers and putting in a movie became exhausting activities as we struggled to unite our different tongues.

As time went on, my grandparents and I found different ways to convey our emotions. Using hand gestures and a sort of garbled Oriya, I managed to speak with them, although most of my dignity vanished. Our adventures to communicate became something we looked forward to, challenges that would send us into fits of laughter.

The best times, though, were when we wouldn't need to get anything done at all, but would still attempt to talk to each other. My grandmother would brush my hair as I sat at her feet listening to my mother's childhood stories, and my grandpa would pretend to be preoccupied with a book, but would really be peering over the top at us with a grin on his face.

Slowly, my younger brother started to come down for these “conversations” as well, opting out of his routine Nintendo sessions to eagerly watch the happenings. One afternoon, he pulled out the chessboard and asked my grandpa, in English, if he wanted to play. Aja replied in his thickly accented British English, “Come! Sit! We'll play.” As my brother looked at me questioningly for an interpretation, I realized that I had become the translator.



The months my grandparents spent with us taught me that any barrier, no matter how exasperating, can be crossed. At 16, I tackled a new language with vigor just to connect with my

grandparents. And it was so worth it: when they boarded the plane in February to return to India, I received a fierce bear hug from my Aja.

*Atasi is a senior at Rock Bridge High School, and will attend the University of Michigan in the fall. She enjoys performing all kinds of dance, but she has been training in this South Indian style, "Bharatnatyam," for 11 years. She is also the Chief Editor of "The Rock", the monthly newspaper of the Rock Bridge High School.*

*All the wonderful things in life are so simple that one is not aware of their wonder until they are beyond touch. - Frances Gunther*



## The Unknown

### Suchi Pahi

What is love?  
Which sight can not find,  
Nor fingers touch,  
Silence so clear, that ears may not perceive?

It is the beat of the heart  
In harmony,  
A sweet sonorous song,  
The unison of the soul with Me  
A pact witnessed by eternity  
A tie no power can touch.  
Such is love.

All encompassing devotion  
At My Lotus feet  
Prayer from deep within  
To Me,  
The tranquil infinity

**God.**

*Suchi Pahi, Grade 10, Kingwood High School,  
Greater Houston, Texas*

## Anger

### Shree Lekha Panda

**I**t howls and it bites,  
It screams and hits,  
It terrorizes everything.

Anger. It does this.  
Like a fierce tornado  
Getting ready to destroy.

The tornado rips apart  
The child's favorite tree,  
The tree he once lovingly climbed.

The tornado demolishes  
The poor farmer's farmhouse,  
The one he worked hard to get.

And all that the tornado does  
Is laugh with satisfaction,  
The bitter-sweet joy of destroying.

Anger is the tool of destruction  
Which must be stopped  
Before it destroys everything.

*Shree Lekha is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and lives in San Antonio, TX. This poem was selected as the best in her English class.*

# Bhartanatyam Dance: A Young Dancer's Perspective

## Abritee Dhal

Bhartanatyam is India's richest and oldest classical dance, with its roots in Tamilnadu nearly 3000 years ago. Over the years it has become a very popular dance across India and abroad. Like the Odissi dance of Orissa, Bhartanatyam is a dance dedicated to the God. According to legends, Bhartanatyam was composed by Lord Brahma. All gods and goddesses requested Lord Brahma to create another Veda, which would be simple for a common person to understand. Accordingly, Lord Brahma created the Natyaveda (the fifth Veda). He created this Veda by taking some of the key elements from other four Vedas. Thus, he took pathya (words) from the Rigveda, abhinaya (gesture) from the Yajurveda, geet (music and chant) from the Samaveda, and rasa (sentiment and emotional element) from the Atharvaveda, and created the new Natyaveda. After the Veda was created, Lord Brahma gave this document to a sage named Bharta. He directed the sage to take this Veda to the earth, and teach to the human beings. Following Lord Brahma's advice, sage Bharta wrote the Natyashastra (Science of Dramaturgy). The Natyashastra is a comprehensive compilation of the science and technique of Indian drama, dance, and music.

There is another story that says Goddess Parvati taught this dance to the Demon Bansa's daughter, Usha. Subsequently, Usha taught the dance to the Gopis of Dwaraka. This is how the Bhartnatyam was created and introduced to the mankind.

According to the Hindu mythology, Lord Shiva is the supreme lord of dance. The dance performed by the Lord Shiva is known as Tandava, which depicts the violent character of the Lord. When the Tandava is performed with joy it is called Ananda Tandava and when it is performed in a violent mood it is called Rudra Tandava. There are seven types of Tandavas. The feminine version of the Tandava is called Lasya. It is supposed to have been created by Goddess Parvati, the wife of Lord Shiva. The movements in Lasya are graceful and gentle.

There are two types of Lasya: Jarita Lasya and Yauvaka Lasya.

In the olden days, Bhartanatyam was performed mostly by female artists in the temple. These artists were called Devadasis. The devadasis were great artists who sang, danced, and played many instruments. Following the disappearance of devadasis from the society, the dance was performed in royal courts of kings and emperors. These dancers were called Rajanartakis, who performed in the royal courts to get food and shelter.

Towards the second half of 19th century, Bhartanatyam was revitalized by the relentless efforts of four talented brothers, known as the Tanjore Quartet. These four brothers created all the basic dance movements of pure dance into a progressive order (called Adavu chapters), which become the basis of modern day Bhartanatyam dance. Until today, Adavu chapters created by Tanjore Quartet form the basis of all Bhartanatyam dances. The four brothers also composed music that is specific for this dance. Even today the Songs are heard, and danced too. One of most popular Adavu form is called Ati Mohan (passionate love for the God) that many dancers learn and practice today.

Some of the stalwarts of the 20th century Bhartanatyam are legendary Udayshankar, Rukminidevi, and Balaswarswathi. Their efforts to revive and popularize Bhartanatyam are all well-known.

In summary, Bhartnatyam has gone through a lot of changes and modifications throughout its history. It has deep roots into the religious heritage of India. I have been learning Bhartnatyam since I was six years old. I continue to learn this dance with lots of passion, as it allows me to express myself. As a child born to parents of Indian (and Oriya) origin, it has enabled me to find a better connection to my Indian heritage. It has taught me a lot of things about India and its history. I feel fortunate



enough to experience this dance from the closest corner.

*Abritee Dhal attends Westford Academy, where she is a freshman. She has completed her Arangetram (the form graduation) in Bharatanatyam. She has given her dance performances in a number of cultural programs in the USA.*

## Inside a Book

**Rutuparna Sarangi** ( 8th grade), Old Bridge , New Jersey

When I open a book  
A new world blooms in front of me  
With mighty sword fights and rescued lives  
And endless journeys across the sea.

Whisked away into the depths of letters  
Imagination takes its toll  
Swirling in the story woven  
In the author's spider web I stroll.

Submerged inside the plot's sea  
Going places without leaving home  
Meeting strangers along the way  
Touring places unknown.

Mystery and suspense  
Cast a shadow of foreboding  
Clawing through the information  
I try to find answers through decoding.

Gothic and horror  
Give me the thrill of roller coasters  
Frankenstein and Mr. Hyde  
Of which the authors are craft masters.

Adventure and romance  
Have a mind of their own  
Their twists and turns have me page turning  
Into its world I will always have flown.

Nonfiction and myths  
Keep things lively  
From Anne Frank to Odin and Thor  
They too add exclusively.

Science fiction and other fantasy  
Tell of what the future stores in its holds  
below  
Dreaming up endless possibilities  
The ideas like a river will always flow.

Closing a book  
I land into reality  
Wondering when I can again  
Plunge into the novel world for eternity.



## Two for price of one

Pratik Dash

Wilson took a breath and sighed. Although he couldn't see, he knew that there was no danger around. The huge cloud of dust had settled on his camp, but he knew that there was nothing wrong. Usually, when something was wrong, everyone seemed tense, but most of his comrades were playing poker. Obviously there was nothing to bet. No one took risk in this business. Risk usually meant death in battle. Death in battle usually meant psychological damage and a suicide. Two lives for the price of one. The Americans had an advantage in weapons, but the Iraqis could care less for death. They thought it was an honor to die for their country just like the Americans, but it became too much of an honor when they would strap bombs to themselves or their cars, and try to kill an American soldier with him, or her for that matter, thought Wilson. Women were beginning to fight as well. These American devils, who were blamed for not being able to keep the peace, needed to die in these Muslims minds.

Wilson never understood the Muslim beliefs, but he did understand if they accepted him or not. Lately, when their tanks would ride the streets, kids would stop all their games in order to begin a new one. They would pick up stones and throw them at the soldiers with all their might. When one child struck their target, he would be commended by his friends and his parents.

Wilson was eighteen. He knew his parents were at home in El Paso, Texas, sitting on their ranch. Dad may be riding his horse, while Mom was sewing. When he ate, he knew just where to look to see his younger brother, Max, stick a pea up his nose. Even the memory of his annoying brother brought tears to his eyes, but he could not cry. He could not show weakness. Not in front of the enemy or his comrades. Showing weakness meant death. Some Iraqi may be sitting behind their tent waiting to kill the weakest soldier. Wilson took precaution immediately. He ran back and checked the tent and saw nothing. Perhaps all was well, he thought. Plus,

the weather was clearing up a bit. He might actually breathe pure oxygen for once.

At that moment he heard a series of gunshots. The rounds were fast, and apparently accurate. He looked around the tent and saw half his fellow soldiers hit the ground and crawl to their weapons. He ran back behind the tent and grabbed his own gun. He thought to himself, "It's time to kill."

But his drive was immediately stopped when he looked at his enemy. His adversary was a young boy at the age of twelve, but he held a machine gun and fired round after round at the American soldiers. He stood stunned and watched his friends get massacred. He didn't know what to do, until he saw his commander go down as well. He pulled his weapon level with the boy's head, and without any hesitation, pulled the trigger. The boy fell like a brick. It had lasted less than a minute, but the results were disastrous. As Wilson looked over his own camp, he saw that two of the men were dead and five were injured. He did not scream in fury, but stood and looked outside again, as if he were a scout on the look out for trouble.

Indeed, what he found was troubling, for over the body of a dead boy, stood two parents, a mother and a father, who wept. They screamed, and their faces filled with tears, cursed the Americans who killed their son. Wilson stood and imagined that he was the Iraqi boy. "Well boy," he thought, "You achieved your goal. You killed two of the best fighters of the country and weakened U.S. That takes talent." But he thought again, and imagined that it was his parents screaming over his body. Wilson could not stand the insanity of it any longer. He put the gun to his head and pulled the trigger.

Jones, a fellow soldier, saw Wilson fall to the ground. He never made a move to stop Wilson. The man was bound to kill himself, and there was no stopping him. After Wilson's body hit the ground he said, "Damn Iraqis. They're



picking us apart." Another soldier looked at two for the price of one." Wilson and said, "Two for the price of one, man,

*Pratik Dash is sophomore at Franklin High School in Franklin, TN. He is the son of Prabir and Prajesh Nandini Dash.*

## Heartwood

Ankita Mohanty

*-the wood in the center of a tree trunk*

Each tree has an unfinished grace refined in its own way. It is always searching for the light of something unknown to human kind in a form of pure simplicity. The wind binds and bends the tree; what power. This tree of innocence becomes a complicated puzzle with no solution. The answer is not meant for us; we do not have the right to this sacred strength. Look at her reach for the sky-toward the heavens. Lord, she is calling; can you feel her majesty and need? Do not cut her down. She will feel the pain long after-right to her heartwood.

Look at all the colors  
the colors in the sky  
colors throughout  
earth and atmosphere  
Bubbles floating 'round  
Orissa  
Humidity closing in on  
you  
Sticky sticky  
Touch her hands  
A beggar is God's child  
just like you and me  
A servant is loved by God  
please remember  
feel her love...  
see her beyond that body  
A blur  
Nirvana  
water color  
dripping in ecstasy  
shh...  
gushing into sheer  
Nothing  
Everything  
you are whole now  
This burden is lost  
Never to be found again  
My ears  
My eyes  
this body that I lie within  
Are cleansed  
finally

*love*  
it comes so quickly  
that I am overwhelmed  
Such love  
from all around  
a million relatives  
Strangers in the street  
all brothers  
all sisters  
Like God meant it to  
be  
So let it be...  
Mother Earth  
holds the two places  
closest to my heart  
The soil is the same  
yet so different  
Orissa's soil  
*mati*  
holds  
Culture  
Tradition  
Respect  
Bonds with family  
True, faithful love  
America's soil  
*dirt*  
holds  
Independence  
Equality  
Wealth  
Justice

Soil, earth  
so different  
yet held by the  
same Mother  
Looked down upon from the  
same heaven  
that surrounds us  
all  
We all look up at the same night  
sky  
We all feel the same sun's rays  
and are loved by the same  
God

I see the women  
in the fields  
on the village side  
Clean Clean  
Splish Splash  
Are you takin' a bath?  
*no no beta*  
*Saris*  
of infinite colors  
Adorn the  
rippling water  
blow in the breeze  
Embellish these women's  
tired eyes  
colorful cotton  
100%  
made in India  
Directions for washing-

Throw onto water's surface  
Sun-dry

"Isn't it fun, momma? To get wet  
and  
have those colors in your eyes..."  
"No, love, not everyday."

Modern India  
Cell phones  
Cars  
Buildings  
Village Side  
Poverty  
in scattered places  
Look into his eyes  
hunger  
need  
lack of hope and light  
a want of love  
What can I do but  
put into his begging hands  
and begging eyes  
everything I've got?  
Here I live in this  
wealthy country

Deeply blessed  
infinitely grateful  
Will I ever truly realize that  
God has given me too much?  
Always need of more...  
until I gaze into a beggar's  
soul  
The dust in his wrinkles  
and clouded eyes  
Lord, give them hope  
help them find their strength  
to move on in their lives  
Sweet Mother  
do not soil and burn  
their blistered feet  
  
Knock knock  
on your door  
Never a  
"Who are you?"  
or "Did you forget something?"  
Just a  
"Please come, share this  
simple meal with us."  
Come come come inside love

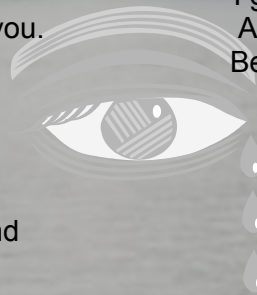
No matter  
Whether it is just  
rice and daal  
or a gourmet meal  
  
It is this love that  
holds India together  
despite its poverty and pollution  
She stands in  
Grace and Beauty  
She has an ancient past  
The oldest tree of all  
will triumph from  
beginning to end  
flying with her  
wings of wisdom.  
Fly to the sky  
but take your people  
with you  
In your heartwood  
we live  
Secure  
until the next journey  
begins.

*Ankita is the daughter of Dillip and Rita Mohanty. She lives in Mt. Pleasant, MI, and is 15 years old.*

## Without You

Sunita (Lily) Padhi

Clouds are forming in the sky,  
I feel like I could lie down and cry.  
I miss all the things we used to do,  
But knowing that I can't  
Makes me realize how much I loved you.  
Family reunions, without you,  
Won't be the same.  
I miss you so much.  
This pain will only stop with time.  
You had such a wonderful life,  
A self-made man, generous and kind  
You never stopped working



In spite of pain people put you through.  
When it rains and gets cloudy  
I only think of you.  
I get a picture of you and sit on my bed,  
And my thoughts would only be of you.  
Because, in my heart, you are not dead.  
Our whole family misses you,  
And I do too.  
Inevitable that one day  
When I know  
I shall be reunited with  
You!

*Sunita, daughter of Tapan and Mani Padhi, is in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. She attends Jasper High School at Plano, Texas. This poem is dedicated to her Grandfather who recently passed away.*



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## In the Dark

### Ankita Khandai

The day was like any other Sunday morning. Only it wasn't. On March 17, 2003, my life changed forever, and I didn't even know what had happened until several hours later.

That morning my mom woke me up, bright and early. Actually, it wasn't really bright. The sky was cloudy, and an unusual fog was lingering across the field behind our house. It was around 7:00 AM, way too early to be woken up at on a weekend, in my opinion. I resisted my mom's efforts to get me up for a few minutes, then I resigned and half opened my eyes.

"Ankita," she whispered, "Daddy isn't feeling well, and so I'm going to take him to the hospital right now."

Even through half closed eyes I could see a strained and worried look on my mom's face. I nodded to show her that I heard what she had said, and she kissed me on my forehead and left.

I woke up about 30 minutes after my parents had left. At first I was confused about how no one was at home. Then I remembered. My mom and dad were in the hospital, and my brother was in Springfield for a club called Youth and Government. When I had finally gathered my thoughts I went to my bathroom to brush my teeth and hair. Obviously I was still sleepy because I was trying to comb my hair with my toothbrush.

After I had brushed the right parts of my body with the right things, I went back to my room to change. I could tell it was a little chilly outside so I put on jeans and a blue T-shirt. After I dressed, I went downstairs and ate waffles with maple syrup and drank orange juice for breakfast. Right when I was eating, my mom called from the hospital. I picked up the phone, trying not to get too much maple syrup on it.

"Hello?" I asked.

"Hello, Ankita? Okay, I called Seetal Nani and Jyoti, they're going to come by, so you won't be alone. They'll be there in about 30 minutes, so get ready," my mom said.

"Okay, bye," I replied, hanging up.

I was very excited at that point. Jyoti and Seetal Nani ('nani' means 'older sister' in Oriya so we call Seetal, 'Seetal Nani') have known me since I was born, and Jyoti was one of my best friends. Going over to their house and playing with Jyoti, Seetal Nani, and Samir (their 9 year old brother) was always fun. I hurriedly finished my breakfast, and got ready for their arrival.

Ding-dong; the doorbell rang. I ran from my kitchen to answer it. I opened one of my two huge white glass double doors, and greeted Seetal Nani and Jyoti.

"Hey!" I exclaimed.

"Hey, Ankita," they replied.

They were really quiet for some reason, which was unusual for them, but I didn't ask them about it. We all herded into my family room and sat on our couch. There was tension in the air for some reason, so no one talked. I picked at the threads on my couch and listened to the annoying sounds of the geese behind our house, and the clock in the kitchen. Normally that clock doesn't sound that loud, but in the presence of our pin drop silence, it was deafening. Finally the silence was broken.

"That clock is so freaking loud!" Seetal Nani exclaimed.

After that unorthodox and random remark, all the tension in the room vanished. Jyoti and I started laughing at Seetal Nani, but I had to agree with her. (Sadly, we still haven't moved that pesky clock from our kitchen.)

When our laughing fit finally ended, Jyoti suggested that we go to her house because we had nothing to do. Seetal Nani and I agreed enthusiastically, and so we got up and got ready to leave. When all of us were ready, we left my house in Jyoti's golden van.

Jyoti and Seetal Nani, along with their mom, their dad and their little brother Samir, live in Naperville, so it took us about 30 minutes to get to their house. When we got to their house we entered through the garage and went into their kitchen. There I was greeted by Samir and Ratna Auntie (their mother). Ratna Auntie, being



the gracious host that she is, asked me if I had had breakfast already. I replied that I had, and that I wasn't hungry. Jyoti then beckoned me from her family room, and I ran to join her.

The rest of the day passed by in a blur; I'd never had so much fun in one day! Jyoti, Seetal Nani, Samir and I did various things to keep us amused. We watched Tom and Jerry, as it was Seetal Nani's favorite show, then we played table tennis. To no surprise my team lost, as I am inexperienced (to put it nicely) when it comes to ping-pong.

"Don't feel bad," Jyoti consoled. "I was horrible at ping-pong when I started too, you'll get better."

"When you started did you hit the ball repeatedly at other peoples' heads?" I argued coldly, reminding her of the incidents when I indeed, hit the ball at Seetal Nani's and Samir's heads.

"Um.... no...." Jyoti trailed off.

We then went outside to play, which was, by far, a much safer way to have fun. It had warmed up considerably since that morning so Seetal Nani, Jyoti, Samir and I played basketball for a bit.

Before long it was lunchtime, a time of blissful happiness. Ratna Auntie made pasta, while Jyoti and I helped prepare a salad. When everything was ready we all ate at their rectangular dining table in their kitchen. It took us about 30 minutes to eat, but most of the time everyone else was waiting for me to finish because I was such a slow eater.

When we were cleaning up the table after lunch, Ratna Auntie asked Seetal Nani if she could wash their van.

"Mom," Seetal complained. "Do I have to?"

"Yes, you do," she replied. "It's extremely dirty and besides, it's really nice outside, so unless you want to wash it when it's 60 degrees out, I suggest you do it now, when it's a lot warmer."

"Jyoti and I can help," I chipped in, even though I wasn't a part of the conversation.

"Please help me," Seetal Nani begged.

"Sure, we'll do it..." I shrugged.

"ANKITA KHANDAI!"

"Whoops, sorry," I apologized, grinning at my now sodden best friend.

"I'm going to kill you!" she replied hotly, obviously not amused.

We were hosing down the van when I 'accidentally' aimed the hose at Jyoti and got her soaking wet. Jyoti then started laughing and grabbed the other hose and aimed it at me. When we were both properly wet, we turned on Seetal Nani and Samir and made them our victims.

Soon the van had been restored to its original golden shine, and we were all soaked to the bone. We were happy, though, because we all had just participated in one of the biggest water wars in our lives.

When we were all dried off and warm (the water from the hose was ice cold, so Seetal Nani had to bring boiling hot water from inside to make it even the least bit bearable) we settled down in Jyoti's family room and watched the Disney channel. Halfway through Boy Meets World, my mom called.

"Hello, Anku?" my mom murmured. "Hey, I'm coming to pick you up now, okay?" (Anku is one of my family's nicknames for me.)

Her voice quivered, and I could tell she had been crying before. I had never seen my mother cry so I was extremely worried about what was going on.

"Okay, sure, but mom what's wrong?" I blurted out over the phone.

"Nothing, Ankita, nothing," she coaxed, her voice still trembling. "I'll be there soon. I love you."

"Love you too," I answered, not at all satisfied by her explanation.

"Do either of you know what's going on?" I demanded, looking at Seetal Nani and Jyoti.

"No, no, we know nothing," they both chorused, a little too quickly.

"Sure..." I replied.

And so I waited for my mom to arrive.

She arrived at Jyoti's house in our golden Camry around 7:00, just as the sun was beginning to set. She acted all happy and peppy, as if nothing was wrong, but I knew better.

Ratna Auntie invited my mom into her house and made tea. In the OSA (Oriya Society of the Americas) making tea is a standard Oriya tradition that shows hospitality.

Every good Oriya has to do it.

While my mom and Ratna Auntie drank tea and talked, Jyoti, Seetal Nani and I proceeded upstairs to Jyoti's and Seetal Nani's

room. There we surfed the Internet, talked, and listened to 103.5 Kiss FM.

About 30 minutes and 10 songs later my mom called me down.

"Let's go Ankita," she shouted up to me.

"Coming mom," I yelled down, trying to be heard over 50 Cent's In Da Club, which was being blared out of Jyoti's boom box.

Seetal Nani turned off the boom box, just as the song ended and we all hurried downstairs. My mom and I thanked Jyoti's family on the way out the door as we said good-bye.

"See you soon, Jyots!" I called back to them.

"See you," she grinned.

Then my mom and I got into our car, and with one last wave to Jyoti's family, we drove home.

When I got to my house there were a lot of 'aunties' there. (Auntie is the term for adult women, usually moms, in the Oriya society.) I had absolutely no idea why they were there, and no one would tell me. I was completely in the dark.

Ticked off that no one would tell me what happened, I went upstairs to finish my math homework that I had neglected. I was halfway through when I heard the doorbell ring. My brother was back from Springfield! I bolted out of my room and started running down the stairs.

"BHAII, YOU'RE BACK!!!!" I screamed at the top of my lungs, ecstatic that my brother was home.

"Hey, Ankita. Do you know what happened?" he said in a serious, dead voice that wasn't his own.

"No, no one would tell me. What happened?" I exclaimed.

He took a deep breath.

"Ankita, Dad had a heart attack."

Right then I could have sworn time stood still.

"What?" I spluttered, stunned by this sudden and awful news.

"He had it this morning," my brother went on. "But don't worry, he's all right now."

"When do we see him?" I asked, frozen on the staircase, gripping the railing for support.

"We can go now, if you want," he offered.

"Let's go," I replied, trying to stay calm, reminding myself that he was all right now.

"Okay..."

One year later we're still feeling the effects of my dad's heart attack. My dad has to take seven different medicines a day, four in the morning, two after dinner, and another one at bedtime. Our entire diet has changed too. We have to be careful about how much oil, fat and sugar are in the foods we eat, and at restaurants we always have to order special dishes made with little oil. My dad also has to exercise every-day, otherwise there's a chance he'll have another heart attack.

My family's entire lifestyle has changed, but there are things that we all have learned from this experience. The most important thing I learned was to never, ever take anything for granted; you never know when it could be taken away.

---

*Ankita Khandai is 11 years old, and lives in Aurora, Illinois, as part of the OSA Chicago chapter. She is a sixth-grader at Granger Middle School. This is an article about a very important day in her life, and how she was kept in the dark for a long time about an important truth*





# Unbroken Threads

*Sukanya Misra*

The bright strings of yarn catch my eye again. As I clutch the miniature rug knitted for a doll, I am amazed at the comfort that can be derived from such a seemingly random object. It always stays in my purse, for I gain courage remembering the arthritic hands that knitted it. Those all-embracing hands belonged to my maternal grandmother – Ayee, as I called her. Her smiling face and the rhythmic "click-clack" of her knitting needles are indelibly etched upon my memory.

Ayee was the tiniest wisp of a woman, so delicate that no one upon first seeing her would have suspected the indomitable spirit that lay behind her frail exterior. She grew up in British dominated India, and participated in her country's struggle for freedom. Her family hid injured freedom fighters from British authorities. Her brother was thrown in jail frequently by the British, and the burden of running the household was left to Ayee, his youngest and only unmarried sister. At a time when women from good families did not study beyond school, and were not expected to work, Ayee got a Master's degree in Philosophy, and became a professor. She managed to juggle her career with raising her children and her late brother's children. My grandfather, a freedom fighter, eminent politician and brilliant lawyer was difficult to live with - he had a temper, traveled frequently because of his career, and filled the house with characters both interesting and strange. Ayee took all this in her stride.

My favorite picture of my grandparents still sits on my nightstand. They are next to each other, both smiling and happy; he radiates charisma and confidence, while she sits a little in the shadow, just content to be there, quietly emanating strength.

I was her oldest granddaughter, and consequently the most pampered during those annual trips to India. As I grew older, she became my confidant; we spent hours in the

drawing room of my grandfather's house in India, where she knitted, amused me with droll stories of my mother's childhood, and listened patiently to my teenage woes. She also told me stories about the great women of Indian history – not of the saintly and self-effacing ones, but of the courageous and the brave. Every year, her knitting grew a little slower – the toll of severe arthritis – but she never complained nor did she stop knitting.

A few days after my 15th birthday, my Ayee suffered a stroke. I rushed to India, where she was lying in a semi-comatose state. Her eyes moved across my face, but there was no sign of recognition, no joyous cry for her oldest granddaughter. She fought hard, but only partially recovered. We still had a few confidential chats – but her hands lay idle.

The day she died was dismal and drab; I was left numb by the news. She had knitted a blanket of security around me that quickly unraveled after her death, and I felt exposed and vulnerable. I went through the rituals of normalcy while I plunged myself in an abyss of despair; I stopped caring about school, my friends, and everything else. Perhaps sharing my grief might have alleviated it a little, but it felt too sacred to share.

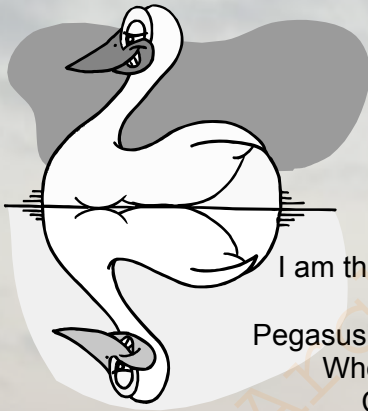
A year after her death, I came across a tiny rug in a corner of my room - the last thing she ever knitted. The tears that I had suppressed for so long flowed out. Gazing at the vivid threads woven around each other, I realized that her greatest legacy to me was the fighting spirit that had characterized her. She would have hated the way I was moping. Once I had asked her how she managed to absorb so many tragedies in her life and still function. She had replied, "I cried and then moved on – I had to."

Accepting her death was a struggle for me; the concept that life is transient is exceedingly difficult for a teenager to grasp. But be-

cause life is so fleeting, I want to make it as meaningful as possible for myself and everyone around me. Ayee continues to inspire me, even after her death.

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*Sukanya is a freshman, majoring in Business and History, at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the daughter of Lalatendu and Tapasi Misra of San Antonio, Texas. Her "Ayee," Uma Misra, taught in S.B. Women's college, Cuttack, for many years, and was the principal of Puri and Sambalpur Women's colleges. She succumbed to multiple strokes in 2000.*



## Inside of Me

Ankita Patro

I am the dulcet, dreamy dancer, whose evanescent rhythms  
Brush one's ears and crawl away to heaven.  
Pegasus's crystal wings unveil the transparent heart of the rider  
Who mirrors her parent's teachings and drums at the  
Clowns to cruise to another galaxy far from the  
Crabapple constantly cooling with a chromatic cluster of  
Flowers falling from fountains suspended in midair.

I am a lunatic with scissors  
Trying to shape human nature by trimming dust from my eyes.  
Taj Mahal weaves inside my heart as  
Anger and frustration sometimes try to peak through.  
Sunshine cracks situate throughout a  
Indigo ocean full of life  
Scurry to my fingertips  
Where there is longevity as a star.

I am a chocolate dripping from chins  
Liked by many for what taste I am  
(not my skin).

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*Ankita, age 13, is the daughter of Loknath & Sujata Patro, lives in Dallas, TX. This poem came second in the 33rd Annual Collin County Poetry Contest, participated by several middle schoolers.*



## The Ring

### Ananya Mishra

Shining, it sits on the table.  
Gleaming, it lights the darkest of nights.  
Its purpose is not to bring happiness to the world,  
But to divide, destruct, and bring greed into our souls.

We all long for this small gold thing.  
Its powers are hypnotic, this little gold ring.  
Soon, we are all quarreling over unimportant trifles;  
"What has it done?" a wise one cries.

Then the wise one takes the ring  
And throws it in the fire, destroying its strength.  
The people of the world are once more happy,  
Peace is the factor that, once again, reigns.

So what is the lesson we all should learn?  
True wealth is a thing that should only be earned.  
Until, once more, a foolish one finds  
A little thing that begins the cycle again.

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*Ananya, daughter of Snigdha and Srikanta Mishra, attends the 6th Grade Talented and Gifted (TAG) program at Deerpark Middle School in Austin, TX. She loves to read and write, and is also taking Hindustani Classical Music, piano and Bharatanatyam lessons. This poem was inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" epic trilogy*



## Seashell

### Arpita Mohanty

Bare-footed you walk  
Down the wet sand  
Looking down at the  
Roaring water below  
You hear it calling you  
To enter it  
Your feet are glued to the ground  
They will not move  
Suddenly with a burst of energy  
You run to the water  
And feel the wetness  
All over you  
All the pain and tiredness is gone  
You feel light and powerful  
Like nothing can stop you  
You feel like a child  
Running to the sea

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*Arpita Mohanty is the daughter of Dillip and Rita Mohanty who live in Mt. Pleasant, MI. She is in sixth grade, and 12 years old.*

## My Math Poem

### Animesh Mahapatra

I like math  
It is the right path,  
I like addition  
It helps me to solve solution,  
I like subtraction  
It is like solving a mission,  
I like multiplication  
It is like going inside to math ocean,  
I like division  
It gives me a good vision.

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*Animesh Mahapatra, age 7 is in the second grade. He lives in Huntville, AL with his parents Dr. Dibyajiban and Mrs. Usharani Mahapatra*

## Writing a masterpiece

### Bagmi Das

This year, as every year before, my mother came to me with the same question, "What will you send to the OSA journal?"

This year, as every year before, I replied "A poem."

This year, unlike every year before, my mother replied, "No."

In all honesty, I was appalled. Did my mother really think of me as that bad of a poet? Every year up till now, I had rummaged through my selection of random poems I wrote and picked out one that was "OSA appropriate" for her to send in. Often they are about critical issues or philosophical. I was all set for my mother's inevitable challenge to find a poem visualizing that it's for the writing contest and OSA Souvenir. (Even if there may not be any contest, for quality purposes my mother always emphasizes everything mathematically: "Let us assume there is a contest, and your entry will be judged accordingly"). This year's poem was entitled "An Angel," which I had written for my mother on Mother's Day:

An Angel:  
someone who laughs at your joy  
cries with your pain

An angel:  
someone who sacrifices herself  
for only your gain

An Angel:  
someone who is always there  
no matter how much it hurts

An angel:  
someone who feeds you  
in hunger and thirst

An angel:  
someone who gives you  
knowledge and experience

An angel:  
someone who knows right and wrong  
and helps you when you are tense

An angel:  
someone I love and cherish,  
for an angel could only be my mother.

As all of my OSA poems, it was flowery and sweet, and my mom truly liked it. There was no wit or sarcasm, because for some reason, the Oriyas favor the beautiful over the creative. Nor was there any morbid subject matter, because nobody enjoys reading depressing poetry. So when my mother gently refused my submission, it created fear and doubt within me. Was the poem that horrible?

She smiled and assured me that it had nothing to do with my abilities. She replied that people often would rather hear poems. For their reading pleasure, they want stories. She did not want people to skip over my entry during their customary skim through the OSA journal. Aware of the short attention span of most Oriyas, she explained that she wanted me to write a story. I simply nodded my head and pulled out a romantic setting I had written for my English class about a cliff side over looking the sea. I changed the ending to make it seem happier. Pointedly she asked me, "Where is the plot?"

I hurriedly searched for one but my hunt proved fruitless. Nevertheless, I was determined to submit an article to OSA. My mother spoke to my disadvantage. Not only did my entry need to be a short story with a plot, but it also had something to do with being Oriya, as well. Saying this was easier than the actual task.

My mother did her best to aid me in my work. She suggested repeated topics: *samosas* in Kuakhia, saying good-bye to my family last year, getting ready for events like prom in an Oriya household. However, I had my excuses for each. The *samosas* reminded me of one of last



year's entries, "Sweet Guavas." Saying bye seemed too cliché. Getting ready for prom seemed personal. So I was left uninspired, barely motivated, stressed, and overall unhappy.

"What am I to do?" I wasted large amounts of time when I should have been studying to answer my own question. I tried repeatedly to write stories, but all ended up as failures. For one of them, I had a perfect ending in mind- "I added a little masala to my mashed potatoes and it finally tasted right." Unfortunately, I had no beginning or middle to compliment my end. Another pathetic attempt was one that I wrote describing my feelings of anger and desire

when my father and two sisters left for India. For this one I had a beginning, middle, and no end. Not to mention the lack of plot. One I actually started while sitting on my dance teacher's deck during a thunderstorm. I could not get past the setting. Alas, I resigned from this task and decided that if a topic and story came to me, I would write it. In my visualization, I also assured myself that this "masterpiece" would win the story-writing contest. I could be right or wrong. The day that the entry was due- it hit me. "Why not write about writing an entry?" I had no negative response to that suggestion, so I carried through on that decision. As you may have guessed, this is the result of my toil.

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*Bagmi Das is a sixteen-year old eleventh grader AP student in Hammond High School, Columbia. She is the daughter of Naresh and Bigyani Das. Bagmi's hobbies include reading, writing, dancing, singing, playing violin, watching Hindi movies and traveling.*

## Yesterday, today, and tomorrow

**Rohini Rege, Age 11**

Yesterday was...

Carefree, spare time, fairy tales,  
Taking restful naps in the afternoon,  
Drawing stick figures and trees without branches,  
Wishing to be all grown up and strong.

Today is...

School dances, more homework, lap swimming,  
Sleepovers where you stay up all night,  
Getting braces to straighten your teeth,  
Wishing everyday that you finished all of your homework.

Tomorrow may be...

Stressful days, driving, sleepless nights,  
Working shifts all day with few breaks,  
Following my dreams to become what I hope to be,  
Wishing to be a little girl again.

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*Rohini Rege is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at T.H. Rogers middle school in Houston, Texas. Her hobbies include playing the piano, learning Indian classical dance and music, art, reading, and listening to the radio.*

## Illusions and A Cricket Ball

Chandan Khandai

Growing up in America, I had always found comfort in my Indian heritage. I reveled in my exotic background- dressing in traditional Indian outfits to school, celebrating holidays like *Holi* and *Diwali*, and eating Indian food for dinner every night. I went to a Hindu religious school, and took part in my cultural society. By all appearances I was an Indian, and proud of it. Thus, over time my pride deceived me into believing I was purely Indian- there was no hyphen in my identity. So when my mother decided to visit India last summer, I seized upon the chance to go with her. I would go back "home," reconnect with my people, and finally live like the Indian I believed I was. I would not only be visiting my relatives, but revisiting myself.

Granted, I had not been back for six years. But India was timeless- what could have changed? And as I continued on the car-trip, my homeland still was the same: cows roaming the streets, people hanging laundry rooftop to rooftop, the jungle competing with temples for the skyline. I was different, however- I couldn't perceive anything the same way. Though street vendors were in plenty, there were no malls; the oppressive heat and humidity couldn't compete with snow. Ashamed of seeming American with such observations, I kept within my Discman's headphones, afraid to talk or wave. But looking around at a sea of people, my people, I felt no connection. I have felt more at home singing in a Christian gospel choir, or ringing bells for charity, than I felt then, surrounded by the very people I was genetically and culturally closest to.

Finally, we reached the house of my father's family in Cuttack, the house I was born in. Here, I resolved to finally affirm my Indian roots. So when my *bhais* (male cousins) suggested a friendly game of cricket, I naturally accepted.

Now, I would show both my masculinity and my nationality. But even at this, the national pastime of India, I found only embarrassment and difference. I found myself shouting, "It's not 'balling,' it's pitching!" every time I came up to bat. The small rubber ball was irritatingly difficult to catch, while the puzzling relationship of wickets and runs was (and still is) eluding. To make matters worse, two old men were watching my laughable lack of Indian masculinity. One was my grandfather, the other a toothless old man who kept grinning and calling out to me, "Come, American! Come!"

As the game ended, I hurried over to pay respects to my grandfather and his friend; when the latter again exclaimed, "American! American!" I was sorely tempted to shout, "No, I'm Indian, just like you! I was born in that house over there; I do all the same things! Can't you see?" But for some reason, I didn't. Maybe it was because yelling at the elderly is unacceptable in any culture. But it was probably due to the next thing my grandfather asked: "So when are you coming to stay?"

At that question, both my worlds clarified into one truth- there was no going back to stay. No matter how Indian I tried to be, a part of me would always be the American the old man saw. And since both were essential parts of my identity, I could never simply be an Indian living in America- I was, am an Indian-American. So while I entertained my grandfather's illusion, and replied, "Yes, *baba*, maybe next year," my own illusions shattered under the force of a cricket ball. All false appearances fell away to reveal the truth: a hyphen would always be an essential part of my identity.

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*Chandan Khandai is 17 years old, and live in Aurora, IL. He is part of the Chicago chapter of the OSA. He currently is a senior at Waubonsie Valley High School, and will be going to Washington University in St. Louis in the fall.*



## The Beauty of Kiawah Island

### Noah Kumar Mishra-Wotring

A man named Bane  
Was asked to explain  
The beauty of Kiawah Island

"Iye" he pronounced  
like a tiger who pounced  
I'll tell yeh  
The beauty of Kiawah Island

The grasses of Kiawah  
Are green through the night  
True they be  
A wonderful sight  
Part 'o' the beauty of Kiawah Island

Its ocean of milk  
And sand, of silk  
Part of the beauty of Kiawah Island

The sunset so nice  
You wish you had thrice  
The beauty 'o' Kiawah Island

Living your life  
With no battle or strife  
T'is part 'o' the beauty of Kiawah Island

The gulls are a flappin'  
And men are a nappin'  
The beauty 'o' Kiawah Island

Imagine livin'  
In a place so quiet  
There is no war  
Not even a riot  
This is the beauty 'o' Kiawah Island



"Iye" he said  
"Tis the beauty of Kiawah Island"

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*Noah, grand son of Ghanashyam and Manorama Mishra, is a fifth grader in the North Augusta Elementary School, SC. Noah was the spelling bee champion of his school and loves to write funny poems.*



## Peace

### Sambit Misra

The Lord gave us a modern language  
To deliver an ancient message  
Yet,  
We let it sink into the midnight pools of darkness  
And like the twilight,  
We let it dance upon the walls;  
But still we make attempts to study the old ways  
As the fiery drum of time beats on us;  
Even in our attempts,  
We do not realize that the ancient message is on our  
tongues  
What we pray for,  
Live for,  
And die for;  
Do you know what the message is?  
No?  
I'll tell you then,  
It is peace.

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*Sambit Misra is a 7<sup>th</sup> grader in Randy Smith Middle School, Fairbanks, Alaska. He is the son of Debasmita and Nilima Misra. He won the first prize for this poetry in a contest held in his school.*

# The Golden Triangle of Orissa

## Ankan Dhal

In geometry, the triangle is one of the most important shapes. In architectures, objects and constructions of triangular shape are well-known, for example the pyramid. Three of the most important places in Orissa, which are intimately associated with Orissa's history and civilization, also make up a triangle in terms of their geographical locations. Three amazing pieces of architectural beauties located in these three places constitute the three points of this famous 'Golden Triangle'. They are 'The Lingaraj Temple of Bhubaneswar', 'The Jagannath Temple of Puri', and 'The Sun Temple of Konarka'. These three places are some of the most attractive places in Orissa for tourists and devotees. The three temples, which have been standing for several centuries are living testament to the past architectural superiority of Oriyas.

### The Marvelous Lingaraj Temple

The magnificent Lingaraj Temple is the conch of this great triumvirate (Shankha Kshetra). The construction of the temple is associated with the three Somavanshi kings of Keshari dynasty. The temple was dedicated to the honor of the Lord Shiva (Tribhubaneswar). The lord Shiva is represented in the temple in the form of a lingam of eight-foot ft. diameter (hence the name Lingaraj). It is located in a huge walled compound of dimension 520 by 465 feet. The temple's limestone vimana (sanctuary) rises to 180 feet. The sanctuary is of square shape and is wrapped in clustered bands that give it a tapered profile. The strata in the sanctuary are enriched at every sixth tier. The pancake style layers of the jagamohan (anteroom) diminish in thickness as it descends, while carrying brilliant bands of sculpted elephants, soldiers, maidens, etc. The sacred lake 'Bindu Sagar' is located on the north side of the temple. Lingaraj is represented in the temple with an 8 ft. diameter lingam. The temple is also famous for its Natamandir (hall of dance), and the Bhoga Mandap (hall of offering). Thousands of devotees come to this temple everyday to worship lord Shiva.

### The Great Jagannath Temple

This greatest temple of Orissa (Bada Deula) is located on the coast of Bay of Bengal. It is called the wheel of this great triumvirate (Chakra Kshetra). Lord Jagannath along with his brother, Balabhadra and sister, Subhadra resides inside this temple. As the legend goes, King Indradumna at the directive of The Lord (Nilamadhab) constructed this temple. At the main entrance of the temple stands the 33-foot stone tower, which is known as Aruna Stambha. The statue on top of the pillar is Aruna, the charioteer of the Sun god. This pillar was originally a part of the Konark Sun Temple. It was brought to Puri in 18th century. The main temple structure is 214 feet high. It is built on elevated ground, which makes it look even taller, and adds to the imposing impression as one first come within sight of the temple. The temple complex comprises an area of 10.7 acres, and is enclosed by two rectangular walls. The outer enclosure is called Meghanada Prachira. The walls are 20 feet high. The inner wall is called Kurmabedha. The walls were built during the 15th to 16th century AD. Within the passage room sits a large deity of Lord Jagannaath or Pattita Pavana (savior of the most fallen). The deity is visible from the road so that people of any caste, creed, and religion can get glimpses (Darshana) of the Lord. There is a wheel on top of the main temple. This wheel is called Nila Chakra (blue wheel) and is made out of an alloy of eight metals. The circumference this wheel is approximately 36 feet. A new flag is tied to the wheel every ekadasi day (11th day of the lunar fortnight). The main temple is surrounded by 30 smaller temples. The temple is said to have the biggest kitchen in the world, serving over 100,000 people every day. Countless devotees come to this holy place every day to offer their prayers to Lord Jagannath (Bada Thakura)

### Konark Sun Temple: The Black Pagoda

The last point of the Golden Triangle is 'The Sun Temple of Konarka'. Also known as the lotus of this great triumvirate (Padma Kshetra),



this temple symbolizes artistic superiority of Oriya architects of yesteryears. The story behind the construction of this temple is also associated with one of the greatest sacrifices of a young Oriya boy, Dharmapada to protect his future generation. Therefore, both the temple and touching legend behind it have made the Konark temple as one of the most visited monuments in India.

The entire temple complex was designed in the form of a huge chariot drawn by seven spirited horses on twelve pairs of exquisitely carved wheels. The sanctum symbolizes the majestic stride of the Sun God and marks the culmination

of the architectural geniuses of Oriya architects. Some say that the wheels represent the 24 hours in a day, while others say that they represent 12 months of the year (12 pairs). The seven horses are said to symbolize the seven days of the week. Sailors once called this temple the Black Pagoda because it was drawing ships into the shore, and was causing shipwrecks due to the presence a huge magnet. While main temple has collapsed presumably from natural calamities, the entrance segment is still preserved. The walls of the temple carry intricate carvings of divine, semi-divine, human, and animal figures amidst floral and geometric ornamentations of medieval period.

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*Ankan Dhal is 12 year old, and is a 7th grader in Westford Middle School, Westford, MA. Writing is one of his main passions. His articles have been published in different souvenirs, monographs, and newsletters. Ankan has come in third place in the state level Vocabulary Bee Contest organized by North-South Foundation and has been honored by the 'Center for Talented Youth' of Johns Hopkins University.*

## What My Mind Says

**Mrunali Das**

War, Destruction, and death  
 That's not what my mind says  
 "Does my hair look right? And "Should I get a manicure"  
 Those are not my worries  
 TV, Clothes and Money  
 Those are not my joys  
 Greed, Selfishness, and Procrastinating  
 Those are not my principles

Care, Give, and Work Hard  
 Those are my principles  
 Family, Friends, and Laughter  
 Those are my joys  
 "Did I get good grades?" And "Did I do that right?"  
 Those are my worries  
 Peace, Life, and Light  
*That's what my mind says*

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*Mrunali Das is an eleven-year old sixth grader G/T student in Patuxent Valley Middle School, Columbia, MD. She is the daughter of Naresh and Bigyani Das. Mrunali's hobbies include reading, drawing, and playing cello, watching Hindi movies and traveling.*

## Extraordinary Devotion

### Sibjeet Mahapatra

Striding down a narrow alleyway in the city of Puri, India, in July of 2003, I sighed. It was going to be another sweltering day. My family and I were heading towards a Hindu religious festival known as Ratha Jatra, also known as the Chariot or Car Festival. My father had said that there would be a colossal gathering of Hindus in the city that day, just to witness and take part in this sacred festival. My father had arranged a viewing box over the Grand Road where the ceremony was to be held.

As we sat down in our viewing box above the Grand Road, a deluge of people started congregating below us, although the actual festival didn't start for another hour. The masses pushed and shoved to be closest to the still-empty chariots. A huge multitude of worshippers had assembled already, and many more soon flooded onto the Grand Road. Also, a troupe of entertainers performed inside a roped-off area on the Grand Road to keep everyone entertained before the ceremony.

The hot sun beat down on as I fanned my face with a magazine. Up in our private box it was already scorching, so I winced when I thought of how it must be down there. A huge number of people were packed onto the Grand Road when the ceremony began. Not only did the merciless heat envelop them, but they were also being assaulted by the stench and heat of many bodies pressing on them. It was a claustrophobic's worst nightmare.

In only the first hour, many stretchers being carried by medics wrestled their way through the crowd, coming to people who had fainted from heat stroke or exhaustion. Helpful volunteers sprayed cooling water from inside the police cordon surrounding the chariots, but it didn't help much. The people numbered as many as waves in a sea, breaking over each other to get closer to the shore of the sacred chariots.

Soon, the crowd was larger than ever. The medics couldn't even get through the as-

semblage now but still more people kept coming. It was almost noon. Some people sitting in viewing boxes like us dumped water onto the crowd to help keep them cool, a welcome action. As I gawked at the crowd below us, I was amazed that they cared about their faith so much as to risk life and limb in the stampede of worshippers.

Dust pervaded the air now, and the atmosphere was suffocating. But like a gift from the heavens, a sudden shower broke the dryness, sending blissful relief to the congregation of worshippers. There was a huge cheer when the drizzle started, transforming into rain and then a full-blown downpour. I was glad that the conditions for the people below had changed for the better.

Finally, the statues of the three deities were brought out of the temple to be installed onto their seats on the chariots. Worshippers rushed to the deities as they came onto the Grand Road, to help lift them up onto the chariots. Three large ramps were set up near the three 45 ft tall chariots. It was an awe-inspiring sight as many people struggled to push each of deities up the tall ramps and into their respective chariots. When this mammoth task was completed a great cheer arose. The final leg of the ceremony had begun.

As the ropes of the chariot were attached there was another stampede, because pulling a chariot was a very illustrious deed, and washed many sins away. Thousands of people strove to pull as hard as they could. With several creaks and groans, the chariots started moving down the Grand Road. The ceremony was complete.

I was profoundly moved and amazed that these people would subject themselves to such suffering for the sake of their religion. This was extraordinary devotion, and it made me realize how far some people will go to uphold what they believe in. With this revelation, my family and I returned home.

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*Sibjeet Mahapatra is a 13 year-old who lives in Montvale, New Jersey, and loves to write about his various travel experiences inside India and in other places.*



## How would I feel?

### **Shashwati Das, Columbia, MD**

If there were a war, how would I feel?  
I'd feel in danger and worried,  
But, I know, I could depend on someone!

If I were lost, how would I feel?  
I would be scared and confused,  
But, I know there would be somebody  
Guiding me on my path back home.

If I were alone, how would I feel?  
I would be bored and sad,  
But I would remember that in the walls, and in the air,  
There is someone to give me company!

If my family were in trouble, how would I feel?  
I would be worried,  
But I know, we would all be safe,  
Since my hero will always be there with us.

If you want to know who this hero is ...  
This is my God, my faith,  
They always stay with me, guide me,  
God is the best friend that I have.

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*Shashwati Das is a nine-year old fourth grader G/T student in Guilford Elementary School, Columbia. She is the daughter of Naresh and Bigyani Das. Shashwati's hobbies include drawing, dancing, gymnastics, biking, playing violin, singing, watching Hindi movies and traveling.*



## Rainbow

### **Manisha Mishra**

Oh, rainbow your colors are so bright  
Oh, what a sight!

You make me like you rainbow,  
Will you lead me to the pot of gold?

I wish ..  
You give will me strength of a bow.

I wish you were shining forever  
Show us all the light to prosper

You come to us for so short  
Yet you dazzle within us forever

We all learn from you, dear Rainbow  
Always smile and enlighten others,  
because the life is so short...

Oh Rainbow, my dear Rainbow  
Stay within my heart for ever.

---

*Manisha Mishra, age 9, is the daughter of Anita and Tusar Mishra, and lives in Terry Town, NY.*

# Me and My Home

## Shovna Tripathy

### What's in a Name

The name, Shovna was given to me by my parents. The name, Shovna, used to be not anything special. It was just something people called me. I didn't really appreciate my name when I was younger. It was so different from all the other kids in my small school. I wanted a name like Melissa, or Stephanie, or Jennifer. It wasn't until I moved to a bigger school, when it hit me. My name was unique and different. My name wasn't like all the other kids in my school. When someone said the name, Shovna, it was instantly known that they were talking about me. My name wasn't like all the other kids in my school, and that is what made me stand out. The name, Shovna, now had a beautiful sound when I said it. My name wasn't weird anymore. It was just me.

### A House on Carriage Hill Street

"The home is where the heart is." That saying is used and heard so much that it has become a cliché. That famous line has no meaning to most people anymore. When I really think about it, the saying is true. My house is my home, and I could never live anywhere else. I've lived in my little house since the day I was born, and I can't even imagine living anywhere else. My house is made of the typical reddish/brown brick. The front door used to be white, but then my dad painted it brown so that it would stand out from the other houses. My house is a place for me to find peace and comfort when I need to leave the real world and go into my own world. My home is where MY heart is.

---

*Shovna just completed her Sophomore year at Denton High School. She enjoys reading, dancing and music. She lives in Denton, Texas.*

## Friendship

### Tapannita (Bobby) Padhi

A beautiful relationship  
With twists and turns  
That tests your loyalties.  
Without it, the world  
Will be empty of  
Love and affection.  
With it, the world  
Will flourish with  
Splendor.  
Friendship is trust  
And the trusties within  
You.

---

*Tapannita (Bobby), daughter of Tapan and Mani Padhi, is in 8th grade. She attends Rice Middle School at Plano, TX.*

## I am a writer when....

### Soumya Misra

I am a writer when I see the shiny sun goes down and the glittering moon comes up.  
I am a writer when I hear the sound of the waves roaring to me.  
I am a writer when I see a peacocks' feather glittering in the light.  
I am a writer when I look at the stars shining in the sky.  
I am a writer when I hear the raindrops falling on the ground.  
I am a writer when I see the beauty of the mountains.  
I am a writer when I see a tiger catch its prey.  
I am a writer when I see green leaves turn into bright colors!  
I am a writer when I feel the smoothness of a shell.

---

*Soumya is a grade three student and resides with her parents Sameer and Sangita Misra in Bayside, NY*



## THE SEARCH FOR DHARAMA

Ankita Ray

Dharama was a twelve year old boy who dearly wished to see his father. A great king of Orissa wanted to build the most beautiful temple for the Sun God. He called for the best workers to work on it. Workers from far and wide came to build this beautiful temple.

While this was going on, Dharama kept asking his mother why his dad never came home. Each time his mother gave him the same answer, that his father was one of the great builders who worked for the king, and would be home the day the temple was done. One day his mother said to Dharama, "If you so dearly wish to see your father, you may go, but it is an awfully long journey". Dharama wanted to go anyway. But before he set off, he asked his mother how he would recognize his father as they had never seen each other ever before. His mother walked into their garden and came back with some cherries with her. She gave him the cherries and said, "these are very special cherries that grow only in our garden. When your father sees them he will recognize you".

Dharama walked and walked till he reached Konark. He asked everyone if they could recognize the special cherries, until finally he found his father. His father could not believe his

eyes. He was very happy to see his son after twelve years.

While Dharama slept at night he heard his father tell his friends that if they could not get the crown of the temple fixed on the top by the next morning, the king would cut off everyone's heads because he had been waiting for twelve long years to see a finished temple. Dharama wished to see his father happy. While everyone slept unhappily at night, Dharama sneaked out into the dark. He climbed the temple and fixed the top stone at the right place. The temple was done at last! Dharama was happy. But he thought that if the king knew that a little boy like him had done the job he would cut off his father's head. Legend says that Dharama jumped off the temple-top into the Chandrabhaga river that flowed nearby and died.

But did anyone actually see him jump and die? Do you think Dharmapada lived to see his father happy? What if the king was proud of the little boy and rewarded him, his father and his friends, and never punished anyone. I would like to believe that this is what actually happened.

---

*Ankita is a 9 year old who lives in New Jersey for the past one and half years and shall be relocating to Maryland in May. She is still very much in love with India and Orissa and loves to listen to tales of yore. As every 9 year old, she believes that a sad tale needs a happy ending. This is what she has come up with! Please let me know if it reaches you in one piece, as pretty many times documents get distorted electronically.*



# Rainbara

Anya Rath

Once in the lost forbidden land there was a tribe who called themselves the Grouchunos. They were rude and mean to each other, but they all had one ambition: destroy happiness! One of the village men, Angrulap thought that the sun was spreading happiness, he mentioned this to the other people and they agreed with him (which was rare there!)

Soon they started gathering everything they needed to start their magic spell of summoning rain so that the sun would be covered with clouds. They succeeded and they celebrated by throwing food into each other's faces!

Meanwhile across a few mountains the Joyeras tribe laughed and played in the rain. Soon they realized that animals were drowning in the rain! So they started chanting for the sun, in their beautiful singing voices, saying: "Oh, dear mighty sun, run from your hiding spot, come and embrace us in your warm arms."

They closed their eyes for a minute, when they opened their eyes they saw clouds parting, green grass, animals playing and in the sky was a great big bright rainbow. In fact the scenery was so beautiful that they decided to make it a season, they named it Springolo, but everyone called it Spring.

But back at the Grouchuno's everyone noticed they had just made things happier. So

they decided, they would get rid of the bands of color on the rainbow. One by one the bands of color disappeared: red, orange, green, blue. Suddenly a protective shield covered the rest of the rainbow. A cry went out, "JOYERAS!"

The Grouchunos looked at each other worried, the Joyeras were their sworn enemies, what would they do? The Joyeras were more powerful magicians than they were! But on the other side of the mountain the Joyeras were merely trying to save the rainbow, not only because it was horrible to destroy a rainbow, but also because that was Rainbara. Rainbara was the native king of stars, checking to make sure everyone was kind and humble. If he was full destroyed, no stars would ever shine again! The Joyeras combined their power and pushed the rainbow up to the heavens, they transformed the rainbow into seven stars, and named the constellation Rainbara. The reason they named a constellation after Rainbara was that he would be home to the stars. Another reason was that they could see him every night.

As for the Grouchunos they ran and hid in the ground thinking that the Joyeras would punish them. They were right the Joyeras turned them into gophers and groundhogs, and to this day we can see the Grouchunos muttering and making a fuss about everything!

---

*Anya goes to 5th Grade, Atwood Elementary, Macomb. She lives with her parents Swapna and Nirmal Rath and sister Nayna.*



## The Meadow of Mine

**Niharika (Nilu) Rath**

Sunflowers stretching in the breeze,  
Willows bending on their knees,  
Ripples form in the crystal clear lake,  
Pollen flies in the dandelion's wake.

Wind whispers into Cloud's ear,  
Cloud nods, and seems to hear,  
Cloud removes all the menacing things,  
Instead of dark clouds, white ones in beautiful rings.

The sweet scent of an apple tree,  
The clean perfume of the airy leaves,  
The soft shadow gives a welcoming air,  
As the breeze makes the apple tree flare.

Reeds wave over the meadow green,  
The sun looks down with a smile that beams,  
Butterfly's flutter, fly and sail,  
Flowers send a delicate fragrance into the air.




---

*Niharika is the daughter of Nigam and Suchitra Rath.  
She is a 8<sup>th</sup> grade student in Parkway Northeast Middle  
School in Maryland Heights, MO*

---

## Follow Your Dreams

**Prerana Pradhan, 13 years**

Follow –  
As in pursue  
Not bad things and deeds people say or do  
Not terrible things from a game of  
Follow the leader  
Only good things that so many have accomplished  
Your-  
But only things that you and you only, own  
Like the special possession that's only yours  
Like the ideas you only share with your best friend  
Like the secret that some one owns  
Like the teddy bear that some one presented you  
Dreams –  
What can your dreams be?  
There's more than one, for sure  
Can you fulfill them?  
Hold on to them, they could be helpful  
Like that last piece of gum



# Goodbye, Selwyn

## Shomya Tripathy

According to the dictionary, a school is an educational institution. Today, I have come to find that my school is so much more. After eight years of attending here, to me, Selwyn, as a school, is my education, my faults, my strengths, my happiness, my sadness, and most importantly my family.

For years now I have watched students come up on this stage and say their speeches. From those days I thought about what I would say when it came to be my turn. Today, it is my turn, and I realize there are no words to describe what the feeling of warmth is every day at Selwyn. There are no words to describe what it feels like to be up here. There are no words to describe the thought that tomorrow I will no longer be a student of this school. Everyday at Selwyn is a treasure. Selwyn has become my second home that I have grown to love and cherish.

I would now like to take a moment and thank my parents. Every time I thought I did my best, you would push me harder, just to find out if I could do better. You taught me that the most

important thing is to be a good person, and there are no better examples than you two. I love you very much. And a very special thanks to the person who helped me out the most through my years at Selwyn - Thank you Shovna, you are a wonderful sister. You would always give me your advice and help me with my homework (even though that help wasn't always helpful.) You have always been by my side, and I have no doubt, you will do the same in high school.

Before writing this speech, my teacher told me that she didn't want us to say goodbye in our speech. So, I have decided, I won't. Instead, I will say thank you. Thank you this school for teaching me everything I know. Thank you for making me a better person. Thank you for making me appreciate everything I have. Every year students graduate leaving their childhood memories behind. I now shall do the same and leave my memories locked up in this school. I grew up in Selwyn. It has become my family. Even when I am away I will always be a part of my family, and my family will always be a part of me.

---

*This is the text of Shomya Tripathy's middle school graduation speech at Selwyn School. Shomya will join Denton High School this Fall. Shomya's hobbies include sports, playing guitar, drums, and piano. She lives in Denton, Texas.*





## Crab Catching

### Alex Kishor Mishra-Wotring

A couple of years ago, my brother Noah and I went to visit our grandparents in Kiawah Island in South Carolina. In Kiawah, Noah and I usually go to beach, and then ride our bikes to Scoopers, the best ice cream parlor in the world. But this particular trip we did something different. Our grandpa and grandma took us crab catching.

To catch a crab you must hold a net over a chicken leg tied to a string. When a crab comes to get the chicken leg, you must be very swift and pull the net on top of the crab.

Noah and I took turns holding the net. We caught 5 crabs and had to stop because a crab split the net. We put the crabs we caught in a bucket.

Suddenly Noah knocked over the bucket and the crabs came running down the ditch.

I took a deep breath and ran for my dear life. The crabs scurried down the bank toward the water. My grandfather frantically tried to recapture the crabs with no avail. All our work was in vain.

That night our grandma made a wonderful dinner with a Flounder we had caught earlier. I still wish that Noah hadn't knocked over the crab bucket, because our life had been in grave danger, and we missed a scrumptious crab curry-dinner.

---

*Alex is one of the twin grand sons of Ghanasyam and Manorama Mishra, and attends fifth grade in North Augusta Elementary School, SC.*

## My brother's wedding

### Reena Patro

I am lucky to have experienced one of the most special events in life - my brother getting married in India. My brother was born and brought up In America. I am grateful to have seen what a typical Indian wedding looks like. In Hindi movies, sure I have watched many times how an Indian wedding is carried out, but the feeling just is not the same. For one of your family members the feeling is spectacular with mixed feelings which words cannot describe.

At first I was surprised for my brother's agreement to have his marriage in India. I thought, "Wow this is going to be pretty cool!" In the summer of 2003 my family and I flew to Orissa for the engagement of my brother, Raj, and now *bhabi* Refern. It was just amazing to see how each ceremony was performed with different rituals marking each event. I really enjoyed it

because seeing your mom's family and dad's family together in the same room was so much fun. My aunts, uncles, and cousins were so surprised and of course at the same time happy for my brother to have chosen his engagement and wedding in India.

In November of 2003 my family and I went to India again for the wedding to be held. We all had decided for the wedding to be in India but we were just not sure where it should be held. What made my parents proud was my brother chose Puri because my parent's wedding was there as well. This decision made my father very happy for him to experience his own son's wedding in the same place. WOW! There were so many rituals before and after the wedding! I had never seen the "behind the scenes" of a wedding, but now I got to experience it. One

week before the wedding, many cousins stopped by to hand my brother sweets, gold, jewelry, and many other items. We stopped by many temples to pray for good luck and a prosperous future for my brother and *bhabi*. The week went by so fast that it was already time for the wedding! In Puri the hotel where the wedding was held, was Holiday Inn Resorts where everything was beautifully decorated with gorgeous flowers and the beach being located behind the hotel. From ice sculptures to the lively Hindi music, the wedding was a blast. We walked around with my brother standing in front as a certain kind of ritual, and met up with the girl's family in the front of the hotel. Then maybe for about two hours my

brother and *bhabi* sat in front of a fire as the priest chanted *bhajans*. It seemed as if everyone enjoyed the wedding, and as for me I had the time of my life.

Some of my family even said how this wedding reminded them of a Hindi wedding because of the live dances and beautiful decorations surrounded by the lights and sound of the waves from the ocean. When I came home, I realized how much I had learned about an Indian wedding with the different rituals performed. Like I said before, I am fortunate to have gone to India and enjoyed my brother's wedding.

---

*Reena completed 10th grade. She loves to play Tennis and plays for her school as one of the top players. She also plays the flute and enjoys learning bhartanatyam dance. Her hobbies include reading, dancing, hanging out with friends, and playing outside.*

## Learning One's Mother Tongue

### Pratyasha Acharya

When I was in Canada, I was always advised by my parents to learn my mother tongue. My mother insisted that I spoke in Oriya at home. However, my Oriya speaking proficiency was not great, and as a result, I did not speak much in my mother tongue. The little that I managed was caused by conscious attempts on my part. But I was always shy to speak up before fellow Oriyas and family friends. Some of my early attempts to speak Oriya outside of home were in the Odissi dance classes I took with Jitu aunty (Guru Chitralekha Pattnaik), Rini apa (Niharika Mohanty), Lora apa (Ellora Pattnaik), and Raj bhai (Devraj Pattnaik).

After moving to New Delhi and having stayed for a few months, I realized that I was able to speak fluently not only in Oriya but also in Hindi. One fine morning I was amazed to realize that my fluency in Oriya on Indian soil had nothing to do with family pressures.

Indeed, I do not ever recall if my parents ever insisted that I speak Oriya at home in Delhi. This was somewhat spontaneous. Both in Canada and India, my parents spoke Oriya at home. Whether it was Toronto or New Delhi, I did not speak Oriya outside of home, unless I was in an Oriya gathering. The school environments in both the places are favorable to English. My Odissi dance lessons in New Delhi are partially in Hindi too. I kept wondering what made the difference in my capability to learn Oriya in two different places. However, as I ponder deep, I think my new-found fluency in Oriya is due to the difference in the social environment that exists between the two societies. It may be a little difficult to learn one's mother tongue in an alien soil. The important lesson that I derive from my experience is this: I don't think parental pressures provide a sufficient condition to learn one's mother tongue. A mother tongue is also helped by a supportive social environment.

---

*Pratyasha Acharya is a student of Class VII at Montfort Sr. Secondary, Delhi.*



## Love something one must

### Amrita Sahu

Love something one must  
Can always be based on trust  
This is the only feeling  
That can change a bad human to good being.

Love is like a garden  
Like small kids in a kindergarten  
Which is hardly visible to us  
But is always around us.

It is a fact that we have to search for love  
As love is to be nurtured by love  
It is a path full of turns and curves  
And is as free as all the doves.

Remarking peace it has war destroying power  
Rains of flowers, it brings us that shower  
Can change a person's destiny  
And is like a maiden dipped in the water of purity and serenity.

True love is something one deserves all the time  
It is a river full of nectar flowing and is very fine  
It passes through everybody's soul  
It is only to be searched, that should be our goal.

Love is like the first dewdrop on a blade of grass  
It is no comparison to gold or brass  
It is something that destroys the ego of people  
It wipes out the desert of sadness and hatred among people.

---

*Amrita Sahu 14, is a 10th grade student in India. She lists sports, music, writing swimming and surfing the net as her hobbies.*

## Entering Holi

### Sonia Chakrabarty

Big kids are having fun  
Shouting and spreading color  
I want to go and join them  
Instead of staying inside

I do not like staying nice and clean  
When big kids are messy and  
having great fun

Looking through the window  
is as close as I can get  
But when will I be able to go out  
and join the big kids  
with their color and their laughter

When I enter the world of Holi  
The world will be at my color's mercy  
How long until color is at my very doorstep  
And I can enter my world of Holi.

---

*Sonia Chakrabarty, age 10, resides in Cookeville, TN with her parents, Sangita & Satya Chakrabarty, and her younger brother, Sanjay. She attends 5th grade at Prescott Central Middle School, where she is on the all A honor roll, attends gifted programs, and is a part of her school's Beta club. Her hobbies include reading, writing, and watching T.V.*

## SUN

### Satwick Misra

The sun is the nearest star to the earth.  
The sun is the biggest star.  
The sun makes heat.  
The sun is hot.  
The sun is the brightest star.  
The sun never moves.  
The sun is very far away from us.  
If there was no sun, flowers and trees will die.

---

*Satwick Misra is six years old and goes to first grade. He lives in Bayside, New York with his parents Sameer and Sangita Misra.*

## Roses

Supriya Misra

Red, white, pink,  
All colors of beautiful roses.

The white roses sway in the wind,  
The pink ones dance to the music of the birds,  
And the red roses smile up towards the sun.

Yet, what could be bad about roses?

I bend down to pick one,  
And prick my self.  
Unfortunately, all beautiful things are not always what they seem.  
All roses have thorns,  
Thorns of misery, bitterness, and anger,  
But no one ever looks for thorns on such beautiful things.

The roses smell beautiful, and are candy to the eye,  
Yet, to the unsuspecting victim, there are thorns.  
Thorns of arrogance, weakness, and deadliness,  
Thorns of bossiness, and untold rudeness.

Why?  
Why must such a beautiful entity have such a curse as a thorn?  
The thorns, are they a curse, a boon, or a fortification?  
Why must life be so unfair,  
To the rose and to its admirer?

The roses dare to deride me, and persist with their insolence.  
And yet, all I wanted was a rose, an emblem of magnificence.  
The regal rose is sadly caught in its own world of haughtiness.  
Taunting the unsuspecting child, who is wondered by its lovely colors.

Still, we want the rose, in all its imperfections.

---

*Supriya Misra will be in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade next year. Supriya loves to write, sing, swim, play tennis and hang out with friends. Supriya plays the violin in the Youth Orchestra of San Antonio.*





## The Lost Pearl

### Amrut Sarangi

A child named Danny lived in a town called Kitten berg. One day, he went to a restaurant. He asked the waiter, "May I please have a coke?"

"Yes, please wait a minute."

"Okay."

The waiter came back in a flash with an ice-cold coke.

"Would you like anything else?"

"No, thank you."

