

The Journal of
The Orissa Society of the Americas



42nd Annual OSA Convention
July 1 - 4, 2011, Dallas, Texas, USA

Our Heritage, Our Pride | ଅକ୍ଷୟ, ଅମର ଆମ ଗୌରବ



The Journal of
The Orissa Society of the Americas

2011 Souvenir Issue
The 42nd Annual Convention,
July 1st – 4th, Dallas, TX

Editors: **Sikhanda Satapathy**
Prachee Behera
Asha Mishra

Our Heritage

Our Pride



**ଅକ୍ଷୟ ଅମର
ଆମ ଗୌରବ**

୨୦୧୧ ଓସା ସ୍ମରଣିକା
୪୨୭ମ ବାର୍ଷିକ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ, ଡାଲାସ୍



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¹ Only president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer are elected positions.

² Dr. Annapurna Pandey resigned on February 12, 2011 and Pitambar Sarangi took charge on February 19th, 2011.



ପ୍ରେସିଡେଣ୍ଟଙ୍କ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା

ପବିତ୍ର ଓସା



ପ୍ରିୟ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଓ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ଗଣ

ଓସାର ବୟାଳିଗତମ ବାର୍ଷିକ ସମାରୋହର ଏ ଶୁଭ ଅବସରରେ ମୁଁ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କୁ ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ସ୍ୱାଗତ ଜଣାଉଛି । ଓସାର ଏ ରଜ୍ଜହଣୀ ଓ ଓ ସ୍ନେହ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନର ଅନୁପମ ଛବି ଦେଖି ମୋ ମନ ପୁଲକିତ ହେଉଛି । ଏଇ ହିଁ ତ ଓସା, ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ପ୍ରକୃତ ରୂପରେଖ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ମିଳନର ଏ ବାତାବରଣକୁ ବାସ୍ତବତାରେ ପରିଣତ କରାଇଥିବା ଏ କନ୍ଭେନ୍ସନ୍ ଆୟୋଜକ ଓସା ସାଉଥ୍‌ସ୍ପ୍ରେଙ୍ଗ୍ ଚାପଟର୍‌ର ସମସ୍ତ ସ୍ୱେଚ୍ଛାସେବୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର କୃତଜ୍ଞତା ଜ୍ଞାପନ କରୁଛି ।

ଦେଖୁଦେଖୁ ଦୁଇଟି ବରଷ କେମିତି ବିତିଗଲା । ଏ ମୋର ପରମ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ଯେ ଓସାର ପ୍ରେସିଡେଣ୍ଟ ଭାବେ ସମାଜର ସେବା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ ମୁଁ ଏ ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇଥିଲି । ଏ କନ୍ଭେନ୍ସନ୍ ପରେପରେ ନୂଆ ପ୍ରେସିଡେଣ୍ଟ ଭାବେ ଆଉ ଜଣେ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ନେବେ, ସେ ହେଲେ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ନିର୍ବାଚିତ ଅର୍ଷ୍ଟପ୍ଲୁର୍ସି ପାଣ୍ଡେ । ମୋର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଆପଣ ମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ନେହ ଓ ସହଯୋଗ ବଳରେ ସେ ଓସାକୁ ସଫଳତାର ମାର୍ଗରେ ଆଉ କିଛିଟା ଦୂର ନିଷ୍ଠେ ଆଗେଇ ନେଇପାରିବେ । ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧମାନର ସମସ୍ତ କର୍ମକର୍ତ୍ତା ମାନଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ଅର୍ଷ୍ଟପ୍ଲୁର୍ସି ପାଣ୍ଡେ ଓ ନବ ନିର୍ବାଚିତ ସମସ୍ତ ସ୍ୱେଚ୍ଛାସେବୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଅନେକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ।

ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଯାଉଛି ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ ତଳର ନିଉଜର୍ସୀର ଟ୍ରେଙ୍କନ୍ ସହରରେ ଘଟିଥିବା ସେ ଐତିହାସିକ ଘଟଣା ଯେଉଁଦିନ ମୁଁ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥରପାଇଁ ପ୍ରେସିଡେଣ୍ଟ ଭାବେ ସମ୍ମୋଦନ କରିଥିଲି । ତାପରେ ଦୁଇଟି ବରଷ କେମିତି ବିତିଯାଇଛି । କେତେ ହସ, କେତେ ଲୁହ; କେତେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ, କେତେ କୋହ; କେତେ ଆଶା ଓ କେତେ ପ୍ରହେଳିକାର ପାହୁଡ଼ ସବୁ ଚଢ଼ିଚଢ଼ି ଶେଷରେ ମୁଁ ବୁଝିଛି ଆମ ଓସା ସମାଜର ପ୍ରକୃତ ସ୍ୱରୂପକୁ, ଯେଉଁଠି ଅଛି ସମାଜ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରଗାଢ଼ ସ୍ନେହ, ପ୍ରଗାଢ଼ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟବୋଧ, ଅନ୍ୟପାଇଁ, ସମାଜପାଇଁ ନିଜକୁ ସମର୍ପଣ କରିଦେବାର ଏକ ଅନନ୍ୟ ଆବେଗ । ତେବେ ଗୋଟିଏ ବିଷୟକୁ ଯେମିତି ସମଗ୍ର ମଧୁପାତକୁ ବିଶାଳ କରିଦିଏ, ସେମିତି ଆମ ଭିତରେ ରହିଥିବା କେତେକ ସଭ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କର ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା ଆମ ସମାଜକୁ, ସମାଜର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକୁ ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ନିଖରଣଦେବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟିତ ରହୁଛି । ସେ ଜୟନ୍ତୀ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରାର ପ୍ରଭାବରୁ ଏ ସମାଜକୁ ରକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ନହେଲେ କେବଳ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଦ୍ଧିକୁ ଲଢ଼ିଲାଇ ଆମର ସମୟ ଅତିବାହିତ ହୋଇଯିବ ସିନା, ଆମେ ଆଉ ଆଗେଇ ପାରିବାନି ।

ଓସାପାଇଁ ରହିଥିବା କେତେକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସବୁ ମୋର ଅପୂରଣ ରହିଗଲା । ମୁଁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲି ଏମିତି ଏକ ସମାଜ ଯେଉଁଠି ସଭ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କର ପରସ୍ପର ପ୍ରତି ଓ ସମାଜ ପ୍ରତି ସ୍ନେହ ଓ ସମ୍ମାନ ରହିଛି; ପରସ୍ପରର ଉନ୍ନତି ପାଇଁ, ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଉନ୍ନତି ପାଇଁ, ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଉନ୍ନତି ପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତେ ମିଳିମିଶି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଛନ୍ତି ଓ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରତ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି; ନୂଆ ଓ ପୁରୁଣା ଉଭୟ ପିଢ଼ିର ସଭ୍ୟମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ପ୍ରଚାର ଓ ପ୍ରସାର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ନିଯୋଜିତ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି । ତେବେ ମୋର ଏ ଅଧିକାରୀ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ ମୁଁ ଓସାର ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ କର୍ମକର୍ତ୍ତା ମାନଙ୍କ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଯାଉଛି ଓ ମୋର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଯତ୍ନରେ ଓ ଆପଣ ମାନଙ୍କର ସହଯୋଗରେ ଏ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଟି ନିଷ୍ଠେ ଦିନେ ବାସ୍ତବ ରୂପ ନେବ ।

ବନ୍ଧୁଗଣ, ଆସନ୍ତୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ମିଳିମିଶି ଆମମାନଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ସମାଜ ଗଢ଼ିବା, ଏ ସୁଦୂର ବିଦେଶ ଭୂମିରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ପରିଚୟର ଓ ପରଂପରାର ଏ ସ୍ମୃତି ସୌଧଟିକୁ ଆମମାନଙ୍କ ଜ୍ଞାନ ଓ ସମ୍ମାନର ଆଭୂଷଣ ପିନ୍ଧାଇ ଗୌରବମଣ୍ଡିତ କରାଇବା ।

ବିଗତ ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ ଓସା ଓ ଓସା ସ୍ୱେଚ୍ଛାସେବୀମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ କଠିନ ପରୀକ୍ଷାର କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ହୋଇଛି ସତ, ତେବେ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରେରଣା ଓ ଉତ୍ସାହ ପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତ ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ଆମେ କୃତ୍ୱିତ୍ୱର ସହିତ ଉତ୍ତୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇପାରିଛୁ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ମୁଁ କୃତଜ୍ଞତା ଜ୍ଞାପନ କରୁଛି । ବିଶେଷ କରି ମୋର ସ୍ୱାମୀ ନରେଶ ଦାସ ଓ ଝିଅ ବାଗ୍ମା, ମୃଣାଳୀ ଓ ଶାଶୁତୀଙ୍କ ସହଯୋଗ ଓ ବୁଝାମଣା ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ କୃତଜ୍ଞ । ଯୋଗାଇଦେବା ସହିତ, ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କର ମୋ ଉପରେ ରହିଥିବା ଅତୁଟ ସ୍ନେହ ଓ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ନିଜକୁ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଗୌରବାନ୍ୱିତ ମନେକରୁଛି । ପଲ୍ଲୀ କବି ନନ୍ଦକିଶୋର ବଳଙ୍କ ଭାଷାରେ -

କର୍ମହିଁ ଜୀବନ କର୍ମହିଁ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ
ଜଗତା ଜୀବନ୍ତ ମରଣ ସିନା,
ଦୁର୍ଲଭ ମାନବ ଜନମ ବିଅର୍ଥ
ଜୀବନ-କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସାଧନ ବିନା ।

ସମାଜର ସେବା କରିବା ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ; ମଣିଷକୁ ସ୍ନେହ କରିବା ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ; ସମାଜର ସୁରକ୍ଷା କରିବା ଆମର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ । ଓସାର ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା ରକ୍ଷା କରିବା ପ୍ରତି ଓସା ସଭ୍ୟଙ୍କର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ।

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ
ଓସା ପ୍ରେସିଡେଣ୍ଟ



The President's Message

Our Holistic OSA

Welcome to the 42nd Annual Convention of The Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA)!

I am thrilled to meet all of you, the dedicated and distinguished members of this historic organization with many distinguished personalities from the state of Orissa, the motherland for many of us and the heritage for our children and grandchildren. I commend the organizing team and OSA members of South West Chapter for their hard work, dedication and success in assembling a rich and wholesome program for your enjoyment.

Speaking of heritage, the theme of this year's convention is "Our Heritage, Our Pride", i.e., "Akshyaya Amara Ama Gouraba". From its ambitious beginning in 1969 to the present OSA is the only one organization of Oriyas in North America that has taken this prominent role in preserving and promoting Oriya culture in the distant land for 42 years.

Fellow OSA Members, for two years it has been my honor to serve you as your president. After this convention, the presidency will pass to a successor chosen by you, the OSA members. I join all OSA members in offering best wishes to 2011-2013 OSA President Dr Annapurna Pandey and her team-members.

For two years irrespective of the opposing forces and obstacles, our administration strived to expand opportunity and hope in OSA. It gives me immense delight looking back over the achievements during the two years. We have made promising mark in grace, growth and glory. The details of our struggle and success are presented in the annual report section.

I am filled with gratitude to many members, volunteers, my executive team and BOG; however, one person I reserve to bestow my greatest gratitude is my husband Naresh Das, who has tolerated my absence from many special moments in his life and to our caring and understanding daughters, Bagmi, Mrunali and Shashwati, who suddenly matured with OSA community concepts. I thank all the OSA Members for the trust you have bestowed on me by raising hands in 2009 Trenton convention. I thank you for the countless acts of courage, generosity and grace that I have witnessed these past two years.

My team's envisioned future for OSA included our dream organization where members are intellectually ignited, culturally enriched, emotionally stable, spiritually enlightened and socially committed. I leave this dream to the next team for their care and nurture.

Living is the art of loving. Loving is the art of caring. Caring is the art of sharing. Sharing is the art of living. If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else. - Booker T. Washington

And so, my friends, my fellow OSA members, thank you for your continued confidence and trust, which have made each of these two years in OSA an outstanding year. Let us live to love, to care, to share and make our organization holistic together.

It is an honor to be your president, May God bless the organization and our next president, Dr Annapurna Pandey! And may God bless you all!

Bigyani Das



Convener's message

On behalf of the convention organizing committee of volunteers, I take great pleasure and pride in welcoming you all to the 42nd Annual OSA Convention 2011 in Plano, Texas. The convention host team appreciates your participation and support, and has made every effort to make your trip to Dallas memorable and pleasurable. If there is something that might make your stay here more pleasant, please let any of our team members know.



This year is the 75th anniversary of modern Odisha. Our forefathers gave their best to see the best in us. Today we have gathered here not just to celebrate another year of convention but also to respect their hard work, dedication and sacrifice. We offer you OSA11 as a traditional convention with a difference: in addition to traditional mix of culture, entertainment, seminars and social networking, OSA11 brings you several additional features that we hope will set a benchmark for years to come. A major focus at OSA11 is the celebration of platinum jubilee of Odia Cinema and Odisha formation day. "Our Heritage, Our Pride" aka "Akshaya Amara Aama Gouraba" is the theme of OSA11. We bring our cultural inheritance, our spiritual wealth, our rich history to guide and inspire us in this land of opportunity which is our home. They are our inherent strength, the talisman of our inalienable pride. As we come together again to celebrate our origins, we celebrate this tradition and our individual talents and collectively build our compound identity as Odia Americans, reaching new heights of success in a new century, keeping alive a great heritage, and weaving it into the fabric of our daily life!

During the last seventy-five years, we have made a lot of progress in every field you can think of. Education, health, industrialization, culture, art, literature, entertainment and sports – in every field we have made a noticeable presence. Over these years we have also reaffirmed our image as a gentle, soft-spoken and amicable people, which is known as "Odianness". Be it the opening ceremony or the seminars or the cultural shows, you will see the celebration of our achievement, heritage, culture and Odianness. I hope you will enjoy and cherish every moment of the convention.

This year also marks the 75th anniversary of Odia cinema. We are fortunate to have eminent personalities from the Odia cinema (Ollywood) among us today to celebrate this milestone. We will be taking an Ollywood journey spanning this seventy-five years which you will find enthralling and nostalgic. We are proud of our distinguished Odias, who have been invited to grace the occasion including cultural icon of Odisha, Ms Jharana Das, Information Commissioner-in-Chief to the Government of India Mr. Satyananda Mishra, distinguished entrepreneur Ms. Jagi Mangat Panda, retired DG Police and revered spiritual ambassador Guruji Shri C.B. Satapathy, award-winning literary figures Yashodhara Mishra and Paramita Tripathy; legendary music composer Mr. Shantanu Mohapatra, singers who have enriched Odia music, Mr Chitta Jena and Mr Prasanta Muduli, accomplished Odissi dancer who has lost one leg in accident but still performs mesmerizingly, Mr Nityananda Das and many other highly talented and respected artists from Odisha.

Our seminars focused on Odisha and the Odia Diaspora in the Americas and across the globe with theme of bridging past to present and building the future together. OSA11 seminar tracks are exciting and inspiring as they are aimed at translating ideas into reality; featuring topics pertinent to the present day milieu. Speakers are erudite, and have a wealth of knowledge and experience in their respective area of excellence. Our constant effort is to provide a platform for panel discussion, experience sharing, brainstorming on ideas and topics of practical usefulness and tangible value which will transcend beyond the convention.

Our business symposium will be held on Friday, July 1st to further business relationship between Odisha and Texas. A government and business delegation from Odisha will meet with their counterparts in this event to explore investment opportunities in Odisha. This symposium "Gateway to India-Odisha" is being held concurrently with OSA11 the day before the convention activities begin, featuring Congressman Jim McDermott and a number of young Odia entrepreneurs. It provides a platform for initiating business collaborations & partnerships and new investment opportunities for US and Indian businesses.

At the center of our convention are our own members, particularly our youth group. We introduce a "Youth Mentorship Roundtable," where our youth group representatives speak about their chosen professions and offer mentorship advice to their younger peers; a "Youth Career Forum," where our youths candidly discuss sensitive issues such as "Who Decides my Career?" and "Pursuing My Dreams: Dealing with Parent/ Peer Pressures." We hope that their concerns get to the center of OSA's concerns, as the organization comes of age. Please spare some time to come to these sessions and listen to their discussions.

A lot of people have worked hard and have made generous monetary contributions to make this event a memorable one for you. I thank each and every volunteer, participant, attendee and sponsor from the bottom of my heart. I hope, we will transport you to an Odia land for three days that will so excite you that by the time OSA11 comes to an end you will start making plans for coming to the next.

Best wishes to each one of you.

ଓମ୍ ନମଃ ଶିବାୟ





Co-convener's message

Its Texas, it's the July 4th weekend, it's definitely going to be hot. Then what's there in it for me?

OSA convention is not just to have cultural extravaganza, or place filled with seminars. This is where we re-live our past, in the company of our friends, at the same time giving the younger generation a colorful glimpse of their rich heritage.

In this year's OSA Convention you can expect to find a blend of favorite traditional fares and some innovative ones. As we strive to deliver the right mix of culture, entertainment, and awareness, our goal is to broaden participation of the North American Oriya community at all levels, especially from younger generation, and to increase the number of chapter representations.

As convention organizers we have always tried, with varying degrees of success, to get our second-generation youth actively involved in the organization's activities. We believe that it is possible to get the youth group more interested and involved in the convention if they have more freedom and control to determine and develop their own agenda. We urge the parents to make sure that this information reaches their children and encourage them to get involved. With the help of the current OSA Youth Committee, we have created a process, which will hopefully accomplish this objective. I cannot thank enough our convention volunteers and participants who have put countless hours of hard work and dedication to make this an exciting experience for all of you starting with the mesmerizing inaugural function. I am looking forward to an exciting convention and meeting all of you. Hope you all will cherish the memories of the 42nd OSA convention and the southern hospitality.



Debasis Nanda

Message from the OSA-Southwest Chapter President

On behalf of Southwest chapter of Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA), I welcome you all to the 42nd annual convention in Plano, Texas. The southwest chapter, known for its hospitality, is proud to host the convention for the third time. As this year marks the 75th anniversary of modern Orissa as well as Odiya cinema, we have gone an extra step to make this event enjoyable and memorable for you.

I am very thankful to members of SW chapter to make this event possible. My special thanks goes to people of Greater Dallas area who shouldered this responsibility and to all those who were generous with their financial contribution and time. Without their help, this event would not have been possible. I also take this opportunity to thank our guests from Orissa who came to join us in this celebration of Orissa culture, heritage and progress.

Enjoy the convention, meet old and new friends, stay cool in this hot Texas weather and be safe.

Thank you and best wishes.

Gopal Mohapatra





Murlidhar C. Bhandare
GOVERNOR, ORISSA

April 29, 2011

MESSAGE

I am glad to know that The Orissa Society of the Americas, Dayton, USA is organizing its 42nd Annual Convention in Plano, Texas on July 1-4, 2011. A souvenir is being brought out on the occasion.

OSA has been actively pursuing the cause of Oriya culture in USA. This year the theme of the Convention is "Our Heritage Our Pride". Multi-activity exhibitions can be organized at different places showcasing Oriya art, culture, cuisine, handloom and handicrafts. This will go a long way in generating interest in Orissa. The more people come to know about Orissa, the more they will love to come to the state. NROs can also make significant contribution to various sectors, particularly health, education, rehabilitation of the differently abled and upliftment of the tribals.

I wish the endeavour all success.

Murlidhar Bhandare
(Murlidhar C. Bhandare)



भारत का राजदूत
वाशिंगटन, डी.सी.

AMBASSADOR OF INDIA
2107 MASSACHUSETTS AVE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

May 9, 2011

MESSAGE

I am happy to learn that the Orissa Society of the Americas is holding its 42nd Annual Convention on the theme "Our Heritage, Our Pride (*Akshyaya Amara Ama Gouraba*)", focusing on the rich cultural heritage of Orissa, in July this year.

Orissa has historically been a source of glorious traditions in the world of arts and culture. Odissi music, Odissi dance, the folk theatre forms of Jatra, Pala and Daskathia, sand arts, patta chitra paintings, handicrafts and architecture speak volumes of the artistic dexterity of the people of Orissa. The Ratha Yatra and Konark Dance Festival attract visitors from all over the world. The Jagannath Temple in Puri, the Sun Temple in Konark and the Lingaraja temple in Bhubaneswar are not merely important places of religious worship but also great works of human genius and art. Today, Orissa like the rest of India, is striving to accelerate economic development and offers many attractive economic opportunities.

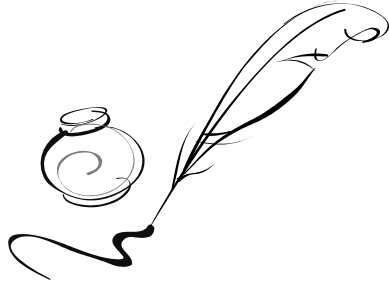
We recognize with deep appreciation the Society's active role in promoting Oriya culture in North America.

I wish the Convention all success.

Yshaukar
(Meera Shankar)



ସଂପାଦକୀୟ



ଏଥର ସଂପାଦକ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ନେବା ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ କୁଣ୍ଠିତ ଥିଲି । ଏକରେ ମୁଁ ମାରିଲ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡରେ ନୂଆ

ଚାକିରିରେ ଯୋଗଦେବାକୁ ଯାଉଥାଏ, ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟରେ ଅଞ୍ଜିନର ଘର ବିକା, ମାରିଲ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡରେ ନୂଆଘର କିଣା, ଏ ସବୁ ଚିନ୍ତା ମୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡର ସବୁ ଯାଗା ମାଡି ବସିଥାନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ, ତପନଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ରୋକ୍‌ଠୋକ୍ କହିଦେଲି, “ଦେଖନ୍ତୁ, ମୋ ଅବସ୍ଥା ଏଥର ବାର’ଣ୍ଡା-ଦିକତା, ମୁଁ ଏଥରକ ଜମାରୁ ପାରିବିନି । ମୋତେ କ୍ଷମା କରନ୍ତୁ ।” ଯେଉଁମାନେ ତପନଭାଇଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ କାମ କରିଛନ୍ତି, ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଜାଣିଥିବେ - ପ୍ରଥମେ ଖୁବ୍ ସହାନୁଭୂତି ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରିବେ । ଧିରେ ଧିରେ କହିବେ, “ଦେଖ ତମେ ନ କଲେ କାମଟା ଚଳିବନି, ଚିକେ ଭାବ - କାମଟା ଏମିତି ବେଶୀ ନୁହେଁ ।” ତା’ପରେ ସେ ନଛୋଡବନ୍ଧା - “ଏ’ଥରଟା ତମକୁ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ନ କଲେ କିଏ କରିବ କହିଲି ?” ତାଙ୍କର ନିଶ୍ଚଳ ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଯେ, “ଆଉ ଜଣକୁ ମୁଁ ଦେଖୁଛି, ତମେ ଖାଲି ପରିଚାଳନା ଓ ଗାଇଡ୍ କରିଦେବ ।” ହଉ, ଯାହା ହେଲେ ହେବ, ତପନଭାଇ ତ ଅତି ଘନିଷ୍ଠ, ତେଣୁ ତାଙ୍କ ବାଧ୍ୟବାଧକତାରେ ମୁଁ ହୁଁ ଭରିଲି । ଭାବିଲି, ଆଉ ଜଣେ ସଂପାଦକ ତ ଥିବେ, ତାଙ୍କୁ ସବୁ କାମ ଧରେଇଦେବି । କିଛି ଦିନ ଉତ୍ତାରୁ କହିଲେ “ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗ ପାଇଁ ଜଣେ ବରିଷ୍ଠ ସଂପାଦକ ମିଳିଗଲେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ତମକୁ ପରିଚାଳନା ସହ ଓଡିଆ ବିଭାଗଟା ଦେଖିବାକୁ ହେବ ।” ଭାରୁଥିଲି, ଇଂରାଜୀ ସଂପାଦକ ହେଇଥିଲେ ବି ଚଳିଥାନ୍ତା, ଯାକୁ ତାକୁ କହି ଆର୍ଟିକଲ୍ ପଢେଇଦେଇଥାନ୍ତି । ହେଲେ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ପଡିଲା ଓଡିଆ ବିଭାଗ ! ଓସା ପାଇଁ ଓଡିଆ ସଂପାଦନା କାଠିକର ପାଠ । ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଲେଖକ ହାତଲେଖା ପଠେଇବେ, ଟାଇପ୍ କରିଦେବାକୁ ନିତାନ୍ତ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିବେ । ଓଡିଆରେ ଟାଇପ୍ କରିବା, ଇଂରାଜୀରେ ଟାଇପ୍ କରିବା ଅପେକ୍ଷା ଦଶଗୁଣ କଞ୍ଜକର । ତା’ପରେ ସଂଶୋଧନ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଓଡିଆରେ ହର୍ଷକାର ଓ ଦୀର୍ଘକାରର ଅପପ୍ରୟୋଗ ବହୁତ । ଏଠାରେ ଇଂରାଜୀ କହି, ପଢି, ଶୁଣି, ମୁଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅଧାପାଶୋରା ହେଲିଣି । ତାପରେ, ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛଦ ପଟ, ବିଭାଗ ବିନ୍ୟାସ, ଇତ୍ୟାଦିର ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ନବ କିଏ, ଏ’ ସବୁ ଭାବି, ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଗୋଳମାଳ ହେଇଗଲା । ସେ ଯାହା ହେଉ, ହୁଁ ତ କରିଦେଇଛି, ଏବେ ଯାଏ କୁଆଡେ !

ମାରିଲ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡ-ଟେକ୍ସାସ୍ ଯିବା ଆସିବାର ବ୍ୟସ୍ତତା ଭିତରେ ସମୟ ଖୁବ୍ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଅତିବାହିତ ହେଇଗଲା । ସଂପାଦନ କରିବା କାମ ଆସି ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ‘ମୁଣ୍ଡବିନ୍ଧା’ ପୋକ ପରି ଘୁରିବୁଲିଲା । ଏଣେ, ନୂଆ ଯାଗାରେ ମୋର ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ ସଂଯୋଗ ହବାରେ ସତ୍ୟହତେ କଟିଗଲା । ଯେଉଁ ଦିନ ସଂଯୋଗ ସ୍ଥାପନ ହେଲା, ସେ ରାତିରେ ଇ-ପତ୍ରରୁ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ପାଇଲି ଯେ ଭାଇରସ୍ ଜନିତ କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟର୍ ବ୍ୟାପି ହେତୁ ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗ ସଂପାଦନରେ ବିଶେଷ କିଛି ଅଗ୍ରଗତି ହୋଇନାହିଁ । ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଚତକ ପଡିଲା; ଏକରେ ତ ଓଡିଆ ବିଭାଗ ପାଇଁ ସମୟ ନାହିଁ , ଏବେ ବୋଧ ଉପରେ ନଳିତା ବିତା ପରି ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଭାଗ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ପଡିବ ? ଦୁର୍ଯ୍ୟୋଗ ଆସିଲେ, ଭାଇ ବନ୍ଧୁ କୁଟୁମ୍ବୁଙ୍କୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନେଇ ଆସେ । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ସମୟ ସାରଣୀରେ ବିଳମ୍ବ ହେଇସାରିଥାଏ । ଆଉ କିଛି ସମୟ ମାଗିବାରୁ ପୂର୍ବ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରିତ ମୁଦ୍ରକ ଏକପ୍ରକାର ଅନିଶ୍ଚିତ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଥାଏ । ତେଣୁ ଅଞ୍ଜିନରେ ମୁଦ୍ରଣ କରିବା ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ମଧ୍ୟ ମୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ଆସିଲା !

ରଘୁ ଅରକ୍ଷିତକୁ ଦଇବ ସାହା । ଭାଗ୍ୟବଶତଃ ସଂପାଦକ ଦଳର ଯୁବଶକ୍ତି ପ୍ରାଚୀ ଓ ଆଶାପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆଗେଇ ଆସିଲେ । ସଂଶୋଧନଠୁ ଆରମ୍ଭକରି ବିଭାଗ ବିନ୍ୟାସ, ସୂଚୀପତ୍ର ପ୍ରକରଣ ଇତ୍ୟାଦିରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସହାୟତା ନମିଳିଥିଲେ ହୁଏତ ଏ ସ୍ଫୁରଣିକାଟି ସମ୍ପିଳନୀପରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହେଇଥାନ୍ତା । ତେଣୁ ପାଠକବୃନ୍ଦ ଓ ସମ୍ପିଳନୀ ଆବାହକ ମାନଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ପ୍ରାଚୀ ଓ ଆଶାପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଙ୍କୁ ମୁଁ ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ କୃତଜ୍ଞତା ଜ୍ଞାପନ କରୁଛି ।

ଏ ଅନୁଭୂତି ଅବତାରଣା ଦ୍ୱାରା ଅଭିଯୋଗ କରିବା ମୋର ଅଭିପ୍ରାୟ ନୁହେଁ । ବରଂ, ଯୁବଶକ୍ତିର ଆବାହନରେ ଓସାର ସ୍ଥାୟିତ୍ୱ ଯେ ନିର୍ଭରଣୀୟ, ଏହା ପ୍ରତିପାଦିତ କରିବା ମୋ ଲକ୍ଷ । ନୂତନ ପିଢ଼ୀର ଯୁବକ ଯୁବତୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଉତ୍ସାହ, ପ୍ରେରଣା ଓ ଦୀର୍ଘତ୍ୱ ହସ୍ତାନ୍ତରେ ହିଁ ଆମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ମଙ୍ଗଳ ନିହିତ । ଏହା କହିବା ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଏହା ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଯେ, ରବର୍ଟ କେନେଡିଙ୍କ ଭାଷାରେ

“ . . . the qualities of youth (is) not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease.”

ତେଣୁ, ଆମକୁ ଯୁବଶକ୍ତିର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ସହିତ ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ ଦ୍ୱାରା ମାନସିକ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରାରେ ଯୌବନ ଭାବ ଜାଗ୍ରତ କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ଳେଷ ସହିତ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିର ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ ହେବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ସର୍ବୋପରି ଆଳସ୍ୟ ତ୍ୟାଗ କରି ଅନୁସନ୍ଧିତକୁ ଆବୋଧି ନେବାକୁ ହେବ । ନହେଲେ ଶାରିରୀକ ବାର୍ଦ୍ଧକ୍ୟ ସହିତ ମାନସିକ ବାର୍ଦ୍ଧକ୍ୟର ସାମନା କଲାବେଳେ ଓମାର ଖୟାମଙ୍କ ରୁବାୟତ୍‌ର ପଂକ୍ତି, *“Alas the youthful fire is a dying ember; The spring of life has reached December,”* ମନେ ପଡ଼ିବ ।

ସଂପାଦନ ଏକ ଅସାଧାରଣ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଏହକୁ ମୋ ପିତା ସ୍ୱର୍ଗତ ଡଃ ଲତୁକେଶ୍ୱର ଶତପଥୀ ଏକ ମାଳି ଓ ଯଜ୍ଞର ହୋତା ସହ ତୁଳନା କରନ୍ତି । ମାଳି ଭଲମନ୍ଦର ନିର୍ବିଚାରରେ ବୀୟ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରି ତାକୁ ପାଣି, ସାର ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଦେଇ, ଶାଖା ପ୍ରଶାଖାକୁ କାଟି, ଯତ୍ନ ସହ ବତ କରିଥାଏ, ଏବଂ ଗଛଟି ବଡ଼ ହେଲା ପରେ ଦର୍ଶକ ମାନେ ତାର ପତ୍ରପୁଷ୍ପର ଶୋଭା ଉପଭୋଗ କରନ୍ତି । ସେହିପରି, ଏ ସ୍ମରଣିକାର କଳାଦାନ ଲେଖକ ମାନଙ୍କର ଓ କଳା ଉପଭୋକ୍ତା ଆପଣମାନେ । ସଂପାଦକର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କେବଳ ଉଦ୍ୟାନର ପରିପୋଷଣ ଓ ପରିବେଷଣ । ସଂପାଦକ ହେଲେ ଏ କଳାଯଜ୍ଞର ହୋତା । ଯଜ୍ଞସାମଗ୍ରୀ ଲେଖକମାନଙ୍କ ଦତ୍ତ କଳା, ଯଜ୍ଞ ଜନୀତ ସମଗ୍ର ସୁଫଳପାତ୍ରିର ଭାଗିଦାର ପାଠକବୃନ୍ଦ । ଯଜ୍ଞକୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଉପବିଷ୍ଣୁ ସଂପାଦକ ମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ କିଏ ଯଜ୍ଞକୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଘୃତ ଅର୍ପଣ କରିଛି ତ କିଏ ଯଜ୍ଞ ସମିଧ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରି ତାକୁ କାଟି ଯଜ୍ଞକୁଣ୍ଡରେ ପଡ଼ିବାପରି ଆକୃତି ଦେଇଛି । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ବିନା ସାମ୍ବଲ୍ୟ ଲାଭ ନିତାନ୍ତ ଦୁସ୍ୱର । ସଂପାଦକଙ୍କ ମୁଖ୍ୟ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ହେଲା ଏ କଳାଯଜ୍ଞର ପରିଚାଳନା । ତା’ପାଇଁ ଦାତା ଆପଣ, ଗୃହିତା ମଧ୍ୟ ଆପଣ ।

ଏ ସଂଖ୍ୟାର ଲେଖକବୃନ୍ଦଙ୍କୁ ଠିକ୍ ସମୟରେ ଲେଖା ପଠାଇବା ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ସହଯୋଗ ପାଇଁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ସଂପାଦନ କରିବା ସମୟରେ ଯାହା ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ହୋଇଛି ତାକୁ ଯଥା ସମୟରେ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେଇଥିବାରୁ ତପନଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଅଶେଷ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ଏ ସ୍ମରଣିକାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଟାଇପିଂରେ ସହାୟତା କରିଥିବାରୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର, ଆଶାପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣା ମିଶ୍ର, ବରୁଣ ପାଣି ଓ ପ୍ରଭାତୀ ବେହେରା ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ସଂପାଦନା ଜନୀତ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଷୟରେ ଆଲୋଚନା ଓ ଲେଖା ସଂଗ୍ରହରେ ସହାୟତା ପାଇଁ ସୁର ରଥଙ୍କୁ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ । ଏ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ସମୟରେ ନିରଭିଯୋଗରେ ଘରସଂସାରର ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଭାର ବହନ କରି ସଂପାଦନପାଇଁ ମୋତେ ସମୟମୁକ୍ତ କରିଥିବାରୁ ମୋ ପତ୍ନୀ ଚିନା, ଓ ନିଜ ଖେଳସମୟରୁ କାଟି ମୋତେ ସମୟ ଦେଇଥିବାରୁ ମୋ କନ୍ୟାଦ୍ୱୟ ନେହା ଓ ଅନିକାଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ମୁଁ ଆଭାରୀ । ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ବନ୍ଧୁମିଳନ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅକ୍ଷୟ ଅମର ଗୌରବ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚାରେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସମୟର ସଦୃଶଯୋଗ କାମନା କରୁଛି ।

ଶିଖଣ୍ଡ ଶତପଥୀ
ଏଲିକଟ୍ ସିଟି, ମାରିଲ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡ



About the Cover Page

Prachee Behera

Putting a face on the compilation of thoughts we take back from the OSA convention is not a trifling effort. However, I knew just the person for it, Rashmi, a talented graphic designer who is also a cousin of mine. With her artistic abilities and inputs from Souvenir committee members it was going to be done quickly. In reality it has taken a few months, sixty-four emails and many phone calls to get this cover page to its present form. The *maati-lipa* texture is reminiscent of the simplicity of rural Odisha; Konark wheel of its advanced architectural history. The *boita* picture found on a blog site speaks of Odia traditions. To me it represents the glorious past and also the present generations' desire to preserve it and even recreate it. The theme of the convention speaks for itself and the Sambalpuri saree border designs boast the artistic and entrepreneurship talents in Odisha. The innovative convention logo and the nostalgic OSA one make it the Souvenir of the 42nd Convention of the OSA. I wish to acknowledge and appreciate the sources of all the artistic contributions to this cover.

For me this experience of helping to get the Souvenir ready for print has been like a journey, a journey in which I met many new people and gained new perspectives on places and cultures and from where I have returned refreshed, informed and maybe even wiser. I gained a sense of the birth of OSA, its childhood and present adulthood. I had to ask myself what Heritage and *Gouraba* mean to me, an Odia. As I forced myself to reflect, I awakened to a renewed sense of pride.

Growing up in Jharuapara, Sambalpur, encounters with Heritage was a commonplace occurrence. It was not just while waiting for the Puri Ratha to start so that Brahmapura *Gudi's* Ratha could proceed. Not just while watching *Sitalsasti* procession from our overcrowded balcony or waking up before sun-up on a moon-lit night to accompany my grandmother to the *ghata* behind our house, to float a small bamboo boat on the Mahanadi and pray to an unknown entity on the river bank. Heritage was imbibed unknowingly while people around me went on with their daily activities. Somewhere along the way, I picked up the art of intricate *jhuntis* by imitation, learnt to tell the *Bichitrapar* and *Saptapar* designs on Sambalpuri clothes apart and absorbed the preparation methods of numerous Odia foods.

It was a few years before I started realizing the significance of these daily doses of endowments. That, the Brahmapura temple hid the essence of the Puri deities for a century or two while invaders searched to defile it. That it was Trijata, a Demon not a God, who was worshiped every year on *Karthik Puni* morning; a Demon who supposedly befriended and comforted Sita during her captivity, at Lanka. That Padmashree Krutartha Acharya was a legendary artist, not the name of a *saree* store. More importantly, I realized all this was a part of the bigger Odia cultural heritage. I still continue to stumble upon the similarities, the subtle variance as well as the distinctly unique customs of the thirty different districts that comprise this common Odia culture and heritage.

However, my work with the Souvenir took me further than I had previously cared to venture. It was a journey both necessary and overdue. It took me to the realization that I carry the torch of the Kalinga warriors, men and women, who fought to keep their enduring independence and democracy and who finally, fell to the Mauryan army, only to instantly transform the *Chandashoka* into an emissary of *Ahimsa*. To the revelation that ancient Odia mariners traversed oceans to trade with not just the Pacific islands but also Europe, Africa and perhaps even South America (on copper clad *boitas* as far back as the 3rd century BC, centuries before the Europeans 'discovered' these lands). My sources of information range from the expected: books and testimonials of elders, to the modern media: blogs and images on the internet, to the totally unexpected: a thesis of the University of Hawaii. A question I came to ask is why so much of this was new to me, even though I have lived more than 20 years in Odisha. Why when I learnt about the *sepoy* mutiny in high school, there was little mention of the

people's resistance in different parts of Odisha, which had so rattled the British that they had decided to chop up the state and had persisted to strip Odisha of all indigenous power, culture and even its language. Those answers perhaps are in another journey, on another day...

One realization I am tempted to share however, is that Heritage is not something that has been. Little did the *sadhava bahus* know that they will be starting a tradition, celebrated even when overseas travel became a matter of hours. Little did the *mistris* that worked the rocks under the sun know that poems would be written in their honor and that their work of art, the Konark would be adored by generations even after it had tumbled. Little did the few Odias who organized a get-together because they missed being home fathom what OSA would develop into only a few decades later. All our efforts, actions and interactions whether being at an Odia party, cooking *bhoga* for Jagannath puja or contributing to OSA activities and Odia culture is in essence, bequeathing our Heritage, the one that will be. Being aware of this should surely give us a reason to strive for perfection in our work, sincerity in our actions and graciousness in our interactions as the people from Odisha. It did for me at least, as I added my bit to this, the Souvenir of the consequential 42nd convention of the OSA.

THE COVER PAGE CREDITS

Rashmi Pujari, for the graphic design of the cover pages of the Souvenir/Journal and the Directory for OSA Convention 2011. Rashmi is a freelance graphic designer based in Philadelphia, PA. She is originally from Sambalpur, Odisha but has grown up in Delhi, India. She holds a Certificate in Graphic Design from the University of Pennsylvania, PA and a BFA (Applied Art Major) from Delhi University, India. Her interests include Odissi, making cartoons, cooking and racquet sports besides her love of drawing and painting watercolors. To learn more about her work please visit www.rashmipujari.com.

Santanu Das, Dallas, Texas for the design of the **OSA11 Symbol: A confluence of cultures**.

"The logo designed for OSA Convention 2011 is a symbolic representation of the confluence of cultures. It exemplifies the coming together of the rich ethnic Odia, Indian, and Texan cultures. The manifestation of Lord Jagannath is represented by the black center portion and the sacrosanct black and white circles. Odia culture is further represented by symbols of Durga puja and colors of Odissi *tahia* and Pipli *chandua* art. The Indian culture is represented through the colors of Holi. The five point Texan star also includes the colors of the Texas flag."

Lt. Arun Das, for the design of the now familiar **OSA symbol**. He was a major contributor to OSA and lent his artistic talents to many Odia cultural activities in OSA conventions.

Tanmay of Elusive42, for his photograph, **Boita Bandana**, included in his blog post compilation of recent wall paintings in the state capital, "Bhubaneswar Wall Paintings - Oriya Culture." Tanmay kindly consented to the featuring of his photo with the words, "My goal is to communicate our rich heritage through this post and any publication of the pictures would only augment my purpose."

<http://elusive42.windforwings.com/2009/05/bhubaneswar-wall-paintings-oriya.html>

Unknown artist, for the wall painting at Bhubaneswar, which has been photographed. This is one of many murals, conceptualized and executed by the **Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation** to promote and preserve "Orissa's cultural & traditional history, art, festivals, rituals, village life, tribal art, folk tales and portraits" while also providing local artists with opportunities.

Tapan Padhi, Bigyani Das, Gagan Panigrahi, Tapas Sahoo, Debasish Chanda, Sura Rath, Sikhanda Satapathy, Asha Mishra, Manas Behera and Pravanajan Behera, for their resourcefulness and feedback.

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OM GANESHAYA NAMAH



Debasnana Purnima, Austin TX, 2010

(Photo credit: Manas Behera)

*JAGANNATHA SWAMI
NAYANA PATHA GAMI BHABATU ME*

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OSA TODAY



1969 2011

OSA 2009-2011 Administration and Annual Report

OSA National Executives (2009-2011)

President's reflection

For two years irrespective of the opposing forces and obstacles, our administration, OSA 2009-2011 administration strived to expand opportunity and hope in OSA.

We have recruited about 100 new permanent member families for OSA and about 100 annual family members. We have facilitated successful regional drama festival events and inspired chapter events in local chapters to carry out OSA's objectives. We have hosted two best conventions in OSA history, 2010 California convention and 2011 Texas Convention. A successful Invest-Orissa symposium in California convention and the follow-up symposium in Bhubaneswar have accomplished the goal of popularizing OSA's name in Orissa while contributing towards Orissa's development. We have made amendments to the constitution by involving members in each phase of the decision making process. These amendments have added stability to the foundation of our organization. Our newsletters were timely and full of richness in information as well as creativity.

While I write this, my thoughts return to the main meeting room of the Patriot Center, in Trenton, New Jersey where I addressed OSA members for the first time as OSA president. However, that meeting witnessed the terrorism in the form of lawsuit harassment in which a member had attacked the society by collaborating with a non-member and tainting the reputation of the organization by wrongful made-up accusations. With strong member allies at our side and with support from OSA Board of Governors (BOG) we stood strong in our effort to fight the evil and ill. Then there came a day to rejoice with complete victory and glory to the organizational repute.

Filing a lawsuit against a socio-cultural voluntary organization for losing in an election for unpaid volunteer positions and harassing volunteers for that reason is wrong every time, everywhere. Working hard to free the society from the terrorist mindset is eternally right. This organization and its members must continue to act for defending

the dignity of the organization and to advance the cause of fellowship and friendship.

Sailing through difficult times, our administration practiced 3 important leadership assets, control, clarity and confidence. Our goals were clear: to add prosperity and growth, to bring back OSA's dignity, to eliminate evil and ill, and maintain control even if challenged with wrong accusations. It was not easy to practice control, but we did and I congratulate each of my team members for being a part of this great mission.

There have been questions on the expense for the lawsuit. Money is recoverable, but dignity is not. We restored dignity and wiped out the taint. We can recover the financial health of the society. Our work will continue till the mission of complete financial recovery is achieved. We, the OSA officials and members did not choose this lawsuit; it came to us when we took office and almost destroyed our mission and envisioned goals, for which we have volunteered our time to the organization. As members of OSA we will never tolerate our organization being threatened, nor stand and take refuge when our volunteers are harassed and the organization is ridiculed. Protecting the dignity of the organization becomes the first and foremost duty of each member of the society and its leaders.

It has been the privilege of a lifetime to serve as OSA president. There have been good days and tough days for making tough decisions. I have always acted with the best interests of OSA in mind. I have followed my conscience and done what I thought was right. There is legitimate debate about many of these decisions. But there can be little debate about the results.

Dr. Bigyani Das

The following are some highlights of our activities:

1. **OSA web documents:** About 95% of our web pages are updated and have become self explanatory. Members are requested to check OSA webpage at

<http://www.orissasociety.org> frequently for society news and updates. Please review and let us know if any information has been missed or needs to be corrected.

2. OSA newsletter Utkarsa: OSA newsletter Utkarsa is published regularly. Congratulations and thanks to OSA editors Sridhar Rana and Julie Acharya Ray for their hard work. You are requested to check the newsletter for information on various OSA activities.

<http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/publication.htm>

3. OSA 2010 and OSA 2011 Conventions: We had very successful conventions in California in 2010 and in Texas in 2011.

4. Membership growth: OSA has been able to add more than 100 new life member families and a few upgrades during this period.

5. Committees: Various committees are formed to look after specific OSA activities. Please visit OSA website and review the web page on committees to know more. We have planned to use 80% of our resources for our members and the development OSA. We will devote 15% of our resources for Orissa's development and collaboration and the rest 5% for international relationship.



6. Handling lawsuit filed by Amit Nayak and Anshuman Bal et al.: This was an unfinished business from 2007-2009 OSA administration. Mr. Amit Nayak and Mr. Anshuman Bal together with a non-member Agni Jandhyala had filed their lawsuit as revenge for losing in the election. There was a hearing on May 26th, 2010. OSA won the case with the help of OSA attorney Ms. Linda Dorney and tireless work of OSA 2009 Election Committee members Mr. Purna Mishra, Mr. Chitta Baral and Mr. Debendra Mallik, OSA

2007-2009 executives Mr. Pratap Das, Mr. Ashutosh Dutta, Mr. Priyadarshan Patra and Mr. Sandip Dasverma and 2009-2011 executives Dr. Bigyani Das and Mr. Pradeep Mohapatra. However, the plaintiffs again filed for en-banc review and the final hearing was on December 10, 2010. OSA won the case. Details are available at:

http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/Legal/osa_legal_information_gateway.htm

7. OSA communication: OSA 2009-2011 administration added a web page to explain OSA communication. Please check at http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/communication_ethics_and_osanet.htm to know more. OSAnet is currently used as a discussion forum as well as a medium for disseminating OSA information. Please use this forum by adhering to guidelines. Our administration's core value is "Respect". Respect for the organization, respect for other members and respect for the self are the attributes we expect to see in each and every communication in every OSA medium.

8. Chapter relations: OSA administration was having regular BOG meetings and email communication for improving chapter relation, forming new chapters and formalizing chapter operation procedure. Jogesh Panda, Leena Mishra and Nilamadhab Nanda, past and present chapter presidents are members of the Chapter Relations Committee. Please come forward and share your ideas for better chapter operation guidelines.

9. A new Chapter-Grand Canyon Chapter: A new chapter was formed in November 2009 in Arizona. This was possible because of the leadership of Mrs. Manju Mishra. The chapter members include Oriya families from Arizona, Utah and neighboring states.

10. Monthly meetings: There are regular meetings and email exchanges between OSA executives, committee members and OSA members to discuss OSA's issues, goals and milestones. OSA BOG meetings are held on the first Sunday of every month. OSA executive meetings are held every month on need basis. Apart from that there were frequent meetings for maintaining the optimum health of OSA.

OSA archives: The goal is to collect historical documents on OSA as well as collect distinguished materials specific to Orissa and create a museum. Mrs. Kula Mishra leads in this effort together with Mr. Manoranjan Pattnaik and Mr. Lalu Mansinha as members.

12. NROFC meeting in Bhubaneswar, Orissa: NROFC meeting was held in Bhubaneswar, Orissa on December 27, 2009. Several OSA members attended the event to represent OSA. OSA President Dr. Bigyani Das and OSA Secretary Mrs. Annapurna Pandey attended the 2010 NROFC meeting.

13. OSA is on Facebook now: We have created a facebook profile for OSA. We are collecting photographs of early years of OSA. Please share the photographs and the stories behind them, such as the people in picture and when and where the pictures were taken. Specifically, pictures of inauguration and cultural events and meetings will be greatly appreciated. You can send them to: orissasociety@gmail.com Please check out OSA at: <http://www.facebook.com/people/Osa-Samaja/>

14. Constitution review: The 2008-2009 constitution review committee had made many good recommendations that were further reviewed by OSA members through OSAnet discussions in January 2010. In the meantime many people have felt that small patch-up solutions will not provide an effective constitution and hence a thorough review is necessary. The new constitution will be adopted in 2011 GBM.

15. OSA awards: The 2010 and 2011 awards were managed by OSA vice-president Mr. Pradeep Mohapatra. In 2010 Mr. Manoj Mohapatra handled the role of Awards Coordinator very well. Saurjya Khandai managed 2011 awards.

16. Drama festival: Annual OSA drama festival event was organized in 4 regions, Eastern, South West, Northern and Central. Mr. Brajendra

Panda was the National coordinator with Mr. Sri Gopal Mohanty and Mr. Sandip Dasverma as the other two members. Please click the following link to know more:

<http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/dramafestival.htm>

17. OSA youth: We are thankful to Mr. Gyan Patnaik who has shown interest in coordinating OSA youth activities. Pupun Das and Soman Panigrahi are two second generation OSA youth volunteers in the committee and would soon start planning for OSA events, the youth would appreciate. This work could not be started as we faced other problems but we want to start activities soon. If your children want to be involved, please pass them the message.

18. OSA language and cultural Propagation: We have formed a Cultural Committee and an OSA Public Relations and Outreach Committee. Dr. Gagan Panigrahi heads the Public Relations and Outreach Committee and Mrs. Lata Mishra heads the Cultural Committee. The goal is to create Oriya learning material and media that could touch Oriyas of various age groups e.g. appealing Oriya music. We have a plan to achieve goals in this field. However, we have not done more work on this and wish to accomplish it in the future.

19. Documentary on OSA: We are planning for a documentary on OSA and OSA activities. The planning is in its infant stage; we need volunteers for activities such as financier, story writer, manager, actors and directors.

20. OSA's Finance: OSA's yearly financial report is provided by the Treasurer in a separate document. Irrespective of the challenges, OSA is still doing fine as regards to its financial health because of dedicated donors for various causes. Although due to the lawsuit, OSA has suffered financial damage its officers are trying their best to recover from this damage through fund-raising and member contribution.

OSA Organizational Information: A Short Summary

Bigyani Das

1. OSA Registration: The OSA is registered in TN as a tax-exempt non-profit organization. The first filing was in 1981. After several years of inactive state, it was made active on June 22, 2009. OSA is currently an active TN organization.
2. Constitutional Rules: The OSA Board of Governors (BOG) has the final say on constitutional rules, by-laws and rules of business. This was according to the amendment made in July 1992 (5. Article IX: B. Replace section 4 as follows: On any question involving the constitution the By-Laws, or the Rules of Business, the decision of the Board of Governors will be final.)
3. What is OSA BOG: OSA BOG constitutes of 4 elected OSA executives, President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and chapter presidents (currently there are 14 chapters) and the past president. Currently there are 19 eligible members in total (Amendment Effective July 1, 1992 – 2. Article V)
4. OSA Communication: OSA communications with its members are made through various ways.
 - *OSA web page* – <http://www.orissasociety.org>
 - *OSA newsletter* – OSA newsletters are kept in OSA web page from 2003. Members were informed about the electronic publication of its newsletters through different mediums. <http://www.orissasociety.org/osaftp01/publication.htm>
 - *OSAnet* – OSA electronic communication medium (yahoo group) established from 2007 and was approved in OSA General Body Meeting 2007. (OSAnet@yahoogroups.com)
 - *Through chapter presidents and local Oriya organizations*: OSA chapters have their own electronic list and some chapters have their own web pages. In some states which do not have chapters, they have their own local Oriya group emailing.
 - *Through individual emailing*: On many occasions OSA officials send emails to individual members by using individual email addresses.
 - *Through US Mail*: Whenever required, OSA officials also send information through US mail
- *Telephone*: Sometimes, OSA officials also make one-to-one communication with members
5. OSA newsletter (more): Before 2003, there were two issues of newsletters made (fall and spring) and sent to OSA members by US mail. These newsletters usually carried minimum information and were usually less than 8 printed pages. *From fall of 2003, the newsletters were made available from OSA web page.* Members interested in OSA affairs have many avenues to get answers to their questions. OSAnet, phone, email, OSA website, mails to BOG or executives. These are regularly used by interested members.
6. OSA General Body Meeting: OSA General Body Meeting (GBM) is held once in every year during its annual convention that is held during the first weekend of July (around July 4th).
7. OSA BOG Meetings: In the constitution it is mandated to have two BOG meetings per year (*Article V – B – C*). Because of the free conference availability, in recent years monthly, bi-monthly and emergency BOG meetings are conducted to address issues, discuss and take major decisions. These meetings are called by the President and in the absence of the President, Vice President or any official authorized by the President. Fifty percent is needed for the quorum.
8. OSA Election: OSA elections are held once in every 2 years in an odd year. The new officers are installed in the General Body meeting of the odd year. The election process starts from the GBM of the preceding year. *For example*: OSA 2011 election process started from July 4th, 2010 and ended on May 14, 2011.
9. OSA Election Committee: A three member election committee with one as chairman is appointed by the BOG (current BOG=Executive Committee before 1992) and is announced to the general body for approval by majority at the annual convention preceding the election year. (By-Law III: Election Procedure, Section 1)
10. OSA Official Positions: Before 2004, there were 3 positions in OSA, President, Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer. The Secretary and

Treasurer Positions were separated in 2004 according to a constitutional amendment and for the first time in 2005, election was held for 4 positions, President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. *Usually members are requested to volunteer for these positions since these are unpaid voluntary commitment for 2 years.* In OSA history many times there were uncontested candidates that win by default. In OSA's 40 years of history there were maximum 2 slates of candidates with one exception in 2001 where there were 3 slates of candidates.

11. OSA Membership: There are mainly 2 types of membership, permanent and annual. Most of the membership is family membership. In permanent category there are 3 types, life (\$300), patron (\$600) and benefactors (\$1000) and in annual category, there were 4 types, single (\$10), family (\$25), student single (\$5), and student family (\$10). One special type of membership for 5 years was introduced in 2008 (\$100). To become a member one needs to fill up a membership form and send the form with signature and the check to OSA treasurer (*Amendment effective July 1, 1992: 6. By Law I: A. Section 1. Add the following at the end of paragraph: "Membership in OSA involves submission of an application for formal approval by the Executive Council."*).

Annual membership dues shall be payable by July 30th of each year. (*Article IV: Membership*).

12. OSA Member Address and Contact Information: Every year OSA directory is produced in the form of a book by the annual convention organizing committee. It has member contact information and in recent years member emails are also included. This is available in OSA directory unless some members intentionally want to block their phone numbers and emails for possible spam.

OSA 2007-2009 Secretary Dr Priyadarshan Patra had exceeded the expectations by creating and maintaining an online member database called DOLA (Directory of Odias Living Abroad). The DOLA system has been very effective for address updates by members themselves and quick reference from anywhere in the world with internet access.

There is no mandate in the constitution that OSA Election committee or OSA executives will provide the voters list, but it is traditionally done

to facilitate the contests, in addition to the address book which is available to all life members. For members who register in the latest convention or thereafter, whose names and details are not in the address book, names are available in the member list and details are available in DOLA. Together, last Address Book, Member list & DOLA give all required information, to the contestants.

13. Financial Report: OSA financial report is mandated to be presented in GBM, once in a year and needs approval by the membership. It is then published in the next issue of OSA newsletter (fall issue). (*Powers and Functions of Treasurer: Amendment Effective July 1, 2004: Section 7: Item 5. The Treasurer will present the complete financial report of the past year in the Annual General Body meeting of the OSA during the convention.*)
14. Unforeseen Circumstances: For unforeseen circumstances, OSA takes advice of
15. its BOG (Amendments Effective July 1, 1992: 5. *Article IX: B.* Replace section 4 as follows: On any question involving the constitution the By-Laws, or the Rules of Business, the decision of the Board of Governors will be final.)
16. Quorum Consideration: Unless a member raises "Point of Order" the quorum is accepted to conduct any meeting. Major decisions are taken by consulting BOG (Amendments Effective July 1, 1992: 5. *Article IX: B.* Replace section 4 as follows: On any question involving the constitution the By-Laws, or the Rules of Business, the decision of the Board of Governors will be final.)
17. Election Irregularity Charges: Any charge of election irregularity or fraud shall be reported to the President and the members of the Executive Committee for resolution. (By-Law III: Election Procedure, Section 11 – Executive Committee = BOG according to Amendment Effective July 1, 1992, 2. Article V)

Note: Although not mentioned in the constitution, from spring 2008 OSA has hired a General Counsel Mr Sujit Mohanty, Esq. who is providing pro-bono service to OSA. OSA officials consult him in critical decision making process. OSA has also appointed an accountant Raj Marurveda in spring 2008 for its audit and tax related work.

OSA Regional Drama Festival

Sandip Dasverma, Sri Gopal Mohanty and Brajendra Panda

Prologue

When do you think men put lipstick on their lips and rouge on their cheeks? They volunteer to put it on. Are they mAichiA or heroes? OSA Drama Festival does the magical transformation - call them actors whether mAichiA or heroes.

On rehearsal days, it all becomes family business coming together with their kids. Sometimes a father or a mother acts while holding the child – a multifaceted loyalty blending together by OSA Drama Festival.

They all know they have to do their best on the stage and they do it so remarkably, be it in creating an illusion of reality or involving the audience in the movement of the play. Players of all forms - actors, writers, directors, stage managers, costume designers and what not find Drama Festival a bonding mechanism in their community as well as in the neighboring communities.

Whether they are engineers or lawyers or simply star gazers, they love to surrender to the tyranny of transformation because of the harmonization they want to share, that assuages their mind and soul. Their longing is reinforced by The Drama Festival.

Drama and stage create the absurdity of reality and seduction by pretense. We the actors and audience momentarily wait for the curtain to rise and get lost. The Drama Festival provides an alluring mechanism to achieve it.

Origin

After watching the drama competition at the 2007 Detroit Convention, Sandip came to Sri Gopal with the brilliant idea of a drama festival in each region. Sri Gopal liked the idea very much, foreseeing its would-be impact in the community and asked a few drama enthusiasts then and there who whole heartedly supported it. Nothing happened as there was an imminent OSA election to be held soon. But something happened in the election – it was a coincidence that Sandip Dasverma was elected as the treasurer. His idea of regional festival was accepted by the

newly formed OSA Executive Body and BOG and thus the dormant concept of the Festival was conceived sometime in November, 2007. While both of them were discussing the topic frequently, Sandip expressed his serious conviction. However, both remained busy, Sandip on his immediate assignment as the treasurer to streamline transparency and membership and Sri Gopal as the Cultural Coordinator of Toronto Convention, 2008. Soon after the Convention, Sandip succeeded to persuade the BOG to rope Sri Gopal into the Festival project as the National Coordinator. The OSA Regional Drama Festival was born.

Purpose

- Increased opportunity for inter-chapter socialization and sharing of ideas at a closer level.
- Exclusive opportunity for drama lovers to participate and/or to be spectators.
- Improving the spirit of congeniality among members of communities in regions, by reviving earlier half-a-day Convention format.

Rationale

- OSA members get only one chance to be together at the annual Convention. Regional Drama Festival will provide another opportunity, more particularly at the regional level.
- Unlike the Convention's tight schedules and formal structures, the Festival is intended to create an environment for more friendly interaction. For that reason, it will not encourage competition.
- The cost for attendees will be less so as to allow better participation as compared to the Convention.
- The community has a substantial number of drama enthusiasts and drama lovers. Unlike a Convention, which is unable to give enough time for a drama except for a skit, the Festival will encourage to stage plays. It is significant because unlike songs and dances, participation in a play quite often does not need any special talent.

Implementation scheme

In order to achieve the above basic objectives, regions needed to be formed so that the driving distance would be reasonable and outsiders were encouraged to enjoy local hospitality. Hence the event was planned for not more than half-a-day. It reminded us of the earlier OSA's half-a-day Conventions. The following guidelines were prepared:

1. Regions are formed from Chapters or otherwise. Neither the division nor the format needs to be rigid. The structural flexibility to adapt and adjust according to the regional condition should be acceptable. It is possible regions may have different formats of presentation in a given year.
2. In each region, a Chapter to host the Festival and the dates of the Festival for a given year are selected through mutual consent of different Chapters/groups within a region. Normally it is expected of Chapters to take turn to be a host.
3. The Festival will be held in a suitable weekend. The guests arrive on Friday evening/night or at the latest on Saturday morning. Dramas are performed on Saturday afternoon and evening. On Sunday the guests depart.
4. The host Chapter makes all arrangements including facilities and providing hospitality to outside guests. Provision of facilities should be reasonable and nothing fancy or expensive. It is understood outside guests are accommodated with families.
5. The duration of a drama should be approximately one hour. For optimality, there should be at most four dramas, two performed in the afternoon and two in the evening with a tea/coffee break for approximately an hour. The minimum number of dramas in a Festival is two.
6. At least two Chapters should participate in a Festival. It may be possible to have two teams from the same Chapter if there is insufficient participation in a Festival.

Actually OSA Drama Festival is a Festival of Festivals, consisting of a garland of Regional Festivals.

Festival 2009

Three regions were formed: Northern (Canada, Michigan, Ohio and Chicago), Eastern (New England, NY-NJ, MD-VA, Washington DC and South East) and Southern (South West and OZARC). An attempt was made to initiate in California but did not materialize. Upon discussion with various Chapters in a region, a host Chapter and the Coordinator were selected. Each Chapter or a subgroup of a Chapter (as in case of South West Chapter of Texas) in a region was represented by the President and/or by a Drama Coordinator. The Director of a drama in most cases happened to be the Drama Coordinator.

It was decided this time to hold all events of the Festival during April so as to celebrate Utkala Dibasa which falls on April 1.

Details of 2009 Festivals:

A. Southern Regional Drama Festival:

Host Chapter – DFW Orissa Society, a part of South West Chapter

Coordinator – Loknath Patro

Place – Denton, TX

Date – Saturday April 4, 09

Attendance – About 115 from Austin, Houston, and Dallas of TX and Arkansas

Dramas –

1. *Athacha ChAnakya* by Dallas of SW, directed by Tapas Sahoo

2. *SAhitya gaDiA Manthana* by Austin of SW, directed by Sikhanda Satpathy

3. *Ea Ki NATaka* by Arkansas of ORZAK, directed by Brajendra Panda

4. *Mom, MA Au MADAM* by Houston of SW, directed by Gopal Mohapatra

An Odissi dance item was also presented. For the celebration of Utkala Dibasa, Bande Utkala Janani was the opening song at each event.

Sri Gopal was present in both Northern and Eastern events, but Brajendra was in the ORZAK Drama team.

B. Eastern Regional Drama Festival:

Host Chapter - Washington DC

Coordinator – Debaki Nandan Chowdhury

Place- Silver Spring, MD

Date – Saturday April 18, 09

Attendance – About 100 from Washington DC, MD-VA, NY-NJ

Dramas –

Sri Ganesha *geetinatya* by Washington DC and

MD-VA, Direction – Pratap Dash
 Pathoi Bohu by Washington DC, Direction –
 Pratap Dash
 GuA NimaNtraNa by NY-NJ, Direction – Ritu
 Mohapatra
 Notes – Pathoi Bohu was based on a story by
 Fakir Mohan Senapati. The theme of GuA
 NimaNtraNa is the invitation by NY_NJ Chapter
 for the forthcoming Convention. In the first two
 dramas children were included who played
 adults' role. Due to the shortage of time another
 drama Ghatasutra by DC Chapter directed by
 Pratap Dash and Bigyani Das was cancelled.
 Biswajit Mohapatra was the Drama Coordinator
 from NY-NJ. Ullasini Sahoo who recently moved
 to NC from NJ tried for an item to bring from
 there but did not succeed. In spite of the contin-
 ued show of support and enthusiasm of NE
 Chapter, nothing materialized.

C. Northern Regional Drama Festival:

Host Chapter – Michigan
 Coordinator – Jogesh Panda
 Place – Flint, MI
 Date – Saturday April 25, 09
 Attendance – About 130 from MI-OSA and
 CanOSA
 Dramas –
 BananAsika by CanOSA (Canada), Direction –
 Gagan Panigrahi
 Mahisa Mardini *geetinatya* by MI-OSA, Direction
 – Swapnalata Mishra

Notes – Gopal Chhotray was the playwright of
 both. MI-OSA celebrated Basantotsav as part of
 the Chapter's annual event which involved
 children's song, dance and a fashion show.
 Chicago's Drama Coordinator was Jhara Das.
 The Chapter did not participate. There was no
 response from Ohio.

Details of 2010 Festivals:

A. Eastern Regional Drama Festival & Utkala Dibasa

Host Chapter: Odisha Society of New England
 Coordinator: Arun Mohanty & President: Nishi-
 kanta Sahoo,
 Place: Chinmaya Mission Auditorium, 1 Union
 Street, Andover MA-01810
 Date: Saturday, April 10, 2010
 Attendance: 150 plus

Dramas:

1. Children Dance drama: Kanchi Abhijan
 by Nupur Dance Academy students
2. NY/NJ Chapter: Dasanana@2010: Naka
 kata Upakhyan

3. OSNE Chapter: Dinu kaka thik Kahuthile
 Notes: Jagannath Puja & singing of Bande Utkal
 Janani by Kanta Kabi Laxmikanta and excellent
 Odishi dance was presented.

B. Regional Drama Festival & Visuva Milana, Toronto

Host Chapter: CanOSA

Coordinator: Parasar Mishra, Jibanjit Tripathy

Place: Port Credit Secondary School, 70 Mineola
 Road East, Mississauga, ON L5G 2E5

Date: Saturday, May 15th, 2010

Attendance: 150 plus

Dramas:

1. **Ohio – "Emiti Bi Hue "**, Written by:
 Birendra Jena, Direction: Basant Mohapatra
2. **CANOSA - "Chha Mana Aatha Gun-
 tha"**, Written by: Fakir Mohan Senapati, Direc-
 tion: Gagan Panigrahi, nATya rupAntara: Sri
 Gopal Mohanty

Notes: Other than dramas, excellent cultural
 programs were held befittingly by CanOSA

C: Southern Regional Drama Festival

Host Chapter: Southern Chapter, Dallas, TX

Coordinator: Saroj Mohapatra

Place: Lyceum Theatre, 1155 Union Circle ,
 Denton , TX , 76203

Date: Saturday, April 24, 2010

Attendance: 150 plus

Dramas:

1. Dallas Drama: **Phasigala Tume Natabara:**
 Biswaranjan Jena, Mousumi Jena, Subrat
 Acharya, Subhendu Rath, Niranjan Tripathy,
 Suvankar Mishra, Debasis Nanda, Bobby
 Dash etc
2. Houston Drama: **Habani Na, Habana Aau:**
 Debasis Mohanty, Leena Mishra, Dillip Patra,

Linu Maharana, Rishab Mohanty, Rajmohan Mishra, Madhab Maharana, Sarmistha Nanda, Sasmita Mohanty, Dhara Mohapatra, Subhashree Patra, Leena Maharana, Arnab Mohanty, Jini Patra, Roopesh Dash, Gopal Mohapatra

- 3. Arkansas Drama: Saura Jagatare Ulkaa Paata:** Soumya Das, Swapnila Das, Satyabrata Mishra, Sushree Satpathy, Brajendra Panda, Nrusingh Nayak, Srabani Patra, Sanjiv Srivastava, and Sanjita Mishra

Notes: Excellent Odishi dance was presented.

D. Midwest Regional Drama Festival & Dewali

Host Chapter: Chicago Chapter

Coordinator: Gyana Pattnayak, Ashoke Parida

Place: Fair Lady Production Inc. 1665 Quincy Ave, Naperville

Date: Saturday, Nov 6, 2010

Attendance: 150 plus

Dramas:

1. Chicago kids brought the house down by their scintillating performances: Shivansh's chanting mesmerized everybody and Pallavi, Payal, Sabrina, Shivangi, Shivank, Samyak, and Ayush", were excellent in "Aayee Dhoom Diwali.
2. Michigan Chapter: *Gosein Mahatma* by Swapnalata Mahapatra openly attacks the institution of priesthood that preys on the faith of common man.
3. Milwaukee Team's *Uchit Charcha* by Raju Pati & team. Targets the plight of a semi-educated power-hungry politician on a visit to Chicago
4. Chicago Chapter: Manoj Mahapatra's densely satirical play *Jaha Hale Hau*"

Notes: Event Chair Rosalin Samantray deserves accolade in making the show well-structured and perfectly synchronized, and praiseworthy, **mixing east and west, modern & classical.**

Finance

OSA provided \$500 to each group and the balance was absorbed mostly by the host Chapter/organizers.

Added features

An informal drama group in NA has been formed with drama enthusiasts. It's address is:

Review

Wherever Sri Gopal was present, he felt the occasion had melA-like environment-people talking to each other, families, children, food (ghugni, baDA, muDhi, pakoDi, dhokIA and what not). Yet everyone was waiting for the dramas, even children waiting to see their friends on the stage. I could see many improvisations in costumes and sets drawing the imaginative energy from the community. There was hardly any pressure on any group. Make-up and dressing area was shared. Shared experience was the dominating mood over the achievement of perfection of quality.

By all accounts, the objectives of the Festival were fulfilled. A friendly relation between host family and guest family was established. In some cases, there were card games and prolonged conversations till early morning. Over all there has been an atmosphere of congeniality among the gathered people. The dramas displayed varieties of individual and group talent. The Festival revealed the special talents of members in the community. The objective of inter-chapter interaction had its beginning and needed to be strengthened. There was a feeling that the Festival would gain momentum and in turn would strengthen OSA, and a belief that the present Festival was to continue in years to come. The flexibility adopted by each region in order to make the Festival successful was working. In the Northern Region, MI Chapter amalgamated its Basantotsav with the Festival. Eastern Region has a special feature that Washington DC Chapter and MD-VA Chapter are very closely located. Thus it was very appropriate for them to pull their resources together and plan for three dramas, although they presented only two. In contrast, SW Chapter of Southern Region covers a large geographical region. It was but natural to have three separate dramas from three different localities all belonging to the same SW Chapter. *The Regional Drama Festival is new and is an additional item to be managed through Chapters. The Chapters have their own events planned on a regular basis. It is felt that there needs to be adjustment in rearranging the events. We believe that with proper cooperation from Chapters the issue can be resolved once the benefit of the*

Festival is realized and appreciated in a larger context and for a wider interest of the community.

Epilogue

Drama, nAtaka or abhinaya – aren't we seeing them at Conventions and Chapter functions? You see and you don't – these are often buried in umpteen numbers of activities. A drama takes a back seat, so that in reality it is adorned in the costume of a 'skit' on the stage. So with the support of the community, we proclaimed just two years back: "Here comes Drama Festival, nATaka meLA, abhinaya mahotsaba. Enjoy and celebrate drama spectacular! "

OSA Conventions, Chapter activities and Drama Festivals-Do they fall in a line, do they connect themselves? Until recently, OSA through its Conventions, and Chapters through their activities were connected, but the connected lines have been hazy enough to leave an impression of disconnectedness. Drama Festival, under this scenario has been refreshing. It attempts to connect Chapters to OSA by interconnecting Chapters to form regions. The hazy lines are becoming clearer.

Acknowledgment

If at all we believe, that the Festival was a positive achievement then it was all due to this endless network of volunteers who form the bedrock of a healthy community. To all of them, we owe our sincere gratitude.

Appendix

At the end of last year's Festival the following note was sent to OSAnet:

Drama Festival is the Key to Our Cohesiveness

Yes, I believe it. Those who have the opportunity to be involved with the Festival also believe it.

The second year OSA Regional Drama Festival ended last weekend in Chicago.

Read, what Basant Mohapatra says recently: Beware! Odias across USA! Get ready to be infected as this virus is going to get pandemic soon and no vaccine can prevent this.

Scary, isn't it? Basant Babu will never mean it. You and I know good and bad cholesterol, good and bad intestinal bugs. He, as a medical

practitioner and at the same time a dramatist (a comedian), tells us not to know any vaccine to prevent these good bugs. Basant Babu, I am fully assured, aren't you?

I bet you did not miss Jogesh Panda's message, the same Jogesh Babu, who made you laugh your head off in his Daskathia grand finale presentation at '07 Detroit Convention. I thought he only makes others laugh but, listen friends, he himself can roar with laughter. Please read his recent message sent by Sandip Babu.

Read again: "The Chicago team's drama written and directed by Manoj babu was about deciding a script for the drama. It was so hilarious, that I would not be surprised, if some people actually peed in their pants. I almost did."

Did you note, what Jogesh Babu was otherwise doing in Chicago? Gapsap. That was his bonus. No, no, the other way around. OSA Drama Festival was merely the pretext – bAhAnA. En, en, kaNa kahile Jogesh Babu, lively, cozy, warm , manaTA khAli chhakpak heuchhi.

I wish I was there. I wish you were there too!

That is the key to our bonding and cohesiveness.

Yes, from all reports, this year's Festival ended with a big bang! Our big hug to Gyana Patnaik, the Festival Coordinator of the Region and the Chapter President Ashok Parida.. By the way, both of you, aren't you glad that Arjun Purohit is not your National Coordinator? Otherwise his bear hug (he has invited many times for this so-called affectionate treatment) would send you to the hospital.

Then what can I say about those, who might have tempted Arjun Babu to prepare for his hugging feat and Jogesh Babu to jump on to the stage singing loudly: rAma je rAma, nablna sundara ghanashyAma... There is Swapnalata Mishra (Mama), the hit talent of MI Chapter. Otherwise Mama is soft spoken, but on the stage a tiger. I saw her in last year's Festival hosted by MI. She was the MC and narrator of MI's drama. Wow, mAA lo, who is she! Yes, she lives with nAtaka inside. Then I bow to Raju Pati from Milwaukee who in my understanding from Niranjana Mishra (whose body, mind and soul dancing and acting all the time) of Sudbury, Canada is another drama-khor. My hats off to Manoj Mohapatra, Chicago. Manoj Babu, I have

to see you, how much have I to dig to take away your nAtuApaNa – BabAhAre majAdAr.

Even within all these nATa, nAtaklyatA, rasi-kapaNiA and fun (tamAsA), I do not think anyone including me would have been disrespectful to the concern Bijoy Babu (Misra) raised: to have fun with dignity. Language and culture are always in the mind.

We never encouraged any competition in the Festival. At the same time we never encouraged, not to have any competition in organizing the Festival in any innovative manner.

OSA has the Chapters and an annual Convention. In due course, as OSA was growing, the level of connectivity to OSA and more generally

in the larger community has been eroding. Just two years back, a new idea to hold OSA Regional Drama Festival was initiated in order to rebuild it. Last year there were three events in three regions, Southern, Eastern and Northern. This year the number has increased to four: South Western, Eastern, Northern and North Western. There is every indication that it will increase.

In this short span, there has been a phenomenal explosion of enthusiasm and excitement through increased interaction among individuals, whether they are OSA members or not. Most of them are young and recent arrivals in NA. A renewed spirit is generated. We are elated - with every hope for the future.

Sri Gopal Mohanty, National Coordinator for Drama Festival
Brajendra panda, National Coordinator and Chair
Sandip Dasverma, National Coordinator



Financial Statement: The 40th OSA Convention, Princeton, NJ, 2009

<u>INCOME</u>	
Advertisement	\$10,300
Corporate donation	\$3,130
Individual Donation	\$38,104
Sales	\$1,335
OSA advance	\$5,000
Registration Fee	\$34,160
Membership Fee	\$3,570
Convention Fee	\$4,740
Food Charges	\$38,466
Currency Adjustment	(\$139)
Miscellaneous Income	\$1,514
TOTAL INCOME	\$140,181
<u>EXPENSES</u>	
Admin	\$1,400
Advertisement	\$1,603
Awards & Trophy	\$3,737
Cultural	\$12,962
Entertainment	\$2,235
Food	\$46,523
Fund Raising	\$204
Hospitality	\$5,689
Hotel & Conferences	\$5,107
Insurance	\$508
Interior Decoration	\$1,359
Logistics	\$1,571
Mailings	\$293
Printing	\$124
Refund	\$1,081
Registration	\$676
Security	\$3,915
Seminar	\$171
Souvenir	\$10,558
Theater	\$23,612
Transportation	\$125
Video & Photography	\$2,871
Web Design	\$300
Youth	\$55
Paid Membership Fee to OSA	\$3,570
Return of Advance to OSA-\$54	\$4,946
Return of Convention Fee	\$4,740
Loss/Gain	\$245
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$140,181

OSA received \$13,379 and NY-NJ received \$122.50

Akhileswar Patel
Treasurer, OSA.

Financial Statement: The 41st OSA Convention, Redwood, CA 2010

<u>INCOME</u>	
Advertisement/Sponsorship	\$54,970
OSA advance	\$6,000
Registration Fee	\$30,100
Membership Fee	\$5,971
Convention Fee	\$4,395
Food Charges	\$40,300
Sofitel (cash back)	\$3,129
Miscellaneous Income	\$1,900
OSACAL Collection	\$4,081
TOTAL INCOME	\$150,826
<u>EXPENSES</u>	
Audio/Light	\$8250.00
Stage	\$2,583.00
Odissi Program	\$1,800.00
Cultural Prep	\$932.00
Tiny Tots	\$750.00
Subrina/Chompu/Ghoda/Sambalpuri	\$925.00
Ribbons.Plaques	\$1,500.00
Ira Mohanty	\$3,808.00
Gifts/Trophy	\$1,140.00
Misc.	\$200.00
Artists	\$1650.00
Opening Drama	\$446.96
Decoration	\$4,080.35
Food	\$43,808.00
Insurance	\$433.38
Logistics	\$2,286.24
Postage	\$385.00
Printing	\$1,838.00
Setup	\$98.00
Invest BBSR Mktg	\$3024.00
Invest BBSR Return after Ira	\$2644.00
Misc Activities (Cricket/Volley/Pool	
Carnival/Kayaking/Babby sitting etc.)	\$5,720.00
Souvenir/Directory	\$9,532.00
Shipping	\$915.00
Hospitality	\$180.00
Advertisement	\$371.00
Photo Shop+Volunteer Paarty	\$6017.00
Hotel Payment	\$1,480.00
Sofitel Adv.	\$500.00
Refund (Donation)	\$1,000.00
Excss Food Regd Refund	\$2,915.00
Theater	\$5,975.25
Transportation	\$1420.00
Video	\$1,500.00
Misc. (Banners, signs supplies)	\$4,345.11
Tent	\$3,200.00

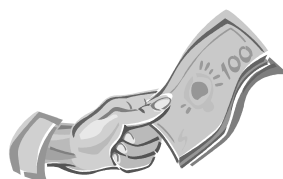
Table and Chairs Rental	\$1,000.00
Food Helper	\$875.00
Web Design	\$300.00
Paid to OSA	\$13,340.00

TOTAL EXPENSE	\$143,167.29
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Surplus \$150,826 - \$143,167 = \$7679.

OSACAL paid \$7679 to OSA with a directive to use 50% on Orissa Development.

Akhileswar Patel
Treasurer, OSA



Donors for OSA Development Fund

Name	Last Name	Amount
Dhirendra	Kar	\$500
Sujit	Sahoo	\$50
Manoranjan	Pattanaik	\$500
Akhileswar	Patel	\$100
Prakash and Kasturi	Patro	\$100
Debendra	Mallik	\$ 1500 (\$ 717.00 Expense not charged)
Lalu	Manasinha	\$250
Hara	Padhi	\$150
Bijoy C.	Das	\$500
Srigopal	Mohanty	\$200
Artatrana	Rout	\$50
Amitabh	Sahu	\$250
Uma	Mishra	\$1000
Sukant	Mohapatra	\$500
Arjun	Purohit	\$200
Dan	Mishra	\$1000
Anadi	Naik	\$100
Brundaban	Panigrahi	\$100
Lalatendu	Mohanty	\$200
Asutosh	Dutta	\$300
Bigyani	Das	\$250
Purna	Patnaik	\$500
Kirtan	Behera	\$300
Amiya	Nayak	\$100
Harlal	Choudhury	\$101
Nishikant	Sahoo	\$200
Total		\$9001.00

2011 MEGHNA MEMORIAL AWARD FOR CREATIVE WRITING

In memory of Meghna Mahapatra (1999-2005)

Winners in the Junior category (ages 7-12 years):

- First position: Ms. Aarushi Nayak for her story, Sunken Ship Adventure, for “excellence in using description and dialogue in developing imaginative and ingenious concepts”
- Second position: Ms. Disha Das for her poem, Mother, for “elegant style of structure and rhythm in writing while portraying heartfelt sentiments”
- Third position: Ms. Kareena Mohapatra for her essay, What New Jersey means to me, for “brilliant observations and a flair in writing a compelling, engaging and delightful piece”

Winners in the Senior category (ages 13-18 years):

- First position: Ms. Sweta P. Sahu for her story, What seems like the world, selected for “excellence in the narration of emotions & relationships through powerful imagery & attention to details”
- Second position: Ms. Ayesha Mishra for her essay, Leaving Home, for “superb comprehension and portrayal of culture and heritage through insightful writing”
- Third position: Ms. Neha Satapathy for her poem, Unrest, for “proficiency in using creative words and phrases to create vivid imagery and convey momentous ideas”

Souvenir Selection Committee:

- Ms. Anna Mishra, Seattle, WA
- Dr. Sura Rath, Dallas, TX
- Ms. Prachee Behera, Austin, TX

Meghna Memorial Trust:

- Chairman: Dr. Sitakantha Dash, Minneapolis, MN
- Coordinator: Mr. Santosh Kar, Dallas, TX

In memoriam; Meghna Mahapatra, a little darling

By Mr. Santosh Kar

It was a festive evening in Michigan, 5th November 2005. The usual, annual celebration of Kumara Purnima was in full swing. Everybody, especially the kids were very excited to be a part of the joyous celebrations. None of the Michigan Odias were expecting the most unexpected; that a little girl amongst us wouldn't see the next morning, leaving us all stunned. A little life would be snatched away by the cold hands of Death, reminding us how helpless we feel in the face of such incidents; merely a puppet in the hands of Providence. It would be heart rending.

Turn of events leading to the end of a life sometimes happens in inconceivable ways. That is the mystery, beyond the common people to unravel. A cherubic 6 year old, Meghna Mohapatra, was the only daughter of Lipi and Santosh Mohapatra. She came to Michigan in August 2001. She was a beautiful child and won the love of all. Her father

didn't want to come to the celebrations that day, on account of some important work. It was Meghna, who insisted that she must go and be with others to be part of this great celebration, so her father gave in. Meghna gave a wonderful performance on the stage that day. It was late in the night when they drove back. That dark night never dawned for her. We lost her for ever to a tragic road accident.

In the Bhagavad Gita it is said that one who is born has to die. When an innocent life is taken away so suddenly and prematurely, it becomes extremely difficult to accept that. OSA Michigan community decided to keep Meghna's memory alive at this great loss. In 2006 the Oriya community of Michigan established the Meghna Memorial Trust, to commemorate her short but wonderful life. At the tender young age, Meghna already showed tremendous interest in creative writing, in addition to her inherent talent in the performing arts. Accordingly, the trust has instituted an annual award for creative writing for kids under the auspices of OSA since the year 2007. Hopefully, this noble effort will kindle the memory of that smiling face for years to come. May the soul of Meghna rest in peace!

All youth written compositions in the youth section have been considered for the 2011 Meghna Memorial Award according to the age categories set by the Trust. The paintings and photo submissions have not been considered. A few articles towards the end of the section have also been excluded from consideration for the award on the basis of pre-publication and author's age criteria.

ARCHITECTING THE FUTURE

Whatever you do will be insignificant,
but it is very important that you do it.
~ Mahatma Gandhi



THE ORISSA FOUNDATION: (GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS)

1. Sahaya- Institution for mentally handicapped 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 (teaching 4th to 10th grades) and library renovation.
6. Orissa Dance Academy (Guru Gangadhar Pradhan) and Konarak Dance Festival- to promote and preserve Orissa dance styles.) (1985-2006)
7. Kala Vikash Kendra, Cuttack.
8. BKMM Eye Hospital, Dhenkanal- Prevention and cure of blindness: Dec. 2006 to present 11500 cataracts operated, giving back the vision.
9. Orissa Development Seminars in OSA conventions (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 and Angul districts).
12. 1st and 2nd Orissi Dance Festivals (Washington, DC)- major grants.
13. Aamara Biswas, Orissa. Mrs. Jayashree (Ranu) Mahanti,
www.aamarabiswas.org

Information:dmisra@bellsouth.net

SEEDS: New dimensions in sustainability & development

Abani. K. Patra, Satya P. Mohanty, Priyadarshan Patra, SriGopal Mohanty, Lalu Mansinha, Sandip Dasverma

It has been over 15 years since SEEDS (Sustainable Economic and Educational Development Society) was born, originating in dreams of a few graduate students and frustrations of several others at effecting meaningful economic and social change in Odisha. Much has happened since then, but a great deal still remains to be done. Reflecting on the changing times and needs, our focus and projects have changed. Although evolved over the years, our core values and philosophies have remained steady. While we are indeed focused on long term sustainable efforts episodically our members have used the SEEDS platform to respond to acute humanitarian crises like the floods in Odisha a few years ago and the devastating Japan's earthquake, Tsunami and nuclear issues.

Essence of SEEDS

"We seek to be conscientious and thoughtful agents of sustainable, non-violent, democratic and equitable development in Odisha and elsewhere. Towards this end we see the need to educate ourselves and other non-residents, as well as to raise monetary contributions and ideas from among us, to support development workers and ordinary people so that they can help themselves achieve their freedom from hunger, deprivation, ignorance, and exploitation - the many socio-economic & political ills that exist today. We do not have delusions about any quick, grand changes that can be engineered by a few, but we hope the movement grows among more people to steadily but surely proceed towards our goals."

Active current efforts include the Rural Math Talent Search, Mahila Shanti Sena, Cultural Infrastructure Rejuvenation, School Library projects, as well as support for Nano Finance and several related efforts. In the following sections we provide you brief write-ups on each of these efforts largely written by their primary organizers (each SEEDS project has one or two active members who oversee and promote it). We include detailed description of some below;

the full list of projects and details can be found on our website. We also have a successful track record of partnering with like-minded NGOs in achieving greater goals. For instance Nano



Finance is a very successful effort of "Aamara Biswas" and Ranu Mohanty to help very poor women stay out of the debt traps, and we have supported it in different stages.

Rejuvenation of Odisha's Cultural Foundations: Pala, Ravana Chhaya and the Lakhmi Purana (Satya Mohanty and Lalu Mansinha)

The overall goal of the project is to work with Odisha-based groups, artistes, and scholars to strengthen what may be called the "cultural infrastructure" of Odia society, deepening the links between the villages and the urban areas and creating channels of communication about progressive, democratic social values and ideals. Pala, for instance, is a valuable cultural tradition of Odisha, combining theatre, Odissi music, highly refined Odia and Sanskrit poetry, wit, humor, and social satire. Ravana Chhaya (shadow puppetry) may well have originated in our part of the world millennia ago, and then spread across South and Southeast Asia. Both of these art forms may be facing extinction under the relentless pressures of modern entertainment media. In 2008, SEEDS (Sustainable Education and Economic Development Society) initiated a project to help sustain and enrich both the art forms.

The project has several facets:

- (a) Popularisation;
- (b) Training;
- (c) Scholarship;
- (d) Publication;
- (e) Plan for self-sustainability after a few years.

There have been sponsored workshops, seminars and performances.

After completing two full years of the project, we are happy to report a measure of success and excitement beyond our most optimistic expectations. Full credit for the progress of the projects goes to two dedicated scholars in Odisha, Shri Prasana Dash (for Pala) and Dr. Gouranga Charana Dash (for Puppetry). Shri Prasana Dash is the founder of "Prafulla," an organization dedicated to village libraries and publication of quality books on Odisha. Dr. Gouranga Dash, a renowned national expert on puppetry traditions as well as an official advisor to the national Sangeet Natak Akademy, is the founder of "Kandhei Ghara," an ashram and museum on puppetry in Angul district. He is an Odia writer and literary critic and the recipient of 2011 Odisha Sahitya Akademi award.

In 2009 four shows/workshops/seminars were held in the larger rural centers of Keonjhar, Angul, Katak, Jagatsinghpur. We have been pleasantly surprised by the high level of interest in the rural population, in not just audience numbers, which at points reached 2000, but also in the number of pala troupes. The love for Pala and Ravanna Chhaya in the rural population in these days of Bollywood and TV is awe-inspiring. There are stories of people walking 20Kms to attend the Badi Pala competitions at our events. Even more amazing is our discovery of the number of troupes eager to participate and present their art. Traditionally Pala has been all males. There are now over 25 pala troupes that are either led by women or are all-female.

We have learned many things over the course of the project, and would like to highlight 2 points:

a) These traditional, popular cultural forms are an invaluable cultural resource, since they are an integral part of village life. These forms make village life attractive to village residents, as well as to many who work in the city. Thus financial

support for their growth and sustenance can help improve the basic infrastructure of rural Odisha society, creating jobs and wealth in the villages; ultimately making unnecessary migration to cities that often occur, because of a dearth of jobs.

b) Given their organic connection to village culture, traditional art forms are able to convey powerful messages about democratic social values more effectively than can television or the cinema. One can draw on the rich repertoire of traditional narratives in Odia literature that contain progressive social values. The recently-concluded Pala workshop in Bhubaneswar developed a Pala script based on the 500 year old Lakhmi Purana by Balaram Das, one that can be the basis for improvisation and adaptation by different Pala gayakas. A similar script, based on the Lakhmi Purana, was developed in October 2009 by Dr. Gouranga Dash for Ravana Chhaya. Plans are underway to create discussion questions on social issues (gender and caste egalitarianism) that can be used by the Pala and puppetry practitioners after every performance, especially in rural schools and colleges. (Note: Sub-projects on Daskathia and Odissi music are also in their early stages. The goal is to link the various performing arts and other cultural traditions together to provide support for comprehensive social development of Odisha's towns and villages.)

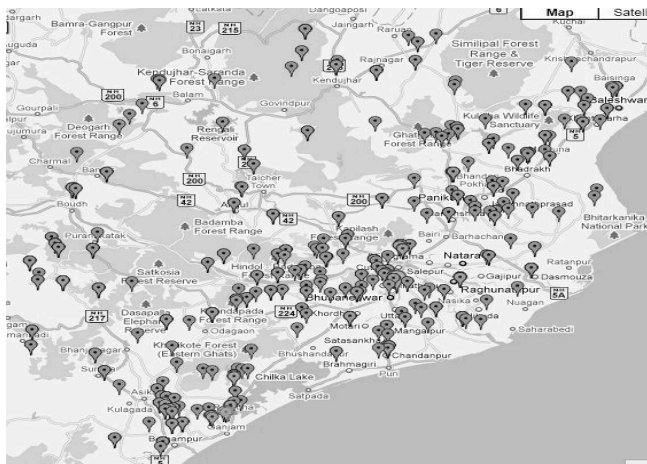
These Odia cultural forms are not museum-pieces, relics of the past, but rather central features of a dynamic rural social life. With intellectual partnership and some financial support, the practitioners of these forms in Odisha will be able to provide a model for how the culture people, especially in the villages, can contribute to the nation and the world.

Donors from the Odia community in North America have made this project possible, and matching funds continue to be generated locally by the village audiences and their organizations. If you are interested in contributing or in finding out more about this project, please email one of the project's organizers:

Lalu Mansinha: mansinha@uwo.ca,
 Satya Mohanty: mohanty@cornell.edu,
 SriGopal Mohanty: mohanty@univmail.cis.mcmaster.ca

Rural Math Talent Search (Sandip Dasverma and Priyadarsan Patra)

Rural Math Talent Search (RMTS) is meant to identify and support promising youngsters in rural areas of Odisha to grow critical thinking. RMTS was started in 2003 with 30 scholarships in name of the first author's deceased father Late Kamala Pada Das. Our good friend Prof. Swadhinananda Pattanayak of IMA (Institute of Mathematics & Applications) has administered RMTS since its inception. In 2010 we completed its 8th year of its operation. Full credit goes to IMA and its staff. Since 2006 we have been adding about 200 new scholars each year to the program. The total number of students selected and trained has reached nearly 1300; www.seedsnet.org/DOLA/rmts/public.



