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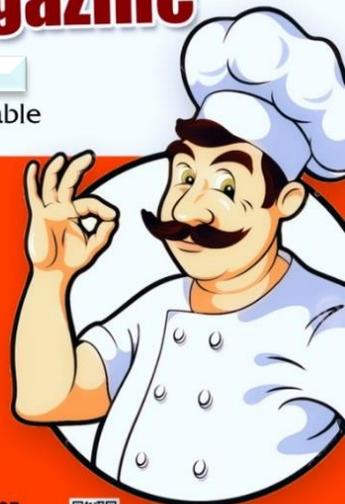
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পূজা সবার ভালো কাটুক ॥

*On sixth day of Navratri, we get new touch, on seventh filled with mist in air, on eighth we offer flowers, on ninth day we have fun, and on tenth day, we enjoy sweets.
Hope Durga Puja is fun-filled for all.*

Elo Sharad, Somoy Sharodotsab Er

Over the last year, there has been a lot going on in our personal lives, our communities and throughout the world. Whether it is the economic crisis, political issues or natural calamities all over the world, we all have a lot of worries occupying our minds and hearts. But with the advent of autumn or fall all those thoughts, worries are pushed to the back of our mind and a strange nostalgic feeling grips our hearts. It takes us back to the bylanes of our hometowns back in India and brings up memories of crowded bazaar with people frantically finishing last minute Puja shopping. At the same time neighborhood clubs collecting *chanda* (donation) for Puja and folks setting up bamboo scaffoldings desperately trying to finish pandal set up which ultimately will resemble the White House or Victoria Memorial.

Durga Puja, the most widely celebrated festival of the Bengalis can be enjoyed by its spurt of fanfare on all the four days of the Durga Puja festival visible throughout India, and particularly in Bengal. This autumnal festival popularly known as Sharodotsab, epitomizes the power of *Nari Shakti* (female power) symbolized by the Goddess Durga who slays *Mahishasura* (Demon) to establish peace and sanctity on planet earth. Bengalis all over the world during these days of Durga Puja rejoice to their heart's content reconnecting with friends and relatives. Durga Puja is an occasion when the familiar sound of Dhak, Dhunuchi Naach, the mild fragrance of Shiuli, gives a familiar tug to every Bengali heart.

This year we will be celebrating Durga Puja on September 23 and 24, 2017 at India Community Center (ICC) 2171 Monroe-Wayne County Line Rd, Rochester NY 14502. This year the added attraction will be the unveiling of our new set of idols that have travelled all the way from Kumartuli in India. Our intention is to make our stage as elaborate and spectacular as our neighborhood pandals of Sarbojonin Puja. In our hearts, with sounds of *Shankha* (Conch shell) or *Dhak* and the hymns of Pushpanjali or the fragrance of Bhog prasad, we hope to be immersed in the spirit of Durga Puja and the feeling of happiness and joy that fills our heart when we offer our prayers to Maa Durga. On Saturday September 23, we will start our festivities in the morning with prayer offerings to Maa Durga, and follow it up with Pushpanjali (floral offerings) and Bhog Prasad.

Durga Puja at home is not only about Puja, but has associated cultural events as *Jatra* (Play), *Nritya-Natya* (Dance Drama). Keeping in mind the spirit of celebrations, we will have cultural functions

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celebrating the occasion as well as the culture of Bengal and India. Our cultural presentations for Saturday September 23 will begin with *Sandhya Arati* (Evening Prayers) and *Agomoni* (or welcome) songs to be performed by Joyoti Choudhury, Chandana Maity, Krishna Chakraborty, Sutapa Majumdar and Padmini Das, and would be coordinated by Indrani Mitra. The highlight of the evening will be an Indian classical dance program Natyanjali, a set of performances by the students of Guru Sastry Bhagvatula of Rochester, NY. Hailing from Bhagavatula family of Kuchipudi, Sastry is the son of Sri Bhagavatula Lakshmi Narasimham, an expert in Mridangam and Ghatam. Born in Kuchipudi, and raised in Hyderabad, Sastry received training from Padmabhushan Guru Dr. Vempati Chinna Satyam and participated in many of his ballets. Sastry has been teaching both Kuchipudi dance and Mridangam at Hindu Temple of Rochester for last 7 years. He is a Senior Programmer Analyst by profession. After dinner there will be a foot-tapping musical performance of Bengali and Bollywood hits by Atreyee Biswas of Rochester, NY. Born in Kolkata, Atreyee Biswas was introduced to music at a very young age by her mother, renowned Rabindra Sangeet exponent Anuradha Biswas. At the age of eight, she started training under Shri Abhirup Guhathakurta. Atreyee won her first award at the age of twelve for a performance at Nehru Childrens Museum, Kolkata. She recorded her first audio CD 'Hey Moro Debota' in 2016. Currently Atreyee lives in Rochester, with husband Santanu and daughter Maahi.

On Sunday September 24, puja will begin early and will culminate with Visarjan (symbolic immersion) of Maa Durga. That will be followed by Sindoor Khela, where married women apply vermilion to each other as the symbol of blessings from Goddess Durga herself and bidding her farewell and simultaneously inviting her back for the next year.

এবার মাগো বিদায় তবে
আসছে বছর আবার হবে
সবাই কে মা রাখিস সুখে
বিজয়া আজ মিষ্টি মুখে!

*Now Mother Durga, it is time to say good bye, till next year when we meet again.
Mother please bless everyone and we celebrate Bijoya with sweets.*

On the evening of Sunday September 24 we will celebrate Lakshmi Puja, which will be followed by Antakshari – A Musical Talent Show by our community members. We hope you enjoy the functions. Planning for these celebrations has been going on for quite some time. A dedicated group of individuals have voluntarily devoted countless hours towards the fruition of these efforts. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts. We would also like to thank Sri Dharma A. Das from Gaudiya Mission USA for all his help in the kitchen. Of course, all this would not be possible without the patronage and presence of our community members. We would like to thank all of you who have supported in this effort and hope you will continue to do so in the coming days. Please join us in these celebrations. We would also request your generous contributions to help us continue hosting this event in its grandeur, this year, as well as coming years.

Sharodiya Shubhechha and Shubho Bijoya (Season's Greetings and Happy Bijoya).

Soumyaroop Bhattacharya
Editor, *Sharadanjali*

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* We apologize for any inadvertent omission.

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বৃহৎ রচেষ্টার বাঙ্গালি সমিতি



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When my father passed away suddenly in 2005, we were completely shocked. I had just seen him ten days before, to celebrate my 30th birthday and he seemed happy and healthy. Not having much experience with funerals or death of loved ones, and consumed by grief, it did not occur to us to write an obituary to show how loved he was and how much he would be missed. As time went by, I regretted not having written anything to memorialize him, so here I share my thoughts with you, the Bengali Association of Greater Rochester, an organization he helped found back in the 1970's, a community that he loved, the community I was born into and later returned to start my own adult life. Rochester was a special chapter in his book, where lifelong friends were made and some of his happiest memories created.

