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## UTSAV 2020







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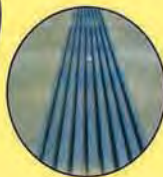
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**UTSAV COMMITTEE 2020**





মমতা ব্যানার্জী  
মমতা বৈনর্জী  
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Mamata Banerjee



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শারদ শুভেচ্ছা

১৭ অক্টোবর, ২০২০



“শিশির ভেজানো শিউলি আকাশে  
মা আসছেন সবার পাশে”


শরৎ-হেমন্তের সন্ধিক্ষণে নীল আকাশ, সাদা মেঘ, কাশফুলের মৃদুমন্দ দোলা আর ভোরের শিউলি আবার নিয়ে এল আনন্দময়ীর আগমন বার্তা।

মা আসছেন সবার মাঝে, আমাদের আনন্দোৎসবে যোগ দিতে, কিন্তু এক কঠিন সময়ে, যখন সমগ্র মানবজাতি অভূতপূর্ব এক সংকটের মুখোমুখি। বিশ্বকে করোনামুক্ত করতে সারা পৃথিবী আজ একজোট হয়ে যুদ্ধ করছে। যে লড়াইয়ে আমরাও সামিল।

প্রার্থনা করি মায়ের চরণস্পর্শে কেটে যাক সব অন্ধকার, দূর হয়ে যাক সব মলিনতা। দশভুজার আগমনে আবার প্রজ্বলিত হোক আশার দীপ। হাসি, আনন্দ আর গানে আবার ভরে উঠুক আমাদের জীবন। উমা মায়ের আশীর্বাদ ধরণীর বুকে বয়ে আনুক অপার শান্তি, সুখ, সংহতি, সমৃদ্ধি আর একতার বার্তা।

পরিবর্তিত পরিস্থিতিতে আয়োজকদের কাছে আমার অনুরোধ, পূজোর আয়োজনে সবধরনের সাবধানতা অবলম্বন করুন। দর্শনার্থীদের সুরক্ষার দিকে সর্বাত্মক নজর রাখুন, যথাযথ শারীরিক দূরত্ব বজায় রেখে প্রত্যেকে যাতে প্রতিমা দর্শন করতে পারেন, তা অবশ্যই সুনিশ্চিত করুন। সরকারের সাথে সহযোগিতা করুন আর সব প্রশাসনিক নির্দেশ সম্পূর্ণভাবে মেনে চলুন।

আপনাদের শারোদৎসবের আয়োজন সফল হোক, এই আশা রাখলাম। সকলকে জানাচ্ছি শারদীয়ার অনেক অনেক প্রীতি, ভালবাসা ও শিউলি শুভেচ্ছা।

  
(মমতা ব্যানার্জী)

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তাং: ১৪ই অক্টোবর, ২০২০

### শুভেচ্ছা বার্তা

বিপ্লবজুড়ে আজ করোনা মহামারীর প্রকোপ। সজ্ঞাতার এই মহাসংকটের মাঝেও শিউলি সুবাসিত জোর, কাশবনের হিলোল, আগমনী সুরের মুচ্ছনা জানান দিচ্ছে মহামায়া, স্নাতনি, শক্তিরূপা, জ্যোতির্ময়ী, জগন্মাতা দেবী দুর্গার আগমন বার্তা। দিকে দিকে চলছে সেই ভুবনমনোমোহিনী, দশপ্রহরণধারিণী, দুর্গতিনাশিনী মায়ের অকাল বোধনের প্রস্তুতি।

এই বছর শারদোৎসবের আমেজ বেশ মিয়মান। করোনা ও মহামারী আতঙ্ক প্রভাব ফেলেছে উৎসব প্রস্তুতি ও উদযাপনে। রয়েছে নানান নিয়ম ও নিষেধের বেড়া জাল।

আশা করি দেবী দুর্গার আগমনে অবসান হবে সকল দুর্যোগ, অঙ্ককার, বাধা-বিপত্তির। এই দুঃসময় কাটিয়ে ধরণী হয়ে উঠবে আবার উৎসবমুখর।

সকল কলুষ তামস হর,

জয় হ'ক তব জয়,

অমৃতবারি সিঞ্জন কর

নিখিল ভুবনময়।

অতিমারীর এই আবহে আপনারা সরকারী স্বাস্থ্যবিধি মেনে দুর্গাপূজার আয়োজন করছেন জেনে খুবই আনন্দিত হলাম। জগবতীর আশীর্বাদে আপনাদের এই পূজা আয়োজন পরিপূর্ণতা লাভ করুক।

শারদীয়ার এই পুনস্নেহে সকলকে জানাই শুভ শারদীয়ার আন্তরিক প্রীতি, শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন। সকলের সুস্থতা কামনা করি।

ধন্যবাদান্তে-

ফিরহাদ হাকিম

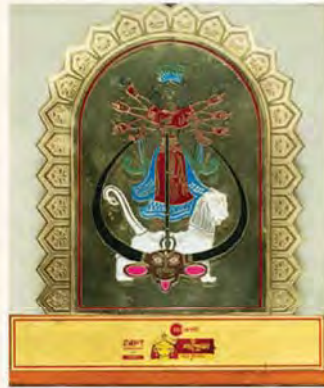
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সভাপতি

আরবানা ওয়েলফেয়ার অ্যাসোসিয়েশন

অনন্দপুর রোড, কলকাতা-৭০০ ১০৭





## RECOGNITION OF HARD WORK AND INNOVATIVE THINKING



URBANA WELFARE ASSOCIATION UTSAV COMMITTEE  
2020





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## Acknowledgement

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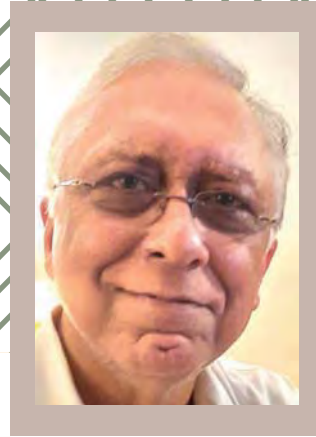
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# President Speaks

**MAKE  
IT  
MATTER**



**i**t is an honour bestowed on me by you, the Urbanite, to write this short note in the Utsav Souvenir for 2020 - 21.

Amongst all the residential complexes in Kolkata, Urbana has been exemplary for the manner in which the various festivals have been conducted. The past Committees have done a superlative job of putting Urbana on the map and we are trying our best to emulate them though, given the year as it has turned out to be, to match them will not be easy.

The festive season is all about setting aside our day to day pressures, sources of annoyance, forgiving,





**MAKE  
IT  
MATTER**

## Secretary Speaks



Let me start by wishing Urbanites, happy “Sarodutsav” marked by good health. “Time flies so fast but gives us millions of memories to remember that time”- Shithal Yadav Shinde. This is so true. It feels like the year 2016 was just yesterday when a small passionate group of us, Urbanites, initiated Durga Puja celebrations in Urbana.

It was an honor for me to be able to get deeply involved and jointly organize the first Durga Puja in Urbana. As time passes, Urbana’s “Durgotsav” is growing by leaps and bounds and has become one of the very special utsav that we all keenly look forward to, bringing in nostalgic memories for many of us.

The essence of the Durga Puja spirit is to fight and win over the Asura / evil of our lives. This is more apt in the current year when we are passing through these unprecedented times with the global pandemic of COVID-19.

With our continued commitment to uphold our traditions and culture, we will be conducting all our traditional rituals but in low key and strictly within the Government Guidelines and protocols.





## Convenor Speaks



### SLAYING CORONASURA: AN UNKNOWN VIRUS CAST SHADOW ON BIGGEST FESTIVAL OF BENGAL AND AT URBANA

A new challenge this year not faced and experienced before by the world after Spanish flu in 1918. A severe blow on mankind shattered our life and dampens our spirit, which led to a major blow on the economy too, but life goes on and show must continue. In spite of

our passing through the most difficult phases in our lives in view of global pandemic which has gripped the entire world, “Never Say Never” is the essence of Utsav this year with devotees praying to the goddess for strength to conquer one of the biggest challenges of our lifetime – the novel coronavirus pandemic.

In spite of fear psychosis amongst residents, we still have decided to go ahead for celebration after curtailing certain aspects to implement social distancing and other safety guidelines of state authority. Thought of cancellation of events is easy but we are aware that cancelling Utsav could mean depriving several people of their livelihoods for several months. We have artists and artisans coming from the interiors of the state. There are idol makers, dhakis, street vendors, decorators and many more who are suffering for want of job today. Our endeavor will help this class for their livelihood, we believe. To us, it is considered a social work, which can only be executed with the help of residents who all are successful in their lives.

Although we have faced acute fund shortage this year for obvious reasons, we still have gone ahead for implementing our plan for CSR activity too.

In Urbana, this year, we have consciously taken out Maa Durga from Air conditioned Tent environment to an ambience of open traditional conservative “Bonedhi Raj Barir Pujo” to give the audience a different feel. Maa will have fierce expression as she slays the Asura (demon) the manifestation of everything evil since world has not seen something as evil as the Coronavirus. The Utsav throughout the year is organized by Urbana Welfare Association for which an Utsav Team is formed comprising all like minded residents with a philosophy of maintaining freedom of expression and thought to celebrate the glory of Urbana by upholding the pride and honor of being Urbanites which would surely, we believe, help maintain legacy of Urbana. We will always hope and sought to receive moral and financial support even if anybody decides against participation.

Lastly, quality of Souvenir in Urbana has always been appreciated for its creative excellence. A superb creative mind of Souvenir team 2020- Aarti Deoskar, Proteeti Mallick, Pratim Dasidar, Chandra Basu Banerjee, Swagata Datta and Debjani B Maji- have displayed their stupendous dedication, determination and devotion which is evident in each page of this brochure deserve applaud from the readers.

Maa saved Devlok from Asura – Can she not protect her devotees!! If you believe, please join us in our prayer.

**PRASAD BANERJEE**  
**CONVENOR - UTSAV COMMITTEE**  
**URBANA WELFARE ASSOCIATION**



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*Shanod Shubheccha*



*time to Cast off past perils,  
and look to the future with renewed hope!*



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# Messages from the heart...



As the Dusshera Evening draws to a close I write this to compliment the designers and organisers of our Community Puja at Urbana. This time around I felt the pandal much more elegant, stately and aristocratic. Though not unique in its theme of the Thakurdalan of an 18 or 19th century Zamindari household of the post Permanent Settlement Bengal. What is so striking of this Genre of architecture is the amalgamation of ancient and medieval styles of architecture with pre modernity.

The outer facade of the triangular pediment is reminiscent of classical Greece from The Parthenon. The Corinthian columns supporting the pediment take us back to the Roman examples of the spectacular Corinthian columns at the Roman Forums, the three surviving columns of the Arch of Septimus Severus being the greatest examples. The ornamental supports of the pulpices reminds one of the stone support reliefs of The Meenaskhi Temple of Madurai. The alternate Black and white Square chess board pattern flooring mimicking the marble flooring perhaps first executed at the Doge's Palace at St. Marco's Square in Venice also was often repeated in these houses of erstwhile Zamindars of Bengal. The Green Painted Wooden Jharokhas are perhaps originated from Burmese and Rangoon area architecture. These have been a key feature of all traditional houses of this type in Bengal, including The Thakur Bari. The central Chandelier is a brilliantly crafted piece of glasswork from a bygone era of Belgian supremacy in this form of craftsmanship which reminds one of the Chandeliers of the Durbar Hall in the Scindhia Palace in Gwalior.

Lastly the Shonar DAKER shaj of the Ek Chalchitrer Pratima was an excellent execution of choice reflecting the Historical relevance of this style. Silver or Gold foil to decorate Matri pratima was unavailable in 18th century Bengal. The Dutch East India Company was founded close to eighty years before the British East India Company and they started transporting these foils for the rich Zamindars to use in Decorations of the mother Goddess, instead of the Sholar Shaaj and exhibit their wealth as these Foils imported from Germany via the Dutch East India company were costly. As they used to arrive by Postal system DAAK , by colloquial terms, the nomenclature became Daaker Shaaj. As a fitting tribute this was first used in The Shovabazar Rajbari whose thakurdalan this Mandap reflects to a large extent.

Such Spectacular Synthesis of Styles and Genres are unique characteristics of the exceptional architecture of the 18th and 19th century in the city of KOLKATA which I personally feel is an unique heritage and WHICH NEEDS TO BE PRESERVED BUT ISN'T IN TODAY'S TIME AND AGE.

I congratulate all the designers and Planners of this puja and the open design of the Mandap and hope that in the years to come we can see much more of such Open, traditional designs of Mandaps at our Community puja.

Subho Bijaya to all.....**Alokesh Ganguly**

Big round of applause to the whole team for a wonderful Durga Puja arrangements. Also to all residents who were so responsibly participated by following all norms. Subho Bijoya and Happy Dussehra to all.....**Atanu Banerjee**

Standing Ovation to the Pujo Organisers Team. Thank You for such a wonderful experience, in these testing times. All of you have done such amazing "Good Karma" ! Congratulations and "Bestest" Wishes.....**Boudhayyan Paul**

Well done team Utsav. You deserve all praise for the wonderfully managed Puja and arrangements of varied and quality food all days. Another round of applause for UWA digital sub committee under the stewardship of ever energetic Anand Saraf and ably supported by Anurag Agarwal, Sourav Roy, Gaurav Bimal and others who made such a superb arrangement to bring Urbana Puja happenings to each household through live streaming and sharing time to time information.

**Sushil Khaitan**

No doubt Utsav team has surpassed all expectations! Well done ! .....**Ritu**

Congratulations to Kolkatans and Urbanities for being able to show remarkable restraint in being able to celebrate a Diwali in such a wonderful pollution free manner. Such resolve as a community is a beacon for the world and shows that incredible things can happen if we all can get aligned for the greater good.....**Anirban Rudra**





This is also our first Puja in Urbana and kudos to Urbana Puja Committee for organizing the Durga Puja maintaining Covid Protocols but following all rituals. Very well done.....**Surjayan**

I and my family wish all the working members of UTSAV 2020 Group a very happy Dushera and Bijoya. The team deserves heartiest compliments for excellent execution of Durga Puja and food arrangements.

**Ashok Gupta**

A spectacular, magnificent and well organised puja. Definitely best in Kolkata. It's an exemplary efforts by the team. Found everything to be so flawless.....**Chandra Banerjee**

Great job done by Utsav committee in these tough times. Thank you . Pandal, protima and food was very good.

**Purba Bhattachrayya**

Had a great experience during Pujo. Thank you for the arrangement even in these trying times. To the entire team

**Meenal Sinha**

A heartfelt thanks to UWA Utsav team. My daughter in law is Tamilian and she was super excited to experience Bengali Durga Puja. Due to covid situation she couldn't come this year. But through your live streaming app ,she along with my son experienced today's Mahashtami puja and Sandhi puja. She is overwhelmed to see the beautiful idol of Maa Durga and pandal also. Thanks to Utsav team 2020 for this wonderful arrangement.

**Piyali Chatterjee**

Ashesh Da you should be involved with Urbana Pujo every year though I know u are not at all interested anymore but still eairokomp pujo pandal decoration and everything related to this pujo is just mindblowing.

Ami actress, onek pujo dekhechi last 23years.... believe me eirokom Complex Pujo konodin dekhini...

Best in my life!! Too good. Evening e aaro sundor.

Khub dhukho peyechilalm last 3 years pandal dekhe aar thakur dekhe.

Namte iche korto na, this year pandal chere opore uthte iche korche na...!

Prasad Da and Ashesh Da, bad luck eai bochor our situation is this...otherwise would hv called the whole of kol to see our pujo.....**Rachana Banerjee**

Heartfelt gratitude to the committee for organizing this year's puja events in these trying times ! Fantastic job done !!

**Swati Dhir**

Extremely competently organised and planned Pujo under such a stressed and challenging situation. Full marks to Pujo organisers.....**Subir Chaki**

Dada , credit goes to you and your Team. Your brilliant idea on mandap structure , decoration , management of puja are factored in getting the Best Abasan Puja award. One of my client who came from Bangalore today was also appreciating the same. The team effort is the good example in the entire prog. Thanks you dada and your team. I have witnessed this prog in the TV just now. This is an important moment for all Urbanites. A new beginning to win and now we are in competition like others. All these years we used to hear Ekdalia, Chetla Agroni, Suruchi Sangha etc etc as Barowari puja and other XYZ in Abasan puja. Now Urbana is added.

Congrats to the each and every member of the Utsav team for proper planning and perfect execution. Also we appreciate the thought leadership of the team leaders. I am circulating this video to my friends in India and Abroad. Pl keep it up. Many thanks.....**Tapan Ghosh**





Thanks for the lovely Diwali gifts from Utsav & UWA. It's beyond our expectations and it's first time in Urbana to give honour with personal touch. Cheers to UWA.....**Bimal Bhowal**

A special mention for this year's pandal ! Kudos to the organisers .. it was indeed a visual treat !.....**Amit Ray**

The Utsav Team has truly pulled a rabbit out of the hat !!

An exceptionally massive and herculean task amidst all the negativity, constraints and the gloom all around.

A selfless task that brought in a breath of fresh air in an otherwise doomed year, a ray of hope amidst the despair and a fresh lease of life! Just like the world will refer periods as pre-covid and post-covid, for us residents we too shall refer this year as pre-Pujo and post-Pujo! What a refreshing change!

Heartfelt and sincere thank you to each and every member / resident who made this possible.

Shubho Bijoya and have a great year ahead !.....**Anurag**

Indeed, Team Puja deserves all our appreciation ! Excellent organization ! Thank You Team Puja !

**Prakash Newer**

Absolutely, it's my first Puja in Urbana.. and was organised very well by the committee...Thanks to the organisers & committee members.....**Vineeta**

This year the Pujo is organized in true tradition and managed very well. Kudos to whole team.

**Sushil Agarwal**

Congratulations to UWA n team Utsav for this wonderful initiative in these tough times....it was very well organised.

**Dr Shelley Ganguly**

Congratulations to the Team....অভিনব মন্ডপ সজ্জা !!.....**Sourav Biswas**

Thank you to all the members and participants in this puja for organizing this year's puja. The pandal was magnificent and authentic. Congratulations for the awards.....**Raja Dey**

Amazing effort of everyone involved... demands a huge round of applause.....**Subhas Agarwal**

It's a great reward to have and as an Urbanite, I feel so proud. Everybody knows that it's not an easy task to perform a Durga Puja in a scale that happens in Urbana every year and especially this year when the economy was getting crumbled because of the pandemic in last few months. My heartfelt thanks and congratulations to all the committee members and Puja organisers for managing everything so beautifully and flawlessly despite the financial crunch that they might have faced for doing so to hold the legacy of Urbana.

**Subrata Kar**

I feel fortunate to be the lead sponsor of today's Maha Ashtami Puja and visited the Mandap today morning. I could clearly feel that all efforts, enthusiasm of the organizers and whoever associated, CAME FROM THE BOTTOM OF THEIR HEARTS and that's exactly what's necessary ! They achieved creating something so spectacular for all of us (despite so many challenges this year) winning appreciation all over, which Urbana truly deserves. I thank each one of you and wish the committee the best of achievements for the future.

Sincerely request all Urbanites to come forward, join and participate in today's Maha Ashtami Day, being the main puja day, of the whole celebration. (Pls follow strict COVID protocol)

Happy Festive Season to all. God Bless.

**Debashis Lahiri**



Thanks for all Utsav team gave so much efforts to organise so nicely.....**Vinay**

It's an excellent Puja Pandal and the lights are also very elegant.....**Dhiraj Jalan**

Mouthwatering breakfast served by Utsav / UWA.....**Piya Kar**

The puja committee has done a super job...we must not compromise and risk ourselves and the community !  
**Sandeep Kumar**

Congratulations to the team for dedication.Hope the team will bring more laurel in the future.....**Chinmoy Chakravorty**

Congratulation to the entire team for such a beautiful execution .....**Dr Sangeeta Das**

A beautiful and well organised Puja. This year's puja showcased the real heritage of Bengal. Done in an aristocratic manner supported by technology. It couldn't have been better in these tiring times. Congratulations to the Utsav Team. Enjoyed excellent varied chaat dishes yesterday served in a clean and systematic manner. There was no rush. Awesome and sumptuous breakfast. Kudos to UWA and Utsav committee for arranging such spread within limited budget.

**Anamika Chowdhury**

Really appreciate all the hard work led by Prasadda and Aleshda.... magnificent Pandal which truly symbolises the old bengali culture and Pratima again "Ek Chalar Thakur" and all the arrangements were very well organised .... Kali Pujo was equally good and so nicely the ambience inside the pandal got changed through lighting ...kudos to all the members and excellent synergy between UUC and UWA .... this is true working on each other's strength.... All the best and thanks for this wonderful delivery.....**Ayan Chatterjee**



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TOWER 1, 2001

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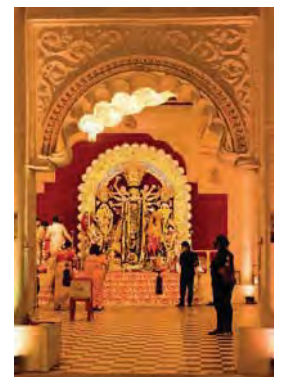
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Moments of  
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**Gautam Bhattacharya** is an eminent writer, author and sports journalist.  
T4 3002

## DHONIISM



A close friend of mine was handling Mahendra Singh Dhoni in his formative international years. He had some problems suggesting things to Dhoni as the man from Ranchi felt and acted in a manner that he was most comfortable. Rest meant very little to him.

Mind you he was not the Dhoni of today. Just two years into international cricket and he was still treated as a junior within the team. Yet Dhoniism had begun in its own quiet way.

I was then covering the Indian team's long and turbulent tour to South Africa. Year 2006. Coach was Greg Chappell and a certain Sourav Ganguly still awaited his opportunity which was to come a month later in the most dramatic circumstance. I

volunteered to speak to Dhoni to see if he could be pursued. His Manager seemed pretty happy as perhaps their relationship had reached such a stage that help from any unexpected quarters was welcome.

Fourteen years have gone by. Yet I can still recall the hotel room setting and the conversation that happened. It was Durban's Elangeni Sun overlooking the Indian ocean. Dhoni had a small room but all for himself which made the private talk easier. I wanted to tell him two things. One, why is he hanging out with a certain cricketer of the team who is under pressure from the Indian media for his series of bad performances and in turn only saying bad things about the journalists ? I said Dhoni you are the brand ambassador of NDTV. They treat you with so much love and respect. Why are you falling in this man's trap and joining in the chorus orchestrated by him in criticising the Indian media ? Please remember he is a falling star and you are a rising star. Your positive mindset shouldn't change just because a friend of yours is bitter. Dhoni did not agree and we went to the second point.

I asked him yesterday there was an award function in this hotel which was attended by everyone from Tendulkar to Chappell. Apparently you were the only absentee. Is it true ? He said, "Yes I had slept off." I could not believe what I heard and retorted, "What are you saying- slept off ! But you were an awardee. You were supposed to collect a prestigious award for the Best emerging cricketer of the world."

"I told you I was tired and slept off," said Dhoni with absolutely zero remorse.

In today's day and time such a conversation with MSD is unthinkable. You may not even last one full sentence. But in the pre 2011 period he had some space and time for senior journalists, if he had faith in them. So I could keep on arguing, "Do you know whose award was that? This CEAT award is spearheaded by Sunil Gavaskar's company. By not going and accepting the same you run the risk of offending him." He disagreed strongly.







Then I delivered my final ace.

Dhoni, Is it true what I get to hear that till date you have not even said hello to Mr Gavaskar ?” He nodded.

I said “what do you mean ? For two long years you are with the Indian team and yet you have not introduced yourself to him. Do you know Gavaskar’s importance ? At times his one line has separated players from getting dropped or actually playing . And here you are not even said hello to him once !”

Dhoni cleared his throat and said, “Whenever I see him he is busy. Either giving commentary or running around for something at the ground. I can’t disturb him in the midst and say Sir Hello. It would be so awkward. May be if I meet him at the corridor or inside the elevator that is possible. Otherwise not.” he sounded very emphatic.

My time was up and clearly the self imposed intervention had meant nothing to him. Though, Dhoni before I left said, “Gautam Da what you told me about the cricketer I shall think over. May be I will listen to you. May be I will not. But as for Mr Gavaskar I stick to what I had said. If he is busy I can’t jump and disturb him by saying



hello.” He said with such finality in his voice that it was pointless going any further.

Some say post the World cup win Dhoni has changed. He may have when his fellow players keep saying so. But deep down he was always like this. Always his own man. Would always follow his own thoughts and convictions completely disregarding opposite sentiments. It is unbelievable as to how a pump operator’s son rising from a small town city could have so much courage of conviction.

Jump cut Perth 2008. Anil Kumble’s India was touring Australia which got rocked by the Monkeygate scandal. But towards the end of the test series a big controversy surrounded the Indian team with her own one day team selection blues. Quite unexpectedly, both Sourav and Rahul got dropped from the one day team which led to a huge stir. Dhoni was in the midst of it. As he, along with the Selection Committee Chairman, Dilip Vengsarkar had taken this call. Sourav was then scoring heavily in one day cricket and the exclusion came as a shocker to him as well to the national media. I remember writing a very strong piece . The next morning had bumped onto Dhoni at the lobby who signalled that he wanted to talk. He began by saying I want to give you an interview which stumped me completely as by then he had stopped giving journalists one on one interviews or even meeting them. But he had not finished and the closing portion was the clincher.

“I want to give you the interview not because I want to give you the interview. But I heard you were writing inflammatory articles and misleading the people of Bengal. I think they have the right to know the truth,” said Dhoni. We went up to his room and finished the interview in one go where Dhoni explained his side of the story in a manner which I thought was truly innovative. End of the interview we placed a bet of Rs 1 on the possible outcome of India in this three nation one day tournament. I of course said with the inexperienced new look







team you would lose and he smilingly said the opposite. History will have recorded that India went on to win the Commonwealth Bank Series in a decisive manner 2-0. Sourav's replacement, Gautam Gambhir sparkled in the tournament so did a Tendulkar. But I had to go back to Dhoni to concede he was right.

His relationship with the Indian media was slowly and steadily declining. No other Indian captain behaved with the media in this fashion. Literally telling them you are no longer relevant. Dhoni openly admitted that he hated doing press conferences and would have loved if ICC had done away with them. He felt that barring one or two individuals in the press box the rest were too intrusive and negative. That most of them chased controversies at the cost of cricket. Once in England he staged a walk out from the press conference with his entire team. The reason being an article the previous morning in the Times of India which suggested there were two groups in the team. One led by Sehwag. The other by Dhoni.

In 2011 I was planning to write a book on Sachin named SACH. I approached Dhoni to write the foreword knowing he might say no. To my utter delight he said yes. I still remember the first draft I showed him after talking to him but he was far from happy. "Gautam Da, thora humour dalo. Nehito aajkaal kou padta nahi," he said. Eventually the entire foreword was dictated by him which had a lovely line --If Cricket is Ram then Sachin is it's biggest disciple, Hanuman.

I could see first hand how his mind worked even sharper. He also talked about the conviction to go along with the unconventional cricketing shots or wisdom. I said these are effective yes but far removed from the MCC cricketing manual. Clearly Dhoni got little annoyed, "Tell me why was copybook invented? The idea was that batsmen can follow this model and score runs. Now here is your new copy book which is equally effective. Who is going to say just because it was made in England some hundred years ago that is more effective? No I would go with our own copybook." This was clearly the voice of a man who had traveled long distance with distinction. Dhoni in other words had become Dhoni 2.

If you look at it he has always been his own master. But the element of unpredictability grew with the passing years. No one knew about his impending marriage. Not even most of his teammates. Most of them did not know his phone number. Even for Chennai Super king related discussions, apparently the big boss N Srinivasan had to go through Suresh Raina to contact Dhoni. Such was his aura that neither the Board nor the selection committee could tell him, look here this can't go on. You need to have a communication system going. As for the media they discounted him long time back. Dhoni has gone down as the only Indian captain in the history of the game who has not explained his position before retiring. Forget India. Have you heard of any captain from any country who puts in a two line Instagram post with a song *Main Pal Do Pal ka shair Hoon*? Absolutely unique and this is what symbolizes Dhoni.

According to his long standing manager Arun Pandey the instagram song is not the one that defines Dhoni. Pandey says for journalists and the cricketing fraternity the Three Idiots song will be much more relevant in the coming future. As post IPL 2021 he will completely retire from public life. "You won't be able to see him or talk to him then. Don't expect for a minute that he will do commentary or come to your television shows. You will only think of the famous song," says Pandey convincingly,

...Behti hawa sa tha woh  
Udti patang sa tha woh  
Kaha gaya usey dhundo...



Who knows? With Dhoni nothing is impossible!







*Bristi Chowdhury*

TOWER 1, 2001  
CONTACT : 8420503323







Best Wishes from

*Agrahari Family*

Sarvesh, Bristi,  
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## Detox Vegetable Juice Diet

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People often talk about the importance of inner beauty. The inner beauty here we talk about is what goes on in our stomach. Is it enough to feel clean only on the outside and stomach rumbling with gasses, spoiled odor, burning sensations, feeling dizzy and nauseous 7 days a week? The choice is upon us. Whether we want to hide this misadventure with deodorants and antibiotics or do we really want a natural, long-lasting, effective profound way to deal with it in an appropriate manner.

In ancient times, people used to cure their diseases with natural juices instead of medicines. It helps to remove all over the toxins in the body. When removed, it solves (resolves) the problem of high blood pressure, when removed from the lungs it helps us to cure asthma or bronchitis. When removed from the intestine, it helps us to get rid of constipation, it also helps to



also helps to cure stones. Not only diseases are cured, juice diet can also help one lose weight (and inches) and makes healthy progress in flushing out toxins. Everyone wants to lose weight and get a proper figure, but people often freeze off when it comes to doing it in a healthy way. It is fine to want a good figure but it is not fine to use an improper way to achieve it. Moreover, juice diet also gives us tons of energy and helps us to balance our body, mind, and soul. It helps us sleep well at night, increases digestion and creates strong metabolism. It also helps us to attain mental peace and clarity of thoughts. It is the most effective way to rejuvenate and detoxify the blood and restore health. Raw juices help to normalize acids-alkaline balance in our body. The best part about this diet is that it is a liquid diet rich in minerals and vitamins. It easily circulates all over the body and nutrients are absorbed quickly.

With the rise of corporate marketing skills, there is a growing variety of food which has hit the market, providing us with all sorts of preservatives, eventually exposing us to extreme toxicity. The toxicity





now has reached its peak. People have forgotten the beauty of nature. Nature has provided us with all varieties of taste, colours, food which are specifically good for a particular season, time, etc. (Xtalkingx) Essentially, there are two things(x to talk about;x) : overeating, eating at the wrong time, and secondly the growing level of toxins in our body due to artificial preservative food. What we now need are a few days to detox our body with local raw vegetables juices. People want to look beautiful and there are two ways to achieve it; one to use artificial objects like makeup to look good, though inside the body the stomach is filled with gasses, fully toxic foul smell is hidden under your perfume. As we are a social being one may eat fast food at parties, the body may become toxic but instead of taking pills we must go back to nature, detoxify our body with local raw vegetable juices with a flavor of fruit in it.



So If u want a clean gut, have the guts to say NO to artificial food.

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## Health And Divinity

Dr. Archana Sinha

T1 2703

Dear Readers, Sharod Subhechha!

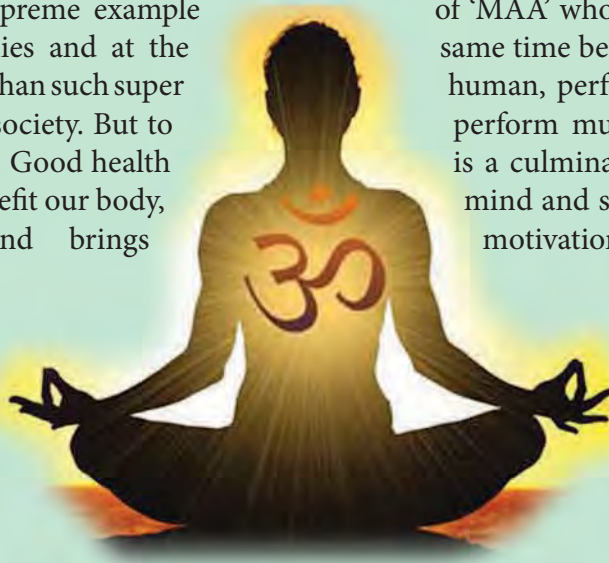
All of us are in need of a warm atmosphere of festivity and celebration to emerge out of the times of uncertainties and grim environment due to COVID-19 spread. We pray to Goddess Durga for our good health and prosperity. At the same time, we must continue to practice social distancing norms and use personal protective equipments and hygiene products, like mask, hand gloves, hand sanitizers as recommended by health authorities. So let this celebration be the one with responsibilities to protect us, our friends and families from the mighty Asura.

Goddess DURGA is a supreme example against our mighty enemies and at the Today's women are no less than such super family, communities and society. But to to stay healthy at all times. Good health spiritual practices that benefit our body, leads to happiness and brings

of 'MAA' who has immense power to fight same time be a caring mother for her kids. human, performing a number of roles in perform multiple roles, all it requires is is a culmination of physical, mental and mind and soul. Unarguably, good health motivation.

### *Physical Health*

It is recommended to exercise daily. As like can develop snags too. attention to the 'signals doctor when needed.



eat a wholesome diet and as any machine, our body But it's important to pay of the body' and visit your

### *Mental Health*

It is said that 'The mind can go in thousand directions but on this beautiful path, I walk in peace. With each step, the wind blows. With each step, a flower blossoms'. It is thus important for us to keep our mind free and focussed. So continue to exercise your mind. Meditate, take short holidays, choose a hobby, pursue your dreams and end of the day, have a peaceful sleep. Mental health issues should not be stigma and should be dealt accordingly.

### *Spiritual Health*

Spirituality creates a balance between physical and mental aspects of our life. So start leading a purposeful life that's beyond our own self and meant to benefit human beings and environment. Discover your purpose and inner calling and align your daily actions. Get in sync with your Inner God.

May all these three elements Trinity of Body, Mind and Soul reach to its fullest and on this occasion, Divinity of MAA DURGA descends on you.