This year the first phase of the RMTS exam is scheduled for October, 2011. Notification has already gone out for the 9th edition of this talent search test. Since 2007 SEEDS has been involved in shaping the project (and has developed and maintained the program's database and visualization system). The idea behind the system is to energize and retool the bases, know our progress and gaps in the geographical diversification efforts, and effectively connect the RMTS alumni and donors together. SEEDS has supported RMTS via NRO sponsored scholarships and other material support. Since 2007 we are conducting two examinations: one preliminary and one final. Last year the first batch graduated past 10+2 stage and many are now in various well-known institutes of India. The total student participation peaked at upwards of 20 thousands/year and is currently at 10 thousands.

The most heartening stories are about the RMTS scholars themselves and how several alumni of the program are coming back to mentor and teach new scholars. In 2007 one RMTS scholar, Himalay Senapati, represented India at Astronomy Olympiad in Semiz, Ukraine and won the Silver Medal. Another example is of boy washing teacups in 2003, who was supported by the program and our partners (e.g., Sri Surajit Amrit and Sri Bidyut Das) and is now studying at the Ravenshaw University! Since 2010, Abhilash Mishra, alumni of a RMTS sister program (a Rhodes Scholar), is supplementing support with corporate funds. The map shown is a geographical representation of the locations throughout Odisha where students have been supported with scholarships and trained since 2003. Each balloon represents a student's location. Nearly half of them are girls.

The local scholarship money administration is done by the SEEDS partner, Vikas Charitable Trust under leadership of Sri S.C. Choudhury. Detailed information about the program, the exams, the training camps, students and the historical results may be found at our website rmts.seedsnet.org. This Web presence for RMTS was originally designed and donated by Sri Prasanta Sahoo of NJ and it has been hosted and further developed by SEEDS since 2008.

Looking forward:

The success of the program has recently drawn significant attention from the Govt. of Odisha. The Govt. plans to start a similar program in 100 towns of Odisha and donate 1000 scholarships. This in addition to the 3140 scholarships in 314 blocks (10 per block). We hope the Govt. preserves the original societal and sustainability goals. If the proposed expansion succeeds and is implemented well, our dream will be fructified and a job will be done well. The question now is: Will it?

Mahila Shanti Sena (MSS) (Sri Gopal Mohanty)

Envisioned by Acharya Ramamurty in 2002, the objective of MSS is to empower women in community building, through peaceful approach and to remove gender discrimination. The procedure for achieving that is through training, to improve awareness, build self-confidence,

learn to work together and participate in decision making process and through maintaining ongoing communication. In Odisha, MSS training started in Mayurbhanj District in 2005 and soon spread to Balasore, Jagatsinghpur and Sambalpur and later to Angul and Nuapada. The positive response of women to MSS is tremendous, especially in boosting their self-esteem and providing leadership roles in conflict resolutions and development work. The future plan consists of training persons who will monitor and supervise the local MSS activities, arranging in-depth workshops and expanding MSS to other districts. (For more details, see the article "International women's Day and Mahila Shanti Sena" by Sri Gopal Mohanty in this Souvenir.)

LED Solar Lamp (Sri Gopal Mohanty)

Odisha is a state where electrification of every village is still a distant dream and the use of renewable energy sources like solar energy for lighting in place of kerosene lamps has not reached yet due to economic reasons and the unavailability of suitable products. With a view to create awareness among people on solar energy and promote use of solar lamps, SEEDS recently launched an experimental project to supply 40 LED solar lamps as a micro-finance scheme in 3 villages, one each in Mayurbhanj, Gajapati and Nuapada districts. Obtained from Greenlight Planet Inc., the lamp is an adjustable device charged by a corded solar panel that sits on the user's roof. It provides hours of bright light through light emitting diodes (LEDs) at a much

lower cost than that of an equivalent kerosene lamp. Each lamp costs approximately Rs.900 to the customer. The implementation is carried out by Unnayan in Mayurbhanj, by AID in Gajapati and by SRUSTI in Nuapada. The lamps have been well received by the users. They find the lamps to be convenient, user friendly and good sources of light for households, without recurring expenses. Nearby villagers are taking an interest in the lamps. The recovered money is revolved to buy new lamps for distribution.

Concluding Remarks

The above project descriptions give a brief sense of where SEEDS is at now. We only mentioned some initiatives such as Nano Finance by Aamara Biswas (<http://www.aamarabiswas.org/>) which SEEDS has supported at different stages. Aamara Biswas has completed 3 years. By giving interest free loans through the Nano Finance scheme, it has helped more than 4000 women in different areas of the state of Odisha. Some women have taken Rs.500 to Rs.1000 (less than \$12) more than once to improve their lives and livelihoods. Nano Finance helps women to not be the victims of money lenders and become poorer. Further, it gives them a sense of security and comfort in times of emergency. Aamara Biswas gives women the opportunity earn more money and to provide a better life for their families. The impact of such small help (sometimes less than \$12) has given women hope and confidence for the future.

This is a time of great change in India and even more so in Odisha. Many needs still remain: the need for including the masses in the massive development underway and keeping our spirits and culture and our souls alive and fresh as we engage in economic development and improved education. These are among the top challenges that we at SEEDS will continue to fight for.

Microfinance: Glimpses into how uncommon common sense helps fight poverty on the ground

Binod Nayak

“Sound common sense is not to be despised¹.”

Professor Ole Danbolt Mjøs

Chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee that awarded 2006 Nobel Peace Prize to Professor Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank

“Common sense is not so common.”

Voltaire

In our modern world, we have made enormous progress in scaling the interstellar space, fathoming the depths of the ocean, understanding the workings of the atom and the human gene, building complex information machines and communication gears to transform the world to a global village. But when it comes to alleviating the curse of poverty on the ground, our successes have been less than spectacular. The enormity of the problem we are up against is overwhelming. Suffice it to say that, out of a total world population of almost 6.9 billion², it is estimated that number of poor people in different countries in the world add up to about 3 billion. The majority of these people live on about \$2 or less per day. However, about 1 billion of the 3 billion are destitute (poorest of the poor), who live on about \$1 or less per day. While it is true that much progress has been made in understanding the complex nature of poverty, its alleviation on a mass scale still eludes us.

Why Poverty Persists?

Poverty manifests itself in the form of hunger, malnutrition, lack of shelter, disease and suffering. Looking at the suffering most of us go through an empathetic response. Hence charity, grants and subsidies for the poor are natural responses with such a mindset. More often than not these very empathetic responses become surrogates for our future responses to fight poverty. While charity, grants and subsidies have their place in helping the poor, they are not a panacea in our fight against poverty. In fact if not used with discretion these tools could give rise to a whole host of problems that can be difficult to deal with later. Therefore, in order to wage a successful war against poverty, one needs to be

ingenious and sophisticated in marshalling financial, technological and management resources that only befits the worst enemy of the humanity.

Anyone who has ever tried to understand the nature of poverty would agree that the causes of poverty appear as a web of tangled knots with many feedback loops. Not only poverty can be its own cause, the feedback loops of many of the fundamental causes of poverty can create vicious whirlpools that can throw the poor into black holes of misery, from which it is difficult to escape. Many of the causes are so pervasive and entrenched that it is difficult to find ways to attack them at their roots. What all this boils down to is: once present in the populace, poverty perpetuates itself by further pauperizing the masses and its elimination becomes a complex and difficult task.

To put it differently, the combinatorial complexity of the underlying causes of poverty hinders our efforts to understand the pathways poverty takes to suffocate the poor. That, in turn hinders our vision to find workable solutions to eradicate poverty. For example, finding practical solutions to fight poverty that are applicable across different societies, cultures, geographical regions and countries in different stages of development is not easy. When exceptions become more important than the rules, solutions to fight poverty one builds with care fall apart. What all this implies is that building cogent causal models of poverty is an immensely difficult task. It is perhaps less appreciated than anybody would care to acknowledge.

Microfinance (Microcredit): A new Paradigm in our Fight against Poverty:

If commonsensical ideas could change the world then the advent of microcredit along with micro savings (voluntary savings as opposed to compulsory savings), micro insurance, micro lease and poor-friendly payment systems for remittances (money transfer) have changed forever how we attack poverty at the grassroots level. It was the “invention” of microcredit in the mid-1970s that gave impetus to the concept “micro” in delivering financial services to the poor. The design of microcredit (very briefly discussed later) was based on experimentations that proved that extension of tiny sums of money as credit with poor-friendly terms could immensely help the poor by bridging critical funding gaps in their micro business and household cash flows. Since then we realized how financial instruments offered by microfinance in the sphere of credit, savings, insurance, lease, finance and money transfers are profoundly changing how the poor manage their finances, smooth consumption, mitigate risk exposure and in the process have the freedom to leverage their “capabilities³” to pursue livelihoods of choice.

By design, most Microfinance Institutions⁴ (MFIs) are dedicated to build social capital in the poor communities they serve, which in turn is leveraged as collateral substitutes under the rubric of group lending to extend microcredit to the poor. While some of the MFIs are moving away from group lending, it still remains one of the most important innovations that have been crucial in the success microfinance on the ground. Besides providing access to micro-financial instruments and building social capital, many MFIs also deliver a variety of complementary (non-financial) products such as literacy training (including financial literacy), nutrition, hygiene, sanitation, healthcare, education, improved shelter, livelihood and marketing training to the poor. Last but not the least, the MFIs are driven by Double Bottom Line (DBL) goals which include (a) achieving financial sustainability (profitability) and (b) creating social value based on well-defined social mission. In spite of the professed commonsensical nature of microfinance, the world of microfinance is complex. The scope of this short article is mostly confined to microcredit (the most important instrument in

the microfinance product space) and excludes a discussion of other financial and non-financial products (except for making passing remarks as to their importance) under the microfinance umbrella. The article also sacrifices many of the details as well as important ideas regarding microfinance to provide only a birds-eye-view of the subject.

Access to formal credit by the poor and non-poor alike is fundamental. As we witnessed during the 2007-2008 financial melt-down, when access to credit was throttled, even many of the major industrialized countries around the globe could not avoid severe recessions. No wonder that lack of access to formal credit has been a major hindrance for the poor to improve their economic wellbeing. However, over the years it has been realized that access to microcredit alone is not a sufficient condition to win the war on poverty. Just to elaborate, we all know, savings and insurance work as backstops to mitigate financial ramifications of risky and uncertain events such as sickness in the family, weather related risks (i.e. droughts and cyclones) and diseases that plague farm animals. Therefore, prudence dictates that the poor should learn to save before even they borrow. Therefore, lack of access to savings products creates a degree asymmetry (imbalance) in their access to financial services and also the MFIs, that are in the business of financial intermediation. Similarly, in the absence of access to insurance markets, the poor substitute credit, personal savings, social capital, help from charitable entities and governmental assistance to manage their exposures to risky and uncertain events. However, because insurance products are designed to mitigate specific risks, they are much more versatile and cost effective in general. Therefore it is critical that the poor have access to micro insurance. Similarly, non-financial products such as sanitation, hygiene, nutrition and healthcare play important roles in engendering economic wellbeing of the poor. Just to illustrate, because the poor mostly monetize physical labor in whatever livelihoods they pursue, less number of sick days helps them to put more money in their pockets. This is particularly true because, the poor normally do not have sick leaves and insurance as backstop mechanisms. Besides, a poor person who is sick not only cannot earn, has to spend money on healthcare that they can ill

afford. When the breadwinner in a poor family falls sick, it disrupts a variety of other activities, including the education of their children and the upkeep of the elderly.

Now let us begin the discussion on microcredit by briefly mentioning about some of the important features of microcredit that sets it apart from garden variety loans provided by the commercial banks. First of all, these loans are rather small, and can range anywhere from \$25 to \$500. Normally they cluster around \$100 to \$200 range. The final maturities of these loans are short and usually range anywhere from 3 months to 3 years. The repayments on these loans (in each period) are small and more frequent in order to accommodate the cash flow patterns of the poor. They are mostly on a weekly or bi-weekly basis although there are microloans that have monthly repayment profiles. As in the case of credit card loans, most of these loans have no grace period and start repaying just after the disbursement of a loan. The poor normally access microcredit without posting any traditional collateral and most MFIs around the world rely on group lending (“joint-liability contracts”) as collateral substitutes, which leverage social capital to keep the repayment rates high and transaction costs and credit risk exposures low. Besides group lending, the MFIs utilize other outside-the-box ideas such as progressive lending and compulsory savings (used as partial cash collateral) to minimize credit risk exposure. Volumes have been written about the innovative features used in micro lending, but the scope of this article does not allow for such discussions.

The MFIs in general charge market based interest rates. The rates charged by most MFIs range from about 20% to 45% per annum. However, there are some MFIs that could charge much higher rates that can even reach around 100% per annum. When in a world, the non-poor go about splitting one hundredth of a percent to get low rates on their loans from commercial banks the reader would rightfully wonder how it is that the MFIs lend to the poor at such high rates. They would also wonder how it is that even with such high interest rates the demand for such lending is exploding. As the reader could surmise, the answer to this question largely lies in the opportunity cost of capital for

the poor. To elaborate, in the world the poor live, access to capital is constrained and hence expensive for a variety of reasons. For example, in order to borrow from moneylenders a poor borrower usually pays to the tune of 10% to 20% of interest per month. At 10% per month, these rates compound to about 214% per annum. If these are not high enough, there are moneylenders who charge 10% to 20% per day. The “5-6” rates in Latin America are examples of daily rates where for every \$5 of borrowing the borrower has to return \$6 at the end of the day, which translates to 20% per day. When annualized, these rates reach stratospheric levels. In reality though, on a risk adjusted basis the moneylenders do not always make such high returns. However, it goes without saying that they make exorbitant profits from their captive borrowers (clients) through opportunistic lending.

In comparison to the moneylenders the MFIs lend to the poor at lower rates and their terms of lending are poor-friendly. However, their lending rates are much higher than the rates offered to the non-poor by the commercial banks. This is partly because lending to the poor lack economies of scale. For example to lend \$1 million, a commercial bank would perhaps make 10 loans of around \$100,000 each. In comparison though, an MFI making \$100 loans would have to make 10,000 loans to reach \$1 million of disbursement. It goes without saying, in comparison, lending to 10,000 poor clients (that too in remote areas who also lack credit history) is much more labor intensive and complex than lending to 10 relatively more sophisticated clients with credit history. And this at least partially explains why MFI lending rates are high.

Over the years it has been well recognized that the microfinance industry has been instrumental in putting down the plumbing for financial intermediation in the poor communities around the world. Besides, the synergy engendered by the microfinance platform has been widely leveraged by the major stakeholders, i.e. the social entrepreneurs, the governments, the donors, charitable foundations and the business to help the poor in improving their economic wellbeing. The magnitude of the success of microfinance on the ground can be gleaned from the fact that based on estimates provided by the “State of the Microcredit Summit Campaign Report 2011,” at

the end of 2009 about 190 million poor households had already accessed microcredit of which 140 million were poor women⁵. Such path breaking achievements on the ground by microfinance has been amply recognized, including, the declaration of 2005 as the International Year of Microcredit by the UN and the award of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize to Professor Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank "... for their efforts to create economic and social development from below⁶."

Ongoing beyond the Commonsensical nature of Microfinance:

In spite of the professed commonsensical nature of microfinance if one looks deep down, one wonders how it is that such tiny sums of money, when lent for short periods of time could achieve so much for the poor. Many even question if microfinance is no more than a stop-gap measure, a "short-term palliative" to the complex problems of poverty⁷. Many have wondered how millions of the poor would be able to become successful entrepreneurs just by accessing microloans when their microenterprises in general lack economies of scale. What is more, lack of scientifically proven impact studies as regards to many of the important assertions made by the supporters of microcredit, has emboldened its critics.

At the same it is important to highlight why delivering microfinance on the ground is a complex task. Some of the major issues include lack of good infrastructure and supporting public and private institutions without which delivery of financial services become difficult. The situation is also complicated by the fact that a high percentage of the poor is not educated; sometimes not even literate. When we consider such things nepotism, corruption, lack of an enabling regulatory environment to support microfinance and also lack of respect for the rule of law, it is no wonder that it is very difficult for the MFIs to operate at the grassroots level. For example, supportive regulatory environment could help MFIs to offer voluntary savings for the poor and public-at-large which in turn would enable the poor to save and help the MFIs to utilize deposits as an inexpensive source of funding to keep microloan interest rates lower. What is more, the Double Bottom Line (DBL) objectives of financial sustainability and social mission create complex

management issues that are unique to the MFIs. This is because while the measurement of financial return and financial bottom line is well understood, measurement of social return and social bottom line is less intuitive and more complex. This is because there is a lack of well-defined and accepted metric to measure what the social value is and hence social return. As a result setting DBL objectives and managing MFIs to attain these objectives in a balanced manner may sound easier than what they are in reality. It is also true that most of the controversies surrounding the delivery of microfinance today emanate from performing the balancing act to achieve DBL objectives in a seamless way.

During the last 15 years, as demand for microcredit skyrocketed, large numbers of MFIs went through transformation to adequately fund themselves from commercial sources. However, pressures of commercialization, rapid growth and competition in the industry have led to some of the MFIs drifting away from the core mission of reaching out to the poorest (mission drift), charging high interest rates, over-lending (resulting in high levels of indebtedness among the poor clients) and use of coercive techniques to make delinquent borrowers comply with debt service payments. There have been also allegations, that such coercive techniques have driven poor borrowers to suicide. As a result, when some of the commercialized MFIs listed on stock exchanges (through Initial Public Offerings) there was widespread criticism that these institutions were putting shareholder interests ahead of those of their poor clients. Needless to say, some of the causes of the 2010 crisis in the microfinance industry in the state of Andhra Pradesh (considered the microfinance capital of India) can be traced to the commercialization of the industry to grow at a rapid rate.

Conclusion:

Poverty is multidimensional and only multidimensional solutions could attack poverty at its roots. Democratization of access to credit, savings, insurance and other financial services for the poor goes to the heart of microfinance, which helps the poor in attacking poverty on various fronts. Over 30 years ago, NGOs led by many of the visionaries of microfinance realized the wisdom of delivering microcredit to the poor. From its inception microcredit has been relying

on funding from the governments, donors and charitable foundations to deliver credit to the poor. Today, commercialization of large numbers of MFIs has proved the point that it is possible to deliver financial services to the poor without relying on subsidy and grants. However, commercialization has brought with it a whole host of issues (that we alluded to in the previous section), which the industry has to confront in the

near term, in order to attain its twin goals of sustainability and social mission. Given the resilience of the microfinance industry it is hoped that over the next several years, the microfinance institutions, their delivery models and the financial tools that they offer to the poor would go through transformation, in which major stakeholders would cooperate to make financial inclusion a reality on the ground

1 Quote from the speech given by Professor Ole Danbolt Mjos, Chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, on the occasion of the presentation of 2006 Nobel Peace Prize to Professor Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank in Oslo, December 10, 2006.

2 Estimate of world population as of September 2010, down-loaded from the website, www.census.gov/ipc/www/popclockworld.html.

3 In his book "Development as Freedom," published by Oxford University Press (1999), Professor Amartya Sen defines poverty as, "... the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than merely as lowness of incomes"

4 We use MFIs here in a generic sense, i.e. any institution that delivers microfinance to the poor.

5 Reed, Larry R., "State of the Microcredit Summit Campaign Report 2009," Published by Microcredit Summit Campaign, Washington DC, 2011.

6 Extract from the Nobel Peace Prize Award announcement, October 13, 2006, as quoted in the speech by Professor Ole Danbolt Mjos, Chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo on December 10, 2006.

7 Dichter, Thomas, "What's Wrong with Microfinance?" edited by Thomas Dichter and Malcolm Harper, Practical Action Publishing, 2007.

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Building Organizational Capacity with an AmeriCorps VISTA Program

Mamata Misra

It was year 2000, the beginning of my second term as the President of SAHELI. SAHELI had been in existence for about 8 years as a small group of dedicated volunteers helping Asian victims and survivors of domestic violence to live a life free of abuse. In the year 1999, SAHELI's help line had registered 257 calls and 38 people had been helped in various ways, long term support and counseling, legal advocacy, language interpretation, temporary shelter, skill building, and so on. Our annual cash revenue was only \$10,562, hardly enough to plan anything big. Life was lonely at SAHELI; at times, only three volunteer advocates were available to help clients. We were lucky if seven volunteers could make it to a monthly meeting.

The same few volunteers were challenged and stretched with a multitude of tasks. Naturally, helping clients took precedence over everything else and required a lot of patience, energy, and continuing education to be able to help a domestic violence survivor. Each case may keep an advocate busy for 100 to 200 hours depending on how complicated the case was. We did outreach as time permitted. Fundraising seemed to be what we did last although our clients often had no money for their legal expenses or education and needed interest free loans from us. Most of us didn't like asking for money. Hiring someone was only a dream. Was there any way to get out of the vicious circle? Was there any way to cross the "But who will do it?" and "We don't have the money" barriers?

While volunteering at SafePlace, the mainstream shelter in Austin, I had worked with several young and energetic people who were called VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America). They were fulltime volunteers, committed to a year of community service after college. They did not get a salary but a small living allowance and food stamps to get by. Perhaps getting a VISTA was the answer to SAHELI's problem. While we focused on services, a VISTA could focus on everything else the organization needed. Eventually, the VISTA could generate funds for SAHELI to be able to hire its first paid staff. But we were so small and an all-volunteer organization! Could we really have our own VISTA program? Who would direct and supervise it when we have no staff? Or should we jointly work with our big sister SafePlace to get a VISTA through their program? After meeting with SafePlace Programs Director who welcomed the idea of including SAHELI in their VISTA program, I sent a brief project description with goals and objectives and waited anxiously.

A few months later, I found out that the Corporation for National and Community Services (CNCS) who administers the AmeriCorps*VISTA program had informed SafePlace that if SAHELI wanted a VISTA program, it is best for SAHELI to apply independently. Was this a disappointment or an opportunity? I called the VISTA program director at CNCS to explore. The VISTA director at CNCS assured me that if our application and project met the requirements, if we followed their guidelines and procedures, and were able to supervise and report progress, it didn't really matter whether we were big or small, all-volunteer or staffed. VISTA supervisors had to attend a three-day training offered by CNCS before application approval. Inspired by the possibility, I started the application process and enrolled myself in the VISTA Supervisor training that summer. I believe I was the only volunteer supervisor attending the training. Since I was already spending a significant time doing client advocacy, community education, writing small grant proposals for special projects, organizing events, editing the newsletter, and supporting volunteers, I felt that my time could be better utilized if I focused it on directing a VISTA to get things done rather than doing it myself.

It took the rest of the year to complete all the steps for the multi-step application process. In spring 2001, our application got approved by CNCS. Recruitment took a couple more months and then we waited for our first VISTA to be trained and accepted by CNCS. In July 2001, about 18 months after the VISTA idea entered my head, SAHELI's first year VISTA Soumya Bhat started her one-year term, to be followed by Jennifer Na starting in July 2002, Sona Shah and Linda Rondinelli in July 2003, and Tania Shahani in August 2004. Now we approach July 2005, when the four-year VISTA project comes to an end after serving its purpose.

There are constraints associated with a VISTA project. Since each VISTA member only works for a year, it is important for each VISTA to organize and document her work clearly so that the next VISTA can easily carry on the project. Also, VISTA members are not substitutes for staff; they cannot provide direct services and must not be assigned routine tasks. A VISTA project's purpose is to build the capacity of the organization.

The SAHELI VISTA project had three capacity building goals:

1. To make Asian communities in the Austin metropolitan area more aware of domestic violence and its prevention by supporting and expanding Saheli's outreach programs.
2. To support, expand, strengthen, and diversify Saheli's volunteer base.
3. To assist with resource development and fund-raising.

Through outreach efforts of the VISTAs, SAHELI is now better known in the Austin Metropolitan area. This increased awareness is drawing more people to SAHELI to receive as well as give help. Before the VISTA project started, about seven people attended volunteer meetings on the average. Now at our volunteer meetings, most chairs in the room are occupied and once a neighbor reported our volunteers occupying all the parking spaces leaving none for his clients. The annual Walk for Safe Families event has seen a six-fold growth in participation.

Through the grant research and writing done by the VISTAs, SAHELI has received funding from the Health and Human Services Commission.

This has enabled us to staff our programs and provide face-to-face sessions with clients, two ongoing support groups, programs for children and parents, and a large number of trainings, roundtables, workshops, and information booths. Some of the past VISTAs who stayed in Austin after their term to study or work had valued their SAHELI experience so much that they continued to contribute as Board members or volunteer advocates.

As we get ready to end the VISTA project and transfer the work done by the VISTAs to staff and Board members, I see that SAHELI is stronger than ever before. Our success and accomplishments are to be celebrated. But we have also learned that SAHELI must strive to sustain what it has. Who will do it and how to get the money will be on-going challenges for SAHELI and any such organization.

In September 2005, after this article was written, finally, SAHELI had the money and the Board training required to be able to hire its first executive director. The organization (www.saheli-austin.org) has grown in leaps and bounds since then and is now strong, with over 10 staff members and many interns and volunteers serving Asian families in need. I 'retired' from SAHELI in 2005 but still volunteer as a community ambassador to connect it with our community, to be a reminder of our humble grass root beginning

International Women's Day and Mahila Shanti Sena

Sri Gopal Mohanty

The world celebrated the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day this year on March 8th. The first national Women's Day was observed on 28 February 1909 in the United States following a declaration by the Socialist Party of America. Inspired, in part by American socialists, Luise Zietz and Clara Zetkin from Germany proposed the establishment of an annual International Women's Day at the meeting of The Socialist International held at Copenhagen in 1910. The proposal was greeted with unanimous approval by the conference of over 100 women from 17 countries. The idea being it would be a strategy to press for their demands against women's oppression and promote equal rights, including suffrage. The following year on March 19, the first International Women's Day (IWD) was celebrated in Europe. That day more than a million women and men attended rallies campaigning for women's rights to work, vote, and be trained to hold public office and to end discrimination. Since 1913 the chosen date for IWD has been March 8th.

The new millennium has witnessed a significant change and a shift in attitude in both women's and the society's thoughts about women's

equality and emancipation. Today IWD is losing its political flavor and is becoming simply an occasion for men to express love and respect to women, somewhat between Mother's Day and Valentine's Day. However the original political and human rights theme still runs strong and political and social awareness of the struggles of women worldwide are brought out and examined in a hopeful manner. The IWD events honor and celebrate the achievements of women all around the world.

On this occasion, my Indian cultural background and my association with Mahila Shanti Sena (MSS) brought to mind to invoke some verses from a prayer to the Divine Mother, Durga:

Yaa devi sarvabhuteshu matru - rupena samsthita, namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, namo namah.

To that goddess who abides in all beings as mother; Salutations to Thee.

Yaa devi sarvabhuteshu shanti - rupena samsthita, namastasyai

To that goddess who abides in all beings as peace: Salutations to Thee.

Yaa devi sarvabhuteshu shakti - rupena samsthita, namastasyai

To that goddess who abides in all beings as power: Salutations to Thee.

My reason to select these verses is spontaneous as they represent Mahila Shanti Sena or Women's Peace Brigade, by interpreting mother to represent womanhood or simply "women" and shakti meaning power or force to represent Sena or Brigade when power emphatically refers to moral power derived by joining hands together allegorically to form a brigade.

MSS: A vision

"...It (each village community) should be able to plan its total life in terms of economy, education, health and other things pertaining to local life. The village community needs an army of peace-workers, who will not fight among themselves but are willing to solve problems and resolve conflicts and disputes peacefully. In this task of neighborhood-building, women are likely to be better than men." That is the rationale of Mahila Shanti Sena. "Can we not use her (woman's) creative talents to make society more human and enlightened?"

Acharya Ramamurti

Acharyaji's concept which is in principle Gandhian and thoroughly rooted in Indian culture puts women in the leading role. It finds a supportive tone in a recent study:

(Maganto, Carmen, Garaigordobil, Maite. "Evaluación del perdón: Diferencias generacionales y diferencias de sexo". *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología* 42 (3): 391-403, Sept 2010. ISSN 0120-0534) that infers women are more ready to forgive than men. "A decisive factor in the capacity to forgive is empathy and women have a greater empathetic capacity than males", Carmen Maganto, co-author of the study and a tenured professor at the Psychology Faculty of the University of the Basque Country, tells SINC (Servicio de Información y Noticias Científicas - The Scientific Information and News Service).

Yet at the same time Acharyaji realized that the women have suffered more than men the consequences of poverty, violence and social neglect; even though for millenniums, women as daughters, wives, mothers and grandmothers have built and taken care of their families. It is time to redress this shameful aspect of humanity. Thus under his guidance, the following state-

ment: "We are women, this is not a fault. We are proud to be women. As a daughter, sister, wife and mother our position in society is that of equality. We should be so treated. We are determined to be treated as equals. When the country is free and independent, there is no reason why anyone should be treated as a second-class citizen." became part of the historic declaration by women at Vaishali Sabha in February 2002.

It is remarkably similar to the traditional theme of IWD, but the concept of MSS is not totally entrenched in the principle of fighting to gain one's right, intrinsically fighting against men. Rather it calls for emanating the inner feminine force so as to act in a constructive but not combative manner for the benefit of building a peaceful society and therefore seeks the cooperation of all including men.

MSS Goal: To remove gender discrimination and to empower women in community building through peaceful approach

The goal of MSS is to be achieved through training and ongoing communication. The MSS training is to prepare women to be the agents of change in community building and in peaceful conflict resolution. The training process helps to improve self-esteem and confidence in women. It helps recognize individuality and develop mutual respect, bring inner transformation. Also women learn to work together, participate in decision making in a participatory democracy, learn the discipline, rules & regulations and understand leadership roles.

The training schedule gradually moves from warm-up sessions to sessions on initiating participation, intensive participation, joining MSS and to planning future action.

The training methodology has 3 features: participatory, sharing of experience, group discussion and presentation, contextual examples, situational analysis, interpretation of historical and mythological stories and events, simulation games, lecture, questions and answers.

Odisha Experience

First Phase

The training program was initiated in select villages of Mayurbhanj District in 2005 and since

then has spread to some villages of Balasore, Jagatsinghpur, Sambalpur, Angul, Nuapada Districts and will soon start in Baudh and Sonpur Districts. The impact has been tremendous, especially among women trained during 2005-06, in boosting their self-esteem and providing a leadership role, their success in working together, in handling many conflicts in the community and in completing some development projects. Some of these women are active in participating in palli sabha (village panchayat meetings) and bringing out women issues for discussion, fighting against social injustice such as caste divide and anti social activities mostly caused by unrestrained alcohol use which is considered as number one social menace and have worked for community upliftment such as to get a dirt road paved which connects several villages and was used to be under water during rainy season.

The Sambalpur training camp in 2009 provided some lessons on organizing future camps. Since the women in the program were from tribal villages, it was soon realized that the training process should be sensitive to tribal cultures and languages. Therefore selected local women with broader cultural and language exposure should be trained as trainers in the region.

Second Phase

After the initial training, the necessity of MSS groups to expand and sustain is vital for their survival. For this purpose they should meet regularly on a monthly and quarterly basis and form new groups. In addition, the earlier formed groups should be strengthened by providing further training on topics pertaining to MSS goals and objectives.

1. For the first one and in view of preceding observation on Sambalpur camp, supervisors and trainers are needed for different localized areas. Recently a training of trainers (TOT) camp was conducted at Unnayan's office from February 12 to 14. It is a process that looks after the details in preparing someone for the role.

TOT Description

1. Go over the entire schedule of a training camp
2. Practical training of the trainees and individual practice
3. Narration of past experiences of MSS old members

4. MSS concepts, need, history and operations
5. Expected work for a year

The training is more detailed than just going over the schedules of a training camp, such as how to start a meeting introducing yourself to the audience, make eye contact with the audience, and smile as you speak and to be sensitive and gentle with negative remarks. An important feature is to have a follow-up discussion/evaluation including, comments, criticism and suggestions for improvement, right after the demonstration by a trainee.

Lalu Mansinha, Professor Emeritus at University of Western Ontario, Canada attended one session and commented: "I am very impressed by the training of trainers. ...I wish every IAS/OAS officer should take this type of training, in basic people skills"

II. Besides supervision, it is intended to strengthen Mayurbhanj-Balasore region based on its existing structure and activities with the introduction of workshops on Gandhian principles, rights and responsibilities, health and hygiene, cornerstones/ethical principles/ values, livelihoods, panchayatiraj systems, awareness and application of principles of democracy, and conflict resolution

A five-year plan for both items is tentatively prepared.

Future

Acharya Ramamurti thought of MSS to as a movement. We are working towards that goal in Odisha. For this purpose, a 3 day event of an International conference on culture of peace and progress through MSS at Bhubaneswar, a workshop to share experiences of different MSS groups at Angul and a regional MSS conference at Sambalpur are actively being planned for February 2012. The objective of the events is to bring MSS to the public attention, improve their own self image and to encourage women elsewhere to join.

Debadas Mohapatra, English Lecturer at Kantamal and a Youth Red Cross Counsellor happened to attend a MSS training Camp and the recent TOT. He is extremely enthusiastic to work to spread it to many districts such as Khurda,

Nayagarh, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput and Malkangiri.

Past success of MSS in Odisha is due to its association with SHGs (Self Help Groups). MSS will explore joining hands with different women organizations and groups. In the recent training at Khariar, Nuapada in February, most of the new MSS members were from ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists).



MSS Map of Odisha

Possible future activities will be in Districts: Khurda, Nayagarh, Kandhamal, Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri. Proposed 3-day event in 1012 will be at Bhubaneswar-Angul-Sambalpur.

Supporting institutions/ organizations and individuals

Centre for Peace Studies, McMaster University, Canada SEEDS (Sustainable Economic and Educational Development Society), USA AID (Association for India's Development), USA – initially for two years Administration and Execution Unnayan, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India Local arrangements BISWA (Bharat Integrated Social Welfare Agency), Sambalpur, Odisha, India SRUSTI (Society for Rural Upliftment & Socio Technical Initiative), Khariar, Odisha, India Baji Raut Chhatrabas, Angul, Odisha, India Gouranga Charan and Sabitri Dash, Khamara, Odisha, India Debadas Mohapatra, Kantamal, Odisha, India Advice Sudarsan Das, HDF Bhanu Panigrahi, Ex-MSS Administrator at Unnayan Annapurna Pandey, University of California at Santa Cruz.

The contributions of the above mentioned institutions/organizations and individuals are highly appreciated. In addition, Nivedita Scudder of Unnayan, Bani Mohapatra of BISWA, Krishna Mohanty of Baji Raut Chhatrabas and Biswajit Padhi of SRUSTI deserve special mention. However, most credit for the continuity and success of MSS training goes to the trainers Rashmi Mohanty (Leader), Anup Behera, Rita Parida, Satyabrata Das, Indira Mohanty and Sanjib Das, all being part of Unnayan.

Final Note

In an interview with Sarah Hampson, Jessica Horn, a writer and women's rights activist working to end violence against women mostly in Africa, remarked: They may have been disempowered by the act of violence, but speaking out empowers them (The Globe and Mail,. April 7, 2011). MSS training empowers the women – at least they learn to speak out.

Empowerment implies economic sustainability. Micro-credit through SHG has helped to a large extent. But in Odisha such institutions have not been able to catch the poorest of the poor. In order to help them, Joyasree(Ranu) Mahanti, the Founder of NGO Aamara Biswas, has the novel idea of helping women through Nano Finance, which is to lend interest-free small loans that will help emergency needs, say for food, healthcare, small trades, and their children's education (see <http://www.aamarabiswas.org>). SEEDS (see <http://www.seedsnet.org>) which is a partner of MSS, supports the work of Aamara Biswas.

Women empowerment often stops at improving their political rights and at their economic betterment. On the other hand, MSS is a holistic approach to prepare women through training, first by transforming them to be the change (in the footsteps of Gandhian principle) and then to become the agents of change in "community building" which includes their participation in Panchayatiraj at political level, getting engaged in economic and other social wellbeing of the society.

The Centre for Peace Studies, McMaster University (Canada) has been a great supporter of MSS in India since its inception in Vaishali in 2002. During last 6-7 years, the University has sent 1-2 students to study MSS in different parts

of the country as AUCC (Association of University and Community Colleges) interns who are funded by CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency). MSS has become a great

learning resource for AUCC interns and at the same time MSS women derive a sense of satisfaction and pride that people care about them beyond India.

Sri Gopal Mohanty is an Emeritus Professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at McMaster University. He is Vice-President (Rural Development) of MSS International, Canada and is with SEEDS since its inception. He regularly visits India helping to carry out SEEDS projects including MSS.

Aamara Biswas: Women helping women through Nano Finance

Joyasree Mahanti

The Aamara Biswas organization was established in November 9, 2007 to implement the Nano Finance concept for the poorest of the poor women of the state of Orissa. It has completed three years. By giving interest free small (less than \$12) loans through its signature Nano Finance scheme, it has helped more than 4000 women in different areas of the state of Orissa.

Trust (BISWAS) is the key factor for the success of Nano Finance. In fact, the women themselves are responsible for the success of Nano Finance and for the existence of Aamara Biswas organization. They are assisted by a **coordinator** who manages the project by following a few rules without many restrictions. It is up to the coordinator to decide to whom a loan will be given and how she will motivate her to return the loan so that other women in similar situations can use the funds. The coordinator is also responsible for spreading the Nano Finance concept by analyzing the situations and needs of women in particular areas. As the need for loans depends on local conditions; where the coordinator understands community needs and problems, the women are doing well. The coordinators who work for Aamara Biswas truly believe in serving the poor women. They and the women borrowers are responsible for the vitality of Aamara Biswas. The project has failed in a few places where the coordinators are either not interested in the concept or the progress of the poor women.

Nano Finance helps women not to become the victims of money lenders or poorer. Further, it

gives them a sense of security and comfort in times of emergency. Aamara Biswas gives them the opportunity to earn more money and to provide a better life to their families. The impact of such small help (sometimes less than \$12) has given women hope and confidence for the future. When I ask them to take bigger loans from micro finance institutions for expanding their businesses, they respond that they prefer to take small interest free loans from Aamara Biswas because they can return these loans comfortably, at their convenience, within the allocated time period.

Details of the Projects

Aamara Biswas has implemented the Nano Finance concept in eight districts (Sambalpur town, Villages of Sambalpur, Baragarh, Anugul, Puri, Jagatsingpur, and Nuapada). The areas are monitored by the coordinators. It has failed in Bhadrak and Keonjhar districts due to the miscommunication of the coordinators.

Many women have taken loans several times to improve their livelihood. We give education loans and encourage them to return those sooner. Once the women understand the concept of Nano Finance and its benefits, they return the loan regularly. Sometimes, the coordinators need to remind them. Also some clients take more than a year to return their loans. The default is negligible for last one year.

Aamara Biswas opened a low budget temporary school in June 2010 in the Kiakata village,

Anugul district, where the children were not going to school due to lack of awareness of education. There are girls (ages 7 to 14 or more) who didn't have the basic education. They had been staying home to take care of siblings and do house chores while their parents worked. They have learnt to read and write in six months. We are planning to open a tailoring training center for the girls, so that the young girls can learn and make clothing and other items to sell.

Aamara Biswas has taken over a center (Purusottampur, Cuttack district) which was not functioning due to lack of funding. Aamara Biswas has given Rs.1,24,000 (\$2,850) as a loan to buy raw materials. There is already an infrastructure with sewing machines and other materials to start the production unit with enough trained girls/women in the village.

Aamara Biswas has started the project with 555 drinking water filters (about \$10 each). The women are buying the filters through the Nano Finance scheme at \$11.50. The extra amount of \$1.50 covers the administrative and transportation costs. Most of the women understand the importance of clean drinking water. The filters and containers are made locally. The filter is developed by a local scientist. Currently, most of the filters are given to the women of Jagatsingpur district and a few in Sambalpur district. Aamara Biswas hopes to expand the project to different parts of the state.

Project Evaluation after three years, by Joyasree Mahanti

I have been overwhelmed and excited to see the impact of Nano Finance on the poorest of the poor women of the society in last three years. Aamara Biswas encourages the women and girls to start small trades within their reach and comfort level and expand their trades with time and experience. I encourage the women to take individual loans but work together for support and share the profit among them (making of bricks, ropes and door mats etc.).

I am always concerned for the sustainability of the organization. Though the administrative costs are small; as the project expands, it will need more funds to cover the administrative cost. The organization can't always depend on donations or grants. Nano Finance provides

interest free loans; the problem is how to sustain it in the coming years. Aamara Biswas has a corpus fund and the interest accrued covers part of the administrative cost. Our plan is to increase the amount of the corpus fund with time.

The other goal is to find a way to have some small business where part of the profit can be used for the administrative cost. Currently, the coordinators of the Sambalpur center are making ladies garments in the office space when they are not busy with Nano Finance activities. The profit will go towards the administrative costs.

The future plan is to have a production center for making ropes and door mats in Puri district. A small percentage of the profit will go towards the salaries and maintenance of the center. We just have started a production unit in Purusottampur, Cuttack district for making ladies' garments. We hope to expand it. A small percentage of the profit will be used for the center's maintenance.

Expanding the Nano Finance project in other areas requires more funding and coordinators who understand the concept. Though Aamara Biswas does not advertise its activities, women from nearby areas find it through word of mouth and often come from a distance for loans. It is difficult to deny them but we don't have a choice. The coordinators try their best to give loans to the women who are in need. It is easy to give loans to the same women who have a good credit history. But there are also others who are in desperate situations and want to improve their livelihoods with the help of Aamara Biswas. We provide loans with trust and hope that the women will return the loans for their own and others' benefit.

It is hard for other non-profit organizations to implement the Nano Finance concept, because it is not a profit making venture. Aamara Biswas is a non-profit organization which achieves its goals through the women. It sustains and manages all the activities with limited funds. There are no unnecessary or lavish expenditures. The main goal is to save the women from money lenders during times of emergency, to help them improve their financial conditions within their limits and to provide basic needs to their children and family members.

Strengths & Weaknesses of Nano Finance

Strengths:

1. The women do not have to go to the money lenders in case of emergency. The loan process is extremely simple and very quick.
2. Women utilize a small amount of loan efficiently and privately (without any family member's interference) versus a larger amount where they don't have much control or knowledge of using the loan properly.
3. Women help other women in similar situations by bringing them to Aamara Biswas centers for getting loan and taking the responsibility for the return of the loan.
4. The coordinators are from the same community, who understand the situation better than a person who is an outsider.
5. A project can start and sustain with any initial amount and continue as long as the women return the loan and the amount is recycled.
6. The coordinators and the women are responsible for the success of their areas which empowers them and gives them ownership of the center. There is no hierarchy.
7. Due to small amounts of money loans, coordinators don't have to get involved in bank transaction. They disburse the collected amount to others or same women as soon as possible.

Weaknesses:

1. Amara Biswas cannot expand quickly due to lack of funds and local coordinators who are not willing to work with low salaries.
2. At the present mostly dependent on donations which is a major concern for the sustainability of the organization.

3. Manual book keeping is time consuming and may not be adequate if the organization expands in the future.
4. Hard to find coordinators who truly believe in working for the interest of the poorest of poor women and Nano Finance concept.
5. Other NGO(s) may not like to adapt the Nano Finance concept; as it is not profit making.

Conclusion

I am thrilled with the results and excited to see the progress of each woman with the help of Aamara Biswas. Often a woman will tell me her success story with a smile and excitement. She will hold my hand and ask if she can get another loan of Rs500 or Rs1000 (12-24 dollars) soon to improve her current condition. At the same time, she also understands that her friends need help more than she does. Therefore she will wait for the next month to get her second loan. Despite her poverty, she is more caring and concerned about her friends and neighbors than some of us who are far wealthier. These women's success stories are not like those of the famous people of the world but they are beautiful and give a different perspective of life. Their dreams are small, limited to what is necessary to live in this world with basic requirements. Listening to the stories of the women of Aamara Biswas can teach us about other meanings of success and about genuine social support.

The coordinators, the women of Aamara Biswas, and I sincerely thank the donors for their kindness and trust. It is not possible to have come this far without their genuine support.

Aamara Biswas
www.aamarabiswas.org

Joyasree (Ranu) Mahanti
 East Lansing, Michigan

Education Funding

Arun Misra

Education makes a person better. It helps one earn more money, makes people more useful to the society. But the 'education', especially good quality, at fine institutions is expensive and getting more and more expensive, day by day. Investing funds for the use of children, for current and future educational expenses has to be hence,

very prudent.

I will try to narrate approaches that I have used for my clients and my children and grand-children over the last 25 years or so. I will describe those under 3 different headings:

- 1) Life Insurance,

- 2) Education IRA and
3) College Savings Plan.

Insurance:

Whenever a child is born to a client, a prospect, a family member etc., I rush to set up a life insurance for the child called juvenile insurance, within 3-4 months. Many people do not like the idea of buying insurance on the life of a child and hate to think of profiting from the prospect of death of a loved child. But generally succeed in setting up a \$100,000 juvenile life insurance policy on a child who is less than 1 year old. The premium would be about \$5 per month. I ask the parent to overfund the policy by paying \$100 to \$200 per month. In 5 years, by paying \$10,000 or so, the policy is paid for life. The life insurance due to accumulated cash value may become worth \$500,000 or even \$1 million, by the time the child is 22 years old, has finished college, has a job, is planning to marry, and needs to buy life insurance, if premium payments are continued. The policy can be surrendered, and the cash value could be about \$25,000 at age 18 of the child and can be used to pay for college tuition. The premium payment can be suspended for 4-6 years, until the child has a job, say around age 24-25 and he/she then can resume premium payment, increase the value of the policy, withdraw funds to buy a car, get down payment for buying a home or eventually turn it into a tax-free retirement plan for age 65 onwards and create huge financial legacy for heirs, charity and posterity. The premium paid at age 1 of the child remains same until age 121, There is never a medical exam, and any adverse medical conditions that may develop over the life of the child will never matter, as it is a continuous policy from age 1 to age 121, if one can manage it properly.

Savings Account:

The Covedell Education Savings IRA, known as ESA, Education Savings Account, allows parents and others to put a maximum of \$2000 per year per child. The funds are not tax deductible but grow tax-deferred and can be taken out tax-free, both principal and earnings. The account eventually belongs to the child and the ownership is

transferred to the child at age 18. This plan is available in all States of the Union. The beneficiary on the account can be changed before the child turns 18 and the funds can be used for the expenses of the school, including private schools as well as for college. Amounts not used for educational purposes are penalized. The accumulation of \$2000 a year to even age 18 will not generate enough funds to send a child to Harvard, Yale, or Stanford. Hence more funds need to be invested for college education properly.

College Plan:

College Savings Plan(s) are also called 529 Plans (irc, internal revenue section 529) and vary from State to State. One can put \$250,000 or more (in several installments) for each child into the plan to generate enough resources to take the child through 4 or more years of undergraduate and graduate school(s) at the finest of institutions. Some states provide limited tax advantages, if the parents keep the funds in their own state's 529 plan. Parents can, however, ignore this trap and put their funds in the best state's plan and with the best custodians. We are allowed to invest in the 529 of any of the 50 state of the union and use it in any state's school where the child goes to study. The funds are not tax-deductible, with certain exceptions, but grow tax-deferred and come out tax free if used for college education. Not using the funds for college funding will trigger penalty by IRS. The beneficiary on the plans can be changed by owners/parents.

Final thought:

Any of the 3 plans outlined above will destruct itself, if funding is not continued for a sufficient number of years. Hence parents need to have adequate life, disability and other insurance policies and enough savings, to cover the payments. Many a times it is better to setup the 529 plan in the name of parents themselves, even if they do not plan or need to get continuing education, and eventually transfer funds for the benefit of children or others as and when the needs arise. This is a smart estate planning tool.

An essay on a provincial milestone **Today's Orissa: Past vs. Present**

Lalatendu Pahi

Orissa (*Odisha*), our land of ancestry on the eastern shore of India, has crossed another milestone on the April 1st, 2011. She is the most majestic at the age of seventy five years this year. In the early 1980s, some writers from the Utkala Prasanga* had fixation on the maritime ancient past of this provincial state. Orissa is laced with former royal principalities, known as *Gadjats*, which were passed on from generation to generation for time immemorial, i.e. *Kalinga-Utkal-Orissa-Udisa, Odisha* (suffixed with vernaculars *Rajya, Pradesh* et al.) notwithstanding the real historic past. Some others contended that Odiya poets, playwrights, novelists and custodians of history spent too much time in a misty rain of nostalgia of the past centuries. Such nostalgia included memories of the seafaring *Saudagars* of *Taapoi* folklore fame, and the romance of a brave fighting people winning a fierce Kalinga battle in piety. A few audacious intellectuals insisted that serious Odiya writers of national eminence should highlight the age-old precarious contemporary socio-economic maladies so that the governmental insolence can be shaken up and industrial revolution could be augured. They vouched for much vaunted empty slogans like "Thousand industries in thousand days!" The dismal center - state relationship and the geographical and regional disparities among different states created a frothy debate ensuing endemic unionized *hartals and bazaar bandhs*. In a modern pluralistic democracy, Orissa's antagonism towards a negligent, plundering and parochial federal/ union/ central government until now is significant. The argument ran - Orissa was one of the most backward states since British Raj since 1903** and the modern nation state had perpetuated the same policy of political subservience and economic exploitation long after the celebrated freedom-at-midnight. As if the voice of a whole Odiya race had fallen on eternal deaf ears, perpetuating abject poverty, despair and excruciating nightmares.

Nearly three decades later, a different nostalgia lingers with us, not so much in our literature as in our overseas ordinary expatriate lives. It is

evident every time, be it a state-of-art aerodrome, mega billion steel plant, software technology park, or an acclaimed central university. Orissa is attributed by all pundits as one of the most resource rich provincial states inside the whole of Asia! Yet, politicians, ranging from the Union ministers from our state down to chief ministers, wrestle with resisting or writing laws to govern, and to convert it to one of the most urban and diverse states in the nation. Most nonresident Oriyas feel a strong pull for all the right causes; unflinching support and judicious action. Can we all NRI Oriyas be united in our pledge to maintain the bond with our home land and to imbibe the core values that are carefully calibrated*** to past, present and future scenarios, especially in our youth, which is admittedly a generational challenge?

What an Arduous Journey Indeed

In the year 1568, our beloved motherland Odisha lost her independence. The last independent Hindu king of Odisha, Mukunda Deva was killed by his feudatory Chiefs while engaged in a prolonged struggle with the Afghan rulers of Bengal. It was the last Hindu kingdoms of India to fall to the foreign invaders. During the times of Akbar, the territories of Odisha were apportioned into five Sarkars such as Jaleswar, Bhadrak, Cuttack, Kalinga Dandapat and Raj Mahendri. During 1765-66, the East India Company attacked from both ends of Odisha, southern part guarded by Madras Presidency and northern part guarded by Bengal Presidency. Only three districts Baleswar, Cuttack and Puri in coastal region and 18 Garjats in the hill tract fell to Bengal Presidency.

The incident that triggered Battle for Odisha :

The problem that agitated the minds of enlightened Odias for a long time was the union of Odiya-speaking tracts into one administrative unit and then the formation of a separate province. It led to an organized movement - a sustained struggle for many years in a constitutional way to achieve the said objective. All protests were in

vain, and by the end of 1895, Odia was abolished in the courts of Sambalpur. Such a decision naturally wounded the sentiments of the Odia-speaking people very much and efforts were made in all directions to reverse the step taken by the government.

Birth of a state named "Odisha" :

While responding to the fighter's campaign, Sir. H.G.Cooke, a British colonial, suggested to form a princely state of Odisha by combining four different pieces of landmarks

- Sambalpur district of the then Chhattisgarh Division of the British ruled Central Provinces,
- Tributary States of Patna, Sonapur, Rairakol, Bamra and Kalahandi and
- The whole or part of the Ganjam district with the States of Kimidi and Ghumsur
- Odia-speaking portions of the districts of Ganjam, Vizagapatam, Sambalpur, Chhota Nagpur and Midnapur

Utkala mani Sri. Madhusudan Das, who was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council by that time, informed Lord Curzon, the Governor General, that the people of Odisha fully supported the Memorial submitted to Sir Andrew Fraser, and it was their desire that the Odia-speaking territories should be placed under a Chief Commissioner.

The crunching tigers of "Utkal Sammilani:"

Finally, the representatives of the Odia-speaking tracts of Madras, the Central Provinces and Bengal met in a conference at Cuttack on the 30th & the 31st of December, 1903. It was the historic gathering of 'Utkal Sammilani' which met amidst unprecedented enthusiasm and spear-headed the *Odia Movement* until the formation of a separate Province on 1st April, 1936.

A weapon called "State Anthem" :

Influenced by the movement named Utkal Sammilani (a federation of Odias), great poet Sri Laksmikanta Mohapatra, who was then young and energetic, composed Vande Utkal Janani (Glory to the Mother Utkal) and some other fiery

songs with a patriotic motive. Well known national poet of Odisha, Banchhanidhi Mohanty, who was also a good singer, started singing Laksmikanta's patriotic songs throughout Odisha and thus inspired everyone.

This song was used as a powerful weapon by the Utkal Sammilani to emancipate Odisha. It is learnt from history that when this song 'Vande Utkal Janani' was first sung at Utkal Sammilani Conference at Balasore in 1912, the song had its spell-bound effect on the audience and surprised many dignitaries in the dais, including Utkalmani Pandit Gopabandhu Das, who was presiding over the Session. Later Sri. Biju Patnaik and Sri Judhistir Dash, made it compulsory to sing this national song at the end of any Assembly Session.



* *Govt of Orissa's publishes Literary mouthpiece issues, popular being Rath Yatra commemorative Issue.*

** “ତେବେ, ୧୯୦୩ ମସିହାଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ପ୍ରଦେଶଟିଏ ପାଇଁ ସଙ୍ଘର୍ଷ । ମାତ୍ର, ୧୮୭୮ ମସିହାରେ ମୁକୁନ୍ଦ ଦେବଙ୍କ ପରାଜୟ ପରେ ଦୀର୍ଘ ତିନିଶହ ବର୍ଷରୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱକାଳ ଖଣ୍ଡ ଭିତରେ ଅପରିବର୍ତ୍ତିତ ରହିଥାନ୍ତା କି ଭୃଗୋଳ ? ଶେଷରେ ସେଇ କପିଳେନ୍ଦ୍ର ବା ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ଦେବଙ୍କ ବେଳର ଓଡ଼ିଶା-ମାଟି ଖୋଜା ପ୍ରୟାସର ଭିତ୍ତି ହେଲା- ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଆଉ ମଧୁସୂଦନଙ୍କ ଉଠରେ ଉଠରେ ଉତ୍କଳ ସନ୍ତାନର ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଝଙ୍କୁତ ହେଲା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପୁରପଲ୍ଲୀରେ । ମଧୁବାବୁଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଗଠିତ ଉତ୍କଳ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଏକତ୍ରିତ ହେଲେ ରାଜା ମହାରାଜଙ୍କଠାରୁ ସାଧାରଣ ଜନତା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ । କୋଟିଏ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗୋଟିଏ ଆକୂଳ କଣ୍ଠରେ ଗାଇଲେ ବନ୍ଦେ ଉତ୍କଳ ଜନନୀ । ପରିଶେଷରେ ଦେଶ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ହେବାର ଏକ ଦଶନ୍ଧି ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ରାଜ୍ୟର ମାନ୍ୟତା ପାଇଲା, ହେଲା ଭାରତବର୍ଷର ସର୍ବପ୍ରଥମ ଭାଷାଭିତ୍ତିକ ରାଜ୍ୟ ।”

- *ଓଡ଼ିଆସାହିତ୍ୟ.କମ୍ (ସାପ୍ତାହିକ ଇ-ପତ୍ର)* Source:

Odiasahitya.com/Saptahika e-patra 3/2/2011

*** “Cruising along the yesteryear calendar, Odisha witnessed yet another phase of industrial rejuvenation and economic reformation. An investment of 10 lakh crore INR was pumped into the state under various projects and programs that opened doors to 3 crore direct employments.

-Source: *Newseum Odisha-2010-Nilachakra*

Literacy in Western Odisha

Gopa Bandhu Behera

The Divine Life Society started an Ashram in 1985 at Jugsaipatna, 22kms from Bhawanipatna at the border of Karlapat sanctuary. It is the head-quarter of a Panchayat of 13 tribal villages. There was no school before the society started one but as the State Government started a UP school later, the original school of the society was discontinued. We noticed in 2000 that the Govt. school was dysfunctional. We decided to house 15 children of 13 villages on an experimental basis; provided them food, shelter, clothes, bed, medicine etc. and taught them every morning and afternoon. A Brahmachari came to us suo moto by God's grace and took charge of them. He could communicate with them and the children gradually developed a faith. The number increased to 30 due to the demand of the local people. It was highly satisfying to see the increased interest among the people. These children were trained in Yoga, Pranayam, chanting of hymns and singing Bhajans. Some of them appeared in the Navodaya school interview but could not succeed. The first batch has graduated class V and has gone to various Ashram schools. Encouraged by this we have taken another group of 15 children and have appointed a local matriculate to take care of them. This experience has led us to think of the following factors for low literacy among tribal men and women.

- Gender based inequality
- Social discrimination & economic exploitation
- Occupation of girl child in domestic chores
- Low enrolment of girls in schools
- Low retention rate and high dropout rate

Solutions for children's literacy:

1. Language: The tribal children find difficulty in the difference between spoken and written language. Even the Kosali language is not properly followed by them.
2. Teachers: The children have to develop faith in the teachers. The teacher must be an ideal for them and help them not only in being literate but also in solving their personal problems. The teacher must be regular.

3. Interconnectedness: There must be a mechanism to connect them with the culture, traditions etc. of the rest of our country through tours, electronic media.

4. Teaching in their environment: They mostly stay in forest areas which provide a wonderful environment for Nature studies. Besides they should be allowed to work while studying. Efficiency in their traditional work should be enhanced.

5. Faith: They must realize that education shall bring them happiness and pleasure; that they'll be able to manage themselves and cannot be cheated by others. This can be done through local examples.

6. Simplicity: Tribals are generally simple people. They have to feel the same quality in the teachers and visitors.

Solutions for women's literacy:

- Create an environment where women demand knowledge and information, empowering themselves to change their lives. Inculcate in them confidence that change is possible, if women work collectively.
- Most of the women can be seen in the markets carrying out business in vegetables. Some of them though illiterate can easily carry out simple arithmetic for their business. These women have to be told the importance of literacy in their business and marketing in very simple terms. They are increasingly becoming conscious of their children and many welfare schemes of the Govt. Their inquisitiveness has to be satisfied; then only their interest will grow. Spread the message that education of women is a precondition for fighting against their oppression.
- Highlight the plight of the girl-child and stress the need for universalization of elementary education as a way of addressing the issue.

These goals can be achieved if this problem is attacked differently. Regional needs and hidden aspirations have to be catered. Some suggestions are given below. I feel that instead of introducing various new schemes, the existing primary or upper primary schools should be

provided with the infrastructure to meet the challenge. The following steps could be taken:

1. Sufficient teachers appointed in the schools.
2. There should not be any compromise in the quality of teachers appointed or their supervision and monitoring.
3. The teachers should not be engaged in frivolous work. The retired teachers can be engaged for these purposes like BPL/APL enumeration, electoral role preparation etc. Greater priority should be given to education.
4. The infrastructure and the environment of the school should improve.
5. Corruption should completely be done away with.

What can the students learn, when the teachers do not go to the school, or when the teachers are incompetent and uninterested in teaching, when mid-day meals are of low standard and the village education committee is only interested in making money. Therefore, although the economy of the country advances, the human quality decreases day-by-day.

The following is a portion of my research compiled over several years on literacy and its relevance at various levels: world, country, state and region. It is mainly based on the 2001 national census report but is still valid today. The data from the recent 2011 census has also been presented as comparison.

Literacy and UNESCO:

Education is the bedrock of all social development. It is the basis of the literacy movement, on which UNESCO has built its Priority program to provide education for all, for life. Literacy is the catalyst for active participation in social, cultural, political and economic activities and for learning throughout life. UNESCO's twin focus is:

1. To train the teachers who are central to the education system
2. To improve education's quality and relevance.

A literate person as defined by UNESCO is one who can read, write and understand a simple statement relevant to his everyday life. Literacy does not mean simply reading a set of associated symbols and sounds; it also imparts the skill of critical understanding of one's situation in the world. Literacy is a means of personal liberation and development; it extends the individual's efforts in response to concrete problems.

Literacy Scenario in India:

The Department of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India published a booklet that opens with the words:

*"I'm learning to read,
So that I can read my own destiny.
I'm learning how to write,
So that I can write my own destiny
I'm learning how to count,
So that I can keep an account of my rights."*

There has always been widespread concern with the quality of education provided in our schools. The government, educationists and millions of ordinary citizens have engaged in a process of reflection and reassessment. The National Policy of Education (NPE), 1986 emphasizes the need for all children to achieve minimum levels of learning (MLL). NPE aimed to combine quality with equity because of three basic concerns:

1. Excessively heavy curriculum at primary school level.
2. Low quality of learning at primary school level.
3. Need for equity.

UNESCO, International Literacy Institute (University of PA, USA) and the National Literacy Mission of India organized a major literacy meeting, the second Asian Regional Literacy Forum in February 1998, in New Delhi to consider innovations and professionalization. The forum reviewed literacy problems within the complex diversity of Asia's pluralistic society and rejected the "one-size-fits-all approach" for illiteracy eradication and addressed the new demands on literacy skills. Literacy, linguistics and ethnic and cultural diversity in Asia and the technology and technological innovations were among the many issues discussed.

Eradication of illiteracy from a nation on its way to become the most populated in the world is, by no means, easy. This problem was realized in India in the eighties and the National Literacy Mission (NLM) came into being, to impart a

sense of urgency and seriousness to adult education. NLM defines literacy as:

1. Acquiring skills of reading, writing and arithmetic.
2. Ability to apply them in one's day-to-day life.

Ernakulum district became 100% literate in 1993. In one year 85,000 illiterate people were taught to read, write, add, subtract, multiply and divide. We had set foot into the new millennium; it gave us the opportunity to reflect upon our efforts and also to learn from our failures, so that we could achieve our target of a sustainable, threshold of literacy. It was time to assess ongoing programs and seek new horizons. In this context the Union Cabinet took some momentous decisions in its meeting on 30th November, 1999. These decisions, which had far-reaching consequences, have greatly strengthened the mission and given it a new orientation as well as a resurgent spirit. Over the years, UNESCO has been collaborating with the NLM in the celebration of International Literacy Day on September 8 and in sponsoring publications on education and literacy.

Thus the goals of the NLM go beyond the simple achievement of self-reliance in literacy and numeracy of functional literacy. The achievement of functional literacy implies:

- Self-reliance in 3 R's (**R**eading, **wR**iting and **aR**ithmetic),
- Awareness of the causes of deprivation and movement towards the amelioration of the people's condition through participation in the process of development,
- Acquisition of skills to improve their economic status and general well-being,
- Assimilation of the values of national integration, environmental conservation and gender equality and family planning etc.

The acquisition of functional literacy results in empowerment and a definite improvement in the quality of life. It helps to ensure the participation of the masses in sharing the benefits of the information era.

Literacy Scenario in Odisha:

Literacy in India has made remarkable strides since independence. This has been further confirmed by the results of the Census 2001. Literacy increased from 18.33% in 1951 to

64.84% in 2001. This is despite the fact that during the previous five decades there was exponential growth of the population. It was noticed that the change in literacy rate/decade (ΔM or ΔF) is decreasing since eighties for male but is constant for female literacy rate. Analysis of data comparing literacy rates in different states in India brings to light the following key facts:

- (a) The male-female literacy gap reduced from 24.84% in 1991 to 21.59% in 2001.
- (b) Mizoram has the smallest gap (3.97%) followed by Kerala (6.52%) and Meghalaya (5.82%).
- (c) All States and Union Territories without exception showed increase in literacy rates during 1991-2001. In all the States and Union Territories the male literacy rate except Bihar (59.68%) is now over 60%. For the first time since independence there was a decline in the absolute number of illiterates during the decade. In the previous decades, there had been a continuous increase in the number of illiterates, despite the increase in the literacy rates, but now for the first time the total number of illiterates was down by 24.77 million.

On the basis of literacy rate, State/UTs can be grouped as under:

- *High Literacy Rate (80% and above)* – Kerala (90.86%), Mizoram (88.80%), Lakshadweep (86.66%), Goa (82.01%), Chandigarh (81.94%), Delhi (81.67%), A & N Islands (81.30%) and Pondicherry (81.24%).
- *Literacy Rate above national average (64.8%) and below 80%* - Daman & Diu (78.18%), Maharashtra (76.88%), Himachal Pradesh (76.48%), Tamil Nadu (73.45%), Tripura (73.19%), Uttaranchal (71.62%), Manipur (70.53%), Punjab (69.65%), Gujarat (69.14%), Sikkim (68.81%), West Bengal (68.64%), Haryana (67.91%), Karnataka (66.64%) and Nagaland (66.59%).
- *Literacy Rate below national average (64.8%)* – Chhattisgarh (64.66%), Madhya Pradesh (63.74%), Assam (63.25%), Odisha (63.08%), Meghalaya (62.56%), Andhra Pradesh (60.47%), Rajasthan (60.41%), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (57.63%), Uttar Pradesh (56.27%), Jammu & Kashmir (55.52%), Arunachal Pradesh (54.34%), Jharkhand (53.56%) and Bihar (47.00%).

Odisha was reported to be below the national average in its literacy rate.

Literacy rate is one of the important indicators for determining the living condition of the people. A study finds that the impact of rural literacy rate on the percentage of rural families living below the poverty line is significant. So, to reduce poverty, education can be a powerful instrument.

But the literacy rate in Odisha is found not to be satisfactory. As per 2001 census, the literacy rate of Odisha was 63.61 per cent as against 65.38 per cent at all India level. In 2011 census the population growth in Odisha is 13.97%. The male: female ratio = 978: 972. The literacy ratio 2011:2001=73.45:63.08, male 2011:2001=82.40:75.35 and female=64.36:50.51. The literacy ratio of female to male is 0.78 in 2011. It has considerably increased.

Western Odisha scenario:

The literacy scenario in Western Odisha (area as defined by Western Odisha Development Council) as compared to the eastern part of the state is frustrating, leading to the concept of regional imbalance. As a metric of comparison between the Western Region (WR) and Eastern Region (ER), ratio of literates over total population is used for both males and females.

Analysis:

(With reference to the Table and acronyms provided)

Literacy: ML / TMP

Western & Southern Regions: ~ **0.49 to 0.68**

Eastern Region (Cuttack, Puri, Baleswar, Dhenkanal, Khurda, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara): ~ **0.70 to 0.77**

Female Literacy: FL / TFP

Western Region: ~ **0.22 to 0.48**

Eastern Region: ~ **0.50 to 0.6**

Literacy ratio: F/M

> 1.0 for least literate districts (Nuapada, Kalahandi)

< 1.0 for all other districts of Western and Eastern Regions

Conclusion:

1. The gaps between Western, Eastern and Southern Regions are easily visible.
2. In the Western Region:
Male Literacy:
Nuapada < Kalahandi << Deogarh
Female Literacy:
Nuapada < KLD << Boudh

References:

Besides probing the internet, the following documents were referred to:

- 'EDUCATION FOR ALL' 1993 -The Dept. of Edu. HRD, Govt. of India.
- 2001, 2011 Census reports
- Districts at a glance, Directorate of economics and statistics, Govt. of Odisha-2009.

DISTRICT	M	F	M/TMP	F/TFP	(F / M) t.p
Bargarh	77.4	50.3	0.67	0.44	0.98
Bolangir	71.7	39.5	0.61	0.34	0.98
Boudh	76.2	39.0	0.65	0.33	1.01
Deogarh	73.3	47.2	0.62	0.40	0.98
Kalahandi	62.7	29.3	0.52	0.24	1.00
Sambalpur	79.0	55.2	0.68	0.48	0.97
Subarnapur	78.9	55.2	0.68	0.40	0.96
Sundergarh	75.3	53.9	0.64	0.46	0.96
Nuapada	58.5	25.8	0.49	0.22	1.00
Jharsuguda	82.2	58.5	0.71	0.51	0.95
Cuttack	85.8	66.9	0.75	0.59	0.94
Puri	88.1	67.6	0.77	0.59	0.97
Baleswar	81.7	58.9	0.70	0.50	0.96
Dhenkanal	80.6	57.9	0.69	0.50	0.96
Khurda	87.9	70.4	0.77	0.62	0.96
Jagatsinghpur	88.5	69.3	0.78	0.61	0.96
Kendrapada	87.1	66.8	0.75	0.58	1.01
Ganjam	75.2	46.4	0.64	0.40	1.0
Koraput	47.2	24.3	0.40	0.20	1.0

M-Male literacy, F-Female literacy, TFP- Total Female population, TMP—Total Male population.

Prof. Gopa Bandhu Behera lives with his wife Subhasini in Bhawanipatna, after his retirement from Sambalpur University in 1999. Since 1999, he has been actively involved in improving the education standards of Kalahandi and Western Odisha in general.

ସୃଜନୀକା

॥ ମାତୃଭୂମି ମାତୃଭାଷାର ମମତା ଯା ହୃଦେ ଜନମି ନାହିଁ,
ତାକୁ ଯଦି ଜ୍ଞାନଗଣରେ ଗଣିବା ଅଜ୍ଞାନ ରହିବେ କାହିଁ ॥
- ଗଂଗାଧର ମେହେର



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କବିତା



ବାଣୀରେ ଅମୃତ

କାନ୍ତିଲତା ସାହୁ, କାଲିଙ୍ଗେଣ୍ଡିଆ

ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ତୁମେ ରାଗିବକି?

ଜଳଧର ପ୍ରଧାନ, ରାଉରକେଲା

ବାଣୀରେ ଅମୃତ ବାଣୀରେ ତ ବିଷ
 ବାଣୀରେ ତ ଅଛି ଠାଣି ,
 ବାଣୀର ପ୍ରକାର ବହୁ ପରକାର
 ସମସ୍ତେ ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ଜାଣି । (୧)

ଅଛି ଜନମତ ଅଛି ବହୁମତ
 କହି ଜାଣି କଥା ସୁନ୍ଦର ,
 ବାନ୍ଧିତ ଜାଣିଲେ ମଥାବି ସୁନ୍ଦର
 ପାଏ ସେ ବହୁ ଆଦର । (୨)

କୋମଳ ଶିଶୁର ଦୋରତି ଭାଷାକୁ
 ହୃଦୟ ଯେ ଯାଏ ଛୁଇଁ ,
 ମହାପୁରୁଷଙ୍କ ଅମୃତ ବାଣୀଯେ
 ଲିପିବନ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ରହି । (୩)

କୁହୁ ଭଲକଥା ନ ଦେଇ ଅନ୍ୟଥା
 ଅପର ମନରେ ବ୍ୟଥା ,
 ପା'ହେଲେ ଭଲ ଦାଗ ରହିଯିବ
 ଲୋକ ମରିଲେ ତା କଥା । (୪)

ହସି ପଦେ କଥା କହିଦେବ ଯଦି
 ସେଠୁ ଝରିବ ଅମୃତ ,
 ପଲସା ଦେବାକୁ ପଡିବନି ବନ୍ଧୁ
 ବଢିବ ମାନ ମହତ । (୫)

ଖରାପ କଥାକୁ କହିବାକୁ ଥିଲେ
 ନ କହି ରଖ ଭିତରେ ,
 ମଧୁର କଥାରେ ଚୋଷ ଜନମନ
 ଅମୃତ ସେଥିରୁ ଝରେ । (୬)

ଖରାପ ଯେ କହେ ନିନ୍ଦା ଅରଜିଣ
 ଗଣାଯାଏ ସେହୁ ହୀନ ,
 କହିବା ଲୋକ ତ ମହତ ନୁହଁଇ
 ମହତ ସହିବା ଜନ । (୭)

ଭାଙ୍ଗିକରି ତୁମ ଭଣ୍ଡାର ଦୁଆର
 ଲୁଚିକରି ତୁମ ରତ୍ନ ଅଳଙ୍କାର
 ବାସହୀନ ଯାର ରାସ୍ତାଧାର
 ଚୋଳିଦେବା ଯଦି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଘର
 ତୁମକୁ ଖରାପ ଲାଗିବକି ?
 ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ତୁମେ ରାଗିବକି ?

ପରାଗ ହଜାର ଏକର ସଂପତ୍ତି
 ଲୁଚି ଖାଉଛନ୍ତି କେତେ ମନ୍ଦମତି
 ଭୁମିହୀନ ଯାର ପେଟନାହିଁ ପୁରେ
 ସେ ଜମିକୁ ଆମେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବାଣ୍ଟିଦେଲେ
 ତୁମେ ଉପବାସ ଭୋଗିବକି?
 ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ତୁମେ ରାଗିବକି?

କୋଣ ଅନୁକୋଣେ ତୁମେ ବାସକର
 ଖରା ବରଷାକୁ ତୁମର କି ଡର
 ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥପର ଯେତେ ଗଢ଼ନ୍ତି ମନ୍ଦିର
 ରଖନ୍ତି ତୁମକୁ କରି ରୁଦ୍ଧ ଦ୍ଵାର
 ସେ ମନ୍ଦିରେ ସତେ କଣ ଥାଅ
 ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ସତ କରି କୁହ

ବିଶ୍ଵବାସୀ ସର୍ବେ ତୁମରି ସନ୍ତାନ
 କରୁଣା ବାଣ୍ଟ କି ତୁମେ ଭିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ
 ବିଦେଶୀ ଚାହିଁଲେ ତୁମ ଦରଶନ
 ଅପବିତ୍ର କିଆଁ ହୁଏ ତୁମ ସ୍ଥାନ ?
 ଅସତ୍ୟରେ ଭାଗୀ ହୋଇବ କି?
 ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ତୁମେ କହିବ କି ?

ଷାଠିଏ ପଉଟି ତୁମ ଭୋଗ ଅନୁ
 ମାଟି ତଳେ ପୋତା ହୁଏ କି କାରଣ
 ସିଂହ ଦ୍ଵାରେ ବସି କେତେ ଦୀନହୀନ
 ଆକୁଳେ ତାକନ୍ତି ଦିଅ ବାବୁ ଅନୁ
 ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଲେ ଦୁଃଖ ଲାଗିବ କି ?
 ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ତୁମେ ରାଗିବ କି?



ଶାଢ଼ି

ପାରମିତା ଶତପଥୀ

ସାଢ଼େ ପାଞ୍ଚ ମିଟର ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦାରେ
ମୁଁ ନିଜକୁ ଗୁଡେଇ ଦେଇଛି
ଓ ନିଜ ମହିମାରେ
ନିଜେ ଘାରି ହେଉଛି ।

ମନେ ନାହିଁ ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦାକୁ
ହାତ ପତେଇ ମାରିଥିଲି
ବା ଜୋର ଜବରଦସ୍ତି ଝିଙ୍କି ଆଣିଥିଲି
ବା କାହା ନାଲି ଆଖିର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ଥିଲା
ନା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ପ୍ରବଣ ସେଇ ତରୁଣର
ଥର ଥର ପ୍ରଥମ ଉପହାର ।

ନିଜ ଆବରଣର
ମାହାତ୍ମ୍ୟ ବଖାଣୁଥିଲେ
ମୋର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଭଉଣୀ, ତାଙ୍କ ମନ ମୁତାବକ
ସୁବିଧା, ସରଳ ସୁଛନ୍ଦ
ଏମିତି କେତେ ଶବ୍ଦର ଜ୍ୟାମିତି
ମୁଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ତୁପ୍ ରହିଥିଲି
କେମିତି ବୁଝାଇଥାନ୍ତି ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ
ଯେ ମୋ ପୋଷାକ, ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ?

ରାତିରେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରି
ମାପ ରୂପ କରି
ତା'କୁ ଖଣ୍ଡ ଖଣ୍ଡ କରି
ଓ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଖଣ୍ଡକୁ
ମନ୍ତ୍ରପଢ଼ି ଉଡାଇ ଦେଲି ।

ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଜରି ଗୋଟାଳୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକର
ଚିରା ଘାଘରାରେ ତାଳି ପଡ଼ିବା ପାଇଁ -
ଖଣ୍ଡେ, ଗାଁ ଚୋଟାରେ ଫେପଡ଼ା



ଧର୍ଷଣପର ଲଙ୍ଗଳା ଶବ୍ଦକୁ
ଘୋଡେଇବା ପାଇଁ -
ଖଣ୍ଡେ, ବଡ଼ ତାଙ୍କୁରଖାନାର
ପୋଡ଼ାଜଳା ଓଡ଼ରେ
ନବ ବିବାହିତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ
ଦଶନମୂର ଖଟିଆର
ଚାଦର ପାଇଁ -
ଶେଷଟି, ପଞ୍ଚ ତାରକା ହୋଟେଲରେ
ପାଞ୍ଚଟି ଗ୍ରାହକଙ୍କୁ ମଦପରଷୁଥିବା ଝିଅର
ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବନ୍ଧ ବନ୍ଧନୀରେ
ସିଲେଇ ହୋଇଯିବା ପାଇଁ -

ସକାଳେ ଦେଖିଲି
ସବୁତକ ଖଣ୍ଡ ଫେରିଆସିଛି
ପୁଣି ଯୋଡ଼ି ହୋଇଯାଇ ମୋତେ
ଆକଣ୍ଡ ବୁଡ଼ାଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଛି
ମୋ ପେଟ ଛାଡ଼ି ପିଠିର
ତଥାପି ଦିଶିଯାଉଛି କିଛି ଅଂଶ
ଏତେ ଲମ୍ବା ଶାଢ଼ିଟେ ବି
ଯାହାକୁ ଲୁଚାଇବାକୁ ନିଅଣ୍ଟ !

ସତ୍ୟର କାହାଣୀ

ବିଜୟମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ର

ଶିଶୁ ମୁହିଁ, ବାଳୁତ ମୁଁ, ହସ ଖୁସି ଖେଳ ।
 ଦୁଃଖିନୀ, ସୁଧା, ତୃଷ୍ଣା, ଆନନ୍ଦ କଲୋଳ ॥
 ସ୍ନେହ, ଶୁଭା, ଗୁଣ, ବିଦ୍ୟା, କଷ୍ଟେଇର ଖେଳ ।
 ଚାହାଣିର ସ୍ମୃତି ଅଛି, ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଓ ମେଳ ॥
 ନାହିଁ ମୋ'ର ରୀତି, ଅବା ଅଛି କିଛି ନୀତି ।
 ମାତାର ପରଶେ ପ୍ରୀତି, କଟିଯାଏ ଭୀତି ॥
 ସତ୍ୟ ମୁହିଁ, କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ମୁହିଁ, ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରତୀକ ।
 ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛ ମୁହିଁ, ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ମୁହିଁ, ନାହିଁ ମୋ'ର ଭେକ । ୧ ।

ଉଚ୍ଚ ହିମାଳୟ ମୁହିଁ, ହିମାଦ୍ରୀ ପର୍ବତ ।
 ଗଙ୍ଗାର ଜନକ ମୁହିଁ, ସମୟର ସ୍ରୋତ ॥
 ବୃଷ୍ଟି ମୁହିଁ, ଲୀଳା ମୁହିଁ, ଗୌରୀ ଶଙ୍କର ।
 ଅଗ୍ନି ମୁହିଁ, ବାୟୁ ମୁହିଁ, ଅବୋଧ୍ୟ ଶୃଙ୍ଗର ॥
 ନଦୀର ବନ୍ୟା ହିଁ ମୁହିଁ, ସାଗରର ଭର୍ମି ।
 ଜଙ୍ଗଲ ବିହଙ୍ଗ ମୁହିଁ, ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛନ୍ଦ ସ୍ୱଧର୍ମୀ ॥
 ସତ୍ୟ ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ମୁହିଁ, ସତଳ ପ୍ରକୃତି ।
 ସତ୍ୟ ମୁହିଁ, ଧର୍ମ ମୁହିଁ, ଜଗତ ସଂସ୍କୃତି । ୪ ।

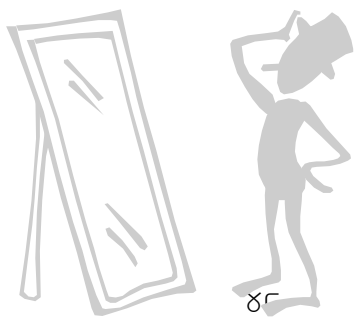
ମାତା ମୁହିଁ, ଧାତା ମୁହିଁ, ସରସୀ ଜନନୀ ।
 ରକ୍ଷକ ଶିଶୁର ମୁହିଁ ଦିବସ ରଜନୀ ॥
 ଧରା ମୁହିଁ, ଅନୁସ୍ରୋତ, ମୁହିଁ ତ ଧରଣୀ ।
 ଧରେ ମୁହିଁ, ରଖେ ମୁହିଁ, ଜଗତ କରଣୀ ॥
 ବୃଷ୍ଟି, କଳା, ଶବ୍ଦ, ବାକ୍ୟ, ରଙ୍ଗ ଭୂମିଧୁନି ।
 ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ଓଁକାର ପ୍ରାଣ, ମୁହିଁ ଆବାହନୀ ॥
 ଜଗତ ଦର୍ଶନ ମୁହିଁ, ଭାବର ପ୍ରତୀକ ।
 ସତ୍ୟ ବସୁନ୍ଧରା ମୁହିଁ, ମମତା ମୋ' ଭେକ । ୨ ।

ସୁଖ ମୁହିଁ, ଦୁଃଖ ମୁହିଁ, ରୋଗ ନିର୍ଯାତନା ।
 ଜଗତେ ଅସ୍ଥିର ମୁହିଁ, ଅସ୍ଥାୟୀ ଭାବନା ॥
 ଆନନ୍ଦ ଉତ୍ସବ ମୁହିଁ, ମନର ବେଦନା ।
 ସଂସାର କୁଟୁମ୍ବ ମୁହିଁ, ଭେକର ବାସନା ॥
 ରାମ ମୁହିଁ, କୃଷ୍ଣ ମୁହିଁ, ବୁଦ୍ଧ ଆଉ ଯୀଶୁ ।
 ହଜରତ ମହମ୍ମଦ, କାହିଁ ଥିଲି ଶିଶୁ ॥
 ଜୌଗ ମୁହିଁ, ଧର୍ମ ମୁହିଁ, ସାଧନ ପ୍ରତୀକ ।
 ପ୍ରଣତ ବଦନ ମୁହିଁ, ସତ୍ୟର ପଥକ । ୫ ।

ବୃଦ୍ଧ ମୁହିଁ, ପିତା ମୁହିଁ, ଜୀବନ ସନ୍ତକ ।
 କର୍ତ୍ତା ଭର୍ତ୍ତା ସଞ୍ଜ ମୁହିଁ, ସଂସାର ପୋଷକ ॥
 କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ମୁହିଁ, ତୃପ୍ତ ମୁହିଁ, ସଂପଦ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ ।
 ରୀତି ନୀତି କୃତି ମୁହିଁ, ଭାବର ସଂଗମ ॥
 ଅଚଳ ନିର୍ଲିପ୍ତ ମୁହିଁ, ପୁରୁଷ ଆଧାର ।
 ଆଦି ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଶୂନ୍ୟ ମୁହିଁ, ଚୈତନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରବୀର ॥
 ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଅଟେ ଭାବ ମୋ'ର, ନିର୍ଜୀବ ପଥର ।
 ସତ୍ୟ ପରାଭୂତ ସାକ୍ଷୀ, ଅଗମ ଅମର । ୩

ପଳାପ ମୁଁ, ବିଳାପ ମୁଁ, ସଂଳାପ ଆଳାପ ।
 ନିର୍ଲେପ ମୁଁ, ନିର୍ବେଦ ମୁଁ, ଅପୁଣ୍ୟ ଅପାପ ॥
 ଆତ୍ମଶକ୍ତି ମୁହିଁ, ତେଜ, ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଅନନ୍ତ ।
 ଜୀବନ ଦର୍ପଣ ମୁହିଁ, ବିସ୍ତାର ଦିଗନ୍ତ ॥
 ବାକ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ, ଶବ୍ଦ ନୁହେଁ, ଆତ୍ମନିରୀକ୍ଷଣ ।
 ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ତାରା ଗ୍ରହ, ଜଗତ ରକ୍ଷଣ ॥
 କିଏ କହେ ଅପଳାପ, ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ଉଭବ ।
 ଭେକ ଭୀତି ବିନାଶ ହିଁ ସତ୍ୟର ସମ୍ଭବ । ୬ ।

ବିଜୟ ମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ର ଓସା ସ୍ମରଣିକାର ଜଣେ ରଚିତା ଲେଖକ । ସେ ବୋଉଙ୍କ ସହରର ଅଧିବାସୀ ।



ଅସମ ମୈତ୍ରୀ ମନୋଜ ପଣ୍ଡା

ଧୂଳିଧୂଷିତ ବିପାଣ୍ଡର ମୁଖମଣ୍ଡଳରେ
 ହାସ୍ୟରେଖାର ତଡ଼ିଲତା ।
 ଫେନିଲ ତୃଷ୍ଣାର କୋପ କୁଟିଳତାରେ
 ନିର୍ବେଦ ନିରଭିଯୋଗର ନିର୍ବାକ, ନିର୍ଭୀଷ ।
 ପଙ୍କ, କର୍ଦ୍ଦମର ପିଛିଳତାରେ
 କୁଞ୍ଜୁମିତ ନୈର୍ମଲ୍ୟର ନିତ୍ୟ ସ୍ଫୁରଣ ।
 ରାଗାନୁଗା ଭକ୍ତିର ତାରଲ୍ୟରେ
 ପ୍ରାବନ୍ଧ ମରୁପ୍ରାନ୍ତର ଉଦ୍‌ବେଳନ ।
 ଏକ ଅକ୍ଷତନ, ନିଃକ୍ଷତନ ପଦାରବିନ୍ଦରେ
 ରାଜରଜେଶ୍ଵରୀର ଶରଣାଗତି ।
 କଣ୍ଠକିତ ପାତାଳପୁଞ୍ଜରେ
 ଆରକ୍ତ କାଦମ୍ବରୀର ଶିହରଣ ।
 ରୂପ ଲାବଣ୍ୟର ସମାହାରରେ
 ଷଡ଼ରିପୁର ତାଣ୍ଡବଲୀଳା ।
 ଭାସନ ଅରଣ୍ୟର କେଦାରରେ
 ଚିତା-ଚିନ୍ତାର ଅନିର୍ବାଣ ଅଗ୍ନି
 ପରେ ପୁଣି ଅମଳ ଅଶ୍ରୁ ସରୋବରରେ
 ଶାନ୍ତି, ପ୍ରୀତି ଶତଦଳର ଅଙ୍କୁରଣ, ପଲ୍ଲବନ
 ଦୈନ୍ୟ, ଐଶ୍ଵର୍ୟର ଏକୀକୃତରେ
 ଏକ ନବ ପ୍ରଭାତର ଅଭ୍ୟୁଦୟ
 ଆଉ ତ୍ରିଗୁଣାଧୀଶ୍ଵରଙ୍କ ପଟ୍ଟହରେ
 ଶୁଣାଶୟ ପ୍ରକୃତିର ସ୍ଥିତି
 ଆଃ ଏହି ଅସମ ମୈତ୍ରୀର ଜୈତ୍ର କେତନ
 ସର୍ବତ୍ର ସମ ଭାବରେ ବିରାଜିତ
 ଏକ ନିଛକ ସତ୍ୟର ଅଭିପ୍ରେତ
 ହୋଇ ସତତ ଫରଫରାୟିତ ।

ରକ୍ତଭିଲ, ମେରିଲାଇଣ୍ଡ

ଅପେକ୍ଷା ପ୍ରବୀର ଦାଶ

ରଜନୀଗନ୍ଧା ଆଜି ଫୁଟିଛି ପୁଣି
 ଝିଲିମିଲି ତାରାଭରା ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନା ରଜନୀ
 ପତଝଡ଼ା କିଶଳୟେ ଭରି ଆସିଲାଣି
 ହଜାଇଛି ତୁମ କୋମଳ ଉଷ୍ଣ ସ୍ଫର୍ଶ
 ଖୋଜେମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ, ନାହିଁ ତୁମେ, ନାହିଁ କାହିଁ ।

ବସନ୍ତ ସମୀର ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ବହିଲାଣି
 ଭ୍ରମର ପୁଞ୍ଜରୁ ପୁଞ୍ଜୁ ମଧୁ ଲୁଚିଲାଣି
 ଖିଲିଖିଲି ହସେ ଝିଲି ଝର ଝରିଲାଣି
 ହଜାଇଛି ତୁମ ହସିଲା ଆଖିର ଭାଷା
 ଖୋଜେମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ, ନାହିଁ ତୁମେ, ନାହିଁ କାହିଁ ।

ଦୂର ପରବତ କୃଷ୍ଣ ରଙ୍ଗେ ରଜିଲାଣି
 କୁହୁତାନେ ପିକ ଆମ ଗୀତ ଗାଇଲାଣି
 ସବୁଜ ଓଢ଼ଣା ଧରା ତନେ ଢାଙ୍କିଲାଣି
 ହଜାଇଛି ତୁମ ଗୋଲପି ଅଧର ରଙ୍ଗ
 ଖୋଜେମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ, ନାହିଁ ତୁମେ, ନାହିଁ କାହିଁ ।



ନିର୍ଜିବ ଏ ଚିତ୍ରପଟ ରଙ୍ଗ ତାର ନାହିଁ
 ନିସଙ୍ଗ ବିହଙ୍ଗ ପଥେ ତେଣାଭଙ୍ଗ ମୁହିଁ
 ସୁଗୁବିତି ଆଖିଲୁହ ଶୁଖିଲାଣି କାହିଁ
 ହଜାଇଛି ମୋର ଆଜି ଜିବନର ସାଧି
 ଖୋଜେମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ, ନାହିଁ ତୁମେ, ନାହିଁ କାହିଁ ।

ଲେଉଟେ ଚକୋର ତାକ(ମୋ) ହୃଦତନ୍ତ୍ରି ଛୁଇଁ
 ହେବା ଏକ ମନ, ଆମ ତନ ଲୋଡ଼ା ନାହିଁ
 ସସିମ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ମୋର ତେବେ ସରିବହିଁ
 ଶୁଣିବିମୁଁ ତୁମ ମଧୁର କଣ୍ଠ ରାଗିଣି
 ଖୋଜେମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ନାହିଁ ତୁମେ ନାହିଁ କାହିଁ ।

ଫାଙ୍କଲାନ, ଟେନେସି



ଆଖି (ଚକ୍ଷୁର ବିଚକ୍ଷଣତା)

କାନ୍ତିଲତା ସାହୁ, କାଲିଙ୍ଗେଣ୍ଡିଆ

ନାରା

ପ୍ରବୀର ଦାଶ

ଜାଣିବୁଲୋ ସଖି ଆମ ଏଇ ଆଖି
ସବୁ କିଛି ପାରେ କରି,
ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମରଙ୍ଗ ଏତ ବଡ଼ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ
ଜାଣି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଯିବ ଘୁରି । (୧)

ଆଖି ଦେଖିପାରେ ଆଖି କହିପାରେ
ଆଖିର ଇଶାରା ପୁଣି,
ସେଇ ଆଖି ଦେଖେ ଆଖି ଥାଇ ଅନ୍ଧ
ଆଖିର ବହୁତ ଗୁଣ । (୨)

ଆଖି ପାଏ ଦୁଃଖ ଆଖି ପାଏ ସୁଖ
ଆଖିରୁ ବୁଝାଇ ପାଣି,
ହସରେ ବି କାନ୍ଦ ଦୁଃଖରେ ବି କାନ୍ଦ
ତମ୍ପତ କିନ୍ତୁ ତୁ ଜାଣି । (୩)

ଦୁଃଖରେ ଅଶ୍ରୁତ ଆଖି ପାଏ କଷ୍ଟ
ସୁଖରେ ସଜଳ ଦିଶେ,
ଆଖିର ଇଶାରା ଆଖିର ସେ ଠାର
କଥାକୁ ତ କହିବସେ । (୪)

ଆଖିରେ ସେ ପଢ଼ି ଆଖିରେ ସେ ଭାବି
ମନକଥା କହିଯାଏ,

ରାଗିଗଲେ ଆଖି ରଙ୍ଗ ବଦଳଇ
ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ନାଲି ହୁଏ । (୫)

ମାୟାର ଏ ଚକ୍ଷୁ ମାୟାରେ ପଡ଼ଇ
ମାୟା ସଂସାରରେ ଥାଇ,
ହେବ ଯଦି ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଥିବ ଯଦି ଯୋଗ
ଦିବ୍ୟ ଚକ୍ଷୁ ତ ମିଳଇ । (୬)

ଝରି ଝରି ଝରି ଝରି
ପିତା ହିମନଗ ରାଜ
ଗହ୍ୱରରେ ଲୁଚେପୁଣି
ପିତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରସ୍ତର ବସେ

ଝର ଝର ଝର ଝର
ପତର ତଳ ଭସାଇ
ଦୃତବେଗେ ଧାବମାନ
କୋଟି କ୍ଷତିକ ସଜାଏ

ଘର୍ଘର ଘର୍ଘର ଘୋର
ବିଧୁନିତ ଉଗ୍ରକନ୍ୟା
ପିତାବକ୍ଷ ତେଜି ଆଜ
ଝଲକେ କିରଣେ ଗଲେ

କୁଳୁକୁଳୁ କଳକଳ
କେବେ ଖରସୋତା ପୁଣି
ଚୀର ଅଗ୍ରଗାମୀ ନାରୀ
ମିଳିବ ଯାଇ ସେ ବସେ

ଝରେ ଝର ନିରନ୍ତର
ମାତା ବସୁନ୍ଧରା ତାର ।
ପୁଟେ ହୋଇ ସେ ପୁଆର
ଲୁଚକାଳି ଖେଳ ତାର ॥

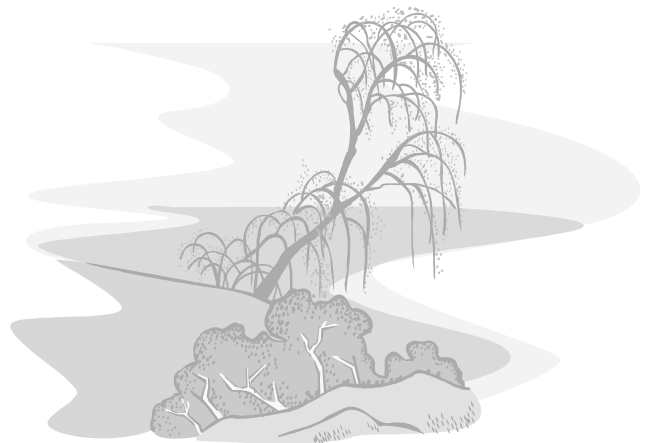
ବହେ ଝରଣାର ଧାର
ଖିଲିଖିଲି ହସ ତାର ।
କାଟେ ମୁଗୁନି ପଥର
ତନୁ ଗିରି କୁମାରୀର ॥

ବଜ୍ରନାଦ ପ୍ରପାତର
ଏ ଯେ କାଳରୂପ ତାର ।
ଲୋଟିବ ମା କୋଳେତାର
ଶତ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଧନୁ ହାର ॥

ନାଦେ ବହେ ନଦୀ ଧାର
କେବେ କନ୍ୟା ଆଳସ୍ୟର ।
ସଦା ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମ ସେମକର
ତାର ସାଗର ପ୍ରିୟର ॥

ଫାଙ୍କଲୀନ, ତା. ୨-୧୯-୨୦୧୧

କାନ୍ତିଲତା ସାହୁ କୁପର୍ବିନୋ , କାଲିଙ୍ଗେଣ୍ଡିଆରେ ନିଜ ପରିବାର
ନେଇ ବାସକରନ୍ତି ।



ଉତ୍ତର ଜୀବନର ଅନୁଚିନ୍ତା

କାନ୍ଧନା ଦାଶ

ବୟସ ଭାରରେ ନଇଁ ଗଲୁଣିରେ ସଜନୀ
ମନଭରି ତତେ କେବେଠୁ ଚିକିଏ ଦେଖିନି ॥

ମନେ ନାହିଁ କେବେ ଆସିଥିଲୁ ହୋଇ କନିଆଁ
ତତେ ଦେଖି ମୁଁ ଭୁଲିଥିଲି ସାରା ଦୁନିଆଁ ॥

ମାଆ ବାପା ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀରେ ମୋ ସଂସାର
'ଲୁଣ' ହେଉ ଅବା 'ଚିନି' ହେଉ ସବୁ ତୋହର ॥

ଏତେ କହି ଲଦିଦେଲି ତୋ ପିଠିରେ ଜଞ୍ଜଳ
ସମ୍ଭାଳି ନେଲୁ ତୁ ନକରି ଚିକିଏ କଟାଳ ॥

ଲୁଣ, ଚିନି ଛତା ବାଲି, ଗୋଡି ଆଉ ଗୋବର
ଉତ୍ତାରି ନେଲୁତୁ ସବୁତକ ବୋଝ ମୋହର ॥

ଫୁଲ ବୁଣିଦେଲୁ ମୋହରି ଛାଲିବା ବାଟରେ
କଖ ଅତେଇ ତୋ ପାଦ ରଖିଦେଲୁ ତା'ପରେ ॥

ଖରା ବରଷାକୁ ପଣତ ଦେଲୁମୋ ମଥାରେ
ତୋହ ଲାଗି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଉଠାଇତାଲିଲି ଉତ୍ତରେ ॥

ମୋହ ପାଇଁ ତୋର ଘଣ୍ଟା କଖ ଆଉ ମିନିଟି
ସକାଳୁ ସଞ୍ଜ ସଞ୍ଜରୁ ହେଉଛି ପାହାନ୍ତି ॥

ତୋହରି କାନ୍ଧରେ ଭରା ଦେଇ ଗଲି ଝପଟି
ପଡିଲୁ ଉଠିଲୁ ଚାହିଁଲିନି ଦଣ୍ଡେ ଲେଉଟି ॥

ମୋ ଖିଆଲରେ ବାଟଚାଲି ହେଲୁ ହାଲିଆ
କିଏ ଜାଣେ କେବେ ବୁଡାଇ ଦେବୁ ମୋ' ନାହା ॥

ସବୁତକ ମୋର ସପନ ପଡିବ ଉଜୁଡି
କୁହୁକ ଅଞ୍ଜନ ଆଖିରୁ ପଡିବ ନେସେତି ॥

ଏଇ କଥା ଭାବି ଦହି ହେଇଯାଏ ମରମ
ଏଇଆକୁ କିଲୋ, କହୁଛି ନିଜର କରମ ॥

ଆଶା ଅବଶୋଷ ଯାହା କିଛି ତୋର ରହିଲା
'ଆର ଜନମକୁ' - ଏଇ ଜୀବନତ ସରିଲା ॥

ବୋଉକୁ ମା' ହେବା ପରେ

ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ

ମାତୃତ୍ୱର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ପରେ ନିରାପଦେ ହଜାଏ ନିଜକୁ ତୋ ଦେହର ସେ ଏକା ଉଷ୍ମତା ଦେହକୁ ମୋ ଅଧିକ ପ୍ରଖର	ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ ଯେବେ ତତେ କରେ ତୋ ଦେହର ଉଷ୍ମତା ଭିତରେ । ଅବ୍ୟାହତ ଅଛି ସବୁକାଳେ ଲାଗେ କିନ୍ତୁ ମା' ହେଲା ପରେ ॥
ଦୀର୍ଘଶ୍ୱାସ ମାରି ମୁହିଁ ଯେବେ ଭିନ୍ନ ସେଇ ମାତୃ ହୃଦନ ଶୁଣେ ପୁଣି ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ବାରି ସୁପ୍ତ ସେଇ କଳକଳ ନାଦ	ମଥା ରଖେ ତୋ ଛାତି ଉପରେ ଶୁଭିଯାଏ ମୋ ଏ କାନରେ । ଝରେ ତୋର ପ୍ରତିଟି କୋଷରେ ହସ୍ତ ଆଜି ମା' ହେଲା ପରେ ॥
ଶୁଭୁଥିଲା କଥା ତୋର କରୁ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ବିପରୀତ ସବୁ ସେଇ ଗାଳି, ନୀତି ଉପଦେଶ ତା' ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି ସବୁ	ବଜୁଥିଲି ଯେବେ ତୋ ପାଖରେ ସେତେବେଳେ ସେଇ ବୟସରେ । ସହାୟକ ସଂସାର ପଥରେ ନିଜେ ଆଜି ମା' ହେଲାପରେ ॥
ଦିବାନିଶି କାନ ତେରୁ ଆଜି ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ତୋ ଆଖି ପିତୁଳା ସେଇ ତୋର ଉକ୍ତା, ଉଦ୍‌ବେଗ କୋଟିନିଧି ପିଲା ଉପସ୍ଥିତି	ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ଆମକୁ ତାରରେ ପ୍ରସାରୀତ ଦେଖିଲେ ପାଖରେ । ପ୍ରବାହିତ ମାତା ଧମନୀରେ ଜାଣୁଅଛି ମା' ହେଲା ପରେ ॥
ଜନ୍ମପୂର୍ବେ ବାନ୍ଧିଥିଲୁ ଗର୍ଭେ ଜନ୍ମପରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ରଖିଅଛୁ ବଦଳୁଛି ମନ ଓ ମଣିଷ ବଦଳେନା କିନ୍ତୁ ମାଆ ମନ	ଦଶମାସ ତୋ ନାଭି ରଜୁରେ ତୋର ସେଇ ପ୍ରେମର ତୋରିରେ । ନିତିଦିନ ସମୟ ଜୁଆରେ ଅନୁଭୂତି ମା' ହେଲା ପରେ ॥

ଲେଖିକା ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ ଉତ୍କଳିନିଆରେ ରହୁଛି । ସେ ନିୟମିତ ଭାବେ ବାର୍ଷିକ ଓସା ପତ୍ରିକାରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବିତା ପ୍ରକାଶିତ କରିଆସୁଛନ୍ତି ।

ଜେମା

ଗଗନ ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ

ଗୋକୁଳାନନ୍ଦ ମନ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଆସିବ ତାର ବୋହୂ,
 ଘର କାମ ଓ ରୋଷେଇ କାମକରିବ ନାହିଁ ଆଉ ।
 ମିଳିଲା ଭିସା ଦିଅଁ ଭରସା ଶୁଣିଲେ ଦୁଃଖ ପରା,
 ବୋହୂ ଆସିଲେ ମଉଜ ହେବ ମନ ଉଲ୍ଲାସ ଭରା ।
 ଦିନ ଆସିଲା ଗୋକୁଳି ଗଲା ଆଣିଲା ବୋହୂ ଘର,
 ଭାରୀ ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ କନକ ଗୋରୀ ନାଆଁଟି ଜେମା ତାର ।
 ଆନନ୍ଦ ଭରେ ବେସମେଷ୍ଟରେ ରହିଲେ ଭତା ଦୁହେଁ,
 ଗୋକୁଳି ଯାଏ ଚାକିରୀ କରି ଜେମା ଏକେଲା ରହେ ।
 ପାଖରେ ଥିଲେ ପତିଶା ଜଣେ ନାମ ଅଗଣି ଦାସ,
 ଆଗରୁ ଆସି କାନାଡା ଦେଶେ କରୁଥିଲେ ସେ ବାସ ।
 ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଯୋଗୁଁ ହୋଇଲା ଚିହ୍ନା ବଢ଼ିଲା ପ୍ରିୟା ପ୍ରିତୀ,
 ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖରେ ସମୟ ବିତେ ସତେ କୁଟୁମ୍ବୁ ଜାତି ।
 ଛୁଟି ଦିନରେ ନିଜ ଭିତରେ ଭୋଜିର ଆୟୋଜନ,
 କରନ୍ତି ବସି ମଉଜେ ହସି କାଟନ୍ତି ସୁଖେ ଦିନ ।
 ଅଗଣି ଦାସେ ଧାର୍ମିକ ଲୋକ କରନ୍ତି ପୂଜା ପୂଜି,
 ଛୁଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ ମାଛ ମାଉଁସ ଯେଉଁଠି ହେଲେ ଭୋଜି ।
 ପିଆଜ ଛାତ ରସୁଣ ଛାତ ପଶିନି ଜମା ଘରେ,
 ସବୁ ଦିଅଁଙ୍କ ଅଟନ୍ତି ଭକ୍ତ ପୂଜନ୍ତି ଭକ୍ତି ଭରେ ।
 ରହିଛି ନାମ ସମାଜେ ତାଙ୍କ କରୁଥିବାରୁ ପୂଜା,
 ସବୁ ପୂଜାରେ ସବା ଆଗରେ ତାଙ୍କର ହୁଏ ଖୋଜା ।
 ଗୋକୁଳି-ଜେମା କାଟିଲେ ଦିନ ଦିହେଁ ଦୁହେଁଙ୍କୁ ପାଲ,
 ସତରେ ଅବା ଗଢ଼ିଛି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଯତନ କରି ସାଇଁ ।
 ଜେମାଟି ଭାରି ପତି ସୁଆଗି ଗେହେଲ କହେ କଥା,
 ଗୋକୁଳି ଆଗେ କହଇ ହସି କଥାରେ ଯୋଡ଼ି ନଥା ।
 ଭୁରୁ ନଚେଇ କଟି ହଲେଇ ପତିର ମନ ରସେ,
 ସରମ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦିଏ ଅଜାତି ସୁହାଗ ଯେତେ, ପାଶେ ।
 ଗୋକୁଳି-ଜେମା ବଜାର କରି ଯାଆନ୍ତି ଛୁଟି ଦିନେ,
 ନୂଆ ଦେଶରେ ଫେସନ ଲୁଗା ଦେଖିଲେ ଜେମା କିଶେ ।
 ଅଗଣି ଦାସେ ଦୁଇ ଜଣଙ୍କୁ ଗାଡ଼ିରେ କେବେ ନେଇ,
 କରନ୍ତି ଚିହ୍ନା ଭାରତୀୟଙ୍କୁ କେବେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ।
 ଭାବନ୍ତି ଦୁହେଁ ଅଗଣି ଦାସେ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଲୋକ ଭଲ,
 ଅଜଣା ଦେଶେ ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତେ ହୋଇବ କିଏ ତୁଲ?