Remembering Ajit Mookerjee

Sohug Mookerjee

Ajit Mookerjee was always ahead of his time. As a child, he was ahead of his class, graduating high school at the age of 14. As a young adult, he was ahead of his time, marrying the woman he loved when an arranged marriage was the accepted norm. As a father, he was ahead of his time as an involved, present, and conscious parent, a job relegated among his peers to mothers. As a marketing executive, he was ahead of his time, recognizing the importance of work-life balance long before it became a buzzword.

Ajit Mookerjee was a man of apparent contradictions. His mind was always running ahead, but his body was always running late. He was a socially progressive man with traditional sensibilities. He had a tremendously large heart in his small frame of a body and despite his soft spot for people, he was sharp as a tack. He was known for expressing discontent with poor service, but it turns out he quietly wrote letters of commendation when it was deserved. He loved Champagne and caviar as much as he loved mishti from small sweet shops that line the streets of Kolkata. Even at the time of his death, he was fulfilling two lifelong dreams: one as a professor at a renowned business school in Phoenix, and the other as a recently enrolled doctoral student at a university in India. And, finally, though he valued practicality, he lived his life emotionally, forever trying to reconcile his love for the values and culture of India and his admiration for the work ethic and resilience of America.

Ajit Mookerjee...when I say his name, I remember the time when I was young, before the age of the internet, when I heard him spell his name over the phone to an operator in India, "A as in apple, J as in jam, and IT as in information technology." I burst out laughing then, at his choice of words, and 30 years later this seemingly insignificant memory still makes me laugh (especially because the I T did not help the operator). But that was the essence of him:

Apple Jam Information Technology, a brilliant man who made so many people laugh.

I remember him through my limited edition daddy's girl rose-tinted glasses, and realize he may not have been perfect, but he was perfectly human. He never stopped loving and he never stopped learning. His untimely death is the one way in which I wished he had not been ahead of his time. But I know that every time we, his wife, his daughter (and son-in-law), his son, his family and friends from all around the world, and even his grandchildren who never got the chance to meet him, talk about him, we bring him alive, for just a few moments, with stories of his craziness, his brilliance, his kindness, and his 1970's brown velvet bell-bottoms.

Ajit Mookerjee, my dear baba, you are loved beyond measure and missed beyond words.



SPRING Going Down

Saanvi Mookerjee Barat

Sprouting beautiful flowers
Pretty views
Ready for beautiful outdoors
I love spring
No more snow
Growing green grass

Saanvi is seven year old daughter of Rochester residents Arup Barat and Sohug Mookerjee.

A Home Away From Home

Krishna Chakraborty

I still remember the day when I moved to Rochester. I was flooded with mixed emotions. I was feeling so down for leaving my entire family and my work life back home. And I was equally overjoyed thinking that from tomorrow I don't have to rush to work, I don't have to prepare notes for classes. Moreover, the day has finally arrived when I'll be living with my husband. After eight months of our marriage, finally we will be together! Again the story of my adventurous, thrilling and dreadful journey from Kolkata to Rochester was haunting me. It was pretty much of an experience! I missed my family- the people with whom I grew up, the people whom I turned to in contentment and melancholy. The entire episode of euphoria and perplexity continued until I regained myself from jet-lags, and the trauma of the flight journey.

Soon I started the new chapter of my life in the new city, and a completely new country, too far from the place where I felt home. Now I had to consider this place as my home. The people here were just two-me and my better half.

Soon all my dreams were dumped under chores. I started feeling the void inside me, which seemed never filling and which started becoming larger and bigger. I began realizing that life, to be specific, life here in abroad, is not a bed of roses. And running a marriage is no fairy tale. I started missing my work life, my independence, as life here without a driving license is not considered independent. I felt I did everything till now to earn *something* and that *something* is paralyzed just because this country has some strange rules. I hope you will understand what I mean by *something*-it means the degrees, the work experience, confidence and everything that I earned to further lead my life. I felt like a child whose toys were snatched from her for the rest of her childhood. Sometimes it created differences and disputes between me and my husband. He also wanted to support me, but what could he do?

Few months later, we planned to extend our family and I thought that will, in a way, give me a new meaning of life in this place- a place which was still a stranger to me. As an expecting mother, my life became miserable with nausea and me not able to eat anything good. Another reason for feeling low was we hardly had friends here. Unfortunately, all my husband's graduate friends had relocated to other cities, and we hardly knew anyone here to be termed as a close friend. Moreover, it was not so long time for me too to make friends of my own. This may be blamed to my shy nature of going out and making friends in the apartment community where I lived. And till now we just had a casual interaction with few of the Bengali Community members.

I had no friends, no relatives, no one to even share my weird feelings and moods and no one to go out with when I'll be feeling low. I know I had a husband, but he can't leave his work and stay with me the entire day nor can he manage everything single handedly. He was also muddled as it was a big responsibility as a first-time expecting father.

Considering my gloomy situation here, we decided that I must go back to my home back in India for the rest of my pregnancy as staying here felt no good.

I had mixed emotions again. I was feeling sorry to go away from the new-to-be father. At the same time, I was excited that at least I will see my parents, who were also the to-be grandparents. I will be able to relish all such delicious food which I was terribly craving for!

The journey resumed here, when after a year I returned to this distant home in Rochester. I got busy with my son who was 9 months old now. I felt even more stressed and burdened as the chores were doubled and I didn't have any friend or relative to suggest me anything or help me in any way. I didn't have a friend to share my pain and frustrations of postpartum depression. After spending a year, I was lucky to meet two new friends inside the same building where I lived. When my son was 2 years and some months old, he started going to a preschool. There I met the moms of the other kids. And then I heaved a sigh of relief that at least I have some friends to talk to. And the good news is by this time, I had a driving license too. Gradually, we met a lot of other people too from the Bengali Community in Rochester. After socializing with the people here, I started realizing that instead of always recounting the memories of past back from home, why not think this place a new home? Why not consider these people as my extended family? I am blessed to have a child because of whom I went out to meet people and we got more involved and felt more connected with the Bengali Community. He was the reason for whom we took the initiative to make more and more friends because we didn't want him to feel the way we felt here. We wanted him to grow in a family which has people more than just his mommy and daddy. I know the absence of his grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins may never be fulfilled here. But at least he has an extended family to be called as aunts, uncles, grandpas and grandmas. Gracefully, they embraced him with abundant love and care. Now I felt much relieved and highly obliged. Eventually, I found a new home in this city, much away from my home!

It's not true that I don't miss my family back in India anymore. I miss them every single day, every single hour, and can't even express how I feel without them. But it's just the way of life. I tuned myself to the new way of life!