## My journey in COVID time & role of community participation

Dr. Debkishore Gupta

T7 1501

I never could have imagined roads would be so empty, journey would be so smooth and there would be no honks while driving. My car was still getting a preference at the slightest congestion. City was pollution free, sky was clear. The hustle and bustle of our busy city had come to a standstill, the known cacophony has stopped. This was the first time I felt it is indeed a privilege to be a health care worker and to be counted under “essential service”. But the actual situation was not that rosy. Life has come to a sudden halt because the entire world was going through



an unprecedented situation- COVID-19 pandemic and our country was locked down under disaster management act. The initial days of lock down were extremely challenging. We spent hours in writing and rewriting protocols and reinforcing our preparedness. Thanks to the ever changing advisories, our manual became a big and fat one with lot of amendments. There were not many patients but a state of apprehension prevailed for some time. Patients were afraid to come to hospitals, elective surgeries and procedures got postponed, emergency trauma cases went down drastically as there was hardly any movement in the road barring essential services. We utilized this time in strengthening our preparedness, conducting numerous drills and trainings and meeting with different teams of consultants. I was given a huge responsibility of preparing and updating all the protocols and policies across the hospitals under the group. Despite rallying an unrivalled international effort, COVID continued to advance. In just six months, COVID-19 has spread to 188 countries and infected over 6.6 million people. Yes there was panic, even among doctors. With the news of daily 2000 deaths from USA, this is quite understandable. Finally it also trickled down in Kolkata, in our hospitals. This is the time when regular patients and suspected COVID patients started showing up in almost equal numbers. Our life style changed. Our days started with meetings followed by changing into scrubs followed by donning PPE. This was definitely not comfortable. The first day I donned a coverall suit, I started suffocating when I reached the bedside and started taking history. After 15 minutes I literally craved to lie down in one of the unoccupied beds. That day I saluted other colleagues who were working in that ward for 12 long hours without any complaint. I understood this also required practice. Yes I did improve with time although the continuous inhalation of exhaled carbon dioxide troubled me with occasional dizziness and somnolence. By this time we started testing after obtaining necessary nod from regulatory bodies. Getting the necessary approval was a grilling experience. The assessment lasted 7 hours and ended well after midnight. Even after that testing was not that smooth sailing when it comes to prioritization against an extremely meager supply of kits from USA. Contact tracing which also included checking detailed CCTV footage consumed a lot of time.







I did find time to manage similar exercise for my residential complex Urbana with the great support from a highly energetic team having diverse professional backgrounds. The team worked really hard and got the screening and quarantine processes streamlined. I reckon this as an achievement not to have more than just one COVID patient during entire lockdown-1. The support to quarantined residents was extraordinary. I still remember when one of our dear neighbors lamented as his quarantine period was over and he got used to the support system during this time!

Community support is essential in controlling any epidemic or pandemic. It is important to address misinformation to avoid increasing anxieties around this largely unknown infection. Community dialogue can help understand perceptions, tackle misinformation and adjust the approach accordingly. It can also help to reduce the stigma associated with disease and social integration. Communities play a vital role in the support of screening, monitoring of outbreak, contact follow-up and quarantine or home isolation of affected families. Involving active and meaningful community leadership in risk communication has proven useful. For diseases like COVID-19 where there is numerous advisories coming from the health ministries and communities are often not familiar with on right way of the prevention, developing trust on the community leaders is of paramount importance- this becomes even more necessary at the time of behavior change. Control of any large scale infection center around behavior change. It covers hand hygiene, wearing and handling mask, coughing or sneezing etiquette and various other measures including dietary behavior. Community can arrange numerous virtual sessions and the results are generally impressive.

There will be new challenges during Durga puja in this “new-normal” time. There is every chance cases will increase after the Puja is over. It is always advisable to do pandal hopping virtually. Maintaining physical distancing will be extremely difficult in the crowd. We will have to depend on masks and regular hand sanitization. Air conditioned pandals and cars may spread infections quickly. Chance is even more in AC restaurants where masks have to be necessarily pulled down. Playing loud speakers in the back ground can make someone shout at the time of normal conversation- this may generate enough aerosols to infect others. Communities must show appropriate responsibilities to do away with certain practices which may be harmful this time. Spreading awareness through regular communication may be reassuring and help alleviate misunderstanding.

It is quite evident that there is no immediate hope for any vaccine. No highly effective antiviral could also be added into our armamentarium. Till that time we will have to fight with the known precautionary measures. More importantly, we will have to change our behavior for better compliance with all the measures.







## Embracing the New Normal: Reality in the Post-Covid era

Dr. Purnendu Roy

T6 4404

M.B.B.S, M.S, F.I.C.S, F.A.I.S, FAMS, D.UROL (LONDON), Chairman & Managing Director – Genesis Group of Companies:  
Genesis Hospital, Genesis Institute of Management & Technology (GIMT)  
Genesis Eduventure (GE), Genesis Educational and Charitable Trust (GECT)

*“And now we will count to twelve  
and we will all keep still.  
For once on the face of the earth  
let’s not speak in any language,  
let’s stop for one second,  
and not move our arms so much.  
It would be an exotic moment  
without rush, without engines,  
we would all be together  
in a sudden strangeness.”*

- Pablo Neruda, ‘Keeping Quiet’

2020 in many ways is a year full of irony. It is crazy to think that a virus, something so tiny in its magnitude, made an impact so large. Covi-19 has taken the world by storm and changed everybody’s lives, possibly for good. So what do mean by ‘new normal’ ?

Life right now is undoubtedly different, but the degree of change will vary from sweeping overhauls in some cases to small adjustments for others. Despite the countless hardships Covid-19 is responsible for, it has also presented opportunities for lasting and meaningful improvements in our lives. Masks have now become part of conventional attire, social distancing can be seen at all public establishments and people have finally started washing their hands! Gyms are open, flights

This has become our new normal

It is hard to say how long we have to continue with these practices, but perhaps there are some things we learnt that we should carry with us even when we manage to leave the global pandemic behind.

One of the biggest ironies of this year would be that social ‘distancing’ has actually made most families less distant. With work from home orders and online classes, more people have started spending time at home with their families. We have also learnt the importance of slowing down. People often get so caught up in the rat race of life, they tend to lose sight of what’s important. The lockdown has brought the realisation to many that we sometimes mindlessly keep working towards a goal that we might not really want. 2020 has seen a substantial rise in entrepreneurship and people pursuing their passions, even if it’s at home. We also learnt that we were spending more than required. It has also seen a decline in consumerism. With less malls and restaurants open, more people are trying to find methods of lasting happiness instead of instant gratifications from purchases.

At such a time collective responsibility coupled with individual awareness, becomes key to overcoming







the stress and distress that clouds our lives at present. We must imbibe some of these changes into our lives until they become akin to muscle reflexes—wearing masks or washing of hands cannot be perfunctory gestures anymore. They must instead be seen as duties, with an intrinsic value and even some morality. Beyond that, we must critically redefine how we inhabit community spaces large and small, because our actions at present will be crucial in determining our future living conditions.

One cannot be content simply with awareness limited to the time they are using public transport but must extend the same safety measures in smaller shared spaces be it their offices or their apartment blocks. Hence it is not only advisable but also intelligent to continue wearing masks and/or gloves in all environments except those where we can be reasonably sure of no contaminated surfaces. After all, people can be asymptomatic carriers and be oblivious to the fact themselves! There is no benefit in panicking over these realisations, though, as a careful and consistent effort at individual and community levels can help us to great extents. Which is why social distancing will need to prevail in various forms, and we must all be responsible in this regard.

Being aware of the latest developments in the multiple spheres trying to tackle this virus can be equal parts distressing as well as hopeful. It will be important for most of us to learn to strike that balance, the balance between being careful and becoming paranoid, between being critical and falling prey to conspiracies and pseudoscience.

While India is at present (when the article is being written) one of the most affected countries by the virus, our recovery rate is quite impressive and well above the international average. At the same time, a host of other communicative diseases have been slowed down by the precautionary safety measures taken worldwide in lieu of this pandemic. Thus, even the darkest of clouds have silver linings and it is important for us to remember that.

The inevitable question also arises: what of a cure? Well, there are several vaccines in various developmental stages at present, with a handful of them running human trials. One of the frontrunners among them is the AstraZeneca Oxford coronavirus vaccine, AZD1222, which resumed trials recently after a brief pause



due to one of the volunteers having developed an 'unexplained illness'. This incident highlights an interesting factor: while the ready availability of a vaccine is the need of the hour, scientists and researchers have to be prudent in their efforts and absolutely cannot risk fast-tracking a cure. The vaccines, available whenever they may be, must be the result of intensive research that leaves no room for complacency as the stakes here are too high.

Meanwhile, the healthcare sector at large is going through massive overhauls, simultaneously accommodating the needs of both COVID and non-COVID patients. Genesis Hospital, my own clinical establishment, in fact, is one of the very few hospitals in South Kolkata which is a non-COVID hospital, meaning it is trying to cater to the numerous patients having other illnesses in this moment of massive health crisis. In doing so it strictly adheres to



the directives of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). We keep no stone unturned literally when it comes to disinfecting our hospital. I must be confident to get my family treated in a non-covid environment, as I did with my mother. She survived the entire lockdown period and then some in Genesis Hospital, only to retire from her life due to natural causes. She was an octogenarian.

The new normal will also bring forth another wave of digitalisation, as more and more people are working from home at present and many of whom will wish to continue doing so for some time to come. Schools and colleges, also, are relying heavily on digital modes of teaching. While this has been a blessing for many, helping the stream of schoolwork (or office work) to keep flowing, it is also at times a weak substitute for a live classroom (or even office space). This can bring forth a decline in mental health conditions. At such times, we must take a break from exercising our minds too much and instead stretch out our muscles. Along with multiple ways of improving mental health ranging from professional help to building support systems for ourselves, exercising regularly in some form or the other is going to be increasingly crucial to staying fit.

Travel will also be altered drastically, with multifaceted safety measures becoming inviolable parts of whatever journeys we undertake in the post-lockdown era. The new normal will mean added responsibility, but one which can bring forth a more secure and safety-adherent social structure. Hence festivities and celebrations, be it Durga Puja or wedding season, will also need to adapt to the new conditions. We may have to sacrifice some larger gatherings in favour of smaller celebrations but ultimately, they will benefit us all. It is extremely necessary to keep our spirits high in these times and thus celebrations must be had, only they should not compromise on safety measures at any point!



In many ways, our lives will also remain the same, except perhaps smaller events will now hold a renewed value. It is perhaps ironic that the pandemic that brought the world to a standstill has also been a wake-up call for many. Meeting friends and family, or the comfort of human touch will possibly hold more significance to many now that we have lived months knowing how it feels to be deprived of them. Thus, in embracing the new normal our ultimate purpose must be to safeguard those connections and hold fast to our loved ones. Our renewed zeal ought to be in pursuit of making the post-COVID reality the brighter, kinder one it can be— for the sake of all who have lost their lives and each of us who survives.







*Best Wishes*

*from*

*Bristi, Poonam, Priyanka,*

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## Corona Chronicles

Dr. Aratrika Das

T4 904

A planetary being going by the name of Corona has wielded the sword on our beautiful planet... he emerged, he saw and he destroyed. Our earth has almost reduced to ashes and the thought of Armageddon is on every mortal's lips...the conflict between man and Corona.

*Corona the hated one*

*Corona the cursed one*

*Corona the murderer*

*Corona the destroyer*

*Corona the most evil being on earth*

*It has left us flat on the mat*

*It has taken away the beloved from the lover*

*It has taken away the son from the mother*

*It has silenced a mother's answer to a child's question*

*It has stolen a friend from another*

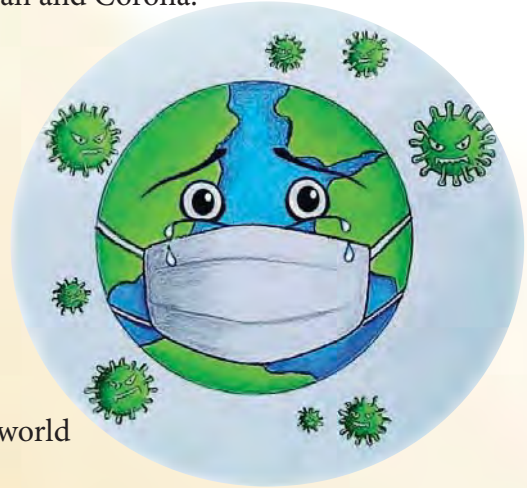
But... Corona has opened our eyes to experience a new world around us, a chiaroscuro of hideousness and brightness.

“Home sweet home” is the adage we have grown up with but we have never really known how savoury the sweetness is till it was pointed out by this unwelcome visitor in our world. My life as a doctor was reduced to that of a robot but it took the tandav of coronavirus to slow down and make me realise the subtle difference between living and existing. Home has been like the solar system where every individual was rotating and revolving in her own orbit with occasional communications on note paper stuck to the frigidaire with magnets. Locking ourselves to stay away from corona's trajectory made us cross each other's paths and bond closely as a single unit laughing, talking, eating and sleeping with each other.

Being at home, made me realise for the first time how sweet the word “mumma” on my teenager's lips sounds. For the first time again I got to probably understand my daughter who has bloomed into a beautiful young lady. I felt her soft loving touch, played silly with her, got into mock fights and realised her food cravings which till now remained the prerogative of my maid. I displayed my culinary skills in the process for my family to relish and for me to bask in their praises. Corona I realised has given me the mother's mantle enveloping the garb of a physician.

Yes, Corona has taken away many of my close acquaintances but in this hide and seek game with corona I have grown extremely close to my extended circle of relatives, friends and neighbours with whom our virtual addas in real life presence changed to real addas in virtual presence.

More importantly, I connected with my inner being... myself. How often have we neglected to take care of our physical & mental health? Today, we have the time to introspect and take the path of self-improvement. I do see a mushrooming of yogic and physical activity centers around us leading to a peak of mortal fulfillment. Corona led sabbatical also made me realise there are other persons hidden within



me who have been stifled and suppressed till date...the singer, the artist, the poet, the dancer and the author. This lockdown has unleashed a whole gamut of these hidden qualities which spilt over the earth.

Corona has given us a peep into the future and a preview into the retired life looming ahead.

We can't but appreciate that Corona has not only taken away the urgency of unnecessary but has given us the window through which we learnt the necessary...new hobbies, new pastimes, new leisure and new pleasures. As until we spread our wings we don't have any idea how far can we fly. Corona helped us to find ourselves and create the right life melody.

So, we herald an emerging new world with the treasures gained in the past few months while we prepare to say adieu to Corona forever.



## Pleasant Encounters : Memories from Before the Pandemic

Stuti Pachisia

T7 1302

At 17, on a rare trip to the bookstore, a young naval officer (in uniform) glanced our way—two schoolgirls (in uniform) —and hesitated before finally asking whether *Gone With the Wind* was a good book to be seen reading. On a date. The school was strict about talking to strangers. In hushed tones, I summarised the book, my friend looking out for the teacher. I don't know how his date went. In my head, they are married. She doesn't know he hasn't really read *Gone With the Wind*. He thanks us each night.

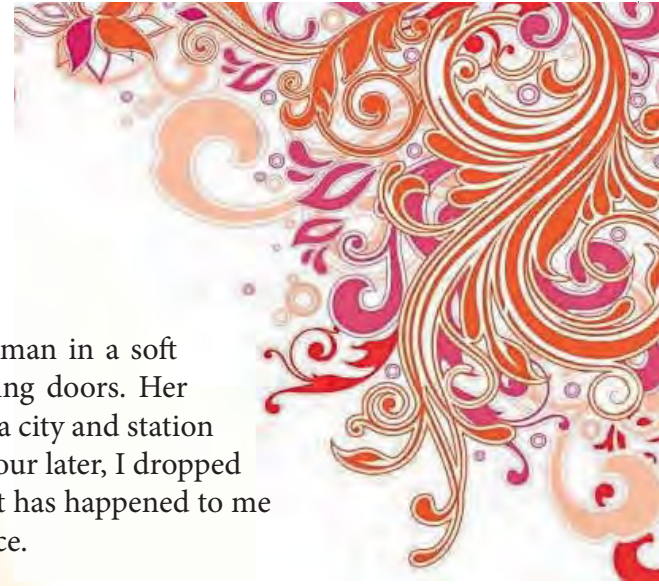
At 15, my then-best friend and I saw a fallen crow. I picked her up. It was clear she was diseased in some way: she neither spoke or ate. We had 50 rupees between us. We carried her to a pet store, then a hospital, then walked 45 minutes to a neighbourhood neither of us knew. The vet had one look and said she would die. There was nothing we could do, he said, except leave her near a temple, leave it to God. We did. I cried. Years later, I still think there is a fundamentally cruel part of me, one that 'rescues' without thought, without longevity.

At 21, I nearly walked past a white homeless woman, crying. I could have stopped, spoken up; but I was scared of saying the wrong thing. As I hesitated, a woman in a hijab stopped. She sat down, chatted with her and shared a sandwich. I was told London was a cruel city. I could see it wasn't.

At 22, I stayed up all night in a lonely city to read *Normal People*, only to be utterly disappointed. The next day, I recommended it to a newly budding friend. She read it the same evening—a follow-through I was sorely missing in this new city. Our friendship blossomed over mutual dislike. A few weeks later, a stranger on the bus home was reading the book. In an inspired moment, I asked what she thought of it. "Oh, it's terrible." she said, never looking up. I smiled and got off the bus. Lonely city or not, our loves and hates would always help us find a home with strangers.







At 14, I was waiting for the next metro home, when an old woman in a soft cream-coloured saree nearly stumbled and fell out of the shutting doors. Her family had gotten in, the doors shutting. She was utterly alone, in a city and station she didn't know. I waited, trying to connect with her family. An hour later, I dropped her off to her son. She hugged me goodbye. Every good thing that has happened to me since, I understand as her love, transmitted through time and space.

At 15, I had a plan. I would write my life — all I knew of it in fifteen years of long living — in notebooks and scatter them around the city. In this fantasy, a stranger would pick them up, to know my story without ever knowing me : collecting the notebooks and piecing them together. Instead, I wrote them and left them collecting dust in my childhood home. My story wasn't that important or interesting, I told myself. In truth, it was — but perhaps only to me. I don't know where the notebooks are. I am the stranger, looking to other strangers, to try to piece together a life lived.

I look at old photos. I am close to my friends, laughing. The sun is bright. There are always leaves. There is a past I desperately confuse as the future, because how do we live if not among strangers?



## What is Success ?

Sarbajit Rakshit

T7 701

Being Successful is a part of our day to day life, we all are trying very hard to become successful in different stages of our life. From very initial days of civilization, human beings have been striving for success. Probably because of the efforts we are putting at an individual level to become successful is making our world a better place to live and making the World is progressing. Being successful is primary goal in our life, so before putting any effort, we analyse if our effort would contribute to become more successful.

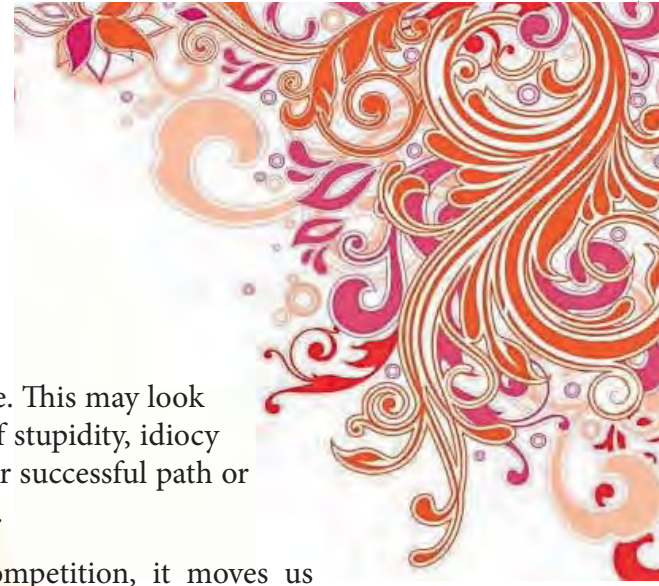
But what is this “Success”? it is “Money”? if yes, then how much money one should have to call himself a successful person. Or should “Power” be considered to call a person successful? In that case what should be the span of control range, or with what level of span of control, or what is the area of control one person should have to consider himself as successful one by being a powerful person. There are many powerful people in different areas, like in Politicals, Administration, Corporate etc. Another way of looking at success is “Fame”. In general, success is cutting across all the above-mentioned dimensions in different ratios. The priorities and distribution ratios of various dimension of success are totally depending on the individual. Whereas, fame brings a life even after your death, people will remember you for a long time and across the world, compare to other two dimensions of being successful like, money and power.

So, the next big question is Who is measuring or evaluating that you are successful? We all are being evaluated by every person in our surrounding. People in our contextual ecosystem evaluate our behaviour, dressing style, knowledge, accent, activity, communication and what not. And this evaluation will be done based on the level of interest, knowledge, maturity, priority of the individual present in your surrounding who is evaluating you. In different scenarios, your success can be compared with another person’s success parameters, even though it is an apple to orange comparison. Galileo Galilei was once sentenced to jail, but it does not mean that he was not successful, maybe he was not properly evaluated by the surroundings people. In some scenario,s crowd feedback is also considered to identify if you are successful or your activity needs to be recognized. Like, before enforcing Widow Marriage Law, more than 300 times of people were against the Widow Marriage Law, Does it mean that the crowd feedback was appropriate in that scenario? If you are evaluated as successful, then you may be recognized with award or Honour, more the number of awards and/or recognition means more successful you are. At the same time, even being a successful person, you may not be awarded or recognized.

A huge amount of chemical process in our brain is occupied to address what other people are thinking about us. Why not ignore what people think about you. Sometime, your ignorance is important to subside several problems in actualizing your dream goal to become successful. Here ignorance does not







mean your responsibility, it is only the perception of other people. This may look like an arrogant or stupid statement. But we need to remember if stupidity, idiocy and ignorance etc. are not present, then you can never get to your successful path or satisfy your dream, and the evaluation criteria may not be correct.

Gradually, getting awards and being successful becomes a competition, it moves us away from family, and happiness, and also people are ignoring health to become more and more successful. So, still it is unclear to me, who and how the success can be enjoyed. If you are not able to keep your health, then you can't enjoy your success, and at the same time, moving away from your family will eventually be making you alone to enjoy your success.

Finally, whether you are successful or not is evaluated by your ecosystem, and this evaluation may not be always correct or appropriate, so why not self-appreciation and enjoy your success on your own. Discover your own path to become successful. Why do you need to follow the known path to become successful, or letting other people to decide if you are successful or not? Keep faith on you and do what you like, may be your way of defining to become successful could become a new definition of being successful. Why not, we define our own way to measuring the criteria of being successful. Otherwise being successful is just a competition by demonstrating what we are doing or also providing justification that how you are superior to other or explaining how other are inferior to you.





## The Rear Right Door

Abhishek Agarwal

T3 2901

I vividly remember that night, June 15th 2019. I was driving back to Boston after dropping my parents at JFK International airport. It was a hectic day and I had driven more than 250 miles already on that day. Despite my father advising me to spend the night in New York and drive back the next day, I decided to swallow the frog that night itself.

The drive from New York to Boston is a fun one, Once you cross Connecticut which usually takes an hour, the remaining route is free from any traffic or congestion. The only place where one would expect to slow down is once they hit MA Pike which for me was 2 hours away. So here I was cruising in my Dodge Charger, determined to break my previous record of 3 hours 45 mins.

I usually take a pit stop after driving for every two hours to stretch my legs and wash my face just to beat the exertion and this time was no different. However, what was strange this time was when I returned from the washroom, I noticed the rear right door of my vehicle completely open. This shocked the hell out of me. I rushed to the car to check if all my belongings were still there. Thankfully, nothing was missing from the car but I was scared of the fact that my vehicle has been tampered with in the middle of nowhere. I checked my watch, it was 9.30 PM; If I started driving now, I would still be able to make it to Boston before midnight. So, without spending much time, I stepped inside my car, double checked the windows and the door locks and vowed that no matter what happens, the next stop I am going to take is going to be in Boston. BUT GOD had different plans for me that night!!!

At around 10:15 PM I could see the highway patrol tailgating me. Now, I am a very responsible driver with no speeding tickets, no parking violations, no hit and run case reported on my license till date. So, a little scared and a little perplexed I pulled over. There was a 5 min time period of no activity after which I saw two cops standing on my left asking me if the lady with me is alright and if we need any assistance. I couldn't understand what they were saying at first and I gave them a puzzled look and said there is no one in the car but me. One of them insisted if I could step out of the car so that they could make sure I was speaking the truth. My emotions of fear and confusion were now converted to anger and frustration and I started ranting on why the cops should not pull over random people and play their stupid pranks at such an odd hour of the day.

After one of them frisked my vehicle completely, he looked even more confused than before and went to his partner and started talking to him in a muffled voice. I could not handle the situation any longer and demanded an explanation for stopping me like this in the middle of the highway. One of them put his hand on my shoulder and told me exactly what had happened in the last 30 mins. What I heard from that officer that night still makes my body shiver at times.







The officer said the following words:

*“ About half an hour back when you crossed the rest stop on I-90 N, we noticed a figure which looked like that of a woman in her late twenties leaning out of the rear right window of your car and that is when we started following you. We didn’t see any activity once we hit the road but continued our pursuit. Ten minutes later we saw the same figure leaning out of the left window this time and that is when we decided to stop you and make sure if everything is alright.”*

I was speechless for the next ten minutes and was almost at the verge of getting a panic attack. I told the cops I will not be in a position to drive alone now in that car. Thankfully, they volunteered to escort me all the way to Boston since they understood my situation and showed no hesitation in helping me out. Once I reached back to Boston, I thanked them for showing this kindness, rushed to my apartment and tucked into my bed. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn’t sleep the entire night and was just waiting for the night to pass. I didn’t want to think about this episode at all and hence I switched on the television. Next morning when I went down to my vehicle to get my luggage, I noticed something which confirmed that what the cops saw last night was not just a mere illusion.

The rear right door of my vehicle was left open like the previous evening.



## Online Education

Sunil Shah  
T4 2306

Covid 19 has brought disruptions in everyone's life pervasively. With disruption human beings have found out ways to overcome it. Current technological advancements have helped immensely in finding solutions. In the field of classes have given Covid challenge mortar class

The impact of it was best and immediately cyclone 'Amphan' with young were seen about network battery backup than water



education online the answer to the to the brick and rooms.

and importance witnessed, during after, the super when families students around more worried restoration and for the laptop, seepage or broken

windows. Online classes are challenging both for the students and the facilitators.

For the students it is demanding as it gives little leverage for side activities. With constant glare of parents and elders and negligible scope for physical movement, information assimilation has to be self-driven. It also robs off the peer learning which is so integral to the system. With time tagged online exams the art of copying .....!!! The positive aspect is the scope of enhanced learning. Barring exceptions students in general are more into the subject matter and in some cases with able guidance the doubt clearing is faster and proper. Conceptual understanding is supposed to be higher by several notches.

For the facilitators the challenges are different. At the elementary level they face the pressure of constant glare/scrutiny of the parents of the students. While the capabilities of the educator is beyond question but the pressure to perform under scrutiny renders them vulnerable. That too real time scrutiny and may be by someone who may be an expert on the topic!! Passionate educators thrive on the feedback received from the students' body language and accordingly mould their own delivery. This key element is missed in an online platform.

Another key aspect the facilitators have to keep in mind the short attention span of the students. Accordingly they need to devise the materials in such a way that it keeps engaged the students for longer duration by including student centric activities.

Both students and educators must brace themselves for another disruption in future when they both return to actual classroom post the current pandemic!!





## Perception of Modern Art

### Exploring MoMa New York, Tate Modern London:

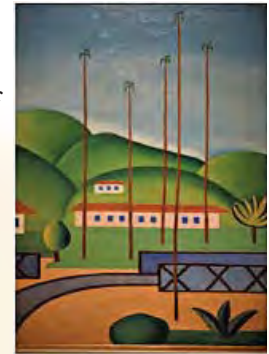
Suvashis Mukherjee

T7 1902

The concept of Modern art goes back to the 1930's when after the first world war the free-wheeling intellectualism took over the social scene in America and Europe. More like non-conformist expressionism and protest against the financial crisis of The Great Depression and unemployment gripping the world.

Modern art at that time, primarily portrayed the educated intellectuals and socially recognised elite.

As the political turmoil took Europe by storm, with rise of fascism and socialism, dividing the opinion of those who mattered, modern art took the shape of protest art. Many artists went underground due to occupation of large parts of Europe by Axis power. Some of these works can be viewed at The Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, under the series Le Guerre.



Until 1960's Modern art was associated with being abstract in expression leaving the creation to the imagination of the viewers. Appreciating modern art became fashionable but there was very little connection to the daily social life of the ordinary people as artists considered them unimportant and catered to the art dealers, art critics and socialites.

Our recent visit to the Museum of Modern Art showed us that Modern art can also connect to day to day life's problems of urbanisation causing the city and suburban life, what we see versus what we don't see, what we feel versus what others feel.

If you see below some selected works on exhibit at MOMA you will realise that there was a smooth transition and coexistence of the exotic and ordinary in Modern form of art after the 1960's, we did not give up on the romanticism of the 1950's but also started recognising and portraying the less known and missed out mass of people that do not have a chance to see the art museums but need to be represented in the art form.

Featuring Tarsila do Amaral Brazil- MoMa NYC and some collection from Tate Modern







## The Need Of Change

Ishita Bhandari

T7 2106

For ages, the woman has always been treated as an inferior gender. Since the birth of humanity, her only goal in life should be to “serve her husband, look after the children and clean the house.” She isn’t opinionated in family matters or financial situations because she is a woman and among many such traits of being a woman having an opinion and expressing it is definitely not one. If women have always been treated rightly then why is it that Draupadi was humiliated and looked upon like an object while her five husbands could not even stop that. Why is it that when a woman is abused or heinously raped it is her who is disrespected, harshly judged and not accepted by the society when the man is freely roaming by. The reason to this crime would be because that girl was too modern, off her limits or not dressed “appropriately”. Fair enough the same excuse can be given when a thief raids a house. Why are you rich enough to attract the thief. It is not the thief’s fault but you. Women should be allowed to express themselves, create their own identity, contribute to the society and most importantly choose for herself, make her own decisions. It is her choice, her body, she can wear what she wants and still be treated with utmost respect undeniably. She did not bleed half her life and kept us inside for nine months experiencing the most horrific pain during labour and further dedicating all her life, sacrificing all her dreams and raise us to disrespect her like that. Every woman feels proud and beyond honoured that she is the one who has the power of giving birth, the glorious opportunity to create a life. As times passed by these things have been slowly evolving for the better. Before women were forced to marry at a young age and wear corsets but today we are living in a world where atleast women can work and choose for herself. It’s not the best yet but definitely better. But our need still remains the same which is to be treated equally. To not be deprived of our rights or certain things just because we are a woman. It is indeed challenging and conflicting for a woman to do something new, something that men have always done and been encouraged for when a woman is taught to know her limits. We do not fight for something we already have but we rather fight for the society to give us the right to fight or raise our voices against any kind of injustice. It is considered a shame to menstruate when that is the cause of our existence. When we talk about feminism we do not mean it as an anti-men movement or a manhating organization. It is the bridge between the “equal” standards of the society and what equality really means. It is but to bridge this gap. Female has been treated as an inferior and vulnerable gender as far as human history can go. If we decide to bring a change and stop this unequal attitude then that is something worth of the appreciation rather than being an everyday shenanigan. If being modern is a crime for a woman than so shall it be for a man. Every new idea was once considered a threat but it shaped and evolved the society paving the way for good. We don’t ask to be treated above or specially, we want to be treated equally. We want to have our share in every thing a man can do. We want to take pride in being a woman and the dignity she holds to the world.







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## The Vermillion Game

Chandra Basu Banerjee

T5 803

Yet another year gone by and here we are ,excited and looking forward to Durga Puja festivities ! NO , the pandemic can not dampen our spirit , we are ready to embrace the Goddess with open arms . Durga Puja today has broken the barriers of caste, creed and religion and opened the door for all to soak themselves in festivity and love.

An important ritual of Durga Puja is Sindur khela , a vibrant and fascinating ritual, in which Hindu married women participate before the immersion of idol. Women apply sindoor on the feet and forehead of Devi ma and offer her sweets and thereafter they smear each other with sindoor and seek blessings of the Goodness of Supreme Power.

According to the popular legends, with her children for five days and married women play with sindoor/ status before they bid adieu to Since my childhood , I have tried only married women are allowed Durga Puja is a celebration of it really so important in today's married status of our Devi ma or as a woman who defeated the to every woman irrespective of in this colourful ritual which By limiting the Sindur Khela truly celebrating the power of reside only amongst the married unmarried or widowed women ? Is Our teenage daughters, single friends, ostracized from this important breaking. Are they not representatives of need to be excluded from this wonderful



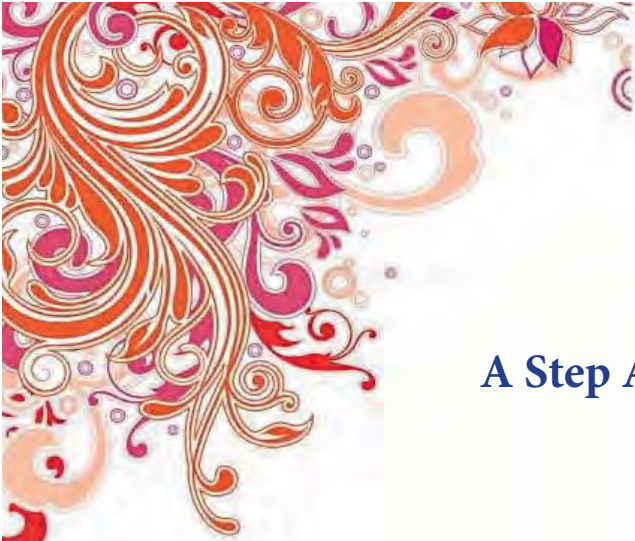
Durga travels to her maternal home the festivities begin . On the last day , vermillion to celebrate their married their beloved Ma Durga.

to understand why on the last day to participate in this ritual ,as the victory of good over evil. Is time to think or uplift the should we celebrate her strength evil power and open the door her marital status to participate marks the end of festivities. to only married woman are we Goddess Shakti ? Does Shakti women ? Why do we leave out it dictated by patriarchal reasons ? widowed relatives are suddenly ritual on the last day , which is heart the Goddess Durga amongst us ? Do they ritual ?

Why not set an example here at our community by including each and every woman to participate in Sindur Khela and make the Puja a true celebration of strength and womanhood ?

Goddess Durga visits us only for 5 days in a year. The power of women sustain societies for the rest of the year. Let us celebrate womanhood during the Ma Durga festival and honour each and every woman , who work tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the wheels of society turning and turning. Let us break the shackles of patriarchy and include women from all walks of life to be celebrated and remembered during the festive days. Women need to come forward to help other women. We, the women of Urbana, need to make a departure from the age old practices that discriminate against women and include all of us in the celebration of Ma Shakti.





## A Step Ahead in the Midst of Crises

Megha Saraff

T3 302

Indeed, the year 2020 has created a mark in our lives and the time has come when our very own existence is being questioned. We all made many resolutions at the beginning of the year but who assumed that very soon we would come across the very idea of “new normal.” Who imagined in their wildest dreams that a time would come when our simple actions like the way we greet each other can have such a dramatic effect, that it will become a trending headline for days? Little did we know that there would be a time when even the busiest person will for once have nowhere to go or work. It’s scary to wake up every morning knowing the fact that there is no schedule planned for the day, no last-minute business trips and eventually our life has lost its very own purpose. We were so busy chasing and navigating our dreams that we forgot to take a pause and reflect upon our life.