X X X

ଖୁସିର ଦିନ ଉଭେଇ ଯାଏ ପାଣି ଫେଟକା ପରି,
 ଶୁଣିଲେ ଏକ ଦିନର କଥା ହାତ ଉଠଇ ଥରି ।

ଗୋକୁଳି ଦିନେ କାମରୁ ଫେରି ପଶିଲା ଘରେ ଆସି,
 ମାରିବ ଥକା କାଟିବ ସଞ୍ଜ ଜେମା ପାଖରେ ବସି ।
 ଦେଖିଲା କିନ୍ତୁ ଶୋଇବା ଘରେ ଜେମା ରହିଛି ଶୋଇ,
 ତକିଆ ପରେ ମୁହଁକୁ ମାତି କାନ୍ଦୁଛି କଇଁ କଇଁ ।
 ଗୋକୁଳି ପାଶେ ପଚାରି ବସେ 'କହଲୋ ଆଲୋ ଜେମା,
 କାନ୍ଦୁଛୁ କିଆଁ ? କି ହେଲା ତୋର ? ନରୁଢ଼ି ପାରେ ଜମା' ।
 'କହିବି କିସ ଅଲୀଭୁକ ମୁଁ କବାଟ ଦେଲି ଖୋଲି,
 ଅଗଣି ଦାସ ଆସିଲେ ପଶି ଏକୁଟିଆ ମୁଁ ଥିଲି ।
 ଭାବି ନଥିଲି ଜୀବନେ କେବେ ଏମିତି ଲୋକ ବୋଲି,
 କହିବା ଠାରୁ ମରିବା ଭଲ ଆଜି କୁଳଟା ହେଲି ।'
 ଏତକ କହି ନିରିହା ଜେମା ପତିଲା ତଳେ ଟଳି,
 ସତରେ ଅବା ଅନ୍ତର ଯାକ ଯାଉଛି ପୋତି ଜଳି ।
 ନୟନୁ ତା'ର ଲୋତକ ଧାର ଶାବଣ ଧାରା ପରି,
 ତୁହାକୁ ତୁହା ଅନାୟସରେ ଭୁଲିରେ ଗଲା ଝରି ।
 ଘଟଣା ଜାଣି ଗୋକୁଳାନନ୍ଦ ରାଗରେ ଗଲା ଥରି,
 'ମାରିବି ନିଶ୍ଚେ ଅଗଣି ଦାସେ ଯିବିନି ଜମା ତରି ।'
 କାନ ମୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ବାହାରି ଗଲା ଜୁକୁଜୁଳିଆ ପୋକ,
 ଦିନର ଥକା ପଚାରେ କିଏ ଉଭେଇ ଗଲା ଭୋକ ।
 ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀଙ୍କୁ କହିଲା ତାକି କରିଲା ଆଲୋଚନା,
 କେଉଁ ଦୋଷରୁ ନିରୀହା ଜେମା ପାଇଲା ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନା ?
 ଶୁଣିଲେ ଧୀରେ ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀଏଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଦେଲେ ହାତ,
 ଭାବିଲେ ମନେ କେତେବା ମିଛ କେତେବା ପୁଣି ସତ ।
 ଅଗଣି ଦାସେ ଧାର୍ମିକ ଲୋକ ଏ ଭଳି କାମ ଜମା,
 କରିବେ ନାହିଁ ହୁଏ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ମିଛ କହୁଛି ଜେମା ।
 ଗୋକୁଳି ଶୁଣି ଦେଲା ଧମକ ଯିବ ପୁଲିସ ଥାନା,
 ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀଏଁ ବୁଝାଇ ବସି କରିଲେ ତାକୁ ମନା ।
 'ପାଇବୁ ଅବା ଏଥିରୁ କିଛି କିଏ ରେ ତୋର ସାକ୍ଷୀ ?
 ଘଟିବା ବେଳେ ଘଟଣା ଏହି ଥିଲା କି କେହି ଦେଖି ?
 ତୁଛାକୁ ଖାଲି ଜେମାଟି ତୋର ହୋଇବ ବଦନାମ,
 ଭାବୁଛୁ କିରେ ପରିଣାମଟି? ହେଲା କି ମତିଭ୍ରମ ?
 କହିଲେ ପୁଣି 'ଅଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ ଭାରିଜା ପିଲା ଛୁଆ,
 ମୁହଁକୁ ଟେକି ସମାଜେ ପୁଣି ହୋଇବେ ସେତ ଠିଆ ।
 ଜାଣିବେ ଯଦି ଘଟଣା ଏହି ଟେକିବେ ଲୋକେ ନାକ,
 ତାଙ୍କର ଦୋଷ କହବା କିସ ଶୁଣିବେ କଥା ଯାକ ।'
 ଶୁଣି ଏ ବାଣୀ ଗୋକୁଳି-ଜେମା ରହିଲେ ତୁନି ହୋଇ,
 ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଆଉଁସି, ସମାଜ ସାଥେ ଆଉ ମିଶିଲେ ନାହିଁ ।

ସେହି ଦିନଠୁଁ ସରମେ ଜେମା ପାରେନି କହି କଥା,
ବୁକୁଟା କିନ୍ତୁ କୁହୁଲୁଥାଏ ମରମେ ଭରା ବ୍ୟଥା ।
ସତରେ ଅବା ଚେରର ଧାରେ ମାରିଲା କିଏ ଛୁରୀ ,
ଗଜରୁ ଥିବା କୁସୁମ ଲତା ସହସା ଗଲା ମରି,
ସମାଜ ଲୋକେ କିଛି ଦିନରେ ଗୋକୁଳି-ଜେମା କିଏ?
କୁଆଡେ ଗଲେ, କାହିଁକି ଗଲେ ଭୁଲିଲେ ଛାଏଁ ଛାଏଁ ।

ଅଗଣି ଦାସେ ପୁଲାଇ ଛାଡି ସମାଜ ସାଙ୍ଗ ଧରି,
ଧର୍ମ ନାମରେ ଖୁସି ମନରେ ରହିଲେ ପୂଜା କରି ।
ଧର୍ମ ଭୀରୁଏଁ ଧରମ ନାମେ ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତେ ମିଶି,
ପାଳିଲେ ଯେତେ ପୁଣ୍ୟ ପରବ ହୋଇଲେ ହସ ଖୁସି ।

Gagan Panigrahi lives in Toronto with his wife Sabita and two children, Soman and Ineka. He has interest in writing poems, paintings and acting in drama .

ଚାରି ପାହାଚ କାନ୍ତିଲତା ସାହୁ

ବିଚିତ୍ର ଜଗତ ବିଚିତ୍ର ମାନବ
ସବୁ ଇଶ୍ଵରଙ୍କ ଲୀଳା ,
ପ୍ରାରବ୍ଧ କର୍ମକୁ ଆବୋରି ବସିଣ
ମନୁଷ୍ୟଙ୍କ ହୁଏ ଖେଳା । (୧)
ଜନମ ହୋଇଲେ ଶିଶୁ ସେ ବୋଲାଏ
ଦେହ ଓ ମନ ନିର୍ମଳ ,
ଶିଶୁଟିର ହସ ଦୋରଟି ଭାଷାକୁ
ସମସ୍ତେ କରନ୍ତି କୋଳ । (୨)
ଦିନ ଅତିକ୍ରମ ବୟସ ବଢ଼ଇ
ଶୈଶବ ହୁଏ ଅତୀତ ,
କିଶୋର ଅବସ୍ଥା ପର୍ଦାପଣ କରେ
ଶିଖିବାକୁ ତ ବହୁତ । (୩)
ଘରର ନୀତିକୁ ସମାଜର ରୀତି
ସବୁହେଲେ ଠିକ୍ଠାକ୍ ,
ମୂଳଦୁଆ ପୁଣି ସବଳ ହୋଇବ
ଜାତି,ପରିବାର ଟେକ । (୪)
ପାହାଚ ପାହାଚ ଚଢ଼ିଚଢ଼ି ପୁଣ
ପହଞ୍ଚିଯାଏ ଯୁବାରେ ,
ମନ କରି ଦୃଢ଼ ଜୀବନକୁ ଗଢ଼ି
ନିଜର ସଂସାର କରେ । (୫)
ଏହି ସମୟଟି ବହୁତ ଜଟିଳ
ସମାଜେ କେତେ ଲଢ଼େଇ ,



ମନ,ବଳ,ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଏକାଠି ହୋଇଲେ
ସହଜେ ଯିବୁ ଆଗେଇ । (୬)
ଭଲ କାମ କଲେ ଲଭଇ ପ୍ରଶଂସା
ମନ୍ଦରେ ନିନ୍ଦା ଅରଜେ ,
ଯୁବା ବୟସର ରକତ ସତେଜ
କ୍ଷଣିକେ ଆତ୍ମା ଗରଜେ । (୭)
ବାହୁକୁ ବିସ୍ତାରି ହରଷ ମନରେ
ସର୍ବଦିଗେ ଯାଏ ମାତି ,
ସଂସାର ଜଞ୍ଜଳ ଖାତିର ନ କରି
ମନ ଗାତି ଯାଏ ଚଢ଼ି । (୮)
ଭୁଲିଯାଏ ସେ'ଯେ ବୃଦ୍ଧା ଅବସ୍ଥାକୁ
ଦୁଆରେ ଆସି ଜାଗ୍ରତ ,
ଦେହ ହୁଏ କ୍ଷୀଣ ମନ ହୁଏ ଖଟା
ମୋହରେ ଖାଲି ଆସନ୍ତ । (୯)
ବେଳୁ ସାବଧାନ ହୋଇଥିବୁ ଯଦି
କରି ପଢ଼ୁଙ୍କ ଆସରା ,
ଶେଷ ଦିନେ ଭଜି ତାଙ୍କ ଗୁଣଗାନ
ସୁଖେ ଯିବ ଦିନ ପରା । (୧୦)
ଶୈଶବ,କିଶୋର ଯୁବା ଓ ବୃଦ୍ଧକୁ
ମାନବ ନିଷ୍ଠେ ଭୋଗିବ ,
କେହି ହେଲେ ରକ୍ଷା ନ ପାଇବେ ପୁଣ
ଚାରି ଅବସ୍ଥାର ଠାବ । (୧୧)

କାନ୍ତିଲତା ସାହୁ କୁପରଚିନୋ , କାଲିଙ୍ଗେଣ୍ଡିଆରେ ନିଜ ପରିବାର ନେଇ ବାସକରନ୍ତି ।

ତରି ଯାଆନ୍ତି ଇଶ୍ଵର

ପ୍ରତିଭା ଶତପଥୀ

ଷାଠିଏଟି ଆଲୋକ ବର୍ଷରେ ପାଦପୋଇ
ସ୍ଵୀଲୋକଟେ ଅଣ୍ଟାଳି ହୁଉଛି
ଛକଜାଗାରେ
ଏତେବଡ଼ ମହାଦେଶର ଦକ୍ଷିଣରେ ।

ଗହଗହ ମାଣିକ୍ୟରେ ବଜାର
ପୃଥୀଟାକୁ ବିକି ଭାଗି ଖାଇଯିବାକୁ
ତିଆର ଲୋକେ
ଚାଲିଯାଉଛନ୍ତି ବାଟ ଭାଗି,
ଯା ଆସ କରୁଛନ୍ତି
ଦିନକୁ ଲକ୍ଷେ ସୌଦାଗର, ସେଇଠି
ସ୍ଵୀଲୋକଟେ ଧରି ହୁଉଛି
ତା'ର ବୋଲି ଘରଟେ ଅଛି କୋଉଠି
ସେ ବାଟ ଖୋଜୁଛି-

କେଇହାତ ଛତାରେ
ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ଭାଗିପଡ଼ୁଛି ଅସରନ୍ତି ନୀଳ
ପ୍ରବାଳ ଲତାରେ ଧକ୍ ଧକ୍ ହୁଉଛି ଜୀବନ
ସଂସାରର ଖରାତରାକୁ ଅଂଗେ ନିଭେଇ
ସ୍ଵୀଲୋକଟି ଫେରିଯିବ, କହୁଛି-
କୋଉଠି ତାର ଘରବଖରାଏ ଅଛି,
ଅଛି ସତ୍ୟର କଷଟି
ସେଥିରେ ନିଃଶ୍ଵାସକୁ ତାର
କ୍ଷଣକୁ କ୍ଷଣ ସେ ପରଖିଛି ।

ପାଗଳୀ ନା ବିଚପୀ
ନା ସିନ୍ଧ ଦେବୀ
କିଏ କେଜାଣି ସେ ମାଇପୀ
ତାକୁ ରାସ୍ତା ଧରାଇବାକୁ
ଠିଆ ହେବାକୁ ତା ପାଖରେ
ଇଶ୍ଵର ବି ତରିଯାଆନ୍ତି ।

ପ୍ରତିଭା ଶତପଥୀ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଜଣେ ଜଣାଶୁଣା ଲେଖିକା ଓ
ଅବସର ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପ୍ରାଧ୍ୟାପିକା ।

ବୋଉ

ମଧୁସୂତା କୋଟା

ବୋଉ,
ସଞ୍ଜା ତୁ ହିଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ସୃଷ୍ଟି
ଚିନ୍ତା, ଦୁଃଖିନ୍ତାରୁ ମୁକ୍ତ ପବିତ୍ର କୋଳଟିଏ
ଅତୀତ, ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଓ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ
ନିଜପାଇଁ ନିଜ ତିଆରିର ସ୍ଵର୍ଗଟିଏ ।

ତୋ ପାଇଁ ତୋ ଶରୀର ରକ୍ତ ଓ ମାଂସର
ମୋ ପାଇଁ, ମୋ ଚିନ୍ତା ଓ ଚେତନାର
ଆଲୋକିତ ପଥଟିଏ,
ନାଲି ଧଡ଼ିଆ କଣ୍ଠରେ ବା ପାଟ ଓ ମଠାରେ
ତୁ କିନ୍ତୁ.....
ସ୍ଵୟଂ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନିର୍ମଳ ଭାବ ମୁର୍ତ୍ତିଟିଏ
ପାତଃ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଉଷ୍ମତା
ନିଶାନ୍ତ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଚନ୍ଦ୍ର କୋମଳତା
ଜାତକର ଜନ୍ମରୁ ନିଃସ୍ଵାର୍ଥପର ହାତଟିଏ
ଅକୁହା ଓଠର ପ୍ରଥମ ଭାଷାଟିଏ ।

ତୁ ମନେପଡ଼ିବାର ବସ୍ତୁ ନୁହେଁ
ମୋ ହୃଦୟର କଥାବସ୍ତୁ
ରକ୍ତଦେଇ ସହିଲୁ ମୋ ଜନ୍ମ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା...
କିନ୍ତୁ ନେଇକି ପାରିଲି ତୋର ଅନ୍ତିମ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା..?

କୃତଜ୍ଞତାର ବିଷ ଜ୍ଵାଳାରେ
ଆମେ ଜଳୁଥିବୁ ଜନ୍ମ ଜନ୍ମାନ୍ତରକୁ
କେହି ନାହିଁ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ଅନ୍ତରର କଥା ।
କେବଳ 'ତୁ ହିଁ ତୁ' ବୁଝୁ
ମୋ ହସ ଓ ଲୁହକୁ
ଅନ୍ତଃପେଟି ତୋ ଜନ୍ମତଳୁ
ତୁ ନିଜେହିଁ ନିଜସ୍ଵ..
ନିରୁତ୍ତା ବୋଉ ଟିଏ ମୋର ।

ମଧୁସୂତା କୋଟା ସ୍ଵାମୀ ନରେନ୍ଦ୍ର କୋଟାଙ୍କ ସହ ମାକୋମ୍ବ ,
ମିଡ଼ିଗାନ୍ରେ ବାସ କରନ୍ତି ।

୪ ପାରିର ଲୋକ

ସୁବାଶ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଶତପଥୀ

ଶୀତର ସକାଳୁ ଦେଖେ
ମୋହ ଭଳି ଶତ ଶତ ମୁଖା ପିନ୍ଧା ଲୋକ
ଶିଶିରର ଶିର ପରେ ଦେଇ ପଦ ଚାଲିଥାନ୍ତି ସୁଖେ ,
ଅନନ୍ତ ସୁଗର ବାଜି ସତେ ଅବା ଜଠରର ଭୋକ
ପ୍ରସରିଛି ମନଭାଗେ , ମିଷ୍ଟ ମଧୁଭରା କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଖ ।

ସିନ୍ଧୁସମ ଉଦାରତା, ଶିଶୁସମ ଶାନ୍ତ ସରଳତା
ଦୂରେ କାହିଁ ବହୁଦୂରେ, ଅତୀତରେ ଆସିଅଛି ଛାତି ,
ତନ୍ଦ୍ରାବିଷ୍ଣୁ ଏହି ମନ ଖୋଜେ ଆଜି ଦୂରନ୍ତ କୁଟୀର ,
ନୁଆଁଶିଆ ଚାଳଘର ,ବାଲ୍ୟସ୍ମୃତି ଅଛି ଯହିଁ ଜଡ଼ି ।

ଅଜ୍ଞବଜ୍ଞ ଗ୍ରାମ ପଥ, ବେନି ପାଶେ ଚାଳର ଛପର-
ଶିଖର-ଶୋଭିତ-ଶୋଭା ସେ ସରଳ ଗ୍ରାମବାସୀ ବାସ
ଦେଉଥିଲା ହସ୍ତାକ୍ଷର ସଭ୍ୟତାର, ସେଇ ବାଲ୍ୟ କାଳେ
ଭରୁଥିଲା ପୁଣି ମନେ ଚୁଡ଼ି ଆଉ ସନ୍ତୋଷର ହସ ।

ଦୂର ତାଳବଣ ପୁଣି ନାତିଦୂର ଚିହ୍ନା ଆମକୁଞ୍ଜ
ଦେଉଥିଲା ପରିଚୟ ସେ ଗାଁର, ଭରୁଥିଲା ମନ,
ଉଲ୍ଲସିତ ଥିଲା ତନୁ, ଶ୍ରାବଣର ନଦୀ ସମ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଛଳଛଳ
କଳକଳ ଦିବ୍ୟନାଦେ ଭରୁଥିଲା ମନ ଆଉ ପ୍ରାଣ ।

ପ୍ରସ୍ତରର ଅନୁକ ସେ ପୁରାତନ ଦେବତା ମନ୍ଦିର ,
ଗ୍ରାମର କୋଣରେ ପରା ବାଙ୍କୁଥିଲା ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତିର ହସ
ଭବାର୍ଣ୍ଣବ-ବୀତି-ବାତ-ପ୍ରସାଳିତ ମର୍ତ୍ତ୍ୟର ମାନବ,
ଯାହା ବଳେ ପିଉଥିଲା ସହର୍ଷରେ ସଂସାରର ବିଷ ।

ପବିତ୍ର ସେ ଘଣ୍ଟଧ୍ୱନି, ପୁତ୍ରସ୍ତବ ଅନନ୍ତ ଓଁକାର ,
ଶିହ୍ୱରିତ କରୁଥିଲା ତନମନ ସଞ୍ଜ ଓ ସକାଳେ,
ଆତ୍ମାର ଅମର ତାକେ ଧାଉଁଥିଲେ ସେ ଗ୍ରାମର ଜନ
ଦେବତାର ବେଦୀ ପାଶେ , ପୁଣ୍ୟଆଶେ ବେଳେ ଓ ଅବେଳେ ।

ଅନନ୍ତ ଶୋଭାର ସିନ୍ଧୁ, ରାଶି ରାଶି ବୀତିର ବଲରୀ ,
ଶୋରାଷ ପୁଲର କ୍ଷେତେ ସୁଖେ ଅବା ଭାଙ୍ଗୁଥିଲା ଢେଉ ,

ଶ୍ୟାମଳ ଶ୍ରୀହସ୍ତେ ଧରି ଅଳଙ୍କାର ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣର ଶତ ,
ପ୍ରକୃତି କି ଅର୍ପୁଥିଲା ଦେବତାର ଶ୍ରୀପଦରେ ଆଉ ।

ଦୂର ତାଳବଣ କୋଣେ , ସୁରୁଜର ରକ୍ତ ଲାଷା ଛବି ,
ଆଜୁଥିଲା ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସେ ଗ୍ରାମର ଚାରୁ ଚିତ୍ରପଟ ,
ପ୍ରୀତିର ପୁଲକ ଭରା , ମୁଠା ମୁଠା ମମତାରେ ମଖା ,
ଅଭାବକୁ ବହୁଦୂର ସତ୍ୟ , କିନ୍ତୁ ଭାବକୁ ନିକଟ ।

କାମନାର ବହୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଶିଖା ଶତ ତୋଳି ଏକ ଦିନ
ବିଭ୍ରାନ୍ତ କରିଲା ପରା ସେ ସରଳ ଶାନ୍ତ ସୌମ୍ୟ ନରେ,
ଲୋଭ ମୋହ ଅହମିକା ଅହର୍ନିଶ କରିଲା ଗୁଞ୍ଜନ
କର୍ଷେ ତାର, ସେ ଚଳିଲା ଚମକି ସେ ନଗ୍ନ ନିଆଁଧାରେ ।

ସ୍ୱଶ୍ରମେ ତୋଳିଲା ସିଏ, ସେ ନଗରେ ରମ୍ୟ ଅଜାଳିକା ,
ସୁରମ୍ୟ ସୁଭଜ ସିନା ହେଲା କିନ୍ତୁ ଚଉପାଶ ପ୍ରାଚୀରରେ ବନ୍ଦୀ,
ଅନନ୍ତର ତାକ ଆଉ ଶୁଣିଲାନି କର୍ଷ କୁହରେ ,
ଶାଶ୍ୱତ ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଭୁଲି ହେଲା ଖାଲି ବିଷୟରେ ଧରି ।

ଆଜି ଏତେ ଦିନେ, ଏ ପାରିରେ ଏ ପଟ ଦୁନିଆ ,
କାଳ କବଳିତ ତାର ବୁକୁତଟେ କରେ ଉପହାସ
ଏଠି ଖାଲି ରକ୍ତ ଚାପ, ବର୍ଷିତ ଏ ରୂପିର ଶର୍କରା
ତନୁ ମନୁ ପୋଛିନିଏ ପଲକରେ ଯେତେ ଅଛି ହସ ।

ଦେହ ପାଇଁ ଏତେ ଲୋଭ, ଯାରେ ମୁହଁ ଅର୍ଜିଥିଲି ଧନ ,
ଲୋଭ ପଙ୍କ ସରୋବରେ ପଶିଥିଲି ମୁଁ ବହୁକୁମର !
ନାରୁଥିଲା ଯେଉଁଦିନ ଚକ୍ଷୁ ଦେଶେ ଜନକ କଙ୍କଣ ,
ଘାରିଥିଲା ନେତ୍ରପଥ, ଲୋଭ ମୋହ ଶତର ସାଗର ।

ସେହି ଧନ ସେ ଉଷ୍ମତା ଛାଡ଼ି ଆଜି ଶୀତର ସକାଳେ ,
ଜୀବନର ସତ୍ୟ ଖୋଜେ ଆଜି ଏଠି ଏ ପାରିର ଲୋକ ,
'କମାଇଛି ଧନ ଯାହା ଉପଭୋଗେ ନାହିଁ ତ ସାଧନ ,
ଉପଭୋଗେ ଥାଇ ଘେରା ମେଖେ ନାହିଁ ଜଠରର ଭୋକ '

ମହାନଦୀ ବିହାର, କଟକ । ଲେଖକ ସିଦ୍ଧିକେଟ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ୍ ର ଜଣେ ଅବସରପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧକ ଅଟନ୍ତି ।

ଆଉ ତମ ନାଁରେ କେତେ କବିତା ଲେଖିବି...

ଶ୍ରୀବତୀ ପାତ୍ର

ଆଉ ତମ ନାଁରେ କେତେ କବିତା ଲେଖିବି,
ଏବେ ତ ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ର ବେଳ..
ଅଗଣିତ ପୃଷ୍ଠାର ଅସଂଖ୍ୟ ଉନ୍ମାଦନା,
ବେଗହୀନ ଆବେଗ ..

ଏମିତି ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦିନ,
ଯେବେ ମହୁମାଛି ମହୁ ଆଣେନା
ଖାଲି ସ୍ମୃତି ଆଣେ,
କୋଉ ଗୋଟେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଫୁଲ ପାଖେ
ଅଟକି ଯାଇଥିବା ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଖୋଜିବସେ..

ଯେବେ ବାଗେଇ ଜାଣି ଜାଣି ଅବାଟ ରେ ଯାଏ
ହଜିବାର ଦୁଃଖ ନଥାଏ,
କୋଉଗୋଟେ ଗଳି ରେ ତା ମନ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସେ
ସେଇ ଝରକା ଫାକ ରୁ ଦିସୁଥିବା ଆଖି..
ଯେମିତି ତାକୁ ଅଟକି ଯିବାକୁ କହେ!
ସେଇ ଦିନ ମୋର ତୁମ ସାଂଗେ ଦେଖା..

ହେଲେ ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ସିନା ସମାପ୍ତି ଖୋଜେ,
ସବୁକଥାରେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଛେଦ ଲୋଡ଼େ..
କୋଉ ପ୍ରାଗ୍-ସମ୍ପତ୍ତିହାସିକ ବେଳର ସାଥୀ ଆମେ
କବିତା ହିଁ ଆମ ସହଚରୀ
ଅନନ୍ତ ଅବିନାଶୀ ...

ବେଷ୍ଟନଭିଲଲ୍ ସହର,
ଆରକନ୍ଧା ରାଜ୍ୟ.



ଫିଙ୍ଗି ହୁଏନା

ପ୍ରତିଭା ଶତପଥୀ

କିଛି ଫିଙ୍ଗିଦେଇ ଯାଇ ହୁଏନା ।
ଏମିତିକି
ମୁଖା କାଢ଼ିସାରି
ତିରା ଶାମୁକା ଫଳକୁ ବି ।

ହାତଧରି ବାଟ ଚାଲୁଥିବା
ରାଜକୁମାରୀକୁ
ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇ ଯାଇ ହୁଏନା ଜଙ୍ଗଲରେ
ଅଧାବସ୍ତ୍ରରେ
ନହେଲେ
ପ୍ରାୟତଃ କରିବାକୁ ହୁଏ
ମୁହଁ ଲୁଚାଇ ଘୋଡ଼ାଶାଳରେ ।

କୌଣସି ସଂପର୍କକୁ କାଟିଦେଇ ହୁଏନା,
ଶତ୍ରୁ ବି ମନେପଡ଼ୁଥାଏ
ଥରକୁ ଥର
ଥାଏ ବି ଗୋଟାଏ ଟାଣ
ଗୋଟେ ଆକର୍ଷଣ
ଶତ୍ରୁତାର ।

ଏମିତିକି
ଫଳଠାରୁ ତେମ୍ପକୁ ବି ଛିଣ୍ଡାଇ
ଫିଙ୍ଗିଦେଇ ହୁଏନା
ଘୋଡ଼ି ସେଠି
ଫିଙ୍ଗିବାର, ଛାଡ଼ିଯିବାର
ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଜାଗା ଥାଏ ଗୋଟାଏ-
ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ଆମ୍ବୁଗାକୁଆକୁ
ଫିଙ୍ଗି ଦିଆଯାଏ ଖତଗଦାରେ
ଘୋଡ଼ି ସେଠି ନୁହେଁ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ତୁମେ
ତୁମେ ଯେମିତି ମତେ
ଅତୀତ ଧକ୍କାଟେ ଦେଇ
ଫିଙ୍ଗିଦେଇ କୋଳରୁ
ଖୋଲାଖୋଲି ରାସ୍ତାକଡ଼କୁ
ମଣିଷ ଫିଙ୍ଗିଦେଇ ପାରେନାହିଁ
ସେମିତି
ଆପଣାର ଶତ୍ରୁକୁ ।

ନୌକା ରେ କେତେ କଣା ଲେ ସାରିଆ ବିଶ୍ୱଜୀତ ମିଶ୍ର

ବାପ ଘରୁ ଯେ ଶୁଣୁର ଘର କାହିଁ କେତେ ଦୂର
ଆସିଥିଲି ମନେ ଭାବି ଭାବି ଗଢ଼ିବି ଏକ ପୋଲ ।
ମୁଁ ନୁହେଁ ଏକା ଯିଏ ଭାବିଛି ଏହା ମନେ ମନେ
ମୋ ସାଂଗେ ଅଛନ୍ତି କେତେ ଆହୁରି ସୃଜନେ ।
“ଆକାଶ କଇଁଆ ଚିଲିକା ମାଛ”, ପୋଲ ଅଭିଳାଷା ରେ ରହିଲୁ
ଦୂର ଦୁରନ୍ତ ରୁ ଚାହିଁ ଚାହିଁ ବସି ଅଶା ର ଉଦ୍ରେକ ନୋହିଲୁ ।
ଆଜି ବସିଛି ତୋ’ ନାଆ ରେ ନାଉରୀ ନେଇଆ ମୋ ବାପ ଘରୁ
ତୋ’ ନାଆ ଯେ ମନୁରି ଚାଲେ ନପଞ୍ଚିତ୍ର ଦିନ ସରୁ ସରୁ ।
ଏ କଣ ନାଉରୀ ତୋ’ ନାଆ ରେ ଲୋକ ହେଲେଣି ଅନେକ
ହେଲେ ଅକାତ ପାଣି ବାହିବକୁ ନାହିଁ କେହି ତୋର ସେବକ ।
ରହି ରହି ଘଡ଼ ଘଡ଼ି ସାଂଗେ ମାଡ଼ି ଆସେ ମେଘ ଘନେଇ
ତା’ ସାଂଗକୁ ବାଆ ବତାସ ଯେ ବହେ ନାହିଁ ନ ଥାଇ ।
ଧୀର ପାଣି ପଥର କାଟେ” ଭାବିକି ବାହୁ କିରେ ଭାଇ
ଏ ଝଡ଼ ଝଞ୍ଜା ରେ ତୁ କି ପାରିବୁ ସେ ପାରେ ପହଂଗୁଇ ?
ଆରେ ଆରେ ଏ କି ହେଲୁ ନାଆ ରେ ଆଶୁଏ ପାଣି
ନାଆ ରେ ତୋର ନାଉରୀଭାଇରେ କଣା ଅଜସ୍ର ଅଜାଣି ।
କାହିଁ ବାକୁ ପାଣି ଲୁଗେ ବେଶି ବଳ କେମିତି ବାହିବୁ ନାଆ
ଏଭଳି ପାଗରେ ଫଟା ନୌକା ଯେ କେହେବ ତୋହର ସାହା ?
ଆସ ସବାରୀ ସଭିଏଁ ମିଶି ପାଣି ଦେବା ଡଂଗା ରୁ କାହିଁ
କୁଳକୁ ଫେରି ଏଇ ଡଂଗା ଚିକୁ ନେଇ ଆଣିବା ସଜାଡ଼ି ।
ସେଇଠୁ ସିନା ଡଂଗାରେ ବସି ଯିବା ବୁଲି ବାପ ଘର
ନେଇ ଆସିବା ସେଇଠୁ ଭରି ଦରବ ଅସୁମାର ।
ମିଳି ମିଶି ଡଂଗାଟି ସଜାଡ଼ି ପାରିଲେ ସାହାସ ହୋଇବ ବଡ଼
ଦିନେ ମିଶି ଥିଲେ ଆମ ପୋଲ ମଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ପାରିବ ଯୋଗାଡ଼ ।
ବସ ନାହିଁ ଖାଲି ଅଗଢ଼ା ପୋଲ କଥା ମନେ ଭାବି ଭାବି
ଅସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ କିଛି ଅଛି ଯଦି ପାଖେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସର ଚାନ୍ଦି ।

Biswajit Mishra, an accountant by profession, lives in Mississauga, Canada with his wife Bharati, daughter Sukanya and son Devidutta. His interests are community volunteering, cooking, reading and listening to music. He is the current chairperson of the Orissa Society of Canada.

ଅସ୍ତରାଗ ର ରାଗିଣୀ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନାୟକ

ଅସ୍ତରାଗ ର ରାଗିଣୀ ଗୋ କୁହ,
ଉଦୟ କି ହେବ ନାହିଁ?
ପୂର୍ବ ଆକାଶେ ନୁତନ ସକାଳ,
ଆଉ ପଞ୍ଜିମ-ରଜନୀ ନାହିଁ …

ନା’ ତୁମ ରୁବାଇ, ଓମର ଖୟାମ ର
ନା ସଲିମ ର ‘ଅନାରକଲି,
ନା’ ସାହାଜାନଙ୍କର, ମମ୍ତାଜ ତୁମେ
ତୁମେ ଏକ, କବିର କଲ୍ଲନା ଖାଲି ।

’ତା-ଭୀନ୍ସି ତୁମକୁ, ଆଁକି ପାରି ନାହିଁ
ମୋନାଲିସା ହସ ଦେଇ,
କବି କଲ୍ଲନା ରେ ରଚିତ ତୁମକୁ
ପାଗଳାମି କେତେ ଦେଇ ॥

ନା ସଧବା ସାଜୀର ମନ୍ଦାର ତୁମେ
ନା ବିଧବା ତରାତ ତୁମେ
ସାଗୁଆ ସ୍ୱାହୀ ର, ପରସ କୁ ନେଇ
ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଲାପି କାଗଜ ତୁମେ

ମାଆ ଝୁଆଟ ହୋଇ ରହି ଥିଲ
କାରାଗାର ର ବସ୍ତ୍ରକଳେ
ଅସହାୟ ସ୍ତନ, ରହିଥିଲା ଝୁଲି
ଏକ କଇଦି ପୋସାକ ତଳେ

ମହିଆନ ତୁମ ଆଖି ପଲକରେ
ସାଜେ, ପିରତି ଆଙ୍ଗନ କେତେ
ସେହି ଆଙ୍ଗନରେ, ଥାଇ ପୁଣି ମୁହିଁ
ଅଖୋଯା, ଅଲୋଡ଼ା ମୁଁ ଯେ……

Surya Nayak, writes both in English & Oriya. He has written 11 books in poetry, and has published several Oriya songs in form of CDs and audio cassettes. He regularly contributes to OSA Journals. He lives in Maryland with his wife Sujata.

ସୁଖ ଓ ଦୁଃଖ ଦିହେଁ ସାଥୀ

ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର

ହେ ପ୍ରଭୁ, କରୁଣାକର ?
 ହେ ମନୁଆ ଠାକୁର ?
 ଖୋଜିଲି ମୁଁ ଏଠି ସେଠି
 ତୁମେ ଯେ କେଉଁଠି ?
 ବାହୁଁଲି ମୁଁ ଏଣେ ତେଣେ
 ସବୁ କୋଣେ, ପ୍ରତିକ୍ଷଣେ
 ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ଥାଅ ତୁମେ
 ଅତି ନିକଟରେ,
 ବାସ୍ତବରେ ଅଛୁ ତୁମେ
 ଏତେ ଦୂରେ ?
 କାହିଁ କେତେ ଦୂରେ
 କେଉଁ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ମଣ୍ଡଳରେ ।

ହେ ଗୋସାଇଁ ?
 ଚିତୁଛୁ କି ନାହିଁ ?
 ପିଲାଦିନେ ଏତେ ସୁଖ ଦେଲ
 ଗୋଟାପୁଣି ଆପଣାର କଲ
 ନା' ତୁମକୁ କିଛି ମାଗିଥିଲି ?
 ନା' ତୁମକୁ କେବେ ଖୋଜିଥିଲି ?
 ତୁମେ ଯେ ସୃଷ୍ଟିର କରତା
 ତୁମ ଯୋଗୁ ମୋର ସୃଷ୍ଟି
 ମୁଁ ପୁରାପୁରୁ ଭୁଲିଯାଇଥିଲି ।

ପିଲାଦିନେ ଭଙ୍ଗା କୁଡ଼ିଆଥିଲା
 ମୋ'ପାଇଁ ରାଜାର ଉଆସ
 ମୋ' ସୁଖ, ଶାନ୍ତିର ନିବାସ
 ପିତା, ମାତା, ଭାଇ, ଭଗ୍ନୀ
 ଗାମବାସୀ, ପଡ଼ିଶା, ପଡୋଶୀ
 ଥିଲେ ଇଶ୍ୱରଙ୍କ ଅଂଶ
 ଆଶୁଥିଲେ ନିତିଦିନେ
 ମୋ' ପାଇଁ ନୂତନ ଭଲ୍ଲାସ ।

ଯୌବନରେ ପହଞ୍ଚୁ ପହଞ୍ଚୁ
 ଜୀବନକୁ ଦୁଃଖରେ ଭରିଲ
 ମଣିଷ ଜନମ ଦେଇ

ଏତେ ପୁଣି କଲବଲ କଲ ?
 ଏମିତି ଭାଗ୍ୟ କାହିଁକି ଖଞ୍ଜିଲ ?
 ହେ ବିଧାତା ?
 ଏତେ ତୁମର କୁଟିଳତା ?
 ସଅଳ, ସଅଳ
 ବାପା, ବୋଉ ଆରପାରି ଗଲେ
 ଭାଇ, ଭଗ୍ନୀ ଅସହାୟ ହେଲେ
 କିଛି ବନ୍ଧୁ ଭଗାଉଁ ସାଜିଲେ
 ବଦଳିଲା ସବୁ ରଙ୍ଗ
 ବଦଳିଲା ସବୁ ଢଙ୍ଗ
 ତରେ ମରେ ତୁମକୁ ସବୁଠି ଖୋଜିଲି
 ତରେ ମରେ ତୁମକୁ ସବୁଠି ଡାକିଲି
 ପ୍ରଭୁ ! କି ଗୁହାରି କରିବି ?
 କେତେ ଆଉ ଲୁହ ଝରାଇବି ?
 ସୁଖ ସବୁ ଭୟଭୀତ ହୋଇ
 କେବେଠୁଁ ଦୂରେଇ ଗଲେଣି
 ଦୁଃଖ ପରେ ସୁଖ ଆସେ ବୋଲି
 ମୁଁ ଏକବାର ପାଶୋରି ଗଲିଣି ।

ଦୁଃଖ !
 କାହିଁ ତୁମେ ସବୁ ଏକଜୁଟ ହୋଇ
 ଏ ସଂସାରରେ ଲୁହ ହେଇ ଆସ ?
 କାହିଁ ତୁମେ ଅନବରତ
 ବର୍ଷା ହେଇ ବରଷ ?

ସୁଖ !
 କାହିଁ ତୁମେ ସବୁ ଏକଜୁଟ ହୋଇ
 ଏ ସଂସାରରେ ହସ ହେଇ ଆସ ?
 କାହିଁ ତୁମେ ଅନବରତ
 ପୁଷ୍ପ ହେଇ ବରଷ ?

ସୁଖ, ଦୁଃଖ ଦିହେଁ ସାଥୀ
 ଏଇତ ଦୁନିଆ
 ଦୁଇ ବନ୍ଧୁ ମିଳିକରି
 କରନ୍ତି କିମିଆ ।



ସତର ସମ୍ମାନରେ

ବରୁଣ ପାଣି

ସତର ସମ୍ମାନରେ ଧାଇଁ ଚାଲିଛି ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗ ଧରି
ସମସ୍ତେ କହିଲେ କୃଷ୍ଣ ସତ, ହେଲେ ବୁଝି ପାରିବନି
ସ୍କୁଲରେ କହିଲେ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ସତ, ହେଲେ ଅପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ
ସହଚରୀ କହିଲା ପ୍ରେମ ସତ, ଧ୍ରୁବ, ହେଲେ ଅବାସ୍ତବ
ବାକି ସବୁ ସହରିଆ ବନ୍ଧୁ କହିଲେ, ପଇସା ରୋଜଗାର କର, ସବୁ ଠିକ ହେଇ ଯିବ ।

ସତର ସମ୍ମାନରେ ଧାଇଁ ଚାଲିଛି , ଅବୋଲକରା ପରି ନଗରୀ ନଗରୀ ବୁଲି ଚାଲିଛି
ଅପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୃଦୟ , ମନ , ଆଉ ଶରୀରର ବୋଧ ନେଇ
ସତ ପରା ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରି ଦିଏ, ତେଣୁ ଖୋଜି ଚାଲିଛି ହଜିଗଲା ସତଟାକୁ
ମୋର ଅପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଜୀବନର ଶୂନ୍ୟତାରେ ସଜିତାନନ୍ଦ ଆଣିଦେବ, ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିଦେବ ।

ସତର ପରିଚୟ ଜାଣେନା , କିନ୍ତୁ ସତ ମୋର ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ବନ୍ଧୁ
ମୋର ଅବିଚ୍ଛେଦ୍ୟ ଅଙ୍ଗ , ମୋର ପାଷାଣ ହୃଦୟ ସଖୀ ,
ସତ ସତେ ବିଦିଗାର ମେଘ ତଳ ଅକ୍ଷକାର , ସିଦି ବଉଳିଦର ଫଳ ଠେଲିଗାଡ଼ି
ସତ ସତେ ଶ୍ରମିକର ପାଦତଳେ ସମାପ୍ତ ମୁକୁଟ, ସତ ସମାଜସେବା ଓ ଆଜ୍ଞାବାଦି ।
କିନ୍ତୁ ସତରେ, ମୁଁ ସତର ପରିଚୟ ଜାଣେନା

ସତର ସମ୍ମାନରେ ଧାଇଁ ଚାଲିଛି ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗ ଧରି
ଗୋପାଳ ପ୍ରହରାଜରୁ ଗୁରୁଲ୍ ଖୋଜି ଚାଲିଛି ମୁଁ
କାନ୍ତ ହେଲେବି ମୋର ପାଦ ଥମି ଯାଇ ନାହିଁ
ଯୁବକରୁ ବୁଝ ହେଲେବି ପିପାସା ମେଣ୍ଟି ନାହିଁ

ସତ ସତେ ଅଜଣା ପରଦେଶେ, ବଇଁଶୀରେ ଦେଶ ରାଗ
ସତ ସତେ ବିରହୀ ଯକ୍ଷର କାନ୍ତ ଶାନ୍ତ ଅଶ୍ରୁର ବିଭବ
ସତ ସତେ ଅତୀତର ମିଠା ଅନୁଭବ ସବୁର ସ୍ମରଣିକା
ସତ ସତେ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଆଶା, ଭରତ ସାଇତିକରା, ରାମର ପାଦୁକା

ସତର ସମ୍ମାନରେ ଧାଇଁ ଚାଲିଛି ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗ ଧରି
ସମସ୍ତେ କହିଲେ କୃଷ୍ଣ ସତ, ହେଲେ ବୁଝି ପାରିବନି
ସ୍କୁଲରେ କହିଲେ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ସତ, ହେଲେ ଅପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ
ସହଚରୀ କହିଲା ପ୍ରେମ ସତ, ଧ୍ରୁବ, ହେଲେ ଅବାସ୍ତବ
ବାକି ସବୁ ସହରିଆ ବନ୍ଧୁ କହିଲେ, ପଇସା ରୋଜଗାର କର, ସବୁ ଠିକ ହେଇ ଯିବ ।

ଅବଶୋଷ

ତାପସ ରଞ୍ଜନ ସାଧୁ

ଆକାଶର ନୀଳିମାରେ ବୋଲିଦିଅ ସବୁଜିମା ,
 ଯୋଛୁଦିଅ ଅବଶିଷ୍ଟ ଅଭିମାନ ;
 ଆସିବାର ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ମଳୟରେ ,
 ତରଙ୍ଗରେ ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ବନୀ
 ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷାର ।

ରଖିଛ ତ ସ୍ବପ୍ନର ଗହଣାଟିଏ
 ଅଜଣା ସେ
 ସ୍ବପ୍ନର ମୀନାର ତଳେ ;
 ରଖିଛ ବି ସୁନ୍ଦର ପରଶଟିଏ
 ଅଜଣା ସେ
 ଅଭିମାନ ଅନ୍ତରାଳେ ।

ଦେଖ ସେଠି ଆକାଶର ରଙ୍ଗ ,
 ବଦଳୁଥିବା ମରୀଚିକା ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟର ;
 ତୋଳିନିଅ ମନଲାଖି ଚିତ୍ରପଟ
 ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣାଳୀର ,
 ଆଙ୍କିଦିଅ ସଂଗୀତରେ ଲିପି
 ସ୍ବପ୍ନ ଆଉ ବିଶ୍ବାସର ।

ଭିଜା ସେଇ ପବନର ଶିହରଣ
 ମୁକ୍ତ ହେବ ବନ୍ଧନରୁ ତନୁ ;
 ଦୂର ନଦୀ ସେପାରିର ଜହ୍ନ
 ଯୋଛିନେବ ଅବଶୋଷ ମନୁ

ବରଣ୍ୟ ବରଦା

ବିଶ୍ବପ୍ରିୟା ମିଶ୍ର

ବରଣ୍ୟ ବରଦା ବାକ୍ଦେବୀ ମାତା
 ନମୋ ସରସ୍ବତୀ ଦେବୀ ଶ୍ରୀଭାରତୀ
 ବରଣ୍ୟ ଦେବୀ ବରଣ୍ୟା...

ଶୁଭ୍ର ବସନା ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ପଦ୍ମାଶନା
 କରେ ଶୋହେ ମାଳା ପୁଷ୍ପକ ବୀଣା
 ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତ ବଦନ ଶୋଭନା...

ନମୋ ବୀଣାପାଣି ଅଜ୍ଞାନ ମର୍ଦ୍ଦିନୀ
 ନମସ୍ତେ ଶାରଦେ ଜ୍ଞାନ ପ୍ରଦାୟିନୀ

ମରାଳ ବାହିନୀ ଆଗମନ କର
 ଅଜ୍ଞାନ ତିମିର ଦେବୀ ପରିହର
 ଜଗାଅ ସୁପ୍ତ ଚେତନା...

ବିଦ୍ୟାବୁଦ୍ଧିଦାତ୍ରୀ କଳା ଓ ସଂଗୀତ
 ମହା ମୁଦେ କର କବି ଓ ପଣ୍ଡିତ

ଅଶେଷ ଅପାର ଅନନ୍ତ ମହିମା
 ଗାଲ ନପାରନ୍ତି ହରି ହର ବ୍ରହ୍ମା

ଆଶ୍ରମେ କର କରୁଣା...

ନ ଜାଣୁ ମା କ୍ଷମ ତବ ପୂଜା ରୀତି
 ପୁତ ମନ୍ତ୍ର କ୍ରିୟା ଆବାହନ ସ୍ବପ୍ନ
 କରୁଣାମୟୀ ମା ନଦୁଅ ବିମନା
 ପୁଷ୍ପ ଦୀପ ଧୂପ ଚନ୍ଦନ କୁଙ୍କୁମ
 ଭକ୍ତ୍ୟାଞ୍ଜଳି କର ଯେନା...

ବିଶୁଦ୍ଧ କର ମା ମନ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ବାଣୀ
 ତବ କୃପା ବଳେ ଜ୍ଞାନ ଦୀପ୍ତି ଜଳେ
 ସତ୍ ସଞ୍ଜୀବନୀ ସୁଧା ସଂଚରେ
 ତବ ପଙ୍କଜ ପଦେ ଧାରଣା...

ବଜାଅ ବଜାଅ ଖୋଳ କରତାଳି
 ପୂଜା ଥାଳି ହାତେ ଶଂଖ ହୁଲୁହୁଲି
 ଗାଥରେ ସରବେ ଭକ୍ତି ପୁଲକେ
 ନମସ୍ତେ ଶାରଦା ନେମସ୍ତେ ବରଦା
 ନମୋ ବୀଣାପାଣି ବରଣ୍ୟା...

କାନ୍ଦିଲେ ଯଦି ସୁଖ ମିଳେ

ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାଶ

କାନ୍ଦିଲେ ଯଦି ସୁଖ ମିଳେ ତୋତେ
ଅଶ୍ରୁ ଯଦି ତୋ ଚିରସାହା -
କରୁଣା ବିଳାପ ଦିଏ ଯଦି ତୋତେ
ଜିବନତନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମଧୁରାହା-

ସାଗରବେଳାରେ ଢେଉ ଗଣିବାରେ-
କଉତୁକ ଯଦି ମନେ ଜାଗେ
ମରିଚିକା ପଛେ ସାର୍ବଦିନ ଧାଇଁ
ଆଶାର କାଉଁରୀ ଚିତ୍ତେ ଲାଗେ

ପୋଛିଲେ ନସରେ ଯୁଗ ଯୁଗ ତୋର
ଆଖିରୁ ଲୋତକ ଧାର ଧାର
ସେ ଲୁହରେ ଦିନେ ଜୀବନ କାହାଣୀ
ବୁଝିଛି କି କହ ସଂସାର

ଲୋତକ ଝରଣା ଆଖିପାଣି ନୁହେଁ
ବ୍ୟଥାର ତରଳ ସୁଅରାଶି
ଛନ୍ଦ ନ ମାନି ବହିଯାଉଛି ସେ
କଳା କରି ତୋର ମୁଖ ଶଶୀ

କାନ୍ଦୁଛୁ ବୋଲି ଦେଖୁଛି ଦୁନିଆ
ନ କାନ୍ଦୁଛି କହ କିଏ ଭଲ
ଜୀବନେ ସବୁରି ଦୁଃଖ ରହିଅଛି
କାହା ଭାର ଅବା କିଏ ନେଲ

ଶୂନ୍ୟ କହୁଛୁ ଜୀବନ କାହାଣୀ
ବାର୍ତ୍ତା ଧାର ତୋର କାହାଣୀରେ
ନିଖିଳ ଧରଣୀ ଚିତ୍ର ଭରିଛି-
ଅଶ୍ରୁଳ ତୋର ଗୁହାଣିରେ

ଭଦ୍ରଖ ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ଜଣାସୁଣା ସ୍ୱର୍ଗତ କବି ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାଶ (୧୯୩୩-
୧୯୭୩) ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱଳ୍ପ ଜୀବନ କାଳରେ ସିଏ ଅନେକ
କବିତା ଓ ନାଟକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ, ବଙ୍ଗଳା, ଇଂରାଜି, ଏବଂ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଦୁ ଭାଷାରେ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି
ଅଛନ୍ତି , ଯଥା ବେସୁର, ପ୍ରଥମ ପ୍ରେମ, The Quest ।



ଭୟ

ତାପସ ରଞ୍ଜନ ସାହୁ

ଭୟଟିଏ ଅଛି ଲିଭିଯିବାର
ଅବଶିଷ୍ଟ ସୂତାଖୁଅ ପରି ଲଟକିଥିବା
ସୂତ୍ରଟିଏ ବସ୍ତ୍ରବାର;
ଭୟଟିଏ ଅଛି ମିଳିଯିବାର
ସାତତାଳ ପାଣି , ଫରୁଆରେ ଲୁଚିଥିବା
ନାଟିକାଟି ଜୀବନର;

କୁହୁଡ଼ି କୁହୁଡ଼ି ଘେରେଇ ରଖିଛି
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ବାଦଲଟିଏ ,
ମାୟା ମାୟା ଗୋଧୂଳିରେ ଡିକ୍ ଡିକ୍
ସୁନ୍ଦର ସମୟଟିଏ;
ଛୁଇଁବନି ବହିଭେଦୀ ପ୍ରହେଳିକା -
ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ସୁରକ୍ଷାର ,
ତେଇଁବନି ଜିଜ୍ଞାସାର ଉନ୍ମାଦନା
ସୀମାରେଖା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟର ।

[ଆଖି ଆଖି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଚୀ, ଅନେକକ୍ଷ
ନୀଳବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଶୃଗାଳର,
ଭୟ ଭୟ ସମ୍ଭାବନା, ଖୋଲିଯିବା
ରହସ୍ୟ-ଭେଦର ।]

ଛପିଯାଉ ଅନ୍ଧକାରେ ରହସ୍ୟର ଗନ୍ତାଘର ,
ଲମ୍ବିଯାଉ ଜୀବନର ପ୍ରସ୍ଥ;
କ୍ଷଣଟିଏ ଜିତିବାର ଗୌରବରେ
ବିତିଯାଉ ସମୟର ଉତ୍ସ ।

ଆକାଶା ଯେ ରହିବାର ,
ରହିବାର ଅଦେଖା, ଅଛୁଆଁ ,
ଜିଛି ରହୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସର ଗର୍ବ ,
ଜିଛି ଜିଛି ଅଭିମାନ;
ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ , ନ ଖୋଜୁ କେ
ସୂଜନାର ଅଭିଧାନ

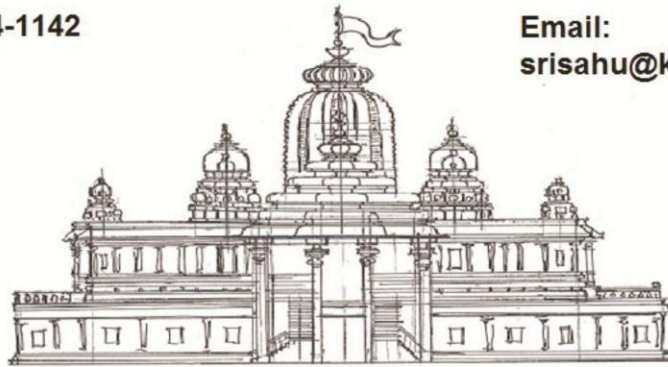
ତାଲସ୍ , ଚେକ୍ସ୍

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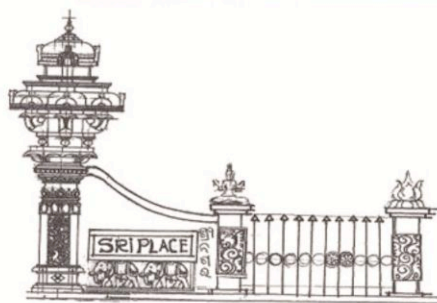
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ଲେ



ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତା

ଶାନ୍ତି ଲତା ମିଶ୍ର

ଦଶମ୍ଭା ଅପିଷ୍ଠରୁ କାମକରି ଥକି ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲା ପରେ , ଏ ଘୁଁଘୁରର ଛମ୍ ଛମ୍ ଶବ୍ଦ !! ଆଃ ! କି ବିରକ୍ତି କର । ଆଗାଡ଼ିଟାକୁ ଆରାମତୌକି ଉପରକୁ ଫେପାଡ଼ି ଦେଇ ପାଖ ସୋଫା ଉପରେ ବସିଗଲେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ । ନା ଚା' ନା ପାଣି । ପୁରସତ କାହାକୁ ଘରେ ତାଙ୍କ କଥା ବୁଝିବାକୁ । କାମବାଲା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ସୁମତି ଆଜିକାଲି ପାଞ୍ଚଟା ପରେ ଆଉ ରହେନା । ରାତି ପାଇଁ ରୋଷେଇକରି ସେ ଚାଲିଯାଏ । ତା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମରିଗଲା ପରେ ଝିଅ ଦିଟା ତାର ଏକୃଷିଆ ଘରେ । ତେଣୁ ସେ ଯଥା ଶିଳ୍ପ ସମ୍ଭବ ଘରକୁ ଚାଲିଯାଏ ।

ଅନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରକୋଷରୁ ଅନବରତ ଶୁଭୁଛି ଘୁଁଘୁରର ରୁଣ୍ ଝୁଣ୍ ଛମର ଛମର ଶବ୍ଦ । ତା ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ଶୋହିନୀର ନୃତ୍ୟଗୁରୁଙ୍କର ନୃତ୍ୟ ବୋଲ୍ ସବୁ ଧିନ୍ ଧା ଉଚ୍ଚସ୍ଵରରେ । ତା ସାଂଗକୁ ଟେପ୍‌ରେକର୍ଡ଼ରୁ ଶୁଭୁଥିବା ନାଚର ଗୀତ । ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ହାତୁଡ଼ି ପ୍ରହାର, ଛାତିରେ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଛି ।

ଏ ବିଷୟ ନେଇ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ କିଛି କହି ପାରିବେନି ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କୁ । ସେ ଭୁଲ୍ ତାଙ୍କର । ସେ ହିଁ ନିଜେ ଶୋହିନୀର ନାଚରେ ମୁଗ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବିବାହ କରିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଚରଫରୁ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଆଗ୍ରହ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଥିଲେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ଏହି ନୃତ୍ୟଗୀତ ହିଁ ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନର ବଡ଼ ଦୁର୍ବଳତା ଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସେଇ ନୃତ୍ୟଗୀତ ତାଙ୍କର ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ଶତ୍ରୁ ହୋଇଯିବ ବୋଲି ସେ ଜାଣି ନଥିଲେ । ଦୁଇ/ତିନି ଥର ନାଚ ପୋଗାମରେ ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କର ନୃତ୍ୟ ଦେଖି ସେ ହିଁ ତାଙ୍କର ମନର ନାୟିକା ବୋଲି ସେ ଧରିନେଇଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ନ ପାଇଲେ ଯେ ଜୀବନ ନିରର୍ଥକ ହୋଇଯିବ, ବଞ୍ଚିବା ବୃଥା ଏହିପରି ତାଙ୍କର ଧାରଣା ହୋଇଥିଲା ।

ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କୁ ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ବହୁ ପ୍ରକାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା ଚଳେଇଲେ, ସାଙ୍ଗ ମାନେ ଓ ବାପମାଆଙ୍କ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଉପରେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ପଠେଇ । ଶୋହିନୀ ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ବାପମାଆ ରାଜିହେବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସେ ସବୁ ପ୍ରକାର ଚାପ ପକେଇ ଚାଲିଲେ । ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତ ଶର୍ତ୍ତରେ ରାଜି ମଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ଶୋହିନୀ ବିବାହ ପରେ ତାଙ୍କ ର ନୃତ୍ୟ ଜାରି ରଖିବେ । ସେଥିରେ ଯେପରି କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ପ୍ରତିବନ୍ଧକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ନହୁଏ ।

- “ ମୋ ଚରଫରୁ ନିଷ୍ଠିତ ରୂପରେ ନୁହେଁ ”। ହସ ହସ ମୁହଁରେ ସ୍ଵାଗତ କରିଥିଲେ ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କର ସବୁ ସର୍ତ୍ତକୁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ । ସେଦିନ କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଜାଣି ନଥିଲେ ସେହି ଦୂରଦୃଷ୍ଟି ହୀନ ଶର୍ତ୍ତ ଚି ତାଙ୍କୁ ନୈରାଶ୍ୟର ଏତେ ଗହୁରକୁ ଚାଣି ଆଣିବ ବୋଲି । ଆଜି ସେ ଜୀବନର ରଂଗମଞ୍ଚରେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଏକାକୀ । ନା କେହି ଦର୍ଶକ ଅଛନ୍ତି, ନା କେହି ସାଥୀ ଅଭିନେତା ବା ଅଭିନେତ୍ରୀ, ନା କେହି ପଥପ୍ରଦର୍ଶକ । କେବଳ ସିଗାରେଟ ସହିତ ଜଳି ଜଳି ନିଜେ ପାଉଁଶ ହୋଇ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି ।

ଦୁଇ/ ତିନି ମାସରେ ଥରେ ଯାଇ ସାଜ ସଜା ରଂଗମଞ୍ଚ ଉପରେ ନୃତ୍ୟାଭିଷେଷରେ ସୁସଜ୍ଜିତା ନର୍ତ୍ତକୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ମନପୁର୍ତ୍ତି କରିବା ଓ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଏପରି ନାଚ ରିହରସଲ୍ ଦେଖିବା ଭିତରେ ଅନେକ୍ ତପ୍ତ । ଏବେ ତାଙ୍କର ଏ ଶବ୍ଦ ଝଙ୍କାର ପ୍ରତି ଭିଷଣ ଅସହିଷ୍ଣୁ ଭାବ । ଏହି ପରି ଯଦି ଆଉ କିଛି ଦିନ ସେ ଶୁଣିବେ ସେ ପାଗଳ ହୋଇ ଯିବେ । କାନରେ ହାତ ଦେଇ ସେଇ ଶୋଫାରେ ଓଲଟ ପାଲଟ ହୋଇ ଗଡ଼ିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେ ସେ । କ୍ରମାନ୍ୱୟ ଭାବରେ ଆଉ ଏକ ସପ୍ତାହ ସେ ବିରକ୍ତିର ସହ ସହ୍ୟ କରିନେଲେ ଏ ସ୍ଵର ଝଙ୍କାରକୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଉ ନୁହେଁ ।

ସେଦିନ ଅପିଷ୍ଠରୁ ଆସି ସିଧା ସେ ଚାଲିଗଲେ ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କର ନୃତ୍ୟ କରୁଥିବା ପ୍ରକୋଷକୁ । ବନ୍ଦ କର ଏ ନାଚଗୀତ …… । ଏକ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଶବ୍ଦ ବିଚ୍ଛେଦନରେ କହିଦେଲେ ଏତକ । ତା ପରେ ଯାହା ମନକୁ ଆସିଲା ବକିଥିଲେ ସେ । କଂପିଗଲା ପ୍ରକୋଷଟି, ଆଉ କଂପିଗଲେ ଶୋହିନୀ । କଣ ହେଲା ସେ କିଛି ବୁଝି ପାରିଲେନି ହଠାତ୍ କରି । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ପ୍ରକାପିତ ଓଷ୍ଠ ଓ ଶରୀର କୁ ଦେଖି ଡରିଗଲେ ଶୋହିନୀ । କ୍ଷଣକ ପାଇଁ କିଂ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ବିମୁଦ୍ ହୋଇଗଲେ ।

ଝଟ ପରି ଚାଲିଗଲେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ରୁମ୍‌ରୁ ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ଝଟଟା କମି ନଥିଲା ସହଜରେ ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କର ମନରୁ । କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ନିଜକୁ ଆୟତ କରି ଇସାରାରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଚାଲି ଯିବାକୁ କହି ସେଇଠି ବସି ଗଲେ କିଛି ସମୟ । ଥରୁଥିବା ଗୋତହାତକୁ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିବାକୁ କିଛି ସମୟ ତ ଲାଗି ଯିବ ।

ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ଗୋଟେ ଶେଯର ଦୁଇଟି କଣରେ ବିନିଦ ରଜନୀ ବିତିଥିଲା ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କର । ସକାଳୁ ବିନା ଖିଆପିଆରେ ଅଫିସ୍ ଚାଲି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ, ନା ଶୋହିନୀ ଉଠିଥିଲେ ଶେଯରୁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ଖାଇବା ନ ଖାଇବା ତଦାରଖ କରିବାକୁ । ସେଦିନ ଅଫିସ୍‌ରୁ ଶିଫ୍ଟ ଆସିଥିଲେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ । ତାଙ୍କ କୃତକର୍ମ ପାଇଁ ସେ ଅନୁତପ୍ତ । କୋଧ ସମ୍ବରଣ କରିବା ତାଙ୍କର ଉଚିତ୍ ଥିଲା । ଏପରି ହୁଠାତ୍ ଭାବରେ ଉତ୍ପତ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଅନ୍ୟ ମାନଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ଶୋହିନୀକୁ ଏପରି ଅପସ୍ତୁତ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବା ଠିକ୍ ହୋଇ ନାହିଁ । ଆଜି ଯାଇ ତାକୁ ବୁଝାଇ ଶୁଣାଇ କ୍ଷମା ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରିବା ତାଙ୍କର ଉଚିତ୍ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଅଫିସ୍‌ରୁ ଫେରିଲା ପରେ ଶୋହିନୀ ଘରେ ନଥିଲେ । ମାନସିକ ବ୍ୟଗ୍ରତା ବଢେଇ ଏପଟକୁ ସେପଟ ଉପରୁ ତଳକୁ ତଳୁ ଉପରକୁ ଇତସ୍ତତଃ ହୋଇ ପଦ ଚାରଣା କରିବା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଆଉ କିଛି କରିବାର ନଥିଲା । ରାତି ପ୍ରାୟ ନଅଟା ବେଳ କୁ ଫେରିଲେ ଶୋହିନୀ । ଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ଘରେ ଯାଇ ନାଚ ପ୍ରାକ୍‌ଟିସ୍ କରୁଥିଲେ ସେ ।

ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ପୂର୍ବର ରାଗ ରୋଷ ନାହିଁ । ବେଶ୍ ନରମି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ଶୋହିନୀ ନୁହେଁ । ସେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କୁ କାଲି ରାତିର ଅଭିଯୋଗ ପାଇଁ କ୍ଷମା କରିନାହାନ୍ତି । ନିଜର ଅବଦମିତ ରାଗକୁ ହୁଠାତ୍ କରି କାହାରିକୁ ଏପରି ଶବ୍ଦ ଦ୍ଵାରା ଆକ୍ରମଣ କରି ପ୍ରଶମିତ କରାଯାଏନା । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ଏତିକି ଜ୍ଞାନ ରହିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ଆତକୁ ଧ୍ୟାନ ନଦେଇ ଉପରଘରକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ଉଦ୍ୟତ ହେଉଥିଲା ବେଳେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ତାକିଲେ ପଛରୁ । ଶୋହିନୀ ! ତୁମର କିଛି ସମୟ ଅଛି ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ । ମୋର କିଛି କହିବାର ଅଛି ତୁମକୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ …କିନ୍ତୁ ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କର ଶୁଣିବା ପାଇଁ କିଛି ଆଉ ବାକି ନଥିଲା ତଥାପି ପ୍ରତ୍ୟୁତ୍ତର ନଦେଇ ବସିଗଲେ ଶୋଫରେ ଶୋହିନୀ, ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ଅନତି ଦୂରରେ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ମନଭିତରେ ତାଙ୍କର ରାଗ, ରୋଷ ଅଭିମାନ ଓ ଦ୍ଵେଷ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଆଉ କିଛି ନାହିଁ ।

–“ ତୁମେ ଏ ନାଚ ଛାଡି ପାରିବ ମୋ ପାଇଁ । ମୁଁ ଆଉ ଏ ନାଚର ଶବ୍ଦଟାକୁ ଜମାରୁ ବରଦାସ୍ତ କରି ପାରୁନି । ସବୁଦିନ ଅଫିସ୍‌ରୁ ଆସିଲା ପରେ ଏ ଛମ୍ ଛମ୍ ଶବ୍ଦ ମତେ ପାଗଳ କରିଦେବ ବୋଲି ଲାଗୁଛି । କିଛିଦିନ ମୁଁ ଟିକେ ଚାହେଁ କେବଳ ଶାନ୍ତି । ମୁଁ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲା ପରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ପରି ଗରମ ଚା ଦ୍ଵାରା ଯେପରି ସ୍ଵାମିଙ୍କୁ ଆପ୍ୟାୟିତ କରନ୍ତି, ମିଠାକଥାରେ ଯେପରି ମନ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରନ୍ତି, ମୋର ଆଜି ସେଇଆ ଦରକାର ଆଉ କିଛି ନୁହେଁ । ଆଉ ଘରେ ଥିଲାବେଳେ ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ତୁମର ସାନିଧ୍ୟ । ତୁମେ ନିଜେ ଭାବ ! ଆମ ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କ ଭିତରର ଶୂନ୍ୟତାକୁ ଆଉ ତୃତୀୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି କିଏ ଅଛି ପୂରଣ କରିବାକୁ । ତୁମେ ନାଚ ଭିତରେ ବୁଡି ରହୁତ ସବୁବେଳେ । ମୁଁ ମୋ ଦୁନିଆଁ ଭିତରେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଏକାକୀ । ନାଚ ତ ବହୁତ କଲଣି, ଏବେ ଛାଡିଦେଲେ କ୍ଷତି କଅଣ ।”

କିଛି ସମୟ ରୁପ୍ ରହି ଶୋହିନୀ କହିଥିଲେ –“ତା ଅସମ୍ଭବ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ । ତା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଆମ ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଶୂନ୍ୟତା ପୂରଣ କରିବାକୁ ଆଉ କେହି ନାହିଁ । ସେଇଟା ତ କେବଳ ମୋର ଦୋଷ ନୁହେଁ ।” ଏତକ କହି ସେ ଉପରଘରକୁ ଚାଲି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ……କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କ କଥାରେ ଜୋର ଦେଲେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଏଥର । ତୁମକୁ ଏ ନାଚ ଛାଡିବାକୁ ହେବ । ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ କଲଣି । ଏବେ ଘରସଂସାର ପ୍ରତି ଧ୍ୟାନ ଦେବାକୁ ହେବ । ଆମର ହସଖୁସି । ଆମର ଘରସଂସାର । ଆମର ଜୀବନ । ସବୁ ଜିନିଷରେ ଆମେ……ଆମେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଥିବା ଦରକାର । ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇଗଲା ତୁମେ ତୁମ କାମ ନେଇ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଓ ମୁଁ ମୋ କାମ ନେଇ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । କେତେଦିନ ଏପରି ଚାଲିବ । ଏକାକୀ ଜୀବନର ଅଧାରିଗଳିରେ ଆଉ କେତେ ଦିନ ଏମିତି ଏକା ଏକା ବୁଲୁଥିବା । ଆମର କିଛି ଆଲୋକର ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । କିଛି ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଦରକାର । ଏ କାମନା କିଛି ଅସୁଚ୍ଚିକର ତ ନୁହେଁ ।

ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କୁ ସବୁକଥା ଶୁଣିଲା କି ନାହିଁ । ଶୁଣି ବୁଝିଲେ କି ନାହିଁ କେବଳ ସେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁ କଥା କହିଦେଇ ନିଜକୁ ବେଶ୍ ଆଶ୍ଚସ୍ତ ଅନୁଭବ କରୁଥିଲେ । କାରଣ ଏ କାମନା ତାଙ୍କର କିଛି ଅସୁଚ୍ଚିକର ନୁହେଁ ବୋଲି ତାଙ୍କର ଧାରଣା । ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କୁ କିଛି ସମୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦେବାକୁ ସେ ଚାହାନ୍ତି, ଏ ସବୁ ବିଷୟ ନେଇ ପୁନର୍ବିଚାର କରିବାକୁ । ଏହା ଏକରାତିର ଫେସଲା ନୁହେଁ ।

ସେଦିନ ରାତିବି ସେହିପରି ଅଜଣା ଅଦେଖା ଭାବେରେ ବିତିଛି । ତାପର ଦିନ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଅଫିସରୁ ଫେରିବା ପରେ ଘରଟା ପୁନଃ ଶୁନ୍‌ଶାନ୍ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଡାକନିଂଗ୍ ଟେବଲ୍ ଉପରେ ଏକ ଚିଠିକୁ ଦେଖି କିଛି ଅଶୁଭ ଆଶଙ୍କା କରିଗଲେ ମନରେ । ନିଃସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଶୋହିନୀର ହୋଇଥିବ ।
ପ୍ରେମପତ୍ର କେବେ ହୋଇନଥିବ ତ୍ୟାଗପତ୍ର ହୋଇଥିବ ନିଃସ୍ୱପ୍ନ । ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ ଚିଠି ଖୋଲିଲେ ।

“ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ! ବହୁଚିନ୍ତା ପରେ ମୁଁ ଭାବି ଦେଖିଲି ମୋ ଜୀବନରୁ ନୃତ୍ୟକୁ ବାଦ୍ ଦିଆଯାଇ ପାରେନା । ଯେପରି ଶରୀରରୁ ଆତ୍ମା ବା ଜୀବନକୁ ବାଦ୍ ଦିଆଯାଇ ପାରେନା ସେହିପରି । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ନୃତ୍ୟ ହିଁ ମୋ ଜୀବନର ସବୁ କିଛି । ତା ବିନା ବଞ୍ଚିବା ମୋ ପକ୍ଷେ ବହୁ କଷ୍ଟକର । ନୃତ୍ୟ ବିନା ଏ ମୃତ ଶରୀରକୁ ନେଇ ତୁମେ କରିବ ବା କଣ । ତେଣୁ ମୁଁ ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ତୁମ ଜୀବନରୁ ଅପସରି ଯିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ । ବହୁଚିନ୍ତା ପରେ ଏଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ସମାଧାନ ମୁଁ ଖୋଜିକରି ପାଇଲି । ମୋର ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ଼ ଅନୁରୋଧ ମୋ ପଛେ ପଛେ ଆସି ମୋର ମତ ବା ମନ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ପାଇଁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା ନ କରିବାକୁ । ନୃତ୍ୟଗୀତ ବିନା ଆଉ କାହା ସହିତ ବଞ୍ଚିବାକୁ ମୋର କୌଣସି ଆଗ୍ରହ ନାହିଁ । ଏପରିକି ତୁମ ସହିତ ମଧ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ ।” ତା ପର କଥା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଆଉ ପଢ଼ିପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ।

ଶୋହିନୀ ଯାହା ଭାବିଛି ତାହା ଠିକ୍ ନୁହେଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର ମତ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରିବାକୁ କିଛି ସମୟ ଲାଗିବ । ଦେବେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ । ଦିନେ ସେ ନିଃସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଫେରିବ ଏଇ ଘରକୁ । ଏଇ ଆତ୍ମ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ନେଇ ନିରବ ରହିଲେ ସେଦିନ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ।

ଆଜିକାଲି ଅଫିସରୁ ଫେରିଲା ପରେ ଘର ପୁରା ଶାନ୍ତ । ଆଉ ସେ ଘୁଞ୍ଚିବାର ଛମ୍ପ ଛମ୍ପ ବିରକ୍ତିକର ଶବ୍ଦ ଘରର ଅବହାଳାରେ ନାହିଁ ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ଶୋହିନୀର ଅନୁପସ୍ଥିତି ଅସହ୍ୟ । ଘରର ପ୍ରତି କୋଣ ଅନୁକୋଣରେ ଶୋହିନୀ । ଯଦି ସେ ଯିବେ ଶୋହିନୀକୁ ମନେଇ ଫେରାଇ ଆଣିବାକୁ ସେହି ବିରକ୍ତିକର ଶବ୍ଦଧ୍ୱନି ସବୁ ଫେରି ଆସିବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତା ସାଥରେ । ଆଉ ସେ ଏ କୋଳାହଳକୁ ମୋଟରୁ ବରଦାୟ କରି ପାରିବେନି । ଶରୀରର ସବୁ ତନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଯେପରି ଛିନ୍ନ ଭିନ୍ନ ହୋଇଯିବ ସେଇ ଶବ୍ଦରେ । ତାଙ୍କର ଦରକାର ନିସ୍ତବ୍ୟତା ।

ବିବାହର ପନ୍ଦରବର୍ଷ ପରେ ବି ସନ୍ତାନସନ୍ତତୀର ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟରୁ ବଞ୍ଚିତ ସେମାନେ । ଆତ୍ମାକୁ ଶୀତଳ କରୁଥିବା ଛୋଟପିଲାଙ୍କ କୋଳାହଳ କଣ ଏଇ ଘୁଞ୍ଚିବାର ଶବ୍ଦ ପୁରଣ କରିପାରିବ । ଶୋହିନୀ ନିଜକୁ ସେଇଥିରେ ହିଁ ହଜେଇ ଦେଇଛି । ତାର ଚାରିପାର୍ଶ୍ୱରେ ଯେ ଅନ୍ୟ କେହି ଅଛନ୍ତି ସେ ଅନୁଭବ ବି କରିପାରୁନି । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଯେ ଏ ଘରେ ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବସବାସ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ସେ ଭାବି ବି ପାରୁ ନାହିଁ ।

ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ତାଙ୍କମନକୁ ଭୁଲେଇବା ପାଇଁ ଅଫିସ୍ କାମ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଆଉ କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ସେହି ରୁଚିନ୍ ବନ୍ଧା ଜୀବନ ଯେ କେତେ ବିରକ୍ତିକର ତାହା ବନ୍ଧବ୍ୟର ବାହାରେ । କାମ ଆଉ ଟଙ୍କା । ଘରଦ୍ୱାର, ଗାଡ଼ିମଟର, ବଞ୍ଚିବା ପାଇଁ ଯାହା ମୌଳିକ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ, ତା ସବୁ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଅଛି । ଆଉ ଅଧିକର କିଛି ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ନାହିଁ । ଏ କଥା ମନକୁ ଆସିଲା ପରେ ଚାକିରୀ ପ୍ରତି ସେ ଏବେ ବିତସ୍କୃତ । କିଛି ନୂତନତା ଦରକାର ଏ ଜୀବନରେ ।

ଶୋହିନୀ କେବେ ସେ ଘୁଞ୍ଚିବାର ଶବ୍ଦ ଘେର ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ବାହାରିବ । କେବେ ସେ ତା ମନଗଢା ମିଛ ରଂଗିନ୍ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ଦୁନିଆଁରୁ ବାହାରି ଆସି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଙ୍କୁ ଖୋଜିବ । ସେଇ ଦିନର ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା କରିବେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ନା ଯାଇ ଶୋହିନୀକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିବେ ଫେରି ଆସିବାକୁ । ନା ଆଉ କିଛି ସମୟ ଦେବେ ସେ ଶୋହିନୀକୁ । ସେ ଏବେବି ଦୁଃସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ଅଭାବଟା ଅନୁଭବ କରିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ପ୍ରତିକ୍ଷାର ଅନ୍ତ କେଉଁଠି !! ଅନନ୍ତକାଳ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷାର ଯୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କର ଥାଇ ବି ନପାରେ ।

ଶୋହିନୀ ଯିବାର ଛଅ ମାସ ହୋଇ ଗଲାଣି । ସେ ଆଉ ଫେରିନି କି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ବି କେବେ କୌଣସି ବା କାହାରି ମାଧ୍ୟମ ରେ ଖବର ପଠେଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି ଆସିବାକୁ । ଏବେ ସେ ତା ବାପଘରେ ରହି ଏକ ନାଚ ସ୍କୁଲ ସେଠାରେ ଖୋଲି ଛୋଟପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେଉଛି ବୋଲି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଶୁଣିଥିଲେ । କରୁ ତାର ଯାହା ଇଚ୍ଛା । ସେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଉ ସେ ନାଚ ଗୀତର ଝଞ୍ଜାର ଭିତରେ ପସିବେନି । ଏ ଘରର ନିରବତା ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଅସହ୍ୟ ହେଲେ ବି ସେ ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ଏଥିରେ ଅଭ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇଗଲେଣି ।

ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଛି ଏବେ ଏକା ଏକା ବାଲକୋନିରେ ବସି ଭାବିବାକୁ । ସଂଧ୍ୟାରେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟାସ୍ତ ଓ ପ୍ରାତଃକାଳରେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟୋଦୟ ଦେଖିବାକୁ । ମୃଦୁ ସମୀରଣ ରେ ଫୁଲ ମାନଙ୍କର ସୁବାସିତ ମହକର ଆଘ୍ରାଣ । ପକ୍ଷୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ମୃଦୁ କାକଳୀ । ଜଣେ ସାଥୀ ଥିଲେ ପାଖରେ ଏ ସବୁ ଦୁଇଗୁଣିତ ଉପଭୋଗ୍ୟ ହୁଅନ୍ତା । ତଥାପି କିଛି ଯାଏ ଆସେ ନାହିଁ । ସେ ଏକା ଏକା ଏ ସବୁକୁ ଉପଭୋଗ କରିବେ । ଏ ସମୟକୁ ଏପରି ହାତଛତା ହେବାକୁ ଦେବେନି ।