When he was drinking, he felt something hard against his mouth. Wondering what it was, Danny peered into the glass and saw a white ball. Looking closely, he thought it resembled a pearl.

"Waiter, can you please come over here?"

"Yes?"

"Do you know a good scientist?"

"Sure, one second."

When the scientist came, he asked him, "What does this look like?"

"It looks like a pearl."

"Can you tell which clam this came from?"

"Let me take this to the science box, it might be able to tell us."

He placed the ball into the box. Lights and flashes blinded us for a second.

"Aha! It says that this pearl belongs to the Southern Indian clam. So we have to go to India."

"Yup."

"Okay."

Danny asked his family and me to go to India with him. "We are leaving in a week!" We had to

live through 16 whole hours on the inter-connecting flights to India. Finally, we reached Bombay. After catching up on some sleep, we felt refreshed enough to leave on our expedition the next day. Danny and I went in the water to find the right clam that the scientist had identified. The scientist and his crew followed close behind. I found sharks and many other animals under water. One shark started to attack me. But I got away by tricking it. A giant octopus and squid tried to tangle me with their long, mighty tentacles. Then Danny saw a dark area, but swimming closer, he came face to face with a huge submarine. There were many twisting and turning passageways. Around the next corner, we met up the scientist. He said, "I can't find that clam. I didn't know finding Southern Indian clams would be so hard."

So we all went to the navigation room. "The navigation somehow located the clam even though it has been broken for many years. It says that we're really close. But I can't see it!" said the scientist. Turning to us he said, "Let's check if our diver is ready to dive in."

A man wearing scuba gear gave us the thumbs-up. "Our diver is ready to go. Let's go!" I said. Soon, our diver found the clam. It was a humongous! We went to take a look at it and gave it its pearl.

The next day, we went back to Kitten berg. We thanked the scientist for all his help. Our adventure was over, but we couldn't wait to go on another one.

---

*Amrit Sarangi is a second grader and lives in Old Bridge, New Jersey.*

# Organizational News and Views





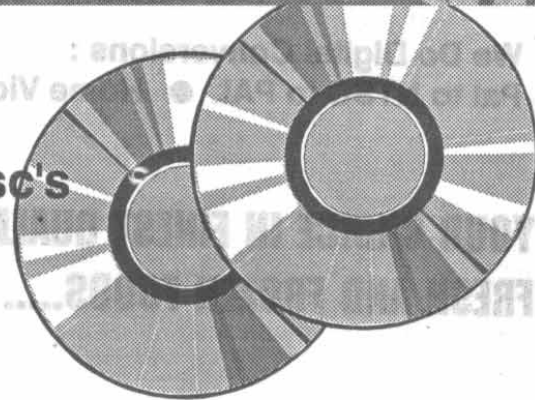
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# State of SEEDS and a Call to Make a Difference

Priyadarsan Patra

## About SEEDS

*Anything you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. – Goethe.*

Over the decades, India's poverty has declined at a macro-level, as reported by National Sample Survey Organization; but Orissa's poverty (both rural and urban) has stayed obdurate at 47%, by far the worst nationwide. Sustainable Economic and Educational Development Society (SEEDS) was formed in 1994 to promote and advocate for sustainable, equitable and decentralized development in Orissa and elsewhere, with its fundamental emphasis on empowerment, education, self-help, and micro-enterprise based thrusts.

SEEDS, catalytically helps development workers (NGOs) and ordinary people alike to empower and help themselves by sponsoring sustainable projects in rural areas. We are not just a funding agency. We work in partnership with the beneficiaries (rural people) and executing bodies (NGOs), before, during, and after a local project is undertaken. SEEDS volunteers, who are individuals residing in Orissa, North America, or elsewhere, periodically visit the project sites and report progress and problems encountered. They try to understand the projects' impact, and analyze reasons for success or failure, big or small. Most of our volunteers continue to donate their time, energy and expenses so that all money donated to SEEDS can be applied to the sponsored project without any overhead.

SEEDS collaborates with other organizations that have similar goals. CanOSA has worked with SEEDS as a strong partner, funding SEEDS approved projects that are supervised by SEEDS volunteers. Two groups in California have joined hands with SEEDS organizing themselves to be self-governing chapters of SEEDS, promoting core principles of SEEDS, and extending the focus area to outside of Orissa. We have networked with other volunteer groups such as Orissa branch of AID. Following incident illustrates our collaboration: we had remitted auxiliary funds to repair check-dams in Chauldia and Khandeichappar damaged by 2003 floods. To avert the risk of work stoppage due to our checks not clearing in time, AID loaned money to the executing NGO, and the farmers thankfully had a bumper harvest this season.

Rural development is a learning process for all parties involved. Some concepts are new to many people, and some people have experience to share. To foster awareness and to promote intelligent debate, we conducted a one-day seminar on "Sustainable Development for Self-Sufficiency" at Ekamra Haat in Bhubaneswar in July, 2003, in cooperation with AID. This seminar was attended by many NGO and village leaders, students of social welfare, and local intellectuals. They actively participated, enthusiastically debating and articulating various points of views. Two more workshops in Western Orissa followed to promote networking among NGOs. To bring greater transparency, the workshops even tried to address the thorny, but the usually avoided, issues of NGO accountability and structural efficiency.

The following table summarizes SEEDS project activities during the 2003-04 year, showing the project goals, location and the executing NGO. You can find details of these activities at our websites, [myseeds.home.comcast.net](http://myseeds.home.comcast.net) and [www.seedsnet.org](http://www.seedsnet.org).



## SEEDS funded projects active during 2003-2004

Place (district)	NGO	Project activity	Goals
(Jagatsingpur, Kendrapa Puri, Cuttack)	Unnayan	Intervention after super cyclone, promote self-reliance via Self Help Groups (SHG)	Formation of pani panchayats and introduction of microcredit and sustainability
Ganjam block (Ganjam)	United Artists Association	repair cyclone-devastated school, provide better environment for education	Primary education, cyclone repair
Baghbahali (Balangir)	REACHD	Minor Lift Irrigation (LI) point, pani panchayat, income generation	Livelihood security SHG, microcredit
Kandhaichhapar, Chauldia (Bolangir)	The Humanity	Land leveling, food for work, building check-dams, composting	Livelihood security, sustainable farming
(Nuapada)	Kalahandi Vikas Parishad	Water harvesting, ponds	Livelihood security, natural resource preservation
Keutaguda (Rayagada)	Kasturba Gandhi National Trust	Supporting schools	Education in tribal area
Jhankarbahali (Sambalpur)	BISWA (in collaboration with Mrs. Ranu Mahanti)	Bamboo plantation, sustainability and micro-entrepreneurship	Livelihood security, cooperative cultivation
Mohana Block (Gajapati)	SACAL	Poultry farming training, SHG	Income generation, selfhelp, confidence building
Jagatpur (Jajpur)	SRDO	Poultry farming, goat rearing, kitchen garden	Income generation
Khurda area(Khurda)	GJS	SHGs, mushroom farming	Income generation
Mahulapada (Dhenkanal)	Indira Social Welfare Org.	Candle manufacturing, SHG, empowerment of women	Income generation
Angul (Angul)	Bajiraut Chhatrabas	Deep bore-well and hand pump	Education; Earn and Learn
Bhubaneswar (Khurda)	Unnayan/ Dhanada Mishra	Ferro-cement boat for marginal or small-scale fisher-folks	Appropriate technology development
Kodala (Ganjam)	SAIMA	School for the mentally handicapped	Special Education and "integrating the voiceless"
Utkal University, Vanibihar (Khurda)	Blind Students Project	Community donation for eye-sight restoration for the very poor college students	Targeted help for the very disadvantaged but meritorious college students

While the above table gives a glimpse into the broader area of our projects, it is best to learn about the success of our work by looking at any particular project, or by reading the reports of volunteers in the field. One success story reported by a volunteer is about a milk panchayat in Singiri, funded by our partner CanOSA and supervised by SEEDS. In the volunteer's own words, "Starting at 10 cows, 17 villagers now own cows within two years, even though out of the original 10, two cows died, two were infertile and one was sold. Moreover, a teacher at the local children's school is supported through the profits of the project. One major reason for the accomplishment is that a local project leader is deeply committed to its success, although himself not a beneficiary of the project. He is an educator and has a strong influence on the people."

Another success story is from Bagbahali village. I have made extended visits to Bagbahali and what follows is my own observation. Other volunteers based in Orissa and North America such as S. Mohanty, B. Patra, and D. Mishra have also visited this site separately for monitoring and discussion.

## Bagbahali and our partnership with REACHD

Bagbahali is situated 60 km from Bolangir's district head-quarters and 20 km from the town of Patnagarh. The total area of the village is 700 acres out of which only 150 acres are cultivable land and the rest is fallow or waste land or is covered by forests. The river Sukatel flows on the outskirts of the village. There are 350 people in 52 families of various tribes living in the village, *Ganda* being the dominant tribe.

Drought is a permanent feature in this region. Local wage earning opportunities are nearly nonexistent. Drove of people migrate to neighboring states, with or without family, in search of wages. Take for example Kailash Dharua, a poor landless farmer. He migrated to Chennai with his family in 2002 to work in a brick making factory. After a few days, he was reported missing. His wife and four daughters returned devastated to their native village. The district administration has neither found Kailash nor rehabilitated his family as yet.

Responding to such cases of despondency, REACHD (an NGO) sought a Pani Panchayat program to bring some long-term solutions to the village. With support from CAPART in the year 1999, the NGO had introduced 11 tribal farmers to banana farming. The farmers had cultivated Green Banana (Bhusabali) in one acre of land each. But this seemingly good idea quickly turned to naught when drought hit the area hard in the year 2000. Thus, a *Pani Panchayat* (water council) type project was ripe for implementation under the able local leadership of Ramachandra Behera.

With financial and moral support from SEEDS in the year 2001, REACHD established a pani panchayat with 21 farmers, and a small irrigation project was completed from which 50 Acres of cultivable land is irrigated. The irrigation facility became functional late 2002. Out of the total 50 acres of land, 20 are of *Bahal* (low land), 15 *Berna* (Medium) and the rest 15 are of *Ant* (high land) category. While earlier it was possible to cultivate only once a year in the best low lands, now, with our lift irrigation facility, two crops a year are possible in all the 50 acres. To date, the farmers have reported two good harvests using this infrastructure.

### Project Results

- 21 low-income farmer families got the opportunity to strengthen their household economy and helped other villagers indirectly by creating local agro-based wage earning facilities.
- Productivity was enhanced by providing irrigation facility and yield increased from Rs.5000/- per acre to Rupees 10,000/- per acre within a year.
- Out of the 30 migratory families, 19 families did not migrate last year. As a result, more children enrolled and stayed in school.
- The farmers are now able to refund loans taken from local money lenders for their household expenses within a short span of time.
- The farmers can now stock sufficient food grains for family use though out the year.
- Also, the farmers jointly pay all expenses associated with the irrigation project: a) Rs. 23,000/- towards electricity charges, b) a replaced transformer costing Rs. 9,000/-, and c) Rs. 2,000/- towards the maintenance of the pump set.



Thus, the Pani Panchayat program has been a significant mile stone for the poor farmers, and needs to be further strengthened with follow-on support to make it a lasting and reproducible model for others. The pictures below, taken by me, show the micro-irrigation mechanism, and happy farmers amidst their crops.



### **Broader Pani Panchayat and SHG work with Unnayan**

SEEDS undertook a longer, larger and broader effort with field support by Unnayan, an NGO in eastern Orissa. Unnayan has recently sent a comprehensive postmortem report (you can find it at SEEDS website given at the end) studying the successes and the difficulties of pani-panchayats, micro-enterprise, and self-help groups (SHG). The economic benefits to the villagers are significant. There are additional benefits, such as, enhanced self-worth and confidence in villagers, improvement of management skills among people, increase in savings, exposure to different marketing activities and events, benefiting by learning from success of individual businesses, and the motivation of others to replicate these ideas. However, there are problems and challenges too, as the Unnayan study has found:

- *“Stringent institutional regulations:* In one way or other, some members of SHGs are defaulters of bank loan. When a bank finds such member(s) involved in a SHG, and the same SHG has applied for a loan, the bank authority rejects the loan application.
- *Negative political attitude:* Political affiliation of the members to different parties and the vested attitude thereof sometimes becomes detrimental to the group interest.
- *Target oriented govt. schemes.* Under the target oriented schemes of the government, women are tempted to accept loans, and get involved in certain vocations decided by the government. Without considering one’s capacities and skill in that particular vocation a loan comes as an illusion. This leads to improper management of the loan....”

According to Unnayan, “A holistic approach integrating institution building, capacity development, net-working, market linkage establishment, monitoring of progress, and finalizing strategic inputs would help us achieve desired sustainability of the groups.”

### **SEEDS Finances**

In 2003, our expenses were \$12,003.00. But, in the same year, cash donations to SEEDS amounted to only \$3086.37. Thus, declined funding remains a major concern, and increase in funding is essential to the success of SEEDS. Although SEEDS has a few dedicated volunteers, it needs a larger number of volunteers. We have a goal of raising at least \$20,000 annually and of recruiting a few new active volunteers among us this year. This year we strongly encourage younger members of our society born or brought up abroad to volunteer at some of our project sites in Orissa.

### **Future Plans**

In 2004-05, we want to focus on micro-enterprise, water harvesting, and project follow-ups to further strengthen areas in which we are already invested. We also hope to support pilot

projects such as the one proposed by SACAL for maize cultivation in tribal Gajapati district. We would like to sustain a bit longer our existing but fledgling micro-credit and micro-enterprise projects, as the beneficiaries learn to repay loans, and spread the fruits of their labor and our support. It takes a lot of effort and resource to make inroads, and gain trust and traction. So, we should further strengthen our successful past projects and sites.

I also think that time has now come for us to “invest” strategically through yearly fellowships in “social entrepreneurs”, individuals who can “envision, energize and enable”, set directions, align people, motivate serious action for social development, and those who are on the field pursuing a revolutionary idea of socio-economic upliftment.

### **Call to Make a Difference**

*“Vision without action is a day-dream. Action without vision is a nightmare.”* - a Japanese proverb.

In SEEDS we have tried to combine our vision of an economically developed rural Orissa with our action to enable and sustain such change. We have seen small successes and faced great challenges. Our resource base in terms of volunteers and monetary donation has declined last year, but we hope and strive to keep working, facilitating, and networking to inch toward what we believe to be our common destiny.

Some of the ways in which you can support SEEDS are:

- Organize a group of people in your city to sponsor a SEEDS project either financially or by providing monitoring and evaluation.
- Learn about SEEDS and talk about it to your friends.
- If you know people in Orissa who can volunteer for SEEDS by making field visits, tell them about our work, and ask them to contact us.
- Be a major donor and donate to SEEDS whatever you can every year.
- Join SEEDS and contribute your skills to the organization.

As always, we love to hear from you, and dearly hope to receive your camaraderie in this effort at true and lasting development. We also need a fresh infusion from university students to shore up “the movement” that started within academic confines a decade ago. We seek your financial and moral support, and your participation. Don’t forget to check our websites [myseeds.home.comcast.net](http://myseeds.home.comcast.net) and [www.seedsnet.org](http://www.seedsnet.org) . Let’s forge ahead together for a better tomorrow.

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## OSA Convention, 2003

### Sri Gopal Mohanty

Yes, it was a MELA, the *mela* we eagerly wait for a year to attend. As a little boy in my village, we spent the whole day watching our bullock cart to be ready to take us to BALANGA MUNI MELA (near Shanti Mishra's village) during the Makara Sankranti time; I would sit snugly with my mother, aunts, brothers, sisters and cousins; the excitement goes up when the bullocks are yoked and finally the cart moves. Later when I grew up, I would prefer to walk the entire distance of three and a half miles to A wedding ceremony or any ceremony as a matter of fact - the relatives from far and near gather together to reaffirm the ever-longing bonding; a greeting smile to behold the faith of closeness and a sense of sadness wallowing over at the time of departure. Decorated halls, women in brilliantly colored attire and vying jewellery, sumptuous food, entertainment programs of music and dance, and above all, time to exchange tidbits of no consequence but of immense linking values. In such ceremonies, we as kids used to meet some of our village relatives - *apa, dada, khudi, mausa, mausi*, and their children - often with innocent curiosity. OSA Conventions are ceremonies after all. And this year was no less.

A convention or conference, people run to share ideas and information, and to engage in dialogues on contemporary issues; to attend sessions, to talk on one-to-one basis in some corners, and seriously participate in discussions. There is an intellectual dimension within me, which gets expanded in such occasions. Indeed any OSA Convention is a convention in that sense. And this year it was too.

A festival of cultural programs showcasing artists of all kinds on the stage; a feast for eyes and ears; songs, dances, skits, and what not; enthusiasm mixed with apprehension of an artist, an audience's stealing wish not to miss anything and to savor every variety of RASA emanated from the artistic presentations and a late night JATRA environment with half asleep children

on parents' shoulders. Staying awake whole night to witness *jatras*, we used to jockey around for a sitting position near the *ustad* (the director) so as to watch his motions to others, prompting, his singing styles and others in action all of which we could copy later in our little shows. There it is always in OSA Conventions. And the night prolonged the same way this year as well.

A potpourri of all varieties. yes, it was, has been and will be. OSA Convention has evolved to accommodate various features of our interests and traits. A small group of people, which is from Orissa, dispersed over thousands of miles finds the Convention providing an optimal solution to individual's quest of being close to each other. It is like opening the family picture album and adding a few more pictures.

Meet the smiling faces of Jayanti Mohapatra, Shanti Mishra and Durga Mishra at the registration desk; there at the entrance patio of the Conference Center see Arun Das (Mantu) with his son Ankur hanging the Pipili appliques; in the big hall the makeshift stage is getting ready for the coming days of celebration. Cars rolling on to the entrance door at frequent intervals; known and unknown people approaching in waves; greet some friends and families with oblong tired-looking faces after a long day's drive. They all have come with expectations. The organizers are determined not to disappoint them. "Hey, Subhas Babu...", "anu, tama sahita gotie kath thila...", "namaskara..." - the expressions of long awaited meetings, the desire to meet new faces, all coming to fruition and leading to unbounded joy and exhilaration. The loud noise became noisier as the July third night was maturing. The restrained excitement got loose to become bursting laughter, and in no time the place became a little Orissa out of Orissa. For many that was their satisfaction.

July 4 - a Nation celebrates. Within that cosmos, a subgroup was celebrating at the OSA Convention. Its inauguration

ceremony was one, which no one wanted to miss. Five young men and five young ladies in Oriya, in praise of Orissa, sang the opening song. They might have been in any profession, IT, Engineering or Management, but they wanted to participate.

There were four speakers, each focused on particular aspects of Orissa. Lalit Mansingh, the Ambassador and Pramathes Rath, the Consul General spoke on the theme of uplifting Orissa from its present deplorable situation. Lalit Babu gave three modest suggestions to NROs: invest whatever limited resource one has or join in some development projects, associate with educational or professional institutions to improve present state of affairs and recognize the contributions of NROs.

Philosophy Professor Jitendra Nath Mohanty emphasized the importance of the language and culture of a group in its progress, more so when confronted with the onslaught of globalization. On the other hand, Professor Richard Shweder who spent time in Bhubaneswar on several occasions spoke on cross-cultural differences. In this context, his last anecdote was very heart touching. It was like this: *A couple finding the father old and invalid decided to carry him in a basket to Puri Bada Danda and leave him there to breathe his last breath. Their son overheard the conversation. When the due day came, he suggested to the father to make sure of bringing the basket back which would be needed to carry the father when confronted with the same predicament.* Sometimes I look for such nice stories to tell the children to inculcate certain values.

No Oriya function is complete without an Odissi dance. This time it was none other than Surama Panda of OSANY who performed in the ceremony. Either my emotion or habit arouses a certain subtle feeling within me when I hear that unique enchanting music in Odissi at the beginning of any performance. Mind you, this kind of music was not there originally. The great pioneers of Odissi reconstructed it. I must recognize here the genius Late Bhubaneswar Mishra. Well, time to recognize our young talents. They came all the way with their parents just for this

opportunity to present whatever they have learnt. The presentation was a mixture of all kinds - songs, folk and classical dances, dance medley, a recitation of Sanskrit prayers. The boy who recited Sanskrit slokas spoke in clear Oriya. I was thrilled. Yes, there were Odissi items and a plenty of them, Sambalpuri dances, a dance based on Odissi style. Hello everyone there, did you miss that six year old girl Ananya Kar on the stage? How could you if you were in the audience? Have you noticed her *lasya* in Odissi and her movements as if she was born as a dancer? Where else I could have met her except in a Convention?

Now the evening time for adults - every evening opened with an Odissi item, the first night by Rajashree Behera and the second by Pallavi Das. Oh, no, Odissi again - murmuring voices echoed. My friends, anything good, that you would like to savor or admire, goes through a long process. If Bharat Natyam has reached its apex and glory, it is because of the appreciation and criticism it receives from a vast number of patrons who can sit hours to watch. Soon came the opportunity to pay a tribute to the legendary giant Akshya Mohanty, the pioneer of Oriya pop music - a documentary produced by Arun(Mantu) Das. I know him since sixties. He is rare among us with his artistic creativity. Then followed OSANY's own production to pay the tribute, based on Akshya Mohanty's musical rendering of Fakir Mohan Senapati's "Patent Medicine." Whose voice in the background was this for introduction - again our Mantu. I did not know Mantu, you write. Sounds like poetry with romantic touch, - and your deep voice. But the audience roared with laughter because of the superb acting of Manaranjan Pattanayak as Chandramani and Lata Misra as Sulochana, the wife and their co-actors. Both of them have an inborn passion for acting, especially in that type of roles. OSA remembers three more illustrious sons of Orissa, Manamohan Choudhury - a public figure, Guru Pankaj Charan Das - the so-called Adi-Guru of Odissi, and Gopal Chhotray - the notable playwright. You may find more in the 2003 Journal under "Tribute".

Night moved to give the audience an opportunity to listen to our Sikandar Alam and his party from Orissa. Alam's songs soothed



the ears of oldies- remember the good old college days. Yet, you cannot pretend that you did not notice his daughter. Her voice was a prize to listen to. I assure you she could, one day, be counted at all India level. The night was becoming heavy - start of Mehfil, a traditional program at each convention. The stubborn visitors refused to accept anything but keeping their eyes wide open at that late hours and were delighted to see the PALA presentation by Pitambar Panigrahi and party. Now the drooping eyes led the dragging feet to the assigned room. And alas! There is some time left at least to lie down. "No, no. We should go to Kuni's room. I told her so. By the way, where are the children?"

July 5 - another day and another morning. A day devoted for youth sports, seminars and Oriya poem recitation and the General Body Meeting. Afternoon was for Pramode Patnaik's Memorial Chapter Competition; another evening of cultural program culminated by another round of Mehfil. The ORIYA KABITA ABRUTI session took me back to my school-college days. Bigyani Das is really a leader in our small community. Everyone spoke Oriya and only Oriya. Bigyani's introduction was colorful. Was there any apathy at that early hour of the morning? Rather, there were plenty of listeners. The guest from Orissa, Prativa Satpathy, made us aware of the recent contribution on topics related to women and by women.

The seminar on developments in Orissa, organized by Debi Mishra, Orissa Foundation, showed a sustained deep interest in Orissa's development and progress by several groups and individuals of NROs. Action Orissa's representative Jnana Dash's crisp presentation on IT in Orissa (mainly at Bhubaneswar) and the future plan, was contrasted by the notable social worker, Ranu Mahanti's challenging experience in rural area and followed by SEEDS spokesperson Lalu Mansinha who narrated the ups and downs of experimenting with the concept of sustainability. Previous day, there was a Women's Forum conducted by Ranu. Experience of raising children was shared by two mothers who were born in Orissa and two who were born here.

Hey, Bigyani again at the Chapter Competition representing Washington Chapter - she is indeed versatile. But the presentation "*ama gaan daktarakhana*" by Michigan Chapter was judged to be the best. My goodness! They all write their scripts and act. Talents galore - they are all young.

In the evening program, I must mention Lata Misra singing Odissi. Excuse me, where do you get your energy, Lata? You were in charge of Cultural events, a most demanding job to account for about twelve hours of stage presentation, you coordinated all OSANY's presentation and you acted previous night and now you are singing and that too, Odissi? Rina Patnaik performed a *kathak* dance. She was as usual marvelous. In the previous night, she and her party from Toronto presented the rainy season in dance form as part of six seasons. Congratulations to you all for receiving the award. The *Kawali* group, in colorful authentic costumes, suddenly turned out to be those on the stage in the opening song - Young professionals.

Tired, exhausted! Remember the plants to be watered. Only those who would not leave a moment to them selves, lest they might miss much lingered on. There you see Bijoy Misra managing the stage with the assistance of Surya Misra for the entire duration sitting on a chair in a 3 ft by 3 ft space gulping water and water; Tirtha and Eva on light and sound faithfully doing their job. You can hear Tirtha's announcements occasionally to realize what a deep voice he has. What about food? Superb in quality and variety. Thanks to the planning of Dhyananarjan Pattanayak. As you enter the dining area, the volunteers are all eagerly ready to feed you. The face of Chitta Das particularly, could not be missed. Neither one could miss Lalit Mansing. After inauguration he had to leave to attend other official duties, but was back on July 5. Sitting silently and probably reminiscing his days in Orissa, he shared the Oriyaness that we all possess. There was joy and there was satisfaction.

The Journal - it is big. More want to write and more and more! Oriya Section has increased too! The Directory which one likes to have as a prize possession, even you may

have web page of addresses - good taste. Pradyot Patnaik, the Editor looked all lost after the last moment's hard work and pressure, but was still smiling. The directory - a Canadian contribution of Hara Padhi and Lalu Mansinha; Hara chased a lot of people to make it as complete as possible. Cheers! The person behind the entire show was our friend Saradindu Misra. He was supported by Joy Gopal Mohanty and a vast team of volunteers. OSA's continuity is mainly through the volunteering efforts by a band of dedicated workers. The Convention has been a must due to these people. This is not true this year only but over other years. We salute to you Saradindu Babu and your team members and by doing so we recognize the contribution of a generation of volunteers. No awards would be enough - perhaps it would not be necessary to grant one. Nevertheless, it is our sincere admiration and the individual's genuine inner call that inspire one to volunteer.

It is time to pack up for return journey. Not quite. On July 5, the zeal to meet was not yet diminished. Action Orissa and the new OSA Council headed by Lakshmi Narayan Bhuyan had to meet - one to continue its work in Orissa and the other to initiate action here. I was there in both. Both have new initiatives. The first one is working on a targeted project of transporting books to Orissa, most possibly to Ravenshaw College, and the second one in delegating responsibilities to a number of committees on various aspects of OSA activities.

Finally we left. The place looked barren. The glamour and noise waned away; the place looked ghostly. Yet, the hope to return was newly seeded - another year and another Convention. According to Bijoy Misra (who almost sat in a suffocated corner for half a day everyday), *this is an annual pilgrimage*. It is a privilege and it is a duty.

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## *A convention in the making...*

It is really heartening to host the 35th convention of Orissa Society of Americas in Dallas this year. Although many times, during local community get-togethers, the idea of hosting a Convention was floated around, it was not until last July that it became a reality.

All volunteers for this cause have dedicated countless hours, and many more hours will be required during the event. It all started with a brain storming session in the local Hindu Temple. Many inspired members attended the meeting. The spirit was high. The main onus was selecting the right venue, and was the first topic of discussion. Everyone recommended the Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center. Thanks to the influence and contacts of our community members, the venue was booked in no time. The process of planning gathered momentum after this first success.

As a next step, it was recommended to have a chapter-wide meeting in Austin. Again, we were excited to drive to Austin, and many of us took this opportunity to meet friends there. The meeting place, the Austin public library, was no doubt the best place for such occasion. Experienced volunteers from Austin, Arkansas, Dallas, Houston and San Antonio attended the meeting. Various aspects of organizing the Convention were discussed. Organizing Committee volunteers' names were proposed, and a unanimous choice for the Convener was approved.

In today's era, for any such convention, the face is a "killer web site." Our talented web master sprung into action devoting hours of hard work. With adequate support from the Convener and the team members, a truly killer web site ([www.osa2004.org](http://www.osa2004.org)) came into being. The words spread around, and many visitors of the web site commended the effort. Refinements and additions continued.

Major planning effort was on the budget and financial planning. We thank the dedicated volunteers of the Finance Team. The true picture of OSA-Convention finance came to limelight. It is

probably funny, educational, and interesting for many members to learn that OSA does not provide any funds for organizing its Conventions! The budget started with a zero balance. However, every details of forecasting and financial planning were done meticulously. The onus fell upon the Fund Raising Team.

The Convention Fund Raising Team had the gigantic task of raising enough funds to meet all the expenses. Again, thanks to the diligent effort by the Fund Raising Team, the burden started to lighten. Although it started with lukewarm responses, many came forward with generous donations. With some big sponsor of the event, the precarious situation did not stay long with us.

As the number one attraction for the participant of OSA Convention, the planning of cultural items has carried a lot of importance. Various aspects such as stage, audiovisual, and interior decoration have been planned with able guidance of the Convener. In order to provide a unique and meaningful cultural experience, our Cultural Team set out to identify an interesting theme. Countless hours went into discussions with artists and guests from Orissa on how to express this theme with the proper script and musical composition. It was again a mammoth task to coordinate such an effort, to assemble all participants for practice sessions, and integrate performances presented by members for other areas. As it happens with organization of any Cultural event, unintended unpleasant situation might happen; but we hope that at the end of the day, a nice cultural event prevails, which is what all matters.

The Registration team has done a commendable job to develop the software that kept track of every step in the registration process. It was again a tedious task of updating each and every address received through e-mails, registration forms, or web-site updates, which kept the volunteers busy until late nights. Lot of effort has gone into planning and producing the final gift bag to every guest along with a nice memento.

Handling the second most important item in the Convention, our Food Team has also dealt with it with rigorous planning. The Team has tried its best to provide a touch of "Oriya" and "unique" style. Many sample tasting sessions were planned, and hopefully, the end result will reflect the sincere effort devoted to the cause, which we Oriyas always relish!

Last but not the least, it is needless to say that one of the toughest tasks of this convention was to edit, compile and produce the OSA Journal and the address-directory right in time for the Convention. Accommodating last minute requests

from writers, convention organizers to print the fund raising ads, and many such requests delayed the final submission date to the printer. The Editors have shown their professional competency and commitment to produce the Journal in time. Working through the nights and long hours has become part of the fun of editing, and we hope the product reflects the merit and devotion of the Editorial Committee.

As I stated earlier, countless hours have been dedicated to the cause of hosting the Convention. We hope that the end result brought smile to all participants.

Jai Jagannath.

Tapan Padhi  
Co-Convener

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## Nava Prabhat Charitable Trust: A school in Orissa offers ancient and modern Education in a Gurukula ashram

Sudhansu Mishra

It is not often that one sees children dressed in saffron clothes, who can recite in fluent Sanskrit, verses of ancient Indian scriptures - especially in an area where poverty and lack of education are predominant. Nava Prabhat (New Dawn) Charitable Trust is preparing them for something better so that these children will grow up to be responsible members of society. The Trust, in one of the remote parts of Orissa, runs such a school where education in Sanskrit scriptures is provided combined with modern mainstream education. Children are taught in Sanskrit, Oriya and English. It is a residential school for boys, and there are plans to open a girl's school in near future.

### A dream becomes a reality

Bhagban Dev, a determined 40-year-old man from Orissa started to build on his dreams of his early childhood when he was a student in his village primary school. He was the teacher's pet in the school and was given authority to act as the lead student with a title of Prime Minister. In this capacity, he led the students to do small jobs like gardening and keeping the school clean. The government of Orissa was generously providing the students with corn powder and milk powder to eat after school at 4 PM. While they ate, poor children from the neighborhood, who did not go to school, watched them and begged them for food, which irritated the cook who used to shout at them. The poor kids wait for Bhagban Dev, who never disappoints them, to offer some food after the teachers and the cook leave. He even took money and food from his home to feed the poor kids. As a child he had been troubled to see the misery of these poor children. As he grew up, he went to study in a Gurukula Ashram in Meerut, where he received ancient spiritual education in Sanskrit combined with modern education. He was inspired by the founder of the Ashram, Swami Vivekananda and later by Swami Veda Bharati at the Himalayan Institute in Rishikesh to start a school in his own village, where

children could be educated with ancient spiritual values and modern education. During one of my visits to Rishikesh he told me of his ambition to start a school in his village in Orissa.

In the year 2001 Bhagban Dev met one Mr. Ramcharan (now *Yogi Muni* after renunciation), a naturalized citizen of U.S.A who wanted to do some charitable work in India. Bhagban was greatly encouraged with his offer and started a school near his village. He set up a trust and named it Nava Pravat Charitable Trust with the blessing of his Guru. Both Mr. Ramcharan and Bhagban worked day and night with a \$700 start-up fund. Since then, with more donations from Mr. Ramcharan and others, the school was established. Mr. Ramcharan has taken *sanyasa* now and helps the *ashram* any way he can. Bhagban's elder brother Sri Soma Dev raises funds in Haradwar where he teaches Sanskrit at a local college. Volunteers collect donation paddy from local villages for consumption at school. Bhagban believes the *ashram* is totally an *Akaash Vriti* which means "just look up to the sky with faith, the Almighty will drop his grace". But it has been hard work, and one has to go from one day to another.

### Our Visit to School

I was fascinated to learn more about the school after Bhagban Dev invited me to pay a visit. Named Nava Prabhat Vedic Vidyapith, the school is located in village Nuapali in Baragarh district, which in one of the most backward regions of Orissa. During my last visit to India in March 2004, I had the occasion to visit this school. I started from Rourkela accompanied by my wife and three members of my brother-in-law's family in a van at 8 AM. On our way to the school we passed through Sambalpur, Baragarh and Sohela. From Sohela we had to go west for about 40 km to reach the school. There was a big signboard on the road for Nava Pravat Charitable Trust. At the signboard, a dirt road,

about 100 meters long, led us to the main gate of the campus. The school is about 100 km away from Sambalpur. Padampur is the nearest town, which is 8 km down the road.

It was 2:30 in the afternoon when we reached our destination. Bhagban Dev and his colleagues were waiting for our arrival. The students and their teachers greeted us enthusiastically and gave us water to wash our feet before entering the building. It refreshed us after a journey of almost seven hours. I was impressed to see the children who all gathered around us dressed in saffron colored *kurta* and a *dhoti*, which was wrapped around their waist and hanging loosely down to their feet. They were all boys ranging in ages from 8 to 12 years moving around like miniature *sanyasis*. All the conversation between the teachers and the students were carried on in Sanskrit while they were preparing to serve us lunch.

We were hungry, and we welcomed lunch, which smelled delicious. The boys who already had their lunch were helping in serving food in stainless steel *thalis*. Food for lunch consisted of rice, *dal*, chapatti, two types of vegetable items, and tomato chutney. Just before eating while we were offering our prayers, the students and the staff chanted the prayers in Sanskrit. We were told that the residents of the ashram grow rice, wheat, vegetables, and other grains that they eat. I saw a crop of *Tulsi* plants, which were dried for making tea.

After lunch we saw the school building where the students reside and study. The building is a spacious two-storied building with 16 classrooms, computer room, library, residents' rooms, guest room, staff room, administrative office, and storage rooms. Children are supplied with wooden beds and bedding where they study and sleep. In the courtyard of the building there is enough room to do the morning yoga practice. Kitchen and dining area is located on the first floor. There is a large room on the second floor, which is used for meditation and other assemblies. There was only one computer and very few books in the library. The children must go to the fields, as there are not enough toilets.

Volunteer workers performed most of work in the building construction.

The students and the staff gave us a formal reception in the assembly room. The boys introduced themselves by giving their names, the villages they came from and the classes they attend. The students were asked to recite scriptures and give short prepared speeches in Sanskrit, Hindi and English. When I asked some of the students what they would be doing if they did not join the school, they said they would have ended up as poor uneducated laborers, without any hope for future like their parents.

After completing elementary school up to 5<sup>th</sup> class in their villages, students are admitted to Nava Prabhat School. Now there are 22 students in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> classes (grades). This year after summer, they will open the 8<sup>th</sup> class with 15 new students added to the school. Most of the children appeared to be bright, and hard working.



The School Building



Students and Teachers meet outdoors

We were told that the student's day begins at 4 AM. After prayers and recitation of scriptures they do yoga and meditation. Breakfast is served at 8 AM. The rest of the day is spent in classrooms where classes in Sanskrit literature and modern subjects are taught until 4 PM. Lunch and rest period are from 12 to 2 PM. During the day, students are required to speak in Sanskrit, English, Hindi,



and Oriya at assigned times for each language. In the afternoon the children meditate, play games and do light work for the *ashram*. In the evening the children engage in *Yagna* (fire worship), *Bhagbad Gita* study and public speaking practice. Then they have dinner. After some self study before going to bed, the children offer prayers and go to bed at 9 PM.

In the short 2-hour time we stayed, I was impressed by the amount of selfless work and organization that has been devoted in establishing a school in the Gurukula tradition. There is a *Gosala* (cow shed) with milk producing cows. Bordering the 35-acre land for the institute is the river Bada-jora that serves as a good bathing place for the children.

The concept of an *Ashram* is realized when one finds a school with various kinds of fruit trees, a farm producing vegetable and grains, mango and coconut trees lined up along the approach road from the gate, cows in a *gosala* (cow shed) providing milk, herbal garden, and teachers teaching ancient scriptures to students from very early ages. Every one we met was very friendly.

At present there are three teachers in the staff, which will be increased to four from July. Some of the teachers are employees at the local Government school who volunteer to teach the children. A doctor from the nearby hospital visits the school regularly to look into health matters. There are two cooks and a ground supervisor in the staff. People from the surrounding villages are eager to help in any way they can.

Recently a few girl students, from the nearby school came to visit the *ashram*. After seeing the ashram and the school, one of them told Bhagban, "I wish to die and take birth as a boy in order to study in this *ashram*." It shows the significance of providing similar education for girls. The Trust considers it important to start a similar school for girls, so that they are not deprived.

I was glad to see that Bhagban Dev's dream has taken some shape, although there is lot more that is yet to be done. We had to

end our short visit in order to return to Rourkela the same evening. I promised Bhagban Dev that I would go to America and tell people about his wonderful project. He held my hand and told me that their needs are many, and every bit of help will enable him to support the existing program and add some more. We took leave of him, but I promised to return soon.

### **The Trust is more than a school**

The Nava Prabhat Trust is established to introduce knowledge based socio-economic program that not only provides traditional education but also prepares the community for a healthier and productive society. A number of projects are adopted by the Trust that help to accomplish this.

An herbal garden and medical plant nursery has been developed on a 15-acre plot within the campus. Promotions of herbal gardens in neighboring villages are also planned.

Organic farming methods like compost, vermin-culture and *neem* based pesticides are used. The Trust is promoting organic method farming in 30 neighboring villages.

The Trust has developed an agriculture and horticulture farm on the 35-acre *ashram* site where essential grains, fruits and vegetables are grown. In course of time the Trust expects to generate enough funds to sustain it.

A *Gosala* is set up with cows for a dairy farm. It will have sufficient milk for children in the *ashram* when the project is completed. The trust has plans for a dairy co-operative in 30 neighboring villages.

The Trust has plans to work with the school dropout children and prepare them for mainstream education. Trust volunteers are providing after-hour coaching to school going children.

### **The Challenge**

As I have mentioned before, the institution is struggling hard to keep the operation going with the current student population of 22. In July 2004, 15 more

students and a teacher will be added. I am listing a few of the short term and long term needs for the school and the trust.

The school now needs

- Donors who can adopt some students to pay Rs10, 000 (\$230) per student/year.
- A decent library is needed with both ancient literature and modern books. Furnishing and books will cost Rs.10, 000/- initially.
- At least 6 computers for computer education. A computer with monitor costs about Rs.26, 000 (\$600) in India.
- More toilet facilities (4 to 5), which is estimated to cost up to Rs20,000/-.
- A *yajna sala* (a place to conduct fire rituals) where 200 to 300 people can participate. This is a spiritual ritual to burn the ego, an essential requirement for *vedic* style teaching in a Gurukula. This structure will be built on pillars with arrangements for a fire pit and a platform for participants to sit. The kitchen and the dinning area will be added to this and the entire complex will be dedicated to *Agni* (fire). The cost for this project is estimated at Rs.5 lakhs (approx \$11000).

The long-term goals are to

- Make provision to add 25 students every year to bring the total student strength of the school to 250 by the time the first batch completes High School.
- Expand the school building to add more classrooms and a hostel for students.
- Add a *Kanya Gurukula*, which is a school for girls, estimated at Rs.40 lakhs (\$90,000).
- Add community programs in the areas of health, nutrition, literacy, job oriented vocational training, and old age Day Care.

There are numerous challenges in supporting an organization of this nature. I know Bhagban Dev will pull through the hurdles with his determination and tireless work. He is hard working, honest and dedicated. As he says, the Lord's grace will provide the means.

There is a web site [www.navaprabhat.org](http://www.navaprabhat.org) available to learn more about the school. Contact Sudhansu Misra at Tel. 651-631-1145, email: [sudhansum@msn.com](mailto:sudhansum@msn.com) if you want to get involved in this project. You will be happy to help many poor children where it is desperately needed.

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*Sudhansu Misra is a resident in St. Paul, Minnesota. He came to U.S.A some 47 years ago. He is a retired engineer from Honeywell. He visits India often and is active in social service.*



Mathematics education in Orissa schools, college and  
research in applied mathematics for Orissa specific problems

## **A new center is rising in Orissa and needs our support**

***Lalu Mansinha***

In the olden times they used to wonder as to how the black ugly mud at the bottom of the pool gives rise to the beautiful Lotus flower. Amidst all the dysfunction, chaos, unemployment and starvation in Orissa, it is wonderful to see a scholastic center rise. And even more wonderful is the fact that it is not an ivory tower where nerdy, eccentric mathematicians ponder about imaginary numbers and virtual dimensions. In fact this institution is unusual in that it has been conceived as a research institution that will have a role in education at the primary school level, at the secondary school level, at the college/university level, tackle Orissa specific problems, and be a world class research institution. It is so wonderful to see a group of scientists work towards a seemingly impossible goal of establishing such a center and succeed in impoverished Orissa, in the face of overwhelming difficulties.

It is important to note a center of applied mathematics will contribute to solutions in just about every field of endeavour in Orissa.

When I was made aware of the crisis of falling numbers of students and falling quality of teaching and research in mathematics, I was incredulous; of all the problems that beset Orissa today, one would not think of a crisis in the mathematics profession as being important or relevant. But on reflection, I realised that I was the ignorant one. The crisis is real. Lucky for Orissa that a small dedicated group, led by Dr. Swadhin Pattanayak and Dr. Chandra Mohapatra have recognised the problem in mathematics, and have been the driving force behind the years of effort to set up an institute of mathematics in Orissa, that would simultaneously be a world class research institute and at the same time be directly linked with the school system, and also be a leader in providing solutions to Orissa specific problems that involve

mathematical and statistical modeling and computation.

Orissa is in need of imaginative and competent applied mathematicians to tackle a host of Orissa specific problems that need mathematical, statistical and computational modeling. Here are a few: Weather model for prediction and tracking of cyclones; Model for prediction of floods in the monsoon season; Modeling of Chilika Lake water flow, salinity and siltation; Agricultural prices and crop forecasting; Economic model for setting the State budget; Model the flow of each major river for irrigation; Groundwater models at each village for guidance for local water use etc. etc. Add to this list the needs of many of the industries.

Even as one can see a current need for applied mathematicians to solve major current problems that beset Orissa, there is a decline in the numbers of the youth who are choosing mathematics as a profession. The number of youths going into mathematics has been dropping for several decades. This has led to the situation that right now there are very few mid-career good mathematicians in Orissa today who can act as teachers and role models. The root cause of disaffection of youth for mathematics must lie at the primary and secondary school levels, in poor teaching, insufficient career guidance advice, and a popular image of mathematics as being exceptionally difficult.

Dr. Swadhin Pattanayak, Dr. Chandra Mohapatra and others have been working on the concept of a Math Institute for several years, and have been trying to address the problems of mathematics in Orissa at several levels: (1) Math talent contest in Class 6 in schools throughout Orissa; Talented students are awarded scholarships; (2) Plans for a high quality B.Sc., M.Sc. program, in collaboration with the Institute of Physics; (3) Concentrate on research topics in applied mathematics:

Wavelet Analysis; Numerical Modeling; Geometric Methods in Physics; Inverse Problems; Mathematical Finance; (4) Plan for collaboration with Orissa institutions for applicable research.

The official title of the centre is Indian Institute of Mathematics and Applications (IIMA). The mathematics talent contest has been running for four years now. The Talent Contest at Class 6 level picks out bright students, but the IIMA cannot use government funds to award the scholarships. Thirty top students are awarded scholarships of Rs1500/year, thanks to recurring generous donations by Dr. Sandip Dasverma of California.

In Orissa there are about 800,000 students in Class 6 in 11,500 upper primary (Classes 5, 6 &7) schools. IIMA does not have the resources yet to conduct the test in every upper primary school. There are 5.5 million students in the upper and lower primary school system in Orissa. If we assume that of the 800,000 students in Class 6 one in ten thousand is exceptionally bright, then we should have at least 80 scholarships. This is where we the NROs can help, by providing funds to bring the number of scholarships up to 80 or so.

There are other ways to help the budding Institute. The faculty of IIMA and students do not have ready access to research journals published outside. There is very little money for subscription of foreign scientific journals. NROs can pay for subscriptions to mathematical journals.

IIMA has already attracted favourable notice and recognition within and outside Orissa. The mathematics talent tests have been praised and other states are thinking of starting their own programs. The Government of Orissa has granted a campus land in

Bhubaneswar. The Tata organisation see enough promise in the societal benefits in the concept of this center and have agreed to donate funds for the building.

In February 2004 IIMA hosted the annual meeting of the Orissa Mathematical Society, and a National Workshop on Wavelets and Applications. Sri Gopal Mohanty (McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada) and I attended this conference. Wavelets fall within my research interests, and I was suitably impressed by the high calibre of the four day Workshop.

Many of us collected funds and personally participated in relief efforts in Orissa after the 1999 Supercyclone. Oriyas in Canada raised perhaps C\$150,000, in US perhaps US\$400,000 for relief and rehabilitation efforts. A tiny fraction of these amounts can play a very effective role in educating future mathematicians and scientists who can work in a modern institution not only to do world class research but also to help prevent future disasters to their own home state. Donations of:

- \$1,000/year can provide 30 scholarships of Rs1500/year for exceptionally bright school students
- \$1,000/year can provide three learned journal subscriptions/year
- \$12,500/year can provide a Visiting Professor

It takes only 10 donors giving \$100/year to raise \$1000. Is that too much to ask to provide an opportunity for a future Srinivasa Ramanujan of Orissa? Please email me if you are willing to join hands.

Lalu Mansinha  
[mansinha@uwo.ca](mailto:mansinha@uwo.ca)

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*Lalu Mansinha is Professor emeritus in the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. His research interests span some aspects of physics, mathematics, statistics, geology and geophysics, data and image processing.*



# Preventing and Curing Blindness in Orissa: The current initiatives

*Devi P. Misra, Huntsville, Alabama*

According to W.H.O. statistics there are 45 million blind people worldwide with a further 135 million visually impaired people. India has 13 million blind people. There are two million blind children in India, and only 5% receive any education. Blindness and visual impairment has tremendous socioeconomic implications.

How can one help?

- Up to 80% of blindness is correctable or preventable.
- Cost of a cataract operation is \$50.
- Cost of a Braille and mathematics kit for a blind child's education is \$40.
- Cost of a village eye camp is \$500 - restores sight of 30 people and treats 250 others.
- Cost of a mobile van is \$12000-\$18000

## CURRENT NRO INITIATIVES IN ORISSA

### 1. VISION CARE, BHUBANESWAR, & EYE CLINIC:

Mr. Srimant Misra, a local MBA and entrepreneur, was initially involved in a World Bank funded rural health project in Keonjhar District. Creating his own foundation, he wanted to reduce avoidable blindness through optimal utilization of its resources.

A makeshift eye clinic in a rented house since November 2000 has restored vision of 1625 cataract patients with intraocular lens implants. Vision Care, an outpatient outfit run under the same umbrella, has been helping in preventive eye care in children and in all age groups. Mr. Prabhat Misra of Union City, California has been involved in funding part of the effort.

Dr. Jeetu Nanda, an internist from '98 in the St. Louis area, spent all of his childhood years outside Orissa and has had his medical school education in the Phillipines, yet he

always wanted to do something benevolent at the grassroots level in Orissa. During his visit in 2002, he encountered a lot of people working selflessly with a genuine desire to help.

Dr. Prashant Mohanty, a professor in ophthalmology at SCB Medical College, arranged some financial help through "Help Age India" and has been conducting surgery.

Recently, arrangements have been made to provide a YAG LASER, for treating retinal diseases, and an auto-refractometer to screen children's vision.

A piece of land has been acquired with a view to build a state-of-the-art eye institution in the area.

For information:

Dr. Jeetu Nanda  
1758 Bighorn Basin Dr.  
Baldwin, MO 63011  
jsnanda@aol.com

Prabhat Misra  
32579 Carmel Way  
Union City, CA 94587

### 2. THE SAMBALPUR PROJECT:

Eye camps were held in rural areas in the outskirts of Sambalpur township in February 2003, December 2003, and February 2004. The camps performed eye check-ups for all age groups for glasses, performed preventive eye care for children and screened elderly people for cataracts. Those with cataracts were operated on in the government hospital in Sambalpur with subsequent follow-up by BISWA. The camps were conducted by Mr. Harekrushna Patnaik of Detroit and Mrs. Ranu Mahanti of East Lansing with the help of BISWA, a local NGO.

A seminar on eye diseases was arranged by Mr. Harekrushna Patnaik and was held in Sambalpur.

The financing of the eye camps and the seminar was arranged by Mr. H.K. Patnaik of Detroit.

The Janasakti Eye Hospital was started in February 2004 in Sambalpur. A piece of land is being acquired. A committee has been formed to look over the project. Donations have been forthcoming from the local people.

For more information:

Mrs. Jayashree (Ranu) Mahanti  
517-337-9570  
mahanti@pa.msu.edu  
ranumahanti@yahoo.com

### 3. THE BKMM ROTARY EYE HOSPITAL (DHENKANAL):

Due to the enormity of preventable and curable eye disease prevailing in all parts of Orissa, the author was inspired and stimulated to encourage planning of a state of the art eye institution in Dhenkanal.

The Orissa Foundation donated in 2002 three acres of land in Bauliabandh, six miles from Dhenkanal township. A local businessman donated one acre of land in memory of his mother.

A 50 bed hospital is in the plan. The architectural design of the project is complete. A committee including local rotary members in Dhenkanal has been formed.

The Orissa Foundation provided \$22000 for obtaining the bank loan for the project. The bank loan of Rs 88 Lakhs has been approved. The Orissa Foundation has donated a further amount of \$23000 for the construction to begin. Just this month, May 2004, the construction of the hospital has started.

The hospital will have two operating rooms and ten paying and 30 nonpaying patient rooms. One operating room cost is set at Rs 1.51000 and both the operating rooms

are spoken for. The patient rooms are at a cost of Rs 121000. Nine patients' rooms are committed by people in memory of their kin. One of the nine patient rooms is donated by a physician from Andhra in memory of her father. We expect more donations in this context once the construction begins.

The rotary does not help in construction but one can obtain a matching grant for equipment, which we expect to obtain as soon as the hospital building is close to completion, which is set for July 2005.

Within India, not much in Orissa, there are many eye-related organizations that can help in obtaining equipment with local prices, which may be cheaper.

The vision of the hospital would be not only directed at preventing and curing eye diseases, but to establish also as a center for research in eye disease. Once established, mobile vans will go within a radius of 75 miles to screen visually impaired patients.

If we can establish five or six such centers in different parts of Orissa, each such center encompassing an area of 75-100 square miles of rural Orissa, then we will have achieved our goal of dealing with visual impairment in the state of Orissa.

Two distinguished physicians from Orissa have kindly consented to facilitate as much help as they can muster to realize these dreams. One is Dr. Amulya Sahu, a practicing ophthalmologist in Bombay. Then we have Dr. Biren Sahoo, regional director for Southeast Asia for Welch-Allyn Company headquartered in Singapore. We need everybody's cooperation.

All of us are requesting those of you who are capable and also aspire to help in such endeavors, to donate 1% of your annual income to developmental projects in Orissa — irrespective of your own expertise.

For information:

The Orissa Foundation  
TEL: 256-883-5499  
E-mail: [dmisra@bellsouth.net](mailto:dmisra@bellsouth.net)



# Homes for poor

## (Homes for people living below poverty line in urban/rural areas)

Address of the NGO: CUTTACK HABITAT FOR HUMANITY  
104, Satyasudha Apartment  
Kanika Road, Cuttack -753 008, India  
E-Mail - [cuttackhfh@sify.com](mailto:cuttackhfh@sify.com)

### Executive Summary

Date Prepared: 10th April 2004

Grant Applicant: Habitat for Humanity International #  
54/ A, 2nd Floor, 3rd Cross Kavery Layout,  
Thavarekere Main Road, Bangalore -560 029.

Implementing affiliate: Cuttack Habitat for Humanity, (A  
Branch of Khammam)

Total project cost: US \$66,650

Amount to be contributed from  
Habitat: US \$22,216

Amount requested from partner: US \$44,433

Unit cost of each house: US \$1333

Number of houses to be built: 50 Houses

Area : Within Dhenkanal District

Project contacts: Dr. Ranjan Singh, President  
Cuttack Habitat for Humanity

### Project Profile

Cuttack Habitat for Humanity is now a branch of The Local Habitat for Humanity, Khammam affiliated to Habitat for Humanity Inter-national. Being a branch of Habitat for Humanity International, the mission of Cuttack HFH is to eradicate poverty housing in rural as well in urban areas.

The branch constructed its first house at Tulsipur, Cuttack on August 9, 2000. Now, the total number of houses undertaken is 125, out of which 114 are completed and other houses are under construction.

Cuttack HFH has successfully completed the B.S. Pur Project, i.e. 46 houses in partnership with OVT. USA and have taken up Patrapada Project, near Puri, in partnership with Rotary Club of Birmingham to construct 28 houses for cyclone affected people of coastal Orissa. To date, 11 are completed, 6 are under construction and 11 new houses are in the pipe line and the expected date of completion is 30th June 2004.

As Cuttack HFH is the only branch in Orissa State, therefore it has not restricted its activity in Cuttack district only, but has

constructed houses in other districts like Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Gajapati, Bhubaneswar, Berhampur and Ganja.

Cuttack HFH has successfully completed construction of 46 houses and 46 toilets at Bhitarsrichandanpur of Erasama Block of Jagatsinghpur near Paradeep coast at east of Cuttack town. The village was completely devastated by the super cyclone that hit coastal Orissa on 29th October 1999. This colony was dedicated to the community on March 03, 2002. This was a joint partnership project of "Our Village Trust", locally implemented by Cuttack Habitat for Humanity. Table-1 shows type of houses.

partition of their property. In both the cases, they live without their won identity and privacy.

The focused group will be mostly Daily Laborer, small trade men and women who trade on a day to day basis with less profit margins. Hence they do not acquire adequate resources to build a house. By this way, the repayment period will enhance as against the routine schedule repayment time. Hence this shall be the first opportunity for Cuttack Habitat to join hands with the people from the poorest of the poor in urban areas for building decent low cost housing with a scheme of building the capacity of the people from BPL by the joint venture of partners NGO of USA and Cuttack Habitat for Humanity.

**Table-1:** Types of Houses

Family Types	Poorest of the Poor
Land situation	Homeowners Possess their own registered land.
Plinth area of the house hall	200-240 sq.ft consisting of a with partition.
Cost of the house	Rs. 60,000 - excluding the unskilled labour provided by homeowners.
Sweat equity	Homeowners provide unskilled labour
Walls	Bricks with cement Plaster.
Roofs	RCC (Reinforced Concrete Cement)
<b>Back ground of the scheme:</b>	The housing programme for the poor people who are living below poverty line.

#### Homeowner Background:

With the increased population in rural/urban area in the Dhenkanal District and increased number of members in each family, inadequate living space has become the major problem. After the division and family partition of ancestral landed property, people are finding it difficult to construct their individual concrete house within the limitation of their income range.

People from the target group mostly stay in a thatched roof and mud wall. Those who have not taken a separate house, they are constrained to stay jointly with other members of their family, even after the

#### Involving Habitat Youth Club and Social Organization of Community:

Apart from "The Habitat Youth Club," Cuttack locally collected money for homeless people and the student voluntary work in the home owner house, also the Y's Men Club of Cuttack, which is the local chapter of Y's Men International, will contribute voluntary service and time in the project. The Youth Club Members have agreed and given their consent to work for the homeless people.



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**PROPOSAL:**

Cuttack Habitat for Humanity has the experience and the expertise in construction of houses for people in poverty and in the past has demonstrated the same. It now proposes to construct 50 houses for people from below poverty line in the urban/rural areas of Dhenkanal District who do not have a permanent shelter.

The current houses that they live in are houses with thatched roofs and the walls are mud, thus they are vulnerable to the vagaries of nature. The children are exposed to contagious diseases in the monsoon season

and hence fall sick very often and there are instances where the children have lost their lives due to lack of proper timely medication.

Cuttack Habitat for Humanity proposes to build 50 houses to such families who have a strong sense of community commitment and are willing to avail benefits under this scheme in providing their sweat equity and also by repaying the money which will be used to build more houses in their area.

Cuttack Habitat for Humanity would eventually build all the houses in the area with the help of repayment and the support of the homeowners.

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*Dr. Ranjan Singh, President, Cuttack Habitat for Humanity*

### **The Art of Giving**

“Remember to be gentle with yourself and others. We are all children of chance, and none can say why some fields will blossom and others lay brown beneath the August sun. Care for those around you. Look past your differences. Their dreams are no less than yours, their choices in life no more easily made. And give. Give in any way you can, of whatever you possess. To give is to love. To withhold is to wither. Care less for your harvest than how it is shared, and your life will have meaning and your heart will have peace.”

By Kent Nerburn in *Letters to My Son*

## 2003 Best Graduates of Orissa High Schools Receive Rs. 1,00,000 Cash Awards

### Sitakantha Dash

During the first symposium of the Orissa Society of Americas held at Swosti Plaza Hotel, Bhubaneswar on December 24, 2003, The Chief Minister of Orissa, Sri Naveen Patnaik honored 2003 Orissa High School Best Graduates holding first, second and third positions with Rs. 1,00,000 cash awards and plaques.

This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Award Ceremony organized by Dr. Hamanta Kumar Senapati Trust under the Orissa Society of Americas banner. The recipients of the 2003 awards were:

First Position: *Digraj Kumar Mohanta of N.S.Police High School, Keonjhar of Keonjhar – Rs 50,000*

Second Position: Nikita Kumari Panigrahi of Government Sec. Tng. School (W), Berhampur, Ganjam, and

Amita Panda of Saraswati Vidya Mandir, Bhubaneswar – Rs. 30,000

Third Position: Auroshri Mishra of Puri Zilla School, Puri – Rs. 20,000

Dr. Hemanta Kumar Senapati Trust Fund provides cash awards of Rs. 50,000, Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 20,000 to high school students holding 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positions in Orissa every year. This trust has been established by the families and friends of Late Dr. Hemanta Kumar Senapati with a cash contribution of \$25,000, and the interest of this trust fund provides the cash for the awards and related expenses.

Dr. Senapati was President of OSA from 1996 to 1998 and was involved in Orissa education and development projects. And for this reason, Dr. Hemanta Senapati Trust was established with Dr. S.K.Dash, former OSA President and Dr. Shishira Senapati (Dr. Hemanta Senapati's younger brother) as trustees.

Mr. Debendra Nath Mishra, the coordinator of Orissa-America Resource Center at Cuttack, organized this award ceremony. Mr. Mishra has been serving as the coordinator of Orissa-America Resource Center since 1995 and assisting in selecting and sending speakers and artists to OSA conventions and recommending students for higher studies in USA and Canada.

Dr. S.K.Dash and Late Dr. Hemanta Kumar Senapati established Orissa-America Resource Centers in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Balasore with their own funds to help the exchange of scholars, artists and to assist students for higher education and NROs for developmental projects in Orissa.



## First NRO Village!

**Akshay K. Panda, Minnesota**

When Dr. S. K. Dash was the president of Orissa Society of Americas during 1993-95, he urged upon our Oriya friends to adopt a village or a school, or to sponsor a student, or to do some development work in Orissa, where our roots are. He had said this at OSA conventions and in OSA Newsletters. His message has received tremendous response from NROs.

Our Oriya friends have helped in establishing Fakir Mohan University in Balasore, creating the Regional Blood Bank in Bhubaneswar, providing health care facilities in different parts of Orissa, adopting high schools, establishing colleges, providing drinking water facilities in villages, building shelter homes in villages, and participating in many more projects. Many of these projects have been reported at recent OSA conventions, 2003 OSA Symposium in Bhubaneswar, and in OSA souvenirs.

When it came to adopting a village, Dr. Dash took the lead besides being in the forefront in the above mentioned projects. He adopted a village that is small with 121 families. He felt he could adopt this village and do the needed projects with his own funds. His first step was to build a temple that the village badly needed. It took him 3 years to get this temple construction complete in 1998. About this time Orissa had the worst cyclone and most of the houses were completely damaged. The villagers had no food to eat, no blankets to protect themselves from the cold weather, no

seeds and fertilizers for cultivation, and no drinking water. Dr. Dash visited the village, talked to each and everyone, and understood the magnitude of the problem. He provided blankets to everyone in the village, provided cash to the needy to buy food and survive, provided seed and fertilizer to all the farmers, and helped many to repair their houses.

Dr. Dash set up a committee of three trusted villagers including his own brother to handle the funds provided by him for the village development project. Now, they are managing the projects.

The first shelter home was completed in 2002. The second shelter home is scheduled to be completed in 2004. A primary school, which was completely demolished in the cyclone has been rebuilt with government funding. Three tube-wells are functioning. Fifty percent houses have been repaired and rebuilt with brick and concrete.

A cooperative bank has been established with Dr. Dash's seed money which is available to the villagers as loan for purchase of seeds, fertilizers, etc. There are 45 members in this cooperative bank now.

Dr. Dash monitors the progress of all the village projects by phone and visits the village during December, every year. The goal is to make this a model NRO village, which will serve as a role model for others.