It’s ironic how we longed to take a break from life and wished to have time to spend with our family and loved ones but now when it’s all coming into reality, we are just not ready to accept the change and focus on the good. Change is inevitable and it is rather hard to accept these unprecedented changes, but we must learn to embrace with it. At times we must come in terms with ourselves that being isolated is not the worst that can happen as it might just be for the good. Everything does happen for a reason and all I want to say is that if your heart says that being disconnected is the best way to get through that phase of life then you must believe in yourself as with time things will start falling in place.

Well, nevertheless, this pandemic has surely made us to one body where we stand for each other even when we are physically absent. Hope is a very small word, but it holds a huge amount of power because it gives us strength when no one is around. Now that we cannot undo the actions, let us make meaning and find purpose within our lives.

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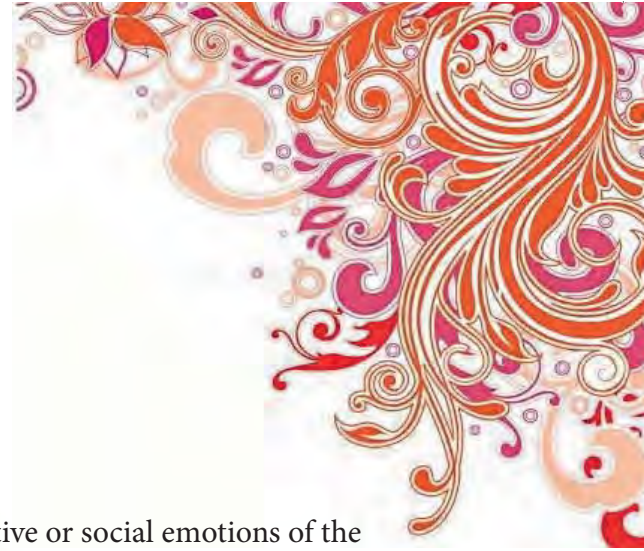
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## Art in Perspective

Rukmini Mukherjee

T7 1902

Like poetry and literature, art is an expression of individual, collective or social emotions of the time. Artistic creations have often shaped major movements in history and captured the spirit of generations. Few years ago, I was at the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, which was holding an exhibition called 'Le Guerre' or 'The War'. Many eminent artists' works were exhibited, some of which were created underground during the second world war, depicting subtle to blatant protest against the oppressive regime of NSDAP and their partners.

I have had the privilege of visiting many of the world-renowned museums displaying some of the greatest paintings and sculpture, besides many eminent Impressionist painters. The artists that influence me are Francisco Goya, Salvador Dali, Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol, Tersila Do Amaral to name a few.

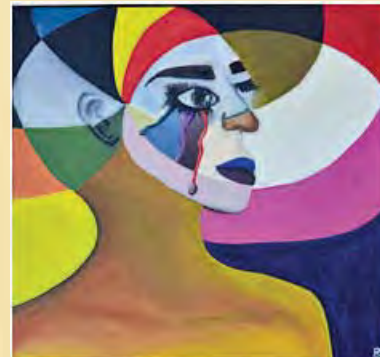
I started painting when I was 17 years old in college. Initially I worked on some commercial art promotion for some large airlines featuring their host country's major tourist attraction to raise funds for our College Art Club. Later I wanted to create art depicting events of the period 1975- 1990 that would shape the future of the world.

Two of my water colour works are shown below which I painted about 35 years ago. The one on the left is called Infinity, the one on the right The Pile.

Infinity is about the scale of river diversion and containment which has made some areas of the world fertile at cost of others, driven by insatiable demand from the growing population of the developing world.

The Pile shows how we tear down the old to create the new without realising the harm we cause to the environment by over consumption and over development. Today global warming, mass scale plastic waste disposal, forced community relocation are some threatening issues that can change our lives for generations to come.

Two of my favourite paintings are shown below, one on the left is Falling by my elder sister Ria (Meghna) which is about the escape from an over industrialised world, and on the right is Silent Tears by me which depicts the oppression of women who are forced into a silent torture of body and mind.



## COVID: Impact on Social Media

Ananya Bose

T1 2003

From Dalgona coffee to making reels and Memes on Chadha Diya, from using dog filter on snapchat to trying makeup tutorials, social media has been a major source of entertainment throughout the lockdown. We are always connected to our friends and family over chats, video call and phone calls.

We learnt and showcased our talents. We posted pictures with throwback hashtags and wished to travel again in the caption.

Apart from entertainment, we received news and knowledge about the pandemic. But are all of them true? I guess not. We received various remedies for the virus like chai with masalas and juices that claimed to cure the virus. However, all of these are false. WHO or any other reliable source has not approved any of these but they are circulating freely. Not only these, we also receive stories about people who have suffered very much or not suffered at all. We are caught in a dilemma of what to believe and what not to believe. Social media has such a great impact that it has created a horrific picture of this pandemic and it has become really hard for us to get back to normalcy. However, gradually when this hype created by the media is coming to an end, we all are trying to get back to our normal life by taking precautions.

It's not that anything or any news we receive over social media is false but we should be wise while believing or forwarding any such message. We should first make sure that the news we have received is true and not just believe in rumours. Social media is very powerful in influencing how we want our surrounding to be. The power is in our hand. We need to be careful about what we receive, believe and forward.



## My Unforgettable Trip

Sampreeti Roy Goswami (11 years old)

T7 304

During each autumn break, we usually go for a trip. Since we have never seen the places of Gujarat, my father decided to take us there. According to our plan, we would stay near the airport. The following day we would go to see Gir forest. On the way to the forest suddenly our car stopped and the driver said that the car had some problem. There was nothing but dense forest on the both side of the road. The car had repaired by the driver and soon it was ready to start.

While we entered in the forest, it was already dark. After some time of wandering, we understood that we had lost our way. Our driver was also confused. We had nothing to do except sitting silently and praying to god. It was already late at night and there was dense forest at outside. While looking for the right way we suddenly saw some translucent body of light and it was going with us. First, I didn't believe my eyes but later my elder sister confirmed that what I saw was absolutely correct. We told our parents to ask the driver about it. The driver told us to sit silently.

After sitting like that, I gradually felt asleep and when I woke up the light had vanished. I hastily asked the driver about the incident. The driver told us that it was true, many years ago a lady came to the forest, she too had lost her way and eaten up by a lion, and so whenever she saw somebody lost in the way, she helped them. We reached our hotel safely. After that, I thanked that lady and prayed to God that may her soul be in peace.







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## Satyajit Ray: Some Pleasant Reminiscences

Prasad Banerjee  
T4 2002

This is neither an analysis nor an evaluation of the artistry and genius of Ray. This is just a modest account of some moments that offered me precious opportunities to observe him from close quarters over the years. My father (“Baba” in Bengali), late actor Sri Haradhan Bandyopadhyay, had been quite close to Satyajit Ray, “Manik Jethu (Uncle)” his affection. Perhaps, after Soumitra with Sri Santosh Dutta of Jatayu number of Ray’s films. Thanks to ready access to his house and film

That was 1963 which month it was, it of Mahanagar was being shown at room. Present were only the actors, I was about eight (8) years old then, Next to me was sitting my father. To on the big screen in front of and a I was completely wonder-struck. On sitting “Manik Jethu” and “Jethima” that while the film was going on, all is my Baba and there is Baba too”. voice, “Who is that?,” followed by a he came and lovingly patted on my back and asked which father was better to me. I was still too much captivated by the wonder to give any response. That was my first meeting with him.



Autographed photo Ray presented to my father - A Ray regular

to me, and am fortunate to receive Chattopadhyay, my father along fame acted in the second highest such circumstances, I used to have shootings.

eludes my memory. The first print the Technicians Studio Projects actresses and the supporting staff. and watching my first Bengali film. my utmost surprise, he was also bit above us. How is that possible? the front row, ahead of us, were (Mrs. Ray). I distinctly remember of a sudden, I screamed, “Here Immediately came a deep, baritone laughter. At the end of the movie,



I am with RAY on my Wedding Reception - 1983

It was 1965. The dining hall set of a Tea Planter of the film Kapurush was constructed in a studio. I went there with my father. I do remember - he came walking in front of me and Madhavi Mukherjee and demonstrated how to sit at the dining table. Furthermore, he showed the waiter the way to put on the headgear by placing it on the latter’s head several times. I was 10 years old then and had no idea whatsoever about Manik Jethu’s level of talent. I only knew him as my father’s friend. In later years, while watching the movie, it dawned on me that although the above scene was registered on the screen for a few seconds, how much care and attention to details that he gave that day to shoot the scene.

The premiere show of Simabaddha was held at the Indira Cinema in the morning. At the end of the show,



while we were descending down the stairs, the wife of the lead actor of several other Ray's movies said in a mildly complaining tone that the movie turned out to very good; however, her husband might have been a

better choice for the main role there. His response was, as I sensed, rather dispassionate, "Oh! I see, you think it so" and then changed the topic. One month before the shooting started on Simabaddha, Baba did happen to contract chicken pox which left disagreeable scars on his face. Those marks would be outrightly visible in an executive role. Hence, Baba thought that he would be naturally rejected from the role. For male actors, Manik-Jethu didn't allow any makeup. The schedule had already been fixed and there was no possibility of making any change. Thus, Baba became quite sad. At last, one morning, Baba, while praying to God, phoned and candidly told him about the problem. I recall, he calmly told my father, "You will do the role, as planned, and if required, I will defer your shooting



RAY Directing my father on the set of Kapurush while Soumitra looks on

schedule. You are the fit candidate for it. You see me after you get well". Needless to say, father was immensely relieved. It was decided later that a light makeup would be used to cover up the remaining marks. That was first time when Manik-Jethu allowed such makeup on a male artist. This incident has been unknown to others. Probably, his son Sandip Ray may know about it. Before I move to other topics, it may not do proper justice if do not mention one particular way of his dealing with us. This

would demonstrate how a man of such high repute used to give importance to others. Whenever we went to his house and later, while taking our leave, he always walked us to the door to bid good bye as long he was in good health. It used to touch my heart which is still palpable today. Since then, I have been following the same custom when I bid adieu to my guests carrying a feeling of gratefulness to him. Baba used to say that the people knew him as an author, screenwriter, music director and above all a movie director. But the artists who acted in his movie used to marvel at how skillful an actor he was. It was a remarkable experience to observe him reading the script of a new movie to the artists. He acted out each and every role while reading. As a result, an actor was able to dive deep into his character role



I am with God of cinema in 1971

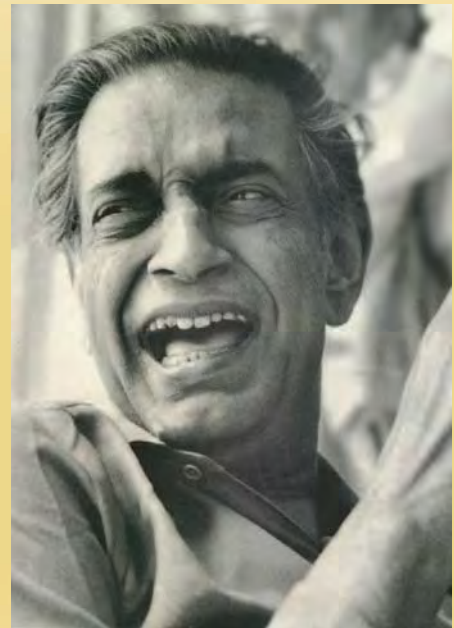


I am at the success party of Sakha Prasakha in 1991 at Taj Bengal



with relative ease. Haradhan Bandyopadhyay said in many of his interviews that he did act in various different character roles throughout his acting career and each and every one of them, he happened to have observed in real life beforehand. However, the exception was with the Tea Planter's character in Kapurush which he never did come across earlier. Manik Jethu acted their manners and way of life and father just blindly followed him. Father admitted that his acting in Kapurush was the best in his career.

In the above context, I recall taking of a particular shot in Ghare-Baire. The set was Bimala's inner chamber. I was there with my father. No one was supposed to enter in the set area with their outdoor footwear. I remember, we also left ours outside. The scene to be taken was about Bimala's extramarital love for another man which his husband had come to know. Bimala was aware of it. As her husband beckoned her, she came near him and while looking at him, she broke down in tears. Every time this crying scene was taken, Ray wasn't quite satisfied though he said, "Swati, you are doing quite right but I would like it in a different way." His choice of words, I thought, was not to hurt an artist's dignity and honour her virtuosity as well. When after many trials, the attempt was not successful, I saw from behind camera that he came near Swatilekha and demonstrated how to cry in that particular circumstance. I was astounded and stunned at the same time on his acting ability.



RAY in a lighter Mood

I would now narrate two incidents associated with Joy Baba Felunath. There was a scene where the character of my father's grandfather was listening to a gramophone. Ray was looking for a person having facial similarity with my father. One day during this time, he said to my father, "Haradhan, I know, you regularly go to the Lake area for morning walk. Can't you find such an old man with a similar face of yours?" After a few days' attempt, when nobody suitable was found, my mother reminded Baba, "Your maternal uncle looks like you. Why don't you mention it to Manik-da?" In reply, Baba said that he never faced a camera nor had any type of acting skill. How could he do it? I recall, when Baba told Manik-Jethu about him, he



Ray writing a script

asked him to leave the matter to him and that he would see to it. On the day of shooting, I saw how much respect and care he gave to my grandfather who was 90 years old by then. Several times, he asked so politely if he was having any inconvenience or difficulty. At the end of the work, he walked with him to the car and showed him due respect.

There was another noteworthy incident that happened with this movie. My father's role had his wife's presence without any dialogue. It was deemed inappropriate to request a known actress for this mute role. Initially, it was thought that a local woman would be considered.





But since the set of Machli Baba Ashram was built in New Theatre studio at Kolkata, the same woman would have to travel there as well. Hence, such idea was abandoned. Baba then quite casually asked Manik-Jethu one day, “My wife will be accompanying me to Benaras. Would she be suitable for the role?” Manik-Jethu replied happily, “This is a very welcoming proposition. However, would she be willing?” Father then requested him to ask her about it. When Ray made this proposal to my mother in his usual deep, baritone voice, she became quite speechless.



The shooting of Sataranj ki Khilari was complete then. One night during that time, all of a sudden came Manik-Jethu’s phone. When I picked it up, there came the usual thunder-like voice at the other end, “Is Haradhan at home?” When I replied in the negative, he said to me in an endearing tone, “This is ManikDa speaking. Request him to call me when he comes back.” Upon his return, when I gave my father the message, he immediately called him. Manik-Jethu said to him, “Looking at the ‘Rush Print’, a patch work is needed. The scene will be taken at the rooftop of the New Theatre 1 Studio - the Kings are watching a birds-flying show. However, I am not finding anyone with a royal face.” I understood, he would like very much my father to play the role, but he was hesitant to broach the request to him for such a trivial participation. Baba then told him in front of me, “Manik-Da, am I be suitable for the role?” He was so overjoyed that he asked, “Will you do it?” Father said, “In your movie, I will be glad to be in a crowd, if need be.” On the day of that shooting, there were a lot of partying and eating at the NT 1 Studio. Father used to love eating very much and Manik-Jethu enjoyed seeing that.



I remember, in the famous ‘Dining Table’ scene of Sakha Prashaka, father ate so much during the scene that when I reached one day at the film set, Ray said to me while laughing, “Your father has been shooting a machine gun here.” There used to be a regular jovial gathering and chatting session (“Adda” in Bengali) on Sundays at his residence. Sometimes, I used to go there with my father. The discussion topics were quite varied and often other than cinema. The Titan wristwatch just came in vogue that time. During discussion, as one person pronounced it as “Tie-tan”, he corrected it to be “Te-tan”. That was the first time when I heard a different pronunciation from him of a word. But it still remained with all as “Tie-tan”. Once after my return from Hyderabad on an official tour, I went to his house. His interest and curiosity in apparently very trivial matters did captivate me a lot. When I described to him about the gigantic film hoardings & cutouts all over the city and with so many cinema halls there, in close proximity, he started asking me for details after details about them –





how far distance apart were the cinema halls from one another, what was the crowd level at any ticket counter, how were the expressions and reactions of the spectators after they come out of the hall, whether Hindi movies also ran there and in how many halls etc. etc. In West Bengal, that time the spread of Bengali films was limited and the Government's attitude towards them was indifferent. On the other hand, the Government there had a positive contribution to the growth of Telegu films and gave subsidy to them. He told me all these that day.

Next, I will narrate another incident where I witnessed Manik-Jethu's inordinate talent in acting and its demonstration to an artist in a given role. In Sakha Prashakha, the rehearsal of a scene involving a house employee (Kamu Mukhpadhaya) and the grandfather of the household (Promod Lahiri) was going on. Ray was expecting to see a different body language and facial expression of Kamu Uncle while the grandfather was trying to walk. As he showed the entire scene through his superb acting, I was dumbfounded. I have no hesitation in saying that I had neither seen nor heard of such acting skill of a film director before. Let me now say a few words about his minute attention to dresses. Before the shooting of "Sakha Prashaka", one day the dresser was called to his Bishop Lefroy Road residence. That day I also accompanied my father there. Manik-Jethu first asked father to walk towards him from a distance and examined his gaits with keen attention. He then instructed father to button up the coat and walk down the stairs from the upper floor. After carefully observing the steps, he ordered the dresser to loosen up the coat near the waist so that tightness would go away. That happened to be a brief scene spanning a few seconds where father would come down the stairs with his coat buttoned-up. It was such an ordinary scene that would hardly have attracted any particular scrutiny of the spectators. Nonetheless, he used to put his thoughts and give attention to details even on such apparently unimportant shot. In Simabaddha, Baba wore his own suit. Manik-Jethu wrote to father: "Although the shooting is to be done in summer, in actual story the time was winter; Positively, bring your warm, woolen suit". I have carefully saved his letter till date. Today, I realize why he had been considered a world-acclaimed movie director. I heard from my father that there was an office scene in "Mahanagar" where a Secretary was taking dictation from a Manager. Father was then employed in a multi-national company and quite conversant with the office manners of the Britishers. During the rehearsal, father said to him: "Manik-Da, when we give dictation in the office, we do use the words 'comma', 'full stop' etc. wherever necessary. This is a standard practice. Although it was not mentioned in the script, should I do it here?" He responded: "I am not familiar with these norms. You should definitely do it here." He was very glad with his suggestion and uttered after the shot:







“Perfect”. When Sandip Ray did his first movie Fatikchand, Manik Jethu used to go to the shooting sessions regularly. Subsequently, when Babu-Da’s (Sandip) extraordinary direction brought success to this film, many people in the film industry started whispering that it was entirely due to Manik Jethu’s effort. He (Satyajit) was very much hurt with such gossips. Later, he stopped going to the shooting studio during Gupi Bagha Fire Elo. In a subsequent informal get-together session at his house (where I was present as well), he was asked about the reason, he said: “Babu does his work so well with his own efforts. If I am present there, there may be bad publicity by media. That’s why even if I wish, I can’t go there.” Let me mention another interesting incident. Ray was invited to the premiere screening of Utpal Dutta directed Jhar at Menoka Cinema hall. He watched the entire movie with full attention. At the end of the show, while he was descending down the stairs, he asked me: “Haradhan’s voice wasn’t his own. Isn’t it? It seems to be dubbed.” I told him that as father was busy, he couldn’t go to Bombay for voice recording and the entire dubbing process was done by another artist with similar voice quality under the supervision of Utpal Dutta. I was quite surprised that while such minor difference wasn’t picked up by anyone else, it didn’t elude his sharp perception.



In the end, let me say again that I had been very fortunate to receive his kind affection over those years. To illustrate this point, let me narrate an incident. After graduation from the Presidency College, I was naturally looking for a suitable placement. One evening during that time, I accompanied my father to his residence. Upon listening to my state of affair, he enquired in an endearing tone about my ongoing effort in the job search. That time during 1970s, important references on the biodata used to carry a lot of weight. Then, my father eventually broached the point to him: “Manik-da, you have been seeing him since his childhood. Perhaps, you may be kind enough to give him a reference certificate. It would be very helpful in his new career search.” Without any hesitation, he immediately agreed and wrote a letter on my behalf. This is even today a precious and a prized life-time possession for me. The recognition that he gave me that day due to his kindness is shown here:



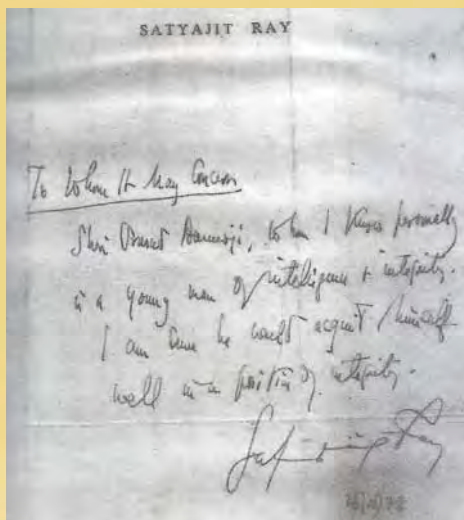
I had then interesting follow up experience with the above certificate. The Organization wherever I went for an interview, before getting into my credentials, all started asking me about how I got to know Satyajit Ray, what special relationship did I have with him that made such an important person to give such a certificate, how did he talk, think, some special moments that I had with him etc. I was quite a bit surprised with their such unending curiosities. The fact was that at my young age, I hardly recognized how fortunate I was to



come in close contact with such a great personality. When I became matured enough to realise this, it was too late. I do repent now that had I received such unalloyed blessing and been in his company for a bit extended period, how much better off it would have been for me.

Now about his wit : My father had a very fair complexion and on a day baba went to his house with a red T-shirt. We both entered his living room along with his son- Babuda. Ray was engaged in skatching something I remember when Babuda told him “ Baba, see Haradhanda, with the red Tshirt. Ray immediately responded “ if the wall is good , then any colour you apply will look attractive and gain natural attraction. And then a laughtner all around the room. Only once did I see him in a sad and dispirited state. As per the advice of his personal

physician Dr. the help from the he was provided ambulance. It during the time of movie shooting, outdoor shooting Bengal. He was the rail station trolley so that he the hard trouble over-bridge across that time onwards, being bound by don'ts. Since then progressively that didn't seem to



Certificate of Ray -  
a prized possession of mine

of doing his creative work by an iota. When pressed by his repeated entreaties, Dr. Baksi did permit him to work in the studios but prohibit him to do outdoor shootings. On one such evening I went to Manik-Jethu's house with Baba. During the course of some initial conversation, father asked him if he was planning for any new project. I distinctly remember, he said in utmost sadness, “If am not allowed to do my work, what is point in living in this body?” That was first and last time, I found him sorrowful and hopeless. After that, he did make only one movie - Agantuk.



Note : All photographs of Satyajit Ray are from the personal album of the writer



## The Age of Kaliyug

Swaminathan Ramani

T6 4401,4501

Imagine, a wonderful world where Friedrich Nietzsche can have a rational discourse with Shuka Deva as they discuss his Thus spoke Zarathustra, in light of the Bhagavata Purana of Shuka.

Imagine the philosophy where bhakti or complete submission to God ultimately leading to self-knowledge and salvation is pitted against one based on the famous premise that God is dead.

Imagine the divine Sanskrit verses met by chaste German, as the two continue their divine judgement.

Social media will be abuzz, the twitteratti will lose their mind, right, left and centre will take their sides and soon, while the sages continue their discourse, their followers will resort to a more direct method of reaching conclusion.

Such is the bane of this time; such is the curse of Kaliyuga.

Do we really understand Kaliyuga or the signs of it? Time is infinite and the universe is cyclic in nature, it was before dissolution, it is and it will be.

The universe remains manifested for a day of Brahma, which is 4.32 billion years as per Hindu cosmology, and is followed by the night of Brahma or pralay, which is of equal length. The day of Brahma is known as kalpa and each kalpa has 14 manvantaras. The manvantaras consists of 71 Chatur Yugas, each lasting 4.32 million years and divided into satyayuga, tretayuga, dvaparayuga and kali yuga. (the current Kali Yuga started with the demise of Shree Krishna after the Mahabharata war).

However, Shree YukteswarGiri (Guru of Shree ParamhansaYogananda whose Autobiography of a Yogi is still one of the most read books of the world) in his seminal work The Holy Science, propagated the theory that we have moved away from the Kali Yuga and entered Dwapara Yuga. He based his theory on the precession of equinoxes. (There is an Apple iPhone application for calculating as per Shree Yukteswar's system). He was a Kriya Yogi and disciple of Shree ShyamacharanLahiriMahashay of Varanasi. The Binary Research institute is working on his hypothesis.

But we lesser mortals, a tiny spec on the grand scheme of things, believe that qualities of patience, kindness, selflessness are marked by hypocrisy in this Kaliyuga. Anger, selfishness, cruelty has overtaken the race. We have lost all the goodness we had.

Religion has become the instrument of reputation and we look with ever increasing awe and distrust at spiritual leaders who live materialistic lives. The age of Rajarshis (Explained in Bhagvat Gita, example of King Janaka is given), a Raja or king, who is also a Rishi or a sage, is gone.

Sense gratification and material possessions are unable to satisfy anymore, there is an ever-increasing need for more, and more and more. The mad rush for acquiring wealth, sacrifices the spiritual virtues at the alter of life.

And truly, even nature is turning its face away, resources are hard to come by. It is already being said that the next world war will be fought over potable water. Wealth seems to be the only resource that decides a high birth and the accompanying qualities that are brought forth with a new life. Family life itself has changed for the worse.

When the Kaliyuga reduces to unimaginable levels, when humanity loses its goodness completely, the earth is no longer able to support with resources, when nature turns against humanity after aeons of exploitation, the Kalki avatar will come and herald change. However, this change, will come at huge cost. For only after complete destruction will creation take place. The cycle of the Yugas will start over again. Who knows, he may be a cool hacker sitting in his cushy private office, or a war hawk unleashing nuclear destruction. For the followers of benevolent Krishna also know, when the end comes, no one is spared. (Almost the entire Pandava and Kaurava army, including his own NarayaniSena, all the young princes, huge populations and kingdoms perished in the Mahabharata war).







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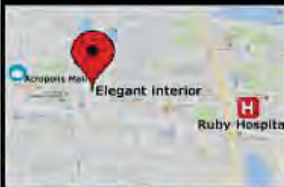
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## The Greedy Farmer

Sanjog Rakshit (9 yrs)

T7 701

Once upon a time, a greedy and selfish farmer lived in the blazing and bright Strawberry Moon. He grew a variety of berries there.

One day, when he went to his field, to his utter surprise, he saw - a 20 inch, humongous strawberry amongst his normal 1 inch berries. He bent down to examine this strange sized fruit and decided to pluck it carefully. Then after exchanging a few words with his staff, he brought it home.

His entire family surrounded this miracle and asked the farmer, "How is this possible? We have never seen such a giant strawberry!" The farmer replied, "You all won't believe it! The night guard told me that a beautiful fruit fairy, in a red, shimmering gown appeared and sprinkled some magical dust over the vines. He heard her say - 'One Two Zero Grow Grow Grow.' These powerful words must have caused the soil to sprout this enormous gem overnight."

Then the farmer cut the ruby coloured, heart-shaped strawberry into small pieces and served it to everyone. But he ate the biggest portion all by himself, as usual. It turned out to be very juicy, tasty and sweeter than the usual berries.

However, the next morning the farmer's wife screamed, "Ahhhhhh! What happened to your face dear husband?" The farmer was confused and rushed to the mirror. He discovered to his horror that half of his head had turned into a big shiny blueberry and the other side of his profile had transformed into a hairy raspberry.

He started crying and then howling. Finally, he rolled on the floor like a baby wailing and throwing his hands around.

Suddenly the fruit fairy appeared and told him, "You should have been fair with everyone while serving the strawberry. It was your duty to eat the smallest portion since you are the head of the household. The bigger servings should have been distributed equally to the rest of the family members."

The farmer realised his mistake and replied, "I will give the best to my family going forward. Please forgive me."

The fairy accepted his sincere and heartfelt apology and restored his face to normal.

From that day onwards, the farmer started treating his dear ones fairly and became a good, honest, kind and generous man.





## Made in India

Subir Chaki

T6 3202

Had we matched our horoscopes, our marriage would not have taken place. We shared little in common. Opposites however, strongly attract.

Simply by chance, both of us preferred to stay away from quadrupeds that find a pride of place in many homes. We considered dog lovers as a crazy bunch. A dog's bark made us jump in fright. We never made friends with people who had a signboard on their door written, beware of dogs. If indeed we had to visit one such home, we made double sure that the dog was put on leash. Psychologists call this phenomenon as cynophobia or fear of dogs.

Corona virus turned the world upside down. Our son, who works in Germany, had come home on a holiday for a week and to our selfish delight, got stuck at home for more than two months. He finally managed to return on a Vande Bharat Mission, paying a fortune. My mother had gone to visit our daughter at Hyderabad and was marooned there.

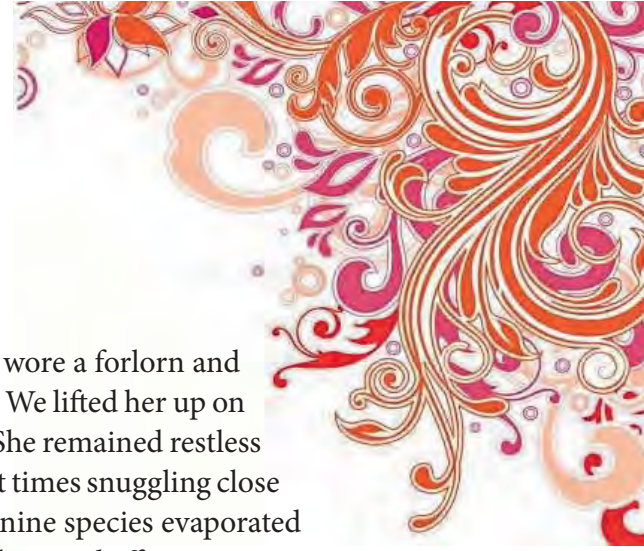
Our daughter's employer, Microsoft declared work-from-home until early next year. When flights resumed, she decided to come home with her grandmother, bag and baggage. The baggage included her pet, a pug of three years.

Boro came to our lives as a package with our daughter, unwarranted, unexpected, uninvited. The pandemic brought her to our home. She is not allowed to fly and was sent by train with an escort. We went to pick her up at the station with trepidation. She was completely exhausted and seemed lost. Her large eyes gave us a silent stare and our hearts melted. Suddenly we realised that she had a mind of her own and her concern was more than ours was.

My daughter stayed back to pack up and accompany my mother home. Two days later, when she arrived, Boro was mad with joy. It was a sight to see as she jumped on her and pushed her back to the floor. Boro was uncontrollable. In my entire life, I have not seen such display of affection between two best friends or the closest of kin.







Those two nights were the most difficult for both Boro and us. She wore a forlorn and deserted look. Our hearts bled and we did the hitherto unthinkable. We lifted her up on our bed and held her close trying to assure her and calm her down. She remained restless throughout the night sometimes sitting on the edge of the bed and at times snuggling close to us. As we felt the warmth of her body, all our past fears of the canine species evaporated in the darkness of the night and we learnt to build a relationship of love and affection crossing the limits of human boundary.

If the corona virus changed our life at work, our life at our home underwent a radical transformation with the advent of Boro. The four walls of our home suddenly expanded without limit to accommodate an all-new world of unbounded joy. Both our house cleaner and cook who stay with us, were initially sceptic of the prospects of a dog at home. Two months of acquaintance and both now dote on her. An enduring smile has lit on the faces of our two octogenarian mothers and they watch the unending antics of Boro throughout the day.

Boro on her part seems to be enjoying all the attention that she is receiving. She spent the first few weeks exploring every corner of her new home. She loves getting under covers and into confined spaces. Whenever she finds our mothers sitting down to watch the television, she snuggles under the folds of their saris. That is her zone of ultimate safety and comfort as she receives an occasional pat and an affectionate vocative of 'sona Boro'.

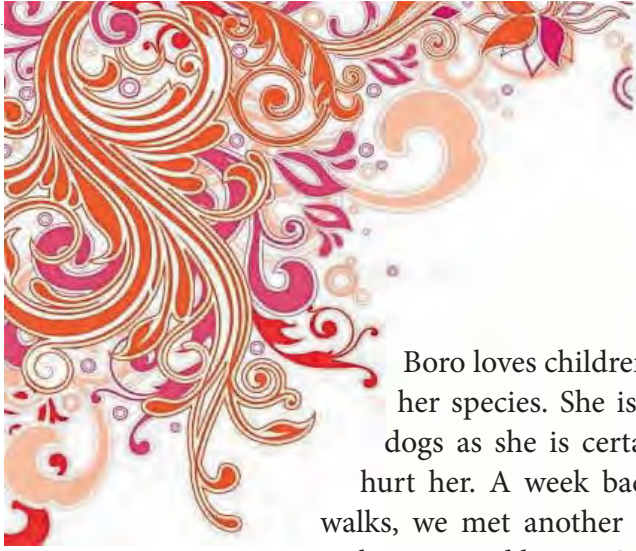
Her abrupt entry to our household has had a disruptive effect on our lives. Petty quibbles have vanished and all our discussions veer around her frolics. Our conjugal relations have distinctly waxed and the arthritic pain of our mothers have waned. For reasons best known to her, Boro has chosen to sleep every night on the bed of the eldest in our family of elders, my mother. By a magical stroke, she has managed to take away all the anxieties of my mother. For this, I am ever grateful to her.

We closely follow the "Pet Owners group" in our WhatsApp community. In the past, our knowledge of breeds were limited to strays and the household or the 'biliti' ones. The only breeds that we were familiar with were the Alsatians or German Shepherd, Labrador, Golden Retriever, Dalmatian (after the movie), Pug (Vodafone ad) and the Bulldog (Winston Churchill). Today, we are introduced to a much wider array, the Corgi, Beagle, Shih Tzu, Lhasa, Siberian Husky, Japanese Akita-inu, Chihuahua, the Chow Chow and the like.

My daughter complains that our indulgence has resulted in Boro gaining weight. Boro is now on a strict diet regime and an evening jogging schedule with my daughter. On days when my daughter is busy with her office work, I take Boro out for a walk. That is not an easy job. She makes it very clear who is the boss, tugging at the leash, suddenly squatting down and deciding on which route to take. I think that she considers me an old man who does not know the way and can get lost, landing both of us into deep trouble.







Boro loves children and all kinds of breeds of her species. She is particularly fond of large dogs as she is certain that they would never hurt her. A week back, in one of our evening walks, we met another pug. Though of the same age, he appeared leaner. Strangely, they did not strike a spontaneous bond, as I am accustomed to witnessing. The young lady accompanying him informed me that hers was a pug of the first generation while Boro, her ears drooping, belonged to the fourth.



Now that was news to me! I am already struggling trying to identify multitude of breeds and now this new dimension of generations. I have heard of fourth generation computers and microprocessor chips, iPhones and tablets. As a child I grew up hearing of generations of Ambassador cars. Mark 4, I guess was the last to roll out. I felt elated. Our Boro was of the latest edition, the finest of the breed!

