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URMI



ଓଂ ନମୋ ଭଗବତେ ବାସୁଦେବାୟ, ଓଂ ନମୋ ଭଗବତେ ବାସୁଦେବାୟ

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THE JOURNAL OF THE ODISHA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS
PUBLISHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE
47TH ANNUAL CONVENTION, JULY 1-3, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

**URMI - THE JOURNAL OF THE ODISHA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS
PUBLISHED AT THE 47TH ANNUAL CONVENTION**

TABLE OF CONTENTS



GENERAL

Message from the President, OSA	Sushant Satpathy	7
Message from the Vice President, OSA	Sulochana Patnaik	8
Treasurer's Report	Sidhartha Behera	9
Message from the Secretary, OSA	Saradakanta Panda	15
Message from the President, OSNE	Arun Mohanty	17
Message from the Convener, 47th OSA Convention	Dr. Sourya R Mahapatra	18
Message from the Co-Convener, 47th OSA Convention	Bikash Behera	19
Organizing Committee of 47th OSA Convention, NE		20
OSA National Staff Members 2015-2017		28
Editorial - English	Satyabrata Mishra	31
Editorial - Odia	Tapasi Mahapatra	33

RISING STARS - ENTRIES FOR MEGHNA AWARD, JUNIOR GROUP

The Life of a Legend	Aditi Padhi	36
Escape from Pelican Rock	Ajitesh Ojha	38
If Only	Amrita Sahu	43
Our Existence	Anjaneya Kar	44
Incredible India	Aaryan Jena	45
What If	Nikhita Ranabijuli	49
My First Trip to India	Yazmeena Harris	50
Junmping Pill	Bastav Senapati	53
Magic Island	Elina Bishowi	54
My Sister - The Gift of God	Haripriya Mahapatra	58
As I see OSA	Nikhil Satpathy	59
Stars	Navya Pradhan	60
Including the Chills	Nishita Kar	61
My Bratopanayana	Piyush Sathpathy	62
The Journey, Begins with First Step	Priyanka Nanda	64
Silence in my Room	Roshita Mohanty	65
Dreams	Sarthak Das	66
If Santa is not Real, then how do I Know God is real.....?	Shreya Mishra	67
A walk back to the past	Simoni Mishra	69
Bapa	Sonak Mahapatra	71
Should we continue to follow our ageold rituals.....?	Sidhanth Mishra	72
The Majestic Snowy Owl	Sulagna Dash	74

ASPIRING YOUTH - ENTRIES FOR MEGHNA AWARD, SENIOR GROUP

Home	Neha Panigrahi	78
The Chocolate Ponytail	Arushi Nayak	79
What Really Matters	Aman Mahapatra	81
Four Seasons	Debanshi Nikita Chowdhury	83
Odisha, Through my Eyes	Amisha Paul	85
My Friend	Ananya Mishra	87
Reflection of Vanity: The Beauty and the Beast	Sneha Mahapatra	88
United We Shall Stand and Preserve	Anwasha Ranabijuli	90
Elysian	Arya Mohanty	93
Dizygotic Cells	Sarthak Panda	95
Volunteering in India: Helping Lives through Better Sight	Shruti Nanada	97
Suffocating	Nistha Panda	99
Flowed Away from the Inani to the shores of Puri	Debanjan Nandan Chowdhury	100
It is a Distictive Distiction	Megha Panigrahi	103
How Wonderful it is	Ipsa Das	104
A Picture is worth a Thousand Words	Parneeta Mohapatra	105
Ambition	Raveena Mishra	106
Just Keep Playing	Sanket Panda	107
The Silver Lining	Sonali Senapati	109
Stranded Spirit	Srujani Das	114
Manakamana	Aaryana Pradhan-Rajnala	115
Forbidden to Favorite	Sudiksha Pradhan	120

ଭାବ ତରଙ୍ଗ - ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲେଖା ସଙ୍କଳନ

ନବ କଳେବର	ପ୍ରମିଳା ମହାପାତ୍ର	123
ଓଡ଼ିଆ କାବ୍ୟ ଓ ତହିଁରେ ପଦାବଳିର ସ୍ଥାନ	ସୁମିତ୍ରା ପାଢ଼ୀ	124
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ କ୍ରିଆପଦ ଓ ଭାବ	ଡଃ ବିଜୟ ମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ର	127
ନାଲି କୋଠା ବନାମ କଳା ମିଛ	ଶାନ୍ତନୁ କୁମାର ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ	129
ପରୀ ହୋଇଗଲେ ମୀରା ବାଈ	ଇନ୍ଦିରା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	136
ବୋଉ	ମିତାଲି ଦାସ	138
ବେଙ୍ଗ କହେ ବେଙ୍ଗୁଲି ଲୋ	ଡଃ ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ	139
ଭୁଲୁଷିତ ପରଂପରା, ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ମର୍ମକଥା	ପ୍ରଫେସର ମନୋଜ ଦାସ	143
ମାନିନୀ	ପ୍ରବୀର ଦାଶ	149
ଅନୁଭବ	ଡଃ ବାସନ୍ତୀ ମହାପାତ୍ର	150
ଜନ୍ମ ଦିନର ଡାକ	ଡଃ ପ୍ରତିଭା ଶତପଥୀ	151

ରଣ ଶୁଭା	ନିରୁପମା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ	152
ଶେଷ ଅର୍ଘ୍ୟ	ଡଃ ସୁଲୋଚନା ଦାସ	155
ଭାରି ମନେ ପଡୁଛି	ତାପଶୀ ମହାପାତ୍ର	164
ଭଲ ବୋହୂ	କଳ୍ପନାମୟୀ ଦାଶ	165
ଆହତ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ମୋର	ନନ୍ଦ କିଶୋର ଶତପଥୀ	169
ବାମନ	ଡଃ ଅରୁଣ ପୂଜାରୀ	170
ତୃଷାର୍ତ୍ତ	ଦେବରାଜ ସାହୁ	173
ନିଜ ସଙ୍ଗେ ନିଜ ପରିଚୟ	ଶ୍ଵେତପଦ୍ମା ଦାଶ	174
ଗୋଧୂଳୀ	ସୀମା ମିଶ୍ର	175
ନୀଳ ଜହ୍ନ	ସୁକାନ୍ତି ମହାନ୍ତି	176
କାଲି ପରି ଲାଗୁଛି	ଅନାଦି ନାୟକ	177
ଭରସା	ଝିନ୍ନ ଛୋଟରାୟ	182
ବନ୍ଦ ଚିଠି	ଶୁଲୋଚନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ	183
ଅନ୍ଧ ରାଜନୀତି	ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର	187
ଜୀବନ ସମୀକ୍ଷା	ଡଃ ରବି ନାରାୟଣ ମିଶ୍ର	188
ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା: ଇତିହାସର ସ୍ମୃତି ତୀର୍ଥ	ମନୋରମା ମହାପାତ୍ର	189
ସ୍ନେହରେ ବଣ ଏ ଜଗତ	ଶାନ୍ତିଲତା ମିଶ୍ର	193
ଏଇ ବର୍ଷ ଜନ୍ମଦିନ	କଲ୍ୟାଣୀ ପାଢ଼ୀ	196
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଦୂର ଦିଗନ୍ତରୁ	ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମିଶ୍ର	197
ଗଛ କଟାଗଲା	ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି	201

MESSAGES FROM OUR SPONSORS

Atmosphere - Maldiva	206
BPCL	207
DCU	208
ShreetSai Agency	208
Dhola Baja Baraat	209
Edward Jones	210
Falcon Group	211
Kalvik Builders Pvt. Ltd.	212
Math Master	213
Metro Builders	214
Srijamyaham.com	215
Pacard Animation	215
Thomsen - Mortgage master	216
Village Mortgage	217

FROM MASTERS' DESK -ESSAYS, POEMS & STORIES IN ENGLISH

New Year - A slice in Space - Time	Twisampati Mitra	220
Prakriti	Manorama Choudhury	221

A Brownie Abroad: Good People, Bad Things	Raj Satpathy	222
Technology and Spirituality, A Silicon Valley Perspective	Jnana Ranjan Dash	224
Coming to the US in the Sixties	Nirmala Dash	227
Homeward Bound	Dr. Jayasmita Mishra	230
Elephant and Blind Men	Dr. Arun Misra	233
Champu, Chhanda, Odissi Initiative	Lata Misra	234
Food, A Lucky day	Parimita Mohanty	236
Telemedicine for Odisha	Dr. Arun R Panigrahi	238
Nilakantha	Nrusinha Mishra	240
Aadhaaracard.com	Dr. Sulakshyana Sen	241
Forlorn Friend	Manjusha Patnaik	245
The Jagannath I know	Anuranjita Nayak	247
Ramchandra Ddev & Razia Begum: Odisha's Bajirao-Mastani	Srikanta Mishra	248
Are you sensitive to Gluten?	Joy Gopal Mohanty	250
Who am I - A Twentyfirst Century Quest	Dr. Basant Parida	254
Without Pain	Surya Nayak	257
Badigam Village: A Reflection	Annapurna Pandey	258
Confessions of a Relatively new Voter	Tapasi Misra	263
My treatment at he Mayo Clinic	Dr. Debendra Kumar das	266
Memory Chest	Snigdha Mishra	270
Gala Putra bAhudi nailA	Dr. Arjun Purohit	271
Biju Patnaik - Odisha's Mahanayak	Satyabrata Mishra	274
Time Outside and Beyond Time.....	Dr. Lalu Mansinha	276
Message from Oil India Ltd.		282
Message from Dr. Dash Foundation		283
My Life My Term		284

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Ajeeta Dash
Debendra & Catherin Das
Srimant Routray
Rajesh Panda
Naimuddin Shaikh
Malayananda Paul
Himanshu & Kumkum Das

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, ODISHA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS



Dear Friends,

Namaskar! On behalf of OSA, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to 47th OSA Convention in Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, RI from July 1st – July 3rd 2016. Every convention is different and through this endeavor the host chapter brings the selfless volunteers together who give their best to host guests and members from different parts of the world. . The 47th Convention, hosted by OSA New England Chapter (OSNE), is unique because it is the maiden convention for OSNE till date. My sincere appreciation goes to every member of OSNE chapter and the Organizing Committee for their hard work, dedication and commitment in organizing this event. In addition to preserving and promoting our culture and heritage, we also make persistent efforts to inculcate those in our next generation who are born and brought up in North America. This year's convention team has planned to invite many artists from Odisha including Rituraj Mohanty and group and Mayur Arts Center representing the famed Mayurbhanj Chhau; engaging events and activities for youth and seminars of interest. Also, we are celebrating the birth centenary of late Sachi Routray, and late Biju Patnaik. I am very positive that you will have a great time during the convention.

One of our primary focus in last one year has been to engage the youths by 1) providing the option to get involved with service project such as OSA's Adopt-a-Village project, 2) encouraging chapters to organize Youth Mentorship at the local level and 3) providing service grants for the first time to our youth for service project in Odisha. Many of these efforts are dependent on the active participation and enthusiastic support of our members and local chapters. Furthermore, we belong to a larger Indian-American community, we need to put more effort in our outreach endeavors and introduce the rich culture and fine arts from Odisha to the non-Odia community. We have encouraged and supported the local OSA Chapters to celebrate Utkala Dibasa and depending on their comfort level we have encouraged them to invite members from other community to be part of it. In today's world our youth need to embrace the multicultural and multilingual society and our effort should be to encourage Odia Culture and Odia Language to be foundation stone of that identity. We are trying to see if we can have an accredited Odia Language course in NA. As you know we have been advocating implementing digital library in Odisha. We have made some progress because of our passionate volunteers and I hope we can achieve much more if more members volunteer for this and other causes.

I want to thank each one of you for your support. We strive to bring reforms into each of the decision making processes, be it for convention or any other executive decisions so that the business of OSA is more transparent, open and inclusive, and ensure that all our members have equal say. Please continue to support OSA and advocate for the change to take it to greater heights.

With warmest regards,

Sushant Satpathy

President, OSA

Message from the Vice President, OSA



Dear Friends:

It is with great pleasure, I welcome you all to the 47th OSA Convention at Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence, RI. The members of the OSNE chapter have worked very hard to present you three unforgettable days. They have worked tirelessly since the last convention to showcase our art, culture and our heritage. Their passion to preserve and propagate our culture is their mission. The aim is to stay connected to our motherland and advance fellowship among Odias in North America.

During the convention, we all come together as a family and celebrate a few fun filled days jam packed with different cultural events, seminars and meetings. We reminisce our childhood and try to bring back our memories through dance, drama and music.

When you see your children performing Odishi dance, sing Champu and Chhanda, you wonder how they have embraced our culture and how determined they are to carry it forward. Our adult members also show their talents and prove that we have not forgotten our language, art, our cultural heritage while working so hard to assimilate ourselves in a foreign country. I am proud to be a member of this small organization of about 1200 family members, with a mission to promote our heritage. When I visit Odisha, I see the influence of western civilization in our people that reflect in their action, their activities and their attitude. I am proud to say that our children here may have an accent when they speak Odia; but their interest to learn our language and preserve our culture is definitely commendable.

At the end, I would like to thank the members in our senior community who created OSA several years back, to have a larger Odia family in North America. I can definitely say that they are truly successful, and have achieved their mission. It is up to us to carry on their dream and build a lifetime of friendship amongst us. I wish this friendship would bind us forever as big Odia families and we will continue in this journey through our future generations.

Thank you all.

Sulochana Patnaik
Vice President, OSA
April 11, 2016

Message from OSA Treasurer

Dear OSA Members,



Welcome to the 47th annual convention in Providence, Rhode Island, USA from July 1st through 3rd. The convention team has worked very hard to make the event an enjoyable and memorable one. Like past, we are continuing to promote and encourage Odia culture in USA by conducting Annual Convention at the North America level and Regional Drama Festival, Utkala Divasa, CCO, Odia Language development and other Chapter level activities. In Odisha we are working on making higher level education better, adopted a village to increase the skillset of the villagers to self sustain their livelihood and bringing up libraries in Phalin affected districts.

Like any successful organization we have also grown financially and our membership has increased with time.

Last year we had a successful membership drive and our membership grew by 34. Over time our membership has consistently grown and now our organization has 1236 members. From the table below we can see our growth is mainly on the permanent Life Members.

Category	June 10th 2013	May 31st 2014	May 31st 2015*	May 31st 2016**	Increase since May 31st 2015
Life Members	806	921	963	995	32
Benefactors	41	42	42	42	0
Patron	51	51	51	51	0
5 Year Member	53	51	62	61	-1
Annual Member	33	40	84	87	3
Total	984	1105	1202	1236	34

* Includes new members registered through 2015 Convention

** Doesn't include new members registered for 2016 convention

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

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

- Surplus money from past annual conventions,
- Increase in membership and upgrades of membership, and
- Tight control of expenses

Over the last 4 years the total balance has grown from \$187,329.77 to \$264,671.43. From the table below, the big jump is in the long term investment and the expense & other funds. Previous executive committee did a tremendous job of investing part of the money in long term investment. The money has grown by about \$15K over a span of one and half years. 2015 Convention account has not been settled and closed as of May 31st 2016. Thus 50% profit amount from the convention is not reflecting in the balance. We expect the number to increase after the 2015 convention financial account is closed.

Category	May 31 st 2013	May 31 st 2014	May 31 st 2015	May 31 st 2016*
Relief Fund	7,000.00	7,000.00	15,598.12	16,818.12
Long Term Investment	103,479.08	103,584.24	156,321.75	174,870.74
Expense + other funds	76,850.69	110,339.28	57,554.48	72,982.57
Total	187,329.77	220,923.52	229,474.35	264,671.43

* Does not include the 2015 Convention account settlement.

Last year, previous Executive Committee obtained a PAN card and opened a Savings Bank account in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. It is enabling people and institutions to donate money in Indian Rupees to OSA. The money in the account can't be repatriated to US dollars. They can only be used for expenses in India. This year we could get an online readonly access to the Savings account. It helps to keep track of the transactions associated the account. The current breakdown of the balance as of May 31st 2016 is:

Category	June 1 st 2015 - May 31 st 2016
OSA	Rs. 81,577.72
Previous convention	Rs. 233,661.60
Current convention	Rs. 300,000.00

Total	Rs. 615,239.32
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All of the achievements have been possible because of good support from our President Sushant Satpathy, Vice President Sulochana Patnaik and Secretary Saradakanta Panda.

Siddharth Behera
Treasurer, OSA (2015 - 2017)

OSA USA Account Statement 9/1/2015 through 5/31/2016

	Amount	Income / Expense Categories
Opening Balance (9/1/2015)		
Checking A/C (Main)	\$66,835.17	
Checking A/C (Relief Fund)	\$15,890.62	
TD Ameritrade	\$154,092.69	
Total Balance (9/1/2015)	\$236,818.48	
Receipts		
	\$6200.00	Awards -- OSA
	\$4,100.00	Donation -- Adopt A Village
	\$1,735.60	Donation -- Chapter
	\$1,250.00	Donation -- Convention 2015
	\$14,688.60	Donation -- Convention 2016
	\$1,000.00	Donation -- CCO-CD
	\$60.00	Donation -- Expense
	\$1,879.70	Donation -- Library
	\$950.00	Donation -- Relief Fund
	\$3,070.00	Membership

Payments

\$179.06	Administrative
\$1150.00	Adopt-A-Village
\$125.00	Awards -- Chapters
\$275.00	Awards -- OSA
\$1000.00	Chapters
\$1250.00	Convention 2015
\$23,388.60	Convention 2016
\$1250.00	Cultural
\$1000.00	CCO-CD
\$91.34	PayPal Transaction Fees

Closing Balance (5/31/2016)

Checking A/C (Main)	\$71,132.57
Checking A/C (Relief Fund)	\$16,818.12
TD Ameritrade	\$166,720.74
Convention 2016 Advance Receivable	\$10,000.00
Total Balance (5/31/2016)	\$264,671.43

OSA India Account Statement 9/1/2015 through 5/31/2016

	Amount	Income / Expense Categories
Opening Balance (9/1/2015)		
Syndicate Bank	Rs.1,258,809.60	

Total Balance (9/1/2015)	Rs.1,258,809.60	
Receipts		
	Rs.60,427.72	OSA
	Rs.200,000.00	Convention 2015
	Rs.450,000.00	Convention 2016
Payments		
	Rs.212,850.00	OSA
	Rs.2,941,373.00	Convention 2015
	Rs.150,000.00	Convention 2016
Closing Balance (5/31/2016)		
Syndicate Bank	Rs.615,239.32	
Total Balance (5/31/2016)	Rs.615,239.32	

OSA Welcomes New Members

New Life Members

Anurag & Susmita Mishra	Gyanaranjan & Sujata Bohidar
Shyam & Anita Biswal	Ram & Namita Misra
Anirudha & Archana Sahoo	Satyaban & Monalisa Mohapatra
Debashis & Seema Patel	Bibhu & Julianne Misra
Ashok & Micky Mishra	Satyadeep Patnaik
Manas & Upali Swain	Ashok & Rakhee Mishra
Sambit & Rinki Mohanty	Kirtan & Subhra Sahoo
Bhaba & Alexis Misra	Krishna & Sanghamitra Mishra
Ramesh & Banani Sahoo	Bhabani & Sabujima Das

Sangram Pattanaik	Abani & Debasmita Pradhan
Antaryami & Monalisah Panigrahi	Shivashis & Bipsha Hota
Atasi & Anil Das	Bhaskar & Manoroama Panigrahi
Joydip & Dharitri Banerjee	Prasanta Bhunya
Subhendu Pradhan	Manoranjan Panda
Manoranjan Das	Chandan & Subhalaxmi Pratihari
Siba Prasad Das	Manoranjan Acharya
Subhankar Panda	Rajiv & Mousami Patnaik
Saroj & Anasuya Nanda	Jayasmita Mishra
Nivedita & John Misra	Jyoti & Smita Mohapatra
Saroj & Kalpana Panigrahi	Sambit Mohapatra
Sidhartha Pani	Tapan Misra (upgrade)
Sarbeswar Sahoo	Bijaya Dash (upgrade)
Aditya Biswal	Shruti Mohanty (upgrade)

Rajdeep Mohapatra (upgrade)

New 5 year members

Lalit & Hema Behera	Debasis & Padmini Pattnaik
Kosensu & Kanak Sahoo	Partha & Sharmilee Mohapatra
Mahesh & Rachna Mohanty	Naba & Mamata Pradhani
Subash & Disha Rath	Jyotiraj & Mausumi Mohanty

Gourab & Devina Nanda

Message from Secretary, OSA, Saradakanta Panda.



ନମସ୍କାର,

I would like to welcome you all and your family to the 47th OSA convention in Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence. New England Chapter (OSNE) of "The Odisha Society of The Americas" is one of the oldest chapters to host this convention for the first time around Boston Metro area. I recall, we had a quick discussion for Boston convention planning in DC during the Global OSA Convention 2015; one year has just passed so quickly that we are ready to host another spectacular convention in Providence. I'm sure the hard work of all the volunteers for this 47th convention will be duly noticed by the guests, esteemed members and their families. I wish all the best! to all volunteers of this convention.

I would like to take this opportunity to update you all about some of work we have done since July, 2015. Towards late last year, We moved OSA member directory from DOLA to our own domain (effort spearheaded by our Treasurer Siddhartha Behera). This will enable us to implement e-voting as soon as possible. We can't implement e-voting if all the members don't update their own and their spouse's email ID in the OSA directory. Hence I strongly encourage and request all members to update their spouse's email id and verify the address on OSA directory. Two New OSA chapters have been created out of PNW chapter, MT. Hood covering Oregon under leadership of Kirti Mohapatra and Seattle Chapter covering the state of Washington under the leadership of Amulya Das

In November 2015, Kirti Mohapatra joined BOG as Chapter head of MT Hood. In December, 2015 Sridhar Rana joined BOG as Chapter head of NY-NJ. In January Debasish Panda joined BOG as Chapter head from Chicago. In February Amulya Das joined BOG as president of newly formed Seattle Chapter. I encourage all other chapters due for elections (normally every 4 years) to elect their new representatives in a fair and democratic manner.

Canada, Ohio, Southern, Michigan, and MD/VA chapters celebrated/celebrating various events around Utkal Dibasa. News/Updates from, OSA public Library Open Forum and Adopt-a-village program have been uploaded to OSA website.

On Dec 22nd a meeting was held in Utkal University where 8-9 academicians from USA joined with departments heads of Utkal University. It was decided to form a coordination committee with 2

faculty members and few OSA Education Committee members. Two possible collaboration projects were identified University of California (riverside) and South Dakota University. Members of committee from Utkal University will communicate and identify possible collaboration by reviewing the match between 2 US institutions and that of UU. Also, it was decided the coordination committee will communicate the visit of Academicians and Professionals and arrange interaction with faculty and students.

Finally as of May 2016 the total OSA membership is at 1236 families. As always, we conduct the monthly BOG meeting among chapter presidents and OSA executives every second Sunday at 7:30pm ET. Below are the links to the minutes.

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

Again I would like to request every one of you to stay actively engaged in our OSA family activities and help us to grow as a community. Please keep visiting our OSA website <http://www.odishasociety.org> for update to information about our various activities, newsletter Utkarsa, monthly Board Of Governance (BOG) meeting minutes, yearly general body meeting minutes and many more. The Chapter and committee pages have been updated latest information. If you want to contact the executives or any chapter representatives you can also find the contact information.

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



Message from the President, OSNE

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Odisha Society of New England (OSNE), it is my singular pleasure to welcome you to the Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence to celebrate the 47th Annual Convention of The Odisha Society of the Americas. We, the Odias from the six New England states (Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont) are honored to be your hosts during this convention.

It was the Beginning! In the year of 1969, a group of few visionary Odias living in the New England region of the USA aspired to create a socio-cultural organization for promoting our Odia culture and heritage in North America. Those self-inspired first generation leaders came together and laid the foundation of our organization, "**The Orissa Society of the Americas (OSA)**". Over the years this organization has grown to encompass more than 1200 families across North America. Our Odia families come together every year to celebrate OSA's annual convention, which is the pinnacle of Odia heritage and culture across generations. This year, the OSA convention is being held at its birth place! We, the New Englanders, are privileged to invite you to attend the 47th OSA annual convention. With its rich history and culture, New England region is arguably one of the "must visit" places in the USA. American Revolution started in New England. New England region is home to some of the world renowned institutions for higher education such as Harvard, MIT, Yale, Dartmouth, and Brown. Incidentally, first public school in the USA, Boston Latin, is also located here in New England. Furthermore, New England offers several attractions including whale watching, river cruises, historical city tours, and beautiful sea beaches. In addition to making best use of your time in enjoying the cultural programs offered by our local Oriya talents and visiting artists from Odisha, I strongly encourage you to make some time during your stay to experience the culture and natural beauty of New England.

More than one hundred Odia families in New England are working tirelessly to make this convention historic and memorable. I am grateful to these volunteers for their self-less hard work. I express my sincere gratitude to all the sponsors, the donors, and our guests for their support. My sincere Thanks to OSA executive committee for their constant encouragement and guidance. I commend the entire convention team for their flawless planning and dedicated efforts towards making OSA 2016 a grand success. Finally, on behalf of OSNE, I warmly welcome you all to New England. I am quite hopeful that you will have a very pleasant stay during the convention.

With warmest regards,

Arun Mohanty

President, Odisha Society of New England

MESSAGE FROM THE CONVENER, DR. SOURYA R MAHAPATRA



Dear Friends,

Greetings! It is my utmost pleasure and a great privilege to welcome you all to the 47th Annual Convention of the Odisha Society of the Americas being held here at the Rhode Island Convention Center. Our dedicated team has gone many extra miles to arrange the events, activities, food, and ENTERTAINMENT with an aim to please your heart, palate, and soul.

We have chosen a theme of **Connect, Celebrate, Impact**.

The objective is to **Connect** and network with our Odia brethren throughout US, Canada, and stretching it all the way to Odisha. In this process can we do something positive for ourselves and for our home state? We have all gathered here to **Celebrate** our “Odiatwa”. We will listen to Champu, Chhaanda, and Odissi, watch Odissi and Chhau dance, partake in authentic Odia cuisine, and most of all, greet one another and do a lot of “khatti”! Amidst all this “sagar manthan”, hopefully we will discover the “amruta” to **Impact** the Odia community here and back home, be it via telemedicine, furthering education, or the Public Library initiative.

Our Chapter’s first effort to host the Annual Convention has been a spectacular experience on our part – now it’s your turn. We hope you all will have a great time in terms of accommodation, food, and entertainment. I am very grateful to members of NE chapter and OSA families, for all of their generous contributions. I would also like to extend our thanks to guests and artists from Odisha who will be joining us in this celebration

On behalf of the Organizing Committee and each of the volunteers, I wish to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for spending the time, effort, and money to be here in Providence, RI. Since you have already done so, please do not hesitate to spend a few more days in this area that we call our home, and explore the myriads of attractions from Newport to Boston, from Mount Washington, NH, to Bar Harbor, Maine, or Plymouth Plantation and Faneuil Hall marketplace. Please make sure to try out the famous New England clam chowder, steamed lobster, and refried beans.

Jai Jagannath!

Sincerely,

Sourya Mahapatra

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CONVENER

Dear Friends,

It is a great honor and a huge privilege to be a member of this great organization called “Odisha Society of the Americas”. This organization brings Odias living in US and Canada together with a common thread of shared culture and tradition of our beloved land Odisha. The annual OSA convention is the crowning event each year when members of this great organization come together to connect with each other, celebrate our unique heritage and endeavor to make an impact on our homeland. It is a great pleasure for me personally to be part of the 47th OSA annual convention being held at Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence, Rhode Island. The Odias living in the New England region, comprising Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont, are taking the lead to organize the convention and inviting Odias from all over US, Canada and India.

Being an Odia means complete immersion in a cultural heritage groomed over thousands of years. We have spent years in the cradle of our motherland relishing our unique culture, delicious food and intimate relationships. But now that we are living far away from our motherland in the heart of North America, we seldom get the opportunity to experience the wonderful Odia culture. The annual OSA convention is one unique event that helps us experience our culture and heritage, relish delicious Odia food and relive the wonderful relationships that we have forged over the years.

It has been heartening to see the energy and enthusiasm among the fellow members of the OSNE community coming together with great enthusiasm for the convention. It is great to see how the community members have organized themselves into many groups under superb leadership of the respective chairpersons and how volunteers have rallied around them to efficiently deliver the myriad responsibilities of the convention. The camaraderie and collaboration among all the volunteers have been outstanding. It is a humbling experience to be part of this great team and witness the wonderful convention experience they have designed. My sincere and heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers for taking time from their busy professional and personal lives to devote into making this convention possible.

We will have the opportunity to witness the wonderful cultural programs and participate in the enriching seminar sessions. But only the articles, stories and poems in this souvenir will capture the Odia experience in a unique manner that we will be able to read over and over again. My heart felt gratitude to all the writers who have taken the time to capture the Odia experience in words. These words will speak to us for a long time.

Our sincere thanks to all the Odias who have travelled from far and wide to join us in the convention to make it a memorable event that we will treasure in our hearts for years. We are very thankful to our sponsors both from India and US who have generously supported the convention.

With lots of love and tons of best wishes for a great convention.

Bikash Behera, Connecticut

Co-convener

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE OF THE 47TH OSA CONVENTION, NEW ENGLAND

Convener

Dr. Sourya Mahapatra

Co-Convener

Bikash Behera

Co-Convener

Sulochana Patnaik - VP OSA

Advisory Body

Dr. Basant Parida

Dr. Budhinath Padhy

Nityananda Misra

Sulochana Patnaik

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Vice-President

Jayshree (Leena) Mahapatra

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Satish K Sahoo

Treasurer

Sujata Dhal

Cultural Coordinator

Prabhu Prasad Sahoo

Leadership

Dr. Sourya Mahapatra

Bikash Behera

Sulochana Patnaik - VP OSA

Dr. Basant Parida

Dr. Budhinath Padhy

Nityananda Misra

Dr. Arun Mohanty

Sasmita Mishra

Sankar Padhi

Satyabrata Mishra

Jyoti Bhusan Padhi

Saroj Panigrahi

Dr. Bishwa Bhusan Sahoo

Dr. Nihar Nanda

Akshya Mohanty

Bijoylaxmi Mishra

Soubhagya Parija

Malaya Paul

Nishikanta Sahoo

Dillip Behera

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Sonali Panda

Volunteers
Volunteers

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Volunteer
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Aparajita Swain

Sankar Padhi
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Co-Chair
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Volunteer
Volunteer
Volunteer
Volunteer
Volunteer
Volunteer

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Swetapadma Sahu
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Tapasi Mahapatra
Kalyani Padhi
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Co-chair
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Volunteer
Volunteer

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Volunteer
Volunteer
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Co-Chair
Volunteer
Volunteer
Volunteer
Volunteer
Volunteer
Volunteer

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Co-Chair
Co-Chair
Co-Chair
Co-Chair
Volunteer
Volunteer
Volunteer

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Volunteer
Volunteer
Volunteer
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Soumya R Mohanty
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Siba Satapathy
Siba Rath
Malaya Paul
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Track Co-chair

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Odia Literature Development
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Odia Kabita Pathachakra:
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Track Co-chair

Regional Drama Festival:
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OSA Women's Forum Seminar
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Track Co-chair

OSA Youth Forum Seminar
Career Planning, Mentoring, Roundtable, Networking:
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Mrs. Sulochana Pattnaik

Nalinikanta Sahoo
Dillip Pradhan
Swarup Sahoo
Nityananda Mishra

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A Journey to Odisha, the Soul of Incredible India:
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Mrs Barnali Dasverma
Ashish Patra
Asima Mohapatra
Mrs Barnali Dasverma
Ashish Patra
Asima Mohapatra

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OSA Seminar Steering Committee:

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Sushant Satapathy
Dhirendra Kar

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Co-Chair - Inaugural Dance+OSA Got Talent, Sr.
Advisor - Teachers' Dance
Advisor - Inaugural Song

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Namrata Mohanty
Suchilagna Panigrahi
Jayashree Mohapatra
Swati Panda

Subrina Biswal Jr Competition
Subrina Biswal Jr Competition
Subrina Biswal Sr Competition

Sudhira Mishra
Soumya Mohanty
Liza DasMohapatra

Subrina Biswal Sr Competition

Core -OSAGot Talent Jr.
Core -OSAGot Talent Jr.
Core -OSAGot Talent Sr.

Champu, Chhanda, Odissi, Jr
Champu, Chhanda, Odissi, Jr
Champu, Chhanda, Odissi, Sr
Champu, Chhanda, Odissi, Sr
Champu, Chhanda, Odissi, Sr

PramodPatnaik Drama & Local Chapter Drama-CT
Local Chapter Drama - CT
Local Chapter Drama - MA
Local Chapter Drama - MA

Mehefil
Mehefil

Fashion Show
Fashion Show
Fashion Show

Local Chapter Dance
Local Chapter Dance

Teacher's Performance
Teacher's Performance

Closing Ceremoney
Closing Ceremoney

Bhajan & Devotional Song
Bhajan & Devotional Song

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Media

Info Tech

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Content Owner
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Leena Sahu
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Namrata Mohanty

Bikash Behera
Bilas Das
Nishikant Bhadra
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Sanjeeb Swain
Prabhudutta Mohanty

Sushmita Mishra
Aparajita(Julie) Swain
Lipsa Mohanty

Amrita Pritam
Sangya Padhi

Jayashree Mohapatra
Anandita Nanda

Suchilagna Panigrahi
Sangya Padhi

Sudhira Mishra
Bishnupriya Paul

Prabhudutta Mohanty
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Jagat P. Brahma
Prabhudutta Mohanty
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Bikram Ray
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Saroj Panigrahi
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SuchiLagna Panigrahi

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

Chapter Presidents/Representatives

Chapter Name	Chapter Head	Email	Phone	Start Date
California	Sunil Sabat	sunil_sabat@yahoo.com	(510) 364-3903	Jul 2012
Chicago	Debashish Panda	debashishp@hotmail.com	(630) 579-4003	Jan 2016
Grand Canyon Chapter	TBD	TBD	TBD	INACTIVE
Maryland - Virginia	Sujata Nayak	esnayaks@msn.com	(301) 528-9702	Oct 2011
Michigan	Pradipta Mishra	mishra.pradipta@gmail.com	(517) 347-7872	Jun 2015
Minnesota/North-west	TBD	TBD	TBD	Vacant
New England	Arun Mohanty	arunmohanty_05@yahoo.com	(617) 224-3275	Oct 2013
New York-New Jersey	Sridhar Rana	sridhar_rana@yahoo.com	(908) 269-5264	Dec 2015
Ohio	Anil Patnaik	anil.dipali@gmail.com	(937) 912-4363	Sep 2014
Ozark (central)	Radhagobinda Mohanty	rmohastat@charter.net	(636) 220-6588	Jul 2012
MT. Hood	Kirti Mohapatra	kirti.mohapatra@gmail.com	(503) 914-6455	Nov 2015
Seattle	Amulya Das	amulyakdas@hotmail.com	(427) 754-	Feb 2016

			5030	
Rocky Mountain	Sadhu Behera	sadhu.behera@gmail.com	(303) 517-3297	Mar 2014
South East	Sakti Singh	sakti_singh@yahoo.com	(919) 412-1228	Jun 2014
Southern	Pramod Mahapatra	m_pramod99@yahoo.com	(423) 709-8301	Jul 2012
South-West	Vacant			Vacant
Washington, DC	Bimal Mishra	bimal_mishra@hotmail.com	(301) 610-2098	Nov 2014
Canada	Dr. Sunanda Panda	drsunanda.panda@gmail.com	(647) 838-9884	Jun 2016

Committees and Associated Members 2015-2017

Committees

OSA Awards

Odissi Steering

Higher Education

Regional Drama Festivals

Finance

Let's Learn Odia

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Sulochana Patnaik(VP, OSA Ex-officio member)

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Annapurna Biswal
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Leena Mishra
Tapas Sahoo
Gayatri Joshi
Birendra Jena

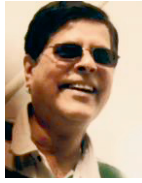
Prashanta Ranabijuli
Akhileswar Patel
Siddharth Behera (Treasurer, OSA Ex-officio member)

Gagan Bihari Panigrahi
Pramod Mohapatra
Swapnalata Rath
Sujata Pattnaik
Ranjita Mishra
Sujit Das

	Gayatri Mohapatra
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<u>Grievance Handling</u>	Esha Bandyopadhyay Dash Jyotsna Mishra Pitamber Sarangi
<u>Guest Selection</u>	Gyana Patnaik Satya Patnaik Prabhat Mohapatra Sourya Mohapatra, Convener , 2016 Conventioin Sulochana Patnaik, VP, OSA (Ex-officio member)
<u>OSA Election Guideline</u>	Durga Mishra Jay Narayan Bhuyan Abani Patra Jagannath Mohanty
<u>OSA eVoting Selection</u>	Sachi Pati Sunil Mishra Kamal Panda
<u>Convention Audit</u>	Akhileswar Patel Satyakam Loknath Patro
<u>OSA Library</u>	Nishikant Sahoo Sandip Dasverma Priyadarsan Patra Sourya Padhi, India
<u>Web Content Management Policy and Strategy</u>	Rupananda Mishra Sushant Routray
<u>OSAnet Moderation</u>	Prashant Padhy Sunil Sabat
OSA Archive	Lalu Mansinha Kula Misra Manaranjan Pattanayak

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

EDITORIAL: WE'RE AT THE CROSSROADS



I extend my greetings and welcome you all.

May I share some personal feelings with you all, my brothers & sisters, nephews & nieces, and beyond? While we are wont to this annual ritual, just like the Sri Jagannath Ratha Jatra (coming up), Raja Sankranti (that just went by), or Durga Puja, I have to admit that these are all times for reflections. We reflect on our early life, in India, beginning of a new life here, way away from not only the motherland, but from the mother and all others near and dear. We have all been pretty enwrapped with our professions, family life, and close social connections. Sometimes, I feel like being under the tree, and not being able to envision the forest, or vice versa. In his inaugural speech President Kennedy had said, “Ask not what the country can do for you; ask what you can do for the country”, profoundly stated. Now, let’s ask ourselves the same question. How have we contributed to the land of our origin and what have we done for the land of our existence? I do know that many of us have done substantially for these causes – in a variety of ways. We should all be thankful to those generous persons. I feel that we need to spread into wider diaspora, of GIVING.

Our journal has been named “Urmi”. This name took shape at the 45th convention in Columbus, Ohio. I don’t need to elaborate on how and what happened to create this beautiful name. You can read it by browsing the last two souvenirs. I would like to explain what we have done for this 3rd edition of Urmi. The editorial team has taken extra efforts to include submissions from children of our community, adults writing in English as well as in Odia. I have been amazed by the style, thinking, and the power of expression, all shown by the children. All of them, to me, are outstanding. I feel blessed that our second generation is so thoughtful, creative, and vibrant. We have covered wide range of topics by the adult contributors starting from Naba Kalebara and Bali Jatra; Vedic spirituality to the spirituality as understood today in the western world. We have covered telemedicine by one practicing physician, and posted creations of oil on canvass by another. It has taken my team and I long hours and several Advil’s to piece this together. We stretched out to our Odia friends in India to design the cover and put colorful ads, all aimed to please, excite, and get you to think about our theme: CONNECT, CELEBRATE, (and) IMPACT. I am quite hopeful that we all together will not just meet for a few short days and disperse to our respective homes, but will come out with a few ideas that will not only help each other here but will reach out to Odisha and can impact with something substantive.

This has been a unique year that we Odias here as well as those in Odisha have got the opportunity to celebrate the birth centenary of two stalwart sons of Odisha. They are Padmashree Sachidananda

Routray and Mahanayak Bijayananda Patnaik. You will find an article in this journal that is devoted to Biju Babu. However, no words can totally describe the illustrious life of this freedom fighter-industrialist-politician.

We did not do the same for Sri Routray simply because our sister e-journal “Utkarsha” has done proper justice to his life and works. The two editors, Mr. Prasant Bhunya and Mrs. Kanak Hota-Mishra painstakingly gathered a lot of information and put it together in the e-zine. Please take a minute or two to browse the link below. That’s the only way you can reward Kanak and Prashant for a job very well done: http://www.odishasociety.org/media/newsletters/UTKARSA_March2016_SR.pdf

In trying to put together this Journal and the Phone directory, I would like to profoundly thank my team for its enthusiastic support, the advisers for their capable and timely guidance, and our associates with printing, Winbrook. Without this support I would be in deep waters. We have had to make some hard choices to get through this process. Also, we may have missed some worthy contributions. My team has worked hard – any oversight is mine, and mine only. The plan of record is to put the entire Urmi publication online that will include the articles we excluded soon after the conclusion of this Convention. Lastly, I would like to thank my wife, Bijoylaxmi, for her support, encouragement, and phenomenal patience, without which I could not have completed this monumental task.

Once again, Welcome to the 47th OSA Convention. We love your participation.

ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ଵ

Satyabrata Mishra

Shrewsbury, Massachusetts



ସମ୍ପାଦକୀୟ

ତାପସୀ ମହାପାତ୍ର

ଯୁଗେ ଯୁଗେ ମଣିଷ ନୂତନତାର ଅନୁସନ୍ଧାନରେ ନିଜକୁ ନିୟୋଜିତ କରି ଆସିଛି । ନିଜର ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ, ଐତିହାସିକ ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟିକ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତିକୁ ପ୍ରତିପାଦିତ କରିବାର ଆହ୍ୱାନରେ ସମଗ୍ର ବିଶ୍ୱ କବଳିତ । ତାକୁ ଆଧାର କରି ଆଜି ଭାରତୀୟ ମାନେ ଆଜି ବିଶ୍ୱର ବିଭିନ୍ନ କୋଣରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ଏବଂ ଆମେ ଓଡ଼ିଆମାନେ ନିଜ ନିଜର ଜ୍ଞାନ ଗାରୀମା ଓ ନିଆରା ପଣକୁ ଏଇଠି ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ୱନିତ କରୁଛେ ।

ଏକବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଦଶକରେ ପହଂଚି ଇଣ୍ଡନେଟରେ ନିଜ ଦେଶର ଖବର ପଢ଼ୁ ପଢ଼ୁ ନିଜ ମାଟିକୁ ଯେତେ ଝୁରେ, ତା ଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ଭାଗ୍ୟବାନ ମନେ କରେ ନିଜର ସୁରକ୍ଷାକୁ ନେଇ । ଏଇ ମାଟି ରେ ଠିଆ ହେଇ ନିଜ ମାଟିର ସାମୁହିକ ବିକାଶ ପାଇଁ ଯେତେ ଗୌରବାନ୍ୱିତ ମନେ କରେ, ତା'ଠୁ ଅଧିକ ହତାସ ହୋଇଯାଏ ମାଟି ମାଁର କୋହକୁ ଶୁଣି । ମାତୃଭାଷା, ମାତୃଭୂମି ଭଳି ଶବ୍ଦକୁ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ କଲେ ବି ବାସ୍ତବରେ ତାହା ଅନ୍ତରରୁ ସ୍ୱତଃ ଝରିବା ପରି ମନେ ହୁଏନି ।

ଯେଉଁ ଭାରତୀୟ ସମାଜ ଦିନେ ' ଯତ୍ର ନ୍ୟାୟାସ୍ତୁ ପୂଜ୍ୟକ୍ତେ ରମ୍ଭତେ ତତ୍ର ଦେବତା' ରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ରଖୁଥିଲା, ସେଇ ଆର୍ଯ୍ୟଭୂମିରେ ନାରୀ ପ୍ରାଣ ଆଜି ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଉପେକ୍ଷିତା । ମହାଷାମର୍ଦ୍ଦିନୀ ଦୁର୍ଗାଙ୍କ ଭୂମିରେ ନାରୀ ଶକ୍ତି ଆଜି ଭୁଲୁଣ୍ଡିତା । ଯେଉଁ ଧର୍ମରେ ଦେବୀ ସରସ୍ୱତୀ ଜ୍ଞାନର ଆଦ୍ୟ ଭକ୍ତାରଣ , ସେଇଠି ନାରୀ ଶିକ୍ଷାର ହାର କେତେ, ସମ୍ଭବତଃ ଉତ୍ତର କେବଳ ଏତିକି ଲାଜ । ଧନର ଆରାଧ୍ୟା ଦେବୀ ମାଁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ, ଅଥଚ ନାରୀ ଏଇଠି ଗଙ୍ଗାଶିଉଳୀର କାକର ଭଳି ଶ୍ରୀହୀନ । ଯେଉଁ ଭାରତୀୟ ନାରୀର ମୌଳିକ ଚିନ୍ତା, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଭିମାନ ଆଉ ଜାତିପ୍ରେମ ତାକୁ ପୁରୁଷ ସହିତ ହାତ ମିଶାଇ ବ୍ରିଟିଶ ରାଜତନ୍ତ୍ର ବିରୋଧରେ ସଂଗ୍ରାମ କରି ଜାତୀୟ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟକୁ ସମ୍ପାଦିତ କରିଥିଲା, ସେଇ ନାରୀ ଆଜି ନିଜ ଅସ୍ଥିତକୁ ଖୋଜିବା ପାଇଁ ଅହରହ ସଂଘର୍ଷରତା । ଯେଉଁ ମାଟିର କନ୍ୟା ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀବାଇ, ସରୋଜିନୀ ନାଜଡ଼ୁ, ଇନ୍ଦିରା ଗାନ୍ଧୀ , କିରନ ବେଦୀ, ଲତା ମଂଗେସକର, ପି.ଟି. ଉଷା , ଶକୁନ୍ତଳା ଦେବୀ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦିତା, କନ୍ୟାଭୂଷା ହତ୍ୟାର ଷଡ଼ଯନ୍ତ୍ରରେ ସେଇ ମାଟି ଆଜି ସୃଷ୍ଟିକରୁଛି ରକ୍ତର ତାଣ୍ଡବଳୀଳା । ଧର୍ଷଣ, ଯୌତୁକ, ଶୋଷଣ, ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନାର ବଳୟରେ ଆଜି ନାରୀ ଲହୁଲୁହାଣ । ଏଇଠି ନାରୀକୁ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଅଜସ୍ର ମୌକା ମିଳେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିବା ଲାଗି ତା'ର ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିଗର ପୁରୁଷ ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ସମାଜକୁ ଏବଂ ନାରୀ ସେଇ ଅନୁଭବକୁ ରୂପତାପ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବାର କାରଣ ଖୋଜିବସିଲେ ଉତ୍ତର ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ପଛରେ ରହିଯାଇଛି ଅନେକ ଉଜ୍ଜଳ ଅତୀତ; ଆଉ ଖୁବ କରୁଣ ଯା'ର ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ।

ନାରୀର ଆତ୍ମସମ୍ମାନ, ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଭିମାନ, ଅଧିକାର ପାଇଁ ଆମ ସମ୍ବିଧାନ ଓ ଜାତିସଂଘର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ଆଇନ ଆଜି ଖୁବ କ୍ରୀୟାଶୀଳ । ତଥାପି ଅସହାୟତା ଆଜି ନାରୀପ୍ରାଣକୁ ଅତି ମାତ୍ରାରେ ଭାବହୀନ କରିବା ଭଳି ମନେହୁଏ । ଏଇ ଅସହାୟତା କେବଳ ଅଶିକ୍ଷିତା, ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଶିକ୍ଷିତା ବା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣଶିକ୍ଷିତା ନାରୀଙ୍କ ଜୀବନକୁ ଭାରାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ କରୁଛି ତାହା ନୁହେଁ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷିତା କର୍ମଜୀବି ମହିଳାମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପରିବେଶ ଓ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିର ବଶବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ହୋଇ ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସ ହରାଇ ବସୁଛନ୍ତି ।

ମାଟିକୁ ଖୋଜିଲେ ହିଁ ଜଳ, ଭୂମିକୁ ଚଷିଲେ ହିଁ ଫଳ । ନିଜର ସାମର୍ଥ୍ୟକୁ ଉପେକ୍ଷା କରି ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଦେବୀକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କଲେ ଅପେକ୍ଷାରେ ହିଁ ଜୀବନ ରହିଯିବ । ଉଣେଇଶି ବର୍ଷୀୟା ମଲାଲୀର ଧମନୀରେ ଯଦି ସାରା ନାରୀଜାତିର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଭିମାନର ରକ୍ତ ବୋହିପାରେ, ଏଇ ମାଟିର ଝିଅ ମାନକ୍ଷି ଆରୋରା, ଇନ୍ଦିରା ଜଇସିଂଗ, ରୁପାନ ଦେଓଲ ବାଜାଜ ଆଦି ଯଦି ନାରୀ ଶୋଷଣ ବିରୋଧରେ ବିପ୍ଳବର ବନ୍ଧି ଜାଳି ପାରୁଛନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ସାଇ ପତିଶା ମାଁ, ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କ ଲାଂଛନାପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଜୀବନ ଦେଖି ଆମ ରକ୍ତ ତାତିଉଠୁନି କାହିଁକି ? ନିଜ ଗାରିମାକୁ ଜାହିର କରିବାର ଉଚ୍ଛାହ କାହିଁକି ଉଭେଇ ଯାଉଛି? ଦୁଇରୁ ତାରି, ଚାରିରୁ ଚାଳିଶି, ଚାରିଶରୁ ଚାରିହଜାର ସମ୍ମିଳିତ ନାରୀ କଣ୍ଠସ୍ୱର ପାଦ ତଳର ମାଟିକୁ ଥରାଇ ଦେବ, ଏଥିରେ ସନ୍ଦେହ ନାହିଁ ।

"ମୁଁ ପାରିବି, ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଗଢ଼ିବି", "ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଧ୍ୱନତା ଦାନର ବସ୍ତୁ ନୁହେଁ ଦାବୀର ବସ୍ତୁ" ଏହି କଥାକୁ ଆଜି ନାରୀ ମୁକ୍ତ କଣ୍ଠରେ ଘୋଷଣା କରିବାର ଅଛି । ଶିକ୍ଷା, ସଚେତନ, ସଂଗଠନ, ସଂଘ ପ୍ରତି ନାରୀର ଅବେଗ ସ୍ୱତଃପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତ ଭାବେ ଝରିଆସୁ । ଯେଉଁ ନାରୀ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଯୋଦ୍ଧା ଅର୍ଜୁନ ଅଭିମନ୍ୟୁକୁ ଜନ୍ମ ଦେଇଛି, ଯା'ର ଗର୍ଭରୁ ନେତାଜି ସୁଭାଷ, ବିବେକାନନ୍ଦ, ପରମହଂସ, ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ରଭଞ୍ଜ, ଚକ୍ର ବିଶୋଭୀ ପରି ଯୁଗପୁରୁଷ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି, ତା'ର ଶକ୍ତି ଅନନ୍ତ । ସେ ହିଁ ପାରିବ ଯଦି ସେ ଅନ୍ଧାର ରାତିରେ, ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦିବାଲୋକରେ ଚେତନାର ଅଲୋକ ଜାଳି କଣ୍ଠରେ ଜଳନ୍ତ ବିପ୍ଳବ ଆଉ କାନ୍ଧରେ ପୁରାତନ ଶବ ଧରି ସାରା ବିଶ୍ୱ ପ୍ରଦକ୍ଷଣ କରିବ । 'I was ever been a fighter, so one fight more, that is the best and the last' - ଏଇ ସ୍ୱର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ନାରୀ ର ସ୍ୱର ହେଉ । ତା'ର ଏଇ ସ୍ୱର ଗୋଟିଏ ସଂଗ୍ରାମୀର ସ୍ୱର ହେଉ । ଆଉ ଏଇ ସ୍ୱର ସମଗ୍ର ବିଶ୍ୱଜୀବନକୁ ପ୍ରତିଧ୍ୱନିତ କରୁ ।



RISING STARS

THIS SEGMENT IS DEVOTED TO

YOUNG AND TALENTED WRITERS WITHIN THE AGE GROUP OF 6 TO 12 YEARS

SUBMITTED FOR THE MEGHNA MEMORIAL AWARD, JUNIOR, COMPETITION

(Painting on the segment header is a reproduction of Oil on canvass contributed by the artiste

Dr. Sidharth Pani)

The Life of a Legend

Aaditi Padhi

Utkalmani Pundit Gopabandhu Das was a famous Oriya poet known for being a nationalist, strong freedom fighter, and a community volunteer/organizer. Utkalmani refers to him being the, “Gem of Odisha.”

Gopabandhu was born on October 9, 1877 to Swarnamayee Devi and Sri Daitari Das. He was raised in Suando Village near Puri, Odisha as an intelligent student, especially in literature. At age 12, he married a young girl named Apti. Soon later, Gopabandhu lost his father, while he was attending school.

He was most famous for writing the poem, “ମିସ୍ତୁ ମୋର ଦେହ ଏ ମାଟିରେ (Let my body mingle with the dust.”

Let my body mingle with the dust of this Land, And let my countrymen walk along my back; Let all the holes in the road of freedom be filled with my blood & bone, And let my life be sacrificed when my people awake into freedom.

ମିସ୍ତୁ ମୋର ଦେହ ଏ ଦେଶ ମାଟିରେ
ଦେଶବାସୀ ଚାଲି ଯାଆନ୍ତୁ ପାଦରେ,
ଦେଶର ସୁରାଜ୍ୟା ପଥେ ଯେତେ ଗାଡ଼
ପୁରୁ ତହିଁ ପଡ଼ି ମୋର ମାଂସ ହାଡ଼ ।।

The poem expressed his willingness to help and sacrifice for the people of Odisha, which is exactly what he did by helping the victims of disastrous floods.

Following the event of his father’s death, Gopabandhu attended Ravenshaw College, taking some time to adjust to the new environment. His bright and studious personality attracted many friends, who in turn helped him with his dedication to flood victims. Not much after, Gopabandhu’s first son fell gravely ill and died. He was working to save many from floods at the time, and when he heard of his son’s illness, he chose to help the others, instead of returning home.

Gopabandhu didn’t get an undergraduate degree, due to his social services, but he did earn his M.A. and LL.B with pride, at Calcutta University. When Gopabandhu was in Calcutta, he crossed paths with the Bande Maataram group, who learned about his services to their country. In turn,

they initiated the Swadeshi spirit in him. Unfortunately, soon later, a tragic event occurred... when he was only 28, his wife died.

Soon, in the year 1909, Gopabandhu went on to establish his famous school, Satyabadi Bana Bidyalaya, where features like residential schooling, were incorporated into a student friendly environment. The school allowed children of all castes to dine, mingle, and talk to each other. By creating the school, Gopabandhu achieved his goal of providing education to all children, and to help them grow mentally, physically, and spiritually.

Before that, in 1903, Gopabandhu attended the Utkal Union Conference at Paralakhemundi. At the conference, it was clear that he opposed the idea of amalgamation of Oriya speaking tracts under the Bengal province. However, Gopabandhu was smart enough to know that the proposal would lead to a domination of the Bengalis over the Oriyas. So he suggested amalgamation under the central province. This event ultimately led to the creation of the state of Odisha. Since then, Oriyas all over the world observe Utkala Dibasa (Odisha Day) on April 1st, 1936.

Gopabandhu Das died on June 17, 1928 at the unripe age of 51. However the whole world remembers the legacy that he left behind.

Aaditi, 11, is a 6th grader, living with her parents, Jyoti and Sunita Padhi, in Westford, Massachusetts. Her hobbies include swimming and Odissi dancing.

Escape From Pelican Rock

Ajeetesh Ojha



The harsh breeze wiped against me as I walked outside. It was summer, but the winds made it feel like winter. Cold and shivering, I entered a small store. The little bell jingled. I held my breath waiting for something to happen. And finally, a small buzzing sound filled the air and the four tiles I was standing on went down into the underground passage. I stared down at the passage, and then I landed with a loud *THUD*. The platform collapsed into pieces.

“Are you alright?” asked a worker. “That platform... Someone’s gonna have to do something ‘bout it...” he muttered. “Oh! You! Didn’t know that was you!” He removed his glasses, a wig and his turtleneck. Then I noticed it. “Thought invaders coming’ back to snoop. Ya’ know? Disguise...it called.” It was Mr. James, my boss for Adventures Caused by Extreme Crimes.

I ran down the aisle as he left. I swung my backpack on as it fell off my shoulder— my room was a far away from here. I ran down the corridor to the left, and then another corridor to the right, then straight, then go to the right corridor— well you get the point.

By the time I reached there I was panting and according to my watch, ten minutes had passed.

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP! THERE IS A CRIME REPORTED THE WEST OF LITTLE SENECA—

I ran in. The alert system had been beeping for half an hour. The thief must have gone by now...but according to the camera he was still there. Then once again, ten minutes later I was in my car turning on the engine. I raced there— and might as well and kind of broke my car.

When I reached there an old woman was crying. The redness on her face stood out showing that she was also mad. She kept crying, and I heard her say to another old woman, “That thief! Stole my money too...did more than just that— things that would get people too worried if it happened to them...”

Then I spotted the thief hiding in front of a basket of fruits.

“Found you!” I said as I stared face to face to the thief. I took out the handcuffs. Then—

“You will never catch me! Once I get you— MWAHAHA— I will get the treasure at the top of the tower!”

Then without knowing it I was running up a strange hill— one I’ve never saw before. On the hill there were shops and different restaurants until finally I was there.

But then, before I could even take out the handcuffs the thief removed his mask. I gasped. We looked so alike, and I had a bad feeling about it— a very bad feeling...

Then before you could even blink, he threw a white cloth over me and tied it to my feet. Then I heard sirens.

“You said the thief was over here!” Said Marshall, the manager of the police station.

“Right there! But, someone already caught him for us! Probably one of my workers...” said a greasy haired boy, and he grinned, a toothless grin.

Then it hit me, I was being framed! I made muffled cries— but they still thought it was me. “We have to send the thief of to prison...” continued the worker. “There the thief will learn their lesson!” He added happily. “No-o-o!” I screamed, though of course, they didn’t understand that. That night as I boarded a ship I spotted a newspaper.

I closed the newspaper once I was done reading it. It was all a lie! I was being framed!

“I see you’ve been reading the newspaper—*Booted Bandit...*” said the boy. I jumped up.

“I’m not—” I started

“Oh, they all say that...” he said.

“Yeah, well you don’t have to believe me! And—what’s your problem if I read it?”

“Oh, everything.” He said. “Well you should already know this but—the Booted Bandit doesn’t get *as much* privileges. Well—really none.”

“*Rude...*” I said angrily.

It was dark by the time I reached the prison, but I could see the gray gloomy walls, with its paint slowly starting to peel off. It was in a very bad condition. I knew it had been there ever since the rock-island was found.

“Come on.” Growled the guard as I walked to my cell. When I saw the guard wasn’t looking I took a cup and put it in my bag—just in case.

The next morning, I walked outside; the guards were still there following me everywhere. As I walked outside, I noticed there were very few people. I just couldn’t wait until I got out of the area.

“Hey—um...I just...Well, just—Hi!” I finally said.

“Hi. My name is Marion. Came here for—well—I don’t want to talk—*BOOTED BANDIT!*” She yelped.

“I’m not the—” I started to say.

“Yea, sure...” she said sarcastically once she had calmed down.

“Ok bye...gonna see the next person I guess...” I walked to the next person. “Hi.” I said waiting for her to yelp now.

“Booted Bandit—you’re not wanted here.” She said plainly.

“I’m not—”

“Well, they don’t call me Florian Flosbury for nothing either.” She said.

“You’re—*you’re* Florian Flosbury! The famous—”

“YES I AM, NOW JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!” She shouted at me.

“Okay, okay!”

“Oh, and one more thing.” She threw a paper to me.

It was typed up very neatly. I opened it. There was another typed up paper. It mentioned a lot of rules and started saying how Florian had power on me because she said she had been accused of a crime, and apparently the police believed her.

“Okay...I really kind of already knew that all...” I said.

“I just hope you did.” She said.

“You are a *terrible* liar.” I said.

“Oh, okay!” She admitted. “But—the famous part and the rules are true!”

Then I walked on to an artist. The only thing that added color to this area was his paintings. His brush strokes had swift movements and he had been painting scenery.

“Hello, been painting if for years.” He said. At that point, when he said that, I was worried that I was going to be stuck here forever. “Let’s see,” he continued. “Black hair, boy, looks exactly like the booted bandit to me.” He said, ignoring my face of disgust.

“I am not... I’ve had enough! I AM *NOT* THE BOOTED BANDIT! FOR A CHANGE, OUT OF ALL OF YOU, I WAS FRAMED!” I hollered.

“That’s enough!” Said a guard, “What is going on over there?!?” She walked over to us. “Ohh... The newbie of ‘em all always acts like that.” She said pointing to me. “Anyways, it’s time to line up.” She shouted over the people. Everyone lined up—and I did so too hesitating.

“Don’t say anything if you don’t have to.” Whispered Marion. “Every time a newbie comes—oh...” she groaned. “That wicked old man; well not *really* wicked. You know—the person that founded this prison.” She said with a shudder.

“Ah, so this is the new prisoner.” An old man walked over. “Very well,” he said checking off a paper off on his clipboard. “The Booted Bandit... Hmmm.... I see... Prisoner because... A terrible thing he did...” he muttered.

Work. Work to earn gum was next on the list of what to do. Gum. I know it sounds *crazy*.

“Hey,” said Patches. Patches was a black man with a bird in his curly hair. “I’m gonna show you how to make license plates—then we get gum. Gum is important to prisoners. We trade it for other stuff— you see, I don’t what the guards think we do with them, but they just give us it. It’s like prisoner money. Of course too selfish to give real money for real working—instead gum for real working.” She said with a wave of hand.

I worked for some time, and soon I was free to go eat. We could only eat once a day, and then sleep. I didn’t like sleeping in this area. I walked down the aisle taking a spoon and sitting next to Patches.

“You can get seconds.” Said Patches.

“Second what?” I asked.

“Second spoons... People these days think they can just dig themselves out of here.” Said Patches.

“Might think about it...” I said.

“Sure you can, but no one has ever succeeded...” His voice trailed off. “Anyways, seven pieces of gum. I’ll make a distraction.” said Patches. I walked over. “*Oh.... Guards, my stomach...*” Patches groaned. I could fool this guard easily because he wasn’t the one who gave me the spoon. So I could just ask him.

“Can I have my spoon now?” I asked. I was sure the plan was going to work.

“Here, bring it back when you’re done.” He said.

I refused to eat prison food, only because I wasn’t an actual prisoner. I thought there might be a way to escape in the kitchen so I signed up for the job... but I had to bring three eggs so the chef can make a decent omelet.

That night I tossed and turned in bed—knowing it would be a busy day. I had a lot on my mind. This was the prison that had the best security—but maybe... just maybe... there might be a way to escape....

That next morning I noticed it would be the same routine. I walked outside. Immediately, I saw the birds nest. I thought fast.

“What are you doing?” I asked Patches,

“Oh, just feeding the birds.” She said and she dropped some bird food. The bird swooped down to eat it. I ran up and took the egg. I went back to Patches. “You can have the leftover bird seeds if you like... I don’t see any use with it.”

Then I spotted a dirt patch and I planted the seeds in there. *I need water...* I thought. I took out my cup and went to an old pipe. It had a large crack in it, and water was dripping out of it. I filled up the cup and watered the seeds. Slowly after a long time it started to sprout a little bud—the first flower ever in prison.

Work wasn’t any fun. But I had an idea. I overloaded the machine.

“Let me see what you did!” Yelled the guard over all the noise. As she checked it I quickly sharpened the spoon. When it was time to sleep I went down to the vent and chiseled all around it. The vent fell off and I walked in. I took the cup and filled it up with plaster this time.

Two days went on, and on the fourth day, I had all three eggs and the flower was fully planted. It came out to be a sunflower. I walked toward the artist—for he always had wanted to paint a flower. I gave it to him.

“Thanks! It’s hard to believe you’re the booted bandit! Anyways, if you need any more painting needs, I’m here to help! But it will cost some gum.”

Work was pretty much the same. There wasn’t anything to do.

Then came the part I was looking forward too. I gave the eggs to the chef and the chef let me in. I took a piece of pasta. It reminded me of something... a drill bit!

"I'll only let you mix the mashed potatoes. After all, you are only a newbie." But instead I spilled the plaster in the mashed potatoes.

"*Oh... too hard to mix... ouch....*" I moaned. The chef quickly came running over and he pulled out the mashed potatoes and went back to his work. I on the other hand carved my face with the plaster and mashed potatoes. Once I got the artist to paint the head I could sneak into the vent all the time. Now that I came to think about painting, I also was about to ask if he could paint the pasta silver. The next morning I ran up to the artist.

"Hey! Good morning. So, I need you to paint this head to look like me, and the pasta silver. Thanks! By the way, how much gum?" I was talking really fast and I was in a rush. I didn't know why.

"That's fourteen pieces of gum."

"Okay, thank you again—so much!" I gave the gum to him and the pasta along with the head.

The day passed quickly and the next thing I knew it was time for bed.

I dreamed of my escape, unless it was possible. I was walking down an area and then I went up onto the roof to escape... The evil guards watching me as I silently tiptoed and then they brought me back into the deep dark depths of Cell C.

"*You can dream it... but you'll never escape. Best security—*" and I woke up.

It was morning. I went outside with the guards. I got the head and the pasta.

All of a sudden the boss of all the guards came walking out. "No more painting! You didn't follow the rules of tucking your shirt in—"

"But it doesn't fit!" The artist protested.

"No excuses Maifts!" Shouted the boss of all guards. This attracted a lot of attention.

I just hoped I didn't need any more anymore painting needs. Maifts had her painting privileges confiscated.

At work, I overloaded the machine and tried to give the fake pasta in. Unfortunately, the guard was not fooled. I needed another plan.

I skipped eating and went to sleep. Luckily, the guards allowed it this time. I had around four hours to explore. I carefully put the fake plaster head on the bed and went into the vent. I went onto the left corridor. *The ventilation system...* I thought. I had an idea. I changed the ventilation system.

I went back to my cell and slept. Escaping was in my hands.

For a complicated plan, I woke up early, rethinking my whole plan. It could be possible—it could work. I just needed the right things. I walked outside roaming around, my heart beating fast. A few more days in this prison, and I'll be free. I also had to clear my name and get the real booted bandit.

Before work, I asked for a drill bit. At work I overloaded the machine. The guard went back to her desk and turned on the fan. But because I changed the system of how it worked, a lot of smoke filled the air as if these were butterflies free from the net they were trapped in. I grinned. I took out the pasta. She was easily fooled because of her blurred glasses.

"Looks about right... *Awk, awk!* Here's your gum—*Awk, awk!*" Now I had the real drill bit.

Then at eating time, I also changed the ventilation there. I started mixing the mashed potatoes but turned on the fan before doing so. The fan made it go up into a pipe and it fell straight on Florian's hair.

"*MY HAIR!! MY HAIR, SOMEONE IS GOING TO PAY FOR THIS!*" She screamed. I must say, it did hurt my ears.

Then, Florian threw the mash potatoes. Two twins started chanting, "*Food fights! Food fight! Food fights!*"

The chef gasped. "How dare they insult my food like that? I put my tears sweat and—well not literally..." The chef left but came back without his beloved mixer. "Please... save my mixer..." he said. And then she fainted. I ran out ducking under tables until I got the mixer. "Oh, thank you!" He said. "You can keep it—treat it like your baby!"

"Um... okay..." I said.

"*THAT'S IT! SLEEP, EVERYONE, NOW!!*" Screamed the guard.

I went back to Cell C, but again went into the vent. I put the drill bit into the mixer when I saw a sealed metal thing that led outside.

“Hi! Wait—”

“*WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?*” I screamed when I saw the twins.

“You’re not the only one that can chisel your way in this place. We got to work together, okay?” She said and continued not waiting for an answer. “Wait for tomorrow we’ll have a boat ready.”

“Okay...” I said.

The next morning, after staying outside for a while Marion came up to me.

“I heard about your escape plan. Here,” she said thrusting something into my hands. “all the files of the prisoners. Don’t show it around the guards.”

“Thanks!” Then Maifts walked up to me and gave me a painting. It was of the tower.

“It’s for how you gave me the flower, luckily I have the picture in my bag.” He said. “You might need it as some type of map to clear your name.”

I waited until night, and then I went back to the vent. I unscrewed the thing that was blocking the way and climbed into it. I lost sight of the twins and I knew they already had their own shortcut to the boat. I slid and hid behind boxes and pipes because of the lights. I was *almost* caught. But Patches’ bird distracted them.

At last I reached the boat. It was midnight and it was a moonless night. I could see the dark silhouette of the buildings on Pelican Rock Island.

It was morning by the time we reached. We landed in front of the Sea Warehouse.

“Hmm... let’s live there.” Said one of the twins pointing.

“Okay—we need money to start.”

“Well let’s just rob the bank *one* more time.” And the twins ran off.

I noticed there were a lot of police. They found out that I had escaped. I hid in the warehouse and climbed a chain. Another hatch was on the top. I lifted it and balanced myself on a thick sidewalk-type wire. Soon I climbed a tree, and with a vine I swung to another tree. I was at the statue. I used the trashcan and jumped onto the statue. Then, I started climbing the tower. When I reached the top, I noticed that something was different from the picture. The window! The middle window only had half of it. I used the chisel and then saw a box type lock. I had to unlock the box. Then I noticed the treasure was inside the box.

“Hehe, I knew you would come! You know the code open the box!” I turned around and saw the real booted bandit. Then Marshall, the boss of the police, came up.

“Aha! I found— wait... two booted bandits?”

“*I’M NOT THE BOOTED BANDIT!!!!*” I screamed.

“Prove it.” Said Marshall.

I went to the box and put the numbers “six, five and four” into it. It unlocked.

“*PHOTOS? PHOTOS!?!?!?*” Screamed the real booted bandit. Well, that really gave it away.

“Aha! So you’re the Booted Bandit!” Said Marshall. He took out his handcuffs. “And your—your head of the Department of Crimes, aren’t you?”

“Well yes...” I said slowly.

When the Booted Bandit was finally arrested Marshall came back to me. “Well, sorry for accusing you.” He said. And he gave me a hundred and fifty dollars.

“Marshall... I don’t need this...” I said giving him the money back. He accepted after I convinced him.

The winds were calm and I went into my car. When I reached my house, I noticed another car. It was new and it was from Marshall with the key.

“*Yesssss!*” I said and I put the key in the car and drove off into the deep blood red sunset as birds flew behind me.

Ajitesh, 11, is a 4th grader, in Clarksburg, Maryland. He lives with his parents, Arun and Ilwala Ojha.

Third place - Meghna Memorial Award, Junior Group

If Only...
Amrita Sahu

Vines...
They crawl up the wall
Silently watching, waiting
The wall takes no notice
Shrugs them right off
Even if they try
So hard
To cover him, smother him, choke him to nothingness
The wall stands tall and strong
Each brick sticks together
Not a leaf goes past

The wall looks beautiful
Because
The vines are still growing
The wall does not stop them
But they cannot take over
And they cannot break through

But alas! Humans aren't walls
The vines find holes and crannies
They push through
Spreading each of us
Farther and farther apart
Till we all crumble
There will be nothing left but a pile of vines
If only
If only
We could be more like the wall

[This poem was inspired by a scene that I saw on a road trip. It was of an old house, with vines that gave it a beautiful, rustic feel. Although, it seemed as if the vines were taking over the wall I appreciated how the vines (reflecting hardship) brought beauty and character to the wall, and how the wall stopped the vines from controlling him completely. The message I am trying to get across is that we should stand strong through the hardest times and stick together, but we should let life run its course, because our struggles shape who we are.]

Amrita is in 6th grade and lives with her parents, Prakash and Manaswini and elder brother Sarthak in Herndon, Virginia. She is fond of reading, writing and drawing.

Our Existence

Anjaneya Kar

Think about us and people like us. We all have access to; we have the money to buy things that we consider 'simple', such as water. However, the poor think about this from a different perspective. They think that we are very fortunate. Day by day, they go on wondering when they can be like us. Moreover, they wait for the opportunity to do the things that we are allowed to do as they slowly work up to this with handfuls of courage. Therefore, we should be happy that we don't exist as people with less opportunities and less freedom. Moreover, the richest people like Taylor Swift and Cristiano Ronaldo should donate a plethora of money to charities for they need to care about others' lives and not only their own fame.

We all know that there are many poor countries such as Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Although we have the knowledge, how do we make use of it? We don't do anything about it; it looks like we don't even care! For example, many people in Afghanistan are basically being held at hostage with limitations to the amount of freedom and luxury they're allowed to have. So, people need to think, care and love each other. We need to reduce the amount of selfishness in ourselves by not always thinking about OUR OWN wants and non-essentials and focusing MORE on the essentials of the people in NEED.

Who knows what this world would've been like if there weren't any Odias in the United States. In fact, all OSA members could've been from Somalia! If that was true, OSA wouldn't even be around today! Consequently, at least once in our lifetime, we shall take a moment of silence to thank the God Almighty for we don't exist are still struggling to find the bare necessities of life. We have basically everything we need to

live. But with so much greed, we still ask for more. So, we just have to be happy with what we already have with us at present.

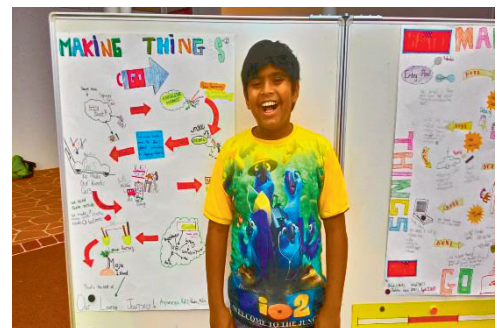
People get categorized in many different ways. And here are some examples:

- ❖ Skin color
- ❖ Gender
- ❖ Age
- ❖ Religion
- ❖ Talent
- ❖ Culture and Origin
- ❖ Smartness

These are only a few. There are still many more. There should always be equality between everyone on this planet! So, to save the Earth and all the poor families in this world that we live in, we must keep the four most crucial things secure in our mentality: calmness, optimism, respect and resilience. These are the key elements of life. And no matter what, we shall always be proud of 'Our Existence'.

Now, I would like to thank everyone for allowing me to share the thoughts I've kept to myself for a long time. THANK YOU!

Our existence in this world is a story, a story that goes on forever.



Anjaneya Kar, Grade-5, Houston, TX 77004

INCREDIBLE INDIA

Aryaan Jena

As 23-year-old Katherine boarded the flight from New York to Mumbai, she started recollecting the events that had happened to her in the past month. About a month ago, she had graduated from Princeton. She had moved in with her parents at Long Island, and had gotten a job as a research scientist at Greenfields. Most recently, her best friend Pooja, who now lives in India, was about to get married. As a matter of fact, Katherine was headed to her wedding right now.

It was a tough decision for Katherine, whether to go or not. Her parents had been against it. They said that there was a lot of crime going on in India. Lootings, burglaries, riots, muggings and assaults on women, and such. They thought it would be dangerous. Back home, crime reports from India dominated news websites. Katherine herself was insecure about her safety, and was scared something might happen to her. A lot of arguments flew back and forth. But at the end, her conscience won out, to her parents' dissatisfaction. Pooja had been her best friend though high school and college, and had always stood by her side. It was only fair that Katherine went to her wedding. Hesitantly, she started packing her bags, and now she found herself here. Her insecurity and worries still hadn't gone away.

The flight from New York to Mumbai was a long and tedious one. Katherine didn't do much, except stare out the window. Many thoughts were going through her mind at once. She was finally relieved after the touchdown, happy to be able to stretch and sit as she pleased. After exiting the Customs and collecting her baggage, she met Pooja outside. The two hugged each other and rejoiced. They hadn't seen each other face-to-face in a couple months.

Katherine's first thought was about the weather. It was in the seventies and cloudless, just perfect with a light breeze. There wasn't as good weather in New York. "I guess the weather is the only good thing about this place," Katherine secretly thought.

Pooja ordered a taxi cab, and the two got inside. They talked about stuff that had happened to them recently. Katherine stared out the window often, looking at the city's buildings and skyline. There was smog in the air, and a huge traffic pileup on the road. Just as Katherine had expected, it took nearly an hour to reach Pooja's house through the traffic. When the cab fare was paid for, Pooja took Katherine into her house.

"Here Katherine, Meet my parents," Pooja replied.

"Oh, so you must be Katherine," they oohed. They embraced Katherine tightly. She noticed that Pooja touched the feet of her aunts and uncles that arrived recently.

"What was that thing when you bowed down and touched your relative's feet?" Katherine asked out of curiosity.

"That was Pranam. It's a common ritual in India. We bow down and touch the feet of our elders as a greeting. We do it to show respect to our elders," Pooja explained. Katherine simply nodded. Nobody did anything like this back in America. It might have been even considered crazy. Many people fought with their parents. Katherine herself remembered the arguments she had when she was little with her parents about raising her allowance. But here in India, people do it. They listen and respect truthfully their elders. They honor them greatly.

Katherine was surprised and curious about another thing.

"How come there are so many people here?" she asked.

"Oh, well there's all the relatives and the extended family. All of them come together to help and

participate in the wedding ceremony. The neighbors also step in to help." Pooja answered. Then she took Katherine to her guest room.

Katherine took out her belongings to settle in and... Her wallet was missing! She must have left it in the cab in a hurry! She had her money and credit cards in there, and most importantly her passport. First thing that came to her mind was that the driver must have taken it for himself, and he was probably laughing at her halfway across the town!

"Pooja. I don't have my wallet! I think it's stolen!" Katherine called. "What?!" Pooja exclaimed in surprise. Katherine ran downstairs, aggravated. Something had already gone wrong, two hours into the trip.

"I can't find my wallet. I think it's stolen by the taxi driver," Katherine panted. She noticed that there was a pot on the floor, and tea surrounding it. Pooja must have dropped the pot in surprise.

"Listen. Calm down. I'll clean up this mess, and we'll go to the police station," Pooja explained. "Maybe he will come back,"

"I can't believe it," Katherine replied. She ran upstairs and made sure for a second time that her wallet wasn't somewhere in her suitcases. Katherine tried to remember the license plate of the taxi, but her mind went blank. Her wallet had to be stolen.

It took about another five minutes, and then Pooja called she was ready to go from downstairs, when suddenly, the bell rang. Pooja opened the door, to see the taxi driver there. He had her wallet in his hands. Katherine froze when she saw him.

"Namaste Ma'am. I noticed a wallet in the back seat, and thought it was yours. I came here to give it back to you," the driver said. He handed her the wallet. She made sure that nothing was missing, and it was good to go.

"Thank you sir. Here, let me pay you five-hundred rupees for the deed," Katherine replied out of sheer gratitude. She noticed that Pooja was watching her.

"No ma'am. I only accept money for the driving," he said as he refused to take the money. And with that, he was gone. Katherine was stunned by the whole experience. She was expecting that the poor driver would take her wallet away. Instead, he returned it to her as soon as he could. He hadn't even accepted the money Katherine had offered her. Maybe this place wasn't as bad and dangerous as it seemed?

Pooja came over to Katherine's room and they spoke about the wedding ceremony and the rituals for sometime, and Pooja suggested to get some famous local cuisine. They took a cab to a famous local eatery. Katherine wasn't very impressed by what she saw, but she went along with Pooja's choice. They ordered Pav Bhaji, Papdi Chat and Bhel Puris. The food was so spicy, yet so delicious. Katherine attacked those with a gusto. They were some of the most amazing creations she had ever seen or eaten.

"Mmm. . ." Katherine was teary-eyed, but couldn't stop herself. They ordered some more. Any thoughts about unsanitaryness were long gone. It was one of the best meals of her life. Then Pooja suggested a desert called 'Kulfi' to cool down her throat. It was wonderful. Katherine ate so much that she had a tough time walking. They eventually came back and spent sometime chatting with Pooja's parents and family before they retired for the night. Katherine was out before her head hit the pillow.

The next day, Katherine was woken up early by Pooja. "Katherine, wake up! We've got stuff to do!" "Do I have to? Do you always wake up this early?" Katherine groaned. "Yes for both questions. Now wake up!" Pooja commented. Katherine hesitantly got out of bed and dressed up.

"Now what is it that is so important that we have to do?" Katherine asked.

"There are some wonderful tourist spots. You should see them, since you're here," Pooja answered. The two ate breakfast quickly, and met up with Pooja's friends, Aditi and Mira.

"Ok, the first stop is. . . Gateway of India!" Pooja explained. The ride to there was short, but what Katherine saw was mesmerizing. She didn't say that to anybody though. The next stop was Girgaum Chowpatty, a legendary beach on the Mumbai coast. The foursome hung out there for a while. For Katherine, it was relaxing and nice.

The foursome also went to Siddhi Vinayak Temple, Babulnath Temple, the Shivaji Terminus, and the Worli Fort. It was great. It was a new world of cultural and historical richness to Katherine. She had been wowed and amazed by each of the tourist attractions. The fine details and the architecture were breath-taking. It was just so. . . interesting and unique in itself. It was way different from what America had to offer. The more tourist attractions they went to, the more her interest in the Indian culture grew, and the more she realized how rich and colorful it was.

Alas, everyday must come to an end. Katherine, Pooja, and their friends were on Fashion Street, shopping their hearts out. Shopping was one of Katherine's favorite things. She was looking for a souvenir to take home to remember her awesome trip. It was getting late, and they needed to go home. After dropping the two friends at their houses, Pooja and Katherine came home. It had been another exciting day. Katherine was really tired, and she was out faster than light.

The next day, Pooja took her friends and Katherine to a *Mehendi* stand, to get their hands painted. "Today is my Mehendi ceremony for my marriage. Today, we will all paint our hands with Mehendi. Mehendi is the paste of a leaf which colors the hand," Pooja explained.

Pooja went first, followed by Aditi and the rest of her friends. It finally came to Katherine.

"It's your turn," Pooja said.

"I'm fine," Katherine replied. "Come on Katherine," Pooja said. Katherine reluctantly sat down in the plastic chair. Half an hour later, Katherine had a dazzling work of art painted onto her hand. She had to admit, it looked pretty cool. And neat.

The next day was the wedding. Katherine had been to formal American weddings in churches earlier, but never anything like this. Pooja had pestered her to wear an Indian Sari for the wedding. She thought it would look ridiculous, but was she wrong! Pooja had explained the etiquette for the wedding to her in great detail. It seemed complicated compared to a regular wedding. In the evening, Pooja started getting dressed for the wedding, and putting on jewelry and make-up. Katherine had to admit, she looked beautiful in her red bridal sari, and with all her jewelry and make-up. Soon, a procession of cars came to the house. They were for the bride's side of the family to go to the venue of the marriage ceremony. One of them was very nicely decorated with flowers and colored ribbons. Pooja got in with her parents. A couple cars showed up behind that one, and Katherine was ushered in to another one, with Aditi and Mira. They greeted her warmly. "Hey Katherine. You look great in that Sari," Mira greeted. They were wearing saris too. "Thank you," Katherine blushed. She got into the back row with them. It was rather cramped in there, but Katherine didn't seem to mind.

The procession went slowly for about 30 minutes. Katherine's car was following a procession of SUVs and other cars. When they reached the venue (Marriage Mandap), Katherine got out and saw a beautifully decorated venue and stage. There were dozens of people greeting each other and having small talk. They were in a grand venue with a stage. Katherine looked around through the crowd, finally finding Pooja.

"Hey Pooja," Katherine said. "Hey Katherine," Pooja responded. They found an empty table and spent sometime chatting with Aditi and Mira. Dinner was served, and it was fantastic, just as always. There was a band playing Indian classical music and popular Hindi (local dialect) songs. It was as wonderful an event as she had ever seen.

The groom's family and friends came in a procession at about nine at night. A band was playing popular dance songs. People were dancing and greeting each other. There were some beautiful fireworks also.

The groom's family started coming in. Even the bride's family and friends joined in the dance. Pooja's friends pulled in Katherine to shake a leg as well. It was so much fun for her. After some time, Pooja's family escorted the groom into the venue. His name was Suresh, and he was a well-built, handsome man in his late-twenties. Katherine was briefly introduced to him. Everybody settled down after a while and took their seats. After they settled down, the marriage ceremony began. Katherine was amazed as to how different it was from an American wedding. First, the couple got up on a decorated stage with their parents and two priests. The priests chanted prayers in Sanskrit, and did a series of ceremonial rituals. The ceremony took a few hours. There were a lot of clapping and applause. The wedding was unique and very different from ones back home. Those were usually boring parties and lectures, followed by a kiss. This, however, was a wedding that Katherine was tuned into and found extremely interesting.

It ended on a high note and a few snapshots. Katherine waited near Pooja's car. When she came over after sometime later, she had tears in her eyes and looked sad.

"Oh well Katherine. I guess it's goodbye," Pooja said.

"Your honeymoon?" Katherine asked. "No. I have to go to my husband's house now. See you later," Pooja said. The two bid farewell. Pooja and her husband took blessing of elders. Then Pooja hugged her family, friends and bid goodbye to them. Then she left with her husband and his family.

Katherine was escorted to a car by Pooja's parents. She thought about a lot of things on her way home. What a fantastic day it had been! Throughout the drive, Katherine reflected on herself. At first she was scared for coming here, and now what a fantastic time she just had. Her last thought before she fell asleep was that was just so awesome.

The next day Katherine had to fly back to America. She felt truly depressed. Pooja wasn't there to see her off, but Aditi and Mira were. "Bye Katherine," they said in unison. Their voices rang again and again in Katherine's head until they died out. Katherine did another self reflection as she boarded the flight to JFK. It was the end to a wonderful trip.

As Katherine looked back on her experience, she felt guilty about the way she felt before flying to India. Oh the terrible things she had thought! It was dangerous, it was unclean, it was corrupt, all of those things. And how wrong she had been... Only when she spent time in India that she discovered the truth. The people were respectful and helpful to each other, their elders and even strangers. They were honest as well. The food was great. As a matter of fact, it was the best food she ever had! The culture of India was rich and deep, more than anywhere else she had been. The wedding was a fun-filled, once in a lifetime experience. There were many tourist attractions and they were so unique and different. They were epic, worth-seeing. India was amazing for her, despite her first thoughts! She was already looking forward to the amazing story she had to tell her parents and other friends! If she hadn't come, she would have missed a real treasure of virtues and culture of the world.

As she stowed her bags away and sat down in her seat, she had one final, concluding thought. What an adventure. What an Incredible India...

Aaryaan Jena, 11, a 6th grader in Chatham, New Jersey, lives with his parents, Shiba, and Sudhansubala Jena. He aspires to study in MIT or Harvard, and eventually become a CEO. (We could not put your picture because of the length of your story - *Editor*)

Honorable Mention: Meghna Award Competition, Junior Group

“What If”

Nikhita Ranabijuli



What if I was born as
“An Ant!”
Then I would see the
World under the ground/
I will collect food for the queen... or I’m the
queen
With a golden crown on my head.
But I heard a big loud foot step I’m scared...

What if I was born as
“A little bird”
Then I would make a
Beautiful nest up in a tall
Tree so I can see the night
Sparkling star with a big
Bright moon. I can travel
Around the world with out
Going to the airport. But
I see a big eagle coming toward me, I’m
scared...

What if I was born as
“A Butterfly”
A beautiful monarch butterfly
With black and orange designs
On my wings. Flying around a
Rose garden collecting super
Sweet nectar. But what’s
That green thing with big eyes
It’s a lizard, I’m scared...

What if I was born as
“A little Clown Fish”
Then I will swim around
The beautiful and colorful
Corral and maybe I can
Meet a beautiful mermaid
And maybe she will be my friend.
But what’s that big
Gray thing coming towards me?
It’s a shark, I’m scared...

Nikhita, 8, is a 2nd grader, who lives with her parents, Prasanta and Chandana Ranabijuli, in Round Rock, Texas.

My First Trip to India

Yazmina Harris (1st grade)

One day, a little girl was going to India with her family. That day, they arrived in Mumbai and stayed at a hotel at night. Her dad took her to a hotel buffet. In a few days, they arrived in Odisha. She met some grandaunts and granduncles at the airport. After that, she was driven to the apartment house.

Their food was good and I learned to say it in Indian language (“bhoka laguchi”). I also got a new shawl, dresses, and other stuff like a new bag and mirror. I got to sit on the swing and do Greek homework. In a few days, I saw a temple and the Sun temple. It was so much fun!

My Journal Entries:

Day 1

I am on a plane now at 8 pm. We are about to set off. We are going to leave before the blizzard.

Day 2

We finally arrived in India. We are at a hotel. It’s almost Sunday. The plane ride took over two days! At night, I went to the buffet with my dad in the hotel.

Day 3

Today, my Grandma Aiee and Grandpa Aja came to India.

I also rode a tour car. The driver sat on the right. We ate at a Chinese restaurant. I also went to a temple and got to take my shoes off. I saw the India Gate Way. I got to sit on a fancy, expensive hotel chair.



Day 4

It’s 3:00 am in the morning and I couldn’t go back to sleep. So, I made animal shadows. We are in the airport now. We have to wait another whole hour. Then, we get to board the plane.

I sat on the swing in the bedroom and did Greek homework. And after that, we met some Indian cousins. We played together. I met lots of Indian aunts and uncles.

Day 5

Today, I went to a party on the balcony. I was dancing. I also put bindis on my head. It was so much fun! I got mehendi or henna on my hands.



I went shopping with my parents and a tour guide. I bought a shawl. I am wearing it in the picture below!



Day 6

Today, I went to the village. I saw monkeys which in Indian language is “mankada.” I saw cows and goats. I also saw a different kind of temple.



Day 7

Today, I will see someone get married. I also got some Indian clothes. My dad went in where they were getting married. I threw flowers at the bride and the groom. I sat with Santa, my great grandfather. He is 96 years old. The wedding took over 6-7 hours! I stayed up the whole night into the next morning.



Day 8

The wedding ended. I came home and ate breakfast. Then, I went to sleep. My mom and I taught my cousins how to play “Spot It!”

Day 9

Today, I returned some clothes and got new ones. Then, I ate dinner at my Goupou Aiee's house. There were so many fruit trees. There were so many beautiful colored flowers.

Day 10

I went to my cousin's house. I ate pita for breakfast. For lunch, I ate dali. When it was dinner time, I ate rootie and shrimp.

Day 11

Today, I went in a famous Sun Temple called Konark. It was carved over a thousand years ago. I drank coconut water from a real coconut on the side of the street. I also went to the beach and got soaked up. I went with my grandparents. I got a little purse from Pipili. I went in a three wheeled taxi and it didn't have any doors. I was squished!

Day 12

Today, I went shopping. I went to my grandpa's sister's house for dinner. They had all my favorites. I met a third grader. We played together.

Day 13

Today, I went gold shopping. I saw a bull cow eating on the road. The horn keeps beeping. The cars are so small. I have to wear a adult seatbelt. Booster seats are too big for the car. So many cows are on the road. There are no sidewalks.

Day 14

Today, I came on the plane back to Mumbai again. I went to an apartment. They dry clothes on a wire clothes line. I slept with two teddy bears.

Day 15

Today, I visited a church. Me and my dad prayed. It's called Mount Mary. I went to the mall and went on a train ride.

Day 16

Today, I went to a Indian temple. It was called Global Vipassana Pagoda. It is for Buddha. After that, we went to a muddy beach. It had so many tiny hermit crabs. Then, we got to the airport and went home.



Yasmina Harris, 6, daughter of Shakti Routryay and Tony Harris, must be very meticulous in keeping her diary. They live in Wilmington , Delaware.

JUMPING PILL

Bastav Senapati

Once upon a time, there was a famous inventor named Jack. His latest invention was a **HIGH-JUMP PILL**.



If you eat one, you will jump very high, higher than a kangaroo. One night, Jack ate few pills at a time and jumped on his trampoline. He jumped so high, he crashed into the moon and turned the moon. There he found it is daytime with lot of sun. However he cannot stick there due to gravity and he landed to Earth. After reaching earth he noticed that everyone was asleep. He was very tired so he went to bed. He forgot all about his adventure. When he woke up, he did not see the sun. Instead everyone were able to see the moon and countless stars. No one had breakfast yet. They were all

talking about the moon. Every news channel programs that you can only watch in the afternoon were visible in night. Everyone talking about the same thing.

“WERE IS THE SUN TODAY? ARE WE JUST DAY DREAMING? “

Then Jack remembered about his pill, and said that, I am going to have my breakfast. He ate another few pills and went outside. He was about to jump when he saw a very big beanstalk that looks like going beyond the clouds. He climbed the beanstalk. When he reached at the top, he started screaming. There was a giant and it was about to eat him. He jumped off the plant, but instead he hit the moon and landed on the earth beside a big ocean, 100 X bigger than the giant. The giant followed the jack and fell into the ocean. Giant did not know how to swim and sank in the water. Jack was very tired and went to bed while his friends sneaked into his laboratory.

I am Baste Senapati, inspired on the idea of jack and jumped on the bed and broke my leg. Kids don't jump on bed, be safe. Follow the right path without being hurt.



Bastav Senapati, 8, a 2nd grader, lives in Westford, MA, with his parents Niranjana Senapati and Itishree Bastia. He loves to read, play to Indian classical music, and draw.

Magic Island

Elina Bishoyi



It was a dark and stormy night. I held on to Maria, my imaginary friend. She was just a toy when anyone else saw her but when nobody was around she was real.

She told me to get under one of the shelters she had made cforest.Max; my dog was already under the other small shelter she had made for him and the small knapsack. I got into the bigger shelter that Maria had made for both of us. When I saw the two shelters I had a flashback of when I went camping with ma and pa and it started to pour.

I came back to my senses when Maria whispered in my ear, "What are you thinking about Darién? Wait, hold this small teddy bear. It was in my pocket when you were little and you were nervous or upset you would hold this and you would calm down."

So as Maria demanded me I held the small teddy bear and a warm a feeling filled me and I spilled out all of the happy memories until a car rushed by.

When I heard that car rush by I had a horrible flashback. Here it goes...it was a peaceful day and ma, pa, Max, and I were going on a road trip when all of a sudden a truck rammed into the front of the car, where ma and pa were sitting and they were rushed to the hospital. Max, Maria, and I waited patiently in the waiting room at the hospital and when the doctor finally came, the only thing he said was, "Your mother and father did not make it and we have informed your relatives and they will arrive here shortly but until then wait here."

When the doctor left I buried my face in my lap and streams of water rolled down my cheeks and Max jumped up my lap and I stopped crying and understood that there was no use of crying cause all I was doing was getting dehydrated.

I woke up from the horrid dreadful nightmare when a strike of lightning hit the ground. I saw a scary storm stirring up in the sky and made sure that all the things were inside of the knapsack and when I checked there was 2 large water bottles,2 huge bones for Max, emergency kit, a small pocket knife, a small box of matches and a lighter, a coil of rope, and a little bit of space for something else to keep. To keep Maria safe I told her to transform into a doll so I could keep her inside of the space in the knapsack.

Just then a strong gust of wind blew the shelters away and we headed to the forest where the trees grew tall and the owls hooted all night long, but that did not bother us and we were soon fast asleep .

When we woke up the sun shone brightly in the middle of the sky. So I guessed that it was about noon and I got out an apple and munched on one and gave Max a bone to munch on, since Maria was not exactly a human she did not need food to survive with.

I told Max to stay while Maria. I wandered close to Max so we could find a fallen tree to make a raft and when we finally did find a dead tree I started to cut strips apart while Maria transformed into a knife and started chopping off chunks of the tree, you see Maria has powers that she can "transform" into anything she wants, anytime anywhere.

We used the rope and the wood and built a raft so we could take anything that we needed on sea and for Max and I.....we would just use Maria as a luxurious boat when we got to sea.

The next day, Maria found some plastic jars on the ground and a blueberry bush. She also had discovered a small creek and washed the jars and filled them with blueberries and brought them back and placed them inside of the empty spot of the knapsack (there were jars left for anything else).

I looked around and saw a spring with fresh water in it. I went to it and emptied out the water from our water bottles onto the grass and filled them with fresh water.

Max sniffed around and found some meat on the ground and dragged it to our "camp". Since there was some extra jars I, tore the meat and placed it in three of the jars for Max to eat later. I was getting bored and Maria sensed that so we decided to go on a hike and we searched for anything exciting and found a lake full of fish.

When saw the fish we also found a lot of sticks, a very sharp rock, and a coil of rope (after we saw all that litter I thought that this was probably a tourist spot attraction). Maria made a spear to catch the fish while I made the basket out of long grass.

After we caught the fish I counted that we had got 3 fish and since we had 3 jars left I put the fish in each of the jars. We planned on going to the ocean the next day so we all could get some shut-eye that night.

We walked for miles and when we reached the big blue ocean I told Maria to transform into a boat where there were no tourists. We had been walking for two straight days with only water and no food because we knew that we would have to be resourceful and use our things wisely.

We sailed on the clear beautiful sea for about eight hours when Maria spotted land and steered straight toward it. As we got closer I spotted a forest with blueberry bushes, coconut trees, apple trees, and some orange trees.

We were really close to the island when all of a sudden lightning struck Maria and we started spinning and I realized that we were caught in the middle of a whirlpool! Maria struggled to get out and after about thirty minutes she could finally escape treacherous waters of the ocean. When I thought about this I realized that we would have to be prepared for the future.

Our boat (Maria)was driven away in the storm and we were attempting to find the island and as we were searching we found the island miles and miles away from where we were and from where we were we saw a speck and assumed that it was the island that we were driven away from.

Max started growling as we headed on towards the island. I looked around on the deck....there was nothing out of the box. I searched in our luggage there was nothing unusual! Then I looked out into the big blue ocean and saw a dark shadow heading straight for us! When I took a closer look I saw that it was a....SHARK!

I was so panicked and Max sensed that so he started whining cause his mistress (me) was scared and panicked! Immediately I told Maria to transform into a speed boat so we could get away from the shark and not become human chow for the shark. She did as I commanded her to and we sped away. We just sped away not knowing where we were going and we crashed on to the beach of the island we had been looking for!



I was so enchanted by the magnificent island that I didn't notice a girl in rags was coming towards us. I finally realized her presence when she was directly in front of me and since she was really close to me I stumbled backwards and almost fell into the rocky sea but the girl grabbed my arm and pulled me back up to the beach!

After she saved me she ran away! I tried to chase her but she was too fast for me to handle and with the sun shining brightly in the sky made it even harder. Maria told me to stop chasing the girl and to go exploring. So I just did what she demanded me to do.

My "gang" and I went exploring in the small forest in the middle of the island and we found a small spring with fresh water in it. We also found a tiny lake with tons and tons of fish and one large sea turtle but just then I saw a small rustle in the bushes and went to investigate the mysterious clue.

I followed it and found the girl I had been chasing a while ago and the same girl who saved me from falling into the treacherous sea. I got a hold of her arm and asked her a lot of questions like, what was her name? Why was she near us? How did she end up here? Did she know what I was saying or did she think I was speaking gibberish? She took a deep and slow breath and said, "I do understand what you are saying. My name is Laila and I am from London and that is the reason I have a British accent. I came on this island because my father was a captain of a ship and I had a thing for ships so I begged on my knees if I could have I could join him on his journey to the United States of America for opening businesses and we were passing this particular island when a whale came and wrecked the boat by banging on it millions of times so my father put out a lifeboat and put me in first then jumped in but it was too big of a jump and I fell out and a big wave washed me onto the sandy beach of this island and I have been living on this island which I call Magic Island for about two years and I already knew about Fish Lake, uh, that is what I gave the name to this lake because it is full of fish you may have seen the spring full of fresh water I have not thought of a name for that spring but it is very helpful for a source of water. I was just hunting here for fish because it is about lunch time. Hey do you want to come to my hut? It has three floors that go underground, a fireplace for cooking, and a torch to send a signal if an airplane comes over Magic Island. We can live together and share our supplies and help each other and many more things!"

Max and Maria had been eavesdropping on our whole conversation and Maria burst out and exclaimed, "Well what are you waiting for? Let's GO!" I realized that Maria could be human around Laila probably because Laila is like her half-sister. So, we all headed to Laila's hut and stopped in our tracks when we saw the fantastic hut where rain, hail, or snow couldn't penetrate its sturdy roof. It certainly looked as if it had taken two years to build!

We went inside and there were wooden planks on the floor and walls of the wonderful house and also a small hole at one of the corners of the hut. I asked Laila what there was in the hole and she lead me to it but before that she tied a rope around a heavy sturdy stone and tied a basket at the other end of the rope and gently placed Max in it. Then I asked Laila what she was doing and she replied, "Well dogs cannot climb ladders and we are going to, so what I will do is put the stone at the edge of the hole and then I will go down to the middle floor and you will lower the basket down at a slow pace and I will catch him, got it?"

I told Laila that I understood and she went down the ladder which was a bunch of small wood planks stuck in the hard dirt. I comforted Max that everything was going to be okay and that he should not move an inch for his safety and of course he did as I ordered him to and after he went down Maria went then I went down and when I reached the middle floor I saw a bed out of palm leaves and then, "We will make your beds a little later but first let's sit down and chat for a minute or two." exclaimed Laila

Right after she said that, I told her about my parents, my selfish relatives, and how Maria, Max and I had ended up on Magic Island. I did include the main part which was the shark's wavy shadow across the big, blue ocean. Then she told me about the danger of Magic Island and it was that it got the most terrifying tornadoes in the universe and then all of a sudden a strong gust of wind passed by and Laila's face was white as if she just saw a ghost.

Laila quickly put Max in the basket and dropped him down to the lowest floor and told Maria and me to go down so I did as she told me to and when we were all in the basement Laila told us that a tornado was stirring up and that we would be safe here but then I remembered our knapsack and told Laila that we needed to have it but she held a surprise and it was that she had already brought our knapsack down!

Finally the tornado passed by and as Laila was getting up the ladder....the hole caved in and Laila was underneath the dirt! When we finally dug her out she had been badly injured on her knee and groaned in pain when she tried to stand up So we made her sit down.

All of a sudden Max started digging a hole in the dirt and a couple hours later, Max found a way out ! We all scrambled out, even Laila did because her knee was feeling better. We didn't stop to look for the second floor but stormed right onto the top floor and my eyes started bugging out because Laila's hut was in an excellent condition when Laila saw her hut still standing she started squealing with joy and so did Maria.

Just then we heard an airplane fly by the island. Laila quickly went outside and grabbed the torch and told me to give me to get the pack of matches and a lighter so I gave it to her and she went outside and gave smoke signals and surprisingly the pilot steered his way on Magic Island and when the pilot came out Laila hugged him and said, "Father you came!"

I looked in surprised as Laila's father walked towards me and said to Laila, "Who are these two girls and dog?" Laila explained how we ended up here and what happened to my parents the shark and everything I told her in the middle floor of the hut. Then Laila's father looked over at Maria, Max, and me and said, "Well, we will definitely adopt these children and the dog if you want me to. "Obviously everyone, including Max nodded! And then I heard my mother's voice whispering "that's my brave little girl." And I knew that she was never dead and she was with me in my heart, and that I had another chance at starting at life once more with a brand new family with brand new people in my life.....

Elina Bishoyi is 10, is the daughter of Nibedita and Binod Bishoyi

My Sister: The Gift of GOD

Haripriya Mahapatra



Sister, always nice, loving and kind
giving all, asking nothing
has a generous heart with a pure mind.
Always helping and caring,
Holding me close, patting me gentle
Cleans the clutter to make me feel better
Always the best, never in haste,
Quietly listening, playfully giggling
Obeys this big brother without complaining,

Thoughtful in action, touching in feeling,
Wiping away tears, giving smiles
Makes me bold when I'm scared.
A cool breeze, when I'm hurt,
a bundle of joy, when I'm bored
a fountain of fun, when I'm sad.
Thank you GOD for this gift, my fairy sister,
Who brings your love and cheers
That binds us together for ever.

Haripriya Mahapatra, 8, is in Grade-III, and lives in Potsdam, NY, USA, with parents, Santosh and Lipika Mahapatra. Passions and Future Goals: Reading biographies, swimming, to be a scientist.

As I see OSA

Nikhil Satpathy



OSA OSA OSA,
Time to meet mausis and lots of mousa.
It falls on July 4th week end,
Believe me, many will attend.
It's a fun fiesta for 3 days' long
We will dance to tune and sing lots of songs.
There will be tons of food,
So make sure you have a happy mood.
We will all have a blast,
It will go by super-fast
So you ready for the roller coaster of fun?
Gear up to catch the OSA train!

Nikhil, 12, is a 6th grader, who lives with his parents, Siba Prasad Satpathy and Tapasi Mahapatra, in Avon, Connecticut. He enjoys soccer and aspires to be a business professional growing up. Good luck, guy!

Stars

Navya Pradhan

The stars in the sky all blinking and winking right at me,

I wonder, what they are doing up there,

I wonder if there is a granny star in her rocking chair.

If there is,

I wish I could see her knitting and spinning in her old little spindle.

I wish I could soar through the clouds and see her watch the generations rising and falling.

I wonder what her feelings are from doing what she does.

If I could see her feelings I wonder what they'd be,

Sad, or mad or even happy.

I wonder what she thinks of herself at this point of age.

I wonder if the grandpa star is as grumpy as can be.

I wonder if he has a newspaper, and sits all time free.

I wonder if he has a rocking chair just like the granny star

I wonder if he can see me from near and from a mile far.

I can only wish upon a star.

Navya Pradhan is in Grade 3.

Including the Chills

Nishita Kar



The day had started as a plethora of fear and this is what happened. Beware, this is no lie!

At the break of dawn an eerie wail came from the depths of woods as the wind picked up. Just those two minor events shook the townfolks with terror. About an hour later, a gusty storm raged over to the hillside as the prairies beckoned the morning chills. The sun didn't wake up nor did the moon shine. Not a single creature starred in the pitch black darkness. There was a moment of pin drop silence just before an abrupt warmth of the sun's rays shone upon us. However I knew someone was watching us.

Finally, a mysterious voice rose from the hard, cracked ground. "I, Zephasus shall take over your world and build my very own wall of fame. No one here has greater power than me. I shall vanquish your leader. I demand him to meet me on this very ground. I pity you that you haven't had a ruler like me you must have heard about Zephasus the mighty creator". Trembling with fear the folks nodded with disagreement. His sharp, angular eyebrows raised with cruelty. "What did you peasants say to me"? Zephasus questioned with a deep arrogant voice. I mustered up the courage and stammered, "We have never heard of you so you are an imposter to all of us".

I waited for his reaction but instead he drifted to the prairies. He glowed with a nylon blue color surrounding him. He turned around and to my interest he had transformed. He redeemed himself from anger and in calm yet deep voice repeated the saying "you will pay for your arrogance. Don't try and act too smart young girl. Your words might come back to bite you in your frozen heart".

I couldn't take it anymore. I had lost control of my actions. I shouted with rage "well you should count yourself in too. Your heart and brain were lying on the ground during your heavenly winter solstice. But with you included it makes it bitter with cruelty and disgust". Everyone stared at me with their jaws drooping down. However I just stood there looking stupid all by myself.

Suddenly the ground shook heavily and knocked people of their feet. I couldn't believe it! In the blink of an eye, Zephasus had disappeared into the mist. All that was left of him was a couple of blue sparks. See I told you it wouldn't be very funny. I would have loved to be in your place but that's never going to happen.

Nishita, a 5th grader, lives in Houston, Texas, with her parents, Jyoti Ranjan Kar and Sarmistha Nanda

My Bratopanayana

Piyush Sathpathy

Do you have an idea of how a Thread Ceremony starts (from the planning) and ends (with the ceremony)? Guess what, it takes a lot of planning and hard work to arrange a *Bratopanayana*, but it is worth it at the end. A *Bratopanayana* is a Thread Ceremony for a *Brahmin* boy who is just about the age of 13. This ceremony is essential to the Brahmins and marks a boy's official acceptance into his *Varna*. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the boy is "reborn." Everyone has a first, biological birth. But when a young man seeks his spiritual identity he symbolically accepts a spiritual teacher as father and the Vedas as mother. He may also receive a new, spiritual name. At the ceremony, he receives the *paita* (sacred-thread), usually worn his entire lifetime. It is replaced at intervals, but never removed until the new one is put on. There is a separate *Samskara* marking the beginning of education. *Bratopanayana* is a combination of the two *Samskara*. Thus, the Thread Ceremony signifies a young *Brahmin* boy's maturity and individuality.

My *Bratopanayana* technically started a year before the actual rituals. My parents planned hard, discussing with my grandparents in India to arrange the rituals, reception, decorations, photographers, food, and most importantly, invitations. Then on July 14, 2015, we finally took off for India from San Diego. It was late in the night when we arrived but I was wide awake. I was excited to meet my grandparents again. From the moment we reached India until the day of the *Bratopanayana*, my family and I accomplished many things. We visited both our Grand Parents' houses (in Cuttack and Bhubaneshwar) as well as many other friends and extended family. We did a lot of shopping.

Finally, the Pooja day arrived. My family and I had a small Pooja (*Mangalapaka*) at my grandparent's house in Bhubaneshwar in the midst of close friends and family. The Pooja represented my birth and my life from then on. The Pundit at one point presented me five objects, to determine my career and lifestyle. I chose the book, for knowledge. At the end of the Pooja, I was gifted with a lot of things including three epic books: *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and *The Geeta*. A couple of days later came the actual Thread Ceremony. While walking out the door to the venue of the event, photographers took pictures of me and my entire family, which would later become part of a book of pictures of the day's activity. On reaching the venue of the Pooja I noticed a sign with my name and the event noticeably placed in the front of the Hotel. After everybody's arrival, my father and I took our position on the platform and the Pooja began.

There were many special moments during the Pooja that remains etched in my memory such as, when I stood up with my Mamu (my mother's brother) and begged alms from the audience chanting "*Bhikhyam Dehi*" which I learned is a symbol of my attaining *Brahmacharya*; My Mai (my uncle's wife) feeding me five servings of rice, and so forth. Finally, all the adult males stood beside me helping me in wearing my *Paita*. Finally!! I had my own *Paita*. Then, my closest relatives dressed me up in a dhoti, a crown, and other items. I looked like an "Indian prince"! At the conclusion of the rituals, it was time for the reception.

We went up to our room to rest a bit and have a late lunch. Two of my close cousins remained with me. I remember seeing lightning strike outside of the room window. It was as if Gods were

blessing me on my important day. I was mesmerized, as I rarely see lightening where I live in San Diego. I prepared for the evening by changing from my dhoti to a dazzling blue kurta. I went down to the *King's Court* with my father and immediately felt the party “vibe”. I was guided into a room where, at the end, there was a large maroon chair. I sat on the chair and it seemed almost an hour before I got off. Family and friends kept arriving non-stop, taking pictures with me and dropping off gifts. By the end, my backpack was filled to the top with rupees. I then decided to have my dinner since I was famished. There was so much food and oh all so delicious! Many friends and extended family members came to greet me as I ate with my cousins. Finally, one-by-one the room started to empty until my family was the last few people present. Later that night, I lay exhausted, on the bed in my grandparent’s house. My family watched me open all the gifts I was gifted earlier that day. I received rupees, jewels, books and even a harmonica! A couple of days later, I was wishing my grandparent’s goodbye and promising to meet them again sometime soon. Next thing I know, I was on the plane back to America, filled with all the good memories of my *Bratopanayana*. I learned the *Paita* is a symbol of God. I decided to keep it as a part of me forever.

Piyush Sathpathy, 12. Son of Priyadarsini and Sanjoy Sathpathy, Poway, CA

The Journey, begins with the first step

Priyanka Nanda

Take a step through the snow
Walk
Begin your life
Leaving the past
To the steps behind you
Looking back
To remember the past glories
And failures
How to Change
And grow
Walk up the hills
And down the valleys
On the icy water
In the bright sky
And the Dark Woods
Stop
Look behind at what you have made
The steps you have taken
What you have
Accomplished in your life
Your Legacy
Your life
Rest.

Priyanka, 11, lives with her parents, Nihar Nanda and Sushree Kar, in Acton, Massachusetts.

First place winner in the Meghna Awards - Juniors' Competition

Silence in My Room

Rosita Mohanty

*Silence in my room
I've always wondered what it's
Like when there's silence in my room
Now I know how it feels
When there's silence in my room*

*Silence in my room
When I look at objects
I start to think
When I look at the paintings
They remind me of pink*

*Silence in my room
When I look at the books on my
shelf
I wonder what I'll learn today
When I look at the cabinets under
the shelf
I remember what I did yesterday*

*Silence in my room
Looking at the drawers
Make me wonder what I'll wear
When I think about the outdoors
I think about the warm spring air*

*Silence in my room
I look at the blue duck that stands
by the door
And think that she's my guardian or
even my best friend
She watches me go in and out the
door
And keeps me cheerful when happy
times come to an end*

*This is how it's like
When there's silence in my room.*

Rosita, 12, is a 7th grader in Cerritos, California, living with her parents, Sachi and Debasmita Mohanty. She enjoys drawing and dancing, and aspires to be an Architect as she grows up.

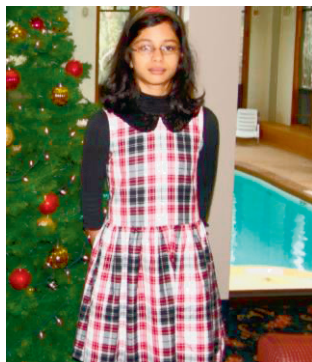


I awoke from a dream,
That took me further than I could see
It seemed to be the key,
To my own destiny
Dreams are your own creation,
Starting from your foundation
From candy land,
To superman
Yours can be stupendous,
Because dreams are endless.....

Sarthak, 11, lives in Brampton, Ontario, Canada, with his parents Smaran & Mitali Das, and sister, Srujani

If Santa is not real then how do I know if God is real or not?

Shreya Mishra



Last Christmas, we went for a skiing vacation to New Hampshire. On Christmas Eve, I was disappointed that Santa did not leave any presents by the fireside. The previous year also he had not given me things that I had asked for, and I was told it was because I had not behaved well. This time, however, I got nothing and neither did my brother. Finally my brother told me that there was no Santa and that our mother used to buy the gifts for us. So all those hot chocolates and cookies that I had been leaving for Santa were always left untouched because he never came? That was a shock for me. Even though the evidence spoke for itself, I could not bring myself to believe it! I had been waiting for Santa to get me a brown Labrador puppy, and every year I tried very hard to be a better child and study hard. All this was wasted. I will never get a puppy from Santa. The previous year, I was told that the puppy cannot tolerate the polar temperatures and an open sleigh ride. I know mom will never get a dog because she says my brother and I are too much to take care of, and having a pet is not an option, so my only hope was Santa. I felt miserable.

We had 2 goldfish as pets once – I had named them Goldie and Suzie. One of them died in two weeks and Dad said that it was because I overfed it. I always thought people died of poverty and starvation. I did not realize that too much food could kill them as well. Anyway I felt very guilty about it and promised my parents that we should try again and this time I'll be careful. But they did not seem interested and mom gave silly excuses of having to change the water every week. To make matters worse, we had to go to Florida to Disney World and mom suggested we ask Jolly aunty to take care of the fish. So Goldie was sent away, and a few weeks later we learnt that she died as well. I think this was all because of Grandma, she was visiting us that time and it was her idea to send the fish away. It is funny that my brother and I would always call the fish by their names, but the adults always referred to them as 'fish' - very rude!

So if Santa is not real, then my parents have been lying to me. I woke up my mother and challenged her on that. In her usual hysterical tone, she told me what an ungrateful child I was. I had received all those gifts over so many years, so maybe it's time to give them back. I thought about my favorite pink kindle and decided that was not such a good idea. Mom seemed pleased with herself for having put me in my place and said, "Thank God for all that you have instead of asking for a dog every day" to which I quipped without thinking "If Santa is not real, have you been lying to me about God as well – Is he real or not?" My mother's expression changed completely. This time her tone was highly apologetic and she said "Of course God is real." I asked "How do I

know? I believed in what you said about Santa only to realize that it is not true, how do I know for sure if God is real?" My mother's earlier confidence was a little shaken and she said "...well some things like the air you cannot see but you know it is there and believe" I suggested that I did not see Santa but deep from my heart I believed he was real. So maybe it is possible that he be real. Dad said my argument was excellent. My sullen brother, who is always a spoilsport, said he is amazed at his luck of having such a dumb sister. People outside will laugh if they hear a 12 year old believing in Santa. As usual, mom jumped in to resolve the problem.

For the first time she suggested that maybe they are all wrong and maybe Santa does exist. She asked me all the things I had asked Santa for this year and I promptly produced my list. Right on top was a brown Labrador puppy, followed by more video time, a phone, some milk chocolate candies, a new bathing suit, vacation to Hawaii and a few others. Mom said that I was greedy and was asking for too many things, and that polite kids did not demand so much. I tried explaining that my past experience has shown that you do not get everything you ask, so if you give a bigger choice list, chances of getting a few of them were better. I was wondering why it mattered if Santa was not real to begin with, when she suddenly flashed a big mommy smile and said, "forget all this conversation and let's go back to the situation when Santa existed" and that a phone and a new bathing suit were probably a long enough list. I am good at negotiating. So I said I needed only the first item and we can forget the others. Mom said if we go back to India that is an option but not here. At this time Dad had had enough of the conversation and walked out of the room. So we settled for one additional item from my list - milk chocolates! I told you I am good at negotiating.