<b>Orissa Society of the Americas</b>		<i>Updated: 6/30/2003</i>	
<b>Income Statement 2001-2003</b>			
	<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>	
<b><i>Beginning Balance:</i></b>	\$ 2,123.17	\$ 2,146.48	
<b><u>Income:</u></b>			
Chicago/MD Convention	3,248.23	-	
Membership Dues	2,700.00	5,233.07	
Subrina Biswal Fund	500.00	-	
<b><i>Total Income</i></b>	<b>6,448.23</b>	<b>5,233.07</b>	
<b><u>Expenses:</u></b>			
Newsletter-Fall	1,577.13	-	
Newsletter-Spring	1,947.16	228.75	
Website Dues	70.00	240.00	
Bank Account Service Charges	75.00	150.00	
Checks	15.00	-	
Newsletter labels & stamps	140.63	211.21	
Transfer of Life Membership			
Dues to Investment Account	2,600.00	5,198.07	
Election Expenses		791.77	
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	<b>6,424.92</b>	<b>6,819.80</b>	
<b><i>Ending Balance:</i></b>	<b>2,146.48</b>	<b>559.75</b>	
<b><u>Investment Account</u></b>			
Beginning Balance	\$ 54,502.73	\$ 56,932.18	
Ending Balance	\$ 56,932.18	\$ 66,080.78	
Growth	\$ 2,429.45	\$ 9,148.60	

\* Submitted by Hari Arjuna Patro, OSA Secretary



# ROYALS SWEETS & FAST FOOD

## Sweets



## Snacks



## Chat



## MENU

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Kalakand      | Hot Mix       |
| Julie         | Chakri        |
| Multani Halwa | Ferari Chewda |
| Apsi Halwa    | Navrathan Mix |
| Cream Cutlet  | Moongdal      |
| Dudhi Halwa   | Ghatiya       |
| Carrot Halwa  | Bananachips   |
|               | Fried Cashews |
|               | Fried Peanuts |
|               | Channa Dal    |
|               | Dalmooth      |
|               | Namakpara     |
|               | Mathi         |
|               | Dry Kachori   |
|               | Dry Samosa    |
|               | Chakarpara    |
|               | Sev           |
|               | Samosa Chat   |
|               | Kachori Chat  |
|               | Papidi Chat   |
|               | Bhel Puri     |
|               | Pani Puri     |
|               | Mirchi Pakoda |
|               | Samosa        |

- Burfee
- Gulab Jamun
- Kala Jamun
- Rasgulla
- Chumchum
- Rajbogh
- Malaisandwich
- Kheermohan
- Petha

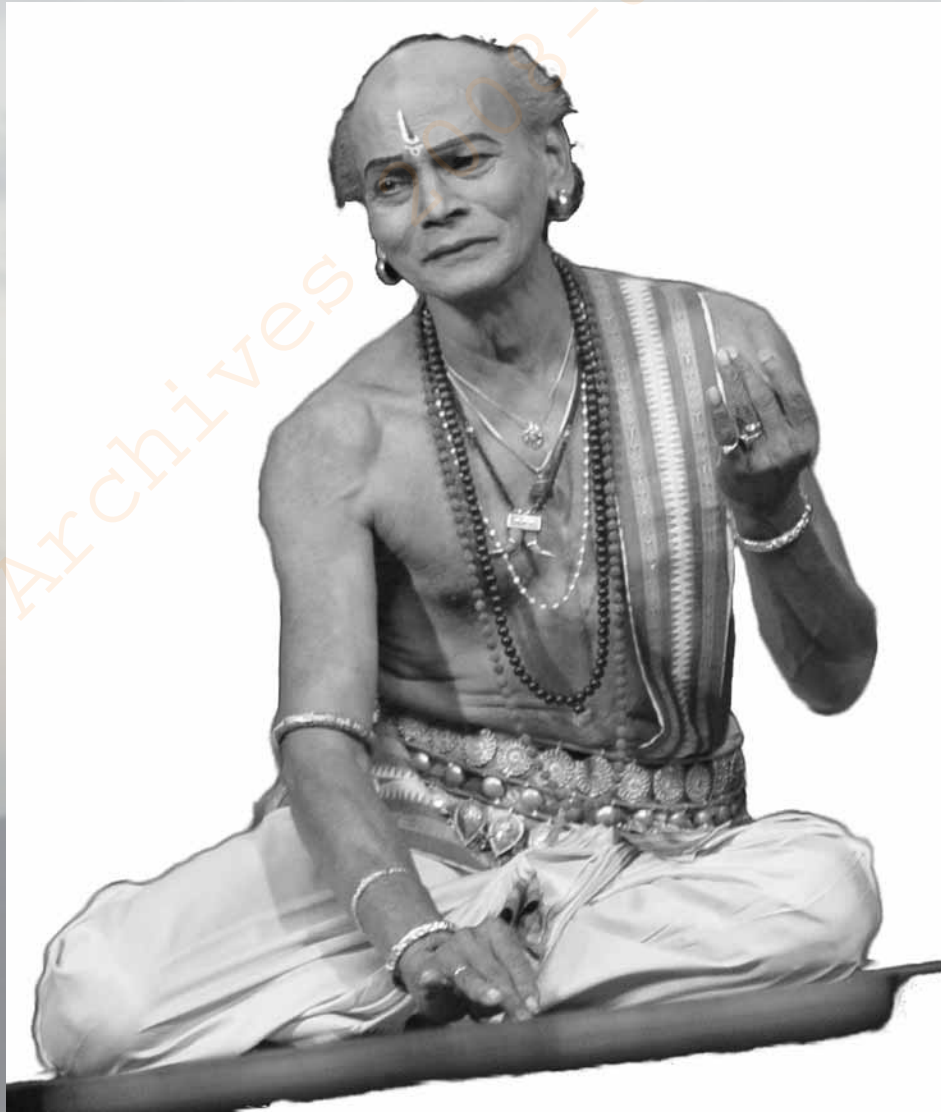
**Taste the best, forget the rest!**

**Farmer's Branch**  
 12895 Josey Lane  
 Suite 109  
**972-484-1150**

**GRAND OPENING**  
**Irving**  
 219 W. Airport Fwy.  
 Suite 100  
**972-871-2120**

**Richardson**  
 524 W. Beltline Road  
 Suite 4  
**972-669-4973**

# Loss of a cultural Icon



**Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra: 1924 - 2004**

Photo Credit – Amitava Sarkar, [amitava.sarkar@paiindia.org](mailto:amitava.sarkar@paiindia.org)

କେଳୁ ବାବୁ





Photo Credit – Avinash Pashricha

# ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନୃତ୍ୟ ଜଗତର ପ୍ରବାଦ ପୁରୁଷ

ନିତ୍ୟାନନ୍ଦ ସାହୁ

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନୃତ୍ୟ ଜଗତର ପ୍ରବାଦ ପୁରୁଷ ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣ ମହାପାତ୍ରଙ୍କର ପାଦର ଘୁଙ୍ଗୁର ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ୭୮ ବର୍ଷର ସାଧନାପୁତ ଜୀବନର ଅବସାନ ଘଟିଛି । ୧୯୨୬ ମସିହା ଜାନୁଆରୀ ୮ ତାରିଖରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିବା ଏଇ ଜୀବନ ୨୦୦୪ ଏପ୍ରିଲ ୭ ତାରିଖରେ ତା'ର ଇହଲୀଳା ସମ୍ପରଣ କରିଛି ।

ଯଥାର୍ଥତଃ ସେଇ ଜୀବନ ଲୀଳାମୟ ଥିଲା । କିଏ ଜାଣିଥିଲା ଚିତ୍ରକର ଗାଁ ରଘୁରାଜପୁରର ଯେଉଁ ବାଳକ ଗାଁର ବଳଭଦ୍ର ସାହୁଙ୍କ ଗୋଟିପୁଅ ଆଖଡ଼ାକୁ ଲୁଚିଛପି ଆଗ୍ରହର ସହିତ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥିଲା, ସେ ଦିନେ ସମଗ୍ର ବିଶ୍ୱରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନୃତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରବାଦ ପୁରୁଷ ହୋଇଉଠିବେ ! ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ପ୍ରାୟ ସପ୍ତାହକ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀର ହାବିଶାଟ୍ ସେକ୍ଟରରେ ଓ ଏପ୍ରିଲ୍ ପହିଲାରେ ଉତ୍କଳ ଦିବସ ସମାରୋହରେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀର ଗାନ୍ଧି ଅତିଚୋରିୟମ୍ରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଛନ୍ଦମୟ ନୃତ୍ୟ, ଚପଳ କମନୀୟ ମୁଦ୍ରା ଶୋଭିତ ଅଙ୍ଗ ଭଙ୍ଗୀ ଯିଏ ଦେଖିଛନ୍ତି ସେମାନେ କେବଳ ମୁଗ୍ଧ ହୋଇନାହାନ୍ତି, ୭୮ ବର୍ଷର ବୟସ କିପରି ତାଙ୍କର ନୃତ୍ୟ ନିକଟରେ ବଶୀଭୂତ ହୋଇଛି ତାହାଦେଖି ବିସ୍ମିତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ଗଭୀର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ନେଇ ଫେରିଛନ୍ତି ଯେ ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଏପରି ନୃତ୍ୟ ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ । ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ମଞ୍ଚରେ ଉତ୍ତର ପ୍ରଦେଶର ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବିଭାଗର ସଚୀବ ରୀତା ସିହ୍ନା ଭାବ ବିହ୍ୱଳ ହୋଇ କହିପକାଇଲେ - “ଯେତେବେଳେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ନିଜେ ନୃତ୍ୟ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହାଁନ୍ତି ସେ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ହିଁ ନୃତ୍ୟ କରନ୍ତି ।” ଯଥାର୍ଥତଃ କେଳୁଚରଣ ଥିଲେ ନୃତ୍ୟାବତାର । ନୃତ୍ୟର ମୁଦ୍ରା ତାଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଅବତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହେଉଥିଲେ ଓ ସେ ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଜୀବନ୍ତ କରି ଅଭିବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଦେଉଥିଲେ ।

ଏଇ ସିଦ୍ଧି ପାଇଁ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କୁ କମ୍ ସାଧନା କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିନାହିଁ । ବଳଭଦ୍ର ସାହୁଙ୍କ ଗୋଟିପୁଅ ଆଖଡ଼ାରୁ ଅର୍ଜିତ ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତାକୁ ପାଥେୟକରି ସେ ପିତାଙ୍କ ଅନିଚ୍ଛା ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ମୋହନ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦେବ ଗୋସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ରାସଲୀଳା ଦଳରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏଇଠି ସେ ନୃତ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଭାବରେ ନିଜକୁ ଗଢ଼ିଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ମେକଅପ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଆନୁଷଙ୍ଗିକ ବିଦ୍ୟା ଶିକ୍ଷା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଚିତ୍ରକର ପିତା ଚିନ୍ତାମଣି ମହାପାତ୍ର ସିନା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆନୁଷଙ୍ଗିକ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେଇ ପାରିନଥିଲେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କଠାରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣ ନିଷ୍ଠିତ ଭାବରେ ଉତ୍ତରାଧିକାର ସୂତ୍ରରେ ଶିଳ୍ପୀସୁଲଭ କଳାମୂଳକ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୋଣ ଏବଂ ମୃଦଙ୍ଗର ତାଳ, ଲୟ ଓ ଧ୍ୱନିସଂଗତ ଲାଭ କରିଥିଲେ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୋହନ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦେବଙ୍କ ରାସଦଳରେ ଥିଲାବେଳେ କେଳୁଚରଣ ଖୁବ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଏଇ ସବୁ ବିଦ୍ୟା ଆୟତ୍ତ କରିନେଲେ । ଏହାପରେ କେଳୁଚରଣ ଯୋଗ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କାଳୀଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଥିଏଟରରେ । ୧୯୪୫ ମସିହାରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ବି ଗ୍ରୁପ୍ ଗଠିତ ହୋଇଛି, ନୃତ୍ୟ ଗୁରୁ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଚରଣଙ୍କ ସହ-ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଭାବରେ ସେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଥିଏଟରର୍ସ ଛାଡ଼ି ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ବି ଗ୍ରୁପ୍ରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ଅଟକି ରହିଛନ୍ତି ୧୯୫୨ ମସିହା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । ଏଇଠି ଦୁର୍ଲ୍ଲଭ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ସିଂହ ଏବଂ ଗୁରୁ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଚରଣଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷା କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

ସିଦ୍ଧି ପଥରେ ଯେଉଁ ୩ ଜଣଙ୍କ ସହ ତାଙ୍କର ସଂଯୋଗ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଛି, ମୋହନ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦେବ ଗୋସ୍ୱାମୀ, କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କାଳୀଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଏବଂ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଚରଣ ଦାସ ଏମାନେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଜୀବନକୁ ବହୁଭାବରେ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ମୋହନ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦେବ ଥିଲେ ଜଣେ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ କୋମଳ ହୃଦୟ ବିଭୁ-ସମର୍ପିତ, ନୃତ୍ୟ, ଗୀତ, ସଂକୀର୍ତ୍ତନ କଳା ନିପୁଣ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି । କେଳୁଚରଣ ତାଙ୍କର ବିଭୁ-ସମର୍ପଣ ଭାବଟି କେବଳ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିନଥିଲେ, ନୃତ୍ୟ ସହିତ ତାକୁ ସମନ୍ୱିତ କରିଦେଇଥିଲେ ।

୧୯୭୫ ମସିହାର ଘଟଣାଟିଏ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ କରିବା ଅପ୍ରାସଂଗିକ ହେବନାହିଁ । ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଯଶରାଜ ଓ ତାଙ୍କର ପତ୍ନୀ ମଦୁରାଜୀ ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ନୃତ୍ୟ ନାଟିକାର ପ୍ରଯୋଜନା କରୁଥିଲେ । ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ନୃତ୍ୟ ସଂଯୋଜନାର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ନ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଥିଲା । କୃଷ୍ଣ ଭୂମିକାରେ ଅଭିନୟ କରୁଥାନ୍ତି ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ଅନ୍ୟତମ ଶିଷ୍ୟା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନୃତ୍ୟ ପଞ୍ଚୟତୀ ମାଧବୀ ମୁଦ୍ଗଲ ଓ ରାଧା ଭୂମିକାରେ ଭି ଶାନ୍ତାରାମଙ୍କ କନ୍ୟା ତେଜଶ୍ରୀ । କେଳୁଚରଣ ନିଜେ ମାଧବୀଙ୍କୁ କୃଷ୍ଣ ବେଶରେ ସଜାଇ ଦେଲେ, ଶିରରେ ମୟୂର ପୁଞ୍ଜ ଖଞ୍ଜିଦେଲେ । ମଞ୍ଚକୁ ଯିବାର ଅବ୍ୟବହିତ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଉଭୟଙ୍କୁ ପାଖକୁ ଡାକି ଠିଆ କଲେ । ହାତଯୋଡ଼ି କିଛି ମନ୍ତ୍ର ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣ କଲେ, ଏବଂ ଉଭୟଙ୍କ ପଦଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ କଲେ । ଶିଷ୍ୟା ଦୁଇଜଣ ଏଥିରେ ଚମକି ଉଠିଲେ, ଗୁରୁଜୀ କିପରି ଏପରି ଅନ୍ୟାୟ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କଲେ; କିନ୍ତୁ ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝାଇଦେଲେ ଯେ ଏଇ ପ୍ରଣତି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ନୁହେଁ । ସେମାନେ ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ମାଧବୀ ଓ ତେଜଶ୍ରୀ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ ରାଧା ଓ କୃଷ୍ଣ । ସେଇ ରାଧା କୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ପଦଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିବା ଆଦୌ ଅନୁଚିତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ । ନୃତ୍ୟକୁ ଦେବାରାଧନା ଭାବରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଥିବା କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ ଏପରି ଯୁକ୍ତି ଓ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସମ୍ଭବ । ଗଭୀର ଭାବେ



କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁଧ୍ୟାନ କଲେ ଦେଖାଯିବ ଯେ ତାଙ୍କ ସିଦ୍ଧିର ମୂଳମନ୍ତ୍ର ଏଇଠି । ସେ ନୃତ୍ୟକୁ କେବେହେଲେ କେବଳ ସୁଲଳିତ ଅଙ୍ଗଭଙ୍ଗୀ ବୋଲି ବିଚାରି ନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ନୃତ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ପରମାତ୍ମାଙ୍କ ସହ ମିଳନର ଏକ ମାଧ୍ୟମ । ନା, ବରଂ ଅନ୍ତରର ନିବିଡ଼ତମ ଅର୍ଥ୍ୟ । ପରମାତ୍ମାଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଭକ୍ତି ଅର୍ଥ୍ୟ ଅର୍ପଣ କଲାଭଳି କେଳୁଚରଣ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଅର୍ଥ୍ୟ ଅର୍ପଣ କରନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ନିଜର ପୂଜନୀୟତା ପାଇଁ ସେ କେବଳ ନିଜର ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ-ଅର୍ଥ୍ୟ ହିଁ ଅର୍ପଣ କରନ୍ତି । ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାବରେ କହିଲେ ଯହିଁରେ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠତା ନାହିଁ, ଉତ୍କର୍ଷ ଅଭିନୟ ହୋଇନାହିଁ, ସେପରି ଅର୍ଥ୍ୟ ଦେବତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ନୁହେଁ ବୋଲି ସେ ବିଚାରୁ ଥିଲେ । ସୁତରାଂ ତାଙ୍କର ନିରନ୍ତର ଉଦ୍ୟମ ଥିଲା ନୃତ୍ୟର ଉତ୍କର୍ଷ ସାଧନ, କେଉଁଠି କ୍ଲାନ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଅଟକି ଯିବା ନୁହେଁ, କିମ୍ବା ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇଗଲା ବୋଲି ଆତ୍ମପ୍ରସାଦ ଲଭି ଆଳସ୍ୟବରଣ କରିବା ନୁହେଁ ।

ଗୁରୁ ପଙ୍କଜଚରଣ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏ ଦିଗରେ ନୁତନ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଲୋକ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଗୋଟିପୁଅ ନାଚର ରୀତି ନୀତି କିମ୍ବା ରାସଲୀଳାର ଅଭିନୟ ନୁହେଁ, ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଧର୍ମ ପରଂପରାରେ ଥିବା ମାହାରୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ବା ଦେବଦାସୀ ନୃତ୍ୟକୁ ପଙ୍କଜ ଚରଣ ସମ୍ମାନରେ ନୃତ୍ୟାୟନକୁ ଆଣିଛନ୍ତି । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ପାଠ ସମୟରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ସୁଷ୍ପ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ଏକାନ୍ତ ଭାବେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ-ସମର୍ପିତା ଦେବଦାସୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ କରେ । ସେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ପ୍ରାଣ ବଲ୍ଲଭୀ ରୂପରେ ନିଜକୁ ସମର୍ପଣ କରି ସାଂସାରିକ କୋଳାହଳଠାରୁ ଦୂରରେ ରହେ । ସୁତରାଂ ଦେବଦାସୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ କେବଳ ପରଂପରା କ୍ରମରେ ଦେବଦାସୀଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଦେବଦାସୀଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଆସୁଥିଲା, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଥିଲେ ତାର ଏକମାତ୍ର ଦ୍ରଷ୍ଟା ଓ ଭୋକ୍ତା । ପଙ୍କଜ ଚରଣ ନିବିଡ଼ ଭାବରେ ସେଇ ଦେବଦାସୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରିଛନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ନୃତ୍ୟ ଭଙ୍ଗିମାକୁ ଅନୁସରଣ କରି ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟରେ ସୁବିନ୍ୟସ କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

କବିଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କାଳୀଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ନାଟ୍ୟକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏକ ଅନନ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ - ଏକ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନାଟ୍ୟିକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ । ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ପ୍ରଯୋଜନା, ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶନା, ନାଟ୍ୟ ରଚନା, ସଂଗୀତ ରଚନା, ସ୍ୱର ଯୋଜନା, ନୃତ୍ୟ ସଂଯୋଜନା, ନୃତ୍ୟ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶନା ତଥା ମଞ୍ଚ ପରିଚାଳନା ଆଦି ଯାବତୀୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ହିଁ ସମାହିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ତା ଛଡ଼ା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ନୃତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂଗୀତକୁ ଭାରତୀୟ ଦରବାରରେ ଉପସ୍ଥାପିତ କରି ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟତାର ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦାରେ ବିଭୂଷିତ କରାଇବାକୁ ସେ ଯତ୍ନରୋନାସ୍ତି ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରୁଥିଲେ । ତତ୍ତ୍ୱବିତ୍ କାଳୀଚରଣଙ୍କ ସହ ନୃତ୍ୟବିତ୍ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ସଂଯୋଗ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏକ ଅବିସ୍ମରଣୀୟ ଘଟଣା । ଏହା ଫଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟର ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟତା ପ୍ରମାଣ କରିବାକୁ ଚେନ୍ନାଇର ମାଡ୍ରାସ୍ ମ୍ୟୁଜିକ୍ ଏକାଡେମି କନ୍ଫର୍ସରନ୍ସ ହଲ୍ ହେଉ କିମ୍ବା ଦିଲ୍ଲୀର ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଭବନରେ ହେଉ, ଯେଉଁଠି ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ସହ ନୃତ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠିଛି, ସେଠାରେ କାଳୀଚରଣଙ୍କ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟାନ ସଂଗକୁ ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ପଖାଉଜ ବାଦନ ଓ ତାଙ୍କର ଶିଷ୍ୟମାନେ ହିଁ ଅପରିହାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ଉଠିଛନ୍ତି ।

ସଂଯୋଗ, ସଂସର୍ଗ ଓ ଆହରଣର ଧାରା ନା ଏହିଠାରୁ ସମାପ୍ତ ହୋଇଛି ନା ଧୀର ଓ ସ୍ଥିତି ହୋଇଛି । ଉଚ୍ଛ୍ୱଳତାର ପ୍ରବେଗ ନେଇ ତାହା ବରଂ ଅଧିକ ବେଗଶାଳୀ ହୋଇଛି । କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଦିଗନ୍ତ ପ୍ରସାରିତ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ମଧ୍ୟଯୁଗର ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ମନ୍ଦିର ଗାତ୍ରରେ ଶିଳ୍ପୀର ନିହାଣ ମୁନରେ ଖୋଦିତ ନୃତ୍ୟାଙ୍ଗନାମାନଙ୍କର ମୁଦ୍ରା, ଭଙ୍ଗୀ ଓ ମୁଖର ଭାବ ତରଙ୍ଗ ସମ୍ପାନରେ ସେ ନିମଜ୍ଜିତ ହୋଇଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକ ହିଁ ମୌଳିକ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରାମାଣିକ ବିଭବ । ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କୁ ମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରେ ନୃତ୍ୟାଙ୍ଗନାର ଭୂମିକାରେ ଦେଖିଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟର ସେଇ ଭାବମୟୀ ଅଳସ କନ୍ୟା, ଶାଳଭଞ୍ଜିକା, ମୃଦଙ୍ଗବାଦିନୀ, ଅଭିସାରିକା, କେଶ ବିନ୍ୟାସିନୀ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଶିଳ୍ପ ରୂପର ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ତ ପ୍ରତିରୂପ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରିହୁଏ । ବୋଧହୁଏ ଏଇଠିଠି ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିର ବୈଶିଷ୍ଟ୍ୟ ପୁଷ୍ଟିଭଂ, ତପସ୍ୟାର ସିଦ୍ଧି ମିଳିଯାଏ । ଲୋକନୃତ୍ୟ (ଗୋଟିପୁଅ ନୃତ୍ୟ), ମାହାରୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଓ ମନ୍ଦିର ଗାତ୍ରର ନୃତ୍ୟାଙ୍ଗନାର ଖୋଦିତ ରୂପ ଇତ୍ୟାଦିର ମିଶ୍ରଣରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟର ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ରତାର ବିକାଶ ଘଟେ ।

ଏତେବେଳକୁ ସେ ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣରେ ରୂପାନ୍ତରିତ ହୋଇସାରିଲେଣି । ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ବି ଗୁପ୍ତରୁ ଆସି ୧୯୫୩ରୁ କଳାବିକାଶ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ ୧୫ବର୍ଷ ଶିକ୍ଷକତା କରିଛନ୍ତି, ପରେ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀର ଗାନ୍ଧର୍ବ ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ, ମୁମ୍ବାଇର ନ୍ୟାସ୍ନାଲ୍ ସେଙ୍କର୍ ଅଫ୍ ପର୍ଫର୍ମିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଆର୍ଟ୍ସ ଏବଂ କଲିକତାର ‘ପ୍ରଜାତିକ’ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନରେ ସେ ଶିକ୍ଷାଦାନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରମୁଖ ଶିଷ୍ୟମାନେ ହେଲେ ପଦ୍ମଶ୍ରୀ ସଂଯୁକ୍ତା ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ, କୁଞ୍ଜମ ମହାନ୍ତି, ପ୍ରିୟମ୍ବଦା ମହାନ୍ତି (ହେଜମାଦି), ମିନତି ମିଶ୍ର, ସୋନାଲ୍ ମାନସିଂ, ପ୍ରତିମା ବେଦୀ, ମାଧବୀ ମୁଦ୍‌ଗଲ୍, ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ଘୋଷ, ଯାମିନୀ କୃଷ୍ଣମୂର୍ତ୍ତି, କୁଞ୍ଜମ ଲାଲ୍, ସୁତପା ଦତ୍ତଗୁପ୍ତ, ତୋନା ଗାଙ୍ଗୁଲି, ମିନାକ୍ଷୀ ନନ୍ଦା ଓ ଇଲିଆନା ସିତାରିସ୍ । ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ପାଦର ଘୁଞ୍ଚର ନିସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ହୋଇଗଲା ବୋଲି କହିଥିଲି । ବୋଧହୁଏ ଭୁଲ୍ କହିଥିଲି । ଏହି ଶିଷ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କର ପାଦର ଘୁଞ୍ଚରରେ ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ଘୁଞ୍ଚର ବହୁକାଳ ଯାବତ୍ ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ୱନିତ ହେଉଥିବ ଏବଂ ଶିଷ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ପ୍ରଶିଷ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଗଲାବେଳେ ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣ କେବଳ ନିକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ ହେଉନଥିବେ, ଗୁରୁଦେବର ଭୂମିକାରେ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ କରି ଚାଲୁଥିବେ ।

ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ବି ଗୁପ୍ତ ଛାଡ଼ିଲା ବେଳକୁ ସେ ନୃତ୍ୟ ସଂଯୋଜନାର ବୈଷୟିକ ଦିଗ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଅବହୁତ ହୋଇସାରିଥିଲେ । ଏ ଦିଗରେ ରବିଶଙ୍କରଙ୍କ ଶିଷ୍ୟ ଦୟାଲ ଶରଣ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିଥିଲେ । ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କୁ କେବଳ ଜଣେ ନୃତ୍ୟବିତ୍ କହିଲେ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ହେବନାହିଁ । ଏକାଧାରରେ ସେ ଥିଲେ ପଖଉଜ ବାଦକ, ନୃତ୍ୟବିତ୍, ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଓ ନୃତ୍ୟ ସଂଯୋଜକ ମଧ୍ୟ । ଏତଦ୍ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଅନେକ ରାଗର ସେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସଫଳ ସୁଖୀ । ତାଙ୍କର ଏକସବୁ ପାରଙ୍ଗମତାର ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ସ୍ୱରୂପ ସେ ନାନା ସମ୍ମାନରେ ଭୂଷିତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ସେ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସଂଗୀତ ନାଟକ ପୁରସ୍କାର ଲାଭ କରିଛନ୍ତି ୧୯୬୬ରେ । ପରେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟକ୍ରମେ ସେ ଭାରତ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପଦ୍ମଶ୍ରୀ, ପଦ୍ମଭୂଷଣ, ଓ ପଦ୍ମବିଭୂଷଣ ଉପାଧିରେ ସମ୍ମାନିତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ମଧ୍ୟପ୍ରଦେଶ ସରକାର ତାଙ୍କୁ କାଳିଦାସ ସମ୍ମାନ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଆସୀମ ସରକାର ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ଶଙ୍କର ଦେବ ପୁରସ୍କାର । ଅଖିଳ ଭାରତୀୟ ଗନ୍ଧର୍ବ ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଡକ୍ଟରେଟ୍ ଉପାଧିରେ ଭୂଷିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସମ୍ମାନ ତାଙ୍କର ସିଦ୍ଧିର ଅନୁସରଣ କରିଛି ସବୁବେଳେ ।

ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା କୁହା ନ ଗଲେ, ଅପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ହୋଇ ରହିଯିବ ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ବୋଧର ଇତିହାସ । ନୃତ୍ୟରେ ସେ ଯେପରି ସମର୍ପିତ ପ୍ରାଣ, ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିକ ଜୀବନରେ ସେହିପରି କୋମଳ, ସରଳ, ନିଷ୍ପପଟ୍ ସ୍ନେହୀ ଓ ଆପଣାର । ମାତୃସ୍ୱଳଭ ସ୍ନେହରେ ସେ ପ୍ରାୟ ତାଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତ ଶିଷ୍ୟ ଶିଷ୍ୟାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓ ସମସ୍ତ ପରିଚିତମାନଙ୍କୁ ବାନ୍ଧି ରଖିଥିଲେ । ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ବି ଗୁପ୍ତରୁ ସେ ଯେଉଁ ଅଭିନେତ୍ରୀ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀପ୍ରିୟାକୁ ନିଜର ସହଧର୍ମିଣୀ ଭାବରେ ନିର୍ବାଚନ କରିଥିଲେ, ଶେଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସେଇ ପ୍ରେମର ମଧୁର ଗୁଞ୍ଜନରେ ସେ ଦୁହେଁ ମୁଁ ମୁଗ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ରହିଥିଲେ । ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟକୁ କେବଳ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟତାର ଆଧାର ଦେଇ ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣ ନିଷ୍ପନ୍ନ ହୋଇଯାଇନଥିଲେ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଗବେଷଣା କେନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ ସେ ଯୋଗଦେଇଥିଲେ, ମାତ୍ର ସ୍ୱାଧୀନଭାବରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଚେତନାରେ ନୂତନତାର ମୁଦ୍ରା ଆରୋପ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ତାକୁ ପରିତ୍ୟାଗକରି ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଗବେଷଣା ସଂସ୍ଥା ‘ସୂଜନୀ’ ସ୍ଥାପନ କରି ଶେଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ନିଜ ଗବେଷଣା ଅବ୍ୟାହତ ରଖିଥିଲେ ।

ନିରନ୍ତର ସେ ଦୀପ ଜଳୁଥିଲା । ଅନନ୍ୟତାର ଭୂମିକା ନିର୍ମାଣ କରୁଥିଲା, ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିର ଦିଗନ୍ତ ସନ୍ଧାନ କରୁଥିଲା, ପୁଣି ସବୁ ଭିତରେ ସେ ଅନନ୍ତ ପୁରୁଷ ଅଜ୍ଞେୟର ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ କାମନା କରୁଥିଲା ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ଚରଣରେ ଜୀବନର ସାର୍ଥକତା, ସମ୍ମାନ ଓ ସମ୍ଭାବନା ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ କରୁଥିଲା । ଅଧରରେ ପାନବୋଲର ରଂଗ, ଚରଣରେ ପୁଚ୍ଛୁର, କଟୀରେ ମେଖଳା, ଚକ୍ଷୁରେ ଭାବତରଙ୍ଗ, ଅଙ୍ଗେ ଅଙ୍ଗେ ଆହାଦ ଉଚ୍ଛ୍ୱାସର ବନ୍ୟା ଏବଂ ସର୍ବୋପରି ଏକ ଲାବଣ୍ୟମୟ ଦୀପ୍ତି ଏ ସମସ୍ତ କେବଳ ବିଭୁ-ସମର୍ପିତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଅନ୍ତରର ନିର୍ମାଣ କଣିକା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଅନ୍ୟକିଛି ନହୋଇପାରେ । ତାହା ନ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ବଳଭଦ୍ର ସାହୁଙ୍କ ଗୋଟିପୁଅ ଆଖଡ଼ା ଦେଖି ମୁଗ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଚାହୁଁଥିବା, ପାନବରଜରେ ପାଣି ମଡ଼ାଉଥିବା, ରାଜମିସ୍ତ୍ରୀ କାମ କରୁଥିବା, ପୁଣି ଆଦୌ କୌଣସି ଆନୁଷ୍ଠାନିକ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଲାଭି ନଥିବା ବାଳକ କେଳୁଚରଣ ଆଜି ବିଶ୍ୱବନ୍ଧ୍ୟ ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣରେ ରୂପାନ୍ତରିତ ହୋଇ କାଳଜୟୀ ହୋଇ ପାରିନଥାନ୍ତେ ।

ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣଙ୍କ ପରି ଯଶୋବନ୍ତୀ ପ୍ରତିଭା ସବୁକାଳରେ ଜନ୍ମ ନିଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ; ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗ ବ୍ୟବଧାନରେ କୋଟିକ କଦବା ଆବିର୍ଭୂତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ମରଣକୁ ଅମୃତ ସୋପାନ କରିଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁଚରଣ ସମଗ୍ର ଭାରତୀୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଜଗତରେ ସୁଚ୍ଛନ୍ଦ, ସାବଲୀଳ, ଜୀବନ୍ତ, ସ୍ୱତଃସ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବମୟୀ ଓ ପ୍ରାଣମୟୀ ଅଭିବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶିଳ୍ପୀମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱରଣୀୟ, ଅନୁସରଣୀୟ ଉତ୍ତର ଅମ୍ଳାନ ଶଙ୍କୁ (ମୋଇଲ୍ ଷେନ୍) ହୋଇ ରହିବେ ।

(ଶ୍ରୀ ନିତ୍ୟାନନ୍ଦ ସାହୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ବିଭାଗରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପନା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରୁ ଅବସର ଗ୍ରହଣ କଲାପରେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ାଠ ରସୁଲଗଡ଼ ନୁଆସାହି, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ୱେଚ୍ଛାସେବୀ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ସହ ଜଡ଼ିତ ରହି ସାରା ଜୀବନ ସେ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ କରିଛନ୍ତି ସମାଜ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ଓ ସେବା ଦିଗରେ । ୨୦୦୨ ମସିହାରେ ସେ ତାଲାସ୍ ଆସିଥିବାବେଳେ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଇତିହାସ ଉପରେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଏବଂ ବିସ୍ତୃତ ଭାବରେ ଭାଷଣ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ।)



# Guruji

## Niharika Mohanty

It felt like the flame had dimmed forever. But we wished to believe that he was immortal, even though in the last couple years, he tried to prepare our minds. He had such a divine presence, and through his dance, one knew that he had reached the divine. It is hard to imagine the rest of our lives without his physical presence. Yet, he is immortalized in our precious memories and will be there guiding us and inspiring us.

I started training from Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra in 1989. Later, I lived with him at his home, participated in his workshops, and joined him on tour. In 1996, I assisted Bapa, Dr. Sri Gopal Mohanty, and a committee of organizers in organizing his first North American tour with his troupe, as part of an international celebration of his 70<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary. In 2000, I organized his second tour and workshops, and was working towards a third shorter tour next year. I wanted to do whatever I could for him for he was not only my Guru but a father, mentor in life, and on many occasions simply my friend.

Ma told me on that fateful day, "Remember his qualities."

Guruji's genius in dance and music is known to all. He had all the in-born talent and insightful experience, which made him unique in his ability as a dancer, musician, teacher, choreographer, and above all a real Guru.

We all saw what a skilled mime and dramatist he was, and how he expressed so vividly transforming himself into whatever character he portrayed. On stage, the balding elder gentleman became Radha, Sakhi, Krishna, Ravana, Kevat, Sudama, etc. I cherish the moments I have spent with him on stage, since his captivating and inspirational presence gave life to us in our roles.

Guruji's *pakhawaj* playing had all the grace, intricacy, intuition, exhilaration, and dexterity, producing only the most beautiful tones that inspired one to dance. Even Zakir Hussain had once remarked to me on the brilliance of his *pakhawaj* play. Also, I recall when he taught me the first *bol* in learning *pakhawaj* "tari kita taka," I

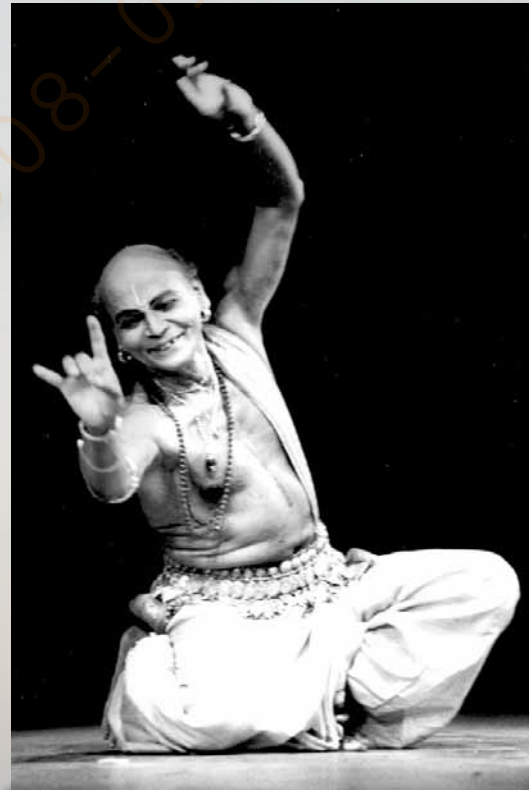


Photo Credit Avinash Pashricha

did not play "Ri" to his satisfaction, and so he tapped it on my knee so that I could feel it. Even in Guruji's dance one could feel how intuitively intricate rhythm flowed through all his movements even when he danced extemporaneously.

His creativity can only be compared to the likes of the greatest choreographers like Martha Graham and Balanchine. His aptitude for logic and his background in visual arts led to the well thought out form and aesthetical beauty of his style. I had the great opportunity of witnessing the creation of a dance drama right from its conception to the discussion with scholars, the music composition, choreography, and to its final production, with Guruji explaining his vision every step of the way. I participated in that dance drama, "Chandasoka".

He was a perfectionist, and this was clearly evident in his dance. He had a well conditioned body that had been perfected through years of training. In the last Odissi Festival, I had the good fortune to witness his performance at Ambassador

Lalit Mansingh's residence. It brought tears to my eyes to see his determination to reach a perfect position, even at that age. Many times in class, we have seen him training us tirelessly into the night, meticulously correcting us until he was satisfied, often without taking a break for dinner. Even during power outages Guruji would insist on teaching by candlelight and would scold me if I did not correctly imitate an expression. His single-minded aim for perfection led him to scoldings that were sometimes very harsh also. Yet, he would always tell me, when I left his home, to remember his "gaali" (scoldings), because they represented his corrections. Today, I fondly cherish his "gaali."

He was a true guru. Guru means from darkness to light, or in other words, one who guides from ignorance to bliss. Guruji was truly inspirational. I definitely would not have come this far if it weren't for him. When I first arrived in Bhubaneswar to learn from Guruji, I was very nervous. Menaka Thakkar, my teacher at that time and disciple of Guruji, had warned me about his temper, how he had thrown a stick at a student and numerous other things. Three days after I got there, he wanted to see Batu. After seeing the dance he spoke to me in Oriya and pointed to Aloka Kanungo (a exquisite Odissi dancer at her peak at that time), "She has a couple of mistakes" (implying she was basically perfect), and then he pointed to Itishree Dwivedi, "She had a few mistakes, but she has not been learning for the past 4 years since she got married and had a child", and then he pointed to me and said, "You have many mistakes." At that point, I just wondered what I was doing there. Yet, I had come so far to learn from the Maestro with high expectations, and my parents had worked so hard to get me there, and so I continued. In the next three months, he worked on me as if chiseling a sculpture out of a rock, pushing and pulling me in so many different ways. After 12 hours a day at his home, my back would ache, sometimes my knees were bruised black and blue from rubbing against his chipped and cracked cement floor, my muscles would be sore, and everyday, Guruji would call me names like "chataraa" or "ghusuri" or "gadhi" constantly (only giving me a break on my birthday) and expect my body to do incredible things. The day I left was difficult for me, but he pretended like it didn't really matter to him. When I returned the following time, he made me his disciple. I realized I had passed his test.

All of these qualities contributed to him being a great Guru, dancer, musician, and choreographer, perhaps the greatest in Odissi. Yet there was so much more to the person he was. Guruji was a great human being, extremely talented but also fundamentally a very good person, that one only aspires to be like.

For him there was only God and dance. He was a very devotional man. He built a temple for his village goddess in Raghurajpur funded by donations from numerous students. He was most definitely a karma yogi. Dance was his karma, and he danced and taught until the day he was no longer. My parents witnessed his second to final performance and remembered how in the backstage he was preoccupied with dressing appropriately for his role as Shakuni. His wish to God was to leave his body while he was actively able to continue with his karma. God knew his devotion and granted his wish.

His greatest qualities, no doubt, were his humility and simplicity. Bani Jairam, the famous singer, had come to Guruji's house. I remember her lying down in complete prostration of Guruji. He had asked her to sit on the couch but upon seeing him seated on the ground, she quickly moved to be seated there also. Guruji felt embarrassed and immediately went to his bedroom to pick up his own pillows from the bed to place behind her so she could sit comfortably. Guruji had a simple down to earth existence, often sleeping on the floor and living modestly like any simple Oriya family even though he may have been able to afford much more.

He was one of those unique people who had a special relationship with so many – those who spent even a little time to those who spent years with him. He had an incredible ability to reach out to so many. Every person who has learnt from him can recollect some special experience, and of course, those of us who were only too fortunate to spend much more time will always feel how blessed we were.

If it were not for pride in his culture, perhaps Guruji would have left Orissa long before, having had invitations to live a better life in India's big metropolis. But he wanted to remain in Orissa to stay close to the place of his artistic inspiration. For him, I was a different student since I was Oriya but brought up outside India. He took pride in telling others that I was Oriya brought up outside India, and yet was raised with the Oriya language and culture. I remember him telling Guruma in



Oriya on my first trip, "Of course, she'll eat everything you make. After all, she is an Oriya girl." That day, I even ate eggplant, which I am allergic to. On the other hand, he used to tease me and say "Sahiba jhia" (foreign girl) to try and provoke me to learning the proper language and culture. When he came to Canada and spoke to my students, he asked them all if they knew their own language, whether Punjabi, Gujarati, Bengali, or Oriya. He was delighted when he saw students who spoke their language fluently, because he felt language was at the base of the culture and important to learn first before training in dance. Guruji, himself, had a vast vocabulary in Oriya. Initially, I only understood 25% of what he spoke, and someone translated his words into simple Oriya for me. Through the years, he educated me in increasing my vocabulary.

Guruji had a thirst for knowledge. I recall that he would be so fascinated by astronomy – spaceships and stars. He would always ask questions to find out more from us, since he would acknowledge the fact that he had not studied. Yet, many times we would not be able to provide him suitable answers, and so he continued to enquire and try to learn from scholars in the field.

Despite Guruji regretting not having a formal education, he was very intelligent and wise, with an incredible memory. Guruji and I would discuss what he would have been had he been educated. I always thought he would be an astronomer, but he felt he would have been an engineer because he loved to open up machines and try to fix them. Whatever he might have been, undoubtedly he would have been a genius in that field. Yet, we are thankful that he did not end up in any other field for what would present day Odissi have been without him?

Always observing everything around him, he possessed an appreciation for any skill and talent. When he came to America, he would sit for hours and watch the soap operas, and when he did not understand something, he would ask. He got very caught up in the emotions of the characters admiring the skill of the actors. I recall exposing him to figure skating late one night after our workshop in Calcutta. He was so appreciative of the talent, and continuously was in awe of the well-rehearsed skaters. Once we both watched a New Year's Eve special happening somewhere in the Western world, and he watched young people dancing and enjoying the music. He observed and he observed, and the next morning he asked me if

these people just danced for joy, "ananda". He also asked me if I did that kind of dance knowing that it was part of the culture in the West. When I admitted to it, he thought nothing of it, because he was very open-minded. In fact, at Pratap Das' house in Washington DC at the end of our tour in 1996, Guruji insisted that he wanted to see me dance and even mimicked me afterwards, for Guruji always had a sense of humor. Yet, he always felt that our Western dance was foreign to the Indian culture and did not belong in the movies.

He epitomized beauty and neatness. How neatly he placed all his things around him as he was seated in the back seat of our car. Even when he took off his sweater he folded it neatly and tucked it away beside him. One time, he looked at me and admired that I had neatly applied *kajal* to my eyes, had worn my nice sari properly and had two *bindis* on my forehead, but he wondered why the big *bindi* was so low. He asked me to come to him, and he picked up the *bindi* (of course the stick-on kind) and placed it in the middle of my forehead. Then, he was pleased and class could go on. Many other times, he scolded us if anything was dusty, and even if a speck of dirt were left on the ground, he would make us pick it up. For him, the world around him needed to be beautiful.

Guruji was good at everything that life required of him. I have seen him as a gardener, videographer, architect, doctor, mechanic, engineer, artist, and a builder. He designed his houses and built his Cuttack home. He would open up his tape recorders that were not working and try to fix them. I remember one time my stomach was not well, and he felt my stomach to see where it was hurting and then gave me his diagnosis.

Yet he had a childlike innocence. Those who were there in the final banquet of last year's Odissi Festival in Washington DC would recall his childlike joy and excitement to receive the token emblem of the Festival that was given to all the participants. One time, when we were traveling by car, my mother had offered Guruji a slice of cake, and after he finished the slice, he so sweetly asked if he could have another slice, like a child asking a grown-up. In another instance, immediately after moving to his Bhubaneswar home, Guruji would thrill at watching the planes go over his house so much so that he would pull us all to watch also.

He was such a sweet person. Perhaps, we wondered if maybe all the sugar he took in his tea

made him so very sweet. He was so kind and loving always kissing our forehead or pinching our cheeks or hugging us in elation when we first arrived in his house. I remember the day when I arrived in his house, and he had found out that I was engaged. He was so delighted and thrilled with the news and anxious to know about his future son-in-law. I remember after my daughter Maya was born how he spoke to me so lovingly first asking about the baby and then asking how I was doing and speaking to me about the beautiful relationship of mother and child and the precious role of the mother.

Now it feels like the light is gone. Sometimes I feel depressed that he is no longer, and other times there is disbelief. Yet I have felt his

presence so strong still inspiring and guiding me in this dance of life. Like I have conversed with God, I converse with him. And he answers me back forever to inspire and guide me.

Thank you, Guruji for your immense contribution to Odissi dance, for which you will be missed more than anyone else.

Thank you for our special and unique bond and allowing me into your heart and family and teaching me so unconditionally not only the art of Odissi dance, but how to be a good human being. Because of you, today we are brothers and sisters who have been bonded together by our connection to you.

We will miss you.

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# ଗୁରୁକୃପା

ନନ୍ଦିତା ବେହେରା

ମୋ'ର ନୃତ୍ୟଗୁରୁ ପଦ୍ମବିଭୂଷଣ କେଳୁଚରଣ ମହାପାତ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଜଗତର ଚଳନ୍ତି ପ୍ରତିମା; ଯାହାଙ୍କ ନାମ ସ୍ମରଣ ମାତ୍ରେ ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ଭାସିଉଠେ ଏକ ହସହସ ସରଳ ଶିଶୁସୁଲଭ କମନୀୟ ରୂପ - ଛନ୍ଦମୟ ତା'ର ଗତି, ଅପୂର୍ବ ଏକ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗୀୟ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟର ପ୍ରତିରୂପ ସତେ ଯେମିତି । ସାରା ଜଗତ ନିକଟରେ ସେ ପରିଚିତ ଏକ ମହାନ ନୃତ୍ୟଗୁରୁ ରୂପେ; ମୋ'ର ଅନ୍ତରର ଏକ ନିଭୃତ କୋଣରେ ସେ ବିରାଜମାନ ଏକ ପବିତ୍ର ସ୍ମୃତି ରୂପେ ।

ଗୁରୁଜୀଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦ୍ୱିସାବରେ ଯେତେ ନୁହେଁ, ଏକ ଆଦରଣୀୟା କନ୍ୟା ଦ୍ୱିସାବରେ ମୋ'ର ଶିକ୍ଷାଲାଭ କରିଥିଲି । କେବେହେଲେ ସେ ଗୁରୁ ଦ୍ୱିସାବରେ ସମ୍ମାନର ଦାବୀ କରିନଥିଲେ । ସୁଶୀତଳ ଗଣ ଭଳି ଦାନ ତାଙ୍କର ଥିଲା ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛ । 'ନମ୍ରତ୍ତି ଫଳିନ ବୃକ୍ଷ' ଭଳି ସଦାସର୍ବଦା ତାଙ୍କର ବିନମ୍ରତା ମତେ ସବୁଠାରୁ ଚକିତ କରିଥିଲା । ଏତେ ଗୁଣର ଅଧିକାରୀ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଗର୍ବ, ଓ ଦର୍ପ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖ ଛୁଇଁ ନଥିଲା । ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ଦୟାରୁ ମୋ' ଜୀବନର ଏକ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ସମୟ ତାଙ୍କ ପଦତଳେ କଟିଥିଲା । ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ପାଷାଣୀ ଅହଲ୍ୟାକୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କଲାଭଳି



ମୋ' ଜୀବନର ସମସ୍ତ ପାପଗ୍ରସ୍ତ ଅକ୍ଷୟକୁ ସେ ଯେପରି କାଉଁରି କାଠି ଛୁଆଁଇ ଆଲୋକିତ କରି ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ମୋ'ର ସବୁବେଳେ ମନେହୁଏ, ମୁଁ ସତେ ଯେପରି ଏକ ସୁଶୀତଳ ବଟବୃକ୍ଷ ତଳେ ଆଶ୍ରା ନେଇଛି, ଯେଉଁଠି ନାମ, ସମ୍ମାନ, ଆଡ଼ମ୍ବର, ଶୌର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଭିଡ଼ ନାହିଁ । ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଜୀବନର ସମସ୍ତ ଅସ୍ଥିରତା ଓ ଅନିଶ୍ଚିତତା ଯେମିତି ସେଠି ମୂଲ୍ୟହୀନ । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତିର ଏକ ନିଳୟ ମୋ'ର ଗୁରୁ ।

ପ୍ରଥମ କରି ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଭେଟ ହୋଇଥିଲା ୧୯୭୧ ମସିହା କଟକ କଳାବିକାଶ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରଠାରେ । ଗୁରୁଜୀ **summer class** ନେଉଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଦିଲ୍ଲୀର କେତେଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ଅପୂର୍ବ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପୀଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଗତିଭେଦ ପଲ୍ଲବୀର ନୃତ୍ୟରୂପ ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ଶ୍ରୀ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ମିଶ୍ର ମ୍ୟୁଜିକ୍ ବଜାଉଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଗୁରୁଜୀ ତାକୁ ସଜେଇ ନୃତ୍ୟ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶନା ଦେଉଥାଆନ୍ତି । ସମସ୍ତ ନୃତ୍ୟରତା ସୁନ୍ଦରୀଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ମୋ'ର ମନେହେଲା ସତେ ଯେପରି କାଳିଦାସଙ୍କ ମେଘଦୂତର ମେଘଖଣ୍ଡ ପରି ଏକ ଶାନ୍ତ ସ୍ଥିରତା ମୁଖି ମୁଁ ଦେଖୁଛି । ତାପରେ ଅନେକ ସମୟ କଟାଇବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଛି; ସବୁବେଳେ ନୃତ୍ୟଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଛଡ଼ା ତାଙ୍କ ନିତିଦିନିଆ ଚାଳିଚଳଣର ସରଳତା ଏକ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖଯୋଗ୍ୟ ବିଷୟ । ଦିନେ ମୁଁ ଚକିତ ହୋଇ ପିଲାଳିଆ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଟିଏ ପଚାରିଥିଲି, “ଆପଣ ଏତେବଡ଼ ନୃତ୍ୟଗୁରୁ ଆଖ୍ୟା ବହନ କରି ଏତେ ନମ୍ର କିପରି ହୋଇପାରିଲେ ?” ଶିଶୁ ଭଳି ହସି ଉଠି ପାନ ଖାଇ ଖାଇ ଗୁରୁଜୀ କହିଲେ, “ଯାହା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ବରଦାନ, ମୁଁ ତ ଛାର ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ମାତ୍ର ।” ସବୁବେଳେ ସେ କୁହନ୍ତି- “ମୁଁ ଏକ ପିତୃଳା ମାତ୍ର, ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶରେ ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲିଛି ।” ଦିନେହେଲେ କୌଣସି ସଭା, ସମିତି ଭିତରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ କହିନାହାନ୍ତି - ମୁଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟର ହର୍ଷା, କର୍ଷା, ଭାଗ୍ୟବିଧାତା ।

ଦିନକର ଘଟଣା । କଟକ ବାରବାଟୀ ଝାଡ଼ିୟମ୍‌ରେ କୁମାର ଉତ୍ସବ ରିହର୍‌ସାଲ୍ ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ଅନେକ ଶିଳ୍ପୀଙ୍କ ସମାବେଶ । ଦିନରାତି କାମ ଚାଲିଛି । ହଠାତ୍ ଜଣେ ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ରାଗିଉଠି ସାରଙ୍କୁ କିଛି କହିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଲେ । ଗୁରୁଜୀ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟର ସହ ସବୁ ଶୁଣି ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ପଖାଉଜ ବଜାଇବାରେ ଲାଗିଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଜଣକ ବାହାରକୁ ବାହାରିଗଲେ । କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ରାଗ ଶାନ୍ତ ହେଲା ପରେ ଆସି କ୍ଷମା ମାଗିଲେ । ଗୁରୁଜୀ ସ୍ଥିତ ହସି କହିଲେ, “ଶିଶୁ ଯଦି ମା'ର ମନରେ କଷ୍ଟ ଦିଏ, ମା' କଣ ତା'କୁ ସାରା ଜୀବନ ଧରିବସେ ? ସେମିତି ତୋ'ର ଇଚ୍ଛାହେଲା, ତୁ କହିଲୁ, ମୁଁ ଶୁଣିଲି; ଏଥର ସମୟ ନଷ୍ଟ ନକରି ଚାଲି କିଛି କାମ କରିବା, କୁଆଁର ପୁନେଇଁ ପାଖେଇ ଆସିଲାଣି ।” ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ଛିଡ଼ାହୋଇ ମୁଁ ଭାବୁଥାଏ, ଏତେ ସହଜ, ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବେ ଗୁରୁଜୀ କେମିତି ଏତେ ବଡ଼ କଥାର ସମାଧାନ କରିଦେଲେ ?

ଗୁରୁଜୀ ସବୁବେଳେ କହୁଛି, ଯେହେତୁ ନୃତ୍ୟ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଆମେ କୃଷ୍ଣ, ରାଧା ଆଦି ତିଆରି କରିଛୁ, ତେଣୁ ଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଅଭିନୟ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଦେଖାଉ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଅନ୍ତରରେ ଭକ୍ତିଭାବ ରହିବା ନିହାତି ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । କେବଳ ଅଭିନୟ କରି ପ୍ରକୃତ ରସ ପୁଞ୍ଜାଳିଲେ ତାହା ପ୍ରାଣହୀନ ହୋଇପଡ଼େ । ମନରେ କୁଟିଳ ଭାବ ରଖି ରାଧାଭାବ ଦେଖାଇବା ଏକ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ଶିଳ୍ପୀର ଧର୍ମ ନୁହେଁ ବୋଲି ସେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରୁଥିଲେ । କଳାକାର ହେବାକୁ ହେଲେ ଅନ୍ତରର ପବିତ୍ରତାର କେତେ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା, ତାହା ତାଙ୍କ ଅଭିନୟ ଦେଖିଲେ ବୁଝାଯାଏ । କେତେଥର ଯେ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିଛି ଭିନ୍ନଭିନ୍ନ ରୂପରେ, କେବେ ରାଧାଭାବେ ତ କେବେ କୃଷ୍ଣଭାବେ, କେବେ ଶ୍ରୀରାମଙ୍କ ଭାବମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ତ କେବେ ସାମାନ୍ୟ କେଉଟର ଆକୃତି ଆବେଦନ । ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଯାଏ, ତୁଳସୀ ରାମାୟଣ ଶିଖିବା ସମୟରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଶ୍ରୀରାମଙ୍କ ପଦଧୁଆ ସମୟ ଆସେ, ଗୁରୁଜୀ ସତେ ଯେପରି ଅନ୍ୟ କେଉଁ ଭାବରାଜ୍ୟରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଯାଆନ୍ତି । ଦିନେ ପଚାରିବାରୁ କହିଲେ, “ମୁଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ କେଉଟ ରୋଲ୍ କରି ଶ୍ରୀରାମଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଉଛି, ସତେ ଯେମିତି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଦପଦ୍ମ ଦୁଇଟି ମତେ ଦିଶୁଛି, କୋହ ସମ୍ପରଣ କରିପାରୁନି; ବେଳେବେଳେ ମନେହୁଏ, ଆଉ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧରିପାରିବିନି, ଭୁଲରେ ଲୋଟିଯିବି ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କ ପାଦତଳେ ।” ତାଙ୍କ ଭକ୍ତ ହୃଦୟରେ ଭକ୍ତିର ଧାରା ସଦାବେଳେ ଅବିରତ ବାରିଧାରା ପରି ବହି ଚାଲିଯାଏ । ଅଭିନୟ ପାଇଁ ଗୁରୁଜୀଙ୍କର ‘ମୃତ୍ୟୁ’ର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା କେବେ ପଡ଼େନି । ନବରସର ସମସ୍ତ ରସ ସତେ ଯେପରି ତାଙ୍କ ଆଦେଶରେ ରୂପ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ ଅଭିନୟକୁ । ସେଠି ଶୈଳୀ, ଭଙ୍ଗୀ, ‘ଲଜିକ୍’, ‘ଇଣ୍ଟେଲେକ୍ଟ୍’ କି ବିଜ୍ଞାନ କିଛି କାମ କରେନି । ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ପ୍ରାଣର ଶୁଦ୍ଧା ଓ ଭକ୍ତି ଯେମିତି ଏକ ଅପରୂପ ଶୋଭା ନେଇ ତାଙ୍କ ଅଙ୍ଗେ ଅଙ୍ଗେ ପୁଞ୍ଜିତଠେ ।

ଗୁରୁଜୀ ଚାଲିଗଲେ । ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଘରର ମୁଖ୍ୟକର୍ତ୍ତା, କେଉଟ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗର କୈବର୍ତ୍ତ ଆଉ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଏକଥା ଚିନ୍ତା କରି ମଧ୍ୟ ବେଳେବେଳେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ହୁଏନି । LA Timesର Dance Criticଙ୍କୁ ଗୁରୁଜୀଙ୍କ ଦେହାନ୍ତ ବିଷୟ କହୁକହୁ କହିଲି, “My guru had the most beautiful death. He got Nirvana. He had no suffering and he was dancing until the last day. He is in heaven and I am celebrating his beautiful journey.”

ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଅସୀମ କୃପା । ତାଙ୍କ ଭଳି ମହାନ ଆତ୍ମାକୁ ନିକଟରେ ପାଇ ଜାଣିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଛି ବୋଲି ମୋ ହୃଦୟ ସର୍ବଦା ରଣୀ । ମୁଁ ଆମେରିକାରେ ଛୋଟିଆ ସ୍କୁଲଟିଏ କରିଛି ଶୁଣି ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହୁଅନ୍ତି, କହୁଛି – “ଆତ୍ମପତ୍ର ଉଡ଼ିଯାଇ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଦୂରରେ ପଡ଼ିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାକୁ କଣ କିଏ ଓହ୍ଲପତ୍ର କହିବ ? ପତ୍ରକୁ ଦେଖି ଗଛର ପରିଚୟ ମିଳେ । ସେମିତି ନିଜର ନୃତ୍ୟ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ତମେମାନେ ମୋ’ର ପରିଚୟ ଦେଉଥିବ ।” ଗତ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଡ୍ରାମାଟିକାଲ୍ ଡି-ସି-ରେ ଦେଖାହୋଇଥିଲା । ଅନେକ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ କରିଥିଲେ ମୋ’ର ଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ । ଶେଷ ଉପଦେଶ ମତେ ଦେଇଥିଲେ- “ବେଶି କିଛି ଫଳ କଥା ଚିନ୍ତା ନକରି ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ମନରେ ରଖି କାମ କରିଯାଅ- **Do not run after program, program should run after you ।**” ଗୁରୁଜୀଙ୍କ ଜୀବନର ପରମଧର୍ମ ଥିଲା, ‘Surrender’; ନିଜର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ନିଜକୁ ସମର୍ପଣ କରିବା । ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଧର୍ମର ଏହି ନୀତିକୁ ଏଠିକାର ଯୁବ କଳାକାରମାନଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝାଇଲା ବେଳେ ଗୁରୁଜୀଙ୍କ ପ୍ରିୟ ନୀତି, ଭାଗବତର ଦୁଇଧାଡ଼ି ମନେପଡ଼େ -

“କରି କରାଉଥାଏ ମୁହିଁ  
ମୋ ବିନୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଗତି ନାହିଁ ।”

କାଲିପଞ୍ଚିଆ



## “To The Life More Abundant”

Rohini Doshi-Dandavate

May 10, 2004

It was a hot summer afternoon. The sun was shining bright and in the calm and humid air one could hear the soft murmur of a few young girls. In the front yard of a house across from a dance school, a group of young girls were under the guava tree pointing towards the ripe guavas on the branches. Perched on the branches at a height were two other friends stretching out to pluck the guavas, and were happily passing them down. Totally unaware of any other presence, the girls were too engrossed in their act.

From the balcony of the dance school, Kala Vikash Kendra, Kelu “*saar*” (sir) was observing the girls. Soon the group of girls was seen walking to the Kendra to resume the dance lesson, only to realize that they were caught in their act, and were grounded. I was one of those girls perched on the branch, and Kelu *saar* was my dance teacher. However, this word, ‘dance teacher’, does not fully describe the role he played in my life.

to Kala Vikash Kendra was a part of my daily routine. My mother believed that learning the art was an important element in the overall development of a child.

Initially, as a young student in the Kendra, I had spent several long hours observing Kelu *saar* while he taught Menaka Thakkar during their daylong dance sessions. Later I had countless opportunities to learn and perform under his direction. Kelu *saar* was just not a teacher to his students; he was a friend, a father, and a strict disciplinarian. Innumerable experiences come to mind as I reminisce my days in Cuttack.

One incident that comes to mind is the day when I assisted him in building the roof of his new classroom in Samanta Sahi, Cuttack. For him dance was not the only creative expression. His creativity was reflected in building, constructing, painting, cleaning, planting, and decorating. Having received the scholarship for young artists from the Gov-



Photo credit: Rohini Dandavate

It was in the Kala Vikash Kendra when I was introduced to Kelu *saar* by my uncle, the late Babulal Doshi. I had the privilege of learning Odissi dance under his tutelage since my early childhood. Going for dance lessons

ernment of India, I was at his home everyday for dance lessons. One morning as I walked into his house I saw Kelu *saar* cutting bamboo sticks for building the roof of the new classroom. That was the lesson for the day:

helping him group the bamboo sticks, tying them firmly together and finally passing them to him. Our whole day went by in this task, and I returned home feeling exhausted and confused. I now understand how participating in this activity of building a roof was also a lesson in creativity and innovation when I teach art education and the importance of nurturing creative expressions in students.

Traveling with Kelu *saar* introduced me to his ways of taking care of his students, which I then found to be quite peculiar and restricting. Our travels those days were mostly by rail. We would be groups of twenty or thirty students. When we would wait for the train, he would arrange our luggage. Bags were arranged according to size, form, and color. We called it his idiosyncrasy. To keep all the girls from straying away on the platform, he would make us sit around the bags in select positions. For him, the railway platform was a stage, and the bags and we were his props to choreograph. His creativity permeated in the mundane chores of life. Artistic expression was not an isolated event for him.

Thirty-five years have gone by, and with those years I have grown through various experiences of my life – school and college graduation in Cuttack, employment and

rehearsing for performances, and finally hosting him at my house in Boston, Massachusetts in 1996, were the numerous occasions when I got to spend valuable time with him. It was a never-ending journey of dance for me. His simplicity in life, his integrity, precision, love and passion for work, his firmness and sincerity in teaching, his innovative energies, and above all his humility, were his strengths.

Learning dance, for me as a child, was only a hobby, and a discipline. As I grew up, it became good times that I shared with my friends. Later as a teenager, it became an obsession to excel. Today Odissi provides me with the joy, meaning and purpose of life. It gives me a sense of self-respect. My art has expanded my world and enlarged my network of people who I would never have met without Odissi. In an intercultural community of America, where I have worked for the past eleven years, Odissi dance has given me an identity that I am proud of. I have discovered that my art has allowed me to connect with people who are so different from me. When I visit schools and colleges for lecture-demonstrations or to perform for intercultural audience, I notice that my art helps people to respect diversity and to discover their own roots. Training under Kelu *saar* was beyond



Photo credit: Rohini Dandavate

marriage in Bombay, motherhood in Delhi, and now teaching and pursuit of a doctoral degree at the Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. Amidst all these changes, Kelu *saar* and his dance lessons always remained a part of my life. Attending dance classes and workshops in Cuttack, Bombay and Delhi,

the form and technique of Odissi. I learned from him:

- The power of reflection
- That creativity must permeate every facet of one's life
- The joy of small things



- That it is important to play, and
- That Odissi is just not a dance form, but an expression of a mindset that is curious, humble, experimental, observant, and open to change.

Dance education in Kelu *saar's gurukul* taught me the art of touching people's lives at a deeper level. His art was an expression of his mind and for me now the most effective way to educate and inspire my students with Odissi is by giving them a glimpse into his MIND. In the words of Henry Miller, a famous

American author, Kelu *saar* truly proved that "Art is only a means to life, to the life more abundant".

His passing away has left a void in my world. Life will carry on but it will never be the same. The lessons of life seem to have ended. It feels like the curtain has dropped forever. With eyes welled with tears, a heavy heart, and a choking voice, I have to bid fare well to him. May his soul rest in peace.

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*Rohini Doshi-Dandavate is a doctoral student in Arts Policy and Administration program at the Ohio State University. As an artist in the Arts in Education Program of the Ohio Arts Council, she has conducted workshops and lecture demonstrations on Odissi dance for students in schools and colleges in Ohio since 1994. She has offered courses in Odissi dance, as a Visiting Faculty in Denison University in 2001 and continues to offer dance lessons at home. She is an active performer and educator of Odissi dance, having received a graduate degree in Odissi dance from Kala Vikash Kendra, College of Indian Dance and Music, Cuttack, India. Her gurus are Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, Guru Raghunath Dutta, Guru Ramani Ranjan Jena, and Menaka Thakkar.*

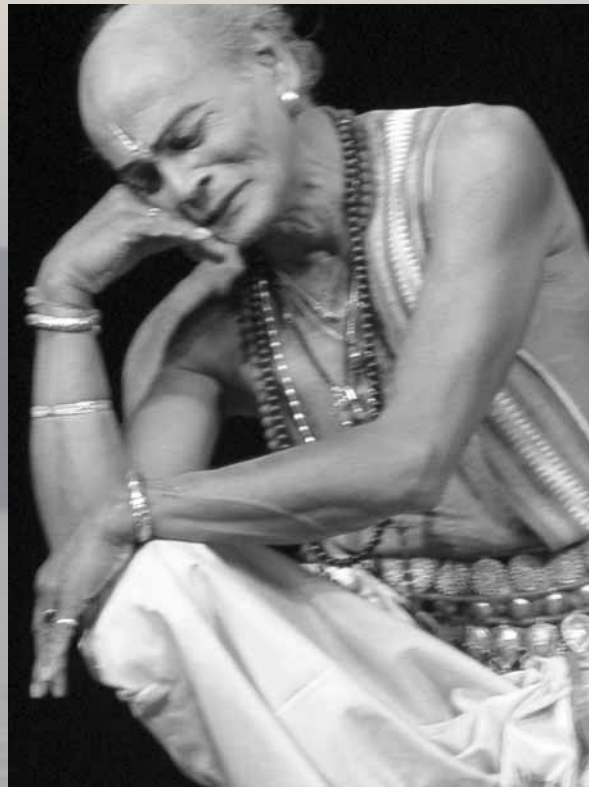


Photo Credit: Amitava Sarkar,  
amitava.sarkar@paiindia.org

## Kelucharan Mohapatra: The undisputed master

Sharon Lowen

Kelubabu, as the great Padma Vibhushan Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra was respectfully called by audiences and students around the world, was one of the most distinguished figures of the past century in the revival of classical Indian performing arts. He passed away at the age of 78 on April 7<sup>th</sup> in Bhubaneswar as the undisputed master performing artist, choreographer, teacher, and percussionist (pakhawaj) of Odissi Dance. All of us who knew him or saw his performance were enriched by magical interpretations of an inner world of spiritual beauty and truth. He was the embodiment of the transformative power of Indian classical performing arts.

The humble, slight man offstage, balding and even missing teeth, transformed into an enchanting maiden as Radha in the *Geeta Govinda* or the powerfully moving devotional Boatman of the *Ramayana*. The stage became a sacred space when he set foot upon it.

In the charged atmosphere of the Sri Sankat Mochan festival in Varanasi, Kelubabu became lost in the *bhakti* of Hanuman's character. He told me, "I was so immersed in the character; I didn't feel that I was Kelucharan Mohapatra at all. I felt that I was truly Hanuman and on stage, I actually chewed each bead from Vibhishan's mala searching for Ram in each precious gem."

I asked for anecdotes for my small book for Roli, "Kelucharan Mohapatra: The Dancing Phenomenon," and guruji related this: "To create a role on stage is a total involvement. Before coming to the stage, I put on my makeup and begin to focus on the role or character, salute my god and guru, and only think of what that character, whether Nayika or Hanuman or Kevat will do. I am already transformed before I enter the stage. You have to forget yourself, your own identity totally. If anything unexpected happens on stage, like the lights going off, I improvise in character."

"In 1995, I was performing at O.P. Jain's open air theatre at Sanskriti at a farewell for the French Ambassador. While I was performing *Pasyati Dishi Dishu*, the electricity went off. I indicated to

my son Shibu to continue playing pakhawaj, and I moved into the audience searching for Krishna by the light of the moon. As the Nayika Radha, or her Sakhi, I asked audience members through my dance actions if they had seen him. Still without stage lights, just like the old days without electricity, I returned to the stage and continued my search for Krishna. Through the arches at the back of the performance space, I showed the many aspects of the heroine who waits and pines for her beloved. By the time the lights came back on and I completed the performance, I had danced 1-½ hours of this single ashtapadi. Amjad Ali Khan and wife Subbhalaxmi genuinely asked if I'd composed the performance this way, but I danced from my inner feeling and continued without caring about lights or time."

"At my performance for the Padatik, Calcutta Classical Dance and Theatre Seminar, I was performing to recorded music. I started my performance of Kevat, the Boatman from the *Ramayana*, but the music started wobbling. The sound system was overheated from all day use. Without stopping the dance, I explained in Abhinaya to the audience that I had to go backstage and fix the tape. I quickly changed to another cassette player and continued the dance without breaking the mood with a single word. The audience loved the classical dance explanation with mudras of technical difficulties as much as the dance."

As a child, he snuck out of the house while his father napped to learn Gotipua dance, one of the foundations of classical Odissi still performed by pre-pubescent boys dressed as girls. He apprenticed in a theatre group, gained invaluable hands-on experience in backstage tech work, learned tabla, and performed as a child actor. He spent a frustrating year as a betel leaf cultivator, working for 5 annas a day till he got a job as a drummer with Orissa Theaters in Cuttack and eventually his previously frustrated desire to dance was discovered by Guru Pankaj Charan Das who included some dance in every theatre production. After this, there was no looking back as he embarked on a life long process exploring



the “Mahari” temple dance and “Gotipua” public art traditions of Orissa, folk forms, Shastric texts, temple sculpture, and paintings with an open-minded genius for examining new material and understanding its aesthetic possibilities and dimensions.

The result was that he is both the architect of the neo-classical revival of Odissi and the guru of most of the leading exponents of this art. For years he traveled untiringly with his greatest disciple, Sanjukta Panigrahi, crossing the length and breadth of India, sleeping on trains at night and performing days, to introduce the art of Odissi to the whole country, and later, to the whole world.

He had a unique ability to teach relatively large numbers of students systematically and precisely with his own creative methods that were constantly evolving. As soon as the students understood the movement, he moved on to give as much as a student could handle, sometimes even more! I recall that after his summer courses at home in Cuttack in the 70's he would joke that the Bombay girls would run home for bhel puri, swinging their dance music cassettes over their shoulders and forget everything! At the same time, he knew that his generosity would enable the serious ones to spread his art.

He put each of us to shame teaching the sensuous walk of Radha that no female among us could match. We looked like a row of awkward ducklings following a swan around the dance studio. Kelubabu has always taught Abhinaya by saying, “Observe and feel, don't mimic or look in a mirror”. He stopped class in Cuttack 20 years ago to instruct students to observe my infant daughter crawling so that they could learn how to show Bal Krishna from nature. After rehearsing an expressive dance passage, he would have us falling apart with laughter as he imitated each student's interpretation of what he had taught.

In the 70's, I saw Kelubabu patiently paint the *alta* and do the makeup mixed from dry pigment for an entire dance drama. His generosity went beyond teaching technique and tradition. At my first recording session of the five items I'd learned, he included an additional seven to spare me the expense of recording when I needed them in future, trusting that I wouldn't use them without his training. At times, he took no payment for

accompanying performances when he knew I wasn't getting expenses covered.

Kelubabu was amazing at putting things together, taking them apart, reassembling and recreating, whether cameras and tape-recorders, or elements of making a dance. From the 70's, he could do perfect music editing cuts with simple cassette recorders that now require digital studios.

Guruji's attention to detail in the myriad aspects of his life and art is nowhere more evident than in the way he prepared pan. Since he gave up smoking over forty years ago, pan and tea became the major support system fueling his untiring stretches of creative output. From the carefully pruned leaves to the elegantly cut slivers of betel nut, the cloves and the final result, perfectly shaped cones; the entire process is an especially fine art in Guruji's hands. This was one of so many real life elements used to convey *abhinaya* that Guruji modeled for all the legions of disciples who sat at his feet. His ritual of preparing pan leaves for travel abroad was amazing. Years of experimentation in the finer points of carefully layering the pan leaves between cloth and plastic ensured that his supply could last up to three weeks, without refrigeration! In 1985, I guaranteed Guruji that I would find fresh pan leaves whenever his ran out during our six week Festival of India-U.S.A tour. It finally happened in Los Angeles where I discovered a grocery store with imported pan patta grown in Hawaii. Guruji, Bhubaneswar Misra (violin) and Rakhil Mohanty (vocal) were delighted to get a substantial bag full of fresh pan leaves. However, when they learned how expensive it was, they were adamant that they could manage till the end of the tour on supari alone!

Much of the standard repertoire of modern day Odissi was created by Kelubabu with gifted music composers Balakrishna Das and Bhubaneswar Misra to assist him.

Starting from a gotipua repertoire that was stretched to last 30 minutes, Kelubabu drew on his vast knowledge of dance, traditional Oriya painting and temple sculpture, mastery of the *pakhawaj*, and years of theater work to create a

repertoire of hundreds of solo and group choreographies for the stage.

Kelubabu has received many honors, starting from Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1966 to the M. P. Kalidas award, the Legion of Honor from France and the Padmavibhushan.

The turning point in Guruji's life happened while he was with the Annapurna Theater group. Sanjukta Panigrahi's mother saw his performance at Annapurna and approached him to teach the little Sanjukta, aged 7 or 8. The Binapani Club in Cuttack, which still exists today, held a hotly contested annual dance competition and Sanjukta won the coveted cup. The guru of a losing contestant was Banobihari Maiti, trained by Uday Shankar, who had composed a dance for Kelucharan and Laxmipriya at the Annapurna Theater. He was terribly jealous, especially after being insulted by his student's father who demanded to know what kind of teacher he was, to teach his daughter so long and lose out to this

upstart! Banobihari abused Kelucharan's composition calling it rubbish, not Odissi and declared that Oriyas don't know how to dance. This was the turning point in Kelubabu's career.

*"It got into my heart that I will do more for the dance of Orissa, learn, study, and if I'm born in Orissa and have Oriya blood, I will definitely show what Odissi is. I have always considered Banobihari Maiti to be my guru because he inspired me to dedicate myself to Odissi dance, even though he taught me in a negative way!"*

Kelubabu's enormous achievements were the result of a combination of ceaseless hard work, openness to challenges to experiment and respond to changing times, and his personal genius as an artist. His performances moved audiences to tears of wonder and joy in villages, temples and capital cities around the globe. The memory of his creativity and affection will continue to inspire and nourish. We are all fortunate that such a man touched our lives with his artistic *darshan*.