Over dinner, I shared my new piece of wisdom with the others. We had a good laugh and revelled in this newly acquired knowledge. My wife cast a doubt. Remember that boy Sukhvinder, she said. Boro might be our Sukhvinder.

Sukhvinder who, I could not recollect.

Then all of it dawned on me. We used to frequent a dhaba run by two Sardars both of who were quite aged. The delectable kababs and chicken tadka they served took us there frequently. The redolent aroma compelled us to ignore the ambience. They had to finally close the dhaba down as their children were not interested. The last time we went there, we had met a young Sardar named Sukhvinder.

Sukhvinder was a grandson of one of the owners. He took us aback by his fluent Bengali, which was devoid of the typical nasal undertone of Punjabi accent. Bereft of his turban, he could have easily passed off as a Bengali. He noticed our awe and smiled. I am a third generation resident here sir, he informed.

For a moment, I was depressed. Boro is not a 'biliti' after all, but a fourth generation local breed!

Our daughter came to our rescue. We should be proud that she is not of foreign origin, she said. Come on Papa, be vocal for local. We could not agree with her more. All our eyes turned towards Boro as our daughter asked her, Boro, are you the desi one ?

Her eyes bulging, she gave a long pensive stare at us, absorbing the proceedings, holding us in suspended animation. Then, what seemed ages, she slowly tilted her head on one side, signalling her affirmation. We all broke in joy.

There she stood in her regal poise, her short paws stretched apart, head firmly held high. Proud to be an Indian!







## Durga Pujo in the Time of Corona

Amrita Hari  
T4 2004



This is a time like no other. Despite sounding a bit dramatic and also being fully aware that this is not the first or the last global crisis we will endure, there is something unique about the current unprecedented and enduring moment, as our lives are plagued by an unstoppable and indiscriminate virus.

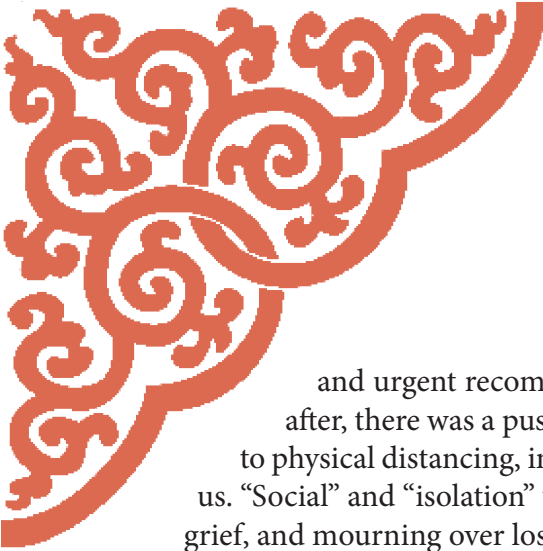
The novel coronavirus or COVID-19 has unrelentingly become a household name. What seemed to have started in one province in China has now been characterized as an ongoing global

pandemic. Putting aside the blame narratives, political blunders, and general malaise, all of us are at different stages of grief and mourning, as we come to terms with this crisis. We all grieve differently, and the stages do not necessarily occur in any particular order. There does however seem to be a universality in how we are experiencing this current socio-economic and political climate, regardless of where we are in the world.

Perhaps this is what makes the coronavirus pandemic its own beast – no one is left untouched by its effects. Historical crises, including world wars, ethnic and communal conflicts, natural occurrences and disasters, as well as economic depressions and financial crises appear to have epicenters with trickle down effects being felt in localized or regionalized pockets of the world. Our current world of the relentless coronavirus is different – its effects are not solely local or regional but are felt globally and in every corner of the world. We witnessed a drastic and overwhelming scale of closures, including schools, workplaces, public institutions, spaces, and transport, as well as all levels of borders. Welcome signs soon became replaced with “stop”, “do not enter”, “caution”, and “closed until further notice”. As is our world of social media, these physical signs soon transformed and were transferred into creative memes, gifs, tiktok and YouTube videos.

As with the first stage of grief, we underwent a period of denial to buffer the immediate shock of the loss experienced by the sudden many countries, shutdown, and in very strict lockdowns. an immediate Social isolation,





and urgent recommendation, allowed us for a while to deny the reality of the situation. Soon after, there was a push to shift the attention away from the word and sentiment of social isolation to physical distancing, in recognition of the significant psychosocial toll the virus was taking on all of us. “Social” and “isolation” were paradoxical when combined and led to a growing sense of further loss, grief, and mourning over lost social and emotional connections that are necessary to sustain us.

For many, there was little distraction other than the vivid and often sensational news coverage of the effects of the coronavirus worldwide. We watched as a localized and regionalized virus was ascribed the title of pandemic: “an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people” (World Health Organization [WHO]). Despite WHO’s many deliberations to call it a pandemic, many of us still waited to cancel our trips, postpone weddings, plan major events, and rush to see distant loved ones. We waited!

As the days distancing endured, we transitioned aimed at indiscriminate from our the news, neighbours, the people streets, and of us knew and told us that we so-called extra families as a gift.



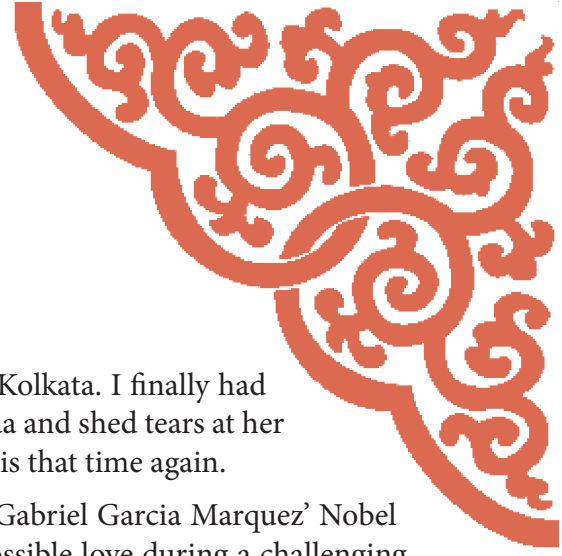
of physical and lockdown inadvertently to anger everything, the virus, clapping balconies, politicians, friends, family, walking the everyone. A part social media should see this time with our That did not

stop us from feeling disheartened and guilty about not seeing everyone else, distancing from our elderly to keep them safe, forcing our kids to stay home and explain why they can’t play with their friends, and generally feeling guilty about all these difficult decisions, making us even more angry. We tried to dim these feelings of helplessness, vulnerability, uncertainty, and the need to regain control of our lives and that of our families’ welfare by our attempts to bargain with anyone and anything. I just need to do this for another month and things will be back to “normal”. If only I could enjoy this time with my children and family, if only I try to get back to the gym at home, if only I call my family and friends more often, if only.

What we thought was going to be a few weeks, became a month, three months, and now over six months for most. It brings us to this present moment, our cherished Durga Pujo. Having spent most of my childhood and adult life outside of Kolkata, I had only heard through stories shared by my family about the glory and magic of the annual Pujo, when Durga Maa comes home with her children to laughter, lights, and love felt through and by every resident of Kolkata and her children worldwide. It was a gift







to experience this magnificent time first-hand last year in our beloved Kolkata. I finally had the opportunity to share with everyone the excitement of welcoming Maa and shed tears at her departure only to say with my whole heart, “asche bochor abar hobe.” It is that time again.

I am deliberate in my play in the title of this piece, harkening back to Gabriel Garcia Marquez’ Nobel prize winning novel, Love in the Time of Cholera, chronicling an impossible love during a challenging time. We find ourselves in a somewhat parallel situation here wanting to welcome our beloved Maa during what feels like an impossible time. Creative solutions, including drive-through pandals are being countered by vehement critiques of any form of organized activity in fear of contributing to new cases. Rather than fixating on this polarization, I wish to move away from it with a humble request: let’s work together at some acceptance.

Acceptance is seen as the last stage of grief and mourning, marked by a calmness and is a step towards the natural process of healing. Let us allow this auspicious and miraculous time of year to be the fresh breeze we all need to continue in this fight against the pandemic. Durga Puja is at its core is a celebration of shakti (power); a battle against the shape shifting Mahishasura, indiscriminate in its destruction, much like the Coronavirus. Moreover, Durga Pujo is at its centre a victory of good over evil, a celebration of harvest, new beginnings, life, and creation. Last and not the least, it is an acknowledgement and ode to motherly power. There is no doubt that the pandemic has taken a great toll on women, who care unconditionally.

In recognition of it all, let us smell the dhunuchi, play and hear the dhak, ululate, laugh, clap, and sing to welcome Durga Maa into our lives once again with all the love, hope, and power she will bring. Celebration can occur with precaution and by keeping the doors and borders of our hearts and minds open. Let this Pujo cleanse us, remind us of the importance of hope, and foster love and happiness in return. Let us work together to make this Pujo in the time of Corona a success – we all need it – and let us shout with gusto in our best outfits: “asche bochor abar hobe.”

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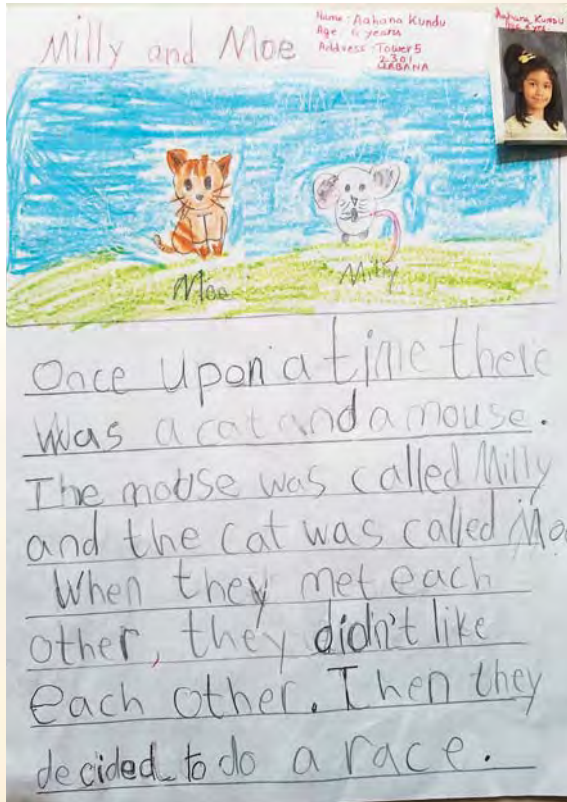
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## Milly And Moe

Aahana Kundu (6yrs)

T5 2301



In the first race Milly<sup>2</sup> won, then Moe was mad. Then they decided to do the next race, then Milly won again. Moe got even<sup>3</sup> mad. Then Moe cried and ran to his cat home. Then Milly came to play with Moe but Moe kept crying, then Milly said "what's wrong?" then Moe told all the things that happened but they became the best of friends when Milly told that it does not matter if you win or lose what matters is you try your best.

Sarod Suviccha From



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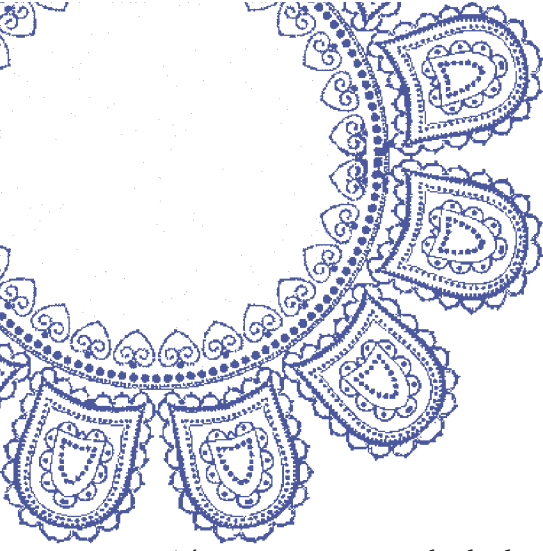




# Nimbus Enterprise

62, Netaji Subhas Road  
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West Bengal





## Birds of Urbana

Susrut Ray  
T7 2505

The autumn morn is bathed in gold. Let us go, you and I, to meet the common birds around Urbana. We shall look for 20 of our commonest species that go unnoticed merely because our familiarity breeds contempt. But these ghar kee murgee are hardly dull or dal barabar; they are creatures of exceptional beauty as you shall see. In all, about forty species can be seen but we will look at just 20. The rest you could find yourself once your eyes open out to the beauty of our avifauna.

Let us take the lift down and step out of the back door into the central lawn. The Rock Pigeon and her cousin, the Spotted Dove, are feeding on the grass, as always. Everyone knows them but only a few have time to look at the glistening multi-coloured metallic sheen on the neck of the slate grey Rock Pigeon. Or, to appreciate the delicate pinkish-brown coat of the dove speckled with white spots and styled with the checker-board collar behind the neck, a frill that would do Pierre Cardin proud. Look at these birds feeding so peacefully; no wonder they have become symbols of peace! They feed on seeds and are mostly silent; but when they do call

(pigeon: a deep a mournful kroo-they keep at it without moving even a bit; like they can deceive far from these noisy Mynahs, on the grass. Mynah is the dark-with black head splashes of bright legs and bare skin The prettier Asian amynah too; as a as the 'pied mynah' officially changed that black-and-touched up with around its eyes and on the bill.

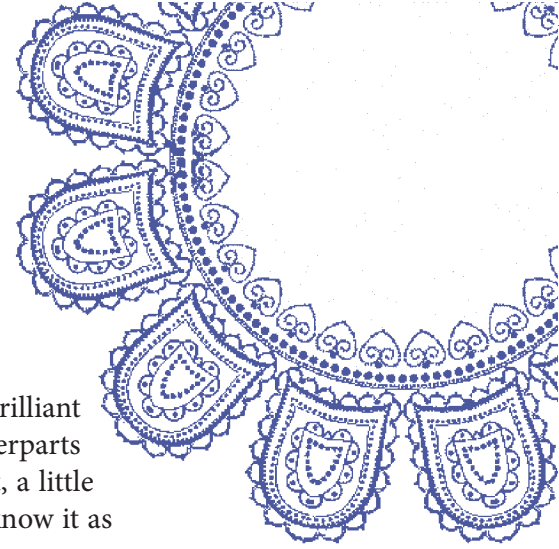


gootr-goo, dove: kroo - kroo) repeatedly, their beaks ventriloquists you. Not too two are the also feeding The Common brown fellow and generous yellow (bill, around his eyes). Pied Starling is boy, I knew him long before they the name. It is white bird an orange brush

A pair of Black Drongos is out, as well. They are perched on the tree, the ones with glossy black feathers and forked tail . They are vigilantly watching for grasshoppers; look at one as he pounces on an insect, takes it to his perch, tears it and swallows the pieces. Now, look who is here, strutting about in the grass with an air of importance, constantly wagging his tail! He is the first of our White Wagtails, white around the eyes and in the belly, but with black head, back and bib. The tail is striped black-and-white. He breeds in the Himalayas and comes only to spend the winter with us. He will be here till spring. We leave him now to meet the White







Throated Kingfisher waiting patiently on his post by the water. Look how brilliant his colours are: turquoise wings, deep chocolate-brown head, neck and underparts and the showy white shirtfront. Look! He has just dived in for his breakfast, a little frog perhaps. Later after his meal you might hear him crying out; you will know it as the most unmusical, oft-repeated, harsh call.

Now let us walk across to the bungalow areas where the trees are bigger. It is the home of the Jungle Babbler whom you may know as the 'seven sisters', the noisy, untidy, earth-brown bird with a long tail, yellow bill and white circles around its eyes. They always flock together, usually in the lower branches of trees. On the ground, they hop but about looking for insects. The common House Crows, black birds with grey necks are there in plenty here and they are cawing away to glory. But their cousin, the Long-Billed (or Jungle) Crow is rarely seen. Earlier in the year, a pair had nested on the tall pole for floodlights just outside our walls where BNRI's office used to be. The nest can still be seen. Both crows make nests that are dirty piles of twigs. The jungle crow is a little bigger than the common crow and has a deeper (and harsher) caw.

Do you hear that screechy sound much like the scraping on a dirty pan? That is the call of the Rufous Tree Pie, appropriately known as the handi chācha (pot-scraper) in Bangla. This long-tailed, chestnut brown bird with

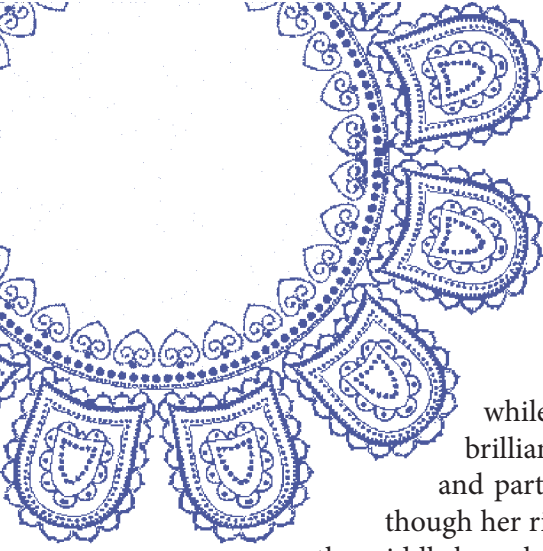
sooty head black tipped larger than we have seen how it flaps then glides the ground. are related to is another that has the embedded even though unrelated. It or Crow- There he is the ground clambering branches of He is the glossy black chestnut



and neck with grey tail is all the birds so far. Look its wings and smoothly to The tree pies crows. There bird here word 'crow' in its name it is quite is the Coucal Pheasant. stalking on stealthily and up the lower the shrubs. large, clumsy, bird with wings and a

long and broad, graduated tail. He is secretive but, being large, finds it difficult to hide itself.

A tree-bird found in abundance in the bungalow area is the Red Vented Bulbul. There she is, the bubbly, smoke brown fellow that has just the hint of a black crest and scale-like marks on the breast and back. The crimson patch below the root of the tail is very conspicuous. We see plenty of them making joyous notes



while feeding on small insects and fruits. The most beautiful of our birds is the brilliant golden-yellow Black-Headed Oriole with its black head, throat, upper breast and parts of the wings. In Bangla we call it bene bou (the bania's wife); she looks as though her rich husband has covered her in gold! There, you see the pretty one hopping in the middle branches of a tree singing its signature tune, a sweet melodious Pi-lo-lo. It has a harsh cry, as well, which is much like the tree-pie's. It is autumn now and not the time to hear the Koel even though it is our best-known whistler. But we see a couple sitting silently, hiding amongst the branches. The male has a glistening black coat and has a yellowish green bill while the female is brown and spotted with white. Come spring and these will come to life with kuoo-kuoo-kuoo whistles!

I had promised to show you 20 of our commonest birds. I will reserve the last five spots for the birds in the sky. Just look up and you will see one of them flying in a swarm at great speed. Against the light of the sky, the House-swift shows up only as a small black bird; up close it is smoky black with white throat, white rump, short square tail, and long narrow wings. While it flies, it keeps its mouth open for small insects to get trapped; nice way to feed, isn't it? The majestic cheel is gliding in circles far higher in the sky. Cheel, the Bangla name of the Black Kite is derived from the shrill, almost musical, whistling ewe-wir-wir-wir it utters. The kite is our commonest hawk and feeds on mice, lizards and also of course the samosas it steals from you if you are careless even for a minute.

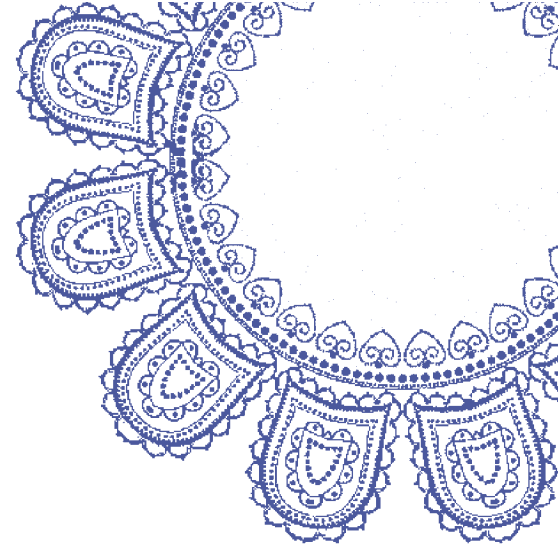
I invite you to my south facing flat to see the last 3 birds in my list. In the grassy fields between us and Mukundapur you see the black water buffalo (the bhains). On top of each you would see a dazzlingly white Cattle Egret. The bird feeds on insects that live on cattle or are stirred up by cattle. It is one of the best known examples of natural symbiosis, for the buffalo benefits in turn by getting rid of its pest-parasites. In the skies above the same area, early morning, you will be sure to spy large flocks of tens-twenties-thirties of two bird species. The larger of these, the Open-Billed Stork is a greyish white stork with black in its wings. It has long legs and bills that are characteristics of all storks, but the opening within the bill is special. It is there to help the bird crack open the shells of large snails found in the marshes that it feeds on; it is known as the shamuk-khol in Bangla. The open-bills roost in trees in the city and fly to their feeding grounds in the East Kolkata Wetlands each morning. So does the Indian Cormorant (pan-kowri in Bangla) the glistening black buck-like water bird with a longish stiff tail and slender bill hooked at the tip.

I have limited our outing to 20 birds but there are many more that you can watch from our homes. I could take you, or you can go with one of the masters, Salim Ali or Grimmett and the Inskipp. I list their books below; both are easily available at Amazon and elsewhere. I have borrowed descriptions from Salim Ali quite shamelessly; no one can describe birds as well as he does.

1. Salim Ali: The Book of Indian Birds
  2. Richard Grimmett, Carol Inskipp, Tim Inskipp: Pocket Guide to Birds of the Indian Subcontinent
- Index for Plate I: Jungle Babbler, Spotted Dove, White Wagtail, White-throated Kingfisher, Black Drongo, Common Crow, Long-billed Crow, Common Mynah, Asian Pied Starling, Rock Pigeon
- Index for Plate II: Indian Cormorant, Open Billed Stork, Rufous Tree-Pie, Koels, House Swift, Red-vented Bulbul, Crow Pheasant or Coucal, Black Kite, Cattle Egret







## The Red Dot

Sravan Banerjee

T5 1704

My earliest memories of Durga Pujo are of inching forward through the wave of pandal the family.

Of course, this was immensely helped by the contributed to about 6 of the 9ft. Nonetheless

the world (felt literal at that moment !!) but most of all I could feel an inexplicable, almost magnetic, draw as I inched closer and closer to the mesmerising beauty that was somehow encapsulated in the Durga idol.

At that height I was blessed with an unrestricted view of the Protima Mukh and felt a sense of awe as I stared into the eyes of Ma and the red dot between them that seemed to somehow breathe life into an idol.

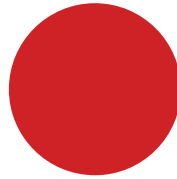
Unfortunately, I had to begin the rather painful process of growing up. Simple pleasures became luxuries and distractions, time was measured in hours spent in school and later at work and identity somehow got distorted into a job title and salary. Having said that, I never lost the sense of absolute joy 'those 5 days' brought every time Pujo was around the corner.

I recognised that Durga Pujo in Bengal is not just a celebration of religious significance. It is a celebration of life itself. It is about getting together with friends and family to stay up till the wee hours of the morning to go pandal hopping and then repeat the routine all over again every day. It is about the intoxicating 'pujor gondho' that somehow fills the air during those days only and then magically disappears. It is about queuing up for hours at the famous pandals just to get a glimpse of Ma and then finding the nearest 'roller dokan'. It is about Ashtamir Anjali, bhog and seeking blessing from elders with lots of 'mishti' during Bijoya Doshomi. It is a feeling unlike any other no matter where we are or who we are. But for me it always was and remains about the sense of wonderment that came from seeing the red dot on Ma's forehead.

As I grew up, I thought the connection would perhaps fade and it would become 'just another childhood memory'. But to my surprise if anything, the connection got stronger. I still feel that magnetic pull every time I stand close to a Durga Protima. It is almost as if the red dot engulfs me in a shroud of fantasy which I sometimes never want to come out of.

Years passed by. Work took me outside the country where I still reside. Yes, we do celebrate Durga Pujo with much fanfare and yes, the magic is sprinkled here too. But in my mind, I am still that 4 year old drawn to the red dot like a moth to a flame.

Hence, I try to make it back home for those 5 days if I can. I want my son to experience the same feelings I did. I don't want him to grow up deprived from that sense of belonging to Bengal. I want him to know what Durga Pujo is and what being a part of it means. I want him to stand 9ft tall and feel what I felt. Because at every 'sindur khela' the red dot spreads its wings and finds itself on every forehead. Because the sound of ullu fills the air with positivity. And because at 'bisorjon' I see the red dot assimilated into the colours of the Ganga. That moment brings tears of sadness and joy in my eyes as deep down I am happy knowing 'ashche bochor abar hobe'



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## আমি মানুষ চাই (এটি একটি কাল্পনিক কাহিনি)

চন্দন কোনার

T7 3604

আজ থেকে কয়েক হাজার বছর আগের কথা। আমাদের এই সুন্দর পৃথিবীর থেকেও সুন্দর এক গ্রহ ছিল। আমাদের মানুষ জাতি সেখানেও ছিল। মানুষে মানুষে গভীর হৃদয়তা ছিল, ভালোবাসা ছিল। সেখানেই ছিল দুই বন্ধু “সিনো” এবং “মিনো”। বন্ধুত্ব ছিল নির্মল কিন্তু দুইজনের চাহিদা ছিল ভিন্ন। সিনো ছিলো জাদুকর, অন্য মানুষ ছিল তার প্রাণ। অন্যের সুখেই সিনোর সুখ। অন্যের দুঃখে, কষ্টে, সিনো সবসময় পাশে থাকত। মিনো মানুষ ভালোবাসত কিন্তু সে চাইত সবাই তার দাস হয়ে থাকুক। মানুষকে কি আটকে, জোড় করে দাস বানিয়ে রাখা যায়? তারা তাদের প্রতিভায় বড় হতে থাকে। সিনো ওই সুন্দর মানুষটিকে নিয়ে মহা আনন্দে থাকে। একদিন মিনো, সিনোকে বলে তার মনের ইচ্ছা। বলে সে চায় এই গ্রহের মালিক হতে। গোটা গ্রহটা হবে তার। একদিন সিনোকে বলে, তার জাদু দিয়ে সব মানুষকে ভ্যানিস করে দিতে পারবেনা? তাহলেই এই গ্রহটা তার হয়ে যায়।

সিনো বলে হ্যাঁ পারবে তবে আর ফিরিয়ে আনতে পারবে না। এমন কি সিনো নিজেও হারিয়ে যাবে। মিনো তাই চায়, কিন্তু বন্ধুকে হারাতে হবে, কিঞ্চিৎ বোধ করে, পরোক্ষনেই ভাবে, বন্ধু যাক তবুতো নিজে এই গ্রহের মালিক হতে পারবে। মিনো কত খুশি, এই গ্রহ তার একার। মিনো এবার সত্যিসত্যি সিনোকে বলে, এখনই সবাইকে ভ্যানিস করতে। সিনো অসহায় হয়ে সবাইকে নিয়ে নিজেও ভ্যানিস হয়ে যায়। এখন থেকে মিনো একা এই গ্রহে। আনন্দে আটখানা। আজ সে কত ধনী। এইভাবে দুই দিন খুব আনন্দে কাটল। তিনদিন থেকে বিষন্নতা ঘিরে ধরল। তখন তার ঘোর কাটল – আজ সে কার কাছে ধনী? কে এখানে গরীব? যখন সে বুঝল গরীব না থাকলে বড়লোকের বড়লোক সাজা বৃথা, তখন সে বন্ধু সিনোকে ডাকতে লাগল। সিনো স্বপ্নে এল। মিনো অনেক কাকুতি মিনুতি করলো সব মানুষকে ফিরিয়ে আনতে। চিৎকার করে বলে আজ “আমি মানুষ চাই”, “আমি মানুষ চাই”। সিনো বলল তা আর সম্ভব নয় বন্ধু। তুমি যা চেয়েছো, তাই তো পেয়েছো। তুমি আজ কত বড়লোক, তোমার অগাধ ধন-সম্পত্তি। মিনো তখন সিনোর কাছে প্রার্থনা করে, যেন তাকেও ভ্যানিস করে নেয়। কিন্তু সিনো বলল বন্ধু তোমার লোভের ফল তোমায় ভুগতেই হবে। পরের দিন মিনো পাগল হয়ে গেল। আজও সে পাগল আছে সেই গ্রহে, আর সুধুই চিৎকার করে বলে “আমি মানুষ চাই”, “আমি মানুষ চাই”, “আমি মানুষ চাই”। সিনো সেই সব মানুষ নিয়ে চলে এসেছিল এই গ্রহে। তখন থেকেই রক্ষাণ্ডের বিস্ময়কর, সুন্দর এই গ্রহটির নাম পৃথিবী।

সারমর্ম : আমাদের বাঁচার জন্য চাইতো একটি ঘর, একটু অন্ন, গা ঢাকার বস্ত্র। সবাইকে নিয়ে বাঁচার আনন্দই আসল মানুষ হয়ে বাঁচা। মিনোর মতন করে বেঁচে কি লাভ? চলুননা আমাদের সব স্বার্থ কে বিসর্জন দিয়ে, অন্যের পাশে দাঁড়াই, আবার এই ছন্নছাড়া পৃথিবীটাকে সুন্দর করে সাজিয়ে তুলি, সমস্ত মানুষ জাতিকে নিয়ে প্রানভরে হাসি।



## ঋণ স্বীকার

কল্পজিত বসু মল্লিক

T7 3004

কিছুদিন হলো বিয়ে হয়েছে। পুরী গিয়েছি দুজনে। ২ - ৩ দিনে সব ঘোরা শেষ। ভাবলাম আজ ফেরার দিনে অনেকক্ষণ সমুদ্র স্নান করবো। আদিখ্যেতা প্রেম করিনি কোনোদিন। তবুও ভিড় থেকে একটু সরে স্নান করছি। ঢেউ এলে লাফ - এই অবধি দৌড়, সাঁতার না জানা দুই বঙ্গসন্তানের। হঠাৎ দেখলাম ও নেই। ওর মাথার চুলটা জলরাশির মধ্যে একবার দেখলাম যেন। সেটা ধরতে যাবো, বুঝলাম আমিও তলিয়ে যাচ্ছি। সবুজ নোনাজল। খাবি খাচ্ছি। আর নিঃশ্বাস বন্ধ হয়ে যাচ্ছে। আর কিছু মনে নেই।

যখন জ্ঞান ফিরলো দেখলাম প্রচুর লোকের ভিড়। আমরা দুজনেই উপুড় হয়ে শুয়ে বালির উপর। আর একটা রোগা কালো লোক, ঘর্মান্ত হয়ে পেট থেকে জল বার করছে। উঠে বসলাম কোনোক্রমে। ভিড় বললো - আজ আপনাদের দ্বিতীয় জীবন, এ দেখলো বলেই বেঁচে গেলেন। ঝাঁপিয়ে নিয়ে এলো আপনাদের। জিজ্ঞেস করলাম কি নাম তোমার? বললো, মঙ্গল।

বললাম তাকে, স্নান করতে এসেছি, তৈরি হয়ে আসিনি। হোটেল থেকে বিকেলবেলা বকশিস দিয়ে যাবো তোমাকে। 'ঠিক আছে', বলে ঘাড় নাড়লো। সেদিনই ফেরার ট্রেন, মানিব্যাগ হালকা। রওনা দিলাম (স্টেশনের উদ্দেশ্যে, ভুলে গেলাম মঙ্গলকে। খুব খারাপ লাগলো। কিন্তু যা ছিল ব্যাগে সেটা নিয়ে পৌঁছলে আরও খারাপ লাগতো। মন শক্ত করলাম, বোঝালাম নিজের মতো করে। কিন্তু কুরে কুরে খেতো সেই ঋণ প্রতিদিন।

১২ বছর পরের কথা। বিজনেসের কাজে দুর্গাপুর গেছি। শতাব্দী এক্সপ্রেসের জন্য দাঁড়িয়ে আছি। ট্রেন ঢুকলো গর্জন করে। কম্পার্টমেন্টে উঠে ব্যাগটা রেখে দরজার সামনে দাঁড়িয়ে একটা সিগারেট ধরলাম। ট্রেনটা জাস্ট ছেড়েছে, একটা আদুল গায়ে ভিখারি ছেলে, আমার ফাঁক দিয়ে, ট্রেন থেকে নামতে গেলো। মিস করলো প্ল্যাটফর্ম। ঢুকে যাচ্ছে লাইনের মধ্যে। গেলো গেলো রব উঠলো। কোনোক্রমে চুলের মুঠি ধরে তুললাম তাকে। বসলাম এক কোণে। থর থর করে কাঁপছে সে। কিছু প্যাসেঞ্জার ধমক দিতে লাগলো ওকে। আমি মাথায় হাত বুলিয়ে দিলাম। জিজ্ঞেস করলাম কি নাম তোর? বললো, 'মঙ্গল'।

আমি চমকে উঠলাম। তাহলে কি আমার ঋণ এতদিনে আজ শোধ হলো?

