

# Journal of the Orissa Society of the Americas

Odisha: Our Land, Our People ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆମ ମାଟି, ଆମ ମଣିଷ



39th Annual Convention, 2008  
Toronto, Canada

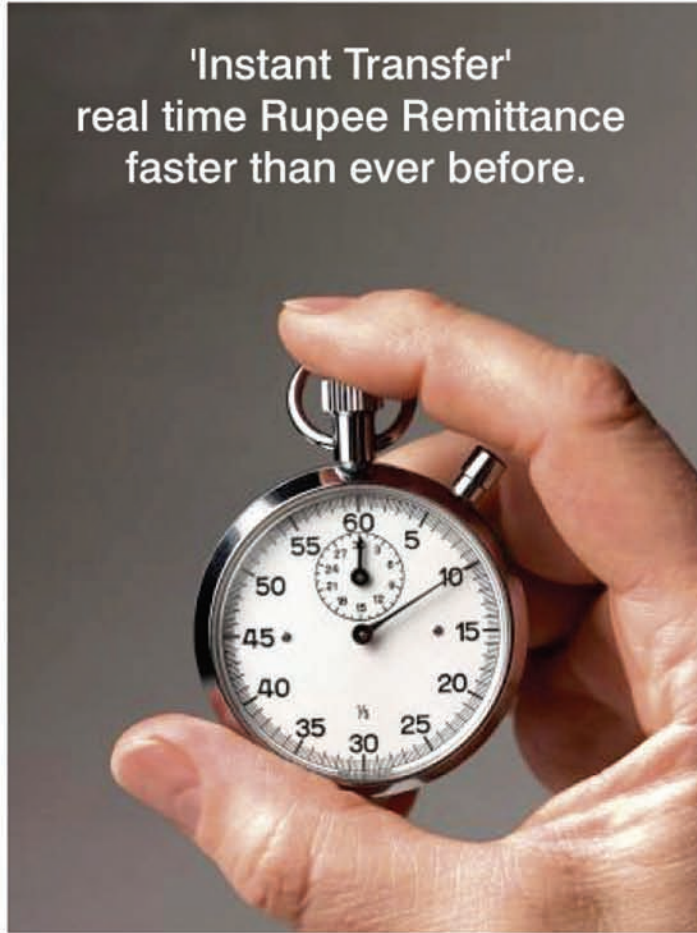


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# Journal of the Orissa Society of the Americas



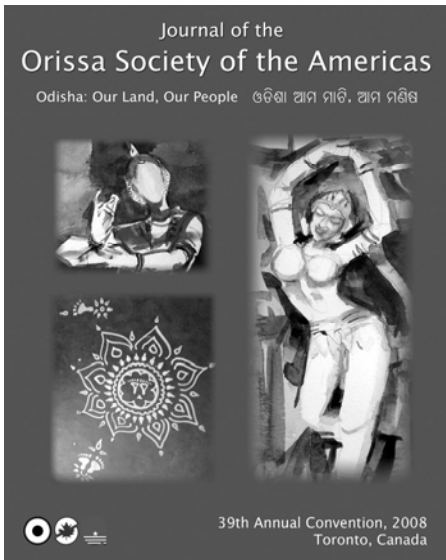
Odisha: Our Land, Our People ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆମ ମାଟି, ଆମ ମଣିଷ

Our love for Orissa, our Land and our People must have begun at birth. The sights, sounds and fragrances of the Land have been imprinted on us from birth. The voices of the People resonate within us. That we are now separated in space from our Land does not diminish our longing to be close to our Land and our People. The sculpture, temples, literature, songs, music and dance of Orissa are living testimony to the creativity and artistic sensibilities of the People of yore, who knew how to live, love and worship. The sun, wind, rain and human activity interplay in a myriad to produce vibrant earth tones and beautiful rustic colours of the Land... this is our inheritance since generations past that has made the Land and People what they are. This we tell our children, with emotion and passion. Orissa is just like any other land with rice fields, wide rivers, deep jungles and misty hills. And yet the Orissa, our Land, and our People is really like no other. This is what we celebrate; this is what we rejoice in. And so to everyone, from inside Orissa and out, we say – Come rejoice with us; Come celebrate Life with us.

Sri Gopal Mohanty

On behalf of the 2008 OSA Convention Team

39th Annual Convention, 2008  
Toronto, Canada



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## ସଂପାଦକୀୟ

ମନେ ଅଛି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସିଲଟ, ଖତିରେ ଅ, ଆ, ଇ, ଇ ଲେଖି ଗାଁ ଆମ୍ଭ ତୋଟାରେ ଲୁଚକାଳି ଖେଳିବାର ଦିନ? ମନେ ଅଛି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଗାଁରୁ ସହର, ସହରରୁ ବଡ଼ ସହର ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଗୋଟ କାଢ଼ି ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍ର, ତେର ନଇ ପାର ହୋଇ କାନାଡା, ଆମେରିକା ଆଉ ଲଣ୍ଡନରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବାର ଦିନ? ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଯେତେ ଦୂରରେ ରହିଲେବି’ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆମ ଦେଶ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆମ ମାତୃଭାଷା । ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆମେ, ଆମର ଭାଷା, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ନେଇ ଗର୍ବ କରୁ ଓ ଶବ୍ଦର ଉଠା ପକା ଖେଳକୁ ଏକାଠି କରି ଲେଖିଥାଉ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବିତା, ଗଳ୍ପ, ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ, ନାଟକ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି, ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଏ ବର୍ଷ ର ‘ଓସା’ ସ୍ମରଣିକାରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବିତା, ଗଳ୍ପ ଓ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରେ ଆପଣ ପାଇବେ ନିଆରା ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଶୈଳୀ, ଭାଷାର ସରଳତା ଓ ସାବଲୀଳତା । ସାରସ୍ଵତ ସାଧକ ପ୍ରତିବି ଲେଖକ, ଲେଖିକା ତାଙ୍କ ଲେଖାରେ କେତେବେଳେ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ, ସମ୍ଭାବନା, ପ୍ରେମ ଓ ପ୍ରଣୟ ର ମନ୍ଦିର ଗଢ଼ିବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ କରିଛନ୍ତି ତ’ କେତେବେଳେ ଆମ ଗାଁ, ଆମ ଜୀବନ ଓ ଜଗତର କୋଳାହଳକୁ ତାଙ୍କ ସାରସ୍ଵତ ସୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ଆମ ନିକଟକୁ ଆଣିଛନ୍ତି ।

ଏହି ପତ୍ରିକା ଏକ ସଂକଳନ, ସ୍ମରଣିକା-ମନଲୋଭା କେତୋଟି ହୃଦୟର କାହାଣୀ । ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଆସିଥିଲେ ବିଦେଶକୁ; ଯେଉଁମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଜୀବନ କେବେ ଥିଲା ‘ଆମ ଦେଶ (ଓଡ଼ିଶା), ତମ ଦେଶ (ଆମେରିକା, କାନାଡା)’- ଏଇ ଦୁଇ ଏବଂ ତୁଳନାତ୍ମକ ଗପ - ସେହି ତୁଳନାତ୍ମକ ଜୀବନ ଦିନେ ବନିଯାଏ ‘ତୁମ ଦେଶ -ଆଉ -ଆମ ଦେଶରେ’ ଆଗାମୀ ବଂଶଧର ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆମେ କଣ ବା’ ବୁଝାଇବା?

ଦିନ ଗତିଯାଏ, ବୟସ ବଢ଼ିଯାଏ; ଆଉ ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ଦୂରେଇଯାଏ ମନର ପଦ୍ମ ପୁଲଟି - ପୋଖରୀ ହୁତାରୁ । ଆଉ ଆମେ ଦେଖି ପାରୁନା, ଦୂରକୁ ଭାସିଗଲା ପଦ୍ମପୁଲଟି । ଖାଲି ଅନୁଭବ କରୁ, ସ୍ମରଣ କରୁ, ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁ ସେଇ ସ୍ମୃତି ଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ । ସେଇ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଆମ୍ଭଗୋପନ କରିଥିଲା, ଆଉ ଏଇ ପତ୍ରିକା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଆମ୍ଭପ୍ରକାଶ କଲା ।

ଆମେ କୃତଜ୍ଞତା ଜ୍ଞାପନ କରୁଛୁ ସେଇ ସାରସ୍ଵତ ସାଧକ ଲେଖକ, ଲେଖିକା ମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ।

ଆମର ମାତୃଭୂମି ଓ ମାତୃଭାଷା ପ୍ରତି ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧାଭାବ ଓ ସମ୍ମାନବୋଧ ରଖୁଥିବା ଅନେକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛୁ ଏ ବର୍ଷ ର ‘ଓସା’ ପତ୍ରିକା ପ୍ରକାଶନରେ ଆମକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସହଯୋଗ କରିଛନ୍ତି, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଆମେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ କୃତଜ୍ଞ ।

ପାଠକେ ଦୋଷ, ତ୍ରୁଟି ମାର୍ଜନା କରିବେ ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ମାପ କାଠିରେ ନ ମାପି ମା ଓ ମାଟିର ମମତା, ଆଉ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଜୀବନର ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷୀରେ ମୂଲ୍ୟାଙ୍କନ କରିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ ରହିଲା ।

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## Letter from the editors

It is with great pride that we present this souvenir, which is a compilation of memoirs, literary ideas, poems, events, critiques, musings, as captured by our people from our land. And when we say land, we mean one that truly has no geographical boundaries. Literary musings have poured in from all over the world, in English and Oriya and as a 6-member Editorial Team, we had the privilege of receiving contributions first hand on various perspectives of the past, present and even the future of our lives, of OSA, of CANOSA, of our land, our people, our art, our culture, our work, our trials, our tribulations... When time came to make the momentous decision of screening, editing, compiling and formatting these literary contributions, some of which came from friends as young as six years old, we were stumped. The task was more formidable that we had imagined. But we did it. And enjoyed it thoroughly. OK, OK, we lie. There were moments of frustration too. There were times when we thought technology was getting the better of us, when attachments could not be opened, or we would see a new kind of language undecipherable to our eyes. There were times, when we thought we had received all contributions and ready to go to press, when there was an e-plea: *“One more. Please could you consider for Meghna Award?... Or just for inclusion into the Souvenir... Sorry for being late...”*. How could we not? Reading the musings of young children was like peeling an onion. Peeling the outer layer came out with difficulty, especially if it was a hand-scripted work. But then once the peel came off, and we understood the intention of the literary work, we would either laugh till tears came to our eyes, or cry at the emotion expressed in the musings. Whatever the case, we felt the urgent need to share all the musings sent to us with you, Our People from Our Land about Our People and Our Land.

Someone wise has rightly said that good work is not what is said, but what is whispered. Here, friends are some of these whispers. Read, enjoy, walk down memory lane. Hope it is as rewarding for you all to read this journal as it was for us to compile, as editors.



PRIME MINISTER . PREMIER MINISTRE



*I am pleased to extend my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of The Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA) being hosted by Canada Odisha Society of Americas (CanOSA).*

*This weekend's conference, with its theme "Our Land Our People," will provide you with an excellent opportunity to highlight the rich history and traditions of the Oriya culture and to celebrate the contributions that the Odia people have made to our social, cultural and economic landscape.*

*From artistic performances and film screenings, to seminars, lectures and demonstrations, this year's program offers a variety of activities sure to interest people of all ages. I am certain that everyone in attendance will enjoy the opportunity to renew acquaintances, form new friendships and to socialize with Oriyas from across North America.*

*On behalf of the Government of Canada, please accept my best wishes for a memorable experience.*

The Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.

OTTAWA  
2008





THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ONTARIO  
LE LIEUTENANT GOUVERNEUR DE L'ONTARIO

4 July 2008



I am pleased to extend greetings to the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA), as you host your 39<sup>th</sup> annual convention.

This year the Canadian chapter of OSA is hosting this event in Brampton, Ontario, where there will be a celebration of the culture and heritage of Odiya from Eastern India. Members will gather from around the world to share experiences and meet up with old friends.

The OSA has always come together to raise funds to assist those in need back home in India or elsewhere, as well as providing support to newcomers in adapting to their adopted country.

As The Queen's representative in Ontario, I commend the OSA for its commitment to customs and traditions, and send my best wishes for an enjoyable and memorable convention.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David C. Onley".

David C. Onley

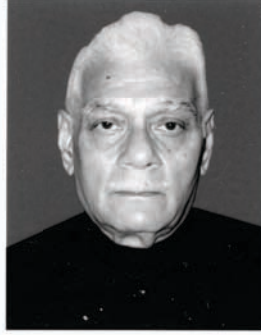


*Murlidhar C. Bhandare*

GOVERNOR, ORISSA

April 24, 2008

MESSAGE



I am glad to know that the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of The Orissa Society of the Americas is being organized on July 4-5, 2008 and an annual souvenir is being brought out on the occasion.

Since my joining here as the Governor of the state, I have marveled at the rich cultural heritage of Orissa. The cultural and traditional grandeur of Lord Jagannath, the architectural perfection of temples and monuments, the excellence achieved in dance, music, handicraft, folk dance, etc. have all made Orissa unique. It is heartening that Oriyas staying in USA and Canada have not only kept their identity intact but also taken organized steps to make their presence felt far away from home. The exhibition of our cultural and artistic heritage should be in such a manner that not only tourist inflow to Orissa increases but also researchers will be encouraged to come to Orissa. It will also provide an opportunity to the participants to know about the Canadian cultural values and the great cultural diversity of Ontario. Apart from the cultural exercises, translation of some representative Oriya literary classics in English should be made available there.

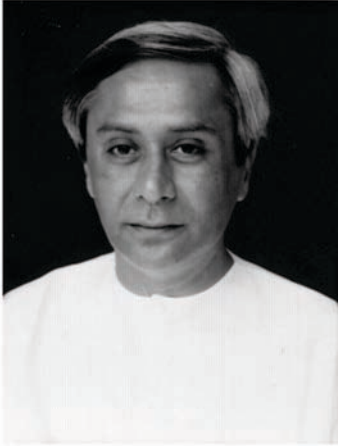
I wish the Convention and publication of souvenir all success.

*Murlidhar Bhandare*  
(Murlidhar C. Bhandare)



**NAVEEN PATNAIK**

CHIEF MINISTER, ORISSA



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D. O. No..... 715.....

BHUBANESWAR

Dated... 21/5/08.....

**MESSAGE**

I am glad to know that the Orissa Society of the Americas is celebrating its 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention at Brampton Ontario from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2008.

The Odiyas living abroad, especially in the Americas have made us proud by their achievement in various fields. Our sense of glory in your success becomes consummate when we find the commitment of the diaspora to their cultural roots taking shape. The OSA Convention, no doubt, provides an important platform for our great cultural heritage. The efforts of OSA members in increasingly engage themselves on the issues concerning Orissa is commendable.

I extend my warm greetings to all the members of the Orissa Society of Americas on the joyous occasion and wish the occasion all success.

(NAVEEN PATNAIK)



Premier of Ontario - Premier ministre de l'Ontario

July 4 – 5, 2008

## **A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER**

On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I am delighted to extend warm greetings to everyone attending the 39<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA), hosted by CanOSA.

In Ontario, celebrating diversity and reaching out to others are characteristics of the inclusive and caring society we have built together. This event is a true reflection of those characteristics, for in promoting a spirit of co-operation and preserving your rich culture and history, you are helping to build a stronger, more cohesive and united community — both at home and beyond.

I extend my sincere thanks to the dedicated organizers and volunteers with CanOSA who have given of their time and energy to make this exciting event possible. Occasions like this are wonderful opportunities for people to stay in touch with their roots and strengthen the ties that bind their communities.

Please accept my sincere best wishes for an inspirational celebration and much ongoing success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dalton McGuinty'.

**Dalton McGuinty**  
Premier





## MESSAGE

June 5, 2008

I have great pleasure in sending my greetings and best wishes to all members of the Canada Odisha Society of the Americas (CanOSA), along with their families and friends, on the occasion of the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA).

The OSA was set up in 1969 and its Canadian Chapter, CanOSA, has been in existence since 1972. CanOSA has an impressive track record in bringing together Indo-Canadians from Orissa to celebrate festivals and cultural events of significance to the community.

Such activities help to not only keep the Oriya community in touch with its heritage and traditional values but, more importantly, also to pass these on to the younger generation. To this end, CanOSA has made special efforts to give an opportunity for budding artists and writers to showcase their talents.

As an outward looking and caring organization, CanOSA has also made generous contributions towards relief and rehabilitation, charitable activities and deserving causes.

It is therefore fitting that the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual OSA Convention is being organized under the aegis of CanOSA and is being held at Brampton, Ontario. I am sure that the participants, from all parts of Canada, the USA, Mexico and the UK will enjoy this taste of Canadian hospitality as well as the cultural diversity of this great country.

I congratulate the Board of Directors and other members of CanOSA and wish you all success in your future endeavours.

**[ R. L. Narayan ]**  
**High Commissioner for India to Canada**



भारत का प्रधान कौंसल  
टोरंटो  
CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA  
TORONTO

1<sup>st</sup> May 2008


## **MESSAGE**

I am delighted to learn that the Orissa Society of the Americas [which is a registered non-profit organization in North America] is organizing its 39<sup>th</sup> Annual OSA Convention on July 4-5, 2008.

I also congratulate "Canada Odisha Society of Americas" (CanOSA) for hosting this year's annual convention. Over the past 37 years, CanOSA has contributed to promote, preserve and sustain the unique heritage of ancient Odiya culture and is catering to the socio-cultural aspects of the Odiya community residing in Ontario through various cultural programmes.

It is heartening that thousands of miles away from India, the place of their origin, the Indo-Canadian community members have not just kept alive but celebrate their heritage and culture and share it with their friends.

I wish the Orissa Society of the Americas and the Canada Odisha Society of Americas all success in their endeavour.

  
(Satish Mehta)





## THE ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS



### **Letter from President**

Friends:

On behalf of the executives and members of the Orissa Society of Americas (OSA), I express my sincere gratitude to our friends of CanOSA chapter who have volunteered their time and effort towards hosting the 39th Annual Convention. "Orissa - Our Land Our People" is an aptly chosen all encompassing and vibrant theme. It is my privilege to congratulate the entire community that has come together in this endeavor bringing with it the unique touch of Canada.

I cannot over-emphasize the role of OSA in the 21st century. We are at the crossroads, a critical juncture in the life of OSA where the mature and experienced founding members wait to pass on the baton of Oriya success and achievement to youthful and talented new comers. With support from all possible quarters, OSA is getting more structured, organized, and transparent. Our OSANet has become an open forum for exchange of views. OSA has hired a Chartered Public Accountant for more financial accuracy and reporting. To prevent harassment or intimidation regarding its conduct or policies, OSA has appointed a General Counsel who would better enable it to protect its legal rights. Our website is getting more efficient and functional by adding membership information, useful archives and polling features. Our members are getting involved in projects of their choices in Orissa. Our local chapters are getting more structured and operating in accordance with OSA bylaws and OSA is exploring the areas of bringing member benefits to the table. But being a realist, I know that there is room for further improvement and we can continue to change for a better tomorrow without compromising on core Oriya values.

I am grateful for the confidence that you have showered on me towards leading OSA for the next two years. But we all are leaders and share the responsibilities of the present. King Narasimha Dev needed 1200 sculptors to build our beautiful Konark temple. OSA will continue to need many volunteers to donate their talent, time and resources. To some it could be a thankless job but to many of us it is the most gratifying experience. I remember today the famous speech by John F. Kennedy "And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country". In the same light, my friends, question not the existence and continuation of OSA, extend your hand towards making it better and meaningful for us as well as our children.

I congratulate all Oriyas today for their professional successes, as well as their achievements and endeavors in North America while holding on to their Oriya foundations. We shall strive to improve and together we can make our OSA a better organization.

Welcome to the 39th Annual Convention!

Pratap Das  
President, OSA

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## From the Secretary's Pen

Dear Fellow OSA Members and All Orissans-at-heart Worldwide:

Namaskar! Thank you, members, for your immense support of me and my colleagues in the Executive Office of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA) over the 8 months since we became volunteer officials.

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to this edition of the OSA Annual Souvenir, and I am certain you are waiting for our upcoming annual convention as excitedly as I am. The last year's OSA convention at Detroit is a testament to the cultural wealth of our community, our variegated talents, the strength of our causes, the richness of our heritage and the incalculable volunteering spirit of our members. The annual convention brings together and celebrates the best in us, and I am sure the Toronto Convention this year will achieve yet greater heights.

I would like to thank the many, many volunteers who make OSA tick and be proud: the organizers and the indispensable volunteers of the convention, the chapters' officials and helpers, the various committee chairs and members, the election commissioners, the various editors and web masters, the moderators, the generous donors, and many other unsung volunteers. There are too many of you to mention your names, but our hats off to you for your enthusiasm, dynamism and dedication for a good cause!

This has been a very challenging and yet thrilling year. Our membership on last count has grown from 1158 (reported in the Secretary's Report last year) to 1372! This includes several membership upgrades. We are a force to reckon with!

OSA office has tried to bring a new sense of purpose, inclusiveness and openness to our grand old organization – an association nearly two score years old and comprising of 14 separate chapters spread over the USA and Canada. We have instituted a Board of Governors Forum (BOGF) which consists of all the national executives, the immediate past president and all of the chapter presidents or their representatives. We thank the board for meeting frequently (about every month) in a phone conference to consider issues important to our organization and the members and local chapters. We are happy that a large majority of them, if not unanimously, has started a diligent effort to ensure that chapter members and especially officials are up-to-date OSA members and that financial records are kept and submitted to the OSA treasurer and the auditor's office in time. This takes a little bit of sacrifice from us each but our organization will undoubtedly be a strong and shining example for all.

We have established an online electronic forum ([osanet@yahoogroups.com](mailto:osanet@yahoogroups.com)) open to all members (and moderated by 5 volunteers) for discussing matters of interest to the members as well as for easily disseminating information from your volunteer executives. We have appointed a pro bono counsel (Mr. Sujit Mohanty) and have sought the services of a capable auditor/accountant (Mr. Marurveda). We also have had a series of phone conferences with the convention leaders to help each other in planning, fund raising and other related activities. We have established a few comprehensive mechanisms such as these to hear and consider a diversity of member opinions and concerns, while enabling effective and rapid actions to address issues of most importance to most members. We hope you all would participate actively, productively and with your traditional grace, generosity and thoughtfulness.

In addition to this magazine and a printed directory (produced by a fantastic team), OSA has other publications such as the quarterly *Utkarsa* edited by a talented group consisting of volunteer editors Mr. S. Satapathy, Mr. S.L. Mohapatra, and youth-editor Ms. P. Patnaik.

How many times have you wished to reach a friend or a person familiar with your language or culture when you visit a new place? How have you struggled to keep your contact information updated in OSA directory and to reach others with the click of a mouse? It has been very hard and expensive to keep our large, geographically distributed organization current with crucial information, given our small and ever changing pool of uncompensated, volunteer members. Moreover, although OSA membership primarily comes from the USA and Canada, members also originate from many places such as the UK, Germany, the Middle East, Australia as well as India. Well, an initiative called The Directory of Odias Living Abroad (DOLA) might just be the ticket -- DOLA is a *living* project to gather, archive, and conveniently and securely share non-private contact information among people of Orissa origin or interest. We have catalogued approximately 2100 non-resident Orissan families the world over into a secure and convenient system backed by a powerful database and user-interface. DOLA, restricted to those who register into the

system, offers an authentication mechanism and judicious listing of information which can enable you to self-update information, and locate or connect with others in case of need or mutual interest. OSA leverages DOLA and provides a number of benefits and features to its members, in addition to a restricted set of facilities made freely available to non-members.

We have instituted a new polling mechanism for broad-based, transparent decision making through the Speak-Your-Mind (SYM) Project which is coupled to DOLA. SYM is also secured with an authentication system and feature-rich interface and database. Please log into the member area at [www.orissasociety.org](http://www.orissasociety.org) to familiarize yourself with a test poll and other features of SYM and DOLA in addition to finding more information on numerous other socio-cultural, educational and organizational activities of OSA.

Please note that in recognition of the escalating expenses and effort in printing, handling and shipping of our ever bulkier but fantastic Souvenirs, we would like a survey of your (members') opinion about your preference for the CD or the Print version. At this point we are simply collecting the data to make a future decision, but we plan to provide Print versions to all members this year. We are also considering various options for raising extra funds and volunteer time from members to facilitate the process going forward. You may indicate your own souvenir preference in the DOLA system by changing the default.

Reflecting the concerns of many OSA members for Orissa's long-term growth and development, we have communicated with the Chief Minister and the Prime Minister of India regarding some important issues. These include: (1) Establishing a *greenfield* IIT in Orissa during the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan, (2) Creating a multi-focus, multi-campus Central University system for Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput (KBK) region, (3) Elevating the 150-year old Ravenshaw University to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Central University in Orissa, and (4) Expeditiously completing rail links to the KBK and other tribal, under-served areas for a deeper economic revival. It appears our efforts might have borne some fruits.

This year we are seeking proposals for the next two years' convention sites early on. We have received a proposal for year 2009 and 2010 each. We would like every geographical community, enthusiastic and equipped, to present a proposal and be considered for selection.

We propose that we start a series of Regional Drama Festivals hopefully at 4/5 different regions of North America. OSA will provide the seed or catalytic financial capital of about \$500 to each region's group/chapters who would pioneer this cultural initiative to further foster and celebrate our great cultural identity, kinship and heritage.

We are also hereby seeking from you new, high-impact ideas and volunteering time for bringing more benefits to all members – such as group discounts at national level, young people's networking and leadership connections, and superior credit or insurance services, etc.

Finally, I am very thankful and proud of the volunteerism and “love for life” that you all have shown. Of special note is the untiring work and thoughtful planning of the people who are making the 39<sup>th</sup> OSA Convention possible and memorable. I wish you a fantastic experience at the Toronto Convention.

With kind regards,  
Priyadarsan Patra  
Secretary, OSA



Canada Odisha Society of Americas (Registered)

CanOSA®

Registered Office: 117 Fontainebleau Drive, Toronto, ON, M2M 1P1.

Website: <http://www.canosa.ca>



President:  
Amit Nayak

Vice-President:  
Suvendu Misha

Secretary:  
Rajesh Nayak

Treasurer:  
Hara Narayan Padhi

Directors:  
Lalu Mansinha  
Prafulla C. Pujapanda  
Sujata Das  
Nivedita Patnaik  
Gagan Panigrahi

On behalf of the members and well-wishers of CanOSA, it is my pleasure to welcome you all to the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas. The hosting of this international convention in Canada is a great event as it showcases not only the maturity of a young community in Canada, but also its commitment to maintain and share its heritage and culture with the rest of Canada's multicultural society. In Canada, CanOSA on its own and in association with various other Indo-Canadian socio-cultural organizations has been organizing a variety of functions, seminars and cultural shows to promote, preserve and sustain the unique heritage of ancient Indian culture.

The annual OSA Convention is an opportunity that brings Odias and Odisha lovers together from across the globe. This is the time when we celebrate our achievements and connect with the heritage of our native land and fellow Odias. I hope all of you will enjoy our seminars on diverse subjects, fun-filled activities, joyous youth events, enthralling cultural programs, meeting old friends while creating new ones, variety of tasty food and your overall stay in the beautiful flower city of Brampton.

Support for our efforts has come in different forms and I want to take the opportunity to thank all our supporters and volunteers for helping us to make another successful Convention. My heartfelt thanks goes to all our individual and corporate sponsors. My special thanks goes to Dr. Gagan Panigrahi to accept our request to be the Convenor of this Convention. I thank Dr. Panigrahi for his enthusiasm, dedication and commitment for a job well done.

Lastly, I am thankful to you all who have attended this Convention. For if any reason you could not attend this convention, we certainly missed you.

*You are for the lord and not for others*

*You are for the lord and so for others.*

- Shri Shri Thankur Anukul Chandra

Namaskar,

Amit Nayak  
President - CanOSA



## ଅଣଚାଳିଶତମ 'ଓସା' ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ଆବାହକଙ୍କ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା

ସମ୍ମାନୀୟା, ସମ୍ମାନୀୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭଉଣୀ ଓ ଭାଇମାନେ !

ଅଣଚାଳିଶତମ 'ଓସା' ସମ୍ମିଳନୀର ଆବାହକ ହିସାବରେ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ସାଦର ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ । ବର୍ଷ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ପ୍ରତି ବର୍ଷ ନିରବଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ଭାବରେ ଏହି ସମ୍ମିଳନୀର ଆୟୋଜନ ହୋଇ ଆସୁଅଛି । ଏହା ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଗୌରବର କଥା । ନିକଟ ଅତୀତରେ ବହୁ ବାଧା ବିଘ୍ନ, ଝଡ଼ ଝଞ୍ଜ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ 'ଓସା' ସଭ୍ୟମାନେ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ନ ପଡ଼ି, ତରି ନଯାଇ 'ଓସା'ର ତରୀତିକୁ ବାହି ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି । ଏହି ଝଡ଼ ଝଞ୍ଜ ଆମକୁ ଦୁର୍ବଳ କରିଦେବା ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ଅନେକ ସବଳ କରିଦେଇଛି । ମୋର ଆଶା ଏବଂ ଦୃଢ଼ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ ଏହି ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ଏଇମିତି ପାଳନ ହୋଇଆସୁଥିବ । ଏଥିରେ ମୋର କୌଣସି ସନ୍ଦେହ ନାହିଁ ।

ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନେ ! 'ଓସା' ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ କାନାଡାରେ ଚତୁର୍ଥ ଥର ପାଇଁ ପାଳିତ ହେଉଅଛି । ଏହି ସୁଯୋଗ ଚିକକ କାନାଡା ବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରାୟ ପ୍ରତି ଦଶ ବର୍ଷ ଅନ୍ତରରେ ଥରେ ଆସିଥାଏ । ଏ ବର୍ଷ ଆମ୍ଭମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏ ସୁଯୋଗ ଆସି ଥିବାରୁ ଆମ୍ଭେମାନେ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ପ୍ରୀତ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ 'ଓସା' ର କର୍ମ କର୍ତ୍ତା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ଏଠାକାର ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନେ ଅକ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରି ଏହାକୁ ସଫଳ ଓ ମନମୁଁ କରିବାରେ ଅନେକ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନେ ଆସି ଏହି ଉତ୍ତର ଆମେରିକାରେ ବସବାସ କରୁଅଛୁ । ବହୁଦିନ ହେଲା ଆମେ ଆମର ଜନ୍ମ ଭୂମି ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିଅଛୁ ନାହିଁ ଏଠି ଆମ ବୃଷ୍ଟରେ କୋଇଲିର ସ୍ୱର, ନାହିଁ ଚାଷି ଭାଇର ହଳ ଲଙ୍ଗଳ ଅବା ନଦୀରେ ଗାଧୋଆ । ଜୀବନର କେଉଁ ମୋଡ଼ରେ, କେଉଁ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଆମକୁ ଏଠାରେ ଆସି ବାସ କରିବାର ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ନେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଛି । ମାତ୍ର ଯେତେ ଦିନ ଏଠାରେ ରହିଲେବି ଅନ୍ତରର କେଉଁ ଏକ ନିଭୂତ କୋଣରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପ୍ରତି ଆମର ଦୁର୍ବଳତା ରହିଛି, ସହାନୁଭୂତି ରହିଛି ଓ ଆନ୍ତରିକତା ରହିଛି । ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ମାନସ ପଟରେ ସେ ଆସି ଉଠି ମାରେ । ମନେ ହୁଏ, ଦୌଡ଼ି ଯାଆନ୍ତିକି ? ମନେ ହୁଏ ପୁଣି ଥରେ ଫେରି ଯାଆନ୍ତିକି ? କିନ୍ତୁ ଜୀବନର ପରିସ୍ଥିତି କୁ ମୁକାବିଲା କରିବାକୁ ଯାଇ ଅନେକଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ ତାହା ଆଉ ସମ୍ଭବ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ । ସେହି ଜନ୍ମ ଭୂମି, ସେହି ପାଣି, ସେହି ପବନ, ସେହି ମାଟି, ସେହି ମଣିଷ ଙ୍କୁ ମନେ ପକେଇବା ପାଇଁ ଏ ବର୍ଷର ସମ୍ମିଳନୀର ବିଷୟ ବସ୍ତୁ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆମ ମାଟି, ଆମ ମଣିଷ । ଏହାକୁ ଭିତ୍ତି କରି ପ୍ରାରମ୍ଭିକ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ପରିବେଷଣ, ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମର ଆୟୋଜନ ଅବା ସ୍ମରଣିକା ପ୍ରକାଶନ । ଆଶାକରେ ଏହା ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କ ମନ ମୁଗ୍ଧ କରିବ ।

ଆପଣ ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ କେତେଜଣଙ୍କର ଚେଷ୍ଟାଦ୍ୱାରା ଉତ୍ତର ଆମେରିକାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ କୋଣେ କୋଣେ ବାଜି ଉଠିଛି ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନୃତ୍ୟ ନୁପୁରର ରଣୁ ଝୁଣୁ ଶବ୍ଦ । ଆପଣ ମାନଙ୍କର ଚେଷ୍ଟା ଦ୍ୱାରା ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସହରର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ବାଜି ଉଠେ ମୃଦଙ୍ଗ ଓ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଘଡ଼ି । ଦୀର୍ଘ ଅଣଚାଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଏହି ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ଉତ୍ତର ଆମେରିକାରେ ବୁଢ଼ାଇଛି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପ୍ରୀତି । ଆପଣ ମାନଙ୍କର ନିଃସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର ଚେଷ୍ଟା ରହିଲେ ଉତ୍ତର ଆମେରିକାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ନୃତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ପ୍ରସାର ନିଷ୍ଠୁ ଘଟିବ । ମୋର ଅନୁରୋଧ ଆପଣ ମାନେ ଏଥିରେ ସଜାଗ ରହନ୍ତୁ । ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କର ଏ ଦିଗରେ ଅନବରତ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ରହିଲେ କିଏ ଜାଣେ ଦିନେ ଏଇଠି ଉଠିବ ବଙ୍ଗେପସାଗରର ଢେଉ, ଏଇଠି ତୋଳା ହେବ ନୂତନ କୋଣାର୍କ, ଏଇଠି ଗଢ଼ି ଉଠିବ ଆମର ସେହି ପ୍ରାୟର ନନ୍ଦନ କାନନ ।

ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ।

ଗଗନ ବିହାରୀ ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ



## CONVENTION COMMITTEE

Gagan Panigrahi  
Ashutosh Dutta  
Amit Nayak

*Convenor*  
*Co-Convenor, Vice-President, OSA*  
*Co-Convenor, President, CanOSA*

### **Advisory**

Sri Gopal Mohanty  
Asoka Das  
Manaranjan Pattanayak  
Arjun Purohit  
Sumitra Padhi  
Pravat Kar  
Niranjan Mishra

Hara Padhi  
Pravat Nalini Mishra  
Pratap Patnaik  
Sradhananda Misra  
Lalu Mansinha  
Bhagaban Panigrahi  
Duryodhan Panda

### **Cultural**

*Sri Gopal Mohanty*  
Sabita Panigrahi  
Jibanjit Tripathy  
Chitta Ranjan Kar  
Monisha Mishra  
Sushree Mishra Kar  
Shantanu Mishra  
Prafulla Pujapanda  
Soman Panigrahi  
Sasmita Tripathy  
Anshuman Patnaik  
Tapan Mishra  
Pratap Satpathy  
Swetalina Mishra

Dinabandhu Rath  
Kalpana Sarangi  
Upasana Pujari  
Amrita Mishra  
Chandan Pujapanda  
Sudhanshu Senapati  
Agnivesh Mishra  
Archana Rath  
Sangeeta Senapati  
Jyoti Maharana  
Kabita Maharana  
Mamata Rath  
Akanksha Mishra  
Anshuman Mishra

### **Registration/Reception**

*Hara Padhi*  
Kalyani Mishra  
Madhumita Das  
Amitabh Mohanty  
Subrat Mishra  
Subhendu Gantayet  
Sumitra Padhi

Omkar Das  
Sudeshna Patnaik  
Gita Mishra  
Sujata Das  
Ashok Das  
Smaran Das  
Pinak Padhi

### **Seminars**

*Parasara Mishra*  
Nilamani Nayak  
Smita Patnaik  
Sunanda Mohanty  
Srimanta Mohanty  
Rekha Mishra

### **Fundraising**

*Amit Nayak*  
Gagan Panigrahi  
Manaranjan Pattanayak  
Pradeep Pradhan  
Niranjan Mishra  
Sanjoy Rath  
Srimant Mohanty  
Lalu Mansinha

### **Finance**

*Suwendu Mishra*  
*Jatindra Kanungo*  
Smaran Das

### **Video/Photography**

Ranjan Pradhan  
Sajneet Sodhi  
Rashmi Pradhan

### **Facility Management**

Ravindra Sabat  
Jewel Sabat  
Goldie Sabat

### **Web/Graphics**

Rajesh Nayak  
Soman Panigrahi  
Jibanjit Tripathy

### **Youth and Children**

*Swapna Nayak*  
Nibedita Patnaik  
Rajesh Nayak  
Mitali Das  
Agnivesh Mishra  
Pushpa Patnaik  
Priyanka Patnaik

Akanksha Mishra  
Ilan Pujapanda  
Arpita Gantayet  
Pallavi Patnaik  
Smita Patnaik  
Lisa Pradhan  
Nikita Gantayet

### **Magazine Souvenir**

*Lalu Mansinha*  
Soman Panigrahi  
Parasara Mishra  
Satyajeet Patnaik  
Pallavi Sodhi  
Sajneet Sodhi  
Rekha Mishra

### **Exhibition**

Manaranjan Pattanayak  
Sajneet Sodhi

### **Interior Design/Decoration**

*Pallavi Sodhi*  
Padmalaya Singh  
Sunil Das  
Mira Panda

Manash Ray  
Nirmala Panda  
Prachi Mishra  
Sushma Pandey

### **Food and Hospitality**

*Dolly Kanungo*  
*Anupama Pradhan*  
Ram Mohan Mohanty  
Ratna Dutta  
Manoj Nayak  
Sanjukta Pujapanda  
Sashmita Kar  
Mani Kar  
Suwendhu Mishra  
Pramod Kar  
Mami Pradhan  
Gita Garnaik

Asit Garnaik  
Arun Patra  
Sunita Patra  
Vijay Khuda  
Nandita Gantayet  
Kahnu Pradhan  
Pradipta Kar  
Nalini Das  
Purnima Patnaik  
Madhusudhan Dutta  
Asha Saxena  
Sushma Pandey

### **Media**

*Jibanjit Tripathy*

### **Transportation**

*Sushant Pandey*

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ନୀଳାଭ କୁହୁଡ଼ିର ମାୟା	<i>ସୁଲୋଚନା ଦାସ</i>
ଝରାପତ୍ରର ରତ୍ନ	<i>ସୀମା ମିଶ୍ର</i>
ଆକାଶର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ	<i>ମନୋଜ ପଣ୍ଡା</i>
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କଣ ପୁଣି ହେଲା?	<i>କଳ୍ପନାମୟୀ ଦାଶ</i>
ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଲୀଳା	<i>ରଚିତା ରାଉତ</i>
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ଚାନ୍ଦ ପୂଜା	<i>ସୁଲୋଚନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ</i>
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କୋମଳ ଗାଧାର	<i>ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲତା ମହାପାତ୍ର</i>
ଏଇ ଆମ ଘର	<i>ସତ୍ୟଜିତ୍ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ</i>
ଏହି ଆମ ଦେଶ, ଏଇ ଆମ	
ମାଟି, ଭୂଲିବାର ନାହିଁ ତାର ନାଁଟି	<i>ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନା ମହାପାତ୍ର</i>
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## Jagannath Seva Sanstha – A Transcending Vision, Part -II

Shashadhar Mohapatra

(Part I of this article was published in the 2007 OSA Souvenir.)

Dear Friends/Devotees/Well Wishers: I had promised last year to give a progress report to you every year until this project is complete. Now, it is the time. I can't believe it ! Time goes so fast. I begin with the following lovable quotations.

*“Thank God for what you have, TRUST GOD for what you need”*

*“God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him”*

*“The real measure of a man's wealth is what he has invested in eternity”*

*“Love is the only thing that can be divided without being diminished”*

*“Kindness is the language the deaf can hear and the blind can see”*

*“We make a living by what we get but, we make a life by what we give”.*

*“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is found to be excellent or praiseworthy, let your mind dwell on these things”*

These are so true and meaningful. We say “God is Divine”. The Divine form of God is visible to the Divine eyes, comprehensible to a Divine mind, experienced by a Divine heart. But, the question is how to attain the Divine heart, mind and senses. A yogi's answer to this question is: a person has to do “right devotion”. I believe that we as human beings have Divine qualities to a certain degree. Some people have been blessed with more, and some with less. There are always some connections between us and God. God is an integral part of our life. Undoubtedly, we are His blessed sons and daughters. Because of His grace and/or because of our previous karma (deeds), we have been blessed with a good life. We have already cashed out the result of our previous good karma. Now, it is time for us to reinvest in good karma so that we can not only get His blessings and love but also enjoy a peaceful life in our next birth. There is a saying “Early bird gets the worms”. Earlier is better. We sometimes feel that it is our moral duty and responsibility to help those who are less fortunate than us and also help the community that has helped us to grow and reach our destination. It does take a village to grow a child, isn't it? Now, it is our payback time.

Let me help you to refresh your memories. JSS (Jagannatha Seva Sanstha), a charitable organization in Orissa was created about four years ago. It was started by our family with the help of the local volunteers in our community. It was a long cherished dream. One of the major undertakings that JSS is working out is to build a Jagannath temple in our community. The purpose behind a Jagannath temple was to cater various needs of the people in our communities. It will be the first Jagannath temple in our area. One may ask: why a Jagannath temple ? It is a fascinating story and is a topic by itself. Here is a summary of our long term project.

- To strengthen the foundation of Jagannath Culture in rural Orissa by building a temple.
- To help poor and sick people as well as needy students.
- To build a shelter for the poor people in case of any natural disaster in our coastal area.
- Use this shelter place (prayer hall) for vocational training for men and women, perform wedding and sacred thread ceremonies, provide free computer classes to the children etc.
- To build a public library.

The idea of building a Jagannath temple in our community came to my mind more than three years ago. When I discussed this with my family members, relatives, close friends and my wife, they showed their cold feet. My children had no reaction as I expected because they didn't understand the whole purpose. However, those who know me for years, know that I am very sentimental and at times stubborn. I inherited that sentimental part from my poor mother, who is in heaven. When my family members realized that I was determined and not going to change or give up easily, they cooperated with me and that is when the project got a jump start.

The original plan was to build the temple on the top of a prayer hall (the base of the temple) and use this hall for various purposes including: as a shelter for the poor people in case of natural disasters in our area, for vocational training for men and women, for wedding and sacred thread ceremonies, teaching computer to the children etc. Later on, some new items such as a Laxmi Mandir, a kitchen, a residential

quarter for the priest and his family, a pond were added. Now, there is a proposal to add a small Ganesh and Bimala Mandir also. The original plan to build this temple was in a different location where we bought some lands adjacent to our land. Later on, it was shifted to another location. The previous land (~one acre) has been donated to the temple by my family. The current location has about an acre of land. Out of which 22 decimels were donated by one of my uncles, a retired high school headmaster. The rest of the land belonged to us and has been donated to the temple. The decision to build the temple in the new location was taken collectively by the people from our village and the nearby villages. When that proposal was conveyed to me over phone by my family back home I accepted it without hesitation. I never thought of this site before, not even in my dream. The people in the nearby villages were very happy and excited when they heard about the temple. We got out-pouring moral support from the local communities. Now, I realize that it was a very wise decision. Sometimes I think, may be that was Lord's desire too. The Lord gave His verdict. He wanted to be worshipped there instead of the site originally planned. We all are His servants ("sevak") only. He is the driver "Sarathi" of our chariots. He is the brain behind everything we do. He guides us, drives us what we do, when we do, where we go.

It was August 12, 2005. The morning was gorgeous. The sky was clear and bright. The Lord smiled on us and gave His blessings. The ground breaking ceremony "Bhumi Puja" was performed on that day with pomp and ceremony. The actual foundation work started on November 20, 2005. Here we are after three years (Picture). A picture is worth thousand words. These pictures were taken a month ago by my brother-in-law, a retired Physics Professor. He oversees this project. He and his family are deeply involved in these activities and have donated fifty thousand rupees. We still have many more miles to go. The chief architect (artist "mistree") is Mr. Muralidhar Giri of Jagannathpur, Bhadrak. He is a Rastrapati Award winner. He was a member of the "Purusottam Sanstha", who built the Swaminarayan temple at Junagarh, Gujrat. The original target to finish the temple work is within five years (2010). We are very much optimistic. Truly speaking, it is in the hands of our Lord. He knows when and where He wants to be worshipped.

The main temple has been designed like the temple at Puri. There would be three temples. The biggest temple in the back will be 67' high, the second one

will be 57' and third one will be 53' high. The temple will be built in three phases. The first phase consists of base of the temple. It includes the prayer hall. The area is of 2800 sq ft., height of 11ft. The first phase is complete. The second phase was to build the actual three temples on the top of this hall. The basic brick structures of those two smaller temples have been completed. The large temple is almost complete. But, "Dadhinauti", plastering, various temple arts and arches both inside and outside and painting etc. are yet to be completed. It is estimated that this work may take about a year alone. As mentioned earlier, there are also plans to build a "Laxmi Mandir" at the side of the main temple, a kitchen, a residential quarter for the priest and his family, boundary and a pond.

There is also a plan to create a trust fund to support the annual expenses of the temple including "Rath Yatra". With the help of my brother, sister and local volunteers, the local MLA (Mrs. Pramila Mallick) was kind enough to sanction money (7 lakhs) for a pond under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) or "Jatiya Gramya Nischita Karma Nijyukti Yojna". Until today, they have dug about 4-5' deep (Picture). The plan is to dig 10 ft deep. The other local political leaders have committed to provide us with a separate substation for supplying electric power to the temple premises through a Government of Orissa scheme.

Swami Vivekananda once said, "We make a living by what we get but, we make a life by what we give". Scripture says: "Seva hi Dharma". Being inspired by this project, some of our friends in the USA have generously contributed towards this temple project. A sum of \$1050.00 has been donated until today towards this temple project through JOGA (visit: jogaworld.org for details) by the following friends and well wishers.

Manoj and Meeta Panda, Detroit, Michigan  
Susanta and Rekha Ghosh, Boyd, Maryland  
Debaki and Anjana Chowdhury, Germantown, Maryland  
Nrusingha and Bandita Mishra, Germantown, Maryland  
Hemanta and Priti Biswal, Virginia  
Varughese and Deena Kurian, Maryland

A sum of Rs. 25,000 (= \$625.00) has been contributed by the people in my village and nearby villages. A sum of about \$80,000 has been spent on this project till today.

JOGA is a non profit tax exempt organization. Dr. Naresh Das of Columbia, Maryland, is the founder and Director of JOGA. He has been kind and gracious enough to help us in this project. He has agreed that one can donate by writing a check to the JOGA “temple fund” in order to get a tax break. No amount is large or small when it is donated for the Lord’s cause. All the contributions towards this temple fund are used on this project only. There is no overhead expenses. All the incomes and expenses are accounted with due diligence. My brother is spearheading this project. He has been instrumental to the success of carrying this project so far. I take this opportunity to request all of our friends, relatives, well-wishers who are in a position to

contribute towards this noble cause. A temple is not a personal property. It belongs to each and every individual in the community now and generations to come. Each individual should feel that it is their temple. We encourage each person to take ownership. We will be glad to receive suggestions from all of you. Please share your ideas and give us your advice. I assure you that we will accept your criticisms gracefully. May Lord Jagannath bless you, your friends and families!

For further questions, comments and suggestions please contact:

Shashadhar & Sujata (Meera) Mohapatra,  
(301.879.8188) <smohapatra318@yahoo.com>

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*Shashadhar Mohapatra, Ph.D. is a physicist, working in the area of Medical Physics. He is the Director of Radiation Safety and Diagnostic Medical Physics in Washington Hospital Center in Washington, DC. And lives in Silver Spring, MD. with wife Meera (Sujata) Mohapatra. His hobbies are reading and writing Oriya poems, socialization, participate in bhajans and various religious activities, social work.*





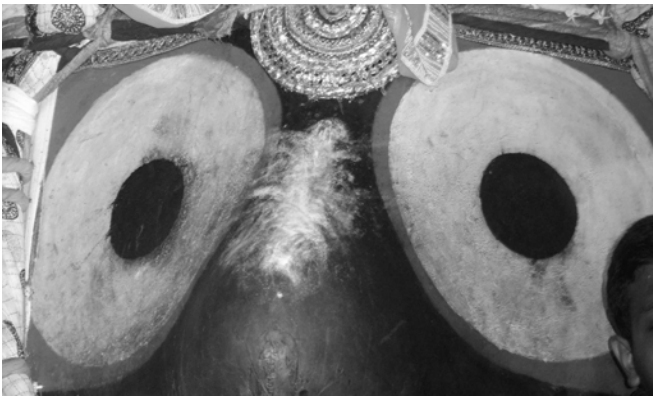
## When the Lord Beckoned...

*Nagesh Rajanala*

I visited India in July 2007 on a business trip and spent 4 days in Bhubaneswar with family. Purely by-chance and with no prior planning I hitched a ride with my cousin Tara bhaina to Puri and found myself on Lord Jagannath's chariot on the last day of Ratha Jatra. As the night unfolded, I realized that my presence there was no coincidence but beautifully scripted. Here are some of the events and experiences that I had the good fortune of being part of between 10:00PM and 3:00AM on Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, the last day of Ratha Jatra 2007 (bahuda).



Lord Balabhadra coming down his ratha



Imagine being 6 inches from the eyes!

It is one thing to see photographs or glimpses of the lord from a hundred feet inside the temple but the emotion of spending 5 hours within a proximity of six feet of the lord himself and being able to touch him, is indescribable.



Rathas in procession



Rathas of Lord Balabhadra and Ma Subhadra



Lord Jagannath makes his way into the temple

It was pure magic. The emotion of devotees being able to hug and touch the lord is unfathomable. The unconditionality was amazing. The devotees wanted nothing but a chance to touch... The Lord's eyes were ever innocent, loving and caring.



Lord Jagannath with devotees

The pictures barely even begin to show the energy on display. The noise... the surge of the crowd... The emotion... It has to be felt...I was pinned to the wall at the corner of Singha Dwar. Imagine the proximity in this picture.

Seconds after this picture, the lord is inside the temple. He was hardly 10 feet inside and it started to drizzle...

The drizzle turned into a full shower. It was surreal. It was a nice warm night allowing fireworks and a huge crowd to be outdoors. There were numerous delays in the Lord coming down from the Ratha and going into the temple. But the moment he was in the door... the skies let go...

Drenched and laughing I and my cousin Tara bhaina made our way home at 3 AM. I kept wondering about the number of things that had to fall in place for me to experience what I did. The only statement that stayed with me was Sudha Nana saying "When there is 'Joga' and the lord beckons...things happen".

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*Nagesh Rajanala lives in St. Louis, MO with his wife Sushmita and kids, Aradhya, Aaryana and Archiit. He is indebted to Tarakanta Mohanty and Sudha Nana for facilitating the entire experience.*



# Role of Pandit Nilakantha in the Formation of Orissa Province

Dr. Shridhar Charan Sahoo



Time, personality and commitment are three important factors which determine a man's role in public life. When a country under bondage of foreign rule fights for its national freedom or when any proud and self-conscious nationality strives and struggles for its identity, it naturally attracts people with leadership qualities to its embrace. A man's personality and traits of his character also shape his role and performance. Over and above, one's sense of commitment and dedication to some social or national purpose shapes his role in society or polity.

The life history of Pandit Nilakantha Das underscores these assertions time and again. Well-known are his struggles as a front-line freedom fighter for the liberation of India,<sup>1</sup> and his contributions as the Headmaster of Satyabadi High school founded by Pandit Gopabandhu. *But Nilakantha's foremost contribution to Orissa was his demand for the first time for a separate Orissa Province in the Indian Central Assembly on February 8, 1927.* Even when his compatriots were agreeable to simply the amalgamation of all Oriya-speaking tracts to be administered under Bengal, due to their uncertainty about the economic viability of a separate administration for Orissa, Pandit Nilakantha accepted nothing less than an independent Orissa Province from the British Govt. and worked tirelessly to make it a political reality.

This article seeks to present a systematic account of Nilakantha's commitment and his role in the formation the Orissa province in 1936. His irrepressible forthright personality, unbounded intellect, and love and dedication for Oriya language and culture helped bring to fruition the dream and passion of Utkal Gaurav Madhusudan, the father of the Oriya nationalist movement, and other makers of modern Orissa.

## Issues and Concerns of the Time - A Backdrop

The late 19th Century was a significant period of history - when Europe was sending the forces of nationalism to Asia and Africa. In India, the English brought with them the enlightenment of the west and inspired the Indians to imbibe the sprit of nationalism. The formation of Indian National Congress in 1885 provided Indians a platform to mobilize their human resources and express their spirit of nationalism.<sup>2</sup>

This "stream of nationalism" flowed to different parts of the country including Orissa through the channel of the Indian National Congress<sup>3</sup> and became a very powerful force when Mahatma Gandhi launched the national struggle for freedom through his strategy of non-violent non-cooperation (1920-1921). In Orissa, this force of nationalism had its impact too where nationalism veered round the narrower circle of its own predicament - that of annihilation of Oriya as a distinct linguistic group.<sup>4</sup>

*Orissa during this time, under British rule, was a dismembered Orissa, with Oriyas being scattered in four provinces - Bihar & Orissa, the Central Provinces, Bengal and Madras.* As a result of this dismemberment the Oriya-speaking territories virtually became appendages to these four provinces. The Oriyas were reduced to the status of linguistic minorities and were neglected and dominated by the linguistic majorities of those provinces. They felt particularly distressed when an anti-Oriya brigade consisting of people like Kanti Chandra Bhattacharya and Rajendralal Mitra deliberately tried to abolish Oriya language and culture.<sup>5-6</sup>

## Pandit Nilakantha: Early Influences

This crisis of identity which Oriya language faced in 1860s and 1870s facilitated the growth of Oriya

nationalism in the late 19th century. It started as a movement to protect Oriya language and culture, and its distinct identity, and gradually became a political issue in the twentieth century. As the safest protection to their language and culture, the Oriya-speaking people demanded a separate political identity of their own, culminating with the formation of a separate province for Orissa.

Pandit Nilakantha, born on August 5th, 1884 in the district of Puri, became a part of this nationalistic movement from his early youth. Utkalmani Gopabandhu and Utkal Gaurav Madhusudan shaped and moulded the personality of young Nilakantha to a great extent. It is they who planted in him the seeds of definite values and ideals during the formative period of his life which left an indelible impression on his mind, and determined the philosophy and course of his life.

### **Impact of Pandit Gopabandhu**

In 1899, while studying in Puri Zilla School, Nilakantha came in close contact of Gopabandhu who was then a student of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack and a budding patriot. Under his leadership and inspiration, Nilakantha along with Acharya Harihar and Pracharaka Ananta Mishra took a solemn vow in 1902 not to join Government service and to dedicate themselves to the service of the country. They were now determined to put in their entire endeavour to help bring their country to a much better condition than what they observed at the time.<sup>7</sup> This vow of service, which he took under the inspiration of Gopabandhu, virtually laid the foundation stone of Nilakantha's patriotism and foreshadowed his role both in India's freedom struggle and in the formation of Orissa as a separate province.

### **Nilakantha's association with Utkal Sammilani and Madhu Babu**

Madhu Babu formed the Utkal Sammilani or the Utkal Union Conference in 1903. It was his brainchild, and an organizational masterstroke of the time to unitedly and effectively strive for the goal of amalgamation of all Oriya regions under one administration.<sup>8</sup>

Nilakantha associated himself with the work of Utkal Sammilani right from his student days in Puri Zilla School and attended the different sessions of the Sammilani with great zeal. As a school student he got inspired to attend the first session of the Sammilani at

Cuttack in December 1903 'as a spectator' but as per his own admission in his auto-biography, he was deeply inspired by its goal and objective. During the heyday of British Empire in India in 1904, with rare courage and fearlessness, Nilakantha became one of the pioneers to sign the vow of Swadeshi in a register circulated at a meeting in Puri by Madhu Babu himself.<sup>9</sup>

Hereafter, Nilakantha became a convinced and dedicated follower of Madhu Babu, and championed and advocated the ideal and objective of the Utkal Sammilani time and again. In 1917, while working as the Headmaster of the Satyavadi School, he presided over the Manjusha session of the Utkal Sammilani and became a vibrant and articulate champion of the cause of amalgamation. He reiterated his afore-said commitment in 1918 at the Cuttack session of the Sammilani along with Gopabandhu and Godavarish, impressing upon the audience their sincerity and dedication to the cause.<sup>10</sup>

### **Issue of Amalgamation vs. Formation of a Separate Orissa Province**

A new sense of advanced and progressive awakening sprang up at the Utkal Union conference in 1919 as regards the goal and objective of the Oriya movement which epitomized almost a revolutionary and radical transformation. The leaders of the movement in a memorable resolution moved beyond the existing demand of amalgamation of Oriya-speaking tracts under one common administration to be tagged to some other province such as Bengal, and explicitly demanded a separate political identity of our own - a separate province for Orissa as our "legitimate aspiration".<sup>11-12</sup>

The Government however was not convinced about the Oriya demand, as there appeared no unanimity behind it. As per the reported discussion on 25 November 1921 in the Bihar-Orissa Legislative council, where as some supported the cause of a separate Orissa province, many others preferred only amalgamation of Oriya-speaking tracts under one Government. Even the local Chiefs in Ganjam, who were otherwise great protagonists of the Oriya cause, showed their apprehension about the financial feasibility of having a separate administration. This was evident from their evidence before the Philip-Duff committee in 1924.<sup>12</sup> This unfortunate lack of unity invited a satirical comment of the newspaper 'Forward' of Calcutta which said "----the young men in Orissa were satisfied with so little."<sup>12</sup>



## **Resolution in Central Assembly for Formation of a Separate Oriya Province**

In this encircling gloom of a sense of diffidence, Pandit Nilakantha held out a powerful ray of hope and confidence that Orissa could be made a separate province. Holding this confident view, he wanted to do something definite in that direction on the floor of the Indian Central Assembly in Delhi when he became its member in 1924.

In this connection, 8th February 1927 is a memorable day for the people of Orissa. It was on that day Nilakantha moved a resolution in the Central Assembly for formation of a separate province of Orissa. That resolution said: *"This Assembly recommends to the Governor General-in-Council to be pleased to take immediate steps to put, or publish the schemes of putting all Oriya-speaking tracts under one local administration."* He unequivocally stated that nothing less than a separate province of their own would satisfy the Oriyas and that if they were merely attached to one existing local government the agitation would continue.<sup>12</sup>

Nilakantha advanced strong and solid arguments in favour of his resolution for a separate province of Orissa, and sought to build up strong public opinion in its favour. He got many articles published in the newspapers and journals of Bombay, Delhi and Madras to exercise pressure on the British administration to accede to the Oriya demand. Pandit Gopabandhu Das acclaimed and admired this significant step of Nilakantha with a sense of great pride.<sup>13</sup>

Though initially the idea of a separate administration or province for Orissa was rejected by the Home member as a matter of 'practical politics', Nilakantha's move did not go in-vain. As it were, it 'created a stir' in Orissa and immediately the movement for a separate province for Orissa was construed as the highest aim of the Oriya amalgamation movement.<sup>14</sup> This claim for a separate Oriya province got a fillip when the Simon Commission (1927-28) began its enquiry. By the beginning of thirties when Simon Commission report was published, it became clear 'that the government had agreed to the Oriya demand for separation' though it excluded many Oriya regions which according to them were not justifiable.

Following the publication of the Simon Commission Report an Oriya All Parties Conference was held on 22 May 1931. Here Nilakantha reiterated his stand and commitment for a separate Oriya

province without any ifs and buts. He pointed out that the two issues of Oriya movement: amalgamation and separation should not be confused. Even he went further and stated that amalgamation was not needed without separation.<sup>14</sup>

## **Impact of Nilakantha on Indian National Congress**

Nilakantha's uninterrupted effort for the formation of a separate province for Orissa became evident again in 1928. During that year the Congress had appointed a committee under Motilal Nehru which took up the question of a separate province for Orissa. It was recommended that Orissa might be made a separate province only if it could have enough funds or if it could be economically viable. This recommendation of the Congress Committee which was given to Govt. in the month of December 1928 disappointed Oriyas.<sup>15</sup> This provision of economic viability as a condition precedent for formation of Orissa as a separate province was vehemently objected to by Pandit Nilakantha. He argued that Orissa being often subjected to floods droughts and famines, there should be no conditional support from the Congress on this issue. It is said: *"He tried to bring an amendment in the Calcutta session of the Congress ..... The President Pandit Motilal Nehru ruled it out. Nilakantha staged a walk out along with all the delegates from Orissa and brought out a procession in the Calcutta streets next day. Gandhiji intervened. Motilal expressed regret. Later the Congress agreed that Orissa would be the first province to be formed on linguistic basis. Not a small achievement for Nilakantha and his leadership."*<sup>16</sup>

## **O' Donnel Boundary Commission and Pandit Nilakantha**

As a result of all this, the question of a separate province for Orissa was considered in the cabinet of Government of India and led to the formation of O' Donnel Boundary Commission in 1931. As the President of the Provincial Congress Committee, Nilakantha gave a long memorandum to the Commission. But unfortunately, he could not give evidence before it due to the orders of Rajendra Prasad, the Zonal Congress head who instructed him to boycott the Commission as the local Congress President. It has been said that Nilakantha's inability to give evidence before the O' Donnel Committee Boundary Commission led to the non-inclusion of

Oriya speaking areas of Singhbhum and Midnapore in Orissa when it was made a separate province on 1st April, 1936. May be, his convincing and irrefutable arguments would have influenced the members of the Commission whereby Orissa would not have lost those areas for ever.<sup>17</sup>

In this connection what deserves mention is that Nilakantha Das along with Godavaris Mishra, Niranjana Patnaik, L.N. Sahu and Jadumani Mangaraj had extensively campaigned in Midnapore. They conducted meetings, formed associations and toured extensively asking the Oriyas to join their nationalist movement for amalgamating Midnapore with Orissa.<sup>18</sup> Pandit Nilakantha along with Sashibhusan Rath also had taken up the case of Singhbhum. They moved in the area in May 1931 addressing the people and impressing upon them to amalgamate with Orissa. As regards Pandit Nilakantha's work in Singhbhum it is said: The famous Congress leader of Bihar Dr. Rajendra Prasad was not happy about Nilakantha's frantic efforts to amalgamate Singhbhum in Orissa. In spite of his attitude, Nilakantha never showed any trace of cowardice. He also never relaxed his demand. Subsequently, even though Orissa became a separate province, Kharasuan and Sadheikala got excluded from Orissa due to some selfish Oriya leaders.<sup>19</sup>

### **British proposal of a sub-province for Orissa and Nilakantha**

During this time, the British colonial administration mooted the lesser idea of a sub-province for Orissa after amalgamating Oriya speaking tracts. On behalf of the Government of India, the Finance Secretary Muddyman Saheb persuaded Nilakantha to agree to this proposal. He came down to his residence and had several rounds of discussions. However, when Nilakantha did not budge from his dedication for a separate full-fledged province for Orissa, Muddyman held out the temptation of conferring him the title of 'Sir' in case he agreed to the sub-province proposal. Pandit Nilakantha was however not the man to surrender himself and sacrifice the cause for which he and his people worked so assiduously over the years. He showed his strength of character and convictions when he said in no uncertain terms "you have come to a wrong door".<sup>20</sup>

### **Birth of Separate Orissa Province**

Hereafter, the British design of making Orissa a sub-province failed and government was virtually forced to declare for Oriyas a separate province. It was certainly an achievement of Pandit Nilakantha Das, whose personality foiled the British design to hoodwink the Oriyas by simply giving them a sub-province. Referring to this sub-province idea and the subsequent developments which culminated in the formation of Orissa as a separate province on 1st of April 1936, Pandit Nilakantha has written in his autobiography "*Possibly in 1929, Muddiman Saheb made correspondence with me regarding the idea of a sub-province for Orissa after consideration in the cabinet. Following discussion on it, the Finance Minister of Government of India persuaded me to accept the proposal of making Orissa a province with a Central grant of Rupees Forty lakhs. I insisted on 80 lakhs to be given for Orissa's progress and development. However, I was pressurized by Bhubanananda Babu to accept this condition in the assembly. I accepted the condition almost as a matter of compulsion. This was the incident of 1933-34. As per the O' Donnell committee Report the British Government decided to form the province of Orissa comprising Puri, Cuttack, Balasore, Sambalpur and Ganjam with Jeypore. It was carried out on 1st April 1936*".<sup>20</sup>

### **Establishment of Utkal University**

After the formation of Orissa as a separate province, Nilakantha put forth the idea of establishing a university in Orissa. While demanding a separate province for Orissa in the Central Assembly he had said "we want a full-fledged province, we need a separate university and a separate High Court". He was determined to see it established. For that, he countered the inhibiting factor of financial constraints raised by the Government of Maharaja of Parala through his convincing and powerful arguments. He convinced the government about the rationality and feasibility of the proposal. Finally, he got the Utkal University established in 1943 through Godavarish Mishra, his close associate and the then Education Minister of Orissa.

### **Conclusion**

To sum up, Pandit Nilakantha Das was greatly inspired by Madhusudan Das and the goal and objectives of the Utkal Sammilani. He showed an

exemplary sense of dedication to the cause of amalgamation of Oriya speaking tracts lying scattered under different provinces and worked uninterruptedly for the formation of Orissa as a separate province. He demanded for the first time a separate province for Orissa in the Central Assembly on February 8, 1927. This move of Pandit Nilakantha facilitated the formation of a separate Oriya province as this cause assumed greater intensity and vigour.

He was uncompromising in his opposition to make economic viability a condition precedent for formation of Orissa as a separate province and crossed swords with Motilal Nehru. He tried to move the Congress in favour of his demand at the Calcutta session of Indian National Congress in 1928. He succeeded and later the Congress agreed that Orissa would be the first province, to be formed on linguistic basis. He was a proud Oriya whose self-confident, strong personality and character foiled the

British design to delude Oriyas by creating a much less attractive sub-province. His dream and sustained efforts to bring under Orissa all Oriya speaking tracts like Midnapore and Singhbhum remained unfulfilled due to a multiplicity of factors and constraints beyond his control. But he tried well and did his best. Madhu Babu chose Nilakantha as his heir in Orissa, but was not there in life to see the formation of a separate province on 1st April 1936; nor was Gopabandhu there having died in 1928. Pandit Nilakantha honoured the other prominent maker of Orissa Sri Krushna Chandra Gajapati, the Maharaja of Parala by installing him as Chief Minister of Orissa and Pandit Godavarish as Education Minister in 1943. Along with those great and patriotic leaders, Pandit Nilakantha Das will be ever remembered and respected by the Oriya people as one of the makers of modern Orissa.

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## ସେମାନେ କଣ ଆମ ମଣିଷ? (Are they our people?)

*Rabindra Nath Sabat*

My 20 years of tribal development work experience with the tribal people in undivided Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput (KBK), Phulbani, Sambalpur and Sundargarh districts and the continued marginalization process of the tribal people in Orissa is prompting me one question consciously all the time: “ସେମାନେ କଣ ଆମ ମଣିଷ?” (Are they our people?)

Fortunately, I have not only extensively travelled in hilly terrain, very inaccessible and remote pockets of rural areas of the above mentioned and other tribal inhabited districts, but also literally lived in the remote areas in thatched and mud huts for more than a decade when I was working for the development of tribal people on behalf of OXFAM, an UK based International NGO. At times, I remember, I had to walk for almost four to five hours to reach a village. I had stayed innumerable nights in the remote villages for conducting need assessment and finalizing a village development plan for the village in a participatory way. Many times, the villagers told me that I was the only person from the plain to reach the village or stay in the night. I learnt a lot about tribal life and their culture by staying in the night in the villages, which provided me an opportunity to observe the tribal village-life and meeting with small groups of people to conduct Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA-is a tool to assess the needs of the people, prioritize them and develop an action plan to meet the actual needs of the people where people have access to decision making process) for village development plans.

Further, my involvement with Friends' Association for Rural Reconstruction provided me additional opportunity to learn a lot on the tribal culture, their amazing traditions, festivals, ethnic ornaments, arts and crafts, rich heritage, unconditional hospitality, solidarity of their social structure and distinctive intimate connection with the nature and the state of happiness the tribal people live in.

Despite their poverty and pre-occupation with the continual battle to survive in this highly unjust world, most of the tribes of Orissa have retained their rich and varied heritage to a greater extent in spite of the focus on mainstream development. The mainstream development parameters are too biased about the

peoples' capacity and impose most of the time a “top down approach”. There is no scope to recognize the indigenous knowledge and practices, their strengths and weaknesses and the actual needs of the people. Many development projects have been literally ridiculed because of lack of true participation of the people.

The scope to incorporate tribal's life pattern in the development projects has been very remote in India. The development framework has a rigid structure-“one size fits all” approach catering to different categories of people when the needs are different. To analyze the tribal socio economic conditions, we need to understand their life style and evolve development plan from within, not from outside.

Most of the tribal people are hard working yet lead a simple life. The colourful dance and music form an integral part of their life and particularly during the festivals and rituals. Unlike other culture, there is no formal training on the dance or music and yet charm and subtle beauty can be found in their dance and music. The dance and music is the natural manifestation of their inner urge and revelation of the pure joy, sorrow, feelings, love, affection, passion and appreciation of beauty and nature.

The amazing conglomeration of traditions, beliefs, practices and philosophies that constitute in the rituals and festivals of the tribes, has descended from antiquity and has been preserved amazingly to the present day. Every facet of their life is intimately connected with religious beliefs and ritual practices. It is these aspects of their culture that give meaning and depth to their lives, and solidarity to their social structure.

Their sense of natural living surrounded by hills, forests, rivers and streams, wild animals, and sense of ecological protection is unparallel to any expensive retreat. Their scientific cultivation practices (contrary to the believe that their cultivation practices are very unscientific-now we are talking of mulching, organic farming after eroding the practices which were in built with tribal systems), sense of worshipping the nature and spiritual convictions are unparallel.

Most of the tribes believe that their life and work are controlled by supernatural beings whose abode is around them in hills, forests, rivers and houses. It is very difficult to standardize the Gods and spirits as

their composition continually changes. Their Gods differ from one another in composition, function, character and nature. Some are benevolent; some are neutral and some are malevolent. The malevolent spirits and Gods are cared more than their benevolent counter parts as they can bring misery.

I still recollect my vivid experience after 22 years also. I had to stay in the night in Gatibeda village of Komna block (presently in Nuapada district) as it was too long distance by walk to come back to my temporary station. There was a special worshipping ceremony for Goddess Sunadei, the living deity of Sunabeda Panchayat of Komna Block. Perhaps, I was the only outsider who was present in the ceremony. The ritual started with a goat's sacrifice to please the goddess. The village women started chanting continuously to invoke Goddess Sunadei's blessings. The 2 hours long chanting created an atmosphere full of magical feelings that one can feel the presence of a supernatural power. It was like a plainchant for me. The village priest was on fast entire day to offer prayers to Goddess Sunadei and people were expecting him to predict about the village affairs including the crop, rain, death and birth in the village for the next year. I could feel the spirit and yes, can sense the presence of some supernatural power on that occasion. (Is it Psychic feeling?)The priest (Jhankar) behaved in a weird manner though and beat vehemently on his back on Korda (a string shaped biting instrument). I was astonished to see the age old wisdom expressed by the priest on many important issues of the village.

The tribal's economy is perpetually dependent on land, water and forest. Because of their simplicity, ignorance and lack of strong protection mechanisms from the government authorities, many unscrupulous people from mainland have manipulated the ownership of the land, which belonged to the tribal. Most of them were either landless or small and marginal farmers. In western Orissa, the colloquial word used for landless people is "Sukhbasi" and the literal meaning of Sukhbasi is happy people! With so many mega projects initiated for mainstream development, the tribal were further marginalized and the forest was depleted to an extent which can not be naturally replenished. Since the Indian Forest Act was promulgated in 1927, and the forest was vested on the government (forest department) and since then the forest has been recklessly denuded to an irreparable extent. The coverage has come down from well over 35 % to less than 11% in Orissa.

Currently, the idea of Joint Forest Management and partially vesting the power of forest management on the village committees is being promoted because of the pressure of International NGOs and UN agencies. The government machinery is utterly irresponsible in stopping the deforestation. With the fast depletion of the forest, the tribal economy has further deteriorated.

The government although depended mainly on tribal people for collection of minor forest products, the price fixed for the Minor Forest Products (MFP) was much lower due to the lobby of the mafia groups. As usual, the middle men and the wholesalers were by and large benefitted out of collection of Minor Forest Products, certainly with the connivance of government officers.

During my work period in Friends' Association for Rural Reconstruction, I have promoted 22 Joint Forest Management Committees in four Panchayats of Gurundia Block and within four years, natural replenishment of the forest was abundant. I remember, the Divisional Forest Officer was awarded because of this and unfortunately, after his transfer, the forest which was preserved for four years with the help of villages went to the hands of dubious contractors again.

Collection and sale of the Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) has been one of the main sustainable economies of the tribal community. For an example, if we analyze the Kendu leaves issue, the notorious nexus of the contractors and government officers can be unfolded (known to everybody) at the cost of marginalization process of the tribal community in Orissa.

During 1980s and 1990s, about a million pluckers were engaged in plucking Kendu leaves during the season, which lasted about 45 to 50 days in summer. The rate fixed by the government (roughly 1 rupee for 100 leaves) did not even meet the standards of minimum wage act and the usual practices of undercounting, rejection, under-payment, and over-invoicing, helped government staff and the nexus of petty contracts to pocket a significant amount of government funds, at the cost of peoples' livelihoods and extra revenues to government.

The Kendu leaves plucking only generated 150 million person days or woman days of employment during the agricultural lean season in Orissa and accounted for 75-80% of total revenue from the forests. Since 1973, kendu trade has been a State monopoly, and the nexus of unholy partnership of the



contractors, politicians and government officers controlling collection, bundling, storage and sale of this minor forest product has capitulated enormous government revenue loss.

As per government stipulations, 50% of net government revenues should be transferred to the *Panchayats*, whereas actual transfer was only about 12%–15%. Madhya Pradesh government during BJP regime, promoted the cooperatives of tribal communities and the entire net profit was passed on to the pluckers' cooperatives.

The irresponsible and uncontrolled forest depletion has caused many natural calamities such as draughts, floods and cyclones recurrently in Orissa. This has affected the economy of Orissa very adversely, perpetuating the marginalization of the tribal community.

As an impact of forest denudation, the water table has gone down precariously in the tribal areas. The water table has also gone down so drastically with denudation of the forest that the tribal communities have no option except to work as casual laborers in the adjoining townships or cities, adding to the miseries of slum dwellers.

The tribal's emotional and spiritual attachment with forest was enormous. They co-existed peacefully with the wild animals and forest creatures. Generally speaking, the mainland people looked down the tribal community and always projected their culture as superior to tribal community. Additionally, they not only squandered the livelihood of the tribal community but also manipulated the individual property such as land and domestic animals to their benefit.

To my experience, the forest dwellers were never afraid of the wild animals such as tigers or ferocious animals. I was stationed (that was literally a Banabas for me initially) in a sanctuary in Komna block of Kalahandi district for 26 months and have heard amazing stories how the people lived with peaceful co-existence with the wild animals. The sanctuary was consisted of 12 revenue villages with a vast area of forest and three types of tribal such as Bhunjia, Gond and Pahadia were the main inhabitants in Sunabeda Panchayat. the Pahadia community was the primitive ones and they were cultivating the land with the help of an axe during 1979-1985.

The Pahadia community's main occupation was fishing, hunting and agriculture was their subsistent occupation. I realized very late, why tribes in most remote pockets used to run seeing the government

officers or extension officers. They carried an absolute wrong image (may be right image) of these people. These people were the symbol of exploitation to them and they carried an adverse image to the so called "education" system which has further marginalized them. Sometimes, these extension officers and government officers were branded as "two legged tigers" that were more dangerous than the four legged ones.

Obviously, tribal economy was based on subsistent economy characterized by simple technology, simple division of labour, small-scale units of production and no investment of capital. The social units of production, distribution and consumption were limited to the family and lineage only. Circumstances beyond the control of human beings, poverty, ignorance and unwillingness to use efficient techniques to exploit natural resources and lack of capital for investment made their life worse, and not adequate support system was built in for them by the government.

Earlier, land in the tribal areas was not surveyed and settled. Therefore, the tribal freely practiced shifting cultivation in their respective habitats assuming that land, forest, water and other natural resources belonged to them.

Several large tribes, such as Santal, Munda, Ho, Bhumij, Oraon, Gond, Mirdha, Savara etc. were settled agriculturists, though they supplemented their economy with hunting, gathering and collecting. Tribal agriculture in Orissa was characterized by unproductive and uneconomic holdings, land alienation, and perpetual indebtedness. Further, lack of irrigation facilities in the undulating terrains, lack of easy or soft credit facilities and use of traditional skill and primitive implements worsened their economy to a bare subsistence level. In general, they raised only one crop during the monsoon, and therefore had to supplement their economy by other types of subsidiary economic activities.

The industrialization and mining operations have led to uprooting of tribal villages, and the displaced tribes became industrial nomads. They lost their traditional occupation, agricultural land, houses and other immovable assets. They became unemployed and faced unfair competition with others in the labour market. Their aspiration - gradually escalated-invariably failed to achieve what they aspired for.

Orissa has one of the largest concentrations of tribal population in the whole of India (22.13 per cent according to the 1991 census).

In concrete figure they number around 7 million. Tribal communities differ from all others in many respects, their distinctive features being clan organization and territorial monopoly, classes, social structure, youth dormitory, colourful rituals and folk art, music and dance etc. to name a few. The 62 tribes in Orissa vary in their size, degree of acculturation and economic patterns, while the Kondhs numbering around nine hundred thousands or close to a million are numerically the largest in the state. The Santals are among the three largest and advanced tribes in the country. The major tribes living in Orissa are the Santals, Oraons, Gonds and Kondhs. Although many of the Adivasi tribes are found in other parts of the country, the Juangs, Bhuyans, Saoras, Bondas and Bathudis are exclusive to Orissa. The tribal communities are in various stages of economic and social development starting with the least developed Bondas and ending with the comparatively advanced Santals, the spectrum covering semi-nomadic to semi-urban conditions. While a few tribes like the Lanjia Saoras and Kutia Kodhs are entirely primitive, the Santals have a high degree of acculturation.

Fortunately or unfortunately, Orissa and particularly the tribal habitats have abundant natural resources of coal, bauxite, iron ore, chromite and other mineral resources. Orissa has a share of 59% of nation's bauxite reserve, 98.4 % Chromite, 31.5 china clay, 28.4% coal, 17.9 dolomite, 25.6% fire clay, 71% graphite, 32.9% iron ore, 67.6% manganese, 30.8% mineral sands, 65.1% Pyrophvliite, 91.8% nickel ore and 6.9 % Quartz and Silica sands. Orissa is a very rich state as far as the natural and mineral resources are concerned but people of Orissa are very poor!

The dismal poverty profile provided by the Government shows that the level of poverty is higher in Orissa than in the rest of India. Although statistics supports poverty falling over time, all data sources indicate that the gap in incomes or poverty situation between Orissa and the rest of India, has widened over the last twenty years. Whereas in 1980 per capita income in Orissa was 27% lower than the rest of India, in 1997 it was astoundingly 70% lower. The proportion of people below the poverty line is estimated at 47% compared with 26% in the whole of India. Orissa is much poorer than the rest of India.

India has grown faster than Orissa and the gap between Orissa and other states is continuously widening to an incredible degree.

Who are these poor people in Orissa? The disparity of region needs attention why some part of Orissa is poorer than other part or why all tribal are invariably poor? Scheduled Tribe population in coastal area is 7.2% as against 39.7% in the southern region. So, poverty ratio in coastal rural region is 64.0% as against 85.5% in the southern region. If we see the overall trend, we find that 80% of the rural families are leading a painful life in the state. I, myself have worked with the tribal people in very inaccessible, hilly terrain region and remote pockets of undivided Kalahandi, Bolangir, Koraput (KBK), Phulbani, Sundargarh, Dhenkanal and Sambalpur for almost two decades and have witnessed stark poverty, lack of basic infrastructure in rural areas, and seen people taking roots of wild plants, mahua flowers and gurji etc. (a staple food normally consumed during the lean period) just to survive during the period of eighties and early part of nineties. But now, after almost one decade I can not comprehend that the situation has worsened amidst plenty and above all the projection of "rising India" image to outside world.

Is equity in development process is possible when we talk of development in Orissa or for that matter in India for the different tribes who are languishing in acute poverty and have been utterly neglected for decades and may be centuries? Do our policy makers doing enough on fair representation and participation of historically disadvantaged people to ensure equity and fairness in development process? Are the development pundits thinking of accessibility and human rights issues and taking steps to remove discrimination barriers (overt and covert) to ensure equity, accessibility and address discrimination issues? Can we conceive development in an all inclusive manner there too?

Can Orissa expect to bring down the poverty level any time in the foreseeable future and particularly for the disadvantaged and vulnerable tribal communities? Please think for a while: ARE THEY OUR PEOPLE? DO WE HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY?

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## Winter Blossoms

Mamata Mishra

Review by Sikhanda Satapathy

Mamata Mishra is well known to the Oriya diaspora in US through her writing in OSA Souvenirs, her participation in voluntary organizations, such as SEEDS and her organization of seminars on women issues in OSA conventions. Recently she published a collection of her poems, *Winter Blossoms*, written over a span of a decade and a half.

This anthology is a soft touch to the soul and a gentle nudge to the mind from a very observant poet. The poems bring forth a point of view that pleads, prods and persuades you to pause for a moment and step into the shoes of a mother, a new bride, a wife, a single mother or a divorced woman - a world normally unexplored and often ignored!

Mamata Mishra is a well known advocate for battered women and children in central Texas, and has been recognized for her activism by *Saheli*, *SafePlace*, etc. She questions the society's stereotypical attitudes toward women. She implores all to appreciate a lonely world full of love, hope and strength, yet mostly neglected due to historical and social reasons. In *Woman* she writes,

*In a lifelong journey she can share the load  
Why make her a burden, then leave on the road?  
She isn't a slave, she doesn't need a master  
Wants a friend to walk beside, not run past her.*

Through the quandary of mud shoes in *Puzzle*, she brings out excellently the helplessness of one who faces impossible demands in a situation created by purported well-wishers. In the Letter from exile, she complains how a mother looks askance at her daughter's misery for fear of what people may say. She derides the insensitive husband, who gets out of marriage by saying "it was a simple mistake" as if it

were a child's play, or like dialing a wrong number! The shackles that an arranged marriage imposes on an unsuspecting girl, or the poverty that she faces among apparent wealth, come out in lucid words in the hope and despair section. Thus she writes,

*Dreams are gone never to return  
nightmares have taken their place  
where I run through a maze with absolute craze  
as every door closes on my face.*

She even offers simple solutions for such despair in medicines for him to cure her depression. She doesn't shy away from pleading ignorance as her inability to explain *Maya* to a youngster:

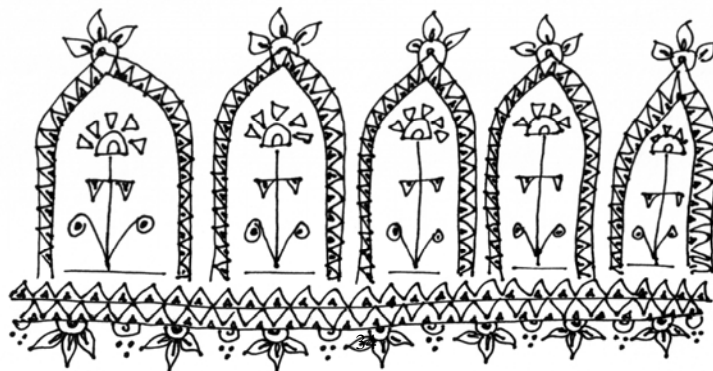
*Not knowing what to say  
I said, "We'll talk another day."  
Pondering deep into your question  
I Silently drove away.*

There are gems of poetry that leave you with a lingering thought in puzzle, goodbye fear, *Maya*, a mother's plea, woman, etc. The poems are very nicely written, and a pleasure to read. It is a must-read to get a glimpse of beautiful blossoms that are so rare to find, let alone appreciate, from an unspoken world of hope and wintry despair.

*Winter Blossoms* won the second place in the nonfiction, poetry category in the Reader Views Reviewer Choice Awards. Enjoy the poetry by an Oriya poet, who has been much acclaimed for her dedication to opposing violence in all forms, especially among South Asian families in central Texas. You can find out more at [www.mamatamisra.com](http://www.mamatamisra.com).

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## Unity in Diversity

*Jnana Ranjan Dash*

Our Rishis (spiritual scientists) five to six thousand years ago searched for the truth, “who am I and why am I here as a human being?” They wanted answers to the purpose and meaning of life. What spiritual scientists they were!

Modern science tries to find answers by observing the external world, the world of matter. Our Rishis found answers by looking at the inner world of man. Instead of observing the objects, they decided to focus on the subject. What came out of that search is the vast literature of the Upanishads that still baffles the minds of the scientists of today. They declared that behind this creation, there exists that cosmic intelligence called the “consciousness”. They named it “Brahman”. The individual soul is called Atman which is none other than Brahman. The twentieth century physics of Einstein, Heisenberg, Schrödinger, or even Fritjof Capra of Berkeley (The Tao of Physics) have marveled at the insights of these Rishis. Consciousness is indivisible, a singularity much in line with the concept of the “Field theory” in physics. Einstein said, “God does not play dice with the universe” meaning there is a grand design behind this perfection. Hence it’s called the cosmos, not chaos. Our spiritual scientists explored that cosmic intelligence behind this creation.

The Upanishadic literature declares four Mahavakyas or ultimate truths. The one from Chhandogya Upanishad says “*Tat Twam Asi*” or That Thou Art. You, the individual, are not this limited entity of pain and suffering, you are something much bigger. You are none other than Brahman. We all are mere manifestations of that all-pervading energy called Brahman. Hence there is no room for divisiveness. This Mahavakya was given by Uddālaka Rishi to his son Svetaketu. The Isa Upanishad says that the entire universe is pervaded by Brahman – *isavasyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat*.

There are ten major Upanishads – Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chhandogya, and Brihadaranyaka. Besides these ten, there are almost hundred other Upanishads. The term Upanishad means “come sit near me”. A teacher tells the student to come and sit near and have a dialog about this life. A famous line such as

*Uttisthita Jagrata Prapya Baran Nobodhata* (Arise, Awake, Stop not till the goal is reached) comes from the Kathopanishad, a favorite of Swami Vivekananda who addressed the parliament of religions in Chicago back in 1893. The Kathopanishad is a dialog between a young boy named Nachiketa and the king of death Lord Yama. The young boy decided to go meet the Lord of death to understand the meaning of death, hence the meaning of life. It’s a beautiful text full of great mysticism, deep philosophy and charming poetry. The Upanishads appear at the end of the Vedas (which are like process manuals) and hence they are also known as Vedanta (*veda+anta* or end of the Vedas). These ten Upanishads are called major, because Adi Shankaracharya wrote commentaries on them.

Adi Shankaracharya or simply Shankara was born in Kerala in 788 A.D. and lived only for 32 years. During this brief life, he wrote the *bhasya* (commentaries) on Brahma-Sutra, the ten Upanishads, and the Bhagabat Gita. He was the one who brought the Bhagabat Gita from obscurity and gave it the prominence it deserved. Just imagine in those times he traveled by foot all over India, creating the four holy places (Puri being the one in the east). He preached *Adwaita Vedanta* (non-dual) meaning the concept of “*Brahma-Jiva Aikya*” (Brahman and Individual soul (Atman) are one and the same). His famous lines include “*Ekoham Bahusyam*” (I am one, but manifested as many), or “*Ekam Sat Viprah Vahudah Badanti*” (there is one truth, but experts express it in many ways). He visited Puri and wrote the famous eight stanzas of Jagannatha Ashtakam, “*Kadachit Kalandi Tatabipin Sangi Takarabo.....Jagannatha Swami Nayana Pathagami Bhaba Tume*”.

The shortest of all Upanishads is the Mandukya Upanishad consisting of only 12 verses. It elaborates the meaning of *Om* which consists of three sounds, A, U, and Ma representing the three states – waking or *jagrata*, dream or *swapna*, and deep sleep or *susupti*. There is a fourth state called *Turiya* symbolized by the silence between the utterances of *Om*. This fourth state *Turiya* is one where one realizes the Brahman. That realization is known as self-realization. The biggest of the Upanishads is the Brihadaranyaka.

Why are these teachings significant to all of us? These messages, contrary to general view of being dry and boring, are actually quite practical in our daily life. They teach us to see unity in our apparent diversity. We tend to be very judgmental. If things don't fit into our set ideas, we tend to reject them. By opening the scope of our understanding, we can look at things with empathy and openness. It helps us to shed our negativity and see life as a blessing and celebration. It also helps us to let go of our ego and appreciate the goodness in everyone.

OSA has been one of the early organizations of Indians in North America, dating back to forty years. At the annual convention in Toronto, let us celebrate this long journey with goodwill and love to all. We may come from different parts of our home state with different backgrounds. But we are one and the same, not only at our language and culture level, but also at the humanity level.

The scripture declares – *Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Niramaya, Sarve Bhadrani Pasyantu, Ma Kaschit Dukham Vag Bhabet* - Let everyone be happy, let everyone be healthy, let everyone see good in all, let there be no sorrow and suffering.

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## Tribal Arts & Crafts: A Treasure Trove of Aesthetics

A. C. Sahoo

The material culture of the tribal world is a store house of vintage Arts and Crafts, embodied in their indigenous knowledge. It is reflective of need-invention continuum of anthropocentric culture of early time vis-a-vis hostile nature.

The child of nature has story of an endless battle of wit and ingenuity, paradoxically against nature; to make them to sub serve the purpose of his sustenance. This man-nature interaction helps evolved the threads of culture component where ingenuity and imagination are conceived as one and indivisible.

Tribal arts and crafts, the product of this unification of sensibility of wit and imagination, invariably represent a meaning beyond its physical existence. They are at once, tools and artifices of survival and also an unfolding of imagination of homo sapiens.

Nature as tormentor and teacher stimulates the tribal mind to go for creation where the process of living asks for creative innovation almost in ceaseless mode. The powerful feelings stirred by 'tooth and claw' of nature or its lovely manifestation, something gets crystallized into powerful symbols - that find expression in their Arts and Crafts.

The use of colour, motifs and other weird shapes and sizes - echoes a definite striving for the continuity of tradition with all the nuances. The acme of their artistic masterpiece, invariably always rests with the faithful portrayal of their fluid culture - which is always seen like a river inflates.

The tribal cultural heritage is the cradle of modern day civilization when one finds the gradual sophistication of wit and ingenuity. Though today we find a split in the holistic aspect of a modern man - with divided aim and disintegration - the wholesome man is possible to find in the tribal world - with their crafts still emanating unified song of life.

Orissa has 62 culturally significant diverse tribal communities. These communities like their counterparts elsewhere are famous for exquisite carpet of distinct tribal culture with a kaleidoscopic colour and vision. They struggle for their survival, they are more or less the same yet they differ from one and another in material culture, social organization, language and folklore. Differences are also marked in application of technology, food habits, settlement pattern and house types and also in their belief system. Almost all the tribals have shown their artistic and creative genius which are activities

of invention and diffusion. The aesthetic and ethnographic significances of their material culture are not only made for joys and merry making. It has also functional value. The little communities with their beliefs, costumes and skills constitute the world views and life style which is to be conceived.

The traditional customs, adornment pattern and use of certain special materials of a tribe are main parameters of its socio-cultural identity. The religious ideas and symbols of worship is subject for imagination to create delicate artifacts and crafts. The artifacts and art objects which are different tribal people of Orissa use are associated with aesthetics and socio-cultural significance.

They use various hunting weapons like bow and arrow, spear, sword, catapult, axe, knife, snare, trap, net and such others which are different from one tribal community to the other in its shape, size, external appearance and pattern of use. Some of the hunting weapons are purchased from the local market. Sometimes, they purchase the iron part of the object from the market and other parts are made by themselves. They add some new designs in order to decorate it to look more attractive. Some individuals attach emotional feelings with specific weapon and carry with them as a personal belonging. There are certain weapons, which are being used by the magico-religious specialists, and preserved at the community levels. Necessary rituals are offered to certain weapons in different ceremonies for its magico-religious significance. The tribal groups reveal their own identity through specific hunting weapons.

The tribal people of Orissa use various types of agricultural implements, which are used for collection of different tubers and practice of shifting cultivation and settled agriculture. Even for collection of minor forest produces, they use specific type of basket and implements, which are examples of their creative skill. They make all these items out of the locally available materials but maker's creative ideas and expertise are quite vital. While making the item they keep in view the need of the person, who is expected to use the object. One can find very primitive types of dibbles and pointed sticks which are very artistic. The spade, plough, leveler, cowbell, billhook etc sometimes look very attractive because of beautiful motifs and designs on it. Even in the same tribal community, some of the agricultural implements differ from one section to the other living in two

different ecological set up.

The settlement pattern, house types and architectural design of the houses are culture and community specific. The outlook and internal structure and placement of various functional parts differ from one community to the other living in the same ecological surroundings.

The household items of the tribal people are revelation of their culture and depict the economic status and artistic vision of a community. They purchase or collect some of their household items from the neighbouring communities but the items they use are according to their culture and the designs are also culture specific. From the household items one can assess the standard of living, socio-cultural and economic background of the concerned people. Their creative ideas and love for beauty are marked from the objects like traditional grinders, measuring pots, mats, ladles, and several such others. The uniqueness and the cultural values are revealed in the items of their daily use.

The people of almost all the tribal communities of Orissa are having some knowledge in basketry. Tribes like Mahali, Dharua, Koya and Birhors have shown their creative skill in this field. The Mahalis make baskets of different shape, size, and designs for different tribes and are famous for their expertise in basketry. The Birhors or Mankidias make beautiful small siali fiber baskets of different size and design which are used for oil extraction. Likewise the baskets of Didayis, bamboo mats of the Bondos, beautiful baskets of the Bhumias, attractive bamboo works of the Oraons and Kisans, fascinating bamboo hanging baskets of Dharuas attract the attention of the outside visitors. The style of baskets, mode of mat making, and basketry designs vary from one community to the other. Different types of winnowing fan, sieves and fishing traps made by using varieties of bamboo splits differ in their creative design and skill. The date-palm leaf mats made by the Paudi Bhuinyas are very popular among the neighbouring people. The Savaras, Saoras, Juangs and Mundas make very good mats. The leaf made umbrella of the Kondhs and Juangs and the marriage crown of Kisan, made out of date-palm leaf, are highly appreciated by the outsiders. The inside vision of the craft person, cultural norms and socio-economic need are instrumental for making varieties of artistic bamboo and cane basketry.

Different types of gourd items, which are either used as a container or a carrier, are very beautiful. The gourd ladles of different shape and size are used

for different purposes. The Saoras, Dongria Kondhs make beautiful carvings on gourd items to make it more attractive and decorative. The carving designs and motifs vary from one community to the other and their uses also differ according to their socio-economic condition. Beautiful masks are made out of gourd items and decorated nicely before using it as votive object. Gourd items used in making musical instrument are also common in several tribal groups. They preserve food grains and seeds, in the gourd containers. The Lanjia Saoras hang it before the wall paintings to satisfy the ancestral spirits for keeping the family members free from danger.

The tribal people of the state irrespective of their age and sex use varieties of jewellery items to adorn different parts of their body. All the women are very much fond of ornaments of different types. Unmarried youths put on various types of jewellery items. Among different types of ornaments mention may be made of varieties of hairpins, hairclips, head ornaments, forehead band, earrings, nose rings, neckband, necklaces, chains, armlet, bangles, waist chain, anklet, finger rings, toe ring etc. All these ornaments are made out of grass, leaves, bamboo, wood, stone, lead, iron, copper, aluminum, while metal, brass, silver and gold. Except for the metal part, all others are made by themselves. Even metal components are purchased and designed according to their socio-cultural norms and aesthetic values. Each tribal community has its own adornment pattern by means of which they are differentiated from each other. Different types of ornaments are also used in various parts of the body. The specialty in style of adornment is marked on marriage occasion, festive occasions, special ceremonies and while attending other villages. In addition to this, adornment during dance, ritual and on special occasion differs from one another. Even a particular jewellery item used in a specific part of the body varies in its shape and size. Ornaments are not only worn for beautification or decoration of the body parts, but also stand as mark of identity, marital status, social position, socio-economic condition and other cultural aspects of the community. It is used as an item of gift at community and individual level. Exchange of ornaments for offering a special type of ornaments to someone is symbolic and associated with socio-cultural values. Ornaments used by magico-religious specialist, which have lineage with appeasing different spirits, gods and goddesses. Certain types of ornaments are used to keep some one away from malevolent spirits and make free from diseases.

The tribal communities of Orissa use different varieties of textiles. Some of the textiles are woven and used by them. There are many tribal communities who purchase clothes from the local weekly market. In some cases they provide the hand made yarn to the local weavers for weaving their traditional cloth. The Dongria Kondh women purchase the base cloth from the local market and make very good embroidery on it, which is having great socio-cultural significance.

The patterns of putting on the textiles also differ from one tribe to the other. Not only the type of cloth but also the pattern of use reveals the cultural identity of a particular community and difference from other groups. The tools and technology belief system and process of making, symbols and motifs on the cloth vary from one tribal community to the other. Even among the people of the same tribal community, the people use different types of clothes for different purposes. In a marriage ceremony different kin group are offered clothes, which vary in their shape, size and design. Different textiles are used at the time of dancing, specific festive occasion, during ritualistic observances, pollution period etc. The designs vary from simple geometrical lines to the complicated figures and figurines, animals and birds, trees and flowers and several human activities. However, each tribal community has its own identity and creative impulses either in weaving or using hence variations are many at different level. These variations are marked at individual and community level, between two age and sex groups and people of different position and status.

Almost all tribal communities of Orissa use Dhokra items, made by casting of metals through lost wax process. It is also popularly known as Cire Perdue process. In this process Dhokra workers make the desired item for which he receives advance in cash or kind. Dhokra items are of several kinds. Some of the Dhokra items are used as votive objects. The other types of items are dowry items, household materials and jewellery. The votive objects are usually different plants, animals, birds, reptiles, human figures and combination of human activity. Dowry items like animals, birds, human figures and different unique Dhokra objects are arranged by the parents to offer to their daughters at the time of marriage. By and large, the Dhokra items of various types and kinds are in good demand among the tribal communities. In spite of economic transformation and cultural changes most of the tribals have retained use of Dhokra items in different forms. In several places the Dhokra items are no more available which have

been taken away by the outsiders by showing them the temptation of high prices. A lot of Dhokra items at present found in several tribal communities may disappear very fast. Necessary preventive measures are required to save them from extinction. The caste communities like Situaalia, Gantara, Ghantaragadha, Thatari, Kansari, Ghasi etc., make these items for different tribal communities by utilizing by their own creative skill. Whatever similarities or differences might have been marked but there is no doubt that all types of tribal Dhokra items are quite precious for all foreigners. All kinds of Dhokra items need to be collected to retain the past glory and cultural identity of the tribal people or to introduce it as cottage industry for economic development. Somehow the Dhokra material culture of the tribals yet maintains its uniqueness and tradition.

Dance and music are an integral part of the socio-cultural life of the tribals. It strengthens the social bond, integrity and unity among the people. During the dance and music and rituals, they use various types of musical instruments which are o percussion, aero phonic and chordophonic type. The percussion types of musical instruments are idiophones and membrane-phones. The aerophonic are blown and the chordophonic are stringed instruments. The tunes created by using different musical instruments vary from one instrument to the other. The making process and procedure of use also vary. Differences are also marked in shape, size materials used in making and beliefs associated with each musical instrument. They use wood, bamboo, creeper, fruits, earthen pot, leather and metallic vessels for making different types of musical instruments. In some of the instrument strings, hair of the horse, wax, bone etc. are used. Among different musical instruments mention may be made of single membrane drum, double membrane drum, flutes, violin, tambourine, cymbals, gong, and many others. According to necessity, they use bamboo and wooden pieces as a musical instrument. Even the sticks are used to make some sound at the time of dance and music. The variations *in* different musical instruments are marked in shape, size, design and motifs. The stringed instruments of the Santals, popularly known as Banam, are made in different ways and an individual tries his level best to make it decorative with designs according to his skill and aspiration of the user. The single membrane drum used by the Juangs, engraved flutes of the Kutia Kondhs, and blowpipe used in war dance by the Lanjia Saoras reveal their respective uniqueness. By and large the tribals used varieties of musical

instruments. But the musical instruments for different purposes vary from one instrument to the other and also in case of the same type of instrument differ from one community to the other.

The tribal crafts and art objects like leaf umbrella, traditional stick, smoking pipe, personal knife, tobacco container, comb etc. are beautifully designed in their respective pattern and used for specific purposes. Not only in the shape, size, and design but also use of materials in making vary between two tribal groups. The Juangs use a traditional umbrella, which can be clearly differentiated from the umbrella made and used by the Kondhs. The smoking pipe is of different types. The differences are not only marked between tribes but also on basis of social status and sex of the user in the same tribe. The shape, size and type of knife used by different tribal individuals and groups also reveal differences at various levels. The tobacco containers used by the Kutia Kondh male members beautifully engraved with traditional designs, which is having some sociocultural relevance in the community. Multifarious combs used by different tribal people are having their respective socio-cultural background and origin. There are some other personal belongings, which an individual keeps with due personal care.

Almost all the tribal communities of Orissa have their respective rich heritage of wall paintings. The wall paintings are drawn with specific purposes, which are having socio-cultural or magico-religious significance. The Santals recreate artistic painting of different animals, birds, trees, flowers and several activities in order to reveal their love for art and artistic excellence. The Saora wall paintings popularly known as *idtal* are not only artistic revelations of their skill in painting but also reflect the imaginative and creative skill of the tribes' men. The meaningful paintings of the Dongria Kondhs and culturally significant wall paintings of the Bhuiyan imply their artistic vision and creativity. The tools and technology used and pigment prepared following indigenous technology are of very simple type. The Lanjia Saora paintings have drawn the attention of many great artists. Due to conversion into Christianity a lot of Saora families have abandoned their traditional paintings and some of them have forgotten the designs and motifs. Tribal paintings and their development especially Saora wall paintings and their commercialization deserve special attention. There is ample scope for marketing of greeting cards, screens, and other useable items decorated with designs of Saora wall paintings. There is ample scope to provide

employment to tribal youths for generation of income utilizing their traditional paintings.

Some of the important, socio-culturally significant beautiful and well-designed crafts and art objects of different tribal groups are no more used by the concerned community men. Due to socio-economic transformation and change in their religious life, these unique objects have disappeared from the concerned tribal group. However, there are a few tribal skilled craft persons who know how to make them and their services will be very much instrumental for reviving and developing these crafts for the posterity. Among some of the vanishing arts and crafts mention may be made of Kisan marriage crown, Juang umbrella and Pillar Carvings, Dongria Kondh smoking pipe, Bond ringa and grass headband, Didayi textile, Lanjia Saora wall paintings, wood carvings and several others. The traditional clothes of different tribal groups are only available as sample pieces in their respective areas. The skill of making traditional comb is only available with a very few skilled artisans. Due to conversion in Saora areas, the culturally significant and religious point of view relevant wall paintings are no more depicted on the walls. It has also happened in case of various types of jewellery items. The people of their own community have already forgotten some of the indigenous musical instruments. The very good wood carvings on the doors, shutters and the magico-religious pillars of the Kondh and Saoras are hardly found in their respective areas. Whatever little is left that is also disappearing very fast. Some of the beautiful and culturally significant designed objects are available as rare specimen, which need to be documented and collected for the posterity. Some skilled artisans at their old age yet interested to teach the skill of making of certain special items to the younger generations. Hence attempts need to be made to encourage the interested youths to learn the technique from their traditionally skilled persons. Revival of certain art objects and their development is very much essential for preservation and promotion of tribal material culture and retention of cultural identity of the tribals.

The traditional art and craft objects of the tribes of Orissa are fast becoming objects of antiquity for lack of their promotion under the pressing circumstances of planned change and modernization. Despite large scale invasion of cheap industrial products and impact of plastic culture some tribal crafts are fighting a losing battle for their survival. However, it is worth mentioning that such dying crafts still retain enough charm and pristine beauty that can attract the attention

of the public world over, if these are properly revived, developed, promoted and published. The tribal crafts and art objects still remain as forgotten objects.

All the crafts and art objects made and used by the tribal people may not look attractive to the general public. A specific craft and art object is made by them, keeping in view its socio-cultural background. Unless one gets into the socio-cultural implication of the object, he cannot be deeply inspired to understand and appreciate it. In spite of their poverty and seclusion the tribal people in Orissa reveal rich tradition of artistic taste which deserves admiration and further development. Their art objects are interpreted as strange, exotic and mysterious. One can derive pleasure by looking at the object provided he has the knowledge about the circumstances in which it is made.

While making an object the tribal artisans give emphasis on their aesthetic socialization, visions and dreams. For tribal artists there is no formal training and he works with a number of tools. By and large contents are true and devoted to the traditions along with their approved form and size. The earlier artistic efforts in several art objects reveal their love for nature and culture. The emotional value of the content, the message to be carried, the meaning to be expressed are depicted by means of multifarious designs and symbols. The real appreciation of tribal crafts and art objects depend on their form and content. The form relates to the aesthetic sense and the content is essentially ethnological. Hence in tribal craft and art objects form and content are inter-dependent. One can observe the influence of aesthetic socialization in their arts and crafts. The tribal ideology and ethics mostly govern the artistic sensibility. Yet there is enough aesthetic awareness among them. In spite of all these they are now susceptible to outside influence.

The tribal art, today, in Orissa has remained mysterious. It is difficult to decide what aspects of tribal art are enduring and which of them need to be preserved and promoted. The economic aspects and

its commercial production can be examined taking into account the ground reality of their natural and human resources. The moment it is commercialized, it has to be confined to the aesthetic value of the outsiders. The customers understanding and their aspirations are to be give top priority.

There is no doubt that the tribal artist must be helped to preserve and develop his or her own distinct way of life and culture. The future of tribal art and craft should be developed with certain adjustments and adaptability and according to the demands of the present. But it must not be manipulated from outside rather it should come from within. The exploitation of tribal artist is to be deplored but any healthy change *in* the art and craft forms keeping their view and traditions is to be welcomed. The rich tribal heritage manifested in their works should be used as an inspiration for an intelligent linkage with modern creative efforts. The material culture, hyphenating the whole some world of tribal little community to the complex ridden present civilization, still has meaning and relevance to the primitive tribes, those who do not respond the call of the high-tech society. The cohesive aspects of tribal bonding have their own world of collective unconscious - which lay embedded in the deep layers of their psyche.

The downright rejection of these material cultures under the new paradigm of tribal development often has strange results ending in the rejection of the development ethics. Though in the cost-benefit assessment of the present day - these material culture lags far behind in *arena* of cut throat competition and also in achieving the intended result of tribal development. Yet, they are to be tolerated for the sake of directing the process of change and development of the tribal people.

In the advanced tribal community, the processes of eclipse of tribal heritage have started in the right earnest. They truly adopt the mainstream culture - making them fitted adequately into the evolving system.

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## Cultural Curse: The Tale of Sanki Toki

Pratibha Ray

### Story of awaiting a life after youth

They live for one day, die everyday. The Bondo highlanders call themselves Remo *i.e.* human being but are known as Bondo *i.e.* naked man by the plain landers. The civilized plain landers suffer from Bondo phobia as they are whimsical killers whereas Bondo people suffer from death phobia as they kill each other on flimsy grounds. The harshness of the ecology and primitive sociological & psychological problems has perhaps made them aggressive, savage and hostile towards the civilized people.

There can be no divergence of views regarding Bondo tribe as primitive, since it subscribes to all the necessary characteristics such as the pre-agricultural level of technology, extreme low level of literacy, low growth rate, absence of literal tradition and a world-view shaped by animism, naturism, shamanism and occultism.

On my first exposure to the tribal world in June 1985, I found myself among these most primitive tribals called the "Bondos" of Orissa, considered to be extremely savage, individualistic, stubborn, violent and above all homicidal in character, who have remained in geographical isolation for centuries.

The wavy blue plateaus of the Eastern ghats bounded by the Malkangiri plains in north-west and hemmed in by the waters of Machhkund river in south-east, are named after this small tribe "Bondo", who claim to be the autochthons of the entire hill range. The hill-range is known as the Bondo-hills, in Koraput district of Orissa, India.

According to some stray legendary beliefs of Bondo people they are of primordial origin and are the descendants of the first man and wife on earth.

### Social organisation

They are patrilocal and patriarchal. The tribe is endogamous whereas the clans are exogamous. Monogamy is a common practice but polygamy is not completely ruled out. As the wife is a working hand in a tribal community, one can go for polygamy which is an economical need. Divorce is not uncommon. Marrying a divorced woman, or a widow is not at all a taboo.

The most interesting feature of their social life is their peculiar marriage system. The wife is normally elder by 10-12 years to the husband. The marriageable age of the Bondo boy is between the age

of 7 and 12 years, beyond which it becomes difficult to be chosen by a girl as a suitable life partner. Older girls prefer to marry younger boys who would earn for them and take care of them when they become old. The normal marriageable age of a girl is 19 and above. A girl of 24-25 could get a spouse without difficulty whereas a boy of 17-18 is right away rejected by girls as too old. Selection of the spouse is left completely to the choice of the partners concerned, where as the girl's decision plays an important role. Without the consent of a girl marriage cannot be possible. Of course, marriage by capture occurs sometimes which is one of the many types of marriages in Bondo tradition. But the girl has every right to divorce the boy after forceful marriage if he is not up to her choice. Soon after the boy gets married he is separated from his parents and is expected to live independently with his wife, older to him.

The village is the most important social unit in which all members are "Soru Bhai" or holy-brother of each other. Marriage within the village is strictly forbidden and considered as incestuous. But "Dhangda": or "Young boys" of other villages are free to come and spend the whole night with the unmarried girls in "Selanidingo" or "Dhangdighar" or dormitory organization. Pre-marital romance is socially approved inside the "Selani dingo" as the Bondo dormitory or "Selani dingo" works chiefly as a matrimonial agency. The boy as well as the girl is free to change and select any number of partners in the "Selani dingo": The girl may dance and sing with the boys but she will never propose for marriage from her side. The boys try to read the minds of girls and to please them, give them small presentations every now and then. After studying the girl's mind they propose for marriage but the final decision is always with the girls. If a girl, after accepting a lot of gifts says 'no' to the boy's proposal, she is not blamed. Hence the boy's fate or ill-luck is to be blamed.

When the girl says "Yes" marriage is fixed but not without clearing the bride price in the form of 2 heads of cattle, some rice, a pot of liquor and one rupee paid to the bride's father by the bridegroom. The betrothed bride and bridegroom can sleep in the "Selani dingo" but the bridegroom can not bring the bride to his house. Till depositing the compensation in form of bride-price for taking away two working hands from the father, the bridegroom cannot be benefited by

utilizing the labour of the girl. After marriage, the young wife takes care of her boy husband, shoulders all the household responsibility including agriculture, cattle, poultry and everything else belonging to her husband.

The relative qualities of Bondo men and women which contribute to their personal and social life may be considered. It is a prevailing age old notion that men have greater physical strength than women. Therefore men can undertake physically more arduous tasks than women such as heavy labour in the field, hunting, cutting wood, carrying logs, ploughing and warfare. In Bondo society women undertake the most arduous tasks such as agricultural activities, felling of trees, carrying logs on head, burning forests and all other activities at home and outside. They carry water on head in large pots from down-streams to their hamlets situated on uplands. But it is generally found in almost all human societies that ploughing, hunting and warfare have been primarily male activities and these are also taboos for Bondo women. When Bondo women can easily do the rest of the heavy manual work, what practically prevents them from performing the aforesaid works? Perhaps in early society women were barred from the activities connected with hunting and warfare since it would not be possible on the part of women during their pregnancy. But Bondo women have been seen doing such arduous tasks even in the advanced stages of pregnancy.

Bondo woman's begetting and rearing children does not prevent her from hard physical work and she mostly remains to be the family's bread-earner. A Bondo young woman marries a boy husband 10-12 years younger to her. Hence the economic control in the family is entrusted on the wife. She sells and buys in the weekly market. It is a funny scene to see the Bondo husband buying liquor and getting boozed and doing all sorts of mischief; all the while his calm, quiet and composed wife tries to always restrain and control the wayward husband, sometimes through scolding, sometimes coaxing and cajoling, bribing him with a brass necklace or plastic comb to assuage his bad temper. At the same time she would be selling hill-products and buying salt, earthen pots, or dried fish according to her budget. Borrowing money, paddy, poultry or repaying the debt, all the transactions take place between the "Saukar's" (money-lender) wife and the loanee's wife, while the husbands remain mere onlookers. From this it may appear that the Bondo women enjoy high status as

they enjoy economic independence and have the power of economic control. But it primarily takes place because of necessity. The wife is not only elder than her husband, but also more mature, practical and mentally balanced. So she performs the deal in a responsible manner. The other important and well known reason is the tragic insecurity of the Bondo men's life, who often does not die a natural death, and frequently meets his end through violence. The Bondos have scant regard for life and when provoked or challenged become violent and murderous. Thus the financial deals are made between women because their life is relatively more secure and repayment holds a better guarantee and assurance. This itself does not necessarily confer a higher status on the woman.

I met Sanki Toki (Toki is a respectable title for women as "Devi" for civilized women) there on the hills, a full-grown, hard working woman of twenty-five, who was working in the paddy fields under a scorching sun, scantily dressed, head clean-shaved, with several colourful strings of beads to cover the youthful chest. On the nearby hill slope, a boy of 9-10, Somra was running after squirrels in a playful mood. She shouted at the boy and ordered her to come and help her in the field. The boy, shirking from the assignment ran away throwing stones to the monkeys on the tree branches. She threatened the boy with dire consequences when he returned home. To me Sanki and Somra seemed to be mother and son, but indeed they were wife and husband! It is unusual in the Bondo society to find a husband older than the wife. This is the age-old custom in the primitive Bondo society. Marriage has not been imposed on her like other Indian marriages. She has chosen her own husband! It appears to be a love marriage and strangely in a marriage the wife is the interviewer and the husband is the interviewee.

One day, with little provocation, ten year old Somra killed a man and went to jail for a long term (fourteen years). His wife Sanki could have remarried another boy husband and continued her struggle for survival. But the possessive husband Somra made her promise to faithfully wait for his return and not to go away with another man. The poor woman had to transgress the injunction of not ploughing the field, but as promised could not go with another man and continued to wait for her husband, as in primitive societies men and women are true to their 'words'. Sanki patiently waited for her husband to

return from jail and to begin a new life. She took care of Somra's house and landed property.

After 14 years or more a strong, tall and young Somra returned from jail to meet his devoted wife. But he was shocked to see a weak, suffering, middle aged woman waiting for him, who claimed to be his wife Sanki! After few months it was not difficult for Somra to divorce his aged wife and marry a young divorcee woman. Sanki not only lost her youth, she lost her home, husband, paddy field and a whole life!

She did not have any property rights on her parents property or husband's property. Somra was not at fault! Wives wait. Wives should remain hard working, youthful, beautiful and devoted to give comfort and pleasure to the husband.

"Are you happy?" To this question, Sanki did not answer but questioned "Why should I be unhappy? We obey the rules of our society. Our culture is great and far above people's happiness and sorrow".

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## The Tribal World of Orissa

*Sitakanta Mahapatra*

The social, cultural and religious life of Orissa has been considerably shaped and influenced by tribal traditions. It is not merely that Orissa today has the largest number of tribal communities in any State in the country some of whom are the most colourful or that the existence of a classical folk-tribal continuum in Orissa is today a generally accepted fact of sociological enquiry. It is for the even more important reason that elements of tribal ethnicity and religious ritual have entered the making of the Jagannath Cult and perhaps the most important religious center of the Hindus at Puri.

The sixty-two tribal groups that inhabit the State are widely different from one another in terms of their numbers, degree of economic development, level of acculturation and ethnographic details. They have among them one of the largest all-India group like the Santals though in the State it is the Kondhs who are most numerous. Some of the groups like the Bondas or the Dongrias are perhaps the most colourful among the Indian tribes. Thirteen groups or sub-groups are designated "primitive" based on a combined criteria of economic and educational backwardness, isolation and a very sharp perception of independent cultural self-image. On one hand you have the Santals who are perhaps the most cultured and on the other, you have the Juangs and the Bondas who are still very little touched by the impact of modernization.