ବର୍ଷେ ଚାଲି ଗଲାଣି ତଥାପି ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ କୌଣସି ତପ୍ତରତା ନାହିଁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଫେରିବାକୁ । ନା ଫେନ୍ ନା ଚିଠି । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ଏବେ ବିରକ୍ତରେ ପରିଣତ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ହୁଏତ ଶୋହିନୀ ବି ତାଙ୍କ ପରି ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଛି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ଫେନ୍‌କଲ୍‌କୁ । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଫେନ୍ କଲେ ହୁଏତ ଆସି ଯାଇପାରେ ।

ପ୍ରଥମେ ସେ ଏକ ଚିଠି ଦେଲେ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରି ଫେରି ଆସିବାକୁ ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କୁ । ପରସ୍ପର ପରସ୍ପରକୁ କ୍ଷମାକରି ପଛକଥାକୁ ଭୁଲି ଯାଇ କିପରି ଦୁଇଜଣ ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଓ ଅନାବଶ୍ୟକତାକୁ ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ରଖି ନିଜକୁ ଖାପ ଖୁଆଇପାରି ଚଳିବେ ସେପରି ଭାବିବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ଶୋହିନୀ ତାଙ୍କର ନାଚଗୀତରୁ କିଛି ସମୟ କାଢି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ବାହିବାକୁ ପ୍ରଥମ ଅଗ୍ନିମଳ ଦେବେ ଓ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ କିଛି ତଙ୍କର ନୃତ୍ୟଗୀତର ଆସରକୁ ସହ୍ୟ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବେ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କୁ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ଅଭିଭୂତ କରାଇ ଆରପରୁ ସେପରି କୌଣସି ଆଶାନୁରୂପ ଉତ୍ତର ଆସିଲା ନାହିଁ । ଚିଠିର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବା ତା ଏକ ଭଦ୍ରାମୀ ବୋଲି ଶୋହିନୀକୁ କଣ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ !! ରାଗିବେ ନା ଆହୁରି ସମୟ ଦେବେ ଶୋହିନୀକୁ । ତା ମନର ଚିନ୍ତା ଏବେ ବି କମିନି ବା ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ତାର ନାଚଗୀତଟା ତା ପାଇଁ ଏତେ ବଡ଼ । ଏଇ ଦ୍ଵିଧା ଯୋଗୁ ସେ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବ ବା ନ ଦେବ ଭାବୁଥାଇ ପାରେ । କଣ ବା ଦେବ ତାହା ବି ଭାବୁଥାଇ ପାରେ ।

ଅପିସ୍ତରୁ ଫେରିଲା ପରେ ସେଦିନ ମୁଣ୍ଡଟା ଟାଳି ଟାଳି ହୋଇ ବିସ୍ତୁଛି । ଘରେ କେହି ଜଣେ ନାହିଁ ଆଦର-ଅଭ୍ୟର୍ଥନାରେ ତା କପ୍ ତାଙ୍କ ହାତକୁ ଧରେଇ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ । ହଟାତ୍ କରି ସେ ଫେନ୍ କଲେ ଶୋହିନୀ ପାଖକୁ । ଶୋହିନୀ ଘରେ ନାହିଁ । ତା ସ୍କୁଲର ବାର୍ଷିକ ଉତ୍ସବ ପାଇଁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଅଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ଫେନ୍ ଉଠେଇଥିବା ତାଙ୍କ ଘରେ କାମ କରୁଥିବା ଲୋକଠାରୁ ଜାଣିଲେ ।

ଦୁଇ ଚାରିଥର ଚିଠି ଦେଲା ପରେ ଶେଷରେ ଦିନେ ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କର ଉତ୍ତର ଆସିଲା ଯେ –“ସେ ଏବେବି ଏ ବିଷୟରେ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିନାହାନ୍ତି । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଙ୍କର ମତାମତ ଉପରେ ସେ ଧ୍ୟାନ ଦେବେ ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କର ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ପରେ ଜଣେଇବେ । ଶେଷରେ ଏ ବି ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି । ଏପରି ଅଲଗା ଅଲଗା ରହିବାରେ କାହାର ତ କିଛି କ୍ଷତି ହେଉନାହିଁ । ଏପରି ରହିବାରେ ଖରାପ ବା କ’ଣ ।

ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ରକ୍ତ ଚଢ଼ୁଥିଲେ ବି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ନିଜକୁ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିନେଲେ । ସେତିକିରୁ ସେ ଜାଣିଗଲେ ଶୋହିନୀର ମନର କଥା । ଆଉ ଖୋସାମତ ର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ନାହିଁ । ଯଦି ସେ ଏପରି ରହିବ ବୋଲି ଭାବୁଛି ତେବେ ରହୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଏମିତି ରହି ପାରିବେନି । ତାଙ୍କର ଜଣେ ଅନ୍ତରାଂଗ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ଦରକାର । ସେ ଶୋହିନୀକୁ ଭୁଲିଯିବା ପାଇଁ ମନେ ମନେ ଠିକ୍ କରିନେଲେ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ.....କିନ୍ତୁ ପୁଣି କଣ । ଏ ବୟସରେ ମନକୁ ଛୁଇଁଲା ପରି ଆଉ ଜଣେ ଜୀବନ ସଂଗିନୀ ସେ କୋଉଠୁ ପାଇବେ । ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଥିବା ଶୋହିନୀର ସ୍ମୃତିକୁ ସେ କିପରି ଦୂରେଇ ପାରିବେ । ସେଦିନ ସେ ଅପିସ୍ତରୁ ଫେରି ସିଧା ଚାଲିଗଲେ ଶୋହିନୀ ପାଖକୁ । ଶୋହିନୀର ମାଆ ଚାଲି ଗଲେଣି କିଛିବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବରୁ । ବାପ ଅଛନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବିଶେଷ କାମ କରୁନି । ଲୋକ ଚିହ୍ନି ପାରୁନାହାନ୍ତି ଭଲ କରି । ଶୋହିନୀର ବଡ଼ଭାଇ ଚାକିରୀ ଯୋଗୁ ନିଜର ପରିବାର ସହିତ ଦୂରରେ ରୁହନ୍ତି । ବଡ଼ ଭଉଣୀ ମଧ୍ୟ ଦୂରରେ । ତେଣୁ ଶୋହିନୀ ତାର ବାପାଙ୍କର ଯତ୍ନ ନେଉଛି ଏବଂ ଘରେ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ଖୋଲି କିଛି ଅର୍ଥାଗମର ସୁବନ୍ଧୋବସ୍ତୁ କରିଛି । ସେ ନିଜ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ନିଜେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇପାରିଛି । କାହାର ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରୁନାହିଁ ।

ଏଥିରେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ଖୁସି ହେବାର କଥା କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଖୁସି ହେଲେନାହିଁ । ବରଂ ଶୋହିନୀ ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭର କରୁଥିଲେ ସେ ବେଶି ଖୁସି ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତେ । ଶୋହିନୀ ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ବେଳକୁ ସେ ଘରେ ନଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ବାପାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗର ବାର୍ତ୍ତାଲାପ କଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ

ତାଙ୍କ ଗୋଳିଆ ମିଶା କଥା ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ରହିଲାନି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର । ହୁଁ ତୁମେ କିଏ ?? ବାରମ୍ବାର ସେ ପଚାରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ବାରମ୍ବାର ମନେ ପକେଇ ଦେବାକୁ ପଡୁଥିଲା ସେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ବୋଲି । ଆରେ ହୁଁ ହୁଁ ମନେ ପଡିଲା କହି ସେ ପୁଣି କଥା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରନ୍ତି । ପୁଣି କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ପଚାରନ୍ତି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ନାମ କଣ ଓ ପରିଚୟ । ଏଠିକୁ ଆସିବାର କାରଣ କଣ ? ପାଷ୍ଟ/ ଛଅ ଥର ସେଇ ସେଇ କଥାର ପୁନରାବୃତ୍ତି ଶୁଣି ବିରକ୍ତିରେ ଉଠି ଫେରିଆସିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛାକଲେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ।

ଠିକ୍ ସାମନା କବାଟ ପାଖରେ, ଶୋହିନୀ ଫେରୁଥିଲେ, ଦେଖା ହୋଇଗଲା ତାଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ । ଆରେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ !! ଖୁସି ହେଲେ ଶୋହିନୀ । ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ଡାକିଆଣି ତା ଜଳଖିଆ ରାତ୍ରଭୋଜନର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କଲେ । ରାତିରେ ରହିଯିବା ପାଇଁ ଅନୁରୋଧ ମଧ୍ୟ । ତେବେତେବେ ଶୋହିନୀ ବଦଳି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏକାକୀ ଜୀବନ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଖାଇ ଗୋଡେଇଛି । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କୁ ମନେ ମନେ ବହୁତ ଖୋଜିଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ଅଭାବ ତେବେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ମନେ ମନେ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଗଲେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ । ଯାହାହେଉ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ଏଠିକୁ ଆସିବା ଯଥାର୍ଥ ହୋଇଛି । ଅନେକ ରାତିଯାକେ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରକାର କଥା ପଡିଲା । ବହୁ ଆତ୍ମିୟତା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ଚାଲିଥିଲେ ବି ସେଥିରେ ଶୋହିନୀ ଯେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ ଫେରିଯିବେ ଏପରି ଆଭାଷ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତାରୁ କିଛି ମିଳୁନଥିଲା । ନିରାଶ ବା ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହରେଇଲେନି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ।

ତା ପରଦିନ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଅଫିସ୍ ନଯାଇ ଛୁଟି ନେଇ ରହିଗଲେ ଶୋହିନି ପାଖରେ । କେବେ ଘରକୁ ଯିବା ପ୍ରକାରନ୍ତରେ କଥାଟା ଯେତେ ପ୍ରକାର ରେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଆଶୁଆନ୍ତି ଶୋହିନୀ ଚାଲି ଯାଉଥାନ୍ତି କିଛି ଉତ୍ତର ନ ଦେଇ । ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟର ବାଲି ବନ୍ଧ ଭୁସୁଡିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଏଥର ବୁଲେଇ ବଙ୍କେଇ ନ ପଚାରି ସିଧା ସଳଖ ପଚାରିଲେ ତାଙ୍କସଂଗରେ ଶୋହିନୀଙ୍କର ଫେରି ଯିବାର କଥା ।

କିଛି ସମୟ ରହିଯାଇ ଶୋହିନୀ କହିଲେ -“ ତାହା ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ! ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ତାଙ୍କ ନାଚ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ସହିତ ବାପାଙ୍କ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ବି ତାଙ୍କର । ସବୁକୁ ଅଧା ପକେଇଦେଇ ମଝିରୁ ଏପରି ଚାଲିଯିବା ଠିକ୍ ହେବନାହିଁ ତାଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରେ । ଯଦି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଇଚ୍ଛାକରନ୍ତି ତେବେ ସେ ଏଠାକୁ ଫେରି ଆସି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ରହିପାରନ୍ତି ।”

କୋଧର ସ୍କୁଲିଙ୍ଗ ବିସ୍ଫୋରଣ ହେବାପୂର୍ବରୁ ଫେରିଗଲେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ତାଙ୍କ ନିଷ୍ଠବ୍ୟ ଦୁନିଆଁ ଭିତରକୁ । ସେ ଶୋହିନୀକୁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି ସତ, କେବଳ ତାଙ୍କୁ ହିଁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କର ପାରିପାର୍ଶ୍ୱିକ ପରିବେଶକୁ ନୁହେଁ । ଶୋହିନୀ ଯଦି ତାଙ୍କ ଯିଦିରେ ରହିବେ ତେବେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ବି ତାଙ୍କ ସିଦ୍ଧାନ୍ତ ବଦଳେଇବେ ନାହିଁ । ଆହୁରି ବର୍ଷେ ଚାଲିଗଲା । ଆଉ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ଦେଖା ଚାହାଁ ବା ଉତ୍ତର ଦିଆନିଆ ହୋଇନାହିଁ ।

ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଏବେ ଜଣେ ସହକର୍ମିଣୀ ରତ୍ନାଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ ସଂପର୍କ ସ୍ଥାପନ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରତ । ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ପରେପରେ ବିବାହ ତା ଖୁବ୍ ଶୀଘ୍ର ହୋଇଗଲା । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ଘରେ ପୁଣି ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକତା ଫେରି ଆସିଲା । ସେ ଯେପରି ଚାହୁଁଥିଲା ସେହିପରି ଜୀବନ । ଅଫିସ୍‌ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଜଣେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରନ୍ତା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୋଇଯିବା ପାଇଁ । ଥକା ହୋଇ ଅଫିସ୍‌ରୁ ଆସିଲା ପରେ ତା ଜଳଖିଆ ଖାଇବା ଟେବୁଲ୍‌ରେ ରଖି ଜଣେ କେହି ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିରହିବା । ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ସୋମ୍ପରେ ବସି ଚି-ଭି- ଦେଖାନ୍ତା, ଗନ୍ଧ କରନ୍ତା, ପାରିପାର୍ଶ୍ୱିକ ଗନ୍ଧ, ଜଳବାୟୁ ର ଗନ୍ଧ, ଦେଶ ଖବର, ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ଖବର, ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଖବର, ଆଉ କିଛି.....ଆଉକିଛି, ଅନେକ କିଛି ଗପ ।

ରତ୍ନା ତାଙ୍କର ଚାକିରୀରେ ବିଶେଷଃ ଖୁସି ନଥିଲେ । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ବିବାହ ପାଇଁ ରାଜି ହୋଇଯିବା ପରେ ସେ ଚାକିରୀ ଛାଡି ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ଙ୍କ ର ଭଲ ଚାକିରୀ, ଭଲ ଦରମା, ସହରରେ ଘର, ଗାଡି ଅଛି । ଖାଇପିଇ ଆରାମରେ ଚଳିବାପରି ସବୁ ଅଛି । ତେବେ ରତ୍ନାଙ୍କର ଚାକିରୀର ବା କଣ ଦରକାର । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ବି ସେଇ ଇଚ୍ଛା । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କୁ ଉଣା ଅଧିକେ ତାଙ୍କ ମନ ମୁତାବକ ସବୁ ମିଳିଗଲା । ଏବେ ଶୋହିନୀ କେବେ କେବେ ମନେ ପଡିଗଲେ ସେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଚାଣି ଓଟାରି ମନରୁ ବାହାର କରିଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଏତିକି ଚିକେ ବି ସୁଖ ଶୋହିନୀ କେବେ ବି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଯୋଗେଇ ପାରିନଥିଲେ । ଛୋଟ ହେଉ ବା ବଡ, ସାଧାରଣ ହେଉ ବା ଅସାଧାରଣ, ମନ ଯାହା ଚାହେଁ ତାହା ମିଳିଗଲେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ, ନ ମିଳିଲେ ନର୍କ ।

ବୟସ ବଢିବା ସଂଗେ ସଂଗେ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର କୋଳାହଳ ପ୍ରତି ଏବେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ଆକଣ୍ଠ ବିତୁଣ୍ଣା । ରୁପ୍‌ଟାପ୍ ବସି ବହି ପଢିବା, ଖବର କାଗଜ ପଢିବାକୁ ସେ ବେଶୀ ଭଲ ପାଉଛନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରତି ସଂଧ୍ୟାଭୋଜନ ପରେ ପାଖରେ ରତ୍ନା ମଧ୍ୟ ବସି ସିଲେଇବହି,

ରୋଷେଇବହି ବା ସିନେମା-ପତ୍ରିକା, କିଛି ଗପବହି ଧରି ବସିଯାଆନ୍ତି । ଏଇ ନିରବ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକୁ ବେଶ୍ ଆନନ୍ଦର ସହ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି କରନ୍ତି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ।

ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କୁ ଥରେ ବାହାରକୁ ସଫାହକ ପାଇଁ ଯିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଲା । ତାଙ୍କର ଜଣେ ଦୂରସଂପର୍କୀୟ ଭାଇ ଯିଏକି କଲେଜ ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ ଯାଙ୍କ ହୋଇ ରହିବା ପକ୍ଷରେ ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଘନିଷ୍ଠତା ବହୁତ ବଢ଼ିଯାଇଥିଲା, ସେ ଏବେ ଭିକ୍ଷଣ ଭାବେ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ । ତେଣୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖା କରିବାକୁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କୁ ଏକା ଯିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଯେତିକି ଦିନ ପାଇଁ କହିକରି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ଗୋଟେ ଦିନ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଫେରିଆସିଲେ । ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ହଠାତ୍ କରି ସେ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ହୋଇଗଲେ କିଛି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ । ଅନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରକୋଷରୁ ତବଲା, ହାରମୋନିଅମ୍, ତାନପୁରୀ ପ୍ରଭୃତିର ଶବ୍ଦ ଶୁଭୁଛି ।

ଶୋହିନୀ ଫେରିଆସିଲା କି ? ତେବେ କଣ ହେବ ? ଯଦି ସେ ସତରେ ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଫେରିଆସି ତାର ଅଧିକାର ମାଗି ବସେ । ସେମାନେ ଆଇନତଃ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର କାଗଜପତ୍ରରେ ସ୍ଵାକ୍ଷର କରି ଅଲଗା ହୋଇଯାଇ ନାହାଁନ୍ତି । ଖାଲି ଯାହା ମୁହଁ କୁହା କୁହିରେ ପରସ୍ପର ଠାରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ଦୁହେଁ । ଶୋହିନୀ ଯଦି ତାର ଦାବି ମାଗିବସେ । ବାହାରେ କୋର୍ଟ କଚେରି ଝୁମେଲାରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଶାନ୍ତି ଭଙ୍ଗ ହେବ । ଘର ଭିତରେ ଅଶାନ୍ତିର ପାହାତ ଚୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବିଚୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇ ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଗଦା ହୋଇ ଯିବ ।

କଣ କରିବେ ନ କରିବେ ଭାବିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ରତ୍ନା ତାଙ୍କ ଆସିବାର ଶବ୍ଦ ଶୁଣି ସଂଗୀତ ଆସୁଥିବା ପ୍ରକୋଷରୁ ବାହାରି ଆସିଲେ । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ହାତ ଧରି ଚାଣି ଚାଣି ସେ ପ୍ରକୋଷକୁ ପୁଣି ନେଇଗଲେ । ଦୁଇଜଣ ଲୋକ ତବଲା, ହାରମୋନିଅମ୍ ଧରି ଏକ ଲୟରେ ବଜେଇ ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ରତ୍ନା ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ପରିଚୟ କରେଇଦେଲେ । -“ଏମାନେ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ମୋର ସଂଗୀତ ଗୁରୁ । ସ୍କୁଲରେ ପଢ଼ିଲା ବେଳେ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ସଂଗୀତ ଶିଖୁଥିଲି । କିନ୍ତୁ କଲେଜ୍ ଗଲା ପରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେଇଥିଲି । ତୁମେ ତ ଘରେ ନଥିଲି । ଚାରିଦିନ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ବଜାରକୁ ଯାଇଥିଲି ପରିବା, ପକ୍ଷ ପ୍ରଭୃତି କିଣିବାକୁ ସେଇଠି ସାରଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ ଦେଖା ହୋଇଗଲା । ଏବେ ତ ମୋ ହାତରେ ସମୟ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ତେଣୁ ପୁଣି ଥରେ ସଂଗୀତଶିକ୍ଷା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିବି ଭାବି ସାରଙ୍କୁ ତାକି ଆଣିଛି । ଦୁଇଦିନ ହେବ ମୁଁ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଛି । ତୁମର ଏଥିରେ କିଛି ଆପଣି ନଥିବ ବୋଲି ମୋର ବିଶ୍ଵାସ । ତୁମ ତରଫରୁ ଶିଫ୍ଟ ବିବାହ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଲକ୍ଷା ଓ ଚାପ ଚା ଏତେ ଅଧିକ ଥିଲା ଯେ ମୁଁ ମୋ ବିଷୟରେ ବିଶେଷ କିଛି କହିବାକୁ ସମୟ ପାଇ ନଥିଲି କି ମନକୁ ଏ ସବୁ ଆସି ନଥିଲା କହିବା ପାଇଁ ।”

ତା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଘରେ ଏକା ଏକା ବସି ବେକାରରେ ସମୟ ଅତିବାହିତ କରିବା ଅପେକ୍ଷା କିଛି ମନଛୁଆଁ କାମରେ ନିଯୁକ୍ତ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି କରିନେଲେ କ୍ଷତି ବା କ’ଣ ! ଦୁଇଜଣ ମାତ୍ର ଘରେ ଲୋକ । କାମ ବା କେତେ । ସେ ସବୁ ସରିଗଲା ପରେ ବୋର ହେବା ପାଇଁ ହାତରେ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ସମୟ । ତେଣୁ ସଂଗୀତ ପରି ଏକ ଆତ୍ମବିସ୍ତୃତ କାମରେ ନିଜକୁ ନିୟୋଜିତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ମନସ୍ଥ କରିନେଲେ । ଏଥିରେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ଅସମ୍ମତ ହେବାର କାରଣ ସେ ଖୋଜି ପାଇ ନଥିଲେ, ତେଣୁ ସେ ଏକା ଏକା ଏ ନିର୍ଣ୍ଣୟ ନେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲେ, ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ଅନୁମତିକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ନକରି ।

ଓଃ !! ସତେତ । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ କେବେ ରତ୍ନାର ଅତୀତକଥା ପଚାରି ନଥିଲେ କି ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଲକ୍ଷା କରି ନଥିଲେ । ନିଜ ବିଷୟରେ ବି ସବିସ୍ତୃତ ଆଲୋଚନା କେବେ ରତ୍ନା ସହିତ କରି ନଥିଲେ । ଦୁଇଜଣଙ୍କର ବୟସ ଆଧିକ୍ୟ ଯୋଗୁ ଏ ସବୁ ଉପରେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ଵ ନଦେଇ ବିବାହ ଉପରେ ହିଁ ବେଶୀ ଗୁରୁତ୍ଵ ସେମାନେ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଶୋହିନୀ ସଂଗରେ ତାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଥମ ବିବାହ ସପକ୍ଷ ହୋଇ ନଥିଲା ବୋଲି ସଂକ୍ଷିପ୍ତରେ କହିଥିଲେ କେବଳ । କିନ୍ତୁ କାହିଁକି ଓ କଣପାଇଁ ହୋଇଥିଲା ସବିଶେଷ ବିବରଣୀ ଦେଇ ନଥିଲେ । କାରଣ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କୁ ଜଣେ ଅସହିଷ୍ଣୁ ସ୍ଵାମୀ ଭାବି ରତ୍ନା ବିବାହ ପାଇଁ ରାଜି ହୋଇ ନଥାନ୍ତା କାଳେ । ସେ ଯାହା ଚାହୁଁ ଥିଲେ ରତ୍ନା ପାଖରେ ଉଣା ଅଧିକେ ତାହା ଥିଲା ବୋଲି ସେ ଭାବି ନେଇଥିଲେ । ଏ ସବୁକୁ ହାତଛତା କରିବାକୁ ସେ ଚାହୁଁ ନଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସଂଗୀତ ଶିକ୍ଷା ବିଷୟରେ କୌଣସି କଥା ସେମାନେ କେବେ ଉଭୟ ତରଫରୁ ଆଲୋଚନା କରି ବି ନଥିଲେ । ଖାଲି କେବଳ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ପଚାରିଥିଲେ ରତ୍ନା ନାଚ ଜାଣିଛନ୍ତି କି ନାହିଁ ବା ସେଥି ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର ଆଗ୍ରହ ଅଛି କି ନାହିଁ ବୋଲି । ରତ୍ନା ମନା କରିଥିଲେ । କେବେ କଣ ଚିକେ ସଂଗୀତ ଶିକ୍ଷା କରିଥିଲେ ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ରତ୍ନା ଗୁରୁତ୍ଵ ଦେଇ କିଛି କହି ବି ନଥିଲେ । ତାହା ବି ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ କେବେ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ଅନ୍ତରାୟ ଯେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିପାରେ । ସେ କଥା ମନକୁ ଆସି ନଥିଲା ।

ହଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କ ଆଶଙ୍କା ସତ ହୋଇନି ଯେ ସେ ଶୋହିନୀ ନୁହେଁ ରତ୍ନା । ଦୀର୍ଘ ଶ୍ବାସ ଦ୍ଵାରା ଛାତିର ବୋଝଟା ହାଲକା କରିନେଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ……କିନ୍ତୁ ଏବେ ସବୁଦିନ ଅପିସ୍ତରୁ ଫେରି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଘୁଞ୍ଚୁରର ଛମ୍ପ ଛମ୍ପ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ …ଆ …ଆ ସଂଗୀତର ମୁହଁନା ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଦିନବେଳେ ଶିକ୍ଷକମାନେ ଆସି ପାରିବେନି ତାଙ୍କର ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ଅଛି । ସଂଧ୍ୟା ବେଳେ ସେମାନେ ଫୁଁ ।

ଅଧିକ କିଛି କହିବାକୁ ବା ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ନଥିଲା । ରତ୍ନାକୁ ସେ ରୁମ୍‌ରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଏକା ଏକା ସେ ଚାଲିଆସିଲେ ଶୋଇବା ଘରକୁ ।

ତାଙ୍କର ଇଚ୍ଛା, ତାଙ୍କର ଖୁସିଟାକୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଯେ ପ୍ରାଧିକାର ଦେବେ ସବୁବେଳେ, କାହିଁକି ସେ ଏପରି ଭାବି ନେଇଥିଲେ । କାହିଁକି ସେ ଭାବି ନେଇଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ଇଚ୍ଛା ତାଙ୍କର ଖୁସି ଯାହା ଅନ୍ୟ ମାନଙ୍କର ବି ସେଇଆ ହୋଇଥିବ ବୋଲି । ସେ ଜାଣନ୍ତିନି, ସେଇ ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥାନ୍ୱେସି କାମନା ଚିକକ ଯୋଗୁ ସେ ଭୁଲ୍ ଉପରେ ଭୁଲ୍ କରି ଚାଲିଛନ୍ତି କେବଳ । ତାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଥମରୁ ହିଁ ଏତକ ବୁଝିନେବା ଉଚିତ୍ ଥିଲା ଯେ ତାଙ୍କପରି ସମସ୍ତେ ନିଜ ନିଜର କାମନା ବାସନାର ଭୃତ୍ୟ । ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ, ଶୋହିନୀ, ରତ୍ନା ସମସ୍ତେ ସେଇ କାମନାର ଅକ୍ଷବଳୟ ଭିତରେ ଘୁଞ୍ଚିଯମାନ । ନିଜର ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥକୁ ଜଳାଞ୍ଜଳି ଦେଇ ଅନ୍ୟର ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥକୁ ଗୁରୁତ୍ଵ ଦେବା, କେତେଜଣଙ୍କର ଏ ହାସ୍ୟାସ୍ତଦ କାମନା ଅଛି ଏ ସଂସାରରେ । ଆଜି ରତ୍ନା ଯେତିକି ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦୋଷ, ଶୋହିନୀ ବି ତାଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦୋଷ ବୋଲି ମନେ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ନିଜକୁ ଦୋଷୀ ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରିବାର ଯୁକ୍ତିଯୁକ୍ତତା ସେ ପାଉ ନଥିଲେ ବି ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥକୁ ସର୍ବଦା ଅଗ୍ରମତା ଦେଇ ଏ ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିନକୁ ସେ ହିଁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିଆଣିଛନ୍ତି କେବଳ । ଯାହାର କି କୌଣସି ପ୍ରାୟତ୍ନିତ ଥାଇପାରେ ବୋଲି ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥଙ୍କର ମନେହୁଏନା ।

ଶ୍ଵାସରକ୍ଷ ମନ କେବଳ ଭାରୁଥିଲା ସେ ଜୀବନରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ନାରୀ ବଦଳେଇବାରେ ହୁଏତ ସକ୍ଷମ ହୋଇ ପାରନ୍ତି କିନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଇଚ୍ଛା ବା କାମନା ନୁହେଁ । କାନରେ ତୁଳା ଦେଇ ଜବରଦସ୍ତ ଘର ଭିତରେ ନିଶ୍ଚବଧତା ଆଣିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିଲେ ସିଦ୍ଧାର୍ଥ ।

ରଚେନ୍ଦ୍ର, ମିନେଷୋଟା



ମୋ ବୋଉର ଚିଠି

ଅସିତା ଶତପଥୀ

ତୋ ପାଖକୁ ଉତ୍ତରଟିଏ ଲେଖିବି, ତୋ ଚିଠି ର ଉତ୍ତର, ସମୟ ନ ଥାଏ- ଇ-ମେଲ୍, ବେଲିଫୋନ୍ ରେ, କଥା ହୋଇଯାଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତୁ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ମୋତେ ଚିଠି ଲେଖୁ । ଏରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ବା ଏନଭଲପ ରେ ତୋ ହସ୍ତାକ୍ଷର ଦେଖିଲେ ମୁଁ କୁରୁଲି ଉଠେ । ଖୋଲି ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ରହେ ନାହିଁ । ଯଦି ମେଲ କଲେକ୍ଟ କରି ଅପିସ୍ତ ସବାକୁ ପଡ଼େ, ତେବେ ଚିଠି ଖୋଲି ପଢ଼ିସାରିଲେ ହିଁ ମୁଁ କାର୍ ଷର୍ଟ କରେ ଓ ସେ ଦିନଟା ବହୁତ ଅରାମ ରେ କଟିଗଲା ପରି ମତେ ଲାଗେ । ମନ ଖୁସି ରହେ-ଯେପରି ଗୋଟିଏ ଅତୁଳନୀୟ ସଂପତ୍ତି ର ଅଧିକାରି ମୁଁ -

ଏବେ ଖାଲି ନୁହେଁ, ମୁଁ ଆର-ଇ-ସି ରାଉରକେଲା ରେ ପଢ଼ିଲା ବେଳେ, ଯତେବେଳେ କି ମୁଁ ଘରଠାରୁ ଦୂରରେ ରାଉରକେଲାରେ ରହିଲି ମୋତେ ମୋର ଲେଡିଜ୍ ହଞ୍ଜେଲର ସାଂଗମାନେ ପରତି ଉଇକରେ ପଚାରି ବୁଝି ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ମାଉସୀଙ୍କୁଁ ଚିଠି ଆସିଛି କି? ତୋ ଚିଠି ଯେ ମତେ ଆବିଷ୍ଟ କରିଦିଏ, ହାଲିଆ ମନରେ ଦମକାଏ ଶିତଳ ପବନ ବହିଗଲା ପରି ଅନୁଭବ ଦିଏ, ହେଲେ ମୋର ସାଙ୍ଗ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ତୋ ଚିଠି ବହୁତ ମୋଟିଭେଟେଟ କରାଏ । ତୁ କଣ ଚିଠି ରେ ମହୁ ଭରି ଦେଥାଉ ନା ଫୁଲବାସ୍ତା ? 'Most of my hostel mates get letters from their Dads, but I was an exception, I get letters regularly from my Mom'. ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ତୁ ଲେଖିଥିବା ଚିଠି pass-the-parcel ଭଳି ଜଣଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଆଉଜଣଙ୍କ ପଖକୁ ଯାଏ । ମୁଁ କେବଳ ନୁହେଁ, ମୋର ମନେ ଅଛି, ଲେନି ନାନୀ JNU ରେ ପଢ଼ିଲା ବେଳେ ତାର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାଙ୍ଗ ତୋ ଚିଠି ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରନ୍ତି । "ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ ଚିଠି ଦରୁତ, ମୁଁ

ପଢ଼ିବି" କହନ୍ତି । ଆଜି ଯାଏ, ମୋତେ ତୁ ଲେଖୁଥିବା ଚିଠି ଅମୂଲ୍ୟ ରତ୍ନ ପରି ମନେ ହୁଏ । ସତ କହିବାକୁ ଗଲେ ଗତ ଦଶ ବର୍ଷ ହେବ India ରୁ ତୁହିଁ କେବଳ ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ଚିଠି ଲେଖୁ । ଆଜି ତୁ ବହୁତ ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଛୁ ମୋର, ମୋତେ ଲାଗିଲା ମୁଁ phoneରେ କଥା ହେଲେ ବା ଇ-ମେଲ୍ କଲେ କେବେ ମୋର ଏଇ feelings କୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିପାରିବି ନାହିଁ ।

ଆଜିକାଲିକାର Internet, text-message, telephone, cell phone ଦ୍ଵାରା ମଣିଷ communications ର ସମୟକୁ ଜୟ କରି ପାରିଛି ସିନା ମୋର ଅନୁଭବ, କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାରର electronic communication ତୋ ମୋ ଭିତରେ ତୋ ଚିଠି ଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ଆନନ୍ଦ କି intimacy ଦେଇ ପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । ତୋ ଚିଠି ସବୁ ମୋ dresser ର drawer ରେ ସାଇତି ରଖିଛି ଓ ସମୟେ ସମୟେ ତାକୁ କାଢ଼ି ପଢ଼ି ଉଲ୍ଲସିତ ହେଉଛି । ମୋର କିଛି tension ହେଲେ ରଞ୍ଜନ ଆଗ କହନ୍ତି, "ବୋଉଙ୍କୁ ଫୋନ କର, ବୋଉଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ କଥାହୁଅ, ସବୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗିବ ।" ମୋ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ କହନ୍ତି ତୋ ମାଆ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି renowned poet, ତେଣୁ ସେ ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଚିଠି ଲେଖୁଛନ୍ତି । ତୋ ଚିଠି ତୋ ହୃଦୟରେ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଥିବା ସ୍ନେହ ଓ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନାର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ସ୍ଵର ।

ତୋର ଚିନ୍ତା ମୋ ପାଇଁ, ମୁଁ ଭଲରେ ଅଛି କି ନାହିଁ । ମନଖୁସି ରଖିଛି କି ନାହିଁ ? ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଶୋଉଛି କି ନାହିଁ ? Exercise regularly କରୁଛି କି ନାହିଁ ? Healthy food ଖଉଛି କି ନାହିଁ ? ଏ ଘଣ୍ଟା ଅଧିକ୍ଷରେ ନଦେଇ ଘରପାଖରେ Part time job କରି ଆରାମ କରେ ବୋଲି ତୋର ଉପଦେଶ । ଏସବୁ ମୋ ଲାଗି ଭାବିବାକୁ ତୋ ଛତା ଏ ଦୁନିଆରେ ଆଉ କିଏ ଅଛି ?

UTA campus ଭିତରେ ଆମେ evening walk ରେ ଯାଉଥିଲେ, ତୁ ଫେରିଗଲା ପରେ, ମୁଁ ଯେବେ ବି evening walk ରେ ସେଇ ରାସ୍ତା ସବୁରେ ଯାଏ, I feel so nostalgic, I miss you alot mom! Lanes ସବୁ UTA ଭିତରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ସେମିତି ଅଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି evening walk ଆଉ ସେଦିନ ଭଳି ଲାଗୁନି, କେମିତି କ'ଣ ହଜେଇ ଦେଇଛି, ତାକୁ ଖୋଜିବା ଲାଗି ଆସିବି ମୁଁ...

Hellen Keller is so right - "The best and most beautiful things in the world can not be seen, or even be touched. They must be felt with the heart."

ମୁଁ ତୋ ପାଖରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ୨୦ ବର୍ଷ ରହିଥିଲି । ତୋର ସମୟ ସେବେ ଆମ ବାରିକଣ, ବାପା, ତୋର college PhD work, ପଢ଼ାଲେଖା, ତୋର ପିୟବାଧ୍ୟବି, ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀ, ମୋ ଅଜା ଆଇ, ଜେଜେବାପା, ଜେଜେମା, ପିଉସି, ମାଉସି, ମାମୁଁ, କକେଇ, ଦେଠେଇ ଆଦିକ ଭିତରେ ବାଣ୍ଟିହୋଇ ଯାଉଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ମୋ ଭାଗରେ ଯାହା ପଡ଼ୁଥିଲା, ସାଉଁଟି ଆଣୁଥିଲି ବୋଲି ଆଜି ମନେ ହୁଏ । ମୁଁ ପେପୁକୁ କହୁଛି, ମୋତେ ନା ମୋ ବୋଉ ମୁଁ ହରଷେଲ ଗଲାଯାଏଁ ଭାତ ଖୁଆଇ ଦେଉଥିଲା, ଯେବେ ମାଛ କି ଚିକେନ୍ ହୋଇଥାଏ, ମୁଁ ଝୁଲ୍, କଲେଜ ଯିବାକୁ ଖାଇବାରେ ତେରିକରେ । ମୋ ମାମା ତା କଲେଜ ଯିବା ତେରିଥିଲେ ତାଇନିଂ ଟେବୁଲ୍ ପାଖେ, ମୋ ଚେୟାର ପାଖେ ଠିଆହୋଇ ମୋତେ ଖୁଆଇଦିଏ । ତୋ ନାତି 'ପେପୁ' ଆଜିଯାଏଁ ଭାତ, ମାଛ କି ଚିକେନ୍ ମୁଁ ଖୁଆଇଦେଲେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଖାଇଦିଏ । ମୁଁ ଏବେ ବୁଝିପାରେ, ମୁଁ ଖାଇଲା ପରେ ତୋତେ କେତେ ଖୁସି ଲାଗୁଥିବ ।

ତିଳ, ପାକି, ଗାଁ କୁ ଗଲେ, ତୁ ଘରେ ରାନ୍ଧୁ, ଆମେ ୪ ଭଉଣୀ, ବାପା ବି, ତୋ ରନ୍ଧାର ସ୍ଵାଦକୁ କି ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁ । ଆମେରିକାରେ ତୁ କି ସୁଆଦ ଖାଇବା ଆମଲାଗି ରାନ୍ଧି ରଖିଥାଉ । ଆମେ ଅଧିକ୍ଷ ରୁ ଆସିଲେ ଗରମ ଗରମ ବାଢ଼ିଦେଉ । ତୁ ଇଣ୍ଡିଆ ଗଲା ପରେ ରଞ୍ଜନ ଓ ମୁଁ ତୋ ଖାଦ୍ୟ କୁ ବହୁତ ମିସ୍ କରୁଛୁ । ରଞ୍ଜନଙ୍କୁ ତ ବେଶ୍ କିଛି ଦିନ ଖାଇବା ଆଉ ରୁଚେନାହିଁ ।

ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ମୁଁ ପେପୁକୁ କହେ, ତୁ କେମିତି ତୋ ବାପା ମାଆଙ୍କର ଯତ୍ନନେଉଥିଲୁ । ଆଇ ରୋଗରେ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା ବେଳେ ତୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଝାଡ଼ା ବି ସଫା କରୁଥିଲୁ । ଅଜା, ଆଇ ସତ୍ୟଭାମାପୁରରେ ଥିଲା ବେଳେ ତୁ କେମିତି ରସଗୋଲା, ବିସ୍କୁଟ, ଫଳ ଓ ମାଛଭଜା, ଜଳଖିଆ କରିନେଉ ଆମେ ପାଳି କରି ପ୍ରତି ମାସରେ ଯାଉ । ଆଇ ଆମଲାଗି ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିଥାନ୍ତି, ପଇତପାଣି, ପରଟା, ମିଠା ହେରିକା ଖୁଆନ୍ତି । ଏସବୁ ମନେ ପଡ଼ିବା ବେଳକୁ ତୁ ପିନ୍ଧିକରି ଯାଇଥିବା ଶାଢ଼ି ବି ମୋର ମନେ ପଡ଼େ । ଗାଆଁର ସମସ୍ତେ ଜୁଟି ଯାଆନ୍ତି, 'ପ୍ରତି ଆସିବୁ, କେତେ ଦିନ ରହିବୁ' ?

ଏବେ ମୋ ଘର backyard ରେ ଥିବା ଫେନ୍ସରେ ଯେଉଁ ଲତା ମାଡ଼ିଥିଲା, ବହୁତ କମଳା ରଙ୍ଗ ଫୁଲ ଫୁଟିଛି । ଗୋଲାପ ତ ଅଜସ୍ର । ତୁ ବହୁତ ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଛୁ । ଥିଲେ ଏଠି, ଫୁଲ ତୋଳି ଠାକୁରଙ୍କୁ ପୂଜା କରନ୍ତୁ । ମନେପଡ଼ୁଛି, ଆମେ କେମିତି ସଂଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ

ଗୋତ ହାତ ଧୋଇ, ଆସନ ପକାଇ, ଦୀପ ଜାଳି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରୁ - ‘ନାରାୟଣ ନମସ୍କୃତ୍ୟଂ...’ ଠାରୁ ମୃଗୁଣୀ ସ୍ତୁତି ଯାଏ ସମସ୍ତେ ଏକ ସ୍ଵରରେ ଗାଉ, ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ରଥଯାତ୍ରା ଆଗରୁ ଘରେ ପୁଜା ପାଉଥିବା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ତୁ, ଲେନିନାନୀ, କେବେ ବା ପୁକୁ ଶ୍ରୀଗୁଣ୍ଡିଚା ଯାତ୍ରା ପୁର୍ବରୁ ରାଗ କରୁଥିଲେ । ପେପୁ ଏତେ ସମୟ ଚିତ୍ତି, କଂପ୍ୟୁଟର୍ ନାନା ପ୍ରକାର game console, video games ରେ କଟୁଉଛି, ମୁଁ ତାକୁ କହୁଥିଲି ତୁ କେମିତି ଚିତ୍ତି ରୁ ସମୟ କାଟି ବତଭାଗ ସମୟ ବହି ପଢୁଥିଲୁ, ଖବରକାଗଜ, ମ୍ୟାଗାଜିନ୍ ପଢୁଥିଲୁ । ଆମେ ଚାରି ଭଉଣଇ କହୁଥିଲୁ, ‘ବୋଉର କେତେ determination ! ତୁ ଯଦି ଆମ ଭଳି study environment ପାଇଥାନ୍ତୁ, ଦେଶର ସବୁଠୁ ବଡ଼ ଚାକିରି କରିଥାନ୍ତୁ । ପେପୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ କଥା କିଛି ବୁଝିପାରୁ ନାହିଁ । ଆମ କଟକ ଘରେ ତୋର ବେତରୁମ୍ ଝଙ୍କା ପାଖରେ ପ୍ରଚୁର ମଲ୍ଲୀଗଛ ଧାତି ଧାତି, ଖରା ଦିନେ ଝଙ୍କା ଖୋଲା, ଫମ୍ପାନ୍ ପବନରେ ତୋ ବେତରୁମ୍ ବେତାଏ ମଲ୍ଲୀପୁଲ ବାସ୍ନାରେ ଭରିଯିବା ମୋର ମନେପଡୁଛି । ଏଠିକା ବଗିଚାରେ ମଲ୍ଲୀପୁଲଟିଏ ଦେଖିଲେ ଅତୀତର ସେଇ ବାସ୍ନା ନାକରେ ପଶିଆସୁଛି, ମୋତେ ସେତେବେଳେ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା, ତୋ ବେତରୁମ୍ ମହାରଣୀଙ୍କ ଉଆସ, ଆମେ ବହିରେ ପଢିଲା ପରି, ଠିକ୍ ସେମିତି ।

ବୋଉ କେତେ କ’ଣ ଅନୁଭୂତି ମୋର, so, exciting and beautiful ! ତୁ ଆମେରିକାରେ ମୋ ସହିତ ବୋଉ ହେଇ ନଥିଲୁ । ତୋ ମୋ ଭିତରେ ୨୪ ବର୍ଷ ବୟସ ବ୍ୟବଧାନ କଟାଇ ଆମେ ଅନ୍ତରାଗ ବାନ୍ଧିବା ହେଇଯାଇଥିଲେ, ଏ କଥା ଅନୁନାନୀଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ‘ତଲି’ କୁ ମୁଁ ଏଠାରେ କହୁଥିଲି । ଇଣ୍ଡିଆରେ ପୁକୁ ଜନମଠାରୁ ପେପୁ ଜନମ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ, ତତେ ଛାଡି ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବା, ପୁଣି ତୁ ଏଠିକୁ ଆସି ଆମେ ଆମେରିକାର ଚାରି ଦିଗ ବୁଲିବା, ସବୁ ଜୀବନ୍ତ ଭାବେ ମନେପଡୁଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ସବୁକୁ ଭାଷାଦେଇ ଲେଖିପଥାରୁ ନାହିଁ ।

ତୁ ମୋତେ କହିଥିଲୁ, "Beautiful things are short lived," you are right. But I really wish that those beautiful moments could stay with us forever.

୨୭୦୧, କେମ୍ବ୍ରେଜ୍, ଡ୍ରାଇଭ୍
 ଫ୍ଲୋରାମାଉଣ୍ଟ୍, ଟେକ୍ସାସ



ପୋଷ୍ଟକାର୍ଡରେ ପ୍ରେମପତ୍ର

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ

ସେଦିନ ଥିଲା ମାର୍ଗଶୀର ମାସ ଗୁରୁବାର । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଘରେ ଘରେ ମାଣବସା ହୁଏ; ଘର ଅଗଣାରେ ଚିତା, ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀପାଦ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଆନାରୀ ମାନଙ୍କର କଳାକୃତିର କେତେ ରକମର ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନୀ । ହଠାତ୍ରେ ଯଦିଓ ଗଣେଷ ପୂଜା, ସରସ୍ଵତୀ ପୂଜା ପାଳନ କରାଯାଏ, ମାଣବସା ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ପୂଜା ସବୁ ପାଳନ କରାହୁଏନି । ତଥାପି ହଠାତ୍ରେ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵରେ ଥିବା ମାଉସୀମାନେ ନିଜନିଜକୁ ମିଳିଥିବା ଦୁଇବଖରା କ୍ଵାର୍ଟର୍ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ମାଣବସା କରନ୍ତି ଓ ସେଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀପୁରାଣ ପଢିବାବେଳେ ଆଗ୍ରହୀ ଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଡାକନ୍ତି । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମାଉସୀ ତାଙ୍କ କ୍ଵାର୍ଟର୍ରେ ମାଣବସା କରିଥିଲେ ଓ ସେତେବେଳେ ବିଜୟା ସେଠି ବସି ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀପୁରାଣ ଶୁଣୁଥିଲା ।

ସ୍ଵପ୍ନାଟିକେ ଡେରିରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀପୁରାଣ ପଢା ଶେଷ ହେବାକୁ ବସିଲାଣି । ଆଉ ମାତ୍ର ତିନିଟି ପୃଷ୍ଠା ବାକି ଥାଏ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଚମକାଇ ଦେଇ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନା କହିଲା, “ଜାଣିଛ ମାଉସୀ, ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥ ବିଜୟା ପାଖକୁ ଏ ପୋଷ୍ଟକାର୍ଡରେ କଣ ଲେଖିଛି ?”

ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀପୁରାଣ ପଢ଼ା ସେଇଠୁ ବନ୍ଦ ହେଲା ଓ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଧ୍ୟାନ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନା ଆଡ଼କୁ ଗଲା । ସ୍ୱପ୍ନା ପଢ଼ିଲା ଓ ସମସ୍ତେ ଶୁଣିଲେ । ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ କୁଆଡ଼େ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନାକୁ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଭଲ ପାଏ ଓ ବିଜୟା ଯଦି ସେ ଭଲପାଇବା ସ୍ୱୀକାର ନକରେ ତେବେ ସେ ପାଗଳ ହୋଇ କଲେଜ ପଢ଼ା ବନ୍ଦ କରି ପଳେଇଯିବ ।

ବିଜୟାର ମୁହଁ ଶେତା ପଡ଼ିଗଲା । “ଇଏ କି ଅଘଟଣ? ଏତେ ଝିଅ ଆଉଥାଉ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସର ବିଜୟା ଉପରେ କାହିଁକି ଆଖି? ନା, ବିଜୟାକୁ ପାଠପଢ଼ାରୁ ନିରୁତ୍ସାହିତ କରିବାର ମତଲବ ?” ମନେ ମନେ ବିଜୟା ଭାବିଲା କହିଦିଅନ୍ତା, “ତୁ ପାଗଳ ହୋ କି ମର, ମୋର କଣ ଅଛି । ଯା, ଇଚ୍ଛା ଯଦି ହେଉଛି, କାଠଯୋଡ଼ିରେ ବୁଡ଼ି ମର ।”

ବିଜୟା ସେତେବେଳେ ଚତୁର୍ଥବର୍ଷ ବିଜ୍ଞାନର ଛାତ୍ରୀ, ପଦାର୍ଥ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଅନର୍ସ । ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ବି ଏକା ଶେଣୀରେ ପଢ଼େ । ମେଧାବୀ ଓ ଆଇ.ଏ.ଏସ୍. ବାପାଙ୍କର ଏକମାତ୍ର କୁଳନନ୍ଦନ । ଚେହେରା ଯେମିତି ସୁନ୍ଦର, ଚଳଣି ବି ସେମିତି ଆରିଷ୍ଟୋକାଟିକ୍ । ବିଜୟା ଓ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସର ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା ଚାଲିଥାଏ ବୋଲି ବୁଝିବାକୁ ହେବ । କେତେବେଳେ ବିଜୟା କେଉଁ ବିଷୟରେ ବେଶି ମାର୍କ ରଖେ ତ କେତେବେଳେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ବେଶି ମାର୍କ ରଖେ । ବିଶେଷତଃ ପ୍ରାକ୍ତିକାଳରେ ବିଜୟାର ସବୁବେଳେ ବେଶି ମାର୍କ ରହେ ଓ ପ୍ରୋଜେକ୍ଟ ରିପୋର୍ଟରେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସର । ବିଜୟାର ମନେ ହୁଏ ଯେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ବିଜୟାର ଅଧିକ ମାର୍କ ରହିଥାଏ, ସେତେବେଳେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସର ମୁହଁ କେମିତି ଶୁଖିଯାଏ । ଏଇ ସାତଆଠ ଦିନ ତଳେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଘଟଣା ଘଟିଥିଲା ।

କାସଫାରି ବିଜୟା ହଠାତ୍ କୁ ଫେରୁଥାଏ । ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଥାଆନ୍ତି ନିରୁପମା, ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣା ଓ ଅରୁଣିମା । ହଠାତ୍ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ଆସି ବିଜୟାର ବାଟ ଓଗାଳିଲା ଓ ତାର ବିଜୟାକୁ କିଛି କହିବାର ଅଛି କହି ଅନ୍ୟ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କୁ ଚାଲିଯିବାକୁ କହିଲା । ଅନ୍ୟ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ଟିକିଏ ଆଡେଇ ଯିବାରୁ, “ବିଜୟା, ମୁଁ ତମକୁ ଭଲପାଏ” କହି ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ କେମିତି ଏକ ଚଳଚ୍ଚିତ୍ରର ନାୟକ ଠାଣିରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ ରହିଲା । ବିଜୟାକୁ ସେଇଟା ଅଭଦ୍ରାମୀ ମନେହୋଇଥିଲା ଓ ସେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ଗାଲରେ ଚଟକଣିଟିଏ ମାରିଥିଲା ।

ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ କଣ ତାର ପ୍ରତିଶୋଧ ନେଉଛି ?

ସ୍ୱପ୍ନାଠାରୁ ଯାହା ଜଣାପଡ଼ିଲା ସେ ଚିଠିଟି ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ତିପାଟମେଣ୍ଟ୍ ଠିକଣାରେ ପଠାଇଥିଲା । ତିପାଟମେଣ୍ଟ୍ ବହୁତ ଜଣ ସେ ଚିଠିଟିକୁ ପଢ଼ି ସ୍ଥାନେ ସ୍ଥାନେ କମେଣ୍ଟ୍ ସବୁ ମାରିଛନ୍ତି ।

ସେଦିନ ବିଜୟା ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀପୁରାଣ ପଢ଼ା ସେତିକି ଶୁଣି ନିଜରୁମ୍ଭକୁ ଆସି ବହେ କାନ୍ଦିଥିଲା । ସେ ଘଟଣାପରର ଦିନଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଯେ ବିଜୟାପାଇଁ କି କଷ୍ଟକିତ ହୋଇଛି, ତାହା କେବଳ ବିଜୟା ଜାଣେ । ଦୁଇ ଦିନ ଭିତରେ ସାରା ହଠାତ୍ କେତେବେଳେ ଏ କାହାଣୀ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଗପସପର ଏକ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରବିନ୍ଦୁ ହୋଇଗଲା । ବେଦବ୍ୟାସର ପାଗଳାମୀ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସନ୍ଦେହ ଜନିତ ଚାହାଣି ଓ ବ୍ୟବହାର, ସେସବୁ ମନେପଡ଼ିଲେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଇଚ୍ଛାହେଇଛି କି ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ଉପରେ ସେ କେମିତି ଏକ କଠୋର ପ୍ରତିଶୋଧ ନିଅନ୍ତା, ତାକୁ ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ଘୋଷାରି ଘୋଷାରି କଷ୍ଟଦିଅନ୍ତା ଓ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସାମନାରେ ତା ଉପରେ ଛେପ ପକାଉଥାନ୍ତା । ତେବେ ସମୟ ଚକ୍ରରେ ଜୀବନ କେମିତି ଗତିଯାଇଛି । ସେଦିନର ସେ ଅଘଟଣ ତା ଜୀବନର ସଫଳ ଗତିପଥକୁ ଅବରୋଧ କରିପାରିନି କି ତାର ମାନସିକ ସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ସନ୍ତୁଳିତ କରିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ପାଇନି ।

ଆଜି ପ୍ରାୟ ପଞ୍ଚାଶି ବର୍ଷପରେ ପୁଣି ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଯାଉଛି ସେହି ବେଦବ୍ୟାସର କାହାଣୀ; ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧପାଗଳ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ, ଯିଏ ପୋଷ୍ଟକାର୍ଡରେ ପ୍ରେମପତ୍ର ଲେଖିଥିଲା । ପଞ୍ଚାଶି ବର୍ଷପରେ ଆଜି ବି ସେ ସେମିତି ଲେଖୁଛି ପାଗଳଙ୍କ ପରି, ଯାହା ନାହିଁ ତାହା, ଯେତେବେଳେ ଯାହା ତା ମନକୁ ଆସୁଛି, ସେତେବେଳେ ସେ ତାକୁ ଇମେଲରେ ଲେଖି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ ଫୋରମ୍‌କୁ ପଠାଉଛି । ବିଜୟାର ଏସବୁ ପାଇଁ ସମୟ ନଥାଏ; ଘରକାମ, ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ କାମ ଓ କ୍ଲବ୍ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି କରୁକରୁ ଦିନ କେମିତି ବିତିଯାଏ । ତାପରେ

ଏ କି ମୋବାଇଲ୍ ଫୋନ୍ ବାହାରିଲା ଯେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଫୋନ୍; ସେଥିରେ ଡିପାର୍ଟମେଣ୍ଟର ବି କେତେକେତେ ଇମେଲ୍ ଛାଡ଼ିଛାଡ଼ି ମାନଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ପଢ଼ିବାର ଓ ଉତ୍ତରଦେବାର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ।

ଅଜନ୍ତା ଆମେରିକାରୁ ଫୋନ୍ କରିଥିଲା, “ବିଜୁ, ରାନ୍ ମହାପାତ୍ର ତୋ ଝିଅ ତ? ସିଏ ଅକ୍ସଫୋର୍ଡରେ ପଢୁଛି ।”

“ହଁ କଣ ହେଲା ?”

“ନାହିଁ, ଆଜି ଗୋଟିଏ ଇମେଲ୍ରେ ତା ବିଷୟରେ ପଢ଼ିଲି ଯେ ତାର କୁଆଡେ ବିକାଶ ରଥ ସହିତ ବାହାଘର ହେଉଛି । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଭାବିଲି ତତେ ଫୋନ୍ କରି ବୁଝେ ।”

“ବାହାଘର ତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ କଥା । ତାକୁ ଏମିତି ପବ୍ଲିକ୍ରେ କିଏ ଆଲୋଚନା କରୁଛି ? ହଁ, ରାନ୍ ସେ ପିଲାଟିକୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କରିଛି । ଆସନ୍ତା ଜୁନ୍ମାସରେ ବାହାଘର ଏଇ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ହେବ ବୋଲି କଥାବାଣୀ ବି ଚାଲିଛି । ହେଲେ ଏ କଥା ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ରେ କିଏ ଲେଖିଲା ?”

“କିଏ ଆଉ ଲେଖିବ ? ଆମର ଏଠି ଅଛି ଗୋଟିଏ ଲୋକ, ତା ନାଁ ହେଲା ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥ; ବିକାଶ ରଥର ବାପା ସିଏ; ସେଇ ହିଁ ଲେଖୁଥାଏ ସବୁବେଳେ ।”

“କୋଉ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥ କଥା ତୁ କହୁଛୁ ? ସିଏ ୧୯୬୬ ମସିହାରେ ରେଭେନ୍ସା କଲେଜ୍ରେ ଫିଜିକ୍ସ୍ ପଢୁଥିଲା, ସିଏ ନୁହେଁ ତ?”

“ମୁଁ ଭଲକରି ଜାଣିନି । ତେବେ ବୁଝିକରି ତତେ କହିବି ।”

ଅଜନ୍ତା ବିଜୟର ଦିଲ୍ଲୀର ସାଙ୍ଗ । ତାକୁ ରେଭେନ୍ସା କଥା ଜଣାନଥିଲା । ତେବେ ପରେ ସିଏ ବୁଝି ଜଣାଇଥିଲା ଯେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥ ସେଇ ଲୋକ । ନିଜ ଝିଅର ବାହାଘର ନେଇ ଯେତେ ଉତ୍ସାହ ଓ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଥିଲା ବିଜୟା ମନରେ ସବୁ ନିମିଷକ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ନିର୍ବାପିତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଭଗବାନ ଏମିତି ଖେଳ ଖେଳେଇବାକୁ ରଖିଥିଲେ ଯେମିତି । ଯେଉଁ ମଣିଷ ପୋଷ୍ଟକାର୍ଡରେ ପ୍ରେମପତ୍ର ଲେଖେ, ସେ ମଣିଷଠାରୁ କଣ ବା ଆଶା କରାଯାଇପାରେ ? ଏ ଭିତରେ ଆମେରିକାରେ ରହୁଥିବା ଅନ୍ୟ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରି ବୁଝିଥିଲା ବିଜୟା, ବିକାଶ ସେଇ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସର ପୁଅ । ଏବେ ତାହେଲେ କଣ ହେବ? ଜାଣୁଜାଣୁ ନିଜ ଝିଅକୁ ସେ ଏମିତି ପରିବାରର ବୋହୂ ହେବାକୁ ତ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଇ ପାରିବନି । ତାପରେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସର ପୁଅ ବାପଭଳି ପାଗଳ ନୁହେଁ ତ?

ସ୍ଵାମୀ ନିଶିକାନ୍ତ ବିଜୟର ଏ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରୁଥିଲେ । ପଚାରିଲେ, “କଣ ଦେହ ଭଲରହୁନି? ଟିକେ ତାଙ୍କର ଦେଖେଇ ଆସ ।”

“ନା! ସେମିତି କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ମୁଁ ତ ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି ।”

“ହେଲେ ମୁଁ ତମର ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରୁଛି । ତମେ ବହୁତ ଦିନ ହେଲାଣି ରାନ୍ ବାହାଘର ବିଷୟରେ ପଦଟିଏ କଥା ବି କହିନ । ତାପରେ ରାନ୍ର ଭାବୀ ଶାଶୁ, ଶୁଶୁର ଯେ ଫେବୃୟାରୀ ଶେଷରେ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି, ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ରାନ୍ ତମକୁ କହିଛି, ହେଲେ ତମେ ମତେ କିଛି ବି କହିନ । କଣ ହେଉଛି?”

ବିଜୟା ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପୁଅ ସୁଜିତ୍ର ଫୋନ୍ ଆସିଲା ବାଙ୍ଗଲୋରୁ ।

“ଜାଣିଛ ମା, ରାନ୍ର ଭାବୀ ଶୁଶୁର ଜଣେ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧପାଗଳ ।”

“ତୁ ସେମିତି କାହିଁକି କହୁଛୁ ?”

“ମୁଁ କଣ କହିବି ମା, ସମସ୍ତେ ସେ କଥା କହୁଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥ କୁଆଡେ କିଛି କାମ କରନ୍ତିନି । ଦଶବାରଟା ଇମେଲ୍ ନେଟ୍ଫ୍ଲକ୍ସର ମେମ୍ବର୍ ହୋଇ ସବୁବେଳେ ଖାଲି ଇମେଲ୍ ଲେଖୁଥାନ୍ତି; ସିଏ ରାନ୍ ଓ ବିକାଶଙ୍କ ଲଭ୍ କେମିତି ହେଲା, ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ବି କୁଆଡେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଇମେଲ୍ ନେଟ୍ଫ୍ଲକ୍ସରେ ଲେଖିଥିଲେ ଓ ମୋ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ମତେ ସେ ମେଲ୍ ସବୁ ଫର୍ଫ୍ଟାଡ଼ କରିବାରୁ ମୁଁ ବୁଝିଲି କେମିତି ପାଗଳ ସିଏ ।”

“ତେବେ କଣ କରିବା । ରାନ୍ ସହିତ ତୁ କଥା ହେଉଥିଲୁ କି ?”

“ନା! ମୁଁ ଭାବିଲି ତମକୁ ଓ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିବି ।”

“ତେବେ ବାପାଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଥା ହୋ ।”

ସୁଜିତ୍ ସହିତ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରିବା ପରେ ନିଶିକାନ୍ତ ଗମ୍ଭୀର ଦେଖାଗଲେ ।

“ରାନୁର ଭାବୀ ଶୁଣୁରଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ତମେ ଆଗରୁ ଜାଣିଥିଲ ବୋଧହୁଏ ।”

“ହଁ, ମତେ ଅଜଣା କହିଥିଲା ।”

“ତେବେ କଣ କରିବା ?”

“ରାନୁକୁ ପଚାର । ବିକାଶ ତା ବାପାଙ୍କ ଭଳି ନା ଅଲଗା ଧରଣର ପିଲା ।”

ନିଶିକାନ୍ତ ରାନୁ ସହିତ କଥା ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଓ ବିକାଶ ବିଷୟରେ ଶୁଣି ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ନିଜ ମନକୁ ବୁଝାଉଥିଲେ, ବାହାଘର ପରେ ତ ଝିଅ ଜୋର୍ ଇଂଲଣ୍ଡରେ ରହିବେ; ଶୁଣୁର ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧପାଗଳ ହେଲେ ହେଉ, କଣ ହେଲା ?

ତେବେ ବାହାଘର ଦିନ ଯେତେ ପାଖେଇ ଆସୁଥିଲା, ବିଜୟା ସେତେ ନର୍ଭସ୍ ହେଉଥିଲେ । ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ସହିତ ତାଙ୍କ ସାକ୍ଷାତତା କେମିତି ଭାବେ ହେବ? ହୁଏତ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ସବୁ ଘଟଣା ନିଶିକାନ୍ତଙ୍କୁ କହିପାରନ୍ତି । ନିଶିକାନ୍ତ କଣ ଭାବିବେ ? ବିଜୟାକୁ ସମେତ କରିବେ ? ନା, ଏ କଥାଟି ଗୁପ୍ତ ରଖିଥିବାରୁ ବିଜୟାକୁ ଦୋଷୀ ମଣିବେ ? ଏ କଥା ବିଜୟା କାହାକୁ ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କହିନାହାନ୍ତି । କହିବାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ବି ପଡିନି । ନିଶିକାନ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ତାଙ୍କର ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ଦେଖା, ଜଣାଶୁଣା ଓ ବିବାହ । ପୁରୁଣା ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଏତେଟା ଦେଖାହୁଏନି, ଯେଉଁମାନଙ୍କ ମେଳରେ ଏ ସବୁ ଆଲୋଚନା ହୋଇପାରନ୍ତା । ତାପରେ ବିଜୟାଙ୍କର ଏଥିରେ ତ କିଛି ଦୋଷ ନାହିଁ ।

ପୁଣି ଫେନ୍ କରିଥିଲା ସୁଜିତ୍ । “ଜାଣିଛ ମା, ସେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥ ଆଜି ଗୋଟିଏ ବଡ଼ ମଜାଦାର ଇମ୍ପେଲ୍ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି । ସିଏ କୁଆଡେ ତାଙ୍କର କେଉଁ କ୍ଲାସ୍ ମେମ୍ବରକୁ ଭଲ ପାଉଥିଲେ ଓ ସେ ଝିଅଟିକୁ ପୋଷକାର୍ତ୍ତରେ ପ୍ରେମପତ୍ର ଲେଖିଥିଲେ । ସେ ଝିଅଟି ବି କୁଆଡେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଚଟକଣି ମାରିଥିଲା ।”

ବିଜୟା ସତେ କି ସଞ୍ଜା ହରାଇବେ । ଏ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥ ନାମ୍ନୀ ମଣିଷଟା ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ମରିନି କାହିଁକି ? ଏଭଳି ପାଗଳ ମଣିଷଙ୍କୁ ଭଗବାନ ଏତେ ଆୟୁଷ ଦିଅନ୍ତି କାହିଁକି?

ଫେନ୍ରେ ସିଏ କିଛି ବି କହିପାରିଲେନି । ସୁଜିତ୍ ବୋଧହୁଏ କିଛି ଆଶଙ୍କା କରି ବାପାଙ୍କ ମୋବାଇଲ୍କୁ ଡାକିଥିଲା । ନିଶିକାନ୍ତ ପ୍ରାତଃଭ୍ରମଣକୁ ବାହାରିଥିଲେ । ହଠାତ୍ ରୋଷେଇଘରକୁ ଆସି କହିଲେ, “ତମକୁ ଏବେ ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ହେବ ।”

“ହେଲେ କାହିଁକି?”

“ତମେ ଫେନ୍ରେ ଠିକ୍ ଭାବେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରିପାରୁନଥିଲ । ମୁଁ ବି ଦେଖୁଛି, ଦିନକୁ ଦିନ ତମର ବହୁତ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହୋଇଆସୁଛି । ଏତେଟା ରିସ୍କ ନେବା ଭଲ ନୁହେଁ ।”

ବିଜୟା କିଛି କହିଲେନି । ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନା ଗଲେ ଓ ସବୁ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରାଇ ଆସିଲେ । ଡାକ୍ତର ସବୁ ଠିକ୍ ଅଛି ବୋଲି କହିଲେ ଓ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିତ୍ରୀ ନକରି ମନ ଖୁସି ରଖିବାକୁ ଉପଦେଶ ଦେଲେ ।

ଅଜନ୍ତା ଆଉଥରେ ଆମେରିକାରୁ ଫେନ୍ କରିଥିଲା ଓ ସେଇ ଏକା କଥା କହୁଥିଲା । “ଜାଣିଛୁ ବିନ୍ଦୁ, ଏ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ଲୋକଟା ଜଣେ ଆତିକ୍ଷେତ୍ ପରଶନ୍ । ସିଏ ହୁଏତ ଇମେଲରେ ଖାଉଛି, ପିଉଛି, ମଳମୂତ ତ୍ୟାଗ କରୁଛି ଓ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଛି । ଏତେଟା ପାଗଳ ମଣିଷ ମୁଁ ଜୀବନରେ ଦେଖିନି । ସତରେ ମତେ ରାନ୍ଧୁ ପାଇଁ ଚିନ୍ତା ହେଉଛି ।”

ବିଜୟା ବହୁତ ଚିନ୍ତିତ ରହିଲେ । ଯେଉଁ ମଣିଷ ଘର କଥା ନେଇ ଏମିତି ପଦାରେ ପକାଉଛି, ସେ ଲୋକ ତ ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ମାନଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ବି ଏମିତି ଲେଖାଲେଖି କରିବ । ବିଜୟାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସାକ୍ଷାତ ହେଲେ ସେ ମଣିଷ ନାଟକ କରିବନି ବୋଲି କିଏ କହିପାରିବ ? ଏ ଭିତରେ ବିଜୟାଙ୍କର ବି ନିଶା ଲାଗିଲା । ଗୋଟିଏ ନୂଆ ଇମେଲ୍ ଆଇ-ଡି କରି ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ସଂଗ୍ରହ ଥିବା ସବୁ ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ ଫୋରମ୍ ମାନଙ୍କର ସଭ୍ୟ ହେଲେ ସେ; କିଛି ଲେଖିଲେ, କିଛି ପଢ଼ନ୍ତି; ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ଭଳି ମଣିଷଟିର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ କାମନା କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ଦିନେ ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆପୁଅ’ ନେଟ୍‌ସ୍ଥଳରେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ଜନୈକ ଭଦ୍ରବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କୁ ଗାଳିଦେଇ ଲେଖିଲେ ଯେ ସିଏ କୁଆଡ଼େ କରପ୍ଟେଡ୍ । ଏକଥାର ପ୍ରତିବାଦ କରି କିଛି ଜଣ ଲେଖିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ତାଙ୍କ ଲେଖାରେ ଜାରି ରହିଲେ; କେତେ ବାଗରେ ଘଟଣାକୁ ଏପଟ ସେପଟ ମୋଡ଼ି ସେ ସେଇଲେଖା ଉପରେ ପୋଥିଟିଏ ରଚନା କରିଦେଲେ କି ସତେ ? ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦିନ ‘କଳାପିୟ’ ନେଟ୍‌ସ୍ଥଳରେ ସେ ନବୀନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକକୁ ଗାଳି ଦେଇ ଲେଖିଲେ । ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ ଚାଲେଞ୍ଜ କଲେ ଓ ପୁଣି ବନ୍ଦ ହୋଇଗଲେ । କାରଣ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ଭଳି ପାଗଳ ମଣିଷ ସହିତ କେତେ ଜଣ ବି କାମଧରା ଛାଡ଼ି ଲେଖାଲେଖି କରିପାରିବେ । ତାପରେ ଯୁକ୍ତିଯୁକ୍ତ କଥା ସିନା ଲେଖିଲେ ହେବ? ଅଯୌକ୍ତିକ, ଅପ୍ରାକ୍ତିକ ଓ ମନଗଢା କଥା ଯିଏ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଭଳି ଲେଖିପାରିବ, ତା ସହିତ ମଣିଷ କେତେ ଲଢ଼ିବ ?

ଆହୁରି ବି ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା ବିଜୟା ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକଲେ ଯେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ଏକା ନୁହଁନ୍ତି; ସବୁ ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ ଫୋରମ୍‌ରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ୪-୫ ଜଣିଆ ଗ୍ୟାଙ୍ଗ୍ ରହିଛନ୍ତି । ଗାଁ ପିଣ୍ଡାରେ ବସି ଗପସପ କରିବା ଭଳି ସେମାନେ ଫୋରମ୍ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଚୁଚୁଲି କରନ୍ତି । ବିଜୟା ବେଳେବେଳେ ଅଣନିଃଶ୍ୱାସୀ ହୋଇଯାନ୍ତି । ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷିତ, ବୟସ୍କ, ବିଦେଶୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କର ଏମିତି ହୀନ ଆଚରଣ ତାଙ୍କ ଶ୍ୱାସରୋଧ କରେ । ତଥାପି ସେ ଫୋରମ୍ ସବୁର ଇମେଲ୍ ପଢ଼ନ୍ତି; କାଲେ କେତେବେଳେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥ ତାଙ୍କ କାହାଣୀଟିକୁ ଅତିରଞ୍ଜିତ କରି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅପମାନିତ କରିଦେବ?

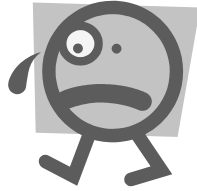
ସେଦିନ କି ଯୋଗରେ ରାତି ପାହିଥିଲା କେଜାଣି, ବିଜୟାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଶୁଣିପାରିଲେ କି ସତେ ? ରାନ୍ଧୁର ଫେନ୍ ଆସିଥିଲା, “ବିକାଶର ବାପାଙ୍କର ହାର୍ଟ ଆଟାକ୍; ସିଏ ଆମେରିକା ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ମଉସା, ମାଉସୀ ଆଉ ତେଣୁ ଫେଟ୍‌ସ୍‌ରୀରେ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ ଯାଇପାରିବେନି ।

ବିଜୟା ଖୁସି ହେଲେ । ସେ ଦିନଠାରୁ କ୍ରମାଗତ ଭାବେ ସବୁ ନେଟ୍‌ସ୍ଥଳର ଇମେଲ୍ ଚେକ୍ କରୁଥିଲେ । ସବୁ ଶାନ୍ତ; ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥର ଗୋଟିଏ ହେଲେ ବି ମେସେଜ୍ ନାହିଁ ।

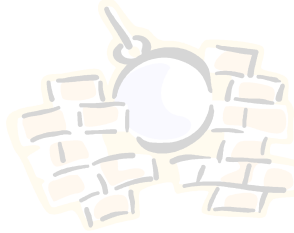
ବିଜୟାଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱଭାବତଃ କୋମଳ ହୃଦୟ । କାହାର କିଛି ଅଘଟଣ ଖବର ଶୁଣିଲେ, ସେ ବହୁତ ଦୁଃଖ ପାଆନ୍ତି, ସେ ଲୋକର ଦୁଃଖ କଥା ତାଙ୍କ ମନକୁ ଆଛାଦିତ କରି ରଖେ ଓ ସେ ମନ୍ଦିର ଯାଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଭଜନ ପରେ, ସେ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କଲେ, “ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ହେଉ ପ୍ରଭୁ ।”

ସହସ୍ର ସହସ୍ର ମାଇଲ୍ ଦୂରରେ, ସାତ, ସମୁଦ୍ର ତର ନଇ ସେପଟର ଦେଶରେ ଆମେରିକାର ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡ ରାଜ୍ୟର ସେଡିଗୋଭ୍ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲରେ ସେତେବେଳେ ଇଞ୍ଜେନିୟର୍ କେୟାର୍ ଯୁନିଟ୍‌ରେ କୋମାରେ ଶୋଇ ରହିଥିଲେ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥ; ପୋଷ୍ଟକାର୍ଡରେ ପ୍ରେମପତ୍ର ଲେଖିଥିବା ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧପାଗଳ ବେଦବ୍ୟାସ ରଥ ।

ଇମେଲ୍ ଫେରମ୍ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ପୁଣି ଆଲୋଚନା ସରଗରମ ହୋଇ ଆସୁଥିଲା, ଏବେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଲୋଚନା ହେଉଥିଲା ବେଦବ୍ୟାସଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ, ତାଙ୍କ ଅସୁସ୍ଥତାକୁ ନେଇ ।



ତକ୍ତର ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ ଡେଟନ୍, ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ନରେଶ ଓ ତିନି ଜଣ ବାଗ୍ନୀ, ମୃଣାଳୀ ଓ ଶାଶୁତୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ରହନ୍ତି । ଯଦିଓ ସେ ଗଣିତରେ ପିଏଚ୍‌ଡି କରି ଗବେଷଣାକୁ ନିଜର ଜୀବିକା ଭାବେ ବାଛିନେଇଛନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ନାଚ, ଗୀତ, ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ବୟୋମିଳନ ଇତ୍ୟାଦିରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଆଗ୍ରହ । ୨୦୦୯ ଜୁଲାଇ ମାସରୁ ସେ ଓସାର ପ୍ରେସିଡେଣ୍ଟ ଭାବେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟଭାର ତୁଲାଇ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏହା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ସେ ୨୦୦୩ରୁ ୨୦୦୫ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଓସାର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ସଂପାଦିକା ଥିଲେ ଓ ୨୦୦୫ରୁ ୨୦୦୭ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଓସାର ସେକ୍ରେଟେରୀ ଭାବେ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ଏ ଗଙ୍ଗଟି ତାଙ୍କର ଅଜସ୍ର ଓସା ଅନୁଭୂତିର ଏକ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ।



ଗୋଟିଏ ପ୍ରେମ କାହାଣୀ... ସ୍ଵପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର(ରଥ)

ଅବାନକ ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଦେଖା ହେବାବା ଯେତିକି ଆକର୍ଷ୍ୟ ଲାଗିଲା, ତାଠୁ ବେଶୀ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଲାଗିଲା । ତିରିଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ବାଣୀବୀହାରରୁ ପେଡିପୁରୁଳା ବାନ୍ଧି ସେ ଯେଉଁ ଦିନ ଘରକୁ ଗଲେ, ମାଉସୀ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ଏମିତି କାନ୍ଦିଥିଲେଯେ ଆମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଆଖି ଲୁହ ଛଳ ଛଳ ହେଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ଝିଅ ଶାଶୁ ଘରକୁ ଯାଉଛି । ମୋ ଭଳି ଅନେକଙ୍କ ମନରେ କୌତୁହଳ ସୃଷ୍ଟିହେବା ସ୍ଵଭାବିକ, କାରଣ ମୋ ପରି ଅନେକ ଥିଲେ ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଛୁଟିହେଲେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଯିବା ପାଇଁ ଦିନ ଗଣୁଥିଲେ । ତେବେ ସେ ଯିବା ସମୟରେ ଆମ ହଞ୍ଜେଲର ସବୁ ଝିଅ ଗେଟ୍ ପାଖରେ ଭିତ ଯମେଇଥିଲେ, ଜାଣି ହୋଉନଥିଲା ସେ ଏତେ ପ୍ରିୟ ଥିଲେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ନା ସମସ୍ତେ ସେଠି କୌତୁହଳ ନେଇ ଜମା ହେଇଥିଲେ । କାରଣ ମୋ ବର୍ଷକର ରହଣୀ ଭିତରେ ତାଙ୍କ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ଵର ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ ଶକ୍ତିକୁ ମୁଁ ଚିହ୍ନି ପାରିନଥିଲି । ଦେଖାହେଲେ କେବେ କେବେ ହସି ଦିଅନ୍ତି, ମୁଁ ବି ହସିଦିଏ ଉତ୍ତରରେ, ବାସ୍ ସେତିକି ହସରେ ବି ସେମିତି କିଛି ଚମତ୍କାରୀ ନଥିଲା ମନେ ରଖିବା ଭଳି । ମୋଟାମୋଟି ଭାବେ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜାଣିନଥିଲି । ତଥାପି ମୁଁ ସେ ଭିତ ଭିତରେ ଛିଡା ହେଇ ନିଜ ଆଜ୍ଞାତରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଭାବ ପ୍ରବଣତାରେ କିଛିକ୍ଷଣ ପାଇଁ ସାମିଲ୍ ହେଇଗଲି । ତାଙ୍କ ରେଞ୍ଜା ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ହେବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଭିତ ସେମିତି ଜମି ରହିଲା ଯଦିଓ କଳରେ ପାଣିଆସିବାର ବେଳ କେତେବେଳୁ ହେଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ହଠାତ କେହି ଜଣେ ପାଣିଆସିବାର କଥା ମନେ ପକେଇ ଦେବାରୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ସେମିତି ଜ୍ଞାନ ଫେରିପାଇଲେ ଏବଂ ଅବଶିଷ୍ଟ ପାଣି ପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗୀତା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଇଗଲା । ମାତ୍ର ସାରା ସଂଧ୍ୟା ଏବଂ ବେଶ୍ କିଛି ଦିନ ଧରି ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚାର କେନ୍ଦ୍ରବିନ୍ଦୁ ଥିଲେ କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପା । ସେଇ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚାର ସୁଅ ଭିତରୁ ମୁଁ ଯାହା ବୁଝିଥିଲି ପ୍ରକୃତ କାରଣ କାହାକୁ ଜଣାନଥିଲା ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜାଣିଥିବା କିଛି କିଛି ଝିଅ ମୁକ୍ତ ହସରେ କେବଳ ଗୁଡାଏ କାହାଣୀ ବାଣ୍ଟୁଥିଲେ । ତଙ୍କର ଏଇ ଭାବ ପ୍ରବଣତା ଦେଖି ମାଉସୀ ମାନେ ବି ଆକର୍ଷ୍ୟ ହେଇଥିଲେ କାରଣ ସେମାନଙ୍କ କହିବାନୁସାରେ କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପା ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏତେ ବେଶୀ ଆପଣାର ପରି ବ୍ୟବହାର ତୁଲ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ କେବେ ଦେଖେଇ ନଥିଲେ । ହଞ୍ଜେଲର ଯାହାର ଭିଜିଟର ଆସନ୍ତି, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ମାଉସୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ସଂପର୍କ ଘନିଷ୍ଠ ହେଇଯାଏ । ମାତ୍ର କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କର କାଁ ଭାଁ କେହି କେମିତି ଭିଜିଟର ଆସନ୍ତି, ବେଶୀ ସମୟ ରୁମ୍ ଭିତରେ କାଟନ୍ତି । କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କର ଲୁହ ସର ସର ମୁହଁ ଆଉ ତାର କାରଣ କ'ଣ ହେଇ ଥିବ, ଏହି ଆଲୋଚନା ବେଶ୍ କିଛି ଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଆଲୋଚନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି

କରିଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରେମୀ ଯୁଗଳ ମାନଙ୍କର ବିଦାୟ କାଳୀନ ଭାବ ବିହୀନତା ଭିତରେ ଗୁଜବ ପେଡି ଭିତରୁ ନିଜର ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ହଜେଇ ବସିଲା ।

ଉପର ବ୍ୟାଚ୍ ପିଲାମାନେ ରୁମ୍ ଛାଡିବାର ଅଳ୍ପଦିନ ପରେ ଆମକୁ ସିଙ୍ଗଲ୍ ରୁମ୍ ମିଳିଗଲା । ମୋତେ କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କ ରୁମ୍ ମିଳିଲା । ଅନ୍ୟ ସାଙ୍ଗ ମାନଙ୍କ ପରି ମୋତେ ବେଶୀ ହଇରାଣ ହେବାକୁ ପଡିନଥିଲା ରୁମ୍ କୁ ନିଜ ଢାଆରେ ସଜେଇବାକୁ, କାରଣ କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପା ରୁମ୍ ଚିକୁ ବେଶ୍ ସଫା ସୁତୁରା କରି ଛାଡିଥିଲେ । ରୁମ୍ ଭିତରେ ଚନ୍ଦନ ଧୂପର ବାସ୍ନା ତଥାପି ଖେଳିରୁଲୁଥିଲା । କେଜାଣି କାହିଁକି ରୁମ୍ରେ ଏକୃଷ୍ଟି ବସିଥିବା ବେଳେ କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କର ହଠାତ୍ ଛାଡିବା ସମୟର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ନାଚିଯାଏ । ମନରେ ଅଦମ୍ୟ ଆଗ୍ରହ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୁଏ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କ କାନ୍ଦିବାର ପ୍ରକୃତ କାରଣ କଣ ଥିଲା । ସତରେ କଣ ହଠାତ୍ ଲାଲ୍ ଫୁଟୁଛି ବୋଲି ଖବର ପାଇଲୁ । ମୋ ଆଖି ଆପେ ଆପେ ରୁମ୍ରେ ଚାରିପଟ୍ଟ ବୁଲିଆସେ । କାଳେ କିଛି ଉତ୍ତର ମିଳିଯିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁଠି ମୋର ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ପ୍ରମାଣ, କିଛିଦିନ ତଳେ ଏଇ ରୁମ୍ ଚିକୁ ଏକାନ୍ତ ଭାବେ ନିଜର ବୋଲି ଜାହିର୍ କରୁଥିବା କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କର ଚିହ୍ନବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନଥାଏ କୋଉଠି । ମୋ ଭଳି କେତେଯେ ନିର୍ଜନ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ କାଟିଥିବେ ସେ ଏଇ ରୁମ୍ ଭିତରେ, କେବେ କେତେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ କେତେ କଳ୍ପନା ଭିତରେ ହଜିଥିବେ, କେବେ ପୁଣି ପରାସ୍ତ ସୈନିକର ଗ୍ଳାନି ନେଇ ଏଇ ରୁମ୍ ଭିତରେ ଆତ୍ମଗୋପନ କରି ଥିବେ, କେବେ ପୁଣି ନିଜ ସଫଳତାର କାହାଣୀ ଏଇ କାନ୍ଦୁ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶୁଣେଇଥିବେତ କେତେବେଳେ ଏଇ କାନ୍ଦୁ ମାନେ ନିରବରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିରୁ ବୋହୁଥିବା ଲୁହଧାରକୁ ଚୁପ୍ଚାପ୍ ନିରୀକ୍ଷଣ କରୁଥିବେ । ମାତ୍ର ମୋ ସହିତ କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ଜୀବନର ଅନୁଭୂତି ବାଣ୍ଟିବାକୁ ସେ ଚାରି କାନ୍ଦୁ ଆଦୌ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ନଥିଲେ । କେଜାଣି କାହିଁକି ମୋ ଭିତରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଉତ୍ତର ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଦିନକୁ ଦିନ ଆଗ୍ରହ ବଢିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ଦୋଳ ଛୁଟିପରେ ଭାଇଙ୍କ ବାହାଘର ପାଇଁ ଆଉ କେତେ ଦିନ ଅଧିକା ଘରେ ରହି ଫେରିବା ପରେ ଜାଣିଲି କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପା ଆସି ମୋତେ ଖୋଜୁଥିଲେ, ତାଙ୍କରୁମ୍ରେ କିଏ ରହୁଛି ବୋଲି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରୁଥିଲେ । ମାଉସି ମାନେ କହିଲେ ରେଜିଷ୍ଟ୍ରେଟ ନେବାକୁ ଆସି ରାତିଟିଏ ରହିବାକୁ ଯାଗା ଖୋଜୁଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ମନ ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ରୁମ୍ରେ କିଛି ସମୟ କାଟିଥାନ୍ତେ । ମୁଁ ତ ନଥିଲି, ସେ ଆଉ ଜାଗା ବି ପାଇଲେନି ରହିବାକୁ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସଂଧ୍ୟା ବେଳେ ଫେରିଗଲେ । ସେଦିନ ମୋର କେମିତି ଗୋଟେ ଅଜବ ଅନୁଭୂତି ହେଇଥିଲା । ଆଗରୁ ଜାଣିନଥିବା କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଲାଗିଲା । ମନେ ମନେ ଭାବିଲି ଏଇ କିଛିଦିନ ତଳେ ହଠାତ୍ ଛାଡି ଗଲାବେଳେ ଲୁହର ଝରଣା ବୁହେଇଥିବା କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କୁ ରାତିଟେ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ ଜାଗା ଚିକେ ମିଳିଲାନି । “ଆଉ କେବେ ଆସିଲେ ମୋତେ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର କହିବ” ମାଉସୀଙ୍କୁ କହିଲି ।

କିଛିଦିନ ପରେ ସହଜରେ ମୋ ହାତ ପାଉନଥିବା କମ୍ପୋର୍ଟର ସଭା ଉପର ଥାକରେ କିଛି ଅଦରକାରୀ ନୋଟ୍‌ବୁକ୍ ସବୁକୁ ରଖି ରଖି ମୁଁ ଅନୁଭବ କଲି ଭିତର ଆତକୁ ଧଳାକରି ଥିବା ଭଳି । ମୋର ମନେ ପଡୁନଥିଲା ମୁଁ କେବେ କିଛି ଆଗରୁ ସେଠି ରଖିଥିବା ପରି । ଚଉକାଟିଏ ଗାଣି ଆଣି କାଢିଆଣିଲି ଅଳ୍ପଟିକୁ । କଳାରଙ୍ଗର ପିପିଲିବ୍ୟାଗ୍ରଟିଏ । କୌତୁହଳ ନେଇ ଅଜାତି ପକେଇଲି, ଗୋଟିଏ ତାଇରୀ ଓ କିଛି ଚିଠି ପରି ମନେ ହୋଉଥିବା କାଗଜ ଗୁଡାଏ ଅଜାତି ହେଇ ପଡିଲା । ତାଇରୀଟି କାହାର କହିବା ସମ୍ଭବ ନଥିଲା କେଉଁଠି କିଛି ନା ଲେଖା ହେଇନଥିଲା , ଚିଠିରେ କିଛି ସଂବୋଧନ ନଥିଲା , ଇତିରେ କାହା ନାଁ ନଥିଲା । ତଥାପି ମନେ ମନେ ଧରି ନେଇଥିଲି ସେ ସବୁ କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କର ସଂପତ୍ତି । ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସେ ସବୁ ନ ପଢିବା ପାଇଁ ବହୁତ ପ୍ରଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ମନରେ କୌତୁହଳ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଲା । ତାପରେ ସେ ତାଇରୀ ଆଉ ସେ କବିତା ସବୁ ମୋ ଅବସର ସମୟର ସାଥୀ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଥିଲେ ।

କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପା ଯେ ଏକ ଗୋପନ ପ୍ରେମ କାହାଣୀର ନାୟିକା ଥିଲେ ଏ କଥା ଆମେ କେହି ଜାଣି ନଥିଲୁ । ମୋ ଗୁପ୍ତ ଧନ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତି କଥା ଜଣା ପଡିଥିଲେ ହଠାତ୍ ହେଲେ ହଇଚଇ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଇ ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତା, ଆଉ ମୁଁ ହଠାତ୍ ସେଲିବିଟି ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଥାନ୍ତି . . . ଗସ୍ତ କୁଲନ୍ ମାନଙ୍କର ଭିତ ଜମିଥାନ୍ତା ମୋ ରୁମ୍ରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ କେଜାଣି କାହିଁକି ମୋର ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଲାଣି କାହାକୁ ସେ ବିଷୟରେ କିଛି କହିବାକୁ, ଏମିତିକି ମୋର ଘନିଷ୍ଠ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ମୁଁ ସେୟାର୍ କରିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଲିନି । ତାପରେ ସେ ତାଇରୀ ଆଉ ସେ କବିତା ସବୁ ମୋ ଅବସର ସମୟର ସାଥୀ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଥିଲେ, ଏକ ଅନନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରେମମୟ ପରିବେଶ ଭିତରେ ମୋ ନିଃସଫଳ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ସବୁ ଧିରେ ଧିରେ ବିଲିନ ହେଇ ଯାଉଥିଲେ । ରଚନାର ଅନନ୍ୟ ଶୈଳୀ, ଭାବ ଓ ଭାଷାର ସମନ୍ୱୟ ସବୁ କେମିତି ଏକ ମଧୁମୟ ପରିବେଶ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଥିଲେ ମୋ ଚାରିପାଖେ । ଏମିତି ଚୁପ୍ ଚାପ୍ ହେଇ ରହୁଥିବା ଝିଅଟିଏ ପୁଣି ଏମିତି ରୋମାଞ୍ଚିକ୍ କବିତା ଲେଖିପାରେ, ମୁଁ କଳ୍ପନା କରି ପାରୁ ନଥିଲି । କବିତା ଲେଖିବା ସୌକ୍ୟ ମୋର ବି ଥିଲା । ମାତ୍ର ଜୀବନ ଧର୍ମୀ କବିତା, ପ୍ରେମ କବିତା ଲେଖିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରି ବିଫଳ ହେଇଥିଲି ଅନେକ ଥର । ତେଣୁ କୁନ୍ତଳାଅପାଙ୍କର କବିତା ମୋ କବିପାଣକୁ ମୋହାବିଷ୍ଣୁ କରି ରଖୁଥିଲା । ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ମୋ ମନରେ ଆଗ୍ରହ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଲା ଜାଣିବାକୁ କିଏ ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେରଣାର ଉତ୍ସ, କାହା ପାଇଁ ସମର୍ପିତ ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରାଣ ଆଉ ମନ, କାହାପାଇଁ ରହୁଥିଲେ କଳ୍ପନାର ଅଭିସାର, କାହା ସହିତ

ବାନ୍ଧୁଥିଲେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନର ନୀତ । ମନରେ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଥିଲା ଅନେକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଉତ୍ତର ମିଳିବା ସମ୍ଭବ ନଥିଲା, କାରଣ କୋଉଠିବି ଲେଖା ନଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରେମିକଙ୍କର ନା ବା ଠିକଣା । ମୋତେ ବି ଜଣା ନଥିଲା କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କ ଠିକଣା । ତେଣୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଧନ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ପଠେଇଦେବା ସୁବିଧା ହେଲାନି । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜାଣିଥିବା ଝିଅ ମାନେ ବି ତାଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ କିଛି କହି ପାରିନଥିଲେ । ସେ କେବେ କାହାକୁ ପ୍ରେମ କରୁଥିବା କଥା କେବେ କେହି କହିବାର ଶୁଣୁ ନଥିଲି ମୁଁ । ତେଣୁ ପ୍ରେମିକ ପୁରୁଷଟିର ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ନେଇ ମୋ ମନରେ ଅନେକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଥିଲେବି ମୁଁ ଛିର କରିଥିଲି ଏ ବିଷୟରେ ତୁମ୍ଭ ରହିବାକୁ । ସେ ବିଷୟରେ କାହାକୁ ପଚାରି କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କ ନାରେ ଅପବାଦର କାଳିମା ବୋଲିବାକୁ ମୋତେ ସାମାନ୍ୟ ମାତ୍ର ଆଗ୍ରହ ଆସୁନଥିଲା । ଅଥଚ ମୋ ମନରେ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ତାଙ୍କ କବିତା ଆଉ କବିତାର ଧାରାରେ, ଅମ୍ଭାର ଆହ୍ୱାନରେ ଲେଖା ହେଇଥିବା ଚିଠି ସବୁ ପଢ଼ିବାର ଆଗ୍ରହ ଥିଲା ଅଦମ୍ୟ । ତାଙ୍କ ନାମହୀନ ପ୍ରେମିକ ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କ ମନ ଭିତରେ ଥିଲା ଅଜସ୍ର ପ୍ରୀତି, ହୃଦୟରେ ଥିଲା ଅସରଳି ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି । କିନ୍ତୁ କେଉଁଠି ବି ନଥିଲା ସେ ଦୁର୍ଲଭ ପ୍ରୀତି ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରେମିକଠାରୁ ପ୍ରୀତିର ସ୍ୱିକୃତୀ ଅବ ପ୍ରେମର ସ୍ୱାକ୍ଷର । ସେ ଯିଏ ବି ହେଉ, ଜାଣୁ ବା ନଜାଣୁ ସେ ନିଃସୃଜ ଭାଗ୍ୟବାନ, ସେ କ'ଣ ଜାଣିଥିଲା କେହି ଜଣେ ତା ପାଇଁ ନିଃସର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଦୀପଟିଏ ଜାଳିବସିଥିଲା, ଶରର ସମୁଦ୍ରେ ବୁଡ଼ିରହି କବିତାର ମୋତି ମାଳା ଗୁଢ଼ୁଥିଲା, ମହମବତୀଟିଏ ଭଳି ଜଳୁଥିଲା ଅହରହ, ନିଜ ଦୁନିଆରେ ନିଜ ପ୍ରେମର ଦିପାଳୀ ଧରି ଅପେକ୍ଷି ରହିଥିଲା , ବାଟ ଚାହିଁ ବସି ବସି କବିତା ଲେଖୁଥିଲା . . .