I met a few excellent people here who made me feel home. They are so close to me. I feel so lucky to even know them. I feel fortunate that I have some people who are like our guardians here and will guide us whenever we need their help. Again, as every finger in a hand is not equal so are we people. How can we think that we won't have differences or clashes in opinions? But the theory is to move on and forget and forgive. Someone told me it's easy to make judgments about one another but difficult to stick together. I believe we all should learn to live together as a "big family". I also feel proud to be able to explore my culture and nurture some values to my child too. I feel equally blessed, in spite of being so far from the motherland, to celebrate and fully participate in the festivals and events among which the most enthusiastic is the greatest festival of our culture- Durga Puja. I believe this new home will always give me new hopes and reasons to embrace this place and my extended family with all my heart.

(The title of my writing was suggested by my sister, Juin Chakraborty. The critics and improvement suggestions were done by my husband, Barun Paul. And the love, support and inspiration credit goes to my son, Arunabha Paul.)

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Remembering September 11

Soumyaroop Bhattacharya

During the last millennium, September 11 was associated with something that had happened 125 years ago, in 1883, in Chicago. It was a day, when a young Hindu monk, who had travelled all the way from the east (India) by sea, addressed a gathering of religious leaders of the world. He opened his address with salutation, "Sisters and brothers of America!" To these words he got a standing ovation from a crowd of seven thousand, which lasted for two minutes. When silence was restored he began his address. He greeted the youngest of the nations on behalf of "the most ancient order of monks in the world, the Vedic order of sannyasins, a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance." It was a speech that resonated across the world. The congress ran for two weeks and Swamiji gave six lectures altogether. His lectures shook America and the whole world. After the Parliament Swami Vivekananda became very popular in the United States. His thoughts are relevant in today's world. In his last lecture at Parliament of Religions, he thanked the "noble souls" for organizing the Parliament, which he felt "proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character". He finished his speech with appeal "Help and not Fight," "Assimilation and not Destruction," "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension." These messages of peace and unity were associated with September, the eleventh, till a few years back, well, sixteen to be precise. All that changed on the fateful morning of September 11, 2001.

Over the last 16 years, the date September 11 rolls in with strong emotions. It is the day of sadness around the world. I had experienced it first hand during my second year of stay in the United States. Still in school, I was on my way to DMV for my driving test to get my license. It was still the era of FM radio. On my way to DMV in one of the Boston suburbs, I heard about a small plane hitting one of the towers of World Trade Center. And then stopped for coffee at a Dunkin Donuts and watched the second plane crashing in the tower on live television. There was a pin-drop silence with a lot of open mouths in coffee shop. No one could understand what exactly happened. I was trying to figure out, whether those were same twin towers that I had visited just a few months back and went all the way to the open promenade at the 110th floor. Memories suddenly flashed by.

On getting to the promenade on the top floor, the panoramic view of the New York City skyline fully lit up, made the wait at the bottom totally worth it. It was windy at times, but with no roof on top, the wind gave the feeling of flying, while the feet were still on ground. I remembered on the elevator coming down, it took us less time coming down 77 floors, than it took our college elevator to come down just six floors.

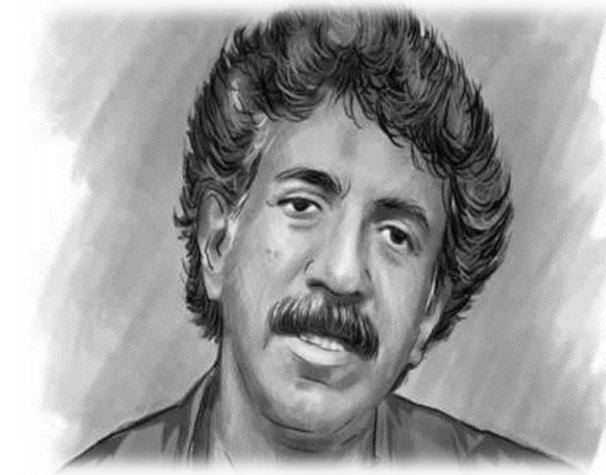
Alas.. that was all a distant memory now. In the immediate aftermath, the biggest reaction was 'did you see that? what just happened?'. My immediate concern was what happens to my driving test, whether I should go to DMV or try to find out what's happening. It was going to have a big

impact on my travel plans over the next few months. Well I still decided to try my luck at DMV and as expected, everything had closed for the day. On the drive back, the freeway was deserted. I have not seen the Boston area freeways during the day that empty prior to that, and after that till date. After getting back home, I watched the news and heard about what happened in details. Over the next few days, weeks, months and years, there were many actions, reactions, explanations, emotions and other feelings that have come to be associated with this date.

This year, however, September 11 brought an additional feeling of loss, a feeling of grief as I listen to the bangla song *Tomay hrid majhare rakhbo, chhere debo na* (I will keep you in heart, will not let you go). And a face floats in front of my eyes...it's Kalika da, late Kalika Prasad Bhattacharjee, the lead singer of Dohar. Born in Silchar, Assam on September 11, 1970, Kalika Prasad co-founded the band Dohar with the intent to revive the folk music tradition of Northern and Eastern Bengal. He also contributed music to a number of movies. He was also involved as a mentor on popular ZEE Bangla musical talent show Sa Re Ga Ma Pa. Apart from playback in many popular Bengali & Hindi movies, Kalika da has provided music direction in the films like "Selfie" directed by Sovan Tarafdar, "Bhuban Majhi" directed by Fakhrul Arefin (Bangladesh), "Bishorjan" directed by Koushik Ganguli, "Rosogolla" directed by Pavel and "Sitara" directed by Ashish Roy.

Over the last few years, one of my routines on September 11 (apart from reminiscing the events of 2001) has been to send birthday wishes to Kalika da, wishing for his long life. It started a few years back when I first got to know him during preparations of Dohar band's visit to Rochester. Prior to that I had just heard about the band as one of the leading Bangla bands, and had expected at least a bit of arrogance from the lead singer of the band, who happened to be a leading expert of Bengali folk music. So it was a pleasant surprise, when at the bus stop he picked up his own luggage, and won't let us help him. During their stay at Rochester, as I got to know him (and the rest of the band members) more, I realized how down to earth these folks were. During the evenings, Kalika da would reminisce about his childhood, his uncle Ananta Bhattacharjee who was his inspiration, about his adventures digging up literature on bangla folk music, and the early days of Dohar. Music was an intrinsic part of his home at Silchar, Assam. Growing up with rhythms & tunes, tabla was his first choice of instrument as he put it, it's an instrument which gives out sweet sound even when you beat it. His fascination with the tabla gradually inclined him towards other ethnic percussion instruments that are not so much in limelight. During his training on tabla, he also worked on his vocal chords. His keen interest in music eventually led him on the path of discovering hidden gems the folk music of Bengal and northeastern India. Thus, began his search for traditional folk songs which are vibrant, melodious and unanimous folk tunes that were always there, unnoticed and unidentified. His search was not only limited to music, but also involved literature from the region. In 1995, he joined Jadavpur University in the Comparative Literature department. After graduation, he went to Bangalore to work on Industrialization and its impact on folk music. In 1999 Dohar was formed as the culmination of long discussions among friends in flats in Bombay (now Mumbai). All these exchanges went on interjected with conversations about our food, travel and yes, coffee. He mentioned that one of the things he needs to bring back to

Kolkata to his wife (Ritacheta di) was Columbian coffee. Well, somehow, between all the runs for organizing their show, taking them around, and taking care of things, I could manage to get some Columbian coffee for him to take with. Alas, that was the last request he had. One of my cherished memories of the visit was the CD he gifted me and was autographed by all Dohar members including himself.