Jagannath, the most adored God of the Hindus, the Lord of the Universe as he is called is supposed to have been originally the God of the Savaras or Jagannath, the most adored God of the Hindus, the Lord of the Universe as he is called is supposed to have been originally the God of the Savaras or Saoras, a tribal group in Orissa. The legend of Viswabasu, Vidyapati and Indradyumna and the crafty stealing of Nilamadhava from the Savara kingdom is deeply ingrained in the cultural history and national psyche of the Oriya people. The worship of the tree in primitive cultures, the half-formed images of the Triad- Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra - which make them look like many rough-hewn wooden sculptures of the primitives, are only added pointers in that direction.

A very high degree of social equality and natural tolerance are the primary ingredients of the Jagannath Cult which has influenced and enriched Orissa's society and culture. The annual Chariot festival or *Ratha Yatra* at Puri is indeed one of the seminal

examples of ritual as anti-structure, when the lord of the Universe, the closeted supreme Deity of the classical Hindu Pantheon comes out of the temple, once a year, and rides a chariot in the street and can be viewed by all classes and groups irrespective of religion, caste or class. The tribal societies of Orissa possess this extreme sense of equality and tolerance towards others. Live and let others live. This motto comes so naturally to the tribals. The whole village is one unit and even when you visit interior tribal villages, you may find everybody in a family gone to work and the doors of the houses are not locked. A family cannot starve when others in the village have something to share. When the hill-slopes are cleared for Podu cultivation, each family contributes labour in tune with its available able-bodied members but the allotment of land is in tune with the number of members in the family. Thus the principle, to each according to his need and from each according to his ability, comes naturally to the tribal.

The levels of economic development vary very widely. On one end of the spectrum you have got the food-gathering Kharia, the hunting and food-gathering Birhors and the swidden cultivators like Saoras, Juangs or Hill Kondhs while at the other end you have Gonds, the Santals and the Bhuiyans who have taken to settled cultivation on the plains and are fairly receptive to modernization in agriculture, health and education. Besides, with economic development also comes a more welcome awareness of their rights and how to protect them, the value of land and the utility of the political process as an avenue to bring in economic benefit to their people and their region. From that point of view surely the Santals or the Oraons are more worldly-wise than the vulnerable Saoras or Dongria Kondhs.

Whatever their level of economic backwardness or development, most tribal societies have a fairly high level of performing and plastic arts. Songs and Dances punctuate their individual and social lives. They inherit a tradition and continue to "live" in a time when all poetry was song. It was meant to be recited, chanted, sung; individually or in chorus and often to the accompaniment of dances and musical instruments. Each song was also meant for a particular occasion, a specific ritual. The singing, the body movements in dancing and the ritual celebration generally go together. Poetry was and still is central to the business of living. In fact for every human

activity, there is a song. Birth, death, marriage, naming a child, attainment of puberty by a girl, sowing of seeds, harvesting, wearing new flowers, hunting, curing illness, thanksgiving to unseen Gods - every occasion has its appropriate song. The human world, after all, is only a part of the large cosmos, surrounded by the natural world, the world of others living things, the birds, the beasts, the trees, the creepers; and the world of spirits and ancestors. The song-poems are ritualistic but they are also functional. They seek to express the simplest truths of life intensely etched in intimate details of lived experience. They continue the traditions of the community. They help the individual to put his tiny lifespan on this earth in a larger context. They seek answers to those eternal questions that have always troubled man: the mysteries of life and death, pleasure and pain, guilt and sin. They try to find answers to natural phenomena like thunder and lightning, stars and planets, the flux of time and the passing of seasons. And in a troubled and sincere voice they seek to address themselves to the only people they have been destined to know. Sometimes it is indeed a small group. For even today when a Juang or a Bonda sings it is for the village people or the clan people not exceeding a hundred or may be a thousand. Rarely he has traveled except in his area and his imagination takes in only his immediate surroundings.

The centrality that poetry or song achieved in their case is sadly missing in the poetry of the last hundred years. Surely we look cleverer, more capable of manipulating words, making them say what we perhaps don't intend to say or worse still, don't

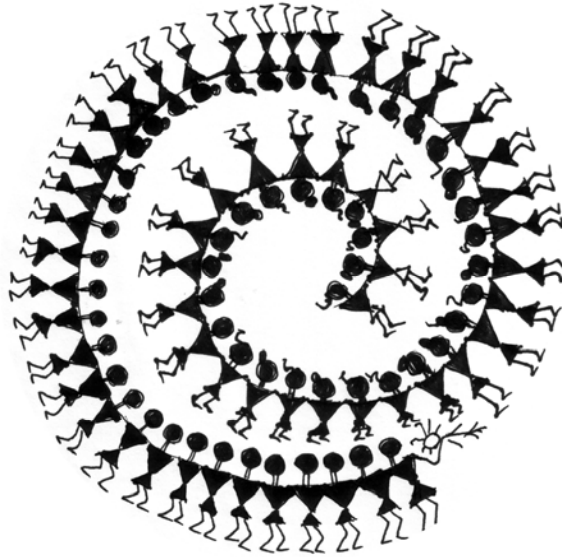
comprehend ourselves. In any case we seem to be preoccupied with many matters that are rather peripheral to human life and experience and are thus stuck in "back-waters".

Tribal life and culture of Orissa has a warmth and vitality, a strength and refinement which has not been often appreciated. It is a strength and an asset which should not be lost sight of in the implementation of the tasks of economic development and poverty amelioration nor get sidetracked in arid political debates. It is a sacred national task to preserve and

nurture these autonomous little cultures, which are sometimes without the strength to stand up to rapid change and modernization. There are unmistakable signs of loss, distortion and decay. A more responsive approach at all levels - political and administrative - is a felt need.

Summing up one may say that the culture and life-style of Orissa's tribals have a range, complexity, grandeur and colourfulness which is perhaps unmatched by any other State

in the country. Oriya society, religion and culture have been enriched through centuries of cross-fertilization between this culture and the non-tribal culture, which has created and nurtured the prevailing classical-folk-tribal continuum. Orissa was one of the last regions of the country to go under British rule. It may have impeded the historical process of British education, railways and so on. But it also helped retain, in comparatively purer and unalloyed form, the contours of our ancient heritage in different arts. The continuum is the result of that comparative historical isolation.




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## Culture Changes and the Orissan Dance Tradition

Dinanath Pathy

Be it a biological evolution or a cultural progression, the 'change' remains the signifier. The 'change' as the evolving pattern brings a sense of immediacy and freshness to the overused practices and morbid forms. Amidst the changes, the property of change remains stable and makes us more sensible to the emerging needs and wiser to accept new challenges. The general assumption emphasizes on the inalterability of a tradition. The strict jacket encasing emerges from our misunderstanding or misreading a tradition. A tradition at its best functions as a text to be followed, commented upon, interpolated and consequently made into several sub-texts, each potential enough to alter or replace the basic text. Misreading the principle of evolution makes the basic text as original or pure and the sub-texts or altered texts as fake or polluted. Each tradition breaks into two components, one the stable and the other progressed and advanced. The stable is considered the essential to a tradition and the altered the ephemeral. However those who even do not profess change as the quintessence of a living tradition, accept change as a partial necessity. In the cultural context, there runs a risk of using the word 'original' to explain the basic text. It then anticipates another category such as 'fake' or if we label the basic as major, we have to juxtapose it against the minor. These categories or labels have several corollaries those push and pull the meaning in several directions. For example, the categories could also be used in the sense of 'national' and 'regional' and should the Orissan dance traditions aspire to be national, to fulfill a populist demand, then it might not be surprising to push a regional singing tradition (say Odissi music) to be accepted as classical by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi at the national level.

A tradition is an ever-flowing stream and not a land locked water body left unused for centuries either to stink or left dry. Several tributaries to make it rich join the stream. Therefore the stream at its origin differ to a great extent at its joining the sea. This is the most common allegory that explains a tradition. To talk about a tradition, we normally rely upon the text, practices, innovations and influences.

An art form like the dance, which is extremely fragile, cannot simply rely on a codified text without being innovative. Although we have not been able to solve the riddle involving the theory or practice in

terms of their primacy, we will do ourselves good to believe that a text is the result of codifying several practices of ethnic groups.

Within a broad parameter of a cultural tradition, we primarily take notice of three distinctive traditions, such as the literary, visual and performing. Although the dance traditions form an appreciable part of the performing arts, there was a continuous dialogue and interpretation between different levels of visual and literary manifestations within a region and that there was also a schematic communication amongst different regions at particular levels. We are fascinated with Kapila Vatsyayan's idea of dividing the Indian cultural traditions not only as micro units and macro movements, but macro subgroups comprising contiguous areas. (Vatsyayan 1994)

With conceptual models, research methodologies constantly evolving in the study of cultural traditions, the terminologies those held good the other day, no more fulfill the aspirations of new strategies. We are aware of the Red-field concept of the "great" and "little" traditions as well as Srinivasan's concept of Sanskritisation. These concepts have almost been accepted universally by the sociologists and have also been applied by the historians. There is rather the critical writing, both in history and sociology that applies Levi Strauss and other structuralists' models for the Indian tradition in *Toto* without modifications. But in the Indian context, it has been realised that the great classical traditions and the little folk traditions do not stand apart as well as the rural and urban or the Brahmin-tribal dichotomy have any relevance.

Dividing the performing art studies into simplistic categories of tribal, folk and classical do not hold any significance. These categories at times may mean political or social segments constantly struggling to reach a unilateral progression in the so-called development plan, which do not contain the complexities of the Indian social structure. When one uses the term 'Sanskritisation' and 'vernacularisation,' the complexity of the social problems become more confounded because a less affluent or privileged class of people begin to acquire the behavioural patterns of an elitist society. Moreover the pattern of patronage exclusive to some dance forms at the cost of others makes the situation worse where we fail to make a judgment fair enough without harming valid claims of specific groups and forms. Therefore I do not consider the approach of this seminar on the given

frontiers of tribal, folk and classical, reasonable enough to hold weightage in an academic discussion.

Secondly, I have preferred to use the expression, "Orissan (Odissi) dance traditions" rather than "dance traditions of Orissa," because I would like to emphasise the regional or local in the tradition and bring in the component of language and ethnicity. No doubt there is a chain of continuity in the dance tradition when we refer to the scene of *Raṅga Sabhā* in the Udayagiri caves in Bhubaneswar (2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C.) as the earliest archaeological evidence, still then, the tradition to become Orissan or Odissi took long years in the phase of evolution.

This could be the first visual record of a court dance, *sabhā nrtya* performed by a dancer of provocative beauty to the accompaniment of drum, flute and cymbals. The Ranigumpha inscription of Kharavela, the Jain monarch, dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C., records that in the third year of his reign, the king himself an expert dancer and musician, arranged a performance of *tandava* (vigorous) and *abhinaya* (histrionics) for the delectation of his people. Such dances by emperors and princes were enacted keeping in tune with the practice prevalent in ancient India. The *Natyasastra*, the primacy dance text codifies several such dance practices.

*Natyasastra* by Bharata is a much larger compendium than what we generally understand by *nrtya* and *nata*. The traditional practitioners of dance, music, drama have preserved the rules successively handed down from the teacher to the pupil and they are better commentators on the text rather than the scribes who over a period of time have made several interpolations. Besides the topics relevant for the dramatic art, many other things, conducive to the understanding of the various landmarks in the cultural evolution of India are found included in the *Natyasastra*. In the Chapters 14, 18 and 02, there are references to several cities, rural region and Odra-Kalinga is specifically mentioned. In spite of such codifications of dance practices and place affiliations, we cannot claim that *Natyasastra* has anything specifically to do with a tradition that we now call Orissan or Odissi. The text is broad based and we would be justified to term it as a basic pan-Indian text and not a regional treatise.

Similarly it would be too vague a claim to begin our Orissan (Odissi) dance tradition from the Ranigumpha dancing sculpture. At best we could weave a commonality between the sculptural art, the dance and the palm leaf text and emphasise on their interrelationship. The architecture of the time,

especially the monasteries and temples project dance sculptures profusely as an act of embellishments. A larger section of them are dancing gods and goddesses. The ParagurdmeAvara temple of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century is rich in dance sculptures including the *Tandava Siva* and the dancing figures in the latticed window at the entrance of the *Jagamohana*, porch. In describing this frieze, the dance historians could find the *prsthasvastika* pose as described by Bharata in the *Natyasastra* in one of the figures in the extreme right of the frieze. It is no wonder that the sculptures carved on the temple walls do depict a variety of poses and postures like *tribhanga* (three body bends), *ksipta, sama* (equipoise), *cauka*, (squatting position), *urddvajanu* (raised knee position), *prasarita abhanga* (two body bends), *karihasta* (the shape of a trunk of an elephant) and the like. The tradition of sculpting dancing figures and friezes continue unabated on the temples till we reach a state of affluence in the Sun temple at Kondrka. Before reaching Konarka, we wish to make a detour to highlight the oft-quoted dancing sculpture on the façade of Bramhesvara temple, Bhubaneswar, constructed in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century. Do the sculptors have carved dancing sculptures on temples as per the prescription of body poses and stances laid down in *Natyasastra* or they were more guided by the principles of artistic traditions those constitute the aesthetics of spatial compositions? The question no doubt is a valid one but could be twisted to serve both the purposes.

To lengthen a regional tradition on a time scale, we can as well locate our resources related to dance in a pan—Indian temple building workshop, what most of the regional styles aspire to assume the mantle of the main stream. On the contrary our claim over a pan-Indian style as our own gains ground when we accept the 11th Century Kalingan style as a regional variation with distinctive features compared to north Indian *Vesara* or south Indian *Dravida* styles. Should we identify present Orissan style with ancient Kalifiga and make a compromise in the geographical positions because style is often associated with a work of art in a given period of time and place. To be precise I would like to draw a dividing line between the pan-Indian and the regional because the regional has several distinctive features such as of language, art and dance with which we are living at best for the last five to six hundred years. The rest is more of a history and I do not say that our claims are not valid. May I be permitted to make a subtle distinction between a historical tradition and a living tradition and our context to a living and lived tradition is more

relevant.

Most of our performing arts are hardly two hundred years old. The Odissi dance is half a Century story. The *chau* has a record of a hundred and fifty years to its credit. *Prahlada Nataka*, *Radhapremalila*, *Bharatalila*, *Ramalila*, *Krsnalila* have more or less the same fate. In such a scenario, how can one push them as far back as 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. to claim a tradition of antiquity?

Oriya expression equates *nrtya*, *natya*, *naca* and *nata*. Many traits are common to these forms. A particular dance style, which was earlier known as *Odia nata* or *daksini nata* later became famous as Odissi *nrtya*. The term *nata* was conveniently changed into *nrtya*. When Odissi dance was choreographed for large stages involving a number of dancers, the presentation was termed as ballet or dance drama. There is yet another form, which is a dance, punctuated with dialogue and enacted to a thematic song composition known as *giti natya*. It seems that these terms and even certain forms are interchangeable. Therefore *nrtya parampara* could also mean *nata parampara*.

With paradigms shifts, the village that was once considered a hub of folk activities has now become a town with highly structured and choreographed performances. The folk dances have now been pulled out of their habitats and they no more belong to ethnic groups. One is amused to witness a group of urban educated girls (urban-folk or urban-tribe) performing a tribal dance number. The tribal and folk dances have lost their originality and are being faked and performed in towns and cities for the entertainment of patrons and the neo-rich. Both the tribal and folk dances by the hill and forest dwelling people and peasants, were never meant to be performed on professional stages. In their original presentations there was hardly a dividing line between the participants performing and participants witnessing. The very basic problem now is how to define a tribe or tribal, folk and the classical? Could these be related to the forest, village and the town (*nagara*)? Earlier there was a movement of communication that took place along these levels determined by regional axis. Along side there was a second system of communication where particular levels interacted with parallel levels in other spheres. The orbit was large comprising many regional areas but there were micro grouping and macro grouping of contiguous areas. We could sense a change in these parameters. Yet it is not difficult to find a clear connection between the artistic expressions of the tribes such as

Kondhs and Sauras of Ganjam district, even the Santals, Juangs, the *paikas*, the dances of Mayurbhanj *chau*, the dramatic techniques of the *jatra* players, the dance and the acrobatic techniques of *sakhis* and *gotipuas* of the *akhadas* and the *maharis* of the temples in Orissa. All these belong to different levels of society, but are held together by a regional style and channels of communication, which can be seen in painting, and architecture styles in these regions. The dance traditions in Orissa are fostered by strong linguistic currents and where there is no play of language, it is the rhythmic resonance and the visual spectacle those provided the coherent structure.

Most of the dance forms at all levels are restructured and given new meanings. They have undergone modifications at the hands of revivalists. *Chau* dance originally did not belong to Mayurbhanj but was adopted from Sareikala towards the later part of 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Upendra Biswal and Banamali Das were the first teachers who settled in Baripada and taught *chau* to a large number of disciples under the patronage of Krushna Chandra Bhanja (1868- 82). During the period of growth, the dancers used to put on masks and wore a *prabha* (halo) made of bamboo stripes fixed at their backs. Till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the *chau* dancers of Baripada and adjacent villages of Chitrada, Kostha, Rairangpur and Singala wore masks, which were subsequently not preferred, and now wearing and not wearing of masks mark the difference between Mayurbhanj and Sareikala *chau*. The *caitra parva* in the month of April, which marks frenzied *chau* performances in Baripada today, was initially a festival to celebrate *Rama Navami* (Radha Mohan Mohanty 1998). It is no wonder that *chau*, which replaced *Ramalila* came to be identified with Mayurbhanj region.

It would be quite revealing to find that *chau* and Odissi dance share a few common characteristics. For instance the basic pose *cauka*, which is so important for an Odissi dancer to master, has been borrowed from *chau*. Both the dances reconstructed in the contemporary times, have acquired traces of western music and compositional attitudes while the music is less visible in Odissi performed by native dancers, the *chau* makes use of Bengali, Hindustani, Santali and Jhumar.

Ritual and dance are interrelated since ancient times. Before this, dance was a part of life's activities and celebrations. The dances performed by the tribes are group dances. Solo performances are almost rare. Although Archer's mention of nude joker dance among the Santals could be a deviation. A majority of

dance performances reflect food-gathering activities. The *kesari kappa* dance to indicate collection of *kesari* fruit of the Oraons, is the best example of gathering dance. Tribes have observed and internalised animal behaviour in their food-gathering and hunting trips, which later found place in their dance performances. Therefore we encounter various dance performances imitating bear, tiger, snake, cock, hen, crane, vulture and peacock. The file dance of the Koyas exhibiting speed and zigzag movements indicates search for a hunt. Anthropologists view this dance as a vestige of Palaeolithic human culture. This file dance gradually transformed into a group-procession dance and is now performed by Sauras, Bondas and Kondhs. Procession dance was further refined and practised by Santals, Kols, Mundas, Koyas and Gadabas. It also formed a part of the *meriah* sacrifice. Tribal marriage dances resemble procession dances. Tribal dances are not meaningful development of limb movements; rather they express a spontaneous outburst of shouts, shrieks, pelting of stones, earthen balls and sticks. Of course meanings could be derived from any kind of kinetics.

Another important dance performance of the tribes is connected with agricultural cycles and is regarded as a community rejoicing. The agricultural year is dotted with several festive occasions like sowing of seeds, planting of saplings, harvesting of crops and eating of new fruits. During these occasions song, music and dance are offered as a mark of respect to the ancestors. They believe that the ancestors and deities are responsible for good harvest and connected with agriculture. Since peacock is considered a symbol of death, the Kondhs pay tribute to a top leader with a peacock dance.

Like the peacock dance of the Kondhs, the Juangs have deer dance. Tribal dances could also be connected with marriages like the Sarhul and Kharia. Many of the dance forms of the tribes have been lost in the process of Sanskritisation and urbanisation, but a few basic compositional structures like the circular dance formation of the tribes have been retained as *hallisaka* and *rasa* in Sanskritised dances.

To bring in a synoptic discussion on tribal dances at this point of presentation is to focus on the ritualistic aspect of dance at all levels concerning tribal, folk (vernacular) and classical (Sanskritised). Viewed in a broader perspective, a dance tradition has two significant aspects, one, its ritual context and the other, its entertaining value. Almost all the dance performances, presented on a professional stage, to be watched by a cross-section of public spectators, are

dances for entertainments, and therefore need not be considered for its ethnic substance. Tourism festival dances put up such bizarre kind of assemblage, which are reviewed by journalists as tribal or folk. The day we took the dances out of their habitats; choreographed them, they lost their context and authenticity and therefore to categorise them as tribal and folk has no validity. Such of our actions amount to faking an art form.

At the same time, we can reconstruct and reinvent any of our dance forms, decontextualise or re-contextualise them according to the demand of the time and need of our viewers. We can as well re-emphasise their ritualistic aspects to boost the ethnic temper of the patrons but we cannot at the same time label them as authentic. If the *mangalacarana*, a ritualistic repertoire is an integral part of Odissi presentation (though it has lost its scene these days), why a similar ritual, say *nrsimhanyasa* could not make *Prahllada Nataka* more acceptable. Tribal dances are so spontaneous and fluid that they do not hold enough of artistic girth. Therefore they are not viable for a stage presentation. Tribal dances provide a colourful spectacle and are fit for large pageantry. Rightly so the processional aspects of the tribal dance forms have been exploited in Republic Day parades.

*Chau* and *dandanata* are dances with enough of ritualistic potentials, while *chau* is performed as an individual dance form devoid of its ritual, *danda* has mostly remained with its acrobatic marvels, though of course *cadheya cadheyanii* and *vinakara* numbers are also performed professionally. The entertaining part of evening *danda* performance contains a small fragment like the *prava* and dances of Ganesa, Isvara and Parvati ritual.

The crux of *danda* performance consists of *dhuli danda*, mirroring a series of agricultural activities like ploughing, sowing seeds, weeding the fields, harvesting and pounding rice; *pani danda* involving water acrobatics and *agni danda* displaying several daring feats with fire torches. These sequences have spectacles and could be made into a fine choreography involving principles of earth, water and fire or *pancabhuta* geometrical presentations. This has to be rescued from the blacktopped roads of Berhampur town by some imaginative choreographer like Narendra Sharma and performed in the lawns of Rabindra Bhavan in Delhi. Or we could weave them into a vigorous war dance form in the lines of Kalaripayattu of Kerala. The pure dance aspect of *dandanata* could match those of *chau* and *Prahllada Nataka*.

Mangala, *osatkothi*, *jhamu*, *ghantapatua*, *gairama* and such other forms have remained marginalized. To label these 'folk', make them withdrawn and casual, instead their artistic aspects have to be explored for new choreographies. How about an Odissi dance with Mangala included in *mangalacarana*? We have made experiments of such innovative mixtures in a dance presentation titled *Interfacing* and it worked, aroused curiosity and a sense of exploration. *Prahlada Nataka*, *sakhinata* and *Radhapremalila* are saturated with dance sequences. *Prahlada Nataka* has vigorous *tandava* dances by the demon king Hiranyakasipu, *Radhapremalila* has *Krsna tandava* and almost akin to *sakhinata* in its display of *lasya*. Both *Radhapremalila* and *sakhinata* thrive on *abhinaya* and what they urgently need is *pallavi*. *Sakhinata*, the legitimate precursor of present Odissi, has been ignored. *Sakhinata* enjoyed the same status that of Kuchipudi in Andhra Pradesh. I would like to draw your attention to *thali* dance (a speciality of Pankaj Charan style), which has unmistakable influence of Kuchipudi. It has become a fashion to talk of acrobatic *bandhas* in *gotipua*, but coastal Oriyas are not aware of *bandhas* in *sakhiatta* and the artistic village Mathura in Ganjam district once full of art forms is now languishing. Look, today *gotipuas* are trained by Odissi teachers. There is an urgent need to revive and reinvent *sakhinata*.

In south Orissa and particularly in Ganjam, there existed (to some extent exists) a *nata panjara*, dance structure with vertical movement of dancers filling dance spaces in *sakhinata*, *Radhapremalila*, *Krsnalila*, *Ramalila*, *Bharatalila* and *Prahlada Nataka*. Teenagers and even boys of eight and nine are picked up by *adhikaris* (managers), to be trained as *sakhis*, rigorously in *akhadas* by *mastres* (masters). They are trained as elemental dancers to perform as *sakhi pilas*, *Krsnas*, *Radhas*, *Rams* and *Prahladas*. A *sakhi pila* used to make a career as a dancer in his native village or depend on a group of neighbouring villages to make a living as an artist of some significance. When these young dancers attained their puberty and crossed twenty they were inducted as Hiranyakasipu in *Prahlada Nataka*. Very strangely a coy *sakhi* character is transformed into a vigorous male. Not all can venture to perform Hiranya but the best out of the lot makes it happen.

The revivalists and dance teachers, responsible to reconstruct and reinvent Odissi in the Fifties of the last century relied to a great extent on *gotipua* dance practices in and around Puri town. It is often cited that Chandra Sekhar Patnaik of Dimirisena was in

possession of technical knowledge related to *ukutas* (rhythmic syllables) of which even the so-called *gurus* had no information (Patnaik 1971). Simhari Shyamsundar Kar, Mohan Mohapatra and Kali Charan Patnaik had substantial amount of traditional knowledge related to the old dance form. The revivalists could not reconcile with both the *gotipua* and *mahari* traditions, those were so divergent, and they were in a hurry to cook up a recipe called Odissi. None of the great teachers on whose shoulders the greatness ultimately rested was from traditional dancer family or background, of course with an exception to Pankaj Charan Das who came from a *mahari* family. But Kelucharan Mahapatra was born in a traditional painter's family and Debaprasad Das belonged to a literati *karana* caste and was trained as *akhada pila*. They had one thing in common that they were all attached to professional theatre groups and *rasa* touring parties. Their earlier careers were ignominious and therefore their rise to fame was stupendous. The present generation of Odissi teachers are now extremely careful to coin words, structure their thoughts, being somewhat imprisoned in the gurudom. They were all trained as *gotipuas* as successors of late teachers.

It is regrettable that a few of the dance teachers like Trinath Maharana, Natabara Maharana, Muralidhar Majhi and Gajendra Kumar Panda who belong to Ganjam and are brought up in *sakhinata* environment neither emphasise their connection with *sakhinata* nor try to revive the form and bring it back on the main dance stream. It is amazing that revivalists like Kali Charan Patnaik and Dhirendranath Patnaik who were at least in know of *sakhinata* in their times, ignored the tradition labelling it as *daksini*. It was a time to build up Odissi as an absolute dance form different from Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi and therefore their intention was logical. However it did not merit a holistic approach.

Oriya *rasa* tradition was more complex and artistic and one finds not only the *mandala nrtya* but *dhadi nrtya* (file dance) and *bandha nrtya* (acrobatic dance) formations such as *navanarikunjara*, *navagunjara*, *asvakunjara* and *navakunjara*. On the contrary the Bengali *rasa* traditions were rather mild and simple. The Bengali influence was evident due to Caitanya's impact on Orissa when a separate class of *gaudiya vaisnavas* was formed. Mohan Sundar Dev Goswami in whose *rasa* party, Kelucharan was performing, was a devout *vaisnava* and therefore when Kelucharan introduced *rasa* into Odissi, it was



more a Bengali tradition. Mohan Sundar Dev Goswami and Kali Charan Patnaik differed in their approach to *rasa*.

Two of the significant *rasa* performances choreographed by Kelucharan, were *Kisoracandrananda Campu* of Kavisurya Baladeva Ratha and *Bhanusingher Padavali* by Rabindranath Tagore. These performances were no doubt refined compared to *Radhapremalila* and *sakhinata* but lacked the earthiness of the local forms. The introduction of one or several *kunjias* as stage props in *Radhapremalila* had given the dance better scope to project three-dimensionality. If one juxtaposes *Bhanusingher Padavali* along with *Radhapremalila*, one will not fail to understand the north south divide. Our choreographers had a tendency to look outward to replenish their native dance at the cost of local valour only with an anxiety to become pan-Indian. No tradition can survive in isolation. But in an attempt to refine forms, one is likely to lose the 'substantial' that is often raw and potential. Orissa has only a *panditya parampara*, which has to do more with words, sounds and their meanings, and therefore *saundarya parampara* or *ruci parampara*, which was our cultural essence a few years ago now suffers and Odissi dance is a virtual victim.

Today's Odissi dance is primarily based on four factors. These are the textual validation, sculptural evidences, dance memory and Kalakshetra Bharatanatyam support. Let us discuss these factors. Of several texts on music and dance, *Abhinaya Darpana Prakasa* of Jadunath Singh with Oriya prose translations and examples belonging to the first quarter of 18<sup>th</sup> Century and *Abhinaya Candrika* by Maheshwar Mahapatra of Badakhemandi, is a 20<sup>th</sup> Century text. These texts mention about *vinnyoga*, the usage of *hastas* (hand gestures), *gita* (song), *vadya* (instruments), *nrtya* (expressional dance), *natya* (drama), *nrta* (pure dance), *vrittis* (different modes of delivery mentioned in the *Natyasastra*), *lasya* (graceful dance) and *tandava* (vigorous dance). They list four varieties of *tandava*, namely *nari nrtya*, *jakkadi*, *madhumita* and *bandha natya*; six varieties of *lasya* — *rasa*, *vilasa*, *hallisaka*, *bhramari*, *prerani* and *halapayana*. These two texts significant in the reconstruction of Odissi, in general follow the *Natyasastra* traditions. (Kothari 1990) Fixing a definite date to these manuscripts suffers from ambiguities. While Kothari (1990) fixes late 17<sup>th</sup> Century for *Abhinaya Darpana Prakasa*, Nilamadhava Panigrahi (1995) ascribes to 18<sup>th</sup> Century. On *Abhinaya Candrika* Satchidananda

Mishra has grave doubts about its earlier dates and he places the manuscript in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Pathy 2006). It would thus be argued that the texts those are an important source for reconstruction are hardly two hundred years old.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Orissa, in the town of Puri, several fake manuscripts were manufactured (Panigrahi 1973) to keep the spirit of revivalist temper alive. Therefore the manuscripts mentioned by Sadashiva Rath Sarma such as *Nrtya Kaumudi*, *Devadasi Nrtya Paddhati* of Narayana Mishra and *Niladri* written in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century by a *devadasi* are viewed with benefits of doubt.

We have the earliest sculptural dance panel in the *Ranigumpha* caves ever prior to the composition of *Natyasastra*. Dance historians are therefore agog with the idea that it could be the ancient evidence of Odissi. Let us review the remarks of Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, who opines that the "dance scenes are perhaps the earliest consciously sculpted scenes of dance and music. If they are identified as scenes connected with King Udayana, they are the first examples of theatre with a full orchestra along with dancers and actors." (Vatsyayan 1968) Coomaraswamy perhaps was not aware of the presence of Odissi dance that was reconstructed in 1950s or else we would have twisted his remark to relate the dance panel to Odissi (!) The sculptor's model was the dance practice that was available to him and definitely not a text on Odissi dance to be followed while carving the panels on temple walls. These were not iconic sculptures. We all agree that in India, a close relationship exists between the art of dance and sculpture from time immemorial, which shares common aesthetic principles, but should we therefore say that these sculptures are all evidences of Odissi dance? The Odissi dancers do not follow the visual propensities the dance sculptures have. They are even ignorant of the dance drawings on the palm leaf manuscripts, which are contemporary of the dance revival. The contemporary Orissan dance culture (Odissi dance in particular) and the Orissan visual culture (contemporary traditional Orissan painting and sculpture) are quite divergent. The dancers are primarily obsessed with sound and when they gesture a bee, a flower, a deer, it is to do more with textual, what Bharatamuni had said years ago, that with the visual. The success of, or the excellence of Kelucharan's dance rests more on his intuitiveness as a painter than as a dancer of the texts. If Debaprasad's dance style has a special earthy flavour it is because of his negotiations with the visuals. The

texts have prescriptions, the teachers impart training but neither the text nor the legacy that is counted; it is the dancer's understanding of the visual world, its internalisation and expression through the body that become the ultimate reality.

The dance memory that provides a booster to the reconstruction process was not adequate; Pankaj Charan was not much valued by the revivalists as the representative of the *mahari* tradition. Dhirendranath Patnaik referred to *gotipua* traditions he collected from different sources. Kali Charan Patnaik favoured the literary-pundit tradition, which was rebuffed by the dancers and teachers soon after Odissi was recognised at the national level. The revivalists had little idea of various local dance traditions in the western and southern Orissa or they were not in a mood to extend their ventures to those territories. Therefore the effort made by Debaprasad to enrich Odissi abstract rhythms with *savda svara pata* remained partially fulfilled with his untimely death. The only substantial input into Orissa's memory bank was the preservation of the *daksini gayaki parampara* donated by Upendra and Baladeva. The singing tradition as well as the songs, was extremely helpful for the survival of Odissi. Debaprasad Das, who of course was not taken seriously in the revival process by *Jayantika*, was the only teacher who could document his dance memory and dance practice in a book titled *Nrtyanusarani*. (Das 2002) The dance manuals, produced by the Odissi Research Centre (*Odissi Dance: Path Finder I and II*, 1995-98) were in the manner of restricting the innovative dance process while enlarging the grammatical structure of the dance form.

The fourth point I want to emphasise is the unsolicited contribution of Kalakhetra in Chennai and its trained Bharatanatyam dancers such as Mayadhar Raut, Minati Mishra and Sanjukta Panigrahi. These dancers realigned the dance in a broader Indian perspective in confirmation with *Natyasstra*.

Now Odissi is experiencing several interactions, interchanges and inter-influences with other dance forms when dancers trained in a particular discipline switch over to Odissi. Thus, we have a mix of Bharatanatyam—Odissi, Kathak—Odissi and *chau*—Odissi. We had in the earlier days Kuchipudi—*sakhinata*—Odissi, Bengali—*rasa*—Odissi. There is an interplay and intermix of Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Avadhi, Maithili and Hindi (Hindustani) influences besides having the eternal presence of Sanskrit. These influences penetrate through language and alien dance cultures. We therefore have to be extra careful to

balance our interest and for this specific reason, I emphasise the Oriya language to become Odissi dance language.

We are at the moment experiencing too much refinement, over-ornamentation to make the dance form populist. This is not the petination that time and experience bestows on an art form but the unnecessary anxiety, which furnishes a gloss, makes it shine at the loss of certain peculiar indigenous characteristics.

Commenting on the rock-cut elephant – *Gajottama* at Dhauli in Bhubaneswar, Krishna Chandra Panigrahi, eminent historian and archaeologist once wrote, "This elephant figure lacks, however, the characteristics usually found in Asokan sculptures. The lustrous polish, characteristically ascribed as Mauryan, is completely absent. The anatomical treatment of the animal figures, another characteristics of Asokan art, is also absent in the Dhauli elephant, which appears to be the work of local artists who were upholders of the indigenous traditions." (Panigrahi in *Reference Orissa*, 1999) At times, the roughness and rawness of a sculpture could also be a quality and need not be polished to be acclaimed as great.

Several other similar examples can be cited. Miniature is a refined painting praised for its graceful rhythmic lines and colour composition. Each region has its own miniature painting. Orissan palm leaf paintings on oblong leaves, engraved with an iron stylus, sometime rendered with colours or left only with bare lines are our best miniatures, an art feat impossible to be achieved by artists anywhere in India. If we are not aware of our distinction and would try to imitate a *pahari* miniature, we cannot achieve their fineness rather lose our own. I am reminded of a significant moment in my life when a distinguished Odissi performer and teacher requested me to make a horse cutout for a dance drama *Dharama*. His emphasis was to make an excellent horse cutout in imitation of a Rajastani horse (of Rajastani miniature painting, he meant). We were standing in the compound of the Sun temple at Konark. Pointing at the stone sculpture of the horse attached to the Sun chariot I suggested to him, "what about our own horse." To my utter amazement, he answered me in negation that Odissi horse was no better than a Rajastani horse.

Odissi is not just dancing; it has come to represent Orissa and its culture. More so at a time when its demand in a global entertainment market is extremely high but price wise only next to contemporary visual

art. Contemporary Indian art is no more regional but Odissi dance as a regional contemporary art form has specific affiliation to Oriya language and visual arts and sad enough, most of the Odissi dancers and teachers have no visual literacy. The aesthetic input in a dance is perhaps more vital than perfecting a few steps.

In the area of performing arts, more specifically in dance, there is a clamour to be classical. In the initial years of Odissi, all the efforts of dancers and teachers, led by Kali Charm Patnaik to get the classical status for the dance by the Central Sangeet Natak Academy was understandable and even desirable. It was the need of a time to come at par with dance forms of other regions. Classical is neither a legal nor an artistic status. It is a political maneuvering. The Sangeet Natak Academy has no legal authority to promote or declare a dance form as classical. Sometimes I wonder at myself, Odissi is a regional and contemporary dance form, then why should it aspire to be classical/Indian in a sense lose its regional value. What benefit has this brought to us, except a couple of Akademi Awards and ICCR sponsorships!

Last year, 50 years of Odissi dance was celebrated at Bhubaneswar. Hundreds of performers from all over the world performed a variety of Odissi sub-styles with startling choreographies to the accompanying of newer music compositions. In this spectacular event were the children of Non Resident Indians, Americans, Europeans and South East Asians, Chinese, Russian and Japanese dancers. They represented Odissi dance schools from all over the globe. Hundreds of foreign students fly to Bhubaneswar and other Indian cities to attend summer courses in Odissi dance. Equally an appreciable number of Odissi teachers visit foreign countries, especially the United States to act as

visiting faculties in the institutions run by NRIs and NROs. This seems a satisfying preamble to rethink Odissi in the global context. My dancer friend, Ramli Ibrahim, the eminent Artistic Director of Sutra Dance Theatre, Kuala Lumpur, wrote to me recently from London, "I am presently in London participating in the *Visit Malaysia at Covent Garden*. For your information, we are presenting Odissi as part of the broader based cultural perspective of Malaysia to the world." Odissi is no more the exclusive identity of Orissa or Oriyas. Any other person, state can use this as their own.

Odissi dance has indeed become a cultural perspective on change to present and sell Orissa abroad. I began my paper presentation with a perspective or change and have reached a point from where nothing but change will only work. To think of *mangalacarana* and *moksa*, even *bengapatia* and *tahia* are just silly and Radhakrsna dance may still impress America born Oriya and Indian children but I was refreshed by two significant Odissi performances by Ratna Ray who teaches in the US, one the '9/11' and other the *Teenage Pregnant Mother* relating to Kunti episode of *Mahabharata*. Dhirendranath Patnaik, one of the Odissi revivalists and an author, watching the performances got bewildered. Perhaps he was not able to swallow the 'change' that was coming for the US. He exclaimed in this belief, "Is this Odissi!" I nodded in affirmation.

Let us not forget that Odissi is the only reconstructed "classical" dance form of Orissa and therefore it is imperative on its part to present a classical ensemble of other substantial dance forms still in practice in several regions: north, south and west. In our enthusiasm of hailing Odissi and the great transformation, we are experiencing; Odissi should not play the big brother.

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## The KBK+ districts of Orissa: Indian Railways' overlooked frontier

*This article is revised from an original version written and posted in a blog in 2007 by*

*Chitta Baral*

By all measures the achievements of Indian Railways over the last four years have been phenomenal and everyone associated with this turnaround, and especially the railway minister Mr. Lalu Yadav, deserve all the kudos that are coming their way. The brochure on Railways at <http://infrastructure.gov.in/> highlights some of the achievements till October 2006. It mentions that the freight and passenger traffic growing at the rate of 9.4% and 7.4% respectively during the last two years as opposed to historical growth at 3-4%. Recent news items mention Railways having a profit of Rs 13,000 crores in 2005-06 and anticipating a profit of Rs 20,000 in 2006-07.

These achievements and the resulting euphoria has propelled the Railways towards many ambitious and further profit making plans such as a dedicated freight corridor. However, there is a worry that in this euphoria the Indian railways may forget its social responsibilities. The goal of Indian Railways is not to be a profit making arm of the Indian government -- the Indian government is not a business enterprise, but rather a self sustaining unit that fulfills its social responsibilities and provides for part of the infrastructure needed for India's economic growth. So making profit is a good goal for IR; but at the same time it must not lose sight of its social responsibilities. As the 2007 Railway budget and the 11th five year plan looms we would like to hereby remind the IR and the planning commission some of the social aspects of IR that they both should keep in mind and that have a chance of getting overlooked by the Indian Railways drive for profit.

There is a great disparity in terms of railway density -- Route kms per one thousand sq km -- across various states of the country. Using the 2004-05 figures, the average rail density for India is 19.13. The rail density is highest in Delhi (138.2) followed by West Bengal (43.4), Punjab (41.6), Haryana (36.1), Bihar (35.9), Uttar Pradesh (35.8), Tamil Nadu (32.1), Assam (31.9), Kerala (27), Gujarat (26.9) and Jhrakhand (24.3). Among the major states outside Northeast and Jammu and Kashmir the lowest rail density is in Himachal Pradesh (5.1), followed by Uttarakhand (6.4),

Chhatisgarh (8.6), Orissa (14.6), Karnataka (15.5), Madhya Pradesh (15.9), Rajasthan (17), Maharashtra (17.9), Goa (18.6) and Andhra Pradesh (18.9).

While the importance of having adequate Railway infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast has been realized the same is not the case with respect to the other frontier of India that lies in the interior. With respect to the North east the planning commission aims to break the sense of isolation associated with it. Several projects for the NE have been planned during the 11th five year plan including extending tracks to Kohima, laying lines inside Meghalaya, and possibly a line to Itanagar. A line to Agartala is nearing completion. Many of these lines have been declared as **national projects** with full funding coming from the central government rather than internal funds from Indian Railways.

By the other frontier of India I mean the area that includes the KBK region of Orissa, parts of Chhatisgarh, parts of Andhra Pradesh etc. The Rail density in this area is very low, the population of this area is mostly tribals<sup>1</sup>, several districts of these areas are listed among the most backward districts of India with very low literacy rates<sup>2</sup> and high poverty rates<sup>3</sup>, and big part of these areas are

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<sup>1</sup> The tribal population percentage of the KBK districts are as follows: Malkangiri 58.36% ST (+19.96% SC), Rayagada 56.04% ST (+14.28% SC), Nabarangpur 55.27% ST (+15.09% SC), Koraput 50.67% ST (+13.41% SC), Nuapada 35.95% ST(+13.09% SC), Kalahandi 28.88% ST (+17.01% SC), Sonapur 22.11% ST (+9.5% SC), Balangir 22.06% ST (+15.39% SC). Two adjacent districts also have high tribal population. They are Kandhamala 51.51% ST (+18.21% SC) and Gajapati 47.88% ST(+8.77% SC).

<sup>2</sup> The literacy rates in the KBK districts are abysmally low. Malkangiri 31.26%, Nabarangpur 34.26%, Rayagada 35.61%, Koraput 36.2%, Nuapada 42.29%, Kalahandi 46.2%, Balangir 54.93%, Sonapur 64.07%. Two adjacent districts also have low literacy: Gajapati 41.73% and Kandhamala 52.95%. The state average is 63.1%.

<sup>3</sup> Population below the poverty line in southern Orissa (of which KBK is a part) is reported to be 89.17% of the people according to the 1999-2000 NSS data and 72% of the families according to the 1997 census.

extremist infested. In other words this area is farther from the mainstream India than most of North east and Jammu and Kashmir. But this area abounds in mineral resources and thus generates a lot of revenue for the Railways. Yet the Railways have severely neglected this area and its people.

The neglect of these areas and its consequence on the underdevelopment of these areas has not gone unnoticed. The Planning Commission in comparing the development status of economic infrastructure of Orissa, especially KBK, vis-a-vis the country says in [http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/stateplan/sdr\\_orissa/sdr\\_orich2.doc](http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/stateplan/sdr_orissa/sdr_orich2.doc)

“Railways have always played an important role in the economic development and rapid social transformation in all parts of the globe. It is one of the key economic infrastructures. However, it is most unfortunate that in a poor and backward state like Orissa, development of rail networks has received much less attention of the Central government in the post-independence period. There are as many as seven districts like Boudh, Kandhamal, Deogarh, Nayagarh, Kendrapara, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur out of the 30 districts of the state, which do not have any railway line passing through them. In the year 1998-99, the density of railway route length per 1000 sq. km of area in Orissa was only 15.03 km as against 42.66 km in West Bengal and 19.11 km. at all-India level.”

Similarly in analyzing the 69 backward districts of India Bibek Debroy and Laveesh Bhandari say: "Rail network is significantly less dense in the backward districts (with the exception of Northern Bihar), and even the parts that are connected may not have frequent trains serving those locations."

Hence, although the recent Railway budgets have increased their allocations to projects in Orissa over previous years, the 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan should aim to finish and its upcoming annual budgets should have generous allocations towards some of the unfinished connectivity in the above mentioned forgotten frontier straddling Orissa, Chhatisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. This includes the lines Khurda Rd - Balangir, Nuapada-Gunupur-Theruvali, Lanjigarh Rd-Junagarh-Nawarangpur-Jeypore-Malkangiri, Baripada-Bangiriposi-...-Tatanagar, Durg-

Dallirajhara-Jagdalpur, Rajahmundry-Bhadrachalam Rd. and connecting Malkangiri, Kirandul and Manguru.

There are several other dangling lines in the above mentioned states where the end points are mining locations. The resulting lack of connectivity has resulted in almost zero passenger services and as a result local inhabitants, mostly tribals, often travel on the roof of freight trains and this has resulted in several tragic incidents with loss of lives. Some of these end points are Barsuan, Kiriburu, Gua, Bolanikhadan, Badampahar and Gurumahisani and the 11th plan must aim to connect as many of them as possible through the already surveyed and/or initiated connections such as Talcher-Barsuan, Keonjhar-Badampahar and Bangiriposi-Gurumahisani.

An irony is that the freight operations in these areas have contributed significantly to the Railways profits, but yet the Railways has hesitated in focusing on completing the above mentioned lines. For example, for the 2003-2004 and 2004-05 the working expense as part of gross earnings of the ECOR zone<sup>4</sup> is the second best at 66.64% and 61.75% respectively. The other profit making zones in those years are South east central (62.8% and 56.1%), North central (76.33% and 66.71%), Central (80.29% and 82.48%), South eastern (81.24% and 83.51%), South Central (85.72% and 83.62%), West Central (80.99% and 84.08%), South Western (91.35% and 86.15%), Western (93.21% and 90.85%), Northern (91.08% and 92.89%) and East Central (93.65% and 98.9%). The loss making zones are metro Kolkata (247% and 264.38%), North Eastern (151.93% and 160.88%), Northeast Frontier (147.98% and 159.45%), Eastern (161.3% and 152.84%), Southern (118.55% and 120.79%) and North Western (106.26% and 104.98%).

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<sup>4</sup> Recently the ECOR general manager said: “With only 4% of the track of Indian Railways, we cater for about 12% of total loading of Indian railway and about 7% of total earning of IR. (Source: ECOR GM Shri Surendra Singh Khurana’s address available at [http://eastcoastrailway.gov.in/custom/press\\_release/index.php](http://eastcoastrailway.gov.in/custom/press_release/index.php))



The above is illuminating; in some sense the poor and backward tribals and their land in ECOR is generating profits that is being ploughed into subsidizing the commuters in metro Kolkata. In the coming years additional metro lines are under works. This includes 146.5 Km in Mumbai at a cost of Rs. 19,525 crores, two lines in Bangalore covering 33 km at a cost of Rs. 6,207 crores, a three line Hyderabad metro of 66 km at the cost of Rs 8,760 crores, etc. No doubt, for speedier implementation part of the above will be borne by the states, but what about the operating expenses in the future years? These cities are drivers of India's growth and investment in them is good for India. But in the process let us not forget the tribals of Chhatisgarh and the KBK districts of Orissa. Such constant neglect of their well being is perhaps why extremists have been able to make inroads into those areas.

properly connect the Mayurbhanj<sup>7</sup> district is: (v) Bangiriposi -Gurumahishasini and/or Buramara-Chakulia.



Thus, we all should write to the government in Delhi<sup>5</sup> that they must declare some of the proposed railway lines to these areas as national projects (similar to some lines in J & K and the North East) with a dedicated budget to complete them during the 11<sup>th</sup> plan. Parts of these lines have been approved for more than a decade and at the rate they are progressing they may never finish (annual budget allocation often less than the inflation) or if they do perhaps not in our life time. The lines connecting KBK are:

Switching gears let us now consider another aspect of the Indian Railways. With 1.6 million employees it is the largest employer in the world. With its aim to significantly grow in the coming years there will be opportunities for the establishments of new employment centers such as new production units. For example, it is reported that the recently announced Rail Coach factory in Rae Bareli at a cost of 1000 crores will provide direct employment to 5000 people and indirect employment to another 10,000; and the Rail engine factory in Bdhaura in Bihar's Saran district at a cost of Rs 1000 crore will give direct employment to 5000 people and indirect employment to another 10,000.

- (i) Khurda Rd-Balangir
- (ii) Lanjigarh Rd – Bhawanipatna - Junagarh – Nabrangpur – Jeypore – Malkangiri – Bhadrachalam Rd (Andhra Pradesh) (NB: Lanjigarh Rd – Junagarh is scheduled to be completed in a year or so.)
- (iii) Gunupur – Therubali (NB: Naupada - Gunupur broad gauge conversion is to be completed in a year.)

When establishing such units IR must look at regional balance and distribute them across the country. Its recent announcements of a Rail coach factory in Rae Bareli (the constituency of Mrs. Sonia Gandhi) and Bihar (the home state of the Railway minister) do not quite give the Indian people the confidence that IR is looking at regional balance. Note that IR's current major production units are the Railway Coach factory in Kapurthala (Punjab), Integral Coach factory in Perambur near Chennai, Diesel loco works in Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Chittaranjan Loco works in Chittaranjan (West Bengal), Diesel-loco modernisation works in Patiala (Punjab) and Wheel and Axle plant in

The key missing line connecting the state capital to the Sundergarh district<sup>6</sup> is: (iv) Talcher – Bimlagarh and the key missing line that will

<sup>5</sup> Please make a copy of this article and write to [pmosb@pmo.nic.in](mailto:pmosb@pmo.nic.in), [crb\\_rail\\_suggestions@rb.railnet.gov.in](mailto:crb_rail_suggestions@rb.railnet.gov.in), [cmo@ori.nic.in](mailto:cmo@ori.nic.in), [soniagandhi@sansad.nic.in](mailto:soniagandhi@sansad.nic.in). An electronic version of this article will be made available at <http://kbkrail.orissalinks.com>.

<sup>6</sup> Tirbal percentage of Sundergarh district is 50.74%.

<sup>7</sup> Tirbal percentage of Mayurbhanj district is 57.87%

Bangalore (Karnataka) and during Lalu's recent visit to Kerala it has been reported that he has promised setting up of a bogey and parts manufacturing unit and an electric multiple unit in Kerala. IR must tabulate all these and try its best to spread the cheer across the country not just in specific states from where some special people come from.

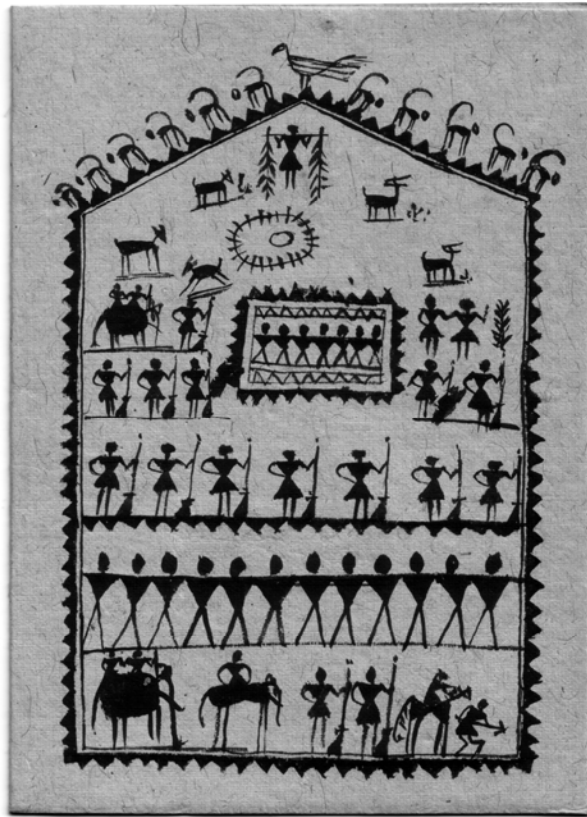
Finally IR must watch out the activity of some of the older railway zones that seem to have not gotten over the zone splits and as a result have knowingly or unknowingly acted in a way detrimental to states that are part of that zone but do

not contain the HQ of that zone. For example, CAG reported that while the gauge conversion of the Rupsa-Bangiriposi section (in Orissa) in South Eastern Railway (SER) zone was conceived as an alternate to the third line between Kharagpur and Tatanagar, SER adopted a mixed track structure instead of conforming to the standard required to run heavy haul trains, thereby defeating the basic objective of providing an alternate route to the heavy haul freight traffic. If SER is not interested in these lines, and is wasting Railways money, may be the railway ministry can consider taking them away from SER and give it to ECOR.

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## SECTION II

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## Dance and Music Tradition, At Shree Jagannath Temple

*Sushree Mishra Kar*

Lord Jagannath is the national deity of the Oriyas. In Him we find universal brotherhood and internationalism. He has been the guiding force behind our national pride, culture, art literature, religion and philosophy. He is conceived in our literature as the Supreme Being and equated to a supreme monarch. The services rendered to a king were considered befitting a god and hence the god was served exactly in the manner the king was served from the morning till he retired at night. The Lord is provided with thirty-six special services. In the early morning he is woken up with the words *Manima, Manima*, 'Your Majesty' and at the time of putting the deity to bed. He is presented with recitals of dance and music to bring in a sense of relaxed entertainment. The importance of food, sleep and entertainment in the life of the common man is reflected in the form of food offerings of fifty six different *bhogas* along with the Car festival on land, the Chandan festival on water, the ceremonial putting to bed and the ritual sleep and the amorous songs and dances of the Mahari to entertain the deities.

The Shree Mandir projects the images of the Lord as a connoisseur of dance and music. During the twelve annual festivals of the deity, both male and female servitors enact Sri Krishna Lila, Sri Rama Lila and present folk dances and music with the help of the Jaga Ghara Akhadas, the most ancient seats of culture in Puri. Innumerable stone inscriptions, copper plates, Records of rights and other documentations like the Madala Panji corroborate the claim

### Devadasi/Mahari Dance in the temple of Lord Jagannath

Lord Jagannath, universally acclaimed as the saviour of the whole world, is enshrined in the shree Mandir at Puri. He is regarded as the fountainhead of Orissan art, music literature and culture. The walls of the Shree Mandir are adorned with representations of Odissi dance, art, painting and depictions of the various ragas and raginis. The inanimate creations of the artists of the ages gone by, not only look like life but also animated enough to recapitulate the raga of Odissi dance and music. The history of Odissi dance and music is collateral to the history of the Shree Mandir itself.

By the beginning of the eleventh century AD it was a practice in the temples of the Kalinga region to engage Devadasis or sani sampradaya to present devotional songs, hymns, dance and music dedicated to the deity. The Kings of the Ganga dynasty ruled Kalinga from their capital at Kalinga Nagar, near Mukhalingam in modern Andhra Pradesh. The Kingdom stretched from the Godavari, down south to the river Rushikulaya in the north. Through matrimonial alliances, the Gangas were related the close, Chalukyas, Bai dumdas and Kadam Das of he deccan, which is turn brought Kalinga into close contact with the cultural trends then prevailing in the decant, in 1112 AD Choda Ganga defeated the Soma King, Karna Deb, ruling Utkal, which ushered in a renaissance to Utkal in the fields of politics, religion and culture. The ancient temple at Puri, with the presiding deities Lord Purusottam, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra saw the advent of the Devadasis of Sani Sampradaya brought in to provide dance and music to the deity, as was the custom then in vogue in the Kalinga region. In 1075 AD Choda Ganga built a Nata Mandap in front of the temple dedicated to the goddess Durga at Dirghasi, a small village near Mukhalingam. The text from a stone inscription of the temple reads:

*Durga devalaya sya bharanamiba purah  
Sthapaya maso gurdin  
Sriman srinath biryah sthagita  
Dasadisa natyasala chalena*

Which means:

Years later, in 1230 AD, King Anangabhima Deb shifted the idols to the temple at Puri, after its completion and in place of the old Nata Mandap, the Mukti Mandap was built.

Before the eleventh century, the Devadasis had an exclusive habitation in the Sri Kurma temple situated near Kalinga Nagar. The place was called Kurma Patak or Purnakoti Eminent gurus of the Baishnab cult used to live in the temple to reach the various branches of philosophy to the resident pupils. The curriculum also embraced the art of dance and music, know as Gandharba Bidya. To learn dance, music and choreography, a large number of Sani Sampradaya also flocked to the temple. Numerous inscription bear the evidence. An example of this is the inscription on a pillar of the Nrusingha temple at Simachalam.

Choda Ganga Deba upheld the tradition by bringing some families of the Sani Sampradaya from Kuma Patak whom he rehabilitated at Puri in Chudanga Sani, the street named after him. This was in the era of Ramanuj when the lyric poet Saranga Deba composed the classic Sangeeta Ratnakar. He is identified as an Oriya by Pandit Nilakantha Dash because, Nishank, the title he was honoured with, is not found anywhere else but in Orissa. Ramanuja helped establish the Baishnab cult in Srikuma. During the reign of Narasimha Ananda Teertha, Ramanuja initiated the custom of Jagannath, the maestro who earned for himself the title Dindima and went on to conquer the Deccan with his enchanting repertoire of Odissi dance and music.

The mother tongue of the families brought from Kurma Patak being Telegu: the songs they sang in the Shree Mandir could not gain immediate popularity among the local public. With a view to overcome this difficulty, Choda Ganga requested contemporary poets to compose devotional songs and hymns in Sanskrit. A profound knowledge of the Gandharba Bidya was a pre-requisite for composing devotional music. The greatest of the contemporary poets, Jayadeva, the poet laureate, excelled in the Geetagovinda, acclaimed by both critics and laymen alike, as a divine piece of composition. The poet not only composed verses but also choreographed the songs and taught it to the Devadasis, there by initiating the Guru-Sishya tradition in Odissi dance and music.

Jayadeva's gift, Geetagovinda, enriched the literary heritage of Orissa. The Geetagovinda was a part of the daily worship of the Lord in the Shree Mandir. It was sung by the Devadasis as well as other troupes of devotees who loved to sing and dance to the deity's satisfaction.

A heart wrenching legend is also related to the origin of the custom of Devadasis, where Bhitarchhu Mahapatra used to take his daily bath in Swetanganga. One morning he drowned while bathing and found himself on the banks of the Ganges, rescued by a lady who took him to her house and nursed him back to health. Long after that, he had a dream in which Lord Jagannath admonished him. The next day itself he started for Puri with promises of reunion there and presented the lady with a ring, which was given to him by the Gajapati, as a memento. She followed him to Puri but he denied any acquaintance with her. She

complained before the Gajapati who accepted the ring as a piece of substantial evidence and advised her to let herself be appointed a Mahari in the service of the Lord.

As time went by, the rites and rituals of the Shree Mandir saw a host of changes. King Ananga Bhima Dev relinquished his sovereignty in favour of Lord Jagannath and ruled on his behalf, as His Rout, servant. The divine rites were made equivalent to that of the king's daily personal routine. It became a vogue for the Debadasi to perform erotic dances, in camera, before the Lord ; just before the deity was ceremonially put to bed. Prior to this, the Devadasis usually performed during the fast offerings of the morning, sakala bhoga or Raja Bhoga. They demonstrated their art on the Nata mandap.

There are thirty six different types of services (seva) rendered to Lord Jagannath for which there are 120 different kinds of temple employees (sevayatas). Only two of the services fall exclusively to the female servitors. One Bhitara Gauni, the performance, in camera; and the other was the Samprada Nijoga who performed dance and music on the occasions of the various festivals.

Performance, in camera, has long been discontinued because the land grants and other perquisites could no more sustain the families in the face of changing times and costs. They were compelled to take up other means of earning their livelihood. They had to give up temple services. A part of their duty was to dance during the Chandan and the Jhulan festivals. Chanting the Geetagovinda and dancing to the ensemble were accepted as a matter of daily routine in the Shree Mandir. Jayadeva himself taught dance and music to a number of boys and girls. The story runs that Jayadeva once failed to rhyme two lines and left his home to ruminate over it on his way to the bathing ghat. His wife, Padmabati was alone when Lord Jagannath went to his home in the guise of Jayadeva and wrote down the words needed to rhyme the couplet. Jayadeva was surprised to find his rhyme completed by the Lord Himself who wrote "Dehi Pada Pallavamudaram." Out of deep devotion towards the Lord, Jayadeva presented Him with Padmabati to dance for Him only. Jayadeva himself coined "Padmavati charana charana chakravarti."

Dance and music followed the Guru-Sishya hierarchy since the days of Jayadeva and Padmavati. The Jaga Gharas were the ideal venue for propagation

of the performing arts and literature. Ram Das and Mohan Mohapatra are two of the earliest gurus of Odissi, Padmashree Pankaj Charan Das did pioneering work to bring the dance out of the premises of the Shree Mandir and presented it on the stage. Padmashree Pankaj Charan Das himself had rendered madeli seva (mardal player) to the Lord for several years. In the Guru-Sishya tradition, the later day gurus like Padmabibhushan Kelu Charan Mahapatra and Guru Deba Prasad Das christened the dances as Odissi, and made it famous throughout the country and abroad.

A remarkable change came over dance and music during the reign of the Bhoi dynasty. The kings employed the Devadasis as their personal bodyguards which caused a dearth of performances on festive occasions. The problem was overcome by dressing little boys up as girls to perform the dances. Their dance was named Gotipua Nacha. This dance form commenced during the lifetime of Sri Chaitanya in the late fifteenth century and flourished during the early decades of the next. The Gotipua dance was taught in all the seven Jaga Gharas. The troupes performed during the Chandan and Jhulan festivals. During the Chandan festival, the male Gotipuas danced on the raft carrying Ramakrishna, while the Devadasis performed on the raft with the deity Madana Madana. The dance and music performed generated a deep sense of devotion in the mind of the spectator.

The age was also ripe to create an awareness among the people for art, literature, dance and music. Many erudite treatments of these forms were published. Purusottam Mishra wrote the Sangeeta Narayan, Haladhar Mishra came out with his Sangeeta Kalpalata, Kamal Lochan published the Sangeeta Chintamani and Narayan Deb composed the Sangeeta Narayana. Towards 1685 AD, poets like Upendra Bhanj, Baladeb Rath, Gopal Krushna, Dinakrushna, Gaurahari composed a large number of Odissi songs in which the significance of the various festivals were outlined. These are being sung at the Chandan, Jhulan and Dola festivals.

The following serves as an illustration:

*Karindra danta palanka teji prabhu*  
*Narendra chape gamana*  
*Probhu Madana Mohana*  
 (Odissi in the Chandana festival)

*Shyamasundara, sindhu manthi pailaki sambhara*  
*Nohila kubera Bedabara sunasira, deipare dutara*  
 (Song of the divine raft)

*Sarina bari bhihara*  
*Bije Braja rama hruda hara je*  
 (song on the occasion of return from the Chandan festival)

*Chandra badani mo rama,*  
*Naba nabinogo, rase rasau kina re*  
 (Jhulana & Rukmuni harana song)

*Jhulanti range rai sange shyama sundara*  
*Raga re anurage karanti bani hundara*  
 (Jhulana song)

*Mahaprabhu, mo dukha binasare ana nahin tumbha*  
*bina,*  
*Dina jana arta nasa boli artatrane uduachi bana*  
 (Hymn sung at ritual of putting the deity to bed)

*Are Ravana, Bare suna mo gita*  
 (Rukmuni Harana)

*Ehi kathare mo mana he Mahaprabhu,*  
*Niti dekhuthibi Niladri Mandape, Kanja sundara*  
*badana, he Mahaprabhu*  
 (Hymn sung at rituals putting the deity to bed)

*Jaya Harachandi atanga nasini ma,*  
*Jaya Jaya Adi Mata*  
*Puni To nama dharile nathae chinta*  
 (Group song at the time of Sola Puja)

Such is the multitude of the songs and hymns composed by the poets of the past. These songs were presented as chorus at the festivals but were performed solo during the daily rituals. These created a sense of spiritual appreciation in the heart of the devotee.

The Jaga Akhadas of Puri served primarily as a venue of physical exercises but gradually came to serve as the best exposure art and literature could wish for. The Jaga Gharas combined the teaching and exhibitions of acrobatic skills like whirling sticks, planks and fencing to the tune of music; along with performance of dance dramas like the Sahi nacha, Akhada nacha, Medha nacha. The image of the Jaga Ghara was incomplete without a chorus, with a mrudanga or Pakhauj, rendering the devotional songs



in the evening. People flocked to the Jaga Gharas in the evenings to while away their precious leisure in artistic activities. The characteristic feature of Odissi music was the practice of accepting the first letter of the song as the mana and the accompanist on the pakhauj had to confirm. The theme of the songs sung were based on the different festivities associated with Lord Jagannath. The venue used for communal activities like setting disputes and hearing cases was also the venue to prepare the young to face the hardships of life bravely by indulging in the practice and presentation of the performing arts. Thus the Jaga Gharas played an important role in nurturing and propagating mass ideals leading to the formation of a

cultural base that kept the different sections cemented for the common goal.

The tradition of Odissi dance and music is the follow up of the custom practised in the Shree Mandir. The Devadasi dance of the past gave birth to the present day Odissi. The Devadasis danced in front of the deities during the morning offerings known as sakala dhupa or Rajabhoga. The mrudanga was the mandatory accompaniment. This went on developing and evolving into five different versions and got acknowledged as a form of classical dance and conquered the whole world by its grace, charm, beauty and above all, spiritualism.

Jai Jagannath!

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## Odissi Dance Comes to Canada

Anjali Anne-Marie Gaston

As we celebrate the remarkable art form that is Odissi dance, I would like to take the opportunity to reflect on my experiences with Odissi and on the history of the style itself. Even now, I marvel that a dance so little known when I began my dance career has become such an international phenomenon. I begin with a little of my own introduction to Indian dance.

1967 was a big year in Canada: the celebration of 100 years as a nation. It was also important for me as a dancer. I had just returned to Ottawa from working for two years in Chennai with disadvantaged children, under CUSO (Canadian University Service Overseas). Chennai is hot and humid. Initially, in a room too small to accommodate a fan. At that time I began my study of Bharata Natyam. On my return I began performing, teaching and lecturing across Canada and later UK, France, Mexico. One of my first engagements was for Expo 67 in Montreal. In 1968 I performed Bharata Natyam as well as other dances as part of the cultural delegation to the Olympics in Mexico City.

It must have been fate that not only was I sent to Tamil Nadu, the centre of Bharata Natyam, but my first stop was at Annamalai University, Chidambaram, where I studied Tamil. While I was there, I went often to the great Nataraja temple, passing through the temple gateways, *gopura*, on which are carved the *karanas* or dancing postures described in the 5<sup>th</sup> century treatise on Indian dance and theatre, the *Natya Shastra*.

In Canada I had heard about Indian dances, but had never seen them performed. When I arrived in Chennai I enrolled in a Bharata Natyam class taught at the Madras Music Academy by the most famous *devadasi*, T. Balasareswati, without ever having seen a performance. Because Bala toured a great deal at the time, classes were irregular. Jon Higgins, an American who was studying music with Bala's brother T. Vishwainathan, suggested that I should study with Ellappa Pillai, who had worked for many years with Bala. Every day, before I taught school, I went to Ellappa's home, took class, had breakfast with the family and cycled to the school to teach. Evenings were spent watching dance recitals. Dance was my entry into South Indian culture which included learning about Hinduism, rituals, costuming, ways of walking, moving, tying flowers, etc.: all

aspects of daily life that are reflected in the traditional dance choreography.

Back in Canada, I lived in Toronto where I taught English to new Canadians and later high school. I also did daily dance practice at the International Students Centre of the University of Toronto where, one day there was a knock at the door. I opened it to find Manikham, a south Indian studying maths, who also sang Carnatic music. He had heard my music playing and asked to watch. He was so impressed that he invited me to perform that weekend for an Indo-Canadian gathering. From that moment my career took off, as people from Hamilton, Guelph and other centres, hungry for a dose of Indian culture, would drive in to Toronto. In those days Indo-Canadian organizations comprised anyone interested in India and therefore included people from a wide variety of backgrounds, unlike today when such groups are made up mainly of people of South Asian origin. Practically every week-end I had an engagement: Toronto, Kingston, Guelph, Hamilton, London, Waterloo, etc. The venues were varied: universities, museum, art galleries, schools.

I returned to India in 1969 with a Canada Council Arts Bursary and again began to study Bharata Natyam in Chennai. However, when I saw Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra accompany Sonal Mansingh's Odissi recital in Chennai for the first time at the Museum Theatre I knew that I had to learn this form. I was entranced by the body shapes created in the dance, which reflected more accurately than Bharata Natyam the shape of the *karana* sculptures that I saw on the temples: the *tribhanga* or three bend posture, the fluidity of the torso, with the head deflected to one side was like seeing mediaeval sculptures come to life.

In July of that year the Canadian High Commission, James George, whose daughter Dolphi had studied Bharata Natyam in Sri Lanka, invited me to Delhi to perform Bharata Natyam along with her and with the famous dancer, Ram Gopal, as part of the July 1st celebrations. At that time the dance officer of the Sangeet Natak Academy, Mohan Kokhar, arranged for me to begin Odissi studies with Mayadhar Raut. I took a two hour class with Mayadhar every day and within three months I was able to perform *Vasant Pallavi*. I decided to shift to Delhi so that I could continue with Odissi, Bharata Natyam and Kuchipudi.

*Anjali is one of the few western dancers who can be mistaken for an Indian, not only for her stage presence but for the technical quality of her dance*  
Delhi, Financial express

Soon, I was performing Odissi regularly. Because Odissi musicians were not available in Delhi then, we had to use North Indian musicians from the *Ram Lila* troupe of the Bharatiya Kala Kendra as accompanists. My husband, Tony, who was studying sitar and vocal at the time, also sang for several performances. After a year we were invited to Bhubaneswar as guests of the Orissa government and I performed at Rabindra Mandap and at Kala Vikash Kendra in Cuttack, the latter a benefit performance for a musician who had contracted leprosy. Tony and I slept on tables at the Kala Vikash Kendra. Food was very difficult to locate, there being very few restaurants in Cuttack then. Raquel Mohanty sang and Bhubaneswar Misra played the violin. The concert was very well received.

While in Bhubaneswar, I met D.N. Patnaik, head of Dance at the Orissa Sangeet Natak Academy. We spent many wonderful hours together. He was working on his book "Odissi Dance" and was able to tell me a great deal about the history of Orissan dances, pointing to the relationships, on the one hand with the *mahari* dances presented in the Jagannath temple, Puri and on the other, with the dances of the *gotipua* (young boys, trained in Ragurajpur and other villages outside Puri). We visited several of the *maharis* who sang some of the songs from the 12 century *Gita Govinda* for us. At that time they were being completely ignored by the artistic establishment, suffering from the usual prejudice against temple women.

I returned to Delhi and broadened my Odissi repertoire by studying at the Gandharva Mahavidyala with Guru Hari Krishna Behera, then one of the chief disciples of Kelucharan Mahapatra. Hari Krishna used to invite "Kelubabu" to Delhi for master classes

and about four or five of us would study with him for six hours a day. This led to travelling to Cuttack by train every August to live and study with Guru Kelucharan at the Kala Vikash Kendra. The local girls would study with him in the evenings. I lived in one hostel room with about eight other girls. The hostel cat took a liking to me and left a dead mouse on my bed every day. Cuttack is terribly hot and humid in August and there were a lot of mosquitos, but the classes were excellent.



Studying the dance was magical. Mostly there were only four of us: myself from Canada, one Mexican (Maria), one Argentinian (Mirta) and one from Mauritius (Rani). We had individual attention and at the end of the course we each made our own music recordings with the finest musicians. The music had mainly been composed and arranged by Bhubaneswar Misra who played violin for the recordings. Raquel Mohanty sang and Guru Kelucharan played the *pakhavaj*. The repertoire at that time included prayers (*Namami, Pada Vande, Guru Brahma* etc.), *Bottu, Pallavi (Vasant, Mohana, Sringara, Sankhara), Moksha* (several variations), *Gita*

*Govinda, Dasavatar* and a few Oriya songs. The lyrical quality of the music continues to enchant, especially the Orissan-style rendition of *Gita Govinda*). I still use some of these early recordings for my recitals as the quality is superb.

Thus began the cycle of performing, teaching, lecturing in Canada and UK and returning to India to work with Guru Kelucharan. I also worked with my Bharata Natyam and Kuchipudi teachers. In 1971 David Haber, who was then head of the National Arts Centre met Tony and I in London, England and invited me to present an full evening of Indian dance at NAC. The first half was Bharata Natyam and the second half Odissi. We sold out the single show, so every year from 1971-1977 I presented at least one show at NAC, performing the traditional repertoire to full houses. By 1973 my recitals incorporated projected backdrops showing exquisite images of sculpture, temples, and miniature paintings and

progressing towards what became a fully-integrated mixed media presentation. Odissi is an essential component for my innovative mixed media work which includes video, dance, images, masks and music.

*“This is art without borders. Anjali and Tony Gaston are part of an international group of artists whose artistic expression belongs to world art. This is transnational work and resonates with diverse audiences be they from India Canada or elsewhere.”*  
Arshiya Sethi, 15 Minute Fringe Festival Curator

It was Odissi dance and the *Nataraja* figures represented on Orissan temples that inspired me to conduct research at Oxford University. Sculptures of *Nataraja*, Shiva in a dancing posture, are quite different than southern depictions of the same theme. Odissi dance mimics the Orissan *Natarajas*. I also noticed that the body shapes of the dancing figures *karanas* that document the dance on South Indian temples were closer to those shapes that we assume in Odissi. Particularly the *tribhanga* and *chauk* form. My research was published by Oxford University press *“Siva in Dance, Myth and Iconography”*. It has gone through 4 editions.

Odissi is a very localised form, being confined to the area along the Orissan coast, but it is also very distinctive. One of the main sources for modern Odissi was the *gotipua* tradition of young boys dancing. Most of the early dance teachers were initiated into the style as *gotipuas*. Essentially the Odissi that is performed today evolved from three paths: the *Jayantika* style which codified the *gotipua* traditions in which several of the early gurus were trained (Kelucharan Mahapatra, Mayadhar Raut D.N. Patnaik); the *mahari* style taught by Pankacharan Das and the style of Debu Prasad Das, who incorporated folk and tribal elements into the dance. Today, with Odissi flourishing and practised world-wide, there are many streams and many interpretations. Dance lives in the bodies of the performers. It changes with time and with various influences.

Since the 1970s Odissi has been acknowledged as a classical style. The lyrical quality of both the music and the dance makes it unique, although the form continues to evolve. Other styles, such as Chhau, have been enriched by Odissi and Odissi has been enriched by Chhau. In the 1970s it was rare to see men perform Odissi. This included the teachers. However, by the 1990s many men were performing the dance. By this time it was no longer mainly a solo form. Group

choreography and ensemble works on a wide variety of themes have largely replaced solo presentations, both in India and elsewhere. This change may have been driven by the use of large venues, and the availability of many students, now that in many cities hundreds study the dance. In addition, multiple dancers present greater opportunity for choreographic variety and for the development of non-traditional themes. We have now reached the stage where audiences have come to expect group choreography. When I began studying Odissi it was unknown in many parts of India. Now there is hardly a town in India where Odissi has not been seen. The same is true of cities world-wide. All this has happened in just under 40 years: an amazing accomplishment for an art once confined to a few coastal towns in what was widely regarded as a poor and backward part of India.

Recently my innovative choreography has incorporated Buddhist themes, inspired by the monuments and historical association that Orissa has with Buddhism. I spent New Year 2007 at Dauli, where Emperor Ashoka, looking at the carnage of the battle of Kalinga, renounced war and became a devout Buddhist. The themes of my innovative choreographies, which combine video, images, dance, music and philosophy, echo Buddhist themes which encourage us to take responsibility for the planet *“The Environmental Wisdom of the Buddha and The Buddha and the Tree of Life* combine dance, video and images. Orissa and its arts continue to be an inspiration for my work. (see [www.culturalhorizons.ca](http://www.culturalhorizons.ca)).

During the 1970s I presented Odissi, Bharata Natyam and Kuchipudi across Canada from Newfoundland to British Columbia. To give some idea of the interest in Indian dances, including Odissi, among Canadians in the 1970s, I list below the cities where I performed. In many cases the venues were large and prestigious: National Arts Centre, Ottawa, Centre for Arts and Culture, St. John's, Newfoundland, Stratford Festival, Stratford, Charlottown, Fredericton, UQUAM Montreal, Hart House, Colonnade Theatre, Toronto, etc. They included universities, libraries, museums and schools. In many places I presented Odissi for the first time. Audiences included many Canadians who had no acquaintance with the dance, but were interested in other cultures, as well as many people from South Asia, Hindu, Moslem and Sikh. I hope and believe that my touring during that period made Canadian audiences more receptive to the wave of Indian-born

dancers who subsequently began to perform in Canada.

### **Anjali's performances in Canada**

1967 Expo 67 Montreal 1967-71 Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton **Ottawa:** 1971-92 National Arts Centre Ottawa (14 full length recitals and several as part as Cultures Canada), Invited to perform for Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Pierre Trudeau during Mrs Gandhi's state visit to Canada, National Gallery of Canada (8x), First Recital to be presented in the theatre of the museum of Civilization Ottawa, Alumni Theatre University of Ottawa ( 7 times) , Carleton University Alumni Theatre (8 times), Dance Festival, Franco-Ontario Festival, National Archives, National Library of Canada, Museum of Civilization etc. 1994-2008 Ottawa Arts Court Theatre, premiere of new work each year **Toronto:** Harbour Front, Royal Ontario Museum, George Ignatief Theatre, Hart House, University of Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum Theatre, Betty Oliphant Theatre (Ishtar Gilgamesh) **Kingston:** Queen's University (3x) St Catherines: Brock Centre for the Arts (5x) **Hamilton:** Hamilton Place, Hamilton Art Gallery, Windsor: Art Gallery of Windsor, Guelph: University of Guelph, Art Gallery Waterloo: University of Waterloo, Sir Wilfred Laurier University(2x), **Stratford:** Stratford Festival, Grimsby **Thunder Bay:** Lakehead University, throughout Northern Ontario: Cobalt, South Porcupine, Cochrane, Smooth

Rock Falls, Virginiatown, etc. **Quebec:** Montreal: Museum of Fine Arts (2x), University of Quebec in Montreal, Expo, Concordia University, Gatineau: CJEP **Manitoba:** Winnipeg: University of Winnipeg, University of Manitoba, Art Gallery of Winnipeg, Brandon: University of Brandon. **British Columbia:** Vancouver: Vancouver Playhouse, Anthropology Museum UBC, throughout British Columbia one month tour organized by Festival Concerts: Trail, Nelson, Kamloops, Chilliwack, Mill Bay, Oliver, Kelowna, Cranbrook, Vernan, Kimberely, Fernie, Sparwood, Creston, Gabriola Island, Delta, Art Gallery of Vancouver, University of British Columbia, Pearson College of the Pacific. Alberta, Malaspina College Theatre, Nanaimo Queen Charlotte City. **Alberta** Banff: Banff Centre, Calgary: University of Calgary, Edmonton: University of Alberta. **Saskatchewan:** Saskatoon, University of Saskatchewan, Art Gallery of Saskatchewan, Regina: University of Saskatoon. **New Brunswick:** Sackville, Fredericton: Beaverbrook Theatre. **Newfoundland:** Arts and Cultural Centre, St Johns, Grandfalls, Gander, Burin Peninsula, Cornerbrook, Stephenville, Burin Peninsula **Nova Scotia:** Halifax, Wolfville, Badeck, Sydney **Prince Edward Island:** Charlottown Cultural Centre **Newfoundland,** Centre for the Arts St Johns, Stephenville , Mary's Town, Gander, etc **Canada:** TV BRAVO, Dancing the Goddess, CBC, Toronto, Ottawa, Saskatoon, Vision TV, Rogers Cable.

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*Anjali Anne-Marie Gaston of Ottawa has spent over twenty years in India, learning and performing Odissi, Chhau and other dance styles. She holds a D.Phil. from Oxford University.*



## **Odissi: Past, Present and Future**

*Rahul Acharya*

The classical dance art of Orissa is one more manifestation, among our classical dances, of a tree which grew in the eastern region, put on many fresh leaves, decayed and blossomed again, almost to collapse with the ill winds that blew, but which is now resurgent with new shoots upon its tender branches.

### **Origin of Dance in Orissa**

The first record of dance in Orissa is found in the manuscripts pertaining to the rituals of Lord Jagannath at his world famous temple at Puri. Dance as a ritual finds mention in Utkala Khanda of Skanda Purana, Niladri Mahodaya, Madala Panji etc. besides many other texts. There it was extensively practised by Devadasis or temple dancers (only females) as an ongoing ritual for the pleasure of the Lord.

The Devadasi dance at the temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri was also known as the Mahari dance. The Devadasis were called Maharis, which literally means, according to some, one who is deeply in love with the Lord. Dancing has remained a very important and indispensable item in the daily rituals (seva) of Lord Jagannath since the time of Ganga rulers of Utkal. Besides the inscriptions of the Ganga rulers, there are also some treatises and literatures which hold the proof for the oldness of this ritual in the temple of Lord Jagannath. We also find dancing as a ritual in the temple of Lord Jagannath mentioned in Agni Purana, Vishnu Purana, Srimad Bhagavatam, Padma Purana and Vamadeva Samhita.

Chodaganga Deva who ruled Utkal in the twelfth century is credited to have first given a legal dimension to the Devadasi dancing at the temple of Lord Jagannath. He established seven localities (sahis) for the servants (sewayats) of the Lord and one of the streets known by the name of Anga Alasa Patana was intended for the Maharis alone. Chodaganga Deva introduced many ceremonies (Jatra) of the Lord in a year. It is interesting to note that dancing and singing were associated with almost all these ceremonies. The Maharis in olden days enjoyed a place of esteem in society. Girls of respectable families took it as an honourable profession. The Maharis were of six categories: Bhitara Gauni, Bahara Gauni, Nachuani, Patuari, Raj Angila, Gahana Mahari and Rudra Ganika.

Much improvement was done in the Devadasi or Mahari dancing during the 16th century. Prataprudra Deva was a great patron of dance and music. He introduced one more item, Ekanta Seva or Palanka Pokhari Seva in the daily services of the Maharis. Ramananda Pattnaik, a great Vaishnava and poet of the time used to dress up the Maharis himself and teach them the arts of Abhinaya and techniques of Nritta. Later two officers Mina Nahaka and Sahi Nahaka were posted in the streets to regulate the services of the Maharis. These officers were supposed to see that the Mahari led a chaste and honorable life and remain dutiful in their services.

I heard many old Maharis quoting names of Shastras such as 'Devadasi Nrutya Paddhati' of Narayan Mishra, 'Nachuni Vidhi' of Madhu Pattnaik, 'Niladri Nacha' of Mukta Mahari. Unfortunately none of these manuscripts have come to my hands as yet. Almost contemporary was the Gotipua tradition. To Ramachandra goes the distinction of paving the way for bringing into being an ingenious if cute dance- the Gotipua. This was towards the end of the 16th century. The last in the sequence in the dynasties of Orissa had collapsed, and the Mughals and Afghans were locked in rivalry to be in power. Ramachandra was Raja of Khurda, a small principality in Orissa. He had found Akhadas to give shelter to Mughal soldiers who had been routed by the Afghans on Oriya soil and thus had earned the favour of Emperor Akbar by being designated as Gajapati or the King of Orissa, with allegiance to the Mughal Viceroy. He was also appointed as the superintendent at the Jagannath temple in Puri, a position of some authority, since it was the hub of religious life in Orissa.

Ramachandra was as enlightened a man, as he was a ruler. From his time Maharis or Devadasis attached initially only to the temples, came to be patronized by royal courts. It was in his time, too, and on his initiative, that another tradition of dance, comparable to that of Maharis, came to make a beginning- the tradition of Gotipuas, the boy dancers. The Gotipuas are boy dancers who dress as girls. They are the products of the Akhadas or Gymnasia, set up by Ramachandra Deva in Puri, to induct and groom young people to protect the temple and the town from intruders. The Akhadas were rather like clubs, brought up in seven streets in the periphery of the temple, to encourage physical culture as well as cultural activity. The main concern of the Akhadas



was physical exercise, gymnastics, to help equip oneself in the art of defence. But side by side, the Akhadas served as nurseries for training Gotipuas. Physical culture formed one stream, the Gotipua another and there was no overlapping. Because they were generated by the Akhada system, Gotipuas came to be known as Akhada Pilas- "boys attached to the Akhadas".

Another reason and an interesting one sometimes put forth to explain, and even justify the emergence of the Gotipua system, is that a section of preachers and propounders of the Vaishnava religion did not approve of dancing by women as a pretext for worship. They introduced the practice of dancing by boys dressed as girls. The boys were not a substitute for the Maharis, for they had no link at all with the temple; yet, what they danced had a strong affinity with what the Maharis offered. The dance style co-existed, each independently, but with palpably common roots. From both the essence has been drawn, kneaded and moulded to shape the Odissi dance of today. The word Goti means 'one', 'single' and Pua, 'boy' or 'lad'. But the Gotipuas always dance in pairs. Not in duet where each is a partner in a composition devised for two. The Gotipuas go through their paces together, identically, in total unison. Even in expressional pieces, accompanied by singing, both dance as if they were one.

Unlike the tradition of the Maharis, that of the Gotipuas faced any contempt or derision. Boys are recruited about the age of six and continue to perform till they are fourteen, then become teachers of the dance and join dance parties or seize any opportunity that comes their way. They are no longer connected with Akhadas, though some Akhadas still survive, providing a facility of sorts for young men to flex their muscles. Gotipuas are now part of professional teams, known as Dals, each managed by a Guru.

Though youngsters achieve training for about two years, during which, having imbibed the basic technique rather casually they are taught items of dance, both ornamental and expressional. At this

tender age they evidently understand little; so what they perform is by and large an imitation. Like the Maharis, they neither know nor can explain anything of a dance step or movement, a raga or tala. They follow blindly what the Guru instructs them, and reproduce what they have learnt. As they are boys in their formative years, the Gotipuas can adapt their bodies to dance in a far more flexible, versatile way, than the Maharis.

This is further reinforced by giving the boys an oil massage, every morning, coupled with stretching, bending and twisting the limbs. The dancing, that involves the body, contrasted with dancing which is expressional and demands a certain maturity in the performer- the Gotipuas conveniently score over the Maharis. One of the most demanding aspects of the dance tradition in Orissa- the Bandha, which includes incredible contortions and positions of the body- is the monopoly of the Gotipuas, for the Maharis, as adult women, could not, even if they tried, have met its demands.

A Gotipua presentation is supported by a set of three musicians, who play the Pakhawaj, the Gini or cymbals and the Harmonium. The boys do the singing themselves, though at times the party has an additional singer. In decorative items, where there is no song and therefore no play of expression, sometimes the boy stands in a pose and recites the phrase or line of rhythmic syllables like a refrain, while the other dances, generally the Bandha pieces. They then switch roles. Earlier, the Gotipuas danced with the feet planted on the edge of the metal tray or with a lighted lamp or pot on the head. The presentation was far more organized than that of the Maharis, and some items bore names such as Panchadevata Puja, Bhumi Pranam and Battu. Today, a Gotipua performance generally begins with Bhumi Pranam, salutations to Mother Earth, and is followed by varied items of dance, with or without song and ends with Bidahi



Sangeet, a farewell song and a dance number; the whole performance lasts about three hours.

The Gotipuas have no place in the temple set up, as neither they nor their Gurus are listed as Sevayats, servitors. But in the past, on a major occasion, they had an indispensable role to play. This was during the Chandan Jatra festival, when, apart from the Maharis, the Gotipuas were carried in independent boats down the Narendra Sarovara, a sacred tank in Puri, to dance and sing before the sacred images. But the Gotipuas had their day when they appeared in a religious festival, where the Maharis were never given any room. This is the Jhoolan Jatra celebrated every August. Though the Jagannath temple also observes this, it is only incidentally. It is the Mathas or religious endowments that celebrated the occasion in a big way. Puri at one time bristled with Mathas, though there are now no more than a dozen that continue to be functional. Most Mathas carry, in the portico, a tall iron framework. In case of the Jagannath temple, the facility is provided in a gallery called the Mukti Mandapa. During Jhoolan Jatra, that begins ten days before full moon, the whole structure is lavishly decorated with models made of pith and adorned with coloured paper, tinsel and the like. Figures of dancing girls, drummers, birds and monkeys are common. A special place is allotted to the Jhoola, or swing, which is of metal and no longer than two hands. Metal images of Madana Mohana representing Jagannath, Sridevi and Bhudevi are placed on the swing. Occasionally a priest sits in front of the swing and gently pulls the chord or chain fixed to the swing to set it in motion. In the open space in front of the makeshift shrine is spread a cotton durrie, and it is here that the Gotipuas dance. Performances take place a number of times during the day, and the early part of the night, and generally more than one party appears before the venue. The festival culminates on full moon night.

Today, the surviving Gotipua dals belong to villages and some leading teams are from Dimirisena and Raghurajpur from Puri, and Darara, near Bhubaneswar. Formerly, Gotipua dancers were well patronized by zamindars and were also in demand

during festivals like Dola Purnima, or Holi and Dusshera. Today they live a genuinely precarious existence, for very few offers come their way. For a night's performance a troupe is paid between Rs 100/- and Rs 200/-. The boys receive no salary, but they get food and clothing, are well looked after and in some cases provided with education. The government extends help to some parties, but not in any significant way. It is no surprise, therefore, if, like the Mahari, the Gotipua tradition fades out in the not too distant future.

Much of Odissi owes to these two traditions, but gone are the days of the Maharis and Gotipuas. Now there has been a lot of adulteration in the traditional Odissi repertoire.



### Odissi Dance Today

Odissi dance, today, has established itself to be the most fascinating dances of the world. Having been projected throughout the world, Odissi dance by virtue of its sheer beauty, has been able to win the hearts of all those who witness it. It is now seen mainly as a female dance although the appeal is not only in its femininity but in its masculinity as well, along with sculpturesque poses and imbibed spirit of the dance, which is spontaneously catered around to move any heart, or soul that the dance is not meant for the human being but for

the gods. It is therefore undoubted that more and more of the dancers are attracted to learn this form within the country and abroad.

Unfortunately there are a lot of differences between the gurus. It is very easy to note the differences. This can be examined by putting some top dancers (disciples of different gursu) together on a stage at a time. Ask them all to put a particular dance number based on a particular raga and tala at a time. Well... even a layman can visualize.., the wide differences in their basic postures, gestures, movements and styles. The reason being it is an admitted fact that till now no real good research work has been done on this dance form. It is not revealed

that whatever little has been recorded till now has not been in the acceptable way. This is evident from the styles of dancing, the chronology of its repertoire and the basic grammar, which is adopted differently in the hands of different gurus. The worst problem that we are facing today is that more of the armchair scholars who confine themselves mainly in compilations are posing themselves as experts and without even the barest knowledge of aesthetics, they fail to identify between the crudities and beauties. And then the history and background of Odissi dance? The proof of its heritage. The evidences of antiquity. To put it in a very secured place where none can dare to question, put it to the pre-historic period first and next to the earliest possible rock carvings of caves. Then to the stone temples. They are there, the dancing girls and the accompanying music players. They are there at the Rani-Gumpha caves, at the Parashurameshwara temple, at the Rajarani temple, the Lingaraj temple, the Jagannath temple, the Konark temple and the thousand and one temples all around us to see.

With Odissi, scaling newer heights and going global in its approach and presentation, dancers have brought in a lot of innovations, some good and some bad. For example trying to choreograph yogic elements in dance is definitely an innovation headed towards the betterment and refinement of the Odissi style, where in dancers would develop a scientific approach, but trying to choreograph a medieval European opera in the Odissi style is definitely not a very welcome move. Personally speaking, while we retrospect about the past history of Odissi, this was a dance meant only for the Lord to watch and was thus performed behind closed doors. So much so even a decree was passed in the Jagannath Temple that a Mahari could not dance or sing any song other than the Geeta Govinda. I always make this statement "Odissi is a dance which occupies the highest position on a golden pedestal and should be watched with folded hands, don't pull it down to a level where the audience is watching it with a glass of wine". While

we are already in an age of the super human, deeper reflection into our very own scriptures, will further enrich our presentation. For instance if an Odissi choreography on the love affair between Romeo and Juliet is replaced by our very own Nala and Damayanti, it would be more appealing in the sense we would be able to unfold another chapter from the depths of our scriptures. Believe me, people would go crazy over such a presentation.

Well, there is of course more than enough of evidence that dance, music and dramatics to Orissa is as old as its history. But do they all at all prove that the present form of Odissi dance is the replica of the old? And there is the dress and costumes, the ornaments, the accompanying instruments and the way of presentation. Have these been very sincerely excavated and adopted?

All these seem to have undergone transformation. When we boast "handed down by a tradition of over more than five thousand years", we must also answer whether we have truthfully kept it the way it used to be or even recorded the gradual transformations, which had taken place from time to time. We have not done that. A lot of imagination has gone into our statistics. So what is left for us is a lot of mysteries. To put it in order and to set it in an acceptable pattern, our research must forge in a very clear chronological pattern with distinct documentation with the specific order of time period.

A thorough probe into these will certainly bring out an authentic idea as to the gradual development and transformations, which have taken place in our dances, time to time.

Art is not confined to limited contours. It is plastic and only the creative artists do have their right of innovations. It is a sad state of affairs where we find the geniuses are criticized on vague points by petty researchers. We do have a right to criticize the one who does not keep the identity of the kind of the distinct form or mixes arbitrarily different forms.

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*Student of Guru Shri Durga Charan Ranbir, Rahul Acharya started studying Odissi dance at the age of 4, attracted by a strong passion for the profoundly religious experience of traditional dance in Jagannatha's culture. He also studied Hatha and Raja Yoga at the Satyananda Yoga Vidyalaya, Bihar School of Yoga. Together with his dedication for the traditional Indian culture, Rahul also cultivated his interest for modern science and obtained a Master of Sciences in Biotechnology. Rahul is a Sanskrit scholar, lecturer and writer, researching in Jagannath Culture and contributing articles and essays for the Sacred Dance Guild Journal, USA and for [www.narthaki.com](http://www.narthaki.com). He is a founding member of the Jagannatha Vallabha Vedic Research Center, Puri.*

## A Sketch of Oriya (Indian) Music

*Rasananda Behera*

The earliest writings in India on all subjects are to be found in the Vedas. These are four in number and the earliest of these is the R'g Veda. There is a great deal of controversy about the date when this work was written. The present author subscribes to the theory that dates this Veda to about 6000 years before Christ. Each of these Vedas has an Upa-Veda. The Upa-Vedas are treatises on specific disciplines. One of these Upa-Vedas --- that of the Sama Veda --- is Gandharva-Veda, which is the science and practice of music.

Here it is necessary to clarify a common misconception that many people have today. Many that say it "classical" or art music originated from folk music. This was to a great extent true in Europe, but in India, this was not at all the case. In India, the tradition of the Vedas required the performance of "Yajnas", which were community prayers organized for the common good. The general features of Vedic culture were that it was rural in nature, there were no temples and prayers were for the common good and not for individual gain. In the Yajnas, there was provision for music in the form of "Samagana". This was merely the singing of the hymns of the R'g Veda according to set formulae and accompanied by a type of stringed instrument known as "Vana-Veena" --- in effect, a lyre. At first, Samagana employed only three notes called Udatta, Anudatta and Svarita. The lyre accompanying this would have three strings only, one for each note. Later, the number of notes increased to four, then five (which continued for a very long time), then six and finally seven, with the accompanying lyre having progressively additional strings to match the melody of the song. However, in folk music, which was music outside the sphere of the Yajna, there were seven notes right from the start. Thus folk music and Samagana did not even come from a common origin, nor did Samagana originate from folk music. Folk music was regional and its character varied from region to region but Samagana was fixed everywhere, except for certain well established schools of performance, such as the Taittiriya Shakha, the Shandilya Shakha or the Ahrak Shakha or school of Samagana. And, the art music of India originated from the Samagana. Therefore, it is not true to say that folk music is the mother of classical or art music, as far as Indian music is concerned.

In the Yajna, it was secondary; the worship was primary. In the theatre the story or the play was primary. So in each case the music was fixed in nature and lacked variety. But when both the Yajna and the classical Sanskrit theatre went out of vogue, the musicians had to make their art more flexible and interesting so that people would listen to music on its own merit. Thus musicians began to adapt and employ those parts of regional or folk musical practices that could be conveniently incorporated into their pre-learnt and highly formalized, grammatically close-knit art music. At the same time, they began to imitate the way in which the plot in a drama unfolded: introducing notes one by one and developing melodic patterns little by little. Thus was born improvisation (called "Bhasha" by Matanga and "Alap" or "Badhat" or "Vistar" today) in Indian art music. Today improvisation is the very cornerstone of this music and the chief feature that makes this music perhaps the only music in the world that makes equal demands upon both the head and the heart for both performer and listener.

With the insurgence of Hinduism during the period of the Gupta Empire around the 5th century AC, musicians tried to recapture the essence of the Hindu musical practices of the Yajna and classical theatre times. This resulted in many new experiments in art music, with resultant innovations. New melodic formats or Ragas were created, as also new methods of expression. At the same time, with the upgrading of regional languages by means of Sanskrit grammar, songs began to be written and sung in regional languages. These songs were called Prabandhas. We find details of the music of these times in Nanyadeva's "Bharat-Bhashyam" (9/10th century AC), Someshvara's "Manasollasa" (10/11th century AC) and in the very authoritative and great work on music of the 13th century AC, the "Sangit Ratnakara" of Sharangadeva.

By the 13th century AC, the Muslims had captured key cities and areas in many places in north and east India. At this time, Allauddin Khilji, the Muslim emperor, and his minister Amir Khusrau, who was also a man of letters and a musician, began to systematically convert, by the sword, non-Muslims (especially Hindus), into Islam. In particular, Amir Khusrau tried hard to totally obliterate the Hindu

foundations of the art music of that time. He adopted a variety of methods for this, such as giving Ragas and Talas (rhythmic patterns) Persian names, creating new Ragas based upon Persian melodic motifs, and many more. In Islam, music is prohibited.

It was four hundred years later, in the 16th century AC, that, during the reign of the emperor Akbar, his court musician Tansen tried to bring back the art music of India to its Hindu roots. Tansen was the son of a Brahmin of the name of Makarand Pandey. His christened name was Tansen. He learnt music from both Hindu and Muslim teachers, thus grasping both the traditions. He was an expert vocalist and a Veena (Indian lute) player. At the same time, he was a scholar who studied ancient music texts. Also, and very importantly, he had the ear of the emperor himself, who in fact was his (Tansen's) student. He countermanded the foundations forcefully laid down by Amir Khusrau and returned the music to its traditional Hindu roots to a great extent. We learn all this by studying medieval texts such as Ahobal's "Sangit Parijata" (16th century AC), Harinayak's "Hr'dayaprakash" and "Hr'dayakautuka" (18th century AC) and several others.

From the 16th to the 18th centuries, there were several important changes in the art music of India. New Ragas were created. Many of these were based upon fanciful theories borrowed from Tantra. This was the time when male and female Ragas and Raginis, their pictorial representation in paintings and many other fantastic creations were made. New song forms were also created. One such was the Dhrupad, created around 1550 in the court of Man Singh Tomar of Gwalior in central India. The ancient Prabandha slowly went out of vogue. New instruments came into use, such as the Sarengi, which was previously used only in light music. The Sitar and the Veena, together with the Sarengi began to have sympathetic strings. The former two instruments began to use metal strings, unlike strings made of gut, silk or grass as used earlier. The Tanpura as we know it today came to be used, with metal strings. Metal strings resonated for a much longer period than did the earlier gut, silken or grass strings. As a result, the acoustic

properties of the music changed and hence the nature of Ragas and songs, too.

At the turn of the twentieth century, there was an intellectual and cultural renaissance throughout India. Odissi music is a classical music consisting of all the necessary ingredients common to Hindustani and Karnatic Music, such as rags and tala. Jayadeva' was the first Oriya poet who composed lyrics meant to be sung and thus the words of those Lyrics were musical to start with. In addition he indicated the classical ragas prevailing at the time in which these were to be sung. Prior to this, there was the tradition of chhandas which were simple in musical outline. From the 16th century onwards treatises on music were written or compiled in Orissa. They were Sangitamava Chandrika, Gita Prakasha, Sangita Kalalata and Natya Manorama.

The chaurisha represents the originality of Odissi style. All the thirty-four letters of the Oriya alphabet from 'Ka' to 'Ksha' are used chronologically at the beginning of each line. A special feature of Odissi music is the padi which consists of words to be sung in druta tala (fast beat). Odissi music can be sung to different talas: navatala, nine beats, dashatala (ten beats) or Egar tala (eleven beats). Odissi sangita is a synthesis of four classes of music, i.e. dhruvapada, chitrapada, chitrakala and panchal, described in the above-mentioned texts. The dhruvapada is the first line or lines to be sung repeatedly. The use of art in music is called chitikala. Kavisurya Baladeva Rath, the renowned Oriya poet wrote lyrics which are the best examples of chitrakala. Chitrapada means the arrangement of words in an alliterative style. All these were combined to form the style peculiar to Odissi music. Chhanda (metrical section) contains the essence of Odissi music. The chhandas were composed combining bhava (theme), kala (time), and swara (tune).

Odissi ragas are different from the ragas of Hindustani and Karnataki music. The chief Odissi ragas are Kalyana, Nata, Shree Gowda, Baradi, Panchama, Dhanashri, Karnata, Bhairavee and Shokabaradi. Ragas in Oriya are famous as Megha Malhar and Champu.

## Helping with a Passion

Sabita Panigrahi

*“The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others” – Gandhi*

We all know we are extremely busy in our profession and at home, giving us no free time. We also want a social life and/or family. Nowadays, especially in this modern, fast-paced life, we are most of the time self-centred. Where do we get the time and energy for community? We all are trapped in rat-race and business world where we always evaluate our time with money. But at the same time, I wonder how some of the best organizations function when they have zero employees and everyone is a volunteer.

Many non-profit organizations are operated by either volunteers, paid staff or a combination of both. Let us discuss organizations which are completely operated by volunteers. A non-profit organization is a registered or non-registered constituted organization whose objective is to support or engage activities of community interest such as the environment, humanitarian aid, arts, culture, charities, health care, sports or other endeavours.

The main structure of this type of organization is volunteers. Among volunteers, some are willing to take leadership roles, some take active roles and some volunteer occasionally. However, they are all willing to work and take responsibility of the organization. Volunteers are ordinary people, inspired to do extraordinary things.

A community organization depends on the volunteer leaders. Unlike leaders of corporate organizations, they are not salaried employees. They take more responsibilities and sacrifice their personal time and money for the benefit of the organization – not because they have lot of free time or lot of money but because they have a passion to serve the community. They do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.

Those leaders have to have special qualities such as being unbiased, resistant to criticism, listening to people, ethical, disciplined, charismatic, polite, humble and tolerant. They must recognize the ability in volunteers of the community and they must love people and appreciate diversity. Regardless of the goal – whether to promote and preserve arts, language and heritage or to organize socio-cultural events to promote dance, drama, music, heritage and tradition or to undertake charity work, rehabilitation projects – leaders must develop and nurture community spirit. Leaders have a responsibility to its volunteers to

recognize their talents as well as their dignity as human beings. It is very crucial for leaders that the volunteers are made to feel important and part of the big picture. They must not be arrogant, dictatorial or bossy. Leaders should help inspire another generation of volunteers. Organizations always need incoming people. The current organisers or leaders must always build new leaders who are willing to work for the community, learn new skills and love the society.

General volunteers learn from their leaders. They put forward their views and help leaders for the benefit of the organization. Like leaders, they also have the passion and time commitment for the organization. Volunteers appreciate their leaders' time, energy and personal sacrifice. They listen to the leaders logically. All of them share the responsibilities on a rotation basis. All their hours of work really are invaluable to the community. It can be disappointing if everyone does not carry an equal load of responsibilities. Like volunteer leaders, general volunteers should be reliable, should be aware of their duties. They should communicate openly and clarify instructions. They should demonstrate initiative, strive for accuracy and manage time effectively. They should also be willing to accept suggestions for improvement.

In many cases, volunteering becomes a family affair. When a whole family volunteers for community service, it creates a bonding experience among family members. They gain a shared sense of satisfaction and accomplishment from giving service to the community. Children who volunteer become adults who volunteer. Children become more responsible. It definitely teaches the value of service and involvement in the community towards a set of goals.

It is frustrating for the organization for volunteers' lack of commitment, deliverables and expectation. Ironically, lazy volunteers with little to no enthusiasm and commitment expect a lot from the active volunteers. Some are extremely difficult to work with. They are not willing to follow any directions. Some think they don't have talents to contribute. Some individuals work infrequently only from their comfort zone. Some even blame the organization, while the organization consists of them only.



No matter what, society and people co-depend on each other. Volunteering is so pervasive it's invisible. Sometimes we take it for granted all the things that have been pioneered by concerned, active volunteers in our community or society where they give their time, energy and skills freely to maintain a vital and vigorous organization. Even if we get carried away into rat-race of life in this busy world, I feel that if we want, we can definitely give a helping hand to the society. There's never a right time to start. Finding new interests and hobbies through volunteering for the society can be rewarding and energizing. It reminds me of Mahatma Gandhiji's saying "We must become the change we want to see". He also once said, "Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is most important that you do". Volunteering is an expression of passion and a means through which individuals can make a difference. It is a way of bringing people together across generations and abilities towards a common goal. We must all learn to

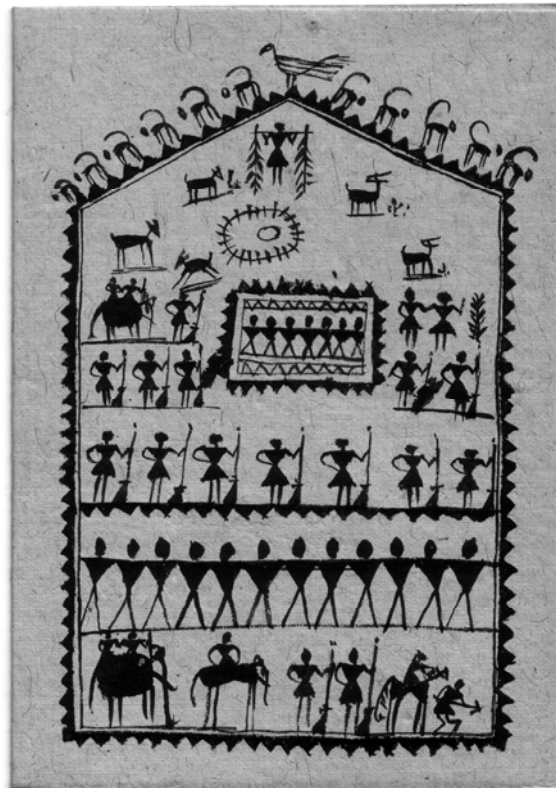
work not just for our own self and family, but for the benefits of society.

Each year, Canada pays special tribute to volunteers for their outstanding contributions who dedicate their time and energy to the community for longer period of time on various worth while causes like health care, charity, sports, environment, preserving culture and enhancing cultural awareness. Volunteerism is the voice of the people put into action. These actions shape and mould the present into a future of which we can all be proud. I salute all past, present and future volunteers for their commitment and loyalty towards the community. I salute all past, present and future volunteer leaders for their passion and enthusiasm and for their invaluable time and effort for the betterment of the community whose fruits we enjoy.

*"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless."*

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## Charity

*Mohammed Yussouff*

Charity has many forms, motivations, modes, purposes, implications, consequences etc. for both the givers and the recipients. The most common form is the donation of money to individuals or organizations. Direct donation of money to individuals can be sometimes very effective, but also sometimes quite frustrating. For example, if you see a family with a bunch of hungry children and give money for their food to their father, he may feed them or use the money to buy drinks for himself. Donating money through charitable institutions can entail losses of 20 to 80 percent due to administrative and logistical expenses, mismanagement, thefts etc. There are other forms of charity where you help the needy to start activities which can keep them active and lead to better living. Whatever form it takes, the act of charity is very satisfying and sometimes the feel good thing also brings you tax deductions.

Perhaps you are thinking that I am trying to write an essay about charity. You are right. But the topic is old and a lot of things have been said and written about it. I was recently drawn to it by my own experience about one aspect of charity. Have you ever asked yourself what is the ultimate result of charity on the society as a whole? The following true story will hopefully provide one possible answer to that question.

My father was a small landlord in a village in Orissa that has about 90% Hindu and 10% Muslim population. There were 2 Muslim landlords and 9 Hindu landlords. These people basically ran the affairs of the village through an informal council called the Panchayat. Villagers preferred to deal with the Panchayat before taking more serious cases to the police and the courts. The time I am referring to was before India gained independence. My father was a follower of Mahatma Gandhi and donated more than half of our land to the poor people. Normally I would have been proud of that action but it made us quite poor when we finally migrated to the city. Charity is one of the five pillars of our religion but it is also forbidden to donate so much that you become poor. However, this story is about a period prior to our decline in fortune.

There was a young Brahmin whose last name was Senapati. He was a handsome young man who had inherited some cultivated land and a small garden around his house. But he was an orphan at an early

age and worse still, he had no relatives at all. In another nearby village lived a beautiful young girl named Radha whose only family was her old father. She had no other relatives and not much wealth. Some people suggested that Radha was a good match for young Senapati. They got married. Tragically, her father died after a few months of her marriage. The most tragic event was the death of Mr. Senapati after two years. They had no children.

Now the events took the predictable course. A young widow, who cannot remarry because of Hindu customs, had no one to look after her. But she was not poor. So she hired an old lady as a live-in companion. Her neighbors started grabbing her cultivated land and her garden slowly but methodically. She complained to the Panchayat but the intruders showed some old and perhaps forged documents to justify their claims. The same thing happened after a few months. After one year, Radha Senapati came back to the Panchayat to report the encroachment involving about 40 % of her land.

My father was feeling helpless in the Panchayat because others didn't care much about this lonely lady. Also, there was the legal problem that the transfer of title to Radha had not been completed. The Panchayat accepted the forged documents. Any challenge must go to the police and the courts. I was about eight years old and like many other villagers, I also liked watching the Panchayat meetings. I vividly remember that moment when my father suddenly got up and said the following:

“Oh my brothers and sisters of this village, I, Haji Fakhruddin, have decided to make an announcement. Today, here and now, before all of you as my witness, I am adopting Radha Senapati as my daughter. I request all those who have encroached her land to please move back their boundaries and restore the original boundaries. I intend to take all the action necessary to restore her land. I will protect her person and her property.”

Everyone in the village was stunned and speechless. Never in the history of the tradition oriented village had a Muslim adopted a Hindu. One group of villagers chanted in support of this move while another group just remained silent. But everyone admired the courage and charity on the part of my father. This lady did not need money or other

material support in charity. But my father gave her a new life in charity.

Next morning, Ms. Senapati came to our house and prostrated herself at the feet of my father crying uncontrollably. My mother lifted her up and said “This is not a time to cry, my daughter.” Ma also gave her a simple Sari as a present. She controlled herself and said “Ma, these are my tears of joy. Till yesterday, I had no one. Today I have a father, a mother and a little brother. You have given me in charity a very precious gift.”

Within days her property was restored and the harassments stopped. My father made the legally required title transfers to Ms. Radha Senapati.

I visited my new sister once in a while carrying fresh vegetables and fruits. She wouldn't let me go until I finished the sweets and milk she always kept for me. Then she would hold my hand and take me through her garden, and we plucked mangoes, guava and other seasonal fruits. I still remember the smile on the happy face of my beautiful tall sister.

The story does not really end there. That act of charity was a charity from heart that touched everyone. There was harmony and good feeling all around in the village. Even now, when I pay a visit to the village, I hear praise for my father and his action.

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## Live Well & Leave Life Wealthy

*Nilmani Nayak*

You have dreams and goals for your future and for future of your family. To achieve all these, for sure you choose different ways to make money. You can spend all towards achieving your goal and maintaining your life style or save it. The most prudent way is if you can do both, spend money to enjoy life and save it smartly & intelligently.

Money is limited resource, yet there are unlimited ways to spend it. Here comes the smartness if you save it in a plan what ever may be the constraints, invest it, and leverage it to acquire more assets to make more money. In this act of financial balancing you will find in the society one person earning same amount of money is better off than another person. The answer is simple; the better off person has used his money to work hard for him to make more money than himself just working hard.

Different spending choices and saving plans lead to very different results. Only small percentages of individuals become millionaires and billionaires and rest of the population struggle when they retire or get disabled or get serious illness. This is not some thing unknown but gets realized very late by many or misunderstood at the beginning. To ensure you meet your goals for future financial security and get protection for you and for your loved ones from the unknown and uncertain future you need to plan. If you fail to plan to day you may have to pay dearly later or it may be too late. You can see many senior people working in McDonald or Wall mart beyond their retirement with minimum wage. Each of these individuals has their own story. One might have been sufferer of a serious disease like cancer, heart attack and used all his savings for treatment, another might have had couple of years of disability with less income but spent on living and educating kids , the story goes on.

There are solutions for different needs and the risks can be controlled or minimized at a fraction of the cost which you or your family may have to pay later if some thing serious happens. Are you prepared for?

You will agree that quality of life is directly linked to personal assets. Statistics about personal assets are frightening in US as well as in Canada. In USA there are 25 million baby boomers whose net worth (assets owned less liabilities/debts) is either negative or less than \$1000/-These baby boomers are reaching to their late fifties or early sixties with no

money or little money to take care of their old age. With modern medicine and health care living after retirement could be a long way who knows may be 25 to 30 years.

As old age is not on any young person's mental horizon, young people do not worry about it. There is an inbuilt unwillingness in every one to think of old age in any detail. What will happen if the person becomes seriously ill or disabled or bed ridden for years and requires special care does not concern most people. Some people have false comfort that their employer or Government would take care. But those supports are either inadequate or not available depending on the situation. The cost of spending retired life in a decent retirement or a nursing home is beyond reach unless a person has a proper long-term care plan, which are of good value when it is put in place early.

Nothing great happens or works well without planning. To plan your life with money, it is a good idea to go for the balancing act and manage your money with professional expertise with the help of professionals.

During our parents and grandparents' days, life was easier and finances were simpler... People stayed in one job for a lifetime, you dealt with one bank, maybe stayed in a joint family; there was limited choice of financial products. Today, with two-income families, every changing tax laws, complex family units, more money required for kids education and early retirement, there are increasingly complex decisions to make in managing finances effectively. It is also important to note that people live longer now than few decades back and the chances of likely hood of getting disabled or getting serious illness such as cancer, heart disease are higher, with lesser family support it is important to get prepared for such eventualities. You are not going to have retirements like your parents' had. You'll likely to live longer and healthier which means more years to enjoy life. More years to fund your retirement as well.

The good news is that there is solution for each and every problem, so when we plan for every thing why should not we plan for our future for such uncontrollable events by minimizing the risks. If it is not planned today which may cost pennies when time comes it may have to be paid in dollars or maybe it is

beyond reach or too late. People with a financial plan worry less and save more.

A financial plan will help you to know where your money is going, understand where the money will come from in future for your family's changing needs, Prepare for different stages of your life, maximize your retirement savings, protect your hard-earned money against the unexpected and manage your taxes.

The process of financial planning is to understand your personal situation by assessing where you are today, defining short and long term goals, creating your plan then implementing strategies to reach those goals which are periodically monitored and reviewed to check on the progress towards reaching your goal. The key elements of financial planning are investment planning, retirement planning, estate planning, and taxation planning and money management

Out of many functional key areas of financial planning, of late estate planning is gaining importance. Though it is death related, it is not merely a death issue. An estate plan has objectives that span both life time and death as well.

In recent years retiring people have observed that they are living longer, living with various illnesses and outliving their savings. As a result of which people approaching retirement have three major concerns.

