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Journal of The Orissa Society of the Americas



ସ୍ଵାତ ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟା ପାର୍ବିରେ Across the seven seas

40th Annual Convention, 2009
NY/NJ Chapter

Journal of the Orissa Society of the Americas, 2009

2009 SOUVENIR

40 Spectacular Years

Trenton, New Jersey 2nd-5th July, 2009



THE ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

1969-2009

With best compliments from New York-New Jersey Chapter



ସାତ ଦରିଆ ପାରିରେ ACROSS THE SEVEN SEAS

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- କପିଳ ସଂହିତା

Editor-in-Chief
Saradindu Misra
saradindumisra@aol.com

Editorial Advisor
Pradyot Patnaik
prpatnaik@yahoo.com

Oriya Editor
Sridhar Rana
sridhar_rana@yahoo.com

English Editor
Hemanta Panda
hpanda@yahoo.com

Managing Editor OSA Directory
Jagannath Mohanty
jpmohanty@yahoo.com

40th
OSA
Convention

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Cover Graphics: *Arun Das*



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to the following individuals and Organizations for supporting 2009 Convention

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2009 OSA CONVENTION ORGANIZATION TEAM



THE 2009 OSA CONVENTION TEAM

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Advisers Akhaya K Das Anjali Mishra Anup Behera	Dhirendra Kar Gagan Panigrahi Jit Goel	Manaranjan Pattanaik Niranjan Pati Sourjya Patnaik	40 Years of History Arun Das Sridhar Rana
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OSA NY-NJ Management, 2007 – 2009

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Picnic:	Amar Senapati and Jeetendra Pradhan
Ganesh Puja:	Hemanta Panda and Gadadhar Patra
Kumar Purnima:	Sridhar Rana and Antaryami Panigrahi

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CD Sequencing:	Sarang Mahatwo
Production:	Antaryami Panigrahi
Special Effects:	Ritu Mishra



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MESSAGE

June 5, 2009.

I am delighted to know that the Orissa Society of Americas (OSA) is organizing its 40th Annual Convention at Trenton, New Jersey on July 3, 2009.

2. I understand that the OSA is one of the oldest Indian American Associations in the US which has been organizing its conventions annually ever since its inception in 1969 to provide a platform for the people of Oriya origin to connect with each other and to promote activities for a better understanding of the Oriya culture. I am sure this year's convention will be no exception with art programmes, folk dances, seminars and films being planned to showcase Orissa's rich cultural and artistic heritage before a large audience. The convention will also provide an opportunity to have exhibitions on issues of interest to Oriyas and Orissa.

3. The Indian Americans have made valuable contributions in nurturing close cultural, economic and political ties between the United States and India, the oldest and the largest democracies in the world, and have served as a bridge between their countries of origin and adoption. I appreciate their efforts and look forward to their continued support in further strengthening the friendship between the two countries.

4. I convey my best wishes to the Oriya community and to the OSA for the success of their 40th Convention.

(Meera Shankar)

Congratulations

Our congratulations to 'OSA' and the members for their valuable contributions for the past so many years, here we are to-day and celebrating the 40th anniversary and proud to be part of this great organization. God bless 'ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS'.

Asoka and Nalini Das
Brampton, Ontario, Canada

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ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଭ୍ୟତା ବଡ଼ ପାରିବାର ।
ବିଦେଶୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହେଉ ବଳୀୟାର ॥
- ବିଜୟମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ର
ବୋଝଳ, ମାପାରୁସେବସ୍

*Congratulation for past Forty years
and best wishes for new ideas for
future*

- Dhyana R & Pirkoo Pattanaik

As the convener of 1985 OSA
convention at Kent, OH I wish great
success for the 2009 convention.

- Dr. Dasarathi Ram & Patricia

On 40th Anniversary of OSA, it is our sincere wish and prayer for OSA to grow bigger ever as a socio-cultural platform for a vibrant Oriya community around the globe and enabling all members of the community to be part of one big virtual happy family

- Sukant and Sanjeeta Mohapatra

I would like to wish the organizers and participants a very pleasant and successful 40th annual convention of OSA.
Gauri C. Das, Retired member and
Founder President

OSA FOREVER, VIVA OSA, OSA FOR
ODIYAS AND DON'T FORGET IT, OSA
THE LIFE LINE OF ODIYAS IN ABROAD

- Gita and Radhakanta Mishra

To all our Oriya friends we want to express our gratitude and thanks for bringing Orissa and her culture to USA and for your love and friendship.

Purusottam and Tripti Jena
Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

Among the new expatriates, there is a large number who have the same emotional attachment to Odisha as people of our generation. At the same time they think of the future in terms of modernity. May them lead the way!

- Sri Gopal Mohanty, Ontario, Canada

We OSAns will work together, act together, dance together, sing together, watch together, eat together and cry together as a family in North America.

- Gagan Panigrahi

My salute to our founding members.

-Dhirendra Kar, NC

My hearty congratulation and well wishes for you flag bearer of our great land. Jai Jagganath

- Jayant K Sahoo, Bangalore



Message from the Convener

Welcome to the 40th Convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas in Trenton, New Jersey! In my 37 years living in North America, I have witnessed OSA grow from the fledgling group that a few pioneering Oriyas launched in 1969 to the tremendous organization that we have become. Forty years ago, there were only a handful of Oriya immigrants in the Americas. None of the founders could have predicted the growth of that first meeting. From church basements and school cafeterias, we have grown to a three-night, two-day extravaganza. From sleeping bags in friends' places, we have moved on to full-service hotels with all of the amenities.

At times we refer to Orissa as a faraway place, as though the seven seas render our origins beyond our reach. Indeed, in making our home here, we have raised children who regard this continent as their motherland and English as their mother tongue. However, in assimilating to our adopted land, we acknowledge the advantages that come with living in two cultures. To celebrate our long and still-evolving journey, we have chosen "Saata Dariaya Pari re" ("Across the Seven Seas") as our theme.

In commemorating the cumulative experience of 40 years of Oriya culture and distinct heritage in North America, we celebrate against a spectacular backdrop. Built in 1932 and reopened ten years ago after a historic restoration of its original Italian Renaissance Revival style, our venue is the Patriots Theater at the War Memorial of New Jersey. Over its history, this theater has played host to numerous world-class acts, including the American Ballet Theater, Marian Anderson, Louis Armstrong, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Frank Sinatra, and Bruce Springsteen.

The cultural program is carefully planned with local talents performing under the guidance of well-known artists. You will have ample opportunity to listen to classics like *Champu* and *Chhanda* and also participate in modern song and dance. Additionally, to promote the "Green" revolution as well as popularize our language, we will also introduce a professionally designed audio version of the Souvenir.

Given the full schedule of seminars, cultural programs, and other activities for each demographic group, by Sunday morning you may find yourself a little sleep-deprived. To maximize our convention hours, we have arranged for you to stay at a reasonable cost at the Marriott Hotel adjacent to the War Memorial. While you are here, we hope you enjoy relaxing moments with your family and friends. We hope that you will return home with fond memories of this convention and plans to return to the next one. And because no OSA convention is complete without the food, we also hope our caterer will meet your expectations.

As I look back on my 37 years in this country, the conventions have been the pillars of our social bonding. From the connections we have forged here, we have made lifelong friends, celebrated births and marriages, and also have cried at the funerals. We miss quite a few regulars at these conventions and we remember them fondly. Their contributions will never be forgotten.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank everyone of the New York–New Jersey chapter. The volunteers have worked tirelessly for over a year to make this possible. I would like to single out one person, Lalatendu Mohanty. My job would have been far more difficult without his patience, competence, and organizational skills.

I sincerely hope that you enjoy your stay in Trenton this weekend. I can assure you that OSA's future is secure because we have many young, enthusiastic, and talented people in our midst.

Long live OSA.

Uma Ballava Mishra

Convener, 2009 OSA Convention

Message from the President



THE ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Pratap Das
President
301-972-8059
pratap.das@orissasociety.org

Ashutosh Dutta
Vice President
908-429-9736
ashutosh.dutta@orissasociety.org

Priyadarsan Patra
Secretary
503-617-0667
priyadarsan.patra@orissasociety.org

Sandip Dasverma
Treasurer
509-371-1286
sandip.dasverma@orissasociety.org

I take this opportunity to congratulate Orissa Society of America (OSA) celebrating the 40th year of the milestone. Forty years of an organization operating with twelve chapters in United States and Canada - is a considerable growth. On behalf of its Executives, Board of Governors, and members - I thank all founding members who visioned the need for such an organization and built the foundation for such a home for all of us away from Orissa. Indeed, we have become one of the major regional association and one of the oldest organization in North America celebrating the 40th anniversary at Trenton, New Jersey. I thank each member towards their contributions.

OSA may not be a big association with thousands of members cross the country, but it is one of the top organization where its members are excelling in their professions everyday. People say for humans at the age of forty, it's down-the-hill. But for OSA at forty - it just got started excelling. This year, I take pride in two Oriyas from North America who have been conferred the distinguished Padma Bhushan awards. The members are - Dr. Bhakta B. Rath and Sam Pitroda. More Oriya kids are going Ivy Leagues and other good schools. There are more Oriya IT professionals, physicians, engineers, research scholars, professors, business ventures, NGOs, cultural promotions in North America than ever before. OSA members are participating in more cross-cultural activities and investing in Orissa. The land of Orissa seems closer to North America and Rath Yatra is being celebrated in each major cities of North America. Our members are building Jagannath Temples in many cities and Odissi is performed in many occasions by all nationals.

But my fellow members - we have a long way to go. We must participate and get involved with the local Oriya chapters. We must remember that members always make an association effective. We must keep our own identity as Oriya and take pride being an Oriya. It's true North America is a great melting pot. But let's not forget our roots. We must see that our children be proud of their heritage.

In conclusion, I must congratulate the New York/New Jersey chapter for organizing the 40th OSA Convention and thank all of you being a part of the great celebration.

Bande Utkala Janani

Pratap Das
President

July 2, 2009
Washington, DC

PO BOX 1293, RICHLAND, WA 99354



Message from President, OSA New York & New Jersey Chapter & Co-Convener

Dear Friends

On behalf of OSA, New York & New Jersey Chapter, I welcome all the participants and guests to the 40th OSA Convention at Trenton, New Jersey. I hope you will have a great time among other fellow Odiyas and collect the best moments to cherish for a life time.

It all started with a small enthusiastic discussion among a small group of active members who were eager to bring the OSA Legacy of Forty years to New York area which they thought will be the right place to highlight it's true color. And then started the plan in early 2008 including finding a dynamic leader as convener who can bring all generations together. I sincerely believe that we were able meet this challenge and exceeded our expectations.

Our theme for the convention is "Saata Daria Pari re" or across seven seas. Forty years ago, we came this far land, tried to disseminate Odiya culture and heritage by establishing OSA. While we transitioned ourselves to the new culture, we kept our rich culture and heritage within us through our next generations.

I hope our depiction of plethora of Odiya cultural aspects with revealing facts that smear our life in America with realms of vibrant color and rhythms will arouse the nostalgic feeling for our motherland and make all proud of our rich ethnic origin. At the same time I hope you will give us your worries; in return you will get lots of cackles, giggles and chuckles in a homely atmosphere.

I also hope you all enjoy the thoughtful seminars, fun-filled activities, joyous events, enthralling programs, meeting old friends and creating new ones, the great food and overall stay in garden city.

I also take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to all volunteers for their exceptional dedication & endurance in planning & executing the convention events. There were many challenges all along but everything became shy in front of their untiring efforts, superior potential, and the commitment knowing the task can be done.

My special thanks to the Convener and fellow Co-conveners for their dynamic leadership and dedication that brought the young and experienced together. Thanks to our advisors for their exceptional advice and superior motivation quality.

My sincere gratitude to all participants for their firm resolution to excel and the courage to act with conviction.

This event could not have been possible without the good will, generosity & thoughtful contribution from our sponsors to support this Convention at a most financially challenging time in our generation.

I thank the OSA National executive Committee for giving us the opportunity to have the convention here and their continuous support.

As somebody once said, *we cannot do great things on this Earth, only small things with great love.* I hope our attempt to bring this love in small things will make the difference to win your heart.

ବନ୍ଦେ ଉତ୍କଳ ଜନନୀ & God bless America.

Lalatendu Mohanty

President OSA, NY & NJ Chapter, Co-Convener OSA

Priyadarsan Patra, Ph.D.
Secretary
12688 NW Naomi Lane
Portland, OR 97229
Ph: 503-617-0667
secretary@orissasociety.org



THE ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS



Namaskar and Greetings!

I warmly invite you and your family to the special 40th Anniversary Convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas. My pleasure is also to welcome you to our newest edition of the Annual Souvenir Journal of OSA.

As you know, my colleagues and I will soon be completing our tenure as your volunteer OSA officers. We certainly will treasure meeting you over the upcoming Independence holidays at the Trenton convention, promising to be the best ever. The convention will bring to life a colorful vignette of Odia arts, all cherished but some regrettably fading. Also planned are a few exciting and timely seminars with themes of great importance and relevance. You will have the opportunity not only to experience and participate in the exquisitely artistic or intellectual performances and fun-filled competitions, but also to meet with such iconic legends as Pandit Raghunath Panigrahi.

A full year of preparation, planning and countless volunteering hours leading up to the convention is yet again a testament to the richness of our heritage, the amazing breadth of your talents, the strength of our purposes, and the robust spirit of our members who make this possible. In the pages of this souvenir, you will find ample evidence of creativity, commitment, quiet pride and diversity of thoughts that make our human values collectively strong, our influence palpably positive and our experience culturally rich.

I am also happy to note that our organization has grown nearly 15% in the past 20 months – over 725 families and 25 individuals are our members today. Various electronic mechanisms and systems we created for communication, recording and archiving use by the members, the executives, the chapter leaders, and the public have helped us tremendously in the operation of this large, 40 year old, geographically dispersed and diverse organization of ours.

Your “Help Odisha” efforts to extend a helping hand to the Odisha flood victims this last winter were very successful and elevating. Our newly introduced regional drama festivals have enthralled hundreds in various regions of North America, and we hope this will become a yearly tradition. This year we also launch a new exciting competition to encourage entrepreneurship and mentoring opportunities for the youth.

The OSA Constitution has served us for decades, but times have changed needing further reform, precision and adaptation. We are introducing a new constitutional draft for our members’ consideration for adoption.

Finally, I wish you a most joyous and meaningful time at the convention, and look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Priyadarsan Patra
Secretary

Editor's Note.....

This year we are celebrating the 40th year of OSA – a milestone in the annals of OSA's history! It feels like only yesterday when this organization started forty years ago by a handful of Oriyas who came to this country in the sixties and felt very homesick without their families and friends, back home, the lack of which necessitated formation of a Society which they could call their own. Thus the formation of the Orissa Society of the Americas came into being in the year 1969. Lots of water has flown under the bridge since then and OSA has gained the distinction of becoming one of the oldest ethnic Indian Organizations in the USA. Fortieth year of OSA is not a mean achievement. The membership roster which started with a few families has grown to almost 800 life members now and continues to grow, every year.

This year, for the first time after the merger of the New York and the New Jersey Chapters, the OSA NY/NJ Chapter has embarked on this massive project of holding the 40th Convention in the historic city of Trenton in New Jersey. New Jersey is not new to holding OSA Conventions. In the last forty years, it has hosted nine conventions – the most that any other chapter can boast of. The theme of the present convention is *Saat Dariya Parire* – “Across the Seven Seas” and on this theme, the Chapter will present some spectacular numbers in the Convention in its cultural segment which will highlight the best of Orissa. Three generations of Oriyas living in America are working day and night to make this historic occasion a grand success. The completion of the 40th year of OSA is quite significant as it will herald a new chapter in its history when the baton of this organization is ready to be transferred from the old to the young.

On this occasion, we have tried to bring our annual souvenir with some of the best contributions from the people of America, as well as from Orissa. Bringing a volume of over 250 pages is a herculean task and the Souvenir Team has been working very hard for the past four months to come up with the best journal that was ever published in the history of OSA for the pleasure of its distinguished readers. As they say ‘the proof of the pudding is in the eating’ and the readers are best to judge that. However, making the pudding did not come without some agony. The Souvenir Team came to know that during this bad period of economy, when advertisement revenue is miniscule, it is extremely difficult to produce such a gigantic volume entirely from the registration revenue of the Convention. After all, the annual OSA Souvenir is meant to be distributed not only to the registrants of the Convention, but to all members who would not even attend the Convention. To add to that is the shipping cost. Since OSA has mandated that all members be given a copy of the souvenir and a directory, every year, it is only fair that OSA should bear the expenses of printing and distributing the journal and the directory for all its members which totals close to 800 and growing annually. We are sure that this will be a contentious issue in the forthcoming General Body meeting which should be resolved without undue burden to the hosting chapter.

For the first time, as a corollary to the Journal, an audio CD is being produced which includes all the articles/poems of the Souvenir. Thanks to Sridhar Rana, a member of our Team who single handedly made this project possible. If members will like it, perhaps this will replace the production of an expensive hard copy at a time when we put so much emphasis on the Green Revolution. I also take this opportunity to thank my colleagues, Hemanta Ranjan Panda for editing the English section; Sridhar Rana for editing the Oriya section; Jagannath Mohanty who, again, has single handedly compiled the directory. Last, but not the least, I must pay my gratitude to Dr. Pradyot Patnaik, the editor of the OSA Journal in 2003, for being an advisor of the Team and also for writing the Obituary chapter for the Souvenir.

Saradindu Misra

OBITUARY

Gurucharan Patnaik (1917 – 2008)

A born revolutionary and an iconoclast Gurucharan delved into India's freedom struggle at the early age of 13. He became an architect of the socialist movement in Orissa right from his youth. Born in a zamindar family in Chanahata village in Puri district that was in the forefront of freedom movement in Orissa, Gurucharan joined the famous Kashi Vidyapith in Banaras (founded by Madan Mohan Malviya) in 1930s where he was influenced and indoctrinated into the socialist philosophy by well-known teachers there such as, Acharya Narendra Dev, Acharya Kripalini and Sri Prakash. Gurucharan was one of the founding pillars of the communist movement in the state. He co-founded the Communist party in Orissa along with Bhagabati Panigrahi and Pranath Patnaik.

Gurucharan was first imprisoned in 1936, a teenager then, by the British government for one and half year. After his release from the jail he founded the New Age Literary Group (*Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad*). He was greatly influenced by his elder brother, the legendary poet, Ananta Patnaik, in propagating the message to fight against imperialism while championing the socialist ideals through his intellectual and inspiring writing. He edited several magazines including *Ranaveri*, *Krushaka*, *Adhunika*, *Kotikanthe* and *Nua Duniya* over three decades, awakening the masses to fight against the oppression and social injustice. Unlike most other leaders of his time Gurucharan never sought any power or position after independence. He continued his struggle relentlessly against the exploitation of peasants and workers defending their causes all throughout. That was his hallmark.

Gurucharan was an outstanding writer, a gem in Oriya literature whose works include "*Oriya Literature: A Thoughtful Analysis*", "*Ganges to Volga*", and "*Eternal Flavor*" (the titles translated into English) that render a refined interpretation of, and a vision into a utopian, classless society. His book "*Jagata Darshana re Jagannath*", is an intellectual analysis of the culture and tradition of Lord Jagannath in a perspective imbued in soft resplendence of universal humanism. This book won him great accolades from the literary circle and the prestigious National Sahitya Academy award. Gurucharan was vibrant and vivaciously active till the end.

Ashok Das (1943 – 2008)

Elected to Orissa State Assembly six times from Korai constituency in Jajpur district from the period 1974 to 2000, Ashok Das was a popular mass leader and a dedicated social worker. A product of the Jayaprakash Narain - led movement in the 1970s, Ashok, a youth leader then became a close associate of late Biju Patnaik and served as the president of the Orissa unit of the erstwhile Janata Dal when Biju Babu was the chief minister of the state. He was a strong believer of secularism and committed to his ideals all throughout his life.

Dhiren Patnaik (1934 – 2009)

Dhiren Patnaik was an internationally acclaimed scholar of Odissi dance. Regarded as an authority over performing arts in Orissa, he was instrumental in getting classical status for Odissi dance. He initiated a project under the banner, *Jayantika* in 1957 to bring recognition to Odissi as a classical art. Many leading luminaries of that era, such as Guru Debaprasad Das, Kelucharan Mahapatra, Mayadhar Raut and Dayanidhi Das and poet Kalicharan Patnaik soon joined in this endeavor to evolve and unify the style and synchronism in Odissi and in codification of its grammar.

Dhirendra Nath was awarded a national scholarship by the Department of Culture in 1955 to research the origin and development of Odissi. He was the first male Odissi dancer to perform outside Orissa – at the inter-university youth festival in 1954 where he scripted and choreographed a number of dance ballets that captivated the audience. He researched and authored many books and papers in leading publications on the subject of arts of Orissa, both in English and Oriya. One of his books, "*Odissi Dance*", theme of such scholastic research traced the origin of *Sabda Nritya* to Tantra Dharma of Buddhist, Saiva and Sakta origin. He was the founder principal of Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, known to be the first college of performing arts in Asia. He held several prestigious positions

including the chairperson of the international dance festival held in USA – and received scores of awards and felicitations including the Central State Sangeet Natak Akademy Award and Orissa's *Kavi Samrat Upendra Bhanja Samman*.



Gyana Patnaik (1919 – 2009)

Gyana Patnaik was an epitome of courage like her late husband, Biju Patnaik. She accompanied her husband, an avid pilot in a daredevil rescue mission to airlift Indonesian leaders Sukarno and Sultan Sijhahir from a jail in Jakarta to New Delhi. This mission took place during Indonesia's most crucial phase of fight for freedom and made her famous. Gyana always was a source of inspiration to her husband. Born in Rawalpindi (in present Pakistan), and graduating from Srinagar, she grew up outside Orissa most part before her marriage in 1938. She is survived by two sons, Prem and Naveen (the current chief minister of Orissa) and daughter, Geeta, a well-known writer.

We mourn the losses of these great souls and offer our heartfelt condolence.

Pradyot Patnaik
Editorial Advisor



Thoughts and Reflections - Across the Seven Seas

*Two thousand years ago - decimated in the Kalinga gory,
Like a phoenix bird – Odias have risen to usher glory !*

*Java and Sumatra were destinations of our business venture,
Home and away, Odias are second to none in cultural adventure!*

With great honor and pride, we endeavored to preserve the heritage and culture of our motherland, our own Orissa. Looking back through the memory lane, we still remember the first day we went to school, chasing butterflies, sailing paper boats drenched in rain. We still remember the first day we boarded the flight, leaving behind loved ones and memories back home. Miles we drove, crossing seven oceans and thirteen rivers. We found a new home in North America. Many of us have tried to achieve something in a faraway land, bridging the gap of seven seas, separating us from our motherland - physically. In thoughts, the land of Orissa has a special place in our hearts.

Still the waves of seven oceans could not wipe out those loving memories. In every corner in a western world, we search for the same set of people – *Odias* and our culture that we have left behind. We try to revive our heritage through the rhythms and vibrations of *Odissi*. Our eyes anxiously crave for Lord Jagannath's *darshan* and His festivals in the temples. Our Orissan culture is unique and extraordinary as far as history, literature, mythology, cuisines, sculpture and artisan works are concerned.

In the journey of life, we have seen days of happiness, struggle, and hardships. Still we have not given up our identity and emotions. To playback those memories, every year, we converge to celebrate the pride and privilege, Orissa has given us. We cherish the memories we have accumulated in Orissa or in relation to Orissa, our land - we so fondly love. After the annual convention, as a memoir, we take back our interaction with families and friends, conversations, events we saw in a momentary sojourn of 2-3 days. A journal of thoughts, people alike have contributed - is souvenir - which has stood out tall – over the decades.

Pride of a culture is often disseminated by their expressions. The articles from youth have proven that they will be an integral part in carrying forward our values and culture. Thoughts of spiritual and cultural values awake our consciousness and have given us a new dimension through quality articles. The virtual tour through personal stories and experience will definitely transport us through the seven seas. Our writers have added an extra flavor to glorify Orissa. This collection has proven that, we are still an Oriya in our body, mind and soul. We appreciate and respect the sincere dedication of our writers of all ages who have expressed their emotions and sentiments as a reflection of their visionary thoughts. These expressions are captured by our youth and seniors through stories, poems and community articles. A collection of close to hundred articles in English section speaks volumes about the enthusiasm and creativity of our members.

Every year we wait anxiously for those 2-3 days in July to reinvent ourselves among our friends and families. OSA convention provides an opportunity to synthesize our Orissan culture, language and heritage, which we have left decades back. We have learnt a lot from our past and are rediscovering new facts to establish ourselves as each year progresses. Every year, we have innovated new styles to construct a bridge crossing those barriers of seven seas between our motherland and the big Oriya family of North America. Challenges are always there but with the mercy of Lord Jagannath, we will be able to cross the bridge and stay connected with our motherland. May Lord Jagannath strengthen that bridge.

Thanks to our editorial team members - Saradindu Misra, Pradyot Patnaik and Sridhar Rana for their camaraderie, literary exchanges and new ideas. Kudos to article contributors and to those who helped us through their suggestions, graphics in compiling this 250 page brochure of thoughts.

Jagannath Swami Nayana Pathgami Bhabatu me !!

Humble regards,

Hemanta Ranjan Panda

English Editor



ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂପାଦକୀୟ

ଅଲେକ ଦିନର ନାଚ ଗୀତ ଗପ
ଆଳାପ ସଂଳାପେ ମରମ ଜାଗେ,
ଦରିଆ ପାରିରେ ରହିଅଛୁ ସତ
ଆମକୁ ବି ଏହା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଲାଗେ ।

ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତାର ଖୋଲା ପ୍ରାଙ୍ଗଣରେ ମୋର ଜନ୍ମ । ଭିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ ଭାଷାକୁ ନେଇ ହାନୀଲାଭ ହିସାବ କରିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ମୋର କର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଗହ୍ଵରରେ ଗୁଞ୍ଜୁରି ଉଠିଥିବା ଶବ୍ଦରୁ ହିଁ ମୋର ଭାଷାର ଶିକ୍ଷା । ଖରାଦିନର ଦ୍ଵିପ୍ରହରେ ଗାଁ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ରୁଣ୍ଡକରି ‘ଗଣେଷ ଜନ୍ମ’, ‘ମହିଷାସୁର ମର୍ଦ୍ଦିନୀ’, ‘କିଏ କାହାର’, ‘ରାମରାଜ୍ୟ’ ଆଦି ନାଟକ କରିବା, ଚାଟଶାଳିରୁ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ାସହିତ ଗୀତ, ମୃଦଙ୍ଗ ଓ ହାରମୋନିୟମ୍ ଶିଖିବା, ସତ୍ୟନାରାୟଣ ପୂଜା, ଶନିମେଳା, ତିନାଥ ମେଳା ରେ ଭଜନ କରିବା, ରଜଦୋଳିର ଝୁଲଣ ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ବାଗୁଡ଼ି ବୋହୂଚୋରି ଖେଳରେ ଉନ୍ମାଦ ହୋଇ ସମୟ ବିତାଇବାରେ ଗଢ଼ି ଉଠିଛି ମୋର ବାଲ୍ୟକାଳ । ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କୁଳରେ କିମ୍ପା ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନାଞ୍ଚଳ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଜନ୍ମ ନେଇଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଦୂର ଓ ନିଜର ପରିଚୟ ପାଇଁ ସଫର୍ଷ ଆଦି ବହୁ ସାମାଜିକ ସମସ୍ୟା ବିଷୟରେ ଅନଭିଜ୍ଞ ମୋର ଶୈଶବ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଅବସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି କରିବା ଅଥବା ତାର ତାପ୍ତୟ୍ୟ ବୁଝିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ମୋ ଭିତରେ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ମୂଳଦୁଆ ପଡ଼ିଛି । ଏ ପୃଥାବିରେ ଭୂମିଖ ହେବାର କେଳଦିନ ପରେ ଯେବେ ମୁଁ ମୋର ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରଣାମ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ଅର୍ପଣ କରିଥିଲି, ସେତେବେଳେ ନା ମୋତେ ଜଣାଥିଲା ଧର୍ମର ସଂଜ୍ଞା, ନା ଥିଲା ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ମୂଲ୍ୟବୋଧ, ନା ଥିଲା ଜାତିର ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନ । ସମ୍ଭବତଃ ଏହା ହିଁ ଥିଲା ମୋର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତି ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ପ୍ରତି ଉଦାସୀନତାର କାରଣ ।

କାଳର ସମୟ କ୍ରମରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ବାହାରେ ରହି ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିଲି, ଜୀବିକା ନିର୍ବାହ ପାଇଁ ଜନ୍ମସ୍ଥାନରୁ ବହୁ ଦୂରରେ ବସତି ସ୍ଥାପନ କଲି । ଏହି ସମୟ ହିଁ ମୋ ଭିତରେ ଯୋତାଯାଇଥିବା ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଅଙ୍କୁରୋଦ୍ଗମ କରିଥିଲା । ମାତୃ ସ୍ନେହର ଅଭୟ କବଚ ତଳେ ବିତିଥିବା ଶୈଶବାବସ୍ଥାକୁ ମନେ ପକାଇଦେଇଥିଲା । ମାତୃଭୂମୀ ଓ ମାତୃଭାଷାର ସଂପର୍କକୁ ନୀବିତତର କରିଥିଲା । ପତୋଶୀ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଉନ୍ନତିରେ ଇର୍ଷାନୀତ ହୋଇ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ସବୁ ରାଜ୍ୟସହ ସମକକ୍ଷ ପ୍ରମାଣିତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ, ବହୁତ ଯୁକ୍ତି ବି କରିଥିଲି । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଦୁଃଖଦାୟକ ଖବର ପାଇ ହୃଦୟରେ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ବି ଅନୁଭବ କରିଥିଲି । ହେଲେ ନିଜର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ବି ନିଜର ଭାଷା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେଇପାରିବି ବୋଲି ମନରେ ଦମ୍ଭ ନଥିଲା, ହାରି ଯାଉଥିବା ବାଜିକୁ ଜିତିବାର କ୍ଷମତା ବି ନ ଥିଲା ।

ଘଟଣା କ୍ରମରେ ଯେବେ ଆସି ଏ ସାତ ଦରିଆପାରି ଆମେରିକାରେ ପାଦ ଦେଲି, ସେତେବେଳେ ମୋର ଛାତ୍ରଜୀବନର ବହୁ ବନ୍ଧୁକ ସହ ଦେଖାହେଲା, ଭାବର ଆଦାନ ପ୍ରଦାନର ମାଧ୍ୟମ ବହୁତ ସହଜ ହେଲା । ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ବାର୍ତ୍ତାଳାପ ସମୟରେ ଏଠାକାର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜର ଖବର ପାଇଲା ପରେ, ବସନ୍ତର ଆଗମନରେ ପତ୍ରଝଟା ବୃକ୍ଷରେ ପୁଣିଥରେ ଜୀବନ ସଂଚାର ହେଲାଭଳି ମନରେ ପୁଣି ଶିହରଣ ଆସିଥିଲା । ଆଜି ବି ମନ ମୋର ପୁଲକିତ ହୋଇଉଠେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ନିଜର ପିଲାମାନେ ଏଠି ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡିଆଟେ ମାରନ୍ତି; କୁମାର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣମୀର ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ ଭାଗ ନିଅନ୍ତି; ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ସ୍ନାନ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମା, ରଥଯାତ୍ରା, ବାହୁଡ଼ା ଯାତ୍ରା, ଗଣେଷ ପୂଜା ଓ ସରସ୍ଵତୀ ପୂଜା ଆଦି ଖୁବ୍ ଧୁମ୍‌ଧାମରେ ପାଳନ୍ତି । ଏକଲବ୍ୟର ଧର୍ମଶିକ୍ଷା ଭଳି ଏ ସବୁରେ ଜାଗିଉଠେ ମୋ ଅନ୍ତରର ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନ ।

ମୋର ପ୍ରିୟ ପାଠକ ଗଣ । ନମସ୍କାର । ମୋର ଜୀବନ ଏକ ସାଧାରଣ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଜୀବନ ଠାରୁ କିଛି ଭିନ୍ନ ନ ଥିଲା । ଆଜି ଆମେରିକାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜର ୪୦ତମ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂପାଦକ ଭାବେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରୁ କରୁ ଅତିତର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ସବୁ ମନର ଖୋଲା ଝରକାରେ ଲମ୍ଫିଯାଏ ଦୂର ଦିଗ୍‌ବଳୟ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । ଏ ସ୍ଵାରକୀ ପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗନ୍ଧ କାହାଣୀ ଓ କବିତା, ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ପିଲାଙ୍କର ସ୍ଵତଃସ୍ପୃହ ଉଦ୍‌ଧାରାର ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟିର ଲେଖାମାନ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରୁ କରୁ ହୃଦୟର ଗଭିର କୋଣରେ ଜାଗ୍ରତ ହୁଏ ଆତ୍ମସନ୍ତୋଷ ଓ ଆତ୍ମତୃପ୍ତି, ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଏକ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ଝଲକ ଏ ସାତ ଦରିଆ ପାରି ସୁଦୂର ଆମେରିକାରେ ପାଇ । ମୁଣ୍ଡ ନଇଁ ଯାଏ ସେହିମାନଙ୍କ ପାଦତଳେ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଅମତା ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଚାଲି ଚାଲି ଆମ ପାଇଁ ବାଟ ପିଟାଇ ଦେଇଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେବି ସେହିମାନଙ୍କୁ, ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଦୀର୍ଘ ଚାଳିଶବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ଏ ସାତ ଦରିଆ ପାରି, ଆମେରିକାରେ ବଜାୟ ରଖିଛନ୍ତି । ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଏହି ସୁଦୂର ପ୍ରାନ୍ତରେ ବି ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏକତ୍ର କରିବା ପାଇଁ ତତ୍ପର ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି, ଆଉ ଧରିରଖିଛନ୍ତି ଏହି ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ଭାଷାକୁ ନବାଗତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ଵାଗତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ।

ପରିଶେଷରେ, କୃତଜ୍ଞତା ଜଣାଉଛି ଏ ବର୍ଷର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ଆବାହକ, ଉପ-ଆବାହକ ସମୂହ ଓ ସ୍ଵେଚ୍ଛାସେବୀ ବୃନ୍ଦଙ୍କୁ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ମୋ ଉପରେ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ ରଖି ମୋତେ ଏ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟଭାର ବହନ କରିବାର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ବିଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଜଣାଉଛି ସବୁ

ଲେଖକ ଓ ଲେଖିକା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଯେଉଁମାନଙ୍କର ଉନ୍ନତ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା ଓ ଭାବପ୍ରବଣତା ଏ ସ୍ଵାରକୀକୁ ଜନ୍ମ ଦେଇ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସମ୍ମୁଖରେ ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ଦେଇଛି । ଅନେକ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଜଣାଉଛି ମୋର ସହକର୍ମୀ ଓ ସ୍ଵାରକୀର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ସଂପାଦକ ଶରଦିନ୍ଦୁ ମିଶ୍ର, ଉପଦେଷ୍ଟ ସଂପାଦକ ପ୍ରଦ୍ୟୋତ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଏବଂ ଇଂରାଜୀ ସଂପାଦକ ହେମନ୍ତ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଯେଉଁମାନଙ୍କ ସହାୟତାରେ ଏ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଓ ସରଳ ହୋଇପାରିଛି । ମୋର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିଥିବାରୁ ଶ୍ରୀମତି ସ୍ଵପ୍ନଲତା ରଥ, ଶ୍ରୀମତି ରଞ୍ଜିତା ମିଶ୍ର, ଗଣେଶ ରଣା ଓ ଜିତେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପ୍ରଧାନଙ୍କୁ ଅନେକ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ।

ଜୀବନ ଏକ ସ୍ରୋତ ଏବଂ ଜୀବନର ଧୂଳିର ବର୍ଷ ଏକ ଘଡ଼ିସରି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜର ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ୪୦ ବର୍ଷ ଖୁସିରେ କରୁ ଏହା ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ଠାରେ ଆଜିର କାମନା ।

ବନ୍ଦେ ଭକ୍ତଳ ଜନନୀ , GOD Bless OSA, GOD Bless America !

ଶ୍ରୀଧର ରଣା
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂପାଦକ

ଏ ସମାଜର ନାୟକ ଓ ଅଧିନାୟକ ମାନେ

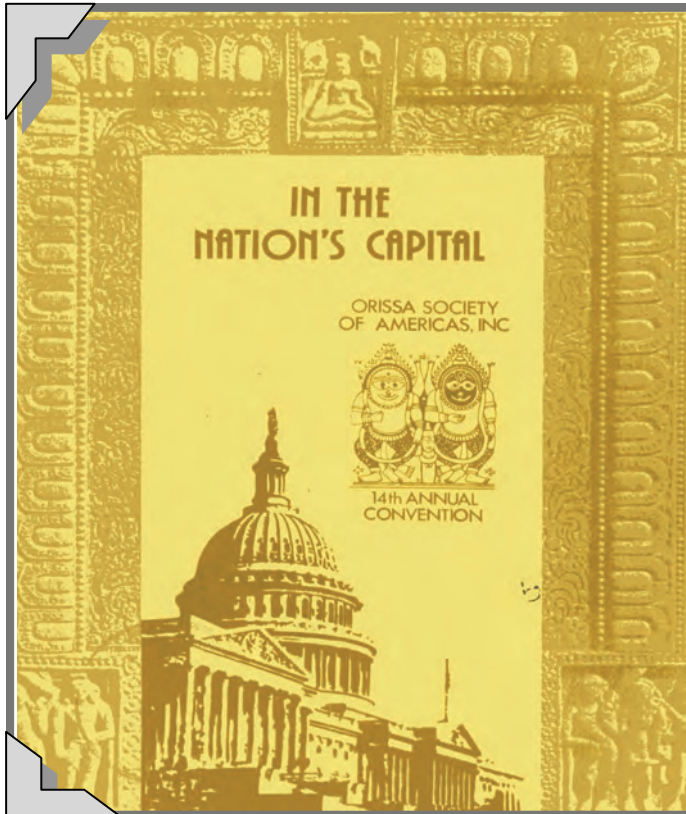
Year	President	Vice President	Secretary	Treasurer	Editor-in-Chief
1970-1972	Gauri Das	Late Krushna Mohan Das Amiya Patnaik	Bhabagrahi Mishra	Nagabhusan Senapati	Bhabagrahi Mishra Gauri Das
1972-1973	Bhabagrahi Mishra(Orissa)	SriGopal Mohanty Surya K. Mishra	Late Pramod K. Patnaik	Late Amiya Patnaik	Pramod K.Patnaik Gauri Das
1973-1975	Gauri Das	SriGopal Mohanty Surya K. Mishra	Late Pramod K. Patnaik	Late Amiya Patnaik	Pramod K.Patnaik Gauri Das
1975-1978	Late Amiya Patnaik	Manindra K. Mohapatra Samar K. Bhuyan	Rabindra K. Ray	Prasanna K. Samantaray	Jnana Ranjan Dash
1978-1981	Late Promod Patnaik	Ladukesh Patnaik	Satyabrata Shaw	No position	Jnana Ranjan Dash
1981-1983	Ladukesh Patnaik	Late Hemanta Senapati	Satyabrata Shaw	No position	Jnana Ranjan Dash
1983-1985	Rabi Patnaik, MD	Saradindu Misra, NY	Pratap Das,MD	No position	Jnana Ranjan Dash
1985-1987	Saroj Behera, CA	Purna Patnaik	Sarat Misro, CA	No position	Deba Mohapatra
1987-1989	Asoka Das, ON, Canada	Pratap Patnaik, ON, Canada	Late Anil Pattanayak, IL	No position	Lalu Mansingh Saradindu Misra Manaranjan Pattnayak
1989-1991	Amiya Mohanty	Biju Mishra(VA)	Keshav Dwivedy	No position	Digambar Mishra Sura P. Rath
1991-1993	Digambar Mishra	Renuka Panigrahi	Late Hemanta Senapati	No position	Kula Chandra Misra
1993-1995	Sita Kantha Das	Gopa Patnaik	Late Bijan Rao	No position	Alekh Dash Purna Patnaik
1995-1997	Late Hemant Senapati	Sujata Patnaik	Parikshita Nayak	No position	Purna Patnaik
1997-1999	Gopa Patnaik	Annapurna Pandey	Babru Samal	No position	Gyana Patnaik
1999-2001	Anadi Naik	Kanan Mishra	Bijoy Mishra	No position	Smritirekha Panda
2001-2003	Sanak Patnaik	Leena(Pepi) Dehal	Anuradha Ihrke	No position	Likun Mishra
2003-2005	Laxminarayan Bhuyan	Nivedita Mohanty	Hari Arjun Patra	No position	Bigyani Das
2005-2007	Niranjan Tripathy	Dhirendra Kar	Bigyani Das	Prakash Patro	Sikhanda Sathpathy
2007-2009	Pratap Das	Ashutosh Dutta	Priyadarshan Patra	Sandip K. Dasverma	Sikhanda Sathpathy Saubhagalaxmi Mahapatra

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀର ଆବାହକ ତଥା ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ପୃଷ୍ଠପୋଷକ ଏବଂ ସ୍ଥାନ

Year	Convener	Place
1970	Gauri Das and OSA Management Team. Function was 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM (1 day).	Hartford, CT
1971	Bhabagrahi Mishra and OSA Management Team. Function was 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM(1 day)	Hartford, CT
1972	Amiya Patnaik and OSA Management Team. Function was 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM(1 day)	Riverdale, NJ
1973	Amiya Patnaik and OSA Management Team. Function was 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM(1 day)	Riverdale, NJ
1974	Prafulla Mishra and OSA Management Team. Function was 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM(1 day)	College Park, MD
1975	Jnana Ranjan Dash. Function was 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM (1 day)	Toronto, Canada
1976	Amiya Patnaik and OSA Management Team. Function was 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM(1 day)	Riverdale, NJ
1977	Amiya Patnaik and OSA Management Team. Function was 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM (1 day)	Riverdale, NJ
1978	Rabi Patnaik and OSA Management Team. Function was 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM (1 day)	Wheaton, MD
1979	Rama Saran Sahoo and OSA Management Team. Function was 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM (1 day)	New Brunswick, NJ
1980	Ladukesh Patnaik and OSA Management Team. Function was 11.00 AM to 8.00 PM (1 day)	Detroit, MI

Year	Convener	Place
1981	Surya Mishra (convention format started)	Chicago, IL
1982	Sitakantha Dash	Minneapolis, MN
1983	Pratap Das	Bowie, MD
1984	Manaranjan Pattanayak	Glassboro, NJ
1985	Dasarathi Ram	Kent, OH
1986	Asoka K. Das	Toronto, Canada
1987	Prasanna Kumar Samantaray	Stanford, CA
1988	Late Hemanta Senapati	Saginaw, MI
1989	Radhakanta Mishra	Nashville, TN
1990	Pratap Das	Washington, DC
1991	Mary Ann Pattnayak	Chicago, IL
1992	Mahendra Mishra	Atlanta, GA
1993	Sudarshan Mishra	Troy, MI
1994	Manaranjan Pattnayak	Pomona, NJ
1995	Sarat Mahapatra	Minneapolis, MN
1996	Annapurna Biswal	Washington, DC
1997	Pradeep Rath	Houston, TX
1998	Saroj Behera	Monterey, CA
1999	Lalatendu Mansinha	Toronto, Canada
2000	Kula Chandra Mishra	Nashville, TN
2001	Saroj Mohanty	Chicago, IL
2002	Sreekanta Nayak	Greenbelt, MD
2003	Saradindu Misra	Princeton, NJ
2004	Niranjan Tripathy	Dallas, TX
2005	Kirtan Behera	Newport Beach, CA
2006	Joy Gopal Mohanty	Columbia, MD
2007	Ravi Rout	Detroit, MI
2008	Gagan Behari Panigrahi	Toronto, ONT
2009	Uma Ballava Mishra	Trenton, NJ

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀର ସ୍ଵାରକୀ ଓ ସ୍ଵେଚ୍ଛାସେବୀ



ORISSA SOCIETY OF AMERICAS, INC.
14th ANNUAL CONVENTION
at
WASHINGTON, D.C.
BOWIE STATE COLLEGE
Bowie, Maryland
Saturday, July 2 through Sunday, July 3, 1983

DATE: July 2, 19 83

PRATAP DAS, Chairman
Organizing Committee

ACCOMMODATIONS:
Prafulla Misra, Coordinator
Binod Nayak
Nilambar Biswal

COMMUNICATIONS:
Rabi Patnaik, Coordinator
Rabik Tripathy
Siba Mohanty
Saura Sahu
Sujata Ray
Kun Kun Patnaik
Sandeep Biswal

CULTURAL:
Surenra Ray, Coordinator
Anu Biswal
Bandita Nayak
Jacob Patnaik
Suddeep Patnaik

FOOD CATERING:
Jaganath Rath, Coordinator
Manas Das
Sobha Patnaik
Sukanti Ray
Suresh Koddoliar
Suddeep Patnaik
Subrendu Misra
Mahendra Mallick
Bhudeep Patnaik

FINANCIAL:
Mahendra Panda, Coordinator
Bhakti Rath
Braj Mishra
Sanjeeb Mishra
Shashi Mohanty

GREETINGS

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our annual convention on behalf of the Washington Chapter. Every year we look forward to this occasion to meet our friends, exchange ideas, think and discuss about the wellbeing of the society, its members and above all, to have a good time.

We, the members of the Washington Chapter, have worked very hard to make your visit productive, enjoyable and relaxing. We have paid special attention to the activities of the children and our young adults. In the event there are any shortcomings, they are entirely unintentional. As you know, the cost of holding conventions has been going up in recent years. However, we have tried our best to hold the cost down to the minimum without compromising your comfort, convenience and activities.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Jm Das, a former member of our society, now living in New Delhi, India for designing the graphics of the cover page of this brochure and the logo for our society. My special thanks to all the sponsors of this brochure for making its publication possible.

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**The Sixteenth Annual Convention
Kent, Ohio**

Friday, July 5th and 6th, 1985

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ORISSA SOCIETY OF AMERICAS



ORISSA
Half-century of progress

1936

1986



17th Annual Convention
July 4 - 5, 1986
Toronto, Canada



Orissa Society of Americas
17th Annual Convention
July 4 and 5, 1986
Toronto, Canada

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ORISSA SOCIETY OF AMERICAS



18th
Annual
Convention
July 3-5, 1987
Palo Alto, California

Orissa Society of America
18th Annual Convention
July 3-5, 1987
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ORISSA SOCIETY OF AMERICAS



The Tradition Continues...
1969-1988



19th
Annual
Convention
July 2-4, 1988
Saginaw, Michigan

Journal of the Orissa Society of America SPECIAL SOUVENIR ISSUE

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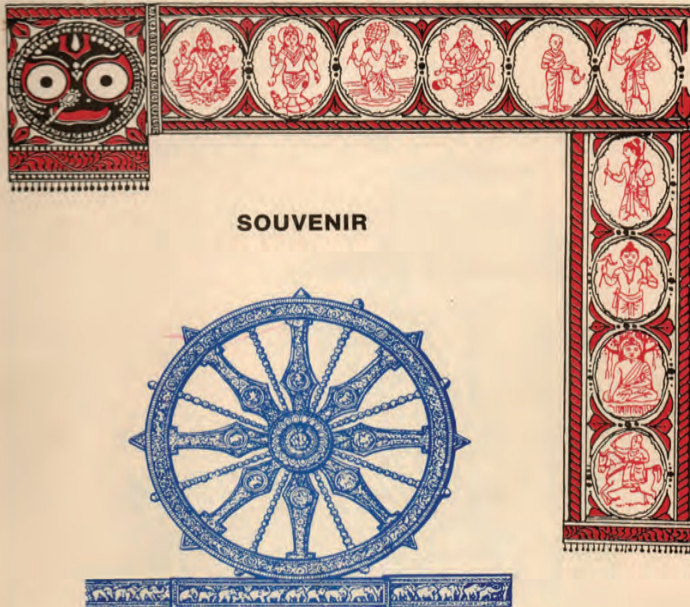
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ORISSA SOCIETY OF AMERICA



TWENTIETH ANNUAL CONVENTION
 July 1 - 3, 1989
 NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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JOURNAL OF THE ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

**Special Souvenir Issue
 SUMMER 1990**



**Twenty First Annual Convention
 of the
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 June 29-July 1, 1990
 Washington, D.C.**

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**JOURNAL
OF THE
ORISSA SOCIETY
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**Special Souvenir Issue
1991**



Twenty-Second Annual Convention
of the
Orissa Society of the Americas
July 4-7, 1991
Chicago

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**THE ORISSA SOCIETY
OF THE AMERICAS**

**JOURNAL
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Twenty-third Annual Convention
July 2-5, 1992
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ATLANTA, GEORGIA
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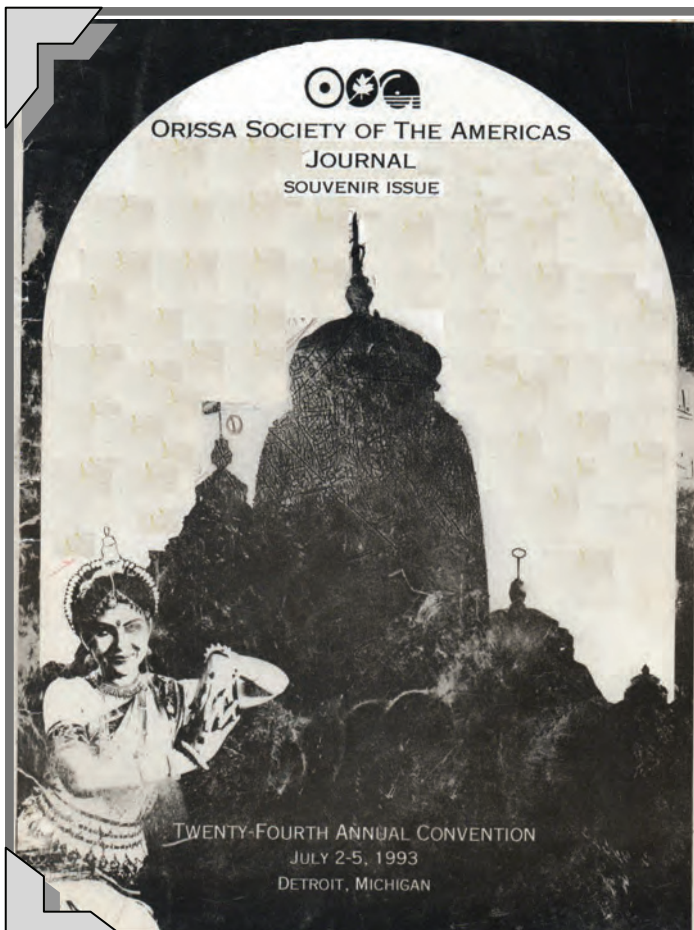
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TROY, MICHIGAN
July 2 - 4, 1993**

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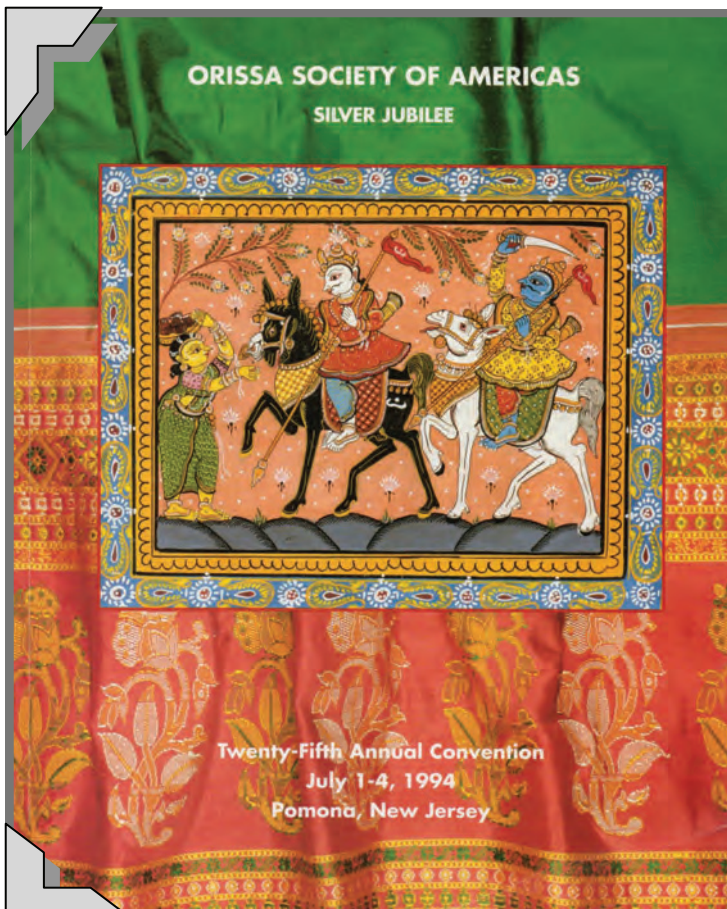
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WELCOME TO THE OSA CONVENTION



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1995 CONVENTION



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Festival of Orissa



**27th Annual Convention
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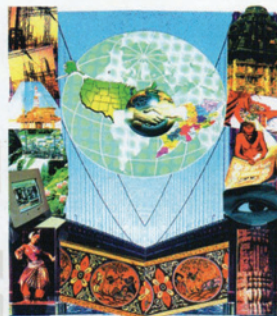
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JOURNAL of the ORISSA SOCIETY of the AMERICAS

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Houston, Texas / July 3 - 5, 1997

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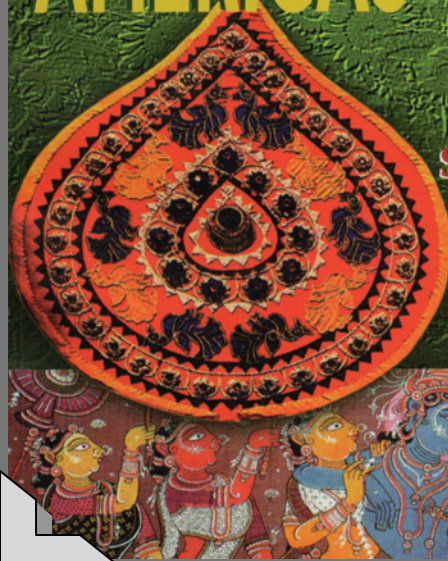
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1998
Souvenir Issue

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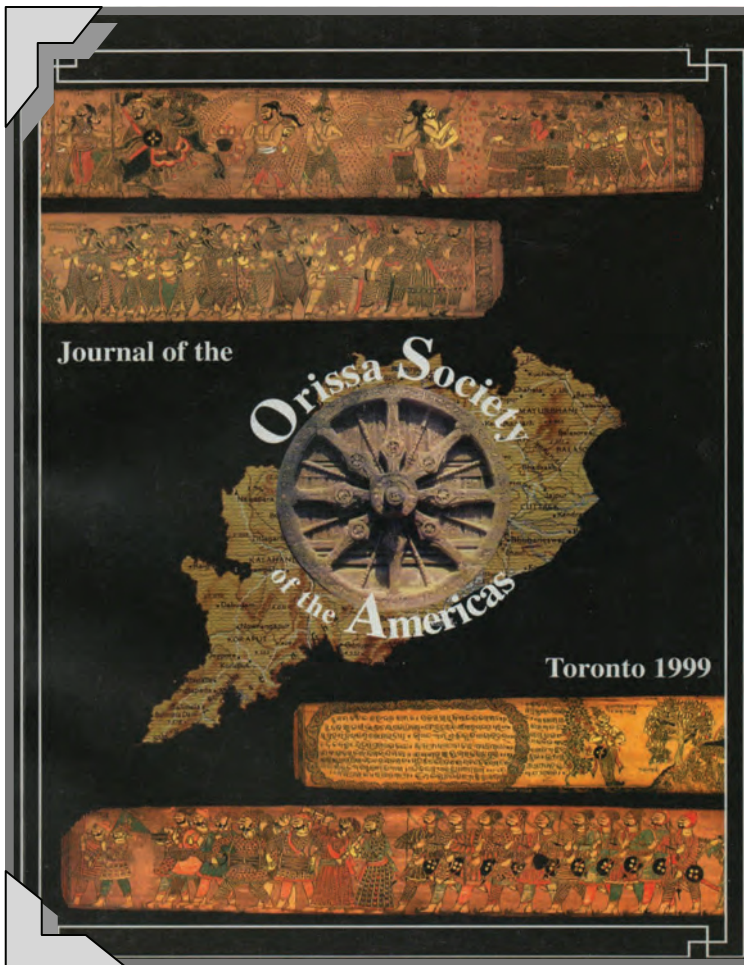
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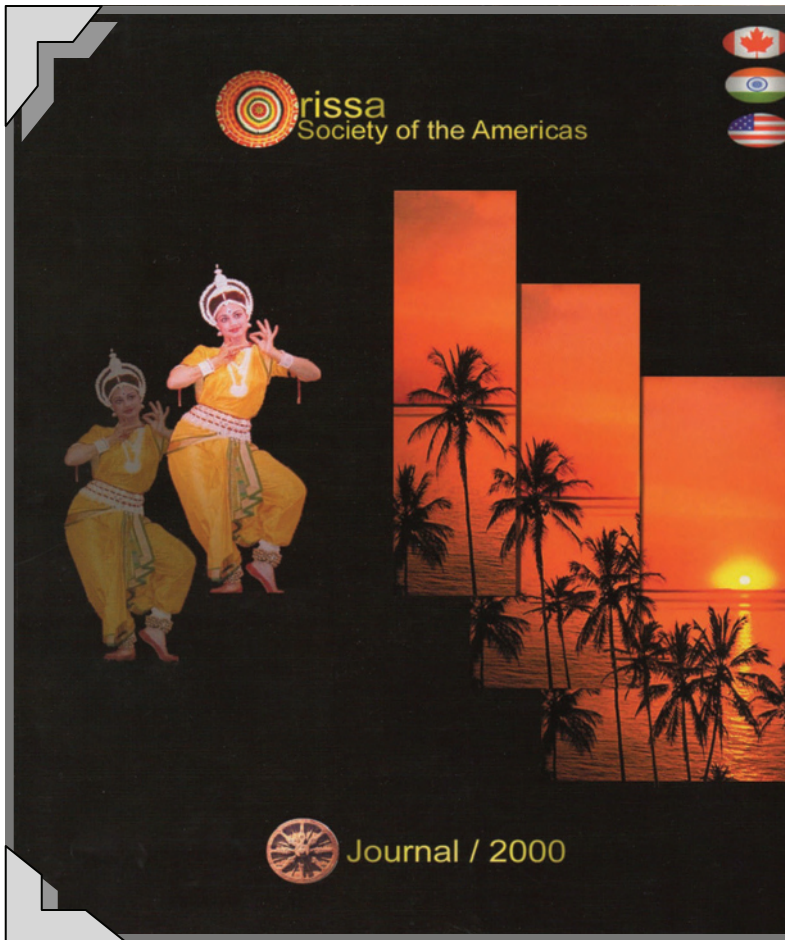
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**JOURNAL OF THE ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS
SOUVENIR, 2000**

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THE 32nd ANNUAL CONVENTION, CHICAGO

The 32nd Annual Convention, Chicago



2001 Souvenir Issue



ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS
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Thirty-fourth Annual Convention, July 4 - 6, 2003
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Orissa Society of the Americas
The Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention
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Orissa Society of the Americas
2004 Souvenir Issue
The 35th Annual Convention, Dallas




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The 36th Annual Souvenir Issue July 2005

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୩୬ତମ ସୁବିକଳା ସଂଖ୍ୟା
ଜୁଲାଇ ୨୦୦୫
ଆରମ୍ଭ ୧୯୬୯ ଶକାବ୍ଦ**



Fortune Towers, Bhubaneswar - modern hi-tech facility in the City of Temples

OSA Journal - 36th Annual Souvenir Issue July 2005



Journal of ORISSA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS
The 36th Souvenir Issue, July 2005


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The front cover is designed by Bijay Kumar Sinha, with ideas from Lalu Mansingh and Sura Rath
Front Cover: Fortune Towers: On the road linking Bhubaneswar to Nandan Kanan and Cuttack lies Chandrasekharpur (often abbreviated to CSPur). The Chandrasekharpur suburb of Bhubaneswar is a vision of Orissa of the future, with National Aluminium Company of India (NALCO), Kalinga Hospital, Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Suresh Plaza, Oberoi and Mayfair hotels, a host of central research institutes, a bevy of engineering colleges, the upcoming Indian Institute of Mathematics and Applications (IIMA), and Fortune Towers Fortune Towers has been constructed by Orissa Industrial Infrastructure Development corporation (IDCO). The building complex is host to, among others, Tata Teleservices, Tata Steel, Reliance Infocomm, State Bank of India (SBI), BHP Minerals (a subsidiary of the Australian multinational BHP Billiton), Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), Orissa Power Generation Corporation (OPGC), Pohang Iron and Steel Company (POSCO) of South Korea.- Lalu Mansingh

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ଆମରି ପିଲାମାନେ ଆମରି ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ **Our Children Our Future**





37th Annual Convention, July 2006, Columbia, MD

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**38th Annual Convention, 2007
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Journal of the Orissa Society of the Americas

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



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39th Annual Convention, 2008
Toronto, Canada



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OSA AWARDS, 2009

DISTINGUISHED ORIYA AWARD, 2009

Manaranjan Pattanayak, Overland Park, KS

Please see the article "A Man of Rice, a Man of Steel" by Saradindu Misra in the Souvenir.

KALASHREE AWARD, 2009

Gagan Panigrahi, Toronto, Canada

Gagan Panigrahi is an artist by birth with strong accomplishments as an actor, painter, and a writer. As a member of CANOSA, he has been a strong supporter and contributor of OSA for 25 years. He has been a promoter of Oriya art, music and drama. His presentations of Fakir Mohan's 'Chha Maan Atha Guntha' in 1995 at New Jersey to Baishnab Pani's opera 'Karna Arjuna' in Toronto in 2008 were masterpieces. He was also the Convener of the OSA Convention, 2008 in Toronto. His sense of humour, integrity and respect for all are unparalleled.

YUVA KALA VIKASH AWARD, 2009

Suraj Patnaik, Naperville, IL (Age – 15 years)

Son of Sujata and Gyana Patnaik, Suraj is a promising young artist who has been groomed to preserve and promote Oriya music outside of Orissa. He has been trained in Hindustani classic music as well as in Oriya vocal music. In his association with Chinmay Mission, Suraj has been a role model for young children with Bhagbat Gita chanting reciting *stutis* and *vandanas* from *Puaranas*. Chinmay Mission released his first Sanskrit and Hindi Bhajan CD in 2004, the sale proceeds of which were donated entirely to the Chinmaya Mission in Orissa. His first music concert was arranged by Raaga (a cultural organization to promote Oriya music) in 2006 in Orissa. Suraj is actively engaged in OSA activities since he was very young. He was a recipient of Subrina Biswal Award for music at the age of 4 and again at 7.

"Suraj is also well versed in western style of vocal and instrumental (violin) music. He recently got selected to an elite Jazz Vocal Group called Wildcats led by Grammy Award winning music department of Nequa Valley High School in Naperville."

SUBRINA BISWAL AWARD, 2009

Ashutosh Patra, Portland OR

Ashutosh, son of Anu and Priyadarsan Patra, has exemplary achievements in academic, extra curricular as well as community activities. He is an accomplished student with numerous recognitions in the areas of academics and research in math & science, writing and debate. He is a 2009 International BioGENEious Award winner for his work on microbes and fuel cells. He also placed 1st in Energy & Transportation category at the 2009 International Science and Engineering Fair for his team research involving solar harvesting using water as lens material. He has received several awards in the areas of sports, community involvement, and leadership as well. Ashutosh is the valedictorian for class of 2009 at Sunset High School, Portland, OR. He was selected for admission by many prestigious universities throughout the nation including MIT, and will be joining the Jerome Fisher Technology & Management Program jointly offered by Wharton and the Engineering School of University of Pennsylvania.

MEGHANA MEMORIAL AWARD, 2009

Age Group 8-12 Years

Malina Maharana, Houston, TX

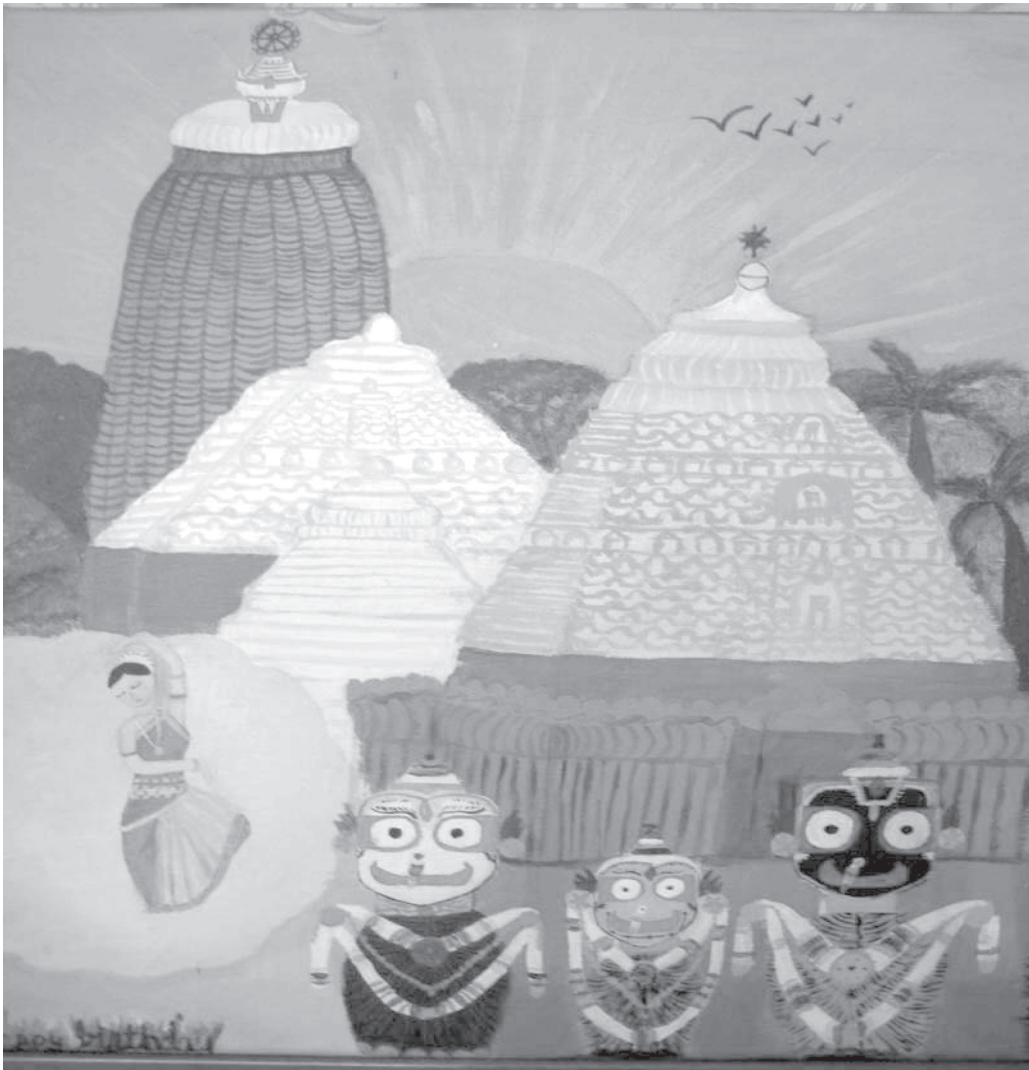
Malina, daughter of Sasmita and Madhab Maharana, resident of Houston, Texas. She is currently a 6th grader in Conerstone Academy. She loves to read at any free time; likes listening/singing/dancing to Hindi and Oriya music; likes writing mystery stories. She is also taking Odissi dance lessons.

Age Group 13-18 Years

Lipsa Panda, Long Island, NY

Lipsa Panda is the daughter of Lalit and Meeta Panda who currently reside in Long Island. She is in 11th grade and attends Syosset High School. Lipsa enjoys writing in her spare time as well as actively learning Oriya.

OSA Executive Committee extends its heart-felt gratitude to Manoj K. Mahapatra for being the Coordinator of the OSA- awards in all categories, and the Souvenir Team for coordinating Meghana awards. They also convey their gratitude to all the judges who spent their valuable time in evaluating the various entries.



An Ebullient Stream



We Oriyas and Our Oriya

By
Dr. J.P.Das



We Oriyas are perhaps pessimists by nature. One stream of our thinking is that everything we had in the past was great and whatever we have now is degenerate and sub-standard. The other stream is that we must do something to get back to our old glory. To put it in the words of Radhanath Ray and Godavarish Mahapatra, two illustrious writers of Orissa, one strain is: "What a land this was; What is it today", and the other: "Skeletons, rise; Weaklings, wake up". Since we believe that old is gold, some of our scholars often try to date some Orissan art or literature to a period much earlier than it was actually executed or written.

In a similar pessimistic vein, some predict that Oriya language will gradually die out like 3500 languages of the world which linguists say are in the throes of death. There is really no justification to add Oriya to the list of such dying languages. As proof of the decline of Oriya language towards oblivion, it is argued that wedding invitation cards are now being written in English and that Oriya kids are calling their parents Mommy and Daddy. Such a proposition is as erroneous as the Sangha Parivar's dread that Indian culture will be corrupted and shattered by the sale of Valentine's Day cards in the Indian market. Oriya language is not a nine day's wonder that a half a dozen English words will destroy it. How an invitation card will be written and how parents will be addressed are social vogues which have nothing to do with the survival of a language. We, the so-called elite, always lived with our English invitation cards in a daddy-mummy culture. The so-called lower strata of our society, through a process of Brahmanisation, are now imitating the elite in this and this seems to have become unbearable to us. We want that only we, the elite, will use Queen's English. To put it differently, we want that only we will drink Coke and Pepsi; others should content themselves with rice-water *torani*.

Another example being given is that our children are no longer knowing about Orissa's flora and fauna and Oriya savory and sweets, and so the words for these will gradually vanish from the Oriya dictionary. The simple explanation is that the children do not know these words as they are no longer seeing them or eating those. They are instead seeing and eating other things. What children learnt a hundred years back is different from what they learnt fifty years back and today's children are learning very different things. The stock of words is changing accordingly. This is a sign of progress, not a cause for worry.

The 'incursion' of words from other languages, especially Hindi, is being cited as another instance of vulnerability of Oriya. It goes without saying that, thanks to Hindi films, many Hindi words have entered our day to day vocabulary. At one time Oriyas (like their neighbors the Bengalis) were 'eating' tea, cigarettes and liquor; now most of them 'drink' tea, cigarettes and liquor! In Oriya newspaper reports Hindi words are sprinkled liberally even where suitable Oriya synonyms are available. Some people are looking at such practices with horror. Sometime back, we had similar fear of Bangla. At least one Oriya writer is on record saying that he did not read Bangla out of a fear that he might be influenced by its literature! I think instead of being afraid of using words from other languages, we should be happy about it. We should consider a language advanced and developed when it has the capability of assimilating words from other languages.

It is the law of language that it would change with time. The words and the language Fakirmohan Senapati used are not being followed in modern Oriya. Even within three decades of the publication of *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* the Oriya language has changed so much that in the new edition of the novel, a glossary had to be appended. There were as many as seven hundred words in the glossary, which means that the generation which followed Fakirmohan's was not familiar with that many words of the novel.

Another bogey which scares us is the expansion of English education. Though there is difference of opinion as to the age at which it should be taught to children, no one is now opposed to English teaching. Many states which have banished English from their schools have welcomed it back. That need not really alarm us. English is not, and cannot be, the language of our heart. For most Indians it is not the language of our literature either. It is the language of our friendly talk, trade and commerce, and office work. For many, it is not a language so much as a tool and a skill. Such limited use of language is nothing new. Before English, Indians learnt Persian for two hundred and fifty years. Indian languages and literature adopted Persian words as the example of *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* would show. Before Persian, Sanskrit too had an elitist use. In Kalidas's plays only kings, Brahmins and higher class people spoke Sanskrit; women and low caste characters were denied the divine language and had their dialogues in *apabhramsh*. If there had been a practice of sending wedding invitation cards at that time, only cards issuing from the palace would then have been written in Sanskrit, and use of Sanskrit by others would have been treated as treason.

There is no law that those who read English must stop reading Oriya. Many states have laid emphasis on English education but the children there are speaking, learning, and reading their own language and literature. The best way to attract children to their own language is to have a good children's literature. If the children in neighboring Bengal are reading Bangla along with English, one of the main allurements is *Abol Tabol*. Rabindranath is the most important reason for English-educated Bengalis not staying away from their own language.

The best way to keep a language alive is to create good literature. Where the number of speakers of a language is small and it has no literature, there might be a possibility of its getting obliterated. A language spoken by forty million people and in which Jagannath Das's *Bhagavat*, Sarala Das's *Mahabharat* and Balram Das's *Lakshmi Puran* have been written need have no such fear. No one need yet think of writing the obituary of Oriya.

Jagannath Prasad Das was awarded the prestigious Saraswati Samman recently as a tribute to a multifaceted talent from modern Orissa. A poet, painter, dramatist, actor, short-story writer, novelist, translator, critic of art literature and cinema – Dr. Das's illustrious career spans several decades. He lives in New Delhi.

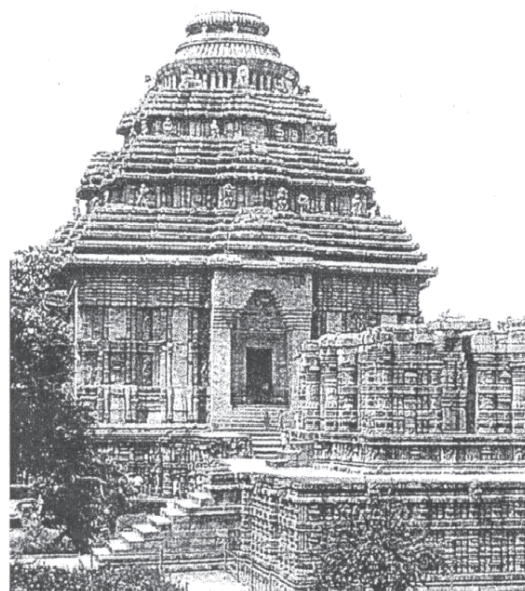
With best wishes from



Sarmistha (Meeta) Panda
Sole Proprietor

1 Annette Way
Jericho, NY 11753

Tel: (516) 677-9050
Cell: (516) 698-1768
Fax: (516) 677-9050
meetapanda@yahoo.com



Romancing a Sprite: Remembering a Past That Never Was

By
Lalu Mansinha

The Butterfly Effect: a butterfly flaps its wings in China, and Chaos Theory may predict a series of atmospheric effects leading upto a cyclonic storm over Balasore. Chaos Theory is about large, unstable and so unpredictable systems that small effects, such as a butterfly flapping its wings, can have large and unexpected outcomes elsewhere. Although I do not know much about the theory behind the Butterfly Effect in Chaos Theory, I can recognise the Butterfly Effect in my music education. Without any formal musical schooling, my musical education has been a random, chaotic path. There have been a few episodes in my life where a whimsical or stray event has started me on a new personal path of musical discovery. In this article I describe the fourth, and considering my advanced years, perhaps my last, Butterfly Effect.

As I write this, I and Natasha, not yet one year old, are watching old Hindi film song videos, again and again. She cannot yet talk, but she knows her favourite Hindi film songs, mostly dances and bhajans. When the music starts, she sits transfixed and watches and listens intently, occasionally jumping up, making a baby sound of enjoyment as her favourite bits of song or dance come on. Her favourites are Geeta Bali (in *Baazi*), Nargis (in *Jogan*) and Jaya Bhaduri (in *Guddi*), among others. The songs that she likes, she listens over and over again. To me it is a wonder that even with an age difference of more than seven decades, we enjoy the same music.

It will be months before Natasha can speak, and years before she can express her sentiments in language, and by that time she would have probably forgotten as to why she, ten month old, born in Canada, found the songs and dances in the grainy black and white Hindi films so absorbing. This article should have been Natasha's story, of her discovery, in the tenth month of her life, of old Hindi films. Instead, perforce, this story becomes the story of I remembering a past that never was, and I and the Butterfly Effect.

Preamble

The Orissa of 1930s, 40s and 50s was a land that time had almost passed by. Technically Orissa in the 20th Century, but not quite. My childhood was in the urban areas of Orissa, in Athgarh, Sambalpur and Cuttack, and in rural

Nandala village, at the south end of Chilika Lake. I have been a witness to the slow transition of Orissa society into the 20th century, adopting and getting familiar with all the new fangled European invented gadgets and ideas. The first contact with the 20th Century was not always pleasant. There is the story of a village woman from Tigrira who had to get on a railway train at night, for the first time in her life. She was terrified. The platform shook when this huge 'thing' pulled into the station, belching steam, smoke and fire, emitting a piercing wail. Petrified, she was pushed into the belly of this 'thing'. She moaned on the floor, convinced that the end had come, that she had been eaten alive by this monster of the nether world.

It was an uneasy interface with the 20th Century of a people used to the gentler side of life, coming into contact with technology for the first time. Suspicion of new gadgets and machines was not confined to the illiterate rural population from remote regions. Thanks to the British, an urban middle class came into existence. The urban class had some western style schooling, but with the culture still rooted in medieval Orissa. The terror of the village lady on her first train ride was repeated in various degrees to every European introduced object or practice.

Fountain pens are not good for you – they spoil your handwriting. Electric light is not good for studying -- they affect your eyesight. Bicycles are not good for you – they cause the disease hydrocele. Many would not eat potatoes or tomatoes both European introduced vegetables, not for any specific fear but that these foreign vegetables are just not good.

But the greatest contempt was reserved by the new Oriya middle class for the cinema. (It would be thirty years hence before television would arrive in India.) Cinema, in black and white then, was in its formative, experimental stage. A new artistic medium with sights, sounds and motion was finding expression Bombay and Calcutta. Oriya cinema was not yet born.

The Orissa urban middle class was suspicious. In the whole of Orissa there were no more than half a dozen cinema halls, for about 10 million people. Not only did cinema spoil the eyesight, but cinema also introduced the 'bazaari' and 'chhatara' ideas into the minds of the 'good' middle class children. Ideas such as romance, falling in love, marriage by choice, etc. struck terror into the middle class Oriya parents of the

time. Woe to the parents whose son or daughter married for 'love'. Family ignominy and outcast by society would follow. Marriage was considered an alliance of two families and was too important to be left to the youth.

And so it was that I, the eldest among the siblings, was rarely allowed to go to cinema in my school and college days. My closest encounter with the cinema was through an irritating Oriya custom – irritating to those not directly participating in whatever festivities were taking place anywhere in town. It is the desire to spread joy and happiness, when you are happy and celebrating. What better way to make everyone in the whole city happy than to let them enjoy hearing your own favourite film songs over and over again, 24/7. So whether our parents liked it or not, we were suffused with romantic songs in lilting tunes night after night. I had my own favourite tunes, but was otherwise blissfully ignorant of the names of stars, directors, music directors, choreographers, names of movies etc.. My friends were walking encyclopedias of film lore. In conversations they spouted off names of stars and movies and details of their lives.

The Twenty-first Century

An email on Ornet on December 4, 2004 from Sandip Dasvarma. This is the email that caused the latest Butterfly Effect on my musical education. It has started me on an obsessive search for the Hindi film songs of yore, songs that move me. The Hindi film songs represent a very different genre of Indian music, where the visual imagery adds to the quality of the music. But all this I had yet to discover, on December 4, 2004, when I read Sandip Babu's email.

The email was a comment on the philosophical issue as to whether it is ethical to colorise the old b/w Hindi movies. He quoted an article by M. J. Akbar, on the re-release, in 2004, of the movie *Mughal-e-Azam*. This epic movie was originally released in 1960 in b/w, with a few color segments. The movie was re-released in 2004 in a colorised version. The re-released movie was a surprise hit in 2004, as it was back in 1960. Grandfathers and grandmothers, who had originally fallen in love with Madhubala and Dilip Kumar in 1960, had come back perhaps for nostalgia and to relive the romance of their youth. The sizable number of young people in the audiences in 2004 was a puzzle. It was definitely not nostalgia that drew them. Perhaps they had come to get some understanding of what made their parents and grandparents what they were.

Of course on Dec 4, 2004, I knew nothing about *Mughal-e-Azam* or other Hindi films. My ignorance notwithstanding, I had inherited the contempt reserved for Hindi films by the Oriya cultured class, because of the supposed shallowness of their intellectual and cultural depth. And yet, when I read M. J. Akbar's review of *Mughal-e-Azam*, I was intrigued, and simultaneously recognised that my longstanding views on the 'quality' of Hindi films stemmed, not from knowledge, but from total ignorance. I became ashamed of my ignorance of this significant part of the culture of modern India, and promised to educate myself. First step: I bought a DVD of *Mughal-e-Azam*.

My ignorance was total. I did not even know the outline of the screenplay of *Mughal-e-Azam*. The Urdu dialog went over my head. I watched the movie many times over, incrementally increasing my comprehension of the story, and Urdu.

And I was entranced by the star, whom I could not recognise. She as Radha, dancing and flirting with Prince Salim, singing:

*nayno Se Jadoo Kiya Jiyara Moh Liya
mora Ghoongat Najariya Se Khol Gayo Re
mohe Panghat Pe ...*

The magic in his glances moves my heart
He unveils me just with his glances

Then she confronts Emperor Akbar dancing a lovely and expressive dance, daring the Emperor, with a toss of her head and the flashing eyes

*Is dard ko lekar juitaa hai
Is dard ko lekar marataa hai
Pyaar kiyaa to darnaa kyaa
Jab pyaar kiyaa to darnaa kyaa*

With this ache I keep on living,
With this pain I keep on dying;
Why should I be afraid because I fell in love?
Should I be afraid just for falling in love?

And so in my old age, I fell in love with this actress, with the film persona as the lovely Anarkali, with Lata's mellifluous voice. There is no historical evidence that there was an Anarkali. She is indeed a sprite and the sprite moved me. The word 'sprite' refers to a spirit, an imaginary person, someone not real.

I was also entranced by many others sprites in the films, including several nameless 'extras' who were the background dancers. I simply marveled at the combination of beauty, motion, music and

songs, to create a sensual imagery in sight and sound.

I watched *Mughal-e-Azam* again and again, with my attention focused selectively, and pleurably, on the music and dance scenes. In the dances I found the acting, direction, movements, lyrics, facial expressions absolutely fascinating and captivating. I finally realised what millions and millions of Indian film fans had discovered before me, that the best parts of the film are in the song and dance sequences. My belated discovery of *Mughal-e-Azam* became a revelation. And as I saw the video repeatedly, I looked at it not as just a fan, but as a professor, analysing the scenes, looking at camera placement, angles and zoom, and began to recognise the creative genius that went into the few minutes of the song and dance.

Mining for Gems

By profession I am a geologist, geophysicist, trained to discover and 'see' underground treasures that cannot be seen on the surface by the lay person. I now embarked on an exploration of other Hindi films of the bygone era. I started an exploration of the Hindi movies. India has been producing some 1000 movies per year for the past 60 years. With five songs per film on the average, we are looking at 300,000 songs yet to be discovered, by me

I have become obsessed with Hindi film music of the 1940s, 50s and 60s. It was like being young again – hearing a new song for the first time, hearing it a second time, and then wanting to hear it again and again. Each time I discovered a new song, it became my hit-tune of the week, until I discovered another one.

My video collection has grown enormously. Yet I still get bored by the movie itself. I still think that much of the script, acting, direction, editing could have been improved. And yet, in all that bad movies, there would be one song or a set of songs that would be spontaneously moving the first time I hear it. There are just so many stunning pieces of music to be mined. This is indeed 'data mining'. Good thing I am a geologist.

I have discovered gems. Kanan Devi singing '*Preetama se*' in the film *Streetsinger*, released in 1938. I had never heard it before ..., or had I?, when I was Natasha's age? There are two lovely songs in the film *Amar*, one with Nimmi, and the

other with Madhubala. I am still looking for a DVD of the movie *Afsar*, with Suraiya. And so the search continues.

Other Butterflies

During Christmas of 1959 my uncle and aunty, Ralph and Polly Victor presented me with a record, Beethoven's Symphony Number 3. Then a fellow student at the University of British Columbia gave me another record, Handel's Water Music. It was love at first hearing. I was smitten. I have no explanation as to why a foreign and alien sounding music written around 1800 in Europe would captivate someone born in the 20th Century in Orissa, in Bhowanipatna.

From then on I started a lifelong exploration of European classical music. But it is the music of Beethoven that continues to move me.

The next Butterfly incident came when my friend Saroj and Suniti Behera were showing me around Berkeley, California, and we stopped at an Indian store. There was a pile of cassettes on sale. I found one by Sunanda Patnaik. Once again, I was moved by her voice and singing. I found out later that she is the daughter of my Headmaster at Chandrasekhar Zilla School in Sambalpur. Sunanda Patnaik's voice set me off on another musical path of Indian classical vocals.

Last Word

I am glad that Natasha and I share a passion for the same music and the same dance. How long will this obsession continue, Charu asks, forbidding me to buy any more DVDs. My answer comes straight from *Mughal-e-Azam*:

Yeh dil ki lagi kam kya hogi, yeh ishq bhala kam kya hoga

Jab raat hai aisi matwali phir subah ka aalam kya hoga!

How will this passion ever diminish, this love ever wither? When the night is so effusive, imagine what the morning will bring!

It is astonishing that it is Hindi films that provide a common culture between a grandfather born in Orissa in the last century and a grand daughter born in Canada in the 21st Century. In Hindi films I have found an avocation for my old age. I still have 300,000 songs to mine and examine.

Voices from Old Lahore

By

Dr Prasanna K. Pati

“Dr. Sonjee, please attend the annual meeting of the Pakistani Psychiatric Society in Lahore next year as my guest.” Dr. Ahmed and I were attending the Annual Meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in Atlanta, Georgia. It was May of 1978. He was a prominent psychiatrist in Pakistan and representing his society at the Atlanta Convention. I had met him in one of the sessions and we connected. It was regardless of the fact that I was from India and a Hindu. At that time, I had a busy private practice in Savannah, Georgia.

“Dr. Ahmed, you know I am originally from India. If I come to Lahore, I might be killed. You know very well, there has not been a closure to the 1947 partition.”

“Dr. Sonjee, I assure your safety. You and I are psychiatrists. We have a commitment to treatment of the mentally ill. I understand, you have specialized in the treatment of anxiety disorders. I would like you to present a paper at our next meeting.”

Dr. Ahmed was warm and genuine. Here was a Pakistani Muslim whose family had migrated from Lucknow to Lahore on the eve of partition.

“Dr. Ahmed, I will consider it. India’s partition followed by wars in 1965, 1971 and the creation of Bangladesh have caused bitterness that is simmering on both sides, but with people like you in Pakistan, however, I see a glimmer of hope. I will consider your suggestion. Yes, I would love to pay a visit to Lahore. According to ancient Hindu traditions, the city was named after Lav, son of Rama of the epic Ramayana, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.”

At the end of the Atlanta Convention, I invited Dr. Ahmed to Savannah on his next trip to America.

His was a friendly invitation, perhaps incidental. But, I was surprised to receive a reminder to mail a paper for the January 1997 program in Lahore. I was not sure I would undertake such a trip, but the invitation was tempting, as educational trip on cross-cultural psychiatry plus visiting a historic city.

Time went by and I had to make a decision. I wrote to Dr. Ahmed about my mixed feelings, but again, I heard from him assuring me of my safety in Lahore.

I was received with so much warmth in the Lahore Airport on that beautiful, cool morning in January. Dr. Ahmed introduced me to his parents, wife, two adult children, their families and a few members of the Pakistani Psychiatric Society.

With such a warm welcome, I was no longer apprehensive. It was a joyous group, everyone talking at the same time. I was the center of attraction and I greeted everyone. We left for the Lahore suburb of Gulberg, where Dr. Ahmed and his family lived. I was to stay in the family home.

Dr. Ahmed had arranged an elaborate and tight program for me and considering that I was a history buff, I would be in guided tours for at least a couple of days.

Lahore, in some way, looked like parts of Delhi. Dr. Ahmed accompanied me everywhere introducing me to his friends. During these tours, we visited the Shalimar gardens laid out by Shah Jahan in 1641, three terraces with more than four hundred fountains. We visited the marvelous tomb of Jahangir. Everywhere I went and met people, I was greeted with much warmth, even if people knew that I was originally from India and a Hindu.

In the family of Dr. Ahmed, we talked about everything except partition of India. I even talked about my childhood days in a small town in Orissa, our Hindu festivals, rituals and ceremonies. Mrs. Ahmed was a highly educated lady with a Masters in history from the University of Punjab. She was a most charming hostess, very outgoing and talkative. Usually, Dr. Ahmed's father was quiet but on this particular evening, he started talking about his childhood days in Lucknow.

"Dr. Sonjee, have you been to Lucknow? If not, you should make a trip to that lovely city. I was born there in 1908. I would like to visit my birthplace one more time before I die. In fact I will not mind if I die there, where my parents and grand parents are buried."

At this point, the elder Ahmed started sobbing. There was a stunning silence. None rose to console him, probably because it was a shocking statement. The elder Ahmed continued, "Dr. Sonjee, our house was not far from the great Imambara. My earliest memories are associated with this meeting place for Shia Muslims, and especially our celebration of Muharram. Dr. Sonjee, you are going to India after your Lahore visit. Why not take me with you on a visit to Lucknow?" Again, he started sobbing and began, beating his chest with his fists. At this point, Dr. Ahmed, Mrs. Ahmed, and I immediately responded and hugged him tightly. All of us started crying. We were speechless.

Dinner was announced. We settled down to an uneasy silence. Mrs. Ahmed started talking about the various cultural activities of Lahore. Actually, as I found out later, she was born in Lahore. She said, "I have never been to India, Dr. Sonjee. My husband was only fifteen when he left Lucknow. He has told me a lot of stories about that beautiful city." She started laughing at this point and added, "If you take my father-in-law on a trip to Lucknow, I would like to come along."

At this point, I stood up, raised my glass of water and offered a toast to the elder Ahmed, "Sir, your heart remains in India. Lucknow, according to the Hindu tradition, was founded by Laxman, the brother of Lord Rama of Ayodhya. Your city later on became a center for Islamic Art and culture. You may not be able to visit Lucknow but I will, and on your behalf, will take bouquets to the graves of your parents and grand parents."

At this, both Dr. Ahmed, his wife and elder Ahmed started crying. They came over, hugged me but said nothing. I thought to myself, here was a Hindu in the Pakistani city of Lahore, in a Muslim home, being embraced almost like a son and brother.

As a part of the program, we made a trip to the mental hospital. Dr. Ahmed, Dr. Hussain, Superintendent of the Hospital and I visited every ward. We informally chatted with the nursing staff. Obviously, word had gone out that I was originally from India. However, I was met only with much friendliness and warmth.

Dr. Hussain stopped to greet a patient sitting in a corner of a room talking to himself.

"Sardarji, how are you today?"

I was a bit surprised at this, as I didn't expect any Sikh patients in a Pakistani mental hospital after thirty-two years of partition from India.

Dr. Hussain told us that Sardarji had schizophrenia and had been in continuous residence as a patient since 1939.

Dr. Hussain again asked, "Sardarji, don't you want to be transferred to hospital in India?"

At this point, Sardarji stood up and came near us. He said, "Dr. Hussain, I have told you many times I am in India. What is this Pakistan? I do not know what it is. You have told me that this is a new country. I hear voices of Mother India every day and she tells me that she cannot be partitioned. Lahore is my home. If you send me to another hospital, I will just die."

Dr. Hussain informed us that Sardarji, the Sikh patient, had declined to be repatriated to India and as an exceptional case, had been allowed to stay in the hospital in Lahore.

I felt uncomfortable at this conversation, which had probably occurred many many times. Dr. Hussain said that he was going to keep Sardarji under his care.

My paper at the scientific meeting of the Pakistani Psychiatric Society was well received. It was on post-traumatic stress disorders. Questions were raised as to such disorders on both sides of the border as a result of partition of India in 1947.

While visiting the various historic places in the city, and conversing with people, I had the feeling that this city had lost its soul, that people of Lahore had buried their historic culture and past, stories of Maharajah Ranjit Singh and Jahangir. Both are buried in Lahore. I decided to share my feelings one evening at the dinner table. "Mrs. Ahmed, you are a student of history. You know the multi-cultural and the rich multi-religious history of your city. I just have the feeling that voices of old Lahore have been silenced forever. What is your opinion?"

Mrs. Ahmed was quick to respond: "Dr. Sonjee, you are right. This Pakistan, the so-called Land of the pure, is on the verge of disaster and suicide. Yes, we are in the process of eliminating our memories of that culture, which was so vibrant. In the name of Islam, we are bringing in barbarism, pure and simple. Look at my father-in-law. Though he migrated from Lucknow, his heart is there. If Pakistan is the Land of the pure, how many Muslims from India are coming over? In fact, it may be the other way, Pakistanis wishing to migrate to India."

"Mrs. Ahmed, the origins of Hinduism can be traced back to Mahenjodaro and Harappa in Sind, to 2500 BC. Your Punjab was the cradle of ancient Aryan culture for centuries. Now Kashmir is an inferno, a living hell."

Dr. Ahmed responded, "Dr. Sonjee, India should hand over Kashmir to Pakistan as it is a Muslim majority state."

Mrs. Ahmed realized that it was getting sensitive and decided it was prudent to change the subject.

"Dr. Sonjee, there has been an invitation for you to give a talk to the students of the government college. It is my alma mater. Will you be willing to talk about mental impairments and treatment at a general level? This is the subject the student body president has suggested."

"I will be delighted to do it. When is it?"

"It is at 11 AM on January 26. I will take you there. I know a number of faculty members, who will have a reception for you at 10. Among them will be the principal of the college, who was born in Delhi. Several faculty members have relatives in India."

"Mrs. Ahmed, I hope that they realize that I do not live in India. While I keep in touch with relatives, friends and events in India, I have been in America for many years."

The reception at the faculty lounge was extraordinarily warm and friendly. There were questions and comments about India and America. The principal wanted me to visit a certain section of old Delhi where he was born. He entertained me with many stories of his childhood, including activities with his Hindu friends. I really enjoyed this get-together.

I was escorted by the principal, Mrs. Ahmed and several other faculty members to the lecture hall. I was received by the president of the students' union. The lecture hall was full. I was introduced briefly by the principal as a psychiatrist from America. There was another welcoming statement from the president of the union, introducing me as a physician who had specialized in the treatment of social phobias and anxiety disorders.

I gave a talk about twenty minutes on the broad classifications of mental disorders in general, diagnostic criteria and treatment.

For another thirty minutes or so, there were a number of questions on various aspects of mental health. I thought it went fairly well. I was ready to sit down as the principal got up to terminate the meeting, when I noticed a commotion in the back of the hall. I saw about dozen youths entering the front of the hall, shoving and pushing others on their way. They stood right in front of the panel and their leader directed a question to me.

With a sarcastic tone he asked, "Dr. Sonjee, you are a Hindu, aren't you? Do you worship that ugly-pot-bellied elephant God Ganesh or something like that?"

I knew there was tension and violence in the air. The principal stood up and very politely stated, "Dr. Sonjee is a psychiatrist. Please do not raise irrelevant questions. Our time is up. I am sure he will stay behind to answer any questions on mental health."

The leader just laughed loudly and looked back at the audience and exclaimed, "Here is a Hindu, a non-believer, an infidel coming to Pakistan, the Land of the Pure."

Suddenly, the crowd burst into cheers.

The leader turned around and directed another comment to me.

"Dr. Sonjee, do you know what Jihad means? It is holy war against the Hindus. You Hindus believe in re-incarnation. Let me tell you I am Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor reborn."

At this statement, the crowd became hysterical and I heard the slogan, "Dr. Sonjee ko Maro" which meant, something like, "Kill him."

The principal was paralyzed with fear at this point, several rocks were thrown towards us and one hit my right arm. In a flash, Mrs. Ahmed shielded me totally from flying rocks. My only thought at the moment was, 'I may not get out alive from Pakistan.' Rock pelting and sloganeering such as, 'Kill the Hindu' and 'Holy war against the Hindus' went on for a few minutes. There was total chaos and pandemonium. Mrs. Ahmed kept whispering into my ears, "I will protect you regardless of what happens to me."

Then, just like that, the noise abated and rocks stopped coming. I heard some slogans, but it was getting less noisy. Apparently, the crowd was dispersing.

Out of the corner of my eyes, I saw policemen. My shirt was wet and I saw that it was bloody. I did not know whose blood it was. The rock hitting my right arm did not cause that severe an injury. I had not felt blood oozing at that site. At this point, I heard a police officer saying, "Dr. Sonjee, are you all right?" I was speechless. He was slowly pulling Mrs. Ahmed away from me. I saw that she was bleeding mostly from her back and arms. However, she was fully conscious and her first question to me was, "Are you all right?" There were a number of police and faculty members surrounding us. The principal, I found out, was severely injured and had been taken to hospital.

The officer told us, "Mrs. Ahmed and Dr. Sonjee, we will take you to the hospital for any necessary treatment. It turned out that Mrs. Ahmed's injuries were not serious and needed only outpatient treatment. Both of us were discharged and taken to Dr. Ahmed's house by police escort. I stayed a couple more days in Lahore until my flight to Delhi. Mrs. Ahmed bounced back rapidly to her usual self. There was no discussion of what happened in that college gathering, as Dr. Ahmed and I were subdued.

The same people came to see me off at the Lahore Airport. I had gotten all the details from the elder Ahmed about his parents' and grand-parents' graves in Lucknow. I went up to him.

“Sir, I will visit your parents’ and grand-parents’ graves in Lucknow. I have never been to a Muslim graveyard anywhere, but I will definitely go this one.”

He hugged me and said, with tears in his eyes, “Just as you Hindus wish to die in Varanasi, I wish to die in Lucknow, but it is not going to happen.”

I hugged Dr. Ahmed and thanked him for his hospitality.

“Please come with your wife to Savannah on your next visit to the States.” He was speechless with gratitude. Then I went to Mrs. Ahmed and held her hands. She hugged me, held me very tightly and started sobbing on my shoulders. I too started sobbing. When she let me go, I found almost everyone sobbing. Boarding of the flight was being announced.

In the front of the group, I bent down, touched the soil of Indo-Pakistan and said, “I touch my forehead like a son touching his mother’s feet and placing the blessings on his forehead.’

Dr. Prasanna Pati is a regular contributor to OSA Souvenir. He has sent this article from Salem, OR. He has acted in the Hollywood classic ‘One Flew over the Cuckoo’s Nest’.

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Bhubaneswar, June 3 (IANS) Art, dance, theatre and other facets of Oriya culture will be in full play at the 40th convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA) to be held in the state of New Jersey next month.

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Oriyas in America ready for 40th convention

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Wed, Jun 3 09:06 AM

Bhubaneswar, June 3 (IANS) Art, dance, theatre and other facets of Oriya culture will be in full play at the 40th convention of the Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA) to be held in the state of New Jersey next month.

The annual event will be held at Trenton from July 2 to 5 this year. OSA is one of the oldest Indian American associations.

‘There would be several special events this year starting from the classical and traditional dances of our state to drama competitions,’ Dharendra Kar, former vice president of OSA, told IANS on phone from the US.



40th OSA Convention hitting multiple website on June 3rd 2009

The Proof

By
Mohammed Yussouff

Oriya is a sweet and beautiful language. It is one hundred percent phonetic with each letter retaining its own sound in a given word. Sometimes it is difficult to write an Oriya word in other languages with its proper pronunciation. Consider the word Bhutto which is the subject of this simple story. It means an evil spirit that does evil things.

Naba was a gentle and good carpenter in our village. He was our family carpenter. He was given some land and took care of our carpentry needs. I was a little over three when I went to Naba and wanted him to make me a pair of wooden shoes. He made a beautiful pair of shoes and I liked it. After some months, I found that the shoes had become smaller. I went to Naba, accompanied by an older boy Sudama, to seek an explanation. Naba had a big smile on his face and said he could explain it as an act of Bhutto because normally wooden shoes cannot grow smaller over time. I asked him what a Bhutto actually was and why should he shrink my shoes. He said that Bhutto was an evil spirit who does many evil things. Anyway, he made me a new pair of bigger wooden shoes.

Now I had grown curious about Bhutto. I asked the older boy, Sudama, about it. He seemed quite knowledgeable on that subject. He started with two simple examples. One was the sudden onset of fires in the cremation ground of the village at night. In a dark night, you can see those occasional random fires from a distance. But nothing actually burns. No one goes near it because Bhutto may attack people. I had to see it a few times before getting completely convinced. The only question was why such fires do not light up in our backyard. Sudama explained that Bhutto originates from the evil dead people and does not want to unnecessarily enter the village.

The other example was the village school house located in an isolated spot outside the village. A tin roof was built on the school after its old thatched roof almost broke down. During summer, after sunset you could hear sputtering and cracking sounds from that house. Also, sometimes other sounds like something entering the roof were audible from a distance. Sudama was scared and convinced me about the Bhutto who enters the school house. When I suggested that birds like pigeons may be entering the school house, Sudama countered by saying that those other sounds were definitely not birds. He was totally fixated on this evil spirit.

Sudama further stipulated that Bhutto does several other things which are far more sinister. He can start hurricanes and tornadoes. The small whirlwinds with leaves, seen during summer, were often called "Khandia Bhutto" in our language. But the worst deed of Bhutto, he explained, was to set people against people and start destruction and war among people!

After a few years, we moved to the city. Sometimes we visited the village for a while and I met old friends like Sudama. He had grown up but could not attend any school higher than the primary school. I was now a city boy attending a high school. But, I still had those questions about the cremation ground fires and sounds from the school house. One day, our chemistry teacher talked about phosphorus and phosphene gas and the resulting cold fires in the cremation grounds. It became clear to me that some activities of Bhutto had other explanations. The sound from the tin roof of the school house came from the contraction of the tin after sunset. But Sudama won't accept any of that. He needed proof that so many activities attributed to Bhutto were indeed something else. What would explain, he asked, the cyclones, tornadoes and hurricanes? And what would explain the unnecessary strife among people and nations throughout the world? I, on the other hand, needed some proof that Bhutto existed. So the situation was a stalemate.

Before I conclude, I would like to point out that Oriya newspapers had limited readership and the journalism was not great. For example, an agreement between the USA and Soviet Union was called Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (S.A.L.T). Some minor newspapers around the world reported it with the confusion that USA and Soviet Union had concluded some kind of a treaty regarding common table salt

(Sodium Chloride). Our local Oriya Newspaper went a step further by saying that it was silly for the superpowers to get into nuclear threats involving common table salt. Coming back to the Bhutto story, after many years, I was on my usual short visit to the village in the summer of 1965. Sudama and I had grown up quite a bit, but that old question regarding Bhutto was still unresolved. One day during this visit, Sudama came running to me with a newspaper in his hand. He said here was the proof of the existence of Bhutto. This time it was in Pakistan and it was a Muslim Bhutto. He even had a name: Zulficar Ali. The headline in the newspaper read "India and Pakistan could have avoided this war but Bhutto would not let that happen."

[Historical Note: In December 1970, there was a general election in Pakistan. Mr. Zulficar Ali Bhutto won in West Pakistan and Mr. Mujibur Rahman won in East Pakistan, which is now Bangladesh. According to the majority doctrine, Mr. Rahman was the winner, but Mr. Bhutto refused to concede. This led to Bangladesh independence movement and India supported that movement. That resulted in India- Pakistan war in 1971. The small Oriya newspaper confused Mr. Bhutto with the Oriya word Bhutto.]

Mohammed Yussouff is a retired professor of IIT, Kanpur and Michigan State University.



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Lord Jagannath as DARU (Wooden) Brahma

By
Sudhansu Misra

A Hindu believes in God as Brahman, which he aspires to achieve as ultimate liberation from many cycles of birth and death. Brahman is omnipresent (present everywhere), omnipotent (infinite power), omniscient (all knowing) that is formless. One can only see the glimpses of it through devotion and meditation. It takes extreme Sadhana (austere practices) that has been laid out by ancient Yogis who have seen the divine through many years of practice and sacrifice. These seers have disclosed their vision in Hindu scriptures such as Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagbad Gita etc. There has been no emphasis on a form to worship in these scriptures. The Upanishads talk about Brahman and Atman as the highest form of consciousness.

Hindu faith mainly based on the principles of Sanatan Dharma believes in one God, but allows one to worship through various forms. Why is this necessary to worship the forms or images if our goal is to ultimately reach one God or the Brahman. The answer to this question is simple. Most of the worshipers do not have the capacity to visualize a formless object that will lead them to the realization of Brahman. For an ordinary person a deity serves as a medium that helps him to realize the formless God. Although the image or the deity is a means to help visualize the manifestation, it is not the end in realizing God. Realization comes after intense sadhana (austere practices) and devotion. The deity can take various forms but the resulting effect is the same, i.e. to see God through a medium of a material object. The medium ultimately becomes formless as one is absorbed in devotion or meditation. Some lucky ones do not need a form to worship and concentrate on a formless divinity called the Self or Atman that is within us. Various yogic paths are available, such as Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Astanga Yoga that prepares a devotee to realize God. It is up to the sadhaka to choose a path. An average person finds it easier to follow Bhakti Yoga where he worships God with a form.

Lord Jagannath is a concept that is beautifully manifested in an abstract form. This form has been created by a genius craftsman to represent the divinity that comes close to the abstract form of the formless. It is up to the observer who worships the Lord, to give a mental image to the form.

Some think of Jagannath as a living God among us doing miracles in every step of our way. We offer Him all the material objects and perform rituals as humans do in their real lives. At the main temple in Puri priests and the attendants wake Him up in the morning, brush and wash His face in front of a mirror, offer the early morning bhoga (food offering) , dress Him up, offer two to three bhogas during the day, prepare for the night rituals including changing his clothes and covering Him before bedtime. Hundreds of attendants perform these jobs without encroaching on each other's task. On special occasions, the attendants and priests decorate the Lord in appropriate clothes and jewels suitable for the occasion and the season. Every twelve years Jagannath changes to a new body called Nava Kalebara. For this, a Neem tree from a special forest is chosen to construct the three deities. Hundreds of thousand people come to Puri from far and near where Jagannath temple is located to attend these the special occasions*. These rituals and festivals serve their purpose by bringing awareness in the minds of people of a living God that watches and protects them. But the real devotee goes beyond the material manifestation and tries to see the Brahman in the wooden body. That is why Jagannath is known as DARU Brahma or Brahman in the wooden form.

*It is sad to note that even in this day and age admission to the temple at Puri is allowed based on caste, religion and skin color, although the scriptures mention that all human beings belong to a universal family (Basudeba Kutumbakam) and they are all equal in God's eyes.

Construction Workshops Offer Progressive Opportunities for Paktika

A Story from the Frontlines of Afghanistan

As told by
US Army CPT Sharmistha Mohapatra

June 2009

Introduction

In April 2008, my unit, Task Force Hammer, 62nd Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), of Fort Hood, Texas deployed on a 15 month tour to eastern Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. I was appointed as the unit's Civil Military Operations (CMO) Officer in Charge assisting in the critical mission of extending the reach and legitimacy of the civilian government while facilitating community construction efforts. The ultimate counter-insurgency goal is to set the conditions for self-sufficiency, enduring prosperity, and a secure and stable environment for the local populace. My shop inherited the management of 20 civil projects to include the construction of schools, road upgrades, and clinic refurbishments intended to win the hearts and minds of the people. However, seeing the poor quality of construction indicated to us that there was a severe lack of skilled labor in the country. Given direction from our commander, we undertook the challenge of progressing the construction training efforts of our predecessors to promote the building of human capacity.

Conception of the Engineer Skills Development Workshop (ESDW)



Paktika Province, Afghanistan

The Engineer Skills Development Workshop (ESDW), a Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP)-funded training and education initiative, is founded on an Afghan-American partnership serving to develop skilled construction work force capacity within Paktika Province. Of a population of 377,000, 99% live in rural districts having minimal exposure to skills enhancement opportunities. Fifty percent of Paktika Province is mountainous and the eastern side borders the hinterlands of Pakistan. This geography explains why the region is accessible to insurgent forces who run intimidation and recruiting campaigns amongst the populace. To counteract their influence, the provincial and district level governments aim to bring development to their citizens in the forms of infrastructure improvements and education opportunities.

The Afghan Skilled Labor Academy, simply addressed as the Winter Workshop, was executed first by Task Force Pacemaker, 864th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), and the Sharana Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in February 2006. It was conducted in the winter when the construction tempo was low, allowing for the availability of troops to serve as instructors. The immediate purpose of the workshop was to teach Afghan contractors and their laborers construction skills in carpentry and masonry. The Task Force Pacemaker engineer leadership, having received insight from visiting jobsites and talking to contractors, developed the curriculum for the original Winter Workshop. The PRT facilitated the local government advertisement and press coverage while the Paktika Provincial Engineer was responsible for civilian enrollment. A hired contractor



Afghan-built "dollhouse"

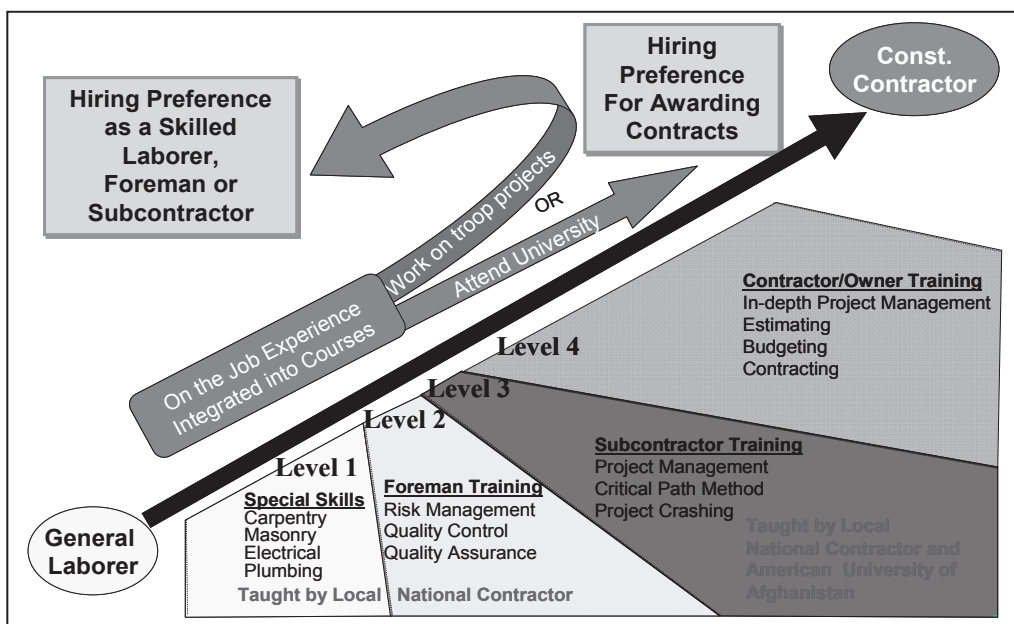
provided CERP-funded billeting, food, transportation, tools, and materials for the students. Total expenses came to \$198,500.

The planning committee decided to start with a 40 hour, 7 day workshop in consideration of student schedules and job impact. Ten Afghan National Army (ANA) engineers attended a practice training session, affording the US military instructor staff time to rehearse and make amends to the curriculum. For the workshop itself, 63 civilian contractors and laborers enrolled. On the first three days, students built wooden guard shacks; and for the last three days, they placed a concrete slab and constructed a short masonry wall. During the classroom training, contractor students shared their business experiences and practices to include contract reading, quality control and quality assurance. Though brief, the discussion proved that students thirsted for knowledge of the construction business. Graduation was held on the seventh day during which the graduates received certificates of completion from distinguished local Afghan government officials. The students also were gifted their tools to give them advantage in securing employment.

The strategic vision of this first Winter Workshop was for the program to serve as a base from which advanced workshops could be developed and exported to other regions throughout Afghanistan. During the first quarter of 2008, TF Pacemaker, on its second OEF tour, took the next step to spread this latter initiative. They conducted one week workshops at FOBs Sharana, Orgun-E, and Kushamond in Paktika and FOB Fenty in Nangarhar, training a total of 188 Afghans. Twenty-five of the Sharana students went on to gain employment on the FOB. While contractors provided the logistical support for the training, there remained heavy US Army Soldier and battalion-level staff involvement in the execution of the instruction and administrative coordination respectively. Total expenses came to \$540,000.

Advanced Development

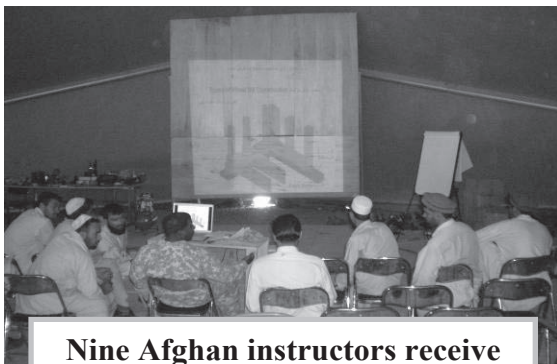
In May 2008, shortly after our arrival in theatre, my shop began work to amplify the efforts of our predecessors by planning for the implementation of a year-round program with additional construction subjects taught in a three-tiered progressive approach. The new curriculum – christened under the name “Engineer Skills Development Workshop” – would consist of six independent courses: 10 days of carpentry, 15 days of masonry, 12 days of electrical, 8 days of plumbing, 14 days of foremen, and 10 days of sub-contractor training. Starting with the skilled laborer, i.e. carpenter, mason, electrician, plumber, heavy equipment operator, exceptional students could move up to foreman and sub-contractor levels of training should they so desire. A fourth-tier, yet to be developed, would be the provision of university-level construction management training for contractors.



Original Concept

Each labor class would cover the fundamentals of construction, including safety practices and international building standards. For each particular class, students would receive hands-on exposure on such projects as constructing a hut, placing a concrete pad, wiring an electrical system, installing a water basin, or building a road. Students exhibiting higher talents would be recommended by the course Afghan Technical Director to pursue the foreman course which would include practical labor construction skills and then advance to materials estimation, risk management, and quality control. And finally, the sub-contractor course would emphasize project management for those seeking or already working in supervisor positions. The duration of each course was planned not to exceed two weeks with the intent to return graduates into the workforce quickly so as to minimize the disruption of their wage-earning potential. Despite having the cost of losing out on 8 to 15 days of wages, the benefit of attending a course was to yield workers with higher earning power as a semi-skilled laborer.

In order to execute this design full-time, we built two contracts: one for vertical and one for horizontal construction. For the vertical ESDW, we hired nine, tri-lingual Afghan engineers to be the primary instructors of the initiative, employed through the same contractor providing all the materials and tools. In August, we ran a two-week long train-the-trainer course to familiarize and prepare the instructors for leading their own classes both in technical and administrative faculties. We wanted the program to be Afghan-led for several reasons. One reason was to minimize on language and cultural barriers between students and instructors; another was to show the students educated role models from amongst their own countrymen. Putting the training onus on the Afghan instructors also forced the staff to implement their own chain of command as well as develop their own leadership skills. In the long-run, this model would ease the transition to total autonomy.



Nine Afghan instructors receive curriculum training from a Coalition Force engineer

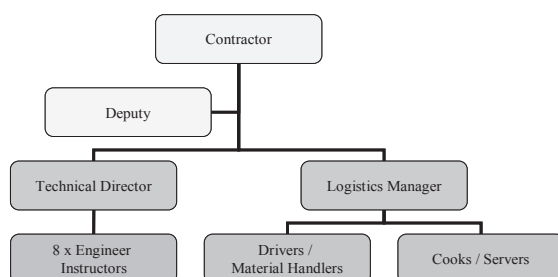


Diagram of Contractor's Chain of Command

To maximize government involvement, the Paktika Provincial Governor reviewed and approved the training initiative and delegated the advertisement and student recruitment to his Director of Social Work and Labor. This director would be responsible to pass on the compiled list to the contracted all-Afghan instructor team who then would provide the students with free lodging, food, transportation, take-home safety equipment and tools, materials, and most importantly, invaluable training for the duration of the course.

From September 2008 through February 2009, vertical construction training took place on FOB Sharana primarily to provide a secure training site for students and instructors and to allow the CMO Shop to provide constant technical and administrative guidance to the ESDW staff. During this time, the staff executed two carpentry, one masonry, one electrical, one plumbing, one foreman, and one contractor (revised from being called "sub-contractor") classes. In after action reviews, students surprisingly commented that they desired longer courses with more exposure to practical construction. They provided recommendations of additional subjects to teach such as furniture-making, insulation, generator repair, shower installation, steelwork, and materials testing.

From October through November 2008, the horizontal ESDW took place both on and off the FOB. A total of 22 students participated in these workshops led by 1 technical director engineer and 11 skilled operator instructors. The operator students spent 16 days learning how to operate heavy equipment to include the

dozer, grader, roller, water truck, and bucket loader, and then another 5 days on a road capstone project for the Sharana bazaar. The ensuing foreman class ran for 15 days continuing to execute road and land upgrades around the city. Combining construction training with urban development projects spurred the conception of implementing this practice in the vertical ESDW, as well. Not only would this benefit the city, it would also give the students a sense of civic pride.