I need to talk to grandma about the dog but I suspect she doesn't like dogs either. Mom went back to serious mood and said we need to pray to God for a wonderful year and God is real and everywhere around us we see his creation and miracles. Our life itself is a blessing and a miracle. My brother rolled his eyes and said that she was using the word miracle too often. My mom asked him - "so do you believe in God?" "yes of course", he responded without blinking. She turned to me and asked - what do you think? I paused, looked at her hard and said "I don't know because I've not seen him, also he hasn't always been listening to me, every time I ask for something and he gives it, then I know He exists for sure, otherwise how can I be sure and then some years down my life you'll tell me that he is not real". Mom knew she was beaten so she gave a sigh and said what a difficult and stubborn child I was and that we should get ready and explore the ski slopes of the Gunstock Mountain.

So what do you think? Is God real?

Shreya Mishra, 12, is a 6th grader, living with her parents, Anindita Mahapatra & Partha Mishra, in Methuen, MA, 01844. She is passionate about Parties, dogs, vacations! And here sure is something off the beaten tracks! She wants to be a "Baker - My bakery name will be 'Sweet Delights'". Best wishes, Shreya!

Honorable Mention - Meghna Award Competition, Junior Group

A Walk Back to the Past

Simoni Mishra

Our world was a naive place once, a long time ago. Yet today, there still is a sliver of hope among the discrimination and violence left to change our world. If, and only if, we kindle that fire of purity, and bring it back into this world, there is a chance that the levels of suffering will go down. And for this to happen, we have to understand our past, and make sure that our mistakes aren't repeated.

Almost 400 years ago in 1619, when slavery had begun, the mindset of the average wealthy European was that those with a light skin tone were far superior to those who had rather darker ones. Nowadays, most of us would agree that whatever those people were thinking were out of their minds. Take Mr. Barack Obama. He is our president, not to mention the first ever African-American to become the President. He may not be the best president to ever live in the White House, or in that case George Washington, however, he sure did do a fine job. He kept our country up and running, and that itself, believe it or not, is a herculean task to carry on your shoulders. If not Mr. Obama, then let's take Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. What did he not do for the freedom of his own people? For Pete's sake, he went to jail for them. He was a leader, and he worked for the common good. Even though he had 2 sons and 2 daughters, not to mention a wife, he decided, along with them to risk their safety for the safety of everyone else. Despite how ridiculous this sounds, still today, there are people who believe that what had happened before was right. People do all sorts of crazy things today, and we are used to it. It's like saying that someone with blue or green eyes would be considered inferior to someone else with brown eyes.

Another horrific time in our history was the release of the atomic bomb of World War II. The purpose of the atomic bombs in Japan was to end the war quickly, and maybe it worked. However, the actions of people during that period in time set me off. First of all, the US claimed that lives were saved. Perhaps they didn't see the destruction that only the 1st bomb did to Japan since all they did was drop the bomb from a long distance. When both of the bombs were combined, they took a total of at least 129,000 people. Second of all, before dropping the second bomb, a mere 3 days later, they had given Japan the option to surrender, as they had done many times before, yet its pride destroyed the country. The US warned the people to stay clear of the cities because "they didn't want to hurt the people, they wanted to kill the infrastructure." If so, for the first bomb, why had they not warned the people of what was coming, and why had they purposely dropped it at 8 in the morning?

We all make mistakes, regardless of the size, at one point, or another. What matters is how you approach them and what you walk away with in the end, not the mistake itself. History is going to repeat itself, either the good times or the bad ones. And if we don't be careful, the consequences are going to be much worse than before. Take the minority of the Muslim population that we think of as bad. It only takes a very small percentage of their people to make a drastic mistake, and for probably the rest of their lives, the majority who are good will be thought of as terrible people, equivalent to the people who unleashed death and horror. Think of their lives, everyday being misjudged by someone or the other. Some people walking past them, giving them skeptical looks, or even an angry stare. Even in the wars in Iraq, it is likely that we will make a mistake. When bombs are dropped there, the targets are the terrorists. However, if a civilian is nearby, it is likely that he or she will die. Not only is it that the people who didn't do anything to deserve to suffer, but so did the terrorists. I acknowledge that for most of our life, we have been told that there is a good side, and a bad side. However, that is not usually true. Some of the fighters only do so for their family, so that when their service is over, their family will receive the money.

Now, there really isn't a point to pointing out mistakes from the past, but there definitely is a point in correcting those very mistakes now. So how do we fix it? The 2 simple words respect and understand. That's it. That is what you can use to fix things. Showing everyone that it doesn't matter what their skin color is and understanding situations in which people are in. Compensating for past mistakes will work out in the end. We are the next generation, and we have to begin to change the world for the people who will come after us. We have to fix problems from the past with the hope that they will continue after us. History is important indeed.

Simoni, 11, is a 6th grader, lives with her parents, Leena and Bimal Mishra, in Rockville, Maryland. She pursues hobbies, such as, dancing, singing, reading, and drawing. She wishes to excel in Math and Sciences when she grows up.



“Bapa”

Sonok Mahapatra

Where is my guardian?
Soft hearted giant,
The strong protector.

The dad of six children,
The giant of my dad's old house,
The drive for me and my other roots.

When I am down he lifts me up,
Shows no weakness even through old age.

He is not close to me at all,
Not in America or this continent...

But in the coast of India.
He is thousands of miles away,

Close in my heart but far away,
He is the protector of me and many others.

The Dad of my dad who takes care of me.

But emotionally or physically can't go...
For his injuries,
And his sons and daughters all stay with him.

But I understand he can't go,
He grows closer in my heart.

And I will always remember him
As my guardian and protector.

Poetic Form was inspired by Tonye Garter's "Bison" and Margret Walker's Lineage."

Sonok Mahapatra, 11, is a 5th grader, who lives in Stamford, Connecticut, with hi parents, Tamasa and Saroj Mahapatra. He is passionate about Nat Geo (Spelling Bee?), and building Lego structures. He wishes to be a scientist growing up.

Should we continue to follow our age old rituals in this century?

Sidhanth Mishra

One day my mother said in a tone of urgency that we needed to go to India in December to get my thread ceremony done as all my younger cousins were getting theirs and I was now of age. I was not sure what a thread ceremony was, so Mom explained that we are Hindus and Brahmins in particular, and as per ritual this needs to be done. If my grandfather were alive, he would've definitely wanted it done on time and the only inconvenience was that I would have a piece of thread across my body and in due time I would get used to it.

I suddenly remembered the pieces of strings hanging from the side curtain rod in my parent's bedroom that my mom had never bothered to throw away even though any form of mess gets on her nerves. I asked if that is what it looked like. My dad said that he had his ceremony pretty late in life. In fact just before his wedding because it was necessary for that ritual to happen before the Hindu wedding rituals could proceed. Because of that he did not quite get used to wearing it and would remove it while taking a bath. One day the thread became so entangled that the only option was to just hang it. My sister and I burst out laughing. Dad appeared a little embarrassed. Shreya, my twin sister always comes up with bizarre questions. She asked that if dad did not get married or maybe married a non-Hindu this would not have been necessary at all. Dad thought for a minute, smiled brightly and said that could've been avoided.

My sister loves parties and celebrations and quickly changed her stance. She wanted to know how many people could be invited and what kind of food there would be and if cake and desserts are allowed. Mom said she has never seen more ignorant children. Dad supported us by saying we do not get the necessary exposure, so it's fine to ask these questions. I was more curious on whether it was just like a birthday celebration or some prolonged ritual that has many steps involved. My mother finally said that I needed to remain on an empty stomach until about 3 pm sitting near a fire! Ideally my hair should be shaven, and ears pierced apparently for scientific reasons. I cried out, "No way, I'm not a girl and even if I could tolerate the pain I don't want my friends to laugh at me for having my ears pierced." My sister showed me her 2 earrings and said what a sissy I was. Since my hair grows very fast - in 3 weeks or so, my hair would be back to normal in no time, but if I went to school with my head shaven clean, the teachers and students may believe I'm undergoing treatment for cancer. That would be very embarrassing and I cannot possibly miss school for so long.

Mom agreed that modern times requires changes to rituals, so we could just cut a little hair lock and just touch the needle to the skin. I felt relieved on hearing this, but my sister who can never resist a bad comment piped in - if you do not follow the rituals the way they are meant to be then why partake in a thread ceremony? My mother looked at her tiredly and said she did not have the energy

to argue. That night we got together and phoned my grandmother in India and told her our plans. My mother had expected approval and consent from the other side but was left speechless when grandma said, "Do you really believe in those rituals? Does Sidhanth even understand what being a Brahmin means? In this modern world does it make sense to pursue these traditions and rituals just for the sake of it?" Even before my mom could answer, my sister was trying hard to stop my grandma because it meant no grand party plans. Mom was definitely confused. She said that rituals help bring the right "emotions" and if we all stop following these rituals then maybe our culture will die. Grandma laughed out loud and said cultures evolve over time and Hinduism was too resilient to die out. We should have a thread ceremony not because we are born into a Brahmin family but because we lead a Brahmin way of life where there is discipline in what you eat, what you wear, what you say, and how you conduct yourself. She added sadly that we have become slaves of this modern world and if we want to just keep the tradition, we should do it in a low key fashion in the local Hare Ram Hare Krishna temple.

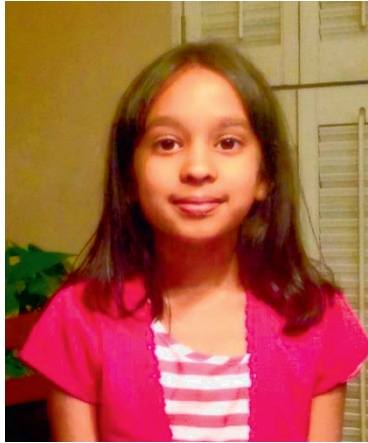
Mom put the phone down and was quiet for some time. Then she said, "I can't believe how open-minded your grandmother has become and how rational it all sounds now." I asked, "What does being a Hindu or a Brahmin mean?" Mom said we better check it out on Google. So we huddled around a laptop and typed "Hindu", it came back with "follower of Hinduism". We typed "Hinduism" and learnt it is less of a religion and more a way of life. The concept that a part of the divine is in all of us was new. We already knew about karma and reincarnations. So we moved on to what is a 'Brahmin' and got "Brahmins traditionally were responsible for religious rituals" to which we all grinned as we had gotten a good dose of rituals for the day and I agreed that it is not something that I would like to make a career of. However another definition said that a Brahmin is "someone who is good and virtuous, not just someone born into priestly class". This time we exchanged glances and mom said that this is the definition grandma was referring to and that irrespective of our birth family, leading a 'Brahmin' way of life is what we all should strive for.

So that was the end of plans for my thread ceremony and my sister's mind blowing party plans!

Sidhanth Mishra, 12, is a 6th grader, lives with her parents, Anindita Mahapatra and Partha Mishra of Methuen, Massachusetts. He is a Black Belt in Karate, good at tennis and also plays piano. He aspires to become an aeronautical engineer when he grows up.

The Majestic Snowy Owl

Sulagna Dash



Oh, how majestic the Snowy Owl is!

As it flies as a white blur in the breeze

With its great, big, pure white colored wings

And its soft nice voice which always sings

Its yellow eyes so powerful, so sharp

Its black beak curved to preserve the bark

Its wings so big, so great, so wide

Its feathers so beautiful, a pale, pearly white

How sharp are its talons, as it grabs its prey

Or its face as it shouts, "Go Away,"

The male calls loudly, "Prek, Prek, Prek,"

As the female hoots softly, "Clap, Krek, Krek,"

The wind whistles softly, as the Snowy Owl flies by

The Arctic so cold with no one to say, "Hi,"

But as clever and smart as the Snowy Owl may be,
When it migrates to a place, where cold is history
“Crack, Crack,” Hoot, Hoot, a chick is born
As its mother hurries to get it mice and corn
Thick plumage for adapting begins to bloom
For the cold’ll come soon, maybe even ‘round noon

Oh, yes majestic’s what the Snowy Owl is
As it never messes up, or does it sneeze
With everything it does from threatening to protecting
We know it’s the best from everything we’ve been seeing.

Sulagna, 11, is a 5th grader, living with her parents, Pratap and Bijayalaxmi Dash, in Germantown, Maryland. She loves to read, participate in Odia dramas, and sing classical music. She has a little brother named Subham.



ASPIRING YOUTH

THIS SEGMENT IS DEVOTED TO

**THE YOUNG & TALENTED WRITERS IN THE AGE GROUP OF 13 TO 18
YEARS**

SUBMITTED FOR THE MEGHNA MEMORIAL AWARD, SENIOR, COMPETITION

*(Painting on the segment header is a reproduction of Water Color contributed by the artist,
Dr.Kalyani Padhy)*

Home

By: Neha Panigrahi

The happiness that I feel when I board a 16 hour plane ride,
The feeling of peace and calm that I would get when I would rest my head in my grandmother's lap,
The fresh *roti* and *subji* that my mother and *Mousi* would cook for us every night,
And then eating all together as a family.
All the *ghanta*, *dalma*, *kanji* and *bhaja*, that we would eat,
Not to forget the sweets, like *kakara*, *chakuli* and *kheeri*.
Hearing my mother sing Odia songs with her sister,
When all of us would cram onto to a bed and play cards all night,
And the happiness that I would feel when I laughed with my cousins.
When my *didi* would do my hair in braids, the same way she does for school,
Or when she would cover my hands with intricate designs using *mehndi*.
The love and affection that I would receive from my Aunts and Uncles.
When we would cross the road with leftover coins in our hands,
To the pan shop to buy candy,
When we would ride a rickshaw or scooter,
To go shopping for Indian clothing and jewelry,
And my mother would take me to see places from her childhood.
Waking up early in the morning from the honking on the streets.
The idea of leaving India was too sad to even think about.
And that's how I knew India would always be my home.



Neha Panigrahi, Grade 9, lives with her parents, Manorama and Bhaskar Panigrahi, in Southborough, Massachusetts, U.S.

THE CHOCOLATE PONYTAIL

Arushi Nayak

They used to play Mario cart, but as they grew, they graduated to Fifa, Call of Duty, and Halo. The glow of the seizure inducing screen illuminated their faces, twisted into expressions of competitive concentration. Her tanned legs were thrown carelessly over the back of the couch and her chocolate ponytail swung from side to side as she leaned in the direction her avatar turned in. Whenever he missed a shot, she would elbow him in the side and then his dimples would deepen as he put on a twisted grin and playfully shoved her back. And then when they finally decided to finish their homework, he would run his fingers through his chestnut hair and slyly throw her an insult about her gaming skills that was dripping in sarcasm. She usually replied with a sigh and commented on his last test score, and they were usually about as high as an airplane flies, before it takes off. But as always, he would just shrug it off, open his biology textbook, and plop down right next to her on the couch.

But that was all seven years ago. With a sigh, he stared at the man he saw in the mirror. He knew this man, but he was different from the teenager he saw many years ago. This man had slightly darker hair, a more pronounced jawline, a bit of stubble that he would soon need to shave. This man was fresh out of college, two months into a new job, and he had a whole different perception of life.

Glancing at his watch, he quickly buttoned up his shirt, threw on a fresh blazer, swung his bag over his shoulder, and finally stepped out into the crisp autumn air. He took a deep breath and started to walk over to the metro stop like he did every morning. He was saving up to buy a car, but he had to pay off his student loans first and that would take a while. As he arrived at the stop, a yellow blur on the passing train told him that this wasn't his rout and he could rest.

As the train passed he saw someone, someone he hadn't seen for a long time. The sight of her was enough to trigger a rush of memories to flood his head. Suddenly, his mind was racing with all the conversations they had together, the jokes, tears, and glee they had shared. He could feel her soft hand holding his, he could smell the aroma of her hair, the sound of her twinkling laughter. He could see the same spark in her eyes, the spark that he had seen so long ago.

But as quickly as the first train had passed, another took its place, shaking him out of the daze he was frozen into. He started frantically running from side to side, trying to find the door she would step into, if this was her train that is. Then he saw the flash of a black jacket, a swish of a chocolate ponytail. He scrambled to find the closest entrance to the train and when he finally found one that few people were using, he swung himself in, throwing back a rushed but sincere 'sorry' and he was finally inside. The odor of caffeine in the atmosphere was so strong that he was suddenly craving a cup of steaming hot coffee. He shook away the thought and started hurriedly searching for the girl, who could be anywhere by now. Suddenly, as the train started moving, he stumbled backwards and he had to grab one of the sleek metal bars to keep from falling over completely. As the pole chilled his palms, he turning his head frantically, trying to locate her again but to no avail. She was gone again, after so many years.

As the train screeched to a halt, he peered out of the windows with one last hope that she would be out there. A flash of a blue skirt gave him another chance, and he hurried out of the train, squeezing through the crowded aisle. As he finally stumbled out of the train, a cool wind embraced him and he started running, running like he had never run before. He was an Olympic runner, sprinting towards the finish line, oblivious to everything else around him. His backpack thumped on his shoulder, his shoelace was coming loose, but he wouldn't stop, nothing could make him stop before he reached her.

He finally reached her. All of his life seemed to be leading up to this moment. There weren't just butterflies in his stomach, there were moths, dragonflies, ladybugs, all dancing and fluttering around inside of him. He drew in a deep breath and reached out, placing his hand on her shoulder.

"Abigail?"

She turned around and to his horror, he saw someone else. The hazel eyes, freckled face, long nose, all made his world crash down silently around him. He wanted to scream, scream so loud that beings in the farthest reaches of the universe would turn their heads to hear his howls of agony. But he did no such thing.

He simply apologized to the woman, who by now had a marbled look of confusion and worry on her face, and walked away.

This was the third time this had happened this month and like always, he would drink his worries away, and dream dreams of a chocolate ponytail.

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Aarushi, 13 year old daughter of Siddhartha & Anuranjita Nayak, is an 8th grader at Lanier Middle School in Houston, TX. She learns Indian classical dance, started with Bharatnatyam at the age of 5 and now into Odissi. She is in school swim team and plays violin at school orchestra. Other passions are sketching and composing on piano.

What Really Matters

Aman Mohapatra

In life, people come, and people go. Yes, there may be people who stay for a long time, but at one point in your life, they must go. By choice or by faith, there will only be one person who will be with you forever, and that is you. So what really matters? The answer to that question is to be content in life. That means providing yourself with elation before giving it to others. Now that doesn't mean that you forget about others. That doesn't mean that you turn selfish and only think about yourself. That means that in the long run, you are happy with what you have done.

Many people find joy in helping others, and that is a great thing. However, putting others before yourself is a mistake that you can never take back. Giving up your happiness in the expense for others' is horrible for you and your mental health. Some may argue that parents do that to benefit their children, but they do it for the cause to make them prosper. A parent's joy comes out of their children's success. Though this is a true scenario, many things need to be done on your own, for you to feel satisfied.

Being happy with who you are does not mean you need to have materialistic objects. Having a million dollar home with a few hundred thousand dollar cars may leave you as unsatisfied as a poor man who has nothing to live for. These valuable objects have little to no meaning when talking about true happiness. Of course, who wouldn't have a smile on their face when they wake up to everything they ever wanted as a child. But in time as stated before, those objects will not matter. The actions that you take and the words that you speak can have positive development on you that no amount of money can compare to. The happiness that truly matters come from what you do as a person, and the goals and dreams that you have accomplished, not the effects of your achievements.

A controversial topic that people struggle with is other people. One may have a passion for an activity or hobby, but they may be put down by their friends, family or even society. Prejudice is also another factor that is a deal breaker to many. But once again, there is only one person that you should care about when making these decisions. And if you haven't guessed it already, that person is you. Life is too short to wait for events to happen. If you truly have the desire to pursue an objective, then there is no time to waste to fulfill it. Time is a resource that cannot be taken back, so not aspiring to obtain your wants because of what someone said is a mistake. The sad

truth is that there will always be people to bring you down. But on the flip side, nobody said you had to listen to them. If someone is trying to help you for the better, then by all means take their advice. But making your own decisions will not only make you stronger and more independent, it may gain you some pleasure.

In conclusion, carrying out your lusts and desires may be the most important thing that you do. Always helping others, striving for materialistic items, and being influenced by anyone can restrict you from being as happy as you can be. There are numerous occasions where you may help others, or satisfy your temporary wants. But having the regret of not accomplishing something that could have easily attainable is something that may lurk with you forever. So the next time you want to retrieve a goal of yours, stop to think about what you want, and then do as you please.

Aman is a 9th grader who lives with his parents, Prabhat Mohapatra and Yasaswini Mohapatra, in NJ. Aman likes to play basketball, spend time with friends and family, and have fun.

Four Seasons

Debanshi Nikita Chowdhury



Snow Falls at 12:00 midnight
What a delightful sight
We celebrate New Year with a freezing frosty day
Then in the misty morning kids play
By midafternoon, the snow peacefully glistens at the sun
At home, kids tell their parents, "Oh what a fun!"
By night, the gusty wind roars up at the snow
Making the sound of a cow
January goes by and February arrives
The snow is still alive
The slushy white powdery snow

People wait to see; will they have six more weeks of snow or an early spring
Eager to hear the beautiful birds sing
They don't want to see the slushy white powdery anymore
They want to have the spring showers pour
How long will they survive in the cold?
When they want to see the spring's gold
Animals waiting to wake up
To welcome the spring by saying, "Sup!"
Gradually, the days get warmer
And the sun gets stronger
Let's say Hello to Spring!
Now their ears will ring
When they hear the birds sing
Flowers start to bloom
Giving the world less room
The sun and rain leave such a delight
Looking at a rainbow is such a sight
Pollen is in the air
Needing to give pollen allergy some care
The temperature is very bold
Not so hot or not so cold
The cherry blossoms arrive
People go to Washington D.C. to see it live
Spring keeps the joy in the air
But soon it will leave having some people's heart to
April and May go by giving us its spring shower

But once June comes by, it'll give us so much sun power
Stink bugs will be in the air, everywhere
Some people won't be able to enjoy their ripen pear
This is the relaxing season, summer!!!
The beaches stay warmer
People go out to tan
With some great plan
Apple picking is best in this season
For which summer is here for this reason
Children are active all day and night
Then when it's dark, people go out to see the stars in sight
In this season we have something very special
An amazing event that gives potential
Something we all like to call The Orissa Society of America or OSA Convention
This year it is in Rhode Island
From July 2nd through July 4th
Some people come north
When OSA is over, everyone leave for their home state, thinking sadly, "Why so early!"
Slowly, July and August end, kids go to their school, for surely

September arrives, giving some people the chill
Reminding winter will arrive still...
The green leaves all fall down
On the ground
Making preparations for winter
And causing less splinters
September says Goodbye
And October arrives with a little Hi
Then it comes
When people hum scary hums
It's Halloween!!!

Some people dress up as goblins that are green
Or others dress up as witches that are black
At the end kids arrive home with candy in a sack
Once Halloween is over, fall goes by

Winter arrives
Time for the animals in their seasonal sleeps
And time for us to wear heavy jackets that we keep.
Holiday lights, holiday season, Christmas vacation, and celebrate New Year!

*(In our lives also we go through four seasons. My interpretation –
Spring is our childhood, the most enjoyable period. Summer is the youth period and initial part of adulthood, when
struggle hard to establish ourselves. Fall is our matured adult age, when we save for old age, children and run after
illusions to make more money, property etc. and Winter is the old age, when we try to stay indoors and enjoy thinking
our past.)*

Debanshi, 13, is a 7th grader and is the daughter of Debaki Nandan and Anjana Chowdhury, living in Germantown, MD. She loves to dance and swim in her free time. She is an active member in her school's Student Government Association. She has set a number of goals in her life. Some of them are to be a world famous dancer, scientist, brain surgeon and finally The President of the United States of America.

Odisha: Through My Eyes

Amisha Paul

This weekend, over one thousand people have gathered in Rhode Island for OSA 2016. We have people from all walks of life from all across the United States, many of who have traveled across the country to attend this convention. Some have even flown overseas to be present at this weekend's event. But what is the motivating factor for all of these unique people to congregate here in Rhode Island this weekend? A couple months ago, I sat down and asked myself the same question. Why were so many people coming together, without an incentive, without any profit? What did all these people share that I just did not see? After talking to a few of the attendees, I came to realize that the one thing that connected all of these people was their love for their motherland and culture: the great state of Odisha. To get a true understanding of this love, I decided to do my own research.

Since, language is one of the main pillars to a unique society; I decided to start my research by looking at the history of the Odia language and by looking at some of the greatest works of Odia literature. Odia is the only Indo-European language of India other than Sanskrit and is the sixth Indian language that has been conferred as a classical language. Odia literature dates back thousands of years and has changed a lot through the ages. In the 15th century, Sanskrit was the language of the upper-class in Odisha while Odia was the language of the commoners and Untouchables. The first great Odia poet was Sarala Das from the 15th century, who translated the Mahabharata. This translation has since provided subsequent poets with the necessary foundation for national literature. He also wrote the Chandi Purana and Vilanka Ramayana. Since Sarala Das had no formal education and did not know Sanskrit, he was given the name Shudramuni, or seer from a backward class. Another great poet from a similar time period was Balrama Dasa, who is considered the senior-most poet in the Age of Panchasakha. He wrote a very famous Purana called the Laxmi Purana. In this Purana, the Goddess Lakshmi visited her devotee Shriya who was a scavenger low caste woman. Because of this, Balarama, the elder brother of Jagannatha (Lord Vishnu) got angry with Lakshmi, and she was turned out from Jagannatha Temple of Puri, one of the four most sacred places of pilgrimage for the Hindus. Lakshmi leaves the temple, and avenges the insult by cursing her husband and elder brother-in-law to go through a prolonged ordeal without food, water or shelter. Interestingly enough, it has been cited as perhaps the first attempt in India towards feminism and casteism. The Purana describes the social structures and gender inequality persisting in the society. It is also a protest against male hegemony. Throughout history, Odia literature has thus been a forefront of new ideas for India.

Another pillar to a culture rich in heritage is their music. Odia music is thousands of years old and is made up of many different categories. Sambalpuri music and dance, which comes from the city Sambalpur, is very popular throughout India. Recent pop culture adaptations of some Sambalpuri songs have given the music an international platform. Dance music is also another big portion of Odia music. Based on archaeological evidence, Odissi dance is the oldest surviving dance form in India. The Odissi dance tradition originally existed in three schools: Mahari, Nartaki, and Gotipua. Mahari were Oriya devdasis and they performed for Lord Jagannath inside the temples. They were considered the wives of Lord Jagannath. The Gotipua tradition originated from certain groups of people disapproving of women dancing. Thus, boys would dress up as girls and were taught by the Maharis. Nartaki dance took place in royal courts for the pleasure of royalty. Although the roots of Odissi dance were religious, it has changed throughout the centuries into also being a form of entertainment for the general public. However, during the British Rule, this form of dance nearly went extinct, only to be revived by a few gurus after independence. Similarly, Odia music has changed throughout the years. It has been influenced by Hindustani classical and recent music has been influenced by Western pop culture. Odia music is truly a style of music that maintains its own identity while adapting new styles of music.

A region's festivities are also a connecting force between its people. In this way, Odia festivities are an important pillar to Odia culture. Odisha has many festivals, among which are Ratha Yatra, Diwali, Kumar Purnima, and Raja. Ratha Yatra is a festival in which the deities Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subradhra

are moved from their home in the temple to their Aunt's temple. They are carried in chariots, or Rathas. Interestingly, the English word juggernaut, which means a huge and overwhelming force, has its roots in the word Jagannath and the force of His chariot during Ratha Yatra. Diwali, or the festival of lights, is celebrated all across India. In Odisha the day starts with drawing Rangolis in front of the house. The Rangoli is drawn in the shape of sailboat on the ground in front of their house and is filled with items like cotton, salt, mustard, asparagus root, turmeric and a wild creeper. Festivities continue throughout the day. After dusk, diyas are lit and all members of household gather for lighting Kaunria (pith of the jute plant). Kumar Purnima is a festival that is mostly unique to Odias. It marks the end of the monsoon in Odisha. On this day, girls wake up early for a purificatory bath and don new clothes. They fast all day, but the day is filled with celebration. All of the girls dance and sing, and games such as Puchi Khela are played. A delicacy called Chanda Chakata (made of khaee, jaggery, banana, coconut, ginger, sugarcane, talasajja, cucumber, ghee, honey and milk) is laid out in the shape of a half moon. After being offered to the moon, it is enjoyed by all. Another festival, called Raja, is a four-day-long festival that inaugurates and welcomes the agricultural year all over Odisha. During the festival, women are given a break from household work. Unmarried girls wear new clothes and put Alatha on their feet. All people abstain from walking barefoot on earth. Many different pithas, such as podapitha and chakuli pitha are made. Girls play on swings tied on tree branches while aged ladies play cards and Ludo. Many villages organize kabbadi matches among young men. Odia festivals are so diverse, fun and colorful that any person that has experienced any of these festivals has very fond memories.

Odisha is also world renowned for its ancient architecture and temples. The temples of Odisha are in the Indo Aryan Nagara style of architecture, with distinctive features specific to this region. Odia temples attract tourists from all around the world. Some of the best known are Jagannath temple in Puri, the Lingaraja Temple in Bhubaneswar, the Konark Sun Temple, and the Maa Tarini Temple in the Kendujhar district. Odisha is also well known for its Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves. Northeast of Cuttack, about 10 miles from Bhubaneswar they were carved out as residential blocks for Jain monks during the reign of King Kharavela. These attractions attract tourists from all over the world.

But perhaps the one thing that truly connects all Odia people is our palate. Odisha has a culinary tradition passed down through the centuries. The kitchen of Jagannath temple, in Puri, is known to be the largest kitchen in the world. It has about one thousand chefs cooking on 752 wood-burning clay stoves, also known as chulas. This kitchen feeds over ten thousand people a day. Similar to the music and literature of Odisha, Odia food has also been influenced by external cultures. One of the best fusions of North and South Indian food can be found in Cuttack. This dish is dahibara-aloodum-guguni, a combination of flavors that is sure to entice anyone's taste buds. Pithas are also a trademark of Odia cuisine. Some examples are Poda pitha, Arisha pitha, kakara pitha, haladi patra pitha (enduri pitha), manda pitha and chitou pitha. Mudhi, or puffed rice, is also an integral part of every Odia household. In addition, because of Odisha's extensive coastline, seafood is a big part of Odia cuisine. Some other popular dishes are pakhalā, badi chura, baigana poda, and saga bhaja. Odia cuisine is so rich and unique that it is the pillar that we have the hardest time living without.

As a fifteen year old high school student born and brought up in the United States, I have not been able to fully experience the immense history and beautiful culture of Odisha. Through this convention, however, I have been able to feel a small part of the love that the adults feel for their motherland. I have been able to see and understand why my parents say the word Odisha with such pride. I have come to realize that no matter what happens or where life decides to take me, my love for Odia culture is what will keep me connected to my roots. Since I have reached this epiphany, I urge you, regardless of your walk of life, to never forget where you have come from. To the youth attending this convention this weekend, I encourage you to always remember the world your ancestors have influenced and held close to their hearts. I encourage you to never try to hide your culture, but instead promote it as much as possible. Wear the true beauty of our Odia culture on your sleeve. For, as a great person once said, "Our culture, our traditions, our language are the foundations upon which build our identity."

Amisha, 15, is a 10th grader who lives with her parents, Malaya and Priya Pal, in Connecticut. She enjoys dancing, singing, reading, playing tennis and violin. She aspires to become a neural engineer

MY FRIEND

Ananya Mishra

My friend, she is the one
Who lights up your life like a sun
A friend is someone who is loyal and driven
A friend's a wish granted, a friend's a need given
A friend is a feeling that you share
A friend's an adventure that you dare
A friend is a language that needs not a word
A friend is a thought that needn't be uttered
A friend is a blanket on a windy day
A friend is a rainbow when the clouds are grey
A friend is consideration, concern and care
A friend, my friend, is always there

Ananya, 13, is a 7th grader, enjoys reading and music. Reported by her mother, Pragyan Mishra

Reflection of Vanity: The Beauty and the Beast

Sneha Mahapatra

I leave the warmth of my house and venture into the frigid, wintery evening. Snow is steadily falling all around and landing softer than feathers; they fall so softly I barely feel them as they fall upon my face. I carefully walk down the steps, completely frozen with ice, the cascading ice beautifully suspended in time. After reaching the bottom of the steps, I start to wander aimlessly through my backyard, only to end up in front of the arboretum. Looking back, I see my footsteps are barely visible, as they have already been filled with the shimmering snow. I look back again to see the skyscraper-like trees that stand tall and proud never wavering from the bitter cold of the icy wind. However, the clumps of snow has formed on the branches of the trees making them droop down lower than usual. The forest is trying to tell me not to venture into it, to stop where I am and turn back. Yet, the iridescent ice and shine of the snow are telling me to come closer and closer.

My feet carry me to a familiar place. In the summer, the emerald pines and the verdant leaves form a path which I always follow. Now the snow has covered the worn down path, but it fails to prevent me from remembering the right way. The branches of the trees fall lower and lower with each step I take, their arms decorated with gentle glass bangles. The usual sight of squirrels running rapidly up and down the trees, the chirps of chickadees, and humming noise of the bumblebees are no where to be seen or heard. I was alone. Walking along the pathway, I felt myself become smaller and smaller, while the forest grow bigger and bigger in size. I walk faster down the path to try to reach my destination. My breath instantly turns into fog and then disappears along with the snow. Suddenly a cardinal flits past me, taking me by surprise. He uses the wind to carry itself above the trees and under the bushes. His cherry colored wings are the most vibrant color radiating from the forest. Not stopping for any of the long slumber, they rise and fall with the sun, day in, and day out. Soon the cardinal reaches his nest, and disappears from sight. Now I am alone, and the sun has fallen past the horizon.

Upon reaching my destination I felt calm, quiet and peaceful, as the snow has stopped falling. I gazed upon the pond centered in the forest. It shimmers gorgeously with the evening sun and produces vast amounts of color, if one looks carefully. As the sun begins to set, the pond starts to reflect the night sky. The pond, acting as mother nature's sole mirror, displays millions of stars that twinkle with colors of the sea and the colors of the snow that had just fallen. Its respondent beauty which only mother nature can unfold. Not too far away, an oak tree is leaning over the pond, trying to gaze into its fathomless bottom. Its twisted and knotted limbs are sprawled all over the pond, providing support over the delicate ice. The oak suffocates the pond, suppressing it, like a tyrannical king. The tree has no desire to see the stars. The pond can barely hold the oak tree's weight. With each snowfall its weight becomes unbearable. The tree looks at its reflection in the ice, a majestic chestnut brown with pure white snow covering him. Yet, it fails to see the murky depths of the pond, where the fish move patiently, waiting for the warmth to come and for the ice to melt. The fish will then break free while the oak will fall into the depths of the murky water, to be long forgotten.

I walk around the edge of the pond, thinking about the disastrous future that lies ahead for the majestic oak tree. I turn and walk back home through the same path. Snow starts to fall again only this time harsher, each flake stinging my face. I fight through the branches that obscure my view, no more intrigued by their beauty and sprint back home. I reach back home and allow the heat to swallow me completely. I observe from the safety of my abode as the snow swirls around the forest.

Sneha, 17, is a junior in high school. She has a passion for Hindustani Music and anything pertaining to Science. Her hobbies include Odissi Dance, reading, drawing, and playing soccer and ultimate Frisbee, and Science Olympiad. Her goals include to be happy, to find the universal truth, to rid the world of any prejudice, and invent something for the betterment of humankind. Sneha lives in Acton, Massachusetts, with her parents, Asima and Sudhira Mahapatra.

United we Shall Stand and Persevere

Anwehsa Ranabijuli



We the people of the United States; this first fragment of the constitution begins with an iconic pronoun that sinks into the hearts and minds of all who hear it. The pronoun “we” is inclusive, equal, and united. Writings brimming with vibrancy and meaning like the United States Constitution, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Declaration of Independence all take this pronoun and give it shape in order express their purpose and allure to the ears of the people listening, and beckon to those who aren’t. The pronoun “we” acts to expunge the walls of separation and the fear of debarment, allowing everyone to stand at the same level while speaking. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. shapes the revolution to end segregation against men and women of color. He preaches how all men, as articulated by the constitution, have the right to freedom and equality regardless of their race. Dr. King advocates for how the ostracizing of African Americans has gone unresolved for too long and adamantly states that it must end. In his “I Have a Dream” speech, Dr. King vocalizes the cry of the African American community and dramatizes the pending issue of segregation while expressing how the people of America must stand together if they wish to end segregation and achieve an egalitarian society. Dr. King compares abstract nouns to natural elements in order to create a feeling of harmony and equilibrium. The natural elements of the Earth work together to keep the Earth functioning in equilibrium, similar to how there is a need for unity if a functioning egalitarian society is to be achieved. Through this unity, “the heat of oppression will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice” and all will be equal (King 3). Freedom entails having the right to act, speak, and think however one wishes. To be free is to be unshackled; to be cut from the weight of disparity. In contrast, oppression entails elongated unjust treatment; to be continuously beaten down and persecuted. The articulation of these words allows Dr. King to propose a prominent observation on the current state of affairs to his audience. It encourages them to fight for the transformation from tart oppression, to

honeyed freedom. Dr. King compares these concepts to the elements of the Earth in order to connect commanding concepts to formidable elements. The elements of the Earth are often drastic and are very prone to extreme changes depending on the Earth's condition. Despite this, the elements balance their extremes and maintain equipoise. Even when there is a surge of heat or unnatural warming on the Earth, the water on Earth tames this heat through its high volumetric heat capacity. This ability allows the Earth's temperatures to stay regulated. Without water's high thermal inertia, the Earth would be extremely warm and it would be impossible to sustain life. Similarly, without heat, the Earth's water and land bodies would freeze over and few to no organisms would be able to sustain life. These two opposite elements are very extreme and have oscillating tendencies, yet they work together to balance each other out and maintain homeostasis on Earth. Dr. King analogizes oppression to heat and freedom to an oasis, connecting powerful concepts to even more powerful elements to stress the need for unity in order to reach functioning equality.

Prior to working towards forming unity in order to reach functioning equality, one must first be aware of the segregation and racism that occurs in everyday society. Dr. King phrases the actions of and the actions doled out by and to Americans with gothic elocution in order to make the listener aware of the distinct "classes" in society and exploit their inequality. In the medieval ages, monarchies were prominent and ruled over where a person fell in the social ladder of society. Each social class had different responsibilities, and each social class received a particularized degree of respect. In contrast to this specification, the founding fathers of America signed "a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir [to]" (King 1). By saying that every American was to fall heir to the same note, a sense of equality is created through the idea that no matter who you are, as long as you are American, you are the legatee to this entreaty. Yet still, the conspicuous phrase "to fall heir to" stands out as oddly gothic as it was a phrase commonly used in the dark-ages. Because of the prominence of monarchies and social classes in the dark-ages, the phrase "to fall heir to" hints at the separation of different groups of people and suggests how, similar to the medieval times, though a "king" might issue out a decree to the whole kingdom, in reality the message is only entailed to a small group of nobles. By employing gothic intonation in his speech, Dr. King brings the reality of segregation and

social classes to the cognizance of the people; implying the fact that despite the fictitious claims of equality, the separation between African Americans and the rest of society is undeniably present.

The transparent equality that has been present in our society since it's genesis has continuously been challenged by people who have ignited revolutions against this fabricated impartiality. Dr. King is no exception to this fact as he stimulated the fight against the segregation of African Americans. Riding on the tails of Dr. King's heroism, many other Americans have taken the stand for human rights and led their respective rebellions against discrimination in order to achieve equality for all. By uniting together to achieve equality, the American public has seen great strides in human rights and will continue to see liberal change as the people of the nation persevere in their efforts to create impartiality for all.

Elysian

Arya Mohanty



“Learn to appreciate the things you have before they turn into things you had.” We often take for granted things that we otherwise could not live without. Those around us and the people we love; we do not realize what we have until they are gone. One has to learn to appreciate the things one has before life makes us learn. As our life passes, we constantly think of the future. We constantly ponder about what we will do after school, after college, and after retirement. We are persistently anticipating growing up. It soon dawns on us that we spent all our time trying to grow up and in the process we forgot to live. It is like child's a sprint to adulthood. Most people in this world go through the actions of life. They wake up every morning, go to work, make an earning, have a stable family, perhaps a few parties; a social life. You keep telling yourself, 'I will do it later. I can do that when I am older.' It is essential to comprehend that every passing moment; you are getting a little older. Every second of your life spent is a one more moment that you could be saving a life, fulfilling a lifelong dream, or getting once in a lifetime opportunities. But going back and saying what if it is not going to change anything. If you want something in your life, you have to do it yourself. If opportunities do not come knocking, then build a door. Life begins at the end of your comfort zone. You cannot cure cancer from the comfort of your couch. There are many obstacles in life. There will always be obstacles. Waiting for things to get easier is a wishful thinking. Once you solve one problem, another will always arise. There will always be another mountain to move. You have to find the light in the darkness and cherish it. Don't wait till you are ready. You can never really be ready; there is almost no such thing such as completely ready. Now is as good a time as any.

We go about life looking for people to look up to. We constantly contrast ourselves amongst those around us. “You have to be the best.” But no matter how hard you try; there will always be someone better, and there will always be someone worse. There are and have been many amazing people in this world, Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela etc. Everyone has role models; they provide inspiration and a reason for life. They will only begin to help when you realize you are not them. We are all individuals. You will probably never sing as well as Lata Mangeshkar or lead wars like George Washington. You need to stop trying to be them and start trying to be yourself. We all have something that makes us exquisite. The world works because of balance. Stars cannot shine without darkness. Be truthful, be honest, be inspiring. Most importantly, the only thing you really need to be is yourself, someone you would be proud to meet! Be the best version of you that you can be.

The majority of the people in this world fall into two categories, those who complain about the rain and those who expect it to change. Those who see the glass half empty and those who see it half full. When something bad happens, you have three choices. You can either let it destroy you, define you, or strengthen you. I find it best to learn to dance in the rain. We are all made of atoms, whose main goal is to reach a state of having a full valence electron shell; to find stability. It is pre-programmed into every cell of our body. We crave contentment. Happiness does not mean everything needs to be perfect. On the other hand, it means you have chosen to see past the imperfections. It does not come as a result of getting something we do not have, rather appreciating what we do have. Albus Dumbledore once said, “Happiness can be found in the dark, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the lights.”

What I have learned from my short experience is that life seldom goes according to the plan. There are rejections, accidents, and disasters. Things around us are changing constantly. Sometimes all you need to do is take a step back, trust, and let go. If "Plan A" did not work, there are 25 other letters in the alphabet. Sometimes being rejected is just another way of being redirected. I like to think of life as a test. You have this one opportunity of doing something incredible; and if you use it correctly, all you need is one chance. All around us, we see labels: Hindu, Christian, old, young, short, fat, white, and black. But what is underneath the 2 mm thick layer skin is the same, flesh and blood. We all have 99.9 percent of the same DNA. Why do we let these labels and words determine the paths of your lives? Why can girls not play football? Why are they too old to get married? Why is she too young to understand? And also, why does it matter? Why should, what others think of you, affect your decisions. They are neither living your life, nor do they have to suffer the consequences of your actions. In the end, we only regret the chances that we did not take. Take risks, take chances; they will help you grow. Do what you want, say what you feel. Life is too short to cry over spilled milk; have fun, regret nothing, do not let anyone hold you back. You may not have a long time on earth, but you can have a good time. Take everything you have, and make it amazing.

Arya, is a 9th grader who lives in Winchester, MA, with her parents, Arun and Namrata Mohanty. She is accomplished in singing, dancing - Odissi and Bharata Natyam, and has a penchant for reading. She aspires to become a doctor.

Dizygotic Cells

Sarthak Panda

You guys are twins? and *What's it like to be a twin?* - For nearly as long as we can remember, my brother and I have fielded these kinds of questions whenever we've met someone for the first time. Our mutual presence, we found, often inspired a familiar routine of movements and inquiries: the curious eyes of our interlocutor would dart from left to right, examining the two of us side-by-side, while we patiently waited for more questions, more observations. *You're not identical, so are you fraternal?* Soon enough, I was no longer called by my name, Sunny, and my brother was no longer called by his, Som. Instead, we became some known by some kind of hybrid of the two: Sunny-Som, or simply "the twins." To the minds of others, we had fused into a single entity.

In a way, though, our reputation for our joint identity was justified: growing up, my brother and I were inseparable. As some of our family members surmised, perhaps our intimacy was simply due to the fact that we shared our mother's womb, that our dizygotic cells determined our bond from birth. More likely, I thought, my brother and I grew close because we dressed in the same clothing, played with the same toys, finished each other's sentences and became one another's best friend. From an early age, we were introduced to instruments before we understood rhythm or melody, but we instinctively fell into synch and stirred something deep in one another as the twin musicians on stage. Even before we could read music with any degree of sophistication, we recognized when one of us missed a chord, when we should improvise, and when we should just keep playing. We always seemed to be on the same page, sharing a beat that seemed natural from birth.

Despite our outward appearances, though, my brother and I discerned our differences with greater precision and insight than possible for external observers. In junior high school, for

example, I began to understand that my passions for art, music, and community service diverged from my brother's interests in computer science and technology. I was always amazed when Som could deconstruct and repair our video game console within minutes, always explaining that he "just knew" how to put the machine together again. In turn, I found that my love of the arts and inclinations toward creativity pushed him to use his talents to make his own programs and hardware rather than just study those we bought from the store.

As we matured and pursued our own avenues of inquiry, it was an incredible privilege and advantage to have a friend, confidante, critic, and teammate by my side in the person of my brother. Our different personalities—he was reserved but social, I was energetic but shy—formed our individual perspectives on the world, and these qualities helped us refine our views and hone our goals. While he programmed, I researched. While I played piano, he sang. We talked and argued for hours about everything ranging from soccer to politics, and the more either one of us knew, the more strongly the other would be motivated to learn and catch up.

My brother and I formed a natural team, immersing ourselves in volunteer projects and staking our place in the fields of medicine, technology, and service. Being a twin has helped me figure out who I am and want to be, even as my brother has also become an integral part of my own identity. Like any pair of siblings, we have had our share of fights, but we always have a deeper sense that we will always be there for one another no matter what unique relationships, interests, or hobbies we pick up along the way. It is this kind of mutual reliance coupled with fierce independence that makes our relationship so special and such a crucial aspect of my identity today.

Sarthak, 18, lives with his parents, Siba and Sonali Panda, in Grafton, Massachusetts. He is graduating high school this year. He, like his brother, is also an extremely talented musician.

Winner -2nd Place – Maghna Awards, Senior Group

Volunteering in India - Helping lives through better sight

Shruti Nanda

During the summer before my sophomore year, I visited New Delhi, to volunteer for an international non-profit organization called SightSavers. Using technology to help others to create a better future, empower women to believe in themselves and giving back to my community were some key takeaways from this experience.

SightSavers works to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equal opportunity for disabled people. They fund vision centers, or eye care clinics in various parts of the world. I was given the opportunity to work at a Vision Center, where patients come to receive eye check-ups, prescriptions etc.

My task was to generate and showcase patient operational statistics and recommend my ideas on how to improve the efficiency of the Vision Center, located in a slum of New Delhi. I was given in-patient data for the previous months; for example, the number of male patients vs. female patients, how many individuals were diagnosed with diseases such as Cataracts, Diabetic retinopathy and Glaucoma, and how many males and females were prescribed glasses. I interacted and observed the daily activities at the center, analyzed the patient data to find disease trends to create graphs and charts, comparing the numbers of patients from each month and then, showcased what I had collected, and provided recommendations on how to improve the logistics of vision centers.

The time spent at the Vision Center was unique and changed my perspective of the world. As an outsider, it felt chaotic in the beginning. At one end, there were patients standing under a tree, undergoing preliminary eye exams. Another group was standing in line in front of the main facility for further check-ups, and others just sitting on humongous rocks waiting for their turn. I was both surprised and a bit shocked at the ambiance of the area. I never expected a medical center to be this crowded and out in the open. On a positive note; despite the hot and humid days, and standing in line for hours, I never heard a single person complain.

During the day, I spent my time at each of the stations. When observing the eye examinations, I found majority of the people were illiterate. The standard eyes check up chart with letters and numbers are not useful. The vision care nurse conducting the initial check up used lines as arrows asking the patient which direction three lines point such as in letter E. I found the scheme to be innovative.

One day, inside the actual vision center building, I saw close to fifty individuals waiting their turn for further check up. I was impressed with the lens meters and microscopes in use, and how efficiently

the doctors were handling the patient volumes. With the help from a volunteer I interviewed few patients. Notably, talking to an elderly lady with diabetic retinopathy helped me explain the data findings. She had a rare eye disease usually occurring in women at old age. We talked about her condition, and how she was unable to receive surgery for her diabetic retinopathy, because the hospital was too far away from her home, and she needed to stay at home, to serve her family. However now that the Vision Center was established, she was attending regularly to receive medical care, and was very thankful to SightSavers.

Touring the clinic, I went to another area where patients received glasses. While speaking with the physician there, he said that majority of female patients needed glasses. I could not imagine how many women were in need of them, but were not able to afford the seventy-five cents for a pair.

My work for vision center, increased my awareness and made me more sympathetic. I learned the social stigma behind glasses, and how although women were in desperate need of them, they were still reluctant to wear spectacles because they were self-conscious. These women suffered from other eye diseases and often had to sacrifice their eye surgeries because the commute to the actual hospital was far, and their duties at home were more important for them. Walking through the vision center, like entering into a different world, with new situations and problems to face. I realized the opportunities that life has given me are something I should be thankful for. Although these people are below the poverty line, I saw that they were still content, and thankful for the benefits they received.

SightSavers has inspired me to join the cause in helping others. I hope to work towards creating a better future and encourage impoverished women and empower them to feel their best self.

Shruti, 15, is a sophomore, lives with her parents, Nihar Nanda and Sushree Kar, in Acton, Massachusetts. Besides being an academically high achiever, she has blossomed into a graceful Odissi dancer.

Suffocating

By Nistha Panda

They teased and tickled the inside of her,
The crosses of the T's and dots of I's
She swallowed them down as they squirmed and stirred;
They scratched her throat, they wouldn't say goodbye.

She wouldn't let the words escape her heart,
So they began to pile up in her lungs.
She couldn't breathe; the words pulled her apart,
But she kept them from rolling off her tongue.

She gasped and grasped, no air, nothing in sight,
With words within her chest, her soul was strained.
She pushed her words away, far from the light,
But it was getting hard to stay restrained.

She couldn't hold them back a minute more,
She let them sink then sail her words to shore.

Nistha Panda, 14, is a 9th Grader, Fremont, CA, daughter of Debabrata & Renuka Panda. She plays Upright Bass for her school orchestra and Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra. She is also an artist and has won several awards in art /painting competitions.

Flowed away from the Inani* to the shores of Puri

Debanjan Nandan Chowdhury



This poem is from the point of view of Rebati Pani, an Odia girl who had migrated from Cuttack to East Bengal (in 1930) with her siblings and parents. She was the daughter of a logistics manager. The family was living in Dhaka (presently in Bangladesh), where her father exported products to Southeast Asia from Dhaka and Chittagong. These were cities in Bangladesh, in pre-partitioned India. This poem describes her bus ride to India in 1947 as a refugee from Bangladesh, and how she started gaining sympathy for her native state of Odisha in this specific journey. This area was part of East Pakistan from 1947-1971, following the 1947 partition.

It was the morning of August 15, 1947.

As I was walking up the beautiful valley of my village,
a flock of jeeps crossed in front of me.

In those jeeps sat mammoth sized demons,
Conquering the village, with mammoth sized guns.

Two minutes later, there was a hubbub of gun shots,
And I saw tremendous bloodshed, a flood of
Red water was pouring into the Bay of Bengal.

There were dead flocks of ilish **,
Dead flocks of slaughtered lambs,

And my village was blood red.
Thirty minutes passed, and the beautiful blue
Skies of the dawn had turned dusty black.
As I reached home, I saw the dead bodies of my parents,
Lying on the front porch of my house.
It felt like being struck by 400
Volts of lightning. My sister and I
Raced 2 miles on foot to catch the
a bus to Kolkata.
I entered the last bus, and suddenly
I heard a familiar voice calling my name:
“Rebati! Rebati!!” It was my sister, who was not
Able to get on the bus, and she was too late in catching up.
Traumatized, I prayed mercilessly to Lord Jagannath
For the first time ever:
“Thou recalled my grandparents, uncles and aunts in
my native land of Cuttack.
Thou recalled the shrines of Puri, the ruins of Konarka.”
My mind was surrounded in the deep thoughts of
My home state of Odisha,
Which I had never considered home.
Flowed away the Inani* beach and came
Into the Puri sea beach.
I was amazed to see all
The polite and courteous people in Odisha.
They respected women and all Hindu people.
After this incident, I started to gain faith

In Lord Jagannath, as I believed
That He was the reason for me being
Safe in India.
This was the first time, I realized how
Proud I am to be an Odia.
And so I march onward.

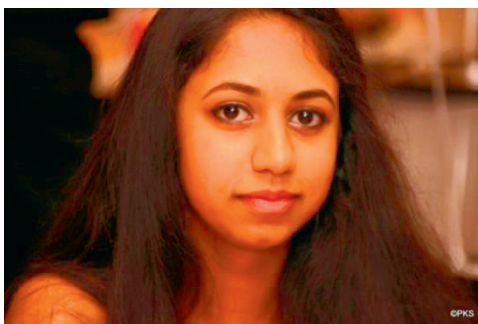
*Inani--- A sea beach in Bangladesh

*Ilish—Most popular fish among Bengali community.

The Poet Debanjan Nandan Chowdhury is a senior (12th grader) at Clarksburg High School, MD. He will be going to University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) in the fall of 2016. He is the son of Debaki Nandan and Anjana Chowdhury. Along with writing, his hobbies are travelling and acting in plays. He was in the Clarksburg High School Swim team and was the Co-founder and President of SMAC-TREC (an entrepreneurship club in Clarksburg High School). Along with those, he is in Boy Scouts Troop 489, on his way to be an Eagle Scout (highest and most respected rank in Boy Scouts).

It's a Distinctive Distinction

Megha Panigrahi



AC blowing on my face, hair frizzing in the humidity, this is the place I call my second home. Not India, but Berhampur, Odisha. This is where Ma feeds me *chakuli* every morning and *shantula* every night. Sitting with all my relatives I see the beauty of love and family. You see, this is the only India I have ever known. Yes, I've been to other places such as Jaipur and New Delhi, but for me, my India was here.

Things are different when I come back to the States. Here, we're all Indian. Yeah we know who the Gujjus, the Tamilians, and the Punjabis are, but there are no Odias. That's because we're all Indian. We can all sing along to our favorite Bollywood songs, but I'm alone in knowing the Odia songs I used to hear in my mom's car as a young child. I inherited the Odia values and pride of my parents, the "Simple living, High thinking." But whatever unique things I may have experienced were molded to fit in with my surroundings.

My experiences in India were not like those of my friends. I was well aware what life was like in the city but they didn't understand the excitement we felt when we rode our Aja's scooter to a candy stall just to buy one chocolate. They didn't understand the constant disturbance that were mosquitoes or the peace that befell the town when everyone took a break for the afternoon nap. The taste of fried *machha* and street side *rasagolas* were only for me to know and no one else to understand.

OSA was able to give me that experience. I was surrounded by people who reminded me of Odisha; they spoke like home and acted like family. For the first time I became close with people who went from acquaintances I saw occasionally to some of my best friends. It was not just me and my family but an entire community. For the first time, I *felt* what it meant to be Odia.

Megha Panigrahi, 16, is in 11th Grade, and she lives in Southborough, Massachusetts, USA, with her parents, Manorama and Bhaskar Panigrahi

How Wonderful It Is Ipsa Das



How wonderful it is to be understood,
To ensconce oneself by the presence of another
Who relieves you of the vile burden
Of having to explain yourself, of having
To seek for the precise words to describe your emotions,
Or having to sort out your own feelings from the perspective of others,
And of the encumbrance of finding no words at all,
Of being in such a state of shock . . . because some brilliant person
Has put your demolished ruins back together
By finding just the right words for you—and you
Have only to be thankful for something you could not have done
For words so perfectly arranged cannot come from a victim,
But from the lips of a witness
Not words but literate light, in which
Your unembellished self understanding blossoms.
How wonderful it is to be understood!

Ipsa Das, 14 years young, lives in Natick, Massachusetts. She is the daughter of Himanshu and Kumkum Das and her Devashish Das.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

Parneeta Mohapatra

The moonlight dances across the river,
The wind whips my hair around.
I walk around downtown, behind her,
Admiring the city lights.

The camera shutter clicks,
A bright background
Compliments her dark silhouette.
I found what makes me tick.

Lighting, angles, edits,
All revolve around
Taking the perfect shot
Of something poetic.

She poses, it is dark.
We find a lighted playground.
"Take pictures of me here!" she exclaims.
I laugh, the sound echoing through the park.

Her happiness fills me with warmth,
With her I am safe and sound.
The camera shutter clicks, and clicks, and
clicks.
I put a timer on for pictures henceforth.

Posing stupidly, giggling merrily.
The foolishness of the scene astound,
A passerby judges two teens,
But we paid no attention cheerfully.

Pointless pictures yet,
Pictures hold memories otherwise unsound.
One day she'll be gone,
But pictures will not let me forget.

A picture is worth a thousand words,
I look at the scene spellbound.
Discerning the meaning
That I'll always be feeling.

Parneeta, 16, daughter of Pramod Mahapatra and Sushree Tripathy, lives in Ooltewah, Tennessee. She enjoys playing piano and violin. When she has free time, she always finds reading a book or watching Netflix. She hopes to become a neuroscientist in the future, while still keeping with her passion for photography.

Ambition

Raveena Mishra

I walked up to the bench where we usually meet and sat my backpack on the ground. Looking up at the sky I noticed it was a soft grey with hints of light blue, it was subtle and calming. This place was calming. However, I was anxious that my friend wasn't here. But as per usual I plugged music into my ears and closed my eyes. Music was my favorite thing in the whole world; it always made me feel better. I always picked a song that was familiar; I need to know I could always go back to it. My body shook from the cold gust, I realized sitting here at Seven o'clock on a windy Wednesday afternoon wasn't a good idea. It wasn't a bad Wednesday but it wasn't a great one.

I was sitting and gathering my thoughts, when I heard a loud sound, she was here. She sat her backpack on the ground and joined me on the bench. The grey day became greyer as time went on. She expelled a deep sigh, and I could tell that she was tired. This was how we spent most of our days, relaxing and not worrying about anything. I looked over to her, I saw her tired eyes, and untamed hair. I saw how she wore herself out. How she works hard to please the people in her life. I was proud of myself to have a friend like her. I liked staying here with her. It made me feel grounded. What can I say, she is my best friend. She turned her head towards me, and started talking. She told me again about her dream and aspirations, how she had made a detailed plan for her life and was going to follow it through. I could see it in her eyes that she was ambitious and I so eagerly wanted to be like her.

It was nice; I could still see the trees even at eight. She stood up, and dusted herself off. I picked up our backpacks and handed hers back. We walked up the concrete path and began walking home. Soon after goodbyes were exchanged, I continued the path, feeling ambitious.

Raveena, an 11th grader, lives with her parents, Pradipta and Manasi Mishra, in Okemos, Michigan

Just Keep Playing

Sanket Panda

As I walked onto the stage, my heart was racing, my mouth dry, and my face hot. I sat on the stool and slowly ran my pick over the thick and thin strings, feeling a rush of excitement. All warmed up, my fingers sprang into action; I listened as the chords complemented each other at my touch. A surge of nostalgia hit me as my hands shifted gracefully along the instrument. The motion was familiar as was the excitement.

Guitar came into my life in middle school, a time when I was making new friends and taking on more work. During this time of transition, the guitar pushed along a wall in the corner of our basement caught my attention. I sat down on the stool and slowly ran my small fingers over the frets until I let my hand slip, causing a chaotic harmony to echo through the room. I felt something within me shift. My musical journey had begun.

It was my 12th birthday and my uncle gave me a big birthday gift. As I unwrapped the gift, I was hoping it was a LEGO or video game but was taken aback to see a "Guitar" - it was a gift I had never wished for, and never expressed an interest in! However, to show respect and not hurt the feelings of my aunt and uncle, I gracefully thanked them for the gift but deep down knew it would sit unused in a corner of a room.

The guitar gathered dust for a long time; my parents urged I take lessons but I resisted. I was reminded often that there is a first time to everything and I should at least try. Soon I was enrolled in a group lesson but was skeptical from the first day. My instructor's patience urged me to keep strumming with the group; I started to enjoy playing the melody. Slowly, I got into the rhythm and started to practice, made mistakes but kept playing.

I have been playing ever since; I have also performed with my brother, family and friends a couple of times a year. Even more impressive, I have begun to write and play my own songs as well as teach younger students. Today, my guitar has become an integral part of my life and the journey to master it began by taking the first step to try, followed by the perseverance not to capitulate.

Now as I performed, I was in a harmonic trance; suddenly I hit the wrong chord. I felt as though everyone in the audience was staring, but I kept playing, carefully creating an arpeggio from the

broken chords. I focused. I improvised with the mess I had made, slowly integrating my notes into a larger plan.

Years of hard work and perseverance transformed my repertoire from a few idle ditties to numerous compositions composed by artists ranging from The Beatles to Maroon 5. As my commitment to musical composition grew, simultaneously my interest in technological innovation grew to involve my pursuits in community service endeavors. I worked with a group of kids in rural villages in India who shared my passion to learn and the creativity to innovate on a grand scale. I feel strongly that if these children were to have the same access that I do, then they would become world leaders in innovation. During high school, I have used my knowledge of Android ROM building and web development to support my school, my community, and other developers, but I would like to expand my interest in a way that will have a greater impact on the world.

I am constantly reminded that although there are moments when we struggle and lose ourselves, we should always stay positive and focused. Our mistakes are part of master plan. So, it is better to always try, keep smiling, and just keep playing. And for now, I will just let that last note resonate, knowing that in my own way, I have succeeded.

Sanket, 18, is lives with his parents, Siba and Sonali Panda, in Grafton, Massachusetts. He is graduating high school this year. He is an extremely talented musician.

The Silver Lining

Sonali Senapati



Prologue

The British ruled over India (then Pakistan, and India) for almost 100 years. In 1915, an Indian freedom fighter by the name of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was fighting for India's independence. His ideas of peace and nonviolence moved the whole country and the rest of the world. He was thrown into jail by the British multiple times for no reason other than peaceful protests. In the 1940s, when some Muslim people threatened to secede from India and form a different country, he believed he could resolve the problem. In spite of Gandhi's views, the Hindus and Muslims formed groups. There was a lot of violence and bloodshed from both sides. Long time friends were separated. It ended when Pakistan and India separated from each other and declared independence from the British in mid-August 1947. This is the story of Harleen, a Hindu girl, and Reshma, a Muslim girl, unlikely friends, whose friendship was torn apart.

July 27th, 1946

Harleen

I skipped through the stalls, stopping every once in a while to glance at earrings or bangles. Reshma kept elbowing me every time I lingered too long.

"Look! Isn't this pretty?" I asked grabbing at a scarf.

"Harleen! Hurry up! We have to go home!" Reshma said. She pulled me harder towards my house.

"No! Can't we stay here for a little while longer?" I asked.

"No," she said. "It's getting dark! We have to be home!"

"Why?" I asked. She did not reply, and just pulled me harder through the crowd.

We rushed through the crowd to my house. Reshma lived only a couple of streets from mine. As we reached home, I found something wrong. Our oxen wagon was loaded with our things.

"Biji (mother)? Babuji (father)? What's going on?"

Biji's panicked face came into view.

"Harleen! What took you so long? We have to leave tomorrow early in the morning!"

"Why?" I asked.

"I'll explain later," she said.

"Reshma?" I asked. Babuji usually walked her home.

"Babuji will take her home. Don't worry."

Reshma

Harleen's father, Jaswinder Chacha (Uncle), walked me home with a worried expression on his face. He didn't talk, like we usually did, but strode forward with a vice like grip on my shoulders. As we neared my house, I saw Abbu's (father) square figure and worried expression. "Go inside, Reshma," Abbu said. I hurried up the steps and rushed inside. The door was a crack open and I heard snippets of the conversation. I had only caught the word 'leaving' when Ammi (mother) caught me listening. "Go eat," she said.

Harleen

Babuji came back quickly. "What happened?" I asked. "Where are we going?" He didn't say anything. Biji answered.

"We have to go farther into Punjab. We are moving to Boha, were my cousin lives."

"Moving? Is Reshma's family moving too?" I asked. "I don't want to leave!"

Biji walked over and gave me a hug.

Reshma

"No! You can't make me go! We are not going anywhere!" I yelled. "Reshma!" Ammi sounded exasperated. "I know this is hard! But if we don't move, we will get hurt! Haven't you seen what happening all around us? There is fighting everywhere! We need to move from here!"

"Can't I see Harleen one last time?" I asked.

"No. It is dark already and we leave early in the morning."

Harleen

I ran out into the darkness, feeling it enclose upon me. I had to see Reshma, just one last time.

"Reshma?!" I yelled. "Reshma?!"

"Harleen?!"

I heard footsteps and Reshma's face came out behind a house. She had tears on her face. We stood in silence.

"We're leaving," I said.

"So are we," Reshma said.

We sat down, on the ground, enjoying each other's company for what seemed like the last time.

Reshma

"Reshma." I heard Abbu's voice. "We have to go home. It's not safe here." Harleen's Babuji was also there. We must have dozed off. Harleen and I stood and faced each other. We hugged for a long time. "Goodbye," I whispered.

August 15th, 1947

Harleen

"They've done it," Babuji said, coming home from work with flushed cheeks. "They've declared independence for India. India and Pakistan are two separate countries." I was sitting on the ground, eating and reading the newspaper. I tried to listen in on the conversation.

"Will anyone from here be able to go visit Pakistan?" Biji asked. "No," Babuji said. "After all that bloodshed?"

My eyes blurred and I felt a tear slip down and fall on the newspaper.

Reshma

I came home from school early, because I had a stomachache. I knew my classmates wouldn't miss me; I rarely spoke and I didn't have any friends. I walked past the stalls, only too similar to the ones I had walked past with Harleen almost a year ago. I remembered when I'd first met her...

First day of school! I was excited and scared out of my mind. I was in the 1st grade. Ammi sent me to school in new clothes. As soon as I reached school, I sat and pulled out my blackboard and chalk. I saw another girl on the other side of the room. She sat tall and confident chatting animatedly with all the other boys and girls. I stared at her, thinking about how I would have loved to have that many friends. She caught my eyes on her face before I could tear them away. She stood up and walked to me. "Are you new?" she asked, crouching near me. I nodded. I was afraid she would tease me so I turned my eyes to the floor. Instead I heard "I'm Harleen. What's your name?"

Harleen

I went to bed early that day, because I felt sick. I'd hoped that after things died down, I'd be able to see Reshma again. I heard the door open and Biji came and sat on the bed. I closed my eyes quickly and pretended to sleep. "I know you are awake," she said. I opened my eyes. "I know it's hard," she said. "Not being able to see Reshma again. I know that you were good friends. Your friendship was like the silver lining amidst all the negativity. For all of us." I turned away, not wanting her to see the tears forming in my eyes. "Don't lose hope. You might see her again." She stayed with me for a few minutes, and then left. I closed my eyes, dreaming of happiness and good memories I had made with Reshma.

"Come on Reshma!" I whispered, beckoning at her to come. "Just jump the fence! We'll only take a few mangoes!"

Reshma was hesitant.

"But what if the gardener catches us?" she asked. "He beat my cousin black and blue and he'd only just stolen one mango!"

I sighed.

"The gardener isn't here right now! Come on! I'll pull you up."

I pulled her up and over the fence.

"Have you gained a few pounds?" I said, grinning.

"You're the one who eats like a pig," she said, grinning back.

We walked to the mango tree in the center of the garden. It was very big, and surrounded by bushes and flowers. "I'll climb up," I said. "You stay down here and keep watch. If the gardener comes, give a low whistle." She nodded. I climbed up the tree and started putting the mangoes into the bag I had brought with me. Suddenly, I heard a low whistle. I stopped moving, and sat, stock still in the leaves. A butterfly flew out and startled me, sending all the mangoes tumbling out of my bag. I jumped down, and ran, alongside Reshma with the gardener right at our heels. We jumped the fence quickly, and ran all the way to my house, where we sat outside, panting.

"That was fun," I said. "Pity, we didn't get any mangoes though."

Reshma sat down near a tree.

"I got some," she said, pulling out my bag.

It was filled with the mangoes I'd dropped.

"Sometimes you surprise me," I said.

January 31st, 1948

Reshma

I woke up to sounds of crying coming from the other room. Was it Ammi? It couldn't be Abbu, he never cried. I tip-toed to the door and creaked it open. Ammi was rubbing Abbu on his back as they listened to the radio.

"Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi passed away a few hours ago. He was shot three times in the chest by a man identified as Nathuram Godse. We express our deep condolences to all listeners and-

The rest of the commentary was drowned out by a sobbing noise. Abbu! He was crying! I had never seen Abbu cry before, except when Dadi (grandmother) had died. I closed the door and returned to my bed. I knew, of course, who Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had been. Both Harleen's parents and my parents had taken his teachings very seriously and had talked to me and Harleen about him all the time.

Harleen

I woke up very late. I was going to be late for school! I rushed to get dressed, comb my hair, and brush my teeth. Why hadn't Biji woken me up? I went to the kitchen. Biji and Babuji were there, talking. "Why didn't you wake me up?" I asked. Biji and Babuji looked at each other. I noticed now that Biji's eyes were a bit red.

"You get to stay home today," Babuji said.

"Why? I don't remember us having a holiday today," I said.

"It's no holiday. Gandhi ji ('Ji' is added to show respect) was assassinated today."

I'd heard so much about him! I knew so much about him! He had believed he could keep Pakistan and India together. Even after we'd separated from Pakistan, I'd always believed that maybe,

just maybe, he could join Pakistan and India again. That I'd be able to see Reshma again. How would that happen now?

April 13th, 1952

Reshma

I came home from the bazaar (grocery store) loaded with food. I walked into the kitchen to put my purchases away when I saw my parents talking in low voices. When I walked in, they immediately stopped.

"Did you get what I need?" Ammi asked.

"Yes," I said, irritably. "What were you talking about?" I asked.

Ammi threw a glance at Abbu before answering.

"Your marriage," she said. "Girls your age are getting married now, and we thought maybe it was time to start thinking about it." (Note: Girls in this time period in India got married really early. Reshma's age (16) would have been considered relatively old for marriage.) She started putting things away.

"Anyone in mind?" she said trying to act casual.

"No!" I said, astounded. Marriage? Sure, all my classmates were getting married, but I'd always thought I would be a little older, maybe closer to finishing my studies. But there was no use arguing when everyone was after my parents about my marriage. I thought of Harleen. Would she be married? Or would she be going through the same dilemma I was going through?

We'd been to a wedding once, together. We hadn't been invited to it though. I closed my eyes and relived that sweet memory.

One day, coming back from school, we heard loud music nearby. "That sounds like a wedding," Harleen said with a mischievous smile on her face. "Oh no," I said. "Oh, yes!" she said, taking me by the arm and dragging me to the wedding. We snuck in and ate so much in an hour, our stomachs bulged like pigs. We danced to the music, and talked to people there like we'd known them for years. Or at least, Harleen did. People were her natural environment. She was so outgoing, and I was so shy. Soon after, a man helping out at the wedding walked up to us.

"Who are your parents?" he asked suspiciously.

Harleen spoke with confidence. "Mr. and Mrs. Singh," she said.

"Take me to your mother," the man said.

"There she is, standing right there!" Harleen said, pointing to a woman with her back to us. The man turned around, and we ran for our lives.

June 6th, 1952

Harleen

Babuji came home with a joyful expression and a bounce in his step. "I have good news! I have finalized Harleen's marriage with Dr. Singh's son, Arjit," he said to Biji. "Arjit is finishing up his studies. There is a date set, in two months." He looked at me with a mixed expression of joy and sadness. "I'll miss you," he said. I walked forward and hugged him. I thought of Reshma. I would not see her again.

Reshma

The preparations for my marriage were extensive, thorough, and quite boring at some points. Ammi and Abbu rushed around all the time nowadays, and I spent most of my time on the roof of our house staring up at the big blue sky. I thought about how it would be to have a husband, and eventually children of my own to take care of. The past that I had spent with Harleen would be gone. I drifted off into my thoughts about my hopes and dreams for my future, and the ghosts of my past.

Harleen and I used to sit on the roof of my house. We used to do this often late at night when we sneaked out. We stared up at the sky. We talked sometimes, and sometimes we just sat there enjoying each other's company and deep in our own thoughts. One night, we were talking about our future.

"Will we be friends when we are older?" Harleen said.

I looked at her incredulously. "Yes! Why would not we be?" I said.

She sighed. "Even after we are married?"

*I looked up at the sky. "Yes. I believe in our friendship. Our friendship is too strong, and we are like puzzle pieces that fit together quite nicely, I think. I know our friendship can take anything."
Harleen looked at me and smiled. "You are quite the optimist."*

Present Times

Reshma

I'd never felt this nervous before! The only thing that kept me going was the faith that I'd be able to get my message out there and hopefully Harleen would be on the other end to receive it. "You'll be fine," my daughter said, rubbing my shoulder. I trembled as I walked into the recording studio of the radio station 83.7. A man walked up to me. "You must be Reshma!" he said smiling warmly. I smiled back.

Harleen

79 years old and I still listened to the radio from 9 AM to 1 PM on Saturdays, without fail. Would something important come up? You never knew. My children and husband got rather annoyed at me because of my habit, but I was persistent. The radio chattered on. Same old, same old. This celebrity did that, the prime minister did that and then in between there would be people leaving messages for their loved ones. How much things had changed from when Reshma and I used to listen to the radio. Where had all the melodious songs gone?

We used to sit in my house listening to the radio. Reshma and I always listened to the music programs that came on at 5 in the evening on Sundays. We sang along with popular ghazals, and laughed at how bad we sounded. Sometimes Reshma's Abbu came and sang with us. He had a very deep and heavy yet melodious voice that seemed to wrap around us like a pleasant fog did early in the mornings. Instead of singing with him, Reshma and I would listen to his voice singing along with Talat Mahmood and Noor Jehan. Reshma and I would fall asleep listening to him sing. I'd never heard someone sing like he did.

My granddaughter and grandson were fighting over the television remote.

Wait. What? Was that my name?

"Ishika! Aryan! Stop fighting! I have to listen to the radio!" I said.

I heard a frail but familiar voice.

"My name is Reshma Qureshi. I am here today to talk about my friend, Harleen Kaur."

I didn't believe what I was hearing. Reshma talked on and on about our first meeting, our friendship, our memories, our separation, and her hopes and dreams that she would still meet me some day. Her voice quavered sometimes but became stronger every time she said my name. Tears dripped down my face as I listened in disbelief. Was it really her?

"Please," she said. "If you are listening, Harleen, please call me at this number: 5738148918." I picked up the phone and started dialing the numbers in. I dialed the last number and waited. She picked up at the first ring.

"Harleen?" she said.

"Reshma?"

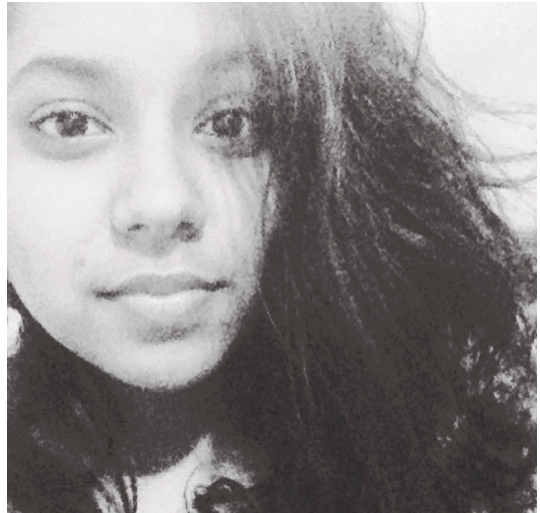
Sonali Senapati, 14, is an 8th grader, lives in Waxhaw, North Carolina, with her parents, Sameer and Gayatri Senapati. She loves to read, sing, and swim. She keeps a goal of becoming a pediatrician.

Honorable Mention – Maghna Awards, Senior Group

Stranded Spirit

Srujani Das

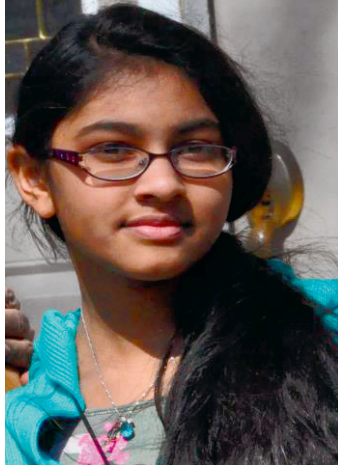
I am a spirit stranded in a tree
I guess 'tis written in my destiny
Days and months and years just go on passing by
I don't know if ever again, I will fly
My thoughts are arrested
I have tried and requested
But the witch of this isle
Who didn't engage me back a while
Has't driven away nature's sound
And made them drown, deep down
I miss the beauty, the nature
The spirits that do live here
The smell, the sound
Everything up and down
The flow of the water,
The freedom the honour
Oh how I miss, freedom
Send someone with wisdom
To take the evil away
Please do not delay
My servitude and loyalty
Me didn't treat her like royalty
But her hatred and betrayal
Her fake and painful portrayal
She didn't confine me
And use me, you see!
If one day I shall be free
I will let go and just be me
I will travel and admire
Watch the elements of nature inspire
Plant the seeds of nature
Help them grow and nurture
Calm the roar of the water
And move the cool air, make it warmer
Oh the wonderful things I could do
If I was free just like you,
But poor old me
I'm just a spirit stranded in a tree



Srujani Das attends Harold M Brathwaite Secondary School. She is 16 years old. She enjoys playing the piano and reading books. She lives with her parents Smaran Das and Sanghamitra Das in Brampton, Ontario, Canada. She also has a younger brother.

First Place Winner – Meghna Award, Senior Group
Manakamana

Aaryana Pradhan Rajnala



The village was absolutely bustling as people started to close up shop, packing up their wares and heading home for the day. Of course, many people were still there, demanding last minute discounts from vegetable and clothing stalls and the merchants vehemently refusing, indignant at the very idea that people could ask such a thing of men who could barely provide for their families as it was. So even though it was closing time, it was just as loud as the rest of the day. The marketplace, however, was not what I was looking at; my eyes were locked on the golden sun in the background as its light faded slowly. I sighed as I watched it dip behind the mountain in the background, taken by its beauty. And then, before I knew it, the sunlight was gone, casting the rest of the village in darkness. I'd always wished the sunsets could be longer. If only it wasn't for that darned mountain sitting in the way!

I chuckled softly to myself. If my parents heard me saying that, I don't know what they would do to me. That mountain was far too special to be spoken about like that, for that was the mountain upon which rested the Manakamana temple. Legend has it that whoever makes the pilgrimage up and prays to the goddess Bhagawati will have their wish granted. But I didn't believe in it. It couldn't possibly be true, could it? It just seemed so unrealistic to me to imagine a goddess sitting up there, waiting for offerings and sacrifices and making wishes come true for such a small price. I sighed wistfully, wishing that the sun would come back out. No one, goddess or not, could make that happen again until tomorrow.

Suddenly I gasped as someone tackled me from behind, knocking me from my extremely comfortable cross-legged position to the ground. "Aya!" I shouted, more surprised than angry as my best friend looked down at me, grinning playfully. "Good evening, Lakhan!" she exclaimed cheerfully. Even if I had been mad at her, I couldn't have stayed that way after looking at her, observing every feature, her long black hair braided down her back, contrasting against the bright yellow shawl she was wearing over her dark blue dress. Her fair skin accented her warm brown eyes, practically glowing as the moon rose over the mountain. "What are you doing here?" she asked. "Isn't it time to go home? I was

thinking of staying in the village tonight, but I think I'll go back home."

"Didn't appreciate that," I muttered. "Why are you going home? It's a little late, don't you think?" Aya lived by the edge of the mountain with her mother, which was quite far from the village.

The glee vanished from her eyes as I said the words. "I know, but...Amma....she isn't exactly..."

I frowned, concern creasing my eyebrows. "Aya, what happened?" I demanded, careful to speak gently. Why did she seem so delicate all of a sudden? "I'll come with you," I offered after she didn't answer. Hesitantly, she nodded her consent, picked up the goods she had left over from her day at the market, and we left the village, taking a final look back at the calm, peaceful lights behind us.

We walked at a moderately fast pace, both of us wanting to get out of the chill that any night brought, whether or not it was actually cold. By the time we reached her house, the moon had risen high over the top of the mountain. "Amma," Aya called softly as she stepped past the blanket hanging over the entrance. Their house wasn't much more than a small hut, looking especially small next to the colossal mountain.

"Aayusha?" a voice called back. "Why are you back...so soon?" The words were slurred by sleep, which made sense since it was the middle of the night.

"It's almost midnight," was Aya's reply. The inside of the house wasn't exactly anything to be proud of. A small wooden chair sat by the doorway, across from which was a small cot, the only bed in the house. And upon this bed lay Aya's mother, looking so...frail. Her skin looked deathly pale, her eyes half closed, her hair hanging limply off the edge of the bed. Almost like she was...

Suddenly I realized why Aya seemed so hesitant when I asked about her going home.

"Is that Lakhan?" her mother asked, attempting to sit up. Aya hurried over to her and pushed her back down.

"Yes, yes," she answered. "Please, Amma, don't try to sit. You should sleep, alright? I asked Lakhan to come with me because it was late when I finished at the market and I was too scared to come home alone. Don't say that I could have stayed at the village. You know I couldn't have, not with you like this." She clasped her mother's hand tightly in her own, smiling sadly. "I almost have enough money to take you to the hospital in the city."

Her mother smiled back at her, but didn't really seem to understand what her daughter had just said. "That's wonderful. Now, if you two don't need anything--" She yawned and turned around in the bed-- "I'll just go back to sleep. Good night, Lakhan, Aayusha."

Within moments her mother's steady breathing filled the air as Aya turned around to look at me, shrinking back with guilt at the horrified look on my face. "Why didn't you tell me?" I whispered. "Aya, is she--"

"Stop!" she exclaimed before I could finish. "Stop, Lakhan, please, don't make me think about that now. I don't want to consider it a possibility. I'll keep going to the market, and eventually I'll be able to pay for a doctor, and then...and then everything will go back to normal." I melted at the hopelessness in her voice. "You don't almost have the money, do you?" "What else am I supposed to do?" she sobbed, tears now streaming down her cheeks.

"She's my mother, Lakhan, I need her, and so I need to do whatever I can to save her. Please, I'm begging you just try and give me the hope that I'll be able to cure her."

"The temple," I breathed, the words almost inaudible.

The tears vanished from her face. "The temple!" she scoffed. "Lakhan, you don't even believe in that! What makes you think that the two of us, two little kids, can--"

"It's just like you said, though," I interrupted. "What else can you do? Aya, by the time you get the money, she might already be..." I didn't finish the thought as I watched her cringe at the words. "If we go to the temple, it at least gives us more of a chance. Please, Aya, at least consider it." I really kind of hated myself for suggesting it. What right did I have to speak about having a wish granted at the temple when I didn't believe in it? But...it would help Aya, so if nothing else, I was saying it for her, just to give her that much more hope.

A bitter self-reproach welled up inside me as I watched the conflicting emotions on her face, watching her battle with herself. "I can't ask you to do this with me," she said at last. "You're not asking me. If you're going, I'm coming."

After another moment, she nodded. "Okay. We'll leave tomorrow early in the morning. We shouldn't need too many provisions since it's only about eight hours there and back. I've climbed the mountain before, but I've never actually made it all the way to the temple." She looked up at me and I took a moment to figure out what she was asking for.

"Don't worry," I said reassuringly. "It'll be alright, Aya. It'll be alright."

And for the first time since we left the village that evening, she smiled, hope gleaming in her eyes.

We woke up early the next morning, but to be entirely truthful, I don't think either of us slept. We weren't scared about climbing the mountain; no, that wouldn't be difficult at all. We were scared that we would take too long to come back.

Aya packed just a little food and water for us with the logic that the less we had, the easier the trek up the mountain would be, which was entirely true. Even without much of a load, I wasn't particularly excited about the hike up the steep, rocky slopes. I had never climbed a mountain before, so of course, I didn't know what it would be like. It wasn't too bad to start since we began climbing so early in the morning. The sun hadn't come out and was not yet glaring on the back of our necks as we made our way up the narrow trail. Well, it wasn't much of a trail, more like just a pathway where no vegetation grew because so many people walked there. My legs ached by the time Aya decided it would be a good time to rest, which was at least two hours into the journey. She simply sat down on a rock at the edge of the path, waving me over to follow suit. I frowned a little as I sat beside her, wondering why she hadn't said much during the first half of the trip. A serious demeanor seemed to have taken her over, a hardset determination --she would conquer this mountain and go back home to tell her mother all about it.

"I wish we had something for to offer," she muttered absently. Once again she was silent, an amazing amount of contemplativeness showing on her face. I sighed, taking in the crisp air. It had only been a couple hours and the sun had already come out, thin beams of light streaming through the thick foliage. "Lakhan, why don't you believe in Bhagawati?" I lifted my shoulders in a halfhearted shrug. "It just seems unrealistic to me. Why do you believe it?"

“Because I want to. It’s not necessarily that it’s our culture or our religion. I believe in it because I want to believe that there is some divinity up there watching over us, someone powerful enough to decide that destiny exists, someone who can decide what destinies people have. It’s comforting to think that there’s someone who can reward me for my faith and all the good I do.” She paused. “You know you’re namesake was the founder of the temple?” “Of course I do,” I muttered resentfully. “And I’ve never liked it, but it’s not like I can change my name or anything. So I’ve learned to live with it.” I sighed sadly, suddenly questioning why I’d ever even mention the mountain. I really didn’t believe that it would help, but thinking about it, I suppose...I did it for Aya. To give her the hope that her mother could still be saved, even though I truly didn’t believe that this temple could help. Based on the skepticism she showed when I proposed the idea, she didn’t think much of it either, but talking to her about it just then, her faith was so apparent.

My thoughts were cut off as she stood up. “We should start again,” she said. “It’s only an hour or two from the top now, and the climb won’t be too bad from here. At this rate, I think we’ll be back long before sunset.”

My heart skipped a beat at the mention of sunset. If we stayed up on the mountain we’d be able to watch it, the whole sunset, not half of it disappearing behind the mountain. But...this was more important. Nodding, I stood and we continued up. She was right. I hadn’t even noticed the time passing beneath my legs, which were now burning from the climb, two hours passing in the blink of an eye. But we’d made it, and that was all that mattered. I shivered as we climbed over the last rocky ridge and stepped onto the cold stone ground. Every stone seemed new, like not many people had walked on them. I looked around, taking in the sight before us. I don’t know why, but the temple didn’t seem very impressive to me. There were only a few people there, praying and wishing, then moving on to whatever came next in their own journeys.

Slowly, Aya walked forward to the temple, but...I didn’t follow. Somehow it felt wrong for me to be there, about to pray to a goddess I didn’t really believe in. What good would a prayer do? I couldn’t help but feel like we’d wasted our time here. But...what if there really was something about that goddess? I hated this feeling of doubt, this uncertainty in my thoughts. If only there was something more definitive I could use to base my beliefs on, something more solid than a legend!

Without realizing it, I had allowed the time to fly by as fast as the sun across the sky. Aya walked back to me, grinning broadly. I raised a quizzical eyebrow at her and she shrugged off my look. “I feel a lot better about this now,” she said softly, wiping tears from her eyes. “Thank you, Lakhan. I needed this. We can...go back now.”

I returned her grin for just a moment, at least knowing now that this hadn’t been a complete waste of time. I helped my friend by giving her something that none of my own words could have given her. Hope.

We began our trip down the mountain again, the receding sunlight casting our side of the

mountain into shadow. Either the journey back only seemed shorter and easier because we were going downhill, or it really did go faster. The entire time I kept imagining running into her house and finding her mother standing and walking around just fine, like she had been before she got sick, but...I knew it wasn't possible. A wish couldn't just be granted and fulfilled in the span of a couple hours. It just wasn't realistic to think so.

We soon reached Aya's house once more and entered immediately to see what condition her mother was in.

"Amma!" she called hurriedly, pushing past the blanket in the entrance. "Amma, are you...?" She froze in her tracks, and I froze behind her. For some reason, I wilted at the sight of her mother lying in bed, as if I'd expected something different. I knew that going to the temple wouldn't work, but it hurt even more to see Aya crushed by the fact.

We both looked up as her mother stirred, sitting up in bed almost effortlessly. She rubbed her eyes blearily, then smiled at us. "Aayusha," she said softly, "where have you been? I couldn't find you anywhere around the mountain. Why did you go back to the village?" Aya frowned, confused by the very question. Even if she had gone back to the village, it would have been to get more money for the doctor. "What do you mean?" she asked in reply. "Well," her mother continued, standing up, "I wouldn't imagine you have any reason to now. I considered that it could have been for the doctor, but then...I'm not entirely sure what happened, but the hospital was having some kind of medical camp and someone sent a doctor here for me. That was you, wasn't it? Aayusha, you're a miracle worker."

Aya didn't answer, simply running into her mother's arms. "I'm so glad you're alright," she breathed. But I couldn't help but question it. A medical camp... My breath caught in my throat and I didn't even bother hiding the surprise on my face. It was just a coincidence, right? It couldn't have been...but what else was there?

An unbelievable amount of amazement surged inside me. This was the sign I'd wished for at the temple, and now here it was. Bhagawati had granted Aya's wish and mine. I took a deep breath, staring in the direction of the mountain.

Yes, I thought to myself decisively, that was definitely a solid enough reason to believe.

Aaryana, 13, is an 8th grader who lives with her parents, Nagesh and Moonmoon Rajnala, in Bridgewater, New Jersey. She loves to write, sing, and play violin.

Forbidden to Favorite

Sudiksha Pradhan



All I could say is that it seemed to be smiling back at me,
But the purple lumps in the bowl could have meant anything,
I hesitated from even thinking of trying it,
Who would put this in their mouth and decide they like it?

I picked up the spoon to scoop up the tiniest bit of the dish,
I tried to relax my mouth,
But I knew the taste wouldn't be as it is,
I placed the spoon inside my mouth and tried not to taste it,
But suddenly, an extravagant, an amazing flavor blast!

The coconut and rice danced throughout my mouth,
While the sweetness lingered around,
I stuck my spoon back inside the purple lumps,
Except now they were beautiful to my eyes, nose, and mouth.

Sudksha Pradhan, 13, is a 7th grader, living in Cedar Park, Texas, with her parents, Subhendu and Niharika Pradhan. She enjoys biking, dancing, and trying out new recipes in the kitchen during her free time. She plans to be a doctor, or pursue any other career in which she will have the opportunity to help people in need.



ଭାବ ଭରଣ

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THIS SEGMENT IS DEVOTED TO

OUR CONTRIBUTORS IN ODIA LANGUAGE

(Painting on the segment header is a reproduction of Oil on canvass contributed by the artiste

Dr. Sidharth Pani)

ନବକଳେବର

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ବିଶ୍ୱକର୍ମା ଆସି ମନପ୍ରାଣ ଦେଇ
ଗଢିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ରୂପକୁ ।
କୋଟି କୋଟି ଲୋକ ଚାହିଁ ବସିଥିଲେ
ଆକୁଳିତ ପ୍ରାଣ ହୋଇ,
ସେ ନୂଆ ରୂପକୁ ଦେଖିଦେଲେ ଯେବେ
ମନ ହୋଇଗଲା ମୋହି ।

ରଥରେ ବସାଇ ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ
ସଭିଏଁ ଉଠିଲେ ଗାଇ,
ଆକାଶ ପାତାଳ କମ୍ପମାନ ହେଲା
ଥରିଲା ଶ୍ରୀକ୍ଷେତ୍ର ଭୂଇଁ ।
ଲୀଳାମୟ ସେହି ଲୀଳା କରି ଭବେ
ବିସ୍ତାରି ଅଛନ୍ତି କାୟା,
ତାଙ୍କରି ଇଚ୍ଛାରେ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ସର୍ବେ
ନବୁଝି ତାଙ୍କରି ମାୟା ।
ଯେଉଁ ରୂପ ଥିଲା ସେହି ରୂପ ଧରି
ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ,
ଉଭା ହୋଇଗଲେ ସଭିଙ୍କ ସମ୍ମୁଖେ
ପ୍ରଣମିଲେ ସର୍ବେ ନଇଁ ।
ଯୁଗେ ଯୁଗେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଏହି ରୂପ ଧରି
ଆସୁଥାଅ ଧରାଧାମେ,
ଅବୋଧ ମଣିଷ ବିନତି କରୁଛୁ
ଯଶ ଉଡୁ ତୁମ ନାମେ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ କାବ୍ୟ ଓ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚିତ ପଦାବଳୀ ର ସ୍ଥାନ

ଲେଖିକା - ସୁମିତ୍ରା ପାଢ଼ୀ

କିଥାରେ ଅଛି ' ମଣିଷ ମନର ଢେଉ, କାଗଜ କଲମେ ଯେଉଁ ଛବି ତାକୁ ହିଁ କାବ୍ୟ କହୁଁ । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳରେ କାବ୍ୟ ଓ ପଦ୍ୟ ଉଭୟ ସାହିତ୍ୟ କୁ କାବ୍ୟ କହୁଥିଲେ । କାବ୍ୟ ର ଅଭିଧାନିକ ଅର୍ଥ ହେଉଛି ରସମୟ ରଚନା । ତେଣୁ ଅଲୌକିକ ଚମ୍ପୁକାର ଓ ଆନନ୍ଦ ନେଇ କାବ୍ୟାବଳୀ କୁ କାବ୍ୟ କୁହା ଯାଉଥିଲା । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତି କାଳରେ ଲୋକମତ ହେଲା ମନୁଷ୍ୟ ତାର ଭାଷା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରେ ଗଦ୍ୟରେ ଓ ଭାବନା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରେ ପଦ୍ୟରେ । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ପଦ୍ୟରେ ଚିତ୍ରିତ ଅନୁଭୂତି କୁ କାବ୍ୟ କୁହା ଯାଉଛି । ଗଦ୍ୟ ଓ ପଦ୍ୟ ଉଭୟ ଚିତ୍ର କୁ ସାହିତ୍ୟ କୁହାଯାଏ ।

କାବ୍ୟ କୁ ଛଅ ଭାଗରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ କରାଯାଇଛି । ୧- ମହା କାବ୍ୟ ୨- ଖଣ୍ଡ କାବ୍ୟ ୩- କୋଶ କାବ୍ୟ ୪- ଗୀତି କାବ୍ୟ ୫- ନାଟ୍ୟ କାବ୍ୟ ୬- ଗୀତା କାବ୍ୟ ।

ମହା କାବ୍ୟ - ମହା କାବ୍ୟ ରେ କୌଣସି ଗୋଟିଏ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣାଙ୍ଗ ମହତ୍ କର୍ମ ର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ରହେ । ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର କର୍ମର ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ମଧ୍ୟ ରହେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ କର୍ମ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମହତ୍ କର୍ମ ରୁ ବିଚ୍ଛିନ୍ନ ନ ହୋଇ ତାର ଅଙ୍ଗରୂପେ ପ୍ରତିଭାତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷାରେ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଦେବତା ବା କୌଣସି ବିଷାତ ରାଜା ବା ରାଜବଂଶର ବୃତ୍ତାନ୍ତ କୁ ନେଇ ମହାକାବ୍ୟ ରଚିତ ହୁଏ । ସର୍ଗର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଅଠରୁ ଅଧିକ ହେବା ଉଚିତ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ରାମାୟଣ ଓ ମହାଭାରତ ଆଦି କାବ୍ୟ ମହାକାବ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ରେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ । ବିଚିତ୍ର ରାମାୟଣ ଓ ବୈଦେହୀଶବିଳାସ ଛାନ୍ଦରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ମହାକାବ୍ୟ କୁହାଯିବ ।

ଖଣ୍ଡକାବ୍ୟ - କୌଣସି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିର ଜୀବନ ର ଗୋଟିଏ ଘଟଣା ବା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ କୁ ଅବଲମ୍ବନ କରି ଯେଉଁ କାବ୍ୟ ରଚିତ ହୁଏ ତାକୁ ଖଣ୍ଡକାବ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । ଖଣ୍ଡକାବ୍ୟ ରେ ସର୍ଗ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଆଠ ରୁ ଅଧିକ ନୁହେଁ । ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଭାଗା, ନନ୍ଦିକେଶରୀ ଓ ଲାବଣ୍ୟବତୀ ଆଦି ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ କୁ ଖଣ୍ଡକାବ୍ୟ କୁହାଯାଏ ।

କୋଷକାବ୍ୟ - ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବିଷୟରେ ରଚିତ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପଦ୍ୟର ଏକତ୍ର ସମାବେଶ କୁ କୋଷକାବ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । ଏଥିରେ ଖଣ୍ଡ ଗୀତି କବିତା, ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶପଦୀ ଓ ସାଧାରଣ କବିତା ଥାଏ । ଇଂରେଜୀ ଭାଷାରେ **Sonnet (poem of 14 lines)** ଅନୁକରଣରେ ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶପଦୀ କବିତା ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବି ମାନେ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି । ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶପଦୀ କବିତା କୌଣସି ବିଷୟର ସାଧାରଣ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଆଠ ଚରଣରେ, ଚରମ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା

(Climax) ଚାରି ଚରଣରେ ଓ କବିଙ୍କ ଉପସଂହାର ଦୁଇ ଚରଣରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ହୁଏ । ଭକ୍ତ କବି ମଧୁସୂଦନ ବହୁତ ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶପଦୀ କବିତା ରଚନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ପଣ୍ଡିତ ନୀଳକଣ୍ଠ 'କୋଣାର୍କେ' ଆଦି ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥରେ ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦଶ ପଦୀ କବିତା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଛନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ 'କୋଣାର୍କେ' କୋଷକାବ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ । କୁନ୍ତଳା କୁମାରୀ ସାବତ ଛାନ୍ଦ 'ଅର୍ଚ୍ଚନା' ଓ କବି ପଦ୍ମଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାଏକ ଛାନ୍ଦ 'ପଦ୍ମପାଖୁଡ଼ା' କୋଷକାବ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ ।

ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟ - ନୃତ୍ୟ ବା ବାଦ୍ୟ ର ତାଳର ଅନୁରୂପ ଛନ୍ଦରେ ସଙ୍ଗତ ର ମୁର୍ଚ୍ଛନା ସହ ରଚିତ କାବ୍ୟକୁ ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । ଏଥିରେ କୌଣସି ଏକ ଦୀର୍ଘ ଅନୁଭୂତି ରଚିତ ଥାଏ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅନୁଭୂତି ଖଣ୍ଡ କବିତାରେ ଚିତ୍ରିତ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏକ ବିଷୟ ମୂଳକ । ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକର ଏକତ୍ର ସମାବେଶ କୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟ କୁହାଯାଏ । କୁନ୍ତଳା କୁମାରୀଙ୍କର 'ପ୍ରେମ ଚିନ୍ତାମଣି' ଖଣ୍ଡିତ ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟ । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳରେ ପୁସ୍ତକ ପ୍ରଚଳନ ନ ଥିବାରୁ ଲୋକମାନେ କବିତା ସବୁ ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ମନେ ରଖୁଥିଲେ । ସଙ୍ଗତର ଆବେଗ ଓ ସ୍ଵରର ମୁର୍ଚ୍ଛନା ଆବୃତ୍ତିକାର ଓ ଶୋଭା ଉଭୟଙ୍କର ଚିତ୍ତରେ ଅନୁରଣନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଥିଲା । ତେଣୁ ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟର ବହୁତ ଆଦର ଥିଲା । ପୂର୍ବେ ଗୀତିକାବ୍ୟ ଚଉତିଶା ନାମରେ ଅଭିହିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଏଥିରେ ଚଉତିଶିକା ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ସ୍ଵରକ ସମ୍ପର୍କିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ପ୍ରଥମ ସ୍ଵରକ ର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଚରଣ ଆଗରେ 'କ' ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ସ୍ଵରକର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଚରଣ ଆଗରେ 'ଖ' ଏହିପରି କ୍ରମାନ୍ୱୟରେ ଚଉତିଶିକା ବ୍ୟଞ୍ଜନ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ର ଲୋକପୀୟ ଚଉତିଶା ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବସାଦାସ ଛାନ୍ଦ 'କଳସା ଚଉତିଶା', ଭୂପତି ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଛାନ୍ଦ 'ଉତ୍ତର ଚଉତିଶା', ଦାନକୃଷ୍ଣ ଦାସ ଛାନ୍ଦ 'ଆର୍ତ୍ତତ୍ରାଣ ଚଉତିଶା', ଭକ୍ତ ଚରଣ ଛାନ୍ଦ 'ମନବୋଧ ଚଉତିଶା', ମାର୍କଣ୍ଡ ଦାସ ଛାନ୍ଦ 'କେଶବ କୋଇଲି ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ସ୍ମରଣୀୟ ।

ନାଟ୍ୟକାବ୍ୟ - ଗଦ୍ୟରେ ରଚିତ ନାଟକ କୁ ନାଟ୍ୟକାବ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ କାଳରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଗଦ୍ୟରେ ରଚିତ ନାଟକ ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ନାଟ୍ୟ ଲୀଳା ବା ସୁଆଙ୍ଗ ନାମରେ ଅଭିହିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ପାଣି ବା ବାଳକୃଷ୍ଣ ଛାନ୍ଦ ଦ୍ଵାରା ରଚିତ ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ନାଟ୍ୟ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଗୀତିନାଟ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ ।

ଗୀତାକାବ୍ୟ - ଗୁରୁ ଶିଷ୍ୟ ଜ୍ଞ ପ୍ରଣେତ୍ରର ଛଳରେ ପଦ୍ୟାକାରରେ ଯେଉଁ ଦାର୍ଶନିକ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ବାଖ୍ୟା ହେଉଥିଲା ତାକୁ ଗୀତାକାବ୍ୟ କୁହା ଯାଉଥିଲା । ଅର୍ଜୁନ-ଗୀତା ଓ ବିରାଟ-ଗୀତା ପ୍ରଭୃତି ଅନେକ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ଗୀତାକାବ୍ୟ ର ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ଏପରି ରଚନା ହୋଇନାହିଁ ।

କାବ୍ୟ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ବିଭକ୍ତ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କାବ୍ୟ ହେଉଛି ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ । ବହୁତ ଜଣ କାବ୍ୟ କୁ ଭ୍ରମରେ ପଦାବଳୀ ମଧ୍ୟ କହନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ଓ ପଦାବଳୀ ଶବ୍ଦ ଦୁଇଟିର ରୂପଗତ ସାମ୍ୟ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅର୍ଥଗତ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ରହିଛି । ଯେ କୌଣସି ବିଷୟ କୁ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର କରି ରଚନା ହୋଇଥିଲେ ପଦ୍ୟର ସମାହାର କୁ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ କୁହାଯାଏ । ତେଣୁ କାବ୍ୟ ର ଅନ୍ୟନାମ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପଦାବଳୀ କହିଲେ କେବଳ ଶୀଳୁଷ୍ଟ ଜ୍ଞ ବଜଲୀଳା ବିଷୟକ ରାଗ, ତାଳ ସମନ୍ୱିତ ଗାନୋପଯୋଗୀ କବିତା କୁ ବୁଝାଏ । ତେଣୁ ପଦାବଳୀ ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ର ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେ କୌଣସି ପଦ୍ୟାବଳୀ ପଦାବଳୀ ନୁହେଁ ।

ପଦାବଳୀ ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର ଏକ ବିଶେଷ ଅଂଶ ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ମୁଁ ଏ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରେ ପଦାବଳୀ ସଂପର୍କରେ କିଛି କହିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛି । ଧର୍ମ ପ୍ରଚାର ଭାଷା ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର ଉନ୍ନତି ଘଟାଏ । କାରଣ ଧର୍ମ ପ୍ରଚାରକ ମାନେ ସାଧାରଣ ଲୋକ ବୁଝିବା ଭାଷାରେ ଧର୍ମର ମର୍ମ ଲେଖି ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ମାନ ପ୍ରଣୟନ କରନ୍ତି । ବୌଦ୍ଧ, ଜୈନ, ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଓ ଅଲୋଖ ପ୍ରଭୃତି ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଧର୍ମ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସମୟରେ ପ୍ରଚାରିତ ହୋଇ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର ବିକାଶ ର ଅନୁକୂଳ ହୋଇଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଯେତେ ଧର୍ମ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ସଂବଳିତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଆବିଷ୍କୃତ ହୋଇଛି ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକ କେବଳ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଧର୍ମରେ ଯତିତ । କେତେକ ଭାବନ୍ତି ଚୈତନ୍ୟ ଜ୍ଞ ଦ୍ୱାରା ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଧର୍ମର ଉତ୍ପତ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାହା ସତ ନୁହେଁ । କାରଣ ଚୈତନ୍ୟ ଜ୍ଞ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଧର୍ମ ର ମୂଳଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ ଭାଗବତ ରଚିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ଚୈତନ୍ୟ ଜ୍ଞ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଜୟଦେବ ଗୀତ ଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ପଦାବଳୀ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷାରେ ରଚିତ ହୋଇ ପରେ ବ୍ରଜବୁଲି ଭାଷାରେ ପ୍ରସାର ଲାଭ କରିଥିଲା ।

'History of Brajabali Literature' ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥରେ ସୁକୁମାର ସେନ୍ କହିଛନ୍ତି ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଧର୍ମର ପ୍ରଚାର ପାଇଁ ପାଲି ଭାଷା ଯେପରି ମାଧ୍ୟମ ଥିଲା, ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଧର୍ମର ପ୍ରଚାର ପାଇଁ ବ୍ରଜବୁଲି ଭାଷା ସେପରି ମାଧ୍ୟମ ଥିଲା । ପରେ ପଦାବଳୀ ବଙ୍ଗଳା, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଭାଷାରେ ଲେଖା ହେଲା । ପୂର୍ବେ ସମାଲୋଚକ ମାନେ କେବଳ ବଙ୍ଗଳା ସାହିତ୍ୟ ରେ ପଦାବଳୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି ଦର୍ଶାଉଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଜୟଦେବ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବି ଭାବେ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ପାଇବା ଦିନ ଠାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରେ ପଦାବଳୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର ପ୍ରକାଶ ବିଷୟ ରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସମୀକ୍ଷକ ଗଣ ବହୁ ଯୁକ୍ତି ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା କରୁଛନ୍ତି ।

ଅତ୍ୟୁତାନ୍ତ ପ୍ରଥମ କରି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ରେ ପଦ-ପଦାବଳୀ ର ଶବ୍ଦ ବ୍ୟବହାର କଲେ । ପଦାବଳୀ ରଚନା କରିଥିବା ପ୍ରମୁଖ କବି ମାନେ ହେଲେ ମାଦବୀ ଦସୀ, ଭୃଗୁପତି ପଣ୍ଡିତ, ଯଦୁପତି, ଚାନ୍ଦକବି, ରାୟରାମାନନ୍ଦ, ଦାମୋଦର ଦାସ, ଚଂପତିରାୟ, ମୁରାରି ମିଶ୍ର, ବଳରାମ ଦାସ, ଓ ଲୋକନାଥ ଦାସ । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତି କାଳରେ ଦନାଇ ଦାସ ଜ୍ଞ ଗୋପୀଭାଷା, ଦେବ ଦୁର୍ଲଭ ଜ୍ଞ ରତ୍ନସ୍ୟ ମଞ୍ଜରୀ, ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ ଜ୍ଞ ରସକଲ୍ଲୋଳ, କବିସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସଦାନନ୍ଦ ବ୍ରହ୍ମା ଜ୍ଞ 'କଳା କୌତୁକ' ଆଦି ପଦାବଳୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ଆଦୃତ ହୋଇଥିଲା ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସର୍ବଧର୍ମର ସମନ୍ୱୟର କ୍ଷେତ୍ର । ଓଡ଼ିଶା କୁ ଯେଉଁ ସବୁ ଧର୍ମର ଲୋକମାନେ ଧର୍ମ ପ୍ରଚାର ପାଇଁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି ସମସ୍ତେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଜ୍ଞ ନିଜର କରିନେବା ପାଇଁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି ବୌଦ୍ଧଜ୍ଞ ବୁଦ୍ଧ, ଜୈନଜ୍ଞ ଜୀନ, ଶାକ୍ତଜ୍ଞ ଭୈରବ ଓ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଜ୍ଞ ବିଷ୍ଣୁ । ମତ୍ସ୍ୟ, କଚ୍ଛପ, ବରାହ, ନୃସିଂହ, ବାମନ, ପର୍ଶୁରାମ, ରାମ, ବଳରାମ, ବୁଦ୍ଧ ଓ କଳ୍କୀ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଜ୍ଞର ଦଶଅବତାର । ତେଣୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ମାନେ ରାମ, କୃଷ୍ଣ ଓ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଜ୍ଞ ମଧ୍ୟରେ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରଭେଦ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରି ନାହାନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଦାବଳୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ କେବଳ ଶୀଳୁଷ୍ଟ ଜ୍ଞ ବଜଲୀଳା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସୀମିତ ନ ରହ କୃଷ୍ଣଲୀଳା, ରାମଲୀଳା ଓ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଜ୍ଞ ଲୀଳା କୁ ଉପଜୀବ୍ୟ କରି ବହୁ ବ୍ୟାପକ ହୋଇଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଇତିହାସ ରେ ରାମ, କୃଷ୍ଣ ଓ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଜ୍ଞର ସଗୁଣ ଲୀଳା କୁ ନେଇ ରଚିତ ରାଗରାଗିଣୀ ଯୁକ୍ତ ପଦ ମାନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଦାବଳୀ ଭାବେ ଏବଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିର୍ଗୁଣ ଲୀଳା କୁ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର କରି ରଚିତ ପଦମାନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭଜନ ଭାବରେ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ଲାଭ କରିଥିଲା । ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ଭଗବାନ ଜ୍ଞ ସଗୁଣ ଲୀଳା ମଧ୍ୟ ଭଜନରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଯୁଗରେ ପୁସ୍ତକ ଅଭାବରୁ ଯେପରି ଗୀତକାବ୍ୟ ସମାଜରେ ବେଶୀ ଆଦୃତ ହୋଇଥିଲା, ଆଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ସମୟ ଅଭାବରୁ ସେପରି ଭଜନ ସମାଜରେ ଆଦୃତ ହୋଇଛି । ଲୋକଜ୍ଞର ବହି ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ସମୟ ନାହିଁ, ତେଣୁ ଅନ୍ୟ କାମ କଲାବେଳେ ଟେପ୍ ଲଗାଇ ଭଜନ ଶୁଣୁଛନ୍ତି ।

ଦୀନକୃଷ୍ଣ, ଉପେନ୍ଦ୍ରଭଞ୍ଜ ଓ ଅଭିମନ୍ୟୁ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ରୀତି ଯୁଗୀୟ କବିମାନେ କେତକ ହୃଦୟସ୍ପର୍ଶୀ ପଦାବଳୀ ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେମାନେ ପଦାବଳୀକାର ଅପେକ୍ଷା କାବ୍ୟ ସୂକ୍ଷ୍ମ ରୂରେ ଅଧିକ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତି ପାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସେମାନେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ରୀତିରେ କାବ୍ୟ ରଚନା କରି କାବ୍ୟରେ ରୀତି ଯୁଗ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଦାବଳୀ ସାହିତ୍ୟ କୁ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ରୂପରେଖା ଦେଇ ତାହାକୁ ଉଚ୍ଚକୋଟୀର କରିବାରେ

କବିସ୍ୱୟଂ ବଳଦେବ, ଭକ୍ତକବି ଗୋପାଳକୃଷ୍ଣ, କବି ବନମାଳି, ଗୌରହରି ଓ ଗୌରଚରଣ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ଜ୍ଞର ଅବଦାନ ଚୀର ସ୍ମରଣୀୟ । ଏମାନେ ଯଥାର୍ଥରେ ସଙ୍ଗତ ର ସ୍ୱର ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନା ଓ କବିତା ର ଭାବ ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନାର ମଧୁର ସମନ୍ୱୟରେ ପଦାବଳୀ ରଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ତେଣୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ର ଇତିହାସ ରେ ଏମାନେ ସଙ୍ଗତ ଯୁଗର ସୁଖ ଭାବେ ସ୍ୱୀକୃତ ।

ପଦାବଳୀ ଯୁଗର କବିମାନେ ସ୍ୱକୀୟ ରଚନାରେ ଭକ୍ତି ର ପରମ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ କୁ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରି ନାହାନ୍ତି ସତ, କିନ୍ତୁ ନିର୍ମଳ ଶାନ୍ତରସ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ମଧୁର ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛନା ଭିତରେ ଏମାନେ ସ୍ୱକୀୟ ଭକ୍ତି ଗଦ୍ ଗଦ୍ ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ଅଭିମାନ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାରେ କୃତତ୍ୱ ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଉଦାହରଣ ସ୍ୱରୂପ କୃଷ୍ଣ ଜ୍ଞ ମୁରଲୀ ଧ୍ୱନି ରାଧା ଜ୍ଞ ମନରେ ଯେଉଁ ପୁଲକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିଛି ତାକୁ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରି କବି ଗୋପାଳକୃଷ୍ଣ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି ‘ ଶ୍ୟମ ସୁନ୍ଦର ମୁରଲୀ ନିନାଦ ଜାତି ନେବ ବୋଲି ମଣିଲି, ଗୁରୁଜନ ସଙ୍ଗେ କଥା ପରସଙ୍ଗେ ବସିଥିଲି କି ତମକି ପଡ଼ିଲି, ପୁରିଲା ପୁଲକ ଦେହ ଗୋଟା ଯାକ ବିନା ଶୀତରେ ମୁଁ ଥରିଲି ’ । କୃଷ୍ଣଜ୍ଞର ଅପରୂପ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ରାଧା ଜ୍ଞ କିପରି ମୁଁ କରିଛି ତାହା ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିବାକୁ ଯାଇ କବି ବନମାଳୀ ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି ‘ ଶ୍ୟମ ନାଗର ହେ, ଏ ବେଶ ହୋଇବ ନାହିଁ, ଏ ବେଶ ହୋଇଲେ ପାଷାଣ ତରଳେ ଯୁବତୀ ବଞ୍ଚିବେ କାହିଁ ’ । ଆଉ ଏକ ପଦାବଳୀରେ କବି ବନମାଳୀ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଜ୍ଞ ଆର୍ତ୍ତ ଜଣେଇଛନ୍ତି ‘ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ହେ କିଛି ମାଗୁନାହିଁ ତୋତେ, ଧନ ମାଗୁ ନାହିଁ ଜନ ମାଗୁ ନାହିଁ, ମାଗୁଛି କରୁଣା ବାଲିରୁ ହାତେ ’ । ତାଙ୍କର ମନସ୍କାମନା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନହେବାରୁ ପୁଣି ଅଭିମାନ ଭରା କଷ୍ଟରେ କହିଛନ୍ତି ‘ ଦୀନବନ୍ଧୁ ଦଇତାରି ଦୁଃଖ ନଗଲା ମୋହରି, ହେଲେ କି ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଚିତ୍ତ ନୀଳାଚଳେ ବିଜେ କରି ’ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପଦାବଳୀ ରଚୟିକା ମାନେ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଜ୍ଞ କୃଷ୍ଣ ଭାବି ନିଜ ନିଜ ର ଅନବଦ୍ୟ ଭକ୍ତି ଅର୍ପଣ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଯୁଗରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କାବ୍ୟ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ନାମ ଧାରଣ କରି ଲୋକପ୍ରିୟତା ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଛି । ତେଣୁ ଯେତେ ଯୁଗ ବଦଳିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପୁରାତନ କାବ୍ୟ ରଚୟିତା ଜ୍ଞର ଅବଦାନ ବିଶ୍ୱ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ସବୁବେଳେ ଚୀର ସ୍ମରଣୀୟ ହୋଇ ରହିବ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ କ୍ରିୟାପଦ ଓ ଭାବ

ବିଜୟମୋହନ ମିଶ୍ର

ଲିଙ୍କନ, ମାସାରୁସେଟ୍ସ, ଯୁକ୍ତରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଆମେରିକା

ଭାଷାରେ ଦୁଇ ପ୍ରକାରର ଭାବ ଅଛି । ଗୋଟିଏ ସଂଜ୍ଞା ଭାବ, ଅନ୍ୟଟି କ୍ରିୟା ଭାବ । ସଂଜ୍ଞା ଭାବ ବସ୍ତୁବାଚକ - ବସ୍ତୁର ଆକାର, ପ୍ରକାର ଓ ବିଶେଷତ୍ୱ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବା ଲାଗି ଶବ୍ଦରେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଯାଇଥାଏ । ‘ପାଠ’ ହେଲା ପଢ଼ା, ‘ପାଠୁଆ’ - ଯେ ପଢ଼ିଥାଏ, ‘ପାଠୁଆଣୀ’ - ପାଠୁଆର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ‘ପାଠୁଆପଣିଆ’ - ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିଥିବା ଲୋକର ବ୍ୟବହାର, ‘ପାଠୁଣିଆ’ - ପାଠ ପଢ଼ା ଲୋକ ପ୍ରତି ଦ୍ୱିରୁଚ୍ଛି - ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଏ ପ୍ରକାରର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ କଥାକୁ ସଂକ୍ଷେପ କରେ । କଥୁତ ଭାଷା ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଏ ପ୍ରକାରର ସଂଜ୍ଞା ପ୍ରୟୋଗର ଗବେଷଣା ନିହାତି ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ କ୍ରିୟାପଦରେ ଭାବ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିବା ଆମର ଅଭିପ୍ରାୟ । କ୍ରିୟା ପଦରେ ଭାବ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟବାଚକ ବା କାଳବାଚକ । କାର୍ଯ୍ୟର ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତା ବା ଅସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତା କ୍ରିୟାପଦରେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପ୍ରକାଶିତ ହୋଇଥାଏ । ସେ ପରି ମଧ୍ୟ କାଳ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ । କାଳରେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ, ଅତୀତ ଓ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ସହ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ, ସମ୍ଭାବନା, ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା, ଆଦେଶ ବା ଉପଦେଶ ମଧ୍ୟ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ । ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷାରେ କାଳଯୁକ୍ତ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ‘ଲ କାର’ କୁହାଯାଇଅଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ କ୍ରିୟାପଦର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ‘ଭାବ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ’ ବୋଲି କୁହାଯାଇପାରେ । କ୍ରିୟାପଦର ଭାବପ୍ରୟୋଗରୁ ଭାଷାର ମୌଳିକତା ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରାଯାଇପାରେ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଅନେକ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଭାଷାରେ ମିଳିଥାଏ, କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରାକୃତ ବା ସଂସ୍କୃତରେ ମିଳୁନାହିଁ । ଏ ଦିଗରେ ଗବେଷଣା କରି ତଥ୍ୟ ନିରୂପଣ ଲାଗି ଆହ୍ୱାନ କରିବା ଏହି ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ।

ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ଭାବ

‘ପୂର୍ବ ଦିଗରେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଦୟ ହୁଏ’ ବାକ୍ୟରେ ‘ଉଦୟ’ ହେଲା ଗୋଟିଏ ଘଟଣା, ‘ହୁଏ’ ହେଲା କ୍ରିୟା । ନିତ୍ୟନୈମିତ୍ତିକ ଅଭ୍ୟାସକୁ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବାର ଏହା ହେଲା ଏକ ବାକ୍ୟ । ସଂସ୍କୃତରେ ‘ଉଦୟ ହୁଏ’ କୁ ଏକାଠି କରି ‘ଉଦୟତି’ କରାଯାଏ, କିମ୍ପା ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟୋଦୟ ହୁଏ’ ରୁ ‘ଉଦତି’ ଶବ୍ଦ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଯାଏ । ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟୋଦୟ’ ଗୋଟିଏ ସଂଜ୍ଞା, ଏଥିରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ । କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଲାବେଳକୁ କର୍ତ୍ତା ହେଲେ ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ’, ଯିଏ କି ‘ଉଦୟ’ ହେବେ । ଏ ପ୍ରକାର ପ୍ରୟୋଗରେ ‘ଉଦୟ’ ହେଲା ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ସଂଜ୍ଞା - ଭାବନାର ‘ଉଦୟ’, ଶୋକର ‘ଉଦୟ’, ପ୍ରେମର ‘ଉଦୟ’, ଆଶାର ‘ଉଦୟ’ - ଏ ସମସ୍ତ ‘ଉଦୟ’ ର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ । ସଂସ୍କୃତରେ ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଉଦୟ’ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ନାହିଁ । ସଂସ୍କୃତ ଭାଷା ଅନୁସାରେ ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଦୟ ହୁଏ’ ର ଭାବାର୍ଥ ହେଲା ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଦିତ ହୋଇଥାଏ’ । ଆଗରୁ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନ ଥିଲା, ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅଛି । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ‘ଉଦିତ’ ହୋଇଛି । କିପରି ହେଲା, ତା’ ର ପ୍ରକାଶ ନାହିଁ । ଏହା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ, ଏହା ଏକ ଘଟଣା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଦୟ ହୁଏ’ ବାକ୍ୟରେ ‘ଉଦୟ’ ଗୋଟିଏ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ‘ଉଦୟ’ ରେ ଉଷା, ପ୍ରଭାତ, ବାଳସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ - ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝାଯାଏ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ‘ଉଦୟ’ ର କାଳ ବା ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଅଛି । ଗୋଟିଏ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ରକ୍ଷିତ ଆଲୋକକୁ ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ’ ର ‘ଉଦୟ’ ର ସଂକେତ ବୋଲି କୁହାଯାଏ । ଏହା ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସଂସ୍କୃତରେ ନାହିଁ । ସଂସ୍କୃତରେ ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟୋଦୟ’ ଏକ ସଂଜ୍ଞା । ଏହା ଏକ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ, ଏକ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ନୁହେଁ । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟୋଦୟ କୁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଆକାରରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିବା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ଶୈଳୀ । ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଦୟ ହୁଏ’ ରୁ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ପ୍ରଥମ ରକ୍ଷି ପୃଥିବୀରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ବୋଲି କୁହାଯାଇପାରେ । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଦୟ ହେଲାପରେ କୋଣାର୍କ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ବିରାଜମାନ କରିବା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଚାରିତ୍ରିକ କାହାଣୀ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ’ ଜୀବନ୍ତ । ତେଣୁ ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଦୟ ହୁଏ’ ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ପ୍ରଥମ ରକ୍ଷି ପ୍ରତିଭାତ ହୁଏ’ । ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉର୍ବ’ ବୋଲି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାରେ ପ୍ରଚଳନ ଅଛି । ‘ଉର୍ବ’ ଏବଂ ‘ଉଦୟ ହୁଏ’ ଭିତରେ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ଅଛି । ‘ଉର୍ବ’ ଏକ ନୈମିତ୍ତିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ, କିନ୍ତୁ ‘ଉଦୟ ହୁଏ’ ଏକ ବିଶେଷ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ । ‘ଉଦୟ’ ରେ ଚକ୍ଷୁ ସହ କିରଣ ର ସଂଯୋଗ ହୋଇଥାଏ ଯାହା ଫଳରେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟକୁ ନମସ୍କାର କରାଯାଇପାରେ । କୋଣାର୍କ ମନ୍ଦିରର ପୂଜା ପଦ୍ଧତିର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୃତ୍ତି ଏ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଅନୁସନ୍ଧାନ କରିବା ବିଧେୟ ।

ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଭାବ

‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଦୟ ହେଉଅଛି’ ଏବଂ ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉତ୍ତର’ – ଉଭୟର ସମାନ ଅର୍ଥ । ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗରେ ‘ଉ’ ର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ହୁଏ । ‘କରୁଛି’, ‘ପଢ଼ୁଛି’, ‘ଯାଉଛି’, ‘ଖାଉଛି’ – ଇତ୍ୟାଦିରେ ଘଟଣା ଘଟୁଅଛି । ସେହି ପ୍ରକାରରେ ଘଟଣା ସମାପନରେ ‘ଇ’ ର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ । ‘କରିଛି’, ‘ପଢ଼ିଛି’, ‘ଯାଇଛି’, ‘ଖାଇଛି’ – ଇତ୍ୟାଦିର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ହୁଏ । ତେଣୁ ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉଦୟ ହୋଇଅଛି’ କୁହାଯାଏ, ଯାହା କି ‘ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଉତ୍ତର’ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସମାନ । ‘ଉ’ ଓ ‘ଇ’ ର ପ୍ରୟୋଗରେ ସମୟର ବ୍ୟବଧାନ । ‘କରୁଥାଏ’, ‘ପଢ଼ୁଥାଏ’, ‘ଯାଉଥାଏ’, ‘ଖାଉଥାଏ’ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ‘ଉ’ ପ୍ରୟୋଗ । ‘କରିଥାଏ’, ‘ପଢ଼ିଥାଏ’, ‘ଯାଇଥାଏ’, ‘ଖାଇଥାଏ’ – ‘ଇ’ ର ନମୁନା । ‘କରୁଛି’ ଓ ‘କରୁଥାଏ’ ଭିତରେ ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ହେଲା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଅବଗତି ଏବଂ ସମ୍ପୃତି । ତେଣୁ ଏଥିରେ ସ୍ଥାନର ପ୍ରଭେଦ । ‘ରାମ ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଉଛି’ – ଏକ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷଦର୍ଶୀ ବିବରଣୀ, ‘ରାମ ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଉଥାଏ’ ର ଅର୍ଥ ‘ରାମ ଗାଁକୁ ଯିବା ଆସିବା କରୁଥାଏ’ । କଥାରେ ସତ୍ୟତା ଅଛି, କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷରେ ଘଟୁନାହିଁ । ଅନ୍ୟ ପକ୍ଷରେ ‘ରାମ ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଇଛି’ ଗୋଟିଏ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଘଟଣା । ‘ରାମ ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଇଥାଏ’ କହିଲେ ଏକ ଘଟଣାର ଅନୁଭୂତି । ଏଥିରେ ‘ଆସିବା’ କିମ୍ବା ‘ନିମିତ୍ତ’ ଅର୍ଥ ନାହିଁ । ଏହି ବାକ୍ୟରେ ଅର୍ଥ ବିଶେଷତ୍ୱ ନାହିଁ, ଏହା କେବଳ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗମୂଳକ । ‘ରାମ ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଇ ଫେରିଥାଏ’ ରେ ‘ରାମ’ କର୍ତ୍ତା । ଏ ବାକ୍ୟ ପରେ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ଅଛି । ଅନ୍ୟ କିଛି ରାମର କାହାଣୀ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ଆଗ୍ରହ ତିଆରି କରିଛି ।

ଅତୀତ ଭାବ

ଅତୀତ ଅର୍ଥରେ ‘ରାମ ଗାଁକୁ ଗଲା’ କୁହାଯାଏ । ଅନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରକାରେ ‘ରାମ ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଉଥିଲା’ ଓ ‘ରାମ ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଇଥିଲା’ ର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ହୁଏ । ‘ଯାଉଥାଏ’ ଏବଂ ‘ଯାଉଥିଲା’ ରେ ଅର୍ଥ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ କେବଳ ସମୟର ଫରକ । ‘ଯାଉଥାଏ’ ଠାରୁ ‘ଯାଉଥିଲା’ ଅଧ କିଛି ଅତୀତ । ସେହି ପ୍ରକାରେ ‘ଯାଇଥାଏ’ ଏବଂ ‘ଯାଇଥିଲା’ ର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ । କଥା ହିସାବରେ ଏମାନେ ଅଦଳବଦଳ ହୋଇପାରନ୍ତି, କେବଳ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗରେ ପ୍ରଭେଦ ହୋଇଥାଏ ।

ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ

ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗରେ ‘ରାମ ଗାଁକୁ ଯିବ’, ‘ଯାଉଥିବ’, ‘ଯାଇଥିବ’ ଇତ୍ୟାଦିର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳୁଛି । ସେହିପରି ‘ଯାଇପାରେ’, ‘ଯାଉଥାଇପାରେ’, ‘ଯାଇଥାଇପାରେ’ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି କୁହାଯାଏ । ଏ ସମସ୍ତ ସମ୍ଭାବନା ଅର୍ଥରେ ବ୍ୟବହାର ହୁଏ, କିନ୍ତୁ ‘ଉ’ ଓ ‘ଇ’ ର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ପୂର୍ବପରି । ‘ଯାଉଥାଇପାରେ’ ର ଅର୍ଥ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଘଟଣା ଚାଲିଥିବର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ଅଛି, ‘ଯାଇଥାଇପାରେ’ ରେ ସମ୍ଭାବ୍ୟ ଘଟଣା ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ହୋଇଛି ।

‘ଉ’ ଓ ‘ଇ’ ର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ

କେବଳ ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀ ଭାଷାକୁ ଛାଡ଼ିଦେଲେ ଅନ୍ୟ ପଡୋଶୀ ଭାଷା ମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗ କିମ୍ବା ସମୟ ଅର୍ଥରେ ‘ଉ’ ଓ ‘ଇ’ ର ପ୍ରଚଳନ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ । ଓଡ଼ିଆର ‘କରୁଛି’ ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀରେ ‘କରୁଛେ’, ଏବଂ ଓଡ଼ିଆର ‘କରିଛି’ ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀରେ ‘କରିଛେ’ ହୁଏ । ବଙ୍ଗଳା ଭାଷାରେ ‘କରୁଛି’ ଜାଗାରେ ‘କୋରୁଛି’, ଏବଂ ‘କରିଛି’ ଜାଗାରେ ‘କୋରେଛି’ ର ବ୍ୟବହାର ହୁଏ । ହିନ୍ଦୀରେ ‘କରୁଥାଏ’, ‘କରିଥାଏ’ ର ପ୍ରଚଳନ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳେ । ଆସାମୀରେ ଅସମାପିକାଟି ହେଲା ‘କରିସ୍’ । ସମାପିକାର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ କର୍ତ୍ତୃବାଚକ ନ ହୋଇ କର୍ମବାଚକ- ‘କୋରା ହଲ୍’ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ।

ଶେଷ କଥା

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାର ମୌଳିକତାର ଆଲୋଚନା ଆମ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ଥିଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଆର ବ୍ୟାକରଣଗତ ବାକ୍ୟବିନ୍ୟାସ ଏବଂ କାଳଗତ ସ୍ୱର ସଂଯୋଗର ଗବେଷଣା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ବୋଲି ଆମର ମତ ।

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(ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରେ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ୨୦୧୭ ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ ୨୭-୨୭ ତାରିଖର ତୃତୀୟ ଜାତୀୟ ଭାଷା ସମ୍ମିଳନୀରେ ପଠିତ)

ନାଲିକୋଠା ବନାମ କଳାମିଛ

ଶାନ୍ତନୁ କୁମାର ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ

ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ବିଶ୍ଵଯୁଦ୍ଧ ସମୟ । ବଜାରରେ ଧଳା ଫୁଲସକ୍ୟାପ କାଗଜ ମିଳୁନଥାଏ । କେବଳ ମିଳୁଥାଏ ମାଟିଆ ରଙ୍ଗର ଏକ ପ୍ରକାର ମୋଟା କାଗଜ ଯାହା ଉପରେ କଲମ ମୂନ ରଖିବା ମାତ୍ରେ କଲମରୁ କାଳି ଶୋଷି ହେଇଯାଏ ବୁଟିଂ ପେପର ଭଳି । ସେ ଜିନିଷ ବି ଦୁଷ୍ଟାପ୍ୟ । ମିଳିଲେ ମିଳୁଥିଲା ଚୋରାରେ । କେବଳ କାଗଜ ନୁହେଁ—ଚିନି କିରାସିନି ଅଟା ଏମିତିକି ଲୁଣ ବି ! ସବୁ ଦୁଷ୍ଟାପ୍ୟ ଆଉ ଅମୂଲ୍ୟ ମୂଲ ।

ସେଦିନ ଆମକୁ କ୍ଲାସରେ ଜଣେଇ ଦିଆଗଲା - ଆଗାମି ସପ୍ତାହରେ କ୍ଲାସଉଠା ପରୀକ୍ଷା ହବ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ପିଲାମାନେ ନିଜନିଜ ଘରୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକେ ଚାରିଚାରି ଫର୍ଦ୍ଦ ଲେଖା କାଗଜ ଆଣିବେ । ତା ସହିତ ଆଣିବେ କଲମ ଓଆମ କ୍ଲାସରେ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପଢ଼ାନ୍ତି ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଜୟକୃଷ୍ଣ ମିଶ୍ର । ତାଙ୍କ ପିଠିରେ ପ୍ରବଳ ଯାଦୁ ହେଇଥାଏ ସେତେବେଳେ । ତେଣୁ ହାତରେ ଧରିଥିବା ଅଢେଇ ଫୁଟ ଲମ୍ବର ବେତ ମୂନରେ ସାର୍ ପ୍ରାୟ ସବୁବେଳେ ନିଜ ପିଠିକୁ ରାଖିଥାନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେଇ ରାମ୍ପିବା ଭିତରେ ସେ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପଢ଼େଇ ପଢ଼େଇ ଥରେ ଥରେ ଏଭଳି ଭାବବିହ୍ୱଳ ହୋଇ ଉଠନ୍ତି ଯେ ସେ କାନ୍ଦନ୍ତି ଆଉ ତା ସହିତ ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଛି ଥରେ ଜୟସାର ଆମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ମଧୁସୂଦନ ରାଓଙ୍କର ଗୋଟିଏ କବିତା ପଢ଼େଇଥିଲେ । କବିତାର ପ୍ରଥମ ପଦ “ରେ ଆମ୍ଭ ନିଦ୍ରା ପରିହରି ଫେଡ଼ି ଚିତ୍କାର ଲୋଚନ / କରକର ନିରୀକ୍ଷଣ / ନିସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ଜୀବନ ସ୍ରୋତ ଧାର୍ତ୍ତି କିପରି / ଭେଟିବାକୁ ମୃତ୍ୟୁସିନ୍ଧୁ କରାଳ ଲହରି” ର ଅର୍ଥ ବୁଝେଇବାକୁ ଯାଇ ହଠାତ କାହିଁକି ତାଙ୍କ କଣ୍ଠ ଥରି ଗଲା । ସେ ଅଟକି ଗଲେ । ପରେ ପରେ ସାରଙ୍କ ଆଖିରୁ ଧାରଧାର ଲୁହ ବୋହିବାକୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା । ଆମେ ପିଲାମାନେ ସେ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଦେଖି ସ୍ଵଭାବିକ ଭାବେ ବିଚଳିତ ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲୁ । ମୋ ପାଖ ସିଟରେ ବସିଥାଏ ସାଙ୍କ ଦୁଃଖିଣୀମାମ । ସେ ମୋ କାନରେ ଫିସଫିସ କରି କହିଲା—ଜାଣିଚୁ? ଜୟସାରଙ୍କ ପାଠ ବର୍ଷର ଝିଅଟିଏ ଅଛି । ତା ଧୂଆ ଭାରି ଖରାପ ବୋଲି ଶୁଣିଥିଲି । ବୋଧେ ତାର କଣ ଦୁଃଖିଣୀମାମ କଥା ପଦକ ଶୁଣିବା ମାତ୍ରେ ମୋ ଦେହରେ ବିଜୁଳି ଭଳି ଗୋଟାଏ ସକ ଲାଗିଲା । ଅଳ୍ପ କେଇମାସ ତଳେ ମୋ ମା ମରିଯାଇଥିଲେ ।

ମୃତ୍ୟୁଶଯ୍ୟାରେ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା ବେଳେ ଥରେ ସେ ମତେ ପାଖକୁ ଡାକି କହିଲେ, “ମୁଁ ଚାଲିଗଲା ପରେ ତୁ କାନ୍ଦିବୁ ନାହିଁ ବାପା! ମୁଁ ତୋ ପାଖରେ ବରାବର ରହିଚି ରହିଥିବି ଚିରକାଳ!” ସେ ଦିନ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ କଥା ଶୁଣି କାନ୍ଦି ନଥିଲି । କହିଥିଲି, “ ତୁ ମରିବୁ ନାହିଁ, ଜମାରୁ ମରିବୁ ନାହିଁ । କାରଣ ମଣିଷ ଅମର- ଭାଗବତରେ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ ଉଦ୍ଧବଙ୍କୁ କହିନଥିଲେ? ନାମ-ନାମୀ କଥା? ଅଜା ବୁଝେଇ ନଥିଲେ ସେଦିନ ତତେ? ମୁଁ ସବୁ ଶୁଣିଚି ଯେ । ତୋ ନାଁ ତ କୃଷ୍ଣପ୍ରିୟା । ତୁ କଣ ମରିପାରୁ?” କିନ୍ତୁ ଜୟସାରଙ୍କ ପାଠ ବର୍ଷର ଝିଅର ମରିଯିବା ସମ୍ଭାବନା କଥା ଦୁଃଖିଣୀମାମ ମୁହଁରୁ ବାହାରିବା କ୍ଷଣି ମୁଁ ଆଉ ନିଜକୁ ସମ୍ଭାଳି ନପାରି ଭେଁ କିନା କାନ୍ଦି ଉଠିଲି । ମୋ କାନ୍ଦଟା କେମିତି କାହିଁକି ମୁହଁଭାଙ୍ଗି ସାରା କ୍ଲାସକୁ ସଂଚରି ଗଲା । ପରେ ପରେ ସାରା କ୍ଲାସରେ ଉଠିଲା ଗୋଟାଏ ସମ୍ମିଳିତ କାନ୍ଦଣା । ସମସ୍ତେ ସକସକ ହେଇ କାନ୍ଦି ଉଠିଲେ । ତା ପରେ ଉଠିଲା ଏକା ସ୍ଵରରେ ଏତେ ଗୁଡ଼ାଏ ପିଲା ରାହାଧରି କାନ୍ଦିବା ଯୋଗୁ ଅନ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ତାର ପ୍ରଭାବ ପଡ଼ିଲା କି କଅଣ! ସେ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ପିଲାମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ କାନ୍ଦିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଲେ ।

ସେତେବେଳେ ଆମ ସ୍କୁଲର ହେଡ଼ମାଷ୍ଟର ଥିଲେ ଶ୍ରୀ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ରଥ । ସେ ଜଣେ ରାହୁଆ ଲୋକ । ସେ କଦାପି କାହାର କାନ୍ଦ ସହି ପାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ କେହି ପିଲା କାନ୍ଦିବା ଦେଖିଲେ ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ସଦା ଜାଗ୍ରତ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଲମ୍ବା ବେତ ବାହାର କରନ୍ତି । ପିଲାକୁ ସାବଧାନ କରିଦେବା ପାଇଁ ଆମ ଘୋଷଣା କରନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କ ନୀତି, “ଦେଖ ବାଳକ! ଝିଅପିଲା ମାନେ କାନ୍ଦନ୍ତି । ତମେ ଜଣେ ବାଳକ । ତୁମକୁ କ୍ରନ୍ଦନ ଶୋଭା ପାଏନା । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ କାନ୍ଦ ବନ୍ଦ କର । ନଚେତ ଏଇ ଦେଖୁଚୁ ଏ ବେତ!” କିନ୍ତୁ ପିଲାଟି ହେଡ଼ମାଷ୍ଟର ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖରଙ୍କ ଭୀମକାୟ ଶରୀର ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କର ରାହୁଆ ପାଟିରେ ଏତେ ମାତ୍ରାରେ ଡରିଯାଏ ଯେ ସେ ରୁପ ହବ କଣ

ଓଲଟି ଚିରଚିରେଇ ଉଠେ ଭୂତ ଦେଖିଲା ଭଳି । ପରେପରେ ଯାହା ଘଟେ ସେ କଥା ଦେଖଣାହାରିଏ ଦେଖନ୍ତି ଆଉ ଭୋଗିଲା ବାଲାଲ **ସ୍ମୃତିରେ** ସେ ଅନୁଭବ ଚିରଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଲିପିବଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ରହିଯାଏ ।

ସେଦିନ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ସମବେତ କାନ୍ଦଣା ହେତୁମାଷ୍ଟରଙ୍କୁ କିପରି ବ୍ୟଥୁତ କରିଥିବ ତାର ଚିପ୍ପଣୀ ଦେବା ଏଠାରେ ଅବାନ୍ଧର । କେବଳ ଏତିକି କହିଲେ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ହେବ ଯେ ମୋର ପିଠିରେ ସେଦିନର ନୋଳାଫଟା ଚିହ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଦେଖୁ ସେତେବେଳେ ଆମ ଘରର ଚାକରାଣି ବୁଢ଼ି ଦଅଣୀ –ଯେ ମୋର ମା ମରିଯିବା ପରଠାରୁ ମୋର ରକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀ ରୂପେ ନିଯୁକ୍ତ ପାଇଛି- ସେ ବୁଢ଼ିର ଚଷମ ଗାଳିରେ ସାରା ଗାଁ କମ୍ପିଲା ଆଉ ସେ କମ୍ପନ ଗାଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ମାଇନର ସ୍କୁଲ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସଂଚରିବା ପରେ ଖୋଦ ହେତୁମାଷ୍ଟର ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରଶେଖର ରଥ ମହାଶୟଙ୍କୁ ଆମ ଘରକୁ ଆସି ମତେ ଓ ବୁଢ଼ି ଚାକରାଣିକୁ ସାକୁଲେଇ ସାକୁଲେଇ ଆଶ୍ଚସ୍ତ କରିବାକୁ ହେଲା । ସେକଥା ଏଇଠି ରହିଲା ।

ଆଉ ଦିନକର କଥା । ସେଦିନ ଜୟିସାର ଆମ କ୍ଲାସରେ ପୁଣି ଗୋଟାଏ ସେମିତିକିଆ କରୁଣ ରସର କବିତା ପଢ଼ାଉଥାନ୍ତି । ହଠାତ ଶ୍ରେଣୀ ଗୃହରେ ଆବିର୍ଭାବ ଘଟିଲା ଜଣେ ହସକୁରା ବୁଢ଼ା ସ୍କୁଲ ପିଅନର । ତା ନାଁ ବାଂଛାନିଧି । ସମସ୍ତେ ତାକୁ ଡାକନ୍ତି ବାଂଛୁ ନାଁରେ । ତାକୁ ଦେଖୁଦେଖୁ ଆମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ନିରୀହ ହାସ୍ୟରୋଳ ଖେଳିଗଲା । ତାର କାରଣ -ସେତେବେଳେ ସାରା ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ପହଳି ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ଥାଏ । ସେ ପହଳିଚିର ନାୟକର ନାମ ବାଂଛୁ । ପହଳିଚିର ପହିଲି ପଦ – “ ବାଂଛା ଗଲଗଲ ” । ଏଇ ତିନି ପଦ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ପହଳିଚି ଭିତରେ ବିଷ୍ଣୁରକ ହାସ୍ୟରସ ଖଂଜା ଯାଇଥାଏ ଏତେ ମାତ୍ରାରେ ଯେ ବୟସ ନିର୍ବିଶେଷରେ ତାହା ଶ୍ରୋତାମାନଙ୍କୁ ହସତ ଥିଲା ଆଉ କୁହାଯାଏ ସେ ହସରେ କେତେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଆକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହୋଇ ନିଜ ପେଟକୁ ଆଉଁଷି ଆଉଁଷି ଲୁଗାରେ ମୁଚି ପକାନ୍ତି ବା କାନ୍ଦିକାନ୍ଦି ମୂର୍ଚ୍ଛିତ ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନା ।

ସେ ଯାହା ହେଉ, ସେଦିନ ସ୍କୁଲ ପିଅନ ବାଂଛାନିଧି ବାରିକ ହେତୁମାଷ୍ଟରଙ୍କ ଅଫିସରୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ନୋଟିସ କାଗଜ ଧରି ଆମ କ୍ଲାସରେ ପହଂଚିଲେ । ଜୟିସାର ପାଠପଢ଼ା ବନ୍ଦ କରି ବାଂଛାନିଧି ହାତରୁ କାଗଜ ଖଣ୍ଡକ ନେଇ କିଛି ସମୟ ପଢ଼ିଲେ । ତାପରେ ଘୋଷଣା କଲେ , “ଆଗାମୀ ସପ୍ତାହ ସୋମବାର ଠାରୁ କ୍ଲାସ ଉଠା ବାର୍ଷିକ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଆରମ୍ଭ । ପ୍ରତି ଛାତ୍ର, ଛାତ୍ରୀ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ନିଜନିଜ ଘରୁ କାଗଜ କଲମ ଓ ସ୍ୟାହି ବୋତଲ ନେଇ ଠିକ ସକାଳ ଦଶଟାରେ ହାଜର ହେବେ । ପ୍ରଥମ ଦିନ ଇଂରେଜୀ ଆଉ ଗଣିତ, ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଦିନ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟରକ୍ଷା, ତୃତୀୟ ଦିନ ଇତିହାସ ଓ ଭୂଗୋଳ । ଚତୁର୍ଥ ଦିନ ତୁଳ୍ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ।” ଏହା କହିସାରି ସାର ଆମକୁ ଚେତେଇ ଦବାକୁ କହିଲେ, “କିନ୍ତୁ ମନେରଖ- ସମସ୍ତେ ନିଜନିଜ ଘରୁ କାଗଜ କଲମ ପେନସିଲ ଓ ଲେଖିବା ପାଇଁ ସ୍ୟାହି ବୋତଲ ଆଣିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଯେ ନଆଣିବ ସେ ଏବର୍ଷ ପରୀକ୍ଷାରେ ବସି ପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । ଏ ଅର୍ଡର ଆସିଚି କଟକ ଜିଲା ସ୍କୁଲ ବିଭାଗ ତି.ଆଇଙ୍କ ଅଫିସରୁ । ”

ସେତେବେଳେ ମୁଁ ପଢୁଥାଏ **ପଂଚମ** ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ । ବର୍ଷ ୧୯୪୨-୪୩ । ସେଇଟା ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ବିଶ୍ୱଯୁଦ୍ଧ ବେଳର ସବୁଠୁଁ ବେଶୀ ଖରାପ ସମୟ । କାରଣ ସେଇ ବର୍ଷ ଆରମ୍ଭରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଉପକୂଳର କୁଜଙ୍ଗ ଓ ଆଖ ପାଖ ଜାଗା ଉପରେ ଜାପାନୀ ଉଡ଼ାଜାହାଜରୁ ବୋମା ମାଡ଼ କରାଯାଇଥାଏ । କୁଜଙ୍ଗ ଆମ ଗାଁର ପୂର୍ବ ଦିଗରେ, ସମୁଦ୍ର ଉପକୂଳ ପାଖାପାଖି ପ୍ରାୟ ଷାଠିଏ କିଲୋମିଟର ଦୂର । ପରେପରେ ଆମ ଗାଁ ପାଖ କଟକ ପାରାଦୀପ ଓ କଟକ ଜଗତସିଂହ ପୁର ରାସ୍ତାର ଚେହେରା ହଠାତ୍ ବଦଳି ଗଲା । ବଡ଼ବଡ଼ ମିଲିଟାରି ଗାଡ଼ି ଆମ ଗାଁ ଦିପାଖ ନାଲି ସଡ଼କରେ ଧୁଲି ଉଡ଼େଇ ସାଇଁ ସାଇଁ ଛୁଟିଲେ । ବନ୍ଧୁକ ଧାରୀ ସୈନ୍ୟ ବାହିନୀ (ପଲଟଣ) ମାର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରି ଚାଲିଲେ କଟକ ଆଡୁ ପାରାଦୀପ ଆଉ ଜଗତସିଂହ ପୁର ରାସ୍ତାରେ । **ଗ୍ରାମାଂଚଳ**ରେ କୋକୁଆ ଭୟ ଖେଳିଗଲା । ଦିନବେଳେ ବି ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଚାଲିବା ବିପଦଜନକ ହେଇପଡ଼ିଲା । ସେ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଯାତାୟତ କମିଗଲା । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ସାବଧାନ କରି ଦିଆଗଲା କଟକ ପାରାଦୀପ ରାସ୍ତା କଡ଼ରେ ଆମ ଗାଁ ପାଖ ତାଳଦଣ୍ଡା କେନାଲ ବା ସେଥିରୁ ବାହାରିଥିବା କରନାଳରେ ଦିନବେଳେ ଗାଧୁଆ ପାଧୁଆ ନକରିବାକୁ ।

ସେଦିନ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ନୋଟିସ ପାଇ ମୋ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଚିହ୍ନ ପଶିଲା । ସେତେବେଳେ ମୋ ନନା(ବାପା) ଆଆନ୍ତି ଦୂର ଯାଗାରେ, ଚାକିରିରେ । ବର୍ଷକ ତଳେ ବୋଉ ମରିଥାଏ । ଅବସ୍ଥା ଚକ୍ରରେ ପଡ଼ି ଗାଁରେ ମୁଁ ଏକା ରହୁଥାଏ ବୁଢ଼ି ଚାକରାଣି ଦଅଣି ଦାୟିତ୍ୱରେ । ସେ ଜଣେ ପ୍ରତାପୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକ । ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ଫେରି ଜଳଖିଆ ଖାଇବା ବେଳେ ମୁଁ ତାକୁ ଚରଚରରେ ଶୁଣେଇ ଦେଲି ପରୀକ୍ଷା ଖବର । କହିଲି, “ ଆଗାମୀ ସୋମବାର ଠୁଁ କ୍ଲାସ ଉଠା ପରୀକ୍ଷା ହବ ଆମ ସ୍କୁଲରେ । ଆଉ ଛ ଦିନ ରହିଲା । ଆଜିଠୁ ମତେ

ପରୀକ୍ଷା ପେଇଁ ଜୋରସୋର ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ହବ । ମୁଁ ତ ରାତିରେ ଡିବି ଆଲୁଅରେ ପଢ଼ି ପାରିବି ନାହିଁ । ମିଂଜିମିଂଜି ଡିବି ଆଲୁଅରେ ଅକ୍ଷର ଦିଶୁନି । ମତେ ଲକ୍ଷନ ଲଗେଇବାକୁ ହବ । ଘରେ ଆମର କିରାସିନି ଅଛି ନା ନାହିଁ? କହୁଚକ୍ତି କନ୍ଦରପୁର ବଜାରରେ କିରାସିନି ମିଳୁନାହିଁ । ଖାଲି କିରାସିନି ନୁହଁ । ସାର କହିଚକ୍ତି ମତେ ଘରୁ କାଗଜ କଲମ ଆଉ ସ୍ୟାହି ନବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । କାଗଜ ବି ତ ମିଳୁନି କନ୍ଦର ପୁରର କୋଉ ହେଲେ ବୋକାନରେ । କଣ କରିବି । ଭାବିଚି ମୁଁ କଟକ ଯିବି । କଟକରେ ନିଷ୍ଠେ ମିଳୁଥିବ । ମତେ ଦଶ ପଇସ ଟଙ୍କା ଦେ- ” ମୋ କଥା ଶୁଣି ଦଅଣି କହିଲା, “ ଘରେ କିରାସିନି ଅଛି । ନଶଟଣ “ଲକ୍ଷନ? ନାଲି କିରାସିନିରେ ଲକ୍ଷନ ଜଳେ? କଲା ଧୁଆଁରେ ମିନିଟକେ କାଚ କଲା ପଡ଼ିଯିବ । ଡିବି ଯାହା ଲକ୍ଷନ ବି ସେଇଆ- ନାଲି କିରାସିନି ନୁହେଁ; ଧଳା କିରାସିନି ଜଳେ ଲକ୍ଷନରେ । ମତେ ଟଙ୍କା ଦେ । ମୁଁ କଟକ ଯାଇ ଧଳା କାଗଜ ଆଉ ଧଳା କିରାସିନି କିଣିବି । ”

କଟକ ଯିବାକୁ ନେଇ ମୋର ଏକା ଜିଗର ଦେଖୁ ଦଅଣି ଡରିଗଲା । କହିଲା, “କଟକ ଯିବୁ? ଦେଖୁନୁ ରାସ୍ତାଘାଟ କଥା । ପଲଟଣ ଗୁଡ଼ାକ ସଣସଣ ହଉଚିନି କେମିତି ଦେଖୁନୁକି? ଏଥେରେ କଟକ ଯିବୁ ତୁ? ଆଲୋ ବୋପା! କଟକ କଣ ପାଖ ଯାଗା? ପରା ଦି ଟଙ୍କାର ଭଡ଼ା ଯାଉଣୁ ଆସୁଣୁ ମଟରଗାଡ଼ିରେ? ପୁଣି କାଗଜ କଲମ କାଲି କିଣା କଥା କହୁଛୁ – ଏତେ ଟଙ୍କା କାହିଁ ମୋ ପାଖେ ? ମୋ ବାପାଟା ପରା- ଡିବି ଆଲୁଅରେ କଣ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ି ହବନି କିରେ? ବାପା ପରା କହୁଚକ୍ତି କୋଉ ବଡ଼ନୋକ ସେ ଯେ ତାଙ୍କ ପିଲାଦିନେ ଜୁଲୁଜୁଲିଆ ପୋକ ବୋତଲରେ ପୁରେଇ ସେଇ ଆଲୁଅରେ ବସି ପଢ଼ି ପଛେ ଏଡେବଡ଼ ହାକିମ ହେଲେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କର ଗରିବ ଘର – ନାଲି କିରାସିନି ପଲାଏ ବି ନଥିଲା ଡିବି ଜାଲିବାକୁ ସେ ଯୁଗରେ । ନୋକେ ପୁଲାଙ୍ଗ ତେଲ ଜାଳୁ ଥେଲେ ଦୀପରେ । ଏଇଲେ ତ ଆମର ମାଟିତେଲ ଅଛି ଯାହାକୁ କହୁଛୁ ନାଲି କିରାସିନି । ତୁ ସେଇ ନାଲି କିରାସିନିରେ କାମ ଚଳେଇ ଦେ ବାପା- ଏ ବିପଦ ଆପଦ ବେଳେ କଣ କିଏ ଘରୁ ବାହାରେ । ତୁ ଜମାରୁ କଟକ ଯା ନା । ” ଡିବି ଆଲୁଅ କଥା ଶୁଣି ମୋ ହାତ ଜଳିଗଲା । ବଡ଼ ପାଟିରେ ରଡ଼ି ଛାଡ଼ିଲି, “ଡିବି ଆଲୁଅରେ ବସି ପଢ଼ିଲେ ମଣିଷ ଅକ୍ଷ ହେଇଯାନ୍ତି । ଡିବି ଜଳିଲେ ଯୋଉ କଲା ଧୁଆଁ ବାହାରେ ସେ ଧୁଆଁ ବେଶୀ ସମୟ ଶୁଂଘିଲେ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଯକ୍ଷ୍ମାରୋଗ ହୁଏ । ତୁ କଣ ଭାବୁଛୁ ମୁଁ ଅକ୍ଷ ହୁଏ, ମତେ ଯକ୍ଷ୍ମା ହେଇଯାଉ, ମୁଁ କାଶିକାଶି ରକ୍ତବାନ୍ତ କରି ମରେ? ”

ଏହାପରେ ମୋର କଟକ ଯିବା କଥା ପକ୍କା ହେଇଗଲା । ଦଅଣି ତା ପେଟରୁ ବାହାର କଲା ଦଶ ଟଙ୍କାର ରେଜା ପଇସା । କଥା ହେଲା ସେଦିନ ମୁଁ ସେତକ ପଇସା ନେଇ ଆମ ଗାଁର ଜଣେ ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ କଟକ ଯିବି । ରାଜୁବାପା କଟକ ଯାଉଥାନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କର କଣ ମାଲିମକଦମା କାମରେ । ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଇକଲ ପଛରେ ବସି କଟକ ଯିବି । ସେଠି ଗାଁର ଜମିଦାର ଓ ମୁରବି ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ବଚକୃଷ୍ଣ ପ୍ରହରାଜଙ୍କ ବସାଘରେ ରାତିକ ରହିବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଥାନ୍ତି ରାଜୁବାପା । କଟକରେ ମୋର କାଗଜ କିରାସିନି ଓଗେର କଣ୍ଢୋଲ ଜିନିଷର ସଉଦା କିଣିବାରେ ରାଜୁବାପା ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରିବାର ନିର୍ଭର ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ଦେଲେ ଦଅଣିକୁ ।

ପରଦିନ ସକାଳେ ଆମେ କଟକ ବାହାରିଲୁ । କିରାସିନି କିଣିବାକୁ ଆମ ଆଟୁଘର ଦରାଣ୍ଡି ଗୋଟାଏ ଛୋଟ କିରାସିନି ଚିଣ ଖୋଜିଖୋଜି ବାହାର କରିଥାଉ ଦଅଣି ଆଉ ମୁଁ । ସେଇ ଚିଣଟାକୁ କାଖେଇ ମୁଁ ବସିଲି ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କ ସାଇକେଲ ପଛରେ । ରାଜୁବାପା ଜଣେ ବଳିଷ୍ଠ ଲୋକ । କୁଟୁକୁଟୁ କଲା ଚେହେରାର ମଣିଷ ହେଲେବି ସୈନ୍ୟ ବାହିନୀର ପଲଟଣ ମାର୍କା ଚେହେରା ତାଙ୍କର । ତାଙ୍କର ସେ ଚେହେରା ଯୋଗୁ ବ୍ରିଟିଶ ସରକାର ତାଙ୍କୁ ଗାଁର ଦଫାଦାର ପଦବୀରେ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ଦେଇଥିଲେ କିଛି ବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବରୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ କଣ ଗୋଟାଏ ଗଲତି ଯୋଗୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦଫାଦାରି କାମରୁ ଅକ୍ଷ ଦିନ ତଳେ କାଢ଼ି ଦିଆଯାଇ ଥାଏ ବୋଲି ଆମେ ଗାଁ ପିଲାମାନେ ଶୁଣିଥାଉ । କିନ୍ତୁ ରାତି ଅଧରେ ଚୋର ଡକାୟତଙ୍କୁ ଗୋଡ଼େଇ ଗୋଡ଼େଇ ଏକା ହାଡ଼ିଆ ମାଡ଼ି ବସନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କର ବହୁତ ନାଁ ଡାକ ଥାଏ-ଆମ ଅଂଚଳର ଜଣେ ବୀର ପୁରୁଷ ଭାବେ ।

ସେଦିନ ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କ ସାଇକେଲ ପଛରେ ବସି ମୋର କଟକ ଯାତ୍ରା ଥିଲା ଏକ ଗଡ଼ ଜିଣିବା ଭଳି ଅଭିଯାନ । ଏହା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ମୁଁ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଥରେ ଦିଅର କଟକ ସହର ବୁଲିବାକୁ ଆସିଥିଲି ମୋ ନନାଙ୍କ ସାଥରେ । ପ୍ରତି ଥର କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ସହରର ହାଉହାଉ ରାଉରାଉ ଓ ଚଳ ଚଂଚଳ ଜୀବନ ଶୈଳୀ ଭିତରେ ମୁଁ ହଜିଯାଏ କୁଆଡ଼େ କେଜାଣି । ଏଇ ହଜିଯିବାଟାକୁ ମୁଁ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଡରେନା, ବରଂ ସହରର ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତ ରାସ୍ତାଘାଟ, ଘୋଡ଼ାଗାଡ଼ି, ମଟରଗାଡ଼ି ଇଂଜିନମାନଙ୍କର ଘାଉଁଆଉଁ ଶବ୍ଦ ଓ ଫେଁପାଁ ହର୍ନ ର ସ୍ଵର, ରେଲ ଷ୍ଟେସନ ପାଖେ ରେଲଗାଡ଼ି ଇଂଜିନର ପିଂକାର ସହିତ ପବନରେ ପୋଡ଼ା କୋଇଲା ଧୁଆଁର ଦୁର୍ଗନ୍ଧ, ରାସ୍ତାକଡ଼ ଛୋଟବଡ଼ ହୋଟେଲ ଆଡୁ ଛୁଟି

ଆସୁଥିବା ବିଚିତ୍ର ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ ଖାଦ୍ୟର ବାସ୍ନା, ବଡ଼ବଡ଼ କୋଠା ବାଡ଼ିର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ,ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରୁ ଶୁଣାଯାଉଥିବା ବୋଧ ଦୁର୍ବୋଧ କଥା କହିବା ଭଙ୍ଗୀ,ଖୋଲଟି କଥା କଟକ ବୁଲାଇ ବେଳେ ମତେ ଏକ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନମୟ ଅଜଣା ଜଗତ ଭିତରକୁ ଘେନି ଯାଏ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି ମୁଁ ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କ ସାଇକେଲ କାରିୟରରେ ଟିଣ ଖଣ୍ଡିଏ କାଖେଇ କଟକ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଯାଉଥିଲା ବେଳେ ସେସବୁ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଥିଲା ନିରର୍ଥକ । ଆଜି ମୋର ଏକ ମାତ୍ର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଥାଏ କେତେବେଳେ ରାଜୁବାପା ମତେ ତାଙ୍କର କୋଉ ଟିସ୍ତା କଣ୍ଢୋଲ ଦୋକାନକୁ ନେବେ ଆଉ ମୁଁ ସେ ଦୋକାନରୁ ସେରେ ଧଳା ସଫା କିରାସିନି (ସେତେବେଳେ ଲିଟର ମାପର ପ୍ରଚଳନ ହୋଇନଥାଏ) ଓ ଦିସ୍ତାଏ ଧଳା କାଗଜ କିଣି ଗାଁ କୁ ଫେରି ଆସି ପରୀକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ପାଠ ପଢ଼ି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେବି ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ଦେଖିଲି- ରାଜୁବାପା ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜ କାମ ଛିଣ୍ଡେଇବା ପାଇଁ ମୂଳରୁ ତପ୍ତ ରହିଥାନ୍ତି । ଦିନସାରା ସେ କଟକର କିଲଟରି କଚେରି ସାମନା ଗୋଟାଏ ବଡ଼ ବରଗଛ ଛାଇରେ ପସରା ମେଲେଇ ବସିଥିବା ପଂଖାଏ ନବସିନ୍ଧା ମୋହରିର ଆଉ କଳାକୋଟ ପିନ୍ଧା ଓକିଲଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ କଣ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତାରେ ମଜ୍ଜି ରହିଲେ । ମୁଁ ମୋ କିରାସିନି ଟିଣଟିକୁ ହାତଛତା ନକରି କଚେରି ପାଖରେ ହାଉହାଉ ହଉଥିବା ମଣିଷଙ୍କ ଗତିବିଧିକୁ ଦେଖି କିଛି ବୁଝି ନପାରିଲେ ବି ଆଗ୍ରହ ସହକାରେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରୁଥାଏ- ମଣିଷମାନେ କେମିତି ମୂଷା ପରି ଏବାଟେ ପଶି ସେବାଟେ ବାହାରୁଥାନ୍ତି ବାରମ୍ବାର ବାରମ୍ବାର ବାରମ୍ବାର । ସେଇ ଦୁର୍ବୋଧ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ମତେ ମେଜିକ ଦେଖିଲା ଭଳି ଲାଗୁଥାଏ । ମୋ ମନରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଲହଡ଼ି ଉଠୁଥାଏ –ଲୋକମାନେ କଣ ଖୋଜୁଥାନ୍ତି? ଏତେ ଲୋକ କଣ ପାଇଁ ଧାଁଧପତ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ? ଥରକୁଥର ଗୋଟାଏ ବାଟରେ ଯାଇ ପୁଣି ଅନ୍ୟ କୋଉବାଟେ କାହିଁକି ସେଇ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଯାଗାକୁ ଫେରି ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି? କଣ ପାଇଁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟସ୍ଥଳରେ ପହଂଚି ନପାରି ବାଟ ଖୋଜି ହଉଥାନ୍ତି ସେମାନେ ଦିନ ତମାମ ସେଇ ଅରାଏ ବୋଲି ଜାଗାରେ ।

ଦିନ ଦିପହର ହେଲା । ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କ କାମ ଛିଣ୍ଡୁ ନଥାଏ । ମତେ ଭାରି ଭୋକ ହଉଥାଏ । ମୁଁ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହେଇ ରାସ୍ତାକଡ଼ ଗୋଟାଏ ବରା ପକ୍କୁଡ଼ି ଦୋକାନକୁ ଗଲି । ଚାରି ଅଣାର ବରା ପକ୍କୁଡ଼ି ଖାଇ ସେଇ ଦୋକାନରୁ ଗିଲାସେ ପାଣି ପିଇଲି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଖାଇ ସାରିବା ପରେପରେ ମୋ ମନରେ ଦକା ପଶିଲା । ଦଅଣି ଦେଇଥିବା ଦଶଟଙ୍କାର ରେଜା ପଇସାରୁ ଚାରିଅଣା ପଇସା କମି ଗଲାଣି ଜାଣି ଆଶଙ୍କିତ ହେଲି- କିରାସିନି ଆଉ କାଗଜ କିଣାକୁ କାଲେ ପଇସା ନଅଣ୍ଟ ପଡ଼ିବ!

ଦିପହର ଯାଇ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ହେଲା । କଟକର ରାସ୍ତା କଡ଼ର ବଡ଼ୀ ଖୁଣ୍ଟରୁ ଆଲୁଅ ଜଳିବା ବେଳ ହେଲା । ସେତେବେଳେ କଟକ ମ୍ୟୁନିସିପାଲିଟିରେ ବଡ଼ୀଖୁଣ୍ଟରେ ବିଜୁଳୀ ବଡ଼ୀ ଜଳିବା ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ନଥାଏ । କିରାସିନି ଲକ୍ଷନ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଥାଏ । ମୁଁ ଦେଖିଲି ଜଣେ ନେଳୀ ପୋଷାକ ପିନ୍ଧା ଲୋକ ହାତରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ଟିଣ ଆଉ କାନ୍ଧରେ ସିଦ୍ଧି ପକେଇ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଯାଉଛି । ତାକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରି ଦେଖିଲି ସେ ରାସ୍ତା କଡ଼ ବଡ଼ୀ ଖୁଣ୍ଟ ପାଖରେ ଅଟକିଲା । କାନ୍ଧରୁ ସିଦ୍ଧି ବାହାର କରି ଖୁଣ୍ଟରେ ଚଢ଼ିଲା । ପରେ ସେ ଖୁଣ୍ଟ ଉପର କାଚ ବାନ୍ଧୁରୁ ଗୋଟିଏ କିରାସିନି ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ବାହାର କଲା ଓ ତଳକୁ ଓହ୍ଲେଇ ଆସି ସେଥିରେ କିରାସିନି ଟିଣରୁ କେଇପଳା କିରାସିନି ପୁରେଇଲା । ମୋ ନାକରେ କିରାସିନି ଗନ୍ଧ ବାଜିବା କ୍ଷଣି ମୁଁ ଚମକି ପଡ଼ିଲି । ଚାଲିଲି ବଡ଼ୀଖୁଣ୍ଟ ପାଖକୁ । ବୁଝିବାକୁ ବାକି ରହିଲା ନାହିଁ ଯେ ସେ ଲୋକଟି ସହର ରାସ୍ତାରେ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳର ଆଲୁଅ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରୁଛି ବୋଲି । “ ଆଜ୍ଞା ଏଠି କିରାସିନି କୋଉଠି ମିଳିବ ଜାଣନ୍ତି କି?” ମୋର ସେଭଳି ପ୍ରଶ୍ନରେ ସେ ଲୋକ କଣ ଭାବିଲା ମତେ ଭଲକରି ଚାହିଁଲା । ଖୁଣ୍ଟ ଉପରେ ବଡ଼ୀ ଜାଳି ସାରି ସେ ତଳକୁ ଓହ୍ଲେଇଲା । “ମୋ ପଛେ ପଛେ ଆ । କିରାସିନି ଦେବି । ” କହି ସେ ମତେ ପଚାରିଲା, “କେତେ ଟଙ୍କାର ନବୁ? ପାଖରେ ଟଙ୍କା ରଖୁ? ହଉ ଆ ମୋ ପଛେପଛେ ଏଇ ମୁଁ ହୁଏତ ସେଇ ଲୋକଟା ପଛରେ ଗୋଡ଼େଇ ଥାନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ମୋ ଗତିବିଧି ଉପରେ । ସେ ମତେ ପଛରୁ ଡାକି ସତର୍କ କରିଦେଲେ, “ହେ କାହା ପଛରେ ଗୋଡ଼ୋଉରୁ? ଜାଣିରୁ ସେ ମଦୁଆ ତୋ ହାତର ସୁନା ମୁଦିକୁ ଉଣ୍ଡି ସାଇଲାଣି । ତତେ ଧରିନେଇ କୋଉଠି ମାଡ଼ିବସି ତୋ ଆଙ୍ଗୁଠିରୁ ସେ ମୁଦିଟାକୁ ଝିଙ୍କି ନବ । ଏଇଟା କଟକ ସହର ଜାଣିଥା । ମୋ କାମ ସାଇଲାଣି । ଚାଲ ଯିବା ଏଥର ବଟିବାକୁ ବସାକୁ , ଗଙ୍ଗା ମନ୍ଦିର । ଆଜି ରାତିରେ ସେଇଠି ଖୁଆ ପିଆ ଆଉ ରହଣି । ମୋ କାମ ତଥାପି ଛିଣ୍ଡିଲା ନାହିଁ । କାଲି ଯଦି ଛିଣ୍ଡେ ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରିବା । ଚାଲ ଯିବା-” ।

ମୁଦି କଥା ଶୁଣି ମୋର ହୋସ ହେଲା । ସେତେବେଳେ ମୋ ଡାହାଣ ହାତ ପରି ଆଙ୍ଗୁଠିରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ସୁନା ମୁଦି ଥାଏ । ସେ ମୁଦିଟି ମତେ ଅଜା ଦେଇଥିଲେ ବ୍ରତ ଭିକ୍ଷାରେ । ମାଙ୍କ ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଅଜାଙ୍କୁ କହି ସେ ମୋ ବ୍ରତଘର କରେଇ ଥିଲେ । ସେ ମୁଦିଟି ମତେ ଭିକ୍ଷାରେ ମିଳିଥିଲା । କୁନି ମୁଦିଟିଏ ହେଲେବି ଆଖିରେ ପଡ଼େ ସବୁ ଦେଖଣାହାରି ଲୋକଙ୍କର । ତା ଉପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଧଳା

ଶଂଖର ମୀନାକାମ ହେଉଥିବାରୁ କି କଣ ପାଇଁ ଲୋକଙ୍କ କଟକ ସହର ଚୋର ଚଞ୍ଚରଙ୍କ ଜାଗା-ଶୁଣିଥିଲି । ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କ ସତର୍କ ବାଣୀ ଶୁଣି ମୁଁ ସାବଧାନ ହେଇଗଲି । ଆଜୁଠିକୁ ଚାହିଁ ଦେଖୁଲି ମୁଦି ଠିକ ଜାଗାରେ ଅଛି । ମୁଁ ତାକୁ କିଛି ସମୟ ପାଇଁ ଗେଲକଲି । ଗାଲରେ ସେତିକି ବେଳେ ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ମୁଁ କାହିଁକି କଟକ ଆସିଛି?

ଆଗକୁ ପରୀକ୍ଷା । ମତେ କିରାସିନି ଆଉ କାଗଜ କିଣିବାକୁ ଅଛି । ଦିନସାରା କଟକରେ ବୁଲି ସାରିଲିଣି ଅଥଚ ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କ ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁନାହିଁ ତାଙ୍କ ଚିହ୍ନା କୋଉ ସେ କଣ୍ଢେଲ ଦୋକାନକୁ ଯାଇ ମୋ ସଉଦାତକ ମନେ ପକେଇ ଦେବାକୁ ପଚାରିଲି, “ରାଜୁବାପା, କିରାସିନି କେତେବେଳେ କିଣା ହବ? ମୋର ପରୀକ୍ଷା ପରା ସୋମବାରକୁ । ଆଜି ହେଲା ” କଣ କରିବା କହ? ଏ କଟିରି ବାଟିରି କାମ ପରା ଏମିତିକିଆ-ହଉ ତୁ ଚିନ୍ତା କରନା । ସେ କିରାସିନି ଦୋକାନଟା ଯାଇ ତିନିକୋଣିଆ ବଗିଚାରେ । କାଲି ସକାଳ ଓଲି ମୁଁ ତତେ କିରାସିନି କିଣେଇ ଦେବି । ”

ରାଜୁ ବାପାଙ୍କ ସାଇକେଲକୁ ଅନୁସରଣ କରି ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ପଛରେ ଚାଲିଲି । କଟକ ସହରରେ ଡବଲ ରାଇଡିଂ ମନା । ତେଣୁ ଆମେ ଦୁହେଁ ସାଇକେଲ ଠେଲି ଚାଲିଲୁ କଟେରି ଛକରୁ ଗଙ୍ଗା ମନ୍ଦିରକୁ । ସେଠି ଆମ ଗାଁର ଅନ୍ୟଜଣେ ଜେଜେବାପା ବଟିବାପାଙ୍କ ବସାରେ ଆଜି ରାତିରେ ଆମର ରହିବା ସ୍ଥିର ସେଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଆମେ ଦିଜଣ କୁଣିଆ ବଟିବାପାଙ୍କ ବସାରେ ପହଂଚିଲୁ ।

ବଟିବାପା ମୋ ନମାଙ୍କ କକେଇ । ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମୋର ଜେଜେମା । ଏ ଜେଜେମାଙ୍କୁ ଆମେ ତାକୁ ମଝିଆଣୀ ମା ଡାକନ୍ତାରେ । ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ବଡ଼ମା । ତାଙ୍କ ତଳେ ସାନମା । ଏ ଜେଜେମାମାନେ ଭାରି ସ୍ନେହୀ ମୁଁ ଜାଣେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋର ମା ମରିଯିବା ପରେ ଆମ ଘରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ଚଷା ଘରର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକ ଦଅଣିକୁ ବାପା ଆମ ଗାଁଘରର ରକ୍ଷଣାଦେକ୍ଷଣ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଦେବା ପରେ ଗାଁରେ ଆମେ ଏକ ପ୍ରକାର ଅଲଗା ହେଇ ଚଳୁଥାଉ ସେତେବେଳେ । ତଥାପି ଆମ ଘରର ପାରିବାରିକ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଗ୍ରାମବାସୀଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପୂର୍ବପରି ରହିଥାଏ । ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ରାଜୁବାପା ଓ ମୋ ଲାଗି ମଝିଆଣୀ ମା ତାଙ୍କ ଘରେ ଖୁଆପିଆ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଦେଲେ । ରାତି ଖାଇବା ସରିଲା ପରେ ମତେ ନିଦ ଲାଗିଲା । ମଝିଆଣୀ ମା ମୋ ପାଇଁ କୋଉଠି ଶୋଇବା ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଥାନ୍ତେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ରାଜୁବାପା ଉପରେ ପଡ଼ି କହଲେ, “ଭାଉଜ, ତୁମେ ତା କଥା ଚିନ୍ତା କରନା । ଏଇ ବାରଣ୍ଡାରେ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ତ ସଉପ ପଡ଼ିଲାଣି, ମଶାରି ବାନ୍ଧି ଦେଇଚି ତମ ଚାକର ପିଲା । ପୁଣି ଆଉ ଗୋଟାଏ ଅଲଗା ଶେଯ ପାରିବ କାହିଁକି? ଆମେ ଅଜା ନାତି ସେଇ ଗୋଟାଏ ସଉପରେ ଗଢ଼ି ପଡ଼ିବୁ ଯେ । ତମେ ଆଉ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୁଅନା ଆମ ପାଇଁ । ” ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କ କଥା ରହିଲା । ମତେ ତ ନିଦ ଘାରୁଥାଏ । ମୁଁ ଲମ୍ବିଗଲିରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ପରାଯାଇଥିବା ସଉପ ଖଣ୍ଡକ ଉପରେ । ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତକ ଭିତରେ ମୁଁ ବୁଡ଼ିଗଲି ଗାଢ଼ ନିଦରେ ।

ସକାଳକୁ ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଲା । ଦେଖୁଲି ରାଜୁବାପା ଶେଯ ଛାଡ଼ି ଗଲେଣି ନିତ୍ୟ କର୍ମ ଶେଷ କରିବାକୁ । ମୁଁ ବି ତରବର ହେଇ ଉଠି ପଡ଼ିଲି । ନିତ୍ୟକର୍ମ ସାରିଲା ବେଳକୁ ମଝିଆଣୀ ମା ଡାକିଲେ ଜଳଖୁଆ ଖାଇବାକୁ । ପୁରି ତରକାରି ପେଟେ ଖାଇ ସାରି ମୁଁ ମୋ କିରାସିନି ଟିଣଟିକୁ ବାହାରକଲି । ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କୁ ମନେ ପକେଇଦେଲି- ତିନିକୋଣିଆ ବଗିଚାରେ କିରାସିନି କିଣା କଥା । ସେ ମତେ ନିର୍ଭର ଜବାବ ଦେଲେ ଗାଁକୁ ଫେରିବା ଆଗରୁ କିରାସିନି କିଣା କାମ ନିଷ୍ଠେ ସରିବ । ତାହୁଁ ତାହୁଁ କଟେରି ବେଳ ହେଇଗଲା । ରାଜୁବାପା ତାଙ୍କ ସାଇକେଲ ଧରି ଚାଲିଲେ କଟେରିକି । ମୁଁ ବି ଚାଲିଲି ଟିଣ କାଖେଇ ତାଙ୍କ ପଛେପଛେ । ସେ ମତେ କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି ଧରାଛୁଆଁ ନଦେଲା ଭଳି ଦୂରେଇ ଦୂରେଇ ହଉଥାନ୍ତି । ମୁଁ ଗୋଡ଼େଇ ଥାଏ କିନ୍ତୁ ତାଙ୍କ ପଛେପଛେ-କଅଁଳା ବାଛୁରି ତା ମାକୁ ଗୋଡ଼େଇଲା ପରି । ଆମେ ପହଂଚିଲୁ କଟକର ସେଇ କଟେରି ଅଂଚଳରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି କିଲଟରି କଟେରି ନୁହେଁ; ରାଜୁବାପାଙ୍କ କାମ ଥାଏ ଜଜସାହେବଙ୍କ ନାଲିକୋଠାରେ ।

କଟକରେ ସେତେବେଳେ ହାଇକୋର୍ଟ ବସି ନଥାଏ । (୧୯୩୬ରେ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ଗଠନର ବାରବର୍ଷ ପରେ ୧୯୪୮ ମସିହାରେ ସେଇ ନାଲି କୋଠାରେ ବସିଲା ହାଇକୋର୍ଟ ।) ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଚି - ସେଦିନ ସେଇ ଜଜକୋର୍ଟ ବା ନାଲିକୋଠାର ଉପର ମହଲାରେ ପହଂଚିଲୁ ଆମେ ଦୁଇ ଜଣ, ଜଣେ ପଚାଶ ପଂଚାବନ ବର୍ଷର ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦାନ୍ତ ଚେହେରାର ଲୋକ ଯାହାଙ୍କୁ ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଥିଲି ଆମ ଗାଁର ରାଜୁବାପା ନାମରେ - ଆମ ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଂଶର ଲୋକ, ଆଉ ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଜଣେ ନଅ ବର୍ଷର ପିଲା, ଅର୍ଥାତ୍ ମୁଁ ନିଜେ । କଟକର ସେଇ ନାଲିକୋଠାର ଉପର ମହଲାର ପ୍ରଶସ୍ତ ବାରଣ୍ଡାକୁ ଲାଗି ବିଚାରପତି ଜଜସାହେବ ମାନଙ୍କର କୋର୍ଟରୁମ । ବଡ଼ବଡ଼ ଚକଚକିଆ ପିଉଳ ଫଳକ ଉପରେ ଜଜମାନଙ୍କର ନାଁ ଆଉ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ପଦପଦବୀକୁ ପଢ଼ିବାରେ ମୋ ଆଖି ଲାଖି ରହିଲା । ସେ

ରୁମକୁ ସର୍ବସାଧାରଣ ପ୍ରବେଶ ନିଷେଧ ବୋଲି ଠାଏ ଇଂରେଜୀରେ ଲେଖା ଫଳକ ଆଖିରେ ପଡ଼ିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ରୁମମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅବାଧରେ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରୁଥାନ୍ତି କାନ୍ଧରେ ମୋହରମରା ହୁଦା ପକେଇ ମଖମଲ କନାର ନାଲିକୋଟ ଓ ପଗଡ଼ି ପିନ୍ଧିଥିବା ମୋଟାମୋଟା ନିଶବାଲା କୋର୍ଟ ପିଅନମାନେ । ଦିଶୁଥାନ୍ତି ଗଡ଼ଜାତ ରାଜାଙ୍କ ପରି । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଲାଗିନିଆ ଓକିଲ ମହକିଲଙ୍କ ଭିତ । କଅଁଳ ସକାଳୁଆ ଖରା ବିଛେଇ ହେଇ ପଡ଼ିଥାଏ ନାଲିକୋଠା ଚଳ କଚେରି ଗ୍ରାଫିକ ଛକ ଉପରେ । ଛକ ଉପରେ ନାଲି ପଗଡ଼ିଆ ପୁଲିସ ଜଣେ ଠିଆ ହେଇଥାଏ । ରାସ୍ତାରେ ଯାନବାହାନ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିବାକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ହୁଇଥିଲ ମାରୁଥାଏ । ଗୁଡ଼ାଏ ଧଳା ପାରା ଧାଡ଼ିହେଇ ବସିଥାନ୍ତି ରାସ୍ତାକଡ଼ ଅନୁଚ କୋଠାର ପାରାପେଟ ଉପରେ । ମୁଁ ସେଇ ପାରାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅନ୍ୟମନସ୍କ ଭାବେ ଚାହିଁ ମୋର ଏକ ସ୍ୱଭାବ ପଡ଼ିଯାଇଥାଏ ଯେ ସ୍ଥିର ହୋଇ ଠିଆ ହୋଇ କୌଣସି ଆଡେ ଚାହିଁ କିଛି ଭାବିବା ମାତ୍ରେ ମୋ ମୁଦିପିନ୍ଧା ଡାହାଣ ହାତଟା ଆପେଆପେ ମୁଠାହେଇ ଉଠିଯାଏ ଗାଲ ଉପରକୁ । ହାତମୁଠାକୁ ଗାଲ ଉପରେ ଆସେଆସେ ସାଉଁଲେଇଲେ ମୋ ଅନ୍ତର ଭିତରୁ ଦୁଆଦୁଆ କଳ୍ପନା ଶକ୍ତି ଜାତ ହୁଏ । ମୁଦିଚିର ସ୍ପର୍ଶ ମତେ ଭାରି ସୁଖପ୍ରଦ ଲାଗେ । ଆଜି ମଧ୍ୟ ସେଇ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ବଶତଃ ପାରାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖୁଦେଖୁ ମୋ ମୁଦିପିନ୍ଧା ହାତମୁଠା ଉଠିଗଲା ଗାଲ ଉପରକୁ ।

ହଠାତ ମୁଁ ପାଟି କରି ଉଠିଲି-“ ଆରେ! ଆରେ! ମୋ ମୁଦି ! ମୋ ମୁଦି ! କିଏ ନେଇଗଲା ମୁଦି ମୋ ଆଙ୍ଗୁଠିରୁ!” ସେ ପାଟି ଶୁଣି ଜଣେ ନାଲି ହୁଦା ଆଉ ଧଳା ପଗଡ଼ି ପିନ୍ଧା କୋର୍ଟ ପିଅନ ମୋ ପାଖ ଦେଇ ଯାଉଯାଉ ଅଟକି ଗଲା । ଜଣେ କଳା କୋଟ ପିନ୍ଧା ଓକିଲ ବାବୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅଟକି ଗଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ କାଳେ ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ କିଛି କହିଦେବି ଏଇ ଭୟରେ ରାଜୁବାପା ନିଜ ଆଡୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବୁଝେଇ ଦେଲେ- “ଏ ପିଲା ଆମ ଗାଁର ନାତି ହିସାବ । ଯାର ଗୋଟାଏ ଖରାପ ଆଦତ ଅଛି ସୁନା ଜିନିଷ ବନ୍ଧା ପକେଇ ଯାହା ଟଙ୍କା ମିଳେ ଉଡେଇ ଦିଏ । କାଲିଠୁ ମତେ ପଚାରୁଛି -ପାଖରେ କୋଉଠି ବଣିଆ ଦୋକାନ ଅଛି । ହୁଦାପକା କୋର୍ଟ ପିଅନ ମତେ ମୁଣ୍ଡରୁ ପାଦ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଅନେଇଲା । କଳାକୋଟ ପିନ୍ଧା ଓକିଲ ପଚାରିଲେ ମତେ, “କଣ ? ଏ ବୟସରୁ ଏପରି ବଦଭ୍ୟାସ? ବଡ଼ ହେଲେ ତ ତୁ ଦେଶଟାକୁ ବିକିଭାଜି ଖାଇଯିବୁ ରେ ପିଲା! ଛିଛି ...” । ଖୋଦ ଜଜ ସାହେବଙ୍କ ନାଲି କୋଠାରେ ମୋ ନାଁରେ ଏଭଳି ଏକ ମିଥ୍ୟା ଆରୋପ ସମ୍ମାନି ନପାରି ମୁଁ କଇଁକଇଁ ହେଇ କାନ୍ଦି ଉଠିଲି । ମୋର କେହି ସାହା ଭରସା ନଥିଲେ ଯାହା ପାଖେ ମୁଁ ସତ୍ୟ ଘଟଣା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଥାନ୍ତି । ସେଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଖାଲି ଚିଣିଟିଏ କାଖେଇ ମୁଁ ଗାଁରେ ପହଂଚିଲି । ବାର୍ଷିକ ପରୀକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେବାର ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ମୋ ମନରୁ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପୋଛି ହେଇଯାଇଥାଏ ।

Shahidnagar, Bhubaneswar



INTERNATIONAL JAGANNATHA SOCIETY

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इधे त्वोर्जेत्वा चायवस्सथोपायवस्स्य देवो वस्सविता प्रार्पयतु श्रेष्ठतमायु कर्मणे ।

Oh Lord, we resort to Thee for the supply of foodstuffs and vigor. May the Creator, the fountain of happiness and knowledge, inspire us for the performance of noblest deeds with our organs. – Sam Veda

OM Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya!

On behalf of “International Jagannatha Society “ I invite you to attend the 4th annual IJS seminar to be held at Omni Hotel, Providence, Rhode island, in association with OSA convention, on 1st and 2nd of July 2016. The expected Guests and Speakers are 1. Hon. J. Oram, cabinet Minister, Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India 2. Ambassador Pramathesh Rath 3. V. C. Prof. Harekrushna Satpathy. I request everybody to attend and learn about ‘Jagannath Consciousness in the World’ and organizational aspects of IJS. Admission is free.

Date 1st and 2nd July 2016.

Venue Omni Hotel, Ball Room., Providence, Rhode Island

Contacts Dr. Bhagabat C. Sahu, drbcasahu@gmail.com, Dr Biswa Sahoo bbsahoo1@gmail.com

Officers of IJS, President Dr Bhagabat C. Sahu, VP Ambassador Pramathesh Rath, President India Branch, VC Prof HK Satpathy, Secy India Branch and in charge Odisha Jugal Satpathy, IAS, S Behera IAS Asst secretary Odisha branch, Coordinator, Barada prasanna Das, Editor Satya Patnaik, USA, Religious Sarat Mohapatra USA, Dr. Uday Dash, Delhi Branch, Sabyasachi Rath, Puri Branch

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ପୁରୁଷୋତ୍ତମ ଦେଶ ଓଡ଼ିଶା

There will be a Meeting of WOO (World Odia Organization) immediately following IJS Seminar.

Venue – Omni Hotel, Ball room. Date: July 2nd, 2016 (Saturday)

Topic - 1. Organizational Aspects

2. Where We Need To Go And How.

Please email us for more information and to make suggestions about 'W.O.O.'

Mission Statement – International Fraternity and Amity.

LET NOBLE THOUGHTS COME TO US FROM ALL SIDES. – RIG VEDA

ପରୀ ହୋଇଗଲେ ମୀରାବାଇ

ଭକ୍ତୀମତୀ ମୀରାବାଇଙ୍କ ନାମ କିଏ ବା ନ ଜାଣେ? ତାଙ୍କ କଥା ଯେତେବେଳେ ମନକୁ ଆସେ, ଗିରିଧାରୀ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ନାମ ଓ ରୂପ ମନରେ ପଡ଼େ। କହିବା ବାହୁଲ୍ୟ, ମୀରାବାଇଙ୍କ ନାମ ସହିତ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଗିରିଧାରୀଙ୍କ ନାମ ଓ ରୂପ ଜଡ଼ିତ । ରାଜକନ୍ୟା ଓ ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ କାଳରେ ରାଜବଧୂ ମୀରାବାଇଙ୍କ ପରିବାରରେ ଯଦିଓ କୂଳଦେବୀଙ୍କ ଭକ୍ତି ପ୍ରଥା ମୂଖ୍ୟ ଥିଲା, ତଥାପି ବାଲ୍ୟକାଳରୁ ମୀରାବାଇ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କୁ ହିଁ ତାଙ୍କର ଇଷ୍ଟ ରୂପେ ବରଣ କରିଥିଲେ । ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ଠାରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଅନନ୍ୟ ଭକ୍ତି ଥିଲା । ଦିବାନିଶି ସଦାସର୍ବଦା ପ୍ରଭୁ ଗିରିଧାରୀଙ୍କ ସେବା ଓ ଭଜନରେ ସେ ନିଜକୁ ହଜାଇ ଦେଉଥିଲେ । ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କ ଅନେକ ନାମ ମଧ୍ୟରୁ ଏକମାତ୍ର ଗିରିଧାରୀ ନାମକୁ ସେ ରଚୁଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ରଚିତ ଅନେକ ଭଜନ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଏହାର ପ୍ରମାଣ ମିଳେ । ମନରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଆସେ, ମୀରାବାଇ ଗିରିଧାରୀ ନାମ ପ୍ରତି ଆକୃଷ୍ଟ ହେବା ପଛରେ ରହସ୍ୟ କ'ଣ ଥିଲା? ହୁଏତ, ଏହା ତାଙ୍କ ପୂର୍ବ ଜନ୍ମର ସଂସ୍କାର ହେତୁ ଆସିଥାଇପାରେ । କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ କହେ, ମୀରାବାଇ ପୂର୍ବ ଜନ୍ମରେ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କୁ ଗିରିଧାରଣ କରିବାର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଦେଖି ତାଙ୍କର ଶେଷ ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ତ୍ୟାଗ କରିଥିଲେ।

ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ କିରଣର ପ୍ରଖରତା ବଢ଼ିବା ସହିତ ପରୀର ଆଖିର ଲୁହ ଶୁଖି ଶୁଖି ଆସୁଥିଲା । ଆହୁରି କେତେ ଦୂର ଅଛି ତା'ର ଗନ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସ୍ଥଳ, ତାହା ତାକୁ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ । ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ପାଇଁ ସେ ଏ ରାସ୍ତା ରେ ଆସିଛି । ସବାରୀ ବାହକମାନଙ୍କର ଗତି ଧୂର ହେବା ସହିତ ସମୟ ସମୟରେ ତା ଅବଶ ଆଖିର ପଲକ ପଡ଼ି ଯାଉଛି । ଚମ୍ପୁ ପଡ଼ି ସେ ଆଖି ଖୋଲିଦେଇ ଅଜଣା ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ପୃଷ୍ଠାକୁ ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଛି । କିଏ ଜାଣେ ତାର ପଥରେ ଫୁଲ ଅଛି ନା କଣ୍ଠା? ନା, ନା, ସେ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରେ କ'ଣ ଭାବୁଛି ? ସର୍ବଦା ମଂଗଳ କାମନା ହିଁ ଶ୍ରେୟ । ଏତେ ଜଣଙ୍କର ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ, ଶୁଭାକାଂକ୍ଷା କଣ ବୃଥା ଯିବ ? ବାପା ପରୀ ପାଇଁ ଶୁଣୁର ଘର ନନ୍ଦଗାଁ ରେ ଠିକ୍ କଲେ । ଗଉଡ଼ ଘର । ଅନେକ ଗାଈ । କ୍ଷୀର ବ୍ୟବସାୟ । ଦ୍ୱାଇଁ ଶୁଖୁଥା ଧୀର ସ୍ୱଭାବ । ସୁଦୃଢ଼ ବଳିଷ୍ଠ ଚେହେରା । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ମନକୁ ପାଇଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ନନ୍ଦଗାଁ କଥା ଶୁଣି ଘରେ ଖୁଡ଼ୀ, ମାଉସୀ ଆଦି କିଛିଟା ଚିତ୍ତେ ଥିବା ପରି ଲାଗିଲେ । କଥା ପଚାରୁ ପଚାରୁ ଜାଣିବାକୁ ମିଳିଲା ଯେ ବ୍ରଜରେ ଯେତେ ନାରୀ, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଘର ଗୃହସ୍ଥିରେ କିଛି ନା କିଛି ଅସୁବିଧା ହୁଏ । ସାଂଗେ ସାଂଗେ ବୋଉ କଥା କାଟି କହିଲା, " ସିଏ ଟୋକାଟାର ସାମ୍ବାକୁ ନଗଲେ ହେଲା । କଥା ସରିଲା । ଯିଏ ନ ଜାଣିଛି, ସିଏ ଫସିଛି । ଆମେ ପରୀକୁ ପାଠ ପଢ଼େଇକି ଛାଡ଼ିବା । ଥରେ ଘର ଜଂଜାଳରେ ମନ ଲାଗିଯାଉ, ପୁଣି ଟୋକା କଥା କିଏ ପଚାରେ । ଶୁଣିଛି, କାଳେ, ସିଏ ଖାଲି ବଇଁଶୀ ଫୁଙ୍କି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ମନକୁ ଟାଣି ନିଏ । ତାପରେ ତ, ତାରି ରୂପ, ତାରି ଗୁଣ, ତାରି ଚେହେରା । ଘରର ଖନ୍ଦାଖାଳ ଠୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ନଇ ତୁଠ ଯାକେ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ର ବିଷୟ ହୁଏ । କାମ ଦାମ ରେ ମନ ଲାଗେନା । ଘର ପରିବାର, ଛୁଆପିଲା ସମସ୍ତେ ଅଣହେଲା ହୋଇଯାନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ପରୀ ବାପାକୁ କିଏ ବୁଝେଇବ ? ତାଙ୍କର ତ ଏକା ଜିଦ୍ । ଥିଲାବାଲା ଘର । ଦୁଧ ଦହି ର ବ୍ୟବସାୟ । ଅଭାବ ବୋଲି କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ଝିଅ ସାଆନ୍ତାଣୀ ହେଇ ବସିବ । ନାହାକ କହିବା ଅନୁସାରେ ରାଜଜୋଟକ ପଡ଼ିଛି । ହଉ, ସର୍ବ ମଂଗଳ ପ୍ରଭୁ, ସବୁ ତୁମ୍ଭରି ଇଚ୍ଛା । ମୋ ଝିଅର ସବୁକିଛି ତୁମ୍ଭକୁ ଲାଗିଲା ।" ଏହିପରି କିଛିଟା କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ପରୀ କାନରେ ପଡ଼େ । ସେ ଲଜ୍ଜାବଶତଃ କିଛି ପଚାରି ପାରେ ନାହିଁ । ଏ ଟୋକା ଜଣକ କିଏ ? ସେ ଯଦି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ମନକୁ ମୋହି ନିଏ ତ ତରିବାରେ କ'ଣ ଅଛି ? ସମସ୍ତେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଭୟଭୀତ କଣ ପାଇଁ ? ସେଦିନ ରାତିରେ ଘରର ସବୁ କାମ ସାରି ବୋଉ ପାନ ଭାଂଗୁ ଭାଂଗୁ ପରୀକୁ କଥା ଛଳରେ ଡାକି କହିଲା, "ନନ୍ଦଗାଁରେ ଗୋଟେ ପିଲା ଅଛି, ନାଁଆଟି ତାର କହେଇଁ । ବଡ଼ ଦୁଷ୍ଟ । ବିଛୁଆଟିଟିଏ । ଯିଏ ବୋହୂ ହେଇ ନନ୍ଦଗାଁ କୁ ଗଲା ତା ମୁହଁ ନ ଦେଖିବା ଯାଏ ତା'ର ଶାନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ତା ଠାରେ କି ଜାଦୁ ଅଛି କେଜାଣି ତାକୁ ଥରେ ଯିଏ ଦେଖିଲା, ସବୁ ପାଶୋରି ଗଲା । ନା ଘରର ହେଇକି ରହିଲା ନା ବାହାରର । ଘର ଗୃହସ୍ଥି ସବୁ ବରବାଦ୍ । ତୁ ଆମର ତାକୁ ଜମାରୁ ଅନେଇବୁନି । ହାତେ ଲମ୍ଫ ଓଢ଼ଣା ଟାଣିକି ଯିବା ଆସିବା କରିବୁ ।" ଏହି ସମୟରେ ଖୁଡ଼ୀ ଘରକୁ ପଶୁ ପଶୁ କହିଲେ, "ନାଇମ ଅପା, ଆମ ହେମ ବିଦା ହେଇ ଗଲା ବେଳକୁ ସବାରୀରେ ପରୀ ଓଢ଼ଣା ଟେକି ପିଲାଟା ତା ମୁହଁ ଦେଖେଇ ଦେଲା । ତା ପରେ ତାର କ'ଣ କେଜାଣି ହେମ ପାଟିରୁ କଥା ବାହାରିଲାନି । କି ଚତୁର୍ଥୀ, କି ଅଷ୍ଟମୀଗୁଳି ସବୁ ଖାଲି ନିରାଶା ରେ ଗଲା । କିଏ କହିଲା, 'ବୋହୂର ଝଡ଼ାଫୁଙ୍କା ଦରକାର' । ରାସ୍ତାରେ କିଏ ଆଉ ଗୁଣି ଗାରେଡ଼ି କରିନି ତ ? ଏତେ ଚଳ ଚଂଚଳ ଝିଅ, ଶାଶୁ ଘରକୁ ଆସୁ ଆସୁ ଯେମିତି ମୁକ୍ତ ହେଇଗଲା । ଖାଲି ମନେ ମନେ କାହାକୁ ଯେମିତି ଖୋଜୁଛି । ଶାଈ ପଡ଼ିଗା ବୋହୂ କ୍ଷାଂଗରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ନଇ ତୁଠକୁ ବାହାରେ, ତା ପାଦରେ ଜୀବନ ଆସିଯାଏ । ତା ମୁହଁରେ ଖୁସି ଦେଖାଯାଏ । କ'ଣ ଯେ ତାର ରହସ୍ୟ କିଏ ଜାଣେ ?" ଏ ସବୁ ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ପରୀର ନିଦ ହଜିଯାଏ । କିଏ ଜାଣିଛି ତାର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ରେ କଣ ଲେଖା ହେଇଛି ? ତା ମନରେ ବି ଇଚ୍ଛା ହୁଏ, ସେ ପିଲାଟାକୁ ଟିକେ ଦେଖି ପାରନ୍ତା କି ? କି ମୋହନୀ ବିଦ୍ୟା ତା ଠାରେ ଅଛି ??? ଛିଃ ଛିଃ । ପରୀ ଜିଭ କାମୁଡ଼ି ପକାଇଲା ।

ଛାତିରେ ଲେଣ୍ଡାଏ ଛେପ ପକାଇଲା । ଏ ସବୁ ସେ କଣ ଭାବି ଚାଲିଛି ? ତା ଜୀବନ ସର୍ବସ୍ୱ, ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖର ସାଥୀ ଶୁଖୁଆ ର ସ୍ମରଣ ବଦଳରେ । ନା, ନା, ଜବରଦସ୍ତି ସେ ଶୋଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲା ।

ଭାବନା ରାଜ୍ୟରୁ ଯେମିତି କିଏ ଫେରେଇ ଆଣିଲା ପରାକୁ । ଏ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସବାରୀ ବାହକମାନେ ସବାରୀକୁ ଗଛ ତଳ ଛାଇ ରେ ରଖି ଚିକିଏ ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ମାରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏ ସମୟରେ ଦଳେ ପିଲା ଉତ୍ସୁକତା ସହ ମାଡି ଆସିଲେ ଇଆଡକୁ । ସତେ ଯେମିତି କିଛି ଆକର୍ଷଣ ଅଛି ଏଇ ଗଛ ତଳେ । ତାଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ପିଲା ଭଙ୍କି ମାରିଲା ସବାରୀ ମଧ୍ୟକୁ । ସାଂଗେ ସାଂଗେ ପରା ତା ଓଢଣାକୁ ହାତେ ଲମ୍ଫ ଟାଣିଦେଲା । ଫିକ୍ ଫିକ୍ ହସି ପିଲାଟା ଧାଇଁ ପଳାଇଲା । ଏହା ସହିତ ପରା ଛାତିର ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସର ପ୍ରଖରତା ବଢି ଚାଲିଲା । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ସିଏ ବହୁତ ଦୂର ବାଟ ଧାଇଁ ଆସିଛି । ଆଉ ରାହା ପାଉନି । ହାତ ପାଦ ରୁ ଝାଲ ବୋହିଗଲା । ସବାରୀ ବାହକଙ୍କ କଥା ଶୁଣି ପରୀର ଶ୍ୱାସ ଥମିଲା । ପ୍ରଭୁ, ଭୋଳାନାଥ, ଏ ବିପଦରୁ ପାରି କର । ଏସବୁ କଣ ହେଇ ଯାଉଛି ? କେମିତି ସେ ଯାଇ ତା ଠାଆ ରେ ପହଂଚିବ ତାକୁ ବୁଝି ଦିଶିଲାନି । ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କୁ ଡାକି ଡାକି ସେ ବାକି ରାସ୍ତା କୁ ପାର ହେଇ ନନ୍ଦଗାଁ ରେ ଯାଇ ପହଂଚିଲା । ଚାରିଆଡେ ଖୁବ୍ କୋଳାହଳ । ଦେଖଣାହାରିଙ୍କ ଭିତ । ଶୁଣୁର ଘର ଲୋକେ ବୋହୁକୁ ଶଂଖ ହୁଳହୁଳି ରେ ପାଛୋଟି ନେଲେ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ । ଆଉ ଏବେ ତର କଣ ? କିନ୍ତୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ମନରେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଚୀ - ପିଲାଟି ଆଉ ବୋହୁକୁ ଭେଟି ନାହିଁତ ??? ସମସ୍ତେ ବୋହୁର ଚେହେରା ଓ ହାବଭାବରୁ ପଢିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ପରୀର ଗତିବିଧିକୁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ନା, ତାଙ୍କ ସନ୍ଦେହ ଭୁଲ । ଆମ ବୋହୁ ଆଜି ବାଜି ଜିତିଛି । ଘରେ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ଆସିଛି । ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ ପରି ବୋହୁ । ଘରଟିକୁ ସୁନା ସଂସାର କରିଦେବ । ଶୁଖୁଆ ବଡ ଭାଗ୍ୟବାନ । କୋଟିକରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ପୁଅ । ଭାଗ୍ୟରେ ଥିଲେ ଏପରି ଯୋଡି ବନେ । ପ୍ରଶଂସା ଶୁଣି ଶୁଣି ଶାଶୁ ଶୁଣୁରଙ୍କର ପାଦ ଆଉ କି ତଳେ ଲାଗେ । ସବୁ ଆଶିଷ, ଆୟୁଷ ମନ ଭରି ବର୍ଷା କରିଦେଲେ ।

ଏହା ମଧ୍ୟରେ କିଛି ବର୍ଷ ବିତି ଯାଇଛି । ହଠାତ୍ ଦିନେ ଅଦିନିଆ ବର୍ଷା କାହିଁ ଥିଲା ମୂଷଳ ଧାରରେ ବର୍ଷିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ବେଳକୁ ବେଳ ବର୍ଷାର ବେଗ ବଢିଚାଲିଲା, ଯେମିତି ଧରତୀ ଆଉ ଆକାଶ ପାଣିରେ ଏକାକାର ହେଇଯିବ । ନା କେବେ ଏଭଳି ଦେଖାଥିଲା ନା ଶୁଣାରେ ଥିଲା । ସବୁଆଡେ ହା'ହାକାର ପାଡିଲା, କୁଆଡକୁ ଯିବେ ? ଗାଈ ମାନଙ୍କର ହମାରଡି ବର୍ଷାର ଶବ୍ଦକୁ ପାର କରି କାନ ଭିତରେ ପଶିଯାଉଥିଲା । ଲାଗିଲା ଯେମିତି ଆଜିହିଁ ସବୁ ଶେଷ ହେଇଯିବ । ସହାୟତା ପାଇଁ ଯିଏ ଯଉ ଉପାୟ ପାରିଲେ କଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁ ବୃଥା । ହେ ପ୍ରଭୁ, ହେ ଭୋଳାନାଥ, ରକ୍ଷାକର, ବଂଚାଅ ପ୍ରଭୁ । ଇୟେ ସବୁ କଣ ହେବାକୁ ଯାଉଛି, ପରୀର ଚିତ୍କାର ବାହାରେ । ଏତିକି ବେଳେ ବାହାରୁ ଡାକ ଶୁଭିଲା, "ସମସ୍ତେ ବାହାରି ଆସ । ଘର ଛାଡି ପଳାଇଚାଲ । ନ ହେଲେ ଏ କାଳ ବର୍ଷା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଗିଳିଦେବ । ନନ୍ଦ ରାଜା କୁଆଡେ ଆଶ୍ରୟ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି । ସେଇଠିକି ଚାଲ ।" ପରୀ କିଛି ବୁଝି ପାରୁନି କଅଣ କରିବ । ଏତିକି ବେଳେ ତା ଶାଶୁ, ନନ୍ଦ ପରୀର ହାତ ଟାଣି ବାହାରକୁ ନେଇ ଆସିଲେ । 'ପଳାଇ ଚାଲ', କହି ଗାଈମାନଙ୍କୁ ଖୋଲିଦେଲେ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଏକ ମୁହଁ ହେଇ ଗାଁ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ପଛରେ ଧାଇଁଲେ । ପଚାରିବାକୁ ଶାହସ ନହିଁ କି ସମୟ ନାହିଁ । ପ୍ରଚଣ୍ଡ ବର୍ଷାର ବେଗକୁ ଖାତିର ନ କରି ପ୍ରାଣ ପଣେ ଧାଇଁଛନ୍ତି । ପରୀ ଦେଖିଲା, ସମସ୍ତେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଯାଗାରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ଗାଁଲୋକଙ୍କ ଭିତ । ଏତିକି ବେଳେ ପାହାଡଟି ଛତା ସଦୃଶ ଟେକି ହେଇଗଲା । ଆଉ ତାରି ତଳେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ଥାନ ଦେଲା । କି ମଣିଷ, କି ଗାଈ ଗୋରୁ ସମସ୍ତେ ପାହାଡ ତଳେ ନିଶ୍ଚିନ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ଇଏ କି ଅଭୁତ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ! ପାହାଡକୁ ଟେକି ଧରିଛି ଗୋଟିଏ ସାନ ପିଲାଟି । ପୁଣି ତାର ବାମ ହାତର କାଣି ଆଂଗୁଠିରେ । ସେ କି ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ! ଘନଶ୍ୟାମ ଶରୀର । ବିଜୁଳିକୁ ନିନ୍ଦା କଲାପରି ପୀତବସନ । ଗଳାରେ ବନମାଳା । ଶିରରେ ମୟୂର ପରର ମୁକୁଟ । କଳା ବଦନରେ ପଦ୍ମ ପାଖୁଡା ପରି ବିଶାଳ ନୟନ ! ଆହା ଆଖି ଫେରୁନି ପରୀର । ସତେ ଯେମିତି ସେ ସମ୍ବୋଧିତ ହୋଇ ଯାଉଛି । ପିଲାଟି ପରୀକୁ ଅନେଇ ଯେମିତି ହସୁଛି ଆଉ କିଛି କହୁଛି..... । ଠିକ୍ ଏତିକି ବେଳେ ପରୀର ଶିଥିଳ ଶରୀର ଧରାଶାୟୀ ହେଲା । ପରମ ଶାନ୍ତି... । ସବୁ କିଛିର ସମାପ୍ତି ।

ଉପୋରକ୍ତ କାହାଣୀର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଚରିତ୍ର ପରୀ ଏକ କାଳ୍ପନିକ ନାମ ଅଟେ, ଯିଏକି ବ୍ରଜ ରେ ଏକ ଗୋପୀ ଥିଲେ । ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କର ଗୋବର୍ଦ୍ଧନ ଗିରି ଧାରଣ ଦର୍ଶନ କରି ସେ ଶେଷ ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ ତ୍ୟାଗ କରିଥିଲେ । ଏହି ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କ ମାନସପତରେ ଲେଖି ହେଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ କାଳରେ ସେ ରାଜକନ୍ୟା ମୀରାବାଇ ଭାବରେ ରାଜସ୍ଥାନର ମେର୍ଥୀ ଠାରେ ଜନ୍ମ ନେଲେ । ଅନନ୍ୟ ଭକ୍ତି, ସମର୍ପଣ ଓ ଶରଣାଗତ୍ତିର ସେ ଉଦାହରଣ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଅନନ୍ତ କାଳ ଯାଏ ମୀରାବାଇଙ୍କର ନାମ ଏ ଜଗତକୁ ଆଲୋକିତ କରୁଥିବ ।

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ବୋଉ

ମିତାଳି ଦାସ



ଜୀବନ ଦେଇ ଦୁନିଆକୁ ଆଣିଥିଲା ଯିଏ
ମୋ ବୋଉ ପରି ସତରେ, ହବ ଆଉ କିଏ
ଦେଇଥିଲା ଏହି ପିଣ୍ଡରେ ପ୍ରାଣ ମୋହର
ଝରିଲା ଜୀବନ ଅମୃତ ବନ୍ଧୁ ତା'ର (୧)

ଉଜାଗର ରହିଥିଲା ସେ କେତେକେତେ ରାତି
ଶାନ୍ତିରେ ଶୋଇଥିଲି ସ୍ୱର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପାଇ ତାର ଛାତି
ଦେଇଥିଲା ମୋ ପାଟିରେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ନିବାଲା
କେତେଥର ରହିଥିବ ସେ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଭୋକିଲା (୨)

ଦୁନିଆ ସଙ୍ଗରେ ମୋତେ ଆଗେଇବାକୁ ହୋଇବ
ହାତ ଧରି ଶିକ୍ଷାଇଲା ଚାଲିବାକୁ ପଡିବ
ପାଇ ତା'ର ମମତା ଆଉ କୋମଳର ପରଶ
ଫୁଟିଥିଲି ଫୁଲ ପରି ହୋଇ ହରଷିତ (୩)

ମୋ ସୁଖରେ ବୋଉ ମୋର ହେଉଥିଲା ସୁଖ
ମୋ ଦୁଃଖରେ ପୁଣି କେବେ ହେଉଥିଲା ଦୁଖ
କେବେ କେବେ ଗାଳି ଗୁଳଜ କରି ମାତ ମାରୁଥିଲା
ମମତାର ଶ୍ରାବଣଧାରା ପୁଣି ବହି ଚାଲୁଥିଲା (୪)

ବୋଉ ମୋର ବୁଝୁଥିଲା ,ମୋ ମନର ବେଦନା
ତା' ସିନେହରେ ତିଲେହେଲେ ନ ଥିଲା ଛଳନା
ପୁଣି ଯଦି, କେବେ ମୋ ଆଖୁରୁ ଝରୁଥିଲା ଲୁହ
ତା' ହୃଦୟରୁ ବହୁଥିଲା ରକତର ସୁଅ (୫)

ବାପାଙ୍କ ରାଗର ପ୍ରକୋପରୁ ହେବାକୁ ବଞ୍ଚିତ
ବୋଉ'ର ପଣତକାନି ହୁଅଇ ରକ୍ଷାର କବଚ
ବୋଉର କୋଳରେ ମିଳୁଥିଲା ସରଗର ସୁଖ
ମଥା ରଖୁ ଭୁଲୁଥିଲି ମୋର ଯେତେ ସବୁ ଦୁଃଖ (୬)

ଦୁନିଆରେ ସବୁଲୋକ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତି ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର
ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ବୋଉର ମନ ଥିଲା ନିସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପର
ବୁକୁଟିରି ଢାଳିଥାଏ ସେ ଅମୃତର ଝରଣ
କେବେ ସେ କହେନାହିଁ ସୁଝିବାକୁ ଅମୃତର ରଣ (୭)

ଯଦି ଅଟେ କେହି ଦୁନିଆରେ ସବୁଠାରୁ ନିଜର
ବୋଉ ଠାରୁ ସତେ ଅବା କିଏ ହେବ ଅତି ଆପଣାର
ଆସିଥାନ୍ତି ଦୁନିଆକୁ ପ୍ରଭୁ କାହିଁ କେତେ ଯେ ବେଶରେ
ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଦେଖା ପ୍ରଭୁ,ମୋତେ ମୋ 'ବୋଉ'ର
ରୂପରେ (୮)

ବେଙ୍ଗ କହେ ବେଙ୍ଗୁଲି ଲୋ

ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ



ସବୁ କିଛି ଠିକ୍ ଥିଲା । ବସନ୍ତ ଆସିଯାଇଥିଲା । ସୁନେଲି ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟକିରଣ ମନ ଉପରେ ସତେକି ଖୁସିର ରଙ୍ଗ ବୋଲିଦେଉଥିଲା । ସବୁ ଚିଢ଼ି ଚ୍ୟାନେଲରେ ଚେରିକୁସମ୍ବ ଫେଣ୍ଟିଭାଲର ଖବର ଅତି ଉନ୍ମାଦନା ଓ ଉତ୍ସାହର ସହିତ ପ୍ରସାରିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ବାହାରେ ୭୮ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ଫାରେନ୍‌ହାଇଟ୍ ତାପମାତ୍ରା । ଘରଭିତରେ ସନ୍ତରୁମ୍ରେ ରହିଥିବା ମଲ୍ଲୀଫୁଲ ଗଛରେ ବି କଜ ଧରିଆସୁଥିଲା ଓ ଭୁରୁସୁଙ୍ଗା ଗଛରେ ପତ୍ର କଅଁଳିଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ହଠାତ୍ ସବୁ ଏପଟସେପଟ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଚିଢ଼ିରେ ପ୍ରସାରିତ ହେଲା ତା'ପର ଦୁଇଦିନ ବହୁତ ଥଣ୍ଡା ହେବ; ଏମିତି କି ବରଫ ବି ପଡ଼ିପାରେ । ତେଣୁ ବାହାରେ ଯଦି କିଏ କିଛି ଗଛ ରଖୁଥିବ, ଭିତରକୁ ନେଇଆସିବା ପାଇଁ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦିଆଗଲା । ମାନିର ସମସ୍ତ ଯୋଜନା ପଣ୍ଡ ହୋଇଗଲା । ସାନପୁଅ ପ୍ରଭବର ଜନ୍ମଦିନ ପାଇଁ ପାର୍କରେ ଯେଉଁ ପାର୍ଟି ରଖୁଥିଲା, ଏ ବରଫପାଗରେ ସେ ପାର୍ଟିକୁ କିଏ ଆସିବେ ବୋଲି ତାର ଆଉ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ନଥିଲା । ମନେମନେ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ବହୁତ ରାଗିଲା ମାନି । ଏ ଏପ୍ରିଲ ମାସରେ ବରଫଟା କଣ ପଡ଼ିବା ଦରକାର ଥିଲା, ଆଉ ପୁଣି ଯେବେ ମାନି ହିଁ କୌଣସି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ରଖୁଥିବ ?

ତରୁଣ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା ଦେଲେ, "ଗ୍ଲୋବାଲ୍ ୱାର୍ମିଙ୍ଗ୍ ପାଇଁ ଏମିତି ସବୁ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହେଉଛି । କେବେ କଣ ପାଗ ହେବ, ତାହାର କିଛି ଠିକ୍ ଠିକଣା ନାହିଁ । ସେଥିରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେବାର କିଛି ନାହିଁ । ପାର୍କ ରିଜର୍ଭେସନ୍‌ଟା କ୍ୟାନ୍‌ସଲ୍ କରାଇଦେବା । "

ତରୁଣ ବଡ଼ ସହଜରେ କହିଦେଲେ । ହେଲେ ମାନି ଏତେ ସହଜରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କଲାନି । ଏବର୍ଷ ସଂଯୋଗବଶତଃ ଶନିବାର ଛୁଟିଦିନରେ ହିଁ ପ୍ରଭବର ଜନ୍ମଦିନ ପଡ଼ୁଥିଲା । ତାପରେ ଏଇଟା ତାର ହାଇସ୍କୁଲର ଶେଷବର୍ଷ; ହୁଏତ ଘରେ ଜନ୍ମଦିନ ପାଳିବାର ଶେଷ ଅବସର । ତା' ସହିତ ପୁଣି ଜୋଡ଼ି ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ଆଉ ଏକ ଶୁଭସମ୍ବାଦ; ପୁଅକୁ ହାର୍ଡ୍‌ୱେର୍ ମ୍ୟୁନିଭର୍ସିଟିରେ ଆଡ଼ମିଶନ୍ ମିଳିଛି । ପ୍ରଥମେ ତ ସେମାନେ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ ଆଉ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଭଳି ସ୍କୁଲବର୍ଷ ସରିଲାପରେ ଜୁନ୍‌ମାସରେ ପାର୍ଟି କରିବେ, ହେଲେ ଏଇଟା ଏକ ବିଶେଷ ପାର୍ଟି ଥିଲା, ପୁଅର ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ । ପୁଅର ଇଚ୍ଛା ଥିଲା ପାର୍କରେ ପାର୍ଟିଟା ହେବ, ପିଲାମାନେ ଖେଳକୁଦ କରିବେ, ତାପରେ ମ୍ୟୁଜିକ୍ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ କରିବେ, ଗୀତ ଶୁଣିବେ, ଖାଇବେ ଓ ମସ୍ତିକରିବେ । ଏବେ ସବୁ ଫସରଫାଟିଗଲା । ବଡ଼ପୁଅ ପ୍ରଣବ ବି ଟିକେଟ୍ କରିଦେଇଥିଲା ଦୁଇଦିନପାଇଁ ଆସିବ ବୋଲି ।

ତରୁଣ ପୁଅ ସହିତ କଣ ଫୁସୁରୁଫାସର ହେଲେ, ତାପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଦିନରେ ସବୁ ଯୋଜନା ବଦଳିଗଲା । ପାର୍ଟିହେବାର ଯୋଜନା ରହିଲା, ହେଲେ ପାର୍କ ବଦଳରେ, ହେବ ହୋଟେଲ୍ ବଲ୍‌ରୁମ୍‌ରେ । କେବଳ ଖେଳ ଛଡ଼ା, ଆଉ ସବୁ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ ରହିଲା । ବରଫ ପଡ଼ିବ ସତ, ହେଲେ ଏତେ ନୁହେଁ କି ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କ ଯାତାୟତରେ ସମସ୍ୟା ରହିବ । ଏମିତିରେ ସବୁ ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍ ହୋଇଗଲା ଓ ତା' ଦୁଇଦିନ ପରେ ପାର୍ଟି ବି ଭଲରେ ଭଲରେ ସରିଗଲା । ହେଲେ ସେ ପାର୍ଟି ପରଠାରୁ ହିଁ ହଠାତ୍ ବଦଳିଗଲା ମାନିର ଜୀବନ ।

ପୁଅକୁ କେତେବର୍ଷ ଅବା ହବ ? ଏଇ ସତର ପୁରି ଅଠର ଚାଲିଲା । ହେଲେ ସେ ଝିଅଟି ଭାଲେରି, ତା' ସହିତ ପୁଅର ଏତେ ମିଳାମିଶାଟା ମାନିର ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଆତଙ୍କ ଖେଳାଇଦେଲା । କେମିତି ଲାଗିଯାଉଥିଲା ସେ ପ୍ରଭବର ଦେହରେ ମ ? ଏ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁରେ ନା ଲାଜ, ନା ସରମ । ତାପରେ ଦେହ ଘୋଡ଼ାଇ ପୋଷାକ ପିନ୍ଧିଲେ କଣ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହାନି ହୋଇଯାଏ ଯେ, ଏଠିକାର ପିଲାମାନେ,

ବିଶେଷତଃ ଝିଅମାନେ ସବୁ ଏମିତି ସର୍ତ୍ତ ଆଉ ତି ସାର୍ତ୍ତ ପିନ୍ଧିବେ ଯେ ମଣିଷ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି ଲାଜରେ ସଜିଯିବ । ହଠାତ୍ ମାନିର ମନେହେଲା ଯେ, ପୁଅର ସବୁ ଆତିଭମେଷ୍ଟ ଏ ଝିଅଟା ନଷ୍ଟ କରିଦେବ । ସେ ଝିଅର ବେଶ, ପୋଷାକ, ନଗ୍ନ, ଅନାବୃତ୍ତ ଶରୀର ଦେଖି ସେଦିନଠାରୁ ତା' ମନରେ ଏତେ ଭୟ ପଶିଗଲା ଯେ ସେଥିରୁ ସେ ଉଦ୍ଧାର ପାଇପାରିଲାନି ।

ମାନିର ମନୋଭାବ ବୁଝିପାରି ତରୁଣ କହିଲେ, "ଏମିତି ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେବାର କଣ ଅଛି; ଆଜିକାଲି ଯୁଗରେ ଏମିତି ହେଉଛି । ତା ଛଡ଼ା ପୁଅ ତ ସବୁଥିରେ ଭଲ କରୁଛି; ହାର୍ଡ଼ୱେରେ ଆଡ଼ମିଶନ୍ ପାଇଲା, ସେଇଟା କଣ କମ୍ କଥା, ତମେ ଏତେ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବାର କଣ ଦରକାର ?"

"ହେଲେ ଏତେ ସାନପିଲାଟା, ଏତେ ଛୋଟବେଳୁ...। ପ୍ରଣବ ତ କାହିଁ ଏମିତି ନଥିଲା ।"

ତରୁଣ କିନ୍ତୁ କିଛି ଚିନ୍ତିତ ହେଲେନି । "ତମେ ଅଯଥାରେ ଏମିତି ଚିନ୍ତା ସବୁ କରନି; ନିଜ ଦେହ ଖରାପ ହେବ । ପିଲାମାନେ ବଡ଼ହେଲେ, ତାଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ଦିଅ; ସେମାନଙ୍କ କଥାରେ ଆମେ କାହିଁକି ବେଶି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଖେଳେଇବା ?"

ହେଲେ ମାନିର ମନ ଥୟ ହେଉନଥିଲା । ସେଇ ଏକା ସ୍କୁଲର ମାଟ୍ । ବଡ଼ପୁଅ ପ୍ରଣବର ସାଙ୍ଗ । ସବୁଥିରେ ଭଲ କରୁଥିଲା; ସିଏ ବି ହାର୍ଡ଼ୱେରେ ଆଡ଼ମିସନ୍ ପାଇଥିଲା; ମେଡିକାଲ୍ ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ମନ କରିଥିଲା, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ବିଜ୍ଞାନରେ ଆଡ଼ମିସନ୍ ନେଇଥିଲା । ଏଇ ଗତବର୍ଷ ଶୁଣିଲାବେଳକୁ କଣନା ସିଏ ପଢୁଛି "ହିଷ୍ଟ୍ରି ଅଫ୍ ଆର୍ଟ୍ ଆଣ୍ଡ୍ ଆର୍କିଟେକ୍ଚର" । ଶୁଣୁଣୁଣୁ କଣନା, ମାଟ୍ ଗୋଟିଏ ଗାର୍ଲଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ୍ ପାଇଲା ଯିଏ କି "ହିଷ୍ଟ୍ରି ଅଫ୍ ଆର୍ଟ୍ ଆଣ୍ଡ୍ ଆର୍କିଟେକ୍ଚର" ପଢୁଥିଲା । ସେଇ ଗାର୍ଲଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ୍ ସହିତ ବେଶି ସମୟ କେମିତି କଟାଇପାରିବ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସେ ସବୁ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ଛାଡ଼ି ସେଇ ସବ୍‌ଜେକ୍ଟ୍ ହିଁ ପଢ଼ିଲା । ଆଜିକାଲି ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ଅଜବ ଫିଲୋସୋଫି । କିଏ ତାନ୍ତ୍ରି ପଢୁପଢୁ ଓକିଲ ହେଲାଣି ତ, କିଏ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟରିଙ୍ଗ୍ ପଢୁପଢୁ ଆର୍ଟିଷ୍ଟ ହେଲାଣି । ଭଗବାନ କେମିତି ଏ ପିଲା ଦୁଇଟିକୁ ସଦ୍‌ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ, ସେଇ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ହିଁ ସେ ସବୁଦିନ କରେ ।

ମାନିର ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଥିଲା ଯେ ମାଟ୍ ଯଦି ତାର ନିଜ ପିଲା ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା, କାନମୋଡି ଚଟକଣିଟିଏ ପକେଇଦିଅନ୍ତା ଗାଲରେ । ନିଜ କ୍ୟାରିଅର୍ ନଦେଖି, ଏ ଗାର୍ଲଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ୍ ପଛରେ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ନଷ୍ଟ କିଏ କରେ ପାଗଳଙ୍କ ଭଳି ? ତରୁଣ ହସରେ ଉଡେଇଦେଇଥିଲେ । "ସତକଥା, ହେଲେ କିଏ କୋଉଥିରେ ସୁଖପାଏ । ତମକୁ ଯେଉଁଟା ଭଲଲାଗେ, ସେଇଟା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଯେ ଭଲଲାଗିବ, ତାର କଣ ଗ୍ୟାରେଣ୍ଟି ଅଛି । ହୁଏତ ମାଟ୍‌ର ଖୁସି ତା ଗାର୍ଲଫ୍ରେଣ୍ଡ୍ ପାଖରେ; ସେଇଟା ତାର ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ନମ୍ବର ଡ୍ଵାନ୍ । ସେଥିରେ ତମେ କାହିଁକି ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଖେଳାଉଛ ?"

ଭାଲେରି ସହିତ ପ୍ରଭବର ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ଛବିଟି ଦେଖିବାଦିନରୁ ତା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ମାଟ୍‌କଥା ବେଶିବେଶି ପଶୁଥିଲା । ଯଦି ମାଟ୍ ଭଳି ଭାଲେରି ପଛରେ ପଡ଼ି ପୁଅ ଦିନେ ନିଜ କ୍ୟାରିଅର୍‌କୁ ଭୁଲିଯିବ, ତେବେ ... ? ଦିନେ ସିଏ ପରୋକ୍ଷରେ ପଚାରିଦେଲା ପ୍ରଭବକୁ, "ହଇରେ, ତୋ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ଆଉସବୁ କିଏ କେଉଁଠି ଆଡ଼ମିସନ୍ ପାଇଲେ ?" ପ୍ରଭବ କହିଗଲା ତା ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ । ସେଥିରେ ଭାଲେରି ବି ଥିଲା । ଭାଲେରି ଆଡ଼ମିସନ୍ ପାଇଥିଲା ବୋଷ୍ଟନ୍ ଯୁନିଭର୍ସିଟିର ମ୍ୟୁଜିକ୍ ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍‌ରେ ଫୁଲ୍ ସ୍କଲାର୍‌ସିପ୍ ସହିତ ।

"ସିଏ ଚାରିବର୍ଷ କାଳ ମ୍ୟୁଜିକ୍ ପଢ଼ିବ ?" - ମାନି ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହୋଇଥିଲା ।

"ହଁ, ମ୍ୟୁଜିକ୍ ତାର ପାଶନ୍; ସିଏ ଅନ୍ୟ ଯୁନିଭର୍ସିଟିରୁ ବି ଅଫର୍ ପାଇଥିଲା; ହେଲେ ବୋଷ୍ଟନ୍ ଯୁନିଭର୍ସିଟି ତାକୁ ଫୁଲ୍ ସ୍କଲାର୍‌ସିପ୍ ଦେଉଛି, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ସେ ସେଇଠିକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ଛିରକରିଛି ।" - ପ୍ରଭବ କହିଲା । ସେଦିନ ତରୁଣଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ନିଜ ଶକ୍ତା ବିଷୟରେ ଜଣାଇଲା ମାନି । "ଜାଣିଛ, ସେ ଭାଲେରି ବି ବୋଷ୍ଟନ୍ ଯୁନିଭର୍ସିଟିରେ ପଢ଼ିବ । ମତେ ଜମା ଭଲଲାଗୁନି । ଏକା ସହରରେ ରହିବ । ଏ ପ୍ରଭବଟାକୁ ମୋକ୍ଷା କରି ବେଶ୍ ଖେଳେଇବ । ମତେ ତ ଚିନ୍ତା ହେଉଛି ଯେ, ପ୍ରଭବ ଯଦି ମେଡିକାଲ୍ ଫୋକସ୍ ଭୁଲି ମ୍ୟୁଜିକ୍‌ରେ ପଶିଯିବ ।"

ପ୍ରଭବ ବି ଭଲ ବଂଶୀ ବଜାଏ ଓ ସ୍କୁଲ କୋରସରେ ଗାଏ । ସାରା ଷ୍ଟେଟ୍‌ରେ ସେ ଦୁଇଥର ବଂଶୀ ବଜାଇ ଚମ୍ପିଆନ୍ ହୋଇଛି । ଭଲ ମ୍ୟୁଜିସିଆନ୍ ଭାବେ ତାର ଖ୍ୟାତି ଅଛି । ହଠାତ୍ ତରୁଣଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ଚିନ୍ତିତ ଦିଶିଲା । ପୁଣି ପର ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ସେ ନିଜକୁ ସଂଯତ କରିନେଲେ ଓ କହିଲେ, "ଦେଖ, ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା ଓ ଚାହିଦା ଏକାଭଳି ନୁହେଁ; ଭଲ ଛାତ୍ରଛାତ୍ରୀ ମାନେ ବହୁତ ବିଷୟରେ ଭଲକରନ୍ତି; ହେଲେ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷାବେଳେ ସେମାନେ ସେସବୁରୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ବିଷୟ ହିଁ ବାଛନ୍ତି । ଏଇ ମତେ ଦେଖତ, ମୁଁ ଭଲ ଡ୍ରାମା କରୁଥିଲି, ସବୁ ଡ୍ରାମାରେ ହିରୋ ହେଉଥିଲି; ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ବି ଭଲ କରୁଥିଲି, ଗଳ୍ପ, କବିତା ଲେଖାରେ ଏମିତିକି ମେଡିକାଲ୍ ସାରିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବି ସକ୍ରିୟଥିଲି; ହେଲେ ଏବେ ମୁଁ କଣ ଡ୍ରାମା କରୁଛି ନା ସାହିତ୍ୟ କରୁଛି; ଏବେ ମୁଁ ମେଡିକାଲ୍ କଲେଜ୍‌ରେ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ଅଛି । ବାସ୍, ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ କାମ, ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ପରିଚୟ । ତେବେ ମୋର ଅଭିନୟ ଓ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଜ୍ଞାନ ମତେ ମୋ ପ୍ରଫେସନ୍‌ରେ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରୁଛି । ପ୍ରଭବ ଯେ ନିଜ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟରେ ରହିବ, ସେ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ ମୋର ଅଛି ।"

ମାନି ଆଶ୍ଚସ୍ତ ହେଲା । ପ୍ରଭବ ଉତ୍ତମ ଛାତ୍ର; ସବୁ ଶିକ୍ଷକ, ଶିକ୍ଷୟିତ୍ରୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ପରମ ପ୍ରିୟ ସେ; ଗର୍ବରେ ଛାତି ଫୁଲିଉଠେ । ବଡ଼ପୁଅ ପ୍ରଣବ ମଧ୍ୟ ସବୁଥିରେ ଭଲ କରୁଥିଲା । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଫୋନ୍ କଲୀବେଳେ, ବୋଉ, ଅପା ଓ ଭାଇଜଙ୍କ ସହ ଗପିବାବେଳେ ଖାଲି ନିଜ ପୁଅମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରସସ୍ତି ସ୍ଵତଃସ୍ଫୁର୍ତ୍ତ ଭାବେ ବାହାରିପଡ଼େ ତା' ପାଟିରୁ । ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀଙ୍କ ମେଳରେ ବି ସେଇ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ହିଁ ସେ ଗପେ । ସେତେବେଳେ ମନେପଡ଼ିଯାଏ ତା ନିଜର ବଡ଼ମାଉସୀଙ୍କ କଥା, ଯିଏ ସବୁବେଳେ ନିଜ ପିଲାଙ୍କ କଥା ଗପନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ମାନି ଦିନେ ପରିହାସ କରୁଥିଲା । ହେଲେ ନିଜ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ସଫଳତା ଯେ ବାପା, ମାଆଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ କେତେ ବଡ଼କଥା, ସେଇଟା ସିଏ ମା' ହୋଇ ବୁଝିପାରିଛି । ବଡ଼ପୁଅ କଥା ଅଲଗା ଥିଲା, ସିଏ ସେତେ ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ନଥିଲା । ବଡ଼ପୁଅର ପ୍ରମ୍ ପାଇଁ କାହାକୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନେବ ହୋଇ ଶେଷରେ ସାଙ୍ଗ ବିଶାଖାର ଝିଅକୁ ଭଲ ଢେରୁଟିଏ ଲାଞ୍ଜଦେଇ ପଠାଇଥିଲା, ସେକଥା ମନେପଡ଼ିଲେ ହସମାଡ଼େ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ବଡ଼ପୁଅ ପାଇଁ ଚିନ୍ତା କମ୍ ଥିଲା । ପ୍ରଭବଟାର ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଏ ମିଳାମିଶା ଗୁଣଟି ହିଁ ମାନିର ଚିନ୍ତାର କାରଣ ।

ଏବେ ଗୋଟିଏ ବାହାଘରରେ ଦେଖାହେଲା ଗୀତାଅପାଙ୍କ ସହିତ । ତାଙ୍କ ମନଟି ଦୁଃଖଥିଲା ଭଲି ଜଣାପଡୁଥିଲା । ମାନି ଯାଇ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ବସିଲା ଓ ଦୁଃଖସୁଖ ହେଲା । କହୁକହୁ ଗୀତଅପା ବଖାଣିଲେ ତାଙ୍କ ଦୁଃଖ । ତାଙ୍କ ପୁଅ ଶିବ, ଯିଏ ପି.ଏଚ୍. ଡି. କରୁଥିଲା, ଏବେ ପି.ଏଚ୍. ଡି. ଛାଡ଼ି, ଜଣେ ମେଡ଼ିକାନ୍ ଝିଅ ପଛରେ ପଡ଼ିଛି ଓ "ହାବିଟାଟ୍ ଫର୍ ହ୍ୟୁମାନିଟି" ସଂସ୍ଥା ସହିତ ଦୁଇଜଣାଯାକ ଯାଇ ସେଣ୍ଟ୍ରାଲ୍ ଆମେରିକାରେ ସବୁ ଘର ତିଆରି କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଗୀତାଅପାଙ୍କର ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ବୁଝିପ୍ରସର ବଢ଼ିଯାଇଛି, ଶର୍କରା ବି । ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ଵାମୀଙ୍କର ଅବସ୍ଥା ବି ସେମିତି । ଗୋଟିଏ ବୋଲି ପୁଅ, କେତେ ସ୍ଵପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ ସେମାନେ । ସବୁ ତ ଠିକ୍‌ଠାକ୍ ଥିଲା, ହଠାତ୍ ଏମିତି ଧକ୍କା ଦେଲା ପିଲାଟା ?