- 1) Have enough money to live on?
- 2) How much the tax to be paid on death on your estate except on few assets?
- 3) From where the money will come? (The Tax man is not leaving you though you are in the grave)

If you are not comfortable to discuss on the issue before and plan then die, your loved ones have to be forced to deal with the events that follow death. Many die suddenly, unexpectedly. These people will not have even a basic will in place to guide their survivors as what is to be done with your property or your mortal remains how to pay the tax on the final tax return of the deceased. Pause to think for a while when you are not around, do you want your loved ones when they are surviving the loss of a loved one which is difficult enough still to undergo the additional emotional, financial and intellectual stress by your lack of planning in addition to your loss? While you are alive and sound mind and body, a professional can help you to make a plan which is very much under your control, with the consultation of your family members. This is called estate planning, which also includes Will, Living Will and Power of Attorney.

The objectives of estate planning when you are living are: Income tax management at optimum tax cost with growth of the estate, shifting investment allocation so that appropriate assets are passed to the survivors, looking in to replacement income. Most important objective of planning is to attain the peace of mind and secondly not to leave any messy problems behind for your loved ones.

The objectives of estate planning when you are not around are: Managing income tax, avoiding or minimizing family disputes and providing income streams for needs of the survivors.

The most important one is to manage death taxes. You may assume that whatever property you are leaving will pass to the heirs. That may not be case as you may have substantial tax liability which you may not be aware of. The instant before you die your assets are deemed to have been sold at fair market value and tax is payable. If you made a capital gain the taxman is there to take his part and not going away until their liabilities are cleared.

Here's the problem: Registered retirement Saving Plans (RRSPs), Registered retirement Income Funds (RRIFs) and other registered plans are main source of retirement income for many Canadians, but what happens to the unused registered funds when you die? Registered funds can be passed to your spouse tax free when you die. After the surviving spouse or if you pass these to some one else, these will be taxed at your death. Similarly there are other assets except the exempt category will be taxed This means that a significant portion will be lost to tax making the Tax man as a partner of your legacy and will have negative impact on the size of your estate.

I will give you few examples of estate settlements. The king of pop Elvis had an estate of \$10,165,434/- but after settlement cost of \$7,374,635 only \$2,790,799 was left for the beneficiary with shrinkage of 73%.

In case of William E. Boeing the founder of Boeing Airplane company the executor found it necessary to petition the court for permission to sell the securities to pay the tax and settlement costs for 10,589,748 leaving net estate of \$ 11,796,410 out of total estate valued at \$ 22,386,158. There are number of Canadian cases as well.

Tax men don't leave army generals, chief justices even presidents. You can see in daily news paper ads on estate sale. Do you want to be in that category one day?

What are your options? There are number of ways to ensure that sufficient funds are available to pay this future tax liability.

- Setting aside money today
- Having the executor of your estate borrow the funds needed to pay the tax man
- Selling some of your registered funds
- Purchasing a permanent life insurance policy

What is the best alternative?

To liquidate the assets at that point of time is not a right decision and also to borrow from a bank .The life insurance is the best option out of the above, which ensures that funds are available tax free to pay the tax liability. It also helps to preserve the estate, increasing the benefits to your heirs passing the maximum wealth to the next generation.

If you plan today insurance lowers the cost of solving this problem in the future.

If you are in good health & opt for a low cost solution which means you pay in pennies for top dollars. The growth in the tax-sheltered plan will be better than any other investment vehicles. The money in the plan is creditor proof and loan can be availed at a lower interest when needed during your lifetime.

The amount is certain as one day you would die and insurance company will pay. This is another way of enhanced wealth creation and passing to next generation whom you love.

You may have avoided thinking about your finances and financial planning until now, but for financial security for you and your family it is good to plan today. A financial plan is not about getting rich...it's about doing more with what you have.

Planning ahead will benefit you and your family. Secondly people don't like to acknowledge and confront their mortality. Thirdly they don't realize the magnitude of the problems that may arise during the last days of life today when everything looks good.

Nobody should have an unplanned life or death. Is it not a feel good situation when you plan? When you plan, your wishes will be implemented the way you want to avoid confusion; frustration, wasted time and money while you are alive and passing maximum wealth to the next generation, your loved ones.

So why not plan today have control on life, feel good and have peace of mind forever.

Live well and die wealthy.

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*Nilmani Nayak, MBA PFP, a former banker, is currently a Financial Advisor with Sun Life Financial, in Toronto.*





# The Rural Mathematics Talent Search (RMTS): A Dream Come True

Sandip K. Dasverma

The Rural Mathematics Talent Search is a test conducted once a year among the sixth grade students of rural Orissa, Government and Govt aided schools. i.e. school is in an NAC area( Notified Area Council) are excluded. So are private schools, like the ubiquitous Saraswati Sishu Mandir. RMTS is trying to reach out and rescue the students from the most vulnerable section of the society, who go to the Govt primary & secondary schools.

It was started in 2003 by Dr. Swadheenananda Pattanayak of IMA (Institute of Mathematics and Applications, BBSR) to net the talents in Mathematics before they wither away. He believed and does believe even today that but for this test, the rural mathematical talents of Orissa, were withering away before they get a chance of flowering. His continuous association with Orissa Math Olympiad test and team, which was totally urban in its contestants and winners, thus convinced him. Orissa being 90% rural, Dr. Pattanayak theorized that Orissa is loosing out 90% talents. The first 4 years the exam was conducted in Sept/October period. Due repeated disruptions of flood, in 2007, it was shifted to November. At his request I have been associated with RMTS from day one.

The mass exodus of talent in India to applied sciences and Engineering in last 3 decades was worrying the Indian establishment. They thus grabbed this opportunity to unearth the additional mathematical talent and to mentor and nudge them to pure sciences. Government of India's department of Atomic Energy thus has been funding four to six, one week long camps for the selected RMTS scholars.

Originally started with 30 scholarships in the name of my father Last Kamala Pada Das in 2003, the scholarships once awarded are given out for 5 years, class 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, and are worth Rs. 1500/year.

A small number of friends in India have donated scholarships to complement this effort, through my good friend, Subhas Choudhury's Vikas Educational & Charitable Trust (VECT), BBSR.

A large section of Non Resident Oriyas have later joined, with 5 years commitment of scholarships, increasing number of scholarships. The effort is coordinated by SEEDS (Sustainable Economic and Educational Development Society) since 2005, when I joined SEEDS. VECT has actively helped SEEDS to administer the scholarships.

The results have been simply spectacular. The main challenge now is how to expand it further, without loosing in quality, which will be discussed later.

**Past:** The scholarships and participants will tell the story of the spectacular expansion.

Year	Participants	Scholarships	Districts	Blocks
2003	3700	30*	14	N/A
2004	1400	100	10	N/A
2005	4700	165	25	81
2006	20000	201	30	170
2007	19000 30000	201	30	200
2008	estimated	201	30	314 est.

\* additional scholarships were donated by individuals via VECT.

The spectacular take off of the program has been possible due to help from friends in bureaucracy and academia. The connecting of one person being attempted for last few years is yielding results. Dr. Pattanayak stature as a simple Gandhian popular teacher has helped tremendously. His students and ex-students largely man these camps. The current Whose Who in Math of Orissa, like ex-Vice Chancellor Dr. G. N. Das, Ex-Prof of IIT, Kanpur, Dr. P. C. Das are his active collaborators.

**Present:**

The current year financial burden is about Rs. 12.75 lakhs or about \$31 K/year for 850 scholarships. And we need about 35 new donors every year donating \$225 per year.

One kid, Himalaya Senapati, who stood 2<sup>nd</sup> in the pioneer 2003 batch, not only got selected in the Orissa team for math Olympiad, but ultimately represented India in the international Astronomical Society competition. He went on to win a silver medal, an enormous and astoundingly creditable effort, besides being 1<sup>st</sup> of its kind. Many Fields Medal (Mathematics Nobel prize) winners, like Dr. Pearlman, are in the list of winners of this competition.

With transfer of IMA to its new campus this year (June 15, 2008), the hassle of holding camps will come down. Additionally, regional camps are starting to be held. One was successfully held this year at Jharsuguda.

**Future:**

We have reached a stage where next year the scholarship numbers will go up to 1000 per year in 2009. This means about 15 lakh in scholarships and about 1.5 lakhs in admin costs. This is over and above the camp costs, which will be 15 lakhs an year.

In future camps in other centers of excellence of Orissa are envisioned, like camps in NIT, Rourkela. We envision this year to have a RMTS test center in each of 314 blocks and try to mobilize 100 students per center.

Two major dreams of the team are:

1. Quantity: Increasing the size of the annual crop to 2000 students from the current 200, i.e. a tenfold expansion, which is a big challenge administratively and academically, even if the required money can be raised easily through CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) aids. It is envisioned to move up in several steps to this goal.

2. Quality: To raise a bunch of dedicated volunteer mathematicians who will carry on this massive project in future, which will need at least one trainer in all 30 districts and more in the bigger districts with 10 or more blocks. Where do we get them?

a. Dr. Patnaik's dream is to take in about 8 doctoral students from this year on, who will teach in RMTS camps, like the teaching assistants in the US Universities.

b. He also envisions to take in as a student researcher one of the primary school teachers each year, who again will get the stipend for the RMTS camp work and will also be given opportunity to complete Ph.D, at IMA, as a carrot to the myriads of primary school teachers to get involved, who are cooperating and making RMTS, successful.

c. Dr. Patnaik envisions now to give hand outs to students, so they can take open book home practice tests and come back ready for the next camp. These questions will keep the kids

interested and in touch, the six months between camps.

d. All future math camps, will have a regular day of visit to the nearby IOP (Institute of Physics), to fire up the kid's imaginations. One ex-Math Olympiad camp (not RMTS Camp) attendee got so fired up, he went on to study Physics in Fergusson College, Pune. He recently got a Rhodes scholarship for Ph. D in Physics at Cambridge U. of UK.

e. Attempts are being made to get other applied science stalwarts & eminent Engineers to visit the Mathematics camps and speak to the kids. Last year, brilliant public minded administrator Bishnupada Sethi, IAS visited the camp and spent time with the kids. This year Padmashree Gopal Mitra, an eminent Engineer & present Head of the IIT, BBSR extension, visited the camp and gave away the scholarships and interacted with the students and their teachers. Other scholars are being brought in to the camp, more recently, like Dr. Gyana Moharana of IOP.

With NISER, BBSR established, we believe RMTS scholars will get opportunity to get in there and continue to Ph. D in basic sciences and Mathematics, per the grand plan.

**Conclusion:**

Mathematics is the language of all sciences. To think of a technological and scientific future for our state Orissa, it is necessary that the foundation for the mathematics is properly laid. RMTS has been a visionary project nudging our state in this direction. The first batch of students selected in 2003 has appeared in class 10 exam this year. In two years 2003 batch RMTS scholars will get out of plus 2, and we will have a chance to test our theory. In another 4 years we will know if the dream will fully be realized. The early signs are positive.

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*Sandip Dasverma is the Treasurer of the Orissa Society of America. He is actively interested and involved in the development of rural Orissa.*



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## A Journey Back on the Memory Lane

*Ghanashyam Mishra*

Everyone close to my age talks about the “Good Old Days”. But there is nothing wrong in reminiscing the difficult days that prepared us for a better and successful future. As I stroll through my memory packed journey half a century ago, it seems like a dream. A dream that had a good ending for a teenager from the impoverished rural Orissa of the 1950’s. It was the summer of 1957. I had left Puri College after completing I.Sc. In those days, there were only three institutions of higher education in Science, Engineering or Medicine in Orissa. The choices were studying B.Sc. at Ravenshaw College, Medicine at SCB Medical College or pursue Engineering at the newly opened Burla Engineering College. No matter what path I would follow, the costs were prohibitive. My expense at Puri was less than ten rupees a month. As a poor Brahmin boy, I lived as a “Bidyarthi” at Bada Akhada Math. I was a kitchen help in exchange of free room and board. But now, I was facing my journey to the unknown. By the last week of June, I had letter of acceptance from Jadavpur Engineering College, Calcutta; from the College of Mining and Metallurgy, Banaras Hindu University (BHU); and from SCB Medical College. I made a visit to the medical college just to pacify my mother. She wanted me to stay closer to home than traveling 300 miles to Calcutta or 700 miles to BHU. After a guided tour of the gross anatomy lab, I got less enthusiastic of becoming a doctor. On my return, I gave all kinds of excuses to my mother. “I will not get enough loan stipend for 5 years of studies to be a doctor, but I can be an engineer in 4 years”, I explained. The most compelling argument was the Govt. Of Orissa’s loans of Rs.1000 per year for students studying engineering out side the state.

I made the decision to attend BHU. The main question was how to get enough resources to manage three to four months, before the loan stipend application processed, and funds remitted to BHU. Thanks to the BHU Oriya Students Association, students from Orissa could delay payments of tuition and hostel rents, until the students received their stipends. With this partial help, I still needed at least Rs. 400 for travel, books, and mess bills for the first four months. My passbook balance was about sixty rupees, the money I saved from my ten rupees a month Brahmin Samiti Scholarship. Throughout my high school and college days, I never asked for any

help from my father. I knew he had very little cash. A few years before, he borrowed some money from the village land lord for my brother’s medical expenses. He was having tough time to keep up with the interest payments. He decided to sell two acres of our agricultural land in Kujang to be loan free. The other reason was that he was getting too old to do planting and harvesting in a plot of land fifteen miles away from our village. The land was good for paddy crop. My father was a farmer, and the land was very precious to him. Besides, this land was given to his grandfather by the Maharaja of Kujang to perform priestly duties. A week before my departure to BHU, my father sold the land, repaid his loans, and gave me a generous gift of Rs. 100 for my college expenses. That was a very big sacrifice for a small farmer to part with his land in order to educate his son. My deep regrets are that my parents did not survive long enough to see their sacrifices paid off beyond their imagination.

In the first week of July, 1957, I packed my little tin box for my journey to the future. According to the village customs, I walked to the nearest bus stop in the early hours of dawn, unseen by any person in the village. The first Cuttack bound bus did not come until day break. I was wearing a dhoti, a full sleeve shirt and was barefoot. In the tin box, I was carrying a set of change of clothes, a small cotton towel, safety razor set, and some flat rice and puffed rice. My mother always insisted on carrying some light snack while traveling. A bundle of paper money containing Rs. 160 was tied to the corner of my dhoti, and was secured carefully around my waist. My loose shirt covered the slight bulge. My middle brother (Bhaina) working in Calcutta, wrote me a long letter advising of the dangers of the pick-pockets, and other strangers traveling in buses and trains. His letter had detailed directions to find him at his work place. “Sorry Ghanashyam, I can not go to Howrah Station to meet you,” he wrote. “The Puri Howrah passenger train arrives at an odd time. I have to cook for the babus, you walk across the Howrah Bridge, and take a tram (street car) coming to Tollygunge. After you pass the Tollygunge Market, get down, and ask for Chunni Bhaduri’s Grocery Store. You can not miss. It is on the main road. Next day, one of our mess babus will take you to Chowrangee to buy all your college clothes”.

My brother was the cook for about three dozen employees of Mr. Bhaduri's grocery stores. Bhaina was given free room and board and Rs.30 per month to cook two meals a day, seven days a week in this workers' dormitory. He was married a couple of years before, but our sister-in-law was at home in our village. In the 1950's, dozens of young men from my village worked as cooks, gardeners and house-hold servants in Calcutta to support their families. Their young wives were left behind to take care of their in-laws or worked as farm laborers. The young men could get a week or two weeks leave during the year to visit their spouses and families.

After arriving at Cuttack, I walked to the rail station about a quarter of mile from the bus stand. The midday Sun was very hot and the air was humid. I walked on the edge of the road on the hot sand avoiding the semi melting black top road surface. At the station, I stood in the line, and got a third class train ticket to Howrah. On the platform, there were hundreds of passengers waiting for the Howrah bound train. There were hawkers and vendors selling snacks, tea, fruits, pens and knives. I had a quick snack of fried vegetables and drank a glass of water. That would be my entire meal for the rest of my travel. As the train approached, the pushing and shoving crowd rushed to the edge of the platform. Red-shirted coolies got hold of the door handles and were inside the train, before it stopped. In the middle of this stampede, I was pushed in to the train compartment. There was no place to sit. I climbed to a corner of the luggage rack with my tin box. That would be my seat for the rest of my trip. After fifteen minutes or so that felt like eternity in the crowded suffocating atmosphere, the train started moving. All I could hear was the deafening train whistle and the whoosh, whoosh noise of the steam engine blowing thick black smoke laden with coal particles. The train crossed over Mahanadi and Birupa River Bridges, and raced through the coastal plains of Orissa and Bengal. The passenger train made a stop at each rail station through its 254 miles of journey. I might have closed my eyes for a few minutes, but no one could sleep amidst the chaotic mess in a third class compartment.

Early next morning, the train arrived at Howrah Station. After the mass exodus from the platform, I stepped outside. The famous Howrah Bridge, the longest suspension bridge in India, jumped right in front of my eyes. I have heard about the bridge being

an engineering marvel, and I felt lucky to see it in my own eyes. I entered a Tollygunge bound tram as directed by my brother. The pages of the history book on British occupation of India flashed through my mind as the street car rumbled past dozens of historical monuments of the British era. "The next stop Tollygunge Market", the conductor shouted. I got out, and located Chunni Bhaduri's grocery store. One of the store clerks was delighted to see me. "Tumi Thakur Da's brother", he talked in half Bengalee and half English. "Thakur Da always talks about you that someday, you will be an engineer. You do not have to be a cook to make a living. Your Dada, our Thakur Da, is a very good man. We all like him". He led me to the mess hall, about 500 feet walk from the main road via a narrow lane. Bhaina greeted me with a tearful embrace. We had not seen each other for more than a year. After a late breakfast, I rested over a reed mat on one corner of the kitchen floor. I slept for several hours. At about 2 PM, after all the babus finished their mid-day meals, Bhaina woke me up. I had a nice lunch of rice, dal, and fish curry. Bhaina asked me to make a list of my minimum needs. There was no time to waste. I had to leave the next day to Banaras. In addition to his savings of two months salary, the mess babus had raised a donation of another sixty rupees to help Thakur Da's brother. It was a grand gesture of kindness, since it would have taken two more months to raise that sum. "Now you get ready, Deben Da has agreed to take you shopping for your college clothes to the Chowrangee market." he told me. "I have to go to the vegetable market to get ready for the evening meals". My brother had to work from 6 AM to 10 PM, seven days a week to earn one Rupee a day. During Durga Puja, he received a new dhoti and a shirt. Now I was more determined to study hard and help my family.

In the afternoon, Deben Da and I went by tram to the Esplanade shopping area. I bought two pairs of ready made pants, two shirts, a pair of shoes, and two sets of under wears and undershirts. Next, we went to the bedding store, where I purchased a small duree(a woven throw rug that can cover a twin bed), a pair of bed sheets and a small pillow. I wanted to buy a hold-all to carry all the bedding material like I have seen people carrying in the trains. Deben Da said it was a waste of money. "You can roll and tie all your bedding material with a piece of hemp rope. There is no use of spending another twenty rupees just for the show", he advised. "The money you save will be

useful to buy books and supplies at BHU". I did not argue. His logic was sound, and we have spent almost Rs. 75 out of the hundred rupees my brother gave me. Bhaina was very satisfied. He knew Deben Da was a careful shopper. He handed over to me the remaining money to add the the sum I brought from home. I calculated that I would have almost RS.180 with me after my travel expenses to Banaras. That could be enough to manage three months, before I would receive my loan stipend.

I ate another hearty meal, and tried to sleep. After the evening meals were served, the mess room was used as a bed room. Several grocery store workers, and my brother slept on small woven rope cots stored in the corner of the room. The cots were fitted with two T-frames on each ends to tie mosquito nets. That night in early July was very hot and humid. The Monsoons had started, but the rains were intermittent. Lots of daily laborers were sleeping out side on the foot path, which was cooler than inside. My brother decided that we should take our cots out side and sleep there. There was a gentle breeze. But a constant noise of vehicles on the main road and never ending barking of stray dogs kept me awake most of the night. Now, five decades later, no one will believe that I slept on a side walk in the city of Calcutta, where Mother Teresa served all her life to help millions on the foot paths of the City of Joy. But it is true.

Next day, I was refreshed, rested and had a determined state of mind. I felt like I was in the base camp to make an assault on Mount Everest. Bhaina asked me to go to Kalighat for a prayer and worship to Mother Kali, before starting my next phase of the journey to Banaras. No. he could not accompany me. He had to work. I took the tram and found my way to the famous Kali temple. Goddess Kali is the deity who protects the humanity from the oppressors and evil doers. I passed through the crowded streets full of devotees, holy men, and beggars. I sprinkled some holy water from the muddy Hoogly River on my head, prostrated in front of Kali Mata and returned back to my brother's mess hall. I got ready to return to Howrah station to catch the Varanasi Cantonment Express. It was little bit scary to get ready for the travel. For the first time in my life, I had to dress like a babu or a student. I wore slacks, inserted my shirt, and put on my shoes. My brother had stitched a small inside pocket next to my waist to carry paper money safely. I did not have a full length mirror to see how

awkward I looked in my readymade outfit. In the 1950s and 1960s, the rich kids bought fabric of their choice, and got their pants and shirts made by the tailor. I only hoped the clothes to survive my sixteen hours of train travel.

It was about 2 PM in the afternoon. The Varanasi Express pulled next to the platform. Luckily, the crowd was less. I got in to the third class compartment and stretched my bed on the overhead luggage rack. Most of the overnight passengers were doing the same thing, reserving a space to sleep. My brother returned quickly after I got in to the train. The train started in time. The big Canadian steam engine pulling almost half a mile long train raced past factories, meadows, small and big villages on the Lower Gangetic Plain. I sat and looked through the window the names of cities and towns in West Bengal and Bihar that I knew through the history and geography books. I slept most of the night clutching to my little tin box. By the day break, the train was whistling past a big stretch of farm land in Western Bihar. After Mugalsarai station, the train passed over the huge Malaviya Bridge over the River Ganges. I was aware that my destination was near. All through my journey, I had not spoken to anyone. My speaking abilities in Hindi were poor, and my English vocabulary was limited. At the Varanasi station, I bargained successfully with a rickshaw puller to take me to my hostel for twelve annas. The rickshaw puller agreed with the condition that he would take another passenger. I did not object. He found a co-passenger part of the way.

At the University Gate, I was told that classes at BHU have been suspended for two weeks because of an epidemic of Asiatic Flu. But the hostels are open, if the students chose to stay. My choice was very clear. I was not returning back to Orissa just for two weeks. I was glad to be at my destination safely. At Dhanrajgiri Hostel, I went to our Warden's office to register for my room. The warden asked me if I would like to share a room with another student from Orissa. Needless to say I was extremely delighted. The peon showed me my room, and I felt I was in Heaven, when I talked to my room mate Kulamani Sahu in Oriya. Kulamani came from a village only eight miles away from mine. He attended a different high school, and passed I.Sc from the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. I felt at home, when I found four other freshmen from and couple of senior students from Orissa.



Our dormitory Dhanrajgiri Hostel housed about 350 students. The freshmen and the sophomores were in double rooms, and the upperclassmen were assigned single rooms. The hostel was a double storied building with an enclosed compound. Four wings of the building faced each other forming a perfect square. Each floor had wide corridors facing the compound and a central flower garden. The canteen, mess halls, lavatories and shower stalls were located on the back about 150 yards away. The discipline in the hostel was as stringent as in a military camp. There was fixed time for serving meals. The main entrance was locked after midnight. The main gate of the BHU campus was guarded by the proctor's office. Students entering the campus after 9.30 PM had to take special permission slips from their hostel wardens for late entry.

BHU founded by Late Freedom Fighter Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, was established in 1916. The engineering College was started in 1919. The magnificent campus located on the banks of River Ganges consisted of dozens of colleges offering degrees in Science, Engineering, Medicine, Music, Fine Arts, Sanskrit Literature and Indian Vedantic Philosophy. The physical setting of the colleges followed foot prints of famous universities like Cambridge and Oxford. Surrounded by a 12 feet high wall, BHU was and still is a self contained city of over twelve thousand students, faculty members, and supporting staff. Each college had its sports field, and student hostel. The major semi-circular and radial roads tree lined with Mango and Mimosa trees. The majestic Viswanath Temple built by the Birla family, provides a cool sanctuary from the rigors of classroom instructions. The two weeks of delay, gave me time to get familiar with the campus, and adjust to the new surroundings. I was very shy and insecure. I made a few friends, improved my language skills for a passable conversation in Hindi with the mess servants. But I could not get rid of my low self esteem. I always felt inferior to my classmates, who were affluent, spoke better English, and most of all had better clothes.

There was no time to brood over my personal difficulties, after the classes started. Our classes started at 8 AM, there was an hour of lunch break, and then more classes, laboratory work or workshops until 5 PM. The only relaxing time was on Sundays. Our mess halls provided four meals a day for less than fifty rupees a month. For the first time in my life I was well-fed. Within a couple of months, I added a few pounds to my scrawny five feet six inches frame. My clavicle bones were no longer protruding.

Over the next few months, my financial hardship continued, until I received the first installment of my loan stipend and my thirty rupees a month merit scholarship from Utkal University. Half a century ago, the total cost of my Engineering Education was about Rs.7000. It was a formidable sum for most of the Oriya families then. At present, estimated cost for a four year engineering college in India exceeds Rs.2 Lakhs. Higher education in engineering, medicine or management is still a dream for most Oriya students. I am thankful to the Government of Orissa and our political leaders of the time to legislate a Loan Stipend (student loan) Program for the needy students.

As I look back, my four years at BHU were the most difficult ones in my life. In spite of the continuing financial difficulties, dawn to dusk classes, tough examinations, and summer trainings, our young minds were constantly challenged. After our graduation, dozens of my classmates traveled for higher studies in Europe, North America and Australia. They all left their marks as innovative engineers, professors, and entrepreneurs. For me it was an incredible journey of following a dream. And here is a little quote for our younger generation readers so eloquently penned by poet Langston Hughes:

*Hold fast to dreams, for if they die  
Life is a broken-winged bird that can not fly*

*Hold fast to dreams, for when dreams go  
Life is a barren field, frozen with snow*

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*Ghanashyam Mishra graduated from BHU in 1961. He worked as a professional engineer for 45 years in the industry and with the U.S. Government. He retired in 2005, and now lives with his wife Dr. Manorama Mishra in Johns Island, South Carolina.*

## My Father's Tongue

Tapasi Misra

Recently at a literary function in Cuttack, an erudite gentleman asked me if I spoke Oriya to my children here in the States. Hmm... I said, I think so. Do they speak fluent Oriya, he prodded. Yes, I answered. Well, do you speak to them in Oriya? Yes, I am sure I do, I said. "*Maane roj*(you mean daily)? *Pura*(entirely), consciously, 100% Oriya?" I am usually conscious while speaking any language but I don't actively exclude English from our daily speech. 100% *nuhe*, I replied honestly. He leaned forward, shocked, why not? I don't know, I said, I don't usually agonize over our medium of communication on a daily basis. Then how did they learn, he persisted. Not sure, I said, reflecting on it for the first time in my life... Frequent trips to India? Maybe we do speak more, unconsciously? Good, he said before he walked to the stage to deliver a speech in 100% English to a predominantly Oriya audience. Oriya, after all, he looked back to add, is your mother tongue.

Actually Oriya is my father's tongue. My mother's tongue is Bengali. But hailing from a family who worked tirelessly to promote the language and culture of their adopted land, she was first taught Oriya at home. They did speak Bengali – but with a heavy Oriya accent. It was of some shame for the family that they picked up a purer version of spoken Bengali from their lesser educated daughters-in-law who were raised in Bengal. My mother's spoken Bengali was further refined later by my father's father and older brother, both die-hard Oriya men who were educated in Calcutta. At school, being from the pre-independence era, both my parents were taught in English. My mother, who did some college outside Orissa, wrote to her siblings sometimes in imperfect Bengali and but mostly in perfect Oriya. My father, who was usually away from his home in Puri, during his college days, communicated with his father and siblings in English. It has been an unbroken and unspoken tradition in his family to write to one another only in English. The origins of this tradition remains mysterious, especially since I have never once heard them speak with each other in anything but Oriya, infused with colorful words and choicest invectives that, according to my Puri cousins, lent it its special Puri flavor. From an early age my father and his brothers were known for their dramatic and speaking skills in Oriya that they proudly displayed in the Jagannath Club and Puri Jilla School in the 1920s

and 30s, and later in Ravenshaw College in Cuttack. My father even went on to attain considerable fame as a writer and orator, in Oriya of course. Their mother spoke what her children called Parlakhementi Oriya, a Telegu flavored drawl characterizing the speech of the residents of southern Orissa. The steady stream of relatives and family friends who would drop in with their own brand of Oriya, regionally influenced accents, provided an endless source of delight for us kids.

Both my brother and I were taught the Oriya alphabet along with ABCD from an early age. We grew up speaking Oriya, Bengali and English at home. Since we had started our schooling in Delhi we also spoke Hindi. My Oriya was reasonably good till I started preparing for my ISC(Indian school certificate exams) and opted to take Hindi as my language elective as by then I was in a high school in Andhra Pradesh and Oriya was not included in the curriculum. After school, it was all English in College and although I continued to speak Oriya with my friends, my reading and writing proficiency in it suffered. I remember being shocked that my cousins who had graduated from Oriya schools had stronger English writing skills (not to speak, stronger math, stronger, science, etc. etc.) than me! So what, I consoled myself, I spoke Convent school English. The real thing, the stylish thing, the small town mark of elitism...But I never ceased to be painfully aware of my "Oriya school" cousins' superior language skills, their natural academic strengths. My half hearted attempts to learn more Oriya failed in the face of having to keep up with exams, social functions, extended family activities, Agatha Christie and Barbara Cartland. I did manage to keep up with my father's articles in Oriya newspapers and magazines, but it was mostly out of a sense of duty rather than real curiosity. Curiously enough no one, neither my parents nor my uncles ever chided me for or commented on my language skills, or rather the lack thereof. They simply laughed and left me alone.

My poor language skills did not really plague me till I got married and my mother-in-law, a perfectly multilingual lady, insisted that when I am in the US I should write to her in Oriya only. For a while I lied and tricked to get out of the scary situation. But many excuses and months later, I braced myself, took up the pen and the aerogram and plunged into practicing my

circles and curly cues with a religious fervor. Soon, emboldened with time and practice, I started adding my own calligraphic embellishments and flourishes to the Oriya letters that went beyond the call of duty. My in-laws were delighted for several reasons. First, their linguistically challenged *bahu* had taken such pains to write to them in such *sundar akhyara* (beautiful handwriting). Secondly, the letters became the source of much entertainment in Keonjhar where my in-laws lived at that time. Friends and neighbors stopped by to peruse the beautifully drawn but, er, slightly off spelt words. Children came over to find the missing *aakaras* and *okaras*, to replace the *harsais* with the appropriate *dhirgais*, to guess the correct *harsau* and *dirghau*...Keonjhar grapevine in the 1980s was abuzz with my name..."*padhi-lekhi jaane naahin, kintu jhia ta bhala...*"(can't read or write but she's a good girl), and thus I was redeemed. By the time my dubious claim to fame had been established, I had become reasonably good with my spelling. The grammar and syntax improved when I dropped my previous tendency to write high flown, bookish Oriya. I soon realized the absurdity of imitating the style of a literature that I hadn't even read properly, and started writing simply and spontaneously, just as I speak. My nephews and nieces claim that my father-in-law, a sentimental man, still takes out those letters from the old *almirah* and chuckles and weeps over them.

A good philosopher/linguist friend of ours had once said about his somewhat thwarted attempts to learn Hindi. "I'll not only learn but master it one day, because I am shameless..." By the time he left San Antonio he was speaking reasonably good Hindi and was also beginning to get the drift of Oriya! What he had meant by shameless was, of course, fearlessness, his disregard of public ridicule which usually creates embarrassment and pressure and prevents us from being adventurous and trying new things, including dabbling openly in a new language. But language needs practice and one has to pursue it freely and "shamelessly" in order to learn it well. And this is what I remind the people back in Orissa when my

kids speak to their cousins in Oriya and they reply in English!

"They know Oriya very well. Please speak to them in Oriya only" my screams often fall on deaf ears. Can't blame the cousins either; they take that opportunity to practice their spoken English.

Some of the second generation Indian kids in the US speak their parents' language. Some don't. But most of them understand it well and have no problem picking it up when they are back visiting their relatives in India. Some take great pains to learn it later in life and in the process pick up a rudimentary knowledge of other Indian languages as well, especially Hindi. Most of the second generation Indian kids I know have grown up with a healthy respect for their language, history and culture.

Many Oriya parents speak nothing but Oriya to their children and it has worked out for them. Some of my more determined friends don't give an answer if their children pose a question to them in English. Although I empathize with their concern and admire their determination, it will never work in my household. My children will simply shrug and go to their room and the last thing I want to do is cut off my channels of communication with them. I guess the bottom line is that we all have to do whatever works to give our children a deeper and stronger sense of identity. But let's not criticize other people's parenting skills and let them do what works for them. I have to admit that I have never spoken much Oriya to my children, at least not *roj*, not consciously either, and never once agonized over it. Maybe they picked it up so well from our frequent visits home or from our relatives here in the US. I have however, spent hundreds of hours trying to instill in them a love and pride in Indian and Oriya culture and history, not so much out of my sense of patriotism as to preserve their sense of belonging, identity. Maybe that has inadvertently led them to retain the language as well. And even if they did not speak a word of Oriya, I would hope that they are still Oriya, and Indian, and American, in more profound ways.

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*Tapasi Misra lives in San Antonio, Tx. with her husband Lalatendu Misra. She loves books, music, politics and organizing events for local associations. She has two daughters, Sukanya and Supriya.*

## **An Obsession for Vintage Fountain Pens**

*Manaranjan Pattanayak*

My fondness for vintage fountain pens started many years ago. As I remember, it was the summer of 1989....I was consulting for a Mexican steel company in Monclova, Mexico with a close friend of mine, Elmer Shigo, when I suddenly noticed that Elmer was using a Big Red Parker pen to write. I could barely check my curiosity. I asked, "Hey Elmer, what kind of pen is that?" Elmer explained, "This is a Parker Duofold Senior circa 1920." Elmer was the man who introduced me to this new expensive hobby. That warm summer evening in Mexico, Elmer gave his first of many lectures on vintage pen collecting (Fountain pens 101!)

Elmer and I had been friends and colleagues for many years. We were both in the steel making industry. We first met when I was employed by the Steel Company of Canada in Ontario and Elmer was working for US Steel in Pennsylvania. Eventually I left Canada and came to work for US Steel in America. Elmer was my boss. We both worked in the blast furnace department and over time we became close friends. Elmer is a true renaissance man: a talented musician, a gifted silver jewelry maker and a skilled woodworker. He is extremely outgoing and funny. Elmer's physical appearance contrasted sharply to my own slight Indian build. He was six foot five inches tall with a broad shouldered Hungarian frame. People watching the two of us walking side by side, often laughed at the mismatch.

My earliest recollection of fountain pens was when I was seven years old. In those years during World War II, very few people could afford a fountain pen in India. All my friends in school were using dip pens with inkpots and ink tablets. I saw a Blackbird & Swan fountain pen in our house. It was cheap and leaking. I think I broke it when I started fiddling with it. I saw my first decent fountain pen, a Pilot Pen, in 1945 when my uncle brought one back after serving in the Second World War. In 1955 I remember I bought a Japanese made Pilot pen which I soon lost. While living in Germany in the early 60's I owned a very inexpensive and ordinary Pelikan fountain pen. That was the extent of my fountain pen knowledge.

After many visits to Elmer's house, my fascination for fountain pens grew tremendously. I was determined to start collecting vintage pens. Elmer explained the basics: how to repair simple

things, how to restore and polish pens, and how to get a collection started. Initially, it was very difficult for me to buy any pens. I had a difficult time learning the worth of vintage pens. There are many factors which affect the true value of a pen, such as the "brand" like Waterman, Parker or Shaeffer. The condition of the pen itself imparts value. Pens of a particular color or material have more worth than other pens. The filling system that is employed to hold the ink varies from pen to pen is important. Lastly, the type and condition of the nib is critical as well. Elmer had a wide variety of pens to demonstrate all of the above. His encouragement enhanced my passion for pen collecting. A few months after our return from Mexico, he took me to my first pen show in Philadelphia.

The pen show was amazing. There were thousands of pens and pen enthusiasts! Many pen collectors were foreigners from Europe and South America. Since I speak German, I quickly made friends with several German collectors who were visiting.

The Philadelphia pen show was the first of many pen shows for me. The pen collectors that I met were for the most part helpful, generous, fair and honest, especially towards new collectors. The shows are essentially for trading and selling pens. When you buy a vintage pen, the seller typically tells the buyer the defects of the pen and the repair work that has been done on it. It has been a great way to meet interesting people.

The last 17 years I have spent much of my free time haunting various flea markets and antique shops in search of great "finds". Some of the pens I have found for \$10, after refurbishments are worth \$1000. I have visited pen shows across the country, from Washington DC to Los Angeles. My pen hobby has crossed the globe as well. In India I met with some antique pen dealers and made some wonderful, unique discoveries.

My collection has flourished through the years. I have acquired some eclectic pens from many different manufacturers. The majority of my collection spans pens made from 1884 to 1960. I have a few new "limited edition" pens as well. I still always keep in touch with my "guru" Elmer and heed his advice. I realize now this expensive hobby has evolved from a passion to an obsession!

## A Beautiful Clutch of Antique Pens



From left to right: (1) Parker Duofold 1921-1929 (lucky Curve). One of the most collectible pen, button filled; (2) Waterman Patrician 1929- Onyx (cream and Red) plastic, lever filling; (3)Wahl 1927-1932 Gold seal, blue plastic, lever filling Ladies pen; (4)Sheaffer 1932 Balance 3-25 Blue & Black marble look, Radite, lever filling; (5)Whal 1923-1927 Emerald Green, lever filling; (6)Sailor (Japan)1960 Hand painted 14kt nib; (7)Whal 1927 #4 in Orange hard rubber, gold filled trim, lever filler; (8)Conklin 1927 Endura large lever filling pen in RED Plastic; (9) Conklin 1927 Ladies pen, lever filling; (10) Parker Pencil 1932 lapis Blue.



From left to right: (1) Waterman #48 Safety Pen (retractable nib) ca. 1906-1908, hard rubber, red ripple; (2) Swan 1920 -1930, with two reservoirs, two nibs; (3) W aterman #322 1900-1920 14k Gold, " Barleycorn" design ,half overlay, eyedropper filled taper cap pen; (4) Parker 51 (1947), chrome cap; (5) Parker Duofold senior (Lucky Curve) ,Black , Hard rubber, button filling. (6) Sheaffer 1959 --PFM (pen for man) with white Dot (signifies lifetime warranty), gold cap with snorkel extended.

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*Manaranjan Pattanayak, originally from the villages of Mendha and Bagalpur, is a founding partner of the M&M Corporation, a broad spectrum consulting group with expertise in software, music and steel production, and, of course, antique fountain pens. Currently he lives with wife Minati in the US heartland, in Kansas City and plays with Lauren, Connor and Christine .*

## **A Pen with a Proboscis: My Unfulfilled Dreams of a Sheaffer Snorkel Pen**

*Lalu Mansinha*

They say that from conception to birth, an embryo re-enacts all phases of human evolution. And so it is that from my school days in Sambalpur, to my old age in America, I have passed through all the stages of evolution of pens. My father, Mayadhar Mansinha, learnt the alphabet by scribing with a stick on sand. I wrote my letters on a slate. My school days in Sambalpur was during the Second World War. There was shortage of everything. We kids looked for dropped large bird feathers. We sharpened the hollow quill to a point, then using a razor blade, split the point, and we had made a quill pen. It was fun writing with a quill pen; it made a scratching sound as we wrote, but the point wore out too soon. Years later, when doing engineering drafting at IIT Khargpur, we had to use a 'crowquill pen'. We used it for drawing and writing with fine lines. It was in name only, nothing to do with the plentiful crows of Orissa. The original crowquill was used by artists to draw fine lines.

As schoolboys our fingers had massive blotches of blue and black -- the inkstains. I received many a scoldings for patches of inkstains on my shirt and shorts. We used to make our own ink. We bought tablets of ink, about the size of a dime, and put it with water in a small bottle. The desk at school had a two or three centimetre size hole, in which sat the 'inkwell', a conical sort of open ink tumbler, made of lead. We used to take the ink from home and pour into the inkwell. We wrote in class by frequently dipping the pen in the inkwell.

The situation was just too tempting for a schoolboy. Gently take the tip of the pigtail of the girl in front, dip it in the inkwell, and gently place it back. She won't notice all this until someone told her about the ink blotches on the back. I never did such things; not me -- I was a good boy; must have been someone like my friend Manaranjan.

In those days, and I am talking of mid-1940s, a metal nib was a luxury. It was the time of the Second World War. Huge amounts of all metals disappeared into making of guns and ammunition.

There were shortages of everything metal. So

alternative materials were experimented with. Only two types of plastics were available then -- bakelite or gutta percha. I had a gutta percha nib. My nibs were prized possessions, much envied by my brother Lalit. And Lalit and I had many a scrap over my gutta percha nib.

The Second World War ended in 1945, and slowly the world returned to normalcy. In 1939 when the war started it was a world dominated by the European colonial powers -- England, France, Holland, Portugal, Germany. In 1945 it was a victorious United States that dominated the world. And so before the war in India we saw Swan and Blackbird pens; after the war the pens to buy was Parker, Sheaffer and Waterman. These were technological marvels, the pride of American engineering and technological craftsmanship. In the India of 1950s and 60s, having a Parker 51 pen with a silver cap in your pocket was a sign that you had made it in the world, and also a magnet for pickpockets. Parker 61, with gold plated cap was even more the symbol of wealth and importance. But technologically, I was fascinated by the Sheaffer Snorkel.

All fountain pens had to be filled with ink. For my cheap fountain pen I had to open the barrel, and fill it with a dropper. With more money you could get a lever- or plunger mechanism for filling. The Parker pen had a special barrel extension that covered most of the nib, and the pen was filled with a plunger pump. Still the tip of the nib cover barrel got messy and had to be wiped.

The Sheaffer Snorkel was inspired by the German submarine U-boats a device that allows a submarine to suck air while still running diesel engines underwater. It was used extensively by the German U-boats in the Second World War. In the Sheaffer Snorkel Pen a narrow tube (much like a mosquito's blood sucking tube) extends from under the nib and sucks in the ink. After that the snorkel tube withdraws into the pen, leaving no ink mess. In its day the Sheaffer Snorkel was the technological marvel among pens. In India, though, the symbol of success remained the Parker 51 and 61. Only a few oddballs like me admired

the mechanism of the Sheaffer and dreamt of one day owning a gold-plated Sheaffer Snorkel.

In 1945 in one of the boys in my class told us that he had written with a pen in which the ink lasted for six months without a refill. We did not believe him. How can such a pen exist? What sort of magic ink did it use? It was impossible. That was the ballpoint pen.

As ballpoint pens became more available and affordable, dire warnings were issued by the teachers and the elders in Orissa. The ink was not permanent; it will fade away. School children should not use ball point pens, as it leads to poor handwriting. But then we had also been warned about fountain pens --- bad for children, spoils handwriting for life. We were also warned by the elders about every new technology. Don't read by electric light – bad for eyesight. (Until I went to at IIT Kharagpur, I studied with kerosene lamps). Don't go to the bioscop (that was the early name for cinema when I was a child) – bad for eyesight and spoils the mind. Well I should not complain too much. My father learnt the alphabet by writing with a stick on the sands on Nandala Village in Chilika Lake. In *sishushreni* (kindergarten), I learnt to write with *seelata*, a slate, with *khadi*, a hard chalk like stick, made from serpentinite.

Back to technology. Well the era of disposable plastic pens has led to the demise of beautifully crafted, technologically inventive pens. The middle class no longer sports a prominently visible gold plated Parker 61. The marvel of the snorkel pen is admired only among the very old, the pen collectors like Manaranjan and in the minds of people like me, remembering the days gone by.

The word Snorkel originally referred to submarines in the 1940s. With advertising campaigns by Sheaffer, the word slowly drifted in meaning to include the special ink filling mechanism also, in the 1950s. With increase in diving, the snorkel and snorkelling took on new meanings. Around the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War between the Western Democracies and the Soviets, public interest in military submarines declined. So in public usage the term 'snorkel' no longer refers to its origins – the submarine, nor to the Sheaffer pen. Currently the only usage of the word snorkel is for shallow diving, using an air breathing tube.

There is a 'Law of Maximum Frustration', or some such law which states – 'By the time you are wealthy enough to afford a swimming pool, you are too old to swim'. In all my growing up years I could not afford a Sheaffer Snorkel Pen, only admiring it from afar. Finally when I can afford to buy a Sheaffer Snorkel, it is no longer manufactured. Not that it matters anymore. In this age a goldplated Sheaffer Snorkel in my pocket will no longer get me an envious or even admiring glance from someone. Ah the follies of youth. Would the girls have glanced in my direction if I had a shiny Sheaffer in my pocket? Perhaps that was behind my dream of owning a Sheaffer Snorkel. Now I will never find out. And so it is that I shall leave this earth without ever having a Gold Plated Sheaffer Snorkel Pen in my shirt pocket, receiving admiring and envious glances from everyone around.

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*Lalu Mansinha lives a life dominated by the Law of Maximum Frustration in London, Ontario, Canada, far removed, in both time and space, from Chilika Lake, Sambalpur and Cuttack, where he grew up and evolved with pens. Among his many unfulfilled and unfulfillable dreams are: to have fought in the great campaigns of the Second World War (65 years ago); to have been in Vienna when Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony with the chorus for Frieden (Peace) was played for the first time (200 years ago); to be in Delhi and Agra in the court of Emperor Shah Jehan (400 years ago); to have been a sculptor during building of Konarka (900 years ago); to have been around when Tyrannosaurus rex roamed the Earth (when humans were 58,000,000 years away from being evolved).*



## Roving the Countryside in Search for Antique Pens

*Lalu Mansinha*

Somewhere in my genes there is an absence of passion for objects animate or inanimate. And so when Manaranjan mentioned that he is starting to collect antique fountain pens, I was not impressed. I thought 'It is a passing fancy; it will pass in due course, as all fads do'. Well, two decades later, in spite of my scepticism, he is now one of the top antique pen collectors in North America. And I? Well I continue to be the roving cynic – cynical and critical of most things, though now, an admirer of pens – beautiful antique pens, with such wonderful artistic design, not only of the mechanism, but also of the beautiful plastic barrel material itself – those iridescent semi-transparent, semi-translucent designs of swirling bright and muted colours; of chips in the plastic with varying shadows and brightness; of the little bars changing colours so subtly. To this day I admire the artists who designed the pen barrels, and marvel at how they did it.

Once Manaranjan got hooked on antique pens, I, Charu and Minati became afflicted too with the second hand enthusiasm, much like second hand smoke. So wherever we travelled, whether the wilderness of New England, the lake country of Ontario, the small towns of southern Oregon or northern and central California, or the flat heartland of the US, before the Rocky mountains rise out of the plains, we looked for antique pens. But of course, we three only know the difference between an old pen and new. We quickly learnt that old does not mean antique. Manaranjan of course travels with a magnifying lupe and a color catalogue. He can usually tell at a glance if a dirty, tarnished pen is 'interesting'; if he does not, out comes the color catalogue, listing every known antique pen of value. I write haltingly, with difficulty and more often than not, nothing flows out from my pen – no words, no phrases, no sentences. My mind goes blank, and my fingers freeze. My father, the writer, wrote every morning. He stood at the pedestal and wrote for a couple of hours, with the words flowing out of his pen, continuously, effortlessly.

Through Manaranjan I learnt that there are huge numbers of collectors, people who worship pens, but do not actually use the pen for writing. The process is simple: acquire an antique pen; repair the mechanism; polish up the outside; replat the gold or silver if needed; take the pen for a test drive – i.e. put a few drops of ink and write something like 'The

quick brown fox .....'; and then put it away and take up the next pen project.

And so the four of us are on the lookout for antique pens, which leads us to stories. Here is one about how I came to sell cards and candies in a variety store. Once Manaranjan came to the unknown town where I live, London, Ontario and told me that there are two major collectors in this area. Here?, in London?. Yes he said; there is an association for collectors, who are all listed in a national directory. So off we went. We arrived at an ordinary gift and variety store with a middle aged man behind the counter.

Manaranjan walked up and said: Do you have any antique pens?

Storeowner: No. I have some gift pens on your left there.

Manaranjan: I collect pens.

Storeowner: Oh yah! Interesting. What do you collect?

Manaranjan: I have the red fat barrelled Parker made in 1928.

Storeowner (Suddenly perking up, looking at both of us in the face for the first time); What else do you have?

Manaranjan: Well last week I went to Chicago pen fair and got a good deal on 1901 Waterman.

Storeowner (Now that he was satisfied that he is talking to a genuine pen enthusiast): Well I have some good pens too. I keep them in the back.

Manaranjan: Why don't we look at them?

Storeowner (now really interested and excited): Yes, your friend can be in charge of the store.

Storeowner (turning to me): Just stand behind the counter and sell anything that any customer wants to buy.

And so I am now suddenly I am a part time cashier – except I have never used a cash register before. The store owner in his excitement of finding another pen enthusiast forgot even to count the cash he was leaving me. Manaranjan and the Storeowner had a field day at the backroom. I could hear them. Every pen that the storeowner brought out, brought out another pen story from Manaranjan, and then from the Storeowner. They were there for an hour, while I was chit chatting away with the customers who came in. One even brought a coffee for me.

This was my first introduction to the world of pen collectors. I learnt of a local penclub; Manaranjan was invited to join. Nothing was said to me. I guess I did not qualify.

Another story. We were at Rice Lake Cottage picnic, and wandered off to the small town nearby. Manaranjan gravitated towards the only store that had a few antiques; he asked about antique pens. They had a few pens. After some bargaining Manaranjan bought a lot of four or five pens. We then went to have breakfast at one of these small cosy country restaurants. As we sat down, he took off his shoes, then his socks. I, Minati and Charu shouted at him not to be so uncouth, taking out his dirty socks in public etc. etc. He ignored us and proceeded to polish one of the pens he just bought with his dirty socks. Apparently dirty socks are just the thing for burnishing the faded plastic barrel of old pens. And soon the pen started shining. A few more rubs and Manaranjan said 'See! My old socks have transformed this old \$10 pen into a \$100 antique'.

In St. Louis, the Gateway to the West, we looked for and found a large flea market. After we parked, we saunter off to the entrance. It was a tiny entrance, just enough wide so that a man could get through sideways. On the top there is a sign 'Handguns not allowed. All guns must be checked in'. I was nervous. Anytime a sign says 'hand in your guns' means someone has a gun pointed at you as you go under that sign. Four brown people coming in -- they do not need a reason to be suspicious. Once inside the flea market we were not reassured. Many of the people manning the stalls appeared very rough. We went to various stalls and Manaranjan asked the standard question 'Do you have any antique pens?' Most did not have any. At one stall a very uncouth looking man could not understand the question; he said 'What do you mean by pen?' Oh my God, I thought; 'pen' has an American colloquial meaning meaning – short form of 'penitentiary', jail. At this point the fellow bent down behind the counter – ' Oh

my God! He is getting his gun'. We quietly slunk away and quickly exited from this flea market.

We roamed in northern California along the scenic but curvy coastal highway. The Pacific Ocean on the right, the hills and bluffs on the left. We saw many brilliant sunsets. And we saw life in small town America that few get a chance to see. One evening we arrive at dusk, tired and hungry, and looked for a motel in this small town of about 1000 people. All motels were sold out. 'How come?' we asked of the Gujrati hotel manager. He said 'There is a football tournament and people from nearby towns have come'. 'There must be rooms in a motel somewhere in this town?'. Well, he says, I know the manager of the next hotel down the street. After some rapid conversation in Gujrati, the manager said, yes he will give you two rooms, but he will need an hour to clean them up. We said we will take it, and asked for directions to the best restaurant in town. We went there, had a nice meal, and came to back check in. Well, no wonder he had the two rooms. They were being repaired and painted. The hour cleaning up was not the typical motel room clean up. They had removed the ladders, painting stuff etc. It was filthy, dirty. In the middle of the night the bed leg gave away, with a resounding crash. We should have driven to the next town.

And so we are planning for the next trip. Not much planning involved. We drive around in the heartland of Canada and the US, stop in antique stores and flea markets, and occasionally Manaranjan makes a big find. During daytime we admire the scenery and when we are tired we stop somewhere. I end with a quote from a poem by W. H. Davies:

*WHAT is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare?—*

*A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare*

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*Lalu Mansinha lives in London, Canada.*

## Memories

Sunanda Mohanty

*“Memory... is the diary that we all carry with us.” - Oscar Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest*

In our lifetimes, we make, keep and try to let go of innumerable memories. In Psychology, we speak of long term, short term, episodic and other kind of memories. In the context of the settlement process of new immigrants, memories have tremendous power and significance. For some, memories of a better life lived sustain them during hardships endured during trying to carve their identities in a new land and for others, the newer pleasant memories help to deal with the trauma of painful memories from a war ravaged or hostile environment in their countries of origin. In talking about memories, I am going to refer to some of mine.

My arrival in Canada was when it was in the throes of winter of January 2002. It was a period in which a lot of new memories were created. It was my first exposure to how lonely and isolated living in an apartment in North America could feel as a new immigrant without the warmth and familiarity of my usual bearings. Like all new immigrants, I had left the associations behind my memories, family, friends and places. This was a time in my life that was marked by a number of new transitions, new marriage, new country and also the first time that I had made an important journey without the support of my mother. “Mummy” as I called my mother, had passed away a few months earlier on a Diwali day in November, suddenly and unexpectedly. In my work with my clients, I encourage that when they are grieving or otherwise that there be not been too many transitions at the same time. However, coping with transitions becomes easier when there are supportive factors in our lives. The loving embraces of my partner soothed me, the task and activities of daily living gave structure and the memories of my experiences with my mother, and guiding, encouraging and loving sustained me.

The landscape of memories changes with time and circumstances. From the initial isolation and loneliness in the apartment, things have come a long

way indeed! I have come to appreciate the beauty of the winter, marveling at how prettily snow can sit on the leaves and the pristine brightness of it on the ground. From being a newbie in the Canadian workplace context, I built up on work experience to presently working with individuals, couples and families from diverse cultures on a variety of issues. Newer associations were created through meaningful conversations, workplaces, friendships and events. Newer skills were also acquired. From being an anxious new learner on the road moving to be a confident driver on the roads, albeit local ones. Being a part of a vibrant and active Oriya community with its cultural programs and get-togethers also contributed to the joy of life in Canada.

Sometimes, like most people, I do wish that I had a magic wand where I could turn back the clock. The magic wand would have given control over life and death, something that as human beings we do not have. That does not stop us from wishing... I wish, Mummy could be a part of the memory of my excitement at cooking a first meal entirely by myself, or seeing Jhumpa Lahiri read at the Harbourfront Reading Series or a new idea for decoration. She loved to read, decorate and try different and new things and we could have had so much fun together. The intensity of the grieving memories reduces with time but they do not completely fade away. Accepting the loss and acknowledging that there would be countless memories of birthdays, anniversaries, achievements, and disappointments without the loved one is an important part of healing from the loss. People hold on to the loving memories and try to push away the more painful ones. They learn to cope, move forward, plunge into roles and responsibilities and find joy in newer ways.

*“Memory is a way of holding onto the things you love, the things you are, the things you never want to lose.” - The Wonder Years*

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Sunanda has an M.Phil in Clinical Psychology, from the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) in Bangalore. She works at a Community Service Agency in Peel, Ontario providing Counselling. She has various interests, the current one being decorating her new home in Brampton, where she lives with her husband, Srimanta.

## The Young Creative Artists Amongst Us

*Sri Gopal Mohanty and Lalu Mansinha*

In the expatriate Indian community, there is a dichotomy in the appreciation of the arts in general, but performing arts in particular. Performing arts are good for enjoyment, are an integral part of our culture, but not a good career option, particularly if one's offspring are involved. Medicine, technology and business are desirable career choices. Performing arts are not. Opera, jazz, musicals, films — these are even more alien territory.

So we being fond of the arts, we note with pleasure, that in spite of the tacit discouragement, several of the next generation have chosen a different path of their own, towards the performing arts.

Here we present short and incomplete list of those who have come to our attention, through being recognized outside the immediate friends, family and community. This list is neither exhaustive nor all inclusive. Undoubtedly there are others, left out, mostly due to our ignorance. We hope future issues of this journal will continue to recognize others of the younger set who have dared to explore and express themselves, and have achieved significant recognition.



**Tirthankar Das** in his own words: "love to express myself through my films, videos and music that I produce." Produced and co-directed *Chath-A Roof Without Walls* that has been screened in 4 international film festivals. Started independent production company Magnapex Media and Entertainment.

*Chath* is the first major production. Hope to make many more interesting and hard-hitting films under this banner and establish it as a creative production house in East-Coast America.

I have composed music for Hindi feature films *Bandhak* and *Circus* with Shyam Vaidhyathan (We go by Shyam-Das: [www.shyam-das.com](http://www.shyam-das.com)). Will be launching my first music album in collaboration with Shyam featuring singers Sonu Nigam, Sunidhi Chauhan, Mahalakshmi Iyer, Sadhana Sargam, Naresh Iyer, Karunya. Completed a music album on Oriya modern songs, to be released in 2008."

Tirtha Das' latest film, *The 11th Day*, is about a transient meeting between a troubled American teenager Amanda and a 9 year old Indian girl Pia, both struggling with their own lives. Amanda is suicidal while Pia is struggling with her terminal illness. The unpleasant beginning transforms into a lively situation during which they share their little experiences, problems and joys. They finally create a bond that helps the American teenager redeem herself from her woes. She realizes that life is reason enough to live. Details about *The 11th Day*: Length: 38 mins; Produced and Directed by: Tirthankar Das; Director of Photography: Hyder Bilgrami; Music: Shyam Vaidhyathan; Production Asst: Arvind Patnaik, Zoltan Bagi.

The film *Chath-A Roof Without Walls* ([www.chaththefilm.com](http://www.chaththefilm.com)) deals with the unexplored subject of homelessness. The primary motivation behind its making was to tell a story that has never been told through a feature film - the story of homelessness, its roots, its impact on human lives and emotions and the reality that homelessness is more of an emotional and mental phenomena rather than just an economic condition. *Chath* delves into the dynamics of the relationships between 3 homeless Indians in USA. The three different personalities clash and this raises pertinent questions about life and existence, and about dealing with life's failures.

They pointed out that *Chath* has been inspired by real-life incidents and experiences of the homeless and strongly felt that people should be aware of this problem that has a huge bearing on our society. Hyder and Das personally met with homeless people including Indians in New York City to get a better perspective on their issues. "Some of the incidents that homeless people have experienced in real life are even more disturbing and horrendous than what we have shown in the film. The bitterness and trauma they experience often results in drug abuse and serious mental abnormalities and deviations".

The youngest in this list of young artists, we introduce **Suraj Patnaik** by quoting verbatim from a recent report in the Hindustan Times:

“At a time when most young people are taking to the western culture blindly, Suraj Patnaik, a 12-year-old boy residing in the United States of America, has left many spellbound with his passion for Oriya music.”

Suraj Patnaik, a fourteen-year-old boy from Naperville, Illinois is a musically gifted child. Suraj, who used to surprise his audience with his performances at a very early age, was believed to be a child prodigy. Being a versatile singer, Suraj has been trained in both Western and Hindustani classical music. Suraj has been receiving Hindustani Classical training in Vishnupur Gharana since the age of six from Manjusha Sangeet Academy. Guru Smt. Mani Majumdar, a recipient of the President of India Music Award and the director of Manjusha Sangeet Academy, nurtures Suraj’s musical talent with much love and dedication. She finds in Suraj a sincere, obedient and gifted singer, who looks promising to keep Vishnupur Gharana alive in his own right.

Suraj, known among his friends as friendly, well mannered, studious and jolly, currently attends Neuqua Valley high school and enjoys music in general. His passion for music is reflected through his training in violin, piano, and keyboard. Besides music Suraj keeps keen interest in learning Hindu Culture and Religion. He attends Sunday School for Vedantic studies at the Chinmaya Mission in Chicago and classes on Hindu epics like Ramayana. Suraj is well versed in chanting Bhagavat Gita and has received many awards in Gita Chanting Competitions. He believes that Chinmaya Mission helps him to reflect on his mistakes everyday and to become a better person.

Suraj has two major accomplishments to his credit. In 2004, he recorded his first Bhajan CD ‘Madhuram’ for which music was arranged by Ms. Nazia Sayeed and directed by Mrs Naima Alam. This CD was released by Chinmaya Mission Chicago. In 2006, Suraj had his first concert in Orissa, which was attended and blessed by music maestros of Orissa. Suraj kept the audience spellbound with his presentations on Odissi, Chhanda, Geeta



Govinda, Loka Sangeeta, Khayal and Bhajan. Pt. Shri Raghunath Panigrahy blessed Suraj on stage with words of praise and Dr Pratibha Ray blessed Suraj with words of wisdom. It was a successful evening for him not because of all the attention he received but because he came back home with his heart filled with Oriyaness. Suraj had learnt to read and write in Oriya before but after this trip he was determined to take his Oriya identity to the next level by exploring Orissa through Oriya music Odissi.”

There are only few other details to add.. Suraj has received training in Odissi vocal music from Guru Sri Keshab Ch Raut. Trained at Chinmaya Mission Chicago, Suraj excels in reciting and chanting shlokas, vandanas, and stutis in Sanskrit. He has received recognitions and awards: the Subrina Biswal Award, 3rd Prize (1997), 1st Prize (2001); and for singing and for dancing, 2nd Prize (2007). Additional details can be found at:

<http://www.oriyamusic.com/Live/SurajPatnaik>

<http://www.twincityplus.com/fullStory.asp?articleID=TCP6ART8262006>

**Sarba Das** holds a BA in Philosophy and Film Studies from Yale, and a MFA, Concentration in



Directing, from the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. She is currently the President of Shakti Productions Llc, New York. Produced and directed several shorts and the documentary NAGAS of the Kumbha Mela. Upcoming feature projects include Spirit

Rising and Be God’s Dog.

*Earlier Production:*

*Passage.* 16mm/color. 17 min. The story of a day in the life of a one rupee coin as it changes hands in a small town in Orissa, India.

*DripDry.* 16mm/b/w. 4 min.. Stuck on the streets of Manhattan, where can a young woman find a place to pee?! A silent comedic short.

*MAUSI or: how an old lady finds her way back to India.* 16mm/color. 10 min. dir. Sarba Das. Guns, drugs, food, and a nagging relative make this a difficult household. And Mausie just might surprise her family... This short premiered at the Asian American International Film Festival in New York City in July 2000. It has since appeared in the Filmmakers of Tomorrow program at the Telluride Film Festival 2000, Interflugs Festival 2000 in Berlin,

Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival in France, Memphis International Film Festival, Kerala International Film Festival 2001 in India, Chicago Asian American Showcase, and the Palm Springs International Short Film Festival 2001. MAUSI was named Best Short Film at the Making Waves Festival in NYC and was named a finalist for the Asian American Academy Award (Ammy) for Best Short Film held in Los Angeles, California Nov. 10, 2001.

*Miracles that Followed.* 16mm/DV. 10 min. An exploration of the community in a pentacostal church in Jolo, West Virginia whose expression of faith includes the handling of poisonous rattlesnakes as a testament to God.

*NAGAS of the Kumbha Mela.* DV. 50 min. A chronicle of Naga Babas, naked spiritual ascetics, and their practices in India .

*Spirit Rising.* A feature length story of an American psychiatrist who has a spiritual awakening. To be filmed on location in India (Works in Progress )

At our request **Siddhartha Misra** wrote a short essay about himself. So in his own words:



I apologize for not being able to personally attend this year's Convention but I am busy preparing for a six-week engagement with Opera North in Lebanon, NH. Perhaps my absence makes clear the point that I would have liked to have made in person: singing is my career and my resources are dedicated to forwarding a career in Western classical

music, specifically opera.

Most importantly, this is not a hobby for me, it is my work. While it can be relaxing, I generally don't find music to be easygoing; that would be the equivalent of a doctor relaxing by sitting down with a blood test analysis. If asked to sing at a social event, I expect a contract with payment details. Frankly, if asked for an impromptu performance by a computer programmer or an accountant at a party, I'm tempted to solicit software or tax help in return. I think the notion of music as a profession is undervalued in American society, evidenced by the lack of funding for the arts in public schools. Yet, in my experience, artistic careers are far more undervalued, if not outright dismissed, in our Oriya-American culture. Parents naturally want to guarantee success, which we frequently equate with financial stability and this is

admittedly quite difficult to achieve in the arts. Yet I would regret the decision for the rest of my life if I had abandoned a musical career in order to gain family approval or to make a quick dollar.

I graduated with degrees in political science and voice performance because I was interested and capable in studying political theory. Indian-Americans often view my liberal arts background as a "backup" plan; however, no one asks a pre-med student or an M.B.A. candidate if he or she has a backup plan, in spite of the competition to enter a top medical school or the overwhelming number of businesses that fail in their first 5 years. The chance of my becoming a successful musician is perhaps equal to either of those endeavours and yet a musical career is viewed as a pipe dream. Why is it so hard for our culture to accept the idea that performing music can be a professional activity?

I believe this stigma is because Western classical music is foreign to Indian culture and has not taken root in India itself. To my knowledge, there are no major symphonies or opera houses in India, a distinction that makes it stand apart from every other global superpower. Like many cultures, we have a rich artistic tradition but we must also accept what other cultures have to offer because cultural exchange is one of the easiest ways to build social and, in turn, political camaraderie.

Therefore, I think we need to take extra measures to build our exposure to Western classical music so that we can foster a greater understanding of this art form. This is as simple as attending performances – which frequently include informative pre-performance lectures – or buying recordings. Armed with this knowledge, we can learn to recognize true potential and cultivate it. I'm not expecting many people to enjoy this art form but once we understand it, we can no longer dismiss its place in society. As the philosopher Will Durant wrote, "Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance."

Siddhartha Misra has performed Spalanzani and Pitichinaccio in Les Contes d'Hoffman. Siddhartha has frequently performed at Center City Opera Theater, including Tybalt in Roméo et Juliette and Malcolm in Macbeth. Prior to his work in the Philadelphia area, he completed the degrees in voice performance and political science at Northwestern University, where he performed Tamino in Die Zauberflöte, Rinuccio in Gianni Schicchi and Bardolfo in Falstaff. Siddhartha received critical acclaim in the Chicago Sun-Times and Chicago Tribune for "brilliant comic timing" and "heartfelt"



performances as Cacambo in *Candide* at Light Opera Works. His summer festival credits include the Lake George Opera, the Pine Mountain Music Festival and, most recently, the Tanglewood Music Center, where he worked with esteemed musicians such as Phyllis Curtin, William Bolcom and James Levine. He feels particularly at home in the music of Donizetti and Mozart and his repertoire includes Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore*, and Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*. Siddhartha Misra is a member of American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA), and holds B.Mus./B.A. from Northwestern University and M.Mus. from Temple University. For more on Siddhartha Misra, see a report by Ranjani Saigal on LokVani [http://www.lokvani.com/lokvani/article.php?article\\_id=4341](http://www.lokvani.com/lokvani/article.php?article_id=4341)

**Arati Misro**, a California native, has dedicated almost a decade to promote, produce and distribute South Asian content in the United States. Arati Misro has produced and distributed the independent feature film as well as Network TV. Misro has worked on various indie feature films such as *Night Of Henna*, *Beat The Drum* and *Its A Mis Match*. Misro has worked for Fox, Discovery and CNBC ASIA. Since 2005, Misro decided to start her own company to serve the South Asian film in all capacities from development to distribution.



Arati holds an MFA from the American Film Institute. and a B.A. from University of California at San Diego in Mass Communications and a second B.A. in Cultural Anthropology with a minor in Postcolonial Literature.

Misro is an active and dedicated member of Women in Film International Los Angeles, Indo Americans in the Media, and Project Involve Alum with the IFP. She also spent extensive time in India as a social worker for battered women and directed her debut documentary film entitled *Distant Voices*, which addresses womens conflicts in East India. This captured the attention of the AFI admissions board. She is spear heading Women In Film India in 2005 with support from acclaimed actress and social activist, Nandita Das.

Her thesis film, *Badger*, has won numerous awards such as Best Direction from the DGA in the Asian Film Category for student film, Best cinematography from the ASC, Best Picture from the

Caucus Foundation for Producers, She is the winner of the Henry Hathaway scholarship, *Badger* also won The Spirit of Excellence from the AFI that is presented to every graduating class for best thesis film. She is producing several projects, especially of South Asian Themes.

She most recently organized the women and film/tv International summit and works as a community liaison for local international film festivals. Misro is collaborating with several filmmakers based in Europe as well. She recently prepped an independent feature film there. Her current project, *The Stamp Collector* is a finalist in the Sundance Filmmakers Lab last year. Misro hopes to continue telling stories about the human condition around the globe.

**Pratik Dash**, the twenty year old son of Prabir and



Prajesh Dash, has embraced music throughout his entire life. He began singing at the age of eight, when his third grade music teacher told his mother that he had the voice of a soul singer. Those words caused Pratik to begin pursuing voice training. That was the beginning. In fifth grade, Pratik was in the play *Annie*, playing the lead role of Mr. Warbucks. He continued his

path in theater throughout his middle and high school career, playing roles in musicals such as the *Pirate King* (*Pirates of Penzance*), *Chief Sitting Bull* (*Annie Get Your Gun*), the *King* (*The King and I*), and the *Beast* (*Beauty and the Beast*).

During his years in middle school, Pratik was asked to sing at the ACDA (Association of Choral Directors of America) National and Regional Honor Choirs, where two hundred singers are asked to come together from around the United States and sing together in a performance. Pratik performed in San Antonio, Texas and Charlotte, North Carolina, as well as his home city of Nashville, Tennessee.

During his sophomore year of high school, Pratik was also offered a scholarship to attend Berkeley School of Music's five week summer program. Pratik spent five weeks in Boston, Massachusetts learning various types, styles, and theory from professors at Berkeley.

Pratik was also awarded the Presidential Honorable Mention, a program which gives out scholarships to those who excel in their field of music



or arts. Pratik was rated as one of the best jazz singers in the country, and his name is recorded in Miami, FL for this award.

His singing was such a success that Pratik was invited to come sing for the 2006 and 2007 Annual Grammy Jazz Ensembles, where eight singers are chosen throughout Canada and the United States to sing for a week at different Grammy events. There, Pratik met numerous celebrities such as Beyonce Knowles, Usher, Alicia Keys, and Chris Brown. Information on the Gibson/Baldwin Grammy Jazz Ensemble Awards can be found at

[www.alexanderbailey.org/uploads/GrammyPress.pdf](http://www.alexanderbailey.org/uploads/GrammyPress.pdf).

Throughout all of this, Pratik has tried to pass his success to the next generation of children. While he is back home, he goes back to his middle school, where his success in singing and theater began, and helps direct plays both produced by his school and the community. Despite all his success, Pratik volunteers his time to help those gain the same fortunes that he has received from the grooming of his talent.

Pratik would like to thank the Lord Jagannath and his forever loving parents for blessing him with the opportunity to perform on this stage.



## How high can a tiger jump?

Pallavi Raut Sodhi

“I was fifteen years old then. An excitable teenager, ready to have fun at the slightest pretext. The *Magha Chaturthi Mela* was to take place in Joronda, near Dhenkanal village. All adults in the household were getting ready to go. The children were not going, but that did not stop me from asking why not. Much like you children ask a million questions, half of which I do not have an answer to. Well, there was no harm in asking for permission to go, right? So I did. I asked my mother if I could go to the *mela*. No, I pleaded...I wanted to go to the *mela* more than anything else in the world. I would be really good. Could I please, please go? I must have been really convincing or there must have been some truth in what everyone used to say...that I could wrap my mother around my little finger. My mother acquiesced to my pleas. So I went. And that was the start of a most unforgettable adventure, which I will share with you, my dear children.”

*So said my father, when we were children, and crowded around him when we wanted to hear a bedtime story. No amount of reading from books captivated our interest as much as his stories did. This particular story was larger than real life. And as years have gone by, nothing has diminished the vibrancy of the story. So here I am, today, telling the story to my son, as told by my father to us....*

“...The *mela* was most enjoyable. But like all good things, it had to come to an end, and that too just before the weekend. My Ravenshaw Collegiate School started on Monday. But I wanted to reach my Ram Krishna Cottage Hostel by Sunday. Guess why? Well, Sunday was the most enjoyable day of the week for me. We used to have early morning music and *bhajan* sessions on Sundays, and I used to play the *mridangam* : I loved that. No way was I going to miss my favourite music hour. But to make it in time for Sunday morning, I had to leave on Saturday itself; one day before all the adults were leaving Joronda. So once again, I broke the rules. I decided to go on my own, and take a shortcut through Kapilash Hill, which would take me to the railway station at Dhenkanal that would finally take me to Cuttack, where my school and hostel were located.

I bid goodbye to my parents. My mother gave me her shawl because she knew that the season of *Magha* was erratic, and it could get chilly in the evening. So,

off I went, with a shawl wrapped around my shoulders, and new slippers on my feet, which were my new acquisition from the *mela*. I could not wait to show both to my friends.

By the time I reached Kapilash Hill, it was evening. All of a sudden I heard faint drums and a holler by stonecutters “Tiger on the prowl. Beware.” I had heard enough stories about tigers in that part of the village. I did not want to take any chances. I had to get closer to the border and out of the jungle hills. But civilization was not in horizon. I decided to play safe. Plus I was tired and sleepy. I could not possibly sleep under the trees. I had an idea. I would sleep on top of the trees! But something stopped me. The holler about the tiger raised another warning in my brain. “A tiger can jump higher than 5 feet.” I tucked my shawl around me, and started climbing a tall tree. Up I went. I guess there was some truth in being called a monkey, albeit lovingly by my mother. I kept trying to measure how much higher I needed to go to escape the imaginary tiger. One of my slippers fell. I cursed. But I did not go back. I kept climbing till I was well above 5 feet. I found a sturdy branch and ensconced myself amidst the foliage. And tried to sleep. The mosquitoes would not let me. Which was just as well. I heard a faint rustling below. I could hear my heart beat louder than those rustles. I peered down, and guess what I saw? There was a tiger sitting below, sniffing my sandal. I was scared to my wits end. I could almost feel that the tiger could smell me, if not see me. It was the battle of wills. The tiger below, and me, this imp of a 15-year old, mosquito bitten. but scared to the core, of the feline sitting below...Suddenly the mosquitoes did not bother me. They had their feast of me, but I would not let this feline creature take the better of me. I kept sitting and waited. And waited. Meanwhile, the tiger too waited. And waited. I do not know how much time passed. But next when I looked, I saw the tiger walking away. I kept sitting inside the branches of the tree. Waiting seemed the lifeline for me then. Again, I do not know how long I waited....

... Till I heard a woman’s scream. “What was that about?” I wondered. The tiger was nowhere in sight, and the light was emerging from the skies. I decided to climb down. Walking slowly, with both slippers on my feet, I walked till the edge of the Kapilash Hill, where I saw a bullock cart with stone cutters. Seeing me, they called me, and asked me if I

wanted a ride. I could have hugged them, I was so grateful. I sat in their cart, which seemed like a king's palanquin to me, after the uncomfortable night up in the tree. But something kept bothering me. That woman's cry. I told the stone cutters about my rendezvous with the tiger and the woman's scream.

The stone cutters heard me spellbound, as if I were a ghost. Then, one of them suggested we look for the woman. The tiger had killed many a villager and who knows what had happened to the woman. We had just about finished talking, when my eyes fell on a blood covered, shivering, but definitely alive huddled body on the side of the road. It was a woman whose left shoulder and bosom was covered in blood. We

helped her up into the cart. She was alive, but crying her heart out, sobbing in her local dialect, "Heda khiya aasla chua neyee gola." I understood at last. She was carrying her child, collecting firewood from the forest, when the tiger snatched her child away. I covered her with my shawl. She was inconsolable. Everyone in the cart was shaken. We dropped off the woman at her hut, which was at the outskirts of

Kapilash Hill. Amid cries, her family welcomed her and took her in. I went back to the stonecutters who offered to drop me at the railway station. A little boy ran behind, with a blood stained shawl in his hand. He handed it to me and I took it quietly. There was not much left to say. It was a quiet ride to the railway station.



I reached Ram Krishna Cottage, and my friends and guru crowded around me, looking askance at the blood stained shawl. I told them what had happened.

Bhajans started. That morning for the first time, my mridangam beats were not loud enough to quieten the sounds in my mind. The

woman's

scream and sobs reverberated louder and louder. I silently sent my prayers to that poor mother who had lost her child to the tiger.

If I had not climbed the bara haath on the tree, who would have been the target? Till today, the thought crosses my mind and shivers run down my spine...."

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*Pallavi Raut Sodhi lives in Toronto with husband Sajneet Singh Sodhi and son Ankit Sodhi. This is a true story as relayed by her father Dr. Kahnu Charan Raut, who is a retired scientist and professor at Indian Council of Agricultural Research. In his youth, he did many firsts, broke many a traditional rule and faced many adventures (taking a short cut through the jungle to reach school in time, going atop a tree with a tiger sitting at the bottom were just a couple of them.) He lives in Delhi with wife Rachita, and spends his time writing books for children. He will always be a hero for his daughters.*

## Maternal Affinity

*Sanjay Misra*

October 20, 2004, a Wednesday night filled with the ordinary chores of the Misra household. Dad pulled himself together after rising from his post-work nap to roll out the mephitic garbage can. Mom went outside for a daily stroll about the neighborhood where she could smell the aroma that the roses discharged as her Majesty walked by. Our pet cats playfully chased one another across the living room, almost breaking the antique glass jar that delicately stood atop an end table gazing out at the masterfully chromatic evening sky.

Not too long after my father returned from his endeavor, the dark black sky interrupted the jar's evening show. I rose from my homework to an unusual creaking noise coming from the door knob. My mother carefully stepped inside, rubbed the black streaks off her face, and walked over to the kitchen table. Her skin was abnormally pale, resembling the keys of an old Steinway left to the rats after its connoisseur passed away. I looked up at my suddenly aged mother and listened to her words.

"I think you should go over to visit Reece and his mother right now."

Confused at my mother's earnest request, I politely responded, "I have too much homework, I'll do it another time."

Mother took a heavy breath as she looked down and played with her thumbs. After a second search for air, she said, "Honey, I really think you should go over now;" her tone proving so compelling that gravity itself deferred to its insistence. With that she rose and walked out the door on her way to my best friend's house. Requiring no additional coaxing, I threw on my shoes and followed my mother out the door.

Reece Thompson, my best friend for the last twelve years, lived only four houses away from mine in our development. His mother had suffered breast cancer for the last three and a half years. Reece had accepted his mother's likelihood of passing away years ago, but his little sister Claire still feared the Malignant Kleptomaniac. Claire forced her mother to wear a wig at all times to cover up her baldness and did not allow her poor mother into the same room as her when her young friends came over for play dates. The entire effort that Reece's mother exerted to appease her daughter had left her motionless on a bed for the last four months.

My two-minute walk contained hours of feigned courage and genuine trepidation. The familiar path seemed foreign to my veteran legs, which begged to turn back after each step. My mother had disappeared somewhere ahead of me, leaving me to fight the night sky alone. Despite a myriad of leisurely saunters along the same route in all kinds of conditions, my body felt intimidated by the pitch black sky, which growled at me every time I stepped on one of the sidewalk cracks. My eyes hunted intensely for a single star to delineate a safe path to my destination, though Orion simply snored during my importunate pleading. A subtle bend in the sidewalk crept up on me so suddenly that I nearly plunged over the instantly-treacherous eight-inch fall into the road. Quickly I veered left from the curb to find the once-recognizable pathway to Reece's house. My premature whiskers cringed as a bitter gust bit into my cheek. When I finally spotted the comforting Thompson lantern, I jumped ship from the sidewalk and sprinted to the house in search of safety.

I walked in the door shortly after my mother arrived to find Reece, Claire, their father, and family friend Fuerza positioned around Mrs. Thompson's bed. The once verdant plants sagged as I walked towards the bed; they were frowning from their two-week stint without water to drink. My mom pulled me aside and explained, "This is it for Mrs. Thompson, Honey. If you want to say anything to her about how you feel, it's now or never."

Suddenly I felt slightly dizzy. The idea that a once strong, determined woman who helped take care of me since I was a toddler was about to die right in front of my eyes caused my heart to race and my body to quiver. I sat down on the sofa for a little while to compose myself. I rubbed a soft pillow against my cheek while I pet Reece's dog Topaz. My hands ran through the dog's smooth golden hair as I contemplated what I could possibly say to the woman who had been a second mother to me all my life.

Finally mustering up the essential courage, I treaded over to Mrs. Thompson's bed side, accompanied only by Fuerza for moral support. However, I soon asked her to leave Reece's mother and me to ourselves so I could be completely open with my second-mother.

The clock chirped signifying nine-o'clock as I began to pour out the thoughts and feelings that had lain dormant in my soul for years. "Mrs. Thompson, I

can't believe this is it, it's too soon." She could not respond verbally because she had not been able to talk for the duration of her bed rest. Still, her eyes told me everything I needed to know. I imagined her responding to my plea with her usual Mrs. Thompson reassurance.

"I know Sanjay, I know. Trust me; I didn't want it to happen like this either." Her eyes blinked and close slightly and then I pictured her continuing. "Sanjay, I don't want you to forget about me."

I felt as if a gust of wind rapidly zipped through my body. How could I ever forget the woman who was so much like my own mother? My warm skin met her cool hand as I held it up to my face and kissed it. Her hand tasted bland but smelled of rich watermelon, most likely a special lotion applied to make her as comfortable as possible.

I gazed into Mrs. Thompson's eyes and answered, "I will never forget you as long as I live Mrs. Thompson, it's impossible." Her hand suddenly became very warm as a tear dropped from my eyes onto it. I spread the liquid around so that she may still feel the warmth of love before she finally gave in.

Her eyes brightened slightly as if she was trying to smile, but her mouth was constantly half open such that she could breathe any nothing more. A rhythmic pattering commenced in the distance, indicating that

rain had begun to fall. I did not know if she could hear the rain, but its constant falling reminded of all the time I had spent with her. The sky cried with me as I reminisced over the sailing trips, birthday parties, and hikes in the woods.

I composed myself to say my final words to Mrs. Thompson. "I will miss you so much, and I love you, Mom."



Her eyes shined as I hoped to catch a last response. Then they closed, for a long time. I finally walked away after watching her top forehead wrinkle for a minute or so, as if it was still fighting to live on, just to give me an answer. I went to give my mother a big hug. The warmth I felt in my mother's outstretched arms was similar to the warmth on Mrs. Thompson's hands when my tears hit them. I realized then, I needed no answer. I knew exactly what she would have said to me.

"I love you, Son."

An hour later Fuerza came into the family room where the rest of us sat and told us that Mrs. Thompson had passed away. She did not speak one word to me in our last conversation, yet she said more to me than ever before. I never before knew how strong love could be with a person beyond one's family, but I had learned it all in a matter of minutes. I will never forget her, and I would always appreciate everything she had done for me. My mother had died, and yet, my mother lives on.

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*Sanjay Prayag Misra is 18 years old and graduating from North Penn High School in Lansdale, Pennsylvania this year. In addition to writing he enjoys playing goalie for his school soccer team. He plays the guitar in a band he and his friends formed, called the The Gentlemen. He is going to attend Harvard University next year to study Economics.*

## The Bedside Stories: Uncommon Deeds of Common People

*Devi P. Misra*

The duty of a physician is to listen intently to the symptoms of a patient presenting to the office or the ER of a hospital and then thread out a diagnostic possibility and plan out a treatment leading to a better prognosis for the patient. Sometimes, the physician may succeed in curing the patient, sometimes he or she does not.

If there was one thing to wish in medicine, it is this: that irrespective of a diagnosis or an outcome of a patient's illness, good or bad, if one could sit down with a patient and ask them one of their pleasurable or memorable moments of their life, then these moments themselves will be teaching lessons to each of us at different times of our lives.

I will narrate a few examples of uncommon qualities and thoughts from the patients one came across.

**JV** 68 year-old, tall, handsome male diagnosed, after a three month illness, to have stomach cancer spread all over the body. He is referred to hospice and is to go home the next day. The night before at 9 p.m., I wished to talk to him for the last time. I would not see him again.

I wake him up. He is under the effects of morphine because of continuous pain. I said, "Hey Jay... how come you have a strange name, stranger than mine...your name is Jay Verrado." I asked, "Are you Italian?" He smiled a big smile from the effects of morphine and nodded yes, I am Italian."

I asked, "You are not Sicilian mafia?" He smiled broadly again and with a full heart said, "No, I am an Italian."

I asked about his family. He said, "I have come a long way. I have had a full life. I did mischief as an adolescent. I was in jail for a while, but I came around."

"How many children do you have?" I asked. He said, "We have been married for 67 years and we have four children and eight grandchildren, but we adopted four children."

I said, "If you raised such a large family, why did you have to adopt?" He said, "We saw if we raised four children, well, why could not we give hope to four more children?"

**WM** within a span of four months...

In 1986, he was one of the eight persons diagnosed to have an inoperable lung cancer. It was a Saturday. There were no family members at his bedside.

I thought if I tell him the diagnosis straight on he will not be crestfallen. I thought about how to give him the diagnosis without throwing him into despair.

At the bedside, I said, "Bill, have you ever played Santa in schools?" looking at his head full of gray hair and flowing beard, and his face lit up with a big smile. He said, "Yes! I played Santa in the Huntsville area schools during Christmas since 1965 and during Thanksgiving holidays along with Sheriff Joe Patterson. We distributed fruit baskets to hungry and homeless people." He smiled heartily. I paused and told him the diagnosis. Tears rolled down his cheek. I could only comfort holding his hand.

**MH** hospitalized for pneumonia... One day I sat down to hear her unique story. She had four sons and four daughters all settled in their lives. She hailed from nearby Decatur, Alabama. During the 1960's a hotbed of KKK activity. She was Caucasian.

In 1988, a very close friend of hers, working in the Human Resources Department of a hospital, requested her to adopt a baby delivered in the hospital. Unknowingly then, she agreed.

The mother of the baby was a Caucasian and the father, an African-American, was a drug addict – she would come to know later.

Once she adopted this baby, she would take her to the Health Department for vaccines or any illness, particularly for frequent seizures which the babies of drug addicts and alcoholics are prone to. She took care of the baby for two years after which the baby was supposed to go to foster care under court jurisdiction. The court date came.

Before the court date came, her husband said, "We have taken care of the baby for two years. Our eight children are gone out of our home. Why can't she be our child?" They went to court and filed the adoption papers for the baby.

When after the hospital stay MH came to my office, I saw the girl braided smart and now a 12 year-old ebullient girl, proficient in music, in her band team at school, and also on the A-B honor roll in the school. Quite a different upbringing in life and a different perspective.

*Seven Deadly Sins*

- *wealth without work*
- *pleasure without conscience*
- *science without humanity*
- *knowledge without character*
- *politics without principle*
- *commerce without morality*
- *worship without sacrifice*

Mahatma Gandhi

*“You must be the change you wish to see in the world”*

---

*Dr. Devi Misra is a physician in Huntsville, Alabama. He is an active supporter of cultural and community development projects in Orissa.*





# The Nigger Doctor

*Dr. Prasanna Pati*

“Dr. Johnson, we do not want a nigger doctor for our brother John. We ask you to assign a white doctor to our brother. This Dr. Sonjee from India does not even look like a psychiatrist.”

It was a very large mental hospital in the heart of America, one of those insane asylums started by the pioneers for the care and custody of the mentally ill. The grounds were beautiful, with very large trees. The entire facility was full of buildings, including the main, all in the Kirkbride style of architecture.

It was over crowded, with more than three thousand patients spread throughout multiple wards. Many patients came and never returned home. Many died in the hospital and many were abandoned by their families. Many did not maintain contact with their loved ones for years and years. You can imagine the tragedy, the sheer pain and heart breaking story behind every patient.

The hospital offered many kinds of talk therapies: group therapy, family therapy, individual counseling, activities and even psychodrama. There was also electric shock therapy. Many patients got better, either because of the therapies or despite them.

I started working in this hospital after completing my training. Despite the grim atmosphere, we, the staff, worked with hope, passion and dedication.

I could go on and on, but let me return to the title of the story, “The Nigger Doctor.” I was assigned as the treating physician for a patient, who had grown up in the deep South where the African Americans had been considered sub-humans for centuries.

Now, I am back to the story and the conversation of my boss, Dr. Johnson and the two older sisters of my patient, Mr. Howard.

Dr. Johnson, as the astute administrator and Medical Superintendent of this hospital, had listened carefully to the sisters’ request. He got up from the chair, went to the window overlooking the beautifully landscaped lawns and flower beds on this rainy day. He was there for some time, and then he returned, but not to his chair. Instead he stood face to face with these two middle-aged ladies and literally shouted at them. “ Dr. Sonjee is a highly qualified psychiatrist. I hire physicians not based on their skin color, ethnicity or country of origin, but with qualifications and character. Do you understand? No, Dr. Sonjee will

remain your brother’s physician and I repeat, there will be no change of doctors.”

Dr. Johnson, in his wisdom, did not share this conversation with me. John, my patient, was born and raised in a southern state with deep roots in slavery and the exploitation of African Americans. Even after President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation feeling for the African Americans remained the same for many, many decades.

John was admitted the previous evening by a Court Commitment. After the nursing staff’s early morning update it was always my first priority to examine, at least briefly, the patients assigned to me.

Mrs. Gilmore, the Head Nurse, brought John to my office and introduced me. John refused to sit in the chair offered to him, paced back and forth, extremely agitated and, all of a sudden, burst into profanities and racial slurs.

“Nurse, I don’t want a Nigger as my doctor. This Dr. Sonjee is a pathetic-looking Nigger. I heard from another patient last evening that this doctor was from India and not even a Christian. God, help me.”

Mrs. Gilmore, a big nurse, stood by, almost between me and John. John launched into a new tirade against the Judge, the system, the hospital and the nurse, interspersed with profanities. It seemed every other work started with “f.” He was also making menacing gestures with his fists. At this point I thought we might be physically assaulted. He was a very big man, very well built and capable of strangling us to death within minutes. I picked up the phone to our nursing office next door and asked for Rex and Joe to immediately come to the office. They were in within seconds and stood on each side of John. John looked at me, the nurse and both psychiatric aides and sat down in the assigned chair.

I gave an order to the nurse for intra-muscular medications and told John “Medications I have just ordered will help you calm down. Within a day or two, you will be in better control and less agitated. I know it has been very, very difficult for you. I want you to cooperate with the nursing staff.”

I asked Rex and Joe to take him to the quiet room and frequently check on him, to give him reassurance. I wrote the orders on the physician’s order sheet and handed the file over to Mrs. Gilmore.

After several days of medication and supportive contact with the nursing staff John improved to the point of being accessible to a more intensive examination. I made it a point to have daily psychotherapy sessions with him, along with some of my other patients. Eventually John and I developed a good rapport. John came from a very chaotic background. We worked not only on his issues but also had family therapy with John's wife to help her understand the illness and help them work out some issues. Eventually John improved will enough to return home.

One day many, many years after this, I was relating this story to my friend, Steve. His response was something like "Dr. Sonjee, where is the story? This seems to be an incident that psychiatrists frequently face, even in their private practices. I said "Steve, it is a good question. The story does not end here. Just recently, one of the psychiatrists that I worked with was killed by a patient in his office, shot to death. The risks that psychiatrists face are real. Steve, back to John, when he was only nine his father had committed suicide in his own home, a single bullet to his brain. His mother never remarried, raised her three children on her own, but had multiple boyfriends. She became addicted to alcohol."

Steve interrupted, "Dr. Sonjee, was the alcohol addiction superimposed on the loss of her husband, guilt and the heavy sense of responsibility for her children?"

"Yes, Steve, you could say that. John was often a witness to his mother coming home intoxicated at late hours, sometimes a strange man coming with her. Look at the scene in America now: divorces, domestic abuse, molestation of children and increasing numbers of persons turning to substance abuse."

Steve was quiet for a moment.

"Dr. Sonjee, it seems both parents violated the trust John had as a child."

"Steve, you have touched on the heart of the issue. That is the issue plaguing this society today. Adults are violating the trust of their children.

Anyway, let us return to my patient, John. Apparently he did fairly well for a number of years. He had another brief hospitalization, though I was not his physician that time.

Many years after I treated John I received a phone call from one of the private psychiatrists in town. He suggested that John's sister needed to be in the hospital and asked if I could facilitate her admission and care. I agreed. She was admitted, but not under my care. All I knew was that she improved and was discharged. Obviously the psychiatrist knew about my

having been John's physician. John might have recommended that his sister be under my care. That was not the end of my contacts with the family. A few years after that John's wife called me asking for advice about a nephew's alcohol addiction problems. As I recall, I made recommendations for a substance abuse rehabilitation program in a nearby city."

"Dr. Sonjee, it seems you became a sort of consultant to John's family. This is not much of a story, but I feel haunted and touched by the story of your patient, whose sisters did not want a nigger doctor. It seems the roots of his mental illness went back to his childhood. Regardless of how you psychiatrists diagnose these conditions, I see John as a tragic and tortured person and maybe your healing touch gave him a fresh breath of life."

I responded, "Steve, we psychiatrists learn the hard way not to take any credit for patients that improve because a tragedy, such as a suicide, might be lurking around the corner."

"Dr. Sonjee, coming back to the original incident with your patient, how did you deal with being called a Nigger? How did you deal with the profanities directed against you by John? You have feelings."

I sat across from Steve, held his hands and said, "My late father actively practiced many rituals of Hinduism. I have told you before, we belong to the Brahmin caste, the priest class.

I will just give you one example: the Hindus have a certain holiday in August in which we celebrate Lord Krishna's birthday. Krishna is another Avatar, a reincarnation of Vishnu. Mythology has it that Krishna was a cowherd as a child. When I was five or six years old, on this particular day of worship, my father rented a cow from a neighbor, brought it to our backyard and worshipped it in a Hindu ritual, as if he was worshipping Krishna. I vaguely recall my confusion and I must have thought it was a bit insane. But, my father had Hindu, Christian, Muslim and Sikh friends and I do not recall his ever mentioning anything against any religion. Yes, I have feelings. I was not hurt being called a Nigger, but at the profanities directed against me."

I responded, "Let me jog my memory. All this happened so many years back. This was perhaps twenty years after I cared for John in the hospital. One evening I got a call from John's wife. I remembered her fairly well after she gave details of her husband's illness and his treatment in the hospital. She even quoted me from the family therapy sessions. She talked for some time, but then added "John is in

the terminal stage of pancreatic cancer and wants to see you. His mind is quite clear.”

I remained silent. Steve broke my reverie and asked, “Dr. Sonjee, did you go?”

I replied, “Yes, Steve, I went the next day. His wife took me to his bedside. I was shocked to see this giant of a man almost like a skeleton. He tried to get up to shake my hand, but just couldn’t. I reached out and shook his hands. He had a very beautiful smile of welcome and pleasure in seeing me after so many years. Then, he started sobbing. His wife started wailing and I held his hands tightly. I became tearful. After what seemed an eternity, I quoted to them what Lord Krishna told his disciple Arjuna in the battlefield: “Your sorrow has no cause. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. There has never been a time when you and I and the kings gathered here have not existed, nor will there be a time when we will cease to exist. As the same person inhabits the body through childhood, youth and old age, so at the time of death he attains another body. The wise are not deluded by these changes.”

I had carried a small jar of the vermilion from our Goddess in a small town in central India. I explained

to them the sacredness of the vermilion and asked them if I could place a dab of it on their foreheads as a blessing from far away, but at the same time invoking the presence of the Goddess here in this room. I gently put the red powder on their foreheads. We sat silently for a few minutes, each engrossed with what transpired. I asked permission of them to leave. John’s wife gave a hug. John, unable to reach out for a handshake, beckoned me to come near him and whispered teasingly into my ears, “You Nigger doctor, Good Bye.” He had again that unforgettable smile, joyful, with a twinkle of feigned wickedness. I gently touched his forehead and said “ Good Bye.”

Steve was silent. Then he posed the question “Did you go to the funeral service?” I replied , “ Steve, I could not make myself. Something very deep in me prevented me from attending the service and consoling his wife and kids. I did not want to view his body in the casket, looking half-alive. I wanted to remember him as almost a skeleton, a dying man with that enigmatic smile.”

*Dr. Pati, a retired psychiatrist, lives in Salem, Oregon with his wife, Norma. He played the role of Dr. Sonjee in the Oscar winning movie classic, “ One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.”*

## **Orissa Society of the Americas: Birth and the Early Years**

*Gauri C. Das*

Forty years ago, there were very few Oriyas in the U.S.A. and Canada. In the Boston area, in the late sixties, our number grew to seven. It was December 14, 1969 – Sunday afternoon. We met at Dr. Prasanta Patnaik's apartment in Cambridge for a nice Oriya luncheon. After lunch, we were engaged in conversation, discussion, debate and gossip. Revolutionary ideas sometimes are born at such meetings. So it was not a surprise when Dr. Jogeswar Rath proposed to form an association of Oriyas in the New England area and it received an enthusiastic smile of approval from all of us. Dr. Rath and I have talked about it many times before but it was the first time the idea was presented in the group meeting. Thus, the New England Utkal Samaj was born and I was elected the President of this baby organization with everybody's consent. The aims and objective of the association were immediately drafted. Those were: (1) to establish social relationship among the Oriyas in the U.S.A. and Canada, (2) to promote interest and activity in the Orissan literature and culture in the U.S.A. and Canada and (3) to help bright Oriya students desirous of coming to America for higher education. Messages were sent to newspapers in Orissa about this organization. Only a few days after the publication of the news, communication between Orissa and the New England Utkal Samaj was established. Letters, enquiries and requests came flowing in. Some Oriya social and cultural organizations in Calcutta and Bombay also contacted the New England Utkal Samaj. Some Oriya students were assisted in their efforts to come to the U.S.A. and Canada for higher studies.

During the labor-day weekend in 1970, we went in a large group to Dr. Duryodhan Mangaraj's house in Amherst, Massachusetts. There we talked about the need for the Oriyas in this country to know other Oriyas and decided to collect the names and addresses of all Oriyas in the U.S.A. and Canada. Immediately we started to make a list. At that time, Dr. Bhabagrahi Mishra was in Hartford, Connecticut. We all went to his house from Amherst. Bhabagrahi babu added some more addresses to our list. There we discussed the formation of an organization of Oriyas in the U.S.A. and Canada. After returning to Boston, on behalf of New England Utkal Samaj, we wrote to all Oriyas whose addresses were known to us, requesting them to send us addresses of other Oriyas

they might have known. Their response was overwhelming and the compilation of a directory of Oriyas in the U.S.A. and Canada continued.

In the mean time, we decided to have a get together of Oriyas in North America to discuss and formally start an organization. On October 5, 1970, we sent out invitations for a get together of the Oriyas in the U.S.A. and Canada to be held in the Hosmer auditorium of Hartford Seminary Foundation in Hartford on October 17, 1970. At that time Bhabagrahi babu's family was the only Oriya family in Hartford. All the Oriyas coming from distant places stayed in his house. On the morning of October 17, there was so much noise and commotion in his house that Bhabagrahi babu and I had to lock ourselves in a room to draft the constitution and bylaws of a new organization of the Oriyas in the U.S.A. and Canada. The objectives of the organization were stated as: (a) to form a nonpolitical and nonprofit organization of all persons interested in Orissa, (b) to promote interest and activities in the understanding of Orissan culture and (c) to facilitate exchange of information between Orissa and the United States and Canada.

That day in the late afternoon, 55 Oriyas from various places in the U.S.A. got together in Hosmer auditorium. It was a unique experience and those who were present will never forget it. For the first time so many Oriyas in North America had got together in one place. Many were meeting some old friends for the first time in many years. Everybody was excited and our joy knew no bounds. Children were playing together and running around. Many Oriyas who could not come from far off places, telephoned or sent messages conveying their good wishes and congratulations. The ladies had prepared Oriya dishes for dinner in their homes and brought it with them. After the dinner and cultural entertainment program, we discussed the formation of an organization to establish close contact among Oriyas in the U.S.A. and Canada. With the enthusiastic approval of everybody, an organization of Oriyas was born and it was named the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA). Its scope and objectives were discussed and the office bearers were elected. With unanimous support, I was elected President; Dr. Krushna Mohan Das and Dr. Amiya Kumar Patnaik were elected Vice Presidents, Dr

Bhabagrahi Misra was elected Secretary and Mr. Nagabhusan Senapati the treasurer. The executive committee members were elected to represent different areas of the U.S.A. and Canada. We decided to publish a quarterly newsletter called the Orissa Society News or Utkal Samachar.

It is amazing to recall the many thoughts and ideas of our members which were published in the newsletter in the early years. For example, communication with government and private agencies in Orissa to transfer American technical know how for practical application in Orissa, charter of an airplane from the U.S.A. to Bhubaneswar for those going on a vacation to Orissa, arrangement of marriages through the newsletter and the publication of authentic Oriya recipes for cooking. At that time, the annual family membership due was \$3.00 and the individual membership due was \$2.00, but many members also made voluntary contribution to OSA. The office bearers very often spent money for the society from their own pocket and never asked to be reimbursed. In the first few years, during the annual convention, the ladies were cooking food for the dinner in their homes and refused to accept any money for the ingredients. All the participants coming to the annual convention from distant places stayed with local Oriya families and the total cost of attending the convention was \$5.00 for family and \$3.00 for individual.

Understanding that the members of the Orissa Society of the Americas were scattered all over the U.S.A. and Canada and the geographic distance would make it impossible for all of us to get together, it was decided to open local chapters of OSA. In the beginning of 1971, local chapters were opened in Boston and New York areas. Dr. Krushna Mohan Das was the first president of New York chapter. Soon after that, with the efforts of Dr. Pramode Patnaik in Atlanta, Dr. Srigopal Mohanty in Toronto, Dr. Surya Mishra in Chicago and Dr. Sitakantha Das in South Dakota, local chapters were opened in those areas.

In the Orissa Society News, in addition to the news of OSA and Orissa, the news of meetings, get together, celebration of Oriya puja, festivals and cultural events at various chapters, marriages, birth of children, completion of education, joining in new jobs, move to new places, return to Orissa, awards, accomplishments and visits to America of family members from Orissa, were also published. For the

first time, the Oriyas had the opportunity to know the whereabouts and get the news of other Oriyas in America. Before the formation of OSA, in 1969 Dr. Jogeswar Rath and I went on a vacation and we tried to find any Oriyas in the places we visited by going through the telephone directory, very often without success. After the Orissa Society was formed, Oriyas during their travel for business or pleasure, got an opportunity to contact other Oriyas in those places and very often stayed with them in stead of a hotel. Many members of OSA, through our news letter, requested all Oriyas to stay with them if they happened to visit that part of the country. At that time, I was living in a one bed room apartment in Boston area and I used to have Oriya guests 3 to 4 times every month. Some times, two or three families would visit together and most of us would sleep happily on the sofas and the floor. Oriyas, whom I had not met before, would call from the airport and I would receive them at the airport and bring them home. This feeling of closeness and sharing among the Oriyas in North America and the opportunity of staying with Oriya families during travel were probably the major advantages of the formation of OSA.

On June 18, 1971, the first directory of Oriyas in the U.S.A. and Canada was published by OSA. The first edition contained the addresses of 160 Oriya families. In those days, the use of computers was very limited. Nagabhusan Senapati and Manmohan Subudhi were graduate students at MIT and their effort to put the directory together deserves much praise. After that, the directory was updated every three months with the publication of the Orissa Society News.

The first annual convention of OSA was held in New York City on July 3, 1971. In the general body meeting, the activities of OSA, the name and format of the newsletter were the subjects of discussion. It was decided that the office bearers should continue for one more year and at the request of Dr. Bhabagrahi Mishra, I accepted the editorship of the Orissa Society News. Dr. Jogeswar Rath was returning to Orissa and he was elected permanent representative of OSA in Orissa.

On October 30, 1971, the coastal areas of Orissa were devastated by a powerful cyclone and tidal waves. We were shocked by this terrible news and OSA immediately started a cyclone relief fund. The

members contributed to this fund with open hand and the collected amount was sent to Orissa Governor's relief fund. Besides, some OSA chapters and individual members collected and sent money to various relief agencies in Orissa.

On November 9, 1971, the Government of the United States accepted OSA as tax exempt social organization.

The second annual convention of OSA was held in Hartford, Connecticut on July 1, 1972. For the first time, members from the South and Midwest attended the convention. We discussed proposal such as: sponsoring Oriya artists for a tour of U.S.A. and Canada, helping Oriya students to come here for higher studies, establishment of scholarships in Orissa and the expansion of the scope of the Orissa Society News.

For the year 1972-73, Dr. Bhabagrahi Mishra was elected President; Dr. Sri Gopal Mohanty and Dr. Surya Mishra were elected Vice Presidents; Dr. Pramod Patnaik was elected Secretary and Dr. Amiya Patnaik treasurer. Due to some difficulties, the change over from the old office bearers to the new office bearers was delayed. In April 1973, a few months after the new office bearers took charge, Dr. Bhabagrahi Mishra returned to Orissa and at the request of the executive committee, I accepted the presidency of OSA till the following election.

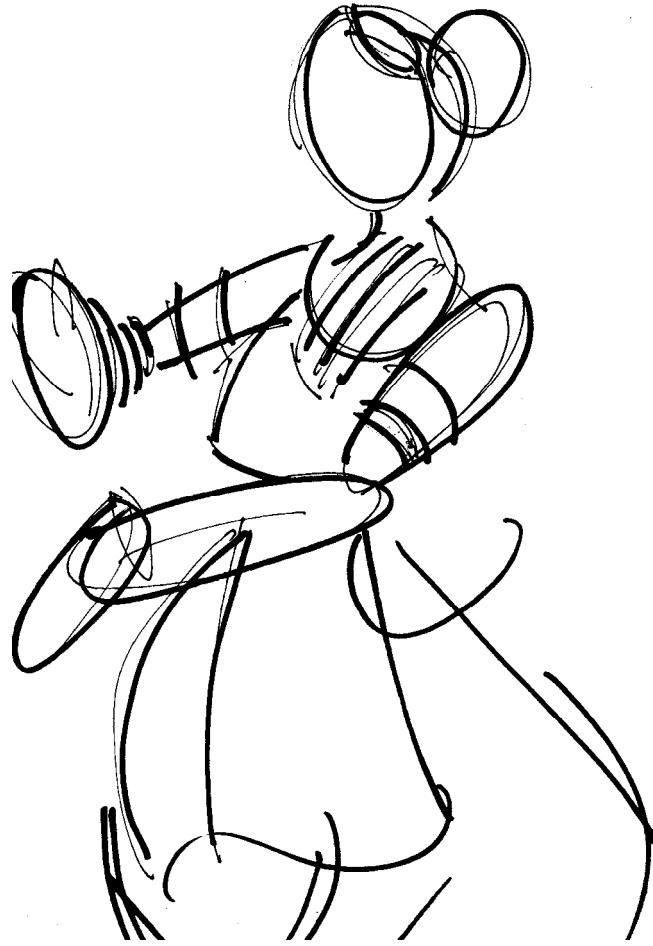
For the first few years after OSA was founded, the office bearers were elected from various places

without affiliation to any group or party. Even though there were differences of opinion among us, we all worked together for the organization without any reservation. In the 1975 election of office bearers, I was chairman of the election committee. Dr. Amiya Patnaik was contesting for the presidency of OSA and he decided to put up a slate of candidates from his group. I was afraid that the creation of a group might disrupt the unity of the members of OSA. I tried unsuccessfully to dissuade Amiya babu from forming a group for the election. Fortunately, the members of OSA, instead of voting for a particular group of candidates, voted on the basis of the qualification and capability of individual candidates. The elected office bearers were: Dr. Amiya Patnaik – President, Dr. Manindra Mohapatra and Mr. Samar Bhuyan – Vice Presidents, Mr. Rabindra Roy – Secretary, Mr. Prasanna Samantaray – Treasurer and Mr. Jnana Dash – Editor of Orissa Society News.

In July 1976, in the executive committee meeting of OSA at the sixth annual convention in Toronto, we had a debate on the increase of membership dues and a few other issues. However, in spite of the difference of opinion and arguments, we had a tremendous amount of affection and respect for one another. We felt like belonging to one large happy family and cared for the feeling of others. In those early years of OSA, the office bearers worked unselfishly and enthusiastically for the society. It was also a great pleasure because the membership very sincerely appreciated and encouraged the efforts of the office bearers.

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*Gauri C. Das is a Founder of the Orissa Society of the Americas.*



## SECTION IV

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## The Answer is “Seize”

*Pallavi Raut Sodhi*

Q: What does one do when...?

The eyes see goals that are  
An unknown few  
The heart gets a feeling  
Restless and new  
The mind muses on things  
Unsaid and unknown.

Q: What does one do when...?

Life seems to circle around  
Mysteries unknown  
Dreams unfinished  
Hopes unfulfilled  
Questions unanswered.

A: SEIZE

Seize the goals unknown  
The eyes see after all  
Seize the restless  
The heart feels after all  
Seize the things unsaid  
The mind recalls after all  
Seize and wrap life around  
The strange but existing after all.  
And you will find life is worth living after all.



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*Pallavi was born and brought up in Delhi. She is a marketing consultant by profession, having worked in India, Europe and currently Canada. Pallavi's self created mantra is "Knowledge is acquired by learning and enjoyed by sharing." She likes learning by reading and enjoys sharing her learning by teaching at York University, penning her thoughts and experiences through stories and poems like these, and when time allows, putting images to these thoughts through sketches and water colour paintings.*

## A Rainy Day

Chandra Misra

If I could only go through memory lane,  
And remember the time we were together

My wanting to live inside you  
Not from outside in.

Taking my desire out of my body  
And put in my mind

The unfinished talk in the empty parking lot  
Asking to kiss me one more time

And reached out to you with tears in my eyes  
Tasting the salty tears dripping on my cheeks.

Looking at the clouds which covered the sky  
And soon heard the rain on the roof drop by

And the desire to put my arms around you  
And say it's not too late; ah it is a rainy day.



---

*Chandra Misra, originally from Puri, is a resident of North Wales, a suburb of Philadelphia. She has a lifelong love of poetry, and considers poems as a medium of expression for inner feelings. She is a regular contributor to the Souvenir.*

## Searching for the Beloved with Love

*Arjun Purohit*

I know the one  
Who plays hide and seek in my mind  
Who opens the eyes of the tulips in the spring  
Who paints his glory on the evening sky  
Who makes the peacock dance  
And makes the blue bird sing

I know the one  
Whose splendor shines on the morning dew  
Whose grace fills a mother's heart  
Whose love excels the lovers' love  
Whose healing touch soothes all woes

I know that one  
As the wave knows the ocean  
As the dance knows the dancer  
As the baby knows the mother  
As the rain knows the cloud

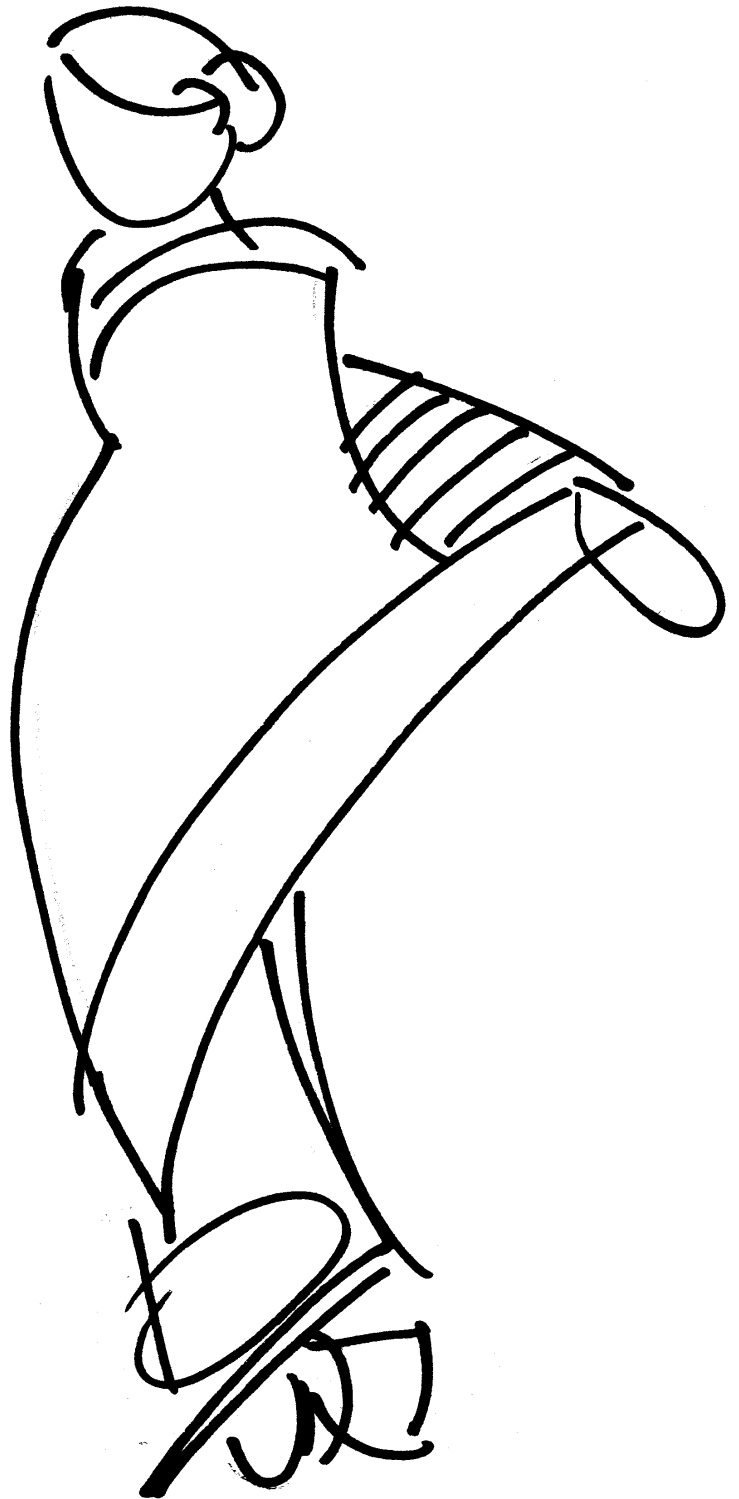
Yet I look for that one  
Shifting the musty pages of scriptures  
Among the sermons of the ancient ones  
Within the dead theories and debates  
Within the walled temple and mosque

I look for that one  
My beloved my mischievous friend  
Who does not leave any foot print  
Like a heron swimming in the sky

Why  
Only he knows  
*"First I find, then I search" - Picasso*

---

*Arjun Purohit is a Psychologist, living in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. He is passionate about Western Orissa and Buddhist philosophy.*



## Between my navel and my heart

Mamata Misra



Between my navel and my heart  
Something happened  
Something trapped for ages  
Fluttered in excitement

It didn't struggle restlessly  
As thoughts do  
Connecting, disconnecting  
Trying to take shapes of ideas  
Or make structures of concepts  
Needing attention  
To find a way out

It just woke up in a natural way  
As if it was sleeping for a long time  
It knew exactly what to do  
Like a baby bird, opening its shell  
It just came out  
And walked slowly up

It didn't transform into words  
As thoughts do  
As it passed my vocal chords  
It knew where to go and how  
Becoming fluid  
It flooded my eyes  
Then flowed down

Nothing in me resisted  
I just watched in silence  
As the gentle soft white Yamuna  
Flowed around me  
Smiling in recognition  
As if saying, child, welcome home

---

*Mamata Misra is the author of Winter Blossoms, a collection of poems. She is a community volunteer and anti-violence activist living in Austin, Texas. She has contributed to the documentary film "Veil of Silence." Her community service has been recognized with several awards, including the Austin YWCA Woman of the Year award in 2005. All proceeds from the sales of Winter Blossoms are directed toward programs empowering women. More information on [www.mamatamisra.com](http://www.mamatamisra.com).*

## My Dear Orissa

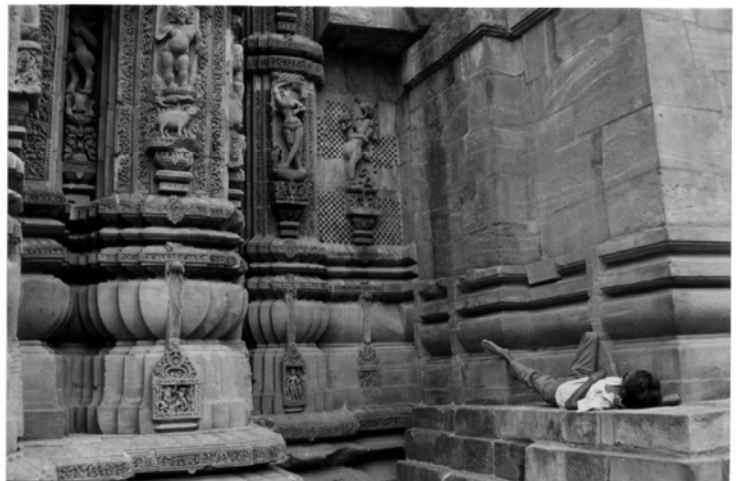
*Sneha P. Mohanty*

My dear Orissa, I listen your voice in the giggling waves  
Resonating in the Pacific, coming from Nilachal shores  
While strolling in this shore. I can feel your pure golden sands  
Dream of Bada Danda, the great path, to Bada Deula, temple, place  
I can see Bada Thakur, the great God, when I close my eyes.  
Longing for His food, Mahaprasad dishes,  
My great God Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe  
Comes With His brother and sister in three Chariots  
For the whole world can receive every year thy bliss.