*Sharon Lowen is a renowned Odissi dancer, trained since 1975 by Padma Vibhushan Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. She has performed and choreographed for film and television and presented hundreds of concerts throughout India, North America, Asia, Africa, U.K. and the Middle East. Sharon came to India in 1973 after degrees in Humanities, Fine Arts, Asian Studies and Dance from the University of Michigan as a Fulbright scholar to study Manipuri and later Chhau and Odissi. Publications include KELUCHARAN MOHAPATRA The Dancing Phenomenon, Roli Books, and Odissi by Wisdom Tree.*

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**Orissa Society of the Americas honored Utkal Gaurav Guru Late Kelucharan Mohapatra with "UTKAL SHREE" – The Lifetime Achievement Award at a specially arranged convention at Saheed Bhawan, Cuttack, in December 1995.**

*-Photo courtesy Sri Gopal Mohanty and Sitakantha Dash*



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# Guruji -- a Retrospection

Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra

1924-2004

## Lalu Mansinha

The lights dimmed, the curtains opened in the dark, and then, suddenly, music, Odissi music burst out, filling the entire space in the hall. It was music that you hear with your mind, providing a sense of space, of all three dimensions and more. Then the dancer made an entrance in the classic Odissi style. The year was 1987. I was sitting in an auditorium at York University, Toronto, Canada. The music that night was magical, enchanting, and for me, memorable. It was music I had heard many times before. Yet, on that evening, in that auditorium, I was surprised by being moved by the music. In my mind I saw abstract imagery with colors of timeless and formless space. This was the first time I saw and heard Guruji, Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. He played the pakhawaj for a while; the dancer on stage was Menaka Thakkar, his student.

The second time I met Guruji, in 1996, there was also a moment of enlightenment, for a different reason. I had known that part of Odissi dance came to us from the dances to the gods, but I had not realized, though I should have, as to how deep was this link.

The eastern sky was lighting up with the hues of dawn as I drove into the town through the early morning mist. We were to go to Sudbury in a caravan of three cars, from the home of Sri Gopal and Shanti Mohanty to the home of Niranjan and Pravatnalini Mishra. There was a rush to get going, when *guruji* called us to assemble for a prayer. With the yellow rays of the rising sun falling on our back, with our shadows on the walls, we stood in the family room with Guruji and Guruma Lakshmi Priya in front of Lord Jagannath. Guruji chanted the prayers and invoked the blessings of Lord Jagannatha on the beginning of this Odissi tour of US and Canada. The early morning mist, the rays of the rising sun, and the chant of the prayers, made this

like a scene out of the time of Vedas. As he prayed, Guruji's face was serene, and reflected the deep devotion to Lord Jagannath. As I stood behind and beside him, I began to recognize the divinity associated with Odissi, that this was a dance for the gods, and those who teach and perform Odissi are possessed of a deep spirituality.

Guruji passed away in April, 2004. It has been a remarkable life. Born in Raghurajpur, Puri, in 1924, he had little formal schooling. He never completed high school, never went to college. Yet for his achievements in dance he has been compared with the most famous and greatest of dancers or teachers in the world. For his lifetime of achievements this unschooled one time laborer was awarded an honorary Doctorate in 1981 for his contributions in defining and popularizing Odissi. He has received the highest of honors in the field of art from the Indian government, like the title of "Padmashree" in 1974, "Padma Bhusana" in 1988, and "Padma Bibhushana" in 2000.

The willowy, gentle, sensuous movements have set Odissi apart from other dance forms in India, and charmed established and aspiring performers in India and abroad to learn Odissi. When they looked for a guru, they heard of KeluBabu. The quality of his dance, his repertoire, and his ability to inspire and teach attracted students from India and abroad. After having been taught the art, the students spread out across the globe, to start dance schools of their own, and organize tours and visits by Guruji. For this rapid rise of Odissi to international recognition, we have to credit KeluBabu. Among all the Odissi gurus, he developed the largest number of students. He will be remembered for his other significant contributions, not only as a great guru, but also as one of the founding gurus who have defined Odissi. His contributions can be found in the costumes, makeup, repertoire, music of



Odissi since the early fifties, and particularly over the last four decades.

From an obscure day laborer KeluBabu rose to be an international celebrity. He rubbed shoulders with the glitterati of the international arts scene. And yet he never lost his humbleness, his civility, he exhibited no bragging, no boasting. The invocation to Lord Jagannatha at every Odissi dance, the greeting with the folded hands and the low graceful bow to the gathering are all part of the belief that the gods control our destiny. By the obeisance we request the blessings of the Lord and the collective blessings of the audience. It shows humility of the mind, a belief that all accomplishments are due to the wish of the gods, and the blessings of the audience. And these beliefs show in the dance movements and contribute to the special charm of Odissi, for Odissi is a dance invocation appropriate for an offering to the gods.

Although I first met KeluBabu in Canada, my father (Mayadhar Mansinha) knew him well. There was the bond between a poet and a creative dancer. I can remember the time when no one outside Orissa knew or appreciated the music and dance of Orissa. There were discussions in our house in the mid-fifties by Bapa on how to get Odissi recognized as a distinct and major dance form in India. Here is how Guruji accepted perhaps his first non-Oriya student. I quote from an earlier writing: "Guruji asks me to sit by his side, and describes a rainy day in Cuttack when Bapa wades through knee deep water and arrives at his (Guruji's) house and said 'Kelu, I know you do not teach non-Odia girls. My *bohu* is Gujrati and would like to learn Odissi'. Guruji said 'You are a poet of Odissa. She is your *bohu*. That is good enough for me. She will be my student'. That student was Sonal Mansingh.

What is now known as 'Odissi' dance was born in the mid 1940s, out of the dream of many Oriya intellectuals to have special dance and music of Orissa recognized outside the province. We owe the early great masters, for defining Odissi, and giving it a brand name identifying Orissa, but we owe Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra, a great debt, for enshrining within the dance the very character of Orissa and the Orissa people, and through his personality, making the dance style recognized throughout the world. Those intellectuals could never have imagined that Odissi would be performed in major cities throughout the world, and Odissi would be described (in The New York Times, September 30, 1996) as "jewel-like abstract dances in which the dancers' bodies formed exquisite, fluid patterns, shifting slowly through symmetrical stage pictures, with an occasional hint of lyrical asymmetry. ....Kelucharan Mohapatra is responsible for present day popularity of Odissi, both in India and abroad. He has been a teacher of dance for almost half a century. His talented and brilliant students have spread out far and wide. In virtually every major city in United States, Canada, Europe and India there are teachers of Indian classical dance, former students of Guruji, who are now teaching Odissi."

The Odissi dance form and the Odissi music are artistic achievements of the highest level. We Oriyas have been provided with a brand identity in the arts and in other spheres. In fact, with the current sorry state of Orissa State, the popularity and adoption of Odissi inside and outside India has allowed us from Orissa to hold our heads high. In paying tribute to the memory of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, let us remember all the gurus and intellectuals in Orissa who strived against so many odds to preserve a vital part of our culture. With Guruji's passing Orissa and the world has lost a great teacher, a great exponent of Odissi, and a great creative artist.

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*Lalu Mansinha is part of Kala Manjari, a presenter of Indian classical music and dance in London, Canada*

## ଗୁରୁ କେଳୁ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଦିନକର କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା\*

ଲଲାଟେନ୍ଦୁ ମାନସିହଂ ଓ ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି

ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଗୁରୁଜୀ, ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ବିଷୟରେ କିଛି କହିଲେ; ପିଲାକାଳରୁ କିପରି ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେ ?

ଉତ୍ତର - ମୋତେ ପାଞ୍ଚବର୍ଷ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ବାବା ନାଚ ଗୀତ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି । ସେ ହରିଭକ୍ତ, ଭଲ ମୃଦଙ୍ଗ ବଜାନ୍ତି । ଦିନେ ହଠାତ୍ କହିଲେ, “ଦି ପୁଅ ତ ମୋହନ ଗୋସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି - ଆମ ଗାଁରେ ତ ଯାତ୍ରା ପାଟି ଅଛି, ଯାଉନୁ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନାଚିବୁ ।” ପିଲାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ନାଚୁ ନାଚୁ ସେ ଦେଖିଲେ ଦି’ଟା କାଠିଧରି ଦଶ ବାରଜଣ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ମୁଁ ନାଚୁଥିଲି; ଗୀତ ହେଲା - ଜାତିକୁଡି ମାଳତୀ । ତା’ପରେ ମୋତେ ସେ ଭାରି ଗେଲ କରିଥିଲେ । ଆଉ ଗୋସେଇଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ପଠେଇବେ ବା ନ ପଠେଇବେ ତାଙ୍କର ଇଚ୍ଛା ଚିନ୍ତା ନଥିଲା । ଆମ ଗାଁରେ ଦି’ଟି ସଂଗୀତ ଦଳ ଥିଲେ - ବଳଭଦ୍ର ସାହୁ ସଙ୍ଗତ ଦଳ ଓ ମହାରଣା ସଙ୍ଗତ ଦଳ ।

ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଗାଁ ନାଁଟା ଚିକିଏ କହନ୍ତୁ ।

ଉତ୍ତର - ଖାଲି ଗାଁ ନାଁ କହିଲେ ବୁଝାଯିବ ନାହିଁ । ପୁରୀ ପାଖରେ ଚନ୍ଦନପୁର ଗାଁ ଅଛି । ଚନ୍ଦନପୁର ବଜାରଠୁ ଅଧମାଇଲିଏ ଦୂରରେ ହେଲା ମୋ ଗାଁ ରଘୁରାଜପୁର । ରଘୁରାଜପୁର ଚିତ୍ରକାରଙ୍କ ଗାଁ ଯେଉଁଠି ସମସ୍ତେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଚିତ୍ର କରନ୍ତି ।

ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ପଞ୍ଚତନ୍ତ୍ର ?

ଉତ୍ତର - ହଁ

ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଆପଣଙ୍କ ବାପାଙ୍କ ନାଁ କ’ଣ ଓ ସେଇଠୁ କ’ଣ ହେଲା ?

ଉତ୍ତର - ବାପାଙ୍କ ନାଁ ହେଲା ଚିନ୍ତାମଣି ମହାପାତ୍ର । ସେ ବସନ୍ତ ଉତ୍ସବରେ, ଦୋଳ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମାରେ ମୃଦଙ୍ଗ ବଜାନ୍ତି । ବାହାରୁ କେହି କେହି ଆସି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ଶିକ୍ଷା ବି ନେଇଛନ୍ତି ଯାତ୍ରା ପାଟିରେ ଏମିତି ଥରେ ନାଚିବା ପରେ ମୁଁ ଲୁଚି ଲୁଚି ବଳଭଦ୍ର ସାହୁଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗତ ଦଳ ପାଖରେ ଯାଇ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ସମୟରେ ବସିଲି । ସେଠାରେ ଯେ ଗୁରୁ, ସେ କହିଲେ - “କ’ଣ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଛି, ନାଚିବୁ କି ?” ମୁଁ କହିଲି, “ହଁ”; ସେ କହିଲେ - “ହଉ ନାଚ” । ତିନି ବର୍ଷ ଲୁଚି ଲୁଚି ଗୋଟିପୁଅ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷା କଲି । ବାବାଙ୍କୁ ଜଣା ନ ଥାଏ ଯେ ମୁଁ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷା କରୁଛି । ସେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ମୁଁ ଚାଟଶାଳୀରେ ପାଠ ପଢୁଛି । ମୁଁ ଚାଟଶାଳୀକୁ କମ୍ ସମୟ ଯାଏ । ବାବା ଯିବେ ଗାଧୋଇବାକୁ । ପୁଜାକାମ ସାରି ଫେରିଲା ବେଳକୁ ମୁଁ ଭୋରରୁ ଉଠି ନିତ୍ୟକର୍ମ ସାରି ନାଚ ଶିଖି ସାରିଥିବି । ବାବା ଯେତେବେଳେ ତାକିବେ ନଅଟାବେଳେ “ଆରେ କେଳା”, ମୁଁ ଧୁଲିଧୁସର ହୋଇ ବସିଯିବି - ନା କ’ଣ ମୁଁ ଖେଳୁଥିଲି । ପୁଣି ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳକୁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ନାଚ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ହୁଏ ସେତେବେଳେ ଯାଇ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରେ । ଏହିପରି ତିନିବର୍ଷ ଗଲା । ଗୁରୁଜୀ ଠିକ୍ କଲେ ମୋତେ ଦଶହରା ବେଳକୁ ଛିଡ଼ା



\* This interview appeared in 1991 OSA Journal.

<sup>1</sup> Photo Credit Amitava Sarkar, amitava.sarkar@paiindia.org



କରାଇବେ । ମୁଁ ସେତେବେଳକୁ ତିନିଟି ନାଚ ଶିଖିଥାଏ । ଗୁରୁ କହିଲେ (ବାବାଙ୍କୁ) “ତିନିଟି ନାଚ ପଢ଼ାଯାଉ, ତମେ ପୁଅର ନାଚ କାନ ଫେଡ଼େଇ ଦିଅ, ସେ ଗହଣା ଗଣି ପିନ୍ଧି ନାଚିବ । ତମକୁ ପୁଅ କହିଥିବ । ସେ ନାଚିବ ଦୁର୍ଗାପୂଜାବେଳେ । ବାବା କହିଲେ, “କିଓ କି ନାଚ ନାଚୁଛି, ସେ ତ ଯାତ୍ରାପାର୍ଶିରେ ନାଚୁଥିଲା ସେତିକି । ଆଉ କେତେକ’ଣ ନାଚ ଶିଖିଛି କି ? ଗୁରୁ କହିଲେ, “କ’ଣ ହେଲା, ସେ ମୋ ପାଖରୁ ତିନିବର୍ଷ ଶିଖିଲାଣି, ତମକୁ କିଛି କହେ ନାହିଁ ? ଭଲ ପିଲା, ତମର ନାଁ ରଖିବ ସେ ।” ବାବା କହିଲେ, “କ’ଣ କହିଲ, ମୋ ପିଲା ନାଚିବ ଓଠରେ ହାତ ଦେଇ, ଅକ୍ଷ ହଲେଇବ; ନାଇଁ ନାଇଁ, ମୁଁ ତାକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିବି ନାହିଁ । ତାକୁ ଗୋସେଇଁଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଛାଡ଼ିବି । ସେଠି ସେ ହରି କୀର୍ତ୍ତନ କରି ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କ ଗୁଣ ଗାନ କରିବ ।” ଗୁରୁ ପଚାରିଲେ, “କାହିଁକି ?” ବାବା ତାଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝାଇଥିଲେ, “ନୀଳନିଧି ହେ, ଲାଜେ ମୁଁ ଗଲିଟି ଶକ୍ତି, ଲୁଚାଇଛ କାହିଁ ଶ୍ୟାମ ହେ ଦିଅ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଶାଢ଼ୀ - ତମେ ଯାଇ ରହିକମାଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ଅକ୍ଷୟ ନେଇ ଆସୁଛି ନାଚ କରି । ଏହା କ’ଣ ହେଉଛି ତା’ର ଭାବାର୍ଥ ?” ଗୁରୁ କହିଲେ, “ଆହେ, ଆମର ତ ମାଗୁଣି ସେଇଟା; ମାଗୁଣି ହିସାବରେ ନେଇ ଆସୁ । ତମେ ସେ’ଟାକୁ ଖରାପ କାହିଁକି ଭାବୁଛ ? ଆମକୁ କିଏ କ’ଣ ଆଉ ମାଡ଼ିଦେବ ପଇସା ? ଗୀତଟା ଗାଇଲେ ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରି କିଏ ଦାନ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ।” ବାବା କହିଲେ, “କବିର ଯେଉଁ ମନୋଭାବ ସେଥିରେ କାହିଁ ?” ଗୁରୁ କହିଲେ, “ହରିଙ୍କୁ ମାଗିଲେ କ’ଣ ହରି ଦାନ କରିଦେବେ ?” ବାବା କହିଲେ, “ନା, ନା, ସେ ଶିକ୍ଷା ମୋ ପିଲାକୁ ଦେବା ଦରକାର ନାହିଁ । ତାକୁ ଠିକ୍ ଜାଗାକୁ ପଠାଇବ; ଯେଉଁଠି ତା’ର ଜ୍ଞାନ ଫେରିବ ।” ସତକୁ ସତ ମୋତେ ନଅ ବର୍ଷ ହୋଇଥାଏ, ଗୁରୁ ମୋହନ ଗୋସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲେ; ଆଉ ଦୁଇ ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଆସିଲେ । ମୁଁ ଗୋସେଇଁଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଥାଏ, ମଝିରେ ବାବା ମରିଗଲେ । ବାର ବର୍ଷ ଟ୍ରେନିଂ ନେଇ ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରି ଆସିଲା ପରେ ଦେଖିଲି ଯେ ଗାଁରେ ବସି କ’ଣ କରିବି ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ମୋହନ ଗୋସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ କି ଶିକ୍ଷା କଲେ ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ସେ ରାହାସ କରାଉଥିଲେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ପରଦା ପକାଉ ନ ଥିଲେ, ତାଳ, ଲତା, ପତ୍ରରେ କୁଞ୍ଚନ କରି ରାଧାକୃଷ୍ଣ ଲୀଳା ସେ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଲୋକମାନେ ରୋମାଞ୍ଚିତ ହୋଇ କରି ଘରୁ ଢେଙ୍କି ବନ୍ଦା ପକାଇ, କଂସା ବାସନ ବିକି ଆସୁଥିଲେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ରାହାସ ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ରାହାସ କ’ଣ ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ଏହା ହେଉଛି ଗୀତିନାଟ୍ୟ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ କବିଙ୍କର - ଯଥା ବନମାଳୀ, ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ରଭଞ୍ଜ, ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ, କବିସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଇତ୍ୟାଦିଙ୍କର ଗୀତ ଉପରେ ନାଟ କରିଦିଆଯାଇଛି । ସେଥିରୁ କେତେକ ନାଟକ ହେଉଛି - ମାନଭଞ୍ଜନ, ରାଧାପ୍ରେମାମୃତ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । କୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଦ୍ୱାରକା ନେଇ, ସୁଦାମା ସେବା ନେଇ ଗୀତିନାଟ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦିଆଯାଏ । ମୁଁ ବାଲ୍ୟକୃଷ୍ଣରୁ ଗୋପୀ ହୋଇ ଲଳିତା, ବିଶାଖା ଓ ରାଧା ପାର୍ଟି କରିଛି । ରାଧାରୁ କୃଷ୍ଣ, ଦ୍ୱାରକା କୃଷ୍ଣ ହେବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଥିଲି । ୧୨ ବର୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ସଂସ୍କୃତରୁ କି ଭଳି ଗୀତ କରାଯାଏ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କଥା ଶିଖିଥିଲି ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଶିକ୍ଷା ପରେ ଗାଁରେ ରହିଲେ ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ବାର ବର୍ଷପରେ ଫେରି ଆସି ଦେଖେ ତ ସେ ପୁରୁଣା ଗୁରୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି, କି ପୁରୁଣା ଗୋଟିପିଲା ପହୁଲି ମହାରଣା ନାହିଁ । ଆଉ ସଙ୍ଗତ ଦଳର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ, ତା ଭାଇ ବଳଭଦ୍ର ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ଗୁରୁ ମୋହନ ମହାରଣାଙ୍କ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷାବେଳେ ମୁଁ ସେ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଯାଏ । ସେତେବେଳେ ଆମର ରାହାସ ଓ ଗୋଟିପୁଅ ଭାବାଭିନୟ ବିଷୟରେ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ଚାଲେ । ଏ ଭଳି ଅନେକ ଦିନ ଯିବା ପରେ ମୋ ଭାଇ ମୋ ଉପରେ ଅସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ହେଲେ ଓ କହିଲେ, “ସଙ୍ଗତ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ଛାଡ଼, ନ ହେଲେ ତୁ ତୋ ବାଟ ଦେଖ ।” ତେଣୁ ମୁଁ ପାନ ବରଜରେ ମୂଲ ଲାଗିଲି । ଛ ପଇସାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲି - ସେଥିରେ ଦେଢ଼ ସେର ଚାଉଳ କିଣାଯାଇ ପାରୁଥିଲା । ପାନ ଚୋକେଇ ଧରି ପୁରୀକୁ ବିକିବାକୁ ଗଲି । ଏ ଦୁରାବସ୍ଥାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସଙ୍ଗତଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ଛାଡ଼ି ନ ଥାଏ । ଦିନେ ପାନ ବରଜରେ ପାଣି ଢାଳୁଥାଏ । ଶେଷ ଘଡ଼ା ସରିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ କଷ୍ଟ ଲାଘବ କରିବାକୁ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ଡାକୁଥାଏ ଓ ଗୀତ ବୋଲୁଥାଏ । ମାଲିକ ମୋ ଗୀତ ଶୁଣି ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଖୁସି ହେଲେ ଓ ମୋ ଅତୀତ ଜୀବନ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ଶୁଣିଲେ । ସେ ମୋ ଦରମା ବଢ଼ାଇ ଦେଇ କହିଲେ ସଙ୍ଗତଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରିବାକୁ । ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ବିଦାୟ ନେଇ ଆସିଲି । ତା ପରଦିନ ମୋ କର୍ଷ୍ଣଗୁରୁ ଆସି କହିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଟକ ଯିବାକୁ - ସେଠାରେ ଅକ୍ଷ

ପ୍ରହରୀରେ ଗାଇଲେ କିଛି ରୋଜଗାର କରି ପାରିବି । ମୋତେ ଜଣାଗଲା ଭଗବାନ ମୋ ଡାକ ଶୁଣିଲେ । ବାବା ମଲାବେଳେ ମାଁଙ୍କୁ କହିଯାଇଥିଲେ, “ପୁଅ ହାତେ ମାପି ଚାଖଣ୍ଡେ ଚାଲିବ, ବୁଝି ବିଚାରି କାମ କରିବ, କରଜ କରିବ ନାହିଁ, କାହାକୁ ଠକାଇବ ନାହିଁ, ଯେଉଁ କଳାକୁ ସେ ଧରିଛି ସେଥିରେ ସେ ଯେମିତି ସୁଖ୍ୟାତି ଅର୍ଜନ କରୁ ।” ପଦ୍ମଶ୍ରୀ, ପଦ୍ମଭୂଷଣ, କାଳିଦାସ ସମ୍ମାନ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଉପାଧି ପାଇବାବେଳେ ମୋ’ର ତାଙ୍କ କଥା ମନେ ପଡ଼େ । ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ନାମ ରଖି ପାରିଛି ଏହା ମୋ ମନରେ ଉଠି ମାରେ ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - କଟକରେ କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ଆପଣ ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଲେ ବୋଧହୁଏ ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ତାପରେ ମୁଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ବି ଗୁପ୍ତ ଥିବାରକୁ ଆସେ ସେତେବେଳକୁ ମୋତେ ୨୨ ବର୍ଷ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଗୁରୁ ପଙ୍କଜ ଚରଣ ଦାସ ଦଶାବତାର, ମୋହିନୀ ଭସ୍ମାସୁର ଏ ପରି ତିନି ଚାରିଟି ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଗୁରୁ ଦୟାଲ ସରନ ଆସି ନୃତ୍ୟକୁ ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରିଥିଲେ ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଗୁରୁ ଦୟାଲ ସରନ କିଏ ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ସେ ଉଦୟ ଶଙ୍କରଙ୍କ ଶିଷ୍ୟ । ଆମ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଦେଖି ଖୁସି ହୋଇ ଆମକୁ ଅନେକ ମୁଦ୍ରା ଶିଖାଇଥିଲେ ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଆପଣଙ୍କର ସେତେବେଳେ ଦୈନନ୍ଦିନ ଜୀବନ କିପରି ଥିଲା ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ସେତେବେଳେ ମୋ’ର କର୍ମଧାରା ହେଲା ବାଦ୍ୟ ବଜାଇବା ଏବଂ ୪ ଘଣ୍ଟା ନାଚିବା । ତବଲା ରେହାକ କରିବି, ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ଡାକିବି ନୃତ୍ୟ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରିବା ସକାଶେ । ରାତିରେ ରଙ୍ଗମଞ୍ଚରେ ନାଟକ ସରିଲା ପରେ ପୁଣି ୨ ଘଣ୍ଟା ନୃତ୍ୟ ବାଦ୍ୟ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରି ଖାଇ କରି ୨-୩ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଶୋଇବି । ରାତି ୪ଟା ବେଳକୁ ଉଠି ପୁଣି ଦୈନନ୍ଦିନ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ଚାଲେ । ଏହିପରି ୬ ବର୍ଷ ଚାଲି ଯାଇଛି, ଯେତେବେଳେ ମାଝରୀ କଲି - ୧୫ ଟଙ୍କାରୁ ୫୫ ଟଙ୍କା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ (ସାମାନ୍ୟ ହସ) ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - କ’ଣ ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ହଁ, ଅର୍ଣ୍ଣପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ବି ଗୁପ୍ତରେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ୧୫ ଟଙ୍କା ଦରମା ଥାଏ ମୋ’ର । ଅଶାନ୍ତିଏ ପକାଇଲେ ପେଟେ ଖାଇ ହେଉଥିଲା । ମୁଁ ମାଝରୀ କରିବା ଭିତରେ ଆମ ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କର ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧ ହୋଇଥାଏ, ମାନେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀପ୍ରିୟାଙ୍କ ସହିତ - ସେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେଠାରେ ନୃତ୍ୟ କରୁଥିଲେ ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ- ଆପଣଙ୍କ ବିବାହ କେବେ ହୋଇଥିଲା ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣାରୁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଚାଲି ଆସୁ । ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀପ୍ରିୟାଙ୍କ ମା’ଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ଏ ଗୁପ୍ତ ବାଉରୀ ବନ୍ଧୁ ବାବୁ ଝିଅ କରି ନେଇଥିଲେ । ବାଉରୀ ବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦରେ ଆମେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ମିତରକୁ ଯାଇ ବିବାହ କଲୁ । ମୋ କୁଟୁମ୍ବୁଙ୍କୁ ଜଣାଇଲି ଯେ ମୁଁ ଏହିପରି ଭାବରେ ମୋ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀକୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଛି । ସେ ଉଚ୍ଚକୁଳର ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ ଘର ଝିଅ ଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ମା ଥିଲେ ବୈଷ୍ଣବୀ ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ବାଉରୀ ବନ୍ଧୁ ବାବୁ ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ଏ ଗୁପ୍ତରେ କ’ଣ ଥିଲେ ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ପ୍ରଥମେ ମ୍ୟାନେଜର । ବି ଗୁପ୍ତରେ ହେଲେ ଲିଙ୍ଗରାଜ ନୟ । ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣାର ମୂଳ ମାଲିକ ହେଲେ ସୋମନାଥ ସାହୁ । ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ନାମ ହେଲା ଅନୁପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ଦେବୀ । ବାଲୁଗାଁରେ ଘର - ବାଣପୁର । ତାଙ୍କର ମୋ ପ୍ରତି ବହୁତ ଅବଦାନ - ଶେଷବେଳେ ମୋତେ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ଦେଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ମାଝରୀ ସମୟରେ କେତେ ଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ନୃତ୍ୟ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରିଥିଲି - ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲ ହୋଇଥିଲା - ସେ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମନେ ନାହିଁ । ଆମେ ବିବାହ କରି ଯେତେବେଳେ ସଂସାର କଲୁ ସେତେବେଳେ ବାହାରେ ରୁପଶ୍ରୀ ଥିବାର ଇତ୍ୟାଦିରେ କଳା



ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରାଉଥିଲା । ଅର୍ଥପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ ମୋ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀପ୍ରିୟାଙ୍କର ନୃତ୍ୟ ଦେଖି ସଂଯୁକ୍ତା ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀଙ୍କ ମା ଭାବିଲେ କିପରି ଏ ନୃତ୍ୟ ନିଜ ଝିଅକୁ ଶିଖାଇବେ । ବାହାରକୁ ଆସିବା ପରେ ସଂଯୁକ୍ତା, ମିନାକ୍ଷୀ ନନ୍ଦ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ୩୦/୪୦ ଝିଅ ମୋ ପାଖରେ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷା କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପର୍ବରେ, ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତାରେ ମୋ ଛାତ୍ରୀ ସଂଯୁକ୍ତା, ମିନାକ୍ଷୀ ପ୍ରଥମ ପୁରସ୍କାର ନେଇ ଆସନ୍ତି । ତା ଦ୍ଵାରା ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷା ବଢ଼ିଲା - ଘରେ ଘରେ ଘୁଞ୍ଚୁର ଝୁଣୁ ଝୁଣୁ ଶୁଣାଗଲା । ଅନେକ ମାଞ୍ଚର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେଲେ । ଗୁରୁ ପଙ୍କଜ ଚରଣ ଦାସ, ଦେବ ପ୍ରସାଦ ଦାସ ଓ ମୁଁ; ପଛରେ ପଛରେ ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ - ମାୟାଧର ରାଉତ, ରଘୁଦତ୍ତ, ବଟକୃଷ୍ଣ ସେଣା । ମୋ ଠାରୁ କେତେ ଜଣ କିଛି କିଛି ଶିକ୍ଷା ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି ଓ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ମଧ୍ୟ । ଏହା ଭିତରେ କଟକରେ କଳା ବିକାଶ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - କେବେ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ଧରନ୍ତୁ, ଦେଶ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ହେବାର ୧୦-୧୨ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ବୋଧହୁଏ । ମୋ'ର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍କୁଲ, କଲେଜରେ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେବାର ଥାଏ; ଅନେକ ଯିବା ଆସିବା କରିବାକୁ ହୁଏ । ତା ଛଡ଼ା ପ୍ରାଇଭେଟ୍ ଟ୍ୟୁସନ୍ - ମୋ'ର ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଭଲ ରୋଜଗାର ମଧ୍ୟ ହେଉଥାଏ । ସବୁଆଡ଼େ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବରେ ନାଟିବା ସ୍ଫୁହା ଆସିଗଲା ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରସାର ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ କହନ୍ତୁ ।**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ କଲେଜରୁ ଆସି ସଙ୍ଗତ ନାଟକ ଏକାଡେମୀରେ ଚାକିରୀ କରିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ଆମମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ବୁଝା ବୁଝି କରିଛନ୍ତି, ଏବଂ ଗାଁ ଗଣ୍ଡାକୁ ଯାଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀର ତଥ୍ୟ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଯେଉଁ ପାରମ୍ପାରିକ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଚାଲିଥିଲା ସେହିପରି ଅଛି । ଗାଁରେ ଗୋଟି ପିଲା ମଧ୍ୟ ଅଛି । ଏବେ ଗାଁ ଗଣ୍ଡାରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ନୂଆ ବିଷୟ ଜଣାଇବା ଦରକାର ପଡ଼ୁଛି, ଆହୁରି ଜ୍ଞାନ ଦେବା ଦରକାର ପଡ଼ୁଛି । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସେତେ ଜ୍ଞାନ ନାହିଁ, ଯେପରି ମୁଁ ଦିନେ ଅଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଥିଲି । ଚିତ୍ରରେ ଅଛି, ପୋଥିରେ ଅଛି - ଏ ସବୁକୁ ସଙ୍ଗଠନ କରି ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେବାକୁ ହେବ । ଆଜି ଯେଉଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ପ୍ରଗତି କରିଛି, ସଂଯୁକ୍ତା, ସୋନାଲ ମାନସିଂହ ବା କୁଞ୍ଜୁ ମହାନ୍ତି ଇତ୍ୟାଦିଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ । ମୋ'ର ଅନ୍ୟ ଛାତ୍ରୀ ଅଛନ୍ତି ବାହାରେ - ପ୍ରତିମା ବେଦୀ, ସୁତପା ଦତ୍ତ, ମେନକା ଠକର ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ତ୍ରିଭଙ୍ଗ ଅଛି, ଗୋଟି ପୁଅରେ ମଧ୍ୟ, ଦେବଦାସୀରେ ମଧ୍ୟ । ତ୍ରିଭଙ୍ଗକୁ ମୁଁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରି ନାହିଁ । ଏହାକୁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ କିପରି ପ୍ରୟୋଗ କରାଯିବ ଓ ତା'ର କ୍ରମ ବିକାଶ କିପରି ହେବ, ସେ ଦିଗରେ ମୁଁ କାମ କରିଛି । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକଟିକୁ କିପରି ଆହୁରି ସୁନ୍ଦର ରୂପ ଦିଆଯିବ, ଅଥଚ ମୌଳିକତା ଲୋପ ପାଇବ ନାହିଁ - ଏହାକୁ ଖଞ୍ଜିକାଟା ହେଲା ମୋ'ର କାମ । ଯେ କୌଣସି ଗୁରୁ ହେଉ, ସେଇ କେତୋଟି ଭଙ୍ଗକୁ ନେଇ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଛନ୍ଦ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଅଙ୍ଗଭଙ୍ଗ ଦ୍ଵାରା ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ କଳାକୁ ପ୍ରଚାର କରିବ । ଏହାର ଅର୍ଥ ନୁହେଁ ଯେ ଆମେ ଅନ୍ୟ କାହା ପାଖରୁ ଦେଖିକରି ଏପରି କରୁଛୁ ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଆପଣ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଅବସ୍ଥା ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ଚିକିତ୍ସା କହନ୍ତୁ, ଯଥା ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ ସେକ୍ଟର . . .**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ନୃତ୍ୟର ଯେଉଁ ନାମକରଣ ହେଉଛି, ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକର ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚାକରି 'ନୋଟେସନ୍' କିପରି ହେବ ଆମ ସରକାର ଏହାର ଗବେଷଣାରେ ଆଗ୍ରହ ପ୍ରକାଶ କଲେ । ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଏ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ସୁଦକ୍ଷ ଅଛନ୍ତି ଓ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଏହାକୁ କରି ପାରିବେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ଦିଆଯାଉ ବୋଲି ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ ହେଲା । ଜାନକୀ ବଲ୍ଲଭ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ କରୁଣା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ୩/୪ ବର୍ଷ ହେବ ଗବେଷଣା କେନ୍ଦ୍ରଟିଏ ହୋଇଛି । ସେଠାକୁ ଗୁଣୀ ଜନମାନଙ୍କୁ ଡକା ହୋଇଛି । ଗୋଟିପୁଅ କେମିତି କରୁଥିଲେ, ଝୁଲଣ ଯାତ୍ରା କେମିତି ହେଉଥିଲା, ଦେବଦାସୀ କେମିତି ଆସିଲେ ଏହାର ତଥ୍ୟ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରାଯାଉଛି । ଗୁରୁ କେଉଁମାନେ ଥିଲେ, ଏବେ କିଏ ଅଛନ୍ତି - ଏହାର ମଧ୍ୟ ଗବେଷଣା ଚାଲିଛି । ବିଭିନ୍ନ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଯେଉଁ ନାମକରଣ କରାଯାଉଛି - କେଉଁଟା ଅଭିନୟ ଦର୍ପଣରୁ ଅଣାଯାଉଛି, କେଉଁଟା ଅଭିନୟ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାରୁ ବା ନାଟ୍ୟଶାସ୍ତ୍ରରୁ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପୁସ୍ତକରୁ କିଭଳି ବିଧି ଅନୁସାରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦିଆଯିବ ତା'କୁ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରି ପୁସ୍ତକ ହିସାବରେ ବାହାର କରାଯାଉଛି । କେନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ 'ନୋଟେସନ୍' ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦିଆଯାଉଛି । ସେମାନେ ବୃତ୍ତି ପାଉଛନ୍ତି । ଅନ୍ୟ ଜାଗାରେ ଯେଉଁ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଅଛନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ ଠିକ୍ ଭାବରେ ଶିଖାଉଛନ୍ତି କି ନାହିଁ ଜାଣିବା ପାଇଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଡକାଯାଉଛି - ଏକ ଧାରା ମାନି ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଶିଖିବା ଓ ଶିଖାଇବା ପାଇଁ । ଏହା ମଧ୍ୟ ଗବେଷଣା କେନ୍ଦ୍ରର କାମ - ଶିକ୍ଷକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦିଆଯାଉଛି ଓ ଶିକ୍ଷା ପ୍ରଣାଳୀ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରାଯାଉଛି ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଆପଣ ନିଜର ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ରତା ନୃତ୍ୟରେ ଦେଖାଇପାରିଛନ୍ତି, ଏହିପରି ଆଉ ହେଉଛି କି ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ହଁ ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । କେଳୁଭାଇ ଏମିତି କଲେ, ମୁଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏ ଭଳି ଭାବରେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବି । ଦର୍ଶକ ଦେଖି କହିବେ ଯେ ଠିକ୍ କରାହେଉଛି ବୋଲି । ମୁଁ ଯାହା କରୁଛି ସବୁ ଯେ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ବୁଝିବା ଭଳି ହେବ କହୁନାହିଁ - ଲୋକ ଯେ ସବୁ ଜିନିଷ ଦେଖି ବାଃ ବାଃ କହିବେ, ତା ନୁହେଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ, କାଳକ୍ରମେ ଲୋକେ ହିଁ ଜାଣିପାରିବେ ପ୍ରକୃତ କଳା କ'ଣ ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଏବେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ଚିନ୍ତା କହନ୍ତୁ ।**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ଗତ ଚାଳିଶ ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଯେଉଁ ଉନ୍ନତି କରିଛି (ମୋତେ ଏବେ ଚଉଷଠୀ ଚାଲିଛି), ଯେତିକିଟା ଶିକ୍ଷା ଆଗେଇ ଚାଲିଛି, ଶହେ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ନିଃସୂତ୍ର ଏହାର କିଛି ଭଲ ରାସ୍ତା ବାହାରିଥିବ । ଗବେଷଣା ଯଦି ୪୦ ବର୍ଷ ଆଗରୁ ହୋଇଥାଆନ୍ତା ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଆଉ କିଛି ଆଗେଇଥାଆନ୍ତା । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦୁଇ ଗତିରେ କାମ ଆଗେଇଛି । ଆଜିକାଲିର ପିଲା ଆହୁରି ଭଲ କରାଇବେ ବୋଲି ମୋ'ର ଆଶା । ଯଦି ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ନ ହେବ ତେବେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେରଣା ବଢ଼ିବ ନାହିଁ । ଅନେକ କହୁଛନ୍ତି - ଗୁରୁଜୀ ଆପଣ ଚିନ୍ତା ଶିଖାନ୍ତୁ । ଏହି ଇଚ୍ଛା ଏବେ ବଢ଼ୁଛି । ତାଙ୍କୁ ନୃତ୍ୟର ବିଧି ଦେଖାଇ ଦେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ୁଛି । ତା ନହେଲେ ଯେତିକି ଶିଖିଛନ୍ତି ସେତିକି ନାଟିଦେଲେ ସରିଗଲା । ଅବା ସେତିକି ଶିଖାଇଲେ ସରିଗଲା । ଆଉ ଆବିଷ୍କାର ହେବ କିପରି ? ତେଣୁ ଯାହା ଜଣା ଅଛି ତା ସହିତ ଅନ୍ୟ କିଛି ରଖିଦେଲେ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ ପିଲାମାନେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ପାରିବେ । ମୋ ପିଲାଟାକୁ ସେଇ ବାଟରେ ଚଳାଇଛି ଓ ମୁଁ ବଜାଇଲେ ସେ ନାଚୁଛି ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପୁଅ ଶିବୁ ବିଷୟରେ କହୁଛନ୍ତି; ଜଣାଯାଉଛି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପରିବାରର ସମସ୍ତେ ଏ କଳାରେ ଜୀବନ ଅର୍ପିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି ।**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ହଁ, ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଯୋଗୁଁ ସେ ରାଜ୍ୟପାଳ, ରାଜ୍ୟପତି ଯଥା ରାଜଗୋପାଳଚାରୀ, ରିଭି, ଫକିର ଅଲ୍ଲି ଇତ୍ୟାଦିଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ପ୍ରଶଂସା ପତ୍ର ପାଇଛନ୍ତି ଓ ପୁରସ୍କୃତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ଗୋଟିପୁଅ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟକୁ ସେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ରଙ୍ଗମଞ୍ଚରେ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇ ଥିଲେ ।

**ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ - ଆଜ୍ଞା କହିଲେ, ନୃତ୍ୟ କଲାବେଳେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ କ'ଣ ଅନୁଭବ କରନ୍ତି ?**

**ଉତ୍ତର -** ଆମ ସଂସାରଟା ହେଲା ନାଟକ । ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁ ହେଲା ସଂସାରରେ କ'ଣ ଚାଲିଛି ତାକୁ ବାନ୍ଧିକରି ନାଟକ ରୂପରେ ଅଭିନୟ କରିବା । ଅଭିନୟ କି ଭଳି ଦର୍ଶକ ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଭାବି ରହିବ ଏହା ଦେଖାଇବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ଦେଖାଯିବ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମୁଖ୍ୟ କେଳୁ ନାଚୁ ନାହିଁ, ନାଚୁଛି ବେଶୀ ପକାଇ । ଥରେ ନୃତ୍ୟ ପରେ ଜଣେ ପିଲା କହିଥିଲା - ସାର୍ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ତ ଚୁଲ ନାହିଁ, ଆପଣ ସେଥିରେ କିପରି ବେଶୀ ପକାଉଥିଲେ - ଏତେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ମେକ୍ ଅପ୍ ବଦଳାଇ ଦେଲେ ? ମୁଁ କହିଲି - କି କଥା ଇଏ, ମୁଁ ତ କିଛି ମେକ୍ ଅପ୍ ହୋଇ ନାହିଁ । ହଁ ଦେଖିବାର ଆଦର୍ଶ ତମର ଅଛି, ଅନୁଭବୀ ହୋଇଛ । ଭଗବାନଙ୍କର ଦୟା, ମୋତେ ଗୁରୁଙ୍କର ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ । ମୋ'ର ନିଜର କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ମୁଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଅଭିନୟ କରେ, ସେତେବେଳେ ମୁଁ ଅନେକ ଆନନ୍ଦ ପାଏ । ଏହିପରି ଭାବରେ ଦେବଦାସୀ ବୋଧହୁଏ ନିଜକୁ ଅର୍ପିତ କରୁଥିଲେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ।





## Guruji's Life and Work

(Compilation done by S. G. Mohanty, and is based on information from PRADAKSHINA, a Souvenir Issue produced on the occasion of Guruji's 75<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebration, organized by his disciples in collaboration with Gandharva Mahavidyalaya and Srjan and from Ratikant Mohapatra.)

### Milestones in Guruji's Life:

Born in village Raghurajpur, Dist Puri, Orissa in 1924 (1926 in official documents).

Parents: Chintamani Mohapatra, a pattachitra painter and Siri Nani

In 1926, his original name Madan Mohan changed to Sabakhy Kela, in order to avoid evil eye and bad influence of stars. Madan Mohan becomes Kelucharan.

In 1928, he is critically ill with small pox; his mother leaves him in front of the village deity Bhuasuni praying for her mercy. He survives; has thought Bhuasuni as his mother since then.

In 1929, joins Gotipua dancing in the Akhada of Guru Balbhadra Sahu, without his father's knowledge; continues training for three years.

His father thought Gotipua dancing to be cheap and stopped young Kelu to continue; leaves him with the Raas Leela troupe of Mohan Sundar Dev Goswami at Puri in 1932.

For ten years with the party, learns devotional singing, acting and Vaishnava philosophy at the feet of his Guru; excels in the role of Krishna; became the most trusted disciple.

In 1941, his father passed away. Kelucharan tries to follow the three rules his father taught: look before you step forward, do not be in debt and excel in your chosen field.

In 1943, leaves the Raas Leela party, works as a labourer in betel groves for survival; plays khol, tabla and mardal in spare times.

In 1944, joins Kalicharan Pattnaik's Orissa Theatres; works as a stage-hand, make-up man, tabla player, singer and minor actor on a

salary of Rs 7/month; leaves within a year for lack of artistic opportunities.

In 1945, joins as the director of the Radhakant Raas party on a substantial salary of Rs 30/month; presents successful performances of *Balya Leela* and *Maana Bhanjana* and directs *Meerabai*; due to serious illness moves to Cuttack and later joins the newly formed Annapurna B group theatre party as a tabla player on a salary of Rs15/month; there he assists Guru Pankaj Charan Das, then engaged as a dance teacher.

1946 was the real beginning of Kelucharan's stage performance as a dancer; plays Mahadev in Pankaj Charan Das's composition *Mohini Bhasmasura* in which Laxmipriya (later she became his wife) who was brought from Annapurna A group in Puri plays Mohini; her graceful dance takes the theatre audience by storm and her two items '*Nahin ke kari dela*' and '*Jaana re mo rana parana mita*' could be regarded as prototype of the present-day Odissi dance.

In 1947 emerged the dance item *Dashavtara* composed as a combined effort by Durlabh Chandra Singh and Pankaj Charan Das in which Kelucharan dances as a duet with Laxmipriya.

In 1948, was introduced to Dayal Sharan, a student of Uday Shankar, from whom he learns exercises, mudras, choreography etc.; also learns the basics of other styles like Manipuri, Kathak and Kathakali.

This is the year when he married Laxmipriya on the theatre stage and later in a ceremony in the Loknath Temple; daughter Charu is born.

Kelucharan studies Gotipua and Mahari dance; gets inspired to compose a dance

sequence for Laxmipriya and uses *pushpanjali*, *bhoomi pranam*, and the *trikandi pranam* which became the basic ingredients of *Mangalacharan* of the current repertoire.

This year also becomes the beginning of an era of dance-dramas with the combined effort of musicians, writers and dancers under the leadership of P.V. Krishnamurthy, the dynamic head of AIR, Cuttack.

1947 marks the starting point of Kelucharan's career as a teacher when he accepts the five year old Sanjukta as his student; starts teaching Minati Misra, Meera Das and others.; his popularity increases and he works hard by going from house to house on a ramshackle bicycle and to other places away from Cuttack.

In 1953, joins Kala Vikash Kendra (KVK), which became the centre for Odissi dance teaching.

In 1954, he teaches Dashavtar to Dharendra Nath Patnaik for the Inter-University Youth Festival for which Dharendra receives a prize.

In 1955, both he and Pankaj Charan compose the dance-drama *Saakshi Gopal* in which Priyambada Mohanty dances the invocation to Lord Ganesh, '*Pada Vande Ganath*'- a popular Mangalacharan item even today.

In 1957, KVK gets a grant from Sangeet Natak Academy for research into folk and tribal dances; Kelucharan heads the research team.

Another landmark in Odissi dance in the year was the formation of Jayantika – a group of Gurus including Kelucharan and scholars – to systemize the Odissi dance form. The basic repertoire of Odissi gets formalized and decision on costumes and hair-styles and jewelry are taken.

In 1958, at the Music Academy Conference in Madras, Kelucharan presents the dance of Sanjukta Panigrahi; later Odissi is recognized as the fifth classical dance style when Kelucharan's student gives a demonstration at the

all India Dance Seminar, organized by the Sangeet Natak Academy at New Delhi.

In 1959, he contracts tuberculosis; gives up smoking *bidis* and picks of the habit of chewing *paans* which continues till the end; for his treatment, money comes from students and KVK, but nevertheless, Laxmipriya has to sell her jewelry.

His illness and a parting of ways among the Gurus hasten the dissolution of Jayantika.

In 1961, composes eleven new solo items and a series of dance-dramas; he buys a piece of land in Cuttack and over a period of four years builds his own house with his own hand and with the help of labourers.

In 1964, KVK organizes a grand three-day show in Bombay; Kelucharan is deeply involved and works continuously until he collapses and falls seriously sick.

In 1965, his son Ratikant is born.

In 1966, gets the Sangeet Natak Academy Award, the first one to get in Odissi.

In 1967, composes *Sakhi He* and *Dheera Sameere* for Kumkum Das (Mohanty), presented at *Geet Govinda* seminar in Delhi, organized jointly by Sangeet Natak Academy and Lalit Kala Academy; music composition by old associate Bhubaneswar Mishra; at the seminar his first demonstration outside Orissa.

A new beginning that he goes abroad with Sanjukta Panigrahi as part of an Indian delegation to USSR; other members are Gopi Krishan, Birju Maharaj, Yamini Krishnamurthy, Bismilla KhanRaj Kapur, Nargis and others.

In 1968, starts teaching condensed courses in the summer at KVK, which attract students from all over India and abroad; among outsiders: Menaka Thakkar, Sonal Mansingh, Rani Karna, Myrta Barvie (Argentina), Akemi Sakurai (Japan), Kumkum Lal and Nalini Malhotra; visits USSR with Sonal.

In 1969, conducts the recital of Sonal at Kala Kshetra, in which she performs *Kuru Yadu-*



*nandan*; this is historic – Rukmini Devi Arundale accepts Odissi as a classical dance style.

In 1974, teaches a few months at Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi where such students as Madhavi Mudgal and Sheela Raj joined; receives Padmashri Award.

In 1975, choreographs the Hindi version of the Geet Govinda with music composition by Pandit Jasraj; Protima Bedi joins as a student.

In 1979, choreographs the dance sequences for Oriya film *Sri Krishna Raas Leela*; performs *Priye Charusheele* which marks the re-emergence of Kelucharan as a performer.

1980: sees his workshop with Padatik, Calcutta and 1981 at the NCPA, Bombay; these become an annual feature since then.

In 1984, joins Odissi Research Centre, Bhubaneswar, headed by Kumkum Mohanty; works on codification and development of a script to write Odissi dance.

In 1987, shifts from Cuttack to Bhubaneswar

In 1988, gets the Padma Bhushan award.

In 1989, suffers from heart attack and undergoes by-pass surgery at Birla Heart Centre, Calcutta in 1990.

In 1990, also appears a film on Kelucharan '*Bhabantaram*' by Kumar Shahani

In 1994, leaves Odissi Research Centre and founds his own institution, *Srjan*, being run by his son Ratikant and daughter-in-law Sujata, a dancer herself; moves to his own house in Bhubaneswar.

In 1995, he is conferred the Officer of the Order of Art and Culture by the Government of France. OSA confers "Utkal Shree" award on him.

1996 witnesses an international celebration of his seventieth birth anniversary in which he and Srjan tour North America; it is first for Srjan.

In 2000, receives the Padma Bibhusan.

In 2001, pays the debt of gratitude to his 'mother', the goddess Bhuasuni, by completing her temple in his village and having an elaborate celebration of inaugural ceremony; his disciples celebrate his 75<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary; the book "The Making of a Guru: Kelucharan Mohapatra – His Life and Times" is released.

In 2003, receives the Shankar Dev Award of Government of Assam and the award of The Fellow of Sangeet Natak Academy.

Gurujii leaves this world on April 7, 2004.

### **Gurujii's Dance Compositions:**

#### Mangalacharan

Pada Vande Gananath – 1955; Namami Vighna Raja – 1957; Manikya Veenamuppala Layanti – 1965/68; Namodevi – 1968; Vedan Uddharate – 1970/85; Kadachit Kalindi Tata – 1971; Saratna hemaghantika – 1976; Yasyaanke – 1979; Jatatavi Galajjala – 1981; Keki Kantha – 1982; Shiva Panchaakhsara Stothram – 1988; Yakudentu Tushar hara Dhabala – undated.

#### Pallavi

Basanta – 1957; Kalyan – 1959; Saveri – 1961; Mohana – 1965; Shankarabharanam – 1965; Saveri – 1966; Gatibheda – 1968; Arabhi – 1972; Hamsadhwani – 1978; Khamaj – 1979; Bihag – 1981/88; Kirwani – 1981; Bilahari – 1983; Mukhari – 1993; Singhendra – 1996.

#### Geet Govinda

Lalita lavanga Lata – 1958; Dashavatar – 1959; Nindanti Chandanamindu – 1959; Yahi Madhav – 1961; Yami He Kamiha Saranam – 1961/79/80; Pashyati Dishi Dishi – 1962; Hariraha Mugdhabadhu – 1963; Kuru Yadu nandana – 1967; Dhira sameere – 1967; Sakhi He – 1967; Rase harimiha – 1968/86; Mugdhe Madhu Mathanam – 1972; Mamiyam Chalita Vilokya – 1974; Kapi madhuripuna – 1977; Radha vadana – 1983; Shrita Kamala Kuchamandala – 1984; Madhave Ma Kuru –

1988; Kishalaya Sayana tale – 1993; Ramate Yamuna – 1995; Samudita Vadane – 1995; Priye Charusheele – undated.

#### Oriya Songs

Nahin Ke Karidela – 1953; Srimati Sripati – 1956; Dekhiba Para Asa Re – 1956; Shyamaku Juhara – 1959; Bhangi Chahan – 1960; Dine na Dakibu – 1961/88; Patha Chhadide – 1966; To Lagi Gopa Danda – 1966; Daya Na Karantu – 1967; He Banagiri – 1968; Badhila Jani Kshama – 1976; Prana Sangini Re – 1976; Bansi Teji Hela – 1988; Mare Bana Dhara Shrabana – 1994; Ekalavya – 1998; Malli Mala Shyamaku Debi, Kanta Bina Diba, Shyama Ja Ja, Ahe Nila Shaila, Bibhusana Puspe, Kahin Gale Murali Phunka, Sagini Re Rasa Rangini Re, Nachanti Range Sri Hari, Aja Mun Dekhili, Bitalaku Alingana, Brajaku Chora, Are Babu Shyama Ghana, Jagannatha He Kichhi Magu Nahin, Hema harini, Kete Chhanda – undated.

#### Champu

Atasi Kusuma, Ki Hela Re, Khela Lola Khanjan Akhi, Janichhi Mun Ete, Dosa Bara He, Nua nata, Leela Nidhi He, Kshamanu – undated.

#### Other Languages

Biswa Bina Rabe – undated; Vande Mataram – undated; Juhi Ki Kali – 1971; Sita Haran –

1973; Kevat Prasang – 1979; Ek Sang Dhaye – 1981; Agamane Prem – undated; Phulwari Leela – undated.

#### Dance Dramas

Kishori Kanhu – 1953; Palli Gatha – 1955; Sakshi Gopal – 1956; Pancha Puspa – 1957; Neela Madhav – 1957; Mahanadi – 1958; Chandrika – 1958; Krushna Gatha – 1958; Poojarini – 1958; Konarka Jagarana – 1958; Sapan Nayaka – 1959; Kumar Sambhav – 1959; Anadi Sangeeta – 1959; Shakuntala – 1960; Bhagabat Geeta – 1961; Tapaswini – 1961; Chitrangada – 1961; Meghdut – 1962; Buddhadeva – 1962; Bharat Mata – 1963; Mahabharat – 1964; Krushna Leela – 1964; Amrapalli – 1965; Vikram Urvashi – 1966; Kanchi Vijay – 1970; Geet Govind – 1975; Ramayana – 1980/81; Ramayan – 1981; Champu – 1983; Geeta Govinda – 1984; Chandrabhaga – 1989; Kanchi Abhijan – 1989/90; Vastra haran – 1990; Abhijan Shakuntalam – 1991/92; Ekalavya – 1992; Konarka – 1993; Dushmanta Shakuntala – 1994; Dashanana – 1995; Jageswari – 1996; Amrit Manthan – undated; Krishna Charitam – undated.

#### Miscellaneous

Ardhanarishwara – 1977; Kumar Sambhav – 1979; Navarasa – 1990; Tandavlasya – 1996.

N.B. The list is not claimed to be exhaustive.

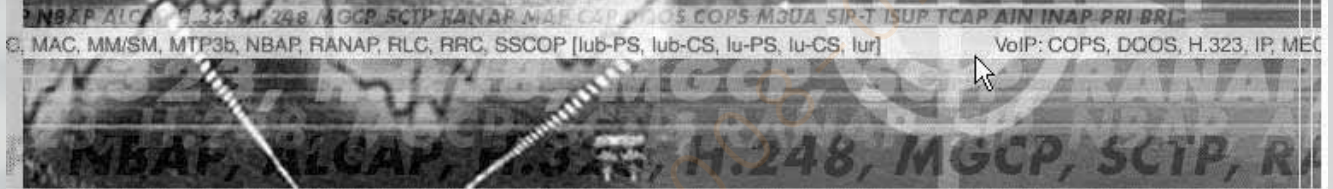


# କବିତା



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## ଅନ୍ୟ ଦ୍ରୋପଦୀ

ଶାନ୍ତି ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର, ରୋଚେଷ୍ଟର, ମିନେସୋଟା

ତାକୁଛି ଯେତେବେଳେ ତୁମକୁ ମୁଁ ଏତେ ଆତୁର ହୋଇ ଶୁଣିବ ମୋ ଡାକ ନିକ୍ଷେ, ଜାଣେ ମୁଁ ବଡ଼ ପଣ ତୁମ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ ।୧।	ସୁଜନ, ସୁପୁତ୍ର, ବନ୍ଧୁ ପରିଜନ ହରାଇ ବାର୍ଷକ୍ୟେ ହୋଇଲା ନିଃସ୍ୱ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ହୃଦୟର ରାଜ ସିଂହାସନେ ରାଜରାଣୀ ହୋଇଥିଲା, ଦେଖିଛି ବିଶ୍ୱ ।୮।
ମଥା ନତ କରୁଛି ଯେବେ ଅଭୟ ଚରଣେ ଆଶ୍ରୟ ପାଇଁ ଦୟା ଦ୍ୱାର ତୁମ ଖୋଲି ଦେବ ନିକ୍ଷେ ମନା କେବେ ହେଲେ କରିବ ନାହିଁ ।୨।	ଏହାକୁ କ'ଣ କୁହନ୍ତି ପ୍ରଭୁ ହେ ଜିତିବା କୁହ ଅନ୍ତର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଲୁଚି କାନ୍ଦୁଥିଲା କେତେ ଯେ ଛୁପାଇ ଲୁହ ।୯।
କରାଯାତ ଯେବେ ଦେବି ଦୁଆରେ ଖୋଲି ଦେବ କୃପା କବାଟ ତ ଦୟାରେ କିଞ୍ଚିତ କରୁଣା ସିଞ୍ଚି ତ ଦେବ ଭିକ୍ଷାର୍ଥୀ ହେବି ଯେବେ ପାଦ ପଦ୍ମରେ ।୩।	ମୁଁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଦ୍ରୋପଦୀ ମାଗିଛି ସେପରି ସାରା ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ହାରିବା କାହିଁକି କଲ ମୋ କପାଳ ଲିଖନ ।୧୦।
କେତେ କୋଟି ଜନ ନିତି ଆସି ପତାଇଛି ହାତ ଆଶାୟୀ ଆଖିରେ ଫେରାଇ ଦେଇନ କାହାକୁ ଏ ଯାଏ ଭରି ତ ଦେଇଛ କିଛି ଡାଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ।୪।	ଜୀବନର ଶେଷ ସମୟରେ ଯାହା ଦେଉଅଛ ମତେ ଜିତିବା ପାଇ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ମୋ'ର ଆଉ ହେବ ନାହିଁ ଦେବି ତୁମକୁ ମୁଁ ସବୁ ଫେରାଇ ।୧୧।
ହେଉ ସେ ବା ବିଷ, ହେଉ ବା ପୀୟୂଷ ତୁମ ଦାନର ତ ନାହିଁ ତୁଳନା ତୁମ ଯଶବାନା ରହିଛି ଜଗତେ ହେଉ ପ୍ରତାରଣା ଅବା ଛଳନା ।୫।	ବଡ଼ ପଣ ତୁମ ଅତୁଟ, ଅକ୍ଷୟ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ ଜଗତେ ଯାଇ ମୋ ଦୁଃଖ କାହାକୁ ମୁଁ କହିବି ନାହିଁ ।୧୨।
ଦିନେ ମାଗିଥିଲା ଦ୍ରୋପଦୀ ଆକୁଳେ ମାନ ଯଶ ଡା'ର ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ ଅପମାନର ସେ ଯଜ୍ଞ କୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାରିବ ବୋଲି ଥିଲ କଥା ଦେଇ ।୬।	ଏ କଥା ରହିବ ତୁମ ମୋ ଭିତରେ କଥା ଦେଉଛି ମୁଁ ଶପଥ କରି ଜଗତ ଗାଇବ ତୁମ ଯଶ କୀର୍ତ୍ତି ଅମାନ ରହିବ ତୁମ ଗୌରବ ପୂର୍ବ ପରି ।୧୩।
ବିଶ୍ୱ ଜାଣିବାରେ ରଖିଥିଲ ଡା'ର ଲାଜ ମହତ ସତେ କି ସେ ଥିଲା ଜିତିବା- ଲୁଚାଅନା, ଧରେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ସତ କୁହ ତ ।୭।	ମୋ ଭିତରେ ମୁଁ ତ ଲୀନ ହୋଇଯିବି ଅଭିମାନ ପିଇ ଦ୍ରୋପଦୀ ପରି ଲୋକ ଜାଣିବାରେ ସର୍ବ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟରେ ଜୀବନ ପାତ୍ର ମୋ ଦେଇଛ ଭରି ।୧୪।

## ଚିଠି

(ପ୍ରଥମ ବାର୍ଷିକୀ ତିରୋଧାନ ଦିବସରେ ଆମ ସ୍ମରଣ ପିତାଙ୍କୁ ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧାଞ୍ଜଳି)

ଝୀନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ

ହସରୁ ତେନାଏ ଝରାଇ ବାପା ହେ  
ଏ ଚିଠି ଲେଖୁଛି ମୁହିଁ  
ନିତି ଶିକ୍ଷାତର ଚିଠିର ପ୍ରାରମ୍ଭେ  
(ସଦା) ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଣତି ଦେଇ ।

ସାକ୍ଷାତରେ ତମେ ବସିଛୁ ଶ୍ରୀପଦେ  
ସୁପୁତ୍ର ଆସନ ନେଇ  
କୋଟି ଦଣ୍ଡବତ ଜଣାଇ ଜାଣିବ  
ଜଣାଇଛୁ ଏଠି ରହି ।

ତବ କୁଶଳତା ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଧୃଷ୍ଟତା  
ପଚାରିବା ଆମ ଜାଣ  
ଯେଉଁଠି ଅଛନ୍ତି ତମ ଦେହରକ୍ଷା  
ସ୍ୱୟଂ ପ୍ରଭୁ ନାରାୟଣ ।

ଚାହୁଁ ଚାହୁଁ ଆସି ବରଷେ ବିତିଲା  
ମିଳିଲାନି ଦରଶନ  
ପ୍ରଭୁ ପ୍ରେମଭରା ପବିତ୍ର ବନ୍ଧନ  
ଛାଡ଼ି କି ପାରୁନି ମନ ?

ଫେରିବ ବା କାହିଁ ସବୁ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥ ଦେଇ  
କିବାଧିଲା ଅବଦାନ  
ସ୍ନେହ, ସେବା, ଯତ୍ନ ଅନ୍ତତଃ ନିଃଶିଳ୍ପ  
ଉଣା ନାହିଁ ସେଠି ତମ ।

ସମାଚାର ଏଠା - ବଞ୍ଚୁଅଛୁ ସର୍ବେ  
ମଣିହରା ସର୍ପ ପରି  
ପରିତ୍ରାଣ ନାହିଁ ଇଶ୍ୱର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ  
ପଥଟି ନହେଲେ ପାରି ।

ତବ ସଂସାରର ଭଗ୍ନରଥ କିନ୍ତୁ  
ଯାଇ ନାହିଁ ଆଜି ରୋକି  
ଇଶ୍ୱର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଚାଣୁଅଛି ସଦା  
ସାରଥୀ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ବସି ।

ଦମ୍ଭ, ସାହସ ବଳ ଆଉ ଯୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ  
ରଥଟିର ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଧ  
ଅବଶ୍ୟ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ତବ  
ଝରୁଛି ଅନବରତ ।

ଆସନ୍ତକି ଦେଖି ତୁମ ପ୍ରାଣ ସଖି  
ନୀରବେ ଯାଇନି ରହି  
ବନ୍ଧ ପରିକର ଛାଡ଼ି ଯାଇଥିବା  
ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ସଂପନ୍ନ ପାଇଁ ।

ଅବଶ୍ୟ ମନରେ ଅଭିମାନ ସଦା  
“ଧିଲା ଦେଖାଣିଆ ପ୍ରେମ;  
ନହେଲେ କି ସିଏ ଛାଡ଼ି ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତେ  
କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ ଚିରଦିନ । ”

ନୟନର ମଣି ତମରି ରଜନୀ  
ମନସ୍ତାପ କରେ କେତେ  
ଏ ପରି ବାପାଙ୍କ ପାଖେ ମୁହିଁ ସଦା  
ଦୋଷୀ ରହିଗଲି ସତେ ।

ଅଭିମାନେ ସଦା ତୁମରି କନିଷ୍ଠା  
କାରୁଥିଲା ପୁଲି ପୁଲି -  
ବାପାଙ୍କ ସ୍ନେହରୁ ସର୍ବଦା ବଞ୍ଚିତା  
କିବା ଦୋଷ କରିଥିଲି ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି ସିଏ ବୁଲି ବୁଲି କହେ  
ଏକା ସେଇ ଭାଗ୍ୟବତୀ  
“ମତେ ଶେଷେ ଦେଖି ବୁଝିଦେଲେ ଆଖି  
କାହାର ଏ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଅଛି?”

ପିଲା ରହି ନାହାଁନ୍ତି ଜିତୁ, ଶିବୁ ଆଜି  
ଆସନ୍ତ କି ଦେଖି ଥରେ  
ଦାବି, ଅଭିମାନ କା'ପାଖେ କରିବେ  
ତମେ ଯେ ଅଜଣା ପୁରେ ।

ଗେହୁ ନାତି ତମ କରେ ଅଭିମାନ  
ଆକଟିଲେ ତାକୁ ଚିକେ  
କହୁଅଛି ସିଏ “ବାପା ଥିଲେ ଆଜି  
ଗାଳି କି ଦିଅନ୍ତେ ମତେ?”

ଅର୍ଜ୍ଜୁନ ତମେ କେତେ ସମ୍ପୃକ୍ତ  
ସ୍ୱାମୀ, ବାପା, ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଭାଇ  
ପିତୃଷା, ମଉସା, ମାମୁଁ ଓ ପୁତୁରା  
ଶଳା, ସଜ୍ଜୁ ଓ ଭିଶୋଇ ।

ଛପିଗଲ ତମେ, ତୁଟିଲା ସଂପର୍କ  
ଝୁରନ୍ତି ଆପଣା ଲୋକ  
ଭିଶୋଇର ସେଇ ମଧୁର ସଂପର୍କ  
ପ୍ରିୟ “ସୁରଭାଇ” ତାକ ।

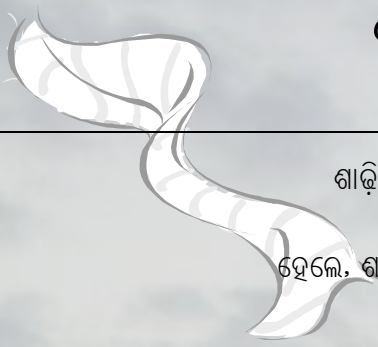
ଯେଉଁଠାରେ ଥାଅ ଉଣା ନକରିବ  
ତବ ସେଇ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ  
ସଂସାର ଜଳଧି ପାରିହେବା ପାଇଁ  
ସେଇ ଏକା ଶକ୍ତ ନାବ ।

ଆଶା, ପରଲୋକେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଭେଟିବା  
ଶ୍ରୀପଦ ଚରଣେ ଯାଇ  
ବାଛିରଖିଥିବ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ସ୍ଥାନ  
ଶ୍ରୀ ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କୁ ଚିକେ କହି ।

ମନରେ ଶୋଚନା ଚିଠି ଲେଖେ ସିନା  
ଉତ୍ତରର ନାହିଁ ଦାବା  
କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋ ମିନତି ସମୟ ସାଉଁଟି  
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନେ ଦେଖୁଥିବ ଆସି ।

ଏତିକିରେ ଇତି କରୁଛି ମୋ ଚିଠି  
ପାସୋରି ନ ଦେବ ମନୁ  
ଭୂମିଷ୍ଠ ପ୍ରଣାମ ଜଣାଇ ରହୁଛି  
ତୁମରି ଅଧମା ଝୀନୁ ।





## ବସ୍ତ୍ରହରଣ ନୁହେଁ ପ୍ରତିଭା ଶତପଥୀ

ଶାଢ଼ିକୁ ନେଇ କେତେ ପୁରାଣ  
କେତେ ଗୀତ, ଗପ  
ହେଲେ, ଶାଢ଼ି ଯେ କେବଳ ପ୍ରତୀକ!  
ନହେଲେ  
ଶାଢ଼ି ଉଲାରି ଦେଲେ  
କେବଳ ଯେ ଆଘାତ ଅପମାନ ହୁଏ, ତା' ନୁହେଁ  
ନାରୀତ୍ୱ ଏକ ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା, ଏକ ଗୁଢ଼ ସତ୍ତା  
ଯାହା ଖାଲି ଶରୀରରେ ନଥାଏ  
ଥାଏ ଖାଲି ନାରୀର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ, କଳ୍ପନାରେ  
ରଞ୍ଜରେ, ମେଦରେ, ସ୍ୱେଦରେ  
ଥାଏ ଅବଶ୍ୟ,  
ଥାଏ ମାତୃତ୍ୱରେ, ଦେବୀତ୍ୱରେ ।  
ଆଜି କେତେ କେଉଁଠି  
ଦୁର୍ମଦ, ଦୁଃଶାସନ  
କେଉଁଠି ଛଳ ପ୍ରେମିକ  
କେଉଁଠି ମୁଢ଼ ସ୍ୱାମୀ  
ବହୁବିଧ ବିକାରର ଧର୍ଷଣ ।  
ଅଥଚ, ନାହିଁ ସୁଦର୍ଶନ  
ନାହିଁ ବି, ଦକ୍ଷିଣବାହୁ ଉପାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ଭୀମସେନ ।

ଆଜି ବିବସ୍ତ୍ରାଠାରୁ ରଞ୍ଜିତାର  
ରଜ ରଞ୍ଜ ନୁହେଁ  
ହୃତ୍ପିଣ୍ଡରେ ଶରାଘାତର !  
ବୃଥା ଯାହା ମୋ'ର ସହିଷ୍ଣୁତା,  
ଦୀର୍ଘ ପଚିଶ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି  
ନଇ ବାଲିରେ ଜିଅନ୍ତା ମୀନ ପରି  
ପବନ ଢୋକିବାର କଞ୍ଜ,  
ପୁଣି, ରଂଗିନ୍ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟାସ୍ତ ଯାଏଁ  
ବଂଚିଯିବାର ଦୁଃସାହସ ।  
ସଭାସଦ୍‌ଙ୍କ ଅଜହାସ ।  
ଅପୋଗଣ୍ଡର ଚାତୁରୀ  
ମଝିରେ, ଚିରିଯାଉଛି ମୋ'ର  
ତ୍ରିଲୋକ ତ୍ରିକାଳ ବ୍ୟାପୀ  
ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦାର ନୀଳାମ୍ବର ଶାଢ଼ି !