Kalika da was very active on social media and was quite vocal in his opinion. I was told that during their performance at last year's Banga Sannelan (North America Bengali Conference), the organizers abruptly cut the audio feed in the middle of the song due to time restrictions. Kalika da did not storm out of the event. The band got on stage for their next performance, however, he kept dinging the organizers for the fiasco from night before by mentioning time left for the performance at the end of every song. Kalika da was fully

devoted towards the songs of soul and heart of rural Bengal, which led him to organize an annual festival called "Sahaj Parob" to celebrate the diversity and variety of folk forms of arts and crafts in greater south Asia, with a deliberate focus on Bengal. Through the festival he continued his work on the proliferation of the traditional arts and the development and rediscovery of the lost tunes of the region. He also actively wrote about his research on Bengali folk music that were published in various national and international publications.

Even after the Kalika da and Dohar band members went back to India following their performance in Rochester, our interactions continued through emails and on social media. Last year before their visit to New York City for Banga Sannelan (North America Bengali Conference) he enquired if I would be attending as he wanted to see my little ones. I could not go as the kids were too young then, and now unfortunately they would not get to meet a gem of a person.

All those messages, greetings, occasional chats, everything suddenly came to a sudden halt on early morning of March 7th this year. It was very early morning (very late night, however you may want to term it) Eastern Time, and I was finishing some pending work on the computer with occasional glances on Facebook, and suddenly there were a lot of mentions about Kalika da, which made me look at those, and couldn't believe what I was reading. *Kalika Prasad Bhattacharjee, the lead singer of Dohar, has passed away in a road accident.* News of untimely deaths are unsettling, and when it is of a *Moner Manush* (someone close to heart), it is a lot more painful. Things that made the feeling even worse were news channel footages of the dead body. I don't understand the reason behind putting up those pictures on live television or on internet, is it just for TRPs? I strongly feel that the last image of a departed person that stays with us should be a smiling image, and not a mutilated lifeless figure with no emotions.

It was a sad day indeed, for Bangla folk music, and for us who knew Kalika da, not only as the lead singer of Dohar, but as a good person, a great friend, who had absolutely no air of his celebrity status. These lines perfectly sums up my feelings right now (on September 11, 2017)

*Ek din bik jayega, maati ke mol, jag mein rah jayenge pyare tere bol
Dooje ke hothon ko dekar apne geet, koi nishani chhod, phir duniya se dol.*

(One day all possessions will be valued as dirt, only your words will remain in the world. Leave your mark in such a way that others speak your words even after you depart.)

It is strange how one event defines how we remember a particular date in the history: September 11 or 9/11. Before 2001, for folks in Americas, it was associated with a coup in Chile and a devastating hurricane in Hawaii. However, for us in India, it was a date that we were proud to associate with Swami Vivekananda and his teachings. And for Bangla folk music, it was the day a star was born, who took the folk music to new heights. Even though the sheer impact of the events on this date in 2001 is impossible to forget, but let's recall the good things that happened on that date and rejoice and celebrate those since it takes fewer muscles to smile, than it takes to frown.



Build your Image Not Ego!!

Juin Chakraborty

Nowadays we all are busy building images. It's not our fault! We were raised like that. *If you don't study and score good marks, you won't be selected in the top rated colleges. And then you won't be able to get a good job in MNCs and won't have your own home and family.*

Family pressure, comparison with friends, cousins, neighbors etc. eventually eats up the human inside us. It just makes us calculative. We lead our lives the same way, by taking the equal pressure as we take at our workplace, which ultimately builds one thing, that is -EGO.

Women staying at home are treated equivalent to an illiterate. Pardon me, I have mentioned women only here because men staying at home is considered a crime in this world. But a women? She has to mention with a miserable face, "Oh I am just a home maker!" Then everyone is ready with their comments, "What's the use of the degree which you took then?" Hello everyone! That degree is helping her in managing the home in a more productive manner.

Each one of us are welding our lives in a way so as to lead the competition. Has any one of us taught how to find happiness in small things? Be it a bird chirping in the morning, a blooming flower, giving a surprise to your mom and dad like helping mom with the dishes or dad by a cup of tea in the morning along with the newspaper and spectacles, giving a flower to the person selling it for livelihood, filling the colors of life by just looking at the butterflies.

By pointing to the street workers we teach our children, "Study hard or you will become like them". How many of us have told them, "study hard so that you can help them?" We should learn to be a human first. Image will take its own path to get built. A good human is not a limited edition but a compilation of many beautiful things.

We get attracted to many astonishing things in our life and we try our best to own them. It's okay! We must try to own them. We must compete but the path to that marvelous thing shouldn't be built with the blood of innocent people. We shouldn't forget that to achieve that amazing thing we had to go through many ups and downs. We shouldn't forget to thank them who helped us in achieving those things.

Reputed image is built only when you know how to live a happy life taking care of the small and beautiful things while keeping our target in mind. TARGET! Yet another word which is killing us along with our relations.

All of us almost die to somehow achieve that target. We never plan it properly, I mean to say is that while planning the path to the target we forget to involve the time which we need to spend with our loved ones.

We have become materialistic nowadays. We forget that there is a beautiful life hidden in the intangible also.

PS: Don't just live your life, Love it.

Don't just plan to build image, Build happiness around you!!

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Advancement in Technology and Present Day Human Society and Amish People – A Contrast

Sujit K Bhattacharya

Technology is blooming. The storm is here to stay. Shunning this near perfect storm is unheard of, but it is true. Technology is all about what you do with it. The rate of technological advancement is increasing with time. The society is looking to create and develop easier ways to live and lengthen their lives. The advancement of new technology has been taking place since the beginning of human history. From invention of items like spear and knife made out of rocks, and to sticks, to aid in the capturing and killing of animals for food, to items like first printing press and the computer. The advancement of technology has been exceptionally fast in the 20th and 21st century. With electronics, technology and machines being produced and improved all the time, it was very likely that along with the positive aspects of new advancement, people would also consider negative aspects and look to criticize new technology.

Today, the people, and the society they make, can be grouped into five categories according to their access to and acceptance of technology, in life. Overlap is inevitable, between the categories.