Some call you Utkal, some Kalinga,  
Some pride it as Koshala  
I have heard about Kharavela,  
Traveled through Koraput hills to Keonjhar falls  
To Kalahandi to Bolangir to Simuligarh sanctuaries  
Read Geet Govinda romantic poems  
At Konaraka, touched giant wheels carved with damsels  
Feel like dancing Odissi for Sun God  
Walked on Khandagiri caves road  
Daya river valley metamorphosed King Ashoka  
Sent his peace messengers to East Asia and Sri Lanka  
Your valiant sailors went to Bali and Java.

On a boat ride in Chilika bay  
I remember sad story of Kali Jai  
Reverberating Ta Poi in Mahanadi  
On your river ride, poet Mansinha's discovery  
In moon light so much hidden beauty,  
Singing Bhanja poems, champu and Odissi  
Prayed to Sambaleswari  
Covered my head with silk scarf of Sambalpur  
Wearing matha-pat-sari of Berhampur.

Silver filigree, horn handicrafts,  
Puri patchitra - hand painting, Pipili Chandua mats,  
Jagannath, with Balabhadra, Subhadra in sides,  
Sculptures of dancing statues and flying horses,  
My little Orissa decorates my walls  
That is where my heart belongs.



---

*Sneha P. Mohanty is a frequent contributor to the Souvenir.*

## **Mahabharata Again**

*Swami Samarpanananda Giri*

### **I.**

O Kalinga Artisan of name and fame!  
Thy finger touch has given life  
To wood and stones,  
Why not return my hands and feet;  
And restore me to manliness  
To blow the conch of revolution

In the Court of Kurus  
When a Draupadi was disrobed  
Defiling the mighty throne, glorious  
For there ruled the blind emperor  
I was agitated and moved into action  
Even though I sit here immobile  
Palmless and legless  
My heart is bleeding every second

Can't you find my pair of eyes:  
Lidless, round, and robust,  
Set in motion of eternal vigilance,  
But falling to witness  
The tyranny of the rich,  
The rulers, and legislators combine

O Kalinga Artisan!  
Waste no time and  
Get back my shape, my strength, my life  
I wish to be the warrior reborn  
And to play with my new conch and wheel  
To crush the evil empire of crime,  
The cult of corruption, and the creed of greed  
I wish to repeat the war of Mahabharata  
With a new-found vigour, with new horror,  
(For) My Krishnaa to be avenged

### **II.**

O Gajapati of Puri!  
How could I rest in peace?  
My Nischintakoili is no more in bliss  
The Ratna-Sinhasana dithers in pain  
No more this temple, nor the lion-gate  
Can condemn me to eternal confinement  
Have my message:  
"I am out in my pilgrimage  
Of war and peace;  
My .Nandighosa shall return no more  
Till the evil-emperor has not seen  
The recurrence of Mahabharata horror  
My centuries old promise to the world  
In the battle ground of Dharmakshetra  
Flash back the vision of Mahabharata again  
The music of my celestial songs  
Stir my heart and shake my being,  
Awaken my Soul  
With fire, fire, and fire

O Gajapati of Puri!  
Let my stupor go for ever  
Send my message to all corners  
"O Kalinga Artisan! Waste not your time  
Get back my hands with palms and fingers  
To swirl my Sudarsana ones again,  
My weapon, my power,  
And swevel my Saranga, the twangs  
Of which could fill the world with horror  
This is no time for the magic flute  
I seek a war  
With a monsoon of missiles on the evil empire"

O Kalinga Artisan of name and fame!  
Give me the final touch, the final brush I wish to be  
the warrior reborn  
I wake up to the trumpets of Mahabharata  
That have started blowing  
Around India's horizon

---

*Swami Sampanananda Giri was a former professor of Political Science in Orissa, before he became a monk.*

## **In Motion (Without) All**

*Ankita Mohanty*

If everything could be as stubborn as a faulty film  
then I would not be frightened  
by the replaced playground equipment  
of my elementary school  
or of the fading signs along newly paved roads  
in my small, falsely predictable hometown.

I would not question the significance of  
newly-formed wrinkles teasing my mother's eyes  
or the surprising but ordinary growth  
of the kids next door, whose mother gave  
birth while I was away for a falsely short year.

I would not be startled by the fact  
that my best friend from high school  
does not look at me in the same way.  
I would be convinced this is not by choice, but  
rather, by a helpless abortion of newborn  
feelings, a miscarriage caused by distance and  
a fear that our gaps are falsely recognizable.

I would not tire of nostalgia  
in the way I do now, if everything  
moved like the film which froze  
and simply remained stubbornly still  
in the heavy moments before some tragedy,  
creating the anti-climax I falsely crave now.

Because then there would be no nostalgia  
to dream of, and we would be caught  
in a world without trust in our children  
and their half-dreaded desire for  
better swings sets and faster slides,  
both of which hold the guarantee of  
improved motion and new experiences.

---

*Ankita Mohanty is 19 years old and lives in Ann Arbor and Mount Pleasant, Michigan.*





## Ignorance

*Bagmi Das*

The world is not as big as we think  
miles between continents  
are overlooked by lightyears.

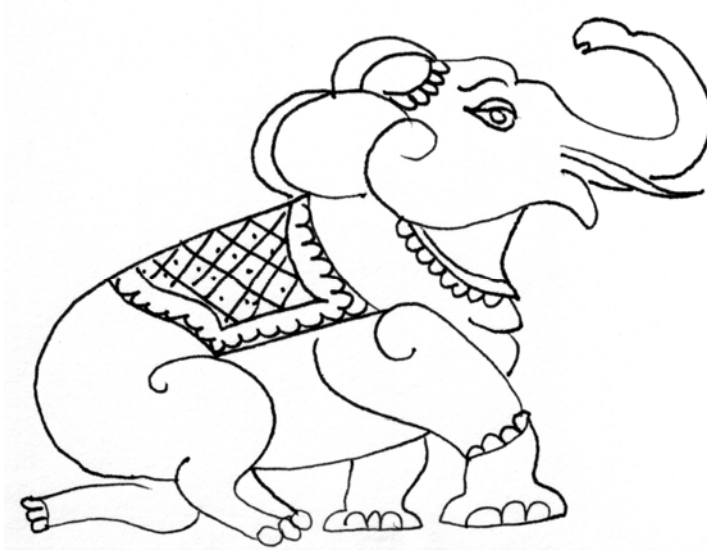
deserts mountains, pastures  
all the same when we look deep enough

how does pigment change us  
when blood can be shared

look to the stars and the world gets smaller...

and while the heavens are laughing  
we remain apart  
we nestle in the blankets of familiarity and are lost to the world

---



## Through Hourglass of Life...

*Manoj Panda*

As the Life continues  
On the meadows of time,  
Some look always back  
Brooding mine and thine.

Some always look front  
Sitting on the top,  
Never minding the ways  
What brought them up.

Some always dream  
Never working to realize,  
Dream remains the dream  
And the lot ceases to rise.

Some always work  
Without having a goal,  
Waste become their effort  
With no peace to soul.

Life is always a learning  
from days of past to present,  
as present will be past  
and past was a present.

Future is made on the base  
of rolling past and present,  
can we neglect past?  
for the sake of present?



Learn from the past  
yet don't dwell on the same,  
keep on moving my friend  
with wisdom of gem.

Obsession of future  
is a grave yard of success,  
as Present action is lost  
in the day dreams of mess.

Wise works in present  
learning from the past,  
while future never off his radar  
relishing success of repast.

Never stop dreaming  
While working with the hope,  
Never stop believing  
In the tightest bind of rope.

Freedom is our birth right  
That we share always with care,  
Will keep on trudging smiling  
Through thick and thin of snare.

---

*Manoj Panda lives in Troy, Michigan and is a frequent contributor to the Souvenir, as well as Ornet.*

## Reflections

*Rabi Prusti*

Do you remember that March Sunday morning?  
There was some snow on the ground  
And the sun was shining!

You came to this lovely world with little cry,  
But soon you gave a sweet smile  
As the flowers in the room felt so shy!

Since that Sunday morning.....  
When I see your sweet smiling face,  
As if God is telling us all the time  
“Give”, “Give” And “Giving” is the eternal base!

Just to let you know my dear.....  
We all come and go to meet the Truth some day,  
The more we “Give”, the more we “Get”  
And that seems to be the Only Way!

---

*Rabi Prusti lives in Auburn, Alabama. He is still searching  
the meaning of existence!*



## When my Parents were Young

Julie Acharya Ray

Dry leaves churned on the dirt floor  
Like a mini tornado  
Making the little heart thump  
Of fear of being swept away

Smoke from incense sticks before the Gods  
Made damp patterns in the air  
Revealing a message  
Saturated with strong optimism

The snakes in the bushes  
Feared the gold-bangled hand  
That whisked at them with a stick  
Bearing the bright shield of protection

Roads were longer  
Distances vast  
The little girl curled up in the back of the car  
Reveling at the endless joy ride

Hunger was not in the dictionary  
Freedom was  
Failure was not a prospect  
Victory was

Fights weren't anathema  
Verbal abuses sweet  
Tears and laughter weighed the same  
As if they were twins

Bright days drove away long nights  
Restful sleep bounded after bad dreams  
The saree that smelled of curry  
Ducked the baby under its cover

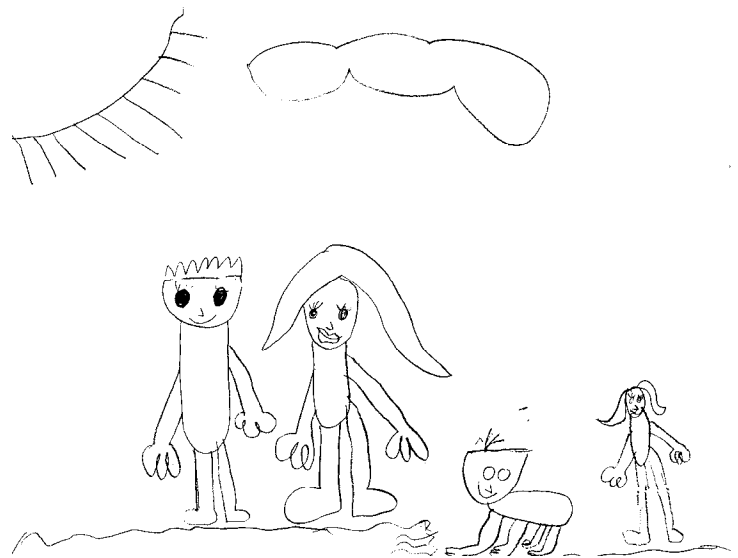
The world kept being conquered everyday  
With a letter, a word  
A single smile created infinite dreams  
When my parents were young

Youth replaced childhood  
Ineptitude with skill  
Ignorance took a beat  
While adulthood thrilled  
I ran amuck vast skies  
Plucking out the stars  
Sprinkling them around me  
To catch them sparkle their last

I lived my separate life  
And thence took theirs from them  
Adding my 'black' to theirs  
Until it became too black to comprehend

The incense sticks still ember at twilight  
Pervading the empty lung  
For the air does not smell the same  
As when my parents were young.

*(This poem was written lamenting the days of youth when the writer was a young girl and knew neither fear nor trepidation; when her mother's 'gold bangled' hand protected her from all harm. As she faced the world as an adult, the perfumed air of her youth did not smell the same as when her parents were young)*



---

Julie Acharya Ray works a postdoctoral fellow at the School of Pharmacy, University of MD at Baltimore. She lives in Elkridge, MD with her two daughters and is in the process of relocating to Salt Lake City, Utah to join her husband Abhijit Ray. Her hobbies include writing, art and music.

## Window Shopping

*Babru Samal*

Once I was born  
My parents put me in a box  
And my teachers sealed it tight  
I learnt about my country and culture  
The best of the best in the world.  
I enjoyed the festivals of life and death  
Ate curry and rice with lots of spices  
I felt at home  
And carried it wherever I went,  
Never feeling an urge to look out side the box

As I travelled across the globe  
I saw every one else  
Inside their boxes too  
With the motto  
We are the best  
Looking at me  
The alien, the underdeveloped, with despise  
Just like me looking at them.

As I grew and got educated and specialized  
The box became smaller in size  
From science to biology  
To molecular biology  
To neuroscience  
To adrenal gland  
To medulla  
To a small protein  
That controls the gene expression.  
That fascinated me  
Enticed me  
Allured me to spend all my life with it  
Inside a tiny box within the box

My window became narrower and narrower  
This tiny part of the box became my world  
My source of happiness and pain  
My frustration and my salvation.

Once in a while  
I look thru the pinhole  
And see the mega world outside  
The glories of sunrise and full moon  
Bipolar artists giving colors to life  
Toddlers dancing to the beat of music  
Video and audio clips playing  
In My space, Orkut, and Utube  
Monks learning more than me but without books  
Waves kissing the beaches  
While the stars look at them with the pang  
Of a long distant lover.

Like vishwaroopa darshan by Yashoda  
I see the creation alive and in motion  
Decorated with wild mustard flowers, lotus buds  
Cherry blossoms and ice crystals on red fruits  
Cows giving birth without painkillers  
And old people waiting for the passage of return  
To be born again and again.

I look this world with amazement  
Without understanding and realizing  
The vastness of creation outside my box  
But it is too vast, incomprehensible  
Even unrealizable  
I better go back to my box  
To my adobe and to my paradise  
To feel at home  
And become more specialized  
By knowing more and more  
About less and less.

---

*Babru Samal lives in Rockville, MD, with his wife Jayashree. His interests are in photography, poetry and study of human creativity. His website: is <http://www.babru.com> and blog <http://morningbytes.blogspot.com/a>*

## **Ropes Divine**

*Subash Chandra Satpathy*

Behold the king, the Lord of the ring  
He holds the world together  
The flag flies high onto the blue sky.  
Mingling merrily in the ether.  
Slowly Lo, slowly He comes,  
Riding a brilliant smile  
He nods at the millions  
Now milling down a mile  
Slowly, and slowly, He holds  
Court over the car  
He listens to all grievances  
Where caste is no bar  
The frenzied crowd pulls  
The ropes, as in a dream  
The monarch of all surveys  
Pouring peace along the brim.  
"Pleasure and pain" He says,  
Take it all in a platter.  
For, whatever you value the utmost,  
In reality hardly does matter."  
Salute Him, the Lord of the world  
The eternal friend of men.  
For, He only saves, and He only can  
Free us from the earthly chain.  
The Monarch takes over, the world stops  
And marches on to eternity,  
The haloed souls, now reach their goals  
Leaving the din and bustle of the city.

---

*Subash Chandra Satpathy is a retired bank manager (Syndicate Bank). He likes to read and write short stories and poetry in English as well as Oriya. His hobbies include writing, drawing/sketching and listening to music.*



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## In Memoriam

*Meghna Mohapatra, A Little Darling*



It was an exciting evening in November 2005 in Michigan. The usual celebration of Kumara Purnima was in full swing. Everybody especially the kids were very happy to be part of the joyous celebration. But none was expecting the most unexpected. Perhaps it was one of the saddest days for all of us. Michigan Oriyas were stunned as a little girl wouldn't see the next morning. A little life would be snatched away by the cold hands of Death! It was heartrending. In the face of such incidents, we feel how helpless we are - a puppet in the hands of Providence.

This cherubic 6 year old girl, Meghna Mohapatra, was the only daughter of Lipi and Santosh Mohapatra. She came to Michigan in August 2001. She was a beautiful child and won the love of all.

Turn of events leading to end of one's life sometimes happen in the most unsuspected ways. That is the mystery which is beyond the common people to unravel. Her father didn't want to come that day as he had some other important work. But Meghna insisted that she must go and be with others to be part of this great celebration. As it is difficult for any loving father to see tears in the eyes of the kids, her father gave in. Meghna gave a wonderful performance on the stage on that day. It was late in the night when they drove back. But the dark night never dawned for her. She was lost for ever by a tragic road accident on the way back home.

In Bhagavad Gita it is said that one who is born has to die. But when an innocent life is taken away so suddenly and untimely, it becomes extremely difficult to accept. May the soul of Meghna rest in peace!

OSA Michigan community decided to keep her memory alive at this great loss. In 2006 the Oriya community of Michigan established the Meghna Memorial Trust to commemorate this wonderful life. Through this trust an essay competition has been started for kids under the auspices of OSA for the first time this year. Hopefully this noble effort will kindle the memory of that smiling face for years to come.

---

*The Meghna Memorial Award for Creative Writing winners for 2008 are:*

**Meghna A** (Ages 7 to 12)

Simantini Mitra Behura for *Fantastic Me*

**Meghna B** (Ages 13 to 18)

Purvasha Patnaik for *Imagine a Night*

## **Fantastic Me**

*(With acknowledgements to Walt Whitman)*

*Simantini Mitra-Behura*

I celebrate myself and sing myself,  
For I am happy with me.  
I am growing with many talents,  
And am hopeful to be like the mothers  
Before me.

For it's me who is fantastic,  
And brimful with happiness,  
I can bounce like a cloud,  
And stay as still as a desk.  
But my imagination's nowhere near here.  
It's off on a ride.

I have no particular worries  
And I only feel joyful.  
The only thing that can destroy me  
Is the repulsive concept of hate.

Indigo is the only color that suits me.  
It's beautiful and sweet  
And quite individual,  
Just like me.

I wish I were a dolphin,  
They swim so free.  
Those carefree animals,  
Are just what I want to be.

As a paper floats down,  
I sprint through happy moments  
And walk through sad memories  
To my wondrous universe,  
Where everything is magnificent,  
Just like me.

---

*Simantini Mitra-Behura will be starting Grade VI soon. Her hobbies: Reading, long distance biking, swimming, skating. She is learning Piano, Violin and Odishi dance.*

*Likes: A science enthusiast and a seeker of world peace.*

*Dislikes: Lack of enough interest among leaders to protect our earth.*

## Imagine a night

*Purvasha Patnaik*

Imagine a night, filled with delight  
A time when one wouldn't sleep.  
For blinking an eye  
Would waste too much time  
And memories wouldn't be there to keep.

A moment, a minute, an hour, a day  
A second of happiness flying away.  
Sleeping at night has no sense at all  
It's the same as sitting and staring at a wall.

Imagine a night filled with delight  
A time when one wouldn't sleep.

Think of a boy,  
Who got a new toy  
And wants to play with it all night long.  
With his friend he wants to sit,  
And sing a very merry song.

But alas, the little boy, he must go to sleep  
During precious moments he wants to keep.  
Elder's say "play again later, maybe tomorrow!"  
But they also said "live today, there may not be tomorrow."

Imagine a night, filled with delight  
When the little boy wouldn't ever sleep  
From the little toy, he got so much joy,  
That this memory would never let him weep.

Imagine a night, filled with delight  
A time when one wouldn't sleep.  
For blinking an eye  
Would waste too much time  
And memories wouldn't be there to keep.



---

*About Purvasha: She is 13 years old and has interest in Indian classical music and dance. She a vivid reader and has developed interest in writing short poems. She is also an encyclopedia on Bollywood hindi songs.*

## Amrik Loves...

*My name is Amrik. I am going to be 6 in July 2008. I am going to write what I love. There are so many things that I love, but I am going to write some of them.*

I love my Dad, he is my Earth.

I love my Dad's piggy back ride

I love my Kindergarten Teacher

I love all my friends

I love Butterflies

I love getting wet in summer

I love to jump on the couch (till I hear Mom shouts)

I love Cuttack (Mom & Dad's place)

I love my Aja (Who is 6yrs old like me, not 60)

I love Pakhala (water rice), Gupchup, and Rosogolla (white round thing)

I love it here and I love going to India.

I love doing Om Namah Shivaya

I love Jagga And Ganesh

I love Batman Spiderman And Hanuman

I love my Home

I love my Birthdays, blowing the candles with my parents.

Now I have to end, if I keep writing Mom says I will be a book. Before I do THE END the last I love...I love my MOM (who asked me to write and helped me type this). I Love you Mom the Temperature of Sun and for all the things that you do for me.

---

*Six year-old Amrik Mohanty is the son of Satya & Prachi Mohanty of Norristown, PA.*



## Diversity?

*Bagmi Das*

Diversity is a loaded word. My grade school experience lay in the suburbs of Maryland where “diversity” meant the intermingling of black and white. We had the occasional Asian or Hispanic individual in our school, making them more of an anomaly than a minority.

High school led to a new definition. Diversity was the cafeteria at lunchtime. People divided into their respective comfort zones. There were tables of punks, athletes, drama students, band kids, mathletes, popular kids, etc. We all sat in the same cafeteria, eating the same food, and having entirely different experiences because of the people we were with. Conversations stayed safe. We dealt with problems that had tangible solutions. Those in the cliques became prime authorities in what and who were in and out.

College, however, was different. The term “diversity” was drilled into our heads. We had multicultural conferences, gender issues conferences, cultural shows, and events on the University Center. Orientation first brought the new extent of diversity. In an event called Community Collage, several students were able to share their stories and their talents with the incoming freshmen. People talked about their biracial background, danced traditional dances, and talked about their life as a wealthy white male. Diversity evolved. It was no longer about races or cliques. Diversity touched upon the different experiences that people have had.

My past three years have made me realize what that definition truly means. Experience is nothing unless you are experiencing it yourself. In order for diversity to pervade throughout a society, each member has to be able to embrace the others. Cultural shows do nothing if they are only attended by people of that culture. Gender conferences get nowhere if their main constituency is of those already active in these issues. In short, a person is useless unless they affect another.

I took some time getting used college. People stayed in their high school mindset. They focused on their comfort zones from high school. Whether this was defined by a religion, a culture, a sport, or a major was of little concern. Everyone rushed to make a niche at school and was reckless in doing so. The cliques were formed by orientation’s end, as exclusive as those of high school but with greater numbers. I, however, never fell into one group during high school and was uninterested in boxing myself into a stereotype in college. I was used to migrating between organizations and people. I soon saw that my way of life was not as easy in college. The people built a strong wall around their interests or cultures and those not willing to devote their entire self were immediately blocked out. I saw so many people trapped by the concept of being involved in Greek Life, Christian fellowships, dance troupes, or a major. They succumbed to being one of many, rather than letting themselves become a mosaic of different thoughts and experiences.

I chose not to be defined by what I did and allow myself to work with who I was and build a college career through that. In this University I have seen religion, culture, gender issues, majors, and political activist groups and a variety of other subsets of society. I have involved myself and grown. I cannot say that my path was the right one. While I know that I have gained so much from what I have absorbed into my college experience, I also know that several other people are happy with their groups and will have something to hold onto and a legacy to leave the University. For me, though, that legacy will be left by something I created and implemented myself; it will be a cause of who I am and not who and what I was associated with. I can leave saying that I exposed myself to a host of different worlds and redefined my boundaries.

---

*Bagmi Das is a current attendee of Carnegie Mellon University. She would like to dedicate this essay to all of her residents that had the courage to be extraordinary and move beyond the norm.*

## Gentlemen

*Sanjay Misra*

Beginning early September of my sophomore year, every Saturday from about midnight to two in the morning, I had visitors lining up outside my bedroom window to hear the show. When the weather was warm, the esteemed imperial moths took their mezzanine seats atop the windowsill while the crickets chirped their own harmonies from the lawn seats below. In the cooler months, the steady breezes added percussion by tapping incessantly on my window. However, the only regulars during my first grueling songwriting process were my acoustic guitar and me.

“Stop wasting your time with this music nonsense,” my mom often counseled after I woke up woozy on Sunday morning. She reminded me that tenth grade is serious: “You need to focus on your academics.” I had been playing guitar in a rock band, The Gentlemen, with three of my friends since the beginning of ninth grade. After spending countless hours playing Beatles covers and jazz numbers, we finally developed the musical maturity to write our own songs. Though I accepted the practicality of my mother’s advice, I struggled to let go of The Gentlemen completely, and now, I was embarking on the epic journey of independently composing my first song.

While most people were dreaming, I was playing assorted melodies, persisting to make a dream come alive. After several months, the song had a basic

structure but lacked substantial musical excitement. Finally, on a cool April night, I gave my guitar a rest and tried to compose an intricate melody in my head. The process proved likewise futile: my ideas were discordant. Just when I had given up and fallen into bed, a short melody rang in my ears. Quickly grabbing my guitar, I realized that the melody was only five notes, yet it fit perfectly into the bridge of my song. Two months later, after intense orchestration and composition, the song I had waited for, aptly titled “Waiting for You,” was born. It was late June, well past the expected delivery date.

“Waiting for You” is more than just a twelve-minute song. It tracks my musical evolution from birth to adulthood. The song emerged out of my passion but lacked a clear distinction, just as I joined The Gentlemen in ninth grade with no idea of what its musical legacy would be. In the song itself, the simple five-note melody evolves into a complex orchestration with various instruments weaving harmonies together, mirroring my transformation into a curious musician exploring life’s complexity through the intricate simplicity of music. Writing music and playing in The Gentlemen has enabled me to explore areas that are not taught in the classroom, such as human emotions and relationships. Thus, by writing “Waiting for You,” I not only initiated my songwriting career, but also nurtured my inquisitive nature, both of which will endure as long as the song.

---

*Sanjay Prayag Misra is 18 years old and graduating from North Penn High School in Lansdale, Pennsylvania this year. In addition to writing he enjoys playing goalie for my school soccer team. He plays the guitar in a band he and his friends formed, called the The Gentlemen. He is going to attend Harvard University this year to study Economics.*

## The Sapphire Pendant Part Two

(As continued from the Souvenir 2007)

Anya Rath

Mira and Komal just stared stubbornly at each other. Komal frowned, "What do you mean you're not from this time?"

Mira, who had been trying to explain her predicament, and was on the verge of hysterics, responded, "What I mean is I saw Princess Paveena last night in her *youth!*"

Komal sighed and picked up a black box with a stick coming out of it. She spoke into it, "Did anyone do a catscan on Patient 3342?"

Mira stared at her like she was crazy. And then surprisingly a voice responded.

"No, she had no visible head injuries. She was basically unscathed, minus scratches on her arms. Why?"

"She is saying impossible things, and I suspect she may have some amnesia as well."

Mira glared at Komal. She had no idea what Komal meant, but she suspected it wasn't very good.

Mira started, "You know, I'm pretty sure there is nothing wrong with me."

The voice came from the box again.

"Well, bring her down. Which nurse is this?"

"This is Nurse Komal speaking."

"Okay then. See you in a few minutes."

Mira climbed out of the bed, and gasped to she was not wearing the clothes she was certain she was wearing last.

"Who changed me," She stuttered.

"Me, of course. Now come on we have to get a wheelchair for you."

Mira speechless with embarrassment at a total stranger changing her clothes for her, complied without really thinking.

She followed Komal into a closet, where she pulled out a chair with little rolling round things. Komal gestured, implying Mira was supposed to sit in the seat.

Mira hesitantly stepped forward and took a seat. Komal pushed the chair and Mira screamed, "What was that about?"

Komal laughed, "What are you talking about?"

Mira yelped, "I'm talking about you trying to kill me!"

Komal rolled her eyes, "Shut up, and hold on to the sides for support."

Mira, used to following orders, did as she was told.

After a clean checkup, (the scary device operator person pronounced her fit in the head.) they went back to her room.

Komal sighed, "Well, I just realized I don't even know your name."

"My name is Mira."

"Okay, Mira. Who should we call to come pick you up?"

"What do you mean?"

"You have to go home. We have other patients who need your room and bed."

"But... I don't know where to go."

"Oh dear. How old are you?"

"I think I'm fifteen by Ojal didi's count."

"Ahh, there we go. Where does Ojal live?"

"Ojal didi lives in the palace."

"You mean those remains those kids found you by? There was no one else there."

"Listen, I am telling you I don't belong here! Ojal didi lives in the Sindoor Palace! The Sindoor Palace in all its beauty. I'm serious. Komal didi, you must believe me!"

"Mira you are constantly telling me you're from the seventeenth century. How in the world are you in this day and age? Can you tell me that?"

"Um, my necklace..." she fumbled, and grasped it as her hands closed around the cool sapphire stone, "Princess Paveena gave it to me."

Okay, Mira, I took a history course before I decided to go into the medical field. Queen Paveena was and is still known for her greediness. Why in the world would she have given it to you, even if this whole crazy story was real?"

"She didn't like Princess Iraja- she wouldn't care if she had lost it, "in an undertone she added, "that's exactly what Ojal didi last said to me."

Komal smiled, "Then your Ojal didi has some smarts. So you're saying Princess Iraja gave it to her, and then she gave it to you. Wait... why did she give it to you? Let me guess you are the princess's best friend right?"

Mira looked at her feet, and blushed. Self consciously picking at her nails she said, "I was a palace servant."

"Oh. Usually when people have fantasies, they don't imagine themselves picking up after other people. Listen, Mira is something going on at home? Do you *have* a home, is the better question."



“What can I say that will make you believe me?”  
Mira pleaded out of frustration.

“Mira, I can tell you are stressed out over this, but I just can’t believe you’re from three hundred to four hundred years ago. Do you see it from my point of view?”

“Yes, I suppose, but... how will I get home? I hate this necklace, just take it from me now!”

“Wait, how does your necklace fit into this again?”

“As soon as I put it on, I was whisked away from my time.”

“And Irajā gave it to Paveena. Irajā and Paveena were both in competition for the throne. Did Paveena ever wear the necklace?”

“I had never seen it before the evening she gave it to me.”

Komal’s eyes widened, “Mira, was there ever such a thing as... magic in your time?”

Mira dropped the necklace, and gaped at Komal as it clattered onto the ground.

*To be continued...*

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*Anya Rath is a ninth grader at LC High School North. She particularly enjoys writing. She lives in Michigan with her parents Nirmal and Swapna, and her younger sister Nayna.*



## Rainbow

*Simantini Mitra-Behura*

Rainbow is VIBGYOR.  
Violet and Indigo,  
Blue and Green,  
Yellow, Orange, and Red.  
That's why rainbow is so beautiful.  
But is it just beautiful or,  
Could it mean more?  
Are trees green,  
Cars red, blue and lilac,  
Flowers pink and purple,  
Water, blue?  
But Trees and Cars,  
Flowers and Water,  
Are all black,  
In the dark.  
Oh! I know,  
Without those tiny droplets  
Rainbows are just pure light.  
May be that's where trees,  
And cars, and flowers,  
And water get their colors!  
And in so light is the strangest of all.  
Light knows no beginning,  
Nor end of time!  
I wish I were light!  
I would be forever a child!  
Future, present and past,  
Will be my ornaments!  
Immortal would be me,  
To dream big for ever!



## My Favorite Place

Siddharth Nayak

My favorite place is my mother's heart...  
I like the place, the place built of love  
Sweet as sugar, but not sugar  
Sometimes sour from scolding

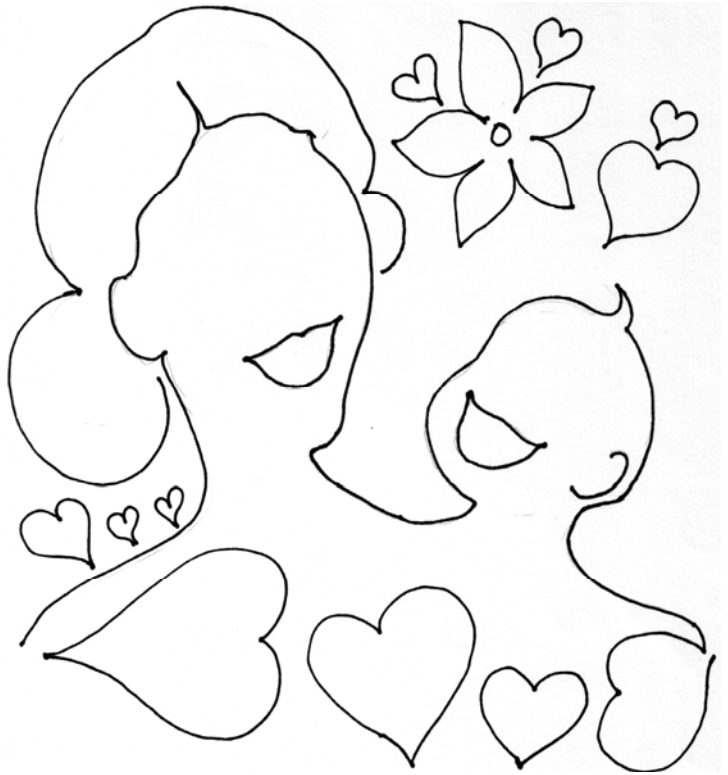
My mother's heart is always lit with happiness ...  
Wherever I go I stay in it, always secure, never lost...

My mother's heart always has perfect room for me ...  
Never crowded with whole world in it  
Never too lonely with just me in ...

Whenever I get scared, it calms me down ...  
Whenever I get happy, it makes me happier ...  
Whenever I am successful, it swells with pride  
Whenever I fail, it contracts and holds me tight  
A place so flexible just right for me...

Sometime blue with depth of love  
Sometime yellow with happiness  
Sometime white with purity  
Sometime green with approval and encouragement  
Sometimes red with caution...  
A place so colorful keeps me content

My favorite place is my mother's heart ... it always was, it is, and it will always be!!!



---

*Siddharth Nayak wrote "My Mother's Heart" in 2006 for National PTA sponsored Reflection program. This poem was selected from his school to the county and was selected from county for the state level competition. Siddharth is 10 year old, studies in 4th grade in the Dr. Salley K. Ride Elementary School in Germantown, Maryland.*

## March

Rasesh Behera

In March,  
It will be "SPRING."  
I hope  
The flower  
will smell good.  
The trees  
will be full of leaves;  
Spring Once  
Spring twice;  
Spring chicken soup  
With Rice.

---

Rasesh R. Behera. Grade II; Teacher: Madam Stuffer. Cedar Grove Elementary School, Germantown, Maryland

## **We can make a difference**

*Siddharth Nayak*

We can make a difference by training other people the “*Each One Reach One, Each One Preach One, and Each One Teach One*” system. First, we reach out to elders and spend time with them; they tell us about their experiences in *past*. Second, we influence our friends to practice good habits and thus we improve the *present* of the world. Third, we teach disadvantaged children with our knowledge and bring up the *future*. So, in the process we preserve the *past*, help the *present* to excel, and build up the *future*.

*Each One Reach One is a concept to reach out to the elders and to get in touch with our past.*

For elder people life is stressful because they go through major losses such as health, spouses, independence, and physical capability, etc. They need external support to bear the pain of the losses and live in dignity. In some countries, the elderly people are respected because of their life experiences and the wisdom they have. An extended family shares responsibility for elderly people. The family members view it as an honor and opportunity to repay the debt of those who cared for them when they were small. But in America, it is easy for the elderly to feel devalued and pushed aside in favor of those who are younger. At the same time, a lot of adults with a lack of family support system feel squeezed between the needs of both their parents and their children. Elderly people have less company and they have chances of dying early from heart problems because of their loneliness. At the same time children of this generation do not know as much about the past as the elders. The wisdom from past will be lost if we do not learn from the elders.

We can help elderly people maintain dignity by speaking in the same way we would like to be spoken to, by listening to their life experiences, by paying them attention and by sitting at eye-level to speak with someone in a wheelchair. We can visit elders with prepared picnic style meals rather than showing up to cook, if they would rather spend time together talking. Sometimes we avoid elderly people because they need so much help with daily activities. Somewhere we forget that we need them as much as they need us. By helping them we learn life experiences without really living through it, in the process, we preserve our past.

*Each One Preach One is a concept to positively influence peers and friends who are our country's present.*

Youths are self-centered. Youths are driven by peer pressure, which sometimes leads them to eat wrong food, smoking tobacco, taking steroids, bullying, drinking alcohol, driving drunk and making wrong choices. Youths take wrong decisions because they want to be liked by their peers and they do not have the courage to do the right things against what is considered cool. Sometime they engage in wrong practices like cheating to get good grades. Youths today are also too attached to computers, iPod, and games, which leads to poor social life and takes time out of studies and outdoor activities.

While growing up youths need acceptance and approval to avoid risk-taking behavior. Youths who do not feel accepted by other people may not appreciate their own selves because they do not feel that they are doing as much as they should or can. Also, youths with learning disabilities sometimes feel rejected due to their slow learning process and more likely to associate with other rejected peers. In these circumstances, peer pressure can be more negatively influential. Some youths risk losing trust of parents just to blend in with other groups with negative peer influences.

Healthy friendship stands on youths' self-identity, self-confidence and independence. Positive peer influences can improve habits, and encourage hard work to succeed. We can be very good role models for our peers by empathizing with the challenges faced by them and by showing appropriate social behavior. We usually try to succeed, but we achieve our goals faster at the urging from our peers. We use others positive impression of us as an encouragement to succeed. We can enhance our positive characters traits and be the peers to instill positive influences on our friends. This will motivate our peers to succeed, block any negative pressure to take over their thoughts and in the process we can strengthen our present.

*Each One Teach One is a concept to nourish our future by educating kids who need extra help.*

We learn from teachers, grandparents or parents. If we teach another child and the child when grows up teaches another child, this chain continues enriching our future. Education enables our mind to open up

for creations, imagination, ideas etc. At some phases of our life we do not like school due to homework. However, if it was not for the school and the education it provides we would not understand anything properly. Education helps us get good jobs and also makes us perform better in our jobs.

We might think that we are educated and have nothing to do with uneducated people. However, as a responsible citizen we have an obligation to our country to teach fellow uneducated people. We sometimes wonder how to help. We can find

uneducated people in many places; for example, if our cleaning lady is uneducated we can offer to teach her. We can also help kids of disadvantageous families with their homework.

Maybe we can donate a part of our allowance to help pay for their books and supplies. If we could also convince our friends to do the same, they could donate a part of their allowance. We can take some time out of each day for this cause and we might be able to make a difference in someone's life and in the process we nurture our future.

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*Siddharth Nayak wrote "I can Make a Difference" in 2007 for National PTA sponsored Reflection program. This essay was selected from his school to the county level competition. Siddharth is 10 year old, studies in 4th grade in the Dr. Salley K. Ride Elementary School in Germantown, Maryland.*

## **I love you**

*Siddharth Nayak*

I do not love you for the toys,  
I say "I loooooove you" when you buy me the latest toys  
But the toys are not what I love you for ...

I do not love you for the clothes,  
I say "I loooooove you" when you get me some cool clothes  
But the clothes are not what I love you for ...

I do not love you for the food,  
I say "I loooooove you" when you make me some delicious food  
But the food is not what I love you for ...

I do not love you for the house,  
I say "I loooooove you" when I come to our safe home  
But the house is not what I love you for ...

I love you because  
Love's only reward is love!

---

*Siddharth Nayak wrote "I love you" for his dad on his birthday in 2007.*

**If I will be**  
*Samarth Nayak*

If I will be a fire fighter...  
I will stop fire  
I will teach others to STOP-DROP-ROLL if they catch fire on their clothes.

If I will be a police man on my motor cycle...  
I will protect the community  
I will teach people to stay out of trouble.

If I will be a painter...  
I will paint pictures of the beautiful world.

If I will be a pilot...  
I will help people travel from one place to other  
I will take people to their families.

If I will be a teacher...  
I will teach students how to read books and write stories  
To be careful and not tear their books  
I will teach students to be happy and be good listeners

If I will be a musician...  
I will make people happy with my music  
I will teach music in Sally K. Ride Elementary School.

If I will be a volunteer...  
I will help people in need  
I will give food and juice to people.

Now I am a little boy,  
I will just be a good boy!

---

*Samarth Nayak wrote this poem in 2007 for National PTA sponsored Reflection program and was selected from his school to the county level competition. Samarth is 5 year old, studies in Kindergarten in the Dr. Salley K. Ride Elementary School in Germantown, Maryland.*

## **Making a difference, One day at a time**

*Sareet Nayak*

I can make a difference...

At home by

Listening to my parents  
Listening music  
Loving my parents and brothers  
Doing my homework  
Cleaning up my room after I play  
Talking respectfully and softly

At school by

Listening to my teacher  
Making friends  
Finishing my lunch in time  
Being a good team player  
Completing my class work

In the community by

Selling more Sally Foster toys  
Being happy and making everyone happy  
Talking to everybody and listening to others  
Helping elders and others in need  
Singing and dancing

In my country by

Pledging to my country and people of my country  
Respecting my country's flag

In the world by

Learning different languages  
Respecting people from other countries.

---

*Sareet Nayak wrote this poem in 2007 for the National PTA sponsored Reflection program. This poem was selected from her school to the county level competition. Sareet is 5 year old, studies in Kindergarten in the Dr. Salley K. Ride Elementary School in Germantown, Maryland.*

# Time Travel

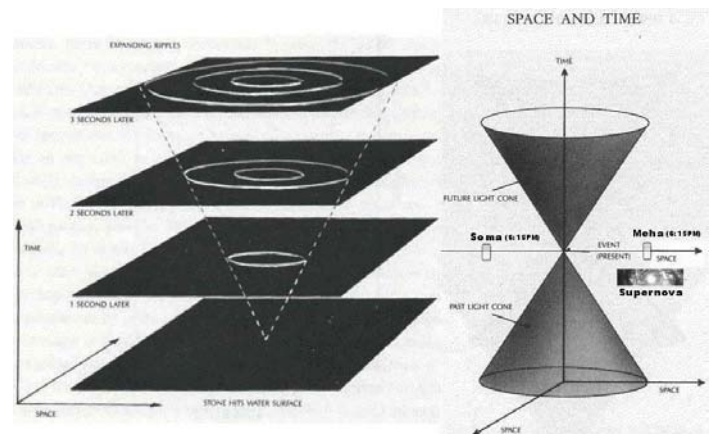
Simantini Mitra-Behura

Have you ever seen the ripples when something is dropped on the water? Now picture an image of the first second of a ripple formation. Picture the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> seconds of this formation. Now stack the images on top of each other in order of ascending seconds, and keep a little space in between. If you draw a line connecting all of the outer ripples you will find that it forms a cone! This cone is called a light cone. Now put 2 light cones inverted on top of each other, vertices touching, and draw a line through the center of the two light cones. This line is time, the bottom cone is the past light cone, the top cone is the future light cone, and the point at where the 2 cones touch is the present time. Wait, maybe I'm going a little too fast. It probably does not make any sense to you. Right! If you look at the diagram below you can tell that this idea is not mine and it made no sense to me either. It's a borrowed idea from the book, *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking, except that I have added some of my own illustrations to the inverted light cones. Ask me why I borrowed this idea? I have read many books and movies which include time travel. All those books and movies like *A Wrinkle in Time* and *Tuck Everlasting* were fantasy and might not be true. So I decided to do my own research about time travel which encouraged me to use this idea as an introduction to the concept of time travel.

Now let me explain this idea in my own way. Let's imagine I'm riding a spacecraft on an endless highway hypothetically shown as a straight line in the middle of the inverted light cones crossing the vertices (my modifications to the Dr. Hawking's light cone diagram with legends Meha, Soma and Supernova). This highway is space. We now have a clear picture of time and space. I don't know if anyone other than me is there in the highway. Suddenly Meha calls me and says that she is on the same highway and just saw a supernova explosion at 6:15 PM on her clock tuned to an atomic clock. I immediately checked my clock tuned as well to an atomic clock. It read 6:15 PM. We both know that the event is happening in our present. Only difference is that I am behind her in the highway. It is like someone telling you that he just saw an accident on 59 South who was traveling ahead of you.

Now let's tweak the circumstances a little bit. Let's assume again that I'm riding on the same highway and Meha calls me saying that she is seeing

a supernova explosion occurring at 6:15 PM in her clock. I look at my clock and it shows 6:14 PM. We know that our clocks are reading correct as they are tuned to atomic clocks. Then how is it possible that we are reading two different times? In Newton's world one of the clocks must be wrong. It assumes that time has been ticking the same way every where in the Universe under all circumstances since its beginning, whether you are running or resting or whatever. However, in Einstein's world both clocks are right. We now know that Einstein's world is more real, so we have to accept that both clocks are reading right. If so could it be possible that she is in my future and I am in her past? My present tells me that in my world time is 6:14 PM. However, in Meha's present in her world her time is 6:15 PM. I have not reached that time yet. Is then that someone's future is my present and my present is someone's future. Wait, what's going on! Am I saying that there is no such thing as past, present and future? All are relative, is that what it looks like?



Is it real? Or is it all our imagination? How do my clock and Meha's clock read different times, and yet both are correct? We bring the issue of time travel when we ask the question - Is it possible for me to arrive in Meha's present which is in my future? To answer the question we have to look into another situation. What happens when Meha says her watch is reading 6:15 PM but I read in my watch 6:16 PM? So there are three distinct situations - 1) my clock and Meha's clock read exactly same, 2) my clock reads 1 minute slower to Meha's, and 3) my clock reads 1 minute faster to Meha's. The first condition is very



easy to understand. Both Meha and I are in the same present. How do you then get into a situation where my clock is either reading slower or faster than Meha's? What happens then? I learnt from "A Brief History of Time" that this situation happens when objects move at very high speed. We learn there that the higher the speed the slower the clock. As we all are shuttling at breath taking speed around the Universe with our solar system our time ticks differently from the one on any other such objects which are traveling at different speeds. With this understanding it is now easy to say if I will ever catch up with Meha's world. If my clock is ticking slower than Meha's then I am speeding faster than Meha. Sooner I will be in her world in both space and time (it is still puzzling what happens when I cross her and my time is still ticking slower than hers). However, if my clock is ticking faster than hers then Meha's space craft is speeding faster than mine. I will never be able to be in her world unless I speed up (but how am I supposed to know what speed Meha is speeding). One thing we must all keep in mind that these big changes in clocks happen at a very high speed and the clock stops ticking at the maximum achievable speed - the speed of light. So the only solution to catch up with Meha's world is to travel at a speed very close to the speed of light and hope that Meha world technologies are not as advanced as mine. Another easy way to catch up with Meha's world is from the fantasy world of Star Wars where you take shortcuts like Wormholes. I don't understand anything of that yet. Or, better, build a time machine like in the book "Contact" by Carl Sagan which transfers Ellie Arroway to a different world where she meets her father. But I am not sure whether she went to the past or future. At least the book is not clear about that. From what I know now however, future, present and past are all relative. So it does not matter.

Let me explain now what I mean when I say time is ticking slower or faster than someone else's. Assume a fixed time duration  $D$  (for example start of an event, say supernova, to the end of the event), and let us measure the time with two different clocks in two spacecrafts A and B shuttling at different speeds. If A is going faster than B then the clock in A will measure less time than the clock in B. This is because the clock in A is slowing down. What does that mean? It means if clock in B is ticking like "tick...tick...tick...tick" then clock in A will tick something like "tick.....tick.....tick.....tick". Because all clocks read by counting how many times each of them ticks, the two clocks will read differently for the same duration  $D$ . In our example the clock in spacecraft A is ticking slower by being faster in traveling speed. So it will read lesser time than the clock in spacecraft B. This should explain how Meha's clock was reading 6:15 PM while my clock was reading 6:14 PM.

In conclusion, if I pick 2 clocks perfectly tuned, put one at home and with the other I travel around the world nonstop, I believe when I come back the clock with which I was traveling would be slower, however small, than the one at home. Therefore, in the context of our colossal universe I believe there are no such things as present, past, or future. They are all relative in space and time, but in the context of a smaller world like our solar system, there is only present. We cannot go to the past and we can only predict our future with our present actions. Nevertheless time travel should be exciting.

Acknowledgement: I would like to thank my Bapa, Somdutt Behura, for modifying the light cone diagram above to fit my explanation, revising the text, and helping me to understand the concepts that I have tried to explain about time travel.

## **Fun facts about India: What 3<sup>rd</sup> graders want to know about India**

*Anshuman Mishra*

I had to present my Social Studies project to my 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class. I was so excited because it was about India. Here are some of the facts I presented about India.

Its Indian name is Bharat which means “The land of light”. It is located in Asia and its capital is New Delhi. Its population is 1,144,734,000 (it is the second most populated country in the world) and its land area is 2,973,190 sq km. The flag is saffron on top, white in the middle and green at the bottom. The white part has a special symbol in the center called the “Ashoka Chakra” after the emperor Ashoka. One special fact is that there are TONS of official languages! Some of them are Hindi, English, Sanskrit and Oriya. The national language is Hindi. The currency is the Rupee. 100 paisa equals one Rupee.

The chief exports are cotton and silk textiles, software, medicines, tea, rice, mangoes, jewelry and gemstones. India is very hot and dry during summer and very rainy during the monsoons. There was a picture of a city with flooded streets and people holding umbrellas after a monsoon rain. The water was up to their knees! The people eat most grains but mostly rice, flat breads called chapattis, fish, chicken, a soup made out of lentils called dal, vegetables and tons of fruit. Some of my favorite foods are rasagolla, samosa and khiri.

The main animals are Bengal tigers, cobras, Indian elephants, peacocks, one-horned rhinos, Langur monkeys, many types of deer and water buffaloes. Most women wear a sari, a 5 yard piece of cloth wrapped around the body. Men wear a cloth wrapped around their legs called a dhoti. Women also wear a Shalvar-kameez (loose pants and long top) and men wear Kurta-churidar (long, loose shirt and pants). Men and women often wear Western clothes.

The national sport is field hockey although cricket and soccer are very popular. Chess, cards and flying kites are all very popular. Did you know that Chess and Parcheesi originated in India hundreds of years ago? The main festivals are the spring festival of colors, Holi, where you throw colored powder and colored water on everyone and the winter festival of lights, Diwali, where you set off firecrackers and other fireworks. The main religion in India is

Hinduism. The holy books in Hinduism are the 4 Vedas and the Gita. These books are all very old and were written by holy men called rishis. The two epics are the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. They are all written in Sanskrit.

The tallest mountain range in the world, the Himalayas, borders India at the top. The Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea border India at the bottom. One of the longest rivers in the world is the Ganga, the holiest river in India. Indian art and architecture are among the best in the world. Thousands of people from all over the world come to see the Taj Mahal in Agra and the ancient forts and magnificent temples like the Jagannath temple in Orissa. Ancient India was famous for its astronomers (Bhaskaracharya came up with the first accurate calculation of the circumference of the Earth in the 5<sup>th</sup> century), mathematicians (who came up with zero) and philosophers/surgeons (who invented early surgical and dental instruments).

Then my friends started asking questions and I answered them. Here are some of them.

Q: How rich is India – poor, middle or rich?

A: Middle. Then someone said: “India used to be rich but the British invaded and stole all the riches and made India poor but now it’s in the middle and getting richer.”

Q: How hot is India?

A: It is hotter than Texas during summer and very rainy during the monsoon.

Q: Do people in India wear silk clothes every day?

A: No, they only wear silk clothes on special occasions like festivals and weddings.

Q: How long did it take to make the “scarf” (chadar) you’re wearing?

A: It’s hand woven out of silk and takes about 2 weeks to finish!

Q: If you wear your “shirt” (kurta) without your “scarf”, is it a public insult? Do they take you to jail?

A: No Way! It’s okay to not wear the “scarf”. People will just think you’re having a bad day! Everyone burst out laughing!

My teacher decided that there were lots of facts for everyone to think about. So I ended my presentation.

---

*Anshuman Mishra, son of Snigdha and Srikanta Mishra, is a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader in the Talented and Gifted Program at Pond Springs Elementary School in Austin, TX. He is learning Tang Soo Do, Hindustani classical vocal music and western classical guitar. Anshuman loves to play on his Nintendo DS and is a voracious reader.*

## Acceptance

Nayna Rath

“Oh I knew this was going to be a horrible day!” mourned Padma, she kicked the bathroom stall.

Padma looked around helplessly for her homeroom.

“2015, 2014, 2013, grrrr where is 1206!!!” she thought she heard something but, nobody would be out right now because it was class time. She moved two steps before she heard giggling coming directly behind her. This time she wishked around to meet 4 pairs of beady little eyes glaring right back at her. There were five girls, all of them looked like juniors, except one girl, she looked like a sophomore (just like Padma). Padma stuck her hand out. But the first girl just crinkled her nose.

“Ummm...I don’t make contact with loser, but anyway you must be the *new girl* ☺”

The girl made the last two words sound like a month old can of tuna. The girl said her name was Claire and that every morning Padma would have to leave \$5 dollars on the desk in the science lab and if she didn’t then something bad would happen. Claire stuck out her finger with disgusting confidence and said all the names of the 4 girls behind her. Finally she got to the girl that seemed like she was in the same grade as Padma. Her name was Priya. Claire stomped over to Padma and snarled in her ear.

“If you tell this little gathering to anybody, especially the teachers and any of your loser frien-“

But Padma didn’t even hear the rest she fled to the girl’s bathroom. Padma ran into one of the stalls. She could not believe it, nobody talked to her like that in her old school!!! She was the queen bee!!! So there she was saying how horrible the day was. Padma stopped cursing herself for being so stupid not to know where her classroom was. She heard the door swing open and the knock on the stall she was in. Padma slowly undid the lock fearing that Claire followed her into the bathroom. Padma let out a air of relief, it was only Priya!!

“Forget about those girls Padma, even I had to pay the price once. Don’t worry, everything will be alright soon.

Let me help you to find your room.” Priya said.

“It is 1206.” Padma said.

Padma and Pryia started talking to each other like they were old buddies.

Slowly everything became alright for Padma in her new school.

Padma spent the rest of her two years in high school happily with her best friend Priya, who accepted her.

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*Nayna Rath is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and lives in Macomb, Michigan with her older sister, Anya, and her parents Swapna and Nirmal Rath. She enjoys making up stories.*



## **Smile**

*Saswat Sahoo*

When you smile,  
It can bring happiness to a room.  
It can make wilted flowers  
Come back to life and bloom.  
A smile can make  
A young child's tears wash away,  
Make dark skies turn blue,  
And let the sun brighten the day.  
It can make the gates of heaven open,  
And let angels fly down to earth,  
To lift the souls of those who have died.  
A smile can make anger  
Turn to happiness,  
And war turn to peace.  
So the next time you smile,  
Just imagine what might happen.

---

*Saswat Sahoo is 11 years old, and attends Hill Side School. He will be in 6<sup>th</sup> grade this fall. His hobbies include reading, writing, playing guitar, and outdoor games like Soccer. He lives in Farmington Hills, Michigan with his parents Sasadhar and Mamata Sahoo.*

## **It's summer**

*Shreya A. Patnaik*

It's summer, so stop your bummer, we're out of school, Now we can rule,

We can do anything we want to do, it's not up to me or you (whoo, whoo), so we can be in lala land, and go to the beach and play with sand,

We can eat all the candy we want to eat, or go home and mess up our bed sheet, we could rule the house, or exterminate the entire group of mouse,

We can have as much fun we want, or type any paper with great big font; we can play outside all day long, or take a long trip to see Hong Kong,

It's summer which is the most relaxing thing to hear, you can pretend your playing school with your friends and send a note saying your present or the most unrelaxing thing is to say is I am here, you can play all the games you want to play, or say anything you want to say,

It's summer-----yay yeah yay yeah yay yeah yay yeah

It's summer, it's summer, it's summer, it's summer,

Yeah-----

It's summer.

---

*Shreya Anya Patnaik lives in Greensboro, North Carolina. She is in Grade IV.*

## **Blooming India**

*Alyssa Sahu*

She sulked as she walked in US  
She felt that everything was a mess  
No rickshaws, no street shops  
No mango flavored lollipops  
Oh, how she missed her jasmine  
Her new home seemed so dim

Her papa once took her hand  
As she told him she hated this land  
He took her to the Botanical Gardens  
Before her mood would harden  
They went down the street  
As, she wondered what she'd meet

In the gardens she walked and talked  
Amongst the unique collection of flowers for hours  
But she didn't like the American plant towers  
She sobbed till she saw Indian flower power

She walked into the blooms of India  
Fragrance of Hibiscus and Marigold  
So many flowers she would like to hold  
She felt like she was in a pillow  
As, she touched an Indian Willow  
And as she smelled a jasmine  
Brightness surrounded the world  
that she thought was so dim

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*Alyssa is 11 years old and a sixth grade student in Kennedy Middle School, Cupertino, CA. She is the only child of her parents Bilashi and Manoj Sahu. Apart from academics, she takes keen interest in reading, classical Odissi dance and outdoor games like soccer.*

## Visiting India after 5 years

*Aparna Ray*

I went to India after 5 years. I had a lot of fun there.

I got to meet Aai, Aja, and Thama...and Majja Aja (that means fun grandpa...but it sounds cooler in Oriya).

I got to touch a live animal for the first time in my Thama's home. A cow. Aai called it the Kamala...it's looks like a bunch of empty balloons hanging on the cow's neck and it is ever so soft. I got to eat eggs...straight from a chicken...not from the grocery store! I even fed a live calf.

In my Aai's house I did something really really fun...it was called Muruja. It looked like colored sand. You had to squeeze it between your fingers and let it slip down slowly. My Aai's muruja was very pretty, but my fish Muruja looked like a cow, so I guess I could use some practice at home. But it just doesn't come out right on the carpet.



I also saw my TWO great grandmothers. From my mom's side I call her BOU and from my dad's side I call her BADA MA. I also learnt I have about a million aunts and uncles and probably a gazillion cousins. I think the coolest part of our family is that we have so many dogs!!! And they are all related to each other.

The best part about going to India was celebrating my birthday there. I got 9500 rupees on my birthday. I gave it to my Aai to keep but I think my mom spent it all!

I want my parents to move back to India but they keep saying they cant any more, so I think I'll move there when I grow up, take some money from my big sister and take care of my grandparents.

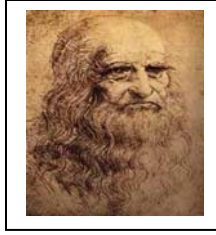
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*Aparna Ray is 7 years old. She went to India with her parents Julie and Abhijit Ray and her older sister Ankita after 5 years. She cried when she returned back to the US. She has vowed to go back to live in India when she grows up.*

## A Meeting with Leonardo da Vinci

Saswat Sahoo

During my PACT (Palmeto Achievement Challenge Test) this spring, I was given an assignment to write an essay titled: "If you were to meet a famous person of your choice, who would it be, what will you talk about and where will you go."



Although at the beginning, I couldn't remember his name, I really wanted to write about him. This person I wanted to meet, lived about four hundred years ago. He was good at every school subject, including art, science, math, and writing. He also painted the famous Mona Lisa or "La Gioconda", the laughing one. Now you probably know who I am talking about. He is Leonardo da Vinci.

If I were to meet him, I would tell him, how to power the models of machines he sketched. Especially the ones he had no means of powering back then. Like the seemingly old fashioned automobile, similar to the model "T" Ford. I will explain to him how to use gasoline to power or to help power the car. Then the parachute he drew. I would first tell him if the chute was supposed to slow, down a fall. I will also tell him what the parachute was supposed to be made of, and if he can think about anything lighter. The heavier the material per unit the faster it will fall on earth and other places with atmospheres. I will also tell him how to improve some other things he drew like the bicycle.

Then we will go on to the famous inventions that have been made after his time. Such as the light bulb. I am sure at the end of the explanation, he shall understand how it works. Then we will go on to the

motion picture camera. I will show how the pictures appear to move, in these instructions. First make or get a wooden wheel. Then sketch some pictures that happened in exactly the same place at about exactly the same time to exactly the same thing, around the wheel in order from what happened first to what happened last. Then put the wheel on an axle pointed upwards, like this, a capital I, with two lines up and down. Then spin the wheel very fast. The pictures will appear to move if you look at them. Next we will talk about the telephone. He will be shocked at how you can communicate with electric signals. We will talk about many more inventions including the dishwasher. When we will talk about the CD player and the phonograph he may come up with another way to trap sound.

The next day we will go to the Eiffel Tower and talk about its structure. If he can do it, I will have him make a model Eiffel Tower, out of limp spaghetti. Then I will explain an identical version made out of steel will be much stronger. In the following days we will go to many other places until he quiets. This will be the most outgoing meet ever.

Then I will challenge him what new inventions he can come up with. He could easily say a new word if he doesn't remember "Eureka". At the end I will advise him if you know something as a secret try your best to reveal it. You might be wondering why I did not choose Einstein or some one like him instead. To me Einstein is well known as a scientist and is very recent. When I go back in time 400 years and meet with da Vinci, even in my thoughts, when I come back to the present, it will feel like I am living in the future.

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*Saswat Sahoo is a rising fifth grader. His favorite hobby is reading science literature, although he enjoys all kind of reading. He also loves biking, making paper airplanes, rockets and doing science illustrations related to geological and physical sciences. Saswat lives in Greenville, SC, with his parents Dr. Rajani Kanta Sahoo, Saubhagya Laxmi Mohapatra and sister Roshni, and goes to Maulding Elementary.*

## Journey to Atlantis

Neha Satapathy

I'm hearing screams to my right as I draw myself closer. I wonder, "Would I scream like that when I ride?" I hear people jabbering all around me. I open my eyes to see that there was an enormous line in front of my mom and me. I look at all the roller coasters around us. "How much longer will it take?" I ask, "I want to ride the journey to Atlantis now." "Have patience," my mom answered. I hear people screaming again. Whoosh.....Tons of water fell on us. The people got out of the cart. Someone's face was green and someone else's looked like they had seen a ghost. I just noticed that we had gone an extensive way from where we had started. We were next! I begged my mom if we could sit either in the first or second row. But by the time she replied, people had already gotten into the first two rows. So we took the third row before anyone else could take it. "This is it," my mom said. "Hmmm," I replied. You see, I was lost in thought, wondering if I would scream or stay calm.

Ding... we started moving up. By the time we reached the top, they had turned us so we would go backwards. Swish..! Some people were screaming their heads off. I don't really know if I was one of them. As we slowed down, an attendant was waving at us as we turned again. "Bye, bye," he called out. I

was wondering what he meant by "Bye, bye". When I looked down below me, I was terrified. We were about to go down. "Oh no!" cried one person from the front seats. "Oh my!" cried another from the back. "Ahhh!" I

heard people screaming all around me.

In just about 5 seconds my heart was trying to break its way through my chest. "Whoa," I exclaimed. Now as I am guessing, my mom was lost in thought, for she just said, "Huh! Is it over?"

"Hey! Over here!" A voice called through the crowd. We ran towards the voice calling us. "Did you see us?" I asked. "Did you see us?" my sister asked. "We were getting splashed while you guys were coming down," my dad explained.

I will always treasure that crazy ride, "The Journey to Atlantis." Plus, who knows, you might experience it someday too!



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*Neha Satapathy is a 4<sup>th</sup> grader in Great Oaks Elementary School. She lives in Austin, TX with her sister Anika and parents Tina and Sikhanda Satapathy. She loves reading, dancing, playing piano, and enjoying Texas outdoors with all kind of fun activities.*



## Being a Child

*Ineka Panigrahi*

As a child, I have always wondered about the things I can and cannot do because I am a child. There are some advantages and disadvantages of being a child, and I will share my opinion with all of you.

### *1. When I had time to play, my parents did not have time to play with me: A Disadvantage*

When I was about three or four, I did not go to school and I did not get homework, so I had lots of time to play. But I needed someone to play with. I asked my parents to play with me, but they told me that they couldn't play because they had to work. When they did not go to work, they brought some of their office work home. They also have to do housework like cooking, laundry, cleaning, groceries and organizing. This meant they did not have time to play with me.

### *2. As I grow older, I get no time to play: A Disadvantage*

These days, I am in grade four and I am really looking forward to the summer vacation. We get lots of homework and I am really busy and sometimes I get really annoyed so I work very fast, trying to finish all my homework, so I can get time to play. But I still do not get time to play, because now I am involved in

extra-curricular activities like dance preparation for the OSA convention. Also, we constantly get tests that I have to study for....so I am extremely busy. Even if I wanted to play, I do not have the time.

### *3. I do not have to do things my parents do: An Advantage*

As a child, I don't have to pay bills or taxes, which means I don't have very big duties and responsibilities like my parents do. This is an advantage to me.

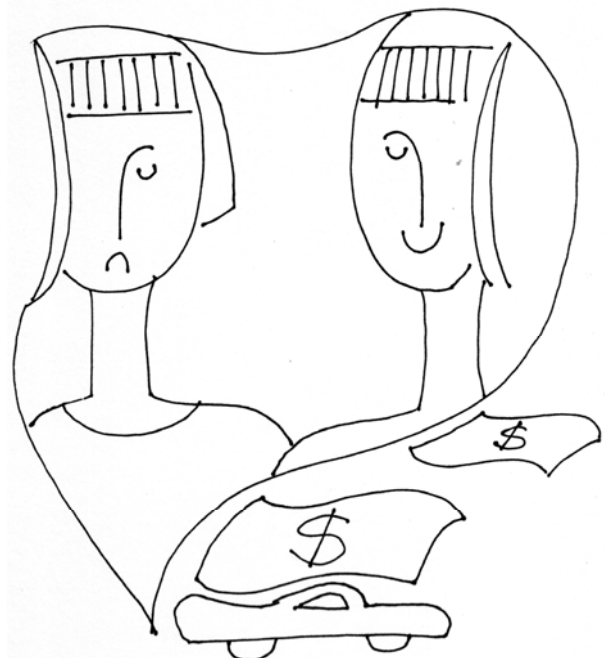
### *4. I cannot experience many things because of rules: A Disadvantage...Maybe an advantage too*

I wish I could drive so I can go to different places without having to depend on my parents to take me around. But I need a license to do that. A disadvantage. But I get carried around in the car with no worries. That's an advantage. You know why? Because then I don't have to worry about maps and taking directions and being responsible for all the people in the car.

I know, as I continue to grow up, my responsibilities will change. And then, maybe I will have advantages and disadvantages of being an adult!

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*Ineka is 9 years old, she loves to dance and listen to music. She also enjoys reading and visiting exhibitions. She lives in Toronto with her brother Soman and parents Gagan and Sabita Panigrahi.*



## First Friends

*Satwik Pattanaik*

I came to Canada in the year 2002, that time I was only 2 years old. Before we were living in Bhubaneswar, Odissa with my grandparents. I was little pampered because I had 3 friends, Jehebapa, Jejema and Jeji (my father's grandma) who were always ready to play with me in all my wired rules. Even now they love me the same way when I used to visit them. I love them the most. Now in Canada I have so many friends, Lucky, Suyash, Yubraj, Nehadidi, Binjal and many more. I love Canada as much as Orissa too.

Now I am going to tell you about my first friends I made in Canada, who are totally different from those whom I mentioned above. So when we arrived here in Canada, first few months we were staying with one of my father's friend's house. His daughter Shradha didi is my first friend. We used to play after her school hours. We had lots of fun. She was very nice to me. As I remembered she used to play skipping with her other friends and taught me how to jump with the rope. I was not good in that but that's how I learned to skip. Now I am doing well. I always give trouble to my Mom for eating my food and usually take longer time. That time my Baba (father) had brought had some plastic bug toys. When Shradha didi screw them they start to walk so I got

scared and finished my food. That trick worked only for one week. One day Shradha didi was performing in school function we went to watch her. When I saw all kid's performances, I stared crying to go and act on the stage. This is how I got interest in plays and dramas. Thanks to Sumitra aunty that in our next Oriya Kumar Utsav she gave me a chance to participate in a play. Then after she is always giving me opportunities to perform in different characters. So Shradha didi was just like an elder sister cum friend to me. Both of us were sad when we moved to a different house.

Cherry was my neighbor in our next home. She is of my age. Cherry used to teach me Telegu and I used to teach her Oriya. One day we made a song mixed with Telegu and Oriya. We used to talk in our khichidi language. When we both were of same age we were not ready to compromise. Then we learned to take turn, share toys, and play safe. One day one day we went to toilet and played in it by putting our hands in it. When my mom saw this she slapped both of us. Many times we quarrel with each other and after 5 minutes again became friends.

I can not forget both of my first friends.

So that is the end.

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Master Satwik Pattanaik (Chandan) is a student of grade 2 at Lancaster Public School, Mississauga. He loves to do stage plays, dance and play Tabla. He lives with his parents, Satyajee & Nibedita and little sister Shreeja in Malton, Canada.

## A Letter

Dear Mom,

I love you because you're an awesome mom. Because you always take care of me. You kiss me when I feel sad. You make breakfast for me everyday and you love me. I love you too. I love playing with you. But you do hug me a lot. That's OK. You look prettiest when you wear earrings. Happy Mother's Day! I want to give you two gifts. A scarf and a windup toy. And now, I go outside to play.

Love,  
Ankit

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*Ankit Sodhi is 7 years old and is in Grade 1 at Bayview Glen School in Toronto. He loves drawing monsters, dinosaurs and bugs. He loves jiving to the tunes of peppy music. He loves playing on the web and on his Nintendo. He teaches his parents Sajneet Singh Sodhi and Pallavi Raut Sodhi how NOT to skip reading pages from books while reading him his bedtime stories.*



## The Big Sad Wolf Becomes Happy

Ankit Sodhi

Once upon a time there were three little pigs. The first little pig gathered up straw to make his house. The second little pig gathered up sticks to make his house. The third little pig gathered up bricks plickety pluckety pluck and started building his house. A big bad wolf blew the first little pig's straw house down. Then the big bad wolf blew the second pig's stick house down. So the two little pigs ran away to the third little pig's house and they all sat down to have some pie. The big bad wolf tried to blow the brick house down but couldn't. So he sat on a log and became a big sad wolf.

I like the third little pig because he let me come to his house too and share the pie with him. I did not go to the first or second little pig's house because their houses were blown away by the big bad wolf. But now that the big bad wolf is a big sad wolf, I want to make him happy. So I will help him. I will ask him to blow candles on children's birthday cakes and blow balloons in their parties. That way he can be useful, and be happy when he sees the children happy.

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*Ankit Sodhi is 7 years old, lives in Toronto and loves reading, drawing, writing and embellishing stories' endings.*



## Jagannath jaha karibe

Ashutosh (Ashish) Patra

I visit Orissa every couple of years with my parents to savor the sights and the sounds of the land where all my grandparents live. It is not only a land of extraordinary beauty but also of gigantic contrasts. There is a palpably strong sense of morality among the people of Orissa. Simultaneously, however, I noticed many people believing in “destiny” or a pre-ordained final fate. People talk about “*Jagannath jaha karibe*” or “*Bhagya're jaha thiba,*” both of which roughly mean “whatever God has determined for us”. Clearly, morality is meaningful when a person has the ability to choose between what is purportedly the “right” and the “wrong”. On the surface that implies the traditional theistic belief of a destiny is incompatible with the strong sense of morality. The question is thus “does free will exist?”

I feel *free will* is an illusion formed by the creative part of our minds that desires freedom. We do make choices but these choices are not necessarily free. Nietzsche, Kant, Laplace, and other notable philosophers take a similar stance on the issue of determinism or, in other words, the opposite of “free will”. A deterministic world implies that given a current state of the world and any extrinsic inputs, the next (future) state is predetermined and unique, i.e. one can determine the future if enough computing resources are given and the underlying laws of the world are known. I take a slightly different stance on determinism from the conventional one. I do believe that free will does not exist but contrary to traditional determinism, I do not agree that there is only one, i.e. unique, possible future.

To show the world is devoid of free will, I first note that we make decisions based on experiences. People make their decisions based on their needs and wants, which, in turn, are determined by the character of the person or the external forces – the *environment*. Now, any external forces determining a person’s choice means that he or she has no free will. Next, I submit that people’s needs and wants are derived from past events, and are always driven by outside factors. For example, a single mother would need to work longer than most, because there is no father to help support the children. Her predisposition (e.g., her intuitive feeling to nourish her child) and the external facts/influences (e.g., no one giving her free money) determine this desire. A person’s



characteristics, shaped by her environment and genes, influence her wants as well. People decide based on their needs and wants that I argued are a result of the past state and the past events. The past state is based on the genes (the “nature” part) and the events form the extrinsic inputs (the “nurture” part). Any decision taken by the individual impacts actions (i.e. inputs) from others, which in turn drive the next decision/action by the person, so on and so forth. Thus, there is a causality chain from decision to decision of a human being, and effectively he/she has no free control over

it once the “initial” state is determined and the external inputs are truly extrinsic. The initial state is perhaps the genetic makeup of a person at conception, and the external input is all things starting from the environment in the womb to the nurture received after birth and the world outside. None of these factors emanate from the free will of the individual. Thus, I assert that free will is an illusion as past events and extrinsic forces or actions determine the future actions.

I do realize that there are many critics of this idea and they have compelling arguments but I will refute these. Libertarians (opponents of determinism) say that the soul overrides the body and that it can act of its own free will. However, this line of thinking is faulty because it fails to address how the soul is created or affected. Let us pretend that the soul is immutable. If we cannot change our soul, we have no free will because we were never given the choice of a soul. Another argument against determinism is the case study on rape. Rape is pointed out as an event where people are denied free will, and this is used to show that if free will is denied then it must exist in the first place. However, people cannot exercise free will because an external event or action is denying them the right or ability to prevent it because the rape was not of his or her choosing. The person being raped can either submit or fight back and the choice he or she makes is due to forces uncontrolled by him or her -- it is rather based on experiences or notions of fear. Some have used quantum mechanics to defend free will by claiming that some events can be random and therefore the deterministic view that there is only a predictable future is false. However, I take a different stance on determinism, one that says we have no free will and that the future is determined to a

probability because of the random events in the process. If a person were to make a choice based on randomness then he or she would not be actually exercising his or her free will at all. On the contrary, I believe this intrinsic randomness in the physical world can lead to multiple possible event sequences, i.e. the multiple potentially concurrent worlds, and hence futures, with different probabilities.

While I do feel the world is deterministic, the moral implications this creates are dire. Take for example a murderer, who killed three people in cold blood, argues that it was not his personal fault and that his actions were simply a result of his genes and environment. If people submit to this simplistic deterministic view then murder, extortion, and crime would be excused. I think we must still hold people accountable for their actions as though they have free will because only then can we change society positively by influencing their behavior and deterring the wrongdoers. It does not have to do with free will, but has to do with humans' intrinsic belief in peace, non-violence and progress. Another counter-argument cited is that determinism deters advances because people feel that whatever happens cannot be changed and conclude that they should not work or try to innovate. However, we must believe that the process of evolution is hard-coded in us and that the desire to

improve is in our nature. Moreover, evolution is marked by genetic mutations, which are random events.

I believe scientific breakthroughs are weighing against "free will". Einstein has said, *"Everything is determined, the beginning as well as the end, by forces over which we have no control. It is determined for the insect as well as the star. Human beings, vegetables, or cosmic dust, we all dance to a mysterious tune, intoned in the distance by an invisible piper."*

Our choices are not really ours but rather consequences of past events and actions. As long as humans make choices based on prior experiences and their genetic makeup, they cannot be called the masters of their fate. However, it is important to have a judicial system, as reflected by our internal desire for fairness and peace, which hands out appropriate justice. Free will is thus likely only a figment of our imagination, which we may pretend to believe as true, because that belief is a cornerstone of society for keeping order. However, perhaps our desire for order in society, or for that matter, seeking of "God", is itself a consequence of our genetic essence, shaped by centuries of evolution. Therefore, the seeming contrasts that I see in Orissa are not irreconcilable contradictions after all.

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*Asihish Patra is a Junior at Sunset High in Portland, Oregon. He is passionate about science yet has interest in national policy and international relations. He loves to debate, play tennis and play piano either competitively or for fun. He learned about microfinance from dad, Priyadarsan, during a visit to rural Orissa, and he hopes to study the economics of micro-lending this summer. As for dislikes, he seems to complain that the days are too short!*

## Is Privacy Dead?

*Purvasha Patnaik*

You come home from school, you go to your room, and you close the door. The four walls around you assure you that you are alone, but do you really have your privacy? Ladies and gentlemen, and respected teachers, I am going to talk to you about privacy. Privacy is defined as the right to be free from being watched or spied on. In the perspective of a typical Canadian, privacy is to control the right of their personal information. Some ways of intruding one's privacy would be through the open use of files and documents and by using advancing technology.

According to an article in *The Economist*, a well-read magazine, privacy no longer exists. Many people strongly agree, however, not much action is being taken to protect privacy. People affected by this issue are either ignorant, or do not want to interfere in the matter since it would consume much of their time and energy. As for the rest of the people affected by this, they are most likely those who are making a living off of invading privacy.

One issue with privacy is the lack of consent. When we are on the phone with a telemarketer, we ignore the fact that they have obtained our contact information. How are our names, numbers, and addresses exposed to these people?

A Canadian candy manufacturer company had gathered a list of people who were enrolled in a weight loss program. By using the contact information on this list, they called these people during Christmas and Easter breaks, to try to sell their products since this is the time when people usually cave into taking breaks from dieting.

Iceland sold the genetic records of the entire population to a drug company without the consent of its citizens.

Mr. Plant had grown illegal plants in his house, but the police had no evidence to prove it. To grow these illegal plants, Mr. Plant required a large amount of electricity. So the police pulled up Mr. Plant's electricity bills, without any consent of the consumer, and presented them in court. Although this invasion

of privacy was meant for safety reasons, Mr. Plant's lawyer argued that access to these types of personal records are enough to qualify as invasion of his privacy.

Whether the records are of occupational or recreational activities, if these details get linked together, then it can create an accurate picture of our private lives – and this is unjust in our society.

Today's advancement in technology plays a great role in the interference in one's privacy. In Canada, privacy would be more protected if it weren't for such progressing technology. For example, The Supreme Court has decided that all Canadian citizens have the right to privacy – meaning that you are not under surveillance cameras or physical accompaniment, when the individual has a reasonable point for privacy. Under this right, it is unreasonable to put cameras in hotel rooms, however, it is reasonable to place cameras in public washrooms.

Awareness about revealing information is very important, especially for today and the future. Internet and ATM are some examples of privacy invasion. It is so simple to get access to money using these technologies, but then again, it is as simple to be robbed using these machines. For example, Mr. Money's credit card number was stolen, and 5 000 dollars were taken out of it. The bank called the police, saying it is unusual for this person to spend this much money in this short of time, according to his previous records. That too at places they had never recorded him spend money at. Privacy is invaded both by the robber and the bank, but the point is that the bank knowing this about Mr. Money saved him from a great loss. Technology was created for the positive use of it, not the negative.

Privacy is a human right, and everyone should have control on what they want or don't want to reveal to the public, or anybody in general. Life without privacy makes it impossible to enjoy the dignity and freedom that human rights seek to protect.

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*About Purvasha, She is 13 years old and has interest in Indian classical music and dance. She a vivid reader and has developed interest in writing short poems. She is also an encyclopedia on Bollywood hindi songs.*

## Infamous

Swagateeka Panigrahy

I wish we went to India more often. The issue with going once every seven or so years is making good first impressions; I only have a few days to spend with each member of the family, which is a completely unsatisfactory amount of time to dole out a personable, cultured child that relatives remember until the next time she comes. I expected a problem with my ineptness at speaking the native language—I was able to understand well enough, but I was afraid of mixing up some slang or calling an elder by the wrong title. Sure, they might understand, but I didn't want to take the chance; after all, I was trying to build up a good character for them to remember me by. Better a mute, quiet, but respectful girl, than some teen throwing around bawdy gibberish trying to sound native. I was so focused on this facet of my vacation in India; I guess the English guard was relocated. Whoops.

I spent about three weeks in my father's home-village in Orissa, on the western side of India. I was most afraid of this part of the vacation, since none from my father's side could, or would, speak English. Worse, my uncles would take us out for "ice cream" (what is known here as a teaspoon of whipped cream) and have us meet family friends. My worries of assimilating were appeased however, when I began doing what everyone else did, every day: sleep, eat, sleep again, cook, eat again, and then sleep again. It was in this mundane mindset I set off, with my family, to Delhi, probably the most westernized city in India, to see my aunt and uncle from my mother's side. Now a new challenge was set: Hindi. One would think all the languages of India are sort of the same, like dialects of English in the United States, and that one would be terribly mistaken. And one may think that anyone who has seen a multitude of Bollywood movies, all in Hindi, should be comfortable with Hindi, and would again be horribly mistaken. From the moment I stepped off the train, I was the most terribly, horribly mistaken person in all of Delhi.

Now I had to adapt to a new atmosphere, with a new language, to speak to my three year old cousin, while maintaining the old tongue, so I could speak with my maternal grandmother—and now I couldn't just take a nap whenever I felt like escaping. I was bombarded with well-meant attempts to make me feel at home (which they understood to be America). My aunt was a teacher at a local school, my uncle was a scientist for a nearby international company, both were mind numbingly

modern. We were given pizza, offered newspapers in English!, and even taken on a trip to a shopping mall. No, not a big fat market spread over a mucky mile offering cheap goods, yet still swallowing you in for hours of bargaining, which I was so used to, but an actual *mall*. No bargaining.

We went to several stores to find some t-shirts, because I had left all my American clothes in another city to use later, not thinking I would need them. We found a few; one mimicked a shirt and slogan from a popular Hindi movie: "I'm Happy." We stopped at Baskin-Robbins for some chocolate ice cream. But we still didn't have enough clothes to last us. Despite my sister's and my garbled attempts at impeding the evening trip to the mall, we were overcome. We went into a snazzy shop of two stories, full of jeans and Indo-European stuff. Feeling terrible about giving the appearance of being picky with my clothing, as this was the fifth large shop we had been to that day, I kept my eyes open for anything wearable. I saw one t-shirt, just one. It said, "If you can't be famous, be INFAMOUS," and had a huge orange, striped "C" at the bottom. *Wow!* I thought. *What a great message! If you can't be famous, be super-famous! That's cute!* I told my aunt and uncle about the shirt. "I really like the message," I said.

"Well, if you like it, you should buy it," my uncle responded, probably hesitatingly.

"Hahn (Yes)," I said. "I really do like the message."

"We can look around some more, there's a section we haven't seen over there," my aunt pitched in. That was my chance. I should have shut up, gone to the section, found nothing, and left. But after looking through the belts, ornaments, jewelry, hats and hairpin section, I found myself back in front of the shirt, with my aunt and uncle. Once again, I exclaimed, "I like the message." *Now they'll see what a wonderful, overachieving child I am* I thought.

Pride and language are so intertwined. People, who are almost always naturally proud, are always trying to show some characteristic of himself/herself off, and language is the most effective method of doing so. If one is trying to appear intellectual, one may disseminate one's orations with seemingly sapient language. Teenagers often curse and use profanity to show a reckless, independent attitude. Along the same lines, a rebellious young woman might mimic the theme of the musical "Chicago," by buying a shirt that says "If you can't be famous, be infamous." Another prideful twelve-year-old young girl may also buy the same shirt in a mist of mistakenness thinking infamous meant super-



famous, thus proving to her relatives whom she hasn't seen since she was seven that she is a dimwit with no grasp of any language whatsoever. One's language can gauge one's pride, one's entire character. Learning the technical aspects is essential, but understanding what it

means makes it a *language*. Now I may truly talk with my relatives, my grandmother especially loves it when I talk about the horse I've promised to give her when she grows old and can't walk. And by the way, I've never worn that shirt.

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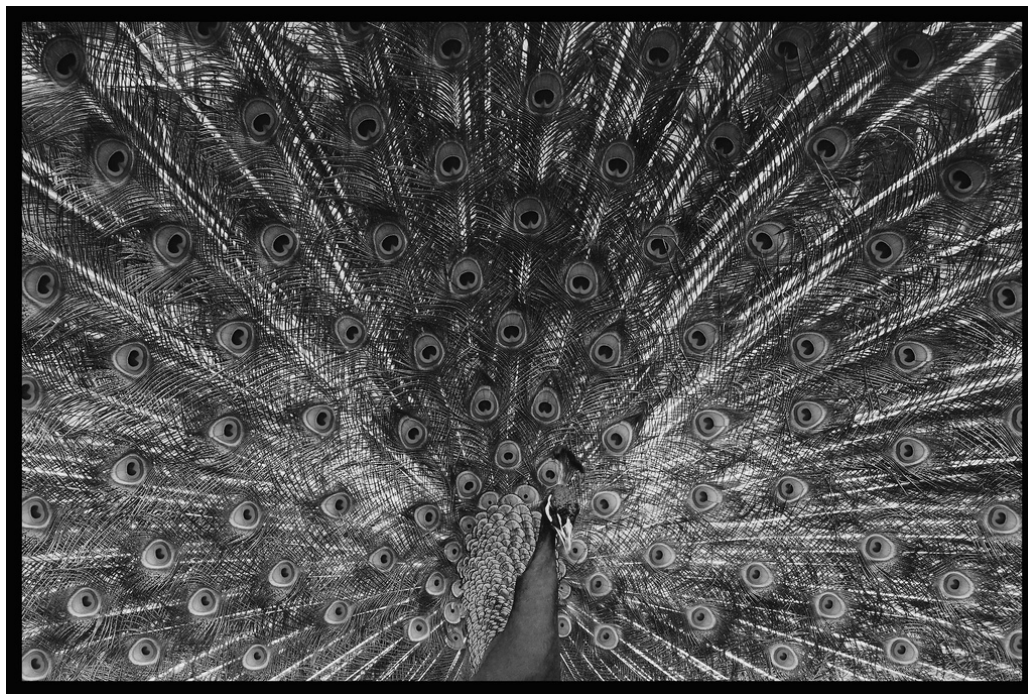
## India

*Swagateeka Panigrahy*

She is no more a child, my mother's land,  
She has gone to prove Herself to the greater.  
Across, eye to eye She may even stand;  
She is, of a miracle, the creator.  
Select of Her progeny are basking  
In Her immense wealth, or thus the world claims.  
But underneath, a world She is masking:  
She muffles her masses, covers Her shames,  
For to stand across them, eye to eye,  
She must stand on the footstool of Her poor.  
But the reaping richer simply sit and sigh,  
*Help Her!* Whose blood is tainted impure.  
By Gandhi's great words, unabashed when unfurled,  
"Be the change, you wish to see in the world!"

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*Swagateeka Panigrahy graduated from Naperville Central High School in May, 2008. She lives with sister Sunameeka and parents Surya and Minakhi Panigrahy, who are both PhDs in Physics, She will pursue an undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences at the University of Chicago, hoping to go into medicine.*



## Turning Points in My Life

*Anshuman Mishra*

Out of all the turning points in my life, one rises above the rest in significance to me. I still remember the event vividly. It was the time when I fought the person that I detest the most: Shane Hickey. What was my reason for fighting him? To me, Shane was the embodiment of all evil. He lived only to torment me, using all of his time to concoct diabolical plans to humiliate me in public. I constantly asked him to stop playing his nefarious pranks on me, but to no avail. Day by day, my loathing for him grew.

One day, Shane crossed the line. During lunchtime, in the cafeteria, Shane walked up to me. As I watched in disbelief, he reached out and grabbed my lunch tray. Then, he uttered a hearty chuckle and overturned it, creating a nasty mess and destroying the last of my restraint. At that moment, my mind stopped functioning, and my rage took over. Without even realizing it, I got up and turned, facing Shane with a demonic look in my eyes. In a low, almost inaudible voice, I asked him to apologize to me. This was followed by silence, which Shane shattered with his loud and annoying guffaws. I was about to explode with anger. Everyone in the cafeteria was leering at us now. The only word on their minds at this time was crystal clear: FIGHT. Once again, I told Shane to ask me for forgiveness. His reply was, “Drop dead, you Paki bastard.”

Physically, Shane was bigger than I. However, that did not save him. With hatred in my heart and adrenaline in my veins, I focused all of my strength into my right fist, and swung. I heard his gasp of surprise, followed by a sickening crunch. Shane reeled back, clutching at his face in disbelief. Blood was pouring out of his nose in a torrential, red stream.

I had broken his nose, and I did not feel any regret whatsoever. He was half groaning and half crying, babbling something about my expulsion from the school. To be honest, I did not care. To see my bully in this pathetic state gave me joy and pleasure that

cannot be described in words. All that mattered to me was that Shane had received what he deserved. All I felt was immense pride at having reduced him to such a pitiful condition. I had never experienced such emotions before, and was unsure how to deal with them.

I was suspended from school for five days. It was the first time that had ever happened, and it seemed a bit surreal. My parents were absolutely livid, and I felt really lucky to live in a country where physical punishment is not practiced. My dad later questioned me why I had punched Shane in the nose, and I told him my reason. What he said next changed my life, and is perhaps the most important lesson anyone can ever learn. “An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.” I did not understand it at first, but eventually, realization dawned upon me. I later found out that my father had been quoting one of Mahatma Gandhi’s famous sayings.

What does the phrase mean? Violence is not the answer to anything. Nothing can be achieved through fighting, except grief, sorrow, and pain. I had been blinded by my rage, and failed to realize the consequences of my actions. The lesson I learned from this incident is simple enough: Never resort to violence under any circumstances. What had I accomplished from hurting Shane? Nothing; but a giant black mark on my respectable reputation. This encounter taught me never to let my anger get the better of me, ever again. Hopefully, others have learned something from this incident of my life. Rage should never cloud one’s judgment, or else there may be hell to pay. Sometimes, it can prove to be an arduous challenge, but controlling one’s actions and emotions leads to great success. No one should ever resort to mindless violence under any circumstances. It is the single greatest lesson anyone in the world can ever learn.

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*Anshuman Mishra is 16 years old and lives in Malton, Ontario in Canada and attends Grade 11 at Ascension of Our Lord Secondary School. His parents, Tapan Kumar Mishra and Dr. Amrita Mishra, are originally from Rourkela, Orissa. His hobbies include writing, playing guitar and listening to music.*

## Journey to the Top of Europe

Ananya Mishra

The train screeched into a stop at Lauterbrunnen, the village nestled in a valley in which we were lodging, triggering the mad rush to retrieve baggage. My family and I waited, taking our time to drink in the different sights of Switzerland. The lilting tones of Schweizerdeutsch were like a beautiful song to me, unfamiliar to my ears. Outside our window, the Alps towered, still capped with snow in July. A light breeze fluttered by, so different from the stifling heat of Texas summers. I could feel my heart pounding as I realized that I was finally in the country of my birth again after imagining it for so long!

We disembarked from the train and left the station. As we strolled up a small hill to the village, I noticed the vivid colors in the little cottages and hotels. Smells of food emanated from every café, so strong that I could almost taste them. All the new features in this wonderful place overwhelmed my senses. Our hotel, Hotel Oberland, was especially quaint, with flowers in the window boxes, bright red shutters, and alpine views of craggy peaks and waterfalls.

Rising early the next morning, I watched the sun staining the Alps golden and pink. Everything looked so beautiful, like pictures from fairy tale books. I couldn't believe that later today, I would be riding a train up the Alps to the highest accessible point in Europe: Jungfrauoch. The thought made me shiver with glee.

I have to admit I was a little nervous. What if there were no railings to prevent people from tumbling to their deaths? Then I consoled myself by saying that if it was truly dangerous, no one would be allowed to go up. The little red train we were in, part of the railway system with the highest railway station in Europe, pulled itself up the mountain through alpine forests. There were no windows, so we could feel the air gradually grow colder. We passed alpine meadows full of wildflowers and happy cows that lay far above tiny villages, dots of color on the slopes below. After the train climbed past the tree line, the views changed.

We could see the bare grey stone faces of the three tallest mountains in Switzerland: Eiger (Ogre), Monch (Monk), and Jungfrau (Young Woman). I was gazing raptly out of the window when the elderly tour guide's voice came over the loudspeakers in the train.

"Let me tell you why these mountains are called Eiger, Monch, and Jungfrau. There is an old story

about a young woman who lived in a cottage atop one of these mountains with her cows. She had golden hair flying in the wind, bright blue eyes, and rosy blushing cheeks. Her skin was soft and smooth, untouched like her innocence. A smile always graced her face. A merry tune fell from her lips as she went out one night, wearing her warm blue coat over her thin dress to bring the cows back home. An ogre stepped out from the shadows, ugly with yellowed teeth and sharpened claws, leering at the girl and wiping drool from his chin. With one scream of terror, she ran to the church, hoping to find a safe place to hide. A monk came out, seeing her plight, and stepped in front of her. Just then, the ogre caught up to the frightened girl, looking furious and very hungry. The monk put up his hand to stop the monster and said, 'Go no further! The girl is under my protection. You cannot touch her.' No creature, not even an ogre, would dare to harm a holy man. The monk stands there now, between the two, protecting the Jungfrau for the rest of time."

The moment the tour guide completed his tale, the train halted inside a tunnel cut through the heart of Jungfrau. I stepped out quickly, almost tripping in my haste. Everyone moved to a small glass window on one side of the tunnel to get their first glimpse of the view, which was spectacular. When I turned around, the train was already gone. Thrilled, I stepped into an elevator that would take us out of the tunnel into the tourist area. We would go out to the peak from there. As we stepped out of the tourist area, a strong gust of wind swept in. I shivered, despite my seven layers of clothing. My cheeks burned from the sheer frigidity of the crisp air that tasted clean and fresh. The blinding white snow took a while to become accustomed to after the dark tunnel.

Once my eyes were adjusted, I was startled to see the Alps practically next to me. I was literally in the sky, not flying in an airplane! I crept cautiously to the railing that formed a barrier from the steep slopes to keep from slipping or falling on the ice, setting eyes upon the magnificent Aletsch glacier below. My fear of heights had magically melted away at that moment, replaced with awe and a sense of being very small. People about as big as ants hiked up the glacier. The woman beside me noticed me watching them with eager eyes and cautioned me. "Those people are experienced climbers. It could be fatal to an amateur who tries to hike on the glacier and fails."

My parents decided the views were even more wonderful lower down, so we moved on, albeit clumsily due to the icy snow underfoot. It was fun to fall on our knees more times than we could count, though we got quite cold and wet. When we went inside for a break and energy snacks, my hands were completely numb. Eventually, we went back into the cold, thin mountain air again. My little brother saw a sign that said 'Ride the Snow Disk!' and decided to try it. Basically, it was a safer version of sledding. A person sat on a large round disk that looked kind of like an oversized Frisbee without any handles and slid down a steep slope on the Aletsch glacier. It wasn't even roped off, but nobody seemed to fall off the edge to the lower part of the icy glacier. My brother went first, being the fearless one in the family. I heard thrilled shouts, saw him spin around and slide down backwards, and then bump to a stop. My father went

down to help him climb back up to the top of the slide with his disk. A woman handed me a red disk and told me to go. I sat down and pushed myself. The 'slide' was a lot steeper and colder than it looked. When I hit the first bump, I spun around and went backwards the rest of the way. A lot of snow entered the disk - and my jeans! I felt the ride was over much too soon. After bringing the disk back, my brother and I went as many times as the woman watching us would allow. Tired, with soaked backsides, we made our way to the mountaintop restaurant.

On the train journey back to Lauterbrunnen, stuffed with food and beautiful memories, I watched the two sides to the scenery: bleak and rugged mountains against lush green meadows. The sun shone brightly and I felt hot and stifled in my winter wear. My first trip to Jungfrauoch was over, but I knew I would have to come back one day, just to feel like I was on top of the world once more.

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*Ananya Mishra, daughter of Snigdha and Srikanta Mishra, is a sophomore in the Talented and Gifted Program at McNeil High School in Austin, TX. She is learning Bharatanatyam, Odissi, and Hindustani classical vocal music and is also a member of her school's varsity choir. Ananya enjoys traveling and writing about her travel experiences.*



## Why do you go to India?

*Amit Kumar*

Do you go to India for the sights, sounds, and smells?  
For the stores, the temples, the constant ringing of  
bells?

Or do you go to India because you love your family  
so much,  
That you travel halfway around the world just to feel  
their comforting touch.

Do you go to India for the food and sweets?  
For the daily market bargaining meets?

Or do you go to India because you miss the rickshaws,  
And traveling on bike with your mamus and dadas.

Do you go to India just to have fun?  
To go and enjoy the bright hot sun?

Or do you go to India because it is your heritage,  
And you must attend your brother's marriage.

Do you go to India because you want a high standard  
of education?  
And to constantly recite the tables of multiplication?

Or do you go to India simply as a tourist,  
To explore the ways of the Hindu artist.

Do you go to India to explore its rich culture?  
To read its folklore of many an archer?

Or do you go to India to see the great state of Orissa,  
For it will surely make you gasp with awe.

I go to India for all of these things,  
And to meet whatever adventures my next India trip  
brings.

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*Amit Kumar is 14 years old. He lives with his parents Smita Mohanty and Rabi Prusti in Auburn, Alabama. Besides school study he loves to play soccer, basketball, piano, percussions, and chess. Amit wants to be an inventor.*



## Seeing the World Differently

Ayesha Kar

December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2000; a baby boy is born in Madras, India. The gasps of joy echoed throughout the small Chennai hospital. A new and adorable son is born to Ullasini Sahoo and Mahendra Kar. An eager five year old waited to see her new baby brother. "Can I hold him first?" She asks with such enthusiasm. The happiness in her eyes was contagious. The short doctor in a white uniform comes out, holding the new born baby. The little girl let out a scream of delight as she rushed to the innocent infant. Her autumn brown eyes widen, as she tugged on her father's shirt. The doctor handed the baby to the tall man, known to be this infant's father. A smile quickly appears on his face; what a beautiful baby have I brought into this world, he thought. His thoughts came to an abrupt halt as a little child, whose eyes were filled with wonder, tugged on his shirt, asking to hold the baby. The little girl scurried to the green plastic chair, she soon found a tiny baby on her lap, and it was her new baby brother. The little boy opened his eyes for the first time, on his sister's lap. She was immediately filled with the joy of the world. The baby boy soon got a name, Ayush Kar. And his sister; Ayesha Kar, loved him more and more every day.

Well, that was the fairy tale start to the rocky life of my brother, Ayush Kar. All was calm at first, until it happened. A couple of months after Ayush was born, my whole family; Mom, Dad, Ayush & me, moved back to America. I was starting 1<sup>st</sup> grade in MacAfee Elementary School, I was so excited. Ayush was only 4 or 5 months when he came to America. He grew up so fast, and we didn't even notice the symptoms. As a child, he was extremely hyper, running up and down the stairs, banging into walls and *always* eating sugar. That was my fault because I was the one who taught him how to eat a lollipop and since then he was hooked. Oops!

My parents started seeing something wrong with him when he was about to turn two. Ayush didn't give us eye contact, nor was saying any words. He wouldn't talk, at all; it was all baby talk. Mom and Dad took him to the doctor. They said he has autism. And that's when it all started.

The day I found out that my brother had autism, the first thing I said was "What's autism?" My parents sat me down and explained it all. I ended up crying for 2 days. It was hard for me at first, but then I got used to it...well, not really. I found it hard to

bring my brother to public places. Restaurants and parties were out of the question for our family. I missed out on so many outings and parties, I really hated it. Ayush would go out of control in public places. He didn't know how to talk so we wouldn't know what to do. It's not like he could tell us what is wrong...which was pretty depressing.

Boy was it hard to adjust with him, People constantly staring at us, his random outbursts and his constant need to get attention. It left me un-attended to. It felt like no one cared about me, not even my own family. It was Ayush this, Ayush that, Ayush everything! The only time I got some attention was when I got yelled at for treating him badly, misbehaving with him or yelling at him. I always thought it was unfair, but as I got older I understood why they did that. It started making sense, I didn't mind after that...well, not exactly. I was bound to have some hard feelings against him, it's a brother, sister thing.

The one thing I hated most is how people would stare at us; it was like they've never experienced something like that before. They were reckless; they even dared to whisper and point. The staring isn't as bad as the pointing and where we got the pointing was in India. That was really bad because I thought they would know better. One time, we were on a train ride and my brother and I had really bad jetlag. I tried to go to sleep while my brother cried, all night. My mom had to keep him near the train door through out night; she didn't even get a wink of sleep. In the morning, the people whose compartment was right across from ours, complained right to our face. They sat there and talked about us, I really felt like say "Hello! We're right here, you know!" It was disgusting to see how they won't take a second to see that my brother is different, he can't understand. They didn't take a second to see the dark circles under my mother's eyes or the annoyed smirk on my face. They just sat there and went one. It was just one night of suffering for them; we have to live with it every single day. I bet if they even attempted to live a day in my mother's shoes; they wouldn't survive. What happened to compassion, solidarity and caring, what India is known for?

My parents have been through so much. It's amazing how they haven't gone crazy yet! I knew from the start that when my parents pass, it was my turn to take over everything. There's a whole house of

family waiting for me in India. I also get the responsibility of my brother. I've been watching and understanding how my parents handle him (especially my mom); I'm getting myself ready for what lies ahead. My mom has been working so hard, she's been holding both of her children up, mostly by herself. Not that my dad doesn't help, but he's at office, helping us financially. He's busy and we know why, so it's unfair to say that my mom does all the work. He helps on weekends by taking my brother grocery shopping which both of them (for some odd reason) enjoy doing. It's their bonding time; my brother runs to the counter for candy while my dad is following and I'm left there laughing with a trolley of vegetables. (My Dad, brother and I looked pretty darn crazy at the store!) We work together as a family to get through our day to day life as easily as possible.

Some people don't notice that having a brother like Ayush isn't always a bad thing. Most have pity and sympathy for us, when they shouldn't because they are truly missing out. It's actually very exciting and fun! Everyday is like an adventure, but some of those are not as good as the others. My brother and I have our ups and downs because he has random temper tantrums. Sometimes, he'll hit me out of the blue and then we get into fights, but it's all good. We end up hugging and playing together two minutes later. Despite his autism, we still have a normal brother and sister relationship. We bite, scratch, and hit, but we also hug, play, and love. He is so much fun sometimes. He has his "moments" and they tend to be very enjoyable. To have a brother like Ayush is something so unique, that I never wished to have a normal brother.

It's been 7 years since he was born, 5 since he was diagnosed. It's been a hard and long journey so far, but we're keeping hope. Autism is a very

complex disorder, with no cure yet, not even in sight. We're keeping our faith that someday, he will improve. It was confusing at first; I really couldn't comprehend what autism is, how it happens and what causes it. It took me a while to get what it is, but it only took me 2 weeks to see what autism was doing to my brother. Sometimes I felt sorry, sometimes I felt jealous and sometimes I felt like running away from life. But after growing up, Ayush has made a place in my heart. He's a really special kid and I know that I'm really fortunate to have a brother like him and having an opportunity to help someone who cannot help himself. After 7 years of this journey of me growing up with him, Ayush has become my love, my life and the world that I understand.

I can remember when my mother was pregnant with me. My parents told me that the doctors said that I would be abnormal. Apparently, I turned out totally normal. I can recall what the doctors said for my brother; he would be just fine. He got positive to everything, while I got negative. Ironic with all scientific and experts' comments, how I was *supposed* to be abnormal and how my brother was *supposed* to be normal...

It makes me wonder a lot when I think about the times before my brother was born. The times back when I was the only child were so much easier, simpler. I never dreamed that I would ever become the sister of a boy like Ayush. The flashbacks of me before Ayush joined us made me think. What would my life be if I didn't have him? Boring? Bland? I'm extremely thankful that I was gifted by god with a brother like Ayush. He's one of kind and completely unique. There's no other kid like him in this whole universe and I appreciate the fact that I have the coolest, most adorable brother in the universe.

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*Ayesha, besides being a good student also enjoys the arts, music (violin), singing (Oriya & other languages) and dancing (Odissi). She has been awarded 3rd place in Subrina Biswal Competition in 2005. She lives in New Jersey with her brother Ayush and parents.*

## A Starry Night

*Mrunali Das*

Of all profound experiences,  
The most meaningful, by and far, is  
Simply staring into a starry night,  
Gazing into the infinite oblivion, and  
Realizing just how small you are.

I follow this exact pattern  
From the confines of my bedroom.  
I open my window, look up,  
And lose sense of where I am,  
Who I am.

It is from this vantage point  
That I come to question reality  
And begin to find myself  
With a peaceful mentality.

The midnight orchestra soothes me.  
The soft breeze provides the harmony,  
The crickets play the bass line, as  
The pond ripples melodiously.

With tears streaming down my face,  
Or boiling rage looking for release,  
Sometimes with doubt forcing my gaze,  
I will look to the heavens for salvation,  
Solace in the starry night,  
Sanctuary in the starry night.

I lose myself in a starry night.  
I'm not sure I want to be found.

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*Mrunali Das is the daughter of Naresh and Bigyani Das. She likes juice boxes, but she dislikes grape juice. Her hobbies include sitar, Odissi, and making people happy. She is currently 15 and will be a junior at River Hill High School this fall.*





## My 15-Minute Adventure

Ankita Ray

I slouch over the pillar, bundled up in layers from head to toe as the despicable chills tauntingly brush against my face. Throngs of anxious mothers chatter close by. Though standing here everyday might seem like a droning experience for others, I absolutely adore it. As I wait for my sister to be dismissed from school every afternoon at 4, I stand in the perfect place for eaves dropping. The latest gossip is poured out from the scandalous waiting mothers. I pity them. Buried inside the four walls of the apartment all day, they let the juiciest rumors brew inside of them, which finally bursts out when they come together with their own species. I hear everything from the new climax on some soap opera to food recipes to their kids' recent triumphs. The entire conversation is showered with overly dramatic gasps and shocks from those around. I let out a small chuckle here and there when I hear something funny. But standing at the portals of the elementary school, I see much more than just theatrical mothers.

As the kindergarteners explode out of doors into the waiting hands of mothers and escorts, so do the Special Ed. kids. A young and beautiful teacher brings them out. They scour around to find their loved ones and run to embrace them. Sometimes I feel that these special kids love their families more than other kids do.

Today I watch one of the mothers more closely. She is a ravishingly beautiful Middle Eastern woman. With slightly tanned skin, dark eyes and long and brown hair flowing down her shoulders she is very attractive. I have noticed her before outfitted in beautiful clothes. Today her face is draped with worry. I do not know of her child, so I am anxious to see if her daughter or son mirrored her gorgeous bone structure.

When the school entrance doors finally opened my eyes turned away from the mother to scavenge out my sister in the huge mass of faces. That's when I saw the Special Ed. teacher as she walked the children to their parents. I wondered about her job

and how much she must love the kids. Just about to look away, I saw the teacher walk up a little girl to the Middle Eastern lady. I stared shamelessly in curiosity. I saw the little girl emerge from behind the teacher and jump out to surprise her mom. Her slow unstable walk and heavy eyes set her apart from the rest of kids her age. Her mother hadn't noticed her yet. She was worriedly speaking to someone and my curiosity attracted me to their conversation. I heard bits and pieces of sentences till I heard one that leaped at me. "My business closed down, I have nowhere to go", I heard. I felt as though the world was slipping away in front of my eyes. A million questions ran through my mind. I glanced at her child. What would happen now? Where would they go? How was she going to take care of her daughter? I searched for a ring on the mother's recently manicured fingers to see if there was another income in her life. Nothing. I was infuriated. It seemed stupid because I hardly knew them, but an uncontrollable rage was burning inside of me. My mind went around in a flurry of accusations against God. Why was He punishing the mother? What had the little girl done to deserve this fate? Why does God punish the few good instead of the million bad?

That's when I saw the mother notice her daughter. I saw the look in her eyes. The love that reflected out of them looked exceedingly like my mom's. My rage slowly started to disappear. Something told me they were going to be okay. The little girl had all odds against her but I knew there was one thing she had, that would push her through. It was the love in her mother's eyes.

All of a sudden I felt a tug on my shirt. I was rudely escorted back to reality by my wonderful, 7 year old little sister. She stood in front of me blinking her big, black eyes. "I love you," I said to her. She gave me a puzzled expression and shrugged "I love you too". As everyday she adjusted her book bag on her shoulders, I bent down and piggy backed her home.

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*Ankita is 13 years old. She attends Grade VII in Mayfield Woods Middle School, Elkridge, MD. She loves to dance and paint. She is the daughter of Julie and Abhijit Ray.*

## ବିଭାଗ (୨)

<b>ସୁଚୀପତ୍ର</b>		
ଜହ୍ନ ମାମୁଁ	ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମିଶ୍ର	୧୬୭
ଆମ ଗାଁ ବାସୀ	ଗଗନ ବିହାରୀ ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ	୧୬୯
ଚୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ଚୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ବିଦ୍ୟା	ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି	୧୭୨
ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ	ଅଲେଖ ଦାଶ	୧୭୩
ଶର୍ବରୀ	ଅର୍ଜୁନ ପୋରୁହିତ	୧୭୪
ନୀଳାଭ କୁହୁଡ଼ିର ମାୟା	ସୁଲୋଚନା ଦାସ	୧୭୫
ଝରାପତର ରତ୍ନ	ସୀମା ମିଶ୍ର	୧୮୩
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ଯିବି ଯେ ନିଃସୃକ୍ଷ ଯିବି	ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର	୧୯୩
ଆମେରିକା ରାଜ୍ୟଦୂତ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶା	ସୋମନାଥ ମିଶ୍ର	୧୯୫
ହଜାଇ ଦେଇଛି ହସିଲା ମୁହଁ	ସୁବାସ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଶତପଥୀ	୧୯୮
କଣ ପୁଣି ହେଲା?	କଳ୍ପନାମୟୀ ଦାଶ	୨୦୦
ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଲୀଳା	ରଚିତା ରାଉତ	୨୦୨
ସାନ୍ଧ୍ୟ ଭ୍ରମଣ	ଶାନ୍ତିଲତା ମିଶ୍ର	୨୦୩
ଦୁଇଟି ରାତି ଓ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା	ବରୁଣ ପାଣି	୨୦୫
ପାଉଁଶ	ଶିଖଣ୍ଡ ଶତପଥୀ	୨୦୬
ଜୀବନର ମୋଡ	ସୁଲକ୍ଷଣା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	୨୦୭
ଅଧା ଓଡ଼ିଆ	ନିୟତି ମହାନ୍ତି	୨୧୨
ଚାନ୍ଦ ପୂଜା	ସୁଲୋଚନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	୨୧୩
ରକ୍ଷା ଓ ରାକ୍ଷଣୀ	ଶାନ୍ତିପ୍ରିୟା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	୨୧୪
କୋମଳ ଗାନ୍ଧାର	ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲତା ମହାପାତ୍ର	୨୧୫
ଏଇ ଆମ ଘର	ସତ୍ୟଜିତ୍ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	୨୧୮
ଏହି ଆମ ଦେଶ, ଏଇ ଆମ		
ମାଟି, ଭୁଲିବାର ନାହିଁ ତାର ନାଁଟି	ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନା ମହାପାତ୍ର	୨୧୯
ଆର୍ଶୀବାଦ	ସ୍ଵପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର (ରଥ)	୨୨୧
ସଂପର୍କ	ଆର୍ଯ୍ୟବେଳା ନାୟକ	୨୨୭
ପ୍ରିୟତମା	ପରାଶର ମିଶ୍ର	୨୨୮

# ଜହ୍ନୁମାମୁଁ

ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମିଶ୍ର

କାହ୍ନା ପଚାରିଲା-

କୁହ ମୋତେ 'ଜହ୍ନୁମାମୁଁ' ଶରଦର ଶଶି,  
ମୋ ହାତରେ ଆଜିକାଲି ପତୁନ ଓ ଖସି;  
ତମେ କ'ଣ ଦିନୁ ଦିନ ମଳିଆ ଦିଶୁଛ,  
ଜାଣି ମୁଁ ପାରୁନି, ତୁମେ ଏବେ ହସୁଛ ନା ଗୁମୁରି କାନ୍ଦୁତ ?

ଛାଇ ବାଦଲ ଉତ୍ତାତୁ ବାହାରିଲା ଗୁନ୍,  
କହିଲା ସେ ଚଟ୍ କର  
“ଶୁଣିବୁଜି କାହ୍ନାମୋର, ମୋ ଦୁଃଖ ଦରଦ  
ମା ତୋର ଅବୁଝା ମନକୁ ତୋର ବୁଝାଇ ପାରେନା  
ଭାତ ଗୁଣ୍ଡା ହାତେ ଧରି, ଅଗଣାକୁ ଆସି  
ମୋତେ ତାକେ ହାତ ଠାରି, (ଧରମ ଭାଇତ ମୁଁ)  
'ଆ ମୋର କାହ୍ନା ହାତେ ପଡ଼ିଯା' ତୁ ଖସି ।’

ଯୋଉ ଦିନୁ ଗୁଲିଗଲୁ ଗୋପ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ଛାଡ଼ି,  
ଭୁଲିଲୁ ତୁ ଯମୁନାକୁ, କଦମ୍ବ ବନକୁ;  
ରାଧା ହାତେ ତୋ ବଂଶୀ ଧରାଇ,  
ମା କୋଳେ ଶରଧାର ବାଲି ଥୋଇ ଦେଇ  
ଗୁଲିଗଲୁ ମଥୁରାକୁ, ଦ୍ଵାରିକାକୁ, ହସ୍ତିନା ପୁରକୁ;  
ବୁଲିଲୁ ତୁ କେତେ ଜନପଦ ନଦୀନାଳ ପାରି,  
କରିଲୁ ତୁ ରାଜନୀତି, ଧର୍ମନୀତି, ଅର୍ଥନୀତି;  
ସେଇଦିନୁ ମା' ତୋର ଅନାଇ ବସିଛି,  
ମୋ କାହ୍ନା ବିଦେଶ ଯାଇଛି,  
ଫେରିବ ସେ କାମ ଦାମ ସାରି ।

ତୁ ଆଉ ଫେରିଲୁନି ଗୋପ ପୁର,  
ମା କୋଳ ତୋ ଲାଗି ରହିଲା ଅପୁରା;  
ବଂଶୀ ସ୍ଵନ ଆଉ ଶୁଭିଲାନି,  
ଗୋପ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ଆଉ ଜମିଲାନି,  
ଗୋଧୁଳି ର ସଂଧ୍ୟା ଆଉ ଝଲକ ମାରୁନି  
ଗୋ ଧନ, ବିଦୁନେ ଗୋପ ପୁର ଶ୍ରୀ ହରିଲାଣି ।”

ପଚାରିଲା କାହ୍ନା,

“ମୁଁ ସିନା ବିଦେଶ କୁ ଗଲି ପାଠପଢ଼ା, କାମ ଧନ୍ଦା ପାଇଁ  
ତୁମେ ଏବେ ଶ୍ରୀହୀନ ଉଦାସ କାହିଁ ପାଇଁ ?



ତୁମେ କଣ ସତେ ଆମ ମାମୁଁ ନୁହଁ ?  
ତୁମେ କଣ ସତେ ବହିନାହିଁ ଶଶକର ଛାଇ?”

ଖେଦ ମନେ କହିଥିଲା ଜହ୍ନ,

“ସେମିତି ଥିଲିରେ ବାପା ତୋ ମାମୁଁ ସାଜି  
ସେମିତି ଅଛିରେ ମୁଁ, ବଦଳିନି କିଛି ।  
ତୁମେ ମାନେ ମୋତେ ଦେଲ ଶ୍ରୀବତ୍ସ ଲାଞ୍ଜନା,  
ମୋ ସୁନ୍ଦର ବାଲି ଶେଯ ଟାକୁ  
ଟାଣି ତୁଣି ଦେଲ ମୋତେ ନିନ୍ଦା ଓ ଭର୍ତ୍ସନା;  
ଉପଗ୍ରହ ଟାଏ ମୁଁହି, ନିର୍ବଳ, ଶକ୍ତିହୀନ, ତେଜ ଜମା ନାହିଁ ।

ମାମୁଁର ପୋଷାକ ଥରେ ଖୋଲି ଗଲା ପରେ,  
କଳ୍ପନା ଆଉ ମମତାର ଗୁଦର ଉତାରି  
ଧାତୁ ପିଣ୍ଡ ଟାଏ ମୋର ଦେହ, ରକ୍ତ ମାଂସ ଗଢା, ମଣିଷ ର ରୂପ ପରି ।  
ତମେ ସବୁ ଭୁଲିଗଲ ଜହ୍ନଟାର ପ୍ରାଣ ଥିଲା, ମନ ଥିଲା,  
ସରାଗରେ ଧରମ ଭଉଣୀ କରି କାହ୍ନା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଭଣଜା ର ରୂପ ଦେଇ ଥିଲା ।”

ପଚ୍ଚରିଲା କାହ୍ନା,

“ଫେରିବି ମୁଁ ବିଦେଶରୁ, ଯିବି ନିଜ ଦେଶେ  
ପୋଖରୀ ଦୁଡ଼ାରେ ଅବା ନଦୀ ତଟେ ବସି,  
ଧାନ ଖେତ, ଖଳା ଅବା ସ୍କୁଲ ପଡ଼ିଆ ରୁ,  
'ଜହ୍ନମାମୁଁ' ତୁମ ସହ ବେଶ୍ କଥା ହେବି;  
ତମେ ଖାଲି କଥା ଦିଅ, ଶରତ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା ଦିନ, ବାଦଲ ଉଠାତୁ ଆସି  
ମୋ ହାତରେ ଥରେ ମାତ୍ର ପଡ଼ିବକି ଖସି ?”