ମାନି ମୁଣ୍ଡ କାମ କରୁନଥିଲା, ଗ୍ଲୋବାଲ୍ ଓ୍ଵାର୍ମିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଭଲି ଏ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ମନରେ ବି ଏକ ଗ୍ଲୋବାଲ୍ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହେଉଛି । କିଏ କଣ ଜୀବନରେ କରିବ, କିଛି କହିହେବ ନାହିଁ । ଆଗେ ସେସବୁ ସହଜ ଥିଲା, ଯିଏ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ଥିଲା, ସିଏ ଶିକ୍ଷକ ହୋଇ ରହୁଥିଲା ତା' ଜୀବନଯାକ; ଯିଏ ଡାକ୍ତର ଥିଲା, ସିଏ ଡାକ୍ତର; ଯିଏ କାରିଗର ଥିଲା, ସିଏ କାରିଗର । ଇଏ କଣସବୁ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହେଲାଣି ଯେ, ହଜାର ହଜାର ବିଷୟ ସବୁ ସ୍କୁଲ୍, କଲେଜ୍ ମାନଙ୍କରେ; ଘୋଡ଼ା ପାଳିବା, ରୋଷେଇଆ ହେବାଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ସଜାସଜି କରିବା ମଧ୍ୟ ବିଷୟବସ୍ତୁରେ ସାମିଲ୍ ହେଲାଣି । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ହୁଏତ ଏ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଆନମନା ହେଉଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜଗ ମନେପଡ଼ିଗଲା, "ବେଙ୍ଗ କହେ ବେଙ୍ଗୁଲି ଲୋ ପୃଥିବୀ କ୍ଷଣ କ୍ଷଣକେ ଆନ ।"

ତରୁଣ କହିଲେ, "ତମେ ଭଲ ଉଦାହରଣ ତ କାହିଁ ମନେ ପକାଉନ; କୋଉଠି ଚିକେ ଖରାପ ହୋଇଗଲା ଯେ ସେଇକଥାକୁ ଭାବି ଖାଲିଟାରେ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ସମୟ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏମିତି ଖରାପଚିନ୍ତାରେ ବିତାଉଛ । ପୁଣି ଏ ଦେଶରେ ତ ହଜାର ହଜାର ପିଲା ଡାକ୍ତର ହେଉଛନ୍ତି, କଲେଜ୍ ପ୍ରଫେସର୍ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି; ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର୍ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି; ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଗୀତାଅପାଙ୍କ ପୁଅ କଣ କଲା ବୋଲି ସମସ୍ତେ କଣ ସେଇଆ କରିବେ, ନା ସମସ୍ତେ ଯାହା କରିବେ, ତମ ପୁଅ ସେମିତି କରିବ ? ଏକା ମା' ପେଟର ରାବଣ, ବିଭୀଷଣଙ୍କ କଥା ତ ଜାଣିଛ; ପୁଣି କାହିଁକି ବୁଝି ନବୁଝିବା ଭଲି ଡ୍ରାମା କରୁଛ ?"

ମରଦପିଲାଙ୍କ ଚିନ୍ତା ହୁଏତ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଚିନ୍ତାଠାରୁ ଅଲଗା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତରୁଣଙ୍କୁ ସବୁ ସହଜ ଲାଗେ, ସାଧାରଣ ମନେ ହୁଏ । ବେଳେବେଳେ ମାନିକୁ ନିଜ ଉପରେ ଭୀଷଣ ଚିତ୍ତିମାଡ଼େ । କାହିଁକି ଯେ ଏତେ ବେକାର ଚିନ୍ତା ସବୁ ତା' ମୁଣ୍ଡକୁ ଆସେ କେଜାଣି ?

ପ୍ରଭବ ସେଦିନ ଆସି ଜଣାଇଲା, "ମା, ଆମେ ସିନିଅର୍ ପିଲାମାନେ ମର୍ଟଲ୍ ବିର୍, ସାଉଥ୍ କାରୋଲିନା, ଯିବୁ ।" ମାନି କିଛି କହି ଆସୁଥିଲେ, ହେଲେ ତରୁଣ ଆଖିରେ ଆଖିରେ ଇଶାରା ଦେଇ ମନାକଲେ । ନିଜେ ପଚାରିଲେ, "କେତେଜଣ ପିଲା ଯାଉଛ ? ଚିତର କିଏ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି ?"

"ନା, ଆମେ ସିନିଅର୍ ପିଲା କେବଳ ଯାଉଛୁ ।"

ମାନି ଆଉ ସମ୍ଭାଳି ପାରିଲାନି; "ଖାଲି ପୁଅ ପିଲା ମାନେ ଯାଉଛ ନା, ପୁଅ, ଝିଅ ମିଶିକରି ଯାଉଛ ?"

"ସମସ୍ତେ ମିଶିକରି ଯାଉଛୁ, ୨୦ ଜଣ ଝିଅ ଓ ୨୬ ଜଣ ପୁଅ । ମିସେସ୍ କିଙ୍ଗ୍ ସବୁ ବସ୍ ଓ ହୋଟେଲ୍ ଆରେଞ୍ଜ୍ କରିଦେବେ ଗୋଟିଏ ସପ୍ତାହ ପାଇଁ । ଆମମାନଙ୍କୁ ଖାଲି ପେମେଣ୍ଟ କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ ।"

ମିସେସ୍ କିଙ୍ଗ୍ ନାଁ ଶୁଣି ମାନି ଜାଣିଗଲା, ଯେ ସିଏ ଭାଲେରିର ମା । ତେଣୁ ଭାଲେରି ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଯାଉଥିବ । ତରୁଣ କିନ୍ତୁ ରାଜି ହୋଇଗଲେ । ଯାଆନ୍ତୁ ପିଲା, ଏତେ କଷ୍ଟରେ ପାଠ ସବୁ ପଢ଼ିଲେ; କଲେଜ୍ ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଚିକେ ଫୁର୍ତ୍ତ କରିଆସନ୍ତୁ । ହେଲେ ମାନି ବିରକ୍ତ ହେଲା, "ଖାଲି ପୁଅପିଲା ମିଶି ହେଲେ ଯାଇଥାଆନ୍ତେ; ସେ ଝିଅଗୁଡ଼ାଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ଯିବେ; ମତେ କାହିଁକି ଭଲଲାଗୁନି - ମଦ ପିଇବେ, ଡ୍ରଗ୍ସ୍ ଖାଇବେ କି କଣ କରିବେ, ତମେ କେମିତି ରାଜିହେଲ ଯେ ।"

"ରାଜି ନହୋଇ ଚାରା ନାହିଁ ଯେ । ସମସ୍ତେ ବ୍ରାଉର୍ ସ୍ଟୁଡେଣ୍ଟ୍ସ୍ । ତାପରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ବି ତ ବାପା, ମାଆ ଅଛନ୍ତି; ତାଙ୍କର କଣ ସ୍ନେହ ନାହିଁ - ଖାଲି ଆମ ଭାରତୀୟ ପିତାମାତାଙ୍କର ସ୍ନେହ ଅଛି । ଯେ ଦେଶ ଯାଇ, ସେ ଫଳ ଖାଇ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ

ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ବି ଚଳି ରହିବାର ଅଛି । ନହେଲେ ସେମାନେ ବାଛନ୍ତୁ ପଡ଼ିଯିବେ ଯେ । ଭଗବାନଙ୍କର ବହୁତ କୃପା ଯେ ଏ ସ୍କୁଲଟିରେ ସମସ୍ୟା କମ୍ । ଶୁଣିଛ ତ ଜିତୁ କଥା ?"

"କଣ ହେଲା ଜିତୁର ?"

"ତା ପୁଅ..." - କହି ପାରିଲେନି ତରୁଣ ।

"କହୁନ କାହିଁକି?"

"ମେଡ଼ିକାଲ୍ ପ୍ରାଇଭାସି ମ୍ୟାଟରସ୍ । ତମକୁ କହିବିନି । ତେବେ ଏତିକି ମନେରଖ ଯେ, ଏ କୋମଳମତି ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ବି ବଡ଼ ଇମୋସନ୍ ଓ ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ସେଣ୍ଟିମେଣ୍ଟ୍ ସବୁ ରହିଛି । ଭାରତୀୟ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଆଳରେ ଆମେ ଆମ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏଠିକାର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ଭାବେ ରଖିବାର ଯେତେ ଚେଷ୍ଟାକରିବା, ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ସେତେ ବିଦ୍ରୋହ ହେବ - ଆଉ ସେମାନେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଏମିତି ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନେବେ ଯେ ?"

"ତା ମାନେ, ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆମେ ରୋକିବାନି? ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ କୋଉଟା ଭଲ, କୋଉଟା ଭୁଲ୍ ବୋଲି କହିବାନି ?"

"ଆଜିକାଲି ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ସିଲାବସ୍ରେ ସବୁକିଛି ପଢ଼ାଯାଉଛି । କୌଣସି କଥା କାହାକୁ ଅଜଣା ନାହିଁ । ନହେଲେ ତ ଅଛି ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍ । ପିଲାକୁ ସ୍ନେହ ଦେଖାଅ, ତା' ପାଖରେ ବସ; ତାକୁ ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ଓ ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀଙ୍କ ବିଷୟରେ ପଚାର । ହେଲେ ତାକୁ ରଗାଇବା ଭଳି କିଛି କଥା କହିବିନି, ବିଶେଷତଃ ଏ ବୟସରେ ।"

ବୋଉ କଥା ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ମାନିର । ଶାଶୁଘରକୁ ବୋହୂ ହୋଇ ଆସିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଏଇଆ ହିଁ ଶିଖାଇଥିଲା ସେ । ଶୁଣୁରଘରର ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ନେହ ଦେଖାଇବ, ସେବା କରିବ, ଭଲମନ୍ଦ ବୁଝିବ, ହେଲେ କାହାକୁ ରଗାଇବା ଭଳି କିଛି କହିବିନି । ଆଜି ସେ କଥା ତରୁଣ କହିଲେ । ଏମିତି କି ନିଜ ଜନ୍ମକଳା ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ବି ଜଗିରଖି ଚଳିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । କି ଯୁଗ ହେଲାରେ ବାବା । ବହୁତ କାନ୍ଦିପାଡ଼ିଲା ।

ପିଲାମାନେ ବଡ଼ ହୋଇଗଲେ ମାନେ, ବାପା, ମା'ଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଦୂରେଇଗଲେ । ଏ ଆମେରିକା ଦେଶରେ ସେ ଦୂରତା ଆହୁରି ବେଶି ।

ମେ ମାସ ପନ୍ଦର ତାରିଖ । ତରୁଣ ଫେରିନାହାନ୍ତି । ହୁଏତ ବାଟରେ କେଉଁଠି ଗ୍ରାଫିକ୍ ଜାମ୍ । ପ୍ରଭବର ଫିଜିକ୍ସ ମିଟ୍ ଅଛି; ସେ ଡେରିରେ ଫେରିବ । ଏମିତି ଏକ ଅଳ୍ପ ଅପରାହ୍ଣରେ ଏକାଏକା ବସିଥିଲା ମାନି । ରୋଷେଇ ସବୁ ସରିଥିଲା । କେବଳ ତରୁଣଙ୍କୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରି ସେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଉପନ୍ୟାସ ପଢୁଥିଲା । କଲିଫୋର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆ; ପ୍ରଥମେ ଖୋଲିବ ନ-ଖୋଲିବ ହୋଇ କବାଟ ଫାଙ୍କରେ ଦେଖିଲା, ଭାରତୀୟ ଝିଅଟିଏ ଭଳି କିଏ ଜଣେ ଦେଖାହେଉଛି । କବାଟ ଖୋଲିବାମାତ୍ରେ ଚମକିପଡ଼ିଲା ସେ । ଇଏ ସେଇ ଭାଲେରି, ପିନ୍ଧିଛି ଗୋଟିଏ ଘାଗରା-ଚୋଲି, ଭାରି ସୁନ୍ଦର ଦିଶୁଛି, କେଶରେ ରଙ୍ଗ ମାରି କଳା କରିଦେଇଛି; ଦେଖାହେଉଛି ପୁରା ଭାରତୀୟ । ଗୋରାଋଜ ଓ ନୀଳଆଖି ଅବଶ୍ୟ ବିହୀନଦେଉଛି ଭାଲେରି ବୋଲି, ହେଲେ ସେ ଏମିତି ଏତେ ଅପରୂପା ହୋଇ ଅବେଳରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଆସିବାର କାରଣ କଣ, ସେ ବିଷୟରେ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଉଥିଲା ମାନି ।

ହାଏ ମିସେସ୍ ମିଶ୍ର, ସରି ତୁ ବଦର୍ ଯୁ; ଆଇ ପ୍ଲାନ୍ ତୁ ପୁର୍ ଦିସ୍ ଫର୍ ପ୍ରମ୍, ଥର୍ ତୁ ଆସକ୍ ଯୋର୍ ଆଡ଼ଭାଇସ୍, ଇଫ୍ ଦିସ୍ ଲୁକ୍ସ୍ ଓକେ ଅର୍ ଇଫ୍ ଆଇ ଆମ୍ ମିସିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଏନି ପାର୍ଟିସ୍ ।"

ମାନି ଜାଣିଥିଲା, କୋଡିଏ ତାରିଖରେ ପ୍ରଭବର ପ୍ରମ୍ ଅଛି ଓ ସେ ଭାଲେରି ସହିତ ଯିବ । ହେଲେ, ଭାଲେରି ଯେ ଏମିତି ଭାରତୀୟ ପୋଷାକରେ ପ୍ରମ୍ ଯିବାକୁ ସ୍ଥିରକରିଛି, ସେ ବିଷୟ ଭାବି, ଆଉ ଭାଲେରିର ରୂପଶୋଭାକୁ ଦେଖି ହଠାତ୍ ଚମକିତ ହୋଇଗଲା ମାନି । ସ୍ୱର୍ଗପୁରୀର ପରୀରାଣୀ ଭଳି ନାଲିରଙ୍ଗର ଜରିଦିଆ ଘାଗରା-ଚୋଲିରେ ଚମକାର ଦିଶୁଥିଲା ସେ ଝିଅଟି, ଭାଲେରି, ସେଇ ଏକା ଝିଅ, ଯାହାର ବେଶଭୂଷା ଦେଖି ସେଦିନରୁ ତା' ମନରେ ଆତଙ୍କ ପଶିଛି । ହେଲେ ହଠାତ୍ ସବୁ କିଛି ଯେମିତି ବଦଳିଗଲା । ଅତି ସ୍ନେହରେ ସେ ଭାଲେରିକୁ ଭିତରକୁ ଡାକିଲେ ଓ କୁସ୍ ଅଫର୍ କଲେ । କହିଲେ, "ୟୁ ଲୁକ୍ ପର୍ଫେକ୍ଟ୍, ବର୍ ମିସିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଆନାଦର୍ ପାର୍ଟି, ଓଡ଼ଣୀ ।"

ଭାଲେରି ପୁଣି ବାହାରକୁ ଆସିଲା ଓ ତା' କାର୍ ଭିତରୁ ଏକ ହଳଦିଆ ରଙ୍ଗର ଓଡ଼ଣୀ ଆଣି ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ପଶିଲା ।

ମାନି ସେ ଓଡ଼ଣୀଟି ଭାଲେରି ଦେହରେ ଖଞ୍ଜୁଖଞ୍ଜୁ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲେ ତରୁଣ । ବିସ୍ମୟ ବିସ୍ମାରିତ ନେତ୍ରରେ ସେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ ମାନିକୁ । ସତେକି କହୁଥିଲେ, "ବେଙ୍ଗ କହେ ବେଙ୍ଗୁଲି ଲୋ ପୃଥ୍ୱୀ କ୍ଷଣ କ୍ଷଣକେ ଆନ ।"

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ଭୁଲୁଣିତ ପରଂପରା - ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ମର୍ମକଥା



ପ୍ରଫେସର ମନୋଜ ଦାସ

ନବକଳେବର ପରଂପରା ଭୁଲୁଣିତ । ଯାବତ୍ତତ୍ତ୍ୱାକ୍ ଶତ୍ରୁର ଶତ୍ରୁପୁରଣ ଅସମ୍ଭବ; କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହା ଏକ ଗୋଷ୍ଠିକୃତ ଅପରାଧ ମାତ୍ର ନୁହେଁ; ଏହା ଏକ ଦିଗ୍‌ଭଙ୍ଗ ମାନବତାର ଦୁଷ୍ଟି ଜନିତ ବଜ୍ରପାତ । ଏ ବଜ୍ରାନଳରେ ଦଗ୍ଧ ହେଉ ଆମର ସାମୁହିକ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧନା - ଆତ୍ମ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧନା; ହେଉ ଆମ ଚେତନାର ନବକଳେବର ।

ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ଧରି ଏ ଲେଖକ ସମସାମୟିକ ଘଟଣାସବୁ ଉପରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଏବଂ ଇଂରାଜୀ ପତ୍ରପତ୍ରିକାମାନଙ୍କରେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ସ୍ତମ୍ଭ ଲେଖି ଆସୁଛି । ସେସବୁ ସମ୍ଭବ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ ବହୁ ଦୁଃଖଦ ଘଟଣା ଉପରେ ଏ ଲେଖକର ମତ୍ତବ୍ୟ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି ଭଳି ଭାରାକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ହୃଦୟ ନେଇ ଅଦ୍ୟାବଧି କୌଣସି ସମ୍ଭବ ଲେଖିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିନଥିଲା । ଆଜି ଏ ନିବନ୍ଧ ଲେଖିବାକୁ ବସିବାବେଳେ ମନେହୁଏ, ପାଠକମାନେ ମୋ ପାଖରୁ ଏ ବିଷୟଟି ଉପରେ ଜରୁର୍ କିଛି ଲେଖିବାକୁ ଦାବି କରିନଥାନ୍ତେ ହେଲେ ! କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେଉଁ ସାମୁହିକ ପାପରେ ସମାଜ କଳଙ୍କିତ, ସେ ପାପରେ ଏ ଲେଖକର ମଧ୍ୟ ଭାଗ ରହିଛି; ତା' ନହେଲେ ଏ ବିଷୟଟି ଉପରେ କିଛି ଲେଖିବାର ଗ୍ଳାନିପୁଣ୍ୟ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ତା' ଉପରକୁ ଆସିନଥାନ୍ତା ।

କାହିଁ କେତେ ଦଶନ୍ଧି ଧରି ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ନବକଳେବର ରାତ୍ରିର ରୋମଞ୍ଚକର ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ସବୁ ମନକୁ ଆସି ମୋତେ ଶିହରିତ କରୁଥାଏ । ଏ ଲେଖକଠାରୁ ସେ ବୃତ୍ତାନ୍ତ ଶୁଣି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଏବଂ ବିଦେଶୀମାନେ ବିସ୍ମୟ-ପୁଲକରେ ଅଭିଭୂତ ହେଉଥାନ୍ତି । ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍ ଶକ୍ତି ଚାଲୁ ହେବାର ପୂର୍ବବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ସମୟର କଥା । ମଧ୍ୟରାତ୍ରିରେ ସମୃଦ୍ଧିକୁ ଯାଉଥିବା ସେ ଦିବ୍ୟ ଘାଟଣା ଉପରେ ମନୋନିବେଶ କରି ପୁରୀର ଭାଗ୍ୟବାନ୍ ନାଗରିକମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରୁ ଅନେକେ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟାସ୍ତ ପରଠୁଁ ମୌନ ଗାମ୍ଭୀର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ ଅପେକ୍ଷମାଣ ରହୁଥିଲେ । ରାତ୍ରିର ପ୍ରଥମାର୍ଦ୍ଧ ପରେ ସମଗ୍ର ନଗରୀରେ ସମସ୍ତ ରକ୍ଷନଶାଳାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅଗ୍ନି ନିର୍ବାପିତ ହୋଇ ଯାଉଥିଲା । ନିର୍ଜନ ମନ୍ଦିର ପରିସର ଭିତରେ, ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନୀରବରେ ମୁଞ୍ଚିମେୟ ସେବକ ଯେଉଁ ଅନନ୍ୟ କର୍ମ ନିର୍ବାହ କରୁଥିଲେ, ତାର ସାକ୍ଷୀ ରହୁଥିଲେ ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଦେବଦେବୀ ବୃନ୍ଦ । ଚତୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିଗରେ ସହସ୍ର ବିନିଦ୍ର ଭକ୍ତ ସେହି ଅପରୁପ, ରହସ୍ୟମୟ ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ନିଜ ଚେତନାରେ କଳ୍ପନା କରି ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରକାର ଅନୁଭୂତିରେ ମଗ୍ନ ରହୁଥିଲେ, ତାହା ଅବର୍ଣ୍ଣନୀୟ । ଅନ୍ତତଃ କେହି କେହି ଭକ୍ତ ସେତିକିବେଳେ ଆପଣା ନବକଳେବର ହେବାଭଳି ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଥିବେ ।

ଏଭଳି ପରଂପରା ସହ ତୁଳନୀୟ ଦୃଷ୍ଟନ୍ତ ସାରା ପୃଥିବୀର କୌଣସି ଦେବାଳୟରେ ନାହିଁ । କ୍ରମେ ମ୍ଳାନ ହୋଇ ଆସିଥିବା ସେ ପରଂପରା ଆଜି ଅକସ୍ମାତ୍ ଭୁଲୁଣିତ ହେଲା ।

ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣାର ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ଦିଗ

ପ୍ରତି ଘଟଣା ବା ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣାର ଦୁଇଟି ଦିଗ ଥାଏ; ଗୋଟିଏ ଦୃଶ୍ୟମାନ, ଅନ୍ୟଟି ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ । ଆମ ସର୍ଭିକ୍ସ ସକାଶେ ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟଜନକ ଏ ଭୁଲୁଣିତ ଦୃଶ୍ୟମାନ ଦିଗରେ ଦକ୍ଷୟମାନ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ଏକ ବା ଏକାଧିକ ଗୋଷ୍ଠିର ସେବକବୃନ୍ଦ । ଅଜ୍ଞାନ ଏବଂ ଅହଂ-ଚାଳିତ, ସ୍ୱାଧିକାର ପ୍ରମତ୍ତ ଏ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିମାନେ କେତେ ଅଭାଗା, ସେକଥା ସେମାନେ ବୁଝୁଥିବେ କି ନାହିଁ ଜାଣେନା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଆମର ଦେବତା; ଆମେ କେତେ ଅଭାଗା ବୋଲି ସେ ଆମକୁ ଏଭଳି ବିଭୀଷିକାର ଧକ୍କା ଦେଲେ, ଆମେ ସେକଥା ବୁଝିବାକୁ ସକ୍ଷମ କି? ସେବକ ମାନେ ଆମରି ସାର୍ବଜନୀନ ଅହଂ ଏବଂ ଅଜ୍ଞାନତାର ବୋଝ ଦ୍ୱାରାହିଁ ଏକ ମହାନ ପରଂପରାକୁ ଧୂଳିସାତ୍ କରୁଥିଲେ, ସେକଥା ଆମେ ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମ କରୁଛୁ କି ? ଏକାଧିକ

ବିଜୟକାନ୍ତ କହିଥାନ୍ତି, ଆମ ଚରିତ୍ର ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରକାର ସରକାର ବା ଶାସନ ଆମର ପ୍ରାପ୍ୟ, ଆମେ ତାହାହିଁ ପାଇଥାଉଁ । ସେମିତି, ଯେଉଁ ପ୍ରକାର ପଣ୍ଡା ପୁରୋହିତ ଆମର ପ୍ରାପ୍ୟ, ଆମକୁ ତାହାହିଁ ମିଳିଥାଏ ।

ମନେପଡୁଛି ଏକ ଜାପାନୀ କାହାଣୀ । ବିଷୟ ବସ୍ତୁଟି ଏହିପରି : ଜଣେ ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛଳ କୃଷକ ନୂଆ ଜମି ଖଣ୍ଡିଏ କିଣିଥାଏ । ବହୁଦିନରୁ ଅବ୍ୟବହୃତ ସେ ଜମିର ବଣବୁଦା ସଫା କରିବା ବେଳେ ହଠାତ୍ ତାକୁ ମିଳିଗଲା ଗୋଟିଏ ପୁରୁଣା ପଥର ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି । ନିଖରୁ କୌଣସି ଦେବତାର ପ୍ରତୀକ । ସେ ତାକୁ ନେଇ ଆସି ନିଜ ଶୋଇବା ଘର ଭିତରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ଭାତି ଉପରେ ଥୋଇଦେଲା ଓ ମୁଣ୍ଡିଆଟିଏ ମାରିଲା । ସବୁଦିନ ସେ ସେମିତି କଲା ଓ ଆପଣାର ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ଜଣାଇଲା ।

କିଛିଦିନ ପରେ ସେ ମୁଲକରେ ଆସିଲା ପ୍ରବଳ ବନ୍ୟା । ହଜାର ହଜାର ଲୋକଙ୍କର ଘରଦ୍ୱାର ଭାସିଗଲା । ଏ ଲୋକଟିର ଘର ବେଶ୍ ଉଚ୍ଚ ସ୍ଥାନରେ । ସେ ରହିଲା ନିରାପଦ । ଦୁଇଟି ଲୋକେ ତା'କୁ ନାମ ମାତ୍ର ମୁଲ୍ୟରେ ନିଜ ନିଜର ଜମି ବିକ୍ରୟ କରିଦେଲେ । ସେ ବନିଗଲା ଜମିଦାର । ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିକୁ ସେ ଜୁହାର କରେ; ସେ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ଆସିବା ପରଠାରୁ ତା'ର ସମୃଦ୍ଧିର ପଥ ଖୋଲିଯାଇଛି ।

ନବଲବ୍ଧ ଜମିଜମାରେ ହେଲା ପ୍ରଚୁର ଫସଲ । ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ଲୋକଙ୍କର ତାହା କିଣିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ନଥିଲା । ସେ ଶସ୍ୟତକ ପଡୋଶୀ ମୁଲକକୁ ରଞ୍ଚନା କରି ବିପୁଳ ଅର୍ଥ ଉପାର୍ଜନ କଲା । ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିକୁ ସବୁଦିନ ଦୁଇ ଦୁଇଥର ଜୁହାର କଲା ।

ପତିବେଶୀମାନେ ଅନାହାରରେ ମରୁଥାନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତା'ର ପରୁଆ ନଥାଏ । ସେ ସଂପତ୍ତି ବିସ୍ତାର କରି ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ଦିନେ ରାତିରେ ତା' ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଗଲା । ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟର କଥା । ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିଟି ଅଜହାସ୍ୟ କରୁଛି ! ସେ ଉଠି ପଡି ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ ଠିଆ ହୁଅନ୍ତେ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ପଚାରିଲା, 'ମୁଁ କିଏ ବୋଲି ତୁମର ଧାରଣା ?'

'ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟର ଦେବତା !' ଉତ୍ତରଦେଲା ଜମିଦାର ବନିଥିବା କୃଷକ ।

'ନା ! ମୁଁ ଦୁର୍ଭାଗ୍ୟର ଦେବତା ! ତମ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ଜନ ବିଶୋଭ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ ରୂପ ନେଲାଣି । ଲୋକେ ମାତି ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି । ତମ ଘର ଲୁଟପାଟ୍ କରିବେ । ଯାହା ନେଇ ନପାରବେ, ତାହା ଫେପାଡି ଦେବେ । ମୋତେ ମଧ୍ୟ । ମୁଁ ଭାବୁଛି, କେତେଦିନ ପରେ ପୁଣି କିଏ ମୋତେ ବଣବୁଦା ଭିତରୁ ପାଇବ; ପୂଜିବ; ପୁଣି କାହାର ସର୍ବନାଶ ହେବ !'

ଏତକ କହି ମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ପୁଣି ଅଜହାସ୍ୟ କରିବା ଭିତରେ ଜମିଦାରର ଘର ବାହାରେ ଶୁଭିଲା ଭୟାବହ କୋଳାହଳ ।

ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ତାପ୍ତର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅପରିସୀମ । ସେ ଖାଲି ଦିବ୍ୟଶକ୍ତି ନୁହନ୍ତି, ସେ ଏ ପୃଥିବୀରେ ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନଶୀଳ ଦିବ୍ୟଚେତନାର ପ୍ରତୀକ । ପ୍ରତେକ ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଭଗବାନ ରହିବାକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟ ନୁହନ୍ତି । (ଭଗବାନ ସର୍ବତ୍ର ବିଦ୍ୟମାନ, ପ୍ରତି ଅଣୁ ପରମାଣୁରେ, ତାହା ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟର ସତ୍ୟ ।) ଯେ କୌଣସି ମହାନ ଦିବ୍ୟ ଉପସ୍ଥିତିର ବାତାବରଣରେ ବହୁ ଅତିଭୌତିକ ଶକ୍ତି ରହିଥାନ୍ତି । ଯେଉଁମାନେ ପ୍ରକୃତ ଭକ୍ତିଭରେ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ନିଜକୁ ଉନ୍ମୁକ୍ତ କରନ୍ତି, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭାବଧାରା ଯାଇ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ପର୍ଶ କରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମେ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଯାଇଥାଉଁ ଆମ କାମନା ବାସନା ପୂର୍ତ୍ତିର ମାଗୁଣି ନେଇ ।

ପୁଣି ସେବକମାନଙ୍କୁ ମାଧ୍ୟମ କରି, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଲୋଭତୁରତାର ପୃଷ୍ଠପୋଷକତା କରି, ଆମେ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଅଧିକ ମାତ୍ରାରେ ଆକର୍ଷଣ କରିପାରିବୁ - ଏହି ଭାବ୍ତ ସଂସ୍କାର ଅନୁସାରେ ଆଚରଣ କରିଥାଉଁ । ଆମର ଏହି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟର ଆବେଦନ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ପହଞ୍ଚେ ନାହିଁ । ବାତାବରଣରେ ଥିବା ଅତିଭୌତିକ ଜଗତର ସତ୍ତାମାନେ ସେସବୁ ଉଦରସାତ୍ କରନ୍ତି ଏବଂ ସେହିସବୁ ଆହାର ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସନ୍ତୋଷ ଦିଏ, ବଳଶାଳୀ କରେ । ଏକ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଯୁଗରେ ଏହିସବୁ ସତ୍ତାଙ୍କୁ ମନ୍ଦିର ବାହାରେ ଖୋରାକ ଯୋଗାଇ ଅଟକାଇ ରଖିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ମନ୍ଦିରର ବହିର୍ଗାତ୍ରରେ ନାନାଦି ଅଗ୍ନିକ ଭାସ୍କର୍ଯ୍ୟର ପ୍ରବର୍ତ୍ତନ କରା ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ସେଥିରେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସାଫଲ୍ୟ ମିଳୁ ନଥିଲା । ସେ ସବୁ ଭାସ୍କର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତି ସ୍ଥୁଳ

ଚେତନାବନ୍ଧ ମଣିଷର କୌତୁହଳୀ ଆକର୍ଷଣର ସୁଯୋଗ ନେଇ ସେ ସଭାମାନେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ସଦା ହୋଇ ମନ୍ଦିର ଭିତରକୁ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରୁଥିଲେ । ଯାତୀଠୁଁ ସେବକ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସାଧାରଣ ସ୍ତରର ଯେ କୌଣସି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିକୁ ଏ ଶକ୍ତିମାନେ ଆୟତ୍ତ କରିନେଇ ପାରନ୍ତି ।

ତେବେ ଅତୀତରେ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ଦର୍ଶନ କରିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ସମବେତ ନରନାରୀ ସଜା ବ୍ୟାକୁଳତା ସହ ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଭକ୍ତି ପ୍ରଣୋଦିତ ହୋଇ ଆସୁଥିଲେ । ଅନେକେ ଆସୁଥିଲେ ଜୀବନକୁ ପାଣି ଛଡ଼ାଇ, ସହସହ କୋଣ ପଥ ପାଦରେ ଚାଲି ଚାଲି । ଦୂରରୁ ନୀଳଚକ୍ର ଆଖିରେ ପତିବାମାତ୍ରେ କୃତଜ୍ଞତାରେ ସେମାନେ ଲୋଚିଯାଉଥିଲେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭକ୍ତି - ପ୍ରାୟତଃ ନିଷ୍ଠା ଭକ୍ତି - ବଳେ ବଳେ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ କରୁଣାର ପ୍ରବାହ ଅବତରଣ କରାଇ ଆଣୁଥିଲା । ଭକ୍ତର ଚେତନାଗତ କ୍ରମ ବିକାଶ ଦୂରାନ୍ୱିତ ହେଉଥିଲା ।

କାଳକ୍ରମେ ଆମ ଜୀବନଶୈଳୀରେ ବ୍ୟାପକ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହୋଇଛି । ଚେତନାର ବିକାଶ, ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜୀବନର ଶାନ୍ତି ଆମର ଆଜି କାମ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ; କାମ୍ୟ ସ୍ଥୂଳ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା, ଉତ୍ତେଜନା, ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତାର ସଫଳତା ଏବଂ ଅନର୍ଥକ ଅର୍ଥ ଲାଭସା । ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ସେ ଦିଗରେ କେତେଦୂର ସହାୟକ ହେବେ, ସେହି ସନ୍ଦେହପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ମନୋଭାବ ନେଇ ଆମେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଭେଟିଥାଉଁ; ବ୍ୟବସୟୀ ଏବଂ ରାଜନୈତିକ ଉଚ୍ଚାଭିଳାଷୀମାନେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିବାରେ ତତ୍ପର; ଭକ୍ତି ବା ପୁରେଣାର ବିନ୍ଦୁ ବିସର୍ଗ ନଥାଇ ‘କାଳିଆ’ ଶବ୍ଦର ଅବାର୍ତିତ ଅସହ୍ୟ ପୁନରାବୃତ୍ତି ଯୋଗେ ତାଙ୍କ ସହ ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗତା ବିଜ୍ଞପିତ କରୁଥିବା ଗୀତର ପ୍ରସାରଠୁଁ ଆରଂଭ କରି ତାଙ୍କ ‘ଚକାଡୋଳା’କୁ ଏକ ଫେସନ୍ ରୂପେ ଚିତ୍ରିତ କରିବା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ - ସର୍ବତ୍ର ଜାଗ୍ରତ୍ୟମାନ ଆମ ଔଚ୍ଚତ୍ୟର ଉଲ୍ଲଗ୍ନ ଦୃଷ୍ଟାନ୍ତ । ସର୍ବୋପରି ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଦର୍ଶନ ଆଜି ଏକ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟନୀୟ ଆକର୍ଷଣ - **Tourist attraction** ।

ବିତମ୍ବନା ହେଲା, ଆଜି ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଯେତେ ନିବନ୍ଧ, ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ, ଗବେଷଣା, ଗଛ, ପତ୍ର-ପତ୍ରିକା ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଉଛି, ଆମେ ଯେତେ ଉତ୍ସାହରେ ‘ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ’ ଧ୍ୱନି ଦେଉଛୁ, ଗତ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ପ୍ରଥମ ତିନିଭାଗ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସେସବୁ ଜମାରୁ ସୁଲଭ ନଥିଲା । ଦୂରଦର୍ଶନ ଯୋଗେ ପ୍ରସାରଣର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ନଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜିର ଏ ସବୁ ବାଦୁଲ୍ୟ, ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ଆମ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ବିକାଶର କେତେଦୂର ପରିଚୟ ତାହାର ଉତ୍ତର ଆମେ ନିଜ ଭିତରେ ସଂଧାନ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସମୟ ଆସିଛି । ଜନପ୍ରିୟ ଚେତାବନୀ ‘ଅତି ଭକ୍ତି ଗୋରର ଲକ୍ଷଣ’ ଆମର ଏ ଭଳି ଆଚରଣ ପ୍ରତି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ୍ୟ ନୁହେଁ ତ ?

ତିନି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟରେ ନ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଅପରାଧ

ବାଲ୍ୟକାଳରେ ଏ ଲେଖକ ଶୁଣିଥିବା ଏକ ମଜାକଥା (କଥାଟି ବରଂ କରୁଣା) ଅଧିକାଂଶ ପାଠକ ମଧ୍ୟ ଶୁଣିଥିବେ । ଜଣେ ଭଣ୍ଡ ନିଜକୁ ଧର୍ମଗୁରୁ ଭାବରେ ବିଜ୍ଞପିତ କରି ଜଣେ ସରଳ ପ୍ରକୃତିର ବିଭବୀନ୍ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କ ସର୍ବସ୍ୱ ହରଣ କରିନେଇ ଦୂରରେ ଏକ ଆଶ୍ରମ ବନାଇ ରହିଥାଏ । ସେଠାରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ନିଜର ଚାତୁର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବଳରେ ସେ ବହୁସଂଖ୍ୟକ ଶିଷ୍ୟ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଆନୁଗତ୍ୟ ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥାଏ ।

ପ୍ରତୀତି ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କର ଶିଶୁ ପୁତ୍ର ତରୁଣ ହେବାପରେ ଭଣ୍ଡ ଉପରେ ପ୍ରତିଶୋଧ ନେବାକୁ ମନସ୍ଥ କରି ଛଦ୍ମ ପରିଚୟ ପ୍ରଦାନ ପୂର୍ବକ ଭଣ୍ଡର ସେବକ ବନିଗଲା । ଦିନେ କିଛିତ୍ ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ଭଣ୍ଡଗୁରୁଙ୍କୁ ଘେରି ଶହେ ସରିକି ଶିଷ୍ୟ ବସିଥାନ୍ତି; କିଏ ଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ପାଦସେବା ତ କିଏ ପୂଜା ସେବା କରୁଥାଏ । ତରୁଣଟି ତାଙ୍କ ଦାଢ଼ି ସେବା ଆଦରି ନେଇଥାଏ । ଖିଏ ଶୁଭ କେଶ ଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ଦାଢ଼ିରୁ ଖସି ଆସନ୍ତେ ତରୁଣ ଜଣକ ସେ ଗୋଟିକ ବାରମ୍ବାର ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଲଗାଇ କହୁଥାଏ, ‘ଓହୋ, ମୋର କେତେ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ, ଆଜି ଶୁକ୍ଳପକ୍ଷ ସପ୍ତମୀ ପୂର୍ବାହ୍ନରେ ଗୁରୁଦେବଙ୍କର ଏ ପବିତ୍ର କେଶ ମୋତେ ମିଳିଗଲା!’

‘ଏହାର ତାତ୍ପର୍ଯ୍ୟ କ’ଣ, ଯୁବକ ?’ ପାଖରେ ଆସାନ ଜଣେ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ନେତା ଉତ୍ସୁକ ହୋଇ ପଚାରିଲେ । ‘ତାତ୍ପର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅସୀମ ଆଜ୍ଞା, ଅସୀମ ! ଏହି ପବିତ୍ର ଲଗ୍ନରେ ହାସଲ ହୋଇଥିବା ଏହି ମହାନ ଚିତ୍ତ ଚାରିଦିଗରେ ପୁରାଇ ହାତରେ ବାନ୍ଧିଲେ ପ୍ରେମରେ ସାପଲ୍ୟ, ଲଟାରିପ୍ରାପ୍ତି, ଶତ୍ରୁ ନିଧନ, ମକଳମାରେ ବିଜୟ - ସବୁ କିଛି ସମ୍ଭବପର’ ।

‘ସତେ ?’ - ଏହା କହି ନେତାଟି ତତ୍ସଖାତ୍ ଗୁରୁଙ୍କ ଦାଢିରେ ହାତ ବୁଲାଇ ଖିଏ କେଶ ଉପାଡିନେଲେ । ଅବିଳମ୍ବେ ତାଙ୍କ ସହକାରୀ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେଇଆ କଲେ । ପଥମେ ତରୁଣର ଘୋଷଣା ଶୁଣି ଗର୍ବିତ ଗୁରୁ ହସିଥିଲେ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସେ ଉଃ ଆଃ କହିବା ବେଳକୁ କେହି କର୍ଷପାତ କରିବାକୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ନଥିଲେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଉଣା ଅଧିକ ମାତିବସି ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ଅନୁଗତବର୍ଗ ନିଜ ପାଇଁ ତଥା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଶଳା, ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭଳି ପ୍ରିୟଜନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଖିଏ ଖିଏ କେଶ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରିବାକୁ ତପ୍ତ ହୋଇ, ଗୁରୁଙ୍କର ସମଗ୍ର ଦାଢିଟି ଯେ ହରଣ କରିନେଲେ, ସେତିକି ନୁହେଁ, ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରାଣ ମଧ୍ୟ ହରଣ କରିବାକୁ ବସିଥିଲେ । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ସେମାନେ ଗଭୀର ଭକ୍ତି ପ୍ରଣୋଦିତ ହୋଇ ତାହା କରୁଥିଲେ ବୋଲି ଘୋଷଣା କରିବାରେ ତୃପ୍ତି କରୁ ନଥିଲେ ।

କହିବା ବାହୁଲ୍ୟ, ଏ କାହାଣୀର ଶିକ୍ଷା ଅଦ୍ୟାବଧି ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ, ବରଂ ସାଂପ୍ରତିକ କାଳରେ ଅଧିକ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ । ଅଧିକାଂଶ ମଣିଷଙ୍କ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ନିବେଦିତ ପୂଜା, ଆରାଧନା ପକ୍ଷତରେ ଭକ୍ତି ତୁଳନାରେ ବହୁ ଅଧିକ ମାତାରେ ରହିଥାଏ ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥସିଦ୍ଧିର ଅଭିପ୍ରାୟ । ଏଠାରେ ହାରାହାରି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟ କଥା କୁହାଯାଉଛି । ଆପଣ ଏ ମନ୍ତବ୍ୟର ବ୍ୟତିକ୍ରମ ହୋଇଥାଇପାରନ୍ତି ।

ବିତମ୍ବନା ହେଲା, ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ଗୁରୁଜଣକ ଯଦି ଭକ୍ତ ନହୋଇ ପ୍ରକୃତ ସାଧୁଟିଏ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତେ, ତେବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏଭଳି ଦଶା ଭୋଗିବାର ସମ୍ଭବନାରୁ ଶତକଡା ଶହେ ଭାଗ ନିରାପଦ ରହି ପାରିଥାନ୍ତେ ବୋଲି କହି ହେବ ନାହିଁ ।

ଆଜି ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର ଖୋଦ୍ ସେବକମାନେ ଯେଉଁ ଆଚରଣ କଲେ, ତା’ ପକ୍ଷତରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ରହିଛି ଏହି ପକାର ଲଜ୍ଜାହୀନ ମାନସିକତା - ମୁଁ ବହୁଦର୍ଶନ ବା ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିଦେଲେ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଲାଭବାନ ହେବି । ଏ ଲୋଭ ସହିତ ପୁଣି ମିଶି ରହିଛି ପୂର୍ବ କଥିତ ସ୍ଵାଧିକାର-ପ୍ରମତ୍ତ ଅହଂ । ମୁଁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଲୋକ । ସେ ମୋ’ ଉପରେ ନିର୍ଭରଶୀଳ । ମୁଁ !!

ଆମର ଏହି ଅକ୍ଷ ଅହଂକୁ ଅବଲମ୍ବନ କରି ଅପଶକ୍ତିମାନେ ଆମକୁ ଆୟୁଧ କରନ୍ତି । ଏ ସେବକମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିଶେଷ ଦୋଷ ଦେଇ ହେବ ନାହିଁ । ଯିଏ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ଆଳୟ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵରେ ଥିବ, ସେ ଅହଂକାର ବୋଧରୁ ମୁକ୍ତ ରହିପାରିବ ନାହିଁ; ଅନ୍ତତଃ ଏ ଯାବତ୍ ପାରିନାହିଁ । ଆପଣମାନେ ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠରେ ବିଷ୍ଣୁଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରପାଳ ଜୟ ଏବଂ ବିଜୟଙ୍କ ଆଚରଣ ସ୍ମରଣ କରନ୍ତୁ । ସନକ ପ୍ରମୁଖ କେତେଜଣ ରକ୍ଷି, ବିଷ୍ଣୁଙ୍କ ଦର୍ଶନାର୍ଥୀ ଭାବେ ବୈକୁଣ୍ଠର ପ୍ରବେଶ ପଥରେ ଉପନୀତ ହୁଅନ୍ତେ ଜୟ ବିଜୟ ଭାତୁଦ୍ଵୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଦୁର୍ବ୍ୟହାର କଲେ । ରକ୍ଷିବର୍ଗ ଦେଲେ ଏହି ଅଭିଶାପ : ‘ତମମାନଙ୍କ ଆଚରଣ ଅସୁର ସୁଲଭ । ଅତଏବ ତମମାନଙ୍କ ଚେତନାରେ ଥିବା ଆସୁରିକ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତିର ପରିପୁର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଚରିତାର୍ଥ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଦୁହେଁ ତିନିବାର ଅସୁର-ଭ୍ରାତାଦ୍ଵୟ ରୂପେ ଜନ୍ମ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବ ।’ ଜୟ ବିଜୟ ତତ୍ସାକ୍ଷାତ୍ ନିଜର ଭୁଲ ବୁଝି ପାରି କ୍ଷମା ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରି ସନକଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଏହି ବର ହାସଲ କଲେ : ପ୍ରତିଥର ଦୁହେଁ ବିଷ୍ଣୁଙ୍କ ଅବତାର ଦ୍ଵାରାହିଁ ପରଲୋକ ଗମନର ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ଲାଭ କରିବେ । (ତାହାହିଁ ହେଲା । ପ୍ରଥମ ଜନ୍ମରେ ଦୁହେଁ ହୀରଣ୍ୟକସିପୁ ଓ ହୀରଣ୍ୟ ରୂପେ, ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ଜନ୍ମରେ ରାବଣ ଓ କୁମ୍ଭକର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରୂପେ ଏବଂ ତୃତୀୟ ଜନ୍ମରେ ଶିଶୁପାଳ ଓ ବକ୍ରଦନ୍ତ ରୂପେ ଜନ୍ମ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ଯଥାକ୍ରମେ ନୃସିଂହ, ଶ୍ରୀରାମଚନ୍ଦ୍ର ଏବଂ ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ-ରୂପୀ ବିଷ୍ଣୁଙ୍କ ଅବତାର ଦ୍ଵାରା ଇହଲୀଳା ସମ୍ବରଣ କଲେ) ।

ଜୟ ବିଜୟ କିନ୍ତୁ ବିଷ୍ଣୁଙ୍କୁ ଅପମାନ କରିନଥିଲେ । ସେମାନେ ବିଷ୍ଣୁଭକ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଅପମାନ କରିଥିଲେ । ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ସେବକ ବୃନ୍ଦ ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ଭକ୍ତମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅପମାନ ଦେବାରେ ସିଦ୍ଧ ହସ୍ତ ଥିଲେ । ଏବେ ସ୍ଵୟଂ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ-ରୂପୀ ବିଷ୍ଣୁଙ୍କର ଅପମାନ କରି ସେ ସେବକ ଅପୂର୍ବ ସିଦ୍ଧିର ରୂପାନ୍ତ ନିଦର୍ଶନ ଦେଲେ । ଏମାନଙ୍କୁ ଜୟ ବିଜୟର ଆସନ ଓ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ମିଳିବାର ଆଶା ଅଛି ତ?

କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ଲେଖକର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଅପରାଧକୁ ହାଲୁକା ଭାବରେ ଉପସ୍ଥାପନ କରିବା । ମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଏବଂ ହାକିମ ଦୁକୁମାଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରପାଳଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ପାଖଲୋକଙ୍କ ଅହଂ ବଳେ ବଳେ ବିକଶିତ ହୁଏ । ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରପାଳ ଏବଂ ପାଖଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଯେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ କ୍ଷମତା ଅସ୍ଵାଭାବିକ ଭାବରେ ଅହଂକାରୀ କରିବ, ସେଥିରେ ବିସ୍ଫୁର୍ତ୍ତ କ'ଣ ? ତା'ଛଡ଼ା ନିବିଡ଼ ସାନ୍ନିଧ୍ୟ ତାହାଙ୍କ ବା ବେପରୁଆ ଭାବ ଉତ୍ପୁଜାଏ (**Familiarity breeds contempt**) । ଏହା ଏକ ଅନିବାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମନସ୍ତାତ୍ତ୍ଵିକ ନିୟମ । କେବଳ ସଜା, ବିକଶିତ ଚେତନାବନ୍ତ ସେବକମାନେ ଏ ନିୟମର ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ଵକୁ ଯାଇପାରନ୍ତି । ଗତାନୁଗତିକ ବା ବଂଶାନୁକ୍ରମିକ ସେବକମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ସେଭଳି ଆଲୋକପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ବିନୟବୋଧ ଆଶା କରିବା ବିତମ୍ବନା । ବିଗ୍ରହର ସହଜ ସାନ୍ନିଧ୍ୟ କ୍ରମେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିଗ୍ରହର ତାପ୍ତମ୍ୟ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଉଦାସୀନ କରିଦେଇଛି ।

ଏ ଲେଖକର ପ୍ରତିନିବେଦନ : ଏ ସମଗ୍ର ବିଭ୍ରାଟରେ ଆମଭଳି ଭକ୍ତ ଜନସାଧାରଣଙ୍କ ଭୂମିକାହିଁ ସର୍ବାଧିକ ।

ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଆମର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଭକ୍ତିକଥା ଅଲଗା । କିଏ ସେ ଭକ୍ତି କେତେମାତ୍ରାରେ ପୋଷଣ କରୁଛି, ସେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ରହସ୍ୟ ବିଷୟରେ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିହିଁ ଅବହୃତ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଏବଂ ପରୋକ୍ଷ ଭାବେ ଆମର ପ୍ରତିନିଧିତ୍ଵ କରୁଥିବା ନେତାମାନେ ଯଦି ସତରେ ଏପରିକି ଦାରୁ ମନୋନୟନ ପକ୍ଷତିକୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରୁଥିବେ ବା କରିବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିଥିବେ, ତେବେ ସେମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆମରି ମାନସିକତାରହିଁ ପ୍ରତିନିଧିତ୍ଵ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ବର୍ଷ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ସେବକମାନଙ୍କ ଅବିବେକୀ ଆଚରଣ ଏବଂ ସ୍ଵେଚ୍ଛାଚାର ତୁଣ୍ଡ ବାଲଦରେ ଓ ସମ୍ପାଦପତ୍ରମାନଙ୍କରେ ପ୍ରଚାରିତ ହୋଇଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିବା ଦିଗରେ ଜନସାଧାରଣଙ୍କ ପକ୍ଷରୁ କୌଣସି ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ ହୋଇନାହିଁ ।

ଆମେ ଜନସାଧାରଣ ପରୋକ୍ଷ ଅପରାଧୀ ହୋଇଥିବା ସ୍ଥଳେ ଏ ବିଭ୍ରାଟରେ ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ଅପରାଧୀ ହେଲେ ସେବକବୃନ୍ଦ । ତୃତୀୟରେ ଯାଇ ଆସୁଛି, ମନ୍ଦିର ପରିଚାଳନା କର୍ତ୍ତୃପକ୍ଷଙ୍କ କଥା । ପ୍ରଶାସନର ଦକ୍ଷତା ସଂପର୍କରେ ଏ ଲେଖକର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତା ନାହିଁ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଅପରାଧ ତୃତୀୟ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ନା ସେବକମାନଙ୍କ ସହ ବନ୍ଧନୀଭୁକ୍ତ, ତାହା ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପାଠକମାନେହିଁ କହିପାରିବେ । ଯେଉଁ ବିଭ୍ରାଟ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି, ପରଂପରାର ପବିତ୍ରତା ଓ ଗାମ୍ଭୀର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରୁ ତା'ର କ୍ଷତିପୁରଣ ଯାବତଚନ୍ଦ୍ରାକ୍ଷେ ହୋଇପାରିବ ନାହିଁ । ଭବିଷ୍ୟତରେ ଯେପରି ଏଭଳି ବିଭ୍ରାଟର ପୁନରାବୃତ୍ତି ନହୁଏ, ତାହା ଉପରେ ବିଶେଷଜ୍ଞମାନେ ଗଭୀର ଚିନ୍ତା କରୁଥିବେ ବୋଲି ଆଶା ।

ଗୋଟାଏ ମୌଳିକ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସ୍ଵୀକାର କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଗୋଷ୍ଠିର ସେବକମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ଆଚରଣବିଧି ତଥା ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ସୌଜନ୍ୟବୋଧ ସଂପର୍କରେ ବିଧିବଦ୍ଧ ପାଠ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରି ତାଲିମ ଦେବା ଅତ୍ୟାବଶ୍ୟକ । ସର୍ବୋପରି ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଧର୍ମର ଇତିହାସ ସଂପର୍କରେ କେତେକ ସାଧାରଣ ଜ୍ଞାନ ସେ ପାଠ୍ୟକ୍ରମର ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ ହେବା ଜରୁରୀ । ଗୋଟାଏ ଦୃଷ୍ଟାନ୍ତ ଦେଲେ ଏଭଳି ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବର ଯୌକ୍ତିକତା ବୁଝିହେବ । ଭାରତବର୍ଷ ଓ ନେପାଳ ବାହାରେ ବିପୁଳ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ବସତି ହେଲା ବାଲିଦ୍ଵୀପରେ । ବହୁ ଆଶା ନେଇ ଦଳେ ବାଲିବାସୀ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କୁ ଦର୍ଶନ କରିବାକୁ ପୁରୀ ଆସିଥିଲେ । ସେବକମାନେ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଗୋଡ଼ କ'ଣ ପଚାରିଥିଲେ । ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବାରେ ସେମାନେ ହେଲେ ଅକ୍ଷମ ! ଅତେବ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ମନ୍ଦିର ପ୍ରବେଶ ହେଲା ନିଶିଦ୍ଧ ।

ସେବକମାନେ ବୁଝିଲେ ନାହିଁ ଯେ ଗୋଡ଼ ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଭରଦ୍ଵାଜ, ସାତ୍ତ୍ଵିକ୍ୟ ପ୍ରମୁଖ୍ୟ ରକ୍ଷିମାନଙ୍କର ସ୍ଫୁଟି ବହନ କରେ । ବାଲିଦ୍ଵୀପରେ ସେସବୁ ରକ୍ଷି ନଥିଲେ !

ସେବକମାନଙ୍କୁ ନିୟମିତ ଦରମାଦେଇ, ଯାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ କିଛି ଆଦାୟ କରିବା ପ୍ରଥା ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବେଆଇନ୍ ହେଉ ବୋଲି କେହି କେହି ଉପସ୍ଥାପନ କରିବାର ଏ ଲେଖକ ଶୁଣିଛି । ସ୍ଵେଚ୍ଛାସେବକ ଦଳ ପାଳିକରି ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ଯାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ

ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛଳତା ଉପରେ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିଦେବାର ଏକ ପରମ୍ପରା ପ୍ରବର୍ତ୍ତିତ ହେଉ । ବହୁ ସ୍ୱେଚ୍ଛାସେବୀ ସଂଗଠନ ସାଦରେ ଏ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବେ ।

ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ପ୍ରତୀକ

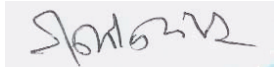
ଇତିହାସର କେତେ ଦିଅଁ ଏବଂ ଦେବାଳୟ ବିଧିସ୍ଥ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତୁ; କାହାରି କାହାରି ପୁନରୁଥାନ ହୋଇଛି (ଯଥା- ସୋମନାଥ, ମଥୁରା); ଅଧିକାଂଶ କିନ୍ତୁ ଚିରତରେ ଅବଲୁପ୍ତ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ କେବଳ ଆମର ଅତୀତର ଅଭିଭାବକ ଏବଂ ଆଜିର ଆଶୀଷ ନୁହନ୍ତି, ସେ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ପ୍ରତୀକ ।

ଏ ସତ୍ୟର ସଂକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ ସୂଚନା ଶ୍ରୀଅରବିନ୍ଦଙ୍କର ଏକ ବିରଳ ବଂଶଳା ରଚନା (ଜଗନ୍ନାଥେର୍ ରଥ୍)ରୁ ଆମେ ପାଇଥାଉଁ । ସେ ରଚନାର ଶେଷାଂଶ - 'ସେଉଁଦିନ ଜ୍ଞାନ, କର୍ମ ଓ ଭାବର ସାମଞ୍ଜସ୍ୟରେ ଏବଂ ଏକୀକରଣରେ ଆତ୍ମଗତ ଐକ୍ୟ ଦେଖାଦେବ, ସମଞ୍ଜିଗତ ବିରାଟ ପୁରୁଷଙ୍କ ଇଚ୍ଛାଶକ୍ତିର ପ୍ରେରଣାରେ, ସେଦିନ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ରଥ ଜଗତର ରାସ୍ତାରେ ବାହାର ହୋଇ ଦଶ ଦିଗ ଆଲୋକିତ କରିବ । ସତ୍ୟଯୁଗ ଅବତରଣ କରିବ ପୃଥିବୀ ବକ୍ଷରେ । ମର୍ତ୍ତ୍ୟ ମଣିଷର ପୃଥିବୀ ହେବ ଦେବତାଙ୍କ ଖେଳର ଶିବିର । ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ମନ୍ଦିରନଗରୀ, **Temple city of God-** ଆନନ୍ଦପୁରୀ ।'

ଶ୍ରୀଅରବିନ୍ଦଙ୍କର ଏହି ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ବାଣୀ ଉପରେ ଆମେ ଧ୍ୟାନସ୍ଥ କିମ୍ବା ଅନ୍ତତଃ ପକ୍ଷେ ଏକାଗ୍ର ହୋଇପାରିଲେ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱରୂପ ଆମ ଚେତନାରେ ଉଦ୍ଭାସିତ ହେବ । ଏକଥା ଠିକ୍ ଯେ ଧର୍ମାନୁଷ୍ଠାନ ନାମରେ ପ୍ରଚଳିତ ଚିରାଚରିତ କିମ୍ବା କର୍ମ ଏବଂ ଯାନ୍ତ୍ରିକ ଭାବରେ ପାଳିତ ବିଧିବିଧାନର ଯୁଗ ଅତୀତ । ଯାହା ଆଗତ ତଥା ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ, ତାହା ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକତାର ଆହ୍ୱାନ । ଆନୁଷ୍ଠାନିକତା ସହିତ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକତାର ଭିତ୍ତି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ସହ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କର ସିଧାସଳଖ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ସଂପର୍କ । ସେଥିରେ କୌଣସି ମଧ୍ୟସ୍ଥର ଭୂମିକା ନାହିଁ । ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଜୀବନହିଁ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଉପଲବ୍ଧିର କ୍ଷେତ୍ର ।

ଆପଣ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୋଣ ସଜାଡି ନେଲେ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ହେବେ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ଅଭିଭାବକ । ମାନବତାର ଏକ ଦିବ୍ୟ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଦିଗରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆମର ଦିଗ୍‌ଦର୍ଶକ ରୂପେ ହୃଦୟରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିପାରିଥିଲେ ପୁନରୁଜ୍ଜୀବିତ ହେବ ତାଙ୍କ ମହିମାମୟ ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ - ଯାହା ଆଜି ଆମ ଆଚରଣ ଯୋଗୁଁ ମୁଝିତ । ସେହି ପୁନରୁଜ୍ଜୀବିତ ମହାଚେତନାର କରୁଣା ରୂପକ ଗଂଗାହିଁ ଆମର ମୃତପ୍ତାୟ ବିବେକକୁ ସଂଜୀବତା କରିପାରିବ ।

ସଂଘଟିତ ବିଭାଗ ଆମ ସର୍ତ୍ତେ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ବଜ୍ରପାତ ସଦୃଶ ଚେତାବନୀ ହେବା ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ଏକ ନୂତନ ସଂଭାବନା ଦିଗରେ ସୂକ୍ଷ୍ମ ଆହ୍ୱାନ ।



ଗତ ନବକଳେବର ବେଳେ ଯେଉଁ ବିଭାଗ ହୋଇଥିଲା ତାହାର ଖବର ସମସ୍ତେ ଶୁଣିଥିଲେ । ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଦଇତାପତିମାନେ ଯେଉଁ ନାଭିପଦ୍ମ ପୁରୁଣା ବିଗ୍ରହମାନଙ୍କରୁ ନେଇ ନୂତନ ବିଗ୍ରହରେ ଥାପିବା ବିଧି, ସେ ବିଧି ଅମାନ୍ୟ କରି ଶତାଧିକ 'ସେବକ' ନାଭିପଦ୍ମ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଏବଂ ଝର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିବାକୁ ଜିଗର କରି ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନରେ ବିଳମ୍ବ କରିବା ସଂଗେ ସଂଗେ ତାର ସମସ୍ତ ଗାମ୍ଭୀର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନଷ୍ଟ କରିଦେଇଥିଲେ । ପ୍ରବାସୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇମାନେ ଏହାର ଗୁରତ୍ୱ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି କରିବା ଆବଶ୍ୟକ । ଏହାହିଁ ଲେଖକ ପ୍ରଫେସର ମନୋଜ ଦାସଙ୍କ ଉପରୋକ୍ତ ଲେଖାଟିରେ ପ୍ରତିଫଳିତ ହୋଇଛି ।

ମାନିନୀ

ପ୍ରବୀର ଦାଶ

ଜାଅ ଶ୍ୟାମଜାଅ ଆଜ

ମୁଁ ନା ନକହିବି କଥା !

ଯାମିନୀବିତିଛିମୋର

ଶୁଣିସଖୀଙ୍କର ଥଟା !! ଜାଅ ଶ୍ୟାମ...

ନିଶୀତନ୍ଦ୍ରାବଳୀବାସେ

କାଟିଥିବ (ତା) ବାହୁଫାଶେ !

ଶଠତୁମକୁଜାଣିଲି

ଏବେ ଅଳିତୁମବୃଥା !! ଜାଅ ଶ୍ୟାମ...

ସୋମେସୋମମଉଳିଲା

ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରସୋମରେଉରିଲା !

ସୋମଭରାହସତୁମ

କ୍ଷତମନେ ଦିଏ ବ୍ୟଥା !! ଜାଅ ଶ୍ୟାମ...

ପୁଷ୍ପରମାଳାଗୁଛିଲି

ମୋ ପୁଷ୍ପ ତାରେ ଆଜିଲି !

(ହେଲା) ମୋରପ୍ରେମ ଅପୁଷ୍ପିତ

ଆଉତୁମ ପୁଷ୍ପ ମିଥ୍ୟା !!

ଜାଅ ଶ୍ୟାମଜାଅ ଆଜ ନକହିବିକଥା

ଯାମିନୀବିତିଛିଶୁଣିସଖୀଙ୍କର ଥଟା !!

ଅନୁଭବ

ଡା: ବାସନ୍ତୀ ମହାପାତ୍ର, ଶ୍ୟାମାକୁଞ୍ଜ,
ସତ୍ୟସାଇ ଏନେଇ, ଖଣ୍ଡଗିରି, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ଅନେକ ଆଗରୁ ଫିଙ୍ଗିଦେଇଛି ସମୁଦ୍ରକୁ ମୁହଁ କରି,
ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ଅହଙ୍କାରର ସକଳ ସ୍ୱରୂପ,
ଅଗ୍ନି ବଳୟ ନୁହଁ,
ତରଙ୍ଗାନ୍ୱିତ ଛିର ଜଳ, ମୁଠାଏ କାକର,
ମୋ ପାଦ ତଳେ ପାପ ପଙ୍କ, ପ୍ରଗାଢ଼ ଅନ୍ଧାର,
ଉପରେ ପଦ୍ମ ବନ, ସୁନ୍ଦର ମଧୁର,
ପଦ୍ମ ନ ହେଲେ ବି ତା ଛାଇ, ବାମ୍ନା, ସାନିଧ୍ୟ,
ମୁଁ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଛି ଅନ୍ଧ ଅନୁଭବ |
ଆବେଗ ପଶରେ ମୋ ଆତ୍ମା
ଆବେଗର ନିରହଙ୍କାର ଝର,
ସମଗ୍ର ଆକାଶ ମୋ ଛାତିରେ,
ମୋ ତୁଠ ପାଦମୟ ଚଳନ୍ତି ଈଶ୍ୱର |

ଜନ୍ମଦିନର ଡାକ

ଡା: ପ୍ରତିଭା ଶତପଥୀ
ପଠିଆ ଷ୍ଟେସନ୍ ରୋଡ୍ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ଜନ୍ମ ଦିନରେ ମୋତେ ଡାକିଦେଲା କିଏ
ବୋଉର ଡାକ ପରି ଶୁଭିଗଲା ତ
ସେ ଯେ କେବେଠୁ ନାହିଁ !
ଏମିତି ଗୋଟିଏ ମଗୁଣୀର ଭୋର୍ ରେ
ମୋତେ ଜନ୍ମ କଲା
ଝରକା ସେପଟୁ ଫୁଲ ବୁଦାମାନଙ୍କୁ
ଅନେଇ ଥିଲା ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା କାତରେ
ତା' ପରେ ମନମରା ହେଇ ପାଳିଲା
ଆଜୀବନ ଗୋଟେ ଭଙ୍ଗା ଡେଶାକୁ ବୋହି ଉଡିଲା
ରୋଗ ଭୋଗିଲା
ଘର ବାହାର ମନ୍ଦିର ପୂଜାଘର
ନୈଶ୍ୟ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରେ ପାଠ ଶିଖାଇଲା
ସାଇ ପଢିଶାଳ ସେବା କଲା
ଗାଈ ଦୁହିଁଲା, ପେଇଲା ମୋତେ |
ତା ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣାକୁ ମୁଁ ବା ଦେଖିଲି କେବେ ?
ବୁଝିଲି ଭୋଗିଲି ଚିକିତ୍ସା ଚିକିତ୍ସା
ମୁଁ ଆଜି ଉଡୁଛି ଭଙ୍ଗା ଡେଶାକୁ ବୋହି
ସମୟ ତ ଅଟକେ ନାହିଁ
ବୋଉକୁ ଖୋଜିଲେ ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ
ପାଖରେ ଥାଏ, ପୁଣି ନ ଥାଏ
ଦିଶୁଥାଏ ତ, ଚିହ୍ନବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ନ ଥାଏ ପୁଣି
ଆଜି ଗୋଟେ ଦିନରେ ସେ ମୋତେ
କୋଉଠୁ ଡାକି ଦେଲା କେଜାଣି !!

ରଣ ଶୂନ୍ୟ

ନିରୁପମା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ

ତ୍ରେନିଂର ଷ୍ଟାଇପେଣ୍ଡ ପାଇଁ ଆବେଦନ କଲାବେଳକୁ ସେଇ ଯେ ଲେଖୁଦେଇଥିଲା “ଦରିଦ୍ର ଅସହାୟଙ୍କ ସେବା କରିବା ମୋ ଜୀବନର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମତେ ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳୁ” , ସେଇ ପଦକ କଥା ତାକୁ ଆଜି ଆଣି ଏଠି ପହଂଚେଇଛି କୋରାପୁଟର ଆଦିବାସୀ ଅଧ୍ୟୁସିତ ମାଳ ଅଂଚଳର ସରକାରୀ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ଶ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟିୟାନ ମିସନାରି ପରିଚାଳିତ ଏଇ ଡାକ୍ତର ଖାନାରେ । ଆଜି ତା ଚାକିରିର ପ୍ରଥମ ଦିନ ।

ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରୁ ନର୍ସିଂ ତ୍ରେନିଂ ସାରି ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରେ ପହଂଚିଲା ମାତ୍ରେ ଏ ଜଣନିଂ ଅର୍ଡ଼ର ପାଇଲା ଓ ଗାଁକୁ ଯାଇ ଜେଜେଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖା କରିଦେଇ ଚାଲିଆସିଛି ଏଠିକି । ଜେଜେଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଆସିଲା ବେଳେ ଭାରି ବାଧୁଥିଲା ତାକୁ । ପିଲାଦିନୁ ଗୋଟାଏ ଗାଡ଼ି ଆକ୍ସିଡେଂଟରେ ବାପାମାଙ୍କୁ ହରାଇ ଏଇ ଜେଜେ ଜେଜମାଙ୍କ କୋଳରେ ମଣିଷ ସେ । ତାର ଚିକେ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ହେଇଗଲା ଦିନୁ ଜେଜମା ଠାକୁରଙ୍କୁ ଡାକିଲେ ସେ ଚିତେ । କାହିଁକି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଉ ଡାକୁଛୁ? କଣ ରଖିଲେ ତୋ ପାଇଁ? ଯାଉ ଉତ୍ତରରେ ଜେଜେମା କହିବ –“ତତେ ପରା ମତେ ଦେଇଚକ୍ତି” । ଏବେ ସେ ବି ଚାଲି ଗଲାଣି । ଜେଜେ ଏକା ଗାଁରେ । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କର ଏତେ ଅସୁବିଧା ନାହିଁ । ସୁସ୍ଥ ଶରୀର । ତଥାପି ବୁଢ଼ାଲୋକ ତ! କେମିତି କେଜାଣି ପିଲାଦିନୁ ଗାଁର ଦରିଦ୍ର ବୁଢ଼ାବୁଢ଼ୀଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ତା ମନ ଖରାପ ହେଇଯାଏ । ତାକୁ ମାୟା ଲାଗେ । ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ବସି ସେମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ଶୁଣେ । ଜେଜେମାକୁ ଲୁଚେଇ ଘରୁ କଣ ସବୁ ଦେଇ ଦିଏ ବୋଲି କେତେ ଗାଳି ଖାଇଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତା ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ଛାଡ଼ି ପାରେନାହିଁ ।

କଣ ମନେହେଲା ମ୍ୟାଟ୍ରିକ ପରେ ଜିଦିକଲା ନର୍ସିଂ ପଢ଼ିବ । ଯେ ଯେତେ ବୁଝେଇଲେ ଶୁଣିଲା ନାହିଁ । ଏକୁଟିଆ ଝିଅଟିଏ ସହରରେ କୋଉଠି ଯାଇ ରହିବ । ଜେଜେ ଚିନ୍ତାରେ ଥିଲେ । ନର୍ସିଂ ହଷ୍ଟେଲରେ ରହିବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ଓ ଷ୍ଟାଇପେଣ୍ଡ ମିଳିବା କଥା ଶୁଣି ରାଜି ହେଇଗଲେ । ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷର ପାଠ ପଢ଼ା ପରେ ପୁଣି ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରୁ ବର୍ଷକର ସ୍ୱେସିଆଲ ତ୍ରେନିଂ ନେଇ ଫେରିଛି ସେ ।

ଆଜିର ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନା ଭିତରକୁ ପଶିଲା ମାତ୍ରେ ଯେଉଁ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚରେ ତାକୁ ଡ୍ରାପ୍ଟି ଦିଆଗଲା ସେଠିକାର ଅବସ୍ଥା ଦେଖି ଭଲ ଲାଗିଲା ତାକୁ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ମନ ବୁଝୁଛୁ ହଉଥାଏ । କିଏ ଯେମିତି ପଚାରୁଥାଏ- ଏଇ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଦେଖୁଥିଲୁ ? ତଥାପି ମନକୁ ବୁଝାଇଲା- ଦେଖ, ମୂଳରୁ ବିରକ୍ତ ହୁଅନା । ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟର ଯାହା ଅବସ୍ଥା ତତେ ସବୁ ସମ୍ଭାଳିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟଧର । ଏ ଚିନ୍ତାରୁ ଓହରିଯାଇ ଝରକା ବାଟେ ଜଂଗଲର ଗଛ ବୃକ୍ଷ ଫାଙ୍କରୁ ଦିଶୁଥିବା ଅରାଏ ଆକାଶ ଉପରେ ଆଖି ପକେଇଛି କି ନାହିଁ କଡ଼ ବେତରୁ ଡାକଟିଏ ଶୁଭିଲା –“ଝିଅ !”

ସବିତା ଚମକି ପଡ଼ିଲା । କିଏ କେଉଁଠି ଏମିତି ଜେଜେଙ୍କ ପରି ଡାକୁଛି ତାକୁ? ବୁଲି ପଡ଼ି ଚାହିଁଲା ସେ । ସରୁସରୁ ହାତଗୋଡ଼, ରୋଗୀଣୀ ରୁଢ଼ିଆ ମୁହଁର ବୁଢ଼ାଟିଏ ସେ ପାଖ ଖଟରେ । ଆଦିବାସୀ ଲୋକଟିଏହୋଇଥାଇ ପାରେ ହୁଏତ । ଏତେ ଦୁର୍ବଳ ଯେ କିଛି ଜାଣିବା ମୁଷ୍ଟିଲ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତା ଆଖିକୁ ଦେଖି ସେ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଲା – ଠିକ୍ ଜେଜେଙ୍କ ଚାହାଣି । ଏଇ ତ କାଲି ମାତ୍ର ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେଇ ଆସିଛି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଗାଁରେ-

ସେଦିନର ଡ୍ରାପ୍ଟି ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ତାର ସେଇ ବେତରୁ । ବୁଢ଼ାଟିର କି ଆନନ୍ଦ! ଖୁସିରେ ତା ମୁହଁ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ଦିଶୁଥିଲା । ପେସେଣ୍ଟକୁ ସ୍ପର୍ଶ କରି ସାରି, ବିଛଣା ଚାଦର ବଦଳେଇ ଦେଇ, ଖୁଆଇବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କଲା । କେମିତି କେଜାଣି ଅନ୍ୟମନସ୍କ ଭାବେ ତା ମୁହଁରୁ ବାହାରି ପଡ଼ିଲା- “ଜେଜେ ତୁମର ଏଠି କିଏ ଅଛନ୍ତି?” ପେଜୁଆ ଆଖି ଦୁଇଟିରେ ପୁଣି ସେଇ ଚାହାଣି । ନାହିଁ କେହି ନାହିଁ ଲୋ ମା! ଦିମାସ ହେଲାଣି ଏଇଠି ପଡ଼ିଛି । ଏଠି ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାରୁ ଖାଇବାକୁ ମିଳୁଛି, ଜିଇଁଛି । ପରେ ବେଶ କଷ୍ଟରେ ହାତ ଉପରକୁ ଉଠେଇ କହିଲା- “କେବେ ଦିନ ସରିବ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଇ ଜଣା । ତୁମେ ଆଜି ନୂଆ ଆସିବ ନା-ମନେ ହେଉଛି ତମେ ସିଷ୍ଟର ନୁହଁ, କେହି ଆପଣାର ଲୋକ । ବୋଧେ କିଛିକାମ ଅଛି ତୁମ ଠି ମୋର ।”

ଭାଷା କେମିତି ମାଜିତ – ସବିତାକୁ ଭଲ ଲାଗିଲା । ସବିତା କଣ ପଚାରିବ ପଚାରିବ ହେଲା – । କିନ୍ତୁ ମନେମନେ ଭାବିଲା- ଆଉ ଆଜି, ପରେ ପଚାରିବା ସ୍ଥିର କରି ନେଇ ସେ ବୁଢ଼ାର ବେତ୍ ପାଖ ଛାଡ଼ିଲା । ଦିନସାରା ଡ୍ରାପ୍ଟି ଭିତରେ ସବିତା ସେ ଆଖି ଦିଓଟିର ଚାହାଣିକୁ ଭୁଲି ପାରୁ ନ ଥାଏ । ଚାର୍ଟ ଦେଖିଲା- ଯକ୍ଷ୍ମାରୋଗୀଟିଏ । ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଉନ୍ନତିର ଲକ୍ଷଣ ତ ଦିଶୁନି । ବରଂ ଖରାପ ଆଡ଼କୁ ଗତି କରୁଛି ଦିନକୁ ଦିନ । ଦିନ ଗଡ଼ି ଚାଲିଲା । କେମିତି କେଜାଣି ସେ ବାନ୍ଧି ହେଇଗଲା ସେ ବେତ୍ ସାଥରେ । ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ ଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ସମୟ ଦିଏ ସେ ତାକୁ । ଆପଣାର ଲାଗେ ବୁଢ଼ାଟି ।

ସେଦିନ ବେଡ଼ ପାଖର ଡ୍ରୟାର ସଜାଡ଼ ସଜାଡ଼ ଦରମାଲଲା ଲୁଗା ପଟା ଭିତରେ କନାମୁଣି ଖଣ୍ଡିକରେ ଗୁଡ଼ିଆ ଟଙ୍କା ପୁଚୁଳି ଟିଏ ଦେଖିଲା । ସେକଥା କହିଲା ବୁଢ଼ାକୁ- ଏଠି ଟଙ୍କା ରଖିତ ଯେ କିଏ ତ ନେଇ ଯିବ! ଅଫିସରେ ରଖି ଦଉନ! ହସିଲା ବୁଢ଼ା- “ସେ କଣ ମୋର ଯେ ରଖିଦେବି? ତା ବେଳ ହେଲେ ସେ ନେଇଯିବ ..”, ଆଗ୍ରହରେ ସେ ଟଙ୍କା ପୁଡ଼ାକୁ ଟିପି ପକେଇଲା କନାମିଶା କରି ଓ ତା ପରେ ଧରଧର ହାତରେ ସେଥିରୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଟଙ୍କା କାଢ଼ି ସବିତା ହାତକୁ ବଢେଇ ଦେଇ କହିଲା, “ ଯା ଲୋ ମା-ତାହା ଟିକେ ପିଇଦେଇ ଆସିବୁ! ଗେଟ ପାଖ ନବିନା ଦୋକାନ ଚାହା ଭାରି ସୁଆଦ । ” ସବିତା ପ୍ରଥମେ ମନା କରୁଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ବୁଢ଼ାଙ୍କର ବାଧ୍ୟବାଧକତାରେ ହାତରେ ଧରିଲା ସେ ଟଙ୍କାଟି । ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଦୁଃଖ ଦେବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା କଲାନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପୁଣି ଡ୍ରୟର ସଜାଡ଼ିଲା ବେଳେ ସେଇଟିକୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଟଙ୍କା ପୁଚୁଳି ଭିତରକୁ ଧୀରେ ଗଲେଇ ଦେଲା ।

ଏଣିକି ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଏଇ ଘଟଣାର ପୁନରାବୃତ୍ତି ହୁଏ । ବୁଢ଼ା ଟଙ୍କାଟିଏ କାଢ଼ି ସବିତାକୁ ଦିଆନ୍ତି ଓ ସବିତା ସେଇଟି ତାଙ୍କ ଅଜାଣତରେ ପୁଣି ସେଇଠି ରଖିଦିଏ । ସବୁଦିନେ ବୁଢ଼ା କହନ୍ତି - ମୁଁ ରଣି ମଣିଷ, ରଣ ନଶୁଝିଲେ କଣ ଛୁଟି ମିଳିବ? କଣ ତା ମାନେ ସବିତା ବୁଝି ପାରେନା । କେହି ନଥିବେ ଏମିତି କଣ ହୁଏ କୋଉଠି? ପଚାରି ପଚାରି ଜାଣିଲା ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ତାଙ୍କର ନିଜର କେହି ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଚିହ୍ନା ଜଣା ଯେ ବା ଅଛନ୍ତି ବନ୍ଧୁବାନ୍ଧବ କାହାର ବେଳ ଅଛି ଏ ରୋଗୀକୁ ଜଗିବାକୁ? ସଭିଏଁ ତ ଦୁଃଖ ଦରିଦ୍ର, ଦିନସାରା ଖଟିଲେ ଖାଇବେ । ଏଣୁ ସବିତା ଜାଣିଲା ଏଇଟି ତା ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ମିସନାରି ତାଙ୍କର ଖାନ୍ନା- ସବୁକଥାକୁ ଯତ୍ନ ନେଇ ନଥିଲେ ବି ଏମିତି ଆମ ସରକାରି ତାଙ୍କର ଖାନ୍ନା ପରି ଅବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥିତ ନୁହେଁ ।

କେବେଦିନେ ପଚାରିଥିଲା ଜେଜେ ଘରକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ମନ ହଉନି? ବୁଢ଼ା ଟିକେ ବେଳ ରୁପ ହେଲେ ତା ପରେ କହିଲେ-କି ଘର ? ଏଇ ତ ମୋ ଘର ତମେ ସବୁ ମୋ ପରିବାର । ହଜିଗଲେ ଖୋଜିବାକୁ କେହିନାହିଁ କି ମରିଗଲେ କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ କେହିନାହିଁ । ବ୍ୟାସି ଥିଲା ମୋର ପରିବାର । ସେ ହଜିଗଲା ପରେ ତ ମୁଁ ପାଗଳ ହେଇଗଲି । ଘର ଉଜୁଟିଗଲା । ଏଇ ତାଙ୍କର ବାବୁ କେତେ ଯତ୍ନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ସେଇଦିନଠୁ ଯେ ଦେହ ଖରାପ ଲାଗି ରହିଲା ଆସି ଏଠି ପହଞ୍ଚି ଗଲାଣି ।

ବ୍ୟାସି ଶବ୍ଦଟି ଚିହ୍ନାଚିହ୍ନା ଲାଗିଲା ସବିତାକୁ । ଦିଲ୍ଲୀରେ ଟ୍ରେନିଂ ନେଲା ବେଳେ ଆଲୋ-ଇଣ୍ଡିଆନ ଝିଅଟିଏ ଥିଲା ତାର ରୁମ୍ମେଟ୍ । ନାଁ ତାର ସିଲ୍ଭାନିଆ । ସେଇ କହେ ଏଇ ଶବ୍ଦ । ଆମେ ଗେଲ୍ଲୀରେ ଧୋବଳି ବଢ଼ଲା ତାକିଲା ପରି ସେମାନେ ତାଙ୍କ ଗାଈକୁ ଡାକନ୍ତି ବ୍ୟାସି । ତେବେ ବୁଢ଼ାଙ୍କର ଗାଈଟିଏ ହଜିଟି ଜାଣିଲା ସବିତା । ଆଉ ଦିନେ ଥିଲେ ହେଇ ଖଟ ଉପରେ ବସିଥିବା ଦେଖି ପଚାରିଲା- ଜେଜେ କାହାକୁ ମନେମନେ ଖୋଜୁଛ? ସବୁବେଳେ ତ କହୁଛ ପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କୁ ଡାକୁଛ । କିଏ ତମ ପ୍ରଭୁ କହିଲ? ବୁଢ଼ାଙ୍କର ମାର୍ଜିତ ବ୍ୟବହାର ଦେଖି ସେ ନିଶ୍ଚିତ ଥିଲା ଯେ ଖୁଷ୍ଟିୟାନ ହୋଇଥିବେ, ଜିସସ କି ମଦର ମେରିଙ୍କ କଥା କହିବେ । ନହେଲେ କୋଉ ସେଣ୍ଟ କଥା । ବୁଢ଼ା କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ ଆହୁରି ମାର୍ଜିତ ଢଙ୍ଗରେ । କହିଲେ- ହଁ ଥରେ ଯାଇଥିଲି ଯେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲି ତାଙ୍କୁ । ସେଦିନ ଥିଲା ରବିବାର । କି ସୁନ୍ଦର ସେ ରୂପ! କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଉ କାହିଁ ସେ ସୁଯୋଗ? ରଣ ଶୁଝିବାକୁ ଗଲେ ସିନା ଯାଇ ଦେଖା ହବ! ଆହୁରି ଦିନେ ଥିଲେ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ- କାହାରି ନାଁ ଆଉ ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁନି । ସେଇଠି ତାଙ୍କୁ କହିଦେଇ ଆସିଥିଲି - ବ୍ୟାସି ଯଦି ଫେରିବ ମୋର ଯାହା କିଛି ସଂଚିତ ଧନ ତୁମକୁ ଦେଇ ଦେବି । କେତେଦିନ ପରେ ବ୍ୟାସି ଯେମିତି ଦିନେ ଉଭାନ ହେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା ସେମିତି ହଠାତ ଆସି ପହଞ୍ଚି ଗଲା । ତାକୁ ତାଙ୍କର ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ ଦେଇଦେଲି । ଆଉ ମୋ ସଂଚିତ ଧନ ଯାହାକୁ ଦେବିକହିଥିଲି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ ପାରୁଛି ନା ଦେଇ ପାରୁଛି?

ସବିତା ଜାଣିଲା -ଜର ବଢ଼ିଛି, ବାଉଳି ହେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଧୀରେ କରି ଶୁଣାଇ ଦେଲା ସେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଖଟ ଉପରେ । ସ୍ୱର ଧରିଲାଣି, ତଥାପି କହି ଚାଲିଆନ୍ତି ସେ- ଆଃ, ସେଠି କି ଲୋକ ଗହଳି! ମତେ ତ ସବୁ ଦିଶିଯାଇଛି । କହୁକହୁ ହଠାତ ସଚେତନ ହେଇ ପଡ଼ିଲେ ସେ । ସବିତାକୁ ବେଡ଼ ପାଖରେ ଠିଆ ହେଇ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଚାହିଁ ଥିବା ଦେଖି କହିଲେ- “ ଆରେ ମା! ମୋର ସେ ଟଙ୍କା ପୁଚୁଳିଟି କୋଉଠି ରଖୁଛୁ, ବାହାର କଲୁ ଟିକେ- ଗଣି ଦେଖୁଲୁ କେତେ ଅଛି । ”

ତାଙ୍କର ବାରତାଉଳିଆ କଥା ଶୁଣି ସବିତା ମନେକଲା -ଲୋକ ଗହଳି? କୋଉ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଗହଳି କଥା କହୁଛନ୍ତି ଏ? ବୋଧହୁଏ କୋଉ ରବିବାରରେ କୋଉ ସହରର ବଡ଼ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚର ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟମାସ ଗହଳି କଥା ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଯାଉଛି ଯାଙ୍କର । ପୁଣି ଟଙ୍କା ପୁଚୁଳି କାହିଁକି ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା ଲୋକ ଗହଳି ସାଙ୍ଗରେ? ତଥାପି ତାଙ୍କ କଥାମାନି ଡ୍ରୟର ଭିତରୁ ଟଙ୍କା ଧଳିଟି କାଢ଼ି ଆଣି ଅଜାଡ଼ିଦେଲା ସେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ, ହସପିଟାଲ ବେଡ଼ ଉପରେ । ମାସେ ହେଲା ନିଇତି ନିଆ ଆଉ ରଖା ହଉଥିବା ଟଙ୍କାର ସଂଖ୍ୟା ଗଣିଲା-ଏକୋଇଶି । ପୁରୁଣା ବେଳର ଓଜନିଆ ଟଙ୍କା କେତୋଟି । ବଡ଼ପାଟିରେ କହିଲା- “ଜେଜେ ଶୁଣୁତ ତ -ଏକୋଇଶି! ଏଥିରେ ତମର ଅଛି ସର୍ବମୋଟ ଏକୋଇଶି ରୁପା ଟଙ୍କା ଜେଜେ । ”

ଏଁ! ଏକୋଇସି ? ଏଥିରେତ ମୂଳରୁ ଯେତକି ଥିଲା ସେତକି ରହିଛି! ଏ କେମିତି କଥା? ଏଇଟା କଣ ଗୋଟାଏ ଅସରକ୍ତି ମୁଣି? କେତେ ତ ଦେଇ ସାରିଛି ସେଥିରୁ ଲୋ ମା କେତେ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ । .ପୁଣି ରହିଲା କେମିତି ଯୋଉ ଏକୋଇସି କୁ ସେଇ ଏକୋଇସି ଏ ମୁଣିରେ! ହଉହଉ ଯାହା ଅଛି ସେତକ ସେ ତିନିଜଣଙ୍କୁ ବାଠିକରି ଦେଇ ଦବୁ ଝିଅ-ତେ ଲାଗିଲା ।”

ସବିତାକୁ ଡର ମାଡ଼ିଲା । ବାରମ୍ବାର ପଚାରିଲା –କାହାକୁ ଦେବି? କୋଉ ତିନିଜଣ ସେମାନେ? ନାଁ କଣ ସେମାନଙ୍କର?କିନ୍ତୁ ଉତ୍ତର ମିଳିଲା ପ୍ରତିଥର ତା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ-ତିନିଜଣଙ୍କୁ ।ସବିତା ପାଇଁ ତଥାପି ଲୋକଟିର ଭାଷା ଥିଲା ଦୁର୍ବୋଧ । କେତେଥର ଜର ଏମିତି ବଢ଼ିଛି କମିଛି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆଜି ଏ କି ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ଦେଇ ଦଉଚକ୍ତି ସେ ତାକୁ? ରଣ ଶୁଭିବା କଥା ଅବଶ୍ୟ ସେ କହୁଛି ଅନେକ ଥର । ସେ ପଚାରି ଲାଗିଥାଏ – କାହାକୁ ଦେବି ଏ ଟଙ୍କା ଜେଜେ?

କେତେଥରର ଡାକ ପରେ ଆଖି ଖୋଲିଲେ ବୁଢ଼ା । ଜରୁଆ ପେଟୁଆ ଆଖି ମେଲା କରି ଚାହିଁଲେ-୩୦ ଥର ଉଠିଲା-ସବିତା ନଇଁ ପଡ଼ିଲା ଡାକ ଛାଡ଼ି ଉପରକୁ ସେ କଣ କହିବେ ଶୁଣି ପାରିବ ବୋଲି । ଏଥର ବହୁ କଷ୍ଟରେ ହାତଟି ଉଠାଇ ସେ ତା ବେକରୁ ଝୁଲୁଥିବା ଲକେଟଟିକୁ ହାତରେ ଧରି କହିଲେ, “ ଯାଙ୍କୁ ଦେଇ ଦବୁ । ଯାଙ୍କରି ଠେକ୍ ମୁଁ ରଣି ” ଘଡ଼ଘଡ଼ ଶୁଭୁଥାଏ ସେ ସ୍ଵର । ଥରିଗଲା ସବିତାର ଦେହ । ପ୍ରତିଥର ସେ କହିଚକ୍ତି –ତିନିଜଣଙ୍କୁ । ଏଇ ତେବେ ସେ ତିନିଜଣ?

ସେଦିନ ଘରୁ ଆସିଲା ବେଳେ ଏଇ ଲକେଟ ଥିବା ହାତଟିଏ ପିନ୍ଧେଇ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ଜେଜେ ତାକୁ । ଆଉ କହିଥିଲେ, “ ଏଇ ତେତେ ଜଗିବେ! ପ୍ରଥମ ମାସର ଦରମା ଯାଙ୍କରି ପାଖକୁ ପଠେଇ ଦବୁ । “ଦରମା ପାଇଲାଣି ଦୁଇଦିନ ହେବ । ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିନି ସିନା, ହେଲେ ଜେଜେ କଥା ଭୁଲିଯାଇଥିଲା । ଏ ବୁଢ଼ା କଣ ସେଇକଥା ମନେ ପକେଇ ଦେଲେ? ଡାକ ଦବା ଏକୋଇସଟି ଟଙ୍କା ହାତରେ ଧରି ବାହାରି ଆସିଲା ସେ ଚାଲିଚାଲି କ୍ଵାଚରସକୁ ଓ ତା ଦରମା ଟଙ୍କାତକ ଆଣି ଏ ଏକୋଇଶିଟି ଟଙ୍କା ସହିତମିଶାଇ ପୋଷ୍ଟ ଅଫିସକୁ ଯାଇ ମନି ଅର୍ଡର କଲା ପୁରୀ ଶ୍ରୀ ମନ୍ଦିର ଠିକଣାରେ । ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କ ରଣ ଶୁଭା ସରିଲା ଆଜି- ଭାବିଲା ସେ ।

ଦରିଦ୍ର ଅସହାୟଙ୍କ ସେବା କରିବାକୁ ଯେ ପଣ କରି ଆସିଥିଲା ତାହା କଣ ତେବେ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଲା ଏଇଠୁ? ସବୁ ଅସ୍ଥିରତା ସତ୍ତ୍ଵେ ତାକୁ ଏ ଆରମ୍ଭ ଭଲ ଲାଗିଲା । ଏତକ କାମ ସାରି ଫେରିଲା ବେଳକୁ ବେଶ ଡେରି ହେଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ତା ପେସେଣ୍ଟଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ଉପରେ ଧଳା ଚାଦର ଘୋଡ଼ିଆ ହୋଇ ସାରିଥିଲା । ସେ ଆଉ ଥୟ ହୋଇ ରହି ପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । ଆଉ ଗୋଟାଏ ମୁହଁ ଦିଶିଗଲା ତାକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର । ଗାଁକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ଚାରିଦିନ ଛୁଟି ଦରଖାସ୍ତଟିଏ ଲେଖିଲା । ସକାଳ ବସର ଟିକେଟ ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରି କ୍ଵାଚରସକୁ ଫେରିଲା ସକାଳ ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେବାକୁ ।

(ଲେଖିକା ପରିଚୟ-ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ନିରୁପମା ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ (୧୯୩୭-) ଡାକ୍ତର ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ଶୈଳୀର ଫିଚର ରଚନା, ଅନୁବାଦ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ମୌଳିକ କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ରଗଳ୍ପ ରଚନା ଲାଗି ସୁପରିଚିତ । ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ : ୭୮୮, ଶହୀଦ ନଗର, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵର, ଓଡ଼ିଶା)

ଶେଷଅର୍ଘ

ଓ ସୁଲୋଚନା ଦାସ

ବନ୍ଧୋପସାଗରର ଅଶାନ୍ତ ବୀତିମାଳା ମଥା ପିଟୁଥିଲା ବେଳାଭୁଇଁରେ । ପଞ୍ଜିମାକାଶରେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଅସ୍ତ ହେଉଥିଲେ । ସାଗର ବନ୍ଧରେ ସହସ୍ରଧାରରେ ପ୍ରତିବିମ୍ବିତ ହେଉଥିଲା ଅସ୍ତଗାମୀ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଚରଣାୟିତ ସୁନେଲି ଆଭା ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ । ବିଚିତ୍ର ଥିଲା ସେ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ । ବେଳ ରତ ରତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଏ ବିଦାୟ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଥିଲା ବେଶ ହୃଦୟଙ୍ଗମୀ । ବେଳାଭୁଇଁରେ ଜମାଟ ବାନ୍ଧୁଥିଲା ବିପଣୀମାନଙ୍କର ସମ୍ଭାର । ସଂଜବେଳର କୋଳାହଳରେ ମୁଖରିତ ହେଉଥିଲା ପୁରୀ ସମୁଦ୍ରକୁଳ । ଜୀବନର ସଫସ୍ତର ଯେପରି ସ୍ୱରାୟିତ ହେଉଥିଲା ଅଗଣିତ କଣ୍ଠରେ । କିଏ ଖାଇବାରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଥିଲେ । ଆଉ କିଏ ଲହଡ଼ି ଭାଙ୍ଗୁଥିଲେ । ସମୁଦ୍ର କୁଳରେ ଚାଲି ଚାଲି ଉପଭୋଗ କରୁଥିଲେ ଦଳଦଳ ଲୋକ । କିଏ ବାଲିଘର ତୋଳୁଥିଲା, ଆଉ ତାକୁ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଭାଙ୍ଗି ଦେଉଥିଲା ଅଝଟିଆ ଅମାନିଆ ଢେଉ । କିଶାବିକାରେ ଆଉ କେହି କେହି ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଥିଲେ । କିଏ ବା ବିଦାୟୀ ସୁନ୍ଦରକୁ ଦୁଇ ହାତ ଯୋଡ଼ି ପ୍ରଣାମ କରୁଥିଲା । ଢେଉ ଗଣୁଥିଲେ ଚପଳମତି ଶିଶୁମାନେ । ଯେତେ ଦେଖିଲେ ବି କାନ୍ତ ହେଉନଥିଲା ଅଗଣିତ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିର ଦିଗ୍‌ବିଳୟ । ଯେପରି ସୀମାହୀନ ଆନନ୍ଦ ବୁଣିଦେଉଥିଲେ ଆକାଶ, ପୃଥିବୀ ଆଉ ସମୁଦ୍ର ଏକତ୍ର ହୋଇ । ଏ ମହାମିଳନ ଥିଲା ମହାକାଳର ଏକ ବିଚିତ୍ର ଲୀଳା । ନିତ୍ୟନୂତନ ।

ସମୁଦ୍ରକୁ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ପ୍ରୟାସ କରିଥାଏ ମଣିଷ । ଅଥଚ କେତେଜଣ ବା ବୁଝନ୍ତି ଜୀବନକୁ ପୁଣି ସମୁଦ୍ରକୁ । ତା' ର ଅଧିକତମ ଛଳଛଳ ପଣିଆକୁ । ତାର ବିସ୍ମୃତିକୁ । ତା' ର ଅବୁଝାପଣକୁ । ତା' ର ସୀମାହୀନ ଅନନ୍ତ ବିସ୍ତାରକୁ ।

ଜୀବନ ଓ ଠିକ୍ ସେମିତି । ବୁଝୁବୁଝୁ ଦିନ ସରିଯାଏ । ସଂଜ ନଇଁଆସେ । ସାଗର ଗର୍ଭରେ ଲୁଚି ଯାଉଥିବା ସୁନ୍ଦର ପରି ସମୟର ବିରାଟଗର୍ଭରେ ଲୁଚିଯାଏ ମଣିଷ । ଏ ପୃଥିବୀ , ଏ ସଂପର୍କ , ଏ ଜୀବନ ବିଲୀନ ହୋଇଯାଏ । କେଉଁ ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟହସ୍ତ ନିର୍ଲିପ୍ତ ଭାବରେ ଚିଣ୍ଡାଇଦିଏ ଏପାରିର ମାୟାମୟ ବଂଧନକୁ । କେଉଁଠୁ ଆସେ ପୁଣି କେଉଁଠି ଯାଏ – ସତେକି ଏକ ଅସମାହିତ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନବାଚୀ ହୋଇ ଉଭାହୁଏ ଏଇ ବେଳାଭୁଇଁରେ ।

ଗୋଟେ ପଟେ ଜୀବନ । ଆଉ ଆରପଟେ ? ସ୍ୱର୍ଗଦ୍ୱାରରେ ହୁତୁ ହୁତୁ ହୋଇ ଜଳୁଥିଲା କେତେଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ଶବ । କେତୋଟି ଚିତା ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି ପାଇଁ ଅପେକ୍ଷାମାଣ ଥିଲେ । ସ୍ୱର୍ଗଦ୍ୱାର ବିଶାମସ୍ତଳୀର ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ପାହାଚରେ ବସିଥିଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ଅସୀମା ମିଶ୍ର । ବାପାଙ୍କର ଚିତା ସଜତା ସରିଥିଲା । ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରୂପରେ କାଠରେ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଦେବାକୁ ସେ ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲେ ମାଲଭାଇମାନଙ୍କୁ । ସେ ସହିପାରିବେନି ସେ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ । ଯେତେ କାଠ ଲାଗୁଛି ଲାଗୁ । ହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ସବୁଠୁ ପ୍ରିୟ ମଣିଷଟିର ଏ ନିଃଶେଷ ହୋଇଯିବାର କରୁଣ ଅନୁଭବକୁ ଅବଶିଷ୍ଟ ଆୟୁଷ ସେ ଛାତିରେ ବୋହିବେ କେମିତି ।

ତାଙ୍କର ସେ । ଆଖି ସାମ୍ନାରେ ସେ ଦେଖିଛନ୍ତି ମୃତ୍ୟୁର କେତେ ବିଚିତ୍ର ଲୀଳାଖେଳା । ଲୁହ ଆଉ କୋହର ଉଜୁଡ଼ା ଜୀବନକୁ ସେ ଅତି ପାଖରୁ ନିରେଖିଛନ୍ତି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭିତରେ ରୋଗୀଟିଏ ଶେଷ ନିଃଶ୍ଵାସ ତ୍ୟାଗ କଲାବେଳେ ଆତ୍ମୀୟମାନଙ୍କର ଆତୁରତାକୁ ସେ ଅନୁଭବ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଗୁମୁରି ଗୁମୁରି କାନମୁଥିବା ମଣିଷମାନଙ୍କର ନିଃସ୍ଵ ହୋଇଯିବା ଅବସ୍ଥାକୁ ସେ କଳନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଆଉ କେବେ କେବେ ନିରେଖିଛନ୍ତି ଛେଉଣି ହୋଇ ଭୁଲରେ ଲୋଚୁଥିବା ମଣିଷ ପଶିଆକୁ । ଜୀବନର ଆଲୁଅ ଆଉ ଅକ୍ଷର ଏ ଉଭୟ ସହିତ ତାଙ୍କର ଭେଟାଭେଟି ହୁଏ । କେତେବେଳେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭିତରେ ତ କେତେବେଳେ ତାଙ୍କରଖାନା ବାରଣ୍ଡାରେ ।

ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଆନମନା ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଇଏ କ'ଣ ? ତାଙ୍କରଟିଏ ଯଦି ଏମିତି ଭାବପ୍ରବଣ ହେବ, ଲୁହପୁତୁ ହୁଦୟଟିଏ ନେଇ ଆତଯାତ ହେବ, ତେବେ ଚିକିତ୍ସା କରିବ କେମିତି ? ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଉଚ୍ଚାରିତ ହୁଏ ନିଜ ଭିତରୁ । ସେ ଫେରିଯାଆନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କର ନିର୍ଲିପ୍ତ ଅନାସକ୍ତି ପାଖକୁ । ନା, ଏପରି ଦୁର୍ବଳତା ତାଙ୍କୁ ଶୋଭାପାଏନି । ଅନ୍ୟ ତାଙ୍କରମାନଙ୍କର ଥକା ପରିହାସ ବି ବେଳେବେଳେ ସହିବାକୁ ହୁଏ ଖାଲି ସ୍ଥିତ ହସଟିଏ ପ୍ରତିବଦଳରେ ।

ବାପାଙ୍କର ସଂସ୍କାର ହେବା ଦୃଶ୍ୟକୁ ଶିବାକୁ ମନେମନେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେଉଥିଲେ ସେ । ବାପାଙ୍କର ଶବ ଧରି ଯେତେବେଳେ ଗାଡ଼ି ପୁରୀ ଅଭିମୁଖେ ବାହାରିଲା , ଅସୀମା ବାହାରିଥିଲେ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଯିବାକୁ । ମନୋଜ ସ୍ମୃତି ହୋଇ କହିଲେ - ଆରେ , ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକ ହୋଇ ତମେ ସ୍ଵର୍ଗଦ୍ଵାର ଯିବ ? କ'ଣ ଦରକାର ? କୋଉ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକ ଭଲ ଶୁଣାନକୁ ଯାଏ ! ତୁମ ଭାଇ ତ ମୁଖାଗ୍ନି ଦେବେ । ତୁମେ ଯାଇ ସେଠି କ'ଣ କରିବ ? ନା, ଦେଖେଇ ହେବାକୁ ଯାଉଛ -ମୁଁ ଏମିତି ମୋ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ଭଲପାଏ । ଜଗତ ଲୋକେ ଧନ୍ୟ ଧନ୍ୟ କହିବେ । ବରଂ ଘରେ ରୁହ । ଏଠିକା ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ବୁଝାବୁଝି କରିବ । ସଂସ୍କାର ସାରି ଫେରିଲା ପରେ ମାଲଭାଇମାନେ କ'ଣ ଖାଇବେ ସେକଥା ବୁଝ ।

କିଛି ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେନି ଅସୀମା । ନୀରବରେ ଯାଇ ଗାଡ଼ିରେ ବସିଲେ । ଏତେଲୋକଙ୍କ ସାମ୍ନାରେ କଥା କଟାକଟି କରିବାକୁ ସେ ଉଚିତ ମନେ କଲେନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ମନ ବିଦ୍ରୋହୀ ହୋଇ ଉଠିଲା । ସବୁ କଥାରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକ,ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକ । ଏଇଟା ତୁମେ କରିପାରିବନି । ସେଇଟା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକ ପାଇଁ ମନା । ଏଇଟା ପାପ । କିନ୍ତୁ ପୁରୁଷ ଲୋକଟି ପାଇଁ ଚାରିଖୁଣ ମାଫ୍ । ସେ ସବୁ କରିପାରିବ । ସବୁଠିକି ଯାଇ ପାରିବ । ଅଗମ୍ୟ, ଦୁର୍ଗମ ବୋଲି ତା ପାଇଁ କିଛି ବାରଣ ନାହିଁ । କିଏ ଏସବୁ ନିୟମ ଗଢ଼ିଛି । ପାଠଶାଳ ପଢ଼ି ତାଙ୍କର ହୋଇ ବି ଯଦି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏତେ କଟକଣା, ଏତେ ନିୟମ କାନୁନ୍, ପରାଂପରା , ତେବେ ସାଧାରଣ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକ କଥା କ'ଣ କୁହାଯିବ । କିଏ ଗଢ଼ିଛି ଏ ସମାଜ । ଘର ପାଇଁ ଯାବତୀୟ କାମ ସେ କରୁଥିବ । ଅଥଚ ସେ ନିଜେ ସେକେଣ୍ଡ ଗ୍ରେଡ଼ ସିଟିଜେନ ହୋଇରହିବ । ମନ ଭିତରେ ନାନା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଦ୍‌ବେଳିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ କିଛି କହିଲେ ନାହିଁ ।

ସେ ବାପାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଥମ ସନ୍ତାନ । ଆରମ୍ଭରୁ ବାପାବୋଉଙ୍କର ସବୁ ସ୍ନେହ ମମତା ଠୁଳ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କରିଠାରେ । ପରେ ଆଉ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀ ଜନ୍ମ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ବି ବାପାବୋଉଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟରେ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ଥାନ ଥିଲା ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ।

ପ୍ରାୟ ତିନିବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ବୋଉର ଦେହାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ସେତେବେଳେ ନିଜକୁ ଏତେ ନିଃସ୍ୱ ମନେ କରିନଥିଲେ ଅସୀମା । ପାଖରେ ବାପା ଥିଲେ । ବାପାଙ୍କର ବରଦହସ୍ତ ଥିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଉପରେ । ବାପା ଅଛନ୍ତି ସବୁକଥାକୁ ସେ ବୁଢ଼ା ହୋଇଯିବା ସତ୍ତ୍ୱେ - ଏପରି ଗୋଟେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ତାଙ୍କ ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ୱର ଅଂଶ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ସୁଖଦୁଃଖ , ଭଲମନ୍ଦ , ସବୁକଥା ସେ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ କହୁଥିଲେ । ଜଣେ ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଭଳି ବାପା ସବୁ ଶୁଣୁଥିଲେ । ହସି ଦେଉଥିଲେ ।

କହୁଥିଲେ - ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମଣିଷର ସବୁଠୁ ବଡ଼ ଗୁଣ ମା' । ସଂସାର ସାଗରରେ ତ କେତେ ଝଡ଼ ଉଠିବ । କେତେ ଝଞ୍ଜା ବୋହିବ । କେତେ ସମସ୍ୟା ଦେଖାଦେବ । ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ନ ଧରିଲେ ତୁ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯିବୁ ମା' । ସଂସାରର ଝଡ଼ ତୋତେ କୁଆଡ଼େ ବୋଲି କୁଆଡ଼େ ବୋଲି କୁଆଡ଼େ ଉଡ଼େଇନେବେ । ତୁ ପାଠଶାଳା ପଢ଼ିଛୁ । କେତେ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଜୀବନ ଦେଉଛୁ । ତୁ ଯଦି ଏମିତି ଭାଙ୍ଗିଯିବୁ , ତେବେ ସାଧାରଣ ଝିଅମାନେ କ'ଣ ଶିଖିବେ ତୋଠୁ ? ଜୀବନକୁ ସାମନା କରିବା ତ ଅସଲ ଶିକ୍ଷା ।

ଅସୀମା ନିଜକୁ ଦୃଢ଼ କରିନିଅନ୍ତି । ହୁଁ ସତକଥା ତ । ଲୋକଙ୍କର କେତେ ଦୁଃଖ ଅଛି । ସେସବୁ ତୁଳନାରେ ତାଙ୍କର କି ଦୁଃଖ । ସଂସାରରେ ଏମିତି ଭଲ କେହି ଅଛି , ଯାହାର ଆଦୌ ଦୁଃଖ ନାହିଁ । ସତକଥା , ସାମାନ୍ୟ ସାମାନ୍ୟ କଥାରେ ଏତେ ଭାବପୂର୍ବକ ହେଲେ ସେ ଆଗକୁ କ'ଣ ପାଦେ ଆଗେଇ ପାରିବେ ? ବାପାଙ୍କର କଥା କେଇପଦ ମଳୟର ଚନ୍ଦନ ପରି ତାଙ୍କ ମନର ଉତ୍ତାପକୁ ଶୀତଳ କରିଦିଏ ।

ଆଜି ସେଇ ବାପାଙ୍କର ହାତ ଅପସରି ଯାଉଛି ତାଙ୍କ ମୁଣ୍ଡଉପରୁ । ତାଙ୍କ କଥା ଆଉ ଶୁଭିବନି । ତାଙ୍କର ସେ ହସ ହସ ମୁହଁ ଆଉ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳିବନି । ବାପା ଅଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ଯେଉଁ ଭରସା ହଜିଯିବ ଏଇ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗଦ୍ୱାରରେ । ଆଉ କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ମୁଠାଏ ପାଉଁଶରେ ରୁପାନ୍ତରିତ ହୋଇଯିବ ବାପାଙ୍କର ସେ ଦୀପ୍ତିମାନ ଶରୀର । ସେ ଶାନ୍ତ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ମୁହଁଟି ହଜିଯିବ ମହାକାଳର ଅନ୍ଧାରି ଗୁହାରେ । ଏଣିକି ସେ ସ୍ମୃତି ହୋଇଯିବେ । ଅସୀମା ଯେତେ ନିଜକୁ ପ୍ରବୋଧନା ଦେଉଥିଲେ ବି ଛାତି ଭିତରଟା ଦୁଃଖରେ କରତି ହୋଇ ଯାଉଥିଲା । ଅମାନିଆ ଲୁହ ବାରମ୍ବାର ଭିଜାଇ ଦେଉଥିଲା ଆଖିପତା ଦୁଇଟିକୁ । ତାଙ୍କ ହୃଦୟର ବ୍ୟଥା, ଚିତ୍ତ ବିଷୋଭ ପାଖରେ ସବୁ ଦର୍ଶନ, ସବୁ ତତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଅସାର ମନେ ହେଉଥିଲା । ସ୍ମରଣ ହେଲାଦିନୁ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ତାଙ୍କର ଯାବତୀୟ ସ୍ମୃତି ଗୋଟି ଗୋଟି ହୋଇ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିମାନ ହେଉଥିଲେ ସତେକି । ମନ ପରଦାରେ ନାଟି ଉଠୁଥିଲେ ନିଜ ନିଜର ଅସ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ପ୍ରକଟକରି ।

ଆଖି ଆଗରେ କେତେଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ଜୁଇ ଜଳୁଥିଲା । ଆତ୍ମୀୟ ସ୍ୱଜନମାନେ ତପ୍ତର ଥିଲେ ସଂସ୍କାର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ । ସ୍ୱର୍ଗଦ୍ୱାରର ଗୋଟେ କଣରେ ଗଦା ହୋଇଥିଲା ମୃତକମାନଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଆସିଥିବା ଲୁଗାପଟା , ଗଦି, ତକିଆ , ବିଛଣାଚଦର ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଆରପଟେ ସଂସ୍କାର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ ଲୋଡ଼ା ହେଉଥିବା ଯାବତୀୟ ଜିନିଷ ବିକ୍ରିହେଉଥିଲା ଗୋଟେ ଦୋକାନରେ । ପାଖକୁ ଲାଗି କାଠ ଓ ଝାଉଁକାଠ ଗଦା ହୋଇଥିଲା ଆଉ ଗୋଟେ ବଡ଼ ଘରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ କର୍ମ ପାଇଁ ଦୁଇଟି ଛାତ ଥିବା ମଣ୍ଡପ । ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରତିକ୍ଷା ଗୃହ । ପାହାଚ ଉପରୁ ତାହାଣ ପଟ ରାସ୍ତାକୁ ଲାଗି ସମୁଦ୍ର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ବେଶ ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟ ଥିଲା । ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଜନନାୟକ ବିଜୁପଟ୍ଟନାୟକଙ୍କ ସ୍ମୃତିସ୍ତମ୍ଭ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଯାବତୀୟ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଉପରେ ପହଁରି ଆସୁଥିଲା ଅସୀମାଙ୍କର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି । ଏ ଶଶ୍ୱାନଭୂଇଁ ଯେପରି ନୀରବରେ କହୁଥିଲା - ଏହାହିଁ ତ ଜୀବନର ଶେଷ ପରିଣତି । ଏଇ ଦେହକୁ ନେଇ

କେତେ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ । କେତେ ତୋର ମୋର । କେତେ ଲୋଭ । କେତେ ଇର୍ଷା , ଅହଂକାର , ଗର୍ବ , ଦର୍ପ , ଅଭିମାନ । କେତେ ଆଶା ଅଭିଳାଷ । ଟଙ୍କା ପଇସା , ଧନରତ୍ନ , ବତପଣ , କ୍ଷମତା , ପ୍ରତିପତ୍ତି ସବୁକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେଇଯିବାକୁ ହେବ ଏଇଠି , ଏଇ ମାଟିରେ । ଏଇ ମାଟିକୋଳରେ ଧନୀ ଦରିଦ୍ର , ଉଚ୍ଚନୀଚ , ସର୍ବର୍ଥ ଅସର୍ବର୍ଥ , ରାଜାପ୍ରଜା ସବୁ ସମାନ । ସମସ୍ତେ ତାର ସନ୍ତାନ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସେ ଆଦରରେ କୋଳେଇ ନେଉଛି । ସବୁ ଏକାକାର ହୋଇଯାଉଛି କେଇଖଣ୍ଡ କାଠ ଆଉ ଚିକିଏ ଅଗ୍ନି ସଂଯୋଗ ମାତେକେ । ଏ ଜଳନ୍ତା ଜୁଇ ଯେପରି ବାରମ୍ବାର ଉଜାରଣ କରୁଛି - ଏ ଜୀବନ ଅନିତ୍ୟ , ଏ ଶରୀର ମରଣଶୀଳ । ଏଠି କିଛି ଚିରସ୍ଥାୟୀ ନୁହେଁ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ମୁଁ ଗ୍ରାସ କରିପାରେ । ନିଃଶେଷ କରିପାରେ । ସେ ରାଜା ହେଉ କି ରଜ୍ଜୁ ହେଉ ।

ଅସୀମାଙ୍କ ମନରେ କେତେ ଭାବନା ଆଉଟୁ ପାଉଟୁ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଠିକ୍ ଏତିକି ବେଳେ ପାଞ୍ଚ ଛଅ ଜଣ ଶବ ବାହକ ଗୋଟିଏ ଶବ ଧରି ପ୍ରବେଶ କଲେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗଦ୍ୱାର ଶୁଣାନ ଭୂଇଁରେ । ଆଗରେ ଚାଲୁଥିଲା ତିରିଶ ବତିଶ ବର୍ଷର ଯୁବତୀ ଜଣେ । ବାଁ କାଖରେ ଧରିଥିଲା ପାୟ ଦୁଇ ତିନି ବର୍ଷର ପୁଅଟିକୁ । ଏ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଥିଲା ସ୍ୱର୍ଗଦ୍ୱାର ପାଇଁ ଏକ ବିରଳ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ । ଆଗକୁ ଆସିଥିବା କେଇଜଣ ଯୁବକଙ୍କ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶରେ ଗୋଟେ ଜାଗାରେ ରଖାଗଲା ଶବଟିକୁ । ପୁଅକୁ ଜଣକୁ ଦେଇ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ କିମ୍ପାକର୍ମ ପାଇଁ ଯୁବତୀଟି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୋଇଗଲା । ମନେହେଉଥିଲା ସେ ଯେପରି ନିଜକୁ ବେଶ ଦୃଢ଼ କରିନେଇଥିଲା ।

ପ୍ରେତକର୍ମର ଆୟୋଜନ ହୋଇ ଯାଉଥିଲା । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକଟି ବାହୁଣୀଙ୍କ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶରେ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରବତ୍ ସବୁ କାମ କରିଯାଉଥିଲା । ସମସ୍ତେ ତତ୍ପର ଥିଲେ । ଚିତା ସଜତା ହେଲା । ଏତିକିବେଳେ ଛୋଟପୁଅଟି କାନ୍ଦି ଉଠିଲା । ଯୁବତୀଟିର ସବୁ ଧ୍ୟାନ ଯେପରି ଦୋହଲି ଗଲା । ସେ ବ୍ୟାକୁଳ ଭାବରେ ଚାହିଁଲା ପିଲାଟିକୁ । କାଖେଇଥିବା ଯୁବକଟି ବୋଧହୁଏ ତାର କେହି ଆତ୍ମୀୟସ୍ୱଜନ ନଥିଲେ । ସେ ଯେତେ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେବି ପିଲାଟି ରୁପ ହେଉନଥିଲା । ରାହା ଧରି କାନ୍ଦୁଥିଲା ।

ଅସୀମା ଆଉ ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟଧରି ବସିପାରିଲେ ନାହିଁ । ତାଙ୍କ ଭିତରର ସତ୍ତା ଯେପରି ଭୁଗୁଡ଼ି ପଡ଼ିଲା ଏ କରୁଣ ଦୃଶ୍ୟରେ । ପିଲାଟିର କାନ୍ଦ ତାଙ୍କୁ ସତେକି ଖିନ୍‌ଭିନ୍ କରିଦେଲା । ସେ ବସିବା ଜାଗାରୁ ଉଠିଗଲେ ପିଲାଟି ପାଖକୁ । ଅହେତୁକ ଭାବାବେଗରେ ଦୁଇହାତ ବଢ଼ାଇଦେଲେ । କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି ପିଲାଟି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଆସି ବଲବଲ କରି ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁଲା । ଅସୀମା ତାକୁ ଛାତିରେ ପକାଇ ଥାପୁଡ଼େଇ ଆଶ୍ୱସ୍ତ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲେ ।

ଯୁବକଟି ଧୀର ସ୍ୱରରେ କହିଲେ - କ୍ଷମା କରିବେ ମ୍ୟାଡମ । ତାକୁ ଶୁଆଇ ପକାନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ । ବୋଧହୁଏ ଆଉ କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ସେ ମୁଖାଗ୍ନି ଦେବ । ତା ବାପା ଇଏ ।

- ଇଏ ମୁଖାଗ୍ନି ଦେବ ?