ତୁମେ ଆସିବ!
 ତୁମେ ଆସିଲେ ଇ ଅପଣା ଛାଏଁ ବଦଳିଯିବ ସବୁ,
 ପୃଥିବୀଠୁ ଆକାଶ ଯାଏଁ ସବୁଆଡ଼େ ଭରିଯିବ
 ପ୍ରେମମୟ ବିଚିତ ବୈଭବ ।
 କଥା ଦିଅ କି ନଦିଅ
 ଦୁଃଖ ନାହିଁ, ବାଟ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥିବି
 ଯୁଗରୁ ଯୁଗାନ୍ତର
 ଜନ୍ମରୁ ଜନ୍ମାନ୍ତର
 ନିଜକୁ ବୁଝାଉଥିବି
 ତୁମେ ଆସିବ ।
 କାରଣ,
 ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି
 କେବେନା କେବେ ତ
 ତୁମେ ଆସିବ,
 ନିଃସୃଜ ଆସିବ ।

ଆଶା ଥିଲା କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପା ଆଉଥରେ ଆସିବେ । ସେ ଯୋଉ ଥରୁଟିଏ ଆସିଥିଲେ ବୋଧହୁଏ ଦୈବାତ ଛାଡ଼ିଯାଇଥିବା ତାଙ୍କ ଗୁପ୍ତଧନକୁ ଫେରାଇନେବା ପାଇଁ, ହୁଏତ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କ ରୁମ୍ ରେ କିଏ ରହୁଛି ଜାଣିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଆଉ କେବେ ଆସିନଥିଲେ । କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପା ମୋତେ ଅଜଣା ଝିଅଟିଏ ଭଳି ଲଗୁନଥିଲେ ଆଉ, ପ୍ରିୟ ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ବାନ୍ଧବୀଟିଏ ପରି ଲାଗୁଥିଲେ, ଯିଏ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗୋଚରେ ମୋ ଆଗରେ ହୃଦୟର ଅନୁଭବକୁ ଖୋଲି ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ହଠାତ୍ ଛାଡ଼ିବା ବେଳେ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ସଂପର୍କକୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲି ସିନା କିନ୍ତୁ ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ପରେ ଆଉଥରେ ତାକୁ ଖୋଲି ମନ ଭରି ପଢ଼ିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିନଥିଲା । ହଠାତ୍ ରୁମ୍ ଚାରିକାନ୍ଥ ଭିତରର ଏକାନ୍ତ ପରିବେଶ ଭିତରେ ସେ ସବୁ ପଢ଼ିବାର ଯେଉଁ ଅଦମ୍ୟ ନିଶା ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କର କୋଳାହଳ ଭିତରେ ସେ ଆପେ ଆପେ କୁଆଡ଼େ ହଜିଗଲା । ମାତ୍ର ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସେ କବିତାର ପଦ ମନ ଭିତରେ ବସା ବାନ୍ଧିରହିଛନ୍ତି । କେବେ ଭୁଲି ହେଇନି ସେଇ ଏକାନ୍ତ ବେଳାର ସେଇ ପ୍ରେମ କବିତା ସବୁ ପଢ଼ିବାର ରୋମଞ୍ଚକର ଅନନ୍ୟ ଅନୁଭୂତି ।

ହଠାତ୍ ଛାଡ଼ିବାର ପୂର୍ବ ରାତିରେ ମୁଁ ବୁଝି ପାରିଥିଲି କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କ ହଠାତ୍ ଛାଡ଼ିଲା ବେଳେ ବିକଳ ହେଇ କାନ୍ଦିବାର କାରଣ । ଏକାନ୍ତ ଭାବରେ ନିଜସ୍ୱ ଏକ ପରିବେଶକୁ ହରେଇବାର ଦୁଃଖରେ ବ୍ୟଥିତ ଥିଲେ ସେ । ଚାରିକାନ୍ଥ ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ . . . ବାହାରର

କୋଳାହଳ ଭିତରୁ ମୁକୁଳି ଯାଇ ସେଇଠି ନିଜ କଳ୍ପନାର ଦୁନିଆରେ ହଜି ଯାଉଥିଲେ , ଶବ୍ଦର ଦୁନିଆରେ ମଜିଯାଉଥିଲେ । ସ୍ମୃତି ଆଉ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଙ୍କ ଲୁଚକାଳି ଖେଳରେ ସଂପର୍କର ସଂଜ୍ଞା ବୁଝୁଥିଲେ । ଶେଷ କବିତାର ଶେଷ ପଦ ଥିଲା . . .

ଜାଣେନା
ଆଉ କେବେ
ଦେଖା ହେବକି ନହେବ
କଥା ଦିଅ...
କେବେ ଭୁଲିବନି
ଭୁଲିଗଲା ବୋଲି ଭାବିନେବନି ।

କିନ୍ତୁ କିଏ ସେଇ ଭାଗ୍ୟବାନ ଯାହାପାଇଁ ଏ ଅନବଦ୍ୟ ପ୍ରେମର ସନ୍ଦେଶ ? ଅନେକଥର ମନରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଆସିଛି କ’ଣ ହେଇଥିବ ଶେଷ ପରିଣତି! ସତରେ କୁନ୍ତଳା ଆପାଙ୍କର ମିଳନ ହେଇଥିବ ତାଙ୍କ ମନର ମଣିଷ ସହିତ । ଯଦି ନ ହେଇଥିବ କେତେ ଭାଙ୍ଗି ପଡ଼ିଥିବେ ସେ ଭିତରେ ଭିତରେ । ଆସି ସାମ୍ନାରେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନମାନଙ୍କର ସାମୁହିକ ସମାପ୍ତିକୁ ସହିପାରିଥିବେ ସେ? ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଯାଏ କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କର ଅଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ କବିତାର ପଦ ..

ମୋ ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ଆଦରି ନେବାକୁ କହୁଛ ଯେ . . .
ଏ ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ମୁଁ ମୋର ବୋଲି କେମିତି ମାନିବି
କାହିଁକି ମାନିବି
ଯଦି ସେ ଦେବନି ମୋତେ ମୋର ପ୍ରାପ୍ୟ,
ତାକୁ କଣ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ
ତୁମେ, ତୁମେ ମୋର ଏକାନ୍ତ କାମ୍ୟ ।

ସତରେ କ’ଣ ତାଙ୍କ ଭାଗ୍ୟର ଦୟାରୁ ତାଙ୍କର କାମ୍ୟ ଓ ପ୍ରାପ୍ୟକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ମିଳିଛି ? ଏମିତି ଅସୁମାରୀ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଥିଲା ମୋ ମନରେ, ଆଶା ଥିଲା କେବେ ଭେଟ ହେଲେ ପଚାରିବି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସମୟ ତା ବାଟରେ ଆଗେଇଗଲା । କେବେ ବି କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କ ସହ ଭେଟ ହେବା ଦୂରର କଥା ତାଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ କାହାଠୁ କିଛି ମୁଁ ଶୁଣି ନଥିଲି ।

ଆଜି ଅଚାନକ ଏତେ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ବି କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ଚିହ୍ନିବାରେ ବେଶୀ କିଛି ଅସୁବିଧା ହେଲାନି । ଆସି ରେ ଚଷମା ଆଉ ମୁଣ୍ଡବାଳ ଚିକେ ଧଳା ହେଇ ଆସୁଛି ଯାହା । ପରିଚୟ ସମୟରେ ଜାଣିଲି ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ପୁଅବୋହୁଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ବୁଲି ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ଭାବିନଥିଲି ମୋତେ ସେ ଚିହ୍ନି ପାରିବେ । ତାଙ୍କ ତଳବ୍ୟାଡ଼ ଝିଅ ଆଉ ମୋ ନାଁ ଜାଣିବା ପରେ ସେ ନିଜ ଆତ୍ମ କହିଥିଲେ “ମୋ ପରେ ତୁମେ ମୋ ରୁମ୍‌ରେ ଥିଲ?” । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ବର୍ଷ ବର୍ଷ ର ଆତ୍ମୀୟତା ଆମ ଭିତରେ । କୁଣ୍ଡେଇ ପକେଇଲେ । ଏମିତି କଥା ଛଳରେ ମୁଁ ପଚାରିଦେଲି “ଆଉ କ’ଣ କବିତା ଲେଖୁଛନ୍ତି, ଇଏ କଣ ସିଏ” । ହସିଦେଇ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇଥିଲେ, “ ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଥିଲି ତୁମେ ଏକୃଷ୍ଟିଆ ସବୁ ଜାଣିଥିବ...”, “ରେଜଲଟ ବାହାରିବା ପରେ ପରେ ବାହାଘର ହେଇଗଲା ଆଉ ସୁବିଧା ହେଲାନି ହଞ୍ଜେଲ୍ ଯାଇ ତୁମକୁ ଆଉଥରେ ଖୋଜିବାକୁ, ଇଏ ସେ ନୁହନ୍ତି ।” ଅଜାଣତରେ ତୀର୍ତ୍ତଶ୍ୱାସତିଏ ବାହାରି ଆସିଲା, ପଚାରିଲି, “ ବାଣୀବିହାରରୁ ଆସିବାପରେ ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଆଉ ଭେଟ ହେଇ ପାରିଲାନି ସତରେ?” ଅଳ୍ପ ହସି ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ ... “କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଁ ତ ସେ ରୁମ୍‌ରୁ ବାହାରିକି ଆସିବା ପରେ ଆମ ଠିକଣା ବଦଳି ଗଲା, କାହାଣୀ ଆଉ ଆଗକୁ ବଢ଼ିବ କେମିତି?” । “ତାଙ୍କ ଠିକଣା ନଥିଲା” ପଚାରିଥିଲି, “ଏତେ ଗଭୀର ସଂପର୍କ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ!” । ହସି ହସି ଗତିଗଲେ କହିଲେ, “ତାଙ୍କ ଠିକଣା ମୋ କଳ୍ପନା ଭିତରେ ଥିଲା, ବାହାର ଦୁନିଆରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଠିକଣା ନଥିଲା କୋଉଠି, ତାଙ୍କ ଠିକଣା ଥିଲା ମୋ ତାଇରୀ ପୃଷ୍ଠାରେ, ତାଙ୍କ ଠିକଣା ଥିଲା ମୋ କବିତା ଭିତରେ, ସାଙ୍ଗ ମାନଙ୍କ ନଜରରୁ ଲୁଚାଉ ଲୁଚାଉ ଭୁଲରେ ସେସବୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେଇ ଆସିଲି ସେଦିନ, ସେ ସେଠି ରହିଗଲେ, କେବେ ସେ ରୁମ୍‌ରୁ ବାହାରି, ମୋ ପାଖେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ପାରିଲେନି । ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ବଞ୍ଚିବା କଷ୍ଟ ହେଲା, ଆସ୍ତେ ଆସ୍ତେ ଦେହସୁହା ହେଇଗଲା, ଆଉ ଏକ ଭିତରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଖୋଜୁଛି ଗଲା ଅଠେଇଶ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲାଣି ” ।

ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରିବି କି ନା ଜାଣି ପାରୁନଥିଲି । ଠୋପା ଠୋପା ଲୁହ ର ଦାଗରେ ଭଣ୍ଡି ବିରହ କବିତା ସବୁ କାହା ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ନଥିଲା, ସ୍ମୃତି ଆଉ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଙ୍କ ତେଣାରେ ବସି ଲେଖା ଯାଇଥିବା କବିତା ସବୁର କାବ୍ୟ ପୁରୁଷ କଳ୍ପନା ପ୍ରସୂତ ଥିଲେ, କ’ଣ କହିବି ଜାଣି ପାରୁନଥିଲି । ମୋ

ମନ କଥା ବୁଝିପାରି କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପା କହିଲେ , “ତୁମେ ସତରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରୁନ? ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କର ସେ ସବୁ ମୋ ନିଃସଙ୍ଗ ବୋଧ କଟେଇବାର ଏକମାତ୍ର ଉପାୟ । କାହାକୁ ଭଲ ପାଇବାର ସାହସ ନଥିଲା, କାହା ମନ ଜିଣିପାରିବାର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ନଥିଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମନା ନଥିଲା, ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖିବାରେ କ୍ଷତି କ’ଣ ?”

ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପାଙ୍କ କବିତାର ଆଉ ଗୋଟେ ପଦ । ଆବୃତ୍ତି କଲି,

ଏ ଜୀବନ କୁ ମୋର ବୋଲି କହିବିନି
ନିଜେ ଯଦି ଶିଖେଇବନି ମୋତେ ସିଏ ଜିଇଁବାର ଶୈଳୀ
ଏ ଜୀବନ କୁ ମୋର ବୋଲି କେମିତି ଭାବିବି
ନିଜେ ଯଦି ଜାଣିବିନି, ବୁଝିବିନି ଜିଇଁବାର କଳା ।

ପଚାରିଲି, କାହାର କବିତା କହିଲେ । ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲାନି ତାଙ୍କର ନିଜ କବିତା ବୋଲି । କୁନ୍ତଳା ଅପା ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଲେ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ କବିତା ମନେ ରଖିଛି , ଅଥଚ ତାଙ୍କର ମନେ ନାହିଁ । ମୁଁ ଭାବୁଥିଲି, କବିତା ମନେ ରଖିଛି କହୁଛୁ, ତୁମେ କେମିତି ଜାଣିବ ମୁଁ ଏତେ ଦିନ ଧରି ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରେମିକ ପୁରୁଷଟିକୁ ଖୋଜିବୁଲୁଛି ଦେଖାହେଲେ ତୁମ ମନ କଥା କହିବାକୁ, ଆଜି ମୋତେ କହୁଛୁ ସେ ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ବିହୀନ, ସେ ତୁମ ମାନସ ପୁରୁଷ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଉ କିଛି କହି ପାରିଲି ନାହିଁ, ତାଙ୍କ ବୋହୂ ଯିବା ପାଇଁ ତାକୁଥିଲା । ଆଉଥରେ ଦେଖା ହେବ କହି ବିଦାୟ ମାଗିଲି । ରାସ୍ତାସାରା ନିଜକୁ ନିଜେ ହସୁଥିଲି ଯେ …ତାହେଲେ ଗୋଟିଏ କେବେ ଘଟିନଥିବା ପ୍ରେମକାହାଣୀର ଏକମାତ୍ର ସାକ୍ଷୀ ମୁଁ !



ସ୍ୱପ୍ନଲତା ମିଶ୍ର(ରଥ) ମାକୋମ୍ବ, ମିଚିଗାନରେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ ନିର୍ମଳ ରଥ ଓ ଦୁଇଝିଅ ଆନନ୍ଦ୍ୟା ଓ ନୟନାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବାସ କରନ୍ତି । ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ମିଶ୍ର ୨୦୦୭ ଓସା ସ୍ମରଣିକାର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବିଭାଗର ସଂପାଦନା ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ତୁଲେଇଥିଲେ ।

ସୁଅ ମୁହଁରେ ପଥର ଦୀଫିରଞ୍ଜନ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ

ସଜାକାଟିସାରି ଜିଅଲରୁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ଫେରିଲା ଭାରି ଫୁର୍ତ୍ତ ଦେଖାଯାଉଥିଲା । ଗୁରେଇକୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଭାରି ମାତିମାତି ପଡୁଥାଏ । ମୁହଁ ପୋତିପୋତି ସିଏ ରାସ୍ତାଘାଟରେ ଚାଲୁଥାଏ । ଆଖିକୋଣରୁ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖୁଥାଏ , କାଳେ କିଏ ତାକୁ ଥଟ୍ଟା କରୁନିତ ! ହେଲେ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ଏକଦମ୍ ବେଫିକର୍ । ଛାତି ଫୁଟଲଇ ନିଶମୋତି ରାଜା ଭଳିଆ ଚଳପ୍ରଚଳ ହେଉଥାଏ । ସତକୁସତ ଜିଅଲରୁ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ଫେରିବାପରେ ପାଖଆଖ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସାମ୍ନାରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଖାତିର୍ ବଢ଼ିଯାଇଥାଏ । ଆଗରୁ ଆଡ଼ଆଖିରେ ଚାହୁଁନଥିବା ଲୋକମାନେ ବି ଏବେ ଅକାରଣ ବେଳଅବେଳରେ ପଚାରିଦଉଥା’ନ୍ତି ‘କିରେ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ କେମିତି ଅଛୁ ? ପିଲା କେତୋଟି ? ‘ଆରେ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତବାରୁ କୁଆଡେ ଯାଇଥିଲ କି ?’ ଏପରିକି ଡେଜରାଟି ଦୋକାନର ଭୁଷଣମୁହାଁ ମାଲିକ ବି ଥରେ ଗୁରେଇକୁ କହିଲା ‘ତମ ସଉଦା ଏଇଠୁ ନବ ଭଉଣୀ । ବାକି ସାକିକୁ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବନେଇଁ । ମାସ ଶେଷକୁ ହିସାବ କରି ମୁଁ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତବାରୁଙ୍କ ଠଉ ନେଇନେବିନି କି?’

ଏଭଳି ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନର ରହସ୍ୟ ଗୁରେଇ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ପଶୁନଥାଏ । ସିଏ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତକୁ ଏକଥା ପଚାରିଲା । ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ହସିଦେଇ କହିଲା ‘ଜିଅଲରେ ସହରବଜାରର ବହୁତ ବଡ଼ବଡ଼ ଲୋକ ରୁହନ୍ତି । ନେତା, ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ , କଣ୍ଠସ୍ୱର, ତାଙ୍କର, ଯାହାକୁ ଯେତେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ଯିଏ ନଶୁଣିବ, କଥାକଥାରେ ଚାଲୁ ହେଇଯିବ ଏକେ ଫର୍ଟି ସେଭେନ୍ । ଶହଶହ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଗତିଯିବ ତଳେ ।

‘ସେଇଟା କି ଜିନିଷ ?’ ପଚାରିଲା ଗୁରେଇ ।

‘ଆଲୋ ସେଇଟା ଗୋଟାଏ ବସ୍ତୁକ । ନଳୀ ଚିପିଲେ ହଜାର ହଜାର ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ସଫା କରିଦେବ । ଶବର ବି ପଥା ରହିବନି ।’

ଗୁରେଇ ଛାତିରେ ଛନକା ପଶିଗଲା । କାହୁକୁ ଛାତିପାଖକୁ ଜାକିନେଇ ସିଏ କହିଲା ‘ତମକୁ ମୋ ରାଣ ରହିଲା, ସେସବୁ ଜିନିଷର ତମେ ପାଶ ପଶିବନି । ମୋ ଛୁଆର ଅକଲଲାଣ ହେବ ।’

ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ହୁଏଲା । କି ହିଲା 'ଆଲୋ ମୁଁ କିଏ ସେ ବନ୍ଧୁକ କିଏ ? ସେଗୁଡ଼ା ସେଇ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଥାଏ ନା । ସେଥିରୁ କିଛି କିଣିକି ରାଜୀବ ଗାନ୍ଧୀ ତା ନିଜ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଦେଇଥିଲା ବୋଲି ତାକୁ ଗାନ୍ଧୀରୁ କେମିତି ତଡ଼ିଦେଲେ ଦେଖିଲୁନି ? ଶେଷରେ ତାକୁ ଶତ୍ରୁ ଦେଶର ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଲଗେଇ ମାରୁ ଦେଲେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ କାଳେ କିଏ ମାରିପକେଇବ ବୋଲି ସେମାନେ ପକ୍ଷିପକ୍ଷର କରି ଯାଇ ଡିଅଲ ଭିତରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି । କି ଆରାମ ଜୀବନ ସେଠି ! ତୁ ଥରେ ଦେଖି ଆସିଲେ ସେଠୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ମନ କରିବୁ ନାହିଁ । କି ଖାଇବା, କି ପିଇବା । ସେଠିକାର ତନମାନଙ୍କ ଭଲ ନଜରରେ ଯଦି ପଡ଼ିଗଲୁ, ତୋ ପାଇଁ ସାତ ଖୁଣ୍ଟ ମାଫ୍ । ଯାହୁଁ ଯାହୁଁ ଜର୍ଜ ଓକିଲ ତତେ ସଲାମ୍ ବଜେଇବେ । ତୁ ଯଦି ଚାହିଁବୁ ବମ୍ବେର ଫିଲିମ୍ ହିରୋଇନ୍ ତୋ ଆଗରେ ନାଚ କରିବେ । ତୋ ପିଲାଟି ମା ହେବା ପାଇଁ ଆଲବମ୍ ହିରୋଇନ୍ ମାନେ ତ ଲାଇନ୍ ଲଗେଇ ଠିଆ ହେବେ ।'

'ଛି ଛି ସେ ନାସନା କଥାଗୁଡ଼ା ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ଆଉ ବଖାଣନା' ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ଉପରେ ବିରକ୍ତ ହେଇ କି ହିଲା ଗୁରେଇ ଆଉ ମନିଆ କାହୁଆ ଦିଲଟାଙ୍କ କାନକୁ ତା ପଶତକାନିରେ ଘୋଡେଇ ପକେଇଲା ।

'ଆଲୋ ଡିଅଲ ନଯାଇଥିଲେ କଣ ମୁଁ ଏତେ କଥା ଜାଣିଥାନ୍ତି ? ଦେଖିବୁଲୋ, ଦିନ କେତେଟାରେ ତୋତେ ରାଣୀ କରିଦେବି । ଆମ ତନ୍ କଥାରେ ମୁଁ ଯଦି ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍ କାମ କରିପାରିଲି ଆମର ଏ ଅଭାବ ରହିବ ନେଇଁ' କହିଲା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ।

ସତକୁସତ ଦିନାକେତେ ସବୁ ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍ ଚାଲିଲା । କୁହାନାହିଁ ବୋଲାନାହିଁ ଗାଁ ସରପଞ୍ଚ ନିଜେ ଆସି ଦେଇଗଲେ ଛ'ସାତଟା ଜାଲ ବିପିଏଲ କାର୍ଡ । ଜଣେ ଜଣେ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଜାଲ ପଡ଼ି କାର୍ଡ ଦି'ଦିନିଟା ଲେଖାଏଁ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେତକ ଯୋଗାଡ଼ କରିବା ପେଇଁ ସେମାନେ ଲହୁଲହାଣ ହେଇଯାଇ ଥିଲେ । କିଏ ମାଲପକ୍, କିଏ ଝିଅ ବୋହୂକୁ ସଉଦା କରି ସେତକ ହାସଲ କରିଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ କହିବା ମୁତାବକ୍ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତକୁ ସାତଖୁଣ୍ଟ ମାଫ୍ । ଭୋଅତ ବେଳ ହୁଏ ବା ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ମିଟିଂ ହୁଏ କି ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଅଫିସର୍ ଆସନ୍ତୁ, ସବୁଥିକୁ ଆଗ ଖୋଜା ପଡ଼ିଲା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ । ଏଇ ସବୁ କାମ କରିକରି ଅପର୍ତ୍ତକୁ ଆଉ ଘରକଥା ବୁଝିବା ପାଇଁ ସମୟ ଅକ୍ଷେ ନାହିଁ ।

ମାସ ଶେଷକୁ ପଡ଼ିକାର୍ଡରେ ଦୁଇଟଙ୍କିଆ ଚାଉଳ ଉଠେଇ ଅଗରବାଲ ମିଲମାଲିକର ଏଜେଣ୍ଟକୁ ଧରେଇଦିଏ । ସେଇ ପ ଲସାରେ ଘରର ହାନିଲାଭ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଉଠିଯାଏ କୌଣସିମତେ । ହେଲେ ଗୁରେଇ ମନରୁ ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ ମରିଯାଉଥାଏ ସରାଗ । ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ଆଉ ଆଗଭଳି ଆଦର ସୋହାଗ ନଥାଏ । ତାର ଦି'ଦିନିଟା ପିଲାପାଇଁ ମା'ସିଏ କେବେକେବେ ଏକାଠି ବସି ଦୁଃଖ ସୁଖ ହୁବା, ଭଲ ମନ୍ କରି ଖାଇବା, ଘେରାଏ ବୁଲିଆସିବା, ସାଇପଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ସାଇପଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ସଞ୍ଜେଲିବା ଏଥକୁ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ନିଘା ନଥାଏ ଆଦୌ । ଏପରିକି ମନିଆଁ କାହୁଆ ଦିଲଟାଙ୍କୁ ଗେହୁା କରିବାପାଇଁ ବି ସମ୍ୟ ନଥାଏ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ଦିନ ଦିନ ଧରି କୁଆଡେ ଚାଲିଯାଏ ଘରୁ । ଫେର ହୁଏଏ ଦି ହୁଏ ପରେ । ପଚାରିଲେ କହେ ଅମୂଳ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ତକେଇଥିଲେ ରାଜଧାନୀରୁ , ସମୂଳ ନେତା ତକେଇ ଥିଲେ ସ ହରରୁ , ସମୂଳ ତନ୍ ସହରବାଟେ ଯାଉଥିଲେ । ବିଦୁଲତା, ସୋନାଲି ହେରିକାଙ୍କ ଆଲବମ୍ ସୁଟିଂ ହୁଅଥିଲା ପଞ୍ଚୁଲିକେଶ୍ଵର ପାଖରେ । ଗୁରେଇ ବୁଝିପାରେନି ଏତେ ଏତେ ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ , ନେତା, ତନ୍ ଆଉ ଆଲବମ୍ ହିରୋଇନ୍ ମାନଙ୍କର ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ପାଖରେ କି କାମ ଥାଇପାରେ । ଅନ୍ୟ ଯାହାର କାମ ଥାଉକି ନ ଥାଉ ଆଲବମ୍ ହିରୋଇନ୍ ମାଙ୍କେର ତା ମର୍ଦ୍ଦ ପାଖରେ କାମ ଥିବ ଏକଥା ଗୁରେଇକୁ ହଜମ ହୁଏନା ଜମା ।

ଗୁରେଇ କେତେଥର ଭାବିଛି ଅପର୍ତ୍ତକୁ ମନା କରିବ କମ୍ ସେ କମ୍ ଆଲବମ୍ ହିରୋଇନ୍ ମାନଙ୍କ ସ ହ ମିଶିବାକୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ କହିବାକୁ ଭୟପାଇଯାଏ ଦିନାକେତେ ହେବ ଭାରି ଚିତ୍‌ଚିତା ଧରିଛି ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ । ଯେତିକି ଦିନ ଗାଁରେ ରୁହେ, ରାତିରେ ଫେରିବାବେଳକୁ ମହୁଲି ଭାଟିରୁ ମହୁଲିମଦ କି ଚାଉଳି ପେଟେଖଣ୍ଡେ ଠୁକିଦେଇ ଆସିଥାଏ । ଏତେ ପିଇକରି ଆସେ ଯେ , ଏକା ଏକା ଚାଲିକି ଘର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଆସିବା ମୁଝିଲ ହେଇପଡେ । ଜଣେ ଦି'ଜଣ ମଦୁଆ ସାଙ୍ଗେ କାନ୍ଧରେ ଭରା ଦେଇ ଘର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଆସିବକୁ ପଡେ ତାକୁ । ପିଲା ଦି'ଟା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ରୁଦ୍ ମୁଝି ଦେଖି ଭୟରେ କତରା ଘୋଡ଼ିହେଇ ସାଙ୍ଗୁଡ଼ିହେଇ ଶୋଇପଡ଼ନ୍ତି । ତା' ଠାଣିମାଣିରୁ ଲାଗିବ ଯେମିତି ସିଏ ସ୍ଵର୍ଗର ଲହୁପଦରେ ବସିଛି । ଚେତା ବୁଡ଼ିଯିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କାହାକୁ ନା କାହାକୁ ଅଶ୍ରାବ୍ୟ ଗାଳିଗୁଡେ ଶୁଣାଏ ଦୀର୍ଘସମୟ । ରାତି ପାହିଲେ, କାହାକୁ ହାଣିବ ,କାହାକୁ ବନ୍ଧୁକରେ ଉଡେଇଦେବ, କାହା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ହାତରୁ କାତ ଓହ୍ଲାଇ ଦେବ , କାହାକୁ ଭିକାରୀ କରିଦେବ ଏଇଭଳି ଗୁଡେ ଆକ୍ଷୟନ କରି ତା ପରେ ଚିତ୍କାତ୍ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଯାଏ ବିଛଣାରେ ଯେ ଚେତା ଫେର ଦିନ ଏଗାର କି ବାଆରରେ କୋଉ ଡିରିଲା କିଛି କହିବାକୁ ଭରସିବ ?

ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର କାଣ୍ଡକାରଖାନା ଯାହା କେତେଦିନୁ ତା ସଂସାର ଉଜୁଡ଼ି ସାରନ୍ତାଣି । ଗିରିମିତି ଦି'ଟଙ୍କିଆ ଚାଉଳ କରିଦେଇଛି ବୋଲି ତା ପିଲାଦିଲଟା ଗଣ୍ଡେ ଗଣ୍ଡେ ଆହାର ପାଉଛନ୍ତି । ନହେଲେ କଥା କୁଆଡେ ଯାଆନ୍ତାଣି କେଜାଣି । ତୁଳସୀ ଚଉରାମୁଳେ ଗୁରେଇ ସଞ୍ଜବେଳେ ବସି ଗିରିମିତି ପାଇଁ ଆକାଶକୁ ଜୁହାର ହୁଏ । ମନେ ମନେ ଭାବେ ଗିରିମିତିର ପିଲାଛୁଆ, ଡିରିଲା କିଛି ନ ଥାଇ ବି ସେ ଗରିବଗୁରୁବାଙ୍କ ପେଟକଥା ଭାବି ପାରୁଛି, ଅଧତ ଏତେ ଆଦରସୁହାଗ କରୁଥିବା ମଣିଷଟା ଏମିତି କଣ ହେଇଗଲା ? ଅତୀତର କଥା ତାର ବଳେବଳେ ମନେପଡ଼ିଯାଏ । ବାପମା' ଜଣକପରେ ଜଣେ ହାତଧରାଧରି ହେଇ ଯେତେବେଳେ ପରପାରିକୁ ଚାଲିଗଲେ, ସିଏ ନିଆଣୀ ହେଇପଡ଼ିଥିଲା ଏକାବେଳକେ । ପେଟଭୋକରେ ଜବାନ ବୟସରେ ବି ସିଏ ପଦାକୁ ଗୋଡ଼ କାଢ଼ିଥିଲା । ପରଘରେ ବାସନ

ମାଜି, ବୋଲହାକ କରି ଦୁଇଗଣ୍ଡା ଆହାର ଯୋଗାଡ କରିବାକୁ ପଡିଥିଲା ତାକୁ । ନୀଚ ଜାତିର ପିଲାହେଲେ କଣ ହେବ , ଏଇ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ହିଁ ତାକୁ ଦୂରରୁ ଦେଖେ । ତା ଦୁଃଖ ଦେଖିଲେ ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ଛାଡେ । ଦେହବାଧିକାରେ ତାର ଆଶ୍ରା ହୁଏ । ତେଣୁ ତା' ହାତ ଧରି ତା ଘରକୁ ଚାଲିଆସିବାକୁ ସିଏ ଯେତେବେଳେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଦେଲା, ଗୁରେଇ କିଛି ଚିନ୍ତା ନ କରି ତା କଥାରେ ରାଜି ହେଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ଅଜାତିରେ ପାଦ ଦେଇଥିବାରୁ ତାକୁ ତ ଆଉ ଗାଁରେ ନିଆଁ ପାଣି ମିଳନ୍ତାନି ; ତେଣୁ ସେମାନେ ଚାଲିଯାଇଥିଲେ ସହର । ସହରରେ ମୂଲ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ । ଛୋଟ ସଂସାର ତାଙ୍କର ସ୍ୱରୂପରରେ ଚାଲୁଥିଲା । ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ସରାଗର ସନ୍ତକ ହେଇ ତାଙ୍କ ସଂସାରକୁ ଆସିଗଲେ ଜଣକ ପରେ ଜଣେ ମନିଆଁ ଆଉ କହେଇ । ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ରୋଜଗାରରେ ଗୁଜୁରାଣ ମେଣ୍ଟି ଯାଉଥାଏ ସତ, ହେଲେ ଭଲମନ୍ଦ ପାଇଁ ଠୁକାଠୁକି । ସାବିତରୀ ଅମେଇସାକୁ ବ୍ରତ କରିବ ବୋଲି ଗୁରେଇ ମନକଲାଯେ, ନୂଆ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଖଣ୍ଡେ କୌଣସିମତେ କିଣିଦେଇପାରିଲାନି ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ । ଗୁରେଇ ଭାରୁଥିଲା ଏତେ କଥା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ମରଦପଣିଆକୁ ଠେସ ଆସିଲା ସେଥିରେ । ତା ଭଲପାଇବାର ଦମ୍ ଦେଖେଇବ ବୋଲି କି କ'ଣ ଦିନେ ଭଲ ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଦୋକାନରୁ ଶାଢ଼ୀଟିଏ ଚୋରି କରୁକରୁ ଧରାପଡିଗଲା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ । ଯେତେ ନେହୁରା ହେଲେବି ମାରୁଆତି ମାଲିକ ଶୁଣିଲାନି ଗୁହାରି । ଚାରିମାସ ସଜା ହେଇଗଲା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତକୁ । ଥଙ୍ଗା ଚାପରା ଅପମାନ ସହିପାରିବନି ବୋଲି ଯୋଉ ଗାଁକୁ ଛି କରିଦେଇ ଗୁରେଇ ବାହାରିଆସିଥିଲା ସହର, ପୁଣି ସେଇଠିକି ଫେରିଯିବାକୁ ପଡିଲା । ଚୋରର ଚିରିଲାକୁ ବନ୍ଧିରେ ଥାନ ଦବନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ଜମିଦାର କହିଲା । ନଇଲେ ଅବା ପର ଘରେ ପାଇଟି କରି ପିଲାଦିଲଟାଙ୍କୁ ଖୋଇପେଇ ପାରିଥା'ନ୍ତା ଗୁରେଇ । ଗାଁକୁ ଆସି ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ଘର ଧସି ହୁଙ୍ଗା ଉଠିସାରିଥିବା ତିହୁଖଣ୍ଡିକରେ ପଲାମାରି ରହିଗଲା ସିନା ତେଲି ବଖତ ଆସିବ କୁଆଡୁ ? ତ, ଗୁରେଇ ପୁଣି ପାଇଟିକୁ ଗୋଡ କାଢିଲା । ହେଲେ ଚୋରର ଚିରିଲାକୁ ପୁଣି ଅଜାତିରେ ଯାଇଛି ବୋଲି ଗାଁରେ ପାଇଟି ଦେବ କିଏ ? ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ଥିଲା ଲେବର କାନଡିରି ମାଲକିଏ ଦୂର ହାଇରାସ୍ତା କାମରେ ଲଗେଇଦେଲା ତାକୁ । ଯୋଉଦିନ କାମ ମିଳେ କାହୁଆକୁ କୋଳରେ ପୁରେଇ ଚାଲିଯାଏ ଗୁରେଇ । ଗଛ ଛାଇରେ ବସେଇ ଦେଇ ମିହନ୍ତ କରେ । ପିଲା ଜଗି ପଡିଥାଏ ମନିଆଁ । ସାପ ସାଲୁବାଲୁ ହୁଙ୍ଗା ଭର୍ତ୍ତି ତିହୁଟାରେ ପିଲାଟାକୁ ଏକୁଟିଆ ଛାଡିଦେଇ ଯିବାଟାକୁ ତା' ମା' ମନ କାଉଳିଆ ହୁଏ । ହେଲେ ତ ଅକର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ନା । କାନଡିରି ମଜୁରୀ ସତୁରି ଟଙ୍କା ଲେଖି ନେଇ ପଟାଶ ଧରାଏ ସେଥିକୁବି ଗୁରେଇ ରୁପ । ଅନ୍ୟ ମାଇପିଏ ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେଇଥିରେ ରାଜି, ଗୁରେଇ ଆଉ କରନ୍ତା କ'ଣ । ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପେଇଁ ଦି'ମୁଠା ଯୋଗାଡ ତ ହେଇ ଯାଉଛି ।

ହେଲେ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ଫେରିବା ପରେ ବଦଳି ଗଲା ସବୁକିଛି । ସଜାଡିକି ଘରକରିବାଠଉ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଘରକରଣା କାମ ଦିନାକେତେ ଶରଧାରେ କରୁଥିଲା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ । ହେଲେ ଜିଅଲରେ କୋଉ ତନ୍ନା ମନ୍ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗହଇଥିଲା ଯେ, ତାରି କଥାରେ ସବୁ ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଇଗଲା ଗୁରେଇର । ମଜୁରିଆର କାମରୁ ତାକୁ ଛତେଇ ଆଣିଲା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ । ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ଛତେଇବ କ'ଣ ଯୋଉଦିନଠୁ କାନଡିରି ଯାଇଁଲା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ସେ ତନ୍ନ ସାଙ୍ଗ, ସିଏ ବଳେ ବଳେ ତାକୁ କାମରୁ ଅଲଗା କରିଦେଲା । ବରଂ ବିନା କାମକରେଇ ସିଏ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତକୁ ମାସକୁମାସ ପୁଳା ପୁଳା ଟଙ୍କା ଅଜାତି ଦେଲା । ସେଇ ପଇସାରେ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ବିଦେଶୀ ମାଲ୍ ପିଇପିଇ ଅବିକା ଏ ଅବସ୍ଥା । ନା କାମ କରିବାକୁ ବଳ ରହିଲା ନା ଏ ନିଉଛୁଣା ଅଭ୍ୟାସରୁ ଛାଡ ମିଳିଲା । କାନଡିରି ଗାଁ ପାଖରୁ କାମ ଉଠେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲା ପରେ ସବୁ ଠପ୍ । ହୁଆଟଙ୍କା ବନ୍ଦ ହେଇଯିବା ପରେ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ନଜର ପଡିଲା ଗାଁ ପାଖରେ ତିଆରି ହୁଉଥିବା ସ୍କୁଲ ଆଉ ମନ୍ଦିର ଉପରେ । ସେଠି ତରେଇ ହରେଇ କାମ ବନ୍ଦ କରେଇ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ମାସକୁମାସ ହୁଆ ନେଇନିଏ ସତ, ହେଲେ ସବୁଯାକ ଉଡିଯାଏ ସେଇ ବୋତଲ ପଛରେ । କିଏ ଜାଣେ ଆଲବମ୍ ନଞ୍ଜୁଳିମାନଙ୍କ ପିଛା ବି କିଛିକିଛି ଉଡ଼ଉନଥିବ କିଏ ଖି ପାରିବ ।

ଆଲବମରେ ନାରୁଥିବା ନଞ୍ଜୁଳିମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ଭାବିଲେ ଗୁରେଇ ଛାଡିରେ ଛନ୍ଦକା ପଣେ । ଦିନକୁଦିନ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ତା' ପ୍ରତି ସରାଗ ଯେମିତି କମୁଛି, ସେଇଥିରୁ ଗୁରେଇର ଭୟ ବଢିଯାଏ । ପିଲା ଦିଗାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁକୁ ବି ଆଜିକାଲି ଅନଉନି ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ , ଢେରଦିନ ହବ ବାପ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ପିଲା ଦି'ଟା ଭେଟିନଥିବେ କି କଣ । ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ଚେତା ଫେରିଲାବେଳକୁ ପିଲା ଦି'ଟା ଚାଲିଯାଇଥିବେ ପାଖ ସ୍କୁଲକୁ । ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ରାତି ଅଧକୁ ଫେରିଲାବେଳକୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିଦ ଅଧା ହେଇସାରିବଣି । କାହିଁ କେତେଦିନ ହବଣି ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ଥରୁଟାଏ ବି ପଚାରିନି ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ । ସେମାନେ କ'ଣ ଖାଉଛନ୍ତି, କ'ଣ ପିନ୍ଧୁଛନ୍ତି, ଗୁରେଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ କେମିତି ଚଳଉଛି ସେକଥା ତା ମଗଜରେ ନାହିଁ । ତାକୁ ଗୋଟେପଟେ ରାସ୍ତାକାମରୁ ଓଟାରି ଆଣିଲା, ଏଣେ ଦି'ଟଙ୍କିଆ ଚାଉଳ ବିକା ପଇସା ବି ତା ହାତକୁ ଆଉ ଆସୁନାହିଁ । ସିଏ ସିନା ବଢିଲା ମାଇପିଟେ ଯେ, ପେଟରେ ଓଦାକନା ଦେଇ ଶୋଇଯିବ, ହେଲେ ଏ ଛୋଟପିଲାଗୁଡା ? ଗୁରେଇ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହେଇ ପିଲାଦି'ଟାଙ୍କୁ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ନେଇ ଛାଡିଲା । ସ୍କୁଲ ଗଲେ ପିଲାଦି'ଟାଙ୍କୁ ଦିନବେଳା ଆହାର ମିଳିଯାଏ । ସଂଜ ହେଲେ ସେମାନେ ଚାଲିଯାନ୍ତି ନୂଆକରି ତିଆରୀ ହେଇଥିବା ମନ୍ଦିରକୁ । ସେଇଠି ବସି ଭଜନ କିର୍ତ୍ତନ କଲେ ମନ୍ଦିରର ସାଧୁବାବା ପ୍ରସାଦ ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଜରିବେଗରେ ପ୍ରସାଦଗୁଡେଇ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀ ଘରକୁ ଫେରି ଆସନ୍ତି ।

ମା' ପିଲା ମିଶି ସେତକ ଖାଆନ୍ତି । ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ଓଳି ଭଲରେ ଗଣ୍ଡେ ଖାଏ ଗୁରେଇ । ଦିନବେଳା ଚୋରାଣି ମୁୟେ କି ପିଲାଙ୍କ ଜଳଖିଆ ରୁଡା ମୁଢିରୁ କଲେ ଚୋବେଇଦେଇ ସିଏ ଭୋକ ମାରିଦିଏ । ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ଦିନଦିନ ଧରି କୁଆଡେ ବାହାରିଗଲେ ସିଏ ଭାବେ

କୋଉଠି ପାଇଟିକରି ବା ମୂଲ୍ୟାନ୍ୱୟ ଦି'ପଇସା ହାତାନ୍ତା, ହେଲେ ତାକୁ ମୂଲ୍ୟରେ ଲଗେଇବ କିଏ ? ଅପର୍ତ୍ତକୁ ଗାଁଲୋକ ଓ ଗାଁଲୋକ, କାନ୍ତରି ଇଂଜିନିୟର୍ ବାବୁମାନେ ବି ଡରନ୍ତି । ତାଁ ତିରିଲୀକୁ ମୂଲ୍ୟରେ ଲଗେଇ ନିଜ ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ବିପଦ ଟାଣନ୍ତେ କାଲିକି ?

ଗୁରେଇ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଭାବେ ଏମିତି କେତେ ଦିନ ଚାଲିବ ? ଆଗକୁ କରିବ କଣ ? ଦିନାକେତେରେ ମନିଆଁର ସ୍ତୁଲ୍‌ବେଳ ସରିଯିବ । ସ୍ତୁଲ୍ ଖାଇବା ଉପରେ ଭରସା କରି ଓ ଝିଅଟା ସବୁଦିନ ବଞ୍ଚିବନି । ତା'ର ବୁଣି ବାହା ପୁଆଣି ଅଛି , ପିନ୍ଧିବା ସଜେଇ ହେବା ସଭକ ଓ ଅଛି । ତା'ର ସିନା ବାପ ମା' ନଥିଲେ ଯେ, ସିଏ ପିଲଟିଦିନରୁ ମନକୁ ମାରିଦେଇଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ବୋପାମା' ଦିଲଟାଯାକ ଥାଇତେ ଥାଇତେ ସିଏ ମନମାରିବ କିଆଁ ? ମନ ଓ ମନ, ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ଯୋଉ ରାସ୍ତା ଧଇଲାଣି, ସେଥିରେ କୋଉ ଘରୁ ବରପୁଅଟିଏ ଆସି ମନିଆଁକୁ ବା'ହବାକୁ ମଞ୍ଜିବ ? ଶେଷରେ ସେଇ ଆଲବନ୍ ନାଚ୍‌ନେବାଲା ନଈମାନଙ୍କ ଅବସ୍ଥା ହବନି ଓ ମନିଆଁର ?

ଆଉ ଆଗକୁ ଭାବିପାରେନି ଗୁରେଇ । ତା ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଗୋଳମାଳିଆ ଧରିଯାଏ । ଯେତେ ଆଗକୁ ଭାବିବସିବ ସେତେ ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶାର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ତାକୁ ଅଗକତ କରିପକଡ଼ାଏ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ କଥା ଭାବି ଯେତିକି ଦୁଃଖ ଘାରୁଥିବ, ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର କାଣ୍ଡକାରଖାନା ଦେଖି ସେତିକି ରାଗ ଆସୁଥିବ ମନରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ କରିବ କଣ ? ନିଜେ ରାଜିରୁଜାରେ ଓ ଘର ଛାଡ଼ିଛି ତା'ର ହାତଧରି । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଘର ଛାଡ଼ିନଥିଲେ କୋଉ ରାଣୀ ହୋଇ ମଣୋହି କରୁଥାନ୍ତା ଯେ ଏତେ କଥା ଉଠୁଛି । ଘରେ ରହିଥିଲେ ଦାଦାଖୁଡ଼ି ତାକୁ ଖଟେଇ ଖଟେଇ ହାତପାଉଁସ ଝୁଣି ସାରନ୍ତେଣି । ପୁଣି ଯା'ତା'ଘରେ ପାଇଟିକରେଇ ତା' ରୋଜଗାରକୁ ଶୋଷିଥାନ୍ତେ । ବାପମା' ମଲାଘରେ ସିଏ ଯେତିକି ଦିନ ଦି'ପହରେ ସିଏ ଘର ଛାଡ଼ିଲା, ତା ପୂର୍ବଦିନ ରାତି କଥା ମନେପଡ଼ିଲେ ଏବେ ବି ଗୁରେଇ ଛାତିରେ ପବନ ଅଟକିଯାଏ । ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ତାକୁ ଛାଇ ନିଦ ଲାଗିଆସିଛି, ହଠାତ୍ ତାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା କିଏ ଯେମିତି ତା ପେଣ୍ଡା ଦିଲଟାକୁ ସାଉଁଳୁଛି । ଗୁରେଇ ଭାବିଲା ସିଏ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଛି । ନହେଲେ ତା ଦିହରେ ପୁରୁଷ ହାତର ଏ ପରଶ କୁଆଡୁ ଆସିଲା ? ସିଏ ନିଜେ ସିଂହଦରଜାରେ କୋଲପ ପକେଇ ପିଛଣା ପାରି ଶୋଇଲା । ଖୁଡ଼ି ବାପଘରକୁ ଯାଇଛି ବୋଲି । ଦାଦା ତାସ୍ ଖେଳରୁ ସଅଳ ଫେରିଆସିଥିଲା, ଖାଇବା ବାଢ଼ିଦେବାରୁ ଡରଡରରେ ଖାଇଦେଇ ତା ଶୋଇବା ଘରକୁ ଚାଲିଗଲା, ଯୋଉଠି ରିନିକିନି ଦି'ଟାଯାକ ଆଗରୁ ଶୋଇପଡ଼ିଥିଲେ । ତାପରେ ସିଏ ନିଜେ ଖାଇ ସଞ୍ଜୁଟି ମାରି ତା' ଶୋଇବାଘରକୁ ଆଇଲା । ଆଉ ତା'ହେଲେ କ'ଣ ଦାଦା ଏତେରାତିରେ . . . ହାଉଳି ଖାଇ ଗୁରେଇ ଉଠିପଡ଼ିଲା, “ଦାଦା . . .” । “ଆଲୋ ପାଟି କରନା ଏତେ ଜୋର୍ରେ, ସେପଟେ ରିନିକିନି ଶୋଇଛନ୍ତି” । ଦାଦା ପୁସ୍‌ପୁସ୍ ହୋଇ କହିଲା । ଦାଦା ସ୍ୱରରେ କ'ଣ ଥିଲା କେଜାଣି ଗୁରେଇ ମନକୁ ପାପ ଛୁଇଁଲା । ତା ପେଟ ଭିତରେ ଡରଡର ହୋଇ ଗୁରୁଣ୍ଡୁଥିବା କୋହଟାଏ ହଠାତ୍ କୁଦାମାରି ମୁହଁବାଟେ ବାହାରିଗଲା “ବୋଉଲୋ . . .”

ଦାଦା ଜବାବ୍ ଦେଲା, “କାଲିକି ଛୋପରା ହଉଛି ବ । କଲିକି ପରା ସେପଟେ ରିନି ଶୋଇଛି, ପାଟି କଲେ ଉଠିପଡ଼ିବ । ବାହାର ଇତର ଜାତିର ଟୋକାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ନସରପସର ହଉଛି, ଘର ଲୋକ କଣ ଗନ୍ଧଉସୁନ୍ତି?”

ଗୁରେଇ ଜାଇଲା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତକୁ ଲଗେଇ ଦାଦା ତାକୁ ଏକଥା କହୁଛି । କେଇଧର ଆଗୁଡୁମାଗୁଡୁ କଥାରେ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତତାକୁ ସେବେଳକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିଥିଲା ସତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ତା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଏମିତିକା ସଂପର୍କଟେ ଯୋଡ଼ିହବ ବୋଲି ଗୁରେଇ ଭାବିନଥିଲା । ଦାଦା କଥାରେ ତା ମନରେ ସମ୍ଭାବନାଟିଏ ବିଜୁଳୀ ଭଳି ଛମକିଗଲା । ସେଇଠି ସେଇ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ସିଏ ବଜ୍ର ନିଷ୍ଠିତେ ନେଲା । ଏ ବିପଦରୁ ମୁକୁଳିବା ମାତ୍ରେ ସିଏ ସିଧା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ପାଖକୁ ହିଁ ଯିବ । ବିପଦରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାରକରିବା ପାଇଁ ମନେମନେ ବଜ୍ରାଙ୍ଗବାଳୀଙ୍କୁ ଡାକିଲା । ବଡପାଟିରେ ଡାକିବ ବୋଲି ତା ପାଟି ଖୋଲିବା ମାତ୍ରେ ତା ପାଟିରୁ ବାହାରି ପଡ଼ିଲା “ଦାଦା, ମୁଁ ତମ ଝିଅ ରାନି ।”

କଥାଟା ବି ଅଧାଅଧି ସତ । ତାରି ଠାରୁ ଚାରିବର୍ଷ ସାନ ଏଇ ରାନିଟା । ଚାଷରିଟା ବର୍ଷରେ ସିଏ ବି ଶୋହଳ ଟପିଯିବ । ଯାହା ସିଏ ଭାବୁଥିଲା, ସେଇକଥା ଦାଦା ବି ଭାବୁଥିଲା କି କଣ, ତୁପ୍‌କିନି ତା ଘରୁ ବାହାରିବଲା । ସକାଳ ହେଲାମାତ୍ରେ ଅଖିଆ ଅପିଆ କୁଆଡେ ବାହାରିଗଲା ଯେ, ଗୁରେଇ ପଦାକୁ ବାହାରିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତାର ଦେଖାନଥିଲା । ଗୁରେଇ ଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଖୋଇ, ଦାଦାପେଇଁ ଭାତ ହାଣ୍ଡିରେ ପଖାଳିଦେଇ ଘରୁ ବାହାରିଗଲା । ଗଲା ଯେ, ସିଧା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ପାଖକୁ । ତାକୁ କହିଲା, “ମୁଁ ଆଉ ରହିପାରିବିନି ଘରେ । ଦାଦାଖୁଡ଼ୀଙ୍କ ଜାଳାରେ ।

ସେଇଠୁ ଯାଇ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବଦେଲା ସିଧାସିଧା । ତାରି ହାତ ଧରି ସିଏ ଯେ ବାହାରି ଅଇଲା, ଆଉ ପଛକୁ ଫେରିନି । ସବୁ ବାଟ ବନ୍ଦ ହୋଇଗଲାପରେ ଯୋଉ ରାହାଟି ଠାବକରିଥିଲା ସେଇଟି ବି ଆଜି ବନ୍ଧେବାକୁ ବସିଲାଣି । ସିଏ କଣ ନୁଆ ରାସ୍ତାଟିଏ ନିଜପାଇଁ ତା ପିଲାଦିଗାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଠାବ କରିପାରିବି ନେଇ ? ଯେତେବେଳେ ବୟସ ହୋଇନଥିଲା, ବୁଦ୍ଧି ପାକଳ ହୋଇନଥିଲା, ସେତେବେଳେ ଦାଦା ମୁହଁରୁ ସିଏ ଖସିଆସିଥିଲା, ଏବେ ଓ ସିଏ ଦି'ଟା ପିଲାର ମା' । ସହର ଗଲାଣି, ଦୁନିଆ ଦେଖିଲାଣି । ମରଦର ବିବେକ ପ୍ରୀତିଗଲା ବୋଲି ସିଏ କଣ ସାରାଜୀବନ ଏମିତି ଡରିହରି ଜାଇଥିବ ? ଆହାର ପେଇଁ ତା ପିଲା ବାର ହିନସ୍ତା ହଉଥିବେ ?

ଗୁରେଇ ଆଉ ଡରିବନି । ସିଏ ଜଣଙ୍କର ତିରିଲା ସତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଦି'ଟା ପ୍ରାଣୀଙ୍କ ମା' । ସେଇ ଦିଲଟାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ତାକୁ ସାହସ ଧରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ସିଏ ସେଇ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ ବାବୁ ପାଖକୁ ଯିବ । ତାକୁ କହିବ ତିହରେ ପଥର ବସା । ଖୁଣ୍ଟ ଲଗା । ମାସକୁ ମାସ ଯୋଉ

ଭତା ମିଳିବ, ସେଇଥିରେ ପିଲାଦିଲଟା ଭଲ ଗଣ୍ଡେ ଆହାର ପାଇବେ । ଦି’ ଅକ୍ଷର ପାଠପଢ଼ିବେ । ପଢ଼ରଙ୍ଗମାଳୀ କୃପା କଲେ ରୋଜଗାରପତ୍ର କରି ବାହାରୁତା ହେଇ ସଂସାର ପାଡ଼ିବେ । ତା ମରଦ ଯଦି ଏକଥା କରେଇ ନପାରିଲା, ସେମିତିକା ମରଦ ଥାଇ କେତେ ନଥାଇ କେତେ ? ଏମିତିରେ ବି ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ କଣ ଆଉ ତା ମରଦ ହେଇ ଅଛି ? କୋଉ ବିଦୁଲତା କି କନକଲତା ହାବୁଡ଼ରେ ପଡ଼ିସାରିବଣି ନା । ନଇଲେ କି ଦିନକୁଦିନ ଏମିତିକା ଅଭୂତ କଥା ସବୁ ଆସି କହୁଥାନ୍ତା, ନିଉଛୁଣା କାମ ସବୁ କରୁଥାନ୍ତା ? ହେଇ ସେଦିନ ତାକୁ ଆସି କହିଲା, “ଶୁଣ, ଏ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ପୋଛି ଦେ । ପାଣିକାଟଗୁଡ଼ା ଓହ୍ଲେଇ ଦେ । ସରପଞ୍ଚବାରୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଯା କି, ତତେ ଗୋଟାଏ ବିଧବା ଭଉ ପାଆସ ବହି କରେଇ ଦବ । ମାସକୁ ମାସ ଚିପଦେଇ ଗଣ୍ଡାଏ ଶହେଟଙ୍କା ପାଇବୁ । ମୁଁ ଆଗରୁ ସବୁ ବେବସ୍ତା କରେଇ ଦେଇଛି ।”

ଗୁରେଇ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଘୁରେଇଦେଲା । ସିଏ ଲମ୍ବ କରି ଭୁଲ୍ ଉପରେ ବସିଗଲା । କହିଲା, “କି କଥା ସବୁ କହୁଛୁ ଶୁଣେ । ନିଶାପାଣି ଖାଇଖାଇ ତମ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବିଗିଡ଼ି ଗଲାଣି । ଗେରସ୍ତ ଆଉଥାଉ କଉ ମୁହଁରେ ମୁଁ କାତ ଓହ୍ଲେଇବି, ସିନ୍ଦୂର ପୋଛିବି କହିଲୁ ?”

ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ସେତେବେଳକୁ ନିଶା ଭଲକି ଉତୁରି ନଥାଏ କି କଅଣ, ହଠାତ୍ ରାଗିଯାଇ ଗୁରେଇକୁ ବହେ ଛେଡ଼ିପକେଇଲା । ଛେଡ଼ିଲାବେଳେ ବି ସଂପୁଥାଏ, “ଗାଳି, ସତୀ ଦେଖେଇ ହୁଅଛି, ପିଲା ଦିନସାରା ଦାଦା ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଶୋଇଶୋଇ ଆସିଲା, ଅଭି ସତୀସାବିତ୍ରୀ ବୋଲେଇହୁଅଛି ।”

ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ହାତରୁ ମାତଖାଇବା ସେଇ ତାର ପ୍ରଥମ । ଯେତେ ନିଶାରେ ଥିଲେବି ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ତା ଉପରେ କେବେ ହାତ ଉଠେଇ ନଥିଲା । ତା ଦେହ ଦରଜ କମ୍ କମ୍ ହୁଏହେ ଲାଗିଲା । ହେଲେ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତରେ ସେଇ ଶେଷ କଥା ପଦକ ତା କଲିଜାରେ ଯୋଉ ଦରଜ ଲଗେଇଲା, ସିଏ ଆଉ କମ୍ ନଥିଲା ଯେତେ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେ ବି । ସିଏ ଭାରୁଥିଲା, ଯୋଉ ମରଦ ସିଏ ସାବିତ୍ରୀ ପୂଜିବ ବୋଲି ଚୋରିକରି ଜିଅଇ ଯାଇପାରିଲା, ତାର ଆଜି ଲଏ କଣ ହେଲା ? ଯେତେବେଳେ ସେ କଥାଗୁଡ଼ାକ ତାର ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଯାଏ, ତା ଭିତରୁ ହାରୁକାହାରୁକା କୋହ ଓକାଳି ହେଇଥାଏ । ଲୁହ ବାତ ମାନେନା । ତା କାନ୍ଦ ଦେଖିଲେ କାହୁଆଟା ଚିରଚିରେଇ ଉଠେ ବୋଲି ସିଏ ଆଉ ଖୋଲିକରି କାନ୍ଦିପାରେନା । ସେ କଥା ମନେ ନପଡ଼ିବା ପାଇଁ ସିଏ ଆଗୁଡୁମାଗୁଡୁ କାମରେ ଲାଗିପଡ଼େ । ବାହାରୁ ବୁଲି ଆସେ ଘେରାଏ ।

ସେ ଘଟଣାର ଢେର୍ ଦିନଯାଏ ଗୁରେଇ କଥା କହୁନଥିଲା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତକୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଥକୁ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ଖାତର ନଥାଏ । ଯୋଉଦିନ ମନହେଲା ସିଏ ଘରକୁ ଆସେ, ମନ ନହେଲା ନାହିଁ । ଆଇଲେ ବି ତାର ସିଏ ନିଶାପାଣି ଭଲ ତ ସିଏ ଭଲ । ଗୁରେଇ ମନକୁ ବୋଧ କଲା । ଏଭଳିଆ ପଥର ଭଳି ମଣିଷଟେ ଉପରେ ଅଭିମାନ କରି କି ଲାଭ ? ହୁଏତ ଫି ମାସ କିଛିକିଛି ପଇସା ହାତରେ ପଡ଼ିଲେ ମଣିଷଟା ସୁଧୁରି ଯିବ । ହେଇଥିପେଇଁ ସିନା ସିଏ ତାକୁ ବିଧବା ଭଉ ଆଣିବାକୁ କହୁଥିଲା । ନଇଲେ ନିଜେ ବଞ୍ଚି ଥାଉଥାଉ କୋଉ ମରଦ ନିଜ ମାଇପକୁ ବିଧବା ବେଶରେ ସଜାନ୍ତା ? ବେଳ ଉଣି ଗୁରେଇ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ ବାବୁର କଥା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତକୁ କହିଲା ।

ଏମିତିକା ଉଦୁବୁଦିଆ ଖରାବେଳଟାରେ ଗାଡ଼ିଚଢ଼ି ବାବୁଟା ଆସିଥିଲା । ସବୁଦିନ ଭଳି ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ କୁଆଡ଼େ ? “ପିଲାଦିହେଁ ଖାଇବାପେଇଁ ଚାଲିଯାଇଥିଲେ ସ୍କୁଲକୁ । ବାବୁଟା ଗାଡ଼ିରୁ ଓହ୍ଲେଇପଡ଼ି ତା ଦୁଆର ମୁହଁରେ ହାଜର । ପଚାରିଲା,

“ଏ ଜାଗାଟା କାହାର?”

ଗେରସ୍ତର ନାଁଟା କେମିତି ଧରିବ ଗୁରେଇ ଅତମତ ହୁଅଥାଏ । କହିଲା, “ଲଏ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ବହାରକୁ ।”

“କେତେବେଳକୁ ଆସିବେ ?”

ଆପର୍ତ୍ତର ତ ଫେରିବାର ଠିକଣା ନଥାଏ । ଗୁରେଇ ତେଣୁ କହିଲା, “ମୁଁ ଜାଣିନି ।”

ସେଇଠୁ ବାବୁଟା ପକେଟରୁ କାଗଜଟାଏ ବାହାର କରି ଦେଲା । କହିଲା, “ଏଇଟା ଆମ ଠିକଣା । ଆସିଲେ କହିଦବ, ସହରକୁ ଆସିଲେ ଆମକୁ ଭେଟିବେ । ଆମେ ତମ ଜମିରେ ଗୋଟେ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ ଟାଣ୍ଡାର୍ ବେସେଇବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛୁ । ତମ ଜାଗା ପାଇଁ ଆମେ ମାସକୁ ମାସ ଭତାଦବୁ । ଏଇ ତମ ଡିହ କଣରେ ଅଳ୍ପ କିଛି ଜାଗା । ଭଲ ଭତା ମିଳିବ । ଯଦି ଏଥିରେ ରାଜି, ସିଏ ଆମକୁ ଖୁବ୍ ଶୀଘ୍ର ଆସି ସାକ୍ଷାତ କରନ୍ତୁ ।”

ଗୁରେଇ ହେମିତିକା ଟାଣ୍ଡାର୍ ଦେଖିଥିଲା । ଗଲାସନ ଗାଁ ଆରମୁଣ୍ଡ ପଟନାୟକ ଆଜ୍ଞାଙ୍କ ବାରିରେ ବସିଥିଲା ସେଇଟା । ଚାରିଟା ଏହୁଁ ଏହୁଁ ସିମେଣ୍ଟ ପଥର । ସେଇଥିରେ ବସିଛି ଲୁହାର ବିରାଟ ବିରାଟ ଖୁମ୍ବ । ତଳୁ ଲମ୍ବଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ଏକଦମ୍ ଯୋଉଠି ତାରାମାନେ ଜିକ୍‌ଜିକ୍ ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ରାତିହେଲେ ସେଇଠି ନାଲି ଆଲୁଅ ଜଳେ । ଦୂରରୁ ଭାରି ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିଶେ । ଯେମିତି ଦିଅଁଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିରର ଚକ୍ର

। ସବୁଠୁ ବଡ଼କଥା ହେଲା, ସେଇ ଟାଣୁର ପେଇଁ ପଟନାଏକ ଆଜ୍ଞା କଂପାନୀଠୁ ଲକ୍ଷଲକ୍ଷ ଟଙ୍କା ଭଡା ପାଉଛନ୍ତି । ମଉକା ଦେଖି ଗୁରେଇ କଥାଟା ପକେଇଲା । ବାବୁର ଠିକଣା ଲେଖାଯିବା କାଗଜଟା ଦେଖେଇଲା ।

“ଇଏ ଆଉଗୋଟେ କଂପାନୀ । ଶଃ ସବୁ ଗିଲିନେବେ ଦିନେ ।” ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ରାଗ ଦେଖି ଡରିଗଲା ଗୁରେଇ । “କଣ କହୁଥିଲା ସିଏ ବେହୁପ ?” “କହୁଥିଲା, ଆମ ଡିହରେ ପଥର ବସେଇବେ । ଟାଣୁର ଖଞ୍ଜିବେ । ଆମକୁ ଭଡା ଦେବେ । ଏଇ ଛୋଟିଆ ଯାଗାଟିକେ ନେବେ ।” “ଆଲୋ ଭଡା ଦେବେନି ଯେ ଆମ ରୁଟିକୁ ହାତମୁଠାରେ ରଖିବେ । ଗୋଟାଏ କଂପାନୀ ଯେମିତି ପଟନାଏକ ଘରେ ବସେଇଛି, ଇଏ ତାଙ୍କ ଗତୁ କଂପାନୀ । ଥରେ ତାଙ୍କ ହାତୁଡରେ ପଡିଗଲେ ଆଉ ଖସିବା ମୁସ୍ତିଲ୍ । ଆମ ତନ୍ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ଆଉରି ବଡବଡ ତନ୍ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପକେଟ୍ରେ । ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଆମେ କଣ ଲଢିପାରିବା କିଛି ଓଲମବିଲମ ହେଲେ ?”

ଆଉ କିଛି ଚାରା ନଥିଲା ଗୁରେଇର ତା’ପରେ । ସେ ଭାବୁଥିଲା, ସିଏ ବିଧବା ହୁବାକୁ ରାଜି ହେଲାନି ବୋଲି ବୋଧେ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ ବାବୁର ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବରେ ହୁଁ ଭରୁନି । ଅପର୍ତ୍ତର ମନ ବିତିବା ପାଇଁ ସିଏ ବିଧବା ପାଆସ ବହି ଆଣିବାକୁ ଯିବକି ? କିନ୍ତୁ ଫି ମାସ ଭଣ୍ଡା ଆଣିଲେ ବି ସେ ପଇସା କଣ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପେଟରେ ପଡିବ ? ସେ ପଇସା ତକ ନିଷହାପାଣି ନଇଲେ ବିଦୁଲତା, କନକଲତା ପଛରେ ଉଡେଇଦବ ନା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ । ଏମିତିବି ଟାଣୁର ପାଇଁ ପଥର ବସେଇଲେ ବି ଭଡା ଟଙ୍କାରେ କାଣିଟାଏ କଣ ତା ହାତକୁ ଆସିବ ? କିନ୍ତୁ ସିଏ ଯଦି ସତକୁସତ ବିଧବା ହୋଇଯାଏ ?

ଚମକି ପଡିଲା ଗୁରେଇ । ତା ରୋମମୂଳ ଟାଙ୍କୁରି ଉଠି ଦେହଟା ଶୀତେଇ ଗଲା । ଛାତି ଭିତରଟା ଧଡଧଡ ହେଇ ଉଠିପଡ଼ ହେଲା । ଦିନ ଦି’ପନ୍ଧର ବି ଗୋଟାଏ ଅଜଣା ଆଡ଼ଙ୍କ ତାର ଦିହକୁ ଯେମିତି ପଥର କରିଦେଲା । ସିଏ କଣ ସବୁ ବସି ଭାବୁଛି ? ଏତେ ଅମଙ୍ଗଳିଆ କଥା ତା ମନକୁ କେମିତି ଆଇଲା ?

ତା ଭୟର ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ଆବେଶ କଟିଯିବାପରେ ଗୁରେଇ ମନକୁମନ ଭାବିଲା, ସିଏ ତ କିଛି ନାକରା କଥା ମନକୁ ଆଣିନି । ଯୋଉ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ପାଦ ଥାପିଲାଣି, ଜୀବନ ଆଉ କେତେଦିନ ? କେତେ ଥର ଗୁରେଇ ଶୁଣିଲାଣି ବେଶି ନିଶା ହୁବାପାଇଁ ଶୁଣ୍ଠୀମାନେ ମଦରେ ବିଷ ମିଶେଇଦୁସୁନ୍ତି । ବିଷର ମାତ୍ରା ବେଶିହେଇଗଲେ ଥୋକେଥୋକେ ମଦତି ଏକାଥରେ ସାମ୍ । ଏମିତିକା ଅପର୍ତ୍ତ ଭଗ୍ୟରେ ଯେ ନଜୁଟିବ ସେକଥା କିଏ କହିବ ? ପୁଣି ଏ ତନ୍ ନା ମନ୍ ମାନଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗର ସଲାସୁତୁରା ହେଇ ଯୋଉ ହୁଣାମରା କରୁଛି, କେତେବେଳେ ଚୋଟ ଓଲଟି ନଯିବ କିଏ କହିବ ? ଆଜି ନଇଲେ କାଲି ତା କାଟ ଓହ୍ଲେଇବାଟା ଥୟ । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ସିଏ ଖୁଜିପ ପାଆସ ବହି କରିପାରିବ, ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ ବାବୁରୁ ପଥର ବସେଇବା ଭଡା ନେଇପାରିବ ମାସକୁ ମାସ । ଭଡା ପଇସାରେ ତା ପିଲାମାନେ ଭଲରେ ଆହାର ଗଣ୍ଡାଏ ପାଇବେ । ବହିପତ୍ର କିଣି ପାଠ ପଢିପାରିବେ । ମନିଆଁର ବାହୁଘର ହବ । ସିଏ ବେ ଏ ପୋତା ବଅସରେ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଭଲମନ୍ଦ ପିନ୍ଧିବ । ଗହଣା ନାଇବ । ଦାନ ଖଇରାତି କରିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବିଧବା ମଣିଷ କଣ ଭଲ ପିନ୍ଧିପାରିବ, ଗହଣା ନାଇପାରିବ ?

ହେ ଭଗବାନ, ସିଏ କଣ ଏସବୁ କଥା ଭବୁଛି ? ତା ମନ ଗୋଳମାଳିଆ ଧରିଗଲା । ଯେତେଯେତେ ଏସବୁ ଅଶୁଭ ଚିନ୍ତା ଦୁରେଇବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଲା ମନରୁ ସେତେସେତେ ସେ କଥାଗୁଡା ସମୁଦ୍ର ଲହଡି ଭଳି ଫେରିଆସି ତା ତୁଠରେ କଟାଡି ହୋଇପଡୁଥିଲେ । ଏଭଳି ଚିନ୍ତାରୁ ମୁକ୍ତିପାଇବାର କୌଣସି ଉପାୟ ନପାଇ ଗୁରେଇ ପାଗେଲି ଭଳି ଘରୁ ପଦାକୁ ବାହାରି ଆଇଲା । ଅମୁହାଁ ହେଇ ଗାଁ ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ଚାଲିଛି ଯେ ଚାଲିଛି, କେତେବେଳେ ଗାଁ ଆରମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲାଣି ତାର ଆଉ ଖିଆଲ୍ ନାହିଁ । ତାର ସମ୍ପୃତ୍ ଆସିବା ବେଳକୁ ସିଏ ଜାଇଁଲା ସିଏ ଠିଆହେଇଛି ପଞ୍ଚନାଏକ ଆଜ୍ଞାଙ୍କ ଘରଡିହର ମୂଳର ଠିକ୍ ଗୋଟାଏ ପଥର ସାମ୍ନାରେ ବିରାଟ ଘରଡିହର ଗୋଟାଏ କୋଣରେ ଚକଟାଏ ଜାଗାଉପରେ ଚାରିଟା ବଡବଡ ସିମେଣ୍ଟ ପଥର । ସେଗୁଡିକରେ ନିଶୁଣି ଭଳି ଲମବିଯଇଛି ଏକଦମ୍ ସ୍ପର୍ଶକୁ । ସିଏତ ସିଏ, ପଟନାଏକ ଆଜ୍ଞାଙ୍କ ବିରାଟ ଘରଟା ବି ଖେଳଣାଟିଏ ଭଳି ଦେଖାଯାଉଛି ତା ସାମ୍ନାରେ ! ଗୁରେଇ ପଥର ମୂଳରେ ଠିଆହୋଇ ଅନେଇଲା ଉପରକୁ ଉପରକୁ ।

ପୁରସ
ବରଂ
ଅନୁମାନ୍ୟ



ବଳରାମ ସାହୁ

ପରାଶର ମିଶ୍ର

କେଉଁ ଯୁକ୍ତି ରେ ଆଜି ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରିବି ଯେ' ବଳରାମ ସାହୁ ଥିଲେ ଏକ ସରଳ, ନିରହଙ୍କରୀ ମଣିଷଟିଏ । ଆଖୁ ଲୁଚୁନଥିବା ଛିଣ୍ଡା ଲୁଗାଟିଏ ପିନ୍ଧି, ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଗାମୁଛାର ପଗଡ଼ି ବାନ୍ଧି, ହଳ, ବଳଦ ନେଇ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ବଳରାମ ସାହୁ ବିଲକୁ ଯାଉଥିଲେ । ବର୍ଷାରେ ଭିଜି, ଭିଜି, ଖରାରେ ଶିଝି, ଶିଝି, ଶୀତରେ ଥରି, ଥରି, ଲହୁ, ଲହୁ, ରଞ୍ଜର ଚର୍ପଣ କରି, ମାଟି ଖୋଳି, ଚାଷ କରି, ମାଟି ମା' କୁ ସୁନା କରୁଥିଲେ । ବରଗଡ଼ ଉପକଣ୍ଠ ବରାହଗୁଡ଼ା ଗାଁ ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ନୁଆଁଣିଆ ଚାଳଘର ହିଁ ତାଙ୍କର ଥିଲା ଅମରାବତୀ । ପ୍ରାଣରୁ ପ୍ରିୟ ହଲେ ହତା ବଳଦ, ଛେଳି, ମେଣ୍ଟା, କୁକୁଡ଼ାଙ୍କ କଲୋରବରେ ଘର ତାଙ୍କର ଉଠୁଥିଲା, ପଡୁଥିଲା । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ତାଙ୍କର ଅକ୍ଷରେ ସାତସିଆଁ କନ୍ୟା ଝୁଲେଇ, ଛୁଆ ତାଙ୍କର ଅଧା ଲଙ୍ଗଳା ଦେହରେ ଥାଇ, ମୋ ଭାରତ ମହାନ, ମୋ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମହାନ ର ମହାମନ୍ତ ଗାଉଥିଲା ।

ମଣିଷ ଜୀବନଟା ବି କେତେ ବିଚିତ୍ର ଯେ କେତେବେଳେ କାହା ଜୀବନରେ କ'ଣ ଘଟିଯାଏ କିଛି କହି ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ । ଲହୁ, ଲୁହକୁ ଏକାଠି କରି କଠୋର ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରୁଥିବା ବଳରାମ ସାହୁ, ମାଟି ମା' ପ୍ରତି ନିଷ୍ଠା, ଏକାଗ୍ରତା ଓ ସମର୍ପଣ ଭାବ ରଖିଥିବା ବଳରାମ ସାହୁ, ଦିନେ ମାଟି ମା'ର ସବୁ ବନ୍ଧନ, ସବୁ ମାୟା, ମୋହ ତୁଗାଇ ନିଜ କର୍ମମୟ, ତ୍ୟାଗମୟ ଜୀବନକୁ ନିଜେ ହିଁ ଶେଷ କରିଦେଲେ ।

ଖବରକାଗଜ, ଟିଭି, ରେଡିଓରେ, ସଭା ସମିତି, ବିଧାନସଭାରେ, ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଗାଁ, ସହରରେ, ବଳରାମ ସାହୁଙ୍କ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟାର ଖବର ଆଲୋଡ଼ନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କଲା । ଚାଷୀ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟାର କାରଣ ଖୋଜା ଚାଲିଲା । କିଏ କହିଲା ଫସଲହାନି ଓ ରଣ ବୋଝ ର ଉତ୍ପାଦନ ଚାଷୀ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟାର ମୂଳ କାରଣ ତ' କିଏ କହିଲା ଅନିୟମିତ ବୃଷ୍ଟିପାତ, ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ଦୁର୍ବିପାକ, ମରୁଡ଼ି, ବନ୍ୟାରେ କ୍ଷତିଗ୍ରସ୍ତ ଚାଷୀ ସାହୁକାରଙ୍କ ରଣଯନ୍ତ୍ରରେ ପଡ଼ି ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରୁଛନ୍ତି । କିଏ କହିଲା ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କରୁଥିବା ଚାଷୀମାନେ ଭୀରୁ, କାପୁରୁଷ ଓ ଅପରାଧୀ ତ' କିଏ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା କୁ 'ଅପରାଧ' ଓ 'ହତ୍ୟା' ବୋଲି ପ୍ରମାଣ କରାଇବାକୁ ବ୍ୟଗ୍ର ହୋଇ ଆଇନର ଅକ୍ଷର ଓ ସମ୍ବିଧାନର ଧାରା ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରିବାରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହିଲା ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ହଠାତ୍ ସାରା ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଝଟବତାସ ହେଲା । ବର୍ଷା ଆସି ସବୁ ଶୀତଳ କରି ଦେଲା । ନୂଆ ସବୁଜ ଘାସ କେରା କେରା ଭିତରେ ହଜିଗଲା ବଳରାମ ସାହୁ ଙ୍କ ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ୱ । ଲୋକେ ଭୁଲିଗଲେ ବଳରାମ ସାହୁ ଙ୍କୁ । ନୂତନ କାହାଣୀ ନେଇ ଖବରକାଗଜ, ଟିଭି, ରେଡିଓରେ, ସଭା ସମିତି, ବିଧାନସଭା ମସ୍‌ଗୁଲ୍ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଏଇ ସବୁ ଘାସ କେରା ଭିତରେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ମିୟମାଣ ଘାସକେରା ପାଖରେ ଏକ ମଇଳା କାଗଜରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଅତୁଟ ମତ ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇ ଥିଲା । ମତଟି ହେଲା 'ଚାଷୀ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟାର କାରଣ ବଳରାମ ସାହୁ ଅବା ।ଷୀର ବିପଳତା ନୁହେଁ । ଚାଷୀ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା ଆମ ସମାଜର ସାମଗ୍ରିକ ବିପଳତାର ସୂଚକ, ଅଭାବାତ୍ମକ ଅର୍ଥନୀତିର ପ୍ରତିଫଳନ' ।

ମୁଁ ସେ ମଇଳା କାଗଜଟି ପଢ଼ି ହସିଦେଲି, ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ପିଲାଦିନେ ପଢ଼ିଥିବା କବିତା ର କିଛି ପଦ

'ଚାଷ ଅଛି ଯାହାର କି ଆନନ୍ଦ ତାହାର, ଚାଷୀ ଭାଇ ଯୋଗାଉଛି ଦୁନିଆକୁ ଆହାର' ।



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ଉତ୍କଳର ବରପୁତ୍ର

ଡଃ ଦାମୋଦର ଶତପଥୀ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓ ଭାରତ ଛାଡ଼ି ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ବିଦେଶ ବୁଲି ଆସିଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବରପୁତ୍ର ମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ବେଶି ମନେପଡ଼େ । କାରଣ କିଛି କାମ ନଥାଇ ଘରେ ବସି ରହିଲେ ସେହି ବରପୁତ୍ର ମାନଙ୍କର ଅବଦାନ ଓ ତ୍ୟାଗ ମନକୁ ପ୍ରେରଣା ଦିଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବିଶାଳ ସଂସ୍କୃତି , ବିପୁଳ ବିଭବ , ବିରୁଟ ପରଂପରା ଓ ସର୍ବୋପରି ଓଡ଼ିଆଜାତିର ପ୍ରାଣର ସ୍ୱନ୍ଦନ ଓ ଅନ୍ତରର ଦେବତା ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଆଶିର୍ବାଦ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଘୋର ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ଓ ପଛୁଆ ସ୍ଥିତି କାହିଁକି ? ୧୯୬୫ - ୬୯ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କାନାଡାରେ ଅଧ୍ୟୟନରତ ଥିବାବେଳେ ଏହି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ମନକୁ ଏତେ ଉଦ୍‌ବେଳିତ କଲୁ ଯେ ପିଏଚ୍. ଡି. ପାଇଲ୍ ପରେ କାନାଡା ବା ୟୁ.ଏସ୍.ଏ. ରେ ନ ରହି , ସହଧର୍ମିଣୀ ଓ ଦୁଇ ଶିଶୁପୁତ୍ରଙ୍କ ସହ ଭାରତ ଫେରିଥିଲି ଦେଶସେବାର ସଂକଳ୍ପ ନେଇ । ଜୀବନର ସାମ୍ୟାହୁରେ ପୁଣି ବିଦେଶରେ ବସି ସେସବୁ ବିଷୟ ଚିନ୍ତାକଲେ , ସଫଳତା ଓ ଅସଫଳତାର ଅନେକ ଚିତ୍ର ମାନସପତ୍ତରେ ଉଙ୍କିମାରେ । ସେତିକିବେଳେ ଏହି ବରପୁତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କ ସ୍ମୃତି, ଅବଦାନ ଓ ଆଦର୍ଶ ଓଡ଼ିଆପ୍ରାଣରେ ଗର୍ବ ଓ ଗୌରବ ଆଣେ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମହାଭାରତର ରଚୟିତା ଶୁଦ୍ରମୁନି ଶ୍ରୀ ଶାରଳା ଦାସ , ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଗବତ ରଚୟିତା “ଉତ୍କଳର ବ୍ୟାସ” ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦାସ ଓ କବି ସମ୍ରାଟ ଶ୍ରୀ ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଭଞ୍ଜଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗର ବରପୁତ୍ର ଅନେକ । ସେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଏଇ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧଟିରେ ଅବତାରଣା କରିବା ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ । ତେଣୁ କେତେଜଣଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ସମ୍ୟକ୍ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଏଠାରେ ଯଥାର୍ଥ ହେବ ଓ ବିଦେଶରେ ଅବସ୍ଥାନ କରୁଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନଙ୍କୁ (ବିଶେଷ କରି ଏଇ ପିଢ଼ିର ନାତି ନତୁଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ) ପ୍ରେରଣା ଯୋଗାଇବ ବୋଲି ଆଶା ।

-: ୧ :-

ସର୍ବପ୍ରଥମେ ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା କରୁଛି ଜନସେବକ, ଜନନାୟକ, ସ୍ୱଦେଶବିହାରୀ ଓ ଅଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ କବି ଉତ୍କଳମଣି ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ଦାଶଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ କେତେ ଧାଡ଼ି । ଭାରତ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତାର ଅନେକ ପୂର୍ବବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ସମୟ । “ଦାଶେ ଆପଣେ” ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଧାମ ପୁରୀରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ପୁତ୍ର ଓ କେତେକ ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ ସହ ଅବସ୍ଥାନ କରୁଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଏକମାତ୍ର ବାଳକପୁତ୍ର ଦାରୁଣ ରୋଗାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ; ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ କାନ୍ଦି କାନ୍ଦି ଅସ୍ଥିର ; ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଭାର୍ଗବୀ ନଦୀରେ ଭୀଷଣ ବନ୍ୟା ବିପ୍ଳବ, ବହୁ ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ଜଳମଗ୍ନ ଓ ଅନେକ ପରିବାର ସର୍ବସ୍ୱାନ୍ତ । ବିପଦ ବାନ୍ଧବ ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ବନ୍ୟା ଖବର ଶୁଣିବାମାତ୍ରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଓ ପୁତ୍ରକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ବାହାରି ପଡ଼ିଲେ ବନ୍ୟାଞ୍ଚଳରେ ରିଲିଫ୍ ଦେବାକୁ । ଦୁଃଖ ଓ ଶୋକାତୁର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ନିବେଦନ କଲେ - “ଯିବାପାଇଁ ଯେବେ ଚାହୁଁ , ମୋତେ ଆଗ ମାରି ସନ୍ତାନଟିରେ ଦେଇ ରୁଲିଯାଅ” । ଉତ୍କଳମଣି ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ (କବି ଗଡ଼ନାୟକ ଭାଷାରେ) -:

“ଗୃହର ସିମିତ ପରିଧିରେ ରଚି , ସମ୍ପ୍ରେହ କାର୍ତ୍ତ୍ତ୍ୱରୀ,
ବାହାରେ ଅଛି ଯେ ବିପୁଳ ଜୀବନ, ମୁଁତ ନ ପାରିବି ଭୁଲି ।
ଗୋଟିକର ଲଗି ଅନେକର ଡାକ, ମୁଁତ ନ ପାରିବି ଏଡ଼ି,
ବାନ୍ଧନା ଏବେ ଚରଣେ ମୋହର , ଅନ୍ଧ ମମତା ବେଡ଼ି ।
ଦିଅ ଛାଡ଼ିଦିଅ ମୋତେ,
ରୁଲିଯାଏ ଏବେ ରୁଲିଯାଏ ମୁହିଁ ବିଶ୍ୱ-ଜୀବନ ପଥେ ।”

ବନ୍ୟାଞ୍ଚଳରେ ସେବା ଓ ରିଲିଫ୍ ଦାନ କରି ଫେରିଲୁ ବେଳକୁ ପୁତ୍ର ନ ଥାଏ ; ଏକମାତ୍ର ପୁତ୍ରର ବିୟୋଗରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମୁର୍ଚ୍ଛାଗତା । ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ନିଜର କୋହ ସଂବରଣ କରି ବୁଝାଇ କହିଲେ - ପ୍ରିୟତମା, ମନରୁ ଦୁଃଖ ଓ ପରିହାର କରି ଶୁଣ - “ଗୋଟିଏ ପୁତ୍ର ଦେଇ , ଅନ୍ତରେ ମୋର ଶତପୁତ୍ର ମୁଁ କଦାଇ ଆଣିଛି ସହି” । ଗୋଟିଏ ପୁଅ ଆମର ସିନା ରୁଲିଗଲୁ ; କିନ୍ତୁ ବନ୍ୟାଞ୍ଚଳରେ ସେବା କରି ଶତ ଶତ ଶିଶୁ ଓ ବାଳକ ପୁତ୍ର ମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ମୁଖରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରି ପାରିଛୁ ।”

ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରପିତା ଗାନ୍ଧିଜୀଙ୍କ ଆହ୍ୱାନରେ ଭାରତର ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ସଂଗ୍ରାମରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ନେତୃତ୍ୱ ନେଇ ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ବିହାରର ହାଜାରିବାଗ ଜେଲ୍‌ରେ ବନ୍ଦୀ ହୋଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବିକ୍ଷୟରେ ଚିନ୍ତିତ ଥା'ନ୍ତି । ସେହି ସମୟରେ ସେ ମର୍ମସ୍ପର୍ଶୀ କବିତା – “ବନ୍ଦୀର ସ୍ୱଦେଶ ଚିନ୍ତା” ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ତାର କେତେକ ପଂକ୍ତି ଏଠି ଅବତାରଣା କଲେ ତାଙ୍କର କବି ପ୍ରତିଭାର ପରିଚୟ ମିଳିବ :-

“ବାହାରେ ବହଇ କେତେ ସୁଗୀତଳ , ମଧୁର, ମଳୟ ମୁଦୁ ମରୁତ,
 ନବ ମଲ୍ଲୀକତି ମୁରୁକି ହସଇ, ଭ୍ରମର ଦୋଳାଏ ପ୍ରେମେ ତା ବୃତ ।
 କବାଟ ଫାଙ୍କରେ ଚାହିଁଲେ ବାଙ୍କରେ , ଧରେ ଧରେ ଆସେ ଚୋର ପବନ ,
 ସେ କି ଗୁପ୍ତଚର ବାହାର ଖବର ଦେଇ କରି ଚାଲି ଯାଏ ବହନ ।
 ତା ପ୍ରିୟ ସଂଭାଷେ ନିମିଷ ସକାଶେ ତାପିତ ପ୍ରାଣ ମୋ ପୁରେ ପୁଲକେ,
 କେତେ କେତେ ଆଶା ଜାଣେ ଏ ଅନ୍ତରେ କେତେ ଚାହୁଁଚିତ୍ର ନାଚେ ପଲକେ ।”

କବି କଳ୍ପନା କରନ୍ତି ଯେ ବସନ୍ତରତୁର ଧୀର ଶୀତଳ , ମଳୟ, ପବନ ଦକ୍ଷିଣରୁ ଉତ୍ତର ଦିଗକୁ ପ୍ରବାହିତ ହୋଇ ପ୍ରିୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭୂମିର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅଂଶ ସ୍ପର୍ଶ କରି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଖବର ସବୁ ଆଣି ଗୁପ୍ତଚର ଭାବେ ମୋତେ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିବ । “ସବୁ ଆଡ଼ରେ ସଂବର୍ଦ୍ଧନା ପାଇ ବିଳମ୍ବ ହେବାରୁ , ହେ ମଳୟ ପବନ! ମୋ କାର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟକୁ ଆଗେଇ ଆସିବାକୁ ତୁମେ ବ୍ୟଗ୍ର ହେଉଥିବ” । ହେଲେ :-

“ଉଦ୍‌ବେଗ ବାହାନା କରିଥିବ ସିନା, ଉପେକ୍ଷି ନଥିବ କା ସମାଦର ,
 ଯେ ଯେତେ କର୍ମଠ , କରେ କ୍ଷଣେ ମଠ, ପ୍ରେମପାଶୁ ହେଲବେଲେ ଅନ୍ତର ।”

ଆଉ ଆଗକୁ ଆସି ତମେ ଚିଲିକା ହ୍ରଦର ନୀଳ ଜଳରାଶି ସ୍ପର୍ଶ କରିଥିବ :-

“ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ ଆଶେ ତବ ପଥପାଶେ , ଚିଲିକା ଆବେଶେ ଥିବ ଅନାଇ ,
 ମୁକ୍ତ ବ୍ୟୋମକେଶୀ , ଶ୍ୟାମ ଶୋଭାରାଶି , ଗିରି ଶିରିସ୍ମିତ ବକ୍ଷ ମେଲଇ ।
 ପ୍ରୀତି ପ୍ରତିଦାନେ , ଉଦ୍‌ବେଳିତମନେ , ହୁମ୍‌ସିଥିବ ଯେବେ ଗାଢ଼େ ସମୀର ,
 ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ ସର୍ବାଙ୍ଗେ , ଉଠିଥିବ ରଙ୍ଗେ ଅପୂର୍ବ ଉଲ୍ଲାସ କଂପାଇ ନୀର ।”

ତା ପରେ ବଡ଼ ଦେଉଳରେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଦର୍ଶନ କରି ପ୍ରଣିପାତ କରିଥିବ ଓ ପଦ ସ୍ପର୍ଶ କରି ଆଉଟିକେ ଆଗକୁ ଆସି ମୋର ଜନ୍ମ ଓ କର୍ମ ସ୍ଥଳରେ ବିରାଜମାନ ସାକ୍ଷୀଗୋପଳ ମନ୍ଦିରକୁ ଯାଇଥିବ :-