ହସି ହସି ଜହ୍ନ କହିଗଲା----

“କାହ୍ନା ମୋ'ର, ଭୁଲି ଯା'ରେ, ସେ ଦିନର କଥା,  
କେଶବ ଯେ ମଥୁରାକୁ ଗଲା, କେବେ ଫେରିଲାକି?  
ତୁ କିଆଁ ଫେରିବୁ କହ ଅପଚରା ଗାଁ ମାଟି ଲାଗି ?  
ବିଦେଶରେ ତୁମ୍ଭ ଚାପ୍ ଶୋଇଯା , ବିଛଣା ସଜାଡ଼ି  
ବୟସ ବହୁତ ତୋର, ଭାବନା ତୁ ଆତୁ ସାତୁ କିଛି ।  
ସେଦିନର କାହ୍ନା ଆଉ କାହ୍ନା ହୋଇ ନାହିଁ,  
ମାମୁଁର ପୋଷାକ ପିନ୍ଧି ନାଚିବି ମୁଁ ଆଉ କାହା ପାଇଁ ?

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# ଆମ ଗାଁ ବାସୀ

ଗଗନ ବିହାରୀ ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ

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ସରଗ ସମାନ ଗାଆଁ ଚି ମୋର,  
ଧାଡ଼ି ଧାଡ଼ି ଘର ନଡ଼ା ଛପର ।  
ତାଳ, ନାରିକେଳ, ଆମ୍ବର ତୋଟା,  
ମାଡ଼ିଥାଏ ତହିଁ ସବୁଜ ଲତା ।  
କ୍ଷେତ ବିଲ ବାଡ଼ି ସବୁଜେ ଭରା,  
ପ୍ରକୃତି ମେଲିଛି ପସରା ପରା ।  
ରହିଛି ଶାସନ, ସାହି, ଉଆସ,  
ନାନାଜାତି ଲୋକେ କରନ୍ତି ବାସ ।  
ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟେ ନ ଥାଏ କଳି,  
ଚଳନ୍ତି ସଭିଏଁ କୁଟୁମ୍ବ ଭଳି ।

ମାଗୁଣୀ ଭାଇର କମାର ଶାଳ,  
ଲୁହାକାମ କରି କାଟଇ ବେଳ ।  
ଭାଡ଼ି ଜଳୁଥାଏ ଦିଲକି ଦିକି,  
ନିଆଁ ଝୁଲ ପଡ଼େ ଦୂରେ ଛିଡ଼ିକି ।  
ସଞ୍ଜ ହେଲେ ଲୋକ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଠୁଳ,  
ପଜାନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କର ଲଙ୍ଗଳ ଫଳ ।  
ଲଙ୍ଗଳ ତିଆରି ହୁଏ ସେଠାରେ,  
ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ସବୁବେଳେ ମରାମତିରେ ।

ମହିନ୍ଦ୍ର ପିଇସା ଗାଆଁର ଧୋବା,  
କାମ ତାର ଲୁଗା ସଫା କରିବା ।  
ଘରେଘରେ ବୁଲି ଆଣେ ସେ ଲୁଗା,  
ସଫା କରିସାରି କରେ ଅଲଗା ।  
ମଞ୍ଚ ଦେଇ ସିଏ କରେ ଇସ୍ତରି,  
ବୋକତାରେ ଦିଏ ଲୁଗା ସେ ଭରି ।  
ଲୁଗା ଫେରାଇ ସେ ଆଣେ ପଇସା,  
ଏକମିତି ଚାଲେ ତାର ବେଉସା ।  
କାହା ଘରେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଅବା ଜନମ,  
ବେଳରେ ତାହାର ଆସଇ କାମ ।  
ପାଣି ଛିଞ୍ଚି ଲୁଗା କରେ ପବିତ୍ର,  
ସବୁ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ଅଟଇ ମିତ୍ର ।

ବାରିକ ସାହିରେ ଗଦା ବାରିକ,  
ବାଳ କାଟେ ସିଏ ଗାଆଁଟା ଯାକ ।  
ଖୁର କଇଁଚିର ବାକସ ଧରି,  
ସଭିଙ୍କୁ ଦିଅଇ ଖିଅର କରି ।  
ବାହା ବ୍ରତ ଥିଲେ କାହାରି ଘରେ,  
ଗଦା ପହଞ୍ଚଇ ସବା ଆଗରେ ।  
ଗୋଡ଼ ଧୁଆ ଧୋଇ କାମ ସେ କରେ,  
ପାଉଣା ଚିକକ ବାନ୍ଧେ କାନିରେ ।

ଉପର ସାହିରେ ଜେନାଙ୍କ ଘର,  
ମହୁରିଆ ସଙ୍ଗେ ବାସ ତାଙ୍କର ।  
ଢୋଲ ତିଆରିରେ ଥାଏଟି ମନ,  
ଢାଉଁ ଢାଉଁ କରି କଟଇ ଦିନ ।  
ବାହା ବ୍ରତ ଥିଲେ ବଜାନ୍ତି ବାଜା,  
ପଇସା ପାଇଲେ କରନ୍ତି ମଜା ।

ବାବୁ ଭୋଳ ଘର ଗଉଡ଼ ସାହି,  
ବେଉସା ତାହାର ଦୁଧ ଓ ଦହି ।  
ଗୋରୁ ଗାଈଙ୍କର ଗୋଠ ତାହାର,  
ଭାବେ ସେ କୁଟୁମ୍ବ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ।  
ଦୁଧ ଦହି ବିକି ପୋଷଇ ପେଟ,  
ଦୋଳ ପୁନେଇଁ ରେ କରେ ସେ ନାଟ ।

ପଦୁ ଦାଦୀ ଘର ଗାଆଁ ଭିତରେ,  
ପାଲିଙ୍ଗି ସବାରୀ ବୁହେ କାନ୍ଧରେ ।  
ବାହାଘର ଥିଲେ କାହାରି ଘରେ,  
ବରକୁ ବସାଇ ପାଲିଙ୍ଗି ପରେ ।  
ବାହା କରି ଯା'ନ୍ତି ଆର ଗାଆଁକୁ,  
ବାଣ ଓ ରୋଷଣୀ ଢୋଲ ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ।  
ସବାରୀ ଭିତରେ ନୂଆ ବୋହୁକୁ,  
କାନ୍ଧେଇ ଆଣନ୍ତି ଶାଶୁ ଘରକୁ ।  
ଘର ପୁରି ଉଠେ କୋଳାହଳରେ,  
ବେହେରାଙ୍କ ମନ ଆନନ୍ଦେ ଭରେ ।

ରୁଡ଼ା କୁଟେ ଆମ ଭଗି ଠାକୁମା,  
ଅଳସ ତାହାର ନଥାଏ ଜମା ।  
ଧପତ ଧପତ କୁଟଇ ଢେଙ୍କି,  
ରୁଡ଼ା କୁଟି ଯାଏ ସାହିରେ ବିକି ।  
ପଇସା ପାଇଲେ ଚଳାଏ ଘର,  
ଦିଅଙ୍କ କୃପାରୁ ଚାଲେ ସଂସାର ।

ଆମ ଗାଁ ତେଲି ସୁରିଆ ଭାଇ,  
ତେଲ ପେଡ଼ି ସିଏ ପେଟ ପୋଷଇ ।  
ତେଲ ପେଡେ ସିଏ ଘଣାରେ ଥୋଇ,  
ସେଥିରୁ ତେଲ ତ ଯାଉଛି ବୋହି ।  
ସୋରିଷ, କରଞ୍ଜ, ନିମର ତେଲ,  
ତା ପାଖୁ କିଣିଲେ ନାହିଁ ଭେଜାଇ ।

ଶାମ ଭାଇ ଘର ତନ୍ତୀ ସାହିରେ,  
ସୁତା ଲୁଗା ବୁଣେ ନିଜ ତନ୍ତରେ ।  
ଭଳି ଭଳି ରଙ୍ଗେ ଗାମୁଛା ଶାଢ଼ୀ,  
ବୁଣି ଯାଉଥାଏ ତନ୍ତକୁ ଭିଡ଼ି ।  
ତନ୍ତ ବୁଣା ଲୁଗା ଚାହିଦା ଭାରି,  
ବଜାରକୁ ନେଇ କରେ ବିକିରି ।  
ପଇସା ସେଥିରୁ ଯେତକ ପାଏ,  
ଖୁସିରେ ସଂସାର ନିଜେ ଚଳାଏ ।

ଠାକୁରା ପୋଖରୀ କୁଳେ ଶାସନ,  
ବାସ କରନ୍ତି ସେଠାରେ ବାହୁଣ ।  
ଶତପଥୀ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନର,  
ଯଜମାନ କାମେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆନନ୍ଦ ।  
ଯଜ୍ଞ ହୋମ ପୋଥି ପାଖରେ ମନ,  
ପୁରୋହିତ ବୋଲି ମିଳେ ସମ୍ମାନ ।  
ପୂଜା ପୂଜି ଅବା ବାହା ବ୍ରତକୁ,  
ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଆସେ ପୁରୋହିତଙ୍କୁ ।  
ପୁରୋହିତେ ପୂଜା କରିଲେ ଶେଷ,  
ଭୋଜିରେ କରନ୍ତି ମନ ନିବେଶ ।  
ଭୋଜି ସରିଗଲେ ମିଳେ ଦକ୍ଷିଣା,  
ଅକ୍ଷରେ ଗୁଞ୍ଜି ନ କରି ମନା ।  
ହରି ବୋଲ ଭାଇ ଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ବୋଲ,  
ଦହି ରୁଡ଼ା ଖାଇ ଯିବାରେ ଚାଲ ।

ଗାଆଁ ଚଉକିଆ ସୁରିଆ ଭାଇ,  
ସାରା ରାତି ସିଏ ଗାଆଁ ଜଗଇ ।  
ନୀଳରଙ୍ଗ ଜାମା, ମୁଣ୍ଡେ ପଗଡ଼ି,  
ହାତରେ ତାହାର ପୁଲିସ ବାଡ଼ି ।  
ଶୁନଶାନ ହେଲେ ଗାଆଁଟି ଯାକ,  
ରାତିରେ ଶୁଭେ ତା' ପହୁରା ଡାକ,  
କାହିଁ କେବେ କେବେ ଥାନାକୁ ଯାଏ,  
ଜନମ ମରଣ ଖବର ଦିଏ ।

ଯେବେ ଶୁଭେ ସାଇକେଲର ଘଣ୍ଟି,  
ଦିବାକର ଭାଇ ଆଣଇ ଚିଠି ।  
ଡାକ ଘରୁ ଚିଠି ଆଣି ଥଳିରେ,  
ବୁଲି ବୁଲି ବାଙ୍କେ ସେ ଘରେ ଘରେ ।  
ସୁଖ ହେଉ ଅବା ଦୁଃଖ ଖବର,  
କେବେ କରେ ନାହିଁ ସିଏ ଉଛୁର ।  
ଦରମା ଗଣ୍ଡକ ଅଟେ ନିଅଙ୍କ,  
ତଥାପି ଆଣେନି ମନରେ କଙ୍କ ।

କରବାରୁ ଆମ ହେତ ମାଞ୍ଚର,  
ଧୋବ ଫର ଫର ଧୋଡ଼ି ତାଙ୍କର ।  
ଗୌର ବର୍ଷ ଦେହ, ମୁଣ୍ଡଟି ଚନ୍ଦା,  
ପାଦରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଚପଲ ପିନ୍ଧା ।  
ଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଗୁଣୀ ଜନ ସରଳ ପ୍ରାଣ,  
ଜ୍ଞାନ ବିତରଣେ ସର୍ବଦା ମନ ।  
ଶିକ୍ଷା ଲାଭ, ଗଲେ ତାଙ୍କରି ପାଶ,  
ବହୁ ଛାତ୍ର ଛାତ୍ରୀ ହେଲେ ମଣିଷ ।  
ବହୁ ଜନଙ୍କର ସିଏ ଭରସା,  
ସବୁରି ମୁହଁରେ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଶଂସା ।

ଦାଶରଥୀ ବାବୁ ବିଦ୍ଵାନ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି,  
ମାଇନର ସ୍କୁଲ ତାଙ୍କର କୃତି ।  
ଗଣିତ ପୁସ୍ତକ ନବ ବିଧାନ,  
ଛାତ୍ର ଛାତ୍ରୀ ପାଇଁ କଲେ ଲିଖନ ।  
କଟକରେ ଥିଲେ ହେତ ମାଞ୍ଚର,  
ଶିକ୍ଷାବୀତ ଭାବେ ଖ୍ୟାତି ତାଙ୍କର ।  
ନାଆଁ ବାଜୁଥିଲା ଦଶ କୋଶକୁ,  
ଗାଆଁ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ଖାତିରି ତାଙ୍କୁ ।

ମଧୁରା ମୋହନ କାନନଗୋଲ,  
 ମାପୁଥିଲେ ଜମି ଅମୀନ ହୋଇ ।  
 ଗାଆଁ ମଧ୍ୟେ ଅଟେ ତାଙ୍କର ଘର,  
 ପାଖେ ଡୋଳିଛନ୍ତି ଦୁଇ ମନ୍ଦିର ।  
 ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଆଉ ରାଧାମାଧବ,  
 ତାଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ କେତେ କରନ୍ତି ପର୍ବ ।  
 ଆଷାଢ଼ ମାସରେ ରଥ ଯାତରା,  
 ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ବଳଭଦ୍ର ସୁଭଦ୍ରା ।  
 ଚଣା ହୋଇଯାନ୍ତି ରଥରେ ବସି,  
 ରଥ ଟାଣିଥାନ୍ତି ଆମ ଗାଁ ବାସୀ ।  
 ଫଗୁଣ ଆସିଲେ ଦୋଳ ଯାତରା,  
 ଫଗୁ ରଙ୍ଗ ବୋଳା ଦେହୁଟି ସାରା ।  
 ମଉଜେ ଖେଳନ୍ତି ଗାଆଁର ଲୋକେ,  
 ଜାତି ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭେଦ ନଥାଏ ଚିକେ ।

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ଏହି ପରି ନିଜ ମଧ୍ୟେ ସଂପର୍କ,  
 ରଖି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ଗାଆଁର ଲୋକ ।  
 ଗାଉଁଲି ଜୀବନ ଗାଉଁଲି ଠାଣି,  
 ସହର ବାସିଏ ନଥିବେ ଜାଣି ।  
 ହୁଏ ଯଦି ଇଚ୍ଛା ଜାଣିବା ପାଇଁ,  
 ଦେଖି ପାରନ୍ତି ସେ ଗାଆଁକୁ ଯାଇ ।  
 ନାହିଁ କୋଠା ବାଡ଼ି ମୋଟର ଗାଡ଼ି,  
 ଦୋକାନ ବଜାର ଧାଡ଼ିକି ଧାଡ଼ି ।  
 ନାହିଁ ପିତୁ ରାସ୍ତା ସିନେମା ଘର,  
 କଳ କାରାଖାନା ଧନ ପୁରୁର ।  
 ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟତା ମଧ୍ୟେ ମାନବିକତା,  
 ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ଜୀବନର ମଉଳିକତା ।  
 ସହଜ ଚଳଣି, ସରଳ ପ୍ରାଣ,  
 ନିଷ୍ଠପଟମୟ ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ଜୀବନ ।

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# ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ବିଦ୍ୟା

ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି

“ହଇରେ ପୁଅ, କିକେଟର ଷ୍ଟୋର କେତେ? ହଁ, ମୁଁ ଭୁଲିଗଲି ତୋ ନାଇକି ଜୋଡା ଆଣିବାକୁ।”

କଥାଟା କଅଣ କି? ପୁଅର ଡିମାଣ୍ଡଟା ଅତି ମାତ୍ରାରେ ବେଶୀ । ଟିକିଏ ଏଇ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ କାରବାର ନ କଲେ ନ ଚଳେ ।

ମୁଁ କହୁଛି ଦିନରେ ମୋଟର ସାଇକଲଟା ଧରି ବୁଲୁଛୁ ବୁଲି, ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀଏ ଅଛନ୍ତି ପରା । କିନ୍ତୁ ପାଠଟା ଲେକ୍ଚରଙ୍କ ଘରୁ ଶିଖି ପକା । ସିଏ ବି ସେଇ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ବେବସା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ତ ; ନ କରି ଆଉ ଚାରା ଅଛି । ଡିଗ୍ରୀଟା ଦାମିକା ଧରଣର ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ କାହିଁକି ବା, ସେଇ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ବିଦ୍ୟାକୁ କାମରେ ଲଗାଇଲେ ।

ପୁଅର ପୁଣି knee high boots ଦରକାର । ମୁଁ ଜାଣେ ତାର ଟିକିଏ drinks ବି ଚଳେ । କିଓ, ନ ହେଲେ ମଣିଷରେ ଗଣା ହେବ କିମିତି । ହଉ ପଛେ, ଏ ସବୁ ଚଳାଇବାକୁ କିଛି ଧନ୍ଦାର ଯୋଗାଡ କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ଧନ୍ଦା ସେମିତି ହେବ ନା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ କିଏ କହେ ଭଲ ପାଠ ଦରକାର । କଥାଟା ହେଉଛି, ଭଲ ପାଠ ତ କଷ୍ଟ ବ୍ୟାପାର, ଆମ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଦେଇ କଣ ହେବ । ତା ଛଡା ଦରକାର ବା କଣ? ଆମେ ଅଳ୍ପକେ ସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ଲୋକ । ତେଣୁ ବାବୁ, ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ କରି ପଶି ଯା, ଆଉ ସେ ବିଦ୍ୟା ଚାଲୁ ରଖ । ଟିକ୍ତା ନାହିଁ; ପେଟ ପୋଷ ନାହିଁ ଦୋଷ । କହିଲି ପରା, lecturer ବାବୁ ସେଇ ବିଦ୍ୟାରେ ପାରଗ, ଆଉ ବାକି ଦୁନିଆକୁ ଦେଖ, ସବୁଆଡେ ସେଇ କାରବାର । ତେଣୁ ତର କାହିଁକି? ଚାରିଆଡେ ଅଫିସ୍ରେ ଦେଖ, କଚେରୀରେ ଦେଖ, ସ୍କୁଲ୍ କଲେଜରେ ଦେଖ, ବା ନେତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖ, ସବୁ ସେଇ ବିଦ୍ୟାରେ ଧୁରନ୍ଧର । ଆମେ ପରା ଗାଆଁରୁ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ପଳାଇ ଆସିଲୁ ସେଇଥି ପାଇଁ । ଆଉ ଗାଁ ଲୋକ କଣ ରହିଛନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁରେ ପଶିଲେଣି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁ ସାଦାସିଧା ଲୋକ, ସବୁ ଅଳ୍ପକେ ସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ।

ଗାଁରେ ଯେବେ ଆମେ ବଢୁଥିଲୁ, ବଲଟିଏ ଖୋଲା ପାଦଟାରେ ଗଡେଇ ଗଡେଇ ଆମେ ଖେଳୁଥିଲୁ ପୁଟବଲ । କଚଡା ଖାଉଥିଲୁ, କାଦୁଅରେ ଘାଣ୍ଟି ଚକଟି ହେବାରେ ମଜା ଥିଲା । ସବୁ ପିଲାଏ ମିଶି ପାରୁଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ କାଦୁଅରୁ ମିଳିବ ବା କଅଣ, ଖାଲି ପେକ୍ସସାର୍ଟ ଗନ୍ଧିଆ ହେବ ସିନା । ଆଜିକାଲି ଲୋକଙ୍କର ବିଶେଷତଃ ପିଲାଙ୍କର ବୁଦ୍ଧି ପ୍ରଖର । ସାବାସ ! କିକେଟ - ଟେଲିଭିଜନ ପାଖରେ ଆରାମକୁ ଆରାମ ମିଳିଲା, ମଳିଆ ଗନ୍ଧିଆ ନାହିଁ, ଖେଳର ମଜା ବି ମିଳିଲା । ଆଉ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁର ଖୋରାକ ମଧ୍ୟ ମିଳିଲା । କି ମଜାଦାର !

ହଁ, ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା । ଆମ ‘ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ’ ଜାତିଟାକୁ ବନ୍ଧାଇବାକୁ ହେବ, ନହେଲେ ଯେ ଆମେ ବୁଡି ଯିବା । କିଓ, ଆମ ବାପଅଜା ଅମଳରୁ ରଜାରାଜୁଡା ଜମିଦାରମାନେ ନିଜ ଗାଦି



ରଖିବାକୁ ‘ଶିଳାକୁ ବାତାଅ ବେ’ ନୀତି ଚାଲୁ ରଖିଥିଲେ । ସେମାନେ କ’ଣ ବୋକା ଥିଲେ ? ଆଉ ଆମ ପୋଲିସ କ’ଣ ବାଦ ଯିବେ କି ? ଛି ଛି, କାହାକୁ ବାଡେଇବ, ଇଏ ଗୋଟେ କଥା ନା । ବାବୁ, ତା’ର ଦରକାର କଣ । ଶିଳାକୁ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ କରି ଏପାଖ ସେପାଖ ଦଶ ଥର କରେଇ ଦିଅ । ଦେଖ କେତେ ବାଟ ଯାଉଛି, ବଳେ ଫଣରେ ପଡିବ ନାହିଁ । ଅତି ବଳି ଗଲେ, ନାଚାରରେ କାହାରି ହାତରେ ବାଡେଇ ଦିଅ, ତାହେଲେ ହାତଟା ଗଞ୍ଜେଇବ ନାହିଁ ।

ହଁ, ପୁଅଟା ତା room କୁ ପଶାଇବାକୁ ଦିଏ ନାହିଁ । ସେଠି କେତେ କଣ କାରବାର । Privacy ଟା ନିହାତି ଦରକାର । ସାବାସ ବେଟା ! ତୁ ଏବେ ଠିକ ବାଟରେ...

ଇଏ ତ ଗଲା ଗୋଟେ ପ୍ରକାର କାରବାର । କଥାଟା କଣ ନା, ଆମେ ଟିକିଏ ଗରୀବ, ଟିକିଏ କାହିଁକି ଭଲଭାବରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ହାଟରେ କହି ବୁଲିବା ନା କଣ । ଆମ କୋଣାର୍କ, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ, ବୋଇତ କିସ ତୁଲିକି ଗଲେ । ଛାତି ପୁଟଲଇ ଗଲା ଝାଡି ନିଶ ମୋଡି ଗାଇ ବୁଲିବା, କହି ବୁଲିବା । ଆଉ ଭାଷଣ ଦେବା, ଯାହା ଆମର ହକଦାର । ସେ ତ କରିବା, ଗରୀବ-ଗରୀବୀଙ୍କୁ କରିବା କଣ । ତମେମାନେ ଟିକିଏ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ତୁଙ୍ଗୁରୁ ବେଶୀ ଭାବରେ କର, କାହିଁକି ବିଚରା ପଡିଥିବ ଝୋପଡିରେ । ହେଲେ ଥାଅ ବାବା ତୁମେ ଝୋପଡିବାଲେ । ଆମ ଘରକାମ କରିବ କିଏ? ସରକାର କହୁଛନ୍ତି ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ହଟାଅ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ସହର ବାହାରେ ଛାଡ । ବଡବଡିଆ ସିନା high level



ରୁଞ୍ଜୁରୁ ରୁଞ୍ଜୁରୁ କରି ପାରିବେ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ କାମ ଚଳିଯିବ । ଆଉ ଆମେ କେଉଁ ଗାତରେ ପଶିବା? ଦେଖ, ଆମକୁ ବି ସେଇ ବିଦ୍ୟା ଚିକିତ୍ସା ଚିକିତ୍ସା ମାଲୁମ ଅଛି । କାହିଁକି, ଏ'ଟା ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ର ଶାସନ ନୁହେଁ କି? ଚାଲ ଝୋପଡ଼ିବାଲେ, ଧର ଝଣ୍ଟା କର ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ - ଇନ୍‌କାବ୍, ଜିନ୍‌ବାଦ୍ ।

ଓହୋ, ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଝାଲେଇ ଗଲାଣି ଏତେ କଥା ଭାବି । ଥଣ୍ଡା ପାଣି ଗିଲାସେ କିଏ ଦିଅ । ମା ସିନା ବିଗ୍ ବଜାର ଗଲେ । ସେ କାମ କଲା ଟୋକିଟା କୁଆଡେ ଗଲା - ସବୁବେଳେ ବାବୁଙ୍କ ହାଲତାଲ ବୁଝେ, ପାଖରେ ବସି ଟେଲିଭିଜନ ଦେଖେ । କିଲୋ କାଞ୍ଚନ, ପାଣି ଗିଲାସେ ଆଣ୍ । ଆସୁନୁ ଆଜି ।

*Sri Gopal Mohanty, Professor Emeritus at McMaster University, is a Founding Member of Canada Chapter of OSA. He has strong interest in socio-cultural activities in Indo-Canadian communities in Hamilton and the region. He is involved in Orissa development projects through SEEDS for last 15 years.*

## ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ

ଅଲେଖ ଦାଶ

ଗଲେ ଯାଉ ପଛେ ମୋ ଆସନ ଡୁବି  
ପଞ୍ଜିମ ଆକାଶେ ଉଦୟ ହେଉ ରବି  
ଘୁଣ୍ଟିତ ଚକ୍ଷୁରେ ଦେଖୁ ପଛେ ବିଶ୍ଵ  
ସତ୍ୟ ପଥୁ କେବେ ନଟଳୁ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ ।୧।

ସାକୁଲେଇ ହୋଇ ଆଖିକୁ ମଳିବା  
କିମ୍ପା ମିଛ କହି ହୃଦୟ ଜିଣିବା  
ମୋର ଜାତକରେ ନପାଉ ସେ ସ୍ଥାନ  
କିମ୍ପା ମୁଁ ନଦେଖେ କେବେ ତା' ସ୍ଵପନ ।୨।

ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନୀ ହୋଇ ମରିବାକୁ ଗୃହେଁ  
ଅସତ୍ୟ ପଥରୁ ବହୁ ଦୁରେ ରହେ  
ସତ କହି ପଛେ ଅଦିନରେ ମରେ  
ଦୀର୍ଘାୟୁ ନହୁଏ ମିଛୁଆ ଭାବରେ ।୩।

ଲୋଡା ନାହିଁ ମୋର ଲକ୍ଷେ ଶଠ ବନ୍ଧୁ  
ଯାର ଇଚ୍ଛାରେ ଲଂଘେ ଭବ ସିନ୍ଧୁ  
ଖାଲି ଗୃହେଁ ମୁହିଁ ଅଳ୍ପ ସଜା ସାଙ୍ଗ  
ଏ ସାରା ସଂସାର କରୁ ପଛେ ବ୍ୟଙ୍ଗ ।୪।

ଏ ସାରା ସଂସାର କରୁ ଯେତେ ଥକା  
ମୋ ଭାଷା, ସଂସ୍କୃତି ମୋ ପାଇଁ ମିଠା  
ଓଡ଼ିଆର ରକ୍ତ ମୋ ଶିରାରେ ବହେ  
ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନୀ ହୋଇ ବଂଚିବାକୁ ଗୃହେଁ ।୫।

ଅଲେଖ ଦାଶ ଓମାହା, ନେବାଙ୍କାରେ ବାସ କରନ୍ତି ।

# ଶର୍ବରୀ

ଅର୍ଜୁନ ପୁରୋହିତ

ଦିବସର ଯବନିକା ଖସିଲା  
ରଜନୀର ଯବନିକା ଉଠିଲା  
ଜନପଥ କୋଳାହଳ ସରିଲା  
ଆକାଶର ରଞ୍ଜିତା ହଜିଲା ।

ଶର୍ବରୀ ପାଦଚିପି ଆସିଲ  
କଇଁଫୁଲ ଆଖିପତା ଖୋଲିଲ  
ବାଜିଯାଏ ତୁମ ପଦ ନୁପୁର  
ଝିଲ୍ଲୀର ଝଙ୍କାର ମୁଖର ।

ପ୍ରସରିଲ ମଲ୍ଲୀକା ମାଧବୀ  
ରଜନୀଗନ୍ଧାର ସୁରଭି  
ପିଇଲି ଆଲୋକର ଓଢ଼ଣା  
ପିଇଲି ତାରକାର ଗହଣା ।

ତୁମକୋଳେ ମଥାଦେଇ ଶୋଇଲି  
ସପନର ଦେଶେ ମୁଁ ଗୋ ବୁଲିଲି  
ଆଉ ଏକ ରାଇଜର ପଥକ  
ବୁଲି ବୁଲି ଶ୍ରାନ୍ତ ମୁଁ ଅଧିକ ।

ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ଅସ୍ତ ମୋ ଧାରଣା  
ଶାନ୍ତ ମୋ ମନ ଆଉ କାମନା  
ଅନ୍ତରତମ ଦେଶେ ମୁଁ ଗୋ ପଶିଲି  
ଆନନ୍ଦସାଗରେ ମୁଁ ହଜିଲି ।

ସେଠି ନାହିଁ ଜନମ ଓ ମରଣ  
ସେଠି ନାହିଁ ବନ୍ଧନ, ମୋଚନ  
ନାହିଁ ସେଠି ଦେଶକାଳ ବିଭେଦ  
ସତ୍ୟ ଓ ମିଥ୍ୟାର ବିବାଦ ।



ଅମୃତ ରସ ମୁଁ ଗୋ ପିଇଲି  
ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ବୀଜକୁ ମୁଁ ଛୁଇଁଲି  
ଅସୀମ ସେ ଆକାଶରେ ମିଶିଲି  
ଅପୂର୍ବ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ମୁଁ ଶୁଣିଲି ।

ଆଉଥରେ ବିଭାବରୀ ଆସିବ  
ପୁଣି ଥରେ ଅରୁଣିମା ପୁଷିବ  
ରଜନୀର ଯବନିକା ଖସିବ  
ଦିବସର ଯବନିକା ଉଠିବ ।

ତପନର ତାପେ ଧରା ଜଳିବ  
ଜୀବନର ସଙ୍ଗମ ଫେରିବ  
କାନ୍ତ ଓ ଜର୍ଜରିତ ମୁଁ ହେବି  
ଆଶ୍ରୟ ପାଇଁ କୋଳ ଖୋଜିବି ।

ଶର୍ବରୀ ମାୟାବିନୀ କେଉଁଠି  
ବିଦାୟ ନ ଦେଇ ଗଲ ଲେଉଟି  
ଶାନ୍ତିଦାୟିନୀ ତୁମେ ଜନନୀ  
ନନ୍ଦିନୀ ସହୋଦରା ସଜନୀ  
ଶର୍ବରୀ ତୁମ ପଥ ଚାହିଁବି  
ଆଶାକରେ ତୁମ କୋଳେ ଶୋଇବି ।

Arjun Purohit is a prolific writer and lives in Kingston, Canada with his wife Padmini.

# ନୀଳାଭ କୁହୁଡ଼ିର ମାୟା

ଡଃ. ସୁଲୋଚନା ଦାସ

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ.....ତୁମେ...!

ଏଇ ପଦେକଥାକୁ କେତେ ସହସ୍ରବାର ସେ ମନେମନେ ଜପିସାରିଲେଣି କେଜାଣି । ତଥାପି କାନରେ ବାଜିଯାଉଛି ସେଇ ମୃଦୁଗମ୍ଭୀର ସ୍ୱର । କେଉଁ ଗ୍ରହଗହାନ୍ତରୁ ଉଚ୍ଚାରିତ ହେଉଛି ଏ ଶୂନ୍ୟବାଣୀ ! ତାଙ୍କର ସମଗ୍ର ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ଲୀନ ହୋଇଯାଉଛି ଗୋଟେ ମହାଶୂନ୍ୟତାର ଚେତନାରେ, ଆକାଶମୁଖୀ ହେଉଛି ସତ୍ତାର କେଉଁ ଗୋଟେ ଅଂଶ । ଅନାୟାସରେ ଅତିକ୍ରମିଯାଉଛି ନକ୍ଷତ୍ର ପରେ ନକ୍ଷତ୍ର । ସତେ ଅବା ନିରବଧି ମହାକାଳକୁ ଆଞ୍ଚୁଳାରେ ଭରି ସେ ଧାଉଁଛନ୍ତି ତ ଧାଉଁଛନ୍ତି..... କାହାର ଅନ୍ୱେଷଣରେ ? କେଉଁ ଅଭୀପ୍ସାରେ ? କେଉଁ ପ୍ରୀତିର ସମ୍ମାନରେ....? ଏ ଅନ୍ୱେଷଣର ଶେଷ ତେବେ କେଉଁଠି ? କେଉଁ ଭୂମିରେ.... ?

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ! ନିଜ ନାମକୁ ଆଉ ଥରେ ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣ କଲେ ସେ । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ କ'ଣ ଖାଲି ଗୋଟାଏ ଦେହ ନା ଖାଲି ଗୋଟାଏ ଚେତନା ? ନା ଖାଲି ଗୋଟେ ଶୂନ୍ୟତା.....ଗୋଟେ ମରାଚିକା ? ନା ମେଞ୍ଚାଏ ଅବରୁଦ୍ଧ ଅକ୍ଷର.....?

ନିଜ ମନକୁ ସେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନକଲେ ।

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କର ମୁଦିତ ନୟନ ଭିତରେ ପୁଟିଉଠୁଛି ସେ ବିଦ୍ୱଳ ଆଖିଦୁଇଟି , ଯାହାର ମାଦକତା ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ମହାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମଦିରାକୁ ବି ଲାଞ୍ଚିତ କରୁଛି । ଗୋଟିଏ ମାତ୍ର ଅପାଙ୍ଗ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ କ'ଣ ସାରାବିଶ୍ୱର କାହାଣୀ ବାଞ୍ଛାୟ ହୋଇପାରେ !

ପ୍ରତିବିମ୍ବିତ ହୋଇପାରେ ତରାତର ନିଖିଳ ବିଶ୍ୱର ଅସୁମାରୀ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ.....? ଦୁଇଟି ନୀଳାଭ ଆଖିର ସବୁଜମାୟା କ'ଣ ଜୀବନ୍ୟାସ ଦେଇପାରେ ଗୋଟେ ଶିଳାଖଣ୍ଡକୁ ! ରୂପାନ୍ତରିତ କରିଦେଇପାରେ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିମତୀ ଅହଲ୍ୟାରେ । ଚିରଞ୍ଜିବୀ କରିଦେଇପାରେ ଗୋଟେ ଅନୁଭବର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ ! ପଲ୍ଲବିତ ପୁଷ୍ପିତ କରିଦେଇପାରେ ସତ୍ତାର କେଉଁ କୋଣଅନୁକୋଣକୁ !

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ କତ ଲେଉଟାଇଲେ । ଆଖିରୁଜି ନିଦ୍ରାଦେବୀଙ୍କୁ ଯେତେ ଆବାହନ କଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେ ଯେପରି କୁଣ୍ଠିତା ଥିଲେ ଆସିବାକୁ । ଆଜି ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିରୁ ନିଦ୍ରା ହଜିଯାଇଛି । ମେଞ୍ଚାଏ ଆଲୋକ ଯେପରି ଅକ୍ଷରର ପରଦାକୁ ହଟେଇ ନେଇଛି । ଖାଲି ଆଲୋକ ଆଉ ଆଲୋକର ପରୁଆର । ସେଇ ପରୁଆର ପଛେ ପଛେ ସେ ସନ୍ତର୍ପଣରେ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି, କେଉଁ ନାମହୀନ ପ୍ରବାଳଦ୍ୱୀପ ଅଭିମୁଖେ !

ହଁ ହଁ.....ସେଇ ସ୍ୱର । ସେହି ମୁଁହ, ସେହି ଚାହାଣୀ । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ଅନାୟାସରେ ତେଇଁଯାଇଥିଲେ ଦୀର୍ଘ ପନ୍ଦରବର୍ଷର ବ୍ୟବଧାନକୁ, ଯେଉଁଦିନ ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ-ଅୟନରେ ପ୍ରଥମ କଦମ୍ବ ହୋଇ ଫୁଟିଥିଲା ଗୋଟେ ଶିହରଣର ରୋମାଞ୍ଚ ।

କନିକା ଲାଇବେରୀରୁ ସେ ଫେରୁଥିଲେ । ସେଦିନ ଆଉ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ କେହି ନ ଥିଲେ । କ'ଣ ଗୋଟେ ନୋଟ୍ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରୁକରୁ ସେ ଭୁଲିଯାଇଥିଲେ ସମୟ । ଲାଇବେରୀର ବୟସ୍କ ପିଅନ ତିନାଥ ଆସି କହିଥିଲା -ଝିଅ, ଘରକୁ ଯିବନି କି ? ସଂଧ୍ୟା ହୋଇଆସିଲାଣି । ଶୀତଦିନ । ଅକ୍ଷର ହୋଇଯିବ ।

ତିନାଥ କଥାରେ ସେ ସମ୍ବିତ୍ ଫେରିଯାଇଥିଲେ । ତରତରରେ ଖାତାପତ୍ର ଧରି ବାହାରି ଆସିଲେ । କଲେଜ ପ୍ରାୟ ନିରୋଳା ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ସମସ୍ତେ ଥିଲେ ଘରମୁହାଁ । କଲେଜ ଲନ୍ଦରେ ଅସ୍ତଗାମୀ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କର ସୁନେଲି କିରଣ ବିଛେଇ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଥିଲା । ବଦଳି ଯାଉଥିଲା ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଘଡ଼ିର ମାନାଙ୍କ । ସବୁଜିମାର ଢେଉଢେଉକା ଆସ୍ତରଣ ଉପରେ ଲହରୀୟିତ ହେଉଥିଲା ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣଭା । ରାସ୍ତାର ଦୁଇକଡ଼ରେ ରଙ୍ଗବରଙ୍ଗର ସିଜିନ୍ ଫ୍ଲୋରମାନଙ୍କର ଦିଗ୍‌ବିଜୟୀ ଜୟଯାତା । ଘରବାହୁଡ଼ା ପକ୍ଷୀଙ୍କର କିଚିରିମିଚିରି କାକଳିରେ ମୁଖରିତ ହୋଇଉଠୁଥିଲା ବଡ଼ବଡ଼ ଦେବଦାରୁ ଗଛ । କଲେଜର କୋଳାହଳ କ୍ରମଶଃ ନୀରବି ଆସୁଥିଲା ।

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ତରତର ହୋଇ ଆଗେଇ ଯାଉଥିଲେ ଆର୍ଟ୍‌ସ୍ ବକ୍‌ଆଡ଼କୁ ।

- ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ, ଚିକେ ଶୁଣିବ !

ମୁହଁ ଚୋଳି ଚାହିଁଥିଲେ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ । ବିପରୀତ ଦିଗରୁ ଆସୁଥିବା ଦେବାଶିଷ ସାମ୍‌ନାସାମ୍‌ନି ବାଟ ଓଗାଳି ଛିଡ଼ାହୋଇଥିଲେ ।

- ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ଭଲପାଏ, ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ । ମତେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କର, ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ନିଜ ପ୍ରାଣଠୁ ବଳି ଅଧିକ ଭଲପାଏ.....

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ପାଇଁ ଏହା ନୂଆକଥା ନ ଥିଲା । ମଧ୍ୟଯୁଗୀୟ କାବ୍ୟନାୟିକା ପରି ଯିଏ ରେଭେନ୍‌ସା କଲେଜର ସର୍ବଶେଷ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ଥିଲା, ଯିଏଥିଲା ବହୁବାସିତ, ବହୁଇପସିତା, ତା' ପାଇଁ ଲଏ ଥିଲା ନିତିଦିନିଆ ଘଟଣା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦେବାଶିଷ ବାଟ ଓଗାଳି ଦର୍ପିତ ଠାଣିରେ ଛିଡ଼ାହୋଇଥିଲେ, ସତେ ଯେପରି ତାଙ୍କ ବିଭୋର ଚାହାଣୀରେ ଥିଲା ଅୟୁତ ଯୁଗର କାହାଣୀ । କ-

ଂପିତ ଓଷାଧାରରେ ଥିଲା ଯୁଗାନ୍ତର ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା । ଗୋଟିଏ ମାତ୍ର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ବିନିମୟରେ ଖୋଲିଯାଇଥିଲା ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ପୃଥିବୀର ଅବରୁଦ୍ଧ ଦ୍ଵାର । ତାଙ୍କ ଓଠରପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକଟି ଶବ୍ଦରୁ ଯେପରି ଅମୃତବର୍ଷା ହେଉଥିଲା; ଭିଜିଯାଉଥିଲା ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀଙ୍କର ଅସ୍ଥିତାର ଅଚଳାୟତନ ।

ଦେବାଶିଷଙ୍କ କଥାରେ ସେ ସମ୍ମୋହିତ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ପ୍ରଣୟର ରତ୍ନସିଂହାସନ ତାଙ୍କ ଅଭିଷେକ ପାଇଁ ଯେପରି ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ରହିଥିଲା କେଉଁ ଅନନ୍ତକାଳରୁ । ଧୀର ପଦପାତରେ ସେ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରୁଥିଲେ ସେଇ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନପୁରୀରେ ।

ଅଭିଷିକ୍ତା ସାମ୍ରାଜ୍ୟର ମହାର୍ଜୀ ମୁକୁଟଟିଏ ଯେପରି ପିନ୍ଧାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଦେବାଶିଷ । ଦେବାଶିଷ ପୁନରାବୃତ୍ତି କରୁଥିଲେ- ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ଭଲପାଏ, ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ । ଏକଥା କ'ଣ ତୁମେକେବେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଛ ? ମୋ ଭଲପାଇବାକୁ ଦୟାକରି ତୁମେ ସ୍ଵୀକାର କର ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ !

ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ତଳକୁ କଲେ । ସାରାଦେହରେ ଥିଲା ଅପୂର୍ବ ରୋମାଞ୍ଚ । ପ୍ରାଣରେ ନିନାଦିତ ହେଉଥିଲା ବେପଥୁର ମୋହନବଂଶୀ । ସମଗ୍ର ସତ୍ତା ତାଙ୍କର ମୁହିଁତହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା, ଓଠରେ ଶବ୍ଦଟିଏ ସ୍ଫୁରି ନଥିଲା । ସେ ତଳକୁ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥିଲେ । କେତୋଟି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ବିତିଯାଇଥିଲା ନୀରବରେ । ସେ ଧୀରେ ବାଟଭାଙ୍ଗି ଆଗକୁ ପାଦ ବଢାଇଲେ । ପଛରେ ଠିଆହୋଇ ରହିଥିଲେ ଦେବାଶିଷ ।

ମନେମନେ ହୁଏତ ଭାବୁଥିଲେ, କେଉଁ ଉପାଦାନରେ ଗଢାଏ ତରୁଣୀଟି ! କେତେ ଅହଂକାର ତା'ର ଏ ରୂପର ଐଶ୍ଵର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ ! ! ସତରେ କ'ଣ ତା'ର ହୃଦୟ ବୋଲି କିଛି ନାହିଁ ? ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ଅନନ୍ୟ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଯେଉଁଠି ଠୁଳହୋଇଛି ଲୀଳାମୟୀ ରୂପରେ, ଯାହାର ଚାଲିରେ ସହସ୍ର ପଦ୍ମ ପ୍ରସ୍ଫୁଟିତ, ଯାହାର ଆୟତ୍ତ ନୟନରେ ନୀଳକଣ୍ଠର ସ୍ମିଗ୍ରଧରା ଭରି ରହିଥାଏ, ଯାହା ରୂପର ଔଜ୍ଞାଧର ମାନ ଦିଶେ ଆକାଶ ଜହ୍ନ , ଯାହାର ଦୁଇ ରଞ୍ଜିତ ଓଷାଧାରରେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ଵଳି ଉଠୁଥାଏ ପ୍ରଣୟର ଫସ୍ତୁ, ଯାହାର ଲଙ୍କାବନତ ମୁଖ ମଞ୍ଜଳରେ ଥାଏ ଆଖୁଳାଏ ଆକାଶୀସ୍ଵପ୍ନ , ଯାହାର ତନ୍ତୁବଲୁରୀରେ ଥାଏ ଲାଜକୁଳି ଲତାର ସ୍ଫର୍ଣ୍ଣକାତରତା, ଯାହାର ପ୍ରତିଟି ଅଙ୍ଗରେ ପୁଷ୍ପିଉଠୁଥାଏ ସ୍ଵର୍ଗର ସୁଷମା, ଯାହାର ମଧୁର ସ୍ଵିତ ହସରେ ଜୀବନ ସହସ୍ର ରାଗରେ ସ୍ଵରାୟିତ ହେଉଥାଏ, ସେଇ ଅନିନ୍ଦିତା ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ କ'ଣ କାଠର କଣ୍ଠେଇଟିଏ ? ଯାହାର ରୂପର ଗୌରବ ଅଛି, ଅଥଚ ହୃଦୟରେ ପ୍ରଣୟର ଭଲପାଇବା ? ଦେହ, ମନ ପ୍ରାଣ କେଉଁଠି ହେଲେ ଶିହରଣ ନାହିଁ, କଂପନ ନାହିଁ । ଦେବାଶିଷ ସେଇଠି ଛିଡା ହୋଇ

ଭାବୁଥିଲେ- ବିଧାତା ଏଇ ଅପରୂପା ସୁନ୍ଦରୀକି ଏପରି ହୃଦୟହୀନା କରି ଗଢିତୋଳିଲେ କିପରି ?

କିଛିବାଟ ଆଗେଇ ଗଲାପରେ ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ ଟିକେ ପଛକୁ ଫେରିଚାହିଁଲେ । ଦେବାଶିଷ ସେମିତି ତାଙ୍କ ଫେରନ୍ତାବାଟକୁ ଅପଲକ ନୟନରେ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଛନ୍ତି । କେଉଁ ଅତଳତଳ ଭାବନାରେ ବୁଡିଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀଙ୍କ ଓଷାଧାରରେ ଚେନାଏ ସ୍ଵିତହସ ପୁଷ୍ପିଉଠିଲା । ସେ ଟିକେ ଚାହିଁଦେଇ ପୁଣି ଆଗକୁ ପାଦବଢାଇଲେ ।

ଦେବାଶିଷ ତାଙ୍କ ଉପର କାନ୍ଧରେ ପଢୁଥିଲେ । ଇଂରାଜୀ ଅନର୍ସରେ ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ରେକର୍ଡ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ସେ ସ୍ନାତକ ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀର ପ୍ରଥମ ହୋଇ ଗୋଲଡମେଡାଲ ପାଇଥିଲେ ସେଇଦିନଠୁ ଇଂରାଜୀ ଡିପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଭାରି ଖାତିର । ଏବର୍ଷ ଏମ.ଏ. ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେ ପ୍ରଥମ ହେବେ ବୋଲି ସବୁ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଦେବାଶିଷଙ୍କର ପୌରୁଷଦୀପ୍ତ ଚେହେରା ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ଗାମ୍ଭୀର୍ଯ୍ୟପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ଵ । ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କ ମହଲରେ ଆଲୋଚନାର କେନ୍ଦ୍ରବିନ୍ଦୁ ଥିଲେ ଦେବାଶିଷ । ବହୁଝିଅ ତାଙ୍କର ସାନ୍ନିଧ୍ୟ ପାଇବାକୁ ଲାଳାୟିତ । ଉପରେ ପଡି କଥା ହେଉଥିଲେ । ବାହାନାକରି ନୋଟ୍ ମାଗୁଥିଲେ । ନୋଟ୍ ଭିତରେ ପ୍ରେମପତ୍ର ଦେଉଥିଲେ । କହିବାକୁଗଲେ ଦେବାଶିଷଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଗୋଟେ ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ।

ସେଦିନ ସେମିନାରକୁ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର ମୋହିନୀମୋହନ ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ସେମିନାରରେ ଦେବାଶିଷ ନିବନ୍ଧ ପାଠ କରିସାରିବା ପରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରି ପ୍ରଫେସର ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କହିଥିଲେ, 'ଇଉ ଆର ଜେମ୍ ଅଫ ଏ ଜେମ୍ । ତୁମର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ଵଳ । ତୁମ ପ୍ରତିଭାର ଅବସୟ ନ ହେଉ ଯେପରି । ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ କରୁଛି, ତୁମେ ଯଶସ୍ଵୀ ହୁଅ । ଉତ୍ତରୋତ୍ତର ଉନ୍ନତି କର ।'

ଦେବାଶିଷ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ନୁଆଁଇ ପ୍ରଶାମ କରିଥିଲେ ଓ ପ୍ରଫେସର ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କ ପାଦଧୂଳି ନେଇଥିଲେ । ସାମ୍ନାରେ ବସିଥିଲେ ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ । ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ଦୁଇବୁଦା ଲୁହ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ଭଳଭଳ ହେଉଥିଲା । ସେ ଯଥାସାଧ୍ୟ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରି ସେଇ ଲୁହକୁ ନିଜ ଭିତରକୁ ଶୋଷିନେବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଦେବାଶିଷ ନିଜ ସିଟ୍ ପାଖକୁ ଫେରିଆସିଲା ବେଳକୁ ଚାରିଚନ୍ଦ୍ରର ମିଳନ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ପଲକମାତ୍ରକେ ସେ ପଢିନେଇଥିଲେ ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀଙ୍କ ମନରଭାଷା । ତାଙ୍କ ସରମବୋଲା ମୁହଁରେ ଥିଲା ଆନନ୍ଦର ଅନିର୍ବଚନୀୟ ବିଭୋରତା । ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀଙ୍କ ନୀରବତା

ଭିତରେ ଥିଲା ହୃଦୟର ଗୋପନ ଉଚ୍ଛ୍ୱାସ । ପ୍ରଣୟର ନୀରବ ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି, ଯାହା ଗୋଟିଏ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ବିନିମୟରେ ଦେବାଶିଷଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟକୁ ସୁଧର୍ଯ୍ୟାତ କରିଦେଇଥିଲା । ଆଲୋକ-ଅଭିସାରରେ ଯେପରି ସେ ଏଇମାତ୍ର ଯାତ୍ରା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଛନ୍ତି ……

ସେମିନାର୍ ସରିଗଲାପରେ ଯିଏ ଯାହା ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଅନେକ ବିଳମ୍ବ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ମଧ୍ୟ ଚରତର ହୋଇ ଫେରୁଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ଅଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟରେ ଦେବାଶିଷ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁସରଣ କରିଥିଲେ । କିଛିବାଟ ଗଲାପରେ ଚିକେ ନିରୋଳା ଜାଗା ଦେଖି ସେ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଲାଗିଆସି କାନପାଖରେ କହିଲେ ତମେ କିଛି କହିଲନି ଯେ !

ଆବେଗରେ ତାଙ୍କ ହାତ ପାପୁଲିକୁ ମୁଠେଇ ଧରିଥିଲେ ଦେବାଶିଷ । ତଥ୍ୟା ହରିଣୀ ପରି ଏଣିକିତେଣିକି ଚାହିଁ ବିକଳରେ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ କହିଲେ-

- କାଳେ କିଏ କେଉଁଠି ଦେଖୁଥିବ । ଛାଡ ।
- ଦେଖୁ, କ’ଣ ହୋଇଗଲା ! ମୁଁ ସବୁରି ସାମ୍ନାରେ କଣ ଫଟକଇ କହିବି … ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ଭଲପାଏ … ଭଲପାଏ …… ଭଲପାଏ ……

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କର ସାରାଦେହ ଉତ୍ତେଜନାରେ ଧରୁଥିଲା । ସେ ଆଖିବୁଜି ନେଲେ ଭୟରେ । କାଳେ କିଏ ଦେଖୁ ନ ଥିବ ତ ! ସେ ଧୀରେ ଦେବାଶିଷଙ୍କ ହାତପାପୁଲିରୁ ନିଜ ହାତ ମୁକୁଳାଇ ଆଣିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ସାମ୍ନାକୁ ଆସି ବାଟଓଗାଳି ଦେବାଶିଷ କହିଲେ - ତୁମେ କିଛି ନ କହିଲେ ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ଆଜି ବାଟ ଛାଡିବିନି, କହିଦେଉଛି । ତୁମ ମନର କଥା ମୁଁ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ଅନେକ ଦିନ ହେଲାଣି ମୁଁ କୁହୁଡି ପହଁରୁଛି । ମତେ ତୁମେ କିଛି ହେଲେ କୁହ ,ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ । ତୁମ ତୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ପଦେ ଶୁଣିବା ପାଇଁ ଦେବାଶିଷ ଚାତକ ପରି ଚାହିଁ ରହିଛି । ଏ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା କେଉଁ ଜନ୍ମର ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା, ତୁମେ ଜାଣନା ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ । ତୁମେ ହୁଏତ ବୁଝିପାରିବନି, ଏ ପ୍ରାଣର ବ୍ୟାକୁଳତା । ତୁମେ କ’ଣ ପଢିପାରୁନ ଏ ହୃଦୟର ପ୍ରତିଟି ଶିରାପ୍ରଶିରାରେ କେବଳ ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷା… ଗୋଟିଏ ନାମ… ଗୋଟିଏ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ … ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ… ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ …… । କୁହ, ଧରଟିଏ ମାତ୍ର କୁହ ତୁମେ ମତେ ଭଲପାଅ ବୋଲି । ତୁମ ସ୍ୱାକୃତିର ମୋହରଟିଏ ଆଙ୍କିଦିଅ, ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ !

- ଦେବାଶିଷ ବାବୁ !
- ଦେବାଶିଷ ବାବୁ ନୁହେଁ । କୁହ, ଦେବାଶିଷ । ସେ ତୁମ ପ୍ରଣୟପ୍ରାର୍ଥୀ । ତୁମ ପ୍ରେମାନୁରାଗୀ । ତୁମ ମନର ମଣିଷ ।

କେବଳ ଏତିକି ଅଧିକାର ସେ ଚାହେଁ । ଦେଇପାରିବ ଏ ଅଙ୍ଗୀକାର ?

- ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀର ପ୍ରେମ କରିବାର ଅଧିକାର ନାହିଁ । ସେ ବାକ୍ଦତ୍ତା ।

- ବାକ୍ଦତ୍ତା ?

ଦେବାଶିଷଙ୍କ ହାତମୁଠା ଶିଥିଳ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । କିଛି ସମୟର ନୀରବତାପରେ କଂପିତ ଧରଧର କଣ୍ଠରେ ସେ କହିଲେ -ଆଜି ବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ, ତୁମେ ପୁଣି ବାକ୍ଦତ୍ତା ? ତୁମେ ଉଇଶିଷିତା । ତୁମର ନିଜର ବୋଲି କ’ଣ କିଛି ଇଚ୍ଛା ନାହିଁ ? ପ୍ରେମ କରିବାର ଅଧିକାର ନାହିଁ । ଆତ୍ମାର ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ନାହିଁ । କେମିତି କହି ପାରୁତ ଏକଥା?

- ହଁ ଦେବାଶିଷ ବାବୁ । ମତେ ବାଟ ଛାଡନ୍ତୁ, ମୁଁ ଯିବି । କିଏ ଯଦି ଦେଖିଦିଏ, ତେବେ ବଡ ଅଘଟଣ ଘଟିଯିବ । ବଡ ଅନର୍ଥ ହୋଇଯିବ । ଦୟାକରି ମତେ ଯିବାକୁ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ ।

- ନାହିଁ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ, ତୁମକୁ ସେ ଆତ୍ମନିର୍ବାସନରୁ ମୁକ୍ତ ହେବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦେବାକୁ ହେବ ସେ ମିଛପଣର କାଟକାଛକୁ । ଭାରବାହୀ ପଶୁପରି ତୁମେ କାହାର ସଂକଳ୍ପ, କାହା ଶପଥର ବୋଝକୁ ବେତାଳ ପରି ସାରାଜୀବନ କାନ୍ଧରେ ବୋହିବୋହି ଚାଲିପାରିବନି, ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ । ତମେ ସେ ଅର୍ଗଳିଚପି ଚାଲିଆସ । ଧରେ ସୁଧର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଆତକୁ ମୁହଁକରି ସତ୍ୟକୁ ସାମ୍ନାକର । ମୁଁ ତୁମ ପାଖେ ପାଖେ ଅଛି, ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ।

- ଆପଣ ଅଧିକ ପ୍ରକଳଭ ହୋଇଯାଉଛନ୍ତି ।
- ମତେ ଆଜି କହିବାକୁ ଦିଅ । ଏ ଜୀବଦଶାରେ ମନର କଥା ଖୋଲି କହିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ହୁଏତ ଆଉ ନଆସିପାରେ । ଧରଟିଏ ତୁମେ କୁହ, ସତରେ କ’ଣ ତୁମେ ମତେ ଭଲପାଅନି? ତୁମ ହୃଦୟର କଥା, ଆଖିର ଭାଷା କ’ଣ ତା’ ହେଲେ ମିଥ୍ୟା? ତୁମକୁ ବୁଝିବାରେ ମୁଁ କ’ଣ ଭୁଲ କରିଛି? ଏ ଭଲପାଇବାରେ ତୁମର ସମ୍ମତି ନାହିଁ? ମୋ’ ହାତ ଉପରେ ହାତ ରଖି ମୋ’ ଆଖିକୁ ଚାହିଁ ଖାଲି ଏତିକି କହିଦିଅ, ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ! ଖାଲି ଧରଟିଏ କହିଦିଅ । ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ଜୋରଜବରଦସ୍ତି କରୁନାହିଁ ।

ଦେବାଶିଷ ଆତୁର ହୋଇଉଠୁଥିଲେ । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କ ଆଖିରୁ ଦୁଇଧାର ଲୁହ ନିଗିଡି ଆସିଲା । ସେ ଆତ୍ମସମ୍ବରଣ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିଲେ । ସେ କଂପିତ କଣ୍ଠରେ କହିଲେ -ଆତ୍ମାର ଅପମାନ କରିବା ବହୁତ କଷ୍ଟ । କିନ୍ତୁ……

- ପୁଣି କିନ୍ତୁ କ’ଣ ?
- ମୁଁ ଜାଣେନି ଭଲପାଇବାର ସ୍ୱରୂପ କ’ଣ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏତିକି ଜାଣେ, ଆମେ ଦୁହେଁ ପରସ୍ପର ବିପରୀତ ମୁଖୀ ଦୁଇଧାର । ଏ ଦୁଇଧାରର ମିଳନ କେବେବି ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ । ଗୋଟିଏ

ବିରୁରେ କିଛିକ୍ଷଣ ପାଇଁ ସେମାନେ ହୁଏତ ଏକାଠି ଅଟକି ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ବାସ୍, ସେତିକି । ଏହାଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ଆଉ କ'ଣ ସମ୍ଭାବନା ଥାଇପାରେ । ଏଇତକ ସ୍ଵତିକୁ ସମ୍ବଳକରି ଅବଶିଷ୍ଟ ଜୀବନ ବିତିଯାଇପାରେ ।

- ନା ନା, ମୁଁ କାପୁରୁଷ ନୁହେଁ । ତୁମ ପାଇଁ ଯେକୌଣସି ପରିସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ସାମ୍ନା କରିବାକୁ ମୁଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ।

- ଯାହା କେବେ ବି ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ, ତା' ପାଇଁ ଅଯଥା ପବନ ପହୁଁରି ଲାଭ କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ମୁଁ ଡେଇଁଯାଇପାରିବିନି ମୋ' ସଂସ୍କାରର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣ ରେଖା । ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଭଲ ପାଇବାକୁ ମୁଁ ସ୍ଵୀକାର କରୁଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଅନୁରୋଧ ଆମ୍ଭର ଏ ସ୍ଵୀକୃତିକୁ ତୁମେ ନିଜ ହୃଦୟର ରତ୍ନପେଡ଼ିରେ ସାଇତି ରଖିବ । ତା' ଉପରେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଛାଇ ଯେପରି ନପଡେ । ସଞ୍ଜ ନଇଁଆସିଲାଣି, ମୁଁ ଯାଏ । ଘରେ ମା' ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେବଣି । ଅନେକ ଡେରି ହେଲାଣି ।

ଅନ୍ଧାରୁଆ ଦେବଦାରୁ ଗଛମୂଳେ ଛିଡ଼ା ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଦୁହେଁ । ଦେବାଶିଷ ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀଙ୍କର ଆଉ ଟିକିଏ ପାଖକୁ ଲାଗିଆସିଲେ । ଧୀରେ କହିଲେ- ଆଜି ମୋତେ ବାରଣ କରନି ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ । ତମକୁ ଅରଟିଏ ମାତ ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ତୁମ ପାଖରେ କ୍ଷମା ମାଗୁଛି । ମତେ ଭୁଲ ବୁଝିବନି । କ୍ଷମା କରିଦେବ ।

ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀଙ୍କୁ ନିବିଡ଼ ଆଶେଷରେ ଜତାଇଧରି ତାଙ୍କର ଦୁଇ ଉଷ୍ଣ ଓଷ୍ଠାଧାରରେ ତୁମ୍ବନଟିଏ ଆଙ୍କିଦେଇଥିଲେ ଦେବାଶିଷ । ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀଙ୍କର ସମଗ୍ର ଶରୀରରେ ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍ ଚରଙ୍ଗ ଯେପରି ପ୍ରବାହିତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକ ପାଇଁ ସେ ମୁହିଁତପାୟ ନିଜ ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ଵକୁ ଭୁଲିଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଏ ଅନୁଭବର ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ ତାଙ୍କର ସମଗ୍ରସତ୍ତାକୁ ଯେପରି ଆଞ୍ଜଳୀଏ ମଲିୟୁଲର ମହକରେ ରୁପାନ୍ତରିତ କରିଦେଲା । ସେ ରୋମାଞ୍ଚର ଶିହରଣ ଅସ୍ଥିମଜ୍ଜାକୁ ଭେଦିଯାଇଥିଲା ଅନାୟାସରେ । ରକ୍ତମାଂସର ଶରୀର ପାଳିଯାଇଥିଲା ଅସୁମାରୀ ରଙ୍ଗୀନ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନରେ । ଅକସ୍ମାତ ସେ ସମ୍ପୃତ୍ ଫେରିଯାଇ ଦେବାଶିଷଙ୍କ ବାହୁବନ୍ଧନରୁ ନିଜକୁ ମୁକୁଳାଇ ଆଣିଲେ । ବଡ଼ବଡ଼ ପାଦୁଣ୍ଡ ପକାଇ ଆଗେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ ନୀରବରେ.....

ନିଜେ ସେ ନିଜ ଆକରଣରେ ଆଚମ୍ବିତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ସେ କିଛି ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରିପାରିଲେନି କେମିତି ! କେମିତି ସେ ସମର୍ପଣ କରିଦେଇପାରିଲେ ନିଜକୁ ! ସେ କ'ଣ ନିଜ ଆୟତ୍ତରେ ନ ଥିଲେ ? ସେ କ'ଣ ବିସ୍ମରିଯାଇଥିଲେ ନିଜର ଆତ୍ମପରିଚୟ ? କେମିତି ସେ ଭୁଲିଗଲେ ସବୁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ -କାରଣ, ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧକୁ, ବାପାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତିକୁ ! ଯା' ରି ନାମ କ'ଣ ଭଲପାଇବା, ନିଜକୁ ଭୁଲିଯାଇ ଅନ୍ୟପାଖରେ ନିଃସର୍ତ୍ତ ଭାବରେ ସମର୍ପି ଦେବା !

ବାକ୍ଦତ୍ତାର ମୋହରକୁ ଫିଙ୍କିଦେଇ କେବଳ ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ, କେବଳ ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀରେ ରୁପାନ୍ତରିତ ହୋଇଯିବା ! ଗୋଟେ ଅନୁଜାରିତ ଯତ୍ନଶା ଆଛନ୍ନ କରିନେଉଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କର ସତ୍ତାକୁ ।

ଦୀର୍ଘ ପନ୍ଦରବର୍ଷ ତଳର ଅତୀତ ଯେପରି ସଶରୀରେ ଉଭା ହୋଇଥିଲା ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀଙ୍କ ସାମ୍ନାରେ । ସେଇ ରୂପମୟୀ ସ୍ଵର୍ଗଲଳନା ଆଜି ଇଂରାଜୀ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ । ଧାପେ ଧାପେ ହୋଇ ଅତିକ୍ରମିଯାଇଛି ଅନେକ ବସନ୍ତ । ସେ ସରମବୋଳା ମୁହଁରେ ଆଜି ଦାମ୍ବିକତା , ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ଵରେ ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ଵାସର ଛାପ । ପକ୍ଷା ଗୃହିଣୀପଣିଆର ନିଖୁଣ ପ୍ରକାଶ । କର୍ମମୟ ଜୀବନ ତାଙ୍କର ଚଳଚଞ୍ଚଳ; କିନ୍ତୁ .... ତଥାପି କେଉଁଠି କିଛି ଅଟକିଗଲା ପରି ଖଟ୍ଟକାଲାଗେ । ପ୍ରାଣଟା ଅମାନିଆ ଠେକୁଆଛୁଆପରି ଡେଇଁଡେଇଁ ଧାଇଁଯାଏ ଅତୀତ ପାଖକୁ । କେଉଁ ଏକ ଅନ୍ଧାରି ଗୁହା ଭିତରୁ ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ ଜୀବନକୁ ଖୋଜୁଥାନ୍ତି । କିଏ ଚୋରାଇ ନେଇଛି ତାକୁ । କେଉଁଠି ଲୁଚାଇ ରଖିଛନ୍ତି ସେ । କେମିତି ସେ ତାକୁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରିବେ....? ଯାହା ବିଦୁନେ ଏ ଚଳମାନ ଶରୀର ନିଷ୍ପାଣ ଜଡ଼ପିଣ୍ଡ ପରି ମନେହୋଇଛି ତାଙ୍କୁ ।

ବାପାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ସାମ୍ନାରେ କଥା କହିବାର ସାହସ କେବେ କରିନଥିଲେ ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ । ମା' ହିଁ ଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ସବୁକିଛି, ତାଙ୍କର ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ଯାହାପାଖରେ ସେ ସବୁକଥା ମନଖୋଲି କହିପାରୁଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି, ସେଦିନ ଏ ଘଟଣାକୁ ସେ କହିପାରି ନଥିଲେ ମା'କୁ । ରଞ୍ଜିତୀର ଧନପରି ତାକୁ ସେ ହୃଦୟର କେଉଁ ଅତଳତଳ ସିନ୍ଧୁକରେ ସାଇତି ରଖିଛନ୍ତି । ଆଜିଯାଏ ।

ଏ ଘଟଣାର ମାସ ଦୁଇଟା ପରେ ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀଙ୍କର ବାହାଘର ତାରିଖ ସ୍ଥିରୀକୃତ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ ମା' ଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଅଳି କରିଥିଲେ - “ମା, ପରୀକ୍ଷା ସରିବାଯାଏ ଏ ବାହାଘର ବନ୍ଦ ରଖ ମା' । ତୁ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ କହ , ମୁଁ ଆଦୌ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ନୁହେଁ । ତୁ ନିଜେ ଟିକେ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକର । ମୁଁ କ୍ୟାରିୟର କରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛି । ତୁ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ମନା କର । ତୁ କୌଣସି ଉପାୟରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝେଇସୁଝେଇ ଏ ବାହାଘର ଭଣ୍ଡାଳିଦେ” .....

ମା ଜଳଜଳ କରି ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀଙ୍କ ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁଥିଲେ । ଝିଅର ମନର ଭାଷା ପଢିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ କେମିତି ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ଅବୋଧ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ସବୁ । ଏତେଦିନ ପରେ ସେ ଅନୁଭବ କଲେ, ଝିଅ ତାଙ୍କର କେଉଁଠି ହଜେଇ ଦେଇଛି ନିଜକୁ - ଯିଏ ତାଙ୍କ ସାମ୍ନାରେ ବସିଛି , ସେ ଯେପରି ଆଉ କିଏ , ଯାହା ସହିତ ତାଙ୍କର କୌଣସି ପରିଚୟ ନାହିଁ । ଅଥଚ ନିଜ ଶରୀର,ମନ, ପ୍ରାଣକୁ ବିଭାଜିତ କରି ସେ ଏ ଝିଅକୁ ଜନ୍ମ

ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଯିଏ ତାଙ୍କର ଆତ୍ମାର ସର୍ବୋତ୍ତମ ଓ ଅନୁପମ ପ୍ରକାଶ ଥିଲା, ଆଜି ତାଙ୍କୁ ସେ ପ୍ରଥମବାର ଅତିହୀନ ଅଜଣା ମନେ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ସେ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ କୋମଳ କଣ୍ଠରେ କହିଥିଲେ - “ତୁ ଏକ’ଣ କଲୁ ମା ! ତୁ ଜାଣୁ, ବାପା କଥାଦେଇସାରିଛନ୍ତି ଅନେକ ଆଗରୁ । ସେ ନିଜେ ମରିଯିବେ ପଛେ ତାଙ୍କ ସଂକଳ୍ପରୁ ଓହ୍ଲିଆସିବେ ନାହିଁ । ସୃଷ୍ଟି ପ୍ରଳୟ ହେଲେ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ସେ ମୋ’ କଥା ଶୁଣିବେନି । ଇଏ ତାଙ୍କର ଅନେକ ଦିନର ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ । ବରଂ ତୁ ତୋ’ ମନକୁ ବୁଝେଇ ଦେ ମା । ରାତିର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଯେତେ ମଧୁର ହେଲେ ବି ଦିବାଲୋକରେ ତାହା ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ହରାଇ ବସେ । ତୁ ଭୁଲିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକର । ବାସ୍ତବତାକୁ ସ୍ୱୀକାର କର । ନିଜ ମନକୁ ସଂଯତ କର । ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କର । ସେ ତୋତେ ଶକ୍ତି ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ ।”

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ କଇଁକଇଁ ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଦିଉଠିଲେ । ମା’ କୋଳ ଭିତରେ ମୁହଁ ଲୁଚାଇ ସେ ଅନେକ ବେଳଯାଏଁ କାନ୍ଦିଥିଲେ । ମା’ ପିଠି ଆଉଁସି ଦେଉଦେଉ କହିଲେ - “ମନଭରି କାନ୍ଦିଦେ’ମା ! କାନ୍ଦିଲେ ମନର ଉତ୍ତାପ ଶୀତଳ ହୋଇଯାଏ, ଦୁଃଖ ଲାଘବ ହୋଇଯାଏ ।”

ମା’ ଜ୍ଞ ଆଖିର ଚୋପାଚୋପା ଲୁହ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କ ପିଠି ଚିତ୍କାର ଦେଉଥିଲା । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ଭିତରେ ଭିତରେ ଗୁମୁରିଗୁମୁରି କାନ୍ଦୁଥିଲେ । ନିଜ ଉପରେ ଭୀଷଣ ଅଭିମାନ ହେଉଥିଲା । ସେ ବାପାଙ୍କ ଏ ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତକୁ କାହିଁକି ନିର୍ବିବାଦରେ ମାନିନେବେ ! ସେ ସମ୍ପା ସମ୍ପା ମନା କରିଦେବେ, ଏ ବାହାଘରରେ ତାଙ୍କର ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ସେ କାଠକଣ୍ଠେଇ ସାଜି ବିବାହ ବେଦୀରେ ବସିପାରିବେନି । ତାଙ୍କର ରକ୍ତମାଂସର ଶରୀର ଅଛି, ମନ ଅଛି, ପାଶ ଅଛି । ନିଜର ହୃଦୟକୁ ସେ ବାପାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତିର ଅଗ୍ନିକୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଆଦୁତି ଦେଇ ପାରିବେନି । ସେ ଅନେକ ସାହସ ସଂଚୟ କରି ବାପାଙ୍କ ସାମ୍ନାରେ ତୁଣ୍ଡ ଖୋଲିଲେ-“ଏ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବରେ ମୁଁ ରାଜିନୁହେଁ, ବାପା । ଏ ବାହାଘର ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ପାଇଁ ବନ୍ଦ ରଖନ୍ତୁ ।”

ବାପା ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲେ । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କର ଏ ସାମନାସାମନି ପ୍ରତିବାଦ ଶୁଣି ନିଜର କୋପକୁ ଆୟତ୍ତ କରିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ କିଛି ସମୟ ଲାଗିଥିଲା । ବହୁ କଷ୍ଟରେ ନିଜକୁ ସମ୍ବରଣ କରି ସେ କହିଲେ - “ତୋ’ ଆପଣ୍ଡର କାରଣ କ’ଣ ,ମୁଁ ଜାଣିପାରେ କି ମା?”

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ରୁପ୍ ରହିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ଓଠଦୁଇଟି ଧରିଉଠିଲା । ବାପା ପୁଣି କୋମଳ ସ୍ୱରରେ କହିଲେ- “କହ ମା’, କହ । ମତେ ତୁ ଡରିଲେ ଆଉ କାହା ପାଖରେ ସବୁ ଖୋଲି କହିପାରିବୁ ?”

ବାପାଙ୍କର ଏପରି ନରମ, ଦରଦୀ ହୃଦୟଟିଏ ଅଛି ବୋଲି ସେ ଯେମିତି ପ୍ରଥମଥର ଅନୁଭବ କଲେ । ସେ ଆଶ୍ଚୟ ହେଲେ । ଧୀରେ କହିଲେ - “ମୁଁ ଆଉଜଣକୁ ଭଲପାଏ, ବାପା ।”

ବାପା ତଥାପି ଶାନ୍ତ ଓ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ଥିଲେ । ଉତ୍ତ୍ୟକ୍ତ ହେବାର କୌଣସି ଲକ୍ଷଣ ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ ନଥିଲା । ବୋଧହୁଏ ସେ ନିଜ ଭିତରେ ସଂଘର୍ଷ କରୁଥିଲେ । କିଛି ସମୟର ନୀରବତା ପରେ ସେ କହିଲେ -“ମୁଁ ତୋ ବାପା । ତୋ’ ମଙ୍ଗଳ ଛତା ଆଉ କିଛି ଚାହୁଁବିନି । ତୋ’ ଭଲପାଇବାର ଚତୁଃସୀମାକୁ ସ୍ପର୍ଶ କରିବାକୁ ମୁଁ ଚାହୁଁନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ବାସ୍ତବ ତେଲ ଲୁଣର ସଂସାର ଅଲଗା । ସେଠି ଭାବପ୍ରବଣତାର କିଛି ଅର୍ଥ ନ ଥାଏ । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର କଳ୍ପଲୋକରୁ ଥରେ ଓହ୍ଲାଇଆସି ଏ ଧୂଳିଧୂସରିତ ଦୁନିଆରେ ପାଦଦେଲେ ତୁ ନିଜେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିବୁ, ଏସବୁ ଭଲପାଇବା କେବଳ ପୌଷସକାଳର କୁହୁଡ଼ିପକ୍ଷୀ ପରି ମହାଶୂନ୍ୟକୁ ଉଡ଼ିଯାଏ ।

ତା’ର ବାସ୍ତବ ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ବୋଲି କିଛି ନଥାଏ । ଗୋଟେ ସୁଖୀ ସଂସାରର ନକ୍ସା ନଥାଏ ସେଠି । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଛତା, ବାସ୍ତବ ଜୀବନଟିଏ ବଞ୍ଚିବା ପାଇଁ ନଥାଏ ସେଠି ନିର୍ଭର ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି । ବାହାସାହା ହୋଇ ଘରସଂସାର କରିବାପାଇଁ ସୌମ୍ୟଶୀଳ ଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ଯୋଗ୍ୟପାତ୍ର କେଉଁଠି ମିଳିବେନି । ତା’ ବାପାଙ୍କର ମୁଁ ବାଲ୍ୟବନ୍ଧୁ । ଅନେକବର୍ଷ ଆଗରୁ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ କଥା ଦେଇସାରିଛି, ମା’ । ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କ ଦୟାରୁ ସେ ତୋର ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ଓ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ହୋଇପାରିଛି । ତୁ ମନା କରନା ମା’ । ଥରେ ତୋ’ ବୁଢ଼ାବାପାକୁ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକର । ତୋ’ ମଙ୍ଗଳ, ତୋ’ ଖୁସି ଛତା ମୁଁ ଆଉ କିଛି ଚାହେଁନା ।”

ବାପାଙ୍କ ଆଖି ଛଳଛଳ ହୋଇଆସିଥିଲା । ସେ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡଉପରେ ହାତଥୋଇଲେ । ବ୍ୟାକୁଳ ଭାବରେ ପୁଣି ଥରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କଲେ -

- “ତୁ କ’ଣ କହୁଛୁ ମା’? ତୁ ହଁ କହିଲେ ମୁଁ ଆଗେଇବି । ତୁ ମୋ ଝିଅ । ମୋର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ , ତୁ କେବେ ହେଲେ ମୋ’ ମାନସମ୍ମାନର ଅମର୍ଯ୍ୟଦା କରିବୁନି ।”

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ କିଛି ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇପାରିନଥିଲେ । ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଥିଲା, ବାପାଙ୍କ ଛାତିରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡଗୁଞ୍ଜି ସେ ଭେଁ ଭେଁ ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଦନ୍ତେ । ସେ ଏକମୁହାଁ ହୋଇ ନିଜ ଶୋଇବା ଘରକୁ ଚାଲିଆସିଲେ । ତଳିଆରେ ମୁହଁ ଗୁଞ୍ଜି ପଡ଼ିରହିଲେ ।

ଐଶ୍ୱର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ସୁଖଶାନ୍ତିର ତୁଳିତଳରେ ଝିଅର ଦିନ ବିତିବ- ବାପା ମା’ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କ ବାହାଘରରେ ବାପା ତାଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତ ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟକୁ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିବାକୁ କୁଣ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇନଥିଲେ । ଆଇ-ଆର-ଏସ୍ ଇନ୍-କମପ୍ୟାକ୍ଟ ଅଫିସର, ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଜ୍ଞାଇଁ ,ଖାନଦାନ ଘର । ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଅନୁକୂଳ ଥିଲେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗର

ଚାନ୍ଦ ଆସି ଆପେଆପେ ଧରାଦିଏ । ତାଙ୍କ ମାନସମ୍ମାନକୁ ବାପା ଆଖିରେ ଜରିଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ନିଜକୁ ରିକ୍ତ, ନିଃସ୍ୱ ମନେ କରିଥିଲେ । କେମିତି ସେ ଏ ଦ୍ୱିଧାବିଭକ୍ତ ମନକୁ ଅର୍ପଣ କରିବେ ସୌମ୍ୟଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ । ମା କହିଥିଲା, ସେ ହିଁ ତାଙ୍କର ଇହକାଳ ପରକାଳର ସାଥୀ । କେମିତି ସେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରବଞ୍ଚନା କରିପାରିବେ ? ପ୍ରତାରଣା କରିବେ ନିଜ ଆତ୍ମାକୁ !

ଏଇ ସଂଘର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ସେ ସନ୍ତୁଳି ହେଉଥିଲେ । ବାହାଘର ସରିଯାଇଥିଲା । ଏକ ବେଗଗାମୀ ଟେନ୍‌ର ଯାତ୍ରୀପରି ସେ ପଛରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଆସିଥିଲେ ପୃଥିବୀର ଅନୁପମ ଶୋଭା, ଶ୍ୟାମଳ ମାୟାମୟ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ, କାଶତଣ୍ଡୀ ପୁଲର ଜୟଯାତ୍ରା - ପ୍ରାଣର ସକଳ ଆବେଗ,ଆକୃଳତା,ସେଇ ଭଲପାଇବାର ମହକ ଆଉ ମିଠାମିଠା କଞ୍ଚାସ୍ୱପ୍ନ, ଅତୀତର କାନଭାସରେ ଏକ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ଜ୍ୟୋତିବିନ୍ଦୁ ହୋଇଯାଇ ଆଜି ଯାଏ ଝଟକୁଛି ।

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ନିଜକୁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରିଥିଲେ ଆଉ ଏକ ଜଗତରେ । ଯେଉଁଠି ପ୍ରାରୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅଛି, ଭୋଗ ଅଛି,ବିଳାସ ଅଛି,କ୍ଷମତା, ପ୍ରତିପତ୍ତି ଅଛି ଏବଂ ସବୁକିଛି ଅଛିର କୋଳାହଳ; କିନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ ଭରାନଇର ପ୍ରାଣଭକ୍ତୁଳା ହୃଦୟ ଅଭିସାର । ସୌମ୍ୟଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ବିଚାରରେ ତୁଳ୍‌ରୁମ୍‌ର ଅନ୍ୟସବୁ ନାମୀଦାମୀ ସାଜସଜ୍ଜା, ଉପକରଣପରି ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମଧ୍ୟ ବେତ ରୁମ୍‌ର ଏକ ତମତ୍କାର କାଚକଣ୍ଠେଇ, ସାଂଗସାଥୀ ମହଲରେ ଯାହାରୁପର ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରିହୁଏ- ପତି ହିସାବରେ ତା' ରୁପକୁ ନେଇ ଗର୍ବ କରିହୁଏ । ପାର୍ଟି,ପିକନିକ,କବରେ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ପତି ସମସ୍ତୁ ନିଆରା ବୋଲି ଭାବିହୁଏ ,ଯେଉଁ ରୁପ କେବଳ ଭୋଗର ନୈବେଦ୍ୟ ହୋଇପାରେ । ଉଚ୍ଚପଦବୀ ସାଂଗକୁ ବତଘରର ବୋହୁ ସେପରି କୋଟିକରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ନହେଲେ, ଏ ବତପଣ ମାନ ଦିଶିବ । ବତବତ ହୋଟେଲରେ, ଦିଲ୍‌ଲୀ, ବାଙ୍ଗଲୋର୍‌ରେ ମୂଦମାଂସ ଭିତରେ ଯୌବନକୁ ଆକଣ୍ଠ ପାନ କରିବା ଥିଲା ଏଇ ଗାରିମାମୟ ସଂଭ୍ରାନ୍ତିର ପରିଚୟ । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ଅଣନିଃଶ୍ୱାସୀ ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲେ । ମନେମନେ ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କରୁଥିଲେ, ସେ କ'ଣ ଏଇ ସୁଖ ଚହୁଁଥିଲେ? ତେବେ, କ'ଣ ସେ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ, ଯାହାକୁ ପାଇ ସେ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତେ, ନିଜକୁ ଧନ୍ୟ ମନେ କରିଥାନ୍ତେ ? ଦମକାଏ ଖୋଲାପବନ ପାଇଲେ ଚିକିଏ ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ମାରନ୍ତେ । କେଉଁଠି ମିଳିବ ସେ ଖୋଲାପବନ, ତାରା ଭରା ଆକାଶ,ଯାହାର ଯୋତାଯୋତା ଆଖିରେ ଥିବ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ମହୁଆ ନିଶା.....ଅସୁମାରୀ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ..... ।

ଦିନ ଗତିଯାଉଥିଲା । ଆଗପଛ ହୋଇ ବାପୁନୁ ଓ ମାମିନି କୋଳକୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ଘରକରଣା, ପିଲାଙ୍କ ଭଲମନ୍ଦ, ପାଠପଢ଼ା,ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କର ବଦଳି, ପ୍ରମୋଗନ,

ଘରତୋଳା, ଶାଶୁ ଶଶୁରଙ୍କ ଚିକିତ୍ସା, କ୍ଳାସପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି, କଲେଜର ନାନା ଜଞ୍ଜଳ ଭିତରେ ଧୀରେଧୀରେ ଲିଭିଲିଭି ଆସୁଥିଲା ସେ ଜ୍ୱଳନ୍ତ ରତନିଆଁର ଉତ୍ତାପ । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ପଞ୍ଜାଗୃହିଣୀ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ପଛକୁ ମୁହଁ ଫେରାଇ ଚାହିଁବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଅବସର ନଥିଲା । ଅତୀତର ସେଇ ସ୍ମୃତିଚିତ୍ର ଉପରେ ସମୟ ପରସ୍ତ ପରସ୍ତ ଧୁଳି ଲେପିଦେଉଥିଲା । ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ ଆସିଥିଲା ସେ ଛାୟାଛବି । ଚିହ୍ନା ମୁହଁ ଅଚିହ୍ନା ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ..... ବିତିଯାଇଥିଲା ଦୀର୍ଘ ପନ୍ଦରବର୍ଷ ।

ଏ ଧରାବନ୍ଧା ଜୀବନରେ ଅକସ୍ମାତ୍ ଗୋଟେ ବିସ୍ଫୋରଣ ଘଟିଲା । କେତେଦିନ ହେଲା ସୌମ୍ୟଶ୍ରୀ ଶଯ୍ୟାଶୟୀ ଥିଲେ । ବ୍ୟାକୁଳ ହୋଇ ଆଇ.ଏମ୍.ଏସ୍. ରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଚିକିତ୍ସା ପାଇଁ ଧାଇଁଯାଇଥିଲେ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କର ନିରୁତ୍ତାପ ଘୋଷଣା ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କ ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ୱକୁ ଧୁଳିସାତ୍ କରିଦେବାକୁ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଥିଲା, ସୌମ୍ୟଶ୍ରୀ ଲିଭର ସିରୋସିସ୍ ରୋଗରେ ପୀଡ଼ିତ । ଲିଭର ଫଙ୍କସନ୍ କରୁନି । ଚିକିତ୍ସାର ଫଳାଫଳ କ'ଣ ହେବ, କହିହେବନି । ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କୁ ଭରସା କରିବାଛଡା ଆଉ କିଛି ଉପାୟ ନାହିଁ । ତାଙ୍କର

ତ ଆଉ ଭଗବାନ୍ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି ! ଅତ୍ୟଧିକ ମଦ୍ୟପାନର ବିଷମ ଫଳ । ବଡ଼ କର୍କଶ ଶୁଭୁଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱର ।

ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ରଗ୍‌ଣ ବିଷଣ୍ଣ ମୁହଁକୁ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ସ୍ନେହବୋଳା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ଚାହିଁଲେ । ଏଇ ମଣିଷଟି ସହିତ ତାଙ୍କର ଦୀର୍ଘ ପନ୍ଦର ବର୍ଷର ସୁଖଦୁଃଖର ସଂସାର । କେତେ ମାନଭିମାନ, କେତେ ରାଗରୋଷ, କେତେ ହସଖୁସି । ଏଇ ମଣିଷଟି ତ ତାଙ୍କ ମାତୃତ୍ୱକୁ ଦେଇଛି ଫଳଶ୍ରୁତି ,ତାଙ୍କ ପତ୍ନୀତ୍ୱକୁ କରିଛି ସମ୍ମନିତ । ତାଙ୍କ ପାଦତଳେ ଅଜାତିଦେଇଛି

ସୁଖସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ । ଏଇ ମଣିଷଟିକୁ ସେ ଭଲପାଆନ୍ତି, ଏଇ ପ୍ରଥମବାର ସେ ଅନୁଭବ କଲେ । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କ ବୁକୁ ଫାଟିଗଲାପରି ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ଆଖିରୁ ଧାରଧାର ଲୁହ ଝରିଆସିଲା । ସେ ଆତୁର ହୋଇ ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କୁ ମନେମନେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କଲେ..... ପ୍ରଭୁ ! ମୋ' ସଂସାର ଉଜାଡ଼ିଦିଅନା । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭଲକରିଦିଅ ପ୍ରଭୁ ! ମତେ ଯେତେ ଦୁଃଖ ଦେଉଛି, ଦିଅ ପଛେ,ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭଲକରିଦିଅ ପ୍ରଭୁ !

ସେ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ, ବେଳେବେଳେ ଏମିତି ଗୋଟେ ସମୟ ଆସେ, ଯେତେବେଳେ ଟଙ୍କାପଇସା, କ୍ଷମତା, ପ୍ରତିପତ୍ତି, ତାଙ୍କର-ଔଷଧ କିଛି କାମଦିଏନି କେବଳ ସେଇ ଦିବ୍ୟ କରୁଣା ଛଡା ।



ଏଇ କେତେଦିନ ଭିତରେ ସୌମ୍ୟଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ସ୍ଵାସ୍ଥ୍ୟର ଦ୍ରୁତ ଅବନତି ଘଟୁଥିଲା । ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଦିନରାତି ଏକାକାର ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ସେ ସବୁକିଛି ଭୁଲିଯାଇଥିଲେ ।

ସତେ କ’ଣ ସେ ଯମମୁହଁରୁ ଛତାଇ ଆଣିପାରିବେ ସୌମ୍ୟଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ । ତାଙ୍କ ସେବାଯତ୍ନ, ଆତ୍ମିକ ନିଷ୍ଠା ଦେଖି ତାଙ୍କର ମଧ୍ୟ ସ୍ଵରୂପ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଏପରି ଏକ ସଂକଟରୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ରକ୍ଷା କରିବାପାଇଁ ଏକ ଚାଲେଞ୍ଚ ଭଳି ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କର । ଏଇ ଅସହାୟ ନାରୀଟିର କରୁଣ ବଚବଚ ଆଖିଦୁଇଟିକୁ ଚାହିଁ ଦେଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ତାଙ୍କରୀ ହୃଦୟ ତରଳି ଯାଉଥିଲା । ସେ ବି ପଣ କରି ଲାଗିପଡିଥିଲେ ସୌମ୍ୟଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଚିକିତ୍ସାରେ !

ଏତିକିବେଳେ ନିଶାନ୍ତ ମନା ଫୋନ୍ କରି କହିଥିଲା-“ଭାଉଜ, ମୋର ଗୋଟେ ଅନୁରୋଧ ରକ୍ଷାକରିବ ! ତୁମେ ତ ଏତେ କରୁଚ, ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ କାମ କରନ୍ତୁନି ଭାଇଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ? ସ୍ଵାମିଜୀ ଏବେ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ଗୋଟେ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟ ହେଲା ବିଦେଶରୁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ତୁମେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଥରେ ଯାଇ ଦେଖାକର । ତାଙ୍କର ଦୟାହେଲେ ଭାଇ ଭଲ ହେଇ ଯିବେ । ସେ ବସନ୍ତକୁଞ୍ଚ ଆଶ୍ରମରେ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି । ମୋ’ ରାଣ ଭାଉଜ, ତୁମେ ଥରେ ଯାଇ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖାକରି ଆସ । ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ହଜାର ହଜାର ଭକ୍ତ ରୁଣ୍ଡ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଦେଖାମିଳିବା କଷ୍ଟ । ଥରେ ଦେଖାହେଲେ, ତୁମେ ତାଙ୍କ ଅଲୌକିକ ଶକ୍ତିର ପରିଚୟ ପାଇପାରିବ । ସେତେବେଳେ ଯାଇ ଅନୁଭବ କରିବ, ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ କ’ଣ କହୁଥିଲି ।”

- “କେଉଁ ସ୍ଵାମିଜୀଙ୍କ କଥା କହୁଥିଲ ମନା । ମତେ ବା ସେ କାହିଁକି ଦେଖାଦେବେ !”

- “ମଣିଷ ଆତ୍ମର ହେଲେ, ବିପନ୍ନ ହେଲେ ଇଶ୍ଵରଙ୍କ ଶରଣାପନ୍ନ ହୁଏ । ସ୍ଵାମିଜୀ ପରମଦୟାଳୁ । ସେ ତୁମକୁ ନିରାଶ କରିବେନି, ଭାଉଜ ! ତାଙ୍କର ଦୟାହେଲେ ଭାଇ ଭଲ ହୋଇଯିବେ । ସ୍ଵାମୀ ଦିବ୍ୟାନନ୍ଦଙ୍କର ମହିମା କ’ଣ ତୁମେ ଶୁଣିନ, ଭାଉଜ ? ମୋର ପୁରା ବିଶ୍ଵାସ, ତାଙ୍କର କୃପାହେଲେ ଭାଇ ଭଲ ହେଇଯିବେ । ମୋ ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଅ ଭାଉଜ…… । ସେ ମୋର ଗୋଟିଏ ବୋଲି ଭାଇ । ତମ ଗୋଡ଼ତଳେ ପଡୁଚି, ତୁମେ ଥରେ ମୋ’ କଥା ମାନି ଆସି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖାକର । ତୁମେ କହିଲେ ମୁଁ ଯାଇ ତୁମକୁ ନେଇ ଆସିବି ।”

ମନାର ଭିଜାଭିଜା କଣ ରୁଦ୍ଧି ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା, ସେ ଆଉ ଅଧିକା କିଛି କହିପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ କୋମଳ କଣ୍ଠରେ କହିଲେ - “କାନ୍ଦନି ମନା । ଭାଇ ତୁମର ଭଲହୋଇଯିବେ । ଠାକୁରେ ମୋ’ ପ୍ରତି ଏତେ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ହେବେନି । ମୁଁ ଯିବି ମନା, ସ୍ଵାମିଜୀଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖାକରିବି ! ତାଙ୍କ ଗୋଡ଼ ଧରି ତୁମ ଭାଇଙ୍କ

ଜୀବନଭିକ୍ଷା କରିବି । ତମେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୁଅନି, ମୋ’ ସୁନାପରା । ତମେ କାନ୍ଦିଲେ ମୁଁ କେମିତି ଯେଉଁ ଧରିବି, କହିଲୁ ?”

କୋହରେ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ପଡିଲେ ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ । ଦୁଇପଟେ ଦୁଇ ଅସହାୟ ନାରୀଙ୍କର ମର୍ମବେଦନାକୁ ବୋହିନେବାପାଇଁ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ ପରି ନିର୍ଜୀବ ବସ୍ତୁଟିର ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟ ନଥିଲା ।

ଚାରିଟା ନବାଜୁଶୁ ମନା ଗାଡିନେଇ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲା । ପାଞ୍ଚଟାବେଳେ ସ୍ଵାମିଜୀଙ୍କର ସର୍ବସାଧାରଣ ଦର୍ଶନ । ଛଅଟାରେ ସମୁଦ୍ର ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା, ସଂଧ୍ୟାଆରତୀ । ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ସୌମ୍ୟଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ବାପୁନୁକୁ ବସାଇ ସେ ମନା ସହିତ ବାହାରି ପଡିଲେ । ବାଟସାରା ମନା ଅନର୍ଗଳ ଗପି ଚାଲିଥିଲା ସ୍ଵାମିଜୀଙ୍କ ମହିମାକଥା । ଆମେରିକା,ଲଣ୍ଡନ,ଇଉରୋପର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଦେଶରେ ସ୍ଵାମିଜୀଙ୍କର ଆଶ୍ରମ ଅଛି । ହଜାରହଜାର ବିଦେଶୀ ତାଙ୍କର ଭକ୍ତ । ତାଙ୍କ କଥା, ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରବଚନ ଯିଏ ଶୁଣିଛି, ସେ ଧନ୍ୟ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ସ୍ଵାମିଜୀ କରୁଣାର ଅବତାର । ଦୀନଦୁଃଖୀ, ଯିଏ ତାଙ୍କର ଶରଣାପନ୍ନ ହୋଇଛି, କାହାକୁ ସେ ନିରାଶ କରିନାହାନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ଦିବ୍ୟଶକ୍ତି ବଳରେ ସେ ଭକ୍ତମାନଙ୍କର ଦୁଃଖହରଣ କରିପାରନ୍ତି । ମୁକ୍ତିର ମାର୍ଗ ଦେଖାଇ ଦେଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଆଖିରେ ନ ଦେଖିଲେ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ କରିପାରିବନି, ଭାଉଜ । ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରୁ ସତେକି ଆନନ୍ଦ ବର୍ଷା ହେଉଥାଏ । ମନରେ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଅହଂକାର ଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଦୟାଦୃଷ୍ଟି ପଡିବନି । ନିଜକୁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସମର୍ପଣ କଲେ ସେ ତୁମର ସବୁ ବିପଦଆପଦର ଭାର ବହନ କରିଥାନ୍ତି ।

ବାଟସାରା ମନା ଗପିଗପି ଚାଲିଥିଲା । ରାଜେଶ୍ଵରୀ ନୀରବରେ ସବୁ ଶୁଣୁଥିଲେ । ସ୍ଵାମିଜୀଙ୍କ ଦର୍ଶନ ମିଳିଯାଉ, ଥରେ କେମିତି ତାଙ୍କର କୃପାଦୃଷ୍ଟି ପଡୁ । ସେ ଆଞ୍ଜୁଳି ପାତି ସୌମ୍ୟଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଜୀବନଭିକ୍ଷା କରିବେ ।

ଆଶ୍ରମ ଲୋକାରଣ୍ୟ ହୋଇଉଠିଥିଲା । ଦୁଇପଟେ ଶିଷ୍ୟଶିଷ୍ୟାମାନେ ଭକ୍ତମାନଙ୍କୁ ଧାଡିଧାଡି କରି ବସାଉଥିଲେ । ଶାନ୍ତିଶୃଙ୍ଖଳା ପାଇଁ ବେଶି କିଛି ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରିବାକୁ ପଡୁନଥିଲା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ । ସ୍ଵାମିଜୀଙ୍କ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ଶକ୍ତି ସେ ସମଗ୍ର ଅଞ୍ଚଳକୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ କରିରଖିଥିଲା । ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଭାବରେ ଯେପରି କେହି ଜଣେ ସବୁକୁ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରୁଥିଲା । ନିଜ ନିଜ ଆସନରେ ବସି ଭକ୍ତମାନେ ଗଭୀର ଭକ୍ତ୍ୟର ସହିତ ସ୍ଵାମିଜୀଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା କରିଥିଲେ ।

ଆଶ୍ରମର ଚତୁଃପାର୍ଶ୍ଵରେ ଗୋଲାପକୁଣ୍ଡମାନଙ୍କରେ ସଜଫୁଟା ଗୋଲାପ ଶୋଭାପାଉଥିଲା । ଧାଡିଧାଡି ରଙ୍ଗ ବେରଙ୍ଗର ଗେଣ୍ଡୁ, ତାଲିଆ, ଜିନିଆ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଶୀତଦିନିଆ ଫୁଲଗଛ ଗୁଡିକର ଅପୂର୍ବ

ଶୋଭା ସହିତ ମଧୁର ଭକ୍ତି ସଂଗୀତର ମୁଚ୍ଛନ୍ନା ସାରା ପରିବେଶକୁ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗୀୟସୁଖମାରେ ଭରିଦେଇଥିଲା । ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିଗରେ ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତିର ଅମୃତମୟ ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭକ୍ତମାନଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟରେ ଭକ୍ତିର ପାବନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଥିଲା । ପାୟ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଭକ୍ତ ଆଖିବୁଜି ଭକ୍ତିସଂଗୀତର ତାଳେତାଳେ ଝୁମିବାକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଇଥିଲେ । ପାଞ୍ଚଟା ବାଜିବାକୁ ତଥାପି ପରମନିନିଚ୍ ବାଜି । ମୀନାକୁ ନୀରବରେ ଅନୁସରଣ କରୁଥିଲେ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ । ଦିହେଁ ଆସନ ଗ୍ରହଣ କଲେ । ଠିକ୍ ପାଞ୍ଚଟାବେଳେ ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିଗକୁ ମୁଚ୍ଛିତ କରି ଶୁଭଶଙ୍କ୍ଷୁନି ବାଜିଉଠିଲା । ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀଙ୍କ ଆଗମନ ପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଉତ୍ସୁକ ହୋଇ ଚାହିଁରହିଲେ । ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀ ଆସି ଆସନ ଗ୍ରହଣ କଲେ । ଭକ୍ତମାନେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଆସନ ପାଖରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ନୁଆଁଇ ପ୍ରଣାମ କଲେ । ସମ୍ମିଳିତ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନାର ମଧୁର ଝଙ୍କାରରେ ଗଗନପବନ ମୁଖରିତ ହୋଇଉଠିଲା । ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀ ମଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନାରେ ଯୋଗଦେଲେ । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ଆଖିବୁଜି ମନେମନେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରୁଥିଲେ ।

- ହେ ଜଗଦୀଶ୍ୱର ! କେତେ ରୂପରେ , କେତେ ଭାବରେ ତୁମେ ଏ ଚରାଚରରେ ବ୍ୟାପ୍ତ ହୋଇ ରହିଛ । ହେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଯ୍ୟାମୀ, ତୁମକୁ ଭଲ କେଉଁ କଥା ଅଗୋଚର ?

ତୁମକୁ ମୋ' ଦୁଃଖ ଜଣାଇବାକୁ ଧାଇଁଆସିଛି ପ୍ରଭୁ ! ଏ ଦୁଃଖିନୀକୁ ଦୟାକର, ପ୍ରଭୁ !

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ଅନେକ ସମୟଯାଏ ଆଖିବୁଜି ବସିଥିଲେ । ସମୁଦ୍ରପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ସରିଯାଇଥିଲା । ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀଙ୍କ ଦର୍ଶନ ପାଇଁ ଲମ୍ବାଧାଡ଼ି ଲାଗିଯାଇଥିଲା । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କୁ ହଲାଇ ଦେଇ ମୀନା କହିଲା - ଭାଉଜ, ଉଠ । ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀଙ୍କ ପାଦଦର୍ଶନ କରିବା । ମନ୍ତ୍ରବତ୍ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ଉଠିପଡ଼ି କ୍ୟୁରେ ଛିଡା ହେଲେ । ଜଣଜଣ ହୋଇ ଆଗେଇ ଯାଉଥିଲେ ଭକ୍ତମାନେ ।

ସୁଦୀର୍ଘ ଶୁଶ୍ରୁତରୁ ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀଙ୍କର ଜ୍ୟୋତିର୍ମୟ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଭାସିଉଠୁଥିଲା । ଆଖିରେ ଅଜସ୍ର କରୁଣାର ସ୍ନିଗଧତା । ଓଠରେ ଲାଖି ରହିଥିଲା ଚେନାଏ ସ୍ଥିତ ହସ । କାହା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ହାତ ରଖି, କାହାକୁ ହାତତୋଳି ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ କରି, କାହାକୁ ସ୍ଥିତ ହସରେ , କାହାକୁ ପଦେଅଧେ ମଧୁର କଥାରେ ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ଆଜାନୁଲମ୍ବିତ ସାଫଳ୍ କଲରର ପୋଷାକ ଭିତରୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଦୁଇ ପାଦପଦ୍ମରେ ସବୁରି ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ନିବନ୍ଧ । ମୀନା ପ୍ରଣାମ କରି ଚାଲିଯିବା ପରେ ଆଗେଇଗଲେ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ - ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀଙ୍କ ଦୁଇପାଦରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡରଖି ପ୍ରଣାମ କଲେ । ଆଖିର ଧାରଧାର ଲୁହରେ ଭିଜିଯାଉଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କର ପାଦପଦ୍ମ । ଆକୁଳ ଆବେଗରେ ଧରଧର କଣ୍ଠରେ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ କହିଲେ - ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀ, ହେ ଦୟାମୟ , ମୋ' ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇଦିଅନ୍ତୁ । ଆପଣ କରୁଣାର

ଅବତାର । ମୋ' ଜୀବନ ବିନିମୟରେ ମୋ' ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କର ଜୀବନଭିକ୍ଷା କରୁଛି । ଏ ଦୀନଦୁଃଖିନୀର ସମର୍ପଣକୁ ସ୍ୱୀକାର କରନ୍ତୁ । ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଉପରେ ହାତରଖି ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀ କହିଲେ- ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ... ତୁମେ.... !

ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀଙ୍କ ତୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଆଉ ଶବ୍ଦ ଝୁରି ନ ଥିଲା । କିଛିକ୍ଷଣ ମୌନରହି ସେ ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ କହିଲେ - ଉଠ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ, ପ୍ରଭୁ ତୁମର ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ନିଃକର୍ମ ମଞ୍ଜୁର କରିବେ ।

ନିର୍ମଳ ହୃଦୟର, ଗଭୀର ବିଶ୍ୱାସର , ଅକୃଷିତର ସମର୍ପଣକୁ ଇଶ୍ୱର ସାଦରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ସେଇ ପରମକାରୁଣିକ, ଦୟାମୟଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କର । ସେ ତୁମର ଇଚ୍ଛା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିବେ । ଅନ୍ତରର ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କେବେ ବିଫଳ ହୁଏନାହିଁ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ..... ।

ଚମକି ପଡ଼ିଲେ ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ । ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀ କ'ଣ ତାଙ୍କ ନାଁ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ? କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ କାହାର ସ୍ୱର ? ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଗହ୍ୱରରୁ ଭାସିଆସୁଛି ଏ ସ୍ୱର ! ଅତି ଚିହ୍ନାଚିହ୍ନା..... ଅତି ଆପଣାର ସ୍ୱର ....କାହାର ? କାହାର ହୋଇପାରେ .....?

ରାଜେଶ୍ୱରୀ ମୁହଁତୋଳି ଚାହିଁଲେ । ସ୍ୱାମିଜୀଙ୍କ ବିଦୁଳ ଆଖିରୁ କରୁଣାର ଜ୍ୟୋତି ଝରିଆସୁଥିଲା । ଦୁଇ ଓଠରେ ଲାଖିରହିଥିଲା ଶିଶୁସୁଲଭ ମିଠା ହସଧାରେ । ଭିଜି ଯାଉଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କର ସମଗ୍ରସତ୍ତା, ତାଙ୍କର ଇହକାଳ, ପରକାଳ ।

*ଡ. ସୁଲୋଚନା ଦାସ, ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଓ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଟକ ବାଦାମବାଡ଼ିରେ ରୁହନ୍ତି । ସେ ତାଙ୍କର ଲଳିତ ନିବନ୍ଧ ବା ରମ୍ୟ ରଚନା "ଅବୁଝା ଅନ୍ଧାର" ପାଇଁ ୨୦୦୩ ମସିହାର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଏକାଡେମି ପୁରସ୍କାରରେ ସମ୍ମାନିତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ୩୦ଟି ପୁସ୍ତକ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ନୀଳସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ, ଆହୁତ ବସୁଧା, ମେଘମୁକ୍ତ ଆକାଶ, ମୋହମୁକ୍ତ, ମାଟିର ମହକ, ମଧୁସରା ଓ ଅଶ୍ରୁର ଅଭିଷେକ ଆଦି ଅତି ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟୀର ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ଅଟେ । ସେ ଝଙ୍କାର ବିଶୁଦ୍ଧ ପୁରସ୍କାର, ଉତ୍କଳ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସମାଜ ପୁରସ୍କାର, ରାଜିବ ଗାନ୍ଧୀ ସଦ୍‌ଭାବନା ପୁରସ୍କାର ଓ ଆହୁରି ଅନେକ ପୁରସ୍କାରରେ ସମ୍ମାନିତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ଅନେକ ପତ୍ର ପତ୍ରିକାରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଲେଖା ପ୍ରକାଶନ ହେଉଅଛି । ଡ. ଦାସ " ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ରାଜନୈତିକ ଚେତନା " ରେ ପି.ଏଚ୍.ଡି ନିବନ୍ଧ ।*

# ଝରା ପତ୍ରର ରତ୍ନ

ସୀମା ମିଶ୍ର

ଅନେକ କଥା ଅଛି  
ଯାହା ସହଜରେ ବୁଝି ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ  
ଯେପରି ପତ୍ର ଝରା ରତ୍ନରେ  
ଚଢ଼େଇ ମାନଙ୍କର କୋଳାହଳ  
ଫୁଲ ମାନଙ୍କର  
କିଛି ଅସହାୟ ଭାବ ।

ଆଉ ଯେତେବେଳେ  
ପବନ ବହି ଆଣେ  
ସବୁ ଭାବ ଅଭାବର ଭାଷାକୁ  
ଶବ୍ଦ ମାନଙ୍କର ଗୋପନ ଅଭିସାରକୁ  
ବୁଝି ହୁଏନି କାହିଁକି  
ସବୁ ନିରବତାର ଲୋଠରୀରେ  
ଶୁଭିଯାଏ  
ସ୍ମୃତି ମାନଙ୍କର କୋଳାହଳ ।

ଆଉ ଥରେ ସେଠି  
ବସନ୍ତ ଆସେ  
ଫୁଲର ମହୋତ୍ସବ ହୁଏ  
ସମୟ ର ପଶତରୁ ଖସି ଆସନ୍ତି  
କିଛି ଚିତ୍ତିତ ପ୍ରକାପତି  
ପଙ୍କରେ ବହି ଆଣନ୍ତି  
ଅନେକ ସୁକୁମାର ରତ୍ନ  
ଯେମିତି ଆଇ ମାଆ ର ପେଡ଼ିରୁ  
ଖସି ଆସନ୍ତି  
ଅନେକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ କଢ଼ି ।

କିଏବା ବୁଝେଇ ଦେବ  
ସବୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ କଢ଼ି  
କାହିଁ ଫୁଲ ହୋଇ ଫୁଟନ୍ତିନି  
ସବୁ ଫୁଲ ବି କାହିଁକି  
ମହକ ବୁଣନ୍ତିନି  
ସକାଳର ଶୁଭ ପଶତରେ

ଲେଖାହୋଇ ଥିବା  
ଯେତେ ଶୁଭ କବିତା  
କାହିଁକି ଧୁଆଁଳିଆ ଦିଶୁଥାଏ  
ଗୋଧୁଳି ବେଳାରେ ।

ବେଳେ ବେଳେ  
ବର୍ଷଣ ମୁଖର ରାତିରେ  
ବାରିଦ ବିନ୍ଦୁର ରିମ୍ ଝିମ୍ ସୁରରେ  
କେହିବି ଶୁଣି ପାରନ୍ତିନି  
ହୃଦୟ ତଳର ସ୍ୱପନ  
ଅନେକ ଦୁରରୁ  
ଅନ୍ଧାର ଦେହରେ ଝଲକାଏ ଆଲୋକ ର ପରି  
ପାଟୀନ ଆଶାର ଝଲକ ଚିଏ  
ଫିଟି ପଡୁଥାଏ  
ରାତିର ପାପୁଲିରୁ  
ସବୁ ଆତ୍ମାନୁଭୂତି ଛୁଇଁଯାଏ  
ଦିଗନ୍ତରୁ ଦିଗନ୍ତକୁ ।

ସକାଳର ସଜଳତାରୁ  
ସାଉଁଟି ନେବାକୁ ହୁଏ  
ମୁକ୍ତା ପରି ବିଛେଇ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଥିବା  
ଅଶ୍ରୁରୁଦା ମାନଙ୍କୁ  
ଥଳ କୁଳ ମିଳେନି  
କାହାର ଏ ଅଶ୍ରୁ  
ତୁମର ନା ମୋର  
ସତରେ କାହାର  
ପ୍ରତିଟି ଜଳ ବିନ୍ଦୁରେ ପ୍ରତିଫଳିତ ହୁଏ  
ସବୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଅଙ୍ଗୀକାର  
ନୀରବ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣାର ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱରେ  
ସବୁ ପ୍ରୀତି ସବୁ ଅଭିସାର

ବିଖ୍ୟାତ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକ ଓ ଗବେଷକ ଡଃ. ପ୍ରଫେସର କାହ୍ନୁଚରଣ ମିଶ୍ର ଜଣେ ଜ୍ୟେଷ୍ଠାକୃତ୍ୟ ସୀମା ମିଶ୍ର ସୁଲେଖିକା ଭାବରେ ସର୍ବତ୍ର ପରିଚିତ । ଅନେକ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସମ୍ମାନର ଅଧିକାରିଣୀ ସୀମା ମିଶ୍ର ଜଣେ ସୌଖୀନ ଚିତ୍ର ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ଓ ବିଶ୍ୱ ବିଖ୍ୟାତ ଆର୍ଟ ଅଫ ଲିଭର୍ଣ୍ଣିଙ୍ଗ୍ ର ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା । ସେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବାହାରେ ଅନେକ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ, ନୃତ୍ୟ, ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ଡ୍ରାମାଟିକ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ମାନଙ୍କର ପରିଚାଳନାରେ ଅଗ୍ରଣୀ ଭୂମିକା ନେଇ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ସୀମା ସଚ୍ଚିଦାନନ୍ଦ ମିଶ୍ର ଜଣେ ଦକ୍ଷ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ଓ ସୁଲେଖକ ।

# ଆକାଶର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ

ମନୋଜ୍ଞ ପଣ୍ଡା

ନୀଳାଭ ଦିଗନ୍ତ

କେବେ ପୁଣ୍ୟେରୁ ଅରୁଣିମାରେ ଉଭାସିତ

ଅବା ସତେଜ, ପ୍ଳାବିତ, ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମ୍ଳାତ

ଆଉ କେବେ ନିଃସ୍ତଭ, ନିଃସ୍ତେଜ, ନିଃସ୍ତ

ତତିଲ୍ଲତା ଓ ମେଘ ମେଦୁରର ଚାପଲ୍ୟ

କେବେ କରେ କ୍ରୀତନକର ଅଙ୍ଗୀକାର

ଶର୍ବରୀ ତଥା ଶାନ୍ତ, ସ୍ନିଗ୍ଧ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ଓ ଉନ୍ମୁକ୍ତ

ଦିବସର ଲୁଚକାଳି ଖେଳ ମରେ

କେବେ ପୁଣି ଉଠେ ରଙ୍ଗ ବେରଙ୍ଗ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣାଳୀର ମନ୍ଦମୁଗ୍ଧ ପଟ୍ଟଚିତ୍ର

ଆଉ ତାହାହିଁ ହୋଇ ଯାଏ ଭାରୁକ, ଦର୍ଶକ, ଗଞ୍ଜାଳିକା ମନର

ଏକ ଫେନାୟିତ ମଧୁପାତ୍ର ।

ଆହା ଏପରି ଏକ ଆକାଶ ଯେଉଁଠାରେ ଚାଲିଥାଏ ଅହରହ

ମଧୁଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାର ଶୋଭାଯାତ୍ରା

ତାହାର କିପରି ହେବ ନିର୍ନିମେଷ ଯବନିକାପାତ ।

ଏକ ଭୀମକାନ୍ତ ଶିହୁରଣର ଝଲକ ଖେଳି ଯାଏ ତାହାର

ଅନୁଶୋଚନାରେ

କିନ୍ତୁ ବାସ୍ତବରେ ଆକାଶର ଅବସ୍ଥିତି ତାହାର ଜନ୍ମର ପ୍ରତୀକ

ଯାହାର ହୋଇଛି ସୃଷ୍ଟି, ତାହାର ତ ପ୍ରଳୟ ତ୍ରିବାର ସତ୍ୟ

ତେବେ ଏହି ଆକାଶର କିପରି ହେବ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ?

ତା'ପରେ ରହିବ କଣ?