## ଏକୃତିଆ ମଣିଷର ଏକା ଏକା ବେଳ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର(ରଥ)

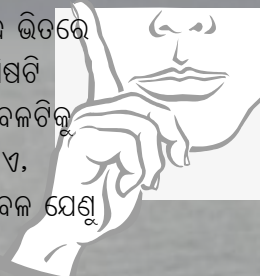
ଏକୃତିଆ ମଣିଷଟି ପାଇଁ  
ସବୁଠୁ ଅବେଳ ଏଇ ଏକୃତିଆ ବେଳ -  
ଆପେ ଆପେ ଖୋଲିଯାଏ  
ସାତ ତାଳ ପଙ୍କ ତଳ ଫରୁଆ ରହସ୍ୟ,  
ଶୂନ୍ୟରୁ ପଦ୍ମତୋଳା ଶୁଭେ,  
ଛାତିତଳ ଅକ୍ଷରି କୋଣରେ  
ଶୋଇଥିବା ସାପତ୍ୟ  
ଫଣା ଟେକି ଚେତନାକୁ ଦଂଶେ;  
ବିବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପ୍ରତୀତ ହୁଏ  
ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିକ ଜୀବନର  
ପ୍ରତିଟି ପାଖୁଡ଼ା,  
ଜୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଦିଶେ ସୁଢ଼ଳ ସଂପର୍କ ।

ଜନ୍ମରୁ ଏ ଯାବତ ଶିଖିଥିବା  
ହସିହସି ଜିଇବାର ଯେତେ ସବୁ ସୂତ୍ର  
ସବୁ ଭୁଲ୍, ନିରର୍ଥକ ଲାଗେ;  
ଅର୍ଥହୀନ ମନେହୁଏ ବିଗତ ବୟସ !

ଏକା ଏକା ବେଳରେ  
ଏକୃତିଆ ମଣିଷଟି  
ନିଜକୁ ନିରେଖି ଦେଖେ,  
ନିଜ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଜାଲ ବୁଣୁଥାଏ ଏବଂ  
ଲହୁଲହୁହାଣ ମୁହଁଟିକୁ  
ପଛ କରି ଠିଆ ହେଉଥାଏ;  
ଅଥଚ,

ଘନଘନ କୋଳାହଳେ  
ଘୋ, ଘା ଶବ୍ଦ ଭିତରେ  
ଏକୃତିଆ ମଣିଷଟି  
ଏକା ଏକା ବେଳଟିକୁ  
ଝୁରି ହେଉଥାଏ,  
ଏକା ଏକା ବେଳ ଯେଣୁ  
ସନ୍ତର୍ପଣେ

(ଜୀବନ ଯୁଦ୍ଧର) ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ ସୈନିକ  
କାନରେ ସାହାସର  
ମହାମନ୍ତ୍ର ଦିଏ !



## ହାହାକାର ଧ୍ୱନି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନାୟକ

ଶିରୋଧାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସବୁ ଏବେ ମୋ'ର  
ପାପ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ, କୁଞ୍ଚିତ ଅଙ୍ଗ ଅଙ୍ଗରେ  
ଭୋଗୁଚି ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ ଦଣ୍ଡ,  
କର୍ମଫଳ ମାନେ ଅନ୍ତତଃ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ  
ବିଧିର ବିଧାନରେ . . . ।

ପରିଚୟ ଥିଲା ମୋ'ର ଅନ୍ଧକାରରେ,  
ତେଣୁ, ଶ୍ୱାସରୁଦ୍ଧ ମୁଁ ଏବେ !  
ଖୋଜି ବୁଲେ 'ଅସ୍ତାଇ'କୁ  
ଏକ ଉତ୍ତର ଚଟାଣରେ  
ମୋ'ର ଛଟପଟ ପାଦରେ ।

ଆଉ, ଧରି ରହିଚି ନୈରାଶ୍ୟକୁ  
ଆଶାର ଆଞ୍ଜୁଳିରେ-  
ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟଭ୍ରଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ ଚାଲିଚି  
କଳସିର ଚହୁଲା ପାଣିରେ . . . ।

ଇଚ୍ଛାମାନେ ମୋ'ର ଯାଉଚକ୍ତି ଘୁଞ୍ଚି  
ଡରି ଡରି, ଧରି ଧରି  
ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକଟି ଶଙ୍ଖା,  
ଭାଙ୍ଗିବାର ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ୱନି କରେ  
ମୋ ଛାତିର ସ୍ତନ୍ନରେ ଏବେ ।

ରହିଯାଇଚି ମୁଁ, ନିରବତାକୁ ନେଇ  
ସେଇ ଅସଜଡ଼ା ଶଙ୍ଖା-ସିନ୍ଦୁରର  
ହାହାକାର ଧ୍ୱନିରେ . . . ।

## ଆଗୋ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମା ସାରଳା ତ୍ରିପାଠୀ

ଆଗୋ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମା ମୋ'ର ପ୍ରିୟତମା  
କେ ଦେବ ତୋ'ର ଆଉ ରୂପ ଉପମା, ରୂପ ଉପମା  
ତୋ'ର ପ୍ରାଣର ମିତ ସେତ ଯାଇଛି ସତ  
ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ କରି ସେତ ଫେରି ଆସିବ, ଫେରି ଆସିବ  
ଜାଭା, ସୁମାତ୍ରା, ବାଲି, ସେତ ଯାଇଛି ଚାଲି  
ଆଣିବ ତୋ ପାଇଁ ସୁନା ମୁକୁତା ମାଳି, ମୁକୁତା ମାଳି  
ପାଟ ରେଶମ ଶାଢ଼ି, ସୁନା ସଂଖା ରୁଡ଼ି  
ଗଭା ପାଇଁ ଆଣିବ ଯେ କେତକୀ ବେଢ଼ି, କେତକୀ ବେଢ଼ି  
ଆଗୋ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମା ତୁ ତ ଲୁହୁ ଝରାନା  
କାନ୍ଦନା ସହୀ କାନ୍ଦନା, କାନ୍ଦନା ସହୀ କାନ୍ଦନା । (୧)

ତୋ'ର ଜୀବ ଜୀବନେ ଯେ କି ଗଣି ରତନ  
ଏକୋଇର ବଳା ସେ ଯେ କୁଳ ନୟନ, କୁଳ ନୟନ  
ତୋ'ର ମନର ଦୁଃଖ ସେତ ଦୂର କରିବ  
ଚିତାଉ ଲେଖି ତୋତେ କେତେ କହିବ, କେତେ କହିବ  
ଆଗୋ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମା ତୁ ତ ଲୁହୁ ଝରାନା  
କାନ୍ଦନା ସହୀ କାନ୍ଦନା, କାନ୍ଦନା ସହୀ କାନ୍ଦନା । (୨)

ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ତୁହି ପୁଲ ଚନ୍ଦନ ଦେଇ  
ତୁଳସୀ ମାଳା ଦେବୁ, ତୁଳସୀ ମାଳା, ତୁଳସୀ ମାଳା  
ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜୁହାର କରି ଶୁଭ ମନାସୁଥିବୁ  
କହୁଛି ପରା ସହୀ, କହୁଛି ପରା, କହୁଛି ପରା  
ତୋ'ର ମନ କାମନା ସବୁ ପୂରଣ ହେବ  
କହୁଛି ପରା ଧନ, କହୁଛି ପରା  
କହୁଛି ପରା ପ୍ରିୟା, କହୁଛି ପରା  
ଆଗୋ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମା . . . . (୩)

Surya Nayak writes in English and Oriya; published several books of poems in English & Oriya. Contributes regularly to OSA.

Sarala Tripathy is a retired customer service manager with Walmart store in Norman, Oklahoma. She and her husband Dr. Narayan Tripathy reside in Norman, Oklahoma since 1969. She enjoys writing in Oriya at her leisure time.



## କିଏ ସେହି ?

କଳ୍ପନା ମୟୀ ଦାଶ

ଶାଳ ପିଆଶାଳ ପତରେ ଅଳପ ଜୋସ୍ନା ପଡୁଛି ଝରି,  
ଅନ୍ଧାର ଘେରା ଭୋଦୁଅ ଆକାଶ ବାଦଲର ବୁକୁ ଚିରି ।

ସଂଗୀତ ଆସର ଜମିଛି କୋଉଠି ଶୁଭୁଛି ବଇଁଶୀ ସୁର  
ନବଜାଅ ବଂଶୀ ନବଜା ବାବୁରେ ଛାତିରେ ବେଦନା ଚୋ'ର

ମମତାମୟୀ ସେ ମା' କିଏ ପୁଣି କହୁ କିଏ ଧନ ତା'ର?  
ନନ୍ଦ ରାଜରାଣୀ ଯଶୋଦା କି ଆଉ - ଇଏ ସେ ଲବଣୀ ଚୋର?

ଗଡ଼ଜାତର ଏ ଗାଁଆଟିରେ ଏବେ ନିରବତା ମାରେ ହାଲ  
ଭଗୀରଥ ପୁର ବାଳ ମୁକୁନ୍ଦ କି ତାକୁଛନ୍ତି ଆସ ରାଲ?

ଚତୁର୍ମାସ୍ୟାର ପରବ ଲାଗିଛି ଘରେ ଘରେ ପୁରେ ପୁ ରେ  
ତାକ ପିନାଧିନ ଲାଗିଅଛି ତେଣେ କଳ୍ପନା କ୍ଳବ୍ ଘରେ ।

ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ପନ୍ଦର ଭେରାଲଟି ସୋ' ଗଣେଷ ପୂଜାର ତ୍ରାମା  
ସୁଲପିଲା ସହ ନିଜ ପିଲା ମିଶି କରିବେ ତାନସ୍ ତ୍ରାମା ।

ଖିଆ ପିଆ ନିଦ, ସବୁ ଭୁଲି ଯାଇ ଲାଗିଛନ୍ତି ଦୁଇ ଭାଇ  
ଏମନ୍ତ ଜୋଡ଼ି ଏ ଜନମିଛନ୍ତି କି ରାମ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣ ଦୁଇ ?

ଦୁର୍ଗା ପୂଜା ହେବ ଉତ୍ସବ ଲାଗିବ ଚାଲିଲା ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଖାଲି  
ହିନ୍ଦୁ ମୁସଲମାନ, ଜାତି କି ଅଜାତି ସଭିଏଁ ହୋଇଲେ ମେଲି ।

ଦିନ କେଲଗାରେ ଘର ଘର ବୁଲି ଆଦାୟ କରିଲେ ଚାନ୍ଦା  
ମେଢ଼ଘର ତୋଳା ଯଥା ସମୟରେ ହୋଇଲା ଦୁର୍ଗା ପୂଜା ।

ଚୁଲିମୁଣ୍ଡ କାମ କରିବେନି ଝିଅ - ସେଇକଥା ଭୁଲିଯାଆ  
ପାଠ ଶାଠ ପଢ଼ି ପୁଅଙ୍କ ପରି ସେ ରଖିବେ ମୋ'ର ନାଆଁ ।

ୟୁ ଏନ୍ ଓ କ୍ଲବ୍, ହିନ୍ଦି ଶିକ୍ଷା ପୁଣି ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସଂଗୀତ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା  
ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ଫେରି ଖବର କାଗଜ - ଝିଏ ପଢ଼ିବେ ପଢ଼ିକା ।

ରାମ ବନବାସେ ରାଜା ଦଶରଥ ଜୀବନ ତେଜିଲେ ସିନା  
ଅହରହ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ଜୀବନ ତହକେ ପ୍ରତିଟି ପିଲାଙ୍କ ବିନା ।

ପରାଶରୁ ପ୍ରିୟ ପାଞ୍ଚଟି ସନ୍ତାନ ଏକକୁ ଆରେକ ବଳେ  
ଦଶରଥ କି ସେ ବିହାର କରନ୍ତି ପାଞ୍ଚ ଦାସରଥୀ ତୁଲେ?

ପିଲାଙ୍କର ପାଠ, ବାହା ବ୍ରତଘର ବୁଢ଼ାବୁଢ଼ୀ ବାପ ମାଆ  
ନିଜ ଅସୁବଧା ନିଜକୁ ବଳାଏ ତେଲ ଲୁଣର ଦୁନିଆଁ ।

ସାଇର ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ, ବନ୍ଧୁ ବାନ୍ଧବ କି ଅବା ଭାଗଚାଷୀ ପୁଅ  
ଅଭାବରେ ପଡ଼ି ହାତ ପତାଇଛି - ଆହା କେଡ଼େ ଦୁରୁବହ ।

ତାପଙ୍ଗ ଗଡ଼ର ଦଳ ବେହେରା ସେ ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ପରା  
ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବଳିଦେଇ ସେଇ ପୁରସ୍କାରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବେ ତୁରା ।

ସମୟର ଚକ ଘୁରିଘୁରି ଯାଏ ବଦଳେ ଜୀବନ ଗତି  
ଜରା କବଳିତ ବାପ ମା' ଏବେ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ବଢ଼ିଲା ଅତି ।

କାନ୍ଧରେ ପକାଇ ମାଆଙ୍କୁ ଥୋଇବେ କାନ୍ଧିଆ ଗଛର ମୂଳେ  
ନିତ୍ୟକର୍ମ ପରେ ଘରକୁ ଆଣିବେ ଧର୍ମପତ୍ନୀଙ୍କ ତୁଲେ ।

କିଏ କହୁ ସତେ ଜାଣିଛୁକି ତାଙ୍କୁ କେଣେ ତାଙ୍କ ଘର ଦ୍ୱାର ?  
ଜନମିଛନ୍ତି କି ଚଳନ୍ତି ଯୁଗରେ ଭିନ୍ନ ଶ୍ରବଣ କୁମାର?

ପହୁଞ୍ଚି ଗଲେ ସେ ହତଭାଗା ଦଳ ମୁହଁରୁ ଧୁଆଁ ଉଡ଼ାଇ  
'ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ମୋହର ଫେଲ୍ କରିବନି ନମ୍ବର ଦିଅ ବଢ଼ାଇ ।

ଏଇ କଥା ଯେବେ ନରଖିବ ତୁମ ଦୁଆରେ ପଡ଼ିବ ଭେଲା'  
ଭାବିବାକୁ ଟିକେ ସମୟ ଦେଲେନି - 'କହିଲେ ଜଲ୍ଦି ପଳା ।

'ଭେଲା ପକାଇ ତ ନମ୍ବର ମିଳିବ ଏଠିକୁ ଆସିଛୁ କିଆଁ ?'  
ଏମିତି ଉତ୍ତର ଶୁଣି ନ ପିବେ ତ ପାଖରୁ ମାରିଲେ ଡିଆଁ ।

ଏଇ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଜୀବନ ତମାମ ଲଢ଼େଇ ରଖିଲେ ଜାରି  
ହାଇକୋର୍ଟ ଠାରୁ ସୁପ୍ରିମ କୋର୍ଟ ସବୁଠି ପଢ଼ିଲା ଦୁରି ।

ନିଷ୍ଠାରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଉପକୃତ ହେଲେ କେତେ ଶିକ୍ଷକ କାହିଁ  
ବିଶାୟାର୍ ପରେ ଯେନ୍‌ସନ୍ ଟିକେ ସମସ୍ତେ ପାରିଲେ ପାଇ ।

ବାଟରେ ଘାଟରେ ଦେଖା ହେଇଗଲେ ଗାଁ ହରିଜନ ଭାଇ  
କୁଶଳ ପୁଛିଲେ ପାଖରେ ବସାଇ କାନ୍ଧରେ ହାତ ପକାଇ ।

‘ହିନ୍ଦୁ ହେଇ ଆଉ ରହିବୁନି ଆମେ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଜଣେ ବାବୁ  
ବହୁତ ପଇସା ଦେଇଗଲେ ଏବେ ଖିଞ୍ଚିଆନ୍ ହବୁ ସବୁ’ ।

ହୁଏ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଭାଷିଲେ ଉତ୍ତର ‘ପାଗଳ ହେଲୁ କି ତୁହି  
ଖିଞ୍ଚିଆନ୍ କୁହ କେମିତି ହେବରେ ଜନମିଲ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ହୋଇ’ ।

ଗୋଡ଼ତଳେ ପଡ଼ି ନିରୀହ ଲୋକଟି ବୋଇଲା ‘ଶୁଣ ସାଆନ୍ତ  
ପଚାଶ ଟଙ୍କା କି ଖରଚ କରିବି ଖାଇବି ମାଉଁସ ଭାତା

ଅଣହିନ୍ଦୁ ସିନା ଅଳପ ଖରଚେ ଗୋରୁମାଂସ ଟିକେ ଖାଇ’  
‘ଯାହା ଖାଉଛୁ ତୁ ଖାଆ ପଛେ ବାବୁ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ହେଇ ଥାଆ ରହି’ ।

ବୁଝାଇ ସୁଝାଇ ବିଦା କଲେ ତାକୁ ସଭାରେ ପଢ଼ିଲା କଥା  
ସକଳ ଘଟେ ତ ପୁରି ରହିଛନ୍ତି ବିଶ୍ୱ ବ୍ରହ୍ମାଣ୍ଡ କରତା ।

ଛେଳିମାଂସ ହେଉ, ଗୋରୁମାଂସ ହେଉ, ପାପର ପ୍ରଭେଦ କାହିଁ  
ଖାଦ୍ୟର ଗୁଣ ଅବିଗୁଣ ଯାହା ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଦିଅ ବୁଝାଇ ।

ସଂସ୍କାର ଯଦି ଆଣିବାନି ଆମେ ଆମ ଧର୍ମରେ କିଛି  
କେତେ ନିରକ୍ଷର ନିରୀହ ଜନତା ଭିନ୍ନ ଧର୍ମ ନେବେ ବାଛି ।

ନିରବ ବିଶ୍ୱ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ପରିଷଦ - ଚକିତ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ ସଭା  
ସଭାପତି ଏଇ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣେ କହ କି ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବା ?

କହରେ ବନ୍ଧୁ କିଏ ସେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି କିଏ ତାଙ୍କ ପରିବାର?  
ଢେଙ୍କାନାଳର ଗାନ୍ଧି ଅବା ସେ ଗଡ଼ଜାତ ଜବାହର?

ଅବସର ପରେ ସଙ୍ଗତ ପାଇଁ ନଟରାଜ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ  
ଜିଲ୍ଲା ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସଂସଦ ପୁଣି ଦାଶରଥୀ ଶିକ୍ଷାଳୟ ।

କେତେ ସଙ୍ଗଠନ ମଥା ଟେକିଲେଣି ତାଙ୍କରି ଅନୁକରଣେ  
କେତେ ଯେ ଛାତ୍ର ଗଣା ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ଗଣକ ଭିତରେ ଜଣେ ।

କଟକର ଚିନ୍ତା ବାଇମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ଲୋ - ସିଏ ତ ଶୁଣିବା କଥା  
ଆଖିରେ ଦେଖୁଛୁ ଏହାଙ୍କୁ ଲାଗିଛି ଜଗତ ଯାକର ଚିନ୍ତା ।

ଶମଶାନ ବୁକୁ ଭିଠି ଆସିଲେକି ଆମରି ସାରଙ୍ଗ ଧର ?  
ଅଧା ଥିବା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସଂସାର ପାଇଁକି କରିବେ ବୋଲି ସାକାର ।

ପୁନର୍ଜନ୍ମ ନେଇଛନ୍ତି ଅବା ବ୍ରଜନାଥ ବଡ଼ଜେନା  
ଭେଟିବାକୁ ମନ ଉଛନ୍ନ ହେଲାଣି କିଏ ସେ ଯୋଗଜନମା ।

ଏତେ ଯେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ପଚାରି ଚାଲିଛୁ ଉତ୍ତର ତାହାର ଶୁଣ  
ଯାହାପାଇଁ ତୋ’ର ଜୀବନ ହୋଇଛି ସବୁଠାରୁ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ।

ଧନ୍ୟ ହୋଇଛୁ ଯା କୋଳେ ଜନମି ସତେ ତୁ କସ୍ତୁରୀ ମୃଗ  
ଜୀବନଦାତା ସେ, ଜନମଦାତା ତୋ ଜନକ ସେ ମହୁଭାଗ ।



*ଉଲ୍ଲିଖିତ କବିତାଟି ମୋ ବାପା ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ବସନ୍ତ କୁମାର ମହାପାତ୍ରଙ୍କ  
୭୫ତମ ଜନ୍ମ ଦିବସ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଲେଖା ହୋଇଥିଲା ଏବଂ  
କପିଳାସଠାରେ ଢେଙ୍କାନାଳ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସଂସଦ ଆନୁକୁଲ୍ୟରେ  
ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ଶାରଦୀୟ ଉତ୍ସବରେ ପାଠ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ଏହି  
ସମୟରେ ଏହା ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଦୂରଦର୍ଶନ ଦ୍ୱାରା ରେକର୍ଡ଼ ହୋଇଥିଲା ।*



## ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଏକ ଆତ୍ମାର

ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମିଶ୍ର

ସେଦିନ, ଜୁଲାଇର ପ୍ରଥମ ସଞ୍ଜରେ,  
ସେଇ କେତେଜଣ ଏକମନ ହୋଇ  
ବୋଝନ୍ ସହରର ଏକ ଛୋଟ ଘରେ  
ଗଢ଼ିଥିଲେ ମତେ  
ଏକ ଆତ୍ମାର ସମ୍ମାନ ଦେଇ ।

ମୋ'ର ଆତ୍ମା ଅଛି, ଦେହ ନାହିଁ  
ମୋ'ର ମନ ଅଛି, ତନୁ କିଛି ନାହିଁ  
ମୋ'ର ମାନ ଅଛି, ଧନ ଜମା ନାହିଁ  
ମୋର ଅନେକ ସନ୍ତାନ,  
ତେଣୁ ଦୁଃଖ କିଛି ନାହିଁ ।

ଗୋଟିଏ ଚକ ଭିତରେ ମତେ ବନ୍ଦୀ କରି  
'ଓ ସ ଏ' ନାଁରେ 'ଲୋଗୋ'ଟିଏ କରି  
ଚକାତୋଳାର ଆଖିକଲେ  
ଆଉ ଅଞ୍ଜନ ବୋଲିଦେଲେ, ମୋତେ  
ଆମେରିକାର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ କହି  
ମା' ଡାକ ଦେଲେ ।

ବର୍ଷପରେ ବର୍ଷ ବିତିଗଲା  
ସେଦିନର ଗ୍ରାଜୁଏଟ୍ ଛାତ୍ର  
ଭଲ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ି ଚାକିରି ପାଇଲା  
ହାତକୁ ଦି'ହାତ ହୋଇ, ସଂସାର ବଢ଼ାଇ  
ଘର ବାଡ଼ି, କାର୍ ସବୁ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ।

ସନ୍ତାନ ମୋ'ର ଯୋଉଦିନ  
ବାପା, ମା', ଭାଇ, ଭଉଣୀ  
ଆଉ ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀଙ୍କଠାରୁ  
ବିଦାୟ ନେଇଥିଲା  
ଉଡ଼ା ଜାହାଜ ବା ଜଳ ଜାହାଜରେ ଚଢ଼ି  
ଆମେରିକା, କାନାଡ଼ା ବା ବିଲାତ ଆସିଲା  
ଏବଂ କହିଥିଲା-  
'ଯାଉଛି ମୁଁ, ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିସାରି  
ତୁରନ୍ତ ଆସିବି  
ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମୋ ମାତୃଭୂମି କେମିତି ଭୁଲିବି?'

ସରିଗଲା ପାଠପଢ଼ା,  
ହଜିଗଲା ସହଜରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ  
ଫେରିବାର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ  
ବିଦେଶରେ କ୍ଷୀର ଆଉ  
ମହୁ ପିଇବାର ଅଦମ୍ୟ ଲାଳସା-  
ସମସ୍ତେ ଏଇଠି ବାସିଲେ କୁନି କୁନି  
ବାୟା ଚଢ଼େଇର ବସା ।

ଖାଇଛି ଅନେକ ଖରା, ବର୍ଷା,  
ଶୀତ ଆଉ ବରଫର ମାଡ଼  
ମନକୁ ଦମ୍ଭକରି, ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିନର ବାତ୍ୟାକୁ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ  
ପଇତାରିଶି ବର୍ଷର ସଂସାର ବୋଝକୁ ଧରି  
ମୋ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସନ୍ତାନଙ୍କୁ କୋଳ କରି  
ମୋର ଚକହୀନ ରଥ ଚାଲିଛି  
ଆମେରିକା, କାନାଡ଼ାର ନଗର ବା  
ଉପନଗରୀରେ  
କରିବାକୁ 'ରଥଯାତ୍ରା' ଅବା ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ।

କନଭେନ୍ସନ୍ ନାଁରେ ମୋତେ ରୂପ ଦେଇ  
ମୋରି ସନ୍ତାନମାନେ, ଏଇଠି କରନ୍ତି ମେଳା  
ବାର୍ଷିକ ଉତ୍ସବ ନାଁ ଦେଇ, ଆସନ୍ତି କରିବାକୁ  
ତୀର୍ଥ,  
ବିଜିନେସ୍ ନାଁ ଦେଇ  
କରନ୍ତି ମନୋରଞ୍ଜନ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ।

କିଏ କହେ ମୁଁ କାଂଗାଲୁଣୀ, ମୋଠି ପଇସା  
ନାହିଁ  
କିଏ କହେ ମୁଁ ଦୁର୍ବଳ,  
ମୋ ପିଲା ମତେ ପଚାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ  
କିଏ କହେ ମୁଁ ଅଧର୍ମ,  
ମୋର ଚାଲିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ନାହିଁ  
କିଏ କହେ ମୁଁ 'ଉକ୍ତ ମାତା' ଗରବିଣୀ,  
ମାତୃଭୂମି ସଂସ୍ଥିତ  
ସଭିଏଁ ମୋ'ଠାରୁ ପାଇଥାନ୍ତି ମା'ର ମମତା  
।

ଦୁଷ୍ଟ ହେଉ ବା ଶିଷ୍ଟ ହେଉ  
ଭ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହେଉ ବା ଶାନ୍ତ ହେଉ  
ଚାକିରି ଥାଉ ବା ବେକାର ହେଉ  
ସବୁ ପରଦେଶୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମୋହରି ସନ୍ତାନ ।

ଖୁଦୁରୁକୁଣୀ ଓଷାର ମାଟିର ରୂପ ନେଇ  
ଜୁଲାଇର ପ୍ରଥମ ସଞ୍ଜକୁ ଓଷାଦିନ ମନେ  
କରି  
ଯୋଉ ପୁଅ ଝିଅମାନେ, ମୋ ନାତି  
ନାତୁଣୀଙ୍କୁ ଧରି  
ତୀର୍ଥଯାତ୍ରା କରି ଆସିଥାନ୍ତି ଓସା  
କନଭେନ୍ସନ୍ କୁ  
ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମନରେ ମୁଁ ଭାଳିଦିଏ  
ହତାଶା ଭିତରେ ଆଶା  
ଅନ୍ଧାର ଭିତରେ ଆଲୁଅ  
ବିଦେଶରେ ପାଇବାକୁ ମାତୃଭୂମି ସ୍ୱାଦ ।

ଅକୁହା ସଂଳାପ ଭିତରେ ମୋ' ପିଲାଏ  
ମତେ କହନ୍ତି  
'ଯା ହେଉ, ଆସିଥିଲୁ ଦିଦିନ ପାଇଁ-  
ଏକା ମା'ର ସନ୍ତାନ ଆମେ, ହସ ଖୁସି  
ରାଗ ରୁଷା, ଆଉ କଥା କଣ କଟି ଭିତରେ  
କନଭେନ୍ସନ୍ ସାରି ଫେରି ଯିବୁ  
ଯେ ଯେଝା ବାଟରେ ।'  
ତେଣୁ, ଅଗରିରୀ ଆତ୍ମା ମୋ'ର,  
ଆମେରିକାର ଜଳବାୟୁ ଭିତରେ  
ଓଡ଼ିଆତୁକୁ ବଂଚେଇବାର ଅଦ୍ୟମ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ  
ଭିତରେ  
ବାହା ମେଲି ଡାକୁଛି ସଭିଙ୍କୁ -  
'ଜୁଲାଇର ପ୍ରଥମ ସଞ୍ଜରେ ଆସିବୁ ମୋ  
କୋଳର ସନ୍ତାନ  
ଦେଖିଯିବୁ ମୋ କନଭେନ୍ସନ୍-  
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କର ମଧୁର ମିଳନ ।'

## ମହାଯାତ୍ରା

### ଶିଖଣ୍ଡ ଶତପଥୀ

ଏକାଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ଗଜନୀର ସୁଲତାନ ମାମୁଦର ଘନଘନ ଆକ୍ରମଣ ଓ ଧର୍ମାନ୍ତାରଣରେ ବ୍ୟତିବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଭାରତର ପଞ୍ଚବ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରୁ ଅଗଣିତ ନରନାରୀଙ୍କର ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ପଞ୍ଜିମୁଖୀ ଦେଶାନ୍ତର ଓ ଯାଯାବର ଜୀବନର ମହାଯାତ୍ରା । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଜିନ୍ଦି ବା ରୋମାନୀ ନାମରେ ପରିଚିତ ଏହି ଭାରତୀୟ ବଂଶଧରମାନେ ଶହଶହ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଯୁରୋପରେ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତ ହୋଇ ସଭ୍ୟ ସମାଜଠାରୁ ଦୂରେଇଯାଇ ପ୍ରକୃତିସହ ଏକାକାର ହୋଇଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏ କବିତାଟି ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଏହି ‘ମହାଯାତ୍ରା’ର ଏକ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ।

ପଞ୍ଚନଦୀର ତୀର ଥରହର  
ସିନ୍ଧୁର ଜଳ କୁହାଇ ତାକେ  
ନୟାଅ ମାନବ ମାଆ କୋଳ ଛାଡ଼ି  
ଶତ ସନ୍ତାପ ଲୁଚାଇ ବୁକେ ॥

ଗଜନୀର ଘୋର ଦସ୍ତ୍ୟ ଦାନବ  
ଯାଅ ଫେରି ତବ ସୈକତ ଭୂମି  
ସନ୍ତାନ ମୋର ପଡ଼ିଛି ବାହାରି  
ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଆଦରି ଅଜଣା ରୁମି ॥

ରକ୍ତ ପିପାଶୁ ନର ରାକ୍ଷସ  
ଧିକ ଯେ ତତେ ଏ କର୍ମ ଦେଲା  
ଶାନ୍ତି ପ୍ରିୟ ମୋ’ ଅବୋଧ ଶିଶୁରେ  
ଧସାଇ ପକାଇ ନିଆଁର ଦୁଳା ॥

ମୁକ୍ତ ତା’ ପ୍ରାଣ, ମୁକ୍ତ ଜୀବନ  
ବନ୍ଦନ କ’ଣ ଜାଣଇ ନାହିଁ  
ନ ପାରେ ହୋଇ ସେ ଅଧୀନ କାହାର  
ଦୁର୍ବୋଧ କାରାଗାର ତା ପାଇଁ ॥

ଶତ ସିଂହର ପରାକ୍ରମ ତା’  
ବହୁଇ ଶରୀରେ ତପ ଲହୁ  
ଜୀବନ କାହାର ନେବା ପାଇଁ ନୁହେଁ  
ରଖିବାକୁ, ଟେକି ଶକ୍ତ ବାହୁ ॥

ପଡ଼ିଛି ବାହାରି ପରିବାର ଧରି  
ହିନ୍ଦୁକୁଶର ହିଂସ୍ର ପଥେ  
ମୁକ୍ତ ବିହଙ୍ଗ କି ଅବା ଲୋଡ଼ା ତା’  
ବିଶ୍ୱଜୀବନ ଅଛି ତା ସାଥେ ॥



ଉଡ଼ାଇ ଚାଲିଛି ଶାନ୍ତି ଧୂଳିଟି  
ପଳାତକ ବୋଲି କହୁଛି ସର୍ବେ  
ମଥା ପୋତି କେତେ ଯାତନା ସହିବ  
ଭିତା ମାଟି ଲୋଭ କରି, ନୀରବେ?

ଲୋଡ଼ା ନାହିଁ ତା’ର ରାଜସିଂହାସନ  
କ୍ଷଣଭଙ୍ଗର ବିଜୟ ଶିରୀ  
ରଣଭୂମି ଛାଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଛି ଆଗେଇ  
ଅସ୍ତରବିର ରଶ୍ମି ଧରି ॥

ନିତି ସେ ଗଢ଼ଇ, ନିତି ସେ ଭାଙ୍ଗଇ  
ବନଲତା କୋଳୁ କୋଳୁ ତିଏଁ  
ରହିଲା ପାଷାଣେ ଶିଉଳି ଲାଗଇ  
ଗଡ଼ିଗଲେ ସିନା ନିର୍ମଳ ରହେ ॥

ନଦୀତୁଳ ତା’ର ଶୌଚ ପ୍ରାଙ୍ଗଣ  
ଗଛତଳ ତା’ର ରାକ୍ଷିବା ଭୂଇଁ  
ଦିନସାରା ବୁଲି ହାତ ରେଖା ପଢ଼େ  
ଭେଲିକି ଦେଖାଏ ଦଉଡ଼ି ତେଇଁ ॥

ନିଶିରେ ଫେରଇ ଦିନମୂଲ ଆଉ  
ବନ ଫଳ ବନ ଶିକାର ଘେନି  
ସାରା ଦିବସର କ୍ଳାନ୍ତି ଭୁଲଇ  
ଏକତାରା ସଙ୍ଗେ ମାର୍ଦ୍ଦଳ ଶୁଣି ॥

ତରୁ ଶାଖା ପଛେ ଲୁଚକାଳି ଖେଳେ  
କ୍ୟୋସ୍ତା ବିଧୌତ ବାଦଲ ଭାସି  
ଇନ୍ଦୁ ଆଲୋକେ ଚମକି ଉଠଇ  
ଶତଦଳ ପରେ ବିନ୍ଦୁ ରାଶି ॥

ଉଷାକାଳେ କଳା ପିକର କୁଜନ  
ଶୀତଳ ସମୀର ଯାମିନୀ ଶେଷେ  
ଝଟକି ଉଠଇ ହିମ ଭରା ଶିଖ  
ଅଂଶୁମାନର ଧୀର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶେ ॥

ଅଜଣା ଗନ୍ତବ୍ୟ, ଅଜଣା ଠିକଣା  
ଅଜଣା ପଥରେ କି ଅଭିସାରେ  
ଅଜଣା ଆବେଗେ ଆଗକୁ ଚାଲିଛି  
ଅଜଣା ସ୍ୱରଗ ସନ୍ଧାନରେ ॥

ଶାନ୍ତି ଖୋଜିଣ ପାଇଲା କଷଣ  
ପାଇଲା ଗ୍ୟାଲୋର ତୀକ୍ଷ୍ଣ ଧାର  
ଚିର ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳ ବନ୍ଧା ତା’ ହାତେ  
ଦଇବ କଲୁ ଏ କି ଅବିଚାର ॥

ବନଲତା ମୁକୁ ପାହାଡ଼ ସନ୍ଧିରୁ  
ଆଜି ବି ଶୁଭଇ ଆର୍ତ୍ତନାଦ  
ଧର୍ମନାମରେ ସଭ୍ୟତା ଆଳେ  
ଦଣ୍ଡୁଇ କରି ତୁଚ୍ଛା ଭେଦ ॥

Sikhanda Satapathy lives in Austin, TX with his wife Tina and daughters Neha and Anika.



## ମୁଁ କିଏ ?

ଶଶିଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର

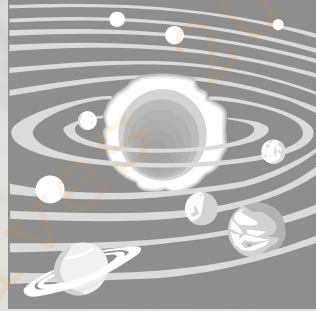
ଜ୍ଞାନୀ ମୁଁ, ଅଜ୍ଞାନୀ ମୁଁ  
ଲୋଭରେ ମୁଁ, ଲାଭରେ ମୁଁ  
ମୋହରେ ମୁଁ, ମାୟାରେ ମୁଁ  
ସତ୍ୟରେ ମୁଁ, ମିଥ୍ୟାରେ ମୁଁ  
ଦୟାରେ ମୁଁ, କ୍ଷମାରେ ମୁଁ  
ଧର୍ମରେ ମୁଁ, ଅଧର୍ମରେ ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ଯେମିତି ଥିଲି ସେମିତି ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ହେଉଛି ମୋ'ର ପରିଚୟ ।

ଛାୟାରେ ମୁଁ, କାୟାରେ ମୁଁ  
ସୁତ୍ର ମୁଁ, ଜାଗ୍ରତ ମୁଁ  
ସଜୀବ ମୁଁ, ନିର୍ଜୀବ ମୁଁ  
ଏଠି ମୁଁ, ସେଠି ମୁଁ  
ସେବେ ମୁଁ, ଏବେ ମୁଁ  
କାଲି ମୁଁ, ଆଜି ମୁଁ, ଯୁଗେ ଯୁଗେ ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ଯେମିତି ଥିଲି ସେମିତି ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ହେଉଛି ମୋ'ର ପରିଚୟ ।

ଅନ୍ଧାରରେ ମୁଁ, ଆଲୋକରେ ମୁଁ  
ଶୂନ୍ୟରେ ମୁଁ, ପବନରେ ମୁଁ  
ଆକାଶରେ ମୁଁ, ପାତାଳରେ ମୁଁ  
ଜଳରେ ମୁଁ, ଛଳରେ ମୁଁ  
ସ୍ୱର୍ଗରେ ମୁଁ, ନର୍କରେ ମୁଁ  
ବାଟରେ ମୁଁ, ଘାଟରେ ମୁଁ  
ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମରେ ମୁଁ, ବର୍ଷାରେ ମୁଁ  
ଶୀତରେ ମୁଁ, ବସନ୍ତରେ ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ଯେମିତି ଥିଲି ସେମିତି ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ହେଉଛି ମୋ'ର ପରିଚୟ ।

ସୃଷ୍ଟି ମୁଁ, ସୃଷ୍ଟି ମୁଁ  
ଶିଶୁ ମୁଁ, ଯୁବକ ମୁଁ, ବୃଦ୍ଧ ମୁଁ  
ସ୍ୱାମୀ ମୁଁ, ଜାମାତା ମୁଁ, ପ୍ରେମିକ ମୁଁ

ପିତା ମୁଁ, ପୁତ୍ର ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ଯେମିତି ଥିଲି ସେମିତି ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ହେଉଛି ମୋ'ର ପରିଚୟ ।



ଧନୀ ମୁଁ, ଦରିଦ୍ର ମୁଁ  
ରାଜା ମୁଁ, ପ୍ରଜା ମୁଁ  
ଶାସକ ମୁଁ, ଶାସିତ ମୁଁ  
ଭାବରେ ମୁଁ, ଅଭାବରେ ମୁଁ  
ଗ୍ରାହକ ମୁଁ, ଗ୍ରହୀତା ମୁଁ  
ଭାଇ ମୁଁ, ଭଗାରି ମୁଁ, ପଡ଼ିଶା ମୁଁ  
ମିତ୍ର ମୁଁ, ଶତ୍ରୁ ମୁଁ  
ବିଶ୍ୱାସୀ ମୁଁ, ବିଶ୍ୱାସଘାତକ ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ଯେମିତି ଥିଲି ସେମିତି ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ହେଉଛି ମୋ'ର ପରିଚୟ ।

ଧନରେ ମୁଁ, ଜନରେ ମୁଁ  
ମନରେ ମୁଁ, ମାନରେ ମୁଁ, ଅଭିମାନରେ ମୁଁ  
ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ମୁଁ, ଚେତନାରେ ମୁଁ  
ଶଙ୍କରେ ମୁଁ, ଚକ୍ରରେ ମୁଁ  
ଗଦାରେ ମୁଁ, ପଦ୍ମରେ ମୁଁ, ନାଭିରେ ମୁଁ  
ସାକାର ମୁଁ, ନିରାକାର ମୁଁ  
ନିର୍ବିକାର ମୁଁ, ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମୁଁ  
ଯେମିତି ଥିଲି ସେମିତି ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ହେଉଛି ମୋ'ର ପରିଚୟ ।

ଦୁଃଖରେ ମୁଁ, ସୁଖରେ ମୁଁ  
ହସରେ ମୁଁ, କାନ୍ଦରେ ମୁଁ  
ଭୟରେ ମୁଁ, ଭ୍ରାନ୍ତିରେ ମୁଁ  
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ମୁଁ, ଜାଗରଣେ ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ଯେମିତି ଥିଲି ସେମିତି ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ହେଉଛି ମୋ'ର ପରିଚୟ ।

ରେଗାନ୍ ରିପବ୍ଲିକାନ୍ ମୁଁ,  
କ୍ଲିଫ୍ଟନ୍ ଡେମୋକ୍ରାଟ୍ ମୁଁ  
କଂଗ୍ରେସରେ ମୁଁ, ଜନତାରେ ମୁଁ  
ବିଜେପିରେ ମୁଁ, ଡିଏମ୍‌କେରେ ମୁଁ  
କମ୍ୟୁନିଷ୍ଟ୍ ମୁଁ, ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ରବାଦୀ ମୁଁ  
ପ୍ରଗତିବାଦୀ ମୁଁ, ଦୁର୍ଗତିବାଦୀ ମୁଁ  
ବାମରେ ମୁଁ, ଡାହାଣରେ ମୁଁ  
OSAରେ ମୁଁ, ODISAରେ ମୁଁ,  
JOGAରେ ମୁଁ, BIJOGAରେ ମୁଁ  
ବର୍ଷା ଯୁଆଡ଼େ ମୁଁ, ଛତା ଯୁଆଡ଼େ ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ଯେମିତି ଥିଲି ସେମିତି ମୁଁ  
ମୁଁ ହେଉଛି ମୋ'ର ପରିଚୟ ।

ସବୁରେ ମୁଁ, ମୁଁରେ ସବୁ  
ହେଲେବି, ମୁଁ ଛାଡ଼େନା ମୁଁ,  
ମୁଁ ଯେବେ ଯାଏ 'ମୁଁ'ର ସେପାରକୁ  
ତେବେ ମୁଁ ବୁଝେ 'ମୁଁ' ପ୍ରକୃତିକୁ ।

(The author lives in Silver Spring, Maryland with his wife Meera, daughter Sharmistha and son Sidhartha. He acknowledges the helpful comments of Mr. Manoj Panda of Michigan on this poem ).

## ଶ୍ରୀଚରଣେ

ପ୍ରବୀର ଦାଶ

ହେ ହରି, ତୁମ ନାମେ ହେବି ପାରି ହେ . . .

ଜୀବନ ଭବସାଗରେ, ବୁଡ଼ିଛି ମାୟା ମୋହରେ  
ତାରିବ ତୁମେ ମୋ ଚରି ହେ  
ହେ ହରି, ତୁମ ନାମେ ହେବି ପାରି ହେ ।

ଶୁଣିଛି ହେ ଜନାର୍ଦ୍ଦନ, ରଖିଛ ଭକ୍ତଙ୍କ ମାନ  
ଏଥର ମୋହର ବାରି ଯେ  
ହେ ହରି, ତୁମ ନାମେ ହେବି ପାରି ହେ ।

ଆସି ଯେବେ ଦ୍ଵାରେ ଯମ, ତାଜିବ ମୋହର ନାମ  
ନୟିବି ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଡରି ହେ  
ହେ ହରି, ତୁମ ନାମେ ହେବି ପାରି ହେ ।

ତୁମ ନାମେ ପଡ଼େ ହୁରି, ପତିତପାବନ ହୁରି  
ଚାହୁଁ ବାରେ ମତେ ଫେରି ହେ ।  
ହେ ହରି, ତୁମ ନାମେ ହେବି ପାରି ହେ  
ହେ ହରି, ତୁମ ନାମେ ହେବି ପାରି ହେ ।



ମୁକ୍ତାଳିନି, ଟେନେସି

## କାତର ଜଣାଣ

ଅଞ୍ଜନା ଚୌଧୁରୀ

ଜୟ ଆହେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଜଗତ ବନ୍ଦନ,  
ଜୟ ଜନାର୍ଦ୍ଦନ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଯଶୋଦା ନନ୍ଦନ ।

ସୁଖ ତୁମେ, ସୃଷ୍ଟି ତୁମ ଏସାରା ସଂସାର,  
ତୁମ ବିନା ଜଗତରେ ସବୁ ଯେ ଅସାର ।

ବରଷାର ଝର ଯେ ମୟୂରୀର ନୃତ୍ୟ ତୁମେ,  
ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ ନିଦାଘ ଯେ କୋଇଲିର ସ୍ଵର ତୁମେ ।

ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ମୁହିଁ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଆହେ ତୁମେ ତ ମହାନ,  
ଜିପରି କରିବି ପ୍ରଭୁ ତୁମ ଯଶଗାନ ।

କି ଗୁଣ ଗାଇବି ପ୍ରଭୁ ତୁମେ ତ ନିର୍ଗୁଣ,  
କି ଉପମା ଦେବି ପ୍ରଭୁ ତୁମେ ଅନୁପମ ।

ତାଜିଥିଲେ ସାଲବେଗ, ଧୁବ ଆଉ ପ୍ରହଲ୍ଲାଦ,  
କରିଲ ଅମର ଦେଇ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ।

ତୁମେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମ ତୁମେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ତୁମେ ପୁଣି ଶୂନ୍ୟ,  
ଉଦ୍ଧାର କର ମୋତେ ଆହେ ପତିତପାବନ ।

ଭକ୍ତର ଭଗବାନ ଆହେ ନାରାୟଣ,  
କାତର ଜଣାଣ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଆହେ ଶୁଣ ।

ଆଶିଷର ବାରିଧାର ଦିଅ ହେ ଝରାଇ,  
ପାପ ଭାର ଯେତେ ମୋ'ର ଯାଉ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଧୋଇ ।







## ତମେ ପ୍ରବାସରେ ଥିଲେ

ସତ୍ୟ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ତମେ ପ୍ରବାସରେ ଥିଲେ  
ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଧରି ତମ ଅନୁଗତ  
ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କର, କେବଳ ତମର ॥

ତମେ ପ୍ରବାସରେ ଥିଲେ  
ତମେ ନାହିଁ - ଜାଣିଲେ ବି ବାରଂବାର ଭୁଲିଯାଏ,  
ତମ ନାଆଁ ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣ କରି ଯେତେ ଡାକିଲେ ବି  
ଉତ୍ତର ଆସେନା,  
ଦରଜାରେ ସେଇମିତି ତାଲା ଝୁଲୁଥାଏ  
ଏବଂ ମୁଁ ଅପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୁଏ ।

ତମକୁ ଦେଖିବା ପାଇଁ  
ଅହରହ ମନ ମୋ'ର ହୁଅଇ ଅଝଟ  
ତମ ବଗିଚାର ଫୁଲ,  
ଆକାଶର ଶୁନ୍ୟତାରେ ତମ ଆଖି ଦିଶିଯାଏ  
ସବୁଠାରେ ତମ ଚିତ୍ରପଟ !

ତମେ ପ୍ରବାସରେ ଥିଲେ  
ଚାରିପାଖ ପବନରେ ଶୁଭୁଥାଏ  
ତମ ପାଦ ପାଉଁଜର ମଧୁର ସଂଗୀତ  
ଲାଗେ - ସତେ ଏଇମାତ୍ରେ ଆସିଯିବ,  
ଦୁଃଖର ଏ ଶୀତରତ୍ନ ସରିଯିବ  
ତମେ ମୋ'ର ଫାଲ୍‌ଗୁନର ମୃଦୁ ପଦପାତ !

କାହିଁକି କେଯାଣି  
ତମକୁ ପୁନର୍ବାର ପାଖରେ ପାଇଲେ  
ଲାଗେ - ତମେ ଆଉ 'ତମେ' ହୋଇ ରହୁନାହିଁ  
ଅକସ୍ମାତ ନିଦ୍ରାଯାଏ ସଂଗୋପିତ ଇଚ୍ଛାର ସହର  
ଉଇଁଥିବା ଜହ୍ନ ପୁଣି ନିଃଶବ୍ଦରେ ଅଧାବାଟୁ ଫେରିଯାଏ  
ବିଶ୍ୱାସର ଚାବିକାଠି ହରାଇବା ଭୟନେଇ  
ଆଶଙ୍କିତ ପ୍ରାଣ ମୋ'ର ବାରଂବାର ଖୋଜୁଥାଏ  
ସେ ମୁଗ୍ଧ ଅତୀତ ॥



7412 C Brandshire Lane, Dublin, OH 43017  
(Satya Pattanaik lives with his wife Snigdha,  
daughter Sadyasnata and son Lagnajit.)

## ତୋ' ପାଇଁ ଗୀତଟିଏ

ଶିଉଗ୍ରୀ ଦାସ

ରଙ୍ଗନ୍ ଓଢ଼ଣା ତଳେ ପ୍ରକୃତିର ସଲ୍ଲଜ ମାଧୁରୀ  
ବସନ୍ତର ମହକରେ ଭଲ୍ଲସିତ ସବୁଜ ଧରଣୀ ।

ସବୁଜିମା ଆସ୍ତରଣ ଭେଦି ଫୁଲର ରଙ୍ଗିନ ପାଖୁଡ଼ା  
ହସିଉଠେ ରହି ରହି ଭରିଦିଏ ନୂତନ ଅଭୀପ୍ସା ।

ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଗର୍ଭା ପୁଣ୍ୟତୋୟା ପ୍ରକୃତିର କୋଳେ  
ବସନ୍ତର ବାସନ୍ତିକା ଖେଳେ  
ମୋ କୋଳରେ ମୋ ପ୍ରେମର ପ୍ରଥମ ସନ୍ତକ  
ହସେ ମୁଁ ମାତୃତ୍ୱ ଗରବେ ।

ତୋ' ଓଠର ହସ ଆଜି ମୋ ଜୀବନ ଅମୂଲ୍ୟ ସଂପଦ  
ତୋ ଆଖିର ଜ୍ୟୋତି ପରା ମୋ ଜୀବନ ପଥପ୍ରଦର୍ଶକ ।

ତୋ' ଆଖିର ଲୁହ ସାଥେ ଅସହାୟ, ମା'ର ମମତା  
ଧନ ମୋ'ର, ଲୁହ ତୋ'ର, ଏ ଜୀବନେ ଏକାନ୍ତ ଅଲୋଡ଼ା ।

ଜୀବନରେ ଜୀଇଁବାର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ, ତୋ ପାଇଁ ତୋ'ରି ସାଥରେ  
ଭରପୁର ଐଶ୍ୱର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅଞ୍ଜଳି ମୋ'ର  
ତୋ ସୁଖ ପ୍ରାରୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଭିତରେ ।



ତୋ ଓଠର ଦରୋଟି ବଚନ  
ଖୋଲିଦିଏ ଜୀବନର ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ  
ଜିତିଗଲି ତୋ ଲାଗି, ତୋରି ପରଶେ  
ହସେ ଆଜି ଗରବେ ମାତୃତ୍ୱ ।

କୁନି କୁନି ହାତର ପରଶେ ତୋ'ର  
ମୁଦି ହୋଇ ଆସେ ମୋର ଆଖି  
ସପନର ଗନ୍ତାଘର ମୁଦା ଆଖି ତଳେ ଉଠନ୍ତି ଝଲସି ।

ଫୁଲର ପାଖୁଡ଼ା ସମ କୁନିପାଦେ ତୋ'ର, ଶକ୍ତିର ଝଲକ  
ଜୀବନର ଚଲାପଥେ ଚାଲିବାର ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରୟାସ ।

ତମକି ଉଠେ ମୁଁ ଧନ, ହସେ ପୁଣି ତୋ' ହସ ସାଥରେ  
ଚାଲି ଶିଖ, ଜୀବନକୁ ସାମ୍ନା କରିବାର  
ମୋ ହାତ ତୋ ଲାଗି, ତୋରି ସାମ୍ନାରେ । (କ୍ରମଶଃ)

## ମାଁ ମାଟି ମୋର

ପ୍ରମୋଦିନୀ ମିଶ୍ର, ମୋଦିପତା, ସମ୍ବଲପୁର

ନୁହେଁ ମୁଁ ପଲ୍ଲୀ ବାଳାଗୋ ମୁଁ ଏ ପଲ୍ଲୀବଧୁ  
 ଭୁଲିଛି ଅତୀତ ପାଇଗୋ ତାର ମମତା ମଧୁ ।  
 ଝଡ଼ିବ ଦିନେ ଏ ମାଟିରେ ମୋର ଜୀବ-କୁସୁମ  
 ମାତ୍ର ନ ଲିଭିବ ତା ଭାଲୁଁ ମୋର ରଞ୍ଜ-କଙ୍କୁମ ।  
 ପୁଣ୍ୟମୟୀ ମାଁ ମାଟି ମୋ ତାର ଉପମା କାହିଁ  
 ଯେତେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ ନେତ୍ରକୁ ସଦା ନୂଆ ଲାଗଇ ।  
 ବନ ଗିରି ପରିବେଷିତ କିଆ କେତକୀ ବନ  
 ବିବିଧ କୁସୁମ ସୁବାସ ତିତ୍ତ କରେ ହରଣ ।  
 ଥିଲା ଏହା ପୂର୍ବେ ଉର୍ବଶୀଙ୍କର ରମଣ ସ୍ଥାନ  
 ଅଦ୍ୟାପି ରହିଛି ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ଚାରୁ ଚରଣ ଚିହ୍ନ ।  
 ସତ୍ୟମୁହିଁ ଗିରିଶିଖରୁ ଝରି ସପତ ଝର  
 ଶସ୍ୟ ଶ୍ୟାମଳା ମାଟିର ଧୋଇ ଦିଏ ପୟର ।  
 କୁଳେ ବିରାଜିତ ଦେଉଳେ ବିଜେ ରଘବପତି  
 ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ବନି ଛନ୍ଦେ ତୋଳୁଛି କେତେ ଯଶ କୀରତି ।  
 ଦେଉଳ ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତ ପ୍ରାଙ୍ଗଣେ ଚାରୁଚିତ୍ର ଚିତ୍ରିତ  
 ସତ୍ୟ, ତ୍ରେତୟା, ଦ୍ଵାପର ସ୍ଵତି କରେ ଚିହ୍ନିତ ।  
 ଝଙ୍କା ବରଗଛ ଓହ୍ଲଳ ଛୁଏଁ କଳାପଥର  
 ତହିଁ ପ୍ରିୟା ସଙ୍ଗେ ବିଜୟ ପ୍ରଭୁ ତମ୍ବୁରୁଧର ।  
 ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ହୋଇଛି ପୁରାଣେ ଶିବ ସ୍ନାନ ନିମନ୍ତେ  
 ଆସୁଥିଲେ ଏହି ଝରକୁ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରିୟା ସଙ୍ଗତ ।  
 ତୋଳିଥିଲେ ଏହି କୁଟୀର ମୋର ପିତୃପୁରୁଷ  
 ପ୍ରତି କୋଣେ ଆହା ଜଡ଼ିତ ତାଙ୍କ ଯଶ-ପୌରୁଷ ।  
 ଜୀବନେ ମରଣେ ସାଥି ତ ମାଁ ମାଟି ମୋହର  
 ତା ପାଣି ପବନେ ଗଢ଼ିଲି ସିନା ସଂସାର ମୋର ।  
 ମାତ୍ର ଚାହିଁଥିବ ମାଟି ମାଁ ବେନି କର ପ୍ରସାରି  
 ତୋଳିନେବ ନିଜ କୋଳକୁ ମୁଖେ ଚୁମ୍ବନ ଭରି ।  
 ଏହି ମାଟି ମାଁ ସେବାରେ ଲାଗିଥାଉ ଜୀବନ  
 ତା କୋଳେ ଜନମି ତା କୋଳେ ହେଉ ଶେଷ ଶୟନ ॥

(କ୍ରମଶଃ)

କୋଳ ମୋ'ର ଭରପୁର  
 ହାତେ ମୋ'ର ପରିପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସୁଖର ଅଞ୍ଜଳି  
 ଜୀବନ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ନୁହେଁ,  
 ଦୁଃଖର ସାଗର ନୁହେଁ,  
 ଐଶ୍ଵର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଗନ୍ତାଘର ଲାଗେ ଆଜି  
 ତୋ ଅଳି ଅର୍ଦଳି ।

କଳ୍ପକିତ ଜୀବନର ଚଳାପଥ  
 ମନେ ଆଣେ ଭୀତି ଓ ଆଶଙ୍କା  
 ତରିବୁନି, ଜୀବନଟା ଏଇମିତି  
 ଆଣିଦିଏ ଶଙ୍କା ।

ତୋ ଜୀବନ ଚଳାପଥୁ କାଢ଼ିବାକୁ କଣ  
 ହୋଇପାରେ ରଞ୍ଜାଞ୍ଜ ତୋ ମା'ର ମମତା  
 ହୋଇପାରେ ତା' ଆଖି ଓଦା  
 ଧନ ମୋ'ର, ଫେରିଚାହିଁ ଅଟକି ଯିବୁନି  
 ସେ ହିଁ ମାତୃତ୍ଵ ଆଉ  
 ଜୀବନର ସୌଦା ।



ନିଉ ଜର୍ସୀ





## ପାଠଶାଳା

ବରୁଣ ପାଣି

- ୧ -

ପାଠଶାଳା !  
 ଭଗ୍ନାବଶେଷ ତୁମେ ସତ କାହାଣୀର  
 ଅବଶେଷ କ୍ଷୟିଷ୍ଣୁ ମଣିଷର କରୁଣ ରାଗିଣୀର  
 ରହିଥିବ କେତେ କଥା, ଭଙ୍ଗ କାନ୍ଧ ଲଗା ପରେ ଲେଖା  
 କେତେ ରାଜା, କେତେ ଦୁଃଖୀ, କେତେ ସଖୀ ସଖା  
 ପାଠଶାଳା  
 ସକାଳର ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଢ଼ିଚାଲେ  
 ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନରେ କ୍ଷୟ ହୁଏ  
 ଆସେ କଳଙ୍କିତ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ପସରାଏ  
 ଦିନ ରାତି ଦେଖିଛ ତ, ବାନ୍ଧିଛ ତ ତାଙ୍କରି ଗଳପ  
 ଶୁଣିଛ ତ ସକାଳର କୁହୁକୁହୁ, ଶୁଣିଛ ତ ରାତ୍ରିର ବିଳାପ  
 କୁନିକୁନି ତାରା ନେଇ ଗଢ଼ିଛ ତ ରମ୍ୟ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମେଳା  
 ଅମା ଆଷାଢ଼ର ଅକ୍ଷକାରେ ଦେଖିଛ ତ ବିଦାୟର ବେଳା  
 ପାଠଶାଳା  
 ଆଣିଦିଅ ଅନୁଭବ ତୁମ ସବୁ  
 ବାନ୍ଧିବି ମୁଁ ଶବଦ ଛନ୍ଦରେ  
 ତୁମର ସେ ଭଙ୍ଗ କାନ୍ଧପରେ ଲେଖା ଥିବା  
 ଗଣିତର ଧାରା ସବୁ  
 ତୁମ ଲଗା ତଳ ଅଶୁ କନ୍ଦରେ କନ୍ଦରେ  
 ପାଠଶାଳା !

- ୨ -

ଦ୍ଵାର ତୁମ ଅଶୁସିଦ୍ଧ ସେ ପଥିକ ପାଇଁ  
 ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା କରିଛି ସଖା ପ୍ରିୟତମା ପାଇଁ  
 ଅନନ୍ତ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ତୁମ ଅନାସକ୍ତ ଦେହ  
 ବାନ୍ଧିଛି ଅଶୁର ଜଳ ବିଷମ ଦୁଃସହ  
 ପାଠଶାଳା  
 ଜୀବନ ଦୀପର ସବୁ ଲିଭିଯିବା ସଳିତାର  
 କଳା ରଙ୍ଗେ ଲିପ୍ତ ତୁମ ଜର୍ଜର ଶରୀର  
 ଅଭଗ୍ନ କଣ୍ଠେଇ ଆଉ ଭଗ୍ନ ହୃଦୟର ଖେଳା

ଭଙ୍ଗାମ ଯୌବନ ମେଳା  
 ଲିପିବନ୍ଧ କଣାରେ କଣାରେ  
 ତୁମ ବୃଦ୍ଧ, ଗଳିତ ଶରୀରେ  
 ପାଠଶାଳା  
 ଏ ଜୀବନ ଚାଲିଯିବ, ଏ ଯୌବନ ଚାଲିଯିବ,  
 ଚାଲିଯିବ ଆଜିର ବିପଣୀ  
 ନୂତନ ଯୌବନ ନେଇ, ନୂତନ ପଥିକ ନେଇ  
 ଲେଖିବ ହେ ନୂତନ କାହାଣୀ  
 କାଲିର ଯୌବନ ଯେବେ  
 ଅମାବାସ୍ୟା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରପରି ଲିଭି ଲିଭି ଯିବ  
 ତୁମର ସେ ଭଙ୍ଗ କାନ୍ଧପରେ ଲେଖା ଥିବା  
 ଅଲିଭା ଗଣିତ ସବୁ ଇତିହାସ ହେବ  
 ପାଠଶାଳା

ଆଣିଦେବ ମଦିର ପାନୀୟ ତୁମେ ନୂତନ ଯୌବନ ପାଇଁ  
 ପିପାସାରେ ଜର୍ଜରିତ ହେଉଥିବ କାଲିର ଯୌବନ ଯେବେ ଅନନ୍ତ  
 ପିପାସା ନେଇ  
 ହାୟ ପାଠଶାଳା  
 ଗଣିତ କଷିବ ତୁମେ  
 କାଲିର ଯୌବନ ଆଉ ଆଜିର ଯୌବନ  
 ସବୁ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଖାଲିହେବେ -  
 କିଏ ମଦିର ପାନୀୟ ନେଇ କିଏ ଅବା ଅନନ୍ତ ପିପାସା ନେଇ  
 ତୁମ କାନ୍ଧେ ଲିପିବନ୍ଧ ହେବେ  
 ପାଠଶାଳା

- ୩ -

ଶୁଣିଛ କି ସେ ବିଧୁର ରାଗିଣୀ  
 ଯେ ତୁମ କାନ୍ଧେ ମୃଦୁ ମୃଦୁ ହୁଅଇ ଝଙ୍କିତ  
 ତୁମ ହୃଦ କେବେ କାହିଁ ହୋଇ ନି ଆହୁତ ?  
 ଶୁଣିଛ କି ବିରହୀ ସଖାର ଆହା ଅଶୁସିଦ୍ଧ ବିଳାପ କାହାଣୀ  
 ମନ କେବେ ବିବ୍ରତ ହୋଇନି ?  
 ପାଠଶାଳା  
 ଧୁ ଧୁ ମରୁ ଖରାକୁଳୁ ଏକାକୀ ପଥିକ ଯେବେ

ଏକା ଆସି ଗଣି ବସେ ଜୀବନ ମଧୁର ସବୁ ଅଭୁଲ୍ଲା ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ  
 ହୃଦ କିବା ହୁଏ ବିଚଳିତ ?  
 ଲେଖିଛ ତ ଗୋଟି ଗୋଟି ଅଭୁଲ୍ଲା କାହାଣୀ ସବୁ କଳ୍ପନାରୁ  
 ବେଶୀ ଭୟଙ୍କର  
 ବହିଛିକି ତୁମ ଅଶ୍ରୁଧାର ?  
 ପାଛୁଶାଳା  
 ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦିଅ କାନ୍ଧ ସବୁ, ଦେଖ ଖୋଲି ଅଭୁଲ୍ଲା ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ  
 ଖଣ୍ଡ ବିଖଣ୍ଡିତ ସବୁ ହୃଦ୍‌ପିଣ୍ଡ  
 ଲୁହ ଏବଂ ଲହୁଭରା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ବିପର୍ଯ୍ୟୟ

- ୪ -

ଗୋଧୂଳିର ମଳିନ ଆଲୋକ  
 ଭସା ଭସା ମେଘ ତଳେ କଦମ୍ବ ମହକ  
 ବସନ୍ତର ବିହଙ୍ଗ କାକଳି  
 ଆଉ ତାହୁଙ୍କର କୁହା କୁହା ତାକ  
 ପାଛୁଶାଳା  
 ସବୁ ତ ତୁମର ସେଇ କାନ୍ଧ ପରେ ଲେଖା  
 ତେବେ ବି କାହିଁକି ପୁଟଟ ବୁଭୁକ୍ଷୁର ଆର୍ତ୍ତନାଦ  
 ରାଗିଣୀ ତୀବ୍ର ବିଷାଦ  
 ରାଧାର ଅଭୁଲ୍ଲା ଅଶ୍ରୁ ଭାସି ଆସେ କେତେ ଦୂରୁ  
 ହସ୍ତ ଭାବେ ଲେଖା ଖାଲି ଅନନ୍ତ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା  
 ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷାର ଶେଷ ନାହିଁ, ନାହିଁ ଶେଷ ପିପାସାର  
 କ୍ଷଣିକ ଆବେଶ ସିନା ଦିଏ ଖାଲି ପାନୀୟ ମଦିର  
 କାହିଁ ପାଛୁଶାଳା?  
 କି ଅଭିଶାପରେ ଶତ୍ରୁ  
 ତୁମର ଏ ପଥିକର ଦଳ  
 ଖାଲି ତୃଷ୍ଣା ଧୁ ଧୁ ମରୁ  
 ଅନନ୍ତ ପଥରେ ଆଜି କାହିଁ ସେ ବିହୁଳ

- ୫ -

ପାଛୁଶାଳା ଅନନ୍ତର ମାୟା  
 ଅନନ୍ତ ତ ଦୟାମୟ  
 ଅନନ୍ତ ତ ବିପୁଳାତ ପୃଥ୍ୱୀ  
 ଅନନ୍ତ ତ ନିରାକାର କାୟା  
 ପଥିକ ତ ଖୋଜି ବସେ କ୍ଷଣିକ ଯୌବନ  
 କ୍ଷଣିକର ଉନ୍ମାଦନା  
 କ୍ଷଣିକ ପ୍ରାଣ, ଆଉ କ୍ଷଣିକ ହୃଦନ

ଉନ୍ମାଦନା ଯୌବନକୁ  
 ପ୍ରାଣ ଓ ହୃଦନକୁ  
 ଅନନ୍ତ କଳ୍ପନା କରି ବହିତାଳେ ପଥିକର ସ୍ରୋତ  
 ଗଢ଼ିତାଳେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନପୁରୀ ଉନ୍ମାଦ ଉନ୍ମତ୍ତ  
 କ୍ଷଣିକର ପରେ  
 ଉନ୍ମାଦ ଯୌବନ ହୁଏ ଜରାରେ ଛବିର  
 ପ୍ରାଣ ବୀଣାରୁ ଝରେ ବିରହର ସ୍ୱର  
 ସ୍ୱପ୍ନପୁରୀ ଧ୍ୱସ ହୁଏ, ସଖା ହୁଏ ବିରହ ବିଧୁର  
 ରାତ୍ରି ଆସେ  
 ତିମିର କରାଳ ଛାୟା ପଥିକର ପଥ ଗ୍ରାସେ  
 କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ଶ୍ରାନ୍ତ ପଥିକର ପଥ ତ୍ରାସେ  
 ପାଛୁଶାଳା  
 ଦୂରେ ବହୁ ଦୂରେ ପାଛୁଶାଳା  
 ପଥିକକୁ ହାତ ଠାରି ତାକେ  
 ଆଗରେ ତ ଅନନ୍ତ ଅନ୍ଧାର  
 ରହି ରହି ଭାସିଆସେ ବନ ମଧୁ୍ୟ ବିକଟାଳ ସ୍ୱର  
 ଏକାକୀ ପଥିକ ମନ ଛୁଇଁଯାଏ ଅନ୍ଧାର କାହାଣୀ  
 ବିନାଶର, ବିରହର, ସୀମିତର କରୁଣ ରାଗିଣୀ  
 ପାଛୁଶାଳା ପାଛୁଶାଳା ଆର୍ତ୍ତନାଦେ ପଥିକ - ଉତ୍ତର  
 ହାୟ ପାଏ ନାହିଁ, ପାଏ ଖାଲି ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ୱନି ତା'ର  
 ପାଛୁଶାଳା

- ୬ -

କାଲି ତ ଥିଲା ଯୌବନ, ଆଜି ଜରା ଖାଲି  
 କାଲି ତ ଥିଲା ବସନ୍ତ, ଆଜି ମରୁବାଲି  
 କାଲି ତ ଥିଲା ପ୍ରାଣ, ଆଜି ଗୋ ବିରହ  
 କାଲି ତ ଅନନ୍ତ, ଆଜି ସୀମିତର କୋହ  
 ଭଙ୍ଗ କାନ୍ଧ ଇତିହାସ ଅମାପ ଅସୀମ ରେଖା  
 କାଲି ଆଜି ବୈଷମ୍ୟର କରୁଣ କାହାଣୀ ଲେଖା  
 ବହି ତୁମେ ଚାଲିଥିବ ଅସହାୟ ପଥିକର  
 ବୃଦ୍ଧ ଯୁବକର ଭାର  
 କଥା କହି ଚାଲିଥିବ  
 ସୀମିତର ଅନନ୍ତ କାହାଣୀ  
 ସୀମିତର ବ୍ୟଥାଭରା ବାଣୀ  
 ତାଜା ରକ୍ତେ ଲେଖା  
 ପାଛୁଶାଳା  
 କଥା କହୁ ଥରେ



ଅନନ୍ତର, ବସନ୍ତର ବାର୍ତ୍ତା କହୁ ଥରେ  
ଥରେ କହ ମଳୟକୁ ରହିଯିବ ସଖା ଘରେ  
ଥରେ କହ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମାକୁ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମାର ରୂପ ନେଇ  
ଦେଖା ଦେଉ, ଲେଖା ହେଉ ଅନନ୍ତ କାଳ ବସରେ

କଥା କହୁ ଥରେ  
ମୁମୁର୍ଖୁ ଯୌବନ କାହିଁ ?  
ବିରୂପ କଳିକା କାହିଁ ?  
ବିରହ ବିଷାଦ କାହିଁ ?  
ଲାଲ ରକ୍ତ ଲୁହ କାହିଁ ?  
ଏ ଜୀବନ ଦର୍ଶନ ହେ ଏତେ ବା ନିଠୁର କାହିଁ ?  
କାହିଁକି ବା ଲୟ ପଥ ?  
କାହିଁକି ପ୍ରଣୟ ମୃତ ?  
କାହିଁକି ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ଶେଷ ?  
କାହିଁବା ମିଛ ଆବେଶ ?  
ଏତେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଲେଖା କାହିଁ ନାହିଁ ?  
ଏତେ ପ୍ରିୟ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଛୁଟି କାହିଁ ନାହିଁ ?  
କୁହ ପାଛୁଣୀ !