ଅସୀମାଙ୍କ ଛାତି ଭିତରଟା ଝମ୍ କର କି କ'ଣ ଗୋଟାଏ ଶବ୍ଦ କଲା । କେତେ ଚିକେ ଛୁଆ । ସିଏ ପୁଣି ମୁଖାଗ୍ନି ଦେବ ? ହେ ଭଗବାନ ! ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଉ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ବାକି ନ ଥିଲା , ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକଟି ତାର ମାଆ । କେଉଁ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକଟି ଆସି ଶୁଣାନ ଭୂଇଁରେ ଏମିତି ଛିଡ଼ା ହୋଇଛି , ତାହା ଜାଣିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ କୌତୁହଳ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହେଲା । ଆହା ! ସେ ଯୁବକଟି ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ କହିଲେ - ଛୁଆଟି ଆଗ କାନ୍ଦ ବନ୍ଦ

କରୁ । ଯେତେବେଳେ ମୁଖାଗ୍ନି ଦେବା କଥା ତାକୁ ନେଇଯିବେ । ଆପଣ ବି ଏଇଠି ବସନ୍ତୁ । ମୁଖାଗ୍ନି ଦେଲାଭଳି କ'ଣ ଆଉ କେହି ନାହାନ୍ତି ।

ଏଥର ଟିକେ ନିମ୍ନ ସ୍ତରରେ କଥା ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା ଯୁବକଟି ।

- ନାହିଁ ମ୍ୟାଡମ । ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ସେ ଦୁହିଁଙ୍କର ବନ୍ଧୁ । ଲିପି ବମ୍ବେରେ ଗୋଟେ ମଲଟିନେସନାଲ କଂପାନୀରେ ଖୁବ୍ ବଡ଼ ଚାକିରି କରେ । ଲିପି ମିଶ୍ର । ବେଙ୍ଗାଳୁଏଟ ହୋଇଥିଲା ଇଂଜିନିୟରିଂରେ । ଏଇ ସାତ ଆଠ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର କଥା । ଖବରକାଗଜରେ , ଟି.ଭିରେ ଦେଖାଇଥିଲା ସେତେବେଳେ । ଆପଣ ହୁଏତ ଦେଖିଥିବେ ସେଇ ଲିପି ମିଶ୍ର । ଆମ କାସମେଟ୍ ।

- ଆଉ ଯାହାଙ୍କର ଦେହାନ୍ତ ହୋଇଛି , ସେ ବୋଧହୁଏ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ନା । ଆହା ! ଏତେ ଅଲ୍ଲବୟସରୁ କେମିତି ହେଲା ? ଯାଙ୍କର କ'ଣ କେହି ଆତ୍ମୀୟସ୍ୱଜନ ନାହାନ୍ତି ?

- ଅଛନ୍ତି ମ୍ୟାଡମ । ସମସ୍ତେ ଅଛନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ଲିପି ଅନ୍ୟ ଜାତିର ପିଲାକୁ ବିବାହ କଲାବୋଲି ଉଭୟପଟ ଡାକ୍ତରୀ ସହିତ ସଂପର୍କ ଛିନ୍ନ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ବହୁତଃ ସାମାଜିକ ବାଧ୍ୟତା କହିଲେ ଠିକ୍ ହେବ ।

- ଆଜିକାଲି ଯୁଗରେ ଏପରି ସଂକୀର୍ଣ୍ଣତା । ମୁଁ ତ ଏହା ଭାବିପାରୁନି । ଛି !

ଅସୀମାଙ୍କ ମନ ବିଦ୍ରୋହ କରି ଉଠୁଥିଲା । ଯୁଗ ଯାଇ କୋଉଠି ପହଞ୍ଚିଲାଣି । ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଭିତରର ଏ କୁସଂସ୍କାର , ଅଧିକାଂଶ କେବେ ଯିବ ? ଜାତି ଜାତି , ଧର୍ମ ଧର୍ମ ହୋଇ ଲୋକେ ଜୀବନକୁ କେତେ ଅସୁନ୍ଦର , କୁସୂଚ କରିଦେଉଛନ୍ତି । ଭଗବାନ ଏତେ ସୁନ୍ଦର ପୃଥିବୀଟିଏ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି ମଣିଷ ହାତରେ । ଅଥଚ ମଣିଷ ନିଜ ଭାବନାରେ ବାହୁଡ଼ ହୋଇ ଏମିତି ଘାଣ୍ଟି ହେଉଛି ଖାଲିଗାରେ । ମନର ଭାବକୁ ଲୁଚାଇ ଅସୀମା କହିଲେ - ହଁ , କ'ଣ ହେଲା ସେଇଠୁ ?

- ସୁବୋଧ ଭିନ୍ନ ଜାତିର । ଘରର ଚଳଣି ବି ସେତେ ଭଲ ନୁହେଁ । ମାଳ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ପିଲା । ଗାଁରେ ବଢ଼ିଛି । ଆଧୁନିକତା ଯେଉଁ ଗାଁରେ ବିଶେଷ ଭାବରେ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରିପାରିନାହିଁ । ପିଲାଦିନରୁ ଖୁବ୍ ଭଲ ପଢୁଥିଲା । ଯାହାକୁ କୁହାଯାଏ ଜନ୍ମରୁ ପ୍ରତିଭାବାନ । ସତ କହିଲେ , ଆତ୍ମମାନଙ୍କର ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଇର୍ଷା ହେଉଥିଲା ତା ଉପରେ । ବେନଟା ତ ଗୋଟେ କଂପ୍ୟୁଟର । ଥରେ ପିଡିଃ ହେଇଗଲେ ଗଲା । ବହୁ ଦୁଃଖ କଷ୍ଟରେ ପାହାଚ ପରେ ପାହାଚ ଉଠି ରାଉଲକେଲାରେ ପଢ଼ିଲା । ସେଇଠି ଆତ୍ମମାନଙ୍କର ବଂଧୁତ୍ୱ । ଲିପି ବି ସେଇଠି ପଢୁଥିଲା ।

- ତା ପରେ ?

- କେମିତି କେଜାଣି ଏହି ନିରୀହ ସରଳ ପିଲାଟି ପ୍ରତି ଲିପି ଭଳି ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା । ଅଥଚ ବହୁ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ଧନୀ ଘରର ଯୁବକ ତା ପିଛା ପଡ଼ିଥିଲେ । ହେଲେ ଲିପିର ଏକନିଷ୍ଠ ଭଲପାଇବା ସତେ ଯେମିତି ଗୋଟେ ତପସ୍ୟାଥିଲା । ଇଏ ଗୋଟେ ବିଚିତ୍ର ସଂଯୋଗ ମ୍ୟାଡମ । କାହିଁକି ଏମିତି ହୁଏ ? ଆମେ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଉ । ଯାହାକୁ ଆମେ 'ତୁଡା' ବୋଲି ତାକୁ , ସେଭଳି ଗୋଟେ ଗାଉଁଳୀ ପିଲାକୁ ଲିପି ପରି ସୁନ୍ଦରୀ , ତେଜସ୍ୱିନୀ ଝିଅଟି ଭଲ ପାଇ ବସିଲା କେମିତି ? - ଆରେ ବାବୁ , ଭଲ ପାଇବା ସେମିତି ଗୋଟେ ରହସ୍ୟମୟ କଥା । କିଏ କାହାକୁ କାହିଁକି ଭଲ ପାଏ - ଏହାର କିଛି ଯୁକ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଖାଲି ଏତିକି

କଥା ସତ୍ୟ , ନିଜ ଅଜାଣତରେ ମଣିଷ ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ନିଜର ହୃଦୟ ଦେଇସାରିଥାଏ । ତାପରେ ଆଉ କ'ଣ ଥାଏ ଯେ , ସେ ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ ବିଚାର କରିବ ?

- ହଁ ମ୍ୟାଡମ । ସତକଥା । ବି. ଟେକ୍ ସରିବା ପରେ ଲିପି ଏମ.ବି.ଏ କରିବ ବୋଲି ବାଙ୍କଲୋର ଯାଇଥିଲା । ଆମେ ଭାବିଲୁ ଲିପି ଏଣିକି ଭୁଲିଯିବ ସୁବୋଧକୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଦେଖାଗଲା ଓଲଟା । ବରଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସଂପର୍କ ଆହୁରି ନିବିଡ଼ ହୋଇଉଠିଲା । ନିଜେ ଲିପି ସୁବୋଧକୁ ବାହା ହେବା ପାଇଁ ଜିଦ୍ ଧରି ବସିଲା । ଉଭୟ ପରିବାର ଲୋକେ ଘୋର ବିରୋଧ କଲେ । ଏପରିକି ସୁବୋଧର ବାପା ମାଙ୍କର ଆର୍ଥିକ ସ୍ଥିତି ଭଲ ନ ଥାଇ ବି ସେମାନେ ସମଜରୂପ ହେବା ଭୟରେ ଏ ବାହାଘରରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଲେ ନାହିଁ । ସଂପର୍କ ବି କାଟି ଦେଲେ । ଲିପିଘର ଲୋକେ ତ ତା ପାଇଁ ଶୁଦ୍ଧିବାସି ହୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଲେ । ସବୁଆଡ଼େ କହିବୁଲିଲେ , ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ମରିଯାଇଛି । ଆମେ ସାଂଗମାନେ ମିଶି ବାହାଘର କଲୁ ।

ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ବାହାଘର ହେଲା । ଭୋଜି ଖାଇଲୁ ଗୋଟେ ବଡ଼ ହୋଟେଲରେ । ଲିପି ଏମ.ବି.ଏ ସାରି ବମ୍ବେରେ ଯାଇ ଗୋଟେ ମଲଟିନେସନାଲ କଂପାନୀରେ ଭଲ ଦରମାରେ ଚାକିରୀକଲା । ବେଶ୍ ହସ ଖୁସିରେ ଚାଲିଥିଲା ସଂସାର । ସୁବୋଧକୁ ବାଧ୍ୟକରି ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ ମାସରେ ତା' ବାପାବୋଉଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ଟଙ୍କା ପଠାଇଥିଲା ଏଇ ଲିପି । ଅଧର ଭଗବାନ କେଉଁଥିପାଇଁ ତା ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଉପରେ ବଜ୍ର ପକାଇ ଦେଲେ , ଆମେ କେହି ବୁଝି ପାରିଲୁ ନାହିଁ । ଇଶ୍ଵର କାହିଁକି ଏମିତି ବିଚାର କରନ୍ତି , କିଏ କହିପାରିବ ? ଲିପିର ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିନରେ କେହିହେଲେ ତାକୁ ସାହାରା ଦେଲେନି । ପାଖରେ ଛିଡ଼ା ହେଲେନି ଚିକେ । ପଦେ ଭଲ କଥା ବି କହିଲେନି ସାନ୍ତନା ଦେଇ ।

- ସୁବୋଧର ବାପା ମା' ବଞ୍ଚିଛନ୍ତି ଚି ? ତା ମା' କେମିତି ଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଧରି ରହିଲେ ? ମୁଁ ତ ଭାବିପାରୁନି । ସେମାନେ କ'ଣ ସୁବୋଧ ପଠାଉଥିବା ଟଙ୍କା ରଖୁ ନଥିଲେ ?

- ହଁ ରଖୁଥିଲେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ସୁବୋଧର ବାପା କହିଥିଲେ ଯେ ଯଦି ସେମାନେ ଗାଁକୁ ଆସିବେ , ତେବେ ତାଙ୍କ ଜାତିଭାଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସମାଜରୁ ଅଟକ କରିବେ । ସୁବୋଧର ଦୁଇଭଉଣୀ ଆଉ ବାହାହେଇ ପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ । ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଏଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ବୋଲି ପୁଅ ସୁବୋଧ । ଲିପି ନିଜ ତରଫରୁ ଏତେ ଉଦାରତା ଦେଖାଇଛି , ଆପଣ ଭାବି ପାରିବେନି । ଟଙ୍କା ପଠାଇ ତାଙ୍କ ଦୁଇଝିଅଙ୍କୁ ବିବାହ କରାଇଛି ।

- ସତେ ! ତେବେ ତାର ଭୁଲ ରହିଲା କୋଉଠି ?

- ଏ ଦୁନିଆ ବଡ଼ ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥପର ମ୍ୟାଡମ । ଏ ସମାଜ ବି ସେମିତି । ଜାତି , ଧର୍ମ, ସଂପ୍ରଦାୟ ଦ୍ଵାହି ଦେଇ ମଣିଷର ମାନବିକତାକୁ, ସ୍ନେହପ୍ରେମକୁ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଭାବରେ ହତ୍ୟା କରିଥାଏ । ତା ନ ହୋଇଥିଲେ ଏକମାତ୍ର ପୁତ୍ରକୁ ଅକାଳରେ ହରାଇଥିବା ମା' ର ଅନ୍ତର୍ବେଦନାକୁ କ'ଣ ବୁଝିପାରିଲା ଏ ସମାଜ ? ନା ବୁଝିପାରିଲା, ଏତେ ଅଳ୍ପ ବୟସରେ ସ୍ଵାମୀ ହରାଇଥିବା ଗୋଟେ ନାରୀ ହୃଦୟର ହାହାକାରକୁ ? ଲିପିର ବାପା ମା' ତ ଓଲଟି କହିଲେ, ବାପା ମା'ଙ୍କ ଅଭିଶାପ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ବୋହି ସେ କ'ଣ କେବେ ସୁଖୀ ହେଇଥାନ୍ତା ! ମୁଁ ନିଜେ ଯାଇଥିଲି ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ । ଯେତେ କାକୁଟି ମିନତି ହୋଇ କହିଲେ ବି ଶୁଣିଲେ ନାହିଁ । ମଣିଷର ଅହଂକାର କ'ଣ ସତରେ ଅକ୍ଷ କରିଦିଏ ? ମିଥ୍ୟା ବଡ଼ପଣ ପାଖରେ କ'ଣ ମାନବିକତା , ହୃଦୟ , ମନ ବୋଲି କିଛି ନାହିଁ ?

କୌଣସି ଚଳଚ୍ଚିତ୍ରର କାହାଣୀ ପରି ମନେ ହେଉଥିଲା ଅସୀମାଙ୍କୁ । ଆଜିକାଲି ସବୁ ସମ୍ଭବ ହେଲାଣି । ଖବରକାଗଜରେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ ଦିନ ଯେଉଁସବୁ ନାରକୀୟ ସମ୍ବାଦ ବାହାରୁଛି , ତାକୁ ଦେଖିଲେ କେହି କ'ଣ କହିବ - ମଣିଷ ଆଉ ମଣିଷ ହୋଇ ଅଛି ବୋଲି ! ମାନବିକ ସଂପର୍କର ଅର୍ଥ ଯେପରି ବଦଳି ବଦଳି ଯାଉଛି । ସତରେ କ'ଣ ପୃଥିବୀ ପୃଷ୍ଠରୁ ଲୋପ ପାଇଯିବ ଏଇ ମଣିଷପଣିଆ !

ଖବର କାଗଜ ପଢ଼ିଲାବେଳେ ଅସୀମା ଏସବୁ ପଢ଼ନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ କୋଉ ଗୋଟାଏ ଦିନ ଭଲ ଥାଏ , ଯେଉଁଦିନ ହିଂସା, ହତ୍ୟା, ରକ୍ତପାତ, ଧର୍ଷଣର ସମ୍ବାଦ ନଥାଏ । ହେତଲାଲନ ପଢ଼ି ସେ କମ୍ ବ୍ୟଥିତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା ଶୁଣି ମନୋଜ ତାହାଲ୍ୟ କରି କହନ୍ତି - ତମର ଏ ପୃଥିବୀରେ ଜନ୍ମ ହେବାର ନଥିଲା । ତାଙ୍କର ହେବା ପାଇଁ ତ ତମର ଆଦୌ ଯୋଗ୍ୟତା ନାହିଁ । ତାଙ୍କର ଛାତି ପଥର ପରି ଟାଣ ନହେଲେ ସେ କି ରୋଗୀ ଚିକିତ୍ସା କରିବ ?

- ତମେ ଭୁଲ କହିଲ । ତାଙ୍କର ଜୀବନ ଦିଏ । ମଲା ମଣିଷକୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଏ । ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ସହିତ ଲଢ଼େଇ କରିଥାଏ । ଜୀବନ ସପକ୍ଷରେ ତା'ର ଲଢ଼େଇ । ଏ ସୁନ୍ଦର ପୃଥିବୀକୁ ଆହୁରି ସୁନ୍ଦର କରି ସୁଖଶାନ୍ତିରେ ଭରିଦେବା ପାଇଁ ତାର ପ୍ରୟତ୍ନ । ତା' ହୃଦୟରେ ଦୟାମାୟା ନ ରହିଲେ ସେ କି ଚିକିତ୍ସା କରିବ ? ତାଙ୍କର ହୃଦୟ ଯଦି ପଥର ହୋଇଯାଏ , ସେ ତାଙ୍କର ନ ହୋଇ ବରଂ ଗୋଟେ ମେସିନ ହୋଇଯିବ ।

ଅସୀମା ନିଜ ଭାବନାରେ ମଗ୍ନ ଥିଲେ । ଯୁବକଟି କଥାରେ ସେ ସମ୍ପୃତ ଯେଉଁପାଇଲେ । ଯୁବକଟି କହିଲା - କର୍ମ ବୋଧ ହୁଏ ସରିଆସିଲାଣି । ଅସୀମା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କଲେ - ହଁ ,କେମିତି ସୁବୋଧର ଦେହାନ୍ତ ହେଲା ? କ'ଣ ହୋଇଥିଲା ତା'ର ?

- ସେ ଦୁଃଖ କଥା କୁହୁଛନ୍ତି ମ୍ୟାଡମ । ଦିନ କେଲଟାର କଥା । ସୁବୋଧର ପୁଅ ହେବାବେଳେ ଏକୋଇଶାକୁ ଆମେ କେତେଜଣ ସାଙ୍ଗ ଯାଇଥିଲୁ । ଲିପି ଯିବା ଆସିବା ଏୟାର ଟିକଟ କରି ପଠାଇ ଦେଲା । କହିଲା - ଆମର ଆଉ ନିଜର ଲୋକ କିଏ ଅଛନ୍ତି ? ତମେମାନେ କେହି ନ ଆସିଲେ ମାମୁ ହୋଇ କିଏ ପୂଜାରେ ବସିବ ? ତା ଭଳି ଝିଅଟେ ମୁଁ ଆଜିଯାଏ ଦେଖିନି । ଭଗବାନ ତା ପ୍ରତି ଏତେ ନିଶ୍ଚର ହେଲେ କେମିତି ? ଏସବୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ଇଶ୍ଵରଙ୍କ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ମନ ବିଦ୍ରୋହ କରିଥାଏ ।

ଏଇ ଛଅମାସ ତଳେ ହଠାତ୍ ବାନ୍ତି କରି ଅବେତ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଲା ସୁବୋଧ । ଅଫିସର କର୍ମଚାରୀମାନେ ତୁରନ୍ତ ତାଙ୍କରଖାନାକୁ ନେଇଯାଇ ଲିପିକୁ ଖବର ଦେଲେ । ଲିପି ସାଂଗେ ସାଂଗେ ଧାଇଁଲା ହସପିଟାଲ । ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ଚିକିତ୍ସାରୁ ଜଣାପଡ଼ିଲା ସୁବୋଧର ଲିଭର କ୍ୟାନସର ହୋଇଛି । ଖବର ପାଇ ଆମେ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନେ ପାଳି କରି ଜଣେ ଜଣେ ଛୁଟି ନେଇ ତା ପାଖରେ ରହି ତାକୁ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କଲୁ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ଲିପି ଭାରି ଭାଙ୍ଗି ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ପରେ ନିଜକୁ ସେ ସମ୍ବଳିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲା । ଲିପିର ନିଷ୍ଠା ନ ଦେଖିଲେ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ କରି ହେବନି ମ୍ୟାଡମ । ଶାଶୁ ଶଶୁରଙ୍କୁ ଖବର ଦେଲା । ସେମାନେ ତାକୁ ତାହାଣୀ, ଅମଙ୍ଗଳୀ, ତାଙ୍କୁଣୀ ଏମିତି ନାନାକଥା କହି ଭର୍ସନା କରି ଚିଠି ଲେଖିଲେ । ଆମ ପୁଅକୁ ମାରି ଖାଇବୁ । ତା ରକ୍ତ ପିଇବୁ ବୋଲି ତାକୁ ବାହା ହୋଇଥିଲୁ - ଏମିତି କାନ ନ ଶୁଣିବା କଥା । ଥରେ ହେଲେ ଆସି ନିଜ ପୁଅକୁ ଦେଖିଗଲେ ନାହିଁ ।

ବାପା ମା' ଓ ଅଭିଶାପ ଦେଲେ ସିନା ,ଝିଅ ଦୁଃଖରେ ଲୁହ ଟୋପାଏ ଢାଳିଲେ ନାହିଁ । ସତେ ଅବା
ଏ ଦୁହେଁ ବାହା ହୋଇ ଅକ୍ଷମଣୀୟ ଅପରାଧ କରିଥିଲେ । ସାତଜନ୍ମର ଶତ୍ରୁ ବି ଏତେ ନିଶ୍ଚୁର ହେଇ
ପାରିବନି ମ୍ୟାତମ । ମୋ କଥାକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ଲିପି ଛୁଟି ନେଇ ଟାଟା ମୋମୋରିଆଲ ହସପିଟାଲରେ ଚିକିତ୍ସା କରାଇଲା । କ୍ୟାମୋଥେରାପି
ଦିଆଗଲା । ଲିଭର ଟ୍ରାନସପ୍ଲାଣ୍ଟ ପାଇଁ ଲିପି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ଥିଲା ।ହେଲେ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ବିମୁଖ ହେଲେ , କିଏ ତାକୁ
ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରିପାରିବ । ସୁବୋଧର ଅନୁରୋଧ ଥିଲା ଯଦି ସେ ମରିଯାଏ ,ତେବେ ଯେତେ ଯାହା କଷ୍ଟ ହେଉ
ପଛେ ତାକୁ ପୁରୀ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗଦ୍ୱାରରେ ସଂସ୍କାର କରିବାପାଇଁ । ତା' ହେଲେ ତା ଆତ୍ମା ଶାନ୍ତି ପାଇବ ।

ତାର ଶେଷ ଇଚ୍ଛାକୁ ସମ୍ମାନ ଦେଇ ବମ୍ବେରୁ ପାଇଟରେ ଡେଡ ବଡି ଆଣି ଆସିଲା ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରକୁ
। ସେଠୁ ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ମିଶି ଆସିଛୁ ।

ଅସୀମା ଯେମିତି ତରଳି ଯାଉଥିଲେ ମେଞ୍ଚାଏ ଲହୁଣି ପରି । ଦୁଃଖର ଗଭୀର ଆବର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଯେଣି
ହୋଇଯାଇଥିବା ଗୋଟେ ଅଳ୍ପ ବୟସ୍କା ତରୁଣୀ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅଳ୍ପ ଦୂରରେ ବସି ନିଜ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ
ପ୍ରେତକର୍ମ କରୁଥିଲା । ଏପଟେ ବାପାଙ୍କ ଚିତା ଜଳି ଜଳି ଲିଭି ଆସୁଥିଲା । କାନ୍ଦି କାନ୍ଦି ତାଙ୍କ କୋଳରେ
ଶୋଇପଡିଲା ଛୁଆଟି । ଅସୀମାଙ୍କ ଭିତରଟା ରୁଛି ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା ଅବ୍ୟକ୍ତ ବେଦନାରେ । ସେ
ଭିଜିଯାଉଥିଲେ ଏକ ପରିଚୟହୀନ ଅନାବିଳ ଆତ୍ମତ୍ୟାଗରେ । ଲିପିର ଦୁଃଖ ପାଖରେ ବାପାଙ୍କୁ
ହରାଇବାର ଦୁଃଖ ଅତି ତୁଚ୍ଛ ମନେହେଲା ତାଙ୍କୁ ।

ପ୍ରେତକର୍ମ ସରିଲା । ଜୁଇ ସଜଡା ସରିଥିଲା । ଚିତା ଉପରେ ସୁବୋଧ ଶୋଇଥିଲା ଗୋଟେ
ନିଷ୍ଠପ ଶିଶୁପରି । ସମସ୍ତେ ତପୁର ହୋଇଉଠିଲେ । ଅସୀମାଙ୍କ କୋଳରୁ ପୁଅକୁ ନେଇ ଯୁବକଟି ଜୁଇ
ପାଖରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା । ଏଥର ମୁଖାଗ୍ନି ଦେବାର ପାଳି । ଲିପି କିଛି ସମୟ ଆଖି ବୁଜି ନିଜକୁ ସମ୍ବରଣ
କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିଲା ତାପରେ ଗୋଟେ କାଖରେ ପୁଅକୁ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ ହାତରେ ନିଆଁ ହୁଳାଟି ଧରି
ବିଧିମୁତାବକ ମୁଖାଗ୍ନି ଦେଲା । ଅସୀମା ଅପଲକ ନୟନରେ ଚାହିଁ ରହିଥିଲେ । ମନେହେଉଥିଲା ସତେ
ଯେମିତି ଜଣେ ନିଃସ୍ୱ, ରିକ୍ତ ହୋଇଯାଇଥିବା ନାରୀ ତା ପ୍ରଗାଢ ଭଲପାଇବାର ଶେଷ ଅର୍ଥ୍ୟ ବାଢି
ଦେଉଥିଲା ଅଗ୍ନି ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ । ସେ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଥିଲା ଅତି କରୁଣ ।ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସଜଳ ଆଖି ଲିପି ଉପରେ ହିଁ
ନିବନ୍ଧ ଥିଲା । ମୁଖାଗ୍ନି ଦେଇଯାରି ଏକ ମୁହାଁ ହୋଇ ସମୁଦ୍ର ଆଡକୁ ଯାଇ ଅଟକିଛିତା ହୋଇଗଲା ଲିପି ।
ଫେରି ଚାହିଁଲା ହୁତୁହୁତୁ ହୋଇ ଜଳୁଥିବା ଚିତାକୁ ।

ଏପରି ଏକ ଅଭାବିତ ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ବିସ୍ମୟ ବିମୁଦ୍ଧ କଲା ପରଂପରାନୁସାରେ ମୁଖାଗ୍ନି
ଦେଇ ସାରିବା ପରେ ଆଉ ପଛକୁ ଚାହିଁ ଅଟକିବା କଥା ନୁହେଁ । ଅସୀମା ଆସି ଲିପି ପାଖରେ ଛିଡା
ହୋଇଗଲେ । ସବୁ ପ୍ରଥା, ନୀତି ନିୟମ ଭୁଲି ଦୁଇ ହାତରେ କୁଣ୍ଡଳ ଧରିଲେ ଲିପିକୁ । ଅସୀମାଙ୍କ ଛାତିରେ
ମୁହଁ ଗୁଞ୍ଜି ଢେଁ ଢେଁ ହୋଇ କାନ୍ଦି ଉଠିଲା ଲିପି ।

ଆକାଶ ଯେପରି କିଛିକ୍ଷଣ ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା ସେ କାନ୍ଦରେ । ସମୁଦ୍ର ଭୁଲି ଯାଇଥିଲା ତାର
ଶାଶ୍ୱତ ସଂଗୀତ । ବିଦାୟୀ ସୁଧର୍ମ ଅନେକ ବେଳୁ ମୁହଁ ଲୁଚାଇ ଦେଇଥିଲେ ସମୁଦ୍ର ଗର୍ଭରେ । ସେ
ଶୋକର ଉଚ୍ଛ୍ୱାସ ସତେକି ଥରାଇ ଦେଉଥିଲା ଦୂର ଦିଗ୍‌ବଳୟକୁ ।ରାତିର ବହଳ ଅନ୍ଧକାର ପହଞ୍ଚି

ଆସୁଥିଲା କେଉଁ ଅଜଣା ରାଜ୍ୟରୁ । ଦୁଇଜଣ ଶୋକାତୁର ନାରୀଙ୍କ ନିବିଡ଼ ଆଶ୍ରେଷ ଭିତରେ ଥାଇ ଛୁଆଟି
କାନ୍ଦି କାନ୍ଦି କହୁଥିଲା - ତୁ କାନ୍ଦନା ମା.....ତୁ କାନ୍ଦନା ।

ଜେତବନ
ଶ୍ରୀରାମନଗର , ବାଦାମବାଡ଼ି , କଟକ

ନିଜର ନିକଟ ସମ୍ପର୍କୀୟର ଦୋଷ ସହସା କୁହ ନାହିଁ । ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ବହୁତ କଷ୍ଟ ହେବ । ତୁମ ପ୍ରତି
ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଥିବା ସ୍ନେହ ମଧ୍ୟ ନଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇଯିବ ।

- ଶିବାନନ୍ଦ

ଭାରି ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଛି

ତାପସୀ ମହାପାତ୍ର, ଏୱାନ୍, କନେକ୍ଟିକଟ୍, ଆମେରିକା

ସକାଳୁ ଆଖି ଖୋଲି ଦେଖିଲି - ତୁମ୍ଭାର ଝଡ଼ ଚାଲିଛି
ହିଚର ଚାକୁ ଚିକେ ବଜାଇ ବଜାଇ ଆଖି ଆଗେ ନାଚିଗଲା
ମୋ ଛୁଆ ଦିନର ଶୀତୁଆ ସକାଳ, କୁହୁଡ଼ି ଭରା ଚାରିଆଡ଼, ଗପର ଆସର
କାଠ ଜଳାର ଧୁଆଁ ଆଉ ଖରା ପୂଆଁ
ପୁରୁଣା କଥା ଭାରି ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଛି, ଭାରି ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଛି |

ମାଲକୋଏବ୍ ବନା ଚା'ରେ ଚିନି ଘାଣ୍ଟିଲା ବେଳେ
ଆମ ଘର ପାଖ ଚା' ଦୋକନଟା ମନେ ପଡ଼େ,
କାଠ ତୁଲାରୁ ଉତୁରିବା ଚା'ର ବାମ୍ଫ ଓ ବାସନା
ମନକୁ ମଛି ପକାଏ,
କି ଯାହୁ ଥିଲା ସେ କେପେ ଚା'ରେ !
ମନକୁ ଚାଣି ନେଉଛି,
ମନ କେତେ ଖୋଜୁଛି, ମନ କେତେ ଖୋଜୁଛି |

ଓର୍ ମିଲ୍ ଆଉ ଖାଫଲ୍ ଖାଉ ଖାଉ
କଣ୍ଠା ଚାମଚ ତଳେ ପଡ଼ିବାର ଶବ୍ଦଟା ଚହଲାଇ ଦିଏ ମନକୁ
ମନ୍ତ୍ର ହାତର ଉପମା, ଚକ୍ଫୁଲି, ପରଠା ଭଳିକି ଭଳି,
ଲାଳ ବୋହିଯାଉଛି,
ମନ ଯେ ଝୁରୁଛି, ସତେ କେତେ ଝୁରୁଛି |

ବସ୍ ଷ୍ଟପ୍ ରେ କାର୍ ଅଟକାଇ ଛୁଆକୁ ବାଇ କଲାବେଳେ
ଗୋଡ଼ ଦିଟା ଛାଟି ପିଟି ହୁଅନ୍ତି
ସତେ ଯେମିତି କହନ୍ତି - ଆମେ ଚାଲିବୁ, ଧାଇଁବୁ, ଡେଇଁବୁ..
ସ୍କୁଲ୍ ବାସ୍ତୁ ଧରି ଚାଲିବାର ସ୍ମୃତି,
ବାଟ ଚଲା ସାଙ୍ଗ ସହ ଖଟି ମିଟି ଖଟି,
କେତେ ମଜା ସେଠି, ଭାରି ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଛି |

ଠାକୁରଙ୍କୁ ଧୂପ ଦେଇଛି,
ଚନ୍ଦନ ଚିପାରେ ସଜେଇଛି,
ହେଲେ କାଳିଆ ଯେମିତି ମୁହଁ ମାରି ବସିଛି,
ଛତା ତୁଳସୀର ବାମ୍ଫା ମନକୁ ବାଉଳା କରୁଛି,
ଆଉ ମୁଁ ଏଠି ବେଲପତ୍ର, ତୁଳସୀ ଖୋଜୁଛି |

ୟୁ-ତ୍ୟୁଏ, ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରେନ୍, କ୍ଲାଉଡ଼ ର ଯୁଗ,
ହାତ ପାହୁଡ଼ାରେ ସବୁ ମିଳିଯିବ
ହେଲେ ରଙ୍ଗୋଲି ଚିତ୍ରାହାର, ସିନେମା ରବିବାରର,
ରଜନୀଗନ୍ଧାର ହାର, ବାମ୍ଫା ମକା ପୋଡ଼ାର,
ତା ମଜା ଯିଏ ପାଇଛି, ସେଇ ଏକା ଜାଣିଛି..
ସତେ କେତେ ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଛି |

ଧନ, ମାନ, ଜନର ଆସର,
ପାର୍ଟି, ପବ୍, ମଦ, ମାଂସର ଛୁଆର,,
ପେଟ ତ ପୁରିଛି ହେଲେ ମନ କି ମାନୁଛି ?

ଅମାନିଆ ସେ ମନ,
ତା' ୠ ଅବୁଝା ତା' ରି ସପନ,
ଖୋଜି ବୁଲେ ମନ୍ଦିର ବେଢ଼ା, ନଈ ପଠା, ଆମ୍ଫ ଡୋଟା,
ଆଉ ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ମନ୍ଦିର ଘଣ୍ଟି, ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ଆଳତି
ନିର୍ମାଳ୍ୟ ଅଭିତା କରେ ତାକୁ ବାଉଳା |

କି ବିଚିତ୍ର ଏ ଖେଳା,
ସବୁ ଥାଇ କିଛି ନ ମିଳିବାର ଭେଳା,
ମରୀଚିକା ଭଳି ଲାଗୁଛି,
ମୁଁ ଆଜି ଝୁରୁଛି, ଭାରି ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଛି |

ଭଲ ବୋହୂ

କଳ୍ପନାମୟୀ ଦାଶ

OSA Convention ବର୍ଷ ଡିମାନ୍ଦ ର ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ପରେ ଏ ଦୁଇ ତିନୋଟି ଦିନ ଆସେ । କେତେ ବନ୍ଧୁ ମିଳନ ଅବା ଆମ ସହର ରେ ଏବଂ ଆମ ନିଜ ଘରେ ନ ହେଉଛି । ଭାରତ ଗଲେ ତ ଅଲଗା କଥା, ପିଲାମାନେ ଘରକୁ ଆସିଲେ ଆଉରି ଭିତ ଆଉରି ଯାକଜମକ । ତଥାପି କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି, ମତେ ବାପଘର ବୁଲିଆସିଲା ପରି ଲାଗେ । ମୁଁ ଅନେଇ ବସିଥାଏ Convention ପାଇଁ, ହେଉପକ୍ଷେ ଯେତେ ଗଣ୍ଡଗୋଳ - ଚାଲିଥାଉ କେତେ ରାଜନୀତି । ଦୂର ଦୂରାନ୍ତର କେତେ ଆପଣାର ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସହ ଦେଖାହୁଏ । କିଏ ଆମ ପାଖରେ ଥିଲେ - ଏବେ ଦୁରେଇ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ତ ଆଉକିଏ ଏହି OSA ର ବନ୍ଧୁ । ବର୍ଷ ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଏଇଠି ଭେଟ - ଦୁଖସୁଖ ବଣ୍ଟାବଣ୍ଟି - ଏଇଠୁ ବିଦାୟ । ଦେଖୁଦେଲେ ମନ ପୁରିଯାଏ । କିଏ ଯଦି ଆସି ନ ପାରିଛି - ତେବେ ସବୁ କେମିତି ଅଧୁରା ଅଧୁରା ଲାଗେ ।

ଏ ବର୍ଷ ଏଇ ହୋଟେଲ୍ ରେ Convention ହଉଛି । ଆମର ପୁଅବୋହୂ ନୀତି ନୀତିମୟୀ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ସମସ୍ତେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ପହଞ୍ଚି, ଲଢ଼, ବୁଲାଇଲି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ପାଇଁ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଆମ ବାବୁ lobby ରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି ପକେଇଛନ୍ତି । ମୁଁ କିଛି ଆଉ ଅନେକ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଲବି ରେ ବସିଛି, Front desk ପାଖାପାଖି । ଲୋକମାନେ Check-in କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ପିଲାପିଲି ଏ ଲବିରେ ଖେଳକୁଦ ଚଳେଇଛନ୍ତି । ମତେ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଛି - ନୂଆ ଅପରିଚିତ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ପଚାରିବାକୁ - କେଉଁଠୁ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି? କାହାର ପିଲା ତୁମେ?? କଣ କରୁଛ ...ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ଆଉ ଚିହ୍ନା ଲୋକ ହୋଇଥିଲେତ ଆନନ୍ଦର ସୀମା ରହେନି ।

ଦେଖିଲି ସେପଟରୁ ଧପାସିଛି କାକଳୀ, ମୋର ଅତି ପ୍ରିୟ ମଣିଷଟିଏ । OSA ର ବନ୍ଧୁ କେବଳ । କିଛି ସିଏ କେମିତି ମୋ ମନରେ ଆସ୍ଥାନ ଜମେଇଲା ମୁଁ ଜାଣିପାରେନି । ମୋର ଦୀର୍ଘ ଜୀବନ କାଳ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ମୁଁ କେତେ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ନ ଦେଖୁଛି ଅବା । ସାଧାସିଧା, ଶାନ୍ତଶିଖ, ଭଦ୍ର ସୁଶୀଳ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ବହୁଗୁଣ ବିଭୂଷିତା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖୁଛି । ଭାରତ ଠାରୁ ଆମେରିକା ଯାଏ ସଫଳତାର ସହ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଲାଭକଲି । ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଗୋଟି ଏ କଲେଜ୍ ରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକାର ଜୀବନ କଟେଇଲି । ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଗୋଟିଏ କଲେଜରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପିକାର ଜୀବନ କଟେଇଲି । କିନ୍ତୁ କଣ ପାଇଁ ମୋର କାକଳୀ - ପ୍ରତି ଏତେ ମାତ୍ରାରେ ସ୍ନେହ ତା ମୁଁ ଜାଣେନି । ପ୍ରତି ବର୍ଷ Convention କୁ ସିଏ ଆସେ । କେବେ କେମିତି ଯଦି ସିଏ ଆସି ନଥାଏ ମୋ ମନଟା ଝୁରି ହୁଏ । ମୋ ବସିଥିବା ସମ୍ପର୍କସୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକ ଗୁଡ଼ିଏ ମୋ ସହ ସହମତ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ---- କହିପକାଇଲେ, "ହେଇ - ତମର ଆସିଲା ।"

ପ୍ରଥମେ ଯେବେ ଦେଖୁଥିଲି - ଆମ ସହର ରେ Convention ହଉଥିଲା ଏବଂ ସମସ୍ତେ କିଏ କାହା ଘରେ ରହୁଥିଲେ, କୋଳରେ ଦଶ ମାସ ର ପୁନେଇଁ ଚାନ୍ଦ ପରି ପୁଅଟିଏ । ପାଖକୁ ଲାଗି ବଡ଼ ପୁଅଟି, ବେଶ୍ ବଡ଼ । ନହ ନହକା ଝିଅଟା । କିଏ କହିବେନି ଏ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ମାଁ ବୋଲି । ଚିହ୍ନା ପରିଚିତ ହେଉ ହେଉ ପିଲା ଦୁଇ ଜଣଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେଲା ଖେଳିବେ, ବଡ଼ ପୁଅ ଖେଳେଇବ ଭାଇକୁ । ଏବଂ ଠେଲିପେଲି ଆମ ସହ ରୋଷେଇ ଘରେ ଏବଂ ବଢ଼ା ବଢ଼ି ରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରି ପକେଇଲା । ତାର ବ୍ୟବହାର ଏବଂ ବିଚକ୍ଷଣତା ଭଲ ଦେଖୁ ମୋର ଶିକ୍ଷୟତ୍ରୀ ମନ ଦ୍ରବୀ ଗଲା । ତାର ସେଇ ଚେହେରା ଆଉ ନାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର ଆନ୍ତରିକତା, ଅନୁରକ୍ତି ସେମିତି ଅକ୍ଷୁଣ୍ଣ ଅଛି, ମୋ ପ୍ରତି ଏବଂ ଆଉ ଅନେକଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି । ତାର ପିଲାଏ ମଧ୍ୟ ଘର ସଂସାର କଲେଣି । ଜେଜେମାଁ ହେଇସାରିଲାଣି ।

ମୋ ପାଖକୁ ଆସି ପାଦ ଛୁଇଁଲା ଏବଂ ସଂଗେ ସଂଗେ ମୋର ଗଳା ବେଷ୍ଟନ କଲା । "କେତେବେଳେ ଆସିଲେ ଅପା ?" – "ଆସିଲିଣି । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖୁଛି - ଜଣା ଅଜଣା ସମସ୍ତେ ଚାବି ନେଇ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି । ତତେ ମନେ ମନେ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରୁଥିଲି ।" ପାଖରେ ଜାବୁଡ଼ି ଧରି କହିଲି । ବାଉଁଶାପ ରୁ ଜାଣିଲି, କାକଳୀର ସେଇ ଦଶମାସ ର ପୁଅ ଚି ବିଭା ହେଇ ଆସି ଏଇ ସହରରେ ଅଛି । ମାସେ ହେବ ତାର ପୁଅଟିଏ ହେଇଛି । ଇଏ ଏଇଠି ଥିଲା । ସ୍ଵାମୀ, ବଡ଼ ପୁଅ, ବୋହୂ ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କ ପିଲାମାନେ ପୁଅ ଦେଖିବା ପାଇଁ ଚାରିଦିନ ତଳୁ ପହଞ୍ଚିଛନ୍ତି । ମନ୍ଦିରରେ ନାମ କରଣ କଲା । ଆଜି ସମସ୍ତେ ଏଇ Hotelରେ Check-in କରିଛନ୍ତି ।

ମୋର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଏବଂ ଶୁଣି ରୁ ଏତାଇ ଗଲାନି । ପିଲାଟି "ମା- ଆମ୍" "ମା- ଆମ୍" କହି ମୋ ସାମନାରେ ଦଉଡ଼ି ଗଲା । ଲବି ଠାରୁ ଦୂର ରେ ଭେଣ୍ଟିଂମେସିନ୍ ପାଖରେ ଝିଅ ଟିଏ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଛି । ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ଛୁଆ ପାଖରେ । ପରିଧାନରେ ପଶାପାଲି

ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀ Skirt ସାଥରେ T-shirt ଖଣ୍ଡେ | ବଗ ପରି ଧୋବ ଫରଫର, ନହନହକା ଲମ୍ବା ବେକ ତା'ର | ମୁଁ କହିଲି, "ହେଉ ଦେଖନା, ସେଇ ଯୋଡ଼ି ଝିଅଟି ସେପଟକୁ ଠିଆ ହେଇଛି - ଗୋରୀଟି, ଛୁଆ ତ ତା ପିଲା ପରି ଦିଶୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି " କଣ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି Convention କୁ ? ନାଁ ଆଉ କିଏ ବାହାର ମଣିଷ !" ସମସ୍ତେ ସିଆଡେ ଚାହିଁଲେ | କହିବା ବାହୁଲ୍ୟ ଯେ, ମୁଁ ଏଇମିତି ବିନା କାରଣରେ ବକବକ ହୁଏ |

କେହି କିଛି କହିବା ଆଗରୁ ଛୁଆଟି କାକଳୀକୁ ଦେଖୁ ଚିର ରା ମାରି ଧାଇଁ ଆସିଲା | ତା' ପାଖରେ ଗେହ୍ଲା ହେଉ ହେଉ ତାର ମାଁ ଆର ଛୁଆଟିକୁ ଧରି ପହଞ୍ଚିଗଲା ଆମ ପାଖରେ | ଜଣେ କହିଲେ, "ସିଏ ପରା ତାର ବଡ଼ ବୋହୂ | ପିଲା ଦୁହେଁ ତା'ର ନୁହନ୍ତି , ତେଣୁ ତା' ପିଲା ପରି ଦିଶୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି |" କାକଳୀ ବୋହୂଟିକୁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହ ପରିଚିତ କରାଇଦେଲା | ହାତ ଯୋଡ଼ି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ନମସ୍କାର ଜଣାଇ ପୁଉଣି ଦୌଡ଼ିଗଲା ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପଛରେ | ବଡ଼ ଚଳ ଚଂଚଳ ଛୁଆ ଦି'ଗା | ଧନ୍ୟ କହିବ ଏ ମାଆକୁ | - ତାର ଧର୍ଯ୍ୟ କୁ -- ଦୁଇଟି ଯାକ ପୁଅ ପୋଷ୍ୟପୁତ୍ର |

ମୁଁ ପଚାରୁ ପଚାରୁ ପଚାରିଦେଲି – "ଆରେ କାକଳୀ, ସତେତ, ତୋର ଦୁଇଟି ଯାକ ବୋହୂ ଆମେରିକାନ୍, ନୁହଁ?"

"ହଁ ଅପା | ଇଏ ବଡ଼ | ସାନର ପିଲା ହେଇଛି, ଆସିନି | ଦୁଇ ଜଣ ସମୁଦି ସମୁଦୁଣୀ ଆମରି ସହରରୁ | ପିଲାମାନେ ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜ କ୍ଲବ୍ ପିଲାଙ୍କୁ ବାଛି ବିଭା ହେଇଗଲେ | ରକ୍ଷା ହେଇଗଲା | ଆମକୁ ବଡ଼ ସୁବିଧା ହେଲା |"

ମୁଁ ତା ମୁହଁକୁ ବଲବଲ କରି ଚାହିଁଲି | ଦେଖୁଲି ସିଏ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଆକର୍ଷଣ କରିଛି | ଅର୍ଥାତ୍, ଲବିରେ କିଚିର ମିଚିର ହେଉଥିବା ସବୁ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକ ତା କଥା ଶୁଣିବାକୁ ଉତ୍ସାହୀ | ବିଦେଶୀ ବୋହୂ ବୋଲି ତା ମନରେ ତିଳେ କୁଣ୍ଡା ନାହିଁ | କହୁଛି ସୁବିଧା - କି ସୁବିଧା ଶୁଣିବା !

"ଛୁଟି ବାଟି ହେଲେ ସମୟତକ ଆମ ପାଖରେ କଟଉଛନ୍ତି | ଅନ୍ୟ ସହର ର ଝିଅ ହେଇଥିଲେ ସିଆଡେ ବି ଯାଉଥାନ୍ତେ | ବାଣ୍ଟି ହେଇ ଯାଆନ୍ତେ ପିଲାମାନେ | ଏଇମିତିରେ ଆମେ ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟମାସ, Thanksgiving, Easter ଏବଂ New Years କୁ ସମୁଦି , ସମୁଦୁଣୀ ଘରକୁ ଯାଉ | ପିଲାଙ୍କ ଜନ୍ମ ଦିନରେ ମୁଁ ଆମଆଡର ଖାଦ୍ୟ କରି ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଡାକେ | ସେମାନେ ଭଲ ପାଆନ୍ତି | ମୁଁ ଏତିକି କରିଦିଏ ବୋଲି ପିଲା ବି ଖୁସି ହୁଅନ୍ତି | ପିଲା ତାଙ୍କ ଧନା ରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ | କିନ୍ତୁ ସମୁଦି ସମୁଦୁଣୀଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ଆମେ Lunch dinner ଖାଇବାକୁ ଯାଉ | ସେମାନେ ଆମର ପାଇଁ ଆସନ୍ତି ଆମ ଘରକୁ | Super Bowl ବା ଯେ କୌଣସି ଖେଳ ହେଲେ - କିଛି Debate ହେଲେ ଆସନ୍ତି, ସମୁଦି ସାଂଗରେ ବସି TV ଦେଖନ୍ତି | ଚା, ପକ୍କୁଡ଼ି, ଚାଟ୍ ଖାଆନ୍ତି | ମନ୍ଦିର କୁ ରଥଯାତ୍ରା ରେ ଆସି ଭାରି Enjoy କରନ୍ତି | ମୋ ବଡ଼ ସମୁଦୁଣୀ ରଥ ମଧ୍ୟ ଚାଣନ୍ତି ନାତି ନାତୁଣୀଙ୍କୁ ଧରି |"

ମୁଁ ଅନ୍ୟ କେତେ ଜଣ ପରିଚିତ ଅପରିଚିତ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ସହ କାକଳୀ ର ମୁହଁକୁ ଚାହିଁଥାଏ | ମୋର ଭଲ ଭାବରେ ମନେ ଅଛି ତାର ବଡ଼ ପୁଅ ଡେଟିଂ କଲାବେଳେ ସଂସାର କମ୍ପୁଥାଏ | ତାର ସ୍ବାମୀ ବଡ଼ ଅସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ଥିଲେ ପୁଅ American ଝିଅ ବାଛିଟି ବୋଲି | ଭାରତର ବୋହୂ ଆଣିଥାନ୍ତେ | ଭାରତର ବନ୍ଧୁ ହେଇଥାନ୍ତେ | ମାଛିକୁ ମ' ନ କହୁଥିବା ପୁଅଟିକୁ ଶାଶନରେ ରଖିନି ବୋଲି କାକଳୀ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ତାଳ ଛିଣ୍ଡୁଥିଲେ | କାକଳୀର ଅନ୍ତରଂଗ ତଥା ଆତ୍ମୀୟ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶୁଣେ କାକଳୀ ଲୁହ ଗଡ଼ାଇ ଦିନ ନେଉଛି ବୋଲି | ତା ଆପରେ କଣ କେମିତି ହେଲା ମୁଁ ଆଉ ଜାଣିନି | କାର୍ତ୍ତ ପାଇଥିଲି - ସେଇଥିରୁ ଜାଣିଥିଲି ଯେ ତାର ପୁଅ American ଝିଅ ବିଭା ହେଇଗଲା |

କହିବା କଥା ନୁହଁ ଯେ - କାକଳୀ ସହ ମୋର ବନ୍ଧୁତ୍ଵ ଅତି ପୁରୁଣା | ତା ସହ ମୋର ସଂପର୍କ ଅତି ନିବିଡ଼ | ଦେଶ, କାଳ, ପାତ୍ର ନେର୍ବଶେଷ ରେ ଆମର ଭାବ ନିହାତି ନିଆରା, କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଁ କେବେ ଯାଇ କାକଳୀ ଘରେ କିମ୍ବା କାକଳୀ ଆସି ମୋ ଘରେ ରହି ନାହାନ୍ତି | ତାର ପାରିବାରିକ ପାରିପାର୍ଶ୍ଵିକ ସୁଖ ବା ସମସ୍ୟା କଥା ମୁଁ କିଛି ଜାଣିନି | ମୋ ଛାତ୍ରୀତୁଲ୍ୟ ଏ ଝିଅକୁ ମୁଁ ସମବୟସୀ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ପରି ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ନେଇଛି |

ଆଜି ମୋର ପୂର୍ବ କଥା ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଗଲା | ଏମିତିଆ ହୁଏ ଅଲିଆ ଘାଣ୍ଟିବାକୁ ମନ ନଥିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ | ଅତି ସନ୍ତୁର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ ଏମିତି କଥା ସବୁ ସ୍ମରଣ କୁ ଆସିଯାଏ | ମୁଁ ତାକୁ କହିଲି, "କାକଳୀ, ତୋର ପୁଅ ମାନେ ବିଦେଶୀ ଝିଅଙ୍କୁ ବିଭା ହେଲେ | ତୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଖୁସିଅଛୁ ଦେଖୁଛି | ଆମ Community ଏ ନେଇ ବହୁତ ସମସ୍ୟା ଉପୁଜୁଛି - ବହୁତ ଘରେ ବାପା, ମାଁ, ପିଲା ଅସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ |

ଗୋଟିଏ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିନି କାକଳୀ । ସଂଗେ ସଂଗେ ଜବାବ ଦେଲା । ଧୀର ସ୍ଥିର ସ୍ଵର - ଆଖିରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଅଭିଭାବକର ଚାହାଣୀ । "ଅପା, ପୁଅ ଦିଲ ଜଣ ଦଇତି ଝିଅକୁ ବିଭା ହେଲେ । ଦୁଃଖ କାହିଁକି କରିବି ? ଦୁଃଖୀ ହେଇଥାନ୍ତି ଯଦି ମୋ ପୁଅମାନେ ଦୁଇଟି ପୁଅକୁ ବିଭା ହେଇପଡ଼ିଥାନ୍ତେ । ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ବହୁତ ବହୁତ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଦୁହେଁ ନିଜ ନିଜର ବାଞ୍ଛିଥିବା ଝିଅକୁ ଧରି ଦୁଃଖେ ସୁଖେ ଚାଂକ ସଂସାର ଚଳେଇଛନ୍ତି । ପର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ସଂଗକରି ଅସାଧ ଦୁସାଧ ରୋଗର ଶୀକାର ହେଇନାହାନ୍ତି । ମଦ, ମାଦକ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ -ଗୋମାଂସ ଆଦି ପାଖ ମାଡ଼ି ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ବହୁତ ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ।"

ୟା' ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଆମ ପାଖ କୁ ଅଧିକ ଲୋକ ଲାଗି ଆସିଲେଣି । କେତେକଙ୍କ ର ପିଲା ବିଭାହେଲେଣି - କାହାର ପିଲା ବିଭା ହେବାକୁ ଅଛନ୍ତି । ଆଉ କିଏ ବି ଅଳ୍ପ ବୟସ୍କ - ଏବେ ବିଭା ହେଇ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି । ସମସ୍ତେ ତାର କଥାକୁ ସହମତ ହେଇ ଶୁଣୁଥାନ୍ତି । ମୁଁ ତାର ବାଳ ସାଉଁଟି ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଚୁମାଟିଏ ଦେଇ ଦେଲି । କହିଲି, "ତୋର ଏଇ ବିଚକ୍ଷଣ ବୁଦ୍ଧି, କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା, ପରାପର ବିଚାର ନ ଥାଇ ସମାନ ବ୍ୟବହାର ପାଇଁ ତୁ କେବେ ଭି ଦୁଃଖୀ ହେଇ ପାରିବୁନି । ସେଇଥିପାଇଁ ତ ତୁ ମୋ ମନ କିଣି ନେଇଛୁ ଓ ବେଳ ଅବେଳରେ ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁ ।"

ଆମ ଭଉଣ୍ୟକୁ ଜାଣିଥିବା ଭଦ୍ରବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଜଣେ ମତେ ପଚାରିଲେ - "ଆପଣଙ୍କ ବୋହୂଟି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପରା । ବଡ଼ ଭାଗ୍ୟବାନ୍ ଆପଣ ମାନେ ।" ଏ କଥାର ପ୍ରଭାବ କାକଳୀ ମନରେ କିପରି ପଡ଼ିବ ସେ କଥା ଭାବିବାର ବିଚାର ବୁଦ୍ଧି ତାଙ୍କର ନଥିଲା । ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ କହିଲି ଯେ, "ହଁ, ବୋହୂ ଆସିଲା, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବିଧି ବିଧାନ, ଭାଷା ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଆଦି ସବୁଥିରେ ଠିକ୍ ଠାକ୍ । ଘରେ ମୋ ପାଖରେ ରହିଲା । ଓଷା ଉପବାସ କଲା । ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଗହଣା ସଜେଇ ହେଇ ପାର୍ଟି ପାର୍ଟି କୁ ଗଲା । ଆମକୁ ଗଲା ଅଇଲାକୁ ଚା ଜଳଖିଆ ଦେଲା । ପାଠ ପଢ଼ିଲା ମୋ ପାଖରେ ରହି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସମୟ ଆସିଲା ତା ନିଜର ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ନୀତି କୁ ସିଏ ଉଡ଼ିଗଲା । ନିଜ ସଂସ୍ଥାନ କରି ପୁଅ ବୋହୂ ଘରୁ ଚାଲିଗଲେ । କୁଣିଆ ମଇତ୍ର ପରି ଘରକୁ ଆସିଲେ ଗଲେ । ଛୁଆକୁ ସାଇତିବା ପାଇଁ ମୁଁ ଗଲି ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ବେଳେ ସିଏ ମୋ ପାଖରେ ରହିନି । ଏବେ ଜିନ୍ ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ ପିନ୍ଧି ଆମ ଆଗରେ ଆତଯାତ ହଉଛି । ଆମେ କହିଲୁ, "ଯେ ଦେଶ ଯାଇ ସେ ଫଳ ଖାଇ । ତୋର ଯାହା ଇଚ୍ଛା ତାହା ପିନ୍ଧି । ଶାଳୀନତା ରୁ ବାହାରି ନଗଲେ ହେଲା ।" ଜଣେ ଚିହ୍ନର ଶ୍ରୋତା କହି ପକାଇଲେ, "ଠିକ୍ ଠିକ୍ ---- ଆମ କାକଳୀର ବୋହୂ ସେଇୟା ହିଁ କରୁଛି ।" ସେ ଭଦ୍ରବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଭିନ୍ନ ଆଡେ ଚାଲିଗଲେ । ଆଜିତ Programme ନାହିଁ । Dinner ପରେ Mehfil ହେବ । ତେଣୁ ମନଇଚ୍ଛା ଗପଟପ ଏଇ ବେଳରେ ହୁଏ । ଯାହାହେଉ କାକଳୀ ସହ ମୋର କଥୋପକଥନ ଭଲ ଜମିଲା । ଭିତ ବି ଜମିଥିଲା ଆମ ଚାରିପଟ । କାକଳୀ ସ୍ଥିର ହେଇ ବସିଥିଲା । ଦୃଷ୍ଟି କୁ ତା ନିଜର ଶାଢ଼ୀ ଉପରେ ନିବନ୍ଧ ରଖି ।

ମୋର ପୁଣି ଲୋଭ ହେଲା ଆଉ କିଛି ଜାଣିବାକୁ । କେମିତି ସିଏ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି କୁ Handle କଲା । କଣ ପଚାରିବି ? ଉଚିତ୍ ହେବ କି ନାଁ ? ସିଏ କାଳେ ଅତିଷ୍ଠ ହେଇପଡ଼ିବ । ଭାରୁ ଭାରୁ ମୋ ପାଟିରୁ ଖସିଗଲା, "ଆଉ ! କାକଳୀ - ତୋ ବୋହୂ ଦିଲଟି ଭଲ ?" ମନେ ମନେ ଧ୍ଵଙ୍କାରିଲି ତାକୁ ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ପଚାରି ।

ସିଏ ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନରେ ଆଦୌ ବିଚଳିତ ହେଲାନି । "ଶିକ୍ଷୟତ୍ରୀ ଜୀବିକା ମୋର । କେତେ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନୋତ୍ତର ଜୀବନରେ ସାମନା କରି ଚାଲିଛି ।" କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତରଦାୟୀ କାକଳୀ ପରି ମୁଁ ଭିନ୍ନ କାହାକୁ ଦେଖିନି । ତାର ନୀରିହ ଉତ୍ତର ଶୁଣିବା ପାଇଁ ମୋ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଆଉ କେତେ ଯୋଡ଼ା କାନ ମଧ୍ୟ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରୁଥିଲେ । ସିଧା ହେଇ ବସିଲା, ମୋତେ ଓଲଟ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ କଲା, "ଭଲ ବୋହୂ ମାନେ କ'ଣ ଅପା ? କ'ଣ ତାର ସଂଜ୍ଞା ? - କଣ ତାର Defination? ମୁଁ ଯେତେବେଳେ ବୋହୂ ହେଇ ଯାଇଥିଲି ପଇଁଚାଳିଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ --- ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଅଲଗା ଥିଲା । ମୋ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭିନ୍ନ । ବହିତକ ଥୋଇଦେଲି, ବୋହୂ ହେଇଗଲି । ଶୈଳବାଳା କଲେଜ୍ Hostel ରୁ ସିଧା ମଫସଲ ଗାଁ ଶାଶୁଘର । ଶାଶୁ ନଥିଲେ କାମ ବତେଇଦେବାକୁ । ସମସ୍ତ ପ୍ରତିକୂଳ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି କୁ ହସି ହସି ସାମନା କଲି । ସକାଳୁ ସଞ୍ଜ ପରିବାର ର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ର ଚାହିଦା ମେଣ୍ଟାଇବାକୁ ହେଲା । ଖରାଦିନେ ସକାଳୁ ଗାଧୋଇ ପଡ଼ି ପଖାଳ ଖାଇବେ ସମସ୍ତେ । ସେମାନେ ଲୁଗା ପାଲଟୁ ପାଲଟୁ ପଖାଳ ବାଜିବି, ବଡ଼ ଭାଜିବି । ଅଳ୍ପ ସିଝା ହେଇଥିବ - ଛତେଇବି । ପିଆଜ କାଟ, ତେଲ ପକା - କେବେ କେବେ ଅଲଗା କ'ଣ ସବୁ କରିଦେବି । ଖାଇବା ସରୁ ସରୁ ବାସନ ଟେକି ନେବି । ଶୁଣୁର ଚା' ପି ଇବେ ଶେୟରେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଚା' ଦେବି - ମୋତି ଦେବି । ଗାଧୋଇ ଆସୁ ଆସୁ ପୂଜା ବାସନ, ଫୁଲ, ପାଣି ଚନ୍ଦନ ଯୋଗାଡ଼ କରିବି । ତେଣେ ରୋଷେଇ ବସିଥିବ । ପୂଜା ରୁ ଉଠିବେ ତ ଲନ୍ଦୁ ଖାଇବେ । ଛୁଆ ଦି'ଜଣ ବି ପାଖରେ ରହୁଥିଲେ । ମୋର ବି ଛୁଆଟିଏ । ବର୍ଷା ଦିନେ, ଶୀତ ଦିନେ ମଫସଲ ଗାଁର ବି ଖାଇବା ପାଟନ୍ତ ବଦଳେ । ଶୁଣୁରଙ୍କର ପାନ ଚା' ଦିନ ଯାକ । ଯାକୁ ସବୁ କରିଦବା ଚା ମୋର ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ଥିଲା । ନଚେତ୍, ସରା ପରିବାର ର ସବୁ କଥାରେ ବ୍ୟତିକ୍ରମ ହେଇ ଥା'ନ୍ତା । ନିଜକୁ ଅବହେଳିତ ମନେ କରିଥାନ୍ତେ । ମୁଁ କରିଦେଲି ବୋଲେ ମାନସିକ ଶକ୍ତି ପାଇଲି । ବାହାର ଲୋକ ଗଲା

ଅଇଲାରେ ପ୍ରଶଂସା ପାଇଲି । ବୁଢ଼ା ବୁଢ଼ୀ କାଳକୁ ଦିଅର ନଶନ ଝୁରୁଛନ୍ତି । ସର୍ବୋପରି ମୋର ମାଆ ବାପା ଏବଂ ପରିବାର ର ଲୋକ ଏବଂ ଏବେବି ମୋ ଜନ୍ମ ସ୍ଥାନର ପ୍ରିୟ ପରିଜନ ମାନେ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ଗର୍ବ କରନ୍ତି ସବୁ ଦିନକୁ । ଅପା - ଦରକାର ପଡ଼ିଲା ବୋଲି ମୋ ପରି ଅକାମିକା ଲୋକଟିକୁ ଏତେ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ହେଲା । ମୋ ବୋହୂର କ'ଣ ଦରକାର ହେଉଛି କି ? ସେ ସବୁ କରିବାକୁ ? ସେ କରୁନି, ତା ଅର୍ଥ କ'ଣ ତାକୁ ଖରାପ ବୋହୂ କହିବା ?

ମୁଁ English MA, University topper ଏ ଦେଶକୁ ଆସି Phd କରି ଗୋଟେ ନାମଜାଦା କଲେଜ୍ ରେ ଅଧ୍ୟାପନା କଲି । ଅଥଚ, କୌଣସି ବିଶ୍ୱ ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟରୁ କିଛିବି ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ହାସଲ କରି ନ ଥିବା ଏ ଝିଅଟି ବୟସରେ ମୋ' ଠାରୁ କେତେଗୁଡ଼େ ସାନ-ମଫସଲ ଗାଁ ରୁ, ଏ ବୋହୂଟି - କେଉଁଠାରୁ ଏ ସାଧାରଣ ଜ୍ଞାନ ଶିକ୍ଷାଟି ପାଇଲା ?? ସାଧାରଣ ଜ୍ଞାନ କିନ୍ତୁ ଅସାଧାରଣ ତାର ଶିକ୍ଷା । ଏ ଶତକର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଭାରତୀୟ ମାଁ ବାପ ଏହି ମନୋବୃତ୍ତି ରଖି ପିଲାଙ୍କର ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତିକୁ ସମ୍ମାନ ଦେବା ଉଚିତ୍ । ମୁଁ ଅଳ୍ପ ହସି ତା ହାତ କୁ ଚିକେ ଚାପିଦେଲି । ଅନ୍ୟ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଲୋକ ମାନେ ମଧ୍ୟ ତା ଉପରେ ଖୁସି ହେଇଗଲେ ।

ସେ ପୁନରାଏ ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲା ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ ସ୍ୱରରେ, "କହିବି ଅପା, ଘରକୁ କୁଣିଆ ମଇତ୍ର ଆସିଲେ କିମ୍ପା ଆମେ ଆମ ସହରକୁ ସଂଗୀତ ନୃତ୍ୟ ଶୀଳ୍ପ ଆଣିଲେ - ସମୟ ଯହା ହେଉ ନା କାହିଁକି ବୋହୂ ଯାଇ Airport ରୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ନେଇଆସେ । ଦି' ଜଣ ଦି'ଟା ଗାଡ଼ି ନେଇ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆଣିବେ, ଛାଡ଼ିବେ, ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମ୍ କୁ ନେବେ । ସାନ ପୁଅ Gifted Talented Education ରେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି ହେଇଗଲା ଛୁଆ ଦିନରୁ । ବାପ ସମୟ ଦେଇ ପାରନ୍ତିନି । ବଡ଼ ପୁଅ ଠାରୁ ୧୨ ବର୍ଷ ସାନ ସିଏ । ମୁଁ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ - ଚାରିଦିନ ସପ୍ତାହରେ ତାକୁ ତା' ସ୍କୁଲ ରୁ ନେଇ University କୁ ଯାଏ Class ପାଇଁ । ଦୁଆ ଦୁଆ Freeway driving ମୁଁ କରୁଥାଏ । ଭୟରେ ଜଡ଼ସଡ଼ । Freezing rain କିମ୍ପା Heavy snow warning ହେଇଗଲେ ମୋ ହାତଗୋଡ଼ Freez କରିଯାଏ ଡରିମରି । ଏଇ ପୁଅଟି ମୋତେ କାମକୁ ନବା ଆଣିବା କରେ ସେତେବେଳେ । ଆଉ ମୋ ବୋହୂ ଦିଅରକୁ ନେଇଯାଏ । School ରୁ କଲେଜ୍ ନେଇ ଛାଡ଼ିଦିଏ । ପୁଣି ତାକୁ ଆଣି ମୋ ପାଖରେ ଘରେ ଛାଡ଼ିଦିଏ Class ସରିଗଲେ ।

ଅପା, ଏବେ କୁହନ୍ତୁ ମୋ ବୋହୂ ଭଲ କି ମନ୍ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୋହୂଟିଏ ହେଇଥିଲେ ଏ ପରିସ୍ଥିତିରେ ମୁଁ ତା'ର ସାହାଯ୍ୟ ନେଇ ନ ଥାନ୍ତି ହୁଏତ । ବରଫାବୃତ୍ତ ଅନୁଳରେ ଅନଭ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଝିଅଟିଏ କୁ ମୁଁ କେବେ ବି ପଠେଇ ନଥାନ୍ତି ପୁଅକୁ ନବା ଆଣିବା ପାଇଁ । ଯଦିବା ସିଏ କରିଥାନ୍ତା - ହୁଏତ ମୁଁ କିଛିଟା ସମାଲୋଚନାର ଶରବ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ଥାଆନ୍ତି, ବୋହୂ କୁ ଏ ଦେଶରେ ରହି ମଧ୍ୟ Use କରୁଛି ବୋଲି ।

ସବୁ କଥା ରେ ଗୋଟେ Plus point ଥାଏ Minus point ପରି । ବୋହୂ, କ୍ୱାଇଁ --- ଏ ସମସ୍ତେ ବି ସେହିପରି । ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି ଯେ ମୁଁ ମରି ପଡ଼ିଗଲେ କେବେବି ପିଢ଼ା ମାଡ଼ି କ୍ରିୟା କର୍ମ ଶୁଦ୍ଧି ଶ୍ରାଦ୍ଧ କରିବନି । ମୋ ବୋହୂ କେବେବି ହାତରେ ବ୍ରତ ବାନ୍ଧିବନି, ସାବିତ୍ରୀ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଉପବାସ କରିବନି । ମୁଁ ସେଇଯା କୁ ଆଖିରେ ରଖି ସାମୟିକ ଆଉ ଯେଉଁ ସୁବିଧା ମିଳୁଛି - ତାକୁ ନଷ୍ଟ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଚାହଁଲିନି । ଏ ବୟସରେ ସବୁଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ ସୁଖ ହେଉଛି ପିଲାଙ୍କର ସାନ୍ନିଧ୍ୟ । ମୁଁ ବାପା ମାଁ, ଭାଇ ଭଉଣୀଙ୍କ ଠାରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଆସିଲି - ପୁଣି ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ନାଁ ରେ ଧର୍ମ ନାଁରେ ଦୂରେଇ ଦେଇ ପାରିବିନି । "

Dinner time ହେଇଯାଇଥିଲା । ଆମେ ବାହାରିଲୁ Dinning hall କୁ । ସମସ୍ତେ କାକଳୀର କଥାରେ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଯାଇଥିଲେ । ବହୁତ Complement ମଧ୍ୟ କରୁଥିଲେ । ବାସ୍ତବରେ ଭଲ ବୋହୂର ସଜ୍ଞା କ'ଣ ? ମୁଁ ଏ ପ୍ରଶ୍ନର ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଇ ପାରିନଥିଲି । ମୋ ହାତ ମୁଠାରେ ତା ହାତ ମୁଠାଟି ତେବେ ବି ଥିଲା , ମୁଁ Dinning hall ରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ବେଳକୁ ।

କଳ୍ପନାମୟୀ ଦାଶ
ମିନେସୋଟା

ଆହତ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ମୋର

ନନ୍ଦ କିଶୋର ଶତପଥୀ

ଆହତ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ନେଇ
ହତାଶାର କ୍ଷତ ବହି,
ଚାଲୁଥିଲି ପଥ ବାହି,
ଶୁଭୁଥିଲା କିଛି ଦୂରେ,
ବେଦନା ଆତ୍ମର ସୁରେ,
ଆକୂଳ ଚିତ୍କାର ଧ୍ବନି,
ଶୁଭୁଥିଲା ପୁଣି,
କଳକଳ କିଂକିଣୀ
ଦୁପୁର ର ରୁଣୁଝୁଣୁ
ମୁକୁ ପଦ ଧ୍ବନି ।

କୃତନର କୁକୁ ଭରା
ଶୀତଳ ସମୀରେ ଥିଲା,
ପୁଲକର ଗାଥା,
ଝରଣାର ଝର୍ଜର
ତଟିନୀର କଳକଳ,
ସାଗରର ଛଳ ଛଳ,
ପରାହତ କରୁଥିଲା,

କ୍ଷୁଣ୍ଣ ମୋ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷାର
ସ୍ତବ୍ଧ ନୀରବତା ॥
ପରାହତ କରୁଥିଲା
ଆରତ ବେଦନା ଭରା
ସେଇ ଚିତ୍କାରର ସ୍ଵର ।
ଆହତ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ମୋର
ହେଉଥିଲା ଦୁର୍ବଳ,
କ୍ଷତ ପରେ ହାତ ଚାଲି,
ମଧୁର ପ୍ରଲେପ ବୋଲି
କହୁଥିଲ ହସିହସି

ତୁମେ ମୋ ନିକଟେ ବସି,
"କିଛି ତୋର ହୋଇ ନାହିଁ,
ଦେଖ ତୋ ପାଖରେ ମୁହିଁ,
ତୋତେ ଛାଡ଼ି ଯିବି କାହିଁ?
ସଦା ତୋର ପାଖେ ମୁଁ ତ,
ପ୍ରହରୀ ମୁଁ ଜାଗ୍ରତ,

ସଖା ଭ୍ରାତା ପିତା ମାତା
ପିତାମହ ତୋର ॥
ସଂସାର ର ଏଇ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ଆହତେ
ବିଚଳିତ ହୁଅ ନାହିଁ ତୁମେ କଦାଚିତେ
ମୋତେ ଉପଲବ୍ଧି କର,
ତାହାହିଁ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା କର,
ସେ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା କେବେ କାର,
ହୁଏନା ଆହତ ।
ସେ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା ଦେଖାଇବ
ଆଲୋକିତ ପଥ ॥

ସେଇ ପଥେ ଗତିକରି,
ଅନ୍ଧକାର ଅପସରି,
ଉପନୀତ ହେବ ଶେଷେ
ମୋ ପାଖରେ ଅସି,
ଦୀପ୍ତ ହେବ, ତୃପ୍ତ ହେବ
ଆନନ୍ଦ ସାଗରେ ଭାସି ॥”

Nanda Kishore Sathpathy is a retired engineer living in Bhubaneswar

ବାମନ

ଅରୁନ୍ ପୂଜାରୀ

ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ଇ-ମେଲ୍ ପାଇ ଅତିଶୟ ଉତ୍ପୁଲିତ ଚିତ୍ତରେ ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁ କର୍ମକ୍ଷମାରୁ ସ୍ୱଗୃହ ଅଭିମୁଖେ ପ୍ରସ୍ଥାନ କଲେ । ଶେଷକୁ, ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁଙ୍କ ନିମନ୍ତେ ସ୍ୱୀକାର କରି ଇନ୍‌ଷ୍ଟିଚ୍ୟୁଟ୍ ଭିଜିଟ୍ କରିବାକୁ ଆଗ୍ରହ ପ୍ରକାଶ କଲେ । କ୍ରମ-ବିଲୁପ୍ତ ମଣ୍ଡଳ ପ୍ରକାଟି ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ଅଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ଅଗ୍ରଣୀ ଗବେଷକ ଭାବରେ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ସୁବିଦିତ । ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ମତରେ ମଣ୍ଡଳ ପ୍ରକାଟି ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ଏକ ଅନୁନ୍ୟ ସୃଜନ ଏବଂ ମଣ୍ଡଳ ସମପ୍ରାୟ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଜନ୍ମ ଆଉ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଏହି ମଣ୍ଡଳ-ଜ୍ଞାନ କୁ ଗବେଷଣାର ବିଷୟ ଭାବରେ ଉଜ୍ଜୀବିତ କରି ଅବହେଳିତ ଲୁପ୍ତପ୍ରାୟ ପ୍ରକାଟିକୁ ଲୋକଲୋଚନକୁ ଆଣିବାର ଅଭିନବ ପ୍ରୟାସ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ଦେଶବିଦେଶରେ ସୁପରିଚିତ କରିଥିଲା । ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ଭାରତ ଗସ୍ତ ବିଷୟରେ ଜାଣି, ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦକୁ ଆମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କରିବାଟା ମୁଁ ହିଁ ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ରଖିଥିଲି । ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରେ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହେଉଥିବା ଏକ କନ୍‌ଫରେନ୍ସରେ ସେ ମୁଖ୍ୟ-ଅତିଥି ଭାବରେ ଯୋଗ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ଅଷ୍ଟ୍ରେଲିଆରୁ ଭାରତ ଆସୁଥିଲେ । କିଛି ବର୍ଷ ପୂର୍ବେ, ମୋର ଅଷ୍ଟ୍ରେଲିଆ ଗସ୍ତ ସମୟରେ, ଏକ ଭାରତୀୟ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଆୟୋଜିତ ରାତ୍ରିଭୋଜରେ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ସହ ପରିଚୟ ହେଇଥିଲା । ତତ୍‌ପରଘାତ୍ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ଆମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ରକ୍ଷା କରି ତାଙ୍କ ମଣ୍ଡଳ ସଂଗ୍ରହାଳୟ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଯାଇଥିଲି । ତାଙ୍କ ମତରେ ବେଙ୍ଗ ନିହାତି ପାରିବାରିକ ଗୃହପାଳିତ ପଶୁ, ବେଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କର ଭାବ ଅଛି, ଆବେଗ ଅଛି, ଅନୁଭୂତି ଅଛି । ଇତ୍ୟାପୂର୍ବ ମଣ୍ଡଳମାନଙ୍କର ଅବସ୍ଥିତି ବା ଉପସ୍ଥିତି ମୁଁ କେବେ ଅନୁଭବ କରି ନଥିଲି, ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ବା ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ ବିଷୟରେ ଭାବିବା ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠୁନଥିଲା । ସୀମିତ ସମୟରେ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ମୋତେ ମଣ୍ଡଳ-ଜ୍ଞାନ, ମଣ୍ଡଳ-ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଓ ମଣ୍ଡଳ-ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରରେ ମାଗଣା ରୁଜସନ୍ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ । ମୋ ସୁଯୋଗକୁ ସମୟର ଅଭାବ ଥିଲା, ତୁଳସିନ୍ କ୍ଲବ୍‌ର ଯବନିକା ପଡିଲା । ଲିଣ୍ଡା ସଂପର୍କରେ ଆସିବା ପରେ ମୋ ମନରେ ମଣ୍ଡଳ-ସମ୍ବେଦନା ଅଙ୍କୁରିତ ହେଲା । ଜାଣିଲି, ବେଙ୍ଗରତି ଏତେଟା କର୍କଶ ନୁହେଁ ଓ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ-ସଙ୍ଗୀତସମ ଅତିଶୟ ଶୃତିମଧୁର, କେବଳ ବୁଝିପାରିବା କଥା । ବେଙ୍ଗରତି ବି ଅନେକ ପ୍ରକାର, ଆର୍ତ୍ତରବ, କଳରବ ତଥା ମୈଥୁନରବ, କିଏ ଜାଣିଥିଲା ଏସବୁ । ଜାଣିଲି, ବେଙ୍ଗତିଆଁକୁ ନକଲ କରି କଂପ୍ୟୁଟର୍ ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ମାନେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଜଟିଳ-ଧନ୍ୟର ସମାଧାନର ବାଟ ପାଇପାରିଛନ୍ତି ଓ ଫ୍ରାକ୍-ଲିପିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଆଲଗରିଦମ୍ ସୃଜନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ବେଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କ ଜାତି, ପ୍ରକାଟି, ଉପଜାତି ଶୁଣି ହତବାକ୍ ହେଇଗଲି- କାଠବେଙ୍ଗ, ପାଣିବେଙ୍ଗ, ଗଛବେଙ୍ଗ, ଷଷ୍ଟବେଙ୍ଗ, ଚାଇଗର୍-ବେଙ୍ଗ, ତୁଷାର-ବେଙ୍ଗ, ତିଆଁ-ବେଙ୍ଗ, ଅଳସୁଆ-ବେଙ୍ଗ, ବିଷାକ୍ର-ବେଙ୍ଗ, ବ୍ରାହ୍ମଣୀ-ବେଙ୍ଗ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । ତୀନ ତଥା ଜାପାନରେ ମଣ୍ଡଳକୁ ସଫଳ-ଯାତ୍ରା ଓ ଶୁଭ-ପ୍ରତ୍ୟାବର୍ତ୍ତନର ଲକ୍ଷଣ ବୋଲି ଧରାଯାଏ । ବେଙ୍ଗ ବିବାହ କରିବା ଦ୍ୱାରା ଇନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦେବତା ସବୁଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ ବର୍ଷା କରାଇବେ ବୋଲି ଚାଷୀମାନଙ୍କ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ । ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଯେ, ଝୁପୁରୁଝୁପୁରୁ ବର୍ଷା ହେଲାବେଳକୁ ବେଙ୍ଗୁଲୀଟି ସାରୁଗଛ ତଳେ ତରୁଣ ବେଙ୍ଗ-କୁମାରଟିକୁ ବାହା ହୁଏ ଓ ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରରାଜାଙ୍କ ଢୋଲିଆମାନେ ଢୋଲ ବଜାନ୍ତି । ସ୍ୱଭାବକବି ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ମେହେର ବି ଲେଖିଗଲେ “ମଣ୍ଡଳ କୁମୁଦିନୀ ବଳା ନାଡରେ; ନ ବସୁ ତିଆଁ ମାରେ ତୁଣ୍ଡୁଡ ତରେ” । ଆମ ରାଜନେତାଗଣଙ୍କ ଦଳ ଅଦଳ-ବଦଳ ବି ବେଙ୍ଗ-ତିଆଁ ସଦୃଶ । କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀ ଅନୁସାରେ, ଅଗ୍ନିଦେବତାଙ୍କ ଅଭିଶାପ ଫଳତଃ ମଣ୍ଡଳର ଜିହ୍ୱା ନଷ୍ଟ ହେଇଯାଇଛି । ବେଙ୍ଗ ଜାତିକୁ ତଥା ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ଜ୍ଞାନକୁ ପ୍ରଶଂସା ନକରି ରହିପାରିଲିନାହିଁ । ଆମ ଇନ୍‌ଷ୍ଟିଚ୍ୟୁଟ୍‌ରେ କେହି ବି ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ମଣ୍ଡଳ-ପ୍ରଶଂସକ ଦଳରେ ଯୋଗଦାନ କରି ନପାରିବେ ବା ଏହିପ୍ରକାର ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା ସହ ଏକମତ ହେଇ ନ ପାରିବେ । ତଥାପି ମୋ ମତରେ ତାଙ୍କ ଆଗମନ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପଶୁ ନିଷ୍ପରତା ତଥା ମଣ୍ଡଳ ପ୍ରତି ବର୍ବରତା ଓ ନିର୍ଯ୍ୟାତନା ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ କିଛିଟି ଜନ ସଚେତନତା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବା ନିହାତି ଦରକାର ଥିଲା ।

ଲିଣ୍ଡାଯେ ଆମର ଅନୁରୋଧ ରକ୍ଷା କରି କିଛିଦିନ ନିମନ୍ତେ ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦ ଆସିବେ ତାହା ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁ ଆଶା କରିନଥିଲେ । ଇ-ମେଲ୍ ପାଇ ଅତିଥି ଅଭ୍ୟର୍ଥନା ଆୟୋଜନରେ ଲାଗିଗଲେ । କନିଷ୍ଠ ସହକର୍ମୀ ବନଶ୍ରୀ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଯାଉଥିଲେ, ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ପାଠକ୍ରରେ ଭାଗନେବା ନିମନ୍ତେ । ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁ ବନଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ବିଶେଷ ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲେ ଯେ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରେ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ସହ ସାକ୍ଷାତ କରି, ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦ ଗସ୍ତର

ସୁବିଧା-ଅସୁବିଧା ବିଷୟରେ ଅବଗତ କରାଇବା ପାଇଁ । ବନଶ୍ରୀ ଆନନ୍ଦରେ ଗଦଗଦ । ଇଣ୍ଟରନେଟ୍‌ରେ ଖୋଜି, ଜଣେ ମହିଳା ଗବେଷିକା ବିଶ୍ୱବିଖ୍ୟାତ ହେଇପାରିଛନ୍ତି ଜାଣି, ଅତିଶୟ ଗର୍ବିତ ମନେ କଲେ । ଯଦିଓ ବନଶ୍ରୀ କସ୍ମିନ-କାଲେ ମଣ୍ଡୁକ-ପ୍ରଶଂସକ ହେଇପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ, ଅବଚେତନାରେ ସେ ସ୍ତାସନାବ୍ୟୟ । ଲିଣ୍ଡା-ଗଣ୍ଡର ସମସ୍ତ ଆୟୋଜନ ମନେ ମନେ ନିଜ ହାତକୁ ନେଲେ, ପ୍ରଥମତଃ ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁ ଜଣେ ମହିଳାଅତିଥିଙ୍କ କ'ଣ ବା' ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା କରିବେ, ତା'ଛଡା ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ସହ ବନ୍ଧୁତାର ସୁଯୋଗ ବି ହାତଛତା କରିବା କଥା ନୁହେଁ । ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ବନଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଅଭିପ୍ରାୟ ବୁଝି ପାରି ନ ଥିଲେ, ବିଶ୍ୱବିଖ୍ୟାତ ଗବେଷକଙ୍କ ସକ୍ୱାରରେ ଜଣେ ସହକାରି-ସହକର୍ମୀଙ୍କ ଉତ୍ସୁକତା ଦେଖି ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେବାର କିଛି କାରଣ ନ ଥିଲା ।

ବନଶ୍ରୀ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ପରେ ପାଠକକୁ ଆୟୋଜକଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରି ପ୍ରଥମ ସେସନ୍‌ରେ ପେପର୍-ପ୍ରେଜେଣ୍ଟେସନ୍ କାମ ସାରିଦେଲେ ଓ ଦ୍ୱୀତିୟ ଦିନ ସିଧା ଗଲେ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ କନ୍ଫରେନ୍ସ୍ ସ୍ଥାନକୁ । ସମୟ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଗଲେ, ଉଦ୍‌ଘାଟନ ସମାରୋହ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେଇନଥିଲା, ମୁଖ୍ୟ-ଅତିଥି ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଆଗଧାଡ଼ିରେ ବସିଥିଲେ, ତାଙ୍କୁ ମଞ୍ଚ-ଉପରକୁ ଡକା ହେବାର ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତି ଚାଲିଥିଲା । ଖାଲି ଥିବା ପାଖ ସିଟ୍‌ରେ ବନଶ୍ରୀ ସିଧା ଯାଇ ବସିପଡ଼ିଲେ, ସମୟ ନଷ୍ଟ ନକରି ସିଧା ସ୍ୱ-ପରିଚୟ ଔପଚାରିକତା ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଦେଲେ । ବନଶ୍ରୀ ସହ ପରିଚୟ ହେଇ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଖୁସି ହେଲେ, ଖୋଲା ଲ୍ୟାପ୍‌ଟପ୍‌କୁ ତଳେ ରଖି ଦେଇ ବନଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ କୁଣ୍ଠେଇ ପକାଇଲେ-“ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦ ଯିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିଲା, ମୁଁ ଅତିଶୟ ରଣୀ, ବହୁତ ଦିନରୁ ଭାରୁଥିଲି କିନ୍ତୁ କେବେ ସୁବିଧା ହେଇନଥିଲା” । ବନଶ୍ରୀ ଦେଖିଲେ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ହସକୁରା ମୁଖମଣ୍ଡଳରେ ଉଲ୍ଲାସର ଝଲକ । ସମୟ ନଷ୍ଟ ନକରି ନିଜ ସ୍ପାର୍ଟଫୋନ୍‌ରେ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ସହ ନିଜର ଏକ ସେଲ୍‌ଫି ନେଲେ । ପରମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଆୟୋଜକଗଣ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କୁ ଘେରିଗଲେ, ବନଶ୍ରୀ ନିରିଖେଇ ଦେଖୁଥିଲେ ସୁଗଠିତ ସୁଜଳ ସୁଶ୍ରୀ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କୁ । ଭାବଭଙ୍ଗୀରେ ସମ୍ପ୍ରାନ୍ତ, ମୁଖମଣ୍ଡଳଟି ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସରେ ତେଜୋଦୀପ୍ତ, କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା ଶୈଳୀରେ ବ୍ୟବସାୟିକତା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ତୁଳନାରେ ବନଶ୍ରୀ ଅପେକ୍ଷାକୃତ ଅଧିକ ସଜ୍ଜିତା ଦେଖାଯାଉଥିଲେ । ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ଚାରିପଟେ ପୁରୁଷ ପ୍ରଶଂସକ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖି, ବନଶ୍ରୀ ମନରେ ପରିଚାରକ-ଗହଣରେ-ଏକ-ସାମ୍ରାଜ୍ୟୀ ପ୍ରତୀତ ମନେହେଉଥିଲେ ଲିଣ୍ଡା । ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ଡାହାଣିର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିତ୍ୱ ଆଗରେ ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ ଦୟନୀୟ ବାମନ ଭଳି ମନେ ହେଉଥିଲେ । ସତକୁ ସତ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ଜ୍ଞାନ ଆଗରେ କନ୍ଫରେନ୍ସ୍‌କୁ ଆସିଥିବା ଅଧିକାଂଶ ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ବାମନ ସଦୃଶ କିନ୍ତୁ ବନଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ଜ୍ଞାନର ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟଠାରୁ ଲିଙ୍ଗର ପାର୍ଥକ୍ୟ ଅଧିକ ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଥିଲା । ସେଦିନ ଆଉ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳିଲା ନାହିଁ । ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କ ବକ୍ତୃତା ସମୟରେ, ବନଶ୍ରୀ ବାମନ-ଗହଣରେ- ଲିଣ୍ଡା, ମୁଖ୍ୟ-ଅତିଥି- ଲିଣ୍ଡା, ବନଶ୍ରୀ-ସହ- ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି ଚାରିପାଞ୍ଚଟି ଫଟୋ ଫେସ୍‌ବୁକ୍‌ରେ ଅପ୍‌ଲୋଡ୍ କରିବାରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତରହିଲେ ଓ କ୍ଷଣକ ଭିତରେ ବହୁ ପ୍ରଶଂସକ (ମାନେ ଫେସ୍‌ବୁକ୍-ବନ୍ଧୁଗଣ) ବନଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ, ପ୍ରସାଧନ, ପିନ୍ଧିଥିବା ପୋଷାକ ତଥା ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛଦପଟରେ ଥିବା ଲ୍ୟାପ୍‌ଟପ୍‌ରେ ଦିଶୁଥିବା ବେଙ୍ଗର ରଙ୍ଗ ଉପରେ ଚିତ୍ତଗଣୀ କରିବା ଆରମ୍ଭ କଲେ । ଅପରିଚିତ କିନ୍ତୁ ଘନିଷ୍ଠ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଭଙ୍ଗାଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପୋଷ୍ଟ କଲେ “ଦାରୁଊଊ...ଊଊଊ”, ସାନଭଉଣୀ ରାଜଶ୍ରୀ କହିଲା, “ନାନୀ, ଏ କାନୁଲଟି କେବେ? ବଢ଼ିଆ ହେଇଛି” ।

ଅତି ସନ୍ତୋଷରେ ବନଶ୍ରୀ ଫେରିଆସିଲେ ଓ ତା'ପରଦିନ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଏଆର୍‌ପୋର୍ଟକୁ ଆଗୁଆ ଚାଲି ଆସିଲେ, ଲିଣ୍ଡା ପାଖସିଟ୍‌ରେ ବସିବା ସୁଯୋଗ ନେବା ନିମନ୍ତେ, କିନ୍ତୁ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଦିନକ ପରେ ଆସିବା ଯୋଜନା କରିଥିଲେ ।

ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁ ସମସ୍ତ ଆୟୋଜନ କରିସାରିଥିଲେ, ଏଆର୍‌ପୋର୍ଟରେ ଏକ ଛାତ୍ରକୁ ପ୍ଲାକାର୍ଡ୍ ଧରି ଠିଆକରାଇଥିଲେ, ଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସିର ବନ୍ଦୋବସ୍ତ ଥିଲା, ଗେଷ୍ଟହାଉସରେ ଭି.ଆଇ.ପି ସୁଇଚ୍ ବି ଠିକ୍ ହେଇଥିଲା । ବିଭାଗର ଦୁଇଜଣ ଛାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିଥିଲେ ଯେ ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କୁ ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦର ସବୁ ଦେଖିବା ଜାଗା ବୁଲାଇ ଆଣିବାକୁ । “ନ'ଟା ସୁଦ୍ଧା ବାହାରିଯିବ, ପ୍ରଥମେ ଯିବ ନେକ୍‌ଲେସ୍ ରୋଡ୍ ଓ ହୁସେନ୍ ସାଗର, ହେବ ଯଦି ବୋର୍ ନେଇ ବୁଦ୍ଧି ମୂର୍ଖି ପାଖକୁ ଯିବ, ତାପରେ ବିର୍ଲା-ମନ୍ଦିର । ଲିଣ୍ଡା ମନ୍ଦିର ଭିତରକୁ ନଯାଇପାରନ୍ତି, କିନ୍ତୁ ନୌବତ-ପାହାଡ଼ ଉପରୁ ସହରର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଅତି ମନୋରମ । ବିର୍ଲା-ମନ୍ଦିରରୁ ସିଧା ଯିବ ସଲାର୍‌ଜକ୍, ୧୨ଟା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ପହଞ୍ଚିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବ । ତା'ପରେ ଯିବ ଚାର୍‌ମିନାର୍, ଫେରିଲାବେଳକୁ ତାଜମହଲରେ ଖାଇବ, ଘଣ୍ଟେ ମାର୍କେଟିଙ୍ଗ୍, ମଙ୍ଗଳାୟତ୍ରେ ସେ ପଲ୍ କିଣିବେ, କାଉଣ୍ଟର୍‌ରେ ମୋ ନାଁ କହିବ, ଟେନ ପର୍ସେଣ୍ଟ ଡିସ୍କାଉଣ୍ଟ ମିଳିବ । ୪ଟାସୁଦ୍ଧା କୁଲି-କୁତବ-ଶାହି-ଟୋମ୍ ଓ ତା'ପରେ ଗୋଲକୋଣ୍ଡା । ଶେଷକୁ ଲାଇଟ୍-ଏଣ୍ଡ-ସାଉଣ୍ଡ୍ ଦେଖି ଚାଲି ଆସିବ ସିଧା ଆମ ଘରକୁ । ତିନି ମିଣିଟ୍ ନେବା ।”

ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁ ତାରିଦ୍ କରି କହିଲେ, “ଦେଖ, ଯେମିତିବି ହେଉ, ୧୨ଟା ଆଗରୁ ମ୍ୟୁଜିୟମରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଯିବ” । ଛାତ୍ରୀଟି ପଚାରିଲା, “କିଛି ବିଶେଷ କାରଣ କି?”

“ସଲାର୍‌ଜଙ୍ଗ-ମ୍ୟୁଜିୟମର ବିଖ୍ୟାତ ମ୍ୟୁଜିକାଲ୍-ଘଡ଼ି ବିଷୟରେ ଜାଣି ନାହିଁ, ଏକ ଘଡ଼ି-ରକ୍ଷକ ପ୍ରତି ଘଣ୍ଟାରେ ଘେରା ଭିତରୁ ଆବିର୍ଭାବ ହୁଏ, ସମୟାନୁସାରେ ସେତିକି ଥର ଘଣ୍ଟା ବାଡ଼ାଏ ଓ ପୁଣି ଭିତରକୁ ଚାଲିଯାଏ । ଘଡ଼ି-ରକ୍ଷକ ଆକାରଟି ଅତି କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ଓ କେବଳ ୧୨ଟା ବେଳେ ସର୍ବାଧିକ ସମୟ ବାହାରେ ରହେ ଓ ଭଲକରି ଦେଖି ହୁଏ । ଶହଶହ ବର୍ଷ ହେଲାଣି ଏଇ ଘଡ଼ିଟି ଏଇମିତି ଚାଲୁଛି, ମ୍ୟୁଜିୟମର ଏକ ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଆକର୍ଷଣ । “

ପରଦିନ ଅଧିକ ଆସିଲା ବେଳେ ଦେଖିଲେ ଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସିଟି ଅଧିକ ସାମ୍ନାରେ ଠିଆ ହେଇଥାଏ । ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଓ ଛାତ୍ରୀ ଦି'ଜଣ ବନଶ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ରୁମ୍‌ରୁ ହରବରରେ ବାହାରିଗଲେ ।

ସଂଧ୍ୟାରେ ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁ ନିକଟବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଏକ ଜଂବୁରେ ତିନର ଆୟୋଜନ କରିଥିଲେ । ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଗେଷ୍ଟହାଉସରୁ ଫ୍ରେସ୍ ହେଇ, ସମ୍ବଲପୁରୀ ସାଲୁଆର-କମିଜ ପିନ୍ଧି ଆସିଲେ । ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରୁ କିଣାହେଇଥିଲା । “ଆଉ ଆଜିର ସାଇଟ୍-ସିଇଜ୍ କେମିତି ହେଲା । ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦ ସହର କେମିତି ଲାଗିଲା ?” ଲିଣ୍ଡାଙ୍କୁ ପଚାରିଲି । “ଓଃ, ସୁପର, ମୁଁ ତ ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦ ବିଷୟରେ ଆଗରୁ ଜାଣିଥିଲି, ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ଆସିବା ଇଚ୍ଛା ଥିଲେ ବି ଆସିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମିଳି ନ ଥିଲା, ମୁଁ ପୁରୀପୁରୀ ଉପଭୋଗ କଲି, ତା ଛଡ଼ା ଏଇ ପିଲାଦି'ଟା ଖୁଣ୍ଟୁଲ କମ୍ପାନି, ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦର ଚାଟ ଭେରି ଯମି” କହୁ କହୁ ଜିଉଟାକୁ ବାହାରକରି କିଛି ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଖଟାରସ ଲାଗିଥିବା ଓଠକୁ ଚାଟି ପକାଇଲେ । ମୁଁ ପଚାରିଲି “ମ୍ୟୁଜିୟମରେ କ'ଣ ସବୁ ଦେଖିଲେ, ରେବେକା ତ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଭଲ ଲାଗିଥିବ ।” ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବା ଆଗରୁ ଛାତ୍ରୀଟିଏ କହିଲା, “ନାହିଁ ସାର୍, ମ୍ୟୁଜିୟମରେ ବିଶେଷ କିଛି ଦେଖିହେଲା ନାହିଁ । ଆର୍ଟ ଗ୍ୟାଲେରି ଦେଖି ଦେଖି ମ୍ୟୁଜିୟମ ବନ୍ଦ ହେଇଗଲା” । ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହେଲେ, ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ରତା ଉଚ୍ଚ ସ୍ତରରେ ପଚାରିଲେ, “କ'ଣ, ତୁମେମାନେ କେତେବେଳେ ମ୍ୟୁଜିୟମରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲ କି? ୧୨ଟା ସୁଦ୍ଧା ପହଞ୍ଚିପାରିଲ କି ନାହିଁ” । ଛାତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କ କଥାରୁ ଯାହା ଜଣା ପଡ଼ିଲା, ସକାଳୁ ବାହାରିବା ଆଗରୁ ବନଶ୍ରୀ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଡାକି, ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁ ଦେଇଥିବା ଟୁର୍-ପ୍ରୋଗ୍ରାମଟିକୁ ନାକଟ କରି ଏକ ଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ଲାନ ଦେଇଥିଲେ । “ଏଠୁ ଫାର୍ଷ୍ଟ ଯିବ ମଙ୍ଗଳରାୟ ପର୍ଲ ଦୋକାନକୁ, ତାପରେ ଯିବ କୋଟି, ସାଉଥ୍-ସିନ୍ଦର ଡ୍ରେସର ଭଲ କଲେକ୍ସନ୍ ଆସିଛି, କୋଟିରୁ ଯିବ ଚାରମାନାର, ତୁଟି ବଜାରରେ ଲିଣ୍ଡା ବହୁତ ଏଞ୍ଜୟ କରିବେ । ଚାରମାନାର ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ କୋଟିରେ ଚାଟ ଖାଇବା ଭୁଲିବ ନାହିଁ । ଚାରମାନାରୁ ଫେରିଲାବାଟରେ ମ୍ୟୁଜିୟମ ଓ ତାପରେ ସିଧା ଗୋଲକୋଣ୍ଡା” । ବିଚାରା ପିଲାଦି'ଟା ଆଜ୍ଞାବହ, ମ୍ୟାଡାମ୍‌ଙ୍କ ଆଦେଶ ଶିରୋଧାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ।

ଝିଅଟି କିନ୍ତୁ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ଥିଲା, “ମ୍ୟାଡାମ୍ ନିଜ ପାଇଁ ତ କିଛି କିଣିଲେ ନାହିଁ, ଆମ ଦି'ଜଣ ପାଇଁ ସୁନ୍ଦର ଡ୍ରେସ୍ କିଣି ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି” । ବ୍ରଜନାଥବାବୁ ମୁଖମଣ୍ଡଳରେ ନିରାଶଭାବ ପରିଷ୍କାର ଜଣାପଡୁଥିଲା । ମନେ ମନେ ବିସ୍ମିତ, ବନଶ୍ରୀର ଏତେଟା ହସ୍ତକ୍ଷେପ କରିବା କଣ ଦରକାର ଥିଲା । ତିନର ସମୟରେ କିଛିଟା ଅନ୍ୟମନସ୍କ ଜଣାପଡୁଥିଲେ ।

ମୁଁ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ ପଚାରିଲି, “କ'ଣ ହେଲା, ଅପସେଟ ଦିଶୁଛି” ।

“ବନଶ୍ରୀଟା ଏତେ ଉତ୍ସାହ କେବେଠୁ ହେଲା? ସାଧାରଣତଃ ତୁମ୍ଭର ପିଲାଟି, ଆଜି ତାକୁ କ'ଣ ହେଇଥିଲା । ତାକୁ ଯାହା କାମ ଦିଆ ହେଇଥିଲା, ଭଲରେ ତ କଲା, ଅନ୍ୟ କାମ ବିଚିତ୍ରାଭାବ କଣ ଦରକାର” । “ବ୍ରଜବାବୁ, ବୁଝିପାରିଲ ନାହିଁ ବୋଧହୁଏ, ଏଇଟା ହିଁ ସଶକ୍ତିକରଣ, ବନଶ୍ରୀ ମନରେ ଯେତେ କମ୍ପ୍ଲେକ୍ସ ଥିଲା ଲିଣ୍ଡାକୁ ଦେଖି ସବୁ ଉଭେଇଗଲା । ସେ ବୁଝିପାରିଲେ, ଯଦି ଲିଣ୍ଡା ଏତେ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଖ୍ୟାତ ହେଇ ପାରନ୍ତି, ସେ ବି କିଛି କରିପାରିବେ । କ୍ଷଣକ ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଆମେ ସବୁ ବାମନ ମନେ ହେଲେ” ।

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ପିତା ଉଚ୍ଚ ଦେବବ୍ରତ

ପିତା ସୁଖ ଶୀରୋଧାର୍ଯ୍ୟ

ଆଜୀବନ ବ୍ରହ୍ମଚାରୀ

ତଥାପି ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ଜଳପାନ ପାଇଁ

କୁଟିଳ ଧୀବରର ସର୍ତ୍ତରେ

ନାହିଁ ଆପତ୍ତି ବା ଅବଶୋଷ

ସିଂହାସନ ପାଇଁ ନାହିଁ ଆକାଂକ୍ଷା

ତଥାପି ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ଜଳପାନ ପାଇଁ

ଅଦ୍ୟତୀୟ ଯୋଦ୍ଧା

ଅମ୍ଭକୁ ଆଶକ୍ତି ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ ବିଜୟୀ
ହୋଇ

କିନ୍ତୁ ଅମ୍ଭଙ୍କ ଆଶକ୍ତି ଅନ୍ୟ ଠାରେ

ତଥାପି ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ଜଳପାନ ପାଇଁ

ଅମ୍ଭ ଝରଣ୍ଡ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଭୃଗୁପତିଂକ
ଠାରେ

କ୍ଷତ୍ରୀୟ ନିଧନ ଯାର ବ୍ରତ

ତାକୁ ପରାସ୍ତ କର ଯୁଦ୍ଧରେ

ତଥାପି ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ଜଳପାନ ପାଇଁ

ବିଧିର ବିଧାନ

କପାଳ ଲେଖନ

ଅମଳିନ ପୁଲ ପାଂଦ୍ରା ଗ୍ରାହକ

ତଥାପି ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ଜଳପାନ ପାଇଁ

ପୁନର୍ଜନ୍ମ ଓ ପ୍ରତିଶୋଧ

କୁମାରୀ ଜୀବନର ଶେଷ ଆଶା

ଆତ୍ମାହୁତୀ ବିନା ଲକ୍ଷ୍ ଅସଂଭବ

ତଥାପି ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ଜଳପାନ ପାଇଁ

ଶିଖଣ୍ଡିର ଜନ୍ମ

ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ପୂରଣ ପାଇଁ

ନପୁଂସକ ସହ ଯୁଦ୍ଧ ନୀତି ବିରୁଦ୍ଧ

ଶିଖଣ୍ଡି ନିମିତ୍ତ ମାତ୍ର

ସଅବ୍ୟସାଚୀର ଶର ହୁଏ

ମରଣାନ୍ତକ ଶର ସଯ୍ୟା

ତଥାପି ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ଜଳପାନ ପାଇଁ

ଇକ୍ଷାମୁଦ୍ରା ବର

ପ୍ରତିଞ୍ଜର ଜ୍ଞାନ ଉଦାହରଣ

ଉତ୍ତରାୟଣ ପାଇଁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା

ତଥାପି ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷା ଜଳପାନ ପାଇଁ

ତୃଷା ନିବାରଣ ହୁଏ

ପାର୍ଥର ଶର ସଂଯୋଜନାରେ

ମା ଗଂଗା ତୃଷାରୁ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ମୁକ୍ତି

ପ୍ରତୀକ୍ଷାରୁ ମିଳେ ନିବୃତ୍ତି

ନିଜ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ନିଜ ପରିଚୟ

ଶ୍ଵେତପଦ୍ମା ଦାଶ, ସାନ୍ ହୋଜେ, କାଲିଫର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆ

ଏ ଜନ୍ମରେ କରିଦିଅ ମତେ ନିଜ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ନିଜ ପରିଚୟ
ଏ ମନ, ଏ ଆତ୍ମା ମୋର ହେଲାଣି ଅଥୟ,
କରିପାରିବିନି ଅପେକ୍ଷା ଜନ୍ମ ଜନ୍ମାନ୍ତର
କରି ଦିଅ ମତେ ନିଜ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ନିଜ ପରିଚୟ ।

ଶକ୍ତି ଯଦି ଦେଲ ବୁଝିବାକୁ ମୁଁ ଚାଲିଛି ବିପଥ ଦିଗରେ
ଦୟାକରି ତେବେ କରିଦିଅ ମନପ୍ରାଣ ଏକାନ୍ତ ତୁମର,
ଏ ମନ ଏ ଆତ୍ମା ମୋର ହେଲାଣି ଅଥୟ
କରିପାରିବିନି ପ୍ରତିକ୍ଷା ମୁଁ ଜନ୍ମ ଜନ୍ମାନ୍ତର ।

ସନ୍ତାପ ଲୁହରେ ଧୋଇଦିଅ ମୋ ମନର ଅନ୍ଧାର କାଳିମା
ତୁମରି ସ୍ଵର୍ଣ୍ଣରେ ପୋଛିଦିଅ ଅଜ୍ଞାନ ଗାରିମା,
ଦେଖିପାରେ ମୋ ଭିତରେ ତୁମର ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ଵଳ ପ୍ରତୀମା
ଆତ୍ମା ହେଲାଣି ଅଥୟ, କରିଦିଅ ନିଜ ସଙ୍ଗେ ନିଜ ପରିଚୟ ।

ତୁମଠାରୁ ପୃଥକ୍ ଏ ଦେହ ମନ ମୋର ହଜିଯାଉ ତୁମରି ଭିତରେ
ଏ ଜନ୍ମରେ ପାଇପାରେ ମୁଁ ତୁମକୁ ମୋ ଅନ୍ତରରେ,
ଦେଖିପାରେ ନିରାକାର ଅସୀମ ଆନନ୍ଦ ସ୍ଵରୂପ ମୋହର
ତୁଟିବ ସଂଶୟ, ଏ ଜନ୍ମରେ ମିଳିଯିବ ନିଜ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ନିଜ ପରିଚୟ ।

ଗୋଧୂଳି

ଲେଖିକା - ସୀମା ମିଶ୍ର

ଗୋଧୂଳିର ଏକ ନରମ ଆଲୁଅ
ଆଉଥରେ ସାଥୀ ବିତାଇବା ଏଇ ନୀଳ ଦରିଆର କୂଳରେ
ହୃଦିତ କାନ୍ତି ସଞ୍ଜ ସମୀରେ ଆଉ କିବା ଥରେ
ଗାଇବା କବିତା ଅସରନ୍ତି ଏଇ ଜୀବନର ଚଳାପଥରେ ।

ସରିତ ଯେ ସବୁ ହିସାବ ନିକାଶ
କାହିଁକି ବା ଆଉ ଖୋଜିବା ମାଣିକ୍ୟ ହୀରା ହର୍ମ୍ୟର ସପନ
ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହସ୍ତୁଚି ରଙ୍ଗେ ଭିଜାଏ ସଲଜେ ଅଦୂର ଆକାଶେ
ଗୋଧୂଳି ବେଳାରେ କାହିଁପାଇଁ ଅଜି ଶତମୁକ୍ତିର ଆହ୍ୱାନ ।

ଶୀତଳ ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନା ଛୁଇଁଛି ଧରାରେ
ଆକାଶ ଭିଜିତ ଚରଳ ରୂପାର ପାଣିରେ
ଜୀବନ ସମୂହା ସରାଗେ ଲୋଟିଛି, ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ବୁଣିତ
ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନାଭିଜା ଏ ସମୟ କ୍ଷଣିକ ଜାଣିରେ ।

ଚାଲିବେ କେତେ ଯେ ନିଦାୟ ଧାସରେ
ହାରିବେ କାନ୍ତି ଭୁଲିବେ ଦୁନିଆ ନୀଳ ଦରିଆର କୂଳରେ
ଅଜଣା ପଥକ ଆଉଁସି ଦେଇଛି ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ଭରିତ
ପୋଛିଦେଇ ସ୍ୱେଦ ମୁହଁନା ତୋଳି ଗାଇଛି ଯାତ୍ରା ପଥରେ ।

ପ୍ରତି ପତ୍ରର ମର୍ମର ସାଥେ କବିତାର ସୁର
ତନ୍ଦ୍ରାହରା ଏ ଶିଶିର ପଖଳା ରଜନୀ
ଅସରନ୍ତି ଏଇ ପଥରେ ସାଥରେ
ଅଶ୍ରୁ ଉଛୁଳା କେତେ ଯେ ଅଭୁଲା କାହାଣୀ ।

କେତେ ଯେ ଝଞ୍ଜ ଆଗୁଳିଛି ପଥ
ଝରିତ ରୂପର ହୃଦୟେ ବହିବେ ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖର କାହାଣୀ
ଫଗୁଣ ସଞ୍ଜରେ ବକୂଳ ବନରେ ହଜିଛି ସମୀର
ଝଡ଼ ଅକ୍ଷାରେ କଅଁଳ ସଞ୍ଜ ମାଗିତ ଆମକୁ ମେଲାଇ ।

କେତେ କଳ୍ପନା ମଉଳିଛି ସିନା ଆଷାଢ଼ର ମେଘ ଅକ୍ଷାରେ
ତଥାପି ଜୀବନ ସରାଗେ ଲୋଟିଛି ଫୁଲ ସଞ୍ଜର ବେଳାରେ
ସବୁକିଛି ଭୁଲି ଆଜି ଯାହା ଖାଲି ନୀଳ ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନାରେ ଭିଜିବା
ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ସାଉଁଟି ସରିତାର ସମ ସାଗର ବୁକୁରେ ହଜିବା ।

ନୀଳଜନ୍ମ

ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସୁକାନ୍ତି ମହାନ୍ତି

ଧାଉଁ ଥିଲା ଗାଡ଼ି ଆମ ଅଜଣା ସହରେ
କେତେ ନଦୀ ପାହାଡ଼ ଯେ ରହିଲା ପଛରେ,

ଜନ୍ମ ସାଥେ ଦେଖା ହେଲା ପୁର୍ନମୀ ତିଥିରେ
ନିନ୍ଦୁ ଜର୍ସି ସହରର ପୁର୍ବ ଆକାଶରେ

ଝଲମଲ ଦିଶୁଥିଲା ମନଲୋଭା ରୁପାଜନ୍ମ
ନୁଆ ଜନ୍ମ ପରି ଦିଶୁଥିଲା ଛନ ଛନ

ପଚାରିଲି ଜନ୍ମ ତମେ ସତରେ ଆସିଛ ?
ପୃଥିବୀର ସବୁ ଦେଶେ ଜୋଛନା ବାଣ୍ଟୁଛ ?

ହସି ହସି ସିଏ ମୋତେ ପାଖକୁ ଡାକିଲା
ମୋତେ ତମେ ଚିହ୍ନିଲକି ନାହିଁ ପଚାରିଲା

ନୀଳଜନ୍ମ ନାମେ ଆଜି ହେଲି ରୁପାୟିତ
ଲୋକ ମୁଖେ ଶୁଣାଯାଏ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ସମ୍ମତ

ସହରର ଇଲାକାରେ ବତୀ ସବୁ ଡ଼କି ମାରୁଥିଲେ
ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରାଲୋକେ ଦେଖୁ ସତେ ଲାଜେ ଝାଉଁଳିଲେ

ନାହିଁ ଏଠି ଚକ୍ରବାକ କୁମୁଦର ଦେଖା
କାହା ପାଇଁ ଉଜାଗର ? କାହାକୁ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ?