ଏକ ଶୂନ୍ୟ, ଶୂନ୍ୟ, ମହାଶୂନ୍ୟର ଅଭିପ୍ରେତ ଅବତାରଣା

ହେଲେ ଶୂନ୍ୟର ସଜ୍ଞା ଆକାଶର ସ୍ଥିତିରେ ଅଭିନିବେଶିତ

ଆଉ ଆକାଶର ଅବକାଶ କଦାଚିତ୍ ହୋଇ ପାରେନା ମନର ଜୀବନରେ

ସୁତରାଂ ଆକାଶର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପାଇଁ, ମନର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଅନିବାର୍ଯ୍ୟ

ଆଉ ଭାବନା ପ୍ରବାହର ସ୍ଥିରତ୍ଵରେ ମନର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ହୁଏ

ମନର ମୃତ୍ୟୁରେ ହିଁ ଆକାଶର ଶେଷତ୍ଵର ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟା ହୁଏ

ଏବଂ ସେହି ମୃତ୍ୟୁରେ ଏକ ଚିରନ୍ତନ ଜୀବନର ଅୟମାରମ୍ଭ ହୁଏ

ଯେଉଁଠି ସମ-ଅସମର ଲେଶ ମାତ୍ର ସତ୍ତା ନ ଥାଏ

କେବଳ ଏକ ମହାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତିର ଦିବ୍ୟ ଅନୁଭବ

ଯାହାହିଁ ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ଜୀବନର ଏକାନ୍ତ, ଅନ୍ତିମ କାମ୍ୟ ।



# ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣନ

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ

ମେ’ ମାସର ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟକିରଣ ସୁନ୍ଦରଭାବେ ବିଛୁରିତ ହୋଇ ଧରାକୁ ହସାଉଥିଲା । ଶୀତରେ ଶୁଖିଯାଇଥିବା ଘାସଗୁଡ଼ିକ କଅଁଳି ଉଠି ଲନ୍ଦ୍‌ମାନଙ୍କର ସବୁଜିମା ବିସ୍ତାରିତ କରୁଥିଲେ । ପୁଣି ବେଳେବେଳେ ସୁନୀଳ ଆକାଶରେ ଭସାଉସା ମେଘଖଣ୍ଡମାନ ଲନ୍ଦ୍‌ଧନୁର ରଙ୍ଗରେ ଛବିଳ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ସୃଷ୍ଟିକରୁଥିଲେ । ପ୍ରକୃତିର ଏମିତି ରଙ୍ଗମୟ ମହୋତ୍ସବ ଚାଲିଥିବା ସମୟରେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ଜୀବନରେ ଏକ ଓଲଟା ମୋଡ ଆସିଥିଲା ।



ଶେଷକୁ ପୁଅ ଦୁଇଜଣ ବାଙ୍କ ହେଲେ । ତେର ବର୍ଷର ଅମର ରହିଲା ବାପାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଆଉ ଦଶବର୍ଷର ଅମୃତ ରହିଲା ମା’ ପାଖରେ ।

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଘୁରୁଥିଲା । ଜୀବନଟା ସତେକି ଶହେ ଅଶୀ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ଘୁରିଗଲା । କଣ ସେ ଜୀବନରେ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲା ଆଉ କଣ ସବୁ ଘଟିଗଲା । ଶେଷରେ ପୁଅ ବାଙ୍କ । ଏବେ ମନେ ହେଉଛି ସେ ଯେମିତି ଏକ ଅଲୋଡା ମଣିଷ । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିମା ଭଳି ସେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମାନ ଅରୁଣଙ୍କର ଆଲୋକରେ ଆଲୋକିତ ହୋଇ ରହିଥିଲା । ଏବେ ସେ କଷ୍ଟରୂପେ । ଅରୁଣଙ୍କ ରେଶୁ ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଲୋକିତ କରିପାରିବନି; ସେ ଏବେ ଅନ୍ଧାରରେ ହିଁ ଜୀବନଯାପନ କରିବ ।

ଠିକ୍ ବର୍ଷେ ଆଠମାସ ତଳେ, ସେପ୍ଟେମ୍ବର ମାସ ୬ ତାରିଖରେ ଏ ଘଟଣାଟି ଘଟିଥିଲା । ଅରୁଣ କଂପାନୀ କାମରେ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି ଡ୍ରାଗିଂଗନ୍ ଡିସି । ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଯାଇଥିଲେ

କଂପାନୀର ଆଉ ଦୁଇଜଣି ଜଣ କର୍ମଚାରୀ ଓ ବଜେଟ୍ ବିଭାଗର ସେକ୍ରେଟାରୀ ଗୋରିଆ ଲୋପେଜ୍ । ସେଇ ସଞ୍ଜ ଶେଷ ଶନିବାର ଦିନ ଅମରର ତେରବର୍ଷର ଜନ୍ମଦିନ ଉତ୍ସବ ପାଳିତ ହେବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଥାଏ । ଯଦିଓ ଭାରତୀୟ ଅତିଥିମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ରେଷ୍ଟୁରାଣ୍ଟରୁ ଖାଇବା ଆସୁଥାଏ, ତେବେ ମେନ୍ୟୁରୁ ଫାଇନାଲ୍ କରିଦେବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ଅରୁଣଙ୍କୁ ଫେ-ଫୋନ୍‌ରୁ ଫୋନ୍ ଲଗାଇଲା ପ୍ରାୟ ରାତି ସାଢ଼େ ନଅଟା ବେଳେ । ଫୋନ୍ ଧରିଥିଲା ଗୋରିଆ ଲୋପେଜ୍ । ବାସ୍ ସେତିକି ହିଁ କଥା, ସେଇଠୁ ହିଁ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ତା’ ଜୀବନର ମହାଭାରତ ।

ଅରୁଣ ଡ୍ରାଗିଂଗନ୍‌ରୁ ଫେରିବାପରେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା କିଛି କହିନଥିଲା ସତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ମନଭିତରେ ପ୍ରବଳ ସନ୍ଦେହ ରଖି ଅରୁଣ ଓ ଗୋରିଆଙ୍କ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧ ଜାଣିବା ପାଇଁ ଗୋଇନ୍ଦାଗିରି କରିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା ।

କଂପାନୀର କ୍ରିଷ୍ଣମାସ୍ ପାର୍ଟିରେ ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କରି ଶୁଭକାମନା ଜଣାଇବା ଏ ଦେଶର ରୀତିରିବାଜ । ହେଲେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଅରୁଣ ଗୋରିଆଙ୍କୁ ପାର୍ଟିରେ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କରି “ମେରୀ କ୍ରିଷ୍ଣମାସ୍” ବୋଲି କହିଥିଲେ, ସେଇଟାକୁ ସହଜଭାବେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିପାରିନଥିଲା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା । ପାର୍ଟି ଶେଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତା’ ମୁହଁରେ ତା’ ମନଭିତରର ଅସନ୍ତୋଷ ଭାବ ପ୍ରତିଫଳିତ ହୋଇ ଅତିଥିମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ମୃଦୁ ଗୁଞ୍ଜରଣ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥିଲା । ପାର୍ଟିରୁ ଫେରିବା ପରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଅରୁଣ ପଚାରିଲେ, “ପାର୍ଟିରେ ତମର କଣ ହେଲା? ଜଣାପଡୁଥିଲା ତମେ ଯେମିତି କିଛି ବି ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁନଥିଲ ।”

“ତମେ ତ ଅତ୍ୟଧିକ ରୁପେ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥିଲ । ମୁଁ ଉପଭୋଗ କଲି କି ନାହିଁ, ସେଥିରେ ତମର କି ଚିନ୍ତା?” – ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ମନ୍ଦବ୍ୟ ଦେଇଥିଲା ।

“ଆରେ, କଂପାନୀ ତରଫରୁ ଏତେ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚକରି ପାର୍ଟି କରୁଛି ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବା ପାଇଁ । ଇଚ୍ଛା ନଥିଲେ ବି ଜବରଦସ୍ତ ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବା ଉଚିତ ।” – ଅରୁଣ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇଥିଲେ ।

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ତୁପ୍ତାପ୍ ରହିଥିଲା ।

ଏମିତି ହଠାତ୍ ଦିନେ ଅରୁଣଙ୍କୁ ଫଟଲା କରୁକରୁ ଧରା ପଡିଯାଇଥିଲା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା । ସେଇଟା ଅଲିଭିଗାର୍ଡେନ୍‌ରେ । ଅରୁଣ ଗାଡିରେ ଡ୍ରାଇଭିଂ ଛାଡି ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ତାକୁ ନେବାପାଇଁ ଆସୁଆସୁ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାକୁ ଦେଖିପକାଇଲେ ।

“ତମେ ଏଠି?” – ଅରୁଣଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ  
“ତମେ ବି ତ ଏଠିକୁ ଆସିଛ । ମୋତେ କଣ ଆସିବାକୁ ମନା ।” – ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାର ଜବାବ ।

“ତେବେ ଆସ ଲଖ୍ କରିବା ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ।” – ଅରୁଣ ଡାକିଥିଲେ ।

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା କିନ୍ତୁ ଯାଇନଥିଲା । ହଠାତ୍ କଣ କହିବ, ବୁଝି ନପାରି ସେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଆସିଥିଲା । ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ବି ଅରୁଣ ଯେବେ ପଚାରିଥିଲେ, ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା କିଛି କହିନଥିଲା । ଅରୁଣ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇ

ପଡ଼ିଥିଲେ, “ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା, ତମେ ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ ଥରେ ଚେକ୍‌ଅପ୍ କରିଆସ । ଦୁଃଖ କିଛି ଗୋଟିଏ ନୁଆ ରକମର ତିଜ୍‌ଅର୍ଡର ତମକୁ ଆଫେକ୍ଟ୍ କରୁଛି । ଆଜିକାଲି ଖାଦ୍ୟପେୟ, ଜଳବାୟୁ ସବୁ ଏମିତି ଜଟିଳ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି ଯେ ଏସବୁ ମଣିଷ ଉପରେ କି ରକମର ପ୍ରଭାବ ପକାଉଛି, ତାକୁ ବୁଝିବା ବଡ଼ କଷ୍ଟ ।”

ଏ ଘଟଣାର ମାସକପରେ ପୁଣି ଗୋଟିଏ ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ପତିଲା ଚିକାଗୋରେ । ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବଦିନ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ପଚାରଲା, “କଣ ଗୋରିଆ ବି ଯାଉଛି ।”

“ହଁ । ବାୟାନ୍ ଓ ରିକ୍ ବି ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ନଥିଲେ ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ବି ଯାଇପାରିଥାନ୍ତେ ।” - ଅରୁଣଙ୍କର ଉତ୍ତର ।

ଅରୁଣଙ୍କର ଗୋରିଆ ସହିତ କି ସଂପର୍କ ଅଛି ଜାଣିବାକୁ ପୁଣି ତିନି-ଚାରିଥର ରାତିରେ ସାଢ଼େ ନଅଟା-ଦଶଟା ବେଳେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ପେ-ଫେନ୍‌ରୁ ଫେନ୍ କରୁଥିଲା । ଦୁଇଥର ଅରୁଣ ଧରିଥିଲେ ଓ ସେ ବନ୍ଦ କରିଦେଇଥିଲା; କିନ୍ତୁ ତୃତୀୟ ଥର ଧରିଥିଲା ଗୋରିଆ ।

ଅରୁଣ ଫେରିବା ପରେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ପଚାରିଲା - “ଗୋରିଆ ସହିତ ତମର କି ସଂପର୍କ ?”

“ହାଟ୍ ଯୁ ମିନ୍? ସି ଇଜ୍ ଆଓ୍ଵାର୍ କଂପାନୀ ସେକ୍ରେଟେରୀ ।”

“ନୋ ! ସି ଇଜ୍ ଇୟୋର୍ ମିସ୍‌ଟ୍ରେସ୍ ।” - ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ରାଗିକରି କହିଲା ।

“ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା, ପିଜ୍ ସର୍‌ଅପ୍ । ନୋ ମୋର୍ ନନ୍‌ସେନ୍ସ୍ ପିଜ୍ ।”

“ଆହା ! ବିରାଡି ଆଖୁବୁଜି ଦୁଧ ପିଉଛି । ତମ କଂପାନୀର ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଆଳରେ ଗୋରିଆ ସହିତ ବାରମ୍ବାର ହନିମୁନ୍ ରଚନା, ତାକୁ ବି ମୁଁ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ବୁଝିଛି । ଏନଫ୍ ଇଜ୍ ଏନଫ୍ ।”

ଅରୁଣ କିଛି କହିଲେନି । ସିଧା ତାଙ୍କ ଅଫିସ୍ ରୁମ୍‌କୁ ଚାଲିଗଲେ ଓ କବାଟ ବନ୍ଦ କରିଦେଲେ ।

ସେଇ ଯେଉଁ ମନ ଫଟାଫଟି ହେଲା, ସେଇଠୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ଏ ବିବାହ ବିଚ୍ଛେଦର ପର୍ବ । ଥରେ ଯୁକ୍ତି କରୁକରୁ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ରାଗିକରି ଫେପାଡିଦେଲା ହାତରେ ଧରିଥିବା ଚାହାକପଟା । ଭଙ୍ଗକପ୍‌ର ଗୋଟିଏ ଅଂଶ ଯାଇ ଅରୁଣଙ୍କ କପାଳର ବାମଭାଗକୁ ଆଘାତକଲା ଓ କପାଳରୁ ରକ୍ତଝରିଲା । ଅରୁଣ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ୯୧୧ ତାଜି ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ୍ ଗଲେ । ଯଦିଓ ଆକ୍‌ସିଡେଣ୍ଟ୍ କହି ପୋଲିସ୍‌ର ଜେରାରୁ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାକୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇଦେଲେ; ହେଲେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ଯେ ଏକ ଭୟଙ୍କର ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରୀୟ ଓ ଏକ ବିପଦଜନକ ପିଶାଚିନୀ,

ତାହା ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ କହି ସତର୍କ କରାଇବାକୁ ଭୁଲିନଥିଲେ । ଏମିତିକି ସେଇ କାରଣ ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା କରି ଦୁଇପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ନିଜପାଖରେ ରଖିବାକୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ।

ତୁଣ୍ଡବାଇଦ ସହସ୍ରକୋଷ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚିହ୍ନାଜଣା, ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ଏ ଖବର ଆଲୋକର ଗତିଠାରୁ ବି କ୍ଷିପ୍ରଗତିରେ ପ୍ରଚାରିତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ସେଇଟା ଅରୁଣଙ୍କ ଲେଖାଯୋଗା ଦୂର ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ଭଉଣୀ ଦ୍ଵାରା । କିଏ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାକୁ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଶା କହିଲା ତ କିଏ କହିଲା ପୁତନା । “ନାଁ ଟା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ଆଉ କାମଟା କ୍ଵାଳାମୁଖୀ ।” - କେତେଜଣ ପୁରୁଖା ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନେ ଏମିତି ସବୁ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାନଙ୍କର ସାମାଜିକ ମିଳନ, ଘରୋଇ ଆସର ଓ ପାର୍ଟି ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରିବାପାଇଁ ବଡ଼ ମସଲାଡିଆ ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁଟିଏ ମିଳିଗଲା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ । କେହିକେହି ଦେଖେଇ କହିବାକୁ ବି ଭୁଲିନଥିଲେ ଯେ ଯେଉଁନାରୀ ଅରୁଣ ଭଳି ଦେବୋପମ ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କୁ ଏମିତି ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିପାରୁଛି, ତା’ ଭଳି କଥା-ତାହାଣୀ, ବ୍ରହ୍ମ-ଚଣ୍ଡାଳୁଣୀର ମୁହଁ ଚାହିଁବା ହିଁ ପାପ ।

ପୁଅମାନଙ୍କର ବାଞ୍ଛହେବା ପରେ ସହରଭିତରେ ଥିବା ଟାଉନ୍‌ହାଉସ୍‌ଟା ତା’ ଭାଗରେ ପଡ଼ିଲା । ସେଇଟା ଆଗରୁ ଭଡାଡିଆଯାଇଥିଲା । ବଡ଼ପୁଅକୁ ନେଇ ସବର୍‌ବାନ୍‌ରେ ଥିବା ଘରେ ରହିଲେ ଅରୁଣ । ସତ୍ସାହ ଶେଷ ବେଳକୁ ଶନିବାର-ରବିବାର ଦିନମାନଙ୍କରେ ଦୁଇଭାଇଙ୍କର ବାପାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଓ ମା’ଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ପାଳିକରି ମିଳନ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଅମରର ଯେବେ ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ୍ ଗାଢୁଏସନ୍ ପାର୍ଟି ହେଲା, ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ଯୋଗଦେଇନଥିଲା କେବଳ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ବାକ୍ୟବାଣର ଭୟରେ । ଅମର କଲେଜ ଗଲା । ଆସିଥିଲା ଫଲ୍ ବ୍ରେକ୍‌ରେ; ଅମୃତ ପାଖରେ ଖବର ଦେଇଗଲା - “ତାଡି ଇଜ୍ ଏନ୍‌ଗେଜ୍‌ଡ୍ ।”

ଅମୃତଠାରୁ ଏ ଖବରଶୁଣି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଯେମିତି କଣ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଯଦିଓ ବିବାହ ବିଚ୍ଛେଦର ପାଞ୍ଚବର୍ଷ ବିତିଯାଇଥିଲା; ତଥାପି କାହିଁକି ସେ ଆଶା ରଖୁଥିଲା ଯେ ଅରୁଣ ଆଉ କେଉଁଠି ବିବାହ କରିବେନି ? ଅମୃତ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ସେ ଅରୁଣଙ୍କ ବାନ୍ଧବୀର ଖବରପାଇଲା । ମିସ୍ ଲିସା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ; ବର୍ଷେ ହେଲା ତାଙ୍କ କଂପ-ନୀରେ ଜଏନ୍ କରୁଛି; ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ, ବୁଝିମତୀ, ସୁରୁଚିସଂପନ୍ନା । ଥରେ ଛପିଛପି ଦେଖିଲା ତାକୁ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା । ଇର୍ଷାରେ ଦେହ ଜଳିଗଲା; ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଥିଲା ସେ ଲିସା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ କଣବୋଲି କଣ କରିପକାନ୍ତା, ରାଂପୁଡି ପକାନ୍ତା, କାମୁଡି ପକାନ୍ତା କି ଖଣ୍ଡିଆ କରିପକାନ୍ତା । ଛପିଛପି ଦେଖିଲା କେତେ ଖଇଲରେ ଅରୁଣ ଲିସା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟର ହାତଧରି ରେଷୁରାଣ୍ଟ୍‌ରେ ପଶୁଛନ୍ତି; ସିନେମାହଲକୁ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି; ତା’ ପାଇଁ ଗାଡିର ଦ୍ଵାର ଖୋଲିଦେଉଛନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେଉଁଦିନ ସେ ଅରୁଣଙ୍କୁ ଲିସା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଗଳାରେ ତା’ର ପ୍ରଥମ

ବିବାହ ବାର୍ଷିକୀର ସୁନାହାରଟି ପିନ୍ଧାଇ ଗେଲ କରାବାର ଦେଖିଲା, ସେଦିନ ତାର ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟରୂପି ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଗାଡ଼ି ଡ୍ରାଇଭ୍ କରୁକରୁ ସେ ମନଇଚ୍ଛା କାନ୍ଦିଲା; ଘରଆଗରେ ଗାଡ଼ିରଖି ଘରକବାଟ ଖୋଲିବାକୁ ଯାଉଛି ତ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଘୁରିଗଲା ଓ ସେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ।

ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ୍ ବିଛଣାରେ ଶୋଇ ଆକାଶପାତାଳ ଭାବୁଥିଲା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା । ତାଙ୍କର କହିଥିଲେ, “ମିସେସ୍ ମହାପାତ୍ର, ଆପଣଙ୍କର ବଡ଼ପ୍ରେସର୍ ବଢ଼ିଯାଇଛି; ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ମନଖୁସି ରଖିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ଓ ନିୟମିତ ଭାବେ ଔଷଧ ଖାଇବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ନହେଲେ, ଆପଣଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟପଥରେ ଏହାର ଖରାପ ପ୍ରଭାବ ପଡ଼ିପାରେ ।”

ଅମୃତ ଏବେ ଅରୁଣଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ରହୁଛି । ଦୁଇ, ତିନିଧର ଆସି ଦେଖିଗଲାଣି । ଗତକାଲି ଅରୁଣ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଲିସା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ସାଥରେ ଧରି । ଲିସା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସହିତ ପରିଚୟ କରାଇ ଦେଇ ପଚାରିଥିଲେ ଫର୍ମାଲିଟି ରକ୍ଷାକରି ।

“କେମିତି ଲାଗୁଛି ?”

“ଭଲ !”

“ମୁଁ ଭାବୁଛି ଏବେ ଅମୃତକୁ ପାଖକୁ ନେଇଯିବି । ତମର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଟିକେ କମିଯିବ । ତାପରେ ତମକୁ ବି ତ ନିଜର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ନେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ।” - ଅରୁଣ ମତାମତ ଚାହିଁଥିଲେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାର ।

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା କିଛି ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇନଥିଲା । ଯେଉଁନିଆଁରେ ଜଳି ସେ ଦଗ୍ଧ ହେଉଛି, ପୁଣି ସେଇ ନିଆଁ ଲିସା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ଆଣି ଆହୁରି ପ୍ରଖର ଭାବେ ଜଳାଇ ଦେଇଗଲେ ଅରୁଣ । ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ତାର ବଡ଼ପ୍ରେସର୍ ଆହୁରି ବଢ଼ିଲା । ଡେକ୍ଟର୍ ଜୋନର ନିକଟବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ହେଲା । ଔଷଧ ଦେଇ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଶୁଆଇ ଦେଇଥିଲେ; ଜାଗ୍ରତ ହେଲେ ମାନସିକ ଅଶାନ୍ତି ତାକୁ ବିଚ୍ଚିତ କରୁଛି ବୋଲି ମତାମତ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ।

ଖବର ପାଇ ଆସିଥିଲା ତା’ ସାଙ୍ଗ ସୋନି । ଲମ୍ବାବଉତା ଏକ ଭାଷଣ ଦେଇଗଲା । ନିଜସଂସାରକୁ ସେ ଯେ ନିଜେ ବିଷାକ୍ତ କରିଦେଲା ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତାକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଦୋଷୀ ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରାଉଥିବା ସୋନିର କଣ୍ଠରେ ଆଜି କିନ୍ତୁ ବଡ଼ ଦରଦ ଥିଲା । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାକୁ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଯେମିତି ସୋନି ତାକୁ ମୃତ୍ୟୁଶଯ୍ୟାରେ ଶେଷଦର୍ଶନ କରିଯାଉଛି; ସେଥିପାଇଁ କୋମଳ କରି କଥାକହୁଛି ।

“ଚିନ୍ତୁ ! ଲାଇଫ୍ ଇଜ୍ ଏ ଗିଫ୍ଟ୍ । ପ୍ରିଜର୍ଭ୍ ଇଟ୍ ।”

“କଣ ମୋର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ବାକି ରହିଛି ସୋନି ? କଣପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ପ୍ରିଜର୍ଭ୍ କରିବି ?” - ନିରାସକ୍ତ ଭାବେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କରିଥିଲା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ।

“ଅମର ଓ ଅମୃତଙ୍କର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଗଢ଼ିବାରେ ତୋର ଭୂମିକା ରହିଛି ।”

“ସେଇଟା ଅରୁଣ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିପାରିବେ ।”

“ମା’ର ଭୂମିକା ଅଲଗା ରକମର ।”

“ମୁଁ ମା’ ନୁହେଁ । ମୁଁ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ନୁହେଁ । ମୁଁ ଏକ ଭୟଙ୍କର ରାକ୍ଷସୀ । ତୁ କଣ ସେକଥା ଜାଣିନୁ । ଆଜି ଏତେ କୋମଳ କରି କାହିଁକି କଥା କହୁଛୁ ?”

“ଦେଖ୍ ଚିନ୍ତୁ, ଇଟ୍ସ ନଟ୍ ଏ ଜୋକ୍ ଆଣ୍ଡ୍ ଇୟୁ ନୋ ଇଟ୍ । ତୋ ଦେହ ଖରାପ । ତୋର ଏମିତି କୋଧ ଓ ଉଦ୍‌ବିଗ୍ନ ପ୍ରକୃତି ପାଇଁ ତୁ ଏତେ ଭୋଗିଲୁଣି ଓ ନିଜ ପରିବାରକୁ ଭୋଗାଇଲୁଣି । ଯାହାହେଲା ତ ଫେରାଇଆଣି ହେବନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଯାହା ଅଛି, ତାକୁ ପୋଟେକ୍ସ କରି ରଖ ।”

“ଅରୁଣ ଲିସା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ବାହାହେବେ । ଅମର କଲେଜ୍ ଗଲାଣି ଓ ଅମୃତ ଆଉ ଦୁଇବର୍ଷରେ କଲେଜ୍ ଯିବ । ଆଉ କାହା ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ବା ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଅଟକି ଯାଉଛି?”

“ଏ କଥା ସତ ଯେ ଏ ଦୁନିଆଁରେ କାହାପାଇଁ କିଛି ଅଟକି ଯିବନି । ତଥାପି ଦୁର୍ଲଭ ମାନବ ଜନ୍ମର ଯଥାର୍ଥତା ତ ରକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଏ ଯେଉଁ ନର୍ସଟି ତୋର ସେବା କରୁଛି, ତୋ ମଳମୂତ୍ର ପରିଷ୍କାର କରୁଛି, ତୋ ବାନ୍ତି ପରିଷ୍କାର କରୁଛି, ତତେ ଧରି ଚଳପ୍ରଚଳ କରାଉଛି, ତା ଜୀବନର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ବିଷୟ କେବେ ଚିନ୍ତାକରିଛୁ? ଯଦିଓ ଏଇଟା ତା’ର ଜୀବିକା, ତଥାପି ଏ ଦେଶରେ ବହୁତ ଲୋକ ମନର ସନ୍ତୋଷ ଓ ମାନବଜୀବନର ଯଥାର୍ଥତା ରକ୍ଷାକରିବା ପାଇଁ ବି କାମକରୁଛନ୍ତି । ମାନବଜନ୍ମର ସଦୃଶଯୋଗ ହିଁ ଜୀବନର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ହେବା ଉଚିତ । ପ୍ରିଜ୍, ନିଜକୁ ଏମିତି ନଷ୍ଟ କରିଦେନି ।”

ସୋନି ସହିତ ଯଦିଓ ବହୁତ ଯୁକ୍ତି କରିଥିଲା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା, ସେଦିନ କିନ୍ତୁ ସୋନି କଥା ବହୁତ ଭଲ ଲାଗିଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ନର୍ସ ଜଣକ ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେଦିନ ତା’ କୋଠରୀକୁ ତା’ ବିଛଣାପତ ବଦଳାଇବାକୁ ଆସିଲା, ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ତାର ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । ମଧ୍ୟବୟସ୍କା ମେଡ୍‌କାନ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକଟିଏ; ମୁହଁଟି ବହୁତ ସ୍ନେହିଳ । ଗତକାଲି ସେ ରାତିଅନିଦା ହୋଇ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାକୁ ଜଗିଥିଲା; ତଥାପି ତା’ ମୁହଁରେ କ୍ଳାନ୍ତିର ଚିହ୍ନ ନାହିଁ କି ଅସନ୍ତୋଷ ନାହିଁ । ବଡ଼ ନିର୍ବିକାର ଭାବେ ନିଜ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ କରିଚାଲିଛି ।

“ହାଓ ଆର୍ ୟୁ ପିଲିଙ୍ଗ୍ ମିସେସ୍ ମହାପାତ୍ର ।” - ନର୍ସଟିର ସ୍ନେହିଳ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ।

“ଭେରି ଗୁଡ୍ । ହାଓ ଆର୍ ୟୁ ?” - ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ପଚାରିଲା ।

“ଆଇ ଆମ୍ ଏକ୍ସପ୍ଟେମ୍‌ଲି ହାପି ।” - ନର୍ସଟିର ମୁହଁରେ ଖୁସିର ପୁଲ୍ ପୁଞ୍ଜିଆସିଲା ।

“ଏନି ଗୁଡ୍ ରିଜନ୍ ?” - ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ମନରେ ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା ।

ସେଇଠୁ ନର୍ସଟି ଉତ୍ତରଦେଲା କେମିତି ଜଣେ ପୁରୁଣା ରୋଗୀ, ଯାହାଙ୍କର ସେ ସେବା କରୁଥିଲା ଏବଂ ଯାହାଙ୍କର ମୁତ୍ରାଶୟ ରୋଗ ଥିଲା, ତାକୁ କିତ୍ତେ ତୋନର ମିଳିଗଲା ।

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ଭାବିଥିଲା ଯେ ନର୍ସଟି ନିଜର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ସଂସାର, କି ନିଜର କିଛି ଲାଭ ହେବାର, ସଫଳତାର ଖୁସିଖବର ଶୁଣାଇବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତା' ମୁହଁରୁ ଏ ଖବର ଶୁଣିବା ପରେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ପ୍ରଥମେ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଲା । ନିଜପ୍ରତି ବିତୃଷ୍ଣା ଜାଗିଥିଲା ତା'ର । ସତରେ ତା' ଭଳି ସ୍ତ୍ରୀପର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଏ ସୁନ୍ଦର ସଂସାର ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ କଳାଦାଗ । ନିଜ ଛତା, ନିଜର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଛତା ସେ ଅନ୍ୟ କାହାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତାକୁ ଏତେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦେଇନଥିଲା ପୂର୍ବରୁ । ଆଜି ତାକୁ ତା' ସ୍ତ୍ରୀପରତାର ପ୍ରକୃତ ପ୍ରତିଦାନ ଦେଇ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀର ତାର ଜ୍ଞାନଚକ୍ଷୁ ଖୋଲି ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ।

ଆର ରୁମ୍‌ରୁ ଏହି ସମୟରେ କାନ୍ଦ ଶୁଣିଲା । ଆଉ ଜଣେ ନର୍ସ ଆସି ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ପୋଛି ଖବର ଦେଲା ଯେ ମିସେସ୍ ଡକ୍ଟରଙ୍କର ବଡ଼ପ୍ରେସର୍ ବଢି ହାର୍ଟ ଅନକ୍ସେବ୍ ହୋଇଯିବାରୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଇଣ୍ଟେନ୍ସିଭ୍ କେୟାରକୁ ନିଆଗଲା । ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମା ବହୁତ ନର୍ଭସ୍ ହୋଇ କନ୍ଦାକଟା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ।

ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ପ୍ରଥମଥର ପାଇଁ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ଜଣେ ପରଲୋକ ପାଇଁ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନାକଲା । “ପ୍ରଭୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ, ମିସେସ୍ ଡକ୍ଟରଙ୍କୁ ସୁସ୍ଥ କରିଦିଅ । ଅନ୍ତତଃ ତାଙ୍କପାଇଁ ଜଣେ ସ୍ନେହୀ ପତି ଅଛନ୍ତି । ମୋ ପାଇଁ ତ କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ କେହି ନାହାନ୍ତି । ମତେ ବରଂ ମିସେସ୍ ଡକ୍ଟରଙ୍କର ସବୁ ରୋଗ, ସବୁ ପ୍ରବେମ୍‌ସ୍ ଦିଅ ।”

ଏଇଟା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାର ସାମୟିକ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ନଥିଲା । କାରଣ, ମିସେସ୍ ଡକ୍ଟରଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସେ ରାତିସାରା ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରିଥିଲା । ‘ମରା ମରା’ କହି ଦସ୍ୟୁ ରତ୍ନାକର ମହର୍ଷି ବାଲ୍ମୁକୀ ପାଲଟିଥିଲେ । ସେଇଭଳି ମିସେସ୍ ଡକ୍ଟରଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରୁକରୁ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ଭଗବାନଙ୍କର ନିକଟବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ହେବାର ଅନୁଭବ କଲା । ତା' ପରଦିନ ଯେତେବେଳେ ନର୍ସ ତାର ବଡ଼ପ୍ରେସର୍ ମାପିଲା, ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ସେ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାକୁ ଶୁଭଖବର ଜଣାଇଲା ଯେ ତା'ର ବଡ଼ପ୍ରେସର୍ ନର୍ମାଲ୍ ହୋଇଆସୁଛି ।

ଅନ୍ୟପାଇଁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରିବାର, ଶୁଭଚିନ୍ତା କରିବାର ପ୍ରଭାବ ସେଦିନ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ପ୍ରଥମଥର ପାଇଁ ଅନୁଭବ କଲା । ଏକ ବିରାଟ ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତି ଭାବ ତା' ହୃଦୟରେ ଖେଳୁଥିଲା; ସେଠି ନଥିଲା ରାଗ, ଅଭିମାନ, ଅହଂଭାବ କି ତିକ୍ତତାର ଅନୁଭବ । ସେଠି ଥିଲା ଅନ୍ୟଜଣକର ମଙ୍ଗଳପାଇଁ ହୃଦୟର ନିଃସ୍ୱାର୍ଥ ଅନୁରକ୍ତ ଭାବନା । ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସୁସ୍ଥ ହୋଇଯାରିଲା ପରେ ସେ ନର୍ସ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରି ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କର ସେବା କରିବାର କାମନା ରଖିଲା । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକାର ଏ ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ ଯେ ଅରୁଣ, ଅମର ଓ ଅମୃତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସୁଖଦାୟୀ ହେବା ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ତା' ନିଜପାଇଁ ମଙ୍ଗଳପ୍ରଦ ହେବ, ସେଥିରେ ତାର ଦୃଢ଼ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଥିଲା । ଏମିତି ଭାବନା ଭିତରେ ତା'ର ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ସୁନିଦ୍ରା ହୋଇଥିଲା ।

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ସାତବର୍ଷ ପରେ, ୨୦୦୭ ମସିହା, ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ପନ୍ଦର ତାରିଖରେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଆନାର ‘ମେରିଅନ୍ ଜେନେରାଲ୍ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ୍’ରେ ଯେଉଁ ନର୍ସଜଣକ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି ବିଭାଗରେ ମିସେସ୍ ସୋନି ଚୌଧୁରୀଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଥମ ନାତିର ପ୍ରସବ କରାଇଥିଲେ, ସେ ଥିଲେ “ମିସ୍ ଚିନ୍ତୁ” ନାମଧାରୀ ମିସେସ୍ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ମହାପାତ୍ର । ତକ୍ତର ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ ଡେଗନ୍, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ରହନ୍ତି । ଯଦିଓ ଏକ ଗାଣିତିକା ହିସାବରେ ସେ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା ଓ ତାଲିମ୍ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ, ତେବେ ମନରେ ଉଠୁଥିବା ଭାବନାର ଡରଙ୍କୁ ଲେଖାଲେଖି ଓ ଅଭିନୟ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ସର୍ବଦା ଚେଷ୍ଟିତ । ଏତଦ୍ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ନୃତ୍ୟ, ଗୀତ ଓ ବନ୍ଧୁମିଳନରେ ତାଙ୍କର ବିଶେଷ ଆଗ୍ରହ । ଏଇ ଗନ୍ଧର୍ବି ସେ ତାଙ୍କର ଜଣେ ବାନ୍ଧବୀର ଜୀବନକୁ ନେଇ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି । ଏହି ଗନ୍ଧର୍ବିକୁ ପଢୁଥିବା ସମସ୍ତ ପାଠକ-ପାଠିକାଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ ଯେ ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ଭୁଲ୍‌ବୁଝାମଣାର କଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଭାବରୁ ନିଜର ସମାଜ, ପରିବାର ଓ କର୍ମକ୍ଷେତ୍ରକୁ ସର୍ବଦା ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ କରି ରଖିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟିତ ରୁହନ୍ତୁ ।



# ଅତିଳିପ୍ତା

ଝୀନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ

<p>ସୁତିର ଝରକା ଫାଙ୍କୁ ସୁଦୀର୍ଘ ସର୍ପିଳ ପଥ  ଦିଶେ ଆଜି ପରିଷ୍କାର ଭଙ୍ଗଳ ଅତୀବ  ଶକ୍ତ ଏଇ ମନତସ୍ତୁ ବାଧାହୀନ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିଶକ୍ତି  ଦିଶିଯାଏ ଜନନୀର ଗତାୟୁଃ ଅତୀତ</p>	<p>॥୧॥</p>	<p>ଆସେ ମିଶ ଅନୁଭୂତି ଆସୁଛି କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସରି  କରିଛି ନୈତିକ ମର୍ଦ୍ଦନ ଶରୀରେ ଅଶେଷ  ସତରେ ତେଣା ବଳିଷ୍ଠ ସହିବ ତୋଫାନ ଝଡ  ନିରାପଦେ ଲଂଘିଯିବ ଜୀବନ ଆକାଶ</p>	<p>॥୨॥</p>
<p>ପ୍ରଖର ଜୀବନ ସ୍ରୋତ ପ୍ରବାହିତ ଅବୀରିତ  ବୋହିଗଲା ପଲକରେ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ବର୍ଷ  ଶିହରଣ ଲୋମକୁପେ ତିର ଆର୍ଦ୍ର ଅନୁଭୂତି  ଭିଜିଅଛି ସ୍ତରସ୍ତର କୋଷ ପ୍ରତିକୋଷ</p>	<p>॥୨॥</p>	<p>ପ୍ରାରମ୍ଭରୁ ଏକାଗ୍ରତା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସଦା ସଫଳତା  କଷ୍ଟସାଧ୍ୟ ପାଞ୍ଚତ୍ୟରେ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ମାତାର  ଅଖଣ୍ଡ ଚରମ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ମାତୃଭୂମି (ମୋ) ମାତାଶିକ୍ଷା  ସନ୍ତାନରେ କରିବାକୁ ଆଜି ହସ୍ତାନ୍ତର</p>	<p>॥୩॥</p>
<p>ସହିଛି ଗର୍ଭ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ଗତିଛି ଆନନ୍ଦ ଅଶୁ  ଉଦ୍‌ବେଗ, ଉଦ୍‌ଘୋଷ, ଆଶଙ୍କା, ଭଲ୍ଲସ  ଅଧର ଓ ଅଭିଭୂତ ଗର୍ବ, କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର, ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟରୂପ  ଯାଇଛି କେତେ ସେ ଆଶା, ନିରାଶା, ସନ୍ତୋଷ</p>	<p>॥୩॥</p>	<p>ନୈତିକତା ଅଳଙ୍କାରେ ଦ୍ୱିଗୁଣ ବର୍ଦ୍ଧିତ ଶୋଭା  ଶୁଣାଇଛି କାନେକାନେ ପ୍ରତିଟି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ  ସମୟର ଉପଗତ ବାସ୍ତବତାର ସମ୍ମୁଖ  ପିନ୍ଧିବା ବା ନ ପିନ୍ଧିବା ଆଜି ତା ଆୟତ୍ତ</p>	<p>॥୪॥</p>
<p>ଜଠରରେ ଦଶମାସ ପୁଣି ଅକ୍ଷୟ ବର୍ଷ  ମାତା ବିନା ଅସମ୍ଭବ (ଏ) ପଥ ଅତିକ୍ରମ  ଶ୍ରେୟଙ୍କର ଏ ଭୂମିକା ଯଦିବା ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ସ୍ୱଳ୍ପ  ଅନନ୍ୟ, ଅତୁଳନୀୟ ନିଷ୍ଠା, ତ୍ୟାଗ, ପ୍ରେମ</p>	<p>॥୪॥</p>	<p>ଅଛି ମାତାର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଏ ନିଷ୍ଠା ଯିବନି ବ୍ୟର୍ଥ  ଦୂରରୁ ଭାସି ଆସିବ ସେ ବାଣୀ ସତର୍କ  ସ୍ଥାନ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଚାପେ ଭ୍ରମ କେଉଁ ପଦକ୍ଷେପେ  ଦୋହଲି ଯିବ ବା ଯଦି ତା' ମନ କ୍ଷଣିକ</p>	<p>॥୧୦॥</p>
<p>ଅତିଳିପ୍ତ ଏ ଭୂମିକା ବିସ୍ମରଣ ଅସମ୍ଭବ  ଏ ଶରୀରରେ ଥିବାଯାଏ ଅକ୍ତିମ ନିଶ୍ୱାସ  ବାସ୍ତବ କଳ୍ପନାତୀତ ନିଜେ ତା ପ୍ରତିପାଳକ  ମାତାର ସମ୍ମୁଖେ ଆଜି ତା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ମଣିଷ</p>	<p>॥୫॥</p>	<p>ଶାରିରୀକ ଉପସ୍ଥିତି ମାତା ପାଇଁ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା  ଦୃଷ୍ଟିର ଅନ୍ତରାଳେ ଚିନ୍ତା ବିସ୍ତାରିତ  ମନପ୍ରାଣ ତା' ଜତିତ ଦିବାନିଶି ସନ୍ତାନରେ  ବ୍ୟସ୍ତତା, ଉଦ୍‌ବିଗ୍ନତା ତା' ମାତୃସୁଲଭ</p>	<p>॥୧୧॥</p>
<p>ପକ୍ଷ ଆଶା ତା'ର ଶକ୍ତ ପରିପକ୍ୱ ତା' ବୟସ  ଜନ୍ମ ନୀତ ଛାଡିବାକୁ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ  ମାତା ମନେ ଶଙ୍କା ଆଜି ବିଜୁଳି ଏ ଘଟଘଟି  ଯୁଦ୍ଧିବାକୁ ଅଛି ତ ତା' ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ସାହସ</p>	<p>॥୬॥</p>	<p>ଜୀବନ ସଂଗ୍ରାମେ ଏକା କରିବ ନିଶ୍ଚିନ୍ତ ରକ୍ଷା  ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟର ଶୁଭଦୃଷ୍ଟି, କୃପା ଓ ଆଶୀର୍ଷ  କାଢିବନି ଆଶା ମୋର ସଯତ୍ନେ ସେ ମାତାପିତା  ଅମୂଲ୍ୟ ରକ୍ଷାକବଚ ଇଶ୍ୱର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ</p>	<p>॥୧୨॥</p>

ଝୀନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ ସେକ୍ସଭଲ୍, ଭରଦ୍ୱଜିଆରେ ରହନ୍ତି । ଲେଖାଲେଖି ସହିତ ବନ୍ଧୁମିଳନ ଓ କଳା ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର ବିଶେଷ ଆଗ୍ରହ । ଉପରୋକ୍ତ କବିତାଟି ସେ ନିଜ ସାନଝିଅ ଶ୍ରୀୟାର ହାଲସୁଲ୍ ଗାଳ୍ପସମ୍ପନ୍ନ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ରଚନା କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

# ଆଶାର ମରିଚିକା

ମିତାଲି ଦାସ

ଆମର ମାତୃଭୂମି ଓଡ଼ିଶା, ତାହାର ପ୍ରକୃତି ବହୁତ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଓ କମନୀୟ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାଟିର ଭିନ୍ନଭିନ୍ନ ମହକ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ମନକୁ ମୋହିନେଇଥାଏ । ପାହାଡ଼-ପର୍ବତ, ସମୁଦ୍ର-ଝରଣା, ବଣ-ଜଙ୍ଗଲରେ ଭରପୁର । କ’ଣ ବା ନାହିଁ ଆମର ଏହି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କୋଣରେ ପ୍ରକୃତିର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଭରପୁର ହୋଇ ରହିଅଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଲୋକମାନେ ବହୁତ ସ୍ନେହି, ସରଳ ଓ ଦୟାଳୁ ଅଟନ୍ତି । ବତମାନଙ୍କୁ ଭକ୍ତି ଓ ସାନମାନଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ନେହ-ମମତାରେ ହିଁ ପରିବାରଟି ବନ୍ଧା ହୋଇରହିଥାଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଲୋକମାନେ ବହୁ ଧର୍ମ ବିଶ୍ୱାସୀ ଓ ଠାକୁରପ୍ରେମୀ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କୋଣରେ ମନ୍ଦିର-ମଠ ଓ ସାଧୁସନ୍ଥଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ । ବିଶ୍ୱର ଅଧିକାରୀ ଦେବତା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ତ ଏଇଠି ହିଁ ବିରାଜିତ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ଭକ୍ତି ଓ ପ୍ରେମରେ ସ୍ୱୟଂ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥତ ଚିରଦିନପାଇଁ ବନ୍ଧାହୋଇ ରହିଛନ୍ତି । ବଡ଼ ଠାକୁର, ବଡ଼ ଦେଉଳ, ବଡ଼ଦାଣ୍ଡ, ବଡ଼ ଆନନ୍ଦବଜାର ଓ ପ୍ରସାଦ ଭିତରେ ମହାପ୍ରସାଦକୁ ଲୋକମାନେ ଭୁଲିବେ କେମିତି ? ବହୁପ୍ରକାର ଭାଷା ଓ ବହୁପ୍ରକାରର ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହି ପୁରୀ ଧର୍ମପୀଠରେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ସବୁଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ କଥା ହେଲା କାହାର ସୁଖ ହେଉ ବା ଦୁଃଖ ହେଉ, କେହି ନା କେହି ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ଠିଆହୋଇଯାଆନ୍ତି ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ । ଏମିତି ଦିନ ନ ଥିବ ଯେଉଁଦିନ କେହି କୁଣିଆ-ମୈତ୍ର କିମ୍ବା ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ସାଙ୍ଗ ଜଣେ କେହି ଘରକୁ ଆସି ନ ଥିବେ ବୋଲି । ଘରର କର୍ତ୍ତା ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲମନରେ ଅତିଥି ମାନଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ୱାଗତ କରି ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରନ୍ତି । ଆଗରୁ ଜଣେଇବା ଦରକାର ପଡ଼େନି ଯେ ଆମେ ତୁମ ଘରକୁ ଆସୁଛୁ କିମ୍ବା ଆସିବୁ ବୋଲି, ହଠାତ୍ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଯାଆନ୍ତି ଘରେ । ସେଥିରେ ଯେଉଁ ଆଦର ଯତ୍ନ ଓ ସ୍ନେହ ମମତା ମିଳେ ନ କହିଲେ ଭଲ । ଦିପହରରେ କେହି ଜଣେ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କେହି ରାଗନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ବରଂ ଭାବନ୍ତି ଭଗବାନ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ଘରକୁ ଅତିଥି ରୂପେ । ଘରେ ଯାହାଥାଏ ଖୁସିରେ ପରଶି ଦିଅନ୍ତି ଅତିଥି ମାନଙ୍କୁ ନଚେତ୍ କିଛି ରାନ୍ଧିଦିଅନ୍ତି ସ୍ନେହର ସହିତ । କୌଣସି କାରଣରୁ ରନ୍ଧାରକ୍ଷି ହୋଇନପାରିଲେ ଚା’କପେ ଓ ଜଳଖିଆ ଦେଇ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରିଥାନ୍ତି ଅତିଥିଙ୍କୁ । ଆଉ ପୁନେଇପର୍ବ, ଯାନିଯାତ୍ରା ଓ



ବାହାପର୍ବରେ ଲୋକଙ୍କଘର ପୁରିଉଠେ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଉଲ୍ଲାସରେ । ଆଗପରି ଆଜିକାଲି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏତେସବୁ ନାହିଁ, ଧିରେଧିରେ ଏହା କମିଆସିଲାଣି । ଆଜିକାଲିର ଲୋକମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପାଞ୍ଚତ୍ୟ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ବିଦେଶ ପ୍ରତି ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ମୋର ମନେଅଛି ଆମେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଛୋଟପିଲା ଥିଲୁ, ସେତେବେଳେ ଯଦି ଆମର ଭାଇ, ଭଉଣୀ କିମ୍ବା ବନ୍ଧୁବାନ୍ଧବ ଆସୁଥିଲେ ଘରକୁ, ଆମେମାନେ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିଲୁ । ଏମିତିକି କେହି ଯଦି ଦେଶ-ବିଦେଶରୁ କାହାରି ଘରକୁ କିଏ ଆସୁଥିଲେ, ସାଇ ପଡ଼ିଶାର ଲୋକମାନେ ଖୁସି ହୋଇ ସ୍ନେହ, ମମତାରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଡାକୁଥିଲେ । ପାଖରେ ବସିପଡ଼ି ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଭଲମନ୍ଦ ଓ ଦେଶ-ବିଦେଶ ବିଷୟରେ ଜାଣୁଥିଲେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ସେଠାକାର ହାବଭାବ, ଚାଲିଚଳନ, ଖାଦ୍ୟପାନିୟ ଓ ବେଶପୋଷାକ ବିଷୟରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବୁଝୁଥିଲେ । ସବୁଠାରୁ ଆକର୍ଷଣର ବିଷୟ ଥିଲା ବିଦେଶର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ନେଇ । କଥାରେ କୁହନ୍ତି “ଦୂରପାହାଡ଼ ସୁନ୍ଦର” । ଏସବୁ ଶୁଣିଲା ପରେ ଆଜିକାଲିର ନୂଆପିଢ଼ିଙ୍କ ମନରେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଆସେ ବିଦେଶ ଯିବାପାଇଁ । ଯାହାକୁ ଏସବୁର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳେ କେହି ଏହାକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିବା ପାଇଁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ କହିବାକୁଗଲେ ବିଦେଶର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ମନକୁ ମୋହିଥାଏ । ନିର୍ମଳ ପାଣି ପବନ, ସୁନ୍ଦ ପରିବେଶ କାହାକୁ ବା ଭଲ ନଲାଗେ ? ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ଅଙ୍ଗାଳିକା, କାଚଘର, ସୁନ୍ଦର ସୁନ୍ଦର ବନ୍ଧୁଲୁ ଓ ଘର ଆଗରେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଲନ୍ ଏସବୁ ବହୁ ମନଲୋଭାଣିଆ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅନେକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ସୁବିଧା ଓ ସୁଯୋଗ ରହିଛି ନିଜକୁ ଗଢ଼ିତୋଳିବାକୁ । ରାସ୍ତା ଘାଟର ନିତି ନିୟମ ଅତି ସୁଚାଳିତ । ନିୟମ ଭଲଘନ କଲେ ଲୋକମାନେ ଦଣ୍ଡିତ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଦୋଷୀକୁ ଦଣ୍ଡ ଦେବାରେ ବିଳମ୍ବ ନହେବା ଯୋଗୁ ଲୋକେ ନିୟମ ଭଲଘନ କରିବାକୁ ଭୟପାଆନ୍ତି । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସବୁ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ନିୟମ କାନୁନ୍ ମାନି ଚଳିବାକୁ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ବିଦେଶରେ ଆମ ଦେଶ ଭଳିଆ ପ୍ରିୟାପ୍ରୀତି ତୋଷଣ ଏବଂ ଲାଞ୍ଜନେବା ପ୍ରକୃତି ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ । ଏଠାରେ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ସଜୋଟ ନୀତି ଓ ସତ କହିବାର ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତି ବହୁତ ପ୍ରଶଂସନୀୟ । ଶିକ୍ଷାପ୍ରଣାଳୀ ଅତି ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟୀର ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ବହୁ

ସ୍ୱନାମଧେୟ ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ନୋବେଲ ପୁରସ୍କାର ବିଜୟୀ ହୋଇପାରିଛନ୍ତି ।

ଆଜି ଆମେ ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍‌ପାରହୋଇ ବିଦେଶରେ ରହିଛୁ । ଆମମାନଙ୍କ ବାପା'ମା ଯେତିକି ଖୁସି ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି, ସେତିକି ଦୁଃଖ ମଧ୍ୟ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ପିଲାମାନେ ବିଦେଶକୁ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ଖୁସି ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଓ ଦୂରେଇ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ଦୁଃଖ କରନ୍ତି । ଗାଁ-ଗହଳିର ଲୋକମାନେ ଏହାଶୁଣିଲେ ବଡ଼ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ଏହା ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ କଥା । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଏବେବି ମନରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଆସେ ଯେ ଉତ୍ତାଜାହାଜରେ ବସିଲେ ତର ଲାଗେନାହିଁ ? କେତେ ସମୟ ଲାଗେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ପାଇଁ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଏବେ ବି ଭାରତରେ ଯେ କେହି ଶୁଣନ୍ତି ଯଦି କେହି ବିଦେଶରୁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି, ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ ଖୁସି ଦେଖାଯାଏ । କେଉଁ କାରଣ ପାଇଁ ସେମାନେ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି, ତାହା ସଠିକ୍ ଜଣାନାହିଁ । ଭାରତର ଯେକୌଣସି କୋଣର ଲୋକମାନେ ଏହାଶୁଣିଲେ ବୋଧହୁଏ ଭାବନ୍ତି ଯେ ଧନୀଲୋକ କିମ୍ବା ବିଜ୍ଞ ଲୋକ ହୋଇଥିବେ ସେମାନେ । ଆଜି କାଲି ଯେମିତି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକ କିମ୍ବା ଭାରତୀୟମାନେ ବିଦେଶ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି କିମ୍ବା ବିଦେଶରେ ଯେତିକି ରହିଲେଣି, ସେମିତି ତିରିଶ ବର୍ଷ କିମ୍ବା ଚାଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ନ ଥିଲା । ଆମର ଜେଜେବାପା କିମ୍ବା ଜେଜେବାପାଙ୍କର ବାପା ଯଦି ବଞ୍ଚିଥାଆନ୍ତେ ଆଜିକାଲି ଦୁନିଆର ଉନ୍ନତିକୁ ଦେଖି ହୁଏତଃ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଥାଆନ୍ତେ ନଚେତ୍ ଦୁଃଖ କରିଥାଆନ୍ତେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହୋଇଥାଆନ୍ତେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଯେ ଦେଶ, ଦୁନିୟା ଏମିତିକି ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ହାବଭାବର ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନକୁ ଦେଖି । ସେମାନେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେବାର କଥା ମଧ୍ୟ, ଏଥିରେ ବା ଭାବିବାର କଣ ଅଛି । ତାଙ୍କ ସମୟରେ ବିଦେଶ ଯାତ୍ରା କରିବା ଏକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ବିଷୟ ଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏକବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ବିଦେଶ ଯାତ୍ରା ଏକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ବିଷୟ ନୁହେଁ ଏହା ଏକ 'ଜ୍ଞାତସ'ର ଚିହ୍ନ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ସେତେବେଳେ ବିଦେଶଯାତ୍ରା କରିବାକୁ ହେଲେ ବହୁତ କିଛି ଅସୁବିଧାର ସମ୍ମୁଖିନ ହେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ୁଥିଲା । ତାପରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପରିବାର ଓ ଗାଁ-ଗହଳିରେ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚାର ବିଷୟ ହେଉଥିଲା । ପ୍ରଥମତଃ ଉତ୍ତାଜାହାଜରେ ଯିବାର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ନଥିଲା ଓ ପାଣିଜାହାଜରେ ମାସମାସ ଲାଗିଯାଉଥିଲା ବିଦେଶରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ପାଇଁ । ବାପା'ମା ମାନଙ୍କର ସବୁଠାରୁ ଚିନ୍ତାର ବିଷୟ ଥିଲା ଯେ ପିଲାମାନେ ବିଦେଶ ଗଲାପରେ କାଳେ ଗୋରୁ ମାଂସ ଖାଇବେ (ଯାହା କି ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମରେ ନାହିଁ) ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ଧର୍ମରେ ବାହାହୋଇ ଜାତିରୁ ବାହା ହୋଇଯିବେ । ତା ସହିତ ବଂଶର ନାମ ମଧ୍ୟ ବଦନାମ କରାଇବେ । ଏମିତିକି ଯଦି କେବେ ବୟସ୍କଲୋକଙ୍କର ଦେହ ଖରାପ ହେଲା ହୁଏତଃ ଏତେଦୂରରୁ ଠିକ୍ ସମୟରେ

ଆସିପାରିବା ଅସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିବ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ସେ ସମୟର ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ, ଏମିତି କେତେ କାରଣରୁ ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ବିଦେଶକୁ ଯିବା ସମ୍ଭବପର ହେଉ ନଥିଲା ।

ଆଜିକାଲି ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିଦେଶ ଯିବାପାଇଁ ଭାବିବାକୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ମିନିଟ୍ ମଧ୍ୟ ଲାଗୁନାହିଁ । ଉତ୍ତାଜାହାଜରେ ଦୁନିଆର ଯେକୌଣସି ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଦିନେ, ଦୁଇଦିନ ଭିତରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଯାଉଛନ୍ତି । ଆଉ ରହିଲା ଟଙ୍କାପଇସା କଥା, ବାପା'ମା ନ ଦେଇପାରିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କରୁ କରଜ ନେଇ ବିଦେଶ ଯିବାର ଆଜିକାଲି କୌଣସି ଅସୁବିଧା ନାହିଁ । ରଣ କରି ଜୀବନକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବାରେ କିଛି ଯାଏ ଆସେ ନାହିଁ । ଆଜିକାଲି ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ତାର ସୁବିଧା ଓ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସୁବିଧା ପାଇଁ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରକାର କରଜ କାର୍ଡ ର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଛି । କଥାରେ ଅଛି "ରଣ କୃତ୍ତା ଯୁତ୍ତଂ ପିବେତ୍ ଯାବତ୍ ଯିବେତ୍ ସୁଖଂ ଭବେତ୍" । ସବୁକିଛି ଭୁଲି ଆଗେଇବାକୁ ହୁଏ । ବାପା'ମା, ଭାଇଭଉଣୀ, ଦେଶବାସୀ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆଗକୁ ଚାଲିଯିବାକୁ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କିଛି ଖରାପ ଲାଗେନାହିଁ । ଯଦି କେହି କେମିତି ମନାକରନ୍ତି ଯିବାପାଇଁ, ତେବେ କୁହନ୍ତି ଯେ ଆମେ କ'ଣ ସବୁଦିନେ ରହିବାକୁ ଯାଉଛୁ, କିଛି ବର୍ଷ ରହିଲାପରେ ଆମେ ପୁଣି ଫେରିଆସିବୁ । ବାପା'ମା ଭାବନ୍ତି ପିଲାମାନେ ଆମଠାରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି, କିନ୍ତୁ ପିଲାମାନେ ଭାବନ୍ତି ଏମିତି ସୁଯୋଗ କେହି କଣ ଛାଡ଼େ ! କିଛି ପାଇବାକୁ ହେଲେ କିଛି ହରାଇବାକୁ ହିଁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଆଉ ରହିଲା ମନେପକାଇବା କଥା, ଏତେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତଜୀବନ ଭିତରେ କାହାକୁ ବା ସମୟଅଛି ? ଅନାବିଳ ମ୍ନେହ ମମତାକୁ ପଛରେ ପକାଇ ଆମେମାନେ ଚାଲିଆସିଛୁ ଏଠାକୁ କିଛି ଆର୍ଥିକ ଓ ବାହ୍ୟିକ ରୂପସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ମୁଗ୍ଧ ହୋଇ । ଏହି ବାହ୍ୟିକ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସ୍ୱାଧିନତା ବାନ୍ଧିରଖିଛି ଆମମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓ ଆମ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଚିରଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଏହି ବିଦେଶରେ ।

ଆମେମାନେ କେବେ ବି କୌଣସି ଜିନିଷରେ ତୃପ୍ତ ହୋଇନାହୁଁ । ସବୁ ପାଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ନ ହୋଇ ପୁଣି ଆହୁରି ପାଇବା ଆଶାରେ ଆଗକୁ ଚାଲିଥାଉ ପଥ ସରିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । ଆଶାର ମରିଚିକା ପଛରେ ଧାଇଁଥାଉ । ସବୁକିଛି ଭୁଲି ବିଦେଶକୁ ଆସି ରହିଯାଉ ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ । ବାପା'ମାଙ୍କ ପରି ନିସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର ଲୋକ ଆଉ କେହି ମିଳିବେ ନାହିଁ ଏ ଦୁନିଆରେ । ବିନା ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ଦେଖି ସଂସାର ତ୍ୟାଗ କରୁଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କେବେ ବି ଅଭିଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ । ସେମାନେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର କେବେ ବି ଦୋଷ ଧରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ବରଂ ସବୁବେଳେ କୁହନ୍ତି ଯେ ଆମର ପିଲାମାନେ ଯେଉଁଠି ଥାଆନ୍ତୁ ଭଲରେ ଥାଆନ୍ତୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପିଲାମାନେ ସବୁବେଳେ

ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥପର ହୋଇ ନିଜର ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥ ଦେଖି ଚାଲିଥାଆନ୍ତି । ପିଲା ବଡ଼ ହୋଇଗଲା ପରେ ବାପା'ମାଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ କିଛି ପାଇବାର ଆଶା ନ ଥାଏ । ଆଉ କ'ଣ ପାଇଁ ବା ପଚାରିବେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ । ସତରେ କେତେ ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥପର ଆମର ଏହି ପିଢ଼ି । ସବୁପାଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆହୁରି ପାଇବାପାଇଁ ଆଶା । ବହୁତ କାରଣରୁ ଆମେମାନେ ଆଜି ବିଦେଶକୁ ଆସିଅଛୁ । ସେହିସବୁ କାରଣ ପୁରା ହୋଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆମେ କଣ ଫେରିପାରୁଛୁ ଆମ ନିଜ ଦେଶକୁ ? ଦେଶ ଛାଡ଼ି ବିଦେଶରେ ପାଦ ଦେଇ ଆମେ ଭୁଲି ଯାଇଛୁ ଆମର ପରିବାରକୁ, ପରିବାରର ସ୍ନେହ-ମମତାକୁ, ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ, ଖାଦ୍ୟ-ପାନୀୟକୁ ଓ ବେଶ-ପୋଷାକକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭଳି ସବୁକିଛି ମିଳିବନି ତ ଏହିଠାରେ । ଯେତେ ଦୂରରେ ରହିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପର୍ବ-ପର୍ବାଣିକୁ କିଏ ବା ଭୁଲିବ? ବାରମାସରେ ତେରପର୍ବ ପାଳନ ନ କଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କିଛିଟା ଆମେମାନେ ପାଳନ କରିଥାଉ ଏହି ବିଦେଶରେ । ଅଳ୍ପ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମିଳିମିଶି ରହିଛନ୍ତି ବିଦେଶରେ, ଯେମିତି ଗୋଟିଏ ଛୋଟ ପରିବାରର ପରି । ଆମେ ଆମର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତିଠାରୁ କେତେ ଦୂରେଇ ଯାଉଛୁ ! ବେଳେବେଳେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ଓ ହାବଭାବକୁ ଦେଖି ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଲାଗେ । ପଛରୁ କହିବାକୁ ପଡେ ଯେ ବଡ଼ମାନଙ୍କୁ ନମସ୍କାର ବା ପ୍ରଣାମ କରିବାକୁ । ସେମାନେ ଯେଉଁ ଦେଶରେ ରହିଲେ ତାହାରି ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ଆପଣାର କରିନେଲେ । ଏଠାରେ ଗୁରୁଜନ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ, ବାପାମା' ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ କିମ୍ବା ଶିକ୍ଷକ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ନାଁ ଧରି ଡାକନ୍ତି । ଆମ ପିଲାମାନେ ଏସବୁ ଦେଖିଲା ପରେ, ତାଙ୍କୁ ଲାଜ ଲାଗେ ମଉସା, ମାଉସି, ଅପା ଓ ଭାଇ ଡାକିବା ପାଇଁ । ଏଥିରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର କିଛି ଭୁଲନାହିଁ, ଅଜାଣତରେ ଆମେମାନେ ହିଁ ଦାୟୀ । ଯେହେତୁ ଆମର ପିଲାମାନେ ଏହିଠାରେ ବଢ଼ୁଛନ୍ତି ବା ବଢ଼ିବେ ଆମେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏଠିକାର ପରିବେଶ ସହିତ ତାଳ ଦେଇ ବଢ଼ିବା ପାଇଁ ଶିକ୍ଷାଦେବା ଆମର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ । ତା ସହିତ ଆମେ ଆମ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆମର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବିଷୟରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷାଦେବା ଉଚିତ୍ ।

ସତରେ ଆମେମାନେ କ'ଣ ଖୁସି ଓ ଶାନ୍ତିରେ ଅଛୁ ନା ପ୍ରହସନ କରୁଛୁ ? ତେବେ ଆମେ ଦେଶ ଛାଡ଼ି ବିଦେଶ ଆସିଛୁ

କାହିଁକି ? ବାହ୍ୟଜଗତର ଚାକଚକ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଗ୍ରାସ କରୁଛି, ଆମେ ବା ସେଥିରୁ ବାଦଯିବୁ କେମିତି । ବିଦେଶରେ ଯେତିକି ଭଲ ସେତିକି ଖରାପ ମଧ୍ୟ ରହିଛି । କେହି ପଛରେ ରହି ଯିବାପାଇଁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସମାନ ହେବାକୁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଯେତେ କଷ୍ଟ ପଡୁଛି ପଡୁ ପଛେ, ଆମକୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ତାଳ ଦେଇ ଚାଲିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । କଥାରେ ଅଛି, “ସ୍ଵାଧୀନ ହେଲେ ହେଁ ସ୍ଵେଚ୍ଛାଧୀନ ନୁହଁ” । ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତାର ଯେଉଁ ମଜା ତାହା ସମସ୍ତେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି । କାହାକୁ ବା ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ଭଲ ନ ଲାଗେ । ଆମର ପିଲାମାନେ ପଛେ ଆମକୁ ସମ୍ମାନ ନ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ, ଆମ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଧାର ନଧରନ୍ତୁ, ସେଥିରେ ମଧ୍ୟ କିଛି ଯାଏ ଆସେ ନାହିଁ । ଯଦି କେବେ ମନଦୁଃଖ ହୁଏ ତେବେ ମନକୁ ବୁଝାଇବାକୁ ପଡେ ଯେ “ଯେ ଦେଶେ ଯାଇ ସେ ଫଳ ଖାଇ” । ଖରାଦିନେ ଦାଣ୍ଡରୁ ବାଡ଼ିପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଲନମୋର କରି ଓ ଶୁଖିଲାପତ୍ର ସଫା କରି କରି ଅଳ୍ପ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କିଛି ଭାବିବାର ନାହିଁ । କାରଣ ଆମେ ବିଦେଶରେ ପ୍ରକୃତିର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଅଛୁ । ଏତିକିରେ ସବୁକିଛି ସରୁନାହିଁ । ଶୀତଦିନର କଥା ତ ନ କହିଲେ ଭଲ, ଅଣ୍ଟାରେ ବରଫ ସଫା କରିକରି ଦୁନିଆରୁ ଚାଲିଗଲେ ଉ ମଧ୍ୟ କିଛି କହିବାର ନାହିଁ କାରଣ ଆମେ ପ୍ରକୃତିକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରି ସ୍ଵଦେହରେ ସ୍ଵର୍ଗାରୋହଣ କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଛୁ । ବାଃ ବାଃ କି ବିଚିତ୍ର ଏ ବିଦେଶ, ଯାହା କଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଚିତ୍ର ଓ ନୂଆ ଭଳି ଲାଗେ । ବିଦେଶର ଏହିସବୁ କଥା ଆମ ଦେଶରେ ବା କେଉଁଠିମିଳିବ ! ସବୁବେଳେ ଦୂର ପାହୁଡ଼ ସୁନ୍ଦର । ଓଡ଼ିଶାଭିତରେ ଏସବୁ ନଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମାଟିର ଯେଉଁ ମହକ ଓ ଅନାବିଳ ସ୍ନେହମମତା କେଉଁଠି ବା ମିଳିବ ! ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାଟି ତୁ ଯେତେଦୂରରେ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତୋତେ ଆମର ଶତ ଜୁହାର । ନିଜ ଦେଶରେ ନିଜ ଲୋକଙ୍କପାଖରେ ନିଜ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ନେଇ ନିଜ ପରିବେଶର ଜଳବାୟୁରେ ଆମେ ହୁଏତ ବହୁତ ସୁଖ, ଶାନ୍ତିରେ ରହିପାରନ୍ତେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମେ ତାହା କରିପାରୁନାହିଁ, କାରଣ ଆମକୁ ସବୁକିଛି ଦରକାର । ଆମେ ମରୁଭୂମିର ତୃଷାର୍ଥ ପଥିକ ପରି ମରିଚିକା ପଛରେ ଧାଉଁଅଛୁ, ସବୁକିଛି ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ । କି ବିଚିତ୍ର ଏହି ଆଶାର ମରିଚିକା?

ମୁଁ ମୋର ସ୍ଵାମୀ ସ୍ମରଣ ଦାସ, ଝିଅ ଚେତନା, ପୁଅ ସାର୍ଥକ ସହିତ ବାମ୍ଫଟନ୍‌ରେ ରୁହେ । ରୋଷେଇ , ଗାଡ଼େନିଙ୍ଗ ଓ ଚିତ୍ର ଆଙ୍କିବାରେ ଆଗ୍ରହ ରଖେ ।

# ଯିବି ଯେ ନିଝୟ ଯିବି

ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର

ଯିବି ଯେ, ନିଝୟ ଯିବି,  
ପାଖେଇ ଆସିଲାଣି ବେଳ,  
ସରି ଆସିଲାଣି ଖେଳ,  
ଚିକିଏ ଖରା ନଇଁ ନଇଁ ଆସୁ,  
ସଞ୍ଜ ପାଖେଇ ପାଖେଇ ଆସୁ,  
ବେଳ ବୁଡୁ ବୁଡୁ ଯିବି  
ତଖା ଘାଟ ଛାଡ଼ିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ  
ଏ ଘଟ ଛାଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଯାଇଥିବି,  
କାନ୍ଦ ବୋବାଳି ପଡ଼ିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ମୁଁ ନଥିବି,  
ନିଝୟ ଚାଲିଯାଇଥିବି ।

ଯିବି ଯେ, ନିଝୟ ଯିବି,  
ଜହ୍ନ ଉଇଁବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ,  
ତାରାମାନେ ଆକାଶରେ ମିଟି ମିଟି କଲା ପୂର୍ବରୁ,  
ଦିଅଁଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ସଞ୍ଜ ସଳିତା ଲାଗିଲା ପୂର୍ବରୁ,  
ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଆଳତି, ଘଣ୍ଟା, ଶଙ୍ଖ ବାଜିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ,  
ମୁଁ କଥା ଦେଉଛି, ମୁଁ ନଥିବି,  
ଆସିଛି ଯେହେତୁ ନିଝୟ ଯିବି  
ଏ ଯାଯାବର ଜୀବନର ସମାପ୍ତି ଘଟାଇ  
ନିଝୟ ଚାଲି ଯାଇଥିବି ।

ଯିବି ଯେ, ଚିକିଏ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କର,  
କଥା ଦେଉଛି ନିଝୟ ଯିବି,  
ଆମ ହସ୍ତପିଟାଲୁର ସାତ ନମ୍ବର ବେତ୍ରେ ଶୋଇଥିବା,  
ଏଡ଼୍ ସ୍ ରୋଗରେ ଭୋଗୁଥିବା,  
ନିରୀହା ମା'ଟିକୁ ଦେଖିକରି ଯିବି,  
ତା' ପାଖରେ ହାମୁଡେଇ ପଡ଼ିଥିବା,  
ମା' ମା' କହି କାନ୍ଦୁଥିବା  
ଶିଶୁଟିକୁ ବୋଧକରି ଯିବି,  
ମୁହଁ ଶୁଖେଇ ବସିଥିବା,  
କପାଳରେ ହାତରଖି ଝରକାଫାଙ୍କେ ଚାହିଁଥିବା  
ଚିନ୍ତାମଗ୍ନ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମାଟିର ପିଠି ଚିକେ ଆଉଁସି ଦେଇଯିବି,  
ନର୍ସଟିକୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଇ ଯିବି ।

ଯିବି ଯେ, ନିଝୟ ଯିବି,  
ଟାପିକ୍ ଲାଇଟ୍ ପାଖରେ, ଦିନ ଦି'ଟାରେ  
ହଞ୍ଜି ଓ ଜବ୍‌ଲେସ୍ ଲେଖା  
କାର୍ଡବୋର୍ଡ ସାଇନଟିଏ ଧରି,  
ମୁହଁ ଶୁଖେଇ ବୁଲୁଥିବା,  
ଲମ୍ବା ଦାଢ଼ି ଛାଡ଼ିଥିବା,  
ଛୋଟେଇ ଛୋଟେଇ ଚାଲୁଥିବା,  
ଭିକାରୀ ଥାଳରେ କିଛି ଖୁରୁରା ପଇସା ପକେଇ ଯିବି,  
ଯିବାପାଇଁତ ଆସିଛି,  
ଆସିଥିଲି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ହସେଇ,  
ଯିବି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ କରେଇ ।

ଯିବି ଯେ, ନିଝୟ ଯିବି,  
ଚିକିଏ ଅବସ୍ଥା ଶାନ୍ତ ପଡ଼ିଯାଉ,  
ଗୋଳା ବାରୁଦ ଗନ୍ଧ ଚାଲିଯାଉ,  
ଭୟ, ଭୀତି କମିଯାଉ,  
ସୈନିକମାନେ ଫେରିଆସନ୍ତୁ  
ଇରାକ୍ ଓ ଆଫଗାନିସ୍ତାନରୁ ନିରାପଦରେ,  
ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ହେଇଯାଉ ସୁରୁଖୁରୁରେ,  
ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମାନ, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ସନ୍ତାନ, ସନ୍ତତି ହରାଇଥିବା,  
ନିରୋଳାରେ ବସି ଲୁହଢାଳୁଥିବା ବନ୍ଧୁମାନଙ୍କୁ  
ଚିକିଏ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା ବାଣୀ ଶୁଣେଇଦେଇ ଯିବି,  
ବାପା, ମା'ଙ୍କୁ ହରାଇଥିବା ଓ ଅନାଥ ଆଶ୍ରମରେ  
ବଢୁଥିବା ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ କ୍ଷଣକପାଇଁ ହସେଇଦେଇ ଯିବି,  
କ୍ଷତ ବିକ୍ଷତ ବିକଳାଙ୍ଗ ସୈନିକମାନଙ୍କୁ ସାଲୁଟ୍ ମାରି  
'ପ୍ରିନ୍ଟର୍ ଇଜ୍ ନଟ୍ ପ୍ରି' ଏତକ କହିଦେଇ ଯିବି ।

ଯିବି ଯେ, ନିଝୟ ଯିବି,  
ଝିମୁଲେଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ପ୍ୟାକେଜ୍ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ହେଇଯାଉ,  
ମଟ୍‌ଗେଜ୍ ଓ ଏନର୍ଜି କ୍ରାଇସିସ୍ ଥମିଯାଉ,  
ପେଟ୍ରୋଲ୍ ଦର କମିଯାଉ,  
ଦରଦାମ୍ ଖସିଯାଉ,  
ତଲାଉ ଦାମ୍ ବଢ଼ିଯାଉ; ଯିବି,  
ଜାତି, ଧର୍ମ, ବର୍ଣ୍ଣଗତ ଭେଦଭାବ ଚିକେ ଦୂରେଇଯାଉ,

ବୋରାକ ଓବାମା କି ହିଲାରୀ କିଣ୍ଟନ ଜଣେ କିଏ  
 ତେମୋକ୍ରାଟ ପ୍ରେସିଡେଣ୍ଟ ହାଇଲଟ୍ ହାଉସ୍କୁ ଆସିଯାଉ,  
 ହେଲ୍ଥ ଇନ୍‌ସୁରାନ୍ସ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ମିଳିଯାଉ,  
 ସୋସିଆଲ ସେକ୍ୟୁରିଟି ବଞ୍ଚିଯାଉ; ଯିବି ।

ଯିବି ଯେ, ନିଈୟ ଯିବି,  
 ଦୁଃଖ ସବୁ ସରିଯାଉ,  
 ଭୋକ ସବୁ ମରିଯାଉ,  
 ଅଭାବ ସବୁ ଦୂରେଇଯାଉ,  
 ପୁଅ, ଝିଅ ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କର ହାତକୁ ଦିହାତ ହେଇଯାଉ,  
 ପତ୍ନୀ ଓ ପରିବାରର ଆଶା ସବୁ ମେଣ୍ଟିଯାଉ ଯିବି ।  
 ଆଉ ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ କହିଦେଇଯିବି ମୋର କାରସାଦି  
 ଯୁବା ବୟସରେ ଦୁଇ ଗୋଟ ଛନ୍ଦି  
 ଗୋଟକୁ ଉପର ଓ ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ତଳକରି  
 କେମିତି ବରଗଛ ଓହ୍ଲରେ ଝୁଲିହୁଏ ?  
 ହୁଲି ତଙ୍ଗରେ କେମିତି ପୁଣ୍ଡଗର୍ଭା ବୈତରଣୀ ପାରହୁଏ ?  
 ଅକ୍ଷୟନିଗଳେ ସବୁ ଦମ୍ଭ କେମିତି ଆପେ ଆପେ ହଜିଯାଏ ?  
 ନିଜ ଉପରେ ଭରସା ସବୁ ତୁଟିଯାଏ ।

ଯିବି ଯେ, ନିଈୟ ଯିବି,  
 ଚିକିତ୍ସ ଯୋଗ୍ୟଧର,  
 ଆସିବା, ଯିବା, ଆସିବା ପରା  
 ଧରାବନ୍ଧା ଗତି ରୀତି ନିୟତିର,  
 ଫେରିଯିବି ସେଇ ମା' କୋଳକୁ  
 ଯିଏ ନଅମାସ ଗର୍ଭରେ ଧରିଥିଲା,  
 ଜରାୟୁର ଘନ ଅନ୍ଧକାର ଭିତରେ  
 ସହସ୍ର ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଆଲୋକ ଜାଳିଦେଇଥିଲା,  
 ପାଣିପିଣ୍ଡକୁ ବଞ୍ଚେଇ ରଖିଥିଲା,  
 ବିପଦ ଆପଦକୁ କାନି ଘୋଡେଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା,  
 ନିଜେ କଷ୍ଟ ଭୋଗି ସତରେ ହସିପାରୁଥିଲା,  
 ଜୀବନ ଥିଲାଯାଏ ଭଲପାଇଥିଲା,  
 ପାଳିଥିଲା, ପୋଷିଥିଲା, ଷତେବତ କରିଥିଲା  
 ମଣିଷଟେ ଭଳି ମଣିଷ ହେବାକୁ  
 ମୋ କାନରେ ମହାମନ୍ତ୍ର ଦେଇଥିଲା,  
 ହଁ, ସେଇ ମା' କୋଳକୁ ଫେରିଯିବି  
 ଯେଉଁଠୁ ଆସିଛି, ସେଇଠିକୁ ଫେରିଯିବି  
 ନିଈୟ ଫେରିଯିବି ।

ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର, ମେରୀଲ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡ



# ଆମେରିକା ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରଦୂତ ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ପ୍ରଫେସର ସୋମନାଥ ମିଶ୍ର Sc. D (MIT)

୧୯୬୦ ମସିହାରେ ମୁଁ ଆମେରିକାର ବୃହତ୍ତର ବଙ୍ଗଳା ମହାନଗରୀ ଉପକଣ୍ଠସ୍ଥିତ କାମ୍ବ୍ରିଜ୍ ସହରରେ ଧାତୁବିଦ୍ୟାରେ ଉଚ୍ଚତର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଓ ଗବେଷଣା କରୁଥାଏ । ଏହି ସହରରେ ଦୁଇଟି ବିଶ୍ୱବିଖ୍ୟାତ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ, ଯଥା-ମାସାଚୁସେଟ୍ସ୍ ଇନ୍‌ଷ୍ଟିଚ୍ୟୁଟ୍ ଅଫ୍ ଟେକ୍ନୋଲୋଜି (MIT) ଏବଂ ହାର୍ଭାର୍ଡ୍ (Harvard) ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ । ମୁଁ MIT ର ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ମାଇକେଲ ବେଭର୍ଲ୍ ଡବ୍ଲ୍ୟୁ. ଡବ୍ଲ୍ୟୁ. ଡବ୍ଲ୍ୟୁ. ଉପାଧି ପାଇଁ ଗବେଷଣା କରୁଥାଏ ।

ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଆମେରିକାରେ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରପତି ନିର୍ବାଚନ ପ୍ରଚାର ଜୋର୍‌ସୋରରେ ଚାଲୁଥାଏ । ଡେମୋକ୍ରାଟିକ୍ ଦଳର ଜନ୍ ଏଫ କେନେଡି ଓ ରିପବ୍ଲିକାନ୍ ଦଳର ରିଚାର୍ଡ୍ ନିକ୍ସନ୍ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରତିଦ୍ୱନ୍ଦ୍ୱିତା ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ଆମେ ଭାରତୀୟ ଛାତ୍ରମାନେ କେନେଡିଙ୍କ ସପକ୍ଷରେ ଥାଉ । ସେ ଟେଲିଭିଜନ୍ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ନିକ୍ସନ୍‌ଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ବିତର୍କରେ ଭାରତ ସପକ୍ଷରେ ଯୁକ୍ତି ବାଢୁଥାନ୍ତି । କେନେଡିଙ୍କ ମତରେ ଭାରତ ସର୍ବବୃହତ୍ ଜନସଂଖ୍ୟାବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ର, ଏବଂ ଆମେରିକା ଭାରତକୁ ଯୋସ୍ତାହନ ଦେବା ଉଚିତ୍ ।

ନିର୍ବାଚନ ଫଳ ଘୋଷଣା ହେଲା । କେନେଡି ବହୁମତରେ ବିଜୟଲାଭ କରି ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରପତି ହେଲେ । କେନେଡି ପରିବାର ମାସାଚୁସେଟ୍ସ୍ ପ୍ରଦେଶ ସଂଲଗ୍ନ ଆମେରିକାର ଉତ୍ତର-ପୂର୍ବ ନିଉ-ଇଂଲଣ୍ଡ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଏକ ସଂଭ୍ରାନ୍ତ ବଂଶ । ଆମେ ଭାରତୀୟ ଛାତ୍ରଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ କେନେଡିଙ୍କ ବିଜୟରେ ଉତ୍ସୁକ ହୋଇଗଲୁ । ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରପତି ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ସମ୍ଭାଳିବା ପରେ କେନେଡି ତାଙ୍କର ସଚିବ ଓ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରଦୂତ ପଦବୀ ପାଇଁ ଚୟନ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟା ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେ । ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପଦବୀରେ ହାର୍ଭାର୍ଡ୍ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ପ୍ରଫେସରମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅବସ୍ଥାପିତ କରାଗଲା । ଏହା ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ, କାରଣ କେନେଡି ହାର୍ଭାର୍ଡ୍ ପୁରାତନ ଛାତ୍ର, ଓ ତାଙ୍କର ମାତୃତୁଲ୍ୟ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟକୁ ବିଶେଷ ଭଲ ପାଉଥିଲେ ।

୧୯୬୧ ମସିହା ପ୍ରାରମ୍ଭରେ ଭାରତକୁ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରଦୂତ ରୂପେ ହାର୍ଭାର୍ଡ୍ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ବିଖ୍ୟାତ ଅର୍ଥନୀତିଜ୍ଞ ପ୍ରଫେସର ଜନ୍ କେନେଥ୍ ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ଙ୍କ ମନୋନୀତ କରାଗଲା । ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ ବିଶ୍ୱଅର୍ଥନୀତିର ଉଦାରବାଦ ଓ ବିକାଶବାଦ

ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରାର ପ୍ରମୁଖ ପ୍ରବର୍ତ୍ତକ ଥିଲେ । ପୂର୍ବତନ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରପତି ରୁଜଭେଲ୍ ଓ ଟ୍ରୁମାନ୍ଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ମନୋନୀତ ହୋଇ ସେ ବିଭିନ୍ନସଚିବ ଓ କୂଟନୀତିଜ୍ଞ ପଦବୀ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ସୁଚାରୁରୂପେ ସମ୍ପାଦନ କରିଥିଲେ । ସେ ଜଣେ ସୁଲେଖକ: ଦୁଇଟି ଉପନ୍ୟାସ, ଟ୍ରାଗିପୁସ୍ତକ, ଏକହଜାରରୁ ଅଧିକ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧର ରଚୟିତା । ଅର୍ଥନୀତି ପରିଷଦର ସଭାପତି, ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରପତିଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣପଦକର ଦୁଇଥର ବିଜେତା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ବିବିଧ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧି ଲାଭ କରିଥିଲେ । କାମ୍ବ୍ରିଜ୍-ବଙ୍ଗଳା ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଭାରତୀୟ ଛାତ୍ରପରିଷଦ, ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ଙ୍କୁ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଇବାକୁ ଏକ ସମ୍ବର୍ଦ୍ଧନା ସଭାର ଆୟୋଜନ କଲା । ହାର୍ଭାର୍ଡ୍ ଛାତ୍ରପରିଷଦ ହଲ୍‌ରେ ଏହି ସଭା ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହେଲା ।

ଆମ ଛାତ୍ରପରିଷଦର ସଭାପତି ଶ୍ରୀନିବାସନ୍, ଏକ ଭବ୍ୟ ପରିବେଶରେ, ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ଙ୍କୁ ଉତ୍ସୁକ ପ୍ରଶଂସା କଲେ । ସର୍ବପୁରାତନ ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ର ଆମେରିକା ଓ ସର୍ବବୃହତ ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ର ଭାରତ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟିର ସୁସଂପର୍କ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ହେବ, ଏହି ଆଶା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତ କଲେ । ଏହି ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗରେ କହିଲେ, “ମିଷ୍ଟର ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍, ଆପଣ ଏବଂ ସାରା ପୃଥିବୀ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ଯେ ଭାରତ ନିକଟ ଅତୀତରେ ଉପନିବେଶ ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳରୁ ମୁକ୍ତିଲାଭ କରି ଏକ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ର ପଦ୍ଧତିରେ ପାଦ ରଖିଛି । ଏକ କୃଷିପ୍ରଧାନ ଅର୍ଥନୀତିରୁ ଏକ ଶିଳ୍ପଭିତ୍ତିକ ଅର୍ଥନୀତି ସମୀକରଣର ଅନୁଶୀଳନ କରୁଅଛି । ଏଇ ଘଟିତ୍ୟ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଆମେରିକାର ସହଯୋଗ, ସହାନୁଭୂତି ଓ ମାର୍ଗଦର୍ଶନ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଆପଣଙ୍କପରି ପୂର୍ବରୁ ବିଖ୍ୟାତ ଅର୍ଥନୀତିଜ୍ଞ ଓ ଜନନାୟକ, ଏହି ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟାରେ ଏକ ବଳିଷ୍ଠ ଭୂମିକା ନେବେ- ଏହା ଆମର କାମନା ଓ ଅଭିଳାଷ ।

ଏହି କୃଷିଭିତ୍ତିକ ଅର୍ଥନୀତିରୁ ଶିଳ୍ପଭିତ୍ତିକ ଅର୍ଥନୀତିକୁ ଅଭ୍ୟୁତ୍ଥାନ ବିଷୟରେ ସମ୍ୟକ ବୁଝାଇବାପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରୀନିବାସନ୍ କହିଲେ, ‘ ମିଷ୍ଟର ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍, ଭାରତ ଏହି ଅର୍ଥନୀତିକ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନରେ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରୋଦ୍ୟୋଗ ଉପରେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦେଉଛି, ଯେଉଁଠା ଆମେରିକା ଓ ବିଟେନ୍ ପରି ପାଶ୍ଚାତ୍ୟ ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ରମାନେ ସହଜରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ, କାରଣ ସେମାନେ ଘରୋଇ ଉଦ୍ୟୋଗରେ ବିଶ୍ୱା କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଭାରତର ଏହି ପ୍ରବର୍ତ୍ତନର ପ୍ରଥମ ପଞ୍ଚବାର୍ଷିକ ଯୋଜନା କାଳରେ କୃଷି ଉପରେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦିଆହୋଇଛି । ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ପଞ୍ଚବାର୍ଷିକ ଯୋଜନାରେ ଶିଳ୍ପର

ବିକାଶ ପାଇଁ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ସମ୍ବଳ ଘରୋଇ ଉଦ୍ୟୋଗ ଯୁଗେଇ ପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ ।’ ପ୍ରାଣ୍ଟଳ ଭାବରେ ବୁଝେଇବାକୁ ଶ୍ରୀନିବାସନ୍ କହିଚାଲିଲେ- ‘ମିଷ୍ଟର୍ ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍, ଭାରତ ଅଗଗତି ପାଇଁ ଶିଳ୍ପବିକାଶକୁ ଏକ ମେରୁଦଣ୍ଡ ହିସାବରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ୱରୂପ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ଭାରତର ପ୍ରଥମ ସମନ୍ୱିତ ଶିଳ୍ପ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରଦ୍ୟୋଗ ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନ ଇଣ୍ଡଷ୍ଟ୍ରି ପବ୍ଲିକ୍ ଓଡିଶା ପ୍ରଦେଶର ରାଉରକେଲାରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ହେଉଅଛି । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ପଞ୍ଜିନ ଜର୍ମାନୀଆମକୁ ବୈଷୟିକ ତଥା ଆର୍ଥିକ ସହାୟତା ଦେଉଅଛି ।’

ଶ୍ରୀନିବାସନ କହିଚାଲିଲେ- ‘ମିଷ୍ଟର୍ ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍, ଭାରତର ଏହି ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରୀୟ ଇଣ୍ଡଷ୍ଟ୍ରି ପବ୍ଲିକ୍ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମର ପୂର୍ବତନ ଉପନିବେଶ ଅଧିକାରୀ ବିଚେନର ଚକ୍ଷୁଶୁଳ ହୋଇଅଛି । ତାଙ୍କର ପୂର୍ବ ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଉଇଲିଂସନ୍ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚିଲ୍ ମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ୍ୟ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି, ‘ଆରେ ବାଃ ! ଭାରତ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରଦ୍ୟୋଗ ମାର୍ଗରେ ଏକ ଅଭିନବ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନେଉଛି, ଏହା ଯଦି ସାକାର ହୁଏ, ତାଙ୍କର ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରଦ୍ୟୋଗ-ତିଆରି ଇଣ୍ଡଷ୍ଟ୍ରି ପ୍ରଥମ ପାଉଣ୍ଡ ମୁଁ ଭକ୍ଷଣ କରିବି ।’

ସମ୍ବର୍ଦ୍ଧନାର ଉତ୍ତରରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ ଭାରତୀୟ ଛାତ୍ରଗୋଷ୍ଠୀକୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଇ କହିଲେ- ‘ଭାରତ ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ରର ଅଭ୍ୟୁଦୟରେ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ରୂପେ ସଫଳ ହେବ । ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରପତି କେନେଡି ଆଶା କରନ୍ତି ଯେ, ଭାରତର ଏହି ସାମଲ୍ୟ ସାରା ବିଶ୍ୱରେ ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ରର ପ୍ରସାରର ଏକ ପଥପ୍ରଦର୍ଶକ ହେବ । ଉପନିବେଶବାଦ ଏକ ଅସ୍ତଗାମୀ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଭାରତ ଶାନ୍ତିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ ଦ୍ୱାରା ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ହାସଲ କରି ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଉପନିବେଶଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ପ୍ରାପ୍ତିର ବାଟ ଖୋଲିଦେଇଛି; କିନ୍ତୁ କମ୍ୟୁନିଷ୍ଟବାଦୀ ଶକ୍ତିମାନେ ଏକ ନୂତନ ପ୍ରକାରର ଉପନିବେଶବାଦର ପ୍ରୟାସ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଭାରତର ଅନୁଶୀଳନାତ୍ମକ ପ୍ରୟାସର ସଫଳତା ପୃଥିବୀରେ ଗଣତନ୍ତ୍ରର ମୂଳଦୁଆ ଟାଣ କରିପାରିବ । ଭାରତର ପ୍ରୟାସ ଉପରେ ଆମର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ରହିଛି, ଏହାକୁ ସାମଲ୍ୟ ମଣ୍ଡିତ କରିବାକୁ ଆମେ ସବୁ ପ୍ରକାରର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସହାୟତା ଯୋଗାଇଦେବୁ ।’

ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ ତାଙ୍କର ଭାଷଣରେ ଇଷତ୍ ହାସ୍ୟରସ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ କରି କହିଲେ- ‘ଓଡିଶାର ରାଉରକେଲା ଇଣ୍ଡଷ୍ଟ୍ରି ପବ୍ଲିକ୍ ଇତିମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏକ ନିୟୁତ ଟନ ଇଣ୍ଡଷ୍ଟ୍ରି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରିବଣି, ମାତ୍ର ସାର୍ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚିଲ୍ ଏଥିରୁ ମାତ୍ର ଏକ ପାଉଣ୍ଡ ଇଣ୍ଡଷ୍ଟ୍ରି ଭକ୍ଷଣ କରିବାର ସଂକଳ୍ପ ପୁରଣ କରିପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ ?’ କରତାଳିରେ ହଲ୍ ଶବ୍ଦମୁଖରିତ ହେଲା । ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ ଭାଷଣର ପରିସମାପ୍ତିରେ ଭାରତୀୟମାନଙ୍କୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଇ କହିଲେ- ‘ଶ୍ରୀନିବାସନ୍

ମୋତେ ମିଷ୍ଟର୍ ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ ବୋଲି ସମ୍ବୋଧନକଲେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଁ କହିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ ଯେ କାଲିପକ୍ଷିଆ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ବର୍କଲି ଶାଖାରୁ ମୁଁ ଏକ ଡକ୍ଟରେଟ୍ ଉପାଧି ହାସଲ କରିଅଛି ।’

ସ୍ୱାଗତ ସମାରୋହ ପରେ ଏକ ଅନୌପଚାରିକ ଚା ଡୋଜିରେ ମୁଁ ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍‌ଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ ନିଜର ପରିଚୟ ଦେଇ କହିଲି- ‘ମୁଁ ସୋମନାଥ ମିଶ୍ର, MITର ପ୍ରଫେସର ମାଇକେଲ୍ ବେଭର୍‌ଙ୍କ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱାବଧାନରେ ଡକ୍ଟରେଟ୍ ଗବେଷଣା କରୁଅଛି ।’ ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ ଖୁସି ହୋଇ କହିଲେ- ‘ସତରେ ? ମାଇକ୍ ମୋର କାମ୍ପିଜ୍ ସହରରେ ପ୍ରତିବେଶୀ ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ବନ୍ଧୁ । ତୁମେ ଭାରତର କେଉଁ ସ୍ଥାନରୁ ଆସିଛ ?’ ଉତ୍ତରରେ ମୁଁ କହିଲି- ‘ଭାରତର ପୂର୍ବ ଉପକୂଳସ୍ଥ ଓଡିଶା ପ୍ରଦେଶର ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟକସ୍ଥଳୀ ପୁରୀ ସହରରେ ମୋର ଜନ୍ମ ।’ ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ କହିଲେ- ‘ଓଃ, ତାହାହେଲେ ଇଣ୍ଡଷ୍ଟ୍ରି ତିଆରି କରୁଥିବା ରାଉରକେଲା ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରଦେଶରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ, ସେଇଠି? ଭାରତରେ ମୋର ରହଣି ଭିତରେ ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିଲେ, ଓଡିଶା ପ୍ରଦେଶ ଓ ପୁରୀ ସହରକୁ ଭ୍ରମଣ ପାଇଁ ଯିବାର ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ମୋର ଅଛି।’

ଇତି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ ଭାରତର ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରଦୂତ ପଦବୀରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଇସାରିଆଅଛି । ଦିନେ ମୋର ଗବେଷଣା ଉପଦେଖା ପ୍ରଫେସର ବେଭର୍ time ମାଗାଜିନ୍‌ର ଏକ ପ୍ରକାଶନ ଦେଖାଇ ମୋତେ କହିଲେ- ‘ସୋମନାଥ, ଆମର ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରଦୂତ ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ ଓଡିଶା ପ୍ରଦେଶରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ ତୁମ ଜନ୍ମସ୍ଥାନ ପୁରୀ ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଭ୍ରମଣ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ।’ ମାଗାଜିନ୍‌ରେ ବାହାରିଥିବା ଫୋଟୋଟି ଦେଖାଇ କହିଲେ- ‘ଏଇ ଦେଖ, ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ କେମିତି ପୁରୀ ଯିବା ରାସ୍ତାରେ ନିଜ କାର ଅଟକାଇ ଏକ ଧାନ କିଆରୀରେ ପଶି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଖାଲି ସେତିକି ନୁହେଁ, ଧାନକେଣ୍ଡା ହାତରେ ଧରି ଗୋଟିଏ ଚାଷୀ ସହିତ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତାରେ ମଗ୍ନ ଅଛନ୍ତି । ଅତିହ୍ନା କୃଷକ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ହୋଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ।’

ପରେ ପରେ ବଞ୍ଚନରୁ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ‘ବଞ୍ଚନ ଗୋବ’ ଦୈନିକ ଖବର କାଗଜରୁ ଜାଣିପାରିଲିଯେ ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍ ପୁରୀର ଏତିହାସିକ ‘ବେଙ୍ଗଲ- ନାଗପୁର ରେଲ୍‌ୱେ (BNR)’ ହୋଟେଲରେ ଦୁଇଦିନ ରହିଥିଲେ । ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଲ୍‌ବେଥ୍‌ଙ୍କ ଉଚ୍ଚତା ଥିଲା ୬ ଫୁଟ ୯ ଇଞ୍ଚ । ଏତେ ଉଚ୍ଚକାୟ ଓ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଅତିଥିଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ BNR ହୋଟେଲ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଭାବରେ ତିଆରି ଖଟର ବନ୍ଦୋବସ୍ତ କରିଥିଲା ।



୧୯୬୩ ମସିହା ନଭେମ୍ବର ମାସରେ ଏକ ଆତତାୟୀର ରୁଲିର ଶିକାର ହୋଇ ରାଞ୍ଜପତି କେନେଡି ଅକାଳରେ ଶେଷନିଶ୍ୱାସ ତ୍ୟାଗ କଲେ । ଏହି ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣା ପରେ ମାତ୍ର ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ ରାଞ୍ଜପତି ଦାୟୀତ୍ୱ ନିର୍ବାହ କରି ଗଲବେଧ୍ ତାଙ୍କ ପଦରୁ ଇସ୍ତଫା ଦେଇ ହାର୍ଭାର୍ଡର ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ପଦବୀକୁ ଫେରି ଆସିଥିଲେ । ଭାରତ ପ୍ରତି କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କର ମମତା ଓ ଆବେଗ ଅସ୍ପୃଶ୍ୟ ଥାଏ । ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ସେ ହାର୍ଭାର୍ଡ ଓ MIT ର କତିପୟ ଭାରତୀୟ ଛାତ୍ରଙ୍କୁ କାମ୍ବୁଜ ସହରସ୍ଥିତ ନିଜର ବାସଗୃହକୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରି ଆପାୟିତ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଏହିପରି ଏକ ମିଳନ ଅବସରରେ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କରିଥିଲି - ‘ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ଗଲବେଧ୍, ପୁରୀ ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ଏକ କୃଷକ ସହ ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଫାଟୋଟିଏ ମୋର ମନେଅଛି । ଏକ କୃଷକ ସହ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ପାଇଁ ଆଣ୍ଡ୍ରୁ ପାଣିରେ ପଶି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ।’ ଉତ୍ତରରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ଗଲବେଧ୍ କହିଲେ- ‘ମୁଁ ଅର୍ଥନୀତିର ପ୍ରଫେସର ହୋଇପାରେ, କିନ୍ତୁ କୃଷି ସହିତ ମୋର ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରେମ, ମୋର ପିତା ଜଣେ କୃଷକ ଥିଲେ, ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀକାଳରେ ଜଣେ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ମୋର ପ୍ରଥମ ସ୍ନାତକ ଉପାଧି ମଧ୍ୟ ଥିଲା କୃଷିବିଦ୍ୟାରେ, କାନାଡାର ଅକ୍ସଫର୍ଡ କୃଷି ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରୁ । ମୋର ଡକ୍ଟରେଟ୍ ଉପାଧି ଥିଲା କୃଷି ଅର୍ଥନୀତି ଉପରେ, ବର୍ଜଲିସ୍ଥିତ କାଲିଫର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରୁ ।’ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତାର ମୋତକୁ ମୁଁ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରି ପଚାରିଲି- ‘ପୁରୀର BNR ହୋଟେଲ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ କିପରି ଲାଗିଲା ?’ ଉତ୍ତରରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ଗଲବେଧ୍ କହିଲେ- ‘BNR ହୋଟେଲର କର୍ମଚାରୀ ଓ ସେବକମାନେ ମୋତେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଅତିଥି ପରାୟଣତା ଦେଖାଇ ଥିଲେ ।’ ତା ପରେ ଚିକିତ୍ସ ହସି କହିଲେ- ‘ବନ୍ଧୋପସାଗର ତଟବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଏହି ହୋଟେଲଟି ଏକ ପୁରାତନ ବିଚିତ୍ର ଉପନିବେଶ ଢଙ୍ଗର । ଏହାର ନିର୍ମାଣର ଏକ ବୈଶିଷ୍ଟ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି ଯେ ୧୯୨୫ ମସିହାରେ ନିର୍ମିତ ଏହି ଅଙ୍ଗାଳିକା ଓଡିଶାର ସର୍ବପ୍ରଥମ ଇସ୍ତ-ସଶସ୍ତ୍ରୀକୃତ (steel reinforced) ଛାତ । ଏହି ଇସ୍ତ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମଦାନୀ ହୋଇଥିଲା, ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଉପନିବେଶ ଅଧିକାରୀ ବିଚେନରୁ ନୁହେଁ ବରଂ ସୁଦୂର ଆମେରିକାରୁ ।’

୨୩ ଏପ୍ରିଲ, ୨୦୦୬ ମସିହାରେ, ୯୮ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସରେ କାମ୍ବୁଜ ସହରର ମାଉଣ୍ଟ ଅବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାରେ ୧୫ ଦିନ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ରହିବାପରେ, ଗଲବେଧ୍ଙ୍କର ଦେହାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ତାଙ୍କର ବିୟୋଗରେ ଭାରତ ଓ ଓଡିଶା ଏକ ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ମିତ୍ର ହରାଇଲା ଭାରତରେ ମାତ୍ର ୨ ବର୍ଷ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାଳରେ ସେ ଭାରତର ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଜବାହରଲାଲ ନେହେରୁଙ୍କର ଘନିଷ୍ଠ ହୋଇପାରିଥିଲେ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅର୍ଥନୈତିକ

ସମସ୍ୟାରେ ସେ ଦକ୍ଷ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ଭାରତ ଉପମହାଦେଶର ବିଭାଜନ ଓ ତତ୍-ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହିଂସାକାଣ୍ଡ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରାୟ ୫ ଲକ୍ଷ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ଜୀବନହାନୀ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ ସେ ତତ୍କାଳୀନ ବିଚିତ୍ର ସରକାର, ବିଶେଷତଃ ଶେଷ ଭାଇସରୟ ଲର୍ଡ ମାଉଣ୍ଟବାଟେନଙ୍କୁ ତୀବ୍ର ସମାଲୋଚନା କରିଥିଲେ ।

୨୦୦୧ ମସିହାରେ ଭାରତ ସରକାର ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ଗଲବେଧ୍ଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଅସାଧାରଣ ପ୍ରତିଭା ଓ ଭାରତ ପ୍ରତି ବଳିଷ୍ଠ ଅବଦାନ ପାଇଁ ପଦ୍ମବିଭୂଷଣ ଉପାଧିରେ ସମ୍ମାନିତ କରିଥିଲେ । ଅଣଭାରତୀୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଜଣେ ଏହି ଉଚ୍ଚ ପଦବୀରେ ସମ୍ମାନିତ ହେବା ବିରଳ । ଗଲବେଧ୍ଙ୍କର ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ବିରାଟ ଅବଦାନ ହେଉଛି ଯେ ଭାରତର ପ୍ରଥମ କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟର ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଓ ଗବେଷଣା ବିଭାଗ, ଯାହାକି IIT କାନପୁର ରେ ସ୍ଥାପିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା, ତା’ଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟାରେ ଆମେରିକାର ସହାୟତାରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଆଜିକାଲି ଭାରତ କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟର ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଓ ସୂଚନା ଜ୍ଞାନ କୌଶଳ ବିଦ୍ୟା କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ବିଶ୍ୱରେ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ସ୍ଥାନ ଅଧିକାର କରିବାର ସୁତ୍ରପାତ ହୋଇଥିଲା ପ୍ରଫେସର ଗଲବେଧ୍ଙ୍କର ଏହି ସୁଗୋପଯୋଗୀ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ଯୋଗୁ ।

ବହୁବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଭାରତ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାବର୍ତ୍ତନ ପରେ, ଏକଦା ପୁରୀର ଐତିହାସିକ BNR ହୋଟେଲରେ ଅବସ୍ଥାନ କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମତେ ମିଳିଥିଲା ।

ହୋଟେଲର ହଲ୍ରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ଗଲବେଧ୍ଙ୍କ ତତ୍କାଳୀନ ଫଟୋଟିଏ ଓ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟକ ପୁସ୍ତକାଳରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଚି’ଣୀ ଦେଖିବାର ଅବକାଶ ମଧ୍ୟ ମିଳିଥିଲା ଚି’ଣୀର କିୟଦଂଶ ମୁଁଦେଲି:

*“...After two days of your hospitality, sea, sun and sand, I find myself rested and restored, both in body and spirit. My sincere thanks.”*  
*J K Galbraith, 24 July 1961*

ହୋଟେଲର ପରିଚାଳକ ଅତି ଗର୍ବର ସହିତ ସେହି ସାଢେ ସାତ ପୁସ୍ତିଆ ଗଲବେଧ୍ଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ତିଆରି ହୋଇଥିବା ବିଶେଷ ପଲଙ୍କଟି ମଧ୍ୟ ମୋତେ ଦେଖାଇଥିଲେ ।

*ଅବସରପାଠ ଅଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷ, ଜାତୀୟ ପ୍ରାଦ୍ୟୋଗିକ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାନ, ରାଉରକେଲା*

# ହଜାଇ ଦେଇଛି ହୁସିଲା ମୁହଁ

ସୁବାସ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଶତପଥୀ

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ସୃଷ୍ଟି ର ସେ ଉନ୍ନେଷରେ  
 ଶ୍ୟାମଳ ବନ ଜାନନ ଗିରି  
 ଭାଗ୍ୟବାନ ମୁଁ ଦେଖିଛି  
 କି ଶୋଭା ସିଏ ଥିଲା ସେ ଧରି ।  
 ଦୂରନ୍ତ ସେଇ ପାହାଡ଼ ଧାରେ  
 ଅରୁଣ ତାର କିରଣ ଧରି  
 ମୁରୁଜ ସମ ମଣ୍ଡୁ ଥିଲା  
 ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ସେ ଅନନ୍ୟ ଶିରି ।  
 ବ୍ୟାଘ୍ର, ମୃଗ, ଗୟଳ, ହସ୍ତୀ  
 ବନ୍ୟ ଜନ୍ତୁ ଭଳିକି ଭଳି  
 ହାସ୍ୟ ଭରେ କୀର୍ତ୍ତୀ ରତ  
 ସଂଖ୍ୟା କିଏ ପାରିବ କଳି?

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ପୁଷ୍ପ-ବନେ ପ୍ରଜାପତି ସମ  
 ହସ୍ତେ ଧରି ଏକ ପକ୍ଷୀ ଫଳ  
 ମଣିଷ ସେ, ଦେଖିଲି ମୁଁ ତାକୁ  
 ଥିଲା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଶିରୀରେ ବିହ୍ୱଳ ।  
 ପ୍ରାତଃ ରବି କିରଣରେ ତା'ର  
 ମୁଖ ଥିଲା ଅତି ଦୀପ୍ତିମାନ  
 ଶାମୁକା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଥିବା  
 ମୁକ୍ତାଟିଏ ଭଳି,  
 ସିଏ ଥିଲା ଏକାନ୍ତ, ଅନନ୍ୟ ।  
 ଦୁଃଖ ଚିନ୍ତା ଯାତନାର  
 ଢେଉ ସବୁ ତାହାର ସାମାଜ୍ୟ  
 ସୀମା କ୍ଷଣି କରୁ ତ ନ ଥିଲା  
 ସତେ କେବେ, ସେ ଯେ ପୁଣି ବୀର୍ଯ୍ୟ !

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ଦିନ ପରେ ଦିନ ଗଲା ଗତି,  
 ଭାବିଲି ମୁଁ ଆଉ ଦିନେ ଯାଇ  
 ଥରେ ଖାଲି ଦେଖି ସେ ଆସିବି,  
 କିପରି ସେ ଅଛି ମୋର ସେ ମଣିଷ ଭାଇ ।

ସେ ଦିନ ନିବିଷ୍ଟ ଚିତ୍ତେ  
 ମୃତ୍ତିକାର ଧରି ପିଣ୍ଡୁଳାଏ  
 ମଣିଷ ସେ, ଗଢୁଥିଲା ଚକ  
 କହିଲା ସେ ଦେଖ ସଭ୍ୟତା ଇଏ  
 ଏହା-ପରେ ଗଢିବି ମୁଁ ଦେଖ  
 ସଭ୍ୟତାର ରାଜ-ସିଂହାସନ  
 ସସାଗରା ଧରା ମୋର ପ୍ରଜା,  
 ଖଟାଇବି ପ୍ରକୃତିକୁ ଭୃତ୍ୟର ସମାନ ।  
 ବିଜୟର ଗୌରବରେ ତାର  
 ମୁଖ ଥିଲା ଅତି ଦୀପ୍ତିମନ୍ତ  
 ସ୍ୱପନର ପ୍ରମତ୍ତ ଭଲ୍ଲାସେ  
 ସିଏ ସତେ ଲଭୁଥିଲା,

ସୁଖ ଯେ ଅନନ୍ତ ।  
 ପଚାରିଲି 'ଭାଇ ମୋର କହ,  
 ଏତେ ସବୁ ସତେ କିପା ଲୋଡା ?  
 ସାରା ଧରା ଅଟେ ତୋ ତୋହରି,  
 ସଭ୍ୟତା ଟା ନୁହେଁ କି ଅଲୋଡା ?'  
 'ଜାଣିନାହୁଁ, ଜାଣିନାହୁଁ ତୁମ୍ଭେ,  
 କହିଲା ସେ ଦୃଢ଼ ସ୍ୱର ଧାରେ  
 'ଏ ସଭ୍ୟତା ଏଇ ମୋର ଅସ୍ତ୍ର  
 ଏହା ବଳେ ଧରାକୁ ମୁଁ  
 ସରା କରି ପାରେ ।  
 କହିଲି 'ମୁଁ ନେଉଛି ବିଦାୟ  
 ଅନେକ ସମୟ ତବ କରିଲିଶି କ୍ଷୟ,  
 ଆଉଦିନେ ପୁଣି କେବେ ଆସି  
 ଦେଖି ଯିବି,  
 ତୁମର ସେ ସଭ୍ୟତାର ଜୟ !'



ଇଏ ପରା ସଭ୍ୟତାର ଖେଳା !  
 ତାହାରି ମଝିରେ ମୁହଁ ଖୋଜିହେଲି,  
 କାହିଁ ଗଲା ମୋ ମଣିଷ ଭାଇ,  
 କୃତ୍ରିମ ଆଲୋକ ଆଉ ପବନର ତଳେ,  
 ଦେଖିଲି ମୁଁ,  
 ବସିଅଛି ମୁହଁଟା ଶୁଖାଇ ।  
 ଧାରଧାର ଚିତ୍ତାରେଖା କପାଳରେ ତାର,  
 ଦିଶୁଥିଲା ଅତି ପରିଷ୍କାର ,  
 ନାଇଟ୍-କ୍ଲବ୍ ର ସେଇ ପ୍ରମତ୍ତ ଉଲ୍ଲାସେ,  
 ଚେଷ୍ଟାରତ ଥିଲା ସେ ଯେ,  
 ଦୁଃଖ ଆଉ ଯାତନାକୁ କରିବାକୁ ଦୂର ।  
 ପଦିଏ କହିବା ପାଇଁ, ଶିର ଶେକି  
 ଦେଖିବା ର ପାଇଁ,  
 ସମୟ ଯେ ନାହିଁ ଆଉ ତାର,  
 ଦିନ ଆଉ ଜୀବନଟା ଯାଏ ଧାଇଁ ଧାଇଁ !  
 ଶୁଣିବକି, ଶୁଣିବକି ଚିକେ, ପଚାରିଲି,  
 'ହେ ମଣିଷ ଭାଇ,  
 ମୋହୁ ପାଇଁ ଏକ କ୍ଷଣ କିବା  
 ଅଛି କୁହ,କୁହ ମୋର ପାଇଁ ?  
 ସଭ୍ୟତାର ଜୟ ଯାତ୍ରା ସବୁ ଦେଖୁଛି ତ,  
 କିନ୍ତୁ ଭାଇ କୁହ ଥରେ କୁହ  
 ଏତେ ସବୁ ପରେବିତ' ପୁଣି,  
 କାହିଁ ପାଇଁ,  
 ତୋର ଆଜି ଏ ବିରସ ମୁହଁ ?'  
 ସ୍ଵପନ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଲା ସତେ, ଆଖି ମଳି ମଳି,  
 କହିଲା ସେ ,  
 'ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛ ତ ଶୁଣ ,  
 ସଭ୍ୟତାର ପଥ ଧାରେ କାହିଁ,  
 ଅନେକ ଆଗରୁ,  
 ହଜାଇ ଦେଇଛି ମୋର ହସନ୍ତ ବଦନ ।'

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ଆଦ୍ୟ ଏକବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ  
 ଭେଟ ହେଲା,  
 ପୁଣି ମୋର ମଣିଷର ସାଥେ,  
 ସଭ୍ୟତାର ଜୟବାନା,  
 ଶିଖରରେ ଧରି, ଘୁରୁଥିଲା ସେ ଯେ,  
 ବିଜ୍ଞାନର ରଥେ ।  
 ଶ୍ୟାମଳ ସେ ବନ ଗିରି,  
 ନାହିଁ ଆଉ ନାହିଁ,  
 ଆଉ ନାହିଁ କେଦାର ପ୍ରାନ୍ତର,  
 ନାହିଁ ଦିନ ନାହିଁ ଅବା ରାତ୍ରି,  
 ଅଛି ଖାଲି ବିଜୁଳିର ଝଲମଲ,  
 କଙ୍କଟ୍ ଜଙ୍ଗଲ ।  
 ଚାରିଆଡେ ଦୌଡ଼ାଦୌଡ଼ି,  
 ସତେ ଅବା ଲାଗିଛି କି ମେଳା,  
 କାହାର ସମୟ ନାହିଁ, ସଭିଏଁ ଯେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ,

The writer is a retired Bank Manager and lives in Cuttack. He wrote this poem on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1998.