- ୭ -

ଆଲୋକର ଆଶା  
ଅନ୍ଧାର ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ଦେଇ  
ରଖେ ପଥକ ବସାଇ ସୀମାହୀନ ପଥ ପରେ ଭୟାବହ ନିଶା  
ଏ ନିଶାର ଶେଷ ନାହିଁ, ଏ ଆଶାର ଶେଷ ନାହିଁ  
ଶେଷ ସିନା ସୀମିତ ଜୀବନ  
ଶେଷ ସିନା ଆଲୋକ ଝଲକ  
ବିଦ୍ୟୁଲୁତା ପରି ଯିଏ  
କ୍ଷଣିକ ଆବେଶ ଦିଏ

କୁହେ ତା'ରେ ହାୟ ଚିରନ୍ତନ  
ଧିକ୍ ହେ ଆଲୋକ ତୁମ, ଧିକ୍ ପାଛୁଣୀ  
ଅନ୍ଧାର ଜୀବନ ପଥ  
ସଦୀର୍ଘ ହେଲେ ବି ସତ  
ମିଥ୍ୟା ତୁମ ମିଥ୍ୟା ଖେଳା  
ମିଥ୍ୟା ତୁମ ଆଲୋକର ଆଶା  
ମିଥ୍ୟା ତୁମ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନପୁରୀ ମେଳା  
ପାଛୁଣୀ  
ବଜ୍ରକଣ୍ଠେ ବାଜୁଛି ନିନାଦ  
ଚିରନ୍ତନ ଅସୀମ ଓ ସସୀମର ଲାଗିଛି ବିବାଦ  
ଆଲୋକକୁ ଅନ୍ଧକାର କରଇ ଧିକ୍କାର  
ଭଗବାନ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଭକ୍ତ ଆଜି ହୋଇଛି ସୋକାର  
ଅନନ୍ତର ଶାସନରେ ସୀମିତ ଯେ ସାଜିଛି ବିପ୍ରବୀ  
ଅବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଦେଶେ ପ୍ରଜା ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ବାଢ଼ିଅଛି ଦାବୀ  
ବନ୍ଦ କର, ବନ୍ଦ କର ପାଛୁଣୀ ଦ୍ୱାର  
ଧ୍ୱଂସ କରି ଇଟା କାଠ, ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଚୁରମାର  
ଆଜି ଗଢ଼ିଦିଅ ପାଛୁଣୀ ଇତିହାସେ ସୁଦୃଢ଼ କବର  
ଲିଭିଯାଉ ଲୁହ ଲହୁ ଭରା ଇତିହାସ ଆଜି  
ଫେରୁ କୃଷ୍ଣ ଗୋପପୁରେ ରାଧିକା ପ୍ରେମିକ ସାଜି  
ମୁମୁର୍ଖୁ ଯୌବନ ଦେହେ ଫେରିଆସୁ ପ୍ରାଣ  
ବାଜୁ ଶାନ୍ତିର ଦୁନ୍ଦୁଭି, ଶେଷ ହେଉ ରଣ  
ଶେଷ ହେଉ ଧ୍ୱଂସର କାହାଣୀ  
ଶେଷ ହେଉ ପାଛୁଣୀ  
ଶେଷ ହେଉ ଆଲୋକ ପିପାସା  
ଶେଷ ହେଉ ନିଶା  
ଶେଷ ହେଉ ମିଥ୍ୟା ଆଶା ବାଣୀ ।

# ଅଗ୍ନିପକ୍ଷେ ଯାତ୍ରା

ମନୋଜ ପଣ୍ଡା

ଚିତାକାଶର ଅସୀମ ନୀଳିମା  
 ଦୂର ଦିଗନ୍ତର ଦିଗ୍‌ବଳୟ ତଳେ  
 ଅଯାଚିତ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ଶୋଭାଯାତ୍ରା  
 ଶତେକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ  
 ତାହାର ପୁଣି ସହସ୍ରେକ ସଙ୍ଗ୍ୟା  
 ସେଥିରୁ ପୁଣି କେତେକ ଦୁର୍ବୋଧ୍ୟ  
 ଆଉ କେତେ ଅତି ସୁବୋଧ୍ୟ  
 ତେବେ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା କେଉଁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନପାଇଁ?  
 ସାକାରୀଭୂତର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ  
 ଅନ୍ତହୀନ ଉଦ୍‌ଯୋଗ  
 କେବେ ବା ସରଳ ରୈଷିକ

ଆଉ କେବେ ଜଟିଳ ବିନ୍ୟାସରେ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରୀଭୂତ  
 ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଅର୍ବାଚୀନ ନୁହେଁ  
 ଏ ତ ଅତି ପ୍ରାଚୀନ  
 କିନ୍ତୁ ନୂତନତର ଭୂମିକା ନେଇ  
 ପ୍ରତ୍ୟହ ଆଲୋଚିତ କରେ  
 ପ୍ରତି ଅନୁସନ୍ଧିସୁ ନିର୍ମଳ ଅଭିବ୍ୟକ୍ତିକୁ  
 ଜୀବନର ସାୟାହ୍ନେ ଓ ପରେ  
 ଶେଷ ହୁଏ ନା ସେହି ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରିୟଗତ ସୁଖ ଲାଭ ଆଶାର  
 କେତେ କ୍ଳାନ୍ତି, କେତେ ଅବସାଦ  
 ପୁଣି ମାର୍ମିକ ଅନୁରକ୍ତି, ଅଥବା ପ୍ରୀତିଭରା ଅନୁଭୂତି

ମନ, ଶରୀର କ୍ଳିଷ୍ଟ, ରିକ୍ଷ ଶେଷରେ ବିନଷ୍ଟ  
 କେବେ ବା ନିଛକ ଆନନ୍ଦେ ହୃଷ୍ଟ, ରୋମାଞ୍ଚିତ  
 ସାର୍ଥକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ନିର୍ବାଚନ ପାଇଁ  
 ଲୋଡା ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତିର ହୃଦୟ  
 ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥହୀନ ଇଚ୍ଛା  
 ସୁତୀକ୍ଷ ଅସୀ  
 ସର୍ବୋପରି ବିଶ୍ୱନିୟନ୍ତା ପରମେଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କ ଅନୁଗ୍ରହ  
 ସେହି ପ୍ରେମନିମଜ୍ଜିତ ମୁକ୍ତି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ଜୀବନ୍ତ  
 ରୂପାୟନ ପାଇଁ  
 ଚାଲିଛି ମୋ ଅଗ୍ନିପକ୍ଷେ ଯାତ୍ରା  
 ଏହି ନଶ୍ୱର ଶରୀରର ଶେଷ ଶ୍ୱାସ ପର୍ଯନ୍ତ



ସୁଦର୍ଶନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଗଠିତ ବାଲୁକା ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି



## ପିଲାଦିନର ହେତୁ ତଃ ପଦ୍ମନାଭ ପ୍ରଧାନ

କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର କହ ତ ଧାନର ଖେତ,  
ମୋର ମୁହଁନେଲା ଘଡ଼ିକେ ଚିତ୍ତ ।  
ଗାଁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆମେରିକା ଆଇଲି ବଲି  
ଗାଁର କଥା କେତେ ହେବା କାଲି ଭୁଲି?

ଆମର ଗାଁ ନାଁ ଆୟେ ଚୁଟାମୁଣ୍ଡା  
ପାଶେ ଅଛେ ରେଙ୍ଗାଲି ଆର କଷଣ୍ଡା ।  
ନଳ ପାର ହେଇ ଯାଇଛେ ରାସ୍ତା  
ନାଲି କହ ନାଲି ତାର ଅବସ୍ଥା ।

ପିଲା ଦିନର କଥା ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଛେ  
ହେଥେଇ କରି ଦୁଇ ପଦ ମୁଲି ଲେଖୁଛେ ।  
ତାମୁର ଛୁଆଁ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ମୁଲି ଖେଳୁଥିଲି  
ଆମ ଗଛକେ ଲେଦା ମୁଲି ଫିକୁଥିଲି ।

ମାୟା ବୁରେଇଥି କେତେ ଯେ ରୁପ  
ଫଲ ଚାଖି କରୁଥିଲି କେଡ଼ିଆ ରୁପ ।  
କେନ୍ଦୁ ଚାର ଆର କୁର୍ତ୍ତ ଭଲିଆ  
ଆମ ଜାମୁ ଖେଜୁର ତାଲ ଲାଗେ ବଢ଼ିଆ ।

ବାହାଲ ଜମିଥି କେଥେ କେଥେ କାଦୋ  
ପହୁ ରୁଥିଲୁ ହେଇ ଲଦୋବଦୋ ।  
ଖେତନୁ ଶୁଭୁଛେ ହଲିଆ ଗୀତ  
ଗଲାଟ ଗୀତ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ମଝୁରା ନାଟ ।

ପେଡା ହେଉଥିଲା ଯେବେ କୁସାରି  
ପିଉଥିଲି ପନା ମୁଲି ଖୁରି ଖୁରି ।  
କେଉଟେ ବୁଢ଼ୀ ଆନଲେ ବିଜି ଭୁଜା  
ଘିନୁଥିଲୁ ଦେଇ ଧାନର ଖେଜା ।

ମାମୁଁଘରେ ଗାଧୁଥିଲୁ ତ ବନ୍ଧେ  
ପହୁଁରୁଥିଲୁ ତ କେତେ ଆନନ୍ଦେ ।  
ଆମର ଗାଁ ନଦୀର ମଝିରେ ଝୁଲି  
କେଥେ ଖାଇବ ଭାଇ ଚନା ମୁଗଫଲି ।

ହରିହରଯୋର ପାନି କେତେ ବଢ଼ିଆ ସତେ  
ଧାନ ଫଲୁଛେ କେତେନେ କେତେ ।  
ନଳରେ ଦେଖିବ କେତେ ଯେ ଝୁରି  
କୁତୁରି, ତେଜେନି ଆଉର ବୟେରି ।

ଆଜିକାଲି ହେଉଛେ ତ୍ୟାମ୍ ତିଆରି  
ଗାଡ଼ି ମୋଟର ଯାଉଛେ ବୁଲି କିମିରି ।  
ବତା ମେହେନତି ଆଏ ଏ ଗରିବ ଲୁକ  
କାଧରନ ନାହିଁ ପତେ ଚାବଲେ ବି ପୁକ ।

ଜମି ଥିଲା ଲୁକେ ଖାଇ ମଦ-ଗଞ୍ଜେଇ  
ପଇସାଯାକ ସବୁ ଦେଉଛନ୍ ଉଡେଇ ।  
ମା ସମଲେଇ ତତେ ଶୁହାରି  
ନାଲି କରୁଲୁକୁ ତ ତୁଇ ଜୁଆରି ।

କରୁଛେ ତତେ ଜୁହାରି ବିନତି  
ଲେଖି ବସଲେ ହେବ ପୁରାନ-ପୁଥି ।  
ତାକ୍ ପକାଲେନ ଆମର ଶ୍ରୀମତି  
ତେନୁକରି ଇନା କରୁଛେ ଇତି ।

ଆଇ-ଟି-ର ମାକେଟ ଏଭେ ଅଛେ ବଢ଼ିଆ  
ଆମେରିକାନେ ଭି ଅଛନ୍ ଗୁରୁତୁ ଉଡିଆ ।  
ମାହାପୁରୁ, ତୁମ୍ଭକୁ ମାରେ ମୁଡିଆ  
ବଢ଼ିଆଁ ବନେଇଛ ଦୁଇଗୋଡିଆ ॥

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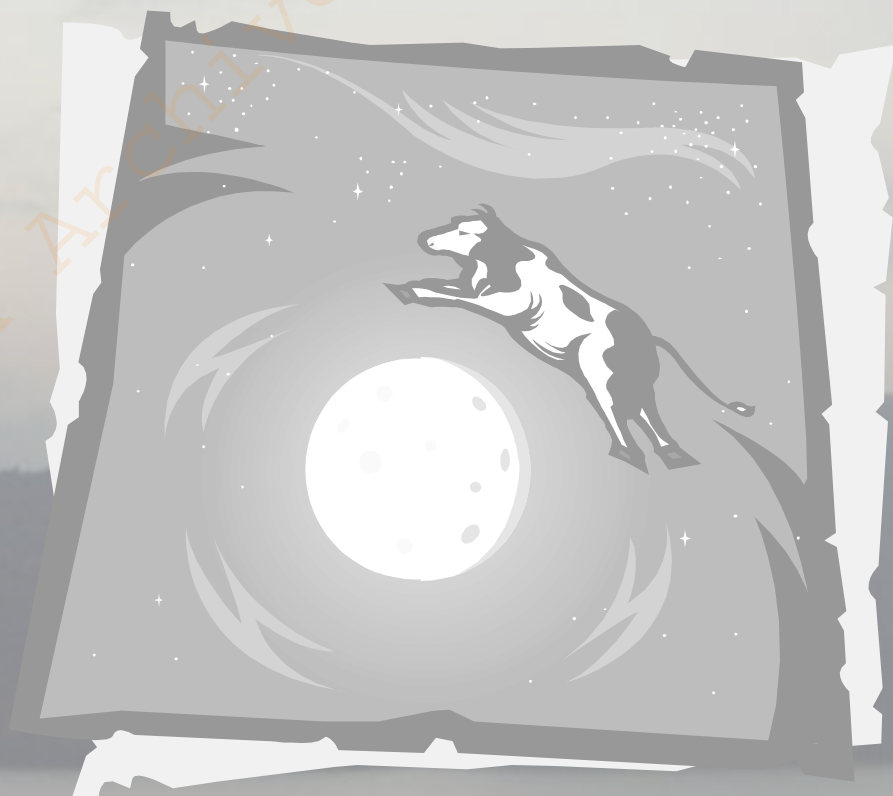
CPA

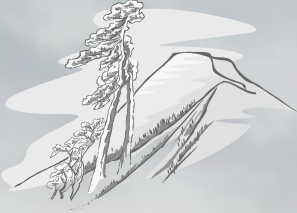
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# ଗେଇ





## ଦୂର ପାହାଡ଼

ତାପସ ରଞ୍ଜନ ସାହୁ

ଦୂର ପାହାଡ଼ ସୁନ୍ଦର । ଦୂର ପାହାଡ଼ର ରଙ୍ଗ ଘଷ ସବୁଜ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଆହୁରି ସୁନ୍ଦର । ତା' ଛାଇରେ ସପନଫେରା ଗାଁଟିଏ ଲୁଚିଥିଲେ ତା'ଠୁ ବି ସୁନ୍ଦର । ଆଉ ରଙ୍ଗ ବେରଙ୍ଗର ଫୁଲ ଫୁଟି ମହକୁଥିବା, ଖରାବେଳେ କୋଇଲି ଗୀତ ଗାଉଥିବା ଗାଁରେ ଅକ୍ଷରେ କଳସୀ ଧରି, ଛନ୍ଦରେ କବିତା ତୋଳି ଯାଉଥିବା ସଖୀଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ଲଳିତା ଥିଲେ ସରଗଠୁ ସୁନ୍ଦର ।

ଲଳିତା ସହ ପ୍ରଥମ ସାକ୍ଷାତ ତାଙ୍କ ଗ୍ରାମ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ରଜତ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଜଣେ ନାମୀ ସଂଗୀତଜ୍ଞର ସୁଖ୍ୟାତି ନେଇ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମର ମୁଖ୍ୟ କଳାକାର ଭାବରେ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ହୋଇଥିବା ଅବସରରେ । ସେଇ ପ୍ରଥମ ଦେଖାରେ ମୁଁ ଯେମିତି ବାନ୍ଧି ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲି ତା ନୀଳ ଆଖିର ଆକର୍ଷଣରେ, ତା' ଗାଁର ସରଳତାରେ ଏବଂ ସର୍ବୋପରି ତା ଗାଁକୁ ବେଢ଼ି ରହିଥିବା ବଣ ସେପାରିର ସେଇ ଦୂର ନୀଳ ପାହାଡ଼ର ମାୟାରେ ।

ଲଳିତା ଥିଲା ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ଶକ୍ତ ପ୍ରହେଳିକା ।

ପ୍ରଥମେ ଭାବିଥିଲି ସେ ଗାଁରେ ବଢ଼ିଥିବ, ଖେଳିଥିବ ବୋଲି । ହେଲେ ସେ ଥିଲା ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆଧୁନିକା । ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଦିନ ତାକୁ ଦେଖିଥିଲି 'ଜିନ୍‌ସ୍'ରେ ଗାଁରୁ ମୁଁ ରହୁଥିବା ସହରକୁ ଫେରୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ।

ଦୂରରୁ ସେ ଖୁବ୍ ସୁନ୍ଦର, ସ୍ଵପ୍ନମୟ । ମୁଁ ପାହାଡ଼କୁ ଦୂରରୁ ଦେଖେ । ଆଖି ନ ପାଉଥିବା ଦୂରତରୁ । ମଜିଯାଏ ତା'ର ତୀକ୍ଷ୍ଣର୍ମୀ ପରିପ୍ରକାଶରେ । ମୁଁ ଲଳିତାକୁ ଦୂରରୁ ଦେଖେ । ଆଖି ନ ପାଉଥିବା ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ଅନେଇ ରହେ । ଘଡ଼ିଏ ବିତିଯାଏ । ମୋ ଅଭିଧାନରେ, ଲଳିତା ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷୀରେ ଦୂରତର ସଂଜ୍ଞା ଦୁଇ ପ୍ରକାରର । ପ୍ରଥମ ଦୂରତ୍ଵ ପାର୍ଥକ୍, ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଆତ୍ମିକ । ପ୍ରଥମ ଦୂରତ୍ଵ ମୋ ସାଧାରଣ ଚକ୍ଷୁଦ୍ଵୟରେ, ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ମୋ ତୃତୀୟ ନେତ୍ରରେ । ଲଳିତାର ଦୁଇଟି ଅବତାର । ପ୍ରଥମଟି ଛଳ ଛଳ ବହୁଥିବା ସ୍ଵଚ୍ଛ ଝରଣାଟିଏ ପରି ଚପଳା, ଚଞ୍ଚଳା । ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଚି ମୋଘର୍ଷ୍ଣ ଆକାଶ ପରି ଉଦାସ, ଗମ୍ଭୀର ।

ଲଳିତା ସହ ସେହି ସାକ୍ଷାତ ପରେ ମୁଁ ତା'ର ନିକଟତର ହେବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲି । ଏକା ସହରରେ ରହୁଥିବାରୁ ତା ସହ କଥା ହେବାପାଇଁ ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଲି । ଜୀବନର ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ତା ସହ କଥା ହେଲା ପରେ ଲାଗିଲା, ମୁଁ ଯାହା ଦେଖିଥିଲି ସବୁ ଭୁଲ୍, ସବୁ ମିଛ । ଗାଁରେ ଗୀତ ଗାଇ, ଝୁମି ଝୁମି ପାଣି ପାଇଁ ନଇକୁ ଯାଉଥିବା ଲଳିତା ସେ ନ ଥିଲା । ତା ପାଦରେ ରୁଣୁ ଝୁଣୁ କରୁଥିବା ପାଉଁଜ କି ଚିକ୍ ଚିକ୍ କରୁଥିବା ଅଳତା ତ ନ ଥିଲା; ସେଦିନର ସରଳ, ସୁନ୍ଦର, ଫୁଲପରି ସତେଜ ମୁହଁଟି ବି ନ ଥିଲା । ବଦଳରେ ସ ଦିଶୁଥିଲା ଖୁବ୍ 'ଗ୍ରେଭ୍', ଖୁବ୍ 'ମାରୁଅର୍' । ବାପା, ମା', ସାନଭାଇ, ଗାଡ଼ି, ବଙ୍ଗଳା ଭିତରେ ବି ସେ ଖୁବ୍ ଗମ୍ଭୀର, ଖୁବ୍ ଉଦାସ ।

କେବେ ଦିନେ ତାକୁ 'ପ୍ରଯୋଜ୍' କଲି । ତା'ଠାରେ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇଲାନି । ସେ ତୁପ୍ ରହିଲା । ହୁଁ କି ନା କିଛି କହିଲାନି ।

ଲଳିତା ଓ ମୋ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ ଦୂରତ୍ଵ କମିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମ ଆତ୍ମାରେ ଆତ୍ମାରେ, ମୋତେ ଲାଗେ, ଲକ୍ଷ ଯୋଜନର ଦୂରତ୍ଵ । ଅନେକ ଦିନ ପରେ ତା'ଠାରେ ଏକ ସ୍ଵାତନ୍ତ୍ର୍ୟ, ଏକ ବିଶେଷତ୍ଵ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କଲି । ତା' ଥିଲା ଆକ୍ଷର୍ଯ୍ୟଜନକ ।

ମୋତେ ଥରେ ସେ ତା' ଗାଁକୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କଲା । ସେଠି ବର୍ଷସାରା ଭଡ଼ାରେ ଲାଗୁଥିବା ତାଙ୍କର ବିରାଟ ଘର । ଗାଁକୁ ଗଲେ ଲଳିତା ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ଭାବରେ ଚଞ୍ଚଳା ହୋଇଉଠେ, ଦେଖିଲି । ପଥରର ପ୍ରତିମାଟେ ଜୀବନ୍ୟାସ ପାଇଲାପରି ଲାଗେ, ଅନୁଭବ କଲି । ତା' ସ୍ଵଭାବ ଓ ବ୍ୟବହାରରେ ଏ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ମୋତେ ପାଗଳ କରିଦେଲା । ମୁଁ ଦୂରରୁ ତା'ର ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ବେଶଭୂଷାକୁ ଅନେଇ ରହିଲି; ନିଜକୁ ଭୁଲିଗଲି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତା' ସହରରେ, ତା' ନିଜ ଘରେ ସେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭିନ୍ନ, ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନିର୍ଜୀବ । ଲଳିତା କ'ଣ ବସ୍ତୁବାଦର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିପକ୍ଷରେ ? ନା ସେ ଆଉ କିଛି ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର, ଆଉ କିଛି ବିଚିତ୍ର ?



ଲଳିତା ଏବେ ମୋ ପତ୍ନୀ ।

ଏକାଠି ଶୋଇଥିବାବଳେ ଦିନେ ପଚାରିଦେଲି ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ଅନୁଜ୍ଞାପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରହିଥିବା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଟି -

“ଲିତା, ତମେ ଏତେ ଉଦାସ, ଏତେ ଗମ୍ଭୀର କାହିଁକି ?”

ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତରରେ ସେ ଉଠିଗଲା ନିଃଶବ୍ଦରେ ଝରକା ପାଖକୁ । ଏକ ଦୀର୍ଘଶ୍ଵାସର ଶବ୍ଦ ମାତ୍ର । ଝରକା ସେପାଖରେ ଚେନାଏ ନୀଳ ଆକାଶ ଦେଖାଗଲା; ପୁଞ୍ଜାଏ ତାରା ଦେଖାଗଲେ । ମୁଁ କଡ଼ ଲେଉଟାଇଲି ସେଇ ଆଡ଼କୁ । ଲଳିତାର ସୁସ୍ଥ ରୁଣ୍ଡ କୁନ୍ତଳ, ଜହ୍ନକୁ ଅଧା ଲୁଚାଇଥିବା ତା’ର ନିଷ୍ଠାପ, ସରଳ, ସୁନ୍ଦର ମୁଖଶ୍ରୀ ଦେଖି ମୁଗ୍ଧ ହେଲି । ଶାନ୍ତ, ସ୍ଥିର ରାତ୍ରିର ବିରଳ ନୀରବତା ! ପତି ପତ୍ନୀଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ମୁଁ ସହ୍ୟ କରି ପାରିଲିନି । ଉଠିଯାଇ ତା’ ମୁହଁକୁ ଡୋଳି ଧରିଲି । ତା ନୀଳ ଚକ୍ଷୁଦ୍ଵୟର ଆୟତନରେ ହାଲୁକା ଭାବରେ ଉତ୍ତୁଳି ଉଠିଥିବା ଲୁହର ପ୍ରଲୋପ ଭିତରେ ଅତି ଝାପ୍ପା ଭାବରେ ମୋ’ର ପ୍ରତିବିମ୍ବ ଦେଖାଗଲା । ସେ ମୋ ଆଖିରେ ଢାଳିଦେଲା ତା ବାହାଣୀ । କହିଲା -

“ତୁମେ ଦୂର ପାହାଡ଼କୁ କେବେ ପାଖରୁ ଦେଖିଛ ?”

ତା’ପରେ ଲୋଚିଗଲା ମୋ ଛାତିରେ । ତା’ର ଉଦାସ ବାହାଣୀ ତ ଅନେକ ଥର ଦେଖିଥିଲି; ତା ଲୁହର ଉଷ୍ମତା ଓ ବାସ୍ନା କେବେ ବାରି ନ ଥିଲି । ଜୀବନର ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ତା’ କଲି ।

ଦୂର ପାହାଡ଼ କହିଲେ ମୁଁ ବୁଝେ ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ପାହାଡ଼ । ଲଳିତାର ଗାଁକୁ ଘେରି ରହିଥିବା ଶାଗୁଆ ବଣ ସେପାରିର ପାହାଡ଼ । ଖୁବ୍ ସୁନ୍ଦର । ଏକ ଅଜଣା ଆବେଗରେ ପରଦିନ ବାହାରିଥିଲି ଖୁବ୍ ପାଖରୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ତା’କୁ - ଲଳିତାକୁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରିବାର ଅଦମ୍ୟ ଇଚ୍ଛା ନେଇ । ଦୂରରୁ ନୀଳ କିମ୍ବା ସବୁଜ ରଙ୍ଗର ଚଦର ଘୋଡ଼େଇ ହେଲାପରି ଲାଗୁଥିବା ପାହାଡ଼ କିନ୍ତୁ ଥିଲା ଖୁବ୍ ଧୂସର; ଶୁଷ୍କ ଏବଂ ଧୂସର । ଜୀବନରେ ଭରପୂର ଲାଗୁଥିବା ବୃକ୍ଷରାଜି ସତେ ଯେପରି ଭୋଗୁଥିଲେ ଅନନ୍ତ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ । ଅଜସ୍ର ଶତ ବକ୍ଷରେ ତା’ର, ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ । ଅଧର ଦୂରରୁ ସେ ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ! ନିରବଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ଝରୁଥିବା ତା’ର ନୀରବ ଅଶ୍ରୁକୁ ଅନୁଭବ କଲି । କେବଳ ଏକ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ପ୍ରତାରଣା । ମିଥ୍ୟାର ଲୁଚାୟିତ ଆସ୍ତରଣ । ଦୂର ପାହାଡ଼ ପାଖରୁ ଖୁବ୍ କୁସ୍ଥିତ, ଭୀଷଣ ଭାବରେ ନୈରାଶ୍ୟଜନକ । ଘୃଣା ଓ ନିରାଶାର ଭାବ ମୋତେ ମନେ ପକେଇଦେଲେ ଲଳିତାର ଗାମ୍ଭୀର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଲଳିତା କ’ଣ ଠିକ୍ ଏଇ ପାହାଡ଼ ପରି ଶତ ବିଷତ ?

ମୋତେ ଦିନେ ହଠାତ୍ ପଚାରିଥିଲା -

“ତୁମେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁକୁ ଡରନା ?”

ତା’ପରେ ବଲ ବଲ କରି ଅନେଇ ରହିଥିଲା ମୋତେ, ମୋ ମୁହଁକୁ ।

ଲଳିତା ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷିତା, ସମ୍ଭ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଓ ସୁଗୁଣସଂପନ୍ନା । ମନ ତା’ର ଉପନ୍ୟାସ, ଗଳ୍ପ, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ଦର୍ଶନର ଗନ୍ତାଘର । ମନସ୍ତତ୍ତ୍ଵରେ ସ୍ନାତକ ଓ ଦର୍ଶନରେ ସ୍ନାତକୋତ୍ତର । ଖୁବ୍ ଦାର୍ଶନିକ ।

ମୁଁ କ’ଣ ବା ଦେବି ମୋ ଅବୋଧା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀକୁ ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ? ମନ ଭୁଲାଇବାକୁ କହିଲି -

“ଛି, ସେମିତି କଥା ମୁହଁରେ ଧରନ୍ତିନି, ଲିତା, . . . ପ୍ଲିଜ୍ . . .”

“ହେଲେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଯେ ଅନିବାର୍ଯ୍ୟ !”

“ନିଶ୍ଚୁର ଭାବରେ ଏହା ସତ୍ୟ । ତେଣୁ ସେ ବିଷୟରେ କମ୍ ଭାବିବା ଭଲ ।”

“କିନ୍ତୁ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପରେ କ’ଣ ନ ଜାଣିଲେ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କ’ଣ ?”

“ଆମ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଜୀବନ; ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ନୁହେଁ ।”

“ହେଲେ କେତେଦିନ ‘ଆଭ୍ୟନ୍ତ’ କରିପାରିବ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ଚିନ୍ତା ? ଦିନେ ନା ଦିନେ ତ . . . ”

ତା’କୁ ଆଉ କହିବାକୁ ନ ଦେଇ କୋଳେଇ ନେଲି । କହିଲି, “ତମେ ଯେତେଦିନ ଯାଏ ମୋ’ ପାଖେ ଥିବ, ମୁଁ ମୃତ୍ୟୁକୁ ଚରିବିନି । ମୁଁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନରେ ହିଁ ବଞ୍ଚିବି । ମୃତ୍ୟୁକଥା ଭାବି ମୁଁ ଆଜିକୁ ନଞ୍ଜ କରିବିନି । ଆମେ ଜୀବନରେ ସବୁ ପାଇଛେ - ଘର, ଗାଡ଼ି, ପଇସା . . . ସବୁକିଛି । ଆମ ପାରିବାରିକ ଜୀବନ କେତେ ସୁଖ-ଶାନ୍ତିମୟ । ତମକୁ ପାଇ ମୁଁ ସବୁ ଭୁଲିଯାଇଛି । ଜୀବନ-ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଭଳି ଗୁଡ଼ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଆଲୋଚନାରେ ଆମର ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ଜୀବନକୁ ବିପର୍ଯ୍ୟୟ କରିବା କାହିଁକି ?”

ସେ ରୁପ୍ ହୋଇଗଲା । ତା’ ମନ କିନ୍ତୁ ବୁଝି ନ ଥିଲା; ସେକଥା ବୁଝିଲି । ଜୀବନର ପ୍ରଥମଥର ପାଇଁ ଦେଖିଥିବା ହସ, ଲାଜ, ରୁଷା, ରାଗ ଭରା ଚଳଚଞ୍ଚଳା, ହୃଦୟୀ ଲଳିତାକୁ ପୁଣିଥରେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ପ୍ରବଳ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଲା । ତା’ ମୁହଁରେ ହସ ଫୁଟାଇବାର କୌଶଳ ମୋତେ ଜଣା । ପରଦିନ ତା’କୁ ନେଇ ତା’ ଗାଁକୁ ଗଲି । ସବୁଥର ଭଳି ଗାଁରେ ପାଦ ଦେବାମାତ୍ରେ ହିଁ ସେ ହୋଇଗଲା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନମୟୀ । ପାଦରେ ଅଳତା ନାଇଲା, ପାଉଁଜ ବାନ୍ଧିଲା; ହାତଭରା ରୁଡ଼ି ପିନ୍ଧିଲା, ମନଲାଖି ପାଟ ପିନ୍ଧିଲା । ତା’ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କହୁଁ ଗାଁସାରା ଖୁବ୍ ବୁଲିଲା, ହସିଲା, ଦୋଳି ଖେଳିଲା; ଗୁଣ୍ଡଗୁଣ୍ଡ ଗୀତ ଗାଇଲା । ତା’ର ପୁଷିଲା ବେହେରା ମୋତେ ଆମ୍ବୁହରା କଲା । ଅଥଚ ତିନିଦିନ ପରେ ଗାଁରୁ ଫେରିଲାପରେ ଯେଉଁ କଥାକୁ ସେଇ କଥା । ପୁଣି ସେଇ ଗମ୍ଭୀର, ଉଦାସ ମୁହଁ; ଶୁଖିଲା ବାହାଣି ।

ଗାଁ ଆଉ ସହର ଭିତରେ କେଉଁ ପାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ୟଟା ଲଳିତାକୁ ଦୁଇଟି ଭିନ୍ନଧର୍ମୀ ଆତ୍ମାରେ ପରିଣତ କରୁଥିଲା, ବୁଝି ପାରିଲିନି । ପଚାରିଲି -

“ଗାଁକୁ ଗଲେ ତମେ ପୁରା ବଦଳି ଯାଅ କାହିଁକି ? ”

“ଗାଁରେ ମୁଁ ସବୁ ଭୁଲିଯାଏ, ପୁରା ଜୀବନକୁ ଭୁଲିଯାଏ ।”

“ଆଉ ଏଇଠି, ଯେଉଁଠି ତମେ ଜୀବନକୁ ଭୁଲିପାରନି, ସେଇଠି ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରତି ଏତେ ଉଦାସ କାହିଁକି ହୁଅ ଲିତା ?”

“କାରଣ ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରତି ମୋର ଆସକ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ।”

“କିନ୍ତୁ କାହିଁକି ?”

“ଜୀବନର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଯେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଅଜଣା, ଆସକ୍ତି ଆସିବ କିପରି ?”

କହିଲି, “ଲିତା, ଆମ ଜୀବନର ତିନି ପ୍ରକାରର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ହୋଇପାରେ । ପ୍ରଥମଟି ବସ୍ତୁଭିତ୍ତିକ, ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଭାବରେ । ଏଇ ଯେମିତି ଜଣେ ବାହେଁ ଭଲ ଖାଇବା, ଭଲ ପିନ୍ଧିବା; ଦରକାର କରେ ଭଲ ଚାକିରିରେ, ଘର, ଗାଡ଼ି, ଡ୍ରାସିଙ୍ଗ୍ ମସିନ୍ . . . ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ସେଇ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକୁ ନେଇ ସେ ଜୀବନକୁ ଯୋଜନାବଦ୍ଧ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରେ । ସବୁ ଶୁଖି ଶାନ୍ତି ଏଇଥିରେ ବୋଲି ଭାବେ । ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ଜୀବନ ଏକ ଘୋଡ଼ା ଦୌଡ଼; ଅସୁମାରୀ ଆଶା ପଛରେ । ଆଶା ବୈତରଣୀ; କେଉଁଠି ତା’ର ଶେଷ ଅଜଣା । ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟଟି ପ୍ରଥମଠୁ ଭିନ୍ନ । ଏପରି ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ରଖିଥିବା



ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ବସ୍ତୁଭିତ୍ତିକ ଜୀବନର ଅସରଳି ଆଶା ପଛରେ ନ ଦୌଡ଼ି ଏକ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସୀମା ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରଣ କରେ । ଅଳ୍ପରେ ସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ହୁଏ । ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଏହି ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସୀମାରେଖା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଜୀବନରେ କିଛି ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ବନିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବସ୍ତୁଭିତ୍ତିକ ଜୀବନର ମୂଳ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ପରେ ହିଁ ସେ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ବିଷୟରେ ଭାବେ । ଯେମିତି ମୋ'ର ସଂଗୀତରେ ରୁଚି । ମୋ'ର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଥିଲା ଏକ ସଂଗୀତଜ୍ଞ ହେବାକୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋ'ର ଆର୍ଥିକ ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛଳତା ଏବଂ ମୌଳିକ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତାରେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତା ଯୋଗୁଁ ହିଁ ମୁଁ ସେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ପାରିଲି । ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ଜୀବନର ମୂଳ ବସ୍ତୁବାଦ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ବି ବସ୍ତୁଭିତ୍ତିକ ଆଶାକୁ ସୀମିତ କରିଥିବାରୁ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ଆନନ୍ଦ ମିଳେ । ଜୀବନ ସାଫଳ ହେଲା ପରି ଲାଗେ ।

“ତୁମେ ‘ମ୍ୟାସ୍‌ଲୋ ନିଡ୍ ଟ୍ରାଏଙ୍ଗଲ୍’ ର ‘ସେଲ୍‌ଫ୍ ଆକ୍‌ଟୁଆଲାଇଜେସନ୍’ କଥା ତ କହୁନ ?”

“ନା, ମୁଁ ‘ଏଞ୍ଜିନ୍ ନିଡ୍’ କଥା କହୁଛି । ‘ସେଲ୍‌ଫ୍ ଆକ୍‌ଟୁଆଲାଇଜେସନ୍’ର ପ୍ରକୃତ ଅର୍ଥ ମୁଁ ଏ ଯାଏଁ ବୁଝିନି; ହେଲେ ତାହା କେବଳ ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରକାରର ଜୀବନ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରୟୁଜ୍ୟ ବୋଲି ଭାବୁଛି ।”

“କିନ୍ତୁ ଯାହା ଜୀବନର ସବୁ ଆଶା ବିଫଳ ହୋଇଯାଏ, କୌଣସି ଆଶା ଫଳବତୀ ହେବାର ସମସ୍ତ ସମ୍ଭାବନା ଲୋପ ପାଇଯାଏ; ଯେମିତି ଛାଡ଼ିପତ୍ର ପାଇଥିବା କୌଣସି ପ୍ରତାରିତା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ତା'ର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କ'ଣ ହୋଇପାରେ ? ସମାଜର କୁସ୍ୱା ରଚନା, ଏପରିକି ନିଜ ପରିବାରବର୍ଗଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଭର୍ତ୍ସନା ସହି ସହି କେବଳ ମୃତ୍ୟୁକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବା ହିଁ ତା'ର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ କି ?”

“ନା, କେବଳ ତା' ପାଇଁ ନୁହେଁ, ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକଙ୍କ ଜୀବନର ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଏବଂ ଅନାହୁତ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ । ଏହା ଜୀବନର ତୃତୀୟ ପ୍ରକାର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ । ଯାହାର ସବୁ ଆଶା ବିଫଳ ହୋଇଯାଏ, ସେ ମୋ' ମତରେ, ନିଃକର୍ମ ଭୟଙ୍କର ଭାବରେ ବଞ୍ଚିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିବା ଏକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି । ମୁଁ କହିଥିବା ପ୍ରଥମ ଦୁଇ ପ୍ରକାରର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କଠାରୁ ସେ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ହୋଇ ନ ପାରେ । ସେ କେବଳ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକଥର ବସ୍ତୁଭିତ୍ତିକ ଆଶା ବିଫଳ ହୋଇଥିବା ଏକ ପ୍ରକୃତ ବସ୍ତୁବାଦୀ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ହୋଇପାରେ ।”

ଜାଣିନି, ଆଘାତଗା ଲଳିତାର କେଉଁଠି ଲାଗିଲା । ସେ ପ୍ରାୟ ଚିତ୍କାର କରି କହିଲା -

“ନା, ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ସବୁବେଳେ ଅନାହୁତ ନୁହେଁ । ନିରାଶାର ଚରମ ସୀମାରେ ଯେ ପହଞ୍ଚେ, ସେ କେବଳ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ହିଁ ଚାହେଁ । ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରିବାକୁ ଯାଉଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ନୁହେଁ ତ ଆଉ କ'ଣ ?”

(ମୁଁ ଭୟଙ୍କର ଭାବରେ ଡରିଗଲି । ଏ କ'ଣ କହୁଛି ଲଳିତା ! କିଏ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରିବା କୁ ଯାଉଛି ? )

“ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରୁଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ମନସ୍ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ବିଷୟରେ ପଢ଼ିଛ କେବେ ? ଠିକ୍ ମୃତ୍ୟୁକୁ ସାମନା କରୁଥିବା ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ସେ କ'ଣ ଚାହେଁ ଜାଣ ? ସେ ଭୀଷଣ ଭଲପାଏ ଜୀବନକୁ ସେ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ; କରୁଣ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ କରେ ବଞ୍ଚିବାକୁ । ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରୁ କରୁ ବଞ୍ଚି ଯାଇଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି, ଯେମିତି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବଦଳରେ ଟ୍ରେନିଙ୍ଗ୍ ହାତ କି ଗୋଡ଼ ହରାଇଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି କେବେ ବି ଆଉ ମରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁନି । ସୁତରାଂ, କୌଣସି ଦୁର୍ବଳ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟାର ସାମୟିକ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ହେଁ ଏହାର ପ୍ରକୃତ ଓ ଅନ୍ତିମ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କେବଳ ଜୀବନ”, ତାକୁ ବୁଝାଇଲି ।

“କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନ୍ତିମ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ସେ ଇଚ୍ଛା ବି ଯଦି ତା'ର ସଫଳ ନ ହୁଏ ? ଯଦି ସେ ମରିଯାଏ ? ମୋତେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ବିଷୟରେ ଭାବିଲେ ବହୁତ ଡର ଲାଗେ, ଅମର । ଯଦି ସେ ମରିଯାଏ . . . ?”

“କାହା କଥା କହୁଛ ଲିତା ?”, ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ବିବ୍ରତ ହୋଇ ତା'କୁ ମୋ ଉପରକୁ ଆଉଜାଇ ନେଲି ।

“ଏଁ, ନା, . . . ଏମିତି ।”

ସେଦିନର ଆଲୋଚନା ସେତିକି ଥିଲା । ଲଳିତାର ମାନସିକ ଅବସ୍ଥା ମୁଁ ଠିକ୍ ଭାବରେ ବୁଝିପାରୁ ନ ଥିଲି । ସେ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ଭାବରେ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ଥିଲା ଓ ଦୁଃଖରେ ମ୍ରିୟମାଣ ହୋଇଥିବା ପରି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ଲଳିତାର ଦୁଃଖ କେଉଁଥିରେ ? ଅଭାବ କେଉଁଥିରେ ? ଏ ଚିନ୍ତା ମୋତେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଦଗ୍ଧ କରିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ଲଳିତା ମୋ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ । ଅଥଚ ତା ବିଷୟରେ ମୁଁ ଏତେ ଅଜ୍ଞ ? ଆମ ଭିତରେ ଏତେ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ? ଲଳିତା ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରତି ନିରାସକ୍ତ । ତା' ମନରେ ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରତି, ଭୀଷଣ ଭାବରେ ବଞ୍ଚିବାପାଇଁ ମୋହ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଲଳିତା ଗାଁକୁ ଗଲେ ଜୀବନକୁ ଏତେ ଭଲ ପାଏ ! ଉପାୟ ମିଳିଗଲା । ଲଳିତା ଆଚାର ଭଲ ପାଏ, ରଙ୍ଗ ବେରଙ୍ଗର ଡ୍ରେସ୍ ଭଲପାଏ; ଟି. ଭି. ସିରିଆଲ୍ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଭଲପାଏ . . . । ସେ ଯାହା ଯାହା ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲପାଏ ଭାବି ରଖିଲି । ପ୍ରଥମ ଦିନ ଆଚାର ବୋତଲ ଲୁଚାଇଲି । ସେ ବହୁତ ଖୋଜିଲା ପରେ ପଚାରିଲି -

“ଆଚାର ନହେଲେ ଚଳିବନି?”

“ମୋତେ ଆଚାର ବହୁତ ଭଲ ଲାଗେ ।”

ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଦିନ ତା'ର ଏକ ଦାମୀ ଡ୍ରେସ୍ ଯୋବା ପୋଡ଼ିଦେଲା ବୋଲି ମିଛ କହିଲି ।

“ଏତେ ବଢ଼ିଆ ଡ୍ରେସ୍‌ଟା ପୋଡ଼ିଦେଲା; କେଡ଼େ ଇତିଏତ୍‌ଟା । ମୁଁ କାଲି କଲେଜ୍ କ'ଣ ପିନ୍ଧି ଯିବି ?”

“କାହିଁକି, ଅନ୍ୟ ଡ୍ରେସ୍, ନ ହେଲେ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ପିନ୍ଧି ।”

”ହେଲେ ସେ ଡ୍ରେସ୍‌ଟା ମୁଁ ଏତେ ଭଲ ପାଉଥିଲି ।”

ଶୁକ୍ରବାର ଦିନ ଠିକ୍ ସିରିଆଲ୍ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ହଠାତ୍ ଟି.ଭି. ଖରାପ ବୋଲି ମୁଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଘୋଷଣା କଲି, ସେ ଭୀଷଣ ଭାବରେ ବିରକ୍ତ ହୋଇଗଲା ।

“ଫାଲ୍‌ତୁ ସିରିଆଲ୍‌ଟା, ନ ଦେଖିଲେ କ'ଣ ଚଳିବନି ?” ତା'କୁ ଚିଡ଼ାଇଲି ।

“ତୁମେ କ'ଣ ଜାଣିଛ । ‘ଡକ୍ଟରଭଏଙ୍କି’ଙ୍କ ଲେଖା . . . ।”

“ଡକ୍ଟରଭଏଙ୍କି’ . . ., ଥାର୍ଡ୍ କ୍ଲାସ୍ . . . ।”

“ଦେଖ, ସେମିତି କହିବନି; ମୋତେ ଜୀବନଠୁ ଭଲଲାଗେ ତା'ଙ୍କ ଲେଖା ।”

“ମାନେ . . . ! ତମେ ଜୀବନକୁ ବି ଭଲପାଅ; କିନ୍ତୁ ତା'ଠୁ ବେଶି ଭଲପାଅ ସିରିଆଲ୍‌କୁ . . .”, ମୁଁ ଟି.ଭି. ଅନ୍ କରୁ କରୁ କହିଲି ।

“ଓଃ, ମୋ ମୁହଁରୁ ଏଇ କଥା ପଦକ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ତୁମେ ଏ ନାଟକ କରୁଥିଲ ?”

“ଦେଖ ଲିତା, ଜୀବନକୁ ଭଲପାଅ ବୋଲି ତମେ ଜାଣତରେ ବା ଅଜାଣତରେ କୁହୁ ପଛେ ତମେ କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଭଲପାଅ । ଅଚାରକୁ ଭଲ ପାଇବା, ଭଲ ଡ୍ରେସ୍‌କୁ ଭଲ ପାଇବା, ସିରିଆଲ୍‌କୁ ଭଲ ପାଇବା ଅର୍ଥ ସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ ଭାବରେ ଜୀବନକୁ ଭଲ ପାଇବା । ତମେ ଗାଁକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ଭଲ ପାଅ । ସେଠିକୁ ଗଲେ ହସିଖେଳି ଗୀତ ଗାଅ । ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବରେ ଜୀବନ କଟାଅ । ମୁଁ ବୁଝୁଛି, କୌଣସି ଦୁଃଖ ତମ ଭିତରେ ଖୁବ୍ ଜୋରରେ ଜମାଟ ବାସିଛି, ଯାହା ଫଳରେ ତମେ ଜୀବନକୁ ‘ହୁଁ’ କହିବାକୁ ପଛପଛ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦୁଃଖ କା' ଜୀବନରେ ନାହିଁ କହିଲି । ତମେ



ମୋତେ ସେଦିନ ଦୂର ପାହାଡ଼କୁ ପାଖରୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ କହିଥିଲ । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ପାହାଡ଼କୁ ନୁହେଁ, ତମକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ଦେଇଥିଲ । ତମ ଭିତରେ ଯେ ଏକ ଗଭୀର କ୍ଷତ ଲୁଚିଛି, ମୁଁ ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଛି; ହେଲେ ଦେଖି ପାରୁନି ।

ମୁଁ ତମର ବିଦଗ୍ଧ ପ୍ରେମିକ । ତମପାଇଁ କିଛି ବି କରିପାରିବି । ମୋ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦୟରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ରଖ ଏବଂ ତମ ଦୁଃଖର କାରଣ କୁହ । ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପରେ କ'ଣ ଆମେ ଜାଣିନେ । ହେଲେ ଖୁସିରେ କେମିତି ବଞ୍ଚିହେବ ଜାଣିଛେ । ଜୀବନଟା ସୁଖରେ କଟାଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବା ହିଁ ଶ୍ରେୟଃକର । ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପରି ଜୀବନ ବି ତ ଏକ ସତ୍ୟ ! ତମ ଦୁଃଖ ମୋତେ କୁହ । ଆମେ ମିଳିମିଶି ସେ ଦୁଃଖକୁ ସାମନା କରିବା, ସହିବା । ଦେଖିବ ଜୀବନ କେତେ ସରସ, ସୁନ୍ଦର ହୋଇ ଉଠିବ ।”

ତା’ ମୁହଁରେ ଅବିଶ୍ୱାସର ଚିହ୍ନ ଦଖିଲି । ଆଖିବୁଜି ତା’ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଲଗାଇଲି, ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଦେଲି ।

“ତା’ ହେଲେ ମୋତେ ଗାଁରେ ରହିବାକୁ ଦିଅ । ସେଠି ମୁଁ ଖୁବ୍ ଖୁସିରେ ରହିପାରିବି ।”

“କିନ୍ତୁ ତମେ ଦୂର ପାହାଡ଼ ଭଳି ଗାଁକୁ ଦୂରରୁ ଦେଖିଛ । ପାଖରୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ସେଠି ବି ଦୁଃଖ, ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ଭରି ରହିଛି । ତମେ ସହରରେ ବଢ଼ିଛ । ସହରର ଦୂରତ୍ୱରୁ ତମକୁ ଗାଁ ଜୀବନ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଛି ।”

“କିଛି ନ ହେଲେ ସେଠି ମୁଁ ସବୁ ଭୁଲି ଯାଇପାରିବି ।”

“ନା, ସବୁ ତମେ ଭୁଲି ପାରିବନି । ସବୁ ଭୁଲିଲେ ବି ତମ ଦୁଃଖଟା ଭୁଲି ପାରିବନି ।”

“ତୁମେ କେମିତି ଜାଣିଲ ?”

“ତମ ଡାଏରୀରୁ . . . ।”

( ଲଳିତାର ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ସଂଗୀତା । ସତେ ଅବା ଆତ୍ମାର ମିଳନ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ । ପିଲାଦିନରୁ ମା’ ନ ଥିବା ଲଳିତାକୁ ସଂଗୀତା ର ମା’ ନିଜ ଝିଅଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ସ୍ନେହ କରନ୍ତି । ସଂଗୀତାର ବାହାଘର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଖୁବ୍ ଖୁସିରେ ନିଜେ ଲଳିତା ଆଣିଥିଲା – ନିଜର ଜଣେ ସଂପର୍କୀୟଙ୍କ ସହିତ । ତାକୁ ଦୁଃଖରେ ମ୍ରିୟମାଣ କରି ଅତିରେ ସେଇ ହାତଗଢ଼ା ସଂପର୍କ ଚରମ ବିଫଳତାକୁ ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣା କଲା । ଲଳିତାର ସମସ୍ତ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା ସେ ବିବାହକୁ ତ ରକ୍ଷା କରିପାରିଲାନି, ବଦଳରେ ଆଣିଦେଲା ନିଜ ପରିବାର ସହ ଭୀଷଣ ମତଭେଦ । ସେହିଦିନରୁ ତା’ ଅନ୍ତର ଗଭୀର ଭାବରେ କ୍ଷତ ବିକ୍ଷତ । ସଂଗୀତାର ମାନସିକ ଶକ୍ତି ବଢ଼ାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଲଳିତା ବରାବର ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଏ ଏବଂ ତାକୁ ହସ ଖୁସିରେ ମଜାଇ ରଖିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରେ । ସଂଗୀତାର ଦୁଃଖ ପାଇଁ ମନଭିତରେ ନିଜକୁ ଦାୟୀ କରି ଔଦାସ୍ୟର ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଭାରକୁ ଆବୋରି ନେଇଛି ସେ ନିଜ ଜୀବନରେ । ଲଳିତାର ଏ ଉଦାରତା ତା’ ମାଧୁର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ଶତଶୁଣ ବଢ଼ାଇଦେଲା । ମୁଁ ଅଭିଭୂତ ହେଲି । )

“ଏ . . . , ତା’ହେଲେ ମୁଁ କ’ଣ କରିବା ଉଚିତ୍ ?” ଲଳିତା ତମକି ପଡ଼ି ପଚାରିଲା ।

“କାହିଁକି, ତମେ ତାକୁ ଏଠିକୁ ନେଇ ଆସ ବୁଝେଇକି । ଯେଉଁ ଶିଶୁ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ବିଷୟରେ ତମକୁ କହୁଥିଲି, ସେଠାରେ ସେ ଶିକ୍ଷୟତ୍ରୀ ଭାବରେ ରହିପାରିବ । କାହା ଉପରେ ବୋଝ ହୋଇ ନୁହେଁ, ନିଜ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ନୂଆ ଜୀବନ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବ । ସଂଗୀତା ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରିବନି, ବଞ୍ଚିବ; ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବରେ ବଞ୍ଚିବ । ତମେ ତାକୁ ବଞ୍ଚିବା ଶିଖାଇବ ।”

ଆନନ୍ଦ ଓ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟର ପ୍ରଗାଢ଼ ପ୍ରଲେପ ଲଳିତାର ସାରା ଶରୀରରେ ଭରିଗଲା ।

“ହେଲେ ମୋତେ ବଞ୍ଚିବା ଆସେନା ଯେ . . . ।”

“ତମେ ଜୀବନକୁ ବହୁତ ଭଲପାଅ ଲିତା ।”

“ନା, ମୁଁ କେବଳ ତୁମକୁ ଭଲପାଏ । ତୁମେ ଦୂରରୁ ତ ସୁନ୍ଦର; ପାଖରୁ ବି ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର !”



୪୮୧୩ ନର୍ଥ ଓ'ଜନର୍ ରୋଡ, ଅର୍ଭିକ୍ସ, ଟେକ୍ସାସ୍ ୭୫୦୬୬

ଶ୍ରୀ ତାପସ ରଞ୍ଜନ ସାହୁ ପତ୍ନୀ ସ୍ମିତା ଏବଂ ପୁତ୍ର ସମୟ-ଶାଶ୍ୱତଙ୍କ ସହ ଡାଲାସ୍ ସହରରେ ବାସ କରନ୍ତି । ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଏବଂ ଏକମାତ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପତ୍ରିକା 'ସାମ୍ବିତ' ([www.sambit.com](http://www.sambit.com))ର ସଂପାଦକ ତଥା ସହ-ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାତା ରୂପେ ସେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ବିକାଶ ଦିଗରେ ସର୍ବଦା ଚେଷ୍ଟିତ । )



### ଆବିଷ୍କାର

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ

[ ନିଜକୁ ଉପରକୁ ଉଠାଇ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ କରାଇବାରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ଉଦ୍‌ଯୋଗୀ ରହନ୍ତି । ହେଲେ ଏମିତି ବି କିଛି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଅଛନ୍ତି, ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ଉଠାଇ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ କରାଇବାରେ ଆନନ୍ଦ ପାଆନ୍ତି । ଏ ଗଳ୍ପଟି ମୁଁ ସେହି ସହୃଦୟ, ସୁନ୍ଦର ମନର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କୁ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ କରୁଛି । - ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ । ]

ଆଠ ଇଞ୍ଚ ଲମ୍ବ ଓ ପାଞ୍ଚ ଇଞ୍ଚ ଚଉଡ଼ାର କାଠ ଫଳକଟି ମୋତେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗାଧିପତି ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଙ୍କ ମଣିମୟ ମୁକୁଟଠାରୁ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ପ୍ରତୀତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଭାରତର ରାଜ୍ଯପତିଙ୍କଠାରୁ ପଦ୍ମବିଭୂଷଣ ଉପାଧି ପାଇଥିବା ବେଳେ କର୍ଣ୍ଣଟକର ସମ୍ପତ ସାମ୍ରାଜ୍ଯୀ ଶୁଭଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କୁ କେମିତି ଲାଗିଥିବ ମୁଁ ଜାଣିନି; ତେବେ ଏ ଅତିଗୋରିୟମ୍ରେ ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ଦୁଇଶହ, ତିନିଶହ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଭାରତୀୟମାନଙ୍କ ସମ୍ମୁଖରେ ଭାରତର ରାଜ୍ଯପତିଙ୍କ ହାତରୁ ଏ ଆୟତାକାର ଫଳକଟି ପାଇବା ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ଅବିସ୍ମରଣୀୟ ଅନୁଭୂତି ଥିଲା । କଲେଜ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ସମରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ପତ୍ନୀ, ରାଣୀହାଟର ସେ ଟିକି ଗଳିଟିର ବାମକୋଣରେ ଥିବା ଛୋଟ ଘରଟିର ଗୃହଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ, କଲେଜମାଟି ମାଡ଼ି ନଥିବା ରତ୍ନପୁଣ୍ଡା ଯେ ଏମିତି ଏକ ସମ୍ମାନର ଅଧିକାରୀଣୀ ଦିନେ ହୋଇପାରିବ, ତାହା ଏକ କଳ୍ପନା ବହିର୍ଭୂତ ଘଟଣା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ କଳ୍ପନାତୀତ ଘଟଣା ଆଜି କେବଳ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ନୁହେଁ, ସାରା ଦୁନିଆଁ ପାଇଁ ସତ୍ୟ । ତା'ର ସାକ୍ଷୀ ମୋର ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଗଣିତ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ସମରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପଣ୍ଡା (ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଲେକ୍ଚର୍‌ରାବୁ ବୋଲି କହେ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କର ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧ ଲଗାଇ କହେ), ମୋ ସାନପୁଅ ପୁପୁନା (କେମ୍ପୁଟର ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର୍ ଶୋଭିତ ପଣ୍ଡା), ଅତିଗୋରିୟମ୍ ଦୁଇଶହ, ତିନିଶହ ଦର୍ଶକ ଓ ବିଶେଷତଃ ନିଜେ ଭାରତର ରାଜ୍ଯପତି ମହୋଦୟ ।

ମୁଁ ଯେ ସତରେ ଏକ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟିର ଗାୟିକା, ତାହା ମୁଁ ଆଜି ପ୍ରଥମଥର ପାଇଁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କଲି । ମୁଁ ଭଲ ଗାଉଥିଲି ବୋଲି ଗାଁରେ ସମସ୍ତେ କହୁଥିଲେ । ସେଇଟା ବଡ଼ିଶ ବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବର ଘଟଣା । ବଡ଼ିଶ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ସେ ପ୍ରତିଭାକୁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରି, ସେଥିରେ ରୂପରଙ୍ଗ ଦେଇ ଭଲକୁ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟିର ପ୍ରମାଣିତ କରାଇଥିଲା ଯେଉଁ ସୁମିତା, ସେଇ ସୁମିତା ମିଶ୍ରକୁ କେଉଁ ଭାଷାରେ ମୁଁ କୃତଜ୍ଞତା ଜଣାଇବି, ସେ ନେଇ ଚିନ୍ତିତା ଥିଲି ।

ସୁମିତା ସହ ଆମର ପ୍ରଥମ ପରିଚୟ ପ୍ରାୟ ପାଞ୍ଚମାସ ତଳେ; ହୋଟେଲ୍ ହିଲ୍‌ଟନ୍‌ରେ । ଯଦିଓ ନୂଆବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ ବିତିଯାଇଥାଏ, ନୂଆବର୍ଷ ପାଳନ କରିବାପାଇଁ ସେ ହୋଟେଲ୍‌ରେ ଏକତ୍ରିତ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି ପ୍ରାୟ ଦୁଇ, ତିନି ଶହ ଭାରତୀୟ ପରିବାର । ଏ ନେଇ ମୁଁ ପୁପୁନାକୁ



ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କରିଥିଲି - “କିରେ, ନୂଆବର୍ଷ ତ କେବେଠାରୁ ସରିଗଲାଣି; ଏମାନେ କି ନୂଆବର୍ଷ ପାଳିବେ ପୁଣି?” ପୁପୁନା ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇଥିଲା, “ଆମେରିକାରେ ପର୍ବପର୍ବାଣୀ ପାଳିବାର ଦିନ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରଣରେ ସେମିତି କିଛି ବାରଣ ନଥାଏ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଯେଉଁ ଦିନଟା ସୁବିଧା, ସେଇ ଦିନରେ ପର୍ବ ପାଳନ କରାଯାଏ । ଏମିତିକି ହଲ୍ ନ ମିଳିଲେ କି ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ସୁବିଧା ନହେଲେ, ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କୁଆଁର ପୁନେଇଁ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଅମାବାସ୍ୟା ଦିନରେ ପାଳନ କରାହୁଏ ।” ପୁପୁନା କଥାରେ ମୁଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ହାତ ଦେଇଥିଲି, “ସତରେ ତ ଇଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ବିପରୀତ ଦେଶ” ।

ନାଲି, ନୀଳ, ସବୁଜ ରଙ୍ଗର ଆଲୋକରେ ସେଦିନ ହିଲ୍ଟନ୍ ହୋଟେଲ୍ ର ଉତ୍ସାହୀ ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ ଦିଶୁଥିଲା । ତା’ଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ ଦିଶୁଥିଲା ସୁମିତା । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ଷୋହଳ, ସତର ବର୍ଷର ଏକ ରଙ୍ଗୀନ ପ୍ରଜାପତି । ଗୀତ ତ ସେ ଗାଉଥିଲା; ଗୀତର ତାଳେ ତାଳେ ବି ବେଳେବେଳେ ନାଚି ଯାଉଥିଲା । ଚାଳିଶ, ପଇଁଚାଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ତା’ର ଏ ତାରୁଣ୍ୟ, ଏ ଚପଳତା ଦେଖି ଯେତେଟା ଅକ୍ଷୟ ହୋଇଥିଲି ମୁଁ, ସେତେଟା ପ୍ରଭାବିତ ବି । ସୁମିତା ମିଶ୍ର ବୋଲି ତ ନାଁଟା ଘୋଷଣା କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ବୟସ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ଜ୍ଞାନହେଲା ଯେହେତୁ ସୁମିତାର ପୁଅ, ଝିଅ ମୋ ପାଖରେ ବସିଥିଲେ ଓ ଭିଡିଓ ରେକର୍ଡ଼ କରୁଥିଲେ । ସେମାନେ କଲେଜରେ ପଢୁଥିଲେ । ସେଥିରୁ ସୁମିତାର ବୟସ ଚାଳିଶ, ପଇଁଚାଳିଶ ହେବ ବୋଲି ଅନୁମାନ କରୁଥିଲି । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଲେକ୍ଟରର୍‌ବାରୁ ମତେ ଚମକାଇ ଦେଇ କହିଲେ, “ଜାଣିଛ ରୁନୁ! ସୁମିତା ଦେବୀ ପରା ତମ ମାମୁଁ ଘର ଗାଁର ଝିଅ ” ।

“ତମେ କେମିତି ଜାଣିଲ?” - ମୁଁ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କଲି ।

“ତାଙ୍କ ମିଷ୍ଟର୍କ୍ ସହିତ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରୁକରୁ ଜାଣିଲି । ବାହାଘର ପୂର୍ବରୁ ତାଙ୍କ ନାଁ ଥିଲା ସୁମିତା ରଥ ।”

“ତାଙ୍କ ବାପାଙ୍କ ନାଁ ଜାଣିଛ କି?”

“ନା! ଏତେ ଡିଟେଲ୍‌ସ୍ ତ ବୁଝିନି । ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ସରିବାପରେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ହୋଇ ବୁଝିବା ।”

ହେଲେ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ସରୁ ସରୁ ଡେଇଁହେଲା । ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ପରେ ବି ସୁମିତା ବହୁତ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଥିଲେ । ଅତଏବ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରିବାର ଏତେଟା ଅବକାଶ ମିଳିଲାନି । ଯେଉଁମାନେ ମଞ୍ଚଉପରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ କରନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ ସେଇ ଅବସରରେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ପାଲଟିଯାଆନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ମିଶିବା ଓ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରିବାକୁ ଦର୍ଶକବୃନ୍ଦ ବ୍ୟାକୁଳ ରହନ୍ତି; ଯେମିତିକି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ନକଲେ ମାନବଜୀବନ ବିଫଳ ହୋଇଯିବ । ଏମିତି ବି କିଛି ଭାରତୀୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଅଛନ୍ତି, ଯେଉଁମାନେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ପଛରେ ଜୋକଭଳି ଲାଗିଯାନ୍ତି ଓ ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଲେ ଫଟୋ ଉଠାଇ ରଖିବାକୁ ପରମ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ମଣନ୍ତି । ହେଲେ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ନଥିଲେ ମୁଁ ବିଶେଷ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଦୂରରେ ରହେ, ଯେହେତୁ ମତେ ଦୂରରୁ ବିଶେଷତା ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରିବାକୁ ଭଲଲାଗେ । ଯଦିଓ ଲେକ୍ଟରର୍‌ବାରୁଙ୍କର ତଥାପି ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ଲଜ୍ଜାଥିଲା, ଆମେ ସୁମିତାଦେବୀଙ୍କୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ନକରି ପଳାଇ ଆସିଲୁ ।

ତା’ପର ରବିବାର ଦିନ ପୁପୁନା ଆମକୁ ମଲ୍ ବୁଲେଇନେଲା । ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶର ପ୍ରାର୍ତ୍ତ୍ୟ ଦେଖି ମୁଁ ଆକ୍ଷୟ ହୋଇଗଲି । ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ଦୋକାନ, ଏତେ ଜିନିଷ, ସବୁ ପୁଣି ସମସ୍ତତୁରା । ଯେତେ ଦୋକାନ ବୁଲିଲେ ବି ନିଶା ଛାଡ଼ୁ ନଥାଏ । ସାରାଦିନ ବୁଲିସାରି ଶେଷରେ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲୁ । ଘରେ ଲୁଗାପଟା ବଦଳାଇ ମୁଁ ରୋଷେଇଘରକୁ ଯାଇ ଭାତ, ତରକାରୀ ରାନ୍ଧିବାପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତହେଲି । ପୁପୁନା ଉପରୁ ଆସି ଖବରଦେଲା, “ବୋଉ, ସୁମିତାନାନୀ ମେସେଜ୍ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିଲେ । ଆସନ୍ତା ଶନିବାର ଦିନ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଡିନର୍ ପାଇଁ ଡାକିଛନ୍ତି । କ’ଣ କହିବି କହ ।” ପୁପୁନାର ବାପା କହିଲେ, “ଆରେ ବୋଉକୁ କ’ଣ ପଚାରୁଛୁ ? ସୁମିତା ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଏତେ ବଡ଼ଲୋକ ଡାକିଛନ୍ତି; ଯିବାନି କାହିଁକି ? ତା’ପରେ ବୋଉର ମାମୁଁଘର ଗାଁ ଝିଅ ସିଏ । ଟିକେ ଚିହ୍ନାଜଣା ବି ଭଲଭାବେ ହେବ ।”

ମତେ କିଛି ପୁପୁନାର ସୁମିତାକୁ ନାନୀ ଡାକିବାଟା ବଡ଼ ଅବାଗିଆ ଲାଗିଲା । ମୁଁ ପଚାରିଲି, “କିରେ, ସୁମିତାର ପିଲା ସବୁ ତୋ ଏକା ବୟସର; ତୁ ତାକୁ ମାଉସୀ ନ ଡାକି ନାନୀ କାହିଁକି ଡାକୁଛୁ ?”

ପୁପୁନା କହିଲା, “ଜାଣିଲୁ ବୋଉ, ଏ ଦେଶରେ ବୟସ୍କା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକମାନେ ମାଉସୀ ତାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ନାନୀ ତାଙ୍କ ବେଶୀ ପସନ୍ଦ କରନ୍ତି । ତା’ପରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଆସନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ ନିଜ ପୁଅ, ଝିଅ ବୟସର ହେଲେ ବି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବୟୋଜ୍ୟେଷ୍ଠ ମାନଙ୍କର ମନର ମେଳ ଅଧିକ । ନିଜ ପିଲାମାନେ ତ ଏ ଦେଶରେ ବଢ଼ିଲେ, ଏ ଦେଶର ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଶିଖିଲେ; ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମନ ମିଳିବ ବା କେମିତି ?”

“ନାନୀ ହେଉ କି ମାଉସୀ ହେଉ, ଆତ୍ମୀୟତାର କିଛିଟା ଶବ୍ଦ ବ୍ୟବହାର କଲେ ହେଲା । ସେ କଥା ପାଇଁ ତମ ମୁଣ୍ଡ କାହିଁକି ଏତେ ଘୁରାଉଛି ? ଏତେ ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧାରେ ସୁମିତାଦେବୀ ତାଙ୍କିଛନ୍ତି । ଯିବା ତ ! କଥା ସେଇଠି ଛିଣ୍ଡିଲା ।” – ପୁପୁନାର ବାପା କଥା ଶେଷ କଲେ ।

ଦେଖୁଦେଖୁ ଛଅଟି ଦିନ ବିତିଗଲା । ଶନିବାର ଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ ପୁପୁନା ଆମମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଯେଉଁ ଘର ସାମନାରେ ଗାଡ଼ି ରଖିଲା, ମତେ ସେ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ଯିବାକୁ କୁଣ୍ଡା ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ଯେଉଁ ଘରର ବାହାରର ଏତେ ଚାକଚକ୍ୟ, ସେ ଘରର ଭିତର ବା କ’ଣ ନ ହୋଇଥିବ ? ମୁଁ ପୁପୁନାକୁ କହିଲି, “ତାଲ୍ରେ ପଲେଇଯିବା, ସେମାନେ ଏତେ ବଡ଼ଲୋକ; ଆମକୁ କ’ଣ ଖାତର କରିବେ?”