ଫେରିଯାଅ ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରମା ଅଭିମାନ କର ନାହିଁ
କୁମୁଦ ବାନ୍ଧବୀ ତବ ରହିଛି ଅନାଇ

ସ୍ମଦେଶେ ଫେରିବି ମୁଁ ଦେଖାହବ ତୁମରି ସାଥରେ
କୁମୁଦିନୀ ହସୁଥିବ ପୁର୍ନମୀ ତିଥିରେ ।।

କାଳି ପରି ଲାଗୁଟି

ଅନାଦି ନାୟକ, Maryland

(ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ଆଜି କାଳି ଆମେରିକାକୁ ଅନେକ ଲୋକ ଆସିଲେଣି ଓ ଆସୁଛନ୍ତି / ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ, ଚାକିରୀ କରିବାକୁ ଓ ବୁଲିବାକୁ ଆସିଥିବା ବନ୍ଧୁ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକ ବୋଲି ନିଜ ଭିତରେ ଗର୍ବ ଆସେ / କୌତୁହଳ ବି ଆସେ / ଏମାନେ ତ ବେଶ୍ ହଜରେ ଆସିଛନ୍ତି / ମାତ୍ର ଏଠିକି ଆସିବା ପାଇଁ କେତେ ଘାଟରେ ପାଣି ପିଇିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା - ପଚାଶ ବର୍ଷ ତଳର ସେ କଥା ଗୁଡ଼ାକ ଆଖି ଆଗରେ ନାଚି ଯାଏ / ସେ ସବୁ କଥାକୁ ତ ଏକା ବେଳକେ କହି ହେବ ନାହିଁ / ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବାକୁ ମୋ ଜୀବନରେ କ୍ଷେତ୍ର କେମିତି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେଲା ସେଥିରୁ କେତୋଟି ଘଟଣାର ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ ତଳେ ଦେଲି - ଲେଖକ)

ଛୋଟିଆ ଜାଗା ହେଲେ କଅଣ ହେବ ବଡ଼ବିଲରେ କିଛି ନା କିଛି ଗୋଳମାଳ ସବୁବେଳେ ଚାଲିଥାଏ /କେତେବେଳେ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନେ ଧର୍ମଘଟ କଲେଣି ତ କେତେବେଳେ କେଉଁ ଟ୍ରକ ଡ୍ରାଇଭର କେଉଁ ଆଦିବାସୀ ମହିଳା କି ଝିଅକୁ ଗୁପ୍ତରେ ଚାଣି ନେଲାଣି / କେତେବେଳେ ଭାଟିବାଲା ସହିତ ପାଖଲୋକଙ୍କର ଝଗଡ଼ା ତ ଆଉ କେତେବେଳେ ମାଲିକଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ଶ୍ରମିକ ସଙ୍ଗଠକଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ନିସ୍ତୁକ ମାତ /ମୁଁ ସବୁ ତରଫରୁ ଖବର ନେଇ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ରଖି ଥାଏ /ସର୍ବୋଦୟ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନର କର୍ମୀ ଭାବରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ମିଶିବା ଥାଏ ମୋର କାମ /ଏଣୁ ଯିଏ ଯେତେ ଗାଳି ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ ନା କାହିଁକି ମୋର ସେଥିପ୍ରତି ନିନ୍ଦା ନଥାଏ /

ବଡ଼ବିଲରେ ସବୁ ରକମର ଲୋକଙ୍କର ଜମାଟ /ଶ୍ରମିକ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନର କମ୍ୟୁନିଷ୍ଟ ନେତା ଖଣି ମାଲିକଙ୍କ ସହିତ ମିଶନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ / କଂଗ୍ରେସ ଦଳର ଶ୍ରମିକ ନେତା ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ରାଜନୀତିରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ଥାଆନ୍ତି /ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପ୍ରଦେଶର ଓ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଭାଷା ଭାଷୀ ଲୋକେ ଏକା ଜାଗାରେ ରହୁ ଥିବାରୁ କିଏ କେତେବେଳେ କାହା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ମିଶି ଥାଏ ବା ମିଶୁଥାଏ କହିବା ମୁସ୍ଲିଲ /

ବାହାରୁ ଆସି ଲୋକମାନେ ଏଠି ପେଟ ପାଟଣା ପାଇଁ ରହି ଥିବାରୁ ଯେଉଁ ଆଡୁ ଦୁଇ ପଇସା ମିଳିଲା ସେହି ଆଡକୁ ଲୋକମାନେ ମୁହାଁଇଥିବା ଦିଶେ / କାଠଗୋଲାର ମାଲିକ, ଖଣି ସବୁର ମ୍ୟାନେଜର ମାନେ ନିରାପତ୍ତା ପାଇଁ ନିଜ ହାତରେ କିଛି ଲୋକ ରଖି ଥାଆନ୍ତି ଯାହାଙ୍କର କାମ ହେଲା କଥା ମାନୁ ନଥିବା ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ମାତ କିମ୍ବା ଧମକ ଦେଇ ବାଟକୁ ଆଣିବା /ମାଲିକ ଓ ମ୍ୟାନେଜରମାନେ ଯୋବ ଧଉଳିଆ ଭଦ୍ରଲୋକ ହେଲେ କଅଣ ହେବ, ମୁଲିଆ ମକୁରିଆଙ୍କୁ ଜବତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଏଭଳି ବାଟ ଧରି ଥାଆନ୍ତି /ଏଣୁ ବଡ଼ବିଲର ବାତାବରଣ ସବୁବେଳେ ଗରମ ରହିଥାଏ /କିଏ କେତେବେଳେ କାହାର ବିରୋଧରେ ଠିଆ ହୁଏ କହିବା ମୁସ୍ଲିଲ / ଯେତେବେଳେ ନିଜ ସ୍ଵାର୍ଥ ଉପରେ ବାଧା ଆସିଲା ସେତେବେଳେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ବା ଗୋଷ୍ଠି ଚିହ୍ନିକି ଉଠନ୍ତି /ବିହାରୀ, ପଞ୍ଜାବୀ, ଗୁଜୁରାଟୀ, ମାରାଠୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ଅଲଗା ଅଲଗା ସଂସ୍ଥା ଥାଏ / ମାତ୍ର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ମାନେ ଠାକୁରପୂଜା, ପାଲା ଇତ୍ୟାଦି କଲେ ବି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ମେଳ ରୁଳ ଥାଏନା /ପରସ୍ପର ବିରୋଧୀ ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର କରି ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଗୋଷ୍ଠି

ସୃଷ୍ଟି ହୋଇଥାଏ / ଅବଶ୍ୟ କିଏ କେଉଁ ଗୋଷ୍ଠିର ଲୋକ ତାହା ଜାଣିବା ପାଇଁ ମୋତେ ସମୟ ଲାଗିଲା / ମାତ୍ର
 ମୁଁ ଯେ କୌଣସି ଗୋଷ୍ଠି ସହିତ ସଂପୃକ୍ତ ନୁହେଁ କି ହେବାକୁ ଚାହେଁନାହିଁ ଏଇଟା ସେମାନେ ସହଜରେ ଜାଣିନେଲେ /
 ବଡ଼ବିଲ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭିତରେ ଥିଲେ ବି ସେଠାକାର ଚାଲି ଚଳଣ ଓ ଗତି ବିଧିକୁ କେହି ଜାଣି ପାରିବ ନାହିଁ ଯେ ଜାଗାଟା
 ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭିତରେ ଅଛି / ଖଣି କାମରେ ଲାଗି ଥାଆନ୍ତି ଆଦିବାସୀ ଲୋକେ / ସେମାନଙ୍କର ନିଜ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଅଲଗା
 / ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟିୟାନଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ମଧ୍ୟ କମ୍ ନୁହେଁ / ମଦ ପିଇବାଟା ବଡ଼ବିଲରେ ଖୁବ୍ ଚାଲେ \ କୁଲି
 ମୁଲିଆ, ବାବୁ ଭାୟା – ସବୁ ରକମର ଲୋକେ ମଦ ପିଅନ୍ତି / ଜାଗା ଜାଗାରେ ଭାଟି / ତା ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ପଞ୍ଜାବୀ ଧାବା /
 ଧାବା ମାନଙ୍କରେ ମଦ ବିକ୍ରି ହୁଏ / ଥରେ ବ୍ରଜଭାନୁ ସିଂ ବୋଲି ଜଣେ ଲୋକ ମୁଁ ବାଟରେ ଆସୁଥିବାର ଦେଖି ତାଙ୍କର
 ସପ୍ତାହ ଯାକର ସବୁତକ ଦରମା " ଭୂଦାନ ପାଇଁ ଦାନ" କରିଦେଲେ / ମୁଁ ଦେଖିଲି ଯେ ଭଦ୍ର ଲୋକ ମଦ ପିଇ କରି
 ତୁର / କାଲେ ଏ ପଇସାକୁ ସେ ଅନ୍ୟତ୍ର ନଷ୍ଟ କରି ପାରନ୍ତି ଏଇଆ ଭାବ୍ ସେଥିପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କ କଥା ମୁତାବକ ମୁଁ
 ତାଙ୍କଠାରୁ ସବୁ ତକ ପଇସା ନେଲି/ ପରଦିନ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଯିବାକୁ ସେ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କଲେ ଓ ମୁଁ ହଁ ଭରିଲି
 / ସେ ବାର୍ଡ୍ କମ୍ପାନୀର ଏକ କୁଟୀରରେ ପରିବାର ସହ ରହୁ ଥାଆନ୍ତି / ପରଦିନ ତାଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ଯାଇ ତାଙ୍କର ସବୁ ତକ
 ପଇସା ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ଦେଇ ଦେଲି/ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ପାଇବା ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଭଦ୍ର ମହୀଳା ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମାନଙ୍କର ଏପରି
 କାରବାରରେ ଖୁବ୍ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେଲେ / ସେହି ଦିନଠୁ ବ୍ରଜଭାନୁ ସିଂ ଆଉ ମଦ ପିଇବେ ନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ଜବାବ ଦେଲେ /
 ମାତ୍ର ମୁଁ ସେକଥା ଉପରେ କିଛି ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱ ଦେଲି ନାହିଁ/ ମଦୁଆକୁ ମଦ ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ହେଲେ ଆହୁରି ଅନେକ କାମ
 କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼େ / ମାତ୍ର ବଡ଼ବିଲରେ ନିଶା ନିବାରଣ କାମ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ମୋତେ ବହୁତ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କଲେ
 / ବର୍ଷକ ପରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଗୋଟିଏ ଝିଅ ବାଜୀ ରାଉତ ଛାତ୍ରବାସରେ ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଅନୁଗୁଳକୁ ମାଳତୀ ଦେବୀଙ୍କ
 ଆଶ୍ରମକୁ ଆସିଲା /

ଶାଳ ବଣର ନିଛାଟିଆ କୋଠରୀଟି ଛାଡ଼ି କିଛି ଦିନ ପରେ ମୁଁ ବାର୍ଡ୍ କମ୍ପାନୀର ଆଉ ଏକ କୁଟୀରରେ , ଶ୍ରମିକ ବସ୍ତି
 ଭିତରେ ରହିଲି / କମ୍ପାନୀର ଅନେକ ଖାଲି ଘର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ବସ୍ତିରେ ଥାଏ / ମାଟି କାନ୍ଥ ଓ ଚିଣ ଛାତର କୁଡ଼ିଆରେ
 ଗୋଟିଏ ଦୁଆର ଓ ଗୋଟିଏ ଝରକା/ ତା ଭିତରୁ ଗୋଟାଏ ମାଗଣାରେ ପାଇବା କିଛି ବଡ଼ କଥା ନଥିଲା /
 ନିଛାଟିଆ ଜାଗା ଅପେକ୍ଷା ବସ୍ତି ଭିତରେ ରହିବାରୁ ସବୁ ଆଡ଼ରୁ ସୁବିଧା ହେଲା / ମୋ ବସା ସାମନାରେ ଗୋଟାଏ
 ବଡ଼ ଶାଳ ଗଛ / ପାଖ ଘର ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଶ୍ରମିକ ମାନେ ରହନ୍ତି / ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପିଲା ଛୁଆଙ୍କ ଖେଳ ଓ ପାଟି
 ଗୋଳରେ ବସ୍ତିଟି ବେଶ୍ ମୁଖରିତ ଥାଏ / ଲାଜାରସ ନାମକ ଜଣେ ଆଦିବାସୀ ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟିୟାନ ଲୋକ ମୋର ନିକଟତମ
 ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ / ତା ପାଖକୁ ଜଣେ ନେପାଳୀ ଲୋକ / ପରେ ଜାଣିଲି ଯେ ଲୋକଟି ବଡ଼ବିଲରେ ଜଣେ ଆଦିବାସୀ
 ମହିଳା ସହିତ ପିଲା ଛୁଆ ନେଇ ବସ ବାସ କରୁ ଥିଲେ ବି ନେପାଳରେ ତାର ଆଉ ଏକ ପରିବାର ଅଛି /
 ପହରାଦାର କାମ କରେ / ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ରାତିରେ ଲୋକଟି ଭାଟି ବାଟ ଦେଇ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ପୁରୁଷ ଉଭୟଙ୍କ
 ଭିତରେ ଖୁବ୍ ପାଟି ତୁଣ୍ଡ ହୁଏ / ବସ୍ତି ଭିତରେ ଘୁଷୁରି ଅନେକ ଥାଆନ୍ତି / ରବିବାର ଦିନ ଛୁଟି / ସେଥିପାଇଁ ପ୍ରାୟ
 ଅଧିକାଂଶ ଘରକୁ କୁଣିଆ ଆସନ୍ତି / କୁଣିଆ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚା ପାଇଁ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପରିବାରରେ ଘୁଷୁରି ମରା ଯାଏ / ଘୃଣା ତ ଲାଗେ /
 ମାତ୍ର ଇଏ ହେଲା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଚଳିବା ଭଙ୍ଗ / ମୁଁ ବସ୍ତି ବାହାରକୁ ଚାଲି ଆସେ /

ବଡ଼ବିଲରେ ଥିବା ଅବସରରେ ମୁଁ ପାଖ ଆଖର ଖଣି ଶ୍ରମିକମାନଙ୍କର କଲୋନୀକୁ ଯାଏ /ଖାଣି ସବୁଥାଏ ମାଲିକଙ୍କ ନାଆଁ ଅନୁସାରେ ଯଥା ସିରାକୁଝିନ, ବି.ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ,ଏସ୍ ଲାଲ କିମ୍ବା ବାଉଁ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି /ଖଣି ମାନଙ୍କର ଅଫିସର ଓ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ବଡ଼ ବ୍ୟବସାୟୀ ମାନେ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ରୋଚାରୀ କ୍ଲବରେ ଏକାଠି ହୁଅନ୍ତି / ବାବୁ ଭାୟା ଲୋକେ ଭୂଦାନ କାମରେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରନ୍ତୁ ବୋଲି ଚେଷ୍ଟା ଚାଲିଥାଏ/ ସେମାନଙ୍କଠାରୁ ଚାନ୍ଦା ଆଣେ / ତା ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ବିନୋବାଜାଙ୍କ ବିଚାର ସହିତ ସମ୍ପୃକ୍ତ କରିବାର ଚେଷ୍ଟା ଥାଏ /ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅଫିସରଙ୍କ ଅଫିସକୁ ଓ କ୍ୱାର୍ଟରକୁ ଯାଇ ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଆଲୋଚନା କରେ / ଜଣକ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଦେଖା କରିବାକୁ ଯାଇ ଆଉ ଦୁଇ ତିନି ଜଣଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ବି ସାକ୍ଷାତ ହୋଇ ଯାଏ /ପ୍ରାୟ ସବୁ ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ଅଫିସରେ ଚାନ୍ଦା ପିଇବା ପାଇଁ ଅନୁରୋଧ ଆସେ /ମାତ୍ର ଭୂଦାନ କର୍ମୀ ହୋଇଥିବାରୁ ମୁଁ ଚାନ୍ଦା ପିଏନା /କେତେବେଳେ କେଉଁଠି ମୋ ପାଇଁ ସରବତ ଆସେ / ଖଣି ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଏଇସବୁ ଅଫିସର ମାନେ ମୁଖ୍ୟତଃ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ଓ ଆକାଉଣ୍ଟାଣ୍ଟ /ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ କମ୍ପାନୀ ସବୁ ବାହାରୁ ଆଣି ଥାଆନ୍ତି /ଓଡ଼ିଆ, ଅଣଓଡ଼ିଆ ମନୋଭାବଟି ଭିତରେ ଭିତରେ କୁହୁକୁ ଥିବାର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକଲି/

ଥରେ ରୋଚାରୀ କ୍ଲବରେ ସର୍ବୋଦୟ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ ବିଷୟରେ କହିବା ପାଇଁ ମୋତେ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଆସିଲା / ମାସକ ଆଗରୁ ଏକ ଚକଚକିଆ କାଗଜରେ କ୍ଲବର ସଭାପତି ଶ୍ରୀ ନଟରାଜନଙ୍କ ଦସ୍ତଖତରେ ଆସିଥିବା ଚିଠିରେ କ୍ଲବର କେହି ସଦସ୍ୟ ମୋତେ ତାଙ୍କ ଗାଡ଼ିରେ ନେଇଆସିବେ ବୋଲି ଲିଖିତ ଥିଲା /

ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସମୟରେ କ୍ଲବର ସଦସ୍ୟ ମହାପାତ୍ରବାବୁ ଆସି ବସ୍ତି ପାଖରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ /ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳେ ଭିତରକୁ ଆସିଲେ ନାହିଁ/ ଲୋକ ପଠେଇଲେ ମୋତେ ଡାକିବା ପାଇଁ/ ମୁଁ ଯେ ଏମିତି ଏକ ଜଗାରେ ରହେ ତାଙ୍କର ଧାରଣା ନଥିଲା / ମୁଁ ଜାମା ପିନ୍ଧୁ ନଥାଏ /ଧଡ଼ି ନଥିବା ଧୋତି ଓ ଚାଦର ଥାଏ ମୋର ପରିଧେୟ / ରୋଚାରୀ କ୍ଲବରେ ଭାଷଣ ହେଲା ଇଚ୍ଛାକ୍ରୀରେ /ଦକ୍ଷିଣୀ ଲୋକ ଅନେକ ଥିଲେ /ବିଅର ଗ୍ଲାସ ଧରି ବସିଥିବା ବାବୁମାନଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ସର୍ବୋଦୟ କଥା କହିବା କାଲ ଆଗରେ ମୂଳା ଚୋବାଇବା ଭଳି ହୋଇଥିବ / ତରୁଣ କର୍ମୀର ଉତ୍ସାହ ନେଇ ମୁଁ ଭାବିଥିଲି ଅହିଂସକ ବିପ୍ଳବପାଇଁ ସେ ଦିନର ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାଟା ହେଲା ପ୍ରଥମ ପାହାଚ !

ମୁଁ ବଡ଼ବିଲରେ ଥିବା ବେଳେ ଆମେରିକାର ଏକ କ୍ଲବର ସଂସ୍ଥା ତରଫରୁ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଏକ ଶିକ୍ଷାଳୟ ପେଣ୍ଡଲ ହିଲକୁ ଛାତ୍ର ଭାବରେ ଯିବା ଲାଗି ଏକ ଚିଠି ଆସିଲା /ଭାରତରୁ ଫେରି ଜର୍ଜ ଓଲୋବା ପେଣ୍ଡଲ୍ ହିଲ ସହିତ କଥାବାର୍ତ୍ତା କରି ମୋ ପଢ଼ିବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ସେଠି କରିଥିଲେ /ମୋ ନିଜ ବିଷୟରେ ଏକ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧ ଲେଖି ସେଠାକୁ ପଠାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଦୁଇ ସପ୍ତାହ ପରେ ଆଉ ଏକ ଚିଠି ଆସିଲା / ଇଙ୍ଗ୍ରେଜୀ ଲେଖିବାର ଧୂରନ୍ଧରତା ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଇଏ ଥିଲା ଏକ ମାଧ୍ୟମ /

ପେଣ୍ଡଲ ହିଲକୁ ଯିବା ସିନା ଠିକ୍ ହେଲା/ ମାତ୍ର ଯିବି କେମିତି? ସେତେବେଳେ ପାସପୋର୍ଟ ଅଫିସ କଲିକତାରେ / ପାସପୋର୍ଟପାଇଁ କାଗଜ ପତ୍ର ଦସ୍ତଖତ କରି ଏସ୍.ଡି.ଓ.ଙ୍କ ଅଫିସରେ ଦେଲେ ସେ ତାକୁ କଲେକ୍ଟର କୁ ଦେବେ ଓ କଲେକ୍ଟରଙ୍କ ଅଫିସ୍ ଦରଖାସ୍ତକୁ କଲିକତା ପଠେଇବ /ମୋତେ ଜଣେ କିଏ କହିଲେ ଯେ ପାସପୋର୍ଟ ପାଇଁ ଇନକମଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସ ଅଫିସରୁ ଲେଖା ଆଣିବାକୁ ହେବ / କେଉଁଝର ଓ ମୟୂରଭଞ୍ଜ ପାଇଁ ଇନକମ ଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସ ଅଫିସ ହେଲା

ବାରିପଦାରେ / ମୁଁ ବାରିପଦାର ଇନକମ ଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସ ଅଫିସରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲି ଓ ବିଦେଶ ଯିବା ପାଇଁ କ୍ଲିଅରାନ୍ସ କାଗଜ
 ମାଗିଲି / ମୁଁ କଅଣ କହୁଛି ସେକଥା କେହି ବୁଝି ପାରୁ ନଥାନ୍ତି / ଅଫିସର ବଡ଼ ଅଫିସରଙ୍କୁ ଯାଇ ଭେଟିଲି / ମୋ
 ଧୋତି ଚାଦର ଓ ଆମେରିକା ଯିବା କଥାରେ ଭଦ୍ର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଉଣା ଅଧିକେ ବିସ୍ମିତ ହେଲେ / "ପାସପୋର୍ଟ ପାଇଁ
 ଆପଣଙ୍କର ଇନକମଟ୍ୟାକ୍ସ କ୍ଲିଅରାନ୍ସ ଦରକାର ନାହିଁ / କାରଣ ଆପଣଙ୍କର ତ ଇନକମ ନାହିଁ କ୍ଲିଅରାନ୍ସ କଅଣ
 ଦରକାର?" ସେ କହିଲେ / ଆଶ୍ଚସ୍ତ ହେଲି / ମୋର କକାପୁଅ ଭାଇ ଗୋପୀନାଥ ନାୟକ ବାରିପଦାରେ ଚାକିରୀ
 କରୁ ଥାଆନ୍ତି / ତାଙ୍କରି ବସାରେ ରହଣି ଓ ଖୁଆ ପିଆ ହେଲା / ଦୁଇ ଦିନ ପରେ ମୁଁ ବଡ଼ବିଲ ଫେରିଲି /

ପଣ୍ଡିତ କୃପାସିନ୍ଧୁ ହୋତା ବଡ଼ବିଲକୁ ଆସିବାକୁ ଚାହାନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ମୋତେ ଆଗରୁ କହିଥିଲେ / ସେ ଥିଲେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା
 ଇତିହାସର ଜଣେ ମୂର୍ତ୍ତିମତ୍ତ ପ୍ରତୀକ / ଆଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ମହାଶୟଙ୍କ ପଦଯାତ୍ରା ଦିନରୁ ମୋ ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କର ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ରହି ଆସିଛି
 / ତାଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଆମେ କେତେ ଜଣ ଝାରସୁଗୁଡ଼ା ଠାରୁ ଚାଲିକରି ମହାରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ପ୍ରଦେଶରେ ଥିବା ଗାନ୍ଧୀଜୀଙ୍କ ଆଶ୍ରମ
 ସେବାଗ୍ରାମ ଯାଏ ଯାଇଥିଲୁ / ତାଙ୍କର ବକ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଶୁଣି ନିଜେ ଉଦ୍ଭୁକ୍ତ ହୋଇଛି ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅନେକଙ୍କ ପରି ମୁଁ ମଧ୍ୟ
 ତାଙ୍କୁ ଗୁରୁ ପରି ଦେଖେ / ଅପ୍ରେଲ ମାସରେ ତାଙ୍କର ଆସିବା ପାଇଁ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କଲି / ମୁଁ ଚାହିଁଥିଲି କୌଣସି ଏକ
 କମ୍ପାନୀର ଗେଷ୍ଟ ହାଉସରେ ବା କୌଣସି ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଘରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ / ମାତ୍ର କୌଣସି ଗେଷ୍ଟ
 ହାଉସ କି କୌଣସି ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ଘରେ ରହିବାକୁ ନଚାହିଁ ସେ କହିଲେ " ମୁଁ ତୋରି ପାଖରେ ରହିବି" / ପଣ୍ଡିତ
 ମହାଶୟ ଥିଲେ ଜିଦଖୋରିଆ ଲୋକ / ଯାହା ବୁଝିଥିବେ ସେଇଆ / କଥାରୁ ଏପାଖ ସେପାଖ ହେବା ଲୋକ ସେ
 ନୁହନ୍ତି / ଏଣୁ ସେ ଆସି ମୋରି ପାଖରେ ରହିଲେ / କେଉଁଝରଠାରୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଣିବା ଲାଗି ଗାଡ଼ିର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରିଥିଲି /
 ବାର୍ଡ଼ କମ୍ପାନୀର ଗାଡ଼ି ପ୍ରତି ଦିନ କେଉଁଝରକୁ ଯାଏ / କମ୍ପାନୀର ଶ୍ରମିକ ଅଫିସର ଯଦୁନାଥ ଜଗତି ତାଙ୍କୁ ନିଜ
 ଗାଡ଼ିରେ ନେଇ ଆସିଲେ ଓ ମୁଁ କେଉଁଝର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଗଲି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଣିବା ପାଇଁ /

ପଣ୍ଡିତ କୃପାସିନ୍ଧୁ ହୋତା ହେଲେ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କର ସହକର୍ମୀ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ସଙ୍ଗ୍ରାମର ଜଣେ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ
 କର୍ମୀ / ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସେ ସର୍ବୋଦୟ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନରେ ଲାଗିଛନ୍ତି / ତାଙ୍କ ଆସିଥିବା ଜାଣି ବଡ଼ବିଲର ବନ୍ଧୁ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି
 ତାଙ୍କୁ ନିଜ ଘରକୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କଲେ / ସକାଳୁ ତାଙ୍କର ଦୈନିକ ଜଳଖିଆ ହେଲା ଚୁଡ଼ା ଓ ଦହି, ମୋ
 ବସାରେ / ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନ ଭୋଜନ ହୁଏ କୌଣସି ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଲୋକଙ୍କ ଘରେ / ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟାସ୍ତ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଚିକିଏ ଚାହା ଓ ଗଣ୍ଡାଏ ମୁଡ଼ି /
 ରାତିରେ ସେ କିଛି ଖାଆନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ / ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଏଠି ସେଠି ଆଲୋଚନା ହୁଏ / ପାଞ୍ଚଜଣ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି କି ପଚାଶ ଜଣ
 ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଖୁବ ବଡ଼ ପାଟିରେ ଭାଷଣ ଦିଅନ୍ତି / ପରେ ଜାଣିଲି ଯେ ବୟସ ଯୋଗେ ପଣ୍ଡିତ ମହାଶୟ ଭଲ କରି
 ଶୁଣି ପାରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ / ତେଣୁ କେତେ ବଡ଼ ପାଟିରେ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜଣା ପଡ଼େନା / ସେ ବଡ଼ ପାଟିରେ କହନ୍ତି /

ଦିନେ ସ୍ଥାନୀୟ ବି.ଡି.ଓ. ଜ୍ଞ ଘରୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଆସିଲା ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନ ଭୋଜନପାଇଁ / ପଣ୍ଡିତ ମହାଶୟଙ୍କୁ ନେଇ ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ
 ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲି / ବି.ଡି.ଓ ମହାଶୟ ଅଳ୍ପ କିଛି ସମୟ ପରେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବେ ବୋଲି ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ କହିଲେ / ପଣ୍ଡିତ
 ମହାଶୟଙ୍କ ଗୋଡ଼ ଧୋଇଦେବା ପାଇଁ ଭଦ୍ର ମହିଳା ତାଙ୍କ ଚାକରାଣୀଟିକୁ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶ ଦେଲେ / ତାଙ୍କର ଏ କଥାରେ
 ପଣ୍ଡିତ ମହାଶୟ ଏକଦମ ଚିହ୍ନିକି ଉଠିଲେ / "ସିଏ ତମ ଘରେ କାମ କରୁଛି ବୋଲି ତାମେ ତାକୁ କହୁଛୁ ମୋ ଗୋଡ଼

ଧୋଇ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ/ ଛୋଟ କାମ ବୋଲି ତମେ ନିଜେ ନକରି ତମଘରେ କାମ କରୁଥିବା ଲୋକଟିକୁ କହୁଛ ମୋ
ଗୋଡ଼ ଧୋଇଦେବା ପାଇଁ /" ବୁଢ଼ାଲୋକଙ୍କର ଏ କଥାରେ ଭଦ୍ର ମହିଳା ଚିକିଏ ଇତସ୍ତତଃ ବୋଧ କଲେ / ନିଜେ
ଭାଲେ ପାଣି ଧରି ପଣ୍ଡିତ କୃପାସିନ୍ଧୁ ହୋତାଙ୍କର ଚରଣ ଧୋଇ ଦେଲେ / ବଡ଼ବିଲରେ ପାଣିର ବଡ଼ ଅସୁବିଧା /
ସହର ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ବଡ଼ ବାମ୍ଫି / ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ପାଣି ସେଇଠୁ ଯାଏ / ପ୍ରତି ଘରକୁ କେହି ଜଣେ ଶ୍ରମିକ
ଶ୍ରେଣୀୟ ଲୋକ ଭାରରେ ଆଣି ପାଣି ଯୋଗାଏ / ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ିଆ ଲୋକେ ନିଜ ହତାରେ କୂଅ ଖୋଳି ଥାଆନ୍ତି /

ପଣ୍ଡିତ କୃପାସିନ୍ଧୁ ହୋତା ବଡ଼ବିଲ ଆସିଥିବା ବେଳେ ଦିନେ ଖୁବ୍ ବର୍ଷା ହେଲା /ମେଘ, ଘଡ଼ ଘଡ଼ି, ତୋଫାନର
ସୀମା ରହିଲା ନାହିଁ / ଚାରି ଆଡ଼େ ରାସ୍ତାରେ ପାଣିର ସୁଅ ଚାଲି ଥିବାରୁ ପଡ଼ିଶା ଘରର କୁକୁର୍ ଓ ଘୁଷୁରି
କେତୋଟି ଆସି ମୋ ପିଣ୍ଡାରେ ଆଶ୍ରୟ ନେଲେ / ପଣ୍ଡିତ ମହାଶୟ ଚୁଙ୍ଗି ଭିତରେ ବସି କଅଣ ଭାବୁଥାଆନ୍ତି
କେଜାଣି / ଏ ବର୍ଷାରେ କାଲେ ଘର ସାମନାରେ ଥିବା ଶାଳ ଗଛୁଟା ଭାଙ୍ଗି ପଡ଼ିବ ବୋଲି ଭାବି ମୁଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ମନେ ମନେ
ଖୁବ୍ ଡରି ଯାଇଥାଏ / ପଣ୍ଡିତ ମହାଶୟ ନିରାପଦରେ ବଡ଼ବିଲରୁ ଫେରନ୍ତୁ ବୋଲି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରୁଥାଏ ସିନା, ଚିଣ
ଛାତ ଉପରେ କୁଆପଥର ବର୍ଷିଲା ବେଳକୁ ଯେଉଁ ଶବ୍ଦ ହୁଏ ସେଥିରେ ମନ ପୁଣି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନାରୁ ଓହରି ଯାଉଥାଏ /

ରାତିରେ ଅଳ୍ପ ଚିକିଏ କଅଣ ଖାଇ ଆମେ ବିଛଣା ଧରିଲୁ /ବର୍ଷା ଓ କୁଆ ପଥର ଚିଣ ଛାତ ଉପରେ ପଡ଼ୁଥାଏ
/ମନେ ହେଉ ଥାଏ ସତେ ଯେମିତି ଅନବରତ କିଏ ଛାତ ଉପରକୁ ପଥର ଫୋପାଡ଼ୁଛି / ମୁଣ୍ଡ ପାଖକୁ ଛୋଟିଆ
ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମନଟି ଫିକ୍ ଫିକ୍ କରି ଜଳୁ ଥାଏ / ପବନର ସାଇଁ ସାଇଁ ଶବ୍ଦକୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେଲେ ବାହାରାଟା ଏକା ବେଳକେ
ନିଶ୍ଚୁନ / ପାଣ୍ଡିତ ମହାଶୟ ବେଶ ଆରାମରେ ଶୋଇ ପଡ଼ିଥିବାର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟକଲି / ମୁଁ ସପ ଉପରେ ଶୋଇ ଭାବୁଥାଏ
" ଏତେ ଦିନ ହେଲା ପାସପୋର୍ଟ ଆସିଲା ନାହିଁ କାହିଁକି?" ଘଟଣା କଣ ବୁଝିବା ପାଇଁ କଲିକତା ଯିବା ଠିକ କଲି
/ କ୍ରମେ ନିଦ ଆସିଗଲା /

ଭରସା

ଝିନୁ ଛୋଟରାୟ

ଭାଲୁ ଅଛୁ ତୋର ଅପାର କରୁଣା ଝୁଲି ମୋର ଭବତୁରୁ
ଯାହା ମୁଁ ଦେଖୁଛି ଯାହା ମୁଁ ପାଉଛି ଦାନ ଅଟେ ତୋର ସବୁ ।

କୃପାବାରୀ ତୋର ଅର୍ହନିଶି ଝରେ ତୁ ଯେ ବାଞ୍ଛା କଳ୍ପତର
ମୋ ସାହା, ସାହାସ, ଶକ୍ତି, ମୁକ୍ତି ଦାତା ତୁ ଆଶ୍ରୟ ମହାମେରୁ ।

ସଂସାର ପଥରେ ଅନ୍ଧକାରେ ଯେବେ ହୁଏ ମୁହିଁ ବାଟବଣା
ଦୂର ଦିଗ୍‌ବଳୟ ଆଲୋକ ଦେଖାଇ ଦର୍ଶାଇ ପଥ ଠିକଣା ।

ନୈରାଶ୍ୟରେ ଯେବେ ମନ ମରିଯାଏ ଶିଥିଳ ହୁଏ ଭାବନା
ଶୁଭେ ଆଶ୍ୱାସନା 'ଅଛି ମୁଁ ପାଖରେ, କି ପାଇଁ ପୁଣି ଶୋଚନା' ।

ହାତଛତା ହେଲେ ଜାତି କୁରୁମ୍ବରୁ କଳ୍ପକମୟ ଏ ପଥେ
ଅତୁଟ ଭରସା କିନ୍ତୁ ତୋ ଉପରେ ଏକା କରିବୁନି ମତେ ।

ଆଦି, ମଧ୍ୟ, ଅନ୍ତ, କାରଣ, ତାରଣ ସବୁର ତୁ କର୍ଣ୍ଣଧାର
ଅମାପ, ଅକାତ, ପ୍ରେମ, ଦାନ, ଦୟା ମହିମା ଯେ ତୋ ଅପାର ।

ଖାତା ବସୁନ୍ଧରା, ମୋ ସ୍ୟାହିଁ ସମୁଦ୍ର, ହେଲେ(ସାରା)ବୃକ୍ଷ ମୋ କଲମ
ବଖାଣିବା ପାଇଁ ମହିମା ତୋହର ତଥାପି ନିଅଣ୍ଟ ମମ ।

ଭୁଲିନାହିଁ କେବେ ଏ ଅକିଞ୍ଚନକୁ ହୋଇ ବହୁଶ୍ରୀ ଠାକୁର ।
ସୁଦୃଢ଼ କରିଥା ଭକ୍ତି ତୋରି ମୋର ଛୁଇଁ ରହୁ ତୋ ପୟର ।

ବନ୍ଦ ଚିଠି



ସୁଲୋଚନା ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ
ଏଲ୍‌ଜି, ମେରିଲାଣ୍ଡ

ଏ ଭିତରେ କେତେବେଳେ ବର୍ଷଟାଏ ଚାଲିଗଲାଣି ଜାଣି ହେଲାନି । ଜୀବନ ବାବୁ କାମରୁ ଅବସର ନେଇଛନ୍ତି । କାମରୁ ଅବସର ନେଇଛନ୍ତି କହିଲା ମାତେ ମନେ ହେବ, ଚାକିରୀରୁ ଅବସର ନେଇଛନ୍ତି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତା' ନୁହେଁ, ବୈବାହିକ ଜୀବନର ଦାୟିତ୍ଵରୁ ଅବସର ପ୍ରାପ୍ତି । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ପାଖରେ ସମୟ ପ୍ରଚୁର । ସକାଳୁ ବସି ଘଣ୍ଟାଏ କଫି ପିଇଲେ ଯାଏ ଆସେ ନାହିଁ, କି ଘଣ୍ଟାଏ ଖବର କାଗଜ ପଢ଼ିଲେ ଯାଏ ଆସେ ନାହିଁ । କୌଣସି ତାରିଦା ନାହିଁ ଜୀବନରେ । ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଭଲ ତାଙ୍କ କାମରେ ନଅଟାରୁ ପାଞ୍ଚଟା ଅଫିସକୁ ଯିବାର ବି ତାରିଦା ନାହିଁ । ଦୁଇ ଦିନ ଟେଲି କମ୍ୟୁଟ୍ କରନ୍ତି । ସେ ଦୁଇ ଦିନର କାମ ବି ନିଆରା । ଅଫିସକୁ ତ ଆଉ ଘର କରି ହେବନି, କିନ୍ତୁ ଘରକୁ ସିଏ ଅଫିସ କରି ନିଅନ୍ତି, ଯେଉଁଠି କୌଣସି କଟକଣା ନାହିଁ । କାକୁଡ଼ି କାଡ଼ୁ କାଡ଼ୁ କରି ଖାଆନ୍ତୁ କି ସୁପ୍ ସତ ସତ କରି ପିଅନ୍ତୁ । ଘରେ ଖାଅ ବା ବାହାରେ ଖାଅ ବା ନ ଖାଅ କୋଉଥିରେ ଫରକ୍ ନାହିଁ । ଯେମିତି ଏକ ଅବିବାହିତ ଜୀବନର ପୁନରୁଦ୍ଧାର ।

ଏବେ ପୁଣି ଏକ ନୂଆ ଜୀବନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବାକୁ ହେବ । ସମୟ ସବୁ କ୍ଷତକୁ ପୁରଣ କରେ । କେତେବେଳେ ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିପାରେ ଅବା କେତେବେଳେ ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ କରିବାରେ ଲାଗିଥାଏ । ସମୟର ବା ଆଉ କାମ କ'ଣ ? ସିଏ ତ କାହା ପାଇଁ ଅଟକି ଯାଏ ନା ! ସମୟ ଆସିବ କହି ମଣିଷ ବି ଯଦି ଅଟକି ଯିବ ଓ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ରତ ହେବ, ତାହେଲେ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଭଲ ଥିଲେ ହୁଏତ କାମ ହୋଇ ଯିବ, କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁକ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ତାହା ସଂଭବ ନୁହେଁ । ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର କ'ଣ ସମାନ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ନା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଭାଗ୍ୟରେ ଭଲ ଲେଖା ଅଛି ? କେଉଁ ଅଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଶକ୍ତିର ଅଧିନରେ ଏ ଜଗତ ଚାଳିତ ହେଉଛି । ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ଅଗ୍ରସର ହୋଇ ଆଜି ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ ମଣିଷ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପୃଥିବୀର ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ତାର କଳ୍ପନାର ବହିର୍ଭୂତ । ଯାହା ଯେତେବେଳେ ହେବାକୁ ଥାଏ ତାକୁ ଅଟକାଇବାର ଶକ୍ତି କାହାର ନାହିଁ । ଜୀବନ ବାବୁ ତ ଜଣେ ସାଧାରଣ ମଣିଷ ମାତ୍ର ।

ଜୀବନ ବାବୁ ଆମେରିକା ସରକାରଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ କାମ କରନ୍ତି । ସରକାରୀ କାମରେ ସୁବିଧା ଚିକିତ୍ସ ଅଧିକ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଥିଲାବେଳେ ସରକାରଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ବଛା ହୋଇ ଆମେରିକା ଆସିଥିଲେ । ସେଥିରେ ଭଲ ଥିଲା ଯେତିକି, ଖରାପ ବି ସେତିକି । ଜାତୀୟ ବୈଜ୍ଞାନିକ ଗବେଷଣାଗାରରେ ପୋଷ୍ଟଡକ୍ ହୋଇ କାମ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରିଥିଲେ । ପୋଷ୍ଟଡକ୍ ଚାକିରୀରେ ଦରମା କମ, କିନ୍ତୁ କାମ ବେଶୀ । ସେଇଥିରେ ସିଏ ନିଜେ ଚଳି ଘରକୁ କିଛି ଟଙ୍କା ବି ପଠାଉ ଥିଲେ । ଚିନ୍ତା କରିଥିଲେ, କିଛି ବର୍ଷ ଏଇ ଚାକିରିରେ ରହି ପରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଚାକିରୀ ଖୋଜିବେ । ସରକାରଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ଆସିଥିବାରୁ ଚାକିରୀ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନରେ ଅନେକ ଅସୁବିଧା ହେଲା । ଯେତେ ଦିନ ଯାଉଛି ଯାଉ କହି ସେଇ ଚାକିରୀରେ ସିଏ ରହି ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ପରବର୍ତ୍ତୀ କାଳରେ ଘରକୁ ଯାଇ ବାପା- ମା ଠିକ୍ କରିଥିବା ଝିଅଟିଏ ସହ ତାଙ୍କର ବିବାହ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ସରୋଜିନୀଙ୍କୁ ବିବାହର ତିନି ସପ୍ତାହ ପରେ ପାସ୍‌ପୋର୍ଟ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି କରାଇ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଆଣିବେ ବୋଲି ମନସ୍ଥ ମଧ୍ୟ କରିଥିଲେ । ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କର ସେଥିରେ କିନ୍ତୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ନ ଥିଲା । ବୋହୂ ହାତ ପରସା ଖାଇବାର

ଅଭିଳାଷ ଥିଲା ସେମାନଙ୍କର । ନ ଦୁଃଖ ବା କେମିତି ? ସହଜେ ବଡ଼ ପୁଅ । ନୁଆ ହୋଇ ବୋହୂଟିଏ ଘରକୁ ଆସିଲେ ବୋଉକୁ ସୁବିଧା ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା ନିଶ୍ଚୟ । ସେତେବେଳେ ବାପା ରେଳ ବିଭାଗରେ କଲିକତାରେ କାମ କରୁଥିଲେ । କିରାନୀ ଦରମା ସହ ଘର ଜମିବାଡ଼ିରୁ ଯାହା ଆସୁଥିଲା ସେତିକିରେ ଦୁଃଖେ ସୁଖେ ଚଳି ଯାଉଥିଲା । ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ, ବଡ଼ ଘର ବା ଚାକଟକ୍ୟର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ନ ଥିଲା କାହାର । ବୋଉ ପ୍ରାୟ ଗାଁ ରେ ରହୁଥିଲା । ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଦୁଇ ପୁଅଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ସ୍କୁଲ ଛୁଟିରେ ବୁଲି ଆସୁଥିଲେ କଲିକତା । ସୁଖ ଦୁଃଖର ଜୀବନ । ପୁଅ କଲେଜରେ ପଢ଼ିବା ଥିଲା ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଚିନ୍ତା । ଭାଗ୍ୟକୁ ପୁଅ ମାନେ ଭଲ ପଢ଼ୁଥିଲେ । ଜୀବନ ବାବୁ ରେଭେନ୍ସାରୁ ଏମ୍ ଏସ୍ ସି ପାସ କରି ଆଇ ଆଇ ଟି ରୁ ପିଏଚ୍‌ଡ଼ି କରିବା ପରେ ଭାରତରେ ରହିଥିଲେ ଯେ କିଛି କମ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା ତା ନୁହେଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଲୋକତ ସବୁବେଳେ ଆମେରିକା ସ୍ୱପ୍ନରେ ପାଗଳ ! ସିଏ ବା କୋଉ ଗାଲର ଗୋବର ? ତେଣୁ ଆମେରିକାରେ ଚାକିରୀ ପାଇବା ପରେ, ଘର ଛାଡ଼ି ଯିବାର ପକ୍ଷସଲ୍ଲା ହେବାକୁ ବେଶୀ କଷ୍ଟ ହେଲା ନାହିଁ ।

ବାହାଘର ତ ଯାହା ଯେମିତି ହୋଇଗଲା । ସ୍ତ୍ରୀକୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଆଣିବାକୁ ମନ ଥିଲେ ବି ମାତି ପଡ଼ୁଥିଲା କହିବାକୁ ଜୀବନ ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ । ସୀତାଖୁଡ଼ି ସେଦିନ ସଂଜବେଳେ ଆସି ଘରେ ବସିଥାନ୍ତି ବୋଉ ପାଖରେ । ସରୋଜିନୀ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ରୋଷେଇ ଘରେ ହିଟରରେ ଚାହା ବସାଇଥାଏ । ବୋଉ ବଡ଼ ପାଟିରେ କହିଲା, ‘ଖୁଡ଼ି ପାଇଁ ପକୋଡ଼ି ଦିଇଟା ଛାଣେ ବୋହୂ’ । ସରୋଜିନୀର ଉତ୍ତର କିଏ ଶୁଣି ପାରିଲେନି କାରଣ ଖୁଡ଼ି ସେତିକିବେଳକୁ ପଚାରିଲେ, ‘ବନ୍ଦୁ, ଆଉ କ’ଣ ବୋହୂକୁ ନେଇ ଆମେରିକା ଯିବାକୁ ଠିକ୍ କରୁଛ ନା ବୋଉ ପାଖେ କିଛି ଦିନ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେଇ ଯିବ ? ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବାକୁ ପାଟି ସତେକି ଅଠା ଅଠା ହୋଇଗଲା । ଅଗଣାର କୁଅ ମୂଳରେ ମାଡ଼ିଥିବା ମଧୁ ମାଳତି ଲତା ଉପରେ ଆଖି ରଖି ଜୀବନ ବାବୁ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେଲେ, ‘ସୀତାଖୁଡ଼ି, ଇଚ୍ଛା ତ ଅଛି ବୋଉ ପାଖେ କିଛି ଦିନ ଛାଡ଼ି ଦେଇ ଯାଆନ୍ତି, ବୋଉକୁ ବି ଭଲ ଲାଗନ୍ତା ! କାମ ଦାମ ବି ଶିଖି ଯାଆନ୍ତା ସରୋଜିନୀ । ହେଲେ ଆମେରିକା କାମ କଥା ତମେ ଜାଣିନ ଖୁଡ଼ି । ଘରକୁ ଫେରୁ ଫେରୁ ଅନେକ ରାତି ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଖାଇବା ପିଇବାର ଠିକ୍ ଠିକଣା ରହେନି । କିଏ ଜଣେ ଥିଲେ ରୋଷେଇ ଗଣ୍ଡେ କରି ଦେଲେ ସୁବିଧା ଦୁଃଖ । ତା ଛଡ଼ା ଏତେ ଥର ଯିବା ଆସିବାକୁ ପଇସା ବି କାହିଁ । ବାହାଘର ପାଇଁ ତ ଗୁଡ଼ାଏ ରଣ କରି ସାରିଛି !’ ବୋଉ ବୋଧେ ବୁଝିଗଲା ମନ କଥା, କହିଲା, ‘ନାହିଁ ବୋହୂକୁ କ’ଣ ଏଠି ଭଲ ଲାଗିବ ଏକୁଟିଆ ? ପାସ୍‌ପୋର୍ଟ ଭିସା ପାଇଁ କାହାକୁ କୁହା ବୋଲା କରି ଚିକେ ଶୀଘ୍ର କରାଇ ଦେଲେ ଦୁଃଖନି? ଏକା ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ଯାଆନ୍ତ ତୁମେ ଦି’ ଜଣ’ । ଆହା, ବୋଉ ମନ ଯଦି ଭଗବାନ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଦିଅନ୍ତେ !

ସରୋଜିନୀଙ୍କର ଆମେରିକା ଆସିବାକୁ ପ୍ରାୟ ନଅ ମାସ ଲାଗିଗଲା । ଏକୁଟିଆ ଆସିଥିଲେ ସରୋଜିନୀ । ଆମେରିକା ଆଦବ କାଇଦାକୁ ଆଦରେଇ ନେବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ବହୁତ ସମୟ ଲାଗି ନଥିଲା । ଜୀବନ ବାବୁ ଯେମିତି ପାଇଗଲେ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ । ନା କେବେ ରାନ୍ଧିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଲା ନା ଘର ସଫା ! ସରୋଜିନୀ ପ୍ରାଣ ପଣେ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଥିଲେ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କୁ ଖୁସି କରିବାକୁ । ହାତକୁ କୁଟା ଖଣ୍ଡିଏ ବି ଦିଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ଦିନ ପରେ ଦିନ କଟିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ଘର ଭିତରେ ବସି ବସି ମନରୁ ଆମେରିକା ନିଶା ଉତୁରି ଯିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ସରୋଜିନୀଙ୍କର ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲା ସୁଲି କଥା । ଶାଶୁ ଘରର କାମବାଳି ଝିଅଟିଏ । ହାଲସ୍କୁଲରେ ନବମ ଶ୍ରେଣୀରେ ପଢ଼ୁଥାଏ । ସ୍କୁଲରୁ ଆସିଲାବେଳେ ଘରକୁ ଆସି ଘର ଓଳାଇ ବାସନ ମାଡ଼ି ଦେଇ ଯାଏ । ଚାହା କପେ ଆଉ ଜଳଖିଆ ଦିଇଟା ଖାଇଦେଇ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଘରପାଠ ବି ପଚାରିନିଏ ସରୋଜିନୀଙ୍କୁ । ଭଲ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ସୁଲି ତାଙ୍କୁ । ଏବେ ଏଠି ସିଏ ନିଜେ ସୁଲି ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । କଥା କହିବାକୁ କେହି ନାହିଁ । ଦିନେ ସ୍ୱାମୀଙ୍କୁ ପରିବା ଆଣିବାକୁ ଗଲାବେଳେ ପଚାରିଲେ, ‘ମତେ ଚିକିଏ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନିଅନ୍ତନି? ଘରେ ବସି ବସି ବିରକ୍ତ ଲାଗୁଛି’ । ‘ମୁଁ ତ ଏଇ ଯିବି ଆଉ ଆସିବି, କ’ଣ କରିବ ସେଠି ଯାଇ’ ? ଏ ଭଳି ଖାପ୍ ଛଡ଼ା ଉତ୍ତର ପାଇ ମନ ବଡ଼

ଖରାପ ଲାଗେ । ହେଲେ କହିବେ କାହାକୁ । ବସି ବସି ଏକୃଷିଆ ସମୟ କଟାଇଲାବେଳେ ଅନେକ ଭାବନ୍ତି । ଦିନେ, ସବୁ ଭାବନାର ଶେଷ କରି ପାଖ ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ ସହ ଦି ପଦ କଥାହେଲେ, ମେଲ୍ ବନ୍ଧୁରୁ ଚିଠି ଆଣିବାକୁ ଗଲାବେଳେ । କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି ଭାରି ଭଲ ଲାଗିଲା । ମନଟା ହାଲୁକା ହୋଇଗଲା । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ପଡ଼ୋଶୀ ମରିଆଙ୍କ ସହ ତାଙ୍କର ଦେଖା ହୁଏ । ପଦେ ଅଧେ କଥାରୁ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ ଏକାଠି ଚାହା ପିଇବାକୁ ଆରଂଭ କଲେଣି ସେମାନେ । ଜୀବନ ବାରୁ ଏ କଥା ଜାଣି ନ ଥାନ୍ତି । ଜାଣିଲେ କ'ଣ କହିବେ ସରୋଜିନୀ ଭାବି ପାରି ନାହାନ୍ତି । କେମିତି ଗୋଟାଏ ଅଜଣା ଭୟ କିନ୍ତୁ ଛାଇ ପରି ଲାଗି ରହିଥାଏ । କହିବାକୁ ସାହାସ ବି କୁଳାଉ ନ ଥାଏ ।

ସେଦିନ ଶନିବାର । ଜୀବନ ବାରୁ ଘରେ ନ ଥାନ୍ତି । ସତ୍ତାହେ ପାଇଁ ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି କାମରେ ବଞ୍ଚେନ୍ । ଭାରି ଏକୃଷିଆ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ସରୋଜିନୀଙ୍କୁ । ବୋଉ ମନେ ପଡୁଥିଲା । ବୋଉ ପାଖକୁ ଦି ଧାଡ଼ି ଚିଠି ଲେଖିଲେ ସରୋଜିନୀ ।

ବୋଉଲୋ,

ଝିଅକୁ ବାହା ନ ଦେଲା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତତେ ରାତିରେ ନିଦ ହେଉ ନଥିଲା । ଏବେ ତୁ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଭଲରେ ଶୋଉ ଥିବୁ । ବାପାଙ୍କର ବୋଝ ହାଲୁକା କରି ଯେତେବେଳେ ମୁଁ ବାହା ହୋଇ ଆସିଲି, ଭାବିଲି, ମୋଠୁ ମୋ ବାପା ବୋଉଙ୍କ ଭାଗ୍ୟ ଭଲ ବୋଲି ଲୋକ କହୁଥିବେ । ଝିଅ ତାଙ୍କର ଆମେରିକାରେ । ଯେଉଁଠି ମେସିନ୍ରେ ବାସନ ମଜା ହୁଏ, ଲୁଗା ସଫା ହୁଏ, ଯେଉଁଠି କାମବାଲିର ବି ଗାଡ଼ି ଅଛି, ସେଠାରେ ତ ଝିଅ ତାଙ୍କର ରାଣୀ ପରି ରହିଛି । ଆଉ ତମର ଚିନ୍ତା କ'ଣ ? ଅଯାଗା ଘା ଦେଖାଇ ହୁଏନାଲୋ ବୋଉ । ସକାଳରୁ ସଞ୍ଜ ଯାଏ କାମ କରିଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ମୁଁ ପୁଣି କାମ ଖୋଜୁଥାଏ । ବଂଚିବାର ଏକମାତ୍ର ରାହା । ସିଏ କାମକୁ ଗଲା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଉଠେ ରାତି ଚାରିଟାରୁ । ନିଜ କାମ ସାରି ପୁଜା ପୁଜି ଶେଷ କରି ତାଙ୍କ ସାର୍ଟ୍ ପ୍ୟାଣ୍ଟ୍ ଆଇରନ୍ କରି ଗାଧୁଆ ଘରେ ରଖି, ଜଳଖିଆ ତିଆରି କରେ । ସିଏ ନ ଗଲା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସେ ଠିଆ ଠିଆ, ବସି ନଥାଏ । କୋଉ ଦିନ କ'ଣ ଖାଇବେ ତାର ହିସାବ ରଖି ପକାରେ ପକାରେ ଖାଇବାକୁ ନ ଦେଲେ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ କାଲି ସେଇଆ ଖାଇଥିଲି କହି ଲକ୍ଷ୍ ଫେରାଇ ଆଣିବାର ଭୟ ବି ଥାଏ ମୋର । ପୁଣି ରାତିର ଖାଇବା ସବୁଦିନ ତିନି ପକାରର କରିବାକୁ ପଡେ । ହଁ, ଘରେ ବାସନ ମାଜିବାକୁ ମେସିନ୍ ଅଛି । ହେଲେ ଦୁଇ ଜଣ ମଣିଷଙ୍କ ବାସନ ବା କେତେ ? କାମରୁ ଫେରି ସଂଧ୍ୟା ବେଳେ ଖାଇବା ପରେ ସିଏ ଚିଢି ପାଖରେ ବସି ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ନ ହେଲେ କିଛି ନିଜ କାମରେ ଲାଗି ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ମୁଁ ଯେ ଘରେ ଜଣେ ମଣିଷ ଅଛି ସେ କଥା ବୋଧେ ମନରେ ଆସେନା ତାଙ୍କର । ମୋ' ସଙ୍ଗେ ବା କଥା କ'ଣ ହେବେ । କୋଉ ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ମୁଁ ବୁଝିବି ।

ଅନେକ ଦିନରୁ ତତେ ଲେଖିବି ଲେଖିବି ବୋଲି ଭାବୁଥିଲି । କ'ଣ ଲେଖିବି, କ'ଣ ନ ଲେଖିବି - ସେଇ ଦ୍ଵନ୍ଦ୍ଵରେ ବସି ଗଲି ଅନେକ ଦିନ ? ମୁଁ ଜାଣେ ତୁ ଭାବୁଥିବୁ, ଝିଅ ଚୋ'ର ଭଲରେ ଅଛି, ଆମେରିକାରେ ଅଛି । ଇଏ ଠିକ୍ ଦିଲିକା ଲଞ୍ଜୁ ପରି । ଯେମିତି ମୁଁ ଏକ ପକ୍ଷ ହୀନ ପକ୍ଷୀଟିଏ । କିଏ ମୋର ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତାକୁ ମୋଠୁ ଛତେଇ ନେଇଛି । ଏଇ କ'ଣ ସେଇ ଦେଶ, ଯେଉଁଠି ଛୋଟ ପିଲାଟିର ବି ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ଅଛି । ମୋର ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ସଂଦେହ, ସିଏ କ'ଣ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ଅଧିକାର କ'ଣ ? ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ କ'ଣ ମଣିଷ ନା ଏକ ରୋବୋଟ୍ ? କଥା କହିବାର ଶକ୍ତି ଥାଇ ବି ସିଏ କଥା କହିପାରେନା ? ମତେ ହୁଏତ ବିଧାଏ ମାରିଲେ ଭଲ ଲାଗନ୍ତା । ହୁଏତ ଦେହରେ ଦାଗ ଲାଗନ୍ତା, କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ଦାଗ ତ ମୋ' ହୃଦୟରେ । କିଏ ଦେଖି ପାରିବ ? ମୋ' ଚିଠି ନ ଲେଖିବାର କାରଣରୁ ତୁ କଣ ବୁଝିଛୁ ମୁଁ ଜାଣେନା, କିନ୍ତୁ ମୋ' ନୀରବ ଜୀବନରୁ ଏକ ବିଦ୍ରୋହୀର ଫୁଟକାର ମୁଁ ଶୁଣୁଛି । ଏ ଫୁଟକାର ବା ଚିତ୍କାର ହାରି ଯିବାର ନୁହେଁ । ଇଏ ଏକ ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତି ମୋ ନିଜ ପାଇଁ । ହୁଏତ ପର ଚିଠିରେ ତୁ ଶୁଣିବୁ ମୋ ଜୀବନର ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟାୟ । ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହେବୁନି

ବୋଉ । ତୋ ଝିଅ ଏତେ ଭୀରୁ ନୁହେଁ । ନିଜ ପାଦରେ ଠିଆ ହେବାର ଶକ୍ତି ମୋତେ ଦେ । ଯା ତୋ' କୃଷ୍ଣଙ୍କୁ ମାଗିବୁ, ତୋ ଝିଅକୁ ସାହା ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ । ମୁଁ ଜାଣେ ସେ ତୋ' କଥା ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଶୁଣିବେ ।

ଆଜି ଏତିକିରେ ରହିଲି ।

ତୋର ସୁରୁ

ଏ ଭିତରେ ଅନେକ ଦିନ କଟିଗଲାଣି । ଅନେକ ଛୋଟ ବଡ଼ ଘଟଣା ଘଟି ଗଲାଣି । ସରୋଜିନୀଙ୍କର ମନର ଦମ୍ଭ ବି ବଢ଼ିଗଲାଣି । ମରିଆ ସହିତ ପରିବାର ଭଳି ସାଙ୍ଗ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ଇଂରାଜୀରେ କଥା କହିବାକୁ ଭଲ ବି ଲାଗିଲାଣି । ସ୍ୱାମୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କର ସଂପର୍କର ଦୂରତା ବି ବଢ଼ିବାରେ ଲାଗିଛି । ସଂପର୍କ ଯେ ଥିଲା ତା ନୁହେଁ, ଥିଲା କେମିତି ଏକ ଅଜବ ଏକ ତରଫ ସଂପର୍କ । କେତେ ଦିନ ତାକୁ ଘୋସାରି ଥାନ୍ତେ ? ସରୋଜିନୀଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ଅନେକ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଆସିଛି । ଆମେରିକାରେ ଏ ଦଶ ବର୍ଷ ଭିତରେ ସେ ଜଣେ ନୂଆ ମଣିଷ ପାଲଟି ଯାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଘରେ ବସି ଯେ ରୋଜଗାର କରି ହୁଏ ତା' ସରୋଜିନୀଙ୍କ କନ୍ଧନାର ବାହାରେ ଥିଲା । ମରିଆଙ୍କର ଦୁଇ ଝିଅଙ୍କୁ ବେବିସିଟ୍ କରି ସିଏ ପଇସା ସଂଚୟ କରି କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟି କଲେଜରୁ କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟର୍ ସାଇନ୍ସରେ ଆସୋସିଏଟ୍ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ପାଇ ଚାକିରୀ କଲେଣି । କୌଣସି କାମ ସହଜରେ ହୋଇନି । ଅନେକ ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚ ବିତର୍କର ଶେଷ ପଳ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଜି ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ କରି ଦେଇଛି । ଆଉ ରହି ପାରିବେନି କାହା ଘରର ପା ପୋଛ ହୋଇ । ଆଜି ସିଏ ଏକ ବଡ଼ ସିଧାନ୍ତରେ ଉପନୀତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି । କାହାକୁ ନ ହେଲେ ବି ବୋଉକୁ ନ କହି ରହି ହେବନି ।

ବୋଉ,

ଏ ଚିଠି ପାଇଲେ ତୁ କଣ ଭାବିବୁ ମୁଁ ଜାଣିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ତତେ ନ କହିଲେ ମୁଁ ଏ ଘରୁ ଗୋଡ଼ କାଢ଼ି ଯାଇ ପାରିବିନି । ଦଶ ବର୍ଷର ସଂସାରରେ ଉଠିଥିବା ଝଡ଼ ଆଜି ନିର୍ବାପିତ ହେଲା । ଆଜି ଏଇ ପଲସଲାରେ ମୁଁ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲି, ଜୀବନ ବାବୁଙ୍କର ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ସରୋଜିନୀର ମୃତ୍ୟୁ ହୋଇଛି । ଏକ ନୂଆ ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଉଦୟରେ ଏକ ନୂଆ ସରୋଜର ଜନ୍ମ । ତୁ ଖୁସି ହେବୁ ଯେ, ତୋ' ସୁରୁ ଆଜି ନିଜ ଗୋଡ଼ରେ ଠିଆ ହୋଇଛି । ଏ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନତା ସେକ୍ସାଚାରିତା ନୁହେଁ, ଏହା ଏକ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା । ମୋ'ରି ପରି ଅନେକ ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏହା ଏକ ଶିକ୍ଷା । ଭାରତୀୟ ନାରୀର ଭୂଷଣ ଲଜ୍ୟା । ଏକ ପତିବ୍ରତା ନାରୀର କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ପତିଗ୍ରତା ହେବା । କିନ୍ତୁ ଯେଉଁଠାରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା ନାହିଁ, ଯେଉଁଠାରେ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀକୁ କେବଳ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରାଯାଏ, ନାରୀ ଦେହର ଅପମାନ କରାଯାଏ, ସେଇଠାରେ ଆର୍ବିଭାବ ହୁଏ ଆତ୍ମମର୍ଯ୍ୟଦା । ଏଭଳି ଏକ ଦୃଢ଼ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନେବାପାଇଁ ମତେ ଅନେକ ଦିନ ଲାଗିଗଲା, ହୋଇପାରେ ଅନେକ ଡେରି ହୋଇଗଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସାଧାରଣ ମଣିଷ ହୋଇ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଅଧିକାର କ'ଣ ମୋର ନାହିଁ ? ସେଇ ଅଧିକାର ମାଗିବା ଯଦି ମୋର ଭୁଲ, ମୁଁ ସେ ଭୁଲ ମାନିବାକୁ ପସ୍ତୁତ ନୁହେଁ । ମୁଁ କହିବି ଏହା ଏକ ଜନ୍ମଗତ ଅଧିକାର, ଏହା ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସମାନ । ମୋତେ 'ମୁଁ' ହେବାକୁ ଦିଅ, ମୁଁ ତ କେବଳ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲି ସହଧର୍ମିଣୀର ଅଧିକାର, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀର ଅଧିକାର । ସ୍ଥାନ କାଳ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଶେଷରେ ଦିଅ ସମତାର ଅଧିକାର । କଥା କହିଲେ ଯୋଧି ହୋଇଯିବ । କିଏ ପଢ଼ିବ ମୋ ଜୀବନ ଯୋଧି? କିନ୍ତୁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଝିଅକୁ ଯଦି ମୋ' ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରେରଣା ଦେବ, ତାହେଲେ ମୁଁ ଭୁଲିଯିବି ସବୁ ଦଃଖ, କଷ୍ଟ, ଓ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା । ଦଶ ବର୍ଷର ସବୁ ଚିଠି, ଯାହା ମୁଁ ବନ୍ଦ କରି ସାଇତି ରଖିଛି, ଯେଉଁଥିରେ ମୋ ଆଖିର ଲୁହ କଲମର କାଳି ହୋଇ ଅକ୍ଷରରେ ରୂପାନ୍ତରିତ ହୋଇଛନ୍ତି, ତାକୁ ଦେବି ମୁକ୍ତି ।

ଅଣ୍ଡ ରାଜନୀତି ଶଶଧର ମହାପାତ୍ର

ସିଲ୍ଭର୍ ସ୍ପିଙ୍ଗ୍, ମେରୀଲ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡ, ୟୁକ୍ଟରାଷ୍ଟ୍ର ଆମେରିକା

ଅଣ୍ଡ ମାତ୍ର ଏବେ ହେଲାଣି ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ
ସାରା ରାଜ୍ୟରେ ଏ ବଡ଼ ସଂକଟ
ଅଣ୍ଡ ଶସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ନୁହେଁ ଶସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ରାଜନୀତି
ମହାଙ୍କ ଗାତିକୁ ଅଣ୍ଡ ମାତ୍ର ନିତି
ନାଲିବତୀ ଚଢ଼ା ବନ୍ଦ କରିଦେଲେ
ତର ଓ ଭୟରେ ଲୁଚି ଲୁଚି ଗଲେ
କିଏ ଯାଏ ଚଢ଼ି ବାଇକ୍ ପଛରେ
ମହା, ବିଧାୟକ ଅଛନ୍ତି ଚିନ୍ତାରେ
ଆନ୍ଧ୍ର ରାଜ୍ୟରୁ ଅଣ୍ଡ ଆଶୁଛନ୍ତି
ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବାସୀ ଗର୍ବ କରୁଛନ୍ତି
ମଧ୍ୟାହ୍ନ ଭୋଜନ ପାଇଁ ମିଳୁନାହିଁ
ସ୍କୁଲ ପିଲାମାନେ ହେଲେ ହାଇଁପାଇଁ
ଯିଏ ଫିଙ୍ଗେ ଅଣ୍ଡ ମହାଙ୍କ ଗାତିକୁ
ବାହା ବାହା ମିଳେ କଂଗ୍ରେସ ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ
ବିରୋଧୀ କହନ୍ତି ମାର ଅଣ୍ଡ, ଢେଲା
ନୀତି, ଆଦର୍ଶ କେଉଁଆଡେ ଗଲା ?
ଯିଏ ଯେଉଁଠାରେ ମାରୁଅଛି ଅଣ୍ଡ
ଶାସନ କହୁଛି ତାଙ୍କପାଇଁ ଠେଙ୍ଗ
'ଶଶତନ୍ତ୍ର ମଲା' ମିତିଆ କହୁଛି
କଂଗ୍ରେସ ପାର୍ଟି ବାଟ ହୁଡୁଅଛି

କଂଗ୍ରେସ କହେ ବିରୋଧୀ ଲଢୁଛି
ଶାସକ ଅପାରଗ, କଥା ଲୁଚାଉଛି
ପନ୍ଦର ବରଷ ଶାସନ କଲେଣି
ଛାତ୍ର ସମାଜ ବଳି ପଡ଼ିଲେଣି
ପାଠ ପଢ଼ି ଏବେ ବସୁଛନ୍ତି ଘରେ
ଚାକିରି ସମସ୍ୟା ତାଙ୍କୁ ନିତି ଘାରେ
ଖାଦ୍ୟ ସୁରକ୍ଷାରେ ଶାସନ କୋହଳ
ନିଜ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥପାଇଁ ଲାଗେ କଳିଗୋଳ
ଉଚ୍ଚ ପଦବୀରେ ନିଜେ ରହିଛନ୍ତି
ରେଶନକାର୍ଡକୁ ହାତ ପାତିଛନ୍ତି
ଅଭାବରେ କରେ ଚାଷୀ ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା
ଆଶାନ୍ତିରେ ଅଛି ଆମରି ଜନତା
ଜନତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ୱାର୍ଥ କେହି ଦେଖୁନାହିଁ
କୁମ୍ଭୀର କାନ୍ଦଣା କହୁ କାହିଁପାଇଁ ?
ଯାହା କରୁଅଛ ଭାବି ଚିନ୍ତି କର
ଶାସକ, ବିରୋଧୀ ଏ ତୁମ ବିଚାର
ଜନ ସାଧାରଣ ଚେଇଁ ଶୋଇଛନ୍ତି
ଉଚିତ୍ ଜବାବ ଦେବେ କହୁଛନ୍ତି
ପାଞ୍ଚ ବରଷରେ ଥରେ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଳି
ଶକ୍ତି ଦେଖାଇବ ତାଙ୍କ ହାତ କାଳି

(ଏ ମୋର ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ଅଭିମତ ନୁହେଁ । ଯାହା ବିଭିନ୍ନ
ଖବର କାଗଜରେ କି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ ପାଇଛି
ତାହାକୁ ଏ କବିତାରେ ଲେଖା ଯାଇଛି ।)

ଜୀବନ ସମୀକ୍ଷା

ଡଃ ରବି ନାରାୟଣ ମିଶ୍ର

‘ଅସ୍ତି ଗୋଦାବରୀ ତୀରେ ବିଶାଳ ସାଙ୍କଳୀ ତରୁ’
“ହିତୋପଦେଶ”ର ଏହି ବିଷ୍ଣୁଗର୍ମା ବଚନରୁ
ପାଇଥିଲି ଯିବାର ପ୍ରବଳ ବାସନା
ଆଉ ଜୀବନର ମୂଲ୍ୟ ବୋଧ ଓ ସଂଜ୍ଞତ ରସନା

ଶୈଶବ କୈଶୋର ଶେଷେ ଯୌବନର ଉପସ୍ଥାନେ
ଭଲ ଭେଲ ବିଚାରିବା ଭାବିବାର ଅନୁପାନେ
ଶିଖୁଥିଲି ମଣିଷ ପଣିଆ ର ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରା
ଆଉ ତାହାରି ବଳରେ ଚାଲିଲି ଜୀବନ ସାରା

ଇତରେ ସଦିକ୍ଷା ତଥା ଗୁରୁଜନେ ସପ୍ରଣାମ
ସମର୍ପଣେ ମିଳିଥିଲା ଅଶେଷ ଯଶ ସମ୍ମାନ
ଭୁଲିଥିଲି କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁ ଅଲୋଡ଼ା ଅମ୍ଳାନ ମନ
ଆଉ ମନର କନ୍ଦରେ
ସାଇତିଥିଲି କେଇଟି
ଅଭୁଲା ସ୍ମୃତି ଏବଂ ଅମିଚିତ ଅଭିମାନ

ଜୀବନର ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରାଗ
ଆଜିର ହିସାବ ନିକାସ ଫର୍ଦ୍ଦ ରେ
ଜେଉଁ କେଇଟି ଅଲିଭା ଦାଗ
ଏ ଯାବତ୍ ବିଦ୍ୟମାନ
ତାର ଏକ ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ ପରେ
ଦେଖୁଛି ମୁଁ;
ଦେବା ଠାରୁଁ ନେବା ମୋର ବହୁଗୁଣ ବେଶୀ
ପୁଣ୍ୟ ଠାରୁଁ ପାପ ଭାର ଗୁରୁତ୍ଵର ପୀଡ଼ିତ ମୁଁ
ପୁଣି ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଚାହେଁ -
‘ଅସ୍ତି ଗୋଦାବରୀ ତୀରେ ବିଶାଳ ସାଙ୍କଳୀ ତରୁ’

ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା : ଇତିହାସର ସ୍ମୃତିତୀର୍ଥ

ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ମନୋରମା ମହାପାତ୍ର,

“ଇତିହାସର ଲଳାଟପତେ ବହିଟୀକା ଯଥା,
ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଏଇ ଜାତି ଲେଖିବ ଆଜି
କୀର୍ତ୍ତିଭରା ଅଭୁଲା ସେହି ଉତ୍ତରାଳୟା ।”

ଇତିହାସ ଚିରକାଳ ମନ୍ତ୍ରଦାତା-ଶିକ୍ଷାଦାତା । ଏହା ଆତ୍ମପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟ ଜାଗ୍ରତ କରି ମହାନ ଐଶ୍ଵର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଉତ୍ତରାଧିକାରୀ ଜାତି ପ୍ରାଣରେ ସଂକଳ୍ପ ସଂଚରିତ କରାଇଥାଏ । ଜାତିକୁ ପୁନର୍ଗଠନ କରିବାରେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସହାୟକ ହୁଏ । ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିକୁ ଆତ୍ମାବଲୋକନ ଓ ଆତ୍ମସମୀକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରେ ।

କୀର୍ତ୍ତିଭରା କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ମାସ-ଆମ କୀର୍ତ୍ତିର ପ୍ରତୀକ- ‘ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା’ । କେବଳ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ କିମ୍ବା ଧାର୍ମିକ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୁ କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ମାସ ଯେ ସୁପବିତ୍ର କରେ ତାହା ନୁହେଁ, ତତ୍ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଙ୍ଗେ ସଂଯୁକ୍ତ ଐତିହାସିକ ଉନ୍ନତ ଗାଥା ମନେ ପକାଇଦିଏ । ଶିକ୍ଷା, ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ, କଳା, ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟ, ସମୃଦ୍ଧି, ବୀରତ୍ଵ-ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନର କାହାଣୀ ଯାହା ଇତିହାସରେ ଲିପିବଦ୍ଧ-ତାରି ସ୍ମୃତିଚାରଣ ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ କୀର୍ତ୍ତିବିଭୂଷିତ କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ମାସର ଏହି ‘ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା’ ମହୋତ୍ସବ । ଉକ୍ରଷ୍ଟ କଳାର ଦେଶ ଉକ୍ରଳ, ଏହାର ଅନ୍ୟନାମ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ସାମ୍ରାଜ୍ୟ । ଏହାର ବୀର ସାହସୀ ସନ୍ତାନ ମାନଙ୍କର ବିଶ୍ଵଭୁବନରେ ଅର୍ଜିତ୍ଵା କୀର୍ତ୍ତିରାଜିର ସ୍ଵରଣ, ରୋମଛନ୍ଦ ଓ ଆତ୍ମସମୀକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ । ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା ପୂର୍ବ ଗୌରବକୁ ପୁନର୍ଜୀବିତ କରିବା ସହ ନୂତନ ଉତ୍ସାହ ଓ ସଂକଳ୍ପରେ ରକ୍ଷିତ ହେବା ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସମର୍ପିତ । ଐତିହାସିକ ସମୃଦ୍ଧିସ୍ଵାତ, ସ୍ମୃତି ମଞ୍ଜୁଳ ବର୍ଷର ସୁମହକ ମାସ କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ।

“ଆ-କା-ମା-ଭୈ / ଆସନ୍ତା କାର୍ତ୍ତିକରେ ଫେରିବି ଭୟ କରନାହିଁ । ଭାସମାନ ବୋଇତରୁ ଭାସିଆସୁଥିଲା କାହାର ଜଳଦଗନ୍ଧାର ସ୍ଵର ବୀରା ନାରୀକୁ ସମ୍ବୋଧିତ କଣ୍ଠସ୍ଵର ଥିଲା ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୀର - ସାଧବ ପୁଅ ମାନଙ୍କର” - ଏବେବି ଏ ବାଣୀ ଆକାଶ-ପବନ-ପ୍ରାଣ କନ୍ଦରରେ ସଂଚରିତ କରେ ଉଦ୍ଘାତନା, ବିଜୟବାଣୀ । ଏ ଜାତି ନିର୍ଭୀକ-ଆତ୍ମପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟ ଭରା । ତ୍ୟାଗଦୀପ୍ତ ଏକ ବୀର ଜାତିକୁ ପ୍ରଣ କରାଇଦିଏ । ଶତସିଂହର ବଳ ପ୍ରାଣ ଭିତରେ ଉଦବେଳନ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରେ । ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନର ମନ୍ତ୍ରରେ ମନ୍ତ୍ରିତ ହୁଏ ଦେହ, ମନ, ପ୍ରାଣ । ଦେଶପ୍ରେମରେ ପରିପ୍ଳୁତ ହୁଏ ସମଗ୍ର ଚିତ୍ତ ଓ ସମଗ୍ର ପରିବେଶ । ସାତ ସମୁଦ୍ର ତେର ନଇ ପାରି ହୋଇ ବୋଇତରେ ପାଲ ମେଲୁଥିଲା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାଧବପଥ । ‘ବାଣିଜ୍ୟେ ବସତେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ’, ଫେରିଆସୁଥିଲା କାର୍ତ୍ତିକରେ ବହୁ ମୂଲ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପଦ ବିଦେଶରୁ ଆଣି-ବୀରାଗୃହିଣୀ ବନ୍ଦନା କରି ପାଛୋଟି ନେଉଥିଲା ପ୍ରିୟତମକୁ-ସମଗ୍ର ସାମଗ୍ରୀ ସହ । ଏବେବି ସେହି ଅକ୍ଷୟ ସ୍ମୃତିକୁ ସମ୍ମାନ ଜଣାଇ ଓଡ଼ିଆଘର ବୋହୁ ଅଗଣାରେ ବୋଇତ କରୁଛି ମୁରୁଜରେ । ଏହା କଳାର ନିଦର୍ଶନ । ବହୁ ମୂଲ୍ୟବାନ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ଥୋଇ ବିଧି ରକ୍ଷା କରି ସ୍ଵରଣ କରେ । କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣିମାରେ ବୋଇତ ବନ୍ଦାଣ ଉତ୍ସବ ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ସେହି ଐତିହାସିକ ଗୌରବ ଉତ୍କଳ ଅଧ୍ୟାୟକୁ ସ୍ଵରଣ କରି ପାଳିତ ହେଉଛି ନଦୀ, ସମୁଦ୍ର ତଟରେ ମହାସମାରୋହରେ । ଉକ୍ରଳର ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଯଶକୀର୍ତ୍ତି ସମ୍ବଳିତ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ ପର୍ବ କଟକର ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା । ଯଥାର୍ଥରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ କବି ଲେଖିଛନ୍ତି-

“ଯେ ଜାତିର ବୋଇତ ଭାସଇ ସାତ ସମୁଦର ତେର ନଇରେ
ସେ ଜାତିକୁ ହତଭାଗା ବୋଲି ଏତେ ଛାତି କା’ର ଦେବ କହିରେ ।”

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବୀର ଜାତି-ଭାଗ୍ୟବାନ ଜାତି-ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ସର୍ବଧର୍ମ ସମନ୍ୱୟର ବାହକ । ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ଦୁର୍ଜୟ ଏ ଜାତି ଥିଲା ଉଚ୍ଚତମ କଳା, ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ବିଭବ, ବୀରତ୍ୱରେ ବିଭୂଷିତ ରାଜ୍ୟ-ଶେଷ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ-୧୮୦୩-ସାକ୍ଷୀ ବୀରବାଟୀ ଦୁର୍ଗ-ସାକ୍ଷୀ ମହାନଦୀ । ମହାନଦୀରେ ଜ୍ୟୋତ୍ସ୍ନାବିହାର କବିତାରେ ମହାନ କବି ମାୟାଧର ମାନସିଂହ ଲେଖିଲେ-

“ଏ ସ୍ୱର୍ଗ ସୁଷମା ଯା’ର କରବି ବିଶ୍ୱାସ
କେମନ୍ତେ କହଲୋ ତା’ର ଅନ୍ତର ଅଭାବ ?
ସୁରାସମ ମୁଗ୍ଧ କରେ ମୋରେ ଯା ନିଃଶ୍ୱାସ
ତାହା ଦେହେ ସମ୍ଭବ କାହୁଁ ଦୁର୍ଦ୍ଦିନ ପ୍ରଭାବ ।”

ଏ ତଟିନୀ ମହାନଦୀ ସାକ୍ଷୀ ମହାସମୃଦ୍ଧିର ଉକ୍ରଲର । ନବ ଉକ୍ରଲର ନିର୍ମାତା, ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନର ମନ୍ତ୍ରଦାତା, ଉକ୍ରଲ ଗୌରବ ମଧୁସୂଦନ ଯଥାର୍ଥରେ ଲେଖିଲେ :

“ଜାତି ଇତିହାସ ଜାତିର ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧର
ତହୁଁ ବହେ ସଦା ଜାତି ପ୍ରାଣ ଧାର
ସେ ଧାରରୁ ନୀର ପିଏ ଯେଉଁ ନର
ଭାବି ଉକ୍ରଲର ସିଏ କର୍ଣ୍ଣଧାର ।”

କବି ପଦ୍ମଚରଣ ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ ଲେଖିଲେ :

“ଅତୀତକୁ ସାକ୍ଷୀ ରଖି ଗଢ଼ିଯାଅ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ
ଅନଙ୍ଗ ଯଯାତି ଦେଶ ନୁହେଁ ନୀଳ, ନୁହେଁ ସାନ”

ଜାତିପ୍ରାଣ ଧାରରେ ସ୍ନାନ କର, ଅତୀତ ହିଁ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନକୁ ସୁସଂଗଠିତ କରିବାକୁ ପ୍ରେରଣା ଦେବ । ଜୀବନ୍ତ ଜାତିକୁ ଜାଗ୍ରତ କରାଇବା ପାଇଁ ଇତିହାସରୁ ବୀରମ୍ଭାର ଶିକ୍ଷା ନେବାକୁ ହୁଏ । ଇତିହାସ ହିଁ ନୈରାଶ୍ୟ ନିଦ୍ରାରେ ଜଡ଼ିତ ଜାତିର ନେତ୍ର ଖୋଲିଦିଏ । ଆତ୍ମବଳ ଶୂନ୍ୟ ଜାତିକୁ ଆତ୍ମପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟ ମଣ୍ଡିତ କରେ ଜାତି ଇତିହାସ ଜାତି ନିଦ୍ରାଭଙ୍ଗର ମହୋଷଧି । ପ୍ରଥତଃ ଯଶା କବି ଗୋଦାବରୀଶ ମହାପାତ୍ର କଙ୍କାଳ ଦେହରେ ପ୍ରାଣ ସଞ୍ଚାର ପାଇଁ ବୀରବାଟୀ ଦୁର୍ଗ ପାଖରେ ବସି ରଚିଲେ କାଳଜୟୀ କବିତା ‘ଉଠ କଙ୍କାଳ’ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପୁଅକୁ ଐତିହ୍ୟ, ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ବୀରତ୍ୱ ଶୁଣାଇ ଉଜ୍ଜୀବିତ କରାଇବା ପାଇଁ ହୃଦୟସ୍ପର୍ଶୀ କବିତା ରଚନା କଲେ । ଐତିହ୍ୟକୁ ରୋମଢନ କରି ପୂର୍ବସୂରୀ ମାନେ ଉତ୍ତର କାଳକୁ ମାର୍ଗ ଦେଖାଇ ଉଜ୍ଜୀବିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଚରଣେ ଯତ୍ନରେ ଅଭିମନ୍ବିତ କରିଛନ୍ତି ଦେଶପ୍ରେମୀ ବୀରବାଟୀ ଦୁର୍ଗର କୀର୍ତ୍ତିଗାଥା ଗାଇଛନ୍ତି ଯଶସ୍ୱୀ କବି :

“ହାତ ପାଶୁଁ ଆଜି ଭାଷା ବହି ଆସୁ, ପୁରୁ ମତାମୁଖେ ହସ
ଭଗ୍ନ ଏ ଗତ ମନ୍ଦିରେ ଶୁଭ୍ର, ଦୁମୁଖି ଅର୍ହନିଶ ।
ଶମଶାନ ଧୂଳି ଅଞ୍ଜି ଭରି, ଘେନ ପୁରବାସୀ ଜନ
ଲକ୍ଷ ଜୀବନ ସାକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ଦେଉରେ, ଗଉରବେ ମହାୟାନ ।
ଉଠ କଙ୍କାଳ ଛିଡ଼ୁ ଶୃଙ୍ଖଳ, ଜାଗ ଦୁର୍ବଳ ଆଜି
ଉଠୁ ଗତ ଗୌରବ, ହୃତ ଗୌରବ, ମୃତ ଗୌରବ ରାଜି ।”

ଇତିହାସ ଜାତି ନିର୍ମାଣ କରେ । ଜାତି ନିର୍ମାଣରେ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ ସାଧକ ଉକ୍ରଲମଣି ଗୋପବନ୍ଧୁ ଦାସ ଲେଖିଯାଇଛନ୍ତି ତାହା ଚିରସ୍ମରଣୀୟ ।

“ପୂର୍ବପୁରୁଷଙ୍କ ପବିତ୍ର ଶ୍ଳାଘା
 ଦେଶର, ଜାତିର ଗଭରବ ଗାନ
 ପୁଣ୍ୟ ଜନ୍ମମାଟି, ପୁଣ୍ୟ ଦେବାଳୟ
 ଉଦ୍ଧରିବା ପାଇଁ କଲେ ତନୁ କ୍ଷୟ ।
 ମାନବ ଜନମ ହୁଅଇ ସଫଳ
 ଏ ମହାଦୀକ୍ଷା କି ବୁଝିବ ଉକ୍ରମ ?”

ମହାଦୀକ୍ଷା ଦିଏ ଇତିହାସ । ‘ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା’ ସେହି ଅତୀତ ଗୌରବ-ବୈଭବ-ସମୃଦ୍ଧି, ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନ, ଉକ୍ରମ ନୌବାଣିଜ୍ୟର ତଥ୍ୟ ଆଧାରିତ ଗାଥାର ରୋମଛନ୍ଦ ଦିବସ । ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା, ସ୍ମୃତିତୀର୍ଥ ଯାତ୍ରା । ସେ ଯୁଗରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପୁଅ ସାଧବ ମାନେ ସୁଦୂର ବାଲି, ଜାଭା, ବୋର୍ଣ୍ଣିଓ, ସୁମାତ୍ରା ଆଦି ଦ୍ଵୀପପୁଞ୍ଜକୁ ଯାତ୍ରା କରି ବହୁମୂଲ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପଦ ସବୁ ଆମ ଉତ୍ପାଦନର ବିନିମୟରେ ଆଣୁଥିଲେ କଟକ ନଗରକୁ । ଐତିହାସିକ ସ୍ମୃତି ବିଜଡ଼ିତ ଗଡ଼ଗଡ଼ିଆ ଘାଟ-ପୁଣ୍ୟତୋୟା ମହାନଦୀ ତାର ମୁକସାକ୍ଷୀ । ସୁ-ପବିତ୍ର କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣମୀ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚେତନା, ଐତିହ୍ୟ, ସ୍ଵାଭିମାନ ତଥା ଆତ୍ମାବଲୋକନର ଦିବସ । ଐତିହାସିକ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିକୋଣରୁ ଏହି ଦିବସର ମହତ୍ତ୍ଵ ଓ ଗୁରୁତ୍ଵ ଅପରିସୀମା । ଉକ୍ରମର ନୌବାଣିଜ୍ୟ, ବିରାଟ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ଜାତିର କୀର୍ତ୍ତିରାଜି ଉତ୍ତରପାଞ୍ଚିଙ୍କ ଜ୍ଞାତବ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ ଉଦ୍ଦିଷ୍ଟ କାର୍ତ୍ତିକର ଏହି ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା ମହୋତ୍ସବ । ଅତୀତର ସ୍ମୃତି ସହ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର ସମୃଦ୍ଧିର ସମନ୍ୱୟ ଯାତ୍ରା । ଦକ୍ଷିଣପୂର୍ବ ଏସିଆର ଦ୍ଵୀପପୁଞ୍ଜରେ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ସାଧବ ଯେ ଖାଲି ବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ବେପାର ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଅର୍ଥ ଉତ୍ପାଦନ କରୁଥିଲା ତାହା ନୁହେଁ ଅଧିକତ୍ର, କଳା, ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ପ୍ରସାର କରିଥିଲା । କଳିଙ୍ଗର ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ସାମ୍ରାଜ୍ୟ ସେସବୁ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ସ୍ଥାପନ କରି ବିଜୟ ପତାକା ଉଡ଼ାଇଥିଲା । କଳିଙ୍ଗ ବୀରର ସେସବୁ ଗୌରବର ସମସ୍ତ ପ୍ରମାଣ ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଇଣ୍ଡୋନେସିଆ, ଥାଇଲାଣ୍ଡ, ଶ୍ରୀଲଙ୍କା, ବାଲି, ତଥା ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଦ୍ଵୀପପୁଞ୍ଜରେ ଦେଖିବାକୁ ମିଳୁଛି । ପ୍ରାଣ ଉଲ୍ଲସି ଉଠୁଛି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅତୀତ ଗୌରବ ସ୍ମରଣ କରି । ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଉକ୍ରମୀୟ କଳା, ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟର ବହୁ ଚିତ୍ର ସେ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ବିଦ୍ୟମାନ । ମନ୍ଦିର ଗାତ୍ର, ବୌଦ୍ଧ କାର୍ତ୍ତି ଲୋକ ମାନଙ୍କ ନାମକରଣରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂପୃକ୍ତି, ଭାଷା ଓ ବୀରତ୍ଵର ଛାପ ଦେଖିଲେ ଅନିର୍ବଚନୀୟ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଓ ଦୀପ୍ତିରେ ଚିତ୍ତ ଉଦ୍ଧଳ ହୁଏ । କି ତମକ୍ରୀର ସାମ୍ରାଜ୍ୟ ସତେ ! କୋଣାର୍କ ଗାତ୍ରର ସୁନ୍ଦର ନାରୀମୂର୍ତ୍ତି ପରି ଅବିକଳ ଶ୍ରୀମୟୀ ଶ୍ରୀଲଙ୍କାର ତରୁଣୀଗଣ । ପ୍ରମାଣ ସ୍ମୃତି ଅଜସ୍ର ।

ଇତିହାସ କହେ ଖ୍ରୀ.ପୂ ୭ମ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ସମ୍ରାଟ ଶୈଳେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଦକ୍ଷିଣପୂର୍ବ ଏସିଆର ଏହି ଦ୍ଵୀପ ମାନଙ୍କରେ ଶାସକ ଭାବେ ଅଧିଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଥିଲେ । ଏପରିକି ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟପୂର୍ବ ପଞ୍ଚମ ଓ ଷଷ୍ଠ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀ ବେଳକୁ ତତ୍କାଳୀନ ଉକ୍ରମର ନୌବାଣିଜ୍ୟର ଅସାଧାରଣ ଅଗ୍ରଗତିର ସ୍ଵାକ୍ଷର ସେସବୁକୁ ସ୍ଥାପତ୍ୟରେ ଅଦ୍ୟପି ବିଦ୍ୟମାନ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଉପକୂଳରେ ସେତେବେଳେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ କେତେକ ବନ୍ଦରରୁ ନୌଯାତ୍ରା ହେଉଥିଲା । ଇତିହାସ ପୃଷ୍ଠାରେ ପରିବ୍ରାଜକ ମେଘାସିନିସ୍ ଓ ହୁଏନ୍ସାଙ୍କ ବିବରଣୀରୁ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ସୂଚନା ମିଳେ । ମେଘାସିନିସ୍ଙ୍କ ଭାରତ ବିବରଣୀରୁ ଜଣାଯାଏ ଯେ ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟପୂର୍ବ ଚତୁର୍ଥ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ କଳିଙ୍ଗର ଲଙ୍କାଦ୍ଵୀପ ସହ ନୌବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ଅତି ଉନ୍ନତ ଥିଲା ।

ହାତୀ ଗୁମ୍ଫା ଅନୁଶାସନରେ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ସମ୍ରାଟ ଖାରବେଳଙ୍କ କାର୍ତ୍ତି-ବୋଇତ ଓ ହାତୀ ଉପହାର ଦେବା କଥା ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ । ଏପରିକି ଅଶୋକଙ୍କ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ଅଭିଯାନ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ବ୍ରହ୍ମ ଦେଶରେ ଉକ୍ରମୀୟ ଉପନିବେଶ ମାନ ସ୍ଥାପିତ ହୋଇସାରିଥିଲା । ଇଣ୍ଡୋନେସିଆ ଓ ମାଲେସିଆରେ ଏବେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏକ ଜାତିର ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ‘କ୍ଲିଙ୍ଗ’ ଭାବେ ସମ୍ବୋଧନ କରାଯାଏ । କ୍ଲିଙ୍ଗ ଯେ କଳିଙ୍ଗ ଶବ୍ଦର ଅପଭ୍ରଂଶ ଏହା ଏବେ ନିଃସନ୍ଦେହରେ କୁହାଯାଇପାରେ । କବି ମାୟାଧର ମାନସିଂହଙ୍କ ଅପୂର୍ବ କବିତା ‘ସାଧବ ଝିଅ’ ଏହାର ସତ୍ୟତା ପ୍ରମାଣ କରୁନାହିଁକି ? ବୈବାହିକ ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧ ମଧ୍ୟ ଏମାନଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସ୍ଥାପିତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ଉକ୍ରମୀୟ ବାଣିଜ୍ୟର ପ୍ରାଚୀନତା ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଦ୍ଵୀପରେ ଐତିହାସିକ ମଜୁମଦାର ବହୁ ତଥ୍ୟ ପ୍ରମାଣ ଲିପିବଦ୍ଧ କରିଛନ୍ତି । ପ୍ରଥମ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀରେ ଚୀନ୍ ସହ ତତ୍କାଳୀନ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ଓ ସାମାଜିକ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ସୁଦୃଢ଼

ଥୁଲା । ବହୁ ଗବେଷକ ଏହି ମତ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଦଉବଂଶ, ଲଳିତ ବିଷ୍ଣୁ ଓ ସିନ୍ଧୁକି ପ୍ରଭୃତି ବୌଦ୍ଧଗ୍ରନ୍ଥରେ ଏହାର ପ୍ରମାଣ ମିଳେ । ଏତଦ୍ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ମହାନଗରୀ ରୋମ୍ ସହ ମଧ୍ୟ କଳିଙ୍ଗର ନୌବାଣିଜ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ କୁହାଯାଇଛି ଯେ ସେଠାରେ କଳିଙ୍ଗର ଅତି ସୁସ୍ଥ ବସ୍ତ୍ର ସହ ସମ୍ବଲପୁରର ହୀରା ମଧ୍ୟ ଯାଇ ଖୁବ୍ ପ୍ରଶଂସିତ ଓ ଆଦୃତ ହେଉଥିଲା । ସମ୍ରାଟ ଖାରବେଳଙ୍କ ରାଜୁତି କାଳରେ ପାରସ୍ୟ ଉପକୂଳରେ କଳିଙ୍ଗର ବାଣିଜ୍ୟିକ କାରବାର କେତେ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ଥିଲା ଐତିହାସିକ ମାନେ ତାହା ବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଆମ କୀର୍ତ୍ତି ଅସୀମ-ଅଥଚ ଆମେ ସଚେତନ କେତେ ଜଣ ? ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ ଅର୍କ୍ଷେନ୍ଦ୍ର କୋଶାର୍କ ମନ୍ଦିର ଆମ ଅତୀତ ନୌବାଣିଜ୍ୟର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟକ୍ଷ ସାକ୍ଷୀ । ଏହି ମନ୍ଦିର ଦେହରେ ଉକ୍ରଳୀୟ ନୌବାଣିଜ୍ୟର ବହୁ ଚିତ୍ର ଖୋଦିତ ହୋଇ ବହୁ ପ୍ରମାଣ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରେ । ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ବୈତାଳ ମନ୍ଦିରର ଶୀର୍ଷ ଦେଶ ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବୋଇତ ଢାଞ୍ଚାରେ ନିର୍ମିତ । ଏହି ବହୁ ପୁରାତନ ମନ୍ଦିରର ସ୍ମୃତି-ସ୍ମାରକୀ ଜାତିକୁ ଚେତାଇ ଦିଏ ।

କଳ୍ପନା କରନ୍ତୁତ, ଯେଉଁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତିର ଅତୀତ ଏତେ ଗୌରବମୟ-ବୀରରକ୍ତ ପିଣ୍ଡରେ ଗଢ଼ା, ସେହ ମାଟିର ସନ୍ତାନ ଏବେ ହୀନପ୍ରଭା ହୋଇପାରିବ ? ଇତିହାସରୁ ଶିକ୍ଷାଲାଭ କରି ଚିନ୍ତନ, ସାଧନ ଓ ଯଥାର୍ଥ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରିପାରିଲେ ଏଇ ବୀର ଜାତିର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ବହୁଗୁଣ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ଉଜ୍ଜ୍ୱଳ ହେବ ଏଥିରେ ବିନ୍ଦୁ ମାତ୍ରେ ସନ୍ଦେହ ନାହିଁ । ମନେ ରଖିବାକୁ ହେବ, ବୀର ରକ୍ତରେ ବୀର ଗଢ଼ା ହେବେ । ଆମେ କେତେ ଉନ୍ନତ-ଆଦର୍ଶ-ସଂସ୍କୃତି-ସଭ୍ୟତା ଓ ଜ୍ଞାନର ଉତ୍ତରାଧିକାରୀ, ତାହା ନବୀନ ଯୁଗର ନବପାଢ଼ିକୁ ଚିହ୍ନାଇ ଦେବାର ଏକ ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ପ୍ରୟାସ । କଟକ ମହାନଗରୀରେ ମହାନଦୀ ତୀରରେ ହେଉଥିବା ଇତିହାସ ପ୍ରସିଦ୍ଧ ମହାପର୍ବ ‘ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା ମହୋତ୍ସବ’ । ସେ କାଳର ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା ଆହୁରି ସଂପ୍ରସାରିତ ଓ କ୍ରମ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇଛି କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ କାଳର ଆତ୍ମୀୟତାର ମହକ ଜାତୀୟ ସଂହତିର ସୁବାସ, ଆତ୍ମପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟର ଐଜଲ୍ୟ ଆଜି ହଜିଗଲା ଭଳି ବୋଧ ହେଉଛି । ଉପଭୋଗ୍ୟବାଦ ପ୍ରାଧାନ୍ୟ ପାଇଛି । ଜାତୀୟ ଜୀବନ ପ୍ରତି ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା, ଐତିହ୍ୟକୀର୍ତ୍ତି-ଆତ୍ମପ୍ରତ୍ୟୟ ସହ କଠୋର ଶ୍ରମ କରି ଜାତିର ଉତ୍ଥାନ ପାଇଁ ଶପଥବଦ୍ଧ ହେବାର ମନ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଅଭିମନ୍ବିତ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ବହୁନାହିଁ-ଜନଗହଳି ବଢ଼ିଛି । ମାତ୍ର ଏହାହିଁ ଥୁଲା ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରାର ମୌଳିକ ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ । ଏହାର ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ନବ ନବ ରୀତି, ଅଦମ୍ୟ ଉତ୍ସାହ ଉଦ୍ଦୀପନା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଯାତ୍ରାର ମୌଳିକ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ହଜି ନଯାଉ-ଏହା ହିଁ କାମନା ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତି ଯେ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ବିଭବ ମଣ୍ଡିତ ତ୍ୟାଗଦୀପ୍ତ ଉନ୍ନତ ଚିନ୍ତାର ବାହକ ତା’ର ସ୍ମାରକୀ ପବିତ୍ର କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ବ୍ରତ ଓ ତୁଳସୀ ପୂଜା । ନୈତିକ ବଳ ହିଁ ସର୍ବଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ବଳ । ଗୌରବକୁ ସଂରକ୍ଷିତ ରଖେ ନୈତିକ ବଳ । ମହାବୀର ଜଳକ୍ଷର ପତ୍ନୀ ବୃନ୍ଦାବତୀ ଆଜି ବନ୍ଦିତା, ପୂଜିତା - ସ୍ୱୟଂ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ସହ ସମାସନର ଅଧିଷ୍ଠାତା ‘ତୁଳସୀ’ । ପବିତ୍ର କାର୍ତ୍ତିକ ବ୍ରତ ପ୍ରମାଣ କରୁଛି ଯେ, ଯୁଗେ ଯୁଗେ ନୈତିକ ବଳ ନଥିଲେ କେବଳ ଦହିକ ବଳ ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ଆଣିଦେଇପାରେ ନାହିଁ ।

ସମଗ୍ର ମାନବ ସମାଜର ଉତ୍ଥାନ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଉକ୍ରଳୀୟ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ସାରକଥା, ନୈତିକତାକୁ ଆଧାର କରି ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ ସହ ଜାତୀୟ ଜୀବନକୁ ପରିଚ୍ଛନ୍ନ ଓ ପରିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କରିବାର ସଂକଳ୍ପ ନେଇ ଉକ୍ରଳର ତରୁଣ ତରୁଣୀ ମାନେ ଅପସଂସ୍କୃତି କବଳରୁ ଏ ମହାନ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଓ ଐତିହ୍ୟକୁ ରକ୍ଷା କରି ଆତ୍ମବଳଯୁକ୍ତ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ । ଗଙ୍ଗା ଭଳି ତ୍ରିପଥଗାମୀ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ, ବିପଥଗାମୀ ନ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ । ଅନ୍ୟକୁ ଆନନ୍ଦ ଦେଲେ ଆନନ୍ଦ ମିଳେ । ଅପୁରୁଷ ଶକ୍ତିମୟୀ ଉକ୍ରଳ ଜନନୀ ତାର ସୁରକ୍ଷା କବଚ । ସେ ଛଳନାର ବେଡ଼ି ଫିଙ୍ଗି, ଭୟକୁ ଦୂର କରି ତ୍ୟାଗ ମନ୍ତ୍ରରେ ଅଭିଷକ୍ତ ହେବାର ଚେତାବନୀ ଅହରହ ସନ୍ତାନ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶୁଣାଉଛି । ଏ ପବିତ୍ର ବାଲିଯାତ୍ରା ଦିବସ କେବଳ ଭୋଗବାଦର ଦିବସ ନ ହୋଇ ଆତ୍ମାବଲୋକନ ଓ ଆତ୍ମସମୀକ୍ଷାର ପବିତ୍ର ଦିବସ ହେଉ-ତେବେ ଯାଇଁ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ପୂରଣ ହେବ । ସଂହତି-ସାମ୍ୟ-ମୈତ୍ରୀ, ଦେଶପ୍ରେମ-ସ୍ୱାଭିମାନ ତଥା ମାନବବାଦ ସଂଚରିତ ହେଉ ପ୍ରତିଟି ପ୍ରାଣରେ ।

ପଦାରବିନ୍ଦ ନିଳୟ,
ଶ୍ରୀବିହାର କଲୋନୀ, କଟକ-୮

ବୋଉର ଚିଠିକୁ ଦଶ ଥର ପଢ଼ି ସାରିଲେଣି ଲିପିକା କାଲି ଠାରୁ ଆଜି ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତଥାପି ଆହୁରି ପଢ଼ିବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା ହେଉଛି । ବୋଉ ଚିଠିରେ ସେପରି କିଛି ନୁହେଁ ନାହିଁ । ସେଇ ଏକା କଥାର ପୁନରାବୃତ୍ତି । କେବେ ଆସିବୁ, ତୋ ମୁହଁ ସବୁବେଳେ ଦିଶି ଯାଉଛି ତାପରେ ବନ୍ଧୁ ବାନ୍ଧବଙ୍କ ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ, ତା ପୁଅ ବୋହୂ ନାତୁଣିଙ୍କ ଖବର ଇତ୍ୟାଦି.....ସିଏ ବି ପୁଣି ଚାରି ପାଞ୍ଚ ଧାତିରେ ଶେଷ । ତାପରେ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହୁଏ ଉପଦେଶ । ଯଦିଓ ସେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି ସେ ଉପଦେଶ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ କଣ, ତଥାପି ସେ ପଢ଼ନ୍ତି ।

ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଶିଖେଇବା ନିହାତି ଦରକାର । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ଚାଲି ଚଳନ, ରୀତି ନୀତି ଖାଦ୍ୟରେ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ମଧ୍ୟ କରେଇବା ନିହାତି ଦରକାର । ନଚେତ୍ ସେମାନେ ଖରାପ ହୋଇଯିବେ । ବୋଉ ସବୁବେଳେ ଚିଠି ଲେଖି ପଠାଉଛି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ । ପିଲାମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନ ଶିଖିଲେ ଯେ କାହିଁକି ଖରାପ ହୋଇଯିବେ ‘ଲିପିକା’ ବୁଝି ପାରୁ ନଥିଲେ । ପିଲାମାନେ ତାଙ୍କର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ନ ଶିଖିଲେ ବି କଣ ହେଲା ଆମେରୀକା ସଂସ୍କୃତି ତ ଶିଖୁଛନ୍ତି । ଜୀବନରେ କିଛି ଗୋଟାଏ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଶିଖିଲେ ହେଲା । ଲକ୍ଷ ଲକ୍ଷ ଲୋକ ଆମେରୀକାରେ ତ ଏଇ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ନେଇ ଚଳି ଆରମ୍ଭରେ ଅଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କର ତ କାହିଁ କିଛି ଅସୁବିଧା ହେଉନି । ହା! ବୋଉ ଯୋଉଥି ପାଇଁ ତରୁଛି, ତାହା ସବୁ ଦେଶରେ ଅଛି । ସବୁ କାଳରେ ବି ଅଛି, ମହାଭାରତ, ରାମାୟଣ ଯୁଗରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ଏ କାଳ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ।

ବୋଉ ଯେ କାହିଁକି ଏପରି ଲେଖୁଛି ଲିପିକା ପୁରା ବୁଝି ପାରୁଛନ୍ତି । ବୋଉର ସେ ଏକ ମାତ୍ର ଝିଅ ଦୁଇ ପୁଅରେ ଏବଂ ବୋଉ ଲିପିକାଙ୍କର ଦୁଇ ଝିଅଙ୍କୁ ବହୁତ ଭଲ ପାଏ । ଲିପିକା ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଗଲେ ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଥଙ୍ଗା ମଙ୍ଗା କରିବାକୁ ବୋଉ ଭଲ ପାଏ କିନ୍ତୁ ପିଲା ମାନେ ଭାଇ ମାନଙ୍କ ପିଲାଙ୍କ ପରି ବୋଉ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ମିଶି ପାରନ୍ତିନି କି ତା ଥଙ୍ଗା ମଙ୍ଗା କଥା ବୁଝି ପାରନ୍ତିନି । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ବୋଉର ମନ ଦୁଃଖ । ପିଲାମାନେ ଆମେରୀକାରେ ବଢ଼ି, ଆମେରୀକାର ଚାଲି ଚଳଣ ସହିତ ନିଜକୁ ମିଶେଇ ସାରିଲେଣି ତାଙ୍କୁ ଅଦେଖା ଅଜଣା ଆଉ ଏକ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଶିଖେଇବା ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଅଯଥା ଚାପ । ଏଠିକା ଚାଲି ଚଳଣ ସଂଗେ ଖାପଖୁଆଇ ନିଜର କର୍ମ ମୟ ଜୀବନ ସଂଗେ ଏସବୁ କରିବା ସମୟ ସାପେକ୍ଷ । ଲିପିକାଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ଏତେ ସମୟ ବା କାହିଁ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଉକୁ ଏସବୁ ବୁଝେଇବା ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ କି ବୁଝେଇଲେ ତାର ଏକ ଯିଦିଆ ଗୁଣ ଯୋଗୁ ସେ ବୁଝିବନି । ତେଣୁ ତା ଚିଠିର ଉତ୍ତରରେ ହୁଁ ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚାଲି ଚଳଣ, ଭାଷା ଶିଖାଉଛନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ସେ ଲେଖି ଦିଅନ୍ତି ।

ସମୟ ତାର ନିୟମ ଧାରା ଅନୁସାରେ ଗତିଚାଲେ କାହାକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ନକରି । ଲିପିକା ଓ ତାଙ୍କ ବୋଉଙ୍କ ପତ୍ର ବିନିମୟ ପୂର୍ବ ପରି ଚାଲିଥାଏ । କେହି କାହା ଉତ୍ତରରେ ସନ୍ତୁଷ୍ଟ ନୁହଁନ୍ତି ବୋଲି ଜାଣିଥିଲେ ବି, ବୋଉ ସବୁବେଳେ ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ଉପଦେଶ ଦିଏ । ପିଲାମାନେ ଖରାପ ହୋଇଯିବେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚାଲି ଚଳନ ନଶିଖିଲେ । ଲିପିକାଙ୍କର ସେଇ ଗୋଟିଏ ଉତ୍ତର ହୁଁ ସେ ଶିଖୁଛନ୍ତି । ବୋଉ ଠିକ୍ ଜାଣେ ଯେ ସେମାନେ ଶିଖୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି । ଶିଖୁଥିଲେ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଚିଠି ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ଲେଖୁଥାନ୍ତେ ଓଡ଼ିଆରେ ଆଇ ପାଖକୁ ଥଙ୍ଗା ପରିହାସ କରି । ଏହା ଭିତରେ ଅନେକ ବର୍ଷ ବିତି ଗଲାଣି । ଲିପିକା ଆଜିକାଲି ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଗଲେ ଏକା ଯାଆନ୍ତି । ବୋଉକୁ ଦେଖିବା ପାଇଁ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ନବାର କିଛି ମାନେ ନାହିଁ କି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖେ ବିଶେଷ ସମୟ ମଧ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ । ତା ସାଙ୍ଗକୁ ବୋଉର ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବିକ୍ଷା ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଭାଷଣ ବି ଅଛି ।

‘ସୋନାଲ୍’ ଏବଂ ‘ମୋନାଲ୍’ ଲିପିକାଙ୍କର ଦୁଇ ଝିଅ ଏବେ କଲେଜରେ ପଢ଼ନ୍ତି । ଦୁଇ ଝିଅଙ୍କର ଦୁଇ ପୁରୁଷ ବନ୍ଧୁ, ସେ ବି ଆମେରୀକାନ୍ । ବୋଉକୁ ଏ ସବୁ ଲିପିକା ଜଣାନ୍ତିନି । ବୋଉର ରକ୍ତଚାପ କେତେ ଦ୍ରୁତତର ଗତିରେ ଯେ ଗତି କରିବ ସେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି । ଏ ବୟସରେ କାହିଁକି ଯେ ତାକୁ ଦୁଃଖ ଦେବେ, ସେଥି ପାଇଁ ସେ ଜଣାନ୍ତିନି । ବୋଉର ଚିଠିରେ ଏବେ ନୁହେଁ ନାହିଁ । ଶିଶୁ ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆଣି ଏଠି ବାହା କରେଇ ଦେଇ ଯା । ବୋଉର ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା ପସିଗଲେ ସେ କଥାଟି ରେକର୍ଡ୍ କଣ୍ଟା ପରି ଦିନ ରାତି ଘୁରୁ ଥାଏ । ବୋଉର ଏ ସବୁ ବିଷୟରେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଖେଳେଇବା ସଂପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଅନାବଶ୍ୟକ ହେଲେ ହେଁ ସେ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଖେଳାଏ ।

ଯଦିଓ ଲିପିକା ଜାଣନ୍ତି ମାଆର ମନ, ସେ ନିଜେ ବି ଜଣେ ମାଆ କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଉର ଏକଥା ତାଙ୍କର ମୋଟେ ବରଦାୟ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ । ସେହି ପୁରୁଣା ସଂକ୍ଷିପ୍ତ ହୁଁ ଦ୍ଵାରା ସେ ଚିଠି ସମାପ୍ତ କରନ୍ତି । ଏବେ କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଉ ତାର ଚିନ୍ତା ଧାରା ବଦଳେଇ ପୁରା ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବ ପଠେଇବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲାଣି । ଅମୃତ ପୁଅ ଏଇଆ କରୁଛି, ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ପୁଅ ସେଇଆ କରୁଛି । ଏହା ଏକ ବିରାଟ ଦ୍ଵିବିଧା ସମସ୍ୟା । ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଯେମିତି ସେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚାଲି ଚଳଣ, ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଶିଖେଇବାକୁ ଅସମର୍ଥ, ବୋଉକୁ ସେପରି ଆମେରୀକା ଚାଲି ଚଳଣ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବୁଝେଇବା ଅସମ୍ଭବ । ଦୁଇ ପେକ୍ଷଣ କାରୀ ଚକିର ମଝିରେ ଲିପିକା । ତାଙ୍କ ଅର୍ଦ୍ଧଦାହ କଥା ସେ କାହାକୁ କହିବେ । ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ କେବେ ସେ ଏ ବିଷୟରେ ବୁଝେଇବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରନ୍ତିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଉ ହେଉଛି ତାଙ୍କର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ୟା । ବୁଝେଇଲେ ବୁଝିବନି । ଓଲଟା ଉତ୍ତର, ଯୁକ୍ତି ତର୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ନିଜକୁ ଠିକ୍ ବୋଲି ସାବ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବ । ଶେଷରେ ଏଇଆହିଁ କହିବ –“ତତେ ଏଇ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେଇଥିଲି ମୋ କଥା କାଟି ମତେ ଜବାବ୍ ଦେବୁ ବୋଲି । ନଚେତ୍ ତାର କୁତ୍ରିମ କାନ୍ଦଣା ଦ୍ଵାରା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହାସଲ କରିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବ ।

ବଡ଼ ଝିଅ ସୋନାଲ୍ ଓ ତାର ପୁରୁଷ ବନ୍ଧୁ ମାଇକ୍ ବିବାହ କରିବାକୁ ମନସ୍ଥ କରି ସାରିଲେଣି । ଏ ଦେଶରେ ପୁଅ, ଝିଅ ସମସ୍ତେ ସମାନ, ସମସ୍ତ ଜ୍ଞର ଏକା ଅଧିକାର । ବିବାହ ନିଜ ରାଜି ରୁଜାରେ । ବାପ ମା ହସ୍ତକ୍ଷେପ କରନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । କରିଲେ ଫଳ ନିଷ୍ଠୁ ଓଲଟା ହେବ । ହୁଁ ଝିଅ ଯଦି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ବା କୌଣସି ଭାରତୀୟଙ୍କୁ ବିବାହ କରିଥାନ୍ତା ଲିପିକା ହୁଏତ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତେ । କାରଣ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ପରିବାର ସଂଗେ ଚଳିବା ଟିକେ ସହଜ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା । ଏକା ଦେଶର ଲୋକ ଯେତେହେଲେ ବି ଚାଲି ଚଳଣରେ କିଛିଟା ସାମଞ୍ଜସ୍ୟ ତ ନିଷ୍ଠୁ ରହିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଲିପିକା ଆଜି ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଚିନ୍ତିତା ନୁହଁନ୍ତି । ଯାହା ହେଲେବି ଏ ଦେଶରେ ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ବାପ ମାଆ ଯାଇ ରହିବାର କୌଣସି ପ୍ରଥା ନାହିଁ । ହୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଭଲ ସଂପର୍କ ରଖିଲେ ହେଲା, କେତେ ବେଳେ କୋଉ କଥା ।

ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ତାଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ୟା ବୋଉକୁ କିପରି ଜଣେଇବେ । ସେ ଏ କଥାକୁ କିପରି ଗ୍ରହଣ କରିବ । ପ୍ରଥମେ ସେ ଏ କଥା ଦୁଇ ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ଜଣେଇ ଦେଲେ । ବୋଉକୁ କିପରି ପ୍ରକାରନ୍ତରେ ଏ କଥା ଟା ବୋଧଗମ୍ୟ କରେଇ ପାରିଲେ ଭଲ ହେବ ସେ କଥା ମଧ୍ୟ କହିଲେ । ଏବଂ ବୋଉର କଟୁକ୍ତି ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ବାକ୍ୟବାଣର ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ ହେବା ପାଇଁ ନିଜେ ମଧ୍ୟ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହୋଇ ରହିଲେ ।