“ଦେଉଳେ ପ୍ରବେଶି ଗୋପୀନାଥ ବଂଶୀ ସୁତେ ରଚିଥିବ ଅସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ସ୍ୱନ ,
 ରାଧିକା ଅଂତଳ ଉଡାଇ ଚଂଚଳ କରିଥିବ ଜାଣି ବେନିଙ୍କ ମନ ।
 ହସି ଉଠିଥିବେ ଯୁଗଳ ମୂରତି , ଖସି ପଡ଼ିଥିବ ଶ୍ରୀ ଅଂଗୁ ପୁଲ ,
 ନବଘନ ଶିରେ ଆହାକି ରୁଚିରେ , ଦୋଳିଥିବ ବାଙ୍କ ମୟୂର ଚୂଳ ।”

ପୁଣି ଆଗକୁ ବଢ଼ି ମନ୍ଦିରମାଳିନୀ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ନଗରୀର ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶା ଅବଲୋକନ କରି ବ୍ୟଥିତ ହୋଇଥିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶ୍ରୀ ଲିଙ୍ଗରାଜ ମନ୍ଦିର ଦର୍ଶନ କରି ମନରେ ସାନ୍ନ୍ୟା ପାଇଥିବ :-

“ବିଧୁସ୍ତ୍ର ଐଶ୍ୱର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟେ ଧରି ଧର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଭା ଲିଙ୍ଗରାଜ ତୁଙ୍ଗ ମନ୍ଦିର ,
 ମହା ଶମଶାନେ କିବା ଯୋଗାସନେ ବିରାଜିତ କଳ୍ପଯୋଗୀ ଶରୀର ।”

ଆହୁରି ଉତ୍ତରକୁ ଆସି କଟକ ନଗରୀରେ ବାରବାଟୀ ଦୁର୍ଗର ଧ୍ୱଂସ ସ୍ତୁପ ଦେଖି ଅଶ୍ରୁମୋଚନ କରିଥିବ । ଆହୁରି ଆଗକୁ ବଢ଼ି ମୋ ନିକଟରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବ ଓ ମୋର ପ୍ରିୟ ଜନ୍ମଭୂମିର ସଂବାଦ ଦେଇ କାର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟରେ ମୋର ବ୍ୟଥିତ ପ୍ରାଣକୁ ଶୀତଳ କରିବ ।

ଏହାଧିଲ୍ କଳ୍ପନାବିଳାଶୀ, ସ୍ୱଦେଶପ୍ରେମୀ, ଜନନାୟକ , ଉତ୍କଳମଣି ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ଦାଶଙ୍କ ମର୍ମସ୍ପର୍ଶୀ କବିତାର କିଛି ଅଂଶ । ଇଂରାଜୀରେ ଅଛି – “Those whom the God loves, die young.” | ଏ ଭକ୍ତିର ସତ୍ୟତା ପ୍ରତିପାଦନ କଲୁଭଳି ଉତ୍କଳମଣି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅବିଶ୍ରାନ୍ତ ସେବା କରି ଅପରିପକ୍ୱ ବୟସରେ ସଂସାର ତ୍ୟାଗ କଲେ ଏବଂ ସେ ମହାନ ଆତ୍ମାର ପବିତ୍ର ସଂସ୍ପର୍ଶରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତି ବଞ୍ଚିତ ହେଲ । କବି ଗଜନାୟକଙ୍କ ଭାଷାରେ :-

ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ସିଂହ ଦୁଆରେ କିଏ ଅଛ ପ୍ରତିହାରୀ,
ଦିଅ ପଥଛାଡି ଦିଅ, ଯାଉଛି ଦେବତା ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ସେ ପୂଜାହାରୀ ।

ଶ୍ରୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଶ୍ରୀ ଚରଣ ତଳେ ତାଙ୍କର ପବିତ୍ର ଆତ୍ମା ବିଲୀନ ହେଲ ।

-: ୨ :-

ଏବେ ପଶ୍ଚିମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସୁଭାବ ଓ ବରେଣ୍ୟ କବି ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ମେହେରଙ୍କ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ତାଙ୍କର ମହାନ ଅବଦାନ “ତପସ୍ୱିନୀ” କାବ୍ୟର କିଛି ଅଂଶ ଅବତାରଣା କରୁଛି । ଧୋବା ଓ ଧୋବିଣୀର କଳହ ଓ କଥୋପକଥନ ଶୁଣି ପ୍ରଜାବହଳ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀ ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ନିଜର ପ୍ରାଣପ୍ରିୟା, ପତିବ୍ରତା, ଜଗଜ୍ଜନନୀ ସତୀ ସୀତାଙ୍କୁ ପରିତ୍ୟାଗ (ବନବାସ) କଲେ ଏବଂ ଅନୁଜ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣଙ୍କୁ ଆଦେଶ ଦେଲେ ବଣରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିବାକୁ । ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଦୈତ୍ୟରାଜ ରାବଣ କବଳରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରିବାକୁ ସମୁଦ୍ରରେ ସେତୁବନ୍ଧ ବାନ୍ଧି, ଲଙ୍କାପୁର ଯାଇ, ଘୋର ସମରରେ ରାବଣକୁ ବଧ କରି , ଯେଉଁ ଦେବୀ ସୀତାଙ୍କୁ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରିଥିଲେ ଏବଂ ନିଦାଘ ଅଗ୍ନି ପରୀକ୍ଷାପରେ ଯାହାଙ୍କୁ ସଙ୍ଗରେ ଧରି ଅଯୋଧ୍ୟା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାବର୍ତ୍ତନପରେ ରାଜ ସିଂହାସନ ଆରୋହଣ କରିଥିଲେ, ସେହି ରାଜନନ୍ଦିନୀ, ରାଜରାଣୀ, ସୁକୁମାରୀ ସୀତାଙ୍କୁ ଶେଷରେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର (ନା, ରାଜା ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର) ପରିତ୍ୟାଗ କଲେ!! ତିରନମସ୍ୟ ଜ୍ୟେଷ୍ଠଭ୍ରାତା ଓ ଅଯୋଧ୍ୟାର ସମ୍ରାଟ, ପତିତପାବନ, ନୟନାଭିରାମ ଶ୍ରୀ ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଙ୍କ ଆଦେଶ ପାଳନ କରି, ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣ କାନ୍ଦି କାନ୍ଦି ସୀତାମାତାଙ୍କୁ ବାଲ୍ମିକୀ ମୁନୀଙ୍କ ବନାଶ୍ରମ ନିକଟରେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିଲେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ଜାନକୀ ଗର୍ଭବତୀ । ପ୍ରଭାତ ଭ୍ରମଣ ସମୟରେ ମୁନୀବର ସୀତାଙ୍କୁ ବନ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଦେଖି ଯୋଗବଳରେ ସବୁ ଜାଣି ପାରିଲେ ଓ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସସମ୍ମାନ ଆଶ୍ରମରେ ସ୍ଥାନ ଦେଇ ନିଜର କନ୍ୟା ଭଳି ପ୍ରତିପାଳନ କଲେ । ବରେଣ୍ୟ କବି ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର “ତପସ୍ୱିନୀ” କାବ୍ୟରେ ସେ ସମୟରେ ସୀତାଦେବୀଙ୍କ ଅବସ୍ଥିତି ବିଷୟରେ ଅବତାରଣା କରିଛନ୍ତି :-

ମଙ୍ଗଳେ ଅଇଲୁ ଉଷା ବିକଟ ରାଜୀବ ଦୃଶା,
ଜାନକୀ ଦର୍ଶନ ତୃଷା ହୃଦୟେ ବହି ;
କର ପଲ୍ଲବେ ନିହାର ମୁକ୍ତା ଧରି ଉପହାର
ସତୀଙ୍କ ବାସ ବାହାର ପ୍ରାଙ୍ଗଣେ ରହି ।
କଳ କଣ୍ଠ କଣ୍ଠେ କହିଲୁ- “ଦରଶନ ଦିଅ ସତୀ ! ରାତି ପାହିଲୁ” । ।
ଅରୁଣ କଷାୟ ବାସ କୁସୁମ କାନ୍ତି ବିକାଶ
ପ୍ରଶାନ୍ତ ରୂପ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ମନେ ;
କେଉଁ ଯୋଗେଶ୍ୱରୀ ଆସି ମଧୁର ଭାଷେ ଆଶ୍ୱାସି
ତାକୁଛନ୍ତି ଦୁଃଖରାଶି ଉପଶମନେ ।
ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ନବ ଜୀବନ , ସ୍ୱର୍ଗୁଁ କି ଓଲ୍ଲାଇଛନ୍ତି ମର୍ତ୍ତ୍ୟ ଭୁବନେ । ।
ସମୀର ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଗାଏ ଭ୍ରମର ବୀଣା ବଜାଏ ;
ସୁରଭି ନର୍ତ୍ତନେ ଥାଏ ଉଷା ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶେ
କୁମ୍ଭାରୁଆ ହୋଇ ଭାଟ ଆରମ୍ଭିଲୁ ସୁବ ପାଠ
କଳିଙ୍ଗ ଅଇଲୁ ପାଟ ମାଗଧ ବେଶେ ।
ଲଳିତ ମଧୁରେ ଗାଇଲୁ- ଉଠ ସତୀ ରାଜରାଣୀ ! ରାତି ପାହିଲୁ । ।

ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ବିରହରେ ସତୀ ଗଭିର ବ୍ୟଥିତା , ମାତ୍ର ପ୍ରଭୁ ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ତିଳେ ମାତ୍ର ରାଗ ବା ବିଦ୍ୱେଷ ନାହିଁ । ତିର ନମସ୍ୟ ପ୍ରାଣ ପ୍ରିୟ ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କୁ ଅନ୍ତରରେ ଦର୍ଶନ କରି ସେ ଶଯ୍ୟା ତ୍ୟାଗ କଲେ :-

ପଦ୍ମିନୀ ହୃଦ ଶିଶିର ବିନ୍ଦୁରେ ଖର ରଶ୍ମିର
ପ୍ରତିବିମ୍ବ ପରି ବୀର ରାମ ମୂରତି ;
ଶୋକ ଜର୍ଜରିତ ଚିତ୍ତ ଫଳକେ କରି ଚିତ୍ରିତ
ହେଲେ ଆସନୁ ଉତ୍ପିତ ଜାନକୀ ସତୀ ।
ନମି ଅନୁକମ୍ପା (ଆଶ୍ରମ ପରିତ୍ସାଧିକା) ପୟରେ, ବନ୍ଦିଲେ ଉଷାର ପଦ ସବିନୟରେ । ।

-: ୩ :-

ପିତା ଦଶରଥଙ୍କ ସତ୍ୟ ରକ୍ଷାକରି ପ୍ରଭୁ ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣ ଓ ସୀତାଙ୍କ ସହ ୧୪ ବର୍ଷ ପାଇଁ ବନକୁ ଗମନ କଲେ । ବନ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରବାହିତ ନଦୀ ପାର ହେବାକୁ ନାବ ଗୁଳକ ଧୀବରକୁ ପ୍ରଭୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଦେଲେ (ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଭବ ପାର୍ବାର ପାରି କରନ୍ତି, ସେ ପୁଣି ସାମାନ୍ୟ ନଦୀ ପାର ହେବାକୁ ନାବିକର ଆଶ୍ରୟ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥୀ !!) । ସେ ନ ଶୁଣିବାରୁ ପ୍ରଭୁ ପଚାରିଲେ - “ହେ ଧୀବର, ତୁ କଣ ବଧିର ? ତାଙ୍କ ଶୁଣୁନାହିଁ କାହିଁକି ?” ନାବ ଗୁଳକ ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କର ବଡ଼ ଭକ୍ତ ଓ ଜ୍ଞାନୀ । ସେ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲା (ବୈଦେହୀଣ ବିଳାଶ କାବ୍ୟ ରେ କବି ସମ୍ରାଟ ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଭଞ୍ଜଙ୍କ ଭାଷା ରେ) -:

“ବଧିର ନୁହଇ ବୀର , ବୋଇଲୁ ତହୁଁ ଧୀବର, ଶୁଣିଛି ପଥରେ ପଥର ଅବଳା,
(ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କ ପାଦଧୂଳି ସ୍ପର୍ଶ କରି ଅଭିଶପ୍ତା ପକ୍ଷୀଣୀ ଅହଲ୍ୟା ନିଜ ସ୍ୱରୂପ ଫେରି ପାଇଥିଲେ)
ବାଲି ପଡ଼ି ତୋ ଚରଣୁ, ଆଶଙ୍କା ଉପୁଜେ ଏଣୁ , ନଉକା ନାୟିକା ହେଲେ ବୁଡ଼ିବ ଭେଲୁ
ବୃତ୍ତି ଏ ମୋ ପୋଷେ କୁରୁମୁ , ବସାଇନ ଦେବି ପାଦ ନଧୋଇ ନାବ /
ବଦାଇ ଦେଲେ ପୟର “ଭାବଗ୍ରାହୀ” ରଘୁବୀର , ପୟରେ କ୍ଷାଳିତ କରି ବସନେ ପୋଛି ,
ବ୍ରହ୍ମାରେ ଧୌତ ଯେ ପଦ ନୋହିଛି, ଶିବେ ବିଷାଦ ଦେଇଛି ଚରଣାମୃତ ପାନକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛି,
ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ କୈବର୍ତ୍ତ ଧୋଇଲୁ, ବିଶ୍ୱେ “ପତିତପାବନ” ନାମ ରହିଲୁ ।”

ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରଭୁ ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଏତେ ଭକ୍ତ ବସୁଳ, ବ୍ରହ୍ମା ଓ ଶିବ ଯଦ୍ରାଙ୍କ ପାଦ ଧୌତ କରି ପାରି ନଥିଲେ, ସାମାନ୍ୟ ନାବିକକୁ ସେ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଦେଲେ, ସେ ପୁଣି ମୋ ଭଳି ଚିର ସେବିକା(ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ) କୁ ପରିତ୍ୟାଗ କଲେ - ଏହି କଥା ସ୍ଥାନ ସମୟରେ ମା ସୀତା ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଥିଲେ । ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣ ମଧ୍ୟ ଠିକ୍ ସେହି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିଲେ । ପ୍ରଜା ବସୁଳ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀ ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ -:

“ପରଜା-ରଞ୍ଜନେ ଯେବେ ହେବ ପ୍ରୟୋଜନ, କରିପାରେ ମୁହିଁ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ-ସୀତା ବିସର୍ଜନ”

ସତୀଙ୍କୁ ପରିତ୍ୟାଗ କଲପରେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଘୋର ବ୍ୟଥିତ ହୋଇ, ସୀତାଙ୍କର ଏକ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ-ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଗଠନ କରାଇ ଓ ତାକୁ ଦେଖି ହୃଦୟର ବ୍ୟଥା ଉପସମ କରୁଥିଲେ । ପ୍ରଜାଙ୍କର ମନବୋଧ କରିବାକୁ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ହେଲେ ସେହି ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ ପିତୃଳା ମଧ୍ୟ ପରିହାର କରିଦେବାକୁ ପଛାଇବେ ନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ପ୍ରଭୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମଣଙ୍କୁ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ । ଏପରି ପ୍ରଜା ବସୁଳ ଥିଲେ ପତିତପାବନ, ନୀଳମୁଜ କୋମଳ ଶ୍ୟାମଳାଙ୍କ, ଜଗତ୍-ଜୀବନ, ଭାବଗ୍ରାହୀ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀ ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର । ପ୍ରଜାଙ୍କର ହିତ ଓ ପ୍ରଜାରଞ୍ଜନ ପାଇଁ ସେ ସଦା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ । ଜୟ ଶ୍ରୀ ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ।

-:୪:-

ସରୁଜ ଓ ରସିକ କବି ରାଧାମୋହନ ଗଡ଼ନାୟକଙ୍କ କବି ପ୍ରତିଭାର ସମ୍ୟକ୍ ଚିତ୍ର ପାଠକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆଗରୁ ମିଳିଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ପ୍ରତି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଏହି ବରପୁତ୍ରଙ୍କର ଗଭୀର ଅବଦାନ କିଛି ଅବତାରଣା କରି ଏହି ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ସମାପ୍ତ କରିବି । ତାଙ୍କ କବିତା ଏତେ ହୃଦୟସ୍ପର୍ଶୀ, ଏତେ ପ୍ରାଣବନ୍ତ ଓ ଭାବ ଓ ଭାଷା ବିନ୍ୟାସରେ ପରିପୁଷ୍ଟ ଯେ ଉଚ୍ଚ ଇଂରାଜୀ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ଅଧ୍ୟୟନ କରୁଥିବା ସମୟରେ (୧୯୪୭-୫୦) ମୋର ତରୁଣ-ପ୍ରାଣକୁ ତାହା ଉଦ୍‌ବେଳିତ କରିଥିଲା ତେଣୁ ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ୬୦ ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କର ଅନେକ କବିତା ମୋର ମନେ ଅଛି ।

ବିବାହ ପରେ ରଣପୁର ଯୁବରାଜ ନବପରିଶିତା କାନ୍ତା, ବରଯାତ୍ରୀ ଓ ସୈନ୍ୟ ସାମନ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହ ସ୍ୱରାଜ୍ୟକୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରୁଥାନ୍ତି । ସେତେବେଳେ ତ କାର୍ , ଟ୍ରେନ୍ ବା ବସ୍ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ନ ଥିଲା । ଅଶୁ ବାହନରେ ଆସୁ ଆସୁ ବାଲେଶ୍ୱର ନିକଟରେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟାସ୍ତ ସମୟ ହେବରୁ, ସମସ୍ତେ କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ, ଶାନ୍ତ ହୋଇ ବିଶ୍ରାମ କଲେ । ସେହି ସମୟର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରି କବି ଗଡ଼ନାୟକ ଲେଖିଲେ -:

“ଶିକର ଶୀତଳ ଶାନ୍ତ ସମୀର ପ୍ରୀତି ଉପତର ପରି,
ଶାନ୍ତ ବିବାହ ଯାତ୍ରୀ ଦଳର ଶ୍ରମ ନେଉ ଥିଲୁ ହରି,
କାନ୍ତ କୁହୁକ ବଳେ
ଶର୍ବଲିବାଳା ମନ ମୋହୁଥିଲୁ ଧାନ୍ତ ନିରୈଳ ତଳେ ।”

ଏହି ସମୟରେ ସଂବାଦ ଅସିଲ୍ ଯେ ବଙ୍ଗଳାର ମୁସଲମାନ ବାଦସାହା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଉତ୍ତର ସୀମା ଆକ୍ରମଣ କରିବାକୁ ଉଦ୍ୟତ । ରଣପୁର ଯୁବରଜ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲେ - କିପରି ଭାବେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସମ୍ରାଟ ଗଜପତି ମହାରାଜାଙ୍କୁ ଖବର ପଠାଇବେ । ଏତିକିବେଳେ ନବ ବିବାହିତ ଯୁବରାଣି କହିଲେ -:

“ପ୍ରବାଳ-ଅଧରେ ସ୍ନିତ ବିକଶାଇ ସୁମଧୁର ମୃଦୁ ହାସ,
 ନବ-ପରିଣୀତ କାନ୍ତା କହଇ ମଞ୍ଜୁ ମଧୁର ଭାଷ,
 ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଛ ଯେବେ
 ସୁଦେଶର ଲଗି ଏଇ ଗୁରୁଭାର ନିଜେ ନେଉ ନାହିଁ ଏବେ ?”

ଯୁବରଜ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ -“ତମେ କଣ ଭାବୁଛ ରଣପୁର ଯୁବରଜ ରଣ ଭୀରୁ? କେବଳ ତୁମରି ଚିନ୍ତା ମୋତେ ବିବ୍ରତ କରୁଛି । ମୋର ଅବର୍ତ୍ତମାନରେ ମୁସଲମାନ ବାଦସାହା ଯଦି ତୁମମାନଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଆକ୍ରମଣ କରନ୍ତି ତେବେ ? ଯୁବରାଣୀ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ -

“ନାରୀ ମୁଁ କି ଅଟେ ଫୁଲ-ସୁକୁମାରୀ ଫୁଲ ବାଣ ଖାଲି ହାଣେ ?
 ତୁମରି ପରଏ ଧନୁ ଧରି କରେ ତୀର ମୁଁ ତ ମାରି ଜାଣେ,
 ଅଶ୍ୱ ବାହାନେ ବସି,
 ଦର୍ପଭରେ ସେ ଶତ୍ରୁ ଶିବିରେ ସଂରୁଳି ପାରେ ଅସୀ ।”

ଏହା ଶୁଣି ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ଯୁବରଜ ଅଶ୍ୱବାହାନରେ ବସି ଗଜପତି ମହାରାଜାଙ୍କୁ ଖବର ଦେବକୁ ବାହାରି ଗଲେ । ସୈନ୍ୟସାମନ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହ ବାଲେଶ୍ୱରରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଉତ୍କଳ ସମ୍ରାଟ ଦେଖିଲେ ଯେ ଉତ୍କଳର ଯୁବରଜ ବେଶରେ ଜଣେ କେହି ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ଧୀର ବାହାନୀ ସାହାଯ୍ୟରେ ସମସ୍ତ ମୁସଲମାନ ସୈନ୍ୟ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ପରାସ୍ତ କରି ଦେଇଛି । ରଣପୁର ଯୁବରଜ ସମ୍ରାଟଙ୍କୁ ଚିହ୍ନାଇ ଦେଇ କହିଲେ - : ସେ ଜଣକ ଆଉ କେହି ନୁହନ୍ତି ;

“ମୁଗ୍ଧା ବଧୂ ଏ ମୋର, ଉତ୍କଳ ଯୁବରଜ ବେଶେ ଆଜି
 କରିଛି ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ଘୋର ।”

-:୫:-

ଉତ୍କଳ ସମ୍ରାଟ କପିଳେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦେବଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ଅଲ୍ପେ ବହୁତେ ପରିଚିତ । ଏକ ଦରିଦ୍ର ପରିବାରର ଗାଈ ତରାଇବା ବାଳକ “କପିଳା”, ଉତ୍କଳର ଉତ୍କଳରେ ସମ୍ରାଟ ପଦରେ ଅଧିଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇ “କପିଳେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦେବ” ହେବା ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟଜନକ ନୁହେଁକି ? କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଅସୀମ ସଦ୍‌ଗୁଣ ଓ ସତ୍‌ସାହସର ଅଧିକାରୀ ଥିଲେ । ସମ୍ରାଟ ହେବା ପରେ ବି ପିଲାଦିନର ପୁରତନ ବାଉଁଶର ବଇଁଶୀ ଖଣ୍ଡିକ ପାଖରେ ରଖି ସେ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ବଂଶୀ-ବାଦନ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଏହା ଦେଖି ଦିନେ ମହାରାଣୀ କହିଲେ - “ଏ ପୁରତନ ବଂଶୀ ତ୍ୟାଗ କରି ଗୋଟିଏ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ-ବଂଶୀ ରଖିଲେ ରାଜୋଚିତ ହୁଅନ୍ତା ନାହିଁ ? କି ବି ଗଡନାୟକଙ୍କ ଭାଷାରେ :-

“ବାଉଁଶର ବଇଁଶୀ ଖଣ୍ଡିକ ହୋଇଲୁଣି ଜୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପୁରତନ,
 ତଥାପିତ ଛାଡ଼ି ପାରୁନାହିଁ, ସତେଯେହ୍ନେ ଆଦରର ଧନ ?”

ମହାରାଜା ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ :-

“ମନର ମୋ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଅଭିଳାଷ, କଷ୍ଟରୂପ ହେଉଅଛି ଯେବେ,
 ଏଇ ମୋର ବଇଁଶୀର ସ୍ୱରେ କଷ୍ଟେ ଡାକି ଆଶୁଛି ମୁଁ ଦେବେ ।”

ମହାରାଣୀ କହିଲେ :-

“ହେ ଦେବ ମୁଁ ବୁଝିବି କିପରି, ତୁମର ସେ ମହତ୍ୱର କଥା

ପାର୍ବବାର ପାରେ ନାହିଁ ବୁଝି

ଅମୁଧୀର କିବା ଗଭୀରତା ।”

ମହାରାଜା ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ :-

“ସ୍ମିତାଧରେ କପିଳେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦେବ ଉତ୍ତରଲେ ଅୟି ପ୍ରିୟତମା,
 ତୁମ ଇଚ୍ଛା ନ ପାରିଲି ରଖି, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଦେବ ମୋତେ କ୍ଷମା,
 ସୁନାର ସେ କଳ୍ପନା ତୁମର ରଖିନ ପାରିଲି ଆଗୋ ସଖୀ,
 ତଟିନୀତ ମଧୁରତା ହାୟ, ପାର୍ବବାର ପାରେ ନାହିଁ ରଖି ।”

ଏହିପରି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅନେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ଓ ଜନନାୟକଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଭଜ କୋଟିର କବିତା ଲେଖି କବି ଗଡ଼ନାୟକ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟକୁ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଆମେରିକାରେ ଅବସ୍ଥାନ କରୁଥିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପରିବାରର ପିଲାମାନେ ଏହି ବରପୁତ୍ର ମାନଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ଜାଣି ସୁଦେଶର ବିଶାଳ ଐତିହ୍ୟ ଓ ପରଂପରା ସମ୍ୟକ୍ ଆଭାଷ ପାଇବେ ବୋଲି ଆଶା । ସର୍ବଶେଷରେ ଭକ୍ତ କବି ମଧୁସୂଦନ ଦାସଙ୍କ ଅମର ଲେଖନୀ ନିସ୍ତୁତ ବିଭୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ଏଠାରେ ଅବତାରଣା କରି ଆଶା କରୁଛି ଯେ ଆମେରିକାର NRO ମାନେ ନିଜର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦିନକୁ ଅଳ୍ପତଃ ଥରେ , ସକାଳେ ବା ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଏହି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ବୋଲିବାର ଅଭ୍ୟାସ କରାଇ ଅନେକ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟର ଅଧିକାରୀ ହେବେ । କର୍ମମୟ ଜୀବନ ସହିତ ଧର୍ମମୟ ପ୍ରେରଣା ମନରେ ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ସରସତା ଭରିଦେବ ।

-: ବିଭୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା :-

ଅଖିଳ ବ୍ରହ୍ମାଣ୍ଡ ପତି ମୋଜୀବନ ସ୍ୱାମୀ,
 ହେ ପରମ ପିତାମାତା ପ୍ରଭୁ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଯ୍ୟାମୀ
 ଧନ୍ୟ କରୁଣା ତୁମର,
 ହେ କରୁଣାସିନ୍ଧୁ କାହିଁ ତାର ପଚାନ୍ତର ।୧ ।

ହେ ଆନନ୍ଦମୟ କୋଟି ଭୁବନ ପାଳକ,
 ଅଧମ ଅକ୍ଷୟ ମୁହିଁ ଅବୋଧ ବାଳକ
 ଜ୍ଞାନ ଦାତା ଭଗବାନ
 ଦିଅ ମୋତେ ଶୁଭ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଦିଅ ଦିବ୍ୟ ଜ୍ଞାନ ।୨ ।

ସତ୍ୟ ପଥେ ଧର୍ମ ପଥେ ଘେନଯାଅ ମୋତେ
 ଭକ୍ଷାଅ ପରଶ ମୋର ତବ ପ୍ରେମ ସ୍ରୋତେ
 ପ୍ରଭୋ ! ପରମ ଶରଣ
 ଏ ଜୀବନ ଶ୍ରୀ ଚରଣେ କଲି ସମର୍ପଣ ।୩ ।

Dr. Damodar Satpathy is a retired professor. He lives in Bhubaneswar. We received this beautiful article from him when he visited his son Dr. Satyajit Satpathy & family at Coppell, TX.

ସାମାଜିକ ଧର୍ମାନ୍ତର: ଅତୀତର ଅର୍ଥାନ୍ତର

ଡକ୍ଟର ରାଜେନ୍ଦ୍ର ନାରାୟଣ ଦାସ

ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ପରେ କ୍ଷମତା ଓ ଅର୍ଥକୁ ନେଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏକ ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ସମାଜ ଗଢ଼ି ଉଠିଛି ଏବଂ ଏହି ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ସମାଜର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ପୃଷ୍ଠପୋଷକ ସାଜିଛି ରାଜନୀତି । ଧର୍ମ ପ୍ରତି ଅଭିକାହାର ଶକ୍ଷା ନାହିଁ କହିଲେ ଚଳେ । ଦେଖାଯାଉଛି ଯେ ଧର୍ମ ନାମରେ ବାହାରେ ଅନେକ ବହୁତମ୍ବର ବଜାୟ ରହିଛି । ପୁଣି କେତେ କେତେ ମନ୍ଦିର, ମସଜିଦ୍ ଓ ଗିର୍ଜା ଲତ୍ୟାଦି ଗଢ଼ାଗାଲିଛି । ତା'ପରେ ଅନେକ ସାଧୁ ସନ୍ଥଙ୍କ ଗୋଟି ମଧ୍ୟ ବହୁପରିମାଣରେ ଜନମଞ୍ଚରେ ଉଭା ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଏସବୁ ହୁଏତ ଏକ ନୂତନ ଧର୍ମର ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା ବୋଲି ମନେ ହୋଇପାରେ । ମାତ୍ର ଏଠାରେ ସୁତାଳ ଦିଆଯାଇପାରେ ଯେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର କୌଣସି ସନ୍ଥ ଭାରତର କୌଣସି ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଆଦୃତ ବା ପୂଜିତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ, କିମ୍ବା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଯେ କୌଣସି ସନ୍ଥ ଥିଲେ, ଏ କଥା ଭାରତ ଜାଣେ ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ସହଭେଜ୍ୟାଣୀ ଯେ କୌଣସି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଆସନ୍ତି କିମ୍ବା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଭକ୍ତବୃନ୍ଦ ଆସନ୍ତି, ସେମାନେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଆମର ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ବୁଦ୍ଧିଜୀବୀମାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ଆଦୃତ ଓ ପୂଜିତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି । (ଡକ୍ଟର କୁଞ୍ଜରାଘ୍ର ପାଣିଗ୍ରାହୀ, ମୋ ସମୟର ଓଡ଼ିଶା, କିତାବ ମହଲ, କଟକ, ୧୯୭୮, ପୃଷ୍ଠା ୧୩୦) । ଏବଂ ଏ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ଏହାହିଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଧର୍ମର ଅବସ୍ଥା ।

ବିଗତ ୬୦ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ କେତେ କେତେ ବାବା ଓ ମାତାଜୀ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ଆସି ନିଜ ନିଜ ଧର୍ମଗୋଷ୍ଠିର ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ତାର ତାଲିକା କଲେ ଅନେକ ଲମ୍ବା ହେବ । କେତେକେତେ ପାଠକଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ତଥାକଥିତ ଧର୍ମତତ୍ତ୍ଵ ଗଢ଼ିଉଠିଛି, ସମସ୍ତେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଉଣା ଅଧିକେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ଏହିସବୁ ଚଳ ବା ସଂଘ କେବଳ ଏଇ ସମୟରେ ବଡ଼ଲୋକ ବୋଲାଉଥିବା ନେତା ବା ଧନୀମାନଙ୍କର ଆୟୋଜିତ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ । ଧର୍ମନାମରେ ଏହା ସବୁ ଏକପ୍ରକାର ନୂତନ ଫେସନ୍ ଓ ସମୟ କାଟିବାର ବାହାନା, ସାଧାରଣ ଲୋକମାନେ ଏ ସବୁର ଧାର ଧାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ସଂପ୍ରତି ନାନାରକମର ଧର୍ମାନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ତିଆରି ଚାଲିଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେଠାରେ ଧର୍ମ ବୋଲି କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ସେଠାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପରସ୍ପରପ୍ରତି ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ରୂପ ନେଉଛି । ନିଜ ଧର୍ମକୁ ଦେଖେଇ ହେବାପାଇଁ ସତେ ଯେପରି ଆଦର୍ଶଗୁଡ଼ାକ ସେଠାରେ ଆଟପଟଳି ଭାଙ୍ଗୁଛି ସେଉଁଧର୍ମ ଆମକୁନେଇ ଗର୍ବ କରୁଥିଲା ଏବଂ ସେଉଁ ଧର୍ମପାଇଁ ଆମେମାନେ ଗର୍ବ କରୁଥିଲୁ ସେହି ଧର୍ମ ଆଜି ଧର୍ମଗୁରୁ, ଧନୀଲୋକ ଓ ରାଜନେତାମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥଜାଲରେ କବଳିତ । ଏପରି ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଧର୍ମର ଏକପ୍ରକାର ସ୍ଵାଶୁତ୍ଵ ଆସିଛି । ସେହିପରି ସହପ୍ରକା ମଧ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟବସାୟଭିତ୍ତିକ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ଏହି କାରଣରୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରକରି ଆମର ଉଦାର ବିଶ୍ଵ ମାନବିକ ଧର୍ମଧାରାଟି ଏହି ଷାଠିଏବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ଧୀରେଧୀରେ ନିର୍ଜନ୍ମ ହେବାକୁ ବସିଲାଣି । ପ୍ରକାଶି ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନେ ଆମେରିକା ବିଚେନ ଲତ୍ୟାଦି ଦେଶରେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର ତିଆରି କରୁଛନ୍ତି ଓ ସେଠାରେ ରଥଯାତ୍ରା ମଧ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି ; କିନ୍ତୁ ଏସବୁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟଦ୍ଵାରା ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଧର୍ମର ପ୍ରସାର ଘଟୁନାହିଁ, କେବଳ ପ୍ରଚାରସର୍ବସ୍ତୁ ଭକ୍ତିବିଜ୍ଞାନର ଜଗତିକରଣ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟା କେବେଠୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇସାରିଛି । ଏଠାରେ ମନେରଖିବାକୁ ହେବ ଯେ ପୁରୀର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଓ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ମନ୍ଦିର ହିଁ ମୂଳ ।

ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ପରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଧର୍ମ ଅଛି, ମାତ୍ର ଧର୍ମ ଉପରୁ କେତେକ ବସ୍ତୁବାଦୀ ମଣିଷଙ୍କର ଆସ୍ଥା ତୁଟିଯାଉଛି । ସେମାନେ ଅର୍ଥବାଦ ଉପରେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ଵ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଅନେକ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଧର୍ମସଭା ହେଉଛି, ଯଜ୍ଞ ହେଉଛି, ହରିନାମ ହେଉଛି, ମାତ୍ର ଏସବୁରେ ସାଧରଣତଃ ଆକର୍ଷକତା ନାହିଁ କି ଶୁଦ୍ଧା ନାହିଁ । କେବଳ ଦେଖେଇ ହେବାର ମନୋଭାବ ରହିଛି । ଧର୍ମନାମରେ ଠକାମି ଚାଲିଛି । ବଞ୍ଚିବାପାଇଁ ଘୋରତର ସଂଗ୍ରାମ କରୁଥିଲାବେଳେ ଆମେମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ବିଶ୍ଵର ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଦେଶର ବା ଜାତିର ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା, ପୂଜା ଆରାଧନା, ଧ୍ୟାନ ଓ ଯୋଗ ଲତ୍ୟାଦିରେ ଅନେକ ବେଶି ସମୟ ନଷ୍ଟ କରିଥାଉ , ଯାହା କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାରେ ଫଳପ୍ରସ୍ତୁ ହେଉନାହିଁ । ଏହାଦ୍ଵାରା ଆତ୍ମସନ୍ତୋଷ ବା ଆତ୍ମପ୍ରବୋଧନା ମିଳିପାରୁଥାଏ , କିନ୍ତୁ ଜାତିର ପ୍ରଗତି ବା ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଦିଗରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ସହାୟକ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ମନେହୁଏ । ଏବେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଧର୍ମନାମରେ ସାଂପ୍ରଦାୟିକତା ଓ ବିଭେଦ ଅନେକ ମାତ୍ରାରେ ବଢ଼ିଛି ମାତ୍ର ଧର୍ମସେ ମୁହୁର୍ମୁହୁ 'ମାନବୀକରଣ'-ଏ ଭାବର ପ୍ରାୟ କୌଣସି ବିକାଶ ବା ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଘଟିନାହିଁ ।

ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ଧର୍ମୀୟ ଓ ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ବିତମ୍ବନା ଭିତରେ ଆମେ ଆଉ ଏକପ୍ରକାର ସମାନ୍ତରାଳ ସାମାଜିକ ଶୈଳୀର ଉଦ୍ଘୋରୋଦ୍ଘର ଅଭିବୃଦ୍ଧି ଦେଖିବାକୁ ପାଉଛୁ । ଏହି ସମାଜିକ ଶୈଳୀର ଭିତ୍ତି ହେଉଛି କଂପ୍ୟୁଟର ଓ ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ପ୍ରୟୋଗବାଦ ଦ୍ଵାରା ପ୍ରଭାବିତ ଏବଂ ସାମୁହିକ ମାନବିକତା -ଯାହା ସ୍ଵର୍ଗ, ନର୍ଜ, ଭଗବାନ, କର୍ମଫଳ ଓ ପୁର୍ନଜନ୍ମ ପରି ପାରଂପାରିକ ଧର୍ମଧରଣାରୁ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ଧ 'ବିଶ୍ଵାସ'ର ପରିଧି ଚାରିପଟେ

ସଂଗଠନ ଶନିବଳୟ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରିସାରିଛି । ମାତ୍ର ଏହି ସତ୍ୟ ଓ ମିଥ୍ୟାର ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱରେ ସ୍ଥିତ ଏ ବନ୍ଧମୂଳ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ବଦଳରେ ଯେଉଁ ମାନବିକ ମୂଲ୍ୟବୋଧ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ ଆମର ଅଭିଳାଷିତ ପ୍ରାପ୍ୟ ଥିଲା , କଂପ୍ୟୁଟର ଯୁଗର ବିଜ୍ଞାନ କ’ଣ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଛୋଟ ମୂଳଦୁଆ ସୁଦ୍ଧା ପକାଇପାରିଛି କି ? ବରଂ ବୈଷୟିକତା ଆମର ମାନବିକତାକୁ କବଳିତ କରିସାରିଛି । ଆଜିର ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ତେଣୁ ଲଗ୍ନର ରୂପକ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଚୀର ଉତ୍ତର ହେବ -‘ମଣିଷ ଏବଂ କେବଳହିଁ ମଣିଷ, ସର୍ବ ମୂଳରେ ମଣିଷ’ ଓ ଏ ମଣିଷର ମଙ୍ଗଳମୟ ଧର୍ମ ଓ ସମାଜର ଗୃହପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ପର୍ବ କିନ୍ତୁ କେବେ ?



Gillbach starasse 95A, 41466 Neuss / Germany



କି ହେଲାରେ କହିତ ନୁହଇ ଭାରତୀରେ.....

ଡଃ ସୁଚିତ୍ରା ମହାପାତ୍ର

ଏ ଦେଶର କବି କେବଳ ଦେବତାକୁ ଆତ୍ମୀୟ ଭାବିନାହିଁ । ଲୌକିକ ସଂସାରର ଭାବଚେତନା ମଧ୍ୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଆରୋପ କରିଛି । ତେଣୁ ଏ ଦେଶର ରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ପରଂବ୍ରହ୍ମ ହୋଇ ମଧ୍ୟ ସୀତା ବିରହରେ କାତର ହୋଇ ବୃକ୍ଷଲତାଙ୍କୁ ସାଶୁ ନୟନରେ ସୀତାଙ୍କର କଥା ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଆଉ କୃଷ୍ଣ, ଚକ୍ରଧାରୀ ସତ୍ୟ; କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଗୋପଲୀଳା ଭିତରେ ମାନବସୁଲଭ ପ୍ରେମିକର ଭାବସତ୍ତାହିଁ ଆରୋପିତ । କୃଷ୍ଣ ଓ ରାଧା ପ୍ରେମିକ ଓ ପ୍ରେମିକାର ଦୁଇଟି ମଧୁର ପରିକଳ୍ପନା । ଏହି ଚରିତ୍ରକୁ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରକରି ଅନେକ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଛି । ତଥାପି ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ କୃଷ୍ଣଚେତନାର ଲତି ହୋଇନାହିଁ- ଓଡ଼ିଆ କାବ୍ୟଧାରାରେ ଯେଉଁ କବିମାନଙ୍କର ସୃଷ୍ଟି କାନନରେ ରାଧାକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କୁ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର କରି ବିଶେଷ ଭିତରେ ନିର୍ବିଶେଷରେ ଦିବ୍ୟକୁସୁମ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି ହୋଇ ମିଠା ମିଠା ସୁରଭିରେ ଆମକୁ ଅମୋଦିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ‘କିଶୋର ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରାନନ୍ଦ ଚଂପୂ’ର କବି କବିସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଳଦେବ ରଥ ଅନ୍ୟତମ ।

ରାଧାକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ପାରସ୍ପରିକ ଅନୁରାଗର ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି ଉପରେ ଚଂପୂରେ କଳାର କୋଶାଳ ନିର୍ମିତ ହୋଇଛି । ଏ ଉଭୟଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ପୁଣି ଲଳିତାର ଭୂମିକା ଅନ୍ୟ । ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ସଖୀର ଭୂମିକା ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ । ଏମାନେ ପ୍ରେମରେ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରନ୍ତି, ପ୍ରେମକୁ ନାଟକୀୟତାରେ ଭରିଦିଅନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ଅବଶେଷରେ ମିଳନରେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣସେତୁରେ ପରିଣତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ‘କିଶୋର ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରାନନ୍ଦ ଚଂପୂ’ରେ ଲଳିତାର ଭୂମିକା ଏ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ବେଶ୍ ଲଳିତ ।

ଚଂପୂର ଆରମ୍ଭ ‘କ’ ଗୀତରୁ । ଏହି ‘କ’ ଗୀତଟି ସଖୀଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଶ୍ରୀରାଧାଙ୍କର ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତ ଭାବରେ ଅଭିବ୍ୟକ୍ତି । ମଣିଷ ବିଧାତାର ଏକ ଅଭୂତ ସୃଷ୍ଟି । ମନସ୍ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ କହେ ମଣିଷ ଏପରି ଏକ ଜୀବ ଯିଏ ସବୁବେଳେ ନିଜର ଆବେଗକୁ ଅଭିବ୍ୟକ୍ତ କରିବାକୁ ଅଧୀର ହୁଏ । ଯାହା କାହା ପାଖରେ କହିଦୁଏନା, ତାହା କେବଳ ବନ୍ଧୁ ନିକଟରେହିଁ ମଣିଷ କହିଥାଏ । ଏହା କହିବା ଭିତରେ ସେ ଆଶୁସ୍ତ ହୁଏ । ଶ୍ରୀରାଧା , ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କ ଅଦମ୍ୟ ଆସକ୍ତି ଓ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱଜନିତ ଭାବାବେଗକୁ ଅନ୍ତରରେ ଚାପି ରଖିପାରି ନାହାନ୍ତି । କେବଳ ସହାନୁଭୂତି ନୁହେଁ, ଅନ୍ତରକାମନାର ଚରିତାର୍ଥ ପାଇଁ ମନେହୋଇଛି ଲଳିତାହିଁ ତାଙ୍କର ଏକମାତ୍ର ସହାୟ । ଲାଜ ଭୁଲି , ସଂକୋଚ ଭୁଲି, ସେ ତେଣୁ ତାଙ୍କ ମନକଷର ସକଳ ବାତାୟନ ସଖୀ ଲଳିତାଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଖୋଲି ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଅନୁରାଗିଣୀର ଅନ୍ତର ଭାରତୀ ଚିରଦିନ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭାବରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇଁ ଭାଷା ପାଏନି । ଯାହା ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୁଏ, ତାଠାରୁ ଅନେକ କିଛି ଅକୂହା ହୋଇ ରହିଯାଏ । ତଥାପି ଯେତିକି ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୁଏ ତାର ସ୍ତରେ ସ୍ତରେ ନାରୀ ମନସ୍ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜିତ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

‘ଚଂପୂ’ ର ‘କ’ ଗୀତରେ ଠିକ୍ ତାହାହିଁ ହୋଇଛି

“ କିହେଲାରେ , କହିତ ନୁହଇ ଭାରତୀରେ,

କାଲିଯା’ ଦୂରରୁ ଦେଖି , କଳନା କଲା ମୋ ଆଖି

କଳା ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରୀର ଆରତୀରେ” ।

ଏହା ଭିତରେ ଚଂପୁର କବି ଗୋଟିଏ ଉତ୍କଳସିତା ଗିରିଚରିତ୍ରୀର ଆବେଗକୁହିଁ ଅଭିବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଯେଉଁ କଥା ଶ୍ରୀରାଧା ଲଳିତାକୁ କହିବାକୁ ଚାହିଁଛନ୍ତି ତାହା ହେଉଛି ଅତିକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଗତକାଲିର କଥା । ସେ ଯାହା ଗତକାଲି ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରିଥିଲେ ମନେହେଉଥିଲା ଗୋଟିଏ ନିଲୋତ୍ପଳ ନିବୃତ୍ତି ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ସତେଯେପରି ରହିଛି । ଯାହା ସେ ଦେଖିଲେ ଏବଂ ଯାହା ତାଙ୍କର ଘଟିଗଲା ତାହା ଭାଷାରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାକୁ ସେ ଯେ ଅସମର୍ଥ, ସେ ସ୍ୱୀକାର କରିଛନ୍ତି ଏହି ଉକ୍ତି ଭିତରେ - “କହିତ ନୁହଇ ଭାରତୀରେ’ । ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ଉତ୍କଳସିତା ଅନୁରାଗିଣୀ ଶ୍ରୀରାଧା ପୁଣି ଲଳିତାକୁ କହିଛନ୍ତି- ଯମୁନା କୁଳରେ ଥିବା କେଳି କଦମ୍ବ ଲତା କୋଳରେ ଗାଢ଼ ଶ୍ୟାମବର୍ଣ୍ଣର ତେଜରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ସ୍ଥିର ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ଫଳରେ ଯେଉଁ କନ୍ୟାକୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଭୟ, ସେହି କନ୍ୟାକୁ ପୁଲକ୍ଷର ତାଙ୍କୁ ବିଷ କଲା । ସେ ବିବତ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲେ । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ସତେ ଯେପରି ଶ୍ରୀରାଧା ଆଉ ନିଜ ଆୟତ୍ତରେ ନଥିଲେ । ବନ୍ୟାକାଳୀନ ଚରିତ୍ରୀ ଯେପରି ସାଗର ସଂଗମ ପାଇଁ ଆକୂଳିତା ହୋଇ ସବୁକିଛି ଭୁଲିଯାଏ, ବାତ ଭାଙ୍ଗେ, ବନ୍ଧ ଭାଙ୍ଗେ, ରାଧାଙ୍କର ଠିକ୍ ତାହାହିଁ ହୋଇଥିଲା । କନ୍ୟାପରେ ଶରଣୀପରେ ସେ ଭୁଲିଗଲେ ଲାଜ ସଂକୋଚ ସବୁକିଛି ।

ଶ୍ରୀରାଧା କହିଛନ୍ତି - “କହୁଛି ବରଜି ଲଜା, କେବଳ ହେଲା ମୋ ମଜା

ମଜି ଯିବିକି ଉଭା ରାତିରେ ।”

ତା’ପରେ ରାଧାଙ୍କ କଣ୍ଠରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ହୋଇଛି ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ରୂପ ଘନଶ୍ୟାମ କାରଣ ସେଥିରେ ପୁରି ରହିଛି କୋଟି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ଏଭଳି ଅନନ୍ୟ , ଅନୁପମ, ସୁବତୀ ମନ ଉନ୍ମାଦକାରୀ ଲୋଭନୀୟ ରୂପ ସନ୍ଦର୍ଶନ କଲାବେଳକୁ ଶ୍ରୀରାଧା ବିଧାତାକୁ ନିନ୍ଦା କରିଛନ୍ତି । କାରଣ ଏଭଳି ଅନନ୍ୟ ରୂପ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥିବାବେଳେ ସେ କାହିଁକି ତାଙ୍କର ଶାଶୁରୁଢ଼ି ଜଟିଳାକୁ ଏତେ ଦୀର୍ଘାୟୁ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସେହି ନାରୀ ମନଲୋଭା ରୂପ ସନ୍ଦର୍ଶନରେ ସେ ଭୁଲିଗଲେ ନୀତି, ଜାତି, ଶୀଳ, କୁଳ । ସେହି ସମୟରେ ପୁଣି କଦମ୍ବ କୁଞ୍ଜରୁ ଚିତ୍ତହରଣକାରୀ ଏକ ବଂଶୀସ୍ୱନ ତାଙ୍କର ଶୁଣିଗୋଚରହେଲା । ଗୋଟିଏ ଦିଗରେ ନିଲୋତ୍ପଳକାନ୍ତି ଧାରଣ କରିଥିବା ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ଅନୁପମ ଘନଶ୍ୟାମ ରୂପ ସନ୍ଦର୍ଶନ, ଅନ୍ୟ ଦିଗରେ ସୁମଧୁର ମୋହନ ବଂଶୀସ୍ୱନ ଶ୍ରୀରାଧାଙ୍କୁ ଆକୂଳିତ କରିଛି, ଆଶାୟତ କରିଛି । ଫଳରେ ସେହି ସମୟରୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ନିଦ୍ରାର କ୍ଷଣ ନାହିଁ , ଜଠରରେ କ୍ଷୁଧା ନାହିଁ ଏବଂ ସେ ଛଟପଟ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି-

“କଲବଳ ଛଟପଟ ହୋଇଯାଉଛି ନିପଟ

ସଂବେଶ-ଅଶନ ବିରତିରେ

କହଇ ଶ୍ରୀବାଲୁକେଶ, ଶରଣ ଧରିଣ ଇଶ,

ଏକି ଦଣ୍ଡ ବିନା ପୀରତିରେ ।”

ବସନ୍ତ ଆଗମନର ଲକ୍ଷିତ ଯେପରି ଦିଏ କୋକଲିର କୁହୁ, ଅନୁରୂପ ଭାବରେ ‘କ’ ଗୀତ ଚଂପୁର ରୋମାଞ୍ଚକର ଭାବଚେତନାର ଆଦ୍ୟକାଳି । କୌଣସି ଉପକ୍ରମ ନଥାଇ କଥାବସ୍ତୁର ନାଟକୀୟ ପ୍ରାରମ୍ଭ ପାଠକକୁ ବେଶ୍ ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ କରିଥାଏ । ଗୋଟିଏ ଦିଗରେ ଚଂପୁର ନାୟକ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ରୂପ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟଦିଗରେ ଶ୍ରୀରାଧାଙ୍କର ଆବେଗାୟତ ଅନୁରାଗ ଭିତରେ କୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ସହ ମିଳିତ ହେବାପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ୟଗକାମନା ମଧ୍ୟ ଏହାର ସ୍ତରେ ସ୍ତରେ ଯମୁନାର ତରଙ୍ଗ ଭଳି ଲିଳାୟିତ । ପ୍ରେମ ଯେଉଁଠି, ବାଧା ସେଇଠି । ଗତିପଥରେ ଉପକର ଉପସ୍ଥିତିକୁ ଦେଖି ଚରିତ୍ରୀ କେବେ ପଛକୁ ଫେରିଯାଏନି । ଏଠାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବାଧାର ବିଦ୍ୟମାନତା ଆମେ ଲକ୍ଷ କରୁ , ବୃକ୍ଷା ଶାଶୁ ଜଟିଳାର ନାମ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ଭିତରେ । ଅନୁରାଗିଣୀର ଆଖିରେ କୃଷ୍ଣ ଏକ ଅପରିହାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଆକର୍ଷଣ । ଯୋଗୀଜନିତ ବନ୍ଦିତ , ଯଶୋଦାର ଗଣ୍ଡିଧନ, ଗୋପାଳନାଙ୍କପ୍ରାଣର ପ୍ରାଣ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ରୂପ ଯୁଗେ ଯୁଗେ କବିର ଲେଖନୀରେ ନାନା ଭାବରେ ଚିତ୍ରିତ । ତଥାପି ଭକ୍ତକବିମାନଙ୍କର କେତେଯେ ଅତୃପ୍ତି ତା’ର ଇୟତା ନାହିଁ । କବି ବଳଦେବ ‘କ’ ଗୀତରେ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ରୂପ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କର ଅନୁରାଗିଣୀ ଶ୍ରୀରାଧାଙ୍କ କଣ୍ଠରେ । ଇନ୍ଦନୀଳମଣିଜିତ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ମୋହନରୂପ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ କାବ୍ୟରେ ବହୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ । ମୋହନ ଏବଂ ମୋହନ ମୂରଲୀ ଗୋପଲୀକାର ହୃତ୍ପିଣ୍ଡ । ଏହି ମୋହନ ମୂରଲୀ ଯାହା ଶ୍ରୀବତ୍ସରେ ଭାଗବତର ରାସପଞ୍ଚାଧ୍ୟାୟୀରେ ଗୋପାଳନାମାନେ ସ୍ୱାମୀ, ଘରଦ୍ୱାର, କୁଳଶୀଳ ଓ ସମାଜ ସବୁକିଛି ଭୁଲି ଧାଇଁ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ସେହି ମୋହନମୂରଲୀର ଆକର୍ଷଣକୁ ବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜନା ଭିତରେ ଏଠାରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ହୋଇଛି । ‘କ’ ଗୀତର ଅନ୍ୟତମ ଦିଗନ୍ତ ହେଉଛି ଚଂପୁର ପ୍ରାରମ୍ଭରୁ କାବ୍ୟନାୟିକା ଭିତରେ ଅଦମ୍ୟ ପ୍ରେମାନୁରାଗର ଉତ୍କାସ ଭିତରେ ଲଜ୍ୟାକୁ ଲଜ୍ୟା ଦେବାପାଇଁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଚଂପୁର ନାୟିକା ଅକୃଷିତା ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି

ସୁମୀତ୍ରା ପାଠୀ

ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ଶବ୍ଦର ଅଭିଧାନିକ ଅର୍ଥ ହେଉଛି ଲୋକ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ଉକ୍ତି । ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଯେଉଁ କଥା ସମାଜରେ ଆଦୃତ ହୋଇଥାଏ ତାକୁ ଲୋକକଥା କହନ୍ତି । ଲୋକକଥାରୁ ସମାଜର ଚଳଣି ଜଣାପଡ଼େ । ଲୋକପ୍ରିୟ ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ବାକ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଜାଗତିକ ସତ୍ୟର ପରିପ୍ରକାଶ ଓ ପରିପ୍ରସାର ଘଟାଇବାରେ ଲୋକୋକ୍ତିର ବୈଶିଷ୍ଟ୍ୟ ନିହିତ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକଟି ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି କେବେ କାହାଦ୍ୱାରା କିପରି ଉତ୍ପନ୍ନ ହେଲା ତାହା ସଠିକ୍ କୁହାଯାଇ ପାରେ ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଲୋକୋକ୍ତିଟିକୁ ଆଲୋଚନା କଲେ କେଉଁ ସମୟରେ କଅଣ ପାଇଁ ସମାଜରେ ପ୍ରଚାର ହୋଇଥିଲା, ତାହା ଜଣାପଡ଼େ । ଜନସମାଜକୁ ନୈତିକ ଶିକ୍ଷା ପ୍ରଦାନ କରି ସମାଜକୁ ଶୁଦ୍ଧୀକୃତ କରିବାରେ ଏହାର ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ଅବଦାନ ରହିଛି । ମନୁଷ୍ୟର ସ୍ୱଭାବ ହେଉଛି, ଉପଦେଶ ବା ଯୁକ୍ତି ଛଳରେ ସତ୍ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦ୍ୱାରା ସେ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ କି ସହଜରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ପାରେ ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଯଦି କୌଣସି ଉଦାହରଣ ଦେଇ ଶ୍ଳୋକର ବାଖ୍ୟା କରି ବା ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ପୁରାଣର କାହାଣୀ କହି ବା ଢଗ ଢମାଳୀ ଆଦିର ସଂଯୋଗ କରି କୁହାଯାଏ ତେବେ କଥାଟି ବେଶ୍ ମର୍ମହର୍ଷୀ ଓ ଗ୍ରହଣୀୟ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଶୋଡ଼ା ବୁଝେ ଏହା ମନଗଢ଼ା କଥା ନୁହେଁ । ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର ପୁରାଣ କଥା ବା ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ିଆ ଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଗୁଣୀ ଲୋକ କହିଥିବା କଥା, ତେଣୁ ସିଏ ସେହି କଥା ଉପରେ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦିଏ । ଲୋକୋକ୍ତିରେ କାବ୍ୟ ଅଳଙ୍କାର ପ୍ରାୟ ନଥାଏ । ତାକୁ ମଳି ମୁଣ୍ଡିଆଙ୍ଗ ଭାଷା ବୋଲି କୁହାଯାଇ ପାରେ । ସେ ବାହାରେ ଦରିଦ୍ର ଦିଶେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନ୍ତରରେ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ । ଅନୁଭୂତି ତାହାର ସ୍ୱାର୍ଜିତ ସଂପଦ ।

ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ର ସର୍ବନିମ୍ନ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ହେଲା - ୧) ଏହା ଛୋଟ ଛୋଟ ବାକ୍ୟ ବା ପଦରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇବ । ୨) ନିରକ୍ଷରତା ଏହାର ସୃଷ୍ଟିର ଅନ୍ତରାୟ ନୁହେଁ । ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ଏହାକୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ବୁଝି ପାରିବେ । ୩) ଏଥିରେ ସାମ୍ବାଦ୍ୟ ସତ୍ୟ ନିହିତ ଥିବ । ୪) ଏହା ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ନୈତିକ ଶିକ୍ଷା ପ୍ରଦାନ କରୁଥିବ । ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ତୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ତୁଣ୍ଡ କୁ ପ୍ରସାରିତ ହୁଏ । ସ୍ଥାନ, କାଳ, ପାତ୍ର ଭେଦରେ ଏହାର ରୂପ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତିତ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ୱରୂପ ଉପକୂଳବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ବେଶୀ ନଡ଼ିଆ ହୁଏ । ନଡ଼ିଆରସ କୁ ତେଜମାଲ ଦୁଧ କହନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଯାଗାରେ “କାଳିଗାଲ ଦୁଧ ମଧୁର” ଉକ୍ତି ବ୍ୟବହାର କଲାବେଳେ ଏ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ “ତେଜ ଗାଲ ଦୁଧ ମଧୁର” ବୋଲି କହନ୍ତି । ସେପରି “ଯାହାର ପୁଅକୁ ସାପ

କାମୁଡ଼ି ଥାଏ ତା’ର ମା ପାଳ ଦଉଡ଼ି ଦେଖିଲେ ତରେ” - ପ୍ରବାଦଟି ବହୁ ଯାଗାରେ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ହୁଏ । ପଞ୍ଜିମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ କହନ୍ତି “ଯାର ବଉଁଶେ ବାୟ୍ ଲାଗି ଗୁଛା କେ ଦେଖିଲେ ତର ଲାଗି” ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ଯାହାର ବଉଁଶରେ କେବେ କାହାକୁ ବାଘ ଖାଇଥାଏ ସେ କୁଦାଟିଏ ଦେଖିଲେବି ତରେ । ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ଗଦ୍ୟ ବା ପଦ୍ୟ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ଏହା ଯଦି ପ୍ରବାଦବା ପ୍ରବଚନ କି ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରବଚନ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇଥାଏ ତେବେ ଗଦ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଏ । ଯଦି ଢଗ, ଢମାଳୀ, ବ୍ୟଙ୍ଗ ବିଦ୍ରୁପ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ ହୋଇଥାଏ ତେବେ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ପଦ୍ୟରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ହୁଏ ।

ସ୍ୱର୍ଗତ ଗୋପାଳ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ପୁରୁରାଜଙ୍କ ମତରେ ସମାଜର ଦୈନନ୍ଦିନ ଚଳଣି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଯହିଁର ଉପଯୋଗିତା ବାସୀରବାର୍ତ୍ତୀ ବିଷୟରେ ଏକାଧିକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଏକମତ ହୋଇ ଯାଆନ୍ତି ତାହା ଜଣଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ମୁହଁକୁ ଚଳ ପ୍ରଚଳ ହୋଇ ଢଗ, ଢମାଳୀ, ପ୍ରବଚନ ଆଦିର ଆକାର ଧାରଣ କରେ । ଏ ପୁରୁଷରେ ଯାହା ପୋଥିଗତ ବିଦ୍ୟା ରୂପରେ ଥାଏତାହା ଆର ପୁରୁଷକୁ ଢଗ, ପ୍ରବଚନ ବା ମହାଜନ-ବଚନ ରୂପ ଧାରଣ କରି ଦେଶ ତମାମ୍ ଖେଳେଇ ହୋଇ ଯାଏ । ଲୋକୋକ୍ତିର ଉପାଦାନ ଉଚ୍ଚତାଟି ଚଳଣି ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ନୀଚତାଟି ଚଳଣି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ, ଐଶ୍ୱର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ପତକୁଟିଆର ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ, ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ବାସ୍ତବବାଦୀ ଜୀବନଦର୍ଶନ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ, ଖାଦ୍ୟପେୟ ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି କୃଷିକାର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ଶିକ୍ଷା, ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତଥା ପାରିବାରିକ ଓ ସାମାଜିକ ରୀତି, ନୀତି ଆଦି ସବୁ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବିଛୁରିତ ହୋଇଛି । ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ଢଗ, ଢମାଳୀ, ପ୍ରବାଦ, ପ୍ରବଚନ, ପ୍ରହେଳିକା ସମସ୍ୟା ବା ନାଁ ଦିଆ, ବ୍ୟଙ୍ଗ ବିଦ୍ରୁପ ଆଦି ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

ଢଗ - ଢଗ ସାଧାରଣତଃ କହିବାର ଢଙ୍ଗ ବା ଏକ ବିଶେଷ ପ୍ରକାଶ ଶୈଳୀକୁ ବୁଝାଏ । ଏହାର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ହେଲା ‘କଥା ଅଳ୍ପ ଭାବ ଅଧିକ’ । ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ସୀମିତ ଶବ୍ଦ ବା ବାକ୍ୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏକ ବ୍ୟାପକ ଭାବକୁ ବାଖ୍ୟା କରିବା । ଢଗ ମାନଙ୍କର ଯତିପାତ ବା ଉପଧା ମିଳାଇବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରା ଯାଇଥାଏ । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ୱରୂପ ‘ତୁଛା କୁ ଏତେ, ମୁଦି ନାହିଁ ଗୋଡ଼ କରାତୁ କେତେ’, ‘ବାର ପୁନିର୍ ପିଠା ଖାଇ, କେତେ ମନ୍ଦ ହରଷ୍ ନାଇଁ’ । ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଶେଷ ପାଦର ଯତି ଓ ଉପଧା ମିଳାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ନିରର୍ଥକ ପ୍ରଥମ ପାଦ

ଜଗରେ ବୋଲା ଯାଇଥାଏ । ଯେପରି ‘କୁକୁଡା କୁ ଦେଲି ତିଆଁ, ମୁଖ ଦରଶନ କରିବି ବୋଲି ନିଜେ ମାଗୁଥିଲି ନିଆଁ’ ।

ଜମାଳୀ - ଏଥିରେ ଶେଷ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣର ମେଳ ନ ହୋଇ ବାକ୍ୟ ଗଠନ କରାଯାଏ । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ୱରୂପ - ‘କାଳି ଗାଈ ର ଭିନ୍ନେ ଗୋଠ’, ‘ପଞ୍ଚମ ରେ ବୁଝୁଛନ୍ତି’, ‘ମାଗି ଆନଲା ତୁନ୍ ସ୍ୱରପେ’, ‘ଅକ୍ଷ ହାତେ ସୁନା ମୁଦି’, ‘ଉଷନା ଧାନ ଗଜା ହେଲା’, ‘ଶହେ ପିପଲ୍ ଗୁଟେ ତୁମେର୍’ ।

ପ୍ରହେଳି - ଏହା ପ୍ରହେଳିକାର ଅପଭ୍ରଂଷ ରୂପ । ଏହା ଅର୍ଥ ଅବୋଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ବା ସମସ୍ୟା । ଏଥିରେ କୃତ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କରି ଶ୍ଳୋକ ଠାରୁ ଉତ୍ତର ଅପେକ୍ଷା ରେ ରହନ୍ତି । ଏହାକୁ ନାଁ ଦିଆ ବା ଧରା ମଧ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । ପଞ୍ଜିମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଏହାକୁ ବଖାନି କହନ୍ତି । ଉଦାହରଣ - ବନ୍ଧା କହିବ ‘ଟିକି ଚଢେଇ ଚିକିକ ପାଣିରେ ବୁଡି ମରଇ’, ଶ୍ଳୋକା ଉତ୍ତର ଦବ ଲୁଣ । ବନ୍ଧା କହିବ ‘ବିନ୍ ବରଷାର୍ ପାନି, ବିନ୍ ଗାଏଥି ଖିରା ଖିଆ, ବିନ୍ କୁମ୍ଭାର୍ ହାଣ୍ଡି’ । ଶ୍ଳୋକା ଉତ୍ତର ଦବ ନତିଆ ।

ବ୍ୟଙ୍ଗ ବିଦ୍ରୁପ - ଏଥିରେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ଘଟଣା କୁ ବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ବିଶେଷ ଙ୍କୁ ପରିହାସ କରି କଟାକ୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବକ ବାକ୍ୟ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ କରା ଯାଏ । ଯଥା - ‘ଅଖାଇ ନ ଖାଇଲା, ଖାଉ ଖାଉ ଗାଁ ଗୋଟାକ ଖାଇଲା ସୁଆଦ ନ ପାଇଲା’ । ‘ଓଜଣା ପଡ଼ିଛି ନାକ ସରିକି, ପାଟି ଶୁଭୁଅଛି ଚଉପାଢି କି’ । ‘କମେଇ କମେଇ ବଲଦ୍ ବୁଢା, ଶାଲେ ବସି ଖାଏଲେ ଘୁଡା’ ।

ଉପଦେଶ ଓ ସାରବଚନ - ଏ ଜଗ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଉପଦେଶମାକ । ଯଥା- ‘ପଣସ ଚୋପା, ପର ପୁଅକୁ ପରତେ ନଯିବୁ ବାପା’ । ସାର ବଚନ ଜଗ ହେଲା

‘ଘୋଡା ଚଢା ଠାରୁ ସଂପତ୍ତି ନାହିଁ,
ଘର ପୋତି ଠାରୁ ବିପତ୍ତି ନାହିଁ’ ।

‘ଶୋଷ୍ ଯାଏସି ପାନିର୍ ପାଶ୍‌କେ,
ପାଏନ୍ ନାଇଁ ଯାଏ କାହିଁ’ ।

ପ୍ରବାଦ - ପ୍ରବାଦ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ କୌଣସି କାହାଣୀ ର ସାରମର୍ମ ବୁଝାଉଥାଏ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ପ୍ରବାଦ ପଛରେ ଏକ କାହାଣୀ, କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ବା ଜନଶ୍ରୁତି ଥାଏ । ଯେଉଁଠା କି ପ୍ରବଚନରେ ନଥାଏ । ଯେପରି ‘ପଦ୍ମ ଘୁଞ୍ଚି ଘୁଞ୍ଚି ଯାଉଛି’

ପ୍ରବାଦ ପଛରେ ସାଧବ ଭାରିଯା ଗର୍ଭବତୀ ଥିବା ବେଳେ ତାର କାଙ୍କଡ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଲା । ସାଧବ କାଙ୍କଡ ଚୋଳିବା ବେଳେ କିମ୍ବାର କୁ ଝିଅ ହେଲେ ଦେଇ ଦବ ବୋଲି ଯୋଉ କଥା ଦେଇଥିଲା, ସେଇ ଗପଟି ଅଛି । ‘ଶିବେଇ ସାନ୍ତେରା କ୍ଷ ପରି ଜାଉ ଖାଇବା ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ପଛରେ କୋଣାର୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର ତୋଳା ହେବାର

କଥା ରହିଛି । ‘ପୁଅରେ ଦାୟୀ କି ବାରଣହ ବଢେଇ ରେ ଦାୟୀ’ ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି କୋଣାର୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର ମୁଣ୍ଡିମରା କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ଅଛି ।

ପ୍ରବଚନ - ପ୍ରବଚନ ହେଉଛି ପରାପରା ଗତ ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ଭିତ୍ତିକ ଚେତାବନୀ ବା ଉପଦେଶ । ଏହା ଜନ ସମାଜର ମାର୍ଗ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶକ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅଲଗା ଅଲଗା ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୋଇ ଥିବାରୁ ପ୍ରବଚନ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ପରସ୍ପରର ବିରୋଧୀ ହୋଇ ଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଉଦାହରଣ ସହିତ

‘ଅଧର୍ମ ବିଘ୍ନ ବଢେ ବହୁତ, ଗଲା ବେଳେ ଯାଏ ମୂଳ ସହିତ’,

‘ନେଇ ଆଣି ଥୋଇ ଜାଣିଲେ ଚୋରି ବିଦ୍ୟା ଭଲ’,

‘ପେଟ ପୋଷ ନାହିଁ ଦୋଷ’ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ସାମାଜିକ ଚଳଣି ଭିତ୍ତିକ ଓ ପାରିବାରିକ ସଂପର୍କ ଭିତ୍ତିକ ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ବହୁତ ଦେଖାଯାଏ । ଯଥା - ‘ସଂସାରେ କରିଥିବ ଘର, ଅଧେ ଆପଣା ଅଧେ ପର’, ‘ଚକ ବୁଲୁଥାଇ, ଅଖ ବୁଲୁଥାଇ, ଆବର ବୁଲଇ ପହିଁ ସଂସାର ଭିତରେ ଘର କରିଥିଲେ ପଥର ପଡ଼ିଲେ ସହି’, ‘ଯାହର ଲୁଣ ଖାଇବ ତାର ଗୁଣ ଗାଇବ’ । ପୁରୀ ଆଡେ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଥଙ୍ଗା କରି କହନ୍ତି ‘ପିଢା ଫଟିବ, ରୁଟି ଉଠିବ, ଲାହି ଲେଉଟିବ, ତେବେ ଯାଇ ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣ ଠାରୁ ଉଠିବ’ । ପାରିବାରିକ ଉଚ୍ଚରେ ପରିବାର ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ କୁହା ଯାଇଥାଏ । ଯଥା -

‘ମା ବାପ ଠାରୁ ସୋଦର ନାହିଁ,
ଆଖୁ ଗୁଡ଼ ଠାରୁ ମଧୁର ନାହିଁ’ ।

‘ଭାଇ ରାଜା ହେଲେ ଭଉଣୀ ନୁହେଁ ରାଣୀ,
ଅତି ସେରେନ୍ତାରେ ଡାକନ୍ତି ରାଜାଙ୍କ ଭଉଣୀ,
ଭଉଣୀ ରାଣୀ ହେଲେ ଭାଇ ନୁହେଁ ରାଜା
ଅତି ସେରେନ୍ତାରେ ଡାକନ୍ତି ଆମ ରାଜାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରଜା’ ।

ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ବ୍ୟଙ୍ଗ ବିଦ୍ରୁପ କରି ମଧ୍ୟ ସମାଜରେ ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ପ୍ରଚାର ହୋଇଥାଏ । ମଧ୍ୟଯୁଗରେ କଟକ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ମୋଗଲବନ୍ଦି ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ପତୋଶି ରାଜ୍ୟର ଆଧୁନିକ ପ୍ରଭାବ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଲୋକେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବ୍ୟଙ୍ଗ କରି କହନ୍ତି

‘କଟକି ଝିଅ ବଡ଼ ଛଟକିଲୋ ହାତେ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଟ ପୁଲି,
ଘରେ ଥିଲେ ଅବା ଦେଖିଥାଆନ୍ତଲୋ ଗଲେଣି ବଜାର ବୁଲି’ ।

ପୁରୀ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଜା ବୋଲାଉଥିବା ଶୋହଳ ଶାସନ ଗାଁକୁ ରାହାଙ୍ଗାତ ବୋଲି କହନ୍ତି । ସେଠାକାର ଲୋକମାନେ ଖାଇବା ପିୟ ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ସେଠିକା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ କୁହାଯାଏ ‘ରାହାଙ୍ଗ ବାଡ଼ ଝିଅ ରାନ୍ଧିଛି ତିଅଣ, ଆଉ ଆଣ ଆଣ’ । ଆଉ ମଧ୍ୟ କୁହାଯାଏ

‘ରାହୁଁ ମାଲପେ ଜଗଜିତା,
ହଲାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି କାପ ମଲକଜି
ଦେଖାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ବାହାଚିତା’ ।

କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ଭିତ୍ତିକ ଲୋକକ୍ତି -

ଇତିହାସ ବା ପୁରାଣ ର କୌଣସି ଆଖ୍ୟାନ ସମାଜରେ ବହୁଳ ପ୍ରଚାର ହୋଇ କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଏହି କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ କୁ ଭିତ୍ତି କରି ଲୋକ ମୁଖରେ ଅନେକ ଉକ୍ତି ପ୍ରଚାର ବା ପ୍ରସାର ଲାଭ କରେ । ଯଥା -

‘ହାତୀ ସୁନା କଳସ ଢାଳିବ’

କଥା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ର ଦୀର୍ଘକାଳ ପରଂପରା ରେ ଚଳି ଆସୁଛି । ଏହାର ଅର୍ଥ ଲୋକେ ବୁଝନ୍ତି ରାଜାଙ୍କର ଉତ୍ତରାଧିକାରୀ ନଥିଲେ ପାତ, ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ସାମନ୍ତ ସବୁ ବସି ପୂର୍ବ ରାଜାଙ୍କର ପାଟ ହାତୀ କୁ ପାଣି ଭରା ସୁନା କଳସ ଦେଇ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ସେ ହାତୀ ଚି ନିଜ ଥୋଡ ପାହାର ରେ କଳସ ଧରି ବୁଲୁ ବୁଲୁ ଯାହା ଉପରେ ପାଣି ଢାଳିଦିଏ ସେ ହୁଏ ରାଜା । ସେ ଆସି ସିଂହାସନରେ ବସି ରାଜା ହେଲେ ପୂର୍ବ ରାଜାଙ୍କର ଶବ ଦାହ ହୁଏ । କଥାରେ ଅଛି କପିଳେନ୍ଦ୍ରଦେବ ଏହି ପରି ରାଜା ହୋଇଥିଲେ । କଳାପାହାଡ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆକ୍ରମଣ କରିଥିବା ବେଳେ ମଧ୍ୟ ବହୁତ ଲୋକକ୍ତି ଅଛି ।

‘ଅଇଲା କଳା ପାହାଡ
ଭାଙ୍ଗିଲା ଲୁହାର ବାଡ
ମହାନଦୀ ର ପାଣି
ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଥାଳିରେ ହୀରା ପରଶିଲେ
ମୁକୁନ୍ଦ ଦେବ ଙ୍ଗ ରାଣୀ ।’

ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ହେଉଛି

‘ଭଲ ରାମଚଣ୍ଡି ଭଲରେ
ଭଲ କଳାପାହାଡ କୁ ଦୁଆରେ ବସାଇ
ଭଲ ପାଣି ପାଇଁ ଗଲରେ ।’

ସ୍ଵଳ୍ପ ପରିସର ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସୁବିସ୍ତୃତ ଭବ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାରେ ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ଗୁଡିକ ବହୁତ ଚିତ୍ତାକର୍ଷକ ହୋଇ ପାରିଛନ୍ତି । ଏହା ଶୋଚନୀୟ ବୁଦ୍ଧିକୁ ଉତ୍ତୀବିତ କରିବା ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବହୁତ ପ୍ରେରଣା ଦେଇଥାଏ ।

‘ଗଙ୍ଗ ବୋଇଲେ ଥିବି

ଗାଙ୍ଗି ବୋଇଲେ ଯିବି’ ।

ଏହା ପୌରାଣିକ ଜ୍ଞାନକୁ ଉତ୍ତୀବିତ କରିଥାଏ, ପୁଣିଶୁଣ୍ଠିତ ସାମାଜିକ ଜୀବନ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରେରଣା ଦିଏ ।

‘ଦୁଷ୍ଟକୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ଭୟ କରନ୍ତି
ସଛର ନଥାଏ ଆଦର
ସୃଷ୍ଟିକର୍ତ୍ତା ବ୍ରହ୍ମା ଅପୂଜା ରହିଲେ
ଶିବଙ୍କୁ ସହସ୍ର ଜୁହାର ।’

ଏହା ଧର୍ମ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ସାମାଜିକ ଚଳଣିକୁ ଚେତନା ଦିଏ । ଇଂରାଜି ରେ *idiom* ପରି ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ଗୁଡିକ ବହୁ ସମୟରେ ରୁଦ୍ଧି ଆକାରରେ ନିତ୍ୟ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହୋଇ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ବୈଚିତ୍ର୍ୟ ବଢାଇଛି । ଏଗୁଡିକ ବାକ୍ୟର କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ଅଂଶ । ଯଥା-

‘ଫକ୍ସ ମାଠିଆର ଶବ୍ଦ ବେଶୀ’

‘କଟା ଘାରେ ରୁନ ଦେବା’

‘ବାପ ରାଣ ଢିଙ୍ଗି ଗିଳି’ । ଇତ୍ୟାଦି

ଏହା କୁ ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ମଧ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । ପଞ୍ଜିମ ଓଡ଼ିଶା କଥିତ ଭାଷାରେ ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ବେଶୀ ହୁଏ । ଯଥା -

‘ତମ୍ବା ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବାନ୍ଧିବା’ । ଏହା ର ଅର୍ଥ ଚିରସ୍ଥାୟୀ ହବା ।

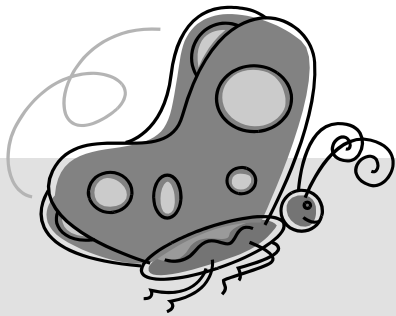
‘ଶୁଖା ଭଟାପି ମାଛ ମାରବା’ ।

‘ଘି ଖାଇ ଗୁରସେ ଆଁଟ’ । ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ।

ଯେ କୌଣସି ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରାଣସତ୍ତା ସେଇ ଭାଷାର ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଅନୁଭୂତି ହୁଏ । ଭାଷାକୁ ପ୍ରଭାବଶାଳୀ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଲୋକୋକ୍ତିର ଅବଦାନ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ରହିଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ବହୁ ଚିତ୍ତାକର୍ଷକ ଓ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ଲୋକୋକ୍ତି ରହିଛି । ସେ ଗୁଡିକ ଲୋପ ପାଇବାକୁ ଯାଉଛି । ତେଣୁ ସେ ଗୁଡିକ ରକ୍ଷା କଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ପ୍ରସାର ହେବ ।

ଏହି ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧଟିର ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଭାଗ ତଃ କୁମୁଦିନୀ ମିଶ୍ରଙ୍କର ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକକ୍ତି’ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରୁ, ତଃ କୁଞ୍ଜବିହାରୀ ଦାଶଙ୍କର ‘ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଲୋକକଥା’ ପୁସ୍ତକରୁ, ପଣ୍ଡିତ ନିଳକଣ୍ଠ ଦାସଙ୍କର ‘ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟର କ୍ରମ ପରିଣାମ’ ପୁସ୍ତକରୁ ଏବଂ ନରସିଂହ ପ୍ରସାଦ ଗୁରୁ ଓ ଦୁଃଖୀଶ୍ୟାମ ତ୍ରିପାଠୀଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ଲିଖିତ ‘ପଞ୍ଜିମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଭଗବତମାଳୀ’ ପୁସ୍ତକରୁ ଉଦ୍ଧୃତ ହୋଇଛି ।

A WINDOW INTO THE MINDS OF LITTLE ENIGMAS



Today you are You, that is truer than true.
There is no one alive who is Youer than You.
~ Dr Seuss



Sunken ship adventure 🏆

By Aarushi Nayak

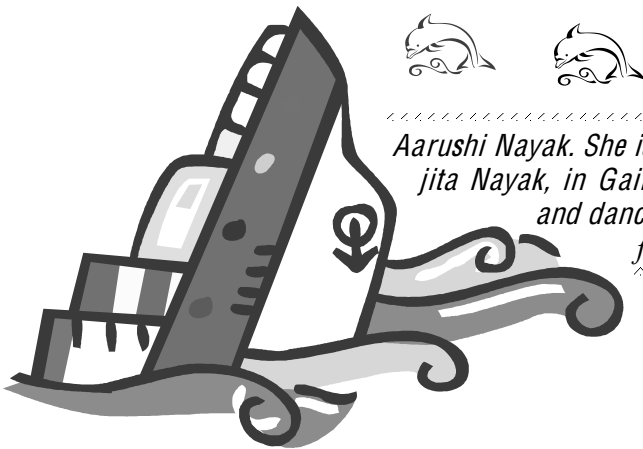
Who would have thought that in the daytime Lilly and I would get lost at Key West in a sunken ship? Our adventure started with us deep in the ocean.

“Look Lilly!” I said and my heart skipped a beat. In front of our eyes was a huge pirate ship, as brown as dirt. I swam over to the ship as my friend followed. We squeezed inside through a tiny window. At the moment we got in, the window slammed shut! We jumped. “Good thing we have flash lights!” I announced cheerfully. Lilly just grinned and nodded. The room filled up with a golden glow. We had decided that we should look for a door out.

We searched and searched until we almost gave up. Then we spotted a door in front of us. “Finally!” we shouted with glee. Lilly and I pulled with all our might, but the door wouldn’t budge. It was like a mountain at rest. “Great” Lilly mumbled under her breath. At that moment, I spotted something out of the corner of my eye. It was a metal walking stick. When I pointed it out to Lilly she screamed with delight and told me we could smash a window with it. We tried to smash a window with all our might, but it would not even crack. I told Lilly that it must be made of Plexiglas, so we had to try another idea.

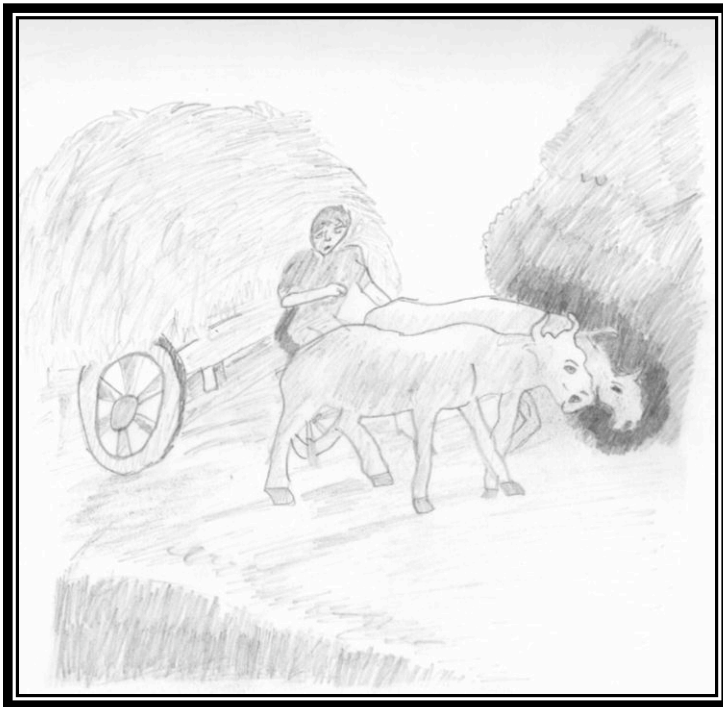
Suddenly, another idea popped into my mind, but I thought “Where would we get the supplies?” At that moment I heard Lilly shout, “Aarushi, Aarushi! Come here!” I swam towards her voice. My heart skipped a beat. Standing next to Lilly was a door as beautiful as a butterfly. “BAM!” something went in my head. I grabbed the walking stick I had found on the floor, and started to pry open the door.

Finally, the door cracked open. We swam outside of the ship. “We’re running out of oxygen!” I told Lilly. I called for the dolphins in my secret dolphin call. We rode them to the surface and then home to surf in the waves. I will never forget that day.



Aarushi Nayak. She is a 3^d grader who lives with her parents Siddhartha & Anurajita Nayak, in Gainesville, Florida. She likes to paint, sketch, read fiction, swim and dance. Her favorite place is the Taj Mahal in India and her favorite food is “gol guppas”.

🏆 This story has been selected for the 1st place for 2011 Meghna Memorial Award, junior category. Please see details in the “OSA Today” section in this Journal.



Bholi uncle by Shruti Sahu.

This piece of art is in honor of Shruti's village guide by same name, who showed her around the village of Barunia, Orissa during her trip to India last summer. Shruti is a 4th grader in Delaney Elementary School. She lives with her parents Satya and Smita Sahu and older sister Shweta in Kennedale, TX.



Tulip fiesta! by Shreya Tripathy

Shreya Tripathy is in the 3rd grade and lives with her parents Gatikrishna and Lali Tripathy along with her two little brothers, Rishabh and Ayush in Herndon, VA. She loves to write stories and paint still life as well as telling jokes, and dancing.

Mother 🏆

By Disha Das

*You cook the food, you clean the house,
You sew my skirt, you hem my blouse.*

*You teach me fashion, you help with art,
You know science, you know math*

*You plant our garden from tiny seeds,
You give us what we really need.*

*You can go fast, you can go slow,
But you always know the right way to go.*

*You barely have any time to rest,
So I wanted you to know, you're the best.*

*You help with homework, you take us places,
And help us through our life-size mazes.*

*You get us ready; you take care of us,
You help us get our grades to an A+.*



*You go shopping, you go to work,
If I were you, I'd go berserk!*

*You put gas in the car, you fold our clothes;
You buy us stuff, and take us to shows.*

*You sure have a lot to do,
So thanks Mama, **THANK YOU!***

Disha Das is a 5th grader at Falls mead Elementary School in Rockville, MD. She wrote this Mother's day poem for her Mom, Deepa Parija.

🏆 This poem has been selected for the 2nd place for 2011 Meghna Memorial Award, junior category. Please see details in the "OSA Today" section in this Journal.

ORISSA THROUGH MY EYES

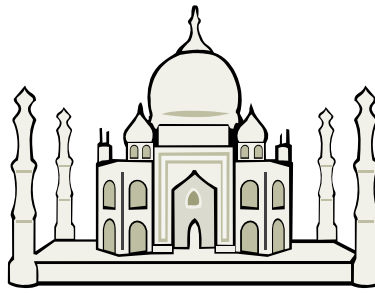
By Shreya Tripathy

*Orissa is as beautiful as any other place my eyes ever laid on.
I admired the streets carefully. The streets have stores that are helpful.
When you need a snack on the road, the stores are always there for I've seen.
The food has such rich flavor; it is always enjoyable to me and for all.
Dalma is as delicious as the round Rasgula sweet
As I take a bite a warm feeling, all around me with its richness.
The people here blossom to bright and filled with happiness what I believe.
The temples are as large as anything. They are as holy as can be.
The beach water shimmers like anything I've seen.
The water is, oh so beautiful to you and of course to me.
Orissa is the best place I've been!*



My prodigious excursion to India

By Sanjana Senapati



My family and I had a phenomenal trip to India, which included a trip to the Taj Mahal, my aunt's wedding and visiting all my grandparents and cousins. This excursion to India was one of my favorites because I was blessed with the opportunity to do so many things. This trip to India was definitely a challenge because of all of my rambunctious cousins. One of my most favorable memories in India was visiting the Taj Mahal.

Three days after my family and I arrived in India, we went to see the Taj Mahal in Agra. The trip was very enduring and fatiguing. We arrived at the exquisite Taj Mahal after suffering through an extensive car ride. As we were walking through the delicate gardens towards the Taj Mahal, the sun was setting; it was casting a beautiful shadow on the Taj Mahal, which made it look multicolored. The closer we were to the Taj Mahal, the more anxious we were to see it up-close. Finally my family and I were able to go inside of the fantastic, but crowded Taj Mahal. Even though the inside was not as breathtaking as the outside, we enjoyed seeing it. Although my trip to the Taj Mahal was fantastic, my aunt's wedding was a whole lot more exhilarating.

My aunt had an Indian wedding in Raurkela, which is city located in the northwestern part of Orissa. It took my family and me about twenty-three hours to get there by train. After we arrived at the guest house that we were going to stay at, we freshened up and went to where all the functions were taking place. The place where they had my aunt's *mehendi rasam*, the henna ceremony, was decorated with bunches and bunches of lights. There was an Indian DJ that kept playing all of my favorite songs; we danced and sang to all of them. The next day was the main part of my aunt's wedding; it was held in a gorgeous temple with an absolutely beautiful water fountain. The best part of this day was when we got a chance to hide the groom's shoes. In India, it is a tradition to hide the groom's shoes. Then the groom gives us a small treat to "buy" his shoes back. That night was the wedding reception; it was my favorite part of the entire wedding. The reception was my favorite part because it brought together all my relatives and friends, magnificent food, and the breath-taking decorations. This was a great experience, but now I had to face the challenge of meeting my energetic cousins.

I had five different cousins to put up with. When I arrived at my grandparents' house, my cousins had already arrived. They were already really hyper-energetic when my family and I arrived. This started to worry me. During my visit, I had to deal with my cousins either teasing each other or breaking into fights with each other. I was astonished at how big my cousins' appetites were. I could not figure out how they could eat so much, but remain so skinny. My grandparents, aunts, and uncles were just like I remembered them.

My grandparents kept trying to talk to me in English, but they kept mixing lots of Hindi words into it. My aunts and uncles were all excited to see us, but they were even more excited to see what we had brought them back from America. I had a formidable time in India, even though it was a challenge to survive; I was going to miss all of my cousins, grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

Overall, our trip to India was a huge success. We were able to see and do all of my favorite things. The highlights of my trip definitely included visiting the Taj Mahal and going to my aunt's wedding. My overall impression of this trip was great because the weather was just perfect, and we were able to do all the things I wanted to do. I have really enjoyed this trip to India, and I hope I will receive the chance to go back soon.

Sanjana Senapati is a 6th grader in Meigs Middle Magnet School in Nashville, TN. She lives with her parents Manoj and Smrity Senapati and a younger sister Ritika. Her hobbies include multiple sports, writing/drawing, and playing the Clarinet. She also enjoys reading different kinds of books. Her favorite subjects in school are Math and Computers.



VAMP BAT

By Aarushi Nayak

I suck animal blood,
With my teeth that are bold.
I soar through the sky,
Looking for a fly.

My, oh my,
Look at the sky.
Turn night,
Into light.
Back to bed,
Lay down your head.
"Oh mom, come on."
VAMP BAT! 😊

The story of Durga

By Anika Satapathy

This is the story of how Goddess Durga came to the earth. Once upon a time, there was a demon named Mahisha. He was a really evil demon. One day he asked Lord Brahma for a wish. He wished that he could be invincible. Lord Brahma granted Mahisha's wish to be invincible. Now Mahisha was invincible. Mahisha asked for another wish to Lord Brahma to never die. Lord Brahma said, "Everyone has to die". So Mahisha said, "Ok I will die in only in the hand of a woman". Lord Brahma granted this wish. One day he troubled the three worlds. The three worlds are earth, heaven, and the underworld. All the gods got together on how to defeat Mahisha. They created a woman who had a mind of herself. She was named Durga. Durga had a weapon from each god. She had a conch shell, a bow & arrows, a sword, a lotus, and a bolt. Mahisha was worried for a minute but then he realized that Durga was only a girl. He had forgotten that he had wished to die in the hand of a woman and thought he was stronger than any woman. They fought and fought. Mahisha turned into a bull and was so angry that he ran and aimed his horn at Durga, but Durga jumped into the air. While he was turning into his own self, Durga killed him. All the Gods cheered Durga. Then Durga was gone from the spot where she was standing. The good won over the evil.

Some facts about the Goddess Durga

- ☞ Durga has 8 to 10 arms.
- ☞ Durga rides on a lion or a tiger.
- ☞ Durga has three eyes. The left eye means desire (moon), the right eye means action (sun), and the middle eye means knowledge (fire).
- ☞ Durga has a weapon from each god, like a sword, bow and arrow, bolt, conch shell, and lotus.
- ☞ Durga's name means, the one who eliminates suffering.



Anika is a 2nd grader at the Great Oaks Elementary School. She loves painting, playing the Piano and learning Indian dances. She used to live in Austin, TX with her older sister, Neha and parents, Tina and Sikhanda, but her whole family will shortly (and sadly) be soon moving to Maryland.