জানি না।

বললাম, চুপটি করে বসে থাক এখানে।

ছুটে গিয়ে কমপ্লিমেন্টারি স্ন্যাকসের পুরো খাবারটাই ওকে দিয়ে দিলাম।

\*\* এই গল্পের কোনো চরিত্রই কাল্পনিক নয় \*\*





## আমি সেই মেয়ে

অনিতা বাসু

T7 3003

দিনটা ছিল ওই গুনগুন বাবা এসে মাকে বলল কোথায় তুমি, আমার কন্যা দেখো লটারি পেয়েছে বাবা খুব খুশি, কন্যার জন্মের আগের ঋণটা সেদিন মা দেখেছিলো বাবার চোখের তারায়।

আবার আমি যখন প্রথম কন্যা সন্তানের জন্ম দিলাম আমি আমার শ্বশুর বাড়ির সবার চোখের দেখেছিলাম সেই আলোর ঝলকানি।

আবার যখন সবাইকে ছেড়ে মরুভূমির দেশ কাতারে এলাম আমার স্বামীর সাথে সংসার পাততে, সেখানে আমি আমার দ্বিতীয় কন্যার জন্ম দিলাম তখন আমি আমার স্বামীর চোখের তারায় দেখলাম সেই আলোর ঝলকানি। আমি সেই দিনই বুঝলাম আমরা কত দামী।

মরুভূমির দেশে এসে দুই-কন্যাকে মানুষ করে কত অনুষ্ঠান করে নিজেকে সবার সাথে মিলিয়ে মিশিয়ে দেবার অনুভূতি অন্যরকম।

কিছুই ছিলনা কাতারে, প্রথম প্রথম খুব মন খারাপ লাগত। তারপর যখন একটি বিদ্যালয়ে পড়াবার সযোগ পেলাম মনটা আনন্দে ভরে গেল।

তারপর কত অনুষ্ঠান যে কত জায়গায় করেছি কাতারিদের সাথে (Doha Seraton) আর (Qatar Foundation) Fashion Show সবই দুর্দান্ত অভিজ্ঞতা।

তারপর আমার স্বামীর Indian Communiti তে President আর আমি বঙ্গীয় পরিষদের President হওয়ার সুবাদে বহু বড় বড় অনুষ্ঠানে যোগ দিয়েছি। দীর্ঘদিন Indian Women's Association-এর Cultural Secretary থাকার অভূতপূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতা ছিল। আমার দুই কন্যা এখন পড়াশুনা শেষ করে একজন কাতারে আর ছোট্ট U.S.A. তে তাদের কর্ম জগতে সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত আর আমরা দুজনে এখন মনের আনন্দে দেশে বিদেশে ঘুরে বেড়াই আর দুটি নাতির সব প্রতিভাগুলো দেখে আনন্দে মেতে উঠি। সব কিছুর জন্য ঈশ্বরকে অনেক-অনেক ধন্যবাদ ও প্রণাম। আর বড়দের আশীর্বাদ ও সবার ভালবাসার জন্য আজ আমরা এখানে পৌঁছেছি। সবাই ভাল থেকে আর সবাইকে ভালো ও আনন্দে রাখার চেষ্টা করো।



## মাঙ্গলিক

ইন্দ্রানী বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

T5 2803

সৃষ্টিকর্তার অনন্ত সৃষ্টির মধ্যে মানুষ শ্রেষ্ঠ, এমনটাই বলা হয়ে থাকে। মানুষের মধ্যে দুটি ভাব আছে। একটি জীবভাব আর একটি বিশ্বভাব। জীবভাবে মানুষ থাকে উপস্থিত অবস্থা নিয়ে, চলে পৃথিবী বিষয়চিন্তায়, জাগতিক হিসাব নিয়ে। সেখানে চিন্তাভাবনার দাম আছে কিন্তু মূল্য কম। আর একটি হল বিশ্বভাব। যেখানে মানুষ আপন সত্তাকে উত্তীর্ণ করে বিশ্বসত্তার সঙ্গে মিলিত হতে চায়। সেখানে আছে আদর্শ, যা অমূল্য অর্থাৎ জাগতিক মূল্যে যার বিচার করা যায় না। মানুষের আত্মা যখন এই ভাবের জ্ঞানের দ্বারা আলোকিত হয় তখন সে আপনাকে অতিক্রম করে সত্যকে, শিবকে, মঙ্গলকে জানতে পারে। সেই বুদ্ধিই শুভবুদ্ধি, যে বুদ্ধিতে আমরা আপন স্বার্থসীমা অতিক্রম করে সকলের জন্য ভাবতে পারি, সকলকে আপন মনে করে গ্রহণ করতে পারি। পরকে আপন করার ইচ্ছাই শুভ ইচ্ছা।

২০২০ সালের শুরু থেকে আমরা একের পর এক প্রাকৃতিক বিপর্যয়ের সম্মুখীন হয়ে চলেছি। সর্বাপেক্ষা গভীর বিপর্যয় এল মহামারী। বিশ্ব মানবসমাজ সেই অতর্কিত আক্রমণে অভিভূত হয়ে পড়ল। এই প্রসঙ্গে দেশে দেশে বিভিন্ন বিশেষজ্ঞ ও জনসাধারণের অজস্র আলোচনা পর্যালোচনা আজও বহমান। সে প্রসঙ্গ ব্যতিরেকে যেন অন্য কোনও বিষয়ই নেই জগতে। কিন্তু এই ভয়াবহ পরিস্থিতিতেও বিশ্বপ্রকৃতির লীলা নিতাই ঘটে চলেছে। কেবলমাত্র মানুষ ছাড়া জীবজগতের আর কেউই এই দুর্দৈবের কবলে পড়েনি। মনে হয় তার কারণ অত্যাধুনিক যুগের মানুষের মধ্যে জীবভাবের প্রাবল্য। প্রকৃত জ্ঞানের নিদারণ দৈন্য, তবু আমাদের একটি বিশ্বাস মনের মধ্যে দৃঢ়ভাবে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতেই হবে যে, হতাশাই শেষ কথা নয়। “যাদৃশী ভাবনা यस্য সিদ্ধির্ভবতি তাদৃশী”, আমাদের ভাবনাই আমাদের কর্মে প্রতিফলিত। যেহেতু প্রতি ক্রিয়ারই প্রতিক্রিয়া আছে। এক সেটি স্বতঃসিদ্ধ, তাই আমাদের শুভ চিন্তা শুভ বুদ্ধি শুভ কর্ম শুভ ফলই প্রদান করবে নিশ্চিতরূপে বলা যারা আজ ত্রিতাপহারিনী জগজ্জননীর শ্রীপাদপদ্মে আমাদের বিনীত প্রার্থনা –

যে অরুণকিরণ শোভামন্ডিত অপরূপা শারদেশ্বরী মাতা, হে যোগেশ্বরী, হে বিশ্বকল্যানময়ী, হে সর্বমঙ্গলা শিবানী বিশ্বজননী মা আমার, জগৎবাসীর প্রতি প্রসন্ন নয়নে দৃষ্টিপাত করো মা গো! মানব সমাজের ভয়ঙ্কর মহামারী দূর করে দাও মা, হেঁ জগৎপ্রসবিনী বিশ্বপালিকে, তুমি বরদা মোক্ষদা আবার তুমি করালবদনী ভীষমা যোগিনীকোটি পরিবৃতা মা। আমাদের বিশ্বরূপী সকল দানবদলন করে পরমপদে লীন হওয়ার যোগ্য করে তুলতে আমাদের শাস্তি প্রদান করে থাক তুমি মা। কিন্তু আমরা অল্পবুদ্ধি মূঢ়মতি অহংমদে মত্ত। তাই তোমার কৃপা লাভের প্রধান মন্ত্র আত্মশুদ্ধি ঘটে না। অজ্ঞানতার বেড়াজালে নিজেদের হৃদয়ের বাতায়নদ্বার রুদ্ধ করে বাহ্যিক উপকরণের আড়ম্বরে আচারের আতিশয্যে ব্যাপ্ত থাকি। তুমি তো সর্বজ্ঞ। তাই আমাদের মঙ্গলের জন্য আঘাত দিয়ে শুভবুদ্ধি জাগ্রত করতে চাও। হে জগদম্বা দুর্গতিনাশিনী দুর্গে! আমাদের অজ্ঞানতা বুদ্ধিরিত হোক, জগতের কল্যাণ হোক এই কৃপা কর মা। আমাদের আত্মি প্রাণিপাত গ্রহণ করে আমাদের ধন্য কর। জয় মা।





## বীরাঙ্গনা কৈকেয়ী

পূরবী গুপ্ত (বরাট)

T5 2001

(লেখাটি সম্পূর্ণ আমার কল্পনা প্রসূত)

মধুদা থাকে উত্তর-বিহারে। প্রতি বছর সপরিবারে ওরা আসেন কোলকাতায় পূজার সময়। মহালয়ার আরম্ভ হয় আর চারিদিকটা যেন উৎসবে মেতে ওঠে।

কুমোরটুলির কাছেই ওর বাড়ি। ট্যান্ড্রি থেকে নেমেই ও দৌড়ে চলে আসে পটুয়া পাড়ায়। চারিদিকে দেখে মৃৎশিল্পীরা কাজে খুব ব্যস্ত আবার অনেকে বসেছেন ধ্যানে। কারণ মার চোখ আঁকার আগে শিল্পীরা একনিষ্ঠ হয়ে ধ্যান করে তার পর মার চোখ আঁকেন। চারিদিকে দেখতে দেখতে এক জায়গায় এসে থমকে দাঁড়ায়, দেখে বড় একটি গরাদহীন জানলার পাশে বসে আছেন এক মাতৃমূর্তি উদাস দৃষ্টিতে বাইরে তাকিয়ে আছেন, নিরাভরণা। অলঙ্কার সুন্দর পটু বস্ত্র পাশে রাখা। মধুদা এক মৃৎশিল্পী কে প্রশ্ন করল ইনি কে?

মৃৎশিল্পী ওকে বললেন তুমি ওর দৃষ্টি ধরে জানলা দিয়ে বেরিয়ে যাও, সোজা যেতে যেতে তুমি একজন ঋষির দেখা পাবে, তিনি বলে দেবেন উনি কে?

মধুদা ঐ খোলা জানলা দিয়ে ঐ মূর্তি দৃষ্টি অনুসরণ করে যেতে লাগল। পথে যেতে যেতে একটি রাজ সভায় পৌঁছে গেল। রাজ সভায় রাজা বসে আছেন। তাঁর পাশে রাজমোহিনী। তারপর একটি আসন ফাঁকা আবার একজন রাজমোহিনী বসে আছেন। মধুদা ঐ ফাঁকা জায়গা দিয়ে গলে বেরিয়ে আবার যেতে লাগল। হঠাৎ এসে পৌঁছাল এক গভীর অরণ্যের মধ্যে। সেখানে দেখতে পেল একজন বয়স্ক ঋষি, সে ধ্যানে মগ্ন। মধুদা প্রশ্ন করতেই উনি তাকিয়ে দেখে, আসার কারণ জানতে চাইলেন। মধুদা ঋষিবরকে প্রশ্ন করল উনি কে এবং অত দুঃখিতই বা কেন?

তখন ঐ ঋষিবর বলতে আরম্ভ করলেন। ঋষি বাণিকী রামায়ন রচনা করার সময় সকলকে প্রশ্ন করেছিলেন কে কোন চরিত্র নোবে?

কৌশল্যা বললেন আমি হব মাতৃমূর্তি স্নেহময়ী, সুমিত্রা বললেন আমি সুন্দর করে সংসার করব।

কৈকেয়ী বললেন আমি রণকৌশলে সুদক্ষ মহিলা হব। মুষ্কিল হল পরে দেখা গেল পৃথিবীতে শিশুকন্যারা পুণ্য-পুকুর ব্রত করার সময়, দশ পুতুলের পূজা যখন করে তখন তাঁরা কামনা করে বলে, মরে মনিষী হব, দশরথের মত শ্বশুর পাব, কৌশল্যার মত শাশুড়ি পাব, মরে মনিষী হব সীতার মত সতী হব। কিন্তু কেউ চায়না আমার মত বীরাঙ্গনা হতে। কৈকেয়ী বললেন আরও, যে যুদ্ধক্ষেত্রে স্বামীর প্রাণরক্ষা করেছিলেন, স্বামী তাঁকে দুটি বর দিতে চেয়েছিলেন। উনি রামের বনবাস এবং ভরতকে রাজা হোক চেয়েছিলেন। রাম কে তিনি সন্তানের মতই ভাল বাসতেন কিন্তু কাব্যের প্রয়োজনে তাঁর বনবাস চাইলেন। রামের বনবাস হল এবং সীতাকে, রাজা রাবণ অপহরণ করলেন। রাজা রাবণের প্রচুর গুণ ছিল যার ফলে তাঁকে দশানন বলা হয় অর্থাৎ দশটি মাথায় যে জ্ঞান বুদ্ধি থাকে, তা তাঁর ছিল। ব্রহ্মার বংশে জন্ম, বিশ্ববা মুনি এবং নিমশার পুত্র এবং শিরে পরম ভক্ত এবং আশীর্বাদ ধন্য। রাবণ কে বধ করবার জন্য রামকে অকাল বোধন করতে

হল। মহাশক্তির মহামায়ার পূজা অর্থাৎ স্ত্রী শক্তির প্রয়োজন হল। এই পূজায় পৌরহিত্য করলেন ব্রাহ্মণ সন্তান রাজা রাবণ। কারণ রাম ক্ষত্রিয় বংশে জন্ম নিয়েছিলেন, তাঁর পূজার অধিকার ছিলনা। আমার এই মহাকাব্যে কীর্তিবাসের সংযোজন এই মহামায়ার পূজা। “মহাশক্তি মহামায়া” অর্থাৎ নারী শক্তি। ইনি হলেন বীরাজনা। বালুকী মুনি এবার একটু হেসে মধুদাকে বললেন, দেখ এই সে মহাশক্তি, তা হল আবৃশক্তি, নারী শক্তি। এই অকাল বোধন হল সেই নারীশক্তি অর্থাৎ বীরাজনার পূজা। অর্থাৎ কৈকেয়ীরও পূজা। ঐ নারী মূর্তি হল কৈকেয়ীর, মৃৎশিল্পীকে বল ওঁকে সুন্দর করে সাজিয়ে ঐ সিংহাসনে বসিয়ে দিতে।

মধুদা তাড়াতাড়ি ফিরে এসে সব কথা বলল শিল্পীদের। শিল্পীরা ঐ মূর্তিটিকে সুন্দর সাজিয়ে সেই শূন্য সিংহাসনে বসিয়ে দিলেন।

এরপর সপ্তমীর দিন অঞ্জলী দিয়ে মাকে প্রণাম করে যেই মা-দুর্গার মুখের দিকে তাকালো, দেখতে পেল কৈকেয়ীর হাসি মুখ। মধুদা অবাক হয়ে চেয়ে দেখতে লাগল।



## অচেনা রবীর আঙ্গিনায়

সুনীল কুমার ঘোষ

T4 4106

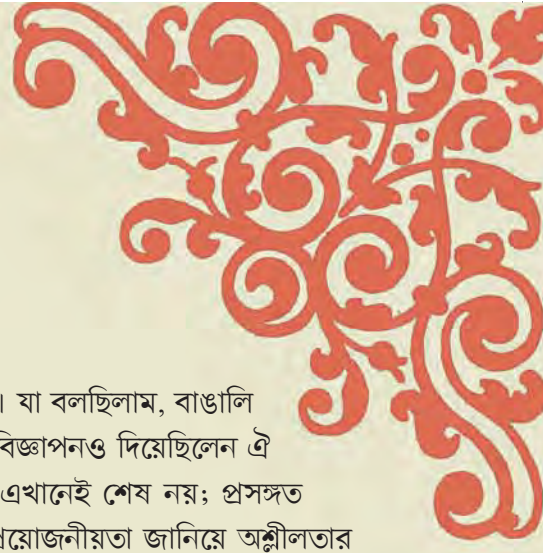
লেখা লেখির নেমস্তন পেলে লোভ সামলাতে পারি না আবার শুরু করলে শেষ করতেও ঝামেলায় পড়ি। তাতে আবার ৫০০ শব্দের দন্ডি। তাই বিশেষ কোনো বিষয়ের কথা না ভেবে মননের শান্তনিকেতন ঘেটে আপাত: অচেনা কিছু লেখার কথাই মনে হলো। এমনিতেই রবি ঠাকুরকে নিয়ে লেখা একটা বাতুলতা, কারণ পিয়াজের খোসার মতো ছড়িয়ে ছড়িয়ে ওনার জীবনীকে সত্য-মিথ্যার মশলায় প্রায় উলঙ্গ করেও ক্ষ্যান্ত দিই নাই, চুল দাড়ি উপড়েও খুঁজেছি আরো কিছু পাওয়া যায় কি না।

যাই হোক, তবুও শান্তনিকেতন আশ্রমের কথা দিয়েই করি। জন-ধারণা, রবি ঠাকুরিই শান্তনিকেতনে বিদ্যালয় স্থাপনের প্রথম উদ্যোগ নেন। এটায় একটা টেকনিক্যাল মিস্টেক আছে। আসলে প্রাথমিক ভাবনা এবং উদ্যোগ নেন ওনার ন-দাদার ছেলে বলেন্দ্র নাথ ঠাকুর। উনি অল্প কালের মধ্যেই মারা গেলে রবি ঠাকুর ওনার অসমাপ্ত কাজের দায়িত্ব নেন এবং মাত্র পাঁচ জন ছাত্র নিয়ে বিদ্যালয় চালু করেন ১৯০১ সালের ২২শে ডিসেম্বর অর্থাৎ ৭ই পৌষ। শান্তনিকেতনের পৌষ মেলাও শুরু হয় ৭ই পৌষ।

এবার আসি ঠাকুর পরিবারের মানুষজনের কথায়। এই যে বাঙ্গালি মেয়েরা আজ তাদের সৌন্দর্য্য এবং সঙ্গে রহস্যও কয়েকগুন বাড়িয়ে তোলেন শাড়ী চাপানোর পর। কিন্তু জানেন কি এই স্টাইলটা আমদানি হয় গুজরাট থেকে এবং সেটা করেন রবিঠাকুরের বৌদি জ্ঞানদানন্দিনী, ওনার স্বামী স্বতেন্দ্র নাথ, আইসিএস, তখন আমেদাবাদে চাকরী সূত্রে। আবার সেই







কোয়াটার্সেই থাকাকালিন রবিঠাকুর তার ক্ষুদিত-পাশানের মশলা পেয়ে গিয়েছিলেন। যা বলছিলাম, বাঙালি মেয়েদের আরো সুন্দরী করে তোলার জন্য উনি নিজের পয়সা খরচ করে কাগজে বিজ্ঞাপনও দিয়েছিলেন ঐ ভাবে শাড়ী পরার অনুরোধ জানিয়ে। মেয়েরা একটু কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাবেন কী? না এখানেই শেষ নয়; প্রসঙ্গত হঠাৎ মনে পড়ে গেলো আরও কয়েকটা কথা সেটাও লিখি। জুতোয় হাইহিলের প্রয়োজনীয়তা জানিয়ে অশ্লীলতার দায়ে পরতে রাজী নই। তবে এটার চল যে প্রায় হাজার বছর আগেই শুরু হয়েছিল সেটা জানতে কোনারক মন্দিরের গায়ে কাঙ্ছিত পুতুলের ভীড়ে খুঁজে দেখতে পারেন। আবার মেয়েদের অবশ্য প্রয়োজনীয় ভ্যানিটি-ব্যাগেরও প্রচলন দেখতে যেতে হবে সুদূর খাজুরাহের মন্দিরে। আজও অতীতের সেই ডিজাইনের কোনো বিশেষ পরিবর্তন না দেখে অবাক হই বইকি!

রবিঠাকুর মানেই আমজনতার কাছে গান, কিন্তু তা নিয়ে বেশি কেলামতি করার সুযোগও কম তাই সংগ্রহ থেকে দু-একটি অল্প পরিচিত তথ্য তুলে ধরছি। সিনেমায় রবীন্দ্র সংগীতের ব্যবহারের প্রথম সূত্রপাত হয় “দুস্তর মত টকি” ছবির মাধ্যমে। এখানে দুটি গান ছিলো “আমার বেলা যে যায় সাঁঝ বেলাতে” এবং “তোমার মোহনরূপে কে রয় ভুলে” এবং গান দুটি গেয়েছিলেন কঙ্কবতী দেবী। অনেক চেষ্টা করেও গুগুলো সংগ্রহ করতে পারিনি - অনুপমদের আলোয় সবই এখন অন্ধকারের সূর্য হয়ে গেছে।

রবিঠাকুর যে নির্ভুলভাবে ভবিষ্যত গনণা করতে পারতেন সে কথা যাঁরা ওনার “তোতা কাহিনী” ইত্যাদি, পড়েছেন তাঁরা জানেন। উনি গনণা করে দেখেছিলেন ভবিষ্যতে সিনেমার মাধ্যমেই মান, অর্থ, যশ এবং আরো অনেক কিছুই পাওয়া সহজ হবে। সে মতো উনি গান-গল্প লেখার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে চিত্রনাট্য লেখা, ডাইরেক্টর হওয়া, অভিনয় এবং গান করার মহড়া শুরু করে দিলেন। এখন কিছু উদাহরণ দেবার দায়।

ওনার লেখা “মেঘ ও রৌদ্র আদলে “গিরিবালা” ছবিটি তৈরি হয়। সেটার পরিচালক মধু বসু নিজেই একটি চিত্রনাট্য লিখে গর্বিত চিন্তে কবিকে দেখাতে যান। কিন্তু রবি ঠাকুরের ওটা পছন্দ না হওয়ায় নিজেই কালি-কলম নিয়ে বসে গেলেন। বিস্তর কালি খরচের পর খোল-নলচে পাল্টানো চিত্রনাট্য দেখে মধু বাবু আনন্দে এতটাই আত্মহারা হয়েছিলেন যে ওটা উনি ওনার ব্যক্তিগত সংগ্রহেই রেখে দিয়েছিলেন। রবিঠাকুরের এই নতুন কন্মোর কথা গোপন থাকে নি। কবি যখন জার্মানীতে যান ওখানকার বিখ্যাত “উফা কোম্পানী” ওনার ঘাড়ে চেপে ওনাকে দিয়ে “দি চাইল্ড” নামে একটি ছবির শুধু চিত্রনাট্যই নয় আবৃত্তি ও গান গাইয়েও ছেড়েছিলো। যাই হোক এরপর “অল্ ইন ওয়ান” হওয়ার বাসনায় “তপতী” ছবির চিত্রনাট্য লেখেন, ডাইরেক্ট করেন এবং অভিনয়ও করেন। কিন্তু মাত্র তিন রীল তোলার পরই উনি বিদেশে যান এবং ছবিটিরও বন্দি দশা আর কোনদিন ঘোঁচে নি। এর পরেও উনি “নটীর পূজা” তে নির্দেশনার কাজ করেন কিন্তু ছবিটি পাবলিক খায় নি। কিন্তু তা বলে কি রবিঠাকুরকে ঠেকানো যায়! এরপর উনি নিজেই একটি ফিল্ম কোম্পানী খুলে ফেলেছিলেন। যাইহোক সে কথা অনেক লম্বা, এখন থাক। বরঞ্চ এসব ব্যাপারে ওনার শেষ উপলক্ষিটা জানাই। মৃত্যুর কয়েকমাস আগে উনি শান্তিদেব ঘোষকে চিঠি লিখে জানিয়েছিলেন “এই আশ্রমেই তুই মানুষ। সিনেমা প্রভৃতির সংস্পর্শে কোনো গুরুতর লোভেও নিজেকে যদি অশুচি করিস তাহলে আমার প্রতি ও আশ্রমের প্রতি অপমানের কলঙ্ক দেয়া হবে।” সিনেমার কথা তত:পর শেষ; এবার অন্য আঙ্গিকে যাই।

রবিঠাকুরের বিষাদ ভরা জীবনের কথা অল্পবিস্তর সবাই জানি। কিন্তু ওনার মননে রসের ভিয়েন সব সময়ই টগ্‌ব্‌গ্‌ করে ফুটতো আর সুযোগ পেলেই তা প্রয়োগ করতেন এবং করতেন ক্যান্ডিডলি। টক-টাইম শেষের দিকে তাই চট্‌ জলদি দু-একটি নমুনা মাত্র নিবেদন করছি।

ড: কালিদাস নাগ একজন সেকালের ডাকসাইটে গণিত বিশারদ। গুরু গস্তীর মানুষ, থাকতেন ওনার মামার কোয়াটার্সে, চিড়িয়াখানার মধ্যে। উনি রবিঠাকুরের খুবই স্নেহভাজন এবং ওনার কাছ থেকে নিয়মিত চিঠিও পেতেন। চিঠির বক্তব্য খুবই কাঙ্ক্ষিত হলেও ঠিকানার শেষ লাইনটা দেখে ওনার খুব মনকষ্ট হতো। রবিঠাকুর লিখতেন “Dr. Kalidas Nag; Zoological Garden (Human Section)”.

সে সময় বিচিত্রায় অনুষ্ঠানের কালে মাঝে মাঝেই জুতো চুরির চল ছিল। একবার শরৎচন্দ্র ওনার জুতো জোড়া কাগজে মুড়ে বগল দাবা করে রবিঠাকুরের পাশে গিয়ে বসলেন। উনি বস্তুর দিকে দৃষ্টিপাত করেই জিজ্ঞেস করলেন “ওটা কি বই শরৎ? পাদুকা পুরাণ বুঝি?”

সেবার মংপুর বাড়িতে রবিঠাকুর খেতে বসেছেন, সামনে বসে আছেন বনমালী - ওনার বিশ্বস্ত ভৃত্য। পরিবেশনায় মৈত্রেরী দেবী। হঠাৎ রবিঠাকুর জিজ্ঞেস করলেন কি রে বনমালী খাওয়া দাওয়া কেমন চলছে? আজে ভালোই, দিদিমণি আবার আমায় দুধও খাওয়াচ্ছেন। কবি হেসে ফেললেন; বললেন “দুধ খাওয়াচ্ছেন কেন, তার চেয়ে দুধ মাখালে পারতেন, খেয়ে তো তোর রং এর বিশেষ উন্নতি হচ্ছে না।”

রবি ঠাকুর পিঠে পায়ের খেতে খুব ভালবাসতেন। এ ব্যাপারটা বহুল প্রচারিত না হলেও আমি রাণী চন্দ্রের মুখেও শুনেছি। যাইহোক, এক সুন্দরী আশ্রমিক নিজের হাতে পিঠে - পুলি বানিয়ে কবিকে পাঠিয়েছেন - আশ্রাদন নেবার অনুরোধ সহ। পরেরদিন উনি স্বয়ং এসেছেন কেমন হয়েছে জানতে এবং কবি প্রশংসা জানিয়েছিলেন কবিতার মাধ্যমে। শুনবেন? শুনুন তবে সেই কবিতা।

লৌহ কঠিন প্রস্তর কঠিন আর কঠিন ইস্টক,  
তার অধিক কঠিন কণ্ঠে তোমার হাতের পিস্টক।





## স্বপ্ন হলেও সত্যি

গৌরি বিশ্বাস

T7 801

ইশ্বর সত্যি আছেন কি নেই, তা নিয়ে প্রথম জীবনে মনে কখনও কোনও প্রশ্ন জাগেনি। কিন্তু বিয়ের কিছুদিন পর থেকেই আমি রাত্রে মাঝে মাঝেই বিশেষ একটা স্বপ্ন দেখতাম। আমি যেন বহুদূরে সম্পূর্ণ অপরিচিত কোন জায়গায় গেছি। সেখানে চোখ জুড়নো সুবম্য সব দেব মন্দির। অপূর্ব কারুকার্য সে সব মন্দির গায়ে। আমি মন্দির থেকে মন্দিরে ক্রমাগত ঘুরে বেড়াচ্ছি, ধূপ ধূনোর সৌরভে আচ্ছন্ন, আমোদিত, মন্দিরগুলোর ভেতরে বিগ্রহের সামনে দাঁড়িয়ে নিবিষ্ট চিত্তে সন্ধ্যারতি দেখছি। শেষ পর্যন্ত ঘুরতে ঘুরতে একসময় সমুদ্রতটে অবস্থিত এক মন্দিরে প্রবেশ করেছি। সেই মন্দিরে সম্পূর্ণ অচেনা, পূর্বে অদেখা এক শায়িত দেবমূর্তি দেখে বিস্মিত হয়ে জিজ্ঞেস করছি, “ইনি কোন দেবতা”? পাশ থেকে পূজারি গোছের একজন বলে উঠল, “ইনি হলেন অলপ্ত শয়নে বিষ্ণু”।

এর কিছুদিন পরেই হঠাৎ আমাদের দুজনের দক্ষিণাত্যে যাওয়ার একটি প্রোগ্রাম হল। দীর্ঘদিন সেখানে থেকে রামেশ্বরম, কন্যাকুমারি, পক্ষীতীরথম, ত্রিচী, তাজর ইত্যাদি কোথায় যে না গেলাম। ঘুরতে ঘুরতে তারপরে একদিন সমুদ্রতটে অবস্থিত এক মন্দিরে প্রবেশ করে আমি সহস্য স্তম্ভিত ও হতবাক হয়ে গেলাম। সেই মন্দিরের ভেতর আমার স্বপ্নে দেখা হুবহু সেই শায়িত দেববিগ্রহটি। আচমকা আমি বলে উঠলাম, “ইনি কোন দেবতা”? ঠিক সেই স্বপ্নের মতই কেউ একজন পাশ থেকে উত্তর দিল, “ইনি হলেন অলপ্ত শয়নে বিষ্ণু”।

ঐ ঘটনার পর প্রায় চল্লিশ বছর অতিক্রান্ত হতে চলল। জানি না এখন সেই বিশেষ মূর্তিটির অস্তিত্ব সেখানে আছে কিনা। কারণ সপ্ত প্যাগোডার দেশ মহাবালিপুর্মে এখন নাকি শুধু একটি প্যাগোডাই অবশিষ্ট রয়েছে। বাকি ছটিকেই গ্রাস করে নিয়েছে সমুদ্র।

কিন্তু যে মূর্তি আমি আগে কখনও দেখিনি, যার বর্ণনা আমি ইতিপূর্বে কোথাও পিনি, সেই দেবমূর্তিটি স্বপ্নে দেখার সৌজন্য আমার কি করে হয়েছিল, তা আজও আমি জানি না। শুধু এটুকু মাত্র বলতে পারি যে, যুক্তি তর্কের উর্দেও কিছু জিনিস আছে যা আমার মতো সাধারণ মানুষ ব্যাখ্যা করে বোঝাতে অক্ষম।

স্বপ্নে দেখা দেবতা বিষ্ণুর ধাতু মূর্তির কথা আমার যদিও অজানাই ছিল কিন্তু ইতিপূর্বে অলপ্ত শয়নে বিষ্ণুর কটি ছবি আমি বহু পূর্বেই দেখেছিলাম।





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## DEAR FANTA

Anoushka Saha (12 years)  
T1 3504

I woke up one morning  
To see a fur ball in the house  
Snowy white with black stripes  
Looking as tiny as a mouse  
Hiding in my mother's lap

Peeping out once in a while  
Showing its dark, round eyes  
Wearing whiskers in style

When we put her on the floor  
She ran to lean against the wall  
She thought she couldn't stand herself  
She feared she would fall

Her whimper was so soft and timid  
Her presence was hardly felt  
She would come out of her corner  
Only when food was smelt

Now it's been a few months  
And the mouse has become a tigress  
She has taken over the house  
And sits on sofas like the mistress

She's first to answer the door bell  
You can't be faster than her gallop  
She brings the house down with her barking  
If she doesn't get her scallop

She's the life of our house now  
We call her 'Dear Fanta'  
She's my little Shih Tzu  
An early gift from Santa!

## THE LIFE

Purnendu Maji  
T7 2203

Thou made the earth and the sun as round  
There no West and There no East  
We made that division on ground  
For our benefit and for our fight  
  
We can call the east as west  
And make the west as east also.  
Sun will forever give us the best  
There will be no change in sunshine though  
Life is all about perception we create  
To some it is east and to some it is west

## THE VIRUS

Sarah Raghav (12yrs)  
T1 2901

I woke up one day and saw an undefeatable ghost,  
Against its power and strength, we were all toast.  
It may be small, but doubt it not,  
For under its toes, it had the world caught.  
I'm afraid to touch you, for you may be the ghoul,  
The merciless creature, who's far too cruel.  
As we're stuck in our homes, I just wanted to say,  
One day the ghost will go away  
More than anything else,  
We wished to stop the deaths.  
So we finally waged war,  
And hoped for success.  
And now I know, we'll get through the crisis,  
Created by this ghost we call 'the Virus'.





## REFLECTIONS

Jyoti Kumar

T1 1103

*Reflections is a small poem which portrays the picture I have painted, thinking about how every day passes by with the hope that one day Covid will disappear from the face of earth and life will be the same again. Faith is our greatest strength when we believe that no matter how stormy the night is, the Sun always rises ...*

Waking up with the bright morning Sun,  
I bath, pray and do my Meditation.  
With Shraddha n Samarpan guiding my way,  
Am rejuvenated n ready for the day!!

The family joins for the morning tea ,  
Talking about their hopes n the dreams they see,  
And I call my parents n children to know that am there,  
Though separated by distance, they are always in my prayers.

Google has made cooking easy for simple cooks like me,  
Love is the special ingredient I use for every recipe.  
During Cleaning chores many stories the house helps share,  
Realize it's not always money they need,  
Just someone to tell them ' We care ...'

Some hours are just as crazy as they can be ,  
With online meetings feel like a monkey jumping from tree to tree.  
So I relax in the evening with a book n my favourite coffee,  
Or listen to good old music, letting some things just be...

At night after dinner I reflect on the day that's gone,  
Having given my best, has everything planned been done?  
Lying down on my bed, place my head at ' Sri Krishna's' feet,  
Happy n content at the World's most peaceful retreat!!







## PARENTS

Ashish Jhunjunwalla  
T4 2604

Parents are always there  
Always letting you know they care  
In the darkness they are the light,  
They can make even the darkest days bright.  
Earwigs, roaches and spiders, they're not scared of any  
For our happiness they'd trade every penny.  
They scare away the monsters from beneath our bed,  
'I'll love you forever' they've often said.  
They also nag and give us curfews  
More and more responsibilities to review  
'No going on dates till you're 16'  
When you go out fill the car with gasoline  
They always tell us to shoot for the stars,  
Who knew love could be so hard?  
No matter how much you hated them  
and thought they were wrong,  
You still miss them when they are gone.  
Parents will forever be our friends,  
And love us unconditionally till the end.

## ALWAYS

Aishi Arjun  
T4 1302

Just be my sunshine, unfathomable blue sky in my life  
Vast expanse of our universe, can feel  
through your evergreen love  
Which ALWAYS makes me thrive...  
Love was ALWAYS there and will be  
Forever n ever n ever be  
Stretched beyond eternity...  
Me, a miniscule dot swell like the gigantic waves  
Deepest core of my being  
Developing them in concaves  
At times it thrashes, lashes  
At the sea-shore of my existence  
Gives a way to all the black and blues in a consistence...  
Else engulfing me, overwhelming me  
Like the pristine moonlight of the full-moon  
Helps me in feeling a oneness with you  
In a turbulent twirling swoon...  
You, who is ALWAYS holding me there  
As I bounce n sway in all the ups n downs  
Along the journey in this incandescent atmosphere...





## WHAT NOW MR. VIRUS

Divya Gupta (12yrs)  
T6 3603

I get it, you're thinking, "what now Mr.Virus?"  
No plusses, no pros, everything's just a minus  
Stock market crashing, economies destroyed  
So many people have been left unemployed  
So Mr.Virus, has your rage settled down?  
Because all that is left of the world is a frown  
Vacations, cancelled, parties, gone  
Yet your germs seem simply to re-spawn  
Now life seems eventless, like a blackhole  
It seems like the world spiraled out of control  
Doctors are working harder than ever  
But what do kids do when there's nothing to endeavor?  
You like to infect people, isn't that true?  
Well look what you've caused, a worldwide curfew  
Guess what Mr.Virus, we've had quite enough  
You think you're a king now, but we're pretty tough  
So, Mr.Virus, soon it'll be the end of your reign,  
And you'll be begging for mercy as you go down the drain.

## HOW LOCKDOWN CHANGED OUR LIVES

Aanya Sinha  
T1 2703

Before this Pandemic,  
It was no big deal when we were sick.  
Now when we leave our house,  
And stay as careful as a mouse,  
It is our task  
To wear a mask  
And stay away,  
But it is better to stay  
In one place  
And go slow, as life is not a race.  
We need to cover our faces,  
So that we don't contribute to the  
million Covid cases.  
We need to follow all precautions,  
And pace with consideration.