ବୋଉ ପ୍ରାୟ ପ୍ରତି ମାସରେ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଲେଖା ଚିଠି ଦିଏ ଅଭ୍ୟାସ ବସତଃ ଲିପିକାଙ୍କ ଉତ୍ତରକୁ ଅପେକ୍ଷା ନକରି । ତାର ଏ ବୟସରେ କାମ ବା କଣ । ପିଲା ମାନେ ଓ ନାତି, ନାତୁଣୀଙ୍କ ଚିନ୍ତା କରିବା ବ୍ୟତୀତ । ହାତରେ ସମୟ ବି ପ୍ରଚୁର । ଲିପିକା ବୋଉର ପ୍ରତି ଚିଠିର ଉତ୍ତର ନ ଦେଲେବି ଭଲ ମୟ ଲେଖି ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଲେଖା ଚିଠି ପକେଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତି । ଏବେ ଏଥିରେ ବ୍ୟତିକ୍ରମ ଘଟିଛି । ଚାରି ମାସରୁ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ଗଲାଣି ବୋଉ ଠାରୁ କୌଣସି ଚିଠି ଆସି ନାହିଁ । ସେ ବୋଉର ମାନସିକ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ଅନୁମାନ କରୁଥିଲେ ହେଁ ଏ ବିଷୟ ନେଇ ବିଷେଷ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଖେଳେଇ ବାକୁ ଇଚ୍ଛା କଲେ ନାହିଁ ।

ହଠାତ୍ କରି ଦିନେ ବୋଉର ଚିଠି ଦେଖି ସେ ବହୁତ ଖୁସି ହୋଇଗଲେ । ପୁଣି ପର ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ ଟିକେ ଦବିଗଲେ । ବୋଉ ସେଥିରେ କଣ ଯେ ଲେଖିଥିବ ସେ ଅନୁମାନ କରିନେଲେ । ଭିଷଣ ଗାଳି ବର୍ଷଣ ସହିତ କଣ କଣ ଯେ ଲେଖାଥିବ । ପୁଣି ମନକୁ ବୁଝେଇ ନେଲେ । ସେ ଯାହା ବି ଲେଖିଥାଉ ପଢ଼ିବେ ତ ସେ ନିଷ୍ଠୁ ଏଥିରେ ଏତେ ତରିବାର କଣ ଅଛି । କିଛି ତ ବୋମା ବିଖେରଣ ହୋଇ ଯିବନି ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ।

- “ଏବେ ପାଆ । ଭଲ କରି ପାଆ । କେତେ ଥର କହିଥିଲି ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଚାଲି ଚଳଣ, ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଶିଖା ବୋଲି । ମୋ କଥାକୁ ଖାତିର ବି କଲୁନି । ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ଭାଇଙ୍କୁ ପୁଅ ଆମେରିକା ଯାଇ ସେଇଠି ସେଠିକାର ଝିଅକୁ ବାହା ହୋଇ ରହିଲା ଯେ ଆଉ ଫେରିଲାନି । ଭାଉଜ କାନ୍ଦି କାନ୍ଦି ଶେଷରେ ସଂସାରରୁ ଗଲା ପଛେ ପୁଅ ବୋହୂ କଣ ଜାଣିଲାନି ।

ମାଆ ଯେମିତି... ଝିଅ ବଢ଼େଇଛି ସେମିତି । ସବୁ ମନ ଇଚ୍ଛାରେ କାମ । ବଡ଼ ମାନଙ୍କ କଥାକୁ ଟିକେ ବି ଖାତିର ନାହିଁ ।” ଏମିତି ଏମିତି ଅନେକ କିଛି । ବିରାଟ ଲମ୍ବା ଚିଠି ଚିଏ । ଶବ୍ଦ ଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଭଲ ଲାଗୁ ବା ଭଲ ନ ଲାଗୁ ଆମୁଳ ତୁଳ ଚିଠି ଚି ପଢ଼ିଲେ ସିଏ । ବୋଉକୁ ସେ ଦୋଷ ଦେଲେନି ଏପରି ଲେଖି ଥିବାରୁ । ବୋଉକୁ ତାର ଘର ଆଉ ତା ସହର ବାହାରେ ଏକ ବିରାଟ ପୃଥିବୀ ଯେ ଅଛି ତାକୁ ଜଣା ନାହିଁ । ତେଣୁ ତାର ଭୟକୁ ମନ ଏପରି ଲେଖିବା ସ୍ୱାଭାବିକ । ଘରର କୌଣସି ପୁରୁଷ ସଦସ୍ୟ ମାନଙ୍କ ବିନା ସାହାଯ୍ୟରେ ସେ କିଛି କରି ପାରେନା । ବୋଉ ଯୋଉ ସାରା ଜୀବନ ପରାଧୀନ ଭାବରେ ବଢ଼ିଛି ଏବଂ ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ମାନେ ଏତେ ସ୍ୱାଧୀନ ଭାବରେ ଏବଂ ଅତ୍ୟାଧୁନିକ ଯୁଗରେ ବଢ଼ିଛନ୍ତି ତାହାର ତୁଳନା କେବଳ ଲିପିକା ହିଁ କରି ପାରିବେ । ବୋଉ ନୁହେଁ । ସେ ଦୁଇଟି ଯୁଗର ଲୋକଙ୍କୁ ବହୁ ପାଖରୁ ଦେଖିଛନ୍ତି ।

“ତୁ ବି ମୋର ମାଆ ତୁ ଯେମିତିକି, ତୋ ଝିଅ ମୁଁ ବି ସେମିତି ।” ହସିଲେ ଲିପିକା କେବଳ, କୌଣସି ପ୍ରତିକ୍ରିୟା ନଦେଖେଇ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏ ସବୁ ସେ ଚିଠି ରେ କିଛି ଲେଖିଲେନି । କଥା ମାଜିଲେ ମୋଟ । କଥା ବଢ଼େଇ ଲାଭ ବା କଣ । ଯାହା ଘଟୁଛି ତାହା ଘଟିବ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏବେ ତାଙ୍କର ଆଉ ଏକ ବିରାଟ ସମସ୍ୟା ତାଙ୍କ ସମ୍ମୁଖରେ । ତାଙ୍କର ବହୁତ ଇଚ୍ଛା ବୋଉ ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ବାହାଘରରେ ଆମେରିକା ଆସି ଯୋଗ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ । ଯୋଉଟାକି ବୋଉ ଆଉ ରାଜି ହେବ ବୋଲି ସେ ଭାବୁ ନଥିଲେ । ବୋଉକୁ କେବଳ ଖୁସି କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଯାଇ ବାହାଘର ମଧ୍ୟ କରି ପାରିବେନି । ତାହା ବହୁ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ବହୁଳ ଓ ଝମେଲା ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ କାମ । ଯୋଉଟାକି ତାଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ସମ୍ଭବ ହେବ ନାହିଁ ।

ଘରର ପ୍ରଥମ ନାତୁଣୀ ‘ସୋନାଲ୍’ । ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ଥିଲେ ସବୁ ବନ୍ଧୁ ବାନ୍ଧବଙ୍କ ମେଳରେ ହସ ଖୁସିରେ ଧୁମ୍ ଧାମ୍ରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ରୀତି ନୀତି ଅନୁସାରେ ବାହାଘର ନିଷ୍ଠୁ ହୋଇଥାନ୍ତା । ବୋଉ ଖୁସି ହୋଇ ଥାନ୍ତା । ଏଠି ତ ତାହା ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ । ଖାଲି ବୋଉକୁ ଯଦି ସେ ଟିକେ ଏଠିକୁ ଆଣି ପାରନ୍ତେ ବାହାଘର ପାଇଁ ତେବେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆତ୍ମାଶାନ୍ତି ଟିକେ ମିଳନ୍ତା । କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଉକୁ ଏଠିକୁ ଆଣି ତାକୁ ପୁଣି ଠିକ୍ ଠାକ୍ ଭାବରେ ନେଇ ଘରେ ଛାଡ଼ିବା ଯେତିକି ଅର୍ଥ ବହୁଳ ସେତିକି ଦାୟତ୍ୱ ଓ ଚିନ୍ତାର ବିଷୟ । ଏତକ ସେ ସୁରୁଖୁରୁରେ ଚଳେଇ ପାରିବେ କି ନାହିଁ ସନ୍ଦେହ । ତା ବ୍ୟତୀତ ବୋଉ ଆସିବାକୁ ରାଜି ହେବ କି ନାହିଁ କିଏ ଜାଣେ । ସେ ବି ଆଉ ଗୋଟିଏ ସମସ୍ୟା । ଆସିଲେ ବି ତା ମୁହଁ ମୋଡା ସହିତ ତା ବାକ୍ୟ ବାଟୁଳିକୁ ସହ୍ୟ କରିବା ପରି ତାଙ୍କର ଆଉ ଶକ୍ତି ଅଛି କି ନାହିଁ ସେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଜାଣନ୍ତିନି ।

ଦୁଇ ଭାଇଙ୍କର କିଛି ପାରିବାରିକ ସମସ୍ୟା ଯୋଗୁଁ ସେମାନେ ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ କେହି ଆସି ପାରିବେ ନାହିଁ । ବୋଉର ତ କିଛି କାମ

ନାହିଁ ସେ ଇଚ୍ଛା କଲେ ତ ଆସି ପାରନ୍ତା । କିନ୍ତୁ ତାର ରାଗ, ଯିଦିରୁ କ୍ଷାନ୍ତ ହେଲେ ତ । ବହୁତ ପ୍ରକାର କଥା ବିନିମୟ , କଥା ଟଳାଟଳି, ଯୁକ୍ତି ତର୍କ, ରାଗ ରୋଷ, ଅଭିମାନ ଓ ରାଶ ନିୟମ ପକେଇ ବାଧ୍ୟ କଲା ପରେ ବୋଉ ଶେଷକୁ ରାଜି ହେଲା ଆସିବାକୁ ।

ବୋଉର ଜଣେ ଦୂର ସଂପର୍କିୟ ଭାଇର ପୁଅ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଯାଇଥିଲେ ଫେରିଲା ବେଳେ ବୋଉକୁ ସାଂଗରେ ଆଣିବାକୁ ରାଜି ହୋଇଗଲେ । ବୋଉକୁ ଚାରି ମାସ ପାଇଁ ନେଇ ଆସିଲେ ଲିପିକା । କାରଣ ଏଇ ହୁଏତ ବୋଉର ଶେଷ ଆସିବା ଏଠିକୁ । ବୋଉ ସଂଗେ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଆଉ ହୁଏତ କେବେ ଏପରି ସୁଯୋଗ ନ ମିଳି ବି ପାରେ । ସୋନାଲ୍ ବାହାଘରର ଦୁଇ ମାସ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ବୋଉ ଆସିଗଲା । ଏଠିକା ଚାଲି ଚଳଣ ଆଦବ କାଇଦାରେ କିଛିଟା ସେ ଅଭ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିବ ବାହାଘର ବେଳକୁ ।

ବୋଉକୁ ସବୁ କିଛି ଅଲଗା ଲାଗୁଥିଲା । ଏଠାକାର ଆତମ୍ବର ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଚାକଚକ୍ୟ ଜୀବନ ତାକୁ କିଛିଟା ସ୍ତମ୍ଭିତ କରି ଦେଇଥାଏ । ତୁମ୍ଭ ଚାପ୍ ସବୁ ଜିନିଷକୁ କେବଳ ନିରୀକ୍ଷଣ କରି ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ଝିଅ ଭଲରେ ଅଛି ଜାଣି ଖୁସି ହେଲେ ସତ କିନ୍ତୁ ଏଠି କାହାକୁ ସମୟ ନାହିଁ ବସି ତାଙ୍କ ସଙ୍ଗେ ତାସ୍ ଖେଳିବା ପାଇଁ, ଦି ଘଣ୍ଟା ବସି ଅଜା ମଜା ଗପ କରିବା ପାଇଁ । ଗାତି ଧରି ଖାଲି ଇଆଡେ ଯାଅ, ସିଆଡେ ଯାଅ । କେତେବେଳେ ଝିଅ ଗଲାଣି ତ କେତେବେଳେ ଡୁଆଇଁ ତ କେତେବେଳେ ନାତୁଣୀ ମାନେ । ତଥାପି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ସ୍ନେହ ଶୁଣାରେ ଅନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରକାରର ଅନୁଭୂତି, ଅନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରକାରର ମିଠା ମିଠା ସ୍ବାଦ । ଭଲ ଲାଗିଲା ବୋଉ ‘ବିମଳା’ ଦେବୀଙ୍କୁ ।

କିନ୍ତୁ ନାତୁଣୀ ବାହାଘର ପାଇଁ ଯେତେଟା ତାଙ୍କର ଖୁସି ହେବା କଥା ସେତେଟା ସେ ଖୁସି ନଥିଲେ । ଯଦିଓ “ସେ ଦେଶ ଯାଇ ସେ ଫଳ ଖାଇ ”ସେ ଭଲ ଭାବେରେ ଜାଣନ୍ତି । ତଥାପି !! ହଁ ଏ ଦେଶକୁ ଆସିଲ, ରହିଲ.....ତାଙ୍କ ଭାଷାଶିଖିଲ, ତାଙ୍କ ଖାଦ୍ୟ ଖାଇଲ, ତାଙ୍କ ଚାଲି ଚଳଣ ଶିଖିଲ, ତାଙ୍କ ବେଶ ପୋଷାକ ପିନ୍ଧିଲ ଏଥିରେ ମନା ନାହିଁ । ତା ବୋଲି ତାଙ୍କ ସଂଗେ ଘର ସଂସାର.....ଏ କଥାଟା ସେ ମୋଟେ ସହଜରେ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରି ପାରୁ ନଥିଲେ । ସେ ଭାବୁଥିଲେ ଝିଅ ଲିପିକା ତା ଝିଅ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଠାରୁ ଅଧିକ ସ୍ବାଧିନତା ଦେଇ ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁ ବଢେଇ ଦେଇଛି । ତାଙ୍କ କଥା ଶୁଣୁଛି ବା କିଏ । ତାଙ୍କ କଥାର ମୂଲ୍ୟ ବା କଅଣ । ଛାଡ଼.....ଏ ସମସ୍ୟା ତାଙ୍କ ଝିଅ ଲିପିର ତାଙ୍କର ନୁହେଁ । ସେହି କାନ୍ଦି କାନ୍ଦି ଦିନ କାଟିବ । କାତୁ । ଗୁରୁଜନ ମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ନମାନିବାର ପରିଣାମ ତାକୁ ଭୋଗ କରିବାକୁ ପଡିବ ।

ବାହାଘରର ଦିନ ଯେତିକି ନିକଟ ହୋଇ ଆସୁଛି ପରିବାରର ଭାଗ ଦୌତ ସେତିକି ବଢି ଚାଲିଛି । କୁଆଡେ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି କଣ କରୁଛନ୍ତି ବିମଳା ଦେବୀ କିଛି ବୁଝନ୍ତିନି । କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଝିଅ ବାହାଘରରେ ଯେପରି ହୁଏ ସେପରି କିଛି ହେଉ ନାହିଁ ବୋଲି ସେ ପୁରା ବୁଝି ପାରୁ ଛନ୍ତି । ‘ହଲିଡେଇନ୍’ର ‘ରିସେପ୍ସନ୍ ହଲ୍ରେ’ ବାହାଘର ହେଲା । ବିମଳା ଦେବୀ କେବଳ ମୁଗ୍ଧ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ସବୁ ଦେଖୁଥାନ୍ତି । ଏତେ ଶାନ୍ତି ଶୁଖିଲାରେ ବାହାଘର ଚା ହେଇଗଲା ! ଲୋକ ମାନେ ଆସିଲେ , ତୁମ୍ଭଟାପ୍ ବସିଲେ, ଖିଆପିଆ ନାଚ ଗୀତ ସବୁ ଗୋଟିକ ପରେ ଗୋଟିକ ଲାଗିଥାଏ ।

ବାହାଘର ପରେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ସୋନାଲ୍ ଆଉ ତା ବର ଆସି ଆଇ ଙ୍କର ପାଦ ଛୁଇଁ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ଭିକ୍ଷା କଲେ ଆଇଙ୍କ ଆଖିରୁ ଆନନ୍ଦାଶ୍ରୁ ଗଡିଗଲା । ସତେକି ଶତପତି ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରଦେବ ତାଙ୍କ ସମ୍ମୁଖରେ ଦଣ୍ଡାୟମାନ । ମାଇକ୍ ପାଇଜାମା କୁର୍ତ୍ତା ପିନ୍ଧି, କପାଳରେ ଚନ୍ଦନ ସିନ୍ଦୂର ଓ ଗଳାରେ ପୁଲମାଳ ପିନ୍ଧି ସ୍ୱର୍ଗର ଦେବରାଜଙ୍କ ପରି ଦିଶୁଥିଲା ।

-ଆଇ ! କିପରି ଅଛନ୍ତି ?? ଭଲ ଲାଗିଲା ବାହାଘର । ସୋନାଲ୍ ଠାରୁ ଦୁଇ ଧାତି ଦର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଶିଖି ମାଇକ୍ ଯେତେବେଳେ ପଚାରିଥିଲା ବିମଳାଦେବୀଙ୍କୁ । ଆଇ ଖୁସିରେ ଆଲିଙ୍ଗନ କରି ପକେଇଥିଲେ ଦୁଇ ଜଣଙ୍କୁ । ତାଙ୍କ ଆନନ୍ଦର ସୀମା ରେଖା କାହିଁ କେତେଦୂରକୁ ବିସ୍ତାରିତ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଥିଲା । ମାଇକ୍ ଆଉ ସୋନାଲ୍ କେତେ ଖୁସିରେ ହାତ ଧରା ଧରି ହୋଇ ନାଟିଥିଲେ ସାଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀ ବନ୍ଧୁ ଙ୍କ ଗହଣରେ, ଆଇ ଭୁଲି ଗଲେ ସେଦିନ ବହୁତ କିଛି । ତାଙ୍କ ମନ ଭିତରେ ଯେଉଁ ଆକାଶ ପାତାଳ ର ମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ଚାଲିଥିଲା ତାହା ହଠାତ୍ ବନ୍ଦ ହୋଇ ସତେକି ଚାରିଆଡ ପୁଷ୍ଟ ବୃଷ୍ଟି ହେବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା ।

କେବଳ ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା ମନ ଭିତରେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ବେଦ ଧ୍ୱନିର ଓଁ କାର ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରୁଥାଏ । ଅନାବିଳ ସ୍ନେହ ଶୁଣା ପାଖରେ କିଛି ବି ଅନ୍ତରାୟ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିପାରେନା । ନା ଜାତି, ନା ଭାଷା, ନା ରୂପ, ନା ରଙ୍ଗ , ନା ଦେଶ । ପ୍ରେମର ମାତ୍ର ଗୋଟିଏ ଭାଷା, ଗୋଟିଏ ରଂଗ, ଗୋଟିଏ ଜାତି, ଗୋଟିଏ ଦେଶ ସେ ହେଉଛି ‘ପ୍ରେମ’ । କେବଳ ସ୍ନେହ, ଶୁଣା ଆଉ ପ୍ରେମ । ତାର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଶକ୍ତି ସବୁ ଅନ୍ତରାୟକୁ ଉଲ୍ଲଙ୍ଘନ କରିଯାଇ ପାରେ ।

ଅନେକ କଥା ଅନ୍ୟ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଯେତେ ସହଜରେ ବୁଝେଇ ଦେଇ ହୁଏ । ନିଜକୁ ସେତେ ସହଜରେ ନୁହେଁ । ମଣିଷ ନିଜ ପରିସ୍ଥିତି ପାଖରେ ନିଜେ ହିଁ ସବୁବେଳେ ଅବୁଝା । କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଉ ଆଜି ସବୁ ନିଜେ ନିଜେ ବୁଝିଗଲା । କାହାର ବୁଝେଇବାର କିଛି ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ପଡି ନାହିଁ । ଝିଅ ଲିପିକାଙ୍କୁ ଭଲ ମନ୍ଦ କହିଥିବାରୁ ଦୁଃଖ ପ୍ରକାଶ କଲେ । ଏ ବିବାହର ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ସ୍ୱର ଉତ୍ତୋଳନ କରିଥିବାରୁ ଅନୁତାପ ମଧ୍ୟ କଲେ ।

ବିମଳା ଦେବୀ ଏକ ମଧୁର ସ୍ମୃତିକୁ ସାଙ୍ଗରେ ନେଇ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଫେରିଗଲେ । ଆଉ ଆଗ ପରି ଚିଠିଦେଲେ କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ଉପଦେଶ ଦିଅନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ । ପିଲା ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେ କି ସେ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଶିଖା । କିନ୍ତୁ ନାତୁଣୀ ପାଖକୁ ନିଃସନ୍ଦେହ ଲେଖନ୍ତି -“ତୋର ପିଲା

ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖିବାର ଦୁଃଖ ମତେ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ନ ମିଳି ପାରେ ସେମାନେ ମତେ ବୁଝିଆଇ କିପରି ଅଛୁ କହିବାର ଏ କାନ ଶୁଣିବାର ସୁଯୋଗ ମଧ୍ୟ ପାଇ ନ ପାରେ ତଥାପି ଦର ଭଙ୍ଗ ହେଉ ପଛେ ଆଇ କିପରି ଅଛୁ ବୋଲି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଦି ପଦ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଶିଖେଇଦେବୁ କହିବାକୁ । କାରଣ ଇଂଲିସ ଭାଷା ଶିଖି ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ହାଏ.....ବାଏ କରିବାର ମୋର ବଳ ବୟସ ନାହିଁକି ହାତରେ ସମୟ ନାହିଁ ।

ଏଇ ବର୍ଷ ଜନ୍ମଦିନ / ମୋ ପାଇଁ ତୁମ ପାଇଁ

ଏମିତି ସମୟ ଗଢ଼ି ଚାଲେ

ପ୍ରତି ବର୍ଷ ଜନ୍ମଦିନ ଆସେ

ଆମ ପାଇଁ ବୟସ ମାପ କାଠି ନେଇ ।

ପ୍ରତି ଦଶକରେ ହଠାତ୍ ଲାଗେ

ବୟସଟା କେତେ ବଢ଼ିଗଲା

ଏବେ ତ ମୋଟେ ମନେ ନାହିଁ

ପିଲାକାଳ, ବାଲିଘର, ଷଢ଼େଇରେ ରକ୍ଷା.....

ଆଉ କଣ୍ଢେଇ ବାହାଘର.....

ସତରେ ବୟସଟା

ଆଂଜୁଳାଏ ସରୁବାଲି, ଆଂଗୁଠି ସନ୍ଧିରେ

କେବେ ଖସିଗଲା.....

ଏଇଗତବର୍ଷ ଯାଏଁ ସବୁତ ସବୁଜ ଥିଲା,

ପରିବା ବଗିଚା ଆଉ

ବାଡ଼ି ପଛପଟେ ଘନ ଜଂଗଲଟା ।

ଏବେ କିଆଁ ହଠାତ୍ ସବୁ ଧୂଷର ଦିଶିଲା,

ଆଉ ଏ ବର୍ଷର ଜନ୍ମଦିନ, ଏଇ ଦଶକ ଗଣନା,

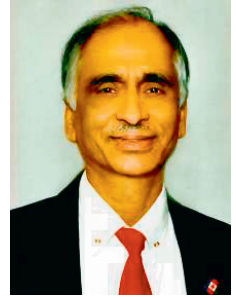
ହଠାତ୍ ଲାଗିଲା,

ନା ଗଣିବାରେ କଉଠି ଭୁଲ୍ ରହିଗଲା ।

Kalyani Padhy

Northborough, MA 01532, USA

ଓଡିଆ ପାଲା ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ଦୂର ଦିଗନ୍ତରୁ ଉପସ୍ଥାପନା - ନିରଞ୍ଜନ ମିଶ୍ର



ଉପକଥା

ସମ୍ଭବତଃ ଭାରତର ପ୍ରାକ୍-ସ୍ଵାଧୀନତା ବେଳର କଥା । ଶୈଶବରେ କାଶୀପୁର ସୁନାଖଣ୍ଡି ଗ୍ରାମର ଠାକୁରାଣୀ ପତିଆରେ ଗାୟକ ହରିନାଥଙ୍କ ର ବିଲ୍ଲୁମଙ୍ଗଳ ପାଲାରେ ଚାମର ଚାଳନା ଓ କାନ୍ଦିବାର ଦୃଶ୍ୟ କୁ ଆଜି ଯାଏ ମନେ ରଖିଛି । ବୟସ ବଢ଼ିଲା : କୈଶୋରରେ ନିଜ ଗାଁ ରାଇସୁଗଡ଼ାରେ ଜାଗୁଳାଇ ପାଠାଗାର ଆନିକୁଲ୍ୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ପାଲା ଗାୟକ ମାନେ (ହରିନାଥ, ନିରଞ୍ଜନ କର, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ବେହେରା, ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ପ୍ରଧାନ ଆଦି) ପାଲା ପରିବେଷଣ କରନ୍ତି କ୍ରମାଗତ ଭାବରେ ରଜପର୍ବରେ । ଏଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ଦେଖୁଥିଲି ଝୁଲ ଜୀବନରେ । ପାଲା ଦେଖି ଦେଖି ଆମବେଳର କେତେଜଣ ନିଜେ ନିଜେ ପାଲା ଶିଖିଲେ, ଝୁଲ ଓ କିଛିଟା ଉତ୍ସବରେ ପରିବେଷଣ କଲେ । ସମୟ ବଦଳିଲା, ଯେ ଯେହା ବାଟରେ ଗଲେ । ବଡ଼ ଡାକ୍ତର ହେଲେ ବା କିଏ ଇଞ୍ଜିନିୟର ହେଲେ - ମୋଟ ଉପରେ ପାୟ ସମସ୍ତେ ଗାଁ ଛାଡ଼ି ବାହାରକୁ ଗଲେ । ପାଲା ଦେଖା ବନ୍ଦ ହୋଇଗଲା - ନିଜ ନିଜ ଧନ୍ଦାରେ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ରହିଲୁ । ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଗଲେ ପାଲା ଦେଖିବାକୁ ଖୁବ୍ କମ୍ ସୁବିଧା ଓ ସମୟ ମିଳେ ।

୨୦୦୭ ରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଚରୁଣ ପାଲା ଦଳର ଗାୟକ ବିଚିତ୍ରାନନ୍ଦ ବେହେରା ପରିବେଷଣ କରୁଥିଲେ - ଖୁବ୍ ଖୁସିହେଲି, ଦେଖିଲି ପାଲା ଏବେ ବି ବଞ୍ଚିରହିଛି । ଅନୁସନ୍ଧାନ କଲି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ପାଲା ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବଞ୍ଚିରହିଛି ନାମକୁ ମାତ୍ର, ବୋଧହୁଏ କ୍ଷୀଣୀୟ ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ଏଇ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଅନେକ ପ୍ରତିକୂଳ ଦେଇ ଗତି କରିଛି । ଅବଲୁକ୍ତ ହୋଇଯାଇପାରେ । ଆମେରିକାର **Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA)** ଓ **Canada** ର **Canosa** ରେ ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ପାଲା ଆଂଶିକ ଭାବେ ପରିବେଷଣ ହୁଏ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ଉପରେ କିଛି କିଛି ଗବେଷଣା ଓ କର୍ମଶାଳା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ପାଲାର ପୁନର୍ଭିତ୍ତି ପାଇଁ କେତେଜଣ କଳାପ୍ରେମୀ ଓ କଳାକାର ଉଲ୍ଲେଖନୀୟ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ଏହି ଅବସରରେ ଓ ପରିପେକ୍ଷରେ ଭାବିଲି, ଦିଧାତି ଲେଖିବି ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ଐତିହ୍ୟ, ଉତ୍କର୍ଷତା ଓ ପୁନର୍ଭିତ୍ତିର ଉପରେ । ଏହି ଲେଖା ଗବେଷଣାତ୍ମକ ନୁହେଁ । ଜନମତ ବଢ଼ାଇବା ପାଇଁ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଭିତରେ ଓ ବାହାରେ ରହୁଥିବା ସାହିତ୍ୟପ୍ରେମୀ ଓ କଳାପ୍ରେମୀ ମାନଙ୍କର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଆକର୍ଷଣ କରିବା ପାଇଁ, ଆଉ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ ଏବଂ ସୂଦୃଢ଼ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲାର କମ ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନ

ଶାସ୍ତ୍ର କହେ ବ୍ୟାସଦେବଙ୍କର ଝନ୍ଦପୁରାଣର ରେବାଖଣ୍ଡରେ ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିତ ସତ୍ୟନାରାୟଣ ପୂଜା କଥାରୁ ପାଲାର ଆରମ୍ଭ । ଏବେ ବି ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ, ଭାରତରେ ଓ ଦେଶ ବାହାରେ ଏହି ପୂଜା ବା କଥା, ମାନସିକ-ପୂଜା ଆକାରରେ ପାଳିତ ହୁଏ । ମଧ୍ୟଯୁଗରେ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ମୁସଲମାନ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ମୈତ୍ରୀ ଭାବ ଆଣି ସତ୍ୟ-ପୀର ପୂଜା ପାଲା ରୂପ ଧରିଥିଲା - ମେଦିନୀପୁରର କବିକର୍ଣ୍ଣଙ୍କର ୧୬ ପାଲା ଓ ଭଦ୍ରଖର ପୀରଙ୍କର ଅଧ୍ୟକ୍ଷରେ ପାଲାରେ ଥିଲା ବଙ୍ଗଳା-ଓଡ଼ିଆ-ପାର୍ସି ଓ ପାଲି ଭଳି ମିଶା ମିଶି ଭାଷା । ସାଧାରଣତଃ ଏ ସବୁ ଥିଲା ପୂଜା ବିଧି କଥା ବା ପାଲା ଓ ବୈଠକୀ ପାଲା ରୂପରେ ।

ଅଜାଣତ ଭାବରେ ହେଉ ବା କେତେକଙ୍କ ମତରେ ଦକ୍ଷିଣାତର ପ୍ରଭାବରେ ବା ରାଜା ରାଜୁଡ଼ା, ଜମିଦାର ଓ ଦର୍ଶକର ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ଆକର୍ଷଣ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ବୈଠକୀ ପାଲାର ନୂଆ ରୂପାନ୍ତର ହେଲା 'ଠିଆ ପାଲା' । କେତେକ ହେଲେ ସ୍ଵରମାର୍ଗୀ - ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା ବହୁର

କ୍ରମ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ତରରେ ଗାଇଲେ । କେତେକ ହେଲେ ଜ୍ଞାନମାର୍ଗୀ- ଏହି କଥା ବସ୍ତୁର 'କ୍ରମଯୋଜନା ଭିତରେ ସଂସ୍କୃତ, କାବ୍ୟାଂଶ, ଶୋକ, ନୀତିବାଣୀ, ଛାନ୍ଦ, ରାଗ, ସଂଳାପ, ଆଳାପ ସବୁକୁ ମିଶାଇ ବିବିଧକଳା, ଅଭିନୟ, ସଙ୍ଗୀତ, ନୃତ୍ୟ ଓ ନାଟ୍ୟ କୁ ସମାରୋହିତ କଲେ ।

ଏହି ନୂତନରୂପର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କଲା ଏକ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ମୁଖ୍ୟସ୍ଥଳ, ଯାହାକି ବହୁଜନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ଆଦର ପାଇଲା, ମନୋରଞ୍ଜନ କଲା, ନୀତି ଶିକ୍ଷା ଦେଲା, ସାହିତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରଚାର କରି ପାରିଲା । ଏହା ଥିଲା ଉନ୍ନବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ଶେଷାଂଶ ଓ ବିଂଶ ଶତାବ୍ଦୀର ପ୍ରଥମାର୍ଦ୍ଧରେ । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ଏକ ସ୍ଵତନ୍ତ୍ର ରୂପ ଧାରଣ କଲା ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ସୁବର୍ଣ୍ଣଯୁଗ ବେଶିଦିନ ରହିପାରିଲା ନାହିଁ । ଭାରତ ସ୍ଵାଧୀନ ହେଲା, ଶିକ୍ଷା ବିକାଶ ହେଲା, ଏବଂ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଅଲକ୍ଷରେ ପଲ୍ଲୀସଭ୍ୟତା ନୂଆରୂପ ନେଲା । ଆଉ ଏହାରି ଭିତରେ, ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ସୀମିତ ହୋଇଗଲା, କେତେଜଣ ବର୍ଷିୟାନ ପାଲା ଗାୟକଙ୍କ ଭିତରେ ଓ ସାମାନ୍ୟ କେଲଜଣ ତରୁଣ ଗାୟକ ଓ ତରୁଣୀ ଗାୟିକାଙ୍କ ମଧ୍ୟରେ । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ, ୯୦ ବର୍ଷର ଗାୟକ ଶେଖର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ବେହେରା, ୮୦ ବର୍ଷର ଗାୟକ ସମ୍ରାଟ ପ୍ରହଲ୍ଲାଦ ସାହୁ, ୮୩ ବର୍ଷର ଗାୟକ ସମ୍ରାଟ ଅଭୟ ଚରଣ ସ୍ଵାଇଁ ହେଲେ ଜଣେ ଜଣେ ଉଦାହରଣ ।

ଗତି କୁଆଡ଼େ

ଅନେକଙ୍କ ମତରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ସଂସ୍କୃତି କେତେକାଂଶରେ ମୌଳିକତା ହରାଇ ବସିଛି । କ୍ଷୟମାନ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ଜୀବନ୍ତ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ପ୍ରସନ୍ନକୁମାର ଦାଶଙ୍କ ଆନୁକୁଲ୍ୟରେ ପ୍ରଫୁଲ୍ଲ ପାଠାଗାର ସହିତ ଯୋଗଦାନ କରି ଆମେରିକାର SEEDS (Sustainable Economic and Educational Development Society) ର ପ୍ରଫେସର ଲାଲୁ ମାନସିଂ, ସତ୍ୟ ମହାନ୍ତି ଓ ଶ୍ରୀଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତିଙ୍କ ଭୂମିକା ଉଲ୍ଲେଖଯୋଗ୍ୟ । ୨୦୧୪ ରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ପାଲା ଗବେଷଣା କେନ୍ଦ୍ର (ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵର) ଏକ ଅଗ୍ରଗାମୀ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ । ଭାରତ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ନାଟକ ଏକାଡେମୀ ଓ ଉତ୍କଳ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ନାଟକ ଏକାଡେମୀ ଏବଂ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରଙ୍କ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବିଭାଗ ଯେତେ ସମ୍ଭବ ପଲ୍ଲୀସାହିତ୍ୟ କୁ ଉତ୍ସାହିତ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ମାତ୍ର ଏତକ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ନୁହେଁ - ପାଲା ଭଳି କଠିନ ଏବଂ ଉପାଦେୟ ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିକୁ ମଜବୁତ କରି ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ, ସୁଦୂରପ୍ରସାରୀ ହେବା ପାଇଁ ବହୁବିଧ ଯୋଜନାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ରହିଛି । ଦେଶ ଭିତରେ ଓ ବିଦେଶରେ ଲୋକମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏ ଦିଗରେ ଅନୁପ୍ରାଣିତ କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ । ସରକାରୀ ଓ ବେସରକାରୀ ପୋସ୍ତାହନ ଓ ଅନୁଦାନ ଏଥିପାଇଁ ଲୋଡା । OSA ର ପ୍ରତିକା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ କିଛିଟା ପ୍ରଚାର କରିବା ମୋର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ । ଅନ୍ୟତ୍ର ଆଲୋଚିତ, ବକ୍ତୃତାମାଳା ଓ ପାଲା ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧୀୟ ପୁସ୍ତକର ଆଧାରିତ ଏବଂ ମୋର ନିଜ ଅନୁଭୂତିରୁ ଏଇ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ନେଇଛି । ଏଇ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବଞ୍ଚିରହିବ ବୋଲି ଆଶା - ସେଗୁଡ଼ିକ ହେଲା (ଏତିକିରେ ସୀମିତ ନୁହେଁ)

ଜନମତ ପ୍ରଚାର ଓ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନୀ

- ଶିକ୍ଷାନୁଷ୍ଠାନରେ ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା
- ପ୍ରଦେଶର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରେ ଓ ବିଦେଶରେ ପାଲା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ ଓ Residency Program
- ଜାତୀୟ ଉତ୍ସବରେ ଓ ପର୍ବପର୍ବାଣୀରେ ପାଲା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ
- ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ପାଲା ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତା
- ଦୂରଦର୍ଶନ, webmail ରେ ପାଲା ପ୍ରଚାର (ଉଦାହରଣ - Public Broadcast ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ଗାୟକ ତରୁଣ ଦୟାନିଧି ଶତପଥୀ ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ୟ ଗାୟକ, ଗାୟିକା ମାନଙ୍କର ଚିତ୍ରାକର୍ଷକ ପରିବେଶଣ)
- ପାଲାଦଳ ଓ ଗାୟକ ମାନଙ୍କର website

ପୋସ୍ତାହନ, ଓ ଅନୁଦାନ

- ଜାତୀୟ ଓ ପ୍ରାଦେଶିକ ସ୍ତରରେ ପୁରସ୍କାର, ପଦକ ଓ ପଦ୍ମ ପୁରସ୍କାର ଆଦି ସମ୍ମାନ
- ବିଦେଶରେ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ ପାଇଁ Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) ର ଆନୁକୁଲ୍ୟ
- ପାଲା କଳାକାରମାନଙ୍କୁ professional allowance, health & life insurance and pension plan
- ପାଲା ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ଓ ଶିକ୍ଷାଧୀନ ମାନଙ୍କୁ ଭଣ୍ଡା

ସଂସ୍କୃତି ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ

- ପୁରାତନ ଗାୟକ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥାବଳି, ସ୍ମୃତି ସଂଗ୍ରହ, ଓ documentary
- ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଗାୟକମାନଙ୍କର documentary
- ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ମହାବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଓ academic accreditation

ପରିଶେଷ

ବିଦେଶରୁ ନିଜ ନିଜ ଗ୍ରାମରେ, ସହରରେ, ସ୍କୁଲରେ, କଲେଜରେ ଏବଂ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନମାନଙ୍କରେ ବର୍ଷକୁ ଥରେ ଅଧେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ ପାଇଁ ଅନୁଦାନ କଲେ, ପ୍ରାଥମିକ ସ୍ତରରେ ପାଲାର ସଂରକ୍ଷଣ ହୋଇ ପାରିବ । OSA ର ଅଧିବେଶନରେ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ବାର୍ଷିକ ଆଲୋଚନା ଚକ୍ର କରାଯାଇ ଜନମତ ଜାଗ୍ରତ ହେବ ଓ ପାଲା ପ୍ରତି କିଛିଟା ଆକର୍ଷଣ ବଢ଼ିବ । ଭାରତ ଓ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବିଭାଗରୁ ପାଲାକୁ ବିଶେଷ ଧ୍ୟାନ ଦେବାପାଇଁ, ଗାୟକମାନଙ୍କୁ ସମ୍ମାନିତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଓ ପଲ୍ଲୀ ପ୍ରସାର ଓ ପ୍ରଚାର ପାଇଁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କରିବା ଉଚିତ ହେବ ।

OSA ର ଅଧିବେଶନରେ ସମ୍ଭବ ହେଲେ ICCR ସାହାଯ୍ୟରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରୁ ପାଲାଦଳଙ୍କୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କଲେ ଏ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବିଦେଶରେ ପ୍ରଚାର ଲାଭ କରିବ । ଭାଷା ସ୍ତରରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସ୍ତରୀୟ ପ୍ରଦେଶ ହୋଇପାରିଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ମାନ୍ୟତା ପାଇଛି । ଓଡ଼ିଆ ପାଲା ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର ବିକାଶ କରି ପାରିଲେ ଆମେ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ମାନ୍ୟତାର ସମ୍ମାନ ରଖି ପାରିବା ଓ ଗର୍ବିତ ହୋଇପାରିବା ।

ଉଚ୍ଚ ହେବା ପାଇଁ କର ଯେବେ ଆଶା

ଉଚ୍ଚ କର ଆଗେ ନିଜ ମାତୃଭାଷା

(ସ୍ୱଭାବ କବି- ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ମେହେର)

ପରିଶିଷ୍ଟ

ପାଲା ସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ସଂସ୍କୃତିର କେଉଁକଣ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟରଙ୍ଗର ମତାମତ ଓ ଉଚ୍ଚତାଂଶ - 'ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଆଜି ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ମାନ୍ୟତା ପାଇବା ପଛରେ ପାଲାକାରର ଭୂମିକା ଏକ ସୁଦୃଶ୍ୟ ଅଜ୍ଞାନିକାର ଭିତ୍ତି ସୂଚକ ଅନାଲୋଚିତ .. ' - ଗାୟକ ଶେଖର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ବେହେରା (୨୦୧୪ ଅକ୍ଟୋବର, ଆକାଶବାଣୀ, କଟକ) । 'ଭାଷା ଆନ୍ଦୋଳନ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ପ୍ରଚାର ଓ ପ୍ରସାର ନିମିତ୍ତ ବିଶେଷତଃ ପାଲା ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଭୂମିକା ନେଇଥିଲା । ଯଦିଓ ଘୋଡ଼ାନାଚ, ଦାଶକାଠିଆ, ନାଟକ, ଗୀତିନାଟ୍ୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷାକୁ ଆଧାର କରି ହେଉଥିଲା, ତଥାପି ପାଲା ଭାଷା ସଂଗଠନ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ଏବଂ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକତା ଆଧାରରେ ଜନମାନଙ୍କୁ ଜ୍ଞାନ ଭଣ୍ଡାର ପ୍ରଦାନ କରୁଥିଲା । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ପାଲାର ମୌଳିକତା ନଷ୍ଟ ହୋଇ ଯାଇଛି । ଏହାର ପ୍ରଚାର ଓ ପ୍ରସାର ବହୁଳତା ଦେଖା ଯାଉନାହିଁ । ଏଥିପାଇଁ ସରକାର ମଧ୍ୟ ଉଦାସୀନ ରହୁଛନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ଅତି

ଆନନ୍ଦର ବିଷୟ ଯେ, ବିଳମ୍ବ ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ, କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ସଂସ୍କୃତି ବିଭାଗ ତରଫରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଷା ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ମାନ୍ୟତା ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ସର୍ବ ସମ୍ପତ୍ତିକ୍ରମେ ଗୃହିତ ହୋଇଛି । ଏହା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତି ପାଇଁ ଗର୍ବ ଓ ଗୌରବର ବିଷୟ ।’ - ଗାୟକ ବିଚିତ୍ରାନନ୍ଦ ବେହେରା (ପାଲା ବଞ୍ଚିଥିଲେ ଭାଷା ବଞ୍ଚିବ ଲେଖାରୁ)

‘ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ବହୁବିଦ ପାଲାକାରମାନେ ପାଲାକୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇ ରଖିବାକୁ ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରିଛନ୍ତି । କେତେକ ଦିବ୍ୟଗତ ହେଲେଣି ଆଉ କେତେକ ମୃତ୍ୟୁର ଅବବାହିତାରେ ପାଦଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ମୋ ଜାଣିବା ଭିତରେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ମାଟିରେ ଅନେକ ପାଲାକାର ଥିଲେ ଏବେ ବି ଅଛନ୍ତି କିନ୍ତୁ ଅତୀତ ପାଲାକୁ ଚିରନ୍ତନ କରିରଖିବାର ପରମ ସୌଭାଗ୍ୟ ଅର୍ଜନ କରିଛନ୍ତି ତ୍ରିଶକ୍ତି । ସେମାନେ ହେଲେ ଗାୟକ ରତ୍ନ ହରିନାଥ, ଗାୟକ ଶିରୋମଣି ନିରଞ୍ଜନ କର, ଗାୟକ ସମ୍ରାଟ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଚରଣ ପ୍ରଧାନ । ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ପ୍ରଧାନ ପାଲାର ଜଣେ ସୃଷ୍ଟିମାନ ବିଗ୍ରହ, ମୁର୍ତ୍ତିମାନ ପାଲା ଜଗତର ସେ ଜଣେ ଉପଭୋକନକାରୀ ଏବଂ କୃତିମାନ କହିଲେ ତତ୍କାଳୀନ ପାଲା ଜଗତରେ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଚପିଲା ଭଳି କେହିନାହିଁ କହିଲେ ଅତ୍ୟୁକ୍ତି ହେବନାହିଁ । ପାଲାର ବିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହେଉ କି ଆଜିକା, ବାଚିକ, ମୌଳିକତା, କୌଳିକତା ଏବଂ ମାର୍ମିକ ଓ ଧାର୍ମିକ ଚିନ୍ତା ଚେତନାରେ ଯଦି କେହି ହୁଏତ ମନ୍ଦାକିନୀର ଧାରା ବୁହାଇଛନ୍ତି ସେ ହେଉଛନ୍ତି ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଚରଣ ପ୍ରଧାନ ।’ ଗାୟକ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀଧର ରାଉତ - ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ପ୍ରଧାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ଶିଷ୍ୟ (ଗାୟକ ସମ୍ରାଟ ବୈଷ୍ଣବ ଚରଣ ପ୍ରଧାନଙ୍କ ସମ୍ମାନାର୍ଥେ)

‘କବି ମଞ୍ଜୁଳ (କୃଷ୍ଣପ୍ରସାଦ ବସୁ) ଥିଲେ ଅନନ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତିଭା ସଂପନ୍ନ କବି, ସଙ୍ଗୀତଜ୍ଞ, ନଟ, ନାଟ୍ୟକାର, ଗୀତିକାର, ସୁରକାର ...’ - ବିସ୍ଫେଶ୍ଵର ବସୁ (ସ୍ଵର୍ଗତ କୃଷ୍ଣପ୍ରସାଦ ବସୁଙ୍କ ସମ୍ମାନାର୍ଥେ, ୧୯୭୦)

କୃତଜ୍ଞତା

- ଗାୟକ ଶେଖର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ବେହେରା (ଜଗସିଂହପୁର)
- ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ପାଲା ଗବେଷଣା ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାନ (ଭୁବନେଶ୍ଵର)
- ଗାୟକ ବିଚିତ୍ରାନନ୍ଦ ବେହେରା (ରାଇସୁଙ୍ଗା, ସାଲେପୁର)
- ଶ୍ରୀଯୁକ୍ତ ପ୍ରସନ୍ନ କୁମାର ଦାଶ (ଦିଲ୍ଲୀ)
- ପ୍ରଫେସର ଶ୍ରୀଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି (କାନାଡା)
- ଗାୟକ ତରୁଣ ଦୟାନିଧି ଶତପଥି (କଟକ)

ଗଛ କଟାଗଲା



ଶ୍ରୀ ଗୋପାଳ ମହାନ୍ତି, କାନାଡା

କର୍ବର - ଚର୍ବର - କାନ ଫଟି ପଡ଼ନ୍ତା ସେ ଗଛ କାଟିବାର ଶବ୍ଦରେ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମେ କବାଟ ଝରକା ବନ୍ଦିଥିବା ଆମ ଘରଭିତରୁ ବାତିପଟକୁ ଦେଖୁଥିଲୁ । ଆଉ ସେ ଗଛ କଟାଳି କ୍ରିସ୍ ! କି ଦମ୍ଭ ତାର, ନିଜର ପିତାକୁ ଗଛ ଗଣ୍ଡି ଦେହରେ ବାନ୍ଧି ପାଦ ଦିଗକୁ କଣ୍ଠା ଲାଗିଥିବା ବୁଟ୍‌ଦ୍ୱାରା ଗଛରେ ଖୁଞ୍ଚି ନିର୍ମମ ଭାବରେ କାଟି ଚାଲିଯାଏ ତାଳଗୁଡ଼ାକୁ । ଚେନ୍ ସ (chain saw) ଭୂଷି ଚାଲିଛି ବିଜୟ ଦର୍ପରେ ମାଲିକଠାରୁ ଦଶଗୁଣ ଚଢ଼ାଉରେ, ମାଲିକର କତା ଆଦେଶରେ ଅତି ଅନ୍ଧରଙ୍ଗ ଭୃତ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ଓ ସେଲ୍ୟୁଟମରା ହାଁ ସାହେବ, ଜରୁର୍ ଜରୁର୍ ଅସ୍ତ୍ର ଆବାଜ୍ ଦେଇ । ଚାଲିଲା କର୍ବର ଚର୍ବର -

ସକାଳ ନିଦ ଭାଙ୍ଗିଲେ ବାତିପଟ ସେଇ ଦିଓଟି ଅସ୍ତିଆନ୍ ପାଇନଙ୍କର ଦୋହଲିଲା ରୁଳ ଆଖିରେ ପଡ଼େ । କେଉଁଦିନ କଅଁଳ ଖରାରେ ଚିକିଏ ମୁଟୁକିଆ ହସ ବାହାରୁଥାଏ ତ କେଉଁଦିନ ମେଘୁଆ ମାତିପତିଲା ଅନ୍ଧାରୁଆରେ ଶୁଖିଲା ମୁହଁ ମଉନ ରହିଥାଏ, କେଉଁଦିନ ପବନ ମାତରେ ଛାଟିପିଟି ହେଉଥାଆନ୍ତି ତ କେଉଁଦିନ ତୁନି ପିଲାଟି ପରି ଆଖି ମିଟିକା ମାରନ୍ତି ।

ଗଛ କାଟିବାଟା ଜଣା ପଡ଼ୁଛି ହାଣିଲା ପରି । କୁରାଢ଼ିର ଗଣା ହେଲା ଚୋଟ ପଡ଼ିଲେ ଯେମିତି ବୋଦା ବଳି ପଡ଼ିବାବେଳର ହାଣିଲା ଅନୁଭୂତି ହୁଏ, ତା ଚିକିଏ ବଦଳି ଯାଇ ଖାଲି ଶୁଭୁଛି କର୍ବର, ଚର୍ବର । ହାଣ୍ଡଲର ବିଷମ ଓ ଭୟଙ୍କର ମୁର୍ଦ୍ଧି ନ ଥାଇପାରେ ଗଛକଟାଳି କ୍ରିସ୍‌ପାଖରେ କିନ୍ତୁ କୁକୁଡ଼ାବେକକଟାଳିର ଉଦାସୀନତା ଓ ଅବହେଳା ଥିଲା ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ତା ମୁହଁରେ ଓ ଭାବରେ ।

ପ୍ରଥମେ ଗଛ ତଳଭାଗର ଗୋଟିଏ ଲମ୍ବିଲା ତାଳ ଉପରେ ଭୂଷିଗଲା କରତର ଦାଢ଼ । ତା'ର ପବନରେ ମନମତାଣିଆ ଦୋହଲିବା ଢଙ୍ଗ ରଙ୍ଗ କେମିତି ଛାନିଆ ଖାଇଗଲା, ହାଉଳି ଖାଇ 'ଆଃ, ଆଃ, ମୋତେ ଛାଡ଼' ବୋଲି ଚିତ୍କାର କଲା କି ସତେ, କାକୁଡ଼ି ମିନତି ହୋଇ ନେହୁରା ହେଲାକି କ୍ରିସ୍‌କୁ ଯେମିତି ମାଙ୍କଡ଼ଧରା କେଳା ଗାଁ ଭିତରକୁ ପଶିଲେ ମାଙ୍କଡ଼ଟିଏ ଘର ଭିତରକୁ ପଶି ଆସି ଡରିଲା ହାତ ଯୋଡ଼ି ମା'ଠୁ ଉପରକୁ ଚଢ଼ି ଯାଏ ଲୁଚିବା ପାଇଁ । ହେଲେ ଗଛ କି ତାଳର ତ ନ ଥିଲା ଛପିବା ଜାଗା । କ୍ରିସ୍‌ର ବିକଟାଳ ଚେହେରା ନ ଥଲା ସିନା, କିନ୍ତୁ ସେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଗଛ କାଟିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଓଭରଅଲ୍ (Overall), ହାର୍ଡ ହ୍ୟାଟ୍ (hard hat) ଓ ବୁଟ୍ ପିନ୍ଧେ, ଜଣାପଡ଼େ ହାଣ୍ଡଲର ସିରୁର ଓ ପୁଲମାଳ ପିନ୍ଧା ପରି । ତାର ତାଳ କାଟିବା ଥିଲା ଯେମିତି ଗଛର ଅଙ୍ଗ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟଙ୍ଗ ଛେଦିଲା ପରି, କୁକୁଡ଼ାଗୁଡ଼ାକୁ ହାଣିବା ପାଇଁ ପିଞ୍ଜରାରୁ ଗୋଟିକ ପରେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଟାଣି ଆଣିଲା ଭଳି । ପରେ ପରେ ତାଳଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଦୁମ୍‌କରି ତଳେ ଲୋଟି ଯାଉଥିଲେ ଉର୍ଦ୍ଧ୍ୱ ନ କରି ।

ଅନେକ ଚିନ୍ତା କରି ଘରକୁ ଯେପରି ଉତ୍ତରା ହାତଭଙ୍ଗ ଶୀତୁଳିଆ ପବନ ପିଟି ନ ପକାଏ, ସେଥିପାଇଁ ବାତିପଟର ଉତ୍ତର ପକ୍ଷମ

କୋଣରେ ଦୁଇଟି ଅଞ୍ଜିଆନ୍ ପାଇନ୍ ଗଛ ଲଗାଇଥିଲୁ । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଅତି ଯତ୍ନରେ ବଢାଇଲୁ । ସେମାନେ ବଢିଲେ, ତାଳ ମେଲାଇଲେ ଅତି ସୁନ୍ଦର ଭାବରେ । ଉତ୍ତରୁ ଉଚ୍ଚ ହେବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ । ସୂର୍ଯ୍ୟ କିରଣରେ ସବୁଜିଆ ଦେହ ଝଟକୁଥିଲେ । ତାଳମାନେ ଲମ୍ବା ଟାଣୁଆ ଛୁଞ୍ଚି ପରି ପତର ଗୁଡ଼ାକୁ (needles) ବୋହି ପବନରେ ଦୋହଲୁଥିଲେ । ଶୀତଦିନର ବରଫ ଗଦା ହୋଇଗଲେ ସେମାନେ ଗୋଛାମରା needles ଗୁଡ଼ିକରେ ଧରି ରଖୁଥିଲେ - ଯେମିତି ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଦେହରେ କୁଢକୁଢ ଧଳା ପୁଲ ପୁଟିଛି । ପୁଲଲ ହୋଇ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ପରା 'ଦେଖ ଆମର ପୁଲ, ଯେତେବେଳେ କେଉଁଠି ପୁଲ ପୁଟିବାର ସମ୍ଭାବନା ନାହିଁ ହେଲ ଦେଖ ଆମର' । କ୍ରିସ୍ କରତ ଚାଲିଛି । ତଳ ତାଳଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଉପରେ କରତ ଲାଗିଲା ବେଳେ ଉପରତାଳ ଧରିଲେଣି, ପିଞ୍ଜରା ରୁ ଗୋଟେ କୁକୁଡ଼ା ଟାଣି ଆଣିଲାବେଳେ ଯେମିତି ବାକି କୁକୁଡ଼ାତକ ଛାନିଆରେ 'କ୍ କ୍' କରନ୍ତି । ଉପରରୁ ଉପରକୁ ତାଳଗୁଡ଼ାକ କଟା ହୋଇ ଗତି ପଡୁଥାଆନ୍ତି ବେକ ମୋତି । ଅତି ବେଶୀ ଉପରକୁ ଯାଇ ନ ଥିଲା କ୍ରିସ୍, ଖାଲି ଯେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଗଛର ଗଣ୍ଡି ମଜଭୁତ ଜଣା ପଡୁଛି ତା ବସୁକୁ ଧରି ପାରିଲା ଭଳି । ଶେଷଆଡକୁ ଦେହଟାକୁ ଝୁଲାଇ ରଖି ସେ ଦଉଡିରେ କଣ୍ଠ ଲଗାଇ ଉପରକୁ ଫେପାତି ଦେଲା ଯାହା ଉପରଭାଗର ପତଳା ତାଳରେ ମାଛ ଖୋପରେ ଲାଗିଲା ପରି ଲାଗିଗଲା । ଦଉଡିର ଅନ୍ୟପଟେ ଲମ୍ବା ହୋଇ ତଳକୁ ଓହଲି ଥାଏ ଯେପରି କ୍ରିସ୍ ଦଳର ଅନ୍ୟ ଜଣେ ତାକୁ ଘୋଷାରି ପାରିବ । ଏଆଡେ କରତ ଚଳା, ସେଆଡେ ଲମ୍ବ ଦଉଡି ଝୁଙ୍କା । ସେଇଠୁଁ କ୍ରିସ୍ କରତ ଚାଲିଲା, ଆଉ ସେଆଡେ ଦଉଡି ଝିଙ୍କା ଗଲା ଦୁଃଖାସନର ଦୌପଦୀ କେଶ ଘୋଷରା ପରି । ସହଜେ ତୁଳ ଖସୁ ନାହିଁ । ଆହୁରି ଜୋରରେ ଭିତାଗଲା ହାତମୁଠା ଶକ୍ତ କରି । ଶେଷକୁ ଅସହାୟଭାବରେ ଗଛର ଉପର ଅଂଶ ଦୁମ୍ବକରି କଟାଡି ହୋଇ ପଡିଲା ମାଟି ଉପରେ ମୁହଁ ମୋତିହୋଇ । ଜୀଇଲା ଶରୀରରୁ ତେତା ବୁଡିଗଲା ପ୍ରାୟ । ଜିତିଲା ବୀର ଦର୍ପରେ ଦେଖୁଥାଏ କ୍ରିସ୍ ଉପରୁ, ଆଉ ତଳୁ ତାର ସହକାରୀଗଣ - ହାଃ, ହାଃ -

ଗଛ ଦୁଇଟା ଖୁବ ବଢି ଯାଇଥିଲେ । ଶୋଇଲା ଖଟରୁ ଦେଖାଯାଏ ଯୋଡିଙ୍କର ବୁଲ । ଜନ୍ମ ଆଲୁଅରେ ଚିକିତ୍ସି କରେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ସକାଳେ ଦେଖିଲେ କେମିତି ମନଟା ଉତ୍ପୁଲ୍ଲିତ ହୋଇ ଉଠେ । ଗଙ୍ଗାଧର ମେହେରଙ୍କ 'ମଙ୍ଗଳ ଅଇଲା ଉଷା' ମନେ ପଡେ ଯେମିତି ସେମାନେ ଆମକୁ ସକାଳ ଆଗମନର ବାର୍ତ୍ତା ଜଣାଉଛନ୍ତି । ରୋଷେଇ ଘରୁ ଦେଖୁ କି ସୁନ୍ଦର ଯୋଡି, ଠିକ ଆମର ବର, ଓସ୍ତ ଗଛ ଯୋଡି ପରି, ଯେମିତି ସବୁ ଦିନର ଓ ସବୁ ଦିନ ପାଇଁ । ପିଲାଟି ଦିନେ ଦେଖିଛି କେହି କେହି ଏ ଯୋଡିଙ୍କୁ ବିବାହ କରାନ୍ତି ଠିକ୍ ଆମ ମଣିଷଙ୍କ ବିବାହ ପରି । ପାଇନ୍ ଦି'ଟା କଅଣ ଗୁପ୍ତରୁ କଥାଭାଷା ହେଉଥାଆନ୍ତି କେବଳ ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଜଣା, ଦୁଃଖ ସୁଖ ହେଉଥିବେ । ଦିନ ହେଲେ ଗୁଣ୍ଡୁରିମୁଣା କେଲଟା ଗଛର ଏମୁଣ୍ଡୁରୁ ସେମୁଣ୍ଡୁ ଓ ତଳୁ ଉପରକୁ ଦୌଡୁଥାଆନ୍ତି, ପୁଣି କୁଦା ମାରିଦିଅନ୍ତି ପଛଘର ବାଡ଼ ଉପରକୁ ଓ କେତେବେଳେ ତଳକୁ ଡେଇଁପଡି ପାଇନ୍ କୋନ୍ ଗୋଟାନ୍ତି, ଏଆଡେ ସେଆଡେ ଅନାଇ ଚଢି ଯାଆନ୍ତି ଗଛ ଉପରେ । ଶୀତଦିନ ଯିବା ପରେପରେ blue jay, morning dove, robbin, cardinal ଆଉ ଜାତି ଜାତିର ଚଢେଇଗୁଡ଼ାକ କୁଆଡୁ ଆସି ତାଳ ଉପରେ ବସି ଚିକିଏ ପରେ ଅନ୍ୟଗଛକୁ କି ବାହାରକୁ ପୁର୍କରି ଉଡି ପଳାନ୍ତି । ବସନ୍ତ ଆସିଲେ କେତେ ଯୋଡିଙ୍କର ଗଛ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ପ୍ରେମସ୍ଥଳୀ । ଏ ଗୁଡ଼ାକ ନ ଆସିଲେ ଯେମିତି ଗଛ ଦିଲଟା କେମିତି ବିଚଳିତ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ପିଲା ବିହୁନେ ବାପ ମା ଭଳି ।

ମୋ ଗାଁ ଘର ଅଗଣା ପିଣ୍ଡାରେ ବସିଲେ ବାହାରପଟ ଡେଙ୍ଗ ସଜନାଗଛଟା ଦେଖାଯାଏ । ସେଇଠି ବସି ଦେଖିହୁଏ ସଜନାଗଛର ଖରା ବର୍ଷା ଓ ଶୀତ ସମୟର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ରୂପକୁ । ଛୁଇଁଗୁଡ଼ାକ ଝୁଲାଇ ଖେଳିଲା ପରି ଦୋହଲୁଥାଆନ୍ତି । ଦିନରେ ମାଙ୍କଡ ଆସି ଉପାତ କରନ୍ତି ସେଇ ଗଛରେ, ପୁଣି କେବେ କେବେ ଡେଇଁ ପଡନ୍ତି ଚାଳ ଉପରେ ଗୋଟାଏ ଆଉ ଗୋଟାଏ ସହିତ ଖେଳିବା ପାଇଁ । କାଉ

ସଜନାଗଛରୁ ଖସିନା ତେଇଁ ଆସେ ଅଗଣାଆତକୁ, ହାତ ହଲାଇ ‘ହେତ୍ ଯା’ କହିଲେ ଉଡି ଯାଏ ସେଇ ସଜନା ଉପରକୁ । ପୁଣି ଫେରିଆସେ ଅଗଣାଆତକୁ । ବୋଉ କହେ, ‘ଏତେଥର ଆସୁଛି, କିଛି ଭଲ ଖବର ଆସିବ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ’ । ତା’ କଥାକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ କରି ମୁଁ ଅନାଇଥାଏ ଦାଣ୍ଡୁଆରଆତେ । ଅତୀତର ସେଇ ସଜନାଗଛ, କାଉ ଓ ବୋଉ । ଜହ୍ନରାତିରେ କେମିତି ସେ ଗଛ ବିଚିତ୍ର ଦେଖାଯାଏ । ଖରାଦିନ ରାତିରେ ଆମେ ବାହାର ପିଣ୍ଡରେ ଶୋଉଁ । ଅନ୍ଧାର ଭିତରେ ମୁଁ ଖାଲି ସେ ଗଛର ରୂପକୁ ଦେଖୁଥାଏ ଜହ୍ନ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଏପାଖରୁ ସେପାଖ ଯାଏ । ଅନ୍ଧାର ରାତିରେ ତା ଉପରେ ଭୂତ କି ତାହାଣୀ ବସିବାର କଳ୍ପନା କରେ ।

ବର୍ଷସାରା ପାଇନ୍ ଯୋଡିକ ତାଳର ପରଦା ପକାଇ ପଛଘରକୁ ରଖିଥାଆନ୍ତି ଆଜୁଆଳରେ । ଆମେ ବାହାରେ ଯାଇ ଦିଓଟିଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖୁ । ସକାଳର ନରମ ଖରାରେ ଗଛ ତଳର ପୁଲଗଛଗୁଡିକ ଚହୁରୁଆଆନ୍ତି । ଦିନ ବଢିଲେ ଖରା ଉତ୍ତାପକୁ ଦୂରେଇ ରଖନ୍ତି ସେଇ ତାଳଗୁଡିକ । ପାଇନ୍ ଛାଇରେ ଦଣ୍ଡେ ବସିବା ପାଇଁ ତିଆରି କଲୁ ସିମେଣ୍ଟବଳ୍ବର ଚଉତରାଟିଏ ଦି’ ଗଛ ମଝିରେ । ମୁଁ ଗଛ ତଳେ ଉପରକୁ ଅନାଇ ଖୁସି ହୁଏ ଗଛ ବଢୁଛନ୍ତି ସୁରୁଖୁରରେ, କେବଳ needlesଗୁଡିକ ଶୁଖି ଯାଉଛି ତଳ ତାଳରୁ, ସ୍ୱଭାବିକ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ । ବର୍ଷ ପରେ ବର୍ଷରେ ସେଗୁଡିକ ଝଡି ପଡୁଥାଆନ୍ତି ଗଦେଇହୋଇ । ଗଛର ସାଧାରଣ ପ୍ରକୃତି, ବଢିବା ସଙ୍ଗେ ତଳ ତାଳର ତେଜ କମି ଆସେ, କଟା ହୋଇଗଲେ ଗଛର ତେଜ ବଢେ । ତାହା ହିଁ କଲୁ, କଟାଗଲା ନଷ୍ଟ ହେଉଥିବା ତଳ ତାଳଗୁଡିକ ।

ଧୀରେ ଧୀରେ କ୍ରିସ୍ ଗଛର ବାକି ଗଣ୍ଡିକୁ କାଟି ଚାଲିଛି । ସରିଗଲା, ଆଉ ମୂଳଟାକୁ ସମାନ କରି ଦେଲେ ଗୋଟାକର କାମ ଶେଷ । ସେତେବେଳକୁ ଦେହରୁ ଗଛକଟା ପୋଷାକପତ୍ର ବାହାର କରି ସାରିଲାଣି । ତଦାରଖ କରୁଛି ନିଜର ବାହାଦୁରୀକୁ, ଯାଏ କରୁଥାଏ ବାକି କାମକୁ । ଚିକିତ୍ସ ତନଖି ନେଉଥାଏ ଆଉ ଗଛକୁ । ଏହାଭିତରେ ସହକାରୀମାନେ କଟା ତାଳ ଓ ଗଣ୍ଡିକୁ ବାହାରକୁ ବୋହି ନେଇ ଯାଉଥାଆନ୍ତି ମେସିନରେ ପୁରାଇ ଟୁକୁରାଟୁକୁରା କରାଇବାକୁ ଠିକ ମାଂସକୁ କିମା (minced meat) କଲାପରି ।

ଗାଁରେ ଆମ ଘର ପାଖକୁ ଲାଗି ପଡିଗା ଘରର ଖଳାବାଡି ସାହିର ମଝିରେ । ବାତକୁ ଲାଗି ବିରାଟ ନିଦ୍ରାବତୀ ଗଛଟାଏ । ତା ତଳେ ଗାଁ ଦାଣ୍ଡ ବେଶ ଚଉତା । ଝାଙ୍କିଲା ଗଛ ତଳେ ଦରକାର ପଡିଲେ ସେଠାରେ ରୁଣ୍ଡ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଗାଁବାଲା । ବିଶେଷତଃ ପିଲାମାନେ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସଞ୍ଜପୂର୍ବରୁ ଗଦା ହୋଇ ଖେଳନ୍ତି, ଯେତେବେଳେ ଯେମିତି ଖେଳ । ଗଛ ବଢି ଏମିତି ବିଶାଳ ହୁଏ ଯେ ପ୍ରତିବର୍ଷ କେତେ ତାଳ କାଟିବାକୁ ପଡେ, ତଥାପି ଗଛ ବଢି ଚାଲିଥାଏ । ପିଲାବେଳେ ଆମର ଅଧା ଜୀବନ ତାହାରି ତଳେ । ଦଶହରା ଛୁଟିରେ ଆସିଲେ କେତେକ ସେଇଠି ପଶା ଖେଳନ୍ତି ରାତି ଅଧଯାଏ । ବର୍ଷସାରା ମୁଁ ପିଲାଦିନେ ଦେଖୁଥାଏ, ସେ ଗଛ ଖରାଦିନ ଝାଞ୍ଜି ପବନର ତାତିକୁ ସହିନିଏ, ଝଞ୍ଜରେ କୁଟାଝାଟି ଗୋଳିଆ ମାଟିଧୁଳିକୁ ଆବୋରି ବାତ୍ୟାକୁ ଶାନ୍ତ କରାଏ ନିଜର କେତେ ତାଳକୁ ବଳି ଦେଇ । ଆଉ ମୁଁ ଦେଖୁଥାଏ ବର୍ଷାଦିନର ପତରଗୁଡାକରୁ ନିଗିଡିଲା ପାଣି ବୋହି ଯାଇ ଦାଣ୍ଡରେ ପାଣିଫେଟକାଭରା ଏକ ଛୋଟିଆ ନଇର ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରାଇବାର ଯେଉଁଠି ମୁଁ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟପିଲାମାନେ କାଗଜର କୁନିକୁନିଆ ତଙ୍ଗ ଭସାଉଥିଲୁ । ନିଦ୍ରାବତୀ ଗଛ ଥାଏ ଗାଁର ଏକ ଅଜାଣୁଆ ଅନ୍ତରଙ୍ଗ ସାଥୀ ।

କ୍ରିସ୍ ଆଖି ପଡିଲାଣି ଆଉ ପାଇନ୍ ଉପରେ । ହଠାତ୍ ପାଖ ଗଛ ଉଭେଇ ଯିବାରୁ ତା ମନରେ ଛନ୍ଦକା ପଶିଲାଣି । କେମିତି କେମିତି ଲାଗୁଥିବ, ଗୁଞ୍ଜିହୋଇ ଲାଗିଥିବା ପାଇନ୍ର ବିଦୁନେ ଅଞ୍ଜଳଟା ଖାଁଖାଁ ଖାଲିଖାଲି ଲାଗୁଥିବ । ଆକୂଳ ଓ ଆଶଙ୍କାର ବଶ ହୋଇ ତେତା ବୁଡିଯିବକି । ଦେଖି ପାରୁ ନାହିଁ କ୍ରିସ୍ ଠିଆ ହେଇଛି ତା ପାଖରେ । ବୋଧଗମ୍ୟ ହେଲା ନାହିଁ ବୋଧହୁଏ ଯେତେବେଳେ ତାର ବୁର୍ବର ଦାଜୁଆ କଞ୍ଜଗୁଡିକ ଗଣ୍ଡି ଉପରେ କେଞ୍ଚିହେଇ ଫେଟି ଯାଉଥାଏ । କେବଳ ଶବ୍ଦ ହେଲା କର୍ବ୍-କର୍ବ୍-କର୍ବ୍-କର୍ବ୍ -

ପାଇନ୍ ଦିଗାଙ୍କର **needles** ଅତି ପରିମାଣରେ ଶୁଖିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲା । ନିଜକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ହେଉ ନଥାଏ ଯେ ସେମାନେ ଆଉ ବେଶି ବର୍ଷ ବଞ୍ଚିବେ ବୋଲି । କ୍ରିସ୍ମସ୍ ଡକାଇ ଦେଖାଇଲି । ତା ପରାମର୍ଶରୁ ଜଣେ ଗଛ ବିଶେଷଜ୍ଞ ଆସି ଗଛ ମୂଳର ଚାରି ପଟେ ସିରିଞ୍ଜରେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତିକରି ଖାଇବା ଦେଇଗଲା । ମୁଁ ରୀତିମତ ପାଣି ଦେଉଥିଲି ବଞ୍ଚାଇବା ଆଶାରେ । ଥରେ କ୍ରିସ୍ ଆସି କହିଲା ‘ସମାନଙ୍କର ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ଆଶା ବୃଥା, କାଟି ଦିଅ’ । ଉପରକୁ ଅନାଇ ଅନ୍ତର କହିଲା ନାହିଁ ତା’ କଥା ରଖିବାକୁ । ଗୁଣ୍ଡୁଟିମୁଷା କାହାଉପରେ ଦୌଡ଼ିବେ, ନାନାଜାତିର ଚଢ଼େଇ କେଉଁଠି ଡେଇଁବେ ଓ ନିଜ ଭିତରେ କଥାଭାଷା ହେବେ ? ସେମାନଙ୍କ ତଳେ ବଞ୍ଚିବାର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନକୁ କେମିତି ହରାଇବି? କେମିତି ଦିହିଁଙ୍କୁ କଟାଇ ଦେଇଥାଆନ୍ତି ? କ୍ରିସ୍ ମତ ବିରୁଦ୍ଧରେ ମୁଁ କେବଳ **needle** ଶୁଖିଥିବା ତାଳଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ କଟାଇଲି । ଭାବିଲି ଏଥିପାଇଁ ସେ ଜାଣିଶୁଣି ଅଧିକ ପାଉଣା ନେଲା କି ?

ମନେ ଅଛି ଦୋଳ ପରେପରେ ଝିଅମାନଙ୍କର କୋଇଲି ଓଷାର ଶେଷଦିନ ପଡ଼େ । ସେ ଦିନ ମାଟିଗଢ଼ା ସୁନ୍ଦୁରିଆ କୁନିକୁନି କୋଇଲି, ଯାହାଙ୍କୁ ଗତ କେତେଦିନ ଧରି ଝିଅମାନେ ପୂଜା କରୁଥିଲେ, ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ତାଙ୍କ ସୁଖ ପାଇଁ ବିଶେଷକରି ଆମ୍ବଗଛରେ ଚଢ଼େଇ ଦିଆଯାଏ । ଆମର ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ପତିଶାଙ୍କ ବାଡ଼ିରେ ବଡ଼ବଡ଼ ଆମ୍ବଗଛ ଥିଲା । ରହି ଆସିଥିବା ପ୍ରଥା ଅନୁସାରେ ସେଇ ଗଛଗୁଡ଼ିକଙ୍କ ତାଳ ଉପରେ ଠିକ ଛକ ଜାଗା ଦେଖି କୋଇଲିମାନଙ୍କୁ ବସେଇ ଦିଆଯାଏ । ଏ କାମ କରିଥାଆନ୍ତି ଗଛ ଚଢ଼ିପାରିଲା କେଉଁ ବାପ, ଭାଇ କି ଦାଦାମାନେ । ପୂଜା ଦିନ ମଝିବେଳାରେ ହୁଏ ବୋଲି ସେଦିନ ଗାଁର ପୁରୁଷ, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଓ ପିଲାମାନେ ସେ ଜାଗାରେ ଠୁଳ ହୋଇ ହୋ ହା କରନ୍ତି । ସେଇ ଆମ୍ବଗଛ ଆମ ଗାଁ ଜୀବନର ସହିତ ଅତି ଘନିଷ୍ଠଭାବରେ ଜଡ଼ିତ - ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କର କୋଇଲି ଗଛ ।

ସବୁବେଳେ ସେଇ ପାଇନ୍ ଯୋଡ଼ିଙ୍କୁ ଆମେ ଦେଖୁଥାଉ । ମନରେ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ଓ ଭରସା ଥାଏ କିଛି ଗୋଟାଏ ହେବ । ପୁଣି ଦେଖିଲାବେଳକୁ ପତିଶା ଘର ବାଡ଼ିପାଖ ପାଇନ୍‌ର ଦିଲଟା ଶାଖା ହେଲାଣି । ହେବା ସ୍ୱଭାବିକ । ହେଲେ ଗୋଟିଏ ଶାଖା ପତିଶା ଘର ଆଡ଼କୁ ମାଡ଼ି ପଡ଼ିଲାଣି । ବିଷମ ସମସ୍ୟା, ପବନ ବାତ୍ୟାରେ ସେଟା କୁଆଡ଼େ ପତିଶା ଘର ଉପରେ ପଡ଼ିଯିବ । ପତିବାର ଖୁବ୍ ସମ୍ଭବନା । ତେଣୁ ପୁଣି କ୍ରିସ୍ମସ୍ ଡକାଗଲା - ଏଥର ଗଛ କଟାଯିବ । ସତରେ ଗଛ ଆଉ ରହିବ ନାହିଁ ।

କ୍ରିସ୍ ଭାବୁଥିବ ଗଛଟାଏତ । ଗଛ ହେଇଛନ୍ତି ମଣିଷର ସୁଖସ୍ୱାଚ୍ଛନ୍ଦ୍ୟ ପାଇଁ । ସେ ନିଜର ଦରକାର ପାଇଁ ଲଗାଇବ, ବଢ଼ାଇବ, ପୁଣି ଦରକାର ପଡ଼ିଲେ କାଟି ଦେବ । ବଣ ଜଙ୍ଗଲରେ କେତେ ଗଛ । ତାଙ୍କୁ କାଟିଲେ ସିନା କାଠଶିଳ୍ପ ଚାଲିବ, ଲୋକେ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ହେବେ, ସମ୍ପଦ ବଢ଼ିବ । ଗଛ ପୁଣି ଫୁଲଫଳ ଦେଉଛି ସବୁ ତ ମଣିଷର ଭୋଗ ପାଇଁ । ଏ ସବୁକୁ ଆୟତ୍ତରେ ରଖିବାକୁ ହେବ ସେଇ ମଣିଷର ନିଜର ଚାହିଦା ମୁତାବକ ।

ମୁଁ ଭାବୁଛି ପିଲାଦିନର ଦେଖା ସିନ୍ଦୁରଲଗା ଗଛ । ଗଛକୁ ଗାଧୋଇ ଦିଆଯାଏ, ଲୁଗା ପିନ୍ଧାଯାଏ, ପୂଜା କରାଯାଏ, ସେ ବନିଯାଏ ଦେବତା । ମୁଁ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖ ଦେଇ ଗଲେ ମୋତେ କୁହାଯାଏ କୁହାର ହୁଅ ବୋଲି, ଆଉ ମୁଁ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ନୁଆଇଁ କୁହାର ହୁଅ । ଆଦିବାସୀଙ୍କର ସେମାନେ ହୁଅନ୍ତି ଠାକୁର । କିମ୍ବଦନ୍ତୀରେ ଅଛି, ନୀଳମାଧବ ନାମରେ ପ୍ରଭୁ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ଅତି ନିଘଞ୍ଚ ଜଙ୍ଗଲରେ ରହି ଶବର ରାଜା ବିଶ୍ୱାସପୁଠାରୁ ପୂଜା ପାଉଥିଲେ । ଗଛ, ବଣଜଙ୍ଗଲ ଓ ପାହାଡ଼ପର୍ବତଙ୍କ ସହିତ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଅତି ଗୁଢ଼ ସମ୍ପର୍କ । ଏପରିକି ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସାତଭାଇ-ପାହାଡ଼ମାଳାକୁ, ବାସିନ୍ଦା ଆଦିବାସୀ ସ୍ତ୍ରୀଲୋକମାନେ, ବାହାରର ଗଛକଟାଳିଙ୍କ କବଳରୁ ବଞ୍ଚାଇ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ ପାଳିକରି ସେଠି ଜଗୁଛନ୍ତି ।*

ପୁଣି କିଏ କୁହେ 'ଏଇଟା ଅନ୍ଧ ବିଶ୍ୱାସ' । ଗଛ, ସାପ, ବେଙ୍ଗ, ଏ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ପୂଜା କଲେ ମଣିଷ ବଞ୍ଚିବା ମୁଖିଲ । ଅଣଆଦିବାସୀରୁ ଅନେକେ କ୍ରିସ୍ତ ମନୋଭାବକୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କରନ୍ତି - ଜଙ୍ଗଲ ଆଉ ସେ ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଖଣିଗୁଡ଼ାକରୁ ଅମାପ ଧନକୁ କେମିତି କେତେ ଦିନ ମାଡ଼ି ରଖିଥିବା । ଆଦିବାସୀମାନେ ଅବୁଝା, ଅପାଠୁଆ, ଅନ୍ଧବିଶ୍ୱାସୀ, କହିଲେ ଅନାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଓ ଆଜିକାଲିର ମାଓବାଦୀ । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସେ ଅଞ୍ଚଳରୁ ଚଢ଼ିଦେବାର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କର, ହୁଏତ ଅତି ବେଶୀ ହେଲେ କେଉଁଠି ଛୋଟିଆ ଜାଗା ଖଣ୍ଡେ ଦେଇ ଦିଅ ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଗୁଞ୍ଜିବାକୁ, ଯେପରି ପାଟି ନ ଫିଟାଇବେ, ଆଉ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଆଣି ଅଣଆଦିବାସୀ ଚାଲିଚଳନରେ ଅଭ୍ୟସ୍ତ କରାଇଦିଅ ଯେପରି କେହି କେବେ ସେ ଗଛବଣର ସ୍ୱପ୍ନ ନ ଦେଖିବେ ।

ଭାବିଲାବେଳେ ମୁଁ ଦେଖୁଛି ଆମ ଗାଁଭିତରକୁ ପଶିବାବେଳେ ହରିହର ମହାଦେବ ମନ୍ଦିର ପଡ଼େ । ସେ ମନ୍ଦିରକୁ ଘେରେଇ ଜଗିବସିଛନ୍ତି ଲାଗିଲାଗି ଗୁଡ଼ାଏ ବରଗଛ, ମୋଜନ୍ନୁ ଆଗରୁ । ଗଛର ମୂଳ ନାହିଁ, ଖାଲି ଓହ୍ଲଳ ପରେ ଓହ୍ଲଳ ତଳେ ଲାଗି ଖୁଣ୍ଟଭଳି ଟେକିରଖିଛନ୍ତି ଏମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏକ ବିରାଟ ଛତାପରି ଯେଉଁମାନେ ଗାଁର କେତେପୁରୁଷ ଦେଖିଆସୁଛନ୍ତି । ଗଛରେ ମହୁ ବସା ଦିଅନ୍ତି, ସାପ ନିଝରୁ ରହୁଥିବେ । ତାଙ୍କରି ତଳେ ଯିଏ ଯାଏ ହରିହରଙ୍କୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡିଆ ମାରେ, ଦୋଳଯାତ୍ରା ହୁଏ, ଜାଗର ଜାଳି ବସନ୍ତି, ଗାଁବାଲା ଥିଏଟର କରନ୍ତି, ପିଲାଏ ତାସ ଖେଳନ୍ତି । ଏହାତଳେ ହଜିଯାଏ ମୋ ସଖା ।

କ୍ରିସ୍ତ କାମ ସରି ଯାଇଛି । ଜାଗାଟା ଫାଙ୍କା ପଡ଼ିଛି ପ୍ରାଣ ନ ଥିଲା ପରି । ସେ ଠିଆହୋଇଛି ପାଉଣା ନେବା ପାଇଁ ।

ସତରେ ଗଛ କଅଣ ମଣିଷ ? ନ ହେଲେ, ତେବେ ତାର ଅଛି କଅଣ ?

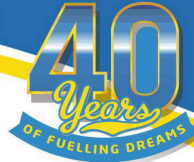
*,(<http://www.newindianexpress.com/magazine/Guardian-Angels-of-an-Odisha-Forest/2015/09/12/article3020884.ece>)

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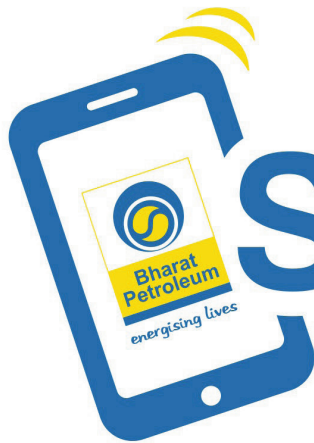
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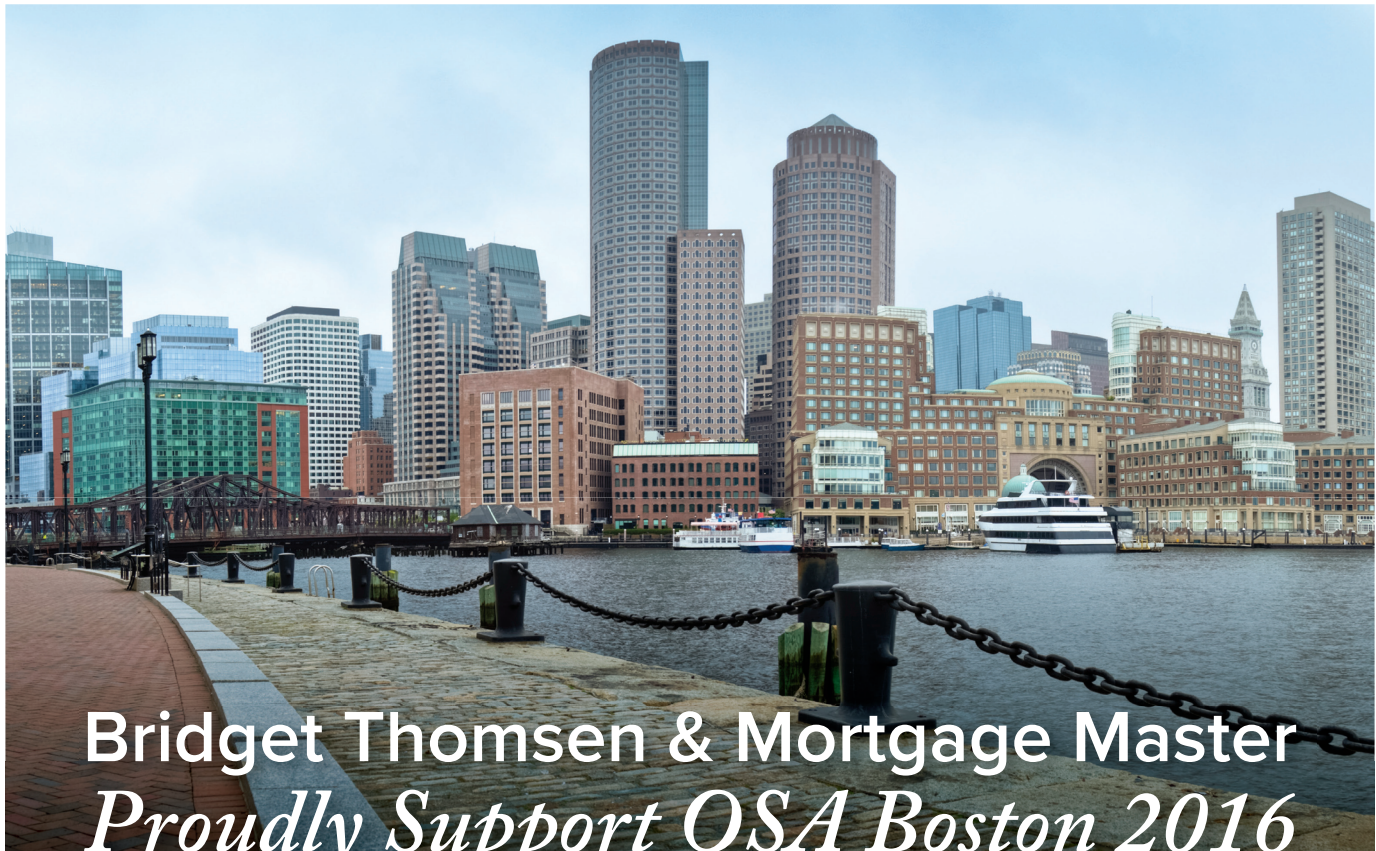
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FROM MASTERS' DESKS

**THIS SEGMENT IS DEVOTED TO A COLLECTION
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ENGLISH**

*(Painting on the segment header is a reproduction of Oil on canvass contributed by the artiste,
Dr. Sidharth Pani)*

NEW YEAR - A SLICE IN SPACE-TIME

A year has just crashed
On the beach of Life,
Spilling the wreckage and treasures,
Like a wave
That started centuries back
In the deep calm of the Ocean.

A new wave has started growing
Somewhere in the Ocean,
Distant and deep,
Where treasure abounds
And dangers lurk.

The space-time slices of
Wave after wave,
Manifest into seemingly isolated pieces
Of Life;
They all belong to the Infinite Ocean
That creates the illusion of
The Shoreline - The Finite Life.



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Prakriti

Manorama Chaudhuri, Southborough, MA

I was so proud deep down to my core, I am an Odia!
I walked into a room full of people,
I proudly announced myself I came from Odisha,
Where Lord Jagannath rules our heart.
I still have the lingering taste of pithas. I felt it. I told them.
I displayed so proudly paintings from various parts of my state.
I was so happy to wrap around in my mom's sarees,
so soft and silky and so much warmth weaved into its' intricate designs.
I danced to the Odissi music, little bells wrapped around my ankle.
My soul is cleansed from every sin by listening to Jagannath Jananas.
Champu, Chanda, Chautisha, Odissi! What a musical world!
I am sure Lord Krishna must have wondered in these streets.
I still can hear his melodious tunes of flute coming from somewhere near.

Suddenly I felt a pinch, no must be a sting.
It must be something poisonous; I can feel the pain in every part of my body.
I woke up sweating.
It took some time to feel my nerves.
Oh! What a beautiful dream I had
It must be the Wonderland of Odisha,

I heard from ajaa, ayee.
I wish I can stay there all the time.
But I forgot I am a crab from Odisha.
My prakriti is only to pull one down.
I don't have the nerve to push one forward.
I desperately wish I can change this prakriti.
But God didn't write that in my fate.
He only said I have to die before I can change my prakriti.
So helpless I am,
All I can wish to go back to my dreams,
To the Magical and Musical land of Odisha.

A Brownie Abroad: Good People, Bad Things

By Raj Satpathy

Occhiolism: The awareness of the smallness of your perspective.

On Friday night, I got robbed by some Moroccans in Alicante, Spain.

I've been told that this was possibly one of the most authentic Spanish experiences that I could have had during my stay in Spain, so I'm quite thankful to the fellows for showing a tourist like me the ropes of Spanish society!

But in all honesty, it was a surreal altercation. I won't bother y'all with the details of the event itself - that's not the whole point of this post. The point of this post is the conversation that I had with one of the fellows. I had kindly lent them my debit cards at their insistence, complete with a set of false PINs, and one hombre eagerly headed off on his little red fixie to try them out at the nearest ATM.

I'm not quite sure why I sat with the other guy, but it was the right decision. As I'm sure you all know, I'm not exactly an imposing figure by any means - some strong breezes could probably come and knock me over. (Warning: cliché incoming) But while I may not have the biggest muscles, I do possess a rather expansive personality. My weapons are not my fists, but my words.

I befriended the man that I sat on a bench with. His name was Mohamed, he was 23 years old, and he and I had what was perhaps the most scintillating discussion that I've had here in Spain, perhaps even in my life. He was surprisingly well spoken, as well as quite religious, often pulling quotes from the Koran at points in our conversation, though this was lost on me at points, considering the fact that our only shared language was Spanish.

Yet while the words that he spoke were well couched and eloquent, that wasn't what made this conversation so enlightening, obviously. It was what we spoke about that, after some time reflecting on what we spoke of, has truly opened my eyes to other perspectives.

I asked him why he robbed people and, though I'm not sure what I expected, his answer was simple: "Para comer." We spoke of his childhood, the fact that he had never had a true father figure, his disadvantaged upbringing in a country where the majority of the people automatically looked down on him for his race, and numerous other things that had made his life just that much harder.

By no means was anything that I spoke about new to me. Many of my classes for my Global Studies major have gone over the enormous disparities that exist between the many people of the world, especially when it comes to racial and economic relations of power. But this was my first time really encountering any of this in the real world.

I have lived a sheltered life.

If I ever have a problem, I know that my parents and siblings will do anything within their power to help me. I've never had to struggle with money, but more than that, I've never really experienced discrimination of any kind. Sure, things got weird for a while after 2001, but usually any such "discrimination" was simply on the part of my peers, couched in the form of a joke. Outside of this, I have always had a support system of friends, always had goals and objectives that were achievable, and have never really lost sight of what I'm expected to do in the next part of my life.

Not so for Mohamed. And not so for so many people today, I think.

By no means am I okay with what those two did to me. Not only did they thoroughly invade my privacy and take my things, but they shattered my understanding of a world where, to me, everyone had the same opportunities and advantages that I had.

I'm not really sure which of those I'm angrier about.

I have no specific realizations about what happened, nor do I truly know what I'm going to do about it. I wanted to study abroad to learn Spanish and travel through Europe, but I also truly wanted to understand more about the world around me. This event, perhaps more than almost anything that has happened in the past month and a half, has done that for me.

I wish I could help everybody in the world achieve their dream. But I can't. But I now understand just a little bit more about how privileged I am to have the family, friends, and opportunities that I do.

I can't just take it all for granted anymore.

If you allow me a moment to think on the page - I have always loved to set lofty goals for myself, and then often barely scraped by when achieving them, or started out and strong and not really put my full effort behind them. That is going to change.

That is going to change because I actually have the ability to make these things happen. I'm in the most enviable position in the world because of the fact that I can make my dreams come true.

Time for me to try a little harder at life, I guess.

Raj Satpathy is a Junior at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. He wrote this article last summer, the day after he was mugged (thankfully, he was not hurt) in Alicante, Spain, while in a Summer Study Abroad program. He is born and brought up in Columbia, Missouri, to parents Namita and Sashi Satpathy.

Technology & Spirituality, a Silicon Valley perspective

Jnana Ranjan Dash

San Jose, California

Introduction

The phrase “Technology and Spirituality” may appear as an oxymoron, but that is far from the truth. In this article we indicate how well known names in the technology field from the Silicon Valley have taken to spirituality in a serious way.

First of all, what is spirituality? It is not to be confused with religion. Religion is a specific set of organized beliefs and practices, usually shared by a community or group. Spirituality is more of an individual practice and has to do with having a sense of peace and purpose. It also relates to the process of developing beliefs around the meaning of life and connection with others. It is a journey within yourself to discover who you really are. Someone said that if religion is the skin of the banana, then spirituality is the inside.

The ancient rishis of India were spiritual scientists, as they discovered the inner world of humans in contrast to the modern scientists discovering the phenomena of the external world. Spiritual science focuses on the “subject” and not the “object”. Our scriptures like the Upanishads (also known as Vedanta) were written thousands of years ago showing this truth of our inner world of self-realization. Unfortunately we forget the essence and boxed these teachings into rigid boundaries of religion leading at times to extreme fanaticism and religious wars. As Swami Chinmayananda said, “Vedanta makes a Hindu a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim, and a Christian a better Christian”.

Swami Vivekananda brought the essence of our spiritual science or Vedanta to the USA back in 1893. In his second and last trip to the US in 1900, two years before his death, he came to visit the west coast. The Vedanta Society in San Francisco dates back to 1906. Another spiritual leader of significance was Paramahansa Yogananda (Founder of Self Realization Fellowship) who came to the US in 1920 and stayed here in Los Angeles for 32 years until his death in 1952. His famous book, *Autobiography of a Yogi* is ranked as one of the top 100 books that have influenced mankind the most. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar (head of the Art of Living Foundation) had said that California used to be *Kapilaranya*, and no wonder it has been home to so many spiritual leaders from all over the world.

Now let us talk about 4 well known personalities in the technology field with interest in spirituality: late Steve Jobs (Founder/CEO of Apple), Jack Dorsey (Founder/CEO of Twitter and Square), Marc Benioff (Founder/CEO of SalesForce) and Ben Silberman (Founder/CEO of Pinterest).

Steve Jobs

Steve Jobs founded Apple back in the late 1970s and is considered a legend in the technology field. Today, Apple is the most valued company in the world. Al Gore, the former Vice President had said after his death that people like Steve Jobs come to this planet once every 150 years or so. Steve transformed six industries during his life – personal computer via Macintosh, smart phone via iPhone, music via iPod, tablet via iPad, animation via Pixar, and the concept of a new store via the glass-and-steel Apple store.

At the age of 19, Steve dropped out of college and took a trip to India in search of enlightenment and self-discovery. His personal quest was to change the world. He wanted to meet one Neem Karoli Baba, who had died when he reached there. But Steve stayed on for seven months. When

someone said that he got wisdom from India, he jokingly replied that it was not wisdom, but diarrhea.

Steve was a strict vegetarian and followed Paramahansa Yogananda's book *Autobiography of a Yogi*. He downloaded only this book on his iPad and read it every year for twenty years. As a matter of fact, at his funeral services at Stanford campus in 2011, the selected guests were each given a brown envelop as per Steve's wish. Marc Benioff, a friend and founder of Salesforce.com was at the service. He said that he got very excited after getting the brown envelop and could not wait to open it, thinking it must be a new gadget from Apple. But what was inside was a copy of the book, *Autobiography of a Yogi*. As Steve was suffering from cancer during his last couple of years he turned more and more to the spiritual teachings from this book to find that inner peace and calmness. Spirituality gives you the strength to face any adversity including death.

Jack Dorsey

Jack Dorsey founded Twitter and currently is the CEO. He is also the CEO of a second company called Square that he founded a few years back in the area of online payment using a smartphone. During a personal conversation with a family member, he said his two favorite books are: *Patanjali's Yoga Sutra* and *Autobiography of a Yogi*. He is a quiet fellow and a deep thinker. Spirituality takes you to a higher egoless state and you start doing your job much more passionately without brooding over the fruits of your action. The selfish motivation disappears and you become much more effective as a leader. Spiritual practices such as meditation centers your thinking and is a great stress reducer.

Marc Benioff

Marc and I worked for eight years at Oracle during the 1990s. He had visited India during that time and met with Mata Amritanandamayi who suggested to Marc to rise above just business and do something more for humanity. This was a profound statement and he has stuck to that since then. Marc founded SalesForce, a very successful company and became a billionaire himself. He donates 10% of company profits to charity every year and encourages employees to do so. He has generously donated to many charities over the years. True spirituality takes you from "I", me, and mine to "we", where you see the world as one family – Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. In the movie "Awakening" released last year on the life of Paramahansa Yogananda, Marc speaks about Swamiji's life and goals.

Ben Silberman

Ben Silberman is a young man in his 30's and founded Pinterest, one of the unicorns (valued over \$1B). If you visit his office, you may find books such *Teachings from the Upanishad* on his desk. The whole idea of Pinterest is finding your own inner needs – what are your deep interests, a bit like soul searching. Ben is the son of doctor parents from east coast and his wife is a pure vegetarian south Indian lady. He has visited India many times and has deep interest in spirituality as expounded in the Upanishads.

Final Remarks

Bill Gates is an excellent example of a tech-head who has crossed over into a more spiritual world of compassion and generosity. The world's richest man and his wife Melinda now run an organization that invests huge amounts of money into medical research so that human children of the future needn't die of disease. They are focusing in particular on helping poor children in developing nations including India.

When I visit India every year, I spend some time in Bangalore, the heart of the country's technology and innovation. I find amongst the young people a lot of stress and restlessness. I get stories of many broken marriages, domestic violence, and other ailments. What the younger generation needs is spiritual practices like daily meditation, which brings centeredness. It is the subtler technology for mind management. It calms the agitated mind. It connects us to our source and brings us back home to ourselves.

A spiritual awakening will reveal that living deeply is not just about our individual needs, but also about what the world needs. It is no accident that this is all happening here in Silicon Valley, where the Internet is connecting everyone and creating new social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Snapchat.

About the author:

Jnana Ranjan Dash has lived in Canada and the USA since 1970 and is a life member of OSA. He is a former executive at software companies like IBM and Oracle.

Coming to the USA in the Sixties

Nirmala Dash, Seattle, WA

When I came to the USA, there were few Indian Oriya families in New York. More Indians came in the eighties and the nineties to work in computer industry, high technology jobs, and in universities. There was only one Oriya family and few Oriyas without their spouses in New York and New England. Later some of the wives joined their husbands. I felt lonely and homesick leaving my parents, siblings and friends behind. Also I didn't know my husband that well at the time. Like most of my generation we had an arranged marriage and I left Odisha eight days after our wedding.

I had not travelled much outside of Cuttack, Odisha, so even coming to Calcutta (now Kolkata) was a new experience for me. I had applied for my Passport and American Visa with a copy of my Marriage Registration, substituting the engagement date for wedding. We didn't receive the Passport and the Visa. Somanath, my husband and I got nervous. He was worried we may not get the documents in time for our departure in four days. We got both the passport and the permanent immigrant visa to the USA in two days after our arrival and before our departure from Calcutta. I remember going to the Consulate office in Calcutta for an interview for the US visa. The Vice-Consulate in charge of the US visas interviewed me in her office. At the time Somanath was living in Poughkeepsie, NY, and had urged me to practice to pronounce Poughkeepsie properly, as we would be living there. Lucky for me the Vice Consulate didn't ask me where we were going to live or write down the town's name. I am sure I would have misspelled Poughkeepsie. The Vice- Consulate officer in charge of visas was a woman in late forties, pleasant looking, and a motherly type. I was surprised that she interviewed me alone in her office. May be it was an office procedure, I am not sure. She asked me just a few basic questions, like, "My wedding date, reason for my going to the USA?" , though my application papers were in front of her. I had hard time following vice consulate's American accent, which was very new to me.

There were few Indian families in Poughkeepsie, NY. We got together for dinner parties and the annual Diwali Celebrations. Everyone took some roles for this event, it was fun. Thankfully we had no fights. This brought unity among the Indians in the community. We all belong to one county and we are all Indians but today I am ashamed to say this, Indians are still divided by languages and regional groups. Even in Seattle there are two groups of Odiyas now. These two groups do not see each other and talk rationally; this is more like Washington politics. Are we moving forward or going backward! We all went to see the old Hindi and Satyajit Ray's movies at different college campuses and saw Indian dances and musical concerts. I had many American friends. I joined book clubs and got involved in volunteering for Red Cross at the hospitals. When I started going to College in New Paltz, NY, my classmates gave me rides to classes. I didn't have a driver's license at the time. I remain thankful to them today. Making friends, going out with my American friends, and watching television improved my English speaking skills; I didn't have to mentally translate any more. English became a second language to me.

I attended the State University College New Paltz, NY, to be a secondary school teacher. During my training sessions in Poughkeepsie High School boys were excited to see me in "Sari." The seventeen/eighteen years old boys first question, "What kind of dress is this, (sari); have I seen tigers, snakes, monkeys in the streets; what kind of food did we eat; or do Indians eat mud to have brown skin?" I was scared of these six feet tall, 200 pounds boys standing over me. This was a novelty for the students. They didn't mean anything bad. Those students were respectful and polite towards me. But this put an end to my teaching career in high school. But I did some substitute teaching in elementary and middle schools in Vermont though.

I remembered a funny incident in Montreal, at the World Fair. A young girl, eight or nine years in age (about my waist high), stood next to me and was smelling my "Sari"! Somanath saw her and asked her "How does she smell? Is it nice?" I was looking at the American pavilion and had not noticed her. By the time I realized, the mother of this innocent little girl yanked her away from me and apologized for her behavior, which I didn't mind at all.

We could not have any Indian grocery stores in Poughkeepsie, NY, or Burlington, VT, There was only one store, Koulostian, on Lexington Ave, New York, selling Indian groceries. In Poughkeepsie it was no problem to go into the city. At least someone in our friend circle made a trip to the city whom we could give our groceries lists. But in Burlington we had to get the necessities through mail order or go to Montreal. Around this time we could not buy fresh ginger, cilantro, any oriental vegetables, or Indian spices from the supermarkets. Now we can go to Costco, or Trader Joe's and stock up on Naans to Chicken Tikka Masala.

The India Club in Vermont was an incredible organization. I felt as if we had more committees and office bearers than members! I remember being the President of the club as well the chair person for community outreach activities and other time vice president and cultural activities coordinator. All of us served in two or three committees at one time or other and be the audience. We asked our American friends to participate. Twenty to thirty of our American friends attended the Diwali celebrations. May be it was for the good food, dance and music. My family and friends enjoyed our club. We planned for these annual events, such as, Diwali, one or two summer picnics, occasional music concerts and dances for the whole year. We still talk about those days. We all tried to help each other when some ones sickness, in childbirth or any other unforeseeable events in our lives. My friends invited Somanath for dinner and brought food for us after I got home from hospital after some sickness. We always had baby shower parties for both wives and husbands.

In the sixties there was no television in India and American magazines were rare. I had seen some old Life and National Geographic magazines at Ravenshaw College Kanika Library in Cuttack. I had not seen TV, washing machines, dishwasher, vacuum cleaner, etc. I had to learn how to operate coin operated washer/drier, how to fold fitted bedsheets. I watched how women in the laundromat were doing; these were minor things compared to learning a whole new culture and life in the USA. During the first snow fall, walking in snow, sliding in snow were the most memorable events for me. My broken wrist was part of it. I learned not to go out in snow wearing sari top it with overcoat and snow boots, sure to fall! I wrote a long letter to my father about my firsthand experience in snow. I have vivid memory of Indian summer, the unusual warm days of October and fall colors in Vermont. We walked in our backyard and in the woods, whenever possible. We enjoyed the fading autumn sunlight, fall foliage. We watched the migratory Canada geese going south. I felt this foreign country welcoming, gave the opportunities to pursue our American dreams. Like migratory birds going south for food and warm weather, we came to seek opportunities, and American dreams. Indians are successful; we have CEOs, Governors, members of Congress and state legislatures, nominee for Supreme Court justice. Mostly we have assimilated in America, accepted the culture and life style but at the same time have not forgotten our roots our culture and origin. We Indians and other immigrants made this country as our own. I was excited to come to America and have my dreams come true, I became an American of Indian origin. We must stay awake and be engaged in the community, focused, informed and involved to continue to move forward in our adopted country and make the country move forward, too.

HOMeward BOUND

Dr. Jayasmita Mishra

The takeoff was smooth as the giant jumbo jet elevated up. The wheels were jarring as they soared high up into the sky. The aircraft was a twin engine Boeing 777-a marvel of engineering and avionics. It glided high up in the air transporting hundreds of passengers to their dream destinations. Comfortably seated in a cozy corner; I visualized myself flying on towards my colorful nest, bounded by walls of unbridled freedom. It's the color of a safe warm place where someone takes you under the wing; feeds you with tasty meals, coos over you, hovers around you; providing all necessary comfort and protecting you from all evils.

This trip was meticulously planned. For months the excitement to go provides ample momentum to set the ball rolling. Hours and days are spent surfing the net to save each penny and bag the best ever deal so that the trip cost is optimized. Options are compromised and long waiting hours in unknown places are accepted as the mind is tuned on towards the journey home.

I have a label tagged to me-N R I. This is no ordinary label, it speaks a lot. To some I am blessed, while others see me as a bundle of wealth, some others perceive me as a traitor and hypocrite to my motherland while another just thinks I am a nomad who exists in a dream world. Each perception is focused on the perceivers' self-created imagination.

God has created the sky blue, plants green, soil brown and the ocean grey everywhere all around the globe; within this likeness coexists a great diversity of species. I am just a microcosm within this chromosphere. At times I ask the same question again and again curious of my self-identity and belongingness. People in the US think I'm too old fashioned, old-style; carrying around me the aura of culture and "Indianness" all around... Yet, I stick to those basic morals, manners values and norms that have been programmed into my mental makeup since childhood. Instances like these have happened: my boss comes around my desk and lo-I instantly stand up with due reverence becoming a laughing stock of all. A friend nudges in and says-what's up -meticulously my eyes turn upward gazing at the ceiling, only after a pause I realize the significance. Harry sounds like Hari, Garie is my favourite Gouri and Graindhier lane is well remembered as Gandhi road-all messed up to make things familiar and less confusing.

On the other hand, Indian people, consider me as a species from another world; because I'm too classy, chic and forward when it comes to US life. Suddenly I realize I am a total misfit it's like I have two sides of the coin. Juxtaposed within the clutches of two poles I remain standstill deciding my next course of action.

With time I have realized, the table has turned, the initial charm of meeting and greeting no more exists. The never ending phone calls I make from abroad has no meaning, the gifts I carry for each and every one- picked up from the countless visit to stores: bought with saved clippings and coupons are not appreciated. At times, it hurts as I sense the jealousy within others: elders always pamper me-when in

sight I am the preferred one. They do not realise how effective a therapy that much needed kindness has on my tired body and soul which is longing for that affection and warmth. Befret of parental love, security and attention I have learned to live in the present; every day is another day, a new beginning, hoping what is the best -that is yet to come....

Shopping in the local bazaars not only is a pleasure, it is nostalgic too. Eating out in local food stalls is not only fun and appetizing- it makes me, feel at home. Tagged as –Firanghi they laugh when I hunt for dustbins, napkins and toilet paper. Apparently, I do have a money tree in my backyard, thus obliged to squander at each and every opportunity.

On the contrary, it is indeed shocking: seeing my folks swaying under a storm of radical social change. People all around have expectations of that glitter of a dollar which I have meticulously saved counting pennies, nickels and dimes bit by bit. Not to say that I am poor or selfish, no one will understand that not everyone in the US is a high paid worker. We as immigrants have our own initial struggles and be content mopping floors, vacuuming carpets, filling gas at the gas stations, baby sitting or standing in a store-these are chores which we would never think of doing back home.

A loom of uncertainty persists at the work place as it is a common practise that the corporate world in a capitalist country adheres to the norm-hire and fire. This sense of uncertainty kills us, we stand on our own having nothing concrete to fall back upon. I am what I am today or have because of my guts wherein I have flown offshore, faced a different world all together without any sort of support. I became frustrated as I spent countless days trying to make connections for a suitable job. Ironically, all surrounding doors shut like a dominoes game, one by one I realized, my doctoral qualification from India did not stand a chance in this land of opportunity.

Besides taking a hefty loan for furthering my education I have spent many sleepless nights struggling with the conscious decision of making this move. In a new country, when you try to talk to new people and hunt for a suitable job for yourself, despite having a work permit, no one really responds and your decades of experience seems to have vanished.

Finding a job of your choice is not easy –hence one has to fit into any cuboid that provides you the space. In the work place people many a times treat you as an intruder/threat to their own well-being and again a struggle for survival harbors. People of your own kind also behave in a different manner-rootless as they are no one really welcomes or co-operates. Foreigners most often blame us for taking away their jobs and it is hard to prove one’s integrity. The best part is-once accepted you become –The preferred ONE, moving up the ladder as lady luck smiles on your sense of perseverance and adaptability. My old label as a snake charmer or naked fakir has changed to a better term –the smart techie.

Today, we have made our nation proud- All top Physicians in the US are Indians, NASA boasts about the majority of our bright Scientists. Extraordinary people like Pichai and Nooryi have topped the corporate world-a dream come true!

Indian music is melody to the ears, spending money on an Indian movie is sometimes my only mode of relaxation. I would drive miles and miles going grocery shopping to buy that bitter gourd and white pumpkin- veggies I had once disliked. With time one realizes that the plain burfi jalebis and ladoos are far tastier than the readily available -cakes puddings and pies. Fast food is tempting, time has taught me

to stay away from them due to health reasons, hence I have to imagine Mom and Dadi ma's kitchen and become an expert Indian chef within no time.

Life is not a bed of roses, it is not static. We all have to strive for the best. No place on earth is heaven- one has to weigh the pros and cons of everything-looking at the positives. Consequently, we must all adapt to new situations. While we may not be comfortable with certain aspects of the Western culture, there are so many plus points. As with all cultures, there is a good, and a bad. The very best that I have learnt from this country is to be self-reliant and independent. Being independent doesn't necessarily mean loving less, or not asking for help. It necessarily teaches you to letting people in and reaching out to others as per the circumstances. This culture teaches you to strive for the best, be confident and enables you to be a fine, independent, young human being. We cannot control what life throws at us, but we can control our response to it. This response is our adaptability.

I have been fortunate to mingle with people of diverse backgrounds. With great enthusiasm I become a part of celebrations like Thanksgiving and Christmas as well as I enjoy Holi and Diwali. In a crowd –I would automatically gravitate around other Indians just because it's a natural talking point like, "where are you from in India? Do you have family there? Do you visit India often? The queries are endless.

What is funny about India and "Indianness" is that sense of affinity-the love, at the very core-the dil that remains Hindustani. India is ridiculous, dysfunctional the people amazing and wonderful, the pathways all entangled and shabby but in spite of all that –I jump at any chance to go.

Living close to your parents and relatives comes with its own share of obligations and family politics. It's amazing how much time is spent in India attending weddings, engagements, birthday parties and festivals. Probably that is the energy that keeps one vibrant and active. Lonely and cut off at times I yearn the company of my loved ones, holding on to past memories strong and firm.

Living in an alien soil for years, has made me stronger as I have learned the hard way to survive against all odds. Every storm that I have endured has taught me a lesson to grow and appreciate the present. Success, for me has always been in providing a great quality of life for my family; seeing them reach their full potential. For sure, I have achieved the American Dream; it gives me immense pleasure and satisfaction to see each and every member of my family growing both at the social and professional level. I perceive my fulfilment of goals in their achievement.

Counting upon my blessings; I am privileged to breathe pure air, live in a neat and clean environment, eat fresh, healthy food and have access to state of the Art and Medical facilities. As a common person; I enjoy a lifestyle worth to be proud off. Lucky, to have the best of both worlds-"I always like everything about being a debased desi". In updating my gratitude list, I am thankful for living in- America. –God Bless America!

.....Happiness is what we make of the circumstances and not what the surroundings have to offer.

Dr. Jayasmita Mishra, Ph.D.

New York

Elephant and Blind Men

Dr. Arun Misra

The story, elephant examined by six blind men, or in dark, originated in India, may be in Panchatantra, which has numerous animal fables, as narrated by Pandit Visnu Sarma, for the education of the sons of a King.

Examining an elephant by blind men, has eventually diffused into various faiths, Hinduism, Jain, Buddhist, Sufi, Bahai etc. The lore became known to the West, when the American Poet John Godfrey Saxe (in the 18th Century) wrote a poem on this subject. This poem was included in the English text books, in High School, which I read in 1955, in Bihar (Mithila), India, and has stayed in my memory since then.

The poem is available and recited on You Tube. Brooklyn Museum has a painting, 'The Blind Men Appraising an Elephant' by Ohara Donshu from the early 19th Century. There is also a famous Wall Mural, on this concept, in Thailand. Wikipedia has also described this situation, which includes the painting from the Brooklyn Museum as well as the Wall Mural from Thailand. The number of men, examining the elephant vary from three to six. But they convey the same concept of one-sided knowledge, and lack of holistic, complete and comprehensive view about the matters of importance.

A group of blind men (or men in dark) touch an elephant to learn, what it is like. Each feels a difference, but only one part of the elephant. They are in complete disagreement, saying elephant is like a snake (tail), a brush (end of tail), pillar (legs), wall (sides), fan (ears), spear (tusks), etc.

No one can see the whole picture, which has important religious and cultural implications, where different faiths argue on their uniqueness, but a holistic view comes only from a man with sight, who sees the whole elephant from a distance, in light, and describes it properly. He/she also explains the debating men, that they are blind, and have a single, narrow, specialized view of the subject.

Reference to this fact appears in Bible (Luke, Matthews), Kathopanishad, Buddhist Sukta, as well as, in Greek, Latin, Arabic and Russian translations. Google search will provide you many more narratives, and amusing situations on this subject, which is worth trying.

This also leads to the Metaphor, if the 'Blind leads the Blind'; it will result in both falling into a pit, which has been said again and again since antiquity. One has to get out of ignorance and have a holistic picture of any situation, is the moral of the story.

Based on this theme, I wrote a book, 'Invest & Insure', discussing the financial and investment advice we often receive from various professionals, like attorney, accountant, realtor, lender, builder, insurance agent, and others about any matter, who provide us their view point and implement their recommendations, which is generally incomplete and one sided. A comprehensive approach to any financial problem will thus be available only from a competent 'Financial Planner', who operates like a 'family physician' and not like a 'neurosurgeon'. In this age of 'specialization', where a 'generalist', receives less respect and lower fees, compared to a 'specialist', needs to be revisited.

Lord Ganesh, with elephant head, is said to be very wise and knowledgeable. No wonder his mouse, has found abode in the pervasive world of Information Technology.

Arun Misra, PhD, Atlanta, 404-861-8754, misrausa@yahoo.com

Champu, Chhanda, Odissi Initiative

Lata Misra, NJ



During the 1950s, Odissi dance was not known outside of Odisha. With the tutelage of persons like Kabichandra Kali Charan Patnaik, Kelu Mohapatra, Sanjukta Panigrahi etc., Odissi dance is now known all over the world and has established itself as a premier dance form. Its affiliate, the Champu, Chhanda and Odissi sangeet does not, however, have the same fate. They are dying down from the memories of the Odias. The age old form of these classical Odia sangeet needs a revival at this time, at least by the Odias, without which it will be forgotten soon. We, the Odias have the moral obligation to see that such a thing does not happen in the future. In Odisha, the lovers of Champu, Chhanda and Odissi music are trying to bring back the age-old tradition of this art form so that it does not fade away from the memories of the people of Odisha. Stalwarts like Singhari Shyam Sunder Kar, Kashinath Pujapanda, Markandeswar Mahapatra, Balakrushna Das, Shyamamani Patnaik, Bhikari Bal and Bhubaneswari Misra devoted their entire lives for the revival of Odissi sangeet, and now it is gaining ground in our State.