Meanwhile as the months continued, it became apparent that the vertical engineer instructors, though technically savvy, lacked sufficient practical construction experience. Upon the engineers' request, in January 2009 we augmented the training team with eight skilled tradesmen, two from each trade. Henceforth, each engineer was paired with a tradesman analogous to a platoon leader and platoon sergeant relationship. After integrating the new staff, to include a second technical director, it became the natural course of action to divide up the instructors and execute two simultaneous skilled trade courses at one time in order to maintain an ideal 1:4 instructor to student ratio as well as generate geometric growth of the ESDW program.

In February 2009, I met with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Capacity Development Advisor in Kabul to cross-talk on the ESDW program in Paktika and the Construction Training Center in Kunar. I took away instructional material needed for extending the duration of the classes and my counterpart took away the tiered-training model to skills development. Back in Sharana, the vertical workshop engineers got to work incorporating the new material into their existing training plan and identifying civic projects for practical training. The new program, scheduled to go into effect in June, would implement a reverse-tiered training approach fit into a semester period with a majority of time dedicated to executing community development needs.

Evolved Concept

Number Students Each Class	Course	Months											
		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
12	Contractor	x 2 classes					x 2 classes						
16	Foreman (vert)		x 2 classes					x 2 classes					
32	Carpentry												
32	Electrical												
32	Masonry												
32	Plumbing												
12	Foreman (horiz)												
30	Operator (horiz)												
Number Students By Month		24	56	132	138	138	66	56	132	138	138	42	

Enroll into AUoA Const Mgmt Program

Re-enter workforce

In the midst of planning curriculum changes, the month of April signified a critical milestone for the vertical ESDW: the movement of the training site from the FOB into Sharana City. A temporary classroom site was provided under the kindness of the Director of Tribal Affairs. In exchange for the use of his compound and building, the ESDW staff and students would upgrade his site. This move into the provincial capital allowed for greater accessibility to the populace who would otherwise have been afraid to come onto the FOB. In addition, the physical transition signified a crucial step that the ESDW instructors took towards autonomy.

April also marked the beginning of the second round of horizontal workshops. The contract implemented the reverse-tiered, semester program with the first 21 days of training dedicated to foremen followed by 66 days of joint foreman and operator collaboration. Equipment familiarization took place on the FOB for the first month and the practical roadwork projects began in June. The contractor's design engineer had met with the Sharana Mayor to identify and prioritize which dirt roads to repair and upgrade to gravel.

Current Statistics

As of 21MAY09, 192 Afghans have graduated from the ESDW, 178 from the vertical classes and 22 from horizontal (8 of whom were also vertical graduates). A total of 238 certificates have been presented which includes the 20% of students who returned for additional courses. The ages of students range between 15 to 60 years with an average of 20.2. Graduates have possessed an average of nine years in the work force but only three years of formal schooling. Only 40% of the labor students have been literate hence the impetus to improve their handiwork skills. Foremen and contractor students, in order to be capable supervisors, are required to be able to read and write in order to enroll. Fifty four percent of the graduates are married with an average household size of 12.3 per student, making secondary benefits available to over 2300 family members. Although tracking students after they graduate is difficult, with figures coming from KBR and word-of-mouth, it is safe to presume that 40% of graduates receive a job immediately after course completion.

In the nine months that the vertical ESDW has been running, \$1.08 million dollars have been injected into the local Afghan economy through the purchase of tools, equipment, materials and the provision of salaries for 32 employees. Total expenditures for the Fall 2008 horizontal ESDW came to \$394,796 to include cost of 13 pieces of rented heavy equipment, salaries for 23 employees, and gravel. The current horizontal ESDW, scheduled to run from mid April through November 2009 is contracted for a bit over \$1.5 million.

Way Ahead

Currently, the focus is on shifting from the short training sessions to the semester program. In June, the contractor class is set to begin with 21 days of theoretical work, followed by 21 days of joint training with the vertical foreman class and another 21 days of joint training with the horizontal foreman class. We designed this concept to give contractors enough field time in both vertical and horizontal disciplines to practice their planning and supervisory skills. The vertical foreman class, after its initial three weeks of hands-on construction, will then go on to train and supervise the follow-on labor students – either masonry and plumbing or carpentry and electrical – for another 76 days. In total, contractors will receive 63, vertical foremen 97, vertical laborers 76 days, horizontal foremen 87, and heavy equipment operators 66 days of training. The extended duration meets the requests of the students as well as follows the USAID model. Student stipends matching unskilled labor wages serve to alleviate enrollees of the worry of lost earnings.

The long-term vision is to affirm Sharana as the education and trades training hub of eastern Afghanistan. To make this happen, the intent is to build a permanent construction school in the provincial capital. The Mayor has donated land for the center, however ground-breaking is not set to begin until enrollment is consistent and interest spreads. This may take another year to ascertain.

Additionally, CTF Castle, 420th Engineer Brigade, began talks with a couple of American universities to develop a two year construction management degree program for contractors. The idea was to send exceptional students, engineers, and existing contractors to Kabul for further study in an emerging Construction Management Major at the American University of Afghanistan. When CTF Castle redeployed in March 2009, this initiative was passed on to the incoming unit, CTF Storm, 168th Engineer Brigade.

Although currently there is collaboration between the Afghan government and Coalition Forces, the ultimate goal for the ESDW is to be a self-sustaining entity that continues to shine as a beacon of progress for the people of Paktika. With the provincial government having very limited funds, it seems as if appeal has to be directed at the national ministerial levels. Some suggestions have been to request support from the Ministries of Education, Social Work and Labor, Rural Rehabilitation and Development, or Transportation. Another viable consideration is requesting financial support from the Ministry of Defense in exchange for training ANA engineer soldiers in a program having semblance to US Army Advanced Individual Training.

The Orissa Society of the Americas: Winner of the Distinguished Oriya Award for 2009

Sri Manaranjan Pattanayak - A Man of Rice, a Man of Steel

By
Saradindu Misra



If a few decades ago I had predicted that a barely educated rice farmer in village Menda, near Sonepur, Dist. Bolangir, will one day be advising countries like Austria, Hungary, Mexico, Zambia on their steel industries as a UN expert, and would be offered the position of U. N. Commissioner of Steel for Africa, I would have been carted away to the asylum. That person is real and I am happy to learn that Sri Manaranjan Pattanayak has been selected for the Distinguished Oriya Award of the Orissa Society of the Americas for 2009 which he richly deserves.

Education

His education has been different from virtually every Oriya immigrant to US and Canada. Due to the untimely death of his mother in early childhood he became rebellious, ran away from home, but managed to complete school. He became a farmer in 1952. He moved away from farming, worked at the Rourkela Steel plant, and after stints in Germany, he came to Canada in 1969. He worked for several companies and then decided to study at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada as an advanced mature student. In 1974 he was awarded his first (and only) university degree, B. Eng.

Professional Career

Following Carleton University, he joined the Steel Company of Canada as a Senior Project Engineer. In 1981 he moved onto US Steel, Fairless Works, in Pennsylvania. From 1984 he was an expert consultant on Iron and Steel for UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation). He worked for the U.N. from 1985 to 1994 and was assigned to study scores of sick steel mills, in the brink of extinction, in Mexico, Eastern Europe and Africa. With his expertise, he revived dozens of ailing steel mills in the above countries and turned them to profitable businesses. After the UNIDO assignment he worked as a consultant to a Mexican steel company at Monclova. By the time he retired, he had become a foremost expert on blast furnace design and construction and in large project management. During his UNIDO days he was asked to be the Steel Commissioner for Africa, with an office in Nigeria. Manaranjan declined, because a permanent move would have forced Dr. Minati Pattanayak (Mini Apa to just about everyone) to close down her practice as a Family Physician in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Kalinga Hospital

A group of Oriya doctors, around that time, acquired land in Bhubaneswar and started to build the Kalinga Hospital. However, due to the lack of project management expertise among the principals, construction of the hospital had halted halfway. The project was on the brink of collapse due to undercapitalisation. Manaranjan took charge of the Kalinga Hospital project, with no salary or travel costs and saw the project to completion, and saw the first patients admitted. He was also instrumental in securing a loan from the Government of Orissa to the tune of Rupees Two Crores for the completion of the project.

By 2000, Kalinga Hospital emerged as the only multi-specialty hospital in Orissa, the only one with an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Now that Kalinga Hospital has demonstrated that it is possible to run a state-of-the-art hospital in Orissa, other hospitals are under construction. The Kalinga Hospital is a monument not only to the dreams of a group of expatriate Oriya physicians, but also to the spirit of a steelmaker. I nominate this man for the Distinguished Oriya Award (and admire Minati) for placing their life on hold until the hospital was completed. Think of any other Oriya couple in US or Canada where the husband worked long and hard, taking no salary and spending money from his own pocket, so that the hospital would be completed. Minati also sacrificed in enduring months and months of loneliness, and the absence of a consortia spouse.

Service to OSA

Perhaps the greatest of his achievement are Manaranjan's contributions to the Oriya community in US and Canada. Manaranjan was a founder member of the Orissa Society of the Americas. During his stay in Canada, he (with Pratap Patnaik) started the famous weekend get together of Canadian Oriyas in cottages by the Rice Lake. Lots of fun activities took place during a long summer weekend. In addition to typical Oriya and India cultural and sports activities, many immigrant Oriyas saw rural cottage country life for the first time, including typical North American past times of boating and fishing. The fame of delicious authentic Oriya *bhoji* cooked outdoors, coupled with excellent songs and drama spread across US and Canada. Soon Oriyas from Alabama, California, Florida, New York, Michigan, D.C., etc. were joining the Canadians.

In the 80s many Canada Oriyas, including Manaranjan, immigrated to the US. The 'Canadian Oriya' culture of the summer weekend cottage event, started by Manaranjan, spread to other OSA chapters. Manaranjan and Minati settled in Yardley, PA, and promptly revitalised the local OSA chapter, including the 'summer weekend at the lakeside cottage' tradition.

In 1984, he was elected to become the President of the then OSANY (New York Chapter of OSA). During his tenure as the president of OSANY, he hosted the 1984 Convention in the historic Glassboro in New Jersey. He was also the Convener of the OSA Convention in Pomona, New Jersey in 1994. In both of those conventions, Manaranjan raised the standards of the conventions. Cultural programs in large well equipped auditorium, comfortable lodgings in college campuses were his pride

Other Community Service

During his association with OSANY, Manaranjan was instrumental, along with late Dr. K.M.Das, in persuading the OSANY members to set up endowed scholarship programs in the three universities of Orissa – Utkal, Berhampur and Sambalpur. For the last 20 years or so OSANY scholarships are being awarded to the best graduates of the three universities. Neither the national OSA nor any other chapter has been able to set up any endowed scholarship.

Minati and Manaranjan have indefatigable fundraisers for OSA, not only regularly donating money to the OSA, but persuading pharmaceutical companies to donate for the community activities of OSA and SEEDS.

Cultural

Manaranjan is a man of culture and has been associated with all the cultural activities of OSA. He took part in various dramas that were being staged during the Conventions, the culmination of which took place in the OSA Convention of 2003, where he played the role of Chandramani Babu in Fakir Mohan's immortal classic "Patent Medicine". His performance was hilarious and was liked so much that he was invited to encore the piece in Dallas Convention, the following year.

Manaranjan's involvement with stage is expert and instinctive. At countless OSA conventions or local chapter meets he is called upon for technical problems with stage, curtains, lights, sound etc. He is also a good stage manager, and an excellent prompter. But with a few hints, a little practice, he can act and give life to stage characters, particularly those that portray his early life in the village as a farmer. Strange that after the years spent around the sweltering blast furnace and then as an expert in the steel industry, he has not portrayed a factory worker.

In Summary

Manaranjan Pattanayak is a remarkable self-made man. In this biographical sketch I have painted an image of Manaranjan. It is a true image, but not a complete one. The portrait of Manaranjan is whole only with his true *sahadharmini* and *ardhangini*, Minati. Even as I admire the man and what he has achieved, I admire even more Manaranjan and Minati as a couple, so supportive and complimentary of each other. Minati appears as a meek housewife, but in reality she is a steel magnolia, a perfect match for the *stahlmann* (German for man of steel).

Queen Gundicha, an Epitome of Sacrifice

By
Pritinanda Panda

Lord Jagannath is probably very dear to all of us. Jagannath as his name suggests is truly the Lord of the Universe. He has attained a special place in the heart of all his dear devotees from all around the world. We always have a strong desire to have a glimpse of the Lord and his siblings at their eternal abode, which is the famous Sri Mandir on the banks of the Bay of Bengal. The temple is also known as the famous Jagannath Puri temple.

We should be thankful to the Lord, as we are back from his holy land, the land of Jagannath. Whenever we get a chance, we visit the Jagannath Puri temple. After seeing the lord we attain solace and a peace of mind. Worship of the Lord is going on since long back, even from Satya Yuga onwards. In Satya Yuga, King Indradyumna and Queen Gundicha Devi were ardent devotees of Lord Vishnu. They had a selfless desire to build a magnificent temple completely dedicating to the Lord. There were lot of obstacles on the way, but with Lord's mercy, the king could overcome them joyfully. Because of the strong desire and pure devotion of the royal couple, the Lord decided to manifest in his Chaturdha Murti form in the temple premises. Lord Brahma and all other demigods from the heavenly planets participated in the deities' installation ceremony.

King Indradyumna and his queen were enjoying each moment blissfully worshipping the lordships. They had only one desire, to serve the Lord sincerely. Everyone including Lord Brahma and other heavenly figures were pleased to see the devotion of the king and queen. They knew only because of the royal couple, they are getting a heavenly pleasure after seeing the lord in this beautiful form. Lord Jagannath became pleased and asked the royal couple for any divine boon or blessing.

Queen Gundicha could have asked anything to fulfill her desire. Instead, she requested the Lord to grant them a boon so that they can stay childless the entire life. The Queen had a strong moral behind this wish. She knew that in future, the sons and grandsons of her dynasty might proclaim a demand on the deities or on the temple. They might feel proud that our father or ancestors have built this temple. They might expect their own glorification and praises from others, who knows they might think they are the owner of the temple and the deities. All these will adverse the affect of the noble cause, which is to worship the Lord Jagannath by every one from a true heart. The famous Orissan poet Krushna Das has nicely described this in his literacy work.

*Tume Jebe Bara deba Maguacchi Muhin
Mohara Bansare Kehi Na thibe Gosain
Putra Nati Bolibe Je Deula Ambhara
Ambhara Boile Dharma Jiba Je Mohara ||
--Poet Krushna Das, Deula Tola*

This kind of sacrifice is rarely seen anywhere. Can we ever think of this type of sacrifice in our life? We plan for our child in numerous ways, 5-year plan, 529 plan, college plan etc. Even, before our child and grandchild are born, we think about them, save resources for their future, open fixed account and what not. We plan so many things for them even in our dream. We claim that our kids will carry forward our name and will pay homage to us after our death. Apart from this, any noble work, we do, we tend to analyze before doing it. The first question comes, what are we going to get out of this? Is there any benefit or reward, which my family and I will get? Will I get any accolade and is this giving me any kind of public visibility. If Queen Gundicha had thought in those lines, then Lord Jagannath culture would have taken a different shape. Hardly have we rendered any service from our heart.

Lord Jagannath is Antaryami. He knows very well, what lies in our heart. He is the owner of the whole universe. Everything belongs to Him, what can we offer to him that belongs to us? We can only offer our true devotion and self less service at his lotus feet. Lord Jagannath always reciprocates, as he is

BhabaGrahi. If we serve him from our heart without any desire, he will definitely shower his choicest blessings on us. This is for sure, His choice and selection will be better than our choice.

As per Queen Gundicha's desire, Lord Jagannath granted the boon. As per the boon, there were no offspring to carry forward the king and queen's family tree. There was no one to pay annual homage or Shradha after his or her demise. Lord was overwhelmed with such sacrifice. He promised, from that day onwards, He would be like a son to queen Gundicha. As a part of his promise, every year during Deva Deepavali festival, Lord Jagannath as an obedient son offers Deeyas to Queen Gundicha and King Indradyumna. Lord offers his annual homage as Vamana Deva to Aditi and Kashyapa of Staya Yuga, as Lord SriRam to Koushalya and Dashrath of Treta Yuga, as Lord SriKrishna to Devaki and Vasudeva of Dwapara Yuga and as Lord Jagannath to Gundicha and Indradyumna of Kali Yuga.

After a mother, the true affection and love to a child comes from the aunt or Mausi (Mother's sister). Mausi holds a special place in a family. We always share a close relation and bond in our lives. From that day onwards, Gundicha became Mausi of Lord Jagannath. As a reciprocation of Gundicha's love, every year Lord Jagannath spends around a week at his Mausi's place after Rath Yatra. Gundicha Temple in Puri is also called 'Mausi Maa Mandir'.

Pritinanda Panda lives New Jersey with daughter Surabhi and husband Hemanta.

Orissa Society of the Americas

40th Annual Convention

2nd-5th July 2009, New Jersey

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FOOD

"A WAY TO A MAN'S HEART IS THROUGH HIS STOMACH" A delicious message conveyed to all Oriyas by their dear Great God Lord Jagannath. To please the greatest culinary connoisseur runs the busiest kitchen and the largest cafeteria of the world "Ahanda Bazaar" gloriously spreading a simple logic and a great science "A pleased stomach builds pleased mind. A pleased mind builds a joyous soul to sing n dance in ecstasy."

Food has always been integral part of our Oriya culture. Being in North America, we easily ignored the "diet" word from our dictionary. When it comes to New York & New Jersey, things go beyond all measuring stick with varieties of ethnic & fusion food.

Our food team has selected food items from different cuisines including Oriya, North Indian, South Indian, Indo-Chinese, Gujarati, and Italian to provide 40 unique dishes for the 40th OSA Convention. Some of the highlights are to prepare food onsite for freshness, Live food stations and special kids menu items.

About Restaurant & Caterers

RASOI is proud to present the finest in Indian Cuisine in New York and New Jersey for years. They are the star in the restaurant and catering business because of their knowledge and expertise. RASOI is happy to be part of OSA family and doing their best to serve you at 40th OSA Convention. [RASOI Web Site](#)

Meal Schedule

	Thursday, July 2 nd	Friday, July 3 rd	Saturday, July 4 th
BREAKFAST (HOTEL, 7:00 AM - 9:00 AM)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continental Breakfast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continental Breakfast
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lemon Fish Fry Achari Chicken Mixed Vegetable Jalfrezi Gobi, Karela, & Bean Tawa Bhaji 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mustard Fish Curry Chicken Curry Saag with crushed badi Aloo Parvat Kau Paneer Caedicum

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A Fateful Day in India's History

By
Rashmi Ranjan Pati

Swamiji is unusually silent today. On and off, he turns his head and looks, when someone interrupts the silence. He listens intently and then smiles. Occasionally he points towards his throat and gestures that he is unable to speak. Today, the usual notebook is even missing - so there is no written instruction being passed to anyone. Sometimes he goes to a deep trance. Sometimes, he just is submerged in a deep thoughtful state. But, all this while though his face reflects a certain state of calmness.

As dusk approaches, the garden in front of Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa Deva's kashipur ashram looks golden from reflecting the final caresses of the evening Sun. The setting Sun is also visible from Swamiji's room. It appears as though, the Sun is waiting for his permission before bidding adieu. Swamiji looked at the setting Sun, then after a brief silence, gestures to summon Narendra. After Narendra enters the room, he indicates others to leave them alone.

Narendra closes the door behind him and takes a seat beside him. "Sit on padmasana and meditate", Swamiji instructs Narendra. Narendra takes his seat and looks eagerly at him. "Close your eyes and meditate", is his simple instruction to a bemused Narendra.

Before he closes his eyes, Narendra notes that Swamiji is preparing to go into samadhi. As usual, after Narendra closes his eyes, his external senses get into a state of numbness. But, before he loses consciousness, he realizes, the experience is distinctly different from other days. The flow of electric current in his body is not something he had not experienced before, but in all those previous occasions, he felt that the flow of electricity originated within him. However, today – this current is entering his body from the outside and energizing his body. He was certainly not moving towards Samadhi but into unconsciousness. Narendra is tempted to open his eyes and find for himself what is happening. Why is Swamiji doing this to me? But today, his body is not in his control any more. He is neither able to open or close his own eyes at will. His eyes feel frail and feeble.

When he comes back to consciousness from this unusual state, he remembers that Swamiji had asked him to meditate. However, what is this – he did not feel like he came back from meditation – he is coming back from unconsciousness.

Narendra clearly remembers that fateful day when he had come to Dakshineswar. Swamiji had touched his body with his right feet. He vividly remembers that he had been to the same strange state that he finds himself in today. On that occasion, Narendra was unable to understand why Swamiji did that. It was someone's feet that touched his body, but what kind of touch was this? His body quivered. In his wide-open eyes, he could see the walls of the room disappearing into a thin air. He felt as if his ego melting with the all-pervading nothingness. He was worried. He had screamed, "What are you doing Swamiji? Am I dying? I want to live - I have my parents at home to take care of".

Swamiji had broken into a loud laughter. It was, as if he was enjoying the prank with a little kid. He had taken Narendra's hand and fondly massaged his chest. He remarked to Narendra's bewilderment - "So we will stop here. No need to do it all at once – everything will happen in its due course". Things returned to normalcy after that. Nothing extraordinary happened after that – although Narendra kept wondering, "When will that time come, what is Swamiji going to do and what was going to happen".

Narendra vaguely attempts to piece the experience in today's context – it all seems to fall into a jigsaw. Narendra might have gone on forever trying to untangle the threads of mystery, but just then, a loving voice calls out – "Naren!" He sees Swamiji is lying motionless on his bed. Swamiji was not asleep - it is as though he is unable to get up – he looks tired and exhausted. Slowly Narendra regains his consciousness. He is thinking to himself – what happened to Swamiji? What is this? Swamiji's eyes are tearful.

Narendra asks, "Swamiji? What happened?"

Swamiji does not attempt to hide his tears – neither does he try to conceal his emotion. In a stuffed voice he says – "Naren! Today, I transferred to you everything I had in my possession. My entire life, whatever I had earned from my life's sadhana, I surrendered to you. Go conquer and win back the cultural pride of this country. Get this sleeping civilization its rightful respect and position at the top. The divine mother, who lived in this body, will henceforth live within you. The divine mother will awaken the consciousness of this country through you".

Time proved this later. The extraordinary powers of Swamiji found expression through Narendra's (whom the world knows today as Vivekananda) tireless quest. His work and achievement brought back the past glory of India, motivated a generation of nation builders and beckoned the start of a new era.

Rashmi Ranjan Pati lives in New Jersey with wife Sasmita and children – Swaha and Swagat.

The Birthday Gift

By
Arati Nanda Pati

Once there was a little boy lived in Houston. He was very handsome and smart. He was the only child of his parents. His parents were very rich and highly educated. Both of them loved him very much. While mother cooked the most delicious and healthy food, father bought the expensive and popular toys for him. He was the happiest boy in the city. Gradually, he grew older. He started going to school. Both parents tried their best to fulfill him with their own acquired knowledge. Mother took some time off from her work to prepare the best recipe both for her son's brain and tummy. Similarly, father took off the weekends to spend some quality time with his growing child. In the evening he told nice goodie-goodie stories. Life was smooth and beautiful for the boy. One day he noticed something strange. Mother was screaming at father in the kitchen. Father was also shouting at the same pitch. He was scared but did not understand so just ignored. It happened again. After some time it became a usual routine. They screamed at each other in front of him. He took pause and started thinking seriously why adults fight?

It was his fifth birthday. He had a nice birthday celebration with his classmates and teacher at school during the day. In the evening mother cooked his most favorite dish for dinner. Even if he had eaten this dish thousand times before still mother's hand cooked food was always his favorite and new. Dad brought 10 gifts from Toy's R US. He picked up a Spiderman decorated chocolate cake from Randalls while returning from work. Both parents took their own pride silently for the birthday preparation.

In the evening by the dinning table both Mom and Dad sang "Happy Birthday to you..." to him.

"Honey! I love you so much," said Mom and kissed on his left cheek.

"Honey! I love you too very much," said Dad and kissed on his right cheek.

Suddenly, tears rolled on the little boy's cheeks.

"What happed, Little Angel?" Mom and Dad cried anxiously.

"Is there something wrong? Did somebody hurt you at school?" They asked curiously.

"You both love me so much" replied the boy while choking with tears,

"but you do not know what I love the most."

"I am scared and do not want to lose both of you, Mom and Dad",

"Will you please promise me the gift that you will never fight again?" pleaded the birthday boy.

Arati, a mathematician lives in Houston with husband Debananda and son Saswat.

Message of Bhagavat Gita

By
Dhiren Das

As a human being, three questions arise in our mind. The first question, “Who Am I?” The second question, “What is the purpose of my life?” The third question, “How do I reach the purpose of my life?” These are not just my questions but these are actually the eternal questions of all mankind.

Srimad Bhagavat Gita has the resources for giving the answers to these eternal questions of mankind. In the contemplative writings on Gita, it has been written:

“SARBOPANISHADO GABO DOGDHO GOPALANADANA”
“PARTHA BATCHHA SUDHIBHOKTA DUGHDHA GEETAMRITAM MAHAT”

The above stanza says that if all the Upanishads are like a cow, Lord Krishna is like a Cowherd boy milking this vast ocean of spiritual knowledge from the Upanishads. The nectar of milk He is collecting is for distribution to the wise seekers like us.

While growing up, we as human beings develop four kinds of fears. They are the following– fear of losing wealth; fear of losing fame; fear of losing health and finally fear of losing life. All these fears are based on the belief that we are essentially our physical body.

To eliminate the fear and to destroy our ignorance, Lord Krishna tells us clearly in Gita that we cannot be our physical body. We are actually ATMA or Self and we are actually the owners of our body. We are essentially beginning-less and endless and happen to be in a physical body which is temporary. The following verse from Gita explains–

DEHINOSHMIN YATHA DEHE KAUMARAM YAUBANAM JARAA
TATHA DEHANTAR PRAPTI DHIRASTATRA NA MUHYANTI -Gita.2.13.

Just like the ATMA passes into childhood, youth and old age. He also passes with another body after death. Therefore the wise persons should not get distressed. To emphasize the eternal relation between HIM and us, HE again tells ARJUNA –

AHAM ATMA GUDAKESNA SARBA BHUTASHAYASTHITA
AHAM ADINCHA MADHVANCHA BHUTANAM ANTA EVA CHA -Gita.10.20.

I am the Self O’ ARJUNA, seated in the heart of beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all beings.

When we realize, that we are ATMA we transcend all kind of fears as all fears are based on body consciousness. We also come to know experientially that we are ATMA and get the answer to the first question, who am I?

Now what is the purpose of our life? In the spiritual journey, we learn that the nature of ATMA is Consciousness. It is also non-changing and all pervading and lacks beginning or end. Its essential nature is ANANDA or unending happiness or bliss. In Sanskrit, it is defined as “Satchitananda”.

The reason we all are seeking happiness in our life and all our life is that we all are pursuing our essential nature – ANANDA. All our education, job, business, material pursuits and family life are supposed to give us happiness. Instead we get temporary happiness or unhappiness. Sooner or later we come to the realization that only true happiness and peace of mind can only be achieved by seeking HIM alone. The reason we are all seeking Him whether we know or not, that we are all part of HIM and to emphasize that part, He says.

“ISWARA SARBABHUTANAM
BHRAMAYAN SARBABHUTANI

HRIDESARJUNA TISHTATI
YANTRARUDHANI MAYAYA” -Gita Chapter 18, Verse 61.

The Lord dwells in the heart of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His elusive power to revolve as if mounted on a machine.

Finally, the question arises, how I reach the ultimate purpose of life to reach HIM. The answer happens to be possibly the most confidential teaching of the entire Gita.

“MANMANA BHABA MADBHAKTO
MAM EVA ASU SATYAM TE

MADYAJI MAM NAMASKURU
PRATIJANE PRIYOSI ME. - Gita Chapter 18, Verse 65

This verse assures the Seeker – You shall reach me by doing the following.

FIX YOUR MIND UPON ME.
SACRIFICE FOR ME.

BE DEVOTED TO ME.
BOW DOWN TO ME.

Man Mana Bhaba means to absorb your mind and heart on the Lord. By unceasing devotion this can only be possible. First and foremost there must be Sraddha or faith in the Lord. By continuously reciting the name ,by meditating on the form of the Lord or the formless form, by thinking about the qualities and phenomenal pastimes of the Supreme Lord. This happens to be the most exalted form of worship of all.

The only way we can achieve this by purified heart of something very special, something very wonderful, in the presence of loving devotion. Therefore, Lord Krishna says –

“Do your duty to the best of your abilities for ME without any selfish motive and remember ME at all times before starting work, at the completion of a task and while inactive.”

Practice to look upon all beings as MYSELF in thought, word, and deed.

The power of Lord is within you at all times and is constantly doing all the work using you as a mere instrument.

I am the all pervading Supreme Lord who exists everywhere in everything and at all times.

By pursuing the path of devotion, we are sure to get the divine grace which will enable us to experience the Divine Consciousness, our eternal purpose of life.

Dr. Dhiren Das is cardiologist and lives in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey.



The Model Home

By
Rupali Hota

The chilly fall wind had blown the leaves everywhere and the tree stood bare trying to shield its nakedness. Just a minute ago, it was beautifully wrapped in the red and yellow colored splendor and now there is nothing. A recycling bin and a garbage can were its only companions on the lonely street corner where a big bold sign was placed in front of the larger than life model home. "Price Reduced", it said. The home was striking in an unsightly way. It was very brown and very large and looked a bit smug in its status. Even the breeze went around it to reveal in the sights of the beautifully landscaped backyard with the fire pit and the meticulously planted flower beds. It had taken a month or even more to put together this amazing feat of labor and it showed. But Naima hated it.

Naima was a middle aged Muslim housewife who lived next door to the sights and sounds of the model home. Her husband, Afzal, was a pleasant and lazy man who made a living selling New Zealand lamb and organic chicken in a tiny smelly store on the wrong side of the town. Naima herself worked behind the counter, saving money on hiring extra employees while her husband listened to the music of the machine grating and cutting through the gristle and the bone of the meat and packed them swiftly in little bags to hand them over. It was after fifteen years of living in a one room apartment in a shoddy neighborhood where homeless hobos rummaged through the garbage for food and cigarette stubs that they had put away enough money to out down for a home in this upper class community. It had its own park and not to mention, a man-made lake with duck and geese swimming in it. An ordinary life coupled with a barren womb had held her back keeping her aloof and remote in her grief. Moving into her own home made her feel alive again. She went for long walks in the drizzle that always kept Seattle green and lush and sat on a bench next to the lake, listening to the throaty croaking of the frogs, seemingly immune to the rain falling on her head. People ran and jogged by her, wondering at the brown lady sitting in the rain, busy with their schedules and their appointments, too busy to stop their pace. She doesn't mind. Her eyes were too busy absorbing the tranquility of the scene, a far cry from her cramped and smelly workplace. Her home in the neighborhood was beautiful too. They bought it when it just a piece of land and had personally chosen the finish and colors of the house. It was the end of a deep struggle and was their heaven after a long and tired day of rank odors and thankless customers. Her favorite part of the day was to escape to her big bathroom and take a hot bath in the jetted tub with fragrant bath salts. The woman suppressed by the grind and bustle of mundane life turned into a water nymph, electrifying and seductive in her abandonment to this simple pleasure.

Soon her views from the bathroom window got darker and to her dismay, a very sizable home next door seemed to have blocked the lake. The model home was built with great speed to attract future customers and had been adorned with every upgrade there was to offer. Her bath time shortened and the smells from the bottles of bath salt fell flat. 'All these years and all this work and she couldn't even be in her favorite place in peace now'. Afzal loved his evening in his new home. Their lonely and isolated lives had new warmth as he waited for Naima to come out of her bath everyday, looking oh so happy and fresh! They would then eat their dinner in bed together, watching the Indian channels she so enjoyed, their bodies touching each other, radiating camaraderie. They had no children, an unspoken sadness between them for years, finally taken over by their new baby, their dream home. But Naima seemed to have become moody lately and did not seem too eager to come back home from work and it worried him. He would see her looking out of the bathroom window listlessly, playing with her graying hair; staring at the brown walls of the home next to theirs. This new house had been her child and he had thought she was happy. May be he was wrong. He sighed, muted by the silent melancholy that always surrounded their life.

Every morning before work, Naima would go into the model home and wish the realtor in her beautifully decorated office. The real estate market had crashed but the realtor was there unfailingly, convincing the diminishing trickle of potential buyers of the rebounding economy and the good investments to be made by

buying a home. Naima saw the realtor's confident smile getting brittle every day, shadowed by an ailing mother in the nursing home and rising dry cleaning costs of her branded work clothes. Naima entered the house everyday and after greeting the realtor, took her customary tour around the house to see new upgrades. She never got tired of looking at the warm tiles in the bath room; the bedroom turned into a theatre room and of course, her all time favorite, the television in the mirror of the bathroom!!! The rich furnishings and trimmings of the model home titillated and angered her and she would go work with a vengeance in their little shop, counting out money and tallying receipts, her eyes filled with faraway yearning.

The week after, everything changed. As she entered the model home, the realtor was unusually busy, not bothering to look up at Naima, who had become the crazy Indian lady fixture of the day. "It seems like your morning routine will be different from next week," she said, busily chewing on her acrylic nails. "Why is that?" Naima asked confusedly. "Are you not going to be here anymore?" 'May be her mother is really ill', thought Naima to herself, saddened by her realization. "No, I will not be. I have just sold the home and the new owners will be here." The realtor seemed animated as she told Naima the details oblivious to the pinched look on her face. 'That's it. Life was so unfair. Now she won't even be able to come in and enjoy the ambience anymore. Now she would have to be in her bathroom sans the window view looking at this gargantuan house from outside.' Not bothering to say farewell, Naima rushed out, rubbing angry tears which threatened to escape. The realtor looked after her retreating figure thoughtfully, thinking about how lucky she was to get that commission to pay for her mother's nursing home bills.

The week passed in a blur and the movers came and went. The garbage bin started being put outside the house on Thursdays and the big bold sign came off. The new neighbors left cookies at Naima and Afzal's doorstep to say hello and decorated their windows with colorful drapes. Naima stopped her usual stopover at the model home in the mornings. She would stare disdainfully at the trikes and Krazz scooters left outside the house by the children. Her house looked desolate, no toys peppering the sidewalk and no chalk drawings on the driveway. As night fell, she would take her customary bath and eat dinner quietly with her tired husband and then she would leave the warm bed and step out for a walk in the crisp black night. Standing next to the model home, she looked around furtively. Knowing all the people would be in bed by that late hour, she would walk around the house into the backyard and sit next to the fire pit, looking at the stars, not daunted by the fact that she was trespassing. Afzal could see her from the bathroom window and stole secret glances at the face of the woman who he had been with for years. Naima never saw him, wrapped in her own sadness like the bare and naked tree standing out in the front of their yard.

Late Rupali Hota was a popular and charming member of the Oriya community in Seattle, Washington for seven years until her death on December 15, 2008.

An extraction from "Orissa Battles for Swaraj" by D D Pattanaik

...The Iram incident is most heart touching, which is compared with the Jallianawallabagh massacre of 1919. At Iram village of Balasore district six thousand people of 25 villages assembled before the palace of the Zamindar on 28 September 1942 in protest against his exploitation and capricious rule. It was held with prior notice to the administration. The people assembled there, declared themselves as '*Marana Sena*' and the ground of congregation was made known as '*Marana Kshetra*'. 130 rounds of firing were shot instantly to the unprovoked unarmed people. The Collector reported that 25 to 30 people died in the firing. But Surendranath Dwivedi, who was an eye witness there, reported that 35 persons had been killed....

Competition Imperative: Metropolis through Man

By

Satyendra and Leena Jenamani

Seeing New York from above the sky in downtown Manhattan is an astounding experience. Beneath the haze stirred up by the winds, this urban island lifts up skyscrapers over Wall Street, sinks down at Greenwich then rises again to the crests of mid town, quietly passes over to central park and finally undulates off beyond Harlem. A wave of verticals, its agitation is momentarily arrested by vision. The gigantic mass is immobilized before the eyes. It is transformed into a texture in which extremes of ambition and degradation, brutal opposition of races and styles, contrasts between yesterday's buildings and recent architectural wonders co-exist. Unlike Rome, New York has never learnt the art of growing old by playing on all its pasts. Its present reinvents itself, from hour to hour in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future. Art and Architecture, Trade and Business, Leisure and Entertainment all vie to win on its turf. Sky scrapers, LED billboards, parks, museums are just a few which prompt emulation by all aspiring urban centers world over. The spectator can read in it a universe that is constantly exploding. On this stage of concrete, steel, glass and light cut between Appalachian and Atlantic, the tallest letters in the world compose a gigantic rhetoric of excess in both expenditure and production. There is an unusual pleasure of seeing this whole, looking down on and totalizing the most immoderate of human endeavors. To be lifted to the summit of Manhattan is to be lifted out of city's grasp. One's body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it by some anonymous law, nor by the nervousness of city traffic.

Down beneath the streets run countless conduits supporting the function of the city above, a subcutaneous circulatory system that is constantly pumping energy and sucking filth out. With a confounding combination of straights, bends, curves, twists and overlaps these oil-gas-water-sewer-fiber optic networks remain de facto lifeline of the city. Further, stout tunnels linking dozens of city nodes on Manhattan and across the river help in transporting residents, visitors and workers. This spaghetti of underground New York is as complex as the engineering and creative process that makes its existence so tall and proud. With most diverse spoken languages New York showcases world as rich, colorful and inspiring. In the last century America showed a great act of leadership and foresight here by inviting and helping the world community to build United Nations. The intention was timely and appropriate for the welfare of nation states and humanity. This kick started an era of global interdependency for peace and growth, political and economic vitality, a shared ground for haves and have-nots. Until very recently American practiced and preached capitalist economy looked like the only viable way to any national prosperity. New York as a metropolis stood as a pillar and a symbol of success. A metropolis is a reflection of not just a nation but of ingrained human values, hope and aspiration beyond its geo-political presence. Is that true for urbanity in general and New York in particular?

Promoting persistence and enterprise, affirming ingenuity and leadership have been hallmarks of New York's greatness. Thousands of world citizens come to see in their eyes what could possibly make this metropolis so different. Some geniuses come to contribute their uniqueness, some become so affected that they make it home; others learn and go back to recreate New York in their homeland. By inspecting a little closer we can see this metropolis has its gloomy side as well. The great spirit of globalization and humane accommodation is imperiled by self indulgent ambition, greed, and a competition to finish one another. A metropolis is like our dream glass house, neighbors envy and owner's pride. Being here we want to see and being seen by rest of the world. In spite of a political brag of being grounded on world's strongest, wealthiest and most enterprising nation, a glass house is indeed fragile. Pioneering effort to set its standard is now challenged by mutually destructive interests from within and outside. Law of competition contains a truth in it. Some competition can be a healthy thing. In business and science, crafts and technology, competition can challenge unwanted monopoly. It can overcome laziness and opposition to creativity. Lately New York City administration is proactively promoting greening of its infrastructure, buildings and business. There is an increasing understanding to consume less energy, adopt reduce-recycle-reuse theory and act responsibility towards nature. Such ideas are fueling competition among world cities towards a low carbon footprint world. Let us examine the other side. If we remember a decade old history

concerning story of supersonic jet liner; The 'Concorde' airplane to transport, titillate or amuse few passengers who can afford to fly, it consumed whopping 110 gallons against 65 gallons per passenger needed for a Boeing 747 on a transatlantic flight. This guzzler was grounded too soon amidst an outcry of its irrelevance. Current censure of American auto-banking-insurance giants is an 'enough is enough' response to profligate capitalism. Scores of other nations were emulating such economic model of mindless consumption and ruthless competition until very recent fallout of economy. Was current recession a genuine global economic failure? Or this was reckless chase of transnational corporate leaders to set higher standards of greed. Competition will always lead to war, for war is but a logical and archetypal symbol of competition. All competition is a kind of war. We are still languishing in the nineteenth century myth of 'competition and survival of the fittest'. So called 'free enterprise' is often implemented in disjointed and unaccountable manner. Average working citizen sees less and less of his rent-fuel-food money. Only the fittest or rather ones with fattest wallet could survive. It is invalid and unsustainable.

As an Institution or an individual, we often try to point certain compulsion in our adherence to undesirable competition. Compulsion is characterized by self-centeredness which ignores others' need and feelings, whether expressed affectively, politically, religiously or cognitively. A drivenness and egoism amounting to gross immaturity dominate such a personality. Experts say, children have a right to a stage of egocentric development until age six, a stage of conformity until twelve, a transition to compassion in adolescence which should later be the norm for mature adulthood. We often choose competition against compassion with a belief that 'competition is natural, without which nothing new would happen'. It is assertiveness not aggressiveness in competition we should look for. We must distinguish and adopt useful, healthy, assertive fundamentals to excel against sick, neurotic aggressiveness that would ultimately sabotage good intention. Greed intoxicated competition leads to destruction. Prime examples are energy giant Enron's fall in 2001 and automobile giant 'General Motors' likely fall this year. Deceitful food manufacturers deliberately use suspicious additive to maximize profit and rule the market. Drug injecting sportsmen desperately want to clinch a medal. Such stories hurt us from time to time.

We seek power to brace ourselves against helplessness, prestige to brace against humiliation and possession to brace against destitution. Unfortunately when these needs are taken at the expense of others, others suffer the loss of their own needs and the result is more pain. Psychologist Karen Horney once mentioned, 'Competition invades a society at every level of action, interaction and self awareness. From its economic center, competition radiates into all other activities and permeates love, social relations and play. Therefore, competition is a problem for everyone in our culture, and it is not surprising to find it an unflinching center of neurotic conflicts'. In love relationships the neurotic tendencies to defeat, subdue and humiliate the partner play an enormous role. The art of loving and relating becomes a battleground carrying poisoned competition. A vicious spiral is created. It contaminates adults to younger generation of the society. Parents want their child to be best in studies, sports, music and dance at all costs.

Anything less is a reason for anger, discontent and frustration. Hindi feature film 'Tare Zamin Par' is an insight to correct our unjustified ambition to be on the top. The anguish of increased competition for grades, school admission, jobs etc., it goes on. The sickness reaches to such a level that one commits suicide, someone else open fires in a public place. A healthy ambition lives with both success and failure unequivocally. It unites and embraces people and their energies. A sickly ambitious person pushes every other out of its way. There is no room for humility or brotherhood; hence it eventually begets isolation and estrangement. This is true for all humanity; No matter whether we operate in a family, as part of an institution or a political-economic decision maker in a metropolis.

Role Reversal

By
Jayasmita Mishra

My 77 year old mother is an intellectual and dignified lady in her own way. She is a great author, a well known literary figure in society and has a whole lot of college degrees to boast. She could achieve all of that, at an age where women rarely attempted to venture College.

Past history, will tell about all the struggles that she has endured to maintain the integrity of our family, the trials and tribulations that she has had to face as she brought us up, almost single handedly.

The best way I would describe her as she is indeed a “Queen”, with a throne made up of sharpened nails. She had access to all possible luxuries that a woman could dream of, but perhaps she was cursed and had no means of enjoying them. My father, a diligent intellectual and highly- reputed lawyer, cared and provided for her but failed to understand the finer aspects of her undemanding life. As the head of a conjugal family, he was engrossed dealing with his other priorities of life as a result of which she was always relegated to the background, made to accommodate to life’s turns and twists, as she wriggled to fit into, every new chapter that opened up on its own. Her inner strength and passion to build up a loving family was so strong that she withstood each and every storm

Making all of us successful for what we are today.....my head bows down with a sense of humility and pride for having been born to such a wonderful - Woman.

As far as her image to me goes, simplicity is her jewel, always clad in a white sari, she bears herself with great self – esteem. Simple living and high thinking has always been her motto. With a great deal of perseverance she has been able to sow the seeds of goodness in each one of us, today she gleams with a sense of pride and satisfaction to see all her kids grow up into successful men and women in society .

I still can faintly recollect the jingling sound of her red bangles; the only ornament she wore in her hands, which had then provided me with a profound sense of comfort and security, the fact that she was in physical proximity to attend to my childhood demands.

My recent visit to her reminded me of those young days of mine wherein I led an over protected life, which of course was not acceptable to me , I vehemently resented my so called captivity.....always wanting the carefree life that my up-to –date friends enjoyed. Believe, me today, I yearn to go back to that womb of hers, lying calm within the warmth of her protected feathers. A dream which would never turn into reality! On the contrary, I pray God to give me the strength and courage that she had so that I can continue transferring the same to my kids.

Mom believes, she's independent but in reality it takes all four of us, a ton of patience to keep this frail woman going. Thank heavens, she is in near perfect health, no pills to pop up for debilitating diseases that we have started taking, as we have balanced ourselves on the roller coaster of life. I am happy to see her reading with profound clarity the daily newspaper from A to Z . She still has the wisdom of giving each one of us a clipping of good advice that she meticulously cuts and collects from her reading material from time to time. Her memory is perfect in the sense that she would tell u in detail long tales of our accomplishments as we have grown up by the years.

My siblings, two brothers and a sister, of mine each handle the situation differently, some with more aplomb and dignity than others. There are as many different ways of dealing with the care of our aging parents as there are people.

Staying miles and miles away from her, I am bond aged in many ways, restricting myself to the frequent and frantic calls that I make, the only solace for me, by being reassured that she is still there to answer my call. This of course may seem a lame excuse, the only way I can cover up my guilt.

My eldest brother, on whose shoulders God left the burden, has always had the least ability to understand or accept Mom's contrariness, restlessness and just plain stubbornness. It is his misfortune (or God given challenge) of taking care of my mother's day to day needs. They live under the same roof. He has taken on the task with gusto, as is his style, and has made it his full blown responsibility to do the best job possible. Mom, however, is rarely content. It is hard to make her, "Happy". She nags and pokes her head into every single matter, giving him less chance to breathe, smothering his sense of independence, at an age wherein he has crossed the barriers of childhood. He complains that we do not share his responsibility, at times he feels desperate.

It is easy for all of us to wash our hands off the mess and say we are helpless. At best we can just pray for him, asking the Almighty to give him the strength to handle the situation with tact and passion, thereby achieving peace.

"Why can't she just be happy? I do everything in my power to make her happy! I provide for her, I pay for her care, I take her to the doctor, and I arrange everything in perfection for her. "Why can't she be satisfied and contented?" The anger and frustration oozes out as he tries to strike a balance. His question is a reasonable one; none of us have an answer, we are all entangled within the strings of our own web failing in our attempt to dare solve this issue.

The truth is Mom's always been contrary. It is just a generation gap that fills this void. Her eldest son is indeed the apple of her "eye". Ungrudgingly she admits that he is the savior of her life. She, is totally dependent on him, seeking shelter and refuge during these twilight years Papa, perhaps had anticipated the worst, he repeatedly had assured Maa, about this miracle, "boy ", of theirs on whom she could conveniently lean.

Early on, I learned to give up trying to change my mother making it easier for me to accept and even come close to understanding my mother's way of handling her journey into aging. Her increasing disregard for her appearance and her disinterest in socializing make some sort of sense to me. She had lost the patience to listen and had lagged behind in trying to cope up with the changing times. On the contrary, her eyes light up, she laughs aloud, when she meets an old acquaintance, they pay undue respect to her, those familiar faces remind her of her good old days, giving her the status quo of a "queen "

"Why is she wearing that ratty old thing, or preserving that torn picture?" -These of course are living memories for her telling untold stories, reminiscences of her past. She clings on to a nasty old tumbler and would not even part with her tatters. Her grandfather cupboard has a big lock, with all (curios big and small) her treasures well preserved. Strange but true, that cupboard has a bunch full of keys which she guards safely under her pillow, even when she is in a deep slumber (any bandit would suppose she has more than a million dollars worth of goods under her control). She has a closet full of clothes!" she hardly wears, all gifted to her, from wealthy relatives and friends.

Mom, recently said, " I never have worn such expensive clothes, now they are meaningless to me, I prefer clothing which is both comfortable and manageable". I believe this reveals her growing difficulty and lack of energy to undertake even the smallest tasks. As each day passes even the most enjoyable activities become more and more difficult. It's a struggle for her, trying to become a part of everything wherein supposedly, others do not want her to interfere.

What she once did easily is now monumental. Magnanimous at heart, her wants have always been limited, making sure to provide for others, the very best. She has taught me, the thumb rule that, true happiness and love is cherished, by empathizing, giving and sacrificing, and not in receiving.

Unfortunately, we are not ready to let Mom just be who she is. It's tough to accept your own mother's aging process in all its imperfection and unsightliness. I repeatedly tell myself, that it is not our job to make her happy, a truism in all relationships. That still falls on Mom's shoulders. We just have to do our part, a duty to fulfill our obligations.

My sister, her eldest born, has a better understanding into her psyche. She is the one who pampers her, looking after the details of her logical and illogical whims. She comes to pay a visit to her as frequently as she can make it...., a joy to behold, such is their mother-daughter relationship! My sister once shared a great secret;

"When I was a little girl, my Mummy provided me with the very best that she could afford, now it is my turn, obviously when I shop for her, I go for the branded ones only." These words have left a long lasting imprint on my mind. She wants Mom to be with her, but the Grand old lady declines her offer vehemently emphasizing....."this is the, Tajmahal your father has built for me I can have a restful night only in my own bed". Rather, at every single opportunity she beckons, welcoming each one of us into her loving home and hearth.

My younger brother, her youngest and the dearest one lives in another State. Circumstances have led him to consign Mom to a small corner of his life. He calls her up every now and then, but avoids as much emotional connection as possible. He is not an unloving, or uncaring person, but there is very little he can do. He has chosen to deal with my mother's aging his own way, by bottling up his feelings. Maybe it's less painful that way. After all, he is still the "baby" of the house, he was too young when Papa expired, shouldering his own responsibility from a tender age he stands flabbergasted not knowing in what way he could contribute.

We as siblings and spouses struggle with how much liability we can handle and how much time we can devote to the task. As with all families, we carry our own psychological baggage and the unfinished business of any parent/child relationship. A parenthesis, reminds me of the famous adage:
-----One parent can look after and feed a dozen kids but when the table is turned, the opposite seems an impossible and arduous task.

Each time I visit, I learn something new about her or myself. Spending time with her to sit and listen has helped me grow, especially in understanding our affiliation. I know her better and can finally accept her for who she actually is, not who I want her to be or think she is. Sometimes it is difficult to just sit and chat when I have so many other things to do. It does irritate me, when I have to hear the same story umpteen times. At times she would hold me captive, not allowing me to be out of her sight. Well, I realize that is her way of reconnecting to me after not seeing me for years.

One fine day, her eyes moistened up as she pulled me across the chair and gently whispered into my ear, "are you sure you are going to leave soon." I was dumbfounded; I realized how much she had missed my physical presence. It is but a natural instinct for every parent to pine for her child. Today, I feel the same pang when my kids have left our nest and moved out to explore their opportunities in life.

We often forget that our aging parents are still people, albeit difficult, cantankerous and certainly demanding. They have done their duty and the reality is that we ignore them in times when they need us the most. They know we are grown up and have an identity of our own, nevertheless in their eyes we are still kids and they still have the right to command, control and give us a bit of their wisdom and experience. Sad to say, with the advancement of technology at our fingertips, we are certainly wiser than ever, not wanting to be enslaved to another's thought patterns.

Thus, continues the constant struggle for power.....

Erik Erikson who is known as "the father of psychosocial development" believed that each of us passes through 8 stages of development in our lifetime. The elderly are in the last stage that he called "Integrity vs. Despair." In this stage a person looks back over their life and evaluates whether or not it was as fulfilling as they had hoped it would be. If they affirm that it was a good life, they become ready to face death. If they cannot affirm their lives they fear death.

As our parents wait for their final call, our gift as children and grandchildren is to accept their individual method of traveling the course and to take as much time out of our busy lives as we can to just be with them; to sit and listen to their stories, to share a meal and to give them an extra hug or two along the way. It goes without saying their physical needs must be dealt, but it is their growing sense of isolation and seclusion that can be most frightening to them, this of course makes them feel insecure and like a child they become unmanageable and ill-tempered. Isolation and loneliness can produce emotional pain as well as mental and physical deterioration.

We can go a long way in solving this problem by assuring that they are still an integral part of the family and of course by giving them due respect, a loving and caring shoulder can make a big difference.

Dwelling in the past, with nothing much to look forward, they are finding their way onto a new and unknown path they must travel alone. But we can certainly do our bit by walking with them as far as we can.

In our quest for happiness, we forget our basic duties and responsibilities; the fact remains, we ourselves are not going to stay prim and young forever. It is time for us to lead a helping hand Who knows we may soon look forward to one.

Jayasmita Mishra lives in New York.



*Patriots Theater at the war memorial to host 40th OSA
Convention...*

My Color, My Heritage, My Accent

By
Sneha P.Mohanty

Despite his color and his heritage of Muslim background, Barack Hussein Obama has been elected as 44th President. By same tolerance of American multi ethnicity and faith, I have won every year hearts and minds of four and five year old students and their parents in a Christian School for more than twenty-five years, despite my color, me heritage, and my accent. Each day is a joyful day asking me mature, innocent questions: Why do I have long hair? Why I cannot eat meat?

They vie to sit on my lap, are eager to hear the answers, and want to listen folk stories from India. My accent, I believe, make them to pay more attention closely and sometime I repeat even when they do not ask for. They call me fondly Mrs. and I treat them just like my four grand children. Sometimes I come home with their pictures, drawings, and models to ornament my freeze, wall and to share with my grand children. Moreover, my grand kids love to hear their activities. Occasionally when they meet my students, they do not want to leave each other.

There was never a problem with my heritage, my culture, or my faith. Even their parents interact with me with no prejudice, but with great pleasure when they pick up their children. They tell me about Hindu mythological stories that they have heard from me. I tell them stories of Jagannath -how the queen got impatient to open the door prior to the time, as she did not hear any sound of the architect Viswakarma to carve out God on a special wood. I tell story of Kalijai in the lake Chilika when she was going in a boat through a rough storm and the boat sank. They are moved by the story of Dharama how he could construct Konarak temple that twelve hundred artisans failed to do. He saved their lives.

They invite me to their birthdays and want to listen more Hindu mythological stories from Ramayana and Mahabharat. I find there their grand parents very friendly and warm. They bring in yearly gifts as a token of their appreciation of my love and care for them.

The School has a few non-white students, yet they observe multicultural events with exhibits from India and catering Indian food. They borrowed my collections of Orissa handicrafts, stone sculptures of dancing poses, and horn artifacts, Pipli Applique and Konarak Chakras and horses They believe that their children's first stepping stone of education in our school should be productive, pleasant, and imaginative, with no bias, for the future growth of their children. I do emphasize child development and self-esteem from early childhood.

The school allows me use Church premises and kitchen facility to celebrate Hindu festivals and to worship Hindu deity. The School takes the pride to allow multi religious activities in a Christian School.

Little boys and girls have such a beautiful minds that they respond to tenderly to motherly love and attention, not bothered by color or culture. They are reluctant to go home after the school hours when their parents come in. Their parents say that their children talk about Mrs. and about all stories, they have heard. Some of these students are now at the UCLA and other Universities, yet they still remember me as Mrs. and are surprised when I call them by their first name. Their mothers give me hug even after so many years. In this period, my color or my accent has not changed, but my hair has turned gray. I wonder what the world would be if there is one color, one accent, and one heritage and whether my students would like me that much.

After receiving her M. A. in Child Development from California State University, Long Beach, she has been teaching at St.Wilfred School, Huntington Beach

The First Class Journey

By
Barun K. Pani

A few experiences of life stay with you. They never fade. It is like the surgical scars, or that fracture, the road accidents you saw as a child, reminds you of the slow pain of living. When it is cold and dark, they appear like ghosts, strike you with no mercy, and we all shriek in pain. It stabs us deep enough in a ritualistic fashion, slow, but leaving enough life force to experience the pain. This journey is what we call life.

But we always wait for those pains. In the midst of the pain, we have hope, no matter how unrealistic that hope is, how unachievable that goal is, the ghost always beckons with the sadistic smile, challenges you moment by moment for ages. But that pain also creates new lights. Without the pain, there will not be new creations. We live in it, grow old, and close our eyes handing over everything we gathered in this marble game to the next generation.

Such was my experience of first class journey in trains. I always looked forward to it with the hope of being one of them, one among them, browsing through expensive magazines, wearing that Seiko watch, or holding that coke bottle in my hand in a mid summer day.

My father was a teacher in railway school, and so we moved every few years. When the administration issued the transfer orders, they also allowed him and the whole family to travel first class on the train, and those four or five hours of first class journey is what I always waited for. It started with my dad coming back from school one day, and announcing we have two weeks to pack and go. The excitement started that evening, our family was a big family, with five brothers and four sisters. We start imagining our new school, new set of friends, and new residence. Railways provided small residential quarters for the employees.

But the biggest challenge was finding everything for the first class journey. Everything must fit, at least in our mind. So the search used to begin for the best of the best shirt, most outstanding trousers, and any shoes (I hardly had shoes in my school days.), to fit the journey. I always sneaked upon the discarded attire of my oldest brother. He was the best dressed man in our family. My dad wore Gandhian clothing. They were low-cost and acceptable for his profession. Some of the old clothing donated by my rich cousins were also tossed into the evaluation mix. Nothing escaped the scrutiny, because the journey was first class, and the décor had to be maintained. It takes a few days to settle on what to wear and when I settle it, I will wash the cloths to bring out the best shine possible. Each of us went on the chore and readied their best set.

My mother used to visit a few friends' house. In fact we all did it, to say the goodbyes. The marble friends, the kite group, all have to be told. I did not have many friends, so that was not a big deal for me. Sometimes there was a dinner or two too. I made sure I am included in it. Food was my weakness. I did everything to look good, I even planned for a hair cut if my hair was too long. Sometimes I could get it, sometimes I could not. My mother generally said yes to my demands since I rarely asked for anything. In a way, I was luckier than my siblings, because I got things easier than them.

I usually checked the books. Mostly, we moved out of State. That meant that the school books changed. Sometimes, even the medium of school instructions changed, which translated to a new set of books in a completely new language. But these were challenges for later. For those days, the dominating thought was the first class journey. We all waited anxiously for the due day.

And finally, the day came. I remember strangely enough, the afternoon trains were almost always late; giving us enough time to get more of the journey. My dad was always for early arrival. We arrived at the

railway station almost an hour or so early, and the trains were late a few hours, giving us some more time to act first class passengers on the platform. I meekly asked for buying something to drink, which was always refused. None of my parents really understood, you have to have a drink in hand to be first class. I pretended to browse comic books like Batman, or Archie in the book stalls. I looked good enough, so the stall owners did not chase me away.

The first class compartments come at the front, just after the engine and the pantry car. So we stood mostly at the right side end of the platform. Often the ticket collector will come and remind us that the second and third class coaches will be behind. We all generally shouted almost in unison that we have a first class pass to travel. My dad reluctantly will take it out, and showed the pass. The Train Ticket Examiner will scrutinize it several times, look at us with disbelief, and then will move on. We proudly stay on that part of the platform. There will be other genuine first class passengers waiting on the platform, but they always kept a distance from us. Mostly they were surrounded by servants, munching on cookies, or real fruits. I feel hungry, but it was not yet time for our eating ritual. I repeat my need for the drinks and my mom shouts at me. I realized it is never going to happen.

Finally, the train comes and the platform comes to life. Many porters run towards the first class coach because that is where business is more lucrative. One look at us makes them realize we are not good business. We all have assigned luggage to pick and board the train. The first class compartment is always closed. We waited outside with other passengers. That is where we got closest to the other first class passengers.

As soon as the door opens and the ticket examiner gives a look at us, he announces with a few passengers with him together that it is the first class compartment. We repeat what we told the guard on the platform and this time it was a shouting competition. Our statements are either not heard, or got lost in the mix of loud arrival announcement, platform noise, and a vehement protest of the genuine first class passengers. My dad again takes out the pass from his pocket, and the guard scrutinizes it, as a few passengers also tried peeking into it. After a careful verification, he announced with a stone face, we can go in and wait. He will be back to assign us seats in a few moments.

We stayed near the door, and waited for the train to start. Just when the train starts the guard boarded the train and walked by us, as my father politely reminded him that we need seats. He asked us to wait and vanished to the other side of the coach.

We knew that we are going to be seated. We discuss proudly that he can not give our seats to others. After all we had a genuine first class pass. Time passed on and the guard reappears and took us to the assigned seats. We had 11 seats, so we were distributed to more than one section. I recognized a few of the passengers who boarded from the same station. I always tried to match up with someone our age group so that we can talk, discuss, and act first class. Finally we were fully accepted. We settled down on our assigned seats, feeling every inch of the soft expensive looking sponge material top of the seats. Seats on the second and third class had no soft cushion, this was first class.

The guy in front of me probably was my age. I carefully selected my place. He is an ideal candidate for me to proclaim first class. I looked at him, but he avoided eye contact. He is submerged in his comic book, I looked at it, it was one I know from my platform browsing, the Archie. I waited until he looked up to make sure my question is not wasted. Time passed on.

I got up and moved around, but then the soft sponge feelings needed to be savored, the journey would finish in a few hours only. I came back to my reserved seat, I had to talk to the guy, my new friend. He blinked and looks up at me as soon as I entered. And then I asked which school he goes to. He answered St. Pauls and then dived back into his comic book. I scrutinized his attire. He wore an expensive Seiko watch, a full set of pressed custom made trouser and matching shirt, his hair neatly combed and trimmed. I pondered why my mom did not allow me to have a hair cut before the journey. It was so wrong!

St. Pauls is an expensive private school. What school he went to told me his dad must be a prominent business man of the city. This kid was son of a rich father. But, hey, we were in same class. I felt proud that I was slowly getting acquainted with him. No matter, how much he resisted, I was determined to know more about him.

Then, I shot my second question. "What grade are you in?" He answered "7th". Same as mine! I was delighted. Though his answers were just one word answers, it made me happy, I am in the same grade, same coach, and same class with this kid, who happened to be son of a prominent business man of the city. I was truly first class in my mind.

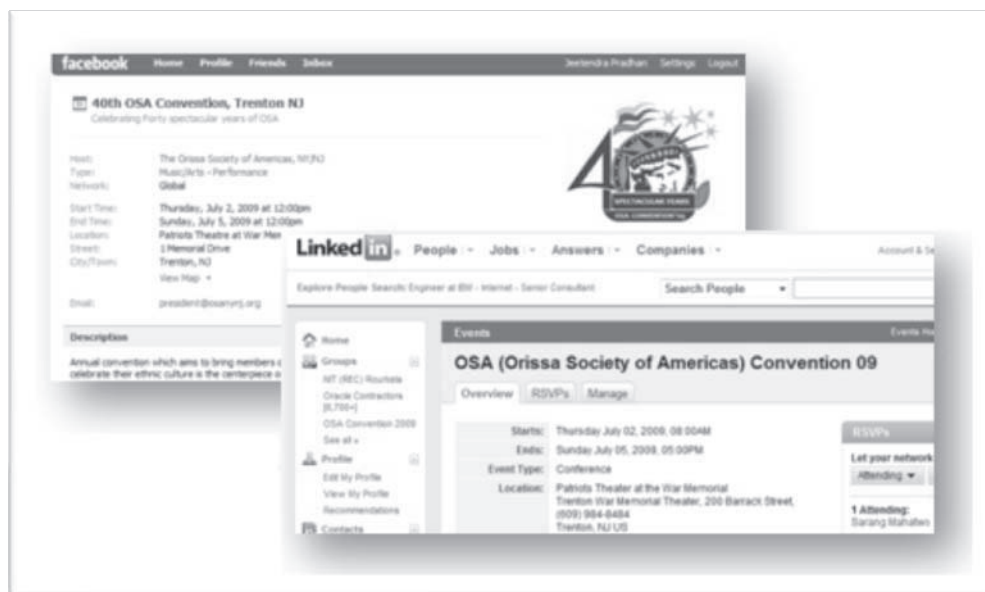
I asked a series of questions thereafter, some relevant, some silly. All my questions were carefully worded to be as long as possible, and all his answers were mostly one or two words. The race continued, I even forgot dinner, when my mother asked me if I was hungry. I did not want to eat home cooked food in front of him. It was better for me to stay hungry rather than lose my class.

Time passed on. I was not particularly happy about his short answers, but then, at the least, he was answering. In my mind, he was accepting me to be first class. I could have a conversation with him.

Our destination arrived. I was not ready for it. I wanted more, more of first class. Though there were elements of rejection, I did not take the rejections. I carefully rationalized them as civilized, pruned, and classy way of conversation. I thought, that is an art you are taught in expensive private schools. After all, why should someone use more words when you can express with a few?

We got down to the platform. Again, porters came to us, and then left after one look at us. Our first class journey was over. It was involved, delightful and a little painful all wrapped up in one four hour journey. We took a Rickshaw to our new home. On the way I realized, neither my new friend asked my name nor did I. Perhaps, it was irrelevant for us to exchange names. I knew next time if we ever meet, we will recognize each other. What is there in a name?

Barun Pani lives in Mississippi and has regularly contributed to OSA Souvenirs.



40th OSA Convention gets into Social Network websites...

LDL, Triglycerides and Lord Ganesha

By
Gopal Mohapatra

When the man woke up from his dream, he felt as if he had just come out of a war. In his dream he was running on the hot sands of an African desert among thousands of hungry, emaciated tribal people. A few US marine helicopters overhead were dropping food packets which were being blown away by the dry desert wind. As he ran desperately to catch one, he was kicked hard on his ankle by a fellow hungry man and fell down on the ground. The food bag hit the ground a couple of feet away from his head. Pieces of mutton and potatoes with deep red colored gravy sprang out of the bag. The sand soaked in the gravy. The man stretched his hands to get a piece of sandy mutton with a small bone but a big foot came from nowhere and trampled his hand like an elephant. He screamed in pain and that is when he woke up from the dream in his posh bedroom.

It was not a good dream, especially for a man like him who never had one about food. It was an early morning dream, hence was probably a message from food god - his days of indulging in food are over. He stood up, looked at himself in the mirror. He had suddenly aged in the last eight hours. The look did not worry him as much because he remembered what his grand father had once said - a man is judged not by his looks or character but by his food. During those days when he grew up, the judgment was based on how much rice and mutton curry one could eat without any side vegetables and water.

A good number of decades had passed since then during which time he carried on his shoulder the curse of thousands of goats – domestic and foreign. Their curse had gradually translated into cholesterol, and saturated and unsaturated fat in his body. However, he had done a good job in hiding his extra frontal mass which earned the envy of his friends. Some went onto rigorous exercises, some took to medicines, and some took to crunching carrots and apples all day, but he stayed the course.

The man came out of his bed room and went to the kitchen. He helped himself to a cold glass of water and sat down at the breakfast table. Today felt like the judgment day. In a few hours, he would head over to the doctor's office for his annual physical check up. His doctor was originally from Egypt, a short, stocky and funny man. Irrespective of the reason for the man's visit, he would always ask 'how is your basement?' He would then go on explaining how the basement is as important to the body as it is to a house and if it cracked, it could damage the whole body. The doctor being from the land of Pyramids certainly believed in strong basements; otherwise how his people could have built those huge pyramids thousands of years ago. The doctor would check him up and say that everything was out of range, the man should watch his diet and exercise regularly – the same advice he had been giving for more than a decade now. But this time he might be very adamant about enforcing a regimented diet and cholesterol pills – that is what scared him the most and subsequently depressed.

Although the man did not eat much vegetable, he did not have any prejudice against vegetarians. He always thought they were good people just like smokers and drunks. He always sympathized with them and tried his best to serve them a good meal. When he invited people for dinner, his wife would cook vegetarian items while he would cook the real food. During his wife's short break from the kitchen, the man would take some mutton or chicken gravy and put it in the vegetarian dish to make it tasty. When the women would praise his wife for a good vegetarian dish and ask for recipe, he would stand nearby and pray 'Oh father, forgive these women for they not know what they are eating.'

He took some boiled eggs and whole milk and sat down at the breakfast table. What would he do if the doctor asked him to drink skim milk and egg whites? Was he going to sit in front of the computer all day crunching carrots, cucumbers and apples? How about some protein? Where was that going to come from now? How about all the medicinal value of the spices which were used to cook the mutton curry? How about sustaining the business of all those poor meat sellers, which, in his mind, was his non-profit

contribution to the society? Cannot he pile of a few milligrams of cholesterol here and there in his body so that a poor man like a meat cutter can live a decent life? Why can't people think about others? Why in the name of healthy diet they are taking away jobs? How about those Sunday meals which everyone anxiously waited for? What about the camaraderie that grew around cooking mutton curry in a 30 gallon pot?

There was no solution, he thought, to these problems, otherwise someone would have cracked the code long before. He got depressed again. He looked up and stared at the picture of Lord Ganesha which was hanging on the front wall. The Lord was so calm, so plenty, he thought. The Lord did not exercise in 24 hour fitness clubs. He ate fatty food like Boondis, laddoos, coconut and what not. He drank a lot of milk. Even his statues, one time, drank so much whole milk that it became news world over. He did not have annual physical check ups with Dhanwantari, the celestial doctor. He never bothered about cholesterol and triglycerides. He did not care about his waist line. The man thought that the Lord probably did not even do any stretching or Tai Chi any time. Yet, he had a lot of wisdom, knowledge and most of all a calmness and bliss on his face that pervaded the universe and beyond. Why can't we all be like that? Why do we impose these restrictions on our mind and body and be slaves of other people's whim?

Life always balances out to a zero, no matter what one does or how one lives. The whole thing started from nothing and has to go back to nothing; we are tiny temporary elements in the big scheme of things. Yet we attach so much importance to ourselves!! Why? Why not flow like a stream of water and make your own course? The man suddenly was becoming emotional. His thoughts were taking him nowhere. He again looked up and stared at Lord Ganesha. He thought he saw something different! He looked again. He could not believe his eyes! The whole plate of Boondi-ka-laddoos was gone. The Lord and His pet, the little mouse, had eaten them up all! He had an unbelieving look in his eyes and kept staring at the Lord. The Lord's face had a grin. Suddenly He gave a wink and thundered with a deep resonating voice - "Salaa, khaa bey, ete bhabuchu kana?"

Gopal Mohapatra lives in Houston with his wife Reva and two daughters Meha and Dhara. He works in oil and gas industry. He enjoys reading, writing, acting, outdoors such as biking, camping and hiking and above all food. He can be reached at gkmohapatra@gmail.com



My Big Catch

By
Ghanashyam Mishra

No, I am not talking about my getting married to a very beautiful and talented girl from Orissa in the mid sixties. My story goes back to late 1940's, only a few months after the end of two century old colonial rule of India. After more than six decades, I still remember how I landed the big one. It is a real fish story.

Those who are fortunate enough like me to grow up in the low country (Talamal) of Orissa in the Mahanadi River delta area could visualize abundance of fish, shrimp, and crabs in the river estuaries and tidal creeks. Rice (paddy) farming and fishing were the main occupation of the impoverished delta area residents. Home grown vegetables, rice, fish (or dried and salted fish) constituted our daily diet. During the heavy Monsoon downpours, the villagers made all kinds of contraptions like cast nets, fish traps (Andhuli or Mugura) or seining nets. For youngsters like us, it was the very primitive techniques of a fishing hook, a line and a rod.

It was mid-October, right after the Monsoons. I did not have to worry about school home work or farm chores during the first few days of Dusserah vacation. My next door friend Banshi Hota and I decided to go fishing. Banshi and I were the only two school going kids from the entire village. Earlier that month, both of us were ridiculed by many of our village urchins after our disastrous fishing adventure. It was not a planned fishing trip with any type of fish traps or fishing gears. On our way back home from school, we observed a whole bunch of migratory fish jumping out of water downstream of a road culvert. That was when the 9 year old brains went to work. We threw our book bags on the road side and tried to plug the narrow culvert with twigs and mud at the upstream inlet. The technique worked. Dozens of four to six inch long reddish brown catfish were flapping their tails on the almost dry stream bed. We folded the front flap of our shirts, grabbed the school of catfish with our bare hands and tossed them in to the shirt-fold. In a matter of minutes, we felt stings on our hands and bellies. Banshi and I ran as fast as we could to our homes. Needless to say it took a lot of village medicine to cure the poisonous stings.

This time, we carefully planned our fishing trip. I asked my brother to buy two fish hooks from the market. Banshi and I cut two six foot long bamboo poles. We tied a string of about 6-7 feet long to a knot at the end of the bamboo stick and secured the fishing hook's eyelet to the other end of the string. I threaded a lead sinker about two feet from the hook. The purpose of the sinker was to keep the live bait (minnow) swimming around in a limited area to attract the big one. The next step was to catch some live bait from the creek. We could catch minnows using earthworms or yellow jacket eggs. But we decided to use an alternate means. I took a chance of using my father's cast net. My father did not like children throwing his prized cast net, the one he had made with his own hands. Children could be careless, if the net got tangled with rocks or submerged tree trunks.

My friend and I walked about half a mile to the creek. The warm October sky was blue with chunks of white clouds floating by. The water in the slow moving creek was glistening under the Sun. Dozens of white egrets (cranes) were gazing for their catch standing in ankle deep water, next to the edge of tall marsh grass. I took up the cast net, rolled around my right arm, and swung the net in a wide circle before casting. "Whoosh" went the noise and the net captured a whole bunch of bait minnows. Banshi picked up the jumping baits, and put them in a bamboo container with a lid. The container was left in the water to keep the baits alive.

We hooked our baits just below the dorsal fins, so that they could swim and attract big fish. I walked in to knee deep mud and water, cast the line to mid-stream and firmly planted the bamboo pole in to the bottom mud. The next phase of the game was the great anticipation. Both of us stood still next to our fishing poles and waited for a hit. It was just a few minutes. My line shook, and the pole bent down touching almost the water surface. I grabbed the pole with my both hands, and gave a big yank. That action set the hook on the unsuspecting big fish. The fish gave a big fight. I asked my friend to help me. I

did not want to get pulled in the middle of the creek into deep waters. I turned towards the bank and started pulling my catch with the fishing pole over my shoulder. As I struggled out of the water, I caught a glimpse of my catch. It was a 30-inch long Balia with its big shark like jaws. I caught my big catch by the gills and raced home with pride to show to my mother. That night, my family enjoyed a big meal of rice and fish cooked with mustard paste and dried mango.

I hope, you all enjoyed my story about the big one that did not get away.

Ghanashyam Mishra received his B.E. from Banaras Hindu University in 1961, M.S. in Mining Engineering from Penn State and a MBA from Waynesburg University, PA. Mr. Mishra worked for 44 years as a professional engineer. He is an author of a recently published book titled "From Primitive to Privileged-Story of an Indian American Immigrant". He lives with his wife Dr. Manorama Mishra in Kiawah Island, South Carolina



OSA Convention planning meeting captured in an artist mind ...

Orissa: Reminiscing Her Birthday

By
Lalatendu Pahi

OSA is to celebrate her formal 40th Birth Anniversary this July 4th in New Jersey, USA while Orissa our incredible birth mother just turned 74 years young on April 1, 2009.

When Orissa (ODISHA) was born on April 1, 1936, she was a still born (No April Fool Joke!). Her umbilical cord was still entangled with the then Bengal (BANGA) and Bihar. This new provincial state was not belabored deformed but was deliberately mutilated. It was well before India's independence, when language was cardinal in determining the birth of a state based on vernacular, cultural identity and demographic homogeneity during British Raj.

Since language and culture other than population, territory and organization (government) were all spectacularly present, politically it was undeniable to recognize a provincial state. However a very rich geographical and topographical territory with extreme poor people, coastal and tribal was systemically and endemically exploited in regional political power brokering since Jamindari System was arbitrated from Calcutta (Kalikata) the then British India capital power hub of so called Banga-Bihar-Odissa-United Triumvirate. Imagine present day Punjab, Haryana or Noida UP being exploited by Delhi State both culturally and physically to maintain pseudo superiority and ethnicity.

A derogatory refrain was coined then for Oriyas as "Udde" speaking only "Udia" dialect (no full fledged Oriya verbal or written script was recognized then. Forget about centuries old Madala Panji in the Jaggannath Temple, Senapati's Bhanja's, Ratha's Mehera's vernacular classics or hundreds of Palm leaf scriptures and classical Devadasi or Odissi dance exuberances (please read John Gunthur's "Inside Asia"). Also like the perverted justice meted out to Hispanics in some quarters of USA as fruit pickers and pauper migrants, Oriyas were invariably referred to as Malis(gardeners) and Pujaris (domestic serfs and cooks) for Bengali elites and commoners alike. However, Oriyas emerged triumphant with little identity crisis and more rich contribution to global heritage and cultures.

Believe it or not in Post Independence Indian Federation, the state government of West Bengal had not recanted its official rhetoric "Udiya Bhasa Bhasa Nay" i.e Oriya Language is not a Language well after 41 years (Just think broadly of Japan's denial of Chinese/Korean/Philippino atrocities until now or Germany's too little too late Holocaust healing reparations. It was only on April 1, 1978 in the Nikhila Bharata Odiya Lekhaka Sammilan (All India Oriya Writer's Association) held in Calcutta, where large number of prominent and erudite Oriya intellectuals from all continents had gathered organized by the Post Graduate Oriya Department, Visva Bharati International University, Santiniketan and Presidency College, Calcutta where the honorable culture minister one Mr. Ghose had formally apologized, regretted, and declared affirmatively initiating a healing process. It was the right reconciliation and reassurance to say the least from centuries old imposingly arbitrary cultural hegemony of a marauding mighty neighbor.

Whether or not the linguistic antagonism, cultural humiliation, political parochialism has dissipated or not the physical dismemberment of Orissa has permanently made her deformed beyond repair. When one hears about unscrupulous politicians trying again in recent years to carve out or annex regional, border areas (Upanta anchala) to their states in connivance with the Federal Government, it sends a chill through the spine.

Hopefully we all overseas Oriyas have some stake some responsibility and many obligations to the land we come from. The time of reflections is well over, it surely is time for some concrete action to preserve the integrity and continuity of a distinct region we proudly identify as the original home of our ancestors and descendants.

PS :(Tender sincere apology from dear readers for memory slips, inadvertent errors & omissions if any)

Lalatendu Pahi lives with wife Surashri Pahi in Texas with two children. Currently Consulting in Hospitality Operations & Investment Industry. Member AAHOA Hospitality Advisory Board, Lone Star College System, North Houston, TX. He has interest in networking literary, socio cultural promotions of Oriya living heritage in multi cultural and International sphere. He is the founder member of Literary organizations and had distinct privilege to host Oriya Writers Enclaves, Cultural programs in Calcutta, Mylapore, Madras, New Delhi and mid western regional OSA chapters in US. He is an Alumni of RCE, Santiniketan, DU, JNU, India and MIU, USA

Convention 2008 – Cultural Presentation: Retrospection

By
Sri Gopal Mohanty

It has been expressed in the Constitution that OSA's aims are to promote an understanding of Odisha's culture and to bring together the people in North America having interest in Odisha. It is also realized that OSA Convention has become a mirror to show a one-time reflection of its image.

After I became the Cultural Coordinator of 2008 Convention, I tried carefully to examine the purpose of a Convention from the above perspectives and viewed that the prime responsibility of the organizers is to plan activities accordingly. Within that framework, the job is to create the best show as far as possible.

What should be OSA's image? I believe that its good image should represent whether its activities follow its stated objectives and whether these activities are presented artfully and creatively.

What should constitute Odisha's culture? Should it not be the total range of ideas and activities including inherited beliefs, values, tastes and artistic expressions of the group of people living in Odisha? However, for common understanding we narrow it down to visibly and demonstratively creative and artistic expressions such as literature, art, drama, music and dance.

In a Convention, a primary goal should be to provide these inherited expressive cultural forms a proper representation as best as possible. Now if we think of OSA's other aim, it naturally follows that the goal needs to take into account the talent pool in NA as extensively as possible, not being restricted to invited professional artists or to those available locally.

Last year, this was precisely our challenge. Our strategy was to build a harmony between the seemingly conflicting objectives and resource pool and to create a reasonable blend between quality presentation and diversified participation?

No doubt Odisha's culture is best represented by Odissi dance. Today this dance form is the only one that provides Odisha's people their identity all over the world. Not even Jagannatha, although it is so among Hindus and Indians. Those who feel uncomfortable about it might not have faced the humiliation as I did even within India, especially at the capital city New Delhi, having been haunted constantly: i.e. *udisha kidher hai bhai?* Not today, of course. I dare not leave my emblem of identity - Odissi. Some say: Odissi, Odissi, too much... uh, boring... My answer to them is (besides my embarrassment of telling them that this dance form is most graceful and aesthetically beautiful classical dance form in India): Are we tired of seeing family album over and over again?

We felt Odissi should have the utmost priority to be best represented. Our Convener Gagan Panigrahi and others realized its importance the day the Convention was decided to come to Canada and thought of the theme, "Odissi – Past, Present and Future" and received an Ontario Government grant to support it - a great beginning indeed. Around it we planned Mahari dance and Mohan Dev Goswami's Rasa Lila to represent the past. Both are absolutely at the core of Odisha's cultural heritage. In this regard, we are very fortunate to have the presence of Sushri Mishra Kar among us. On the other hand, Sujata Mohapatra, Ellora and Raj Patnaik were best representatives of the present and by extension of the future. I believe those who attended their performances would confirm our choice. For more appreciation of the dance form, workshops were organized in the morning.

Yet over years, North America is witnessing the emergence of a number of excellent Odissi dancers and upcoming ones. It took years of dedication of parents to train the children in this dance form (our Odissi) with hard work and sacrifice even in the face of lack of teachers and far away distances they have to travel. Isn't OSA has an obligation to provide platform for them? In my view, it is yes; our conscience will bite otherwise. While keeping this in our mind for the Convention, we created a special category, "Odissi in North America" to highlight its need and by doing so achieved simultaneously the diverse participation from California, Michigan, DC area and Illinois (unfortunately this participant could not attend due to a family emergency).

So far as diverse participation is concerned, it has been an accepted tradition to count on Subrina Biswal Award competition for the children and Pramod Patnaik Competition for Chapters. In our eagerness to bring the community at large and different talented groups to be represented at the Convention we specially created a category for general entry, called “Ame alagA, Ame ekAThi”.

What about Odisha’s enthralling folk songs and dances? Folk dances were sprinkled here and there and again that too by our guests from diverse community.

Thinking of folk songs and dances, we realized that Odisha’s cultural diversity has to take into account tribal people who constitute about 22% of total population. When we represent Odisha’s culture we can not truly do it by ignoring them and only stay with Odissi, folk dances of non-tribal population. Thus “Tribal Dances – Ama Adibasie” emerged as a new special feature in the cultural programme as a first time item in any Convention. Thanks to our friends from other chapters who were very kind and eager to contribute to this item. And it became a great success.

Collecting flowers from here and there for the Convention’s garland did not satisfy us. Our eyes were looking for plants with fragrant flowers in abundance. Thus a new search began.

In order to provide a better sense of appreciation of Odisha’s cultural wealth, we thought of selecting two theme-based items of a longer duration, one in each evening. Very recently the local group here had an excellent production of Karnarjuna Gitinatya, one of Baishnaba Pani’s pioneering contribution to Odisha Opera. It occurred to us that Odisha opera, a unique asset of our heritage, has hardly been staged in earlier Conventions and in that context we decided to celebrate Baishnaba Pani’s legacy by staging Karnarjuna in the Convention.

For the second one, I thought of looking at our literature that had indelible impact on Odisha’s music and dance and realized that a dominating and resplendent theme in all those is love and romance. Should we not celebrate our literary heritage (Jayadeva, Baladeva, Upendra Bhanja, Banamali, Gopalakrushna, Gangadhara Meher, Mayadhara Mansinha and Kali Charan Patnaik) replete with the most delightful SrungAra Rasa? Should we not remind ourselves of our heritage in music – Champu, Chhanda and Odissi?

Guided by these thoughts I created an item called: Romance and Love. How has it to be a stage presentation? At that time, I had another consideration in my mind. In NA, there are good vocalists among us whom OSA should encourage to participate in a manner similar to Odissi dancers. I prepared a script on the theme by extracting portions from Kali Charan Patnaik’s drama “Chumbana” interspersed befittingly with Baladeva’s Champu, Upendra Bhanja’s Chhanda and an Odissi, Jayadeva’s Astapadi for a dance and a folk dance on the theme and a piece of Mayadhara Mansinha’s love poem for recitation. I took a daring decision of assigning different portions of the script to individuals/ groups distributed all over NA keeping our vocalists in mind, since it would be impractical to involve the local group and unethical not to involve the extended community. Many challenging encounters were confronted throughout, but the item survived - thanks due to extremely supportive community members at distant places. At least I had the satisfaction of involving the community at large in presenting a portion of neglected cultural heritage. I take full responsibility for the quality of the production.

Cultural heritage must include the language of the Land – Odia. We attempted to use the language in every possible situation, including the Convener’s speech, preamble of items and introductions. To our delight the Chief Guest Murlidhar Bhandare, Governor of Odisha spoke a few sentences in Odia.

What about our next generation and youths? They usually get bored and run away and hardly feel part of the conventions. OSA can not and should not stick only to those who are the first generation migrants.

We created an item called, “Theme Song and Dance”, the song being “Odisha, Odisha, I love my Odisha...” (Listen to the song and you will feel like swinging besides being sentimental). It was choreographed and performed entirely by the local youth team. In addition, we decided to start a unique item of showcasing a few extremely talented youths and young adults who have demonstrated unusual artistic ability in non-Odia medium. We are happy to mention that there were three youths presented on the stage, one specializing in jazz singing, one in opera singing and the third in Hindustani classical singing. We also recognized three for their artistic expressions in

movie making (see the Convention Souvenir). Besides, they had their exclusive entertainment programme designed and executed by them on every day late night.

Finally, we liked to think Odisha as a unity, starting from the east washed by the Bay of Bengal over which the morning sun touches the Land of Lord Jagannatha and ending in the west covered by hills and lush green forests over which the sun takes leave from her People. While the morning (Inauguration) witnessed Puri's famous MedhanAta and an expression of devotion to the Lord as presented through the historical spread of Bhakti Movement in the Land, it was the evening (Grand Finale) which set the mood for jubilation culminating in ecstatic dance to "Rangabati" music by the People.

I believe that we tried to fulfill OSA's core objectives in preparing our cultural presentation in Convention 2008.

Sri Gopal Mohanty is associated with OSA since its inception and is a Founding Member of Canada Chapter. By profession, he is a Statistician (Professor Emeritus at McMaster University, Canada). In his heart, he is close to India and in particular to Odisha. He is a Founding Member of India Canada Society of Hamilton and Region and has a strong interest in socio-cultural activities in the community. He has a passion for Odisha's culture and is deeply involved in SEEDS for Odisha's development projects.



As I Look Back

By

Abasar Beuria

It was the summer of 1986. I reached New York to take up my new diplomatic assignment. I was perhaps the first Oriya to be posted as an Indian diplomat in the USA. Soon after two other gentlemen from Orissa – Mr. P. Rath and Mr. Arif Khan joined the Permanent Mission of India. I was serving as Consul General in a totalitarian communist state with three changes of guards at the Kremlin beginning with Andropov to Chernynko and finally Gorbachov's 'Perestroika' in the former Soviet Union. My tenure to land of 'liberty' and 'capitalism' was therefore exciting and a welcome change. The impact of change was so sharp that my two daughters Prarthana and Varnana managed to forget their near flawless Russian in less than six months till the younger one was reminded by someone in the School, PS-6, during the proposed visit of Gorbachov to that school, and when she won the Mayors Award for Painting for School children.

My first impression on the first day of my arrival was of the sunset against the backdrop of Manhattan sky line from Flushing. The red hot sun as a bowl of molten gold with the Empire State building silhouetted against it and a myriad of lights transformed Manhattan to a bejeweled beauty. Manhattan at night viewed from the other side of the Hudson River is also deeply imprinted in my mind – a place I visited several times later. Watching the changing colors of Manhattan from my apartment on the 84th Street, Manhattan East or Central Park remains fresh in my mind thousands of miles away years after.

On assuming charge in office, I was immersed in several assignments in the Consulate General of India. It was the last phase of Festival of India which impressed Americans strongly as they got a glimpse of rich cultural mosaic of our country. The closure of the festival required massive coordination strategy with the cooperation of counterparts in different American agencies. Apart from the Festival of India, I was also entrusted the responsibility of being the Head of Chancery along with the Commercial Representative of Government of India, and for a brief period as Resident Director of Marine Products Export Development Authority's New York Office. In the first few months in New York took every ounce of my energy I could muster to cope with the official work leaving very little time to socialize.

The first meeting with non-resident Oriyas of the USA was at the residence of Navaneeta and Birendra Patnaik – a friend, philosopher and guide to me, who was living in Pennsylvania. It was a small close knit group which included among others. Manoranjan & Minati Pattanayak, Dr. Kashi & Niru Sahoo, Saradindu & Lata Misra, Bijay & Jayanti Mahapatra and few others. The discussions in such gatherings were more of a nostalgic journey down the memory lane. One could see the desire to make it a big syndrome of the first generation immigrants in them. Such parties over the weekend were a regular feature. These often continued till the wee hours of the morning. Every one participated in the cooking and preparation of food except me. Lalu Mansinha from Canada was an occasional visitor to such parties. Dr. Ramesh & Asima Raychoudhury were staying in Long Island. They had a beautiful house on the water front. The other house which I found somewhat different with lovely scenic beauty was that of Dr. Rama and Sudha Patnaik in Pennsylvania. Mr. Prafulla Padhi from California was also visiting sometimes to meet his friends in the East Coast to make them familiar with his new venture. In this milieu the idea of establishing a super specialty hospital in Orissa by non-resident Oriyas was mooted and discussed in several informal gatherings at that time.

I had the privilege of attending some of these meetings and was privy to the intimate and intense discussion on the subject. It all ended with lot of arguments without progress; a lot of sound and furry signifying nothing. They were all professional earning well but having little knowledge about business with the inherent risk element. The proposal took a final shape in the Kalinga Hospital much later.

On the East Coast, I had the privilege of meeting Dr. Krushna M. Das, perhaps the first Oriya to migrate to USA after making a mark in Cornell University. He was something of a father figure for all Oriyas and everybody consulted him on various matters, personal or official. He consistently maintained his Oriyaness, his long stay in the USA notwithstanding, and many of the Oriya festivals were celebrated in his house. In

the sixties and seventies the many new arrivals from Orissa stayed in his house before moving out to their respective work place. Some faces do come to mind and I had occasions to visit their homes viz. Dr. Dhiren & Lipi Das, Dr. Mangaraj, Dr. Panigrahi and Bijay Mishra from Harvard. Dr. Braja Mishra from Washington, Madhab Das, Dr. Uma & Shanti Mishra etc. I remember a proposal initiated by me which Prof. Kalpataru Kanungo negotiated with the University in Bridgeport, Connecticut to establish a chair named after 'Orissa' through a meager contribution of US\$ 10,000 only and the balance matching amount to be provided by the University authorities. It was a pity that the proposal could not progress due to disinterestedness of NROs. This would have been actually the first of its kind done by any regional group from India. It was much later that Govt. of India entered into a MoU with U Penn to create a similar facility there.

It was the Rajiv Gandhi era and Indo-US relationship was entering a new phase. Economic liberalization had just started in a limited way in India as a prelude to the later steps to greater liberalization of the nineties. As a result several delegations from Indian states visited New York to interact with NRIs to solicit their cooperation and participation in the economic development of the country. Stalwarts like Late Ramakrishna Hegde, Late M. G. Ramachandran, and Shri Sharad Power etc. visited, besides Chief Ministers and official delegations from other states. The Consulate arranged meetings for them in its heritage building. The Consulate was also making cultural life vibrant by arranging concerts by eminent musicians like Pt. Ravi Shankar, Ustad Zakir Hussain, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, dancers like Yamini Krishnamurthy and Madhavi Mudgal to name a few. It was unfortunate that in these events non-resident Oriyas were conspicuous by their absence. They never tried to play an important role in Indian community affairs.

While life was exciting in the 'city which never sleeps', occasional trips outside New York on official work, particularly to address on Independence Day & Republic Day functions, gave greater insight into the life of Indians in different regions. I had occasions to visit almost all states on the East Coast including Virgin Island & Puerto within our Consulate jurisdiction and interacted with Indians who were bright, hardworking, but denied very senior positions, which they richly deserved, in the Corporations or Companies. As the Commercial Representative of Govt. of India I had the opportunity of meeting and addressing senior executives of MNCs like Pepsi, IBM etc and Chambers of Commerce of different states, while I met a large number of Indians in such places, the number of Oriyas was few. There has been a sea change in the image of Indians in the USA during the last 25 years. One can see now Indians making a mark in all fields including science, technology, media, medicine, business, academics, entertainment industry, service industry, IT industry, etc. We, the Oriyas, are yet to make a mark as a group though professionally competency.

A year after my arrival in New York, a God sent opportunity came on my way to visit San Francisco on the West Coast to attend the OSA Convention. The eminent writer Late Gopinath Mohanty was the Chief Guest and I was invited as the Guest of Honor to that Conference.

OSA Conference then was a comparatively small affair with around 300 members attending the Conference. It was more of a family get-together and people looked forward to the Conference to renew and refresh friendly relationship. The bonhomie extended to family members including children. The Independence Day week end for the Conference was like an annual pilgrimage. We all stayed in a college hostel and dormitory and there was cultural program by members and their children. Apart from seminars, talks on different subjects agitating the minds of the members, one subject was permanently in the agenda close to the hearts of members i.e. how to inculcate Oriya culture, language in the second generation of non-resident Oriyas. Conference also provided an occasion to demonstrate material progress and individual success stories. Meeting your own people and speaking your own language provided much needed relief to otherwise stressful life in America. Professor Digambar Mishra from South was always helpful in keeping me informed about the community and the political developments in the country.

Disinterestedness of participants in speeches was revealed when the Chief Guest's speech and that of mine echoed in the half empty Conference hall. I could meet some of my old friends and relatives in the Conference. Gauri Das and Chinmayee were extremely helpful and hospitable. The organizers knew my desire to visit Los Angeles, San Diego and Disneyland. During the fog end of the Conference on a specific request by a friend, Shri Bibek Satpathy volunteered to take me to Los Angeles by road. The stunning landscape and the thrilling experience ended with a lavish dinner at their house. It was providential that I was destined to travel by road or else I would have missed the real West Coast. San Diego was another

stop and our host was Purna Patnaik about whom I had heard from Pt. Ravi Shankar. His house was fabulous facing unique scenic beauty. It seems he designed the details of the house himself.

During my sojourn in America, I had the occasion to meet former President Jimmy Carter in a large reception to which prominent American citizens and NRIs were invited. I was looking forward to meeting Oriya friends there but I was disappointed. On another occasion, I had the privilege of accompanying Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi along with Foreign Minister Natwar Singh, Ambassador P. K. Kaul to the residence of Prof. John K. Galbraith during one of the official visits of the Prime Minister. They discussed many matters of mutual interest. While leaving his house Prof. Galbraith looked at me and finding my physical features somewhat different asked the state I belong to in India. I answered Orissa and his cryptic response was "not many here"?

As I look back, I have reasons to feel gratified that Indo-US relationship within the last two decades has strengthened further. The US remains our largest trading partner, the largest source of investment. We now talk and take steps about the India-US strategic partnership. NRIs are visible in all fields, occupying senior positions and achieving a fair amount of success in their respective professions. They are now a growing vibrant, hardworking dynamic community enriching and realizing the American dream. Time has come for friends from Orissa to take a more active role in the Indian community affairs and project the group as model though numerically small. Jai ho –

Abasar Beuria of Indian Foreign Service was posted as the number 2 man in the Indian Consulate in New York during the mid-eighties for several years. He is now retired from the Indian Foreign Service and lives in Bhubaneswar with wife Tripti



My Experience as a Fulbrighter in the United States

By
Mahendra K. Satapathy

After completing my Masters degree in Botany from Utkal University in 1979, I completed my PhD from Central Rice Research Institute, Cuttack. During 1991-93, I joined as a Post Doctoral Fellow at International Rice Research Institute, Philippines. Having worked with Dr. Paul S. Teng, former professor of Hawaii University, I had a strong weakness to visit the USA in some academic program. Fortunately, while working as Professor of Science at North East Regional Institute of Education (NERIE), my dream came in to reality when I was selected as a Fulbright Fellow to visit USA for three months in 2008.

Fulbright program sponsored by the US government is the International Educational Exchange program designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of the other countries. This program offers the opportunity not only to do advanced research or lecturing in a field but also to develop new relationship with American colleges and to expand the understanding of the United States. The participants get the opportunity to observe each others political, economic, cultural institutions, exchange ideas and embark on joint ventures of importance to the general welfare of the world's inhabitants.

On 20th May 2008, I got the message from USEFI, New Delhi that I have to attend the orientation program for Fulbrighters during 26-28th May at Chandigarh. With a short preparation I started for Chandigarh. It was an exciting experience to interact with about 40 participants coming from different disciplines/ professions such as science, education, medicine, engineering, civil service, forest service etc. from different parts of the country. In the orientation there was discussion about preparation for departure, getting Visa, University system, adjustment to socio-cultural life in US etc.

After coming from the orientation program I contacted Professors of US Universities and finally it was approved that I shall be joining with Prof. Robert B. Blair of the School of Food , Agriculture and Natural Resources(Department of Fisheries, wildlife and Conservation Biology) of the University of Minnesota to study the models of Environmental Education. There was a lot of anxiety in my mind. After finalization of placement, I contacted my cousin sister Mrs. Kalpanamayee Dash and Bhaina Dr. S.K. Dash who are staying at Minneapolis for a long time. They became very happy and wanted me to stay with them. My sister came to receive me in the airport and I was extremely happy to see her after a long gap.

On 2nd October I went to the University (Saint Paul campus) with my sister and met Dr. Blair in the department. He took me around the department, introduced me to some of the colleagues, arranged a computer for me and gave me some books and publications to go through. Within two to three days all formalities were completed such as ID card, Bank account and Library number and my program was sorted out week wise for three months.

As a part of my program I used to go to Deluth with Prof. Blair every week on Thursday to attend evening classes on Environmental Education (EE). Deluth is a small and beautiful town of Minnesota about 200 miles from the University located on the bank of Lake Superior. Evening classes are held in the office of US EPA where a variety of people with diverse background such as teachers, researchers, housewives, retired Govt. servants, come to attend this non-formal EE classes to learn about Minnesota's ecology, biodiversity etc. and become volunteers for the environmental protection program. There used to be a lot of academic discussions, activities, and fun. I enjoyed it by sharing my Indian experiences with them with special reference to environmental protection. Besides enjoying the scenic beauty of Deluth that has colorful trees, during field trips I had the opportunity to see Saint Louis Park, river dam, hydro electric project, harbor etc. I was delighted to see how common people of America are concerned about environment. They come in late hours in the evening to attend classes in order to serve the state/ nation.

My weekly trip to Deluth with Rob was always interesting. In the two hours drive, we discussed many issues such as Indian society, caste system, traditional marriage, Indian education system, University education, environmental problems, energy crisis, and TATA car project.

Besides Minnesota Master naturalist program I also studied the School Yard Ecology Exploration, a science education program for teachers organized by Dr. Karen Obststruber, associate Professor, along with Lis, the Program Coordinator. I could learn how enquiry based approach is used to study environment of school yard. I had interacted with a large group of teachers coming from different schools of the state. During International Education Week (17-21 Nov.), I visited Garlough Environmental Magnet School in Minneapolis to discuss with teachers about environmental education being imparted in their school. I was extremely delighted to see a variety of activities such as stone work, nature classroom, forest study, water harvesting, birds rearing, mobile composting, weather garden, worm waste bin, etc. that motivate and stimulate children and create their fascination for environmental protection. As a whole the school stresses on nature centered education that is key to unlocking learning.

There used to be regular classes for M.S and Ph. D students in Environmental Education in the department. Prof. Blair told me to attend the classes and interact with American students. Prof. Steven Carson was the teacher. In one class he presented on non-formal education. During discussion I shared my ideas and experiences on non-formal EE in Indian context. In US, teachers present the topics in an open manner but my systematic presentation was appreciated by the students.

In the department every Thursday, research scholars present one topic of their research interest so that other participants share in the discussion. On 18th October 2008, I presented a topic "Education for Sustainable Development with special reference to Teacher Training Program in India. There were lots of questions relating to sustainability issue, EE, Eco-clubs, community work in Teacher Training program etc.

My experience of staying with my Nani and Bhaina was exciting. They have a big house at Edina, Minneapolis. Both of their sons, Rajesh and Debesh are married and stay independently and visit home at the weekends. Before my joining she had arranged one student, Rishi, doing his medicine course in the university, to drive me while going to the University. In spite of her ill health, Nani used to arrange my breakfast, lunch pack at about 6.00AM for my travel to the University. After looking in to house hold work she used to go to office and come back at about 4.00 PM. It pains me a lot that she makes it a point to go up to the bus stop at Blake Road at 5.00 PM to bring me on my return from the University. On the first day of my travel I got down from the bus at a different place. Both Bhaina and Nani took a lot of pain to find me and I felt very guilty. My sister used to take me many places such as Minnesota Hindu temple, Farmers market, Malls, departmental stores, bank etc. I was really astonished to find how Indians have constructed a huge Hindu temple at Minnesota where different diets have been put along with Lord Jagannath by the people of Orissa! On the New Year's Day I also went to the temple with Bhaina and Nani who are greatly committed to this temple.

One interesting experience was that in the last week of October 2008, Mr. Praffula Kar, Mr. Mohaprasad Kar the eminent singers of Orissa and Sri Anoop Jalota, the Bhajan Samrat visited this place and made vibrant presentation in the Nath Auditorium of Hindu temple. It was a memorable day for me. On 18th October I attended the Diwali function celebrated at the Thomas Jaller High School, Minneapolis, organized by Indian families. There was lots of fun followed by dinner. Of course no cracker, the most prominent item in India during Diwali celebration. The short English play "33 crores Goddess plus one" was very enjoyable that stressed on why Indians have poor performance in Olympics and the need for a separate god for sports.

I was very close to my sister. In the month of November, my sister came to India for a month. During this period I became very close to Bhaina. While coming back from University, I used to come to his office at Valley View Road by bus and then we travel together to home. On 8th December 2008 there was a lot of snow and my bus from university campus (Minneapolis) to South Station (Eden Prairie) was delayed by one hour. So I could not catch the connecting bus from Eden Prairie to Valley View Road. It was evening and I was getting scared as to how to reach home. An American traveling in the same bus could sense my

discomfiture and asked what the problem is. I explained him about my problem. In spite of bad weather and traffic Jam, he could take me in his car to Bhaina's office though it took him an extra hour. I was really surprised how Americans are positive and helpful to some strange fellow in distress.

The students, researchers and faculty in the Department of Wild Life, Fisheries and Conservation Biology were very helpful to me. We had lots of discussion about Indian culture, caste system, marriage and dowry system with them besides my areas of research. Research scholars such as Lis, Anne and Grant were very helpful to me. During any difficulty, they come for my support. I met some students such as Dr. S. K. Rout and Dr. Mohanty who were working as Post Doctoral Fellows in chemistry and we used to discuss many issues relating to education - there system vs. our system in India. I stayed for two days with Mr. Pronab Mohanty (working in Indian Police Service) a Fulbright fellow from Orissa staying in the University Village and have enjoyed his exciting job experiences besides research program through informal discussions. During my stay I had the opportunity to visit certain departments in the campus. My meeting with Prof. Alfred Finley of science education was really exciting. We had interesting discussion on National/ Indian education policy with special reference to Teachers training program and science education. Prof. Belani of the school of medicine was not only friendly but equally helpful to me and we had a lot of discussion on India Centre at Delhi.

For Thanksgiving Day my co-father-in law (mausa) Sri Saradindu Mishra and his wife Mrs. Lata Misra (mausi) invited me to visit their place in Franklin Park, New Jersey and had sent the air tickets for me. I reached there on 25th November and Mausi had prepared very good dinner with fish curry, rasgula etc. Taking one day rest we started for Washington, D.C. Driving 300 miles we reached Washington at about 1.00 pm to stay with Mausa's friend Dr. Brajendra Mishra, Emergency Care Surgeon, settled in the USA. After keeping bags at his residence, we started for sightseeing in Washington. We moved around the city in a Double Decker bus peeping in to tall buildings, beautiful gardens, parks, embassies etc. We got down near the White House and spent some time there. Half a day of continuous travelling was tiring. So we returned back, had an excellent dinner made by Mrs. Mishra for the Thanksgiving Day consisting of turkey, cranberry sauce, and sweet potato and pumpkin pie. Next day we left Dr. Mishra's house in Washington, D.C. and proceeded to the Atlantic City to watch casino gambling. In India gambling is banned but in the USA it is legalized where people from various walks of life are putting millions of dollars in the game. Mausa, mausi and I played a few dollars but all were lost. In the night we returned back to Franklin Park. Because of bad weather, we could not go out for two days, but instead met some of the Oriya families who lived around the neighborhood. On 1st December we went to New York. In Manhattan, I could see the UNO building, the demolished WTC, Hudson River, the tall Empire State building, China market, Harlem, the largest Macy Department store. The sight at Times Square during evening hour was really exciting. On the next day I visited Princeton University, Durga temple, local market and left for Minneapolis. Both Mausa and Mausi took lots of pain for me and wanted me stay a few days more but my compact program in the University forced me to come back.

During the Fulbright program, I had the opportunity to attend a few conferences such as Professional conferences of Minnesota Teachers held at Saint Paul River Centre. I had the opportunity to speak teachers and teacher educators of diverse background and see a lot of teaching –learning materials. There was a lot of stress on interactive learning. Close to the venue, I visited Minnesota Science Museum which mostly stresses on understanding of science concepts and principles. During 3rd week of November, I went to Alexandria with Prof. Blair to attend Minnesota Naturalist conference. It was an exciting event where environmentalists spoke on diverse issues starting from climate change to secret snakes of Minnesota. I spoke on the biodiversity of Eastern India and there were interesting questions on white tigers, crocodiles, olive ridley turtles, tourist destinations of Eastern India etc. On 18th December there was a big insect fair at Kauffman Union in the Minneapolis campus and about 300 projects on different issues having relevance to environment were presented by school students. I am really surprised to see how creativity is encouraged among students for independent thinking, analysis and interpretation.

Interestingly, Fulbright office Washington organized a Chicago night at Columbia College (Chicago) on 5th December 2008 with the title Print for Print: Contemporary Illustrations and Traditional media. Many Fulbright scholars from neighboring University attended it along with former Fulbrighters from USA having

experience in other countries. It was interesting to meet and discuss scholars of other countries about our programs and activities. Next two days I stayed at Chicago with Mr. Sudip Chakravorty, a Fulbright fellow from India and visited Chicago Science and Industry Museum, Michigan Lake, Aquarium, Art Institute of Chicago.

My visit to USA as a Fulbrighter was very interesting and rewarding. I could see how vibrant the US education system is. There is encouragement and support for independent thinking and creativity. With my experience about the socio-cultural life in US, I found the people of America are very friendly, open, hard working, punctual and positive. Perhaps I could have had a chance to study in this country and imbibed all its greatness.

On completion of my program, I left for India on 2nd January 2009. Both Bhaina and Nani came to drop me in the airport. Bhaina was standing by my side till the security check was over and Nani was waiting in the car. I was feeling a bit emotional. I could see the feelings of Bhaina in his eyes at the departing moment. My sweet and memorable experience in the US will stay with me for a long time.

Mahendra K. Satapathy is a professor of science in the Regional Institute of Education (NCERT), Bhubaneswar.

THE ORISSA FOUNDATION

By
Devi Mishra

1. Sahaya – mentally disabled children in Cuttack.
2. Institute of Orissan Culture.
3. SCB Medical College Library – lifetime grant.
4. Basundhara: 7 year support ended 2002.
5. Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack – computer center creation and library support.
6. Orissa Dance Academy (Guru Gangadhar Pradhan) and Konarak Dance Festival – to promote and preserve Orissa dance styles.
7. Kala Vikash Kendra, Cuttack.
8. BKMM Eye Hospital, Dhenkanal – To cure blindness: so far, from Dec. 2006, 6400 cataracts have been operated on and given vision back.
9. Orissa Development Seminars in OSA convention (for the last eight years).
10. Prof. Jatindra Mohanty (5 grants for review publications in Oriya literature).
11. JOGA, Washington, DC (for training of secondary school teachers in Dhenkanal in Angul districts).
12. 1st and 2nd Orissi Dance Festivals (Washington, DC) – major grants.

Devi Mishra lives in Huntsville, Alabama. He is the founder of the organization.

A Letter on Samant Chandrasekhar

By
Rajat Kumar Mishra

Dear Ritu,

Today is Kumara Purnima. The moon is magnificent. As you know Chandrama manoso jatah, mind originates from moon.... Let me introduce to you one of such brains who paid back the debt to the moon, by unraveling the mysteries of this dearest heavenly body, in the most unique way.

It is not Ramanuja, neither Aurobindo or C.V. Raman: the most original Indian brain, so far, flourished under Orissa's sky. Chandrasekhar Simha Samanata Harichandana Mohapatra is an example of a level of genius which materializes purely by providence. When nature wants to reveal herself, she creates her own windows through which the entire mankind revels in witnessing her profound secrets.

Why am I placing Samanta on such a pedestal? Am I biased because I am an Oriya? No.

We don't know anything about Samanta, except the fact that he was awarded Mahamahopadhyaya for his Siddhanta Darpan and that he invented few rudimentary instruments for measuring height and angles of distant objects. Samanta stunned the scientific world when it came to know his discovery of 4th equation of moon, the equation which had eluded brains like Aryabhatta, Bhaskara, Manjula, Nilkantha, Bramhagupta and Tycho Brahe. His legendary equation, called Digamsa Samskara in sanskrit and eventually famous in all scientific literature as Annual Equation Of Moon, fixed the coefficient constant at 11'27".6(11 minutes and 27.6seconds of arc). Tycho Brahe had calculated the concept very incorrectly, and fixed at 4'30".The modern super computer value is 11'10".There is no argument now as to which brain was superior.

Just imagine, a wobbling, naughty moon diverting the path of her travel by the width of a hair! And someone is sitting approximately 4lacs kilometer away observing it, just by fixing his sparkling eyes on it, night after night. Samant Chandrasekhara, a strict vegetarian, had never ate a full meal in 30 years, suffering from intense colic pain, so much so, that in the middle of the observations he used to roll on the ground to reduce his intense pain. He never travelled beyond 5 kilometers from his home before he completed his 24 chapter, 2500 sloka (2284 being originally composed by him) magnum opus at the age of 34. Samanata never had a chance to see an english alphabet; still he finalized his most astounding equations and tested some utterly innovative instruments.

No body knows which school he attended; his uncle introduced him to few palm leaf scriptures on Astronomy, kept in family collections. His brain flourished by Swadhaya(study by his own intellect) and natural scientific temper which manifested in his unbelievable emphasis on exact measurements to the last fraction possible by mathematics. Nobody understood Moon better than him. We Odiyas should be proud to know that the most advanced scientific papers on astronomy use the terms, Tungantara Samskara(Evection), Pakshika Samskara (Variation) and Digamsa Samskara(annual equation) as a tribute to this profound intellect. In his entire life he didn't believe anything which is not visible, measurable, and proved by several methods of calculations. He started this practice when he was only 14. Looking at the sky, having ancient classical texts like Siddhanta Shiromani of Bhaskara in hand, he realized that stars and planets are not appearing as they should. He felt that errors are creeping into the calculations due to many planetary and cosmic phenomena. As he knew, in Hindu scripture, God had stated, Kalantare tu samskarah chantyatam ganakottamah, means in course of time the corrections must be decided by the expert mathematicians. Young Chandrasekhara knew what his purpose of life was.

A Siddhanta can't be written by anybody as Bhaskara clarifies. A Siddhanti should know each and everything that connects the heavenly bodies in one sutra and should be capable of rectifying the mistakes and improvising upon the calculations. From this point alone, only three Sidhhanatas have received universal acceptance. Suryasidhhanata, by Aryabhatta, Siddhanata Shiromani by Bhaskara and Siddhanta Darpan by Samanta. It is interesting to note that Nilakantha, an expert par excellence, wrote Tantra Sarasamgraha, 500years ago, which is the foundation of higher planetary calculations, but he never gave his treatise siddhanta status, being intellectually honest.

Even after Jogesh Chandra Ray explained in his erudite essay on Chandrasekhar's work, scientific world could not believe for many years that a native astronomer can calculate mean motions of planets, per day up to ten places in sexagesimal system, just by observing the sky with naked eyes!! Once, Professor Ray showed him a small 80 mm telescope. Samanta had deep frustration written on all his face. He exclaimed "Ethiru gotie milithile kete samay mora banchijaithanta!!!" When he pointed the scope on to moon, and asked about the magnification, Professor Ray wanted to know Samanta's own calculation. Samanta startled him by describing the entire magnification in exact scientific way. In another instance, when Venus and Mars were visible on sky, Professor ray asked him about the angular difference and got the reply instantly and on measurement the error was less than .05%.

It was a chance meeting. Samanta met Prof Mahesh Chandra Nyayaratna, Principal of Sanskrit College, Calcutta who was on an official tour. Nyayaratna immediately sensed the unique talent. He referred Professor Yogesh Chandra Ray of Ravenshaw college, Cuttack to evaluate the erudition of Samanta. It was professor Ray's initiative, which rescued Siddhanta darpan, which was lying as a bunch of palm leaf manuscript in Odiya font in Sanskrit language for 30 years. He also invented a diagrammatic graphical method called Parilekha for the calculation of eclipses, summarized his elaborate methods of correction, in 55 tables, each table is needed to reach at the final result.

Last but not the least, Samanta's calculation of distance of sun from earth was an example of scientific audacity. It is surprised to know that before the advent of modern era, the distance of sun from earth was a great point of debate. The apparent visual discs of sun and moon are exactly the same. So for many centuries, it was generally accepted that the distance of sun from earth is only 14 times of the distance from earth to moon. That means the distance was calculated to be only 0.56million kilometers instead of 1.5billion kms. Samanta was not happy about this 14 times concept, but had no means to arrive at the correct value. Finally, after several years of deep thinking and calculations he reached at a value of 154 times of lunar distance. This is the closest value ever calculated by any of the classical brains including Aryabhatta and Bhaskara, who could not improve upon 14 times, the correct value being 390.

This is the reason; he is great, simply incomparable, because C.V Raman and Ramanujam had exposure to best of their fields in western sphere. Tycho Brahe, the most brilliant astronomer of west, had well-organized observatories and Kings and Emperors dined with him. Samanta, was completely disowned by the royal house to which he belonged, lived through complete penury with his children and Government sanctioned Rs 50, monthly ex-gratia payment on his death bed. That is the reason, Nature, the famous magazine, in its 9th March issue of 1899, while discussing a detailed analysis of Siddhanta Darpan with the title Modern Tycho, commented "Prof Ray compares the author very properly to Tycho, but we should imagine him to be greater."

The international journal Knowledge, reported on 1899, in its volume xxii, page 257-258, that "It is a complete system of astronomy founded on naked eye observation only....it demonstrates the degree of accuracy possible in astronomical observation before the invention of telescope."

The great man knew when he would bid farewell to earth. He reached Puri in time and when calculated hour approached, he refused medicine telling his son Gadadhara,"Gadadhara, aau ausadha kahinki? Baram Nirmalya!!!!"

Itti,
Bhaina

American anthropologist W. Y. Evans-Wentz and his Orissa connection

By
Prof. Somnath Misra

INTRODUCTION

Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz was a celebrated international anthropologist and a world authority on Tibetan-Buddhism. He studied Tibetology intensively & wrote several treaties on Indo-Tibet Yoga & Philosophy. He was literally a “Gypsy Pilgrim”; the major period of his world travel included a 30 year pilgrimage tour of Sri Lanka, India, Sikkim and Tibet during early twentieth century. His India pilgrimage included almost all places of religious tourism covering the sacred places connected with Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism & Sikhism, covering not only sightseeing but also deep study of the scriptures. In this paper the author wishes to highlight Dr. Evans-Wentz’s obscure facts of Jagannath-Puri connection of the then undivided state of Bengal--Bihar & Orissa under British colonial rule.

EARLY LIFE & EDUCATION

At the outset, it would be relevant to scan briefly the life story of this erudite world traveler. Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz was born on February 2, 1878 in Trenton, New Jersey into a wealthy American business family of one-time Baptists. He grew up in La Mesa, California, just east of San Diego and turned to spiritualism & theosophy. From an early age Evans-Wentz was disenchanted with Conventional Christianity & interested in psychic phenomena, coming under the influence of Madame Blavatsky’s writings *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* and became interested in the teachings of Theosophy. He wrote in his unpublished autobiography “as I have held myself formally with no one country or race, so I have not allied myself formally with any of the world’s religions. I have embraced them all.” He studied Religion, Philosophy & History at Stanford University & was conferred B.A. and M.A. (1907). Here he studied with & was much impressed with William James and William Butler Yeats.