We need to learn to adjust.  
And this time, it is a must.  
In this new normal, we need to know  
How to live and how to grow.







## OUR CHANGING HOME

Saamya Sinha (12 yrs)

T1 2703

Every time, every day until this year,  
Urbana used to be filled with sounds, something I loved to hear.  
Aunties and Uncles used to sit in the park,  
Laughter used to echo around until it was dark.  
Music used to play, bells were rung,  
Prayers of puja, together they were sung.  
Dances were prepared from July to October,  
New clothes were bought, so that we could welcome our mother.  
Pandals were built, with care and dedication,  
This used to be for our much awaited celebration.  
But how in these 6 months this place has become,  
Quiet and so unlike our bustling home.  
As I look at the park I see no one,  
It feels like all the Urbanites have gone.  
But I know in times so tough,  
We have each other, that is enough.  
We might not meet, like we used to do,  
We might be sad or feeling very blue.  
These times are scary and might continue for long,  
But we have each other, and our bond is strong.  
If help is needed, just a call,  
And a hundred Urbanites will protect you from your fall.  
These times are difficult, like a god given test,  
But remember with each other we are at our best.





## **THIS WILL HAPPEN AGAIN.....**

Nisha Jhunjhunwalla

T4 2604

In hathras, cops barricade a raped woman's home  
Hijack her corpse, set it afire on a murderous night.  
Deaf to her mother's howling pain. In a land where  
Dalits cannot rule, they cannot rage or even mourn.  
This has happened before, this will happen again

What does that fire remember ? the scam of satis  
Dragged to their husbands pyres and brides burnt alive  
The walls of caste-crossed lovers put to death.  
The tongue-chopped shrieking of raped women  
This has happened before , this will happen again

Manu said once, so his dickheads repeat today,  
All women are harlots, all women are base  
All women seek is sex, all they shall have is rape  
Manu gives men a licence plate, such rape -mandate  
This has happened before, this shall happen again

This has happened before, this shall happen again  
Santana, the only law of the land that's in force  
Santana, where nothing, nothing ever will change  
Always, always a victim-blaming slut-template  
A rapist shielding police state, a caste denying fourth estate

This has happened before , this shall happen again







## काली हूँ मैं

Jyoti Malhotra

T6 701

रंग फबेगा लाल ना मुझ पे,  
काली हूँ, मैं काली हूँ।  
सौंदर्य प्रसाधन जंचते ना मुख पे,  
काली हूँ, मैं काली हूँ।  
राधा रानी का पात्र ना दो तुम,  
काली हूँ, मैं काली हूँ।  
आ भी गईं गर प्रथम कक्षा में,  
कहने को नहीं कुछ वर्ण रक्षा में।  
खेल कूद में अक्वल आई,  
घर में फिर भी खुशी ना छाई।  
बी.ए.एम.ए. पास किया तो भी,  
सर्वश्रेष्ठ खिताब लिया तो भी।  
लड़के वालों ने फेल किया है,  
असुन्दर का ताज दिया है।  
वर संग यह वधू नहीं सजेगी,  
बेमेल है जोड़ी, नहीं जंचेगी।  
सखियाँ भी करती हैं ठिठोली,  
कड़वी लगती उनकी बोली।  
कृष्ण हूँ मैं, संहार करूँगी,  
भेदभाव का विनाश करूँगी।  
श्यामा द्रौपदी बन सकती हूँ,  
विध्वंसकारी विस्फोट कर सकती हूँ।  
रंग रूप तो सब माया है,  
चाणक्य ज्ञान ने सिखलाया है।  
बुद्धिमता चक्र बना सकती हूँ,  
अभिमान अभिमन्यु हरा सकती हूँ।  
श्वेत का नहीं अभिमान करो तुम,  
अर्थहीन चश्मे का त्याग करो तुम।  
सशक्त आज की नारी हूँ,  
फिर क्या हुआ अगर काली हूँ।

## दिल की कलम से

Ajay Agarwal

T4 3303

इश्क़ का जुनून कुछ इस कदर था यारों  
ना पूछो हाले दिल अपना  
की अगर वो मोहब्बत नहीं  
नफ़रत होती...  
तो भी हमें उनकी नफ़रत से  
मोहब्बत होती।  
यह कैसा इत्तेफ़ाक़ है जिंदगी  
की तू और मैं दोनों खुश है  
यह बात और है की तू गम देकर खुश है  
और मैं गम लेकर खुश हूँ।  
तुझे खोने के डर से तुझे पाना कैसे छोड़ दूँ,  
तेरी रुसवाई के डर ने बाँध दी बेड़िया पैरों में  
वरना इन मोहब्बत की गालियों से आना जाना कैसे छोड़ दूँ।





## मज़ा ही कुछ और है

Rakesh Gupta

T6 3603

वक्त वेवक्त, वक्त की दुहाई देते हैं जो  
कभी वेवक्त में वक्त निकाल कर तो देखो  
वक्त पे बादशाही करने का मजा ही कुछ और है।

पल, हर पल, दुसरो का साथ ढुँढ़ते हैं जो  
खुद से चंद लम्हे साथ बिता कर तो देखो  
खुद में खुदा देखने का मजा ही कुछ और है।

मक्सदी दुनिया में, मंजिलें तलाशते हैं जो  
कभी बेमक्सद भी फूर्सा के देखो  
बेमंजिल जीने का मज़ा ही कुछ और है।

तखतो ताज और बादशाही पे इतराते हैं जो,  
कभी फकिरियात भी तो देखी होती  
दिलों पे हुकुमत करने का मज़ा ही कुछ और है  
लम्बी गाड़ियों और तेज विमानों में फिरते हैं जो  
कभी धरा पर नंगे पाँव चल कर तो देखो  
जिंदगी को जिस्म से महसूस करने का मज़ा ही कुछ और है।

बंद तिजोरियों को गुल्लक बनाये बैठे हैं जो  
कभी दोनों हाथों से लूटा कर तो देखो  
निःस्वार्थ दुआयें बटोरने का मज़ा ही कुछ और है।

## मेरा घर

Meenakshi Bhuwalka

T2 3401

मेरा घर केवल घर ना हो  
वह तो प्रेम का मंदिर हो  
बोली में सब के प्रेम की मिठास हो  
विचारों में प्रेम की सुगंध हो  
दिल इतना बड़ा हो कि  
सारा जग समा जाए उसमें  
समस्त देवी संपदाओं का  
पितरों का घर में निवास हो  
सुबह मंदिर के घंटियों की ध्वनि  
शाम को घर में शंखनाद हो  
हँसी की आवाज की गुंजन हो आँगन में  
और मस्ती में भरा सारा परिवार हो  
मेहमानों का घर में सत्कार हो  
आपस में सबके सदभावना हो  
ऊँच नीच की बातों से परे हो  
जहाँ बच्चों को प्यार, बड़ों का सम्मान हो  
मेरा घर केवल घर ना हो  
प्रेम प्रतीक का वह मंदिर हो।







WITH BEST COMPLIMENTS  
FROM

SUBRATA SOUND  
&  
ELECTRICAL WORKS



## শান্তির আরাধনা

রত্না ঘোষ  
T5 2401

পূজা মানেই নীল আকাশে শরৎ মেঘের ভেলা, পূজা মানে কাশের বনে মন মাতোয়ারা।  
পূজা মানেই শিউলি ফুলের গন্ধ বিভোর, পূজা মানেই নূতন শাড়ির ভাঁজ, শিশির ভেজা সকাল বেলার ঘাস,  
মন খারাপের ভাবনা যেন, আনতে মনে মানা। মা আসছে মা আসছে, মনে খুশির আনা গোনা।

এবার পূজা কেমন যেন মন খই-খই জল,  
অনেক কিছুর বিয়োগ ব্যাথায় নিঃস্ব পরিজন।  
কেমন যেন উদাস হওয়া, জানান দিচ্ছে রোজ,  
পূজা মানেই সাবধানতা, সতর্কতা, ভালোবাসার নেই তো কোনো খোঁজ।

দোলায় আসা, গজে যাওয়া তোমার নেই তো কোনো বদল,  
ধরার বুকে পরিষেবা বন্ধ কিংবা খোলা,  
হোলদোল নেই কি তোমার তাদের কথা ভাবার,  
আগমনীর গানে আজ শঙ্কাভরা মন,  
কেমন করে করবে তারা খুশির আয়োজন।  
কোথাও তাই বাজছে না আর, পূর্ণ প্রাণে খুশির কোনো মাদল।

তবুও কেন অস্ত্রে তুমি, শান দিচ্ছে রোজ,  
উঁচিয়ে ধর ত্রিশূল এবার মারণ থাবা রুখতে  
তোমার হাতেই বধিয়া তুমি ক্ষুদ্র ভাইরাসকে।

দশভূজা দুর্গা তুমি শক্তিরূপী, শান্তিরূপী প্রতিবাদী কন্যা,  
তোমার হাতেই লুকিয়ে আছে, সুখশান্তির বার্তা,  
এবার তুমি ফিরিয়ে দাও, বিশ্ব মাঝে স্বস্তিসুখের মাত্রা,  
আলোর রেখায় ঝলমলে সেই সকাল, আর সোনালি সন্ধ্যা।  
রংহীন মন রাঙিয়ে দিতে এস মা, রঙের প্রলেপ হাতে,  
খুশির হাওয়া ছুটক সবার প্রাণেপ্রাণে, মনেমনে।







## বন্ধুত্বের মধুর ছোঁয়া

গৌরী ভাওয়াল

T1 2503

সূর্যোদয়ের শীতল রশ্মির পরশে  
কিছু মনেরা যেন শুনতে পায়  
মন অনুভবের বার্তা, হরষে!

নেই কোনো রাগ অভিমানের পালা,  
যেন এক সূত্রে বাঁধা সুগন্ধী মালা।  
মনে এক অদ্ভুত শিহরণ জাগে কৌতুহলে,  
কোনো বন্ধন নিশ্চিত ছিল পূর্বজনমে।  
এ বন্ধুত্বের নেই কোনো সময়ের বিচার-  
নব আর পুরাতন, মিলেমিশে একাকার।

শীতল হাওয়ার ছোঁয়ায়  
যোগ ব্যায়ামের রীতি মেনে  
প্রশ্বাস ও নিঃশ্বাসের তালে তালে  
সবাই কিভাবে মিলেমিশে গেল কে জানে।

কখনো নাচ কখনো বা গানের সুরেতে  
ডানা মেলে নীল আকাশে ওড়ার ফাঁকেতে  
সুখ-দুখের হাজারো গল্প নিয়ে,  
পরশের ছোঁয়া দিল যেন এক 'মা' –  
নিজের আঁচল দিয়ে।

জন্মদিনের তিথিতে মেতে ওঠা শত কলরবে-  
নিয়ে মিষ্টি আর নোনতার ডালি সগৌরবে।  
হবেনা বিচার এই বন্ধুত্বের কোনো মাপকাঠিতে  
আয় জুড়ে থাকি সবে-  
এমন প্রাণ খোলা খিলখিলে হাসিতে॥

## কে আমি?

কল্যানব্রত সরকার

T4 4103

অচেনার খোঁজে পথহারা আমি পথিক  
উথাল পাথাল সমুদ্রের বুকে দুঃসাহসী নাবিক  
মরুতৃষ্ণা লয়ে বুকে – আমি মর পথযাত্রী  
একাকীত্বের কষ্ট লয়ে বুকে – আমি অভিশপ্ত রাত্রি

আমি ফসলকাটা শূন্য মাঠের ছবি-  
আমি উন্মাদ – আমি বিনিদ্র রাতের কবি  
শহর থেকে দূরে অনাদরে পড়ে থাকা মেঠো ফুল  
প্রেমের কাঙ্গাল আমি – জেনে শুনে করি ভুল

আমি শরতের নীল আকাশ – নীলকন্ঠ পাখি  
প্রবাসী বন্ধুর চিঠি – বোনের আদরের রাখী  
আমি সদ্য ফোঁটা প্রথম কদম ফুলের গন্ধ-  
আমি বাঁধন হারা – লোকে বলে আমি মন্দ

এলোমেলো হাওয়ায় ভাসা আমি ভোকাটা এক ঘুড়ি  
আকাশ ছোঁয়ার ইচ্ছে নিয়ে দুর্গম শিখরে চড়ি  
আমি শিকল-ছেড়া-উন্মাদ- আমি বন্য  
একদিন ধুম কেতুর মত ছুটে আসবো-  
শুধু তোমারই জন্য



## দুর্গা পূজা ১৪২৭

শিশির চক্রবর্তী

T5 1003

ছ' মাস ধরে বিশ্বজগৎ  
করে লন্ড ভন্ড  
আশ মেটেনি, এখন আসছে  
করতে পূজো পণ্ড।  
চুলকে মাথা ভাবছে সবাই  
পূজোর ভবিষ্যৎ—  
ক্রমে ক্রমে নানান মুনি  
দিলো নানান মত।  
কেউ বললো, এই বছরে  
থাকনা পূজো বন্ধ,  
নমো নমো করেই সারো—  
কারো কথায় দ্বন্দ্ব।  
কেমন লাগবে এমন পূজো—  
মণ্ডপটাই খালি,  
কারোর মতে হোকনা পূজো  
এবার ভাচুয়ালি।  
ভেবে চিন্তে অনেক কিছু  
ঠিক করলো সবাই—  
লকডাউনের নিয়ম মেনেই  
পূজো হওয়া চাই।  
মুখটি ঢেকে করবে পুরুত  
পূজোর অনুষ্ঠান,  
দর্শনার্থী সবাই যেন  
মুখোশ পরে যান।  
এবার প্রশ্ন, কেমন করে  
রক্ষা করবো মাকে  
থাবা যখন করোনাসুর  
মারছে যাকে তাকে।  
কথাতো নয় মায়ের একার  
চার সন্তান সাথে,

পাঁচ পাঁচটি বাহন তাদের  
জুড়তে হবে তাতে,  
কলা বউ আর অসুর নিয়ে  
সব সুদ্ধ বারো—  
ডজন খানেক মাস্ক লাগবে  
বুঝতেইতো পারো।  
প্রতিমাতে মাস্ক পরালে  
নিয়ম পালন খাঁটি  
কিন্তু মায়ের মুখটি ঢাকা—  
মজা খানাই মাটি।  
দু' মানুষের মাঝে দু'গজ  
বিধান মানতে হবে,  
মণ্ডপেতে দশবিশ জন  
ভক্ত কেবল রবে।  
তা নয় হলো – এবার কিন্তু  
ঠাকুর একচালায়,  
তাহলেই তো মায়ের দলের  
বিধি ভাঙার দায়।  
মাথার মধ্যে ঘুরছে এসব  
ভাবনা হাবিজাবি,  
এমন সময় পড়লো মনে  
সমাধানের চাবি।  
চপ্তীতে তো লেখাই আছে,  
আবার অসুর এলে  
রক্ষা করতে মা আসবেন,  
বিপদ দেবেন ঠেলে।  
মায়ের কৃপায় করোনাসুর  
বিনাশ হয়ে যাক,  
যেমন ছিলো মায়ের পূজো  
সেই রকমই থাক।







## এবারের আগমনী (২০২০)

সন্ধ্যা ভট্টাচার্য্য

T1 503

মাগো! এই একটি বছর  
বেশ তো ছিলে কৈলাসে!  
দুখী হয়ে যাবে মা  
এবারে মর্তে এসে।  
বছরে চারটি দিন  
পিত্রালয়ে আসার  
কত না উৎসাহ, উদ্দীপনা  
ও আগ্রহ থাকে কন্যার!  
তোমার ভক্তরাও থাকে  
অধীর অপেক্ষায়  
তৃপ্ত হয় একটি বছর পর  
তোমাকে দেখায়।  
কত না প্রস্তুতি চলে  
সানন্দে কতদিন ধরে-  
কৈলাস হতে মর্তে আসবে  
মা সপরিবারে।  
দেশজুড়ে কত না সাজসজ্জা  
মায়ের অভিনন্দনে  
দেশবাসীরাও মেতে ওঠে  
মায়ের বন্দন গানে।  
এবারে এসে আমাদের সাথে  
কী দৃশ্য দেখবে মা -!  
এবারে তো আশংকা ছিল-  
তোমার পূজা হবে কিনা!  
আপাতত: হচ্ছে পূজা  
কোন কোন স্থানে;  
যদি দুর্গতি দূর হয় -  
মায়ের শুভাগমনে।  
হবেনা সেই সমারোহ,  
থাকবে না সেই জৌলুস;  
বন্ধ বছজনের রোজগার;  
কেউ নেই দিলখুশ।  
মাগো! এবারে এসে  
দেখবে মানুষের দূরবস্থা;

করোনা ক্লিষ্ট দেশবাসীর  
দুঃখ, দুর্ভোগ ও হতাশা।  
দেখবে সকলের মুখে মাস্ক,  
আর দূরে দূরে থাকা।  
নেই একসাথে ওঠা বসা,  
নেই কোন ঘনিষ্ঠতা।  
যায় না কেউ কারোর বাড়ী,  
শুধু ফোনে ফোনে কথা;  
বন্ধ স্কুল, কলেজ, শপিং মল -  
চারিদিকে কেমন নিস্তব্দতা।  
মানুষের দুর্গতি দেখে মা  
তোমার চোখে আসবে জল,  
কারোর নেই আনন্দ - শুধু  
আশংকা ও ব্যথিত অন্তঃস্থল।  
মাগো! এবার নিখন করো  
ভয়ংকর করোনাসুর;  
যে প্রাণ নিয়েছে অগণিত-  
যে নির্দয় ও নিষ্ঠুর।  
মাগো! প্রতি বছর আসতে-  
কত না ছিল উল্লাস;  
এই প্রাণঘাতী করোনা আবহে  
এবারে নেই তেমন উচ্ছ্বাস।  
মগুপে হবে না কোন অনুষ্ঠান,  
না মিলিত ভোগ গ্রহণ;  
যে যাবে ভয়ে ভয়ে -  
দূরত্ব রেখে - কড়া নির্দেশন।  
দুর্গতিনাশিনী তুমি মা -  
তুমি অসুর বিমর্দিনী;  
প্রণমি তোমায় মাগো -  
তুমি সর্বাশুভ বিনাশিনী।  
শান্তি-মুখ-প্রদায়িনী।  
নমস্তস্যে! নমস্তস্যে! নমস্তস্যে!  
নমো নমঃ ॥





# LASTING IMPRESSIONS

“ It is a press, certainly, but a press from which shall flow in inexhaustible streams... Through it, God will spread His Word. A spring of truth shall flow from it: like a new star it shall scatter the darkness of ignorance, and cause a light heretofore unknown to shine amongst men. ”

- Johannes Gutenberg

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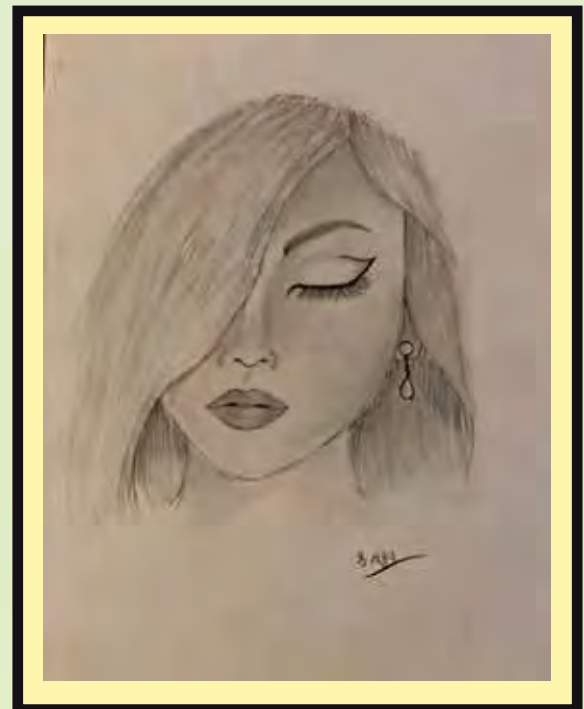
Mom & Child  
Ahana Chatterjee (12 yrs) - T7 1306



Gyana Sharma (5 yrs) - T5 3403



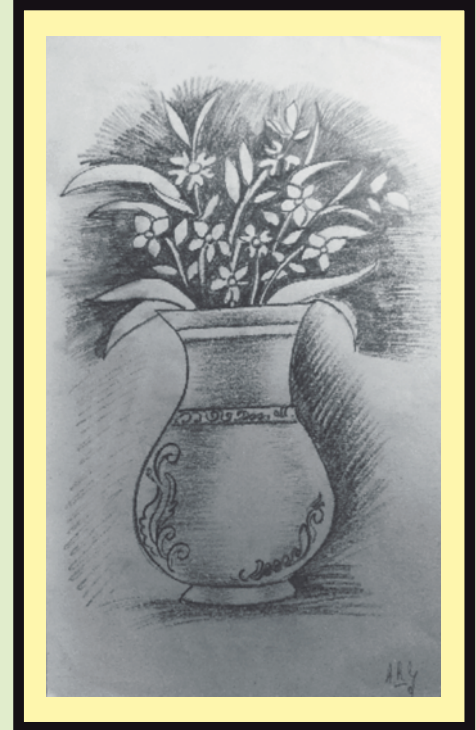
Arshiya Singhi (11yrs) - T7 1103



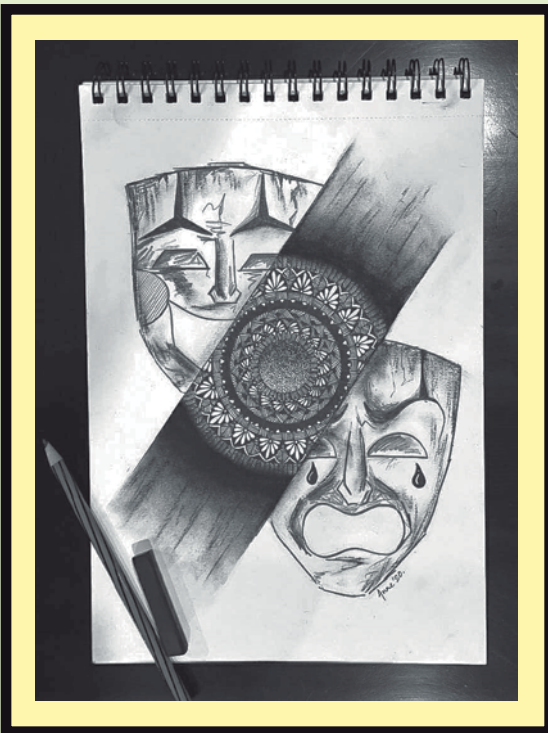
Saga Sharma (10yrs) - T5 3403



Arjun Saraf (7 yrs) - T6 1404



Asmita Roy Goswami (22 yrs) - T7 304



Aneesha Agarwal (19 yrs) - T1 804



Maahir Roy (5 yrs) - T7 2303





Anish Dash (9 yrs) - T4 3804



Vasudev sutam, Archana Singhania - T2 2902





Jeevan Sathi, Gauri Bhowal - T1 2503



Om Shri Ganesh, Tanusree Gupta - T7 206



Seeking for prey, Sampurna Konar (12 yrs)  
T7 3604



Doctors' care for Mother Earth, Tanmay Basu  
T4 4406





Freedom Everyone's Right,  
Shrivi Agarwal (13yrs ) - T5 1204



Tanisha Gupta (17 yrs) - T6 3603



Roshni Roy - T6 4404

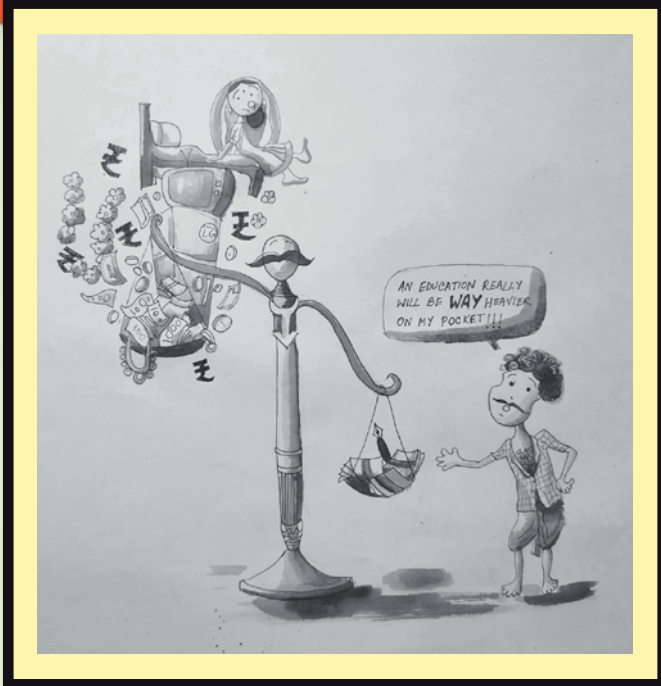


Niyasa Chatterjee (13yrs ) - T7 3103



Mayanshi Gupta (6yrs ) - T7 206





Arushi Chakraborty - T7 1803



Yuvraj Singh (13 yrs) - T7 3106



Subhra Paul - T1 203



Jamini Ray's Peacock,  
Riddhima Chatterjee (8 yrs) - T7 302





Lady Margarete,  
Divya Gupta (12 yrs) - T6 3603



Deafening Silence,  
Megha Saraff (18yrs) - T3 302



King Khan  
Karishma Bhuwalka - T2 3401



Anika Sharma (8 yrs) - T6 301



Meenal Sinha, T7 3602



Medha Gupta (12 Yrs) - T7 206



Peacefully relaxing underwater,  
Sampriiti Konar (10 yrs) - T7 3604





Tanya Sen - T1 1801



Shaurya Dhir (6 yrs) - T6 3902



Bottle art, Tanmay Basu - T4 4406



VISUAL DELIGHT  
AT URBANA  
2020



Photo Courtesy : Sourav Biswas, T4 4304





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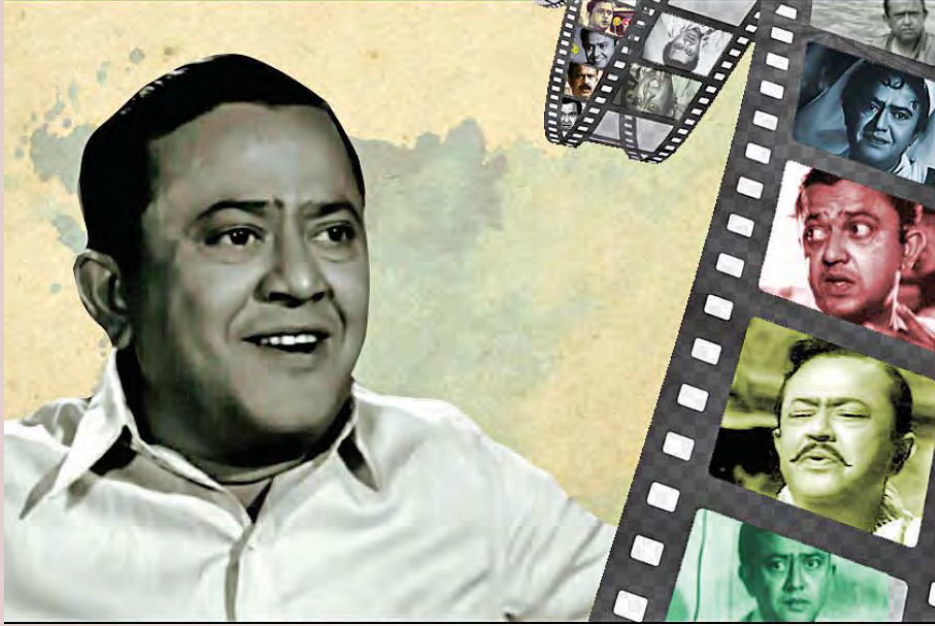
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## জন্মশতবর্ষে প্রখ্যাত অভিনেতা প্রয়াত ভানু বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের স্মৃতিচারণায় পুত্র শ্রী গৌতম বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়



এ বছর আমার বাবার জন্মশতবার্ষিকীতে তাঁর স্মৃতিচারণা করতে পেরে নিজেকে অত্যন্ত গর্বিত বলে মনে হচ্ছে। আমার পিতা ভানু বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় কয়েক দশক ধরে বাংলা তথা সমগ্র ভারতবাসীর অত্যন্ত আদরের শুধু একজন কৌতুক অভিনেতা নন, একজন পূর্ণাঙ্গ শিল্পীও বটে।

আমার বাবা ১৯৪১ এ ঢাকায় অনুশীলন সমিতির ব্রিটিশ বিরোধী কাজের জন্য লুকিয়ে কলকাতায় আসেন, আশ্রয় নেন চারু অ্যাভিনিউতে বোনের বাড়ীতে। পাশের পাড়াতে থাকতেন মানবেন্দ্র মুখোপাধ্যায়ের কাকা সিদ্ধেশ্বর

মুখোপাধ্যায় – যেখানে গান শিখতে আসতেন আমার মা নীলিমা দেবী। চিরকাল শক্ত হাতে মা সংসারের হাল ধরেছেন। সিনেমায় অভিনয় করে ও বাবা ছিলেন রক্ষণশীল ও ঘোর সংসারী। কোনদিন বাড়ীতে মদ্যপান অবধি করেননি স্ত্রী বা সন্তানের সামনে – কারণস্বরূপ মার ঘোর আপত্তি – এমন ই ছিল স্ত্রী ও সন্তানের প্রতি ভালবাসা, শ্রদ্ধা ও দায়িত্ববোধ।

অল্প বয়স থেকেই বাবা ছিলেন বৈজ্ঞানিক সত্যের বসুর একান্ত প্রিয় পাত্র। মাঝে মাঝে ক্লাস পালিয়ে চলে যেতেন সত্যের বসুর পদার্থ বিদ্যার ক্লাশে তার লেকচার শুনতে তখন থেকেই দুজনের আমৃত্যু ভালবাসার সম্পর্কের সূচনা।

বাবার মনে বড় একটা ক্ষোভ ছিল যে আজীবন অভিনয় করেও সত্যজিৎ রায়ের যে কোন ছবিতে তার অভিনয় করা হয়ে ওঠেনি। এই প্রসঙ্গে একটা গল্প বলি –

সোনার কেব্লা ছবির Premier Show র পর কোন সাংবাদিক হঠাৎ ই বাবাকে প্রশ্ন করেন ‘সত্যজিৎ রায়ের ছবিতে আপনি ব্রাত্য কেন?’ – বাবার ঝটপট উত্তর ‘লেখাপড়া’ না জানলে ওনার ছবিতে জায়গা হয় না। কিঞ্চিৎ বিরত রায় মহাশয় – তাড়াতাড়ি উত্তর দিলেন – ‘না না সে রকম কোন ব্যাপার নয়, আমি ওনার অত্যন্ত গুণগ্রাহী, প্রয়োজনে নিশ্চয়ই ব্যবহার করব।

সমস্ত শিল্পীর মনে মনে একটা সুপ্ত কামনা থাকে কোন না কোন দিন রায় পরিবারের একটা ছবি তার ভাগ্যে মিলবে, কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় এত বড় মাপের শিল্পী হয়েও একটা সত্যজিৎ রায় বা ঋত্বিক ঘটকের ছবি আমার বাবার করা হয়ে ওঠেনি। একে ভাগ্যের পরিহাস ছাড়া কি বা বলব?