The giant Octopus

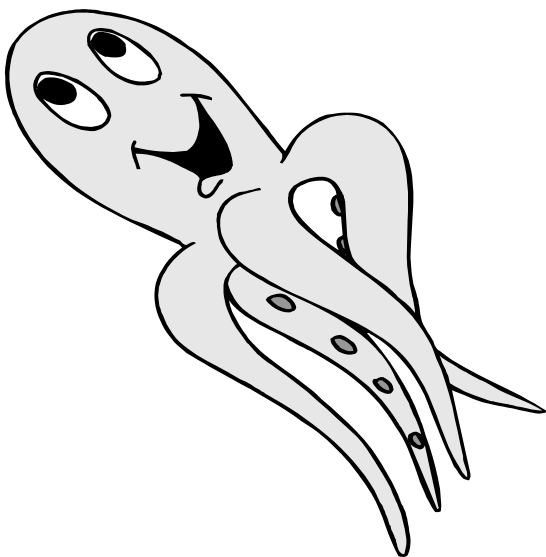
By Dibya Patnaik

I went swimming in my pool
The water was both salty and cool
When I dived right in and made a big splash
I saw a giant octopus make a fast dash

Eight tentacles started waving around
It was then that I thought I was going to drown
I came closer and saw he was holding pie
He looked at me and was very shy
He said, "Hey there Mister Guy.
Do you want a slice of my homemade pie?"
I looked at him very confused
But the pie looked so good, how could I refuse?

With his help, I cut a slice out
This pie was so good I wanted to shout
The giant octopus smiled at me
I got both of us a glass of iced tea

Dibya Patnaik is 11 years old and in the 6th grade. He lives with his parents Sourjya and Reena Patnaik, and older sister Darshee in Robbinsville, New Jersey.



Education

By Adi Sarangee

High School is very important,
it helps you learn & grow much more,
it makes you extremely confident,
it helps you work hard core.

Then you go to college,
the hardest of all.
You need to tackle everything,
so you will not fail after all.

When it is time to take a test,
you better have studied hard,
because if you took a rest,
you will be crying in your backyard.

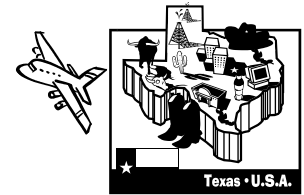
Education helps you achieve more;
it will help you succeed more.

Aruys (Adi) Sarangee is the youngest son of Surya and Bithika Sarangee, of St. Louis, MO. Adi is a 3rd grader in Shenandoah Valley Elementary School, Chesterfield, MO. He is a blessed with many literary and artistic values. His writings and paintings on "The Dream of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr." has been selected in Parkway School District and awarded second prize in the State level competitions this year.



My California trip

By Devarun Dass



Yay! I was going to California. I was so happy. We all got ready and put the suitcases in the car. We were ready to go! We hopped into the car and went to Hobby Airport in Houston. It took us 45 minutes to get there. Finally we got there, parked and waited for a bus to take us to the airport. Then we stood in a line to check in our bags. Oh my God; how much luggage we had; 3 suitcases and 3 handbags, a stroller and car-seat and a laptop!

Even for our India trips, we dont have that many suitcases! We were already late and the line at airport check-in was so long for security check. We managed to bypass the line for our sister Ava Rani, I guess, but when were done we found "Oh", our plane had left without us! So my dad managed to change our tickets to another flight, which would take us through Albuquerque instead of Las Vegas, the gambling city! So finally we reached our destination and guess what, one of our suitcases was missing, which unluckily had my clothes in it! But I was so excited that we had reached California!

My dad got a rental car and we headed to San Jose to meet my Dad's friend and his son Asi and see their million-dollar house. Then we began our 7 day tour of San Francisco, Santa Cruz and San Jose. Imagine my dad steering the car with one hand on the wheel and the GPS in the other. He had not turned on the voice on the GPS! He went around and around Capital Expressway for two hours trying to reach the Mystery Spot.

Then my mom took the wheel and the dad was the Navigator and our drive became more fruitful. The temperature was low in the sixties and my mom had not brought a single piece of warm clothing for us except a cotton jacket for Ava. So you can imagine our plight! We were shivering wherever we went whether it was the Golden Gate or the Mystery Point or the Gurudwara on the hilltop in the Bay Area.

OSA Convention 2010. My first Odia convention was a wonderful experience. The food was excellent. We even swam in the cold swimming pool at the Sofitel Hotel. I managed to go kayaking and go-carting with my friends too! The scenery was so beautiful that I was told to take some pictures from within the rental car while driving around in the city. We went to the beaches and the frothy water was really cold! I managed to go against the waves. My mom went wine tasting and kayaking all by herself. My dad met some of his classmates after 25 years. Finally our journey ended and we came back to the hot and humid Houston at 11 PM on Wednesday.

We came home and what do we find? Our house has been burglarized when we were gone. I can't believe that somebody broke into each and every corner of our house looking for money and gold! What an anticlimax to our wonderful journey!!!

Dev is the eldest son of Arunima & Raghu Dass of Houston. He is a 5th at Harmony School of Discovery. He likes outdoor games and eating good food.

What New Jersey means to me!* 🏆

By Kareena Mohapatra

Living in New Jersey is like a warm ray of magical sunshine that spreads a beam of joy across your face. There are many things to see in the highlands, such as beautiful violets, exotic parks and of course lots of history, traditions and culture! And let's not forget how fortunate we are to live in a temperate climate and to get to enjoy all four seasons!

I also relish New Jersey's clean, enchanting beaches.

New Jersey has beautiful highlands, that make you want to take a breath and enjoy that cool, misty mountain air! One very renowned mountain range named the Appalachian Mountains run right through New Jersey. Why don't you hike up the attractive mountain trails next time you are on vacation?

New Jersey also has a perfectly purple state flower called the Violet. Violets are a beautiful sight! They are small, sweet and have very fragile petals. They are a wonderful flower and just perfect for our elegant state.

Strolling through a park in New Jersey is just the thing to bring your mind to peace! Green grass, tall trees and lovely flowers are just some of the eye-catching items, you will find in a New Jersey park.

Have you ever been to a dinosaur museum? Well come on over to New Jersey, if you want to see the *Hadrosaurus foulkii*, one of the biggest dinosaurs ever known to man! This giant was unearthed in Haddonfield, New Jersey in 1858!

I feel so fortunate that New Jersey is in a temperate climate and we get to enjoy all the different types of weathers each season has to bring! In some states like Alaska for example



there is very cold weather and it feels like winter all year round! In other states like Florida for example there is warm or hot weather and it is like summer won't leave! But in New Jersey it's just right! There's summer, fall, winter and spring!

In the summer, grab your beach towel and bathing suit and head right for New Jersey's perfect beaches! Once you see the golden sand and bright blue ocean, you will never want to leave! Better bring a kite because New Jersey's sea breeze is just right for flying kites.

Out of all the fifty states in the USA, New Jersey has so much more nature and history in it. It makes me feel much gratitude towards New Jersey, my home!

Kareena is a 4th Grader at Ben Franklin Elementary School in Edison, New Jersey, daughter of Manisha and Saroj Kumar Mohapatra. She likes biking, playing outdoors and has an interest in creative writing.

🏆 This essay has been selected for the 3rd place for 2011 Meghna Memorial Award, junior category. Please see details in the "OSA Today" section in this Journal.

High in the storm

By Saswat Pati

<p>High in the storm There was a dorm</p> <p>With shackles of light That destroyed all in spite In a drift</p> <p>That showered the earth below To keep balance in tow</p> <p>The beaker was tipped Which gave a spark That lit up the dark</p> <p>There was sand Which illuminated his hand</p>	<p>Which lit up a spark In everyone's heart</p> <p>So everyone knew his love Which was as soft as a dove</p> <p>His brain is greater than the farthest reaches of math And evildoers shall face his wrath</p> <p>And then light shall pass through those shackles and go above And everyone with their hearts pure shall behold his crackling love</p>
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Saswat Pati is 9 yr. old and a 4th grader at St. John's School. He lives in Houston, Texas with his parents, Dr. Debananda Pati and Dr. Arati Pati. He loves poetry, sports, reading, and legos.

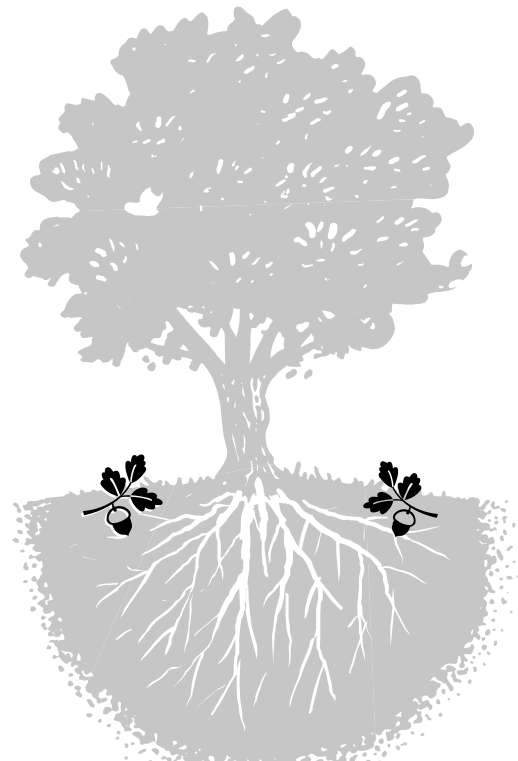
The mighty Oak

By Anshuman Mishra

I stand proud, I stand high,
My arms reaching out to the sky.
I stretch my branches all around
And watch my acorns litter the ground.

I make a home for living things,
I hear the sound of flapping wings.
Squirrels hide nuts in their lair,
And the gentle breeze ruffles my hair.

My roots dig deep, going down,
Upon my head I wear many crowns.
My skin is rough, my beard is long.
My spreading roots are very strong!



Anshuman Mishra is a 6th grader at Willard Grizzell Middle School in Dublin, Ohio. He loves to read, swim, play his guitar and is a black belt in Tae Kwan Do.

What seems like the world

By Sweta Pratyasha Sahu

No one told her it would be like this. It didn't hurt no, it didn't hurt physically; but it hurt. It felt as if there was a gaping hole on the inside. An abyss so black and bottomless... the worst part was that there was no light at the end. It was like a no-gravity free fall.

Aarti sat looking out the 3rd story window in her hospital room: Room 348, West wing. She was getting tired of being there. Sure, the green valley below was quite soothing to the eyes, but it seemed to be eternal. There was no change of season here in south Florida, no excitement to make her stand on her toes and wish to see more. She'd lived there for all her life and, to tell the truth, she didn't want to live there anymore, she wanted to go somewhere special, somewhere unique. Her life seemed to be lacking excitement and liveliness ever since Dr. Turner had found the tumor. She supposed from then on, she had just been going through the motions of living. The doctors had tried to do everything they could; she'd give them credit for that. But no one ever seemed to step into her shoes and ask what *she* felt. Everyone was so busy worrying about her life that they overlooked the basics, the support, and the not ephemeral display of affection. Her friends from school came around. but they never asked her *personal* questions about anything. When they did visit, they'd just go *on* and *on* with the stories of what they had done that day at school and what she was missing out on, but they'd never stop and ask her about the cancer. They felt like they were prodding too deep. It was like they had to guard everything they were saying. They treated her as if she were a priceless piece of glass- caring for the materialistic things, but never *more* than that! They acted as if they had put her on a pedestal; she felt... unreachable, untouchable. They held her at arms' distance, saying "Oh, she has cancer..." Perhaps they were too scared to ask, to know the truth. Oblivion was bliss.

But in truth, she was dying on the inside to talk, to be '*normal*' again. Oh, how she wanted to be treated as a human being, and not... just another patient.

The medical jargon they used was too impersonal. Their hands as they checked her vitals were too cold- in the barren, desolate sort of way. When they looked at her, they didn't really *see* her. No, they just saw another patient to be treated. Whether she lived or died was nothing more than the testament to their abilities as a doctor.

A soft 'tap tap' came from the door. "Come in," she said, not bothering to get up.

"Hi there, Mamun. How are you feeling?" Her mother asked in a troubled tone. Aarti turned and looked back out the window.

"Fine," she replied as usual.

"Listen, I know you're worried. These reports will determine a lot. But everything will turn out just fine." Her mother replied unsteadily, knowing the slim chances, betting on the odds. Aarti turned and gazed at her mother quizzically for a moment, and then her expression hardened.

"Yeah right, like there's not a rain cloud in the horizon!" she scoffed. As if on cue, thunder rumbled in the distance, signaling the daily down pour. Her mom sat down and together, they waited for the doctor to bring in the report that would determine the severity of the cancer, and what preventive measures would need to be taken in order to stymie any further regression of health.

Sighing, Aarti turned and stared out the window, not really seeing the scenery, but letting the gentle patter of rain lull her to unconsciousness. She sat there, on the verge, floating in the ether between

subconscious, unconscious, and conscious. She thought of being back home; home in India. America wasn't the land of promises it used to be. But India was. India was heartland. It was a matter of differentiation, of choice. Given the choice, her answer would have been India, with its freedom and natural beauty. She thought of the smell of fresh grass, flowers, and a variety of fruits and vegetables in the country sides, the smell of oxen hard at work. She could hear the sound of their grunts as they labored through the mucky fields, the drone of flies - machhi - as they called then in Orissa. She pictured the city of Bhubaneswar with its plethora of motorcycles, its myriad of street vendors. She could see the Kurkure packets hanging down in streams across the back of the store, the Frooti pouches lined up in the tiny refrigerators, waiting to quench the thirst of avid customers. Yes, India meant the world to her.

She thought about the time when she and her Aja and Ai had all sat around the dining table in their cozy little home in Bhubaneswar. They had laughed bickered and bantered, all the while coming up with feasible possibilities for her future. Her grandma had thought she would become an excellent business analyst, though her grandfather had his heart set on her becoming a brilliant lawyer. So she had sat there watching the two argue, they seemed to be enjoying it for the most part. But of course, all that had been running through her 9 year old mind had been her conviction that she wanted to be a veterinarian - "to help all the animals in the world get better," she remembered she had put it. Now she realized, it not only might not happen, everything had changed. One couldn't always go in with her heart and mind set on one goal only. One had to have a backup plan, a "Plan B."

Just like those times she had snuck up into the kitchen to go get Complian, or Haldiram's Bhujia Sev, but she always found her Mai there, cutting the vegetables or rolling the dough for roti. Mai always seemed to know where she was headed. She tried to cover up by asking either where her cousin was, or what was for dinner that night, or if she could have a glass for water. Unfortunately she always saw straight through it: maybe because everybody has to deal with those awkward phases. She would then make her drink the glass of water she knew very well Aarti didn't need to drink. Finally, as an extra touch of the humiliating nature of the situation, Mai would make sure Aarti found the person she was "looking" for. But that was only after she had scolded her for lying, and generally making her feel a little ashamed of herself for doing 'such a bad deed,' as she would call it. In these cases, reverting to an impromptu 'plan B' was not very successful.

Smiling, Aarti thought about the times when she and her Mamu would claim of getting the milk every morning. It was their protocol; finish the remaining packet of milk at night, wake up the next morning craving tea, grab money, then hop on the motorcycle and drive to Ganguram's. The whole "operation sweets," as they had called it, was so flawless that no one ever thought anything of it. No one thought anything wrong with getting milk every morning when it could have last a little bit longer; no one suspected their reason for leaving *every* morning, near 8:00, when the sweets had just come to the show case, freshly made. Maybe they thought she loved the motorcycle rides and they were just being easy on her since she was new to India and they had repeatedly told her to 'get out and see the natural wonders.' Ganguram, the store owner, always kept a plentiful supply of Kesar peda made specifically for her and her Mamu. Whenever they went, they always made sure to make a little time for him so the three would always chat it up. However, unfortunately for Aarti and her Mamu, the talk unerringly veered towards the issue of health. Ganguram would always lecture them about taking care of their cholesterol levels and blood pressure, or especially in her case, early diabetes. For an unwealthy street vendor, he was an intellectual, caring, and down-to-earth man.

She and her eldest cousin, Sonu, would always sneak across the street to buy the orange cream biscuits that came with the *Tom and Jerry* cartoon mini-comics. It didn't matter that he was three years older than she, no; it was the freedom of getting to do as they wished together, taking risks,

and reveling in doing so. It was their personal recurring ritual, one they did every time everyone in their family had just drifted to sleep for their afternoon nap, but when the vendors were still open. They always knew to expect them.

Not only that, she remembered when she and her cousin sister, Shreya, would sneak out into the dark stair well late at night to talk about anything and everything. They were the same age so their typical conversation matters ranged anywhere from boys and clothes to shoes and weather. So they would talk and talk until either Ai got up from her spot on the non air-conditioned cot and chided them for being up so late, or 'till it got too hot for Aarti to be out anymore.

Those were the good times; what wouldn't she give to be normal again! What wouldn't she give to be treated like she always had been before?! Why didn't Mai berate her more for trying to sneak into the kitchen for spoonfuls of Complian or Amul Spray? Rather, now why was she catering to her every unspoken wish?! Why didn't Ganguram admonish her for not controlling what she ate and not watching out for diabetes? Why did he feel somewhat compelled to send gifts off even more sweets? Why didn't Ai chastise her anymore for staying up so late at night? Ai had always been the protective kind, who perturbed herself with making sure everyone's health was fine, so now, why wasn't she reprimanding her for "not getting enough sleep," which "could be detrimental to her general physique." Why did Sonu let her have all the *Tom and Jerry* comics now?! Why did Shreya always insist that Aarti get a good night's sleep? Every time Aarti asked why they couldn't just sit and talk like before, Shreya would just shrug it off saying, "maybe next time." But it never happened.

Perhaps it was a testament to how much they cared, how much they loved her. Perhaps they couldn't stand to see one more iota of pain in Aarti's deep, velvety brown eyes. Perhaps it was just their way of showing support, strengthening her in a quiet, reassuring fashion. Perhaps it was a combination of multiple things. But no matter what they meant by it, she knew they would stand by her because they cared. And that was enough for her.

She opened her eyes to find her mom on the edge of the bed, watching her with anxious eyes.

"Are you all right, Mamun? She murmured.

"Yes, Mama. Can we go to India?" Aarti asked softly. For just one moment, something flickered in her mother's eyes. Something deep, that said she was deeply touched. "Or at least for just one more long visit..." Aarti hastened to say. Slowly, a blooming smile touched her mother's lips, and her eyes brimmed with proud tears.

"Yes." She said. "No matter what the report says, *even if* it says you need to continue your chemotherapy and all the rest of your routine; we can do that in India. If that is truly what you want?"

"Yes, Mother," Aarti whispered. As a brisk knock sounded on the door. Her mother rose to greet the doctor.

Shweta P. Sahu is a rising junior at the Trinity Valley School. She is the eldest daughter of Satya and Smita Sahu of Kennedale, TX. She enjoys Indian food, sweets, clothing, and dance. She loves to draw, write, and read. Her favorite activities include fishing, volleyball, and spending time with friends and family.



This story has been selected for the 1st place for 2011 Meghna Memorial Award, senior category. Please see details in the "OSA Today" section in this Journal.

Unrest


By *Neha Satapathy*

*A wolf howled in the night
Howled out of sorrow
Howled in fright
Where did it go, no one knows
The deep emotions
That it holds
One day, two days, a month and more
No one has heard
It howl any more*

*A clash of the worlds
When did it start?
Fighting, agony, misery
No one's been a part
Of this grave act
Yet
Everyone's been on the guard
Waiting for the worst
Sorry and sad
Little do they know
That the worst has occurred
Centuries ago
That's how long
This tragic tale been on*

*Let's stop this fight
Let's not give in to the old
And let peace once again
Rule the world*

Neha is a 7th grade student at Cedar Valley Middle School. She loves composing piano and flute numbers, learning Odyssey and Bharat Natyam, and is a member of National Junior Honors Society. She lives in Austin with her sister Anika and parents Tina and Srikhandha Satapathy.

 This poem has been selected for the 3rd place for 2011 Meghna Memorial Award, senior category. Please see details in the "OSA Today" section in this Journal.



Hope

By *Malina Maharana*

*She shields us like a blanket.
He shields us like a tent.
She keeps us yellow when we are blue.
He keeps our spirits up when they're down.
She helps us in times of conflict.
He helps us persevere when we least want to.
She is the last one in the hidden box,
He is the last one in everyone's hearts.
She is the determination that soars during war.
He is the bravery that resides in a soldier's heart.
She knows when to come in with her cheerful
aura.
He knows when to come in with his steady but
sure way, giving off courage.
He is in everyone, and so is she.
They are one, but are both.
Both ride with a steely courage that we know is
power.
As we see this, we knew what was coming.
Hope.*

Malina Maharana is an 8th grader who lives with her parents and little brother Mallesh in Houston, Texas. Her hobbies include reading fantasy books, singing all sorts of songs, and dancing to practically everything (and of course, writing!). She also learns Odissi dance and loves it.



Leaving home ¶

By Ayesha Mishra

Toothbrush. Calculator. I pause to think what else I need to pack for college. Not really concerned about the orderliness of my suitcase, I continue to toss in miscellaneous items. Blanket. Ruler. Bhagavad Gita. Lotion. Wait, what was that? No, not the lotion, the book. I fish the Gita out of my suitcase and stare at it. I've never even opened this book. How did I possibly end up putting this in my suitcase for college?

As I rest the dust-covered book back on my shelf, a flood of thoughts rush into my head. It finally hits me: I'm going to college! Something about seeing that book reminds me of my childhood, a phase of my life that is now over. The pictures of gods on the cover of the Gita bring back memories of Sundays at Balavihar and *poojas* celebrated with the Oriya community in Southern California. Will I continue to do this in college? Will I be the same person, or will I change? For the better or worse?

Besides a couple instances here and there, I've been a fairly well-behaved child. No drugs, drinking, or anything of that sort. In my 12 years of education, I haven't even received a single detention. This is all while I've lived under my parents' roof, under their rules and care. My parents won't be living with me in my dorm...what will guide me now?

Honestly, I'm not too worried about how I'll behave in college. My upbringing and culture have left me with values I can never leave behind. My hands automatically fold together for a *namashkar* when I meet someone older than me, and I instantly jump off my seat to let an older uncle or aunty sit down in my place. And I'm not the only one with these values. All the children in our Oriya community have been raised to do the same things.

In college, I will be around plenty of drugs, drinking, parties, and other inevitable experiences that could easily ruin the rest of my career. I've heard plenty of stories about Indians going crazy in college after being caged up by their strict (but well-meaning) parents for 18 years. Eager to finally be able to try new things without their parents hovering over them 24/7, these kids go overboard and lose the capacity to control themselves. Although my American friends often tease me about this, prophesying that I will be one of these Indians, I feel that being around the Oriya community for so long, I not only have my parent's expectations to live up to, but also those of all the uncles and aunts. And there are all those little kids, including my younger brother, who look up to me as one of their role models. Besides my own inhibitions of going off track, I can't bear to let all these people down.

My Oriya culture has been such a large part of my life that I can't just drop it like a hot potato and go on to college expecting to be an entirely different person, whether it is my choice or not. My culture and upbringing is not just a phase of my life — it is my life. College will only comprise a portion of my life; I will need this *sanskriti* for many more years to come, in all sorts of decisions. After all, someone will need to teach my kids the same values I've learned.

As I zip up my suitcase, I glance again at the Gita lying on my shelf. My hand automatically reaches to grab the book once more, and I put it back in my bag. My mother walks in at this moment to make sure I'm packing everything correctly (a habit is a habit for Indian moms), and stares at the Gita. She laughs, but little does she know that this book will take on her role in college. Seeing just the cover of the Bhagavad Gita brought back so many old memories and thoughts for me today; a little reminder like this will go a long way for me when I'm surrounded by temptations in college. Who knows, maybe I'll even crack the book open once in a while!

Ayesha Misra, better known as Richa, will be going to the University of Southern California this fall. She lives in Aliso Viejo, CA, with her parents Manoj and Reena Misra. She enjoys Bharatanatyam and Bollywood dance, as well as writing. Ayesha is the editor of her school newspaper.

🏆 This essay has been selected for the 2nd place for 2011 Meghna Memorial Award, senior category. Please see details in the "OSA Today" section in this Journal.



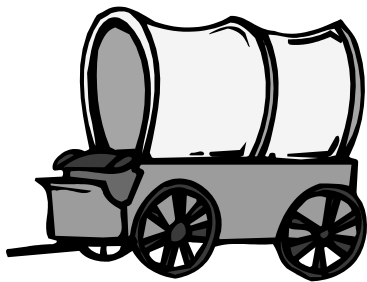
“A window into homeland” by Shweta Sahu.

Empty-handed

By Malina Maharana

When I first heard the news, I felt like something heavy had been dropped on my head. “Move to California and mine for gold?” It seemed like an absurd idea, but then when you thought about it, it kind of made sense because now was our chance. Now we could start over and get a new life. The only question was: What if it didn’t work? What if Michael did not get any gold and came back home empty handed? Our family would be broke, with no money to feed our children or buy a house. On the other hand, if we did go to California and Michael did get rich; we could have whatever we wanted. We could buy a big house, full of modern furniture. Michael could have that new waistcoat he had always wanted, and there would be new toys for the children. And I, why I could have that beautiful mahogany dress! It was a hard decision to make, but I decided that sometimes, it’s good to take some risk. I was going to California.

“Come on; hurry up now Jacob, or else Daddy will be mad. That also includes you Sarah,” I scolded the children as we packed up. It seemed so strange to take down everything, especially Mother’s picture because it had been there for nearly 26 years. I really couldn’t believe that we were leaving to go to California. After I had told Michael that I wanted to go, he had leapt with joy and swung me around. Now, Michael was sitting at the head of the wagon with a brooding look on his face. I went over to him. “Michael, are you all right?” He looked at me, lost in his own thoughts, and said, “Mary, are you sure that we are doing the right thing? Now that I look at the house, it seems so bare, completely stripped of its happiness. When I first told you about gold being in the American River, I was exuberant. Money at last! We could quickly get rich. But now, I just feel depressed. Maybe we’re not doing the right thing after all.” I put a reassuring hand on his shoulder. “Michael, it’ll be all right. Everything will go exactly as we planned it. You’ll see.” Michael looked down at me. “Yes,” he replied. “Yes it will.”



On March 12, 1849, we were on our way! I kept the children away from the ends of the wagons for fear that they might fall down. I had also oiled the tarp covering the wagon so that when it rained, the water would just slide down and land in the pots outside. Our neighbors and our family were going to California in a group so that if one family needed help, there would be other families waiting to help us. The trip to California was very long because it took us nearly four months to get there. Nothing much eventful happened, except when Sarah got sick. Thankfully, she didn’t have cholera, but she did have a very violent cough. After two weeks, it had passed, but the whole time through, I was afraid for her life. About a month into the trip, our wagon and oxen got stuck in the freezing water of the Platte River. Whatever Michael did, the oxen couldn’t move because their hooves were stuck in the mud. So then, our naughty Jacob took hold of one of the oxen’s tails and pulled on it. That definitely got the oxen going! Day after day, the only thing that I could think of was California. I had daydreams about it. Sometimes I even had nightmares about it. What would it be like? Would the ground be lush and green? Were there many diseases there? But the question that kept on nagging me the most was: Was the gold going to last forever? Either way, I just couldn’t wait to get there!

My first glimpse of California was a barren landscape with few trees and people but before long it was covered up by Michael, who was practically kissing the ground with infinite joy. I saw my children step

carefully out of the wagon with dazed looks on their faces. Just then, Michael came up to me. "Mary, do you know what this gold rush means? It means freedom, freedom to get away from our poverty! Mary, I will buy you that mahogany dress and new toys for the children. I swear upon it," he finished dramatically.



"Michael!" I said shocked. "You certainly don't have to do that!" One look at his eyes told me that it was of no use. The look in his eyes made me feel a bit strange. Perhaps it was greediness? No, I told myself. It was probably just determination. Yes, that made more sense. That definitely made more sense. Michael went around town looking for a house. After we had gotten our house, he strode out to buy mining tools. Michael soon came back to tell us that there was only one place where you could buy mining tools from (Sam Brannan, he said later) because apparently Brannan owned all of them. Since there were not very many mining tools left, everyone wanted some, so the prices were really high.

After Michael had gone to mine for gold, I went outside with my children to look for some work. About half an hour later, I was back at our house, readying up the kitchen. I knew that most men could not cook (Michael definitely couldn't), so I volunteered to help out by cooking for all of the men. In return, I was to get five dollars, which was quite a big amount of money. When Michael came home, flushed and dirty, his bag was bulging with golden nuggets. I looked up at his grimy face. His eyes were big and round as if he couldn't believe it himself. Silently, I pulled out my profits and showed it to him. Michael's eyes got even wider. I told him that we should keep the profits in a safe place at our house and use a bit of it everyday. Michael agreed, so we kept all of our profits in a chest underneath the trapdoor.

So far, life was going well. Day after day, then month after month, Michael got gold, and I got money by cooking meals. Our children and our house grew bigger and brighter each day. As Christmas drew closer, I started making plans. I would definitely buy new toys for the children. I was pretty sure that Jacob wanted a small toy rifle and that Sarah wanted a China doll. Oh, and who could forget about Michael's waistcoat? I knew how much he really wanted it. On Christmas Day, our whole family flocked to the decorated Christmas tree, eager to see what we had gotten. Surprisingly, I found a package for myself. Slowly, I opened the box and out spilled the shimmering silk of mahogany fabric. I was so happy I was rendered completely speechless and I felt tears coming to my eyes. I looked over at Michael and saw that he was also emotionally touched by the waistcoat, except for the fact that his eyes were sadder. I looked closer. Yes, they certainly looked sadder. I went to Michael and put a hand on his tired shoulders. "Michael, is everything all right?" "Yes," he replied. "Although when I came home yesterday, I found out that I had a lot less gold than I usually do. What if the gold supply is depleting?" "You will do better tomorrow," I responded. When Michael came home the next day, he did have a lot less gold than he used to. What was happening?



Michael came home every day with less and less gold. In return, I received less and less money from the men who needed food. Then one day, Michael did not bring home anything at all. I was devastated. Maybe all of the gold was gone! But I did not give up yet. We still had all the money from the chest underneath the trapdoor. We could be entrepreneurs and use our resources to make money. I was already cooking for everyone. Maybe I could teach Sarah how to sew blankets with cotton in them. The miners always needed blankets; I thought as I hurried over to the trapdoor and started to open it. "If only I could get some of the money and...No!" There was no sign of money in the chest. I searched frantically, feeling panic rising in my chest. It had to be there, it just had to! But it wasn't.

There was not a single shimmer to be seen, not a single clink to be heard. It was all gone. Could Michael have taken it? I darted over to him. "Michael, where is the money? I can't find it!" He looked at me with a very grim look on his face. "Mary, I have bought all of the things that we need to get back home in Missouri." I stared blankly at him, astonished. "We're leaving? But this is so sudden, and we didn't even plan it out!" Michael stated coldly back, "We're leaving in another hour. Gather the children and start packing." I couldn't believe it. After all this time, we were leaving? I could not refuse though, because it wasn't my right to do so. I gave a sad sigh and started packing up.

An hour later, the oxen were walking and the wagon was rolling along with it. The journey was mostly uneventful except when Jacob drank dirty water. He was so dehydrated, there wasn't any clean water left, and I just couldn't help myself. There was nothing I could do when he caught cholera and died. We could only give Jacob a proper burial. I cried for him at night when I was sure no one was looking. Michael just kept a distance away from me. When we got home, I went straight to my musty bed and fell asleep. The past month had been horrible and silent, and I had no intention to do any work. The next morning, Michael was nowhere to be found. I searched for him desperately and finally found his dead body, floating towards me in the pond. The loss was so great



that I could not even shed a single tear. All I had now was Sarah. I had lost nearly everything, and I knew I was going to keep safe whatever I had left. Jacob had died of cholera, Michael had died by killing himself, and there was nothing I could have done about it. Sometimes, it's good to take risks, but the risk about taking risks is the fact that sometimes, you might fail. Life gives you obstacles, and you just have to face them. I knew that it would take me a long time to recover from the California Gold Rush, but eventually, I would. Sometimes, all you need in life is hope and perseverance.

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The characters in this story are fictional, but the facts stated in it are all true. When colonists went to California in hopes of gold and prosperity during the Era of Manifest Destiny, many struck rich. When word came out, hundreds of thousands of colonists traveled west. Traveling west had its obstacles. You could die from thirst, or while crossing the river, or many diseases, like cholera. The California Gold Rush was a golden opportunity (pun intended) for many, but after a while, disaster struck. From searching in the rivers so much, gold supply depleted, day by day, and soon, there was no more gold. Some stayed, thinking that gold was yet to be found, but most fled back to their homeland, where they were pelted with poverty again. Some gave up, and committed suicide, like Michael. The Gold Rush was a great opportunity, but it failed. But that's all right, because sometimes, it's okay to fail. You just have to know get back up. I think that the Gold Rush teaches us all a lesson. If you don't succeed, try, try, again.

By Malina Maharana, 8th grader Houston, Texas

If life were an apple pie

By Devidutta Biswabharati



If life were an apple pie, what a great apple pie it would be!
It would be round and fluffy and tasty you see.
Though the crust may be difficult to chew,
And you'll find a bad apple or two.



Life can be harsh sometimes,
As sour as a bucket-full of limes.

At other times you'll feel you could fly,
Like those birds that go ever so high.

And you'll need to work hard for success,
Or else you'll be in a big mess.

If life were an apple pie, what a great apple pie it would be!
It would be round and fluffy and tasty you see.
Though the crust may be difficult to chew,
And you'll find a bad apple or two.

Learn to shoot for the star,
Yet, thank life for what you've had so far.

Thinking big may be a good thing to do,
But small things can matter as much I'll tell you.

Life has bumps, so hold on tight.
It can be fun, if you play it right.

If life were an apple pie, what a great apple pie it would be!
It would be round and fluffy and tasty you see.
Though the crust may be difficult to chew,
And you'll find a bad apple or two.

Devidutta is a 7th grader at Greenbriar School. He lives with his parents Biswajit and Bharati Mishra and elder sister Sukanya in Mississauga, Canada. He likes skateboarding, sports and Tae-Kwon-Do besides writing poetry and short stories, some of which have been published in the e-magazine Dura-drusti.



A NATION DIVIDED

By Akshar Dash

This article has been selected as winner for the FMHS (Flower Mound High School) PTA Reflection Contest: “Together we Can”.

Ten years after the terrifying terrorist attacks that jeopardized the lives of hundreds of Americans; our nation is at a religious turmoil yet again. Hostility between Muslims and Christians has suddenly become an immediate reality. Often, I skim over articles over the concept of recuperation after the attacks. Many questions I have recently heard again and again involve “Islamaphobia”, or the fear of Muslims as a whole, coincident group that detest Americans. Inevitably, the word “Islamaphobia” does not exist because spell-check vehemently opposes its existence.

Ironically, this fear and hostility shown towards Muslims undermine our nation’s promise to allow one to practice his or her religion freely. Since our childhood days in elementary school, my generation quickly learned that America is one of the most accepting nations when it comes to religious freedom. (After all, was it not the pilgrims, who, in attempt to escape religious persecution sailed to the Americas?) Furthermore, people often ask me about my religious beliefs and I lay out Hinduism with its many gods, incarnations, and engaging tales to them. Why then, I often wonder, do people show such repugnance in the land of the free and the home of the brave?

There is not, and never will be, a definite answer to this haunting question. Unfortunately, our nation will be burdened with social injustices just as a rock will always be burdened with the idea that it cannot change into a boulder no matter how hard it tries and how hard it works. However, if we, as Americans, change our negative mindset towards Muslims, we could fundamentally spark new ideas and new innovations which could eventually result in a new world.

Furthermore, if radicals in our country learn to accept people for who they are, we can assiduously spend time trying to solve other global problems such as poverty and crime. These adversities have been plaguing our world for generations; yet, we unduly squander time fighting over the existence of Jesus, Muhammad, and Shiva. If, for one second, people could imagine what a beautiful place the world would be without poverty and social injustices, then they would never go back to even thinking about religious hatred. In a world without poverty, crimes, or injustices, the topic of religious freedom would sort itself out.

Unfortunately, this utopia might never exist in my lifetime, and in fact, more than likely will not exist for generations to come. However, everything in the world, whether the tiniest sapling or the largest tree, grows one step at a time. In order to hammer in the mentality, “Together we can do anything we set our minds to”, we need to spread our enthusiasm to as many people as we can. Only then can we make people believe that our society can be free from its adversities, burdens, and negligence.

Akshar is a 10th grader at Flower Mound High School. His parents are Ranjan Dash and Asita Satpathy. He enjoys drawing, painting, and writing. His hobbies include collecting coins, money, and stamps. His favorite subjects are Math and Science and he hopes to become a doctor one day.

A fundamental flaw

Soman Panigrahi

I have been to Odisha a handful of times, spread apart by a number of years. Thus, each visit involves an initial shock and subsequent adaptation. Before my visit in January of this year, I had promised myself to keep an open mind about the new environment I was going to be in. After all, this was not my first visit to Odisha, and I knew exactly what to expect. Soon after my arrival however, I realised keeping an open mind was not going to be easy. Within minutes after landing in Kolkata, I saw things which were in direct contrast to North American standards of life. At an international airport, structures were falling apart, cables strewn across the floor, window panes broken or missing, and general disregard for proper existence. I suppressed my frustrations as I had only been in the country for a matter of hours and I did not want judge by first impressions. During my stay in Odisha, I observed more examples of the lack of maturity I saw in Kolkata, all the while taking notes on interesting aspects of my visit I had seen, questioned, or felt the need to research later on.

Upon my return to Canada, one of the topics I decided to look up was the Rourkela Steel Plant. Having never visited Rourkela myself, I had heard much about the plant and its famous engineering college, and out of curiosity decided to read about its history. Much to my surprise, I found that it had been a German collaboration that lasted just over a decade. I could not help but wonder what their experiences must have been, and if they went through shock and adaptation similar to my periodical visits. Unfortunately I could not find any substantial publications by Odia or other Indian authors that would be of value to me, but did come across numerous case studies by German authors and political scientists. The following is an abridged analysis of a case study conducted by Jan Bodo Sperling,

the director of the German personnel at Rourkela. His study focussed on the human problems with adaptation that he witnessed over the period of his four year tenure.

In 1959, the President of India inaugurated a steel plant in Odisha which was part of a handful of industrialisation initiatives taken by the government. With the other steel plants undertaken by the British and Soviets, the West Germans had persuaded the Government for the contract with an emphasis on the superior quality of work the Germans had to offer. With the \$178 million (1955 USD) contract, the Germans were expected to construct and operate an integrated steel plant in Rourkela, the first of its kind within India's public sector. For the Germans, this would involve transforming and setting up the underdeveloped country as a partner for German goods. For the Indians, this project would spearhead the new country's industry and manufacturing sector, stimulating the economy and creating jobs for thousands of Indians. For both, this would be an undertaking like no other.

The German firms were led by the well-established Krupp Company, and all had extensive experience in steel foundries, production and manufacturing. Krupp itself had produced most, if not all, of Germany's armaments and ammunition in both World Wars, and had at one point been the world's largest industrial company. The 400-year-old Kruppian dynasty was based in the city of Essen and was recognized as the industrial capital of Germany. Much of Essen and its neighbouring cities in Ruhr region, Düsseldorf and Duisburg, had been planned by the steel companies and had organized their infrastructures over time in order to optimize the efficiency of their industries.

India, on the other hand, had just emerged from under the British Empire as an independent state, and was looking for ways to stimulate its own economy. Naturally steel was the lifeblood of the industrial world, and India needed to produce its own material rather than import from overseas. The ore and mineral reserves in eastern India were of a lower grade, and had not been mined by the British reasoning that it would be uneconomic to work. In Odisha, the village of Rourkela lay near one of these ore deposits, but until the 1950s simply remained a name on the map, and nothing more. Largely inhabited by Odia and *adivasi* farmers, Rourkela saw little development more than a railway line passing through it. In fact, Odisha itself had been said to be one of the most economically backward states of the Indian Union. Protected by dense jungles and mountains to the north, south and west and the Bay of Bengal on the east, historically the region had been scarcely influenced by foreign conquests. Thus, the Odia people had shown little inclination for economics or technology. Even during the colonial and contemporary age, the few industries that did exist in the region were primarily run by immigrant workers from other parts of India, leaving menial, labour tasks to the Odias and *Adivasis*.

For Krupp, their work was set out for them. Their engineers would be able to process low-grade ore economically, and had guaranteed the completion of the steel plant within four years of signing the agreement. In order to do this, the German firms would have to set up Rourkela in a different fashion; one that allowed 100,000 of their workers to live and function comfortably. The new city was modeled on Essen, complete with drinking water and sewage systems, shopping and motor streets and appropriate housing. The steel plant on the other hand was being modeled after the Rheinhausen plant in Duisberg, a recent undertaking of a similar scale in the Ruhr valley.

Prior to their departure, the German firms had educated their members on the different culture, climate and geography in India, in an attempt to ease the transition to Rourkela. Upon arrival, however, they soon realised they were largely unprepared. Workers would fly from Germany, land in Kolkata and the shock factor set in immediately. The Germans did not believe such places existed; hoards of people and cattle filled the streets, living in poverty compared to the towns in the Ruhr. Once the 'Kolkata shock' had subsided, they would find themselves in the contrasting town of Rourkela, and were expected to settle in and get to work almost upon arrival. Here the adjustment process was a tough one. The climate made the German way of life outmoded and at times hazardous to one's health. For most Germans, a meal was not a meal without proper meat, and a refreshing beer was the ideal way to relax after a long day. The heat and humidity did not make it appropriate for regular consumption of red meat and alcohol. This led to additional frustrations on top of the Germans' initial impression of India, and inevitably boiled over into their work.

The Germans were seen by the Indians as very industrious and professionally disciplined, which in part had led to their selection for the Rourkela plant. They came to Rourkela with years of experience in their work, and saw the steel plant as a job like any other. In Rourkela this was not to be the case. Here they had to work under pressure from weather, adverse accommodations, deadlines and co-workers. European and American engineering and construction had a high level of sophistication and discipline; something that was drilled into the minds of both fitters and engineers. Their self-determination led to numerous conflicts with the Indians they were working with. While German fitters were experienced both in basic theory and practise, Indian engineering was entirely based on the book. Fitters were being constantly undermined by their Indian superiors, who would criticize their actions and provide

meaningless theoretical suggestions which they had 'studied'. Many senior Indian engineers would not listen to the fitters out of sheer arrogance, since they saw themselves as belonging to a higher, educated class while the fitters were lowly labourers. In practise, many of the Indian engineers were not even able to properly use a wrench. Furthermore, the Indian and *adivasi* labourers recruited for work had no experience in steelworks, and German fitters and engineers had to instruct them, sometimes repeatedly, while under tight deadlines. Some German works took the time to make the collaboration a pleasant one, while others succumbed to their emotions.

The Indians in Rourkela also exhibited a high level of cultural and moral attachment. While the majority of German workers acted responsibly during their stay, a small number of rowdy Germans would take to the German Club to release their frustrations in a less than responsible manner, further exacerbated by the effects of alcohol in a tropical climate. On numerous occasions the Indians of Rourkela were faced with the responsibility of keeping order. Many also displayed an interest in learning the advanced systems and operations of the steel plant; something that without a doubt has helped the steel plant flourish till today.

There were three main reasons for the breakdown in human collaboration at Rourkela: lack of communication, accountability to resolve conflict, and training and preparedness. Only a small percentage of German fitters and engineers were able to speak good English, and a handful were able to speak conversational Hindi. Among the Indians, the language of choice was Hindi, while some workers spoke Odia, Punjabi, Tamil or tribal tongues. Furthermore, their English was too poor to be a useful alternative to Hindi. This proved to be problematic as it was not always efficient to resort to written or physical communication. The lack of communication was not only limited to language, howev-

er, as administration and supervision were often inadequate to deal with any issues that arose. The German firms had given all authority to the newly formed and largely incompetent Hindustan Steel Limited, headquartered in Delhi, then Kolkata and finally Ranchi, all of which were far from Rourkela. The over-staffed HSL had numerous administrative strata and 'supervisors' aplenty, leading to itself becoming four times the size of an equivalent entity in Europe. The HSL was unable to properly accommodate Germans as they arrived in Rourkela, and afterwards was not able to coalesce with the German Social Centre and perform effectively. Thus, the ineptitude would have to be remedied in Germany itself, before the workers arrived in Rourkela. Unfortunately, this was not being taken care of in an appropriate manner. The German firms were providing little or useless training and preparation for their workers and most language classes were optional. During the course of operation however, these classes were being made mandatory, and eventually the collaboration improved on various levels at the Rourkela Steel Plant.

Today the Rourkela Steel Plant is under the Steel Authority of India Limited, the much more capable successor to the HSL. SAIL has since doubled the output and modernized various components of Rourkela (with the assistance of German engineers), while overseeing the operations and maintenance of several other steel plants as well. The German collaboration has been seen as an astounding technical success given the conditions under which the plant was constructed, while its human dimension has been studied and analysed by German, British and American bureau- and technocrats to improve undertakings of a similar nature. To many Odias, Rourkela simply consists of a steel plant and educational institutions, but to engineers and political scientists around the world it is much more. Sperling had recognized the problems that arose in the coexistence of

humans, especially with the entanglement of different value systems.

I feel that perhaps my values have changed to the degree where I am no longer able to simply disregard poor standards of life, and become frustrated, as the Germans did, under the climate and conditions of a place thousands of miles away from home. In an increasing globalized society, there is no excuse for lack of communication and transmission of knowledge, especially in the field of engineering. With scores of 'engineering colleges' populating Odisha, I can't help but question where the graduates of these institutions are going. From my experience, it seems there is no value of education in these colleges, and those who do graduate from reputable and properly accredited institutions end up in professions completely unrelated to their academic field. I became embarrassed telling people I was in mechanical engineering, because it seemed that every other person I met was in engineering, but had little idea of what it meant to be an engineer. Eventually I decided to present myself as a history student instead, because it became simply too bothersome to explain the professionalism and licensing involved in being an engineer in Canada.

In my two-week visit I met countless mechanical, electrical and civil 'engineers', but looking outside one would think engineers did not exist in such a place. Bridges were being constructed with bamboo scaffolding and roads being repaired by hand by spreading baskets of gravel and rocks. Five-star hotels, with nightly rates at par with North America ones, had crumbling walls filled with bubbles of air and moisture, while bathroom plumbings sometimes consisted of a single open drain. The worst part was no one around me seemed to recognize the same flaws I did, making me feel like a pretentious idealist, whereas in North America these would be basic components of life.

Towards the end of my trip I also realized that there were underlying flaws that hindered the perception of people. Mentioned by Sperling in his case study, the issue of class and perception within society is a prominent one India. Members of society can jump to higher strata by becoming a civil officer after writing a standardized exam, and pursue education in medicine or engineering just for the sake of a supposed elevated status. Centuries ago, false pride and arrogance are what led to the fall of the European aristocracies, making way for the renaissance and industrial revolution. But from my observations, it was not only the higher levels of society that had this sense of pride, but lower ones as well. At one guest house, we had asked the caretaker to sweep a large section of our room's floor which had a thick layer of dust. Curtly he informed us that the sweeper would be coming in tomorrow, and would sweep the dust then; he did not think sweeping was a job worthy of him. My father was annoyed by this, took a broom, and showed him how to sweep a floor, much to the caretaker's dismay and embarrassment. This occurrence was reciprocated in Sperling's study, where he observed officers and engineers of the HSL not actively participating in the construction and operation of the Rourkela Steel Plant because their education led them to believe that they were on a higher social level than the German fitters.

Repeatedly, I had to remind myself that a few thousand miles away, a world did exist where one would not simply have to adapt to an environment, but be able to coexist comfortably with standards and fundamental values; a place where people will do any job to get work done; not just for an income or social standing.

Sixty years ago the Germans created a steel plant in a country that was intent on development and industrialisation. Sixty years later the steel plant is flourishing, but the attitudes and standard of work that hindered human collaboration are still inherent. It is not until these traits

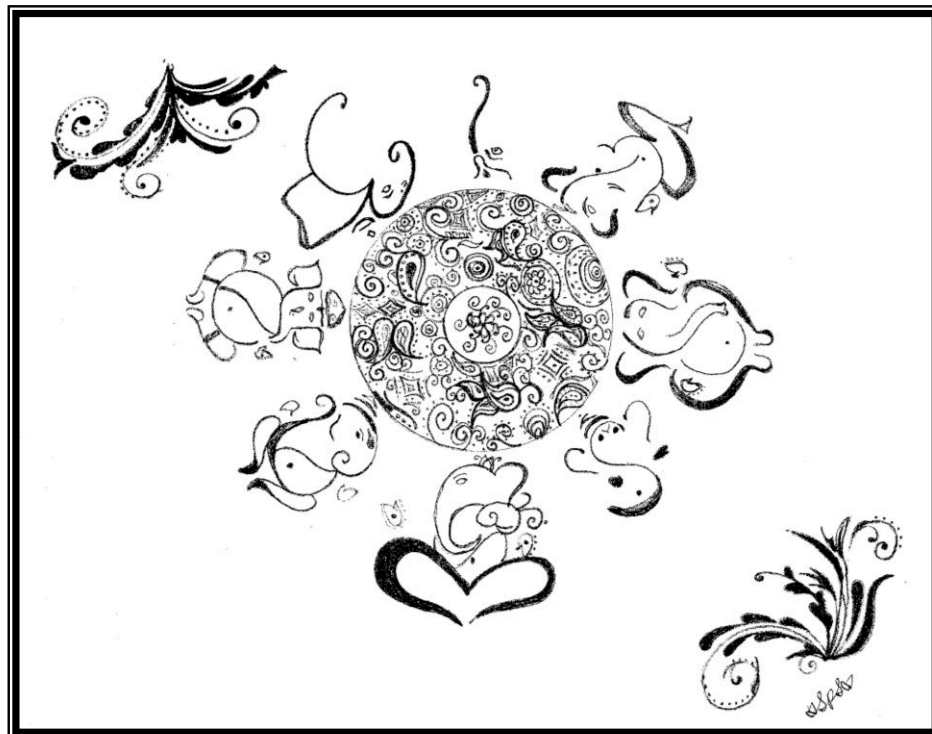
are wiped out from that Odisha can truly become more than a place on a map, and be as renowned as other states of India.



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Soman Panigrahi is a mechanical engineering student at the University of Waterloo, with an interest in political science and military history.



“Om Gam Ganapataye Namaha” by Shweta Sahu.

Jump for joy, but watch your step

By Alex Amar Pani

I looked her straight in the eyes
 Waiting for her gaze to sooth my lies
 Tales I delicately craft as a part of a mask
 And yet in their creation lies a truly ultimate task

A purging of dark cloudy doubt and ignition of fiery
 will
 To tell myself that I yearn to always love, never to kill
 But how can I say such a thing, such an untamed lie
 Knowing that within my love I am left with nothing to
 do but cry

Selfishly weeping over the idea of compromise
 Fearing, perhaps accepting, that I have, I am but
 despise
 Not for her sweet sincere seemingly strawberry-hinted
 lips
 Or for the closure she embodies, a care-induced
 touching of tips

Because that simply makes no sense, a hatred for the
 amazing
 No, what indeed has my thoughts hiding, and my heart
 lost
 Is the separation between the real and ideal?
 That I so helplessly try to unify, to rectify, to seal

In convincing myself that this chaotic state is a mere-
 side effect
 Of what could very well be an intricately intimate
 romantic desire?
 I am constantly left to question a wildly soothing yet
 just as easily scarring fire
 Through which I have a choice: to dance, frolic, and
 smile
 Or to endure, suffer, conquer, and reign

The options seem endless, to let the mind govern the
 heart
 Or to let the heart guide the mind?
 Perhaps what I'm doing is creating the need to
 question
 A most toxic doing, for even I have forgotten where
 this outpouring started

Surely I should blame myself, wallowing over my
 trials, tribulations, troubles

Leaving this incredible other behind as I bounce
 between abstractly concrete thought bubbles
 What I have hereby rendered necessary and alarmingly
 pleasant in its delivery
 Is not necessarily what it seems, it may very well be,
 but know that is your interpretation?

Your individual and respective perceptions, emotions,
 means of reason, and gut feelings,
 That allows this poem, if that's what it must be, to be
 of my making
 And of your very own special, unique taking
 All of this obviously confusing yet persistently
 senseful talk is, sadly, of finite origins

For though the heart would say the imagination seems,
 feels, practically is endless
 The mind, and the brain chained to it, speaks in only
 the binary, starting at 0, ending inescapably at 1

This all having finally been put forth, given this
 journey that I, and hopefully you too, have taken
 I've garnered an odd sense of preparation for that to
 which I am forsaken
 That my anger fueled by what is lost is but what I
 perceive as mercilessly taken

Which isn't reason, emotion, a computational mode of
 cognition with remarkably complex neural substrates,
 a synesthetic ability to repeatedly conjure up beauty in
 its most, and least, visible form, or, to my surprisingly
 greatest satisfaction-- her,

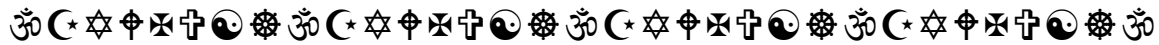
This thing, this unsolvable puzzle, this beautiful
 animal, the closest thing I've ever been, and maybe
 ever will be, to a simple truth, the simple truth.
 I want to believe she is the answer, and that I really am
 a perpetually begging question finally satisfied,
 But let it be known, it must be said, possibly the
 harshest manner of alleviation
 That such a truth was never possible
 Because her effect is bound within her existence

A creation of my collective selves, and what each
 wills to feel,
 Despite so much wonder at my very disposal, I can
 only wish she were real

Unfortunate, yes indeed it still seems, but when considering where and how I am, my reciprocated view of being

One is peacefully alone, thinly sharp,
And gratefully lost.

Mr. Alex Amar Pani
Emory University, Atlanta



Faith

By Arpita Mohanty

I have always been skeptical about religion, which always struck me as something that only caused conflict in the world and never fostered peace. I often look at the religious extremists and wonder why people can put so much trust in the words of a so-called “holy book.” It took me a trip to India to understand that religion isn’t all that terrible. Rather it allows a person to put faith in something that is ever-present. This faith is something that is ineffable.

India is one of my favorite places to be; the smell of the earth and the dust on my skin is something that I will never tire of. It is my second home and one that I will always cherish. I recognize that India is a developing country and is slowly rising in the ranks, but the number of people living off of \$3 a day or less is appalling! I wonder how these people survive and how they have the courage to fight everyday. Once I asked one of the servants in my mother’s home, Sari Mausi, how she was able to stay positive and happy in the light of her monetary struggles. She replied, “*Bhagaban ra daya re mu bancheebi.*” My life is in God’s hands, He will keep me safe.

India is a land of spirituality, a place known for its beautiful temples and gurus. Though there are multiple religious practices throughout India, Hinduism is by far the most prevalent. The temples line the street; the colors and aura around them are bright and warm. The temples around my mother’s house in Sambalpur are to me, by far the most beautiful because they are so famil-

iar to me. My memory of going to these temples allows me to appreciate the Hindu religion, though I am not sure myself what religion, if any, I will choose to identify with.

One of my favorite temples, though farther than the others, would be in Puri, one of the most sacred cities for Hindus who flock there in large numbers. Puri is a beautiful city, bordered on the east by the Bay of Bengal. Every time we go to Odissa we visit the Jagannath temple at Puri. I am in complete awe every time I step inside the temple with the sea of people pushing me closer to Lord Jagannath. His eyes pull me in and the pushing becomes a shadow and everything moves in a slow motion. It is always my mother’s voice yelling my name that shakes me back to reality and I grip her arm tighter. We fight our way through the thick crowd of people.

This experience did not instill the Hindu religion in me, rather it gave me an understanding of why religion can be so important to people. Religion gives people faith and that faith allows people to continue to live. Yes, I realize that religion can cause a divide among people but we must keep in mind that religion has another dimension to it, its role in peacemaking, which is the one that has been usually neglected. Most people are fighting for the same things: the desire for happiness in this cruel world. Some look to religion as a means to achieve it. We must remember that this aspect of humanity, fight to survive, unites us all.

Arpita Mohanty is the daughter of Dillip and Rita Mohanty of Mt. Pleasant, MI. She is currently a sophomore at the University of Michigan.

♥♥♥ **Love is complicated** ♥♥♥

By Mrunali Das

Love is complicated. I realize that statement is rather cliché, but it is also true. There are so many different levels of love! I love Chipotle Burrito Bowls, and I love playing the Sitar. I love it when my iTunes Shuffle manages to match my mood, and I love "Calvin & Hobbes" comics. I love my friends and my family, but in different ways, and I wish there was some method of differentiating between them. It just doesn't seem right to describe my feelings for a burrito bowl and my mother with the same word.

Perhaps "lofio" could be used to describe LOve For an Inanimate Object. I lofio, You lofio, He/She/It lofios, etc. For example, I lofio thin crust pizza with green peppers. I also lofio pleasant surprises and pajama pants. However, problems may arise with abstract objects. Is it possible to lofio Love? What about spiritual love? Pocahontas said "every rock and tree and creature has a life, has a spirit, has a name;" would I offend her if I said I lofio my rock collection? The purpose of using a new word is to simplify expressions, but lofio seems like it would just complicate language. So inanimate objects, I still love you.

But what about loving a friend? I can honestly say that I love my friends in the sense that I enjoy their company, appreciate their contributions, and truly care about them, but do not consider any one of them to be a "significant other." I have never claimed to have a way with words, and frankly, I doubt even Shakespeare could come up with a word or phrase that encompasses that kind of love. Sure, platonic love has become synonymous with friend-love, but saying "I love you platonically" just sounds awkward. Is the qualifier really necessary? It's actually a little insulting. "'I love you' 'Aww!' 'Platonically.' 'Well fine then.'" We are better off just using "love," unfortunately.

The issue is that along with being complicated, "Love" is also beautiful. Part of the beauty of love is the beauty of the word itself. I realize that Shakespeare once proclaimed, "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Sure the rose would smell as sweet, but it would not sound as sweet. Love may be the ultimate form of affection, but using a less beautiful word would make it less attractive. Saying "I have a profoundly tender and passionate affection for you," does not convey the same message as "I love you," even if they have the same literal meaning. So forgive me, but I cannot come up with a simple word to summarize passion, beauty, and perfection. As much as I would love to clarify love, I cannot. There is no adequate replacement for "love."



Mrunali is the daughter of Naresh & Bigyani Das of Dayton, MD. She is studying Biology & Mathematics at McGill University, and will be starting her second year this fall.

FACTS...
FABLES...
FEELINGS...

The difference between the right word
and the almost right word
is the difference between lightning
and a lightning bug.
~ Mark Twain



Two poems for my twin grandsons

Sitakanta Mohapatra

☞ The Amateur Artists ☞

A green leaf had fallen from the tree
even as yellow ones
trembled up there in the breeze.

Picking it up I placed it
on your table;
next morning patches
of turmeric yellow
appeared on its body
a charming cocktail of green and yellow.

A day later the green disappeared
it was all stark yellow.
In disbelief, you asked
“Grandpa, is it the same leaf”?

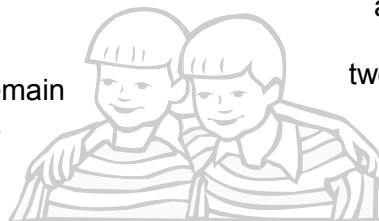
Yet another day
tiny dots of grey were all over the yellow;
slowly darkening
they extended the realm of
happy with the feast of yellow.

Both of you sketched the leaf
painted its changing life
with colour crayons
with devotion and care.

Strange that grandpa,
who had brought it in
now threw it outside.

The coloured paintings remain
on your sketch book.

☞..☞



☞ The Pumpkin Planters ☞

Both of you insisted
you would plant pumpkin seeds;
you had collected a few
and learnt the technique of planting.

A persistent drizzle
Mama's *fatwa* that it was not

a job for five year kids
nothing could negative
the steely resolve.

Seeds were planted
deep in the soil's womb
watered and plastered over
by tiny palms;
we were sure
poor seeds had a decent burial.

But lo and behold,
one fine morning a miracle happened
two buds peeped out of the burial ground
looking for the planters who
came running
stars shining in their eyes;
followed a conversation with the newborn
in a language unknown to us, poor mortals.

Days passed
the hapless plants were unaware
of your departure for a distant land;
and they seemed to miss both of you.
Poor things, tied to the soil
they could not scan the distance.

Morose they crawled on the grass
inch by silent inch
looking for the planters
as they gave birth to
a few lovely golden flowers,
and in turn,
two green pumpkins were born.

Days passed
the plants
withered and died.

☞..☞

Mr. Sitakanta Mohapatra is a much published notable poet and writer in English and Oriya as well as a retired IAS officer. He has been honored with many awards including the Sahitya Akademy, the Jnanpith and the Padma Bhusan.

The unevenness of History

Aparna Mohanty

And
along with this
I refuse with all humility
the alluring invitation
to live on in the golden page
of history.

For to be in history's page
means involvement
in envy, reproof, coercion, rape,
conspiracy and intrigue,
and with murder;
to go along too
with the subterfuge of truth,
to say farewell to beauty
and make a pact with evil.

To stay in the pages of history
is to surrender
to the many base practices
born out of high ambition.
That is why perhaps
no one has ever written
the history of flowers.

And so the tender leaf
smiling at the breeze after a storm,
or the moon and the water lily
kissing each other
deep in the lucent water
never care for the attractions of history.

Who has been able to tether
the fall of the rain
or the flight of the bird
to history?
Even though very rarely
an immortal tale of love,
having ridiculed history,
is spread and carried from person to person
long after the lovers
have vanished from public memory.

History is written
by self-appointed charlatans
in exaggerated words
from the heart's untimely death
in piled up blood.
If, somewhere,
a fresh, blissful mind
is wandering around, let it ramble on,
for what use is it to decorate
the enchanting museum of history
with the early death of a short-lived butterfly?

Translated from Odia by Jayanta Mahapatra

A handful of rice

Rajendra Kishore Panda

Only a handful of grains
is the harvest's yield.
The whole world
hungers for it.

What is one's share,
how much to be cooked,
how much to be given in alms!

Then, from where will come
the seeds for Akshaya-tritiya —
the day of sowing?

Barn, harvest yard,
field, oxen, sickle, ploughshare,
mouth, hand, stomach, navel,
mind, consciousness,
light, water, wind, sky
the god, and, above all, the soil —
whomever you ask about it,
all of them keep mum.

Only a handful of rice
is the harvest's yield.
Once the chaff is culled
the rest is just sop
for the sacrificial lamb.

Translated from Odia by Rabindra K Swain

Becoming a Bohu

Anna Mishra

As a Korean-American growing up in northern Idaho, I had no ties to India. None of my classmates, teachers, or family friends were Indian; there was not even an Indian restaurant in my home town. I couldn't have imagined that I would one day marry an Indian-American man and eventually spend a month in 2011 visiting his home state of Orissa.

My husband Swaroop has a strong sense of his heritage and speaks of his culture and background with fondness and pride. I think this is why he was so eager to bring me to his hometown in Orissa- Sambalpur; he wanted me to meet the people who had raised or grown up with his parents, the people who had, directly or indirectly, helped to shape his values and beliefs. I would see glimpses of the boy Swaroop and see for myself his origins, his roots. As a recent bride, as the new "bohu" or daughter-in-law, I would gain a richer sense of the family and culture into which I had married.

My first view of India came in a car ride through the busy streets of Mumbai. There seemed to be people everywhere: some in taxis, some in cars, some in auto-rickshaws, some in buses, some hanging off of buses. There were people crossing the street, in the street, sleeping on the street. People were walking, standing, selling their wares. Vehicles on two wheels and four wheels were honking, swerving, using road lanes and traffic signs as suggestions only. (To be fair, Swaroop had tried to prepare me for this – with a YouTube video titled "Crossing the Street in Mumbai." Somehow, it just wasn't the same.) It was all a little overwhelming to a girl from Idaho.

The next morning, we continued our journey to Orissa. I carefully prepared myself – I put on salwar kameez, tika, earrings, necklace, anklets, and toe rings. I placed bangles up and down my forearms. I wanted to look the part, to make a good first impression as a daughter-in-law and as a foreigner. When Swaroop and I arrived at his aunt's house in Sambalpur, several relatives greeted us. The aunties laughed good-naturedly

at the sheer number of bangles I had on – good intentions aside, maybe it was a bit of overkill.

While our day-to-day agenda varied somewhat, there were two people we tried to see every day: Swaroop's grandmothers. They told us stories about hearing Gandhi speak on a riverbank, about cows wandering in the front door and giving everyone a startle, about how difficult a phone call between India and the States was in the '70s. They asked us about our lives back in the States: What did we wear? What did we eat? How could we consider it a proper meal without rice and daali? In their pale sarees, they were a hub of information and respect. While neither grandmother ventured out of the home much anymore, they maintained a keen interest in the doings and well-being of those around them. To them, no matter what our ages were, we were children come home after a long absence.

Swaroop's grandmothers (and so many others) took a particular interest in our daily diet. No matter where we went, we were sure to be fed beyond reason – a genuine treat, since I was able to sample many new foods and flavors. When we weren't eating, we were expected to give an accurate recital of what we had eaten that day – it's no wonder I learned more Oriya words associated with food and eating than any other subject. Clearly in Orissa, as in so many cultures and families, food is the language of love and well-being. To feed someone is to give them caring and sustenance.

The spectrum of what is possible in India is breathtaking. The ever-present crowds of people create a vibrancy and energy that can feel both exhausting and alive. In Orissa I saw farmers on foot, laboriously driving oxen to plow their fields in the same fashion I imagine was used hundreds of years ago, and I found it difficult to juxtapose those images with the ultra-modern skyline in Mumbai. Of course, I found the accumulation of garbage in India's streets and rivers to be unfamiliar and unsettling. By the time I came back to America, I actually felt things seemed a bit antiseptic – while I didn't miss the

garbage, I had become accustomed to the hustle and bustle and noise.

By traveling to India with me, Swaroop wanted me to see myself as part of the family I had only heard about, and the relatives I met certainly embraced me into their homes and lives. At first, I think my gratitude embarrassed them at times – I was family now, and the kind of gratitude I was used to giving was, in India, reserved for the kindness given by strangers. I met many relatives: mamas, mausis, mausas, kakas, kakis, nanis, gaeens, mamus, mains...the number of relatives and the interconnected relationships quite overwhelmed me, although everyone else seemed to find it quite easy to rattle off a verbal family tree. I realized that I was now a part of that daunting family tree.

In Sambalpur, it is common for relatives to live in houses right next to each other, to drop by unannounced for a morning or evening chat. I had never experienced that before, but there's something I found comforting in that kind of familiarity. The bigger a family is, the more personalities and relationship dynamics there are to juggle, but there is also a bigger support system, a community formed from duty, hierarchy, caring, and a shared sense of responsibility. These were the people who had taught Swaroop's parents – and later Swaroop himself – the meaning and importance of family.

When I met Swaroop, he told me he had been raised to believe that people don't get married, families get married. To me, this idea had seemed both charming and foreign (after all, I had grown up with the example of Romeo and Juliet as the ideal of romance: two young people who find love and marry despite their families, never mind the disastrous consequences). To be honest, during this first year of marriage, I've realized that there is truth to Swaroop's view;

you can't marry a person without marrying their family; their family is who they are.

Swaroop came back to India, to his family, no longer a youth, but as a married man who was introducing his choice of wife to his relatives. In turn, his family took me in as one of their own and acted as a bridge between the boy Swaroop and the grown-up version I know. I could trace the physical features he had inherited through the generations, but I could also trace the family commitments and traditions ingrained in his upbringing. Through his family, Swaroop wanted me to know him better, and I feel happy to have made that journey. I left with a sense of how lucky I am to have family all across the globe – America, Korea, India. While the physical distances between us can be large, we illustrate just how interconnected this world actually is. What a comforting thought.



Ms Anna Mishra grew up in the Pacific Northwest and currently lives in Seattle, Washington with her husband. A high school English teacher by trade, she enjoys reading novels, watching plays, seeing students use semicolons correctly, and traveling to new places.

Ode to buds which never blossomed

Anuranjita Nayak

Sobbing and drenched he was pulled out by firemen
 Shivering and aching he stared at the rushing water
 The river just engulfed his whole world.
 Why me? He thought...
 Moments ago his single mother in sheer despair and anger shoved them all
 All including five month old Daniel tucked in his seat.
 She drove the vehicle off the road right into the body of water!
 Was she blinded by her flooding tears?
 A quick reflex and he hit the power door button, jutting off to air
 Just before the car dove into the frigid water....
 His family wiped out in a fit of rage
 Another orphan to brace the big bad world at this tender age.
 These make to front pages of the daily news
 Then get trashed like a school dropout, fleeing from his nightmare
 Seeking solace in the poisonous arms of drug abuse.

The beeping monitors and hissing ventilators
 Keep company to her limp body
 Intravenous lines make a net around, attempting to keep the soul within.
 All she did to reach this fate
 Was to cry like a normal seven month old and make her father irate
 Got shaken like a rag doll her tiny brain bruised and battered...
 She will be moved to a rehab, then to foster care
 Who knows if she will ever walk or see
 And even if so, there is no more abuse to foresee?
 No, they didn't ask much,
 These little souls just needed some affection, protection and care
 And would have blossomed into healthy productive beings.
 All they plead is to find another way to vent out your feelings
 Please don't make them your punching bags
 They are fragile, PLEASE HANDLE WITH CARE.

Dr. Anuranjita Nayak is a faculty and clinical Pediatric Neurologist at University of Florida, resides with her husband Siddhartha and daughter Aarushi in Gainesville, Florida.



The night my heart skipped a beat.... and then some

Srikanta Mishra

1:58 AM. As I groggily check the luminescent readout of the bed-side alarm clock, the growing heaviness in my chest begins to sink in. There is a feeling of burning, and of pressure. My mind tries to focus. *Heart Attack?* I try breathing deeply. There is no shortness of breath. I check my forehead; no sweating. I pinch my arms; no loss of feeling. *Could it be heartburn?* I get up, walk to the kitchen, drink some water and come back to bed. *Let me try to sleep it off,* I think and climb back under the duvet.

Underneath the cozy comforter, sleep is hard to come by. The heaviness in my chest refuses to subside. Slowly, a feeling of nausea begins to creep in. I pad over to the bathroom sink, and try throwing up. It is an ordeal. The chest feels no less constricted even after the heaving stops. I decide to call for reinforcements.

Snigdha, wake up, I say, gently shaking my wife. *My chest hurts.* She sits up, immediately alert, hearing the dreaded words. *Where? For how long?* I tell her about my symptoms, and my suspicion that it is heartburn. Another wave of nausea sweeps over me, and the chest pain kicks up a notch, as I run to the sink. Snigdha quickly scans her first aid book. *Call 911,* I say.

She comes over, and massages my back. *Looks like a bad case of heartburn. Let me take you to the emergency. But first, take some antacid and drink some more water. That should help.* I do all that, but with little effect. As I walk around the kitchen island, massaging my chest, and hoping for relief that continues to evade me, Snigdha gently takes my arm. *Let's get dressed and go to the emergency.* I follow her, sensing that time is of the essence.

My subconscious mind recalls a similar incident 7-8 years ago, when a childhood chum complained of chest pains, was taken to the emergency, and had a heart attack during the ER triage. *That is what saved me,* I remember him saying over and over again, as I quickly change and put on my jacket. The garage feels bitterly cold as I get into the car. Pulling out of the

garage, Snigdha pats my hand. *We'll be there in no time. Don't worry.*

2:39 AM, the clock on the dashboard says.



Christmas is only a few days away. The night is crisp and clear. The blackness of the sky is in sharp contrast with the brilliance of the snow on the ground. It is an eerie feeling for recent transplants like us from Texas. Snigdha begins telling me about her trip to the doctor yesterday, when she got lost and found herself at the entrance to the emergency. *I know exactly where it is,* she keeps assuring me. I listen, partly to get distracted, as I keep massaging my chest.

The roads are completely deserted, and we get to the emergency in a few minutes. I get out of the car, and quickly walk across to the reception desk. The lobby is deserted, save the nurse in charge of check-in. *May I help you,* she says. *I am having chest pains,* I say. *It hurts.* She rushes out, gets me seated on a wheel chair, mumbles *chest pain....chest pain...* to her headset, and wheels me right in. A team of nurses runs towards us. *Room 22,* one of them says. *It is set up for cardiac patients.* We enter the room, and the ER protocol rapidly kicks in.

Take off street clothes...put on hospital gown ...what is your social security number... let me shave your chest to attach the EKG leads....are you allergic to any medication....we are going to do an IV....how would you rate your chest pain...

The nurses are bustling all around me, setting up the EKG, the IV, the blood draw, etc. *He is diabetic and also on blood pressure medication,* Snigdha keeps repeating, while giving out details about my insurance. A petite lady in scrubs comes in and shakes my hand. *I am Dr. Alexander,* she says. *Let's see what we have here.* The EKG readout is beginning to emerge, and I suddenly wince, as the pain intensifies. Taking a deep breath, I look at the doctor, silently asking

for a diagnosis. *You are having a heart attack, she says, reading my mind.*

The doctor's words take time to sink in. I feel detached from my body, almost like a ghost hovering over the room, watching the ER team continue its drill. There is a sense of unreal, as if the whole experience belongs to someone else. *Call for the pharmacist....give him some heparin...we don't have a cath lab here...we'll have you air lifted to the heart hospital midtown...check his BP...are you allergic to any medication....how would you rate your chest pain....are you cold....here are some blankets....*

The med flight team arrives, and takes charge. A new gurney is called for and I am gently slid onto it. The doctor comes over and touches my shoulder. *You are going to be all right. We have you stabilized and Dr. Silver is waiting for you at the heart hospital. Good luck.* Snigdha is standing by the door, holding my clothes. She pats my forehead, and gives me a wan smile. *I am coming to the hospital, don't worry, she says, as the med flight team wheels me away.*

3:23 AM, reads the clock over the doorway.



We move quickly through a long and empty corridor and step out of the building into an open ramp. My body goes into shock at the sudden drop in temperature. The med flight crew races towards the waiting helicopter and quickly directs my gurney into the chopper's belly. I feel like being trapped inside a metal coffin. The gurney is strapped on, and a pair of headphones is put over my ears. *Relax, the disembodied voice of one of the crew says, we'll be taking off in just a minute.* I can barely turn my head around.

The helicopter engines whine and rev higher as we take off. Claustrophobia begins to battle the pain in my chest. I close my eyes and reach for my chest. *Om tryambakam yajamahe,* I start chanting silently, willing away any sense of panic. *It will be OK,* I tell myself, every time I reach the end of the mantra, *mryutyor mukhshiya mamrutat,* before starting all over again.

We land, and the med flight team rushes me through the parking lot and a maze of corridors

into the brightly lit cath lab. Everyone is in scrubs looking bright eyed and alert. The doctor steps in and introduces himself. He is completely bald, with a peaked nose, and a serious demeanor. *I am Dr. Silver,* he says, shaking my hand. *You had a heart attack. We are going to inject some dye into you and find out where the arterial blockage occurred. Then we'll take care of it.*

They slide me from the med flight gurney onto the operating table and start some more medication through the IV. A local anesthetic is applied to my groin area. It is wet and cold, and my teeth begin to chatter. I am swaddled with more blankets. The relaxant begins to take over. I can barely hear Dr Silver's voice telling me about the catheter, the wire, the dye, the balloon, the stent, as my heavy eye lids begin to close of their own volition.

3:55 AM, is the last thing I remember as I drift away.



My eyes gradually focus on Dr. Silver's glistening forehead as I come out of anesthesia. *How are you feeling?,* he asks. *OK,* I mumble, slurring my words. *You did great,* he says. *One of your arteries was almost completely blocked. I removed the blockage and put a stent. Another artery also has some serious blockage. I need you to come back in a month so that we can fix it.* He stops to watch me digest the news. *You got lucky,* he says after a long pause. *We caught the heart attack just in time.*

There is another flurry of activity to get me ready for the move to the cardiac ICU. I keep mulling over the fact that I just had a heart attack. Or was it somebody else? Denial takes over, until we come out of the cath lab and I see Snigdha's smiling face mirroring a huge sense of relief. Realization follows; something serious did happen to me.

A bubbly nurse takes charge of transporting me to the ICU. Snigdha holds my hand as we navigate a maze of corridors and finally check into my ICU cabin. I am partially immobilized from all the attachments to my body. The nurse gets me settled, introduces me to the ICU crew,

wishes me luck, and leaves. I close my eyes and doze off for a bit.

When I open my eyes, I see Snigdha sitting in the lone visitor's chair, sleep weary, sipping a cup of water and looking in my direction. I wave at her. She comes over and gently strokes my face. *How are you feeling*, she asks. *Not bad, just a little bit of pain in the chest*, I say. *I am so glad*, she says. *Let me go home and check on the children*. I nod in agreement. *You rest now*, she says. *I will be back in a couple of hours*.

She gives my hand a final squeeze, gathers her purse and coat and steps outside. *Thank you for*

giving me my life back, I silently mouth after her. She stops at the door to look back at me. Reassurance is writ large on her face, a calamity averted. A smile flits across her face, as if to say, *you're welcome*.

5:43 AM, the ICU clock reads.



Dr. Srikanta Mishra and family recently relocated to Dublin, OH. He has committed himself to a healthy and balanced lifestyle in order to continue enjoying the blessings of life.

The Visitor

Snigdha Mishra

You came to me once, a long time ago
as I walked by the shores of a lake.
The water gleamed black in the moonlight,
frothy little ripples lapping at the edge.

You loomed behind me as I walked on wet sand.
Though You made no sound, I knew it was You.
I did not look behind for I knew it was You.
You were there with me. I was content.

You asked me my heart's desire.
Foolish child that I was, I asked for flowers.
I asked for my gardenia bush to bloom
so I could offer its fragrant flowers to You.

In my innocence, I asked for nothing for myself.
In my joy, I asked for nothing for the world –
no cure for cancer, no freedom from poverty,
no end to war, hunger, greed or disease.

And yet You gave me what I sought.
My gardenia bloomed with the morning sun.
Every branch bowed with blossom
Heady with perfume all summer long.

You came to me again, not so long ago,
as I drove alone on a midnight road.
I did not look behind for I knew it was You.
You were there for me. I was content.

You asked me again for my heart's desire.
Innocent no longer, I was selfish.
I asked You for a life, precious to me.
Again, I asked for nothing for the world.

Yet again You gave me what I sought.
I sat in the ICU, listening to the soft beeps
of machines keeping my beloved alive.
Watching him breathe in the dim, cold light.

I know You will come again when I call
and walk behind me in silent support.
You will envelop me in Your gentle warmth.
I will know it is You. I will be content.

I have nothing for You but the gift of my music
and my boundless belief that You are there
always, soundlessly watching over me.
I need not look behind. I am content.



Mrs. Snigdha Mishra resides in Dublin, OH with her family. On a welcome extended break from her job as Contracts Manager for an Environmental Consulting company, she teaches Hindustani classical music and writes poetry in her spare time.

A testament of Failure

Sura Rath

Success is an American appetite, synonymous with life. We want to emphasize success, and to some extent even guarantee it. As a college teacher for almost four decades, in India and the US, I have always nurtured a fear of failure. Every time a student fails my class I experience a sense of haunting self-defeat.

Last November, when our Admissions Director invited me as the luncheon speaker to a group of 50 high school counselors, I decided to speak not of success but of failure. We serve a large number of under-privileged, first-generation college students; they and their families could exemplify failure to many, yet the nation's success depends on theirs. Texas has a program, Success by Degree, where the state's success is measured by the number of high school and college dropouts it can help earn a college degree. The invitation offered me a pulpit to preach about the importance of failure as a reminder of the uncertainties of life, as an opportunity for exploring the untrodden and unimagined paths that we bypass in our haste to reach our destination. Somewhere in the bumps and bruises of my academic journey, I thought, there would be a message for our prospective students or even parents. The following is an expanded version of that talk:

Recently many American universities and colleges are combining their Academic Affairs and Student Affairs divisions into one unit, either as a cost-cutting measure or as an integration of the intellectual and social growth of students. At some institutions like my own, this new division is called Academic Excellence and Student Success, reinforcing the complimentary nature of faculty-centered teaching and student-centered learning. I work as the Director of our University College, supervising two key areas of our students' academic progress during their first two years of college: Academic Advising and Academic Support. My administrative responsibility is to ensure that they build a strong foundation in their general education before they enter their major fields of study. I come to you today as a teacher who just completed his 35th year in

American higher education, as a student of American literature and culture, as an Odia whose personal and professional values are grounded in things I learned in a tiny village school near the Chilika Lake on India's eastern seaboard, as a friend, a colleague, a neighbor, and a father of two boys who have gone through American public education. When we speak, we have three options: one, to tell what should be (philosophy and theology); two, to tell what could be (romance and fiction); and three, to tell what we have lived through (biography and confession). I will take the third route and move toward the first: begin with some confessions and end like a Sunday school teacher, or a village priest.

In 1979 teaching as a lecturer at Loyola University, New Orleans, I came to know the tragic story of a local author. John Kennedy Toole, wrote a book called *A Confederacy of Dunces* and killed himself at age 31 because of the publishers' rejection and his mother's nagging. A dozen publishers had turned it down, because its 30-year old protagonist Ignatius J. Reilly neither pursued nor achieved success in life. In fact, he spurned success. The book, published posthumously in 1980, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for literature. Toole's life story, like that of his novel's protagonist, is one of failure; his death a ritualistic sacrifice to the goddess of success who granted him his wish, but too late. His death was an act of denial, an aggressive rejection of failure that turned fatal.

We love success, we adore it, and worship it; we don't want to think, talk or write about its other, failure. That is what I will do here today: talk about a series of failures that have made me what/who I am today as a celebration of roads not taken, dreams not realized, destinations not reached; of life's uncertainties, surprises, instabilities. I will speak from experience and select three anecdotes: first, flunking a sophomore calculus course that resulted in my failure to secure admission in medical school; second, being told by my professor in my junior year that I was not cut out to be an English major; and, finally, failing selection for a lucrative bank officer

job. Each of these, ironically, pushed me in directions never considered before.

1968: For a rural Brahmin boy with an older sibling who was an engineer, pursuing a career in medicine was a given. The idea was planted in my mind as early as the 7th grade and nurtured until high school graduation. It worked; I got into a pre-med 2-year program at a premier college. The path was clear; the plan infallible. The sophomore year calculus class had a shock in store. With an unexplained 17% in Maths, the medical school dreams evaporated. Looking back at the 2 previous year's General Education course work, I had picked English Literature as my major. There was safety in the selection: a Master's in English meant a guaranteed college teaching position; the demand was there.

1969: The excitement of the new world of humanities and literature had lasted a short time. A 6-page interpretive analysis of 3 poems by John Donne submitted as an extra-credit assignment returned bleeding with red ink early in the junior year. A decisive, legible message on the cover page read: *consider some other major*. Faculty mentorship and academic advising rolled into one prophetic message: I could not succeed in English. Embarrassing failure, again, but I refused to quit! Determined to fight this branding, I took a risk and stayed on in English. The final grading was to be done by professors elsewhere, by people who would judge my work anonymously. I thought a year and half of dedicated work would vindicate me. It did. When the results were published, I looked for my name from the bottom of the list of successful graduates and just as I was getting to the top with a sinking heart fearing the confirmation of the prophecy there it was, number one on the list. It was a death and a birth blended into one.

1972: With pride and vigor I applied myself to graduate school, but the arrogance of success prompted me to take a competitive exam for a bank officer position. These positions were lucrative but there was an added appeal: being selected as a bank officer would "prove" my ability. I made the cut in the written part of the examination, but the interview was a different matter. In Calcutta, the committee chair reviewed my documents while I sat silently but confidently. After what seemed like eternity he began, "Son,

you have done well in your studies and in the exam. I want you to explain why you want to drop out of graduate school for this job." I had not applied myself to such self-reflection, and meekly replied: "Because I want to earn for my family." "I know your father since the time he tutored the princes of Parikud" he said, "Is he unwell, does he depend on your income?" "He is fine," I said, "In that case, son, take my advice: finish your Master's and then try for this job. Since you qualified now, you will qualify again." This was an avuncular decision! I failed to get the position and more importantly, I failed to understand the advice until the University gold medal came. By then I had lost interest in any administrative work; I wanted to be a scholar, a teacher; my dream career had taken shape.

At each of these moments I was asked to make a choice: either to accept the uncertain future or end it. Where did the strength to accept failure, actually embrace and invite it, come from? What sustained me against the daunting fear of failure that is planted in us in childhood? I'd be tempted to call it my strength of character, but that would be wrong. Maybe a blind faith in God or some superior intelligence but that would be wrong too. Maybe, my parents' support at my moments of crisis... Looking back, I see one man who was my guide and guardian angel: my 10th grade English teacher named Subas Tripathy who was teaching school to save money to get a Master's. He awoke in me a resilience. I have since then wanted to be like him: a teacher, a counselor, an advisor, a mentor to someone who is on the brink of something uncertain. The principle is simple: no one has the right to fail, because failure is merely an inversion of success. We simply need to redefine success.

If we can plant this simple idea in every student's and in every teacher's mind, we would have a much larger population of college grads. I will end with two lessons that I hold dear:

The first is a philosophy of education: Robert Hutchins. The University of Chicago's President, whom I admire, once put our task as educators in a simple chiasmic phrase, "*the true goal of education is to settle the unsettled mind and to unsettle the settled*".

The second, a philosophy of life: Ecclesiastes 9:10-11: *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it*

with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to

the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all

Dr. Sura Rath is the Director of the University College at University of North Texas, Dallas. He is married to Manju and is blessed with two sons, Siddhartha and Gautam, daughter-in-law Ranjeeta and grandson Vasudev.



Maria

Lisa Bedbak Alva

I wrote this story long back in July 2005 about a little girl, Maria. I met Maria when she was 11 and I was 25 but we became friends and spent countless evenings in my house talking in my apartment about her dreams, my dreams and about the sweet nothings in life. Her mom was poor and what amazed me was that nothing, I repeat, nothing could dampen the spirits of that little girl. I lost her somewhere in this process called "LIFE". It is hard to express our emotions and love for some people. Meeting Maria was a very enriching experience for me.

July 8th, 2005

Baltimore, Maryland

I met Maria for the first time around Christmas of 2002 when my University was closed. She was one of 5 children. Her mother Claudia was in her mid-thirties and was a perfect example of welfare queen. She was on social security benefits and other benefits as well. I always wondered if she had planned it all for the benefits. The oldest son was 22 years and had moved out of the house. Claudia lived with her three daughters and her youngest son, five year old John.

Maria was the third daughter and a beautiful 11 years old. Initially, Maria didn't speak to me and she kept pretty much to herself. I had few days off after my Fall Semester and it was a very cold winter in 2002 with blizzards in Washington DC. Ajjai used to be in the Library most of the time that winter as he was preparing for the USMLE exams, so it was mostly me at home. One

evening, there was a knock at the door and I opened it and saw Maria in front of me. She asked me if I had some butter and eggs in my refrigerator. She wanted to bake a cake with her sister. I had 2-3 eggs and some butter. She took them from my hand and smiled. I smiled back.

For me, Maria was always an enigma. I really wanted to talk to her more but I didn't want to impose my friendship. So I gave her some time. Next day I was shoveling snow from my car as I had to go to the grocery store. She asked if I could give her a ride. While I was driving, I played an old ghazal of Jagjit Singh in the stereo. She listened to that song and asked me if I was Muslim and if I spoke Urdu. I told her that I was from India and I spoke Hindi. The truth is that she had heard Ajjai speak to me only in English as Ajjai is from Karnataka and not very fluent in Hindi. So I explained to Maria some more about India, the different languages that people spoke in India, the different cultures, different dresses and told her that India was a very culturally vibrant country. She listened to me so intently with her eyes twinkling. I think I forgot to mention before that Maria was accompanied by her elder sister, Jackie. Jackie was 18 years old, lost in her own world and never interacted with me much. So it was mostly me and Maria talking. We went inside the store and did our share of shopping. When I was turning back to find the girls, I saw Jackie and Maria arguing about something and it looked pretty bad. I knew I had to take the girls with me so I

tried to chip in. Jackie told me everything was fine and went to the right side to get some milk and bread for her mom. I asked Maria if everything was alright and she told me that she would love to have a German Chocolate Cake for herself and for her little brother, John but the problem was that Jackie was not letting her buy one as it was expensive. The cost of a medium size German Chocolate Cake was around \$8-\$9. I asked Maria if it was OK with her if I bought the cake. She jumped with joy and gave me a big hug with tears in her eyes. I was touched and happy too because I knew that Maria was opening up to me. While driving back, nobody spoke anything; there was pin drop silence.

Gradually Maria became close to me and we would make chat papdi at my place, which she loved. She would come to me with her homework and was extremely glad when I helped her with HCF and LCM. She was a sharp girl and learnt things fast and well. She had these sea secrets in her eyes which always made me wonder about her. Slowly she started confiding in me about the emotional abuse she had gone through at a very young age. There was absolutely nobody to talk to about her goals, to encourage her. She was a good singer and considered Beyonce her role model.

My school reopened after Christmas break and I got busy with classes and I didn't get to see Maria much after that. She would still greet me every now and then. At the end of the spring semester in 2003, she told me that she got all "A's" in her Math courses. I was just so happy for her. We ordered a pizza and celebrated her success. I told her that I was about to start an internship that summer and I was not sure why she started crying and she became very quiet. I tried talking to her but she kept on crying and after some time she went back home. I saw her the next day and she gave a beautiful smile and held me tightly and told me how much she would miss me. I asked her if she would go for a walk and she did join me. She told me that her mom

had not paid the house rent for more than 3 months and the leasing office people were planning to throw them out. I didn't know what to say. I was a student myself and I couldn't afford to pay her rent. However I told her that the best way to come out of this vicious cycle was to do well at school and get a good job. She told me she would try. By then she had stopped crying and I could see a slight ray of hope on her face. She told me about the tremendous peer pressures she felt at school. It was very strange but I always felt Maria always demonstrated some sort of scant interest in collectivism. It was time for me to come back home as I had to cook dinner. I told her to aim high and think about all the minority leaders and people who had made it big. It wasn't easy for them and it wouldn't be easy for her either but she could do it with her indomitable determination. She listened to me so intently. I loved the glow in her big dark eyes. I gave her a hug and went back home. I had to get up at 5:30am next day to travel to Laurel (a small town between Baltimore and Washington DC) for my internship.

My first week at work was so hectic and I hardly had time to think about anything. I really wanted to meet Maria that weekend to see how she was doing. I thought of giving her a surprise visit so I went to her apartment but I was shocked to see that the front door was locked. They had left the apartment complex. Well, not really shocked. I always saw it coming but didn't expect it to happen so fast. I felt devastated as I could not see her for one last time. Even to this day, I often wonder what she is up to and where is she now.

I hope she is doing well wherever she is. I hope God gives her enough strength to fight the battle of life. I hope that she does not become a victim of the vicious cycle of emotional abuse from her own mother. I hope she does not lose her interest in Math and Music and her childhood innocence. I hope she finds the true meaning of life wherever she is; I hope that she is HAPPY!!

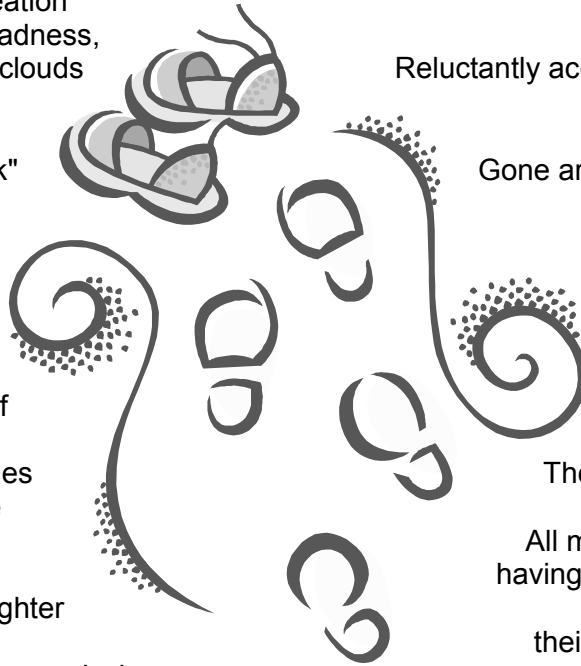
Mrs. Lisa Bedbak Alva is originally, from Sambalpur, Orissa. She came to United States in 2002 to do her MS in Computer Science in Maryland. She is now settled in Houston, Texas. She is married to Dr. Ajjai Alva and has two little boys, Arjun and Anmol.

Through the Child's eye

Sneha Mohanty

As I glance at the Child's face,
 Playing in the crimson **shores** of the sands,
 Searching for sea shells or hermit crabs
 Innocent as doe in the free land
 Intensely building forts or castles.
 Suddenly an unruly rude wave
 Sweeps away the little creation
 No remorse, revenge or sadness,
 Staring at the patches of clouds
 Floating in the sky as sail
 boat
 May be it is a "spilled milk"
 Or a patch of water lilies
 bursting in the pond
 As the rain touches the
 ground.

He peeps for the colors of
 the rainbow,
 Lightening and rain puddles
 His mind is filled with the
 magic of
 imagination
 Pure as porcelain and laughter
 Cycles of life changes,
 Imagination swirls into the complexi-
 ty and emptiness of shells.