- The modern young and affluent, who are very quick to grasp, adapt and use all the available technologies to their advantage. This class, are surging ahead of others, in all walks of life. They constitute what one may call world's true emerging market power house. The pace of work is quickened, paperwork is reduced, communication is made easy, and job position is improved.
- The mediocre class of fast aging, authoritarian sect, educated and affluent, constitute the second category. This sect accepts the technological advances but are rather slow to put these into action.
- The non-evolved human tribes constitute the third group. Anthropologists have identified many tribes who inhabit different darker regions of earth, since time immemorial, but are not evolved with time. These are
 - The *Sentinelese* tribe, who reside in deeper jungles of Andaman islands of India;
 - The *RUC* tribe residing in Central Vietnam;
 - The *Tolobiegasodo* tribe, who are found in Paraguay;
 - The *Waaduni* tribe, who are inhabitant of Equador and Colombia;
 - The *Carabayo* tribe, found in Colombia;
 - The *Piaroa* tribe are found inhabiting Venezuela;
 - The *Taramona* tribe, mostly found in Bolivia;
 - The *Waywompi* tribe, whose habitat is Guinea and Brazil;
 - The *Jarao* tribe, mostly found in island group of Andaman (India); and
 - The *Bushmen* tribes that are natives of Africa.

Most of these tribal populations live isolated and primitive life. Some of their habitats have been accessed by the local Governments, for upliftment. These people employ unusual, ancient maneuvers in their daily life. Some continue to be violent. Others practice to bury alive their ailing elderly and terminally ill relatives.

- The kids raised by animals. The ‘Feral’ children have been isolated from human contact from very young age and grew up wild, sometimes being cared by animals like monkeys (Marina), birds (Ostrich boy), cats (toddler), dogs and other animals. Few such feral also live with their own parents. For them, technology fails to serve any purpose.
- The AMISH People: The Amish are known for simple living, plain dress and reluctance to adapt many conveniences of modern day technology. These people eschew personal adornment and follow closely prescribed habits of dress. The Amish, resist technological advances, specifically using the horse and carriage for transportation (buggy) and using mainly horse drawn agricultural equipment. Electricity and telephone are not permitted in their home.

The history of Amish church began with a schism (a division or separation of a group because of differences in opinion) in Switzerland within a group of Swiss and Alsatian. Anabaptists in 1693 led by Jacob Ammann (1644 – 1720). Those who followed Ammann became known as Amish. Movement was originally founded in Europe by Menno Simmons (1496 – 1561). Amish are separated as reform group, because what they perceived as lack of discipline among Mennonite. They try to avoid many of the features of modern society by developing practices and behavior, which isolate them from mainstream American culture. Some Amish migrated to North America in early 18th century. Initially settled in Lancaster county of Pennsylvania, other waves of immigrants became established in New York, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, as well as Canada.

Most Amish are farmers. Private enterprise with mutual assistance characterize the Amish economic system. Amish do not want their children educated beyond grade school. Some Amish are trilingual, especially English, German, and Dutch, while others are bilingual. A strong system of sanctions including excommunication and shunning (*Meidung*) helps to maintain the group.

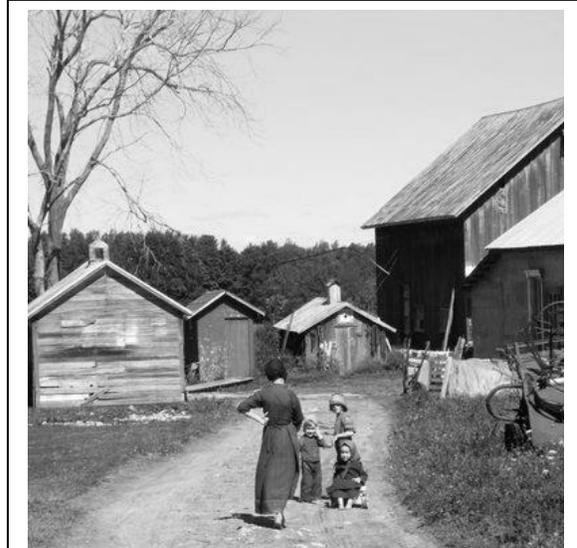
The Amish population has grown steadily since 1905. A study in 2010, suggested that their population had grown by 12% in the past two years, to 250,000 while the US population has increased by 23%. Most Amish continue to have 6-7 children. The Amish do proselytize,



Amish family riding a traditional Amish Buggy

and marrying outside the faith is forbidden. Genetic disorders are prevalent, and women attribute this to the domain of God. Polydactyly (more than normal number of fingers and toes) is common.

Thus the present human society is as diverse as the universe. From obscurity (non-evolved tribes) to religious reluctance (Amish), to most advanced and affluent, the profile is scintillating. Humans do not take long to invent, and use the technology. It is humanity's choice whether the advancement of the technology will be used for positive or negative outcome. Barring a select few, the society, in general, has responded positively, to the technological revolution. Technological Somnambulism is a concept used when talking about the philosophy of technology. That is, we are simply in a state of sleep walking in our mediations with technology.



An Amish Family in an Amish Farm

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Sharodiya Shubheccha and Shubho Bijoya to All!!!

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শেষ অঙ্ক

- ইন্দ্রাণী মিত্র

মাত্র কয়েকমাস হ'ল জজ শশধর রায় রিটায়ার করে চম্পাহাটিতে বাড়ী করে চলে এসেছেন। অনেক নাম ডাক তাঁর। জীবনে ভালভাবে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হ'য়ে, বহু বছর কলকাতা হাই কোর্টে practice করেছেন। শ্যামপুকুরে পৈতৃক বাড়ী ছাড়াও আরও বেশ কয়েকটা বাড়ী করেছেন তিনি। অনেক অর্থ উপার্জন করেছেন, বহু লোককে নানাভাবে সাহায্য করেছেন। কারুর অর্থকষ্ট দেখলে দুহাত ভরে অর্থ দিয়ে সাহায্য করেছেন কারণ অর্থকষ্ট যে কি ভয়ঙ্কর তা তিনি ছোটবেলা থেকেই জানেন।

বাবা সাধারণ এক government office-এর বড়বাবু ছিলেন। আজও তিনি জানেন না বাবা ঠিক কি কাজ করতেন। ভাড়া বাড়ীতে তাঁরা থাকতেন। মাঝে মাঝে ভাড়ার টাকা দিতেও তাদের বহু কষ্ট করতে হ'ত।

বাড়ীতে টাকা-পয়সার এত অভাব থাকলেও বাবা-মাকে কখনও অসৎ পথে চলতে দেখেন নি তিনি। দান-ধ্যান করতেন সাধ্যমত। কর্তব্য কর্মের কোন ত্রুটি হয় নি। মা নিজের গয়না বিক্রী করেও কর্তব্য করে গেছেন। সৎ পথে থেকে কিভাবে জীবন যাপন করতে হয় শশধরবাবু শিখেছিলেন মা-বাবার কাছে। এখনও মনে পড়ে honesty কথাটার প্রকৃত অর্থ সেই ছেলেবেলাতেই শিখেছিলেন মা-বাবার কাছ থেকে, সেই honesty-কেই পাথেয় করে জীবনে তিনি প্রতিষ্ঠিত, সম্মানিত হয়েছেন।