# କ'ଣ ପୁଣି ହେଲା?

କଳ୍ପନାମୟୀ ଦାଶ

ମୁଁ ଯେବେ ପିଲାଥିଲି ଜେଜେନାନୀ କହୁଥିଲେ  
ସବୁବେଳେ ସେଇ ଗୋଟେ କଥା  
ଏ ଦେଶରେ ପିଲାମାନେ ନିଜ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ନିଜେଇ ତୁଲାଇ,  
ଲୁଗାପଟା ହେନ୍ ଟେନ୍ ଲାଗି ନାହିଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବ୍ୟଥା । (୧)

ନାନୀ ମଧ୍ୟ କାନ୍ଦୁଥିଲେ- ପିତାଙ୍କୁ ଖୁଣ୍ଟା ଦେଇ  
କାହିଁକି ଯେ ଫେରିଗଲେ ବୋଲି  
ଏଠି ଖାଲି ଅଭାବ, ଅସୁବିଧା, ଶାଶୁଘର ଜଞ୍ଜଳ  
ସବୁଠାରୁ ବଳି । (୨)

ଏ ଦେଶରେ ରହିଥିଲେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଡଳାରକୁ  
ଗୁଣିଦେଇ ସାତ ଅଧେରେ  
କେତେ କଥା କରିଥାନ୍ତେ - କେତେ ଟଙ୍କା ସଞ୍ଚିଥାନ୍ତେ  
ଚଳିଥାନ୍ତେ କେତେ ଆରାମରେ । (୩)

ବୁନ୍‌ଟୁ, ପିନ୍‌ଟୁ, ଚିନ୍‌ଟୁ ପାଇଁ ଟ୍ୟୁସନ୍- ସିନେମା  
ମାନୁପାଇଁ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଓ ଗହଣା  
ନିତି ଦିନ ଚିନ୍ତା ପୁଣି ବାରମ୍ବାର କୁଣିଆ ମଇତ୍ର  
ଆଉ ବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କର ଯାବତ୍ ଗଞ୍ଜଣା । (୪)

ତୁମେ ଯେବେ ଆସିଗଲ ପିତାସା ତ ଭାରିଖୁସି ହେଲେ  
ବାପା ! ତୁ ରହିବୁ ସେଠି  
ଏଇକଥା ନାନୀ କହିଥିଲେ । (୫)

ତୁମେ ଦିନେ ଯାଇଥିଲ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଜେଜେ ମାଆ  
ଘର, ଡୋରା, ନଇ  
ବୋଉ ଆଉ ମତେ ଧରି ଫେରିଥିଲ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ  
ସେ ସବୁ କୁ ପିଠି କରିଦେଇ । (୬)

ବାରମ୍ବାର ବୋଉକୁ କହିଲ ଦେଖ, ଶୁଣ୍ ଶିଖ୍, ବୁଝ୍  
ଏ ଦେଶର ଏମିତି ସଭ୍ୟତା  
ଥ୍ୟାଙ୍ଗ୍ ଇଉ, ଗୁଡ୍ ମଣ୍ଡିଙ୍ଗ୍, ଗୁଡ୍ ନାଇଙ୍ଗ୍ ଏବଂ  
ସେଇପରି କେତେ କଥାବାଞ୍ଛା । (୭)

ସମ୍ପା ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି ଚିପ୍‌ଟପ ଘରଦ୍ୱାର ଲୁଗାପଟା

ଆପଣାର ଦେହମୁଣ୍ଡ ଯାଏ  
ବୋଉ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶିଖିଗଲା ସୁପ୍, ସାଲାଡ୍, ସାଣ୍ଡୁଇଚ୍  
ପଡ଼ିଶାଙ୍କୁ ହାଏ ଆଉ ବାଏ । (୮)

କହିଥିଲ ଅଙ୍କଲଙ୍କୁ 'ଭୁଲହେଲା' ବାହା ହୋଇ ଏ ଦେଶକୁ ଆସି  
ଅଭିଆତୀ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଧଳାଝିଅ ବିଭାହେଇ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି ସୁଖୀ । (୯)

ଏବେ ପୁଣି କ'ଣ ହେଲା ? କ'ଣ ପୁଣି ହୋଇଗଲା ବାପା ?  
ମୋର ଏଇ ଢଙ୍ଗ ରଙ୍ଗ ଦେଖି ତୁମେ କ'ଣ ସବୁବେଳେ ଖପା ?  
(୧୦)

ମୁଁ ଯଦି ପଇସା ମାଗେ ସର୍କସ୍ କି ସିନେମା ଯିବାକୁ  
ଭାରି ଜୋର୍ ରାଗିଯାଅ ତୁମେ -  
ଏ ଦେଶର ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପରି ନିଜ ରୋଜଗାର ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କଲେ  
ମଜା ସିନା ଜମେ । (୧୧)

ଏଇକଥା କହିଦେଇ ତୁମେ ଯେବେ ଦୂର ହୋଇଯାଅ  
ମୋ ମନ ତ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ରୁଜି ରୁନା ରୁନା ହେଇଯାଏ  
ତୁମ୍ ତାମ୍ ବୋଉ କିଛି ଭାଳିଦିଏ ଲୁହ । (୧୨)

ଛୋଟ ମନ ତ ଭାବିବସେ 'ଏଇ ମୋର ବାପା? ଏଇ ମୋର  
ଘର ?  
ଏଇଠିକୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ହେଉଥିଲି ଏତେ ତରତର ।' (୧୩)

ଚାହିଁ ଦିଏ ବୋଉ ମୁହଁ -ମତେ ଲାଗେ ସିଏ ଅବା ଭାବୁଛି  
ସେଇ ଏକା କଥା  
ତା କୋଳରେ ପଶିଯାଇ କହେ  
“ଷୋହଳ ବର୍ଷ ମତେ ପୁରୁଲୋ - ରହିଥା” । (୧୪)

ଷୋହଳ ବର୍ଷ ପୁରୁପୁରୁ ଛୋଟ କାଟ ଚାକିରୀଟେ କଲି  
ସିନେମା- କନ୍‌ସର୍ଟ- ଲୁଗାପଟା ଇତ୍ୟାଦିରେ  
ପଇସା ସାରିଲି । (୧୫)

ଛୁଏଁ ନାହିଁ ଡ୍ରାଉନ୍, ବିଅର୍, ସିଗ୍ରେଟ୍ କି ଅନ୍ୟ ବଦଭ୍ୟାସ  
କିଛି ମୋ ନଥିଲା କିନ୍ତୁ କାମ କରି ପାଠେ ହେଲା କରି  
ଏ କଥା ତୁମେ ଜାଣିଛୁ ଅବଶ୍ୟ । (୧୬)

ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହ ଜବ୍ ସହ ଡେରିଙ୍ଗ୍ ବି କଲି  
ତୁମେ ଭାରି ଖୁସି ହେବ ଭାବି (ବୋଉ କଥା ଭୁଲି ଭାଲି ଗଲି )  
ସେ ଝିଅକୁ ବିଭା ହୋଇଗଲି । (୧୭)

କିନ୍ତୁ, ବାପା କ'ଣ ହେଲା ପୁଣି - କ'ଣ ପୁଣି ହୋଇଗଲା କହ  
ତୁମ ମୁହଁ ଏବେ ଫଣ ଫଣ ବୋଉର ଯେ ଶୁଖୁ ନାହିଁ ଲୁହ ।  
(୧୮)

ତୁମେ ଯାହା ଚାହୁଁଥିଲ- କହୁଥିଲ - ପାଶ ମୁହଁ କରିଗଲି ତାହା  
କ୍ଷୋଳବର୍ଷ କେବେଠୁ ପୁରିଛି- ଛବିଶି ବି ପୁରିଗଲା ଆହା ।  
(୧୯)

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*This poem was written in ଲୁଝି କାନ୍ତ, ଭେଙ୍ଗିନ/ଲ. She is a regular contributor to the OSA Journal.*

ମୋ' ବୋଉ ତ ସେମିତି କାନ୍ଦୁଛି ଖାଲି ଯାହା ମୁଁ ନାହିଁ କୋଳେ  
ତୁମେ ଖାଲି ଦୁଃଖୀ ଦୁଃଖୀ ଲାଗ ତୁମକୁ ମୁଁ ଚାହେଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ  
। (୨୦)

ତୁମେ ଦୁହେଁ ଦୁଃଖେ ଜରଜର - ମୋଦିନ କି ସୁଖରେ ଭରିବ ?  
ରାତି ଯଦି ଏକ୍ଷଣି ପାହିଲା - ଦିନ କିପରି ସରିବ । (୨୧)

ମୋ ଦିନ ଏମିତି କଟୁଛି -ବୋଉ ବେଳ ଅତି ଦୁରୁବହ  
ତୁମ ମନ କେବେ ବଦଳିଲା କଅଣ ତୁମର ହେଇଗଲା କୁହ ?  
(୨୨)



# ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଲୀଳା

ରଚିତା ରାଉତ

ଅସ୍ଥାବଳେ ପାହାନ୍ତିଆ ତରା

ତାଜି କହେ ପ୍ରାଣୀ ବଧୂ କାନେ,

ଫେରି ପୁଣି ଆସିବି ମୁଁ ବନ୍ଧୁ

ଆଜି କଥା ରଖିଯିବ ମନେ ।

ନିତି ଆସି ଯାଏ ନିତି ଚାଲି

ଅଜଣା ସେ ଦୂର ପଥ ପାରେ,

ନୁହେଁ ଏକା କୋଟି ଜୀବ ବନ୍ଧୁ

ଯେଉଁ ପଥେ ଅବିରତ ଘୁରେ ।

କ୍ଷଣିକ ଏ ଜୀବନ ଗୋ ମୋର

ଅଙ୍ଗେ ବହେ ଘାତ ପ୍ରତିଘାତ,

ତୁମେ ଗାଅ ଉଷା ଆଗମନୀ

ରୂପମଦେ ସଦା ସୁରଭିତ ।

ନିୟତୀ ର ଚିରନ୍ତନୀ ଲୀଳା

ଜ୍ଞାନ ସୀମା ନୁହେଁ ଅବଗତ,

ଅଜ୍ଞାତ ସେ ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଧାରା

ଆନନ୍ଦନ କରେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଶତ ।

ଜରା ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ବିକଳ ବିଧୂତ

ବିଶ୍ୱ ତୋର ଭରା ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନା,

ତହିଁ ତବ ସୁଖମା ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ

ମରତକୁ ଉପହାସ ସିନା ।

ଅଙ୍ଗ ତବ ବିହଗ କୁଜନ

ମଳୟର ଉପବନ ଲୀଳା,

ହାସ୍ୟ ତବ ସୁମନ ବିକାଶ

ଧନ୍ୟ ତମେ ହେ ପ୍ରଭାତୀ ବାଳା ।

ସନ୍ତର୍ପଣେ ମୌନ ପ୍ରାଣୀ ବଧୂ

ଜିଜ୍ଞାସୁରେ କରି ସମ୍ବୋଧନ,

ଉତ୍ତରିଲେ ଭ୍ରାନ୍ତ କି ହେ ସାଥୀ

ଅଭୂତ ସେ ବିଧିର ବିଧାନ ।

‘ବିକଶିତ ଜୀବନ ଯୌବନ

ରୂପ ଘେରା ମଧୁ ମାଦକତା,

ଆକର୍ଷଣ କ୍ଷଣିକ ଜଗତେ

ବିନାଶେ ତା ଥାଏ ସାର୍ଥକତା’ ।



Rachita Raut lives in Delhi with her husband Dr. Kahnu Charan Raut, who encourages his spouse to pursue her multi-faceted interests, be it writing prose and poetry, playing the sitar, dress designing, embroidery, toy-making...or cooking exotic dishes. For Rachita, half the fulfillment she gains in pursuing her interests is through teaching. She has transferred her skills to many a student in Delhi University in Home Science. Her children consider themselves lucky to have been brought up under her talent and tutelage.

# ସାକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଭ୍ରମଣ

## ଶାନ୍ତି ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର

ଖାଲି ପାଣି ମାଠିଆ ଟାକୁ ଦି ଗୋଇଠା ଦେଇ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦେବାକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ହେଉଥିଲା ଯେ, ଛାତ ନିଜକୁ ସଂଜତ କରି ନେଲେ ରୁଦ୍ର ବାବୁ । ରାଗ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ରେ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦେଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜ ପକେଟ୍ ରୁ ହିଁ ଟଙ୍କା ଦେଇ ପୁଣି ମାଠିଆ କିଣିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ରିଟାୟର୍ଡ ଜୀବନରେ ପେନସନ୍ ଟଙ୍କା ତ ଗୋଟି, ଗୋଟି ଗଣିତା । ମାପି ରୁପି ନ ଚଳିଲେ ନିଜେ ହଇରାଣ ରେ ପଡିବେ । କଣ କରିବେ ସେ ଭୁଲ୍ ତ ତାଙ୍କର । ପୃଥିବୀ ର ସବୁଠାରୁ ଯେ ମୁଖ, ସେହିପରି ଏକ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ କୁ ବିବାହ କଲେ ଜୀବନ ଟା ଯାହା କଲବଲ ହୁଏ । ଅନ୍ୟ କାହାର ତ ଏପରି ଅନୁଭୂତି ନଥାଏ । କହିବେ କାହାକୁ? ଶୁଣିବ ବା କିଏ? ଶୁଣି ବୁଝିବ ବା କିଏ? ବୁଝିବ ବା କାହିଁକି?

ଘରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ନାହିଁ କି, ମାଠିଆ ରେ ପାଣି ନାହିଁ । ସବୁଦିନ ଚାରିଟା ବେଳେ ସେ ଯାଆନ୍ତି ସାକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଭ୍ରମଣ ରେ । ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବ ରୁ ଦି ଗାସ ପାଣି ପିଇ ସେ ବାହାର କୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ଚାଲିଲା ବେଳେ ହାଲିଆ ଯେପରି ନ ଲାଗିବ । ପାଣି ନ ହେଲା ନାହିଁ, ମୁଖ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ କୁ କଣ ଏ କଥା ଜଣା ନାହିଁ ପାନ ଦି ଖଣ୍ଡ ଦବା ପାଇଁ । ଗଲା ବେଳ କୁ ପାନ ତବା ବି ମିଳିଲାନି । ରୋଷେଇ ଘର ଠୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଦିଅଁ ଙ୍କ ଘର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଖୋଜିଗଲେ ସେ । ଯାଃ ଆଜି ସବୁ ବିଭାଗ କିଛି ହୋଇ ପାରିବନି । ଶୋଇବା ଘର କୁ ଗଲେ ଚାଦର ଟା ପାଇଁ ଯେ ..... ଚାଦର ଟା ଯୋଡ କଣରେ ପଡିଥିଲା ସେଇ କଣ ରେ ସେମିତି ପଡିଛି । ଦି ଦିନ ହେବ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ‘ସୂତୀବାଳା’ ଙ୍କୁ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ସମ୍ପା କରି ଦେବାକୁ ଯେ ସମ୍ପା ତ ଦୂର ରେ ଥାଉ ସେଇ କୋଣରେ ସେମିତି ପଡି ରହିଛି ଚାଦର ଟା ।

ରାଗ ତମ ତମ ରେ ଗର ଗର ହୋଇ ଘରୁ ବାହାରି ଗଲେ ରୁଦ୍ର ବାବୁ । ଆଜି ଗଜାନନ ବାବୁ ବି ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଯାଇ ପାରିବେନି ଭ୍ରମଣ ରେ ବୋଲି ନାତି ହାତରେ ଖବର ପଠେଇ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କର ଦେହ ଭଲ ନଥିବାରୁ । ଯାହା ହେଉ ଗଜାନନ ବାବୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଠୁ ନିଃସୂଚକ ବେଶୀ ଭାଗ୍ୟବାନ । କିଛି ନ ହେଲେ ବି ଗଜାନନ ବାବୁ ଙ୍କ ର ଏକ କୁଳାଙ୍ଗର ପୁଅ ଅଛି ଘରେ । ବୋହୁ, ଦି ଟା ନାତି ଘରେ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ କଥା ବୁଝିବାକୁ । ହେଇ ତ ନାତି ଆସି ଖବର ଦେଇଗଲା ଜେଜେ ଙ୍କ ଦେହ ଖରାପ ବୋଲି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ! ସେଇ ଦେହ ଖରାପ ରୁ ଉଠି ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତେ ଖବର ଦେବାକୁ ଯେ ତାଙ୍କର ଦେହ ଭଲ ନାହିଁ ବୋଲି । ତିନି ତିନି ଟା ପୁଅ ଯେ ତାଙ୍କର । କିଏ ଯାଇ କୁଆଡେ ସବୁ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି । ବର୍ଷ ରେ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଚିଠି, ଦି ବର୍ଷ ରେ ଥରେ ଆସି ମୁହଁ ମାରି ଦେଇ ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ହିଁ ବାପା ବୋଉ ବଞ୍ଚିଛନ୍ତି । ସେତିକି ଜାଣିବା ଟା

ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । କେମିତି ବଞ୍ଚିଛନ୍ତି । କାହା ଦ୍ଵାରା ବଞ୍ଚିଛନ୍ତି । କଣ ତାଙ୍କର ଦରକାର କି ନାହିଁ ଜାଣିବାର ବି ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ମନେ କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ବୃଦ୍ଧ କାଳ ରେ ମଣିଷ ବଞ୍ଚି ଥାଉ ଥାଉ ନିତି ମରୁଛି । କାହାକୁ କହିବେ । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଯାଇ କୁଆଡେ ବୁଲୁଛନ୍ତି । ଗର ଗର ହୋଇ ମନ କୁ ମନ ବଜର ବଜର ହୋଇ ଚାଲୁଥିଲେ ରୁଦ୍ର ବାବୁ ।

ସାଇ ଯାକରେ ଯେତକ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକ ଅଛନ୍ତି ସମସ୍ତ ଙ୍କ ର କିଛି ନା କିଛି ବୁଝି ଅଛି, କାହାର ରୂପ ଅଛି ତ କାହାର ଗୁଣ ଅଛି ତ କାହାର ବିଦ୍ୟା ବା ଧନ । କିଏ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ତ କିଏ ସରସ୍ଵତୀ, କିଏ କମଳା ତ କିଏ ବିମଳା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୂତୀବାଳା ଙ୍କ ର କୋଉପିରେ କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ନାଁ ଟା କଣ ନା ସୂତୀବାଳା । ଆଜି ଆଉ ଭାଳି ହୋଇ ଲାଭ ବା କଣ । ତାଙ୍କ ବେଳ ରେ ନିଜ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀରେ ତ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ବହୁ ଯାଉ ନଥିଲା । ଯାହା ତାଙ୍କ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ରେ ଲେଖାଥିଲା ସେଇଆ ହେଲା । ଆଜି ଭାଳି ହୋଇ ଦୁଃଖ ସାଂଉଟିବା କେବଳ ସାର ହେଉଛି । ଦିନ କାଳ ସରିବାକୁ ବସିଲାଣି । ପାଟିଲା ଆମ୍ବ କେତେବେଳେ ଝଟିବେ ଗଛ ରୁ କିଏ ଜାଣେ । ଆଜି ଆଉ ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଲିଖିତ ଭାଗ୍ୟ କୁ ଦୋହରାଇଲେ କଅଣ ହେବ । ଚାଲୁଥିଲେ ସେ ଏକ ଅନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ରାସ୍ତା ରେ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟହୀନ ଭାବରେ ।

...ରୋଷେଇ ଘର ଠୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଦାଣ୍ଡ କବାଟ ଯାଏ ସବୁ ଖୋଲାମେଲା । କଣ ଯେ କରିବେ “ସୂତୀବାଳା” । ମାତ୍ର ଘଣ୍ଟା କ ପାଇଁ ଘରୁ ଗୋଡ କାଢିଥିଲେ ସେ । ସୀତା ବୋଉ ଙ୍କର ଅନ୍ତିମ ସମୟ । ପତୋଶୀ ରବି ବୋଉ ଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ ଯାଇଥିଲେ ସେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ । ଏତିକି ସମୟ ର ଅନୁପସ୍ଥିତି ରେ ଘରେ ଖଣ୍ଡ ପ୍ରମୟ । ଭାଗ୍ୟ ବସତଃ କେହି କୁକୁର ବିଲେଇ ରୋଷେଇ ଘରେ ପଶି ନାହାଁନ୍ତି । କଣ ଯେ କରିବେ ସୂତୀବାଳା, ଭାଗ୍ୟ କୁ କେବଳ ନିନ୍ଦିବା ବ୍ୟତୀତ । ପୃଥିବୀ ର ସର୍ବଶେଷ ମୁଖ ଅବାଗିଆ ମଣିଷ କୁ ବିବାହ କରି ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷ ସେ କେମିତି ଯେ ବିତେଇଲେଣି କେବଳ ସେହି ଜାଣନ୍ତି । ଛାତ ଆଜି ଆଉ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ସଂଗେ ବିବାଦ କରି ଲାଭ କଣ । ହାତ ଗଣତି ରେ ଆଉ କିଛିଟା ଦିନ ଏ ସଂସାର ର ଅତିଥୀ ସେ । କରିବାକୁ ବା ଭାବିବାକୁ ହାତରେ ଆଉ ବେଶୀ ସମୟ ନାହିଁ । ଏମିତି ଏମିତି ରେ ଦିନ ବିତି ଗଲେ ଗଲା ।

ଆଜି ବାବୁ ପାଣି ବି ପିଇ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି । କୁଆଡେ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି, ଖାଲି ମାଠିଆ ଟାକୁ ଗଡେଇ ଦେଇ । ମାଠିଆ ଟା କଣା ହୋଇ

ଯାଇଥିବାରୁ ସେଥିରେ ମାଟି ଲଗେଇ ଶୁଖେଇ ଦେଇ ଥିଲେ ସେ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଆଜି ମାଠିଆ ଟାକୁ ଖାଲି କରିଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମାଠିଆ ପାଖରେ ଢାଳେ ପାଣି , ଗିଲାସ ସବୁ ରଖି ଦେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଦିଶି ଥିବ କି ତାଙ୍କୁ ! କଣ ଯେ କରିବେ ସେ । ଆଜି ବାଟରେ ହାଲିଆ ହୋଇ ଚେତା ବୁଡି ପଡିଲେ ସେଇ ବୁଝିବେ । ଶୋଇବା ଘର କୁ ଗଲେ ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରିୟ ଗପ ବହି ଟାଏ ଆଣି ବାହାର ବାରଣ୍ଡା ରେ ବସି ପଢିବେ ବୋଲି । ବାହାରେ ଭଲ ସୁଲୁ ସୁଲିଆ ଥଣ୍ଡା ପବନ ବୋହୁଛି ।

ଏଇ ଦେଖ ବାବୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଚାନ୍ଦର ଟା ବି ନେଇ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ସେମିତି ଶାର୍ଟ ଖଣ୍ଡେ କି ଗଞ୍ଜି ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଗଲେଇ ଦେଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ବୋଧେ । କାଲି ବର୍ଷା ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ପୁରୁଣା ଚାନ୍ଦର ଟା ସଫା କରି ପାରି ନଥିଲେ ଶୁଖିବନି ବୋଲି । ସେଥି ପାଇଁ ବଡ ପୁଅ ଗଲା ବର୍ଷ ଦେଇଥିବା ନୂଆ ଚାନ୍ଦର ଟା ସେ ଶେଯ ଉପରେ ରଖି ଦେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଆଖି ଚାନ୍ଦର ଉପରେ ପଡିବ ବୋଲି ତା ଉପରେ ପାନ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଥାଳିଆ ରେ ରଖି ଦେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ । ପାନ ଉପରେ ଆଖି ପଡିଲେ ଚାନ୍ଦର ଉପରେ ଆଖି ପଡିବ ବୋଲି । ଧନ୍ୟ ରେ ସେ ଆଖି । ଆଖୁଠି ଗେଞ୍ଜି ନ ଦେଖେଇଦେଲେ ସେ ଆଖି କୁ କିଛି ଦିଶେନା । ସେ ସୀତା ବୋଉ ଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ଗଲାବେଳେ ରୁଦ୍ରବାରୁ ନିଘୋଡ ନିଦ ରେ ଶୋଇ ଘୁଞ୍ଚୁଡି ମାରୁଥିଲେ । ତେଣୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ନ ଉଠେଇ ଶୀଘ୍ର

ଫେରି ଆସିବେ ଭାବି ଚାଲି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କୁ କିଛି ନ କହି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଠି ସାଇର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଚିହ୍ନା ଜଣା ଲୋକ ଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ଗପୁ ଗପୁ ଟିକେ ଡେରି ହୋଇଗଲା । ଯୁଆଡେ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ଯାଆନ୍ତୁ । ଏ ଥଣ୍ଡାଳିଆ ପବନ ଯୋଗୁ ବେଶି ସମୟ ସେ ବାହାରେ ରହି ପାରିବେନି ସୃତିବାଳା ଭଲ ଭାବରେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ।

ଦାଣ୍ଡ ବାରଣ୍ଡା କୁ ଚାଲି ଆସିଲେ ସୃତିବାଳା ଖବର କାଗଜ ଓ ଗପ ବହି ଧରି । ବାରଣ୍ଡା ରେ ଝୁଲୁ ଥିବା ବେଞ୍ଚ ଦୋଳିରେ ବସି ଝୁଲିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ ପିଠିପଟ ବାତାରେ ଆଉଜି । ତିନି ଜଣ ବସି ପାରିବା ପରି ଲମ୍ବା ବେଞ୍ଚ ରେ ସାଇ ଘୋଡେଇ ଗୋଡ ଲମ୍ବେଇଦେଇ ଗପ ବହି ପଢି ବସିଲେ ଯେ ……ଗପ ରେ କୋଉ ମନ ଲାଗୁଛି ।

ଫେରି ଆସିଲେ ରୁଦ୍ର ବାବୁ ଖୁବ୍ ଶିଘ୍ର ସୃତିବାଳା ଙ୍କ ଅନୁମାନ କୁ ସତ୍ୟ ରେ ପରିଣତ କରି । ସୃତିବାଳା ଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ବସି ପଡିଲେ ଦୋଳିରେ । ଥଣ୍ଡା ପବନ ରେ ରୁମ ସବୁ ଟାକୁରି ଉଠିଛି । ଶିଘ୍ର ଘୋଡେଇ ଦେଲେ ଭଲ ଚାନ୍ଦର ରେ ସୃତିବାଳା ରୁଦ୍ର ବାବୁ ଙ୍କୁ । ପାନ, ପାଣି ଓ ଖବର କାଗଜ ଯୋଗେଇ ଦେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ।

ଏଇ ମୁଖ ଅତି ପ୍ରିୟ ବୁଢୀ ଟି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖ ରେ ନ ଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ଆଜି ନର୍କ ରେ ପରିଣତ ହୋଇ ସାରନ୍ତାଣି । ମୁଗ୍ଧ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ରେ କେବଳ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଲେ ରୁଦ୍ର ବାବୁ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଙ୍କୁ ମୁହଁ ରେ କିଛି ପ୍ରକାଶ ନ କରି । ତାଙ୍କର ନିତ୍ୟ ନୈମିତ୍ତିକ ରାଗ ଗର ଗର କଥା ଗୁଡାକୁ ଚାପି ରଖି ଗର୍ଭସ୍ଥ କରି ସାରିଲେଣି । ପୁଣି ହୁଏତ ଦରକାର ପଡି ପାରେ ସାମଞ୍ଜସ୍ୟ ପୁଣି ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ରେ ସେଇ ଶବ୍ଦ ଗୁଡିକ ଆଗାମୀ ଦିନ କୁ ।

ଏ ସଦୟ ପ୍ରୀତି ଉପହାର ର ବିନିମୟ ରେ ଆଣିଥିବା ରସଗୋଲା ଦି'ଟା ବଢେଇ ଦେଲେ ରୁଦ୍ର ବାବୁ ସୃତିବାଳା ଙ୍କ ହାତକୁ । ମୁଗ୍ଧ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ରେ ଚାହିଁଲେ ସୃତିବାଳା ତାଙ୍କ ର ଅତି ପ୍ରିୟ ମୁଖ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମୀ ଙ୍କୁ । ତାଙ୍କ ର ସ୍ନେହ ଶୁଣା ବିନା ଏ ଜୀବନ ନର୍କ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଦିନ ସାକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଭ୍ରମଣ ରୁ ଫେରିବା ବେଳେ ରୁଦ୍ର ବାବୁ କିଛି ନା କିଛି ଆଣିଆନ୍ତି ସୃତିବାଳା ଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବରା, ସିଙ୍ଗଡା, ପକୋଡି, ଲଡୁ, ଜଲେବି, ରସଗୋଲା ବା ଅନ୍ୟ ସେହିପରି କିଛି । ଏ ତାଙ୍କର ନିତି ଦିନ ର ଗତାନୁଗତିକ ଜୀବନ ଧାରା ର ପ୍ରଣାଳୀ । ସେଇ ଦୋଳିରେ ବସି ସେମାନେ ଖାଆନ୍ତି । ରାତ୍ରୀ ଭୋଜନ ରେ କଣ ଖାଇବେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରନ୍ତି । ସେଇ ଦୋଳିରେ ବସି ସୃତିବାଳା ଚଷମା ଲଗେଇ ଗପ ବହି ପଢନ୍ତି ଓ ରୁଦ୍ରବାବୁ ଖବର କାଗଜ । ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ଯିବା ଆସିବା କରୁଥିବା ଚିହ୍ନା ଜଣା ଲୋକ ଙ୍କୁ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ତାକ ଦେଇ ପାଖ କୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରନ୍ତି । ପାନ ପାଣି ଦ୍ଵାରା ଆପ୍ୟାୟିତ କରି ଗପ ର ଆସର ଜମାନ୍ତି । ଆଜି ରଗା ରଗି ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ ବୋଲି କଣ ତାଙ୍କ ନୈମିତ୍ତିକ ଜୀବନ ଧାରାରୁ ସେମାନେ ଓହ୍ଲି ଯିବେ !

“-ବୁଝିଲ ସୃତି ! ଆଜି ରାତି ପାଇଁ କିଛି ବିଶେଷ ଆଉ ରୋଷେଇ ବାସ କରନା । ସକାଳ ର ଯୋଉ ଭାତ ବଳିଛି ତାକୁ ପଖାଳି ଦିଅ । ମାଛ ଭଜା ତ ଅଛି । ଶାଗ ଦି'ଟା ଆଣିଛି ବଜାର ରୁ ବଡି ଦେଇ ଭାଜି ଦିଅ । ହେଇଗଲା ରାତ୍ର ଭୋଜନ ।” ସବୁଦିନ ରୁଦ୍ରବାବୁ ରାତ୍ର ଭୋଜନ ପାଇଁ ଏହିପରି ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦିଅନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୃତିବାଳା ତାଙ୍କର ଯାହା ଇଚ୍ଛା ହୁଏ, ଯାହା ଘରେ ଥାଏ ସେଇଆ ରାନ୍ଧନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଯାହାର ରୁଚିରେ ଖାଦ୍ୟ ତିଆରି ହୋଇଥାଉ ପଛେ ଦୁହେଁ ଆନନ୍ଦ ରେ ଖାଆନ୍ତି । ଆଉ ଖାଇବା ବେଳେ ସେଇ ପୁଅ, ବୋହୁ ନାତି ନାତୁଣୀ ଙ୍କ ଗପସପ ରେ ରାତ୍ର ଭୋଜନ ପର୍ବ ଶେଷ ହୁଏ । ଏଇତ ସ୍ଵର୍ଗ, ଏଇତ ଆନନ୍ଦ । ଯେତେ ରାଗ ରୁଷା ହେଲେ ବି ଏଥିରୁ ଓହ୍ଲି ଯିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛ ବା କିଏ?

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# ଦୁଇଟି ରାତି ଓ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା

ବରୁଣ ପାନି

ପୁଣିମାର ସ୍ନିଗ୍ଧ ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନେଇ  
ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ପ୍ରିୟା କରୁଥିଲ ଅନୁଯୋଗ  
ପ୍ରେମର ଗୋ ଆଉ ଏକ ଡାକ୍ ଗଢି ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ।

ସାଗରିକା ତୁମେ, ମୁକ୍ତ ବିହଙ୍ଗର ପକ୍ଷୀ ନେଇ  
ଦେଖୁଥିଲ କି ଶାନ୍ତ, କି ଭୀଷଣ ସୁନ୍ଦର  
ମିଳନ, ଏ ଆକାଶ ଓ ପୃଥିବୀର ।



ଅନନ୍ତ କଳ୍ପନା ନେଇ  
ବାଲୁକାର ପରଶରେ  
ବାହୁ ଲଠିକାରେ  
ପ୍ରଣୟର ନିବେଦନ ଚିରନ୍ତନ ବୋଲି  
କହିଥିଲ ଧୀରେ  
ଏକ ପୁଣିମା ରାତିରେ ।

ଆଉ ଏକ ରାତି  
ସେଇ ସାଗର କୂଳରେ  
ଜୁଆର ଢେଉରେ  
ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଯାଇଥିଲା ଆମ ବାଲୁକାର ଘର  
ମେଘର ସେ ପଶତ କାନିରେ  
ଲୁଚିରହି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦେଖୁଥିଲା  
ମନେ ମନେ ହସୁଥିଲା ଅବା  
ଜୀବନ ଯୌବନ ନେଇ ଏଇ ଲୀଳା ଖେଳା  
ଜୁଆରର ସୋତେ

ଚାଲିଯାଇ ଥିଲ ତୁମେ ଦିଗ୍‌ବଳୟ ପର ପ୍ରାନ୍ତେ  
ମନେ ମନେ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷାରେ  
ମୁଁ ପରା ଗୋ, ଗୋଟି ଗୋଟି ବାଲୁକା କଣାକୁ  
ଗଣୁଥିଲି ଦିବସ ଶେଷରେ ।

ମେଘ କଟି ଗଲା  
ଶାନ୍ତ ହେଲା ଜୁଆରର ଅଶାନ୍ତ ସଲୀଳ  
ଅନାଇ ମୁଁ ଦିଗ୍‌ବଳୟେ ଦେଖିଲା ବେଳକୁ  
ଅସ୍ତ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କାନେ କାନେ କଥା କହିଗଲା  
ଦିଗ୍‌ବଳୟେ ଯା ଦେଖୁଛ ଭ୍ରମ  
ଅଶାନ୍ତ ନିର୍ମମ  
ଏଇ ସାଗର କି ମିଶି ପାରେ ଆକାଶ ରୁକୁରେ ?  
କେବେ ନୁହେଁ ।

ଆକାଶ ଓ ସାଗରର କବି  
ଆଜିବି ତ ଭୁଲିନି ସେ ଛବି  
ଆଜିବି ତ ହଜିଗଲା ପ୍ରିୟା ପାଇଁ  
ଦିଗ୍‌ବଳୟେ ରହିଛି ଅନାଇ  
ଆଜିବି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରିକା ମିଛ, ଆଉ ମିଛ ଅଶାନ୍ତ ସଲୀଳ  
ସତ ସିନା ବେଳା ଭୂମି, ବାଲୁକା କଣା ଗଣିବା  
ଆଉ ଯେତେ ଦୀର୍ଘ ହେଲେବି ଗୋ  
ସତ ଏଇ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ବେଳ ।

# ପାଉଁଶ

ଶିଖଣ୍ଡ ଗତପଥୀ

ତମେ ଭାବିଛୁ,  
ମତେ ଖାଁତି ଖାଁତି କାଢ଼ିଦେବ  
ଚମ ଉତାରିଲା ପରି  
ଜଳନ୍ତା ଅଙ୍ଗର ଉପରୁ  
ବହୁ ଟାକୁ ଲେଲିହାନ୍ କରି  
ଟାଣିନେବ ଉଷ୍ମତା ସବୁ  
ଅନ୍ତରରୁ ପଳପଳ କରି ॥

କ୍ଷଣିକ ପୁଲକରେ  
ନିଜକୁ ହରାଇ  
ଭୁଲିଯିବ ମୋ'ର ସତ୍ତା  
ଚିନ୍ତାମୟ ମୁଖେ  
ରୁବନ ଦେଇ ॥

ନିଆଁଟା ଦାଉଦାଉ ଜଳିଗଲା ପରେ  
ଅତୃପ୍ତିର ତୃଷ୍ଣା ମେଣ୍ଟି ଗଲା ପରେ  
ରାତ୍ରୀର ନିଶଃ ପ୍ରହରରେ  
ଶେଷ ଅଙ୍ଗର ଯବନୀକା ପଡ଼ିଗଲାପରେ  
ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ କୋହୁ ବୁଜେ ଧରି  
ମୁଁ ରହିଥିବି  
ଅନ୍ଧର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପାଉଁଶ ॥

ମୋ' ଠାରେ ସବୁ କିଛି ଲୀନ  
ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଶେଷ ପରିଣତି  
ଆକୃତିର ବିକୃତିର  
ଲୋଭର ବିତୃଷ୍ଣାର  
ପ୍ରେମର ଇର୍ଷାର  
ଆଶାର ହତାଶାର, ମୁଁ  
ଅବଶିଷ୍ଟହୀନ ଅଭିବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ॥

ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଧୂବଂ ହି ଜାତସ୍ୟ  
ମୁଁ ହିଁ ସେହି ଚିରନ୍ତନ ସତ୍ୟ  
ତମେ ସିନା ଯିବ ଜଳି  
ମୋ'ର ଆଉ ଜଳିବାର ନାହିଁ  
ମୋ' ଠାରେ ସବୁରି ବିଲୟ  
ତୁମର ମୁଁ ଶେଷ ପଂକ୍ତି  
ସମାପ୍ତ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ॥

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# ଜୀବନର ମୋଡ

ସୁଲକ୍ଷଣା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ



ପ୍ରେମ ଆସିବାକୁ ତଥାପି ଦେଇନାଏ ଅଛି । ସୁରେଖା ଏୟାର-ପୋର୍ଟ ଭିତରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ । ଗୋଟିକିଆ ହୋଇ ଏକପାଖିଆ ରେୟାରଟିଏ ଦେଖି ବସିଲେ ଗେଟ ୧୩ ପାଖାପାଖି । ଛୋଟ ଆଗାଟୀଟାକୁ କତରେ ରଖିଲେ । ଆଗାଟୀଟିରେ ଦୁଇ-ତିନିଦିନ ପାଇଁ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଲୁଗାପଟା ଓ ହାଲକା ନୋଟବୁକ୍ ଲାପଟ୍‌ପଟିଏ । ତିନିଦିନ କନ୍‌ସରେନ୍‌ସ୍ ଅଛି ସାନ୍‌ପ୍ରେନ୍‌ସିସ୍‌କୋରେ । ପ୍ରଥମ ଦିନ ହିଁ ସକାଳ ନ'ଅଟାରେ ତାଙ୍କର ପେପର୍ ପ୍ରେଜେଣ୍ଟେସନ୍ । ସାନ୍‌ପ୍ରେନ୍‌ସିସ୍‌କୋ ସମୟ ତେଟୋନାବିର୍ ସମୟ ଠାରୁ ତିନିଘଣ୍ଟା ପଛକୁ । ହାତ ବ୍ୟାଗ୍ ଭିତରୁ ଭଙ୍ଗାହୋଇ ରହିଥିବା ୪-୫ ପୃଷ୍ଠର କାଗଜ ଉପରେ ଆଖି ପକେଇନେଲେ ୫ ମିନିଟ୍ ପାଇଁ, କାଲି ପାଠ୍ୟ-ପଞ୍ଜି ପ୍ରେଜେଣ୍ଟେସନ୍ କରିବେ; ୨୫ ମିନିଟ୍ ଭିତରେ ସରିଯିବ, କିନ୍ତୁ ୨୦ମିନିଟ୍ ଆଲୋଚନାର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ-ଉତ୍ତର ଅଛି ପଛକୁ । ପାଖାପାଖି ଘଣ୍ଟାଏ ପ୍ରାୟ ।

ପର ଦିନ ସାନ୍‌ପ୍ରେନ୍‌ସିସ୍‌କୋ ସହରଟିକୁ ବୁଲି ଦେଖିବେ ଗୋଲ୍‌ଡେନ୍-ଗେଟ୍ ବିଜ୍ ସହ ସହରର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଆକର୍ଷଣ ସହ, ନହେଲେ ସମୟ କଟାଇବାକୁ ପଡିବ ଯେମିତି ହେଲେବି । ଶେଷ ଦିନଟିକୁ କେମିତି କଟେଇବେ ଠିକ୍ କରି ନାହାଁନ୍ତି ମଧ୍ୟ । ଦୁଏତ ହୋଟେଲ ପାଖାପାଖି ଚାଲିବୁଲି ସାନ୍‌ପ୍ରେନ୍‌ସିସ୍‌କୋର ଆବହାଡ଼ା ଓ ପରିସରକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବେ । ଏକା ଏକା ଜୀବନରେ 'ଉପଭୋଗ' ବୋଲି କିଛି ଆଉ ନାହିଁ । ଖାଲି ମାତ୍ର ଭୋଗିବାକୁ ହିଁ ଦୁଏ ସବୁକିଛି । ସବୁ ଥିଲେବି ବେଳେବେଳେ କିଛି ନ ଥିବାର ଆବହାଡ଼ା ଦେହରେ ଅଚାନକ ଅପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଶିତ ଶିତୁଆ ପବନ ଭଳି ପରଶି ଯାଏ । ଇଚ୍ଛା ଦୁଏ ଉଷ୍ମ ପତଳା କମ୍‌ଲଟିଏ ଭିତରେ ଭୁଜି ଯିବାକୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ କ୍ଷଣିକର ସେଇ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହାଲକା ଶୁଖିଲା ପତର ଭଳି କୁଆଡେ ଉଡିଯାଏ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ କରିଦେଇ । ଜୀବନର ଚକ ଗତି ଚାଲେ ଅବାରିତ ଭାବେ ବୟସର ବୋଝକୁ ଭାରି କରି କରି ।

'ଯୋନ୍ ୨' ବୋଲି ମାଇକ୍ ରେ ତାକ ଶୁଣି ସୁରେଖା ଆଗାଟୀଟିକୁ ଧରି ଆଗେଇ ଗଲେ । ପ୍ରେମ ଭିତରେ ଝରକା ପାଖ

ସିଟ୍ ଟି ତାଙ୍କର । ଆଗାଟୀଟିକୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଉପରକୁ ଥିବା କମ୍‌ପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ଓ ହାତବ୍ୟାଗ୍ ଟିକୁ ଗୋଡ ତଳକୁ ପାଖିକିଆ କରି ରଖିଲେ । ପାଖ ସିଟ୍‌କୁ ଜଣେ ମଧ୍ୟବୟସ୍କା ଭାରତୀୟ ଭଦ୍ରମହିଳା ଆସି ବସିଲେ । ବେଶ୍ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟବତୀ । ରଙ୍ଗ ବେରଙ୍ଗ ର ପୁଲ ପୁଟିଥିବା ସାଲୁୟାର-କମିଜ୍‌ଟି ଦେହକୁ ତାଙ୍କର ମାନୁଥାଏ । ହାତରେ ବଡ ବଡ ସୁନାବାଲା ସାଙ୍କୁ ବେକରେ ଭାରି ମୋଟା ବେନ୍‌ରେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଲକେଟ୍‌ଟିଏ । ସାମାନ୍ୟ କଥୋପକଥନରୁ ଜାଣିଲେ ଭଦ୍ରମହିଳାଙ୍କ ଘର ସାନ୍‌ପ୍ରେନ୍‌ସିସ୍‌କୋରେ । ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ଟ୍ରାଭଲ୍ ଏଜେନ୍‌ସି ବ୍ୟବସାୟ । ଦୁଇ ପୁଅ କଲେଜରେ, ଜଣେ ଜୁନିୟର୍ ଓ ଜଣେ ସୋଫୋମୋର । ଝିଅଟି ପାଞ୍ଚବର୍ଷ ତଳକୁ ତଥାପି ହାଇସ୍କୁଲରେ । ଝିଅଟିର କଥା କହିଲା ବେଳକୁ ଭଦ୍ରମହିଳାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ ହସ ପୁଟିଗଲା କ୍ଷଣିକ ପାଇଁ । ପ୍ରେମ ଉପରକୁ ଉଠିବାର ଅଧଘଣ୍ଟା ପରେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଏୟାରହୋଷ୍ଟେସ ମଝିରେ ଗାଡିଟିଏ ଠେଲି ଠେଲି ଆଣି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ୱାକ୍ ଓ ଡିଙ୍କ୍ ପରଶି ବାରେ ଲାଗିଗଲେଣି ସେତେବେଳକୁ । ଛୋଟ ପ୍ରେଜ୍‌ଜେଲ୍ ପ୍ୟାକେଟକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବଦେଇ ଦେଇ ପଚାରିଲେ 'ଜୁସ୍ ,କୋକ୍ ବା ଅନ୍ୟକିଛି?' ଭଦ୍ରମହିଳା ଚାହିଁଲେ ଅରେଞ୍ଜ ଜୁସ୍ ଓ ସୁରେଖା ଚାହିଁଲେ ପାଣି ବୋତଲଟିକୁ । ତାପରେ ସୁରେଖା ଦେଖିଲେ ଭଦ୍ରମହିଳା ଜଣଙ୍କ ଗୋଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଲେ ଆଉ ସୁରେଖା ଉପର ଲକେଟ୍‌ଟିକୁ ଲିଭାଇଦେଲେ ଓ ଛୋଟ ଝରକାଟିକୁ ଟାଣି ବନ୍ଦ କରିଲେ କିଛି ବିଶ୍ରାମ ନେବେ ବୋଲି । ଯେତେବେଳେ ସୁରେଖା ଆଖି ଖୋଲି ଜାଣିଲେ ବେଶ୍ କିଛି ସମୟ କଟି ଯାଇଛି ଏ ଭିତରେ । ପ୍ରାୟ ୨-୩ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଦୁଏତ । ଆନାଉନସ୍‌ମେଣ୍ଟରୁ ଜାଣିଲେ ପ୍ରେମ ଲ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ୍ କରିବାକୁ ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରିବ । ରାତି ସେତେବେଳକୁ । ଝରକା ତୋଳି ଦେଖିଲେ ସାନ୍‌ପ୍ରେନ୍‌ସିସ୍‌କୋ ସହରଟି ରାତିର ଆଲୋକ ମାଳା ଭିତରେ ଅପୂର୍ବ ମନେ ହେଉଛି ।

ସୁପର୍-ସକଲ୍‌ଟିରେ ବସି ଆସିଲେ ଏଲିସ୍ ଷ୍ଟିଟ୍‌ରେ ଥିବା ହୋଟେଲ୍ 'ମୋନାକ୍'କୁ । ବାହାରୁ ହୋଟେଲ୍‌ଟି ବିରାଟ ମନେ ହେଉଛି । ଏୟାର୍‌ପୋର୍ଟରୁ ମାତ୍ର ଅଧଘଣ୍ଟାଏ ବି ଲାଗିଲା ନାହିଁ ।

ସଙ୍ଗେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ଭାବରେ କିଛି ଚିନ୍ତା ଦେଲେ, ହୋଟେଲ ଭିତରେ ଢୁଙ୍କି, ପୁସ୍ତକ ଦେଖିବା ଚାହାଁ ନେଲେ । ସତର ମହଲାରେ ଥିବା ୧୦୩ ନମ୍ବର ରୁମ୍‌କୁ ପଶିଲେ ସୁରେଖା । ରାତି ୪ ଘଣ୍ଟାରୁ ବେଶୀ ହେଲାଣି ସେତେବେଳକୁ । ବେଶ୍ କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ଲାଗୁଥାଏ । ତେତେନା ବିଚରେ ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଦୁଇଟା ରାତି ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିବ । ସିମ୍‌ପଲ୍ ଶୋଇ ଯାଇଥିବ ଦିନେଶ୍ ଓ ରୀତାଙ୍କ ଘରେ, ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଶୀଖା ପାଖରେ । ସୁରେଖା ଆଗରୁ ଲ୍ୟାପ୍‌ଟପ୍‌କୁ ବାହାର କରି ନେଇ ପୁସ୍ତକ ଲଗେଇ ଦେଲେ । ରୁମ୍‌ଟି ଖୁବ୍ ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତ । ନାଇଟ୍ ଗାର୍ଡ୍‌ଟିକୁ ଗଳାଇ ନେଇ ରୁମ୍-ସଭିସ୍ କୁ ଡାକି ସକାଳ ସାତଟାରେ ଉଠେଇ ଦେବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରି ଶୋଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଲେ । ଘରୁ ବାହାରିବାର ପ୍ରାୟ ପନ୍ଦର ଘଣ୍ଟା କରି ଗଲାଣି । ସକାଳ ନ'ଟାରେ ପ୍ରେଜେଣ୍ଟେସନ୍ । ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ଆଖି ଲାଗିଗଲା ବିଛଣାରେ ପଡ଼ୁ ପଡ଼ୁ ସାରା ଦିନର କ୍ଳାନ୍ତି ଯୋଗୁ ।

ସକାଳ ସାତଟା ପୂର୍ବରୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲା । ପୂର୍ବଦିଗକୁ ଥିବା ବଡ଼ ଝରକାଟିରେ ଲାଗିଥିବା ଭାରି ସ୍କିନ୍ ଟିକୁ ଭିତ୍ତିଆଣିଲେ ଗୋଟିଏ ପାଖକୁ । ସତର ମହଲା ତଳୁ ସାନ୍‌ପ୍ରେସ୍‌ସିସ୍‌କୋ ସହରଟି ସକାଳ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ପହିଲି କିରଣରେ ଚିକ୍‌ଚିକ୍ କରୁଥାଏ । ଗତ ରାତିର କ୍ଳାନ୍ତି, ଅବସାଦ, ସକାଳର କଅଁଳ ପରଶରେ ଦୂରେଇ ଗଲାଣି ଦେହ ଓ ମନରୁ । ନିତ୍ୟକର୍ମ ସାରି ଲ୍ୟାପ୍‌ଟପ୍ ଓ ହାତବ୍ୟାଗ୍‌କୁ ଧରି ରୁମ୍‌ରୁ ବାହାରି ଗଲେ ସୁରେଖା । ପୁସ୍ତକ ଦେଖିବା ବୁଝିନେଇ କନ୍‌ସ୍‌ଟ୍ରକ୍‌ସନ୍ ହଲକୁ ଆଗେଇଲେ ଆଉ ରେଜିଷ୍ଟ୍ରେସନ୍ ସାରି ଡିସ୍‌ପ୍ଲେ ଟେବଲ୍ ଉପରେ ଥିବା ନାନା ରକମ ବ୍ରେକ୍‌ଫାଷ୍ଟ ଭିତରୁ ବ୍ଲୁ-ବେରୀ ମର୍‌ସିନ୍ ଓ କିଛି ଅରେଞ୍ଜ ଜୁସ୍‌କୁ ଚରଚରରେ ସାରି ରୁମ୍ ଭିତରେ ଢୁଙ୍କିଲେ । ରୁମ୍‌ଟି ୩୦ ଜଣ ବସିଲା ଭଳି । କିଛି ଲୋକ ବସିଗଲେଣି ମଧ୍ୟ ସୁରେଖା ଢୁଙ୍କିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ । ପ୍ରେଜେଣ୍ଟେସନ୍ ସରିଲା ପରେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ଆଶ୍ଚିତ୍ ଲାଗିଲା । ମୁଣ୍ଡ ରୁ ବଡ଼ ବୋଝଟିଏ ଉଠିଗଲା ଯେମିତି । ତାପରେ ସୁରେଖା ରୁମ୍‌କୁ ଯାଇ ଲ୍ୟାପ୍‌ଟପ୍ ଟିକୁ ରଖିଦେଇ ଆସି ହୋଟେଲ୍ ର ପକ୍ସିମ ଦିଗକୁ ଥିବା ଷ୍ଟର୍ଭିଞ୍ଜ୍ କାଫେ ଆଡ଼କୁ ମୁହାଁଇଲେ ।

କାଫେ ଭିତରକୁ ଆଖି ବୁଲେଇ ନେଇ ଦେଖିଲେ କାନ୍ଥକୁ ଲାଗିଥିବା ଗୋଲେଇ ଟେବୁଲ୍ ଖାଲି ପଡ଼ିଛି । 'ଗୁଆପାଲା' ବୋଲ୍‌ଡ କଫି କଫି ପାଇଁ ପଇସା ଦେଇ ସିଟ୍‌କୁ ଆସି କଫି ଧରି ରୁମ୍ ଭିତରେ ଆଖି ବୁଲେଇ ନେଲେ । ପାଖାପାଖି ସବୁ ସିଟ୍ ପ୍ରାୟ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି । ଡିନିଟି ସିଟ୍ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇ ସେଇ ଧାଡ଼ିରେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ଭଦ୍ରଲୋକ ବସିଥିବାର, ରୁପ୍‌ଟିର ପଛ ଆଡ଼ରୁ ମନେ ହେଲା । ଯଦିଓ ଜଣଙ୍କର ମୁହଁ ଅଧା ଦେଖା ଯାଉଛି ଓ

କତରୁ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ମନେ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି, ପଛ କରିଥିବା ଅନ୍ୟଲୋକ ଜଣଙ୍କୁ ବାରି ହେଉନି ଆଦୌ, ଭଦ୍ରଲୋକଙ୍କ ନ୍ୟାଭୀ ରଙ୍ଗର ସୁଟ୍‌ଟିର ପଛରୁ ଟିକିଏ ଦେଖାଯାଉଛି । କିଛି ସମୟ ସେଇଭଳି କରି ଯିବା ପରେ ସୁରେଖା ହାତବ୍ୟାଗ୍ ଟିକୁ ଧରି କାଫେରୁ ବାହାରିବାକୁ ଉଦ୍ୟମ କଲାବେଳେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଲେ ସେଇ ନ୍ୟାଭୀ ରଙ୍ଗ ସୁଟ୍ ପିନ୍ଧା ଲମ୍ବା ଚେହେରାର ଭଦ୍ରଲୋକଙ୍କ ସତ୍ତା ତାଙ୍କର ଖୁବ୍ ପାଖରେ । ଟିକିଏ ସଙ୍କୁଚିତ ହୋଇ ତଳୁ ମୁହଁ ତୋଳି ଚାହିଁଲେ ଭଦ୍ରଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ସୁରେଖା । ଆଖି ବିସ୍ତାରିତ ହେଲା, ମନ ସଙ୍କୁଚିତ ହେଲା, ପାଦ ତଳୁ ପୃଥିବୀ ଖସିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା... ପୁସ୍ତକ ଦୂରରେ ତାଙ୍କର, ତେଇଶି ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ଅତୀତ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଛି, ଆଖି ଆଗରେ , ସ୍ୱଦେହରେ , ନ୍ୟାଭୀ ରଙ୍ଗର ସୁଟ୍ ଭିତରେ । ସୁରେଖା ନିଜକୁ , ନିଜର ଆଖିକୁ, ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ଅସମ୍ଭବ ଅବିଶ୍ୱାସରେ ଠେଲି ଦେବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁ କରୁ ବହୁ ଦିନ ତଳର ସେଇ ଗଭୀର ସ୍ୱର ଶୁଣିଲେ 'ସୁରୁ'.....। ସେଇ ସ୍ୱର, ସେଇ ଗଭୀର ଚାହାଁଣୀ, ସେଇ ସୁଦୀପ୍ତ ପ୍ରେମ ପୁରୁଷ ଶଶାଙ୍କ.....ସମୟର ଧକ୍କା, ବୟସର ଧକ୍କା, ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କ ନାରୀ-ମନଜିଣା ପୌରୁଷକୁ ଆଘାତ କରି ପାରିନି । ପରିସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ଅସ୍ୱୀକାର କରି ହେଉନି ଶତ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଲେ ବି, ଅବିଶ୍ୱାସକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରି ମଧ୍ୟ ସୁରେଖା ହାରି ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି । ହାତ ଧରିଲା, ଦେହ ଭିତରେ ଅଜସ୍ର କଂପନକୁ ଚାପି ସୁରେଖା ଧରିଲା ଓଠରେ କହିଲେ 'ଶଶାଆଙ୍କ' । ବାଇଶି ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ପୋତା ଅତୀତ ଝାଡ଼ିଝୁଡ଼ି ହୋଇ, ସମାଧିକୁ ଓଟାରି ତାଟି, ପୁସ୍ତକ ଦୂରରେ ମାତ୍ର ଦକ୍ଷୟମାନ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ । ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ପଲକ ନି ପକାଇ ନିରବରେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥିଲେ କିଛିକ୍ଷଣ । ଶଶାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହୋଇ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରୁଥିଲେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ବସିବାକୁ । ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ବସିବାକୁ ହେବହିଁ.....ନହେଲେ ହୁଏତ ପଡ଼ିଯିବେ ସୁରେଖା । ଦୁଇ ମିନିଟ୍ ସେମିତି କଟିଗଲା, ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ପାଟିରେ ଭାଷା ନାହିଁ । ସୁରେଖା ଆଖି ତୋଳିଚାହିଁଲେ ଏଇଥର । କପାଳ କରରୁ ବାଳ ଉଠି ଗଲାଣି । ଲମ୍ବା ଛାଙ୍କ ଶରୀରରେ ବାଇଶି ବର୍ଷର ଛାପ ବାରି ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେଇ ସୁଦୀପ୍ତ ଚେହେରା ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କର ଅକ୍ଷତ ରହିଛି । ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ । ସ୍ମୃତିର ମହନ ଭିତରେ କିଛି ନିରବ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ କଟିଗଲା ପରେ ହୁଏତ ଉଭୟ ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହେଲେ । ସୁରେଖା ଭାବୁଥିଲେ କୋଉଠୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବେ ସେଇ ବାଇଶି ବର୍ଷ ତଳକୁ । 'ସୁରୁ ମୁଁ ସେଇଠି ଅଛି, ଟିକିଏ ମଧ୍ୟ ଘୁଞ୍ଚିନାହିଁ, ବାଣିବିହାର ଲାଇବ୍‌ରେରୀର ସେ ଛ' ନମ୍ବର ଡି-୨୦ ବହି ଥାଏ ପାଖରୁ । ସମୟ , ବୟସ ଓ ଜୀବନର ଧକ୍କା ଭିତରେ ତଥାପି ମୁଁ ସେଇ ଲାଇବ୍‌ରେରୀର ସ୍ମୃତିର ଥାଏ ତଳେ ଅଛି

ସୁରେଖା, ଯୋଉଠି ଆମର ଶେଷ ଦେଖା ହୋଇଥିଲା ବାଇଶି ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ । ତାଲ, ସେଇଠୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବା । ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କ କଥା କାନରେ ବାଜୁ ଥିଲା । ସୁରେଖା ଓ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ପଛକୁ ଫେରିଗଲେ ସେଇ ଡିକ୍ସ ଘଟଣା ବହୁଳ ଅତୀତକୁ ।

ଶଶାଙ୍କ ବାହୁଣ ଘର ତାଙ୍କର ଶିବ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କର ଏକମାତ୍ର ପୁଅ । ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଓ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରୀତିର ଘନିଷ୍ଠତାକୁ ସହଜରେ ନେଇ ପାରି ନ ଥିଲେ ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କ ବାପା-ମା', ସମାଜରେ ସମ୍ମାନ ହରେଇବାର ଭୟରେ । ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ବାପା ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଏ-ଜି ଅଫିସରେ ପ୍ରମୋସନ ପାଇ କିରାନୀରୁ ଉଠି ବଡ଼ କୀରାନୀ ଚିଏ ମାତ୍ର । ସୁରୀ ଝିଅଟିଏ ମାତ୍ର ତାଙ୍କର ସଂପତ୍ତି । ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ସଙ୍ଗେ ସମାଜରେ ସମାନ୍ୟ ହେବା ଏ ଜୀବନରେ ସମ୍ଭବ ନ ଥିଲା ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ପରିବାରର । ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ବିବାହ ନ କରାଇଦେବା ଓ ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ସଂପର୍କ କଟେଇ ଦେବା ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ଓ ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କ ଜିନ୍ଦ୍ ଭାଙ୍ଗିବା ପାଇଁ ନିଜର ଏକମାତ୍ର ପୁତ୍ରକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦୂରକୁ ପଠାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଶିବ ମିଶ୍ର । କାନାଡାରେ ଥିବା ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କ କଲେଜ୍ ପ୍ରବେଶରେ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟରିଂରେ ପି-ଏଚ୍-ଡି କରିବାକୁ ମାତ୍ର ସଫାହକ ପରେ କାନାଡା ଯାତ୍ରା କରିଥିଲେ ଶଶାଙ୍କ । ପଡିଶା ଘରର ପୁଅ ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କ ଦୂର ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ପୁତୁରା ଚିଟୁ ଠାରୁ ଖବର ଶୁଣି ମର୍ମାହତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ବାପା, ବୋଉ । କଥା ଅଛପା ନ ଥିଲା ସାଇ ପଡିଶାରେ; ଚିଟୁର ପରିବାରକୁ ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କର ଘନ ଘନ ଆସିବାଟା ଯେ କେବଳ ଚିଟୁର 'ସୁରୁ ନାନୀ' ପାଇଁ । ଚିଟୁର ପରିବାର ତାହୁଁ ଥିଲେ ସୁରେଖା ଓ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ମିଳନକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ।

ଚିଟୁର ବାପା ଦେବ ଭାଇନାଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ବାପା ଝିଅ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଧରି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ, ମନରେ ଅନେକ ଆଶା ଧରି ଭିକ ମାଗିବା ପାଇଁ ଜାତିର ଭେଦ ମନରେ ନ ରଖି । ଫେରି ଆସିଥିଲେ ସେ ମହଲଣ ଅଶୁଭ ସଞ୍ଚରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ରିକ୍ତ ହସ୍ତରେ, ରକ୍ତଶୂନ୍ୟ ମୁଖ ନେଇ । ବୋଉ, ବାପାଙ୍କ ପାଦ ଶବ୍ଦ ଶୁଣି ରୋଷେଇଘରୁ ଧାଇଁ ଆସିଥିଲା । ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ଡାହାଣ ଆଖିଟା ଡେଇଁଥିଲା ଦୁଇଦିନ ଧରି ଆଗାମୀ ଅଶୁଭର ସୂଚନା ଦେଇ । ବାପା, ବୋଉକୁ ରୂପ, ରୂପ କହୁଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଅସଫଳ ପ୍ରବେଶର ଅପମାନ ଭରା କାହାଣୀକୁ । କଟା ଘାଆରେ ଚୂନ ଦେଇ ଶିବ ମିଶ୍ର ମଧ୍ୟ କହିବାକୁ ଭୁଲି ନ ଥିଲେ ଯେ ସେ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ସହ ଚାହୁଁଲେ ବି ଦୁଇ ତିନିଟି ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଇ ପାରିବେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ଅଧା ଆଉଜା ଦୁଆର ସେପଟୁ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ଅଜାଳିକା ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଚୁର୍ମାର୍ତ୍ତ ହୋଇଥିଲା ଅଚାନକ ଭୂମିକାପରେ, ସେଇ ଅଶୁଭ ସଞ୍ଚରେ । କୋହ ଚାପି, ଆଖିରେ ଆଖିଏ ଲୁହ ଧରି ପାଖ ଘରେ ବିଛଣାରେ

ପଡି କଇଁ କଇଁ କାନ୍ଦୁଥିଲେ ସୁରେଖା ଡକିଆ ଡିକ୍ସାଇ । ବାପା ବୋଉ ଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରୁ ଭାଷା ହଜିଥିଲା, ତାଙ୍କୁ କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ହୁଏତ ସେମାନେ- ଲୁହରେ ଭସାଇ ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କୁ ଭୁଲି ଯିବା ପାଇଁ ସବୁ ଦିନ ଲାଗି । ସେଇ ଦିନ ଘରେ କେହି ଖାଇ ନ ଥିଲେ । ପର ଦିନ ସକାଳେ ଚିଟୁ ଆସି ରୂପ୍ ହୋଇ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ଦୁଆର ମୁହଁରେ କିଛି କ୍ଷଣ ବସି ଚାଲି ଯାଇଥିଲା । କେତେ ରାତି କଟିଥିଲା ଲୁହ ଭିଜା ଡକିଆକୁ ଜାକି, ବୋଉର କୋଳ ଲୁଗାକୁ ଡିକ୍ସେଇ । ଚିଟୁ ଠାରୁ ଶୁଣିଥିଲେ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରୁ ଫଲ୍ଲଟ ଧରି କାନାଡା ଯାତ୍ରା କରିଥିଲେ ତିନି ଦିନ ପରେ । ଆକାଶର (ବୋଧ) ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କୁ ମାଟିର ପୃଥିବୀରୁ ଧରିବାକୁ ଅସଫଳ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଥିଲେ ସୁରେଖା । ରାତି ପାହି ସକାଳ ହେଲା ବେଳକୁ ସୁରେଖା ଅନୁଭବ କରିଥିଲେ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ବିନା ପୃଥିବୀକୁ । ଜୀବନର ମୋଡ଼ ବଦଳିଲେ ବି ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କ ହସ, ମୁହଁ ଓ କଥା ମନରୁ ଲିଭିବାକୁ ଅନେକ ଦିନ ଲାଗିଥିଲା ।

ଛ' ମାସ ପରେ ବାପା ଓ ଦେବ ଭାଇନାଙ୍କ ବହୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାରେ ସୁରେଖା ଙ୍କ ବିବାହ ଠିକଣା ହୋଇଥିଲା ଶଶଧର ଦାସ୍ ଙ୍କ ପୁଅ ଜୀବନ ଦାସ୍ ଙ୍କ ସହିତ । ବାଇଶି ବର୍ଷର ରୂପସୀ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ଶଶଧର ବାବୁଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ଆନନ୍ଦରେ କୋଳେଇ ନେଲେ । ଜୀବନ ସେତେବେଳେ ଦମ୍ଭଦମ୍ଭ ରୁ ଏରୋନଟିକାଲ୍ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟରିଂ ପାସ କରି କଲିକତାରେ ହିଁ ଚାକିରି ପାଇଥିଲେ । ଜୀବନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେମ ପ୍ରୀତିର ପରଶରେ, ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ମନର ଆକାଶରୁ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଘୁଞ୍ଚି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ସବୁ ଦିନ ପାଇଁ । କଲିକତାରେ ମାତ୍ର ଚାରିମାସ ରହଣି ପରେ ଜୀବନଙ୍କର ହଠାତ୍ ଯୁ: ଏସ୍. ଏ. ଯାତ୍ରାର ଠିକଣା ହୋଇ ଥିଲା ଭଲ ଚାକିରିଟିଏ ପାଇ । ଜୀବନ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଫରିଡା ଏମ୍ପ୍ରିତିଲ୍ ଯୁନିଭର୍ସିଟିରେ ଏକ ମୋଟା ଅଙ୍କର ଦରମା ପାଇ । ବୋଉ , ବାପା ଖୁସି ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ପଡିଶା ଘର ଚିଟୁ ତା ଗଭୁରି ଆସୁଥିବା ନିଶରେ ହାତ ମାରି ଡେଇଁ କହିଥିଲା, ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଭାଇ କାନାଡା ଗଲେ ସିନା ସୁରୁ ଅପା ଆମର ଆମେରିକା ଯିବ.....ହେ.....ହେ । ଚିଟୁଟା ଚଗଲା ସିନା, କିନ୍ତୁ ଭାରି ସ୍ନେହ-କାଙ୍ଗଳ । ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ବାହାଘରରେ ଅନେକ ଖଟିଛି, କୋଉଠି ନାଲି, ନେଳୀ ଆଲୁଅ ଲାଗିବ, କୋଉଠୁ ବାଜା, ବାଣ, ହିନ୍ଦି ଫିଲ୍ମର ରେକର୍ଡ ଆସିବ ଆଉ କୋଉଠୁ ଫୁଲସଜା କାର୍ରେ ଯାଇ ଜୀବନ ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ପାଛୋଟି ଆଣିବ, ସବୁ କରିଛି ସାଙ୍ଗ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ଅକ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ଉତ୍ସାହରେ ଚିଟୁ । ସୁରେଖା ଓ ଜୀବନ ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବାର ପରଦ ଦିନ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଓଡିଶା ଯାଇ ବାପା, ମା'ଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟି ଫୁରିଡା ଯାତ୍ରା କରିଥିଲେ । ସୁରେଖା ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଏୟାର୍‌ପୋର୍ଟ ରୁ ବାପା ବୋଉ ଙ୍କୁ ଚାହିଁଥିଲେ ଆଖିରେ ଲୁହ ଭରି । ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କର ଆଖିରେ ଝିଅକୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଦେବାର କଷ୍ଟ

ଭିତରେ ବି ସୁରେଖା ଅନୁଭବ କରିଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିର ସନ୍ତୋଷ ଏକମାତ୍ର ଝିଅର ସୁଖର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତକୁ ଅନୁମାନ କରି । ପ୍ରେମ୍‌ର ଝରକା ଭିତରୁ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଦୂରେଇ ଯାଉଥିଲା ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କ ସ୍ତୁତିକୁ ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ପତଳା କରି । ଜୀବନଙ୍କ ବାହୁବନ୍ଧନ ଭିତରେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ମୋତ ବଦଳେଇଥିଲା ଆଗାମୀର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତକୁ କୋଳ କରି ।

ଆତ୍ମଲ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟ ଏୟାର୍‌ପୋର୍ଟରୁ ଡେଟୋନାଟିବ୍ ଏମ୍‌ପ୍ରିତିଲ୍ ଯୁନିଭର୍ସିଟିରେ ପଢ଼ୁଥି ନୁଆ ଜୀବନର ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥିଲେ ସୁରେଖା । କିଛି ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଝିଅ 'ସିମ୍‌ରନ୍'ର ଜନ୍ମ । ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ରଙ୍ଗ ଓ ହସ ଆଉ ଜୀବନଙ୍କ ଆଖି ଓ ନାକ ଆଣିଥିଲା ଛୋଟ ସିମ୍‌ରନ୍ । ସିମ୍‌ରନ୍ ଭରି ଦେଇଥିଲା ଅସରଳି ଆନନ୍ଦ ଓ ସାବଲୀଳ ଭାବେ ଜୀବନ ଗତି ଚାଲିଲା, ସିମ୍‌ରନ୍‌ର ସ୍କୁଲ ପ୍ରି-କେ ରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି । ଜୀବନ ଖେଳାଖେଳିକୁ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି । ଛୋଟ ବେଳୁ ଝିଅକୁ ବେସ୍‌ବଲ୍, ସକର୍ ଓ ବାସ୍କେଟ୍‌ବଲ୍ ଶିଖାନ୍ତି । ନିଜେ କ୍ରିକେଟ୍ ଖେଳିବାକୁ ଗଲାବେଳେ ଝିଅକୁ ସିଟି ସେଟ୍‌ସ୍ ପାର୍କକୁ ପ୍ରତି ଶନିବାର ନେଇ ଯିବାକୁ ଭୁଲନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦିନେ କଲେଜରୁ ଫେରି ଏକ ଅପରାହ୍ନରେ କହିଥିଲେ, ' ରେଖା, ଆଜି ଫେରୁ ଫେରୁ ଡେରି ହେବ ଫାଇନାଲ୍ କ୍ରିକେଟ୍ ଗେମ୍ ଯୋଗୁ । ସିମ୍‌ରନ୍ ରହିବ ଘରେ । ତିନର୍ ଖାଇନେବ, ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବ ନାହିଁ ' । ସୁରେଖା କି ଭାବିଥିଲେ ସେଇ ଏକ ସାଧାରଣ ଅପରାହ୍ନ, ଏକ କାଳ ରାତିରେ ପରିଣତ ହୋଇ ଜୀବନରୁ ତାଙ୍କର ସବୁ ଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଆଲୁଅ ଲିଭେଇ ଦେବ? ଘର ଛାଡ଼ିବାର ଘଣ୍ଟାଏ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ପରେ, ଜୀବନଙ୍କ ଘନିଷ୍ଠ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଦୀନେଶ୍‌ଙ୍କର ଅଚାନକ କାବାଟ ବାଡେଇବାର ଘନ ଘନ ଶବ୍ଦରେ ସୁରେଖା ଏକ ଅଜଣା ଭୟରେ ଦଉଡ଼ି ଯାଇ କବାଟ ଖୋଲିଥିଲେ । ଦିନେଶ୍‌ ସଂକ୍ଷେପରେ ଜୀବନଙ୍କ କ୍ରିକେଟ୍ ପ୍ରତିଆ ଉପରେ ଅଚେତ୍ ହୋଇଯିବା ଓ ହ୍ୟାଲିଫାକ୍ସ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ୍‌କୁ ଆମ୍ବୁଲାନ୍ସରେ ପଠା ହେବାର ଖବର ଦେଇ, ସିମ୍‌ରନ୍‌କୁ ନେଇ ନିଜ ଘରେ ରୀତା ପାଖେ ଛାଡ଼ି, ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ୍‌କୁ ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ବାଟରେ କହିଥିଲେ ବିନା ବଲ୍ ଓ ବ୍ୟାଟ୍‌ର ଆଘାତରେ ହଠାତ୍ ଏପରି ଅଚେତ୍ ହୋଇଯିବା ଓ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଜୀବନଙ୍କ କୌଣସି ଶାରୀରିକ ଅସୁସ୍ଥତାର ଆଗରୁ ଆଭାଷ ନ ଥିବାର ଜାଣି କିଛି ଆଉ ନ କହି ରୁପ୍ ହୋଇ ବାକି ତକ ରାସ୍ତା କଟେଇ ହ୍ୟାଲିଫାକ୍ସ ରେ ପଶିଲେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ।

ପ୍ରାୟ ଛଅ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବା ପରେ ଡାକ୍ତର ଲୋପେଜ୍ ବେନ୍ ସର୍ଜନ ଆସି କହିଥିଲେ ଜୀବନଙ୍କ ବେନ୍ କ୍ୟାନ୍‌ସର୍ ଖବର । ସୁରେଖା ଦୁଃଖରେ ମୁଗ୍ଧମାଣ ହୋଇ ଭାରୁଥିଲେ କିପରି ଏ ସମ୍ଭବ ବାହାଘର ପର ଠାରୁ ଦିନେ ଯିଏ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବିନ୍ଧା ବି

ଭୋଗିନି, ଦିନେ ଅଚାନକ ହାଲିଆ ବି ହୋଇନି, ଏତେବତ କଠିନ ରୋଗ ନିରବରେ ଜୀବନଙ୍କୁ ଖାଇ ଚାଲିବାର ଆଭାଷ ବି ଦେଇନି !! କିଛିଦିନର ଆଗ୍ରେସିଭ୍ କିମୋ-ଥେରାପି ପରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅବସ୍ଥାର ଅବନତି ହୋଇ ଚାଲିଛି । ଏକ କାଳ ବୈଶାଖୀ ରାତିରେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ହାତକୁ ଚାପିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରି କହିଥିଲେ ଜୀବନ ଭଙ୍ଗା ସ୍ୱରରେ, ସିମ୍‌ରନ୍... ସିମି..... , ହାତ କୋହଳିଥିଲା , ସୁରେଖା "ନାଃ" କହି ମାଟିରେ କଚାଡ଼ି ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲେ ଜ୍ଞାନ ହରେଇ । ଏମ୍‌ପ୍ରିତିଲ୍‌ର ସବୁ ଭାରତୀୟ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଯୁନିଭର୍ସିଟିର ଡିପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟ ବନ୍ଧୁମାନଙ୍କର ରାତିଦିନ ଲାଗି ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଓ ସଦିକ୍ଷା ଦିନେଶ୍‌ଙ୍କ ଅଖିଆ ଅପିଆ ରାତି ଦିନ କାଟିବାର ଘନିଷ୍ଠ ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ , ପ୍ରାଣ-ପ୍ରତିମା ସିମ୍‌ରନ୍ ଓ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ପଛ କରି ଆଖି ବୁଜିଥିଲେ ଜୀବନ, ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ଅସହାୟ କରି, ଏକୁଟିଆ ଛାଡ଼ି । ବାପା, ବୋଉ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଜମି ବିକି ,କରଜ କରି ଆମେରିକାକୁ, ଝିଅର ଅଚାନକ ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟର ଖବର ପାଇ । ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ପୋଛା କପାଳକୁ ଚୁମ୍ବା ଦେଇ ବୋଉ ବେହୋସ୍ ହୋଇଥିଲା, ବାପା ସ୍ତବିର ହୋଇ ବସି ରହିଥିଲେ ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କ ଲହୁଣୀ ପ୍ରତିମା 'ସୁରୁ' କଠିନ ପାଷାଣ ହୋଇ ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କୁ ବିଦାୟ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । କିଛିଦିନ ପରେ ଭାରତକୁ ଫେରିଗଲେ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଦୁଃଖର ବୋଝ ଧରି - ଆଉ ଚାରି ମାସ ଭିତରେ ବାପା ବୋଉ ପଛକୁ ପଛ ଡକାଡ଼କି ହେଲା ଭଳି ସଂସାର ଛାଡ଼ିଥିବାର ଖବର ପାଇଥିଲେ ସୁରେଖା ।

ଦୁଃଖଭରା, ପଥହରା , ଦିଗହରା ଜୀବନରେ ଝିଅ ସିମ୍‌ରନ୍ ହିଁ ଏକମାତ୍ର ପାଥେୟ ଥିଲା ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କର । ଦଶ ବର୍ଷର ଝିଅ ସିମ୍‌ରନ୍, ଦିନେଶ୍‌ ଙ୍କ ପରିବାରର ସ୍ନେହ, ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ଓ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ମାତୃତ୍ୱର ଅକଳନ ମମତା ଭିତରେ ତାତିକୁ ପ୍ରାୟ ଭୁଲିଥିଲା । ଜୀବନଙ୍କ ବିନା ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ଗତି ଚାଲିଲା । ଏମ୍‌ପ୍ରିତିଲ୍‌ର ପ୍ରେସିଡେଣ୍ଟ ଓ ଜୀବନଙ୍କର ଡିପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟର ତିନି ସ୍କର୍ ମାର୍ଟିନଙ୍କ ସହାୟତାରେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ଯୁନିଭର୍ସିଟିରେ ପାର୍ଟ ଟାଇମ ଚାକିରି ସହ ପି-ଏଚ୍-ଡି କରିବାକୁ ଆର୍ଥିକ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ମିଳି ଯାଇଥିଲା ଡିପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟ ଗ୍ରାଣ୍ଟ ରୁ ତିନିବର୍ଷ ପାଇଁ । ସୁରେଖା ବାଣିବିହାରରେ ଇକୋନମିକ୍ସ୍ ରେ ମାଷ୍ଟର୍ କରି ଥିଲେ ଆଗରୁ । ପି-ଏଚ୍-ଡି ସାରିବା ପରେ ପରେ ଏମ୍‌ପ୍ରିତିଲ୍‌ର ବିଜ୍ଞାନେସ ଡିପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ହିଁ ଇକୋନୋମିକ୍ସ୍‌ରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା ଚାକିରିଟିଏ ପାଇଥିଲେ । ଜୀବନ ଅବାରିତ ଗତି ଚାଲିଥିଲା ସିମ୍‌ରନ୍‌ର ରିପୋର୍ଟ କାର୍ଡ, ସ୍କୁଲ ଫର୍ସ୍‌ରେଜିଙ୍ଗ ବା ମ୍ୟୁଜିକ କ୍ୟାସ ଭିତରେ । ଆଉ ନିତିଦିନିଆ କଲେଜରେ ପାଠ ପଢେଇବାର ଚାପ, ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ , ପେପର୍ ପ୍ରେଜେଣ୍ଟେସନ ଓ ପବ୍ଲିକେସନ୍ ଭିତରେ ଅତୀତ ପୁରୁଣା

ହେବାରେ ଲାଗିଥିଲା ଓ ଜୀବନ ଗତି ଚାଲିଥିଲା ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କର ସିମ୍ବଲ୍‌କୁ ନେଇ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ "ଆଜି" ଯେ ଭିନ୍ନ, ନିରବରେ କାଟି ଚାଲିଥିବା ଅତୀତର ସବୁ "କାଲି" ଠାରୁ ! ସେଇ ଶଶାଙ୍କ, ଯିଏ ଅତୀତର ସାତ ତାଳ ପଙ୍କର ଗଭୀରତା ଭିତରେ ଡୁବି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ମନ ଭିତରୁ --ହଠାତ୍ ଉଦ୍‌ଘାଟିତ ହୋଇ ଦୁଇ ପୁସ୍ତକ ଦୂରରେ ମାତ୍ର ତାଙ୍କୁ, ଟେବୁଲ୍‌ର ଅପର ପାର୍ଶ୍ୱରେ ସ୍ୱଦେହରେ ଦକ୍ଷୟମାନ । ନିଜ ମୋଡ଼ ଭରା ଜୀବନର ଦୁଃଖଭରା କାହାଣୀକୁ କହିଥିଲେ ଓ ଶୁଣିଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କୁ । ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଆମେରିକାନ୍ ଝିଅ କିଛିନିକୁ ବିବାହ କରିଥିଲେ ସମୟ ସ୍ରୋତରେ । ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ହରେଇ ନିଜର ସୁଖର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତକୁ ଛାରଖାର କରିଥିଲେ କେବଳ ବାହୁଣୀ ପୁତ୍ର ବୋଲି । ଦୁଃଖ ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କ ବାହୁଣୀତାକୁ ଖିଞ୍ଚିଯାନ ଝିଅଟିଏ ବିବାହ କରି ଅପମାନ ଦେଇଥିଲେ, ନିଜର ଅକଳନ ଗାନୀକୁ ଘୋଡେଇବାର ଅସମ୍ଭବ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ଭିତରେ । କିଛିନିଙ୍କ ସହ ଚାରି ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ପୁଅ ଯସ୍‌ର ଜନ୍ମ ତାଙ୍କ ଦାମ୍ପତ୍ୟ ଜୀବନର ଚିହ୍ନଟାକୁ କିଛି ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରି ପାରି ନ ଥିଲା । ଆଉ ଛ'ମାସ ପରେ ତିତ୍ତୋର୍ସ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଶଶାଙ୍କ । ସେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଟେକ୍ସାସ୍ ହ୍ୟୁଷ୍ଟନ୍‌ରେ ଥିବା ଗୋଟିଏ କମ୍ପାନୀରେ ସି. ଇ. ଓ. । ଗୋଟିଏ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟରିଙ୍ଗ୍ କନସ୍ଟରକ୍ସନ୍‌ସ୍‌ରେ ସାନ୍‌ଫ୍ରାନ୍ସିସ୍କୋ ହୋଟେଲ 'ମୋନାକୋ'କୁ ଦୁଇଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ତୁମ୍ଭ ହୋଇ ଶୁଣିଥିଲେ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କର ଦୁଃଖଭରା କାହାଣୀ, ଓ କହିଥିଲେ 'ମୋ ଯୋଗୁ ତୁମକୁ ଏ ଅସହନୀୟ ଅବସ୍ଥା ଭିତରେ ଯିବାକୁ ପଡିଲା ସୁରୁ, ଯଦି ମୁଁ ସବୁ ବଦଳେଇ ପାରନ୍ତୁ...' ସୁରେଖା ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇ ନ ଥିଲେ । ଜୀବନରେ ଯାହା ଘଟି ଯାଇଛି, ତାକୁ କେହି ବଦଳେଇ ପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ, ତା ହୁଏତ ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କ ବରାଦ ।

ପର ଦିନ ହ୍ୟୁଷ୍ଟନ୍‌କୁ ଫେରି ଯିବାର କଥା ଥିଲା ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଙ୍କର । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଇ କଫି ଶପ୍ତ ଛାଡିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଫ୍ଲୁଇଡ୍ କ୍ୟାନିଷ୍ଟ୍ରାଲ୍ କରି ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ସେଇ ଟେବୁଲ୍‌ରେ ବସି । ଉଭୟ ନିରବରେ ବସିଥିଲେ କିଛି କ୍ଷଣ । ପରଦିନ ଗୋଲ୍‌ଡେନ୍ ଗେଟ୍ ବିଜ୍ ଓ ସାରା ସହରଟିକୁ ବୁଲି ଦେଖିଥିଲେ । ସୁରେଖା ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିଲେ ବହୁଦିନର ପୁଞ୍ଜିତ ଦୁଃଖ ଯେମିତି ହାଲୁକା ହେବାରେ ଲାଗିଛି... । ରେଷ୍ଟୁରାଣ୍ଟ୍‌ରେ ସଞ୍ଚରେ ତିନର୍ ଖାଇବା ସମୟରେ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ସିମ୍ବଲ୍‌ର ଫେଟୋଟିକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ, ଆଉ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ ସିମ୍ବଲ୍ ବିଷୟରେ ଅଧିକା । କନସ୍ଟରକ୍ସନ୍‌ସ୍‌ରେ ବର୍ଷରେ ଥରେ ଦୁଇଥର ବାହାରକୁ ଗଲେ ସିମ୍ବଲ୍‌କୁ ଦିନେଶ୍ ଓ ରୀତାଙ୍କ ପାଖେ ଛାଡି ଆସନ୍ତି ସୁରେଖା । ସିମ୍ବଲ୍ ଭାବେ ଦୀନେଶ୍‌ଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ଶାଖା ସଙ୍ଗେ ତାର 'ଶ୍ଲିପ୍-

ଓଭର୍' ଓ ଖୁସିରେ ଗପେ ତାଙ୍କ ଛୋଟ ପୁଅବୀର ଘଟଣା ସବୁକୁ ସୁରେଖା ଫେରି ଆସିବା ପରେ । ଶାଖା ଓ ସିମ୍ବଲ୍, ଏକା କ୍ୟୁମ୍‌ପେଟ୍ ଓ ଏକା ସ୍କୁଲରେ ପଢନ୍ତି । ସିମ୍ବଲ୍ ବିଷୟରେ ଗପିବା ବେଳେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ଚିକ୍‌ଚିକ୍ କରିବାର, ନିରବରେ ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିଲେ, ଓ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥିଲେ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ।

ଘଟି ଯାଇଥିବା ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣା ଭରା ଜୀବନ ପାଇଁ ନିଜକୁ ଦୋଷୀ କରିଥିଲେ ଶଶାଙ୍କ , ବାରମ୍ବାର ଭୁଲ୍ ମାଗିଥିଲେ ଓ କ୍ଷମା ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ । ସୁରେଖା ତୁମ୍ଭ ରହି ଭାବୁଥିଲେ, କ୍ଷମା ଦେଲେ ବି ଘଟି ଯାଇଥିବା ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣା ଭରା ଜୀବନ ବଦଳି ଯିବ ନାହିଁ, ଯାହା ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭୋଗିବାକୁ ହୋଇଛି ମାତ୍ର । ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଭାବୁଥିଲେ କେମିତି କହି ବୁଝାଇବେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ଯେ - ବୟସ ବଢିଛି , ସମୟ ଗତିଛି ସିନା ସୁରେଖା ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ସେମିତି ଅକ୍ଷତ ...ଦେବୀ ଭଳି ପୂଜା ପାଉଛନ୍ତି ! ଯସ୍‌ର ଜନ୍ମ ବେଳାରେ, କିଛିନି ଠାରୁ ତିତ୍ତୋର୍ସ ହେବା ଦିନ କୋର୍ଟରେ, ଆଉ ଏକା ଏକା କେତେ ବ୍ୟଥିତ ଅକଳନ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ଚମ୍ପାପୁଲ ଭଳି ମୁହଁଟି ଦିଶି ଯାଇଛି ଅଗଣନ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ । ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଅଜସ୍ର ତୋଳପାତ । ତେଇଶି ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ତାଙ୍କ ମନର ମଣିଷଟିକୁ ଏଇଭଳି, ଏଇ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଦିନେ ଭେଟିବେ ବୋଲି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ବି ଭାବି ନ ଥିଲେ । ମନର ଗନ୍ତାଘରେ ତାଲା ଦେଇ ଚାବୀଟିକୁ ଇଛା କରି ହରାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ସମୟର ସ୍ରୋତରେ କଚଡା ଖାଇ ଖାଇ ଭାସି ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି ଯାହା ଜୀବନ ଜୁଆରରେ । ବଞ୍ଚିଛନ୍ତି ବଞ୍ଚିବାକୁ ହେବ ବୋଲି ।

"ସାନ୍‌ଫ୍ରାନ୍ସିସ୍କୋ"କୁ ଭୁଲି ହେବନି କେବେ ଜୀବନରୁ । ଫେରିବାଦିନ ଏୟାରପୋର୍ଟକୁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ଶଶାଙ୍କ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ସହ ପ୍ରାୟ ଦୁଇ ଘଣ୍ଟା ପୂର୍ବରୁ । ତାଙ୍କର ହ୍ୟୁଷ୍ଟନ୍‌କୁ ଫ୍ଲୁଇଡ୍ ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ଫ୍ଲୁଇଡ୍‌ର ଆଉ ଘଣ୍ଟାଏ ପରେ । ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେମ୍ ଛାଡିବାର ଆନାଉନ୍‌ସ୍‌ମେଣ୍ଟ୍ ହେଲା । ସୁରେଖା ବ୍ୟାଗ୍ ଧରି ଉଠି ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କ ଆଖିକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା ବେଳକୁ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ହଠାତ୍ ତାଙ୍କ ହାତଟିକୁ ଧରି କହିଲେ 'ମୋ ଭୁଲ୍‌ର ପ୍ରାୟଶ୍ଚିତ ନାହିଁ ସୁରୁ....., ହରେଇଥିବା ସମୟ ଫେରିବ ନାହିଁ , ତଥାପି ଗୋଟିଏ ମାଗୁଣୀ ରଖିବ ମୋର? ସୁରେଖା ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ , କହି ପାରି ନଥିଲେ ଯେ 'ଆଜି ମୁଁ ରିକ୍ସ-ହସ୍ତା ଶଶାଙ୍କ , ଯେବେ ନିଜକୁ ଅଜାତି ଦେବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲି ତୁମ ପାଦ ତଳେ, ଜୀବନ ସୁଯୋଗ ଦେଇ ନ ଥିଲା ଆମକୁ । ଆଜି ଏ ଆଘାତ ଭରା ଜୀବନରେ ଖାଲି ଶୂନ୍ୟତା .....କଣ ଚାହୁଁ ଆଜି ଶଶାଙ୍କ ?' କିଛି ନିରବ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ କଟିଥିଲା ସିନା ସୁରେଖା ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇ ନ ଥିଲେ । ଶଶାଙ୍କ ମାଗୁଣୀ ମାଗିଥିଲେ ପୁଣିଥରେ 'ମତେ ଅନୁମତି ଦିଅ ସୁରେଖା, ମୁଁ

ସିମ୍ବଲ୍‌କୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ ଥରକ ପାଇଁ ହେଲେବି' । ସୁରେଖା ଭାଷାଶୂନ୍ୟ... ଅତୀତର ସେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ଆଜ୍ଞାଳିକା ଭାସି ଆସିଲା କ୍ଷଣକ ପାଇଁ ପୁଣିଥରେ, ମନର ସେ ନିଭୃତ ପୃଥିବୀକୁ, ଯୋଉଠି ଦିନେ, କେବେ ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇ ନଥିବା "ଶଶାଙ୍କ - ସୁରେଖା"ଙ୍କ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ଭରା କୋଳାହଳ ଶୁଣି ଥିଲେ, ଯୋଉଠି ଦିନେ ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ବାକ୍ସ୍ୟର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖି

ଉଲ୍‌ସିତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସୁରେଖା । ସୁରେଖା ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହୋଇ ବାଁ ପାଦକୁ ଆଗକୁ ବଢାଇ ଶଶାଙ୍କଙ୍କ ଆଖିକୁ ଆଉଥରେ ଗଭୀର ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ଚାହିଁ ହଠାତ୍ ଫିକ୍ କରି ହସିଦେଲେ । ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ତେଇଶି ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ସୁରେଖାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିଥିଲେ ଶଶାଙ୍କ ଆଉ ସୁରେଖା ଦେଖିଥିଲେ ଆଖି ସାମ୍ନାରେ ତାଙ୍କର, ଜୀବନ ମୋତ ବଦଳଊଛି, ହୁଏତ ପୁଣିଥରେ ।

*ତଃ ସୁଲକ୍ଷଣା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଧକ୍ଷ୍ଣୟିତ୍ରୀରେ ମ୍ୟାଥ୍‌ମାଟିକ୍‌ସ୍ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ । ସ୍ୱାମୀ ତଃ ଶୁକ୍ଳଦେବ୍ ସେନ୍ ଓ ଝିଅ ସୁଜାନ୍ ସହ ତେରୋନାବିର୍, ପୁରୀତାରେ ରହନ୍ତି । ଇଂରାଜୀ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଲେଖାଲେଖି କରିବା ଛଡା ରନ୍ଧାବନ୍ଧା ଓ ବଗିଚା କାମ କରିବାରେ ନିଜର ଅବସର କଟେଇବାକୁ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି ।*

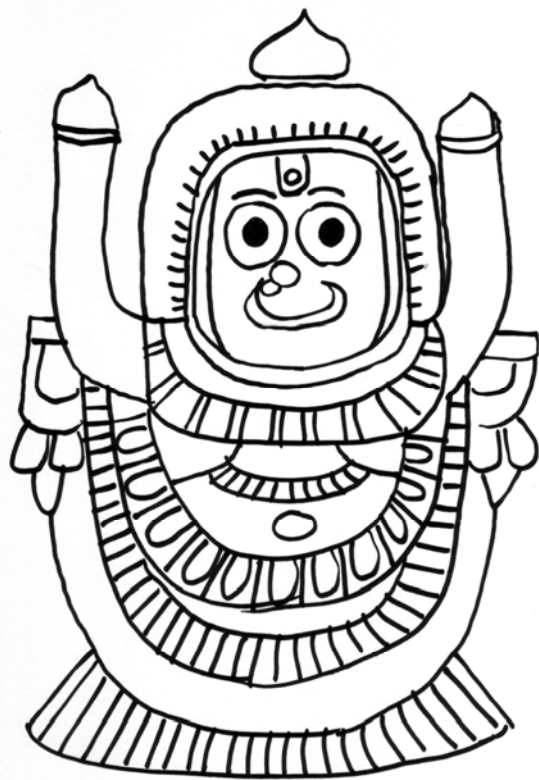
## ଅଧା ଓଡ଼ିଆ

*ନିୟତି ମହାନ୍ତି*

ମୋତେ ଲାଗେ ସବୁ କବିତା ଗୁଡ଼ା ଅଧା  
 ଯେମିତି କି ସବୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଗୁଡ଼ା,  
 ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯାଏ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ରହିଯାଏ  
 ଭାଷା ସରିଯାଏ ଭାବ ରହିଯାଏ ।

ଯେମିତି କି ସବୁ weekend ଗୁଡ଼ା ଅଧା  
 ରବିବାର ଅପରାହ୍ନରୁ ସୋମବାର ପାଇଁ  
 ଚିଫିନ୍ ସଜାଡିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଯାଏ ।

ସଞ୍ଜ ପାଇଁ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ସବୁବେଳେ ଅଧା  
 ଆମର ତ ସଞ୍ଜ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ହିଁ ଅଧା  
 ଆମର ଭାଷା, ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ସଂସ୍କୃତି ସବୁ ଅଧା  
 ଅଧା କାନାଡ଼ିୟ ଅଧା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ।



*ଲେଖିକା ନିୟତି ମହାନ୍ତି ମାଲ୍‌ଗନ, ମିସିସାଉରା ରେ ନିବାସ କରନ୍ତି । ସେ କବିତା ଲେଖିବା ଓ ପଢ଼ିବାରେ ବିଶେଷ ରଚି ରଖନ୍ତି ।  
 ଉପରୋକ୍ତ କବିତା ଟି ୨୦୦୮ ଟରୋଙ୍କ୍ସେ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପାଠକରେ ପାଠ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା ।*



# ଚାନ୍ଦ ପୂଜା

ସୁଲୋଚନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ବୋଉ ନାହିଁ, ନାହିଁ ଏଠି ତୁଳସୀ ଚଉରା  
କୁଲା ନାହିଁ, ଡାଲା ନାହିଁ, ନାହିଁ ବି ତ ଲିଆ  
ଦଶହରା ରଜ ସଜ କୁମାର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା  
ତଥାପି ଭୁଲିନି ମନୁ ବିଦେଶୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ।

ଶନିବାର ରବିବାର ମୁଲ୍ୟବାନ ଦିନ  
ସବୁ ପର୍ବ ପଡ଼େ ଏଠି ସେ ଦୁଇ ଦିନରେ  
ହାଲୋଇନ୍ କ୍ରୀୟମାସ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ  
ପିଲା ମନ ଉଣା ହେବ ନ କରି ପାରିଲେ ।

ମାଆ ମନ ବୁଝେ ନାହିଁ, ବୁଝେ ନାହିଁ ଝିଅ  
ତଥାପି ପାଲୁଛେ ଆମେ ପରବ ପର୍ବାଣୀ  
ବାର ମାସେ ତେର ପର୍ବ ହୋଇ ନ ପାରିଲେ  
ଅବଶୋଷ ନାହିଁ, ଯଦି ଏକ ମନ, ଏକଇ କାହାଣୀ ।

ଆସ ଆଜି ହଜିଯିବା ସ୍ମୃତିର ସପନେ  
ଖୋଜି ଖୋଜି ଅତୀତର ବିତିଥିବା ଦିନ  
ଦଶହରା ରଜ ସଜ କୁଆଁର ପୁନେଇ  
ଭାବିଦେଲେ ମନ ମୋର ହୁଏ ଆନମନ ।

ମନେ ପଡ଼େ ଆଜି ମୋର ବୋଉର ଚାରିଦା  
କୁଆଁର ପୁନେଇ କାଲି ଶୋଇବୁନି ତେରୀ  
ସକାଳର ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପୂଜା ଭୁଲି ତ ଯିବୁନି  
ତୁଳସି ଚଉରା ମୂଳେ ଦେବାକୁ ଅଞ୍ଜଳି ।

ମନ ମୋର ଛନ ଛନ କାଳେ ଡେରି ହେବ  
ଚାହେଁନି ମୁଁ ବୁଝା ବର ପାଇବାକୁ କେବେ  
ଚାଉଁ ଚାଉଁ ଲାଗେ ଖାଲି ନିଦ ଆସେ ନାହିଁ  
ସଜ ସକାଳରେ ଦେବି, ଅଞ୍ଜଳି ମୁଁ ଭାବେ ।

ଅପା ମୋର ପୂଜା କରେ ଚଉରା ମୂଳରେ  
ଫୁଲ ଲାଗିଥିବା ଜହ୍ନି ଆଉ କାକୁଡ଼ି କଷିରେ  
ସଞ୍ଜ ବେଳ ଚାନ୍ଦ ପୂଜା ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀ ମେଳେ  
ସାରା ଦିନ କଟିଯାଏ ଆଖି ପଲକରେ ।

ଗୋଡ଼ ଲାଗେ ନାହିଁ ତଳେ, ମନ ଆକାଶରେ  
ବୋଉ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ସାରା ଦିନ, ମନ ମୋର ଚାନ୍ଦ ଚକଟାରେ  
ଭାଇ ପାଇଁ ଛେନା ଚାନ୍ଦ, ଆମ ପାଇଁ ଲିଆ  
ଶହ ଶହ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଆସେ, ଶୋଡ଼ଣୀ ମୋ' କୁଆଁରୀ ମନରେ ।

କୁମାର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା ଖାଲି କରିବେ କୁମାରୀ  
ପାଇବାକୁ ମନ ଲାଖି ଜୀବନର ସାଥୀ  
ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମାର ଚାନ୍ଦ ସମ ସୁଗୁଣେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ  
ପିଲା ଖେଳ ମନେ ହୁଏ ଭାବିଦେଲେ ଆଜି ।

ଏତିକି ମିନତି ପ୍ରଭୁ ଆଜି ତୁମ୍ଭ ପାଶେ  
ଯେତେ ସବୁ ଝିଅ ଏଠି କଲେ ଚାନ୍ଦ ପୂଜା  
ପାଆନ୍ତୁ ସେ ମନ ଲାଖି ଜୀବନର ସାଥୀ  
ଗାଆନ୍ତୁ ସେ ସବୁଦିନ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଧୂଜା ।

*Sulochana Patnaik, a Maryland resident, wrote and recited this poem on the occasion of 2007 OSADC Kumar Utsav function.*



## ରନ୍ଧା ଓ ରାନ୍ଧୁଣୀ

ଶୀମତୀ ଶାନ୍ତିପ୍ରିୟା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ଆଳୁ ଟକାଟକ

ଉପକରଣ - ସିଙ୍ଗାଆଳୁ ୨୦୦ ଗ୍ରାମ୍  
କର୍ଣ୍ଣଫ୍ଲୋର୍ ୪ ଚାମଚ୍  
ଟମାଟୋ ସସ୍ ୪ ଚାମଚ୍  
କଟା ଅଦା ୧ ଓ ୧/୨ ଚାମଚ୍  
କଞ୍ଚା ଲଙ୍କା ୪ - ୫ ଟା ଦହି ୬ ଚାମଚ୍  
କିଛି ଭୃଷଙ୍ଗା ପତ୍ର ଓ ସୋରିଷ  
ଲଙ୍କା ଗୁଣ୍ଡ ଓ ଲୁଣ ସ୍ୱାଦ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ



ପ୍ରଣାଳୀ - ଆଳୁସିଙ୍ଗାକୁ ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ କାଟି କର୍ଣ୍ଣଫ୍ଲୋର୍ ଓ ଲୁଣ ରେ ଗୋଳାଇ ରଖନ୍ତୁ । ଗରମ ତେଲରେ ଏହି ଆଳୁ ଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଛାଣି ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ । ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ପାତ୍ରରେ ତେଲ ଦେଇ ସୋରିଷ ଓ ଭୃଷଙ୍ଗା ପତ୍ର ଫୁଟାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ । ଅଦା ଓ କଞ୍ଚା ଲଙ୍କା ମଧ୍ୟ ସେଥିରେ ଭାଜି ନିଅନ୍ତୁ । ତା'ପରେ ଦହି, ଟମାଟୋ ସସ୍ ଓ ଛଣା ଆଳୁ ଏକାଠି ସେଥିରେ ଦେଇ ଘାଙ୍କନ୍ତୁ । ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ଅନୁସାରେ ଲୁଣ ଓ ଲଙ୍କାଗୁଣ୍ଡ ମିଶାଇ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ । ଏହା ଏକ ରଚିକର ଜଳଖିଆ ।

ବାଇଗଣ ସାଲେମା

ଉପକରଣ - ଛୋଟ ବାଇଗଣ ୨୦୦ ଗ୍ରାମ  
ଅଦା ରସୁଣ ବଟା ୧ ଓ ୧/୨ ଚାମଚ  
ନଡ଼ିଆ ରସ ୧ କପ୍  
ଧଳା ରାଶି ୨୦ ଗ୍ରାମ୍  
ଚିନା ବାଦାମ୍ ୨୦ ଗ୍ରାମ୍  
ପୋସ୍ତକ ୨୦ ଗ୍ରାମ୍  
ହଳଦୀ ୧ ଚାମଚ  
ଲୁଣ, ଲଙ୍କା ଗୁଣ୍ଡ, ଭୃଷଙ୍ଗା ପତ୍ର, ଚିନି, ଗରମ ମସଲା ଓ ରିଫାଇନ୍ ତେଲ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ଅନୁସାରେ

ପ୍ରଣାଳୀ - ବାଇଗଣ କୁ ଚାରିଭାଗ କରି କାଟିବ ଯେପରିକି ଡେଞ୍ଜ ଲାଗିଥିବ । ତା'କୁ ତେଲରେ ଛାଣି ଦେବ । ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ପାତ୍ରରେ ତେଲ ଦେଇ ଭୃଷଙ୍ଗା ପତ୍ର ବଘାରିବ । ରସୁଣ, ଅଦା ବଟା ୧ ଚାମଚ ଦେଇ କଷିବ । ତା'ପରେ ଲଙ୍କା ଗୁଣ୍ଡ ୧ ଚାମଚ, ହଳଦୀ ଗୁଣ୍ଡ ୧/୨ ଚାମଚ ଦେଇ କଷିବ । ତା'ପରେ ରାଶି, ଚିନା ବାଦାମ୍, ପୋସ୍ତକ ବଟା ଓ ୧/୨ ଚାମଚ୍ ଚିନି ଦେଇ ପୁଣି କଷିବ ।

୨ - ୪ ମିନିଟ୍ କଷି ସାରି ବାଇଗଣ ଓ ଲୁଣ ପକାଇ ଘାଞ୍ଜିବ । କପେ ନଡ଼ିଆ ରସ ଦେଇ କିଛି ସମୟ ଫୁଟାଇ ଗରମ ମସଲା ଦେଇ ବନ୍ଦ କରି ରଖିବ । ଏହା ପ୍ରାୟ ୬ - ୭ ଦିନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତାଜା ରହିବ ଓ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗିବ ।

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ଶୀମତୀ ଶାନ୍ତିପ୍ରିୟା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରେ ୪ ନମ୍ବର ଯୁନିଟ୍ ରେ ନିବାସ କରନ୍ତି । ସେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପତ୍ର ପତ୍ରିକା ପଢ଼ିବା ସହ ରୋଷେଇରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ରଚି ରଖନ୍ତି । ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଶୈଳୀରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜନ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରିବାକୁ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି ।

# କୋମଳ ଗାନ୍ଧାର

ଶୀମତୀ ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲତା ମହାପାତ୍ର

ଆଜି ଯାଏ ଦେହକୁ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଭଲ ଛିଟ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ପାଇଲା ନାହିଁ ଗେଣ୍ଡି । ଖାଲି ଚିରା ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଆଉ ଫଟା ଫାଣ୍ଡେରା ଅଙ୍ଗ । କି ଖରା, କି ବର୍ଷା କି ଶୀତ ଏତିକି ରେ ତାର ବର୍ଷକ ବାରମାସ ବିତିଯାଏ । ଛିଟ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଖଣ୍ଡେ କୁଞ୍ଚେଇ ପିନ୍ଧି, ନାଲିଆ ଅଙ୍ଗକୁ ଦେଖେଇ ଖୁସିରେ ବଜାରକୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ମନହୁଏ ଗେଣ୍ଡିର । ଛିଟ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ହେଲେ ଭଲ ହୁଅନ୍ତା ।

ମେକି ବା' ହେଲାବେଳେ କଇଥିଲା, "ବର ଦବଲୋ ! କେତେ ପିନ୍ଧିବୁ?" ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଜାଣିଛି, ବା' ହେଲେ ବରଟେ ହୁଏ । ଛିଟ ଶାଢ଼ୀ, ବାସନା ତେଲ, ଚିକିଲି ପେକେଟ ଦିଏ ।

କନିଆଁ ସାଜି ମେକିଟା ଭଲ ଦିଶୁଥିଲା । ବରଟେ ଆସି ମେକିକୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନେଇଗଲା । ବରଟେ ହେଲେ ଭଲ ହୁଅନ୍ତା । ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଓଢ଼ଣା ତଳୁ କଣେଇ କଣେଇ ଅନେଇବ, ମୁକ୍ତି ମୁକ୍ତି ହସିବ, ମଜା କରିବ, ଫେରିବାଲାଠୁ ହରେକମାଲ କିଣିବ, ପିଲିମ ଯିବ; ଏସବୁ ସେ ଜାଣେ । ବରଟେ ହେଲେ ଭଲ ହୁଅନ୍ତା ।

ଖାଲି ଛିଟ ଶାଢ଼ୀ, ନାଲିଆ ଅଙ୍ଗ , ବରଟେ ନୁହଁ । ଏମିତି କେତେ କଥା ଗେଣ୍ଡି ମନକୁ ଆସେ । ତା'ଭଳି ଝିଅମାନେ କେତେ ଭଲରେ ରହିଛନ୍ତି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଗେଣ୍ଡି ତବତବ ଚାହିଁ ରହେ । ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବାଳ ଆଲୁବାଲୁ ହୋଇଯାଉଛି । କିଲିପି ଦି'ଟା ହେଲେ ଭଲ ହୁଅନ୍ତା । ବାବୁଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଦୋକାନରୁ ଜିନିଷ ନେବାକୁ ଆସିଛି ଗେଣ୍ଡି । ପଣା ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତି ତ ବଡ଼ି ସକାଳୁ ମରିରେ ଭିତ । ରାସ୍ତାରେ ବଡ଼ ଗହଳି, ପୁଲିସି ବାଲାମାନେ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ତଥାପି ମାତପିଟ ଲାଗି ଯାଉଛି । ଯୁଆଡେ ଚାହିଁବ ସେଆଡେ ମୁଣ୍ଡମାଳ । ରଙ୍ଗ ବେରଙ୍ଗର ସାଜ ପୋଷାକ । ଏସବୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଗେଣ୍ଡି କୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗେ । କେତେ ପ୍ରକାର ପୈକାଳି କେତେ ରକମ ବାଜା, କେତେ ରଙ୍ଗର ବେଲୁନ । ବେଲୁନ ଗୋଟେ ହେଲେ ଭଲ ହୁଅନ୍ତା ।

ଚିହ୍ନା ଦୋକାନ । ଦୋକାନ ରେ ଚାରିଟା ପିଲା କାମ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଜିନିଷ ଓଜନ ହେଉଛି । ଠୁଙ୍ଗରେ ପଶୁଛି । ଗରାଖ ନିଜ ଡାଲିକା ମିଳେଇ ଜିନିଷ ରଖୁଛନ୍ତି । ଟଙ୍ଗ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଯିଏ ଶହେ ଟଙ୍ଗରୁ ବେଶି ଜିନିଷ କିଣୁଛି ତାକୁ ଲୁଣ ଖିଆ ଝିଲ ଡାଟିଆ ଟାଏ ମିଳୁଛି । ଏକଥା ଆଜି ଦିନକ ପାଠ ।

ସଜା ହେଲା ପରି କାମ ଚାଲିଛି । ଦୋକାନ ଭିତରେ ପାଟିତୁଣ୍ଡ ନାହିଁ । ବଡ଼ ଦୋକାନ; ବାବୁ ଘରକୁ ଫି ମାସରେ ଏଇଠୁ ସଉଦା ଯାଏ । ବାବୁ ଘରେ ହଳିଆ ଥିବା 'ଦିନୁଭାଇ' ବାବୁଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଆସି ଜିନିଷ ନିଏ । ତାକୁ ଜ୍ୱର ବୋଲି ଗେଣ୍ଡି

ଆସିଛି । ଦୋକାନ ବଜାର କୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ତାକୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗେ । ସବୁ ଜିନିଷ ତାକୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗେ । ସବୁ ଜିନିଷ ତାକୁ ନୁଆ ଦିଶେ । ଗେଣ୍ଡି ବଲବଲ କରି ଚାରିଆଡକୁ ଚାହିଁ ଥାଏ । ଜିନିଷ ଓଜନ କରୁଥିବା ଲୋକଟା ଗେଣ୍ଡିକୁ ଚାହିଁ କହିଲା "କଣ ଦେଖୁଛୁ?"

ଭକ କିନା ପାଟିଲାଳକୁ ଢୋକିସୁନେଲା ଗେଣ୍ଡି । ହସିଲା; ଏତେବଡ଼ ଦୋକାନ, ଚଟାପଟ କାମ ହୋଇଯାଉଛି । କେତେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଡାଲି, ସୁଜି ଓଜନ କରି ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଜିରା, ସୋରିଷ, ଫୁଟଣ ଆଗପରି ଆଉ ନାହିଁ । ଏବେ ସବୁ ଚିତ୍ତ ପ୍ୟାକେଟ ରେ ମିଳୁଛି । ଦିନକୁ ଦିନ ମଣିଷ ମାନଙ୍କ ପରି ଜିନିଷପତ୍ରର ର ରଙ୍ଗଙ୍ଗ ବି ବଦଳି ଯାଉଛି । ସାବୁନ ଖୋଳର ରଙ୍ଗକୁ ଘଡ଼ିଏ ଚାହିଁ ରହେ ଗେଣ୍ଡି । ଶୁଙ୍ଘି ହୁଏ, ସାବୁନ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ହେଲେ ଭଲ ହୁଅନ୍ତା ।

ଗୋଟାଏ କୋଣରେ ଚିତ୍ତି ଚାଲିଛି । ବାବୁ, ଦୋକାନୀବାରୁ ଆଉ ଦି'ଜଣ ବାବୁ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏଇ ଚାରିକୋଣିଆ ଛୋଟ କାଚ ବାଙ୍କରେ ଛବି ଦିଶେ, କଥା ଶୁଭେ । ଗେଣ୍ଡି ହାଁ କରି ଚାହିଁଥାଏ ଆଚମ୍ବିତ ହୋଇ । କୋଉ ରାଇଜରେ ନାଚଗୀତ ହେଉଛି, ଏ କାଚ ବାଙ୍କ ରେ ଦିଶୁଛି । ବଡ଼ ସଜା । ଧନ୍ୟ ସେ କାରିଗର, କେତେ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ତା' ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ! ଇସ୍ ! ଚିକିଟିକିଆ ସେଇ କାଚ ବାଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ସେ ଥରେ ପଶି ଯାଆନ୍ତା କି; ତା ଛବି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଦିଶନ୍ତା । ସମସ୍ତେ କାବା ହୋଇ ଯାଆନ୍ତେ ।

ପାଟିରୁ ଲାଳ ବୋହି ପଡ଼ିଲା, ସୋତକି ନେଲା ଗେଣ୍ଡି । ପିନ୍ଧା କାନିରେ ପୋଛି ପକେଇଲା । ବାବୁ କହିଲେ, "ଜିନିଷ ନେଇ ଘରକୁ ଯା" । ଦୋକାନୀବାରୁ ଦି'ଟା ଲେବନଟୁସ୍ ବ୍ୟାଗ ପାଖରେ ରଖି ହସିକି କହିଲେ "ନେ ଖାଆ । ଏଣେ ତେଣେ ନ ଚାହିଁ ଘରକୁ ଯିବୁ ।"

ମନେ ମନେ ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଖୁସି ହେଲା । ଲେବନଟୁସ୍ କୁ ବାଁ ହାତରେ ମୁଠେଇ ଡାହାଣ ହାତରେ ବ୍ୟାଗ ଧରି ଦୋକାନରୁ ବାହାରି ଆସିଲା । ବ୍ୟାଗଟା ଓଜନ ଲାଗୁଛି । କାନ୍ଧରେ ଥୋଇ ଚାଲିଯିବ । କିଛି ଦୂରପରେ ଜରି ଖୋଲି ଗୋଟେ ଲେବନଟୁସ୍ କୁ ଜିଭରେ ଥୋଇଲା ସେ । କି ବଢ଼ିଆ । ମିଠା ମିଠା, ଖଟା ଖଟା । ବଡ଼ ସୁଆଦ; ରସ ଢୋକି ଗେଣ୍ଡି ହସି ପକାଇଲା । ଲେବନଟୁସ୍‌ଟାକୁ ଓ ଖାଲି ଜରିଟାକୁ ଅଖରେ ଭଲ କରି ଖୋସି ଦେଲା । ଲେବନଟୁସ୍‌ର ସୁଆଦ ଜିଭବାଟେ ପେଟକୁ ପଠେଇ ଚିକିଏ ବେଳଯାଏ ସୁଆଦକୁ ଶୁଙ୍ଘିଲା, ଚାଖିଲା । ଏକାପରି ଗୋଲ

ଗୋଲ ହୋଇ ଏସବୁ ତିଆରି ହେଉଛି କେମିତି କଳରେ, କେଉଁ ପଦାର୍ଥରୁ ହେଉଛି; ତାହା କଥା !

"ଗେଣ୍ଡି କିଲୋ"

ଗଉରି ଅପାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲା । ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଖୁଡ଼ି, ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗ ଚିରି ଅପା ।

"ଅପା ତେମେ . . ."

"ରହ । ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ଯିବା ।" ତା'ପରେ ଗଉରି ଅପା କହିଲେ, "ହେଇ ଚିରି, ଦେଖିଲୁ ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଆମକୁ ଜୁଟି ଗଲାଣି । ତୁ ଖାଲି ମିଛଟା ରେ ଡରୁଛୁ । ତର ଗୋଟାଏ କଣ ?"

ଚିରି ଅପା କହିଲେ - "ନା । ମୁଁ ସେ ବିଲବାଟେ ଜମା ଯିବିନାହିଁ । ମତେ ତର ଲାଗିବ ।"

ଗଉରି ଅପା କହିଲେ, "ତର ତ ତତେ ଖାଇଯାଉଛି । ଆମେ ଏତେ ଜଣ ହେଲୁଣି, ଖୁଡ଼ୀ ଅଛନ୍ତି, ଅଳ୍ପ ବାଟ; ଚାଲି ଯିବା । ଏକା ତୋରି ତର !"

ଶେଷରେ ଗଉରି ଅପା ରାଗ ତମତମ ହୋଇ କହିଲେ, "ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଚାଲିବୁଟିଲୋ, ତୋର ମୋର ଯିବା; ତାକୁ ତର ଖାଇ ଯାଉଛି ।" କହିଲେ ଆଉ ସତକୁ ସତ ତମତମ ହୋଇ ଚାଲିଲେ । ମୁହଁ ଶୁଖାଇ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହେଲା ପରି ତାଙ୍କ ପଛରେ ଚିରିଅପା ଚାଲିଲେ । ଗଉରି ଅପାଙ୍କ ଖୁଡ଼ୀ କହିଲେ, "ଯିବା ବେଳେ ଆହୁରି ସାଙ୍ଗ ମିଳି ଯିବ ଲୋ" ଚିରି । ତରନା ।' ଏତିକି ବେଳକୁ ପ୍ରକ୍ ପିନ୍ଧା ଝିଅଟିଏ ଆସିଲା । ଖୁଡ଼ି ଖୁସି ହୋଇ କହିଲେ, 'ହେଇଟି ପରା ଝିଙ୍କି

ଆଇଲାଣି । ଚାଲ ଚାଲ ।' ଚିରିଅପା କାନ୍ଦ କାନ୍ଦ ସ୍ଵରରେ କହିଲେ, "ଗଉରି ର ଯୋଉ ଜିଦ୍ !" ସମସ୍ତେ ବଡ଼ ରାସ୍ତାରୁ ତଳ ରାସ୍ତାକୁ ବାଟ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଲେ । ଗେଣ୍ଡି ବ୍ୟାଗ୍‌କୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଥୋଇ ପଛରେ ଚାଲିଲା ।

କିଟି କିଟି ଅନ୍ଧାର । ଖାଁ ଖାଁ ଗହ୍ୱର ବିଲ । ଘୁ ଘୁ ପବନ । ବଜାର ଭିତରେ ଝାଳ ବୋହୁଥିଲା । ଖୋଲା ଯାଗାରେ ପବନ ପାଇ ଦେହ ଶିତଳ ଲାଗିଲା । ଖୋଲା ମେଲା ପବନ ଲୁଗାପଟାକ କୁଡ଼ୁକୁଡ଼ୁ କରି ପକାଉଛି । ଗେଣ୍ଡିର ଦେଶ କଥା ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲା । ଆନ୍ଧ୍ରର ସମୁଦ୍ର କୁଳିଆ ଛୋଟ ଗାଁରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଘର ଥିଲା । ବାପା ବାବୁ ଘରେ ବାସ କରୁ ଥିଲା । ବାବୁ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଗାଁର ଆଉ ଜଣେ ବାବୁର କଣ ଗଣ୍ଡଗୋଳ ହେଲା କେଜାଣି, ବାବୁ ଘର ଜମିରେ ହଳ କରୁଥିବା ବେଳେ ମାତପିଟି ହୋଇ ବାପା ଓ ସିଦୁ କାକା

ହାଣ ଖାଇ ମଲେ । ଆରଦଳ ବାବୁର ଗୋଟିଏ ହାତକୁ ହାଣି ପକାଇଲେ । ତା'ର ଦି'ମାସ ପରେ ମା'ର ଗୋଟେ ପିଲା ହେଲା । ଦିନ ଦଶ ବାରଟା ରେ ମା'ପିଲା ଦୁହେଁ ମଲେ । ଗେଣ୍ଡି ମାଉସି ଘରେ ରହିଲା । ମାତ ଗାଳି ଖାଏ । ଭୋକ ଉପାସ ରେ ରହେ । ମଉସା ମାଉସି ପାରାଦ୍ଵୀପ ପଲେଇ ଆସିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଗେଣ୍ଡି । ପେଣ୍ଡୁ ଏଠି ସେଠି ଗତି ଗତି ପାଦରେ ମାତ ଖାଇଲା ପରି, ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଏଠି ସେଠି ହୋଇ ମାତ ଖାଇ ଖାଇ ସାତ ବରଷର ହୋଇଗଲା । ମାଉସିର ପୁଅ ଝିଅ ହେଲେ । ଏ ବାବୁ ପାରାଦ୍ଵୀପ ରେ ଚାକିରୀ କରୁ ଥିଲେ । ମଉସା ଗେଣ୍ଡିକି ତାଙ୍କ ଘରେ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ରଖିଲା । ମଉସାକୁ ବାବୁ କୁଲି କାମ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ।

ସେହି ଦିନରୁ ଗେଣ୍ଡି ବାବୁଙ୍କ ଘରେ ଅଛି । ଏବେ ବାବୁ

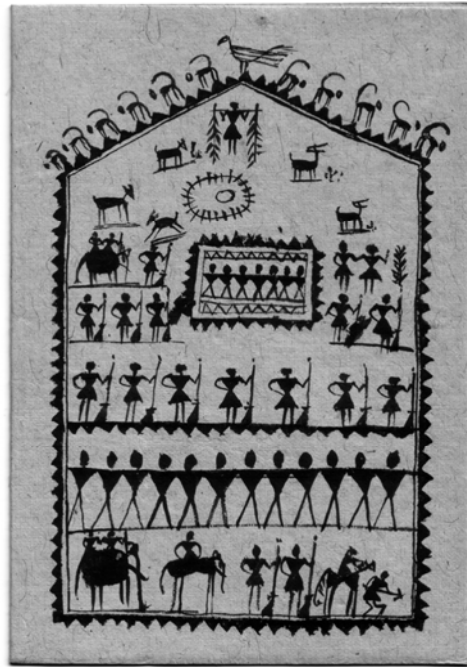
ରିଟାୟର୍ଡ଼ କରି ଗାଁରେ ଚାଷ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି, ବ୍ୟବସାୟ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ବାବୁ ଘରେ ରହିବାର ନଅ ବରଷ ହେଲା । ଏକଥା ମାଆ କହନ୍ତି; ତା'କୁ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ । ପାଟିରେ ଲେବନଟୁସ୍ ପତଳା ହୋଇ ଆସିଲାଣି । ଏଥର ସରିଯିବ । ସେ ତା'କୁ ଜିଭ ତଳେ ଚାପି ରଖିଲା ।

ରାସ୍ତା ଛାଡ଼ି ତୋଟା ପାର ହୋଇ, ବିଲ ଭିତରେ ପଶିଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ । ଏଥର ସ୍କୁଲ ହତା; ସେ ପଟେ ବୁଲାଇ । ଏ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଅଳପ ବାଟ । ଭଲ ହେଲା ଏବାଟେ ଆସି । କିଛି ବାଟ ପରେ ଖସ୍ ଖସ୍ ଶୁଭିଲା । ଚିରିଅପା ଯାବୁଡ଼ି ଧରିଲେ ଖୁଡ଼ୀଙ୍କୁ - " ମୋ ବୋଉଲୋ !!" ଗଉରି ଅପା କହିଲେ, " ନେଉଳ କି ଏଣୁଅଟା

ହେଇଥିବ; ତୋତେ ଏତେ ତର ଖାଇ ଯାଉଛି ?"