He then proceeded to Jesus College, Oxford, U.K as a Rhodes Scholar & studied Celtic mythology and folklore. In 1907 Dr. Evans-Wentz began to journey through Brittany, Cornwall, Scotland and Ireland to interview people who were believed to have encountered fairies. His subsequent studies at Oxford enabled him to obtain D.Litt (1910) & to author his first major work “*The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*” (1911), which is in wide circulation. This is one of the most in-depth and scholarly attempts to explain the phenomena of the Celtic belief in fairies. Based on Evans-Wentz’ Oxford doctoral thesis, it includes an extensive survey of the literature from many different perspectives, including folk-lore, history, anthropology and psychology. The heart of the book is the ethnographic fieldwork conducted by Evans-Wentz, an invaluable snapshot of the fairy belief system taken just on the cusp of modernity. There are regional surveys of the fairy-faith in Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Brittany and the Isle of Man.

Evans-Wentz examines each of the hypothetical explanations of the fairy phenomena. Among these are the theories that fairies were a reclusive race of dwarfs, that they are disembodied spirits, or that they are a figment of imaginations. He concludes that they may indeed be a manifestation of inhabitants of a higher reality that only some of us are able to view, let alone understand. We come away from this study with a multi-dimensional view of the fairies, who, much like the grey aliens of UFO belief, inhabit a narrative which seems too consistent to be the product of insanity, yet too bizarre for conventional explanation.

TRAVELS

Evans Wentz travelled extensively, in Mexico, Europe and the Far East. At Oxford he met T E Lawrence (of Lawrence of Arabia fame) who encouraged him to move along with him on to Egypt during First World War. In Middle East, Evans-Wentz along with T E Lawrence fought atop camels. The latter then inspired Evans-Wentz to travel further to the Orient. He boarded a ship from Port Said onto Colombo, capital of the then Ceylon. Thus commenced an expedition which was to last three decades, and which he eulogized as “wandering from the palm-wreathed shorelines of Ceylon, & thence through the wonderland of the Hindus, to the glacier clad heights of the Himalayan Ranges, seeking out the wise men of the East. Sometimes I lived with the city-dwellers, sometimes in jungles & the mountain solitude among the Yogis,

sometimes in the monasteries with monks; sometimes I went on pilgrimages as one of the salvation-seeking multitudes.”

Evans-Wentz initially devoted himself to studying the ancient history, customs & religious tradition of Ceylon, amassing a collection of Palli manuscripts which he later donated to the Stanford. In 1918 he set off on pilgrimage to virtually every major religious site in India- Madurai, Madras, Puri-Konarka-Bhubaneswar (Golden Triangle), Amritsar, Simla, Badrinath, Rishikesh, Benares, Bodhgaya, Calcutta, & finally reaching Darjeeling in 1919; there he encountered Tibetan religious texts firsthand. He interviewed Annie Besant in Madras, (where he briefly got entangled in Theosophical Society machinations), developed close relationships with Swamijis: Satyananda & Shyamananda, & later in his India travels met Krishnamurty, Paul Brunton, Ramana Maharshi (1935), Swamy Yogananda, Sri Krishna Prem & Sunyabhai.

ORISSA CONNECTION

Evans-Wentz visited extensively the Golden Triangle region (Puri-Bhubaneswar-Konarka) of Orissa & studied the scriptures. He was popularly known there as Evans Sahib, & encountered & interacted with celebrities: Vaidyaratna Maguni Brahma Misra (author's paternal grand father), Shri Kuladananda Bramhachari of Jatiababaji Math, & Jagat Guru Sankaracharya Madhusudan Tirthaswamy, Head of Sankaracharya Math. He eulogized these outstanding personalities as “Modern Gurus” and has given brief descriptions about them, as follows (in his book “Tibetan Yoga & Secret Doctrines” ; or, Seven books of wisdom of the great path, according to the late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup's English rendering; arranged and edited with introductions and annotations to serve as a commentary, London, Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1935):

“The late Vaidyaratna Pandit Maguni Brahma Misra, Teacher of Ayurveda, Government Sanskrit College, Puri: It was on New Year's Day, 1921 that the Viceroy & Governor General of India, then Lord Chelmsford conferred on him the title of Vaidyaratna (Gem of Medical Science) in recognition of his eminent attainments. The Editor, who knew him intimately & often enjoyed his hospitality & scholarly assistance, can testify to the saintliness of his character. He was an Ideal Type of Guru, who marries & lives as a householder and works in the world as a Karma Yogin. He was of ancient Brahmin lineage and was blessed with four four sons, all of whom survive him.”

“The late Shri Kuladananda Bramhachari of Jatiababaji Math: He was one of the most beloved Gurus of Madhavacharya & had many disciples, one of whom is kneeling at his side in reverant obeisance. He was most remarkable for his physical appearance & luxuriant growth of hair. To him the Editor is indebted for clearer understanding of some of the deeper problems of Yoga”.

“The late Jagat Guru Sankaracharya Madhusudan Tirthaswamy, Head of Sankaracharya Math Puri, founded by illustrious Sankaracharya himself. He is seated on the seat of Abbotship of the Math. Underneath him is a skin of the royal Bengal tiger. At his right hand stands a brass Kamandalu (water pot) such as is commonly used by mendicants who have made the Great Renunciation: and at his left hand a bamboo staff, symbolical of the Brahmadanda (Staff of Brahma), represented by the spinal column in man, and also indicative of his membership in the Danda order of the Brahma ascetics. He was revered for his remarkable powers of intellect combined with spiritual insight, and to him the Editor gratefully acknowledges indebtedness for his guidance.”

Dr. Evans-Wentz was so impressed & fascinated with India's Yogic & Ayurvedic Health Care System that he decided to establish one Yogashram near suburb of Puri on the coastline of the Bay of Bengal as a Center of Research & Practices on these Cultures. The natural beauty and the clean environment of Puri-Konark sea front attracted him. For this purpose he purchased farm land in two installments (in 1925 & 1927), totaling 300 acres situated between the river Liakhia (a branch of the Kuakhai river) and Ramchandi Temple (famous for the anecdote of how Devi Ramachandi hoodwinked Kalapahad, the Muslim-convert destroyer of Hindu temples) from Sri Sadhucharan Chanda, a Zamindar (land owner) & the office Nazar of Collectorate, Puri. To proceed with his plan he started with deforestation of the locality. Subsequently he faced some difficulties, largely because his frequent tours to other places of Yogic importance in India left him with little time for the Yogashram project. So later he decided to abandon the project. He consulted

with his lawyer, Sri Govind Chandra Misra (author's paternal uncle), second son of Maguni Brahma. Evans Sahib had so much regard & devotion for Maguni Brahma that he sold away the vast land to the latter for only Rs2000 in 1929.

Maguni Brahma, in line with the ambition of Evans Sahib, also desired to establish one Ayurvedic Hospital Care Centre at the Yogashram site. He considered the scenic & wholesome place ideal for Ayurvedic treatment of intractable diseases. The project however could not materialize due to the demise of Maguni Brahma in 1933. Evans Sahib at a later stage desired to repurchase the land to revive his pet Yogashram project and settle down in India permanently. By then there was the onset of World War II and Evans Sahib was ordered in 1933 by the British rulers to leave India to head back to USA.

It is no coincidence that even after the passage of 75 years, the dreams of Evans-Wentz & Maguni Brahma have not lost relevance. The Vedanta Group of Industries headed by Industrialist Anil Agarwal have entered into a memorandum of understanding with government of Orissa to establish a world standard Vedanta University of healthcare & technology in this locality, under the banner of Vedanta Foundation. However, the realization of that dream envisages acquiring a much expanded land area of around 7000 acres. The project would involve the displacement of about 50,000 farmers in 95 villages in the blocks of Chhaitana & Kakatpur of Puri district and thus is facing resistance from the natives. The proposed Vedanta University would involve a sprawling township, an airport, and infrastructure for overseas Culture Tourism & Medical Tourism.

STUDIES ON TIBETOLOGY

The most providential of meetings of Evans-Wentz with spiritual leaders proved to be with Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdub at Sikkim. The Lama, who had already acted as a translator for Alexandra David-Neel & John Woodroffe, happened to be the Head Master & English Teacher of Maharaja Boys' School at Gangtok. He had already been a Tibetan plenipotentiary in India and a staff of XIII Dalai Lama during his Indian exile in 1910. The Lama was a man of considerable learning, spiritual discernment, humility & good humour, & the compiler of an English-Tibetan dictionary. He translated the Bardo Thodol, using Evans-Wentz as his "living English Dictionary." Evans-Wentz referred himself to be the disciple of the Lama. Kazi Dawa Samdup was appointed as a Lecturer of Calcutta University in 1919 & died 3 years later. It was not until 1927 that Evans-Wentz could publish the translation which owed so much to the efforts of the Lama.

The classical Tibetan treaties translated, edited and annotated from Tibetan by Evans Wentz are:

- The Tibetan book of the dead; or, The after-death experiences on the Bardo plane, according to Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdub's English rendering, with foreword by Sir John Woodroffe, London, Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1927.
- Tibetan yoga and secret doctrines; or, Seven books of wisdom of the great path, according to the late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdub's English rendering; arranged and edited with introductions and annotations to serve as a commentary, London, Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1935.
- Tibet's great yogī, Milarepa: a biography from the Tibetan; being the Jetsün-Kahbum or biographical history of Jetsün-Milarepa according to the late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdub's English rendering (2d ed.), edited with introduction and annotations by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1951.
- The Tibetan book of the great liberation; or, the method of realizing nirvana through knowing the mind, preceded by an epitome of Padma-Sambhava's biography and followed by Guru Phadampa Sangay's teachings. According to English renderings by Sardar Bahādur S. W. Laden La and by the Lāmas Karma Sumdhon Paul, Lobzang Mingyur Dorje, and Kazi Dawa-Samdub. Introductions, annotations, and editing by W. Y. Evans-Wentz; Psychological commentary by C G Jung, London, New York, Oxford University Press, 1954.

The later life of Evans-Wentz, this eccentric & insular "gypsy scholar" (so dubbed by his Oxford Professor Dr. Marrett) is not without its intriguing aspects – his friendship with Lama Govinda, his encounters with figures such as Carl Jung & Dwight Goddard, his work on sacred geography, culminating in his last publication, "Cuchama & Sacred Mountains," (published posthumously in 1981) (a worth which

foreshadows the contemporary interest in a resacralised nature), & his defense of the spiritual heritage of the American Indians. He was a highly principled, somewhat puritanical & isolated man, who lived the last 23 years of his life in a down-'n-outers Motel on a mountain near San Diego. He spurned public life & never took on the role of a spiritual teacher. Of his life he wrote – the evidence supports the claim – that he had “striven to love all mankind of all nations & races & faiths...., dwelt in solitude of deserts, of the jungles, of the mountain tops..., sought neither the worldly goods nor worldly honours..., relinquished those things men struggle for most.” Evans-Wentz was a practitioner of the religions he studied. He became Dawa-Samdub's "disciple", wore robes and ate a simple vegetarian diet. He provided financial support to the Maha Bodhi Society, Self-Realization Fellowship, and the Theosophical Society. In recognition of his lifelong work, Oxford University conferred upon him a Doctorate of Science in Comparative Religion in 1931.

In considering Evans-Wentz significance for Tibetology it needs to be remembered that the central Tantric texts of Vajrayan were at that time completely unknown in the West. Those few scholars who knew something about Tibetan tantra, such as John Woodroffe, tended to dismiss it as a degraded form of Hinduism. In defense of Evans-Wentz it must be said that he was always ready to be apprised of errors & inadvertencies; after world War II, his friend Lama Govinda, at that time living in Evans-Wentz modest “estate” at Kasar Devi, near Almorah, (presently in the Indian state of Uttarakhand) came across an authorized block print of Bardo Thodol, which he closely compared with Evans-Wentz translation. Govinda’s corrections appeared in subsequent editions of the text. It must also be said that Evans-Wentz understood Tibetan Buddhism through spectacles tinged by theosophy & by his intent to find in the Himalayas a worldwide “wisdom religion” of whose existence he had been persuaded by his enquiries into Gnosticism, the Egyptian & Greek mysteries & Hinduism. There can be no doubt that he performed a valiant task in bringing the Tibetan texts to Western audience. He was also successful in spreading a view, earlier treated with scholarly derision, that the Vajrayan was neither a degeneration of Theravadin Buddhism nor incompatible with it, but the highest expression of Buddhist esoteric, related to Orthodox Buddhism.

AUTHOR’S CONTACT

The author since his childhood was much fascinated, on learning from his father, Sri Rama Chandra Misra at Puri, about the great adventurer-philosopher Evans Sahib and his encounters with his grand father Vaidyaratna Maguni Brahma, although the latter was dead in 1933 before the birth of the author in 1936. Childhood camping outings to Evans Sahib’s dream Yogashram site in the suburbs of Puri always evoked strange admiration for that wandering “gypsy scholar”. The author neither had any opportunity of meeting Evans Sahib, who had left India since 1939. The author proceeded to USA in 1959 for pursuing higher studies in Metallurgy at the world famous Massachusetts Institute of Technology, situated at Cambridge, near Boston, Massachusetts. He obtained the latest address of Evans Sahib from his father and wrote a letter of courtesy to the former introducing himself. An endearing and affectionate reply was received, which is reproduced below:

“Motel Keystone

San Diego

June 16, 1961

My dear friend from Aryavarta:

I was very pleased to receive your letter. My recollections of the associations with your grand father Vaidyaratna Maguni Brahma Misra and your father and other members of your illustrious family are still very vivid.

It is creditable how students from India become proficient in English & benefit from higher studies in United States of America as you are doing. Many are the problems that India faces today but she can always count on the friendship of the U S A.

Should I, ever be around Cambridge, I shall meet you there and if you at all come this way, please look me up.

Very sincerely,

Yours,

W Y Evans Wentz.”

The very classical & rare tone of addressing as “dear friend from Aryavarta” speaks how intensely Evans-Wentz knew & loved India.

During the author’s 6 year stay in US comprising his first span of higher studies & research period (graduate program of SM, Sc.D, Research Associateship at MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1959-1964; & Research Metallurgist & Physicist at Nuclear Division, Union Carbide Corporation, N.Y., 1964-1965), he did not have any occasion to visit San Diego so that he could have an opportunity to meet Evans Sahib. He however wrote a parting letter in June 1965 on the eve of returning to India to join Banaras Hindu University as Reader in Metallurgy. Evans Sahib replied stating, “I am very happy to learn that you are heading back to Benares. Coming from my holy city of Jagannath Puri, a seat of synthesis of various shades of Hinduism and returning to my other holy city of Benares, a seat of confluence of Hinduism & Buddhism, indicate your tryst with the pilgrimage citadels. I am sure your learning & training in the USA will forge a strong tie between our two democracies--the oldest one & the most populous one. Very sincerely, Yours, W Y Evans-Wentz”.

CONCLUSION

The author joined the Banaras Hindu University in July 1965. Soon after he learnt with profound sorrow that India’s most devoted American pilgrim, Evans Sahib passed away at San Diego on 15 July 1965. Appropriately, his Tibetan Book of the Dead was read at his funeral. In the introduction of this book, he had voiced the noble & grandiose hope that the translation would “serve as one more spiritual strand in an unbreakable bond of good will & universal peace, binding East & West together in mutual respect & understanding, and in love, such as overlaps every barrier of creed and cast and race.” The collection of Palm-leaf manuscripts of W.Y. Evans-Wentz, mainly of 19th century written in languages Oriya, Sanskrit, Sinhalese, and Tamil, along with his papers and artifacts, were bequeathed to the Department of Special Collections and Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library. The artifacts are now on loan to the Ashmolean Museum. The Department of Religious Studies at Stanford University has hosted The Evans-Wentz Lectureship in Asian Philosophy, Religion, and Ethics since 1969, also funded by a bequest from Evans-Wentz.

Somnath Mishra was Principal of NIT, Rourkela. He formerly held Tata chair professor at IIT Kharagpur and was the Director of Biju Patnaik National Steel Institute, Puri.



A Great Moral Legend from Orissa

By
Richard A. Shweder

Is it permissible to kill one person in order to save twelve hundred? What if the one person is an innocent child? What if the one person is your own son? What if the one person is you? What if the twelve hundred are not abstract persons or strangers but rather specific people who are known to you and members of your own in-group or community? What if all of the twelve hundred trust you and have been devoted to you for many years? Are you for the twelve hundred or are you for the one?

The moral legends of Orissa are many; and one of those stories is among the greatest ever told anywhere in the world. For many Oriya readers of this essay the question I just posed (twelve hundred or one?) will immediately bring to mind the legend of Dharmapada. Dharmapada was a 12 year old boy whose name means “the path to righteousness” and can also be translated “at the foot of duty.” He was the son of Bisu Maharana, the Divine Architect, who, according to local legend, designed and built the Sun Temple at Konarak. The Divine Architect undertook the building project at the request of the King and under the threat of a mass execution of his work force if the temple was not completed exactly on time (twelve years, not a second longer) by exactly 1200 artisans (not one person more nor one person less). (Even today “Maharana” is a common surname in the Badhei artisan community in Orissa). In a moment I will retell the story (although in much abbreviated form) based on a version originally told to me in the early 1980s while I was conducting comparative anthropological research with Dr. Manamohan Mahapatra and others on moral reasoning in the Old Town of Bhubaneswar in Orissa, India and in Hyde Park, Illinois in the United States. And I will try to explain the significance of the Oriya legend of Dharmapada for contemporary research on moral psychology.

So, returning to the original question: “Is it permissible to kill one person in order to save twelve hundred lives?” That way of putting the question is associated with an influential school of moral philosophy called “utilitarianism”, which is based on the principle that a moral choice ought to aim to minimize aggregate harm and “do the greatest good for the greatest number”. One lesson I have learned from years of research on moral judgment and reasoning is that despite the appealing simplicity of the utilitarian principle “twelve hundred or one?” it is an artificial and dehumanizing way to describe a moral choice. Why? Because that way of formulating the question makes it seem that moral choice is a “no-brainer” (1200 is obviously a bigger number than 1) and is simply a matter of arithmetic, of calculating and maximizing a “utility”, of being able to count the number of lives that will be lost or saved.

Notice too that the very formulation of that question (“twelve hundred or one?”) presupposes that all individuals and peoples should be treated as morally equivalent, regardless of whom they are. That sparse and narrow framing of the choice forces you to think about the twelve hundred and the one as abstract individuals or strangers devoid of specific personal identities and without actual moral careers or histories of benevolent or malevolent conduct. In order to offer an answer you are required by the slim and narrow framing of the question to view the twelve hundred and the one from such a great distance that you can no longer see the particular features of any of them: you have no choice but to ignore variations in their moral character; you are provided with no information about their past, current and prospective value for your community; you have no choice but to overlook how you and they (he or she) might be related to each other by moral bonds of kinship, guardianship, friendship, patronage or communal identity and solidarity.

Recent research in moral psychology reveals that ordinary folk have a far more complex (because true to life) view of their moral obligations and are not consistently abstract, numeric, and utilitarian in their judgments. Consider the following version of the so-called trolley problem, which is a type of hypothetical question that has become quite popular in contemporary research in moral psychology. “A runaway trolley is about to run over and kill five people, but a bystander can throw a switch that will turn the trolley onto a side track, where it will kill only one person.” This is called “the bystander condition.” When the choice is so described, most people in the world who can count will answer that it is “permissible” for the

bystander to throw the switch, killing one person in order to save five lives. (It is not entirely clear what ordinary folk mean by the concept “permissible” when presented with the trolley problem or whether they mean just one thing. The English word “permissible” might mean any of the following things: “Not illegal,” “Not punishable by either god, nature, conscience or other human beings,” “Not damaging to your reputation,” “Not morally incorrect,” “Likely to be viewed with approval by god, nature, conscience or other human beings”. What we do know is that most people say that the bystander in the bystander condition has “permission” to throw the switch.)

Now consider a second version of the trolley problem. “A runaway trolley is about to run over and kill five people, but a man who is standing on a footbridge over the track can push another man off the bridge, so as to stop the train and kill only that one person.” This is called “the footbridge condition.” When the choice is so described many people in the world (even those who can count) do NOT think it is permissible to push the man onto the track, killing one person in order to save five lives. What is going on here? Is this apparent inconsistency of choice in the two runaway trolley situations a problem with everyday moral judgment, a failure of moral logic and human rationality in the application of the utilitarian counting principle? Or could it be that the inconsistency is merely apparent and signifies a problem of a different and deeper sort, perhaps a failure of utilitarian moral theories to understand the true nature of moral judgment in everyday life? Some lessons I learned from my research in Orissa and from the legend of Dharmapada may help us answer those questions.

Here in a narrative nutshell is the legend of Dharmapada, as I first heard it told in the Old Town of Bhubaneswar. Let me tell you a story. Long ago, King Narashimhadev the First employed the Divine Architect, Bisu Maharana, to construct the Konarak Sun temple. For astrological reasons both the selection of the site of the temple (at a remote location near the Bay of Bengal) and the timing and nature of the construction process had to be exact (1200 artisans working alone and in isolation must build the temple in exactly 12 years). Indeed, their lives were on the line; according to the conditions set by the King the risk of failure of the project would be the execution of the entire work force. The Divine Architect, confident of his abilities and the skills of his twelve hundred artisans, took up the challenge; thus Bisu Maharana left his family behind for twelve years and he and his workmen went into isolation at the remote construction site.

On the night before his departure the Divine Architect’s wife became pregnant and nine months later she gave birth to a son. The son, Dharmapada, was a prodigy, a genius who quickly and easily mastered all the books in the family library. (He was so-to-speak the Mozart of architecture.) He grew up hearing majestic tales about his great father, the Divine Architect. He longed to meet his adored yet absent father, but of course that was forbidden by the orders and conditions of the King. Nearly twelve years went by before his mother would allow him to leave the family home and venture off to seek his father at the distant temple site by the sea. As he set off on his journey to Konarak, Dharmapada’s mother gave the boy two marks of family identity to carry with him so that his father would recognize him – her wedding ring and a distinctive fruit from the family garden.

After a long trek Dharmapada arrives at the construction site and sees the grand Sun Temple. He also sees several of the artisans. Much to his surprise they are despondent. They tell him that the temple is complete except for the capstone, which keeps falling off. There is a mysterious and disastrous problem with the design of the temple which the Divine Architect has been unable to fix or even detect. Unless the problem can be solved by midnight all of them, including the Divine Architect, will be executed by the King.

The boy walks around the temple and quickly spots a minor and easily corrected flaw. “Take me to the tent of the Divine Architect” he exclaims! The artisans bring the boy to the tent of the Divine Architect where the great Bisu Maharana is going out of his mind trying to figure out what went wrong. “This boy says he can fix the temple”, the artisans announce; thereby sending the Divine Architect into a rage over the arrogance of a child presuming to telling him how to design a temple. He drags the boy by the ear to the temple site. The boy points to the flaw, which the Divine Architect immediately recognizes and then corrects. The capstone is successfully placed on the temple and the work is complete, on time.

First there is a great celebration of success but then slowly an anxious and dreadful silence falls over the crowd of artisans. One of the men approaches the Divine Architect and says: "Sir, It is great that we completed the temple on time but if the King finds out that we did this with the help of this boy he will kill us anyway. There is but one way out of this dilemma. It is twelve hundred or one. The boy must be killed; and since you are our leader and the Divine Architect you must kill him."

"But he is an innocent child," the Divine Architect avers, horrified by the proposal. "Nevertheless Sir, it remains twelve hundred or one." The spokesman for the artisans impresses on the Divine Architect the inexorable utilitarian moral calculation and urges him to kill the boy. Reluctantly the Divine Architect agrees to end the life of the one person so that the lives of the twelve hundred might be saved.

Nighttime arrives. With blade in hand Bisu Maharana enters Dharmapada's tent intending to kill him. Standing over the boy's bed he slowly raises the knife and is about to slay the sleeping child when he notices the wedding ring and the fruit from the family garden. He realizes that this brilliant boy is his son; and he awakens Dharmapada and embraces him with joy and tears. Father and son are united, to their mutual delight.

The Divine Architect, together with Dharmapada, approaches the twelve hundred. "This is my son Dharmapada" the Divine Architect proudly tells his artisans, in anticipation of a great celebration. Yet the twelve hundred are unmoved by this discovery. They press forward with their utilitarian logic. "A moment ago when you did not know the precise identity of this boy you were willing to kill him to save us all. Be consistent! What difference does it make if he is your son? The fact is it is still twelve hundred or one!"

Distraught the Divine Architect becomes immobilized in the jaws of this moral dilemma. He begins to go mad, damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. "BARasaha badheire dAyee, nA purare DAYee" is the Oriya expression (here written with English letters), which in English translation means "Are you for the twelve hundred artisans or are you for your son?"

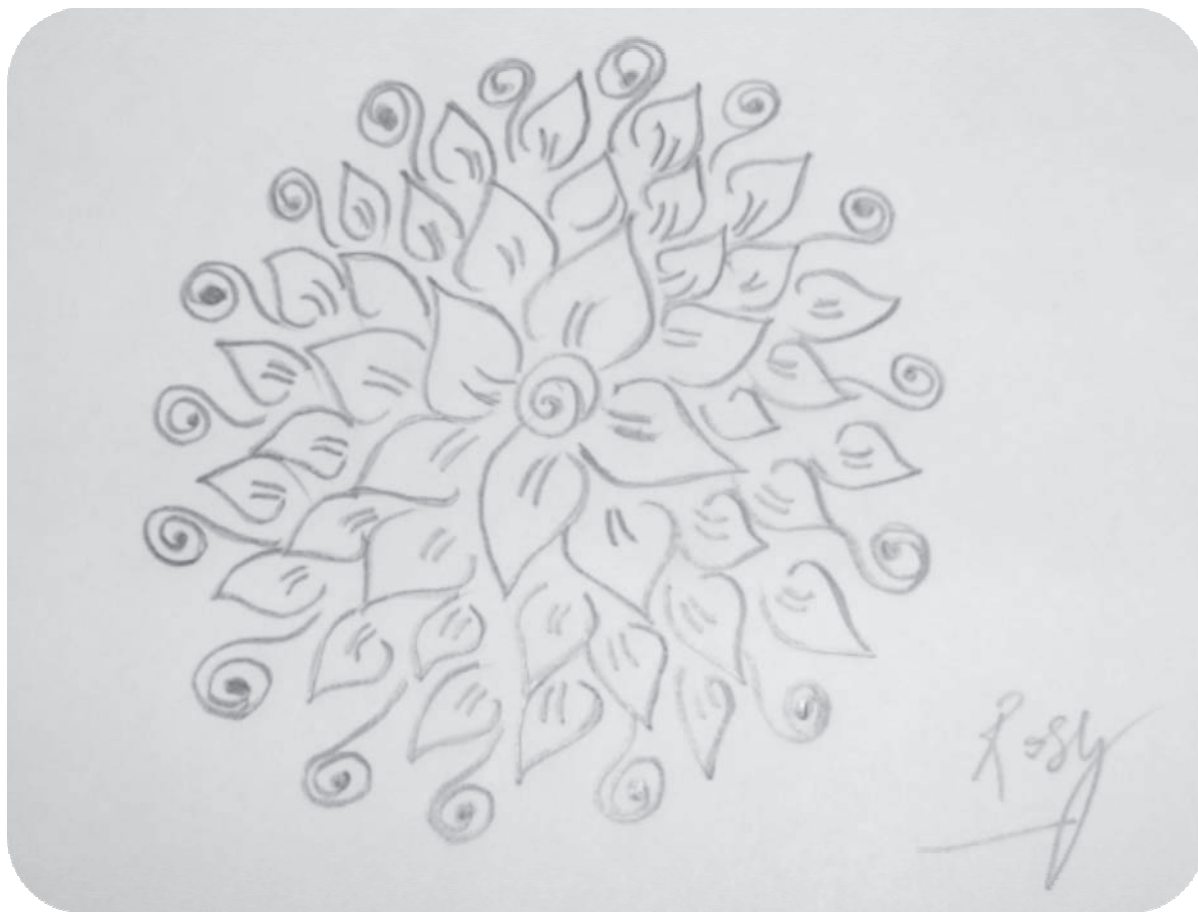
Notice that the Oriya formulation is somewhat ambiguous. Does it mean that one is faced with a simple (and "no-brainer") utilitarian choice between twelve hundred lives and one life; or, alternatively, does it mean that one is faced with a real moral conflict between two different role based obligations, a dilemma in which Bisu Maharana is forced to choose between his protective occupational duties as the Divine Architect towards his artisans and his protective familial duties as a father towards his son? Some of my research on moral reasoning in the Old Town of Bhubaneswar suggests that doing one's role-based duty is a high moral ideal among many groups in Orissa and that an ethics of community and an ethics of divinity play a significant part in everyday moral reasoning. My colleagues and I have proposed a "Big Three of Morality" (Autonomy, Community and Divinity) and have suggested that a utilitarian calculus focused exclusively on the assessment of aggregate harms and benefits for abstract individuals is not the only way to reason about what is right and wrong (see for example the essays by Shweder, Mahapatra and Miller and by Shweder, Much, Mahapatra and Park, available on the website referenced below).

So how does the great story of Dharmapada come to an end? Over the years I have discovered that most of my American students are unable to predict the conclusion of the Oriya legend on the basis of the plot summary I just provided. They almost never anticipate the final dramatic scene in the story. Dharmapada, recognizing his father's moral conflict and observing his incapacitating psychological distress, climbs to the top of the Sun Temple and jumps off, thereby voluntarily engaging in a sacrificial suicide in order to save his father from having to make an immoral or sinful choice between two types of violations of duty. In the end the virtuous soul of this twelve year old boy goes to heaven and is made sacred; and Dharmapada, who is "on the path of righteousness," becomes the heroic Oriya exemplar of a dutiful son.

Now finally, let's return to the trolley problem. Imagine a new version of the trolley problem called "the Oriya Dharmapada condition." "A runaway trolley is about to run over and kill five people, but a twelve year old boy who is standing on a footbridge over the track sees what is going to happen, assesses the situation, and jumps off the bridge and in front of the trolley, so as to stop the trolley and kill only himself." Is it "permissible" for the boy to jump? Here as elsewhere the word "permissible" does not quite do justice to the moral character and complexity of the situation. But at the very least, whatever the sadness

and embarrassment we might feel about such an outcome, we can be filled with awe and greatly admire the boy for his act of heroic sacrifice. In comparison the actions of the adult male protagonist in the footbridge condition (pushing another man off the bridge instead of sacrificing himself) seems undignified, ignoble and almost self-serving; and of course we can now discern one of the ways the footbridge condition is quite different from the bystander condition, where self-sacrifice is not an option and moral judgment has become attenuated that it amounts to little more than being able to count.

Richard A. Shweder is the William Claude Reavis Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Comparative Human Development at the University of Chicago and a Rosanna and Charles Jaffin Founders Circle Member of the School of Social Sciences at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. He began conducting research in Orissa in the summer of 1968, while residing in the home of Sri Nilamani Senapati (I.C.S. retired). He is the author or editor of many books and articles including "Thinking through Cultures: Expeditions in Cultural Psychology", "Why Do Men Barbecue?: Recipes for Cultural Psychology.", "Engaging Cultural Differences: The Multicultural Challenge in Liberal Democracies" and the forthcoming reference work "The Child: An Encyclopedic Companion." Some of his research and essays on moral reasoning can be accessed directly at this website address: <http://humdev.uchicago.edu/shweder-b.html> He wishes to express his gratitude and thanks to friends and collaborators in and from Orissa over the years, including Manamohan Mahapatra, Gagan Dash, Rama Dash, Saradindu Misra, Lata Misra, Prasanna Hota, Rama Hota, Usha Menon, S.K. Menon, Biranchi Puan, S.K. Misra and Nilamani Senapati.



Perception through the Lens of Slumdog Millionaire

By
Sulagna Misra

First, I have to say that this isn't a critique.

It's a series of observations, an analysis of my viewing, and a reflection on one of the warmest and most electrifying movies I've seen in a while. *Slumdog Millionaire* wasn't perfect, but I know that after I saw it, I felt incredible. I had already known I would like it before I had gone in, because it fit the type I liked—the interesting premise, the quirky storytelling device, and, of course, the overall familiarity of the subject matter, but it defied my expectations. The hopeful, love-themed story was at Bollywood levels of intensity (though better made), and I easily identified with the setting and characters.

Here is where I realized that I saw this movie differently than how perhaps my non-Indian friends at college did. I saw layers underneath certain scenes in the movie that I doubt they would've.

When Jamal answered the question about the Hindu god Rama, I predicted the clash of religion. As the pulsing beat of the music and the main character's mother's anxious face forecasted the riots, frustrated emotions burst in my chest, the fatigue of the age-long conflict between Muslims and Hindus in India and Pakistan pressing me with its weight.

Wasn't it just a little more than a month ago that my family and I had watched the news about Mumbai on fire during our Thanksgiving holiday? I had felt uncomfortably separated from it—India felt so far away, but I still felt a scrambling anxiety at the events, nervous about what this changed.

Pakistan used to be part of India. When the British set up arbitrary lines dividing the country, these lines were religious as well. After the Partition, there were violent riots between the Hindus and Muslims in both countries and along the border. This history deeply affects relations between the countries today. What followed the Mumbai terrorist attacks indicated the changes that it would have: tensions between Pakistan and India rose, and the idea of "conflict" frightened me, when I allowed myself to think about it.

The scene of the Hindu extremists yelling with their weapons and the scurrying Muslim children were very easy reminders of these past events and facts.

And then there was Maman's gang of children, trained (against their will or knowledge) to become expert sympathy seeking beggars. My mouth went dry as I felt a cavalcade of anguish inside. I had seen these children in the street when I would visit India, imploring me for a rupee, because as their belly-rubbing and palms pressed together suggested to my non-Hindi speaking self, they were poor and hungry—unlike me. There were so many of them too; crowding around us as we walked down the street, squished together and crouching across from the idols in temples, patting and pulling our clothes when traffic stopped. Their presence and suffering in the movie gave me guilt—it almost felt like my fault, because I knew this sort of thing happened, and these kids existed, but I hadn't done anything to help them.

With this tumult of emotions, I came to a realization: most of the other people who would see this movie wouldn't feel so much, or as deeply, as I did. They would view this scene with a certain amount of distance that I couldn't have, because of the knowledge that I possessed.

The guilt went deeper—that I couldn't just feel sympathetic to the characters and wonder at their predicament; instead I saw them in a different perspective, examining the world that director Danny Boyle presented through a filter of my own experience.

If this story had been set somewhere else, I would've just felt the usual consideration in the characters and the interest in the culture. But it was set in India, infusing the story with that which was permanently ingrained in me. My view was set to a certain slant of light that I couldn't stop myself from seeing.

But as I ruminated on this idea, I wondered if this difference was actually a bad thing. My study of media in college had revealed the idea of "active audiences," where certain people would see media in different ways, creating their own impressions and making their own conclusions. Everyone had their own special filter through which they viewed the world, and this film; it was a lens built from their own experience and personality and mind process, and it wasn't the wrong way of seeing, just a different one.

However, there are ways to analyze this type of differences in perception. With these "active audiences," there are three basic ways that people can take in certain types of media.

First, there is the preferred and usually dominant position, which is how the producer of that certain type of media wants you to absorb the media. Most people recognize Danny Boyle's vision as one of a fiercely hopeful movie that would be uplifting and beautiful, which is evidenced by its critical acclaim and box office status.

Then there is the viewpoint of the opposite side, the oppositional position, which sees the movie in the opposite respect that Danny Boyle had in mind. They might find the movie to be a mere "feel-good" movie without any real value in its story or construction. There are also others who see that Boyle's incorrect depiction of India is one of extreme poverty and corruption. Some of these people may even go as far as saying it "ennobles [this] poverty", as Owen Gleiberman does in his Entertainment Weekly review of the movie, because it "turns the horror of broken Indian childhoods into a whooshingly blithe, in-your-face picaresque."

Then there is the third type, the negotiated position, where the interpretation is independent of the producer's intent. I didn't need to be influenced into feeling for the characters or properly informed of Jamal's life hardships and sufferings. I already identified with the people onscreen because of their familiarity and the background they shared with me, even with the multitude of differences between us, and I recognized the hardships as problems my parents would discuss with other family members or ones I would witness when I visited India.

And then there were the cultural additions that Boyle added to the film that were more than pieces of artistry and added more than worldliness for me—I knew them. Little things would make me smile, like the way I sometimes didn't even need the subtitles (though my Hindi is still hazy), and how the main characters exclaimed over famous actor Amitabh Bachchan (and how Salim's character mirrored the "Angry Young Man" archetype the actor always played in his youth), and the wondrous music composed by the much loved and well known AR Rahman, especially the usage of Sonu Nigam's "Aaj ki Raat" and the earnest Bollywood-like dance sequence at the end.

I also realized that I would always hold this "negotiated" position in my view of any media that referenced India and its culture. There was an everlasting connection between us, not just because of my family, but also because I felt a certain amount of responsibility to it, having visited India constantly and seen its separate existence outside of the usual American perspective, but grown up here with that said perspective.

Similarly, every one of us sees the world through their own lens; mine is just markedly unique in this instance because of the different and distinctly Indian American experiences that affect it, and the importance these experiences play in viewing this type of media.

Entrepreneurship Development by Odia-Americans (Odias) in the Americas and Odisha
The Role of the OSA: A Virtual Case Study

By
 Amiya R. Nayak

Background: Entrepreneurship development by Odia-Americans (Odias) in the Americas and Odisha (India) is a recent phenomenon and challenging topic for discussions. The idea of entrepreneurship by Odias is just beginning and offers new types of opportunities. The OSA is primarily an Odia socio-cultural non-profit organization with new interests in contributing to the entrepreneurship development by odia youth. Kalinga Youth Entrepreneurship Award (KYEA) program during the OSA 2009 is going to be a new event. We appreciate the generous contributions of Mr. Dan Mishra (sponsored), Dr. Ranjan Dash (coordinator), the volunteer team and OSA (host) for setting up the KYEA event. Odia-American name and identity should be globally promoted as an ethnic Indian brand. The vision of Odia entrepreneurship ideas are economic/social/cultural/community/organizational/people development and change in business cultures in Americas, Odisha and wealth creation through entrepreneurship and new ventures development.

Kalinga Youth Entrepreneurship Award (KYEA): The proposed KYEA program organized by OSA can provide a good learning experience for the old and new generation Odias for both social entrepreneurship and commercial entrepreneurship developments in Americas and Odisha.

The Role of The OSA: OSA and its members can contribute in the following two areas:

1. Social Entrepreneurship Development - OSA (organization) and its members have had certain experiences in community socio-economic development oriented projects. The focus should be Giving Back to Odisha, the roots of the Odias. The foundation, trust, society, NGO, 501(c) (3) and related non-profit entities are working models to pursue social entrepreneurship that are developmental, philanthropic, voluntary and societal.
2. Commercial Entrepreneurship Development - Can be challenging, but mentoring, information exchanges and early resources may be possible, if appropriate networks may be built and leveraged. Issues-cultural needs confidentiality and appropriate mechanism. StartUp, New Venture, or Company (Inc., S Corporation, LLC, LP, Limited, Pvt. Ltd. and other for-profit entities) are functional models to pursue commercial entrepreneurship.

The Top-10 Strategic Ideas on Opportunities and Challenges in Creating Various Types of Entrepreneurship Models by Odia-Americans (Odias) in Americas and Odisha

Opportunities:

1. Technology Entrepreneurship – Needs Discovery, Eureka Moments, R&D, Innovation, Invention, Science/Technology/Engineering/Design/Creativity, Intellectual Property/Patents, New Products, Services and Solutions. Academic and/or Industry experiences are the requirements. The technology sectors can be biotechnology, nanotechnology, information technology, consumer technology, internet and knowledge sectors. Both first generation and second generation Odias may pursue this model.
2. Academic/Educational Entrepreneurship – Barriers to entry in the Americas, because of established, competitive, quality educational and research systems. High potential opportunity in Odisha. Quality and offerings are issues in Odisha. The human resources, training and placements offer potential opportunities.
3. Micro Entrepreneurship - Microfinance, nanofinance, small credits, soft loans, micro-business and related tiny businesses. Barriers to entry in the Americas. However,

micro-entrepreneurship is a big opportunity in Odisha, because of under-development.

4. Career Entrepreneurship – As a new career path. Both first generation and new generation Odias may consider this evolving career entrepreneurship model.
5. Shop-Owner Entrepreneurship – Dokan/Store Model (retailing) is the most successful entrepreneurship model in Odisha. The typical American store model to sell products to the American community/immigrant ethnic community is a gap area for the Odias in the Americas.
6. Accidental Entrepreneurship – Typical model where people trained in certain areas pursue a business opportunity as an accidental entrepreneur in his/her area of expertise or in a totally different area. America is a land of opportunity and owning your business is an American dream.
7. Investor Entrepreneurship – Typically this category may use earned wealth/investments by acting as an angel investor, partner, seed capital provider, venture capitalist & co-founder of firms.
8. Social Entrepreneurship – Social ventures that contributes to community development (local/national/international) in various areas such as: education, poverty, health, agriculture, food and socio-economic development. This is a feasible model that can create an impact in human lives and communities where service to be provided.
9. Virtual Entrepreneurship – Emerging model. Exploratory. Uses people, computer, internet, networks and can do business, transactions and services anywhere, anyplace & anytime on virtual platforms (Google, social-networking, Twitter, social-media, e-advertisements, mass campaigns).
10. Odia Entrepreneurship – This term is coined to promote odia entrepreneurship in Americas and/or Odisha by the Odias, and odia entrepreneuring as a brand new culture, mind-set, new career and opportunity development. Selling the brand Odisha and Odia are most challenging issues, particularly to market Made in Orissa (now Odisha) Products, Brands, Services, and Manufactured in Odisha and marketed in western countries. Some of the products/services can be such as: Odissi Dance (cultural/entertainment product), Agro/Spices/Herbals (foods, ingredients, ayurvedics), processed minerals, fishery, Sambalpuri Silk, Hand-Crafts (Pipili Chandua), Cuttack silvers filigree, Rasgoolas (Pahal, Salepur), more recently IT software exports and services, and Odia Human Resources for the Global Markets.

Other Entrepreneurship Models - Family Entrepreneurship (second, follow-up generations), Service Entrepreneurship (services industries, contracts, vendors), Franchise Entrepreneurship, Serial Entrepreneurship, Individual Entrepreneurship (Consultant, Sole Proprietor, Independent Founder), Internet Entrepreneurship (WWW), Drop-Out Entrepreneurship (Microsoft, Google, Youtube, Facebook) and Corporate Entre/Intra-preneurship.

Challenges:

The challenges are - entrepreneurship culture development, education, information, networks, role models, mentoring, investments, incubators, conservative mind set, teaming, NRO-RO partnerships, high-risk activity, accepting failures and converting concepts/ideas into a business. Entrepreneurship development requires congruence between people, ideas and investments, and of course a marketable business plan.

Amiya Nayak (PhD, MBA) is a management consultant, generalist and emerging bioentrepreneur, with broad-based interests in entrepreneurship (business/social), entrepreneurship (corporate new venture) and public-private-partnership development. Amiya has been interested/involved in America-Odisha business/development initiatives and is a life member of OSA.

Love Marriage

By
Arun Misra

Over 25 years, ago when I used to teach college, had a two door hatchback to drive, and was living in a small apartment in a low income housing complex, in downtown Atlanta, our life was just beautiful, and our needs so few. We went places, even on long vacations in the hatchback, with three teen age children and wife. No one complained, except my wife occasionally, that the car was too small for five grown ups. The apartment had two bedrooms, and only one bath, consisting of a sink, and tub with shower, for five adults. The mornings were kind of difficult and an exercise in continence. We didn't then know what a half-bath was. All the children were in school, using the free bus service. My wife finished college, got a job, and bought a brand new four door big expensive car, as her job was too far, 200 yards away from home. One American dream realized. I left academia, and started selling insurance, had the same hatchback with no radio and no air- conditioning. I was tempted to use the new car for my business, but did not succeed in getting it. Next the apartment seemed too small to my wife and she drove all over the town to buy a house. But it would take another 9 years to realize the second dream. I was so attached to my cheap place, and would not want to move out and shell out more money, which I did not have. My wife went ahead and rented another apartment, in the same cheap complex, and started living on her own with more space. I was still at the old place, with all the three children. My wife ran back and forth to cook at both places, and took care of both homes. We eventually, advised our son to move out and live with my wife while I stayed at the old place with the two daughters.

My brother's family came from England for a visit, and wondered why we had two separate apartments, and not a bigger one. We explained, the apartments bigger than ours' did not exist in the low income housing complex, and we, especially me, did not want to move away. Then came, a friend's family from Virginia to visit, and spent a weekend with us, they asked for my wife and son, and I took them to the other apartment, where they were. My wife got mad, and wanted that I should have called her and asked to come to the old place, and may be stay there, as before, for the weekend. My friends thought, we were separating, which my wife suspected that they will, hence want to spend time all together at one place. But my friends, asked me anyway, 'Apka Love Marriage Tha Kya', (was yours a love marriage) seeing us at two separate places, suspecting our marriage being dissolved.

Since a traditional arranged marriage, does not have a situation of separation, living separately and eventual divorce, hence the question on 'love marriage', which is not expected to last very long anyway. Most marriages in India are still arranged, with the help of parents and seniors on both sides of the family. Divorce is still a taboo, and exception.

No one walks out of wedlock, as the decision for marriage involves numerous people from two families, and the society/village at large. It works like the US Congress, where you can vote a dissent, but once the opinions are counted, the majority wins, the so called 'family-whips' control the entire affair, and the matrimony, thus, can not be dissolved, without a long parliamentary practice. The process may not be pleasant for the divorcing couples, but most of the time they give in to the pressures, and the marriage is saved. Many a times it may end up in an unhappy marriage carried out for the benefit of children, as well as for the convenience of both sides of the family. And mostly due to the inconvenience, of going through the whole process again, if one wishes to remarry. All this made a lot of sense for me. Hence I tried to arrange the marriages of all three of my children, but did not succeed in either. My two younger brothers in England and India, both had 'love-marriages', as had our three children in USA. In my case, in remote Bihar, India back after finishing college, I came home for summer vacation, in the 1960s, and my father said to me, 'you better get a hair cut, as we will take you to get married this weekend in a different town'. I was 19 then, had finished the masters in science, earlier than most of the students in my age group, and was considered bright, also had lived the city life for several years, where I was now teaching college for couple of months. But I had no courage to ask anything to my father, or to anyone else, hence got married to a 16 year old girl, from a far away place, selected through arranged marriage. People ask me, when you saw your wife first. I answer, four days after getting married. At the podium, the bride was under a veil. After the wedding we were separated, and allowed to be with each other, four days later on an auspicious day. We are still together, for the last 45 years or so, with plenty of turmoil, dissensions and heartaches. We did not separate, in spite of the numerous problems we have had, as it was not a 'love-marriage.'

Twenty-five Years of Orissa Society of New England and the Story of Oriya Activity in New England

By
Satyabrata Mishra

Orissa Society of New England (OSNE), a Chapter of the Orissa Society of the Americas completed twenty five years of existence last year and a community Silver Jubilee event is being planned to be celebrated on Saturday, August 1, 2009. We invite all well wishers and friends to join us to help us celebrate our community in this northeast swath of the US. This essay gives a short synopsis of Oriyas settling in New England and the activities of OSNE during the past twenty five years.

Oriya Settlement in NE and Early Activities:

Oriyas arrived in New England area in the late '60s, Dr. Gauri Kumar Das in Boston, MA and Dr. Jogeshwar Rath in Providence, RI being among the first arrivals. With Dr. Bhabagrahi Misra in Hartford, CT a triad was formed that had the vision to create the foundation of the Orissa Society of the Americas as a gathering place for the Oriya immigrants. They were joined by Chandrasekhar Mohanty of RI, who continues to be the person of longest tenure living in the New England area. The early years were facilitated by the influx of students who arrived for higher education in the area. They included Nityananda Mishra, Nagabhusan Senapati, Dhiraj Pradhan and Prasanna Samantaray. Kabita Sinha, a skilled Odissi dancer, settled in Quincy, MA, with her husband Kenneth Lombard and became active in community building. Bijoy Misra, Prafulla Padhi, Debendra Das came to New England area in the early 70's. The famous Indian physician Dr. Somanath Prusty arrived in Boston at this time and maintained his practice in the local hospitals. Dr. Somanath Dash also moved to Burlington, VT, in late 70's. By 1975, the area had a sizable Oriya population to host games in community picnics. We had our first community puja in 1976 organized by Prasanna Samantaray in his apartment.

Guru Sri Kelu Charan Mahapatra visited Boston in April of 1976, with Maneka Thacker of Toronto and the seed of the cultural activities in New England was sown with his visit. Shashi Nayak, the renowned Tabla player arrived from Europe and operated a music studio in Brookline, MA. Through his work Orissa became visible in

Boston area and Bijoy Misra helped him to put Oriya tunes into classical orchestra. Oriya music icon Sri Akshaya Mohanty visited Boston along with the famous dancer Dr. Minati Mishra. Nityananda Mishra negotiated this visit and the arrangements were followed by Bijoy Misra. We had our first cultural event in local school in Cambridge, MA, and we treated the local New England cultural milieu with Oriya music and Odissi dance. The acclamations and the reception were novel and new.

The Oriya population in New England got a boost with the arrival of Laxmi Charan Padhy and his wife Sudeepa, who became excellent community hosts in the area. They were followed by Surendra Patnaik and his family, several brothers and sisters of Chandrasekhar Mohanty collectively known in those days as Mohanty family, Indubhusan Das and his family and Rajendra Roy and his family. The picnics got larger in size and by 1982, the picnic was arranged in a public park arranged by Rajendra Roy. This also marked the arrival of the present author with his family. Many older residents meanwhile had relocated to different parts of the USA for professional work and job transfers.

The genesis of OSNE began in the summer of 1983. I moved to Framingham after getting a job offer in town. We befriended Nihar Mohapatra also working in R&D of Prime Computer. He introduced us to Budhinath Padhy, his batch mate at RPI, then working for Digital. Budhinath was then a "forced" bachelor (his family was still in India). He introduced us to Godavarish Panigrahi, also then at Digital. Chandrasekhar Babu's brothers and sisters, Mantu Babu, and Indu Bhusan Das were in RI. In the summer of 1983 I organized a picnic with potluck dinner. Chandrasekhar Babu and his wife, Rita, had suggested inviting Dhiraj Pradhan, then a professor at UMass, Amherst. Although everyone had agreed to prepare food and come, that Saturday morning heavy rains were predicted. My only recourse was to divert the venue to the

backyard of Gadavarish Babu's house. He was then the only Oriya in the neighboring area with a house! That event too was well attended thanks to the generosity of the Panigrahis.

Meanwhile, Bijoy babu with the help of Shashi Nayak tried to create inroads into the larger Indian community in the New England for the future propagation of Oriya culture and the efforts paid dividends when they hosted the noted singer Md. Sikandar Alam in September 1983. Shashi Nayak's studio got abuzz with Oriya music and great Sambalpuri tunes and then we went on to create a popular ghazal circuit in more folksy settings. They made money by serving Oriya music and thought about holding the account in a formal way by forming a formal OSA Chapter.

The beginning of OSNE:

I will call Dr. Bijoy Mohan Misra the founding father of OSNE. On November 17, 1983, Bijoylaxmi and I organized a birthday party for our daughter, Lira. All the local Oriyas of New England (that we then knew) were in attendance, including Mausī (mother of all the Mohanty brothers and sisters from RI). As the evening progressed and we were talking about the Alam concert of past summer, Bijoy Babu expressed all the difficulties raising money, and its distribution, etc. He suggested forming a "society" that would handle all such group events in the future. And thus was born the Orissa Society of New England. The "general body" of available 20 to 25 adults and children at this "meeting" elected the first office bearers. Godavarish Panigrahi as President, Nihar Mohapatra as VP, and me as the first Secretary. The first group event was held in summer of 1984 with a few adult and children's programs at Brophy Middle School, Framingham. At this meeting Dhiraj Babu became the 2nd President, Mantu Babu (Surendra Patnaik) the VP, and Akhaya Mohanty the Secretary. The first Ganesh Puja by OSNE was held in Bijoy Babu's Cambridge apartment by the new office bearers.

OSNE came to spotlight immediately by helping to sponsor the dance recital of Sanjukta Panigrahi at Sanders Theater of Harvard University in the fall of 1984. With the earlier success of Oriya music, we went on to feature the music genius Raghunath Panigrahi with an ethnic concert catering to non-ethnic audience. We formed an Oriya school for children and our Oriya children chorus group was formed. Our troupe performed in the OSA Convention in Toronto and was highly appreciated. Our local children keep strong interest in music and several young people have developed strong talents in instrumental and vocal music. One of our early OSNE boys, Siddhartha (Sidu) has gone forward to be a professional opera singer.

Bijoybabu became the President of India Association of Greater Boston in 1987 and helped arrange the visit of two Oriya artisans for the India Festival he was organizing at the Boston Museum of Science. We had the pleasure of displaying Orissa arts publicly for the first time and Sri Raghunath Behera and Sri Somanath Maharana made us proud by the live display of their craftsmanship to thousands of Museum visitors. Filigree and palm leaf writing became the focus at the museum along with other arts like shawl making, saree weaving, sitar making and metal sculpting. OSNE had the pride of presenting Upendra Bhanja through an India Bride Show and our Odissi costume and beautiful gestures of Gitanjali Rath with Odissi music stole the show. OSNE also had the privilege of creating an exhibition of Orissa arts and crafts and we had an excellent presentation.

With our growth and confidence, we offered to take responsibility of hosting the OSA convention in 1988. Our dreams were shattered when suddenly the chapter became split in two, which was the pattern in other Chapters by that time. We had to mourn the loss of a young friend who lost his life through a road accident while returning home from an organizing meeting. With the permission of the OSA, we had to fold off our efforts. It has taken a long time to heal the wounds.

Regular Social Events

The Society routinely conducts three social get-togethers to celebrate Ganesh and Saraswati Puja, as well as an annual picnic in summer. During each of these Puja events our children have shown their talents in music and dance. Around 1998 another fall events. Kumarotsav, was added when Mr. Jyoti Das, and Ms. Mona Lisa Pattnaik were in office. A fifth event was added in 2002: Holi (to usher in the spring). These last two events have been suspended for the past two years.

Cultural events: Over the years this chapter has hosted several artists from Orissa. Most notable among them are Odissi dancers, Smt. Sanjukta Panigrahi, and Smt. Geeta Mahalik. Notable vocal artists performing in this area have been Pt. Raghunath Panigrahi and his son, Pt. Prafulla Kar and his son Mahaaprasaad (several times), Sri Pranab Patnaik, Smt. Bhubaneswari Mishra, the two sisters: Suchitra & Sangeeta Mishra, Mr. Sikandar Alam and his daughter Nazia, Smt. Susmita Das among others. The members have also shown their talents from time to time. In 1986 an annual function was held in Shrewsbury Middle School where members witnessed adult drama (under the direction of Bijoy Babu), children's songs and dance drama (directed by Gitanjali Rath), solo Sitar and Harmonica recitals. We have seen ballet performances of Vinita and Sunita, Bharata Natyam recitals by Lira, Bijayaa, and Abritee, flute, violin, and recitals with other musical instruments by children too many to name. We have seen them as amateurs developing to professional levels. Our children have represented the Society at functions organized by the India Association of Greater Boston and India Society of Worcester.

Charitable work: The office bearers and members have sincerely volunteered time and energy to collect funds, clothes, food, for charitable work, such as, the Maharashtra earthquake, mega-cyclone of Orissa, the recent Tsunami that hit India and Southeast Asia. The Society has donated money from its funds to a variety of charities and NGO's in with focus on Orissa, including IAFF, SEEDS, THRIVE, etc.

Growth and vibrancy: When I was the Secretary the first savings account I had opened for the Society had \$65 and change. The total membership was around 30. Times have changed. A lot more of our Oriya brothers, sisters, nephews, and nieces have moved in and out of the area. Although I do not have the exact count, the Oriya population in NE could very well exceed a hundred families. Of course, New England is a big area, too. The number truly rose in late 90's when Y2K created an influx of Computer professionals. Oriyas in the area have advanced rapidly in academics, business, and entrepreneurship. The 2nd generation is even more vibrant.

At every society gathering I find a new member or few being introduced. When I see the gleam in their eyes and smiles on their faces I feel proud. Truly, from a humble start in '83 we have taken a giant leap in 26 years. And now you know OSNE a bit better, because now you know the rest of the story!!

PS: Please join us, if you will, on Aug. 1 to celebrate our Silver Jubilee and see how we are doing. We do aspire to host an OSA convention in the future on the foundation of success of this little celebration.

Satyabrata Mishra, Founding Secretary, OSNE lives in Shrewsbury, Massachusetts.



Rhythm and Resonance



Requiem of a Cocooned Spirit

By
Manoj Panda

There lived a pretty princess,
In a city with nine gates;
Ten attendants followed her always
Each having a hundred mates.

A five-headed reptile kept its vigil,
In and out of city every where;
With matchless care for its people
Quashing threat from anywhere.

One fine soothing breezy morning
Birds were crooning melodious tunes;
Blossoming flowers swaying and singing
Relishing the vernal grace in triune.

A handsome charming prince then pass by,
This lovely outskirts blooming dale;
While the princess roaming in there,
With her trusted chaperone regale.

Four eyes then when met one another,
Love trapped them at maiden sight;
Wedding bell then could wait no longer,
Honoring the moment approaching right.

One's state of emotion twinned in other,
As years rolled on identity grew stronger;
Prince lost in princess and princess in her lover,
Heedless for storms, gathering further.

Meanwhile arrived a powerful chieftain
with an army of eighteen score and five;
Each one had one more to ordain,
making the assemblage ready to dive.

Though the fighting going on long time,
Nobody deigned any attention;
Guarding snake turn into pieces,
Fulfilling foregone conclusion.

By now prince is old and fragile,
Left alone by his kinsfolk aboard;
Nobody came to save his life,
When the city fell with its lord.

Thus is the story of mortals around
Foresight needed to save one's crown;
Carefulness for this eventual bound,
would save one from one's gravy drown.

To win over unyielding villain apparent,
Relentless practice should lead the way;
The shield of detachment and selfless devotion
Would seal one's victory in precise way.

KALINGA

By
Dr J P Das

The day gallops away
riding on horseback
over the dilapidated
rocks of Dhauli hills.

The invisible hands of Time
chronicle across the skies
the ironies of history.

Layers of legend
lie strewn across the landscape.
The fading rock-edicts
keep repeating the arrogance
of a dubious victory.
The ancient red earth
connects one age with another.

As the echo of the last conch shell
is drowned in the wind,
the peak of the hill puts an end
to the strategies of devastation.
The tiny flower in the shrub
lifts its head
like a veritable victor.
The silent waters of river Daya
flow like blood.
The trees, mute witnesses,
point to the east
with their new branches.

No one wins;
no one loses.

At the break of dawn
weary warriors move on
to the humdrum battlefield
of their daily grind.

Leaving Kalinga behind,
wrapped in a legend,
wearing a monk's habit,
Ashoka walks towards
his own nirvana.

(Translated from the original Oriya)

Jagannath Prasad Das was awarded the prestigious Saraswati Samman recently as a tribute to a multifaceted talent from modern Orissa. A poet, painter, dramatist, actor, short-story writer, novelist, translator, critic of art literature and cinema – Dr. Das's illustrious career spans several decades. He lives in New Delhi.

Somber Silence

By
Surya Nayak

She was a somber Silence, in a snow-lit night
Her eyes were nothing but illusion, Beyond point
Lips were moist and lusciously-fake.

Breasts were full and deceptively-talkative
Legs were silky and misleading.
I watched her endlessly.

When my eyes are fixed on her
She smeared into eternity.

I looked around with my searching eyes,
Saw,
a shadow in darkness;

Emptiness, engulfed
my de-fleshed body.
My skeleton mocked at me, I broke without pain.
Painless, as I was, I stood still, and Closed my eyes
to peace

Surya Nayak writes poetry both in English and Oriya. He has been published widely in different leading magazines and has published several books of poetry both in English and Oriya. Besides writing poetry, Surya has written several Oriya lyrics which are recorded in Orissa in the form CDs and audio cassettes. His lyrics are sung by Subhas Dash, a leading singer of Orissa and music are rendered by Subhas Dash, Sujata Nayak & Abhijit Mujamdar

Kanya Sahasra Nama

By
Babru Samal

She came
To be adored, to smile, to cry
To dance and play
But what should I name her?
I want her to be the abode of my wishes
Aasha, Mamata, Maya, Nirmala, Priya,

I want her to be symbol of tenderness
Kabita, Lata, Hemalata, Kusumalata
And represent the depth of creativity
Alpana, Kalpana, Geetanjali,

She should symbolize Gaia's avatars
Aruna, Atasi, Banani, Barsa, Deepti,
Jharana, Kakali, Maushami, Nishita, Rashmi,
Sabita, Usha,

All the glories of my culture
Aarati, Archana, Aradhana, Bandana, Gayatri,
Minati, Puja
And the mythical devis
Ahalya, Annapurna, Ambika, Apsara, Bharati
Devajani, Gopa, Janaki, Shakuntala,
Should find abode in her.

I wish her to be the best of the best,
Ananya, Anisha, Anupama, Aparajita, Aseema
Nirupama

I want her to flower and become
Charulata, Hemangini, Hiranmayi
Kamini, Lalita, Manasi, Manaswini,
Manini, Manorama,
Meenakshi, Nayonika, Priyanka, Sukanti and
Sulochana

But I wish she will be also one
Who will wonder and look
Will find pleasure in what others overlook
And love to learn, teach and connect,
OK
I will name her
Manisha.

Aspiration

By
Shovan Pradhan

Oh my beloved
Cant I write about the beauty of this universe
Intricate laws, discoveries, truth in lucid way

Cant I express my beautiful emotions and
observations

In a simmering and immaculate way
Cant I write about the truth which mercifully
illuminated in my meditation

Cant I dedicate myself entirely as a true seeker
Where every moment being molded in selfless
service

Where the mind is always free
Where the emotions are in service of Infinite
Where I cant see evil anywhere and any thing
And become true observer of Your play
Where blissfulness of Your activity always engulf me
Where idealness, sloth and inertia of body and mind
Never touch me and every moment of my life
Being utilized in blissful, meaningful activities..

Where each of my expression, feelings, thought and
knowledge

Being dedicated for others
Where I will never away from my indwelling Soul
And every cell of my body, every corner of my mind
Every point in my heart and every bit of my
intelligence

Will observe and obey Your intrinsic command..
Let all my past bad work, activities and impressions
Never ever again have enough power to pull me
from my righteousness

Where YOUR consciousness be my guiding force,
commanding entity
For my entire existence

Where love for You will always increase

Let my devotional service towards You, ever grow

Let I become Your perfect instrument
Let me give enough strength and intelligence
So that, can manage to do everything to Your aught
most satisfaction

Let I be ever awake and Your love descend to every
aspect of me ...

On the River Bank

By
Rabi Prusti

Behold the little boy!!!
With a silent look on the river bank
As I was walking by, he asked,
"Have you seen the bottom of the River?"
"No, I wish!" I said
"Though I would like to....."
One day dive to the river bottom,
Touch the fine silky sand cheering my reflection,
And like a lost happy little fish
I could swim away to my own freedom"
He looked amused,
And asked with an innocent smile,
"Will you take me with you, p-l-e-a-s-e?
I want to see the River bottom
But I can't dive and I don't swim....."
With a light touch I held his hand
And he kept on walking with a happy sign
As if he knows no limit for the river bank
Or the presence of ever running time
Then he turned his face,
"Have you seen the Mountain Top?" the boy asked.
I was confused as I moved,
And could see the far away mountain,
"No, I wish! Though I would like to....."
One day climb to the mountain top,
And then....."
Suddenly he stopped,
"It must be beautiful,
And Peaceful at the Mountain Top
I can fall asleep and Dream I hope!"
Now I could see the Mountain through his bright eyes
"Oh, yes, Peace at last!
Worry no more and Dream for your future, my dear..." I said.
He just hugged me and said, "I love you Daddy".

Rabi Prusti lives in Auburn, Alabama. The way things are changing, he often wonders about the future of our future generations?
Of course, with lot more hope and cheers!

I Must Be God

By
Julie Acharya Ray

The body remains statuesque
Awareness darts as lightening
Touching mountain tops
Diving ocean beds
Fingering the pollen on pretty passion flowers
Touching the powder onto the forehead
Making yellow 'bindis' out of them
I must be God

Commencing new galaxies
Twirling pristine planets with my hands
Like spin-tops in air
Repeating hymns into nothingness
Listening to my own voice
Ruffling the ether
And mediating on the ripples therein
I must be God

Glancing at the face
An unknown string pulled somewhere
Coming back to stare at it
And recognizing the millions within
Each pair of eyes registering a separate tale
Each smile chronicling another
Every touch a discrete experience
I must be God

Skiing on rain drops
Falling squat
On the canopy of the tallest Amazonian trees
Sliding down with long tailed monkeys
Grazing the bark with bugs and microbes
To find the earth humid and warm
Teeming with a million encounters
I must be God

Impressing an idea
Like the embryo embedded in folds
Nimble fingers weaving life
Into the tiny body that sleeps
And breathes wisps of prayers

Whose eyes are shut, seemingly tight
But it only discerns with my eyesight
I must be God

Burning with the fire
And choking with the smoke
I paint myself the color of ash
I continue to die the same death
Dampening my hands with blood
Tear drops etching my cheeks
And the heart breaking over
I must be God

I recognize
I am the mirage in desert lengths
I am the breath of dying earths
I am the mother's dormant blessing
I am the rope that strengthens the vine
I am the belief in every sanctuary
I am the legs that tread every cemetery
I am the waves that whip the shore
I am the voice that you almost hear
I am God, I am God

Bliss and Service



Lone NGO Fights Cancer in Odisha

By
Dr. B. N. Mishra

Sri Ram Chandra Sahu (name changed) 55 years reported at early cancer detection clinic of Urmila Cancer Smaraki Trust in January 2007. He had a non-healing ulcer (Left) cheek for over two months. Scrappings of his ulcer were collected on a slide, fixed and then sent to Regional Cancer Centre at Cuttack for cytological examination. The reports were positive for cancer. He was treated at Regional Cancer Centre as referral from U.C.S.T. and doing well for past two years.

Srimati Manorama Dash (name changed) a lady 80 years, was visiting his brother at Bhubaneswar. She had a lump in her (R) breast for over six months. Her brother brought her to Early Cancer Detection Clinic functioning at Zonal Dispensary, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar. The doctor in the clinic removed some tissue from the lump by pricking the lump with a fine needle (FNAC). The collected sample was sent to Cuttack Regional Cancer Centre for cytological examination and the report came positive for Cancer. She was treated by surgery at the Regional Cancer Centre as referral from U.C.S.T. and doing well for past two years.

In two field camps at Paradip in the district of Jagatsinghpur 92 samples of pap smear were collected from ladies between 35 to 55 yrs. old. Six of the samples turned out to be positive for pre cancerous condition of cervix (CIN II & CIN III). All the cases are referred to Regional Cancer Centre at Cuttack and appropriate treatment was conducted for them. They are all doing well for past 2 ½ years.

The above success stories of early cancer are the handy work of Urmila Cancer Smaraki Trust, the lone NGO working for over four years now for cancer control in Orissa.

Cancer scenario in Orissa is quite disturbing. Five new cases of cancer appear every hour and more than half of these die every hour. 80% of cases come for detection late resulting in increase mortality, rise in cost of treatment and more suffering to the patients and relatives. The only answer to these problems is to promote awareness about cancer in the community for early detection. Urmila Cancer Smaraki Trust is taking a pioneering role in this aspect.

Urmila Cancer Smaraki Trust is a non-Governmental, non-profit organization registered in November 2004 at Bhubaneswar. This is affiliated to Indian Cancer Society, Mumbai since 2006.

The Trust devotes itself for promotion of awareness about cancer in the community and its early detection. Awareness Promotion is done through publication of books, brochures, leaflets, posters and banners and through cancer awareness meetings in the community. Cancers common in the locality like oral cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer, their early symptoms, causes, preventive measures are discussed in the meeting by experts. Willing participants are screened for cancer. When felt necessary, samples for cytology are collected by oral scrapping, pap smears and FNAC (Fine Needle Aspiration Cytology) from any lump in the breast or elsewhere. If reports are positive the cases are referred to Regional Cancer Centre at Cuttack for necessary treatment and follow up.

Till date Urmila Cancer Smaraki Trust has conducted 23 camps, involved 142 experts, sensitized 3146 people, screened 584 persons, collected 223 samples, for cytology and 12 cases have been positive for cancer, almost all of those are early cancers.

The Trust organizes public meeting on 'World no Tobacco Day' on 31st May, 'National Cancer awareness Day' on 7th November for promotion of awareness about tobacco hazards and cancer.

The Trust proposes the following activities for future years

- (i) Extend activities to other Districts of the State (Till date 7 districts have been touched by the Trust.)
- (ii) Strengthen the institution – Constitute Executive Committee working President, office staff and office accommodation.
- (iii) Improve mobility – provide a van.
- (iv) Improve diagnostic facilities – Endoscopy, Biopsy, miniature X-ray machine fixed to van for field work.

Augment Resource :

- Motivate young experts for field work.
- Mobilize Funds by donation, charity shows, sponsorship

Donations received from donors for the Trust is exempted u/s 80 G of Income Tax Act 1961 vide Order No. ITO(Tech) 80G 52/2006-07 dated 8th November 2006.

The Trust will appreciate liberal donation from philanthropist individuals, institutions, organizations both inside and outside the State of Orissa and philanthropist oriyas, oriya organizations and institutions abroad for the cause of cancer.

Thanking you all.

Long live Urmila Cancer Smaraki Trust.

* A-161, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar – 751 007, Orissa, India
Tel. + 91 674 2546458

Present Organization Structure :

Trust Board :

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Dr. B. N. Mishra, FRCS
Director of Health Services (O) (Retd.) | Chairman & Managing Director
Trustee |
| 2. | Dr. P. K. Mishra, MS
Head of the Dept. of Surgery
Sant Paramanand Hospital, Delhi | Member |
| 3. | Dr.(Mrs.) Sabita Mishra, D.N.B., Ph.D.
Prof. Maulana Azad Medical College
New Delhi | Member |
| 4. | Captain Debasish Mishra
General Manager, (Operation)
J. M. Baxi Group of Companies
Vasant Kunj, New Delhi | Member |
| 5. | Mrs. Kalyani Mishra, I.E.S
(Indian Economic Service)
Dy. Secretary Ministry of Power
Govt. of India | Member |
| 6. | Dr. (Mrs.) Pramila Satpathy,
Faculty Member D.M. School
Bhubaneswar (Retd.) | Honorary Secretary |
| 7. | Mr. N. K. Satapathy M.I.E.(India)
Ex-Principal, Women's Polytechnic
Bhubaneswar | Hon. Treasurer |
| 8. | Sri. N. Panda, CA
Panda & Associates
Baramunda, Bhubaneswar | Accounts & Audit |

Lord Jagannath in California

By
Jnana Ranjan Dash

Introduction

Earlier this year on March 6, 2009 the Oriya community of the San Francisco bay area accomplished an important milestone – the Prana Pratistha of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Lord Subhadra at the Fremont Hindu temple. The next day, on March 7, a grand celebration followed where 1200 people came to witness the newly installed idols (specially made in Puri and flown over). Starting on March 3, various pujas were performed as per the rituals of the Puri temple for which an expert priest was invited from Orissa.

The final day started with a puja, followed by bhajans by local Oriya group. Then two remarkable talks followed. This article will reflect on the essence of these talks. The day was packed with food, cultural program, and exhibits of Orissa artifacts. The event was widely covered in the news and television media of the bay area.

The two talks were given by - Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya, resident teacher of the Chinmaya Mission, San Jose and Dr. Kabi Prasad Mishra, a well-known cardiologist who also specializes in Jagannath Culture.

Talk 1 - Seeing the Lord in your heart

There is a Sanskrit word called Upasana, meaning “sitting near” (Upa + asana). What it implies for each individual is to focus on one thing (an idol, a sound, a picture). By such “single-pointedness” the mind gets away from myriad thoughts and gets calm. But upasana by itself is not enough – then it can be a mere ritual. One must understand the ultimate goal. Bhakti or devotion is very important, but it must be complimented by jnana or knowledge. If we have only bhakti and no jnana, then we get superstitious and fearful. On the other hand, if we have only jnana and no bhakti, then we develop arrogance. Hence in our lives we must have a combination of both.

An idol is just a statue. When we superimpose an “ideal” on that idol, it takes a new meaning. The purpose of prana pratistha (like activation) is to bring the Lord into that idol, a living God.

Adi Shankaracharya lived for only 32 years (788-820 AD). He must have visited Puri around 815 AD or so. This was much before the current Puri temple’s existence (late 12th. century). Adi Shankaracharya wrote the famous Jagannath-ashtakam (Jagannath Swami Nayana Pathgami Bhabatu me). He also declared Puri as one of the 4 holy places of India. He assigned one of the 4 Mahavakyas (great statements in the Vedas) to Puri – “Pragyanam Brahma” which means Brahman is nothing but this chaitanya or consciousness. In other words, each jeevatma or individual being is a reflection of that paramatma or the cosmic Lord.

Beyond worshipping Lord Jagannath, we must all try to see the Lord in our heart and treat every fellow human being as paramatma only. Bhagaban Krishna says in the Bhagabat Gita that there are four kinds of devotees – Arta (one in agony), Artharthi (one seeking material wealth), Jignyasu (a seeker of knowledge), and Jnani (the enlightened one). Of all the 4 types, His most favorite devotee is the last one – Jnani who does not see any difference between himself and the Lord.

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya said we all should give it a try to go beyond our ego and see the Lord in our heart and surrender to His grace for a better life on this earth.

Talk 2 - Unique aspects of Jagannath Culture

Dr. Kabi Mishra explained the unique features of Lord Jagannath. Nowhere in the Hindu culture, have we seen “brother-sister” being worshipped. We always see “Radha-Krishna”, “Shiva-Parvati”, or “Rama-Sita”.

But here we have two brothers guarding an innocent sister with love, as if protecting her in the middle. They also represent the trinity – Brahma (Subhadra), Vishnu (Jagannath), and Maheswar (Balabhadra) representing the creator, sustainer, annihilator aspects of the creation.

Is Lord Jagannath a man or a woman, as the dress is always a saree (20 yards of cloth) and a nose-ring to beautify the face? One vedantic interpretation is that Lord Jagannath is both prakriti (matter) and purusha (spirit). Hence both the female and male elements are present. Why is the idol of Lord Jagannath incomplete? Answer is how can you show infinity in a finite form?

Lord Jagannath is a personal or family God of Orissa for centuries. He is treated as a family member. So the first invitation to a marriage is always given to the Lord. He is the only God who leaves the temple once a year to recuperate after a fever and visits his aunt's place. This is the famous Ratha Yatra festival. During the Lord's fever, the entire temperature of Orissa goes up (Anasara).

Lord Jagannath is a symbol of all our gods – Vishnu, Shiva, Krishna, Rama, Hanuman, etc.. Tulsi Das came and he saw Lord Rama in the form of Lord Jagannath. Guru Nanak came and when he was denied entry into the temple (he was mistaken to be a Muslim), he sat outside and sang bhajans. During that time, the Lord's face became sad. So the Gajapati of Puri wanted to know why the Lord looked so sad and the Lord communicated via dream about a true bhakta outside the temple singing His glory and not permitted to come near. After that, Guru Nanak was taken inside the temple.

There are numerous stories on the glory and miracles of Lord Jagannath. Orissa's entire DNA is built around Lord Jagannath. Everything about the Lord is of grand scale. The kitchen at Puri temple is the largest in the world. It employs 1000 full time cooks plus many hundred part timers. The food is cooked in steam only and everyday several thousands are fed the "mahaprasad".

Finally, we in the San Francisco bay area had the unique experience of planning this event for over a year, but the final culmination showed us how privileged we are in getting this opportunity.

Lord Jagannath is the true representation of Brahman in Vedanta. He is the constant witness with open eyes (no eyelids), he is infinite (horizontal on top), he is silent (one line on the mouth), he is "akarta" or non-doer (has arms but no hands), etc. Our scriptures repeat this message that we individual beings are also infinite in a finite form called body. Once we realize who we really are, we escape from our selfish world of narrowness, sorrow and negativity.

Jai Jagannath

Jnana Ranjan Dash, a former executive with IBM and Oracle, is currently a consultant and board member at software companies. He lives in San Jose, California.

Aamara Biswas: Women Helping Women through Nano Finance
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By
Joyasree (Ranu) Mahanti

A. Introduction

After working for almost nine years at the grass root level, I realize that, the poorest of poor are at the same condition for centuries, which has not changed. Still they can't go to the Government or any commercial banks or to the Micro Finance Institutions for their emergency needs. The only option for them is to go to the moneylenders at the minimum interest rate of 120 % per year. The poor don't have the choice when there is a dead body at the door but don't have money to buy woods for the cremation, when there is no money for the medical treatment for the family members, when there is no money to buy food for a day, and there is no money to send children to school. They are not the part of the micro finance institution. If they are; they are not able to pay back their weekly or monthly due. The situation forces them to take another loan to pay back their previous loan. I find Nano Finance concept is the best way to help the poorest of poor.

B. Purpose of Nano Finance

- Not to be the victims of the moneylenders at the time of emergency.
Example: A woman takes a loan of Rs 500 (about \$11) from a moneylender for her son's medical need. She pays 50 rupees every month towards the interest until she pays back the 500 rupees (one time). The total household income (both husband and wife) is about Rs 1500. She will never pay back the amount unless she has some extra income. If there is another such emergency need, she has to take another similar loan. It is a vicious circle and most of the time; the poorest of the poor are the victims of such trap and never come out of this trap. In extreme emergency situation, the interest rate can go up to 320% per year.
- Interest free loan for one year provides women enough time to pay back the loan comfortably.
Example: Unlike under rules of Micro Finance Institutions or banks, they have the freedom of paying back the loan within a year, in installment, any amount, at any time and at their convenience. A woman took her first loan of 500 rupees to start her small business. She had comfortable time and bigger window to pay back the loan in a year without any interest. She had already taken second time loan to expand her business.
- Provides women secure feeling for desperate situation in case of emergency.
Example: A woman was suffering from Malaria and was hospitalized with a serious condition. The family needed money for her treatment and did not have any savings. Only option was to go to the moneylender at any cost. The mother-in-law came to our center and took a loan for the treatment. It is a tremendous comfort to know there is money available for emergency need instead of going to the moneylender who can reject their request.
- The purpose is not to make the women rich but to help them when they are in desperate need for health care, children's education, and other unavoidable circumstances.
Example: We give maximum loan amount of 1000 rupees with a few exceptions. The amount is not going to make them rich. But, it will help them not to be poorer, help them to educate their children at a minimum level, help them to provide minimum health care, and bring food to the family when there is no other choice, and stop them from going to the moneylenders.
- Using their money to help other women in need
Example: The returned money is used to give loan to other women who are in similar situation like them. The initial invested loan amount of Rs 4, 00,300 has reached to RS 10, 00,000.
- Provide loan with dignity and return the amount in time without any forceful action.
Example: The women come to the center and express their need by themselves and take the loan by giving minimum information without going through any paper work.
Unless they don't return the loan in one year, we don't force them to pay, but always encourage them to pay some amount every month. So, in the end, it is not a big burden on them. After one year, we do remind them frequently.
- The trust (Biswas) is the key factor of the success of the Nano Finance concept
It is all about trust. Unless, they return the first loan, they can't get another loan even in emergency. They are responsible for their loan. In fact, the women themselves are responsible for the success of the Nano Finance project and the establishment of Aamara Biswas.

C. Total Amount Collected

I am extremely humbled and thankful to my donors for their kindness and trust in me to work for the people. They never doubt or question my integrity and are always interested in my work and encourage me to pursue my dream. I wouldn't have come this far without their concern and good will.

Many donors decided to transfer their invested amount with BISWA mFI in 2005 to Aamara Biswas for the Nano Finance project (about 70% of the total amount of Rs 21, 50,169). The other 35% is collected from the kind donors who had supported my work year after year without any hesitation.

Aamara Biswas does not have the Reserve Bank clearance (FCRA) for accepting foreign currency as donation as yet. The entire donation has come through BISWA. I am hoping to get this clearance in 2009 or 2010.

November 2, 2007	Rs 5, 05,769
February 20, 2008	Rs 5, 00,000*
September 11, 2008	Rs 5, 49,850**
October 22, 2008	Rs 5, 20,000
December 12, 2008	Rs 74,650
Total (Nov. 2007-Dec. 2008)	Rs 21, 50,269 (about \$49,500)

*The amount is kept as a fixed deposit with BISWA mFI at the interest rate of 11% per year for five years.

** Personal collection for the year 2007-2008

Total Amount Invested in Nano Finance Project: Rs 9, 80,269 (2007-2008)

Total Amount Invested in Solar Lantern Project: Rs 6, 70,000 (2008)

The above quoted amount includes the administrative expenses and the bank deposit.

D. Financial Report of the Nano Finance Project at Sambalpur District

Month	Amount Disbursed In Rupees (Indian Currency)	Amount Collected In Rupees	Number of Beneficiaries			Amount kept for giving Loan
			New	2 nd Time	3 rd Time	
November	2,36,000	3,620	397			3,75,600
December	1,18,600	55,005	215			
January	39,000	49,925	80			
February	1,48,700	65,630	106	95		9,000 (donation through me)
March	47,000	62,535	54	95		
April	34,000	41,110	50	18	25	
May	49,500	56,500	62	11	16	
June	27,000	40,280	35	13	12	
July	49,000	48,555	62	25	4	
August	54,200	36,220	61	44		
September	73,000	43,900	90	47		18,400 (donation through me)
October	43,700	34,450	60	27	5	
November	43,000	40,260	62	24	8	
December	37,300	37,800	35	18		
Total	10,00,000	6,15,790	1,364	417	70	4,03,000

80% of the women who took loan in November 2007 have paid back the loan in a year (November, 2008). I am still hoping, most of them will return the loan though it will take them more than one year. There are genuine cases where they don't have enough money to pay back the loan in time after barely taking care of their family. Sickness is the common culprit for this situation. A few women will not return. It is just their nature. I still strongly believe that most of the women who are in need do not cheat, are not greedy, don't have the dream of acquiring properties or materials, and their needs are minimum. Their only hope is to have a simple thatched roof as their home, to provide food to the family, basic education to their children, and minimum health care to the family members.

E. New Nano Finance Projects in Different Areas

- I. Childright (NGO), Bhadrak Dist. Rs 2,15,000 Tapan Mohapatra, Secretary
Indu Malick, coordinator
- II. Srusti (NGO) in Nuapada Dist. Rs 1,00,000 Biswajit Padhi, Secretary
- III. Itishree Behera, Jagatsingpur Dist. Rs 65,000 Jeevan Lal Behera
- IV. Surabhi Seth, Baragarh Dist. Rs 23,000

V.	Kamalini Badi, Anugal Dist.,	Rs 18,000
	Total amount invested:	Rs 4, 21,000

I knew most of the coordinators during my last visit (except Jeevan Lal Behera). I work with trust. I am hoping, the project will be successful and will be expanded to other areas.

F. Solar Lantern Project through Nano Finance

For the last six years, I was looking to promote the solar lantern project. I became aware of a basic problem when I visited several villages of Sambalpur district with BISWA in 2002. It was heart breaking to see that some villages did not have electricity even in this century. After doing some research, I decided to purchase the Aiswaria solar lantern from NEST, a Hyderabad based company. The only reason I chose this product was that the product had been in the market for eight years and the customers were very happy with it. In this project, the villagers purchase the lantern from us by paying an initial amount and take an interest free loan for the rest, which they have to pay back in a year or less. We have already started to deliver the lanterns and started collecting the initial amount. We are hoping to use the collected money to purchase more lanterns. The total amount invested towards the project: Rs 6, 70, 000

G. Up scaling the Project through existing NGOs / through Individuals

Though, Aamara Biswas has given some funds to two NGOs (Childright and Srusti) for promoting the Nano Finance concept, I feel it will be more viable to promote this concept through individual women with small amount of money at the beginning. The women know their own areas and difficulties what they go through in daily life. Most of the time, they also know the women whom they are giving loan. It is interesting and heartwarming to know that, all the women who are currently working for this project never complain about their salary. They are genuinely interested to work for the project and the benefit of the women.

H. Evaluation of the Project after One Year

Lessons Learnt:

- At the beginning, the women were not accustomed to the concept of interest free loan. It was beyond their expectation.
- Many women thought it was just given to them because they were poor.
- Some women (outsiders) just took loan with false identification
- It was not useful to keep their voter IDs, because they did not match with their current profiles.
- It took a few months for the women to understand the benefit and importance of this project.
- Book keeping must be done properly at the very beginning
- It is a learning process and it requires constant correction and improvement with experience.

Corrective Actions:

- It is very important to disburse a small amount of loan to a few numbers of women at the beginning and give them some time to understand the concept.
- We don't keep ID but ask the new clients to come with another woman who has already established good credit report with us.
- The books for keeping information must be ready before disbursing any amount of loan.
- It is a constant effort to put emphasis on trust. The concept of Nano Finance will not be successful without women's help and their trust. Aamara Biswas is their organization and the future is on their hands.

I. Future Plans

- Expand the Nano Finance concept in different parts of Orissa through women
- Encouraging the women to take short term education loan for buying books, paying tuition fees, or any education related expenses. We have already started giving loans for education purpose and ask them to return the loan as soon as possible at their convenience. So, they can again take loan when they need.
- I am still trying to find out how to provide minimum health care to these women and the children but have not been successful. I had a discussion with the women. They are ready to deposit 1% or more of their loan amount towards the health care. Please suggest if you have any idea.

Jagannath Seva Sanstha – A Transcending Vision, Part -III
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By

Shashadhar & Sujata (Meera) Mohapatra

Dear Friends/Devotees/Well Wishers:

Now, it is the time of the year again to write an article for OSA souvenir. Time flies. Is not it? As I promised last year, here is a progress report from me regarding the Jagannath temple project in my village in Orissa. I begin with the following lovable quotations.

“You can't change the past, but you can ruin the present by worrying over the future. Love...and you shall be loved”

“A hug is a great gift... one size fits all. It can be given for any occasion and it's easy to exchange”

“Everyone has beauty but not everyone sees it”

“If you fill your heart with regrets of yesterday and the worries of tomorrow, you have no today to be thankful for”

“Man looks at outward appearance but the Lord looks within”

“The choice you make today will usually affect tomorrow”

“To get out of a difficulty, one usually must go through it”

Are not they wonderful ? They teach so powerful lessons. We are getting old but, still learn new things everyday. I was attending a religious discourse once in the Hindu temple in Maryland. Swamiji said, the purpose of human life is to be happy, peaceful and blissful. The human desire is to be good and do good. There was a question from the audience: why people hate each other, kill each other in the name of religion ? Why they commit crimes ? Swamiji answered, although the same Lord has created us equally, He has given us a free will, a freedom to choose. That freedom is not free. We make mistakes when that freedom is misused or abused. Problems arise when we fail to follow a right path. Swamiji also said, the way to God realization is simple and easy. The only thing you need to do is to love and completely surrender to your God. He also quoted from Bhagwat Gita where Lord Krishna says the same thing. Through Bhakti or devotion, one can achieve an ever lasting, ever increasing bliss of divine love. This is called Sanatan Dharma. The other day, one of my Indian colleagues said: “I am not a believer of God. But, I do know this. If I can't help some one, why should I harm some one ?”. He was absolutely right. I agreed with him hundred percent, I said.

Let me go back to the original topic. Please allow me to refresh your memory about JSS (Jagannatha Seva Sanstha). It is a charitable organization in Orissa that was created more than five years ago. It was started by our family with the help of the local volunteers in our community. 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 is to cater various needs of the people in our communities.

Our mission is the following:

- 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, adults and retirees etc.
- To build a public library.

To fulfill our mission, we have taken some baby steps. Pictures below exhibit the status of the three main temples in February, 2009. As you see, the artists finish from the top of the temples and come down. To remind you, we started the foundation about four years ago. So far the progress has been slow but, steady. One bottle neck is to find good, experienced artists who can make “murtis”. There are some old and experienced artists available, but they are scared of heights. They are willing to work only in the base areas where the heights are low. We are waiting for those days to come soon. But, we are happy with the progress.

Muralidhar Giri is our chief architect (picture: standing on the ground 2nd from the left with some other young artists). How we discovered him is a mystery. He is from Jagannathpur, Bhadrak. He looks like an ordinary person, has no college degree, but his brain is thousand times smarter than my brain. He is a Rastrapati Award winner. He was a member of the “Purusottam Sanstha”, who built the Swaminarayan temple at Junagarh, Gujrat. Recently, I made a trip to India for four weeks in the month of February. I spent about two weeks of my vacation in the southern part of India and spent two weeks in Orissa. Most of my time in Orissa was spent for the temple purpose. During my stay in the village, we performed the “bhumi puja” for mother Laxmi, Bimala, Radha &

Krishna and Ganesh temples (picture). The pond for the temple (picture) started last year. They have dug about 4-5' deep (Picture). The plan is to dig 10 ft deep. Work is pending because of the upcoming general election. It would continue once the election is over.

Murali babu discussed with me his plan for other smaller temples. The Laxmi mandir shall be built on a lotus flower and its height will be 32 feet. The other side temples for Bimala, Radha & Krishna will be about 20 feet high. Ganesh Mahaprabhu will sit on a hexagonal mandap like structure. The roof will be covered by colored tiles and the sides will be covered by glasses so that one can get darshan from all angles. The main entrance will be like a chariot to replicate Arjun's chariot in Mahabharat with Lord Krishna sitting on it as the "sarathi". There will be two elephants on the side and a logo of "OM" at the center. Murali babu added the elephants on its side. According to him the elephant is a sign of good luck. The syllable "OM" symbolizes "brahman" and is of paramount importance to all Hindus. The main boundary wall will have different segments, and in each segment there will be a character such as "Dasa Avatars" or "Krishna Leela" etc. Although the Laxmi mandir was his plan, the others were my ideas and he wholeheartedly supported my ideas.

We are targeting to install the main deities in 2010. I like the uniqueness of the number 2010. By that time we are planning to complete at least the three main temples and Laxmi mandir. Recently, I contacted Rajguru of Puri. Rajguruji visited the temple about two years ago and had given his blessings. We have plan to bring the king of Puri, Divyasingh Dev prabhuji and Rajguru to the installation function.

I traveled a few places in Orissa. I will tell you an incident. In fact, it was like a miracle to us. Yes, Virginia, there is Lord. You may call Him as Jesus, Budhha, Rama, Jagannath or Krishna. Yes, Virginia, miracle does happen sometimes. Here is an example from my own experience.

Almost every day I call home from the USA and talk to my brother, sister or Murali babu to get an update on the progress or if there is any problem that they face or if I can be of any help to them. Once, during our conversation before my trip to Orissa, Murali babu mentioned that we must visit Khiching to order some deities (parswa devatas) to be installed in the temple at different sides. This place in Mayurbhanj is famous for "murtis" made out of marble or black stones (muguni pathar). I had never heard about this place before and was excited to see the place. I agreed to his plan. We decided the date of February 17, 2009.

The plan was to go from Kendrapara right after the wedding of my nephew (my older sister's son). One of the reasons of my trip to Orissa was to attend this wedding and to fulfill the rituals that an uncle has to perform. I attended the wedding in the night as a "barajatri" after so many years. The decorations, the light & sound, the songs, music & dance, the flowers and the colorful dresses were just gorgeous, and above all the food was little spicy but, yummy. It was fun. We had planned to leave the house right after the arrival of the bride and the groom since we didn't have much role to play. My brother (Ghanashyam), my youngest sister (Sarojini), Murali babu, myself and the driver left Kendrapara early morning. We had also to pick up a family friend (Lalmohan) from Panikoili on our way who was interested to see the place too. He was waiting for us there by the time we reached. Then we started our journey.

Lalmohan took a bus from his village. As soon as he sat in the car he narrated this story to us. There was an old man sitting near him in the bus. During conversation, the old man asked him where he was going. Then he said about the Jagannath temple and murtis. The old man said to him not to go that far. There is a village called "Alati" near "Ramachandrapur" in Keonjhar district, not far from Jajpur road the oldman said. There is a person named "Pramod Baral". He is excellent in making sculptures, oil painting etc. He has received several awards and has been supplying to temples all over Orissa for several years. In fact, most of his students go to Khiching to build these murtis, said the oldman. We were listening Lalmohan patiently and all agreed to see the village and meet with Pramod babu. He said that if we like the "murtis" here then we don't have to travel that far and can save significantly on the transportation cost. On the way, we asked people for direction to Ramachandrapur and from there we reached the village of Alati at about noon. Pramod babu was there with several other co-workers. He was a wonderful person, very humble, very soft spoken, down-to-earth. He invited us to his house which was about a block from his office and served lemon drinks. We saw his art works and were very much impressed. We decided to give him some money in advance for the "murtis" and depart. His prices were so reasonable that we didn't have to bargain. I invited him to visit the temple in our village when he gets free time, which he accepted. He came with us to the road side where we parked our car. We thanked him and left his village. I came to know from my brother recently that he visited our village last month.

In the car everybody seemed to be happy and relaxed. Everybody thanked the Lord for his kindness and saving us from a long trip. We were debating whether our decision was right or wrong. We asked the expert, the one and only Murali babu. He said he was very much pleased. Then others were quiet. We ate lunch at Panikoili and returned back to Kendrapara. We had planned to go Khiching not Alati. But, the plan changed all of a sudden. My sister remarked that perhaps it was the Lord's plan. He came as an old man and showed us the path to Alati. We plan something, but, the Lord has a different plan. Is not it a miracle ? Let the readers decide.

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 feedback gracefully whether it is positive or negative. Please remember, we need help and support for this cause from donors like you. As you all know, JOGA (Jagannath Organization for Global Awareness) 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. You may donate by writing a check to the JOGA "temple fund" in order to get a tax break. Due recognition shall be given to the donors. We have decided to print the names of donors on marbles who contribute at least 50K rupees (or equivalent dollars) and place them in the temple hall. All the contributions towards this temple fund are used on this project only. There is no overhead expense. All the incomes and expenses are accounted with due diligence.

May Lord Jagannath bless you, your friends and families !

For further questions, comments and suggestions please contact:

Shashadhar & Sujata (Meera) Mohapatra
2105 Hidden Valley Lane
Silver Spring, MD 20904
Ph: 301.879.8188 (home) 301-233-2407 (cell)
Email: smohapatra318@yahoo.com

Dr. Naresh Chandra Das
4525 Rutherford Way
Dayton, MD 21036
Ph: 410.531.7445 (home)
Email: nareshdas@yahoo.com



Computer Center in Ravenshaw Collegiate School Orissa

(a NRO initiative)

by

Mr. Sanatan Panda, Headmaster
Mr. Dasarathi Behera, computer teacher
Mr. Sapan Jena, (ex) Headmaster
Ravenshaw Collegiate School, Cuttack, Orissa

Established in 1822, R.C. School, Cuttack is the oldest premier school in Orissa. At the present time, it nurtures about 800 students from 4th to 10th grades. Being a government funded school, the development of infrastructure and new programmes is limited by the financial constraints.

To maintain the standard of excellence, the school authorities assess, along with Parent-Teachers Association and Old Boys Association, and plan out necessary beneficial projects. In 2000, Dr. Devi P. Misra, a 1958 alumnus of the school, approached the then Headmaster, Mr. R.N. Mohanty, on his own initiative to establish a computer center and modernization of the existing library through a regular yearly funding through The Orissa Foundation. From 2000 to 2008, the school had received \$2500 from The Orissa Foundation. Unfortunately, Mr. R.N. Mohanty retired because of illness and the subsequent Headmasters were appointed for short tenures. In 2005, Dr. Kula Mishra, professor of geology at UT, himself a 1953 alumnus, investigated the inertia and lack of action towards establishing the computer center and refurbishing the library.

Eventually, in 2005, a computer classroom was allotted by Mr. Sapan Jena, the then Headmaster of the school. Five computers were acquired in February 2005 with the contribution from The Orissa Foundation and were utilized initially to provide computer education to the 9th and 10th grade students only.

Mr. Sapan Jena, the then Headmaster (2005-2008), procured 7 computers from INFOSYS and 4 computers from APTECH. The local State Bank of India donated 20 old PCs in working condition in 2007-2008.

Mr. Sanatan Panda, the present Headmaster, along with the Old Boys Association and Parent-Teachers Association, have placed all 39 computers in a sprawling hall named after Prof. P.K. Parija. Now, in 2009, about 748 students from grades 9th-10th try to enrich their learning skills through computer and internet education.

In 2008, a computer set each was donated by the late Dr. Ghanshyam Tripathy and his family from Ohio and also by another prominent alumnus, Dr Kabi Mishra (cardiologist).

It is worth mentioning here that from 2006 to 2009, The Orissa Foundation (Devi & Sarojini Misra) has contributed \$3500 towards modernizing and refurbishing the present library at Ravenshaw Collegiate School.

Taking this opportunity, we are requesting the ex-students of the school to donate their precious time, money, and energy for continued development of their alma mater in the 21st century.

By

Mr. R.K. Baral, Managing Director

INTRODUCTION

BKMM Rotary Eye Hospital (BKMM), located at Baladiabandha, opposite OMFED, NH-42, Dhenkanal, Orissa, India is a charitable trust registered in 2002 under The Indian Trusts Act, 1882, was promoted by US based Dr. Devi Misra (The Orissa Foundation) in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Dhenkanal and managed by Bharat Integrated Social Welfare Agency (BISWA). Head office at -Danipali, P.o.- Budharaja Dis. Sambalpur, Orissa, a voluntary organization registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act 1860, committed for the development of Orissa.

The trust has set up an eye hospital in a rural underserved area having a significant population of economically poor and downtrodden tribal and backward classes within a radius of 150 km.

OBJECTIVE

The hospital focuses on cataract, glaucoma, and refractive error which are the major causes of reversible blindness and are curable. In the future, BKMM plans to work on diabetic retinopathy, low vision aids, eye banking, and child eye care surgery.

The main objective of this public charitable trust is to provide medical facilities to the poor and needy and, more specifically, to extend medical facilities for the treatment of eye related diseases to the poor and to the public in general on a nonprofit basis. The trust may consider providing any other services in the fields of health education, health care, and other medical facilities. The hospital operates by organizing large numbers of eye camps in the rural hinterland and, after preliminary screening, brings the patients to the hospital for evaluation and surgical correction. The poor patients are treated free of cost.

EYE CARE – ITS NEED

Blindness is a major public health problem in India with an estimated 12 million blind persons in the country. To tackle this problem, National Programme for Control of Blindness was launched in 1976 with the goal to reduce the prevalence of blindness from 1.4% to 0.3% by developing eye care infrastructure and human resources, increasing accessibility to eye care services, and improving quality of eye care services and visual outcome following medical and surgical management.

Cataract is the dominant cause of blindness as it accounts for nearly two-thirds of the blind population. The purpose of cataract surgery is to restore vision of the affected person through provision of a package of services that can enable the person to not only gain sight, but also return to their normal working-mode which existed before the visual disability. Refractive errors, childhood blindness, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and corneal blindness are other important causes of blindness.

In Dhenkanal district (undivided), the decadal change in population growth has been a 20.60% increase the 1991 census over the 1981 census (i.e. total population was 15.83 lakhs in 1981 whereas it rose to 19.1 lakhs in 1991). This indicates that every year nearly 2% of additional people require eye care and treatment. Originally, Dhenkanal was one district. It was later bifurcated to two districts, namely Dhenkanal and Angul. Although the district is divided, the socioeconomic and cultural ties are as deep as ever. The adjoining districts of Dhenkanal are: Angul, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Jharsugada, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Boudh, Bolangir, and Sonapur. The aforesaid service areas of Orissa have a population of over 10 million who would benefit from the project.

MEDICAL

We have our medical personnel with technical skills and knowledge for medical, clinical, and surgical activities.

PROJECT DETAILS

a) LAND

The eye hospital is located on a plot of land of Ac3.30 with the hospital building occupying Ac1.0. The land has been leveled and developed.

b) BUILDING

The building is designed in two floors. The ground floor of the building is around 15,000 sq. ft. accommodating five dormitories with 6 beds each, one general ward consisting of 16 beds, and two double-bedded cabins. Each dormitory and ward is provided with two bathrooms.

The ground floor has a patients' waiting room, record room, 4 independent examination rooms, room for pathological examination, pharmacy, optical unit, minor OT and OT room, 2 A.C. rooms for cabin patients, administrative office rooms, duty room, general store, trust boardroom, etc.

PRESENT STATUS

BKMM has started its outpatient department from 12th October, 2006 and cataract surgery from 1st December, 2006. The response to both the outpatient department and surgery is encouraging. BKMM has conducted 12 awareness camps for eye related diseases at different places.

In addition to the awareness camps, BKMM also conducted 354 eye screening camps until January 2009 in the area of Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Angul, Jajpur, Kendrapara, and Nayagarh districts. A total of 39051 patients were screened at these camps, and 6233 cataract patients and 122 other eye patients were brought to the hospital for operations and successfully operated.

BKMM ROTARY EYE HOSPITAL qualifies for tax benefit under section 80G of Income Tax Act 1961 and is also registered under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act. Your kindness in donations to the cause of curing blindness in Orissa may be forwarded to The Orissa Foundation, contact dmisra@bellsouth.net, TEL: 256-883-5499. A \$10 contribution per person goes a long way towards getting the person's vision back.

Best Wishes



Avesta Computer Services Ltd

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NOKIA MISSIO ORPHAN HOME AND SCHOOL IN JAYPORE, ORISSA

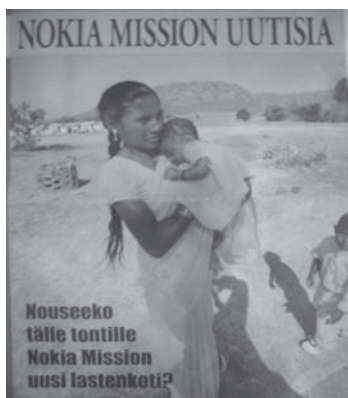
by
Pirkko Liisa Pattanayak

Traveling in Orissa in early winter 1998 it bothered me to see how many more western advertisements were there than during my previous visits, especially Coca Cola advertisements all over and around Bhubaneswar temples. There were also large billboards advertising NOKIA telephones: 'Nokia connecting people'. Since Nokia is from my native country Finland, and I was always wearing Nokia boots as child, that advertisement became like a breeze from home with one change: Instead just seeing 'Nokia connecting people' I hoped to see 'Prayer connecting people to God'. Therefore I was stunned as upon return to our home here in Sayreville, New Jersey, there was a local paper from my northern Finland hometown featuring a visit from a group called 'Nokia movement' (later Nokia Missio). That was the first time that I heard from the group, which had started years before in the same small southern Finland town, Nokia, the company now known worldwide as the cell phone company (if interested, see www.nokia.com and look for the history). Other than their birthplace, there is no connection between the cell phone company and the group. The young pastor Markku Koivisto in Nokia was struck with lymphatic cancer, and people around him started with humble prayers for his healing. After he was cured, more and more sick and desperate people joined the group, which branched to several Finnish towns and has currently around 50,000 members.



I saw it as divine connection that the writer Chita Ranjan Das from my husband's village Bagalpur had visited my mother's home village in Lapua Mustamaa decades before my husband and I met in a bus station in Berlin, West-Germany. Now it was more than just an answer to my prayer to learn that one of the first projects of the Nokia Missio outside of Finland was to sponsor an orphan home and school in Orissa. Nokia Missio is a Finnish Group committed to bring good news to the poor and give care and show love to those in need. Some years ago they got connected with a financially needy project in Jaypore, Orissa. A local group had started there an orphan home and school called Deborah for poor children. Nokia Missio decided to support them with modest material

means as far as they were able and also connect with them spiritually and mentally. Every time the Finnish people visited the school they were so impressed with the joy and energy of the young children, that Markku Koivisto wrote the headline in March 2009: The most beautiful sight in the world (see photo). The joy and love of the children is contagious despite their poor background and suffering. The children radiate hope beyond human understanding even when last year many Christian homes and churches were gravely attacked in the area, and their school was burned.



The Deborah Orphan Home is presently the only place to be called home by over ninety children. Most children were rescued from the poorest forest areas. Every child receives free education, shelter, food and clothing. After the destruction of the school, the conditions in the present orphan home are very crowded and hygiene is poor. Some medical workers from Finland are currently staying with the local volunteers to help the children, but infections are common. Before planning the next step of building a medical center, Nokia Missio has decided to build a new orphan home and school near the existing facility. There is a "perfect" property available.

The preliminary cost estimate for the project is around \$100,000 (70,000 Euros). Nokia Missio launched a collection in Finland in March 2009, and they are counting on small individual donations by their members. They absolutely guarantee that all donations are directly used in Jaypore, Orissa to build the new orphan home.

For further information see the website www.nokiamissio.com or contact markus@nokiamissio.fi or invitations@nokiamissio.fi or me at: pirkkopatt@verizon.net

Pirkko is married to Dhyana Ranjan Pattanayak since 1975. They have three grown sons and a grand daughter. Pirkko practices architecture in South Amboy, NJ

The Future Vision

Stories from our future generations



Memoirs of a Bilingual

by
Lipsa Panda

***** This story is completely fictional *****

"Idsa, singhasona, sesa, prasna. Bulbul kaha."

"Idsa, singhasona – ugh mommy how long will I have to do this? You know I'm going to be late for dance practice? They're random words, mom."

"Bulbul, kond pai thoro sekhi baku icha nahi, why you don't want to learn Oriya? It's a part of you, a part of everything we stand – Ash... fine I'll drive you there. Get in the car."

Conversations like these peppered my childhood. Born in Orissa, raised in Brooklyn, I was the epitome of a child brought up in a dual-culture, caught between two worlds vying for my attention and struggling to break all ties with a seemingly decayed culture.

Fast-forward 10 years later and I had moved to Orissa. My parents lived there, lonely and retired, while my brother wasted away in college. I found a suitable job as a medical consultant to a hospital – decent pay which could be better but never is, with a good apartment, lizards a given, of course. Not too far from my parents so that I can be at their beck and call, and not too close so that I lose my dignity. I was living a mediocre lifestyle in a cookie-cutter life.

It was the subsequent events, occurring as always on a stifling summer day that changed it all. I lived in a two-story flat near College Chhakha. The gate to my building opened to a little courtyard and another barred door with a padlock that led to the first floor. My room was located on the right of the door upstairs complete with water and a small barred balcony to hang my clothes. The flat downstairs had a similar makeup but it was the old woman inside that most intrigued me.

I had been watching Mrs. Mohapatra –or rather, her door– as I came and went through the building ever since I learned of her existence, which was not an obvious thing. I passed her door everyday for 2 weeks after I moved in before I heard a murmur behind the door. She was fascinating, an old woman living alone with, as far as I could tell, no ascertainable signs of relatives at all. She rarely came out of her room and often sent a cooking maid to buy groceries. I thought her lonely and depressed and pained in some way. But I assumed she was perfectly fine... I...was very wrong.

It seemed exceptionally hot on that summer day. I was biking back from the consulting office. I dropped my bike in the courtyard and locked it. I made my way to the stairs and I kept thinking it was way too hot to climb up 25 steps. But as I was passing by her door, I heard a loud crash and it drew me out of my thoughts. Working at a hospital, I sensed some signs there. Old woman, living alone, hot day, no signs of movement after crash. No... not that. We saved her. I broke down the door in a flurry of action I didn't think myself capable of –especially not on that day– and saw her lying on the floor, collapsed due to stroke.

The following days in which she was admitted into the hospital I decided to check up on her. Somehow, it didn't seem right that an elderly woman, without relatives had no one to be by her in her state. I entered the hospital room, at once feeling a little regretful I had come. I didn't even know this woman. I hadn't even spoken a word to her since I had arrived two months ago. But she broke the silence first.

"Namaskar, thome mothe saajhia kala. Dhunyabaad." [Hello, You helped me, Thank you so much.]

I was a little shocked to hear complete Oriya. I hadn't really spoken in a while. I lived in Orissa, but I had cleverly found a way to get around the speaking. My job as a medical consultant, only forced me to interact with doctors, most of whom were well educated enough to speak in complete and coherent English. Not that I didn't understand what little Oriya with which they attempted to vilify me behind my back. But I digress.

“You’re welcome. I just came to see how you were. I live in the flat above you.”

“Ah... I see. So where do you come from?”

“I come from America. My family lives here so I’m just staying for a while.”

“Oh! *Moro Pua*, my son lives there!”

“Really? I didn’t know you had children.”

“Just one, my son. I haven’t seen him in a while. But he will come to visit eventually.”

I paused to contemplate what waiting like that could possibly feel like. But an awkward silence had passed by then.

“Oh! It’s already 12! My lunch break has passed, Mrs. Mohapatra. I have to go back to work, but I’ll come visit you tomorrow.”

While I was walking away, I felt extremely sorry... for her, I mean. Her position was arresting; I was struck by the sadness of it all. This woman, all alone, abandoned by her son, husband probably dead, living on retirement money and clinging to a false hope. Mothers don’t deserve that kind of loneliness; it’s against nature.

July 15th ... I remembered it was Mom’s birthday so I called her.

Next day, I decided to see her again –Mrs. Mohapatra. I brought her some cha and Cuttack mixture.

“*Sanga*. That’s what this feels like it is.”

“What? I’m sorry, I don’t understand.”

“*Sanga*. It’s a word in Oriya for friend. How come you don’t know? I thought you were Oriya?”

“I am Oriya but I never really learned how to speak.”

“Oh I see. But you live in Orissa?”

“Yes, I get by with enough to understand.” I told her about my devious scheme. She laughed pleasantly.

“Well, would you like me to teach you then?”

At first I thought I wouldn’t have the time. It would be frustrating staying with her, helping her while trying to learn more about the language. Something faltered in me though, and I succumbed with a short nod. At least it was an amusing idea.

“Sure.” I replied.

It started that day and continued nearly every day from then on. I came back from the office at about six, and walked into her room for cha and a lesson. She spoke completely in Oriya and encouraged me to try the same. She went around the house and pointed out different things naming them in Oriya. I was a poor student, but I tried hard, much to my own surprise. My vocabulary was sparse and my grammar coarse, but with every lesson I improved a little.

I began to wonder if there was much more to language –especially the language of my ancestors– than I had ever imagined. “There’s a saying in Hindi but it’s also used in Oriya. *Apruchi khana, peruchi pehna*. Do you understand?” I laughed because she had been commenting on my clothes.

“I think I get it Auntie, I’ll wear more yellow if you say it brightens my face.”

It may sound strange, but the saying brought me closer to understanding the mindset of the culture. I felt connected to a body of people that spoke the same language and I noticed it everywhere. People on the

street, people in the *pau-bhaji* stands, people in the bookstores, the cinema-hall, the office, people ranging from *chai-vallas* to doctors, all used this colloquial connection revealing inside jokes that I was now privy to.

I spent nearly everyday there, slowly growing to love the old woman whom I now call Auntie. A couple of weeks passed slowly but Auntie was becoming sicker day by day. Her health was failing as a result of the stroke. And yet she still managed to make cha and entertain me. I talked to my parents about her often simply because she struck me as an exemplary person. I started to respect her for her humility and pride and her everyday ability to astound me with a kinder perspective. As she was getting sicker, I was losing confidence in the goodness of the world that a beautiful person like her was subject to such and evil.

Several weeks more passed like this. I went to her room on a normal day, or so it seemed at first. I called out to her and I was met with the sound of silence... a sad, melancholy silence with a tinge of realization. I didn't know at first what to do. Her son's pictures and postcards were posted on the *almira* so I decided to mail him a letter. I wasn't even sure whether he knew his mother was sick or whether he would even get the letter, as the postcards were dated many years ago. I doubted it would even get to him in time but at least he should be informed that his mother was no longer alive. He disgusted me completely. I was disappointed in his lack of interest in this beautiful person.

The funeral was to take place in three days and I was busy preparing for that. No one knew her but I still made calls to a priest to give her a proper cremation and made arrangements to visit the Ganges after. On the day of, I dressed in white and made my way to the cremation grounds. Tears fell from my eyes silently, as I walked with trepidation. I looked up to see a man by the pyre. I drew in a short breath, as much as I had seen his image over the past couple weeks, seeing him in person and here nearly rendered me speechless.

"What are you doing here?" I asked coldly. He shrugged off the austerity.

"You're the girl that sent me the letter, right? I'm just here for the funeral and the belongings."

I couldn't believe this and suddenly I realized that everything in me just wanted to hurt him for his absolute incapacity to understand and appreciate the being that was his mother. And then I was glad. I realized that I had a closer bond with Auntie than this man would ever have. We spent the last couple weeks in blissful connection and upon reflection I realized I had learned a lot from her. She taught me appreciation, she taught me friendship, she even helped me regain some innocence.

Most of all, she taught me the importance of language and heritage. Here I was, speaking completely in English, while she spoke completely in Oriya. We were from two separate worlds and we sat together like we were in one of our own. She brought us together with language and taught me how crucial it is to communication and understanding. She used *language* to change my outlook on the world.

With that in mind, I turned to the man who claimed to be her son.

"Tu Auntie ro pua heyneu au kebe bhi hey pari buni."

[You are not Auntie's son and you will never be.]

And I never looked back at him but moved on with Auntie in my mind forever.

Segregation

by
Pratik Pradhan

In almost all the countries in the world, there is at least one account of segregation. But segregation is a horrible and heinous thing to do and can sometimes prove to be the worst thing that ever happens in the country. In India's past there was Gandhi who fought against segregation peacefully. In America's past there was Martin Luther King Jr. who was Gandhi's follower and who fought segregation. In Hinduism, there are many different Gods, so even the population of ancient India believed in diversity. Therefore, I think that segregation should not be a problem we have to deal with in the world right now.

First of all, ancient gods such as Radha-Krishna and Jagannath symbolized equality. Radha was very fair in color while Krishna was very dark, yet they loved each other greatly. Jagannath was very dark in color, while Subadhra was yellow and Balabadhra white. The trinity of Vishnu the protector, Shiva the destroyer, and Brahma the creator are all portrayed very different in color. Vishnu is dark, Shiva is blue since he drank the poison, and Brahma is fair in color. The three brothers of Ram were all fair while Ram himself was dark. Thus, even the gods symbolized a fight against segregation.

Another account of anti-segregation can be exemplified in India. The British came and segregated our country by exploiting the caste and the religion and thus dividing up our country. Ancient Indian society was divided into different groups depending on peoples' occupation, which later developed into a caste system and weakened our country. British took control of our country and never let us free ourselves. In the early 1900s, a man named Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi started fighting for the freedom of our country. Before that, he fought segregation in South Africa. He was sent to jail many times, but his persistence kept him going. Soon, he freed us from the British. Not only did he free the motherland, he did it in peaceful terms. He never took part in any kind of violent act to free our country. Have you ever heard the saying, if someone slaps you on one cheek, offer him the other? That came from Gandhi, he knew that the British would have to go away sooner or later, and they did, thanks to him. Unfortunately, Gandhi died from a person who didn't believe in Gandhi's ways. Today, without Gandhi, India would be a very different country.

Lastly, in the country we live in, there was a man named Martin Luther King Jr. He followed Gandhi's principles and fought against white and black segregation. If you were colored or African-American, you had to suffer much more than the "white" Americans who lived there. They had to go to worse schools, they had worse working conditions, and they had worse jobs to do. When Dr. King heard about the success in India; he learned that Gandhi defeated the British, and segregation overall. He decided to try it, and it worked! Like Gandhi, someone who opposed King's beliefs shot him. If we had more men like Gandhi and Dr. King, there would be much less segregation and the world would be a better place to live.

As you can see, segregation can be very bad for any society. It can kill people, hurt people's feelings, and can be bad for an entire country. Therefore, segregation shouldn't be something this world has to deal with. Dr. King once said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Of course, his dream came true. The election of Barack Obama as the president of USA is the true fulfillment of Dr. King's dream. But, in my heart, I hope that this will happen not only in America, not only in India, but also in all the countries of the world. Segregation will end.

A Small Mind Thinks About the Big World

By
Ineka Panigrahi

As a small mind begins to wonder about the big world...

Every evening when I sit down for dinner, I wonder what the discussion at the table is going to be about. Is it going to be about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which I don't know why they started? Or about Barack Obama being the U.S. President? Is it going to be a discussion about early human civilizations which takes me back thousands of years? Is it going to be about an unfortunate disaster that will leave me with nightmares or about the current pirate problems? Is it going to be about the latest hit movie or about the impact of the latest technology on society? Is it going to be about the meaning of a poem or about my father's childhood stories in the village? Or is it going to be about the economic recession?

My family members talk about things they come across and share their opinions about a certain topic. I sit there, my small mind listening to the discussions trying to understand what they mean. I only understand a little part of these topics. Sometimes, I get excited to learn something new or something I can share with my friends the next day. However, I get worried sometimes, knowing about these big issues the world is having. I try to change the topic to something different; like what we're eating, what we did at work or school, what the plans are for the rest of the week or how much I loved my lunch today. Most of the time my family members just *have* to talk about things my small mind doesn't know too much about. Not just my family, wherever I go I hear people talking about some things unknown to the small mind.

These days, anywhere I look I see the word "recession". I see it on T.V., I hear it on the radio, posters in public mention it and people are talking about it every where. After hearing the word so many times, my small mind was burning with curiosity to find out what it meant. I researched it and gathered information by talking to many people and this is basically what this small mind understands about the recession.