স্ত্রী আশা দেবী আর চার পুত্র সন্তান নিয়ে তাঁর সুখের সংসার। তিন ছেলেই বিদেশে বড় বড় কাজ করে। বড় আর সেজ ছেলে Engineer, মেজ ছেলে ডাক্তার, ছোটো ছেলে কলকাতাতেই থাকে। একটা NGO-তে কাজ করে। টাকা-পয়সার প্রতি কোন নজর নেই। মনের আনন্দে থাকে। ঝড়ের মত আসে, ঝড়ের মত চলে যায়। আর তিন দাদার মত status নিয়ে তার মাথা ব্যথা নেই। দেখতে সবার মধ্যে ছোট ছেলে সোমেন-ই অত্যন্ত সুপুরুষ। কিন্তু পোষাক-আষাকে একেবারে সাধারণ। বলে বলেও চুল কাটানো যায় না। শশধরবাবুর মনে অনেক আশঙ্কা আছে সোমেনকে নিয়ে। কিন্তু কেন জানি না আশা দেবীর কোন উদ্বেগ নেই। হয়ত তিনি সোমেনকে ঠিকমত চেনেন।

আজ প্রায় দশ বছর হ'ল তিন ছেলেই দেশে আসেনি। Modern Technology-র ফলে কথা হয়, Skype হয় এতেই তারা দুজন খুশী। সবারই বিয়ে হ'য়ে গেছে, ছেলেমেয়ে হ'য়েছে। তাদের সবার ফটো আসে ফোনে, কম্পিউটারে। কিন্তু নাতি-নাতনীকে নাড়াচাড়া করা, রোদে বসে তেল মালিশ করা, নরম ভাত মাখন দিয়ে গরশ করে খাওয়ানো এসব সুখ থেকে আশাদেবী বঞ্চিত। শুধু তিনি কেন, দুজনেই বঞ্চিত। তবুও কোনো অভিযোগ করেন নি কখনও কারণ তাঁরা জানেন ছেলেরা ব্যস্ত তাই আসতে পারে না। বৌ-রা প্রবাসী বাঙালী। তারা প্রায়ই বাপের বাড়ীতে আসে কিন্তু সময়ের অভাবে কলকাতা আসা হয় না। তাই এই দশ বছরে কারকে বুক জড়িয়ে কপালে স্নেহচুম্বন দেওয়া হয় নি। মাঝে মাঝে ভাবলে চোখে জল আসে। কিন্তু ওরা ভাল আছে এটুকুই যথেষ্ট। শশধরবাবু জানেন এ নিয়ে কোন কথা আশাদেবী বলেন না তিনি কষ্ট পাবেন বলে। সব হাসি মুখে সহ্য করেন।

অন্যদিকে ছোট ছেলে সোমেন দৌড়তে দৌড়তে আসে, মাকে জড়িয়ে ধরে surprise দেয়, কালো গরু দুটোকে খড় খাওয়ায়, বাবার সঙ্গে দাওয়ান বসে গল্প করে তারপর “আবার আসব” বলে রওনা দেয়। কখন আসবে আবার এই আশায় দুজনেই দিন গোণেন। ছেলেটা কখনও তিনি দাদার মত প্রতিষ্ঠিত হবে কিনা — এই ভাবনায় শশধরবাবু মগ্ন হ'য়ে যান।

চম্পাহাটির জীবন একেবারে সাধারণ। শহরের কোলাহল, হরদম লোকজনের আনাগোনা প্রায় নেই বললেই চলে। Modern life-style-কে ভুলে সোজা, সরলভাবে জীবন কাটানোর ইচ্ছে। স্বামী-স্ত্রীর মধ্যে গভীর ভালবাসা, শ্রদ্ধা ও একে অন্যের প্রতি অপারিসীম আস্থা, এই নিয়েই তাদের দিন কেটে যায়। কারকে দরকার হয় না। জীবনে বহু লোককে বুঝতে হ'য়েছে। সবাই মানুষ কিন্তু কতরকমের মানুষ। যে জগতে তাঁর দিন কেটেছে সেখানে অসংখ্য অমানুষ, বিবেক সেখানে প্রায়ই অনুপস্থিত। ঘোরতরো অন্ধকারে তাদের বাস। এইসব মানুষকে বুঝে, তাদের পরিস্থিতি বিচার করে তাঁকে রায় দিতে হয়েছে, তাই এখন তিনি শুধু ঈশ্বর চিন্তা নিয়ে থাকতে চান। ভেঙে যাওয়া মনকে ঈশ্বরের পায়ে সমর্পণ করে দিন কাটাতে চান। চম্পাহাটির জীবন তাই তার কাছে স্বর্গের মতন।

আশাদেবী প্রকৃত অর্থে যোগ্য সহধর্মিনী। তাঁর নিষ্পাপ মন, সরলতা ও পবিত্র চিন্তাধারা সংসারে এক শান্তির পরিবেশ তৈরী করে রাখে। সেখানে মলিনতার স্থান নেই।

বাড়ীটা মাটির না হলেও স্টাইলটা অনেকটা সেইরকম। একটা সুন্দর উঠোন তাতে নকশা কাটা মাদুর বিছোনো থাকে, দুটো আরামকেদারা রাখা আছে। দুটো কালো গরু আছে। সকালে একজন এসে দুধ দুইয়ে যায়। গাছে গাছে ফল, ফুল। কোকিলের ডাকে ঘুম ভাঙে। সারাদিন নাম না জানা পাখির ডাক শুনতে ভাল লাগে। কিন্তু গ্রামে থাকা এখন খুব একটা নিরাপদ নয় বলে চারিদিকে কাঁটাতার দিয়ে ঘেরা। সারাদিন বই পড়ে, কাগজ পড়ে দিন কাটে। তারই মধ্যে মাঝে মাঝে মনটা বিদেশে ছেলেদের কাছে চলে যায়। এখনও বিদেশে যাওয়া হয় নি। টাকা-পয়সার অভাবের জন্য নয়, ছেলেরা এত ব্যস্ত বলে কখনও আসতে বলে নি। থাক ওরা ভাল থাকুক।

সোমেনকে নিয়েই যা চিন্তা। অনেক দূর পড়েছে, গান গায়, অনায়াসে আবৃত্তি করে, চমৎকার লেখার হাত, কিন্তু জীবন সম্বন্ধে উদাসীন। সামান্য রোজগার কিন্তু খুবই সুখী। কলকাতায় এক ভাড়া বাড়ীতে থাকে। বাড়ীওয়ালার খুব যত্ন নেয় বলে বৃদ্ধ ভদ্রলোক ওকে নিজের ছেলের মতই দেখেন। তার ছেলেরাও সব বিদেশে।