The Odias living in the United States have never given importance to Odissi sangeet compared to the Odissi dance. That is the reason why a few Odias are working hard to bring this ancient form of music to the forefront of our audience in America. I, with a few like-minded people, made a promise to bring back this classical form of sangeet to our second generation Odias in order to remind them that the sangeet form is no less enthralling than the dance form.

In the year 2009, in spite of the skeptics, ten Odia youngsters, ranging from age 8 to 18 were persuaded to learn Champu, Chhanda and Odissi to perform in the 2009 OSA Convention, held in Trenton, NJ. The untiring efforts of Riti Mohanty, herself an Odissi singer of repute, the children were ready to perform. A few children from outside the area also participated. Together, they sang brilliantly to the amazement of the Convention audience. Most of the attendees felt that the Odissi sangeet program of the kids was the best program in the cultural segment of the Convention.

Next year, in 2010, the Convention was held in California. The hard work of the Cultural Committee Chairpersons, Gayatri Joshi and Kuku Das duly paid off. There were 13 participants and they mesmerized the audiences with their outstanding performance. The same year, the General Body of OSA approved the inclusion

of Champu, Chhanda and Odissi sangeet (CCO) as an item of the cultural function of every OSA convention. However, the following year of 2011, the initiative did not get any momentum in the Dallas Convention due to the apathy of the Cultural Committee. By June of that year, not a single entry was received for this item. I, in my despair, started calling all over the country and requested parents to support this initiative by enrolling their children in the program. I am grateful for the support I received in this regard from Riti Mohanty and Ritu Mohapatra of NJ; Debaki Choudhury and Bigyani Das of MD. They were instrumental in coaching the children for the program. As usual, the CCO program, once again, became a hit among the audience and proved that this initiative is going to stay. The same year, based on the popularity of the program, OSA General Body passed another resolution that it would financially support the initiative. In the beginning when this program was started, it was decided to distribute prizes to all the participants of the CCO. The first year, the prizes were given to all of them and the funds were provided entirely by me which continued for a couple of years. Thereafter, a CCO fund was established by OSA.

With all the encouragement received from OSA as well as from the parents of our kids, The CCO program became a hallmark in the OSA Convention and the Odias eagerly awaited this program, every year, at the Convention. In the year 2012, this initiative was repeated in the Seattle Convention. Although it was the first Convention in Seattle, the organizers took great pains to showcase this program by bringing ten participants and made it very successful. Following years, in 2013 and 2014, the Convention was held in Chicago and Columbus, respectively, with record number of children participating. By then the CCO had already established as a signature item and was presented on the stage with a house-full of audience. The year 1915 was no exception. In the Global OSA Convention, held in Washington, D.C., the CCO program with some 20 participants, enthralled the audience with their soulful rendering of the songs with perfect Odia pronunciation, *taal* and *laya*.

In order that the momentum continues, now it is the duty of all Odia parents to encourage their children to continue to uphold this initiative by having regular practice, at least, more frequently than once a year. Rather they must present this program on every possible occasion in their respective chapters. We have also produced two CDs, each one of them containing ten to twelve simple Champu, Chhanda, Odissi songs with music which are followed by karaoke tracks for the children to learn and rehearse those at their spare time without having a trained teacher of Odissi music to train them. The karaoke tracks help them to sing along without the support of live accompaniment of harmonium and tabla. The production of the CDs were possible with financial support from the lovers of this initiative, along with financial support from the OSA. We have come up with a third CD now which has been entirely financed by a grant from Drs. Shanti and Uma Mishra for which we are immensely grateful to them. The songs of the first two CDs are brilliantly sung by Nazia Alam with her golden voice and are an immense hit with the kids. The third CD has three other singers besides Nazia. For the first time two male singers have lent their voice in this CD. The master copy of the third CD has been in our possession. The art work of the cover and the duplication of the CDs are under way and the CD will be ready for release by the end of this month. For the art work and duplication, we are indebted to Lalatendu Mohanty of NJ who single-handedly undertook this important work for all the three CDs. The first two CDs are now floating among the children of the Odia community in the U.S.A. and they are using it to present their performance in the conventions of OSA. It is a pleasure to see our young kids performing the classical form of Champu, Chhanda and Odissi on the stage which is greatly appreciated by the audience. However, much more needed to be done in this endeavor so that more and more children are attracted to this program. My appeal to all Odia parents is to get involved in this noble initiative and infuse interest in their children in order that this age-old tradition continues and not face extinction in future.

Lata Misra has been involved in the cultural arena of OSA since 1972. She won the coveted Kalashree Award from OSA in 2004. She also received a "Lifetime Service Award" from OSA in 2011, along with husband Saradindu Misra. She is the founder of Champu, Chhanda and Odissi initiative and lives in Franklin Park, NJ.

Food; a Lucky Day

Parimita Mohanty, Portland, Oregon

This year I had the wonderful experience of visiting a slum in Cuttack, Odisha... It was interesting yet very eye opening! This was my very first time going to a place like this and meeting people who live there. I was doing a project for my school to learn the daily lifestyles of low or no income families raising their families in a slum.

As a Holistic Nutrition Therapist, it was important for me to start from the bottom of population where food is pronounced as a "lucky day". I learned a lot while interviewing these people of their "nutrient intakes" or what they would eat on an average day to survive themselves and their children.

It was difficult to hear of what I heard from talking to these people and I realized it was more than and beyond just food and nutrition they would regularly struggle. They were also struggling with alcoholism in men and physical abuse in women. Not a good experience of listening to the voices of women victims face to face than reading about it from some sources. My heart ached and I felt for them.



(DISTRIBUTING FOOD AMONG PEOPLE AT SLUM WHILE SHARING IDEAS OF COMMUNITY MEAL PLANS)

I went with my two friends; we brought in with us fruits, some healthy snacks and juice for the people there. A huge crowd had formed into lines and we started distributing food; "a lucky day".

When they started enjoying their "lucky day", I started sharing with them what they can eat or do to meet their minimum nutritional requirements per day or at least for the week. Here, you can visualize once a meal lifestyle and suggesting nutrition is out of practicality. But still I went on as it was part of my project to find something that is doable at the minimum.

I offered the idea of a "community meal". A community meal is something that would allow everyone in the community to offer what food they have to the bigger table. So the goal was to achieve a complete nutrition from whatever ingredients they have in their houses. Some carbohydrates, a little protein and a little fiber would make a complete meal in this case if they can gather somehow. It was an easier choice to gather a complete protein in a "lucky day" than getting one meal of the day mostly in carbohydrates in the form of rice.

So they were told to choose a "lucky day" of the week where the whole community participates by offering rice lentils (dal) and vegetables to make a complete meal at least once or twice a week to save themselves from malnutrition.

ODISHA AMONG TOP FIVE STATES WITH 11 LAKH MALNOURISHED KIDS

Monday, 09 March 2015 | SANJEEV KUMAR PATRO | BHUBANESWAR | in Bhubaneswar

The scourge of malnutrition among children is still haunting the State. Odisha, even in 2014, continued to be in the top five States of the country with a sizeable chunk of child population in the age group of 0-6 years facing acute malnutrition.

According to the data available with the State Women and Child Development Department, malnutrition is being detected in around 28 children in every 100 children weighed. The acute malnutrition condition is being observed in 2 of every 100 children weighed.

The data further puts the total malnourished child population in the State at around 11 lakh, which is fifth largest overall nationally. The details show that Odisha pulls ahead of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh but falls behind Jharkhand in the dubious list topped by Bihar.

It is pertinent to mention that the State has over 50 lakh children in the age-group of 0-6 years as per the 2011 census data. The detection rate of undernourishment puts the total malnourished child population in the State at around 13.5 lakh with the acutely under nutrition affected number at around 92,000. However, the respite for the State is in 2011 it has over half (52 per cent) of its child population affected by malnourishment but last year over 72 per cent children in the State in the said age-group were identified as normal.

Though the overall malnutrition cases detected has shown a decrease of around 2.5 per cent, cases of severely malnourished rate didn't exhibit the same buoyancy by showing a fall of only 0.86 per cent.

Someone needed locally to take care of this idea of "community meal". I was guided by my wonderful doctor friend who helped me to share a little about community meal and if that might add towards a healthy nutrition for the people live in the slums. This doctor friend of mine lives a life of an example of humanity while staying in between these people and serving their lives. A line of thankfulness and gratitude goes towards Prof. Dr. Niranjan Tripathy, without his help and guidance my project wouldn't be successful. It was also advised to people who are interested in donating food should bring fruits, vegetables, good oil, salt, rice, lentils and eggs than a lot of cookies or sugary candy.

We all want to give, but we must give that-what is healthful to the one receives it.

In a gentle way, you can shake the world.

– Mahatma Gandhi

Thank you for taking time in reading about Food; A lucky day! It was a project for both my studies in **The Wellspring Schools of Healing Arts, Portland, Oregon** and also a little trial of what I want to do as a Holistic Therapist in future.

Parimita Mohanty can be reached via email: Parimita.mohanty.01@gmail.com

TELEMEDICINE FOR ODISHA

Dr. Arun R Panigrahi, MD, Louisville, KY

Medicine in many ways has transformed over the last few decades in developed countries, enabling patients to have marked improvement in mortality and morbidity. As a pediatric hematology / oncology / stem cell transplant physician at the University of Louisville, I have seen the remarkable benefits of thoughtful and focused care for pediatric patients. As a second generation Indian American with close family ties in Odisha, I often feel conflicted between the options that are available for my patients versus those of similar children in Odisha. For the first time this winter I was able to experience this stark contrast, and it left an indelible impression in my mind.

I had the opportunity to interact with the medical care system in Odisha through my parents, Godavarish and Anuradha Panigrahi, who have been living in Bhubaneswar since 1997 after having lived in America for close to 30 years. As I progressed through college, medical school, and further postgraduate training in the United States, my parents have become more and more involved in philanthropic work locally in Odisha. After having not travelled to Odisha for over 5 years, this winter I decided to visit with my wife Swapna and two young children.

Over the last few years, my parents have become actively involved in various charity projects, including the local Rotary Club chapter in Bhubaneswar. My mother had the chance interaction of meeting a parent with thalassemia, and was truly awestruck by the struggles that these patients face on a daily basis. Thalassemia is a relatively common blood disorder in Odisha, with thousands of affected patients throughout the state. It occurs due to mutations in the bone marrow, causing a lack of hemoglobin production. Patients are dependent on red blood cell transfusions to survive, and often suffer major complications due to these transfusions, including iron overload which may progress to liver dysfunction.

Through the Rotary Club, my parents arranged a symposium on thalassemia for patients in the Bhubaneswar area. There, I had the privilege to speak to families and care providers about the current state of medical therapy for those with thalassemia, as well as to meet other care providers throughout the metropolitan area. As I spoke to many patients and their families, I felt the truly urgent needs that are present for this population. Up till a few years ago, patients would have to identify and produce a donor for every blood cell transfusion they received. As one can imagine, this was often not possible and children and their families suffered a great deal. Finally through patient advocacy pressure and government funding, Capitol Hospital in Bhubaneswar has provided transfusions on a regular basis, through a donor blood drive. Still, these transfusions are not carefully monitored, and often are of whole blood and not leukodepleted, which is the standard of care to avoid unnecessary transfusions as well as various reactions with blood products.

Furthermore, patients with time develop iron overload, and require various medications to reduce their iron content. This medication, which is quite expensive, is being provided free of charge for families. Still the dosing and monitoring for these patients is not adequate. I examined many children that day, and felt marked liver abnormalities which I have only read about in textbooks. It was at this point that I decided to become more involve in the care of these unfortunate patients.

Through the help of the Rotary club and various philanthropic groups, we have worked to create a database for patients with thalassemia which will allow me to monitor transfusion needs, medications, and other important health quality measures. During the course of my visit in Odisha, I was able to meet various government figures as well, and officially have been allowed to provide health expertise and

consultation for the thalassemia patients in Odisha. Through a little effort, I believe the patients may start to receive more standardized care and better outcomes. My goals are small and concrete at first, but with the appropriate partners, I may be able to consider allogeneic bone marrow transplant as a cure for these patients in the years to come.

My experience reveals how we can help to improve the lives of others in Odisha, and begin to give back to the community in a meaningful way. With the help of the internet, telemedicine, video chat and other technology we can connect with patients and families at a moment's notice. I believe now it is much easier than before for those in the medical community to give back to patients in Odisha. Through the organization of various philanthropic groups and modern technology, all of us can with a little time and perseverance help the children of Odisha truly reach their full potential.

Nilakantha

Nrusingha Mishra

Churning of ocean was performed to get the nectar
Devas the virtuous ones at one end and the cruel demons at the other
Used tremendous force on the great serpent Ananta used as rope
Fueled by competition to defeat the other and take revenge
Many treasures were recovered from the bottom of the ocean depth
Including the most beautiful and accomplished princess
Goddess Lakshmi who became the consort of Lord Narayan
Decided to give nectar to Devas and demons received drink of intoxication
When everything seemed to be settled, serpent Ananta was very tired and exhausted
Fires of blue poison began to erupt from the mouth and flow was uninterrupted
Everybody became worried to see the poison spreading like wild fire
Prayed to Lord Shiva to come to the rescue and save creatures from the burning pyre
For Shiva poison and nectar, palace and crematorium are one and the same
Fire and water both carried on the head, serpent on the top as consciousness infinite
Lord Shiva was in deep penance and opened his third eye to come up with quick solution
Suddenly arrived at the scene and engulfed the whole poison in His mouth to save creation
God of destruction became God of solace, benevolence, and protection
Poison had to be stopped at the throat not allowed to go inside being the abode of Narayan
Throat of Lord Shiva became deep blue because of effects of poison on the vocal chord
Became Nilakantha which symbolizes His courage, unparalleled sacrifice and devotion to His Lord.

Germantown, MD 20876

Aadhaarcard.Com

Dr. Sulakshana Sen



My last visit to India was half and half- not in the sense of cream in the coffee but in the sense of glass half full and half empty. The trial to get my Aadhaar card was funny and made itself in the terms of the glass half full. The empty half of the glass ran through a series of hurdles: not finding the luggage in Delhi airport, standing in line (except us no one cared about the 'line forms here') to make a written complain at 'Baggage Claim' office and as usual with successive stomach problems after carelessly eating the delicious chat at Calcutta New Market.

After a week spent I at Park Circus at my father-in-law's place, we came to Bhubaneswar then to Puri. I enjoyed the Camel-ride at Puri Beach with my nephew's wife and her little two years old who sat sandwiched between his mother and me. The beautiful breeze soaked in salty vapor caressed my hair; the red silk scarf ignored my fingers' repeated pulling to stay in place. I enjoyed the riding over the saddle-top of a beautifully dressed Camel walking on the sand in the moonlit light with roaring waves touching the camel's feet. The meaningless sound of the little boy's cheering made us to pay the camel owner three more times back and forth. After few nights stay at Puri Beach, we were back to Bhubaneswar when the city was looking gorgeous from Mausima Sight in that moon-soaked night of 'chaturdasi'. The empty part of the glass started feeling up. At Bhubaneswar we attended Higher-Education meeting of OSA at Utkal University, a conference at KIIT University with a wonderful VIP tour of the campus. Next two days spent with friends through elaborate lunch at Tankapani road or special dinners at Laxmi Sagar. Stopping by for hot Samosha with sweet-tamarind chutney and hot tea, we did not miss the evening 'Alati' at Ram Mandir to Lingaraj temple. But I was anxious to meet my eagerly awaiting family at my hometown Khordha. As soon as I reached Khordha, I felt a new life. Time flew through endless chatting, my soft demands of eating red-koshala sag fried with crushed garlicks, Sajana Chhuin with tomato in light mustard coating, Goat meat curry with big split- half Aloos - the color and taste of sauce never came out the same with the meat that I get from Patel -Indian store here, or small Mahuradi Macchha came straight from water poodles of paddy field cooked like 'no one cooks' as my sister-in-law.

Before we know- the 30th December 2015 knocked at the door to look at the departure schedule from Delhi to USA. As I packed some homemade mixtures, few sets of gorgeous blue and green stone bangles for my friends back at USA, sets of new Salwar-kamij that I got from Calcutta New Market, thought of checking my Itinerary with passport secured inside my little orange address- book. I noticed in the reminder page of my orange-address book underlined with a red ink pen 'Aadhaar card'. Until then I didn't pay attention that the word has double "Aa" to begin and two 'a's before the 'r'- of total four 'a's in the word. With a sudden rush, I called the Treasury officer who is my friend to ask how to get an "Aadhaar card". A short and abrupt reply came from a office staff: "Go to Tahsil Office". I did not have a chance to say that the Treasury officer is my friend or my time was precious. But I asked: "Where is the Tahsil Office?" I heard the phone hang giving me a loud message that "Find out yourself".

Since couple of years, once in a while a thought came to my mind to go back to India, but the thought could not dwell long. May be my addiction of hanging out with my professor friends at a Starbucks coffee place, parties at Bahama Breeze happy hours gathering with colleagues to ship 'Cuban

Mohitos', frozen lime-green Margaritas with salt on the rim at La Fiesta , or limited edition of red wine-at Monterey Grill beach restaurant--tossed the 'go back to India' thought away . Here, I am leaving my hometown after nineteen hours; the urge forced me that I must get the information of Aadhaar card before I leave. Slipped on to my Kolkata slippers, I walked fast to Tahsil office. At the entrance a tall bald man with dhoti- kurta was passing by, stopped and glanced at me with a question mark in his face. Hearing that I want to apply for an Aadhaar card said, "the Aadhaar card office moved to Municipal office that is straight down, you cannot miss; it is a big yellow building. "Is the office close to the big Banyan tree?" I asked. "Yes, yes"- he pointed his finger straight ahead to the big tree.

As I got close to the Banyan tree, my childhood made a forced entrance in me and I remembered that there was a hidden ghost living in that humongous Banyan tree. A few moments of nostalgic feeling engulfed me. Holding two long hanging aerial roots, there were two pre-teen boys who were swinging loudly cheering as one passes faster than the other to a bigger height. Clearly there were no ghosts at least in the broad daylight in or around the Banyan tree. As I passed the tree, there was still the old elementary school, but I could not see a building written "Municipal office" anywhere and there was no other office building around except only a yellow building where in the top-left written in big Oriya letters: "POUR PARISHAD KARYALAYA". I was amazed about the wonderful translation of "Municipal Office". The words sounded good as I heard myself reading.

"Why are they saying Municipal office if they don't like to write, read or say as "Pour Parishad? I wondered. As I entered the gate, a man walked towards me putting his bike in the side wall wearing a light- blue shirt with a red sweater, scratched his throat and asked: "what do you need?" "I want to make an 'Aadhaar card"- I said. He looked at me as if scanning me through from top to bottom and said: "Are you from here?" -not sure why he asked, "Yes, surely I am from here. I was born and raised here, got married and moved. That's all". "Where is your house?" As if he wanted to get proof that I was not lying. "Jail Road"- I said. "What is your father's name?" I proudly said: "Gangadhar Patnaik adding enthusiastically that my father was an Attorney- but expired long back". Somehow convinced he said: "The Aadhaar card office would open soon- the girl who works in the office has the key and must be on her way, she would be any minute". Chewing pan he smiled big; I could smell the Jarda from his mouth even from six feet away. "Here she comes", the man pointed to the gate towards two girls who were entering. I was about to say 'Thank you', but looking towards "Poura Parishada..." I said: "Dhanyabad"- The man looked at me in a way as if he never heard the word "Dhanyabad".

I stepped towards the office as the two girls wearing Salwar-kamij trying to open the door. The girl with white top, long breads with butterfly hair-pin sat in her chair and booted the computer while the other girl with a ponytail once in few seconds while looking at her cell phone tried flipping through a folder. The room was quiet except the girl's clicking sound of the keyboard. After almost three minutes, the girl working in the computer looked at me saying "How can I help you?" "I need an 'Aadhaar card'.

The girl: "Come next month, we already sent this months' applications to Mumbai" as we send all the applications by 25th of each month". It was 29th of December. I said: "I cannot come again soon". The girl pressed her lips. "Sorry, we cannot do, it is late, come two months later". I said "I cannot come for a year actually". The girl did not utter any more words. I was still there not moving an inch. There were no new customers or any one shown. "What is your name?" she asked.

'Sulakshana', taking a scratch paper from my handbag, I said: "I can write here because people make mistakes in typing "Sulakshana"- It is a long name". The girl looked amused and exchanged an unspoken vibe with the other girl. With a very friendly gesture I asked "what is your name?" She said "Suprava Pradhan". After hearing her name I figured that she might be my lucky break. I said "Including you I have three other Supravas- One Suprava Sahu who is an IT professional, the second is Suprava Nayak- manager of ICICI bank at Nayapalli, and you are my third- Suprava Pradhan of "Pour Parishad Karyalaya". Suprava smiled as she tried to correcting me saying "Municipal Office".

But I liked to say "Pour Parishada. Suprava Pradhan of Pour Parishada giggled -seemed to be pleased hearing her name in my lucky list. Then something must have clicked between us. Suprava typed my name, my father's name, date of birth, house address of Khordha and said: "I can do this as a late submission for you but you will get it after a month which would be delivered to your house". I was amazed at the sudden turn over in my progress-so I said: 'no problem'. "Now I like to take a picture of you, please come to this side and face to the camera". Suprava clicked the camera switch. In next second she showed two of my pictures in the screen and asked: "Is this okay or that one okay?" I smiled and said: "you pick, any picture is okay because I know that is me". Then Suprava took my finger prints - all ten fingers. I was happy to see the way she took the prints in a black pressed-ink pad. I said: "I like your butterfly-hairpin". While enjoying my friendly compliment Suprava added: "There is a web ID to access and follow through the steps as prompted along to get your computer generated Aadhaar card. Once you get your One Time Password (OTP) type it and you can get a computer generated copy of your Aadhaar card".

I got extremely excited and said to Suprava: "Well, you seemed to be quite young to do this job, what is your degree?" She smiled proudly and said that her bachelors she did few computer courses and got the job. "Great". With one of her buck tooth Suprava looks cute when she smiles. I asked: "How long it would take for the approval letter to come?" Suprava said "I already sent your information to Mumbai, It takes ten/fifteen minutes to approve". I realized most people in India count each minute is equal to five minutes-because already one hour had passed by then. Being thirsty even in that mild winter heat, no air in the office, a shilling fan was moving as slow as it could. Looking at no sign of hurry in Suprava's part, I said to Suprava that I would be back soon with a water bottle: "Do you girls need any?" They pointed towards their own bottles. In ten minutes I was back with a plastic bag full of bottles. Five Mazza bottles with one Water bottle. As I drank through my water bottle, I handed them two Mazza bottles. Both girls were surprised to be offered, but smiled at me as they shipped through their Mazza bottles. I drank the whole water bottle and one Mazza. It was quite hot for me.

After few minutes, making krink-krink sound, a paper came out from the printer- with all of my information signed and approved by Mumbai office. Suprava said: "It is here". I looked at it, after my name with a C/O sign I found my father's name underneath. There was the picture that Suprava took of me to the side. My eyes glistened. Suprava handed me the paper with a big smile. I liked her smile cuter than before. But before I left I asked Suprava: "Oh I forgot to ask you the web address to download the real Aadhaar card in the computer". In the back of my orange address book Suprava wrote step by step: "E-AADHAAR. Com- then your Enrollment number sent from Mumbai office- Password is your Khordha pin- and then just click Download". Feeling obliged I was going to leave some tips for the two young girls- the other girl's name is Menaka Swain. I opened my purse, paused for a moment but zip it back -up again after a second thought. I felt that it may be unwise to tip here. The girls giggled as I said "Dhanyabad" and left their office with the two Mazza bottles still in my bag with a flicker of smile.

I walked back through a shortcut route- the old fish market where Rohi, Bhakur, Salt- water Shrimps and rows of Dry fish were set in order of their size on the mat with a pile of dry shrimp in one corner. The Fish market used to smell horrible to me when I was a teen passing by this market from my uncle's house. Today after many years the smelly shortcut route made me peep through my childhood again..... the smell was not any bad at all! "What else one expect to smell in fish market- ?"... I smiled to myself and entered from the narrow street to join the Main road. The traffic was heavy crowded with vehicles, auto, and motor bikes rushing as if they all were late. Suprava's printed paper with my enrollment number and her Instructions "How to log to Aadhaarcard.com"- written in my little orange address book inside my handbag I felt was secured.

The glass was getting fuller and fuller.

We flew to Delhi next morning and reached through New York- to Daytona Beach, our home town.

Two weeks later, I was unpacking and saw my little orange address book inside Suprava's handwriting: E-Aadharcard. Com-...etc that I had completely forgotten trying to catch up at work. I stopped unpacking, sat to type in the computer "Aadharcard.Com". Forgetting to type 'E' in the front, I was going back to re-type, but the whole page popped up with information of Aadhaar card, Unique Identification of India, Check the status of your Aadhaar card and many more link to open with the word that Google picked up. Following Suprava's step by step note, I did not realize the enrollment number assigned to me is fourteen digits, the date is eight 12-29-2015 and the time is six digits: 12:54:27 seconds, telephone number has to be Indian which Suprava reminded to write my brother's telephone number of India not my America number, and she did not forget to tell me that 'Remember the Khordha pin number is your password' to type. As soon as I finished typing the information, the screen directed me to "copy the image" in the box- I surely copied the image correctly.

Halleluiah!!!

"Your one time password (OTP) is sent". Thrilled, I looked at my bedroom clock, must be 10 PM in night at India. I have to call my brother immediately to get the OTP sent to his phone. I heard his voice: "Hello Apa, how are you?" "Hey, listen, I will talk to you later, just look to your phone message and let me know the OTP sent from Aadhaar card". By the time he let me know, here my computer flashed that 'the time expired'. Information that I typed was no longer on the screen and there was a new page with empty spaces/boxes again to retype. Totally frustrated I was getting up, calling back and forth three times- every time faster than the previous but the same message came on the screen that the "time expired". May be the time to get OTP to calling India and to type was less than a minute. When I gave up, I heard the phone ring, it was my brother. As soon as I picked up he said: "Type the last one just came: 67099". As soon as I typed, I saw the screen said: "Validated and Download now".

Feeling goose bumps, I clicked to "Download" and sent to the printer. When I saw the down loaded paper printed out with green-orange- white color lines of Indian flag color in the top, Ashok Stambha in the side - underlined "Bharat Sarkar" then underneath written "Unique Identification Authority of India-Your Aadhaar Letter". Also in Odia "Apanaka Aadhaar" and in English "Your Aadhaar No": My unique Identification of twelve digit numbers written in accompanied oriya words: "Mo Aadhaar, Mo Parichaya" and below there was a two inch square box with black and white spots that surely carried my finger prints. I cannot see or no one can identify my fingerprints except the Unique Identification Authority of India because those belong uniquely to me and only me.

On the top of the paper was my picture that Suprava took- my father's name with a C/O sign "Gangadhar Patnaik" was written just under my name - which made me feel- Yes, that is my 'Parichaya' that is 'me'. I remembered getting my passport first time, Visa, Green card or Citizenship, Social Security number, Driver license, Degrees from India or degrees from America all first time- but my unique Aadhaar card showed me "Mo Parichaya" and underneath in Hindi words: "Mera Aadhaar, Meri Pehachan". My eyes swelled up with tears flowing as I carefully kept my "Parichaya- my Aadhaar" in the important bottom drawer of our bedroom cabinet. It was not my tear filling up the eyes; the glass was not just full - but overflowing.

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Forlorn Friend

Manjusha Patnaik

One of the greatest attractions of being in a small town, away from the hustle bustle of the city, is the bountiful nature that surrounds our everyday life. It is no different here in the US. Located on the east coast, one can experience the four distinct seasons celebrated by mother nature in full pomp and flair. Being no poet, I leave the lyrical description of the changing seasonal scenery to adept writers. But what I wish to share here is the story of a dear pal who transformed with the changing colors of leaves.

Away from family and friends, there are few things that bring absolute delight to one's lonely heart. One such source of happiness was a playful friend in my backyard. With rolling grasslands and lofty trees, the backyard is the arena of my fuzzy friend to share his enthusiasm towards life. Jumping from one branch to another, chasing birds and bees. Be it summer, spring, winter, or fall, this zealous performer showcases his numerous tricks to eager spectators like me. What could be more endearing than watching this cute little ball of fur chasing tiny birds and brown bunnies?

I cannot describe how much I worry about him in the long snowy winters when food is scarce and temperature drop below freezing. An occasional sighting of him scuffling the snow in search of food warms my heart while an involuntary sigh of relief escapes on his well-being. Then comes spring with budding flowers, and chirpy birds. Pink flowers, yellow flowers. Cherry blossoms. Flowers on the branches and flowers on the ground. Even the luscious ever-green trees adorn fresh hues of green, bright and young with promise of life. The new vibrant backyard becomes an orchestra for tiny chirpy birds, singing their heart out. Amidst all these, my ever entertaining friend continued to jump from one branch to another, chasing birds and bees.

This spring was no different. But maybe I was. My desire for friendship was no longer satiated by the distant observance of my playful friend up in the trees. I yearned for more - both in numbers and in intimacy. I made new friends. Little birds. Large birds, Red birds, Black Birds. Birds on the branches and birds on the ground. Birds in scores and birds in flight. I started feeding my feathery visitors waking up to their chirpy demands for breakfast. They nibbled on the grains filling their tiny bellies and my empty heart. I found a new meaning in life in mutual belongingness, something my long standing furry friend had denied to concede.

But alas, between me and my furry friend, I was the only one pleased. A lone performer throughout his life, my entertaining comrade refused to share the pulpit and the spotlight for his swan song. To my utter dismay, he became a source of terror in my own backyard. Maybe in search of food, or playmates, or being simply envious of the new subjects of interest in my life, he pillaged the backyard scaring away his fellow ensemble with wings. Little birds. Large birds. Red birds. Black Birds. Birds on the branches and birds on the ground, scurrying for refuge from this furry fiend. Spring blossomed to summer. And summer sweltered to fall. My visiting friends now prepare to take flight to warmer winters, away from the unrelenting icy heart.

Unscathed, the squirrel in my backyard celebrates his triumph, jumping from one branch to another, chasing birds and bees.



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The Jagannatha, I know

Anuranjita Nayak

Earliest I recall,
Tried to capture you on my drawing book
Those mesmerizing black eyes with the added drama of red and white
Simple yet powerful figurines..
Watched you on the grainy television set swimming across the pouring crowd
Listened inadvertently to the devoted chants on the blaring radio
Braved the suffocating crowd holding on to my father's finger
On one such Ratha jatra among many, just for a glimpse at you.....

And I recall my sojourn to you one such hot June
Walked up the burning baaisi paahaacha
Finally I end up in the cool darkness infused with the smell of burnt camphor and ghee
From the darkness emerge half of your face
The same hypnotizing eyes peer down at me
I see the smile, my heart fills with joy
Shoved to the side, my turn is over
What did you ask from Jagannatha, someone asks
Oh, I forgot.....had so much to ask for yet couldn't
That bewitching smile and the abysmal eyes
I drown deep in a trance
No, I didn't regret any of that precious moment

He gives you all, you need not ask
He is the Rama true to his words
He is the charioteer in control of your senses
He who asks you to do your karma and leave the rest to him
He is the truth I believe and surrender to

I pray to you in my heart, what if I can't build a temple
I talk to you in my sorrows and bliss, what if I can't sing melodious to you
I offer you my karma as my devotion, as nothing else I own is my own
Just half your face is enough for me
As you my lord are the one and ultimate infinite

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Ramachandra Dev and Razia Begum: Odisha's Bajirao-Mastani

Srikanta Mishra

Bajirao Mastani is a recently released historical romance movie set in the 18th century. The film is based on the novel, "Raau" written by Nagnath Inamdar. It tells the story of the relationship between Peshwa Bajirao Ballad, the prime minister of the Maratha emperor, Shahu, and Mastani, the illegitimate half-Muslim daughter of Bundelkhand's king Chatrasaal. Like most viewers, I too was swept away by Sanjay Lila Bhansali's epic production - the stunning visuals, the delightful music, the seemingly authentic period costumes and armor, Ranveer Singh's haughty, confident and love-torn Peshwa Bajirao, Deepika Padukone's strong, yet soft Mastani, and Tanveer Azmi's decidedly unmatronly and villainous Radhabai. As the movie unfolded, I kept thinking about a contemporaneous episode in Odisha's history, which has been beautifully fictionalized in Surendra Mohanty's novels - "Nilashaila" and "Niladri Bijaya". The two main characters in these novels are Ramachandra Dev, the Gajapati King of Odisha, and Razia Begum, his half-Muslim consort. Here is a brief account of Ramachandra and Razia's star-crossed life.

The year is 1732. In Pune, the young Peshwa Bajirao Ballad is busy leading military expeditions to expand the reach of the Maratha Chhatrapati kingdom. In Delhi, the Badshah (emperor) Muhammad Shah was desperately trying to hold on to the rapidly declining fortunes of the Mughal Empire. In Murshidabad, the Mughal subedar (regional ruler) Shuja Khan is struggling to maintain his tenuous hold over a chaotic Bengal-Bihar-Odisha province which was under constant attack from the Marathas. In Cuttack, the Naib-Nazim (local ruler) and Shuja Khan's illegitimate son, Taqi Khan, was engaged in quelling active resistance from the many feudal kingdoms in Odisha by randomly attacking civilians and destroying Hindu temples to terrorize the population. And in Khurdha, Ramachandra Dev had just been installed as the Gajapati King of Odisha after the assassination of his older brother Gopinath Dev.

Ramchandra Dev had barely managed to take control of the reins of the kingdom when Taqi Khan decides to attack the Puri Jagannath Temple. This was a break from the 150-year old "live and let live" tradition of Odisha's Muslim rulers, who were content with collecting a religious tax (jiziya) on the pilgrims to the Jagannath Temple in Puri. Taqi Khan's goal was to conquer Puri and sack the Jagannath temple, loot its famed treasure, and thus persuade the Mughal Emperor in Delhi to make him the subedar of Murshidabad. Ramchandra Dev led his forces in battle against Taqi Khan, but was betrayed by his own prime minister, Bakshi Benu Bhramarabara, and was captured on the battlefield.

While Ramachandra Dev was contemplating his fate in prison, Taqi Khan was having second thoughts about the wisdom of destroying the Puri Temple. He offered Ramachandra Dev the veritable devil's alternative - *"pledge allegiance to me, convert to Islam, and marry my sister Razia. In return, I will spare your life, withdraw my forces from Puri, and re-install you as the Gajapati King of Odisha"*. Ramachandra Dev realizes that this is his only chance to protect the Jagannath Temple from the clutches of the Muslim rulers. He accepted Taqi Khan's offer, to become Hafiz Qadar Beg, and got married to Razia - while remaining in Cuttack under house-arrest. As the newly-wed couple got to know each other, Ramachandra Dev found out that Razia, who was also an illegitimate child of Shuja Khan, was born to Kanchanbai, a famous Hindu courtesan in Murshidabad. Kanchanbai was a secret devotee of Jagannath and had instilled in Razia some of that mystical attraction.

The news of Ramchandra Dev's conversion devastated his wife, Lalita Mahadei. Enraged, she declared herself a widow, moved to her father's palace with her teenage son Bhagirathi Kumar, and started plotting the downfall of Ramchandra Dev together with Bakshi Benu Bhramarabara. As it

turned out, Bakshi had plotted the assassination of Gopinath Dev, but the feudal kingdoms refused to accept Bakshi as the Gajapati - with the majority opting to throw their support for Ramachandra Dev instead. While Ramachandra Dev was still contemplating his next move from Taqi Khan's court in Cuttack, Bakshi managed to bribe some key priests in the Jagannath Temple to declare him Regent for Bhagirathi Kumar. However, the head priest, Laxmi Paramaguru, quickly realized that Bakshi's strategy is to create more chaos and ultimately install himself on the throne while ignoring the long-term Muslim threat towards the very existence of the Puri temple. He traveled to Cuttack, and convinced Taqi Khan that Ramchandra Dev should be released to take his place as the true Gajapati King of Odisha. Taqi Khan agreed, but forced Razia to stay behind in Cuttack to ensure that Ramchandra Dev's loyalty to him is never in question.

Ramachandra Dev returned to Puri, and with the support of several key priests, managed to return to his duties as the principal caretaker of the Puri temple. Being a Muslim, he was not allowed to enter the temple. An image of Jagannath known as Patitapavan is set up at the main entrance to the Temple so that the King can worship Jagannath without entering the Temple. Angered by these developments, Bakshi and Lalita Mahadei continued their efforts to undermine Ramachandra Dev's authority. They even hatched a plan to loot the cavalcade bringing the annual tax revenues from south Odisha to Cuttack so that Taqi Khan will assign the blame on Ramachandra Dev. However, Ramchandra Dev came to know of this plot, looted the money himself to fund his secret rebellion-in-planning, succeeded in trapping and killing Bakshi, and was able to convince Taqi Khan that he had established control over Odisha on behalf of the Muslim rulers.

Taqi Khan's good wishes are only short lived, as he decided to install one of his Hindu courtiers, Amichand, in charge of the day-to-day affairs of the Puri temple, hoping to get ready access to its famed treasures. Ramachandra Dev began to see the writing on the wall about his fate, and secretly engineered the removal of the deities from the Temple to one of the many uninhabited islands within Chilika Lake. As Taqi Khan's soldiers and spies spread out over the land to locate the deities, Lalita Mahadei proposed to Taqi Khan that if her son, Bhagirathi Kumar, would replace Ramachandra Dev as the Gajapati, she will ensure that new deities are installed in the Temple and Amichand will be accepted by the priests to supervise the Temple's affairs.

Ramachandra Dev is made aware of these machinations through secret meetings with Razia and her messengers. He learnt that Taqi Khan has taken a sizable army and travelled to Murshidabad to meet with the dying Shuja Khan. Ramachandra Dev decided to seize this opportunity to bring the deities back from hiding before Lalita Mahadei was able to get new deities installed, and renounced his claim to the Gajapati throne in favor of Bhagirathi Kumar. This reinforced his support among the feudal kings, who are unwilling to be parties to a father-son fight to the end. Accompanied by Razia, Ramachandra Dev brought back the deities to Puri at the nick of the time, but not without a few battles with Taqi Khan's depleted army who were unable to stop the march of the deities towards Puri.

At the end, Ramachandra Dev and Razia were prevented from entering the Temple as they were perceived to be Muslims. Razia was unable to fulfil her dream of seeing Jagannath in the Sanctum Sanctorum and was disappointed to kill herself. Lalita Mahadei also committed suicide, and Bhagirathi Kumar was quickly displaced as the Gajapati King as the Muslims and the Marathas continued to fight over Odisha for the next several decades.

Ramchandra Dev ruled Odisha for less than a decade, but the association with Razia and the dual Hindu-Muslim identity makes his story unique, not the least because of its poignant ending and the striking similarities with the life and times of Bajirao-Mastani.

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Are you sensitive to Gluten?

Joy Gopal Mohanty
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A few days back, I was invited to one of my friend's house for dinner. There I met one of the guests who was walking with a stick and was limping a bit. From a distance, he appeared to be quite healthy and did not appear to be that old. Curiosity grew in my mind. Soon, our host introduced us to each other and then we started talking about our family and personal wellbeing. After we settled down, I could not resist myself to ask him about his physical condition. I was curious to know why he is limping and needs a walking stick for support. He said he is suffering from knee pain for the last one year and that is why he has difficulty in walking. Therefore, it was obvious for me to ask him if he has consulted a doctor about his condition. He said he did and as per his physician, he has to undergo knee surgery. Unfortunately, he is diabetic, his blood sugar level is too high, and so he cannot undergo surgery until his blood sugar is controlled. He is trying his best to cut down calories; but has not reached the goal yet.

Then I started talking about my knee-pain story. Around December 2012, I felt pain in both of my knees with more pain on my right side. Going up and down on the stairs became more and more painful. As usual, I started taking popular painkillers like Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin tablets) regularly. These did help relief my pain to some extent; but pain came back the next day. Gradually, I noticed my knee pain became severe. I even experienced bone to bone touching in my right knee making me much more painful irrespective of taking painkillers. At work, I was scared to take steps to go up or down even one floor and preferred to take elevators.

After doing some research, I learned that with age, cartilage¹ damage in knee could happen. Cartilage acts as a lubricant² for the bone movement in the knee. I also found out that osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common chronic condition of the joints³. OA occurs when the cartilage or cushion between joints breaks down leading to pain, stiffness and swelling³. Chondroitin⁴ is a major component of cartilage that helps it retain water. The body makes chondroitin naturally. Like chondroitin, glucosamine⁴ is another natural compound found in the healthy cartilage, particularly in the fluid around the joints. Therefore, older people with knee pain, consider taking glucosamine/chondroitin sulfate as supplement to help replace their loss in the body. Nevertheless, clinical studies with the use of glucosamine/chondroitin sulfate as supplement suggested no significant difference from placebo in reducing knee pain. However, in cases of severe knee pain in patients taking glucosamine/chondroitin sulfate⁵, there was slightly (66% vs 60% in placebo) better relief. Therefore, I thought I have nothing to lose if I try taking Glucosamine/Chondroitin sulfate pills. This supplement along with Ibuprofen pills helped me reduce some of my knee pain but it did not go away. After trying this way for several months, I was thinking that maybe I have to go for my knee replacement surgery.

The surprise TV show changed my thinking

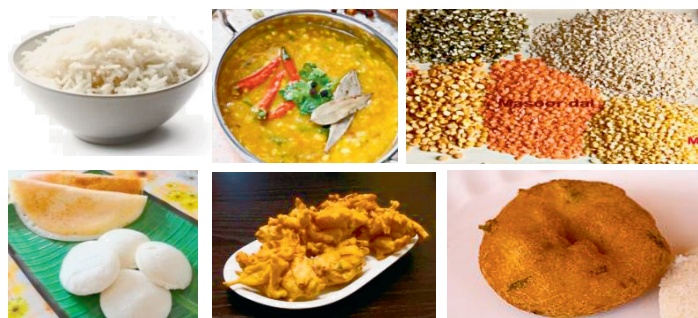
Around January of 2013, one day, I was at home, came down to my living room and turn on the TV. It was set to a PBS channel and the program on “Celiac disease and gluten containing diet” was almost going to be over. Gluten is the major protein found in some grains, like in all forms of wheat⁶ (Bulgur, Durum, Semolina, Spelt, Farro, and more) as well as in barley, rye and triticale (a wheat-rye cross). Some people are allergic to gluten and as such suffer from an autoimmune disease called Celiac disease⁷ having pain in abdominal area due to damage in small intestine.

Within a few minutes of closing the program, I heard the speaker saying, “*If you have knee pain, try giving up food with gluten for three weeks and see if you feel better*”. It immediately hit my thinking. I asked myself, “Am I sensitive to gluten?” I was familiar about immunology and allergies. I know it needs at least three weeks to develop immunity to an infection or even from vaccination. So similarly, if we are allergic to any food, we can get relief if we give up that food for at least three weeks. Therefore, I thought, if giving up of wheat products in my food can help reduce my knee pain, and then I may not have to go for knee surgery. Just changing one’s food habit should be easier than go for an unnecessary surgery.

Immediately, I informed my family that I would not eat wheat or barley products for three weeks. Although I decided, it was not that easy because, many things I loved to eat are prepared with wheat flour such as *Puris*, *Sooji Halwa*, *Kakara Pitha*, *Samosa*, bread toasts etc. as they are so delicious. Then I learnt that gluten could also turn up⁶, in unexpected places, like certain brands of chocolate, imitation crab (surimi), deli meats, soy sauce, vitamins and even some kinds of toothpaste. Therefore, I had to find alternatives and be careful since I decided to go for gluten-free.



I remember back home, in South India, people normally live on rice and lentils. They rarely eat wheat, as it is not normally grown there. Moreover, gluten is a different kind of protein than proteins in other grains⁶ (such as rice) and in meat. Since I am a vegetarian, I did not have to think about eating meat etc. Therefore, to try my hypothesis, I gave up Parathas, Puris, Samosas, Pizzas, Breads, Biscuits, cookies etc. and started eating food without wheat products. Fortunately, I was not diabetic, and liked to eat *Rice*, *Dals*, and cakes made with rice and Urad dal like *Dosas/Idlis*, deep-fried snacks made with gram flour (*Besan*) like *Pakodas* etc. For breakfast, when I used commercial products like cereals etc., I carefully checked through ingredients not to contain wheat or barley, before I decided to eat. In addition, I continued taking glucosamine/chondroitin sulfate and ibuprofen pills as and when needed.



In fact, in three weeks of carefully controlling my diet, eating only with gluten-free foods, I was surprised to notice that my knee pain subsided to 50%. Therefore, I decided to continue with gluten-free diet. Luckily, within one year, I felt my knee pain reduced by 90%. Thus, I surprisingly discovered that my knee pain was linked to my eating wheat products. Perhaps I am allergic or I am sensitive to gluten for some unknown reason.

What choices I found for my gluten-free diet?

Since I decided to eat gluten-free diet, I was curious to know what choices are out there. Surprisingly I discovered that many people are eating gluten-free food because such products are becoming available in normal grocery stores. Even, a number of grocery stores have a special section for gluten-free foods such as our neighboring “Wegmans” grocery store in Columbia, Maryland.

Gradually, I learned that a lot of grains⁸ such as Oats⁹, Corn¹⁰, Amaranth¹¹, Buckwheat¹², Millet¹³, Quinoa¹⁴, Rice, Sorghum etc. and lentils like Urad, Gram, Moong, Masoor etc. are naturally gluten free. So, there are plenty of choices in grains to eat while giving off wheat and Barley. **Even people with diabetes** having gluten sensitivity can survive well with choices other than wheat, barley and even rice products. Recently, I noticed in a number of restaurants that they are also conscientious about gluten sensitivity in people and offering gluten-free food in their menu. Prior to discovering my sensitivity to gluten, I used to love to eat “Honey Nut Cheerios” made from Oats by General Mills for my breakfast. I recall, a few years back, General Mills was advertising that this cereal is good for the “Heart” as it lowers cholesterol. Interestingly, these days, General Mills is even putting “Gluten free” sign on the Honey Nut Cheerios box¹⁵. Therefore, I continued to eat Honey Nut Cheerios without any guilt. It is true however, that gluten-free foods are costlier than wheat containing foods; but I am relieved to know that there are plenty of choices to live on gluten-free diet. Surprisingly, these days, it seems, a number of people are experiencing gluten sensitivity and that is why gluten-free foods are becoming available in many stores and restaurants.



Is there a scientific evidence of link of gluten to knee pain?

Once I experienced relief of my knee pain by giving up wheat products, I was curious to find out if there is any scientific research published with link of knee pain due to gluten sensitivity. Interestingly, I found a clinical report, “Celiac disease of the joint” published by Ozyemisci-Taskiran *et. al.* from Gazi University Faculty of Medicine, Ankara, Turkey¹⁶. According to the authors, “A 42-year-old woman was admitted to outpatient clinic with a 3-week history of left knee pain and swelling. She said that her pain tended to wane minimally with ice application and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Knee pain increased with motion, and her gait was antalgic. On admission, she was mainly dependent on wheelchair. Her past medical history included dermatitis herpetiformis (DH) for 12 years. Since DH is a chronic, gluten-sensitive skin disease, treatment plan consisted of gluten-free diet, stretching and strengthening exercises, analgesic or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs when needed, and selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor-sertraline for anxiety disorder. Two months after commencing treatment, her symptoms disappeared.”

According to Dr. Amy Myers¹⁷, a renowned leader in Functional Medicine, “*More than 55 diseases have been linked to gluten, the protein found in wheat, rye, and barley. It has been estimated that 99% of the people who have either gluten intolerance or celiac disease are never diagnosed.*”

It is three years and a few months after I gave off gluten in my diet and I can definitely say that by giving off wheat and other products containing gluten, I am better off today and my knee pain is almost gone. While I am living with gluten-free diet in my home, I find that there are challenges while going out. It is not easy to control when I decide to attend parties or eat in restaurants. I have been careful in checking ingredients with food vendors before I take them. Yet, I have noticed that if unknowingly I had taken food containing wheat or barley products, I can sense my knee pain to flare up. So if I see an elderly person with knee pain, I get tempted to ask, “Are you sensitive to gluten? “

Editor: The author has collected a lot of information from a variety of source. Please reach out to the author in case you need further details.

Author can be reached at jgmohanty@yahoo.com for any questions regarding this article. A part of this writing was published earlier in February 2016 issue of *Chirantana*, a bi-annual newsletter of JOGA (Jagannath Organization for Global Awareness).

Who am I - A 21st Century Quest

Dr. Basant Parida, Massachusetts

Almost all of us sometime or the other, have pondered over the question - what is my true identity? I grew up believing that I am the embodiment of my physical body, mind and soul. I have a good understanding of my physical body which is made up of the five basic elements of nature, earth, water, fire, air and ether. Like everybody else, I love it. I have a fair knowledge of my mind which is ever active and I realize that human mind is the fastest moving entity in the universe. Mind can travel even faster than light and can reach the nearest galaxy - Andromeda or the distant galaxy z8_GND_5296 at the farthest end of the universe in a fraction of a second, whereas light will take 2.5 million years to reach our neighboring Andromeda. As for the "soul", very few of us have the true knowledge of its origin and attributes. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, one of India's great spiritual masters, "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest the divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy - by one or more, or all of these - and be free. This is the whole of religion....". In essence, the soul within each one of us is a part of the omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient divine creator of the universe, but we fail to recognize this truth due to our own ignorance.

Now, let us examine if there is any truth about our connection with the divinity or the creator of the universe on the basis of our 21st century scientific knowledge and the unraveled cosmic mysteries by the astrophysicists so far. Those of you who had the good fortune of watching Carl Sagan's televised "COSMOS" episodes a few decades ago or have watched the recent episodes "How the Universe Works" in the Science Channel would have heard the phrase - "we are all made of star materials". For the benefit of our young scholars, budding scientists and inquisitive readers, let us briefly examine the veracity of this claim and the scientific evidence of the human evolution process in a cosmic scale. According to the astrophysicists and the cosmologists, it is now acknowledged that about 13.8 billion years ago, the Universe came into existence with a "Big Bang", releasing unimaginably vast amount of energy in a flash. That unique event is considered by the scientists as a singularity - marking the origin of space and time. For the first 300,000 to 400,000 years, the products of the Big Bang were believed to exist in the form of elementary particles of both matter and antimatter that expanded at tremendous speed outward while at the same time undergoing annihilation through a chaotic collision process between matter and antimatter. Fortunately, the matter ultimately survived in that crucial tussle between the matter and antimatter to finally manifest as the vast Universe we see today. The scientists of particle physics had been searching for past many decades to find an elusive Higgs Boson, also nicknamed "God Particle", whose existence is essential to explain how atoms acquired their mass. Finally, after a long wait for technological advancements in many disciplines, the Higgs Boson was successfully detected in the Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Switzerland last December (2015). The cosmic evolution process had witnessed the formation of the atoms of the first element, Hydrogen around half a million years after the Big Bang. Over the next few million years, the vast expanding gaseous clouds of Hydrogen coalesced to form the first generation stars, which under intense inward gravitational pull gave rise to nuclear fusion in their cores that converted Hydrogen into Helium, a process known to be universal within all stars including our own star, "Sun". The outward forces exerted by the nuclear fusion process within the stars, kept in check the inward gravitational pull forces. But once the first generation stars exhausted their hydrogen reserve, the nuclear furnace ceased to operate and under intense inward gravitational pull force, more heavy elements such as Carbon, Calcium, Sodium, Magnesium, Aluminum, Iron, etc, were formed. Once a medium size star accumulated the heavy element Iron in its core, its rapid inward collapse became imminent and that gave rise to a stupendous explosion called "Supernova". The corresponding explosion of a star about 100 times or larger than our Sun is called a "Hypernova". Due to the unimaginably large energy release during a Supernova and Hypernova, the exploded remnants of a star contained many heavier elements. Over the next few billion years, these expanding clouds of star dust formed large number of nebulae, some of which have been recently imaged with spectacular details by the Hubble Space Telescope such as the "Crab nebula" and the "Orion nebula" within our Milky Way Galaxy and beyond. These nebulae are the star nurseries that gave rise to many more next generation stars, which in turn went through the same evolution and demise process of stars -

further giving rise to many heavier elements such as platinum, silver, gold, titanium, uranium, etc. including a total of 118 elements of the Periodic Table as of now.

In this long evolution process of the universe, nearly 4.5 to 5 billion years ago, our Solar System came into existence from the remnants of a n_{th} generation star explosion in one of the spiraling outer arms of the Milky Way Galaxy. The little blue planet, Earth which is home to us happened to form about 4.5 billion years ago in the goldilocks or the habitable zone of the solar system, optimally situated at a distance of 93 million miles from our Sun. It is blessed with an atmosphere containing mainly Oxygen, Nitrogen and Carbon Dioxide in an ideal proportion, two-third of its surface covered with water, which offered a temperate climate conducive to support the evolution of simple life forms first originating in water and ultimately leading to the intelligent life forms including homo sapiens through the evolution of species over several hundred million years. Most of us do not realize, but many more miraculous celestial events had to take place for the origin of life on planet Earth. The astrophysicists have recently unraveled some of these mysteries with the help of sophisticated space and celestial collision simulation modeling including remote satellite data monitoring of the dark side of the Moon. It is believed that about 4 to 4.5 billion years ago, during the early developmental stage of a smoldering Earth, another stray planet the size of Mars, called "Theia" had collided with it scattering out huge chunks of molten materials into close earth orbits that later coalesced to form two satellites. In that collision process, the axis of the Earth got a tilt and its spinning velocity about this tilted axis was far greater that time compared to what it is now. Over a few hundred million years later, the two orbiting satellites merged together to form a single satellite, which we call Moon today. The proof of this two satellite merger theory was recently validated after NASA got accurate measurements of the varying gravitational fields of the Moon's bright and dark sides and the retrieved lunar rock sample compositions perfectly matching with that on Earth. The stable-isotope ratios of lunar and terrestrial rocks found on earth are identical, implying a common origin. According to the predictions of the celestial collision model, the newly formed Moon was initially orbiting at about 15,000 to 20,000 miles away from Earth. The Moon was so close to earth that the cooled-down Earth had oceans with tidal waves rising to the height of several hundred feet. During that violent churning motion of the ancient chemical brew in the oceans along with the bombardment of other heavenly bodies such as asteroids, comets and large scale eruption of volcanoes causing intense lightning strikes, somewhere the first organic living cell seems to have evolved. Over hundreds of million years later, that led to the evolution of single and multicellular organisms branching out from aquatic to amphibian to land based animals through the evolutionary process of selection of species. Scientists believe that our planet Earth has witnessed many cycles of evolution and large scale extinction of species due to some sporadic cosmic events that we still do not fully understand. The best known example of this mass extinction of species, is the sudden extinction of the giant dinosaurs about 65 million years ago, which is now believed to have been caused by the impact of a six-mile wide asteroid or comet near Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. Incidentally, the Earth - Moon system has undergone remarkable changes over the billions of years, such as the earth's rotational speed about its axis has substantially slowed down and has nearly stabilized at 24 hours. The Moon has receded farther away from earth and at its farthest point (apogee) of orbit, presently the Moon is 252,700 miles away. This has resulted in a much smaller gravitational pull on Earth and consequently much smaller tidal waves of only a few feet height now rise in our oceans on full-moon nights. Even today, the Moon is spiraling away from Earth at an average rate of 1.5 inches per year as detected by NASA's Lunar Laser Ranging Experiment using the "retroreflector" installed on Moon by the Apollo Mission Astronauts decades ago. However, the Astrophysicists strongly believe that the contribution of Moon to the evolution of intelligent life on Earth is undeniable. So, the next time we look up to enjoy the beauty of a full moon night, let us not forget to show our sense of appreciation to the Moon - to whom we owe our very existence on Earth today. Purely, based on the theory of probability, one can say with some degree of certainty that we humans are neither alone, nor the only intelligent creation in the Universe. There must be millions of planets in the habitable zones of their stars among the 200 billion or so galaxies that could sustain life and certainly some of them should be supporting intelligent life forms. Already Kepler and Spitzer space telescopes have identified several hundred Earth like "Exoplanets" of interest and in a couple of years, a far more powerful James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) will join the hunt for our extra-terrestrial neighbors.

As of now, we the human beings are the ultimate culmination of the evolutionary process on Earth, who are endowed with the intelligence and the curiosity to search for our true origin and continue the quest to unravel the truth about the creator of this vast expanding universe as we know it today. This search for the truth has led us to

recognize that the human body consisting of about 60 elements such as oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium, phosphorous, potassium, magnesium, iron, zinc, etc., could not have evolved without the many generations of massive star evolutions and explosions as supernova and hypernova. Hence, it is true that we are all made of “star materials”. But we, humans had to wait all these 13.8 billion years after the Big Bang to come into existence for a fleeting 100 - year life on a small planet Earth located in a tiny corner of the enormously expanded universe spanning nearly 156 billion light years across from one edge to the other and still counting. With the endowed intelligence, ingenuity and creativity we have built sophisticated optical and infrared space telescopes, enormous range of scientific tools and analytical models to recognize that the visible universe constitutes only less than 50 % of the total mass of the actual universe that makes us believe that the rest of the mass may be accounted for as “Dark Matter”, whose existence and attributes are not yet well understood. By the same token, we still do not understand why the expanding universe is still accelerating instead of slowing down, as expected, and again we ascribe it to the contribution of another entity called “Dark Energy”, whose precise source and attributes are still unknown.

Most importantly, our scientific knowledge alone cannot logically answer - what existed before the Big Bang or the so called “singularity” and what was the source of the enormous energy released in a flash that was instrumental in the creation of more than 200 billion galaxies and each galaxy consisting of, on an average, 100 billion stars and innumerable planets, satellites, black holes, nebulae, quasars and many more cosmic entities? Recently discovered largest ever Black Hole is claimed to be 17 billion times more massive than our Sun and, just for our comprehension, our Sun is so massive that 1.3 million Earths could fit inside the Sun. It will be utterly mindboggling to estimate the energy involved in the Big Bang using Einstein’s famous equation, $E = m \cdot c^2$, even with a very rough approximation for the mass of all the 200 billion galaxies, including all supermassive black holes situated at their centers within the known universe alone and where “c” represents the velocity of light, i.e. 186,000 miles per second or 3×10^{10} cm/sec.

Is it not truly amazing to reckon that what the Astrophysicists and the Cosmologists with all their scientific research and use of 21st century technological marvels have discovered so far and what more intriguing mysteries they cannot understand as yet, some of the ancient Indian Siddha Yogis meditating in the dark corners of bare Himalayan caves had gained a fair comprehension of their essence. Indeed, in “Devi Suktam”, which is a part of “Rig Veda” there is reference to the “Adya Shakti” or the Primal Energy, an integral part of Shiva the infinite, which emerged out of a singular point and spread across the manifested universe as well as across the un-manifested universe as dark matter. Through profound teachings in Vedas and Upanishads the self-realized sages had expounded that the creator of the Universe is Omnipresent, Omnipotent, and Omniscient, whom we may perceive as the all-pervading “Super-consciousness”. One may call the creator “God” or by any other name based on one’s own belief or faith. But philosophically speaking, there is a profound synergy between the scientific unraveling of the mystery behind human origin and the spiritual proposition that everything - inanimate and animate existing in the universe in its manifested and un-manifested form evolved out of the Super-consciousness. And, by the same token, every human being is the manifestation of that divinity which resides within each one of us as the soul - the embodiment of “Sat-Chit-Ananda”. Thus, my quest for the true identity has led me to realize that each one of the proverbial 13 trillion cells that constitute my physical body owe their origin to the primal energy of the Big Bang. With a coordinated conscious spiritual effort of my body, mind and soul, it may be possible for me as well as all of you to attain, what the Siddha Yogis have all along said - a state of self-realization of the Super-consciousness and express with humility - “Aham Brahmasmi”!

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Without pain

Surya Nayak

I hear my body cries
My heart bleeds for love

My lip dries without a kiss.

Poetry does not find
Rhymes or rhythms.

Feelings, circles within
Creating
Eddies of loneness.....

I wake up to sunshine, find
Exotic eroticism pervading far
As far as, my vision takes.

I travel through a tunnel

Just to escape the 'vices of
sunlight'

But
Ended up seeing 'Naked Women',
Dancing to the flickering lights of
silence,

And their breasts swinging and
waging war
AGAINST MEN.

Candles melt,
Floor gets waxy and hot.....

I feel dehydrated, and
I break without pain

Montgomery Village, MD 20886

Badigam Village: A Reflection

Annapurna Pandey (UCSC) and Smita Mishra Panda (CUTM)



Barely 30 kms from Parlakhemundi, Badigam, predominantly a Christianized Saora village, has been lost to the local and state administration. When Annapurna and her University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) students stumbled upon Badigam while visiting Parlakhemundi during their summer field project in 2015, they discovered that this village had no SHGs, no visible education opportunity for women, no skill development initiative among the

youth, no health run mobile vans sanitation facility



clinic or any sign of health checkup by the state for months and no adequate water and here.

Afterwards, when district about the Tribal members of the members said that it is a problem village; most of the villagers drink and waste away their health and talent. Here we would like to invite you all to visualize this village, its people and the initiatives taken by OSA and Centurion University of Technology and Management (CUTM).

she went to visit the collector of Gajapati plight of this village the collector asked her Development agency staff (all of them Saora community) about the status of this village. The

The Badigam We Witnessed

Badigam opened our eyes to the stark contrast between the rural and urban Odisha. It is situated in southern Odisha, part of Gaiba Panchayat, Gumma Block of Gajapati District. We could easily reach the village through the pukka road thanks to the *Indira sadak jojana* (the road project named after the ex prime minister of India). We visited this village several times in the summer, 2015 and brought in Masters students in Development Management from Centurion University. Most of the University students are from different parts of Odisha, but were never exposed to issues relating to poverty, adult illiteracy, unemployment, and lack of sanitation in general in a rural setting.

As per record, this village came into existence around 60 year ago when a few of the Saoras came down from the hilltop to settle in plain land near Gaiba village. Currently there are 95 households, with a total population of 443. The statistical breakdown between men and women is 192 to 251, women constituting the majority of the population and are playing important roles in the village economy. Women also take important decisions regarding the welfare of the village.

Landholding and Outmigration

Outmigration of villagers is rampant and is the only viable option available to the villagers of Badigam. The average landholding size per household is about 0.52 acres. About 75 households are engaged in both shifting and settled cultivation during the

agricultural season. The landless cultivate leased lands (sharecropping where they share 50% of the produce with the owner of the land). A decade back, *bagada* (slash and burn) farming used to give the villagers food security. Now with more flatland farming, they are losing food security and can only grow Ragi and hill paddy.

With minimal landholding, when jobs are scarce, people go out to earn either in cashew factories or construction work, but are hardly left with surplus money. As an incentive for commercial cashew crop, the state government allows them to grow cashew on government land. (Tribal in the area in 10- 12 villages also undertook another commercial crop, rubber plantation, but it did not survive around this village.) The merchants mostly own commercial cashew crop farming from urban Odisha and neighboring Andhra and they are doing well. Many villagers have taken credit from the moneylenders to grow them and have become more and more dependent on them. For example, with Rs. 1500 loan, they pay half of it as interest in 6 months' time.

Young women in their post teens make Rs. 50- 60 per day (a dollar) working as daily laborers and in cashew factories. Thirteen girls go to the cashew factory where they get a low wage of Rs. 15 per kilo and shell up to 5-6 kilos of cashews per day. There are half a dozen cashew factories around, the closest are in Marigada (5 kms away) and in Hadubhangi (12 kms away). We discovered that these girls have not been to formal schools and can only sign their names. Working in cashew factories, they say, "actually the wage is less and it is hard work. But we do not have any money for soap, cosmetics, oil so even with low wage, we have to go to work. We use the lathe machine to shell the cashews and get trained for it on the job. Our body aches, our hands hurt to crush the shell and we use our leg for running the machine so they hurt" (personal conversation).

Construction work does not help improve people's lives, either. After harvest they travel out of state to do construction as unskilled laborers and come back to the village only for Christmas. The landless migrate out for the entire year. Many middlemen from Maharashtra, Gujarat and Hyderabad come to the village to recruit workers. The able bodied young people borrow money to migrate with the hope to improve their situation. Prakash Bhuyan, a married young man with two children, said a middleman from Maharashtra promised him Rs. 500 per day. He took the train to Raipur and then to Nagpur. To his surprise after reaching the site, he was paid only Rs 200 per week for his food and was never paid any wages. So he came back and now works in the village where he earns Rs. 100- 200 per day.

Health

On our visit, we found that children and adults suffered from tuberculosis, chronic cold and cough, malaria, typhoid, teen pregnancy, and alcoholism, among other ailments. Contagious disease like cold, diarrhea, and viral fever are constant; people die due to tuberculosis, fever and blood deficiency. The nearest health clinics are between 7 and 15 kilometers away. The health van is supposed to come once a month but had not come in the last several months. So, there is no respite from malaria or other chronic diseases. Without a medical clinic, the easy solution for people is to seek help from the magico-

religious (witchcraft) domain. Lack of education or skill building contributes to marriage at a very young age, hence the high rate of teen pregnancy. Respiratory ailments are caused by exposure to the chemicals used in processing cashews. Poor water supplies and lack of sanitation contribute to typhoid and other illnesses. Out of seven water resources (five bore wells and two wells) only one is functional. Availability of safe drinking water is a major problem as it is difficult for all the 95 households to depend on one bore well which provides usable drinking water for the entire village. The water is hard and has excess iron in it, as mentioned earlier. No house has toilet facilities; however, under "Swachha Bharat Abhiyan," we saw a toilet being constructed at the premises of the Primary school in the village.

The state government has branded this village as a Maoist heaven because the villagers resent their exploitation at the hands of moneylenders and the indifference of the state officials towards them. As mentioned earlier, alcoholism is widespread. Both men and women are addicted to *khajuri moddo*, local alcohol. The youth told us that at home parents drink, so there is a lot of fight and tension. They informed us that drinking is a way to satiate hunger and to take their mind off their despair and hopelessness.

The Role of the Local Church, NGOs, and Government Programs

For the last 22 years, the local church, which includes 82 of the 95 households, has played an important role in bringing people together, for example, conducting marriages, and allowing villagers to use church premises for feasts and festivals. However, the church has not played any role in education, health care and economic advancement of the villagers.

We heard that World Vision did some developmental work beginning in 1996, but left the village in 2011 for reasons unknown. The local NGO, The Adivasi Development Society (ADS), is supposed to be actively engaged in youth education and skill-building programs, but we did not see any visible impact it has made in Badigam.

The state and central government initiatives on tribal upliftment and empowerment are plenty but they have not reached the village. For instance, the government has introduced the Odisha Tribal Empowerment Program (OTLP) to improve the quality of life, we did not see any visible signs of improvement on the people. The village has also been declared below poverty line (BPL). As a result, the government provides 25 kilos of rice and 3.5 liters kerosene to each BPL member. The BPL elderly receive Rs. 300 monthly pension.

Education

Ninety percent of the villagers do not know how to read and write. Few of the village children attend school because they help the adults engage in field labor. Young children take the cattle for grazing and girls, among other responsibilities, take care of their younger siblings. As a result they do not have time to study at school.

We visited the two-room, coed primary school (1st to 5th grade), which has been functioning since 1975¹. The language of instruction is Odia, even though the villagers speak Saora, their tribal language. We were struck to see that the children were literally self-teaching. For example, in the first classroom, the teacher was reading the newspaper and the children were doing their own reading, writing and drawing. One child was drawing beautiful figures in his notebook. Some were dozing, while others were loitering outside.

In the second classroom, the teacher was busy doing paperwork while a child wrote numbers on the blackboard. When we asked, none of the students could read the numbers on the board. The teacher blamed it on their lack of Odia language skills. When it was time for midday meal, many children gathered at the school. We found out that the children go to school every day mainly for the mid-day meal.

The present initiative by OSA and Centurion

Contrary to all the reports calling the Saoras most primitive constituting the majority in this region², the youth show a resiliency in their social systems to take advantage of opportunities under conditions of scarcity. When we asked the young members, majority of women, who had never been to school because of structural and cultural constraints, they told us that they were interested in learning how to read and write and acquire skills to land them jobs in the larger economy.

We were deeply moved by our experience and discussed our findings with the administrators at Centurion University (www.cutm.ac.in) as well as with like-minded friends from Odisha in the United States. We helped establish a sewing machine center and a night school for the young women in Badigam. A recent judgment of the Supreme Court regarding women's economic empowerment applies to these women's initiative. In directing the Chhattisgarh government to appoint a woman Excise Sub Inspector as Deputy Superintendent of Police after granting her relief in the upper age limit, the justices observed that "It would naturally lead to empowerment of women, which is the need of the hour... Empowerment of women... is perceived as equipping them to be economically independent, self-reliant, with positive esteem to enable them to face any situation and they should be able to participate in the development activities" (Jain, Devaki, A judgment for Women's Rights, *The Hindu*, February 15, 2016).

Now two teachers are working with the youth in the village. One runs the night school and the other teaches sewing to women in the village. Currently, the night school has 30

¹ Badigam P.s School is situated in the village of Badigam, Gumma Block, Gajapati District, Odisha. The school information is as below: Management : Dept. of Education, Village: Badigam Category : Primary and Co-Educational Block Name: [Gumma](#) Cluster: Gaiba M.e District [Gajapati](#) Odisha,761208.

² Integrated Tribal Development Agency report says that "Among tribals, the Saora community constitutes numerically the largest group in this ITDA area and Lanjia Saora are considered most primitive in this area". <http://gajapati.nic.in/Departments/itda/itdamain.htm>

students and 17 women are learning to sew and are ready to sell some garments they have produced in the nearby local market. Together we have invested in procuring six commercial sewing machines with the cooperation of Centurion. The university has engaged one intern to coordinate this project in Badigam. The Government of India has initiated 'Make in India' campaigns and has collaborated with World Bank, USAID among other international bodies to impart employable skills to the youth, especially women for their economic empowerment. The Skill India initiative seeks to build vocational skills across the country, but most of the centers are located in the urban areas. Instead of luring the youth away from the village to cities like Bhubaneswar and far away places where they feel alienated, our focus is, first, to take educational skill training institutions like Centurion closer to the grassroots people.

Odisha Society of the Americas (OSA) has taken up the Badigam initiative as an Adopt-A-Village service project. This year Ms. Erin Ramsden, the Co-curricular Program Coordinator at College Nine, University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC) focused her course titled *Global Action* on learning about the interconnected issues that affect the women of Badigam village and coordinated a fundraiser to benefit the women of the village. This annual student-taught course seeks to focus on an international social justice issue and take action to make a tangible difference on the issue. Approximately 70 students from the university took up the project to support the night school for youth and teaching tailoring to adolescent women in Badigam village. The class organized a fundraising event in February 2016, to supply the sewing machines to the women of Badigam. They raised 2600 dollars to keep the project going. OSA has played an instrumental role in making arrangement for these funds to be transferred to Centurion, which is managing this project.

When we first visited the village, the state government had dismissed it as a problem village. However our dream for Badigam is to see these women economically empowered and politically active in the decision making process in the village and larger community. Our hope is to help the women to become the models for others in their village. Here is the link to the presentation on Adopt-A-Village - <https://youtu.be/e4NBemH8rZQ>



Confessions of a relatively new voter

Tapasi Misra

In my almost four decades of living in the United States I have never been more aware of the American Presidential election as I am this year. This might be true for a lot of others as well. The drama, the “brawls”, the “slugfests”, the name-calling, the rambling, ravings, rantings; what fun! Regardless of whether you are a Democrat, or Republican, undecided, neutral, apathetic, allergic to politics, anti-election, you have to admit that a part of you has been both shocked and entertained by it all, especially by a handful of atrociously colorful candidates. By the same token, regardless of your affinities, a part of you must also be relieved and engaged by the more stable, informative, powerful, contentious but not abusive debates of a few, just a couple actually, others. And you still don't know what to expect from whom, nothing is beyond limits this year, especially surprises. All this takes me back to those early, fresh off the boat, years when I was clueless about American politics, blissfully ignorant, and the chain of events that got me involved and then hooked.

As far back as I can remember, my father, Bibudhendra Misra, was either winning or losing elections or litigating political cases in India. It was ingrained in me from childhood that the constant stream of eclectic visitors at home were all “political” in some way or the other and that everyone had something small or big to do with the making or breaking of the order of things, in the state, in the country. Feuds at mealtimes over politics were staples on the menu, along with rice and dal. My mother, a reclusive philosophy lecturer, who frequently denounced the ills of politics, reveled in discussing it and campaigning for my father. So did my uncles, aunts, cousins... I witnessed it all from the outside, being too young to vote and too smug to care.

After moving to America with my husband in 1979, I was hurled into a life so alien to my body, mind, and soul that anything outside the sphere of my immediate existence was invisible to me. My personal tragedies and triumphs over the washing machine and vacuum cleaner transcended those of political and social causes. My entire being was consumed by the daily battles of finding the right building on the University of Texas campus, getting used to iced tea, navigating the aisles of HEB, elaborating on arranged marriage and my bindi to every non-desi passerby. I don't know when I started feeling more comfortable or looked beyond the periphery of my daily routine, but one day I found myself watching election coverage on TV as religiously as I had watched *Dynasty* and *Dallas* earlier. I never really cared about the policies of a party or candidate or the long term implications of who wins or loses. As far as I was concerned, we were Indian students abroad and would surely be returning home. This was never going to be my life, and these leaders were never going to affect its course. It was all as fascinating and as distant as Joan Collins and Victoria Principle. President Reagan's Hollywood past added to that distant glamour of Washington politics in my head, as did the charismatic Clinton's extra-curricular activities later.

But American politics became more than a spectator sport to me when my elder daughter became an office bearer in the UT Students' Democratic party. Her “niche” she had said.

“But how about the India Students' Association or Orchestra or Debate club, something safe and non-controversial to put on your resume?” This too shall pass, I was sure.

I was soon to realize that this was no fleeting fancy and was amazed by her conviction and commitment. In 2003, when she started a voter registration program in her dorm and helped the University Democrats register over 7000 voters, I decided to take her new passion seriously and support her. I started paying more attention to the issues at stake and the candidates' positions than their TV appeal or extra-curricular activities. Even my 2004 spring vacation in India could not keep me from the Kerry-Bush contest. When my husband called, I would exasperate him by first asking about our daughter's political activities. My husband, a stickler for academic excellence above and beyond all things, couldn't digest the thought of our daughter's activism infringing on her GPA.

"We don't ask about grades anymore?" He screamed across 10,000miles.

I found myself calling my daughter daily to commiserate or congratulate about the polls. The day I returned to the US, I took the Vote for Kerry/Edward sign out of the closet, carefully wiped the thick layer of dust from it, stuck it defiantly in my front yard, and invited our friends to watch the Democratic convention over chapatti and potato curry. When my daughter asked me with great trepidation if it was ok to join the vigil in the West Mall on campus the night before Early Voting so that she could be one of the first ones to cast her vote at 7 the next morning, I promised to send her extra sleeping bags.

"But when will you vote, Mom?" Hmm...

I have to admit I had very mixed feelings the day I took my oath as an American citizen four years later. The thought of giving up my Indian passport had seemed unpatriotic to the Indian in me. My father had been a bit disappointed when he had heard that I was relinquishing my Indian citizenship. But my daughter had come to me with a thrilled expression on her face and fire in her eyes, proclaiming that she'll never speak to me if I don't exercise my precious right, the right to vote. When she heard of my misgivings, she said, "Well, you didn't go to vote in India, did you?"

No, I had to admit, but...

"So what's the problem, be happy to be playing a role in the democratic process of some country, now also your country, Mom! Very important. Besides, how can you not be excited to vote for Barack?"

"Yes, Mommy!" Her precocious little sister had joined the chorus.

Well, who I'll vote for, I'll be the one to decide, and that's my right too!

So a few days later I walked to the neighborhood middle school and told the volunteers that I needed help with the voting machine since this was my first time at it. While he was looking up my name, I felt strangely inspired to establish a camaraderie with him,

"You see I just became a citizen, so..."

"My colleague will help you", he interrupted nonchalantly. Rude!

When his colleague was explaining to me in a monotone how the machine works, I beamed,

"All democrats please..." I said loudly to no one in particular, looking around, with a knowing smile at puzzled faces.

As I was leaving the booth, I could feel their collective stare searing my back through my kameez as I rushed out to the car, head held high, dying to call my daughter in Austin and tell her, don't worry, I

voted today. But instead, I rushed back and ran past the door before it closed on me, slowly but decidedly.

I had suddenly remembered that I still had something called a caucus to attend, see if I could become a delegate and do lots of other things I did not fully understand yet. But I had gathered by then that we would still not be even close to choosing a candidate; but that's the American democratic process, my daughter had tried to explain. We had many more elections later that evening inside a tiny library. Elections for who'll chair the meeting, election for who'll take the minutes of the meeting. Everyone looked presidential that evening. I think I went to this length, the very first time I was voting, in honor of my late father. Maybe he'll forgive me once he thought that I was putting my changed citizenship to good use? He had always said that we in India must protect our democratic system, despite the difficulties of sustaining such a system in a complicated country like ours. "Most important" he had always insisted.

This year of course, it's a whole different story. Neither do I feel flashes of patriotism nor inspiration. In this sad and surreal field of candidates whose contest seems less of issues and policies, and more about who can insult whom better, who can show more ignorance, how to flaunt their donations from poor individuals, who can shock and provoke best of all... For us electorate, it's become not so much about choosing one, but about keeping others out! "But vote one must"... I keep hearing my father's voice.

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My Treatment at the Mayo Clinic

Dr. Debendra Kumar Das

Introduction: In the summer of 2014, I went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota for the treatment of my diabetes. I underwent treatment in their Division of Endocrinology. I was so impressed with the high-quality medical care I received, that I decided to write about it. My goal was to convey to the readers, many remarkable aspects of the treatment, I experienced at the Mayo Clinic. I hope the tips I have summarized in this article will benefit those who are searching for good quality treatment for their illness.

My health history: At Mayo Clinic the patients are asked to fill out a comprehensive form on the patient's and his/her family's health history. This history gives the healthcare team the information that is necessary to understand the nature of the illness, which leads to providing the best care possible. For my case, I had been diagnosed with diabetes for nearly 20 years before going to the Mayo Clinic. In my family, my father and eldest brother had adult onset, type-2 diabetes, diagnosed many years ago. At a later stage, my sister and two other brothers also developed diabetes. Some of them are able to control their ailments of elevated blood glucose level with oral medications. For the first 15 years of my ailment, I could control my blood glucose level with proper diet and exercise, supplemented with oral medications. But as years progressed, the treatment I received in Fairbanks, Alaska was not adequate and my blood sugar level kept on rising. In my family, my eldest brother, my sister and I, are insulin-dependent, whereas the other diabetic family members could control their disease with just oral medicines. So, I had gone to the Cleveland Clinic in Dec. 2010 to undergo treatment for my coronary artery disease and diabetes. There, the endocrinologist had put me on a long-acting insulin, one shot a day. This worked for about 4 years, but after that period, the blood sugar level started rising again. At that stage, I discussed with some biomedical science professors at my university, who recommended me to seek treatment at the Mayo Clinic.

The process I followed to get appointment: I first wrote to some friends and relatives living in Minnesota about good diabetes doctors at the Mayo Clinic. That effort was supplemented with my own research by collecting information about the physicians at the Division of Endocrinology of the Mayo Clinic. I was immensely helped by my wife Katherine in this effort. She downloaded all the information written about the doctors specializing on diabetes treatment from the website of the Mayo Clinic. We found detailed information about a long list of doctors and carefully read about the medical education, experience and accomplishments of about 15 physicians listed under the discipline of endocrinology at the Mayo website. From that list I selected a few top physicians, who had received their MD degrees from very well-known universities in the USA and had many years of experience and most of them were full professors of endocrinology at the Mayo Clinic. Contacting them was challenging, because their personal e-mail IDs or phone numbers were not listed. But the postal addresses and the phone numbers of their office assistants were mentioned at the clinic website. Initially, using my university letterhead, I wrote a detailed letter to three physicians, as a request from one professor to another. I explained my illness and my research on their qualifications that matched my need. I expressed my earnest desire to be treated by them. Usually these professors are busy in large scale research projects, so I did not get any response. Next, I called their office assistants, reminding about my letter and persuading them to personally ask their physicians about my request for an appointment. I did not receive any reply from the professor who was my first choice, but I received responses from the other two physicians. The # 2 professor on my list had graduated long ago from Brown University, also my Alma Mater, and perhaps that caught her attention to write me a reply. She and the # 3 professor on my list politely declined,

explaining that they specialize on different aspects of diabetes than what I needed. Next, I called the office of the professor, who was at the top of my list, Dr. Robert A. Rizza, specialist in endocrinology and diabetes. He had not replied to me up to that point. That was a lucky and valuable call, because I was pleasantly surprised, when I got the response from his office that, he would see me. I was extremely pleased to receive his brief e-mail; "Dear Prof. Das: Yes. I will be happy to see you in the last week of May, 2014. Please make arrangements with my office assistant."

Impressive qualifications of the physicians: My primary physician at the Mayo Clinic was Dr. Robert A. Rizza, Professor of Medicine of Mayo Graduate School. I had researched carefully by reviewing his 45 page curriculum vitae and found his qualifications to be outstanding. He received the undergraduate degree from the Johns Hopkins University in 1967, MD degree from the University of Florida in 1971, followed by internship and residency at Johns Hopkins until 1976. He then joined the Mayo Clinic in Rochester as a clinical fellow in endocrinology and steadily rose through the ranks to become a full professor in medicine in 1987. During his long career at Mayo, he had held numerous major appointments, e.g., Director-endocrinology fellowship, Director-endocrine research, Chair-Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes, Metabolism (1992-2002) and Executive Dean for research, just to name a few. He had served in the professional societies of his discipline, such as the American Diabetes Association as a member of the Board of Directors and the President of the Diabetes Policy Committee. His curriculum vitae listed 315 journal publications, 7 books, 28 chapters and numerous prestigious multi-year research grants. I considered myself extremely fortunate to get the opportunity to be treated by an eminent physician of his stature.

Dr. Rizza was a very pleasant person and his dealings with me were warm, just like one professor conversing with another professor. As my primary physician at Mayo, he also lined up my appointments with physicians in other departments; ophthalmology, gastroenterology and rheumatology. This was because, I had expressed my desire to Dr. Rizza to be examined for my other ailments, since I had travelled a long distance from Fairbanks, Alaska to be treated at Mayo. The ophthalmologist did the eye examination as that was necessary for diabetes. The gastroenterologist performed the colonoscopy, since I had a prior complication of the ulcerative colitis. The rheumatologist performed x-rays to diagnose joint pains from my hip and heel. I noticed that the physicians of other departments who treated me were not as eminent as Dr. Rizza. They were younger with less experience and achievement. This was because my appointments were made very quickly during my brief stay at Mayo, based on whoever was available at that time. However, my subsequent review revealed to me that all of those physicians were graduates of good universities in the USA, and Dr. Rizza had casually assured me that all physicians of Mayo clinic are competent. Fortunately, I receive treatment for my ulcerative colitis from a very competent professor of gastroenterology at the Cleveland Clinic. I also get my cardiology related treatment at the same clinic. Therefore, I will go to the Cleveland Clinic for those treatments and to Mayo Clinic for the diabetes treatment. Since I was at Mayo in 2104, I underwent the other checkups just to get second opinions.

My treatment at the clinic: I arrived in Rochester on May 19, 2014 and stayed at a hotel within the walking distance to the Mayo Clinic building. There are good accommodations at reasonable costs near the Mayo Clinic Hospital Methodist Campus. Dr. Rizza had scheduled a comprehensive metabolic panel test for me in the morning of May 20. When I arrived there, I saw more than a hundred people sitting in the lounge. I had never seen such a big gathering of people for blood tests. I realized the Mayo Clinic was possibly one of the largest and busiest medical treatment centers in the nation. All my tests were performed in the Mayo/Gonda Building. This is a large building, possibly 20-storeies high and the Endocrinology department was on the 18th floor, where I met Dr.

Rizza the next morning after he had reviewed my metabolic panel test results. He recommended new insulin for me, increased the frequency of injection from once to twice daily and eliminated a few oral medications. He also relaxed the upper limit of my A1C and the fasting blood sugar numbers. The target numbers set by him were more achievable than those set by my prior physicians. I felt hopeful that I could meet those new targets. Dr. Rizza immediately set up appointments at the ophthalmology, endocrinology and the rheumatism departments for subsequent days. The rheumatology department was on the Gonda Building side of the Mayo Clinic and its lounge where patients waited was huge. I met a family there who had travelled all the way from India to be treated at the Mayo Clinic. On a wall, in that lounge, there was a large framed photograph of President George H. W. Bush, the 41st President of the United States, who had been treated there many years ago. On display was a kind, complementary message by President Bush to the physicians of the Mayo Clinic for his excellent treatment there. For me, fortunately all the test results from rheumatology, ophthalmology and gastroenterology departments came out to be good. I received excellent treatment for my diabetes from Prof. Robert A. Rizza. I was also very pleased with the treatments I received from physicians of other three departments. I also got instructions on insulin adjustment from nurses and education on proper diabetic diet from a dietician.

Historical information regarding the Mayo Clinic: Although the Mayo Clinic was officially founded in 1919 as Mayo Properties Association, it started long ago by Dr. William Worrall Mayo, who can be considered the initiator of this famous institution. He had emigrated from England to the United States in 1846. He received two medical degrees, the first from Indiana Medical College in 1850 and the second from the University of Missouri in 1854. President Lincoln recognized the talent of Dr. Mayo as a physician and appointed him in 1863 as a Civil War examining surgeon for the Union enrollment board in Rochester, Minnesota. Dr. Mayo was a perfectionist who delighted at any opportunity to improve medicine. His quest for knowledge and exploration, while balancing those with commitment to family and community had profound influence on his two sons, who also became physicians. Dr. William James Mayo graduated from the University of Michigan Medical School in 1883 and joined his father's practice. Dr. Charles Horacio Mayo graduated from the Chicago Medical College of Northwestern University in 1888 and began practice with his father and brother. The two brothers were known as Dr. Will and Dr. Charlie to their staff, patients and the community. What great parents Dr. W.W. Mayo and Mrs. Louise Wright Mayo were, who could mold the minds and motivate their young sons toward a righteous path!

In 1883 there was a devastating tornado in Rochester that injured many residents and Mother Mary Alfred Moes and the Franciscan Sisters with the help of Dr. W.W. Mayo cared for the injured at the convent. From that day, Mother Alfred and the Sisters of Saint Francis became determined that they needed a hospital in that area to care for the sick. The congregation saved \$40,000 to open the Saint Marys Hospital. The three Drs. Mayo were the first partners of this hospital. On the inaugural day on September 30, 1889, Dr. Charlie, assisted by Dr. Will, successfully removed a cancerous tumor from a patient's eye.

There are two large bronze statues of Dr. W. W. Mayo and Mother Alfred in the garden in front of the Mayo/Gonda Building and two smaller statues of Drs. Will and Charlie in a sitting position next to each other. During my stay in Rochester, on many evenings I used to go for walks to that garden and stare at those statues with a great deal of admiration, because of their enormous contributions to the society. During the 20th century thousands of surgeons and physicians from across the nation and around the world received part of their training at the Mayo Clinic. Today, more than 11,000 alumni of Mayo Graduate School of Medicine have spread the Mayo Clinic's treatment model to the whole world. Each year, patients come to the Mayo Clinic from every state in the USA, plus many

countries of the world. Among the foreigners, I noticed a large percentage of patients were from the Middle East. My colleague, Prof. Lin at my university, who hails from Taiwan, told me that Mrs. Chiang Kai-shek, wife of the former President of the Republic of China used to come to the Mayo Clinic for her health checkup every year and she lived to be above 100 years old. Two noteworthy achievements are: (i) Mayo researchers, Drs. Edward Kendall and Philip Hench shared the Nobel Prize in 1950 for the development of cortisone, and (ii) In 2014 the US News & World Report had ranked Mayo Clinic in Rochester # 1 in Diabetes and Endocrinology treatment.

Some fun things to do there: When I was not occupied with any tests at the clinic, I spent my time exploring interesting sites in and around Rochester. There are tour companies which offer sightseeing tours to Amish Country, Mississippi River Valley and Minneapolis & St Paul city. Most of these are full-day tours. I took the Rochester City and Countryside tour, which lasted about 4 hours. It took me to some historic sites, a nature park with a zoo featuring Minnesota animals and a perennial garden firm. I also took a trolley tour to the important places of Rochester City and Mayo historical sites. In this trip, I visited the History Center of Olmstead County, Mayowood Mansion, Mayo foundation House and the Saint Marys Hospital Campus and Chapel. The Mayowood Mansion is a 3000-acre estate, former home of Drs. Charles H. Mayo and William J. Mayo. The center of attraction is a 38-room mansion completed in 1911, which was added to the National Register of Historic places in 1970. The Plummer Building containing the Mayo Historical Suite on the campus is a must-see place. It is a museum containing the offices of Drs. Will and Charlie, preserved as they were. Important family photographs and one with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt with Mayo brothers adorn the wall.

Meeting the relatives and friends living near Rochester made my trip to Mayo quite stress free. My niece, Ms. Simi Patnaik, her husband, Dr. Mohit Dewan and their daughter and son, who live near Minneapolis came to see me in Rochester over the weekend. They drove me to a small tourist town sitting on a bluff on the bank of the Mississippi river. I enjoyed visiting the tourist spots in that town with them that afternoon. While ordering my lunch at the restaurant, I asked Mohit for his suggestion on the best food, I should order, which is a specialty of Minnesota. He advised me to order a dish made from the walleye fish. I did and it was absolutely delicious. Before going to the Mayo Clinic, I had contacted my Regional Engineering College, Rourkela friend, Dr. Sarat Mohapatra who lives near Minneapolis. Over the weekend, he and Mrs. Mohapatra drove to Rochester to visit me at the hotel. We spent some time together over the lunch and it was a great opportunity to get caught up with him. I had also contacted Dr. Prasanna Mishra, a scientist at the Mayo Clinic. I had lunch with him one afternoon on the campus and he showed me one of the old historic buildings, where there was some Indian symbol.

I received excellent treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, which was a great experience. I was highly impressed with all the facilities there. Therefore, I highly recommend Mayo Clinic to the readers.

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Memory Chest

Snigdha Mishra

I close my eyes and listen with a smile.
Rhythmic creak of bullock cart wheels.
Distant laughter of children at play.
The plaintive lowing of a wandering calf
And my *jeje*'s village comes back to me.

I close my eyes and breathe in deep.
The sweet scent of milk boiling over a wood fire.
Smoldering palm leaves perfuming the smoky twilight.
Champaas in bloom scenting the evening breeze
And my *jejema*'s kitchen comes back to me.

Eyes closed, I suck lemon pickle on my sunny patio.
Cool wetness of *paida* juice sliding down my throat.
Sticky, sweet mango stone slipping from my hand.
Tart tang of fresh green mango salted to perfection
And my *jejema*'s voice comes back to me.

Cool stone pillars rough under my palms
Thick moss under my feet, slippery, slick
Moist over the granite steps of my *jeje*'s courtyard.
Siuli branches reaching down to brush my head.
I am back on the porch of my grandfather's house.

I close my eyes and reach into my memory chest.
My *jejema*'s keys jingle on her sari *kaani*.
My *jeje*'s cutter chops his sweet *paana*
His belly jiggling in time to my five year old laughter,
And my beloved *jeje* comes back to me.



Snigdha Mishra resides in Columbus, OH, with her family. A Contracts Negotiator, she teaches Hindustani classical music and writes poetry in her spare time.

Gala putra bAhudi nailA

Arjun Purohit



"Dr.Purohit Uncle Sir, can you tell me what this phrase means?" asked Ringo (Rengadhara Harianayaka), a man of about fifty five and of Odishan descent in Kuala Lumpur. Ringo was still not sure as to how to address me. "Just call me uncle, Ringo. But why do you ask?"

"When I was little, all the women in my neighborhood would gather in my house on Sunday afternoons, munch Pan, huddle together and sing the same old songs again and again, and cry. This is the only phrase I remember from the old songs.

Without being able to verify my hunch, I correctly remembered it to be a line from Keshaba Koili, which turned out to be correct later when I returned home. I told Ringo about Yashoda`s maternal anguish, pining for her Krushna as she waited for his return from Mathura. As I was telling about Krushna, I realised that he was not familiar with our mythology. Then he would bring his son and daughter to hear the juicy stories about Krushna`s childhood mischievous exploits. Thus I became an involuntary story telling old uncle. I will come back to this phrase, but let me give you some contexts.

My daughter Tani was teaching in Kuala Lumpur (KL), and invited us to spend couple of months there during winter heretic always wanted to see South Asian countries because of their historical connections with Odisha and the ancient Buddhist structures. My dream of seeing the South Asian countries could not be fulfilled when I proposed to Australian Government that I pass through these countries on a motor bike on my return trip to India after completing my tenure there as a Commonwealth scholar. My plan was to fly over to Singapore, buy a motor bike and pass through Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Laos terminating in Burma. From there I would have come to India by boat. The main reason they would not agree was that it was not safe because Vietnam war was gradually taking shape. Vietcong, they told me , will shoot you just for your motorbike ! So this time I fulfilled most of my dream. Padmini and I managed to go to Penang (the next important city in Malaysia, Singapore, Bali, Cambodia and Thailand. We could also spend a week in Perth(Australia), my old stomping ground! I needed to convince Padmini that I went to a real university to do my Ph.D. The Head of the department was happy to see their first ever Indian Ph.D.

One day Tani asked me whether I would like to meet Odias in KL whom she had met in one of the Baha'i meetings. I was curious about them as they were curious of me. A real living psychologist, teaching in North America, treating psychological problems of whites, and from Odisha! I saw many of them in groups, some in their homes, occasionally in restaurants sharing meals. Ringo was one of the leading members of the group. I will give a very short profile of the Odias as it was narrated by Ringo.

Indians constitute only 7 % of the population, 30% being Chinese and 50% being Malays. The rest are tribal. Among the Indians, Tamils are the majority with various other Indian ethnic groups are evident, such as, Punjabis, UPites, Bengalis, and Odias with other smaller groups. Tamil is one of the official languages, and there are government run Tamil schools. Ringo thinks that Odias number between six to ten thousand, and are mostly concentrated in a nearby town about an hour ride from Kuala Lumpur. It seems most of them are fifth generation descendants of Odias who were brought over by the Brits to work in Rubber Plantation. Brits did not like work habits of Malays. They brought Indians and Chinese for the gruelling labour. Over years, Chinese have dominated commerce, whereas Indians have become skilled and professional workers. You will find lots of teachers, engineers, doctors, lawyers, taxi drivers, mechanics, and occasional shop keepers. When I was in Australia, University of Malaysia had lots of Indian professors. Not now. I was looking for a Malaysian friend who joined the university after his Ph.D. but he stepped out a few years ago. In Malaysia, Malays enjoy Bhumi Putra special rights. As the Malays get educated and trained, they replace Indians. Chinese are not as affected because Malays do not gravitate towards business. Among Odias, there is no single defining occupation. Most are engaged in trades. Incidentally, I met one Pradhan from Cuttack district (É) working in IT, who got married to local Punjabi girl and left for Germany! I did not meet but talked to a man on phone from Dhenkanal who came there to be a lecturer in a college.

Ringo could not tell me anything about the legendary Sadhabas who came to the area to settle few centuries ago. The only reminder of those is the word Kelingas, which applies not to Odias only but to all Indians. And it was a derogatory term. It seems in the beginning Odias came as bachelors, and went to Odisha for their brides. Now there is lot of intermarriages, particularly between Odias and Tamils. Many Odias have become Muslims because Malaysia being an officially Muslim country, there are privileges granted only to Muslims. And of course many have turned to Christianity and Baha'i faith. Ringo told me about current stress points in the community. Apparently when somebody changes religion or marries outside the group he or she is no longer considered pucca Odia. Even those who consider themselves pucca Odia, they cannot speak more than a few Odia words. Except some older folks, they cannot read in Odia script. Ringo tells me that the last Chatasali which was based upon voluntary effort was closed some fifty years ago. Ringo's kids are studying Cantonese in addition to English and Malayi. Here is some clues as to the future of Odia Community. Ringo's proper name is Rengadhara; that is the way apparently Tamils spell Rangadhara. His last name is Harianayaka. After a bit skull scratching, it became obvious that his ancestor was an illiterate guy from Ganjam called Haria Nayaka. Now Hrianayaka is his surname. I met a charming Odia girl about to be married to a Tamil guy. Her name was Rajesh Lekula. I teased her saying that her name is that of a man (unless of course you are a Punjabi). No, it was really Rajesari; Rajesh is the short form, she said. I corrected her:

it was either Rajasri or Rajeswari, and explained the difference. And what is Lekula? Again after skull scratching it was found to be really Nakula, a TAMILIAN way of calling Nakula. Furthermore, Nakula was the first name of her ancestor. Now it is her last name!

I asked Ringo whether any of them have thought of returning to India. Nope, he said. Standard of living is better than in India. Malays get special privileges, but because they are not work oriented, it is always possible to find some jobs. Besides, many tried to go back to India but returned soon after. Apparently, there is a law in Malaysia; non-Malays lose the right of re-entry if they stay too long away from the country. Simply being born in the country does not give you full-fledged citizenship if you are a non-Malayi! Therefore, Indians and Chinese are forever "aliens" no matter how many generations they live in that country. Getting permanent residency is possible if you marry a Malayi gal! However serious discussions were happening during my stay to resolve some of this antiquated stuff. I wonder about the future of Odia community in Malaysia. My hunch is that it is gradually dissolving like a sugar cube in the potful of Tamils. And I shudder to speculate about the future of Odishans in North America. Just think about Odishans after five generations! Is there any reason why our community will have a different outcome?

Now I am coming back to the main theme of this article. Just imagine the picture: Odia ladies from Ganjam brought over to an alien country crossing oceans who are not able to go back to see their kith and kin, permanently marooned among strangers. They were feeling the pangs of separation, and they vented their feelings through Keshaba Koili. Through these simple words and simple lyric, they identified with and understood Yashoda's pain, and in the process got some temporary relief by shedding tears. I wonder when Sri Markanda Dash wrote this beautiful lyric, did he ever think that his little work would give comfort to those lonely women in a distant land, and the simple primordial emotions and feelings depicted here would be reverberating in their hearts? This is the unmistakable sign of great poetry. As Ananda Vardhan says, kAvyasya AtMA dhvani. Great poem need not have sophistication of word wizardry, correct grammar or high philosophy. All a great poem has to do is to touch and shake your inner core, like fingering the subtle cord of a violin inside you. Just for us Ringoes in North America, let me give the whole pada here:

Koili, Keshaba je mathurA ku gala
kAha bole gala putra bA hudi nailA, lo koili
koili, khanda khira debi mu kA ha ku,
khaibAra putra gala mathurA puraku, lo koili
koili, ghara mora na maNanti nanda,
ghataNa na dishe pura, na thile gobinda, lo koili

BIJU PATNAIK – ODISHA’S MAHANAYAK

This year marks the birth centenary of a legend of Odisha - Biju Patnaik. Needless to say that if Odisha ever produced a statesman, that was our beloved Biju Babu. I am too limited to talk about the life of this illustrious person. But I will make an attempt to speak about his persona.

Biju - The daredevil!

Bijayananda Patnaik was born on 5 March 1916 to Lakshminarayan and Ashalata Patnaik. He was educated at Ravenshaw College. He dropped out of college due to his interest in aviation and trained as a pilot. He flew with private airlines but at the start of the Second World War with the Royal Indian Air force to eventually become head of air transport command. While in service he began an interest in nationalist politics and used air force transports to deliver what was seen as subversive literature to Indian troops. Shortly after independence Pakistani tribesmen invaded Kashmir and at Nehru's request he helped airlift the first Indian soldiers into Srinagar. He piloted the first plane that left Palam Airport at Delhi on 27 October 1947 at dawn and landed at Srinagar Airport in the early morning. He brought 17 soldiers of 1-Sikh regiment commanded by Lt.Col. Dewan Ranjit Rai. "...He, the pilot, flew dangerously low on the airstrip twice to ensure that no raiders were around. Instructions from Prime Minister Nehru's office were clear: If the airport was taken over by the enemy, you are not to land. Taking a full circle the DC-3 flew to ground level. Anxious eyeballs peered from inside the aircraft - only to find the airstrip empty. That's how rescued the captives.



“Biju Patnaik met with Pundit Nehru during his participation in Indian freedom struggle and became a trusted friend. Nehru viewed the freedom struggle of the Indonesian people as parallel to that of India, and viewed Indonesia as a potential ally. When the Dutch attempted to quell Indonesian independence on 21 July 1947, President Sukarno ordered Sultan Sjahrir to leave the country to attend the first Inter-Asia Conference organized by Nehru in July 1947. Sjahrir was unable to leave as the Dutch controlled the Indonesian sea and air routes. Nehru asked Biju Babu, who was adventurous and an expert pilot, to rescue Sjahrir. He and his wife flew to **Java** and brought Sultan Sjahrir out on a Dakota reaching India via Singapore on 24 July 1947. For this act of bravery, Mr. Patnaik was given honorary citizenship in Indonesia and awarded the 'Bhoomi Putra', the

highest Indonesian award, rarely granted to a foreigner. In 1996, when Indonesia was celebrating its 50th Independence Day, Biju Patnaik was awarded the highest national award, the 'Bintang Jasa Utama'.

In a recent interview, Gita Mehta, daughter of Biju Babu, spoke of his patriotism. She mentioned that Biju Babu bought a textile mill with the intention to print counterfeit currencies to bring the British Empire down to its knees. The method: the textile mill uses the same colors that are used to print rupees! What a great thinker - outside the box!!

Biju - The Politician

At the age of 45 Biju Babu became the chief minister of Odisha on 23 June 1961 and remained in the position until 2 October 1963 when he resigned from the post to revitalize the Congress party. Biju Babu was elected from the Kendrapara constituency to the Lok Sabha in 1977 and became Union minister for Steel and Mines until 1979. He was re-elected to the Lok Sabha again in 1980 and 1984 from Kendrapara as leader of Janata Party. In 1990 state assembly election, the Janata Dal received a thumping majority (two third assembly seats) which saw Biju Patnaik ascending once more to be the Chief Minister of Odisha for the second time until 1995.

He was re-elected to the Lok Sabha in 1996 from Cuttack and [Aska](#) constituencies as a Janata Dal candidate. He retained the latter until his death on 17 April 1997 of cardio-respiratory failure.

My personal stories:

- The AICC (All India Congress Committee) was meeting in Bhubaneswar in 1961 (open field then but Gopabandhu Nagar today, if my memory serves right). Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, came to lay the foundation stone for the Tikarpara dam project. But he returned to Bhubaneswar with ill health. Although I was pretty young, I had an opportunity to be present at an open session with my parents. With some "connections" we were able to get front row seating. The stage was just a few meters away. It was a quite a sight to see Lal Bahadur Shastri, Gulzarilal Nanda, Jagjiwan Ram, and Indira Gandhi, among the then Congress luminaries. They were trying to discuss some important policy matters that were not being broadcast. There were a lot of people in the back of the audience, way behind us that were making a lot of noise and were disrupting the meeting. Quite a few people including Mrs. Gandhi went up to the microphone to control the crowd - to no avail. Then, Biju Babu came up. He said "Maalike - Paati chup kara", etc, pointing his finger at the unruly crowd, and the crowd fell silent. His commanding voice had a magical effect!
- When he was the Union Minister of steel & Mines, he had the opportunity to have K. Ramachandran, IAS (Odisha cadre), as the Secretary of the department, and Krupasindhu Mahapatra, a bright Mining Engineer from Odisha, the-then Member of the Iron ore Board, for guidance. The trio, by virtue of being able to speak Odia, and with Odisha's interest in mind together in Delhi discussed a lot of the nation's policy matters relative to steel, mines, and coal, and take strategic decisions - favorable to Odisha.
- There currently is a move in Odisha to petition the President of India to posthumously confer Biju Babu with "Bharata Ratna". Who else could be more deserving candidate for the highest honor than Bijayananda Patnaik - the Mahanayak of Odisha?

Satyabrata Mishra, Shrewsbury, MA, has contributed this article with substantial help from the web and other sources.

Time Outside and Beyond Time: The Nature of Time in the Mandukya and Maitri Upanishads

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In the Mandukya and Maitri Upanishads, there are references to several classes of time. These are possibly the earliest discussions on the nature of time anywhere, precursors to the current intense discourses in the Physics community on the existence and reality of time. There are references to time in two lines of the Mandukya Upanishad, and in the sixth Prapathaka of the Maitri Upanishad. The first type of time is time as commonly understood, and includes the entire past, the present and the future (the three *kālas*). A second category is a time outside the bounds of the three *kālas* (त्रिकालतीतं). We explore two possible interpretations of the second form of time. The first meaning may be the timeless state of eternal bliss, implied in *nirvana* and *moksha*. Another possible interpretation relates to the cyclic model of the universe in Hindu cosmology. Each cycle of the universe starts with creation of the universe and ends with a *pralaya*, the destruction of everything, and after one night, a rebirth, a re-creation of a new universe. The second class of time may refer to time in the universes before and after the present universe, which is a cyclic version of the Big Bang Theory. In fact ancient Indian cosmology recognised a third class of time which flowed much slower: one day in the life of Brahma is equal to 4.32 billion human years, as mentioned in the Maitri Upanishad.

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ओमित्येतदक्षरमिदं सर्वं तस्योपव्याख्यानं भूतं भवद् भविष्यदिति
Aum ity etad aksaram idam sarvam, tasyopavyākhyānam, bhūtam bhavad bhavisyad iti
सर्वमोकार एव । यच्चान्यत् त्रिकालतीतं तदप्योकार एव ॥१॥
sarvam aumkāra eva, yac cānyat trikālātitam tad apy aumkāra eva

— *The Mandukya Upanishad*, circa 500 BCE
— Transliteration by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, 1953.

OM is this imperishable Word.
OM is the Universe, and
this is the exposition of OM.
The past, the present and the future,
all that was, all that is, all that will be, is OM
Likewise all else that may exist
beyond the bounds of Time,
that too is OM.

— translated by Sri Aurobindo,

The lines are easier to read and understand if the compound Sanskrit words are split up.

ॐ इति एतत् अक्षरमिदं सर्वं तस्य उपव्याख्यानं भूतं भवद् भविष्यत् इति सर्वं ॐ कार एव ।
Om iti etad aksaram idam sarvam, tasya upavyākhyānam, bhūtam bhavad
bhavisyat iti sarvam Om kāra eva,
यत् च अन्यत् त्रिकालतीतं तत् अपि ॐ कार एव ॥१॥

yat cha anyat trikālātītam tat api om kāra eva

— Guided by Swami Sharvananda, 1920.

इति This (visible) सर्व all ॐ Om इति एतत् this अक्षरं letter तस्य its उपव्याख्यानं explanation. भूतं the past भवद् the present भविष्यत् the future इति सर्व all ॐ कार Om एव verily. अन्यत् the other चे and यत् what त्रिकालतीतं the transcendental, beyond time तत् that अपि also ॐ कार Om एव verily.

— Swami Sharvananda

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Almost 3000 years ago in India, theologians and philosophers had pondered over the nature of time, and postulated that time was not the same for everyone and nor was it same everywhere. They saw two distinct classes of time, an ordinary or human time for us mortals on Earth, and another class of *timeless time* for the heavens. In addition, they believed in a third and different category of time for Brahma, the creator of universes. One day in the life of Brahma is equivalent to one *kalpa*, 4.32 billion human years. They postulated that the universe was cyclic, with each universe cycle, created by Brahma, lasting for one kalpa, 4.32 billion years, and then be totally destroyed in a *pralaya*, and after one night the next universe cycle is created. There are several discourses on time in the Vedic texts. Here we have focused on a few lines in the Mandukya and the Maitri Upanishads.

If questioned on the nature of time, most of us would respond much as Saint Augustine did in the 4th Century CE. He lived at a place named Hippo (present day Annaba, Algeria), then a part of the Roman Empire province of Numidia:

*What, then, is time?
If no one asks me, I know;
If I wish to explain. . . ,
I know not.*

Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis (354-430CE)

St. Augustine faced the same problem as most of us do. We assume we know what is time, until asked to define and explain.

In the 6th Prapathaka of Maitri Upanishad, there is a discussion on the reality of time. Even as they believed in different categories of time flowing at different rates, they pondered over the reality or otherwise of time.

*On account of subtleness of Time, this is the proof of its reality;
On account of it the Time is demonstrated.
Because without proof, the assumption which is to be proved, is not
admissible;
But, that which is itself to be proved or demonstrated, when one
comprehends it in its parts, becomes the ground of proof, through which it
brings itself into consciousness (in the inductive way).*

—Maitri Upanishad 6.14

The verse mentions the necessity of the proof of reality of time, but with some circular reasoning, the proof is not provided. This is an indication is that the nature of time was as baffling to the sages then, as it is today.

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Part of the reason for the bafflement about the nature of time is that we humans have no physiological sensor that senses time and there is no instrument that senses time. A clock does not sense time. Rather, the clock provides a reading or sound after an internal, designed, interval. A clock provide a signal at that interval, regardless whether time flowed or not. Although we talk about a 'time-sense', or having a sense of time, our body has no sense organ that is known to sense time. For the other senses, vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, the specific organs are known. Not so for time. Time is an entity we all know, or we think we know, and yet we are unable to sense.

Although we may think we recall a certain time in the past, we actually recall a series of snapshots stored in one's memory of that particular instant. We cannot recall just the time. We sense the passage or flow of time by successive memory snapshots of change.

From birth we are familiar with the rhythms of day and night, of the seasons. Any natural or manmade system that provides two 'ticks' at regular intervals can be called a clock. Day and night are natural, though imperfect, clocks. Manmade clocks subdivide the day into hours, minutes, seconds and more; and other clocks subdivide the year into months, weeks, days and more. Although each clock, natural or manmade, gives an appearance of sensing time, it is only marking durations of intervals, which we compare with durations measured with other natural or manmade clocks. We experience the passage of time, not by sensing time directly, but by counting successive intervals, and inter comparing with other clocks.

To tell whether time has elapsed, we need a clock that ticks at regular intervals, and a counter. The clock ticks can be substituted by events. If there are no events or ticks, we cannot tell the elapsed time. In effect, without events, there is no time.



Galileo Galilei (1544-1642), and Isaac Newton (1643-1747) introduced the concept of a universal time that flowed independent of any clock, or any local condition, at the same constant rate throughout the universe. Newton postulated that when 1 second has elapsed on Earth, 1 second has elapsed everywhere in the universe. This idea of a time, independent of the ticks of any natural clock is different from our time with which we conduct our daily lives. Our ordinary time is essentially keeping a continuous tally of intervals defined by a clock.

The foundations of physics involve three space coordinates and an independent time coordinate. Albert Einstein (1879-1955) proved in 1905 and 1916 that the relative speed of the clock and the local gravitational field affect time. If one could see clocks at all parts of the universe, they would not read the same. Because space and time are linked, Einstein combined them into one, space time. Einstein's work triggered a renewed interest in the nature of time. Spirited discussions ensued.

Some physicists now believe that time is not real, and time (as defined in physics) may not exist. Paul Davies, a Theoretical Physicist in Australia has summarised the history of the development of the role of time in Physics and Cosmology in *About Time: Einstein's Unfinished Revolution* (1995). Julian Barbour, a British physicist, presents his ideas in a book *The End of Time* (1999), is convinced that time does not exist and develops a physics in a timeless universe, and goes on to cast doubt on Einstein's ideas of a space time continuum. Lee Smolin, a physicist at the Perimeter Institute in Theoretical Physics at Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, does not agree with Barbour. In a recent book *Time Reborn: From the Crisis in Physics to the Future of the Universe* (2013) Smolin reasons that time is indeed real. Smolin extends his arguments in a

book published just a few months ago, jointly authored with Roberto Mangabeira Unger *The Singular Universe and the Reality of Time: A Proposal in Natural Philosophy (2015)*. Roberto Unger is a philosopher, politician, and teaches at Harvard law school, and is currently Minister of Strategic Affairs in the Govt. of Brazil.

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The Mandukya Upanishad, composed circa 5th - 1st Century BCE, is considered by many scholars as the earliest exposition of ॐ in Vedic texts. Yet it is not a gentle introduction to ॐ; rather, the *shloka* is in the form of a prescription, stating the divine powers implicit in the verse. A natural backdrop to any introduction of a spiritual incantation would have been the forests, the rivers, the valleys and the high mountains. We would expect that the intonation of ॐ would resonate in the ashrams in the forest, or echo off the valleys. But, instead of local geography, we are surprised with the use of the universe, from the beginning of time, to the very end of time, as a canvas, and that the sound of ॐ is primeval, omnipresent and everlasting, having existed for all times past, and will exist for all of the yet-to-happen future. The verses add a stunning dimension of space and time to the exposition of ॐ. The very first two lines in the Mandukya Upanishad have a reference to time. The three words भूतं, भवद्, भविष्यत् (the past, the present, and the future), and the phrase यच्चान्यत् त्रिकालतीतं (whatever transcends the three realms of time), are the references to time in this verse.

In the shloka there is reference to time outside the bounds of the totality of ordinary time, the past, the present and the future. What is the nature of this second type of time, outside the bounds of ordinary time? We explore here possible interpretations of this extraordinary class of time.

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As early humans started observing their surroundings, they observed that many changes occurred with the passage of time: day and night, spring and fall etc. But with time came ageing, disease, death. And there were epidemics, floods, drought, pestilence, locusts etc. Life was a struggle, and usually time brought on more struggle for survival. Lot of bad things happened to humans with passage of time.

When they looked up and saw the heavens, the sky, they saw a system with order where objects stayed put or moved entirely predictably with time. Here nothing changed unexpectedly. No destructive earthquake, storm, floods etc. damaged or destroyed any of the heavenly objects. They could see no change for the worse with the passage of time. Thus the heavens appeared to be governed by a different, benevolent class of time. To early societies it would have appeared as if there two types of time, ordinary time for humans on Earth, and a timeless time for the heavens.

It is thus that humans developed ideas of being controlled and enslaved by earthly time. Use of fantasy words have come into use, with imaginary independence from earthly time, like 'forever', 'timeless', 'eternal', 'time stands still', 'perpetual', 'undying', 'immortal'; etc. Each of these terms means a freedom from any change, a freedom from the bondage of earthly time. Hence the concepts of *moksha* and *nirvana* that imply liberation from earthly time, from the cares and pain of *samsara*, the repeating cycle of birth, life, suffering and death. The attainment of a timeless state is the ultimate reward for leading a good life.

We postulate here that one possible interpretation of यच्चान्यत् त्रिकालतीतं is the timeless state of *nirvana* and *moksha*, which would have been considered in those days as outside earthly time. This interpretation has some support in the Maitri Upanishad

(Section 6.14). There is a discussion of two forms of time: *kāLa* and *akāLa* (Time and Timeless; also translated as Time and non-Time).



In the original Sanskrit, and in English, the past, present and future give the impression of being about similar in duration. The past, present and future acquire different meanings with just some elementary reflection. The 'present' is just an instant, transient and with no duration, merely separating the past from the future. With the passage of time, the future is constantly sliding into the present, which is always sliding into the past. So in effect, we have only two *kāLās*, the past and the future, as the present has no duration.



In the Big Bang Theory some 14 billion years ago the universe was a hot (millions of degrees) hot plasma, a mix of photons and subatomic particles. With no spatial markers, and no event markers, there was no space and no time. Then at some point the universe started expanding (The Big Bang). This event is considered the beginning of space as well as time in the present universe. There was no time and no space before the Big Bang.

So we suggest a second interpretation of the time outside time mentioned in the Mandukya Upanishad, that possibly त्रिकाल (ordinary time), the past, the present and the future (भूतं, भवद्, भविष्यत्), refer only to time limited to the present universe cycle, and the time outside the three *kāLa* (यच्चान्यत् त्रिकालतीतं) refers to the times in the past and future universe cycles. In between the cycles time does not exist.



Endnote

The Vedic and Puranic texts, together with Buddhist and Jain texts in India constitute a vast repository of the sources of our culture. We can further add to the repository with those written in *Avestan*, sister language of Sanskrit, then in use in Iran. In this article we have explored just a few lines in the Maitri and Mandukya Upanishads, just a proverbial drop in a *sindhu* of knowledge that remains to be explored.



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कालस्तस्यातिदूरमपसरतीति एवं ह्याह :

कालालत्स्त्रवन्ति भूतानि कालाद्धृदिं प्रयान्तिच।

काले चास्तं नियच्छन्ति कालो मूर्तीरमुर्तिमान् ॥ १४॥

. . . . from Time all beings flow; from Time they grow; and into Time they set;

—*Maitri Upanishad 6.14*



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Katha Dance Academy (Minneapolis)
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Jagannath Society of Americas
Vanguri Foundation of America
Sangeetha Kannada Koota (Minneapolis)
Twin Cities Tamil Association(Minneapolis)
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Padmaja Dance Academy (Minneapolis)
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