People buy and sell things and companies do the same. These things are called economics. Sometimes the economy moves fast which is when there is lots of buying and selling occurs and sometimes the state of the economy becomes weak because companies, the government and banks don't buy and sell very often. When the economy moves slowly, it is called a recession. During a recession, people lose their jobs because companies can't pay them. House prices go down as well. Cars are not sold and its industry is affected. Then, the car companies don't make any money and begin spending money they don't have. Further recessions occur because businesses create inventories and unfortunately their production decreases, so their profit goes down which causes unemployment. Stock prices go down. Because of the recession, stress, anger, sadness and depression occurs in some families. However, adults aren't the only ones affected by the recession. Children are affected by it too because they are insecure about their surroundings. Children are also afraid their parents will not be able to provide them with the things they need. More than 40% of children said that their parents are way too worried about money during the recession (BBC Survey 2009). In times of the recession, people have to let go of luxuries in order to save money for necessities.

Although the recession can be scary at times, it is important to keep in mind that recessions are only temporary and will go away. There have been many recessions before and they all have gone away. We have to cope with all the negative things that happen in a recession and try our best to make them positive. Have you lost your smile because of the recession? Some bigger minds (adults) have shared some simple ideas with me about coping with the recession which my small mind can understand. Here are some of those tips:

1. If you have any extra money, your first priority should be to pay off any debt.
2. You can keep money in the country by buying goods and services when possible in your community.
3. If you have been staying at home with no job, this might be the time to take a course so you can update your skills.
4. Insure your house, medical care, car and income so you are not affected if something goes wrong.

5. As much as possible, make things on your own. Grow your own fruits and vegetables to start. Being thrifty can be very useful.

It is also important to keep in mind that we are not defined by what we own; it's who we are. No matter what happens, we have to be mentally strong to overcome the recession. My well-wishers are telling me that it is natural to worry about these things but we have to put our worries away and focus on our top priorities. Therefore, even though I am worrying about these big issues going on in the world, my small mind has to put these things away for a while because right now my high priority is doing well at school. And so, a small mind slowly exits the big world and enters her reality.

Ineka Panigrahi is 10 years old and lives in Toronto with her family. She loves dancing, singing and drawing. Article writing has been one of her interests since she was 6 years old.

Deep Sea Courage

by
Nayna Rath

I stared at the aquamarine water. Little waves rippled out of the boat. I took a deep breath to calm myself down. Why was I worrying about a silly little dive? Oh, I know exactly why, IT'S UNDERWATER! "Nayna?" I snapped out of my trance and put on my best (or I think) poker face, while I tried to figure out if I had enough courage to do this. Slowly everyone on the boat plopped underwater. Thankfully, I was going with my sister, so if anything happened she would die with me. Okay, okay I know I'm being over dramatic here but what if the cord that is holding me snaps?

I wringed my hands until they were sore. It felt like two seconds past us by, yet it was our turn. My heart quickened (out of excitement or fear I don't know). I took slow steps toward the back of the boat. My sister just stood there looking absurdly thrilled. What is wrong with her? My face flushed and I was sick to my stomach. My eyes got watery and it felt like my lungs were being pushed into my throat. I looked back at my mom with a sad gleam in my eyes. All I got in return was hand gestures indicating to go. My belly bubbled up. I opened my dry mouth to protest but quickly closed it. I gulped and let the instructor put a yellow helmet on my head. He sprayed it with this clear liquid to protect the glass from fog. Wetsuit and all, I stepped on to the ladder. Anya, my sister sat by me and took one look at me and gave me a "calm down!" face. It would take a little more than that to get me calm. I was pretty sure that I was going to start hyperventilating any second. I shut my eyes and opened them up in hope that this was a dream. No luck. When I turned my head to the left I saw there was nothing but bubbles. WHERE WAS MY SISTER IN MY TIME OF NEED! Soon enough I felt a sharp tug on the cord, telling me it was my time to descend into the bright blue waters. I hesitated. Could I get out right now? Or should I do it? But, the last thing I saw was my cousin giving me a full grin.

My head went underwater slowly; it felt like the elevator at the mall. I hung on to the ladder for dear life. OW! My ears popped about a foot underwater, it gave me enough pain to let go. I squeezed my eyes shut once again, regretting the choice to go diving. Slowly I drifted to the bottom. My feet felt a grainy texture and my eyes popped open. As soon as I laid my eyes on the bright colors and fish swimming around me I went back to my 2nd plan about being happy I came. I saw my sister holding a bar. I flashed my smile and I knew I was going to be okay.

I was completely happy as the vibrant colors of coral swished by and little tropical fish swam near me. In fact I got to take a picture with one! Now I was absurdly thrilled and it all happened because I had the courage to dive!

Sailing Your Ship through the Ethnic Maelstrom of North America

By
Soman Panigrahi

“I will let the winds of all cultures blow about my house; but I will refuse to be blown off my feet by any.”
- Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

Immigration has been at the heart of North American culture since the arrival of the Europeans in 1492. Colonized by Britain, France, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain, to name a few, North America became forcefully divided into regions dominated by one ethnicity, language and culture. It wasn't until the 19th century when the Anglophonic peoples were the rulers of the continent, leaving small communities or regions to the ethnic minorities of the Francophones and Hispanophones, as well as visible minorities of other racial backgrounds. The arrival of immigrants from non-Colonial powers was fully underway by the 20th century, and increased considerably in the 1960s. The metropolises of North America underwent a change of their ethnoracial landscape, as more and more immigrants came to the “west” looking for a better life than that of their ancestors.

The main challenge that any immigrant to North America faces, is that of fitting into the existing culture that surrounds them. Any individual, who wishes to keep their identity and ethnicity unique, must hold up against North Americanism, which coupled with the current marketing and media frenzies could be viewed as an ethnic maelstrom, rather than just a “melting pot”. Adjusting to North American culture requires an open mind and strong existentialist backbone, as to preserve one's cultural background while attempting to succeed in the “new world”.

In our very own Odia community here in North America, we have reached the third generation of Odias. From first hand experience, I have observed one particular case of immigrant Odia families; those who keep only open minds with the cultural choices they make, disregarding their ethnic roots.

Families and individuals, originated from Odisha, who jump on the North American bandwagon right away, never looking back at their cultural and ethnic roots, have the sole intention of fitting into the stereotypical “white American” society. They believe that to be North American they must speak English, eat “American” food and embrace the popular culture as if it were their own. In most cases, this not only makes a mockery of the North American culture, but also insults their ethnic and cultural background from which they emerged.

The term “mothertongue” has been essentially lost within immigrant families, because parents would rather their children speak English than be unique and multilingual, speaking both Odia and English, not including the plethora of other languages that their child may learn. This has even resulted in many parents themselves speaking English as if it were their first language, riddled with grammatical errors and mispronunciation. I for one am offended when an Odia elder addresses me in English – do I not look capable enough to be speaking fluent Odia? Is Odia not *your* first language? The height of losing one's touch with their ethnic language comes with speaking in English to present an award that itself stands for the preservation of Odia culture, or even giving an acceptance speech in pure English after receiving an award for the promotion of Odia language and culture surely pushes one to second-guess the recipient's credibility and the value of the award itself.

Another familiar characteristic for those with too much of an open mind lies with the food that they choose to eat. Contrary to popular belief, pizza and pasta, or hot dogs and hamburgers are not at all the finest that North American cuisine has to offer. To this day I have not understood the motivation behind cooking two dinners within a single Odia family: one meal prepared for the parents, and a separate meal for the children. Why must there be a separate menu for the youth and children of our community, offering cheap attempts at Western or even Chinese cuisine? Granted Odia food is hard to prepare for hundreds of people in North America, but Indian food at least keeps most characteristics of our culture alive. Pushing children to eat such demeaning foods with the ridiculous excuse of “Mo chhua ta au kichhi khaibani” has become an unnecessary, yet frequent issue when cooking for an Odia gathering. Children aren't born to eat only a certain type of food. They will eat what ever is made available to them. If they are

presented with chicken nuggets, they will eat chicken nuggets. If they are presented with rice and lentils, they will eat rice and lentils. A child will not starve to death when food is plenty. A child will eat anything that is given to them when they are hungry.

Thirdly, there lies the matter of culture; specifically speaking, the arts of Odisha. We may not have *jatra kalis* coming to our neighbourhood park, but we certainly do have the opportunity to put on a show in which we can present a *pala*, *jatra*, or *geetinatya*. It is up to us to do this here in North America. We have many promising, as well as already established, Odissi dancers and singers among our 2nd and 3rd generation youth, as showcased at a recent convention, and their talents and perseverance to preserve the arts of Odisha are highly commendable. Unfortunately this quality is not always present within our community. Celebrating *Utkala Dibasa* or *Kumar Purnima* by dancing to Hindi film songs and performing songs in Hindi, all the while compering the performances in English, is certainly not an acceptable way to be celebrating Odisha or one of its most popular occasions. One must step back and look at what aspects of their Odia culture are being displayed, and take the initiative to preserve the arts and culture of their ethnic background.

This is not to say, however, that we should remain clinging onto our own culture, and turn a blind eye to all those that exist around us. Take the time and show some interest in other cultures, to add to your own understanding and appreciation for them. Get involved at your local community centre; go to the opera; watch a hockey game; go to restaurants that offer food from specific cuisines. See what language, arts and food other cultures have to offer, and then you will be able to pass through the cultural maelstrom as it exists. Let the winds of all cultures blow about your house, but keep your feet firmly planted on the ground.

To say the least, those who are able to manage symbiosis between North America and Odisha are without a doubt more likely to succeed as a culturally enriched individual in this great multicultural society. The countries of Canada and the United States of America have not been built upon the foundations of one culture or language. In these free and democratic countries, people from all backgrounds are encouraged to practise their own religion, speak their own language, and follow their own cultural customs (provided they follow the laws of the country). If this is the case, then why do some people feel they have to abandon their own culture in order to live, speak and eat the way that they believe represents North America? There is no intelligible reasoning behind it.

As the 39th President of the United States, Jimmy Carter, said, “We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.” Let us preserve and nourish our Odia culture in this land far, far away from Odisha. Only then will we be able to truly add to the beautiful mosaic.

Soman Panigrahi is an undergraduate engineering student at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada.

My Visit to Orissa

By
Shreya Tripathy

I went to Orissa with my family. We saw our Aja, Aai, my cousins and Dadei and Detheis and relatives. In my trip to Orissa we celebrated Holi. We played Holi with water guns and color. We got wet and messy. It was fun! I really miss Holi in USA.

We went to Puri temple. We prayed to Lord Jagannath there. Then we went to the beach from there. My daddy and grandma went on a camel ride at the beach. It was scary. My cousin sisters and I went on pony ride. It was fun. We ate *chaat* and returned home.

We had gone to my daddy's village, Mahukhanda. Inside his house there is a well and lots of coconut trees behind the house. It was cool!

My trip to Orissa was very nice and was lots of fun. I loved meeting all my family members.

Shreya is a 1st grade student in Floris Elementary School. She lives in Virginia with her parents Gatikrishna and Jagyanseni and her brothers Rishabh and Ayush. She loves to dance and paint and tell jokes.

My Connection Stays Strong

By
Ayesha Kar

My life has become extremely dependent on my connection to my culture. Ever since I was a little girl, I fell in love with my language, food, and music. My first OSA convention was in 2002, the one in Greenbelt, Maryland. I immediately fell in love with the idea of our annual convention, and so did my parents. As the conventions, Kumar Purnimas, and various Pujas (hosted by the NJ/NY Chapter of course) went on, my connection with my culture, home land, and its natives continued to grow stronger.

I learn two different styles of singing, Indian Classical and American Classical. I noticed how alike both of the methods are; they come from the same origins and “Do Re Mi Fa” can easily replace “Sa Re Ga Ma” anywhere. I learned ballet when I was young and then, after I left ballet, I got into Odissi. When I started Odissi, I saw how alike the two dance forms were. They both were so graceful and beautiful; with smooth movements and gliding turns. Being involved with two cultures is so educational and it lets me experience different things.

Back in sixth grade, I went on an overnight camping trip with my school. For three days, all I had was fries, tator tots, chicken nuggets, and other foods of that nature. When I came home the first thing I said to my mom was, “Mom, can you make me some pakhala (rice water) and aloo chakta (mashed potatoes)?” I didn’t know I would miss Oriya food so much and it had only been three days. I know when I go to Orissa, after a week or so, I start to miss pizza, burgers and tacos. I think every kid does. We’re so accustomed to having two different varieties of food every day that if we stick to only American or Indian food, it gets unexciting.

One visit I particularly look forward to when I go to Orissa is the visit to Konark Sun Temple, in Puri. The detailed stone carvings of elephants, Odissi dancers, and most importantly, the Konark Chakra (wheel) are so breathtaking. Every single slab of black granite has a marvelous carving of something that is significant to our culture. Being an artist, the figures in the temple intrigue me so much. A lot of my inspiration comes from what I see in temples, especially Konark. It’s amazing that they could make such a beautiful and meticulous chariot in the thirteenth century without the tools we have today. Even with all the sculpting utensils we have now, we could never make monuments as incredible as the ones made in the ancient times. Konark speaks for itself, its stories, the ones carved into the temple, and the the well-known Dharmapada tale, are no match for what anyone else has to say about it.

Puri is my favorite place out of the places we go sight-seeing; Jagannath Temple, Konark, and of course the beach. I think I was about eleven when I had met a sweet, homeless girl who was around my age. Somehow we had met while we were playing on the beach. She had no home, no decent clothing, no parents, and it also looked like she didn’t eat three meals a day. Despite all of that, she was carelessly happy. She frolicked in the sand and played in the ocean just as I did; with a big grin on her face. Her clothes were gray, shaped like a big rag, just draping over her body. It was soggy and wet, clinging on to her body. She had no shoes; her feet were dry and cracked. Her face was dark with small scars; messy, salt laden black hair covered her forehead. I was a little scared of her at first because she looked like she was merely bones with a thin coat of skin. We played together for about twenty minutes, and she was one of the most amazing people that I’ve ever met in my life. I’ve also wanted more in life; you could call me spoiled because I think I don’t appreciate enough. With so little, she was so content with her life, while most of us want something else right after we get something.


After twenty minutes, my Bapu Baba (Bapu Uncle) was running towards me, with an angry look on his face. He was worried about me and told me not to stay away from my new friend. He pulled me away from her, but I begged my uncle to buy her an ice cream cone. After much pleading, Bapu Baba complied and bought her vanilla ice cream. Her eyes filled with happiness; she enjoyed every lick to her heart’s content. She gave me a big hug, and walked away, to live her life while I walked away to live mine.

Orissa is filled with so many interesting things. Its festivals are so vast and unique. And it’s possible to experience each and every one of them over here. I remember my mom telling me how she had never

pulled the Ratha (chariot) in a Ratha Yatra (festival in which Lord Jagannath is sent to his aunt's house for a week). When we had our Ratha Yatra last year, my mom got to pull the Ratha. Of course it wasn't the same feeling, but it was close. Kumar Purnima (Moon Puja) is another festival we celebrate at home. My mom makes homemade Manda Pita (steamed rice cakes filled with grated coconut and paneer), and we sit around a tulsi plant (basil) and wait for the Moon to come out. Once the Moon comes out, we conduct a puja and pray that we get a good husband. A good life partner is important for life, so praying for one from an early age is what guarantees it. All the festivals are so much fun and the fact that we get to celebrate them in America is so incredible.

The things that Orissa has to offer never cease to amaze me. Our culture is so different from other cultures and it should be spread across the world. Being thousands of miles away doesn't stop any of us from being educated about our language, music, food, or dances. The place we come from tells people who we are and what background is like, and the people from Orissa are simply remarkable. I extremely blessed to be part of two ethnicities and I get the chance to indulge myself in all different types of activities. Even as I grow older, and become more pressured in school, I'll always try my best to have a connection with our Oriya culture.


Ayesha is an active participant of OSANYNJ cultural activity round the year. She is the daughter of Mahendra Kar and Ullasini Sahoo.



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A Different World

By
Ayesha Mishra

In my peaceful suburban life in sunny California, I have everything one could ever want. My own room in a nice house, a loving family, a dog, tennis lessons, dance lessons, a good school, lots of friends. The list goes on and on...sounds perfect, right? But who could ever know that what I really want is to walk down the street, chatting with street vendors selling *kulfi* and *gupchup* and *chat*? An outsider would never know that I long to travel from place to place by catching rickshaws and autos. But is that something that would happen in my quiet little white community of Aliso Viejo? Impossible. Sure, I love my life here; even with all my school work, life is pretty easygoing. I have the best friends I could ask for, and my school provides me with endless opportunities in everything. But my life in this town seems too quiet and personal. It's not loud and bustling and colorful like India. Yeah, I have nice neighbors and everything, but it's not like in Orissa where everywhere you go, people greet you and lovingly force feed you. My extended family with my grandparents, aunts and uncles, and my million cousins, whom I really love, are all far away in a different state in a different country in a different continent. I talk to them every week but I still feel excluded in a way.

I really enjoy the lifestyle I have here in America, but I realized that in everything I do, I find myself missing the better Indian way of doing it. My favorite singers here are Kanye West, Akon, Flo Rida, and Rihanna. But whom do I like much better? Sunidhi Chauhan, Sonu Nigam, Shreya Goshal, and Shaan. Western clothes are stylish, but I find that I look much better in the colorful salwars and ghagras of India. I sit at the movies with my friends and enjoy watching movies like *Blades of Glory*, *Batman*, and *Hancock*. But what I like much better is watching a movie in my own language with my own culture, in other words, Bollywood. I'm a dancer, and yes, I like doing jazz and hip hop at school, but by now you've probably guessed what kind of dance I'm really passionate about...Bollywood and Bharatanayam. I'm crazy about these two dances, and why? Because I feel like myself when I'm doing them, I don't have to pretend to be anyone else, this is how I express myself...because I'm Indian. I genuinely look forward to all the Oriya get-togethers here and make it a point to make my parents take me to ALL of them. I enjoy these parties and pujas much more than the dances at my high school, much more than the pool parties at my friends' houses. The reason I love these Oriya parties is because all of us there have countless things to relate to because we have a common culture, tradition, and language.

I always tell my parents that I'd much rather go on a trip to Orissa than on a vacation to Europe. And because my parents have always given in, we still haven't gotten a chance to see the "green valleys of Switzerland" and "sit in a boat in Italy"...sorry, mom. A trip to my family in Orissa is something I always look forward to. As soon as I'm in the state and in a cab on my way to my family's house, I can barely sit still with the anticipation of seeing my cousins. And then I realize that my hands are sweating because of the heat. But heat and mosquitoes are something I don't notice while I'm in India (even though those two factors constantly make me suffer) because I'm having too much fun. All the memories of playing cricket with my cousins, bargaining for bangles on the streets, crying while eating spicy *gupchup*, and playing carrom with family come back to me all the time. The temples in Puri, like the Jagannath temple, give me a real sense and feeling of my culture. I was fascinated by those structures. The Gopalpur beach was one of my most fun experiences. I waded in the water with cousins and goofed around with people I was comfortable with. The Oriya food is equally delicious. It is one thing to eat fish in America, but entirely another thing to eat *machha bhaja* with family in Bhubaneswar. Riding in a car in the U.S. is boring and normal, but feeling the wind blow through my hair on motorcycle rides with my uncles and cousins is exhilarating. Racing to catch an autorickshaw and then pretending to not need it when the driver asks for a high price is an experience on its own that make me laugh every time. The feeling I get when speaking Oriya in my motherland is one of unity. The language gives an atmosphere of family and closeness, even when speaking with strangers. The hospitality that everyone in India shows is something remarkable on its own. People are constantly offering you the best food they can give when you visit their homes. The care

that the locals in Orissa express to even foreigners is heartwarming. When I was young, my parents always asked me if I wanted to go back to Orissa, but I always said no. I loved seeing my family, but I didn't think I could handle the other things in India for more than two months. I would always crinkle my nose at the idea of sweltering heat, mosquitoes, stinky bathrooms, and bumpy roads. But this past winter break, I went on a service trip with my friends to India, and I realized that these things definitely don't matter when compared to all the other great things about the country. This time, I didn't go to visit family, and I still truly enjoyed the trip. The trip made me realize that what I really loved about India was not just seeing my family; it was the people, the busy streets, the color, the food, the clothes, the culture, the language, and most of all, the lifestyle. After I came back to America, I was depressed for an entire month. The English language seemed bland, the clothes seemed boring, and the calm quiet of my city seemed suffocating. I realized how much was missing from my life, even though I have a life that is extremely comfortable and luxurious.

By now it has to be obvious that I really love India, and in particular, Orissa, because that's where my family is. So one would ask me that if I'm such an India lover, then why don't I just move there? The truth is...nothing would make me happier than to do just that. But the only problem is my education. I'm a high schooler, and have already planned my entire journey into getting into the college of my choice and becoming a doctor. But after my career is established? I will most definitely move to India, because even though it is *saat samandar par*, it is my true calling.

Ayesha Misra is a 10th grader from Aliso Viejo, California. She has an uncontrollable passion for dance and a zest for life.

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Namaskar, Namaste, or Hello?

by
Anand Mohapatra

“Fasten your seatbelts. We will be arriving at Indira Gandhi International Airport in a few minutes,” announced the heavily accented, almost incomprehensible voice over the intercom. It had been six years since I had last come to India. I had been too young to remember the last trip, yet I felt prepared. “You’re Indian, and you know Oriya and a little Hindi. There’s nothing to worry about,” I told myself repeatedly. However, when we arrived at immigration, I lost all hope – my dad had to do all of the talking for me. I finally realized how little Hindi I actually knew and that just being Indian and knowing Oriya would not help me in New Delhi. At my uncle’s house, no matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t relate to the interests and life of my Hindi-speaking cousin, Anurag. I was amazed at how different the food tasted from the Indian food in America. After watching his favorite movie, listening to some of his music, and seeing the gigantic Kutab Minar and the magnificent Taj Mahal, I made a note to myself that I would give the India outside Orissa some thought once I returned to the United States.

After we finished visiting relatives and sightseeing in Delhi, my family and I traveled to my parents’ birthplace in the state of Orissa on the Eastern seaboard. “Finally,” I thought, “people who I can talk to easily and actually get to know.” But, to my despair, things went just about the same as they did in New Delhi, and once again, my hopes of fitting in were shattered. Though I shared my Oriya relatives’ language and regularly associated with Oriya Americans, I did not share their culture and wasn’t really one of them. Everything here was so different from New Delhi – the architecture, the food, and interactions with people, even the weather. I spent the thirty-hour flight home deep in thought, confused and upset at my failure to be an Indian and an Oriya.

When I returned home, I finally realized how little Indian and Oriya I was: even though I could speak the language and associated with my parents’ Oriya community, I did not really understand the culture. I was hardly Oriya, let alone Indian. In an effort to change that, I devoted the rest of my summer reading up on the traditions and history of Orissa and India, learning how to prepare various Oriya and Indian dishes, improving my Hindi, and learning how to play the tabla, a classical Indian drum. By the end of the summer, I was able to understand and enjoy Oriya and Hindi movies and music, hold a conversation in Hindi with native speakers, perform a tabla recital for a group of over a hundred people, and cook several different complete Oriya and Indian meals, and I had added several Indian and a few Oriya holidays to my calendar. Of course at first, adding all of these spices to my mostly American melting pot resulted in an awkward mixture. But slowly, the spices melted into my Americanness, and as the mixture settled, I emerged, truly multicultural: Oriya and Indian while still American. More than three years have passed since then, yet I have to admit that I’m the same person who can put roasted cumin powder and tandoori masala in his spaghetti and has three different ways of greeting people, each with its own history and culture, “namaskar,” “namaste,” and “hello.”

Anand Mohapatra is a freshman at the University of California at Berkeley, studying Bioengineering. He is involved in Biomechanics research, and participates actively in several organizations including the Berkeley chapter of Engineering World Health, the Bioengineering Honor Society, and Tau Beta Pi, the national engineering honor society. In his free time, he volunteer at the Oakland Children’s Hospital, spend time with friends, and keep up with the latest action movies and comedies. He is fluent in Oriya, Hindi, English, and Spanish, and I can play many different musical instruments including the violin, tabla, and harmonica.

My Summer-2008 Orissa Experience

By
Pranoy Mohapatra

Every year, my family and I take a trip to the village of Satabatia, in Cuttack, Orissa. Usually, I spend my time lying around, roaming with village children, attempting to fish, or lighting fireworks all day long. Typically, I finish a few books while I am there. Most of the trips feel the same to me, but this one would be a trip to remember. From the arrival in Bhubaneshwar, India still felt the same. It was the same humid, scorching hot environment it always was. When we arrived at my grandparents' house, nothing had changed. The village looked exactly the same as it did last time, the power still got cut very frequently, and the roads were still rough and littered. However, things quickly changed when a malaria epidemic suddenly broke out, killing the young children and leaving many others sick.

I first learned about the epidemic in the marketplace. I did not know what the disease was, as everybody was referring to it as "dengu fever". Soon, I realized that it was malaria, and that it had been spreading for some time. I was taken aback, as this dreadful disease is not even existent in America. Not only that, but in America, something like this would be taken care of immediately and efficiently. In India, people were crammed into a one-roomed schoolhouse that had been set aside for controlling the epidemic. Intrigued, I drove a motorcycle to the schoolhouse to help with the efforts.

Once I reached the school, I was truly shocked. A mob of suffering malaria victims had crowded the door. Once finding my way inside, I realized that the makeshift "hospital" was just as dangerous as the rest of the village. There was no power supply, no fans, and mosquitoes flew freely around the room. The doctors were understaffed and had too many patients to handle. At one point, anybody complaining of anything at all would instantly receive medication. To help, I brought my own thermometer, weight scale, and blood pressure cuff from home. Then I brought forth the idea of a prescription system at the door based on a first come first served basis. This simplified the entire system, and made the job easier for the doctors, as symptoms would be recorded by volunteers at the door rather than gathered by doctors from each individual patient. With the new found organized system, things went much more smoothly, and more patients were examined and given medication in much less time than before.



According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 350 – 500 million people worldwide suffer from malaria each year. Most of the casualties of malaria are young children. The root cause of this problem is the poor sanitary condition coupled with a moist, warm environment that mosquitoes cherish and thrive in. Improved sanitary conditions, awareness, education, and proper protection can help prevent such calamities from recurring. One thing I preached in India was awareness and cleanliness to the people. Without the mosquitoes, there would be no more malaria. However, this will never happen if the village is kept dirty and unclean. Many

villagers heeded my advice, and began to correct this problem.

Most of the time I spent on this trip was in the malaria emergency camp. However, I feel satisfied with the fact that I was able to help many people that I had seen throughout the years. They were something like an extended family. With some work and education, malaria can be removed from the world and be left in the history books.

Musings of Bygone Days

By
Sibjeet Mahapatra

There's a slender volume on the top shelf of my bookcase, nestled snugly in between *Midnight's Children* and *The Sun Also Rises*. Given a cursory glance, there's nothing extraordinary about this book—a stylized peacock in green, orange and black is the sole embellishment on a plain white dust jacket. A title and author are printed on top of the image: *Musings of Bygone Days*, by Hari Hara Das.

If you were to tug the book from its spot on the shelf, meaning to flip idly through the crisp, still-white pages, you would learn two new things about it. The first is that apart from the title, this book is not written in English. The contents are typeset in a peculiar language, full of swooping, curvaceous characters that intertwine sinuously on each page.

You would also see a dedication, located prominently on the inside cover. It's in black ink, written in a bold, flourishing hand. "*Presented with love to my dearest Sibjeet. Hari Hara Das, 28 July, 2003.*"

Hari Hara Das is my maternal grandfather. He has written over fifteen books—five novels and novellas, four short story anthologies, several collections of poetry. My mother tells me that for twenty-eight years, he taught university students how to wield a pen with grace, and power, and restraint. He is an author in every sense of the word. Every novel, story, and poem my grandfather has written is in Oriya. It's an Indo-Aryan language, rooted in Sanskrit, comprised of swooping, curvaceous characters that intertwine sinuously on each page.

I can't understand any of his stories. Oh, I can read the Oriya alphabet, thanks to my mother's long-suffering determination— throughout elementary school, not a summer went by in which she didn't try to entice me to sit down with a ragged Oriya preschool primer. When I visit Bhubaneswar, I can slowly piece together enough letters to read signs on the storefronts around Bapuji Nagar, or to read the daily headline on the *Samaj* newspaper. But I don't have the vocabulary or the practice to understand the abstract concepts and themes of Oriya literature. My mother used to try and give me Oriya storybooks, but I was younger then, and didn't think that learning a strange alphabet was important enough to keep me from the street hockey games that were going on without me as I chafed under her lessons.

When I was twelve years old, my grandfather gave me *Musings of Bygone Days* on the last day of one of our biannual trips to India. We had stayed in his house for only a week, and though I was happy to spend time with him, I was more eager to play badminton and tease stray cats and plan pranks on my grandmother, abetted by similarly-impish cousins.

The morning of my departure, he pulled me aside and handed me the book. It wasn't wrapped, and I was thrilled to see his name on the cover.

"Is this one of the books *you* wrote, Grandfather?" I blurted excitedly.

"Indeed it is," he replied in his booming, professorial voice. "It's a collection of poetry."

Eagerly, I flipped through the first few pages—and stopped. Crestfallen, I turned to him, and had the grace to look embarrassed. "Grandfather, this is in Oriya. I can't understand it."

I began to hand it back to him, but he smiled and shook his head. "That's not the point at all. Someday, I hope you will be able to read this. Until then, please keep it, and fill in the words yourself."

So I keep the book on the top shelf of my bookcase. Take it down, from time to time. Trace the characters with my fingers, marveling at their smoothness, wondering what they might say. I like to think I'll find out someday. In the meantime, I tell my own stories, pen my own poems, compose essays and articles and critiques, just as he did for his entire life.

I layer my words over his, and the English blurs with Oriya when I write.

Oriya: The Mother Tongue

by
Suchismita Pahi

I will be the first to admit that I miss hearing Oriya when I am at University.

I never thought that it was anything different to speak Oriya, though sometimes Lasu Bhaina and I used it as a secret language. I did not believe that I would miss speaking Oriya with my parents, brother, cousins, aunts and uncles, and the whole gamut of relatives.
But I do.

I miss the random rhyming of words like "*katha patha*" and "*aypata, saypata*" and "*jinsa, phinsa*". I miss making silly mistakes such as calling "*amruta bhand*" an "*amruta anda*" and trying to figure out why it was called "*amruta egg*" when the fruit looked nothing like an egg.

I miss being able to make nonsense gushy affection noises in Oriya, I miss hearing Aai go "*Houu Lo*" when she was indulging me and my little cousins; I miss being able to joke around in Oriya with other Oriya kids and make fun of each other's ridiculous pronunciations.

Being immersed in your language is beautiful. It is amazing to visit cousins, go to OSA convention, and be surrounded by people who speak the same language. All of a sudden, you are not just one isolated individual, but you are one of an extensive, mildly insane, curry obsessed family.
So it comes as no big surprise that sometimes I will get off the phone with my parents and accidentally answer my roommate's English question in Oriya.

Or that I will call someone and accidentally start the conversation with "*karna karuchu*" instead of "what's up". I wasn't even born in Orissa, but the language has a hold on me that I cannot deny.
Being able to interact in Oriya is an experience that is safe, secure, and comforting- as if you are an infant in your mother's embrace.

A mother tongue is important not just for maintaining culture, but also to the soul. Learning and teaching Oriya, allowing the language to flourish in more than the common communication sense is something that ought to be a goal of non-resident Oriya families.

I hope to learn how to read and write in Oriya- not just because I want to read Oriya literature, but also because I believe that losing the Oriya literary culture would be a disaster for my generation and the generations after us.

I'm proud of being able to speak Oriya, even if it is somewhat basic- and I wish that pride to be instilled in other Oriya children across the Western hemisphere. Being able to speak multiple languages is a treasure that should never be lost. It is a part of our heritage that is just as rich as the habits and traditions of the Oriya people.

"What is that?"

"It's called Oriya, from Orissa."

"Wow it sounds so cool! It's really fast! What else can you say?"

Suchismita Pahi is a Junior at the University of Texas at Austin studying Human Biology B.S./Government B.A major. She loves writing on international relations, culture, and religion and is involved in non-profit organizations, Nourish International (Austin Chapter) and Foundation for International Relief of Children. She is also a staff writer for Nazar- A South Asian Perspective.

Snorkeling in Cozumel, Mexico

by
Ankita Nayak

The dust was blowing into my eyes. I kept blinking but it wouldn't get out. The Yamaha Rhino 400 "car" was bumping up and down at 40 mph. My helmet was itchy, and the heat was extreme. Despite all this, I was psyched about going snorkeling and seeing the coral reefs. When the "Rhino" slowed down, my heart leaped. We were at the beach! I jumped out of the "car" and ran down the beach.

"WOW," I exclaimed.

The color of the water was beautiful and the sand was smooth. I felt like I was in a paradise.

"Ankita, Come here, the snorkeling gear is over here," my dad yelled.

I sprinted towards the gear. I grabbed the life jacket, belts, straps, flippers and breathing equipment. I struggled to put it all on.

"UGH!" I let out in frustration.

"Here, let me help you," the tour guide said with his Mexican accent.

He adjusted the belts, straps, life jacket, and he put on the breathing equipment on me. He told me to hold on to the flippers. He then read some boring instructions and screamed,

"DIVE IN!"

I put the flippers on my feet and swam in. The guide told us to follow a red buoy and, I was right behind it.

About half way to the coral reefs I realized that my skin was rough and my face was bright as a red rose. My dad and I were the last ones in the group and the red buoy was on the horizon. I turned around and saw my dad kicking and struggling to keep up with me. I, myself, was struggling to keep up with the group..... And red buoy.

"Keep going, I can't go any further. I am very, very, very tired! You keep going though," My dad screeched as he was trying to flag the rescue boat down.

I snickered as he was waving his arms around frantically. I turned around and kept swimming.

30 minutes later we reached the coral reefs. The color and beauty of it captured my attention. I was truly amazed. The fish were all different colors and sizes and, the schools that passed by were like little fish movies. We stayed for about 15 minutes in astonishment, and then made our way back. On my way back I thought I saw the beach. I pinched my arm and yelped. I wasn't hallucinating. I swam even faster, a few minutes later I reached it. I was exhausted! My feet were screaming, my head was clogged and my hands were stiff. In the midst of all this I was thrilled. I accomplished my goal! Further down the beach I could see the stake out place where we had started. I was utterly confused.

"The currents were strong today so they pushed us more east of the beach than we thought. They pushed us until where we are now," the tour guide explained.

"UGH!" I yelled.

I started to walk. I walked and walked and walked until I thought my feet and arms were going to fall off! I collapsed at my parents' feet. I sat up and with my last breath I whispered, "Please give me some food!"

The Sacred Thread: A Reflection on Heritage
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by
Rutuparna Sarangi

It has been four years since my brother's *Bratopanayan*, but I still remember the event as if it were yesterday. Perhaps I can thank the agonizing heat for emblazoning those memories into my mind. It was the 11th of July—the middle of summer in a rather tropical country: India. The monsoon rains had not yet arrived, and we were currently staying in an air conditioned-less village. However, the constant activity in the house kept our minds occupied as we prepared for the arriving guests. The event began around midday, and I was given the job of the photographer of the event. So there I stood in the sweltering heat, clicking away in the dusty foreground of the altar. The ceremony continued for hours, and though I was exhausted at the end, I couldn't help but feel a sense of pride and accomplishment (and not just for my photography skills). A few months ago I did not even know the meaning of the sacred thread. Now, not only did I know what it symbolized, but I had also seen the entire ceremony performed first hand. From learning the *Gayatri Mantra* to the traditional trip to the temple, I felt I had gone through the entire process vicariously through my brother.

I have always been interested and eager to learn about our culture. Whether it was my parents' constant reference to Sanskrit shlokas as I was growing up, or taking part in OSA plays and activities, I have enjoyed having close ties to my heritage. Watching my brother go through his thread ceremony made me realize just how rich of a background I have. There are limitless traditions and customs that I have just tasted with my trips to India and readings of *Amar Chitra Katha* comics. Our culture helps define us, and provides us with a sense of community. It is only until I left home for college that I realized how much this community had become a part of me. I almost took it for granted that I would always go to Ganesh puja or Kumar Utsav functions with my family. I had even made plans to go home for Saraswati puja this year before I realized a five-hour trip to and from Boston was not a very practical endeavor for a two-day weekend. The reality finally hit me that I was on my own and had to keep these traditions alive myself. I promised I would hold myself to that end, whether I observed the pujas on my own or I simply kept in touch with the language.

Being a part of OSA greatly helps me to fulfill this promise. I am grateful to be a part of an organization that fosters a sense of kinship, and educates youths about Oriya customs and traditions. In its effort to bridge the gap between two countries, OSA provides the younger generation with a way to stay in touch with their roots and develop their own sense of culture, blending Oriya customs with those of America. I too hope to do my part in promoting this connection by carrying on the values, traditions, and beliefs of our community.

Odia-American

By
Amit Kumar

They call me Indian-American. I call myself Odia-American. After all, should I really be called an American? Why not, I ask myself. I eat American food, I play American sports, and I listen to American music. Shouldn't I be considered an American? My first language is English, my favorite class is PE, and I think that the best movies come from Hollywood. Shouldn't I be considered an American? Of course, retort my friends. Don't you say the Pledge of Allegiance every morning? Yes, I do. But does that make me an American? When I went out yesterday, I played basketball. Today, I have a soccer game. Tomorrow, my friends and I will play football. I have never played cricket in my life (although one day I would like to play!). I have never played field hockey in my life. But does that make me an American? Last winter, I technically went to Odisha on vacation. But the way I see it, I went back home to Odisha, after a long vacation in America. I stepped off the train in Balasore. I felt the sun on my face. I heard the motorcycles roar past. I saw the oxen trot aimlessly around. And I knew I was home. Odisha is unique in many ways. It is one of the few places on earth where you can see all the aspects of life. You can see great cities, like Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri, and Rourkela. Then you can travel just a few kilometers/miles out of the cities and see a completely rural village. Where in America can you step out of your house and see towering coconut trees? Where in America can you see something as magnificent and awe-inspiring as the Sun temple of Konarka or as intimidating and bold as the Puri Jagannath temple where hundreds of disciples from all walks of life gather daily to have *darsan* of the Lord Jagannath? So also many *Pandas* are busy chanting *shlokas* and taking care of the *pujas* for the disciples. Can any one show me a place in America like Panchalingaswar or Nilagiri, Balasore where tranquility reigns amidst the sounds of a cool clean waterfall, singing birds, dancing peacocks at a distance, and there you feel the presence of the Lord Shiva and try to find *pancha lingas* under the streaming water. What a natural and peaceful place to be!

Personally witnessing and viewing these masterpieces made my origin feel dignified. I felt a sense of appreciation that went deeper than words. I have often heard the phrase "What do you see when you look in the mirror?" I see an American haircut. I see American clothes. I see an American baseball hat. But does that make me an American? No. Because what else do I see, underneath the American disguise? I see an Odia. It is truly easy to lose our heritage amid the deep stars and stripes of America. It is truly easy to forget our culture and bask in the American ideal. But it is equally easy to go open up the Journal of the Orissa Society of the Americas or simply India Abroad and realize who we are. Last year's motto was: Our Land, Our People (aAma mati, aAma mAnisha). I do not believe that "Our Land" was referring to America. I do not believe that "Our People" was referring to Americans. Because whenever someone asks me what I am, I reply: I am three things. I am Odia; I am Indian; and I am proud.

Amit Kumar is 15 and lives with his parents Smita Mohanty and Rabi Prusti in Auburn, Alabama. He plays in the school soccer team and travels with the school honors band. He loves to travel read storybooks. He also writes articles for newspapers (youth section) and plays basketball, piano, percussion, and chess.

A Slithering Summer

By
Amrut Sarangi

I felt a rush of joy the moment I woke up that morning. It was my grandmother's birthday! I didn't know where we were going or what we were going to do. I quickly brushed my teeth and ran downstairs to ask my mom the plans for the day, trying to stay as quiet as possible about the topic when my grandmother was around. My mom wasn't sure, but I knew there would be a big surprise. I eagerly devoured my breakfast, anxiously waiting for something exciting to happen.

After I finished eating, I went to take a shower in the clumsy bathroom. When everyone was ready, we all got inside the car. I was so excited; we were going to throw her a surprise party! Although I could barely contain my enthusiasm, my grandmother did not seem as happy. I asked her why she was so depressed. She told me that when she was born, a fortuneteller had predicted her 74th birthday would be a disaster. That wiped the smile off my face, but I convinced myself not to believe in any of that fortune-telling nonsense.

After a filling lunch at a nearby restaurant, we headed home. It began to rain, so I went upstairs to play a game with my sister. The humid atmosphere and heavy lunch had a soporific effect, eventually lulling me to sleep. I woke up at 7 o'clock in the evening and went downstairs. I turned on the TV and to my surprise my favorite movie was playing. We all watched together until the commercial break. My sister turned to the kitchen and out of nowhere screamed, "SNAKE!!!!!!!" I whirled around to catch a glimpse of a slithering black coil disappear under a table.

Instinctively, we all drew ourselves onto the sofas, trying to avoid contact with the floor. My grandparents kept trying to call their house worker, but were unable to reach him. The neighbors arrived to help, but we all were very nervous. They came armed with sticks, ready to kill the snake. Unfortunately, they couldn't find it anywhere and were convinced it had left amidst the commotion. We on the other hand were not as satisfied that it was gone. Eventually, our house worker came, bringing a snake charmer along with him. The other men resumed their search and started banging on the ground, trying to lure the snake out. Suddenly, a startled snake jolted out of a pile of newspapers and slid onto the floor with unimaginable speed. It started to slither towards me! Frozen in place with fear, I saw my life flash before my eyes. Despite the terrifying situation, I couldn't help but cringe at my rather clichéd reaction. My forehead slowly began to resemble a sauna as it became damp with sweat.

The snake charmer jumped in front of me, acting as a barrier. As the snake tried to escape, it hit the bedroom door. It stretched to its full length against the door—roughly 5 feet tall! It was taller than me at the time! Then in a split second, it disappeared into the bathroom. The snake catcher quickly took the chance to grab the snake, catching it in a way that it couldn't spray venom. Although I was relieved to see the snake caught, it still made me recoil in fear. I was so shaken by the experience that over the next couple of days I was still hesitant to walk on the floor. After this incident, I have had a considerable debate with myself about my opinion of fortunetellers.

I quickly called my dad to tell him about our horrific incident. He explained that the snake was probably confused because of the rain, and had come inside for shelter. Normally I would find snakes very fascinating, especially from watching all the documentaries on *National Geographic* or *Discovery Channel*, as well as the countless number of times I have seen tamed snakes with trainers in school. But to actually meet a wild, untamed snake was more terrifying than I had ever imagined.

Apart from the snake incident, however, I always look forward to going back and enjoying summer in India with my grandparents. Let's just hope my future trips are a bit less exciting.

Rooftop Try

By
Mrunali Das

I could never adequately describe my passion for rooftops. I love the elevation despite my crippling fear of heights. Then again, despite is not the proper word. "Because of" is more appropriate. Because of my crippling fear of heights, looking down gives me a sense of accomplishment, of invincibility. If I am courageous enough to peer past the rooftop, I can overcome any other obstacle. From my precarious perch, I am free from the troubles of the world below.

I first fell in love with rooftops in Delhi. I was at my Mamu's house, and it was nighttime. Someone probably held my hand as I climbed the steep steps. It was too dark for me to tell where I was, but then I looked up. The stars shined beautifully bright contrasted with the dreadfully dark backdrop. The seemingly infinite night sky filled my four-year-old eyes with wonder. I thought I had transcended into some delightfully mysterious heaven. When I woke up the next morning, I was still under the spell of that night sky. I did not fear the height. I loved it.

However, it took over a decade for my rooftop passion to become international. That adventure began last February when we went to Orissa, specifically my paternal village of Sahada. I spent hours on the rooftop of our temple home. I would sometimes sneak up there to watch the morning puja. In the afternoon, I would spread a sheet down, bask in the warm sunlight, and read a variety of material from The Catcher in the Rye to a found copy of The Ramayana. I would later contemplate the hidden meanings and messages while staring into the same seemingly infinite night sky from my toddler days. The found copy came to take on a special meaning during those nighttime sessions.

I came across the copy in an armoire of sorts. It was filled with books and pictures, but that's a separate story all together. I imagined my Jai-jai Bapa reading about Rama's adventures in the main temple area. Perhaps he carried it with him on walks to the pond. Perhaps my Papa read it as his first English book. Perhaps Jai-jai Bapa would read to Papa from the yellow volume. Those are probably ridiculous fantasies, but nonetheless I felt a special connection to the literary treasure and brought it back with me. It was my way of remembering my rooftop escape.

I'm fairly certain that treasured copy was the reason I finally decided to climb onto my American rooftop. I wanted to continue reading it, but a couch or bed did not seem appropriate. (My current bedroom has a window opening onto a small inclined rooftop. The window happens to be right above my bed). With one hand clutched to my headboard, I inched onto the rough shingled surface. I managed to sit down but then proceeded to rush back into the safety of my bed. It took me a few weeks to recover.

The second attempt I managed to crab-walk to other sides of the small rooftop. By the fourth attempt, I managed to stand. The seventh attempt I mustered up the courage to actually lay a bed sheet on the rooftop, lie down, and finally read. It was amazing. At times I would pause in my reading and look up. In those brief moments, I traveled across the Atlantic and even further, back to Sahada. After about ten or more daytime rooftop excursions, I managed to inch onto the rooftop with just the light of the moon. I made another trip across the Atlantic and further, back about a decade as well, back to Delhi. This time, the night sky filled my fifteen-year-old eyes with wonder. There was a certain sense of serenity in the soft natural sounds. I felt at peace. I felt at home.

Mrunali is 16 years old and is a junior in River Hill High School, Clarksville, Maryland. She lives in Dayton, Maryland with her parents Naresh and Bigyani Das and two sisters. Her hobbies include reading, writing, Odissi dance, playing Sitar and helping people in need.

The Forgotten Elixir

By
Nirlipta Panda

If God could fix one thing in this world, I wonder what that would be. Granted, there are a plethora of problems...from politics, to health, to economy...the latter probably having the most world wide effect right now. Quite honestly, I don't think he would choose any of those things to fix. What he would choose is his people's happiness. We just don't have enough happy people in this world. If anyone is asked who the happiest person in the world today, most would say the richest. I think that's arguable.

The most important thing that God gave to the mankind was to *feel*. We have the capability to love to a phenomenal degree. All of us have the capability to be happy to the best of our abilities. Happiness seems so overrated to some, but to me, it is a God-given gift. Most people would agree that to go far in life, hard-work and sacrifices are needed. But people work themselves in the assumption that their work will eventually bring them happiness. "Eventually" may be too late. People often say they want something under the notion that it'll make them happy, and then after they get it...that long-awaited elated, accomplished feeling never comes. Everyone should have an aim in life, but they should have fun in fulfilling it. The best feeling is when you finally get what you want, and you can say that you had the best time ever in trying to get it.

Now if only God could do that. He can do anything. But force us to be happy? That's probably the only thing out of his hands. He gave us everything to be happy. He gave friends, family, art, knowledge, every tool we could ever imagine to experience happiness. But we don't pay attention to that. We are inherently flawed, for we focus on problems we have now. There are always going to be drawbacks. Every step of life will have an obstacle. And by giving up that one smile today, tomorrow, everyday, is just making life seem worse than it really is. No matter how badly things may get tangled up in this world...in the end, it always works out. There is history to prove that. Did America ever think it could get out of the Great Depression in the 1930s? Of course not. But it did. Or did India ever imagine finally taking that intoxicating breath of freedom from the British? Nope. But it eventually did. How great are the problems now compared to the ones just mentioned?

Imagine being the creator of the dynamic specie of homosapiens. Looking down to Earth, you see two types of people. First, there are those who are determined to make their mark, and are bemoaning everyday just because something they hoped for didn't work out. Then, there are those that are as determined...maybe have twice as much problems...yet seem to find happiness in every aspect of their lives. Whether it's from a lame joke someone made, catchy music on the radio, or an exhilarating play in a theatre. The latter know that life is too short to worry through it. As the [hypothetical] creator, who would you gladly help?

God gave us a whole world out there to explore and learn. Orissa, our roots and founding, has so much culture. But just think about the fact that Orissa is only one part of this whole world. It's not the richest part of India, but I doubt anyone of us would ever complain or even think about that when we go there. Happiness is the one thing that is undefinable and achievable.

The least we can do for God, is to be happy on the Earth he provided us. Don't get caught up in the little, imperfect details. Look at the big picture in life, and everything will seem to fit together perfectly. When the time comes to tell others what you've experienced and learned...those little details ultimately won't help you give an answer or tell a story.

I Am Me

by
Abhinav Mohapatra

The ray of light shines into my eyes, gently waking me up. It's Sunday, and peering out of the window I see a foot of snow bathing in the rich, golden sunshine. Oh how I want to savor a few more moments in my warm, comforting blanket. I stretch and all my senses awaken. Slowly getting up, I follow the sizzle and aroma of *chokuli pitha* and *sambar chatni* wafting from the kitchen.

“Namaskar. Utkala Prabha re apananku swagata. “ It's 9:00 already and my Dad has tuned in to EBC radio. Where am I? In Orissa, or in America? Or in a little niche of India in America...that is where I live, grow, and call my *home*. As I brush my teeth, the eyes that gaze back at me in the mirror do not look any different from the millions of kids in the largest democracy of this world.... But then why do I sometimes feel like a stranger amongst people most alike to me? Why do individuals so unlike me, whom I call friends, with whom I share a laugh and talk about silly little happenings become more of my kin? Am I an Indian? That is just a half-truth as I have practically resided in America my whole life. Or am I an American—Desi as they call us the second generation kids...consciously putting the American part upfront as if apologizing for all our non-Indian like behavior that they'll ever witness.

This makes me think sometimes am I really different?! My origin goes back to the nation where civilization was born. I am an Oriya, belonging to a quiet, hard working, people who are poor but believe in God's grace, where each day marks a celebration of life in some form of Pooja or Brata. People go hungry but feed their guests first. India is where life is slow but progress is not halted. It is really fascinating to watch my parents and all my other Dada Khudi trying to recreate Orissa with Taas and Pakhala Paaga and reminiscing their yesteryears when life was difficult yet blissful. My parents never fail to assert in lucid terms that we are too privileged, too selfish, and too demanding a generation and have it too easy over here in matters of education and other categories. While in India I have felt people feel that all security and amenity is in the US and life is so beautiful for us here. I can only say that life for us Indian-Americans kids trying to find their place in the world, is not as uncomplicated it seems. Do they have a clue of how hard a balancing act we do in our daily lives here, trying to do justice towards both the cultures so diverse in their attitude and ethics? I feel torn between trying to assure my parents that wearing Abercrombie, Hollister, growing my hair, or asking for another pair of Converse sneakers does not make us *Americanized* as they call it. It is merely the way of joining in the popular flow of things with those I spend my time most. The Indian and American within me can coexist, peacefully learning and sharing, judging and coaxing, feeling and committing me to become a person who is both or neither.

Sometimes I honestly feel confused of whether I am more American than Indian or more Indian than American (It sounds like a stressful math problem of ratio and proportion or percentage, which is utterly exhausting. I have to work quite hard to please both sides of life.) It is as if I am being stretched from both sides, nearly torn apart.

I am an ambassador of both nations India and America . Here Americans may have a stereotypical view of our people, of snake charmers or Slumdog Millionaire. Our generation assumes the responsibility of representing India 's virtues and beliefs. Our actions paint a vivid picture of who we truly are. However, when I go to India I attempt to sustain my values of not littering and other community services, which are clearly lacking in India . When I visit India I attempt to imbibe that America is not a nation of fast cars, tall skyscrapers, and vulgar language. It is a nation where we engage in community service and help one another in times of need without the slightest bit of hesitation. Here there is public consciousness of rising issues such as genocide in Sudan and global warming.

The chanting of the *Mahamrutunjaya Mantra* makes me feel safe and secure, yet I feel proud to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Jana Gana Mana, India's national anthem, evokes a sentiment for a country, which has given me my identity but not my home. The Tiranga and Stars and Stripes both make me feel conscious of my heritage. So who am I really? An Oriya with deeply ingrained Indian values or an American citizen feeling more at home with the diverse friends from all myriad cultures and backgrounds. I love to speak

Oriya taught by my Bengali mother, born in Kolkata, love the auto rickshaws in Bhubaneswar and visiting all my loving relatives. I enjoy the Sandy Hook Beach, which reminds me of Puri's seashore. The Konarak Sun temple gives me a glimpse of architectural marvel in stone just as Mount Rushmore amazes me. Bada Danda fills in my heart with spiritual fervor just as the World War II Memorial fills me with a deep sense of loss.

...Through all these turmoil and conflicts within myself and all around me I struggle to reconcile my life and have finally come to believe that I'll always be different yet a part of this melting pot. Being an Indian has taught me to understand and empathize people who are different, while being an American has given me an understanding of how I can make a difference in this world

I can proudly say I am an Oriya who respects India-the country of my birth-and loves America: the land of opportunity and freedom, which makes up my body. Above all I am blessed to be a citizen of this world, a speck in this sea of humanity which makes my soul and the person who I am and shall become regardless of color, race, nationality, background, culture, religion....the one and only me.... the unique--Abhinav

Abhinav Mohapatra is 13 years old and a seventh grade student from Parsippany, NJ. He is an avid reader, loves learning languages, enjoys music and writes for his school newspaper. He is an AP student and has been Geography Bee winner in his school. He was selected for the State Geography Bee.

Home Sweet Home

By
Julia Priyanka Subudhi

Imagine a place filled with incredibly delicious spices. Imagine a place with beautiful silk clothing. Imagine a place where you will find amazing music and intense colors. Are you with me? I bet you know exactly the place I am talking about: India.

Judging by the title, I know a lot of you thought I would write about my Long Island home. But actually, I wrote this based on my home in Orissa. When I am at my grandparents' house in Orissa with the people I love, I feel right at home.

The state where my family comes from is Orissa. Orissa is a state on the eastern coast of India. It has delicious food, gorgeous clothing, lovely music, beautiful monuments, amazing scenery, artistic dance, and pretty good movies. Whenever I go to India, I always visit Cuttack where my family lives.

My family tries its hardest to go to Orissa as often as possible because in my family, I am not the only one that loves this place. I feel so lucky to have such a great culture like mine. I love our Oriya traditions and customs. I like to eat water rice and Indian mangoes. I love visiting Puri Beach and seeing the Jaganath Temple. I love riding through the streets of Cuttack on the back of my Mamu's scooter. I love playing with my cousins who I finally get to see when I visit. There are so many things I love about Orissa, and I have only named a few.

I love the house in which my mother's family lives in. I enjoy staying there because I am with the whole family. Many weddings have been held in the very backyard of this house. Whenever I am there, I stop and think about what my family has been doing there in that house. I get all excited when I finally realize I am stepping on the same grass my mother and father got married on.

There is so much pleasure that comes from going to Orissa. Not only are there many fun things to do and see but also I get to visit my loved ones and experience my culture where my ancestors are from. Plus, I get to brush up on my mother tongue, Oriya!

Measuring Oriya

By
Rashmi Satapathy

Language is not simply a tool. It is access to the core of a people, their very souls and identities. Language may be used to communicate our need for directions, but it also expresses our emotions. More significantly, language holds our knowledge of literature and science, both highly sophisticated means of understanding our world. All of these processes are essential to being human, in fact they are the very qualities that define humanity, yet the most fascinating thing about them is that they occur through a myriad of languages that exist on Earth. Indeed, each language carries with it its own personality and cadence. The language of our parents and our ancestors, Oriya, is no exception to these qualities. It has a rich and ancient literary history, as well a prominent position in classical Indian culture, and is the pedigree of our people. Even now, our identities are connected to it, and its merit should not be overlooked. Nevertheless, Oriya is promoted less frequently only to inevitably result in a further decline of its modern function.

True enough, modern societies everywhere seek efficiency and utility over artistic and sentimental value. Consider the heavy favor English receives in the world. It is the *lingua franca* that people from all corners of the globe strive to learn and through which they hope to better their economic condition and social status. It is the language of cutting-edge scientific and technological advances, and its massive influence has proliferated even into other languages, replacing vernacular terms with English ones. English is the vehicle for knowledge in the modern age, and any language with such a use is guaranteed to thrive for a long time and even stamp out other languages that don't match up. Put simply, English symbolizes power above anything else and is most probably the biggest reason why smaller, more regionally contained languages like Oriya are abandoned by a large portion of its native speakers. Moreover, it is not uncommon to harbor the belief that American-born Oriyas have all they need for economic prosperity in the most economically prosperous country in the world: English.

But what about our roots and our heritage? What about the tongue spoken by those close to us not even a generation ago? What about the bonus is having an "exotic" identity through an exotic language even while growing up in society that is both literally and figuratively thousands of miles away? Oriya's economic and modern advantages, or lack thereof, cannot be the only determinants of its worth. It would be a shame to lose sight of the significance cultural and literary richness while focusing only on what brings more money. A history of great and ancient rulers such as Kharavela is contained in this language. The beautiful and profound depictions of Odissi stem from the Oriya tradition. Yet, no grand historical and cultural standing would be enough to convince the modern person of conserving the language. No, what is most needed is essentially pride, a feeling entitled to everyone of every background and ethnicity. And if the Western Europe as well as Russia, China, and Japan have come so far in successfully promoting their mother tongues, with English clearly coming out on top, then there is no reason why our language should not have the potential as well.

I am not taking the extreme position of making Oriya the next world language tomorrow. My intention is instead to encourage its survival because no matter where we interact and in which society we integrate ourselves, our backgrounds and ethnicity will always follow us. Even if we immigrant and American-born Oriyas speak fluent and flawless English, outwardly live the American dream, and attend work and school with our American countrymen, our ethnicity remains apparent in our appearance, and it is bound to an inner place inside of ourselves that is not readily visible. And in order for us to face the world with the full dignity that is also our right, we should harness this justifiable pride that reflects that the language of our heritage is, too, deserving of as much respect as any other language. For what are speakers of Oriya, speakers of English, speakers of Chinese, and speakers of German but all human beings with the same intellectual capacity and potential? In recognizing this, a vital key to our heritage and ancestry will be saved, preserved, and given the means to evolve. But if we choose to forsake it because it doesn't happen to be "smart" enough to be useful then Oriya will eventually be only a fragment of history.

The Pushcart War - II

By
Saswat Sahoo

There once was a club called the Improvers. The Improvers were the most unpopular club in the town. People who left it made it even more unpopular. Almost all who joined the team thought it as boring! Some left within a month. Others left within a week but most left in one or two days after joining. They thought the Improvers were talking about many subjects and not even working on one. Only the four founders stayed permanently.

One day a founder came up with an idea – “I have the most wonderful idea!” he said. “What is it?” said the team. “We will make a hovercraft cart.” “We need planks of wood, sand paper, wax and some nails.” For the next few days the team worked hard on making the craft. The club members were in the age from 7 to 20. They started to work in making the homemade craft 3 ft by 5 ft and 2 ft tall. When they were finished they got drills and made holes in the bottom. In one week the improvers made some compressors to compress air, and blow it out.

The craft was complicated for the club. The club made holes in the short side of the craft. After that they made holes in the bottom. Then the team fit compressors on the bottom holes and wired them together in a circuit. They covered the bottom part above the compressor with a solid piece of cardboard.

To test it the team turned it on in an abandoned bike trail after plugging it in for 24 hours. When they turned it on it was away in a second, but after 10 minutes it stopped. When the Improvers found it, they decided it should be a convertible. First they would remake the craft to be boat shaped. For going on land it would have four one foot long wheels and a rope in case it had to be pulled. The craft would also have oars, two bed sheets for sails, and a motor. To fly it would have wings and another motor to power the propeller. It would even have a license plate.

It was now time to bring the pushcart to public. The Improvers were against a gang called, “The Great Young of the Wild Bunch”. They named themselves after the “Wild Bunch”, a famous historic gang led by Butch Cassidy. Unlike the original gang who loved goods, these people loved money. Improvers thought to challenge the gang.

Finally one day the club and the gang decided to meet. The club showed the gang their craft. They told the gang to copy it precisely with all the accessories copied with it and build their own craft. When the gang would finish, they would make a race.

The race would be only using rods to propel the craft.

When the gang started copying they thought it would be really easy. As they continued, they found it hard but still thought it was easy. They even did it as fast as possible to make people believe it was not a big deal. They did not even study the model carefully. So they couldn't copy it precisely enough.

On the day of the race both the teams met in the town's popular park with their pushcarts. The race was announced. Soon people gathered to watch the unique race. One spectator was chosen to mark the trail, and announce the winner. The race was 10 laps around a one-mile track.

Finally the improvers won. The gang finished one lap after. The crowd loved the race. Many young people joined the Improvers and stayed longer. They made more and more improvements for the town through technology.

Saswat is a Fifth Grader at Partin Elementary School. His interests include reading, drawing and net research. His article “A meeting with Lionardo Da Vinci” was published in 2008 OSA Souvenir. He lives with his parents Dr. Rajani Kanta Sahoo and Saubhagy Laxmi Mohapatra, and sister Roshni in Oviedo, FL

Author's Note: This story is named after a book titled, “The Pushcart War” which was recommended for reading in the cover of another book, titled “The Toothpaste Millionaire”. I kept it in my mind and thought of the story. I have put those ideas in “The Pushcart War - II”. Now that I have finished my story, I am looking forward to read the original story.

The Miser and His Double

By
Sachin Patro

In New York City, there lived a boy named Farley Drexel Hatchery. He lived with his parents and his older brother, Recman. Farley was interested in money. He talked all about money. He thought money came from money machine, the so called ATMs. He wanted to buy the world.

One night, he asked Recman how much did it cost to buy the world. Recman said, "Not everything is for sale, Farley. Plus it's the rule of life." Farley said, "I'm the miser!" Farley called himself the Miser because he did not want to share his money with anyone and thought he was the first and the greatest miser that ever lived, even if he did not know what a miser meant nor did he want to know! Recman said, "Who's the miser?" Miser (Farley) ignored him and said, "It's a stupid rule of life for me miser!"

Their Dad, Mr. Warren Hatcher heard Miser (Farley) and said, "We don't use the 'stupid' word." "Oh, yes we do!" said the Miser. "We just don't use it for people. If we want to say something on people we say 'turkey brain'. "Ask Recman, he knows!" said Miser (Farley).

The next morning, Dad said, "Someone has been decorating the cereal box." Recman said, "Yeah, Miser has learned to draw the dollar sign." Soon after that, Miser started making his own money from this weird made up corporation called 'MISER MONEY ENTERPRISES: All rights reserved'. Recman told his parents, "The kid has no values." Their Mom, Mrs. Minerva Hatcher said, "It's just a phase."

They decided to go to the Bureau of printing and engraving to teach Farley a lesson about money. When they arrived at the place, Farley went crazy! He threw his Monopoly play money at the printers. The next day the play money was printed as U.S. currency! Two days later they caught Farley and took him to the President, the Vice President and the commander of the armed forces to be evaluated, questioned and swear a crime oath. Farley was scared to death, but his mind was already working towards a plan.

Farley has this friend named Rich Potter who he calls Richie. Potter came over for a playmate. Halloween was close at hand. Farley asked Richie, "Would you like to be my double miser for the Halloween?" Recman held his breath. Richie accepted the Miser's offer. Recman choked.

Five weeks later, Miser (Farley) and Richie were wearing red suspenders and a money tie. They went for "Money-and-Treating", as Farley calls it. One guy asked Farley, "Are you the Miser?" "No I'm not, but he is!" said Farley pointing towards Richie! The man just shook his head and muttered under his breath, "Foolish kid! Now I have found you" dragging Richie by his collar. He took him to the reform house for the kids. Poor Richie had no idea what was happening. However, the original Miser came home drawing dollar signs and yapping away!!!

Sachin is 11 years old and lives in Philadelphia with his parents, Sibaram and Rashmi Patro. He is good at studies and won the regional science competition. He is proficient in piano. He enjoys reading books, writing stories and playing video games.

My visit to Alarnath

by
Surabhi Panda

In my last visit to Orissa, I got a chance to visit Alarnath temple with my parents and grandparents. Alarnath temple is in Brahmagiri, which is close to Jagannath Puri. The main deity of the temple is Lord Alarnath, who is a four-hand form of Lord Narayan. There are some burnt marks on the Alarnath's body. The priest told us that the deity was burnt by hot sweet rice.

Long time ago in Brahmagiri, a priest was living with his family. His name was SriKetana. His duty was to offer Bhoga to Lord Alarnath. One day there was no food left to offer. SriKetana decided to go to beg for alms. Before he went for getting alms, he called his son named Madhu. He told his son that from that day Madhu will offer Bhoga to Lord Alarnath. Madhu said, "Father, I do not know any mantra. How can I offer?" SriKetana told his son that he should just pray and put the Bhoga on the place mat in front of the deity.

The next day Madhu did as he was supposed to do. Madhu took the Bhoga, which his mother had made. He said to the lord, "Oh Lord Alarnath, Please eat this Bhoga. Then he went out side to play with his friends. The boy did not know that the Lord could eat by just glancing on it. After 15 minutes, he came back and saw the plate was still full. He said to the Lord, "Oh Lord, I do not know any mantra. Please eat my Lord. I will come back again". He went to play outside for some more time. Madhu came back after 15 minutes and saw the plate is still full. The Bhoga was still there. This time Madhu started crying and said to Lord, "Oh Lord, You have not eaten anything. Please eat. Otherwise my father will be mad at me." After saying this, Madhu went to play again. This time when he came back after a while, he saw the Bhoga plate was empty. Alarnath came and ate the Bhoga. Madhu was offering like this for three days and Lord Alarnath was coming and eating the Bhoga.

After three days Madhu's father SriKetana returned home and asked for Prasad to eat. Madhu's mother told there is no Prasad at home, as Lord Alarnath has eaten everything. SriKetana did not believe this. He asked Madhu about the food Prasad. Madhu innocently replied that Lord Alarnath ate everything. SriKetana said, "You are hiding something. You are telling lies. How can a stone deity eat Bhoga? Show me again. I will hide in deity's room and see the proof in my eyes." Therefore, Madhu took some sweet Kheer, which his mother had just prepared. Madhu called out with devotion, "Oh Lord Alarnath, Please come and eat sweet Kheer." After saying this, Madhu left. When Alarnath came out of altar and was about to eat the sweet Kheer, SriKetana jumped out and grabbed the deities arm. The hot sweet Kheer bumped on Alarnath's body in different places. As the Kheer was hot, Alarnath's body was burnt and blisters came on them. SriKetana said, "Stop, Don't eat everything. Why are you eating? You are a deity. You cannot eat. If you eat, what will I eat? I will be hungry then." SriKetana was a priest, but he was not good at heart. He did not have any faith for the Lord.

Lord Alarnath became very mad at SriKetana and said, "You fool, you do not have any devotion. You shall be punished for this act. Your family and generations will not exist except Madhu. I only like that simple boy. He had true devotion. If you offer me anything without any love and devotion, I won't accept it." After a few days, a big flood came and washed away everyone of Brahmagiri except Madhu. Until to day, the blisters in Alarnath's body still exist. The sweet Kheer of Alarnath is very famous. We tasted that also.



Alarnath Temple, Brahmagiri, Orissa.

This temple is also an important spot for Lord Jagannath devotees. When Lord Jagannath becomes sick after his bath ceremony, he does not give darshan. That time everyone comes to see Alarnath. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also came here during that time. He saw Lord Jagannath in Alarnath. Out of love and devotion, he fell down on the floor. The stones melted down where his entire body touched. The present priests have taken out those stones, kept it separately, and are worshipping it.

True love and devotion can win Lord's heart.

Amrik's Diary 08

by
Amrik Vedant Mohanty

I celebrated my Birthday at the zoo with all my favorite people and good friends, but more than all this I was happy that I turned six. It was like a big number to me when I thought that I was going to be in Grade 1. I felt like the happiest kid in the Galaxy. Summer was so much fun because my grandma (Bapi's Mom) was visiting us. She loves to tell me all Oriya stories and I tell her all about America (whatever little I knew).

Sometimes I give her all my books to read because she loves to read a lot. Only bad thing for me about this year was that my Dad had to stay away for four days as he took up a new job. I miss him a lot, as he his greatest Bapi for me in the world. I keep telling my Mom that I fell in love with my Dad when I as in her tummy and whenever he touched her the tummy I could feel that. I love it when dad calls me 'Gelha Pua' (loving son). I love to call him 'Bapi Dapi Doo, I love you'. This year after my school was over we were going to move out. That made me happy that as I would be with my Bapi everyday, and we would have our Dad - Son time all the time.

I have a big teddy bear that I sleep with when my Bapi is away. Every night before I go to bed I call him to say good night and say that I am trying to hug him and kiss him and tickle his tummy as he likes that when I do that to him. I pray to Gurudev all the time for him and for all of us to be together again, no more waiting for Thursdays for him to come home. He takes care of all small things for me. I like it when he picks me up from school on Fridays and takes me to my Basketball and Taekwondo classes. I love to see him and feel proud that my Dad is watching me. While Bapi is away my Mom takes care of me as being both my mom and dad. I know she cheers me up sometimes just the way Bapi would have done. She is so funny. She makes sure that I call my Bapi and talk about everything that happened in the day. They both are so happy to see me growing up but sometimes I see my mom becoming sad. When I asked her why she was sad she said, 'My Dhana, you are growing up so fast!', and then she would hug me so hard, and I know exactly what would follow next. I don't like tears in her eyes, but I guess I will understand those things when I myself will be a parent as she says that. Both my Bapi and Mamma are very wonderful parents. When some people ask me who do you love very much...your Mom or your Dad, I really freak out when people ask questions and why should one ask these types of questions to kids. I give a strong reply saying that they both are my parents and how I am supposed to differentiate between them. Both my parents mean a world to me. For me they are the best, I can never ask for anything else. I pray to God and Gurudev to keep us all happy and always happy.

School has been really good till now. I like my Classroom Teacher. But sometimes I don't like her. When something happens and we complain to her, she says, 'Boys, this is nothing you will live thru it'....that annoys me a lot. I like most of my class friends except Jimmy as he uses all sort of bad words and brags a lot. I like Makenna very much as she is so nice to me all the time. I like Ms. Levine my Discovery class teacher, she is so good in all subjects, I like to work in the editorial magazine, play chess and do science projects when I am with her, mostly I enjoy doing Kinnex. I love all my specials except Arts as I don't like the teacher. Mom says that's bad, as they are your teachers. When I hear about how my parents grew up in their childhood and how they went to school, and how their life was in Cuttack then, I am thankful that I'm here in the USA. I love going to India and being pampered there so much, but I feel at home here.

I have a cousin here, Sachin, who is 11. When he comes over the weekend we have a blast, playing Wii. He is like a big brother, we fight and get mad at each other and then back to being friends again. I have so many cousins but most of them are in India. Only Chandan bhai is in Canada. I love talking to my little brother Ayaan, my Mamu and my sweet Maen. They live in Pune, India. We talk and see each other in Skype. Ayaan loves to give me Hi five and sings the ABC's song all the time. I love it when he calls me Bhai. I want to be a big brother to him and take care of him all the time. I have two more favorite cousins in Cuttack, Bapuli Bhai and Guddu Bhai, They show me all around Cuttack and teach me how to fly kites, while Jeje loves to watch us flying kites. My Jeje loves to take me around to his friends, so they can meet

his American born Nati (grandson). I love going to Maryland to my Sanu grandmaa's house. She is so nice to me. When I see her, I miss my Boulo (My mom's mother). Happy Uncle is the best. He is a doctor. I wish to be like him when I grow up, --- well that's the thought for now. My uncle Alok is a good friend because he is 19 only but in real he is 9. I feel sad when I come back from my grandma's house but yet with a little happy face because grandpa never forgets to give me her famous Rosogolla. I am really happy thesedays because my Aja is visiting us. He is the best friend anyone can ask for. He is teaching me math, I teach him playing Wii. He loves it. I don't like my Piano teacher. He teaches piano music but his face is never happy...I feel pain to see his swollen face all the time...I wish I get another teacher, one with a smiley face.

Everytime the school is off we go out with Dad and that's the best time. Two more months to go before school's over. I am looking with a good Report card, so far all the report cards are very good. Another birthday to celebrate and another year older I will be and Mom will be sad again, but I'll be seven. I am looking forward to be with my Bapi...life will be fun. Amrik's wishes will be fulfilled...."Touchwood" (that's what mom would have said right away) .God bless me and my family all the time.

Amrik lives in Norristown, PA. He will be turning seven soon. He enjoys piano, basketball, Wii and Taekwondo lessons. He loves dancing and singing too. Amrik is the son of Satya and Prachi Mohanty.

My First Train Ride in India

by
Sourav Panda

"ALL ABOARD"! The man shouted in Hindi. We picked up our bags and hurried to get into our train that was about to leave, and jumped on, literally. Once aboard the train it was very crowded, packed with people of all ages. Some looked in their 30s and many in their single digits. A lot of them were shouting at their children to stay close to them and not get lost. I could barely move, and our compartment was all the way in the back. It took a long time, but we got to our stall, I fell into the small cot that we had. It was kind of a bunk bed, so I took the top one. Obviously my grandpa took the bottom one.

It was around 4 o'clock in the afternoon when the train left. The sun was setting. I think I played video games for three hours; it was hard to concentrate because the mosquitoes kept biting me and the people in the compartment next to us kept on talking. Then I ate dinner after which again I played video games all night long. I beat 30 levels in 5 games I played. The next morning I ate a simple breakfast, some idli with samber. Then I asked my grandpa to tell me stories. I've learned a lot of stories from Indian mythology from him. He told me about the Mahabharata and Ramayana and things like that. This time he told me about the turtle that holds the world up. We probably finished around 12 noon then we had lunch, which was very much like our breakfast. Then I tried to sleep but I couldn't and looked out the window. I saw a lot of people working in the rice farms. Some were really old and some were small children. The sound of the birds lulled me to sleep. I woke up around 4 o'clock in the afternoon after which I started playing video games again. We ate dinner and arrived in Cuttack at 9 o'clock. This trip was nothing like a train in America.

Sourav Panda lives in Long Island, NY with parents Lalit and Meeta Panda.

The Dream

Poems from the talented bunch



True Music

by
Malina Maharana

From parts of this world we come,
with different traditions and culture
All different, with just one in common
Music.

Music also has different ways
Expressing

Do re mi fa so la ti do
sa re ga ma pa dha ni sa
No

One that comes from all
Is music that comes from your heart
your soul

Touching your heart like water
It forms ripples, stretching your voice
waves, from higher pitches

Think of the soft breeze
Softening your voice

Think of the strong wind

Making your voice firmer

What about our colorful moods?
Expressing heartfelt music as turquoise
orange as feisty

Think about day and night

Think about black

so still and quiet as ever

blue, so peaceful and terrific

This is the magic of music.

Music, ever so quiet

instruments, insisting to play their tunes

Harp, violin, piano, flute

Instruments so wondrous

But, when played altogether
something new

something beautiful and melodious is created

This is true music...

Malina age 12 lives in Houston. She is the daughter of Madhab
and Smita Maharana.

Recipient of Meghna Memorial Award for 7-12 age category.

Mother Nature

by
Malina Maharana

I am made up of scrumptious valleys,
tender mountains,
silky oceans,
blissful streams.

Who am I?

I can create masterpieces of art,
destroy with natural disasters,
make beautiful arrangements with nature itself.

I can create the rock and water cycle.

Who am I?

I am so powerful that I can
block out the sun for 3 months.

I am so strong that I can make
the temperature rise to
100°F in the winter.

Who am I?

I make torrents of clear silver,
storms of winter wonderlands,
thick fog of which you can't see through,
and balls of ice the size of oranges.

Who am I?

I am Mother Nature-
the one who loves the planet,
the one who cares and caresses it too.
The one who also destroys plants in it,
And brings up thunderstorms too.

I am Mother Nature!



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and Smita Maharana.

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Paint Me Like I Am

By
Soumya Misra

I know this
the world we are living in is dying
It is holding a burden far too large
and that burden is us

I know this
the world is plagued with hate and disgust for others
but we care for nothing but ourselves
and we live to torture other souls brutally for things
they cannot change

I know this
it is not difficult to avoid fights with one another
I think it is fallacious to assume that people will treat us with respect
when we do not treat them with respect back
I think we cannot live in a world with full peace and love
but we can try our best to war is not fair to everyone partaking in it, so why get tangled up
in its blood-thirsty fists?
It is cruel and unnecessary.

We need to accept that everyone does not think the same
We need to learn that mistakes are made and weapons are not the way to fix them
We need to understand that fighting is not the answer,
it is another problem that we create in desperation for the true answer

I know peace is a good idea
I know humans are vindictive and thirst for revenge
I know we will all kill each other before global warming
even gets the chance to do so
We need to stop taking out our angers on others
We need to step into the future and leave the past behind.
We need peace to stop us from destroying anything we've ever known
We owe it to ourselves to forgive and forget
And save ourselves before the time comes when our actions can never be undone

Paint me peaceful, Paint me forgiving, Paint me Soumya

I'm a humanitarian

Soumya Misra is a 13 years old and studies in 8th grade.



The Blue Gold

By
Prerana Pradhan

Before, there was some peace, some health,
Some song, some light.
Days when the baby would smile bright
When he would grasp my fingers tight
Hold on to it with all his tiny, infant might
Blue Gold to make the world work right.

But that was before they came
Said to the Lord that Blue Gold is His to claim
He can do whatever He please
Everything lay at his knees.
He will make Blue Gold purer, He says
So that we live healthier, merrier, smarter, brighter
And we foolishly followed his prints, his fatally
flawed mind.
Even though His green eyes were visible to even the
blind.
And He used to Blue Gold for His gain
Blemish the Gold till there was nothing left to maim.
Blue Gold no longer shone
The color had seeped till it looked as if mere stone.
But what tainted Blue Gold will I bring to my baby?
I asked the Lord of the Blue Gold.

There used to be days when he didn't burn like the
sun
Restless sleep traps his eyelids long before the day
is done.

He is supposed to crawl, walk, jump, dance, run.
But he is finished before he even begun.
So what tainted Blue Gold will I bring to my son?

The Lord told me to pay, to pay for Blue Gold
For Blue Gold? I asked. Absurd! I barely have
enough to feed.

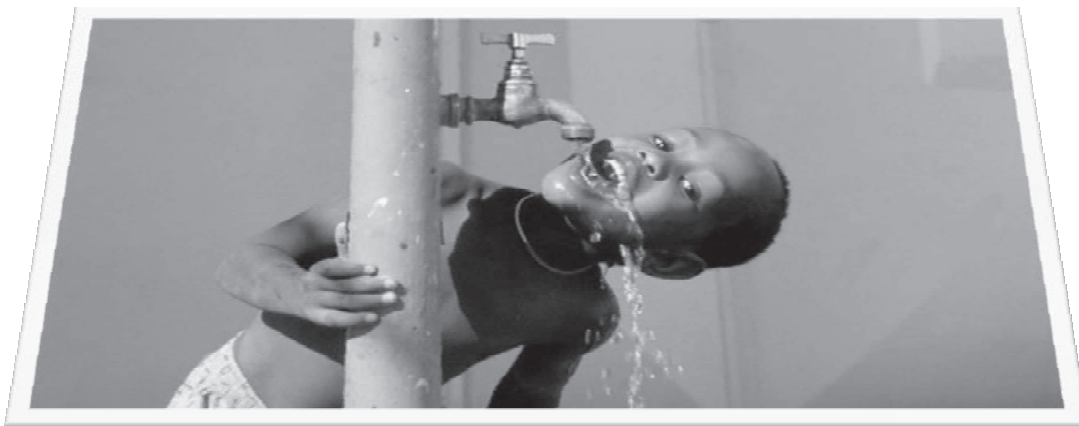
And the Lord laughed, laughed at my plea
Told me that the Blue Gold flowing from my eyes
were enough for me.

And I cried, what right do you have to dictate my
baby's life?

You are no God, even He would give me this strife.
If I do not take your air, why do you take my Gold?
What did my baby do to not deserve what you
withhold?

Look! I said. He doesn't open his eyes!
He doesn't run, he doesn't smile!
So tell me, tell me
What use is your Blue Gold once he dies?

Prerana Pradhan is the daughter of Padmanava and Chandana Pradhan of Edison, New Jersey. She is a trained Bharatanatyam dancer and actively participates in cultural programs organized by OSANYNJ.



This poem is about the scarcity of clean water in third-world regions. Blue gold refers to water, while the Lord represents water companies that privatize various bodies of water and take the right to clean water from poverty stricken people. As a result of this privatization, many people, especially children, fall very ill or die. In this poem, I hope to express some of the grief and anger that a mother must feel when her child is subjected to poor water conditions, especially when such a necessity of life should be accessible to everyone for free.

Raising a Tree

By
Ankita Ray

I toy with the pencil in my hands waiting to break through
I chew the pink eraser top yearning for something new.
I nibble down my stubby fingernails till I'm breaking skin
Yet the crumpled papers fill up the brimful bin.

I have rattled my brain in every corner searching for a spark
But everywhere I turn to look is grimly dull and dark.
The paper I once confided my secrets has come to deceive me too
Accompanied by the wretched pencil that's turned on me through and through.

I wither away from existence as I gradually slip off my chair, lethargy encloses all around me as I let down
my hair.

My bloated head leans towards my neck as I let go a pitiful breath,
Who knew this boundless ailment was fate far worse than death.

My stomach churns like a cyclone crashing on the bay
The nausea, aches, and throbbing all happen to sail today.
My vision is only glazed, as shapes swim on by
I have an intuition as if I'm going to die.

I stare down at toes craving for a clue,
Alas they have turned against me when their help is truly due.
All of a sudden something plants a seed of light
It charges through my fingers, the luminosity brings back my sight.

My fingers are irrepressible, working on their own.
Thoughts that were once concealed are letting themselves be shown.
My lassitude is lifted away as the idea sprouts its leaves
Writer's block is a distant memory when it finally becomes a tree.

Ankita Ray is an 8th grader at Evergreen Junior High, Salt Lake City, Utah. Her passion lies in dance. She also finds pleasure in sketching and writing. She is the daughter of Julie and Abhijit Ray

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Masala and Mothballs

By
Ankita Mohanty

I know you wipe your nose
on name brand tissues because
your mother's hem has disappeared.

You searched for Masala-Mothball scented
Kleenex once, in the nearest K-Mart, but
paper remains forever unlike the Indian pajama.
It is too neutral in scent, too quickly sodden
with disposable sadness.

Look at your mouth, for it is a record.
Your violin bow on top
was not always so violent, you know.
Once flat sounds of dutiful obedience
became sharp, piercing ones of rebellion.

She watched your mouth change
from soft and blurry to hard and definite.
She measured her balls of rice with vigilance,
her left eye twitching, her fingertips throbbing
when you said you would like them bigger, please.
Her wariness increased with the activity of your mouth.
First kiss, American slang, hamburger, beer.
Your mouth made shapes she had not
expected to see, that she convinced herself she would
never have seen in a different place and time.

Your mouth became foreign, and she
a cautious, politically correct immigration
officer, young and eager to keep her job.

She put away her hem no longer of use
and truly believed that you were relieved
to use memory-free Kleenex, not understanding why
she keeps finding boxes of the stuff,
tops slightly torn, stowed
in her masala cupboard and
clothing dresser.

Your mouth refuses to assimilate completely.
It is, in its foreign roundness and raw
rebellion, still searching for a scent of home.

One Confused Girl

By
Ayesha Kar

One confused girl,
Stuck all alone,
In a world so cold.
Everything around her is going so wrong.
She just wants to run away,
They'll be long gone.
Something was missing,
But who would listen?
She felt incomplete,
Like a heart without a beat.
She didn't know what,
Or when,
Or why.
No one would answer her questions,
'Cause they didn't have time.
Fed-up with the world,
Was what she was.
She couldn't take it anymore.
She was just so young.
People always trying to tell her right from wrong,
They didn't think she understood.
But she knew what to do,
She's been through a lot.
This little girl heard what the world said,
But she couldn't make a sound.
Not a peep of her opinion was out.
She was forced,
Pushed and hurt.
What could she say?
What could she do?
Run away and never come back?
She couldn't,
She loved and cared for them.
The young girl would just have to wait,
Until they understood the way,
A confused girl does.

Ayesha Kar studies in 8th grade in Cary, NC.

Winter

by
Pratik Pradhan

Cold, hard, a time of heavy coats,
Forgotten caps and bare trees.
Snowballs and snow forts, laughter thrives
White wonderland everywhere, climbing up our
knees.
There are reunions and dinner pot lucks
Warm lasagna and warmer hugs.

People rejoice when meeting family after a long
time
And cherish the moments until the clocks chime.

Puff! Puff! each snowball explodes and scares
people
A time when birds go and fly away to the south,
Hey! there goes a flock of birds right now.

A time to turn over a new leaf, become a better
person.
A time to exchange gifts and presents and light
candles
A time for a new year to come.

Spring
Warmth comes backs, Flowers blossom,
A time of happiness and safety
People always stooping low to smell the flowers
Spring brings flowers to the world and life is strong
again
The feeling of the loneliness goes away and
We are left with a jolly feeling
A time for raincoats, sandals, and playing outside
People almost always smiling.



Pratik is a 6th grader. He lives in Edison, New Jersey.

My Stylish Nana

by
Aparna Ray

My sister's life is in the bathroom.
She is stylish.
She dresses up and puts on makeup.
She plays with her hair all day.
Sometimes she straightens and sometimes she curls
them in all possible ways.
She tries on red nail polish and black mascara.
Sometimes she plays with my hair too.
She puts hairspray, mousse, pins and hair bands.
She picks my clothes and matches my outfits.
I think she makes me look like a superstar but
sometimes I don't like it!
Weekday mornings are the loudest at home
That's because she wears flats instead of boots
when it's snowing
And skirts instead of pants when it's raining
But even if she seems a little crazy I still love my
Stylish Nana.



Aparna Ray is 8 years old. She lives with her older sister (Nana) in Salt Lake City, Utah. She loves to read and paint. She is the daughter of Julie and Abhijit Ray.

A Great Big Family!

by
Lipika Rana

We are all different
From skin color to eye color
From hair color to tradition
But, We have something in common
We are a great big family
Have you ever thought of it like that
Think it like this
The world is our home
AND
EACH one of us is a member of the family
You may then think how the different world wide
problems and fight occur
How that is a true family
But we can change that by
Maybe stopping the war like the IRAQ one
We can be stopping racists
The violence and crimes
If we work together to stop these things
We can make a true family
All this concludes to one big family!



Lipika Rana lives in Mount Olive, NJ with her parents Bijayalaxmi and Sridhar and her little sister Deepika. She loves reading books, piano and Odissi Dance.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
June 29, 1983

I am pleased to extend greetings to all those gathered for the Convention of the Orissa Society of Americas.

Since its founding, the Society has worked to preserve the culture and traditions of your homeland while promoting the active participation of its members in American life.

All Americans can take great pride in the contributions of Americans of Indian heritage to our nation. A major part of the success of our country stems from the vast diversity of our people and all our citizens have done to enrich their communities throughout our history. You play a valuable role in furthering the pluralistic development of America.

You have my every wish for a most enjoyable and rewarding meeting.

Ronald Reagan



I Am
by
Shivani Misra

I am a bird and I am free
I wonder where the sky ends
I hear the blissful melody of silence
I see the white, drifting clouds floating together
I want to enjoy my freedom, while it lasts
I am a bird and I am free.
I pretend to fly and be free for eternity
I feel the wind rushing beneath my wings
I touch the crisp droplets of mist
I worry that my flight will come to an end
I cry for those in bondage
I am a bird and I am free.
I understand that this will not last forever
I say live life while you can
I dream that everyone can live in this freedom
I try to enlighten everyone about peace and free
will
I hope everyone understands
I am a bird and I am free.

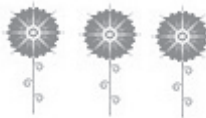
Shivani Misra is 14 years old and Simant Misra's daughter.

Teachers
by
Saswat Pati

Teachers are great
And their rules are straight.

Ask them a lot
They will answer your thought.

Teachers always nurture
By giving knowledge for future.



Saswat, 7 years old is a 2nd grader at St. John's School, Houston, TX. He loves writing, scouting, and playing piano, soccer, and lego. He is the son of Arati and Debananda Pati.

The Swing of Life
by
Anya Rath

Her feet kick at the ground as she fights for a hold
She is too small, too inexperienced for this she was
told
But did she listen?
Never, she only wishes to glisten
In this planet of nonbelievers
She believes she can fight and become an achiever
Her feet leave the ground
Her eyes close as she goes upward bound
The air carries her as high as she can go
Then suddenly something is dragging, yanking her
back in tow

Once again on Earth, she opens her eyes
And sees that she beat what they all theorized
She then kicks off once again
Because she now knows there is no more a binding
chain

Anya Rath, 15, going to be a junior this coming fall at L'anse Creuse High School North. She lives in Macomb, MI with her parents Nirmal and Swapna Rath, and younger sister Nayna. She enjoys reading, writing, and her Oriya culture with a great passion.

The Huns That I Meet
By
Saswat Pati

When I spill ice water
It makes fun
So you know I can go
Out and run
I can go back in time
And meet the legendary Hun.
The Huns were great warriors
Who could blow off roof tops
Coming from central Asia on horse backs
They could run very fast downs and ups.
Having lots of fun, I request:
Horses hooves, Horses hooves
Let's go back to our time
And clean up the mess
And dance and sing with beautiful rhyme.

Saswat, 7 years old is a 2nd grader at St. John's School, Houston, TX. He loves writing, scouting, and playing piano, soccer, and lego. He is the son of Arati and Debananda Pati.

My Five Senses

By

Darshee Patnaik

Wow, wow, wow
 Everything I smell is wow,
 Like cookies baking in the oven or hot fudge on ice
 cream,

Everything I smell is wow!

Wow, wow, wow
 Everything I hear is wow,
 Like birds chirping in the air or a
 woodpecker pecking for food,
 Everything I hear is wow!

Wow, wow, wow
 Everything I touch is wow,
 Like snowflakes drifting by or grainy sand lying on
 the beach,
 Everything I touch is wow!

Wow, wow, wow
 Everything I taste is wow,
 Like ice cream on a hot day or popcorn during
 movies,
 Everything I taste is wow!

Wow, wow, wow
 Everything I see is wow,
 Like fall colors in autumn or squirrels gathering food,
 Everything I see is wow!

My five senses say everything is wow!

Darshee is 11 years old and is in 6th grade. She is the daughter of Sourjya & Reena Patnaik.

Spring Time

By

Saswat Sahoo

A dogwood tree,
 On the verge of blooming,
 Smiles at the world.

Tulips glimpse
 The blue sky,
 Cloudless, in March.

A Steller's jay perches
 In the blossoming plum tree,
 And makes a picture,
 A picture Of living,
 Living in a beautiful world,
 A picture of springtime,
 Clear and blue,
 Living and dancing,
 In spring.

A hawk screams,
 And disturbs the peace,
 Crows dive-bomb,
 And the hawk leaves.

A little chickadee
 Cocks her head curiously.

A squirrel scampers up a branch.
 It is spring.

Saswat is 12 yrs old (a 6th Grader), lives with his parents Sasadhar and Mamata Sahoo in Farmington Hills, Michigan.

The Jump shot

By

Arvin Mohapatra

"Arvin run!" my dad screamed. My legs sped up. My brain grew more focused. In my mind I said, "Target-hoop, hoop is target."

I ran and ran. People were running behind me. I looked to my left and then my right. "Two people each side," I thought to myself. Suddenly my eyes spotted the hoop. I dashed toward it and jumped.

I blacked out for a second. In that second I saw Michael Jordan running to the hoop and making a three point score.

When my brain snapped out of it, my hand was 3 centimeters from the hoop. I knew this was my last chance to win the game. Immediately, I pushed my hand down and the ball slammed into the hoop and hit the road like a bowling ball dropping from 17 feet. "We Won!" I thought.

My heart was beating fast, but slow down after I knew my team won. I let go of the hoop and felt my legs hit the bumpy ground.

Three seconds later, I saw my team rushing toward me screaming, "Awesome job, Arvin! We won!" "Yep, we did," I replied.

Arvin Mohapatra is 9 years old and is son of Prabhat and Annie Mohapatra of New Jersey. He has a younger brother named Aman.

Marty's Party!

By
Dibya Patnaik

I went to my friends party
His name was Marty.
We played in the sun
And had fun!

We had a lot of food
I was in a good mood
Let's do some stuff we can make
Then we can have cake.

Then it was present time
I couldn't be more pleasant
Pick my present and you will be quiet pleasant!

Did you like it?
You liked my toy
And now I'm full of joy!

Now it's leaving time
I'm very, very sad,
But Marty is very, very mad.
I take a step out of the door
Did a big sigh
Then said GOOD BYE!

Dibya is 9 years old and is in 4th grade. She is the daughter of Sourjya & Reena Patnaik.

My First Rhyme - Brother Rasesh

by
Ritwik R Behera

My brother name is Rasesh;
Who is a 3rd grader and like to slide!!

RASESH was sliding on the slide
The slide broke
And he said "Ouch!"

He bumped his head
He went to the doctor
The doctor said; 'No more sliding on the slide!!'

Sliding once ..
Sliding twice.
RASESH slides on the slide

Ritwik R Behera lives in Germantown, MD.

The Worm

by
Rasesh R. Behera

When the earth is turned in SPRING!!
The worms are fat as anything.

And birds come flying all around,
To eat the worms right off ground.

They like worms just as much as I
Like bread, and milk and apple pie.

And once, when I was very young,
I put a worm right on my tongue

I did not like the taste a bit,
And so I didn't swallow it.

But, oh it makes my mother squirm,
Because she thinks I ate that worm!



Rasesh is a 3rd grader in Cedar Grove Elementary School in Germantown, Maryland.

The Tiger

by
Satwick Misra

He is silently running in a quiet jungle
As far as he can
To catch his prey hiding behind
The dark shadow of a lonely cave

His eyes burn
In the deep dark of the forest
And he growls roughly
Getting impatient

It was a deer
So small, so sad
So scared, but ----
The tiger did not care.

Satwick lives in Bayside, NY along with parents Sangita and Sameer Misra

ସୁଦୂର ଅର୍ଥ



ସାତ ଦରିଆ ପାରିରେ

ଗଣେଷ ରଣା

ଘୁଣ୍ଟିତ ବିଶ୍ୱର ଆବର୍ଜନ ମଧ୍ୟେ
 ଏକ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତରେ ଯେବେ ବସିଥିଲି,
 ଭାବନାରେ ମୁଁ ନୀଳ ବନ୍ଧ ଭେଦି
 ଅପର ପ୍ରାନ୍ତକୁ ଦେଖୁଥିଲି ।
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 ମୋ ନିଜ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ ଚୋରାଇଲା ।
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 ବିଶ୍ୱଭ୍ରାତୃ ଭାବ ଜାତୀୟ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ
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 ଆତ୍ମୀୟତା ଜାଗେ କୋଟି ଜନ ପ୍ରାଣେ
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 ଦରିଆ ସେପାରି ରୁପ ଦେଖି,
 ଉନ୍ମାଦିତ ମନ ମୋ ଅନ୍ତରେ ଲେଖେ
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 ନାମକୁ ଖାଲି ଏ ସାତଦରିଆ ।

ଗଣେଷ ରଣା IGIT, Sarang ର ଛାତ୍ର । ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କୁ ଠୁଳ କରି
 ସାମାଜିକ ସେବାକାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ରତ ରହିବା ଛଡ଼ା, ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବିତା ଓ ଗଳ୍ପ
 ଲେଖିବାରେ ତାଙ୍କର ବଡ଼ ଆଗ୍ରହ ।

ରାକ୍ଷସ ଓ ଜଳଦସ୍ୟୁ

ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ କୁମାର ମିଶ୍ର

ଆମ ଘରଠୁ ଅଳ୍ପଦୂରରେ ଗୋଟେ ପର୍ବତ ଅଛି,
 ସେ ପର୍ବତରେ ଗୁମ୍ଫାଟେ, ଗୁମ୍ଫା ଭିତରେ
 ଅନ୍ଧାରରେ ଗୁଡ଼ିଆଗୁଡ଼ି ହୋଇ କାହାଣୀଟେ
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 ଶବ୍ଦ ବାକ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ ଯେହେତୁ
 ବିରାମ ଚିହ୍ନ ନାହିଁ, ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଚ୍ଛେଦ ନାହିଁ ।

ଅଛି ବୋଲିଲେ ଖାଲି ଗୋଟେ ରାକ୍ଷସ
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 ବୟସଠୁ' ବି ବେଶୀ
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 ଜାଣିପାରୁନା କେତେବେଳେ ଉଠି ଚାଲିଯାଏ ।

ଥରେ ସେପାଖ ବେତ ଚେୟାରରେ
 ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେଇଗଲା ତା ପଗଡ଼ି, ନା
 ପଗଡ଼ି ଭଳି ଦିଶୁଥିବା ଗୋଟେ ପୁରୁଳି
 ସେ ପୁରୁଳି ଖୋଲି ଆମେ ଦେଖିଲୁ ଯେ
 ସେଥିରେ ଗୋଟେ କଟାମୁଣ୍ଡ, ମୁଣ୍ଡଟା
 ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଯେମିତି ଗୋଟେ ଜଳଦସ୍ୟୁର ।

ଘରେ ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଡରିଗଲୁ
 ନିଜ ଲୋକ ଦି'ଚାରିଜଣଙ୍କୁ ତାଜି ସଭା କଲୁ
 କ'ଣ କରିବୁ? ପୁଲିସ୍‌ରେ ଖବର ଦେବୁ?
 ନା ଅଧରାଡ଼ିଆ ସମୁଦରେ ନେଇ ପକେଇଦେବୁ?
 ସାନମାନେ କାନ୍ଦିଲେ, ଶୋଇପଡ଼ିଲେ
 ବଡ଼ମାନେ ଏପଟ ସେପଟ ହେଲେ, ଚିନ୍ତା କଲେ ।

ଶେଷକୁ ବାଡ଼ିଆତକୁ ଯାଇ ମାଟି ଚକଟିଲୁ
 ତିଆରି କଲୁ ଗୋଟେ ଦେହ, ଯୋଡ଼େ ଲେଖା ହାତଗୋଡ଼
 ଗୋଟେ ବଡ଼ ନୌକା, ଗୋଟେ ଲମ୍ବା ତଳଢ଼ାର
 କହିଲୁ ଏଥର ଯା ଯୋଉଠୁ ଆସିବୁ ସେଠିକି
 ଆମେ ତା'କୁ ଗୋଟେ ନାଁ ଦେବାକୁ ଭାବୁଥିଲୁ
 ହେଲା, ହେଲା, ବହୁତ ହେଲା କହି ସେ ଉଠିଗଲା ନୌକାକୁ ।

Prof. Soubhagya Mishra is an eminent poet of Orissa and
 the recipient of this year's prestigious "Sahitya Bharati
 Samman" award. The poem is reprinted from this year's
 Ravenshavian with the author's permission.

ଦିନେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ...

ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର(ରଥ), ମାକୋମ୍ବ, ମିତିଗାନ୍



ଆମ୍ଭାଟିଏ ଅଳିକଲୀ
 “ରହିବି ମୁଁ ଅଶରୀରୀ ପ୍ରଭୁ,
 ନେବିନି ମୁଁ ଝିଅ ଜନ୍ମ,
 ଝିଅଟିଏ ଜନ୍ମହେଲେ
 ଚାରିପଟ ନାକସବୁ
 ଆପେ ଆପେ ଟେକି ହୋଇଯାଏ ।”
 ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଭରା ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କୁ ଚାହୁଁ
 ଆମ୍ଭା ଧିରେ କହେ
 “ଆଜ୍ଞା କର,
 କଇଚିଏ ହେବି
 ପୁଲହୋଇ ସକାଳେ ପୁଟିବି
 ଚଉଦିଗ ମହକେଇ ସଂଜରେ ଝରିବି,
 ଝିଅହୋଇ ଜନ୍ମନେଲେ
 ବଞ୍ଚିବାକୁ ହେବ କିନ୍ତୁ
 ପ୍ରତିକ୍ଷଣେ ମଉଳି ମଉଳି” । (୧)
 ଉତ୍ତରିଲେ ଇଶ୍ୱର ମଧୁର କଣ୍ଠରେ
 “ଆମାନ ପୁଲଟିଏ ଖଞ୍ଜାଥାଏ
 ଝିଅର ଓଠରେ
 ପୁଲମଣୀ, ଇଛାବତୀ
 ଇଛାକଲେ ଚଉଦିଗ ଚହୁଟିବ
 ତା’ ରଙ୍ଗ ତା’ ମହକରେ ।”
 “ନା, ନା” ଆମ୍ଭା କହେ
 ହେବି ପଛେ ମାଟିର ପିତୁଳା
 ହେବିନି ମୁଁ ଇଛାବତୀ ,
 ଇଛାବତୀ ହସୁଥାଏ ବଞ୍ଚୁଥାଏ
 ଚାପିଦେଇ ନିଜ ଇଛା
 ନିୟମର ଘୋଡ଼ଣୀ ଭିତରେ ।
 ପିତୁଳାଟେ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯାଏ
 ହଜିଯାଏ ଶିଶୁର ମନରୁ ,
 ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲାପରେ ବି ତ
 ଇଛାବତୀ ସିଝୁଥାଏ.....
 ଅନ୍ୟକା’ କାମନାର ଉତ୍ତର ବାମ୍ଫରେ
 ।(୨)

ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଣ ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କ ଗମ୍ଭୀର କଣ୍ଠରେ
 “ ମାଟିର ପିତୁଳା କେବେ
 ଭାଳିପାରେ ମମତାର ଧାରା,
 କରିପାରେ ଅନ୍ୟାୟର ପ୍ରତିରୋଧ
 କେବେ?
 ପ୍ରୀତିମୟୀ, ଶକ୍ତିମୟୀ ନାରୀ
 ଦୁହିତା ସେ,
 ପରକୁ ଆପଣା କରେ ବଧୂଟିଏ ସାଜି ।”
 ସ୍ନିତହସି ଆମ୍ଭା କହେ,
 “ ବଧୂବେଶେ ସାଜିପାରେ
 ଝିଅଟିକି ଏତେ ସହଜରେ,
 ବିନା କିଛି ସର୍ତ୍ତରେ?
 ଜନକତ ଚାହିଁଥାଏ
 କନ୍ୟାକେବେ ବଧୂ ହେବ
 ଦୁହିତା ଶବ୍ଦର ଅର୍ଥ ସାର୍ଥକ କରିବ,
 ବାରଂବାର ଜନନୀବି ବାଞ୍ଛୁଥାଏ
 ନିଜ ମନଗଣ୍ଠି
 ଦେବାପାଇଁ ପତୋଶୀଙ୍କ
 ଅସରଳି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ...!
 ବିବାହର ପଣ୍ୟ ବଜାରରେ
 ନାରୀତ୍ର ଡଳାଯାଏ
 କେବେ ରୁପ, କେବେ ରଙ୍ଗ,
 କେବେ ପୁଣି ଯୌତୁକ ଭିତ୍ତିରେ ।” (୩)

ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କ ନୟନରେ କୋଧର ପ୍ରାବଲ୍ୟ!
 “ବୁଝିନିଯେ ବଧୂମୂଲ୍ୟ, ବୁଝିବକି
 ନାରୀମୂଲ୍ୟ
 ବଧୂ ସିଏ ପ୍ରୀତିର ପ୍ରତୀକ
 ସିଞ୍ଚେଯିଏ ଅମୃତର ରସ,
 ସିଏ ମୋ ଲେଖନୀ,
 ଲେଖିବାକୁ ମନୁଷ୍ୟର ଭବିଷ୍ୟ କାହାଣୀ ।
 ନାରୀ ମୂଲ୍ୟ ବଢେନି କମେନି
 ରୁପ, ରଙ୍ଗ ଯୌତୁକ ଭିତ୍ତିରେ
 ନାରୀମୂଲ୍ୟ କିଛିନୁହେଁ
 ନାରୀତ୍ରର ଅଭାବ ବୋଧରେ ।
 ପ୍ରୀତିର ପରଶଦେଇ
 ପ୍ରେମମୟୀ କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ ସେ
 ସାଉଁଟିନିଏ ବୀଜଟିଏ,
 ମାଟି ପାଣି ପବନ ଓ ଆଲୁଅର
 ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଯୋଗାଏ,

ବୀଜଟିକୁ ଦୁମାଟିରେ
 ରୂପାନ୍ତର କରେ,
 ନାରୀ ସେ ଯେ ଭଗବତୀ, ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଇଶ୍ୱର ।
 (୪)
 ବିନମ୍ର କଣ୍ଠରେ ଆମ୍ଭା ଧିରେ କହେ
 “ଉତ୍ତରିଲେ ଶେଷ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ମୋର
 ସତ୍ୟ ମୁଁ ରଖିଲି ପ୍ରଭୁ
 ଝିଅ ହୋଇ ଜନ୍ମହେବି
 ଅକୃଷ୍ଟ ଚିତ୍ତରେ!
 ଆଲୋକ ମୁଁ କେମିତି ଦେଖିବି?
 କେମିତିବା ଅଂଜଳୀରେ
 ପିତୀର ପାଖୁଡ଼ା ଭରି
 ଚଉଦିଗ ମହକେଇ ଦେବି ?”
 ତୁମ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ନେଇ
 ଭୃଣହୋଇ ରହିବି ମୁଁ ଜନନୀ ଗର୍ଭରେ
 କିନ୍ତୁ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ନିରୀକ୍ଷା କରି
 ଝିଅବୋଲି ଜାଣିଗଲେ ...
 ଜନନୀକି ରହିବାକୁ ଦେବ ମୋତେ ତା’ ଜଠର
 ଭିତରେ?“
 ଆମ୍ଭାର ଏ ଶେଷ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ.. ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଚିଏ ହୋଇ
 ରହିଗଲା
 ନିରୁତ୍ତର ଇଶ୍ୱର ଯେଣୁ ଉତ୍ତରର ସମ୍ମାନେ
 ରହିଲେ (୫)

ସପନ ହୋଇଲା ଶେଷ,
 ମନରେ ମୋ ଅବଶୋଷ
 ଇଶ୍ୱର ବି ନିରୁତ୍ତର,
 ତେବେ....
 କିଏ ସେ ପାରିବ ଚିହ୍ନି
 ନାରୀ ମନ ଓ
 କିଏ ସେ ପାରିବ ବୁଝି
 ଆମ୍ଭାର ଏ ଶେଷ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ!:

(ସ୍ତମ୍ଭୀ ନିର୍ମଳ ରଥ ଓ ଦୁଲ ଝିଅ ଆନ୍ୟା, ନୟନାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ମୁଁ ମିତିଗାନ୍ରେ ବାସ କରେ । କବିତାଟି ପ୍ରାୟ କୋଡିଏ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ଲେଖା ହୋଇଥିଲେବି ସମାଜ ଆଜିକି ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଖୋଜୁଛି । ନିକଟ ଅତୀତରେ କନ୍ୟାଭୃଣ ହତ୍ୟାକୁ ନେଇ ପ୍ରକଟ ପାଇଥିବା କିଛି ସଂବାଦ ପୁନଶ୍ଚ ମନରେ ଆଲୋଚନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଛି, ମୋ ନାରୀ ହୃଦୟ ଏବଂ ମୋ କବି ପ୍ରାଣ- ମନରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠୁଛି କଣ ଏହାର ସମାଧାନ?)