দিন কাটছিলো একরকম। এরই মধ্যে কেমন করে আকস্মিকভাবে, ঘুমের মধ্যে আশাদেবী চলে গেলেন তাঁকে ভয়ঙ্করভাবে একা করে দিয়ে। কারকে বুঝতে দিলেন না, নীরবে বিদায় নিলেন। সমস্ত পৃথিবীটা নিমেষে অন্ধকার হ'য়ে গেল। সোমেনই মার সব কাজ করল কারণ অন্য ছেলেরা কেউ মার শেষ কাজে আসতে পারল না। শশধরবাবু ভাবলেন তা হ'ক, ওরা তো সবাই ব্যস্ত। প্রতিষ্ঠিত হবার জন্য এসব তো করতেই হবে।

একাকীষের কষ্টকে বুকে চেপে দিন কাটতে লাগল। শৈশবের বন্ধু নিতিনবাবু, আত্মীয়স্বজন সবাই খবর নিত, এখন তারা আরও বেশি যাতায়াত করে, এটা ওটা রান্না করে দিয়ে যায়। প্রতিবেশীরা খবর নেয়। কিন্তু তীব্র এক শূণ্যতা তাঁকে গ্রাস করতে আসে। মনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে শরীরটাও ভাঙতে থাকে। অনেক ভাবনা চিন্তার পর তিনি ঠিক

করলেন এবার সম্পত্তি ভাগ করবেন। বাল্যবন্ধু নিতিনবাবু বারবার একটা কথাই বলতেন। “মায়ার বশে সবকিছু ছেলেদের দিয়ে দিও না। শেষ বয়েসের জন্য কিছু রেখো।” নিতিনবাবু যে ভুল করেছেন সে ভুল আর কেউ যাতে না করে তাই একথা বলতেন। এককালের নামকরা ব্যবসায়ী সবকিছু ছেলেমেয়ের নামে করে দিয়ে আজ পথে এসে দাঁড়িয়েছেন। কিন্তু শশধরবাবুর শরীরের যা অবস্থা তাতে এখনই সব করা উচিত। চারিদিকে তাকিয়ে দেখলেন — যা কিছু আছে তা হয়ত বিদেশে ওরা নিয়ে যাবে না। আশাদেবীর একটা গোলাপ ফুল তোলা টিনের স্যুটকেস আছে সেটা উনি কখনও কাউকে খুলতে দিতেন না। মাঝে মাঝে একা কখনও বাক্সটা খুলে বসে থাকতেন। শশধরবাবু জানতেন না কি আছে ওতে। ওই বাক্সটা ছাড়া আর যা কিছু আছে সবই ভাগ করতে হবে।

সোমেনকে বলতে সে হৈ চৈ করে উঠল। সে স্পষ্ট জানাল তার কিছু লাগবে না। টাকা, গয়না, জিনিসপত্র সব অন্য ভাইদের দেবার জন্য অনুরোধ করল। ছেলেদের তিনি জানাবেন তার মনের ইচ্ছের কথা। মনে আশা রাখতে ভয় হ'ল — হয়ত এবারও ওরা আসবার সময় পাবে না। তাহলে সব কিছু ভাগ করে, কাগজপত্র তৈরী করে সেই নেবার জন্য পাঠাবেন, আর কিইবা করার আছে। এইসব ভাবতে ভাবতে ছেলেদের জানালেন তাঁর মনের ইচ্ছের কথা।

একসঙ্গে তিন ছেলেই জানাল তারা আসবে পরিবার নিয়ে কারণ তাদেরও তো বাবার প্রতি কর্তব্য আছে। এত অবাক বোধহয় কখনও হন নি তিনি। জীবনের সব মলিন অভিজ্ঞতাকে এই ঘটনা তুচ্ছ করে দিল। মনে পড়ল আশাদেবীর করুণ দুটি অশ্রু ভরা চোখ। কোন বিশেষ দিনে, ছেলেদের জন্মদিনে পায়ের কাছে ঠাকুরকে দিয়ে অঝোর ধারে কাঁদতেন। মুখে কিছু বলতেন না। শশধরবাবু মায়ের মনের ব্যথা বুঝতেন অথচ এমন ক্ষমতা তাঁর ছিল না যে ছেলেদের মার কাছে এনে মিলিত করাবেন। দশটা বছর কম নয়।

কেন, জানি না কোন উৎসাহ পেলেন না। এতদিন পর সবাই আসছে। সোমেনই দৌড়ে এসে বাজার করল। বিদেশে ওরা যা খায় তা কিনল, সমস্ত বাড়ী লোক দিয়ে পরিষ্কার করল। ঘরে ঘরে খাট-বিছানা ফুল দিয়ে সাজাল। অবশেষে সবাই এসে পৌঁছল। অনেক আশা আজ সফল হ'ল। ছেলেরা মায়ের ছবির পাশে ফুল দিয়ে সাজাল, মায়ের ছবিতে মোটা রজনীগন্ধার মালা দিল। কারুর কারুর দু'ফোটা চোখের জলও পড়ল। বৌ-রা প্রায় সবাই চোখ মুছল, কিন্তু আশাদেবীকে ওরা প্রায় চেনেই না। আশচর্যের ব্যাপার নাতি, নাতনীরা নিমেষের মধ্যে শশধরবাবু আর সোমেনের অত্যন্ত কাছের মানুষ হ'য়ে গেল।

শশধরবাবুর Lawyer বন্ধুদের সাহায্যে বাড়ীঘর, গয়না সবকিছুরই সুষ্ঠুভাবে ভাগ হ'য়ে গেল। সবাই কাগজে সই করল শুধু সোমেন কিছু নিল না। হাসি ঠাট্টার মাঝে বার বার চোখ মুছল। সব ছেলে বৌ-রা সিদ্ধান্ত নিল যে এবার শশধরবাবু হোম-এ যাবেন। ওরাই বিদেশে বসে ইন্টারনেট দেখে হোম-এর ব্যবস্থা করেছে। শশধরবাবুর সমস্ত সস্তা বিদ্রোহ করলেও তিনি কিছু বলতে পারলেন না। আশাদেবীর প্রচণ্ড ইচ্ছা ছিল চম্পাহাটির বাড়ীটা রামকৃষ্ণ মিশনকে দেবেন। সেই ইচ্ছা পূরণের জন্য শশধরবাবু বাড়ীটা রেখেছিলেন, ভেবেছিলেন মৃত্যুর পর বাড়ীটা মিশন নেবে। হোম-এর কথা কখনও ভাবেন নি। সোমেন আপত্তি করায় দাদারা সবাই মনে করিয়ে দিল যে সোমেনের দূরদর্শিতার অভাব এবং তার প্রতি অন্য ভাইদের আস্থা বড় একটা নেই। সেই কারণে তারা যা ভাল বুঝে করবে সেটাই ওকে মেনে নিতে হবে।