ଗେଣ୍ଡିର ତର ଭୟ ନାହିଁ । ସେ ପୁଲୀଏ ଲାଳ ଭକ୍ କିନା ଢୋକିଲା । ଚିରିଅପା କହିଲେ, "ପାନ ଖାଉଛୁ କି'ଲୋ ଗେଣ୍ଡି ?"

"ନାହିଁ, ଲେବନଟୁସ୍ ।" ବେଶ୍ ଟାଣ ଭାବେ କହିଦେଲା ଗେଣ୍ଡି । ସମସ୍ତେ ହସିଲେ । ଆଗରେ ସ୍କୁଲ ଘର । ତାରା ଆଲୁଅରେ କଳାବୁଦାଟାଏ ପରି ଦିଶୁଛି । କାନ୍ଦକୁ କାଟିଲାଣି । ଗଛ ଗହଳରେ କିଟି କିଟି ଅନ୍ଧାର । ସ୍କୁଲ ଗେଟ୍ ରେ ମଧୁମାଳତି ମାଡ଼ିଛି । ବାସ ବହୁବୁଛି । କତେ କତେ ଧାଡ଼ି ଧାଡ଼ି ଗଗର ଗଛ । ହଠାତ୍ ସେଇ ପଟୁ ଚାରିଟା ଗୋକା ବାହାରି ଆସିଲେ । ଦି'ଜଣଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ଭୁଜାଲି । ଦୁଇ ହାତରେ ପାଣି ଠେଲି ଠେଲି ପୋଖରିରେ ପଶିବା ପରି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଦି'ଭାଗ କରିଦେଲେ; ମଝିରୁ ଚିରିଅପାଙ୍କୁ ଟେକି ନେଇଗଲେ ସ୍କୁଲ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ । ଝିଙ୍କି ରଡ଼ିଟେ ଛାଡ଼ି ରାସ୍ତାରୁ



ତଳକୁ ଗତି ପଡ଼ିଲା । ଉଠିପଡ଼ି ଧାଇଁଲା, କିଛି ବାଟ ପରେ ପୁଣି ତଳେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା । ଗଉରି ଅପା, ଖୁଡ଼ୀ ହାଉ ହାଉ ହେଲେ, “ କିଏ କେଉଁଠି ଅଛ . . . . .” । ହେଲେ ଏ ଗହୀର ମଝିରେ କିଏ କାହିଁ ?

ସିମେଣ୍ଟ ଖୁଣ୍ଟଟେ ଭଳି ଠିଆ ହୋଇଥିଲା ଗେଣ୍ଡି । ଭୟରେ ତା’ପାଟି ମେଲା ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ଏମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେ ଚିହ୍ନେ । ଦି’ଜଣ ଗାଁ ଶେଷମୁଣ୍ଡ ସାହିର । ଯେଉଁ ଦି’ଜଣ ଟେକି ନେଲେ ସେମାନେ ବାବୁ ଘରର । ଗଉରି ଅପା, ତିରି ଅପାଙ୍କ କଲେଜରେ ଏକାଠି ପଢ଼ନ୍ତି ।

ତିରିଅପାଙ୍କ ପାଟି ଆଉ ଶୁଭୁ ନାହିଁ । ଛୋଟ ପିଲାଟେ ଭଳି କେମିତି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଶୁନ୍ୟରେ ଶୁନ୍ୟରେ ଟେକି ନେଇ ଗଲେ ଷଷ୍ଠ ମାର୍କା ଦି’ଟା . . . . . ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଦେହ ଶିର୍ ଶିର୍ ହୋଇ ଉଠିଲା । ବ୍ୟାଗ୍ ଟା ଖସି ପଡ଼ିଲା ହାତରୁ . . . ‘ଭୁସ୍’ !! ଭୁଜାଲି ଝଲସି ଉଠିଲା, “କିଏବେ ସେଠି . . . . . ?” ଆଉ ଜଣକ ଘୁମୁରିଲା, “ଗେଣ୍ଡି ! ଦେ’ ତାକୁ ଖତମ୍ କରି . . . . .”

ତା’ପରେ କ’ଣ ହେଲା ଗେଣ୍ଡିର ଆଉ ମନେ ନାହିଁ । କେମିତି ସେ କୋଉ ବାଟରେ ଦଉଡ଼ି ଦଉଡ଼ି ରେଳ ଷ୍ଟେସନ ପାଖରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଗଲା । ରେଳ ଗାଡ଼ି ରେ ଚଢ଼ିଗଲା ଓ ଗାଡ଼ିଟା ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସିଟି ମାରି ଦୋହଲି ଦୋହଲି ଚାଲିଲା । ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଛାତି ଏତେ ଜୋରରେ ଧଡ଼ ଧଡ଼ ହେଉଥାଏ ଯେ ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ଛାତିରେ ଧରୁ ନ ଥାଏ । ତଣ୍ଡି ଶୁଖି ଅଠା । କିଏ କାଳେ ତାକୁ ଚିହ୍ନି ପକାଇବ, ଧରିନେଇ ଯିବ । ଭୟରେ ଥରୁଥାଏ । କି ଭିତ ! ଶୋରିଷ ପକାଇବାକୁ ଜାଗା ନାହିଁ । କାନିରେ ମୁହଁ ପୋଛି ସେ ଚାରିଆଡ଼କୁ ଡରି ଡରି ଅନେଇଲା । ନା ! କେହି ତା’କୁ ଚାହିଁ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ସମସ୍ତେ ହାଉ ହାଉ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । କେତେ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ସେ ରେଳଗାଡ଼ିରେ ବସିଲା ?

ଗୋଟିଏ କଣରେ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତ ବୁଢ଼ୀଟେ ଧକଡ଼ି । ବୁଢ଼ୀକୁ ନିଜ ଛାତିରେ ଆଉଜେଇ ଧରିଛି ଗୋଟେ ମଝାଳିଆ ମରଦ । ବୁଢ଼ୀ ମଲାପରି ଛଟପଟ ହେଉଛି । ଗେଣ୍ଡି ବିକଳ ପାଇଲା । ଲୋକେ ଠେଲ ଠେଲି ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ।

ତବା ଭର୍ତ୍ତି ଲୋକ । ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଝରକା ପାଖ ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ କହିଲା, “ ଏ ବାବୁ, ଏ ବୁଢ଼ୀ ମାଆକୁ ପବନ ଟିକେ ଦିଅ ।

ବାବୁ ଘୁଞ୍ଚିଗଲା । ବୁଢ଼ୀ ନାକ ରେ ପବନ ବାଜିଲା । ମରଦଟା ସେଠି ବସିଲା । ବୁଢ଼ୀ ପାଦକୁ ଆଉଁସିଲା ଗେଣ୍ଡି ।

ଟିକିଏ ପରେ ବୁଢ଼ୀ ସତେଜ ଦିଶିଲା । ମରଦଟା ଗପିଲା । ମା’ର ବେମାରିକି ତାଙ୍କର ଚିହ୍ନିପାରୁ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି ।

ହୁକୁମ ପାଇଁ ଆସିଥିଲୁ । ସଂକୀର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଠାକୁରାଣୀ ଦର୍ଶନ କରି ଫେରୁଛୁ । ତୁ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଯାଉଛୁ ଝିଅ ? କଣ କହିବ ଗେଣ୍ଡି, ସେ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଯାଉଛି ।

ଗେଣ୍ଡି କହିଲା, “ମା’କୁ ଶୋଷ ଲାଗୁଛି । ପାଣି ମନ୍ଦେ ଦିଅ ।” ମରଦଟା ପଚାରି ଲାଗିଲା ଗେଣ୍ଡିକୁ - କୋଉଠୁ ଆସିଲା . . . କେଉଁଆଡ଼େ ଯିବ . . . ତା’ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଆଉ କିଏ ଅଛି . . . ତା ନାଁ କଣ, ଏମିତି କେତେ କଥା । ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଭାବନାରେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା । ଏହା ଆଗରୁ ସେ କେବେ ବି ଭାବିଚିନ୍ତି କଥା କହିନାହିଁ । ତେବେ ସବୁଦିନେ ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଅଳ୍ପ କଥା କହେ । ସେ ଧଙ୍ଗେଇ ଧଙ୍ଗେଇ କହିଲା, “ମୋ ନାଁ ଟଗର; କାମ ଖୋଜୁଛି ।”

ଗେଣ୍ଡିର ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ଲେବନ’ରୁସ୍ କଥା । ଅଖକୁ ଦରାଣ୍ଡି ପକାଇଲା । ନା, ବାଟରେ କେଉଁଠି ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ।

ମରଦଟା ଗେଣ୍ଡିକୁ ପାଖରୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଲା ନାହିଁ । ବୁଢ଼ୀର ବିକଳ ଦେଖି ଗେଣ୍ଡି ମଧ୍ୟ ଆଉ କିଛି କଥା ଭାବି ପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । ମର ମର ହେଉଥିବା ଅତଳ ମଣିଷଟାକୁ ଅଧପଚ୍ଛରିଆ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେଇ ଯିବାକୁ ମନ କହିଲା ନାହିଁ ।

ଲୁଗାରେ ପ୍ରସା ପଡ଼ିଯାଉଛି, ବାନ୍ତି ହେଉଛି । ମରଦଟା କଣ କରିବ ?

ଲୋକଟାର ଘର ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଶେଷମୁଣ୍ଡ - ‘ଶିଖରଚଣ୍ଡି’ରେ । ଘର ବୋଇଲେ ନାଲିମାଟିର ଦି’ ବଖରା ଘର । ଛିଣ୍ଡା ଅଖା, କେର୍ପାଲ ଟଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ବାରଣ୍ଡାରେ ରକ୍ଷା ହୁଏ । ପିଣ୍ଡା ପହୁଣ୍ଡ ଖଣ୍ଡିଆ ଦଣ୍ଡିଆ । ଚାରିଆଡ଼ ଅଳିଆ ଅସନା । ଛିଇ ! ଘର ଏମିତି ନାସନା ଥାଏ ! ଘରେ ମଣିଷ ବୋଲି ତିନି ଜଣ ; ବୁଢ଼ୀ, ବୁଢ଼ୀର ପୁଅ ହୁରୁଷି, ହୁରୁଷିର ପୁଅ ମାନସିଂହ । ମାନସିଂହ ମଞ୍ଚେଶ୍ୱରର କୋଉ ଗୋଟେ କାରଖାନାରେ କାମ କରେ । ମା’ ମରି ଯାଇଛି । କାମିକା ଗେଣ୍ଡି ଅଖରେ କାନି ଭିଡ଼ି କାମରେ ଲାଗି ପଡ଼ିଲା- ଲୁଗାପଟା କଟାକଟି, ଘରଦ୍ୱାର ଲିପାପୋଛା ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ବାଡ଼ି ସଫା ସୁତୁରା । ବାରିଆଡ଼େ ଲେମ୍ବୁ ଗଛଟେ । ଗଛମୂଳେ ମଲା କରି ପାଣି ଦେଲା । ଲଙ୍ଗାଗଛ, ମଲୁଗଛ ପାଣିପାଲ ହସି ଉଠିଲେ ।

ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲତା ମହାପାତ୍ର ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ର ଚୈଳଶ୍ରୀ ବିହାର ରେ ନିବାସ କରନ୍ତି । ସେ ଜଣେ ସୁଲେଖିକା ଏବଂ ତା’ଙ୍କ ରଚନା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପତ୍ର ପତ୍ରିକା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପାଠକ ମହଲରେ ବିଶେଷ ଆଦୃତ

## ଏଇ ଆମ ଘର

ସତ୍ୟଜିତ୍ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ମୋର ପଚାରିଲା ଦୁହାଇ ଦୁହାଇ,  
'ବାବା ! ଏଇ କ'ଣ ଆମ ଘର, ସ୍ୱର୍ଗଠୁ ସୁନ୍ଦର?'

ବୋଧ ଦେଇ ବୁଝାଇଲି,

'ବାରୁରେ, ଏବେ ଠାରୁ ଏଇ ଆମ ଘର  
ନଥାଉ ସେ ବାଡ଼ିଆତ ଆଉ ସେ ବଗିଚା,  
ଜୁଇ ଯାଇ, ମାଳତୀ, ଟଗର ର ଗାଲିଚା  
ନ'ଥାନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଖେଳ ସାଙ୍ଗ ଚୁଆଁ ଚୁଇଁ,  
ଗୋଡା ଗୋଡ଼ି ଲୁଚକାଳି ଓ ଧୁଳିଖେଳ ପାଇଁ  
ଏଇ ଆମ ଘର !

ଭୁଲିବାକୁ ହେବ ତୋତେ ଜେଜେମାଙ୍କ ଗପକୁହା,  
ଜେଜେଙ୍କ ସହ ହାତରୁଲା ଆଉ ଚକୋଲେଟ ଖିଆ  
ମାମୁଁ ଘର ମଉଜ ଆଉ ମାଇଁଙ୍କ ଶରଧା,  
ବାଲିଯାତ ଦଶରା-ପଶରା ଭୁଲିଯା ତୁ ନକରି ଦୁବିଧା  
ଏଇ ଆମ ଘର । ୧୮

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ପୁଣି ପଚାରିଲା,

'ବାବା ! ଏଠି ରିକ୍ଷା ଆଉ ହାତଟଣା ଗାଡ଼ିନାହିଁ ?'

ପୁଣି ବୁଝାଇଲି,

'ବାରୁରେ ଏହା ପ୍ରଥମ ବିଶ୍ୱ, ରୁଜୁଆଙ୍କ ଦେଶ;  
ସଭିଏଁ ବସିବେ, ଟାଣିବେନି କେହି, କେ କରବ ଏ କ୍ଲେଶ ?  
ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଡାଉନ୍ ପେମେଣ୍ଟ ଆଉ ନାମ-ମାତ୍ର ଇଣ୍ଡରେକ୍ସ,  
ଘର ଗାଡ଼ି ସବୁରି ପାଖରେ,  
ଇନ୍‌ସୁରାନ୍‌ସ୍ ଟକସ୍‌ସୁହ, ଇନ୍‌ଭେଷ୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟ ରଣଯନ୍ତ୍ରା ଇଏ,  
ସୁମରିବା ଇଷ୍ଟ ।

ଏବେଠାରୁ ଏଇ ଆମ ଘର ।'

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କହିଲା 'ବାବା ତୁମେ ବଡ଼ 'ଅଧୋତକ୍ଷ', କିଛି ବି ଜାଣନା ।  
ମନେ ମନେ ଗୁମରିଲି, ତୃତୀୟ ବିଶ୍ୱର ସୃଷ୍ଟି, ଖଟିଖିଆ ଦିନ  
ମଜୁରିଆ;

କାହୁଁ ଅବା ବୁଝିବି ଏ ରଣ ଅର୍ଥନୀତିର ଗଣିତ ଆଉ ସରଳ  
ସୁଧକଣ୍ଠା ।

ଏଇ ଆମ ଘର । ୧୯

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ରହି ରହି ପଚାରିଲା,

'ବାବା ! ବର୍ଜର ଆଉ ଡୋନଟ୍ ଖାଇ ପାରିବା ?'

ବୁଝାଇଲି ପୁଣି ତା'କୁ 'ବାରୁ ରେ, 'ଜଙ୍କ-ଫୁଡ଼' ସେସବୁ;

'ଟ୍ରାନ୍‌ସ୍-ଫ୍ୟାଟ୍' ଓ 'କଲେଷ୍ଟେରୋଲ୍' ଭରା,

'ମ୍ୟାକ୍ ଡୋନାଲ୍ଡ୍' ଆଉ 'ଟିମ୍ ହର୍ଟନ୍' ମାନଙ୍କ ଚକ୍ରାନ୍ତ,

ଦେ' ନା, ଦେ' ନା ତୁ ଧରା ।'

ମା' ର ଶରଧା ଭରା ସ୍ୱାଦିଷ୍ଟ ବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜନ ତା'କୁ ଏବେ 'ୟାକ୍' ଲାଗେ,

ସ୍କୁଲ୍‌ରେ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ା କମ୍, ଶାଠ ଦୁଏ ବେଶି;

ଆଜି ପିଜା ଡେ' ତ କାଲି ପି ଏ ଡେ' ।

ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ପିଢ଼ୀ ର ସଂସ୍କରଣ ସେ,

କେତେ ଦିନ ଅବା କରିପାରେ ତା'କୁ ପିଜା ସଂସ୍କୃତିରୁ ଅଲଗା ?

ଏଇ ଆମ ଘର । ୧୯

ହଠାତ୍ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦିନେ ପଚାରିଲା,

'ବାବା ! 'ଗାର୍ଲଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ୍' ଆଉ 'ୟୋ-ୟୋ' ମାନେ କଣ?'

ଚମକି ପଡ଼ିଲି ମୁଁ ହତବାକ୍ ହୋଇ !

ଇଏ କଣ ମୋ'ର ସେଇ ସରଳ, ନିର୍ବୋଧ, ଲାଜକୁଳା ସନ୍ତାନ,

ମା'ର କୋଳରେ ଅବା ପଣତ ଉହାଡ଼େ ଲୁଚାଉଥିଲା ଯେ ନୟନ;

ଏଇ ଦେଶଟା ଯେ ତା' ଘର,

ଭାରୁଛି କିପରି ବୁଝାଇବି ତା'କୁ ଏସବୁ ଆଉ କଣ ତା' ର ମାନେ,

ଯା' ର ସଜ୍ଜା ବୁଝିବାକୁ ଲୋଡା ପଡ଼ିନି ଜୀବନେ ।

ଜାଣିନାହିଁ ହେବି 'ଲିବରାଲ୍' ଅବା 'କଞ୍ଚରଭେଟିଭ୍',

ମାତ୍ର ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ନିଶ୍ଚେ ଦିନେ କହିବ ମୋତେ 'ହେ ଡ୍ୟୁଡ୍ କୁଲ୍',

ନହୋଇ ପ୍ରଗଳ୍ଭ ।

ଏଇ ଆମ ଘର । ୧୮

ସତ୍ୟଜିତ୍ ମିଶ୍ରସାହେବା ନଗରରେ ତା'ଙ୍କ ପତ୍ନୀ ନିବେଦିତା, ପୁତ୍ର ସାତ୍ୱିକ ଓ କନ୍ୟା ଶ୍ରୀଜା ଙ୍କ ସହ ନିବାସ କରନ୍ତି । ସେ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ଓ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ରେ ରଚି ରଖନ୍ତି । ଏହି କବିତା ଟି ୨୦୦୮ ଟରକ୍ଷେ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପାଠକରୁ ରେ ଆବୃତ୍ତି କରାଯାଇଥିଲା ।

# ଏହି ଆମ ଦେଶ, ଏହି ଆମ ମାଟି, ଭୂଲିବାର ନାହିଁ ତାର ନାଁଟି

୦୪ ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନା ମହାପାତ୍ର

ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଶିକ୍ଷା ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାନ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ଆମ ଦେଶ ଭାରତବର୍ଷର ପୂର୍ବାଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଥିବା ରାଜ୍ୟଟିଏ । ଆମର ଏହି ଅତି ପରିଚିତ ଓ ଅତି ଲୋଭନୀୟ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶା । ଅନେକ ଦିନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଏହା କଳିଙ୍ଗ ନାମରେ ପରିଚିତ ଥିଲା । ବିଗତ ୩୦୦୦ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ଇତିହାସରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବିଷୟରେ ଅନେକ କିଛି ଧାରଣା ହୋଇଥାଏ । ବୌଦ୍ଧିକ ଯୁଗରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଓ କଳା କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ସ୍ଥାନ ଅଧିକାର କରିଥିଲା । ଏହା ମଧ୍ୟ ଲଳିତ ଗିରି, ରତ୍ନଗିରି ଓ ଭଦ୍ରଗିରି ର ସର୍ବଶେଷ ପ୍ରତ୍ନତାତ୍ତ୍ୱିକ ଗବେଷଣାରୁ ପ୍ରମାଣିତ ହୋଇଅଛି । ନିପନ ରୁକ୍ଷ ସଂଘ ତରଫରୁ ତିଆରି ହୋଇଥିବା ଧଉଳି ଗିରି ଠାରେ ଏକ ରୁକ୍ଷ ଶାନ୍ତି ସ୍ଥୂପ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟକକୁ ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ କରିଛି ।

ଆଜି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଲୋକସଂଖ୍ୟା ୩୫ ଲକ୍ଷ ରୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ । ଏହା ଭିତରୁ ୫୭.୮୦ ଲୋକ ଗାଁ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ରୁହନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ସମୁଦାୟ ଲୋକ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ର ୨୫.୮୦ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ଆଦିବାସୀ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରେ ଅନେକ କିଛି ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ ଓ ଦର୍ଶନୀୟ ବସ୍ତୁ ଭରପୁର ଅଛି । ଏହାକୁ ଅନେକ ଲୋକ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ପୁରୀ ର ଦେଶ ବୋଲି ଜାଣନ୍ତି । ପୁରୀ ରେ ଥିବା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର ପାଇଁ ଏହା ଗୁରିଆଡ଼େ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ । ଏହି ମନ୍ଦିର ର ଉଚ୍ଚତା ୧୯୨ ଫୁଟ ଓ ଏହା ୪୦୦.୦୦୦ ବର୍ଗ ଫୁଟ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ । ଏହି ବଡ଼ ମନ୍ଦିର ଭିତରେ ପାଞ୍ଚଟି କି ଛଅଟି ନୁହେଁ ଛୋଟ ବଡ଼ ହୋଇ ୧୨୦ ଟି ମନ୍ଦିର ବା ଦେବା ଦେବୀ ଅଛନ୍ତି । ବର୍ଷ ସାରା ୨୪ ଟି ପର୍ବ ପର୍ବାଣି ଏଠାରେ ପାଳନ କରା ଯାଇଥାଏ । ସବୁ ଠାରୁ ପ୍ରଧାନ ହେଉଛି ରଥଯାତ୍ରା । ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଥିବା ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ, ବଳଭଦ୍ର ଓ ସୁଭଦ୍ରା ଙ୍କ ର ନିମ୍ନ କାଠରୁ ତିଆରି ହୋଇଥିବା ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଏହି ରଥ ଯାତ୍ରା ଦିନ ବାହାରକୁ ଭକ୍ତ ମାନଙ୍କ ଦର୍ଶନ ପାଇଁ ଅଣା ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଅଛି ଭଗବାନ ନିଜେ ତାଙ୍କ ଭକ୍ତ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ବାହାରକୁ ଆସିଥାନ୍ତି ବର୍ଷରେ ଥରେ । ୩୫ ଫୁଟ ଉଚ୍ଚା, ୧୨ ଟି ଚକା ଥିବା ୩ଟି ରଥ ଦିନ ଦିନ ଲାଗି ତିଆରି ହୋଇ ଥାଏ । ଏହି ରଥ ଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ତିନି ଠାକୁର ବସି ହଜାର ହଜାର ଭକ୍ତ ଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଟଣା ହୋଇ ମାଉସୀ ମା ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ପହଞ୍ଚନ୍ତି । ଏହି ଦିନ ଲକ୍ଷ ଲକ୍ଷ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ସମାଗମ ହୋଇଥାଏ ପୁରୀ ବଡ଼ ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ । ସେଠାରେ ୮ ଦିନ ରହି ୯ମ ଦିନ ପୁଣି ନିଜ ମନ୍ଦିରକୁ ତିନି ଠାକୁର ବାହୁଡ଼ନ୍ତି । ଏହାକୁ ବାହୁଡ଼ା ଯାତ୍ରା କୁହାଯାଏ । ରଥ ଯାତ୍ରା ଭଳି ବାହୁଡ଼ା ଦିନ ମଧ୍ୟ ଲକ୍ଷ ଲକ୍ଷ

ଲୋକଙ୍କର ସମାଗମ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଯେତେ ପର୍ବ ପାଳନ କରାଯାଏ ରଥଯାତ୍ରା ସବୁ ଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ ଓ ଏଥିପାଇଁ କୋଟି କୋଟି ଟଙ୍କା ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କୁ ଦର୍ଶନ କରିବା ବା ରଥ ଟାଣିବା ଏକ ପୁଣ୍ୟ କାମରେ ଗଣା ହୁଏ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଗୁରିଆଡ଼େ ମନ୍ଦିର ମାଳ ମାଳ ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗ ରୁ ରହି ଆସିଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର କୋଣାର୍କ କୁ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ଷେତ୍ର, ପୁରୀ କୁ ବିଷ୍ଣୁ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର କୁ ହରକ୍ଷେତ୍ର ଏବଂ ଜୟ ପୁରକୁ ପାର୍ବତୀ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର କୁହାଯାଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ବାର ମାସରେ ତେର ପର୍ବ ପାଳନ କରାଯାଏ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସବୁବେଳେ ମନ୍ଦିର ଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ଦିନ ରାତି ଭିତ ଜମି ରହିଥାଏ । ପୁରୁଣା ମନ୍ଦିର ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଦେଖିଲେ ଜଣାପଡ଼େ ପୂର୍ବ ପୁରୁଷମାନେ କଳା ଓ ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟରେ କେତେ ନିପୁଣ ଥିଲେ ସତେ ! ଆଜିକାଲି ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଯୁଗରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହି ପରି ମନ୍ଦିରଟିଏ ପାଇବା ବିରଳ । ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଅଛି କି ବଡ଼ ଠାକୁର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କୁ ଦର୍ଶନ କଲେ ସହସ୍ର ପାପ କ୍ଷୟ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ନିର୍ମଳ ମନରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କୁ ଭଜରେ ଭରସା ରଖି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କଲେ ସୁଫଳ ମିଳି ଥାଏ । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କର ମହିମା ଅସୀମ । ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗ ଧରି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ହୋଇ ଆସୁଥିବା ଅଭତା ଓ ଭୋଗ ଖାଇବାକୁ କିଏ ବା ଭଲ ନପାଏ ? ଗୁଡ଼ଳ, ପରିବା ଓ ତାଲି ସିଝା ର ପ୍ରସାଦ । ମାଟି ହାଣ୍ଡି ଉପରେ ହାଣ୍ଡି ରଖି ତିଆରି ହୋଇ ଥାଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏତେ ସ୍ୱାଦ ଆସେ କୁଆଡୁ, ମନେ ହୁଏ ଯେପରି ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ହିଁ ଭରି ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ସେଥିରେ ଅମୃତ । ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶ ରେ ଦିନ ଦିନ ରହୁଥିବା ଓ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ହୋଟେଲ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶର ସୁସ୍ୱାଦୁ ଖାଦ୍ୟ ଖାଉଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ମାନେ ଯେବେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆସନ୍ତି ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଲେମ୍ବୁ, ଲଙ୍କା ଦେଇ ଏହି ଅଭତା ଖାଇବାକୁ ଆଦୌ ଭୁଲନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । କି ଆନନ୍ଦ ଓ କି ତୃପ୍ତି ! ବିଦେଶୀ ଖାଇବା ସେଇଥିରେ ହାରମାନେ । ଦୁନିଆରେ ଏତେ ପ୍ରକାରର ମିଠା ଜିନିଷ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପୁରୀର ଖିରା ଯେ ଥରେ ଗୁଣିଛି ଭୁଲିବାର ନାହିଁ । ଆଦୁରି ଅଧିକ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହୁଏ ଓ ସେତେବେଳେ କଲୋଷ୍ଟଲ ବଢ଼ିବା କଥା ସମସ୍ତେ ପାଶୋରୀ ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ତିଥି ବାର ଦେଖି ଅନେକ ପ୍ରକାରର ଭୋଗ ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗ ଧରି ପୂଜା କରା ହେଉଛି ।

ପୁରୀରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର ଛଡ଼ା, ଶ୍ରୀଗୁଣ୍ଡିଚା, ଶ୍ରୀ ଲୋକନାଥ, ସୁନାର ଗୌରାଙ୍ଗ, ଦରିଆ ମହାବୀର ଆଦି ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ । ପୁରୀ ପାଖରେ ଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ରାଜଧାନୀ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ରେ ୨୦୦୦ ରୁ ଅଧିକ ମନ୍ଦିର ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଏହି ସହର ର ନାମ ମନ୍ଦିର ସହର । ମନ୍ଦିର ମାଳାଛଡ଼ା ପୁରୀର ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ବଡ଼ ଆକର୍ଷଣ ହେଲା ପୁରୀ ର ବିରାଟ ଢେଉ ଆସୁ ଥିବା ସମୁଦ୍ର କୁଳ । ଏହିପରି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପୃଥିବୀର ଆଉ କେଉଁଠି ଠାରେ ଦେଖାଯାଏ ନାହିଁ । ପୁରୀ ର ସମୁଦ୍ର କୁଳ ଛଡ଼ା, ଗୋପାଳ ପୁର, ଗୁଣ୍ଡିପୁର, ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଭାଗା ବାଲିଘାଟ ଚିଲିକା ଆଦିର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ କିଛି କମ୍ ନୁହେଁ । ଏହି ଚିଲିକା କୁଳରେ ଯେ କେତେ କବିଙ୍କର ସୁନ୍ଦର ସୁନ୍ଦର କବିତା ଫୁଟି ଉଠିଛି ତାହା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜ୍ଞାନୀଙ୍କ କାନରେ କିଛି କିଛି ନିଃସୂୟ ବାଜିଛି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ଆକର୍ଷଣ ହେଲା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ମିଠା । ଦୁଧ ରୁ ତିଆରି ସାଲେପୁର ବିକଳି କର ରସଗୋଲା , ରସାବଳି, ପାହାଳ ରସଗୋଲା, ଛେନାପୋଡ, ଖୁର ମୋହନ, ରାଜଭୋଗ, ରାବିଡି, ଛେନାଝିଲୀ ପାଟିରେ ଥରେ ଲାଗିଲେ ଛାଡ଼ିବାର ନାହିଁ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଛଡ଼ା ଏହି ମିଠା ତିଆରି କରୁଥିବା କାରିଗର ଆଉ କେଉଁଠାରେ ମିଳନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଏହି ମିଠା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଅନ୍ୟ ଆଡେ ମିଳୁଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରେ ଏହାର ସ୍ୱାଦ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର । ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶକୁ ଏହା ପ୍ରଚୁର ପରିମାଣରେ ରଫ୍ଟାନ୍ କରାଯାଏ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରୁପା ଓ ତାରକସୀ କାମ ପାଇଁ ବେଶ ନାମ କରାନ୍ତି । କାରିଗର ମାନେ ତାର ଠାରୁ କେତେ ଗୁଣରେ ସରୁ ସରୁ ସୁତା ରୁପାରୁ ତିଆରି କରି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଡିଜାଇନ ର ଗହଣା ସବୁ ଗଢ଼ିଥାନ୍ତି । ଏହା ଛଡ଼ା ପଟ୍ଟ ଚିତ୍ର, ପିତଳ କାମ, ପିପିଲି କାମ ଓ ସୁତା ଟପର ଓ ସିଲ୍‌କ୍ କନାରୁ ତିଆରି ହୁଏଣୁମ୍ବର ଶାଢ଼ୀ ପୃଥିବୀ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ । ବିଦେଶୀ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟକ ମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଫେରିଲା ବେଳେ ରୁପା ତାରକସୀ କାମ ର କିଛି ଗୋଟିଏ ଅଳଙ୍କାର ଓ ୫-୫ ମିଟର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଶାଢ଼ୀ ନିଜ ସୁବ୍‌ଜେକ୍ସରେ ପୁରାଇବାକୁ ଆଦୌ ଭୁଲନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ।

ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରୁ ପୁରୀ ଗଲା ବାଟରେ ପଡେ ପିପିଲି ନାମରେ ଛୋଟ ଗ୍ରାମଟିଏ । ଛୋଟିଆ ଗାଁ ଟିଏ କିଏ ଜାଣିଥିଲା ଆଜି ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶରେ ଲୋକେ ତା କାମକୁ ଲୋଡ଼ିବେ । ସେମାନେ ଆଜି ତାଙ୍କ ବାହାଦୁରୀ ଯୋଗୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓ ଭାରତକୁ ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶ ରେ ପହଞ୍ଚାଇ ପାରିଛନ୍ତି । କି ସୁନ୍ଦର ରଙ୍ଗ ରଙ୍ଗିଆ ଗୁନ୍ଥୁଆ, ଲ୍ୟାମ୍ପ ସେତ, ବ୍ୟାଗ , ଛତା ବେଶ୍ ଲୋଭନୀୟ ରଙ୍ଗର ତିଆରି କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ପିପିଲି ପାଖରେ ରଘୁରାଜପୁର, ଯେଉଁଠି ସୁନ୍ଦର ପଟ୍ଟଚିତ୍ର ତିଆରି ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଏହା ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶରେ କିଛି କମ୍ ନାମ କରି ନାହିଁ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ର ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନାଚ ଦେଖି ବାକୁ ଦେଶୀ କି ବିଦେଶୀ ସମସ୍ତେ ବେଶ୍ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି । କାନରେ, ନାକରେ, ଗଳାରେ, ପାଦରେ, ଅଙ୍ଗରେ, ସିନ୍ଧିରେ, ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ, ବାହୁରେ ଗହଣା ଲଗାଇ, ବାଳରେ ଗଜରା ଲଗାଇ ରଙ୍ଗ ବେରଙ୍ଗ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ଶାଢ଼ି ପିନ୍ଧି ତାଳରେ ତାଳ ମିଶାଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ନାଚ ଦେଖିବାକୁ କାହାକୁ ଭଲ ନଲାଗେ । ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶରେ ଏହି ନାଚ ବେଶ୍ ନାଁ କରି ପାରିଛି । ଖାଲି ଅତି ସାଧାରଣ ମଙ୍ଗଳା ଚରଣ ବା ଅଭିନୟ ଟିଏ ଦେଖିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଗୁରୁଙ୍କୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ନଦେଇ ରହି ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ରହିଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକମାନେ ବେଶ୍ ଶାନ୍ତ, ସରଳ ଓ ସ୍ନେହୀ । ଗୀଷ୍ମ ଋତୁରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାନେ ନିଜ ଜାତି କୁଟୁମ୍ବ ଜ୍ଞ ସାଙ୍ଗ ରେ ମିଶି ଦହି ପଖାଳ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଗରମ ଗରମ ମାଛ ଭଜା, ସାଗ ଭଜା, ବଡ଼ି ଚଟଣି, ଆମ୍ବ ଚଟଣୀ, ପିଠଉ ଦିଆ କଖାରୁ ଫୁଲ ଭଜା ଓ ବେସର ଦିଆ ସଜନା ଛୁଇଁ ଭଜା ଚୋବାଇ ଚୋବାଇ, ଗପ ସପ କରି ଖାଇବାକୁ ବେଶ୍ ଆନନ୍ଦ ପାଆନ୍ତି । ଏହି ପଖାଳ ର ମଜା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ମାନେ ହିଁ ଠିକ୍ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ।

ଏହି ହେଲା ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଆକର୍ଷଣ । ତାକୁ ଆଦୌ ଭୁଲିବାର ନାହିଁ ।

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# ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ

ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର (ରଥ)

ଏୟାରପୋର୍ଟରୁ ବାହାରି ଗାଡ଼ି ହାଇଓ୍ୱେ ଉପରକୁ ଆସିବା ବେଳକୁ ଆରତୀ ଆଖିରୁ ଟପ୍ ଟପ୍ ହୋଇ ଲୁହ ଝରିଗଲା, ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରିବି ସେ କାନ୍ଦ ବନ୍ଦକରି ପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । ସୁମନ୍ତ ଥକାକଲେ, “ଅଠର ବର୍ଷ ବାହାହେଲା ପରେ ବି ନୁଆ ବାହା ହେଇ ବାପା ମା’ ଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଶାଶୁଘର ଗଲାପରି କାନ୍ଦୁଛୁ? ମାତାମ୍ ! ଆପଣ ନିଜ ଘରକୁ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି, ଯେଉଁଠି ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଏଇ ଅଧମ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଆଶ୍ରୟ ନେଇଛି ମାତ୍ର” । ପଛରୁ ମିଲି କହୁଥିଲା, "Mom don't forget what Aee said... ସେ ଦୂର ରେ ଥିଲେବି ତାଙ୍କ ମନ ଆଉ ପ୍ରାଣ ସବୁବେଳେ ଆମ ପାଖରେ ଅଛି” । ପୁରା ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଏକାକୀରେ ଧାଡ଼ିଏ ! ଆରତୀର ମୁହଁରେ ହସ ଫୁଟି ଉଠିଲା । ସେ କଳ୍ପନା କରିପାରୁନଥିଲା ମିଲିର ଓଡ଼ିଆ କହିବା ଏତେ ଭଲହେଇଯାଇଛି ଏଭିତରେ । ପିଲାବେଳୁ ମିଲିକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶିଖେଇ ଶିଖେଇ ବାର ବର୍ଷରେ ସେ ଯାହା କରିପାରିନଥିଲା, ବାପାମା’ଙ୍କର ଛ’ମାସର ରହଣି ଭିତରେ ସେ କାମ ହୋଇଗଲା ।

ସୁମନ୍ତ ଗୀତ ଲଗେଇଲେ...‘ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ହୋ’, ଶୁଣୁ ଶୁଣୁ ଆରତୀ ଗୀତ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବାକୁ କହିଲା । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ପାଟିତୁଣ୍ଡ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଇଯିବ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଟିତୁଣ୍ଡ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ଏବେ ଯମା ମୁତ୍ ନାହିଁ ତା’ର । ପଛରୁ ମଞ୍ଜୁ ପାଟିକଲା, "It is okay Mom, don't worry, I have my mp3 on. By the way I love to hear this song when Aja sings every night." । ଏକଥା ପୁଣି ମଞ୍ଜୁ କହୁଛି, ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଲାଗିଲାନି ଆରତୀକୁ । ଭଜନ କି ପୁରୁଣା ହିନ୍ଦିଗୀତ ଶୁଣିଲେ ଯାହାର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଖରାପ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଯା’ହେଉ ବାପାଙ୍କ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ।

ଘରେ ଗୁରୁଜନଙ୍କର ଅଭାବ ସବୁବେଳେ ଆରତୀକୁ ଏକ ଶୂନ୍ୟତାବୋଧ ଆଣିଦିଏ । ଅନେକ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କର ବାପା ବୋଉ ଆସିଥିଲେ, ସେତେବେଳେ ମଞ୍ଜୁ ତିନି ବର୍ଷର ମିଲି ବର୍ଷକର ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । । ଆରତୀ ଓ ସୁମନ୍ତ ଯଥାସାଧ୍ୟ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଥିଲେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଖୁସି ରଖିବାକୁ । ନୁଆ ଜାଗା ଦେଖି, ନାତି-ନାତୁଣୀଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଖେଳିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇ ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ବହୁତ ଖୁସିଥିଲେ ସେମାନେ । ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟର ସଂକୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବାତାବରଣ, ଦିପହର ବେଳର ନିଃଶବ୍ଦତା ଭିତରେ ସେମାନେ ଅଣନିଃଶ୍ୱାସୀ ବୋଧକଲେ । ସୁମନ୍ତ ପିଏଚଡ଼ି କାମରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହୁଥିଲେ । ଆରତୀ ନୁଆନୁଆ କାମ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥାଏ । ପିଲାମାନେ ତେ କେୟାର୍ ଯାଉଥିଲେ ଶାଶୁଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ମିଲି-

ମଞ୍ଜୁକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଯିବାକୁ ସୁମନ୍ତ ଠିକ୍ ଭାବୁ ନଥିଲେ । ଏମିତିବି ଶୁଣୁରଙ୍କ ପସନ୍ଦ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ରକ୍ଷାରକ୍ଷିରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ବହୁତ କାମ ପଡ଼ିଯାଉଥିଲା । ଛୋଟ ପିଲାଟାକୁ ବେବିସିଟର୍ ପାଖରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆରତୀର କାମକୁ ଯିବା ଶାଶୁ ଶୁଣୁର ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କୁ ପସନ୍ଦ ନଥିଲା । ଛ’ ମାସର ଭିସା ଥିଲେବି ତିନି ମାସରେ ଫେରିଗଲେ । ତାପରେ ସେମାନେ କେବେବି ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବା ପାଇଁ ଆଗହ ଦେଖେଇନାହାନ୍ତି, ଅଧିକ ସୁମନ୍ତ ତାଙ୍କର ଏକମାତ୍ର ପୁଅ, ତିନି ଝିଅଙ୍କ ତଳେ ସବୁଠୁ ସାନ ପୁଅ । ଆରତୀର ଅନୁରୋଧକୁ ବାରଂବାର ଏତାଇ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ସୁମନ୍ତ, ସେମାନେ ନିଜେ ନଚାହିଁଲାଯାଏଁ ତାକିବେନି କହି । ତିନି ନଶଇଁଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ଆରତୀକୁ କିଛି କମ୍ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିନି ସେଥିପାଇଁ ।

ଆମେରିକାରେ ଅଠରବର୍ଷର ଘର ସଂସାର ଭିତରେ ବାପାମା’ଙ୍କର ଏଇ ପ୍ରଥମ ଆଗମନ । ବାପାଙ୍କ ଚାକିରୀ, ସାନ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ପାଠପଢ଼ା, ବାହାଘର, ଭଉଣୀ-ଭାଉଜ ମାନଙ୍କର ଡେଲିଭରୀ ଇତ୍ୟାଦିର କାରଣ ଦେଖାଇ ବାପା, ମା ଆରତୀର ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣକୁ ରଖିପାରିନଥିଲେ । ପ୍ରତିଥର ଭାରତ ଗଲାବେଳେ ଆଠ ସପ୍ତାହର ରହଣି ଶାଶୁଘର, ବାପଘର, ବନ୍ଧୁବାନ୍ଧବ, ସପ୍ତଂ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଭିତରେ ବଞ୍ଚୁକୁଞ୍ଚୁ ହୋଇ କେମିତି ସରିଯାଏ ଜଣାପଡ଼େନି । ମା’କୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡିଆ ମାରି ବିଦାୟ ନେବା ବେଳେ ଆରତୀ ହିସାବ କରେ ସମୁଦାୟ କେତେ ସମୟ କଟେଇଛି ସତରେ ମା ସହିତ । ପ୍ରତିଥର ଦେଖିବା ବେଳକୁ ବାପା ମାଙ୍କର ବୟସ ଆଉ ଦୁଇ/ତିନି ବର୍ଷ ବଢ଼ିଯାଇଥାଏ । ଆରତୀ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତହୁଏ ମନେ ମନେ ଭାବେ ସତରେ କେବେ ସେମାନେ ଆସିବେ, ତା ଘର ସଂସାର ଦେଖିବେ । ଶେଷରେ ତା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସତ ହେଲା ବାପା ମା ଛଅ ମାସ ପାଇଁ ଆସିବାକୁ ରାଜିହେଲେ ।

ଛଅ ମାସ! କେତେ ଶିଘ୍ର ଚାଲିଗଲା ସମୟ । କାଲିପରି ଲାଗୁଛି, ସୁମନ୍ତ ଥକା କରୁଥିଲେ ବାପା ମା ଆସିବେ ବୋଲି ଝିଅର ପାଦ ତଳେ ଲଗୁନି । ବାପା ମାଙ୍କର ଭିସା ହେଇଯିବା ଖବର ପାଇବା ପରଠାରୁ ବହୁତ ଖୁସିଥିଲା ଆରତୀ । ସତରେ ସେତେବେଳେ ମନଟା କେମିତି ଉଡ଼ୁଥିଲା । ବ୍ୟାକୁଳ ହୋଇ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥିଲା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏୟାରପୋର୍ଟରେ ସ୍ୱାଗତ କରିବାର ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକୁ । ମନେ ମନେ ଡରୁଥିଲା ଶାଶୁ, ଶୁଣୁରଙ୍କ ପରି ବୋର୍ ହେଇ ଫେରିଯିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁବେନିତ ! ବାହାଘର ପରେ ଏଇ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ବାପା ମା ଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଏକା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଏତେ ଗୁଡ଼ାଏ ଦିନ କଟେଇବାର, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଯତ୍ନ ନେବାର,

ମନଖୋଲା ଗପ କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିଲା । ବାହାଘର ପୂର୍ବରୁ ବାପାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ତା, ଜଳଖିଆ ତିଆରି କରିବା ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ଥିଲା ତା'ର । ତା ହାତ ତିଆରି ଚାହା ବାପାଙ୍କର ପସନ୍ଦ ଥିଲା ବୋଲି ବହୁତ ଗର୍ବ କରୁଥିଲା ମନେ ମନେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଆଡ଼ଜଙ୍ଗମେଣ୍ଟରେ ସୁବିଧା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରଥମ ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ ଛୁଟି ନେଇ ଘରେ ରହିଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଦିନରୁହିଁ ମା' ରୋଷେଇ ଘରର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ନେଇଗଲା । ବାପା ତା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଫର୍ମର'ସ୍ ମାର୍କେଟ୍, ଗୋସରୀ ଷ୍ଟୋର୍ ଯିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଲେ । ଚାହୁଁ ଚାହୁଁ ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ ବନ୍ଧୁ ବାନ୍ଧବ ମାନଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଆଲୋଚନା, ମନ୍ଦିର ଦର୍ଶନ, ମଲ୍ ବୁଲା, ଫର୍ମର'ସ୍ ମାର୍କେଟ୍ ଓ ଗୋସରୀ ଷ୍ଟୋର୍କୁ ଚିପ୍ ଆଉ ମା'ର ଖାଣ୍ଟି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପିଠାପଣା, ତରକାରୀ ଇତ୍ୟାଦିର ସ୍ଵାଦ ଭିତରେ କୁଆଡେ ଚାଲିଗଲା । ପ୍ରଥମ ଦିନ କାମରେ ଜମା ମନ ଲାଗିଲାନି, ବାରଂବାର ଘରକୁ ଫେନ୍ କରିଥିଲା । ପରଦିନ କାମକୁ ବାହାରିବା ବେଳେ ବାପା ତାଗିଦ୍ କରିଥିଲେ, “ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେବୁନି, ଆମେ ଦରକାର୍ ପଡ଼ିଲେ ଫେନ୍ କରିବୁ, ତୁ କାମରେ ମନ ଦେ ” ।

ଘରର ବାତାବରଣ ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ବଦଳିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ଘରର ବାସ୍ନା ଭାନିଲା/ରୋଜ/ ଲାଭେଣ୍ଟର୍ ରୁ ଚନ୍ଦନ/ ଚମ୍ପା/ଝୁଣା ରେ ବଦଳିଗଲା । ସପ୍ତାହ ରେ ଥରେ ପୂଜା ପାଉଥିବା ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ଫେଟୋ ପାଖରେ ସକାଳ ଓ ସଂଜରେ ଦୀପ ଆଉ ଧୂପ ଲାଗିଲା । କିଚେନ୍ ସକାଳୁରାତି ଯାଏଁ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହିଲା । ସୁମନ୍ତ ବି ଏନଜୟ୍ କରୁଥିଲେ ବାପା ମାଙ୍କ କଂପାନି । ତାଇନିଂ ଟେବୁଲ୍ରେ ବାପାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ପଲିଟିକ୍ସ, ଇକୋନୋମିକ୍ସ କୁ ନେଇ ଢେଙ୍କନାଳରୁ ଢିଙ୍କିଶାଳ ଯାଏଁ ଆଲୋଚନା ଆଉ ମାର ସ୍ଵାଦିଷ୍ଟ ହାତରକ୍ଷା ଭିତରେ ଶିପ୍ଟ ବେଡ୍କୁ ଯିବାର ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କେତେବେଳେ ବଦଳିଗଲା ସେ ନିଜେ ଜାଣିପାରିଲେନି । ସୁଯୋଗ ଦେଖି ଆରତୀକୁ ଚିତେଇବାପାଇଁ ମା'କୁ କହୁଥିଲେ, “ମା, ଆପଣ ଝିଅ କୁ ରକ୍ଷା ଶିଖେଇଲେନି କାହିଁକି, ଏମିତି ସ୍ଵାଦିଷ୍ଟ ଖାଇବା ମୋତେ ସବୁବେଳେ ମିଳନ୍ତା । ଝିଅ ଜନମ ତୁଲୀମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ଏକଥା ମାନିବାକୁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ରାଜି ନୁହେଁ ।” ବାପା ହସି ହସି ଉପଦେଶ ଦିଅନ୍ତି, "way to a man's heart is through his stomach." ଆରତୀ ମନେ ମନେ ଗରଗର ହୁଏ, “ହୁଁ କେବେ ରାନ୍ଧିନି --ଏତେବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଏମିତି କଂପେନ୍ କରନ୍ତି, ଶାଶୁ, ଶୁଶୁରଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ପୁଲେଇ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି, ଏତେକାମ ଭିତରେ ଛ' ତିଅଣ ନ' ଭଜା ରାନ୍ଧିବାକୁ ସମୟ କାହିଁ?” ସୁମନ୍ତ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ରହୁଥିଲେ, ଏତେଦିନ ପରେ ଘରଟା ଘର ପରି ଲାଗୁଛି ବୋଲି ଆରତୀକୁ କହୁଥଲେ । ବାପା ମା ବୋର୍ ହେବେନି ବୋଲି ଜି ଚିଢି, ସୋନି ଚାନେଲ୍ ନେଇ ଆସିଲେ । ଆରତୀ ବି ଖୁସି ଥିଲା,

ମନେହେଉଥିଲା ସେ ଯେମିତି ସେଇ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ କଲେଜ୍ ପଢ଼ିଲା ବେଳର ଆରତୀ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଛି ।

ବାତାବରଣ ବଦଳିବା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ହାବଭାବ ବଦଳିଗଲା । ବାପା ମାଙ୍କ ଆସିବା ପରେ ପରେ ସେମାନେ ସଂଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ ବେଶି ସମୟ ନିଜନିଜ ରୁମ୍ରେ କଟେଇଲେ, ଖାଲି ଗୁଡ୍ ନାଇଟ୍ କହିବାକୁ ଆସନ୍ତି ଯାହା । ଚିକେନ୍ ସାଣ୍ଡଉଇଚ୍, ସ୍ନାଗେଟି, ନୁଡୁଲ୍ସ୍ ପିଜା, ଯାହା ବି ହଉ ଧରିକି ନିଜ ରୁମ୍କୁ ପଳାନ୍ତି । ଆରତୀ ଯଦିଓ ବୁଝେ ବାପା, ମାଙ୍କ ମନ ଦୁଃଖ ହେଉଛି, କିଛି କରିପାରେନି । ମିଲି, ମଣ୍ଡୁଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଥା ହେଲେବି କିଛି ବିଶେଷ ଲାଭ ହେଲାନି । ଚିନ୍ ଏଜର୍ ପିଲା ! ବାପା, ମାଙ୍କ ସହତି ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ କଥା ହେବାର ବାଧ୍ୟବାଧକତା, ତାଇନିଂ ଟେବୁଲ୍ରେ ସବୁଳା, ଘାଣ୍ଟି, ମାଛବେଶର ପରି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରକାର ଖାଣ୍ଟି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଖାଦ୍ୟର ଭିତ ପାଖରୁ ଦୂରରେ ରହିବାକୁ ସେମାନେ ଉଚିତ୍ ମନେକରୁଥିଲେ । ଆରତୀ ବି ଏତେ ମଜ୍ଜିଯାଇଥିଲା ଏଇ ନୂଆ ବାତାବରଣ ଭିତରେଯେ ଏସବୁ ନୋଟିସ୍ କଲାବେଳକୁ ବହୁତ ତେରି ହେଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ଦିନେ ସୁମନ୍ତ ବୋଉ ହାତ ରକ୍ଷା ଚିକ୍ଷୁଡ଼ିଘାଣ୍ଟି ଖାଉ ଖାଉ ବହୁତ ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରୁଥିଲେ । ବାପା କହିଥିଲେ, “ଯେତେଯାହାହେଲେ କଣ ହେବ ନାତିନାତୁଣୀ ଙ୍ ମନକୁତ ଜିଣିପାରିଲାନି, ତାଙ୍କରି ପାଇଁତ ଆସିବା କଥା” । ପରଦିନ ସୁମନ୍ତ ମିଲି ମଣ୍ଡୁଙ୍କୁ ଟେବୁଲ୍ ରେ ବସି ଖାଇବାକୁ କହିଥିଲେ । ମଣ୍ଡୁ ହୋମ୍ଡ୍ରାକର୍ ଆଳ ଦେଖାଇ ରୁମ୍ରେ ଖାଇବ ବୋଲି ଜିଦ୍ କଲା, ସୁମନ୍ତ ବୁଝେବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ମଣ୍ଡୁ ଯୁକ୍ତିକଲା ଆଉ କିଛି କଥା ନଶୁଣି ରୁମ୍କୁ ଚାଲିଗଲା । ମିଲି ଯଦିଓ ଟେବୁଲ୍ରେ ବସିଲା, ପୁରା ସମୟ ମୁହଁ ପୁଲେଇ ବସିଥିଲା । ସୁମନ୍ତ ରୁପ୍ତାପ୍ ଖାଉଥିଲେ । ବାପା, ମା ବି ପୁରା ସମୟ ନୀରବ ରହିଲେ । ସେଇ ନିରବତାର ବୋଝ ଖୁବ୍ ଭାରି ମନେହୋଥିଲା ଆରତୀକୁ । ମିଲି ରୁମ୍କୁ ଗଲାପରେ ବାପା, ମାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ କୁ ଚାହିଁପାରୁନଥିଲା ସେ । କଣ ଭାବୁଥିବେ ସେମାନେ, କି ଅସଭ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟବହାର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର । ରାତିରେ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ କାନ୍ଦି ପକେଇଥିଲା ସେ । ଗଲା ପନ୍ଦର ବର୍ଷରେ ଥରେବି ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସେ ଏମିତି ଲଜ୍ଜାବୋଧ କରିନଥିଲା । ସୁମନ୍ତ ବୁଝେଇଥିଲେ, “ସେମାନେ ଭଲ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କହିପାରନ୍ତିନି, ଆମ ଚାରିଜଣଙ୍କ ଗପସପ ଭିତରେ ସେମାନେ ବୋଧେ ଇଗ୍ନୋର୍ଟ୍ ପିଲ୍ କରୁଛନ୍ତି” । ସତକଥା, ଏକଥା କେମିତି ଆରତୀ ବୁଝିନଥିଲାଯେ ଏଭିତରେ ସେ ପିଲା ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କୁ ଏତେ ନେଗେକ୍ଟ୍ କରିଛି । ନିଜ ଅଜାଣତରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ସହ ଏକ ଦୂରତ୍ଵ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଇଯାଇଛି । ପିଲା ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କ ପସନ୍ଦ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଖାଇବା, ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ

ବାହାରକୁ ବୁଲିଯିବା, ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଗପସପ କରିବା ସବୁକେମିତି ବନ୍ଦ ହେଇଯାଇଛି । ନିଜେ ବାପା ମାଁ ଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ହେଉ ହେଉ ନିଜ ପନ୍ଦର ବର୍ଷର ପୁଅ ଆଉ ୧୩ବର୍ଷ ର ଝିଅ ଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ଦୂରେଇଯାଇଛି କେତେବେଳେ । ୪ମିତିରେ ତ ସୁମନ୍ତ ଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ କେବେ ସମୟ ନଥାଏ । ତେଣୁ ଆରତୀ ସବୁବେଳେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଥାଏ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିଜି ରଖିବାରେ । ଗଲା ଦୁଇ ତିନି ସପ୍ତାହ ହେଲାଣି ସେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହିଯାଇଛି ମା' ବାପାଙ୍କ ସହିତ । ବାପା, ମା ଆସିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝେଇଥିଲା ସୁନାପିଲା ହେବ, ଜିନ୍ଦ୍ କରିବନି, ପାଟିତୁଣ୍ଡ କରିବନି, ସେମାନେ ସୁନାପିଲା ହେବାର ଭଲ ରାସ୍ତା ବାଛିନେଇଛନ୍ତି । ସୁମନ୍ତ ସବୁବେଳେ କାମରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ, ଅଫିସ୍ କାମ ନଥିଲେ ଘରେ ରିଲାକ୍ସ କରିବେ, ଘରଭିତରେ କାମ ଖୋଜି ଖୋଜି ନିଜକୁ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରଖିବେ । ତା' ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଏବେ ଗପ କରିବାକୁ ବାପା ମିଳିଯାଇଚାନ୍ତି । ନିଜକୁ ନିଜେ କଥା ଦେଲା କାଲିଠୁ ପୁଣି ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ଆଗ ବୁଝିବ । ସୁମନ୍ତ ଯାହା କହିଲେ ସତକଥା, ଓଡିଆରେ କଥା ହେବା ପୋବେମ୍ ହେଇଯାଉଛି ବୋଧେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡିଆ କଥା ବୁଝିତ ପାରିବେ । ଆର୍ଲିଙ୍ଗ୍ ବାପାଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଥା ହେଇପାରିବେ । ୪ମିତି ଦୂରେଇ ଦୂରେଇ ରହିଲେ ବାପା ମା ଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ମିଶି ପାରିବେନି । କିଛିଗୋଟେ କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ ।

ପରଦିନ ସକାଳୁ ବାପା ମା ଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ବ୍ୟବହାର ପାଇଁ ମନଦୁଃଖ କରି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରୋବେମ୍ ଜଣେଇଥିଲା । ମା ଅଶ୍ରୁସନା ଦେଇଥିଲା, ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ନହେବାକୁ ବୁଝେଇଥିଲା । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ବୁଝିବାକୁ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ଅଫିସ୍ ଯିବା ଆଗରୁ ଆରତୀ ପ୍ରିନ୍ଟ୍ ରୁ ଚିକେନ୍ ବାହାର କରି ସିଙ୍ଗ୍ରେ ରଖିଥିଲା । ମା ଚିକେନ୍ ଖାଏନି, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତାକୁ କହିଯାଇଥିଲା ଚିକେନ୍ ରାନ୍ଧିବାକୁ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ନହେବାପାଇଁ । ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବାବେଳକୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଚିକେନ୍ କରି ହେଇଯାରିଥିଲା । ଆରତୀ କିଛି କହିବା ଆଗରୁ ମା କହିଥିଲା, “ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେବୁନି, ଯମା ରାଗ ପଡିନି, ପିଲାମାନେ ଖାଇବା ପରେ ରାଗ ପକେଇଦେବି” । ସେଦିନ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ମଞ୍ଜୁ-ମିଲି ମାର ହାତରକ୍ଷା ଖାଇଥିଲେ । ସେମାନେ ଖୁସିରେ ଖାଉଥିବା ଦେଖି ମା ମୁହଁରେ ଖୁସିର ଝଲକ ଝଙ୍କ ଦେଖାଯାଉଥିଲା । ତାପରଠାରୁ ମା ମିଲି ମଞ୍ଜୁ ଙ୍କ ପସନ୍ଦ ଆନୁସାରେ କିଛିନା କିଛି



ରାନ୍ଧିବକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା । କୋଉଠୁ ଏତେ ନୂଆ ରେସିପି ଶିଖିଥିଲା କେଜାଣି । ମିଲି-ମଞ୍ଜୁ ପ୍ରତିଥର ଆଇଠୁ ରେସିପି ରଖିବାକୁ ରିମାଇଣ୍ଡ୍ କରିବାକୁ ଭୁଲୁନଥିଲେ ।

ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ଘରର ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ବଦଳିବକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ସଂଧ୍ୟା ବେଳେ ଅଜା ଆଇ ନାତି ନାତୁଣୀ ଙ୍କ ହସଖୁସିରେ ଜମିଲା । କେବେ କେବେ ବାପା ମିଲି-ମଞ୍ଜୁକୁ ହୋମଡ୍ରାକ୍ଟରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କଲେ । ଆଇର ଖାଣ୍ଟି ଓଡିଆକୁ ବୁଝିବା ନାତି-ନାତୁଣୀ ଙ୍କୁ ଅସୁବିଧା ହେଲାନି କି ନାତିନାତୁଣୀ ଙ୍କର ଖଣ୍ଟି ଓଡିଆ ବୁଝିବା ପାଇଁ ଅଜା ଆଇଙ୍କର ଅସୁବିଧା ହେଲାନି । ଶନିବାର ରବିବାର ବୁଲାବୁଲିରେ ଯାଏ, କେବେ ଓଡିଆ ବନ୍ଧୁ ମାନଙ୍କ ଘର ତ କେବେ ସାଇଟ୍ ସିଂ ରେ, କେବେ ପୁଣି ଲଙ୍ଗ୍ ଉଇକ୍ଟ୍ରେ ଲଙ୍ଗ୍ଟ୍ରିପ୍ । ଏ ବୟସରେ ବି ବାପା,ମା ବୁଲିବାକୁ ଭଲ ପାଉଥିଲେ, ନୂଆଜାଗା ଦେଖି ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହେଉଥିଲେ । ଆମେରିକା ର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟନ ସୁବିଧାର ଶତମୁଖ ପ୍ରଶଂସା କରନ୍ତି ବାପା । ବାପାଙ୍କର ଖୁସି ଆଉ ଉତ୍ସାହ ଦେଖିଲେ ଆରତୀର ଯାତ୍ରାଜନିତ କାନ୍ତି ଦୂର ହେଇଯାଏ । ସୁମନ୍ତ ତାଇଲ୍ କରିବାକୁ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି, ତେଣୁ ବାହାରକୁ ଯିବା ପ୍ଲାନ୍ କରିବା ବିଶେଷ ଅସୁବିଧା ହୁଏନି । ଯେତେ କମ୍ ସମୟର ପ୍ଲାନ୍ ହେଇଥିଲେବି ମା ପୁରା ଟିପ୍ ପାଇଁ ଘରତିଆରି ଖାଇବା ରେଡି କରିଦଉଥିଲା । ବାହାରେ ଖାଇବା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁନଥିଲା । ସୁମନ୍ତ ଏନ୍‌ଜୟ କରୁଥିଲେ ଘରତିଆରି ଖାଇବା । କିନ୍ତୁ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ପସନ୍ଦ ନଥିଲା ସେସବୁ । ସେମାନେ ଜିନ୍ଦ୍ କରୁଥିଲେ ଫାଷ୍ଟ୍‌ଫୁଡ୍ ପାଇଁ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ସପୋର୍ଟ କରି ଅସୁବିଧାରେ ପଡୁଥିଲା ଆରତୀ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଖରାପ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରେଇଛି ବୋଲି ବାପାମା'ଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଗାଳି ଶୁଣିବା ବେଳେ ସୁମନ୍ତ ଆରତୀକୁ ଚାହିଁ ହସୁଥାନ୍ତି । ରାଗ ଲାଗୁଥିଲେବି କହିପାରେନି ଯେ ଏଇ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ପଛରେ ଏଇ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କର ହାତ । ତାଙ୍କର ମହାମନ୍ତ ‘ଯେ ଦେଶ ଯାଇ ସେ ଫଳ ଖାଇ’ । ଲଙ୍ଗ୍ଟ୍ରିପ୍ ଗୁଡାକରେ ଅଶାନ୍ତିର ବଡ କାରଣ ଥିଲା ଗୀତ । ବାପା-ମା କହିବେ ଭଜନ ଲଗା, ମିଲି-ମଞ୍ଜୁ ଚାହିଁବେ ହିନ୍ଦିମୁଭି ଗୀତ ନହେଲେ ପମ୍ ମ୍ୟୁଜିକ୍ ଆଉ ସୁମନ୍ତ ଲଗେଇବେ ପୁରୁଣା ହିନ୍ଦୀ ଗୀତ । ସେଇ ବାହାନାରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ମିଲି ମଞ୍ଜୁ ତାତିଙ୍କୁ ମନେଇ ଏମ୍‌ପିଥି ହାସଲ କରି ପାରିଲେ ।

ଚାହୁଁ ଚାହୁଁ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ସମର୍ ଭେକେସନ୍ ଆସିଗଲା । ଏତେ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସମର୍ଭେକେ -

ସନ୍ଦେ ଏନ୍‌ଗେଜମେଣ୍ଟ ନେଇ ଆରତୀ ନିଃସିନ୍ଧୁ ଥିଲା । ବାପା ମା' ଘରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି ତେଣୁ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଆଉ ବିଶେଷ କିଛି ଚିନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ ।

କେତେଟା ଇଭିନିଂ କାସ୍‌ପିବା ଛଡା ପ୍ରାୟ ଘରେ ରହିବେ । ବେଶୀ ସମୟ ଅଜାଆଇ ଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ରହିଲେ ପିଲାମାନେ ଓଡିଆ ଶିଖିଯିବେ ଆଉ ବାପାମା'ଙ୍କ ଦିପହର ବେଳାର ଏକୃଷିଆ ଭାବି ଦୂରହେଇଯିବ ଭାବି ଖୁସି ଥିଲା ଆରତୀ । ପ୍ରଥମ କିଛିଦିନ ବେଶ୍ ଭଲରେ ଗଲା । ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ଦୁଇପକ୍ଷରୁ ମୃଦୁ ଅଭିଯୋଗ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଇଗଲା, “ତୋ ପିଲାମାନେ ଖାଲି ଚିତ୍ତି ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି, କଥା ଶୁଣୁନାହାନ୍ତି, ମଞ୍ଜୁ କିଛି ନକହି ବାହାରକୁ ପଳେଇଲା, ମିଲି ଘଣ୍ଟା ଘଣ୍ଟା ଫୋନ୍‌ରେ ଗପୁଛି”, “ଅଜା ଇଜ୍ ସ୍ପୋରିଂ ଠୁ ମର୍, ଟେଲ୍ ହିମ୍ ନର୍ ଟୁ ସିମ୍ ଅନ୍ ଦି କାଉଟ୍, ଆଇ ଇଜ୍ ଅଲଭଏଜ୍ ଟେଲିଂ ଇଟ୍ ଇଟ୍” ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ତା ଭିତରେ ବି ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ଗଢିଉଠୁଥିଲା । ଭାଷା ଆଉ ଏକ ସମସ୍ୟା ନଥିଲା । ଯଦିଓ ଆଇ ସାଙ୍ଗର ଏତେ ଗପସପ ଜମୁନଥିଲା, ଅଜାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗର ମଞ୍ଜୁର ଗପସପର ଜୁଆର ଛୁଟୁଥିଲା । ସୁମନ୍ତ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ଥଙ୍ଗା କରୁଥିଲେ, “ମୁଁ ଭାବୁଥିଲି ବାପାଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ପିଲା ଓଡିଆ ଶିଖିବେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ବାପାତ ଓଡିଆ କହୁନାହାନ୍ତି । ନାତି ନାତୁଣିଙ୍କୁ ହାତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ମାତୃଭାଷା କୁ ପାସୋରିଯିବେ ଶେଷରେ” । ସୁମନ୍ତ କି ଆରତୀ ଯଦି ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ଓଡିଆ ରେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରିବାକୁ ବାରଂବାର ମନେ ପକାନ୍ତି, ବାପା ହସି ହସି ଉତ୍ତର ଦିଅନ୍ତି, “ହୃଦୟର ଭାବ କୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାପାଇଁ ବା ବୁଝିବା ପାଇଁ ଖାଲି ମାତୃଭାଷା ଲୋଡା ନୁହେ, ସବୁଭାଷାର ସେ ଶକ୍ତି ରହିଛି, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଲୋଡା ଶୁଣା ଆଉ ଆନ୍ତରିକତା । ଜୋର୍ ଜବରଦସ୍ତିରେ ଶୁଣାର ଅଭିବୃଦ୍ଧି ହୁଏନା, କ୍ଷୟ ହୁଏ । ସେମାନେ ଓଡିଆ ନକହିପାରିଲେ କଣ ହେଲା, ମୁଁତ ଇଂରାଜୀ କହୁଛି । ତାଙ୍କ ଆଇ ତ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗର ଓଡିଆରେ ଏକତରଫା କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ଚଳେଇଛି । ମିଲି କି ମଞ୍ଜୁ ର ମନ କଥା ଜାଣିବାରେ ତାର କିଛି ଅସୁବିଧା ହୁଏନି । ତୁମେତ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ଅମେରିକାନମାନଙ୍କ ମେଳରେ ବଢେଇଲ, ସେମାନେ ନିଜ ଭାବକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଭାଷାକୁ ମାଧ୍ୟମ କଲେ, ମୋ ବିଚାରରେ ଏଥିରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଦୋଷନାହିଁ” ।

ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ଆରତୀ ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରିଥିଲା, ଘର, ପରିବାର, ସମାଜ ଓ ଜୀବିକାର ଛନ୍ଦାଛନ୍ଦି ଜାଲ ଭିତରେ ତା ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ବିବ୍ରତ ଜୀବନ ଶୈଳୀ କୁ ନେଇ ବାପା-ମାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଅନେକ

ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଚୀ । ବାପା କୁହନ୍ତି, “ଆମର ସେଠି ଏବେ ମତର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଏଜର୍ ସବୁ ସୁବିଧା ହେଇଗଲାଣି, ରହିବାକୁ କିଛି ଅସୁବିଧା ହେବନି । ଏଠି ଗୁଡାଏ ଅତିହ୍ନା ଲୋକଙ୍କ ମେଳରେ ପଢି ରହିଛ କାହିଁକି, ଏଥର ଫେରି ଚାଲ । ପାଠ ପଢିବାକୁ ଆସିଥିଲ, ପଢାସରିଲା, ବେଶ୍ କିଛିଦିନ ଚାକିରୀ ବି କରିଲ, ଆମେରିକାର ବିଳାସ ବ୍ୟସନ ଭୋଗ କଲ, ମଉଜ ମଜଲିସ୍ କରିଲ, ଏଥର ଫେରି ଚାଲ” । ବେଞ୍ଜ କରିବି ଆରତୀ ବୁଝେଇପାରେନା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ, ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇପାରେନି ତାଙ୍କ କାହିଁକିର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନକୁ । ନିଜ ସଂପର୍କୀୟ, ନିଜ ଜନ୍ମମାଟି, ଜନ୍ମରୁ ପରିଚିତ ବାତାବରଣ, ସବୁଥିରୁ ଦୂରରେ ରହି ନିଜ ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ୱ, ନିଜ ପରିଚୟ ର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ଏ ସଂଘର୍ଷ ର କାରଣ ସେ ନିଜେ ତ ବୁଝିନି ଏଯାଏଁ, ଆଉ କାହାକୁ ବୁଝେଇବ କଣ ! କିଛି ପାଇବାକୁ ହେଲେ କିଛି ହଜେଇବାକୁ ହୁଏ, କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ନିଜେ ହିସାବ ରଖିନି କେତେ ହଜେଇଛି ଅଉ କେତେ ପାଇଛି । ଅନେକ ଖୁସିର ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଆସିଛି ଅଥଚ ନିଜ ଆତ୍ମୀୟ ସ୍ୱଜନଙ୍କୁ ସେ ଖୁସି ବାଞ୍ଛିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିନି । ଅନେକ ଦୁଃସହ ସମୟ ଆସିଛି, ଦୁଃଖକୁ ଛାଡିତଳେ ଚାପିଦେଇ ଆଗକୁ ବଢିଯିବାକୁ ହେଇଛି । ସମୟ ଅଟକିଯାଇନି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକ ପାଇଁ । ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ହୋଇ କେତେବେଳେ ଅଠରବର୍ଷ ଚାଲିଯାଇଛି । ଅଠରବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ସାତ ଆଠ ଥର ଇଣ୍ଡିଆ ଯାଇଛି । ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ଓ ଆତ୍ମୀୟ ସ୍ୱଜନଙ୍କର ଉପସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁଯୋଗ କୁ ମନଭରି ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପୁଣି ନିଜ କର୍ମସ୍ଥାନକୁ ଫେରିଆସିବାକୁ ହୋଇଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ କେବେ ଆପଣି କରିନି, ଜୀବନ ର ବାସ୍ତବତା କୁ ମାନିନେବାକୁ କୁଣ୍ଠାବୋଧ କରିନି । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହଯୋଗ ତାକୁ ସବୁବେଳେ ଶକ୍ତି ଆଉ ସାହସ ଦେଇଛି । ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ପରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ହୋଇ ଜୀବନର ପୃଷ୍ଠା ଓଲଟି ଯାଇଛି ।

ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କର ପିଏଚ୍‌ଡି ଆଉ ନୁଆ ନୁଆ ଜବ୍, ନିଜର ମାଷ୍ଟର୍ସ, ପ୍ରେଗ୍ନାନ୍ସି, ଡେଲିଭରି, ପିଲାମନଙ୍କର ତାଲପର୍ତ୍ତେଜ୍, ଟର୍ଡଲର୍ ପ୍ରି ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ତାସାଙ୍ଗର ସବୁକୁ ସୁବିଧା ହେଲା ପରି ନିଜ ପାଇଁ ଜବ୍ ଅନ୍ଦେଷଣ ଭିତରେ ତା ଘର ସଂସାରର ପ୍ରଥମ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟର ଅନ୍ତ ହେଇଥିଲା ଯେବେ ସେ ଜବ୍ ପାଇ ଚାକିରୀରେ ଜଏନ୍ କରିଥିଲା । ସୁମନ୍ତ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଗ୍ରିନ୍ କାର୍ଡ ପାଇବାପରେ ସ୍ଥିର କରିଥିଲେ ଘରକିଣିବାକୁ ସେତେବେଳେ ତା' ନୁଆ ଜବ୍, ନିଜର ଏବଂ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀ, ଏଲିମେଣ୍ଟରି ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ପାଠପଢା ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଆକ୍ଟିଭିଟି ରେ ଭରପୂର ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟର ଶେଷ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ଆରତୀ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଥିଲା ଏ ଦେଶ ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବିଦେଶ ନୁହେଁ । ଜନ୍ମଭୂମି ନହେଲେବି ଏ ଦେଶ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବହୁତ କିଛି ଅପର୍ତ୍ତୁନିଟି ଦେଇଛି, ତାଙ୍କର ଅନେକ

ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ବାସ୍ତବରେ ରୂପାନ୍ତର ହେଇଛି କେବଳ ଏଇ ଦେଶର ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗ କାରଣରୁ । ବିଏସ୍ ସି ପାଶ୍ କରି ବାହାହେବାପରେ ସେ କେବେ ଭାବି ନଥିଲା ପିଲାଦିନରୁ ମନ ଭିତରେ ବଢ଼ିଥିବା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଟି ଆଉ କେବେ ସତ ହେବ, ସେ ଚାକିରି କରିବ, ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଏକ ପରିଚୟ ନେଇ ଦୁନିଆ ଆଗରେ ଠିଆ ହେବ । ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କ ଉତ୍ସାହ ପାଇ ସେ ବି ମାଙ୍ଗର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିଲା, ଚାକିରି କଲା । ବିଦେଶରେ, ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅପରିଚିତ ସହରରେ ଅଳ୍ପ କେତେଜଣ ପରିଚିତଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ସେମାନେ ଏବେ ପଡ଼ିଛନ୍ତି । ନିଜର, ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ନେଇ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଯୋଜନା ଭିତରେ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆ ସବୁବେଳେ ଆଲୋଚନା ପରିସରକୁ ଆସେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରତିଥର ଆଲୋଚନା ବେଳେ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆ ଫେରିଯିବାର ଯୋଜନା କେବଳ ଆଲୋଚନାରେ ସୀମିତ ରୁହେ । ନିତିଦିନିଆ ଜୀବନର ବାସ୍ତବତା ପାଖରେ ଭାବ ପ୍ରବଣତା ହାରିଯାଇ ବାଟବଣା ହୁଏ । ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ସମସ୍ୟାକୁ ନେଇ ମନ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରୁହେ । ଗୋଟିଏ ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନ ନେହେଉଣୁ, ଆଉଗୋଟିଏ ସମସ୍ୟା ମୁଣ୍ଡଟେକି ଠିଆ ହେଇ ଯାଏ, ଗୋଟିଏ ଯୋଜନାର ପରିପୁରଣ ନହେଉଣୁ ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ଯୋଜନା ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଶୀର୍ଷମଣ୍ଡଳ କରିବାକୁ ବ୍ୟକୂଳ ହୋଇ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରୁଥାଏ । ଇଣ୍ଡିଆ ଫେରିଯିବାର ଯୋଜନା ସେମାନେ ଏଯାଏଁ କରି ପାରି ନାହାନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ମନ ଭିତରେ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆ ଫେରିଯିବାର ଆଶାଟିଏ ତଥାପି କୋଉଠି ଲୁଚିରହିଛି ଆରତୀର, ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ମନକୁ ଉତ୍ସୁକାଏ, ପରିବାର ଆତ୍ମୀୟ ସ୍ୱଜନଙ୍କ ର ଆକର୍ଷଣ ମନକୁ ବ୍ୟାକୂଳ କରେ । ବିଶେଷ କରି ଏବେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ପିଲାମାନେ ଭାରତୀୟ ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ହତାଦର କରି ଆମେରିକୀୟ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଢଙ୍ଗ ରଙ୍ଗ କୁ ଆପଣେଇନିଅନ୍ତି, ସେତେବେଳେ ବେଶୀ ମନେପଡ଼େ ଭାରତ-ଓଡ଼ିଶା, ଛାଡ଼ିଆସିଥିବା ସମାଜର ରିତିନୀତି, ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳାର ନିୟମ । କୋଉଠି କିଛି ହିସାବରେ ଭୁଲ୍ ରହିଗଲା ପରି ମନେହୁଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କର ଏଥିପାଇଁ କିଛିବି ବିବଚବୋଧ ଦେଖିନି ସେ । ନିହାତି ଅସମ୍ଭାଳ ଅବସ୍ଥା ନହେଲେ ସୁମନ୍ତ ପାଟି ଖୋଲନ୍ତିନି । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ସବୁ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ଆରତୀ ଉପରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇ ସେ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି । ଆରତୀକୁ ଏକା ଖୋଜିବାକୁ ହୁଏ ନିଜ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର । ଅନେକ ସମୟରେ ଉତ୍ତର ମିଳେନା, ପିଲାଙ୍କ ବୟସ ବଢ଼ିବା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନୁଆ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ, ନୁଆ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ଭିତରେ ବାଟବଣା ହୁଏ । ଇଣ୍ଡିଆରେ ଥିଲେ ଏମିତି ହେଇନଥାନ୍ତା, ସେମିତି ହେଇନଥାନ୍ତା ଭାବି ସନ୍ତୁଳି ହୁଏ ନିଜ ଭିତରେ ।

ଦିନେ ମିଲି ବହୁତ ଜିଦ୍ କରିଥିଲା ସାଙ୍ଗ ଘରକୁ ସ୍ଥିପ୍ତଓଭର ପାଇଁ ଯିବାକୁ । ଆମେରିକୀୟ ସାଙ୍ଗ, ନୁଆ ନୁଆ ପରିଚୟ; ସ୍ଥିପ୍ତଓଭର ପାଇଁ ମନା କରିଥିଲା ଆରତୀ । ବାସ୍ ସେତିକିରେ

ମିଲିର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଖରାପ ହେଇଗଲା । କାନ୍ଦିକାଟି, ପାଟିତୁଣ୍ଡ କରି ଘରକୁ କଂପେଇଲା । ବାପା ମା ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ, ଶେହେଲ ମିଲିର ରୁଦ୍ଧ ରୂପ ଦେଖି । ଆରତୀବି କମ୍ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଇନଥିଲା, କେବେ ଦେଖିନଥିଲା ମିଲିର ଏମିତି ରୁପ ଆଗରୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମନେପଡ଼ିଗଲା ‘ଚିନ୍ ଏଜ୍’ । ଗଲା ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଏଇ ଶବ୍ଦ ଦୁଇଟିର ରାଜତ୍ୱ ଚାଲିଛି ଘରେ । ମଞ୍ଜୁର ଜିଦ୍, ସମୟେ ସମୟେ ଅର୍ଥହୀନ ଯୁକ୍ତିତର୍କ, ବେପରଢ଼ା ଜବାବ୍ ଏବେ ବି ଚାଲିଛି । ମିଲି ଚିନ୍ ଏଜ୍ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ସଂସ୍କରଣ !! କେହିଜଣେ ଥରେ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଇଥିଲା ଚିନ୍ ଏଜ୍ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ସମ୍ଭାଳିବା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ନିଜକୁ ସମ୍ଭାଳିବା ଦରକାର । କିନ୍ତୁ ବାପା ମାଙ୍କ ଉପସ୍ଥିତିରେ ମିଲିର ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ବ୍ୟବହାର ଆଗରେ ନିଜକୁ ସମ୍ଭାଳିବା ସହଜ ନଥିଲା ଆରତୀ ପାଇଁ । ଖୁବ୍ ରାଗିଥିଲା ମିଲି ଉପରେ । ମିଲି ଦୁଇଦିନ ଧରି ନିଜ ରୁମ୍‌ରୁ ବାହାରିଲାନି । ଘରେ ଏକ ଅଶ୍ୱସ୍ତିକର ପରିବେଶ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଲା । ସୁମନ୍ତ, ଆଜ୍, ଇଉଜୁଆଲ୍, ମା-ଝିଅଙ୍କ ପ୍ରୋବ୍ଲେମ୍‌ରେ ପଶିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଲେନି, ବରଂ ଆରତୀକୁ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଗିଲ୍ଟି ଫିଲ୍ ନକରି ମିଲିକୁ ଟାଲମ୍ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ । ମା ବାପା କଣ ଭାବୁଥିବେ ଭାବି ଖରାପ୍ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଆରତୀକୁ । ମା ନିଜ ଆତ୍ମ ତାକୁ ବୁଝେଇଥିଲା, ମିଲିକୁ ବୁଝେଇବାପାଇଁ ବାଧ୍ୟ କରିଥିଲା । ଆରତୀ ମା ପାଖରେ ନିଜକୁ ସମ୍ଭାଳି ପାରିନଥିଲା । ଛୋଟପିଲାଙ୍କ ପରି କାନ୍ଦିପକେଇଥିଲା । ଅନେକଦିନରୁ ଛାଡ଼ିତଳେ ବାନ୍ଧିହୋଇ ରହିଥିବା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ସବୁ ମା ପାଖରେ ଆପଣାଛାଏଁ ଫିଟିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ । ମା ବୁଝେଇଥିଲା, “ଜେନେରେସନ୍ ଗ୍ୟାପ୍, ବୟସର ଦୋଷ ସବୁକାଳେ ରହିଥିଲା ସବୁକାଳେ ରହିବ । ପିଲା ମାନେ ଚାରିପାଖେ ଯାହା ଦେଖିବେ ସେସବୁକୁ ଅନୁସରଣ କରିବେ, ଶିଖିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବେ । ସେଇଥିରୁ ଦୁନିଆର ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ ଜାଣିବେ । ନିଜେ ନବୁଝିଲା ଯାଏଁ ବୁଝିବେନି ଭୁଲ୍ କଣ, ଠିକ୍ କଣ । ସେଥିରେ ତାଙ୍କର କିଛି ଦୋଷ ନାହିଁ । ଏତ ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ନିୟମ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତୋତେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତକୁ ଜାଗତ ରଖିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ନେହର ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ରଖିବାକୁ ହେବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏତେ ଜୋର୍ ରେ ନୁହେଁ ଯେ ସେମାନେ ଅଣନିଃଶ୍ୱାସୀ ହେଇ ମୁକ୍ତିପାଇଁ ଆଉ କାହାର ଆଶ୍ରୟ ନେଇ ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ମାରିବାକୁ ବାଟଖୋଜିବେ” । ଆରତୀ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇଥିଲା, “ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆରେ ଆମେ ଯେଉଁ ପରିବେଶରେ, ଯେଉଁ ସାମାଜିକ ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳା ଭିତରେ ବଢ଼ିଥିଲୁ ସେଇ ପରିବେଶରେ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ବଢ଼େଇବା ସହଜ ହେଇଥାନ୍ତା ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି, ଏଠି ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ଠିକ୍‌ରେ ବଢ଼େଇବା ବହୁତ କଷ୍ଟ” । ମା ହସିହସି ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇଥିଲା, “ଏଇ ସମାଜରେ ବଢ଼ିବା, ସାମାଜିକ ଚଳଣିକୁ ଅନୁକରଣ କରିବା ପଛରେ ହାତ ରହିଛି ତୁମମାନଙ୍କର ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି,

ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଆଗରୁ ତୁମେ ଏ ସମାଜକୁ ଆଦରି ନେଇଛ । ନିଜକୁ ସୁହେଇଲାଭଳି ସବୁ ସୁବିଧା ସୁଯୋଗକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରିଛ । ଅନେକଦିନରୁ ନିଜ ଦେଶ ଛାଡ଼ି ଏଦେଶକୁ ଆପଣେଇ ନେଇଛ । ତୁ ଯେଉଁ ସମାଜ, ଯେଉଁ ପରିବେଶ କଥା କହୁଛୁ ଆଉ ସେ ସମୟ ନାହିଁ, ପରିବେଶ ନାହିଁ, ଏବେ ସେଠିବି ସମାଜର ରଙ୍ଗ ଢଙ୍ଗ ବହୁତ ବଦଳି ଯାଇଛି । ଖାଲି ଏତିକି କଥା ସେଠି ରହୁଥିବା ଲୋକମାନେ ସମୟ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ତାଳଦେଇ ବଦଳିଯାଇଛନ୍ତି, ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ସମାଜ ଆଉ ସାମାଜିକ ନିୟମ ବି ସ୍ୱତଃ ବଦଳି ଯାଇଛି । ତୁ ଯେଉଁ ସମୟର କଥା କହୁଛୁ, ସେ ସମୟରେ ତୋର ଭୂମିକା ଆଜି ଏଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ତୋର ଭୂମିକା ଭିତରେ ଆକାଶ ପାତାଳ ପ୍ରଭେଦ । ଆଜି ତୁ ମା' ଭୂମିକାରେ ରହି ତୋ ପିଲାଙ୍କର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଛୁ, ସେତେବେଳେ ତୁ ପିଲାଥିଲୁ, ସେତେବେଳେ ତୋର ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ ବିଚାର କରିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ନଥିଲା, ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଭାବରେ, ବାହାର ଦୁନିଆର ଚାପରେ ତୁ'ବି ଆପଣି କରୁଥିଲୁ, ଅଭିଯୋଗ କରୁଥିଲୁ । ଶୁଖିଲା ଆତ୍ମାରେ ତୋ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ଆମକୁ ସଜାଗ ରହିବାକୁ ହେଉଥିଲା । ସେଇ ଏକା ସମାଜ, ସେଇ ଏକା ମାଟି ପାଣି ପବନ ଭିତରେବି ଅନେକ ନୂଆ ନୂଆ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନନେଇ ସମୟ ଆମ ଆଗରେ ଠିଆ ହେଇଯାଉଥିଲା । ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଖୋଜିବା ପାଇଁ, ସମସ୍ୟା କୁ ସମାଧାନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ବାଟ ଖୋଜୁଥିଲେ, ସମୟ ସହିତ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ କରୁଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଠିକ୍ ବାଟ ବତେଇବାର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଥିଲା ଆମର । ସବୁବେଳେ ସଫଳତା ମିଳୁଥିଲା ତା ନୁହେଁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା ଜାରି ରହିଥିଲା । ଅଭିଯୋଗ, ଆପଣି, ଯୁକ୍ତିତର୍କ, ଭୁଲ୍ ବୁଝାମଣା ଭିତରେବି ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ, ଘରର ଶାନ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧରିବାକୁ ହେବ, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭୁଲ୍ ପାଇଁ କ୍ଷମା କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ, ଦୃଢ଼ ହୋଇ ସମାଧାନର ବାଟ ଖୋଜିବାକୁ ହେବ” । ମା କୋଳରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ରଖି ଆରତୀ ତୁମ୍ଭ ଚାପ୍ ଶୋଇ ଶୋଇ ଭାବୁଥିଲା, “କେଜାଣି ସତରେ ତାକୁ ସମାଧାନର ରାସ୍ତା ସବୁବେଳେ ମିଳିବ କି ନାହିଁ, ସତରେ କଣ ସୁରୁଖୁରୁରେ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ମଣିଷ କରିପାରିବ ସେ ! ” । ଆଖିଖୋଲି ମା'ର ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା ସେ । ଆରତୀର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଆଉଁସିଦେଇ ମା ହସି ହସି କହୁଥିଲା, “ତୁ ଏଠି ଘୋଡ଼ା ଚଢ଼ାଠାରୁ ଘାସ କଟା ଯାଏଁ ସବୁ କାମ ଭିତରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହି ଯେଉଁ ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ଘାରି ହେଉଛୁ, ଇଣ୍ଡିଆରେ ଥାଇ ଚାକର, ପୁଝାରୀ, ଡ୍ରାଇଭର, ବନ୍ଧୁ,

ବାନ୍ଧବ ଙ୍ଗ ଘେରରେ ରହି ତୋ ଭଉଣୀ ଆଉ ଭାଉଜ, ସେଇ ଏକା ମନ୍ଦ “ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ମଣିଷ କେମିତି କରିବୁ” ଘୋଷୁଛନ୍ତି ଅହରହ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆହୁରି ଚାଲିବାକୁ ହେବ ଏବେଠୁ ଧକିପଡ଼ିଲେ ଚଳିବନି । ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋ'ନା, ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧର ।” ।

“ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋ'ନା, ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧର ।” ଚାରିଟି ଶରରେ ଯେମିତି ଚାରିଯୁଗର ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ଭାଲିହେଇଗଲା ଆରତୀ ଉପରେ । ଏଇତ ସଂସାରର ନିୟମ, ଜୀବ ଥିଲା ଯାଏଁ ବାପା ମା'ଙ୍କୁ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟର ସହିତ ସନ୍ତାନରର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ମାନସିକ, ଶାରୀରିକ ଉଭୟ ସ୍ତରରେ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ଜାରି ରଖିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ସବୁ ଝଡ଼-ଝଞ୍ଜ ଭିତରେ ପରିବାରର ଶାନ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ଶାନ୍ତ ରହି ଶକ୍ତି ସଞ୍ଚୟ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ସତରେ ଆହୁରି ଅନେକ ବାଟ ବାଜି ରହିଛି । ଏ ବୟସରେ ବି ବାପାମା' ତାଙ୍କ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ଜାରି ରଖିଛନ୍ତି, ସମୟ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନିଜକୁ ଖାପ ଖୁଆଇ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଖୁସି ରେ ଖୁସି ରହି ଶାନ୍ତିର ବାଣୀ ବାଣୁଛନ୍ତି । ଆରତୀ ହାତ ଯୋଡ଼ି ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ମନେ ମନେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କଲା, “ପ୍ରଭୁ ମୋତେ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଦିଅ, ଶକ୍ତି ଦିଅ” ।

“କାହାକୁ ନମସ୍କାର କରୁଛ ?”, ପଚାରିଲେ ସୁମନ୍ତ । ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହେଲା ଆରତୀ । ଏ'ଭିତରେ ସେମାନେ ଆସି ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେଣି ।

ଗାଡ଼ିରୁ ଓହ୍ଲେଇ ମିଲି ଗେହ୍ଲେଇ ହେଇ ପଚାରୁଥିଲା “ ସୋନିଆ ଘରକୁ ଯାଇ ପାରିବି?”

ଗାଡ଼ିରୁ ଓହ୍ଲେଇ ଓହ୍ଲେଇ ମଞ୍ଜୁ ଆବୃତ୍ତି କରୁଥିଲା ବାପାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରିୟ ଫଂକ୍ସି , “ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠେ ସମାନ ଆହା ଅଟେ ସେଇ ଘରୋ , ପରସ୍ପରରେ ସ୍ନେହୋ ଯହିଁ ଥାଏ ନିରନ୍ତୋରୋ ।”

ମଞ୍ଜୁର ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବିତା ଆବୃତ୍ତି ଶୁଣି ଆରତୀ ସୁମନ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । ସୁମନ୍ତ ହସୁଥିଲେ । ସେ ହସ ସଞ୍ଚରିଆସିଲା ଆରତୀର ଓଠକୁ ।

“ଘର କେତେ ଖାଲି ଖାଲି ଲାଗିବ, ଛ ମାସର ଘୋ ଘା ଭିତରେ ସମୟ କୁଆଡେ ପଳେଇଲା ସତରେ”, କହିଲେ ସୁମନ୍ତ ।

କବାଟ ଖୋଲୁ ଖୋଲୁ ଆରତୀ ଭାବୁଥିଲା ଛ' ମାସ କେତେ ଶିଘ୍ର ଚାଲିଗଲା ସିନା କିନ୍ତୁ ଏଇ ଛ'ମାସର ସ୍ମୃତି ସାରା ଜୀବନ ପାଇଁ ଅଶୀର୍ବାଦ ହେଇ ରହିବ ତା ପାଇଁ, ତା ପରିବାର ପାଇଁ । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର(ରଥ) ମିଶ୍ରଗାନ୍ଧରେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ନିର୍ମଳ ରଥ ଓ ଦୁଇଝିଅ ଆନୟା, ନୟନାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବାସ କରନ୍ତି ।

ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର(ରଥ) ମିଶ୍ରଗାନ୍ଧରେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ନିର୍ମଳ ରଥ ଓ ଦୁଇଝିଅ ଆନୟା, ନୟନାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବାସ କରନ୍ତି ।

# ସଂପର୍କ

ଆତ୍ମବେଳା ନାୟକ

କେବେ ସିଏ ବନ୍ଧାଆଏ ପଣତ କାନିରେ  
ଆତ୍ମାର ଡୋରିରେ

କେବେ ସିଏ ବାନ୍ଧି ହୋଇଯାଏ  
ରାକ୍ଷୀର ରେଶମ ଡୋରିରେ ।

କେବେ ପୁଣି ଛନ୍ଦି ହୋଇଯାଏ  
ମଙ୍ଗଳସୂତରେ, ପବିତ୍ର ଓଁକାର ଧ୍ବନିରେ  
ଜୀବନର ଫୁଲ ତା'ର ଭରିଯାଏ  
ରଙ୍ଗ ମୁରୁଜରେ ।

ବହୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣା ପୃଥିବୀରେ  
ସଂପର୍କର ଛାଇ ଆଲୁଅରେ ।

ଯେତେ ସବୁ ଅଭିନବ ସଂପର୍କର ରଜୁ  
ତାକୁ କେବେ ପାରେ ନାହିଁ ରଖି

ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପଞ୍ଜୁରୀ ଖୋଲି ଉଡ଼ିଯାଏ  
ବହୁ ଦୂରେ ପରଦେଶୀ ପକ୍ଷୀ ।

ସଂପର୍କର ସତ୍ର ଡୋରି ଖୋଲି  
ତାକୁ ପୁଣି ଯିବାପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖ  
ଯେତେ ସବୁ ସୁକୁମାର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଆଖିରେ ବିଛାଇ  
ତାକୁ ପୁଣି ଶୋଇବାକୁ ଦୁଃଖ ।

ପଛରେ ତା' ପଡ଼ିଯାଏ ରଙ୍ଗର ମୁରୁଜ  
ଜଳୁଥାଏ ପ୍ରେମର ଦୀପାଳି  
ସହସ୍ର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣ ରେଖା ପାରେ ନାହିଁ  
ତା' ପଥ ଓଗାଳି ।

ପଲକରେ ମିଛ ହୋଇଯାଏ  
ସ୍ନେହ, ପ୍ରେମ, ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି, ପବିତ୍ର ବନ୍ଧନ

ମୃତ୍ୟୁ କୋଳେ ନିରନ୍ତର ପରାଜୟ -  
ବରିନିଏ ଶାଶ୍ୱତ ଜୀବନ, ଶାଶ୍ୱତ ଜୀବନ ।

ମୁଁ ମୋର ସ୍ୱାମୀ ମନୋଜ ଓ ଝିଅ ଆୟେଶା ସହିତ ଆଜ୍ୟାଙ୍କରେ ରୁହେ ।



# ପ୍ରିୟତମା

ପରାଶର ମିଶ୍ର

ପ୍ରାଣରୁ ଅଧିକ ପ୍ରିୟ ମୋର ପ୍ରିୟତମା,  
କେଉଁ ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଆଜି ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରିବି ଯେ  
ସୁଖୀ ସୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ତୁ ଏକ ଅନବଦ୍ୟ ସୃଷ୍ଟି,  
ତୋ' ପାଖେ ଅଛି ବସୁନ୍ଧରାର ସହନଶୀଳତା,  
ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ତେଜସ୍ୱିତା, ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର, ତାରାଙ୍କ ଶୀତଳତା!

ଖୋଜିଥିଲି ତୋତେ ପୁରୀ ସମୁଦ୍ରକୂଳରେ,  
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ରେଭେନ୍ସା ଓ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ର ଶ୍ରେଣୀଗୃହରେ  
କିନ୍ତୁ ପାଇଥିଲି ତୋତେ ମୋହନର ବଂଶୀ ସ୍ୱରରେ,  
କବିର କବିତାରେ, ଜହ୍ନର କଳା ମେଘ ସହ ଲୁଚକାଳି  
ଖେଳିବାର ବ୍ୟାକୁଳତାରେ ଓ ପ୍ରକୃତି ର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ।

ମଥାରେ ସିନ୍ଦୂର, ପାଦରେ ଅଳତା, କାନରେ ଝୁମୁକା  
ଆଖିରେ କଜଳ ଲଗାଇ, ଆକାଶ ରଙ୍ଗ ପାଟଶାଢ଼ୀ ପିନ୍ଧି,  
ତୋ' ଉତ୍ତର ଶାଢ଼ୀ ପଶତରେ, ଲାଜ, ଲାଜ ଆଖିରେ,  
ସ୍ଥିତ ହସରେ ଗଢି ବସିଲୁ ପ୍ରେମର, ପ୍ରୀତିର ମନ୍ଦିରଟିଏ  
ଆଉ ଆପଣାର କରିନେଲୁ ମୋତେ  
ତୋ' ନୈସର୍ଗିକ ସ୍ନେହ, ପ୍ରେମ, ଆନ୍ତରିକତା ଓ ଆତ୍ମୀୟତାରେ ।

ପ୍ରାଣରୁ ଅଧିକ ପ୍ରିୟ ମୋର ପ୍ରିୟତମା,  
ତୋ' ଆକର୍ଷଣ, ତୋ' ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ, ତୋ' ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ  
ଏତେ ରମଣୀୟ, ଏତେ ସ୍ମରଣୀୟ, ଏତେ ନୈସର୍ଗିକ ଯେ'  
ବାହୁରେ ଧରି ହୁଏନା କି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ହୁଏନା,  
ପ୍ରତିଟି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ମନ ହୁଏ  
ମଥା ରଖି ତୋ' କୋଳରେ ଶୋଇରହିବାକୁ  
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଆଉ  
ରାଜା-ରାଣୀ ଗପ ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ପରା ରାଇଜକୁ ଉଡ଼ିଯିବାକୁ ।



ପ୍ରାଣରୁ ଅଧିକ ପ୍ରିୟ ମୋର ପ୍ରିୟତମା,  
ତୋ' ହସରେ ଦେଖୁଥାଏ ଗଛ, ପତ୍ର, ଫୁଲଙ୍କ  
ହସକୁ  
ତୋ' କାନରେ ଦେଖେ ବାଦଲ ଓ ଝଡ଼, ବର୍ଷାକୁ,  
ତୋ' ରାଗ, ରୁଷା, ମାନ, ଅଭିମାନରେ ମୁଁ  
ଦେଖୁଥାଏ  
ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କ ଅପୂର୍ବ ସୃଷ୍ଟିକୁ, ପ୍ରକୃତି ର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ।

କେମିତି ଅବା ବୁଝାଇବି ତୋତେ  
ମୋ ଜୀବନର ବିଷାଦଯୋଗ, ବିପ୍ଳବୀ ମନ  
ବିଦ୍ରୋହ କରୁଥାଏ ପ୍ରତିଟି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ  
ବନ୍ଦ କରିବାକୁ, ଶେଷ କରିବାକୁ  
ଆଜିର ସମାଜରେ ନାରୀ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନା, ଯୌତୁକ ଜନିତ ହତ୍ୟା  
ଧର୍ଷଣ, ଲୁଣ୍ଠନ, କନ୍ୟାଭୁଣ ହତ୍ୟା ପରି  
ପ୍ରତିଟି ରୁଗ୍ଣ ମାନସିକତାକୁ ।

ପ୍ରାଣରୁ ଅଧିକ ପ୍ରିୟ ମୋର ପ୍ରିୟତମା,  
ତୋ' ରୂପ, ତୋ' ରଙ୍ଗ, ତୋ' ଛନ୍ଦ, ଛଟା, ଆଉ  
ତୋ' ଜ୍ୟୋତିରେ ଦୀପ୍ତିମାନ ହୋଇ ତୁ ରହିଥା'  
ମୋ ଆତ୍ମାରେ, ମୋ କାନ୍ଧାରେ,  
ଏ ଜନ୍ମରେ, ଆଉ ଜନ୍ମରେ, ସାତ ଜନ୍ମରେ  
ଜନ୍ମଜନ୍ମନ୍ତର ର ସାଥୀ ହୋଇ ।

ପ୍ରାଣରୁ ଅଧିକ ପ୍ରିୟ ମୋର ପ୍ରିୟତମା,  
ମୋ ଉପରେ ରାଗିବୁନି କି' ଅଝଟ, ଅଭିଯୋଗ,  
ଅଭିମାନ କରିବୁନି  
ତୋ' ପାଇଁ କବିତା ଗୋଟିଏ ଲେଖିବି, ଲେଖିବି ବୋଲି  
ଶତ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରି ହେଇ ଦେଖି,  
କବିତାଟି ଆଜି ପୁଣି ମୋର ଅସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରହିଗଲା ।

Parasara Mishra lives in Toronto, Canada with his wife Rekha and daughter Lipi. He has been actively involved with the Odiya community in Canada and his passion lies in writing Odiya poems, stories and dramas. His e-mail address is parasara1@yahoo.ca.



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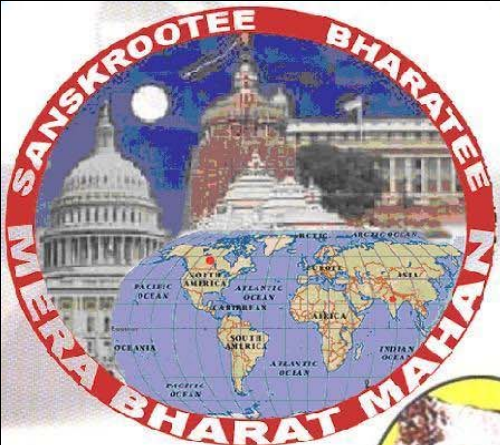
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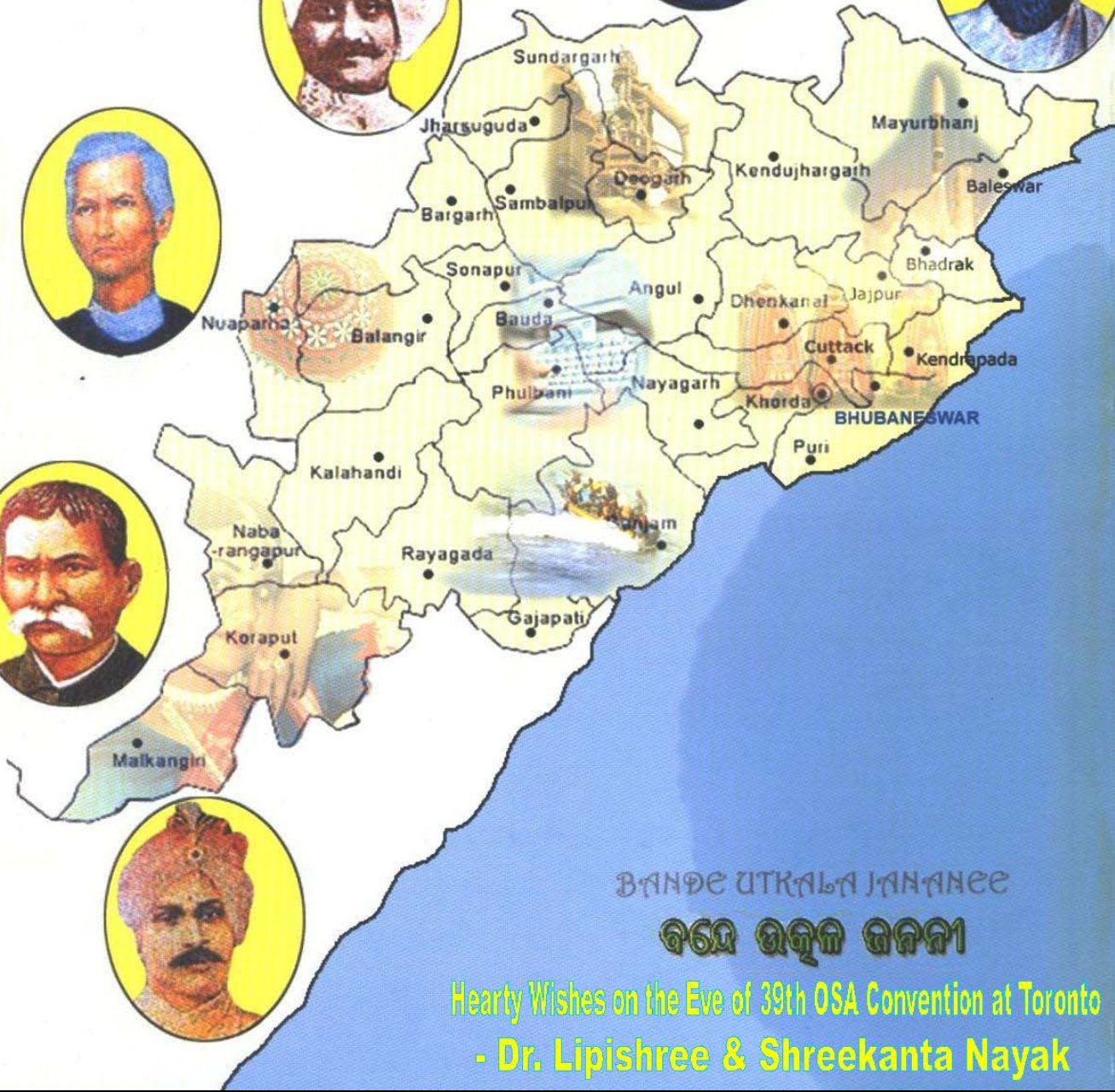
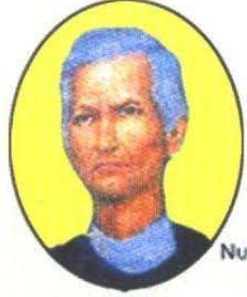
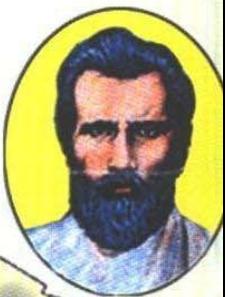






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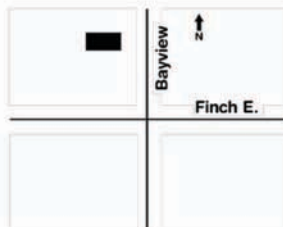
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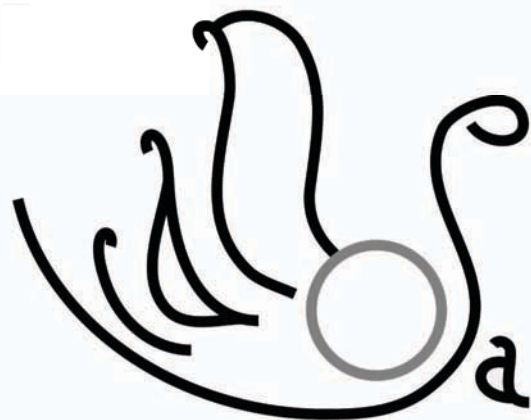
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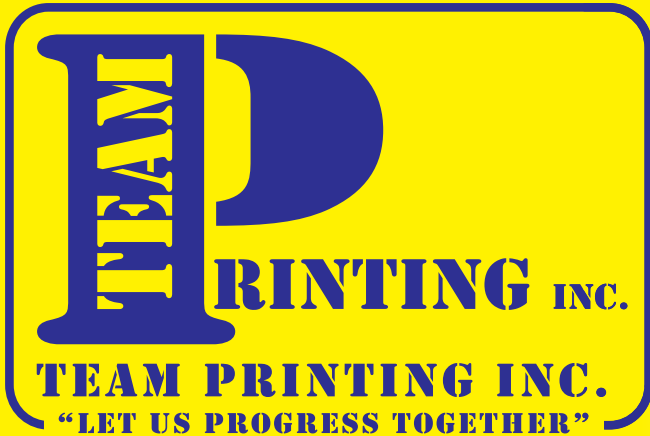
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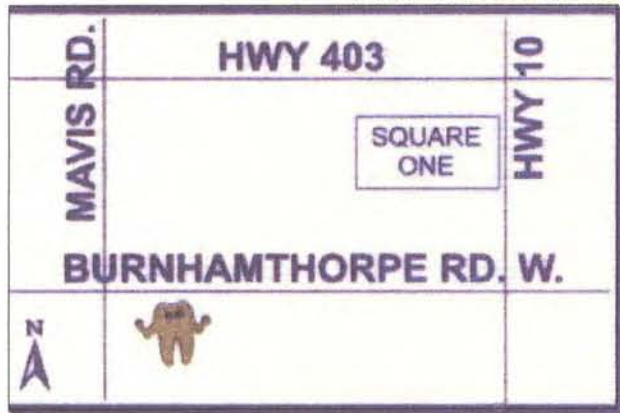
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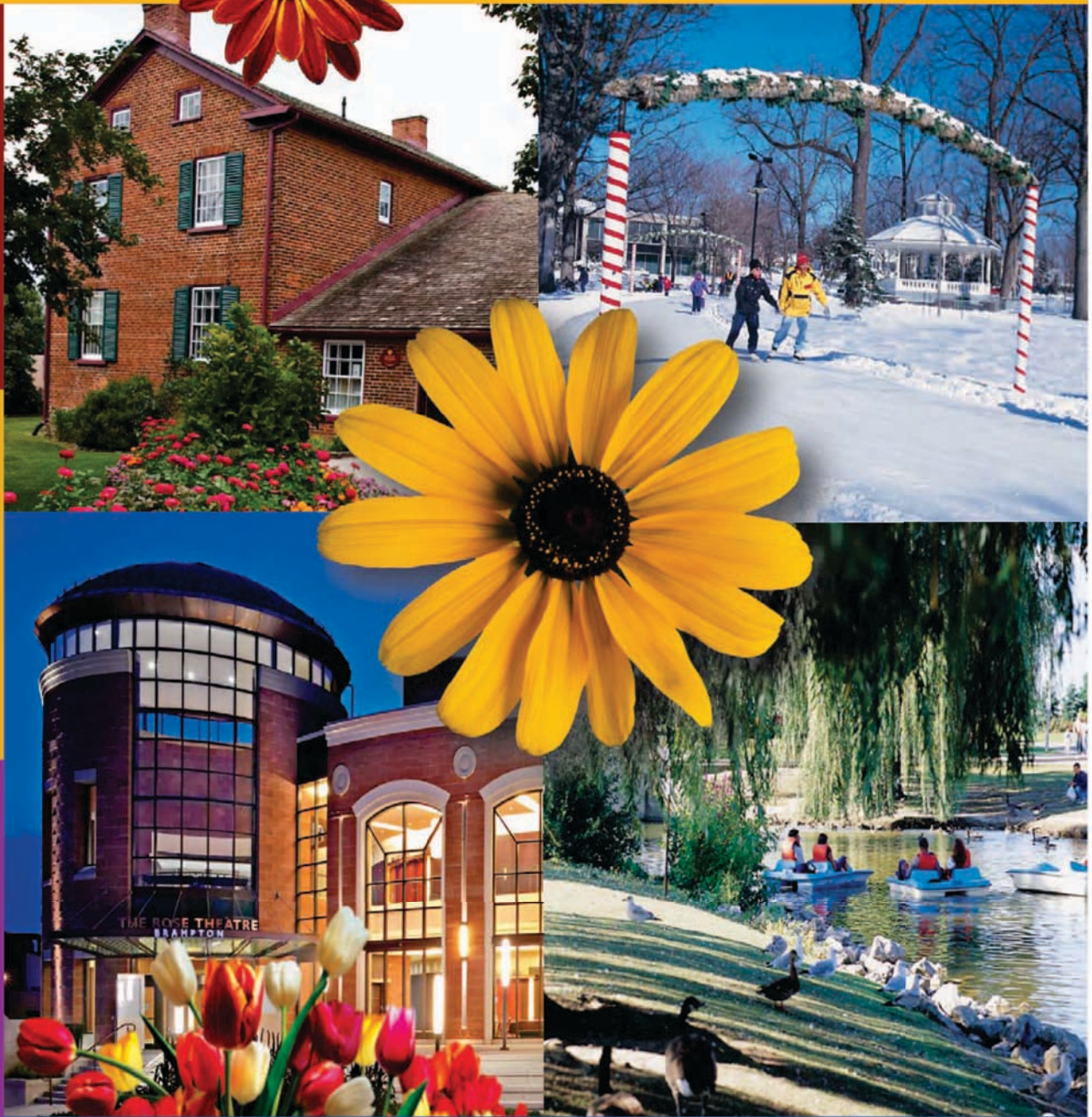
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