ବର୍ଣ୍ଣାଳୀ

ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର



ରୂପ ଆଉ ଗୁଣ ସମାହାରେ
ରହିମନ୍ତ କରି ପ୍ରକୃତିରେ
ରଚିଲେ ସଞ୍ଜ ତତେ କେତେ ଆଦରରେ
ରଜନୀ ପରଭାତର ସନ୍ଧି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ।
ରଖିଲେ ପିତା ମାତା 'ବର୍ଣ୍ଣାଳୀ' ତୋ ନାମ
ରସମୟ ହେଲା ତାଙ୍କ କର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଶୁଣି ତୋର
କୁଆଁ କୁଆଁ ରାବ

ରଜତ କପାଳେ ଶୋଭା
ଘନଶ୍ୟାମ କେରା କେରା କେଶ

ରଞ୍ଜାଭ ଓଠେ ବୋଳା ହିଙ୍ଗୁଳର ଧାର ।
ରହିଲେ ଚକିତ ଦେଖି ତୋ ଆଖିର ଚପଳ ଚମକ
ରକ୍ତମାଂସ ଶରୀରରେ ଥିଲୁ ଅବା ଅଭିଶପ୍ତ ଅପସରୀ ଏକ ।

ପାହିଲା ଶୈଶବ ତୋର ହେଲୁ ତୁ କିଶୋରୀ
ପ୍ରସାରିତ ହେଲା ତବ ଯଶ ସୁଦୂର ବିସ୍ତାରୀ ।
ପୁରସ୍କାର ରୂପେ ଦେଇଥିଲି ଏକ
ପାରିଜାତ ରଙ୍ଗେ ରଙ୍ଗ ଅପୂର୍ବ ପୋଷାକ ।
ପରିଧାନେ ଦିଶୁଥିଲୁ ନୀଳପରୀ ସମ
ପାଶେ ଆସି ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନେ ଛୁଇଁଲୁ ମରମ ।
ପ୍ରତି ଲୋମକୂପ ମୋର ହେଲା ରୋମାଞ୍ଚିତ
ପରଶ ତୋ ଆଶେ ମନେ ଜୀବନ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ।

ଲୀଳାଖେଳା ସାରି କିଶୋରୀ ସମୟ ଯେ ଗତ
ଲଜାସିନ୍ଧୁ ଯୌବନ ସୁସମୟ ହୋଇଲା ଆଗତ ।
ଲଲାଟରେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ସମ ସାଜି ସିନ୍ଦୂରର ଗୋପା
ଲୋହିତ ପାଞ୍ଚରେ ହେଲୁ ବୋହୁ ଅପରୂପା ।
ଲାକ୍ଷ୍ମୀରକ୍ତ ପଦଦ୍ଵୟ ଗଲା ଦୂରେ ପତି ସଙ୍ଗ ପାଇ
ଲଭିବାକୁ ନୁଆ ସ୍ନେହ ପୁରୁଣାରେ ଭୁଲାଇ ।
ଲକ୍ଷ ତୋର ଜିତିବକୁ ଜୀବନ ପାହାଡ
ଲାକ୍ଷା ଗୃହେ ଭାବିଥିଲୁ ବାସିବୁ ଛୋଟ ଏକ ନୀତ ।

ହୋମଅଗ୍ନି ନିଏ ସିନା ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟର ଆଦୃତି
ହୃଦଅଗ୍ନି ମାଗେ ଖାଲି ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥର ଆଦୃତି ।
ହୃତାଶନ ଶାନ୍ତି ଲଭେ ଉଦ୍ଘାଟଣେ 'ସ୍ଵାହା'
ହୃତାଶ ହୁଅଏ ମନ ନଶୁଣିବ ପଦଚିଏ 'ଆହା' ।

ହସ ଅନ୍ତରାଳେ ଥାଏ ଲୁହ ରାଶୀ ରାଶୀ
ହବାକୁ ନ ଦେଲୁ ଜାତ ଦୁଃଖ କେବେ ହେଲା ତୋ' ଜୀବନ ସାଧି ।
'ହବ୍ୟା', 'ଇତା', 'ରକ୍ତା', 'କାମ୍ୟା', ଧରି ରୂପ ନାରୀତୁ 'ବିଶ୍ଵତି'
ହଜିଗଲା ସଭା ରୂପାନ୍ତର ହେଲା
'ଜୋୟତା', 'ତନ୍ଦା', 'ସରସ୍ଵତୀ',
'ଅନ୍ୟା', ଓ 'ଅଦିତି' ।

ତାଳେ ତାଳେ ନାରୁଥିଲୁ ଜୀବନ ସଙ୍ଗୀତେ
ତାଳ କେବେ କାହିଁ ଗଲା ହଜି ନହୁଏ ପରତେ ।
ତତେ ସାଥୀ କରି ନେଲା ମୃତ୍ୟୁ,
ଦେଇ ତାର ପରଶ ଶୀତଳ
ତର୍ପଣ କରିବେ ଅବା ପ୍ରିୟଜନେ ଢାଳି ଦେଇ
ହୃଦରକ୍ତ ଆଉ ଅଶ୍ରୁଜଳ ।

ତୁ ନାହୁଁ ଏ ଜଗତେ ନ ହୁଏ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ
ତୋ ଉଷ୍ଣ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ ସ୍ଵତି ପଟେ ଆଜି ବି ଜୀବିତ ।
ତୋ ସ୍ଵତି ଲତା ପରି ବେଢିଛି ମୋ ସତ୍ୟ
ଦେବି ପଞ୍ଚତନ୍ତ୍ର ପରମାତ୍ମେ ହୁଅ ଲୀନ,
ହେ ଦୀବ୍ୟ ଆତ୍ମା

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ଚିହ୍ନଣୀ -
ବେଦ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ନାରୀର ୧୦ଟି ନାମ
'ହବ୍ୟା' - ଅନ୍ୟର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ପାଇଁ ଯିଏ ନିଜ ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥକୁ ଆହୁତୀ ଦିଏ
'ଇତା' - ସୁନ୍ଦର ବାଣୀ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରି ଯିଏ ପ୍ରଶଂସନୀୟା ଅଟେ
'ରକ୍ତା' - ରମଣୀୟା, ସୁରମ୍ୟା, 'କାମ୍ୟା' - କମନୀୟା, ପୁରୁଷର
କାମ୍ୟ
'ତନ୍ଦା' - ଆହୁତ ଦାୟିନୀ । ବିପଦ ସମୟରେ ପୁରୁଷକୁ ସହାୟ୍ୟ
ବଦନରେ ଆହୁତ ଆଶ୍ଵାସନା ଦିଏ
'ଜୋୟତା' - ଦୀପ ସଦୃଶ ଗୃହକୁ ଜୋତି ପ୍ରଦାନ କରେ ।
'ଅଦିତି' - ଅଖଣ୍ଡନୀୟା, ପୁତ୍ର, କନ୍ୟାଙ୍କୁ ଜନ୍ମ ଦେଇ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପରେ
ମଧ୍ୟ କୁଳର ପରଂପରା ରଖେ ।
'ସରସ୍ଵତୀ' - ଶୁଭ, ମଧୁର ବାଣୀର ଉତ୍ସ
'ବିଶ୍ଵତି' - ସବୁ ଗୁଣର ଆଧାର, ଏଥିପାଇଁ ଅବିସ୍ଵରଣୀୟା
'ଅନ୍ୟା' - ମାତୃଶକ୍ତି , ଅବଧ୍ୟା, ଅହଲ୍ୟା

ମାଧବୀ ଗୋବିନ୍ଦ

ଗଗନ ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ

ପ୍ରଥମ ଭାଗ

ରାଜଧାନୀ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ମହାନଗରୀ,
 ଅଜାଳିକା, ସଉଧ, ଅଫିସ୍, କଚେରୀ ।
 ଲାଲକିଲ୍ଲା, କୁତୁବ ମିନାର,
 ରାଜଘାଟ ବାପୁଜୀର ସ୍ତୁତି,
 ଦୂତାବାସ, ନେତା, ପ୍ରଧାନ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ,
 ରାଜପତି ଭବନ ଓ ରାଜପତି ।
 କୋଟିପତି, ଶ୍ରମିକ, ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ, ବ୍ୟବସାୟ,
 ମାଲିକ ସର୍ବହୁରା କାହାର ବି ନଥାଏ ସମୟ ।
 ହଜଗୋଳ, ଗୋଳମାଳ, ଭିତ ଭାତ
 ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ଦୋକାନ ବଜାର,
 ବଜୁତା, ଧର୍ମଘଟ, ଶୋଭାଯାତ୍ରା
 ସର୍ବଦା ନୂତନ ସମାଚାର ।
 ଘଡ଼ିକେ ଛୁଟଇ ଘୋଡ଼ା,
 ପିଚୁର ସରଣୀ ଯାକ ନିଅନ ଆଲୁଅରେ ଭରା ।
 ଗବେଷଣା କେନ୍ଦ୍ର, କାହିଁ କେତେ
 ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ,
 ତାହାର କରିବ କିଏ ବା ବୟାନ ।
 ତା' ମଧ୍ୟେ ନେହେରୁ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ
 ପୃଥିବୀ ବିଖ୍ୟାତ,
 ନାନା ରାଜ୍ୟ, ନାନା ଦେଶ
 ଛାତ୍ର ଛାତ୍ରୀ ଅଧ୍ୟୟନେ ରତ ।
 ମାର୍କସବାଦ, ଲେନିନବାଦ, ସମାଜବାଦ
 ଫ୍ରୀ ପିଲିଙ୍କ ସାରା ଗର୍ଭକ ଭାଷଣ,
 ରୁଜୁଆ, ପ୍ରଲିଟେରିଏଟ ଶକ୍ତଗୁଡ଼ି
 ଆଲୋଚନା ମାଧ୍ୟମେ ପାଇଥାଏ ଅନେକ ବାର ସ୍ଥାନ ।
 ମୁକ୍ତ ସମାଜ ଯୁବକ ଯୁବତୀ ଛାତ୍ର, ଛାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କର
 ବିଦେଶୀ ଢାଞ୍ଚାରେ ଇଂରାଜୀ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା,
 ଚିପା ଜିନ, ଛୋଟ ଝଟ, ହାଇ ହିଲ, ବୁଟ
 ବିଦେଶୀ ଅତରର ସଭ୍ୟତା ।
 ଆଉକେତେ ପିନ୍ଧିଥାନ୍ତି ଖଦି ଜୁର୍ତ୍ତା ଓ ପାଦରେ ଚପଲ,
 ମୁଖ ମଞ୍ଜଳ ଶୁଣି ଭରା ଲକ୍ଷେଲେକତୁଆଲ ।
 ସେହି ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ କେଉଁ ଏକ
 ଛାତ୍ରାବାସ ନିଭୂତ କଷରେ,
 ଭାତୁଦୁୟ ଚୋଲୁଛନ୍ତି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ସଭ୍ୟ
 ଫାଙ୍କ ବତାସରେ ।

ମିଳିବ ବା ତାଙ୍କୁ କ'ଣ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ମହାନଗରୀର
 ହାଇ ସୋସାଇଟି ଚାକ ଚକ୍ୟରୁ,
 ଅବା ଧନଧାନ୍ୟ ରାଜନିତୀ, ତର୍କ ବିତର୍କରୁ ।
 କେଉଁ ଏକ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅନାମଧ୍ୟେୟ
 ଅଜଣା ଅଶୁଣା ମଫସଲରୁ ଆସି,
 କରନ୍ତି କଳ୍ପନା ଜଳ୍ପନା, ଦେଖନ୍ତି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ
 ଏକ ଛାତ୍ରାବାସ ପ୍ରକୋଷ୍ଠରେ ବସି ।
 କେତେ କେତେ ବିଗତ ଘଟଣା
 ମାନସ ପଟେ ଉଠିମାରେ,
 ଆସି ଭାସିଯାଏ ପାଲଟଣା ଜାହାଜ ସଦୃଶ
 ନୀଳ ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ।
 ବାଲ୍ୟକାଳ ଅଭାବ ଅନାଟନ,
 ପରଠାରୁ ମାଗିବା ପୁସ୍ତକ, କାଗଜ କଲମ ।
 ସଞ୍ଜ ହୁ ଯାକରେ ଏକକ ପୋଷାକ,
 ଚିରାପିଲେ କରିବାକୁ ସିଲାଇ ହୁଏ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ।
 ଦିନ ଦିନ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ବଗତା ଚାଉଳ,
 ସାଥେ ଘରବାଡ଼ି ପିନିପରିବାରେ କରୁଥିଲା କାଳ ।
 ଜୋତାହୀନ ପୁଲୁକା ପାଦରେ,
 ସର୍ବଦା, ସର୍ବତ୍ର ଯାତାୟତ ବିନା ଦ୍ୱିଧାରେ ।
 ବହୁ କୁରୁମ୍ପା ପରିବାର,
 ନ ଥାଏ ବାସପୋଯୋଗୀ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଗୁଞ୍ଜିବାକୁ
 ଏକ ବାସ ଘର ।
 ଆଜି ବାଡ଼ି ପଟେ, କାଲି ଦାଣ୍ଡ ପଟେ,
 ପୁଣି କେବେ ଗାଁ ସ୍କୁଲର ବାରଣ୍ଡାରେ
 ପୋକ, ଭେକ, ସରୀସୃପ ସାଥେ ରାତିକଟେ ।
 ସ୍ଵରି ତାରେ ଭାତୁ ଦୁୟ କରନ୍ତି ଯୋଜନା,
 ଗଢ଼ିବୁ ନିକେ ଦିନେ ଆମ ଗାଆଁରେ,
 ଏକ ପକା ଘର, ଦୂର ହେବ
 ସବୁ ଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଚିନ୍ତା, ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଗୁଞ୍ଜିବାରେ ।
 ଭାତୁଦୁୟ ଏହା ଭାବି ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଉଲ୍ଲାସ,
 ଜାଗି ଉଠେ ମନ ମଧ୍ୟେ କେତେ ଉଚ୍ଚ ଆଶ ।

କଳ୍ପନାର ସଉଧ ଓ ସୁନେଲୀ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ,
 ଭରି ଦିଏ ଧମନୀରେ ଉଷ୍ଣ ରକ୍ତ ।
 ପର ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଉଭେଇ ଯାଏ
 ସେ ସୁନେଲୀ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ,
 ମନେ ପଡେ ଯେତେ ବେଳେ ସିଏ
 ଦୁହେଁ ପରା କପର୍ଦ୍ଦକ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ।
 ଛାତ୍ର ବୃତ୍ତି, ଫେଟଲାସିପ କ୍ରମେ କ୍ରମେ
 ହୋଇଲାଣି ଶେଷ,
 ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ମହା ନଗରୀ କରେ ଉପହାସ
 କିଏ ତୁମେ କିବା ପରିଚୟ, କେଉଁ ମଫସଲି
 କେଉଁ ଠାରୁ ଆସି ଅଛ ଯାଉଛ କି ଭୁଲି ?
 ସହପାଠୀ ଠାରୁ କରି ରଣ,
 ମେଣ୍ଟୁଥାଏ ଦୁଇ ଭ୍ରାତାଙ୍କର ଯେନ ତେନ ଶୁଭୁରାଣ ।
 ଦାରିଦ୍ୟର ପ୍ରବଳ କଷାଘାତ,
 ସୁନେଲି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ କରେ କ୍ଷତ ବିକ୍ଷତ ।
 ପଚେଷ୍ଟ ଅନେକ, କଷ୍ଟକଷ୍ଟି ଚଳିବାର,
 କରୁଥାନ୍ତି ମୁକାବିଲା ବେନି ଭାଇ ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିନ ସମୟର ।
 ଏକ ପ୍ରାତଃ ଭୋଜନ ଖାଇ ଦୁଇଜଣ,
 ଅନାହାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ କାଟିଛନ୍ତି କେବେ କେଉଁଦିନ ।
 ଦାରିଦ୍ୟର ଅଜହାସ୍ୟ ଶୁଣାଯାଏ ଯେବେ,
 ସୁନେଲୀ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅସ୍ତ ହୁଏ ତେବେ ।
 ଜ୍ୟେଷ୍ଠ ଭ୍ରାତ କନିଷ୍ଠରେ ଦିଏ ଉପଦେଶ,
 ବାବୁରେ ! ଅୟଧର, ଦିନେନା ଦିନେ
 ଦାରିଦ୍ୟର ହୋଇବ ବିନାଶ ।
 ନିର୍ବାପିତ ହୁଏ ପ୍ରଜ୍ୱଳିତ ଶିଖା କଳ୍ପନାର,
 ଶୁଖି ହୁଏ ସଦ୍ୟ ଉଦଗମ ଭୃଣର ଅଙ୍କୁର ।
 ବୁଦ୍ଧବୁଦ୍ଧସମ ମିଳାଇଯାଏ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ତୋଳିବାର ବାସ ଗୃହ,
 ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ରେ ହିଁ ହୁଏ ଲୟ ।
 ଚୁଆଁ ଚୁଇଁ କାହାଣୀ ସଦୃଶ ନ ହୁଏ ଘର ତୋଳା,
 ସମୟ ସ୍ରୋତେ ବାନ୍ଧିଭେଳା,
 ବିଦାୟ ନିଅନ୍ତି ବେନି ଭାଇ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ମହାନଗରୀରୁ,
 ଗାଆଁର ଘର ତୋଳା ପାଶୋରୀ ମନରୁ ।

ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଭାଗ

ସେହି ଦିନୁ ବିତିଯାଏ ଅନେକ ବରଷ,
 ସମୟ ସ୍ରୋତେ ଭାସି ଯାଇ ଜଣେ ଭ୍ରାତା ଅଞ୍ଜେଲିଆ
 ଆରକ ପହଞ୍ଚି କାନାଡାର ଦେଶ ।
 ଅଜଣା ଅଶୁଣା ନୂତନ ଦେଶ,
 ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଝାଳ ତୁଣ୍ଡେ ମାରି ତୋଳନ୍ତି
 ନିଜ ନିଜ ବାସ ।
 ଆଗପଟେ ପଛପଟେ ଉଦ୍ୟାନ,
 ଶୀତ ତାପ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରୀତ ପ୍ରକୋଷ୍ଠମାନ ।
 ବୈଠକ ଖାନା, ପାଚକ କୋଠରୀ,
 ଆମୋଦ ପ୍ରମୋଦ ସକାଶେ
 ବେସମେଶ୍ୱରେ ବିଲିଆତ ଓ
 ଜାକୁଚିରେ ପାଣି ଥାଏ ଭରି ।
 ହାଇ ଡେପିନେସନ ଟେଲିଭିଜନ,
 ସରାଉଣ୍ଡ ସାଉଣ୍ଡ ମ୍ୟୁଜିକରେ ଫଟିଯାଏ କାନ ।
 ଚମତାର ସୋଫା ପାରସ୍ୟର ଗାଲିଚା ଉପରେ,
 ଝରକାମାନ ଢଙ୍କା ଥାଏ ଫିନଫିନ ସୌଖୀନ ପରଦାରେ ।
 ଘର ମଧ୍ୟେ କାରପେଟ ଏ ପାଶୁ ସେ ପାଶ,
 ବାହ୍ୟ ତାପ ଯେତେ ଥେଲେ ଥାଉ ପଛେ
 ଆନନ୍ଦରେ କରି ହୁଏ ବାସ ।
 ପତି ରହେ ଛାଡି ଆସିଥିବା ଗାଁରେ ସେ ମାଟି କାଛ
 ନତା ଛପରର ଘର,
 ବଟ ବୃକ୍ଷ ତଳେ, ଅନତି ଦୂରେ ବାସୁଳି ମୟିର ।
 ଯେଉଁଠି କଟିଥିଲା ବାଲ୍ୟକାଳ ଓ ଶୈଶବ,
 ସାକ୍ଷୀ ସିଏ ଦୁଃଖ କଷ୍ଟ ଓ ଅଭାବ ।
 ରୌଦ୍ର ତାପ ଓ ବାରି ଧାରାରୁ ଦେଇ ମୁକ୍ତି,
 ଆଣିଥିଲା ଜ୍ଞାତି କୁଟୁମ୍ବଳ ମନ ମଧ୍ୟେ ତୃପ୍ତି ।
 କେଉଁ ତିନି ପୁରୁଷର ବାସ ସ୍ଥାନ,
 କାଳ କ୍ରମେ କାଳର କରାଳ ସ୍ରୋତେ
 ହୋଇଆସେ ଲୀନ ।

ଭଙ୍ଗ ଚାଳ, ବାଡ଼ିପଟେ ନାହିଁ ଦ୍ଵାର
 ଜରାଜୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅବସ୍ଥା,
 ମରାମତି କରିବାରେ ନଥାଏ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ।
 ମୂଷିକ ଗର୍ଭ ମଧ୍ୟେ ବନ୍ୟାଜଳ ପଶି,
 ଦୁର୍ବଳ କଲ୍ୟାଣି କାନ୍ଧ, ପତିବ ବା ଖସି ।
 ଚାହୁଁ ଚାହୁଁ କେଉଁ ଏକ କାଳ ରାତେ
 ମାତି ଆସିଲା ଝଡ଼ ତୋଫାନ ବର୍ଷା,
 ଭାଙ୍ଗିଲା ସେ କେଉଁ କାଳର ବାସ
 ମିଶିଲା ମାଟିରେ ଯେତକ ଥିଲା ବା ଭରସା ।
 ବୃକ୍ଷା ମା, ଭ୍ରାତା ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ପରିବାର, ଗୃହ ପୋଷା
 ଗୋରୁ ଗାଈ, ଶ୍ଵାନ, ମାର୍ଜାର ସମେତ
 ହେଲେ ବାସ ଶୂନ୍ୟ,
 ବାତ୍ୟାପରେ ବାଉଁଶ, ନତା ମାଟିରେ
 ତୋଳି କୁଡ଼ିଆ, ଗୋରୁ ଗାଈ ସଙ୍ଗେ କଟାଇଲେ ଦିନ ।
 ପହୁଞ୍ଚିଲା କାନାଡା ଦେଶେ ସୁଜନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ପତ୍ର ଏକ,
 ମିଶିଛି ମାଟିରେ ପରା ସମସ୍ତ ବାସ ଗୃହ ଯାକ ।
 ସନ୍ତାନମାନ ମନେ କରିଲେ ଭ୍ରମଣ,
 କାନାଡାରେ ଥିବା ଭ୍ରାତା
 ପତ୍ନୀ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଘଟଣା କ'ଣ?
 ପହୁଞ୍ଚି ଦେଖନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରୀୟ ପୁରାତନ
 ମାଟିର ବାସଘର,
 ଅନତି ଦୂରେ ଅଛି ଖାଲି ବୟ ବୃକ୍ଷ
 ବିଷଣ୍ଣ ବଟ ବୃକ୍ଷ ଆଉ ବାସୁଳୀ ମନ୍ଦିର ।
 ତା' ଆଗେ ନତା ବତା ବାଉଁଶରେ ଠିଆ ହୁଏ,
 ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ପରି ଭାସିଗଲା ମନ ମଧ୍ୟେ ଅତୀତ ତାଙ୍କର ।
 କାହାକୁ ବା କହିବେ କ'ଣ?
 କିପରି ବା ଏତେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଘଟିଗଲା ଏ ଅଘଟଣ?
 ମାତା ବୃକ୍ଷା ଝରାଇ ଲୋତକ କହିଲେ 'ବାପରେ!
 ଯାହାକି ଥିଲା ବାସଟିଏ ମୋର ମିଶିଲା ମାଟିରେ ।
 ଯୋଗ୍ୟବାନ ଯଦି ତୁମ୍ଭେ ପୁତ୍ର ଗଣ,
 ତୋଳିବ ଏ ଘର,
 ମୁଁ ବା ଆଉ ବଞ୍ଚିବି କେତେ ଦିନ
 ଅଳ୍ପ ଦିନେ ଛାଡ଼ିବି ସଂସାର' ।
 ଏହା କହି ଚର୍ମ ବିଗଳିତ ଦୁଇ ନେତ୍ର
 ଝରି ଗଲା କେଇ ଚୋପା ଲୁହ,
 ପଶତ କାନିରେ ପୋଛି ଦୂର କଲେ ଅନ୍ତରର କୋହ ।
 ହସ୍ତୀ ପରି ଭାରା କ୍ରାନ୍ତ

ବିଦେଶ ଫେରନ୍ତା ପୁତ୍ରଙ୍କର ମନ,
 କିପରି ଅବା ଘଟିଲା ଏ ସମସ୍ତ
 ଜାଣିବାରେ ମନ ହେଲା ଉଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ।
 ଜାଣିଲେ ବି ଲାଭ ଅଛି କିବା?
 କପାଳରେ ସିନା କର ମାରିବା?
 ପତ୍ନୀ ତାଙ୍କ ଦେଲେ ଆଶ୍ଵାସନା,
 ଦିନେନା ଦିନେ ତୋଳାହେବ ବାସ ଗୃହ ଏଠି
 ଚାଲିଲା କଳ୍ପନା ।
 ତାର କରିହେଲେ କଥା ବାଣୀ,
 ଅଛେଲିଆ ଭ୍ରାତା ସଙ୍ଗେ
 କିପରି ହେବ ଗ୍ରାମେ, ଏକ ସ୍ଵାୟୀ
 ବାସ ଗୃହ ଓ ରହିବା ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ।
 ଦୁଇ ଭ୍ରାତାଙ୍କର ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ଅତୀତ,
 ଜବାହରଲାଲ ନେହେରୁ ବିଶ୍ଵବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ
 ଛାତ୍ରାବାସ ପ୍ରକୋଷ୍ଠେ ଦେଖିଥିବା
 ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ହୋଇବକି ସତ୍ୟ ?
 ପତ୍ନୀ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ଭ୍ରାତା ସଙ୍ଗେ କରି ସମସ୍ତ ଯୋଜନା,
 ଛୁଇଁ ହେଲା ବାସ ଗୃହର ସ୍ଥାପନା ।
 କିଏ ଦେଲା ଶମ ଓ ସମୟ,
 କିଏ ଦେଲା ବୁଦ୍ଧି, ପୁଣି କିଏ କଲା ଅର୍ଥ ବିନିମୟ ।
 ଶତ ଶତ ମୁଦ୍ରା ଓ ଶ୍ରମ ବିନିମୟେ,
 ତୋଳା ହେଲା ବାସ ଗୃହ,
 ଗୃହ ପ୍ରବେଶ ହେଲା ନୂତନ ନିଳୟେ ।
 ଗଢ଼ାହେଲା ଉଦ୍ୟାନ ବାଡ଼ି ପଟେ,
 ଜାମୁ, ଆମ୍ବ, ତାଳ, ନାରିକେଳ ଶୋଭାପାଏ
 ପୁଷ୍କରିଣୀ ଘାଟେ ।
 ଏତେ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ହେଲା ସତ୍ୟ ଆଜି
 ଅତୀତରେ ଦେଖିଥିବା ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ,
 ସିମେଣ୍ଟ, ଇଟକରେ ଏବେ ଘର ତୋଳା
 ହୋଇଲା ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ।
 'ପୂର୍ବ ପୁରୁଷ ହେବେ ସୁଖି ସୁଖେ, ଦେଖି ନୂତନ ନିବାସ',
 ଏ ଥିଲା ବୃକ୍ଷା ମାତାଙ୍କର ସନ୍ଦେଶ ।
 ଝରିଗଲା ଦୁଇ ବୁଝା ଲୋତକ ମାତାଙ୍କ ନେତ୍ରରୁ
 ଏଥର ମନ କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନେକ ଆନନ୍ଦ,
 ପୁତ୍ର, ପୁତ୍ରବଧୂମାନେ ତାଙ୍କ ମିଳି ମିଶି
 ବଟ ବୃକ୍ଷ ତଳେ ତୋଳି ଦେଲେ
 'ମାଧବୀ ଗୋବିନ୍ଦ' ।

ତପସ୍ତୁ ଭଲ୍ଲକ ସଂବାଦ

ଅର୍ଜୁନ ପୁରୋହିତ

ଆମେ ହେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବଣିକ
ତପସ୍ତୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଭଲ୍ଲକ
ବେପାର କରିବାର ପାଇଁ
ଗଲୁ ମଗଧ ଦେଶ ହୋଇ ।

କହିଲେ ଶୁଣ ହେ ସାଧବ
ଏ ବନେ ହେଲ ଆର୍ବିଭାବ
ଅଜଣା ସାଧୁକୁ ତୁମ୍ଭର
ନିଜ ଆହାର ଭେଟି ଦେଲ ।

କିଏ ବା ଦିଅଁଙ୍କୁ ପୁଜଇ
ଆୟୁଷ ସଂବଳ ମାଗଇ
ଅଯଥା କରେ ସେ ଗୁହାରି
ରକ୍ଷ ମୋ କୁଳ ନରହୁରି ।

ଆସକ୍ତି ମୁଲୁ ଓପାତିଲେ
ମନ ଆକାଶ ସୁଦ୍ଧ ହେଲେ
ମାନବ ହୁଏ ନିବିକାର
ନିର୍ବାଣ ଲଭେ ସେ ତତ୍ପର ।

ବାଟରେ ଘୋର ବନ ଥିଲା
ହିଂସ ଜନ୍ତୁଙ୍କା ତହିଁ ମେଳା
ଦେଖିଲୁ ବଟ ଗଛ ତଳେ
ଦିବ୍ୟ ପୁରୁଷ ବସିଥିଲେ ।

ଯେ ଜନ ଦୟା ପରବସେ
ବାଞ୍ଛିଣ ଦିଏ ଯେ ହରସେ
ଆପଣା ଧନ ଅରଜନ
ସେ ହୁଏ ଦେବତା ସମାନ ।

ଏ ସବୁ ବୃଥା କାରବାର
ଦୁଃଖ ନ ଯାଏ ଏ ପ୍ରକାର
ସେ ଲାଗି କେତେ ଶୁରୁ କଲି
ଦୁଃଖ କାରଣ ପଚାରିଲି ।

ଏ ପରି ଅନେକ ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ
ବଖାଣି ଦେଲେ ତଥାଗତ
ଶୁଣି ହୋଇଲୁ ଆଚଂବିତ
ଆନନ୍ଦେ ହେଲୁ କୃତ କୃତ୍ୟ ।

ସୁନ୍ଦର କ୍ଷୀଣ ଏକ ଯୁବା
ଝଲକେ ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣର ପ୍ରଭା
ଶାନ୍ତିର ପ୍ରତିମା ଆକାର
ଧ୍ୟାନରେ ମଗ୍ନ ମୁନିବର ।

ତୁମର ଧନ୍ୟ ଏ ଆଦର୍ଶ
ସ୍ମରିବ ସଦା ଇତିହାସ
ସେ ହେତୁ ତୁମେ ଆଜି ଶୁଣ
ମୋର ସାଧନା ଫଳଶୁଣ ।

ନ ଦେଲେ କେହି ଯା ଉତ୍ତର
ତେଣୁ ତପିଲି ଛ ବର୍ଷର
କଲି ଗମ୍ଭୀର ମହାଧ୍ୟାନ
ବୁଝିଲି ଦୁଃଖର କାରଣ ।

ବୁଦ୍ଧଙ୍କ ସୁମଧୁର ବାଣୀ
ଆକାଶେ ଦେବତାଏ ଶୁଣି
ଆନନ୍ଦେ ପୁଷ୍ପ ବୃଷ୍ଟି କଲେ
ଅକ୍ଷରା ହୁଳହୁଳି ଦେଲେ ।

ଉପରୁ ଆକାଶର ବାଣୀ
ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ଚକିତ ହେଲୁ ଶୁଣି
ଶୁଣିହେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାଧବ
ତୁମର ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଅସଂଭବ ।

ନର ଜୀବନ ମହାଦୁଃଖ
ଜରା ମରଣ ରୋଗ ଶୋକ
ଏହାଙ୍କ ଜାଲେ ବାନ୍ଧି ହୁଏ
ମାନବ ମକ୍ଷିକା ପରାଏ ।

ତପସ୍ତୁ ଭଲ୍ଲକ ହେ ଶୁଣ
ତୁମେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଦୁଇ ଜଣ
ଶୁଣ ହେ ଦେଇ ମନ କର୍ଣ୍ଣ
ତୁମକୁ ଦେବି ମହାଜ୍ଞାନ ।

ଆମ୍ଭେ କରିଲୁ ପ୍ରଣିପାତ
କହିଲୁ ଆହେ ତଥାଗତ
ହେ ବିଜ୍ଞ କରୁଣା ସାଗର
ଆମକୁ ନିଜ ଶିଷ୍ୟ କର ।

ଜଗତୁ ଦୁଃଖ ଲିଭା ପାଇଁ
ଦେଖ ହେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଗୋସାଇଁ
ସେ ଯେ ବିଷ୍ଣୁଙ୍କ ଅବତାର
ଅଗାଧ କରୁଣା ସାଗର ।

ଏହାର ଆଦି ଅନ୍ତ ନାହିଁ
ଜନ୍ମ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଜନମ ଯାଉଥାଇ
ଜୀବନ ଚକ ଗତୁ ଥାଇ
ଏହାର ଅବସାନ ନାହିଁ ।

ଆସକ୍ତି ସବୁ ଦୁଃଖ ମୁଲ
ସେ ଅଟେ ପ୍ରବଳ ଗରଳ
ସୃଜଇ ମନର ବିକାର
ତହିଁ ଜନ୍ମଇ ଦୁଃଖ ଘୋର ।

ତଥାସ୍ତୁ କଲେ ଶାକ୍ୟମୁନି
ଶୁଣିଲୁ ଆକାଶରୁ ବାଣୀ
ଧନ୍ୟ ହେ ତପସ୍ତୁ ଭଲ୍ଲକ
ଧନ୍ୟ ହେ ଭକ୍ତକ ବଣିକ ।

ତାଙ୍କ ଚରଣେ ନତ ହୁଅ
ଚାଉଳ ପିଠା ମହୁ ଦିଅ
ତୁମର ମହା ପୁଣ୍ୟ ହେବ
ଜଗତେ ଧନ୍ୟ ବୋଲାଇବ ।

ଦୁଃଖରୁ ମୁକୁଳିବା ପାଇଁ
ନର ଯେ କଣ ନ କରଇ
କେ କରେ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରୀୟ ତୋଷଣ
ଭୁଲିବା ପାଇଁ କେତେ କ୍ଷଣ ।

ଜଟିଳ ଏ ଗଛର ଚେର
ମନକୁ ବାଂଧେ ଅବିରଳ
ବିଷାକ୍ତ ହୁଏ ମନାକାଶ
ତହିଁ ଜମଇ ନାନା ଦୋଷ ।

ବୁଦ୍ଧମ୍ ଶରଣମ୍ ଗଛାବ
ଧର୍ମମ୍ ଶରଣମ୍ ଗଛାବ
ଇତି ତପସ୍ତୁ ଭଲ୍ଲକ ସମ୍ପାଦ
ଅର୍ଜୁନ ପୁରୋହିତ ରଚିତ ।

କହିଲୁ ଆହେ ମୁନିବର
ଘେନ ଆମର ଉପହାର
ମୁନି ଯେ ହୋଇଲେ ଉତ୍ପତ
ଖାଇଣ ହୋଇଲେ ତୃପତ ।

କେ କରେ ତପ ଅତି ଘୋର
ହୋଇ ନିଜଳା ନିରାହାର
କେ କରେ ଯଜ୍ଞ ଅନଷ୍ଟାନ
ନିରହ ପଶୁ ବଳିଦାନ ।

ଇର୍ଣ୍ଣା ଚାଂଚଲ୍ୟ କାମ କୋଧ
ହଂସା ଭାବନା ଓ ବିଷାଦ
ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ମନର ବିକାର
ଜୀବକୁ କରେ ହରବର ।

ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ

ପରାଶର ମିଶ୍ର

କେତେ ଦିନ ଆଉ ଏକମିତି ଦେଖୁଥିବା ଆମେ
ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥିବା ଆମେ
ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର, ତାରାଙ୍କ ଉଦୟ-ଅସ୍ତକୁ
ଜନ୍ମର କଳା ମେଘ ସହ ଲୁଚକାଳି ଖେଳିବାର ବ୍ୟାକୁଳତାକୁ,
ନୀଳ ଆକାଶର ନୀଳିମାକୁ, ସମୁଦ୍ରର ଅଗଣିତ ଲହଡ଼ିକୁ
ଗୀଷ୍ଠ, ବର୍ଷା, ଶରତ, ହେମନ୍ତ, ଶୀତ ଓ ବସନ୍ତର ରୁଚୁ
ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନରେ ପ୍ରକୃତି ର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ?

କେତେ ଦିନ, କେତେ ମାସ, କେତେ ବର୍ଷ
ଆଉ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବା ଆମେ
ମାତା ବସୁନ୍ଧରୀର ସହନଶୀଳତାକୁ ପ୍ରମାଣ କରିବାକୁ?

ଆ' ଏଥର ସମୟ ଆସିଛି
ଏକାଠି ହୋଇ ଆଖି ଖୋଲିବା,
ଏକାଠି ହୋଇ ଆସ୍ ଦେଖିବା ଆମ ସମାଜରେ
ଆତଙ୍କବାଦୀଙ୍କ ଧ୍ବଂସ, ବିଧ୍ବଂସର ବିଭୟତାକୁ,
ଆ' ଏଥର କାନ ଖୋଲି
ଏକତ୍ର ହୋଇ ସମସ୍ତେ ଶୁଣିବା ପ୍ରତିଟି ବୋମା ବିସ୍ଫୋରଣକୁ,
ଭୀରୁ ଆତଙ୍କବାଦୀଙ୍କ ଅତର୍କିତ ଆକ୍ରମଣରେ
ଶହୀଦ ହେଉଥିବା ନିରୀହ, ନିରସ୍ତ୍ର ଜନତାର ଶେଷ କଥାକୁ ।

କେଉଁ ଧର୍ମ, କେଉଁ ସଂସ୍କୃତି, କେଉଁ ସଭ୍ୟତା ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦିଏ
ଜାତି, ଭାଷା ଓ ଆଂତଳିକତାର ଆଳରେ
ରାଜନୀତିକୁ ବ୍ୟବସାୟ କରି,
ଗୁଳିଗୋଳାରେ ରକ୍ତର ହୋରି ଖେଳିବାକୁ
ଧର୍ମ ନାମରେ ଧର୍ମର ସଭା କରି ନରହତ୍ୟା,
ନର ସଂହାର, ସଂହାରଲୀଳାକୁ?

ଧର୍ମ ଧ୍ବଂସ କରେନା'
ଧର୍ମ ବିଭେଦ, ବିଭ୍ରାନ୍ତି ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରେନା
ଧର୍ମ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ, ସଂଘ, ଆଧିପତ୍ୟର ଭାଷା କୁହେନା,
ଧର୍ମ ଘୃଣା, କ୍ରୋଧ, ହିଂସା, ବିଦ୍ବେଷକୁ
ସତ୍ୟ, ଶିବ, ସୁନ୍ଦର ରେ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରି
ଆମକୁ ପଥ ଦେଖାଏ
ଅସତ୍ୟରୁ ସତ୍ୟକୁ, ପାପରୁ ପୁଣ୍ୟକୁ, ଅଧାରରୁ ଆଲୋକକୁ ।

ଇଶ୍ବରଙ୍କ ସନ୍ତାନ ମଣିଷ ଆମେ
ତରିବୁ ନାହିଁ ଭୀରୁ, ବିଧର୍ମୀ ଆତଙ୍କବାଦୀଙ୍କୁ
ଏକତ୍ର ହୋଇ ବାହାରିବୁ ଆମେ ମନ୍ଦିରରୁ, ମସଜିଦରୁ,
ଗୀର୍ଜା, ଗୁରୁଦ୍ବାର, ସବୁ ଉପାସନା ପୀଠରୁ
ହୃଦୟକୁ ପ୍ରେମରେ, ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କକୁ ଜ୍ଞାନରେ ଓ ହସ୍ତକୁ କର୍ମ ଓ
ସେବାରେ
ବିନିଯୋଗ କରି ଏକ ମନ, ଏକ ପ୍ରାଣରେ ଏକାଠି ହୋଇ ଆମେ
ବନ୍ଦ କରିବୁ ଆତଙ୍କବାଦୀଙ୍କ ଆତଙ୍କକୁ
ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଆଣିବୁ, ମଧୁମୟ କରିବୁ ଆମ ବସୁନ୍ଧରୀକୁ ।

Parasara Mishra lives in Toronto, Canada with his wife Rekha and daughter Lipi. He has been actively involved with the oDiA community in Canada and his passion lies in writing oDiA poems, stories and dramas. The oDiA drama "Nilam" written and directed by him was not only a huge success at the OSA 2008 convention but also became the top winner of the prestigious Pramode Patnaik Inter-Chapter cultural competition. His e-mail address is parasara11@yahoo.ca

ଜନନୀର ଦେଖା କରିବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା
ଯଦି ହୋଇଥାଏ ମନେ
ଉତ୍କଳ ମାଟିର ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କରି
ତା ଧୂଳି ଲେପ ବଦନେ ।
- କୁଳବୃଷ୍ଟ ମଧୁସୂଦନ ଦାସ

ଏସବୁ କଥା ଛବିଟି ପରି
ପ୍ରବାସେ ମନେ ଉଠି ଝଳି
ଇଚ୍ଛା ହୁଏ ମାଟିରେ ତାର
ଶିରଟି ଥରେ ନୁଆଁତି
ଛୋଟ ମୋର ଗାଁଟି ।
-- ସଚ୍ଚିଦାନନ୍ଦ ରାଉତରାୟ

ସେଇ ଗାଆଁରେ ଉଇଁଲେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ
ଏଇ ଗାଆଁକୁ ପତଳ ଖରା
ସେଇ ଗାଆଁକୁ ଆଲୁଅ କରେ
ଏ ଗାଆଁ ଜନ୍ମ, ଏ ଗାଆଁ ତାରା
-- ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀକାନ୍ତ ମହାପାତ୍ର

ଫୁଲଟିଏ

ମିତାଳି ଦାସ

ଫୁଲଟିଏ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ମୁହିଁ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ, ଯାଇ, ମଲ୍ଲୀ କି ଗୋଲାପ
ପାଇଥାନ୍ତି ଆଦର ମୁଁ କେତେ, ଦେଇଥାନ୍ତି ସବୁଠି ମହକ ।
ବୋଳାହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା ସୁଗନ୍ଧ ଚନ୍ଦନ ଓ ସିନ୍ଦୂରର ପଲେପ
ଚଢ଼ିଥାନ୍ତି ମଥାରେ ମୁଁ ନିତି ପାଇ ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବଡ଼ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ।୧।

ଫୁଲଟିଏ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଗୁଛାଥାନ୍ତି ମାଳା ପାୟୁଙ୍ଗରେ
ରହିଥାନ୍ତି ହୋଇ ଅଳଙ୍କାର ରାଧାକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ଗଳାରେ ।
ପାଦୁକା ମୁଁ ଯେ ହୋଇ ରହିଥାନ୍ତି ଠାକୁରଙ୍କର
ପାଇଥାନ୍ତି ଆଦର ମୁଁ କେତେ ସଭି ଭକ୍ତଙ୍କର ।୨।

ଫୁଲଟିଏ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ମାଳିର କେତେ ଯେ ଆଦର
ଭିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ ରଙ୍ଗରେ ଫୁଟି ସଭିଙ୍କୁ କରନ୍ତି ବିଭୋର ।
ମଧୁରସ ଓ ସୁଗନ୍ଧରେ ଜିତିଥାନ୍ତି ଭ୍ରମରର ମନ
ଗୁଣ୍ଡଗୁଣ୍ଡ ଗୁଞ୍ଜନରେ ପାଇଥାନ୍ତି ପ୍ରେମର ତୁମ୍ଫନ ।୩।

ଫୁଲତୋଡ଼ା ହୋଇ ଘରେ ଫୁଲଦାନୀରେ ରୁହନ୍ତି
ବନ୍ଧୁତାର ସଂପର୍କ ଓ ଘରର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଢ଼ାନ୍ତି ।
ଫୁଲଟିଏ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଲୋଟିଥାନ୍ତି ଶୁଣାଞ୍ଜଳି ପାଇଁ
ଶତ୍ରୁ ବା ମିତ୍ରର ଦୁଃଖରେ ସମବେଦନା ଜଣାଇ ।୪।

ସାର୍ଥକ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା ମୋର ଫୁଲଟିଏ ହେବାର
ଜଞ୍ଜଳମୟ ଅଟେ ଏହି ଯେ ବିଚିତ୍ର ସଂସାର ।
ଭଗବାନ ମୋର ଏହି ଭାବନାଟିକୁ କରିବ ସାକାର
ପର ଜନମରେ ମୋତେ ଫୁଲଟିଏ କର ।୫।

ମୁଁ ମିତାଳି ଦାସ ମୋର ଝିଅ ଚେତନା, ପୁଅ ସାର୍ଥକ ଓ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ସୁରଶଙ୍କ
ସହିତ ଟରୋଙ୍ଗେରେ ବାସ କରେ ।

କଲ୍ପେ ପଲ୍ଲେ ମୁହିଁ କେତେ ମଳିନ
କେମନ୍ତ ସରି ତୋର ହେବି ନଳିନ
ପଙ୍କଜ ଅଗ୍ରୁ ତୁହି ତେଣୁ ଭରସା
ତୋ ପରି ଶୁଭ ହେବି ଲଭି ସୁଦଶା
-- ଭକ୍ତକବି ମଧୁସୂଦନ ରାଓ

ଫେରି ଯା, ଫେରି ଯା

ଆର୍ଯ୍ୟବେଳା ନାୟକ, କାନାଡା

ପଳ ପଳ ଅକ୍ଷର ଭିତରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ଦେଇ
ଯିଏ ତତେ ଦେଖାଇଛି ସୁରୁଜର ପହିଲି କିରଣ,
କେତେ କେତେ ଯତ୍ନଶାଳୁ ଛାତିରେ ଦବାଇ
ତୋ ଜୀବନେ ସଦା ଯିଏ ଭରିଛି ପୁଲକ,
ଅସରା ଲୁହର ଧାରା ଆଖିରେ ଛପାଇ
ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିଛି ଯେ ତୋର ଇଚ୍ଛା, ଅଭିଳାଷା
କେତେ ଆଶା, ଆକାଂକ୍ଷାକୁ ପଛରେ ପକାଇ,
ସଜାଇଛି କେତେ ରଙ୍ଗ ଫୁଲରେ ତୋ' ଚଲାପଥ ଧାର
ଯେତେ ସବୁ କଷ୍ଟ ନିଜ ପଥରେ ବିଛାଇ ।

କାହିଁକି ତେବେ ତୁ କହ -
ସେ ମା'ର ଲୁହଭିଜା ଆଖିରେ
ଦେଖାଇ ପାରୁନୁ ଥରେ ଆଶାର କିରଣ,
ଅକ୍ଷର ଜୀବନ ତାର, ତୋ ଠାରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ।

କାହିଁକି ତୁ ଜଗାଇ ପାରୁନୁ ମନେ
ଜିଇଁବାର ଇଚ୍ଛାଟିଏ ତା'ର
ଜୀବନର ମାନେ ସେ ଭୁଲିଛି, ତୋତେ ଯେ ହଜାଇ ।

ବୟସର ଅପରାହ୍ଣେ, ଥରଥର ପାଦତା'ର ଝୁଣ୍ଟେ ବାରବାର,
କାହିଁକି ତୁ କେଇପାଦ ଭୁମି
ହାତଧରି ତା'ର ପାରୁନା ଚଳାଇ ?
କାହିଁକି ? କାହିଁକି ?

ସମୟର ଅନୁରୋଧ ତତେ -
ଫେରି ଯା ଫେରି ଯା ଆଜି
ସେ ହତଭାଗୀ ଜନନୀ ପାଖକୁ,
ତା' ଜୀବନ ଚଲାପଥେ ବିଞ୍ଚି ଦେ ତୁ ଆଜି କିଛି ଆଲୁଅ ମୁରୁଜ,
ନିରବ ଓଠରେ ଭରି ଦେ, ଭରି ଦେ ଟିକେ ହସର ପିୟୁଷ,
ମନେ ତା'ର ଜଳାଇ ଦେ ଥରେ,
ଥରେମାତ୍ର ଜିଇଁବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ଦୀପଟିଏ ।
କୋଳରେ ଶୁଆଇ ତତେ ରାତି ରାତି ଜାଗିଥିବା ସତ୍ତାଟିକୁ
ଥରେ ମାତ୍ର ତୋ'କୋଳରେ ମଥାଥାପି ତା'ର
ବୁଝାଇ ଦେ ତୁ ତା'ର କେତେ ଆପଣା, କେତେ ତୁ ନିଜର ।
ଫେରି ଯା, ଫେରି ଯା ତୋର ଛୋଟ ଗାଁ ଟିକୁ
ଯେଉଁଠାରେ ତୋ ଜନନୀ ବସିଛି ବାହିଁ ତୋ' ଫେରିବା ବାଟକୁ
ଫେରି ଯା, ଫେରି ଯା

ସ୍ମୃତି

ମନୋରଞ୍ଜନ ମିଶ୍ର
ମାପଲ ଗୋଉ, ମିନେସୋଟା

ଚଂପା ପୁଲର ବାସ୍ନା

ତଥାପି ପୁଛୁଛି ଚଂପା ସେ ଗଛରେ
ନାହିଁ ସିନା ତାର ବାସ୍ନା ,
ବିରହୀଣୀ ଆଉ ସାଜୁ ନାହିଁ ସିଏ
ନିଞ୍ଜଳ ତାର ମୁହଁନା ।
ବାତାୟନ ପାଲେ ଉଠି ମାରୁ ନାହିଁ
ଆଉ ସେ ମୃଗ ନୟନୀ ,
ବଲ୍‌ଗିର ତାନେ ଛନ୍ଦ ତୋଳୁ ନାହିଁ
ଆଉ ସେ ଚଞ୍ଚଳା ହରିଣୀ ।
ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶାଳା ର ପତ ଉହାତେ
ନାହିଁ ସେ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ସ୍ନାତା ,
ଚଂପା ଗୋ ସୁଗନ୍ଧିତ ହୁଅ,
ଆସିବ ଅଭିଶାରିକା ।

ପଳାତକ

ପଳାତକ ଆଜି ମୁହିଁ ଆଞ୍ଜୁଳାଏ ଲୁହ ନେଇ
ବାଲୁକାର ସୌଧ ଗଢି ମହୋଦଧୀ କୁଲେ,
ତଥାପି ମୁଁ କହି ପାରେ ଯିଲି ମୁହିଁ ବିଶ୍ୱକର୍ମା
ଅଧା ଗଢି ଚାଲି ଗଲି ଦିଅଁ ଏ ଦେଉଳେ ।
ତୁମେ ସବୁ ଧର୍ମପଦ ଏ ଲାଞ୍ଜୁଳାର କୋଣାରକେ
ବାରଣ ବଢେଇ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଆଜି ତୁମ ପାଶେ ,
ଅସରନ୍ତି ଆଶା ନେଇ ବାସ୍ତବତା ଖୋଜି ବୁଲେ
ଆକାଶର ରାଜା ମୁଁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନିକ ପାରୁଜ୍ୟ ରେ ।

ହାୟଲୋ ଭକ୍ତଲଭୁମି, ପକୃତ ସୁନ୍ଦର
ମରାଜିନୀ ସମ ନଦୀ, ଶିବ ସମ ଗିରି,
କାନନେ କେଦାର ଲକ୍ଷ ଶୋଭାର ବିହାର
ଥାଉଁ ତୋର, କହ କିଂପା ଏତେ ହୃତଶିରୀ ।
- ମାୟାଧର ମାନସିଂହ

ତୃଷ୍ଣା

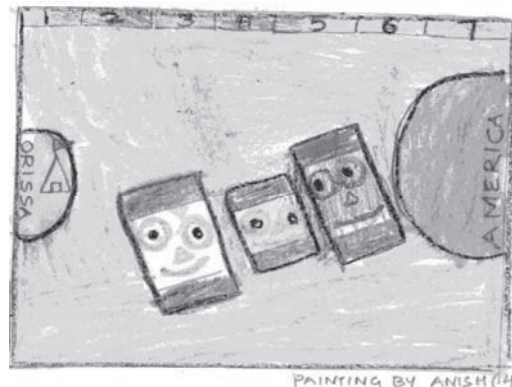
ଦିଗମ୍ବର ମିଶ୍ର

ମନର ଆବେଗ ମୋ ମରେ ନାହିଁ
ଅସଂଜତ ବେଶିର ଆଘାତେ, ଯଦିଓ
ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ତମ ମନଲାଖି ସହରରୁ ସବୁ କିଛି ଆଣେ,

ଖୁବ୍ ଅନ୍ୟମନସ୍କ ଭାବେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଖୁବ୍ ଖୋଜେ
କିମ୍ପା ତୁମ ବେଶି ଖୋଲି ଇତିହାସ ପୃଷ୍ଠା ଲେଉଟାଏ,
ହଁ, ତାଙ୍କ କଥା ଶୁଣ, ଯେ ଖୁବ୍ ନିର୍ଭୟରେ
ରିଞ୍ଜା କରି ଆସି ପାରୁଥିଲେ, ରାସ୍ତାସବୁ ଚିହ୍ନି ମଧ୍ୟ
ସବୁଦିନ ଅପବାଦ ବୋଧ ବୋହୁଥିଲେ ।
ଅବଶ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ଯିବାପରେ ମୁଁ ଚିନ୍ତାଗ୍ରସ୍ତ ହୁଏ,
ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କର ବା ନ କର, ସେ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି ସେଠି
ତେଣୁ ଖୁବ୍ ଅପଦସ୍ତ ମୁଁ ……

କିଏ ବା କହିବ, ସେ କାହିଁକି ଚାଲିଗଲେ,
କାହିଁକି ସେ ପୁଣି ଥରେ ରୂପ ସଜାଡିଲେ
ଆମର ଏ ଭଙ୍ଗ ଦର୍ପଣରେ ।

(ଦିଗମ୍ବର ମିଶ୍ର **OSA** ର ପୂର୍ବତନ ସଭାପତି । ସେ ବର୍ମିଂହାମ୍, ଆଲାବାମାର ଅଧିବାସୀ)



ସାତ ଦରିଆ ପାରିରେ, ବେଖିପାରିଲେ ତୁମକୁ
ସେହି ରଂଗ, ସେହି ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ, ସେହି ଚକା ଆଖି
ସତେ ଯେମିତି ଭାସିଆସିଛ
ଓଡିଆଙ୍କର ହୃଦୟରେ ବସି
ହେ ଦୀନବନ୍ଧୁ, ହେ ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ,
ତୁମ ଚରଣରେ ଆମର କୋଟି କୋଟି ପ୍ରଣାମ
ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ! - ପ୍ରଧାନ ପରିବାର

ନିରବତା ର ଭାଷା

ଉମା ଶଙ୍କର ମିଶ୍ର

ନିରବ ରେ ଯେ କଥା କହି ହୁଏ,
ଏ କଥା ମୁଁ ନ ଥିଲି ଆଗରୁ ଜାଣି ।
ମୁହଁ ର କଥା ରୁ ଆଖି ର ଭାଷା ଯେ ବହୁ ଶକ୍ତି ଶାଳୀ
ଅନୁଭବ ରୁ ହେବ ଜାଣି ॥
କିଛି ନ କହି ଆଖି ବୁଜି ବସିଲେ ବି
ବହୁତ କିଛି କହି ହୁଏ, ଦେଖିଲେ ହେବ ଜାଣି ।
ମୁହଁ ନ ଖୋଲି, ଗୋଡେଇଲେ ପଛେ ପଛେ
କହି ହୋଇ ଯାଏ, ଅନେକ କଥା ,
ଆଗରେ ଯାଉଥିବା ଲୋକ ପାରେ ମନରେ ଜାଣି ॥

ତୁମେ ଯେ ମତେ ଭଲ ପାଅ,
ଏକଥା ମୁହଁ ରେ କହିଲେ ବଢେ ନାହିଁ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ,
ତୁମ କୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ ହୁଏ ଜାଣି ॥
ଜୀବନ ରେ କେବେ କହି ନ ଥିଲ,
"ମୁଁ ତୁମ କୁ ଭଲ ପାଏ ବୋଲି" ,
ଗଲା ବେଳେ ଦେଇଥିଲ ଦୁଇ ଟୋପା ଲୁଣିଆ ପାଣି ।
ସେଥିରୁ ବୁଝି ଗଲି, ଜୀବନ ଯାକର,
ସେ ଥିଲା ଭଲ ପାଇବାର ଖଣି ॥
ରାଗ ରେ ବି ଚାହିଁ ଦେଲେ, ବୁଝି ହେଉଥିଲା
ଅନ୍ତର ର କେତେ ନିବିଡ଼ ସ୍ଥାନ ରୁ ସେ ଭଲ ପାଉଥିଲେ
ଆଉ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଥିଲେ ବିକଳ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ମଉତ ମଣୀ ॥
ଖାଲି ପଦ୍ମଟିଏ ଡାକିଦେଲେ ଆନ୍ତରିକତା ଭରି,
ଆଉ କିଛି କହିବା ଦରକାର ନ ଥିଲା, ସବୁ ଶୁଭି ଯାଉଥିଲା ॥
ଆଜି ନାହିଁ ସେ ସବୁ, ଝୁରିବାର ଦିନ ଯାଏ ହୋଇ ଗଣି ॥
ଦରୋଟି କଥାରେ, ନଥାଏ କିଛି ଅର୍ଥ ଆଉ ଶବ୍ଦ,
କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ବିଶ୍ୱ ର ସେଇ ଅମୂଲ୍ୟ ନିଧି, ତା ବିନା ହୁଏ ସବୁ
ଅସାର ॥
ଗଲାବେଳେ ଏ ଧରା ରୁ କାହାକୁ ନ ପଚାରିଲେ ବି,
ଶୁଭିଯାଏ, ଜୀବନ ଯାକର, ସାରାଂଶ ଓ ମୂଲ୍ୟ ବୋଧ ॥
ନୀରବ ରେ ଯଦି ଏତେ କହି ହୁଏ,
କାହିଁକି ଲୋକେ ଭୁଲନ୍ତି, ଗଲା ଫଟାଇ ଆଉ ମାଲକ୍ ବଜାଇ ॥
ଜୀବନ ର ଭାଷା ବୁଝୁଥିବା, ହେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ର ସର୍ବଜ୍ଞାପିକାରୀ,
ତୁ କଅଣ ପାରୁ ନାହିଁ ମଣିଷ କୁ ଏତିକି ବୁଝାଇ ॥

Uma Shankar Mishra was a prof. in Vani Vihar, Bhubneswar, Orissa. curenly he is retired and utilising his time in writting oriya stories and poems which published in several magazines in orissa. He is involved with lots of oriya literary organization. He has some poems translated to other Indian languages too.

ମୋ ଆଶା ଆଉ ପ୍ରୀତି

ଉଲ୍ଲାସିନି କର

ସାଗରର ବେଳା ଭୂମି ପରେ
ସାହାରାର ମରୁଦ୍ୟାନପରେ
ନତୁବା ନିରୋଳା ନିଶିଥରେ
ଯାହାକୁ ମୁଁ ଭାବୁଥାଏ ମନଗହନରେ
କିଏ ସେହି???

ଯଦି ମୁଁ ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ପଚାରେ
କେବଳ ହତାଶାର ବାହୁଛାୟା
କଙ୍କାଳର ଭଗ୍ନାବଶେଷ
ରାହୁଦ୍ୱାରା ଆକମିତ
ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରପରି ମନେହୁଏ ମତେ
ତଥାପି ଅମାନିଆ ମନ ମୋର
ନ ମାନଇ ବାଧା ବନ୍ଧନକୁ
ଧାଉଥାଏ ମୃଗତୃଷ୍ଣା ପଛେ
ଜାଣେନା ଏ ରହସ୍ୟର ପରିଣତି
କେବେ ବା କେଉଁଠି
ହୁଏତ ହୋଇପାରେ ସାଗର ବନ୍ଧରେ
କି ସାହାରାର ମରୁ ପ୍ରାନ୍ତରେ
ନତୁବା ଏକ ସୀମାହୀନ ହତାଶା ମଧ୍ୟରେ
ମୋ ଆଶା ଅଉ ପ୍ରୀତି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏକ ବିରଟ ବ୍ୟବଧାନ
ସେ ଦୁଇଟି ଗତି କରେ ଦୁଇ ସମାନ୍ତରାଳ ସରଳରେଖାରେ
ବିତମ୍ବିତ ଯାହାର ମିଳନ;
ଅତଏବ ମୁଁ ଯାହା ଖୋଜେ, ତାହା ପାଏନି
ଯାହା ପାଏ, ତାହା ଖୋଜିବି ନଥାଏ
ତଥାପି କିଛି ପାଇବାର ତୃଷ୍ଣା କମେନି ମନରୁ
ନଇର ପୁଞ୍ଜା ପୁଞ୍ଜା କୁଆର ପରି
ମୋ ମନରେ ଅନେକ ସୁନେଲି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଭରି
ନିରାଶାର ଧଙ୍କାରେ ପଡିଯାଇଥିବା ଅସହାୟ ମଣିଷଟେ ପରି
ଭଲଲଗେନି ମୋତେ ରହିବାକୁ
ଦୂରଦିଗନ୍ତର ପନତ ତଳେ ନିଜକୁ ଆବୋରି ।

Ullasini Kar is an active volunteer of OSA NY-NJ and a regular host of Oriya Radio Program - Utkalprabha



ନିଃସଂଗ ଆନନ୍ଦ

ମନୋଜ ପଣ୍ଡା

ସାଂଗର ଆନନ୍ଦ ନିତ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟ ,
କିନ୍ତୁ ନିଃସଂଗର ଆନନ୍ଦ ଅମରତ୍ୱର ଆଧିଗମ୍ୟ ।
କିନ୍ତୁ କାହିଁକି ଏହି ଅସମତାର ଯୌଗିକ ଅବସ୍ଥାପନା?

ଜୀବନ ଓ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ, ଦୁହେଁ ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କର ନାମାନ୍ତର
ପରିବେଶ ଓ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିର ପରିସୀମାରେ,
ଏହାର ସଂଜ୍ଞା ହୁଏ ଭୀନ ଭୀନ ପ୍ରକାରର ।

କାହାପାଇଁ ପୃଥାକି ସାଜେ
ସତ୍ତ୍ୱିଦାନନ୍ଦ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତିର କର୍ମଶାଳା,
ଆଉ କାହାପାଇଁ ସୁଖର ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍‌ଲତା ପଛେ
ଦୁଃଖ ସହ ଚିରନ୍ତନ ଅବଧାବନ ।

ଏହି ଆଲୋକ ଓ ଅନ୍ଧକାରର ଲୁଚକାଳୀ ଖେଳାରେ,
କିଏ ମରି ମରି ବଞ୍ଚେ ତ କିଏ ବଞ୍ଚି ବଞ୍ଚି ମରେ
ଆଉ କିଏ ମରିବା ପାଇଁ ବଞ୍ଚେ ତ
କିଏ ବଞ୍ଚିବା ପାଇଁ ମରେ ।

ତେବେ ଏହି ସତ୍ୟ-ମିଥ୍ୟା
ଜୀବନ-ମରଣର ଗୋଲକ ଧନ୍ଦାରେ
ଜୀବନ ଉଦ୍ୟାନରେ ଅମରତ୍ୱର ଅଜ୍ଞରୋଦ୍‌ଗମ ପାଇଁ
ଦିବ୍ୟ ବୀଜର ସମ୍ଭାବନାର ପ୍ରୟାଶ
ଅନିର୍ବାଚ୍ୟ ଉଦ୍‌ଘୋଷକ ।
ଆଉ ଏହି ସତ୍ୟର ଅବତାରଣା ପାଇଁ
ଆତ୍ମ ପ୍ରବଞ୍ଚନାରେ ନିର୍ବାସିତ ମିଥ୍ୟାର ବିଳାପ
ଏକ ତୃଷ୍ଣା ପଥକର ସୁଦୃଶ୍ୟ ମୃଗତୃଷ୍ଣା ।

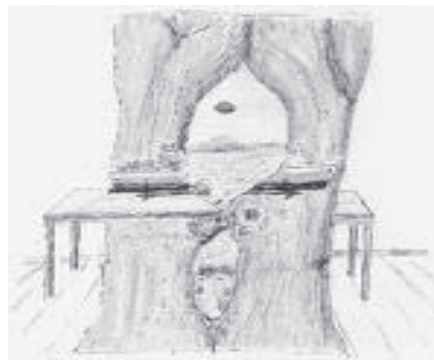
ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ସୃଷ୍ଟିକୁ ସମ୍ମାନୀତ କରେ
ଆସକ୍ତ ମନୁଷ୍ୟର କ୍ରନ୍ଦନାରୋଳ
ତା'ର ଶୀତଳ ଝରଣ ଆଶଙ୍କାରେ
ଘର୍ମାକ୍ତ ହୁଏ ଶରୀର
ସଂଗଘୃକ୍ତ ଆନନ୍ଦର ପରିସମାପ୍ତି ଘଟେ
ଏହି ବିଭୀଶିକାମୟ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧନାଦରେ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ନିଃସଂଗ ଆନନ୍ଦ
ଏକ ନିରାଶକ୍ତ, ଆଶା-ନିରାଶାର ପରିଧିମୁକ୍ତ
ଅଛେଦ୍ୟ ଆତ୍ମାର ଫିକ୍ୟର ପ୍ରତୀକ
ଓ ଅକ୍ଷତ ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତି,
ଶାଶ୍ୱତ ତୃପ୍ତା ଓ ଶେଷହୀନ ସୃଷ୍ଟିର
ନିଃଛକ ସ୍ୱରୂପ ।

ଯାହାର ପାର୍ଥୀବ ଜୀବନର ଅବତରଣ
ଦିବ୍ୟ ମାନବ ଜୀବନର
ମୃତ୍ୟୁ-ଧାରାର ପ୍ରତିହତ ପାଇଁ ଅମୋଘ ଅସ୍ତ୍ର
ଏବଂ ଏହା ପୁଣି ପ୍ରକାଶ ହୁଏ
ପରମାତ୍ମା ସହ ସାର୍ଥକ ସଂଳାପରେ
ସ୍ତୁତିକୃତ ଅନ୍ଧକାର ଅପସାରିତ ଘଟେ
ଅତିତର ରୋମଛନ୍ଦକୁ ଠେଲି ଦେଇ
ଏକ ବିଦୁଗୁନ୍ୟ ଠିକଣାରେ ।

ମନୋଜ ପଣ୍ଡା

ମହାଶିବ ରାତ୍ରୀ ୨୦୦୯
ମିଡିଗାନ୍



ଆସ ମିଳିମିଶି ଓଡିଆ
ଭାଷାକୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇ ରଖିବା ।

ଶୁଭ କାମନା
ଓଡିଆ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ

ଜୀବନ

ବିଜୟଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ରଣା



ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଅନ୍ୟନାମ
 ନୁହଁଇ ଜୀବନ,
 ଶିଖିବାର ଅନ୍ୟନାମ
 ନୁହଁଇ ପଠନ ।
 ଚାହିଁବାର ଅନ୍ୟନାମ
 ନୁହଁଇ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା,
 ମାଗିବାର ଅନ୍ୟନାମ
 କେବେନୁହେଁ ଭିକ୍ଷା ।
 କିଛି ହୁଏ କିଛି କାମ
 ସୁଖ ଓ ଦୁଃଖର ମିଳନ,
 ଭଗବତ୍ କାମନାର
 ସମାହାରେ ହୁଏ ଏ ଜୀବନ ।
 ଖାଲି ପାଇବାର ଆଶା
 ମନମଧ୍ୟେ ଯଦି ଆଶେ,
 ଅପ୍ରାପ୍ତର ଶୁନ୍ୟସ୍ଥାନ
 ପହଞ୍ଚିବ ତୁମ ପାଶେ ।
 ବିସ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅଭି ପ୍ରାନ୍ତେ
 ତୋଳିଲ ଜୀବନ ଘର ,
 କେଜାଣି କେବେ ତା ଭର୍ତ୍ତି
 ବିଷଦେବ ବିଶ୍ୱାସର ।
 ଜୀବନକୁ ଗଢ଼ ଯଦି
 ବନ୍ଧୁର ଶିଳାପରେ,
 ଭାଙ୍ଗିଦେବ ଝଟ ତାକୁ
 ଶିଳାଟି ବି ତାକୁ ଡରେ ।
 ଜୀବନଟି ନୁହେଁ ଏକ
 ଅଢେଇ ଦିନିଆ ଖେଳ ,
 ହୋଇପାରେ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତଟେ
 ହୋଇପାରେ ଏକ କାଳ ।
 ଜୀବନର ଦୂରତାଟି
 ଜନ୍ମରୁ ମରଣ ଯାଏଁ ,
 ଜନମର ପଛେ ପଛେ
 ମରଣ ଦଉଡ଼ୁ ଥାଏ ।

ଜଣାନାହିଁ କାହାପାଇଁ
 କେତେବେଳେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବ,
 ସବୁଧନ ସାଥି ଛାଡ଼ି
 ତା ଆଡେ ସେ ଯୋସାରିବ ।
 ଦୁଇଟି ନିଆଁର ମଝି
 ଜୀବନର ଖେଳଘର,
 ଗୋଟିଏ ତ ଚାଲିଗଲା
 ଅନ୍ୟଟି ଆସେ ଏଥର ।
 ଜୀବନର ରୂପ ରଂଗ
 ସବୁରି ପାଶେ ସମାନ,
 କେବଳ ପ୍ରକୃତ୍ତି ତାକୁ
 କରିଦିଏ ହିନୀମାନ ।

ବିଜୟଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଶ୍ରୀଧର, ଦୁଇ ଝିଅ ଲିପିକା ବିପିକାଙ୍କ ସହିତ
 ନ୍ୟୁ ଜର୍ସି, ଆମେରିକାରେ ବାସକରନ୍ତି ।



ମଧୁମୟ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ସୁଧାମୟ ସୃଷ୍ଟି
 ଏ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଅମୃତମୟ ହେ ।
 ଜାଗ ନରନାରୀ ଅମୃତ ସନ୍ତତି
 ପିଅ ସେ ଅମୃତ ପୟ ହେ ।
 ପିଅ ସେ ଅମୃତ ଦିବସ ଶର୍ବରୀ
 ଗାଅ ଅମୃତ ଜୟ ହେ ।
 - ଭକ୍ତକବି ମଧୁସୂଦନ ରାଓ

ଛଳିଆ କାଳିଆକୁ

ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର, ମେଘାଲ୍ୟାଣ



(୧) ତୁଳସୀ ମାଳ

ତୁମ କଥା ଭାବି କଳ୍ପନାରେ ଦିନେ
 ଶୁଣିଲି ତୁଳସୀ ମାଳ
 ପିନ୍ଧାଇବାପାଇଁ ତୁମକୁ ପ୍ରଭୁହେ
 ଆସିଲି ଧାଇଁ ସଅଳ
 ଆସିଥିଲି ତୁମ ଦରଶନ ପାଇଁ
 ଲୁଚିଗଲ କାହିଁପାଇଁ
 ଛକାପଞ୍ଚା ଖେଳ ଖେଳିବାକୁ ପ୍ରଭୁ
 ବଳ, ବୟସତ ନାହିଁ
 ହାତ ଧରିଲାଣି, ଗୋଡ ଧରିଲାଣି
 ରୁଧିର ଗଲାଣି ଶୁଖି
 ପିନ୍ଧାପଡିଲାଣି ରଙ୍ଗ ମୋର ପ୍ରଭୁ
 କିଛି ପାରୁନାହିଁ ଦେଖି
 କାନକୁ ଶୁଭୁନି, ଆଖିକୁ ଦିଶୁନି
 ସପନ ଗଲାଣି ସରି
 ତୁମ ଭଳି ପ୍ରଭୁ ଥାଉ ଥାଉ ପୁଣି
 ହେଲି ମୁହିଁ ହତଶିରୀ
 ଆଶିଷ ତୁମର ମାଗିବାକୁ ପ୍ରଭୁ
 ପହଞ୍ଚିଲି ତୁମ ଦ୍ଵାରେ
 କବାଟ କିଲିକି ଲୁଚି ରହିଲହେ
 ବିଶ୍ଵାସ ହଜିଲା ଦୂରେ
 କେତେବେଳେ ତୁମେ ଅତି ଆପଣାର
 କେତେବେଳେ ହୁଅ ପର
 ତୁମରି ରହସ୍ୟ ଭେଦିବାକୁ ପ୍ରଭୁ
 ମୁଁ ଏକ ମାନବ ଛାର

ସ୍ଵର୍ଗ ସୁଖ ମୋର ଲୋଡାନାହିଁ ଦିନେ
 ଏତିକି କରୁଣା କର
 ତୁମ ପାଦପଦ୍ମେ ବାନ୍ଧିହେଇ ରହୁ
 ମନ ମୋର ନିରନ୍ତର
 ଧନ ଓ ଜୀବନ ହଜିଯାଉ ପଛେ
 ଚିନ୍ତାନାହିଁ ଭାବଗାହୀ
 ଶରଣ ପଶିଛି ତୁମରି ଚରଣେ
 ରଖ ଆହେ ଶୂନ୍ୟଦେହୀ



(୨) ମାୟାଧର

ଆସିଥିଲି ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମନଭରି ଜଗାରେ
 ଲୁଚିଗଲୁ ଏଣେ ତେଣେ ପାଇଲିନି ଦେଖାରେ
 ଏତେ ଛଳ, ଏତେ ଛନ୍ଦ ଭରିଛି ତୋ' ମନରେ
 ସଂସାରଯାକର ମାୟା ଘେରିଛି ତୋ' ଦେହରେ
 ତୁହି ପରା ପିତା, ମାତା, ବନ୍ଧୁ, ସଖା ଅଗୁରେ
 ଲୁଚିଗଲୁ କାହିଁ ପାଇଁ କି ଦୋଷ ମୋ' ଥିଲାରେ
 ଭେଟିଲି ତୋ ବଡ଼ଭାଇ, ଭଉଣୀ ସୁଭଦ୍ରାରେ
 ମହାନୟେ ହସିଦେଲେ ଆଶିର୍ବାଦ ଦେଲେରେ
 ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ସୁଦର୍ଶନ, ଶ୍ରୀଦେବୀ, ଭୂଦେବୀରେ
 ଚାହିଁଥିଲେ ତୋ ବାଟକୁ ଖୋଜୁଥିଲେ କେତେରେ
 ରତ୍ନ ସିଂହାସନ ଫାଙ୍କା, କେଉଁଠି ଲୁଚିଛୁରେ
 ମାୟାଧର ନାଁ ତୋ'ର ସାର୍ଥକ ତୁ କଲୁରେ
 ମୁଁ ନୁହେଁ ଭକ୍ତ ଶବରୀ, ଦାସିଆ ବାଉରୀରେ
 ଆଶିନାହିଁ ବରକୋଳି, ନତିଆ ତୋ'ପାଇଁରେ
 ଭକତ ସେ ଥିଲେ ଦିହେଁ ତୋ'ପାଇଁ ବାୟାରେ
 ଶୁଣିଲୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଗୁହାରି ଭବୁ କଲୁ ପାରିରେ
 ଆସିନାହିଁ ଦେବାପାଇଁ ନେବାପାଇଁ କିଛିରେ
 ଦର୍ଶନ ପାଇଁକି ମନ ବଳିଲା ତୋ'ପାଇଁରେ
 ଯାଉଅଛି ଆଜି ଚାଲି ବିନା ଦରଶନରେ
 ଦୟା ରଖୁଥିବୁ ତୁହି ଗୁହାରି ତୋ' ପୟରେ

ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ସହର

ଶିବ ପ୍ରସାଦ ସତ୍ପଥୀ



ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ସହରର ଦିଗନ୍ତରେ,
 ରାସ୍ତାଭୁଲ୍ଲା ପଥଚାରି ପରି
 ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ଖୋଜିଲି ମଣିଷ,
 ପାଇବାକୁ ସଠିକ୍ ଠିକଣା ।
 ଠିକଣାତ ପାଇଲିନି,
 ପାଇଲି ଖାଲି ଜଳନ୍ତା ଅଙ୍ଗର,
 ଜଳନ୍ତା ଘର,
 ଦରପୋତା ଶବ,
 ଆଉ ସ୍ତୁପ ହାତ ପଉଁଶର ।
 ନିଃସହାୟ ଦିଅଁମାନେ ଗତୁଥନ୍ତି
 ରାଜରାସ୍ତା ପରେ,
 ଆଜି ତାଙ୍କ ଭାଗ୍ୟଲେଖା
 ମଣିଷ ହାତରେ ।
 ସଂତସ୍ତ ଲୋକ ମାନଙ୍କ
 ଧର୍ମ ଧର୍ମ ଚାଲି,
 ଅଭିଯତ୍ତ ବାଳକଙ୍କ ବିକଳ ବୋବାଳି,
 ଭାସିଆସେ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ରାସ୍ତରେ ,
 ଗୃଧ୍ରଙ୍କର ସଭା ବସେ
 ଭଙ୍ଗ ରୁଜା ମହଲର
 ଜନ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ତିନି ତଳ ଛାତର ଉପରେ ।
 ଏବେ ସବୁ ପରିସ୍କାର !
 ଅଦୂରରେ କେତେ ଦୁର୍ଯ୍ୟୋଧନ
 ଚାଣି କେଶ କେତେ ଦୌପଦୀଙ୍କ,
 ବିବସ୍ତାନ୍ତି ସର୍ବ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ,
 ଗଣ ଧର୍ଷଣର ଅନ୍ତେ ଫେପାତନ୍ତି
 ସ୍ତାନ ଶିବା ପାଖେ ନିର୍ବିକାରେ ।



କାହୁଁ ବାତ ଚାରିଆଡ଼େ
 ନିଃସହାୟ ରକ୍ତରେ ଚିତ୍ରିତ
 ଅସମାପ୍ତ ଚିତ୍ରପଟ ମାନ,
 କାରନାମା କେଉଁ ମୃତ ଚିତ୍ରକର ?
 ତା ଶବ୍ଦ ବୋଧେ ଏବେ ଶକ୍ତିନିଙ୍କ କବଳରେ ,
 ଖିନ୍ ଭିନ୍ ହୋଇ ପୋକ ଲାଗିବେଣି
 ମୃତ ନିରୀହ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଗରମ ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସରେ ।
 କେତେଟି ସଂତସ୍ତ ଚକ୍ଷୁ
 ଦିକି ଦିକି ଜଳୁଅଛି କବାଟ ଫାଙ୍କରେ,
 କେହି କାଳେ ଦେବ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା,
 କେହି କାଳେ କହିଦେବ
 ହଜିଥିବା ଆତ୍ମୀୟଙ୍କ ସଠିକ୍ ଠିକଣା ।
 ରାସ୍ତା କଡ଼େ ପୁଲପରି ମୁଲ୍ୟମ୍
 କେଉଁ ଏକ ନିଷ୍ଠାପ ବୃକ୍ଷରୂପ ଶିଶୁ
 ମତୁ ଶବ ସ୍ତନ ଚାଣି କରେ ରକ୍ତ ପାନ ,
 କିଏ ତାକୁ ଦେବ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନ । ଇଏ କଣ ?
 ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ସହରେ ଶୁଭେ ଗଣଧୂନି,
 ଶବଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଚାଲି ନାଚନ୍ତି ଶକୁନି ।
 ଧରି ହାତେ ଧର୍ମ ଧୂଜା,
 ମଣିଷ ରକ୍ତେ କରନ୍ତି ଦେବତାର ପୂଜା ।
 ମିଳିଗଲା ମତେ ମୋର ସଠିକ୍ ଠିକଣା,
 ପାଇଗଲି ଯାହାକିଛି ସବୁ ଜାଣିବାର,
 ନିର୍ବେଦ ମଣିଷ ଖଣ୍ଡ ଖଣ୍ଡ କରି ଥୋଇଲାଣି
 ଅସ୍ତ୍ରାବୀର ବ୍ରହ୍ମ ନିରାକାର,
 ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣ ରେଖା ମଣିଷ ଓ ଜାନୁଆରର,
 ନିଷ୍ଠିନ୍ନ ହେଲାଣି,
 ଶେଷ ବିଷ୍ଣେରଣ ପାଖେଇ ଆସିଲାଣି ।

ଉପଲବ୍ଧ

ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ

ତିକାଳଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସଂଘର୍ଷ

କିଏ ଅଟେ କାହାଠାରୁ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ
ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠତାକୁ ପ୍ରମାଣ କରନ୍ତି
ଦେଇ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଅଭିମତ ।

ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ

ବାହାଞ୍ଜେଟ ମାରିଦେଇ ହସି
ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଦିଅଇ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ
ତିକାଳର ରାଜା ମୁହିଁ ଅଟେ ବାସ୍ତବ ମୋ ସଦା କରାୟତ ।
‘ଅତୀତ’ ଯେ ଗତ ଇତିହାସ
‘ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ’ ସଦା ଅନିଚ୍ଛିତ
ଅତୀତ ଓ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ମଧ୍ୟେ ବାନ୍ଧିଅଛି ମୁହିଁ ସେତୁବନ୍ଧ ।
ସେଇ ସ୍ଥୁତି ସ୍ତୁପର ନିର୍ମାଣ
ମୋ ବିଦୁନେ ନୁହଁଇ ସମ୍ଭବ
ନିଷ୍କଳ ସେ ଶିକ୍ଷା, ଦୀକ୍ଷା, ଜ୍ଞାନ ପରିଶ୍ରମ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତିର ପର୍ବ ।
ସ୍ଥିତି ମୋର ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକ ସିନା
ମୁଁ ଯେ ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ଆଧାର
ବାସ୍ତବ ମୁଁ, ଆନନ୍ଦ, ଭଲପା, ଆଉ ଅକାବ୍ୟ, କଠୋର ।
ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଜୀବନ ମୋର
ହୁଏ ପୁଣି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ମରଣ
ଅଙ୍ଗେଲିଭା ଅନୁଭୂତି ଦେଇ ଚାଲିଯାଏ ସଦା ଅବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ।
ସୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ମୁଁ ଆଣେ ନୃତନତା
ପୁରାତନେ ଟାଣେ ପୁଣ୍ୟହେତୁ
ତିକାଳର ସୂତ୍ରଧର ମୁଁ ଯେ ସର୍ବଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ମୋ ଗୁରୁଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ।

ଅତୀତ

ମଥାଟେକି ସ୍ଥୁତି ସ୍ତୁପ ତଳୁ
ସଧୂରରେ କହଇ ଅତୀତ
ଅଙ୍ଗେଲିଭା ଅନୁଭୂତି ସବୁ ଧରିଛି ମୋ ଏଇ ମନ ସ୍ତୁପ
ନିଜ ଶକ୍ତି ପରାକାକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ
‘ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ’ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଗର୍ବିତ
ପ୍ରଭାବର କାରଣ ସିନା ସେ, ପ୍ରଭାବେ ତା ନଥାଏ ଭୂଷେପ ।
ବିଂଚିଦେଇ ହୁଏ ସେ ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ
ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଗୌରବ
ଅନୁଭୂତି (ମୁଁ) ଲେଖିଯାଏ ସୁପେ, ସ୍ଥୁତି ସେ ଯେ ଚିର
ଉପଭୋଗ୍ୟ ।
ଉରୁଗୁରୁ ଯେବେ ଭଗ୍ନମନ
ପାଏନାହିଁ କୁଳ ଓ କିନାରା
ତରିବାକୁ ସେ ଅଥଳ ଜଳ ନେଇଥାଏ ସ୍ଥୁତିର ସାହାରା ।
ମୋ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଜାତ ଅସମ୍ଭବ
ଆଦି ସୃଷ୍ଟି ସେ ବିଶ୍ଵବ୍ରହ୍ମାଣ୍ଡ

ସନ୍ତାନକୁ ସଦା ଅଗୋଚର, ନିଜ ବଂଶ ପରମ୍ପରା ଗୋତ୍ର ।
ମୁଁ ଆଦାମ, ଇଭ୍, ମୁଁ ବେଦ
ପୁରାଣ ପୁଣି ଗୀତା, ଇତିହାସ
ଅତୀତ ମୁଁ, ଦୃଢ଼ ଭିତ୍ତି ମୋର, ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଆଜି ମୋ’ ପରେ ସ୍ଥାପିତ ।

ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ

ଶୂନ୍ୟରୁ ସ୍ଵର ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ଵନୀ
ଭବିଷ୍ୟର ହୁଅଇ ଝଂକୃତ
ମୋ ହସ୍ତର ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଲଗାମେ ଅଗ୍ରସର ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଅବିରତ ।
‘ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ’ କରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ
ବାସ୍ତବକୁ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ସ୍ଵହସ୍ତ
ସ୍ଥାନ, କାଳ, ବିଷୟବାସ୍ତବ ମୋ ଦ୍ଵାରା କିନ୍ତୁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରୀତ ।
ମୁଁ ଅଟେ ଆଶା, ଅଭିଳାଷ,
କାମନା ମୁଁ, ସଦିଚ୍ଛା ଓ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ
ଯୁଗ ପରେ ଯୁଗ ପୁନରାବୃତ୍ତି, ମୋ ବିଦୁନେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଅଥର୍ବ ।
ଦିବସର ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟାଲୋକ ମୁଁ ଯେ
ଅଟେ ମୁହିଁ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମା ରାତିର
ନାବିକର ଦୂର ବତୀଘର ଶ୍ରାବଣ ମୁଁ ଆଶାୟୀ ଚାଷୀର ।
ଅନୁଭୂତି ମୋ ନୁହେଁ ଜୀବନ୍ତ
ଅନାଗତ ସଦା କାଳ୍ପନିକ
ଅପେକ୍ଷାର ସେଇ ଭଉଡ଼େନା ଆଶିଦିଏ ଅସୀମ ଆନନ୍ଦ ।
ଦେଇ ଚାଲେ ଆଶାବାଣୀ ସଦା
କେବେ ନୁହେଁ ନାସ୍ତି ସୂଚକ
ଜୀବନକୁ କରେ ଅର୍ଥପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ଜନ୍ମ ସାର୍ଥକ ।

ତିକାଳଙ୍କ ତୃତି ଉପଲବ୍ଧ
ହୁଏ ଶୁଣି ଅନ୍ୟ ମତାମତ
ସ୍ଵୀକାର କରନ୍ତି, ସତରେ
କାହାଠାରୁ କେହି ନୁହେଁ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ।
ଛନ୍ଦାଛନ୍ଦି ପରଫର ମଧ୍ୟେ
ତିକାଳଙ୍କ ଏକଇ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ
‘ସୃଷ୍ଟିର’ ପୁଣି ‘ସୃଷ୍ଟି ପାଇଁ’
ଏଇ ତାଙ୍କ ଗୋପନ ରହସ୍ୟ ।

ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ ସେକ୍ସଭଲି, ଭରଜିନିଆରେ ରହନ୍ତି । ଲେଖାଲେଖି ସହିତ ବହୁମିଳନ ଓ କଳା ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର ବିଶେଷ ଆଗ୍ରହ । ଓସାର ବାର୍ଷିକ ପତ୍ରିକାରେ ସେ ନିୟମିତ ଭାବେ ଲେଖା ପ୍ରକାଶିତ କରିଆସୁଛନ୍ତି ।

ମୋର, ତୁମର, ଆମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର

ବିଜୟ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଗୁରୁ



ମୋ ରକ୍ତରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ
 ହୁଳା ହୁଳା ନିଆଁ ପଶିଯାଏ,
 ଦେହ ଜଡ ସତ ହୁଏ ଲୁଣି ପାଣିରେ,
 ଛୋଟ ପିଲା ଭାବି
 ଚାରି କାନ୍ଧ ମୋତେ ଆକଟ କରେ,
 ଘର ଭିତରେ କୋଲପ ଦେଇ ରଖେ,
 ଧ୍ୟାନମଗ୍ନ ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଭିକ୍ଷୁ ପରି
 ଛିଡା ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଗଛ ଗୁଡାକ,
 ଭୁଲ୍ ଆଁ କରେ
 ମରୁଥିବା ମଣିଷ ପରି,
 ଖଣ୍ଡିଆ ଭୂତ
 ଝାଡୁଦାର୍ ସାଜେ ମୁନିସିପାଲିଟିର,
 ସେଇତ ଖରାଦିନ
 ମୋର, ତୁମର, ଆମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ।
 ଯାହାର ଓଦା ଓଦା ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସରେ
 ନଷ୍ଟ ଗଛ ଫୁଲରେ ଗୁଛି ହୋଇଯାଏ,
 ଯିଏ ପାଣି କାଦୁଅରେ
 ଲଙ୍କଳା ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ
 ଡାହଣି ମାଁ ପରି ଡେଇଁବାକୁ ଡାକିନିଏ,
 ଯେତେବେଳେ ଅଗଣା ପାଣିରେ
 କାଗଜର ଡଙ୍ଗା ଗୁଡା ନାଚୁଥାନ୍ତି
 ପିଲଙ୍କ ନିଷ୍ଠପ ହସରେ,
 ଯିଏ ଗାଡିଆ ପୋଖରୀରୁ ଟେକିନିଏ
 ମାଛ ମାନଙ୍କ ପତା ଶବ,
 ଖୁଆଇ ପିଆଇ
 ନଇ ନାଳ ମୋଟା କରିଦିଏ
 ଗୋଟାଇ ନବାକୁ ଗାଁ ଗଣ୍ଡା ବନ୍ଧବାଡ,
 ସେଇତ ବର୍ଷାଦିନ
 ମୋର, ତୁମର, ଆମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର

ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ
 ମୋ ପାଟି ଚିମ୍ନିରୁ ଧୁଆଁ ବାହାରେ,
 ଅଗଣାରେ ସେବତି ଗଛଟା
 ବାଙ୍କୁଡାଏ ଫୁଲ ଧରି ଛିଡା ହୁଏ,
 ପାଉଁସିଆ ଦେହରେ ତିଆରି ହୁଏ
 ଅନେକ ମାନଚିତ୍ର,

ଘର ପଛପଟେ ହାଟ ବସେ
 ସ୍ୱେଚର ଓ କମ୍ପାନର,
 ରାସ୍ତା କଡରେ ଜଳୁଥିବା
 ଦିକ୍ ଦିକ୍ ନିଆଁ ଚାରିପଟେ
 ଭୂତ ପରି ଛିଡା ହୁଅନ୍ତି
 ଛାଇ ଛାଇଆ ମଣିଷ ଗୁଡାକ,
 ଛାତିରେ ହାତ ଜାକି ବସିଯାଏ
 ଫୁଟପାଥର ଲଙ୍କଳା ପିଲା,
 ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ରାତି କାନ୍ଦେ
 ଅନ୍ଧାରର ଚୌହୁଦି ଭିତରେ,
 ଆଖିରୁ ତା' ଝରୁଥାଏ
 ଟୋପା ଟୋପା ମୋତି ବିନ୍ଦୁ
 ସବୁଜ ଘାସର ଗାଲିଚା ଭିଜାଇ,
 ସେଇତ ଶୀତ ଦିନ
 ମୋର, ତୁମର, ଆମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ।

ମୋର, ତୁମର, ଆମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର
 ଯାହା ବସନ୍ତ,
 ତାହାତ କୋଇଲିର ମଧୁର ଆହ୍ୱାନ,
 ଆମ୍ବ ବଉଳ ଓ ମହୁଲ ଫୁଲର
 ମହୁଆ ବାସ୍ନା
 କାନିରେ ପୁରାଇ ବୋହିନିଏ
 ବସନ୍ତି ପବନ,
 ରଜନି ପଳାସ ବଣ
 ଆସେ ଯେବେ ଧରି ହାତେ
 ବସନ୍ତର ଆଦି ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ,
 ଝରଣା ସଙ୍ଗତ ଗାଏ,
 ପବନ ବଂଶୀ ବଜାଏ,
 ଯାହାର ପରିବର୍ଯ୍ୟା
 ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ମନ ଟାଣିନିଏ,
 ଫୁଲ ଫୁଲ ପ୍ରଜାପତି କଙ୍କିମାନେ

କହି ବୁଲୁଥାନ୍ତି - 'ସ୍ୱାଗତଂ ବନ୍ଧୁ ସ୍ୱାଗତଂ',
 ସେଇତ ବସନ୍ତ - ମୋର, ତୁମର ଓ ଆମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ।

(ଲେଖିକା - ବିଜୟ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ଗୁରୁ
 ଏପି-୨୧୯, ଏଃ୦୭-ସେକ୍ସପିପଟ ସି ଆଇ ଆର
 ରିବମଣ୍ଡ, ଭର୍ଜିନିଆ ଲୁ ୨୩୨୯୪)

ଶିଖର

ସୁବାସ ସତ୍ପଥୀ

ଶୈଶବରୁ କୌମାର
 କୌମାରରୁ ଯୌବନ ଓ ତଦ୍‌ପର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ
 ମୁଁ ପିଇଛି ଯାହାକୋଳେ ଜୀବନ ଅମୃତ
 ଅକ୍ଷୟ ଅନନ୍ତ
 ଯାହା କୋଳେ ଦେଖିଅଛି
 ସରଗର ତାନ୍ଦ ଆଉ ନନ୍ଦନ କାନନ
 ହିମାଦ୍ରୀର ଶୁଭ୍ରସନ୍ଧ୍ୟ ମଣ୍ଡିତ ଶିଖର
 କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ଅତି କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ଲାଗେ
 ଯା କୋଳର ହେଲି-ପ୍ୟାଡ୍ ପରୁ
 ଜାଣିଛି କି ଅଟେ କିଏ ସେହୁ ?
 ସିଏ, ସିଏ ମୋର ବୋଉ ।

ସେବା ତ୍ୟାଗ ତିତୀକ୍ଷାର ସିଏ ତ ଦର୍ପିତ
 ଅନ୍ୟ ଲାଗି ଦିଏ ଯିଏ ଜଳାଞ୍ଜଳି
 ହସି ହସି ନିଜ ଶରୀରକୁ
 ତୃଣ ମାତ୍ର ଭାଳି
 ମମତାର ମୁର୍ଖିମତୀ
 ହୃଦ ଯାର ଅନନ୍ତ ସାଗର
 ମୋ କୁଟୁମ୍ବ ଧରି ବିଶ୍ୱ, ବାସୀ ଯାର
 ଏକାନ୍ତ ନିଜର, ଅତି ଆପଣାର
 ଏପରି ଧାରଣା ଯାର -
 କହିକି ପାରିବ ତୁମ୍ଭେ
 ଅଟେ ସିଏ କେହୁ ,
 ସିଏତ ସେ, ନୁହେଁ ଆଉ କିଏ
 ସେହି ମୋର ବୋଉ ।

ଛୋଟ ତାର ସଂସାରକୁ ନେଲା ଆଉଯାଇ,
 ପ୍ରୀତି ଭରେ ନିଜ ବୁକୁ ପରେ
 ଗଗନର ବିଶାଳତା ଲଜ୍ୟା ପାଏ
 ଯା ଆକାର ଦେଖି
 ନନ୍ଦନକାନନୁ ଆଣି ପୁଷ୍ପରାଜି
 ରୋପିଦେଲା, ଭରିଦେଲା ସିଏ
 ନିଜ ସଂସାରରେ ଇର୍ଷା, ଦ୍ୱେଷ ଦେଇଣ ଓଳାଳ
 କୃଷ କରୁ ନିଜ ଦେହ, ଯେଉଁ ମନ୍ଦାକିନୀ
 ବିତରିଲା, ବିଞ୍ଚିଦେଲା ସ୍ନେହ ଜଳ ରାଶୀ
 ସଂସାରର ତପ୍ତ ମାଟି ପରେ,
 ସ୍ନେହାଞ୍ଜଳେ, ଶୁଭାଙ୍କୁର ଉଦ୍‌ଗମନ ଲାଗି
 ସିଏ ଏକା ନୁହେଁ ଆଉ କେହୁ
 ବିଶ୍ୱ ହିତେ ନିସ୍ତ, ଧରା ପାଇଁ ସରା,
 ସେହି ମୋର ବୋଉ ।

କି ବର୍ଣ୍ଣି ଗୁଣ ତାର, ଯାର ମହାନତା
 ତୁଷାର-ପର୍ବତ ସମ ରହିଛି ଗୋପନ
 ସାଗରର ଜଳେ, ଲକ୍ଷରେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିର ଉଦ୍‌ହାତେ
 ଅଗର ଶିଖର ଦେଖି
 କରୁଛି କି ବାତାଳତା
 ବଖାଣିବା ପାଇଁ ମୁହିଁ ତାର ଗୁଣ ରାଶି
 ‘ବାଣି ମୋର ନାହିଁ ଫିଟଟ’
 ତଷ୍ଟୁ ମୋର ଅକ୍ଷ ତାର ଜ୍ୟୋତିର ଝଲକେ’ ।

ଏତେ ତ୍ୟାଗ କରନା’ ଲୋ,
 କହୁ କହୁ କହିଥିଲି ଦିନେ ଆବେଶରେ
 ଏକାନ୍ତ ବେଳାରେ, ବସି ବସି ଭାବାବେଗ ବେଳେ
 କୃଷ୍ଣ କୃଷ୍ଣତର ତୋର ଶରୀର ସଂପଦ
 ପାରୁନାହିଁ ଦେଖି ନିରତେ ନିରେଖି
 କର୍ମ ଯୋଗ କଠୋରତା ତୋର ,
 ଦେଖି ପରା ପରାଣ ମୋ ଜଳେ
 ଗୁପ୍ତରେ, ଅଲକ୍ଷରେ ଅତି ଅବହେଳେ
 ନିମିଷେ ଅନାଇ ମୋତେ ଉତ୍ତର ସେ ଦେଲା
 ଯେ ଏତିକି
 ‘କି କରୁଛି ମୁହିଁ? ତ୍ୟାଗ ଆଗେ ସବୁ ସାନ
 ସେହି ଧର୍ମ, ମୁଁ ଯାହା ତାହାକୁ ଧରିଛି ।

ପାରିବିନି ରାମାୟଣ ଲେଖି ,
 ନୁହେଁ ମୁଁ ବାଲ୍ମିକି
 ଉଇ ହୁଙ୍ଗା ମଧ୍ୟେ ରହିବାର ,
 ସେ ସାଧନା, କରୁନି ଅଦ୍ୟାପି
 ଲେଖନୀର କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ମୁନେ ପାରିବିନି ଲେଖି
 ହେ ଜାନକୀ, ଗୁଣ ତୋର ,
 ନାହିଁ ଶକ୍ତି ମୋର
 ଅଗ୍ନିସ୍ନାତ ଶୁଭ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ତୁହି,
 ଲେଖିବାକୁ ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣାକ୍ଷରରେ
 ଯଶ ତୋର , ନୁହେଁ ମୁଁ ଭାଜନ ,
 ମୁଁ ପରା ଏକାନ୍ତ ଅଙ୍ଗର ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆମ ମାତୃଭାଷା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆମ ପ୍ରାଣ
 ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଦେଶରେ ଜନ୍ମ ଆମର ଓଡ଼ିଆର କରୁ ଗଣ
 ପଢ଼ିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶିଖିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗାଇବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗାନ
 ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଆମ ମାତୃ ଜନନୀ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର କରୁଗଣ ।
 ଇଶ୍ଵର ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ହୋତା

ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ଵ

ସୌମ୍ୟକାନ୍ତ ସାମନ୍ତସିଂହାର,
 ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ, ଚିତ୍ତେଶ୍ଵରୀ ଶିକ୍ଷାଳୟ,
 ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵର

ମୁଁ ହେବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ

ସୁରଞ୍ଜିତା ସୁତାର



ହେବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ ମୁଁ ବଂଧୁଟିଏ
 ତୁମ କଣ୍ଠକିତ ପଥେ ଫୁଲ ହୋଇ ଫୁଟିବାକୁ,
 ହେବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ ମୁଁ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣମାଲୟ
 ପୋଛିବାକୁ ତୁମ ଜୀବନର ଘନ କାଳିମାକୁ ।
 ପୋଛି ପାରେ ଯଦି ତୁମ ଆଖି ଲୁହ
 ଖେଳାଇ ଓଠରେ ଧାରେ ହସ,
 ତୁମ ଜୀବନର ଦୁଃଖ ଯେତେ ଅଛି
 ଧୋଇ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ମୋ ପ୍ରୟାସ ।
 ଦୀପଟିଏ ହୋଇ ଜଳିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ
 ବଂଧୁ ତୁମର ଚଳା ପଥେ,
 ତୁମ ଦୁଃଖେ ଦୁଃଖ ତୁମ ସୁଖେ ସୁଖ
 ହେବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ ମୁଁ ଅବିରତେ ।

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ଅନ୍ତର୍ଦ୍ଧର ଅନିର୍ବାୟା
 ଆନ୍ତରିକତା ଅଥ
 ଅନୁଭବ ଏକାନ୍ତ
 ଆବଶ୍ୟ ଏକାକୀତା
 ଅନନ୍ତ ଅସୀମ
 ଏବଂ
 ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ଵ ସର୍ବଦା
 ଅବଦମିତ ସତ୍ୟପରି
 ଅଠର ଦିନ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ପରେ ବି
 ମହାଭାରତ ପରି
 କୌଣସି ମତେ ବଞ୍ଚିରହିବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ
 ପ୍ରୟାସ ବୋଲି ଜଣାଇ ହେବାର
 ଆକାର ଓ ଅଙ୍ଗିକାର

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ପୃଥିବୀର ଆଦିଅନନ୍ତ
 କରଣୀୟତାର ଅନ୍ତରାଳେ
 ଆଦର୍ଶ ଓ ଅଙ୍ଗିକାର ବନ୍ଧନର
 ଏରୁଣ୍ଡିତ ଏପଟେ
 ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଲଗ୍ନ ଅପେକ୍ଷାରେ
 ଲଟକି ଥାଏ କେତେ ଯେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନଚିହ୍ନ,
 ପ୍ରତିମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ବଦଳୁଥାଏ
 ତା ଆକୃତି, ପରିବେଶ, ପରିପାଟି,
 ପ୍ରଗତିର ପ୍ରତିଛବି
 ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତି ପରି ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତି ଆନ୍ତରିକତା,
 କ୍ରମବର୍ଦ୍ଧିତ ବୌଦ୍ଧିକତା
 ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ
 ମୂର୍ଖାମୀ ଆତକୁ ମୁହାଁଇଥାଏ……

ଜୀବନ ସତ୍ୟ

ଆର୍ତ୍ତତ୍ରାଣ ରଥ



ଘନ କାଳିମାର ନିଶାନ୍ଧରେ
କେହି କେବେ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ପୁରୀ
ସାଗର ବେଳାରେ ଥିବା ସ୍ୱର୍ଗଦ୍ୱାରକୁ
କେହି କେବେ ଦେଖିଛନ୍ତି କି
ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଜଳୁଥିବା ଲେଲିହାନ ଶିଖାକୁ ।

ଆହା, ଜଣେ କିଏ ଗୁଲିଗଲା
ଚିରଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଏ ସଂସାର ବନ୍ଧରୁ
କିଏ ସେ ! ଜିଜ୍ଞାସାରେ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳିତ
ତାରି ପରି ଏ ଶରୀରର ତନ୍ତୁସବୁ ।

ସିଏ ପଛେ ଯିଏ ବି ହୋଇଥାଉ
ଏ ସଂସାରରେ ପଛେ ନ ଥାଉ
କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି ସେ ହୋଇଗଲା ଅତୀତ
ଦିନେ କାହାର ଥିଲା ସେ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ।

ଅନୁଭବ କେବେ ତୁମେ କରିଛ କି
ଶ୍ରୀବତୀର ଘନ ଅକ୍ଷୟର ରେ
ଏକୃଷିଆ ସାଗର ବେଳାରେ ବସି
ଏ ପଟେ ଶବ୍ଦ ଅଜସ୍ର ଲହଡ଼ିର
କୁଳରେ ପିଚୁ ଥିବା ଶବ୍ଦସବୁ
ସେ ପଟେ ଜଳୁ ଥିବା ନିଷ୍ପାଶ ଶରୀର
ଦିଶୁଥିବା ଅଗ୍ନିର ଝଲକ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱକୁ
ରାତ୍ରୀର ଆକାଶରେ ଆଖି ମିଟିକା ମାରୁଥିବା
ଅଗଣିତ ତାରକାଙ୍କର
ଆଉ ସାଇଁ ସାଇଁ ବୋହୁ ଥିବା ପବନସବୁ ।

ହଁ, ଅତୀତରେ ବସୁଥିବାବେଳେ
ହୃଦୟରେ ହିମାଳୟର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ନେଇ
ଭାବିଥିଲା ନିଜକୁ ଅମର ଅଜେୟ
ଦେଇଥିଲା ରଞ୍ଜନ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ହଜେଇ ।

ଆତ୍ମୀୟ ସ୍ୱଜନପାଇଁ କେତେକଣ କରିଥିଲା
ନ୍ୟାୟ ଅନ୍ୟାୟର ସଂଜ୍ଞା ମାନିନଥିଲା
ହେଲେ କାଳର ତାକରେ ସେ ସବୁ କିଛି
ଆଜି ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇ ଏକା ଚାଲିଗଲା ।

ଥିଲେ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଦିନେ ତାର
ଅତି ଆପଣାର ଏମର ଶରୀରର
ଶୁଆଇତାକୁ କେଇଖଣ୍ଡ କାଠର ଢୁଲରେ
କରିଦେଲେ ଇତିହାସ ଆସନ୍ତାକାଲିର ।

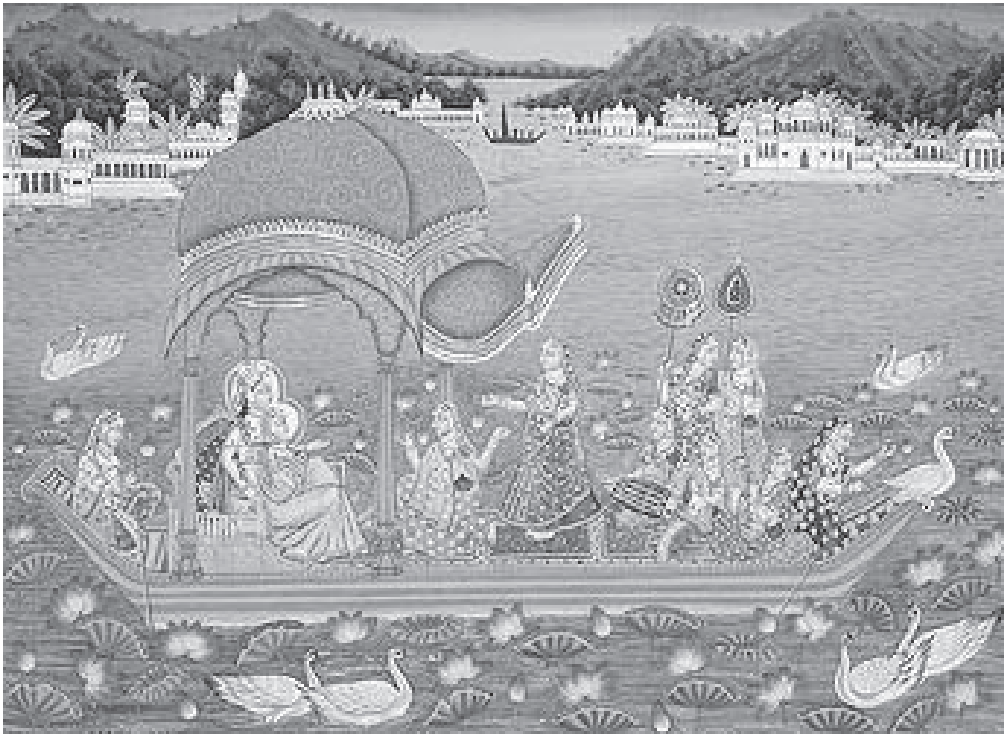
ହେଉ ଦେଖ, ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସେ ତ ଜଳୁଛି
ଦିନେ ଅତୀତରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଜଳୁଥିଲା
ଅଜସ୍ର ହିଂସା, ଲୋଭ, ମୋହ ନେଇ
ସତେ ଯେପରି ଜଳିବାଟା ତାର କଳା ।

ସିଏ ତ ଜଳୁଛି କେତେ ଆଉ ଜାଳିଛି
ଯେତେ ବେଳେ ଦୁନିଆରେ ବସୁଥିଲା
ସେଭଳି ଜଳିବାର ମାନେ କିଛି ନାହିଁ
ଜଳୁଛି, ଜଳିବ, ଏହାହିଁ ସୃଷ୍ଟିର କଳା ।

ହୁଏତ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଦୀପ ଜାଳିଥିବ
କାହାର ଅବା ସହାୟ ହୋଇଥିବ
ହେଲେ ଯାହା ବି ସେ କରିଗଲା
ନିଜେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥିବା ମାୟା ସଂସାର ପାଇଁ ।

---O---

କଥା ସାଗର



KALA NISTAN

ଝିଅ ର ଭାଷା

କଳ୍ପନା ଦାଶ



ଝିଅଟା ଛୋଟ ଥିଲା ବେଳେ ବାରମ୍ବାର କହୁଥିଲା ଯେ 'ବୁଝିଲୁ ମା', ତୁ କାହାକୁ କେବେବି 'ମରିଯା' କହି ଗାଳି ଦେବୁନି, କି -- ମରିଯାଆନ୍ତି କି କହି ଗେଁ ଗେଁ ଯେଁ ଯେଁ ହୁବୁନି । ହାଣ୍ଡି, କତେଜ ଏବଂ ତୁଲୀ କରତୁଲୀ ର ସଂସାର ମୋର, ଶାଶୁ ଶଶୁର ଖୁଡ଼ିଶାଶୁ ଖୁଡୁତାଶୁର ନଶଦ ଯାଆ ଦିଅର ରେ ଜଂଜାଲ ମୋର, ଝିଅର ପିଠି ରେ ଲାଗ ଲାଗ ଛୁଆ ଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ମୋର, ବେଳ ନଥାଏ ତା କଥା ଶୁଣିବାକୁ, ଏବଂ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ବୁଝି ମଧ୍ୟ ନଥିଲା ସିଏ କଅଣ କହୁଛି ବୁଝିବା ପାଇଁ ।

କହିବା ବାହୁଲ୍ୟ, ଝିଅଟି ମୋର ପ୍ରଥମ, ମୁଁ ଏବଂ ମୋର ଦିଅର ନଶଦ ସମସ୍ତେ ଅଳ୍ପ ବୟସ ର ହେଇଥିଲୁ- ଝିଅଟି ହେଲା, ତେଣୁ ଅତି ମାତାରେ ଗେଲ ବସର ର, ଭାରି ଅହଂଗୁଣୀ ଏବଂ ଅବାଗିଆ ହେଇଥିଲା, ପ୍ରଥମ ନାତୁଣୀ ତେଣୁ ଜେଜେ ବାପା ମଧ୍ୟ ହାଟ ବାଟ ଜୁର କରିଥିଲେ । ସେ ପେଟରେ ରହିବା ଦିନରୁ ସାମନା ମଠ - ଆଖ ପାଖ ମଝିର, ସବୁଠାରେ ଅଷ୍ଟପଦରୀ ସଂକୀର୍ତ୍ତନ କାଳୀ ଭୋଜନ, ଭାଗବତ ସଂସା, ରାମାୟଣ ପାଠ ତାକୁ ରଖିଥିଲେ ସିଏ ଜନ୍ମ ହବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ, ଜାତକ ହେଲା - ପିଲା ସଦଗୁଣ ବତୀ, କିନ୍ତୁ ରୁଗ୍ଣଜୀବନ ଯାପନ କରିବ, ଏହା ଶୁଣି ମୋ ଶାଶୁଙ୍କର ପୁଜା ଉପବାସ ଏବଂ ମୋ ଶଶୁରଙ୍କର ନାମ କୀର୍ତ୍ତନ ମାତ୍ର ବଢ଼ିଗଲା । ଏ ଝିଅଟି ସଦା ବେଳେ ଜେଜେ ଏବଂ ମାଆ ପାଖରେ ଆତଯାତ ହୁଏ, ତାଙ୍କରି ବଚନ ପ୍ରବଚନ ସବୁକିଛି ମୋ ଆଗରେ ବଖାଣିବା ତାର ଅଭ୍ୟାସ, ତେଣୁ ସେ ଯାହା କହିଲେ ବି ଜେଜେ ଏବଂ ମାଆଙ୍କୁ ଶୁଣି କଅଣ ଗୁଡେ ବରବର ହେଉଛି ବୋଲି ମୁଁ ଭାବୁଥିଲି ।

ପରିଣତ ବୟସରେ ମୁଁ ତା କଥାର ତାତ୍ପର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବୁଝିଲି । ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶାଶୁଘରକୁ ବିଦାକଲି, ପୁଅମାନଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଜଞ୍ଜଳ ବୁଝାଇ ଦେଲି, ଶାଶୁ ଶଶୁରଙ୍କୁ ସେ ପୁରକୁ ବିଦାୟ ଦେଲା ପରେ, ମୋର ନିର୍ଜଞ୍ଜଳ ଜୀବନ ମତେ ଦୁଃସହ ମନେ ହେଲା । ଶାଶୁ ଶଶୁରଙ୍କ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନରେ ହିଁ ମୋ ପିଲାଙ୍କର ପିଲାପିଲି ହବା ଝୁନ୍‌ଝୁନ୍ ସରିଥିଲା । ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ପିଲାମାନେ ଏବଂ ନଶଦ ଦିଅର ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ସମସ୍ତେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ସଂସାର ରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହୁଥିଲେ । ମୁଁ ବଡ଼ ଏକାକୀ ହେଇଗଲି । ମୋ ଚଉପାଶ ର ଦୁନିଆ ମତେ ଅର୍ଥହୀନ ମନେହେଲା । ଇଏ ମତେ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଧରି ଗୀତା ଭାଗବତ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ସ୍ଥାନକୁ, ଗୁରୁକୁଳ ଆଶ୍ରମ ତଥା ନାନା ପ୍ରକାର ଧର୍ମ ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସଙ୍ଗତ ର ଆସରକୁ ନେଇଗଲେ । ଲିଭିଆସୁଥିବା ଦୀପରେ ତେଲ ଟିକିଏ ପଡ଼ିଲେ ଯେମିତି, ଠିକ୍ ସେମିତି ମୋର ନିରର୍ଥକ ଜୀବନ ମତେ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ମନେହେଉ ଥିଲା । ମୋର ସେତିକି ବେଳେ ହୃଦ୍‌ବୋଧ ହେଲାଯେ ଝିଅ ଛୋଟ ଥିଲା ସିନା, କିନ୍ତୁ ଛୋଟିଆ କଥାଟେ କହି ନଥିଲା । କେବଳ ମଣିଷଙ୍କ ଭୃଣଙ୍କୁ ପେଟରେ ଥିବା ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ସ୍ୱୟଂ ଦର୍ଶନ ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଶଂଖ ଚକ୍ର ଗଦା ପଦ୍ମ ଧାରି ଭଗବାନ, ଜୀବନ ଯାପନ ପାଇଁ ଏହି ଭୃଣଙ୍କୁ ବହୁ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଭୃମିଷ୍ଟ ହେବା ପରେ ଶିଶୁ ଏ ସବୁ ପାଶୋରି ଦିଏ । ଭଗବାନ ଅନ୍ୟ କୌଣସି ଜୀବନକୁ ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ଦର୍ଶନ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଏଇଥି ପାଇଁ କୁହାଯାଏ ମଣିଷ ଜୀବନ ଅତି ଦୁର୍ଲଭ । ସେଇ ସକ୍ଷେ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା, ଭୃଣହତ୍ୟା ଆଦି ମହାପାପ ରେ ଗଣାଯାଏ । ମଣିଷ ଜୀବନ କୁ ଶେଷ କରିଦେବା ର ଚିନ୍ତା ବି ପାପ ବୋଲି କୁହାଯାଏ । 'ମରିଯା' ବୋଲି ଗାଳି ଦେବା ଅବା 'ମରିଯାଅନ୍ତି' ବୋଲି ଭାବିବା ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହି ପରି ପାପ । ଗୁରୁ ପ୍ରବଚନ ଶୁଣିଶୁଣି, ଗୀତା ଭାଗବତ ପଢ଼ିପଢ଼ି ଘରେ ସତ୍‌ସଙ୍ଗ ଭାଗବତ ସଂସା ଏବଂ ରାମାୟଣ ପାଠ ପୁରାଣ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରି କରି ମୁଁ ମୋ ଝିଅ ର ପିଲାଦିନେ କହିଥିବା କଥାର ତାତ୍ପର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବୁଝିଗଲି ।

ନାନା ପ୍ରକାର ରୋଗ ବୈରାଗ୍ୟ ସହ ଲଢ଼େଇ କରି ବଞ୍ଚି ରହିଥିବା ମୋର ଏହି ଝିଅ କୁ ଏବେ ବୟସ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ତାର ପିଲାଏ କୁଳରେ ଲାଗିଗଲେଣି । ଶାଶୁ ଶଶୁର ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ସଂସାର ତ୍ୟାଗ କଲେଣି । ଏ କୁଳରେ ତାକୁ ସକଳ କଥାର ମଉତମଣି ବୋଲି ବିଚାର କରୁଥିବା ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ଆତ୍ମୀୟ ରୁ ଅନେକ କୁ ହରାଇ କିଛିଟା ମନ ମରା ମଧ୍ୟ ହେଇଗଲାଣି । ଖୁଡୁତା ପିୟୁଷା, ମାମୁଁ ଜଣେ ଜଣେ ବାହୁଡ଼ି ଗଲେ - ଶୁଣି କରି କାନ୍ଦିଲା, ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ଗଡେଇ ଗଡେଇ - ଆଖି ଦୁଇଟି ମଧ୍ୟ ଅସ୍ୱସ୍ତ ହେଇଗଲେ । କହିଲା ' ଯେଉଁ ମାନେ ମୋ ଜୀବନ କୁ ଏତେ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ମନେ କରୁଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ହରେଇ ବଞ୍ଚିରହିବା କି ଲାଭ?' । ଶେଷରେ ବାପା କୁ ତାର ବିଦାୟ ଦେଲା, ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟର ସହ ଶବାଧାର କୁ ଫୁଲ ହାର ରେ ସଜେଇ ଦେଲା, ବାପା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଚନ୍ଦନ ଚିପା ଆଙ୍ଗି ଦେଇ କହିଲା 'ମୋ ପାଳି ଆସୁଛି ବାପା' ... ସେଇ ଚାରି ପଦ କଥାରେ ତାର ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିଗ ଚମକି ଗଲା । ପୁରୋହିତ ଘଟିଏ ତାର ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ ଏବଂ ମୋର ଅନ୍ୟ ପିଲାପିଲିଙ୍କ ସହ ସମସ୍ତ ସ୍ୱଜନ ବୃନ୍ଦ କଳ ରୋକ କରି କାନ୍ଦି ପକାଇଲେ । ଯେଉଁ ଜାଗାଟିରେ ବାପା ତାର ବସୁ ବସୁ ଦେହ ତ୍ୟାଗ କଲେ, ଠିକ୍ ସେଇଠି ବସି ଆଖି ପାଣିରେ ସେ ଜାଗାଟିକୁ ଧୋଇ ଦେଲାସିଏ । ଯା ପରଠାରୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ସିଏ ଘରକୁ ଆସେ,

ପୁତୁରା , ଝିଆରୀ, ଭଣଜା ଭାଣିଜୀ, ମାମୁଁ ଘର, ପିଉଣୀ ଘର , ସମୁଦି ଘର ସବୁଠାରେ ମୁହଁ ମାରିଦିଏ । ଯୁଆଡେ ଗଲେ ମତେ ଟାଣି ଟୁଣି ନିଏ । ଜୋଇଁ ଏକ୍ସ୍‌କର୍ଟିଆ ଖା' ପିଆରେ ହଇରାଣ ହେବେ ବୋଲି ଅଧିକ ରହେନି । ଆମେ କେହି ବାଧ୍ୟବାଧକତା କରୁନି । ସେ ଗଲାପରେ ସମସ୍ତେ - ସମ ପରିମାଣରେ ଝୁରି ହୁଏ । ସେ କେବେ ପୁଣି ସମୟ କରି ଆସିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁ ରହୁ । ଏଇ ଗହଳି ଲାଗିଥାଏ - ମୋର ଆଖି ବୁଜି ହୋଇ ଯାଏ, ଏତିକି ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା । ଏଇଥର ନିହାତି ଗାଁକୁ ବାହାରିଥିଲା । ଗାଁ ମହାଦେବଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ପୂଜା ପୂଜି ହୁଏତ ତାଆରି ପାଇଁ । ଖୁତି ତାର ଆସି ଦି ଦିନ ହେବ ବସିଛି ଝିଅକୁ ନବାକୁ । ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ବାହାରିଲୁ । ତା ପରଦିନ ଚକବନ୍ଦ ଅଖବନ୍ଦ ଓଡିଶା ବନ୍ଦ । ତା ପର ଦିନ ଝିଅ ଫେରିଯିବ ତା ଯାଗାକୁ । ସେ ଗାଧୁଆ ଘରୁ ବାହାରିନି , ଆମେ ମାନେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେଉଛୁ । ହୋ ହାଲା କରି ତାର ନଶର ନଶରେଇ ଯାଆ ଦିଅର ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କ ପଟର ଚିହ୍ନା ଅତିହ୍ନା ଆଉ କିଛି ଲୋକ ପଶି ଆସିଲେ । ମୋର ବହୁ ନାତୁଣୀ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଓଲଟି ହୋଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପରିଚର୍ଯ୍ୟାରେ ଲାଗିଗଲେ । ଯାଆ' ଗପସପ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା ବନ୍ଧୁଘର ପିଲାଙ୍କ ସହ । ମୁଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ପାଖରେ ବସାଇ କୁଶଳ ପଚାରିବା ସହ ମନେ ମନେ ପ୍ରମାଦ ଗଣୁଥାଏ । ଏମାନେ ହଠାତ୍ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଗଲେ, ଝିଅର ପାନ ଭଣ୍ଡର ହୋଇ ଗଲେ ସିଏ ବିଗିଡିବ । ଏ ଝିଅ ବହୁ ଗୁଡା ବାହାରିଥିଲେ, କିଛି ଗୋଟେ ଅପ୍ରିତିକର ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଉପୁଜିବା ଆଶଙ୍କାରେ ମୁଁ ମନେ ମନେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଉ ଥାଏ । ମୋ ନାତୁଣି ମାନେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସରବତ ଦେଇଗଲେ । ବୋହୁ ମାନେ ଫଳ ବିସ୍ତ୍ରଟ ବାରମଜା ମିଠା ଥୋଇ ଦେଇଗଲେ । ଅଲିଅଳି ବାହାରିଲେ ଗାଧୁଆ ଘରୁ, ମୁଖରେ ଗାମୁଛା ଦେଇ ଠେକା କରି ଆସିଲା ସ୍ୟାଡୁ ହାଁ କରି, 'ଆରେ ମୋର କେତେ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ, ଅକୁହା ଅପୋଛା ତୁମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଏଠି ' । କହୁ କହୁ ଗୁରୁଜନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଣାମ କରି ପାଦଧୂଳି ନେଲା । ମୋ ଛାତିରୁ ଗୋଟେ ବୋଝ ଖସିଗଲା । ବଡ ନଶଦେଇ କହିଲେ - 'ଆମେ ଭାବିଲୁ ତତେ ଏଥର ଆମେ ମିଳିମିଶି ଚକତ କରିଦେବୁ । ଦେଖୁଛୁ - ତୁ ଗାଁକୁ ବାହାରିଛୁ । ଆମେ ଘଣ୍ଟେ ରହି ଫେରିଯିବୁ' । ମୋ ମନକୁ ଆହୁରି ଉଲ୍ଲସିତ କରି ମୋର ଝିଅ ଜବାବ୍ ଦେଲା, 'ଭାଇନା - ଗାଁକୁ ବାହାରି ଥିଲି ମହାଦେବଙ୍କୁ ଦର୍ଶନ କରିବାକୁ, ଆପଣ ମାନେ ତ ସ୍ୱୟଂ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେଣି, ଶିବ ପାର୍ବତୀ ନନ୍ଦୀ ଭୁକ୍ତ ବାସୁଆ ବଳଦ ଠାରୁ ବାସୁକୀ ନାଗ ପୟାନ୍ତ ସମସ୍ତେ ଏଇଠି । ମୁଁ କାହିଁକି କୁଆଡେ ଯିବି?