যদিও তার অভিনীত কোন ছবি দেশী বা বিদেশী কোন তকমা আদায় করেনি কিন্তু তিনি ছিলেন একজন পরিপূর্ণ অভিনেতা, দর্শক তাকে আপন করে নিয়েছে। পেয়েছেন অগনিত মানুষের শ্রদ্ধা, ভালবাসা ও আদর, – একথা বলতে আজ আর কোন বাধা নেই যে বাবা ও জহর রায়ের রসিকতা ছিল বুদ্ধিদীপ্ত তার মধ্যে কোন ভাঁড়ামো বা বাড়াবাড়ি থাকতো না তাই ভানু, জহর আজও অমর।

তাকে যদি শুধু কৌতুক শিল্পী বলা হয় বড় অন্যায্য করা হবে। তার অভিনীত চরিত্রের মধ্যে পাওয়া যায় গভীর জীবন বোধের স্বাক্ষর।

আমাদের দুর্ভাগ্য যে বিশ্বমানের চলচ্চিত্র পরশ পাথরের মতন ছবি হয়ত তিনি পাননি তবু ভানু বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় হাস্যরসের বাইরে গিয়ে চরিত্রাভিনেতা হয়ে উঠেছিলেন।

প্রবীণ বয়সে দুই বন্ধু মিলে ‘ভানু গোয়েন্দা জহর অ্যাসিস্ট্যান্ট’ করার আগে ও ভানু বেশ কিছু অন্য ধারার ছবি ও করেছিলেন।

১৯৬৭ সালে ‘আশিতে আসিওনা’ একসঙ্গে সিরিও কমিক চরিত্র নিয়ে তাঁর তুমুল উৎসাহ ছিল। বাবার অনুরোধেই তার চরিত্র থেকে কমিক অভিনয়ের ভাগ কমিয়ে তা জহর রায়ের অংশে ঢুকিয়ে দেওয়া হয়। কখনো দর্শক মনে করেছে জহর রায় অতি অভিনয় করেছেন কিন্তু অভিযোগ কোনদিনই দর্শক ভানু বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের প্রতি করেননি – এখানেই তাঁর সার্থকতা, তাঁর অভিনয়ের পরিমিতি বোধে দর্শক মুগ্ধ।

বিংশ শতাব্দীর মধ্যভাগের কৌতুক অভিনেতারা তো শুধু কৌতুক পরিবেশন করতেন না, তাঁরা তাদের অভিনীত চরিত্রের মধ্যে নিপুন হস্তে মিশিয়ে দিতেন কৌতুক ও হাস্যরস। তাই তাঁরা হয়ে উঠেছিলেন অনন্য।

অভিনয় জগতে বাবা পেয়েছিলেন আত্মপ্রতিম ছবি বিশ্বাস মহাশয়কে। নানারকম রঙ্গ রসিকতায় ছবি বিশ্বাস ও বাবা নাট্যমঞ্চকে করে তুলতেন জীবন্ত আর দর্শক তাড়িয়ে তাড়িয়ে উপভোগ করতেন তাদের অভিনয়ের সমীকরণ যা কখনোই অতি অভিনয় নয় অথচ মার্জিত ও হাস্য রসে পরিপূর্ণ।

চারু অ্যাভিনিউয়ে ভানুর পুরনো বাড়ি এখন ফ্ল্যাটে রূপান্তরিত। তাঁর দেওয়ালে আঁকা ছবিতে তুলসী লাহিড়ী, তুলসী চক্রবর্তী, নবদ্বীপ হালদার, নৃপতি চট্টোপাধ্যায়, জহর রায়, স্নেহভাজন রবিদের সঙ্গেই খোশমেজাজে ভানু। আছেন চার্লি চ্যাপলিনও। কুলীন অভিনেতাদের দলে ভানুর ঠাঁই চিরকালীন।

১৯৬২তে পথ দুর্ঘটনায় ছবি বিশ্বাসের অকালপ্রয়াণের দিন ভানুরও সঙ্গে যাওয়ার ছিল। রেডিও নাটক পড়ায় যাওয়া হয়নি। কমেডিয়ান ভানুর শিল্পী-জীবনের ট্র্যাজিডির ছায়া রয়েছে ‘নির্ধারিত শিল্পীর অনুপস্থিতিতে’ ছবিতে। সে ছবি জুড়েও ভানু আর ছবি বিশ্বাস। ভানুর বেদনা তাতে তাঁর ‘ছবিদা’র সংলাপেই মূর্ত- “হাসাও, হাসাও জগৎকে শুধু হাসিয়ে যাও। লোকে জানুক তোমার শোক নেই, নৈরাশ্য নেই, ব্যর্থতা নেই! আছে শুধু ফেনায়িত পুঞ্জ পুঞ্জ হাসি।”

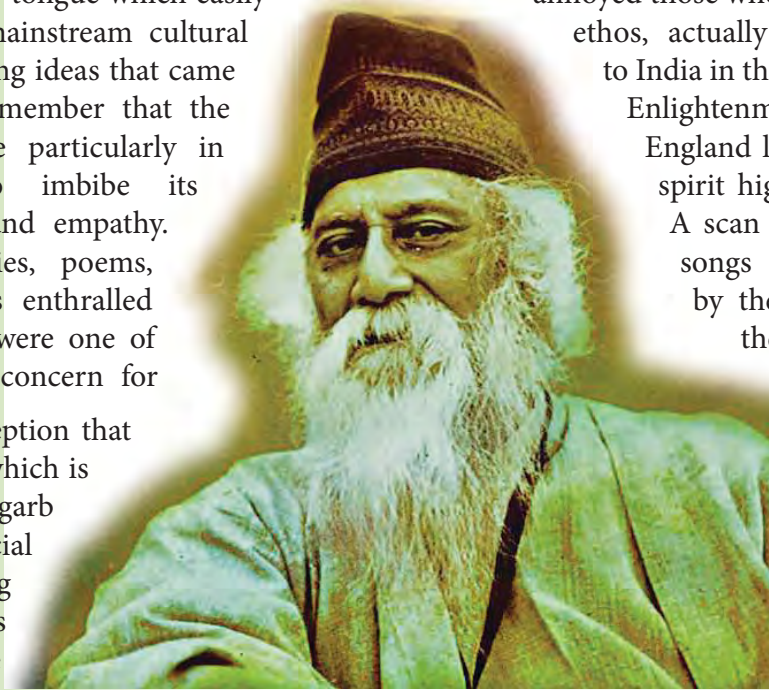




**Bidyut Chakraborty**  
Vice Chancellor - Viswa Bharati, Shantiniketan

## Human Emancipation and Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore

Popularly known as Gurudev, Rabindranath Tagore was born in 1861 and in an affluent family of Calcutta that was also leading voice in Bengal's cultural world. As a cursory look at the members of the family, it can strongly be argued that Tagore family created a new genre of thought that radically altered the cultural voice which was so far considered axiomatic in Bengal. The task was not accomplished so easily. Despite being born in a family that was highly respected, he was subject to humiliation often presumably because of his sharp tongue which easily annoyed those who, in the name of being respectful to the mainstream cultural ethos, actually were determined to halt the new inspiring ideas that came to India in the wake of colonial rule. Here, one must remember that the Enlightenment philosophy which had its appearance particularly in England led many of Gurudev's contemporaries to imbibe its spirit highlighting the vales of compassion, care and empathy. A scan of the bard's writings, novels, short stories, poems, songs and critical essays, reveal that he was enthralled by these values because he believed that they were one of the effective means to evolve a common concern for humanity.



There is a misconception that Gurudev Tagore was merely a poet which is clearly misleading because behind the garb of a poet, there also existed a social reformer who, while challenging the lackadaisical attitude of his brethren, strove to galvanize the people who, by being blind to the Western mode of thinking

as the only organizing tool for freedom, happily forget the repository of knowledge left behind by India's ancient texts. It is fair to argue that Tagore can be conceptualized in two complementary ways: on the one hand, he was a poet par excellence; on the other, he expressed his views in clear terms on ideas of freedom, justice and fairness, which he brought out in his novels, short stories, songs and poems besides those critical essays that he wrote on various occasions to highlight his viewpoints on socially meaningful issues and concerns. The point, being made here, relates to the needs of taking into account both his literary texts and also the contemporary essays in which he responded to the socio-political



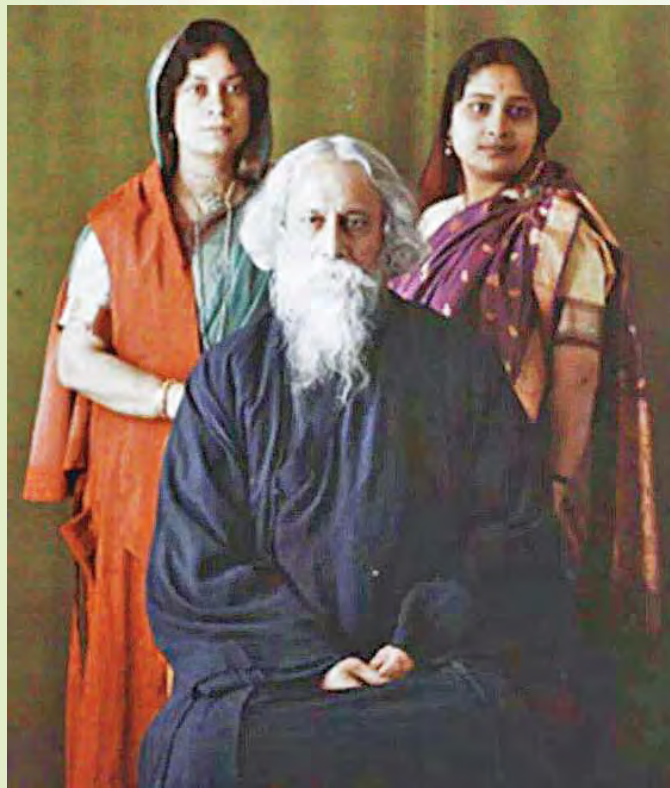




and ideological issues that were bothersome. Being an organic thinker who also played the role of a public intellectual, Rabindranath carved a space in the Bengali psyche in numerous ways which are both inspired by his poetic innovation and also driven by and socio-cultural concerns.

One should also add a disclaimer: Tagore, unlike his colleagues in the nationalist movement, did not codify his views bluntly while being critical of colonial rule and supportive of the campaign for freedom. Implicit here was his fantastic capability of couching his views in such a way as not to attract the British wrath nor to antagonize his colleagues fighting for liberation from colonial rule. That he tempered his views

on many occasions twin concerns: on the one hand, he sincerely believed that without being economically self-independent, political independence was futile. Hence, he insisted on evolving Swadeshi Samaj to take care of the needs of those living in the Samaj. Similar to Gandhi's village Swaraj in Gandhi's formulated first in the context of his South Africa sojourn and later developed this model in India, Gurudev articulated in a novel entitled Samaj published in 1904; it was clearly articulated in a novel of 1916, Ghare-Baire where he defended the idea of Swadeshi through the character, zamindar, Nikhilesh, Ghare-Baire (which once the famous film picturized the novel), in making the local



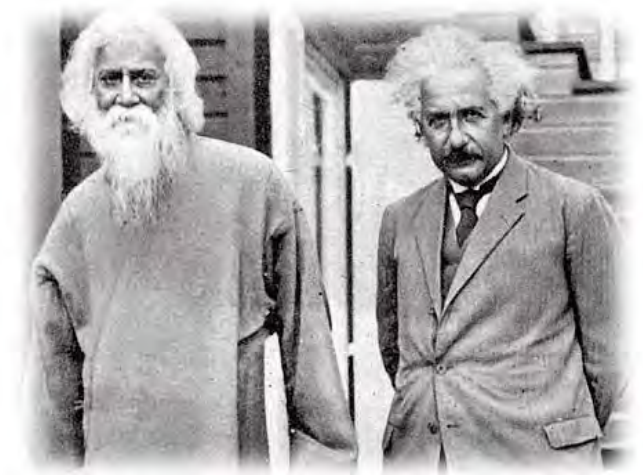
was illustrative of his one hand, he sincerely being economically self-independence was futile. on evolving Swadeshi the needs of those living to Gandhi's village Swaraj in Gandhi's formulated first in the Africa sojourn and later developed this model entitled Swadeshi in 1904. This was the public appearance in articulated in a novel (Home and the World), idea of Swadeshi Samaj Nikhilesh. A local as per the storyline of came to the world stage maker, Satyajit Ray, devoted his energy people self-dependent

by being involved in producing household goods by themselves. In contrast, Sandip, the protagonist of Swadeshi philosophy, contradicted his ideological commitment to Swadeshi product by being appreciative of foreign goods as they were purportedly qualitatively better. In other words, Sandip represented a mindset which was full of contradictions in terms of what he preached and what he practised. This was the characteristic of the historical phase that Tagore had confronted. In public life and utterances, people raised the voice for swadeshi (indigenous) goods and products though, in their private existences, they were found, in large numbers, to have abdicated what they stated for public consumption.

The above discussion makes a critical point, namely Tagore's most of the novels were powerful examples of



equally powerful socio-political messages which he put forward in his essays. This was possible because he, being involved in the mission for socio-economically, awakened the Indians to take up the cudgels against the social ills that, he strongly believed, crippled the Indian masses. Being ruled by a foreign power, as Gurudev only minced no words, not realized that they should also the humanness to do to by being born as human beings. For Tagore, it was a calamity that needed to be mitigated first before one should embark on a campaign for political freedom. It was an unpleasant truth



because most of his colleagues who were part of the nationalist campaign did not find his argument persuasive since there was hardly a dispute on the view that India was ready for political independence. Given the differences of opinion between Tagore and his compatriots, the battle that he had waged against the mainstream nationalist campaign continued unabated. Besides the negative outcomes of such incessant fight, the chasm that the debate between Tagore and his colleagues had shown had also a positive aspect because the exchange of opinion had enriched the nationalist understanding of the freedom struggle which was not merely meant to attain political emancipation, but also human emancipation that Gurudev always insisted. Fundamental here is the premise that a thorough study of Tagore will help us understand the complexities of the long-drawn nationalist movement that was conformist at one level since the mainstream nationalist movement privileged the philosophy of the Enlightenment; at another level, as Tagore emphasized, it was both innovative and non-conformist because it drew on the ancient texts which were dismissed as archaic by the former.

Tagore was primarily a poet of global repute who also wrote many critical essays where he articulated his views on politico-ideological priorities. His literary texts were not independent of what he wrote in the form of essay; in fact, they were statements, the purpose of which was to provide a design of a social compact by taking into account the prevalent socio-economic peculiarities. In a nutshell, Tagore's ideas were both context-driven and were also derivative of his own understanding the ancient texts to which he had had access since his childhood presumably because of being born and raised in a family appreciative of free flow of ideas. It is therefore fair to argue that Tagore's socio-political thoughts had unique texture since they were drawn on what he learnt by also being receptive to the ideas that he came across. As is well-known, he was fortunate to have had interaction with the prominent public intellectuals of the period. Prominent among them was Rammohun Roy who mentored his father, Debendranath Tagore. That he shifted his allegiance from Hinduism to a new religion, Brahmoism, was largely due to Roy's persuasion; Debendranath realized that Hindu idolatry was anything but religiously justified in view of the inherent limitations that Roy and his colleagues in Brahma Samaj had exposed. Once Debendranath







was introduced to the Vedas and Vedantic texts, he claimed to have had access to the storehouse of wisdom that remained hidden to him so far. The tradition continued. So, for Rabindranath Tagore, it was not unusual since he was born in a family that nurtured interests in these texts for, they were believed to be repository of knowledge that had not been adequately explored. But that does not mean that the Tagore family was anthemic to the Western influences; contrarily, there was also an equally enthusiastic keenness in being acquainted with the fundamental texts that evolved newer philosophical discourses on which the Western civilization rested. In his *Atmaparichay* (Autobiography), he gave us enough inputs in this regard when he candidly mentioned that ‘there was something remarkable about our family. It was as if we lived close to the age of pre-Puranic India through our commitment to the Upanishads. As a boy I grew up reciting slokas [hymns] with a clear enunciation. We had no experience of the emotional excesses prevalent in Bengal’s religious life. My father’s spiritual life was quiet and controlled. Along with that there was a genuinely deep love of English literature among my elders. Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott had a strong influence over our family’.

Explicit here is claim that the Tagore family was characteristically cosmopolitan, at least in thinking since the family members were exposed to the India’s traditional wisdom, simultaneously with their access to the well-established conceptual texts from which the West drew its philosophical lineage. A unique blending of the ideas emanating from the East with those from the West, the philosophical discourses that the Tagore family had privileged had its roots in the free flow of ideas that had begun with the initiatives of his grandfather, Dwarkanath Tagore (1794-1847). A loyalist to the core, Dwarkanath believed that India’s happiness was linked with the material well-being of the Empire which does not seem to be deviated from the prevalent ethos in colonial Bengal. Nonetheless, by creating an atmosphere in which the ancient texts of Indian civilization were allowed to be taught, the senior Tagore generated an ideational confidence in what contributed to India’s rich intellectual traditions. It was therefore not surprising that both his son, Debendranath and his grandson, Rabindranath, appreciated the role that Dwarkanath discharged

in precipitating texts, especially that Dwarkanath mid-nineteenth a boost from when he started in Santiniketan in Bengal; what was Debendranath Brahmoism, it at the best of once he founded and Visva Bharati, learning in 1921.



interests in Vedantic Upanishads. The trend had set in motion in the century received Debendranath Tagore Brahmo School in 1888 the district of Birbhum, initiated by his father who was baptized in was fully blossomed Rabindranath Tagore Patha Bhavana in 1901 as a centre of higher





The story however shall remain complete if we stop here because to understand Tagore distinct approach to nation, nationalism and national identity, one needs to pay attention to the socio-cultural views that became prominent in the late nineteenth century with the organization of political agitations, though sporadically, in various parts of India. These attempts were just initial attempts at raising clearly a feeble voice against the British authority because the idea of mass mobilization for the nationalist cause was still rudimentary in form and character. Nonetheless, the Tagore family was, as the evidence shows, intellectually drawn to the exhortations for freedom which were not exactly a clamour for freedom but an articulation of the difficulties due to being kept in an atmosphere of unfreedom. As Tagore elaborated, poems like Rangalal Bandyopadhyay's Swadhinata-hinayat key bachitey chai (who wants to live without freedom) or Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay's Bingshoti koti manusher bas (a nation of over 200 million)

had provided him of what unfreedom elders in the family, did not seem to be in associating with drew its inspiration intervention. family stood out for various steps to those who expressed contribute to India's Tagore was explicit that Besides trying unity on the basis of defined Indianness, contributed to the Hindu Mela, founded



with a true picture meant. Still, the argued Tagore, very enthusiastic the campaign that from these literary However, the having undertaken instil patriotism in their keenness to self-sufficiency. when he mentioned to conjure a sense of vaguely, if not loosely the Tagore family popularization of in 1867, which

was a socio-cultural endeavour seeking to rally people, particularly the educated youth, around India's distinctive cultural traits. It was, in other words, a platform for mobilizing support by drawing attention to India's rich cultural heritage. Although Nabagopal Mitra was one who conceived the idea, the Hindu Mela gained momentum with the support from some of the members of the Tagore family. Interests in the activities of the Mela receded by the early 1890s presumably because of its obsession with typical Hindu ethos which alienated the Tagores leading its final eclipse in 1898 once most of the patrons seceded to join the Indian Association presumably because of its secular character.

The above description is useful to show that Tagore's socio-political ideas were an outcome of multiple influence. On the one hand, he was fortunate to have a family which was open to newer ideas which was possible because of the relatively welcoming nature of the Tagores since the days of Tagore's grandfather, Dwarkanath Tagore. There were also societal impulses, on the other, which also the family had access to.







It was therefore not surprising that he had had a chance to get acquainted with the poems championing an urge for freedom. Similarly, that Hindu Mela had an impact on the evolution of his socio-political ideas that however had undergone changes as he confronted newer socio-economic circumstances and myriad political challenges.

To conclude, one is required to highlight how Gurudev got disillusioned as he was engaged in being part of the activities that drew on his concern for humanity. As is well-known, when the plague epidemic spread in Calcutta in 1898, it was Gurudev who took part in providing relief to the victims. It was he who also moved around Calcutta to remove the fear of plague vaccine. The same person wrote a very scathing critique in *Bharati* when the British government incarcerated Bal Gangadhar Tilak for being so critical of the government policy during the outbreak of the plague epidemic. Nonetheless, he was also disappointed, if not disillusioned with the Bengalees who appeared to have lost their capability as a nation in the context of the British rule, In his *Charitrapuja* (1895) which was nothing but a tribute to three great men who he admired, Vidyasagar, Ramnohun Roy and his father Debendranath Tagore. In his assessment of Vidyasagar, he made certain caustic remarks about the Bengalees, who, according to him, had become 'inert, excessively self-possessed and dependent on others and also irresponsibly critical of the tasks that others sought to accomplish'; he thus concluded that 'this community has no future'. This was still a mild criticism. In his exchange of views with Sri Sajani Kanta Das, the famous essayist, he came out far more sharply against the Bengalees while seeking to find out the reason for the decline of this community which forced GK Gokhale to say 'what Bengal thinks today India thinks tomorrow'. I shall dwell on two comments that Gurudev Tagore made with loads of anguish presumably because it was not expected of a community which had a glorious past. According to him, What is evident from an assessment of Gurudev's own writings and interviews is that as Bengalees we appeared to have deviated from what the bard endeavoured hard to popularize; his purpose was not personal, but universal. In fact, it will not be an exaggeration that by being truthful to the values of humanity he reiterated some of the fundamental ideas of the Vedas. His concern for making *Visva-Bharati* a place where world meets was articulated very clearly by an Upanishadic hymn, *Yatra Vishvam Bhavati Eka Needam* (the world is a nest). The goal is still distant for variety of reasons. As Ghalib poetically said in a couplet, *Umro-Bhar Ghalib Yei Gunah Korta Raha, Dhul Chera Pe Tha, Aaina Saaf Korta Raha* (throughout his life, Ghalib made the same mistake: he kept cleaning the mirror though he failed to draw his attention to the fact that dust was in one's mind and body). It is difficult, if not impossible to dwell on the multifaceted dynamics of Gurudev's writings in a short essay though the fundamental point that comes out is very significant: the bard was not just a poet or an essayist, but one who set out for the humanity new ways thinking for human emancipation in the real sense of the expression.





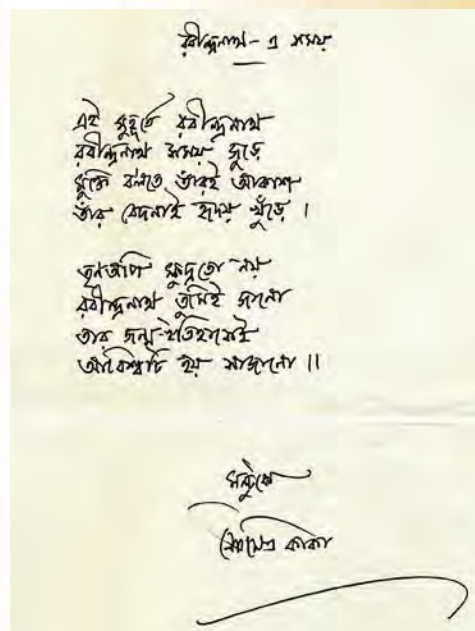
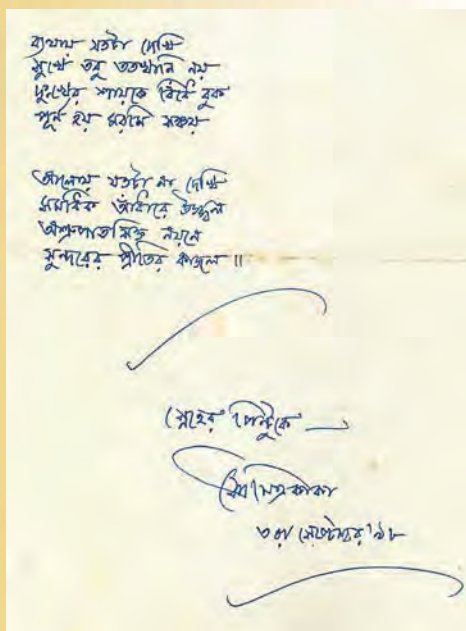
(1935 - 2020)

Padma Bhushan **Soumitra Chatterjee** is an Indian Film Actor , Poet, Writer, Drama Director recipient of Dadasaheb Phalke Award and Ordre des Arts et des Letters - the highest civilian award of France.

## Shraddhanjali

Bangabibhusan Soumitra Chatterjee's influence on Cinema and Theatre was not limited to Bengalis. He was truly a master of the universal language of cinema, arts, poetry and theatre and was the rarest of rare geniuses whose charisma remained undiminished through the ages. There is a well known Cherokee (an American Indian tribe) proverb. "When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice". Soumitra Chatterjee had lived a full life over a vast expanse of the Indian cultural space with innate richness and exemplary integrity. When he left his mortal body, we cried silently.

We Urbanites are fortunate enough to have him amongst us in our Kali Puja inauguration in 2019.



The above hand written unpublished poems of Sri **Soumitra Chatterjee** for readers.  
 Courtesy : Prasad Banerjee of T4 / 2002 from his personal collection received out of affection from the poet.







সুরঞ্জন দাস  
উপাচার্য - যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

## অনলাইন শিক্ষা সরাসরি শিক্ষার পরিপূরক - বিকল্প নয়

অতিমারী পরবর্তীযুগে উচ্চশিক্ষায় বিশ্বজুড়ে যে গুণগত পরিবর্তন আসবে, তা অস্বীকার করে লাভ নেই। ভারতও তার বাইরে নয়। ১৯৩০এ 'গ্রেট ডিপ্ৰেশন' এর পর এই প্রথম বিশ্বব্যাপী এক অর্থনৈতিক সংকট আসছে। ভারতেও তার প্রভাব প্রবলভাবে পড়বে, পড়ছেও। ইতিহাস দেখায়, এমন অর্থনৈতিক সংকটের সময় উচ্চশিক্ষায় বহু সংখ্যায় ড্রপ আউট বেড়ে যায়, ছাত্রছাত্রীরা পড়াশোনা ছেড়ে দেয়। এবং তা মূলত ঘটে নিম্নবর্গীয় শ্রেণির মধ্যে। ভারতের মতো পুরুষতান্ত্রিক দেশে কিন্তু ড্রপ আউটের প্রধান শিকার হয় ছাত্রীরা।

কেরলে অনলাইন ক্লাস করতে না পারার জন্য এক ছাত্রীর আত্মহত্যার ঘটনাটি এরই প্রতিফলন।

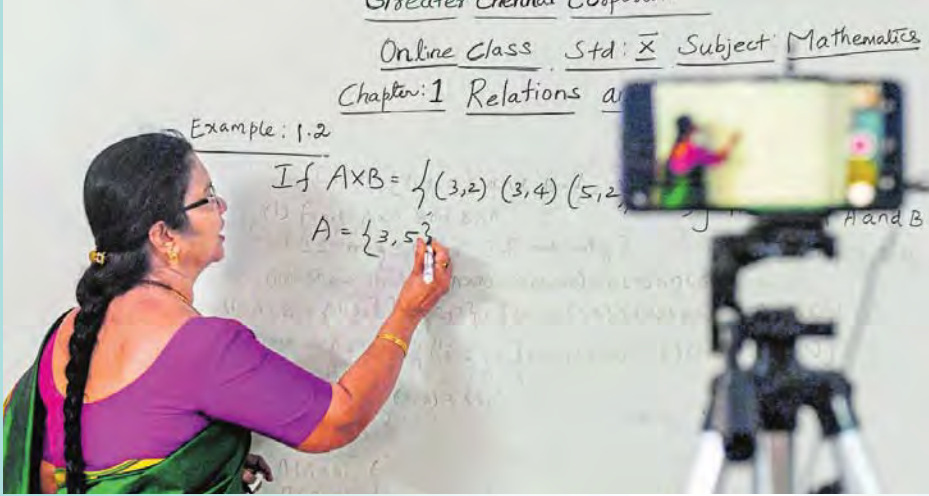
বিশ্বব্যাপী আর্থিক মন্দা থেকে ছাড় পাবে না বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গুলিও। সেই সংকটের মোকাবিলার জন্য বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গুলিকে নতুন আঙ্গিকে চিন্তাভাবনা শুরু করতে হবে। যেহেতু ভারতের বেশিরভাগ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, বিশেষ করে পাবলিক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়গুলোর তেমন কোনও পরিকাঠামো নেই, যেখানে শারীরিক দূরত্বের নিদান মেনে পঠন-পাঠন প্রক্রিয়া চালানো সম্ভব। এদিকে শারীরিক দূরত্ব কিন্তু আমাদের নিউ নরমাল-এ ইতিমধ্যেই প্রতিষ্ঠিত। বিশেষ করে, যেসব বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের হস্টেলের বন্দোবস্ত রয়েছে, সেখানে তো এটা বাড়তি অসুবিধা। হস্টেলে শারীরিক দূরত্বের নিদান মেনে চলা একপ্রকার অসম্ভব-সেখানে একটা ঘরেই দুই তার বেশি ছাত্রছাত্রী থাকে। এই বিবিধ সমস্যার সামনে পড়ে দেশব্যাপী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়গুলো একটা সমাধানসূত্রে আসার চেষ্টা করছে। সমাধানসূত্র হিসাবে উঠে আসছে-অনলাইন শিক্ষা। পঠন-পাঠন, গবেষণা, প্রশাসনিক কার্যকলাপ-সবটাই অনলাইন ব্যবস্থায় নিয়ে আসতে হবে।

অনলাইন শিক্ষাব্যবস্থা নিশ্চয়ই আমাদের সামনে নিয়ে আসবে নতুন কিছু চ্যালেঞ্জ। শিক্ষাপদ্ধতির পুরনো অভ্যাসগুলো ত্যাগ করে প্রযুক্তি নির্ভর পঠন-পাঠনের অভ্যাস নির্মাণ করতে হবে। যেমন ধরা যাক - শিক্ষা প্রদান করা। আমাদের শিক্ষক-শিক্ষিকাদের লেকচার মোড সম্পূর্ণ বদলাতে হবে। কারণ, ক্লাসরুমের শিক্ষাপদ্ধতির সঙ্গে এর পার্থক্য বিপুল। ছাত্রছাত্রীরাও ক্লাসরুমভিত্তিক পড়াশোনার সুবিধাগুলো পাবে না। তাদের সৃষ্টিশীল হতে হবে শিক্ষাগ্রহণের জন্য। পুরনো লাইব্রেরি পদ্ধতির বদলে ডিজিটাল লাইব্রেরি তৈরি করতে হবে। ফলে ছাত্রছাত্রী, শিক্ষক, গবেষক-সকলকেই প্রযুক্তি নির্ভর হতে হবে। এছাড়াও আছে, ফিজিক্যাল কনফারেন্স। তার বদলে আমাদের যেতে হবে ওয়েব কনফারেন্সে। যেটা ইতিমধ্যেই শুরু হয়ে গিয়েছে বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে। অনেকেই বলছেন, ওয়েব কনফারেন্সে বেশি সংখ্যক মানুষ অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবেন। এবং অনেক কম খরচে। যাঁরা এটা বলছেন, তাঁরা এটাও বলছেন যে, ডিরেক্ট টিচিংয়ে যাঁরা আসতে পারেন না, তাঁরা এবার যোগদান করতে পারবেন। যেমন, গৃহবধুরা বা বাড়িতে যাঁরা কাজ করেন তাঁরা। অনেক শ্রমিকও নাকি অনলাইন শিক্ষার সুযোগ পাবে।

কিন্তু প্রশ্ন অনেক।

ভারত কি অনলাইন শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার জন্য প্রস্তুত? আমার মতে, না। প্রথমত, ভারতে এসেছে প্রযুক্তিবিপ্লব, কিন্তু তার সঙ্গে তৈরি হয়েছে 'ডিজিটাল ডিভাইডও'। ভারত সরকারের তথ্য অনুযায়ী, এদেশের প্রায় ৫৫ হাজার গ্রামে মোবাইল ফোন কভারেজ নেই। ভারতের জনসংখ্যার মাত্র ২৬ শতাংশ মানুষ সরাসরি ইন্টারনেট সংযোগের সুবিধা নিতে পারে। ফলে, আমরা





যদি অনলাইন শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থায় যাই, তাহলে এই বিভেদটা শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রেও আসবে-যাদের হাতে ইন্টারনেট আছে, যাদের হাতে ইন্টারনেট নেই। এমনকী, আমেরিকাতেও কিন্তু অনলাইন শিক্ষাব্যবস্থা প্রসঙ্গে এই ডিজিটাল বিভেদের প্রসঙ্গটা আসছে।

বলা হচ্ছে, অনলাইন শিক্ষা দান এবং গ্রহণের প্রক্রিয়া শিক্ষাপদ্ধতিতে একটি বৈপ্লবিক কাঠামোগত পরিবর্তন আনতে

চলেছে। কিন্তু, একটা ভয় থেকে যায় এক্ষেত্রে। সেটা হল 'হোমোজিনাইজেশন অফ নলেজ'। কারণ, ভারতে যে অনলাইন শিক্ষাব্যবস্থা রয়েছে, তাতে একজন মাস্টারমশাই বক্তৃতা দেবেন, কিন্তু কোনও প্রতিবর্ত সংলাপের পরিসর তৈরি হবে না। ফলে, একটা 'ওয়ান ওয়ে ফ্লো' বা একমুখী প্রবাহ তৈরি হবে, যার অভিমুখ শিক্ষক থেকে ছাত্রের দিকে। কিন্তু আমি আমার শিক্ষকতার জীবনে সবসময় দেখেছি, ছাত্রছাত্রীদের মধ্যে যতক্ষণ না প্রশ্ন করার প্রবণতা তৈরি হচ্ছে, ততক্ষণ পর্যন্ত একজন শিক্ষকের সর্বোত্তম গুণটি প্রকাশিত হয় না। কিন্তু, ভারতে যেভাবে অনলাইন শিক্ষা চলছে, সেখানে এটা সম্ভব নয়। অনেক সময় বলা হয়, অনলাইনের মাধ্যমেও ইন্টার্যাকটিভ ক্লাসরুম তৈরি করা যায়। কিন্তু এই প্রযুক্তিগত ইন্টার্যাকশন এবং ফিজিক্যাল ইন্টার্যাকশনের মধ্যে গুণগত তফাত রয়েছে।

অনেক শিক্ষক, যাঁরা মূলত লিবরাল আর্টস-এর অধ্যাপক, তাঁরা ভীত হচ্ছেন, ক্লাসরুমে তিনি কী পড়াচ্ছেন, যেটা এতদিন কর্তৃপক্ষ পর্যন্ত পৌঁছত না, কিন্তু অনলাইন শিক্ষাপদ্ধতিতে সে সুযোগ নেই। সেটা রেকর্ডেড হচ্ছে, ফলত কর্তৃপক্ষ নজরদারি চালাতে পারে। এর ফলে যেসব অপ্রাতিষ্ঠানিক বক্তব্য, বিশেষত লিবরাল আর্টসের ক্লাসে যা তুলে ধরা যেত, সেটি আর সম্ভব না-ও হতে পারে। এই আশঙ্কাও কিন্তু অনেকে করছেন।

প্রশাসনিক ক্রিয়াকলাপও অনলাইন হয়ে যাবে। ফলে এতদিন যে ছাত্রছাত্রীরা সরাসরি কর্তৃপক্ষের কাছে তাদের বক্তব্য তুলে ধরত, এখন সেটা হবে না। অথচ, আমি আমার ১৮ বছরের প্রশাসনিক অভিজ্ঞতায় দেখেছি, সংকটের মুহূর্তে সামনাসামনি কথা বলে অনেক দ্রুত সমস্যার সমাধান করা যায়।

অনলাইন শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে একজন ছাত্র বা ছাত্রী একটা ডিগ্রি পাবে, তার হয়তো একটা বাণিজ্যিক মূল্যও থাকবে। কিন্তু, ভারত এখন একটা টেক-অফ পয়েন্টে দাঁড়িয়ে। যেখানে আমরা একটা উচ্চতর সামাজিক-অর্থনৈতিক সংগঠনের দিকে এগাচ্ছি, সেখানে দাঁড়িয়ে উচ্চশিক্ষার মূল উদ্দেশ্য কী হওয়া উচিত? একজন ছাত্রকে অমনভাবে তৈরি করা, যাতে সে বাজার অর্থনীতিতে পুরোদমে যোগদান করতে পারে? না। বরং, উচ্চশিক্ষার মূল উদ্দেশ্য হওয়া উচিত একজন সুনামগরিক তৈরি করা। যে নাগরিক জাতিগঠনের বিভিন্ন প্রক্রিয়াকে ক্রিটিকালি বিশ্লেষণ করতে পারবে, এবং প্রশ্ন করতে পারবে। মার্খা নসবম, বিখ্যাত মার্কিন দার্শনিক বলেছিলেন, 'ইনক্লুসিভ ক্রিটিকাল সিটিজেন' তৈরি করার কথা। যেখানে ছাত্রছাত্রীরা



নানা প্রশ্ন করতে পারবে; যেমন, আমরা কী করে অর্থনৈতিক অগ্রগতির সঙ্গে সুরক্ষিত পরিবেশের মেলবন্ধন ঘটাতে পারব? বা, ভারত সবচেয়ে বড় ভ্যাকসিন রফতানিকারী দেশ হওয়া সত্ত্বেও কেন দেশের ৬২ শতাংশ শিশু তাদের প্রয়োজনীয় ভ্যাকসিন পায় না? আমরা গর্ব করি, বায়োটেকনোলজির গবেষণায় আমাদের দেশ বহুদূর এগিয়ে গিয়েছে, তাহলে কেন বায়োটেকনোলজি ক্ষেত্রের মাত্র ১০ শতাংশ কৃষকদের জন্য বরাদ্দ? কেন এখনও ভারতের মাত্র ১ শতাংশ জিডিপি উচ্চশিক্ষায় ব্যবহৃত হয়? কেন গবেষণাক্ষেত্রে জিডিপির ১ শতাংশও বরাদ্দ নয়। এই প্রশ্নগুলো করার জন্য ছাত্রদের তৈরি করতে হবে। নোয়াম চমস্কি বলেছেন, আমাদের শিক্ষার মূল উদ্দেশ্য হবে এনলাইটেনমেন্ট, ইনডকট্রিনেশন নয়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছিলেন, উচ্চশিক্ষার মানে জ্ঞান দেওয়া নয়, উচ্চশিক্ষা মানে একজন মানুষের মধ্যে একটা অগ্নি প্রজ্বলিত করা। সর্বপল্লি রাধাকৃষ্ণণের কথায়, ‘ইনিসিয়েশন অফ হায়ার লাইফ’। আমার একটাই বক্তব্য, অনলাইন শিক্ষার মাধ্যমে কি আমরা এমন ধরনের শিক্ষা দিতে পারব? অ্যালবার্ট আইনস্টাইনের সেই বিখ্যাত উক্তি—‘ইমাজিনেশন ইজ মোর ইম্পোর্ট্যান্ট দ্যান নলেজ।’ এই কল্পনাশক্তি কি আমরা ‘ডিসট্যান্ট মোড অফ এডুকেশন’-এর মধ্য দিয়ে দিতে পারব? এসব নিয়ে আমাদের কিন্তু চিন্তাভাবনার সময় এসেছে।

উঠে আসছে, ডিজিটাল লাইব্রেরির মাধ্যমে কি সবসময় পড়াশোনা সম্ভব? যেরকম আমার মাস্টারমশাই, বিখ্যাত ইতিহাসবিদ তপন রায়চৌধুরী বলেছিলেন, যখন আমি একটা পুঁথি ওলটাচ্ছি, সেই পুঁথির একটা গন্ধ আসে, সেই গন্ধটা আমায় উদ্বুদ্ধ করে। যেটা কিন্তু ডিজিটালের মধ্যে পাব না কখনও। এখনও যখন আমি ইংল্যান্ডে ব্রিটিশ লাইব্রেরিতে কাজ করতে যাই, আমাকে কিন্তু পুরনো পুঁথি ওলটানোর অনুমতি দেওয়া হয়। যে পুঁথিগুলো অবশ্যই ডিজিটালি রেখে দেওয়া হয়েছে সংরক্ষণের জন্য। আজ পর্যন্ত আমাদের দেশে যা যা ডিজিটাইজেশনের প্রকল্প, সেগুলো কিন্তু অধিকাংশই অসম্পূর্ণ। জ্ঞানলাভের পথে তা বাধাস্বরূপ।

অনলাইন শিক্ষার নিশ্চয়ই অনেক সুযোগ-সুবিধা আছে। কিন্তু তা সরাসরি শিক্ষার বিকল্প হতে পারে না। এই দুই শিক্ষাব্যবস্থা একে অপরের পরিপূরক হতে পারে, বিকল্প কখনওই না। ঐতিহ্যের সঙ্গে আধুনিকতার মেলবন্ধন হওয়া উচিত। তাহলেই উচ্চশিক্ষায় আমরা অগ্রসর হতে পারব।

নয়তো কেরলের ঘটনার পুনরাবৃত্তি আটকাতে পারব না। কেরলের বাচ্চা মেয়েটি শুধুমাত্র অনলাইনের সুযোগ পাচ্ছে না বলে আত্মহত্যা করল। এই ঘটনা চোখের সামনে দেখিয়ে দেয়, যদি আমরা সম্পূর্ণ অনলাইন শিক্ষাব্যবস্থায় যাই, তাহলে আমাদের ভবিষ্যতে কী রয়েছে। এই ভবিষ্যতের মুখোমুখি কিন্তু আমরা হতে চাই না। গণতন্ত্র মানে এই নয় যে কয়েকজন উচ্চবর্গীয় সমাজের শিক্ষার্থী অনলাইন শিক্ষার সুযোগ পাবে, আর দেশের বেশিরভাগ ছাত্রছাত্রী তার থেকে বঞ্চিত হবে, এবং দুঃখ ও হতাশায় আত্মহত্যা করবে। সেই জন্যই সরকারকে নিশ্চিত করতে হবে যাতে সব প্রান্তিক অঞ্চলে অনলাইন শিক্ষার সমস্ত পরিকাঠামো পৌঁছে যায়। সংযোগ-ব্যবস্থা শুধু শহরের মানুষের মধ্যে দৃঢ় হলেই চলবে না।

Put the cart before the horse — আমাদের অবস্থা যেন এই প্রবাদটার মতো না হয়, তা আমাদের মাথায় রাখতে হবে।





**Jawhar Sircar** is a retired IAS Officer and a public intellectual based in Kolkata. He is well known as a researcher, publisher of articles, author and public speaker.