সবকিছু ব্যবস্থা হবার পর সবাই চলে গেল। অসহ্য এক ব্যথা বয়ে বেড়ালেন শশধরবাবু। সবাই এসে জিনিসপত্র গোছাতে সাহায্য করলেন। সোমেন কিন্তু এল না। আত্মীয়স্বজন কত কথা বলতে লাগল। সোমেন যে জীবনে কিছু করতে পারবে না, ওর যে দায়িত্ববোধ বলে কিছু নেই সেই কথা শুনতে শুনতে শশধরবাবুর অভিজ্ঞ মনেও দ্বন্দ্ব এল। সত্যিই বোধহয় তাই। ও মানুষ হ'ল না।

দেখতে দেখতে দিন এসে গেল। ১৩ই জুন, ভোরবেলা থেকে আনমনে বসে আছেন দাওয়ায়, আজ তাঁর জীবনের এক দুঃখের অধ্যায় শুরু হতে চলেছে। কুয়াশা হয়েছে খুব, কিছু দেখা যাচ্ছে না। কোকিলরা নিস্তব্ধ। দোয়েল, চন্দনারা কোথায় গেল? ফুলগুলোও যেন ঠিক পঁাপড়ি মেলছে না। তবে কি সবাই আজ শশধরবাবুর মনে হৃদিশ পেল? তাঁর দুঃখে তারা দুঃখিত?

হঠাৎ খুব দূর থেকে আবছা দেখা গেল দুজন মানুষ যেন গেটের সামনে এসে দাঁড়াল। পিছনে কি একটা ট্যাক্সি? ভাল করে কিছু বোঝার আগে কোকিলের ডাক শুনতে পেলেন। সামনে এসে দাঁড়িয়েছে সোমেন। পাশে একটি মেয়ে। চশমাটাকে আরও ভাল করে চেপে ধরলেন যাতে বুঝতে বা দেখতে পারেন। সত্যিই তো সোমেন। মেয়েটি পায়ে হাত দিয়ে প্রণাম করল। “বাবা, আমার বান্ধবী, তোমার হবু ছেলের বৌ, তৃণা। আমরা তোমায় নিতে এসেছি। তুমি হোম-এ যাবে না। তুমি আমার কাছে আমার ভাড়া বাড়ীতে থাকবে। তোমার মত থাকলেই তবে আমি তৃণাকে বিয়ে করে নিয়ে আসব। আমরা তিনজনে একসঙ্গে থাকব।” শশধরবাবুর সব সংযমের বাঁধ ভেঙে গেল। সোমেনকে বুকে জড়িয়ে কাঁদতে কাঁদতে বললেন, “তোমার মত ছেলে ঘরে ঘরে জন্মাক, এই আমার কামনা।” তৃণাকে টেনে নিলেন, আশীর্বাদ করলেন। তারপর দাওয়া থেকে নিয়ে এলেন আশা দেবীর ফটো। “এই দেখো আশা তোমার সোমেনের বৌ।” ঘুরে দাঁড়িয়ে ফটোটা ওদের দিয়ে বললেন — “আশাকে ছাড়া আমি কখনও কিছু করি নি। আজও তাই ওকে নিয়েই যাত্রা শুরু করব ভেবেছিলাম।”

ট্যাক্সিটা কাঁচা রাস্তায় দুলে দুলে চলতে লাগল। বরাবর শুনেছেন “God works mysterious ways” আজ তারই মস্ত বড় এক প্রমাণ পেলেন। প্রতিষ্ঠিত, সমাজে সম্মানিত, অর্থবান তিন পুত্র বাবার প্রতি যে কর্তব্য করল তার অর্থ ব্যাখ্যা করার ক্ষমতা শশধরবাবুর নেই। কিন্তু সোমেন আজ যা করল, যেভাবে তাঁর dignity-কে রক্ষা করল, মনুষ্যত্বের যে দৃষ্টান্ত দেখাল তাকে বোধহয় তিনি ব্যাখ্যা করতে পারেন। সোমেনের যা

আছে তা অন্য তিন, সমাজে প্রতিষ্ঠিত, সম্মানিত ছেলেদের নেই। শশধরবাবুর কাছে আজ তারা আর গর্বের বার্তা বহন করছে না। খানিকটা কাঙালের মত - নিজেদের কথা ভাবতে ভাবতে এতটাই বদলে গেছে যে বাবা-মা'র মনের খবর তারা রাখতে পারে নি। সোমেন হারিয়ে যায় নি। নিজের সততায়, সরলতায় এমন এক শিখরে উঠেছে সেখান থেকে নেমে এসে নিশ্চিন্তে বাবার হাত ধরে উচ্চ শিখরে যাত্রা করা সহজ। টাকা নামক ভয়ঙ্কর দানব পথ রুখতে পারে নি। বাবাকে অন্য লোকের লাঞ্ছনার বলি হ'তে দেবে না সোমেন। একেই তো বলে প্রতিষ্ঠিত তাই নয় কি?

সোমেনের বিয়ে হয়েছে। বৃদ্ধ বাড়ীওয়ালা বিষ্ণুবাবু তার বাড়ীটা সোমেনকে লিখে দিয়েছেন কৃতজ্ঞতা স্বরূপ। সবাইকে নিয়ে সোমেনের দিন কাটছে অত্যন্ত আনন্দের সঙ্গে। হঠাৎ একদিন শশধরবাবুর আশাদেবীর ফুল তোলা বাক্সটার কথা মনে পড়ল। কখনও ওটা খুলবেন ভাবেন নি। কিন্তু মনে হ'ল আশাদেবী বার বার বলতেন — “খুব জানতে ইচ্ছে করে না গো, কি আছে এটায়? খুলবে খুলবে, সময় এলে খুলবে। আমি কিছু বলব না।”

হয়ত এখনই সময়। সবার মত নিয়ে বাক্সটা খুললেন। ভেতরে শুধু বাচ্চাদের হাতে বোনা সোয়েটার, টুপি, মোজা। যখনই, কোন ছেলে জানিয়েছে তাদের বাচ্চা হবে তখনই মহা উৎসাহে এইসব বোনা শুরু করেছেন। তারপর লুকিয়ে রেখে দিয়েছেন। নিজে হাতে পরাবেন বলে। কিন্তু সেদিন আসে নি। আবার বন্ধ করে দিলেন বাক্সটা। বাক্সটা সোমেন, তৃণাকে দিয়ে বললেন — “খুশীর খবর এলে বাক্সটা খুলো। তোমাদের মা খুশী হবেন।” তারপর মনে মনে বললেন — “আশা, যথার্থ জায়গায় পৌঁছে দিলাম তোমার মন নিংড়ানো ভালবাসা ও স্নেহ। অবিচার হবে না। জীবনের এই শেষ অঙ্কে আমি ১০০-র মধ্যে ১০০ পেয়েছি। তুমি জানলে খুশী হবে তাই জানালাম।”

কবিতা

কিরণ শঙ্কর চক্রবর্তী

(১)

তুমিই তোমার মনের মানুষ,
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(২)

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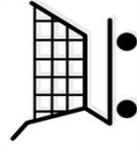
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