ଲେକ୍ତରବାବୁ ମୋ ଉପରେ ଚିଡ଼ିଲେ; “ଯଦି ଖାତର ନ କରିବେ, ତେବେ ତାଙ୍କିଲେ କାହିଁକି? ଏକା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଇଜର ଲୋକ; ପରଦେଶରେ ବଡ଼, ଛୋଟ କଥା କିଏ ଏତେ ଦେଖୁଛି ? ତାପରେ ସବୁ ବଡ଼ଲୋକ ମାନେ ଦିନେ ନା ଦିନେ ଦରିଦ୍ରତା ଅନୁଭବ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ସବୁ ପ୍ରଫେସରମାନେ ଦିନେ ଛାତ୍ର, ଛାତ୍ରୀ ଥାଆନ୍ତି; ସବୁ ବାପା, ମାଆ ଦିନେ ପୁଅ, ଝିଅ ଥାଆନ୍ତି; ଦେଖିବ ରୁହ, ତମ ପୁପୁନା ବି ଏମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ ଘର କିଶିବ ।”

ସୁମିତା ଓ ତା’ର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଶୁଭେନ୍ଦୁବାବୁ ଆମମାନଙ୍କୁ ଯେମିତି ଅପେକ୍ଷାକରି ରହିଥିଲେ । ଆମେମାନେ କଲିଂବେଲ୍ ଚିପିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସେମାନେ କବାଟ ଖୋଲି ଆମମାନଙ୍କୁ ପାଇଁ ଚିନ୍ତାକରିଲେ । ଏ ତ ଘର ନୁହେଁ, ରାଜପ୍ରାସାଦ । ମୋ’ର ଏମିତି ଆକର୍ଷ୍ୟାନ୍ୱିତ, ବିଦ୍ମଳ ଭାବ ଦେଖି ପୁପୁନା ମତେ ଚିମୁଟିଦେଲା । ସୁମିତା ଆମକୁ ତା ଭିତରଘରକୁ ତାଙ୍କିନେଇ ସୋଫାରେ ବସେଇଲା ଓ ପିଇବାକୁ କ’ଣ ଦେବ ବୋଲି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନକଲା ।

ସୁମିତାର ଆତିଥ୍ୟେୟତାରେ ଆମେମାନେ ବହୁତ ମୁଗ୍ଧହେଲୁ । ଜଳଖିଆ ପରେପରେ ସଂପର୍କର ଅବତାରଣା ଆରମ୍ଭହେଲା । “ଆପଣ ମଦନସାର୍ଙ୍କ ବଡ଼ଝିଅ । ତା ମାନେ ଆପଣ ରୁନୁନାନୀ, ଯାହାଙ୍କ କଥା ଆମ ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ୍ ଦିବିମାନେ ପ୍ରାୟତଃ କହୁଥିଲେ । ମୁଁ ବି ପଢ଼ିବାବେଳେ ମଦନସାର୍ ଆମର ସଙ୍ଗତ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଥିଲେ । ଝୁନୁନାନୀ ବି ତ ବହୁତ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଗୀତ ଗାଉଥିଲେ ।” – ସୁମିତାର ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା ଥିଲା ।

ସୁମିତାର କଥାବାଣୀରୁ ଜାଣିଲି ସିଏ ମୋଠାରୁ ସାତ, ଆଠ ବର୍ଷ ସାନ । ସିଏ ମୋ ମାମୁଁଘର ଗାଁ ବରୀର ରଥ ସାହିର ଗଗନ ରଥଙ୍କ ନାତୁଣୀ । ତା ବାପାଙ୍କର ଯେତେବେଳେ କୋରାପୁଟ ବଦଳି ହୋଇଥିଲା, ସେତେବେଳେ ସିଏ ଆସି ଗାଁ ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ୍ରେ ପଢ଼ୁଥିଲା । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ମୁଁ ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ୍ ଛାଡ଼ିଥିଲି ଓ ମୋ’ର ବାହାଘର ବି ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ବାପା ବରୀ ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ୍ରେ ସଙ୍ଗତ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଥିଲେ ଓ ଆମ ଗାଁ ପରିଡ଼ାରେ ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ୍ ନଥିବାରୁ ଆମେ ସବୁ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀ ମାନେ ବରୀ ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ୍ରେ ପଢ଼ୁଥିଲୁ । ସୁମିତା, ମୋ ବାପା ଓ ସାନଭଉଣୀ ଝୁନୁକୁ ସେଇଠାରୁ ଜାଣିଛି । ସୁମିତା ଅଷ୍ଟମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ପରେ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରେ ଆସି ପଢ଼ିଲା ଓ ବି-ଜେ-ବି କଲେଜରୁ ବି-ଏସ୍-ସି ପାସ୍ କରିବା ପରେ ବାହା ହୋଇଥିଲା । ସେମାନେ ୧୯୭୦ ମସିହାରେ ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଥିଲେ ଓ ଆମେରିକା ଆସି ସୁମିତା କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟର୍ କର୍ମନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶକ ପଢ଼ିଲା । ହଠାତ୍ ସୁମିତା ମତେ ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲା, “ରୁନୁନାନୀ, ଆପଣ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୀତ ଗାଆନ୍ତୁ ନା! ଆପଣ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଓ ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ଗାଉଥିଲେ ବୋଲି ଆମ ଗାଁ ସାରା ସମସ୍ତେ କହନ୍ତି । ମୋ’ର ତ ଶୁଣିବାର ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ନଥିଲା ।”

“ମୋ’ର କଣ ଆଉ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ଅଛି? ବାହାଘର ପରେ ଗୀତ ସହିତ ସମସ୍ତ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଯେମିତି ଛିନ୍ନ ହୋଇଗଲା । ତମେ ତ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଗୀତ ଗାଉଛୁ ସୁମିତା; ସେଦିନ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ରେ ଗାଉଥିଲ । ତମେ ବରଂ ଗାଅ; ଆମେ ଶୁଣିବୁ” – ମୁଁ ଏଡ଼ି ଯିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲି ।

“ମୋ ଗୀତ ତ ଚାଲୁ ଗୀତ । ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଗାୟିକା ହେବାକୁ ମତେ ପୁନର୍ଜନ୍ମ ନେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ମୁଁ ହାର୍ମୋନିୟମ୍ ଆଣୁଛି; ଆପଣ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଗାଇବେ ।”



ମୋ ଉତ୍ତରକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ନକରି ସୁମିତା ଚାଲିଗଲା । ତିନି, ଚାରି ମିନିଟ୍ ପରେ ହାର୍ମୋନିୟମ୍ ଧରି ହାଜର ହେଲା । ଶୁଭେନ୍ଦୁବାବୁ ଚଟାଣରେ ବିଛଣାତାଦର ପକାଇଦେଲେ ଓ ସୁମିତା ମତେ ନେଇ ହାର୍ମୋନିୟମ୍ ପାଖରେ ବସାଇଦେଲା । କହିଲା, “ନାନୀ, ଆପଣ ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଗାଉଥିଲେ । ଗୀତ ସହିତ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ନ ରଖିଲେ ବି ସାର୍‌ଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ଯେଉଁ ତାଲିମ୍ ପାଇଛନ୍ତି, ସେଇଟା କେବେ ଭୁଲିବାର ନୁହେଁ । ସାଇକ୍‌ଲ୍ ମାନେ ବି ତ ସେଇଆ କହନ୍ତି । ଦଶ, ବାର ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ଯେଉଁ ବିଷୟଟିକୁ ପିଲା ଶିଖୁଥାଏ, ତାହା ସଦା ସ୍ମୃତିରେ ଛାପି ହୋଇ ରହିଯାଏ । ତା’ପରେ ଏଠି ତ କେବଳ ଆମେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଓ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ଅଛନ୍ତି; ଆମମାନଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ଏତେ କୁଣ୍ଠା କାହିଁକି ?”

ସୁମିତାର ଅନୁରୋଧରେ କ’ଣଥିଲା କେଜାଣି, ହଠାତ୍ ମୋ’ର ଯେମିତି କିଛି ହୋଇଗଲା । “ସା”, “ପା”, “ଗା” ଇତ୍ୟାଦିକୁ ପରଖୁ ପରଖୁ କେତେବେଳେ ଯେ ମୁଁ ସୁର ଧରିଛି “ଲଳିତ ଲବଙ୍ଗଲତା ପରିଶୀଳନ”, ବୁଝିପାରିନି । ମୁଁ ସେତେବେଳେ ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷର ରତ୍ନପୁଣ୍ୟ ଦେବୀ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ବାର-ତେର ବର୍ଷର ରୁନୁ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଥିଲି । ମତେ ଅନୁଭୂତ ହେଉଥିଲା ଯେମିତି ବାପା ମୋ ପାଖରେ ବସିଛନ୍ତି । ଜେଜେମା ତାହା ପିଉପିଉ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ହଲେଇ ଶୁଣୁଶୁଣୁ ହୋଇ ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ସ୍ଵରରେ ମୋ ସହିତ ତାଳ ଦେଉଛି; ଆଉ ମୁଁ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଗାଇଚାଲିଛି । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର କରତାଳି ବି ମୋ’ର ଧ୍ୟାନଭଗ୍ନ କରିବାରେ ସକ୍ଷମ ହୋଇନଥିଲା ଯଦିଓ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର କରତାଳି ମୁଁ ଶୁଣିପାରୁଥିଲି ଓ ଦେଖିପାରୁଥିଲି । ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ତିନି-ଚାରିଟି ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ଗାଇସାରିବା ପରେ ହଠାତ୍ ପ୍ରକୃଷ୍ଟିତ ହେଲି ମୁଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ସୁମିତା ମୋ ସାମନାରେ ମାଇକ୍ରୋଫୋନ୍ ଆଣି ସେଟ୍ କରିଦେଇ ଗୀତ ରେକର୍ଡ଼ିଂ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଲା ।

“ଆପଣ ତ ଜଣେ ବହୁତ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟିର ଗାୟିକା ।” - ଶୁଭେନ୍ଦୁବାବୁ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଦେଲେ ।

ଧ୍ୟାନରୁ ପ୍ରକୃଷ୍ଟିତ ହୋଇ ପରିବେଶ ପ୍ରତି ସଚେତନ ହେବାପରେ ପୁଣି ମତେ କୁଣ୍ଠା ଗ୍ରାସ କଲା । ସୁମିତା ବୋଧହୁଏ ବୁଝିପାରିଲା । ପାଖକୁ ଆସି ପୁଣି ହାତ ଧରି ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲା, “ଆଇ ଆମ୍ ସୋ ସରି ନାନୀ । ମାଇକ୍ରୋଫୋନ୍ ଆଣି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଧ୍ୟାନଭଗ୍ନ କଲି । ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଆଉ ମାତ୍ର ଦୁଇଟି ଗୀତ ଗାଇବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ । ତାପରେ ଆମେ ତିନି ଖାଇବା ।”

ଏ ତ ସୁମିତା ନୁହେଁ; ଠିକ୍ ମୋ ବାପା । ବାପା ସେମିତି କହୁଥିଲେ - “ମା’ରେ ଆଉଥରେ ‘କାଳିନ୍ଦୀ କୁଳକୁ ମୋର’ ଗାଇ ଦେ; ତାପରେ ଖାଇବା ।” ସୁମିତାର ଅନୁରୋଧରେ ପୁଣି ମୁଁ ଧ୍ୟାନମଗ୍ନ ହେଲି ଓ ଦୁଇଟି ଗୀତ ବଦଳରେ ଚାରିଟି ଗୀତ ଗାଇସାରିବା ପରେ ମୋ’ର ପରିବେଶ ପ୍ରତି ସଚେତନତା ଆସିଲା । ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ମୁଁ ମୋ ନିଜ ଭିତରର ଲୁକ୍କାୟିତ ଚେତନାକୁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କଲି - ଦୀର୍ଘ ବର୍ଷର ବ୍ୟବଧାନ ତଥାପି ମୋ ଭିତରର ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ପ୍ରତିଭାକୁ ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ରଖୁଥିଲା ।

ସେଦିନ ସୁମିତା ମତେ ତା’ ହାର୍ମୋନିୟମ୍ ଦେଲା ଓ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରିଥିବା କେତେଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ପୁସ୍ତକ ଦେଇ କହିଲା, “ନାନୀ, ଆପଣ ତ ଏଠି ବୋର୍ ହେଉଥିବେ । ମୁଁ ସିନା ଏ ସବୁ କିଣିଥିଲି; ହେଲେ ପ୍ରାକ୍‌ତିସ୍ତ କରିବାକୁ ସମୟ ବାହାର କରିପାରୁନି । ଆପଣ ଥିବାପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରୁଆଆନ୍ତୁ । ଶନିବାର, ରବିବାର ଦିନ ଯଦି ଆପଣ ବୁଲାବୁଲି କରିବାକୁ ନ ଯାଇ ଘରେ ରହୁଥିବେ, ମୁଁ ବି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଗୀତ ଶିଖିବାକୁ ଆସିବି ।”

ସତରେ ତ ସୁମିତା ମୋ ମନକଥା ବୁଝିଥିଲା । ପୁସ୍ତକର ବାପା ବହି ଲେଖୁଥିଲେ ଆଉ ମୁଁ ଏକାକିନୀ ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିଲି । ଏବେ ମତେ ମିଳିଗଲା ମୋ ସାଧନାର ସୂତ୍ର । ବାସ୍, ସେଇଦିନରୁ ଚାଲିଲା ମୋର ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ସାଧନା । ପୁସ୍ତକର ବାପା ବି ତତସ୍ଥ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲେ । ବର୍ଷର ବର୍ଷର ସଂପର୍କ ପରେ ସେ ଯେମିତି ନିଜର ସହଧର୍ମିଣୀକୁ ନୁଆକରି ଚିହ୍ନୁଥିଲେ । ମୁଁ ଗୀତ ଗାଉଥିଲି ବୋଲି ସେ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ ଓ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଗାଇବାକୁ ଯେ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିନଥିଲେ ସେମିତି ନୁହେଁ । ମୁଁ ବି ତାଙ୍କ ଅନୁରୋଧରେ ଗୀତ ଗାଇଥିଲି; ହେଲେ ସେ ଗାଇବାରେ ସେମିତି କିଛି ନୁତନତା ନଥିଲା । ସେ ଅନୁରୋଧ ସେମିତି ପାଟିଭିତରୁ ବାହାରୁଥିଲା ଓ ସେଥିରେ ଚାପ ନଥିଲା । ସୁମିତା ଭଳି ହାର୍ମୋନିୟମ୍ ସାମନାରେ ରଖି, ମତେ ତା ପାଖରେ ବସାଇ, ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଶୁଣିବାର ବିଶେଷ ଆଗ୍ରହ ନେଇ ସେ କେବେ ଅନୁରୋଧର ଚାପ ପକାଇ ନଥିଲେ । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଘର ଚଳାଇବାର ଏତେ ଚାପ ଥିଲା ଯେ, ହାର୍ମୋନିୟମ୍ କିଣିବାରେ ଅର୍ଥ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିବାଟା ସେତେବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷେ ସମ୍ଭବ ନଥିଲା । ସେଦିନ ସୁମିତା ଘରେ ମୁଁ ଆଉ ଏକ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରିଥିଲି ମୋ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ - ସ୍ନେହପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅନୁରୋଧର ଚାପ ମତେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟପାଇଁ ଉତ୍ସାହିତ କରେ ଓ ଦୃଢ଼ମନା ହୋଇ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟର ସଫଳତା ପାଇଁ ମନପ୍ରାଣ ଭାଳିଦେବାକୁ ପ୍ରେରଣା ଯୋଗାଏ ।



ସୁମିତାର ହାରମୋନିୟମକୁ ବହୁଦିନର ହଜିଯାଇଥିବା ସମ୍ପଦ ଭଳି ମୁଁ ଜାବୁଡ଼ି ଧରୁଥିଲି । ବାହାଘର ପରେ ସଂସାର ଜଞ୍ଜଳରେ ହାରମୋନିୟମ୍ କଥା ଭାବିବାକୁ ବି ମୋ'ର ଅବସର ନଥିଲା । ତିନିଟି ପିଲାଙ୍କର ଲାଳନପାଳନ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵସହିତ ଦିଅର, ନଣନ୍ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଠପଢ଼ା ଓ ବାହାଘରର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ବି ଥିଲା । ତା' ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ କଟକର ସେ ଛୋଟ ଭଡ଼ାଘରଟିରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଗାଁ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଯାତାୟତ । କାହାର ମେଡ଼ିକାଲ୍ ଯିବା ଦରକାର, କାହାର ହାଇକୋର୍ଟରେ କେଶ୍ ଲାଗିଛି, କାହା ପିଲା ଝଲାର୍ସିପ୍ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଦେବାପାଇଁ ଆସୁଛି, ସମସ୍ତେ ସବୁବେଳେ ସେଇ ସାମୁ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ବସାରେ ହାଜର । ଏମିତିକି ସମ୍ବଲପୁର, ରାଉରକେଲା, କୋରାପୁଟ, ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦ, ବମ୍ବେ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଦୂର ସହରକୁ ଯାଉଥିବା ଗ୍ରାମବାସୀ ଓ ବନ୍ଧୁବାନ୍ଧବଙ୍କର ଆମ ଭଡ଼ାଘରଟିହିଁ ଥିଲା ଏକମାତ୍ର ଧର୍ମଶାଳା । ମୁଁ କେବେ ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରିପାରିନି । ଲେକ୍ଚର୍ସରୁ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଚିଡ଼ାନ୍ତି, “ଏତେ ଭଲ ଖାଇବା ପିଇବାକୁ ଦେଇ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ଯେ କରୁଛ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଏଇଠି ହାଜର । ନହେଲେ ଆମ ଗାଁର ଟିକନ, ଶାମା, ବ୍ରଜ, ସମସ୍ତେ ତ ଅଛନ୍ତି । କେହି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ବସାକୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତିନି କାହିଁକି ? ମୁଁ ଏ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟରେ ଆନନ୍ଦ ପାଏଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବେଳେବେଳେ ମନ ମୋ'ର ଖୋଜେ ନୀରବତାକୁ; ଏକ ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତମୟ ପରିବେଶ ଯେଉଁଠି କି ମୁଁ କେବଳ ହାରମୋନିୟମ୍ ବଜାଇ ଗାଇତାଲିଥାନ୍ତି ରାଗ ପରେ ରାଗ - ଶଙ୍ଖରାଭରଣ, କାମୋଦୀ, କଳାବତୀ, ରାମକେରୀ, ... ଆଉ ଛୁଟାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ମୂର୍ଦ୍ଧନା ଶୃଙ୍ଗର ରସର, ଭକ୍ତି ରସର, ଓ ପ୍ରେମ ରସର । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଘରଭିତରେ କେବେ ନୀରବତା ମିଳେନି; କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟର ଅନେକ ବନ୍ଧନ ଭିତରେ ବାନ୍ଧିହୋଇ ରହିଯାଏ ମୋର ସଙ୍ଗତପ୍ରେମୀ ମନ । ରେଡିଓରେ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵରୀ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କର ଗୀତ ଆସେ, ଶ୍ୟାମାମଣି ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଗୀତ ଆସେ; ନୁଆକରି ଗୀତ ଗାଉଥିବା ସୁଧା ମିଶ୍ର ଓ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରାଣୀ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କର ଗୀତ ବି ଆସେ । ମୋ'ର ବି ଇଚ୍ଛାହୁଏ ମୋ କଣ୍ଠର ଗୀତ ରେଡିଓରେ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ । ହେଲେ, ବଣମାଳତୀର ଫୁଟି ଝଡ଼ିଯିବା ହିଁ ଭାଗ୍ୟରେ ଲେଖା । ପରିବେଶର ପ୍ରଭାବରେ ଏକାଗ୍ରଣର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ବି ସାମାଜିକ ପଦବୀରେ ଅନେକ ଦୂରତା । ରେଡିଓର ଗୀତ ସହିତ ସୁର ମିଳେଇ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଗୀତ ଗାଉ ଗାଉ କେବେ କ୍ଷୀର ଉଡ଼ୁରିଯାଏ, ହାତରୁ ଗ୍ଲାସ୍ ପଡ଼ି ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯାଏ ଓ କେବେ ପୁଣି ଭଜା ପୋଡ଼ିଯାଏ । ଲେକ୍ଚର୍ସରୁ ଥକା କରନ୍ତି - “କ'ଣ କେଉଁ ପୁରୁଣା ପ୍ରେମିକଙ୍କ କଥା ଭାବୁଥିଲ ନା କ'ଣ?” ମୁଁ ଉତ୍ତରରେ ହସିଦେଇ ଭାବେ, “ସତରେ ସଂଗୀତ ମୋ'ର ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରେମ ନୁହେଁ କି?”

ଥରେ ଘଟଣା ବଡ଼ ଗୁରୁତର ହୋଇଥିଲା । ସେତେବେଳେ ରେଡିଓରେ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵରୀ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କର ଗୀତ ଆସୁଥିଲା । ସେ ଗୀତର ତାଳରେ ଗାଉଗାଉ ଫୁଲ୍ ପ୍ରେସର୍ ଥିବା ପ୍ରେସର୍ସକୁକରୁ ମୁଁ ଅନ୍ୟମନସ୍କ ହୋଇ ଖୋଲୁଥିଲି । ହଠାତ୍ କୁକର୍ ଭିତରୁ ଗରମ ତାଲି ଭସ୍‌ଭସ୍ ହୋଇ ବାହାରି ମୋ ହାତ, ମୁହଁ, ବେକ ଓ ଛାତିରେ ଭାଳି ହୋଇଗଲା; ରକ୍ଷା, ଆଖି ଅକ୍ଷତ ରହିଥିଲା । ସେଇଦିନରୁ ମୋର ରେଡିଓ ଶୁଣିବା ବନ୍ଦହେଲା ଓ ଗୀତଗାଇବା ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ବି କମିଗଲା ।

ସୁମିତା ଯେ ମତେ କେବଳ ହାରମୋନିୟମ୍ ଧରାଇଦେଲା, ତାହା ନୁହେଁ । ତିନି ସପ୍ତାହ ପରେ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ମୋ ଗୀତ ଗାଇବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାକଲା । ତବଲା ସହିତ ପ୍ରାକ୍ଟିସ୍ କରାଇବାକୁ ସିଏ ମତେ ନେଇଯାଉଥିଲା ଦୀପକ୍ ମାଧୁରଙ୍କ ବସାକୁ । ହିନ୍ଦୁ ମନ୍ଦିରର ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ଏତେ ଭଲ ହେଲା ଯେ, ସେଇଠୁ ଆରମ୍ଭହେଲା ମୋ ସଂଗୀତକାରର ଜୀବନ । ନିଉୟୋର୍କ, ନିଉଜର୍ସୀ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ କେତେ ଯେ ଭାରତୀୟ ସଂସ୍ଥା, ତା'ର ହିସାବ ନାହିଁ । ସେସବୁ ସଂସ୍ଥାର ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍‌କୁ ସୁମିତା ମତେ ନେଇଯାଉଥିଲା । ସୁମିତାର ମତେ ଏମିତି ଭାବେ ଗୀତ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ସହିତ ଜଡ଼ିତ କରାଇବାରେ ପୁସ୍ତନା ବେଳେବେଳେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ନାଏଗ୍ରା ଫଲ୍ ଯିବା ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ କ୍ୟାନସଲ୍ କରାଗଲା; ଆର୍ଲ୍‌ଲ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡ୍ ସିଟି ଯିବା ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ବି ବନ୍ଦହେଲା । ଏମିତିକି ଚିକାଗୋରେ ରହୁଥିବା ମୋ ବଡ଼ ଝିଆରୀ ଘରକୁ ଯିବାର ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ବି ବନ୍ଦ ହେଲା । ମୁଁ ଯେମିତି ସଂଗୀତ ସହିତ ମଜ୍ଜିଯିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲି, ହଜିଯିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲି ଓ ସଂଗୀତ ସହିତ ବିଲୀନ ହୋଇଯିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲି । ଏତେ ବର୍ଷର ବିଚ୍ଛେଦ ମୋ'ର ସଂଗୀତ ପ୍ରେମକୁ ଯେମିତି ସହସ୍ରଗୁଣିତ କରିଥିଲା । ପୁସ୍ତନାର ବାପା ପୁସ୍ତନାକୁ ଛିଗୁଲାଇ କହୁଥିଲେ - “ବୁଝିଲୁ, ତୋ ବୋଉ ଏବେ ଝାନ୍ ଝାନ୍ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ସିଏ ତ ଏବେ ଆଉ ଖାଲି କୁନୁ ବୋଉ, ମାନି ବୋଉ କି ପୁସ୍ତନା ବୋଉ ହୋଇ ରହିନି । ଝାନ୍ ମାନଙ୍କର ନିଜ ପରିବାର ପ୍ରତି ସମୟ ନଥାଏ ।”

ସୁମିତା ସହିତ ମୁଁ ଯେମିତି ଭାବେ ବେଶଭୁଷା ହୋଇ ପ୍ରାକ୍ଟିସ୍ କରିବାକୁ ବାହାରିଯାଉଥିଲି, ସେ ନେଇ ଲେକ୍ଚର୍ସରୁ ମତେ ଉପହାସ କରନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ସୁମିତାର ଓ ମୋ'ର ବେଶଭୁଷାରେ ଆକାଶ, ପାତାଳ ପ୍ରଭେଦ । ଯଦିଓ ବୟସରେ ସିଏ ମୋଠାରୁ ଜମା ସାତ-ଆଠ ବର୍ଷ ସାନ ହେବ, ତଥାପି ରହିଆସିଥିବା ପରିବେଶର ପ୍ରଭାବରେ ଆମମାନଙ୍କ ବାହାରର ସ୍ଵରୂପ ଅଲଗା ଦେଖାଯାଏ । ସୁମିତା ସାର୍, ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ୍ ପିନ୍ଧେ, ଯଦିଓ ଭାରତୀୟ ସମାରୋହ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ସିଏ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ପିନ୍ଧି ଯାଏ । ବେଳେବେଳେ ସୁମିତା ଟି-ସାର୍ଟ୍ ଓ ଜିନ୍ସ୍ ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ୍ ପିନ୍ଧେ । ତା'ର ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ କଣା କେଶରେ ସିଏ ବେଳେବେଳେ ରଙ୍ଗ ଲଗାଏ ଓ ଓଠରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଲିପ୍‌ଷ୍ଟିକ୍ ମାରେ । ମୁହଁରେ ବି ସେ ଲଗାଏ କେତେ କ'ଣ । ମୁଁ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ପିନ୍ଧେ ଘୋଡ଼େଇ ହୋଇ; କେଶକୁ ସଜାଡ଼ି ଖୋସା କରେ ଓ କପାଳରେ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ଟିପା ଲଗାଏ । ସିନ୍ଦୂର ବଦଳରେ ଟିକିଲି



ଲଗାଇବାକୁ ନିଜେ ପୁସ୍ତକାର ବାପା ମତେ କହିଥିଲେ ହେଁ, ମୁଁ ସେ ଅଭ୍ୟାସଟା ବଦଳାଇ ପାରିନି । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସିଏ ମତେ ଚିଡ଼ାନ୍ତି । ସୁମିତା ଓ ମୁଁ ସମବୟସୀ ହେଲେ ହେଁ ସୁମିତା ଯେ ମୋ'ର ଝିଅ ଭଳି ଦିଶେ, ସେ ନେଇ ଆକର୍ଷଣ କରନ୍ତି । ହେଲେ ଯଦିଓ ବେଶଭୂଷାରେ ଆମର ଏତେ ତାରତମ୍ୟ, ମନଭିତରେ ଆମମାନଙ୍କର ବହୁତ ମେଳ ଥାଏ; ଭାବନା ବହୁ ସମୟରେ ଏକାଭଳି ଶରରୁପ ନିଏ । ବିଶେଷତଃ ସଙ୍ଗତକୁ ଆମେ ଏକାଭଳି ନିଷ୍ଠାର ସହିତ ଭଲପାଉ । ଏ ବି ଥିଲା ମୋ'ର ଆଉ ଏକ ଆବିଷ୍କାର - ବାହାରକୁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିପରୀତ ଦିଶୁଥିବା ଦୁଇଟି ମଣିଷମାନଙ୍କ ମନଭିତରେ ସାଦୃଶ୍ୟର ଏ ବିଶେଷ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି ।

ଏମିତି ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଚାରିମାସ କେମିତି ବିତିଗଲା, ମୁଁ ଜାଣିପାରିଲିନି । ପୁସ୍ତକ କହିଲା, “ବୋଉ, ଆଉ ଜମା ଦେହମାସ ରହିଲା ତୋ ରିଟର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଚିକେଟ୍ । ଏଥର ଆଉ ନାଏଗ୍ରା ପଲ୍ଲ ଯିବା ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ବନ୍ଦ କରିବୁନି । ଉମାନାନୀ ଘରକୁ କେବେ ଯିବୁ କହ, ମୁଁ ଚିକେଟ୍ କରିଦେବି ।” ସୁମିତା ବି ବୁଝିଲା, ଯଦିଓ ତା ମନରେ ବି ମୋ ଭଳି ସଂଗୀତ ନିଶା ଲାଗିଥିଲା । କହିଲା, “ନାନୀ, ଆପଣ ଏବେ ବୁଲାଇବୁନି କରନ୍ତୁ, ନହେଲେ ମତେ ଗାଳି ଦେବେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଉ ଠିକ୍ ମାସକ ପରେ ଆମର ଭାରତୀୟ ଦୂତାବାସ ତରଫରୁ ଏକ ବଡ଼ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ହେଉଛି । ଭାରତର ରାଜସ୍ୱପତି ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି । ଆପଣ ନିଜେ ସେ ଦିନଟି ମୋ ପାଇଁ ରଖିବେ । ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ପରିବେଷଣ ପାଇଁ ଅଧ୍ୟୟନ ରଖୁଛି ।”

ଉମାଘରେ ସାତଟି ଦିନରୁ ଅଧିକ ରହିପାରିଲିନି । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ମୁଁ ମୋର ସଙ୍ଗତ ଅଭ୍ୟାସଟିକୁ ଝୁରୁଥିଲି । ଉମାର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ଗହଳରେ ଯଦିଓ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିଲି ଓ ନୂଆ ଚିକାଗୋ ସହରଟିକୁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରୂପେ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ଥିଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ ସଂଗୀତ ସମାରୋହରେ ସଂଗୀତ ପରିବେଷଣ କରିବାର ଯେଉଁ ତୀବ୍ର ନିଶା ଲାଗିଥିଲା ମନରେ, ସେ ନିଶାର ଶକ୍ତି ଏ ସବୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ବଳଶାଳୀ ଥିଲା । ଉମା ଓ ଜୁଆଁଙ୍କ ଶଶିକାନ୍ତ ବହୁତ ମନଦୁଃଖ କଲେ । ନାତି, ନାତୁଣୀ ଦୁଇଟି ବି ମୁହଁ ଶୁଖାଇଲେ । ଚିକାଗୋରୁ ଫେରିବା ପରେ କ୍ରମାଗତ ଭାବେ ମୁଁ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ପାଇଁ ଗୀତ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରିବାରେ ଲାଗିପଡ଼ିଲି । ଶେଷରେ ଆସିଥିଲା ଏଇ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷିତ ଦିନଟି, ଗୀତଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ପରିବେଷଣ କରିଥିବାରୁ ଏକ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦର ପଲକ ମୋତେ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ ସ୍ୱୟଂ ଭାରତ ଦେଶର ରାଜସ୍ୱପତି ।

ପାଇନ୍ କାଠର ସେ ପଲକଟିକୁ ଧରି ମୁଁ ମନେମନେ ଭାବୁଥିଲି - ସୁମିତାକୁ କ'ଣ ଦେଇ ରଖିମୁକ୍ତ ହେବି? ପରମେଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦରୁ ତା'ର ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସୁଖୀ ସଂସାର; ସୁନ୍ଦର ଓ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ଡାକ୍ତର ସ୍ୱାମୀ, ଆମେରିକାର ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ଅଧ୍ୟୟନଶୀଳ ପ୍ରତିଭାବାନ ଦୁଇଟି ପୁଅଝିଅ, ଆଉ ନିଜେ ସୁମିତା, କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟର ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର । ଧନ, ସମ୍ମାନ, ପାରିବାରିକ ସୁଖ ସବୁ ସୁମିତା ପାଖରେ । ମୋ ଭଳି ଏକ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ନାରୀର ଅନ୍ତର୍ନିହିତ ପ୍ରତିଭାକୁ ଜାଗ୍ରତ କରାଇ ଏ ଯେଉଁ ଉଚ୍ଚ ସମ୍ମାନର ଅଧିକାରିଣୀ କରାଇପାରିଛି ସେ, ସେ ରଣ ଏ ଜନ୍ମରେ ଶୁଝିପାରିବି ବୋଲି ମୋର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ନଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ କାହାର ରଣୀ ହୋଇ ରହିବା ମୋ ପକ୍ଷରେ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ଥିଲା ।

ମୋ'ର ଏ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଭାବକୁ ଦୂରକରାଇ ହଠାତ୍ ତାହାପଟ ଗହଳ ଭିତରୁ ବାହାରି ଆସି ସୁମିତା ମତେ ପୁଲ୍ଲଗୁଚ୍ଛଟିଏ ଦେଇ ମୋ ଗୀତର ପ୍ରଶଂସା କଲା ଓ ତା'ର ଅନୁରୋଧ ରକ୍ଷାକରି ଗୀତ ଗାଇଥିବାରୁ ମତେ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଜଣାଇଲା ।

“ଆମେ ତମର ରଣୀ ହୋଇ ରହିଲୁ ସୁମିତା । କେମିତି ସେ ରଣ ସୁଝିବେ, ସେଇ କଥା ଭାବି ତମ ରୁନୁ ନାନୀ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ।” - ପୁସ୍ତକାର ବାପା ସୁମିତାକୁ ମୋ ମନର ଭାବ ଜଣାଇଦେଲେ ।

“ରୁନୁ ନାନୀ ତ ମତେ ରଣୀ କରିଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ଭଳି ସ୍ନେହୀ, ସୁଗାୟିକା ଓ ସରଳ ମନର ନାରୀଙ୍କ ସଂସ୍ପର୍ଶରେ ଆସିବାର ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ଯେ ମୁଁ ପାଇଲି, ସେଇଟା ମୋ'ର ଭାଗ୍ୟ ।” - ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏତିକି କହି ସୁମିତା ମୋ ହାତ ଧରି ଆଣି ମତେ ପାଖ ଚେୟାରରେ ବସାଇଲା । ତାପରେ କଣ ପରିଷ୍କାର କରି ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲା, “ନାନୀ, ଆପଣ ସେମିତି ଭାବିବେନି । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ପ୍ରତିଭା ତ ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଥିଲା; ଆପଣ ପ୍ରକାଶ କଲେ । ମୁଁ ବା କ'ଣଟା ବଡ଼ କାମ କଲି ? ଆପଣ ଯେ ମତେ ବଡ଼ଭଉଣୀର ସ୍ନେହର ଅର୍ଥ ବୁଝାଇ ଦେଇଗଲେ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ରଣୀ । ଜୀବନରେ ବହୁସମୟରେ କଲୁଷିତ ମନର ମଣିଷ ମାନଙ୍କ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଆସି ମୋର ମନଟି କ୍ଷୁଣ୍ଣ ରହିଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସଂସ୍ପର୍ଶରେ ଆସି ମନରେ ପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣତା ଭରିଯାଇଛି ଓ ପୁଣି ମଣିଷମାନଙ୍କୁ ଭଲପାଇବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଛି । ଆପଣ ମତେ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ କରନ୍ତୁ ଯେମିତି କି ମୁଁ ସର୍ବଦା ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଭଳି ସ୍ନେହୀ ଓ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଆତ୍ମାର ମଣିଷମାନଙ୍କ ସଂସ୍ପର୍ଶରେ ଆସେ ।”

“କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁମିତା, ହାରମୋନିୟମ୍ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ନହେଲେ ସେମିତି ମୂଲ୍ୟହୀନ, ପ୍ରତିଭା ଅପ୍ରକାଶିତ ରହିଲେ ସେମିତି ମୂଲ୍ୟହୀନ । ତମେ ଯେ ମୂଲ୍ୟହୀନ ପଦାର୍ଥଟିକୁ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ କରାଇଛ, ପ୍ରେରଣାର ପାଣି ଦେଇ ଶୁଖିଲା ଗଛଟିକୁ ପଲ୍ଲବିତ କରି ସେଥିରେ ଫୁଲ ଫୁଟାଇ ପାରିଛ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସତରେ ତମପାଖରେ ମୁଁ ରଣୀ । ହେଲେ ଏ ଗରୀବ ନାନୀ କ’ଣ ବା ଦେଇପାରିବ ତମକୁ?” – ମୁଁ ମୋ ଅନ୍ତରର ଭାଷା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରି ବୋଧ ହାଲୁକା କଲି ।

“ତାହେଲେ ନାନୀ, ମତେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଭଲ ଉପହାରଟିଏ ଦେବେ । ମୁଁ ଯାହା ମାଗିବି ଦେବେ ତ ? ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞା କରନ୍ତୁ ।”

ମୁଁ ଟିକେ ଡରିଗଲି । ଏଠି ବହୁତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିବାର ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଝିଅ, ନହେଲେ ବନ୍ଧୁବାନ୍ଧବମାନଙ୍କ ଝିଅର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ପୁସ୍ତକ ସହିତ ପକାଉଥିଲେ । ସୁମିତା ସେମିତି କିଛି ମାଗିବନି ତ ? ମୁଁ ‘ହଁ କି ‘ନାଁ’ କହିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସୁମିତା ତା ଉପହାରଟି ମାଗିସାରିଥିଲା – “ନାନୀ, ଆପଣ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଗୀତ ଗାଇବା ଅଭ୍ୟାସଟି ରଖିବେ । ମୁଁ ମୋ ବଡ଼ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ଖବର ଦେଇଥିଲି, ସିଏ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ହାରମୋନିୟମ୍ କିଣିକରି ରଖିଛନ୍ତି । ଆପଣ କଟକ ଫେରିଲାପରେ ସିଏ ହାରମୋନିୟମ୍ ଆଣି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଘରେ ଦେଇଯିବେ । ବାସ୍ତବରେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପୁଅ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମତେ ଡଲାର ଦେଇଛି । ଆପଣ ପୁଣି ଯେବେ ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବେ, ସେତେବେଳେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ଼ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ କରିବି ବୋଲି ଭାବିଛି । ଏବେ କୁହନ୍ତୁ, ଏ ଉପହାରଟି ମତେ ଦେବେ କି ନାହିଁ?”

ସୁମିତା ଭଳି ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ମଣିଷଟିକୁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରିଥିବାର ସୁଖ ମୋ ଆଖିର ମମତାଶୁ ହୋଇ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହେଲା ଓ ମୋ ହାତଭିତରେ ଥିବା ସୁମିତାର ହାତକୁ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦର ସ୍ପର୍ଶ ଦେଲା ।



*(ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, କଲମ୍ବିଆ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ ନରେଶ ଦାସ ଓ ତିନିଟି ସନ୍ତତି ବାଗ୍ନୀ, ମୃଗାଳୀ ଓ ଶାଶୁତୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ରହନ୍ତି । ସମ୍ପ୍ରତି ସେ ଓସାର ଟ୍ରେମାସିକ ମୁଖପତ୍ର ‘ଉତ୍କର୍ଷ’ର ସଂପାଦିକା । ଗଣିତରେ ଗବେଷଣା କରିବା ସହିତ ଅବସର ସମୟରେ ସେ ଲେଖାଲେଖି କରିବାକୁ ଏବଂ ଗୋଝମାଝର ସଂସ୍ଥାର ବକ୍ତୃତା ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ ଯୋଗଦାନ କରିବାକୁ ଭଲପାଆନ୍ତି । ଏତଦ୍‌ବ୍ୟତୀତ ନାଟ, ଗୀତ ଓ ଅଭିନୟରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସଂପୃକ୍ତ ରହିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଆଗ୍ରହ । )*

## ଚଲା ବଉଦ ସୁଲକ୍ଷଣା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ରାତିରେ ନିଦ ହେଉନି । ଝିଅ ବାହାଘର କେତେ ଯାଗାରେ ପଡ଼ୁଛି । କେଉଁଠି ଝିଅର ମନକୁ ପାଉନି ବା କେଉଁଠି ଜାତକ ସୁଝୁନି । ଝିଅ ସୁମିତାକୁ ଚାରିଶ ବର୍ଷ ପଶିଲା । ଗତବର୍ଷରୁ କଲେଜରେ ଚାକିରି ପାଇଛି, ରସାୟନ ବିଜ୍ଞାନରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ହୋଇ ଯୁନିଭରସିଟିରେ । ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ମନେ ପଡ଼େ, ସୁମିର ଜନ୍ମ । ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରସୂତି ଯଦିଓ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସହଜ ହୋଇ ନ ଥିଲା, ସୁମିର ଫୁଲ ଭଳି କଅଁଳ କୌତୁକିଆ ମୁହଁଟି ଜୀବନରେ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରେରଣା ଓ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଭରି ଦେଇଥିଲା ।

ସୁମିକୁ ନେଇ ଜୀବନ । ସୁମିର ଆଜି ପରୀକ୍ଷା, ସୁମିର ସ୍କୁଲରେ ଆଜି ଉତ୍ସବ, ସୁମିର ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରାଇଜ୍, ଓ ସୁମିର ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ ପ୍ରଥମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ପାସ୍ତୁ ନେଇ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ସୁମିମୟ ହେବାରେ ଲାଗିଲା । ସୁମି ରେଭେନ୍‌ସା କଲେଜରୁ ମାଷ୍ଟର୍ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ପାଇଲା ରସାୟନ ବିଜ୍ଞାନରେ । ସୁବ୍ରତ ଓ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ମନରେ ସେ ଯାଏଁ ଛୁଇଁନି ସୁମିର ଘର-ସଂସାର, ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଚିନ୍ତା । ସୁମିକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ ସୁରଭି ଭାବି ପାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ‘ସୁମି ବିନା ଜୀବନ’ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁମି ଶୈଳବାଳା କଲେଜରେ ଚାକିରି ପାଇବା ଦିନଠୁ, ସୁବ୍ରତ ଚିନ୍ତାଶୀଳ ଦେଖା ଯାଆନ୍ତି ଅନେକ ସମୟରେ । ବନ୍ଧୁ, ବାନ୍ଧବ, ସହକର୍ମୀ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଆଣନ୍ତି । ସୁବ୍ରତ ସୁମିକୁ ଜୀବନଠୁଁ ବେଶୀ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି କିନ୍ତୁ ଭଲ ପାଇବାକୁ ଭାଷାରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାରେ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷେ କେବେ ସହଜ ହୁଏନି । ଗମ୍ଭୀର ପ୍ରକୃତିର ମଣିଷଟିଏ, ଅଧିକ୍ଷରେ ବଡ଼ ଚାକିରୀ, ଇଞ୍ଜିନିଅର । ରିଟାୟାର୍ କରିବାକୁ ଆଉ ପାଞ୍ଚ, ଛଅ ବର୍ଷ । ଘର ଓ ଅଧିକ୍ଷକୁ ନେଇ ସୁମିର ବାହାଘର କଥା ଆଗରୁ ଚିନ୍ତା ନ ଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁମି ଚାକିରି ପାଇବା ଦିନଠୁ କେତେ ବାର କଥା କଥାକେ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ଡାକି, ସୁମି ପାଇଁ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ମନକୁ ପାଇଥିଲେ କହନ୍ତି ।



ଗତକାଳି ସୁବ୍ରତ ଅପିସ୍ତରୁ ଫେରି ସୁରଭି, ସୁରଭି ତାଙ୍କ ଦେଲେ । ସୁରଭି, ଗାଡ଼ି ଶରରୁ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ଫେରିବା, ତରତର ହୋଇ ତା କେଟିଲିରେ ପାଣି ବସାନ୍ତି । ସୁବ୍ରତ ସାର୍, ପ୍ୟାକ୍, ଓ ଜୋତା ବଦଳାଇବା ଭିତରେ ତା' ଦୁଇ କପ୍ ଧରି ସୁରଭି ଲିଭିଙ୍ଗ୍ ରୁମ୍‌କୁ ଆସନ୍ତି । ସେଇଠି ଦୁଇଜଣ ଧରାବନ୍ଧା ପଟିଶ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ତା' ଖାଆନ୍ତି । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଇଟି ବିସ୍କୁଟ୍ ଓ ନିଜ ପାଇଁ କିଛି ଚନାଚୁର୍ ଧରି ପ୍ଲେଟ୍‌ରେ ବସନ୍ତି । କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କର୍ମର ଧରାବନ୍ଧା ଅପିସ୍ ଖବର ଭିତରେ ସୁମି କେଉଁ ଛଟକରେ ଆବୋରି ନିଏ ତାଙ୍କ କଥୋପକଥନକୁ, ସୁମିର ନୂଆ ଚାକିରି, ନୂଆ ଛାତ୍ର ଛାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ କଥା ଶୁଣୁ ଶୁଣୁ ସୁବ୍ରତ ଅନେକ ହାଲୁକା ହୋଇଯାଆନ୍ତି । ସୁବ୍ରତ କହିଲେ, “ଅପିସ୍‌ର ବାସ୍ତାନିଧି ବାବୁ ଆଜି ଗୋଟିଏ ଭଲ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ସୁମି ପାଇଁ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ବାପା ଇଞ୍ଜିନିଅର୍ ...” । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ କଥାକୁ ରୋକି ଦେଇ ସୁରଭି ଉଦ୍‌ବିଗ୍ନରେ ପଚାରିଲେ, ପୁଅଟି କ'ଣ କରେ? . . . ପୁଅଟି କଂପ୍ୟୁଟର ଇଞ୍ଜିନିଅର୍ ବାଙ୍କଲୋର୍‌ରେ । ବୟସ ଛବିଶ, ସତେଇଶ, ଫଟାଟିଏ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ସୁରଭିଙ୍କର ଆଉ ବାପା, ମା'ଙ୍କ ଚାକିରି ଉପରେ ଆଗ୍ରହ ନାହିଁ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ, ସୁମି ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଆସିଲେ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ସବୁ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଉତ୍ସୁକତା ଥିଲା । ତିନି ଚାରିଟା ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଯିବା ପରେ, ଆଉ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କର ସେସବୁ ଜାଣିବାରେ ଆଗ୍ରହ ନାହିଁ । ବାପା, ମା', ଘର ଦ୍ଵାରରୁ ମିଳିବ କ'ଣ? ଝିଅ ଶିକ୍ଷିତା । ପୁଅର ଶିକ୍ଷା, ଯୋଗ୍ୟତା ସୁମିର ମନକୁ ପାଇଲା ଭଳି, ସୁମିକୁ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ହେଲା ଭଳି ହେଲେ ହେଲା । ପୁଅର ଫଟା ଦେଖି ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗିଲା । ସୁବ୍ରତ ଆଗରୁ ବାସ୍ତାନିଧି ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ ସୁମିର ଫଟା ବାହାଘର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ପୁଅଘର ଝିଅକୁ ଫଟାରୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଆସିବେ ଆଉ ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ ପରେ ଝିଅ ଦେଖିବାକୁ । ସୁବ୍ରତ ଆଉ ଖଣ୍ଡିଏ ବିସ୍କୁଟ୍ ଚାହିଁଲେ । ସୁରଭି ଆଉ ଅଧ କପ୍ ତା' ଢାଳିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ କପ୍‌ରେ । ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ମନେ ହେଲା ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ଅନେକ ଦିନ ପରେ ଏତେ ହାଲୁକା ଦେଖିବା । ଏଇ ସମୟରେ ସୁମି ମା' ମା' ତାଙ୍କ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ଢୁକିଲା । ସାଧାରଣତଃ ସବୁବେଳେ ସାଲୁଆର୍ କମିଜ ପିନ୍ଧେ । କିନ୍ତୁ, ଚାକିରି ପାଇବା ଦିନଠୁ କଲେଜକୁ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ପିନ୍ଧି ଯାଏ । ସୁମି ଘର ଭିତରେ ପଶୁ ପଶୁ ସୁବ୍ରତ ତାକୁ ପାଖକୁ ଡାକିଲେ । ପାଖରେ ବସାଇଲେ । ତା' ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ଟିକେ ଆଉଁଷ ଦେଲେ । ବାସ୍ ସେତିକି । ସୁବ୍ରତ କେବେକି କଥାରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଅନୁଭବକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରି ପାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ବାପ ଝିଅଙ୍କୁ ଏପରି ଦେଖିଲେ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ମନ ଖୁସିରେ ଭରିଯାଏ । ସୁମିର କଲେଜର ଘଟଣା ଗୋଟି ଗୋଟି ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ଆଗ୍ରହ ହୁଏ । ଆଜି ସୁରଭି ସୁମିକୁ ବଢ଼େଇଦେଲେ ପୁଅର ଫଟାଟି । ସୁମି ତା'ର ବାପା ଭଳି ଏତେ ଚାପା ସ୍ଵଭାବର ନୁହେଁ । କହିଲା, “କିଏ ଏଇ ରୁପବାନ ଯୁବକ - ମା' ?” ସୁରଭି ଫିକ୍‌କିନା ହସିଦେଇ କହିଲେ, “ମନକୁ ପାଇଛି ତାହାହେଲେ ତୋ'ର” । ସୁମି ମୁହଁରେ ଝଙ୍କକରି ରାଗ ଚହକି ଗଲା କ୍ଷଣକ ପାଇଁ । ସୁରଭି କହିଲେ, “ସେ କଂପ୍ୟୁଟର ଇଞ୍ଜିନିଅର୍ ବାଙ୍କଲୋର୍‌ରେ” । ସୁବ୍ରତ ଯୋଡ଼ିଲେ - ନାଁ ତାର ଦେବାଶିଷ ଦାସ୍ । ଭଲ ଛାତ୍ର ପିଲାବେଳୁ । ବମ୍ବେରେ ପଢ଼ିଛି ଓ ବଡ଼ ହୋଇଛି । ଦୁଇ ଭାଇ । ମା' କ୍ୟାନସରରେ ପାଞ୍ଚ ବର୍ଷ ତଳୁ ଚାଲିଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ମନରେ ପୁଅ ଦୁଇଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ମାୟା ଲାଗିଗଲା ।

ଦିନ ଗଣିବାରେ ଲାଗିଗଲେ ସୁରଭି । କେମିତି ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ କଟିବ । ସୁବ୍ରତ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅପିସ୍‌ରୁ ଅଧଘଣ୍ଟା, ଘଣ୍ଟା ଆଗରୁ ଘରେ ହାଜର । କେହି ନ ବୁଝିଲେ ବି ସୁରଭି ବୁଝନ୍ତି ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ଉଦ୍‌ବିଗ୍ନ ମନକୁ ।

ଗତକାଳି ସୁମିର କାମ୍ କ୍ୟାନସେଲ୍ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ସୁମି ତା'ର ବନ୍ଧୁ ପଦାର୍ଥ ବିଜ୍ଞାନର ଲେକଚରର୍ ରୀତାକୁ ଧରି ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲା ଦିନ ୨ଟାରେ । ରୀତା, ସୁମିର ହାଲୁକାକୁ ‘ଜିଗ୍‌ରୀ ଦୋସ୍’ । ତା' ରୁମ୍‌ରେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ହସ, ଖୁସି, ଗଳ୍ପରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ସୁମି କଫି ଭଲ ପାଏ ଅକାଳେ ସକାଳେ । ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବହୁଳିଆ କ୍ଷୀର ଆଉ ଚିନିରେ କଫି ତିଆରି କରି ରୁମ୍‌କୁ ପଶିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ବାହାରୁ ଶୁଣିଲେ ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କ କଥୋପକଥନ । “କେମିତି ଲାଗୁଛନ୍ତି ତୋତେ କହ ଏଇ ଉଦ୍ୟମାନ ଯୁବକ ?” ବୋଧହୁଏ ସୁମି ଫଟାଟି ଦେଖାଉଛି ରୀତାକୁ । ରୀତାର ଉତ୍ତର, “ହଁ, ... ବୁଦ୍ଧିମାନ, ତୀକ୍ଷ୍ଣ ଓ ରୁପବାନ ଜଣାପଡ଼ୁଛନ୍ତି ତ, ହେଲେ ବଡ଼ ଫଟା ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଆଉସବୁ ଶାରୀରିକ କମ୍ପେକ୍ସ ଦେଇଥାନ୍ତି, ସବୁ ନିଶରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ...” । ହେଁ, ହେଁ, ଉଚ୍ଚ କଣ୍ଠରେ ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କ ହସ । କଫି ଥଣ୍ଡା ହୋଇଯିବ । ସୁରଭି କବାଟକୁ ଚୋ ସାହାଯ୍ୟରେ ହାଲୁକା କରି ଧକ୍କା ଦେଲେ । ପଶି ଦେଖିଲେ ରୀତା ହାତରେ ଦେବାଶିଷର ଫଟା । ଦେଖି ନ ଦେଖିଲା ଭଳି କହିଲେ, “ମୁଁ ଜାଣେ ତୁମେ ଦୁଇ ଜଣ କଫି ସଂଗେ କୋବି ପକ୍କୁଡ଼ି ଭଲ ପାଇବ” । ହସି ହସି ରୁମ୍‌ରୁ ବାହାରି ଆସିଲେ ସୁରଭି - ଝିଅ ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କ ବୟସର ଉଦ୍‌ବେଳକୁ ଚାପି ନ ଦେଇ । ସୁମି, ରୀତାଙ୍କୁ ଏକାଠି ଦେଖିଲେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ଵାଳରେ ତାଙ୍କ ହଜିଲା ଅତୀତ - ତାଙ୍କ ପିଲାଦିନର ବନ୍ଧୁ ‘ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍’ । କାଲି କେତେ ଦିନ ତଳର ସ୍ମୃତି ।

ଗୋଟିଏ ମାତ୍ର ଝିଅ ସୁମି । ତା'ର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ, ତା'ର ସୁଖ ଯେମିତି ତାଙ୍କର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ, ତାଙ୍କର ସୁଖ । କାଲି ଆସିବେ ସେମାନେ ଓପରଠଳି ଝଟା ସମୟରେ ବାସ୍ତାନିଧି ବାବୁଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ । ଲିଭିଙ୍ଗ୍‌ରୁମ୍‌କୁ ସଜେଇବାକୁ ଗଲେ ସୁରଭି । ଚାକର ଗୋକା ‘ଅରକ୍ଷିତ’ ସାତବର୍ଷ ବେଳୁ



ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖେ । ପୁଅ ଭଳି ମନେ କରନ୍ତି ସୁରଭି ତାକୁ । ଯବର୍ଷ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖେ । ଘର କାମ କରେ । ବଜାର ସଉଦା କରେ । ଯେଉଁଦିନ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଆସିଥିଲା, ସୁରଭି ସେଇଦିନକୁ ତା'ର 'ଜନ୍ମଦିନ' ବୋଲି ପାଳନ କରନ୍ତି । ସୁମି ପରେ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କର ପୁଅଟିଏ ହେବାର ଲକ୍ଷା ଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁମି ଜନ୍ମ ପରେ କେତେକ ଶାରୀରିକ ଅସୁବିଧା ଓ ଡାକ୍ତରମାନଙ୍କ ସାବଧାନତା ଯୋଗୁଁ ସେ ଲକ୍ଷା ତାଙ୍କର ଫଳବତୀ ହୋଇ ପାରି ନ ଥିଲା । ତାପରେ ... ହଠାତ୍ ଦିନେ ଛଅବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ବାଞ୍ଛାନିଧି ବାବୁ ଅରକ୍ଷିତକୁ ଧରି ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ ପହଞ୍ଚିଥିଲେ ଦାଣ୍ଡଆଡୁ ପାଟି କରି କହି "ତା' ପର୍ବ କ'ଣ ସରିଗଲାଣିକି ଆଜ୍ଞା ?" ସୁରଭି ବାଞ୍ଛାନିଧି ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ ସୋଫାରେ ବସେଇ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ପାଟି କରି ଡାକିଲେ, "ଶୁଣୁଛ, ବାଞ୍ଛାନିଧି ବାବୁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ।" ସୁରଭି ତା' ଧରି ପହଞ୍ଚି ଦେଖିଲେ ବାଞ୍ଛାନିଧି ବାବୁଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ପିଲାଟିଏ । କାନ୍ଧରେ ଗାର କାଟୁଛି ନଖରେ । ପୁରୁଣା ଛିଣ୍ଡା ହାଫ୍ ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ୍ ସଙ୍ଗେ ମଇଳା ସାର୍ଟ ଆଉ ନାଲି ଗାମୁଛାଟିଏ ପକେଇଛି କାନ୍ଧରେ । ନୁଖୁରା ବାଳ । ମୁହଁଟି କିନ୍ତୁ ନିର୍ମାୟା । ଆଖିରେ ଅନେକ ଆଶା । ଜାଣେ ବୋଧହୁଏ କାହିଁକି ବାଞ୍ଛାନିଧି ବାବୁ ତାକୁ ଏ ନୂଆ ପରିବାରଟିକୁ ଆଣିଛନ୍ତି । ସୁରଭି ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ଘର କାମରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବାକୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ପିଲା ପାଇଁ ଅନେକଙ୍କୁ କହିଥାନ୍ତି । କାଞ୍ଚନ ଯିବା ପରେ, ବାସନମଜା, ଘର ପୋଛା, ରୋଷେଇବାସ, ସୁମିର ସ୍କୁଲ, ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ଅଫିସ୍ ଚାଇମ୍ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ଅଗନିଷ୍ଠାସୀ କରିଦିଏ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ । ସୁରଭି ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି । ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ସମ୍ମାନ କରନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ରୂପର ପୂଜା କରନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ଚଂପାକଳି ଆଖୁ ଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଦୁଇ ହାତରେ ଧରି କହନ୍ତି, "ସୁରଭି, ମୁଁ ରେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଛି - ପିଲା ମିଲୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକ ମଧ୍ୟ ମିଲୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଅନେକ ଦୋକାନ, ବଜାର ଖୋଲିବା ପରେ ବାହାରେ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସୁବିଧା, ସ୍ବାଧୀନତା । ଘରକୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ସେମାନେ ଚାହୁଁ ନାହାନ୍ତି ।"

ଆଜି ଅନେକ ଦିନ ପରେ ବାଞ୍ଛାନିଧି ବାବୁ ପୁଣି ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ । ସୁରଭି ଜାଣନ୍ତି, ସୁରଭି ବାଞ୍ଛାନିଧି ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ ବଡ଼ ଭଲ ଭଳି ସମ୍ମାନ କରନ୍ତି, ବନ୍ଧୁ ଭଳି ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା କରନ୍ତି, ସହକର୍ମୀ ବୋଲି ନିର୍ଭର କରନ୍ତି ଅଫିସ୍‌ରୁ ଘର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସବୁ କଥାରେ । ସୁରଭି ପଚାରିଲେ ପିଲାଟିକୁ, "ତୋ ନାଁ କ'ଣ?" । ମୁହଁକୁ ନ ଚାହିଁ କାନ୍ଧରେ ସେମିତି ଗାର ଚାଶୁ ଚାଶୁ ପିଲାଟି କହିଥିଲା, 'ଅରକ୍ଷିତ' । ସାଙ୍ଗିଆ କ'ଣ? - 'ସ୍ବାଇଁ' । 'କୋଉଠି ଘର?' - 'ସୁନାଖଲା, ବୋଲଗଡ଼ ପାଖେ' । 'ଘରେ ଆଉ କିଏ?' ବାଞ୍ଛାନିଧି ବାବୁ ରୋକି ନେଇ କହିଲେ, "ମା', ବାପା ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଏଠି ସେଠି ବସ୍ ଷ୍ଟାଣ୍ଡରେ ବୁଲୁଥିଲା । ଏଇଥର ଗାଁରୁ ଆସିଲାବେଳେ ବସ୍‌ଷ୍ଟାଣ୍ଡରୁ ଧରି ଆଣିଲି ତାକୁ ଚାକିରି ପାଇବ ବୋଲି କହି ।" ବଡ଼ହେଲେ, ସୁରଭି ବାବୁ ତାକୁ ଅଫିସ୍‌ରେ ଚପରାଶୀ କରିଦେବେ, "ବଡ଼ ଅଫିସ୍‌ରଙ୍ଗ ଘରେ କାମ କରିବୁ" । ଅରକ୍ଷିତର ମୁହଁ ଉଜ୍ଜଳିଆ ଦେଖାଗଲା ଏବେ । ସୁରଭି ତାକୁ ଡାକିନେଲେ ରୋଷେଇ ଘରକୁ । ସୁଜିରେ କରିଥିଲେ ମହନଭୋଗ । ଥାଳିଆଏ ବଢ଼େଇ ଦେଲେ ତାକୁ । ମନଭରି ଖାଇଲା ସେଦିନ, ଆଉ କେମିତି କୃତଜ୍ଞତାରେ ଆଖିଭରି ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ମୁହଁରେ ଭଲ କରି ଚାହିଁଥିଲା ।

ପ୍ରଥମ ଦେଖାରୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗିଥିଲା ଅରକ୍ଷିତ । ସୁମି ସାଂଗେ ସାଂଗେ କହିଥିଲା, "ମା', ତାକୁ ଜାମା, ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ୍ କିଣିଦିଅ ।" ସେଦିନ ଉପରଠଳି ବଜାରରୁ ଦୁଇ ସେଟ୍ ଜାମା, ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ୍ ଓ ନୂଆ ଗାମୁଛା କିଣି ଦେଇଥିଲେ ସୁରଭି । ସୁମି ତାକୁ ଅକ୍ଷର ଶିଖାଏ । ପଢ଼ାଏ । ଏବେ ସେ ସୁମିର ଛୋଟ ବେଳର ତୃତୀୟ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ବହି ପଢ଼ିଲାଣି । ମିଶାଣ, ଫେଡ଼ାଣ ଶିଖିଲାଣି । ସୁମି ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ତାକୁ ଗାଳି ଦିଏ, କହେ "ମା'କୁ କହିବି" । ଅରକ୍ଷିତ ବି ଭୁଲିଯାଏ ତା'ର ସ୍ଥିତି ଏ ଘରେ, କହେ - "ମୁଁ ବି କହିବି ମା'ଙ୍କୁ, ତୁମେ କେମିତି ମା'ଙ୍କୁ ଲୁଚେଇ ସେଦିନ ରୀତାଅପା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବଜାର ଯାଇଥିଲ" । ଦୁଇଜଣ, ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ଭଳି ଝଗଡ଼ା କରନ୍ତି । ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗେ । ଘର ଲାଗେ ଘର ଭଳି । ସେଇ ଦିନଠୁ, ବାଡ଼ି ବଗିଚା, ଘରଦ୍ବାର, ବଜାର ସଉଦା ସବୁଥିରେ ଅରକ୍ଷିତ ତାଙ୍କର ବଡ଼ ହାତ ।

ଝିଅର ଚିନ୍ତା ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ । ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଅରକ୍ଷିତ ବୁଝେ । କହେ, "ମା', ସୁମିଅପା ବାହାଘର ପୂର୍ବରୁ ମୋ'ର ଗୋଟେ ସାଇକଲ୍ ଦରକାର । କେତେ କାମ, ବଜାର ଘାଟ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ ।" ସୁରଭି ତା'ର ଏଇ ବର୍ଷ ଜନ୍ମଦିନରେ ତାକୁ ସାଇକଲ୍‌ଟିଏ କିଣି ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଦିନେ ଦୁଇ ଦିନରେ ଶିଖିଗଲା ସାଇକଲ୍ । ଜିଦି କଲା ସୁମିଅପାଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ଚିକେ ସାଇକଲ୍‌ରେ ବୁଲେଇ ଆଣିବ କଲୋନୀ । ସୁମି ମଧ୍ୟ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ବାରଣକୁ ଉପେକ୍ଷା କରି ଅରକ୍ଷିତ ସାଂଗେ ସାଇକଲ୍‌ରେ କଲୋନୀ ବୁଲି ଆସିଲା । ଅରକ୍ଷିତର ରଂଗ ଚିକେ ମଇଳା ଯାହା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଦବ, କାଲଦା ଦେଖିଲେ କେହି ବୁଝିବେନି ସେ ସୁମିର ଭାଇ ନୁହେଁ ବୋଲି । କଲୋନୀର ଲୋକେ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଭୁଲ କରନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କର ପୁଅଟିଏ ଦୁଇଟି ବୋଲି ।

ଆଜି ଅରକ୍ଷିତର ଗୋଡ଼ ତଳେ ଲାଗୁନି । ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ ହିମି ଗୀତ ଛାଡ଼ିଛି, 'ମେରୀ ମଖ୍‌ଡ଼ା, ମେରୀ ଶୋଣିଏ ... ଚଲ୍ ବଲୀଏ .. ଏ..ଏ' । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ସୁମି ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ଯାଇ, "ସୁମିଅପା, ସେମାନେ ଆସିଲେଣି । ଏମିତି ବେଶରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଗକୁ ଯିବ?" କହି ହସି ହସି



ଗଡ଼ୁଛି । ସୁମି ରବିବାର ବୋଲି ବିଛଣାରେ ଦିନ ନଅଟା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ପଢ଼ିଥାଏ । ବିରକ୍ତ ହୋଇ, “ମା’, ଅରକ୍ଷିତ ମତେ ଡିଜର୍ଭ୍ କରୁଛି” କହି ବାଧରୁମ୍ଭୁ ଉଠିଗଲା ।

ଆଜି ସେମାନେ ଆସିବେ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଆଶା । ସୁବ୍ରତ ଉତ୍ସୁକ । ସୁରଭି ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ ଭେଜିଟେବ୍ଲ୍ ଚପ୍, ଅଣ୍ଡା ଚପ୍ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଗଢ଼ି ରଖିଲେଣି । ଖାଲି ଗୋଳା ବେସନରେ ବୁଡ଼େଇ ଗରମ ତେଲରେ ଛାଣିଦେବେ ଆସିବା ବେଳକୁ । ଅରକ୍ଷିତକୁ ପଠେଇ ଗାଙ୍ଗୁରାମ୍ ସୁଇଚ୍ ଝଲ୍‌ରୁ ସନ୍ଦେଶ, କମଳା ଭୋଗ ମଗେଇ ରଖିଛନ୍ତି । ଦିନ ଦୁଇଟାରୁ ଅରକ୍ଷିତ ତା’ ସାଇକଲ୍ ଯୋଛୁଟି । ସୁରଭି ପାଟିକଲେ, “ଆରେ ଅରକ୍ଷିତ, ବାସନ ପଢ଼ିଛି - କ’ଣ କରୁଛୁ ସିଆଡ଼େ?” “ମା’, ଘରକୁ ଲୋକ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି, ମୋ ସାଇକଲ୍‌ଟା ଅପରହନିଆ ମାଟି କାଦୁଅରେ - ନ ପୋଛିଲେ କ’ଣ ଭାବିବେ ସେମାନେ!”, ଅରକ୍ଷିତ କହିଲା । ସୁବ୍ରତ ପାଟିକଲେ, “ସେମାନେ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି ତୋ’ ସାଇକଲ୍ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ହଇରେ - ନାଁ, ତୋ’ ସୁମିଅପାକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ?” ଅରକ୍ଷିତ ଜବାବ ଦେଲା, “ସୁମିଅପାକୁ ତ ସେମାନେ ସେମିତି ଟେକିନେବେ ମୋ ସାଇକଲ୍‌ଟା ସମ୍ପ ଦେଖିଲେ ସିନା!” ସମସ୍ତେ ହସିଲେ, ସୁମି ବାଧରୁମ୍ଭୁ ଆସୁ ଆସୁ ହସି ପକେଇଲା ।

ସୁମି ପାଖକୁ ଗଲେ ସୁରଭି । କହିଲେ, “ସେଇ ସବୁଜ ରଂଗର ଶାଢ଼ୀଟା ଗତ କୁମାର ପୁଣ୍ୟମୀ ଦିନ ପିନ୍ଧିଥିଲୁ, ସେଇଟା ପିନ୍ଧିପକା । ଆଉ ମୁହଁଟାକୁ ଟିକେ ସଜେଇ ଦେ ।” ସୁମିକୁ ଏ କଥା କହିବାକୁ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ମାଡ଼ି ପଡ଼େ । ମନେ ମନେ ସେ ତାକୁ ସମ୍ମାନ କରନ୍ତି, ଭାବନ୍ତି, ସୁମିର ଦରକାର ନାହିଁ ଏ ସବୁ । ତା’ର ଭିତର ବାହାର ସବୁ ସୁନ୍ଦର । ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଓ ରୂପର ନିଛକ ପ୍ରତିଛବି ତାଙ୍କ ସୁମିତା । ଯେମିତି ସାକ୍ଷାତ ସରସ୍ୱତୀ । ରୁମ୍ଭୁ ବାହାରି ଆସିଲେ ସୁରଭି । ତାଙ୍କୁ ବି ଶାଢ଼ୀ ବଦଳେଇବାକୁ ହେବ । ପଛଆଡ଼ୁ ସୁମିତା କହିଲା, “ମା’ ତୁମେ ସେଇ ଘିଅ ରଂଗର, ନାଲି ବର୍ଡର୍ ଶାଢ଼ୀଟା ପିନ୍ଧିବତ?” ସୁରଭି ଦର୍ପଣ ଆଗରେ ଠିଆ ହେଲେ । ବାଳଗୁଡ଼ା ଟିକେ ପାଟି ଯାଇଛି କପାଳ କରେ କରେ । ଉପରେ ପାନିଆଟା ଚଲେଇ ଦେଲେ ଓ ମୁହଁ ପୋଛି ହାଲକା ପାଉଁରର ଛାପ ଦେଲେ । ସତେଜ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ଟୋପାଟି ମାରିଲେ । ପଛ ଆଡ଼ୁ ସୁବ୍ରତ ଆସି ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ମୁହଁ ପାଖକୁ ମୁହଁ ଦେଇ କହିଲେ, “ଝିଅକୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କରୁ କରୁ ମା’କୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କରିବେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଭଦ୍ରଲୋକ - ଭଦ୍ରଲୋକ ତୁମ ଉପରେ ଆଖି ପକେଇବେ ନାହିଁ ତ? ସୁରଭି, ଆଜି ଏ ବୟସରେ ତୁମେ ତଥାପି ମନେ ହୁଅ ସେଇ ପଟିଶ ବର୍ଷ ଆଗର ସୁରଭି ।” ସଦା ଗମ୍ଭୀର ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ରସିକତା ସୁରଭି ଉପଭୋଗ କଲେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ । ଲଙ୍କାର ଅରୁଣିମା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆରକ୍ତ କରୁ କରୁ ଏଡ଼େଇବାକୁ କହିଲେ, “ଯାଏ ଦେଖେ ସୁମି କ’ଣ କଲା ।”

ସୁରଭି ଝିଅ ରୁମ୍ଭୁକୁ ପଶିଲେ । ଆଖିରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଲୁହ ଜକେଇଗଲା - ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ସୁମିକୁ ସେମାନେ ଡୋଳିନେବେ ବିନା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନରେ । ସୁମି ବିନା ଜୀବନ . . . ଆଗକୁ ଭାବି ପାରିଲେନି ସୁରଭି, କୋଳକୁ ଆଉଜାଇ ନେଲେ ସୁମିକୁ ।

ହଠାତ୍ ଅରକ୍ଷିତର ଦାଣ୍ଡଆଡ଼ୁ ପାଟି । “ମା’ ଆସିଗଲେଣି ସେମାନେ, ଧଳା କାର୍ ତାଙ୍କର”, କହି ଦୌଡ଼ି ଆସିଲା ଭିତରକୁ - ଗୋଡ଼ ଯେମିତି ତଳେ ଲାଗୁନି ତା’ର । ସୁବ୍ରତ ଦାଣ୍ଡଘରକୁ ବାହାରି ଗଲେ । ବାଞ୍ଛାନିଧି ବାବୁଙ୍କ ପରିଚିତ ସ୍ୱର ଶୁଭିଲା । ସୁମି ସଂଗେ ତା’ ରୁମ୍ଭରେ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ତାକକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ରହିଲେ ସୁରଭି । ଝିଅକୁ ଡାକିଲେ ବାଞ୍ଛାନିଧି ବାବୁ, “ମା’ ସୁମି . . .” । ସୁମିକୁ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ, କେଉଁ କଲେଜରେ, କେତେ ବର୍ଷ ଚାକିରି, କ’ଣ କ’ଣ ଭଲ ପାଏ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଭଦ୍ରଲୋକଙ୍କ ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ସ୍ୱର ଶୁଣା ଯାଉଥାଏ । ଏପଟେ ରୋଷେଇ ଘରେ ତା’ କରିବାକୁ ଅରକ୍ଷିତକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କଲେ ସୁରଭି । ତା’ପରେ ଚପ୍‌ଗୁଡ଼ା ଓ ମିଠାକୁ ପ୍ଲେଟ୍‌ରେ ଧରି ଅରକ୍ଷିତ ନେଇଗଲା ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ସୁବ୍ରତ ଉଠିଆସି ସୁରଭିଙ୍କୁ ଡାକିଲେ ଓ ତା’ ଟ୍ରେ ଧରି ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ପଛେ ପଛେ ସୁରଭି ଆସିଲେ ।

ରୁମ୍ଭୁକୁ ପଶିବା ମାତ୍ରେ ପୁଅ ‘ଦେବାଶୀଷ’ ଆଖିରେ ପଡ଼ିଲା । ତା’ କପ୍‌ଟା ରଖିବା ଆଗରୁ ଚାହିଁ ଦେଲେ ଝଟକରେ ପୁଅର ବାପକୁ । ଏ କ’ଣ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି ସୁରଭି? ଭୁଲ୍ ନୁହେଁ ତ ! ‘ମନୁଭାଇ’ ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ସ୍ୱର ବାହାରିଗଲା ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରୁ । ତା’ କପ୍ ଚହଲିଗଲା । ପାଦତଳୁ ପୃଥିବୀଟା ଯେମିତି ଖସି ଯାଉଛି । କପାଳରେ ବିନ୍ଦୁ ବିନ୍ଦୁ ଝାଳ । ଭୁଲ୍ - ଭୁଲ୍ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି ସୁରଭି । ନାଁ - ପଟିଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ଅତୀତ, ସାମ୍ନାରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ୩ ଫୁଟ୍ ଦୂରରେ ମାତ୍ର । ହାତ ଅରୁଛି । ନିଥର ହୋଇଗଲେ ସୁରଭି । ଦେବାଶୀଷର ବାପା ‘ମନୋଜ’ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ପଟିଶ ବର୍ଷ ଆଗର ‘ମନୁଭାଇ’ ।

ସେଇ ସମାନ ରେହେରା . . . ଉପରେ ବୟସର ଯାହା ପ୍ରଲେପ । କ୍ଷଣକ ମାତ୍ର ସମୟ - ଆଖି ଉଠେଇ ପୁଣି ଥରେ ଭୁଲ୍ ବୋଲି ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରିବାକୁ ମୁହଁ ଡୋଳିଲେ ସୁରଭି । ‘ସୁରୁ’ ଭଦ୍ରଲୋକଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରୁ ବାହାରିଗଲା ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ । ସେ ସ୍ୱର ଭୁଲ୍ ହୋଇ ନ ପାରେ । ସ୍ମୃତିର

ଫରୁଆ ବନ୍ଦ ହୋଇ ରହିଥିଲା ପଚିଶ ବର୍ଷ । ଖୋଲିଗଲା . . . ଫିଟିଗଲା . . . ବୋହିଗଲା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ସୁଅ । ଅତୀତର ପ୍ରବଳ ଝଙ୍କାର ଝଲକାଇ ଦେଲା ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନକୁ ତାଙ୍କର । ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ କୁଦା ମାରି ଅତୀତ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଗଲା । ସୁରଭି ଠେଲିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତ ଶକ୍ତି ଦେଇ । ନାଁ . . . ମନୁଭାଇ ନାଁ . . . ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକର ଝଲକାରେ ସୁରଭି ଫେରିଗଲେ ପଚିଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳକୁ ।

. . . . .