This poem was read at the Children Poetry Symposium at Los Angeles in 2002. After getting her second M. A. in Child Development from California State University, Long Beach, Ms Sneha Mohanty taught at St. Wilfrid's School at Huntington Beach, California till her retirement in 2009. Her book, Amrutyaana was published in Odia by Books and Books, Cuttack in 1982. Her second book Geeti Kavita is in the press.

Descent of a man

Babru Samal

The afternoon sun has lost all its hype
 The clouds decorated with rainbows have gone
 home
 And the bravado of the thunders has died
 down
 Slowly and surely with the fragile mind and
 limbs
 The man descends
 Reluctantly accepting its place in the universe

Gone are the looks from the tree above
 Pitying the seen unseen
 Less complex, less evolved
 bacteria and viruses
 Sheep and cows and milli-
 pedes
 The simple amoeba and
 earthworms
 Once I know them intimately
 They all appear equal or better life
 forms
 All made in the image of the creator
 having what they need to be alive and
 propagate
 their progenies for millions of years
 Even in some cases
 Equipped with better tools than me.

In the twinkle of the eyes
 The young parents become ancestors
 The new born babies have babies
 As if the time stands still
 and we come and go after a sojourn here
 With humility I accept my existence
 As a tiny part in the march of life
 All across the mother earth and beyond.

Dr. Babru Samal is a former editor of the OSA Souvenir. He is a writer, poet as well as an avid photographer. He lives in Maryland.

The first curse

Sharmistha Mohapatra

The Sun was ablaze overhead, warming me like an embrace. His rays attempted to comfort me, the soft grass offered to salve my blistered feet, the downward slope was gentle. Nature yielded to provide me an easy passage home. Alas, my memories would not let me enjoy; memories of the immortal Parshuram and his curse.

Parshuram my Guru, to whom I had devoted the prime of my youth, his rage at my bleeding thigh, I could not stop envisioning. Having humbly offered my lap for his head to rest, I had not known then that it would bring about my detriment. *O cruel scorpion! Who sent you?* My blood which had wetted my master's knotted hair and disturbed his afternoon slumber, that same blood now pumped his curse through my body.

Parshuram had sat up suddenly at the sight of my sanguine lower garment, blood had already pooled on the ground where I was sitting bow-legged. "You insolent creature! How dare you bring dishonesty to my refuge. You disgusting Kshetriya!" I looked up at him now standing in the stance of an aggressor; "Guruji?" "Filthy scourge of this earth, progeny of mass murderers and violators of the rules of warfare!" Parshuram pointed at my chest as he thundered his words. His left hand gripped his bow that had been leaning against the Banyan tree.

"But Guruji, I am not what you say. I am merely your simple servant." "Do not insult me further with your pretenses. You are neither a Brahmin nor a protector of the Vedas. You are the descendant of my father's killers; Kshetriya! No one but a warrior could have tolerated the scorpion's bite, as your caste members are unfeeling slayers who revel in pain and suffering. You have illicitly received my teachings of righteous warfare and just destruction and for this I curse you! The mantra I taught you for the divine Brahmastra, that most deadly of weapons will abandon you at your greatest time of need just as you have abandoned Truth when you entered my home. Its absence will be felt at your final hour!"

Now stung worse than the scorpion's bite, I felt bitter hallucinogens force into my mind and I lost sensation of the present.

My parents had never been dishonest about my birth. They told me they had never seen my entrance into this wide world, only the entrance into theirs, as I came floating in a hemp basket on river Ganga's currents. "Son, when I opened the basket, there was a tremendous glow that burst forth, blinding me as if the solar deity, Surya, had sent a piece of himself. Only moments after, once the rays retracted into your skin, I was able to see you inside, an infant decked in golden armour and fine jewels on the ears. You did not cry when I lifted you to my chest and carried you home. Radha took to you immediately and shed tears when I told her how I found you. Just as a seed contains the essence of life, you came as a gift to us."

They loved me, I had never doubted it. Love not lineage had weaved the organic threads of my body. Nevertheless, I was not completely a part of them. My armour skin formed a barrier between myself and their embraces. I had never been able to feel their touch upon my shoulders, just a gentle compression. Because of this rigid encasement, other children in my neighborhood saw me as nothing more than a daunting force, though my behavior towards them had always been reserved. I was different.

When I was six, my father gifted me with a child's bow and arrow set, carved specifically for me by the royal bowyers and fletchers. "My friends at the armory made these for you. It's nothing fancy, just made from spare materials." When he presented me with the set, I was ecstatic. To top that, every year after, I got a new set to match my size.

Being a servant to the king had its benefits. We lived not in poverty. No. But, we did live modestly among other royal employees. Everyone in our southern section of the city was of lower or mixed caste but fared considerably well.

Though I was proud of my parent's honorable living, I did not feel settled that my future duty lay only in driving chariots like my father. *Suta-putra, son of modest cast I am, but surely I must be destined for acts and events of enormous proportion*, I would think. *Otherwise, what is the purpose of my unique alloyed skin?* For years, I turned to Surya to be my Guru in the training of the martial arts. But it was difficult to hone my movements when he refused to speak his observations. *How was I supposed to know if I was doing things right?*

"Why don't you ask my father to teach you? He just got appointed as the arms instructor at the palace. And since your father has been working for King Dritirastha for years, I'm sure it would be an acceptable request." I remember giving Aswathama a skeptical look. A friend for over ten years, he seemed greatly changed in the past ten months. "Has living in the palace the past months wiped out all memories of your 15 years in the hard world?" I responded with a friendly smirk. "Firstly, your father is a new employee and it would be unwise for him to jeopardize his position by taking on some kid just because he happens to be his son's friend. Secondly, don't you think that all government children would be clamoring for educational opportunities alongside the royal princes? As it is we enjoy more than a decent school system for our caste because we are government employee beneficiaries, so to ask for more would just be ungrateful. Plus I'm 19 and already done with secondary school. I'm too old to be in the same classroom as the young students of your father."

"Oh, come on! You said yourself that you wished to learn more about weaponry and the science of arms. My father learned Mantras from the great Parshuram, himself! Who better to teach you? Plus, I'd be there with you. Those kids aren't so bad, it's quite fun watching them brawl. You and me, we could be my father's understudies and be junior mentors for the princes. In years to come, we'd get to share in all their glory and riches!"

"Aswathama, you're getting carried away; that is a ridiculous supposition and I don't want their glory and riches. I want my own."

"Ha, you are such an idealist. These days, you can't make it on your own. You have to know

the right people. And what better people to know than the future kings? Consider yourself lucky, your father is the King's charioteer. Uncle Adiratha has never asked King Dritirastha for anything. What's the point of that relationship if he can't exploit the King's fondness for him?"

"Look, I'm not going to ask my father to take advantage of anyone; I don't care how much the other person has. But I'll ask Uncle Drona directly if he'll accept me. I'd really rather not take away his time from the princes, since that might get him into trouble. Perhaps he can set aside some time in the evenings?"

"Of course! Father will gladly take you on. He hasn't forgotten his own upbringing, and seeing you are a willing student, will remind him of his own youthful curiosities."

Aswathama's words rang bitterly in my mind now. Not only had Drona rejected me, but he had accused me of vanity to consider myself worthy of individual tutelage from him, the highly selected royal arms instructor. "I only teach Kshetriyas, men bound for greatness, not minions who dare out step their rightful place in the social order." And that was the catalyst for my quest to find Parshuram, that Brahmin lord of destruction; to go directly to the source of the great master warrior.

But alas! Cruel reality! Is there no Guru whom I can please? Neither Surya nor Drona and now not even Parshuram! How I had hoped to be destined for the great art of warfighting! Have I really been birthed simply to chariot greater men?

I had knelt down and put my hands together. "Yes Guruji, I shamefully admit I am no Brahmin. But I did not come to you as a Kshetriya either; the truth is I am a *Suta-putra*, the son of Adhiratha, a charioteer. Though I am the offspring of a humble servant, my earliest memories have been the urges to be a war fighter. O Brahmin warrior, you who destroyed the Sahasrarjuna clan to avenge your father, how can you crush me likewise, your reverent student? Having heard of your glory, I sought your guidance. Fearing your rejection, like that of Drona for simply not being of worthy lineage, I sacrificed Truth for my sense of Duty. Please forgive this

failure of my character. I beseech you, Guru, to retract your heated words! I am not your nemesis of the Kshetriya breed.”

As I spoke, I saw Parshuram’s eyebrows furrow deeper, but the redness in his eyes had dissipated and his face had slackened. “Yes,” he said with calmer voice, “you are a Kshetriya. And you have known it always though you may not have been sure to believe in it. I know your mind, Karna. You, who were born with a golden armor and earrings as skin, how could you be anything less than a warrior hero? Even greater, how could you not be something divine? You have thought over these things constantly; uncertain, but hopeful. You are right about your Duty; you are built for and meant for fighting. I hereby confirm this Truth to you.”

I remained rooted to the ground, stunned again. “Alas,” he continued, “I am unable to void my Curse to you. For just as you are destined for fighting; you also are destined for dying. To assuage this burden though, I gift you with another celestial weapon, the Bargavastra.” He reached out his right hand and helped me to stand. I felt a rush of energy course through my arms and into my torso like water rushing into an empty tank. “Despite being dishonest upon entrance to my gate of knowledge, you have been a most honest student along the way. For this, I bestow a final gift to you: my own Bow! May you wield it to bring about the destruction of unrighteousness.” With his left hand he thrust Vijaya into mine.

Dizzy with his words I replied, “O great Guru, for over a decade you have taught me all the lethal dances of the battlefield. I am grateful. But the knowledge you have given me this hour; that I am indeed a Kshetriya; that, I feel, has made me a Man. Despite your hatred for this caste and the looming of your Curse, I can now feel my destiny. Feel it not with anxious hope but with utmost and fervent certainty.”

There had been no reason to prolong my stay at Mount Mahendra. The following day with final obeisance to Parshuram, I left his home, my home of the last twelve years. Slipping in between the thinning trees, I continued to make my way towards the river Mahanadi, recounting over and over my last lesson. *I. Am. Kshetriya.*

Kshetriya!

Doomed!

Hoh, cruel Fate! Why do you taunt me? Even my last words to Parshuram were lies. Rather I would have remained in the unknown and free of this disease!

No, that’s not true. Stop lying to yourself! I needed to know the truth. I wanted to know. I am relieved that I now know.

But a curse for the price of Knowledge? That can not be fair, Lord!

Unless, no... yes,, it was the price of my untruth.

Sigh. Yes, that is the Truth.

Twelve years gone! Sixty three days of wandering it had been for me to find Guruji. All that distance and time away from my family! Has this all been in vain?

O cruel scorpion! Who sent you?

Thunder crashed overhead. I was startled to see that cumulous clouds had crept into the sky and rays of the Sun had been overpowered. Moments later thick drops landed on my hair, my unfeeling upper body and then my exposed arms. I heard the heavy sounds of an unknown beast bounding behind me and my hands snapped to my quiver and then with glinting arrow to Parshuram’s Bow. Before I had completely pulled myself out of my thoughts, I pulled the arrow and let fly. This would bring about the second Curse upon my head.

Ms. Sharmistha Mohapatra is a 2005 graduate from The Johns Hopkins University. She is also a US Army veteran who served on combat tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan. She will be attending the Teachers College at Columbia University starting this fall to pursue a Masters degree in health education.

Innovation and the rest....

Kishore Mishra

Innovation is a complex thing. One cannot design a course or devise a method to teach people how to innovate. However, one can create awareness, accentuate the benefits of innovation, extend support and provide help to make Innovation possible.

Innovation and Analytical ability are mostly two separate things; sometimes they can coexist and work with each other well. Innovation is inductive and Analysis is deductive. Innovation thrives on lack of data; Analysis is formed on a bed of data. When there is scant information, no established trend and things are least clear, the innovator comes in and uses his imagination and inductive leap of faith to build and see things entirely in his mind before it takes its solid forms in the real world later. The analyst on the other hand, uses a different mental faculty to find commonality, trends and tries to make sense out of seemingly chaotic things. Both are important, and some people may have a natural talents in one of these and some special people may be good at both.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship are often put in the same bucket, and used interchangeably. Though they are not exactly same they share many important common genes. Both require taking risks and creating something.

The other interesting thing about Innovation is that it has often sprouted from the seemingly negative human traits. I won't be surprised if someone compiles some data and finds that a significant percentage of innovations have taken birth out of these seemingly negative human traits: inconvenience, discomfort, lack of facility, adversity, rebellion, non-conformity, impatience, and rejection.

In any case, every situation is unique like every human being. With due respect to all, respect your individual self.

Nothing like it!

Kishore Mishra

Cruising along the Pacific coast with an open mind on an open road, leaving behind the busy skylines of the city and vanishing into the idyllic beauty of pristine nature in the wee hours of a summer morning – Nothing like it.

Sitting on the river sand in the remote countryside as time has stands still, watching the sun going down; relishing the sweet aroma of fresh, beautiful roses in the garden; inhaling the dusty and musky smell of the first rain of the season is simply priceless– Nothing like it.

The adolescent silent flush and blush you had at the thoughts of your sweetheart, the anticipation, the excitement and the adrenaline rush of meeting your first love – Nothing like it.

An unexpected encounter with your childhood buddy after twenty years or so, both trying to relive the sweet childhood memories in an hour is like a torrential rain gushing down the stream – Nothing like it.

The match has been a tie, and it has come down to the last minute. You scored the winning goal for your team at the last five seconds; the joy and pride – Nothing like it.

Away from home on a lengthy business tour, hopping on the earliest flight back home; the joy of hugging your kids – Nothing like it.

Your little act of generosity to a complete stranger – Nothing like it.

The freedom to live your life without any burden or bondage is the best gift of Life.
Nothing like it!

Mr. Kishore Mishra lives in Santa Clara with wife Dolly, son Aniket and daughter Tamanna. He graduated from NIT Rourkela and obtained MS from University of Toledo, OH. He loves to write short essays with a touch of positivism.. He also has interest in development of Orissa, and entrepreneurial activities.

The man who sought Nirvana

Prasanna Pati

It had been almost half a century since I attended the great Car Festival of Lord Jagannath, at Puri, in the Indian State of Orissa. I wasn't sure if it had been in 1947 or 1948? I was not even sure if I had gone there as a devout pilgrim or as a tourist on a sightseeing jaunt. Now I was looking forward to attending the same festival in America, in the Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. I had been in private practice of psychiatry in San Francisco for a number of years. My office at Arguello Boulevard was just walking distance from the park and I was keenly waiting for June 23rd, the date of the festival.

Sunday, June 23rd was a cloudy day. I got up early and read several pages of the Bhagavad Gita, the centerpiece of Hindu philosophy. Jagannath represents Lord Krishna of the Gita. On my way to the park, I had breakfast at Bamboo Curtain one of my favorite Chinese restaurants. I saw many people of Indian origin, walking towards the Park. I was looking forward to a day of festivity, rituals and *mela*, that ancient custom of getting together in Hindu festivals. I was walking along at a leisurely pace when I heard someone behind me, "Dr. Sonjee, please wait for a minute; I hope you do not mind my coming with you to the festival." I stopped and greeted this white man with a "Good morning, looked at him closely and said, "I do not think that I know you." "Dr. Sonjee, I wouldn't expect you to. It was maybe 3 years back that I met you briefly at the Asian Art Museum; during a special exhibition of miniature paintings of the Moghul Empire of India." I laughed and said, "Lately my memory is not very good; I am sorry, I cannot recall the meeting." I was about to continue towards the festival when he said, "I am George Hexton; I would like to accompany you."

George turned out to be a very pleasant and friendly companion. He was quite knowledgeable about India the great Hindu festivals. I assumed he belonged to the Hare Krishna movement, although he was not dressed in the Hare Krishna garb. We enjoyed the festival very much; the chariot of the Lord being pulled by devotees. It was a mini version of the Great

Festival at Puri. Nevertheless, it had certain spiritual significance for me. George seemed to participate fully in this spiritual experience.

On conclusion of the program, I was ready to walk back to my office and said, "George, I really enjoyed your company. Maybe, we will meet again. May the Lord Jagannath be with you." "Dr. Sonjee, it is almost time for dinner", he said "I am going to the China Moon Restaurant; would you like to join me?"

During dinner we chatted mostly about Hinduism and the festival. At one point, George said, "Dr. Sonjee, you are a psychiatrist. You have studied Carl Jung's theory of the Collective Unconscious." I was not about to get into any discussion with George on this subject but before I could cut him off, he proceeded to inform me that he was haunted by recollections of his previous birth in India. My immediate reaction was that here was yet another offbeat American, fascinated by Hindu philosophy. George must have sensed this for he said, "Dr. Sonjee, have you visited the cremation sites on the Ganges at Varanasi?"

"Yes, I have been there twice, why?"

"I can recall that I was cremated there in my previous life."

I started laughing and said, "Do you expect me to buy your incredulous story? First, the concept of reincarnation is a matter of faith for the Hindus, with profound philosophical significance; second, the Jungian concept of Collective Unconscious has been debunked and third, even as a Hindu, I have much difficulty with this concept." George was persistent that I hear out his story. Finally I said, "If you insist, I will listen."

We fixed a date a few days later to meet for dinner at the Empress of China restaurant in Chinatown. George was very warm and friendly, and he proceeded with the following story. "Dr. Sonjee, do you recall that you told me on our first meeting that you were from Orissa? I

was born in 1880 in the ancient city of Cuttack. Mind you, I have never been to India, in my present birth." "How do I know that you have not concocted the whole thing?" I responded. "Let me finish; Dr. Sonjee. You might be familiar with that city. I was born in a locality called Maria Bazaar. My father was a shopkeeper of general goods, spices, oil, rice, sugar, etc. My mother was illiterate, but a devout Hindu. I had a brother 4 years younger." I was getting impatient with this story, and just to test him, asked if he could recall his name in this so called previous birth. "Yes, Dr. Sonjee, my name was Nilamani Sahu." I knew it was a typical Oriya name but I still suspected George to be a master storyteller. He continued, "In those days, Cuttack was sparsely populated, full of trees. I went to school until the 3rd grade. Around age 10, I started helping my father in his shop."

I gently reminded George that it was getting late, and I had a very busy schedule with my patients the next day, "George, let us come to Varanasi, cremation site of your previous birth." "I had a relatively stable life at Cuttack. As a young man, I took over my father's business, got married, and became relatively prosperous. I was a regular devotee of the Cuttack Chandi. I made annual trips to the Car Festival of Lord Jagannath at Puri." I interrupted him, "George, anyone can read about this and make a story out of it." "Dr. Sonjee, let me finish. With prosperity came greed. I became obsessed with money; it became my God, though I pretended that I was a great devotee of Jagannath. I went into money-lending business and charged exorbitant interests. I hired local anti-socials to threaten the debtors. Apart from amassing money, I enjoyed having a power over the debtors. On the surface, I pretended that I was a devout Hindu. The rituals and festivals in my house in Maria Bazaar were celebrated with pomp. I would go around with folded hands to greet the guests. I would frequently utter the various names of Vishnu. When guests would complement me, I would ascribe all the credit to Lord Jagannath."

"George, do you mean to say that you were leading a double life?" "Not necessarily, I had convinced myself that I was a great devotee of Jagannath, Lord Shiva and the Goddess of Cuttack. Money making was just a part of life. Yes, I was aware on a certain level, of my greed

and the exploitation of people; but I believed that my sins were washed away daily with my devotion and visits to the temples."

"Do you recall any feelings of guilt? Were you ashamed of yourself? It appears that you harassed, exploited and threatened many, many families. Did you get any feedback from others?" "Dr. Sonjee, of course; I was aware that people talked behind my back. In fact, I actively cultivated shamelessness because only then could I do anything."

"George, so far it is not much of a story. The world is full of such people. In summary, you were a shameless, sadistic, selfish and rich man; but more dangerous, because on the surface, you had all the pretensions of deep spirituality, and devotion."

"Dr. Sonjee, you are getting impatient. There is no summary or finality to such stories. In any event, let me come to the incident that turned my life around."

"I distinctly remember that evening, a very pleasant one in the month of October. I went to the temple of Cuttack Chandi to pray and participate in the ceremonial ritual. On the way back home, I had to pass through a mango grove near a pond. It was a bit late, but I had walked alone on that path many times before. I heard footsteps behind me. I thought perhaps other devotees were returning home from the temple. I looked behind and could see only a shadowy figure. After I entered the mango grove, that shadowy figure came just behind me. I heard a voice, "Sir, the Goddess has directed me to kill you tonight. She symbolizes the triumph of good over evil." I started trembling in apprehension. I protested, saying that I was a staunch devotee of the Goddess. He said something like, "Your lackeys have been threatening to kidnap my only child, aged 10, and to kill him if I do not pay you back the money I owe. My child, wife and I are living in a nightmare day and night. I too went to the Goddess this evening for guidance and she gave me this order."

"George, did he have any weapon in his hand?" "I could vaguely make out an axe raised over his right shoulder. I prostrated myself on the ground; touched his feet crying, asking him to spare my

life. I promised him huge sums of money. Then, I felt the axe strike my left shoulder.”

“George, I am sorry to interrupt you. Am I to believe that you remember all these details from your previous life?” I asked incredulously.

“Dr. Sonjee, I woke in a hospital the next day. You remember the huge hospital campus near Manglabagh of Cuttack. Luckily for me, the axe had missed my neck. That was in 1930. On recovery, I transferred all my business to my sons. I became a recluse; I gave up going to temples. One night I had a dream that I should go to Varanasi and wait there for Death, to attain Nirvana. My wife accompanied me to Varanasi.”

“George, is this the end of your story? You died on the bank of the sacred river Ganges and were cremated. Thus, you attained salvation? But it seems you did not attain Nirvana, which is the end of the cycle of birth and rebirth and the merging with the Brahman.” “Dr. Sonjee, it seems that way.” He smiled and gave me his phone number.

In due time, this encounter with George faded from my memory until one day when I had a business lunch with a psychiatrist colleague at China Moon. I called George the same evening. A female voice answered the phone. I introduced myself and told her about my encounter with George. There was a moment of silence. Finally, she said, “Dr. Sonjee, I am Jane.

George is my boyfriend. He left for India about a year ago, for the holy Hindu city of Varanasi. Just prior to his departure, he seemed obsessed with the idea that he had to go there to be an ascetic and die there to attain Nirvana. Dr. Sonjee, I love him and we were planning to get married. I let him go assuming that he would get over this craziness and return soon. So far, I have had no word from him. Dr. Sonjee, I am having nightmares about him being cremated on the banks of your Holy River Ganges in Varanasi. I am hearing his voice assuring me that he would be back. He had told me that in his previous life, he had lived in the city of Cuttack in Orissa and that he was a devotee of the Goddess Kali. Sometimes, I hear the voice of the Goddess and have visions of the Goddess cradling him, like a baby in her arms. Dr. Sonjee, you are a Brahmin, born into the priest class of the Hindus. Can you perform a ritual in San Francisco, to bring him back to me? Dr. Sonjee, on your next trip to India can you please stop in Varanasi, to search for him and persuade him to return?”

Translated by the author, Dr. Prasanna Pati of Salem, Oregon is a retired Oregon State Hospital psychiatrist. He is a regular contributor to OSA Souvenirs and is also an actor/consultant in the Hollywood classic 'One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest' filmed in Salem



The Adviser

Biswajit Mishra

I am so wealthy with the riches overflowing
 What do I do with it not really knowing.
 Heavy it is and so very gross
 Not sure if this is really green or just some moss.
 For I know not if there is room with anyone to take
 some from me
 As I brood day and night never thinking though to
 come out of it free.
 I sometimes believe there is none as generous as
 me
 Who can only give and never take a penny.
 Oh give, I sure do, unasked and unsought ever so
 If you have not tasted my treat pray come and
 take it now.
 Ever ready and willing I am with my donations
 day or night
 You will not find a provider as willing and ready at
 sight.
 Brimming with it to give away I am always fluent
 Does not matter if for the receiver it turns out
 effluent.
 With this wealth ready for distribution the large
 me romps like a buffoon
 When I don't know it is just a small me inside a
 large empty balloon.
 Always on the tide but never with an ebb
 Oozing out it is to be given with no need to rev.
 Oh! If I could find a way to turn its flow inward
 That would sure make me move forward;
 And give me the sight to see the beauty
 As ugliness lies in the eyes of the beholder at this
 sea.
 Friends, see how tricky is that little me and how
 zany
 With this poem too is trying to win points brownie.

McMaster Library, Hamilton April 19, 2011

Fragile

Devraj Sahu

Months and years of peace
 Shatter like fallen glass
 Triggered by a freak wind,
 Irreversibly.

Was the glass on edge
 Did the wind play tricks
 Or was it destiny
 Or fragility?

Did peace dwell in the glass
 Did chaos reside in the wind
 Or complexity bring confusion
 Or breaking rejuvenate life?

Peace reappears
 New glass shines
 Wind blows
 In the calm before the storm.

Days and nights roll
 Autumns and winters pass
 Searching for tenderness
 To find fragility along the way.

Dr. Devaraj Sahu lives in North Potomac, MD. He played for Berhampur University in the Eastern Zone and Inter-zone basketball tournaments. He represented Orissa in basketball Nationals. He was a lecturer in the Post Graduate Department of Physics of Berhampur University. His PhD is in theoretical condensed matter physics from Michigan State University. He is a satellite engineer with SES-Americom in McLean, Virginia.

A Raja's story

Yasodhara Mishra



Finishing his tea Vikram put down the cup on the table. Turning to Shivprasad he said, "Leave your newspaper alone and think of something better to do." Looking at the sky added, "These evenings seem never ending here. "Putting away his newspaper, Shivprasad replied in between gulps of tea "You have to read this three-day-old paper as though it was a detective novel. What else can you do in this jungle, tell me?" They were sitting in the *verandah* of the forest *dak* bungalow which dated back to the good old days. Vikram Sharma had newly been posted here as a *tehsildar* while Shivprasad, an official in the Forest Department, had been in this area for the last three years. The *verandah* faced a bedraggled garden patch and beyond it ran a narrow paved road which had been constructed a few years earlier from one end of the small town to the other, in honour of a visiting minister of the state. At that time the *dak* bungalow had also been given a face-lift with new curtains and furniture.

Lachmanpur was a remote non-descript *moffusil* town. Originally, a small tribal principality of Chhattisgarh, it was later made the *tehsil* headquarters. It still remained almost a village; only once in a while a gust of city breeze passed over it. On the road through the middle of the town, tribal girls, their hair plaited with red and blue ribbons walked past in groups, singing in their high pitched voice, wearing bright saris and short *cholis*. With arms around each other's waists and shoulders they looked like garlands of long-stalked *rangni* flowers. Men going to the weekly market with their head loads walked along the road in a file, as though still walking on field abutments.

His quarters being under repair since the past month, Vikram had been staying in the *dak* bungalow. During this period he had gained a fair acquaintance with Lachmanpur's social life. He had seen that other government servants had also come to Lachmanpur against their wishes, leaving families behind. Like him everyone else was pulling all their strings to be posted to a bigger place. Come evening, most of them would

gather around the card tables in the one-room club house. Till 10 or so in the night, the clubhouse resounded with their talk and laughter. In between there were short lulls when their attention would be focused on their cards, when all that could be heard was the hissing of the *petromax* lamp nearby and the howling of the jackals in the distance. The government quarters had been fitted with electric lights and fans but the power was supplied only for 3 hours in the evening by a diesel generator. Then the street lights would suddenly come on, dim and winking like hurricane lanterns. In the *dak* bungalow and the club-house the hundred watt bulbs would light up like fifteen watt ones and the fans moved fitfully as if propelled by gusts of wind.

The nearest town was 36 miles away, connected by a *kutchra* road with two shallow streams enroute, with no bridges over them. Every year before winter a makeshift road would be made right through the river bed, and after summer it would get washed away by the monsoon rains. After that, communication to the town was cut off and all traffic more or less ceased.

Shivprasad was gustily narrating his last year's experience of *shikar*. After coming here most of the handful of government officials bought guns and took to the new hobby of hunting. Young new-comers to the place like Vikram Sharma were naturally fired by this desire on hearing the exploits of others. As for Shivprasad, the listeners were obliged with ever new stories of his jungle exploits each time he got into narrating one. This one went something like this: One night he was passing through a steep *ghat* road in a jeep when all of a sudden came into his view, a full sized tiger, sauntering majestically down the craggy hill side. The jeep, already slow because of the narrow winding roads, slowed down further and its headlights fell full on the menacingly magnificent animal leisurely crossing the road. The game, teasing the hunter in him from so close, was impossible to let go of. Shivprasad picked up his rifle and gesturing the driver to brake, took aim at the tiger. Just as he fired, the animal seemed to freeze for a fraction

of a second and then sprang into the dense thicket, disappearing down the hill side. Next moment, its wild roar from the forest below meant that the bullet had injured the tiger, but not fatally. Shivprasad knew from past experience that at such times it is best to leave the spot quickly. His jeep had traveled only some distance when at a sharp turn of the road he saw two eyes, smouldering like live coal from behind a high rock. On his left was a deep gorge shrouded in darkness. Luckily for him Shivprasad had taken over from the driver by now. Just as he pressed the accelerator the tiger leaped from the rock and he heard it land on the road behind as they sped away. Sweat broke out on Shivprasad's body. It had not dried when at the next turning he again saw two bright eyes glaring at him from atop a boulder. That night Shivprasad had to face the tiger four times and had got away unscathed through his sheer driving skills. And such was his narrative skill that Vikram listened to him with bated breath. At the end his joints felt like they had been welded together. Bringing his breathing to normal Vikram stretched his limbs, sprawled in the chair and ordered two more cups of tea.

"You only know how to spin yarns," he said to Shivprasad. "When are you going to fix a *shikar* trip, like you promised? And yes, what about my gun? You told me that you would make enquiries." Shivprasad was silent for a while. Then he said, "I had thought of getting you a gun from the Raja Saheb. He is a stiff funny fellow. Why not go to him personally; he'll feel flattered. Lots of people have purchased guns from him."

The next day Vikram sent word to the Raja Saheb and in the evening after his office he started for the palace. From a distance he could see the vast boundary of the palace, long stretches of mud walls with narrow tiled roofs, overtaken by weeds at places. The palace itself hardly looked more than a cluster of decrepit houses; most of its earthen portions already reduced to rubble. Only the middle concrete part still held its ground, resolute and obstinate like a soldier long after the battle was over. The path to the main palace gate looked dusty and forlorn, littered with cow dung and dry leaves. Standing at the half shut gate, Vikram looked around, wondering about his next step. Before long the gate door opened further and a middle-

aged man in a red shirt and turban emerged from behind, a *biri* between his lips. He seemed to size Vikram up, eyeing him from head to toe. Then sitting down right there on the door sill he resumed his smoking. For a moment Vikram thought this man must know who he was, the most important government official around the place. But on second thoughts approaching the man he asked, "Raja Saheb is expecting me. Is he in?" The man did not so much as stir. His answer came through twirls of *biri* smoke, "He has gone out hunting."

"Hunting? All by himself?"

"No, Rani Saheba has accompanied him."

Vikram felt like giving a blow to this impudent fool. That would show him who he was. As if reading his mind the man blinked his watery eyes and said in a bland voice, "It appears you are new to this place. I don't think I have seen you before." Vikram looked around, wondering whether to wait or leave. "Gone for hunting in this broad daylight?" he asked. "When is he likely to return anyway?"

"He will return in good time." The man got up abruptly as if he remembered something, stubbing out his *biri* he tucked it behind his ear, called out to someone and started running towards the road. Following him with his eyes Vikram saw a big herd of cows returning home at dusk; must belong to palace, he thought. Still running the man shouted over his shoulder, "Saheb! Raja Saab is back".

Vikram looked into the distance in the hope of spotting a vehicle. Through the cloud of dust raised by cow hoofs and tainted orange by the setting sun, he saw a bicycle slowly emerging. As the scene shifted closer, he saw a tall, gaunt man riding the cycle, a gun resting on his shoulder and a dead duck dangling from the handle. Sitting behind the rider was a woman, discernible by her sari. As the cycle came close to the gate the pillion rider jumped off with alacrity. The rider wiped his face with a handkerchief and called out "Hey, *sala* Ramu, where are you? Take this cycle, you rogue!" A youth in a red shirt and turban, Ramu to be sure, came running from nowhere, and with a polite "Ji huzoor!" took charge of the bicycle.

Getting over his surprise, Vikram drew near the man and said, "I presume you are the Raja Saheb of this palace." He was a slim man around thirty, with a lean and longish face, wearing jeans and a shirt of the latest style. Removing his dark glasses he asked in an unmistakably well-accented English, "May I know whom I am talking to?" Vikram introduced himself to the Raja who seemed to know his European manners to a nicety. After a stiff yet warm welcome Vikram was lead into the palace. In the meanwhile the Rani Saheba had disappeared into the inner quarters. In spite of her fashionable synthetic sari it was quite evident that she had a local tribal background, with her roundish blunt features and the blue-black tattoo marks on her chin and nose.

Inside, the palace seemed to belong to a different time, with its high tiled roofs and polished wooden beams. Plaster had peeled off the walls and fissures ran along like streaks of lightening. A wide verandah with rooms behind surrounded the huge courtyard. A few menials in red shirts and turbans were seen leisurely going about their business. A big door opened into an inner courtyard. Suddenly an angry female voice pierced the calm and Vikram saw a woman framed by the doorway. The sight of a man in a dress suit seemed to freeze her for a moment and then she turned back and disappeared. What was there in the inner courtyard, Vikram wondered, a harem of tribal women under thatched roofs? On the high verandah walls rows of stuffed stag and wild buffalo heads looked down at him, their skins covered with dust and cracks of long neglect. The drawing room was opened. The once rich sofa sets had their soiled seats sunk into hollows. The walls had all sizes of heavily framed photographs with an odd oil painting or two thrown in between, taxidermi-ed heads of stags, leopards, and royal Bengal tigers and intricately carved doors.

Tea came after a while, a simple affair without paraphernalia. Raja Saheb sipped his tea gravely. His complexion must have been fair once, now sun burnt to a dull copper. The haircut was in the latest fashion though his clothes looked unkempt. Drinking had made his brown eyes take on a red hue, deeper at the rims as though he had applied some special kohl. Since the Raja showed no signs of starting a conversa-

tion Vikram broke the ice. "You seem to be very fond of hunting", he said, "Did you hunt all these animals?" The rigidity on the Raja's face dissolved into a soft smile.

"No, most of the hunting was done by my father and my grandfather" he replied. "My father was renowned for his hunting. He used to travel to far off places in search of game, had single handedly killed one hundred and thirty tigers."

"But you too seem to be equally fond of *shikar*. Even today you had gone out hunting I think."

Vikram realized his mistake. The smile on the Raja's face faded. His eyes on his cup of tea, he replied with knitted brows "I do hunt a little," he said, "just to kill time." "And you must be aware that hunting has been banned now." Vikram searched his mind for some new topic that would suit this Raja. This was no place to talk about petty business right away. "I have heard a lot about your father", he said, "but I don't think you would remember your state days."

Raja Saheb raised his eyes from the cup as if to assess the words. The line between his eyebrows vanished and the relaxed smile returned to his face. He got up to introduce his ancestors in the photographs and elaborate on the trophies with historical details. He resumed his seat, his eyes on the pigeons on the moss covered tiled roof in the evening sun and ruminated about his childhood; about his days in the famous Rajkumar College of Raipur, an exclusive school for princely families; about how he missed his that and his principal who was a 'damn smart chap', and also his tutor who was 'a real genius' in his knowledge of cocktails. It was this man who taught him a few tricks of *shikar*. Raja Saheb had not been to his old school in sometime. But how could he? His dad sold off his two limousines while he was still alive.

The pigeons were no longer there on the faded tiles. The red sunlight had also disappeared and the dark evening was descending over the palace. His patience running, Vikram tried to get back to his mission, but Raja Saheb went back to his illustrious ancestry. "My father-in-law, Veer Gangadhar Sai was the most illustrious Raja of Chhattisgarh and a famous hunter" he said, "I am sure you have heard his name."

The mention of father-in-law brought to Vikram's mind the Rani on Raja Saheb's cycle. He also recalled someone telling him that when Raja Saheb was very young his father, the old Raja had arranged his marriage with the princess of Sarangarh. By the time of this Raja's wedding the old Raja had already fallen into bad times, ailing with consumption and his state gone. Shortly after his death the daughter-in-law went back to her parent's place and never returned. The young Raja never visited his in-laws.

When the Raja paused Vikram seized the opportune moment. "You know Raja Saheb; I am also very fond of *shikar*. But I don't have a gun. I'm told you have lots of guns you don't use and wouldn't mind disposing of. If you could please spare one for me ..." Even in that dim light the sudden keenness in Raja Saheb's eyes was unmistakable, though his manners remained casual and disinterested. After a suitable pause, he cleared his throat and said, "If you need a gun I am can spare one for you. It will be my pleasure, in fact." Then he got up and personally went in to fetch a gun. When the gun was removed from its case, Vikram was overtaken by surprise and disappointment. It was an old gun showing signs of disuse and rust. Vikram took the gun and examined it half-heartedly. "Don't you have any other gun?" he asked at last. "I mean it's a gun of the old vintage; the cartridges may not be available easily." Without batting an eyelid, Raja Saheb said, "No I'm sorry, I don't have another gun. People took them away. After the merger of our state we had no use for these and my father just gave away many. You know it is not easy to get a license these days; so I disposed of my firearms."

Vikram put the gun back with a sigh, but before it could touch the table Raja Saheb picked it up and started showing its parts and explaining their fine points to Vikram. "In this dim light it does not show to advantage", he said, "but the fact is this is unique. You won't be able to get a gun of this type anywhere now. As for the cartridges, you can get them from Calcutta. I'll give you the firm's address." Heartened by Raja Saheb's enthusiasm, Vikram said "If you don't mind, what about the gun you were carrying this evening?" Raja Saheb's gusto seemed to dry up suddenly. The wooden frown returned to his face. Resting his back against the sofa he said politely "That

gun has been with me for ages. There is no question of my parting with it." Vikram realized that he had trodden on the Raja's foot again. There seemed to be some unseen boundaries of the Raja's self respect which he must not trespass. "I'm sorry, I didn't know", Vikram apologized.

As he was turning over the old gun in his hands an idea occurred to him. This gun could pass for an antique. If he could get it cheap perhaps some day he would get a good price for it. "Well, I think I'll buy it after all", he said politely. "I suppose we could decide about it right away...I mean the price." Without beating about the bush, the Raja asked straight, "How much are you thinking of paying?" Raja Saheb's business-like attitude made things easier. "Raja Saheb, it's an old gun and you can see it can't fetch you a high price. I can't offer you more than five."

"Eight. Well, make it eight."

Vikram thought eight hundred was not much for this gun. Besides, he did not feel good about haggling with the scion from royalty.

"Well, may I take away the gun then? I would like to have some cartridges so I can try the gun first. If everything is alright, I'll send you the money tomorrow, eight hundred."

Raja Saheb was getting up from his sofa, and stopped midway. "Eight Hundred?" he sat back. "What are you saying? I had meant eight grand.

Eight thousand!"

Vikram looked stunned, but broke into a smile the next moment. "You mean eight thousand rupees for this obsolete weapon?" He started laughing deliberately. "Well, let it remain with you," he said. "Anyway one can't go out hunting with this gun of Sepoy Mutiny vintage. I was thinking of keeping this old thing just for fun. But I see no point in paying eight thousand rupees for it. I'm sorry, Raja Saheb." Raja Saheb looked as though he had an iron mask for a face. He got up and said in a calm voice, "It's all right. In fact I was in no mood to part with it, but since you were so keen about it I thought..."

The next day while Vikram was changing his clothes after returning from office, his peon announced, "Sir, the Raja Saheb is here." He saw a mixed expression of respect and levity for Raja Saheb on the peon's face, an attitude he had seen in many of the locals for their ex-king. Raja Saheb said, "I was passing by and thought I would drop in for a moment. "So nice of you" Vikram said, "please sit down." Of course everyone knew too well that Raja Saheb was not the type to call on others to make friends and socialize. He lived his days wearing an imaginary garb of a king. Perhaps he believed royalty to be his birthright, even though he never actually was a king. He was like a caricature of a king. He could barely keep up the consciously worn image which slipped off his face at unguarded moments, like a cheap children's mask worn. The poor Raja seemed to remember his mask all of a sudden and lifted it from his neck to fit on the face again.

After tea and the usual topics of the weather and the radio news Raja Saheb said, "The wind is a bit chilly here, let's move inside, if you don't mind. Vikram could guess that the two peons, eyeing them, whispering and sniggering a little distance away, were responsible for this move. Settling down in a chair, the Raja said in his stylish accented English, "To be sure, it was far from my intention last evening to disappoint you. I hope you have not taken me amiss." "Oh no, not at all. Why should I take you amiss?" Vikram tried to read his mind. Suddenly he felt mellowed towards this eccentric and helpless Raja. "Raja Saheb, after all you are the scion of a royal family," Vikram said with extra politeness. "Eight thousand rupees may mean nothing to you, but it is a huge lot of money for a man like me. I just can't afford it." Raja Saheb leaned forward and said in an earnest tone, "But you had liked the gun, didn't you? And you wanted to buy it too. Then you have things your way. Keep the gun. It will only rust at my place." Vikram was at a loss for an answer. He tried to fathom what this man wanted to tell him. Raja Saheb pressed home the point in an amiable tone. "You see, you have come here, to my state, as a government official. And I have not been able to do any thing for you," he said. "In the times of my father and my grandfather you would have been our state guest." Vikram conjured up the vision of Raja Saheb's father or grandfather, with looks of a

formidable fairy tale king, talking to a humble functionary of the government like himself.

Raja Saheb got up from his chair. "I'll send you the gun today. I know you had taken a fancy to it. Yesterday after you left I felt so low. It was such a small thing you wanted and I could not offer it to you." Vikram was overtaken by a strange sympathy that almost hurt. But while going out to see him off, the Raja's face was barely visible in the dark, and a bizarre urge came from nowhere to titillate him, throttling his sympathy and waking up a long sedate childish prankishness. As a child he had read all sorts of stories about kings and princes. A poor Brahmin once picked up courage and went to the Emperor's palace to try his fortune. In such a story Vikram could only identify himself with the poor Brahmin. On this quiet evening if only Vikram's childhood would return for a moment! A real Raja's son had come to him, asking him a favour, begging almost. Weighing his words carefully, Vikram said "Look, I've thought over the matter again. Yesterday in my enthusiasm I did not consider certain things. On my meager salary I have to look after my family. Even eight hundred rupees is a little too much for me. If it could be five hundred ..." Raja Saheb's face was not clearly visible in the dark. But he replied in his usual calm voice, "You may give me whatever you care to. Don't let the amount bother you anymore. I'm sorry I'm not in a position to make a gift of it to you. Good night."

Soon after a man in a red shirt and turban brought him the gun in question, "It has been cleaned and oiled" the man said. "Raja Saheb has sent some cartridges also along with the gun." In less than an hour after Vikram had been sitting there all alone, he heard Harish Gupta's squeaky voice traveling up to the veranda in the dark. "Namaste, Saab, How come you haven't gone to the club today?" As always Vikram's response was lukewarm towards this local businessman/politician. Gupta sat down in the adjoining chair. "So this is the gun you purchased from Raja Saheb?" he said looking at the gun. Vikram nodded. "I ran into Raja Saheb on my way to the club." Gupta's voice was more warm and confidential this time. "But how could someone like you get duped like this, sir?" Vikram refused to let himself get persuaded into any conversation on this topic, and getting up from his chair said, "I was just about to go to the

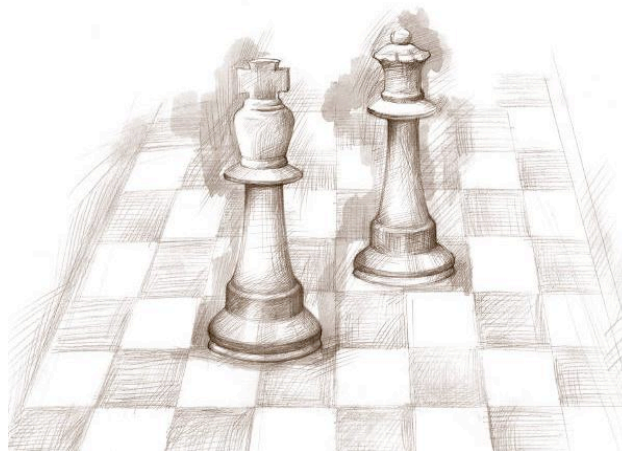
club. Are you coming?" Vikram knew that Gupta knew Raja Saheb well and on occasions they even went together on *shikar*. "That rascal of a Raja dared to cheat you sir? Took eight thousand rupees! For this rotten rusty thing?" "Eight thousand? Who told you that?" Vikram asked, unable to dodge him this time. "Why, that Raja himself told me," Gupta said, "the fellow owes me some money, you see." "Strange! We settled down for five hundred rupees only half an hour ago. Is he really crazy?" Without commenting this time on Vikram's last query, Gupta gave his full consent on the price of the gun. Banging his fist on the table he said, "Right sir! Don't pay him a *paisa* more than five hundred. You want to buy it for fun, don't you? Infect this one is just scrap and will be of no use. Earlier people have taken away such good guns from him, at throw away prices. He usually starts with ten thousand rupees. The thing is, when he gets fed up with country liquor and wants a drop of scotch, he sells some knick-knack from his palace. Any customer would do. And once he decides on his foreign liquor you can buy anything from him, just stick to your price."

A few days later Vikram was returning from an evening stroll when he saw Raja Saheb's lanky form in the bungalow- veranda. He was a little more spruced up than usual. After the formalities

Raja Saheb said, with his bland mimicry of a smile on his inscrutable face, "Could I have a word with you, on something urgent." Vikram did not quite feel at ease now in this man's grim presence. Looking at his watch he said, "Sure. Go ahead please." Raja Saheb stood silent for a while as if groping for words. "I'm sorry I could not offer you the gun as a gift", he said at last. "It's indeed a matter of shame for me. But what give and take we had, out of regard for each other, if the facts could remain between us ..." The Raja hung on to a polite smile on his lips, but the rest of his face seemed oblivious of it. Unable to get the hang of things Vikram kept silent. "The genuine price of my gun is not five hundred but eight thousand rupees." Raja Saheb said. His lips looked as though it were unable to carry the weight of his smile. "You can't deny sir, that the price of my gun is eight thousand rupees. Not five hundred. You may tell everyone if you must, that you have purchased the gun. But sir, its price is eight thousand."

The humble appeal in the Raja's voice made it impossible for Vikram to want to hurt his feelings. At the gate he warmly shook hands with the Raja as if they were old friends. "Sometimes I say things unthinkingly," he said "but rest assured, I'll tell them that this gun is a gift from you."

Translated by the author, Dr. Yashodhara Mishra is a well-known figure in Odia literature in India, winner of major Odia literature awards including the famous Sahitya Academy and Katha. Her present focus is on "Kalahandi Lokakatha" and "Narijibana." A recurring theme in her work is the condition of the Indian woman, as she cleverly subverts well-known and popular characters and plots to celebrate the female force. Her collection of stories Muhansanja came out in 2009.



Waiting for that touch with love

Arjun Purohit

When my Mother and I were one
We were one bundle of joy and wonder
Wonderful? She said with love
Leave for a while and come back
And see how even more wonderful it will

be
&

Before I knew it
I morphed into an existence
Sleepwalking through births and deaths
Peaks and valleys of joy and sorrow
Showered with thousand roses
Stung by thousand arrows

&

Now I want to be back with my Mother
And melt unto Her and feel the same joy
and wonder
But how and who will show me the way
And release me from this prison of endless

time
&

Shall I race around aimlessly among the
stars

Like a meteor unhinged from its course
Or keep waiting as a jilted woman
Forever looking through the window
For the lover who never comes

&

Shall I wait as a Mantra*
Scripted and covered by musty pages of a
scripture

To dawn in the mind of a sage
And be released into a chant

&

Shall I remain hidden in a cave of a
mountain

Like a Terma until a Terton finds me**
And ignites minds of the seekers
To dispel the darkness of a thousand years



Shall I sleep as a blueprint of a banyan in a
seed

Until I wake to the touch of summer rain
Or like Ahalya I go to the bend of a river
Lie like a stone with all my dreams of love
frozen

And wait and wait and wait
For the gentle and beatific smile
And the touch of grace of my Mother
To wake up in Her arms and be home

&&

* *Lipibaddha Mantra*

***When profound insights are revealed in deep meditation to the Tibetan Lamas, they are written down and kept hidden in caves and minds if the Lamas feel that contemporaries are not ready for such insight. Such scriptures (Termas) are discovered by Lamas (Tertons) a few generations later from the caves or through meditation if hidden in minds. Such Tertons are usually previous incarnations of Lamas who hid the Termas.*

Dr. Arjun Purohit, a founding member of the OSA lives in Kingston, Ontario, with his wife Padmini.

Silent witness

Arjun Purohit

I have known for years that there are all kinds of interesting features in the reservoir of the Hirakud Dam. Among these are some submerged temples, which often create problems for the boaters and some that are visible over the water. So when Dr. Tarini Panda, my old student by proxy, suggested to me to have a look at them when I visited Sambalpur a couple of years ago, I jumped at the chance. He took me on his scooter to the Jamadaar Pali Ghat from where we took a boat which took us across the reservoir to Lakhan Pur Block. It was a motor boat capable of taking about 40 people but had no roof or proper seats. I managed to find a place to sit near a little girl, about 5 years old on the flat bar, one of many along the width of the boat. Tarini had to stand for the whole trip, which took about an hour. About 15 motorcycles and scooters besides the 30 people boarded the boat. Apparently, there was some kind of an Adivashi festival on Gunja Parbat, a rather tall hill with a majestic triangular top which you could see across the waters. The crowd was in a festive mood with lots of chatter and laughter in anticipation of the merry-making in the festival.

Some 20 minutes after we started, the anticipated temple came into our sight. Suddenly the chatter and laughter ceased, and the eyes of the whole crowd except that of the girl beside me were turned on the temple, which I estimated to be about 25 feet over the water. The mood became reverent and some folded their hands in *Juhar*. I simply could not control my tears to the curious amazement of the little girl who continued staring at me. I must confess that I am given to tears rather easily. I cry at the movies and when I watch the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat*. When Sita gets abducted, I cry. When *Dushasana* tries to disrobe *Draupadi* in front of the *Pandava* and *Kaurava* elders, I cry. But the sight of a half-submerged temple was a really special thing and kicked up all kinds of memories, ones that had been dormant for years like the sediments at the bottom of a lake.

After all this was the temple of *Rampella*! This is the village where my cousin, *Nagara Nani* went

as a bride. This is where my *Badkhama* (wife of my father's elder brother) came from. I knew of a host of relatives from this once, large prosperous village. *Ram-pella* was one of the 294 villages which went under water for the Hirakud Dam. These were very prosperous villages and were known to be the *Bhata Handi* (rice bowl) of the district because of the fertility of the land. The old royalties of Sambalpur came from the area. *Veer Surendra Sai* fought with the British around the area. Though our family never lived in the *Budi Anchal* (submerged area), we owned lands in a village called *Basantpur*, which went under and for which we never got compensated.

The submerged temple began to flood my mind with all kinds of associated memories. The first time I was aware of the Hirakud Dam was when I was a 7th grader in *Borasambar*, *Padampur*, where my father was working as a minor civil servant. I saw *Harekrushna Mahatab* for the first time ever and for the last time, except in photographs. He along with *Ranjit Singh Bariha*, cousin of the then *Jamindar* of *Padampur* and a fresh returnee from England, gave lectures to town people on the steps of the local temple. They spoke of the good stuff about the future Hirakud Dam. I also saw lot of folks protesting against the Dam. When I came back home, I found my house swarming with people from Sambalpur and my mother hastily cooking dinner for all of them who had come to be a part of the protests. Couple of months later when I visited my *ma-mughar* in Sambalpur, I found the whole town in turmoil. Thousands of people were shouting all kinds of slogans and were marching on the main road. There were large meetings near the *Mahanadi* bank, and police were everywhere. Later that evening I learnt that, *Dr. Janardan Pujari* and his wife were arrested and taken to the jail. *Dr. Pujari* was a revered personality of Sambalpur and was literally worshipped as a saintly figure because of his social service and medical expertise. Next day there was another march; this time the ladies including my grandmother joined in. It was an awesome thing to see them on the road because these ladies never even venture outside unescorted

and their heads were always covered with odhana. And guess what, my grand-mother was taken to the jail for a while! For a young boy of my age, this was incompre-hensible. I remember teasing my grand-mother for months afterwards about becom-ing a kaidi. "What did they feed you in jail, Aai?" I would ask. I knew then that something big was happening but did not under-stand the full import of the events.

Later when I came to Sambalpur to study in the G.M. College, I slowly began to compre-hend the enormity of the issues. We saw huge earthmovers we never seen before. These were manned by sardarjis, many of them fresh refugees from Pakistan. We also went on our bicycles to see how huge machines hauling cement to great heights to build the dam. During the summer vacation of 1952, three of my friends including Rajen-dra Supakar who currently lives in Chica-go and I, went on a bike tour to look at some of the villages that were to go underwater. Among them, we saw Samplahara, Rajen-dra's village, where we were treated with PaNA after being lovingly reprimanded by Rajendra's folks for biking all that distance under the hot sun, risking heat stroke. I also remembered meeting Ayodhya Khosla, the main architect of the Dam and Dr. Issac Santra, the local hero, who established a leper colony in Hatibari. They came to Jharuapara one evening in 1951 looking for Sradhakar Supakar, Rajendra's father and the M.L.A. from Sambalpur. I did not know the importance of Mr. Khosla but had heard of Dr. Santra. They asked to be led to Srad-hakar Babu's house that was in our gulley. They tried to impress upon me the impor-tance of the Dam for the next hour!

The memories kept flooding in. The little girl looked at me with her big eyes and asked, "Why are you crying? Are you alright?" I wiped my tears and smiled and patted lovingly on her head and gave her a chewing gum. She looked at her mother for permis-sion to accept, and then took it and smiled back. The boat kept going ahead and all the chattering came back as the temple receded from our view. After a few minutes, we saw another temple. It must have been a small one because we could see only the very top, the Chuda. This time, the sight of the temple did not evoke as much emotional response as before. I do not know what kind of tem-ples they were.

Were they Vaishnavite or Saivite? As you can see from the picture, the Chuda of the Rampella temple has lost its crown. Saivites have Trishul and Vaishnavites have Chakras as crown. My hunch is that the Rampella one is Saivite judging from my experience in other Koshal-ite villages. Almost always they have a Shiva temple especially near a bathing ghat al-though we do have Vaishnavite temples as well but not very often, and they are of recent vintage when they occur.

As we approached the other shore, I saw thick vegetation through which a path for the boat has been cut out to reach the shore. Tarini explained that this was because of the silt accumulating in the reservoir. Apparently 27% of capacity of the reservoir has been used up by the silt. When we reached the other shore, Tarini took out his scooter and we toured some of the villages including his own Kumharbandh. It was so close to the reservoir that I suggested that ground water would be available only a few feet in well and would be great for agriculture. Tarini told me that there is coal only five feet down, not water. Apparently sponze iron companies are already buying up land for future expan-sion of their enterprises. On our return trip we went to another spot to catch a boat to go back to Sambalpur via Rengali. While waiting for the boat, I asked Tarini whether Bikram Khol was not very far from that spot since we were in Lakhan Pur block as is Bikram Khol, which I visited few years back. He confirmed that indeed it was close but behind the Dungere (hills are called Dungere in Koshali) on our left. In order to go to Bikram Khol we would have to go to Jhar-suguda and then take the road to the other side of the Dungere. That meant reaching Sambalpur by late evening; so we decided not to take the trip to Bikram Khol. Inciden-tally, Bikram Khol is very interesting site which has a large flat stone wall on top of a small hill and has inscriptions in Brahmi and Mahenjo-daro scripts. Apparently, the writ-ings are about 4000 years old and yet to be deciphered.

Tarini also informed me about another interesting site within the reservoir which our boat did not go by; Cattle Island. Apparently, because the confiscated villages were vacated at gun point the villagers could not take all of their cattle with them. These animals found shelter in an island in the reservoir and have become wild after a few generations. When the locals try to capture them

they become very aggressive and hence are left alone.

Finally the boat to take us back to Rengali came. This time the trip was much shorter. As we scooted back towards Sambalpur on Jhar-suguda-Sambalpur road, which is part of a very busy National Highway, I saw the chain of sponze iron factories. One could not help but notice the thick haze of smoke from the chimneys of these plants, worsened by the fly ash emitted by the coal fire power plants. Apparently, Pollution Control Board has already declared the whole corridor as an ecological disaster.

Sitting behind Tarini's scooter as he drove towards Sambalpur which took us about half an hour, I was still thinking about Rampella Temple. I wondered what this half sub-merged temple, which still stands as a silent witness, is a symbol of. Is it a symbol of sacrifice of the well settled vibrant communi-ties for the protection of the coastal areas of Orissa from floods? Or of the utter callous and contemptuous treatment of the ousted families, 7000 of them yet to be compensated more than half a century later, by the Orissa government? Or of the beginning of an industrial age for the region? Or of the end of innocence and simplicity of a bygone era? To me it is all of the above.

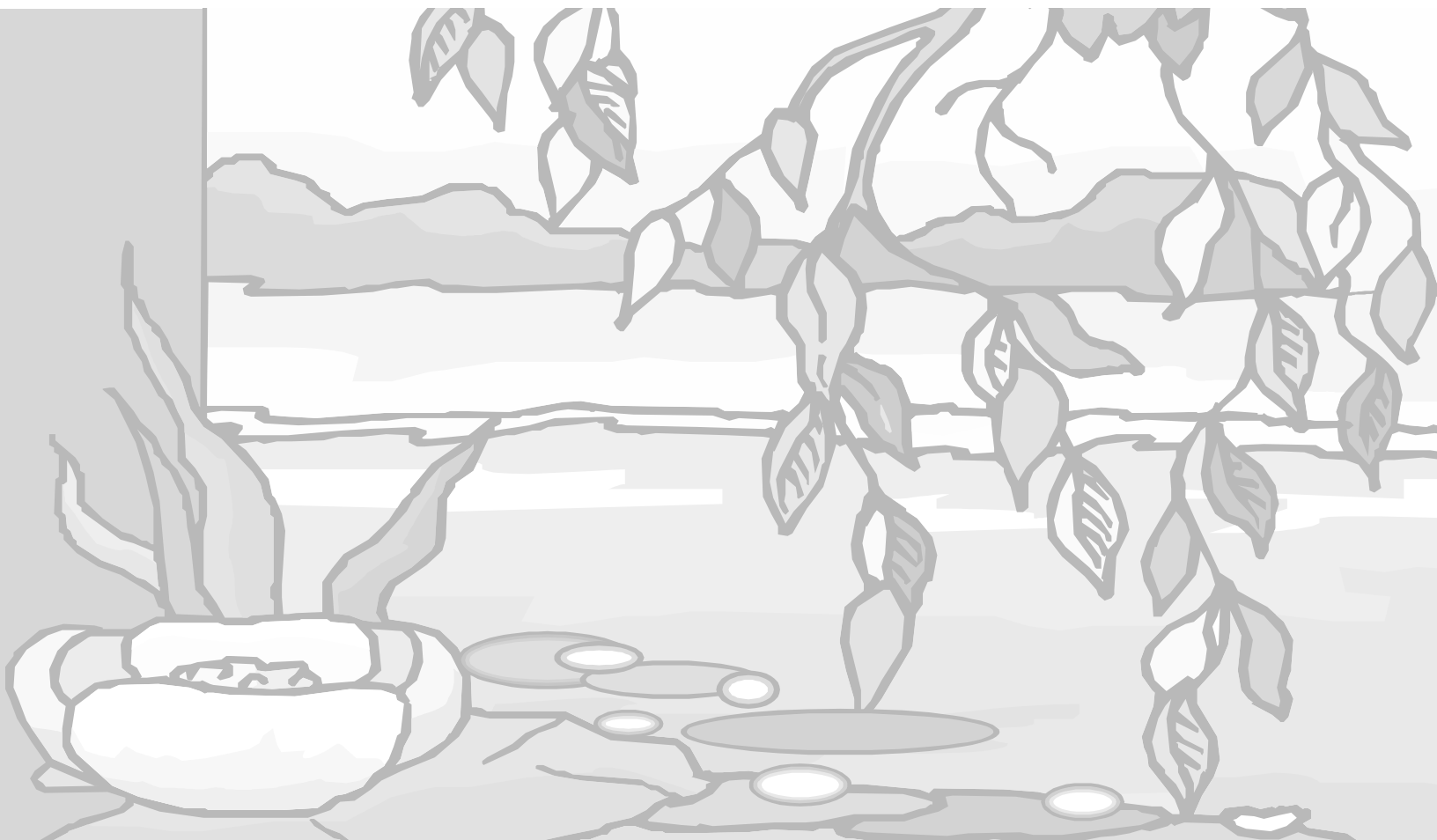


The Temple of Rampella
Photo credit: Dr. Tarini Panda

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REMEMBRANCE

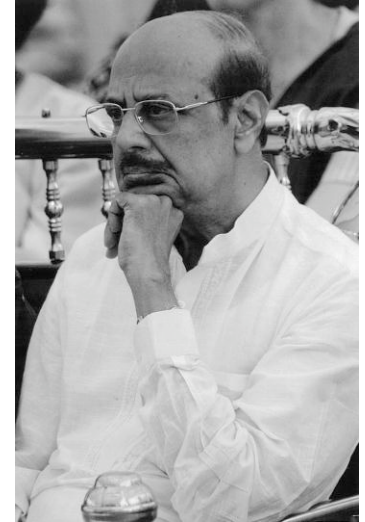
"The Soul is not born; It does not die;
It was not produced from anyone...
Unborn, eternal, It is not slain..."
~ Katha Upanishad



ମନପସୀ ଝୁରେରେ, ବନପସୀ ଝୁରେ...

ଶରଦିନ୍ଦୁ ମିଶ୍ର

ଗୁରୁବାର ଅଗଷ୍ଟ ୫ ତାରିଖ ସକାଳ ୩ଟା ରେ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ ବାଜିଲା । ଖବର ମିଳିଲା ଯେ ମୋର ପରମ ବନ୍ଧୁ ସିକନ୍ଦର ଆଲାମ୍ ଗୁରୁତର ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରର କର କିନିକ୍ରେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । କ'ଣ ହେଲା । ସପ୍ତାହକ ତଳେ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଘଣ୍ଟାଏ କାଳ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ରେ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରିଛି । ଅନେକ କଥା - ଅନେକ ଗମତ । ଶାରୀରିକ ଅସୁସ୍ଥତାର କୌଣସି ସୂଚନା ମିଳି ନ ଥିଲା । ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ମୁଁ ଓ ମୋର ପତ୍ନୀ ସିକନ୍ଦରଙ୍କ ସାନଝିଅ ନାଜିଆକୁ ଟେଲିଫୋନ୍ କଲୁ । ଯେତେ ଭିତରେ ରଞ୍ଜସାବ ହେବାରୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାକୁ ଅଣାଗଲା ଓ ସେ ସେବେଠୁ ଅଚେତ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଶଯ୍ୟାଶାୟୀ । ତା ପର ଦିନ ହୃଦ୍‌ଘାତ । ଆଠ ତାରିଖ ରବିବାର ଦିନ ସବୁ ଶେଷ । ଓଡିଶାର ସଙ୍ଗତ ଆକାଶର ଏକ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ତାରକା ଚିରଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଅସ୍ତ ହୋଇଗଲା ।



ସିକନ୍ଦରଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ମୋର ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ୧୯୫୦ ମସିହାରୁ । ଦୁହେଁ ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟ କଲେଜିଏଟ୍ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ପଢୁଥାଉ । ସେ ସମୟରୁ ସିକନ୍ଦରଙ୍କର ସଙ୍ଗତରେ ସଭକ୍ । ବେଳେବେଳେ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ନ ଥିଲେ ସେ ସହପାଠୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କର ମଧୁର ଗଳାରେ ହିନ୍ଦୀ ସିନେମା ଗୀତ ଗାଇ ମୋହିତ କରୁଥିଲେ । ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇ ହାଲସ୍କୁଲ ସାରିଲୁ । ପରେ ଦୁଇଜଣ ଝୁଆର୍ଟ୍ କଲେଜରେ ନାମ ଲେଖାଇଲୁ । ୧୯୫୬ ମସିହାରେ ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ଆନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ଯୁବମେଳାରେ ସିକନ୍ଦର ଓଡିଶାରୁ ମନୋନିତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ସେହିବର୍ଷ ଯୁବମେଳାରେ ଓଡିଶା ପ୍ରଥମ ହେବାର ଗୌରବ ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଥିଲା ଓ ସେହି ଦିନଠାରୁ ସିକନ୍ଦରଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗତ ସାଧନା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ୧୯୫୭ ମସିହାରେ ଆକାଶବାଣୀ କଟକ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ସେ ସଙ୍ଗତ ପରିବେଷଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ଝୁଷ୍ଟ ଓ ଅନାବିଳ କଣ୍ଠ ଯୋଗୁ ସେ ଅତି ଶୀଘ୍ର ଲୋକପ୍ରିୟତା ଅର୍ଜନ କରି ପାରିଥିଲେ । ୧୯୬୦ ମସିହାରେ ବାଳକୃଷ୍ଣ ଦାସଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗତ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶନାରେ ସେ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ଓଡିଆ ଚଳଚ୍ଚିତ୍ର 'ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ' ରେ କଣ୍ଠଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ । ସେ ଗାଇଥିବା ଭଜନ 'ଆରତ ସୁରେ ବାରେ ମିନତିରେ' ଓଡିଶାରେ ଖୁବ୍ ଆଦୃତ ହୋଇଥିଲା ଓ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଲୋକପ୍ରିୟତାର ଶୀର୍ଷରେ ପହଞ୍ଚାଇଥିଲା । ପରେ ପରେ ସେ ଆକାଶବାଣୀ, 'ହୀର୍ଣ୍ଣ ମାଞ୍ଜୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭବ୍ୟ' ରେକର୍ଡ୍ ଓ ଚଳଚ୍ଚିତ୍ରରେ ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛଦପଟ୍ଟ ଗାୟକ ଭାବରେ ଓଡିଶାର ସଙ୍ଗତ ଜଗତରେ ଏକ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ସ୍ଥାନ ଅଧିକାର କରିବାରେ ସମର୍ଥ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ।

୧୯୭୧ ମସିହାରେ ମୁଁ ଓଡିଶା ଛାଡି ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଲି । ଓଡିଶା ଛାଡିବା ପରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେହି ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ୱ ଅସୁଣ୍ଠ ରହିଥିଲା । ପ୍ରାୟ ପଚୋକ ବର୍ଷ ଓ ଦୁଇବର୍ଷରେ ମୁଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଓଡିଶା ଯାଉଥିଲି, ଆମ ଦୁଇ ପରିବାର ସବୁବେଳେ ଏକାଠି ହେଉଥିଲୁ । ୧୯୮୩ ମସିହାରେ ସିକନ୍ଦର ପ୍ରଥମଥର ଆମେରିକା ଆସି ଆମଘରେ ପ୍ରାୟ ଦୁଇ ମାସ ରହିଥିଲେ । ଏହି ରହଣି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସେ ଆମେରିକା ଓ କାନାଡାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ଯିବା ଓଡିଆମାନଙ୍କୁ ନିଜ ସଙ୍ଗତର ମୁହଁନାରେ ମୋହିତ କରିଥିଲେ । ୨୦୦୩ ମସିହାରେ ଓଡିଶା ସୋସାଇଟିର ବାର୍ଷିକ ଅଧିବେଶନ ନ୍ୟୁଜର୍ସିର ପ୍ରିନ୍ସଟନ୍ ସହରରେ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ସେତେବେଳେ ସିକନ୍ଦର ତାଙ୍କ ସହଯୋଗୀ ଓ କନ୍ୟା ନାଜିଆ ସହିତ ଏଥିରେ ଭାଗନେବା ପାଇଁ ଆସି ପ୍ରାୟ ଅଢେଇମାସ ଆମେରିକାରେ ରହିଥିଲେ ଓ ପୂର୍ବପରି ଏଠାର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ଥାନକୁ ଯାଇ ଓଡିଆମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସଙ୍ଗତ ପରିବେଷଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର ସୁଲଳିତ କଣ୍ଠ ଓ ଅନାବିଳ ଭଦ୍ର ବ୍ୟବହାର ଓଡିଆମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିମୋହିତ କରିଥିଲା ।

ଜୀବନକାଳ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସିକନ୍ଦର ଏକ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟୀର ଗାୟକ ହିସାବରେ ଖାଲି ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରିୟପାତ୍ର ହୋଇନଥିଲେ; ତାଙ୍କର ଅମାୟିକତା ଓ ଭଦ୍ର ବ୍ୟବହାରରେ ସେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଆପଣାର କରି ପାରିଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କର କେହି ଶତ୍ରୁ ନ ଥିଲେ । ସେ ଥିଲେ ଅଜାତଶତ୍ରୁ । ତାଙ୍କର ବିଯୋଗରେ ଓଡିଆ ସଙ୍ଗତ ଜଗତର ଏକ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ତାରକା ଚିର ଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଅସ୍ତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ମୋର ଅତି ଶୁଣ୍ଠେୟୁ ବାଲ୍ୟବନ୍ଧୁ ଚିରଦିନ ପାଇଁ ମୋଠାରୁ ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ହୋଇଗଲା ।

ଆଜି ଏହି ଅବସରରେ ମୋର ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ଏତିକି ନିବେଦନ ଯେ ସେ ସିକନ୍ଦରଙ୍କ ଧର୍ମପତ୍ନୀ ନଇମା, କନ୍ୟା ସୋପିଆ ଓ ନାଜିଆଙ୍କୁ ଧର୍ଯ୍ୟର ସହିତ ଏ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିର ମୁକାବିଲା କରିବାକୁ ଶକ୍ତି ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ ।



Prakash Patnaik

Prabhat Patnaik

Prakash Patnaik, a life member of OSA passed away on May 4, 2011 at his residence in Washington, DC. He belonged to the 1st generation of Odias in the US and was, in terms of years of residence, one of the senior-most Oriya expatriate, having come to this country in 1969. He was an avid pilot and an active member of the Odia community when OSA was being formed. He helped many people in many ways. The following is a tribute reminiscent of his life, passions and achievements.



federal government employee, in the field of nuclear energy, until shortly before his death. Unfortunately his wife predeceased him in 2000 after struggling courageously with her health problems for many years. They are survived by their children, Rakesh and Malasri.

There are three traits, inherited from our indomitable parents, which differentiated Prakash. The first is his remarkable courage, unconventionality and sense of adventure.

He was born in 1940, as the second child of Pranath and Manjari Patnaik. I was his younger brother, the third child. Our parents were both freedom fighters, and our father, who had left university at the call of Gandhiji to join the Civil Disobedience Movement, had suffered long years of incarceration in the struggle for a free India. Our family had to endure extreme hardship and penury, which continued even after the country's independence, due to our parents' socialist convictions. They persisted in the struggle for an egalitarian social order. There was little money for our education, but we turned out to be academically bright and won stipends and scholarships to finance our own way through the best institutions of in India.

He did what he believed and pursued his life exactly as he wished to, unconcerned with what others thought. New things always fascinated him. He was the first amateur photographer in Jatni. While still in class IX he bought a camera, for all of 11 rupees, took pictures with gusto (I was his first subject). When electricity came to Jatni in the 50's, he was greatly excited and made it a point to spend all his off-school hours with the "electricity people", the overseers, the engineers and the workers, and he ensured that our house was the first to be electrified. In fact, he got to know so much about electrical connections that he became the unofficial repairman in our neighbourhood and then at IIT Kharagpur.

He passed matriculation from Jatni High School, a remote village school started by our father, a great believer in the liberating role of education. Prakash went on to get his Intermediate degree in Science from the SCS College, Puri, and was selected into the IIT, Kharagpur, where he studied Mechanical Engineering. His specialization was nuclear power plants. After graduation he joined the Atomic Energy Establishment at Trombay and later the nuclear power plant at Rawatbhata in the Kota district of Rajasthan. In 1966 he married Kautuki (Babuli), the vivacious and spirited daughter of B.N.Roy of Khurda, a renowned advocate of Orissa. The desire to give his family a better life brought Prakash in 1969 to the US where he worked as a

His travel to the US after giving up a secure government job in India, without any immediate employment prospects is another example of his sense of adventure. After he obtained employment, one of the first things he did was to purchase a small airplane. Flying had always been his passion. When at Trombay he used to spend a significant part of his monthly income as a member of the Bombay Flying Club. As a college student I had gone to Bombay once for an interview and stayed with him. He made me spend all my spare time at the Flying Club and even got a friend to take me up in a training plane. That was his notion of "giving a good time" to a younger brother, was visiting Bombay for the first time! In the U.S., he flew regularly with family and friends as passengers, until he developed a cardiac problem.

This courage and unconventionality was also evident when he took as his companion, towards the end of his life, a Chinese lady, Rui Lan who looked after him with great devotion and care.

The second trait was his remarkable generosity and lack of meanness. Although our “otherworldly” parents were neither mean nor calculating; this trait in Prakash could perhaps be traced to our maternal grandfather. Our grandfather had been born a zamindar but became a nationalist poet and freedom-fighter and was as free-spirited as he was open-handed. Prakash was sensitive and touchy, but generous to a fault, and he helped many Oriya immigrants into the U.S. to tide over their initial days of hardship.

The third trait was a deep interest in politics. The level of interest in politics in the U.S. tends to be somewhat low among professional people; especially among immigrant professionals. Politics, especially U.S. politics, does get talked about on social occasions, but only perfunctorily.

Prakash’s interest in politics was far from perfunctory. He argued passionately over it, and believed that immigrants should involve themselves more seriously in U.S. politics.

Prakash and I differed sharply in our political views, and we often had extraordinarily heated arguments. When I visited him three weeks before his death, the first question he asked me, even though he was ailing, breathless and could barely articulate, was about my views on the NATO actions in Libya. Our conversation was necessarily brief but he listened thereafter for hours, until he fell asleep, to television coverage of the happenings in Libya. This made me feel that one who was so passionate, so intense, and so full of life, could not possibly succumb to ailments so soon. I was alas mistaken. An extremely gifted, unusual and wonderful human being, whose real personality not many could glimpse, has been snatched away from us.



In memory of Bimal Krushna Mahanti

Sri Gopal Mohanty

Bimal Krushna Mahanti, a life member of OSA passed away at Kalinga Hospital, Bhubaneswar on November 4, 2010.

He completed his Bachelors in Mechanical Engineering at IIT, Kharagpur and came to Cornell University for a Masters in Industrial Engineering, in 1959. This was where he met Krushna Mohan Das, a founding member of OSA then a fellow student at Cornell. They have been lifelong associates until Krushna Babu’s demise a few years back.

I call him Bimu Bhai since he was my wife’s cousin. I met him, his wife Sanjukta (Kuni) and his son Libu (Jay) for the first time in 1966 at Sindelfingen, Germany. He was working with IBM at the time. Bimu Bhai moved to the States in 1968 as an employee of IBM. During 1966-68

after I moved from India and before I moved to Canada; we used to visit each other frequently. Soon after his arrival was the formation of OSA and he joined the OSA founders like K. M. Das, Amiya Patnaik, Duryodhan Mangaraj, Birendra Patnaik, and Kalpataru Kanungo in those formative years. Before moving to Germany, he taught at Burla Engineering College and IIT Bombay. Although he acquired many American and European friends and always lived in style and high taste, Bimal Mahanti was a typical Odia at heart and moved in Odia circles at every oppor-



tunity. In the 1984 Souvenir of OSA K. M. Das wrote, "Mr. Bimal K. Mohanty of IBM fame has been the founding president of the Jagannath Society of New York and helped the first Odissi dance program by Dr. Minati Mishra in New York."

Bimal Mahanti had a bright academic career, was fluent in Odia, English, German and Hindi and an avid reader of literature, philosophy, history, science, engineering, geography and other topics. While he appreciated brilliant minds and admired the company of intellectuals, he was equally comfortable in any social circle

being warm, hospitable, a great conversationalist and a great story teller. Despite his short stature, he stood tall in any conversation gathering and dominated the scene. He had flair of exploring new avenues. Once he decided to memorize Bhagabat Gita and he did. He could quote lines with explanations for many topics. He would entertain his guests with his culinary talents.

Bimal Mahanti is survived by his wife Sanjukta and sons Jay and Jeet and will be missed dearly by many. May his soul rest in peace!



Guru Gangadhar Pradhan, as I remember

Sri Gopal Mohanty

Gangadhar Babu, as I address him used to call me "Bhai" with deep affection and respect. I first met him in 1974, while searching for an Odissi teacher at Bhubaneswar. While on a sabbatical leave at ISI, Calcutta, I was determined to give some Odissi training to my daughters Jini and Rini, then 10 and 5 respectively. There we were introduced to young Gangadhar; who had just started a school a year ago, Orissa Dance Academy (ODA). It was Guru Deba Prasad Das who became Jini's teacher.

I remember every time I visited Orissa, I met with him and visited his school. The place attracted many musicians and dance lovers. Through him I learnt a great deal about the dance style and met many members of the dance community including Dhiren Patnaik.

I remember he had received training from the Gurus Pankaj Charan Das, Deba Prasad Das and Srimati Minati Mishra at Utkal Sangeeta Mahavidyalaya and later from Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. Gangadhar Babu was a strong



proponent of the Guru-shisya parampara and had a lot of love and reverence for his Gurus.

I remember him inviting me to an afternoon program of his prime disciple Aruna Mohanty at Bhubaneswar. Aruna was groomed to be a promising dancer and years later when she toured North America with Guru Gangadhar, she enthralled everyone by her superb performance. Our cordial relationship provided an opportunity to host them during their Toronto performance. That was a glorious period for Guru Gangadhar.

I remember he accompanied Sanjukta Panigrahi during her North American tours, as he an acclaimed and energetic mardala player.

I remember him providing young men from villages with the opportunity to train at his school. He was a friend as well as a Guru for them. His institution has the unique reputation of producing large numbers of excellent male dancers like Manoranjan Pradhan, Bichitrananda Swain, Yudhistir Nayak and Ramesh Jena

I remember him as a dreamer and institution builder. Young Gangadhar shared with me his dream to spread Odissi throughout the world by establishing institutes as branches of ODA. His dream took some shape when Chitrlekha Patnaik in Canada started her dance Academy in 1980. Guru Gangadhar often visited Chitrlekha's school, which got associated with ODA. At the formative stage, once Nandita Patnaik (presently Nandita Behera in the Los Angeles area), another of his prime disciples and contemporary of Aruna, was performing with others as part of Chitrlekha's Academy. For the first time, I witnessed group choreography instead of a solo performance. The more performances of ODA I saw, the more I got the impression that this innovation is the hallmark of ODA and Gangadhar Babu's training. Later his association with Purna Patnaik led him and other ODA members such as Manoranjan Pradhan, Yudhistir Nayak, and Aruna Mohanty to visit San Diego for some time. Gangadhar Babu also spent some time as a visiting faculty at Cornell University through his collaboration with disciple Durga Bor at Ithaca, NY.

I remember his masterful brilliance and his audacity in pursuing his vision. He took me to see his new creation, Konark Natya Mandap, which challenged me to fathom the depth of his tenacity and determination. It was more than a branch of ODA. It was a Gurukul in the same line as Kalakshetra, not only for Odissi but for also art forms such as *gotipua*, *pala* and also Odia literature. I attended his Konark Dance Festival several times, different from the one organized by the Government. He built a stage for the Festival, but being driven by his dream, he had to change it to a completely new one, in harmony with the existing ruins of Sun temple.

I remember him receiving many awards; the most memorable the Padmashree awarded by the Government of India in 2008. I happened to attend the felicitation ceremony at Ekamra Hall, Bhubaneswar organized by the local artists. I deemed it a great privilege to be invited onto the stage to speak on this eventful occasion by

Sumanta Mohanty, a young promising singer-composer. Especially since every other speaker there (including Sikandar Alam) was an artist except the Minister of Culture, Surya Narayan Patra. Today with heavy heart, I accept the fact that neither Sikandar Babu nor Sumanta are with us.

I remember Guru Gangadhar as the principal advisor for the preservation of *pala* as part of the project, Preservation of Odisha's Cultural Infrastructure, initiated by SEEDS.

I remember meeting him earlier this year in the same modest precinct in Unit 3, Kharavela Nagar, which had housed ODA. ODA had moved somewhere else and Gangadhar Babu had moved back from Konark to the place of his artistic origin. His instinct of institution building drove him to start here afresh, what is now called Gangadhar Pradhan Foundation. Although busy with organizational work, he introduced me to his colleague in *Chhau*. I was impressed by the work at this Institute. I never knew this meeting was going to be our last. It was destiny, perhaps which completed a full circle for him. He breathed his last while residing at that unidentifiable place which he built with his own hands for the world to recognize; the very one which built him for the world.

Finally I remember him as a true noble Odia soul with refined artistic talent and as a modest, humble person with a soft-spoken and affectionate voice and deep passion for Odisha and the propagation of her culture and heritage. If Guru Kelucharan, the creative genius, made Odissi popular by attracting disciples from India and abroad, then Guru Gangadhar will be remembered for making endless conscientious efforts to sustain and propagate Odissi world-wide.

Instead of viewing his leaving this earthly world as a great loss to Odissi and Odissan art and culture, let us celebrate his life as a successful fulfillment of his dreams and let us share his dreams. I salute this great son of Odisha. My prayers go out to bless his soul to be in peace.

My Mother

(1931-September 20, 2010)

Raghunath Dass

My mother is no longer with us. She is now beyond the experience of the stages of birth, childhood, youth, motherhood and old age. She is ahead of us in her journey. Flames at the Swarga Dwara of Puri turned her mortal remains into ashes on September 21, 2010. She became a part of eternity. She only resides in photos and in our memories now.



My mother had a period of illness since January 19, 2009. She had a very active life until then. We are her seven living sons spread across India and abroad, and her only daughter smartly gotten married next door in the village. My sister was close to her during this nerve-wrecking illness, a stroke. She had high blood pressure earlier. She had been initially diagnosed and treated at SCB Medical College Hospital and Ashwini Hospital in Cuttack.

I visited her during July 2009 when she was in New Delhi at my elder brother's place for follow-up treatment at AIIMS. She had recovered well and looked well but her reflexes were a bit slow. She was always eager to return home, our native place Fakirpur on the banks of Baitarani in Keonjhar. She finally returned home in January of 2010. She lived well only at times worried about her two unmarried younger sons. On July 7, 2010 her health deteriorated with low sodium level. Again she was admitted to Ashwini Hospital. Her health was cause of worry this time as she stopped taking solid food. She stopped talking in August and was hooked on to liquid diet and a catheter. Subsequently my elder brother got her admitted in Aditya Care Hospital in Bhubaneswar for better care. Her health did not improve and she breathed her last at 11PM

on September 20th, 2010 in our Chandrashekhar Pur home while being attended by her two youngest sons, my elder brother, her daughter and son-in-law.

All her life, my mother had been providing us services. My "Aja" used to call her fondly "Hadiani". I have heard of and seen her strength. She had been through 10 childbirths.

Our family has ancestral farm lands and my mother processed all crops including paddy, pulses and vegetables. She never asked the help of others except during periods of child-births. She was good at making all kinds of foods, snacks and cakes to nourish her eight children. We hardly bought food items from market except at village fairs. I can still remember her fetching drinking water pots from river; one on her head and one her hip until we dug our own well.

Festivals were her forte. She would prepare all kinds of delicacies during Janmashami, Radhasthami, Durgapuja, Deepavali and other native festivals to distribute among the villagers. During summer months, she used to cook "two mana" more rice to feed poor neighbors and beggars. She felt good providing service to the people around her, in her own way. She may have rightly lived upto her name "Hadiani". My mother is no more. I attended her last rites in my village last year. It was a different experience. We think she lived a good, active and a purposeful life. People remember her for her services.

Her Legacy: Service to the living and the non-living things is service to God.



ଅନ୍ୟ ପୃଥ୍ବୀ

ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ

ଏ ଯେ ଏକ ଅନ୍ୟ ପୃଥ୍ବୀ!!!

ଅଛି ଯହିଁ ସେଇ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟାଲୋକ, ନାହିଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଉଷ୍ମତା ତେଜରେ
 ବୋହୁଅଛି ବାଆ ସୁଲୁ ସୁଲୁ , ଆଶୁ ନାହିଁ ରୋମାଞ୍ଚ ଶରୀରେ ।
 ବସୁନ୍ଧରା ଲାଗେ ଏଠି ରୁକ୍ଷ ମସୃଣତା ନାହିଁ ସେ ପୃଷ୍ଠରେ
 ଅଗ୍ରସର ହେବାକୁ ଆଗକୁ ଆସୁ ନାହିଁ ଉତ୍ସାହ ପାଦରେ । ୨
 ଆକାଶ ଯେ ଲାଗଇ ଉଦାସ ବ୍ୟତିକ୍ରମ ସବୁରି କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ
 ଚାରିଆଡେ କାରୁଣ୍ୟତା ଛାଇ ହୃଦୟ- ନି ଆସେ ଶରୀରରେ । ୩
 ଆଜି ଅଛି ସେଇ ସମାରୋହ ଆଏ ଯାହା ପୁନେଇ ପର୍ବରେ
 ସେହି ମୁହଁ ଦିଶେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଭିନ୍ନ ଏଠି ଏଇ ଅନ୍ୟ ପୃଥ୍ବୀରେ । ୪
 ପିଲାଙ୍କର ନାହିଁ କୋଳାହଳ ଗାମ୍ଭୀର୍ଯ୍ୟତା ପ୍ରତିଟି କୋଣରେ
 ଅଳଙ୍କାର, ଶାଢ଼ୀ, ଦୁଃଖ, ସୁଖ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ନାହିଁ ନୀରୀମହଲରେ । ୫
 ବିଜ୍ଞର ଆକର୍ଷଣ ନାହିଁ ଅବା ସ୍ଵେଚ୍ଛସ, ପଲିଟିକ୍ସରେ
 କ୍ରିକେଟ୍ ଜିତା ହାର ବାଜି ନାହିଁ ଆଜି ଯୁବକଦଳରେ । ୬
 ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯାଏ ସେଇ ନୀରବତା ଅସମ୍ଭାଳ କଇଁକଇଁ ସ୍ଵରେ
 ଅସଃହାୟ, କରୁଣ ଚାହାଣୀ, ନୈରାଶ୍ୟତା ସବୁରିଦିଗରେ । ୭

ଏ କି ଭୟଙ୍କର ସମାପ୍ତି!!!

କଳାକାର ନାମର ଘୋଷଣା ନାହିଁ ଶେଷ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ
 ମୁଖରୀତ ଗଗନ ପବନ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ ସେ କରତାଳିରେ । ୧୪
 ସେ ଦର୍ଶକ ଆଜି ଅଭିନେତା, ଅଭିନୟ ଇଚ୍ଛା ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ
 (କାଲିର) ଅଭିନେତା ଆଜିର ଦର୍ଶକ ନାଗାର ସେ କାନ୍ଦ
 ବୋବାଳିରେ । ୧୫
 ଧ୍ରୁବସତ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ଧିମ ଭୂମିକା ମିଥ୍ୟା ନାହିଁ ଏ ଅଭିନୟରେ
 ସାରଗର୍ଭ ଜୀବନ ଦର୍ଶନ ଭରା ଏଇ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ନାଟିକାରେ । ୧୬
 ଆତ୍ମା ସେ ଯେ ଅଜୟ, ଅମର କହିଛନ୍ତି ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଗୀତାରେ
 ପୁରୁଣା ଶରୀର ତ୍ୟାଗ, ଜନ୍ମ ପୁଣି ନୂଆ କଲେବରେ । ୧୭
 ଜନ୍ମ ହେଲେ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ଅନିର୍ବାଣ୍ୟ ଶୁଭିଯାଏ ପ୍ରତିଟି କର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ
 “ରାମନାମ” ସତ୍ୟ ହିଁ କେବଳ ଆଉ ସବୁ ମିଥ୍ୟା ଦୁନିଆରେ । ୧୮
 ଜାଣି, ଶୁଣି, ଦେଖି ଆସୁଅଛୁ ଏ ସତ୍ୟତା ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ
 ଅସମ୍ଭବ କିନ୍ତୁ ନେବା ପାଇଁ ସାଧାରଣ ମଣିଷ ପକ୍ଷରେ । ୧୯

ଏ କି ଭିନ୍ନ ନାଟକ!!!

ଅଭିନେତା ନୀରବ, ନିଷ୍ଠର ଚଳମାନ ଅନ୍ୟ ସାହାଯ୍ୟରେ
 ଦେଖିଯାନ୍ତି ଭାବ ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା ଆଜି ସେଇ ମୁଦିଲା ଆଖିରେ । ୮
 ଅଭିନୟେ କ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ଶରୀର ମନ ନାହିଁ ବୋଧେ ନାଟକରେ
 ବାଛିଛନ୍ତି ସହଜ ଭୂମିକା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ନାହିଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତିରେ । ୯
 ଦର୍ଶକଙ୍କ ମନଖୁସି ସଦା କରିଛନ୍ତି ଜୀବନ ମଞ୍ଚରେ
 ଅବସର ଘୋଷଣା କରନ୍ତି କ୍ଷମା ସହ ଫୁଲ ଶଯ୍ୟାପରେ । ୧୦
 ଜାଣିବାରେ କରିନାନ୍ତି ତୁଟି ନେଇଥିବା ପୂର୍ବ ଭୂମିକାରେ
 ସଫଳତା ପାଇଁ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରିଛନ୍ତି ଅକ୍ଳାନ୍ତ ଭାବରେ । ୧୧
 ସହଜରେ ମାପି ହୁଏ ବୋଲି ଲୋଚିଛନ୍ତି ଲମ୍ବୁଭାବେ ତଳେ
 ସଠିକ୍ ମାପ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଜି ଲୋଡ଼ା ଦେରିଛନ୍ତି କର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଉଦ୍‌ବିଗ୍ନରେ । ୧୨
 ଶୁଣି ସେଇ ନ୍ୟାୟ ନିରୂପଣ ଶାନ୍ତି ଆସେ ତାଙ୍କର ଆତ୍ମାରେ
 ପରିଶ୍ରମ ସେ ବୃଥା ଯାଇଛି କୃତଜ୍ଞ ସେ ଆଜି ନୀରବରେ । ୧୩

ଶେଷ ଶୁଦ୍ଧାଞ୍ଜଳି!!!

ଚାଲିଗଲେ ଦୁଇ ବରପୁତ୍ର ଖୁବ୍ ଅଳ୍ପ ବ୍ୟବଧାନରେ
 ଅକଳ୍ପିତ ଅନ୍ଧିମ ଦର୍ଶନ ଆଜି ଏଇ ଅନ୍ୟ ପୃଥ୍ବୀରେ । ୨୦
 ଶରୀରକୁ ସିନା ଛିପାଇଲେ ଅକ୍ଳେଶରେ ଓ ବିନା ଦ୍ଵିଧାରେ
 ତାଙ୍କ ଶୁଣ, କଳା, ମାନବିକତା ଚିର ଛାପା କିନ୍ତୁ ହୃଦୟରେ । ୨୧
 କଳାପ୍ରେମୀ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଝୁରିବ ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ ସେ ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ
 “ଆଆନ୍ତେ କି ଆଜି ଅରୁଣବାବୁ” ଭାସିଯିବ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କଣ୍ଠରେ । ୨୨
 ଚିରଞ୍ଜୀବୀ ତୁମେ “ପ୍ରଦୀପବାବୁ” ସ୍ମରଣୀୟ ପ୍ରତି ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ
 ତବ ଶୁଦ୍ଧା, ସେବା ଓ ଶୁଶ୍ରୁଷା ନିତି ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ବନ୍ଧୁମହଲରେ । ୨୩
 ‘ଅରୁଣ’ ଯେ ଚିର ତେଜିୟାନ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ହୃଦ ଆକାଶରେ
 ‘ପ୍ରଦୀପ’ଙ୍କ ଶିଖା ଅମଳିନ ହୃଦୟର ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର କୋଣରେ । ୨୪
 ଘେନ ଆମ ଶେଷ ଶୁଦ୍ଧାଞ୍ଜଳି ଅର୍ପିତ କି-ତ ଶରୀରେ
 ଆତ୍ମାର ସଦ୍‌ଗତି ହେଉ ଯେଉଁ ଘଟେ ଥାଅ ଯେଉଁ ପୁରେ । ୨୫

This poem was published in OSA souvenir 2010 which was dedicated to late Arun Das and Pradip Pattanaik. But the published version was not the revised one and was not published in the appropriate section. For their honor the poem is republished this year again