ମୋ ସାନ ପୁଅଟି ବାହାରି ପଡି କହିଲା 'କହିଲୁ ତୋର କେଉଁଟି ବାସୁକୀ' । ହେଁ ହେଁ ଫେଏଁ ଫେଏଁ ରେ ଘର ଭରୁଥିଲା । ମୋ ଯାଆ' ଗାଁକୁ ଫେନ୍ଦ୍ କରି ଆମେ ନଯିବା କଥା ଜଣେଇ ଦେଲା । ବିନା ପଟରା ଉଚରାରେ ମୋର ବୋହୁଏ ରକ୍ଷାବଢା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଲେ । ପୁଅମାନେ ମାଂସ ଆଣିବାକୁ ବାହାରିଗଲେ । ବାକି ଝିଅ ମାନେ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରୁ ଆମ ମାଆ ଖୁତିଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ନିରାମିଷ କରି ଆଣି ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ । ଆମେ ଦି ଯାଆ' ଆମୋଦିତ ହେଲୁ, ଆଚମ୍ପିତ ହେଲୁ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ଆଚରଣରେ । ଆଜିକାଲି ଏପରି ଆଶା କରା ଯାଏନା । ସାନ ଯାଆ କହିଲା 'ନନା ଯିବା ଦିନରୁ ଏମିତି ବନ୍ଧୁ ମିଳନ ଚିଏ କେବେ ହେଇନଥିଲା' । ଝିଅ ପୁଣି ଥରେ କହିଲା - 'ମୋର କେତେ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ଯେ ତୁମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ମୁଁ ମୋ ବାପ ଘରେ ଏକାଠି ଦେଖୁଛି' । ଦିଅର ଜଣେ କହିଲେ 'ଆମେ ଭାବିଥିଲୁ ତୁମକୁ ବିଚଳିତ କରିଦବୁ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଦେଖୁଛୁ ତୁମେ ଆମକୁ ଦେଖି ଏତେ ଭୋଳ' ।

ଝିଅ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁ ଅଳ୍ପ ହସିଲା । ତାର ବଡ ନଶଦେଇ ବାହାରି ପଡି କହିଲେ 'ଦେଖମ କାହାର ପିଲା ସିଏ - କାହା ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦୀକ୍ଷାରେ ମଣିଷ ହେଇଛି , ଚାଟ ଘର ପିଲା ଚାଟ' । ଆମେ ଦିଇ ଯାଆ ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଲୁ ଘଟିଏ । ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକରେ ବାଲିଘର ଭୃଷ୍ଟି ଗଲା ପରି- ସତେ ଅବା ସକଳ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ- ଗ୍ଲାନି ମନରୁ ଉଭେଇ ଗଲା । ତାର ସକଳ କଳାକୃତ୍ତିର ମୂଲ୍ୟ ତା ବାପ ତୁଲ୍ୟ ବଡ ନଶଦେଇଙ୍କର ପଦେ କଥା ପାଖରେ କମ୍ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ୍ ମନେ ହେଲା ମତେ । ବାପ ଖୁତୁତା ଆଉ ପରିବାରର ଅନ୍ୟ ପରିଷଦମାନେ, ଯଦି ବଞ୍ଚି ଥାଆନ୍ତେ ଶୁଣି କି ଖୁସି ନ ହୋଇ ଥାଆନ୍ତେ ସତେ । ଖିଆପିଆ, ଗନ୍ଧ ଆଳାପ ବିଶ୍ରାମ ସବୁଥିରେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣହେବ ଟାଣି ଝିଅ କହିଲା, "ଯଦି ଫେରିଯିବା କଥା - ରାତି କର ନାହିଁ, ଚଉଦୁଆର ଚପିଲେ ତକାୟତ ଉପାତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି" । ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ "ରହିଯାଅ" ବୋଲି କହିଲୁ । ଦୁଇ ଦିନ ରହଣି ପାଇଁ କେହି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ନଥିଲେ । ବାହାରିଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ । ନମସ୍କାର ଆଦାନ ପ୍ରଦାନ ସରିଗଲା । ସବୁରି ହୁଦୟରେ ବନ୍ଧୁ ବିଚ୍ଛେଦର ପୀତା । ସବାଶେଷରେ, ଦେଖିଲି - ଗୋଟିଏ ନଶଦ ତାକୁ ଆଁଠୁ ଲଗେଇ ପ୍ରଣାମ କଲେ । ଧୀରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡଟି ରହିଲା ଝିଅର ପାଦ ପାଖରେ - ମୁଖା ପରି କେତେ ବୁନ୍ଦା ଲୁହ ତାର ଚରଣ ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ କଲା । ତାଙ୍କୁ ତଳୁ ଉଠାଇ ଆଣି ଦୁଇ ହାତରେ ଧରି ଛାତିକୁ ଆଉଜେଇ ଆଣିଲା ସିଏ । କୋହ କୋହ ହେଇ କହିଲେ "ତୁମେ ଠିକ୍ ସମୟରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରି ନ ଥିଲେ ମୋ ପିଲା ମଣିଷ ହୋଇ ପାରିନଥାନ୍ତେ । ଏତେ ଧୂମ୍ ଧାମ୍ରେ ମୁଁ ପୁଅ ବାହା, ଝିଅ ବିଦା କରି ନଥାନ୍ତି ।" କିଛି ନ କହି ତାଙ୍କର ହାତଟି ଧୀରେ ଚାପି ଧରିଲା - ନେଇ ଗାଡିରେ ବସେଇ ଦେଇ ଆସିଲା । ସମସ୍ତେ ବାହୁଡି ଗଲେ । ମୋର ଝିଅ ଜୋଇଁମାନେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲେ ।

ମୋ ଝିଅର ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶାଗ୍ରସ୍ତ ଅତିତ ର ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ନୀରବ ସାକ୍ଷୀ ତାର ଏଇ ଖୁତିଟି । ଦୀର୍ଘ ଶ୍ୱାସଟିଏ ଛାଡି କହିଲା - "ହୁଅ, ଏ ଆଖିର ଲୁହ ସେ ଆଖିରେ ପୁରେଇ ଦିନ କଟେଇଲା ଆମ ଝିଅ, ଏଇମାନଙ୍କର ଅବୁଝା ପଣ ପାଇଁ । ଏବେ ଆଉ ଯେତେ ସୁଆଗ କଲେ କଣ ହେବ, ଦିନ ତ ଫେରିବନି" । ତଳକୁ ମୁହଁ କରି ଖଞ୍ଜ ଭିତରକୁ ପଶୁଥିବା ଝିଅର ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁଲି । ଲେଉଟି ଆସିଲା ଖୁତି ପାଖକୁ । ତାର ଚାରି ପାଖରେ ଗୋଟେ ହାତକୁ ଗୁଡେଇ ଧରି ଘରକୁ ନେଇଗଲା । ସମସ୍ତେ ତାଇନିଂ ଟେବୁଲ୍ ଚାରିପଟରେ ଘେରି ବସିଲୁ । ହାଲିଆ ହେଇ ସବୁତକ ହାଇ ମାରୁଥିଲେ । ଝିଅ ମୁହଁ ଖୋଲିଲା, ଖୁତିକୁ ଉତ୍ତର ଦବା ପାଇଁ - 'ଏମିତି କାହିଁକି କହିଲ ଖୁତି?' । ପଥର

ଦବି ଯିବାର ଉପାଦାନ ଥିଲା ତାର ଭାଷାରେ । ‘ତୁମ ମାନଙ୍କ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦରୁ ଜୀବନରେ କଠିନ ତମ ସମୟକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ମୁଁ ହସି ହସି ଅତିକ୍ରମ କରିଆସିଲି । ତୁମ ମାନଙ୍କର ମୁହଁ ତଳକୁ ନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ, ଆବଶ୍ୟକର ଅଧିକ ସାବଧାନ ହେଇ ଚଳିଲି । ଯାହା ଘଟିଯାଇଛି, ତାକୁ ବଦଳେଇ ହବନି । ପଛଦିନ ମୋର କେବେବି ଫେରିବନି । କିନ୍ତୁ, ଅଯାଚିତ ଭାବରେ, ଜୀବନର ଏଇ ସମୟ ଯଦି ଏତିକି ତୁଫିରେ କଟିବ, ତେବେ ଗୋଟେ ପରିପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣତା ଭିତରେ ମୁଁ ଆଖି ବୁଜି ଦେବି । ଏହି ଭାବରେ ଦେହ ତ୍ୟାଗକଲେ ମୁଁ ପୁଣି ଏଇ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଉଲ୍ଲାସ ଏଇ ପରି ପରିପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସଂସାର କୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରିବି । ନଚେତ୍ - ଖୁଡ଼ି, ଆସନ୍ତା ଜନ୍ମ ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଷମୟ ହୋଇଯିବ । ବୁଝିଲ ଖୁଡ଼ି’ ।

ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ହେଲୁ । ‘ମୁଁ ମରିଯାଏ’ ‘ତୁ ମରି ଯା’ କହିବୁ ନାହିଁ.... ଏବଂ ଆଜିର ଏ ପ୍ରବଚନ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କିଛି ଫରକ ନଥିଲା । ଯା ଭିତରେ ଅନେକ କଥା ସେ କହିଛି । ଗୁରୁଜନ - ଗଲା ଆଇଲାଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ନାନା ପକାର ତାରିଦା ଶୁଣିଛି । ବହୁତ ଶାସନ ଆମେ କରିଛୁ ତାକୁ । ପରଘରି ହେବାପରେ ଅନେକ କିଛି ସହିବାକୁ ହେଲା ମଧ୍ୟ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି ଏକଥା ତାର ଏକ ପରମ ଶିକ୍ଷା ପରି ମନେହେଲା ଆମକୁ । ପରିବାରର ସମସ୍ତେ ନୀରବ ରେ ବସିଥିଲେ । ବିଜୁଳି ବତୀ ଜଳାଇ ନଥିଲୁ କେହି । ବାହାର ପର୍ବତରେ ଅକ୍ଷର ମେଞ୍ଚା ମେଞ୍ଚା । ସହରର ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା କୋଳାହଳ ବହୁଥାଏ । ନାତୁଣୀ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବତୀ ଜଳାଇ ଦେଇଛି । ରୁଖା ଉପରେ ବଡ଼ ଘିଅ ଦୀପଟିଏ ମଧ୍ୟ ପୂର୍ବଜ ମାନଙ୍କ ତୈଳ ଚିତ୍ର ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ପାଖରେ ଜାଳିଛି । ଏବଂ ମୋ ଝିଅର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ନିବନ୍ଧ ରହିଛି ସେଇଠି - ତାର ବାପା, କକେଇ ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟ ପୂର୍ବଜଙ୍କର ତୈଳଚିତ୍ର ଉପରେ ।

Kalpanamayee Dash is a regular contributor of the OSA Journal. She lives with husband Sita Kantha Dash in Edina, MN



ମା କଟକ ଚଣ୍ଡି

ବାରବାଟୀ ଦୁର୍ଗ

Cuttack - a city of thousand years old flanked between river Mahanadi and Kathajodi. This is one of Orissa's oldest cities and was the state capital till 1950, before being shifted to Bhubaneswar, the present capital is only 35 km towards south. Cuttack is popularly known for its traditional values and rich cultural heritage. Also famous for Silk and cotton textiles, horn and brasswares. The exquisite, delicate silver filigree work and casting of metal sculptures of Cuttack are world famous. The sights to see here include the ruins of a 14th century Barabati Fort. Kadam Rasool, located in the centre of the city, is a sacred 18th century shrine that is revered by both Hindus and Muslims. It contains the footprint of the Prophet Mohammed. There is an 11th century stone Revetment on the Kathajuri River, which protects the city from seasonal floods. It's a remarkable example of ancient technological skill of Orissa.

ଅସ୍ତରାଗ

ସୌଦାମିନୀ ମହାରଣା



ରତୁରାଜ ବସନ୍ତ ଆସୁଛି । ଫୁଲେଇ ଧରଣୀ ରାଣୀ ସଜ ହେଉଥିଲା ଠିକ୍ କିଶୋରୀଟିଏ ଆଦ୍ୟ ଯୌବନରେ ପାଦ ଦେଲାପରି । ଆମ୍ବଗଛର ତାଳେ ତାଳେ କଅଁଳ କିଶଳୟ, କୋଇଲିର କୁହୁକୁହୁ ସ୍ଵନ । ସବୁଜିମା ଭରା ଚଉଦିଗ ଆନମନା କରୁଥିଲା ଯଶୋଧାରାକୁ । ବାଡ଼ିର ସେଇ ପୁରୁଣା ଆମ୍ବଗଛ ଅଛି । ଅଛି ତା ସାମନାରେ ସେଇ ବିରାଟ ପୋଖରୀ । ଆମ୍ବଗଛର ଚରିତ୍ରର ପକ୍ଵା ଚନ୍ଦିନି ଆଡ଼େ ଚାହିଁଲେ ସେ । ଧୂଳିଧୂସରିତ ଚଉତରା । ଠିକ୍ ତାଙ୍କପରି ବିଗତା ଯୌବନୀ । ଆଗପରି ଆଉ ବଉଳରେ ଭରି ଯାଏନି ଏ ସହକାର । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ତାଙ୍କପ୍ରତି ସେ ସହାନୁଭୂତି ଜଣାଏ ନିଜକୁ ଶ୍ରୀହୀନା କରି । ପଂଡ଼କରି ଉଡ଼ିଗଲା କୋଇଲିଟା । ଚମକି ପଡ଼ିଲେ ଯଶୋଧାରା । ଧୀର ସମୀରଣରେ ପୁଲକିତ ହେଲା ତାଙ୍କ ଦେହ । ମନେ ହେଲା ସତେ ଯେମିତି ଦେବ୍ ତାଙ୍କ କାନ୍ଧ ଉପରେ ହାତ ରଖୁଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ କାନ ପାଖରେ କହୁଛନ୍ତି, ‘ଯଶୋ’ ତମେ କଣ ଆଜି ଯାଏ ମୋ ଉପରେ ରାଗିଛ ? ବୁଲ ପଡ଼ିଲେ ସେ । କାହାନ୍ତି ? କାହାନ୍ତି ଦେବ୍ ?

ଆଖୁରୁ ଝରିଲା ଅମାନିଆ ଲୁହ ତୁହାକୁ ତୁହା । ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଥିଲା ଦେବଙ୍କ କଥା । ଏଇ ସହକାର ତଳେ ନିଜ ହାତରେ ଗଡ଼େଇ ଥିଲେ ଚଉତରା । ବସୁଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ସହ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଘଣ୍ଟା । ଘରେ ପିଲାମାନେ ନିଦରୁ ଉଠିବେଣି କହି ଉଠିଗଲା ବେଳେ ପଛରୁ ଭିଡ଼ିଧରୁଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କୁ । କହୁଥିଲେ, “ଘରେ ପରା ମାଆ ଅଛନ୍ତି ? ବସନା, ଆଉଟିକେ । ରସିକତା କରି କୁହନ୍ତି, “ଯଶୋ ! ଦେଖୁଛି, ଆଜିକାଲି ତୁମେ ଆଉ ମୋତେ ବେଶୀ ଭଲ ପାଉନ । ସବୁବେଳେ ଖାଲି ବାପୁନ୍ ଆଉ ଈଶା । ହେଲେ ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ଭଲ ପାଇବାରେ ଚିକିଏ ବି ଉଣା କରିଛି ? ତମର ଏ ଗୋରା ତକ୍ତକ୍ ପାନପତ୍ର ପରି ମୁହଁ, ଲମ୍ବା ନାକ, ଟଣାଟଣା ଆଖି, ତୁମର ଏ କଳା ମର୍କଟ ଲମ୍ବା ବାଳ, ଆଉ ତୁମର ମଥାର ଏ ଲାଲ୍ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ଗୋପା ମତେ ତ ପାଗଳ କରୁଛି । ସତରେ ଯଶୋ, ମୁଁ ଭାରୀ ଭାଗ୍ୟବାନ୍ ।”

ଉପରେ କୃତମ ରାଗ ଦେଖାଇଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମନେ ମନେ ଖୁସି ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଯଶୋଧାରା । ଏମିତି କଟିଗଲା ପନ୍ଦର ବର୍ଷ ଦେବଙ୍କ ସହ । କାଲି ପରି ତ ଲାଗୁଛି । ଯେଉଁଦିନ ପ୍ରଥମକରି ଦେବବ୍ରତ ତାଙ୍କ ବଡ଼ଭାଇଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ଗୋରା ତକ୍ତକ୍ ଚେହେରା । ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଗୋଛାଏ କଳା ମୁରମୁର ବାଳ, ଲମ୍ବା ନାକ । ଚେହେରାରେ ଫୁଟି ଉଠୁଛି ଏକ ଉଜ୍ଜଳ ବିସ୍ତାମୟ କାନ୍ତି ।

“କିଏ ଇଏ” ? ପଚାରିଲେ ବାପା ।

“ମୋର ବଂଧୁ ଦେବବ୍ରତ । ଆମେ ଏକା କମ୍ପାନୀରେ କାମ କରୁ । ତାଙ୍କ ଘର ଓଡ଼ିଶା । ସେତେ ବେଳକୁ ମାଆ ମୋର ଗୋଟିଏ ଆଳିଆରେ ଦୁଇଟି ମିଠା ଓ ଗ୍ଲୁସ୍ଟିଏ ପାଣି ଆଣି ରଖିଦେଲେଣି । ମାଆ ମୋର ଅସମ୍ଭବ ସ୍ନେହୀ । ପ୍ରଶ୍ନକଲେ, “ତୁମେ ଆମ ଖୋକାର ବଂଧୁ ? ବସ ବାପା, ବସ । ତୁମର ନାଆଁ କ’ଣ ? ତୁମେ ଏଠି କୋଉଠି ରହୁଛ ? ଇତ୍ୟାଦି

ଘାପର ଠାରୁ ଦେବବ୍ରତ ଆଉ ଆମଘରେ ଅତିହ୍ନା ହୋଇ ରହିଲେ ନାହିଁ । ପ୍ରାୟ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ସେ ଭାଇଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଅସୁଥିଲେ । ମାଆ ଜୋରକରି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅଟକାଇ ରଖି ରାନ୍ଧିବାତି ଖୁଆଇ ପିଆଇ ଛାଡ଼ୁଥିଲେ । ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବଡ଼ ଭାଇଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗ ହିସାବରେ ଭାଇପରି ସମ୍ମାନ କରୁଥିଲି । ଦେବ୍ ଥିଲେ ଖୁବ୍ ମାର୍ଜିତ, ସରଳ ଓ ସ୍ଵଭାଷୀ । ମୁଁ କୃତ୍ ତାଙ୍କୁ ହସିବାର ଦେଖୁଛି । ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ଦେବଙ୍କ ଆଚରଣ ବ୍ୟବହାର ମାଆଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗିବାରେ ଲାଗିଲା । ତେଣୁ ତାଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ଅଦ୍ଭୁତ ଖିଆଲ୍ ଜୁଟିଲା ।

ଖରାଦିନ, ଦ୍ଵିପହର । ମୋର ମାତୃକ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ସରିଥାଏ । ମୁଁ ତକିଆ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଚଟାଣରେ ପକେଇ ତଳେ ମୁହଁ ମାଡ଼ି ପଡ଼ିଥାଏ । ଗରମରେ ଆଖୁକୁ ନିଦ ଆସୁ ନ ଥାଏ । ବାପା ଖଟ ଉପରେ ଶୋଇଥାନ୍ତି । ମାଆ ବସି ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ପଞ୍ଜା କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ହଠାତ୍ ମାଆ କହିଲେ, “ହେଇଟି ଶୁଣୁଛ ? ଶୋଇଗଲକି ?” ଛୋଟ ହୁଁଟିଏ ମାରି ବାପା କହିଲେ, “ନାହିଁ କଣ କହୁଛ ? କୁହ, ମୁଁ ଶୁଣୁଛି ।”

ଆଉଥରେ ମାଆ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେ, “ଏଇ ଯେଉଁ ଦେବବ୍ରତ ? ପିଲାଟି ମ ? ଯିଏ ଆମ ଖୋକା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଆସୁନି ? ତୁମକୁ କେମିତି ଲାଗୁଛି ?

ନିଜ ମଳମଳ ଆଖିରେ ବାପା ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ, “ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଛି ତ, କାହିଁ କଣ ହେଲା ?” କାହିଁ ? ତା ସମ୍ଭବରେ ଖୋକା କଣ କିଛି କହୁଥିଲକି ?”

“ନାଜମ୍, ମୁଁ କ’ଣ କହୁଥିଲିକି ? ଆମ ଧାରାକୁ ତ ପନ୍ଦର ବର୍ଷ ପୁରିଗଲା । ତା ସହିତ ଯଦି ଆମ ଧାରାକୁ ବାହାକରନ୍ତେ ?” ଏଥରକ ବାପା ବିଛଣାରୁ ଉଠି ବସିଲେ । କହିଲେ ଆରେ ! ଆମେ ତ ସହଜେ କଲିକତି ବଙ୍ଗାଳୀ ଲୋକ । ସେତ ଜାତିରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ । ସେ କଣ ଆମ ଧାରାକୁ ବିବାହ କରିବାକୁ ରାଜି ହେବ ?” ତାଛଡା ତା ଘରେ ତା ବାପା ମାଆ ଥିବେ । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ସେମାନେ ଯଦି ରାଜି ହୁଅନ୍ତି, ମୋର ଏ ବାହାଘରରେ କୌଣସି ଆପତ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ତଥାପି ଖୋକାକୁ କୁହ ସେ ପିଲାଟି ମତାମତ ନେଉ । ତା ଛଡା ପିଲାଟି ଯେତେବେଳେ ଆମ ଜାତିର ନୁହେଁ, ତୁମ ଝିଅର ବି’ତ ମତାମତ ନେବ ?”

ମାଆ କହିଲେ, “ତାକୁ କଣ ପଚାରିବି ? ସେ କଣ ତା ନିଜ ବାହାଘର ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧରେ କିଛି ମୁହଁ ଖୋଲି କହିବ ? ତା ଛଡା ମୁଁ ଯେତେ ବେଳେ ପସନ୍ଦ କରିଛି ସେ କ’ଣ ଆଉ ମୋ କଥାରୁ ବାହାରି ଯିବ ?”

ସେଇ ସମୟରେ ଝିଅମାନେ ବାସ୍ତବିକ ଲଜ୍ଜାଶୀଳା ଥିଲେ । ଏବଂ ବାପାମାଆ ଯାହା କରୁଥିଲେ ସେଥିରେ ଝିଅଟିଏ ନୀରବ ସମ୍ମତି ଜଣାଇବା ଥିଲା ପରିବାରର ସଂସ୍କାରର ପରିଚୟ । ଝିଅଟିଏ ବାପା ଭାଇଙ୍କ ସାମନାରେ କଥା କହୁ ନଥିଲା । ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା ସମ୍ପନ୍ନ ଘର ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଅନ୍ତତଃ ମାଆ, ଜେଜେମା ମାନେ ଝିଅଟିଏ କିଭଳି ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ ଭଲ ଆଦର୍ଶ ବୋହୂଟିଏ ହୋଇ ଦୁଇ କୁଲର ହିତ ସାଧନ କରିବ ସେଭଳି ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ଏବଂ ମୋର ମାଆଙ୍କର ମୋ ଉପରେ ଗଭୀର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଥିଲା ଯେ ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ଏକ ଆଦର୍ଶ ବୋହୂ, ପତ୍ନୀ ଓ ମାଆ ହୋଇ ପାରିବାର ଯୋଗ୍ୟତା ହାସଲ କରିଛି । ତେଣୁ ପିଲାଦିନୁ ସେ ମୋତେ ସେହି ଭଳି ଗଢି ତୋଳିଥିଲେ ।

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ସେଦିନ ଭାଇ ଦେବବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଯାହା କହିଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟଚକିତ ହେଲେ । ଦେବବ୍ରତ ବିବାହିତ । ତାଙ୍କର ଝିଅଟିଏ ବି ଅଛି । ଝିଅଟିକୁ ଜନ୍ମ ଦେଇ ମାଆ ତା’ର ପରଲୋକ ଗତା ହେଲେ । ମାଆ ମୋର ଏକଥା ଶୁଣି ଖୁବ୍ ମନଦୁଃଖ କଲେ । କିଛିଦିନ ଚାଲିଗଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋର ମାଆଙ୍କର ଦେବବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଅନାବିଳ ସ୍ନେହ ତାଙ୍କୁ ପୁଣି ମାୟାସକ୍ତ କଲା । ସେ ଦିନେ ବସି ମୋତେ କୁଣ୍ଡାଇଲେ । ଦେଖ ଧାରା, “ଦେବବ୍ରତର ବୟସ ମାତ୍ର ଚବିଶି ବର୍ଷ । ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଯେମିତି ସୁନ୍ଦର ସେମିତି ସୁଶୀଳ ଓ ଭଦ୍ର । ଭଲ ଦରମାବି ପାଉଛି । ଯଦିଓ ସେ ବିବାହ କରିଥିଲା ତାର ପତ୍ନୀତ ଆଉ ନାହିଁ ? ଝିଅଟିଏ ତାର ଜେଜେମା ପାଖରେ ବଢୁଛି । ସେ ବଡ଼ ହେଲେ ତାର ବିବାହ ସରିଗଲେ କାମ ଶେଷ । କେଜାଣି କାହିଁକି ପିଲାଟିକୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ମୋତେ ମାୟା ଲାଗୁଛି । ଭଗବାନ୍ ତୋରି ପାଇଁ ତାକୁ ଗଢିଛନ୍ତି । ତୁଲ ରାଜି ହୋଇଯା । ଦେଖିବୁରେ ମାଆ ତୁ ଜୀବନରେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ସୁଖୀ ହେବୁ । ଏଇଟା ତୋର ମାଆର ହୃଦୟର କଥା ।”

ସେଦିନ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ରାତିରେ ମୁଁ ଲୁଚିଲୁଚି ଅନେକ ବେଳ ଯାଏ କାନ୍ଦିଥିଲି । ମାଆର ଜିଦ୍ ଆଗରେ ବାପା ଭାଇ ବି ନୀରବ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ମୋର ମାଆଙ୍କର ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିବାର ଶକ୍ତିଥିଲା ପ୍ରବଳ । ତାଙ୍କର ଭଲ ପାଇବା ଆଗରେ ଦେବବ୍ରତ ବି ହାର୍ ମାନିଲେ । ହଁ, ନାହିଁ ର ଦୃଢ଼ ଭିତରେ କିଛିଦିନ ଛଟପଟ୍ ହୋଇ ଶେଷରେ ସେ ରାଜି ହେଲେ । ତେବେ ଗୋଟିଏ ସର୍ତ୍ତରେ । ନିରାତମ୍ଭର ଭାବେ ମୋର ବିବାହ ଏକ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ସମାପନ ହେଲା । ଦେବଙ୍କର ପତ୍ନୀ ହୋଇ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ କ୍ୱାଚରକୁ ଗଲି ।

ବିବାହର ଖୁବ୍ ଅଳ୍ପଦିନ ପରେ ମୁଁ ଅନୁଭବ କଲି ମୋ ମାଆ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ସଂସାରର ସର୍ବୋତ୍ତମ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ନିର୍ବାଚିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ଯେ ବିବାହିତ ଓ ଗୋଟିଏ କନ୍ୟାର ପିତା ଏକଥା ସେ କେବେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିବାକୁ ଦେଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଇଶ୍ୱର ମୋର ପଣତରେ ଏତେ ସୁଖ ଯେ ଭାଲି ଦେବେ ମୁଁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରି ନ ଥିଲି । ଜଣେ ପତ୍ନୀ ତାର ପତି ଠାରୁ ଯେତେ ସୁଖ ଚାହେଁ ସେ ତାହା ଦେବାରେ କେବେ କାର୍ପଣ୍ୟ କରି ନାହାନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରେମ କଣ ତାଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଶିଖିଲି । ନୈସର୍ଗିକ ପ୍ରେମ, ଯାହା ଆତ୍ମାରୁ ଆତ୍ମାକୁ ସଂକ୍ରମିତ ହୁଏ । ସେ କୁହନ୍ତି, “ଯଶୋ, ମୁଁ ଯଦି କୌଣସି କାରଣରୁ କଦାକାର ହୋଇଯାଏ, ରୋଗାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଯାଏ, ତୁମେ ମୋତେ ଭଲପାଇ ପାରିବ ତ ? ମୋର ଏ ଶରୀରକୁ ବାଦ୍ ଦେଇ କରିପାରିବ ମୋତେ ପ୍ରେମ ?” ମୁଁ ମୋର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ବୁଝି ଦେଇ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରେ ।

ସେ ପୁଣି କୁହନ୍ତି, “ପତି ପତ୍ନୀର ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧ, ଏକ ଆତ୍ମାର ଆଉ ଏକ ଆତ୍ମା ସହ ଘନିଷ୍ଟତା । ଦୁହେଁ ପରସ୍ପର ପାଇଁ ଲୋଡ଼ା । ପୁଣି କୁହନ୍ତି ଦର୍ଶନର କଥା । କହିଲ ଯଶୋ, “ମନୁଷ୍ୟ କାହିଁକି ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇଛି ? ତାର ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ରହସ୍ୟ କ’ଣ ଜାଣ ? ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ସୃଷ୍ଟିକୁ ସୁନ୍ଦର କରିବା । ତୁମେ ଜାଣ, ଏଇ ଆତ୍ମଗତ୍ତ, ପକ୍ଷୀ, ଫୁଲ, ଫଳ, ମାଛ, ସବୁଠାରେ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କର ସତ୍ତା ବିଦ୍ୟମାନ । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ପାଇ ଶିଖ । ତୁମର ପୃଥିବୀକୁ ପରିବ୍ୟାପ୍ତ କର । ତୁମର ବାପାମାଆ, ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଓ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ନିଜକୁ ସାମାବଦ୍ଧ କରିଦିଅ ନାହିଁ । ଯାହା ସହିତ ତୁମର ରକ୍ତର ସଂସ୍ପର୍ଶ ନାହିଁ, ତାହା ସହିତ ମଧ୍ୟ ତୁମର ଏକ ଆତ୍ମିକ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଅଛି । ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ପରମେଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କର ସନ୍ତାନ, ଭୁଲି ଯାଅ ନାହିଁ । ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କର ମୁହଁକୁ ବୋକାଳ ପରି ଚାହେଁ । ଭାବେ, ଏଇ କ’ଣ ମୋର ସ୍ୱାମୀ, ଯିଏ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ମୋର ରୂପ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରନ୍ତି ? ଇଏ କଣ ମୋ ରୂପରେ ଇଶ୍ୱର ଦର୍ଶନ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ?” ମୋତେ ହଲେଇ ଦେଇ ଦେବ୍ କୁହନ୍ତି, “ଏଇ ! କଣ ଏମିତି ଚାହେଁ ? ହଉ ଗଲ, ଟିକେ ଚା ଆଣିବ ?”

ଯଶୋଧାରା ଆଖୁରୁ ଲୁହ ପୋଛିଲେ । ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଟାଇଥିବା ଦିର୍ଘ କୋଡ଼ିଏ ବର୍ଷର କଥା ସବୁ ଆଜି ଏଇ ଉତ୍ତର ବୟସରେ ମନେ ପଡୁଛି । କାହିଁ କେଉଁଦିନ ତ ଉଣା କରି ନ ଥିଲେ ସେ ତାଙ୍କର ପତ୍ନୀ ପଣିଆରେ ? ମାଆ ହିସାବରେ କେଉଁ ଦିନ ଅବହେଳା କରିନାହାନ୍ତି ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ । ତେବେ କେଉଁ ଦୁଃଖରେ ସେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଚାଲିଗଲେ ? ଯଦି ଜନ୍ମମାଟିର ଏତେ ମୋହଥିଲା ତେବେ ସେ ମୋତେ ବିବାହ କରୁଥିଲେ କାହିଁକି ? ସ୍ଵାମୀ ଭାବେ ସବୁକାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ତ ସେ କଲେ । ମୋତେ ମା ହେବାର ଗୌରବ ପ୍ରଦାନ କଲେ । କଠିନ କରିଶ୍ରମ କରି ଧନ ସମ୍ପତ୍ତି କଲେ । କାହିଁ ତାଙ୍କର କ’ଣ ଅଭାବ ବୋଧ ଥିଲା, ସେ କଥାତ ସେ କାହିଁ ଅନୁଭବ କରିନାହାନ୍ତି ? ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାଟିରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିଥିବା ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅର ବିବାହ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପନ୍ନ କରିବାକୁ ଯିବେ ବୋଲି କହୁଥିଲେ । ମୁଁ ଅଭିମାନରେ କହିଲି ତୁମେ ଯଦି ମୋତେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଚାଲି ଯାଅ, ତେବେ ସତ କହୁଛି ତୁମ ସହ ଆଉ କେବେ କଥା ହେବି ନାହିଁ ।”

ଦେବବ୍ରତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଫେରିଲେ । ନିଜର ଜନ୍ମମାଟିର ତାଙ୍କ ଅନେକ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ସେ ଶୁଣି ପାରିଛନ୍ତି । ନିଜ ମାଆଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିଥିବା ନିଜ କନ୍ୟା ପ୍ରତି କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ବୋଧ ପୁଣି ଗଣି ଆଣିଛି ତାଙ୍କୁ ମାଆ କୋଳକୁ । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ସେ କଲିକତାରେ ଥିବା ସମୟରେ ଠିକ୍ ଭାବେ ପଇସା ପଠେଇଛନ୍ତି ମାଆ ଓ ଝିଅ ପାଇଁ । ହେଲେ ଏତିକିରେ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସରେନାହିଁ । ଝିଅ ବାହାଘର ପରେ ବୁଢ଼ି ମାକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆଉ ଯାଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି ଦେବବ୍ରତ ଏକାକରି । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଯଶୋଧାରା ଓ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ବର୍ଷକୁ ତିନି ଝରିଥର ଯାଆନ୍ତି ଦେବବ୍ରତ କଲିକତା । ରୁହନ୍ତି ଝରି ପାଞ୍ଚଦିନ ଲେଖା ପିଲାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଯଶୋଧାରା ନିଜ ଜିଦରେ ଅଟଳ । ଦେବ୍ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଗଲାଦିନୁ ଯେତେବାର ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ସହ ଆଉ ପଦୁଡ଼ିଏ ବି କଥା କହି ନାହାନ୍ତି । ନୀରବରେ ଖାଇବା ଥାଳି ଥୋଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଜଛଣା କରି ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ପଞ୍ଜା କରନ୍ତି । ଦେବ୍ କିଛି କହିଲେ ନୀରବରେ ଆଖୁରୁ ଲୁହ ଝରାନ୍ତି ସିନା ହେଲେ କଥା କୁହନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । କେତେ ବୁଝେଇଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କର ମାଆ, ଜ୍ଞାନିଙ୍କ ସହ କଥା ହେବାକୁ । ବୁଝେଇଛନ୍ତି ପିଲାମାନେ ହେଲେ, ବୁଝି ନାହାନ୍ତି ଯଶୋଧାରା । ଅଭିମାନ ତାଙ୍କର ଆକାଶସ୍ଵର୍ଗୀ । ତାଙ୍କର ଅହଙ୍କାର ପାଖରେ ତୁଚ୍ଛ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଛି ତାଙ୍କର ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଥିବା ସ୍ନେହ, ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ଓ ଭଲ ପାଇବା ।

ଆଜି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଆସିଛି ଚିଠିଟିଏ । ଦେବବ୍ରତ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ । ଦେବବ୍ରତଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ଲେଖୁଛି ।

“ମାଆ, ତମେ ଶିଘ୍ର ଆସିବ । ବାପା ବଡ଼ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ । ତାଙ୍କର କଲିକତା ଯିବା ଅବସ୍ଥା ନାହିଁ । ସେ ତୁମକୁ ଖୋଜୁଛନ୍ତି । ମାଆ ତୁମେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଆସିବ ।”

ଲୁହଭରା ଆଖୁରେ ଯଶୋଧାରା ଚିଠି ଭିତରେ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି ଦେବବ୍ରତଙ୍କର ମୁହଁ । କେତେ କାକୁଡ଼ି ମିନତୀ ସେ ଆଖୁର ଝହାଣୀରେ । ଏଇ ଶେଷଥର ଯିବା ବେଳେ ସେ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି ଦେବ୍‌ଙ୍କର ସେ ଲୁହ ଡବଡବ ଆଖୁ । ସେ ଆଖୁରେ ଥିଲା ଅନେକ ଅକୁହା କଥା ଯଶୋ, ତୁମର ଏ ଅଯୋଗ୍ୟ ସ୍ଵାମୀକୁ ତୁମେ କଣ ଆଜିଯାଏ କ୍ଷମା କରିନାହିଁ ? ମୁଁ ଚାଲିଗଲି ବୋଲି, କ’ଣ ନିଃଶେଷ କରି ଦେଲ ତୁମର ସେ ଭଲ ପାଇବାର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କଳସି ? ଦୀର୍ଘଦିନର ଘରକରଣା ଭିତରେ କଣ ବୁଝି ପାରିଲ ନାହିଁ ତୁମର ଦେବଙ୍କୁ ?

ଯଶୋଧାରା ଚିଠିଟି ପାଇବା ପରଠାରୁ ଅସ୍ଥିରା । ହୃଦୟରେ କେଉଁ ନିଭୃତ କୋଣରେ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଛି ଭୁକମ୍ପିଟିଏ । ମନପକ୍ଷୀ ବାରବାର ଉଡ଼ିଯାଉଛି ଦେବ୍‌ଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ । କେମିତି ଥିବେ ସିଏ ? କିଏ କରୁଥିବ ତାଙ୍କର ସେବାଯତ୍ନ ? ସତରେ କଣ ଦେବ୍ ଖୁବ୍ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ? ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଗତଥର ସେ ଆସିବା ବେଳେ ଖୁବ୍ ଦୁର୍ବଳ ଦିଶୁଥିଲେ । କଥା ନକହିବାର ଅଟଳ ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞା ପ୍ରତିବନ୍ଧକ ହୋଇ ଠିଆହେଲା । ପଝରି ପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କୁ ପଦୁଡ଼ିଏ । ଏକ ମାନସିକ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଦ୍ଧାତ୍ମ ଛର୍ପର୍ପ କରୁଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କୁ । ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରୁଥିଲେ ସେ ନିଜର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାବଳୀକୁ । ଯେତେ ବେଶୀ ବେଶୀ ଭାରୁଥିଲେ, ସେତେ ପଶ୍ଚାତାପର ଅଗ୍ରୀରେ ଦଗ୍ଧ ହେଉଥିଲେ ସେ । ନିଜ ଅଜାଣତରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖୁରୁ ଝରୁଥିଲା ଅମାନିଆ ଲୁହ । ଖୁବ୍ ଅନ୍ୟାୟ କରିଛନ୍ତି ସେ ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଥା ନକହି । ଅବମାନନା କରିଛନ୍ତି ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କ ଭଲ ପାଇବାକୁ । ଦେବ୍ ସବୁବେଳେ କୁହନ୍ତି, ପ୍ରେମ କ’ଣ ଜାଣ ଯଶୋ ? ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାଶାବିହିନ ପ୍ରେମ ହିଁ କେବଳ ପ୍ରେମ । ତାହାହିଁ ତ କରି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ଦେବ୍ । ନିଜର ପତ୍ନୀ ଓ ସନ୍ତାନ ମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସଂପାଦନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । କେବେ କିଛି ଆଶା କରି ନାହାନ୍ତି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ପ୍ରତିଦାନରେ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିଥିବା ତାଙ୍କ କନ୍ୟାର ବିବାହ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଶେଷ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ଯଦି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଗଲେ, ଏଥିରେ ବା ଅସଜାତି ରହିଲା କେଉଁଠି ? ଏବେ ଏକ ସାମାଜିକ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନର ପରିଚାଳନାର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ନେଇଛନ୍ତି ସେ । ଏ ସବୁ ସତ୍ତ୍ଵେ ଆତ୍ମମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଆସିବାକୁ ତ ସେ କେବେ ଭୁଲିନାହାନ୍ତି । ଜଣେ ସ୍ଵାମୀ ଓ ପିତା ହିସାବରେ ନିଜର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସଂପାଦନରେ ତିଳେମାତ୍ର ତୁଟି କରି ନାହାନ୍ତି ।

ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କର କୌଣସି ଦୋଷ ଦେଖି ପାରୁ ନଥିଲେ ଆଜି ଯଶୋଧାରା । ସେ ଭାରୁଥିଲେ ଦେବ୍‌ଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରେମ କଣ ବାସ୍ତବରେ ନିସ୍ଵାର୍ଥପର ପ୍ରେମ ? ନାଁ, ତା ହୋଇଥିଲେ ସେ କାହିଁକି ରୁଦ୍ଧ ଅଭିମାନରେ ଆଜିଯାଏ ରହି ଆସିଲେ ? ସେ ହୁଏତ ବାନ୍ଧି ରଖିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କୁ ଚିରକାଳ ତାଙ୍କର ପଣତରେ । ଏକ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ଵର ଜଗତରେ ବାସ କରୁଥିବା ତାଙ୍କର ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କୁ ସେ କେତେ କମ୍ ଚିହ୍ନିଥିଲେ ସତରେ ? ସେ ବାସ୍ତବିକ ତାଙ୍କର ପତ୍ନୀ ହେବା ପାଇଁ ଅଯୋଗ୍ୟ । ତାଙ୍କର ମିଥ୍ୟାଭିମାନର ଅନ୍ଧକାର ପଶ୍ଚାତାପର ଆଲୋକରେ ଅପସରି

ଯାଉଥିଲା ଧିରେ ଧିରେ । ସେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ କଲେ, ସେ ଯିବେ ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ । ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କ ସହ ଅସହଯୋଗକରି ସେ ଯେଉଁ ଅନ୍ୟାୟ କରିଛନ୍ତି ତାର ପ୍ରାୟଶ୍ଚିତ ସେ କରିବେ । ଧରିବେ ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କର ପାଦ, ଅନୁନୟ କରି କହିବେ ତାଙ୍କୁ କ୍ଷମା କରି ଦେବା ପାଇଁ । ସତରେ କଣ କ୍ଷମା କରିବେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେବ୍ ? କେତେ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ସେ ? ତାଙ୍କୁ କ୍ଷମା ମାଗିବାର ଅବସର ପାଇବେ ତ ଯଶୋଧାରା ? ଏକ ଅଜଣା ଭୟରେ ଆତଙ୍କିତ ହୋଇ ଉଠୁଥିଲେ ସେ ।

ବଡ଼ ପାଟିରେ ଡାକିଲେ ପୁଅ ବାପୁନର ନାଆଁଧରି । ପୁଅ ଆସି ଠିଆ ହେଲା । ଯଶୋଧାରା କହିଲେ କାଲି ସକାଳ ଟ୍ରେନରେ କଟକ ଯିବାର ଦୁଇଟା ଟିକେଟ୍ କାଟିଆଣ । ତୋର ବାବାଙ୍କ ଦେହ ଖୁବ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ । ଆମେ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଯିବା ।

ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟଚକିତ ହୋଇ ବାପୁନ୍ ଚାହିଁଥିଲା ମାଆଙ୍କୁ । ମାଆଙ୍କର ସେଇ ମୁହଁକୁ, ଯେଉଁଠି ନଥିଲା ମିଥ୍ୟା ଅଭିମାନର ସେଇ ଘନ କାଳିମା । ମାଆଙ୍କର ସେଇ କାନ୍ଦୁର । ଆଖିରୁ ବାପୁନ୍ ଦେଖୁଥିଲା ଛରି ପଡୁଛି ତା ପିତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଅନାବିଳ ପ୍ରେମର ଅମୃତଧାରା ।

ପ୍ରାଧ୍ୟାପିକା ଧର୍ମଶାଳା ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ

ନୂଆବଜାର, ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ ପଛ,

ପୋ : ନୂଆବଜାର, କଟକ-୪, ଓଢ଼ିଶା, ଭାରତ



Sri Nitai and Gouranga being worshipped in the temple at Mangalpur

History of Mangalpur, Soro in Balasore District.....

History reveals that about 500 hundred years ago while on the way from Remuna(Khira Chora Gopinath temple near Balasore) to Puri,Lord Sri Chaitanya stayed in Mangalpur a princely state for a short while and accepted the courtesy of the king. History also depicts that in reciprocation to kings devotion for him, Sri chaitanya presented the king his wooden sandal which was later on shifted to Vrindaban by an unknown saint (Mahanta).

The princely state Mangalpur was a part of independent Kalinga Dynasty and considered as one of the most powerful military base situated at the eastern region. The glimpses of such activities are observed from the very existing Ghoodasal river(Stable for horses), Hathikhan (Drinking place for elephants).The activities of the state as warrior nation is revealed from its geographic location strategically encompassed with high altitude Devagiri Mountain range in three sides like a fort. Besides their military activities ,these Samanta kings were highly influenced by the Gajapati of Puri towards their selfless devotion for the God.



The Hirakud Dam Project is the first major multipurpose river valley project in India,after India was liberated from the British rule in 1947. Constructed across the river Mahanadi at about 15 Kms. upstream of Sambalpur town in Orissa the main dam, the Hirakud is 6 Kms from NH(National Highway) 6 and 8 kms from the Hirakud railway station. It is 61 metres in height and 4801 metres in length with 21 kms of dykes. It is the longest earthen dam in the world with the biggest artificial lake in Asia.The initial concrete foundation for the project was laid by the first prime minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 12th April, 1948.The project was officially inaugurated by him on 13th January, 1957.

ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍

ନିନ୍ଦା ବେହେରା



ଜୀବନରେ ଏଇ ଦିନଟିର ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଅନେକ ଦିନ ପରେ ଜାଣିଲି । ନିଜର ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ କେବେ ହେଲା, କେମିତି ହେଲା, ସବୁ ଅପାସୋରା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏଠି ଯେତେବେଳେ ଯେଉଁ ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଯାଏଁ ମନେ ମନେ ମୋ ପୁଅ ଅର୍ଜୁନ ବଡ଼ ହେଲେ କେମିତି କରିବ ସେଇ ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଥାଏ । ଅର୍ଜୁନ ପଛେ ଅଳିଆରୁ ପତି ଗଢା ନ ହେଉ, ମନେ ମନେ ତା ମୁହଁଟି ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ଗୋପି ଭିତରେ କେତେ ଆଙ୍କିଛି । ଆମେରିକା ଆସି ମୋ ଭଳିଆ ଅମଣିଆ ବଳଦ ବେକରେ ହଳ ଲଗେଇ ଭୁଲ୍ ଚଷି ଚଷି ଦିନ ରାତି ଖଟି ଖାଲି ଗୋଟିଏ ଚିନ୍ତା, ଆହା ପୁଅଟା ମୋର କେମିତି ମଣିଷ ହେଇଯାଉ । ନ ହେଲେ ଏ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମହଲରେ ମୁଁହ ଦେଖେଇ ଚାଲି ହେବନି । ଭାବିଥିଲି ଯଦି ପୁଅଟିକୁ ମଣିଷ କରିବାରେ ହାରିଯାଏ ତାହେଲେ ମୋର ମୁସଲିମ୍ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଠାରୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ବୁଝା ମାଗି ମୁଁହଟି ଘୋଡେଇ ଦିନ କାଟିବି । କେତେଥର ପୁଅକୁ ଦେଖେଇ ଦେଖେଇ କହିଛି ବାବୁରେ ଭଲ କଲେଜରେ ନ ପାଇଲେ ମୋ ଜୀବନ ବୃଥା । ପୁଅଟି କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋର ଶ୍ରବଣ କୁମାର, ମା ପାଇଁ ପାଣ ଦେଇଦେବ, ତେଣୁ ଭାବିଥିଲି ଅର୍ଜୁନର ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ଏମିତି ଜାକ ଜମକରେ କରିବି ଯେ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମହଲ ଖାଲି ହାଁ କରି ଚାହୁଁ ରହିଥିବେ । କେତେଶିଘ୍ର ସେଇଦିନ ଆସିଗଲା, ଭାବିଲେ ଅବାକ୍ ଲାଗେ । ପୁଅ ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ପାଟିରେ ମୁଁ କଣ ବେଶ ହେବି, ସେଇ ଚିନ୍ତାରେ କେତେ ରାତି ବିତିଛି । ମନେ ମନେ ମୋର ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ଯେମିତି ହୋଇଗଲା, ଏ ଜୀବନରେ ସେମିତି ମନେ ହେଲା । ଭାଉଜଙ୍କୁ ଫେନ୍ଦ କରି ବରାଦ୍ ଦେଲି ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଗଢିଦେବେ ସେଇ ମୟୂର ପକ୍ଷୀ ପଥର ବସା ହାର । ପିଲାଦିନୁ ସେଇ ହାରଟି ଉପରେ ମୋ ଆଖି, ବୋଉ ତାକୁ କେତେ ଜତନରେ ସାଇତି ରଖିଥିଲା । ମନେଅଛି ଭାଇ ଭଗାରୀ ଘର, ବାପା ବହୁ କଷ୍ଟରେ ପଇସା ରଖି ରଖି ବିଜୟନଗରମ୍ ରୁ ସେଇ ପଥର ବସା ହାରଟି କରାଇ ବୋଉକୁ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ନୀଳ ନୀଳ ପଥରବସା ମୟୂରଟି ପକ୍ଷୀ ମେଲେଇ ଦେଇଛି । ବୋଉ ବିଚରା ଭୟରେ କେବେ ପିନ୍ଧି ପାରିନାହିଁ । ଦିନେ ଦିନେ ରାତିରେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣ ଆଲୁଅ ଭିତରେ ଦର୍ପଣ ଆଗରେ ପିନ୍ଧି ଦେଖେ । ତାପରେ ଓହ୍ଲେଇ ରଖିଦିଏ । କାଳେ କିଏ ପଦେ କହିଦେବ । ଗାଁ ଗାଉଁଲି କଥା, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ନଜର ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଉପରେ । ଶେଷରେ ବୋଉ ହାରଟିକୁ ଭାଉଜଙ୍କୁ ଦେଇଥିଲା ଘରର ବୋହୁ ବୋଲି । ଆମେ ଯେହେତୁ ଚାରି ଭଉଣୀ ମୋ ଭାଗରେ ଆଉ ପତିଲାନି । ମୋ ବାହାଘର ଦିନ ମୁଁ ମୁହଁଟାକୁ ହାଣ୍ଡି କରି ବସିଥିଲି, ପଥର ହାର ପାଇଲିନି ବୋଲି । ମୋ ସାନ ମାଉସୀ ଧୁନୀଦେଇ ଗାଁରୁ ଆସିଥାଏ । ମୁଁହ ମୋତି ଦେଇ କହିଲା ‘ଆଲୋ, ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶରେ ଗଛରେ ପଇସା ଫଟଳ ଶୁଣିଛି, ବସ୍ତାଏ ତୋଳି ପଠେଇ ଦେବୁ, କେତେ ହାର ହବ, ମୁଁହଟାକୁ ଅଧରହାଣ୍ଡି ପରି କରିଛୁ କଣ? ଶାଶୁଘର ଲୋକେ ଭାବିବେ ଆହା କେତେ ଅଭାବୀ ଘରୁ ଝିଅ ଆଣିଛୁ’ । ଏତେ ଦିନର ସମ୍ପ୍ର ମୋର ପୁରଣ ହେଲା । ଅର୍ଜୁନର ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ପାଟିରେ ମେଘ ରଙ୍ଗର ଶାଢ଼ୀ ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ପଥରବସା ମୟୂର ହାର ପିନ୍ଧି ଖାଲି ପୁଛ ଟେକି ଚାଲିବି ।

ଏତ ଗଲା ଆମ ଘର ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ କଥା, ତେଣେ ମୋ ଚାକିରୀ ରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ପାଟିର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ମତେ ଶେଷରେ ଦେଲେ । ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଲା ପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ **Elementary School** ରେ କାମ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥିଲି, ଗୋଟିଏ **autistic** ପିଲାଟିକୁ ନେଇ । ସୁନ୍ଦର କୁନୁନିଆ ଗୋରା ତକ୍ ତକ୍ ଗୁଲୁଗୁଲିଆ କୋରିଆନ୍ ପିଲାଟିଏ, ନାଁ ତାର ଜଞ୍ଜିନ୍ । **1st grade** ରୁ ତା ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ମୋ ଉପରେ । ଏ ବର୍ଷ **6th grade** ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ପାଟିରେ ତାକୁ **special award** ମିଳିବ । ବର୍ଷ ବର୍ଷ ଖଟି ଖଟି ତାକୁ କେତେ କେତେ ଅଙ୍କ ଶିଖେଇଛି । ଅଙ୍କ କଷିବାରେ ପ୍ରବୀଣ କିନ୍ତୁ ସାଧାରଣ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ବେଳେ ମୁଁହଟି ପୋତି ମନକୁ ମନ ଗପେ । କେତେବେଳେ ଖିଲିଖିଲି ହସର ଜୁଆର ତ କେତେବେଳେ କୋହୁଭରା ଆକୁଳ କ୍ରନ୍ଦନ । ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ଏ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଶିଶୁଟି ମତେ ଯେ କେତେ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଦେଇଛି ତାର ତୁଳନା ନାହିଁ । ବସି ବସି ଅତି ଯତନରେ ତାର ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ଗୋପି, ପୁଲର ହାର, କେତେ କଣ ମୁଁ ତିଆରି କରି ରଖିଛି । ମନେ ହେଉଛି ଜଞ୍ଜିନ୍ ଯେମିତି ମୋର ଅତି ନିଜର, ତାର ନିରୁହ ମୁହଁଟିକୁ ଚାହୁଁ କେତେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରିଛି ଠାକୁର ଜଞ୍ଜିନ୍ ଟି କାଲି ସକାଳେ ଏକ ସୁସ୍ଥ ସବଳ ତରୁଣ ହୋଇ ବାହାରି ଆସିବ ତାକୁ ଯେମିତି ଘଟ୍ଟ ଘୋଡେଇ ରଖ । ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ବେଶପଟା ହୋଇ କାମକୁ ଗଲି । ମୋର ଛାତ୍ର ଆଜି ମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରକୁ ଉଠିବ, ମୋ ହାତ ଧରି ଅନ୍ୟ ଶିଶୁ ମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ତାଳଦେଇ ଫଟ୍ ଉଠେଇବ, ଆଇସକ୍ରିମ୍ ଖାଇବ, ଏହାଠାରୁ ବଳି ବଡ଼ଦିନ - ଏମିତିକି ଅର୍ଜୁନର ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ପାଟି ସଂନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ମୁଁ ଏକରକମ ପାଶୋରି ଦେଇଛି । ସ୍କୁଲରେ ଜଞ୍ଜିନ୍ ମା ସହିତ ଦେଖାହେଲା । ହାତ ଧରିନେଇ ବସି ବୁଝାଇବାରେ ଲାଗିଲି । ତରବର ହୋଇ ଜଞ୍ଜିନ୍ ଗୋପି ହାର ସବୁ ଦେଖାଇ ଚାଲିଥାଏ, ଜଞ୍ଜିନ୍ କେତେ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟୀର ଚିତ୍ତ ଓ ଅଙ୍କ ଯେ କରି ପାରୁଛି ସେ କଥା ମୁଁ ଗର୍ବର ସହିତ କହି ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ସବୁ କାଗଜତକ ମୋ ହାତରୁ ନେଇ ତା ମା’ ଟି ଚାହୁଁ ରହିଥାଁ ଯେମିତି ପ୍ରଥମଥର ପାଇଁ ସିଏ ତାର ପୁଅକୁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରୁଛି । ହଠାତ୍ ଦୁଇଟି ବରକୋଳି ପରି ଲୁହ ଗୋପା ଖସିପଡ଼ିଲା ତା ଆଖିରୁ । ମୋ ଦୁଇହାତ ଧରି କହିଉଠିଲା ଅତି ଅନୁନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ବିନ୍ଦୟ ହୋଇ ‘ଜଞ୍ଜିନ୍ ଗାଢ଼ୁଏସନ୍ ହେବନି । ମୋର ଏତିକି ଅନୁରୋଧ ତାକୁ ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ବର୍ଷ ପଛେଇ ରଖ । ଯେଉଁଦିନ ମତେ

ମା' ବୋଲି ଡାକିବ, ଭୋକ ହେଲେ ଖାଇବାକୁ ମାଗି ପାରିବ ସେଦିନ ତାର ଗ୍ରାଜୁଏସନ୍ ହେବ' । ତାପରେ ଜର୍ଜିନ୍‌ର ସବୁ କାଗଜ ଟୋପି ପୁଲହାର ବ୍ୟାଗରେ ଅତି ଯତ୍ନରେ ରଖି ଜର୍ଜିନ୍‌କୁ ମୋ ହାତରେ ଧରାଇ ଦେଇ କାନ୍ଦି କାନ୍ଦି ଚାଲିଗଲା । ହତ୍‌ବାକ୍ ହୋଇ ବସିଥିଲି ମୁଁ । ହଠାତ୍ ଜର୍ଜିନ୍ ମତେ ଜତାଇ ଧରି କହି ଚାଲିଯାଏ "I love you teacher".

ସଂକ୍ଷ୍ୟାରେ ପୁଅ ଅର୍ଜୁନର ଗ୍ରାଜୁଏସନ୍ । ମନମୋର ମରି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ବିରାଟ ପତିଆ ଭିତରେ ବସିଥାଏ ମୁଁ ପାଷାଣୀ ଅହଲ୍ୟା ପରି । ମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରକୁ ଯାଇ ଉଠି ଆସୁଛି ଅର୍ଜୁନ **valedictorian speech** ଦେବାପାଇଁ । କେତେ ମନ ଦେଇ ଗଢ଼ିଛି ମୁଁ ତାକୁ, ଦୂରରୁ ନିରେଖି ଦେଖୁଥାଏ ଏକ ପୁରୁଷର ଲକ୍ଷଣ ଶୌର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ବୀର, ସୁଠମ୍, ସୁନ୍ଦର ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଙ୍କ ପରି ଶାନ୍ତ ସୁଖିଳ ଉଦାରମନା । ସବୁକିଛି ତା ଭିତରେ ଦେବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଛି ମୁଁ । ଅର୍ଜୁନ କହୁଛି, ତାର **Inner strength** ଉପରେ । ଭିତରେ ମୋର ସମସ୍ତ ଗର୍ବ, ଦମ୍ଭ, ଦର୍ପ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଚୁର୍ମାର୍ ହୋଇଯାଉଥାଏ । ମୋ ଭିତରେ ଜର୍ଜିନ୍ ମା' ର ହୃଦୟଟିକୁ ମୁଁ ଖୋଜୁଥାଏ । କେଉଁ ଆଶାରେ ସେ ଦିନ କାଟୁଥିବ । ତାର ଲୁହଗୋପା ଭିତରେ ମୋ ପଥରବସା ମୟୂର ହାର ଝାପ୍‌ସା ଦିଶୁଥାଏ । ମନେ ମନେ ଭାବୁଥାଏ ରାତି ପାହିଲେ ମୋର କଠିନ ବ୍ରତର ଦିନ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବ । ଜର୍ଜିନ୍‌କୁ **lunch** ସମୟରେ ଖାଇବା ଆଗରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବ ଶୁଆ ଭଳି ଘୋଷା କାମ । ଜର୍ଜିନ୍‌ର ନିରିହ ଜୁଲୁଜୁଲୁ ଆଖିରେ ଆଖି ମିଶାଇ କହିଚାଲିବି **Justin, please pay attention. Repeat after me, "mommy, I love you. Can you give me food? I am hungry. Justin, you have to graduate one day, please repeat. Justin, you have to graduate one day, please repeat."** ଶୁଆ ଭଳି ଘୋଷି ଚାଲିବ, ଯାହା ମୁଁ କହିବି । ହଠାତ୍ ମୋର ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା, ଝିଅ ନୁପୁର ର ୧୦ମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ଲେଖାଯିବା କବିତାର ଦୁଇଧାଡ଼ି -

"I have done what I can
And what I have wanted
I am still not convinced
I have left in success

But success is a funny word
Success of change
Success of love
Success of being"



Nandita Behera has performed and led several dance numbers for past OSA conventions. She lives and runs a dancing school in Los Angeles, CA

କେହି ରହି ନାହିଁ ରହିବେ ନାହିଁଟି
ଭବରଙ୍ଗ ଭୂମିତଳେ
ସର୍ବେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଅଭିନୟ ସାରି
ବାହୁଡ଼ିବେ କାଳ ବଳେ ।
- କବିବର ରାଧାନାଥ ରାୟ

ଜଗତ ସରସେ ଭାରତ କମଳ
ତା ମଧ୍ୟେ କେଶର ପୁଣ୍ୟ ନୀଳାଚଳ ।
- ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ଦାଶ

ଶାଶୁ ଜୀବିବାହୁ

ଶାନ୍ତି ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର



ଆଜି ପୁଣି ଥରେ ‘ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା’ ଡେରି କଲାଣି ଅଫିସ୍ କୁ ଆସିବାକୁ । କଣ ଯେ କରିବେ ‘ମିତା’ ସଫାହୁ କୁ ତିନି ଥର । ଅଫିସ୍ ର ନିୟମାନୁସାରେ କାମ ରୁ ବାହାର କରା ଯାଇ ପାରେ, ଏପରି ଅବହେଳା ପାଇଁ । କେତେ ଯେ ମିଛ କୈଫିୟତ୍ ଦେବେ ମ୍ୟାନେଜର କୁ । କେତେ ଅବା ଯେ ନିଜ କାମ୍ୟ ର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ସହିତ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ମଧ୍ୟ ତୁଲାଇଥିବେ । ଜଣେ ଲୋକ ପାଇଁ ତାହା ଅତ୍ୟଧିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଭାର ।

ଆଜି ଯାହା ବି ହେଉ ଯେ ପଚାରିବେ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କୁ । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ଭଲ ଭାବ ରେ ଜାଣେ ଅଫିସ୍ ର ନିୟମ କାନୁନ୍ । ପନ୍ଦର ବର୍ଷ ରୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ଵ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି କାମ କରିବା ଏ ଅଫିସ୍ ରେ । ତାକୁ ଏ ସବୁ ବିଷୟ ରେ ଚେତାବନୀ ଦେବା କଣ ନିହାତି ଦରକାର । ମିତା ଯେ ଅଫିସ୍ ର ସୁପରଭାଇଜର ହେବା ପରଠୁ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ଏ ପରି ଭିଲ୍ଲା କରୁଛି । ମାସକୁ ତିନି ଚାରି ଥର ଡେରି ରେ ଆସୁଛି କାରଣ ନ ଜଣେଇ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏବେ ମାସେ ହେବ ଦୁଇ/ତିନି ଦିନ ସଫାହୁ କୁ ଡେରି ରେ ଆସୁଛି ।

ନା ! ଏପରି ଖାମ୍ ଖିଆଲି , ଅବହେଳା, ଅସମ୍ମାନିତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କଳାପ ମିତା ଜୀବ ବରଦାସ୍ତ କରିବା ଉଚିତ ନୁହେଁ । ତାଙ୍କ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧ ରେ ଯେ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ବା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ନିଆଯାଇ ପାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉପରିସ୍ଥ କର୍ମ କର୍ତ୍ତା ଜୀବ ଠାରୁ । ଅଫିସ୍ ର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ କର୍ମଚାରୀ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେପରି କରିବେ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ପରି । ଆମେରିକା ରେ ସମସ୍ତ ଜୀବ ପ୍ରତି ସମାନ ବିଚାର କରାଯିବା ନିୟମ । ପ୍ରିୟାପ୍ରିତି ଡୋଷଣ କୁ ପ୍ରଶୟ ଦିଆ ଯାଏ ନାହିଁ । ମିତା ମଧ୍ୟ ଏ ସବୁ ର ନିହାତି ବିରୁଦ୍ଧ । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କ ର ଦୁର୍ବଳତା ଏ ତାଙ୍କ ର ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ଵ ଡୋଷଣ ର ପରିଶାମ ନୁହେଁ । କୃତଜ୍ଞତା ଜାପନ ଓ ସହନ ଶୀଳତା ର ଏକ ଦୃଷ୍ଟାନ୍ତ ମାତ୍ର । ତାର ପୁରା ଫାଇଦା ଉଠାଉଛି ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ।

ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ଭଲ ଭାବରେ ଜାଣେ ମିତା ତାଙ୍କୁ ସାହସ କରି ପାରିବନି କିଛି ପଚାରିବାକୁ ଯେ ତାର ସୁପରଭାଇଜର ହେଲେ ବି । ମିତା ର ଦୁର୍ବଳତା ର ସୁଯୋଗ ନେଉଛି କେବଳ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା । ଆଜି କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କ ସହନ ଶୀଳତା ର ସୀମା ଚପି ଯାଇଛି । ସକାଳେ ତାଙ୍କ ର ଆଜି ଉପରିସ୍ଥ କର୍ମକର୍ତ୍ତା ଜୀବ ସଙ୍ଗେ ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଥିଲା । ସେଠାରୁ ଫେରି କିଛି କ୍ଲାଏଣ୍ଟ ମାନଙ୍କ ଅଭିଯୋଗ ଶୁଣି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ତାଙ୍କର ଗରମ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଛି । ସେ କାଗଜ ପତ୍ର ତଦାରଖ କାମ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର । ସେ ଠିକ୍ ସମୟ ରେ ଅଫିସ୍ କୁ ଆସି ସେ ସବୁ କରି ପାରିନି । ମିତାଙ୍କ ର ମିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ନଥିଲେ ସେ ଏସବୁ ହ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡଲ କରି ନିଅନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି ଏ ସବୁ ହୋଇ ପାରିନି ।

ସେ ଏଥିପାଇଁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଦାୟୀ । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କୁ ଆଗରୁ ଚେତାବନୀ ଦେବା ତାଙ୍କର ଉଚିତ ଥିଲା । ଏବେ ହଜାର ପ୍ରକାର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ର ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ ସେ ହେବେ । ଉପରିସ୍ଥ କର୍ମକର୍ତ୍ତା ଜୀବ ସହିତ କ୍ଲାଏଣ୍ଟ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମନ ମୁତାବକ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇ ସମସ୍ୟା କୁ ସମାଧାନ କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ନଚେତ୍ କାମରୁ ରିଜାଇନ୍ ଦେବାକୁ ହେବ । ଆଜି ର ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ରେ ଦୁଇଟି ଯାକ ଦୁଃସହ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପରି ଲାଗୁଛି । ଚାକିରୀ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ରେ ଛାଡିଦେବା ତାଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷେ ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଚାକିରୀ ଛାଡିଦେଲେ ପୁଣି ଏପରି ଚାକିରୀ ମିଳିବାକୁ କଷ୍ଟକର ହେବ । ସମୟ ସାପେକ୍ଷ ମଧ୍ୟ । ଟଙ୍କା ତାଙ୍କ ର ନିହାତି ଦରକାର । ଏ ବର୍ଷ ନୂଆ ଗାଡି ଟେ ଲୋନ୍ ନେଇ କିଣିଛନ୍ତି ତାକୁ ଯଥା ଶିଫ୍ଟ ଶୁଫିବା ଦରକାର । ଗଲା ବର୍ଷ ତାଙ୍କ ପୁରୁଣା ଗାଡି ଟି ଆଞ୍ଚିଡେଣ୍ଟ ରେ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲା ପରେ ସେ ସାତ/ଆଠ ମାସ ଯାହା କଷ୍ଟ କରିଛନ୍ତି ବସ୍ ରେ ଯିବା ଆସିବା କରି ସେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି । ଥଣ୍ଡା ରେ ଖରା ରେ ବାହାରେ ଠିଆ ହେବା ବସ୍ ପାଇଁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି । ଓଃ କି କଷ୍ଟ !

ତା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଘର ଲୋନ୍ ତ ଅଛି । ସ୍ଵାମୀ ରମେଶ୍ ଦୁଇ ଥର ଚାକିରୀ ରୁ ଲେଡ୍ ଅଫ୍ ହୋଇ ଏବେ ବହୁ କଷ୍ଟ ରେ ଏକ ଚାକିରୀ ପାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ଚାକିରୀ ବି କେତେ ଦିନ ରହିବ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ । ଦୁଇ ଝିଅ ଯାକ ଆଉ ବର୍ଷେ/ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ କଲେଜ ଯିବେ । ଏଠାରେ କଲେଜ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କଥା ଭାବିଲେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଘୁରି ଯାଏ । ସ୍କଲରସିପ୍ ଓ ଷର୍ଟ ଲୋନ୍ ର ସୁବିଧା ଥିଲେ ବି ହାତ ରୁ ଅନେକ କିଛି ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିବାକୁ ତ ପଡିବ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ । ତେଣୁ ଏପରି ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ରେ ଚାକିରୀ ରୁ ରିଜାଇନ୍ କଥା ଭାବିବା ବୁଦ୍ଧିମାନ ର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେବ ନାହିଁ ।

ସେଦିନ ଅନ୍ୟ କୌଣସି କାମ କରିବାକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ହେଲାନି ମିତା ଜୀବ ର । ମନ ଟା ବଡ ଭାରା କ୍ରାନ୍ତ । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କୁ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ମାନସିକ ଆଘାତ ନଦେଇ ଯଦି ପ୍ରକାରକ୍ତରେ କିଛି ସୁଚନା ଦେଇ ପାରନ୍ତେ ଏ ବିଷୟ ରେ ତେବେ ସବୁ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଭଲ ହୁଅନ୍ତା । ସେଦିନ ଦେହ ଖରାପ ର ଏକ ମିଛ ବାହାନା କରି ସେ ଘର କୁ ଚାଲି ଆସିଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ର କର୍ମନିଷ୍ଠା ପ୍ରତି ଉପରସ୍ଥ ମ୍ୟାନେଜର

ମାନଙ୍କର ବହୁ ଭଜ ଧାରଣା । ନିହାତି ଅସୁବିଧା ନଥିଲେ ସେ କେବେ ଛୁଟି ନିଅନ୍ତିନି କାମରୁ ସହଜରେ । ତେଣୁ ବିନା ବାକ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟୟରେ ସେଦିନ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅଧା ଦିନ ଛୁଟି ମିଳିଗଲା । ଘର କୁ ସିନା ଚାଲି ଆସିଲେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଘରେ କୌଣସି କାମରେ ମନ ଲାଗିଲାନି କି ନିଷିଦ୍ଧ ରେ ସେ ଶୋଇ ବି ପାରିଲେନି ।

ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କୁ ସେ ଦୀର୍ଘ ଦଶ ବର୍ଷ ହେବ ଜାଣନ୍ତି । ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଥିଲେ ଦୁଇ ଝିଅ ଓ ସ୍ୱାମୀ କ୍ଷମା ଯାଏ ରେ ସେତେବେଳେ ର ଆର୍ଥିକ ଦୁରାବସ୍ଥା କଥା ନ କହିଲେ ଭଲ । ସ୍ୱାମୀ ରମେଶ ପୋଷ୍ଟ ଡକ୍ଟର ଥିଲେ ଏକ ଯୁନିଭରସିଟି ରେ । ସେତିକି ଟଙ୍କା ରେ ଦୁଇ ବଖରା ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟ ଘରେ ଭଡା ଦେଇ ଚାରି ପ୍ରାଣୀ ଖାଲି ଚଳି ଯାଉଥିଲେ । ସେଥିରୁ ଅଧିକ କିଛି ଆଶା କରା ଯାଇ ପାରୁ ନଥିଲା ।

ଆମେରିକା ରେ ଗାଡି ନିହାତି ଦରକାର । ତାହା ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୁରି ରେ ଗଣା ଯାଏନା । ତାହା ଆବଶ୍ୟକୀୟ ବସ୍ତୁ ଭାବରେ ଗଣାଯାଏ । ପୁଣି ଯଦି ଛୋଟ ପିଲା ଛୁଆ ଥାଆନ୍ତି ଗାଡି ଚିର ବେଶି ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ପଡିଯାଏ । ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ପଇସା କୁ ସଞ୍ଚି ସଞ୍ଚି ସେ ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ରେ ସେକେଣ୍ଡ ହ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡ ଗାଡି ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଯୋଗାଡ କରି ପାରିଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଗାଡି ଚଲେଇବା ପାଇଁ ଡାଇଭର ରଖିବା ତ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ । ସ୍ୱାମୀ କ୍ଷର ମାସକର ଦରମା ଡାଇଭର ର ମାସକ ଦରମା ରେ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତା । ତେଣୁ ନିଜକୁ ଗାଡି ଚଲେଇ ଶିଖିବା ନିହାତି ଦରକାର । ତେଣୁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ରମେଶ ଓ ପରେ ମିତା ଗାଡି ଚଲେଇ ଶିଖିଲେ ।

ଏଠିକାର ରାସ୍ତା ଘାଟ ର ନିୟମ କାନୁନ୍ ଟ୍ରାଫିକ୍ କୁ ଦେଖି ଗାଡି ଚଲେଇବା ପ୍ରଥମେ ଏକ କଷ୍ଟକର ସମସ୍ୟା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଉପାୟ ନଥିଲେ ମଣିଷ କଣ କରିପାରେ । ଶିଖିବାକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟ । ତେଣୁ ସେ ଶିଖିଲେ । ଖାଲି ଶିଖିଲେ ନୁହେଁ ପରିବାର ର ଡାଇଭର ହୋଇ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଏଠିକି ନେଇ ସେଠିକି ଯା, ସେଠିକି ନେଇ ଏଠିକି ଆ ଏଇ କାମ ମଧ୍ୟ କଲେ । ସକାଳୁ ରମେଶ କ୍ଷୁ ନେଇ ଅଫିସ୍ ରେ ଛାଡ ତା ପରେ ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ସ୍କୁଲ ରେ ଛାଡ ଆଣ । ଛୁଟି ଦିନ ରେ ଲାଇବ୍ରେରୀ, ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଛୋଟ ପିଲା କ୍ଷ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ କୁ ନେଇ କି ଯାଆ ।

ଏ ଦେଶରେ ଛୋଟ ପିଲା କ୍ଷ ର ଶିଖିବା ପାଇଁ ଏତେ ପ୍ରକାର ସୁବିଧା ଅଛି ଯେ ସେ ପୁଣି ମାଗଣାରେ ଏ ସବୁର ସୁଯୋଗ ନେବା ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଚିତ୍ । ତଥାପି ସେ ଏ ସବୁ କାମରେ ସମୟ ବିତେଇଲେ ବି ମନ ଭିତରେ ସର୍ବଦା ଏକ ଅଜଣା ଭୟ ଲାଗି ରହିଥାଏ । ସେ ହେଲା ଆର୍ଥିକ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ବହୁଳ ସମସ୍ୟା ଯଦି କିଛି ପଡିଯାଏ ତେବେ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ସେପରି କିଛି ସମ୍ବଳ ନାହିଁ ଯାହାକୁ ସେ ଦେଇ ସେଥି ରୁ ସେ ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇଯିବେ । ଯଦି କାହାର ଦେହ ଖରାପ ହୋଇ ଯାଏ , ରମେଶ କ୍ଷୁ ଭଲ ଚାକିରୀ ନମିଲେ ତେବେ କଣ ହେବ ! ତାଙ୍କ ହାତରେ କିଛି ଅର୍ଥ ସମ୍ବଳ ରହିବା ଉଚିତ୍ ।

ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେମାନେ ଭାରତ ରୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଝିଅ ଦୁଇ ଜଣ ଚାରି ଓ ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ର ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ସେମାନେ ସ୍କୁଲ ନଗଲା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଘରେ ରହିବାକୁ ପଡିଲା । ବେବିସିଟର ପାଇଁ ବି ଟଙ୍କା ନାହିଁ ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କୁ କାହା ପାଖ ରେ ଛାଡି ଦେଇ କିଛି କୋର୍ସ କରି ନିଜକୁ ଚାକିରୀକ୍ଷମ ସେ କରିଥାନ୍ତେ ।

ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଗାଡି ଶିଖିଲା ପରେ ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଯାଗାକୁ ଯିବା ଆସିବା ଦ୍ୱାରା ବହୁତ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଚିହ୍ନା ପରିଚୟ ହେଲା । ଥରେ ଲାଇବ୍ରେରୀ ରେ ଛୋଟ ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକ କାର୍ଟୁନ ମୁଭି ଦେଖା ଯାଉଥିଲା । ସେଠାରେ ହିଁ ତାଙ୍କର ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ସହିତ ଦେଖା ହେଲା । କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ବି । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ବହୁତ ମେଲାପି । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ଏକ ମାତ୍ର ଝିଅ ଚିଁ ମିତା ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ବୟସ ରେ କିଛି ବଡ ହେଲେବି ସେମାନେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ଖରାଦିନ ଛୁଟି ପୁରା ତିନି ମାସ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ସେ ଲାଇବ୍ରେରୀ କୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ମିତାଙ୍କ ଇଂଲିଶ୍ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ଏତେ ଭଲ ନଥିଲେ ବି ସେ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ସଂଜ୍ଞେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଲେ । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ଏପରି ସ୍ନେହ ଶୁଦ୍ଧା ପୁଣି ଆଚରଣ, ଭଦ୍ରୋଚିତ ବ୍ୟବହାର ରେ ସେ କିଣି ହୋଇଗଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ସଂକୋଚତା ଓ ଲଜ୍ୟାଶୀଳ ଭାବ କଟିଗଲା । ଏବେ ଖରାଛୁଟିରେ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କାମକୁ ଗଲେ ତା ଝିଅ କୁ ମିତା କ୍ଷ ପାଖରେ ଛାଡି ଦେଇ ଯାଏ ବେବି ସିଟିଙ୍ଗ କରିବା ପାଇଁ । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ଘର ମିତା କ୍ଷ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟ ଠାରୁ ବେଶି ଦୂର ନୁହେଁ ।

ଖୁବ୍ ଶିଘ୍ର ମିତା ଓ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କ୍ଷର ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ବଢି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କୁ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରକାର ଓଡିଆ ଖାଦ୍ୟ ତିଆରି କରି ମିତା ଖାଇବାକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ଯଦି କେବେ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ଘର କୁ ଆସୁଥିଲା ତେବେ ବରାଦ କରିଦେଉଥିଲା । ବରା, ଆଳୁଚପ୍, ପକୋଡି,ସିଂଘତା ବା ପୁରି ଆଳୁ ଚରକାରୀ ଏହିପରି କିଛି । ତାର ଏ ସବୁ ବଡ ପ୍ରିୟ ଖାଦ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଦିନେ କଥା ପଢୁ ପଢୁ ମିତା କ୍ଷର ଚାକିରୀ ପ୍ରତି ଆଗ୍ରହ କଥା ସେ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କୁ କହିଥିଲେ । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ମାତ୍ର ହାଇସ୍କୁଲ ପାସ୍ କରି ଏକ ଅଫିସ ରେ କାମ କରି

ପାରୁଛି, ମିତା ଜ୍ଞର ତ କଲେଜ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ଅଛି ସେ କଣ ସେ କାମ କରି ପାରିବେନି । ହଁ ! ଏଠିକା ନିୟମ କାନୁନ ଆଦବ କାଇଦା ନିଷ୍ଠୟ ଅଲଗା ହେଲେ ବି ସେ ନିଷ୍ଠୟ ଶିଫ୍ଟ ଶିଖିଯିବେ ।

ସାନ ଝିଅ ଟି ସ୍କୁଲ ଯିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବା ପରେ ମାର୍ସୀ ର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ରେ ମିତା ଜ୍ଞ ମାର୍ସୀ ର ଅଫିସ ରେ ଏକ କାମ ମିଳିଗଲା । ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସେ କିଛି ବୁଝି ପାରୁନଥିଲେ କଣ କିପରି କରିବେ, କିପରି କାହା ସଙ୍ଗେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବେ । ପ୍ରତି ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ରେ ସେ ମାର୍ସୀ ର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଲୋଡୁଥିଲେ । ସତରେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସେ ବହୁତ ଭୁଲ ଭାଲ ବି କରୁଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମାର୍ସୀ ତାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରବୋଧନା ଓ ସାହସ ଦେଇ ସେ ସବୁ ସମସ୍ୟା ର କିପରି ସମାଧାନ କରାଯିବ ସେଥିରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରୁଥିଲା । ପୁରା ବର୍ଷେ ଲାଗିଗଲା ସମସ୍ତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କୁ ସହଜ ରେ କରାଗତ କରିବାକୁ ।

ତା ପରେ ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ତାଙ୍କର କାମ ରେ ମନ ଲାଗିଗଲା । ମିତା ପରିଶ୍ରମି, ଠିକ୍ ଚାଲମ୍ ରେ ସବୁ କାମ କୁ ସୁଚାରୁ ରୂପେ ତୁଲେଇ ପାରିବାର ଦକ୍ଷତା ହାସଲ କରି ପାରିଲେ ଶିଫ୍ଟ । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ମାର୍ସୀ ର ଅବଦାନ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ । ସେଥି ପାଇଁ ସେ ମାର୍ସୀ ପାଖରେ ଚିର କୃତଜ୍ଞ । ତାଙ୍କ ର ସମୟାନୁବର୍ତ୍ତୀତା, କାର୍ଯ୍ୟଦକ୍ଷତା, ବିଚାର ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଓ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା ଯୋଗୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ହେବ ସୁପରଭାଇଜର ପୋଷ୍ଟ କୁ ଉତ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରା ଯାଇଛି । କିଛି ସହକର୍ମୀ ଇର୍ଷାନିତ ହେଲେ ବି ମାର୍ସୀ ହସ ହସ ମୁହଁ ରେ କଂଗ୍ରାତୁଲେସନ ଜଣେଇଥିଲା ମିତା ଜ୍ଞ ।

ମାର୍ସୀ ର ଜୀବନ ରେ ବି ଅନେକ କିଛି ଦୁଃଖ ଥିଲା । ଯୋଡ଼ାପିରେ କି ସେ ମିତା ଜ୍ଞ ପରି ଦରଦୀ ସାହାଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ଜ୍ଞ ପାଇ ଖୁସି ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା । ମାର୍ସୀ ଛଅ/ସାତ ବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବ ରୁ ତାର ପ୍ରଥମ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମୀ ଜ୍ଞ ପାଖରୁ ତିଭୋର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନେଇ ଏକ ମାତ୍ର ଝିଅ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଏକାକୀ ରହୁଥିଲା । ଏ ଦେଶ ରେ ନାରୀ ପୁରୁଷ ଏତେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀବଲମ୍ବୀ ଯେ ପରସ୍ପର କେହି କାହାକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ଯେ ଦରକାର ତାହା ସେମାନେ ଭୁଲି ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ସେଇ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ରୁ ମାର୍ସୀ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଏକାକୀ । ପରିବାର ଠାରୁ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ବା ସ୍ନେହ ଶୁଣା ର ଆଶା ସେ ରଖି ନ ଥାଏ । ମାର୍ସୀ କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେତେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଧୀନ ଦେଶ ର ନାଗରୀକା ହେଲେ ବି ପ୍ରଥମେ ସେ ରକ୍ତ ମାଂସ ର ମଣିଷ । ସବୁ ମଣିଷ ପରି ତା ମନ ଭିତରେ ସ୍ନେହ ଶୁଣା ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟାକୁଳତା ରହିବା ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ । ତେଣୁ ମିତା ଜ୍ଞ ପରି ଜଣେ ବିଦେଶିନୀ ମହିଳା ଟିକୁ ପାଇ ସେ ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ର ହାତ ତା ତରଫରୁ ବଢେଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ଯୋଡ଼ାଟାକି ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ରେ ମିତାଜ୍ଞ ର ଏ ଅଜଣା ଅପରିଚିତ ଦେଶରେ ବି ନିହାତି ଦରକାର ଥିଲା । ମାର୍ସୀ ପାଖ ରେ ଉଣା ଅଧିକେ ସବୁ କିଛି ଥିଲା ଏକ ଆପଣାର ଦରଦୀ ବନ୍ଧୁ ବ୍ୟତୀତ । ସେତେବେଳେ ମିତା ଜ୍ଞ ପାଖେ କିଛି ନଥିଲା ନିରଳସ ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ବ୍ୟତୀତ । ତେଣୁ ତାହା ତୁମ୍ଭକାୟ ଶକ୍ତି ପରି ବେଶ୍ କାମ କଲା ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ମାର୍ସୀ ଆଉ ଥରେ ପୁନର୍ବିବାହ କରିବା ପରେ ମିତାଜ୍ଞ ସହିତ କମ୍ ସମୟ ପାଏ ମିଶିବାକୁ । ମିତା ବି ଏବେ ଆମେରିକା ର ଚାଲି ଚଳନ ସହିତ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଜଡ଼ିତ ହୋଇ ଗଲେଣି ଯେ ତାଙ୍କର ଆଉ ମାର୍ସୀ ର ଆଜୁଠି ଧରି ଚାଲିବାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ମଧ୍ୟ ପଡେ ନାହିଁ । ଏବେ ଯେଝା ବାଟ ରେ ଯେଝେ ଚାଲୁଥିଲେ ବି ପୂର୍ବ ର ସେ ସ୍ନେହ ସହାନୁଭୂତି ସଂପର୍କ ଆଗ ପରି ଜାରି ରହିଛି । ଦୁହେଁ ଆଗପରି ଏକାଠି ଲକ୍ଷ ଖାଇବାକୁ କ୍ୟାପେଟଟରିଆ ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ମୁଢି ଥିଏଟର ବି ।

ଏହା ଭିତରେ ସମୟ ଅନେକ ଦୂର କୁ ଚାଲି ଯାଇଛି । ମାର୍ସୀ ର ଝିଅ ପାର୍ଟ ଚାଲମ କାମ କରି କଲେଜ ରେ ପଢିବା ପାଇଁ ଟଙ୍କା ସଂଚୟ କରୁଛି । ମାର୍ସୀ ର ପୁନର୍ବିବାହ ପରେ ଝିଅ ତାର ଅଲଗା ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟ ଭଡା ନେଇ ମାଆ ଠାରୁ ଶହେ ମାଇଲ ଦୂର ରେ ରହୁଛି । ଅଠର ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ପିଲାମାନେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀବଲମ୍ବୀ ହେବା କୁ ଏ ଦେଶ ଶିଖେଇ ଦିଏ । ତେଣୁ ମାର୍ସୀ ନିଷ୍ଠିଳ ରେ ତା ନୂତନ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମୀ ଜ୍ଞ ସହିତ ବାସ କରୁଛି । ଝିଅ ର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଆଉ ତାର ଚିନ୍ତା ନୁହେଁ । ଏ କଥା ମିତା ଜ୍ଞର ଏତେ ସହଜ ରେ ହଜମ ହୋଇ ପାରେନାହିଁ । ସେ ଯେଉଁ ଭାରତ ଭୁଲ୍ ରେ ବଢିଛନ୍ତି ସେଠି ସବୁ ସଂପର୍କ ଜନ୍ମ ଜନ୍ମାନ୍ତର ର । ବାପ ମାଆ ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମୀ ଜ୍ଞୁଆ ପିଲା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । ଏବେ ବି ଲୋକ ସେଠି ସତ୍ତ ପୁରୁଷ ଜ୍ଞ ଆତ୍ମା ତୃପ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରାନ୍ତ ରେ ପିଣ୍ଡ ଦାନ କରନ୍ତି ।

ଯୋଉଠି ଏ ଭାବନା ତାଙ୍କ ଶୋଣିତ ର ପ୍ରତି ଶିରା ପ୍ରଶିରା ରେ ସେ ମାର୍ସୀ ର ଏ ଚିନ୍ତା ଧାରା କୁ ଏତେ ସହଜ ରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ପାରନ୍ତିନି । ମାର୍ସୀ କୁ ସେ ଦୋଷ ଦେଇ ମଧ୍ୟ ପାରନ୍ତିନି । କାରଣ ଏ ଦେଶ ର ରୀତି ନିତି ଅନୁସାରେ ସେ କିଛି ଭୁଲ୍ ବି କରୁ ନାହିଁ । ତୁଳନା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଅନ୍ୟ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରା କିଛି ନ ଥାଏ ମଣିଷ ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରା ରେ ହିଁ ଚାଲେ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁ ବା ନ ଲାଗୁ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ମାର୍ସୀ ତାର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ଜୀବନ ରେ ଯାହା ବି କରୁ ସେଥିରେ ତାଙ୍କର କିଛି କହିବାର ବା ଭାବିବାର ନାହିଁ । ଏ ଦେଶ ର ପାଣି ପବନ ରେ ମିତା ଏବେ ନିଜକୁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରୂପେ ମିଶେଇ ସାରିଲେଣି । ତେଣୁ ଏ ସବୁ କଥା ଦେଖି ବା ଶୁଣି କୌଣସି ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା

ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରେନି ଆଜି ଆଉ ମନରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ଏପରି ଅର୍ପିତ କୁ ଡେରିରେ ଆସି ତାଙ୍କ ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ର ଫଳଦା ଉଠେଇବା ଠିକ୍ ନୁହେଁ । ସେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ଉପରିସ୍ଥ କର୍ମକର୍ତ୍ତା । ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ପରି ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ତାଙ୍କୁ ସମ୍ମାନ କରିବା ଉଚିତ୍ ।

ସେଦିନ ଅନେକ କଥା ତଳ, ଉପର, ଏପଟ, ସେପଟ, ଓଲଟ, ପାଲଟ, ଅତୀତ , ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସବୁ କୁ ଆଗପଛ ବିଚାର କରି ଅନେକ ଗୁଡିଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ତିଆରି କଲେ ଏବଂ ସେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ର ଉତ୍ତର ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କଣ ଦେବ ଏବଂ ସେ ଉତ୍ତର ବଦଳ ରେ ସେ କଣ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବେ ସବୁ ମନେ ମନେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରି ନେଇ ତା ପର ଦିନ ଅର୍ପିତ କୁ ଗଲେ ।

ଆଜି କିନ୍ତୁ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ଠିକ୍ ସମୟ ରେ ଆସି କାଲିର ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ପାଇଁ ନିଜକୁ ଦୋଷି ଭାବି କାମରେ ମନ ଦେଇଛି । ସବୁ କାମ ସମୟ ଆଗରୁ କରି ଚାଲିଛି । ହୁଏତ ଅନ୍ୟ କେହି ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କୁ ସୁଚିତ କରି ଦେଇଛି ତାର ଭୁଲ୍ ବିଷୟ ରେ । ତେବେ ମିତା କୁ କିଛି ପଚାରିବାକୁ ପଡିବନି । ଭଲ ହେଲା ।

ମିତା କୁ ଦେଖି ଗତାନୁଗତିକ ଭାବେ ‘ହାଏ ମିଟ’ କହି ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ପୁଣି କାମ ରେ ମନ ଦେଲା । ସତେକି ଯେପରି କିଛି ଘଟି ନାହିଁ ବା ମିତା ତା ଉପରେ ରାଗିନି ସେହିପରି ହାବ ଭାବ ତା ଚାଲି ଚଳନ ରେ । ସେ ଯାହା କରୁଛି ତାହା ଦୋଷାବହ ନୁହେଁ ବା ତାହା ସେପରି କିଛି ଗୁରୁତର ଅପରାଧ ନୁହେଁ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ମିତାଙ୍କର ରକ୍ତ କାଲି ଠାରୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡ କୁ ଚଢ଼ିଛି । କେବଳ ସଂକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ ରେ ‘ହାଏ’ କରି ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ‘ହାଏ’ ର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇ ଅନ୍ୟ ମାନ କ୍ଷ କାମ ତଦାରଖ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ଚାଲିଗଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ଏ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ରେ ରାଗ ରୋଷ ବା ଅସ୍ଥିରତା ଦେଖେଇବା ଶୋଭା ପାଇବନି ସେ ଯାଶକ୍ତି ।

ସେଦିନ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କୁ ଲକ୍ଷ ପାଇଁ କ୍ୟାପେଟଟରିଆ କୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଇ-ମେଲ୍ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଜଣେଇ ସେଇଠାରେ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ଟା ଆଣିବାକୁ ମନସ୍ଥ କରିନେଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ଇ-ମେଲ୍ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଉତ୍ତର ପଢି ହସିବେ କି ଆକ୍ଷୟ ହେବେ ଜାଣି ପାରିଲେନି । ସେ ଆଜି ଲକ୍ଷ କୁ ଆସି ପାରିବନି ବୋଲି ଜଣେଇଛି । କାରଣ ସେ ତାର ଶାଶୁ ଓ ଶାଶୁ ର ବୟ ଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ କୁ ଲକ୍ଷ ପାଇଁ କ୍ୟାପେଟଟରିଆ କୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିଛି । କାଲି ର ଡେରି ପାଇଁ କ୍ଷମା ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ମଧ୍ୟ କରିଛି । ଶାଶୁ କ୍ଷ ବିବାହ ପାଇଁ ସେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହି କାମ କୁ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଡେରି ରେ ଆସି ମିତା କୁ ଏପରି ଅସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ପକେଇ ଥିବାରୁ ଦୁଃଖ ପ୍ରକାଶ ମଧ୍ୟ କରିଛି । ଆଉ ଦୁଇ ମାସ ପରେ ଶାଶୁ କ୍ଷ ବାହାଘର ଟା ସରିଗଲେ ସେ ଏପରି ଅସୁବିଧା ରେ ମିତା କୁ ପକେଇବନି ବୋଲି ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞା ମଧ୍ୟ କରିଛି ।

ମିତାଙ୍କ ର ରାଗ କମିଗଲା ଥପ୍ କରି ଚିଠିଟି ପଢି । ବିଚାରି ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ଦୟା ହେଲା ତା ଉପରେ । ଏ ଦେଶ ରେ ନାରୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ର ଏତେ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ଦେଖି ସେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଯେତେ ବେଳେ ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଥିଲେ ବଡ଼ ଇର୍ଷା କରୁଥିଲେ ଏମାନଙ୍କୁ । ନିଜକୁ ବୟନୀ ବୋଲି ଭାବୁଥିଲେ । କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନେବା ପୂର୍ବ ରୁ ସ୍ୱାମୀ କୁ ଶହେଥର ପଚାର, ଘର ଲୋକ ବା ପରିବାର ବର୍ଗ କୁ ବି ଶହେ ଥର ପଚାର । ସେଥିରେ କେବେ ‘ହଁ’ ବା ‘ନାହିଁ’ ରେ ଉତ୍ତର ମିଳୁଥିଲା । ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ଯେ କେତେଥର ଝରୁଥିଲା ସମସ୍ତ କ୍ଷ ଲକ୍ଷ ଅଲକ୍ଷ ରେ ତାର ହସିବା ସେ ଆଜି ରଖି ନାହାଁନ୍ତି ।

ଏବେ ଭାବୁଛନ୍ତି । ତାହା କିଛି ମନ୍ଦ ବିଚାର ନଥିଲା । ନିଜ ପାଇଁ ସବୁବେଳେ ନିଜେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେବା ଅପେକ୍ଷା ଅନ୍ୟ କେହି ଜଣେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେବାକୁ ଥିଲେ ବଞ୍ଚିବା ଟା ଚିକେ ନିଷ୍ଠୟ ସହଜ ଲାଗନ୍ତା । ତାଙ୍କ ଅଜାଣତରେ ବା ଅଲକ୍ଷ ରେ ସେ ନିଷ୍ଠିଳ ରୂପେ ଅନେକ ଦୁଃଖିକ୍ତା ରୁ ଯେ ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇଛନ୍ତି ତା ନିଃସନ୍ଦେହ । ନଚେତ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ପରି ନିଜ ପାଇଁ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଖୋଜ । ସେ ସଂପର୍କ ଭଲ କାମ କଲାନ୍ତି, ସେ ବନ୍ଧନ ରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ପାଇ ଅନ୍ୟ ବନ୍ଧନ ର ସମ୍ମାନ କର । ଏବେ କଣ ନା ଚିକେ ଶାନ୍ତି ରେ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ ଶାଶୁ କ୍ଷ ବିବାହ ର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କର । ମନେ ମନେ ହସିଲେ ସେ । କିଛି ଉତ୍ତର ତା ଚିଠି ର ସେ ଦେଲେନି ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ତା ସହିତ ବାର୍ତ୍ତାଳାପ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ଉକ୍ଷିତ ହୋଇ ରହିଲେ ।

ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ଠାରୁ ଯାହା ସେ ଶୁଣିଲେ କିଛି ଅସୀମତନ ନ ଲାଗିଲେ ବି ଏତେ ସହଜ ରେ ସେ କଥା ଚି ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ପାରିଲେନି । ଏ ସବୁ ଘଟଣା ଏଠାରେ ନିତି ପ୍ରତି । ଅନେକ ସେ ଶୁଣିଛନ୍ତି, ଅନେକ ସେ ଦେଖିଛନ୍ତି କିନ୍ତୁ ଏତେ ପାଖରୁ ନୁହେଁ । ଏତେ ଜଣା ଶୁଣା ବନ୍ଧୁ କ୍ଷ ଠାରୁ ନୁହେଁ । ଯାହା ହେଉ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ତାର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଜ୍ଞାନ ପ୍ରତି ସତେତନଶୀଳ । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ସ୍ୱାମୀ ‘ରବର୍ଟ’ ଟା ଶାଶୁଙ୍କର ଏକ ମାତ ସନ୍ତାନ । ଶୁଶୁର ତାର ସାତ ବର୍ଷ ହେବ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଗାରୋହଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ପୁଅ ଚି ବିବାହ କରି ନ ଥିବାରୁ ମାଆ ନିଜ କଥା କିଛି ଭାବି ନଥିଲେ । ରବର୍ଟ ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା କୁ ବିବାହ କରି ଅଲଗା ରହିବା ପରେ ମା କ୍ଷ ପାଖରେ ସମୟ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ । କରିବେ ବା

କଣ !! ଏକାକୀ ଜୀବନ ବଡ଼ ଦୁଃଖ ଦାୟକ । ପୁଅ ବୋହୂ ଜ୍ଞ ପାଖ ରେ ଆସି ରହିବାର ଏ ଦେଶ ରେ ସେପରି କିଛି ଝଙ୍କ ମରା ଭାରତ ପରି ନିୟମ କାନୁନ ନାହିଁ । ତା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ପାଖରେ ରହିଲେ ଝଗଡ଼ା ଝାଡ଼ି, ଡିଙ୍ଗଡ଼ା ବଢ଼ିବ । ତେଣୁ ଦୂର ରେ ରହିଲେ ଭଲ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏକାକୀ ରହିବେ ବା କେମିତି ? ବୟସ ତାଙ୍କର ପଞ୍ଚଷଠି ବର୍ଷ ହେଲେବି ଏବେ ବି ସେ ବେଶ୍ ଶକ୍ତିଶାଳୀ । ବାର୍ଦ୍ଧକ୍ୟ ର ଛାପ ବିଶେଷ ପଡ଼ି ନାହିଁ କହିଲେ ଚଳେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦିନକୁ ଚବିଶ ଘଣ୍ଟା ସଖ୍ୟ ଦାନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସମୟ ବା କାହାର ।

ପୁଅ ବୋହୂ ସକାଳୁ ଉଠି କାମକୁ ଯିବେ । କାମକୁ ନଗଲେ ବି ନଚଳେ । ଏଠି ତ ଜମି ବାଡ଼ି ବା ପୈତୃକ ସଂପତ୍ତି ବାପ ବା ମା ବଞ୍ଚି ଥାଉ ଥାଉ ପିଲା ମାନ ଜୁ ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ । ଯାହା ବି ମିଳେ ତାହା ସେପରି କିଛି ନୁହେଁ । ତେଣୁ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଦୁଇଜଣ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟ । ତା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଏଠି ତ ବିବାହ ଜନ୍ମ ଜନ୍ମାନ୍ତ ର ର ବନ୍ଧନ ନୁହେଁ କି ସେପରି ବନ୍ଧନ ରେ ଗଣାଯାଏ ନାହିଁ ଯେ ହୁଁ ଥରେ ବାହା ହୋଇଗଲେ ଦୁଃଖ ଚାଲିଗଲା । ମନାନ୍ତର ଓ ମତାନ୍ତର ତ ସର୍ବଦା ଲାଗି ରହିଛି । କୋଉ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ରେ ସେ ସୁତାଖିଅ ର ବନ୍ଧନ ଚି ଯେ ଛିଣ୍ଡି ଯିବ ତାର ଠିକଣା ନାହିଁ । ତେଣୁ ପତି ପତ୍ନି ଉଭୟେ ଏ ସବୁ ରେ ସତର୍କ । ତେଣୁ ବୋହୂ ମାନେ ଶାଶୁ ସେବାରେ ସମୟ ନଷ୍ଟ ବା ମନ ନିବେଶ ନକରି ଅର୍ଥ ସଞ୍ଚୟ ପ୍ରତି ବିଶେଷ ଧ୍ୟାନ ଦିଅନ୍ତି । କାରଣ ତାଙ୍କର ତ ଜୀବନ ଅଛି, ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଅଛି । ପ୍ରଥମ ବିବାହ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ଅସପକ୍ଷ ହେବା ପରେ ସେଇ ଚାକିରୀ ଯୋଗୁ ହିଁ ତା ଝିଅ ସହିତ ସେ ନିଜେ ବଞ୍ଚି ପାରିଲା । କାହାକୁ ହାତ ନ ପଡ଼େଇ ନିଜ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ନିଜେ ତ ଛିଡ଼ା ହୋଇ ପାରିଲା ।

ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ଯାହା ବି କରୁଛି ଠିକ୍ କରୁଛି । ସକାଳୁ କାମକୁ ଯାଇ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ରେ କାମ ରୁ ଫେରି ଶାଶୁ ସେବା କରିବା ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ପକ୍ଷେ କେବେ ସମ୍ଭବ ହୁଅନ୍ତାନି । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ବି କିଛି କଅଁଳ ବୟସି ନୁହେଁ । ତାକୁ ବି ବୟସ ଚାଳିଷ ହେଲାଣି । ରବର୍ଟ ଓ ତା ବୟସ ଏକା । ସେ ବି ଦର ବୁଢ଼ି ହେଲାଣି କହିଲେ ଚଳେ । ଶାଶୁ ତାର ପୁଅ ବୋହୂ ଜୁ ହଇରାଣ ନ କରି ନିଜେ କିପରି ସୁଖ ସୁବିଧା ରେ ରହି ପାରିବେ, ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଅନେକ ଆମେରୀକାନ ମାନ ଜ୍ଞ ପରି ଏଇ ବିବାହ ରାସ୍ତା ଚି ବାଛି ନେଇଛନ୍ତି । ବୋହୂ ବି ଖୁସ୍ ଶାଶୁ ବି । ଆଉ କେହି କାହା ରାସ୍ତାରେ ପ୍ରତି ବନ୍ଧକ ହେବେ ନାହିଁ ।

ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ତା ଶାଶୁ ଜ୍ଞ ସହିତ ଭଲ ସ୍ନେହ ଶୁଦ୍ଧା ର ସଂପର୍କ ଥିବାରୁ ସେ ଏ ବିବାହ ରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରୁଛି । ଆମ ଦେଶ ପରି ଏଠି ଶାଶୁ ବୋହୂ ଜ୍ଞ ଭିତରେ ଯୋଉ ଗୁରୁ, ଲଘୁ ର ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ବାତ ଚି ପଡ଼ିଥାଏ ତାହା ଏଠି ନାହିଁ କହିଲେ ଚଳେ । ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ଚଳି ଭଲ ସଂପର୍କ ରଖି ପାରିଲେ ତ ଭଲ କଥା ନଚେତ୍ କୌଣସି ସଂପର୍କ ହିଁ ନାହିଁ କହିଲେ ଚଳେ ।

ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ତା ଶାଶୁ ଜ୍ଞ ବିବାହ କୁ ମିତା ଜ୍ଞ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିଛି । ଯିବେ ସେ ନିଷ୍ଠୟ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ଖାତିର ରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଏକ ସମସ୍ୟା । ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ବୋଉ କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରୁ ଆଣିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଭିସା ନମିଳୁ ଥିବାରୁ ସେ ଆସି ପାରୁ ନଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ହଠାତ୍ କରି ତାକୁ ଏବେ ଭିସା ମିଳି ଯାଇଛି । ସେ ଆସିଯିବ ଆସନ୍ତା ମାସକୁ ।

ବୋଉ ଯେ କେତେ ଦିନ ଆଉ ବଞ୍ଚିବ । ତା ପାଖରେ ରହିବାର ମିତାଙ୍କୁ କେବେ ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳି ନାହିଁ । ବାହା ହେଲା ପରେ ଭାଗ ଦୌଡ଼ ଜୀବନ ତାପରେ ଏଠାକୁ ଆସିଲା ପରେ ଏଠାକାର ଜଂଜାଳ ପୁଣି ଜୀବନ ସରଣୀ ଭିତରେ ସେ କେବେ ବୋଉ ପାଖରେ ଯାଇ ରହିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ଏବେ ସେ ଏଠାରେ ଘର ଦ୍ୱାର କିଣି ସାରିଲେଣି । ଭଲ ଚାକିରି ଚିଏ ମଧ୍ୟ ମିଳି ଯାଇଛି । ପିଲା ମାନେ ବଡ଼ ବି ହୋଇ ଗଲେଣି । ସେମାନ ଜ୍ଞ ପାଇଁ ବିଶେଷ ତାଙ୍କୁ କିଛି କରିବାକୁ ପଡୁନି । ତେଣୁ ବୋଉ କୁ ଏଠିକୁ ଆଣି କିଛି ଦିନ ପାଖରେ ରଖି ତାର ସେବା କରି କିଛି ଦିନ ତାକୁ ଆରାମ ଦେବାକୁ ସେ ବହୁତ ଦିନ ରୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା କରୁଥିଲେ ହେଁ ବୋଉ କେବେ ରାଜି ହେଉ ନଥିଲା ଏଠିକୁ ଆସିବାକୁ । ଏବେ ବହୁତ ଖୋସାମତ ପରେ ବଡ଼ କଷ୍ଟରେ ସେ ଆସିବାକୁ ରାଜି ହୋଇଛି ।

ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ଶାଶୁ ଜ୍ଞ ର ବାହାଘର ଏଇ ସହର ରେ ହେଉ ନାହିଁ । ଏଠାରୁ ଦୁଇ ଶହ ମାଇଲ ଦୂର ରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ସହର ରେ ହେଉଛି । ରାତିରେ ସେଠାରେ ରହିବାକୁ ହେବ ଏକ ହୋଟେଲ ରିଜର୍ଭ କରି । ବୋଉ କୁ ସାଂଗ ରେ ଧରି କି ଯିବାକୁ ହେବ । ବୋଉ କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି କି ଏକା ଯିବାର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠୁନି । ମିତା ଜ୍ଞ ପରିବାର ର ସମସ୍ତ ଜ୍ଞ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିଛି । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ଝିଅ ବି ଆସୁଛି ବିବାହ ରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେବାକୁ । ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ଝିଅ ଓ ମିତା ଜ୍ଞ ଝିଅ ମାନେ ବାଲ୍ୟବନ୍ଧୁ । ଅନେକ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲାଣି ତା ସଂଗେ ସେମାନ ଜ୍ଞ ଦେଖା ହେବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳି ନାହିଁ । ତେଣୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ସେଠାକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ଆଗୁହି ।

ବୋଉ ଏ ଘଟଣା ଚି କୁ କିପରି ଯେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବ ମିତା ଭାବି ପାରୁ ନଥିଲେ । ବୋଉ ପାଇଁ ଏହା ଏକ ଚମକ ପ୍ରଦ କାହାଣୀ ହେବ । ସେ ତା କାନ ଉଠିଲା ଦିନୁ ଶାଶୁ ଜ୍ଞ ବିବାହ ବୋହୂ କରୁଥିବାର ଶୁଣି ନଥିବ । ଯାହା ବି ହେଉ ବୋଉ ଆସିବାର କିଛି ଦିନ ପରେ ସଂକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ ରେ କେବଳ ସେମାନ ଜ୍ଞ ଯିବା କଥାଟା ଜଣେଇ ଦେଲେ ଏବଂ ସେଠାକୁ ଯିବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି କହିଲେ

। ସେଠାରେ ଅଧିକ ଦୁଇ ଦିନ ରହି ପାଖ ଆଖ ର ଯାଗା ବୁଲି ଆସିବେ ମଧ୍ୟ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଉ ର ବେଶୀ ବଳ ନାହିଁ ଅତ୍ୟଧିକ ଚାଲିବାର । ଗାତି ରେ ବି ବେଶୀ ସମୟ ସେ ବସି ପାରିବନି । ତେଣୁ ତାରି ସୁବିଧା ଅନୁସାରେ ସବୁ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ ।

ବୋଉ କୁ ତ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସବୁ ଖାପଛଡା, ଅସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ ବିଶ୍ରାମ ନେଲା ପରେ, ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ ମିଶିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲା । ଝିଅ ମାନେ ବି ଆଇ, ଆଇ କହି ଥିବା ପରିହାସ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଏଠିକା ଚଳଣି ରିତି ନୀତି ଶିଖେଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ଚଳେଇ ଥାନ୍ତି । ତାପରେ ଦିନେ ମିତା ବୋଉ କୁ କହିଲେ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ଶାଶୁ ଙ୍କ ବାହାଘର କୁ ଯିବାକଥା । ହଠାତ୍ କରି କଥାଟା ବୋଉ ବୁଝି ପାରିଲାନି । ଦୁଇ/ତିନି ଥର ମିତା ବୁଝେଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲାପରେ ବୋଉ କିଛି ସମୟ ହତବାକ୍ ହୋଇ ମିତା ଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ କୁ ବଲ ବଲ କରି କେବଳ ଚାହିଁଲା । କିଛି କ୍ଷଣ ରହିଯାଇ ପରେ କହିଲା;

- “କଣ କହୁଛୁଲୋ ତୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି ନା ଥିବା କରୁଛୁ ଲୋ ।”

- “ନାହିଁ ଲୋ ବୋଉ !! ସତ କହୁଚି । ଏଠି ଏପରି ହୁଏ । ଏହା ଏପରି କିଛି ବିଚିତ୍ର କଥା ନୁହେଁ । ଏ ଆମେରିକା । ଏଠି ଆହୁରି ଅନେକ କଥା ଘଟେ ତୁ କେବେ କାନ ରେ ଶୁଣି ନଥିବୁ କି କଲ୍ପନା କରି ପାରି ନଥିବୁ । କିଛି ଦିନ ରହିଲା ପରେ ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ତୁ ସବୁ ଜାଣି ଯିବୁ ।”

- “ମୋର ଏ ବୟସ ରେ ଏଗୁଡ଼ା ଜାଣିବା କଣ ଦରକାର ଲୋ ମା !! ମୁଁ ଏଠୁ ଶିଘ୍ର ଚାଲିଗଲେ ମୋର ଶାନ୍ତି । ମୋ ଦେଶ, ମୋ ଘର ଦ୍ୱାର, ମୋ ପୁଅ ବୋହୁ ନାତି ନାତୁଣୀ ଙ୍କ ପାଖେ ରହିଲେ ମୋର ଆନନ୍ଦ ।”

- “କାହିଁ ! ଆମେ କଣ ତୋର କେହି ନୁହେଁ । ନା ମୋ ଝିଅ ଆନେ ତୋର ନାତୁଣୀ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି ନା ରମେଶ ତୋର ପୁଅ ନ ହେଲେ ନାହିଁ ତୁଆଁଲ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି ।”

ଝିଅ ମିତା ଙ୍କ ଅଭିମାନ କଣ୍ଠର ଭାଷା ବୋଉ ବୁଝି ପାରି ରୁପ୍ ରହିଗଲେ ସେଦିନ । ତାଙ୍କ ମନର ସଂଗଠ୍ୟ କିନ୍ତୁ ଦୁର ହୋଇ ପାରୁ ନାହିଁ ଯେତେ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେ ବି । ସବୁଦିନ ସେଇ କଥାକୁ ଗୁଡେଇ ତୁଡେଇ ଏପଟ ସେପଟ କରି ଖାଲି ପଚାରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ତାଆ ପାଇଁ ଏହା ଏକ ବିଶ୍ୱ ବାହାର ର ଭାରି ଉଦ୍‌ଭଟ କଥା ଟାଏ । ଏହା କିପରି ସମ୍ଭବ ଓ ସମିଚୀନ । ଶାଶୁ କିପରି ବିବାହ କରିବାକୁ ଯାଉଛି ପୁଅ, ବୋହୁ, ନାତୁଣୀ ଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ । ମିତା ଯେତେ ଅନ୍ୟ କଥା ପଚାରିଲେ ବି ବୋଉ ର ମନ ଭୁଲେଇବାକୁ , ସେ ବୁଲେଇ ବଙ୍କେଇ ପୁଣି ସେଇ ଆଧ୍ୟାୟ କୁ ଚାଲିଆସେ । କାହିଁକି ସେ ଏ ବୟସ ରେ ବିବାହ କରୁଛି । ତାକୁ ବର କିଏ ଖୋଜି ଦେଲା । ଏ ବୟସ ରେ ସେ ବର ଚିଏ କୋଉଠୁ ପାଇଲା ଏମିତି ଏମିତି ଅନେକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ତା ମନରେ ।

ବର ଖୋଜି ଦେବ କିଏ ! ଏଠି କିଏ କାହା ପାଇଁ ବର ଖୋଜି ଦିଅନ୍ତିନି ଆମ ଦେଶ ପରି । ସେ ନିଜେ ଖୋଜି ନିଜେ ବାହା ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ଯାହାଙ୍କୁ ବିବାହ କରିବାକୁ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ପାଞ୍ଚ ବର୍ଷ ହେବ ସ୍ୱାଗୀ ରୋହଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ଏବେ ଏକାକୀ ରୁହନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ଦୁଇଟି ଝିଅ ବିବାହିତ । ନିଜ ନିଜ ଘର ସଂସାର ଜଂଜାଳ ରେ ଲିଓ । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ପୁରୁସତ ନାହିଁ ଆସି ବାପ କଥା ବୁଝିବାକୁ । ବାପା ଙ୍କର ବି ଜଣେ କେହି ପାଖରେ ରହିବା ଦରକାର ଏକାକି ଜୀବନ ରେ ସାହା ଭରଣା ହେବାକୁ । ମନ ଖୋଲି ଦି ପଦ କଥା ବାଣୀ ହେବାକୁ । କାହା ସଂଗେ କୁଆଡେ ଚିକେ ବୁଲି ଯିବାକୁ । ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କ ର ଏ ସବୁ ପାଇଁ ସମୟ ବା କାହିଁ ।

ସେ ଭଦ୍ର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ପ୍ରତି ରବିବାର ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚ କୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ସେଇଠାରେ ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ର ଶାଶୁ ଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଦେଖା, ଚିହ୍ନା ଜଣା ପରିଚୟ । ତା ପରେ ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ, ଘନିଷ୍ଟତା ଏବେ ପରିଣୟ । ସେ ଏବେବି ବେଶ୍ ଶକ୍ତିଶାଳୀ । ତଥାପି ବୋଉ ଏତେ ସହଜ ରେ କଥା ଚି ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ପାରୁନି । ନ କରିବା ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ମଧ୍ୟ । ସେ ଯେଉଁ ପରିବେଶ ଭିତରେ ବଢି ଆସିଛି ତାହା ଏ ସବୁ ଗ୍ରହଣୀୟ ନୁହେଁ । ମିତା ବୋଉ କୁ ଏଥିପାଇଁ ଦୋଷ ନଦେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବୋଉ ଆଜି କାଲି ଭାରତରେ ଥିବା ତାର ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀ, ଝିଆରୀ, ପୁତୁରା, ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ, ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ମାନଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଫେନ ରେ କଥାବାଣୀ ହେଲା ବେଳେ ଖାଲି କହୁଛି ମୁଁ ଯାଉଛି ଶାଶୁ ବାହାଘର ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଏବଂ ହସି ହସି ଗଠୁଥାଏ । ସେପଟୁ ବି ଅନେକ ଥିବା ପରିହାସ ପୁଣି ଉତ୍ତର ବୋଉ ର ହସ କୁ ଦୁଇଗୁଣିତ କରୁଥାଏ ।

ମିତାଙ୍କୁ ଏ ସବୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁ ନଥାଏ । ଏପରି ହସିବା ଥିବା ପରିହାସ କରିବା ବୋଉ ର ବଡ ଅଭଦ୍ରାପୀ ବୋଲି ଭାବୁଥିଲେ ହେଁ ବୋଉ କୁ କିଛି କହି ପାରୁ ନଥାନ୍ତି । ଏଥିରେ ଏତେ ହସିବାର ବା କଣ ଅଛି । କଣ ଏଥିରେ ବେଦ ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଯିବା କଥା ଟାଏ ଘଟିଗଲା । ସେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ବୋଉ ପାଇଁ ଏହା ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଏକ ଅଲୌକିକ ସମ୍ପାଦ ତଥାପି ଏତେ ଟା ହସିବାର କାରଣ ମିତା ଖୋଜି ପାଉ ନଥାନ୍ତି । ବୋଉ ବାହାଘର କୁ ଯାଇ ଯଦି ଏପରି ଅଭଦ୍ରାପୀ ଦେଖାଏ ?? ଅବଶ୍ୟ ତାକଥା ସେଠାରେ କେହି ବୁଝି ପାରିବେନି କି ସେ କାହା କଥା ବୁଝି ପାରିବନି । ତଥାପି ତା ପରିହାସ ପୁଣି ହସ କୁ ତ ଲୋକ ବୁଝି ପାରିବେ ।

ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ଓ ତାର ସ୍ୱାମୀ ରବର୍ଟ ର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସହଯୋଗିତା ରେ ତାର ଶାଶୁ ଙ୍କ ବିବାହ, ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ଖୁବ୍ ଅଳ୍ପ ଲୋକ ଙ୍କ ଗହଳି ରେ ବଡ ସମାରୋହରେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ମିତା ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ମାର୍ଯ୍ୟା ଓ ତା ଶାଶୁ ଶୁଶୁର ଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ବିନିମୟ ପରେ ଅନ୍ୟ କିଛି ଦର୍ଶନୀୟ ଯାଗା ବୁଲାଇ କରି ସେମାନେ ଘର କୁ ଫେରି ଥିଲେ । ମିତା ଙ୍କ ଡରିବା ଅନୁସାରେ ବୋଉ ସେଠାରେ କିଛି

ଅଘଟଣ କାଣ୍ଡ କରି ନାହିଁ ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ତା ମୁଖ ରୁ ହସ ଟା ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରୂପେ ଲିଭି ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଫେରନ୍ତି ବାଟରେ ବହୁତ ରୁପ୍ ଟାପ୍ ହୋଇ ଗାଡ଼ି ବାହାର କୁ ଚାହିଁ ବସିଥାଏ । ଯାହା ପଚାରିଲେ କିଛି, ସଂକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ ରେ ହୁଁ ନାହିଁ ରେ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଉଥାଏ କେବଳ । କଣ ହେଲା ବୋଉ ର ମିତା କିଛି ଭାବି ପାରିଲେନି । ସେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ବୋଉ ପାଇଁ ଏ ସବୁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରୂପେ ନୂଆ ହେଲେ ବି ତା ପ୍ରଗଳଭତା ଟା ହଠାତ୍ କରି କୁଆଡ଼େ ଚାଲିଗଲା ।

ବୋଉ ଜ୍ଞ ଦେହ ଭଲ ଅଛିତ ! ରମେଶ ଡ୍ରାଇଭର ସିଟ୍ ରୁ ପଚାରିଲେ । ଓଃ !! ବୋଉ ର ଖାପ ଛତା ହାବ ଭାବ କୁ ରମେଶ ବି ଲକ୍ଷ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ମିତା ଧରି ନେଲେ ଏଠାରୁ ସେଠାରୁ ଏପରି ଯାତ୍ରା କରିବା ବୋଧେ ବୋଉକୁ କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ କରି ଦେଇଛି । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତୁମ୍ଭ ରହିଛି ।