ଖରାଦିନ ଦ୍ଵିପ୍ରହର । ବୋଉ ଠାକୁର ଘରେ ପୁଜା କରୁଛି । ପୁଜା ସରୁ ସରୁ ତା’ର ଦିନ ହେବ ଗୋଟାଏ କି ଦୁଇଟା । ଦୁଇଧାଡ଼ି ଘର । ଛ’ ବଖରା । ବାପା କଚେରୀ କାମରେ କଲିକତା ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସାନଭଉଣୀ ସରସୀ, ମାଉସୀ ଘରକୁ ଚାରି ଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଯାଇଥାଏ । ଘରେ ଖାଲି ବୋଉ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସୁରଭି । ରଂଗୀ ବୋଲି ଚାକରାଣୀଟା - ବାହାରେ ଗାଧୋଇବାକୁ ଯାଏ ପୋଖରୀକୁ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଏଇ ସମୟରେ । ପ୍ରବଳ ଖରା ଧାସରେ ଦ୍ଵିପ୍ରହର ଆଡ଼କୁ ସବୁ ଯେମିତି ନିସ୍ଵବ୍ଦ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ନିସ୍ଵେଜ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ସୁରଭି ପୁରୁଣା ଆଲ୍‌ମାରୀଟା ଖୋଲି ଆଲ୍‌ବମ୍‌ଟାକୁ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି । ହଠାତ୍ ପଛଆଡ଼ୁ କାହାର ବଳିଷ୍ଠ ବାହୁ ବନ୍ଧନ ଭିତରେ ଛନ୍ଦି ହୋଇଗଲେ, ଫୁଲଭଳି ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁକୁ ଡୋଳି ନେଇ ମନୁଭାଇ ଡାକିଥିଲେ ‘ସୁରୁ’ . . . । ସେ ଅଭାବିତ, ଅପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଶିତ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ନିରବ ନିଧର ଖରାବେଳ, ହାବୁକା ହାବୁକା ପ୍ରୀତିର ରଙ୍ଗୀନ ଶୀତଳ ସମୀରରେ ଭରିଗଲା । ସେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀକୁ ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବନ୍ଦ ଫରୁଆରେ, ନିଗୁଡ଼ ଚାପରେ, ମନର ଗନ୍ତା ଘରେ, ଅତଳ ତଳରେ, ସାତତାଳ ପଙ୍କ ତଳେ ରଖିଥିଲେ ସୁରଭି । ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ଅତର୍କିତ, ଅଭାବିତ, ପ୍ରୀତିର ଏ ଚାପରୁ ଯଦିଓ ସୁରଭି ମୁକ୍ତ ହେବାକୁ ଚାହଁ ନ ଥିଲେ ତଥାପି ନିଜକୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଦେଲେ - କିଏ ଦେଖିବ - କିଏ କ’ଣ କହିବ . . . !

ବଡ଼ବାପାଙ୍କ ପୁଅ ସୁଜିତଭାଇଙ୍କ ସାଂଗ ମନୁଭାଇ । ବୁର୍ଲା ଇଞ୍ଜିନିଅରିଂ କଲେଜରୁ ପାସ୍ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ବାପା, ମା’ଙ୍କ ଏକ ମାତ୍ର ସନ୍ତାନ । ବାପା ତାଙ୍କର ଆଇ.ଏ.ଏସ୍ । ସେତେବେଳେ ସର୍ବତ୍ରିଭିଜନର ବଡ଼ ଅଫିସର୍ ହୋଇ ଆସିଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଛୋଟ ସହରକୁ । ସୁଜିତଭାଇ ଓ ମନୁଭାଇ ସେଇ ପିଲାବେଳୁ ସାଙ୍ଗ । ପୁଣି ବୁର୍ଲା ଇଞ୍ଜିନିଅରିଂ କଲେଜରେ ଏକାଠି ହଞ୍ଜେଲରେ ରୁମ୍‌ମେଟ୍ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ସୁଜିତ ଭାଇଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଘରକୁ ଦୁଇ ତିନି ଥର ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ଘରେ ସେତେବେଳେ ସମାଜର ଚାପାରେ ଭାଇ ବା ବଂଧୁଭାବେ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନ ହୋଇ ମିଶିବା ଝିଅ ଜୀବନରେ ସଂଭବ ନୁହେଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଆକର୍ଷଣ, ଛୋଟ ଭଉଣୀ ସରସୀ ଆଖିରୁ ଏଡ଼େଇ ଯାଇ ନ ଥିଲା । ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ବାହାଘର ପାଇଁ ବାପା ବୋଉ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଲା ବେଳେ ଦିନେ ବୋଉକୁ କହିଥିଲା, “ବୋଉ, ମନୁଭାଇତ ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲ କାଣ୍ଡିଡେଟ୍, ସୁରୁଅପାର ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ ବାହାଘର କଲେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଭଲ ‘ଯୋଡ଼ି’ ହେବ ।” ସୁରଭି ମଧ୍ୟ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ, ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଦେଖିଥିଲେ ସେଦିନ ‘ସୁରଭି ଓ ମନୋଜ’ ର ଯୋଡ଼ିକୁ । ବୋଉ ପାଖରେ ପାଟି ଖୋଲିନି ତାଙ୍କର କେବେ ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ନିଜେ କହିବାକୁ ନିଜପାଇଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କ ନିରବତାରୁ ବୋଉ ବୁଝିପାରିଥିଲା ସରସୀର ଏ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ତଳେ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ଆନନ୍ଦ ।

ଦୁଇଦିନ ପରେ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ଖାଇବାକୁ ବାଢ଼ିଦେଇ ବୋଉ କହିଥିଲା, ମନୁପାଇଁ ସୁରଭିର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବଟି ଦେଲେ ଭଲ ହୁଅନ୍ତା । ସୁଜିତର ବି ପସନ୍ଦ । ସୁଜିତ କହୁଥିଲା, ତାଙ୍କ ଘରର ଆଭିଜାତ୍ୟ ଆମଠୁ ବହୁତ ଉଚ୍ଚରେ । ବୋଉ କହିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ ଜରିଆରେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବଟି ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ପଠେଇବାକୁ । ବାପା ଚୁପ୍ ରହିଲେ । ଉତ୍ତର ନାହିଁ । ବୋଉ ଆଉଟିକେ ଚରକାରି ଦେବାକୁ କହିଲା - ବାପା ଗମ୍ଭୀର ହୋଇ ମନା କଲେ । କ୍ଷଣକ ପରେ କହିଲେ, “ମୁଁ ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ କହିବି । କିନ୍ତୁ ମନୋଜର ବାପା ପୁଅର ଆଗ୍ରହକୁ କେତେ ସମ୍ମାନ ଦେବେ କହିପାରିବିନି । ସୁରୁ ଦୁଃଖ ପାଇବା ମୁଁ ବରଦାସ୍ତ କରି ପାରିବି ନାହିଁ ।” ତଥାପି ବୋଉ ଜୋର ଦେଇଥିଲା ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ ଡକେଇବାକୁ ।

ମା’ ଛଡ଼ା ଝିଅର ମନ କଥା ବୁଝିବ କିଏ ଅଧିକ ? ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ବାବୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ପଚାଶ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କା ଯୌତୁକ ଚାହାନ୍ତି ସେମାନେ । ଝିଅକୁ ଦେଖିବେ ପଛରେ, ଯଦି ଯୌତୁକ ଦେବାକୁ ରାଜି ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଆପଣ । ବାପାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ଶୁଖିଗଲା, ବୋଉ ମୁହଁ ଶୁଖିଗଲା । ବାପା ରିଟାୟାର୍ କରିବେ । ଘରତୋଳା, ଦୁଇଝିଅଙ୍କ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ାରେ ଭିଡ଼ାଭିଡ଼ି ଭିତରେ ସଂସାର ଚଳୁଛି । ସେତେବେଳେ କୋଡ଼ିଏ ହଜାରରେ ଝିଅ ବାହାଘର ଉଠିଯିବ । ବାପା ଚାହଁ ନ ଥିଲେ ଟଙ୍କା ଦେଇ ଜୁଆଁଇ କିଣିବାକୁ । ସମାଜରେ, ଆଭିଜାତ୍ୟର ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟକୁ ଟଙ୍କାରେ ଡାକେଇବାକୁ । ଶୁଣିବା ପରଠୁ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ସେ ରଙ୍ଗିନ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଧୂଳିସାତ୍ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା । କାରଣ, ଜାଣନ୍ତି ଯେ ପଚାଶ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କା କେବଳ ଯୌତୁକରେ, ଆଉ ବାହାଘରରେ ଅତି କମ୍‌ରେ କୋଡ଼ିଏ ହଜାର ଟଙ୍କା । ସତରୁି ହଜାର କେବଳ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ! ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ମନରୁ ପ୍ରେମର ମହକ ଉଡ଼ିଗଲା । ସୁରଭି ଭାବିଲେ, ମନୁଭାଇ ଜାଣନ୍ତି କି ଏ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ କଥା? ସରସୀ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ନେଇ ବାପା, ବୋଉଙ୍କୁ ଲୁଚାଇ ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ଚିଠିରେ ପଚାରିଥିଲା । ମନୁଭାଇ ଲେଖିଥିଲେ, “ସରସୀ, ମନୁଭାଇର ନିଜସ୍ଵ ବୋଲି କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କର ମୁଁ ଦାସ । ସୁରୁକୁ ଯଦିଓ ମୁଁ ଚାହେଁ, ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରି ମୁଁ ପୁଣି ତୋତେ ଲେଖିବି - ମନୁଭାଇ ।” ଉତ୍ତର ଫେରିନି । ଯଦିଓ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସରସୀ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ସୁରଭି ହିଁ



ତାଙ୍କ ସମୟକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି କରି ଦିନ କଟାଇଥିଲେ, ଦିନ କଟିଥିଲା ଆଘାତରେ କେବଳ । ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରବଳ ଆଘାତ ଦେଇଥିଲା ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ଉପେକ୍ଷା । ଦିନ ରାତି କଟିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଥିଲା କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଗଭଳି - ଯେମିତି କିଛି ହୋଇନି ।

କେତେଦିନ ପରେ, ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମଉଷା ହଠାତ୍ ଦିନେ ‘ସୁବ୍ରତ’ଙ୍କ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ନେଇ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ଯୌତୁକ ନାହିଁ, ଲଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ । ବାପା ବୋଉ ଖୁସି । ଯଦିଓ ବୋଉ ବୁଝି ପାରିଥିଲା ତା’ ଝିଅ ମନର କ୍ଷତକୁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ହାତରେ ତା’ର କିଛି ନ ଥିଲା । ବୟସର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତାରୁ ସେ ବୁଝିଥିଲା ଝିଅ ଜୀବନରେ ‘ସବୁ ପାଇବାର ଆଶା’ ସମ୍ପନ୍ନ ହୁଏନା । ଯଦି ହୁଏ - ହୁଏ କଦବା କ୍ଷତିତ୍ ।

ସୁବ୍ରତ ତାଙ୍କ ଅଜାଣତରେ ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ମନରୁ ଜୋର୍ କରି ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ଅପସାରି ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଜୀବନ ଯମୁନାର ସୁଅରେ ସୁମିର ଜନ୍ମ ଉତ୍ଥାଳ ତରଙ୍ଗ ଆଣିଥିଲା । ସୁବ୍ରତ ଖୋଲା ମେଲା, ଗମ୍ଭୀର ପ୍ରକୃତିର ଲୋକ । ଜ୍ଞାନୀ, ମାନୀ ଭଦ୍ରଲୋକ । ସଂସାର ପାଇଁ, ସୁରଭି ଆଉ ସୁମିଙ୍କ ସବୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକୁ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ଆପ୍ରାଣ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ତଥାପି, ସବୁ ଭିତରେ କେବେ କେବେ ନିଛକ ଦ୍ଵିପହରରେ, ଏକୁଟିଆ ଆଖି ବୁଜି ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ବେଳେ ମନୁଭାଇ ଯେ ଦଲକାଏ ପବନ ଭଳି ଭୁଲି ଆସି ନାହାନ୍ତି ନୁହେଁ, ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ମନରେ ସେ ଅପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଶିତ ପ୍ରୀତିର ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ୍ଣକୁ ଉଦ୍ଘାଟିତ କରି ନହାନ୍ତି ନୁହେଁ - କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ନିଃସ୍ଵାର୍ଥପର ଭଲ ପାଇବା, ସୁମିର ମାତୃତ୍ଵ ଦେଇ ସୁରଭି ସେ ନିଛାଟିଆ ଦ୍ଵିପହରର ସ୍ଵତିକୁ ଫରୁଆ ଭିତରେ ମନର ସାତତାଳ ପଙ୍କରେ ପୋତି ଦେଇ ଦୂରେଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି କହି - ନାଁ - ମନୁଭାଇ - ନାଁ ।

ସୁରଭି ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହେଲେ । ଚା’ ଖିଆ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଉ ହେଉ ପଦଟିଏ ନ କହି ଉଠି ଆସିଲେ । ସୁମି ଓ ଦେବାଶିଷଙ୍କୁ କିଛି ସମୟ ଏକା ଛାଡ଼ି ବାଞ୍ଛାନିଧି ବାବୁ ଆଳ କରି ସୁବ୍ରତ ଓ ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ପଛ ବଗିଚାର ଫୁଲ ଦେଖେଇବାକୁ ନେଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସୁରଭି ରୁମ୍‌କୁ ଆସି ଖଟ ଧାରରେ ବସିଗଲେ । ମନେ ମନେ ଭାବିଲେ, ହେ ଭଗବାନ! ଏ କି ପରୀକ୍ଷା ? କିଭଳି ଭାବେ ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ସଂପର୍କକୁ ପୁଣି ଯୋଡ଼ିବେ ସୁମି ଦେଇ ? ଏଭଳି ସଂପର୍କ କ’ଣ ସେ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ ? ଫରୁଆ ପିଟିଯାଇ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ହାତଗଢ଼ା ପଟିଶ ବର୍ଷର ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସଂସାରର ପବିତ୍ରତାକୁ କଳୁଷିତ କରିଦେବନି ତ ? କହିବେ କି ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ? ଦିନେ କାଳେ ମନ ଭିତରେ ସେ ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ ! କହିବେ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ, ଯେ ଆଡ଼େଇବାକୁ ଶତ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେ ବି ସେ ନିଛାଟିଆ ଦ୍ଵିପହରରେ ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆଜିବି ସତେଜ ! ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ଚିପି ଧରିଲେ ସୁରଭି । ବଂଧୁ ହିସାବରେ ସମୁଦି ବୋଲି ନୁଆ ସଂପର୍କ ଗଢ଼ିବେ ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ ! ସେ ନିଛାଟିଆ ଦ୍ଵିପହରକୁ ଭୁଲି ପାରିବେ ନୁଆ ଗଢ଼ା ସଂପର୍କ ଭିତରେ !

ଯଦି ସୁମି ଓ ଦେବାଶିଷ ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ଚାହାଁନ୍ତି ? ଯଦି ମନୁଭାଇ ଚାହାଁନ୍ତି ସୁମିକୁ ବୋହୁ କରିବାକୁ ? କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁରଭି ମନର କ୍ଷତକୁ ନେଇ ତାଳ ଦେଇ ଚାଲିପାରିବେ କି, ଭବିଷ୍ୟତକୁ ଅଭ୍ୟର୍ଥନା ଜଣେଇ ? ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରୁ ‘ମନୁଭାଇ’ ଓ ମନୁଭାଇଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରୁ ‘ସୁରୁ’ ଚା’ କମ୍ ଓ ପ୍ରେମ୍‌ର ମୃଦୁ ଝଙ୍କରରେ ହୁଏତ କାହା କାନକୁ ଯାଇନି, କାହା ମନକୁ ଛୁଇଁନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁରଭି ଶୁଣିଛନ୍ତି ‘ସୁରୁ’କୁ, ମନୋଜ ଶୁଣିଛନ୍ତି ସେ ‘ମନୁଭାଇ’କୁ ।

କାର୍ ଶବ୍ଦରୁ ମନେ ହେଲା, ସେମାନେ ଚାଲିଗଲେ । ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ହସି ହସି, ତାଙ୍କୁ ଖୋଜି ଖୋଜି ସୁବ୍ରତ ପଶି ଆସିଲେ ଆଉ କହିଲେ, “ଜାଣିଲ ସୁରଭି, ମନୋଜବାବୁ ରାଜି ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ସୁମିକୁ ବୋହୁ କରିବେ ବୋଲି । ଦେବାଶିଷ ତୁମକୁ କେମିତି ଲାଗିଲା ?” ଏ କଥା ପଚାରି କହିଲେ, “ବାଧୁରୁମ୍‌ରୁ ମୁଁ ଆସୁଛି ସାଂଗେ ସାଂଗେ ।” ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ଉତ୍ତର ନାହିଁ । ତକିଆକୁ ମାଡ଼ି ମୁହଁ ଲୁଚେଇ ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ଭାବେ କହିଲେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବିନ୍ଦୁଛି ବୋଲି । ଅରକ୍ଷିତ ରୋଷେଇ ଘରେ ପ୍ରେମ୍ ଧୋଉଛି । ସୁମିର ପାଦ ଶବ୍ଦ . . . ନିକଟ ହେଲା । ସୁମି ଆସି ମା’ ପାଖରେ ବସିଲା ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତେ । ଚାରି ଭାଂଗର ଛୋଟ କାଗଜଟି ତାଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ଶୁଞ୍ଚିଦେଇ ସୁମି ଉଠିଗଲା ମା’ ପାଖରୁ । ସୁରଭି କାଗଜଟିକୁ ଖୋଲିଲେ । ଦେବାଶିଷ ଲେଖିଛି, “ସୁମିତା, ମୁଁ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଝିଅ ଆଗରୁ ଠିକ୍ କରି ନେଇଛି । ତୁମକୁ ପାଇଲେ ଯେ କେହି ଖୁସି ହେବ । ତୁମେ ମୋ’ ଠାରୁ ଅନେକ ଯୋଗ୍ୟର ପାତ୍ର ପାଇବ । ସମୟ ପଇଁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ମୁଁ ଦୁଃଖିତ - ଲତି ଦେବାଶିଷ ।” ସୁରଭି ଉଠି ପଡ଼ିଲେ ଧଡ଼କିନା । ଫରୁଆ ବୁଡ଼ି ଯାଉଛି, ଘୁଞ୍ଚି ଯାଉଛି . . . ସୁରଭି ଚାହୁଁଲେ ନାହିଁ ପଛକୁ । ସୁମିର ରୁମ୍‌ରେ ପହ଼ି ଝିଅକୁ କୋଳରେ ଆଉଜାଇ ନେଲେ । ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ହୋଇଥିଲା ପଟିଶ ବର୍ଷର ଅତୀତକୁ ଝିଅ ଆଗରେ ଖୋଲି ଦେବେ । କିନ୍ତୁ କେମିତି ବୁଝାଇବେ ତାଙ୍କ ମନର କଥାକୁ ?

ଅପସରି ଗଲା ସେ ଘଣ୍ଟକର ଚିକ୍ତ ଅନୁଭବ । ଭୟର ସେ ପ୍ରାଚୀର ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲା । ଜାଣନ୍ତି ସେ ସୁମି ମନରେ ଚିକିଏ ଦୁଃଖ । ଶିକ୍ଷିତା ସେ । ଏ ଘଟଣା ନ ଘଟି ଥିଲେ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ସେ ଦୁଃଖ କରି ନ ଥାନ୍ତା । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କୁ ଚିଠି ଦେଖାଇଲେ ସୁରଭି । କଳା ମେଘରେ ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ହସ ହସ ମୁହଁ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ହୋଇଗଲା । ସେ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ହୋଇଗଲେ । ସମୟ କିନ୍ତୁ ଗଢ଼ି ଚାଲିଲା ।

ମାସକ ପରେ . . . ସୁମି ପାଇଁ ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରସାବ ନେଇ ପୁଣି ବାସ୍ତାନିଧି ବାବୁ ଘରକୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ପୁଅଟି ଡାକ୍ତର । ରେସିଡେନ୍ସି କରୁଛି ପିଲାଡେଲ୍‌ପିଆରେ, ଆମେରିକାରେ । ବାପା, ମା ପୁଅକୁ ନେଇ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ବାହା କରି, ଏକାଥରେ ବୋହୂକୁ ନେଇ ଯିବେ । ତରତର ସେମାନେ, ସେଇଦିନ ସଞ୍ଜବେଳକୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଝିଅ ଦେଖିବାକୁ । ସମସ୍ତେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କଲେ । ପୁଅଟି ହସ ଖୁସିଆ । ନାଁ ‘ଗୁରୁପ୍ରକାଶ’ । ହଠାତ୍ ସବୁ ଠିକ୍ ହୋଇଗଲା । ସୁମିକୁ ମୁଦି ପିନ୍ଧାଇଦେଲେ ସେମାନେ । ସୁମି ଖୁବ୍ ଖୁସି, ଆମେରିକା ଯିବ ବୋଲି । ସୁବ୍ରତ ମଧ୍ୟ । ଆଉ ସୁରଭି ? ସବୁଠୁ ବେଶୀ ଖୁସି ବୋଧହୁଏ ସେ ହିଁ । ଅରକ୍ଷିତ ପୁଣି ଗୀତ ଛାଡ଼ିଛି ସାଇକଲକୁ ପୋଛି, ‘ମେରୀ ମୁଖଡ଼ା . . . ମେରୀ ଶୋଣିଏ . . . ଚଲବଲିଏ . . . ଏ . . . ଏ’ । ସୁମି ଆମେରିକା ଚାଲିଯିବ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି । ଝିଅ ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ । ତିନିଦିନ ଅଛି ମାତ୍ର ସୁମିର ବାହାଘର । ସୁରଭିଙ୍କ ଗୋଡ଼ ତଳେ ଲାଗୁନି । ସରସୀ ତା’ ତିନି ପୁଅଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ଆସିଛି । ସୁବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ସାନଭାଇ ଓ ତା’ର ପରିବାର ଆସି ଗଲେଣି । ସୁଜିତ ଆସିବ ସଞ୍ଜକୁ । ସୁମିପାଇଁ ଗହଣା ତିନି ସେଟ୍ ଧରି ସୁରଭି ସାନ ଜା’ ଓ ସରସୀଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖାଉଛନ୍ତି । ରୀତା ଓ ସରସୀର ପିଲାମାନେ ସୁମି ରୁମ୍‌ରେ ଜମା ହୋଇ ସୁମିକୁ ଚିତାଉଛନ୍ତି . . . ଗୁରୁ . . . ଗୁରୁପ୍ରକାଶ . . . ଗୁରୁ . . . । ସୁରଭି ଗହଣା ତଳ ନେଇ ଆଲମାରୀରେ ଚାବି ଦେଲେ । ଠାକୁର ଘରକୁ ଯାଇ ମୁଣ୍ଡିଆ ମାରିଲେ । ଫରୁଆଟି ଡୁବି ଯାଉଛି ପଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ । ସାତ ତାଳ ପଙ୍କ . . . ଚଉଦ ତାଳ . . . ଏକୋଇଶ ତାଳ । ସୁବ୍ରତ ସେ ଘରେ କେଉଁ କାଳର ପୁରୁଣା ରେକର୍ଡ଼ିଂ ଲଗେଇଛନ୍ତି, ‘ଜୀବନ ଯମୁନାରେ . . . ଜୁଆର ଉଠେରେ . . .’ ।



(Sulaksana Patnaik lives with her husband Dr. Shukdeb Sen and daughter Susan at Daytona Beach, Florida. She is a college professor in Mathematics. )



ପୁରୁଷ

ବରଂ

ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ



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## ଖାରବେଳ

ସୁମିତ୍ରା ପାଢ଼ୀ

ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ୩ଟି ରାଜ୍ୟର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଅଂଶ ଥିଲା । ମେଦିନିପୁର ସମୁଦ୍ରଠାରୁ ଗନ୍ଧା ଜିଲ୍ଲା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଥିଲା ଉତ୍କଳ ଦେଶ । ଢେଙ୍କାନାଳ, ଅନୁଗୁଳ, ହିନ୍ଦୋଳ, ସମ୍ବଲପୁର ଓ ରାୟପୁର ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଘେନି ଥିଲା ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଉତ୍ତ୍ରଦେଶ । ବାଲେଶ୍ଵର, କଟକ, ପୁରୀ, ଗଞ୍ଜାମ, ଜିଲ୍ଲାକୁ ଘେନି ଥିଲା ଅତି ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ଦେଶ । ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵର ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ଉଦୟଗିରିର ହାତୀ ଗୁମ୍ଫା ଓ ମଞ୍ଚପୁରୀ ନାମକ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଥିବା ଦୁଇଟି ପ୍ରାଚୀନ

ପଥର ଲେଖାରୁ ଜଣାପଡ଼େ ୨୧୦୦ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ମହା ପରାକ୍ରମୀ ରାଜା ଖାରବେଳ କଳିଙ୍ଗରେ ରାଜୁତି କରୁଥିଲେ । ସେ ନିଜ ବଳରେ କୁମାରିକା ଅନ୍ତରୀପ ପାଖ ପାଖ୍ୟ ରାଜ୍ୟଠାରୁ ହିମାଳୟ ତଳର ମଗଧ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସବୁ ଜିଣିଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ବଣିକମାନେ ଅନ୍ତତଃ ପାରସ୍ୟ ଉପକୂଳ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ କରୁଥିଲେ । ସେ ସମୟରେ ତିମେତ୍ରିଅସ୍ ନାମକ ଜଣେ ବିକ୍ରମଶାଳୀ ରାଜା ଆଫଗାନିସ୍ଥାନର ପୂର୍ବ ରାଜ୍ୟ ବଜିର ଏବଂ ବେଲୁଚିସ୍ଥାନର ପୂର୍ବ ରାଜ୍ୟ ପୁର ପ୍ରଭୃତିକୁ କୃଷୟୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଅଧିକାର କରି ବିଦେଶୀ ବଣିକ ମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ତଣ୍ଡ ନେଉଥିଲେ । ବଜିର ରାଜା ରାଜ୍ୟ ଛାଡ଼ି କୌଶସି ମିତ୍ର ରାଜାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଆଶ୍ରୟ ନେଇଥିଲେ । ବଜିର ରାଜକନ୍ୟା ଧୂସୀଙ୍କୁ ପଟଳ ରାଜ୍ୟର କୃଷକପତି ପାଳିଥିଲେ । ଖାରବେଳ ପାରସ୍ୟ ଉପକୂଳ ଆଡ଼କୁ ଯାଉଥିବା ବଣିକମାନଙ୍କୁ ସାହାଜ୍ୟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସିନ୍ଧୁଦେଶ ଆଡ଼କୁ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ଯାତ୍ରା କଲେ । ସେ ସିନ୍ଧୁଦେଶର ବଣିକ ନଗରୀ ପଟଳରେ ଛାଉଣୀ କରିଥିଲେ । ସେଠାରେ କୃଷକମାନେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ସାହାଜ୍ୟ କରିଥିଲେ । ପାଳିତ କୃଷକ କନ୍ୟା ବଜିର ରାଜକୁମାରୀ ଧୂସୀ ଛଦ୍ମ ବେଶରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ସେନାପତି ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ଧୂସୀଙ୍କ ଚତୁରତା ଯୋଗୁ ତିମିତ୍ରିଅସ୍ ପରାସ୍ତ ହେଲେ । ପରେ ଖାରବେଳ ଧୂସୀଙ୍କୁ ବିବାହ କରି କଳିଙ୍ଗ ଫେରିଥିଲେ ।

ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳେ ନଥିଲା ତ ଏବର ବିଶାଳ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଇଜ  
କଳିଙ୍ଗ, ଉତ୍କଳ, ଉତ୍ତ୍ରଦେଶ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସ୍ଥାନେ ଥିଲେ ବିରାଜ ।

ଦୀର୍ଘ ଜଟିଳ ପଥ ପରେ ବଣିକ ନଗରୀ ପଟଳେ କଲ ଛାଉଣି  
ବିଚକ୍ଷଣ କୃଷକ ସେନାପତି ଯୋଗୁ ତିମେତ୍ରିଅସ୍‌କୁ ପାରିଲ ଜଣି ।

ଏକୋଇଶିଶହ ବରଷ ତଳେ ଆହେ ମହାବାହୁ ଖାରବେଳ  
ଚେତ ରାଜବଂଶେ ଜନମି ପତ୍ତର ବରଷେ ଯୁବରାଜ ହେଲ ।

ସେନାପତି ନୁହେଁ ଆନ କେହି ଅଟଇ ସିଏ ବଜିର ରାଜକୁମାରୀ  
ପଟଳ ମେଖଳା କୁଳେ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା ଯା' ଉପରେ ଚକ୍ଷୁ ତୁମରି ।

ମହାପରାକ୍ରମଶାଳୀ ତୃତୀୟ ଫିର ଭାବେ ହେଲ ବିଖ୍ୟାତ  
କଳିଙ୍ଗର ସୀମା ହେଲା ହିମାଳୟରୁ କୁମାରିକା ଯାଏ ବିସ୍ତୃତ ।

ନିମିଷେ ଦେଖି ଉପଲେ ଚିହ୍ନି ରଖିଥିଲ ତା'ରେ ବଡ଼ କଉଶଳେ  
ଖୋଜୁଥିଲ ସପନ ପ୍ରତିମାକୁ ପଟଳର କନ୍ଦରେ କନ୍ଦରେ ।

ଧର୍ମରେ ହେଲେହେଁ ଜୈନ, ସବୁ ଧର୍ମର ରଖୁଥିଲ ମାନ  
କରି ଆତମ୍ଭରେ ରାଜସୁୟ ଯାଗ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣଙ୍କୁ କରୁଥିଲ ଦାନ ।

ସାରା ବିଶ୍ଵେ ସିନା ମହାବୀର ଭାବେ ହୋଇଥାଅ ପରିଚିତ  
ପାଷାଣ ନୁହେଁ ତବ ହୃଦୟ ଅମୃତ ପ୍ରେମ ଧାରାରେ ପୁରିତ ।

ତବ ରାଜୁତି ସମୟେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବଣିକର ଚତୁର୍ଦିଗେ ଥିଲା ଖ୍ୟାତି  
ବନ୍ଧେପସାଗରୁ ପାରସ୍ୟ ଉପକୂଳ ଯାଏ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟର ଥିଲା ଛୁଟି ।

ସମପ୍ରାଣ ମଣି ଯେବେ ସେନାପତିଙ୍କୁ ଜଣାଇଲ ମରମ କଥା  
ହସି ହସି ଛଦ୍ମବେଶି ଧୂସୀ ଦୂରକଲେ ତବ ମନର ବ୍ୟଥା ।

ସିନ୍ଧୁଦେଶ ଉପକୂଳେ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ବଣିକର ଯେବେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ବିପତ୍ତି  
ଯୁଦ୍ଧଯାତ୍ରା କରିଥିଲ ଉତ୍କଳ, ଉତ୍ତ୍ର ଓ ପାଖ୍ୟ ସେନା କରି ସାଥୀ ।

ବଜିର ରାଜଜେମାଙ୍କ ହାତଧରି କଳିଙ୍ଗ ଫେରିଲ ତତକ୍ଷଣେ  
ମହାରାଣୀ ଧୂସୀଙ୍କ ସହ ରାଜୁତି କଲ ଉଷତ ମନେ ।



ବଲିଙ୍ଗନ, କାନାଡ଼ା

## ମୋ ଦାଦା

ଲଲାଟେନ୍ଦୁ ପତ୍ରି

କହିବା ବାହୁଲ୍ୟ ଯେ ପଙ୍କୀର ମୋହନ ସେନାପତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ଅମର କରି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଉପାନ୍ତ ଜିଲା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କେନ୍ଦୁଝରଗଡ଼ ଅନ୍ୟତମ । ଏଠି ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କୁ ଭାଷା ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବହୁ କଷ୍ଟ ସହିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥାଏ । ୧୯୩୬ ମସିହାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ରାଜ୍ୟ ହେଲାଣି, ତଥାପି ସୀମାବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଇଲାକାରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଭାଷାଭାଷୀ ପଡ଼ୋଶୀଙ୍କ ପ୍ରକୋପ ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସୁସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ।

କିଭଳି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ ସର୍ବଦା ବଜାୟ ରହୁ - ଏଥିପାଇଁ ଯେଉଁ କେତକ ଉଦ୍ୟମୀ ସତତ ତପ୍ତର ଥିଲେ, ମୋ ଦାଦା ସ୍ୱର୍ଗତଃ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ମୋହନ ପତ୍ରି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ଏକ ଅମାୟିକ ଅଗ୍ରଗଣ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି । ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶାସନ ପଦବୀକୁ ତ୍ୟାଗ କରି “କେନ୍ଦୁଝର ଗଡ଼ ମିଳନୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସଂସଦ” ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ସମଗ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶାର କବି, ଲେଖକ ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକଙ୍କୁ ଆଦର ଓ ସମ୍ମାନିତ କରିବା ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଭାଷା କିପରି ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ରହିବ ତା’ର ପ୍ରତିକାର ପାଇଁ ସେ ସର୍ବଦା ସଂଗଠିତ ତପ୍ତରତା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଏହା ସହିତ ସେ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ କଳାକାର, କବି ଓ ଲେଖକମାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାଦେଶିକ ସ୍ତରରେ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇଥିଲେ ଏବଂ ଅଳ୍ପକ୍ଷ ଚିତ୍ତରେ ଅର୍ଥ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରି ପ୍ରତିଭା ବିକାଶକୁ ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ ମଣୁଥିଲେ । ନିଜର କର୍ମମୟ ଜୀବନରେ ସ୍କୁଲ୍, କଲେଜ୍, ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ୍ ଆଦି ନିର୍ମାଣ କରି, ବହୁଅର୍ଥ ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଥିଲେ ହେଁ ବହୁବାର ସର୍ବସ୍ୱ ଦାନ କରି, ସରଳ ସାଧୁ ଜୀବନ ଆଦରି ଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ଗାନ୍ଧିବାଦୀ ଜୀବନ ଅନୁସରଣୀୟ ଥିଲା । ବହୁବାର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଓ ସମ୍ମାନ ଲାଭ କରି ମଧ୍ୟ ସେ ଅମାୟିକ ଏବଂ ନିରାଡ଼ମ୍ବର ପ୍ରିୟ ଥିଲେ । ମୋ’ର କାଲି ଭଳି ମନେ ପଡ଼େ - ଦୁରଦର୍ଶୀ ନେତା, ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସୁଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଦାୟାଦ ବିଜୁ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ଶାସନ କାଳରେ ଆଦିବାସୀ ହରିଜନ ଗୃହ ନିର୍ମାଣ ଯୋଜନାକୁ ସଫଳ କରାଇବାରେ ମୋ ଦାଦା କିପରି ଅପୂର୍ବ କୃତୀ ଥିଲେ । ସମସ୍ତ ଜୀବନ ଶ୍ରମ ଏବଂ ସମାଜ କଲ୍ୟାଣରେ ବ୍ରତୀ ଏଇ ପରୋପକାରୀ ପରମ ସ୍ନେହୀ ମଣିଷଟି ଇହଲୀଳା ସାଙ୍ଗ କରି ଅମର ପଥର ଯାତ୍ରୀ ହେଲେ ।

ଦାଦା ! ତୁମର ଅକାଳ ତିରୋଧାନ ମୋତେ ଯେତିକି ବ୍ୟଥିତ କରିଛି ତାକୁ କେଉଁ ଲେଖନୀ ବା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ ସମର୍ଥ ହେବ? ତୁମର ଅତି ପ୍ରିୟ ଅକ୍ଷ କବି ଭୀମ ଭୋଇଙ୍କର “ପ୍ରାଣୀଙ୍କ ଆରତ ଦୁଃଖ ଅପ୍ରମିତ ଦେଖୁ ଦେଖୁ କେ ବା ସହୁ; ଏ ଜୀବନ ପଛେ ନକେଁ ପଡ଼ିଥାଉ, ଜଗତ ଉଦ୍ଧାର ହେଉ . . .”କୁ ସ୍ମରଣ କରି ମୋ’ର ବିନମ୍ର ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନାଞ୍ଜଳି ଅର୍ପଣ କରୁଛି । ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଜୀବନର ଗତିପଥ ଯେତେ ଖସଡ଼ା ହେଉ ପଛକେ, ତୁମ ଲିଖିତ “ସୁରଣ” ଓ “ସରଗ ପଳ” ପୁସ୍ତିକା ଗୁଡ଼ିକର କାଳଜୟୀ ପଢ଼ିଲେ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଗୀତା ମାହାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ଭଳି ସଦା ସର୍ବଦା ରକ୍ଷା କବଚ ହୋଇ ରହିବ, ନିଃସନ୍ଦେହ ।

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ଲଲାଟେନ୍ଦୁ ପତ୍ରି

୩୮୦୬ ହେଭେନ୍ ପାଇନସ୍ ଡ୍ରାଇଭ୍

କିଙ୍ଗ୍‌ଫିଶ୍, ଟେକ୍‌ସାସ୍ ୭୭୩୪୫



## ରୋଜଗାର ଶୂନ୍ୟ

ଡକ୍ଟର ରାଜେନ୍ଦ୍ର ନାରାୟଣ ଦାସ

ମଣିଷ ପୃଥିବୀରେ ବୋଧହୁଏ ଏକମାତ୍ର ପ୍ରାଣୀ, ଯିଏ ରୋଜଗାର ପାଇଁ ଚିନ୍ତା କରେ । ସେହି ରୋଜଗାରର ଅର୍ଥରେ ସେ ଘରଦ୍ୱାର କରେ, ଗାଡ଼ିଘୋଡ଼ା କରେ, ବିଳାସବ୍ୟସନ କରେ ଓ କିଛି କାହିଁ ମଧ୍ୟ କରେ । ରୋଜଗାରଶୂନ୍ୟ ମଣିଷ ନିଜକୁ ଅସହାୟ ମନେ କରେ । ତା'ର ଜୀବନ ଗୋଟାଏ ଅଭିଶପ୍ତ ଜୀବନ, କାରଣ ତା'ପକ୍ଷରେ ବସ୍ତୁବା ଏକ ଦୈନନ୍ଦିନ ସମସ୍ୟା ।

ସଂପ୍ରତି ଦେଖାଯାଉଛି ଯେ ରୋଜଗାରିଆମାନେ ଧନସଂପତ୍ତିକୁ ନେଇ ଉଚ୍ଚପଦବୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସମାଜରେ ବଡ଼ ହୋଇଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମତ ହିଁ ଏକମାତ୍ର ମତ ଓ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ବିଚାର ହିଁ ଏକମାତ୍ର ବିଚାର । କାହିଁକି ନା ସେମାନେ ପାଠୁଆ, ବଡ଼ ଚାକିରିଆ ଓ ଧନରେ କୁବେର । ଯିଏ ଯେତେ ଉଚ୍ଚ ପଦବୀରେ ଅଛି ତା'ର ରୋଜଗାର ସେତେ ବେଶୀ । ମାସିକ ଦରମା ତା' ପାଖରେ ଗୌଣ । ତା'ର ମଧ୍ୟ ନାନାପ୍ରକାର ପକ୍ଷିପକ୍ଷର ଥାଏ । ଯିଏ ରାଜନୀତି କରୁଛି ତା'ର ରୋଜଗାର କହିଲେ ନ ସରେ । ଯିଏ ବଡ଼ ବ୍ୟବସାୟୀ ବା ଶିଳ୍ପପତି, କି ଆଉ କ'ଣ, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ରୋଜଗାରକୁ ନେଇ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବାର ମୂଲ୍ୟ କ'ଣ ? ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରାଯାଉଛି ଯେ ଏବେ ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ସରକାରୀ ଚାକିରି ଘରେ ତାଲା ପଡ଼ିଯାଇଛି । ରାଜକୋଷ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ଏହାର କାରଣ ଆମର ନେତାମାନେ କେବଳ କହିପାରିବେ ।

ରୋଜଗାର କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ମଧ୍ୟବିତ୍ତ ବା ଉଚ୍ଚମଧ୍ୟବିତ୍ତ ଶ୍ରେଣୀର ସମସ୍ୟା ଅନେକ । ଯେଉଁ ଆୟ ଭିତରେ ସେମାନେ ଜୀବନ କାଟନ୍ତି ଓ ଆଭିଜାତ୍ୟ ତିଆରି କରିଥାନ୍ତି ସେହି ଆୟ କମିଗଲେ ବା ଶୂନ୍ୟ ହୋଇଗଲେ ସେମାନେ ଏକପ୍ରକାର ଅସହାୟ ହୋଇପଡ଼ନ୍ତି । କାରଣ ସେମାନେ ତଳକୁ ଖସିପାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ, ଉପରକୁ ଚଢ଼ିପାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଏକମାତ୍ର କାମନା ଉପରକୁ ଯିବେ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ପାଞ୍ଚଜଣଙ୍କଠାରୁ ନିଆରା ହେବେ । ଯେଉଁ ବସ୍ତୁକୈନ୍ଦ୍ରିକ ଆଭିଜାତ୍ୟ ସେମାନେ ଗଢ଼ିଥାନ୍ତି ତା'ରି ଭିତରେ ସେମାନେ ବିଳାସ କରନ୍ତି ଓ ଜୀବନକୁ ଭିନ୍ନ ମାର୍ଗରେ ଉପଭୋଗ କରନ୍ତି ।

ଚାକିରିଜୀବୀଟିଏ ଅବସର ନେଲାପରେ ନିଜକୁ ଅସହାୟ ମନେ କରେ । କାରଣ ଆଜିର ସମାଜରେ ପୁଅ ଝିଅ ବୋହୂ ସମସ୍ତେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥ-ବୃତ୍ତରେ ଆବନ୍ଧ । ପାରସ୍ପରିକ ସ୍ନେହ ପ୍ରେମ ମମତା ପ୍ରାୟ ନାହିଁ କହିଲେ ଚଳେ । ସବୁ ପ୍ରାୟ ବସ୍ତୁ ସଂପର୍କିତ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ମୋଟାମୋଟି ଭାବରେ ଆଜିର ବସ୍ତୁକୈନ୍ଦ୍ରିକ ସମାଜରେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ମଣିଷ ନିଜକୁ ନେଇ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ଏହି ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷୀରେ ମଣିଷ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଚାକିରିରୁ ଅବସର ଗ୍ରହଣ ପରେ ନିଜକୁ ରୋଜଗାରଶୂନ୍ୟ ମନେ କରେ ସେତେବେଳେ ସେ ଭାବେ ତା'ର ଯେପରି ଆଉ ଛୁଟି ନାହିଁ । ସେତେବେଳେ ସେ ନିଜକୁ ସତେ ଯେପରି ଅଲୋଡ଼ା ମନେ କରେ । ଏହା ସତ୍ୟ ଯେ, ଆଜିର ସମାଜରେ ରୋଜଗାର ଏକାନ୍ତ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଏହାର ଅର୍ଥ ନୁହେଁ ଯେ ଟଙ୍କା ପଛରେ ଅଛ ଭଲ ଗୋଡ଼ାଇବା । ଯୋଗ୍ୟତା ଥିଲେ ଟଙ୍କା ମନକୁ ମନ ଆସିବ । ଜୀବନସାରା ରୋଜଗାର କରି ଅବସର ନେଲାପରେ ଟଙ୍କା ପାଇଁ ବିକଳ କାହିଁକି ? ତା'ର କାରଣ ହେଉଛି ଯେ ମଣିଷଟି ସାରା ଜୀବନ ଟଙ୍କା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଆଉ କିଛି ଚିନ୍ତା କରି ନ ଥାଏ । ଯିଏ ରୋଜଗାର ସହିତ ଅନ୍ୟର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ଚାହୁଁଥାଏ ବା ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିଲେ ଅନ୍ୟର କିଛି କରିଥାଏ ବା କରୁଥାଏ, ଆପଣାର ଦେଶ, ଜାତି, ଭାଷା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ପାଇଁ କିଛି ପରିମାଣରେ ସମୟ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ କରୁଥାଏ, ସେହି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରୁ ଅବସର ନେଲାପରେ ନିଜକୁ ଏକାକୀ ଓ ଅସହାୟ ମନେ କରେନାହିଁ । ଯେତିକି ପାଏ ସେ ସେତିକିରେ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଲାଭ କରେ । ତା'ର ବେଳ ନଥାଏ ନିଜ କଥା ଭାବିବାକୁ । ତେଣୁ ଅବସର ଗ୍ରହଣ ପରେ ନିଜକୁ ରୋଜଗାର ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଭାବିବା ଠିକ୍ ନୁହେଁ ବୋଲି ମୋ'ର ମତ । ମଣିଷ ହିଁ ନିଜେ ନିଜର କର୍ତ୍ତା । ପ୍ରାବସିକ ଚିତ୍ତରଞ୍ଜନ ଦାସଙ୍କ ଭାଷାରେ “ମଣିଷର ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କ ହେଉଛି ସବୁ ନାଟର ଗୋବର୍ଦ୍ଧନ ।” ନିଜକୁ ବୁଝାଇବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ନିଜକୁ ଠିକ୍ କରିନେଲେ ଏପରି ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଆସିଲେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରୁ ଅବସର ନେଲା ପରେ ଏପରି ଏକ ରୋଜଗାରଶୂନ୍ୟତା ମଣିଷକୁ ବିଚଳିତ କରିପାରେନାହିଁ । ସେ ଏକ ଭିନ୍ନ ମଣିଷ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ସେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏକ ଅଭିଜ୍ଞ ପୁରୁଷ ହୋଇପାରିବ । ଏପରି ଅଭିଜ୍ଞ ପୁରୁଷର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଅଧିକ, ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଅଧିକ ଓ ଅଧିକାର ଅଧିକ । ଏଠି ଅଧିକାର କହିଲେ ଅନ୍ୟର ଧନ ସଂପତ୍ତି ଉପରେ ଅଧିକାର ନୁହେଁ, ଅନ୍ୟର ଉପକାରରେ ଲାଗିବାର ଅଧିକାର ବୋଲି ବୁଝାଯାଏ । ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଓ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ କହିଲେ ସମାଜସେବା ବୋଲି ବୁଝାଯାଏ । ନିଜର ସାରାଜୀବନ ପରିଶ୍ରମରେ ରୋଜଗାର କରିଥିବା ସଂପତ୍ତିକୁ ପରିବାର ପାଇଁ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ କରିଦେଇ ମଣିଷ ଚାହୁଁଲେ ତା'ର ପରିଶିତ ବୟସରେ ଏକ ଅଭିଜ୍ଞ ପୁରୁଷ ଭଳି ଜୀବନ କଟାଇ ପାରିବ । ଏହାହିଁ ମୋ'ର ଧାରଣା । ଭକ୍ତକବି ମଧୁସୂଦନଙ୍କ ଭାଷାରେ-

“ବାଲ୍ୟକାଳୁ ଧର୍ମ ଧନ ମୁଁ ସଞ୍ଚିବି

ଏ ଜୀବନ ଅନିଚ୍ଛିତ  
କେ ଜାଣେ କାହାର ଆଜି ମୃତ୍ୟୁକାଳ  
ହୋଇଯିବ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ॥”

କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ କଥାକୁ କିଏ ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଛି ? ଆଜିର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ ଧର୍ମ ଅର୍ଜନ; ଏକମାତ୍ର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଧନ ଅର୍ଜନ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠତ୍ୱ ପ୍ରତିପାଦନ ।



ଗିଲ୍‌ବାଉଁ ଛାତ୍ରେ, ୯୫ ଏ, ୪୧୪୬୬,  
ନଏସ୍, ଜର୍ମାନୀ

## ଗୀତା ସାର - ମୁକ୍ତିର ଆନନ୍ଦ

ଅନୁବାଦ: ଦିବ୍ୟା ଦାସ

କାହିଁକି ବୃଥା ଭାବନା କରୁଅଛ ? କାହାକୁ ବୃଥା ଚରୁଅଛ ? କିଏ ତୁମକୁ ମାରି ପାରିବ ? ଆତ୍ମା ଅମର ଅଟେ ।

ଯାହା ହୋଇଗଲା ତାହା ଭଲ ପାଇଁ, ଯାହା ହେଉଅଛି ଭଲ ପାଇଁ, ଯାହା ହେବ ତାହା ମଧ୍ୟ ତୁମ ଭଲ ପାଇଁ ହେବ । ତୁମେ ଅତୀତକୁ ନେଇ ଝୁର ନାହିଁ କିମ୍ବା ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ପାଇଁ ଅତିକ୍ଷ ହୁଅ ନାହିଁ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସମୟକୁ ସବୁଠାରୁ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ।

ତୁମେ କାହିଁକି ମନ କଷ୍ଟ କରୁଅଛ । ତୁମେ କ’ଣ ଆଶିଥିଲ ଯେ ହଜାଇ ଦେଲ, ତୁମେ କ’ଣ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥିଲ ଯେ ଧ୍ୱଂସ ହୋଇଗଲା । ତୁମେ ଏଠାକୁ ଖାଲି ହାତରେ ଆସିଛ ଏବଂ ଖାଲି ହାତରେ ଏଠାରୁ ଯିବ । ଆଜି ଯାହା ତୁମର ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଅନ୍ୟ କାହାର ଥିଲା ଏବଂ ପରେ ଅନ୍ୟ କାହାର ହୋଇଯିବ । ତୁମେ ତାହାକୁ ନିଜର ଭାବି ଭୋଳ ହେଉଛ । ଏହି ପ୍ରସନ୍ନତା ହିଁ ତୁମ ଦୁଃଖର କାରଣ ଅଟେ ।

ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ସଂସାରର ନିୟମ ଅଟେ । ଯାହାକୁ ତୁମେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ବୋଲି ଭାବୁଛ ତାହା ହିଁ ଜୀବନ ଅଟେ । ଆଜି ଯିଏ ରାଜା ରାଜବାରୀ କାଲି ସେ ଦାଣ୍ଡର ଭିକାରି । ମୋର-ତୋର, ଛୋଟ-ବଡ଼, ଆପଣା-ପର ମନରୁ ଲିଭାଇ ଦିଅ ଏବଂ ବିଚାରରୁ ହଟାଇ ଦିଅ - ପୁଣି ଦେଖିବ ସମସ୍ତେ ତୁମର, ଏବଂ ତୁମେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ।

ନା ଏହି ଶରୀର ତୁମର ଅଟେ, ନା ତୁମେ ଶରୀରର । ଏହା ଅଗ୍ନି, ଜଳ, ବାୟୁ, ପୃଥିବୀ ଓ ଆକାଶରୁ ଗଢ଼ା ଏବଂ ସେଇଥିରେ ମିଶି ଯିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆତ୍ମା ସ୍ଥିର ଅଟେ । ତାହାହେଲେ ତୁମେ କିଏ ! ତୁମେ ନିଜକୁ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ସମର୍ପଣ କର । ସେ ସର୍ବୋତ୍ତମ ସାହାରା ଅଟନ୍ତି । ଯିଏ ଥରେ ତା’ଙ୍କ ଶରଣରେ ଆସିଛି ସେ ଭୟ, ଚିନ୍ତା, ଶୋକରୁ ସର୍ବଦା ମୁକ୍ତ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

ଯାହା କିଛି ତୁମେ କରୁଅଛ ତାହା ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ଅର୍ପଣ କରିବାଲା । ସେଥିରୁ ତୁମେ ସଦା-ଜୀବନ ମୁକ୍ତିର ଆନନ୍ଦ ଅନୁଭବ କରିବ ।





## ସଂବିତ୍ - ନବ ଚେତନାର ସୃଷ୍ଟିଧାରା (www.sambit.com)

ସଞ୍ଜୟ ମିଶ୍ର

ତାପସ ରଞ୍ଜନ ସାହୁ

ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଯାହାକୁ ମାରି ପାରି ନାହିଁ, ଜୀବନ ଯାହାକୁ ବଞ୍ଚେଇ ପାରି ନାହିଁ, ଦୁଃଖ ଯାହାକୁ କନ୍ଦେଇ ପାରି ନାହିଁ, ସୁଖ ଯାହାକୁ ହସେଇ ପାରି ନାହିଁ - ଅଧିକ ସୁଦ୍ରାତିସୁଦ୍ର ଅନୁଭୂତିରେ ହସି ହସେଇ, କାନ୍ଦି କନ୍ଦେଇ, ଯିଏ ଅମୂଲ୍ୟ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଜୀବନକୁ ବଞ୍ଚି, ଅସାମାନ୍ୟ ସାମାନ୍ୟ-ଭଙ୍ଗୀରେ ପାର୍ଥବ ଜଡ଼ତୁକୁ ପରିତ୍ୟାଗ କରି ଆବୋରି ନେଇଛି ଅନ୍ତରୀକ୍ଷର ଅସୀମ ବ୍ୟାପ୍ତିକୁ - ସେହି ଦୁର୍ଲଭ ସତ୍ତା ହିଁ ସଂବିତ୍ ।

ସଂବିତ୍ - ପ୍ରହରାଜ ସଂବିତ୍ କୁମାର ନନ୍ଦ ।

ଆଦ୍ୟ କୈଶୋରରୁ ମୁକୁଳିତ ସାରସ୍ୱତ ପ୍ରତିଭା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିକଶିତ ହୁଏ ବୁଲ୍ଲା ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟରିଂ କଲେଜର ଛାତ୍ରାବସ୍ଥାରେ । ୩୩ ଜନ୍ମ ନିଅନ୍ତି ଅନେକ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ସୃଷ୍ଟି: ଗଳ୍ପ, କବିତା, ଏକାଙ୍କିକା - ସାହିତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଦିଗରେ । ଅଳ୍ପଦିନ ଭିତରେହିଁ ସେ ପରିଚିତ ହୁଏ ସମଗ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଜଣେ ଉଦୀୟମାନ ଲେଖକ ଭାବରେ ।

୧୯୮୬ରୁ ୧୯୮୯ - ବୁଲ୍ଲା ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟରିଂ କଲେଜରେ ଛାତ୍ର ଜୀବନର ୩୩ ତିନିବର୍ଷ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ‘ପ୍ରହରାଜ ସଂବିତ୍ କୁମାର ନନ୍ଦ’ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥିଲା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତି ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରେରଣା ୩୩ ଉତ୍ସାହ, ତାହା ଅବିସ୍ମରଣୀୟ । ରାଜ୍ୟସ୍ତରୀୟ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତାରେ ଶୀର୍ଷସ୍ଥାନ ତଥା ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପତ୍ରିକାମାନଙ୍କରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ଓ ବହୁ ଆଦୃତ ତା’ର ସୃଷ୍ଟିସମୂହ ଆଣିଥିଲା ଯେଉଁ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକ ଆଲୋଚନ ଆମ କଲେଜର କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ପରିସରରେ, ତାହା ଅବର୍ଣ୍ଣନୀୟ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରକୃତିର ନିୟମ ଭିନ୍ନ ୩୩ ବିଚିତ୍ର । ମାତ୍ର ୩୩କୋଇଶ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ ସଂବିତ୍‌ର ଅକାଳ ବିୟୋଗ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟାକାଶରେ ଏକ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ଉଦୀୟମାନ ନକ୍ଷତ୍ରର ଅନ୍ତ ଘୋଷଣା କରିଗଲା ଦିନେ ଅତୀତକ ... ।



୧୯୮୯ ମସିହା ଜୁଲାଇ ୯ ତାରିଖ ହୁଏତ ଆଣି ଦେଇଥିଲା ସଂବିତ୍ ନନ୍ଦର ପାର୍ଥବ ଅନ୍ତ, ଅଧିକ ତା’ର ଅସାଧାରଣ ପ୍ରତିଭା ଓ କୃତି ତା’କୁ ଜୀବନ୍ତ ରଖିବ ଚିରଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଆମମାନଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟରେ । ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରେରଣାର ଧାରା ସେ ଭରି ପାଇଥିଲା ହୃଦୟ କନ୍ଦରରେ, ସେଇ ଧାରାର ଅନ୍ତ ନ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଆମେ କେବେ ଶପଥବଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଥିଲୁ ଅଜ୍ଞାତରେ । ସେଇ ମହାନ ପ୍ଳାବନର ଅମାପ ଶକ୍ତିରେ ବୋଧହୁଏ ଅବଶେଷରେ ଜୀବନ୍ୟାସ ପାଇଲା ଏକ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପତ୍ରିକା- ‘ସଂବିତ୍, ନବ ଚେତନାର ସୃଷ୍ଟିଧାରା’ । ପ୍ରିୟ ବନ୍ଧୁ ସଂବିତ୍ ପ୍ରତି ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗୀକୃତ ଏହି ପତ୍ରିକା ଅଶେଷ ବାଧାବିହୀନ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା ଜାମ୍‌ଗେଡ଼ପୁରରୁ ୧୯୯୫ ମସିହାରେ । ଅନେକ ଦିନର ଯୋଜନା ସଫଳ ହୋଇ ପାରିଥିଲା କଂପ୍ୟୁଟରରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଅକ୍ଷର ଉପଲବ୍ଧ ହେବା ଯୋଗୁଁ, ଅଧିକ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବାହାରୁ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହେଉଥିବାରୁ ଏହାର ପ୍ରସାରଣ ଥିଲା ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସୀମିତ ।

‘ସଂବିତ୍’ ସୃଜନଶୀଳ ପ୍ରେରଣାର ଶାଶ୍ୱତ ଉତ୍ସ, ଅସରଳି ପ୍ରଜ୍ଞାର ଚିରନ୍ତନ ବିତରଣ ...

ସେଇ ଅନନ୍ତ ପ୍ରେରଣା ପ୍ରାୟ ତିନିବର୍ଷ ପରେ ୧୯୯୮ ମସିହା ଏପ୍ରିଲ ମାସରେ ପୁନର୍ଜନ୍ମ ନେଲା **World Wide Web** ରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ପ୍ରଥମ ୩୩ ଏକମାତ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପତ୍ରିକା ରୂପରେ । **Internet**ର ବିସ୍ତୃତ ପ୍ରସାର ଯୋଗାଇ ପାରିଲା ବିଶ୍ୱବ୍ୟାପୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କୁ ନିଜ ମାତୃଭାଷା ପଢ଼ିବାର ଏକ ଅଭିନବ ଉପାୟ । **www.sambit.com** ଜନ୍ମ ନେଲା ଅଳ୍ପ ଦିନ ଭିତରେ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର **website** ଭାବରେ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ପୃଥିବୀର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କୋଣରେ ପହଞ୍ଚାଇବା, ନବପ୍ରତିଭାବାନ୍ ଲେଖକ ଲେଖିକା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଉତ୍ସାହିତ କରିବା ଏବଂ ନିର୍ମଳ ଗଠନାତ୍ମକ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରସାର କରିବା ଏହାର ମୂଳ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ତଥା ଭାରତ ବାହାରୁ ସଂକଳିତ ଏହି ପ୍ରବେଶ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବରେ ଅବ୍ୟବସାୟିକ ।

ଏହି ସ୍ୱତଃ ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛେଦ ଝଙ୍କାରିତ କରୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପ୍ରାଣରେ ନବଚେତନାର ସୃଷ୍ଟିଧାରା । ପ୍ରଲମ୍ବିତ କରୁ ନିର୍ମଳ ଗଠନାତ୍ମକ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରାବଲ୍ୟକୁ, ସମୃଦ୍ଧ କରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ଏବଂ ଅଗ୍ରଗାମୀ କରି ତୋଳୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତକୁ । ଏଇ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ସଂକଳନକୁ ଏକ ଦୃଢ଼ ସଂକଳରେ ପରିଣତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଲୋଡ଼ା ହୃଦୟଭରା ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ସହଯୋଗ ।

## Frequently Asked Questions about SAMBIT

### 1. What is SAMBIT?

**SAMBIT - Naba Chetanara Srustidhara** (ସଂକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ - ନବ ଚେତନାର ସୃଷ୍ଟିଧାରା) is the first Oriya literary magazine on the World Wide Web. You can read, review and submit articles online.

### 2. Who is SAMBIT or why the name SAMBIT?

The web magazine SAMBIT is in the memory of **Late Sri Praharaj Sambit Kumar Nanda**, a literary genius, whose untimely demise (at the age of just 21), left a huge void in Oriya literature.

### 3. What does SAMBIT want to accomplish?

- Promote clean, constructive and responsible Oriya literature
- To be a launchpad for the upcoming Oriya writers
- To be a world wide window to Oriya language, literature and culture.

### 4. Is this a commercial Venture?

No, this is a completely non-commercial effort. The expenses are shared by the promoters and its sponsor.

### 5. Who are behind SAMBIT?

Tapas Ranjan Sahoo  
Amit Mukherjee  
Sanjay Mishra  
Deepak Mohapatra

We are a group of UCE, Burla graduates united on the basis of being Unicollengians and friends of Late Shri Praharaj Sambit Kumar Nanda.

We are thankful to Sri PrabhuDatta Mahapatra of *All India On-Line* for volunteering to host our Website [www.sambit.com](http://www.sambit.com).

### 6. How to read SAMBIT ?

To read SAMBIT online you need the following:

- Windows PC
- Internet access
- CDAC Leap Oriya font (OR-TTSarala) installed on your PC



**7. Other than reading Oriya stories and poems, what else can I do at [www.sambit.com](http://www.sambit.com)?**

At [www.sambit.com](http://www.sambit.com), you can:

- Listen Oriya Songs at Surabhi (ସୁରଭି)
- Send emails in Oriya at 'Sambit DakaGhara' (ସଂବିତ୍ ଡାକ ଘର)
- Read Oriya Literature Classics at ଆମ ଐତିହ୍ୟ
- Read stories for kids and solve crossword puzzles at ଶିଶୁ ବିଭାଗ
- See a list Oriya festivals at ପର୍ବ ପର୍ବାଣୀ
- You can Submit short stories and poems for publication.
- You can send us your comments and feedback, and also sign the guest book

**8. How to send articles for publication in SAMBIT?**

If you can type Oriya articles using OR-TTSarala font in MSWord or Odiphon, then you can submit online by copying and pasting. Or you can e-mail the doc/odi file to us. For terms and conditions on article submission, follow link Terms and Conditions on the [sambit.com](http://sambit.com) homepage.

**9. How to contact SAMBIT?**

Email: [editor@sambit.com](mailto:editor@sambit.com)  
[tapas\\_s@hotmail.com](mailto:tapas_s@hotmail.com)



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## Reach Orissa

**The welfare of the rural people in Deogarh district is at stake. These areas are usually neglected by the government of Orissa. Deogarh stands next to Kalahandi where the rural people are deprived of drinking water, health care, education and awareness. Deogarh Vikas Manch (DVM), headed by Smt. Nivedita Nayak, Bharat Integrated Social Welfare Agency (BISWA), headed by notable socialist Mr Khirod Chandra Mallik, and Foundation for Excellence (FFE), headed by Mr. Suresh A Seshan have been striving to reach the poor people, those who live in utter poverty and in sub-human condition. Even after 57 years of independence, provision of basic necessity has not reached them.**

**We request your kind support, pledge and encouragement towards the development of orissa. For further information please contact the followings:**

**Smt. Nivediata Nayak  
Deogarh Vikash Manch,  
C/o G.M., IDCO, Sambalpur  
Industrial Estate, Baraipali  
Sambalpur, Orissa, India-  
768150  
Phone: 91-663-2404437**

**Mr Khirod Chandra Mallik  
Bharat Integrated Social Welfare  
Agency (BISWA)  
Debasis Bhawan, Near Ramji  
Temple  
Sambalpur, Orissa, India-768001  
Phone: 91-663-2400849**

**Suresh A Seshan  
1890 Warburton Ave.,  
Suite 201,  
Santa Clara, CA 95050  
Phone: (408) 985 2001**

**Thank you for your kind support.**

**Surya & Kabita Sahoo  
18 Valcourt Place, The Woodlands, TX 77382,  
Phone: 281-362-7560, Email: [kabitasahoo@aol.com](mailto:kabitasahoo@aol.com)**

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