## How the British Settled in Kolkata Exactly 330 Years Ago

On this day, 24th August, in 1690, Job Charnock landed in Sutanati amidst heavy rain. This is what he recorded: “This day at Sankrail ... ordered Capt. Brooke to come with his vessel at Sutanuti, where we arrived about noon, but found the place in a deplorable condition, nothing being left for our accommodation. The rain falling day and night, we are forced to betake ourselves to boats, which considering the season of the year, is unhealthy”. The question is why did Charnock select this malaria-prone area full of thick jungles with dangerous tigers and crisscrossed by numerous rivulets where treacherous crocodiles reigned. The great salt water marshes were only a few miles to the east and even the river banks were far less inhabited as compared to the other side of the river.

The west bank of the Hooghly river was where Bandel, the stronghold of the Portuguese was located. The Dutch had constructed Fort Gustavus at Chinsurah in 1656 and by 1680, the French had established a factory at Chandernagore. In comparison, the English factories at Hooghly and Cossimbazar were just getting along, harassed as they were, by the unending exactions of the Moghul governor and his agents. Charnock had been appointed as the East India Company's Agent in Hooghly in 1686, and soon enough, he got into a massive fight with the Mughal Fauzdar. Charnock retaliated but had to escape with his men and ships and camped at a village on the other side that he knew as the trading centre of Sutanati.

But as soon as the Company sent warships, frigates and military companies to him, Charnock took the offensive. He destroyed the Mughal Subhadar's salt-house and forts, sacked Balasore and seized Hijli, where he fortified himself until a cessation of arms was agreed upon. Though the Mughal authorities had accorded the English permission to settle at Uluberia and Hooghly, Charnock chose Sutanuti and remained there for a year from September 1687 to try it out. The Company found such a hostility unfavourable to trade and







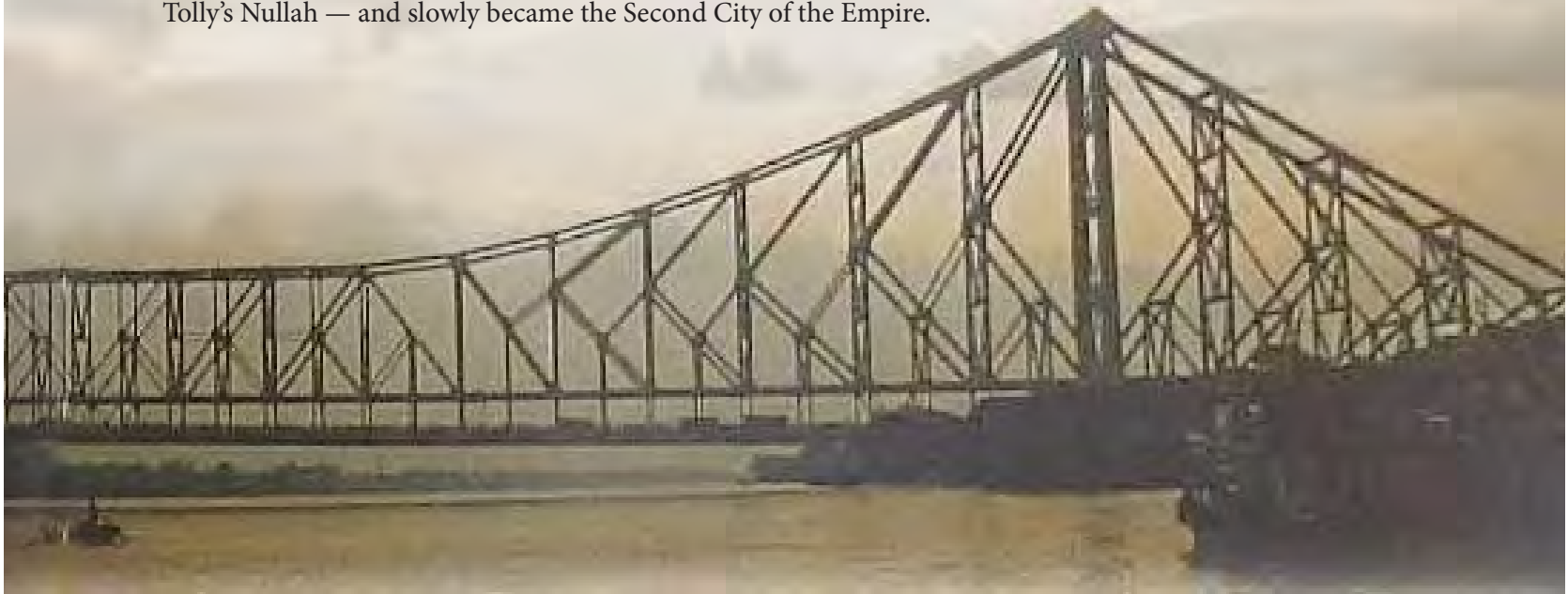
removed Charnock from Bengal. But soon enough, the Company realised that it could not make any progress without Charnock's strategy and aggressive spirit and brought him back.

This is when he decided not to go back to the old English settlement in Hooghly town on the west bank of the river and came bag and baggage to Sutanati — on this very date in 1690. Charnock felt that this was ideal for the English headquarters in Bengal as he had already tried Patna, Cossimbazar, Hooghly, Balasore, Uluberia and Hijili earlier. His logic was that since England's strength lay in its navy and its ships, he needed a large stretch of water between him and the nearest Mughal base at Hooghly, where the Fauzdar was stronger. His ships stationed at Sutanati could bombard any hostile vessel if it tried to cross the river to attack. He also required a settlement that was nearer the sea, which would allow bigger ships of the maritime nation to sail into and leave unhindered. Besides, the Seths, Basaks and Seals of this area understood business and were easier to deal with than soldiers and bureaucrats.

So, from the week of his arrival, he directed his followers to build thatched houses in Sutanuti. This was recorded in the 'Diary and Consultation Book for the Rt. Hon'ble East India Company' on the 28th of August: "The Right Worshipful Agent Charnock (and colleagues) resolved that such places be built as absolutely necessary, viz., a warehouse, dining room, a room to sort cloth in, a cook room and an apartment for the Company's servants. The Agent's house as also the Secretary's office". All these were of mud and thatched. Tradition has it that the Cutcherry building belonging to the local zamindar was purchased for the safekeeping of the Company's books and documents, located at Lal Dighi, that was to become famous later as Dalhousie Square.

In 1698, the Company bought the villages of Sutanati (Chitpur to Sobhabajar), Govindapur (where Fort William stands today) and Kalikata (around Dalhousie Square or BBD Bagh) from the SabarnaRoychaudhury family. These three villages would later be the kernel and Kolkata — 'the city of places'.

This is how the town started growing far north of the existing settlement of Savarna Ray Chaudhury in Barisha. It was also away from the well-known temple of Kalighat and villages along the Adi Ganga, today's Tolly's Nullah — and slowly became the Second City of the Empire.



## Sai Bhaji

Harsha Punjabi

T1- 2202

Sai Bhaji is a traditional Sindhi recipe from Sind, Pakistan. Its a powerhouse of nutrients as it is a combination of green leafy vegetables, healthy vegetables and dal.

### Ingredients :

- Spinach(palak) leaves 500 gms chopped
- Sorrel leaves(khattapalak)1 bundle chopped
- Dill(Soa) leaves chopped
- ½ cup Chana dal
- 1 big onion
- 1 big potato
- ½ cup chopped bottle gourd
- ½ cup chopped carrots
- ¼ cup chopped beans
- 1 cup chopped tomatoes
- Green chillies as per taste
- Garlic/ginger paste
- Kasoorimethi 2tbsp
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 2 tsp dhaniya powder
- ½ tsp red chilli powder
- Salt to taste



### Method :

Heat oil in a cooker. Stir fry garlic, ginger, onions, tomatoes, chillies one after another. Add all the chopped vegetables and all the green leafy vegetables, dry masalas and the chana dal. Mix everything and cook it for a while on a slow fire. Then add 2 cups of water and pressure cook with 4-5 whistles. After opening the lid, mash everything with a masher, Add salt. Serve hot with rotis or pulao or plain rice. Enjoy.



## Coconut Motipak

Jaya Chakravorty

T7 3806

### Ingredients :

- scraped fresh coconut
- chana besan
- ghee
- milk
- 3 cups sugar

### Procedure :

Mix all the ingredients in a pan .Place the pan on heat . Stir continuously and cook till the mixture leaves the pan .Let it cool for 4-5 minutes and pour it on a greased plate.Level it with a spatula, let it cool completely before cutting it into small pieces with a sharp knife.You can store it for 15 days without refrigeration



## Didar Aamer Morobba

Sabita Sur Roy, T4 503

### Ingredients :

- Green mango 1 kg,
- Cumin seeds 25 gms,
- Whole red chillies 25 gms
- Sugar 1 kg,
- Mustard oil 150 gm
- Chun (lime/quick lime) worth Rs 5/-.

### Procedure :

- 1) Peel off the mangoes and cut it into 8 slices.
- 2) Pierce the slices of the mango with fork and allow them to soak in lime water for 12 hours.
- 3) Wash the mango slices in running water and boil them.Add sugar while boiling and stir it well. See that the water gets reduced while boiling. Crush the cumin seeds and chilli and add them along with the mustard oil.
- 4) After cooling down, the morobba can be stored in containers and preserved in the refrigerator.



## Molaga Podi Gun Powder for Idly & Dosa

Mangalam Ramani

T6 4401,4501

### Ingredients

- 1 cup Chana dal
- 1½ cup urad dal
- 2 cups mirchi
- 1 cup til

### Preparation

- 1) Fry chana dal and urad dal separately, on low flame until they turn red, using one small spoon of oil.
- 2) Fry at least 2 cups of mirchi in a spoon of oil on a low flame.
- 3) Fry 1 cup til. Dry roast (without oil) until it is red.
- 4) Grind dals and mirchi with salt and hing. Then grind the til, dal, mirchi together, but not too much, just enough to blend! Add more mirchi according to taste.







## Exotic Mini Pizza

Silpi's kitchen

T4 1605

### INGRIDIENTS :-

#### Dough

- 2 cups of flour(maida)
- Luke warm water
- 1 tbs of instant yeast
- 1 tbs of sugar
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2 tsp of oil

#### Toppings

- 1/2 cup pizza sauce
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese
- 1 tbs mixed Italian seasoning
- 1 tbs of chilli flakes
- Vegetables - black olives, onions, capsicum, bell pepper etc



### Making Mini Pizza's

1. We need to mix all the dough ingredients nicely and put the warm water gradually, make the dough very soft. Knead the dough at least for ten minutes on a hard surface. Keep the dough covered for at least two hours to activate the yeast.
2. After the dough has resting for two long hours knead the dough nicely again make a small base similar to the size of your palm.
3. Start preheating the the oven for 10 minutes at 180 degree centigrade.
4. Take a baking tray and spread some flour
5. Place the small pizza bases on the tray.
6. Spread the pizza sauce around the pizza base evenly and sprinkle the mozzarella cheese on it.
7. Spread your desired toppings and sprinkle the Italian seasonings and put the tray in the oven for 20 to 25 minutes.
8. Take the tray out ,let the pizza cool and enjoy the delicious pizza with your family and friends.

## Spaghetti Aglio e Ooglio

Abhishek Agarwal

T3 2901

### Ingredients

- 120 gm Spaghetti
- 8 cloves of Garlic (More if you like the Garlic flavour)
- 30 ml Olive Oil
- 1 bunch of Parsley
- Salt to Taste
- Paprika
- Italian Seasoning (Oregano)
- Parmesan Cheese (Be as generous as you can)

### Preparation

1. Heat 3-4 Litres water in a large saucepan over high flame. for approximate 8 - 10 mins till you start seeing the water bubbling.
2. Add the Spaghetti straight into the pot. Lower the flame to Medium. No need to break the Spaghetti, once they cook, they will sink automatically.
3. Cook the Spaghetti for 12 mins, Turn of the stove and cover the pan. Let it cook for another 5 mins. Drain the Spaghetti and keep aside.
4. In a frying pan, heat the olive oil, once the oil is hot enough, add in chopped garlic. Make sure the oil isn't too hot, we don't want the garlic to turn out brown and crispy. Cook for 5 mins, till you start getting the aroma
5. Empty the cooked Spaghetti and cooked garlic in a large bowl.
6. Add in Finely Chopped Parsley, Paprika, Italian Seasoning, Salt and Cheese. Mix Well
7. Add some more cheese for Garnishing.



Ready in 20 minutes

Serves 2

Calorific Information

Serving size : 1 Cup Cooked

Calories : 250 Cal

Carbs : 45 gms

Protein : 6 gms

Fats : 6 gms





## Potato Pancakes

Divya Gupta (12yrs)

T6 3603

These taste super yummy, and they're super easy too! Let me show you how to make them!

### Ingredients :

- 2 potatoes, boiled and mashed
- 1/2 cup of chopped green onions
- 1/2 cup of chopped red onions
- 2 tbsp of chopped cilantro (optional)
- 2 tsp of salt
- 2 tsp of pepper
- 1 tsp of paprika ( red chili powder)
- 1/2 tsp of garlic powder
- 2 tbsp of melted butter or oil
- A few tbsp of butter or oil to cook with
- A few sheets of parchment paper (optional)
- A little bit of sour cream to garnish with (optional)



### Method :

1. Put your boiled and mashed potatoes into a large bowl
2. Add in your green and red onions
3. Add in the salt, pepper, garlic powder, and paprika
4. Pour in your melted butter or oil, and gently fold everything together with a metal spoon
5. Pick up a little bit of the mixture, and gently pat it, until you have formed a pancake shape
6. Lay a piece of parchment paper on your work surface (I like to tape the corners of the parchment to the counter)
7. Put your pancakes on the parchment paper, and make sure they aren't touching
8. In a skillet, melt 1/2 tbsp of butter, or spread 1/2 tbsp of oil, and let it heat up
9. Gently place your potato pancake into the pan, and use a spatula to flip it
10. When both sides of the potato pancake are golden brown, remove it from the skillet, and place it on a plate
11. Pile on a few more potato pancakes, and garnish with a dollop of sour cream, and a little bit of cilantro (optional)

Now, all that's left to do is enjoy your potato pancakes! And give yourself a pat on the back, because you should be proud of yourself for cooking a meal!



## প্রণ-রাইস ও ডিমের দম-পোক্তা

Chaitali Sarkar  
T1 3601

আমি মানুষটা খুবই খাদ্যেরসিক। টক, ঝাল, মিষ্টি কিংবা তিতো সবই ভালোবাসি। কিন্তু ‘রান্না’ বিমুখ ছিলাম বরাবরই। বাবার প্রশ্নে কোনোদিন রান্নাঘরের চৌকাঠ ডিঙাইনি। মা কে দেখে ভেবে পেতাম না কী করে প্রতিদিন একই কাজ মা ক’রে। কিন্তু নিজে যখন মা হলাম তখন কিছুটা উপলব্ধি করতে পেরেছি। আজ আমি আপনাদের সাথে আমার মায়ের হাতের অনবদ্য দুটো রেসিপি শেয়ার করব। খুবই সামান্য উপকরণ আর স্বল্প সময়ে ভীষণই সুস্বাদু এবং স্বাস্থ্যকর দুটি রেসিপি। এই কোরোনা কালেও উপযোগী। শুরুতেই বলি যে কোনো রান্নার মূল উপকরণ ‘ভালোবাসা’ –

### প্রথম মেনু – প্রণ-রাইস (চারজনের জন্য)

উপকরণ :-

- |                        |   |                |
|------------------------|---|----------------|
| ● গোবিন্দভোগ চাল       | - | দু’কাপ         |
| ● মাঝারি মাপের চিংড়ি  | - | ২৫০ গ্রাম      |
| ● মাঝারি মাপের পেঁয়াজ | - | ২টি            |
| ● গোটা জিরে            | - | ১ চা চামচ      |
| ● কাঁচা লঙ্কা          | - | ২টি            |
| ● মাখন                 | - | ২০ গ্রা.       |
| ● সাদা তেল             | - | ১ টেবিল চামচ   |
| ● লেবুর রস             | - | দুই টেবিল চামচ |
| ● নুন                  | - | পরিমাণ মত।     |
| ● দুধ                  | - | এক কাপ         |



প্রণালী :-

- ১) চাল ভালো করে ধুয়ে ৩০মি. ভিজিয়ে রাখুন। তারপর জল ঝরিয়ে ছড়িয়ে দিন।
- ২) মাছ ভালো করে ধুয়ে সামান্য নুন ও লেবুর রস মাখিয়ে রাখতে হবে ৩০ মি.
- ৩) একটা কড়ায়ে সাদা তেল গরম করে চিংড়ি মাছগুলো অল্প ভেজে তুলে নিন।
- ৪) এবার ওই কড়াই-এ মাখন দিয়ে দিন। মাখন গলে গেলে এক চামচ জিরে আর লঙ্কা দিয়ে দিন। একটু নেড়ে পেঁয়াজ কুচি দিয়ে দিন। পেঁয়াজে যখন সঙ্গে যাবে চাল দিন। হালকা নেড়ে চিংড়ি মাছগুলো দিয়ে দিন ১ মিনিট নেড়ে, তিন কাপ গরম জল ও এক কাপ দুধ দিয়ে ভালো করে মিশিয়ে ঢাকা দিয়ে দিন। ৮-১০ মি. পর নামিয়ে দিন। মাঝে মাঝে ঢাকা খুলে নেড়ে নেবেন। মাঝারি আঁচে রান্নাটা হবে। সারা ঘরে গোবিন্দভোগ চাল ও চিংড়ির সুবাসে ভরে যাবে। গরম গরম পরিবেশন করুন।





## দ্বিতীয় মেনু – ডিমের দম-পোক্তা

### উপকরণ :-

- ডিম - ৪টি
- পেঁয়াজ - মাঝারি মাপের দুটি
- টমেটো - মাঝারি মাপের দুটি
- আদা - বাটা - ১ চা চামচ
- রসুন - ১ চা চামচ
- গরম মশলা - ১ ১/২ চামচ
- ধনে পাতা - ইচ্ছা অনুযায়ী
- কাঁচা লক্ষা - কুচি চারটি / বা স্বাদ অনুযায়ী
- সাদা তেল - দুই টেবিল চামচ।

### প্রণালী :-

সমতল কড়াইয়ে তেল গরম করে লক্ষা কুচি ও পেঁয়াজ কুচি দিন। পেঁয়াজ একটু নরম হলে টমেটো কুচি দিন। ভালো ক'রে নাড়তে থাকুন। ১ মিনিট পর আদান ও রসুন বাটা দিন। ভালো করে নাড়ুন। যখন মিশ্রণটি থেকে তেল ছাড়বে। গ্যাস কমিয়ে দিন। কড়াইয়ের মাঝ থেকে মশলাগুলো চার দিকে সরিয়ে দিন। মাঝে যেন শুধু তেল থাকে। এবার একে একে ডিমগুলো ভেঙে কড়াই-এ দিন। দেখবেন কুসুম যেন না ভাঙে। এবার কড়াইটি ভারী ঢাকা দিয়ে দিন। ২ মিনিট পর ঢাকা খুলে, আন্তে করে ডিসের তলাটা আলগা করুন। উপরে গরম মশলা ছড়িয়ে দিন। আরও এক মিনিট ঢাকা দিয়ে রান্না করুন।

এবার খাবার রেডি। লাঞ্চ বা ডিনার, বাচ্চা বা বড় সবার জন্য তৈরী। গৃহবধু, কর্মজীবী, যে কেউ খুব সহজেই তৈরী ক'রে ফেলুন।





## Adventure in Land of Midnight Sun and Polar circle

Meghna Mukherjee

T7 1902



I had visited Norway as a child to see my uncle, however I had only vague memories of the place - lush barren landscapes next to the road with bold and rugged mountains. Apart from being one of the most naturally beautiful countries in the world, it is also one of the most developed and progressive (if not the most). Even with the high standard of living, life in Norway seems to be idyllic and quaint. People are encouraged to wander and roam wherever they please, but always at their own risk. There is an implicit understanding that nature is to be respected, and some of the terrain is so awe inspiring that it commands respect. Norway attracts walkers,

hikers, climbers and all people who like to enjoy the outdoors. The locals tend to be in good physical condition and look like they can run up and down a mountain before breakfast.

We started the trip by landing in Bergen around midnight, and the next morning we explored the Sonjefjord area which is a couple of hours drive from Bergen. The landscape was many shades of green and yellow, with abundant waterfalls scattered on the mountains from melted snow. We took a boat ride through the fjord which took us through narrow and winding waterways, and eventually to the town of Flam. From here we drove eastward to the Jotunheimen national park, which is a mountain area with lakes, glaciers, fjords and the famous Bessegen trail. The journey was like a rainbow wonderland; there was an abundance of rainbows which always came in pairs.

On the way we had our first experience of the extremely complicated Norwegian tunnel infrastructure which can close at any time without warning for dynamiting. Norwegian tunnels aren't like ordinary tunnels - they







have roundabouts, signals and colored lights, which is why they need so many repairs.

Next morning, we woke up early and started on the Bessengen trail, which is one of the most scenic hikes in Norway, with the snowcapped Jotunheimen mountains in the background. The distance is 14 km with an ascent of 900 m, and can be done in 6-7 hours. The climb was steep and involved scrambling with hands and feet. Most of the hike up to the ridge was scary if you looked down, with a deathly drop down to lake Gjende and only loose and unstable rocks to hold on to. On top, we were greeted by the magnificent

view of the narrow ridge called the Bessegen. Lake Gjende is on the left and Lake Bessvatnet on the right, which appear to have different colors. After this breathtaking view, we had a nerve racking descent down which if anything, was even scarier than going up.

We left at the end of the day for a 7 hour drive towards Odda, which is close to the mountain Trolltunga, which was to be the starting point of our next hike. On the way, we had another tunnel catastrophe which prevented us from reaching our Airbnb apartment. We were lucky to find a hotel which could accommodate us at the last minute, or we would have had a very unpleasant night in the car.



The next day we started the Trolltunga trail, which is one of the most popular and difficult day hikes, and has reached cult status amongst casual hikers. The distance is 23 km of rough terrain, with 1 km of ascent. The hike takes about 10 hours, which is no easy feat even for those who are physically fit. The hike started with a killer 1 km steep climb

which was surely designed to demotivate the faint of heart into giving up. After this qualifying round, the trail was full of surprises, the mesmerizing landscapes and challenging terrain never allowing for a dull moment. We reached the summit which is called 'Troll's tongue' because of the narrow rock which juts out into the fjord. No matter how many pictures we had seen or taken, it could not do justice to the real thing, which was like a spectacle unfolding in front of us.



The next day we spent time in the charming and colorful city of Bergen before our flight to Svalbard. The city center had a traditional fish market with delicious fresh catch, grilled and served.





We arrived after midnight at Svalbard and it was bright daylight. Welcome to Svalbard, where the sun doesn't go down and you have continuous daylight for 5 months. The town of Longyearbyen is located on the 78 degree latitude, which is a stone's throw from the actual North Pole.

The next morning, we were picked up by our guide who took us hiking on the Nordenskjoldtop mountain. This ended up to be a challenging hike of 7 hours with a lot of wet snow, rocks and a snow storm at the end. We saw some fascinating fossils which were millions of years old. For lunch, we had freeze dried meals which we heated up with hot water. They were quite enjoyable and a respite in the freezing and windy weather on the mountains.

On the second day we made an adventurous trip to the Nordenskold glacier. With 3 hours of bouncing on the waves back and forth, it was like a jet ski gone wild. We arrived at a camp in front of the glacier, and had our reliable freeze dried meals again. Tandoori chicken on top of a glacier was certainly an outlandish experience. After lunch, we were instructed to get out of our wetsuits and get into our special glacier hiking equipment. We were accompanied by two armed guides who schooled us to 'stay in a line, not a step to the left or right'. There were polar bears that could spring from anywhere, or we could fall into a crack in the glacier.

The next day we had a cruise trip to a spooky outpost of the Soviet Union called Pyramiden, which had been hastily abandoned after the end of the Soviet era. It used to be a wealthy mining hub where Russians had relocated to live a prosperous life. Lenin's statue still stands proudly in the central square, but the hotels and dance halls are occupied only by seagulls. We were told that 9 people and 4 polar bears were also part of the community, and that the bears occasionally broke into the local bar and helped themselves to some vodka.

Since we had become accustomed to hiking, we climbed on a mountain and glacier on the last day past a satellite weather station which was completely on the snow. We had our favorite freeze dried lunch again on the summit where you couldn't distinguish between snow and sky – everything was white.

Svalbard is a fascinating place. Being so close to the North Pole and on the topmost point of civilization is unreal, it feels like you have visited another planet and come back to earth.







## Escape to Mother Nature

Mrs. Jayashree Ghosh

T1 2603

Each year, on New Year's Eve, I make a resolution. Well, actually a list – of all the places I will visit in the coming year. In 2020 was no exception. But as you all know, the virus visited us instead. Me, like most of us, got restricted inside our homes. Now, as I look out from my window like a caged bird, I dream about the gorgeous places I have visited in the past. Today, I want to share one such destination with you all.



on New Year's resolution. Well, of all the places I will visit in the coming year. In 2020 was no exception. But as you all know, the virus visited us instead. Me, like most of us, got restricted inside our homes. Now, as I look out from my window like a caged bird, I dream about the gorgeous places I have visited in the past. Today, I want to share one such destination with you all.

We think gorgeous places are in far off lands like Switzerland, Galapagos or Scandinavia or at least Kashmir or Uttarakhand. But if I tell you that you can reach Heaven on Earth overnight from Kolkata on train (even less, if you choose to fly) plus a few hours on road – would you be curious? Then read on.

Hop on to any one amongst the many train options to New Jalpaiguri or fly to Bagdogra. Your host will be happy to send you a pick-up for about Rs. 3000. Your car will drive past the iconic Sevoke Bridge and Mahananda WLS and start climbing the hilly roads. As the air gets chilly, stop by a roadside stall and savor piping hot Momos and a hot cuppa. Within 4 hours, you will be grandly welcomed by your home-stay host at Sillery Gaon, one of the most picturesque hamlets you can ever imagine just 30Km from Kalimpong. The price? An “astronomical” Rs. 1000 per day (stay and food inclusive)



As you settle down in your balcony with a cup of freshly brewed Darjeeling tea you will be captivated by Mt. Kanchenjunga, the 3rd highest peak of the world, rising majestically amongst the 180-degree view of the Great Himalayan Range. Enjoy the different hues of color these majestic peaks take at different times of the day while you are pampered silly by your host with local cuisine lovingly dished out from their home kitchen. Occasionally, I would take a stroll around the village to be greeted with ever smiling faces. As the Italians would say, “La dolce far niente” - the fine Art of Doing Nothing at all.







If you crave for some activity – you will be spoiled for choice. Just follow the calls of the Laughing Thrush through the jungle trail and you will soon reach Ramitty Point offering surreal views of sunset and the Teesta flowing down the valley. You can also trek to the dilapidated Damson Fort or cross-over to the next hillock to visit Icchey Gaon, yet another picturesque village. One day, you can rent a Sumo (Rs. 8000) to visit the historic Silk Route at Zuluk whose serpentine road is an all-time favorite of Instagrammers.

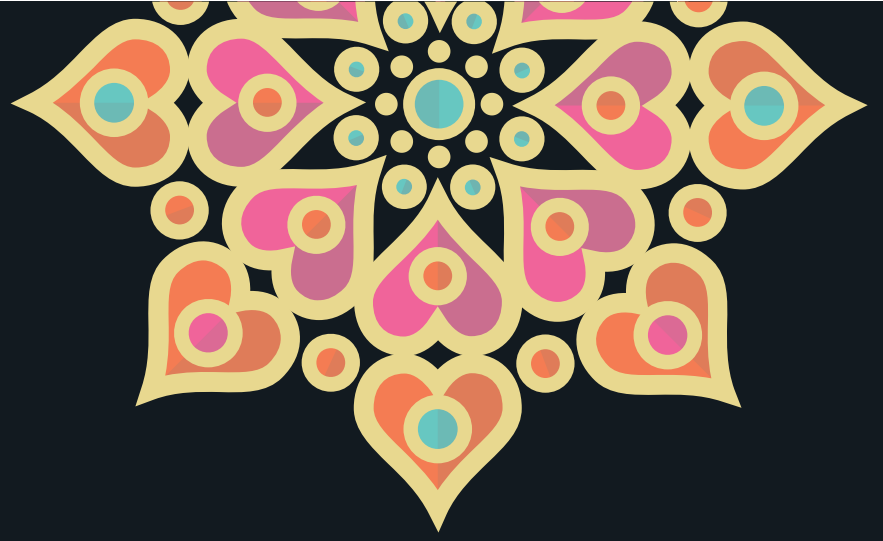


If my story and the accompanying pictures entice you to plan a visit to this nature's lap, you may get more information by calling my home-stay host Mr. Thapa (+91 9635005410).

Best time to visit: Aug/ Sept is when the wildflowers bloom. Expect snow between Jan-Apr. Avoid monsoon.







*Best Wishes  
from*







**Some Joyful Moments of Utsav 2020**





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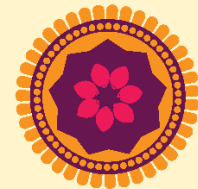
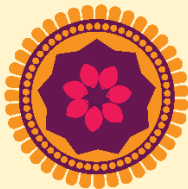
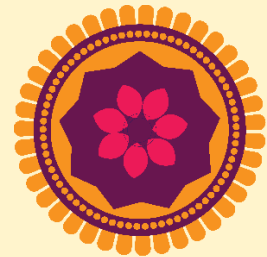
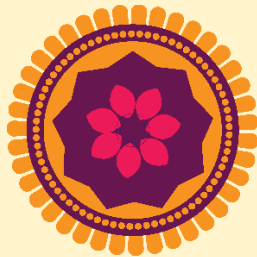


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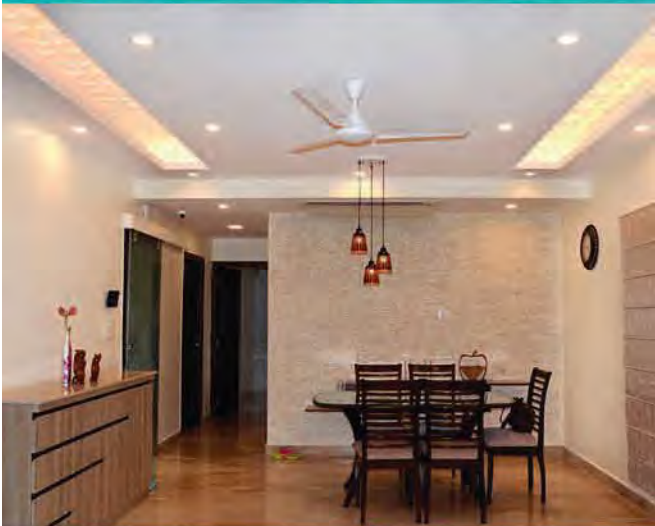






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