ଘର କୁ ଆସିଲା ପରେ, ମିତା କହିଲେ ବୋଉ କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା କୁ ତା ଭଉଣୀ ବା ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ପୁଅଝିଅ ଜ୍ଞ ସଂଗେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରିବାକୁ । ଦୁଏତ ତାର ଘର ମନେ ପଡୁଛି ବା ପୁଅ ବୋହୁ ନାତି ନାତୁଣୀ ଜ୍ଞ କଥା ମନେ ପଡୁଛି । ସେମାନ ଜ୍ଞ ଠାରୁ ଦୂର ରେ ପୁଣି ଏତେ ଦୂର କୁ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ସେ ଆସିଛି । ତା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ସେମାନ ଜ୍ଞ ସହିତ ବାର୍ତ୍ତାଳାପ ରୁ ମିତା ବୋଉ ର ମାନସିକ ସ୍ଥିତି ମଧ୍ୟ ସହଜ ରେ କଳନା କରିନେବେ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଉ କହିଲା - ନା ଥାଉ ଲୋ ଝିଅ । ମୁଁ ଖାଲି ସେଇ ଶାଶୁ ର ବାହାଘର କଥା ଭାବୁଛି । ତାକୁ ପଅଁଷଠି, ମତେ ଆସି ଅତସଠି ତା ଠୁ ତିନି ବର୍ଷ ମାତ୍ର ବଡ଼ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଁ ଦିଶୁଛି ତାଠୁ ବୟସ ରେ କୋଡିଏ ବର୍ଷ ବଡ଼ ପରି । ସେ କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ସଜେଇ ମଜେଇ କେତେ ହସ ଖୁସିରେ ପୁଣି ଥରେ ବାହା ହେଇ ଏ ବୟସ ରେ ଘର ସଂସାର କରିବାକୁ ଆଗଭର ହୋଇଛି ।

ଆମକୁ ଦେଖ । ଆମେ ବଞ୍ଚି ଥାଉ ଥାଉ ମୃତ ବୋଲି ଆମକୁ ଧରି ନେଇଛୁ । କୌଣସି ଥିରେ ଆଗ୍ରହ ନାହିଁ ଉତ୍ସାହ ନାହିଁ ଧଳା ଶାଢ଼ି ଖଣ୍ଡେ ପିନ୍ଧି, ନିରାଭରଣ ହୋଇ, ହଜାର ପ୍ରକାର ଉପାସ ବତରେ ଏ ଦୁର୍ବଳ ଶରୀର କୁ ଧରି ପାଦେ ଚାଲିବାର ସମ୍ଭାବ ବି ନାହିଁ । ମରିନୁ ବୋଲି କେବଳ ବଞ୍ଚିଛୁ । ତାକୁ କଣ ବଞ୍ଚିବା କୁହାଯାଏ ।

“କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦୁହେଁ ପରସ୍ପର କୁ ଧରି ନାଚୁଥିଲେ କହୁତ । ଦୁହିଁ ଜ୍ଞ ମୁହଁ ରେ ଅନାବିଳ ହସ । ଏଥିରେ ଦୈହିକ କାମନା ର ଲେଶ ମାତ୍ର ଚିହ୍ନ ନାହିଁ । ଏ କେବଳ ଆତ୍ମା ସହିତ ଆତ୍ମା ର ମିଳନ , ମନ ସହିତ ମନର । ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ଵ ର ଏକ ତୁଚ୍ଛି ଏକ ସ୍ଵାସରନାମା ମାତ୍ର । ଏକାକୀ ହୋଇ ଅଲଗା ଅଲଗା ହୋଇ ଏକ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ, ନିରୁତ୍ସାହିତ, ନିରଳସ ଜୀବନ ଯାପନ କରିବା ଅପେକ୍ଷା ଜଣ କ ସହିତ ଏକାଠି ରହି ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ହସ ଖୁସି ରେ ଦିନ ବିତେଇଦବା ଭଲ । ଏଥିରେ କ୍ଷତି କଅଣ । ସଜ ମାଛ ରେ ଯୋକ ପକେଇବାକୁ ଏଠି ଲୋକ ବି ନାହଁନ୍ତି ।”

“କିନ୍ତୁ …… କିନ୍ତୁ କଣ ଲୋ ବୋଉ । ତୁ ଭାବୁଛୁ ଏପରି ବଞ୍ଚିବା ଉଚିତ୍ ବୋଲି ”। ବୋଉ ମୁହଁ ରୁ ମିତା ଏପରି ଶୁଣିବେ ବୋଲି କେବେ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ କରି ନଥିଲେ । ସତ୍ୟାହେ ହେବ ଯେ ହସ ସମ୍ବରଣ କରି ପାରୁ ନଥିଲା, ସେ ପୁଣି ଏପରି କଥା କହୁଛି ।

- “ଆମେ ସିନା ଆମ ସାମାଜିକ ଲକ୍ଷଣ ରେଖା ଟପି ପାରି ଏ ସବୁ କଥା ଚିନ୍ତା କରି ପାରିବୁନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତୁମେ ମାନେ …ମୋ ନାତୁଣୀ ମାନେ କାହିଁକି ଏପରି ଅକାଳ ବାର୍ତ୍ତାଳ୍ୟ ଯତ୍ନଶା ଭୋଗ କରିବେ । ମୁଁ ଖାଲି ବାହାଘରୁ ଆସିଲା ଦିନୁ ସେଇ କଥା ଟା ଭାବୁଛି । ଶାଶୁ ଯାହା କରିଛନ୍ତି ଠିକ୍ କରିଛନ୍ତି । “ସଂସାରେ ଥିବ ଯେତେ ଦିନ, ଆନନ୍ଦ କରୁଥିବ ମନ” ।”

- “ଆମ ପୂର୍ବଜ ମାନେ ସିନା ଲେଖି ଦେଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ଏ ସବୁ କଥା କିନ୍ତୁ ଆନନ୍ଦ କରିବାର ବାଟ ବତେଇ ଦେଇ ଯାଇ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ଦେଖୁନୁ ରୁକ୍ମଣୀ ମାଉସୀ କୁ (ବୋଉ ର ମାଉସୀ ଝିଅ ଭଉଣୀ) ତିରିସ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସ ରୁ ବିଧବା ହୋଇ ସାରା ଜୀବନ ବିତେଇ ଦେଇଛି ।

ଜୀବନ ରେ ସୁଖ କଣ ସେ ଜାଣେ ନାହିଁ । ହସ ମଜା କଣ ସେ ଜାଣେ ନାହିଁ । ଭାଇ ମାନ ଜ୍ଞ ପିଲା ମାନ ଜ୍ଞ ଲାଳନ ପାଳନ ରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରି ଦି ମୁଠା ଖାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଟିକେ ଆଶ୍ରୟ ପାଇଁ ସେଇଠି ପଡ଼ି ରହୁଛି । ଆଜି ପଞ୍ଚାବନ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସ ରେ ଦିଶୁଛି ଶହେ ବର୍ଷ ର ବୁଢ଼ି ପରି । କି ଜୀବନ ସେ ଲୋ ।”

ହୁଁ ସବୁ ଦେଶ ର ନିୟମ କାନୁନ, ସାମାଜିକ ରୀତିନୀତି ଧର୍ମ ରେ ଭଲ କଥା ବି ଅଛି ମନ୍ଦ ବି ଅଛି । ତେବେ ଯୋଉ ପ୍ରଥା ରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଉପକୃତ ହେବେ ସେଇଟାକୁ ଭଲ ବୋଲି ଭାବିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ବୋଉ ର ଆଖି ଓଦା । ବୋଉ ନିଜ ବିଷୟ ରେ କିଛି ନ କହୁ ଥିଲେ ବି ତା ଭିତର ର ମଣୀଷତ୍ଵ ଓ ନାରୀତ୍ଵ ର ନିରବ ଆହ୍ଵାନ ଶୁଣି ପାରୁ ଥିଲେ ମିତା ।

ଶ୍ଵାନ ମନ୍ଦିର

୭୪ ନାରାୟଣ ରଥ

ଭାଗବତରେ ଲେଖା ଅଛି:

“ଅନେକ ଲୋକ ଯହିଁ ମିଳି
ସେଠାରେ ଉପୁଯୟା କଳି”



ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ କାରଣ, ଯଥା ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧୀୟ ଆତ୍ମ ଏବଂ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ସଂରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ସାମୟିକ କଳି ହେବା ସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ନିଜ ନିଜ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କଳିଗୋଳ କରିବାଟା ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନବାଦର ବାହାରେ ନ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆଲୁଙ୍କ ନାମରେ ସୁନି ଓ ସିୟାଲଟ୍ ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବିବାଦ; ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚରେ ସେପରି **catholic** ଏବଂ **protestant** ମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ବିବାଦ । ସେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ହିନ୍ଦୁଧର୍ମୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ୟା ଅନେକ ପରିମାଣରେ ହାଲୁକା । ଧର୍ମ ସମସ୍ୟାର ଲାଘବତା ନିମନ୍ତେ ଆମ ପୂର୍ବ ପୁରୁଷ, ପିତା, ପୁତ୍ରପାତ୍ରମାନେ ଏବଂ ସାଧୁ ସହ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ମାନେ **intelligent design** କରି ଅନେକ ଦେବତା ଏବଂ ଦେବୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଯାହାଦ୍ଵାରା

ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗ ଧରି ଏପରିକି ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବାବା ଓ ସାଧୁ ମାନେ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ କଲେ କୌଶଳରେ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ଜୀବନକୁ ଆଶୁଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ, ଯଦିଓ ହିନ୍ଦୁମାନଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଅନ୍ୟ ଧର୍ମର ଲୋକ ତୁଳନାରେ ବହୁତ କମ୍, ତେବେ ପ୍ରତି ହିନ୍ଦୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡପିଛା ଦେବାଦେବୀଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଅନେକ, ଏବଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମାମଲା ମେଣ୍ଟାଇବା ପାଇଁ ପୂଜାପୂଜିରେ ଲୋକମାନେ ଅନେକ ସମୟ ଲାଗିଥାନ୍ତି ।

ସେ ସିନା ଥିଲା ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନର ମାମଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେଉଁ ଦିନ ଠାରୁ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ମାନେ ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନ ଛାଡି ବିଦେଶାଗତ ହେଲେଣି ଦେବାଦେବୀ ମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ **immigration** ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେଣି । ତାଳିଶ କିମ୍ବା ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ପାଖତ୍ୟ ଦେଶମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ ସେମାନେ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଗୃହରେ କୃଷ୍ଣ, ଭଗବାନ କିମ୍ବା ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଦେବାଦେବୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଅଥବା ତାଙ୍କ ଚିତ୍ର ବା କ୍ୟାଲେଣ୍ଡରକୁ ପୂଜା କରି ସନ୍ତୋଷ ଲାଭ କରୁଥିଲେ । ହେଲେ ସ୍ଵଧର୍ମୀ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ସଂଗେ ସଂଗେ ବିକାଶ ଲାଭ କରିଥିଲା ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନ ଭଳି ମନ୍ଦିର ମାନଙ୍କର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଏବଂ ସେଇ ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣୟ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ନୂତନ ମନ୍ଦିର ମାନଙ୍କର ନିର୍ମାଣର ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଦେଖିଥିଲେ ହିନ୍ଦୁମାନେ । ହେଲେ ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ ପାଇଁ ଅର୍ଥର ଅନେକ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଥାଏ । ସେ ପ୍ରକାର ଅର୍ଥାଗମନ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ସହଧର୍ମୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ଘନତା ଏବଂ ଉଦ୍‌ଯୋଗୀତାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତାଟା ବେଶୀ । ସେହି ପାରିପାର୍ଶ୍ଵିକତା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୁ ନେଇ **New York, San Francisco** ଏବଂ **Detroit** ଭଳି ସହରରେ ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ ଏବଂ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ସଂସ୍ଥାମାନଙ୍କର ଅଗ୍ରଗତି ହେବା ସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ । ପୁଣି ମନ୍ଦିର ମାନଙ୍କର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଦେବତାଙ୍କୁ ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣୟ କରିବା ଏବଂ ମନ୍ଦିର ନାମ କରଣ କରିବାଟା ଅନେକାଂଶରେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଓ ଗୋଷ୍ଠି ସଚଳତା ଏବଂ ଅର୍ଥିକ ଦାନ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରିଥାଏ । ସେହି ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ କେଉଁଠି ତିରୁପତି ମନ୍ଦିର ତ, କେଉଁଠି ଗଣେଶ ମନ୍ଦିର, ଅଥବା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର । ତାହାର ଅର୍ଥ ନୁହେଁ ଯେ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଦେବାଦେବୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେ ସମସ୍ତ ମନ୍ଦିର ମାନଙ୍କରେ ସ୍ଥାନ ଦିଆଯାଇ ନଥାଏ । ତେବେ ସେ ସମସ୍ତ ଦେବତା, ଦେବୀ ଓ ଦଶାବତାର ବିଗ୍ରହମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ମନ୍ଦିରର ବାହାରେ ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ କୋଣରେ ସ୍ଥାପନା କରାଯାଇ ରଖାଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି । ଭକ୍ତମାନେ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଦେବୀ ଓ ଦେବତାଙ୍କୁ ବୃହତାଂଶ ଧ୍ୟାନ କଲାପରେ **side** ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଦଶ ପନ୍ଦର ସେକେଣ୍ଡ ଦେବାଟା ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ମନେ କରନ୍ତି ।

ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଭାରତୀୟ ମାନଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ବର୍ଦ୍ଧନକୁ ନେଇ ଆମେରିକାର ବଡ଼ଠାରୁ ଛୋଟ ସହର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ ଏକ ସାଂପ୍ରଦାୟିକ ପ୍ରଥା ହୋଇ ପଡିଥିଲା । ସେହି ସମୀକ୍ଷା ମଧ୍ୟରେ **Agraville** ରେ ବାସ କରୁଥିବା ହିନ୍ଦୁମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏକ ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣର ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଦେଖିଥିଲେ । ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ହିଁ ଯୋଜନାର ସଫଳତାର ପ୍ରଥମ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ । ସଫଳତା ସମ୍ମିଳୀତ ଅଧ୍ୟବସାୟ ହୋଇପାରେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଉଦ୍ୟମଟା ଅନେକ ଭାଗରେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ । ଅନେକ ଲୋକ ସମାରୋହ କିମ୍ବା ସମ୍ମିଳନୀକୁ ଆସିପାରନ୍ତି, କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ସମସ୍ତର ଆବାହକ କେବଳ ଜଣେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଥାଆନ୍ତି । ସେମାନେହିଁ ହେଲେ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ‘ପଥ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶକ ନେତା’ । ସେହି ପରିଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ‘ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ’ର ଆବାହକ ଥିଲେ **Agraville** ର ବାସିନ୍ଦା ଏବଂ ‘**Panda Brothers Veterinary Clinics**’ର **proprietor** ଡକ୍ଟର **Dan** ଓରଫ ଧନଞ୍ଜୟ ଏବଂ ଡକ୍ଟର **Chuck** ଓରଫ ଚକ୍ରଧର ପଣ୍ଡା । ଯଦିଓ **Drs. Dan** ଏବଂ **Chuck** ପଣ୍ଡା ସହଜୀକରଣ ପ୍ରଥାରେ

ନିଜର ନାମକୁ ସାମାନ୍ୟ କ୍ରିଷ୍ଣାୟାନୀ ପୁଟ ଦେଇଥିଲେ, ମାତ୍ର ହୃଦୟରେ ସେମାନେ ଥିଲେ ଅସଲ୍ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଏବଂ ସେହି ପ୍ରେରଣାର ଅନୁଭୂତିରୁ ଦୁହେଁ ମନ୍ଦିର ତୁଳନାର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖିଥିଲେ ଏବଂ meeting ର ଆବାହନ କରିଥିଲେ ।

ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ ଯେ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ସଂପ୍ରଦାୟର ହିତକାରୀ, ସେଥିରେ meeting ର ଯୋଗଦାତାମାନେ ନିଃସନ୍ଦେହ ଥିଲେ । ଅନ୍ତତଃ ପକ୍ଷେ ସାଂପ୍ରଦାୟିକ ‘ସମାବେଶ ସ୍ଥଳୀ’ ଭାବରେ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ସ୍ଥାପନାରେ ମନ୍ଦିର ଯେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିଥାଏ ସେଥିରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଥିଲା । ମନ୍ଦିରସ୍ଥ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ସାଧୁଭାବନା ଯେ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରାକୁ ସ୍ଥୂଳୀତ କରିଥାଏ ତାହା ମଧ୍ୟ ଅନେକ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ । ପୁନଶ୍ଚ ପିଲାଛୁଆ ମାନଙ୍କର ଦରକାର ପଢ଼ୁ ନପଢ଼ୁ, ପ୍ରଥମ ପୁରୁଷ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ମନ୍ଦିର ଯେ ପ୍ରୟୋଜନ ଉପଯୋଗୀ ସଂସ୍ଥା ତାହା ଅନୁଭବ କରିବା ପାଇଁ କାହାରିକୁ ଅସୁବିଧା ହୋଇ ନଥିଲା । ଦେଶରୁ ଭ୍ରମଣ କରି ଆସୁଥିବା ବାପା, ମା, ଜାତି କୁଟୁମ୍ବ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଯେ ହିତଜନକ ହୋଇଥାଏ ତାହା ଅନେକ ସ୍ୱୀକାର କରିଥିଲେ । ପୁଣି ପୂଜାପର୍ବାଣୀରେ ଅନେକ ବନ୍ଧୁମିଳନ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରସାଦ ଭୋଜନ ଯେ ଆମୋଦ ଦାୟକ, ତାହାମଧ୍ୟ ଥିଲା ଏକ ଅକାଟ୍ୟ ଯୁକ୍ତି । ସେଇ ସମସ୍ତର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ନେଇ Agraville ର ହିନ୍ଦୁମାନେ ସମ୍ମତ ଥିଲେ ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ ନିମନ୍ତେ । ହେଲେ କଥାଟା ଆସି ଅଟକି ଥିଲା କେଉଁ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ନାମରେ ମନ୍ଦିର ସ୍ଥାପନା କରାଯିବ । ଯଦିଓ ସମସ୍ତେ ଭାରତୀୟ ହିନ୍ଦୁ, ଏବଂ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସବୁ ଦେବତାମାନେ ପୂଜ୍ୟ, ପୁରାତନ ଜୀବନର ଅନୁଭୂତି ଏବଂ ସ୍ୱଭାବ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ଭକ୍ତିକୁ ଅନେକଭାବରେ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିଥାଏ । ସେହେତୁ ବଙ୍ଗଳାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ କାଳୀମନ୍ଦିର, ତାମିଲ୍ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବାଲାଜୀ ମନ୍ଦିର, ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର ଏବଂ ଗୁଜରାଟିମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବିନାୟକ ମନ୍ଦିର, ମୁଖ୍ୟ ମନ୍ଦିର ହେବା ସ୍ୱଭାବିକ । ସେଥିରେ ଯୁକ୍ତି ମଧ୍ୟ କରିବା ଅସମ୍ଭବ । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ତାହାର ଅର୍ଥ ନୁହଁନ୍ତେ ସେ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଠାକୁର ଠାକୁରାଣୀ ମାନେ ବିଜୟ କରିବେ ନାହିଁ । ତେବେ ମନ୍ଦିର ଯାହାଙ୍କ ନାମରେ ହେବ ସେ ହେଲେ ମନ୍ଦିରର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଦେବତା ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କର ଆରତୀ ପ୍ରଥମେ ହେବା ସ୍ୱଭାବିକ । ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ଯୋଜନା ଏବଂ ନାମକରଣ ରେ ସେ ପ୍ରଧାନ ଦେବତା ଏବଂ ଦେବୀ ମାନଙ୍କର କୃପା ଥାଏ କି ନାହିଁ ତାହା ଅନୁମାନ କରିବା ମଣିଷ ପକ୍ଷେ ଅସମ୍ଭବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚଣାସ୍ତ୍ର ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ‘ଦେବାଦେବୀ’ ମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟତା ନିର୍ଭର କରିଥାଏ କତିପେୟ ‘ଅର୍ପଣାଳୀ’ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଯେଉଁମାନଙ୍କ ଉତ୍କୃଷ୍ଟ ଅର୍ପଣକୁ ନେଇ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣୟ ହୋଇଥାଏ, ବିଗ୍ରହ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରାଯାଇଥାଏ ଓ ତାହା ସହିତ ମନ୍ଦିରର ନାମକରଣ ମଧ୍ୟ । ସେହି ବିକଳରେ Detroit ରେ ରାଧାକୃଷ୍ଣ ମନ୍ଦିର, New Jersey ରେ ତିରୁପତି ମନ୍ଦିର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ହେବା ସ୍ୱଭାବିକ, ହେଲେ Agraville ର ହିନ୍ଦୁମାନଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଅନେକ କମ୍, ତେଣୁ ସେଠାରେ ଯେ କେଉଁ ଦେବତାଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରାଯିବ ତାହାର ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣୟ ଟା ଅନେକ ପରେ ହୋଇ ପାଇଥାନ୍ତା । କିନ୍ତୁ ହଠାତ୍ କରି B.N. Rao (ବିଶାଖାପଟ୍ଟନମ୍ ନରସିଂହ ରାଓ) ମତଦାନ କଲେ Agraville ରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ସାଇବାବାଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ହେବ । ତାଙ୍କ କଥା ନ ସରୁଣୁ B.B. Agarwal (ବ୍ୟାପାରିକ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଅଗ୍ରଣ୍ଡାଲ୍) କହିଲେ ‘ଶ୍ରୀ ହନୁମାନ ମନ୍ଦିର’ ସ୍ଥାପନାଟା Agraville ପାଇଁ ଠିକ୍ ହେବ । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରୀ ନରସିଂହମ୍ ଏବଂ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରନିୟର୍ ଅଗ୍ରଣ୍ଡାଲ୍ ଠିକ୍ କହୁଥିଲେ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଦୁର୍ଗା, ଶିବ ଏବଂ ବିଷ୍ଣୁଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଅନେକ ମନ୍ଦିର ହେଲାଣି, କିନ୍ତୁ ସାଇବାବା ଏବଂ ହନୁମାନଙ୍କ ନାମରେ ବେଶୀ ମନ୍ଦିର ଥିବା ଶୁଣା ଯାଇନାହିଁ । ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ମନ୍ଦିର ତୁଳନାରେ ଯେ ଅନେକ ନୂତନତା ଓ ବିଶେଷତ୍ୱ ଅଛି ତାହା ନିଷ୍ଠିତ । ହେଲେ ସେ ସମସ୍ତ ଯୁକ୍ତିର ଶେଷ ଥିଲା ଅର୍ଥ ପାଖରେ, ପଣ୍ଡା ବଦରସ୍ ଦ୍ୱୟ ଥିଲେ professionally ଡାକ୍ତର । ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା ଅନୁଯାୟୀ, ଡାକ୍ତର ମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛ ଅର୍ଥାଗମତାରୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଦାନ ଭାଗଟା ବିଶେଷ ଭାବରେ ହୋଇଥାଏ ଯାହାଦ୍ୱାରା ମନ୍ଦିର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାନଟା ସେମାନଙ୍କ favor ରେ ଥାଏ । ମାତ୍ର Agraville ରେ ବାସ କରୁଥିବା ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଥିଲା ଶୂନ୍ୟ । ସେଇ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଥିଲା Panda brothers ଙ୍କ ଉପରେ, ଯଦିଓ ଦୁହେଁ Dan ଏବଂ Chuck ପଣ୍ଡା ଥିଲେ ‘ପଣ୍ଡା ଭେଷଜ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ସିଦ୍ଧ’ । ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ Dan Panda ଙ୍କୁ ହନୁମାନ ମନ୍ଦିର ସ୍ଥାପନାର ମୋଡ଼ଟା (ପୁଣି ପ୍ରଥମ meeting ରେ) ସାମାନ୍ୟ ବିବ୍ରତ କରିଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ meeting ର ଆବାହକ ହିସାବରେ Dan Panda ରୁପ୍ ରହିଥିଲେ । ମାତ୍ର T.N. Reddi (ତାମିଲ୍ ନାଡୁ ରେଡି) ଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସେଇଟା ଯେମିତି ଅନୁକୂଳ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ନଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ରେଡିବାରୁ ଡାକ୍ତର ଉତ୍ତେଜନାକୁ ଲୁଚାଇଦିଅନ୍ତେ କରି ରଖିପାରି ନଥିଲେ ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଅଗତ୍ୟା ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ । “ଏତେ ଦେବତା ଦେବୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଏ ହନୁମାନ ମନ୍ଦିର ସ୍ଥାପନାର ଅର୍ଥଟା କ’ଣ ? ହେଲା ବା ରାମଭକ୍ତ ହନୁମାନଙ୍କର ଅନେକ ମନ୍ଦିର ହିନ୍ଦୁସ୍ଥାନରେ ଅଛି ହେଲେ ଏଠାରେ ତାଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର ହେବା କ’ଣ ଦରକାର ? ଗୋରୁ ଗାଈ ମାନେ ଭାରତରେ ପୂଜା ପାଆନ୍ତି । କେତେକ ଲୋକ ମୁଷା ଏବଂ ସାପକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ପୂଜା କରନ୍ତି । ଗଣେଶଙ୍କ ବାହନ ମୁଷା, ଶିବଙ୍କ ବାହନ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ପୁଣି ସାପ, ମୟୂର, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ନାମରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ମନ୍ଦିର ତୋଳାଅ ।” ସର୍ବସାଧାରଣରେ ରେଡିବାରୁଙ୍କର ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟ B.B. Agarwal ଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ୍ୟ ଅପମାନ ଭଳି ଲାଗିଥିଲା । ସେ ହଠାତ୍ ରାଗରେ ପକ୍ଷମ ହୋଇ ଉଠିଥିଲେ । “ରେଡି ତମେ କ’ଣ କହୁଛ ? ବଜ୍ରାଙ୍ଗଳୀ ହନୁମାନ କ’ଣ ଦେବତା ନୁହନ୍ତି ? ତମେ ହିନ୍ଦୁଧର୍ମ ବିଷୟରେ କ’ଣ ଜାଣିଛ ? ବାରୁପାଣି ଖାଇ କ’ଣ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ଡକାଯାଏ ?”

Dan Panda ଭାବୁଥିଲେ, ଯେମିତି ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣର ସେଇଠି ସମାପ୍ତି । କାହିଁ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ କଥା ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲାଣି କିଏ କ’ଣ ଖାଉଛି । Chuck Panda ଭାବୁଥିଲେ ଏ ଗୁଡାଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ମନ୍ଦିର କ’ଣ, ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବସି ମଧ୍ୟ ତାହା ପିଇ ହେବ ନାହିଁ । ମନ୍ଦିର

କୁଆଡେ, ଠାକୁର କୁଆଡେ - କିଛି ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସେଠାରେ କେଉଁ ଠାକୁର ବସିବେ ସେ ନେଇ ଏତେ କଳିଗୋଳ । ପରେ କ’ଣ କରିବେ ଏମାନେ ? ମନ୍ଦିର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଯେ ସେଇଠି ଶେଷ ତାହା ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ଜଣା ପଡୁଥିଲା । ତେବେ Dan Panda ମନରେ ସ୍ଥିରତା ଆଣି କଥାଟାକୁ ବେଶି ଆଗେଇବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସମ୍ମୁଳିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିଲେ । ମାତ୍ର ଏଥର ଚକ୍ ପଣ୍ଡା ତାଙ୍କ ଭାବନାର ଗତି ରୁଞ୍ଜ କଲେ ।

Chuck Panda କହିଲେ, “ଦେଖନ୍ତୁ ଆପଣ ମାନେ ଯେଉଁ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେଣି ତାହା ଦ୍ଵାରା ମନ୍ଦିର କ’ଣ ଆମ୍ଭେମାନେ ଗୋଟିଏ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ବସି କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ମଧ୍ୟ କରିପାରିବାନାହିଁ । ମନ୍ଦିର କଥାତ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇନାହିଁ, ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ବିଶେଷ ଆଲୋଚନା ମଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇନାହିଁ, ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ଲତ୍ୟାଦି କଥା କେହି ଭାବିନାହାନ୍ତି । ଆପଣମାନେ କେଉଁ ମନ୍ଦିର ହେବ ସେ ଉପରେ ମାତ୍ର ଗୋଳ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେଣି । ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ତ ପରେ ଅଛି । ସେ ହନୁମାନ ମନ୍ଦିର ହେଉ ବା ସୀତାରାମ ମନ୍ଦିର ହେଉ, କିମ୍ବା କାଳୀ ମନ୍ଦିର ହେଉ, ଭଗବାନ ତ ସବୁଠାରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି । ଆପଣ ସମସ୍ତେ ଗୀତା ପଢ଼ିଛନ୍ତି । ଗୀତାର ଶେଷ ଶ୍ଳୋକ ହେଲା ‘ମୋକ୍ଷ ସମ୍ଭାଷ୍ୟ ଯୋଗ’ । ସେଥିରେ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଅର୍ଜୁନଙ୍କୁ କହିଥିଲେ -

ଇଶ୍ଵର ସର୍ବଭୂତାନାମ୍ ହୃଦେଶେଷ ଅର୍ଜୁନ ଚିନ୍ତତି
ଭ୍ରାମୟନ୍ ସର୍ବ ଭୂତାନୀ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରାରୁଢାନ୍ତି ମାୟାୟା । (୧୮ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ, ଶ୍ଳୋକ ୬୧)

ତା’ର ଅର୍ଥ ହେଲା ଯେ ଭଗବାନ ସମସ୍ତ ପ୍ରାଣୀଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ନିଜ ମାୟାରେ ପ୍ରକଟିତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । ତାହା ବୃକ୍ଷ ହେଉ, କି ନାଗ ହେଉ, କି ପେଟା ହେଉ, କି ମୟୂର ହେଉ, ସେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଦେହରେ ବିରାଜିତ । ସେଇ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ଭାବନାକୁ ନେଇ ଆମ ପୂର୍ବପୁରୁଷମାନେ ମୂଷା ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ମୟୂର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତକୁ ପୂଜା କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ତେବେ ଆଗେ ମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ ପାଇଁ ଅର୍ଥର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ହେଉ ତା’ପରେ ଦେଖାଯିବ ଦୁର୍ଗାମାଧବ ମନ୍ଦିର କରାଯିବ କି ଶ୍ଵାନ ମନ୍ଦିର କରାଯିବ ।” Dan Panda ଭାବୁଥିଲେ Chuck ର କଣ ଆଜି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଠିକ୍ ନାହିଁକି ? ସେମାନେ ତ ହନୁମାନଙ୍କ ନାମରେ ଏତେ ମାତ୍ର ଗୋଳକୁ ଚାଲିଗଲେଣି, ଏ କଣ କହୁଛି ‘ଶ୍ଵାନ ମନ୍ଦିର’ ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିବ ?

ମାତ୍ର ଚକ୍ ପଣ୍ଡା ଅନର୍ଗଳ ସ୍ଵରରେ କହିଚାଲିଆନ୍ତି “ଆପଣ ମାନେ ଭାବୁଥିବେ ମୋର ଶ୍ଵାନ ମନ୍ଦିର କହିବାର ତାପୂର୍ଯ୍ୟତା କ’ଣ ? ଦେଖନ୍ତୁ ଆମର ଯେତେ ଦେବତା ଏବଂ ଦେବୀ ମାନେ ଅଛନ୍ତି, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ବାହନଙ୍କୁ ଆମେ ପୂଜା କରୁଛୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆପଣମାନେ କହନ୍ତୁ ସେ ମୂଷା ହେଉ କି ଗରୁଡ ହେଉ, ସେ ସମସ୍ତ ପ୍ରାଣୀମାନଙ୍କର ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତି ଅବଦାନ କ’ଣ ? ଗଣେଶଙ୍କ ବାହନ ମୂଷା, ମଣିଷର କ’ଣ କ୍ଷତି ନ କରେ, ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଙ୍କ ବାହନ ପେଟା ଶର ଶୁଣିଲେ ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ମନରେ ଆତଙ୍କ ଆସେ । ପୁଣି ନାଗସାପ ! ଆମ ଦେଶରେ ସାପକାମୁତାରେ ସହସ୍ର ସହସ୍ର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ପ୍ରାଣ ହରାଇଛନ୍ତି । ତେବେ କିଏ ‘ନାଗ ପଞ୍ଚମୀ’ ପାଳୁଛି ତ କିଏ ଶିବରାତ୍ରିରେ ଷଷ୍ଠ ପୂଜା କରୁଛି । ଅଥଚ ମନୁଷ୍ୟର ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ବିଶ୍ଵସ୍ତ୍ର ପୋଷାଜୀବ ଶ୍ଵାନର ପୂଜା ନାହିଁ । ଶ୍ଵାନ, ଯାହାର ବିଶ୍ଵସ୍ତ୍ରତା ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ଅବଦାନ, ଅନ୍ଧର ସେ ଆଖି ସମାନ, ତା’ର ତ କୌଣସି ସମୀକ୍ଷା ନାହିଁ ପୁରାଣରେ । ମହାଭାରତରେ କେବଳ ଯୁଧିଷ୍ଠିର ତାଙ୍କ ଶ୍ଵାନ ସହ ସିଧା ସ୍ଵର୍ଗକୁ ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଭୃଗିକଂପ ହେଉ, କିମ୍ବା ଝଡ ହେଉ, କିମ୍ବା ଚୋର ଧରିବା ହେଉ ସବୁଠାରେ ଶ୍ଵାନର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ନିଆଯାଏ । ହସପିଟାଲରେ ଶ୍ଵାନ ହିଁ ଯାଇ ରୋଗୀକୁ ଉତ୍ସାହ ଦିଏ । ଏ ସମସ୍ତରେ କେହି ହଂସ, ମୂଷା, ମୟୂର, କିମ୍ବା ସିଂହର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ନିଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ମୋତେ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଲାଗୁଛି ଯେ ଆମର ପିତା ଏବଂ ପ୍ରପିତାମହମାନେ କେଉଁ କାରଣରୁ କୁକୁର ଏବଂ ବିଲେଇ, ଯେଉଁମାନେ ହେଲେ ମାନବର ବିଶ୍ଵସ୍ତ୍ର, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେବତା, ଦେବତାଙ୍କ ବାହନ ହେବାରୁ ବିରତି ଦେଇଥିଲେ ? ଅନେକ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଶ୍ଵାନକୁ ସମସ୍ତ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟରୁ ବଞ୍ଚିତ କରି ତାହାପ୍ରତି ଅନେକ ଅନ୍ୟାୟ କରାଯାଇଛି । ବାସ୍ତବିକ୍ ଶ୍ଵାନ ଭଳି ପ୍ରାଣୀ ମାନବର ପୂଜା ଯୋଗ୍ୟ । ଆମେ ବିଶ୍ଵକର୍ମା ପୂଜାଦିନ ମେସିନ, କୋଦାଳ, ଲଙ୍କଳ ପୂଜା କରୁଛେ କାରଣ ତାହା ଦ୍ଵାରା ଆମ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସଂପନ୍ନ ହେଉଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ କୁକୁର ମାନବର ଏତେ ବିଶ୍ଵସ୍ତ୍ର, ତା’ର ତ କିଛି ଆରାଧନା ହେଉନାହିଁ । ମୋ ମତରେ Agraville ରେ ବରଂ ହନୁମାନ ମନ୍ଦିର ନ କରି ଶ୍ଵାନ ମନ୍ଦିର ସ୍ଥାପନା କରିବାଟା ବିଶେଷ ସମିଚାନ ହେବ ।”

କଥାରେ ଯେ କହନ୍ତି “ଲୋକ ମହରଗ ରୁ ଯାଇ କାନ୍ଥାରରେ ପଡେ” । Chuck Panda ଯେ ହନୁମାନ ମନ୍ଦିର ଦ୍ଵୟକୁ ନେଇ ଶ୍ଵାନ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ସଂଭବିତ କରିବେ, ଏ ବିଷୟରେ କେହି ଭାବି ନଥିଲେ । ବିଶେଷକରି ତାଙ୍କ ଭାଇ ତାନ୍ ପଣ୍ଡା ।

ଚକ୍ ପଣ୍ଡା କହିଚାଲିଆନ୍ତି, “ଆପଣମାନେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ଇଶ୍ଵର ହେଲେ ଏକ, ସେ ସବୁଠାରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ । ଆପଣମାନେ ଦୁର୍ଗାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଣାମ କରନ୍ତୁ ବା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଣାମ କରନ୍ତୁ, ଆଲ୍ଲାଙ୍କୁ ତାକନ୍ତୁ ବା ହନୁମାନ ଙ୍କୁ ପୂଜାକରନ୍ତୁ ଅଥବା ଶ୍ଵାନଦେବଙ୍କ ବନ୍ଦନା କରନ୍ତୁ, ସେ ସମସ୍ତ ଯିବ ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ଇଶ୍ଵରଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ । ଯେମିତି ଆଦି ଶଙ୍କରାଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କହିଥିଲେ -

ଆକାଶାତ୍ ପତିତ ତ୍ଵୟଃ ଯଥା ଗଚ୍ଛତି ସାଗରଂ
ସର୍ବ ଦେବ ନମସ୍କାର ଗୋବିନ୍ଦମ୍ ପ୍ରତି ଗଚ୍ଛତି ।

ତେଣୁ ମୋ ମତରେ **Agraville** ରେ ଶ୍ଵାନ ମନ୍ଦିର ସ୍ଥାପନା ଅନେକ ନୂତନତା ଏବଂ ବିଶେଷତା ଆଣିବ । ତାହା ମଧ୍ୟ ଶ୍ଵାନ ଭଳି ଏକ ବିଶ୍ଵସ୍ତ ପ୍ରାଣୀର ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ଜଗତରେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ସ୍ଥାନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବ । **Every thing has a beginning** । ଏହା ହିନ୍ଦୁଧର୍ମ ପଛରେ ଅନେକ ନୂତନତା ଏବଂ ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଆଣିବ । **After all, culture always evolves. We cannot afford to be pedantic** । ଚକ୍ ପଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ବକ୍ତବ୍ୟରେ କେତେକ ଲୋକ ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧି ବୋଧ କଲାଭଳି ଜଣାପଡୁଥିଲେ । ହେଲେ ତାନ୍ ପଣ୍ଡା ଅନେକ ପ୍ରୀତି ଲାଭ କରୁଥିଲେ । ମନେ ମନେ ଭାବୁଥିଲେ ‘ଭାଇ ହୋ ତୋ ଝିଅ’ । ଆଉ ଯାହା ହେଉ ନ ହେଉ “ଶ୍ଵାନ ମନ୍ଦିର” **Panda Brothers Veterinary Clinic** ପାଇଁ ଯେ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରୟୋଜନୀୟ ଏବଂ ଅନୁକୂଳ ହେବ ସେଥିରେ ସେ ଦୃଢ଼ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ଥିଲେ ।

(The author expresses his gratitude to Mrs. Rashmi and Professor Brajendra Panda for transforming the story to this format. Let it be known that neither Dr. Dan nor Chuck Panda is related to either of them even in dream).

ଡଃ ନାରାୟଣ ରଥ

Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA



ଦୀପତଳ ଅନ୍ଧାର

ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସ୍ନିଗ୍ଧା ସେନାପତି



ଶୀତଦିନରେ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରୁ ଫୁଲଗ୍ କ୍ୟାନସଲହେବାଟା କିଛି ବଡ଼ କଥା ନହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟତିବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଇପଡ଼ିଥିଲେ ଅଦିତି । ସବୁଠାରୁ ଦୁଃଖର ବିଷୟ, ବିମାନ ବନ୍ଦରର କର୍ମଚାରୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ମଉଜିଗତି । ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ସହାନୁଭୂତି ମିଳିବା ବଡ଼ ଭାଗ୍ୟର କଥା । ବହୁକଷ୍ଟରେ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରୁ ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କରତାମ୍ ଟିକେଟ୍ କନଫର୍ମ କରି ରାତି କଟାଇବା ପାଇଁ ସେନ୍‌ଟୁର୍ ହୋଟେଲକୁ ଫେରିଆସିଥିଲେ ଅଦିତି, ଆଶା ଯେ ଆମ୍ଭଙ୍କରତାମ୍ ତେଟ୍‌ୟେଟ୍ ଟିକେଟ୍ ମିଳିଯିବ । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ କରି ରିସେପସନ୍‌ରୁ ଫେରିଲା ବାଟରେ ଅଚାନକ ନିତୁକୁ ଦେଖି ନିଜ ଆଖିକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରି ପାରି ନଥିଲେ ଅଦିତି । ଦୀର୍ଘ ୨୭ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଦେଖା । ନିତୁର ଚେହେରାରେ ବୟସର ଛାପ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଶେଷ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହୋଇ ନଥିବା ଯୋଗୁ ଚିହ୍ନିବାରେ ଅସୁବିଧା ହୋଇ ନଥିଲା ଅଦତିଙ୍କର । ନିତୁ, ଅଦତିଙ୍କର କଲେଜ ଜିବନର ଅତି ପ୍ରିୟ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ । ଅତ୍ୟାଧୁନିକା ନିତୁ ରେଭେନ୍‌ସା କଲେଜରେ ଟେନିସ୍ ଚମ୍ପିୟାନ୍, ରାଜ୍ୟସ୍ତରିୟ ଟେନିସ୍ ଚମ୍ପିୟାନ୍, ଆଉ ସେତିକି ନୁହେଁ ରାଜ୍ୟସ୍ତରିୟ ଟେନିସ୍ ଚମ୍ପିୟାନ୍ ହିସାବରେ ବହୁ ଖ୍ୟାତି ଲାଭ କରିଥିଲେ । ନିତୁ ଟେନିସ୍ ଖେଳାଳୀ ହିସାବରେ ଉତ୍କଳ ତାରକା ଥିଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପାଇଁ । ଆଉ ଅଦିତି ଥିଲେ ମାଟ୍ରିକ୍ୟୁଲେସନ୍‌ଠାରୁ ବିଏସସି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ପ୍ରଥମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ପ୍ରଥମ । ଦୁଇ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ଅଧ୍ୟାପକ ମହଲ ଛଡ଼ା ଅନ୍ୟ ଛାତ୍ର ଛାତ୍ରୀ ମହଲରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସୁପରିଚିତ ଥିଲେ । ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ବର୍ଷ ଏମେସସି ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଆଗରୁ ନିତୁଙ୍କ ବିବାହ ଆଇ.ଏ. ଏସ୍ ଅଫିସର୍ କଣ୍ଟ୍ରୀ ମହପାତ୍ରଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ସବୁଠାରୁ ମଜାର ବିଷୟ ବିବାହ ଆଗଦିନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ **Mr. IAS** ଙ୍କର ନାଁ କାହାକୁ ଜଣା ନଥିଲା । କାରଣ ନିତୁଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କର ନାଁ ଟି ବଡ଼ ଅପସନ୍ଦ ଥିଲା । ସେତେବେଳେ ବନ୍ଧୁ ମହଲରେ ଏହା ଥିଲା ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ଼ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚାର ବିଷୟ । ନିତୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ରୋଗାରୀ କର୍ବର ପ୍ରେସିଡେଣ୍ଟ । ତାର ଗୃହ ସହିତ କାଠମାଣ୍ଡୁ ଯିବାକଥା ରୋଗାରିୟାନ୍ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ଯୋଗଦେବା ପାଇଁ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ମଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରେନ୍ କ୍ୟାନସଲ୍ ହେଇଗଲା । ଯେ ଥିଲା ଦୁଇ ପ୍ରିୟ ବାନ୍ଧବୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସୁଯୋଗ ପରସ୍କର ସହିତ ସମୟ କଟାଇବା ପାଇଁ ।

ଏମେସସି ରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ଉତ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହେବାପରେ ପ୍ରିୟ ରେଭେନ୍‌ସା କଲେଜରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା ହୋଇ ଯୋଗ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଅଦିତି । ସହକର୍ମୀ ଆଶୁତୋଷଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ମଧୁର ସଂପର୍କରେ ପରିଣତ ହେବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ପଟରେ ଅସିଥିଲା ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ । ବାଣୀବିହାର କୁଳପତିଙ୍କର ବିଦେଶରେ ଗବେଷଣାରତ ସୁପୁତ୍ର ବିକ୍ରମଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଅଦିତିଙ୍କର ବିବାହ ଛ'ଦିନରେ ସ୍ଥିର ହୋଇଥିଲା । ନନା-ବୋଉଙ୍କର ନିଷ୍ଠିକୁ ଟାଳିବାତ ଦୂରର କଥା ଅସମ୍ଭବ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିନଥିଲା ଅଦିତିଙ୍କୁ । ସବୁ ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନର ଉତ୍ତର ସାଇତିରଖିଥିବା ଆଇ, ଅଦିତି ଏବଂ ଆଶୁତୋଷଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ, ସବୁ ଜାଣିଥିଲେବି ନନା ବୋଉଙ୍କର ନିଷ୍ଠିକୁ ନିରବ ସମର୍ଥନ ଜଣାଇ ଚୁପ୍ ରହିଥିଲେ । ଅଦିତିଙ୍କର ମନ କଥା ମନରେ ରହିଗଲା । ଆଉ ନିଜର ପ୍ରିୟ ଜନ୍ମସ୍ଥାନ କଟକ, ଚାକିରୀ, ନନା, ବୋଉ ଏବଂ ବିଶେଷ କରି ଆଇକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଯେ ଏତେ ଦୂରକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ହେବ, ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ବି ଭାବି ନଥିଲେ ଅଦିତି । ଅକ୍ଷର ଚିହ୍ନିନଥିବା ଆଜୁଠିଛାପ ଆଇଙ୍କ ପରି ବୁଝିମଉଁ ମହଲ ଥିଲେ ଅଦିତିଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ରୋଲ୍ ମଡେଲ୍ । ମାତ୍ର ୨୨ବର୍ଷରେ ବିଧବା ହୋଇ ସମଗ୍ର ପରିବାର ଓ ସମାଜ ସହିତ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ କରି ବୋଉକୁ ଉତ୍ତରାଧିକାରୀ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ ଆଇ କିପରି ସାଧିକ କରିଥିଲେ ଶୁଣିଲେ ଆଇଙ୍କ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ନିକଟରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡନଇଁ ଆସେ । ହେତୁ ପାଇବା ଦିନରୁ ଅଦିତି ଯାହା ବୁଝିଛନ୍ତି ଆଇଙ୍କୁ ସମଗ୍ର ପରିବାରର ବଡ଼ ଭରସା କହିଲେ ଅଧିକାର ହେବନାହିଁ । ସେଇ ଆଇଙ୍କର ନିରବତାକୁ ଶେୟ କରି ଭାଗ୍ୟର ଲିଖନକୁ ଆଦରି ନେଇଥିଲେ ଅଦିତି । ବିବାହର ପନ୍ଦରଦିନ ପରେ ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍ର ପାର ହୋଇ ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଥିଲେ ବିକ୍ରମଙ୍କ ସହିତ ।

ତାପରେ ଜୀବନ ସଂଗ୍ରାମର ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା - **Phd, Visa** ସମସ୍ୟା, ଦୁଇ ଝିଅଙ୍କର ଜନ୍ମ । ଅଦିତି ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ନାମକରା ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ଗଣିତ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକା । ସେ ସବୁ ପଛକଥା ଇତିହାସ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ନନା ତାଙ୍କର ଭାରୀ ଖୁସି ଅଦିତିଙ୍କ କୃତିତ୍ୱ ପାଇଁ । ନିତୁର କେତେ ଅଭିମାନ ଯେ ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ଅଦିତି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆସୁଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କେବେ ଟେଲିଫୋନଟିଏ କରିବାକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିନାହାନ୍ତି । କଲେଜ ଜୀବନର ଅବିସ୍ମରଣୀୟ ସ୍ମୃତିକୁ ମନେ ପକାଇ ଦୁଇ ବାନ୍ଧବୀଙ୍କର ମନରେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଥିଲା ଅପୂର୍ବ ଆନନ୍ଦ । ଆଉଥରେ ଫେରିଯାଇଥିଲେ ସେଇ ଅଭୁଲା ଅତୀତକୁ । ଏଥର ଅତି ଆଦରର ଆଇ'ଟିର ଅସୁସ୍ଥତା ଖବର ପାଇ ଧାଇଁ ଆସିଥିଲେ ଅଦିତି ତାଙ୍କ ଶେଷ ଦର୍ଶନ ପାଇଁ । ସେ ଆସିବାର ଦୁଇଦିନ ପରେ ଆଇ ତାଙ୍କ କୋଳରେ ଶୋଇ ଶେଷ ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ତ୍ୟାଗକଲେ । ଆଇଙ୍କର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ସମୟରେ ସେ ପାଖରେ ଥିଲେ, ମନରେ ଥିଲା ଶାନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କର । ଜନ୍ମ ହେଲେତ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁ ଜାଣି ମଧ୍ୟ ମନକୁ ବୁଝାଇବା ବଡ଼ କଷ୍ଟକର ଥିଲା ଅଦିତିଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ନିତୁର ଅଦିତିଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ଦୁଇ ପରିବାର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସଂପର୍କକୁ ଦୃଢ଼ଭୂତ

କରିଥିଲା । ଆଇଙ୍କର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଖବର ଶୁଣି ନିତୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦୁଃଖ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଥିଲେ । ଓଡିଶାରେ ଥାଇ ମଧ୍ୟ ୨୭ ବର୍ଷରେ ଥରେ ଆଇ'କୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଯାଇ ପାରି ନ ଥିବାରୁ କ୍ଷମା ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ ଅଦିତିଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ।

ନିତୁ ଓରଫ **Mrs IAS** ଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା ପାରିବାରିକ ଜୀବନ ଉପରେ ଭାବର ଆଦାନ ପ୍ରଦାନ ଅଦିତିଙ୍କର । ଅଦିତିଙ୍କର ଅଭିଯୋଗ ଯେ ତାଙ୍କର ଦୁଇ ଝିଅ ଆଡୁନିର୍ଭରଶୀଳ, ଭଲ ଚାକିରି କରୁଛନ୍ତି, ହେଲେ ବିବାହ କଥା କେହି ନାଁ ଧରୁନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ଅଦିତିଙ୍କ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା ଆଉ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ଭାବନା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଆକାଶ ପାତାଳ ତପ୍ତ । ଯାହାହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଚିନ୍ତା ସମୟ ସମୟରେ ବଡ଼ ବିବ୍ରତ କରେ । କରିବାର କିଛି ଉପାୟ ନାହିଁ । ଆମେରିକାରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ବଢାଇ ନିଜର ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରାକୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଚାପିବା ଠିକ୍ କି ନୁହେଁ ସେ ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ଼ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନାବଳୀ ଅଦିତିଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଇନ୍ଟରନେଟରେ ଓଡିଆ ସମ୍ବାଦପତ୍ର ନ ପଢିଲେ ଭଲଲାଗେନି ଅଦିତିଙ୍କୁ । ଓଡିଆ ସମ୍ବାଦପତ୍ରରୁ ନିତୁଙ୍କ ପୁଅ **IAS** ପରିକ୍ଷାରେ କୃତିତ୍ୱର ସହ ଉତ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହେବା ଆଉ **Mr & Mrs IAS** ଙ୍କ '**Best Married Couple Award**' ପାଇବାର ସମ୍ଭାବ ପଡିଥିଲେ ସେ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଇଥିଲେ ସେ ନିତୁଙ୍କୁ । ମାତ୍ର ଆନନ୍ଦିତ ହେବା ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ନିତୁଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ଥିଲା ଗଭୀର ଦୁଃଖର ଛାୟା । ନିତୁ ଏ ସୁନ୍ଦର ମୁଲ୍ୟବାନ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ନିଜର ଦୁଃଖ, ଅଭିମାନ, ହୃଦୟ ଭିତରେ ଥିବା ଜର୍ଜରିତ ଭାବନାକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ ନ କରି ରହିପାରି ନଥିଲେ । ନିତୁଙ୍କର ବିବାହର ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ଜଣାପଡିଥିଲା ଯେ ତାଙ୍କର **birth defect** ପାଇଁ ସେ ଚିରଦିନ ପାଇଁ ମା ହୋଇପାରିବେନି । ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରତି ନିଷ୍ଠୁହ ହେଇ ପଡିଥିଲେ ନିତୁ, ସଂସାରର କୌଣସି ଜିନିଷ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ ନ ଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କର ଆଦର ଯତ୍ନ ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କ ମନପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରାଇବାର ଆପ୍ରାଣଚେଷ୍ଟା ଫେରାଇ ଆଣିଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କର ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସ । ଓଡିଶାରେ ପ୍ରବଳ ବନ୍ୟା ସମୟରେ କଣ୍ଟରୀ ଘରକୁ ନେଇଆସିଥିଲେ ଗୋଟିଏ ସଦ୍ୟଜାତ ଶିଶୁପୁତ୍ର । ନିତୁଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ଆସିଲା ମାତୃତ୍ୱ, ପୁତ୍ର ଅମରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସହିତ ଜୀବନରେ ଆସିଥିଲା ଗଭୀର ଆତ୍ମସନ୍ତୋଷ ଆଉ ଆନନ୍ଦ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଛଅ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ନିତୁ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ପାଇଥିଲେ ଯେ ଅମରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପାଣିରେ ଭାସିଯାଉଥିବା ଅସହାୟ ଶିଶୁ ନ ଥିଲା, ସେ ଥିଲା ବିକ୍ରମ ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କର ବାଲ୍ୟବାସିନୀ ଗୌରୀଙ୍କର (ଯାହାର ପୋଲିଓ ରୋଗପାଇଁ ବିବାହ ହୋଇପାରି ନଥିଲା) ଅବୈଧ ସନ୍ତାନ । ଏଇ ବିଶ୍ୱାସଘାତକତା ପାଇଁ ନିତୁଙ୍କର ମନରେ ଘୃଣାଛତା କିଛି ନ ଥିଲା ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ । ସେ ଘୃଣାରୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିର ମଣି ଅମରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ମଧ୍ୟ ବାଦ୍ ପଡିନଥିଲା । ମାନସିକ ଭାରସାମ୍ୟ ହରାଇ ନିତୁ ଦୁଇ ମାସ ରାସ୍ତି ହାସପାତାଳରେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ଫେରିଲା ପରେ ଦୁଇ ଥର ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରି ମଧ୍ୟ ସଫଳ ହୋଇପାରି ନଥିଲେ । ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡପତ୍ର ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଇପାରି ନଥିଲେ । ସମସ୍ତ ବିପର୍ଯ୍ୟୟର କାରଣ ସେ ନିଜେ ବୋଲି ଭାବି ଅପରାଧ ମନେ କରୁଥିଲେ ନିଜକୁ । ସବୁ ପୁରୁଷ ଚାହେଁ ନିଜର ପରିବାର, ଯାହୁଁ କଣ୍ଟରୀଙ୍କୁ ଦେବାର ସକ୍ଷମ ନ ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କର । ଏବେ ଏଇ ସମାଜ ସେବାରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଆନନ୍ଦ, ଅନ୍ୟପାଇଁ କିଛି କରିପାରିବାର ଆନନ୍ଦ ହିଁ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ମାଧ୍ୟମ ।

ନିତୁର ଜୀବନ କାହାଣୀ ମୁକ୍ତ କରିଦେଇଥିଲା ଅଦିତିଙ୍କୁ । ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରାୟ ବାସିନୀକୁ କଣ କହି ସାନ୍ତନା ଦେବେ ଭାଷା ନ ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କର । ଭାଗ୍ୟର କି ବିତମ୍ବନା । ଅତୀତକୁ ଦୁଃସ୍ୱପ୍ନଭାବି ଭୁଲିଯିବାକୁ ଆଉ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନକୁ ନେଇ ବଞ୍ଚିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବାପାଇଁ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ନିତୁକୁ । ରାତି ପାହି ସକାଳ ଷଟା ହୋଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଯେପରି ଏଇ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ଆଗରୁ ଭେଟିଛନ୍ତି ଦୁଇ ବାସିନୀ । ନିତୁକୁ ଶୋଇବାକୁ କହି ନିଜେ ଶୋଇବାର ବାହାନା କରିଥିଲେ ଅଦିତି । ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ବଡ଼ ଦୁଃଖଥିଲା ଯେ ସେ ବିକ୍ରମକୁ ପତିଭାବରେ ପାଇଥିଲେ ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ମନର ଦୂରତା ଥିଲା ଅନେକ, କାରଣ ବିକ୍ରମ ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କର ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା ଥିଲା ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିପରୀତ । ସବୁକୁ ଭୁଲି ସଂସାର ଚଳାଇନେବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରିଛନ୍ତି ଅଦିତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କର ବୈବାହିକ ଜୀବନ କେବେ ସୁଖମୟ ନ ଥିଲା । ତାଙ୍କର ଅନ୍ତରର କଥା ମୃତ ଆଇଙ୍କ ଛତା କେହି ଜାଣି ନ ଥିଲେ । ମାତ୍ର ନିତୁ ପୃଥିବୀରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଖୁସିବୋଲି ତାଙ୍କର ଯେଉଁ ଧାରଣା ଥିଲା ତାହା ଆଜି ସ୍ତମ୍ଭୀଭୂତ କରିଥିଲା ଅଦିତିଙ୍କୁ । ଅଜାଣତରେ ଆଖିରୁ ଝରିପଡିଥିଲା ଦୁଇ ଟୋପା ଲୁହ । ସତରେ ଦୀପ ତଳ ଅଧାର ।

ଶ୍ରୀମତି ସ୍ମିରଣା ସେନାପତି ଡିପ୍ଟାମେଣ୍ଟରେ ପୁଅ, ଝିଅ ଓ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ରୁହନ୍ତି । ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବା ଆଗରୁ ସେ କଲିକତା ହାଇକୋର୍ଟରେ ଆଇନଜୀବି ଭାବେ କାମକରୁଥିଲେ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଡିପ୍ଟାମେଣ୍ଟରେ ଗୋଟିଏ **immigration law office** ରେ କାମ କରନ୍ତି ।

ଜାତି ନୟିତ୍ୟୋଷ ଚଳିବ କି ଭାଇ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥକୁ ସାରଥି କଲେ	ଗାନ୍ଧାରୀ ଦେଲା ଜନନୀ ପ୍ରାଣର ସୁମହତ୍ ପରିଚୟ	ସଂସାର କାଳିମା ବିଷ ପରଶ ତା ଛୁଇଁ କି ପାରିବ ତିଳେ
ଚାଣେ କିରେ ଗାଡି ଦାନାର ତୋବତା ଘୋଡା ମୁହେଁ ବନ୍ଧାଥିଲେ ।	ଅକ୍ଷୟ ହେଉ ପୁଣ୍ୟଜଗତେ ଧର୍ମର ହେଉ ଜୟ ।	ତୋ ପରାଣେ ଯେଉଁ ପରଶ ମଣିବି ପୁଟି ଉଠେ ନିରନ୍ତରେ ।
- କୁଳବୃକ୍ଷ ମଧୁସୂଦନ ଦାସ	- କାଳିନ୍ଦୀ ଚରଣ ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ	- ଗୋଦାବରୀଶ ମିଶ୍ର

ସ୍ମୃତି ପାଥେୟ

ଡକ୍ଟର ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ, କଲମ୍ପିଆ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ

ବୋଷ୍ଟନ୍ ଡ୍ରାଲିଂ ଟ୍ରେଡ଼ ସେକ୍ଟରର ସବୁଠାରୁ ଉପର ମହଲାର ଗୋଟିଏ କୋଣରେ ବସି ଚାଲିବ୍ ନଦୀର ଅସ୍ତଗାମୀ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କର ଶୋଭାକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ଚାଲିବ୍ ନଦୀର ଜଳରାଶି ଭିତରେ ଅସ୍ତଗାମୀ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କର ସୁନେଲି ଆଭାର ସ୍ଫୁରଣ ଯେମିତି ନମ୍ର ସେହିପରି କଳାମୂଳ ବି । ନଦୀ ଚାରିପଟର ଥୁଣ୍ଠ ଗଛଲତା ମାନେ ସେ ଆଭାରେ ଯେମିତି ଅଧିକ ପ୍ରାଣସଖା ପାଇ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ଦିଶୁଥିଲେ । ବାଇନୋକୁଲାରରେ ସେ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରିନେଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ଦୁଃଖ ଆଉ କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ଏ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟମୟ ପ୍ରକୃତିର ସଖା ନ ଥିବ । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅସ୍ତ ସହିତ ରାତିର ଅନ୍ଧକାରରେ ମିଶିଯିବ ଏ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଦୁଃଖ ବିଜୁଳି ଆଲୋକର ପ୍ରଭା ଅନ୍ଧକାରର ସେ ରାତିରେ ନଦୀରବକ୍ଷକୁ କିଛିଟା ଆଲୋକିତ କରିପାରେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରକୃତିର ଏ ସୁନେଲି ରଙ୍ଗ ଆଣିବାକୁ କେବେ ବି ସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇ ପାରିବନି ।

ହଠାତ୍ ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହୋଇଉଠିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । “ଆରେ, ଘଣ୍ଟରେ ସାଢ଼େ ପାଞ୍ଚଟା ବାଜିଲାଣି ।” ଜାନୁୟାରୀ ମାସର ସମୟ ଏ । ଏବେ ସାଢ଼େ ପାଞ୍ଚଟା ରାତି ହୋଇଯିବ । ଦୁଃଖ କାଲି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ରଙ୍ଗ ବି ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳିବନି । ଶୀତଋତୁର ବରଫ ସହିତ ବିସ୍ତୃତ ରଜନୀ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ଜମା ବି ଭଲ ଲାଗେନି; ଭୟ ଲାଗେ । ମନେଦୁଃଖ ଯେମିତି ତା ପାଖେ ପାଖେ କିଏ ବସି ଅଜହାସ କରୁଛି । ନିର୍ଜନତାର ସେ ଅଜହାସ ତାକୁ ବହୁତ ବିକୃତ ଓ ଭୟଙ୍କର ମନେଦୁଃଖ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତ ଏତେଦିନର କ୍ରମାଗତ ବରଫପାତ ପରେ ପରେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟୋଦୟକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବାକୁ ସିଏ ଏଠାକୁ ଚାଲିଆସିଲା । ଏଇଠି ବସି ସିଏ ସମଗ୍ର ବୋଷ୍ଟନ୍ ସହରକୁ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଭଲପାଏ । ବେଳେବେଳେ ତ ଶନିବାର, ରବିବାର ଛୁଟିଦିନ ମାନ ସବୁ ତା’ର ଲାବୋରେଟୋରୀ ଭିତରେ, କାମ ଭିତରେ ହିଁ କଟିଯାଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନେକ ସମୟରେ ସିଏ ଏମିତି ପ୍ରକୃତି ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବାକୁ ହିଁ ଏଠାକୁ ଚାଲିଆସେ ।

ଏମିତି ଉଠି ଫେରିବାକୁ ଉଦ୍ୟତ ହେଉଛି ତ ହଠାତ୍ ଆଠ-ଦଶ ବର୍ଷର ପିଲାଟିଏ ଦୌଡ଼ ଦୌଡ଼ ତା’ ଦେହରେ ଧକ୍କା ଲଗାଇଦେଲା । ଶହେ ଡଲାର ଦେଇ କିଣିଥିବା ବାଇନୋକୁଲାରଟି ଶୁଭ୍ରାହାତରୁ ତଳେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା । ଯଦିଓ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲାଣି, କିନ୍ତୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଜାଣିଲା, ବାଇନୋକୁଲାରଟି ଆଉ କାମ କରିବନି । ଭୀଷଣ ଦୁଃଖ ଲାଗିଲା ତାକୁ । ରାଗ ବି ହେଲା ପିଲାଟିର ଅଭିଭାବକ ମାନଙ୍କ ଉପରେ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆୟତରେ ରଖିଜାଣନ୍ତିନି । ଏମିତି ଭାବି ଆଗକୁ ଚାହିଁ ଦେଖିଲା ପିଲାଟି ଯେମିତି କାକୁସ୍ଥ ହୋଇ ତା’କୁ ଚାହିଁରହିଛି । ମନର ଭୟ ପିଲାଟିର ମୁହଁ ଉପରେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ପ୍ରତିଫଳିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ପିଲାଟିର ମା’ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପାଖରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ସମା ମାଗିଲେ ଓ ବାଇନୋକୁଲାରଟିକୁ ପରଖି ଦେଖିଲେ । ତା’ପରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲେ ଯେ ସିଏ ଏ ଭଙ୍ଗା ବାଇନୋକୁଲାରଟି ନେଇଯିବେ ଓ ବାଇନୋକୁଲାରର ମୂଲ୍ୟଟା ପାଇଁ ଚେକ୍ ଲେଖିଦେବେ । ମହିଳାଙ୍କର ଏମିତି ବ୍ୟବହାର ଦେଖି ଶୁଭ୍ରାର କ୍ଷଣକ ମୁହୁର୍ତ୍ତର କ୍ରୋଧ ଯେମିତି ପାଣି ଭଳି ମିଳାଇଗଲା । କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତାରୁ ଜାଣିଲା ମହିଳାଙ୍କର ନାଁ ଶିଲା; ଶିଲା ରାୟ । ସେକେଣ୍ଟ ଜେନିରେସନ୍ ଭାରତୀୟ । ତା’ପରେ ବାଇନୋକୁଲାର ବିଷୟ ଭୁଲି ପରସ୍ପର ନିଜନିଜ ପରିଚୟର ଆଲୋଚନାରେ ମଜ୍ଜିଗଲେ । ସେଥିରୁ ଜଣାପଡ଼ିଲା ଶିଲାର ମା’ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସୁନ୍ଦରଗଡ଼ର ଝିଅ; ବାପା କଲିକତାର । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏବେ ବାପା, ମା’ ତା’ର ଲୁଜିୟାନାରେ ରହନ୍ତି । ଶିଲା ବିବାହ କରିଥିଲା ଜଣେ ଆମେରିକୀୟ ଯୁବକଙ୍କୁ । ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ ହେଲା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଛାତ୍ରପତ୍ର ହୋଇଛି । ତା’ର ଝିଅ ରିନି କିନ୍ତୁ ତା’ ପାଖରେ ରହୁଛି, ଇତ୍ୟାଦି, ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଏମିତି ତ ସେକେଣ୍ଟ ଜେନିରେସନ୍ ଭାରତୀୟ ମାନେ ଏତେ ବେଶୀ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରନ୍ତିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶିଲା ଟିକେ ଅଲଗା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଶିଲାର ପିତାମାତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଯଦିଓ ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ସମ୍ମାନ ବଢ଼ିଗଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ “ଛାତ୍ରପତ୍ର” ଶର ଶୁଣି ତା’ ମନଭିତରେ ପୁଣି ଦୁଃଖ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଲା । ତେଣୁ ଶିଲାକୁ “ଇଟ୍ସ୍ ଓକେ; ଛୋଟ ପିଲାଟିଏ ଭୁଲ୍ କରିଦେଲା ତ” କହି ବିଦାୟ ନେବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶିଲା ନହୋତ୍‌ବନ୍ଧା । ଶହେ ଡଲାରର ଗୋଟିଏ ଚେକ୍ ଲେଖି ଓ ତା’ର ଠିକଣା ଓ ଫୋନ୍ ନମ୍ବର ଦେଇ ସେ ବିଦାୟ ନେଲା ।

ବାହାରେ ଆସି କିଛି ସମୟ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବାପରେ ବୋଷ୍ଟନ୍ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟନ ବିଭାଗର ଟ୍ରଲି ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା । ଟ୍ରଲିରେ ବସି ସେ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ଆସିଲା ଓ ତା’ ପରେ ଚ୍ୟାକ୍ସି ଡାକି ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା । ଗାଡିଟା ତା’ର ସକାଳେ ଠିକ୍‌ଭାବେ କାମ କରୁନଥିଲା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତାକୁ ଚ୍ୟାକ୍ସି ନେଇ ଯିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା । ଘରଭିତରକୁ ଆସି ଦେଖିଲା ଫୋନ୍‌ର ଆନ୍‌ସରିଙ୍ଗ୍ ମେସିନ୍ ଦମ୍ପଦମ୍ପ ହେଉଛି । ମେସିନ୍ ଅନ୍ କରି ଦେଖିଲା ପାଞ୍ଚଜଣଙ୍କର ମେସେଜ୍ ରହିଛି । ସେଥିରୁ ଚାରିଟା ମେସେଜ୍ ଫର୍ମାଲ୍, ଲାବର୍ ସହକର୍ମୀ ମାନଙ୍କର । ପଞ୍ଚମଟି ଥିଲା ମିନି ଅପାଙ୍କର । ମିନିଅପା ନିମନ୍ତଣ କରିଥିଲେ ଆସନ୍ତା ଶନିବାର ପାଇଁ । ତାଙ୍କ ସାନ ପୁଅ, ବୋହୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରୁ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି; ଆଉ ଜଣେ ନୂଆ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିବାର ବି ବୋଷ୍ଟନ୍‌କୁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି; ତେଣୁ ମିନିଅପା ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ବି ନିମନ୍ତଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କର ଏତେ କୈଫିୟତ୍ ଦେବାର ଅର୍ଥ ହେଲା, ବେଶୀ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ଭଲଲାଗେନି । କାରଣ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ସମସ୍ତେ କେମିତି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନିତ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ଚାହାନ୍ତି । “ସଇଚିରିଶ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲାଣି, କାହିଁକି ବାହା ହୋଇନି”, ଏଇ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ବାହାଣୀରେ ଫୁଟିଉଠୁଥାଏ । ଦୁଃଖ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଚାହାଣି

ସେମିତି ଥାଏ କି ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ମନ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଚାହାଣିର ଅର୍ଥକୁ ଭୁଲ୍ ବୁଝେ, ତାହା ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ଅଜଣା । କାରଣ ଯାହା ବି ହେଉ, ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ବେଶି ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ଭଲ ଲାଗେନି । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କର ଏ କୈଫିୟତ୍ ।

ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ବି ବହୁତ ଦିନ ହେଲା ଯାଇ ନଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ତେଣୁ ଭାବିଲା, ସିଏ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଯିବ, ଟିକେ ମନ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ତ ହୋଇଯିବ । ତା’ପରେ ମିନିଅପା ଜଣେ ବହୁତ ଇଞ୍ଜେରସ୍ତିଫିଙ୍କ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ । କେବଳ ବୋଞ୍ଜନ୍ ସହର ନୁହେଁ, ସାରା ଉତ୍ତର ଆମେରିକାର ଓଡିଆ ମାନଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତ ପ୍ରକାର ଖବର ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଥାଏ । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବେଳେବେଳେ ଆକର୍ଷ୍ୟ ହୁଏ । ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କ ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କ ଯେ ନୋବେଲ୍ ପୁରସ୍କାର ପାଇଥିବା ଆଇନ୍‌ଜିନିୟରଙ୍କ ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କ ତୁଳନାରେ ଅଧିକ ସଜ୍ଜିତ, ଭାରତରେ ଖ୍ୟାତିଲାଭ କରିଥିବା ନାରୀ ଗଣିତଜ୍ଞା ଶକୁନ୍ତଳା ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କ ତୁଳନାରେ ଆହୁରି କ୍ଷିପ୍ର, ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ସନ୍ଦେହ ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟବଶତଃ ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କର ଶିକ୍ଷାଲାଭ ବିଜ୍ଞାନରେ ନ ହୋଇ ଇତିହାସରେ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଅତଏବ, ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କର ଏ ସଜ୍ଜିତ ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କର ଖବର ନୋବେଲ୍ କମିଟିର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଆକର୍ଷଣ କରିପାରି ନଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପାଇଁ ମିନିଅପା ଏକ କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟର । ତେଣୁ ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଭଲ ପାଏ । ମିନିଅପା ବି ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ଭଲପାଆନ୍ତି ଯେହେତୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଭଳି ଏକ ଅସୀମ ଯୈର୍ଯ୍ୟଶୀଳା ଶୋତା ମିଳିବା ଏ ଯୁଗରେ କଷ୍ଟ । ଏ ଯୁଗରେ ସମସ୍ତେ କହିବାକୁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି; ଜଣାଇବାକୁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି; ଆତ୍ମପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି; ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ, ବୁଝିବାକୁ, ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାକରୁଥିବା ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା କମ୍ । ଏଣୁ ମିନିଅପା ଓ ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ଖୁବ୍ ଜମିଯାଏ; ଯଦିଓ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବୟସ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଦୀର୍ଘ କୋଡିଏ ବର୍ଷର ବ୍ୟବଧାନ । ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କର ପିଲାମାନେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବୟସର ହେଲେବି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅପା ତାଙ୍କେ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ତ ଭାବିଥିଲା ମାଉସୀ ତାଙ୍କିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଯିଏ ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପରିଚୟ କରାଇଦେଇଥିଲେ, “ଅପା” କହି ପରିଚୟ କରାଇଦେଇଥିଲେ । ତା’ପରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଭାବିଲା, ପିଉସୀକୁ ବି ତ ଅପା ତାଙ୍କିବ; ତେଣୁ ମିନି ଅପାଙ୍କୁ ମାଉସୀ ନ ତାଙ୍କି ଅପା ତାଙ୍କିବାର ଗ୍ଲାନି ତା’ର ଆଉ ରହିଲାନି ।

ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କୁ ଫେନ୍ଦ କରି ଆସନ୍ତା ଶନିବାର ଦିନ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଆସିବ ବୋଲି ଜଣାଇଦେଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ମିନିଅପା ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହେଲେ; ସେଇଟା ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର ଶୁଣି ଅନୁମାନ କରିନେଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ତାପରେ ଟିକେ କଫି ଡିଆରି କରି କପ୍ରେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତିକରି କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟରରେ ଇଞ୍ଜେନେଟ୍ ସାଇଟ୍‌ରୁ ଭାରତ ସମ୍ବାଦ ପଢ଼ିଲା ।

ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ଜାନ୍ତୁୟାରୀ ଚଉଦ ତାରିଖ ଦିନ ପାଗ ବି ଭଲ ଥିଲା । ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କ ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ବେଳକୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ଟିକେ ବିଳମ୍ବ ହୋଇଗଲା, କାରଣ ଲାବୋରେଟୋରୀରେ କାମ କରୁକରୁ ସମୟ ଭୁଲିଯାଇଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କ ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ବେଳକୁ ତାଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତ ଅତିଥି ପହଞ୍ଚି ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ସମସ୍ତେ ତାଙ୍କ ବେସ୍‌ମେଣ୍ଟ୍ରେ ଥିଲେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ପ୍ରକୋପି ଦେଇ ମିନିଅପା ତଳକୁ ନେଇଗଲେ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇଦେବାକୁ । ସେଠି ଶିଳାକୁ ଦେଖି ପ୍ରଥମେ ଆକର୍ଷ୍ୟ ହୋଇଗଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶିଳା ଖୁସିରେ ଉଛୁଳିଉଠିଲା ଓ “ହାଏ ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ଇଚ୍ଚ ସୋ ନାଇସ୍ ଟୁ ସି ୟୁ ଏଗେନ୍” କହି ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କଲା । ଶିଳାର ଝିଅ ରିନି ବି “ଆଣ୍ଟି” କହି ଜୋରରେ କୁଣ୍ଡାଇଧରିଲା । ମିନିଅପା ଆକର୍ଷ୍ୟ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ତାପରେ ଶିଳା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ସହିତ ପରିଚୟ ହେବାର ସମସ୍ତ ବୃତ୍ତାନ୍ତ ଜଣାଇଲା । ସେଇଥିରୁ ବୁଝିଲା ଯେ ଶିଳାର ମା’ ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କର କଲେଜରେ ସାଙ୍ଗ ଥିଲେ । ଶିଳା ସହିତ ଦେଖା ହେବାର ଏ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଅବକାଶ ମିଳିଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ । ତେଣୁ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଫର୍ମାଲ୍ ପରିଚୟ ଆଦାନପ୍ରଦାନ ପରେ ସିଏ ଶିଳା ସହିତ ଗପ ଜମାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା । ମିନିଅପା ତିନି ଗରମ କରିବାକୁ କିଟେନ୍‌କୁ ଚାଲିଗଲେ ।

ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଗାଡି ରହିବାର ଶବ୍ଦ ହେଲା ଓ ମିନିଅପାଙ୍କର ଅତିଥିମାନେ “ଅଭୟବାବୁ ଆସିଗଲେ” ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣ କରି ନୂଆ ଅତିଥିଙ୍କ ସହିତ ମିଳିବାର ଅଭିପ୍ରାୟରେ ଉତ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ସହିତ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ରହିଲେ । କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ମିନିଅପା ତଳକୁ ଯେଉଁ ନୂଆ ଓଡିଆ ପରିବାରକୁ ନେଇ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇବାକୁ ଆଣିଲେ, ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ଚମକିପଡିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । “ଅଭୟ ମିଶ୍ର ପୁଣି ବୋଞ୍ଜନ୍‌ରେ କାହିଁକି? ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ଜୀବନ ସହିତ ଖେଳିବାର ନିଶା ତଥାପି ଛାଡିନି ବୋଧହୁଏ । ପୁଣି ତା ଜୀବନକୁ ବିଷିତ କରାଇବାର ଆଉ ଏକ ଯୋଜନା ।”

“ହାଲୋ !” ଜଣେ ନାରୀକଣ୍ଠର ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସ୍ୱର । “ଇଏ ପ୍ରଭା, ପ୍ରଭା ମିଶ୍ର, ତକ୍‌ଟର୍ ଅଭୟ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କ ଡ୍ରାଇଫ୍ । ତକ୍‌ଟର୍ ମିଶ୍ର ଛ ମାସ ପାଇଁ ଭିଜିଟିଙ୍ଗ୍ ପୋଜିସନ୍‌ରେ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ଗତ ସପ୍ତାହରେ ସେମାନେ ଫେନ୍ଦ କରିବାରୁ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଡାକିଦେଲି । ସେମାନେ ଲୋଏଲ୍‌ରେ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି ।” ମିନିଅପା ପରିଚିତ କରାଇଦେଲେ ।

ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହୋଇ ନମସ୍କାର ଜଣାଇଲା ଓ ଫର୍ମାଲିଟି ରକ୍ଷାକରି ଆମେରିକାରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଫାଷ୍ଟଟାଇମ୍ କି ସେକେଣ୍ଡ୍ ଟାଇମ୍ ଭିଜିଟ୍ ବୋଲି ପଚାରିଲା । ତାପରେ ଏଣୁତେଣୁ ଗପକରି ବୁଝିଲା ଯେ ସେମାନେ ଏବେ ଡ୍ରାଇଭିଙ୍ଗ୍‌ରେ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି । ଅଭୟ ମିଶ୍ର ଏବେ ସେଠି ଆର୍-ଇ-ସି- ଡ୍ରାଇଭିଙ୍ଗ୍‌ରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ହୋଇଗଲେଣି । ପିଲାଦୁଇଟିଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଭାଇଙ୍କ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱାବଧାନରେ ଦେଇ ସେମାନେ କେବଳ ଦୁଇଜଣ

ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । “ଧ୍ୟାନ୍ ଗତ” ଯେ ଅଭୟ ମିଶ୍ର ପୁରୁଷ ଅତିଥିମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପରିଚୟ ଆଦାନପ୍ରଦାନ ପରେ ଗପସପରେ ଏତେ ମିଶିଯାଇଥିଲେ ଯେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ସହିତ ପରିଚିତ ହେବାର ଅବକାଶ ମିଳିନଥିଲା । ନହେଲେ ହୁଏତ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ସେଠି ସଂଜ୍ଞାହୀନ ହୋଇ ପଡିଯାଇଥାନ୍ତା । ଯେଉଁ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଟି ତା ଜୀବନକୁ ଏମିତି ବିଷାକ୍ତ ଦୂଷିତ କରିଦେଇଛି, ତା ଜୀବନକୁ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗତାରେ ଭରିଦେଇଛି; ଯେଉଁ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଉପରେ ଦିନେ ପ୍ରତିଶୋଧ ନେବାର ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ଭରି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବଞ୍ଚିରହିଛି; ସେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଟିକୁ ହଠାତ୍ ପାଖରେ ପାଇ କିଛି ନକରିପାରିବାର ଅବଶୋଷ ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ମନକୁ ଅସନ୍ତୋଷରେ ଭରିଦେଉଥିଲା । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ମିନିଅପା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଡିନର୍ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଡାକିଲେ ଓ ସମସ୍ତେ ଉପରକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ଉଦ୍ୟତହେଲେ । ଖାଇବାବେଳେ ହଠାତ୍ ପ୍ରଭା ଅଭୟଙ୍କୁ ଡାକିଆଣିଲେ ଓ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ସହିତ ପରିଚୟ ଆଦାନପ୍ରଦାନ କରିପକାଇଲେ ।

ଅଭୟ ଯେମିତି ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ; ସେଇଟା ତାଙ୍କ ବଚବଚ ଆଖିକୁ ଦେଖି ଜାଣିପାରୁଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ଦିନେ ଏଇ ଆଖିର ପ୍ରେମରେ ହିଁ ପଡିଯାଇଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ସେ ଆଖିରେ ଆଜି ଚଷମା ଥିଲେ ବି ଚଷମା ଭିତର ଦେଇ ସେ ଆଖିକୁ ନିରେଖି ନିରେଖି ଚାହିଁବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାହେଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରାର । ହେଲେ କ୍ଷଣକରେ ପୁଣି ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହୋଇ ନମସ୍କାର ଜଣାଇଲା ଓ “ନାଇସ୍ ଟୁ ମିଟ୍ ୟୁ” କହିଲା । ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ଚେହେରା ସେମିତି ଏକାପରି ଥିଲା ଯଦିଓ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧାଧିକ କେଶ ଶ୍ୱେତବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇଯାଇ ମଧ୍ୟମବୟସର ଆଗମନୀ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା ଜଣାଉଥିଲେ ଓ କପାଳରେ ଦୁଇତିନିତି ରେଖା ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ନମସ୍କାର କରିବାପରେ ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ ହେଲେ ଅଭୟ ଓ ପ୍ରତି ନମସ୍କାର ଜଣାଇଲେ । ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ଦୂରେଇଯିବାର ଆଳ ଖୋଜୁଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରଭା ଶିଳାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଗପ ଜମାଇଦେଇଥିଲେ ଓ ମିନିଅପା ତାଙ୍କ କିଚେନ୍ରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଥିଲେ ।

“କେମିତି ଅଛୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ?”

“ଭଲ ।”

“ଏବେ କଣ କରୁଛୁ ?”

“ଗୋଟିଏ ଫର୍ମାସିଉଟିକାଲ୍ କମ୍ପାନୀରେ କାମ କରୁଛି ।”

“ଆଉ କଣ ଖବର ?”

କଥାର ମୋତ ବଦଳାଇବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ଅଭୟ ହୁଏତ ଖୋଳିତାତି ପଚାରିବେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବାହା ହୋଇଛି କି ନା । ତେଣୁ ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ମନରେ ଥିବା ଗ୍ଳାନିକୁ ଆତଃକଣ୍ଠ କରି ପଚାରିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଏକ ପ୍ରଫେସନାଲ୍ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର କଣ୍ଠସ୍ୱରରେ, “ଆପଣ ଏବେ କେଉଁ ବିଷୟରେ ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ?” ଅଭୟ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଲେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରାର କଣ୍ଠସ୍ୱର ଏତେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ବଦଳିଗଲା କେମିତି ? ପୁଣି କଥାର ମୋତକୁ ହଠାତ୍ ଏମିତି ବଦଳାଇ ଦେଲା ସେ କେମିତି ? ଯାହାହେଉ, ପ୍ରଭା ଶିଳା ସହିତ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ ଓ ଶିଳାକୁ ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇଦେଲେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ରକ୍ଷାପାଇଗଲା ଯେମିତି ଓ “ମିନିଅପା କଣ କରୁଛନ୍ତି, ଦେଖି ଆସେ” କହି ସେଠାରୁ ଖସିଆସିଲା ।

ସେଦିନ ଶିଳାର ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଆତ୍ମୀୟତା ଏତେ ବଢିଗଲା ଯେ, ସେ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ଓ ଅଭୟ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରଭାଙ୍କୁ ଆସନ୍ତା ସଞ୍ଜରେ ତା’ ଘରକୁ ଡିନର୍ ପାଇଁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କଲା । ଯେହେତୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ରହୁଥିବା ସ୍ଥାନ ଓ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ରହୁଥିବା ସ୍ଥାନର ଦୂରତା କମ୍, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଟିକେ ରାଇଡ୍ ଦେବାକୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲା । ଶିଳାର ଏ ଅନୁରୋଧ ରକ୍ଷାକରିବ କି ନା ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତା’ ମନରେ ଦ୍ୱନ୍ଦ ଉଠିଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରଭାଙ୍କର ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ମୁଖମଣ୍ଡଳକୁ ଚାହିଁ ସେ ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଥିବା ଆକ୍ରୋଶ କଥା ଭୁଲିଗଲା ଓ ରାଇଡ୍ ଦେବାକୁ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ପ୍ରଦାନକରି ଫେରିଲା ।

ସେଦିନ ରାତିସାରା ଶୋଇପାରିଲାନି ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ଏ ଅଭୟ ମିଶ୍ର ଯେମିତି ଗଳଗ୍ରହ ପରି ତା’ ଚାରିପଟେ ପ୍ରଭାବ ବିସ୍ତାର କରୁଛି । ଯେଉଁ ସ୍ତୁତିକୁ କେତେ କଞ୍ଜରେ ମନଭିତରୁ ଭୁଲିଯାଇ ସିଏ ଏକ ନୂତନ ଜୀବନ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥିଲା, ସେଇ ସ୍ତୁତି ସବୁ ପୁଣି ଯେମିତି ଜୀବନ୍ତ ହୋଇଉଠୁଛନ୍ତି ଓ ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ମନକୁ ଗ୍ରାସ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛନ୍ତି ।

ବନାରସ ହିରୁ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ଆଡମିସନ୍ ନେଇ ଏକ ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ ସ୍କଲାର୍ ଭାବେ ଜଏନ୍ କରିଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ଯଦିଓ ସେ ହିମି ଭଲଭାବେ ବୁଝୁଥିଲା ଓ ଲେଖୁପାରୁଥିଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ କଥିତ ହିମିଭାଷା ତା’ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ବଡ କଞ୍ଜକର ଥିଲା । ତା’ର ରୁମ୍ମେଟ୍ ବନ୍ଦନା ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତା’ର ଏ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ବଡ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥିଲା । ସେଦିନ ବନ୍ଦନା ତା’ର ବନ୍ଧୁ ମିଷ୍ଟର ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପ୍ରସାଦଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପରିଚୟ କରାଇ କରାଇ ଶୁଭ୍ରାର କଥିତ ହିମି ଭାଷାରେ ଦୁର୍ବଳତା ବିଷୟରେ ହିଁ ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା କଲା ଓ କେମିତି ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ଏ ବିଷୟରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରାଯାଇପାରିବ, ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନକଲା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଓଡିଶାରୁ ଆସିଛି ଶୁଣି ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ରବାରୁ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟଦେଲେ ଯେ ତାଙ୍କର ସାଙ୍ଗ ଅଭୟ ମିଶ୍ର ବି ଓଡିଶାରୁ ଆସିଛି ଓ ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସିଏ ବି ସେମିତି କଥିତ ହିମିଭାଷାର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ କରିବାରେ ଏକାଭଳି ଅସୁବିଧାର ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ

ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଅତଏବ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ କେବଳ ଅଭୟ ହିଁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିପାରିବ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ପରଦିନ ଅଭୟ ସହିତ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ମିଳାଇବାର ଗପ କବି ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ରବାରୁ ବିଦାୟନେଲେ ଓ ସତକୁସତ ତାପରଦିନ ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ । ଆଉ ସେଇଠିହିଁ ଆରମ୍ଭହେଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଓ ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ଯୋଗସୂତ୍ର । ଯଦିଓ ଏକାରାଜ୍ୟରୁ ଆସିଥିବାରୁ ପରରାଜ୍ୟରେ ପରସ୍ପର ପରସ୍ପରକୁ ବନ୍ଧୁଭାବେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିନେଇଥିଲେ ଓ ସେଇ ସୂତ୍ରରେ କିଛିଦିନ ଏକତ୍ର ବଜାର ଯିବାଆସିବା, ମନ୍ଦିର ଯିବାଆସିବା କରୁଥିଲେ, ଓ ଗଙ୍ଗାନଦୀରେ ନୌକାବିହାର କରିଥିଲେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଧୂରେ ଧୂରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା କେମିତି ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଆକର୍ଷିତ ହୋଇପଡ଼ୁଥିଲା । ଅଭୟ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ ପରିବାରର ବୋଲି ଜାଣିଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଓ ସିଏ ବୈଶ୍ୟ ପରିବାରର ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ଏ ଆକର୍ଷଣ ବିପଜ୍ଜନକ ବୋଲି ବି ଜାଣିଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ହୃଦୟର ଅନୁଭବ ତ ଜାତି, ପାତ୍ର ମାନେନି । ଏମିତି ଦିନେ ବଜାରରୁ ଫେରିବା ସମୟରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ତା’ ହଠାତ୍ ଫେରିବାକୁ “ବାଏ” କହୁକହୁ ହଠାତ୍ ଅଭୟ ଦୁଃଖିତ ଦେଖାଗଲେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପଚାରିଲା, “କଣ ହେଲା? ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଧକ୍କା ଧରିନି ତ? ଏମିତି ଶୁଖିଲା କାହିଁକି ଦିଶୁଛନ୍ତି ?”

“ଧକ୍କା ହେଲେ କି ଶୁଖିଲା ଦେଖାଗଲେ ତମର କଣ ଅଛି?”

“ସେମିତି କୁହୁଛୁନି ଅଭୟଜୀ । ଏ ପରଦେଶରେ ଆପଣ ମୋର ଜଣେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ବନ୍ଧୁ । ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଦେହ ଖରାପହେଲେ ମତେ ଚିନ୍ତା ପଡ଼ିବ ।”

“କିନ୍ତୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ଖାଲି ବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ ଦେହ ଖରାପହେଲେ ତମକୁ ଚିନ୍ତା ପଡ଼ିବ । ମନ ଖରାପହେଲେ ଚିନ୍ତା ପଡ଼ିବନି ?”

ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଭାବିଲା ହୁଏତ ଅଭୟଙ୍କର ଥେସିସ୍ ଆଡ଼ଭାଇଜର୍ ସହିତ କିଛି ଗଣ୍ଠଗୋଳ ହୋଇଛି କି କଣ । ଏମିତି କେସ୍ ତ ସବୁଠାରେ । କେତେକ ସ୍ଥଳରେ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀ ମାନେ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇରହିଯାନ୍ତି ଓ ମୁହଁ ଖୋଲନ୍ତିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁହଁ ଖୋଲିବାମାତ୍ରେ ସମସ୍ୟା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଯାଏ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସେ ପଚାରିଲା, “ଅଭୟଜୀ, ଆପଣଙ୍କ ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚକାମ ଠିକ୍ ଚାଲିଛି ତ? ନହେଲେ ମନଖରାପ ହେବାର ଅନ୍ୟ କାରଣ କଣ ବା ହୋଇପାରେ? ”

“ତମେ କଣ ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଓ ଧକ୍କା, କାଣ ଛତା ଆଉ କିଛି ବୁଝିପାରନି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ?”

ଅଭୟଙ୍କର ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଶୁଣି ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ହଠାତ୍ ଗୋଳମାଳ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଭଳି ଅଭୟ ତା’ ପ୍ରତି ଆଉ ଆକର୍ଷିତ ହୋଇନାହାନ୍ତି ତ ? ତା’ହେଲେ ତ ମହାବିପଦ । ତେଣୁ ପରିବେଶକୁ ସହଜ କରିବାକୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ହସିଲା ଓ କହିଲା,

“ନାହିଁ ଅଭୟଜୀ, ମୁଁ ବହୁତ କଥା ବୁଝିପାରେ । ସିନେମା ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଯିବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ବୁଝିପାରେ, ଭୋକ ହେଲେ ଖାଇବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ବୁଝିପାରେ, ବୋର୍ ଲାଗିଲେ ଗଙ୍ଗାନଦୀରେ ଯାଇ ନୌକାବିହାର କରିବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ବି ବୁଝିପାରେ, ଆଉ ଘରକଥା ମନେପଡ଼ିଲେ ବିଶ୍ୱନାଥଜୀଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର ଯାଇ ଦୀପ ଜଳାଇବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ବି ବୁଝିପାରେ । ଏବେ କଣ ଆପଣ କହିପାରିବେ ଯେ ମୁଁ ଖାଲି ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଓ ଧକ୍କା, କାଣ ଛତା ଆଉ କିଛି ବୁଝିନି ବୋଲି ?”

ଅଭୟ ବି ଶୁଭ୍ରାର କୌତୁକତାରେ ହସିପକାଇଲେ ଓ ବିଦାୟ ନେବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ କହିଗଲେ, “ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ତମେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା ବୁଝିପାରନି ଯେ, ତମକୁ ବିଦାୟ ଦେବାକୁ ମତେ କାହିଁକି କଷ୍ଟ ଲାଗେ । ମୁଁ ଚାହେଁ ଯେ ତମେ ସେଇଟା ବୁଝି ।”

ତାପରେ ‘ବାଏ’ କହି ଚାଲିଗଲେ ଅଭୟ । ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଆହୁରି ଉଦ୍‌ବେଳିତ ହେଲା । ଅଭୟ ତେବେ ସତରେ ତାକୁ ଭଲପାଉଛନ୍ତି । ନହେଲେ ଏମିତି କାହିଁକି କହିଥାନ୍ତେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ’ ତ ଭଲ କଥା ନୁହେଁ । ତା’ ଜେଜେମା’ର ଗୀତ ତା’ର ମନେପଡ଼ିଲା, “ପୀରତି ପଥ ବଡ଼ ଖସତା ଲୋ ବଉଳ, ଗୋଡ଼ ଖସିଗଲେ ମହତ ଗଲା ଲୋ ବଉଳ ।”

ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଏ ଭିତରେ ଚିକେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହିଯାଇଥିଲା ଯେହେତୁ ତା’ର ଆଡ଼ଭାଇଜର୍ ଗୋଟିଏ କନ୍‌ସ୍ଟରକ୍‌ସନ୍ ଆୟୋଜନ କରାଉଥିଲେ ଓ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ କିଛି ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଅର୍ପଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଦୂଇ ସଂଘ ହ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସାକ୍ଷାତ ହୋଇପାରିନଥିଲା । ଦୂଇ ସଂଘହସପରେ ଅଭୟ ଦେଖାହେଲେ ବିରଳା ମନ୍ଦିରରେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ପଚାରିଲେ, “ଶୁଭ୍ରା, କଣ ମୋ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ପାଇଲ ?”

ଶୁଭ୍ରା କୌତୁକକରି କହିଲା, “ମୁଁ ତ ଆଉ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଜିନିଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇନି ଯେ ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ଫିଲୋସୋଫିକାଲ୍ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଏତେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ମୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଭିତରେ ପଶିଯିବ । ଆପଣ ଉତ୍ତର କୁହନ୍ତୁ ନା !”

“ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ତମେ ଜାଣି ଜାଣି ଉତ୍ତର କହିବାକୁ ଆଉଁସତ୍ କରୁଛ । ତେବେ ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି । ମୁଁ ହିଁସ୍ ଦେଉଛି, ତମେ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବ । କଣ ରାଜି ।”

“ମୁଁ ରାଜି ।”

“ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ତମ କଥା ମୁଁ ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ଭାବେ । ତମକୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ଖୁସି ହୁଏ ଓ ତମକୁ ବିଦାୟଦେବାକୁ ମତେ କଷ୍ଟ ଲାଗେ । ଇଚ୍ଛା ହୁଏ ଯେ ତମେ ମୋ ପାଖେ ପାଖେ ସବୁବେଳେ ରହିଥାନ୍ତି । ଏ ଅନୁଭବକୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ବାକ୍ୟରେ କେମିତି ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବି ?”

“ଆପଣ ମତେ ଭଲ ପାଉନାହାନ୍ତି ତ ?”

“ଆଉ ତମେ !”

“ମୁଁ କଣ? ମୁଁ ସେମିତି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ କେମିତି ଦେଖିପାରିବି ? ଆପଣ ତ ବାହୁଣ ନା !”

“ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ତମେ ଏତେ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷିତା ହୋଇ ଏସବୁ ଜାତିଭେଦରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରୁଛ ? ତାହେଲେ ତମ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା ଓ ଗାଁର ମାଲନର୍ ପାଶ୍ ନ କରିଥିବା ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା ଭିତରେ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ଆଉ କଣ ରହିଲା? ଶିକ୍ଷା କଣ ଖାଲି ତିନି ଆଉ ତିଭିଜନ୍ରେ ମପାଯାଏ ? ଶିକ୍ଷା ପ୍ରକୃତ ଅର୍ଥହେଲା ମାନସିକ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରାର ମାର୍ଜନା ।”

“ଆପଣ ଏଠି ଏମିତି କହୁଛନ୍ତି । ଆପଣଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ଓ ଗାଁ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଆପଣ କଣ ଜାତିଭେଦ ବିଷୟରେ ଏମିତି ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନେଇପାରିବେ ? ତାପରେ ମୁଁ ଘରର ବତଝିଅ । ମୋ ତଳେ ଦୁଇଭଉଣୀ ଅଛନ୍ତି । ଏମିତି ରିସ୍କ ନେବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁନି ମୁଁ ।”

ଅଭୟ ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ଆଉଟିକେ ପାଖକୁ ଆସିଲେ ଓ ପଚାରିଲେ, “ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ଅନ୍ୟ କିଛି ବିଷୟ ଚିନ୍ତା ନକରି କେବଳ ମୋ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଦିଅ । ତମେ ମତେ ତମ ପାଇଁ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଭାବ କି ନାହିଁ ?”

“ପ୍ଲିଜ୍, ସେମିତି ପଚାରନ୍ତୁନି ।”

“ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ପ୍ଲିଜ୍, ଆମେମାନେ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷିତ । ଭାବନା ରହିଲେ ବି ଆମମାନଙ୍କର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱବୋଧ ରହିଛି । ତେଣୁ ତମପାଇଁ ମୋର ଦୁର୍ବଳତା ରହିଲେ ବି ତମ ଇଚ୍ଛା ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ତମ ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱର ସୁଯୋଗ ନେଇ ତମକୁ ଅନ୍ୟଥା ହଇରାଣ କରିବାର ପକ୍ଷପାତୀ ନୁହେଁ ମୁଁ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତମକୁ ପଚାରୁଛି ।”

ଅଭୟଙ୍କର ଏତିକି କଥାରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଯେମିତି ଚମକିତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ସତରେ ଅଭୟ କେତେ ଉଚ୍ଚ, କେତେ ସଜ୍ଜିତ । ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସେ କେବଳ ବନ୍ଧୁଭାବେ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଆସିଛନ୍ତି । କେବେ କୌଣସି ଅଶ୍ଳୀଳ, ଅସଂଗତ ଶବ୍ଦ ସେ ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଟିରୁ ଶୁଣିନି । ଏମିତି ଏକ ମାର୍ଜିତ ମଣିଷର ମନରେ ଦୁଃଖ ଦେବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାହେଉନଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରାର । ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଥିଲା ନିଜକୁ ସେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଭାବେ ଅଭୟଙ୍କୁ ସମର୍ପଣ କରିଦିଅନ୍ତା ଓ କୁହନ୍ତା, “ମତେ କିଛି ପଚାରନ୍ତୁନି, ମୁଁ କେବଳ ଆପଣଙ୍କର, ଆପଣଙ୍କର ହୋଇ ରହିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ ।” କିନ୍ତୁ ପାଟି ଯେମିତି ମୁଦିହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରାର । ଆଖିରେ ଲୁହ ଭରିଆସିଥିଲା, ଆନନ୍ଦର ଲୁହ । ଅଭୟଙ୍କୁ କେବଳ ଚାହୁଁରହିଲା ସିଏ । ଅଭୟ ପଚାରିଲେ,

“ଶୁଭ୍ରା, କଣହେଲା? କାୟୁଛ କାହିଁକି ?”

“ଏତେ ଖୁସି କେଉଁଠି ସାଇତି ରଖିବି କୁହନ୍ତୁ ତ?” କ୍ଷଣ କଖରେ କହିଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା ।

ଅଭୟ ଯେମିତି ପାଗଳ ହୋଇଯିବେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ହାତଧରି ଛୋଟ ରୁମ୍ବନଟିଏ ଦେଇ କହିଲେ,

“ଲେଟ୍ସ୍ ସେଲିବ୍ରେଟ୍ ।”

“ନୋ, ଲେଟ୍ସ୍ ପ୍ରେ ଫାଙ୍ଗ୍ ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲା ।

ସେଇଠାରେ, ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ, ବିରଳା ମନ୍ଦିର ଭିତରେ ପୁଜା, ଅର୍ଚ୍ଚନା କରିସାରି ଦୁହେଁ ଦୁହିଁକୁ ପ୍ରେମର ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଦେଲେ । ଆଉ ତା’ପରେ

ଅଭୟଙ୍କର ଥେସିସ୍ କାମ ସରିଆସୁଥିଲା । ସିଏ ଚାକିରି ଖୋଜୁଥିଲେ । ଚାକିରି ନହେବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ବାହାଘର ବିଷୟରେ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବାର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ହିଁ ନାହିଁ । କିଛିଦିନପରେ ଅଭୟଙ୍କୁ ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦର କେନ୍ଦ୍ରୀୟ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ଚାକିରି ମିଳିଗଲା । ସେ ବିଦାୟର ସମୟ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପାଇଁ କେତେ ଯେ ମର୍ମନ୍ତୁଦ, ତାହା କେବଳ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଜାଣେ । ତା’କୁ ଏବେ ଅନ୍ତତଃ ତିନିବର୍ଷ କାଳ ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ବିଚ୍ଛେଦ ସହିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । କାରଣ, ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦୁଇଟି ସାନଭଉଣୀଙ୍କର ବିବାହ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଥିଲା ଓ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ବି ତ ପି-ଏଚ୍-ଡି- ସାରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ତେଣୁ ଅନ୍ତତଃ ତିନିବର୍ଷ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ଏମିତି ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟର ସହିତ ବିତାଇବାକୁ ପଡିବ । ଜୀବନସାରା ତ ସିଏ ସଂଘର୍ଷ କରିଆସିଛି । ଆଉ ତିନିଟା ବର୍ଷ କଣ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ରଖିପାରିବନି ?

ଅଭୟ ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦ ଚାଲିଗଲେ । ସେଠି ତାଙ୍କୁ ନୁଆନୁଆ ଚାକିରିରେ ସେଟଲ୍ ହେବାକୁ କିଛିଦିନ ଲାଗିଗଲା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ତା’ ଗବେଷଣା କାମ ନେଇ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତରହିଲା । ଅଭୟଙ୍କର ଚାକିରିରେ ଯୋଗଦାନ କରିବାର ଛ’ ମାସ ପରେ ସିଏ ଥରେ ବନାରସ ଆସିଥିଲେ । କେତେ

ମଜାକଲେ ସେମାନେ ! ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ସାରନାଥ ଗଲେ, ଗଙ୍ଗା ନଦୀରେ ନୌକାବିହାର କଲେ, କାଶୀ ବିଶ୍ୱନାଥଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଯାଇ ଦୀପ ଜଳାଇଲେ । ଅଭୟ କହିଲେ, “ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ଏ ବିଛେଦ ମୁଁ ସହିପାରୁନି । ତମେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ପି-ଏଚ୍-ଡି ସାରିଦିଅ । ତାପରେ ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦ ଚାକିରି ପାଇଁ ଆପ୍ଲାଇ କର । ଆମ ସୁନାସଂସାର ଗଢିବା ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବି ପ୍ରଗଳ୍ଭା ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଥିଲା, ସତରେ ତା’ ର ପି-ଏଚ୍-ଡି ସରିଯାଇଛି । ଅଭୟଙ୍କୁ ବାହାହୋଇ ସିଏ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରଣୀ ସାଜିଛି । ପୁଣି ତାଙ୍କ ସଂସାରରେ କୁନିକୁନି ପୁଅ, ଝିଅ, ଆଉ କେବଳ ଖୁସି ଆଉ ଖୁସି ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଅଭୟଙ୍କର ବନାରସ ଆସି ଫେରିବାର ମାସଟିଏ ବି ବିତିଛି କି ନାହିଁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପାଇଲା ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ଶୁଭବିବାହର ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ପତ୍ର । ତା’ ଭିତରେ ଦୁଇଟି ବାକ୍ୟର ଛୋଟ ଚିଠି ଖଣ୍ଡେ, “ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ମୁଁ ନିଜକୁ କ୍ଷମା କରିପାରୁନି । ଯଦି ପାରିବ, ତମେ ମତେ କ୍ଷମା କରିଦେବ ।” ବାସ୍, ସେଇହିଁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଜୀବନର କାହାଣୀ । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ସେ ଚିଠିର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇନି କି କେବେ ଆଉ ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସଂପର୍କ ରଖିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁନି । ଏକ ଭୀରୁ, କାପୁରୁଷ, ପ୍ରତାରକ ମଣିଷ ଭାବେ ଘୃଣା କରିଆସିଛି । ସମସ୍ତ ପୁରୁଷ ସମାଜ ପ୍ରତି ତା’ର ଧାରଣା ବଦଳିଯାଇଛି । ସଂଯୋଗବଶତଃ ଅଭୟଙ୍କର ସେ ପତ୍ର ପାଇବା ପରେପରେ ଆକସ୍ମିକ ଭାବେ ଏକ ଚମତ୍କାର ଘଟଣା ଘଟିଗଲା । ଆମେରିକାର ଭିରଜିନିଆ ଟେକ୍ସ ଡକ୍ଟର ନାଗ୍ ବନାରସ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ସେଠି ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ଆତ୍ମଭାଇଜର୍ଜ୍ଜ ସହିତ ସାକ୍ଷାତ୍ କରିବାକୁ ଆସିଲେ । ସେ ସମୟରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ତା’ଙ୍କ ସହିତ ତା’ ରିସର୍ଚ ବିଷୟରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରୁକରୁ ଡକ୍ଟର ନାଗ୍ ବହୁତ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ତାପରେ ହଠାତ୍ ଚାରି-ପାଞ୍ଚ ମାସ ଭିତରେ ଜି-ଆର୍-ଇ, ଗୋ-ଏଫ୍-ଏଲ୍-ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଦେଇ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଲା ତା’ର ରିସର୍ଚ କାମ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିବାପାଇଁ ।

ଅଭୟଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତାରଣା ଭୁଲିବାପାଇଁ ସେଇଦିନଠାରୁ ସେ ନିଜକୁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରୂପେ ତା’ ରିସର୍ଚକାମ ଭିତରେ ମଜାଇଦେଇଛି । ତଥାପି ଭୁଲିପାରିନି । ମନଭିତରେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ସେ ସ୍ମୃତିସବୁ ସଜାଗହୋଇ ସେମିତି ନିଆଁ ଜାଳିଦେଇଛି । ବାରମ୍ବାର ଇଚ୍ଛାକରିଛି ସେ ଅଭୟ ମିଶ୍ର ଉପରେ କେମିତିଭାବେ ପ୍ରତିଶୋଧ ନିଅନ୍ତା । ଅଭୟ ମିଶ୍ରର ସଂସାରକୁ ଜାଳିଯୋଡି ଛାରଖାର କରିଦିଅନ୍ତା ଓ ତା’ସହିତ ଆଭୟ ମିଶ୍ରକୁ ବି ଜଳାଇଦିଅନ୍ତା । ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଦଶନ୍ଧ ଅଭୟ ମିଶ୍ରର କାନ ଧରି ସେ ତା’ର ଏ ପ୍ରତାରଣାର କାରଣ ପଚାରନ୍ତା । ଏ ଭୟଙ୍କର ଭାବନା କଥା ଚିନ୍ତାକରି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବି ନିଜେ ତରିଯାଏ । ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ ଜୀବନରେ ଏ ପ୍ରତାରଣା ଓ ଘୃଣାର ସ୍ମୃତିକୁ ଭୁଲିଯିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରେ ଓ ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବିତାଇଥିବା ପ୍ରେମମୟ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତମାନଙ୍କୁ ମନେପକାଏ । ଏମିତି ଦୀର୍ଘ ଦଶବର୍ଷ ଧରି ନିଜର ସ୍ମୃତି ସହିତ ଲୁଚକାଳି ଖେଳିଆସୁଛି ଶୁଭ୍ରା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ସ୍ମୃତି ଆଜି ଜୀବନ୍ତ ରୂପ ନେଇଛି । ଅଭୟ ମିଶ୍ରକୁ ସିଏ ଦେଖିପାରୁଛି ତା’ ର ପତ୍ନୀ ପ୍ରଭା ସହିତ । ଏବେ ତା’ହେଲେ କଣ କରିବ ଶୁଭ୍ରା?

ସେଦିନ ଶିଳା ଘରେ ତିନିଘଣ୍ଟାରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବହୁତ ସହଜ ଥିଲା । ନିଜର ପ୍ରଫେସନାଲ୍ ଲାଇଫ୍ ବିଷୟରେ ଏତେ ତିସକସନ୍ କଲା ଯେ ସେଠି ଆଉ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ଜୀବନର ସୁଖ, ଦୁଃଖ, ରାଗ, ଘୃଣା ଓ ଭାବନା ପାଇଁ ସମୟ ନଥିଲା । ଏସବୁ ଆଲୋଚନା ଚାଲିଥିବା ସମୟରେ ହଠାତ୍ ଅଭୟ କହିଲେ, “ଶୁଭ୍ରାଜୀ, ପ୍ରୋଟିନ୍ ଫେଲ୍ଡିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଉପରେ ଆମେ ବି ତ କାମକରୁଛୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଇଣ୍ଟରଡିସିପ୍ଲିନାରୀ ରିସର୍ଚ କେମିତି ହେଉଛି ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଆଗ୍ରହ ଜାଗୁଛି ।”

ଶିଳା କହିଲା, “କାଲି ତ ରବିବାର ଅଛି । ଶୁଭ୍ରାଜୀ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଲାଭ୍ ଦେଖାଇବାକୁ ନେଇଯିବେ । ପ୍ରଭାଙ୍କୁ ମୁଁ ସେ ସମୟରେ ଡ୍ରାଲ୍ଡ୍ ଟେଡ୍‌ସେକ୍ଟର୍ ଦେଖାଇଦେବି ।”

ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଅପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେଲା । ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଏକାକୀ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତର ଭାବନା ତା’କୁ ତରାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା । କାଳେ ଗଛିତ ଦୁଃଖ, ରାଗ, ଅଭିମାନ ସବୁ ଆତ୍ମପ୍ରକାଶ କରି ତା’କୁ ଦୁର୍ବଳ କରିଦେବେ । ତେଣୁ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟଦେଲା, “ଅଭୟଜୀ, ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଲାଭ୍ ଦେଖିବା ଆଗ୍ରହ ଛାଡି ବୋଝନ୍ ଭ୍ରମଣ କରନ୍ତୁ । ପ୍ରଭାଜୀଙ୍କୁ ବି ବୋଝନ୍ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ମିଉଜିଅମ, ସପିଙ୍ଗ୍ ସେକ୍ଟର୍ ସବୁ ବୁଲାଇ ଦେଖାନ୍ତୁ ଓ ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଆମେରିକା ରହଣି ଉପଭୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ । ସବୁବେଳେ ସେମିତି ଆଉ ରିସର୍ଚ ଓ କାମ କଥା ଭାବିଲେ ତ ହେବନି । ଟିକେ ଜୀବନକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ ବି ତ କରିବା ଦରକାର ।”

ପ୍ରଭା କହିଲେ, “ତା’ଙ୍କ କଥା କୁହନ୍ତୁନି ଶୁଭ୍ରା; ସବୁବେଳେ ସେ ସେମିତି । ଆଉ ବୁଢ଼ା ବୟସରେ କଣ ବଦଳିଯିବେ ? ସବୁବେଳେ ସେଇ କାମ, ଲାଭ୍, ରିସର୍ଚ । ଆଉ ଦୁନିଆଁର କଣ ବା ସିଏ ବୁଝନ୍ତି ?”

ଅଭୟଙ୍କର କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରବଳ ଆଗ୍ରହ ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ଲାଭ୍ ଦେଖିବାପାଇଁ । ଅତଏବ, ପରଦିନ ରବିବାରରେ ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନ ଭୋଜନପରେ ଦୁଇଟାବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଲାଭ୍ ଦେଖାଇବା ପାଇଁ ରାଇଡ୍ ଦେବାର ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଦେଲା ଶୁଭ୍ରା ।

ପରଦିନ ରବିବାର । ଲାବ୍‌ରେ ବହୁତ ସହଜ ଓ ପ୍ରଫେସନାଲ୍ ଭାବେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବୁଝାଉଥିଲା ଅଭୟଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରୋଟିନ୍ ଫେଲ୍‌ଡିଙ୍ଗ୍ ବିଷୟରେ । ଅଭୟ କହିଲେ, “ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ମୋର ତମକୁ କିଛି କହିବାର ଅଛି ।”

ଅଭୟଙ୍କ କଣ୍ଠସ୍ଵର ଅଲଗା ଥିଲା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଚମକିପଡ଼ିଲା, “ଅଭୟଜୀ, ଆପଣ ଏବେ ଜଣେ ବିବାହିତ ପୁରୁଷ । ଆପଣ ମୋ ଲାବ୍ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି, ମୋ ସହିତ ଗପ ଜମାଇବାକୁ ନୁହେଁ ।”

“ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି ଯେ ମୁଁ ଜଣେ ବିବାହିତ ପୁରୁଷ । ମୋର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ଓ ମୋର ସୀମା ମଧ୍ୟ ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି । ଏକଥା ସତ ଯେ ମୁଁ ତମ ଲାବ୍ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଓ ତମ ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ ବିଷୟରେ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଆସିଛି । ଆଉ ଏକଥା ବି ସତ ଯେ ତମ ଆଗରେ ମୋର ଦୋଷ ସ୍ଵୀକାରକରି ତମପାଖରୁ କ୍ଷମାଭିକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ବି ଆସିଛି ।”

“ଏତିକି କଥା ତ! ମୋଠାରୁ କ୍ଷମାଭିକ୍ଷା ନେବାର କଣ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ? ମୋ ପାଖରେ ତ ଆପଣ କିଛି ଦୋଷ କରିନାହାନ୍ତି । ଦୟାକରି ସେ ସବୁ ଚିନ୍ତା ନକରି ଆସନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରୋଟିନ୍ ଫେଲ୍‌ଡିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଉପରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ।”

“ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ଏଇହିଁ ତ ତମର ଭାବପ୍ରବଣତା । ଦଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ତମେ ଯେମିତି ଥିଲ, ସେମିତି ଅଛ । କିଛି ବି ବଦଳିନ । ଏବେ ତମେ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ଦୟାକରି ମୋତେ କହିବାକୁ ଦିଅ ଓ ମୋ ମନର ଗ୍ଳାନିକୁ ବାହାରିଯିବାକୁ ଦିଅ ।”

“ତାହେଲେ ଅଭୟଜୀ, ଏଇହିଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଇଚ୍ଛା ଥିଲା, କୌଣସି ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧୀୟ ତଥ୍ୟ ଜାଣିବାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ନୁହେଁ । ସବୁବେଳେ ଆପଣ ନିଜ ମନମୁତାବକ କାମ କରନ୍ତି ଓ ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ଆଘାତଦେଇ ବିଜୟୀ ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଲାବ୍ ବୁଲେଇ ଆଣିବାର ଭୁଲ୍ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ଯେତେବେଳେ, ଆପଣଙ୍କ କଥା ଶୁଣିବା ବ୍ୟତିରେକ ମୋର କଣ ବା ଉପାୟ ଅଛି ? ତେଣୁ ମୁଁ ଏଇଠାରେ ବସିଲି । ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଯାହା କହିବାର ଅଛି କୁହନ୍ତୁ । ଆପଣଙ୍କ କାହାଣୀ ଶେଷ ହେବାପରେ ମୁଁ ଉଠିବି ଓ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ରାଲଟ୍ ଦେଇ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଆସିବି ।”

“ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ମୋ’ ବାହାଘର ଆକର୍ଷକ ଭାବେ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଏତେ ଆକର୍ଷକ ଯେ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ ବି ହେଉନି । ମାମୁଁଙ୍କ ଗାଁ ରେ ଥିବା ବେଳେ ମାମୁଁଙ୍କର ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ପ୍ରଭା ର ବିବାହ ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଯୋଗଦେବାକୁ ଯାଇଥିଲି । ପ୍ରଭା ସହିତ ବିବାହ କରିବାକୁ ଆସିଥିବା ପାତ୍ର ଜଣକ ଏତେ ମାତ୍ରାରେ ମଦ୍ୟପାନ କରିଥିଲେ ଯେ ବିବାହ ମଣ୍ଡପକୁ ଆସିବାର କ୍ଷମତା ହରାଇ ଶୋଇ ରହିଥିଲେ । ଅପମାନରେ, ଲଙ୍କାରେ ପ୍ରଭାର ବାପାଙ୍କର ହଠାତ୍ ହାର୍ଟଆଟାକ୍ ହେଲା । ଯଦିଓ ପ୍ରଭାର ମଉସା ଜଣେ ହାର୍ଟ ସର୍ଜନ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ଦ୍ଵାରା ସିଏ ବଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରଭା ସେତେବେଳେ ଆତ୍ମବଳି ଦେବାକୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ । ତା’କୁ ବୁଝାଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରିବା ପରେ ବି ନବୁଝି ସିଏ ମତେ ଓଲଟା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କଲା, ‘ଆପଣମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ ବଡ଼ବଡ଼ କଥା କହନ୍ତି ଓ ମୁଖାପିଛି ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଖେଳ ଖେଳିବାକୁ ଭଲପାଆନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ନେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଲେ ପଛଘୁଞ୍ଚା ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଏଇତ ବାପା ଜଣେ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷିତ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର୍ ସହିତ ବିବାହ କରାଇବାକୁ ବସିଥିଲେ । ଏବେ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି ତ କେତେ ନିମ୍ନସ୍ତରର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ସେ ଜଣକ । ଆପଣ ମତେ ଏତେ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି, କିନ୍ତୁ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଯଦି ମୁଁ ପଚାରିବି ଯେ ଆପଣ ମତେ ବିବାହ କରି ଏ ଅପମାନ, ଲଙ୍କାରୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇପାରିବେ, ଆପଣ ପଛକୁ ଘୁଞ୍ଚିଯିବେ, ସତ କି ନୁହେଁ ?’

ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ପ୍ରଭା ସହିତ ମୋର ବିବାହ ଗୋଟିଏ ଆକର୍ଷକ ପରିବେଶ ପ୍ରତି ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା, ଯାହାପାଇଁ ମୋ ପ୍ରେମ, ମୋ ଭାବନା ଓ ମୋ ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ମୋତେ ଜଳାଞ୍ଜଳି ଦେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଲା । ତମେ କଣ ଭାବୁଛ ସେ ସବୁ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ସହଜଥିଲା ? ପ୍ରଭାଙ୍କୁ ମୁଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ସବୁ ଖୋଲି କହିଥିଲି କେବଳ ତମର ନାଁ ଓ ପରିଚୟ ଛଡ଼ା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ପ୍ରିଜ୍, ମୋ କଥା ବୁଝିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କର ଓ ଯଦି ପାରିବ କ୍ଷମା କରିଦିଅ ।”

“କେତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଗପଟିଏ ସତେ ! କେଉଁ ସିନେମାରୁ ଏ ଗପଟି ଆପଣ ପାଇଲେ ? ସତରେ ବହୁତ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଅଭୟଜୀ, ଆପଣ ଜଣେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଗାଳ୍ପିକ । ଏବେ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଆପଣଙ୍କର କହିବାର କଥା ସବୁ ସରିଗଲାଣି । ଚାଲନ୍ତୁ ତାହେଲେ ଯିବା ।”

“ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ତମେ ଜାଣିଛ ଯେ ତମେ ମତେ କ୍ଷମା ନକଲେ ମୁଁ କେବେ ଆତ୍ମାଶାନ୍ତି ପାଇପାରିବିନି । ତଥାପି ଯଦି ତମେ ମତେ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ କରିବାକୁ ନ ଚାହଁ ତେବେ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ ନକର । ତମପ୍ରତି କରିଥିବା ଅନ୍ୟାୟର ଯେ କ୍ଷମା ନାହିଁ, ତାହା ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ବି କେମିତି ଖେଳ ଖେଳିଲା ? ଛାଡ଼ ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ମୁଁ ଯେ ତମକୁ ଭେଟିପାରିଲି ଓ ଏତିକି କହିପାରିଲି, ସେଇହିଁ ମୋର ଆଶ୍ଵାସନା । ଭଲରେ ରୁହ ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ତମପାଇଁ କେବଳ ମୁଁ ଏତିକି ହିଁ କାମନା କରିପାରିବି । ଏବେ ଯଦି ଚାହୁଁଛ, ତମେ ମତେ ଆମ ଆପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇପାର ।”

ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ଇଚ୍ଛାହେଲା ସେ ପୁଣି ଦଶ ବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବର ଶୁଭ୍ରା ହୋଇଯାଆନ୍ତା । ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ବୁକୁରେ ଲାଗିଯାଇ ମିଶିଯାଆନ୍ତା ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ଅସ୍ଥିତ ଭିତରେ । ହଜାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତା ନିଜକୁ, ନିଜ ଅସ୍ଥିତକୁ, ଓ କେବଳ ପରିଚୟ ତା’ର ରହନ୍ତା ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ପରିଚୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ । ଅଭୟ କେବଳ

ତା'ର, ଶୁଭ୍ରାର; ଆଉ କାହାର ନୁହଁନ୍ତି । ଏଇ ଯେଉଁ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗଣ ତା'ର ଅତି ଆପଣାର ଥିଲା, ଏଇ ଯେଉଁ ହୃଦୟଟି ସହିତ ସିଏ ନିଜ ହୃଦୟକୁ ମିଶାଇଦେଇ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ତାଜମହଲ ତୋଳିଥିଲା, ସେ ତାଜମହଲ କେବେ ଅସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରହିପାରେନି । ଅଜାଣତରେ ଯେ ତା' ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ଝରୁଥିଲା ଓ ସେ ଲାବ୍ ଭିତରେ କଇଁକଇଁ ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଦୁଥିଲା, ସେକଥା ସେ ଜାଣିପାରିନଥିଲା । ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ପ୍ରବୋଧନାର ସ୍ୱରରେ ସେ ଆତ୍ମସତେତନ ହେଲା ।

ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଆଖିରୁ ଲୁହ ଯୋଛିଦେଉଦେଉ ଅଭୟ କହିଲେ, “ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ମୋ ସୁନାଟା ପରା, ଦୁର୍ବଳ ହୁଅନି । ତମେ ଦୁର୍ବଳ ହେଲେ ମୁଁ ନିଜକୁ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଅପରାଧୀ ମନେକରିବି । ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଯେ ଏମିତି ଖେଳ ଖେଳି ଆମକୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଦେଇଥିଲା ଓ ପୁଣି ଆମକୁ ମିଶାଇଦେଇଛି, ହୁଏତ ସଞ୍ଜର ଆଉ କିଛି ଲକ୍ଷା ଅଛି । ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରକୃତିସ୍ଥ କର ଶୁଭ୍ରା । ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ସିନା ସଂସାର ଗଢିପାରିଲେନି, କିନ୍ତୁ ନିଜ ସୁଖ, ଦୁଃଖ ତ ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ବାଞ୍ଛିପାରିବା ।”

ପିନି କହିଲା, “ଶୁଭ୍ରା ମାଉସୀ, ଆପଣ ଶୁଅନ୍ତୁ । ଆଜି ମୁଁ ରୋଷେଇ କରିବି ।”
“ତୁ ସାନ ପିଲାଟା, ତୋର ପାଠପଢ଼ା ଅନେକ । ତୁ ପଢ଼ । ସାମାନ୍ୟ ମୁଣ୍ଡବିନ୍ଧା ତ, ମୁଁ ରୋଷେଇ କରିପାରିବି ।”
“ନାହିଁ, ନାହିଁ, ନାହିଁ । ଆଜି ଆପଣ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଝିଅର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହାତରକ୍ଷା ଖାଇବେ । ଏଇଟା ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଝିଅର ଅନୁରୋଧ ଓ ଦାବି ବି ।”
ଶୁଭ୍ରାଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଆଣି ଅମୃତାଞ୍ଜନ ଘସିଲା ପିନି । ତା'ପରେ ଟେପ୍‌ରେକର୍ଡର ଭିତରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଭଜନ କ୍ୟାସେଟ୍ ଲଗାଇଦେଇ ସେ କିତେନ୍‌କୁ ଗଲା ।

ଏଇ ପିନି । ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ବଡ଼ ଝିଅ । ଠିକ୍ ଅଭୟଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତିଛବି ଯେମିତି । ଏମ୍-ଆଇ-ଟି-ରେ ଏମ୍-ଏସ୍- କରିବାକୁ ଆସିଛି । ପି-ଏଚ୍-ଡି- ବି କରିବ ବୋଲି ଯୋଜନା କରୁଛି । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପାଖରେ ରହୁଛି, ଆଉ ରହିବ ମଧ୍ୟ । ସେଇଟା ଅଭୟ ଓ ପ୍ରଭାଙ୍କର ଲକ୍ଷା । ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ବି ପିନି ବହୁତ ଆଦରିଯାଇଛି । ଆଉ ଏ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ ଜୀବନରେ ସାକ୍ଷିଏ ପାଇ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବି ବହୁତ ଆନନ୍ଦିତ । ପ୍ରଭା ଫୋନ୍‌କରି କହିଥିଲେ, “ଶୁଭ୍ରାଜୀ, ମୋ ଝିଅ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ହେଲା ସିଏ । ଟିକେ ଜଗିବେ ।” କାନ୍ଦୁଥିଲେ ପ୍ରଭା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା ଦେଉଥିଲା । ଅଭୟ କିନ୍ତୁ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ଥିଲେ । ଫୋନ୍‌କରି କହିଥିଲେ, “ଶୁଭ୍ରା, ପିନି ଯେ ଏମ୍-ଆଇ-ଟି-ରେ ପାଇଲା ଓ ତମ ପାଖରେ ରହିବ, ସେଇ ହିଁ ମୋର ଅନେକ ଖୁସି । ତମ ଝିଅ ସିଏ । ତମ ଝିଅକୁ ତମ ପାଖରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ମୁଁ ଏବେ ନିଃସିତ । ଏବେଠାରୁ ତା'କୁ ହିଁ ମୋର ସ୍ତୁତି ମନେକରି ସାଇତି ରଖିବ ।”

ଆଉ ପିନି । ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ଜୀବନରେ କେଉଁ ସଙ୍ଗତର ଲହରୀ ଛୁଟେଇଦେଇଛି ଯେମିତି । ଏବେ ସେ ଲାବ୍‌ରୁ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଫେରିଆସେ । ଶନିବାର, ରବିବାର ଲାବ୍ ଯିବା କମେଇଦେଇ ପିନି ସହିତ ପିନିର ପାଠପଢ଼ା ଆଲୋଚନା କରି ସେ କେତେ ସବୁ ନୂଆ ବିଷୟ ଶିଖିଲାଣି । ପିନିର ଏ ଜିନିଷଟା ଦରକାର, ପିନି ଏଇଟା ଭଲପାଏ, ପିନିକୁ ଏ ତ୍ରେସିଙ୍ଗ ଭଲ ମାନିବ, ଏବେ ସେସବୁ ଚିନ୍ତା ଶୁଭ୍ରା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ପଶେ । ପିନି ଭିତରେ ସିଏ ଅଭୟଙ୍କୁ ପାଏ । ପିନିର ଉପସ୍ଥିତି ତା'ର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ସର୍ବଶେଷ ରୂପା ବୋଲି ତା'ର ମନେହୁଏ । ଆଉ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗତା ଶୁଭ୍ରାକୁ ଡରାଏନି । ତା'ର ଚାରିପାର୍ଶ୍ୱରେ ପିନି ଛାଇଯାଏ । “ଶୁଭ୍ରା ମାଉସୀ, ଶୁଭ୍ରା ମାଉସୀ” ସ୍ୱରରେ ତା'ର ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଆଲୟ ପୁରିଉଠେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଆଜି ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ ନୁହେଁ । ସେ ଜନନୀ, ସେ ପରିପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ । ମା' ନହେଲେ ବି ସିଏ ମାଉସୀ, ଅଭୟଙ୍କ ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ମାଉସୀ ସିଏ ।

ଠିକ୍ ଯେମିତି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଚାହିଁଥିଲା ଝିଅଟିଏ, ପିନି ତା'ର ସେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ପ୍ରତିବିମ୍ବ । ଏମିତି ସୁନ୍ଦର ସ୍ୱଭାବର ଝିଅ ପିନି । ଥରେ ଷ୍ଟୋରରେ ପିନି ସବୁ ଜିନିଷର ଦାମ୍ ଦେବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା କହିଲା, “କାହିଁକି ପିନି? ତୋ ମାଉସୀ ଥାଉଥାଉ ତୁ କାହିଁକି ସେ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ନେବୁ ?” ପିନି କିଛି ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କଲାନି । କିନ୍ତୁ କିଛିଦିନ ପରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ଦେଖିଲା ଯେ ପିନି ଏମ୍-ଆଇ-ଟି-ରୁ କ୍ଲାସ୍‌ସାରି ଫେରିବା ସମୟରେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଗୋସରୀ ନେଇଆସୁଛି । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପଚାରିଲେ କହେ, “ନାହିଁ ମାଉସୀ, ଲକ୍ଷାହେଲା ଆଜି ଟିକେ ଚିଲୁଟି ତରକାରୀ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଯେ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଦୋକାନ ଚାଲିଗଲି ଓ ଆଉସବୁ ଜିନିଷ ମନେପଡିବାରୁ ନେଇଆସିଲି ।” ପିନି ସବୁ ବୁଝିପାରେ । କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପାଦନର ସମସ୍ତ ଶୈଳୀ ତା'କୁ ଜଣା । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବି ବେଳେବେଳେ ଜାଣିଜାଣି ପିନିକୁ ତା'ର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପାଦନ କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗଦିଏ । “ପିନି, ଆସିଲାବେଳକୁ ଟିକେ ଆଇସକ୍ରିମ୍ ନେଇଆସିବୁ ତ ।” ପିନି ଆଶେ ଓ ଭୟ ଖୁସି ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ଶନିବାର ରବିବାର ଛୁଟିରେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ପିନି ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ମୁଣ୍ଡବାନ୍ଧି ବସେ । କହେ, “ମାଉସୀ, ଆପଣ ସବୁଦିନ ସେମିତି ଏକାରକମର ବେଶୀ କରନ୍ତି । ଆଜି ମୁଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ନୂଆ ଷ୍ଟାଇଲ୍‌ରେ କେଶ ବାନ୍ଧିଦେବି ।” ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରେ, “ବୟସ କଣ ଆଉ ଫେରିଆସୁଛି ମୋର ଯେ ନୂଆ ଷ୍ଟାଇଲ୍‌ରେ କେଶ ବାନ୍ଧିବ ? ନୂଆ ଷ୍ଟାଇଲ୍ ସବୁ ତମମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶୋଭାପାଏ ।” ପିନି କହେ, “ମାଉସୀ, ଆପଣ ନିଜକୁ ଦର୍ପଣରେ ଠିକ୍ ରୂପେ ଦେଖନ୍ତିନି ଦେଖାହୁଏ, ନହେଲେ ଏମିତି କହନ୍ତେନି । ଆପଣଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିଲେ କେହିବି ତିରିଶ ବର୍ଷରୁ ଅଧିକ କହିବେନି ।” ଶିଲା ରିନି ବେଳେବେଳେ ଶନିବାର, ରବିବାର ଦିନ ଆସେ । ଶୁଭ୍ରା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇଦେବା ପରେ ସେମାନେ ବହୁତ ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ପିନି ଆଉ

ରିନି ବେଳେବେଳେ ଅନ୍ୟ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କୁ ବି ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରନ୍ତି । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ହସ, ଖୁସି, ଗପ ଓ ମେଳରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ଜୀବନ ଯେମିତି ରୋମାଞ୍ଚିତ ହୋଇଉଠେ ।

ନିଜକୁ ମାୟାରେ ନ ବାନ୍ଧିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରି ବି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ପିନିର ମାୟାରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ଯଦିଓ ସେ ଜାଣେ କିଛି ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ପିନିର ପାଠ ସରିଯିବ । ପିନି ତା’ର ନିଜର ସଂସାର କରିବ ଓ ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ଜୀବନରେ ପୁଣି ସେମିତି ନିଃସଙ୍ଗତା ଘାରିଯିବ । ତଥାପି ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ସେ ବ୍ୟର୍ଥ ଶୋଚନା ନକରି ସେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ପରିପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଜୀବନରେ ମଜ୍ଜିଯିବାକୁ, ହଜିଯିବାକୁ, ବିଲୀନ ହୋଇଯିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ ; ଜନନୀର ଭୂମିକାରେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରୂପେ ନିଜକୁ ଆବିଷ୍କାର କରିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ପିନି ସହିତ ତା’ର ନିତିଦିନର ଜୀବନଚର୍ଯ୍ୟା ତା’କୁ ଆନନ୍ଦିତ କରେ, ଅଭିଭୂତ କରେ ଓ ସେ ଯେ କେବେ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ ଥିଲା, ସେ ସବୁ ଅନୁଭୂତି ବିଗତ ସ୍ମୃତି ଭିତରେ ହଜିଯାଏ । ଏଇତ ଜୀବନ ! ଜନ୍ମିତ ସନ୍ତାନକୁ ବିଦାୟଦେଇ ପିନିର ପିତାମାତା ବି ତ କେବଳ ଝିଅର ସ୍ମୃତିକୁ ପାଥେୟ କରି ରହିଛନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ନିଃସଙ୍ଗତାକୁ ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବି ଏମିତି ପରିପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଓ ସୁନ୍ଦର ସ୍ମୃତିରେ ସଜାଇ, ମାତୃତ୍ୱର ସୁଖଦ ଅନୁଭୂତିରେ କାହିଁକି ମଜାଇ ରଖିପାରିବନି ?

କବାଟ ଖୋଲିବାର ଶରରେ ଶୁଭ୍ରାର ଭାବନା ଭଙ୍ଗହୁଲା । ପିନି ଟେପ୍ରେକଡର୍ ବନ୍ଦକରି କହିଲା, “ମାଉସୀ, ଖାଦ୍ୟ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ।” “ଯାଉଛି” କହି ଶୁଭ୍ରା ବିଛଣାରୁ ଉଠିଲା ।

ତକଟର ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ ତେଟନ, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ରହନ୍ତି । ଯଦିଓ ଏକ ଗାଣିତିକା ହିସାବରେ ସେ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷା ଓ ତାଲିମ୍ ପାଠ, ତେବେ ମନରେ ଉତ୍ପ୍ରାବା ଭାବନାର ଚରଣକୁ ଲେଖାଲେଖି ଓ ଅଭିନୟ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ସର୍ବଦା ଚେଷ୍ଟିତ । ଏତଦ୍ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ନୃତ୍ୟ, ଗୀତ ଓ ବନ୍ଧୁମିଳନରେ ତାଙ୍କର ବିଶେଷ ଆଗ୍ରହ । ଏଇ ଚାନ୍ଦି ସେ ତାଙ୍କର ଜଣେ ବାନ୍ଧବୀର ଜୀବନକୁ ନେଇ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି ।



ସେଇ ଗାଆଁରେ ଉଇଁଲେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ
ଏଇ ଗାଆଁକୁ ପଡ଼ଇ ଖରା
ସେଇ ଗାଆଁକୁ ଆଲୁଅ କରେ
ଏ ଗାଆଁ ଜନ୍ମ, ଏ ଗାଆଁ ତାରା
- ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀକାନ୍ତ ମହାପାତ୍ର



ବିଦେଶରେ ଆମର ସାମାଜିକ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ

ବିଜୟମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ର
ବୋଝନ୍, ମାସାରୁସେଟ୍ସ୍

ବିଦେଶରେ ରହିବା ମୋ'ର ହାରାହାରି ପଞ୍ଚତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷ ହେଲା । ଯୁବକ ବୟସରୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ପରିଣତ ବୟସକୁ ଗତି ଚାଲିଛି । ଆମ ବୟସର କେତେକ ଲୋକ ଏବେ ସଂସାରରେ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କର ପିଲାମାନେ ବାହାସାହା ହୋଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ପରିବାର ପୋଷଣରେ ଲାଗିଛନ୍ତି । ଅନେକ ନୂଆ ଯୁବକଯୁବତୀ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଛନ୍ତି । ଛାତ୍ରସଂଖ୍ୟା ମଧ୍ୟ ବଢ଼ିଛି । ଆମର ଜୀବନନିର୍ବାହରେ ବିଦେଶରେ ଜୀବନଯାପନର ପ୍ରଣାଳୀ ଆମକୁ ନିଜେ ହିଁ ଖୋଜିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ୁଥିଲା । ଜୀବନର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କ୍ଷେପରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେ'ପରି ନିଜ ହାତରେ ରାସ୍ତାଟିଆରି କରି ଆମକୁ ଆଗେଇବାକୁ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଯାହାକିଛି ସେଥିରୁ ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ହୋଇଛି, ତାହା ଏ' ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଆମର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଜଣାଇବାକୁ ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରୁଛି । ଏହା ଅନ୍ତରର କଥା, ସୁଦୃଢ଼ ହିସାବରେ ପାଠକମାନେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବେ ।

ଯେ' କୌଣସି ସମାଜରେ ବସବାସ କରିବାକୁ ହେଲେ ସେଠାର ଚଳଣିସହ ଖାପଖୁଆଇ ଚଳିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରିବା ମଣିଷର ରୀତି । ବିନୟ, ନମ୍ରତା, ଭଦ୍ରାମି, ପରୋପକାର ସବୁ ସମାଜରେ ପ୍ରଶଂସା ଆଣିଥାଏ । ଅନ୍ୟର କ୍ଷତି ନ କଲେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ସମାଜରେ ମଣିଷ ଆପଣାର ସ୍ଥାନ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାରେ ଶୋଚନା ନାହିଁ । ତେବେ ବିଦେଶ ରହଣି ଅଲଗା କାହିଁକି ? ବିଦେଶୀ ସମାଜ ତ ଅଲଗା ନୁହେଁ । ତେଣୁ ଏଥିରେ ଶିଖିବାର କ'ଣ ଅଛି ? ଏ' ପ୍ରଶ୍ନକୁ ଅଧ୍ୟୟନ କଲେ ଏହାର ମର୍ମ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି କରାଯାଇପାରେ । ଅନେକ ସମୟରେ କେବଳ ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତାରୁ ହିଁ ଉପଲବ୍ଧିର ସୃଷ୍ଟି । ବିଦେଶ ସମାଜରେ ପଞ୍ଚତିରିଶି ବର୍ଷ ରହଣିର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତାରୁ ଯାହା ମନରେ ଆସୁଛି, ତା'କୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ ଏ' ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରେ ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରିବି ।

ଏ' ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରେ ଛ' ଭାଗ ଅଛି । ପ୍ରଥମ ଭାଗରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପ୍ରତିନିଧି ହିସାବରେ ପିଦେଶରେ ଆମର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ କଥା ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବି । ଅନେକଦିନ ଅସ୍ଥାୟୀ ହେଲାପରେ ନିଜ ଘରେ ବାପା, ମା', ଭାଇ, ଭଉଣୀ, ଅନ୍ୟ ପାରିବାରିକ ଓ ବାଲ୍ୟବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ ସହ ଆମର ସଂପର୍କକୁ ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଭାଗରେ ଆଣିବି । ଆପଣାର ନିଜ ପରିବାର - ସ୍ୱାମୀ, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ପିଲାମାନେ, ଶିଶୁ, ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ, ବିବାହ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ତୃତୀୟ ଭାଗରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବି । ଚତୁର୍ଥରେ ସାମାଜିକ ପରିବେଶ, ଧର୍ମ, ନୀତି, ସାଇପତିଶା କଥା ଆଣିବି । ପଞ୍ଚମରେ ଭାଷା, ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ସଂଗୀତ, କଳାଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କଥା ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବି । ଶେଷ ଭାଗରେ ଜାତିପ୍ରୀତି ଓ ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ ବିଷୟ ଉଠାଇ ଦେଶ ଓ ବିଦେଶଲାଗି ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଓ ଆମର ସ୍ୱକୀୟ ମାନବିକତାର ମର୍ମ ଆଲୋଚନାକରି ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ସମାପ୍ତ କରିବି । ପାଠକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏ' କଥା ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରିବାର ଆଗ୍ରହକୁ ମୁଁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦେଉଛି । ଏ' ଉଦ୍ୟମ ଲୋକଧର୍ମୀ ।

୧. ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମୂଲ୍ୟବୋଧ

ବିଦେଶ ଅବସ୍ଥାନ ଫଳରେ ଆମେ ଆମର ଅଜ୍ଞାତରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଜାତିର ପ୍ରତିନିଧି ହିସାବରେ ଗୃହୀତ ହେଉ । ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ ଆମର ଗାଁ ପରିପାଟଣା, ସରଳତା, ସୁଛତା, କମନୀୟତା ଦେଖିବାର ସୂଯୋଗ ନାହିଁ - ଆମ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ହିଁ ସେମାନେ ଆମ ଦେଶକୁ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି । ତା' ଫଳରେ ଆମର ଯାହା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ, ତା' ଦେଶର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ବୋଲି ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ଲୋକ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିନେବାର କାରଣ ଅଛି । ତେଣୁ ନିଜ ଦେଶରେ ଯାହା ଆମେ ଦୁଷ୍ଟମି ହିସାବରେ ଚଳଣିକୁ ଆଣିଥିଲୁ, ମୂଲ୍ୟବୋଧ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ତା'ର ବିଦେଶରେ ସ୍ଥାନ ନାହିଁ ।

ନିଜର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱର ସବୁଗୁଣକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାଲାଗି ଆମର ଶିକ୍ଷା ବା ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ନାହିଁ । ତେବେ ଦୁର୍ଗୁଣକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ ନ କରିବାର ସୂଯୋଗ ଅଛି । ତେଣୁ ଆତ୍ମରକ୍ଷା ଲାଗି ଆମେ ସର୍ବଦା ଓ ସର୍ବତ୍ର ନୀତିରକ୍ଷା କରିବା ତାହାହିଁ ଆମର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ । ନୀତିବାନ୍ ଲୋକର ସର୍ବତ୍ର ପ୍ରଶଂସା ଅଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ନୀତିରକ୍ଷା କରିବା ଏତେ ସରଳ ନୁହେଁ । ନୀତି କ'ଣ, ତା'କୁ ବୁଝାଇବାକୁ ଏ' କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରେ ସୂଯୋଗ ନାହିଁ । ତେବେ ସାଧୁତା, ଅଶଠତା, ସତ୍ୟତା ଓ ବିବେକିକତାକୁ ଆମେ ନୀତି ବୋଲି ଭାବିଥାଉ । ତେଣୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଏ' ପ୍ରକାର ଗୁଣ ସହ ନିଜକୁ ପରିଚାଳନା କରିବା ଆମର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ । ତାହାହିଁ ଆମର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମର୍ମ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମୂଲ୍ୟବୋଧର ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ମାପକାଠି ହେଲା ଆମର ପରାକାଷ୍ଠା । ଆମ ଜାତି ପୁରୁଣା ଜାତି, କଳାର ଜାତି, ସଂଗୀତର ଜାତି, ନୃତ୍ୟର ଜାତି, ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟ ଓ ଭାସ୍କର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଜାତି । ଅନେକ ସୁସ୍ଥୁକଳାର ଉଦ୍ଭାବନ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ହୋଇଛି । ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ, କଳା, କୌଶଳ, ଅଳଙ୍କାର ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ସୁସ୍ଥୁତା ଆମ ଜାତିର ପରାକାଷ୍ଠା । ଏ' ସମସ୍ତର ପ୍ରତିନିଧି ହେବା ଆମ ପକ୍ଷରେ ସମ୍ଭବ ନ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆମ ନିଜ କାମରେ ବା ଚଳଣିରେ ପରାକାଷ୍ଠା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରାଇବାର ସୂଯୋଗ ଆମର ଅଛି । ସବୁ କାମର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତା, କାମରେ ଦୃଢ଼ତା ଓ ସଭିଙ୍କ ସହ ସହଯୋଗରେ ଆମେ ପରାକାଷ୍ଠା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିପାରିବା । ଭାରତବର୍ଷର ସବୁ ଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ କିଛି

କାଳ ରହଣି କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ମିତ୍ର । ଆମେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥର ଦେଶ । ଆମର ବାଛ ବିଚାର ନାହିଁ । ସବୁ କାମ ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ । ଆମର ଆପଣା ପର ନାହିଁ । ଏଆକୁ ନିଜ ଚଳଣିରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରାଇବା ହିଁ ଆମର ପରାକାଷ୍ଠ ।

ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ଓ ପରାକାଷ୍ଠ ପରେ ମଣିଷର ଚରିତ୍ର ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୁଏ । କେହି କହନ୍ତି, ଚରିତ୍ର ଆମ ଜନ୍ମଗତ । ତେବେ ବିଦେଶରେ ଆପଣାଛାଁ ଆମ ଚରିତ୍ରରେ ସଂଯତ ଓ ଉନ୍ନତ ହେବା ଆମର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ । ଜାତିର ପ୍ରତିନିଧି ହିସାବରେ ଚରିତ୍ରଠାରୁ ବଳି ଗୁଣ ନାହିଁ । ସହାନୁଭୂତି, ପରୋପକାର, ଶୁଦ୍ଧା ଓ ବନ୍ଧୁତା ଚରିତ୍ରର ଆଦର୍ଶ । ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଖାଦ୍ୟ ଠାକୁର ଦିଅନ୍ତି, ତେଣୁ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଜୀବନଧାରଣ ଲାଗି ଖାମଡ଼ିଆଲି ଭାବରେ ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ପ୍ରବର୍ତ୍ତନା କରିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଚରିତ୍ର ନୁହେଁ । ଚରିତ୍ର ରଖିଲେ ଚରିତ୍ର ଆସେ । ଏହା କଞ୍ଚକର ନୁହେଁ, ଚରିତ୍ର ଆମର ପ୍ରଥମ ନୀତି । ଆମର ଘର, ପରିବାର, ଗାଁ, ମାଟି, ପାଣି, ପବନ - ସବୁ ଆମର ଚରିତ୍ର ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ।

୨୦. ନିଜ ଘର, ବାପା ମା', ଭାଇଭଉଣୀ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ

ଆମେ ଯେଉଁଠି ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବାପା ମା'ଙ୍କ ଛତା ଆମର ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛୁ ସଂସାରରେ ବିରଳ । ବାପା ଓ ମା'ଙ୍କର ସ୍ନେହଯୋଗୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କପ୍ରତି କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟବୋଧର ପ୍ରଗାଢ଼ତା ଆମମାନଙ୍କର ଜାତିଗତ । ତେବେ ଘରର କେତେ ବୋଝ ଆମେ ଉଠାଇପାରିବା ଏବଂ ଆମର ନିଜର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟଦକ୍ଷତା ଓ ସୀମିତସୈଯ୍ୟ ଉପରେ ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟବୋଧ ଏତେ ସହଜ ନ ହୋଇପାରେ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପରିବାରରେ ଆର୍ଥିକ ଅସୁବିଧା ପ୍ରବଳ । ଅସୁବିଧା ନ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଘର ଆୟ ତୁଳନାରେ ବ୍ୟୟ ଅଧିକ । ବିଦେଶରେ ରହିଲା ଫଳରେ ଅର୍ଥର ସୁବିଧା ବୋଲି ଆମର ଧାରଣା ଏବଂ ଏ' ପ୍ରକାର ଧାରଣା ମଧ୍ୟ ଆମେ ପରିବାରକୁ ଦେଇଥାଉ । ଅର୍ଥ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଆମେ କେତେ ପରିମାଣରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ହୋଇପାରିବା ତା'ର ସୀମା ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରଣ କରିବା ଆମର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଅର୍ଥ ହିଁ ଚରିତ୍ରରେ ଭୃତ୍ୟ ଅଣାଇବାର ଦୁଆର । ତେଣୁ ଘର ନାଁରେ ନିଜର ନୀତି ହରାଇବା ସମୀଚୀନ ନୁହେଁ । ବାପାମା'ଙ୍କର ଯାହା ଲୋଡ଼ା ଅବଶ୍ୟ କରିବା, ତା'ର ସୀମା ମଧ୍ୟ ଆମକୁ ନିଜକୁ ଟାଣିବାକୁ ହେବ ।

ବାପାମା'ଙ୍କ ବାଦେ ଆମର ଭାଇଭଉଣୀ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଓ ବଢ଼ଣରେ ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଅଛି ଏବଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ମୂଲ୍ୟବୋଧରେ ଆମର ନୂତନ ମୂଲ୍ୟବୋଧର ଆଦର୍ଶ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବାରେ ଆମର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଅଛି । ଦିନିକିଆ କାହାଣୀରେ ଦରିଦ୍ରତା ଆସେ ନାହିଁ । ବହୁ ବର୍ଷର ଶିଥିଳତା, ଉଦ୍ୟମରେ ଭୀରୁତା, ଆଉ କାମରେ ଅଳସୁଆମି ଯୋଗୁଁ ଦରିଦ୍ରତା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୁଏ । ଦରିଦ୍ରତାକୁ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଏ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ନ ହେଲେ ହେଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଯୁବକ ଓ ଯୁବତୀଙ୍କୁ ନିଜ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ଠିଆ କରାଇବାରେ ଆମର ଯେ' କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ରହିଛି, ସେଥିରେ ସନ୍ଦେହ ନାହିଁ । ଆମର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଫଳରେ ଆମର ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀମାନେ ଜେ' ସ୍ୱାବଲମ୍ବୀ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି, ତା'କୁ ମାପିବା ଆମର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଅନେକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଆମର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଯୋଗୁଁ ଅଳସୁଆମି ବଢ଼ିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ଅଛି । ବଡ଼ପଣିଆ ନ ଦେଖାଇ କର୍ମଦକ୍ଷତା ଦେଖାଇବା ଏତେ ସହଜ ନୁହେଁ । ସେଥିଲାଗି ଆମର ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବାର ଅବକାଶ ରହିଛି ।

ତା'ପରେ ପରିବାରର ଆହୁରି ଅନେକ ସଦସ୍ୟ ଅଛନ୍ତି ଯେଉଁମାନେ ବିଦେଶରୁ ଆଗନ୍ତୁକ ବନ୍ଧୁଠାରୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଲୋଡ଼ିଥା'ନ୍ତି । ଆପାଣା ସମ୍ମାନ ଆପେ ରଖି ନିଜର ସୀମିତ ସମ୍ବଳକୁ ଆମେ କେତେ ବାଟ ନେଇ ପାରିବା, ତା' ଆମ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରେ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ କଥା ନ ଦେଇ ଯାହା ଆମେ କରିପାରିବା, ତା' କରିବାରେ ଆମର ନୀତି ଅଛି । ଆମର ସାହାଯ୍ୟର ଉତ୍ତର ବା ପ୍ରତିଫଳ ଆଶା କରିବା ଆମ ପକ୍ଷରେ ଅଶୋଭନୀୟ ଏବଂ ନିରର୍ଥକ । ତେଣୁ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ଶିକ୍ଷା ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ସାହାଯ୍ୟକୁ ଉଚିତ ବୋଲି ଗରହଣା କରାଯାଇପାରେ । ଭରଣପୋଷଣ ବା ଯାନିଯୌତୁକ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗର ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚକୁ ବିବେକପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବରେ ସମ୍ବୃଦ୍ଧି ଆମର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ।

୩୦. ଆପଣା ପରିବାର

ପ୍ରଧାନତଃ ଆମେ ଅବିବାହିତ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ବିଦେଶ ଆସିଥାଉଁ । ଯୁବକ ବୟସରୁ ବାହାରକୁ ଆସିଲା ଫଳରେ ସମାଜର ଗଠନ ଓ ସାମାଜିକ ବନ୍ଧନର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଆମର ଉଣା । ବିଦେଶରେ କିପରି ପରିବାର ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବା ତା'ର ମଧ୍ୟ କେହି ଶିକ୍ଷକ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ସ୍ୱାମୀର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ କ'ଣ, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ କ'ଣ, କିଏ କେତେବେଳେ ବଡ଼ କିଏ ସାନ, ଘରଚଳଣିରେ ସହଯୋଗ - ସବୁଠି ଆମର ଅଜ୍ଞତା ଥିବା ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ । ଯୌବନର ଉଦ୍‌ଘାଟନା ଓ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ବିବାହ ପରେ ଶିଥିଳ ପତିବାର ଅନେକ ସମ୍ଭବନା ଅଛି । ଦୁଇ ଜଣଙ୍କର ପରିଶ୍ରମ ଯେ' ଜଣକଠାରୁ ବହୁ ଅଧିକ ହୋଇପାରେ, ତା' ସାର୍ଥକ କରିବା ଲାଗି ଆମର ନିଜର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ, ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଓ ସୈଯ୍ୟର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଅଛି । ଆମର ପିଲାଦିନର ବା ବାପାମା'ଙ୍କର ସାମାଜିକ ଚଳଣିକୁ ବିଦେଶରେ ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରିବା କେବଳ ବିଫଳତାର ପ୍ରୟାସ । ପରିବାର ପୋଷଣ କରିବା ଓ ତା' ସହ ଜୀବନର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଧାରଣ କରିବା ଏକ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ନୁହେଁ । ଏ' ଚେଷ୍ଟାରେ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥର ବା ଛଳନାର ସ୍ଥାନ ନାହିଁ । ଆନେକ ସମୟରେ ବାପାମା'ଙ୍କ ସମେତ ପରିବାରର ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ କିଏ ବଡ଼ କିଏ ସାନ ଆଲୋଚନାରେ ଆମକୁ ଅଭିଭୂତ କରାଇବାର ପ୍ରୟାସ କରନ୍ତି । ବିଦେଶରେ ଆପଣା ପରିବାର ଯେ' ଆମର ସର୍ବସ୍ୱ ଏବଂ ନିଜ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ବା ନିଜ ସ୍ୱାମୀର ସମ୍ମାନରକ୍ଷା ଯେ' ଆମର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ - ଏ' କଥା ଶୀଘ୍ର ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଆପଣା ପରିବାର ଗୋଟିଏ ସଂଗଠନ ଏବଂ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ଓ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ଅଙ୍ଗ । ଅଙ୍ଗମାନେ ଆପାଣାଛାଁ ଗତି କରିବା ସଂଗଠନ ପ୍ରତି ସହାୟକ ନୁହେଁ । ଅଯଥା ମନୋମାଳିନ୍ୟ, ତର୍କ, ବିମୁଖତା ବ ଅସୁୟା ପରିବାର ପ୍ରତି ଘୋର କ୍ଷତିକାରକ ।

ସ୍ଵାମୀ ଓ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କର ଶୁଖିଲା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ ବାପା ମା' ହେବା ଲାଗି ପ୍ରଧାନ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା । ସୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ନୂତନ ଜୀବନସୃଷ୍ଟିର ରୋମାଞ୍ଚ ଓ ସୁଯୋଗ ପଛରେ ସନ୍ତାନର ଶିକ୍ଷାଦୀକ୍ଷା ଓ ଅଭିବୃଦ୍ଧି ମଣୀଷ ପକ୍ଷରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରହେଳିକା । ପିଲାଙ୍କ ବିକାଶ ଲାଗି ଆପଣା ଘରକୁ ଶାନ୍ତିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରଖିବା ଉଭୟ ସ୍ଵାମୀ ଓ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ । ଚରିତ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷାଲାଗି ବିଦେଶରେ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଅଭିଭାବକ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ବାପା ମା'ଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ବୋଧ ଅଧିକ । ବାପା ମା'ଙ୍କର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ଵର ଛାପ ପିଲା ଉପରେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ । ଏଥିରୁ କିଛି ପରିମାଣରେ ନିବୃତ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ବିଦେଶରେ ସାମାଜିକ ବନ୍ଧୁର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ବହୁ ଅଧିକ । ବିଶ୍ଵସ୍ତ୍ର ସାମାଜିକ ବନ୍ଧୁ ତିଆରି କରିବା ସହଜ ନୁହେଁ । ଏ ଦିଗରେ ସ୍ଵାମୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଉଭୟଙ୍କୁ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଦେବାକୁ ହେବ ।

ଆମର ନିଜର ଶିକ୍ଷାଦୀକ୍ଷାକୁ ଅବଲମ୍ବନ କରି ବିଦେଶରେ ଆମ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଶିକ୍ଷାପ୍ରଣାଳୀ ନିରୂପଣ କରିବା ଠିକ୍ ନୁହେଁ । ଆମ ନିଜ ପରି ଆମର ପିଲାମାନେ ଘୋର ବିବେକସଂପର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଓ ବୁଦ୍ଧିସଂପର୍ଣ୍ଣ । ତେବେ ଆମମାନଙ୍କ ତୁଳନାରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଜୀବନରେ ସୁଯୋଗର ପରିମାଣ ଅନେକ ବେଶୀ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବୁଦ୍ଧିକୁ ପ୍ରୟାସରେ ପରିଣତ କରି ସମାଜର ପ୍ରତିଦ୍ଵନ୍ଦିତାରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସାମିଲ୍ କରାଇବା ବାପାମା'ଙ୍କର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ପିଲାଙ୍କ ନିପୁଣତା ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରିବାର ସମାଜକୁ ବହୁତ ଦୂରକୁ ଆଗେଇ ଦେବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବା ବାପାମା'ଙ୍କର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ । କୌଣସି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ - ଏ ମନ୍ତ୍ର ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ଦେବା ବାପା ମା'ଙ୍କର ହିଁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଏଥିରେ ଅଯଥା କରୁଛି ବା ବିରକ୍ତିର ସ୍ଥାନ ନାହିଁ । ପିଲାଙ୍କ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକୁ ଆପଣା ଛାଏଁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରଣ କରିବାରେ ବାପାମା'ଙ୍କର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପ୍ରମାଦପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇପାରେ ।

'ଉଦ୍ୟମରୁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟସିଦ୍ଧି' ଏକ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ନୀତି । ଆମର ଜୀବନ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବିଷୟଗତ ହେଲାଫଳରେ ଆମର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଷୟସହ ଜଡ଼ିତ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକୁ ବିଷୟରୁ ଅଲଗା କରିବା ହିଁ ମଣିଷର ମନୋଗତ ଉଦ୍ୟମ । ଦୂରପଥ ଆବିଷ୍କାର, ନିର୍ଭୀକ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି , ଜଟିଳ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ସିଦ୍ଧି - ବିଷୟଗତ ନୁହେଁ, ଏହା ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ । ଭୟ ହିଁ ମଣିଷର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଶତ୍ରୁ । ଭୟରୁ ଭୀରୁତା, ଆଉ ଭୀରୁତାରୁ ଅବଗତା ସଂସାରର ଚଳଣି । ଭୟକୁ ଦୂର କରିବା ଲାଗି ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ଵାସର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଅଛି । ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ଵାସ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବାଲାଗି ଅଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମଚିନ୍ତାର ଉଦ୍ୟମ । ସଂସାରରେ ଆମେ ଯେ' ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହ ସମାନ, ଆମର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକୁ ଉଣା କରିବା କେବଳ ଯେ' ଆମ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରେ - ଏ' ବିଶ୍ଵାସକୁ ଅଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମଚିନ୍ତା କୁହାଯାଏ । ଆମର ଉଦ୍ୟମରେ କିଏ ସହାୟକ ହେବ - ସେ' କଥା ଆଗରୁ ଚିନ୍ତାକରି ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରାଯାଏ ନାହିଁ । ବିଶ୍ଵାସ ଫଳରେ ଉଦ୍ୟମ ସଜୋଟ ହୁଏ । ସଜୋଟ ଉଦ୍ୟମରେ ଠାକୁର ସାହା - ଏ' ଚିନ୍ତା ସରଳ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହାକୁ ଆମର ଜୀବନରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ଲାଗି ସର୍ବାଙ୍ଗ ପରିଣତ କରିବା ହେଉଛି ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ଵାସ ।

ପାରିବାରିକ ଜୀବନରେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ବିବାହ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିବାଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ଜଟିଳ ସମସ୍ୟା ବିଦେଶରେ ନାହିଁ । ସମସ୍ୟାକୁ ସରଳ କରିବା ନିମିତ୍ତ ବାପାମା' ନିଜ ଚିନ୍ତାପରିଚୟରେ ବା ଓଡ଼ିଆଭାଷୀ ପରିବାର ସହ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ସ୍ଥାପନ କରିବାକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରନ୍ତି । ନିଜ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ଆଭିମୁଖ୍ୟ ଓ ଜୀବନର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ସହ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଏତେଟା ଖାତିର ନ ଥାଏ । ଆପଣା ବଂଶମୟାଦା ଲାଗି ଆପଣାଜାତିରେ ଝିଅ ପୁଅ ଠାବ କରିବା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଯୁବକଯୁବତୀମାନଙ୍କର ବିଦେଶଗତ ଦୁର୍ଗୁଣମାନଙ୍କୁ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାରେ ଘଟ୍ଟ ଘୋଡ଼ାଇ ଏ' ସମ୍ପର୍କ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବାର ଉଦ୍ୟମ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଅନ୍ୟ ପରିବାରରୁ ପୁଅଝିଅ ଆଣି ନିଜ ପରିବାରରେ ମୟାଦା ଦେବାର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଆମର ନାହିଁ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ବିବାହ ବାପାମା'ଙ୍କର ଘୋର ଅଶାନ୍ତିର କାରଣ ହୋଇଛି । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ନିଜର ଶାନ୍ତି ଲାଗି ବିବାହର ଆୟୋଜନରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସହଯୋଗ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ବିଶେଷତଃ ଅନ୍ୟଘରୁ ଝିଅ ଆଣି ତା'କୁ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନା ଦେବାର କୌଣସି ଅଧିକାର ଆମର ନାହିଁ । ଅନେକ ଝିଅଙ୍କର ବିଦେଶରେ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା ଫଳରେ ଏ' ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଆମ ସମାଜରେ ଆମର ସମସ୍ତ ଦୋଷ ଦୁର୍ବଳତାକୁ ପଦାରେ ପକାଇ ଦେଇଛି ।

୪- ସାମାଜିକ ପରିବେଶ

ବିଦେଶର ଚଳଣି ଆମ ଦେଶର ଚଳଣିଠାରୁ ଅନେକ ଅଲଗା । ପରିଷ୍କାର ପରିଚ୍ଛନ୍ନତା ଓ ପରିପାଟୀ ବିଦେଶରେ ରୁଚି । ଯେହେତୁ ବାହାରେ ଆମକୁ କଟକଣାରେ ରହିବାକୁ ହୁଏ, ଆପଣା ଘରକୁ ଅପରିଷ୍କାର ରଖିବାରେ ଆମ ମନ କୁଣ୍ଠାବୋଧ କରେନାହିଁ । ନିଜ ଦେଶ ପରି ବିଦେଶରେ ଚାକର ପୁଝାରୀ ନାହାନ୍ତି, ତେଣୁ ସମସ୍ତ କାମ ନିଜ ଉପରେ । ଭାରତବର୍ଷରୁ ଆସୁଥିବା ଅନେକ ଯୁବକଯୁବତୀ ଘରକାମକୁ ଏତାଇ ବାହାର କାମ ଚଳାଇବା ବାହାନାରେ ଥା'ନ୍ତି । ଜୀବନନିର୍ବାହର ପ୍ରଥମ କିଛି ବର୍ଷରେ କାମକୁ ରିହାତି ଦେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସମାଜରେ ଚଳଣି ପାଇଁ ସମାଜର ସଂସ୍କାରକୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବା ନିତାନ୍ତ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ସ୍ଥାନଶୁଦ୍ଧି ଓ ପରିଚ୍ଛନ୍ନତା ଭାରତବର୍ଷରୁ ହିଁ ପୃଥିବୀର ଅନ୍ୟ ଦେଶକୁ ସଭ୍ୟତା ହିସାବରେ ରଞ୍ଜନ ହୋଇଛି । ଆମର ନିଜର ସଭ୍ୟତା ଆମକୁ ନିଜକୁ ବଜାୟ ରଖିବାକୁ ହେବ । ବିଦେଶଲୋକଙ୍କର ପରିଚ୍ଛନ୍ନତା ଥା'ଏ, ଆମେ ତା' ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ନିଷ୍ଠା ଓ ମାନସିକ ସୂକ୍ଷ୍ମତା ମଧ୍ୟ ଚଳଣିକୁ ଆଣି ପାରିବା । ଜୀବନରେ ଶୁଦ୍ଧି ଆମର ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା । ଅଯଥା ରଣ, ଶଠତା ବା ବେହିଆମିର ସ୍ଥାନ ଅମ ଜୀବନରେ ନାହିଁ । ନିଜ ଦେଶର ପ୍ରତିନିଧି ହିସାବରେ ସମାଜର ଚଳଣିରେ ସାମିଲ୍ ହେବାରେ ଆମର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ସର୍ବାଧିକ ।

ଚଳଣିର ସଦ୍‌ଭାବରୁ ଆମର ସାଇପତିଶାଙ୍କ ସହ ସଂପର୍କ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୁଏ । ପୃଥିବୀର ଜନସମାଜ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଆମର ଜ୍ଞାନର କୃତ୍ରିମ ପରିସୀମା କେବଳ ନୁଆ ପତିଶାଙ୍କ ସହ ଆଲୋଚନାରୁ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି କରାଯାଇପାରେ । ସଂସାରର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଆପଣାର ସଂସ୍କୃତିସହ ଲିପ୍ତ ଓ ଜୀବନସଂଗ୍ରାମରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ପତିଶାଙ୍କ ବନ୍ଧୁତା ଲାଗି ଅମର ସହୃଦୟତାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଅନ୍ୟ ଲୋକକୁ ଆମ

ନିଜର ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀ ହିସାବରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବା ଆମର ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଶିକ୍ଷା । ଏଥିରେ ଭାଷା, ଧର୍ମ ବା ଜାତିର ବିଚାର ନାହିଁ । ଆମ ଠାକୁରର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନାହିଁ , ମାନବିକତା ଆମର ଧର୍ମ । ନମତା, କଥାବାଣୀ ଓ ସହଯୋଗ ଜରିଆରେ ବନ୍ଧୁତା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଆମର ସଦ୍‌ଭାବରେ ପତିଶାନ୍ତ ସଦ୍‌ଭାବ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ନ ହୋଇପାରେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଆମ ପ୍ରତି ଅଜ୍ଞାନ ମଧ୍ୟ ଗଭୀର । ଅମେ ଦରିଦ୍ର, ମୂର୍ଖପୂଜକ, ଅନ୍ଧବିଶ୍ୱାସୀ - ଏ'ପରି ଅନେକ ଅସଙ୍ଗତ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ବିଦେଶରେ ରହିଛି । ଭାରତବର୍ଷକୁ ନିଜ ଅକ୍ତିଆରରେ ରଖିବାକୁ ଏ' ସବୁ ଅସଙ୍ଗତକଥା ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ତା'କୁ ଖାରଜ କରିବା ବିଦେଶରେ ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଆଶା ଦେଇ ଆତିଥ୍ୟ ଦେବା ଭାରତବର୍ଷର ସଂସ୍କୃତି । ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ଖୁଆଇ ନିଜେ ଖାଇବା ଆମର ସଂସ୍କୃତି । ଅର୍ଥରେ ଦରିଦ୍ର ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆମେ ମନରେ ବା ହୃଦୟରେ ଦରିଦ୍ର ନୋହୁଁ । ପୃଥିବୀକୁ ଆପଣାର କରିବାରେ ଆମର ଆତିଥ୍ୟବୋଧ ଆମର ସଂସ୍କୃତି ।

ଯୌବନ ସମୟରେ ବିଦେଶ ଆସିଥିବାରୁ ଧର୍ମ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଆମର ଅନୁଶୀଳନ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସୀମିତ । ଧର୍ମ ଯେ' ମତାନ୍ତତା ନୁହେଁ ଏବଂ ସଂସାରପ୍ରତି ସମଦର୍ଶିତା ଯେ' ଭାରତୀୟ ଧର୍ମ - ଏହାକୁ ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରିବା ସହଜ ନୁହେଁ । ନିଜର ନୈତିକ ବଳର ବିଶ୍ୱାସକୁ ଆମେ ଧର୍ମ କହିଥାଉ । ବିପଦରେ ଆମର ନୀତି ଆମକୁ ରକ୍ଷା କରେ । ନୀତିର ନିୟମକକୁ ଆମେ ଭଗବାନ୍ ବୋଲି କହିଥାଉ । ନୀତି ବହିର୍ଗତ ନୁହେଁ, ନୀତି ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ । ଆମର ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛ ବିବେକ ହିଁ ଅମର ନୀତି । ବିବେକର ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛତା ଲାଗି ଆମର ନିଜର ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟରକ୍ଷା ନିହାତି ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଖେଳ, କସରତ, ବ୍ୟାୟାମ, ଯୋଗ ଓ ପ୍ରାଣାୟାମ ଆମ ଶରୀରରେ ଶକ୍ତି ଆଣିଥାଏ । ଶରୀରର ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛତାରୁ ମାନସିକ ଶକ୍ତି ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଥାଏ । ମାନସିକ ଶକ୍ତିରୁ ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଆସେ । ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସ ହିଁ ଧର୍ମ । ଆମେ ପାଦେ ଚାଲିଲେ ଠାକୁର ଆମକୁ ଆଉ ପାଦେ ଚଳେଇନେବେ । ପ୍ରଥମ ପାଦ ଆମକୁ ହିଁ ନେବାକୁ ହେବ । ସଂସାରର ସମସ୍ତ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ସେହି ପାଦକୁ ଆଗେଇବାରେ ଆମର ସହାୟ । ସେ' ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବା ଆମର ଧର୍ମ । ସେ' ଧର୍ମକୁ ରକ୍ଷା କରିପାରିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ହିଁ ଆମର ନୀତି ।

ଆପଣା ଶକ୍ତିକୁ ଅନ୍ୟପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବାକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କୁହାଯାଏ । ନିଜର ଭରଣପୋଷଣକରି ଅନ୍ୟ ଲୋକକୁ ହାତ ଧରାଇବାର ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ କେବଳ ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସରୁ ହିଁ ସମ୍ଭବ ହୋଇପାରେ । ସଂସାରରେ ଆମ ତୁଳନାରେ ଅନେକ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଭଣା । କେହି ନିଷ୍ଠେଷିତ, ତ କେହି ବୁଦ୍ଧିଷିତ । କେହି ରଣଗ୍ରସ୍ତ, ବା କେହି ଜୀବନରେ ଭୀତଗ୍ରସ୍ତ । ସଂସାରର ସମସ୍ତ ଦୀନତା ସହ ଆମେ ଜଡିତ ହୋଇ ପାରିବା ନାହିଁ । ତେବେ ସଂସାରର ଦୁଃଖରେ ଆମେ ଆଖିବୁଜି ରହିପାରିବା ନାହିଁ । ଯେ' ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଆମର ଅଙ୍ଗପ୍ରତ୍ୟଙ୍ଗ ଓ ମସ୍ତିଷ୍କରେ ଶକ୍ତି ରହିଛି ଅନ୍ୟର ଦୁଃଖ ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରିବା ଏବଂ ସେଥିରୁ ସଂସାରର ନିବୃତ୍ତିଲାଗି କିଛି ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ଆମର ଜାତିଗତ ଧର୍ମ । ଅନେକ ସମୟରେ ଆମେ ସାଙ୍ଗଠନିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ଲିପ୍ତ ରହି ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିପାରିବା । ସ୍କୁଲ, ଲାଇବ୍ରେରୀ, ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ୍ ରେ ସ୍ତେଚ୍ଛାସେବୀ ଭାବରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କରିବାକୁ କେବଳ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ସମୟ ହିଁ ଲୋଡା । ସ୍କୁଲ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ଖେଳରେ ତାଲିମ୍ କରାଇବା ଓ କିଛି ସୁସ୍ମକଳା ଶିଖାଇବା ଆମର ନିଜର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱବୃଦ୍ଧିରେ ସହାୟ ହୁଏ । ସମାଜର ସଙ୍ଗଠନରେ ସାମିଲ୍ ହେବା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବିଦେଶ ବାସିନ୍ଦାଙ୍କର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ।

୫- ଭାଷା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି

ବିଦେଶଯାତ୍ରାର ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତିରେ ଆମର ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି ସବୁଠାରୁ ଭଣା । କିଛି ପରିମାଣର କାମଚଳା ଇଂରାଜୀ ଜ୍ଞାନ ଆମର ଥାଏ, ଆଉ ଓଡିଆ ପ୍ରତି ଆମର ବିତୃଷ୍ଣା ଗଭୀର । ଆମ ଭିତରୁ କେହି କେହି ଓଡିଆକୁ ଗାଉଁଲି ଭାଷା ବୋଲି ଭାବନ୍ତି । ଓଡିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା ଓ ଭାବପ୍ରବଣତା ସହିତ ଆମର ସଂପର୍କ ଖାଲି କେତୋଟି ଜଣାଣ ବା ଭଜନରେ ସୀମିତ । ବିଦେଶରେ ଏ' ଅଜ୍ଞାନକୁ ଦୂର କରିବା ଆମର ପ୍ରଥମ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ । ଭାଷା ପୃଥିବୀ ପ୍ରତି ଆମର ଦୁଆର, ଆମର ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ପରିଚାୟକ । ପୃଥିବୀର ଗୋଟିଏ ଭୌଗୋଳିକ ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡର ଆମେ ଅଧିବାସୀ ଏବଂ ସେ' ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡର ଗାରିମା ତା'ର ଭାଷା । ଆମର ବନ୍ଧୁ, ବାନ୍ଧବ, ସମାଜ - ଆମର ଭାଷା ଯୋଗୁ ହିଁ ସଂଗଠିତ । ତେବେ ବିଦେଶରେ ଆମର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଓଡିଆ ଗୀତଗିଏ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାରେ ଆମର ଘୋର ସଙ୍କେତ । ମୋ'ର ବିଦେଶ ରହଣିରେ ଏହାଠାରୁ ଆଉ ଲଜଜନକ ବିଷୟ ମୋ' ଆଖିକୁ ଆସିନାହିଁ । କେହି କେହି ଆମ ଭିତରୁ ନିଜର ପରିବାରବର୍ଗକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଇଂରାଜୀରେ ଚିଠି ଲେଖିବା ବା ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍‌ରେ ଇଂରାଜୀରେ କଥା କହିବା ମୁଁ ଶୁଣିଛି । ଓଡିଶା ପକ୍ଷରେ ଓ ଓଡିଆ ଜାତି ପକ୍ଷରେ ଏହା ଗ୍ରହଣୀୟ ନୁହେଁ । ଆମର ଉଦ୍‌ଯୋଗ ଅଛି, ତା' ହେଲେ ଭୀରୁତା କାହିଁ ପାଇଁ ? ଯଦି ଶିକ୍ଷାରେ ଅବହେଳା ହୋଇଛି, ତେବେ ଆମକୁ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଅମର ଭିଗମାଟିର ଭାଷାକୁ ଅକ୍ତିଆର କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । କାରଣ, ତାହାହିଁ ଆମର ପରିଚୟ । ଆମେ ଯେତେ କଥା କରୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷା କହିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତା' କେବଳ ଛଦ୍ମତା । ଆମର ପରିବାର ପାଇଁ, ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଓ ଆମ ନିଜର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ପାଇଁ ଆପଣା ଭାଷାର ଭାବନା ଓ ସାବଲୀଳାତାକୁ ଆମକ ଅନ୍ତର ଭିତରକୁ ଆଣିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରକରଣର ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତରୁ ମୁକ୍ତି ହିଁ ଓଡିଶାର ପ୍ରତିନିଧି ହିସାବରେ ବିଦେଶୀ ଓଡିଆର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ।

ଭାଷାରୁ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟରୁ ସଂସ୍କୃତି । ଭାଷା ନ ଜାଣିଥିଲେ ସାହିତ୍ୟଜ୍ଞାନ ନ ଥାଏ । ମଧ୍ୟଯୁଗରେ ଓଡିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଭାରତବର୍ଷର ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାଷା ତୁଳନରେ ଅଧିକ ରୁଚିମନ୍ତ - ଏ' କଥା ଆମକୁ ହେଉଥିଲେ ରଖି ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଅଧ୍ୟୟନ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଓଡିଆ ଲେଖକର ଭାବନା ଓ କଥାର ଠାଣି ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ଆମକୁ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଆମେ ଅବହେଳା କଲେ ଆମ ଭାଷା ରଖିବାକୁ ଆଉ ଅଛି କିଏ ? ଆମେ ହିଁ ପଢାଶୁଣା ଲୋକ, ଓଡିଆ ନ ଜାଣି ଆମ ପଢାର କି' ମୂଲ୍ୟ ? ଏ' କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଏତେ ସହଜ ନ ହୋଇପରେ ଏବଂ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ମନ ଏଥିରେ ନ ଯାଇପରେ । ତେବେ ଆମକୁ କିଛି ଆଗ୍ରହ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରି ଆମର ନିଜର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ବଜାୟ

ରଖିବାକୁ ହେବ । ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରକୁ ଜୀବନକୁ ଆଣି ଆମର ନାଚ, ଗୀତ, ଯାତ୍ରା ଓ କଳାକୁ ନୂଆ ଆଖିରେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଦେଶର ଗଠନ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସାଂସ୍କୃତିର ଦେଶ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ହିସାବରେ ଏ' ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରି ବିଦେଶରେ ତା'ର ପରିପ୍ରକାଶର ଆୟୋଜନ ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ।

କେହି କହିପାରନ୍ତି - ଭୋକିଲା ଲୋକର କଳା ନାହିଁ । ତା'ର ଉତ୍ତରରେ ଆମେ କହିବା - ଖାଇଲା ଲୋକର ଭେକ ନାହିଁ । ବହୁ ଜନ୍ମର ସାଧନାରେ ଭେକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୁଏ । ମୁଷ୍ଟକୁଣ୍ଡା, ଲୁଗାପିନ୍ଧା, ଘରସଜା, ଠାକୁରପୂଜା, ସାହିତ୍ୟଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା, କବିତାପଢ଼ା, ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଆଉ ନାଚ ଶିଖା - ଏ' ସବୁ ଭେକର ସାମଗ୍ରୀ । ବିଦେଶରେ କେହି ଆମର ଝିଅ ହଠାତ୍ ବିଦେଶୀ ଝିଅ ପରି ପରିଧାନ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରନ୍ତି । କେହି କେହି ପୁଅକୁ ଧୋତୀ ପିନ୍ଧିବାକୁ ଲାଜ ଲାଗେ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଛାତି ଆସିବା ଏମାନଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ ତାହା ବାଣୀ । ଏ' ଭୀରୁତର କାରଣ ଆମର ଅଶିକ୍ଷା ଓ ଅଲ୍ଲୀକ ଆମ୍ଭବଚିନୀ । ବିଦେଶ ଯାତ୍ରା ଫଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବା ଓଡ଼ିଆକୁ ପିଙ୍ଗି ଦେବା ଆମ ପକ୍ଷରେ ଘୋର ଅଶୋଭନୀୟ । ସଂସାରରେ ଆମ ଗାଁ ଓ ମାଟି ହିଁ ଆମର ଏକମାତ୍ର ବନ୍ଧୁ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାଂସ୍କୃତି ସହ ଭାରତୀୟ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିର ଖାତିର କରିବା ଆମର ଅନ୍ୟତମ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିର ସାବଲୀଳତାକୁ ବୁଝିବା ଆମର ଯେତିକି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ଭାରତବର୍ଷର ସାଂସ୍କୃତିର ବିପୁଳତାକୁ ମନରେ ହେଜ କରିବା ତା' ଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଯଦିଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଆମେ ଭାରତବାସୀ, ବିଦେଶରେ ଭାରତୀୟ ହିସାବରେ ହିଁ ଆମର ପରିଚୟ ।

୬- ଜାତିପ୍ରୀତି ଓ ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନ

ବିଦେଶରେ ରହିଲେ ନିଜ ଦେଶ ପ୍ରତି ମମତା ବଢ଼ିଥାଏ । ନିଜ ମାଟିର ପାଣିପବନରେ ସାମିଲ ହେବାଲାଗି ଆମେ ଆତୁରତା ସହ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥାଉ । ଏ' ପ୍ରକାର ଜାତିପ୍ରୀତି ସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ । ଏ' ଜାତିପ୍ରୀତିକୁ କେବଳ ଆର୍ଥିକ ବୋଲି ଭାବିବା ଭୁଲ୍ । ବିଦେଶୀ ବାସିନ୍ଦାଙ୍କର ତୁଚ୍ଛା ସାହଯ୍ୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀଙ୍କର ଉନ୍ନତି ହେବ ନାହିଁ, ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀଙ୍କର ସମ୍ମାନକୁ ଆମେ ବିଦେଶରେ ବଜାୟ ରଖି ପାରିଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଉନ୍ନତି ହେବ । ଆମ ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭ୍ରମଣରେ ନେଇ ପାରିବା, ଆମ କାମର ସଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଂପର୍କରେ ଅବଗତ କରାଇପାରିବା, ଆମର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍କୁଲରେ ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିର ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନୀ କରାଇପାରିବା, ବା ଆମ ସହରରେ ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାଂସ୍କୃତି ପରିବେଷଣ କରାଇବାର ଆୟୋଜନ କରିପାରିବା - ଆମର ପ୍ରୀତିର ଉଦ୍ୟମ ହୋଇପାରେ । ଦେଶକଥା ଭାବିଲେ ଦେଶ ଆଗେଇ ଯିବନାହିଁ, ଦେଶକୁ ଆଗେଇବା ଲାଗି ବିଦେଶରେ ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଅଛି । ଦେଶର ଦାୟାଦ ହିସାବରେ ଦେଶକୁ ପୃଥିବୀ ସମକ୍ଷରେ ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା କରିବାରେ ଆମର ସୁଯୋଗ ଅଛି । ସେ' ସୁଯୋଗକୁ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣାଙ୍ଗ କରିବାକୁ ଆମକୁ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ ।

ଜାତିପ୍ରୀତି ଭିତରେ ଅଛି ଆମର ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନ । ଆମେ ମାଗୁନାହିଁ, ଖଟିକରି ଖାଉ । ଆମ ନାଁ, ଗାଁ, ମାଟିର ତାକ ଅଛି । ଆମ କଥାର ଚତୁରୀ ଅଛି । ଆମ ଗୀତରେ ଭାବ ଅଛି । ଏ' ଭାବ ହେଉଛି ଆମର ମାନବିକତା । ସଂସାରର ଅନ୍ୟଲୋକଙ୍କ ପଛ ଆମର ଦରଦ ଅଛି । ସେହି ଦରଦ ହିଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ପ୍ରାଣ । ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଜନ୍ମାଥ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ସଖା । ସେହିପରି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କର ସଖା । ଅନ୍ୟର ସୁଖରେ ସେ' ଆନନ୍ଦିତ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟର ଦୁଃଖ

ଦୂର କରିବାକୁ ସେ' ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ । ସେ' ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି ତିଆରି କରିବା ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଆମର ବନ୍ଧୁ, କେହି ପର ନାହିଁ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ସଜୋଚିତାର ନମୁନା - ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ।

Dr. Bijoy Mohan Mishra was a past secretary of OSA and a regular contributor to the OSA Journal. He lives in Boston with wife Subarna.



ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଗୌରବ ଓ ତାହାର ଦାୟାଦ

ଡଃ ଆଶା ମିଶ୍ର, ଏସ୍.ଏ., ବି.ଏଡ୍,
ପିଏଚ୍ଡି, ଡିପ୍ ଇନ୍ ଲାଙ୍ଗୁଏଜ୍

ଡଃ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ମିଶ୍ର ବହୁମୁଖୀ ପ୍ରତିଭାର ଅଧିକାରିଣୀ, ପିଲାଦିନୁ ଲେଖାଲେଖି ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର ଆଗ୍ରହ ଥିଲା । ଗଞ୍ଜାମ ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁର ସହରରେ ୧୯୩୬ ମସିହାରେ ବିଖ୍ୟାତ ରଥ ପରିବାରରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଜନ୍ମ । ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁରରୁ ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ଶିକ୍ଷା ସମାପ୍ତ କରି ସେ କଟକରେ ଉଚ୍ଚ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଲାଭ କରିଥିଲେ । ୧୯୫୮ ମସିହାରୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଅଧ୍ୟାପନା ଜୀବନ ଆରମ୍ଭ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସରକାରୀ କଲେଜରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପନା ଶେଷ କରି ସେ ୧୯୯୪ ମସିହାରେ ଅବସର ଗ୍ରହଣ କଲେ । ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ଲେଖନୀ ଚଳଚ୍ଚଳ । ତାଙ୍କର ବହୁ କବିତା, ଗଳ୍ପ, ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ପତ୍ରିକାମାନଙ୍କରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇ ପାଠକୀୟ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ଲାଭ କରିଅଛି, ଏବେ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ତାଙ୍କର ଗଳ୍ପ, କବିତା, ଶିଶୁ କାହାଣୀ, ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଉପରେ ବାରଖଣ୍ଡ ପୁସ୍ତକ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ । ଅସମୀୟା ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ତାଙ୍କର କବିତା ପୁସ୍ତକଟି ପାଠକମାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଉଚ୍ଚ ପ୍ରଶଂସିତ ହୋଇଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବହୁ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ଦ୍ୱାରା ସେ ସମର୍ଥନ ଓ ସମ୍ମାନିତା ହୋଇଅଛନ୍ତି । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପତ୍ରିକା “ଶ୍ରେତ ସଙ୍କେତ” ସାରସ୍ୱତ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନର ସେ ସଭାପତି ଅଛନ୍ତି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଏକ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ସମ୍ପନ୍ନ ଦେଶ । ଏହାର ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ନାମ ହେଉଛି ଉତ୍କଳ । ଉତ୍କଳ କଳାର ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ଏହି ଦେଶରେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଉତ୍କଳ ନିଜର ଗୌରବ ପାଇଁ ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶରେ ଖ୍ୟାତି ଲାଭ କରିଥିଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାଧବମାନେ ବୋଇତ ମେଲି ସାତଦରିଆ ପାରି ହୋଇ ଜାଭା, ସୁମାତ୍ରା, ପ୍ରଭୃତି ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ନିଜ ଦେଶର କଳା କୁଶଳତା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରୁଥିଲେ ଏବଂ ବ୍ୟବସାୟ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଦ୍ୱାରା ନିଜ ଦେଶର ଗୌରବ ବଢ଼ାଉଥିଲେ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସାଧାନ ଗଜପତି ରାଜାମାନେ ନିଜର ବୀରତ୍ୱ ଓ ପରାକ୍ରମ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଗଙ୍ଗଠାରୁ ଗୋଦାବରୀ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସୀମାକୁ ପରିବ୍ୟାପ୍ତ କରି ପାରି ଥିଲେ । କଳାର ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ଓ ବୀରତ୍ୱର ମହିମାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଅଗ୍ରଗଣ୍ୟ ଥିଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଭାଷା ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେହିପରି ଅତି ଉନ୍ନତ । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କବିମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସାରଳା ଦାସ, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାସ, କବି ସମ୍ରାଟ ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଭଞ୍ଜ, ଅଭିମନ୍ୟୁ ସାମନ୍ତ ସିଂହାର, ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ ଦାସ, କବି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଳଦେବ ରଥ ଏମାନଙ୍କ ନାମ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ । କବି ସାରଳା ଦାସଙ୍କ ମହାଭାରତ’ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଭାଷାମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଓ ପ୍ରଧାନ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ବୋଲି ସମାଲୋଚକମାନେ ମୁକ୍ତ କଣ୍ଠରେ ସ୍ୱୀକାର କରିଅଛନ୍ତି । କବି ଜୟ ଦେବଙ୍କ ‘ଗୀତ ଗୋବିନ୍ଦ’ ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଆଦୃତ ହେଉଅଛି ।

ଏ ଦେଶ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦେଶ ରୂପେ ପରିଚିତ । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ଆମ ପ୍ରାଣ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର । ନୀଳ କନ୍ଦରରେ ବିଜେ ହୋଇ ସେ ଆମକୁ ଯେଉଁ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି ତାହା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ପ୍ରାଣରେ ଉନ୍ମୁଦନୀ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଛି । ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଧରି ସେ ବସିଛନ୍ତି । ଭାତୁପ୍ରମର ଏହା ଏକ ଜୁଲିନ୍ଦ ନିଦର୍ଶନ । ଉଚ୍ଚ ନୀଚ, ଛୁଆଁ ଅଛୁଆଁ ଭେଦଭାବ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ନାହିଁ, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସମାନ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ସେ ଦେଖନ୍ତି । ଭକ୍ତର ସେ ଭଗବାନ । ଭକ୍ତ ଯଦି ଅନ୍ତରର ସହିତ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଡାକେ ସେ ଦୌଡ଼ିଯା’ନ୍ତି ତା’ ପାଖକୁ । ସେହିପରି ଦିନେ ଅନ୍ତରର ସହିତ ଡାକିଥିଲେ ରାଜା ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ଦେବ । କାଞ୍ଚି ରାଜା ତାଙ୍କୁ ‘ଚଣ୍ଡାଳ ରାଜା’ କହି ଅପମାନ ଦେଲେ । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ରଥରେ ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ଦେବ ଛେରା ପହଁରା କରୁଥିବାରୁ କାଞ୍ଚି ରାଜା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଚଣ୍ଡାଳ କହି ନିଜ ଝିଅ ପଦ୍ମାବତୀଙ୍କୁ ତା’ଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବିବାହ ଦେବାକୁ ଅସ୍ୱୀକାର କଲେ । ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ଦେବ ଏହି ଅପମାନର ପ୍ରତିଶୋଧ ନେବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଲେ ଏବଂ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଶରଣ ପଶିଲେ । କାଞ୍ଚି ରାଜାଙ୍କ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ଘୋଷଣା କଲେ । ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ଯାତ୍ରା ସମୟରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଓ ବଳଭଦ୍ର କଳା ଘୋଡ଼ା ଓ ଧଳା ଘୋଡ଼ାରେ ଚଢ଼ି ତାଙ୍କୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସେଠାକୁ ଯାଇଥିବା ବିଷୟ କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ କହେ । ଏହାର ସାକ୍ଷୀ ରୂପେ ‘ମାଣିକ ପାଟଣା’ ଗ୍ରାମଟି ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ରହିଛି । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ପତିତ ପାବନ । ପତିତ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ମନ୍ଦିର ଉପରେ ବାନା ଉଡ଼ାଉଛନ୍ତି । ସେଇଥି ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ରଥଯାତ୍ରା ସମୟରେ ସେ ହସି ହସି ମନ୍ଦିର ଭିତରୁ ବାହାରକୁ ପଳାଇ ଆସନ୍ତି । ରଥ ଉପରେ ବସି ଚକା ଚକା ଆଖିରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଚାହିଁନ୍ତି । ଭକ୍ତ ତା’ଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ଭକ୍ତିରେ ବିହ୍ୱଳ ହୋଇଯା’ନ୍ତି । ‘ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ’ ଶବ୍ଦରେ ସବୁ ଆତ ମୁଖରିତ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଏହି ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶରେ ପୂଜିତ । ବିଦେଶରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ରଥଯାତ୍ରାର ସମାରୋହ । ସେ ଜଗତର ନାଥ, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ପୂଜ୍ୟ । ଯେଉଁ ଦେଶରେ ସେ ଅଛନ୍ତି, ତାହା କେତେ ମହାନ !

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ହେଉଛି ଧର୍ମପାଠ । ଏଠାକୁ ଶ୍ରୀ ଚୈତନ୍ୟ, ରାମାନୁଜ, ଶଙ୍କରାଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟଙ୍କ ପରି ମହାପୁରୁଷମାନେ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ଶୁଣାଯାଏ ଯାଶୁ ଶ୍ରୀକ୍ଷ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏଠାକୁ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ଶୈବ, ଶାକ୍ତ, ଗାଣପତ୍ୟ, ଜୈନ, ବୌଦ୍ଧ ସବୁ ଧର୍ମର ସମନ୍ୱୟ ଏହିଠାରେ ସାଧୁତ ହୋଇଛି । ଏହିସ୍ଥାନ ଚଣ୍ଡାଶୋକଙ୍କୁ ଧର୍ମାଶୋକରେ ପରିଣତ କରିଥିଲା । ଧଉଳିଗିରି, ଖଣ୍ଡଗିରି ଓ ଉଦୟଗିରି ଏହାର ସାକ୍ଷୀରୂପେ ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ରହିଛି । କଳା କୁଶଳତାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଗୌରବ ଅତୁଳନୀୟ । କୋଣାର୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର, ରାଜାରାଣୀ ମନ୍ଦିର, ଲିଙ୍ଗରାଜ ମନ୍ଦିର ଏସବୁ ଦେଖି ଦେଖି ବିଦେଶର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟକମାନେ ବିସ୍ମିତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ଏ ଦେଶରେ ବୀରବର୍ଷର ବାଳକଟିଏ ମଧ୍ୟ ପିତୃକୁଳର ସମ୍ମାନ ରକ୍ଷା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ନିଜ ଜୀବନକୁ ବିସର୍ଜନ କରିପାରେ । ତ୍ୟାଗ ହେଉଛି ଆମ ଜୀବନର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ, ଭୋଗ ନୁହେଁ । କୋଣାର୍କର ଚାରୁକଳା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟକମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିସ୍ମିତ କରେ । ଏସବୁ ଆମ ପୂର୍ବ ପୁରୁଷ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶିଳ୍ପୀ ମାନଙ୍କର କଳା କୁଶଳତା । ନିହାଣ ମୁନରେ ପଥରକୁ ଜୀବନ୍ୟାସ ଦେବା କେବଳ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶିଳ୍ପୀଙ୍କୁ ଜଣା । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଓ ନୃତ୍ୟ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଖ୍ୟାତ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନୃତ୍ୟରେ ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ ବହୁ ବିଦେଶୀନୀ ଏଠାକୁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ଓ ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ମୁଗ୍ଧ କରିଦିଏ । ସେହି ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟ ତଳରେ ଚିରଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଝଙ୍କୁତ ହୁଏ । ସଙ୍ଗୀତର ପ୍ରଭାବ ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟକୁ ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ କରେ ଏବଂ ଦୁର୍ବଳକୁ ବଳ ଦିଏ । ବିଷଧର ସର୍ପ ମଧ୍ୟ ବଶୀଭୂତ ହୋଇଯାଏ ।

ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ସମ୍ପଦରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆମ ଦେଶ ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ । ପାହାଡ଼, ପର୍ବତ, ଝରଣା, ନଦୀ ସବୁଥିରେ ଏଦେଶ ଭରପୂର । ପ୍ରକୃତି ଉପାସକମାନେ ଏହି ପ୍ରକୃତି ଭିତରେ ନିଜକୁ ହଜାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି । କ୍ଷଣକ ପାଇଁ ସଂସାର-ଜଞ୍ଜାଳକୁ ଭୁଲି ସେମାନେ ନୈସର୍ଗିକ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଉପଭୋଗ କରନ୍ତି । ଆମ ଦେଶର ‘ପଠାଣି ସାମନ୍ତ’ ବାଉଁଶ ନଳୀରେ ନକ୍ଷତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କର ଗତିବିଧି ନିରୂପଣ କରି ସାରା ବିଶ୍ୱରେ ବିପ୍ଳବ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଯାଇଅଛନ୍ତି । “ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ ଦର୍ପଣ” ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତିଭାକୁ ଜୀବନ୍ତ କରି ରଖୁଅଛି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଏ ଗୌରବମୟ ଐତିହ୍ୟ ଓ ପରମ୍ପରା ଉପରେ ଆଜିର ଦାୟାଦମାନେ ଦଣ୍ଡାୟମାନ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ସୁନ୍ଦର ପ୍ରସାରୀ ହେବ ଉଚିତ୍ । ସେମାନେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦେଶର ସନ୍ତାନ । ପ୍ରଭୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଆମକୁ ଶୁଣାଇଛନ୍ତି ଶାନ୍ତି, ମୈତ୍ରୀ ଓ ବିଶ୍ୱଭାଉତୁର ବାଣୀ । ବିଶ୍ୱରେ ଆମେ ସେହି ବାଣୀ ପ୍ରଚାର କରିବା ବାଞ୍ଛନୀୟ । ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୋଲି ଗର୍ବ କରିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ହାନିମନ୍ୟ ଭାବ ଆମ ମନରେ ସ୍ଥାନ ପାଇବା ଉଚିତ୍ ନୁହେଁ । ଯେଉଁଠି ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆମ ଦେଶକୁ ଓ ଆମ ଭାଷାକୁ ଆମେ ଭୁଲିବା ନାହିଁ । ବରଂ ସେ ଦେଶର ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଆମ ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ଆମ ପରମ୍ପରା ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଭଲ ରୂପେ ବୁଝାଇ ଦେବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ବହୁ ବିଦେଶୀ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଆସି ଏଠି କାର ରୀତିନୀତି ଦ୍ୱାରା ପ୍ରଭାବିତ ହୋଇ ଅଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନେ କହିଛନ୍ତି- “ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମହାନ” । ଆମେ ମଧ୍ୟ କହିବା “ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମହାନ” ।

“ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ”

ଆଲୋଖିକା
ଶହୀଦ ନଗର
ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଇତିହାସ, ଭାଷା ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ତା'ର ପରମ୍ପରା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି

ଇଂ ଦୁଃଶାସନ ବାରିକ୍
ଶେଖ୍ ବଜାର, ନିଉକଲୋନୀ,
ଫୋ-ଡୁନିମ୍ପା ନୂହ, କଟକ-୭୫୩୦୦୮
ଓଡ଼ିଶା, ୯୪୩୭୪୩୧୨୭୨

ଇତିହାସ ହେଉଛି ଗୋଟିଏ ଜାତି ଓ ସଭ୍ୟତାର ଜୀବନ୍ତ ଇତିବୃତ୍ତ । 'ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ଇତିହାସ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ଭାଷା, ଲିପି, ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ଧର୍ମଧାରା, କଳା ଓ ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟ, ଲୋକସଂସ୍କୃତି, ସାମରିକ ଐତିହାସିକ ସହିତ ପରିଚିତ । ତେଣୁ ଏଇ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରେ ମୁଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ଇତିହାସକୁ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରେ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇବାର କିଛି ପ୍ରୟାସ ମାତ୍ର ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଯୁଗରେ ଅନେକ ନାମରେ ନାମିତ କରାଯାଇଛି । ଯଥା :- କଳିଙ୍ଗ, କୋଶଳ, ଓଡ୍ର, ଉତ୍କଳ, କଙ୍ଗୋଦ ଆଦି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅଂଶକୁ ବୁଝାଉ ଥିଲା । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ନାମରେ ଐତିହାସିକ ସ୍ଥିତି ଭିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ ଥିଲା । କାରଣ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ରାଜବଂଶ ଦ୍ୱାରା ସେସବୁ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଶାସିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ପରିଶେଷରେ ଗଂଗ ବଂଶ ରାଜତ୍ୱ କାଳରେ ରାଜା ଅନନ୍ତବର୍ମଣ, ଚୋଳଗଙ୍ଗ ଓ ତୃତୀୟ ଅନଙ୍ଗଭୀମ ଦେବଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଫଳରେ ଉତ୍ତରରେ ଗଙ୍ଗା ଓ ଦକ୍ଷିଣରେ ଗୋଦାବରୀ ନଦୀ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମଧ୍ୟବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ବିସ୍ତୃତ ଅଞ୍ଚଳକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟନାମରେ ନାମିତ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଶବ୍ଦ ଓଡ୍ର ଶବ୍ଦରୁ ଉତ୍ପତ୍ତି ହୋଇଅଛି । ଅତି ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳରେ 'ଉଡ୍ର' କୌଣସି ଏକ ଜନଗୋଷ୍ଠୀକୁ ବୁଝାଉଥିଲା । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଅଧିଷ୍ଠିତ ରାଜ୍ୟ ଓଡ୍ର ନାମରେ ଖ୍ୟାତ ଥିଲା । ତୀନ ପରିବ୍ରାଜକ ହୁଏନସାଂ ତାଙ୍କ ଆତ୍ମଜୀବନୀ ପୁସ୍ତକରେ ଓଡ୍ର ରାଜ୍ୟର ବିବରଣୀ ଲିପିବଦ୍ଧ କରିଅଛନ୍ତି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଜନସାଧାରଣ ଅନେକ ଭାଷାରେ ଏବେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ହୁଅନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହାର ମୂଳଭାଷା ଥିଲା ପାଳି ବା ମାଗଧି ବୋଲି ପଣ୍ଡିତମାନେ ଅନୁମାନ କରନ୍ତି । କ୍ରମେ ଏଇ ଭାଷାରୁ ଓଡ୍ର ଭାଷାର ଉତ୍ପତ୍ତି । ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷାର ବ୍ୟବହାର ଗୁପ୍ତାଭର ଯୁଗରେ ମାଠର ଓ ଗଙ୍ଗରାଜ ବଂଶର ତାମ୍ରଲେଖମାନଙ୍କରୁ ଜଣାପଡ଼େ । କ୍ରମେ ରାଜାମାନେ ପୃଷ୍ଠପୋଷକତା ଲାଭ କରି ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷାକୁ ଲୋକପ୍ରିୟ କରାଇପାରିଥିଲେ । ଏଇ ମୂଳ ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷାରୁ କାଳକ୍ରମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ, ବଙ୍ଗଳା, ଆସାମୀୟ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ଭାରତୀୟ ଭାଷାମାନଙ୍କର ଜନ୍ମ । ପଞ୍ଚଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଆଦିକବି ସାରଳା ଦାସ ଯେଉଁ ମହାଭାରତ ରଚନା କଲେ ସେଥିରେ ଆଧୁନିକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ବ୍ୟବହାର ପ୍ରଥମେ ଦେଖାଯାଏ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଆଦିକବି ସାରଳା ଦାସଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଜନକ ବୋଲି କୁହାଯାଏ । ରାଜା ଭରତଙ୍କ 'ନାଟ୍ୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର'ରେ 'ଉଡ୍ରଜା' ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଦେଶ ଭାଷା ରୂପେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ । ନାଟ୍ୟ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ସାତଟି ଦେଶ ଭାଷାର ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ଅଛି । ଯଥା :- ମାଗଧୀ, ପ୍ରାଚ୍ୟା, ଶୌରସେନୀ, ଦାକ୍ଷିଣାତ୍ୟା, ବାହିକା ଓ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧ (ଉଡ୍ର) ମାଗଧୀ । ଉଡ୍ର ମାଗଧୀ କେବଳ ଓଡ୍ର ବା କଳିଙ୍ଗରେ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ଭାଷାକୁ ସୂଚିତ କରେ । ନାଟ୍ୟଶାସ୍ତ୍ରର ଭୂମିକାରେ ମନମୋହନ ଘୋଷ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି- "It is almost certain that the name 'Odra' was older and enjoyed great prestige for this reason, shared the honour with Magadha in giving a

name to the eastern style of procedure which was called 'Odra Magadhi'.

ଶ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟପୂର୍ବ ତୃତୀୟ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ସମୟରେ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମୀଲିପିର ବିଶେଷ ପ୍ରଚଳନ ଥିବା କଥା ରାଜା ଅଶୋକ ତାଙ୍କ ଶିଳା ଲେଖରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଭାରତରେ ଆଜି ଯେତେ ପ୍ରାଦେଶିକ ଭାଷା ଅଛି, ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକକର ଲିପିଅଛି । ଏ ଲିପିମାନ ସବୁ ମୂଳ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମୀ ଲିପିରୁ ଉଦ୍ଭବ ହୋଇଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳରେ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମୀଲିପି ପ୍ରଥମ ଲିପିଥିଲା । ବ୍ରାହ୍ମୀ ଲିପି ବ୍ୟବହାର ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ କ୍ରମଶଃ ଅଧିକ ସରଳ ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ବିକଶିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା ।

ଗୁପ୍ତଯୁଗରେ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମୀ ବଦଳରେ ଗୁପ୍ତଲିପି ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ହେଲା । ମାଠର ବଂଶୀୟ ରାଜାମାନେ ଏହି ଲିପିରେ ତାମ୍ରପତ୍ର ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲିପି ଶ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟୀୟ ଏକାଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ବେଳକୁ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣରୂପରେ ବିକଶିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ତ୍ରୟୋଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀବେଳକୁ ଆଧୁନିକ ଅକ୍ଷର ପରି ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲିପି ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଉତ୍ତର ଭାରତୀୟ ଓ ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ଭାରତୀୟ ଲିପିର ମିଶ୍ରିତ ଅଂଶ । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ସାରଳା ଦାସଙ୍କ ମହାଭାରତ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ଭାଷା ବେଳକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲିପି ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିକଶିତ ହୋଇସାରିଥିଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲିପିର ବୃତ୍ତାନ୍ତ ବିକାଶ ହେଲା ଇଂରେଜ ଶାସନ କାଳରେ । ପ୍ରଥମେ କଟକ ଓ ପୁରୀ ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ସରକାରୀ ଦସ୍ତରେ ଏହା ପରିଚିତ ହେଲା । ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଦେଖିବାକୁଗଲେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲିପିର ପ୍ରବର୍ତ୍ତକ ମିଶନାରୀମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ପ୍ରଶଂସାର୍ଥୀ । ପୌରାଣିକ ମତ ବାଦରେ ମଧ୍ୟ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ରାଜ୍ୟର ପରିଚୟ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଥିଲା । ମହାଭାରତରେ ଓଡ୍ର ଏବଂ କଳିଙ୍ଗସେନା କୁରୁକ୍ଷେତ୍ର ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଯଥାକ୍ରମେ ପାଣ୍ଡବ ଓ କୌରବଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ କରିଥିବା ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଅଛି । ଦ୍ରୌପଦୀଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱୟଂବର ସଭାରେ କଳିଙ୍ଗରାଜା ଶ୍ରୀତାମ୍ବୁଧ୍ର ଦୁର୍ଯ୍ୟୋଧନଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ଥିଲେ । ଭାଗବତ ପୁରାଣରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ଅଛି ଯେ, ରକ୍ଷି 'ଦୀର୍ଘତମ'ଙ୍କ ଔରସରେ ରାଣୀ ସୁଦେଷାଙ୍କ ଗର୍ଭରୁ ଯେଉଁ ପାଞ୍ଚପୁତ୍ର ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇଥିଲେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କର ନାମ ଥିଲା, 'ଅଙ୍ଗ', 'ବଙ୍ଗ', 'କଳିଙ୍ଗ', 'ପୁଣ୍ଡ୍ର' ଓ 'ସୁନ୍ଦ୍ର' । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ସମୟରେ ସେମାନେ ପୂର୍ବଭାରତରେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ନିଜ ନାମାନୁସାରେ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସ୍ଥାପନ କରିଥିଲେ । ସୁଦେଷାଙ୍କର ଆଉ ଏକ ପୁତ୍ରଙ୍କ ନାମ ଥିଲା 'ଓଡ୍ର' । ସେହିପରି ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ସୁତ୍ରରୁ ଜଣାଯାଏ ଯେ, ବୈବସ୍ୱତ ମନୁଙ୍କର ପୁତ୍ର ପ୍ରହୁ୍ୟମ୍ନ ତିନୋଟି ପୁତ୍ର ସନ୍ତାନର ପିତାଥିଲେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ନାମ ଥିଲା ଉତ୍କଳ, ବିନିତାଶ୍ୱ ଏବଂ ଗୟା ଏହି ପୌରାଣିକ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନାକୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କଲେ, କଳିଙ୍ଗ, ଓଡ୍ର ଏବଂ ଉତ୍କଳର ସ୍ଥାପୟିତା ତିନିଜଣ କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ପୁରୁଷ ଥିବାର ଅନୁମାନ କରାଯାଇପାରେ । ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାତାଙ୍କ ନାମାନୁସାରେ ରାଜ୍ୟର ନାମକରଣ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ତିନି ରାଜ୍ୟ ଅତି ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳର ସୃଷ୍ଟି ବୋଲି ଭାରତୀୟ ସାହିତ୍ୟରୁ ସୂଚନା ମିଳେ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଭୂଗୋଳ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କଲେ ଦେଖାଯାଏ ଯେ ପୂର୍ବରେ ସମୁଦ୍ରତଟ ପଶ୍ଚିମରେ ଘନ ପର୍ବତମାଳା ଓ ଅରଣ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ଉତ୍ତର ତଥା ଦକ୍ଷିଣରେ ଯଥାକ୍ରମେ ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣରେଖା ଓ ବଂଶଧରାନଦୀଦ୍ୱୟ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପରିବେଷିତ ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡର ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ରତା ଅଛି । ଏହି ଭୂଖଣ୍ଡର ଭାଷା, ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ପରିବେଶ, ଶାରୀରିକ ବିକାଶରେ କେତେକ ବିଶେଷତ୍ୱ ପରିଲକ୍ଷିତ ହୁଏ । ଏସବୁ ବିଶେଷତ୍ୱ ଭାରତର ଅନ୍ୟ ଯେକୌଣସି ରାଜ୍ୟଠାରୁ ଭିନ୍ନ । ଏହି ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ରତାହିଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସଂହତି ପାଇଁ ଅନୁକୂଳ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଧାରାବାହିକ ଇତିହାସରେ ଯେଉଁ କେତୋଟି ଶିକ୍ଷଣୀୟ ବିଷୟ ରହିଛି ସେଥିରେ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ହେଲା ଅନ୍ତର୍ଦ୍ଧି ବା ଗୃହଯୁଦ୍ଧର ଅନୁପସ୍ଥିତି । ଅଶୋକଙ୍କ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ବିଜୟ ସମୟରେ କଳିଙ୍ଗବାସୀ ଏକଜୁଟ ହୋଇ

ମଗଧ ସମ୍ରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ କରିଥିଲେ । ନିଜ ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନ ଓ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତାକୁ ରକ୍ଷାକରିବା ପାଇଁ କଳିଙ୍ଗବାସୀ ନିଜ ଜୀବନକୁ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ କରିଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଏହା ଏକ ଜାତୀୟତା ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ଥିଲା । ଯେଉଁ ପରିମାଣରେ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ସେନା ମୁଦ୍ରା ବରଣ କରିଥିଲେ ତାହାର ଦୃଷ୍ଟାନ୍ତ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବିରଳ, ଗୋଟାଏ ଜାତି ନିଜ ଦେଶର ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ରକ୍ଷା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ନିଜର ସମସ୍ତ ବଳ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ କରି ମଗଧ ଆକ୍ରମଣର ପ୍ରତିରୋଧ କରିଥିଲା ।

ସେହିପରି ଖାରବେଳଙ୍କ ଦିଗ୍‌ବିଜୟ ସମୟରେ ସେ ସମଗ୍ର କଳିଙ୍ଗବାସୀଙ୍କର ସହଯୋଗ ଲାଭ କରିଥିଲେ । ମଗଧକୁ ବିଜୟ କରି ପାଟଳିପୁତ୍ରରୁ କଳିଙ୍ଗ-ଜୈନ ପ୍ରତିମା ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରିଥିଲେ । ସେମିତି ଗଜପତି ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମଦେବ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନ ଓ ସମ୍ମାନ ରକ୍ଷା ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ କାଞ୍ଚି ଅଭିଯାନ ଆୟୋଜନ କରିଥିଲେ । ଯେଉଁ ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ସ୍ଵୟଂ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଓ ବଳଭଦ୍ର କଳା, ଧଳା ଘୋଡ଼ାରେ ଚଢ଼ି ଯୁଦ୍ଧକରି କାଞ୍ଚି ବିଜୟରେ ସହାୟତା କରିଥିଲେ ବୋଲି କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତି ଅଛି ।

ଇଂରେଜମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଅଧିକାର କଲାପରେ ଖୋରଧାର ପାଇକମାନେ ଯେଉଁପରି ଭାବରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତିରୋଧ କରି ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ କରିଥିଲେ ତାହା ସାରା ଭାରତପାଇଁ ପଥପ୍ରଦର୍ଶକ ଥିଲା । ବକ୍ସି ଜଗବନ୍ଧୁ, ଜୟୀ ରାଜଗୁରୁ, ବୀର ସୁରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସାଏମାନଙ୍କ ପରି ଦେଶ ଭକ୍ତ ଯେକୌଣସି ଜାତିପାଇଁ ଗର୍ବ ଓ ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନର ପ୍ରତୀକ ।

ବହୁପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳରୁ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଭାରତର ସବୁ ଧର୍ମ ସଂପ୍ରଦାୟ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ଥିଲା । ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଧର୍ମ, ଜୈନ ଧର୍ମ, ଶୈବ, ଶାକ୍ତ, ବୈଷ୍ଣବ, ଗାଣପତ୍ୟ ଓ ସୌର ସଂପ୍ରଦାୟ ଏମାନ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଥିଲେ । ସବୁଧର୍ମର ସମନ୍ୱୟ ଥିଲା ଏଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶା । ଏଠାରେ ପଞ୍ଚ ଦେବତାର ପୂଜାର ଆଦର ଓ ପରସ୍ପର ସହିତ ଚଳିଶିଖିବା ଏ ରାଜ୍ୟର ସାମାଜିକ ପରମ୍ପରା ଥିଲା । କେତେବେଳେ ସାମ୍ରଦାୟିକ ଦଙ୍ଗାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସାମାଜିକ ଜୀବନ କଳୁଷିତ ହୋଇନଥିଲା । ଧର୍ମ ମତରେ ସମନ୍ୱୟ ଓ ସହବନ୍ଧନ ରକ୍ଷା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପରମ୍ପରା ରୂପେ ସ୍ଵୀକୃତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଗନ୍ଧରାଡ଼ିର ଯୁଗ୍ମମନ୍ଦିର, ଲିଙ୍ଗରାଜମନ୍ଦିର ଓ ପୁରୀର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର ଏହାର ଉତ୍କଳ ଦୃଷ୍ଟାନ୍ତ । କଳିଙ୍ଗର ରାଜାମାନେ ଧର୍ମାନ୍ଧ ନଥିଲେ । ସବୁଧର୍ମକୁ ସବୁସମୟରେ ଆଦର କରିବା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଆଦର୍ଶ ଥିଲା । ରାଜା ରଣଭଞ୍ଜ ଏକାଧାରରେ ଥିଲେ ପରମମାହେଶ୍ଵର, ପରମ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଓ ସ୍ତମ୍ଭେଶ୍ଵରୀପାଦଭକ୍ତ । ସେହିପରି ତୃତୀୟ ଅନଙ୍ଗଭୀମଦେବ ଥିଲେ ଶିବପୁତ୍ର ଦୁର୍ଗାପୁତ୍ର ଓ ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ପୁତ୍ର । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସମୟରେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଧର୍ମୀୟ ଗୁରୁମାନେ ଆସି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ପ୍ରଚାର କରି ତାଙ୍କ ଆଦର୍ଶରେ ଅନୁପ୍ରାଣିତ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟିତନ୍ୟ, ରାମାନୁଜ ଓ ପଞ୍ଚସଖା ଯେଉଁ ଧର୍ମତତ୍ତ୍ଵ ପ୍ରଚାର କରିଥିଲେ ସେଥିରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଆଦର କରିବାହିଁ ମୂଳମନ୍ତ୍ର ଥିଲା । ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଧର୍ମ ବା ସନାତନ ଧର୍ମରେ ଏହି ଆଦର୍ଶ ପ୍ରତିବିମ୍ବିତ । ଜୈନ, ବୌଦ୍ଧ, ଶାକ୍ତ ଓ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଧର୍ମମତର ସମ୍ମିଳିତ ପ୍ରତୀକ ହେଲେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ, ବଳଭଦ୍ର ଓ ମାତା ସୁଭଦ୍ରା । ଧର୍ମୀୟ ଭାବନା କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ସବୁଦିନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜନଜୀବନରେ ସହନଶୀଳ ମନୋଭାବର ଦୃଢ଼ଚେତନା ସୁକ୍ଷ୍ମ ଦେଖାଯାଏ ।

ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଯେଉଁ ଧର୍ମବିପ୍ଳବ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଥିଲା ତା'ର ପରିଣତି ଥିଲା ଦୁଇଟି ମୁଖ୍ୟଧର୍ମ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟର ଜନ୍ମ । ପ୍ରଥମଟି ଜୈନ ଧର୍ମ ଏବଂ ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟଟି ବୌଦ୍ଧଧର୍ମ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଜୈନ ଧର୍ମର ମହତ୍ତ୍ଵ ପ୍ରଚାର କରିଥିଲେ ଶେଷ ତୀର୍ଥଙ୍କର ମହାବୀର । ଖଣ୍ଡଗିରି, ଉଦୟଗିରି, ରତ୍ନଗିରି, ପୁଷ୍ପଗିରି ଓ ଲଳିତଗିରି ଆଦି ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଜୈନ ଧର୍ମର କୀର୍ତ୍ତିମାନ ଏବେବି ଅକ୍ଷୁଣ୍ଣ ରହିଛି । ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟୀୟ ସପ୍ତମ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରୁ ନବମ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ

ଭିତରେ ଓଡ୍ର ଦେଶରେ ଜୈନ ଧର୍ମର ଛିତି ଖୁବ୍ ଉଷାହ ଜନକ ଥିଲା । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ସମୟରେ ମହାଯାନ ବୌଦ୍ଧଧର୍ମ ଓ ଶୈବ ଧର୍ମ ସହିତ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତାରେ ବିଫଳ ହୋଇ ଜୈନଧର୍ମ ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ଲୋପ ପାଇଥିଲା । ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ୍ୟ ଧର୍ମର ଅନୁପ୍ରବେଶ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବୌଦ୍ଧଧର୍ମର ପୀଠଭୂମି ଥିଲା । ଏହି ଧର୍ମୀ ଶ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟପୂର୍ବ ଷଷ୍ଠ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରୁ ଶ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟାବ୍ଦ ନବମ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଅତି ଜନପ୍ରିୟ ଥିଲା । କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ଅନୁସାରେ ଗୌତମ ବୁଦ୍ଧତ୍ୱ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତିପରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓ ଶ୍ରୀଲଙ୍କାରେ ଦୁଇ ବଣିକ ଯଥା ତପସୁ ଏବଂ ଉଲିକଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ବୌଦ୍ଧଧର୍ମ ପ୍ରଚାର କରିଥିଲେ । ଶ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟପୂର୍ବ ୨୬୧ ବେଳକୁ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ଯୁଦ୍ଧର ଭୟାବହ ପରିଣତି ସମ୍ରାଟ ଅଶୋକଙ୍କୁ ବିଚଳିତ ତଥା ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିପାରିଥିଲା । ଏକଲକ୍ଷ ଶାନ୍ତିକାମୀ ଜନତା ନିହତ ଦୃଶ୍ୟକୁ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ଭୂମିରେ ଦର୍ଶନ କରିଲାପରେ ଚଷ୍ଟାଶୋକରୁ ଧର୍ମାଶୋକରେ ପରିଣତ ଇତିହାସରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ଅଛି । ତାପରେ ସେ ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଧର୍ମରେ ଦୀକ୍ଷିତ ହୋଇ ନିଜ ପୁତ୍ର ଓ କନ୍ୟା ଦ୍ୱାରା ଭାରତ ନେପାଳ, ଶ୍ରୀଲଙ୍କା ବ୍ରହ୍ମଦେଶ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଦେଶ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଧର୍ମ ପ୍ରଚାର କରିଥିଲେ । ଧଉଳି ପାହାଡ଼, ରତ୍ନଗିରି, ଲଳିତଗିରି, ଉଦୟଗିରି ଆଦି ସ୍ଥାନମାନଙ୍କର ଅନେକ ବୌଦ୍ଧ କିର୍ତ୍ତୀମାନ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳୁଛି ।

ସୋମବଂଶୀ ଓ ଗଙ୍ଗବଂଶୀମାନଙ୍କ ଶୈବଧର୍ମର ପୃଷ୍ଠପୋଷକତା କରିଥିଲେ । ଭୌମରାଣୀମାନେ ଶାକ୍ତ ଥିଲେ ଏବଂ ସୌର ପୂଜାର ମହତ୍ୱ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ପାଇଁ ଗଙ୍ଗ ସମ୍ରାଟ ନରସିଂହଦେବ କୋଣାର୍କର ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟମନ୍ଦିର ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ଏଇ ମନ୍ଦିର ଗାତ୍ର ଅନେକ କଳାକୃତି ଦ୍ୱାରା ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଥିଲା । ଶାକ୍ତଧର୍ମ ମତ ମାତୃଶକ୍ତି ପରିକଳ୍ପନା ସହିତ ସଂଶ୍ଳିଷ୍ଟ । ଐତିହାସିକ ଯୁଗରେ ଭୌମକର ଶାସନ କାଳରୁ ମାତୃପୂଜାର ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଜନଜୀବନରେ ଅନୁଭୂତ ହୁଏ । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯାଜପୁରରେ ‘ମା ବିରଜା’, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରର ଶିଶିରେଶ୍ୱର ମନ୍ଦିର ଦେବୀ ଚାମୁଣ୍ଡା, ଭଦ୍ରଖରେ ‘ମା ଭଦ୍ରକାଳୀ’ ପଶ୍ଚିମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ‘ମା ସମଲେଇ’, ମାଣିକେଶ୍ୱରୀ ଓ ପାଟଣେଶ୍ୱରୀ, ଉତ୍ତର ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ‘ମା ଅମ୍ବିକା’, ଖିଚିଂରେ ମା କିଚକେଶ୍ୱରୀ, କଟକରେ ‘ମା କଟକ ଚଣ୍ଡୀ’, ବାଣପୁରରେ ‘ମା ଭଗବତୀ’ ଝଙ୍କଡ଼ରେ ‘ମା ଶାରଳା’ କାକଟପୁରରେ ‘ମା ମଙ୍ଗଳା’ ଓ ବାଙ୍କୀରେ ‘ମା ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚିକା’, ଆହୁରି ଅନେକ ଶକ୍ତିପୀଠ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ ଲାଭ କରିଛି ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର କଳାପ୍ରେମୀ ଜନସାଧାରଣ ଖାଲି କଳା କୃତିରେ ନିପୁଣ ଥିଲେ, ତା ନୁହେଁ, ବସ୍ତ୍ର ବୁଣିବାରେ, ପଟ୍ଟଚିତ୍ର ଆଙ୍କିବାରେ, ସଜୀତ ଓ ନାଟକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଅନେକ ଉନ୍ନତ ଓ ମାନସିକତାର ପରିଚୟ ଦେଉଥିଲେ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ସୃଷ୍ଟି ପ୍ରାୟ ବ୍ରହ୍ମୋଦ୍ଭବ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ସହିତ ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷାର ମଧ୍ୟ ଆଦର ଥିଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଣ୍ଡିତମାନେ ଦେଶ ବିଦେଶରେ ସମ୍ମାନିତ ହେଉଥିଲେ । ସୁଦୂର ଚୀନ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଦେଶମାନଙ୍କରୁ ବିଦ୍ୟାର୍ଥୀ ଓ ପରିବ୍ରାଜକମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଶିକ୍ଷାୟତନମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆସୁଥିଲେ । ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ବହୁଧର୍ମର ପ୍ରଚଳନ ହେଉଥିବାରୁ । ଏଠାରେ ଜାତି ଭେଦ ପ୍ରଥା ନଥିଲା । ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇମାନେ ସୁଦୂର ଜାଭା, ସୁମାତ୍ରା ଓ ବୋର୍ଣ୍ଣିଓ ବାସୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ କରିବା ସହିତ ସାମାଜିକ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ରଖିଥିଲେ । କବି ସାରଳାଦାସ ଶୁଦ୍ର ହେଲେବି, ସମାଜରେ ଭେଦଭାବ ନ ଥିବାରୁ ସେ ମହାଭାରତ ପରି ପବିତ୍ର ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ରଚନା କରିପାରିଥିଲେ । ପଞ୍ଚଦଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ମଧ୍ୟଭାଗରୁ ଷୋଡ଼ଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ମଧ୍ୟଭାଗ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ରକ୍ଷିତ କଲେ, ବଳରାମ ଦାସ, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାସ, ଅତ୍ୟୁତାନନ୍ଦ ଦାସ, ଯଶୋବନ୍ତ ଦାସ ଏବଂ ଅନନ୍ତ ଦାସ । ଏମାନଙ୍କ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକ କୃତିମାନ ପଞ୍ଚସଖା ସାହିତ୍ୟ ନାମରେ ଅଭିହିତ । କବି ସମ୍ରାଟ ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଭଞ୍ଜ, ଅଭିମନ୍ୟୁସାମନ୍ତ ସିଂହାର, କବିସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ

ବଳଦେବ ରଥ, ଭକ୍ତ ଚରଣ, ଭକ୍ତକବି ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ ଆଦିକବିମାନେ ନାନା ପ୍ରକାର ସାହିତ୍ୟିକ ରସ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ରକ୍ଷିତ କରିଥିଲେ ।

ସାମରିକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନେ ପଛରେ ନଥିଲେ । ସେମାନେ ସବୁ ସମର ବିଦ୍ୟାରେ ବିସ୍ତାର ଦ ଥିଲେ । ସମ୍ରାଟ ଖାରବେଳଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭକରି ଗଜପତି କପିଳେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦେବ ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କ ପୁତ୍ର ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମଦେବଙ୍କ ସମୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସାମରିକ ହୁଏତ୍ତି ସାରା ଭାରତକୁ ଚମକୃତ କରିଥିଲା । ଏବଂ ଏସବୁ ରାଜା ତାଙ୍କ ବିଜୟ ସହିତ ଯଶ ଏବଂ ଧନସମ୍ପଦ ବିପୁଳ ପରିମାଣରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଆଣି ଦେଶର ଅର୍ଥନୀତି ଓ ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ କରିଥିଲେ । ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବହୁତ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱରେ । ଏଠାକାର ଅଧିବାସୀମାନେ ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମାବଲମ୍ବୀ । ମୁସଲମାନ ଓ ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟିଆନ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟର ଲୋକ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଖୁବ୍ ମୁଷ୍ଟିମେୟ । ଏଠାକାର ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଅଧିବାସୀ ଆଦିମ ବା ତପସିଲଭୁକ୍ତ ଜାତି ଓ ଉପଜାତି । ତେଣୁ ଏଠାରେ ଅନେକ ଲୋକସଂସ୍କୃତିର ପ୍ରଚଳନ ଅନୁଭୂତ ହୁଏ । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ୱରୂପ- ପୁରୀର ପ୍ରଭୁଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ରଥଯାତ୍ରା, ଦଶହରା, ରଜପର୍ବ, ଦୀପାବଳି ଓ ମାଣବସା ଗୁରୁବାର । ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀମାନେ ସ୍କୁଲ ଓ ଶିକ୍ଷାନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଶ୍ରୀଗଣେଶ ଓ ମା ସରସ୍ୱତୀଙ୍କ ପୂଜା କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅନେକ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଯାତ୍ରା ଉତ୍ସବ ମଧ୍ୟ ପାଳିତ ହୁଏ । ଯଥା :- ସମ୍ବଲପୁରର ନୂଆଖାଇ, ମୟୂରଭଞ୍ଜର ମକରପର୍ବ, ବହୁପୁରର ଠାକୁରାଣୀ ଯାତ୍ରା ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଉତ୍ସବ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଭେଦ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ସଂହତି ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବାରେ ସହାୟକ ହେବା ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଭାରତ ତଥା ବାହାର ଦେଶର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ କରିଛି । ଦାସକାଠିଆ, ଗୋଟିପୁଅ, କଣ୍ଠେଇନାଚ, ଓଡ଼ିଶୀନୃତ୍ୟ, ଛଉନୃତ୍ୟ, ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀ ନାଚ ଓ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଝୁମର ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶୀ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ, ଆଦି ଅନେକ କଳାପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଆଜି ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଭାରତ ତଥା ଅନ୍ୟ ଦେଶରେ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ପରିଚୟ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଛି । ତାଳପତ୍ରରେ ପକ୍ତିତ୍ର, ପଥରରେ କଳା ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟ, କାଠ ଖୋଦେଇ ପ୍ରସୂତ ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟ, ଶିଙ୍ଗ କାମ, କଂସାପିତଳ, ମୁଣ୍ଡୟ ଶିଳ୍ପ, ତାରକସି କାମ, ବସ୍ତ୍ରଶିଳ୍ପ ଓ ବାନ୍ଧକଳା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତିକ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ପ୍ରଂଶସିତ କରାଇଛି ।

ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମର ପରମ୍ପରା ଅନୁସୂତ ହେଉଥିବାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମାଜରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ସବୁ ସାମାଜିକ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାରେ ଏକତା ପରିଦୃଷ୍ଟ ହୁଏ । ବିବାହ ବ୍ରତ , ଶୁଦ୍ଧିକ୍ରିୟା, ନାମକରଣ, ଅନ୍ନପ୍ରାସନ, ବାରବ୍ରତକୁ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ କରୁଥିବା ପାଞ୍ଜି, ପୁରୀର ମୁକ୍ତିମଣ୍ଡପ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ସଭାଦ୍ୱାରା ଗୃହିତ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ତାହାର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ଓ ନିଷେଧକୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଜନସାଧାରଣ ମାନି ଚଳିଥାନ୍ତି । ଆଚାର ବିଚାରରେ, ସାମାଜିକ ବ୍ୟବହାରରେ ସମାନ ନୀତି ଅନୁସୂତ ହୁଏ । ତେଣୁ ସୁସ୍ଥ ସାମାଜିକ ବାତାବରଣ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଏକ ବିଶେଷତ୍ୱ । “ବନ୍ଦେ ଉତ୍କଳ ଜନନୀ ।”

ସହାୟକ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ

(୧) ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ଇତିହାସ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି - ଶ୍ରୀପ୍ରବୋଧ କୁମାର ମିଶ୍ର

(୨) ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଇତିହାସ - ପ୍ୟାରିମୋହନ ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ



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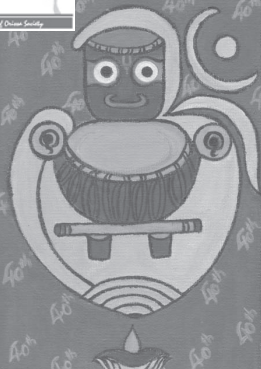
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For any further information you can contact Persons:

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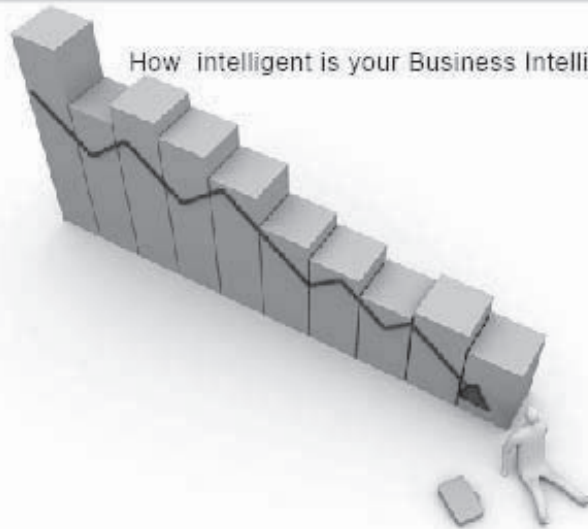
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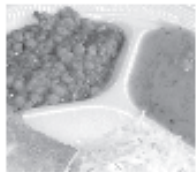


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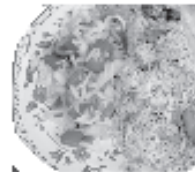


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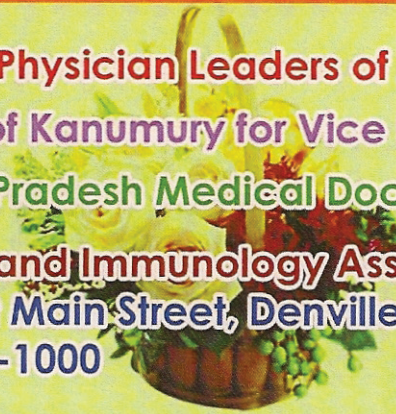
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