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Creative Literature, Translation, and Research

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MatruAkshar Journal

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MatruAkshar Journal

International Journal of Indian Languages

for Creative Literature, Translation, and Research

MatruAkshar

MatruAkshar
Founders' Voice

Founders' Voice

Dear Readers,

Namaskar ... !!!

We are very much delighted to begin a JOURNEY of a MatruAkshar Journal on the waves of the Time towards infinity. The watermark picture of this draft is a Wheel of Sun Temple of Konarka, Odisha. It represents the initiation of the journey into the Time. It is great pleasure that the literature in Indian languages will be read by Global readers. The objective behind this multi-lingual journal is to spread the indigenous literature to all the corners of India and the globe as well.

Well said by Rita Mae Brown,

“Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going”.

India being a multi-lingual nation, it has variety of the people are coming the journey of thousands of years with its multi-cultural aspects. Our journey of each language is very long and having the deep roots in philosophy. Indian people have undergone multi-lingual journey throughout his life as the languages are mostly inter-mingled. The Nobel Laureate Nelson Mandela has rightly pointed out that –

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to you in his own language, that goes to his heart.”

So, the significance of translation is underlined in his viewpoint. Translation has the magic to reach the hearts beyond the language barrier. It helps the avid readers get aesthetic pleasure through all sources of literature beyond their mother tongue.

MatruAkshar Journal invites all genres of creative literature – Poetry, Short Story, Fiction, Non-fiction, Essay, Memoir and Research as well. In this Inaugural Issue, we have submissions from Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Oriya, Sindhi and Tamil language. It provides one more opportunity of reading the translation of the Regional Classics for the global readers. In this Issue, we have translation of The Canto II of the Marathi Epic ***Debdoot, the Angel*** by Sudhakar Gaidhani.

The journal is subscription-based quarterly. The subscription rates are moderate in order to be affordable to the common readers. The Editorial Board for each language

consists of the Eminent Writers, Editors, Experts in their respective language areas and enthusiastic lovers of Indian ethos, culture and philosophy.

They have worked very efficiently to reach the writers, to extract the submissions and to edit and proofread it minutely.

MatruAkshar Journal intends to provide a platform for the grassroot level research in language studies. It wishes to sensitize the research in preservation of the languages which are on the verge of extinction, to encourage the native speakers of those languages for expression of their emotions in their own language, dialect or register. A Chair for the particular study will be established in future.

We, the Executive Board and all the respective Language Editorial Boards hereby request you to be part of MatruAkshar Journal and help to carry forward this Chariot of Jagannatha of Languages to reach all corners of the Globe.

As the literature plays a vital role in moulding the society and vice-versa, we invite you to the journey saying:

“Let’s join our hands together to enlighten the masses through Literature that soothes, consoles, illuminates the souls, and assists them in building beautiful future through their wonderful imagination...”

Waiting in anticipation,

Tejaswini Patil, Ph. D. and Orbindu Ganga

Co-founders,

Aditi Barve,

Executive Board Member,

MatruAkshar Journal,

International Journal of Indian Languages for Creative Literature, Translation and Research.

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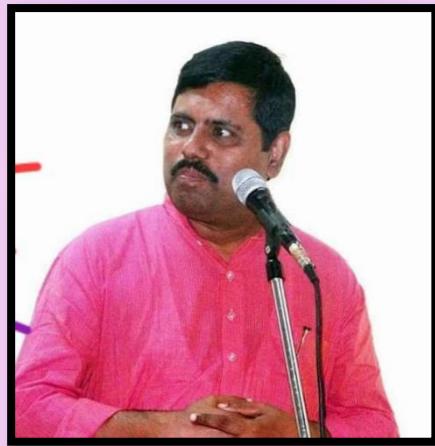
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Shyamal Bhattacharya

Bio-note of Author:

Shyamal Bhattacharya, is working with Press Information bureau as Translator to Prime Minister of India since 2014. He is an eminent author of Bengali Literature and a linguist of repute. He is the recipient of many honours, chiefly Punjabi Lekhak Akademi, Jalandhar, (2000); Tripura Prabha Honour (2007), Sutapa Roy Chowdhuri Award by Paschimbanga Bangla Akademi, Govt. of West Bengal (2010), Amrita Pritam Samman (2015), Siromani Sahityakar Samman, Udaipur, Rajasthan (2016), Tathagata Srijan Samman, Siddharthanagar, U.P. (2016), Mahatma Fule Talent Search Academy, Nagpur(2016), Sahitya Akademi, Govt. of Madhya Pradesh (2018), Manohar Kothari Smriti Samman, by Sahitya Mondal, Shreenathdwara, Rajasthan (2019) and the Sahitya Akademi Translation Award (2010).



Ms. Mandakini Bhattacharya

Bio of the Translator:

Ms. Mandakini Bhattacharya, from Kolkata, is Associate Professor in English and a multi-lingual poet, literary critic and translator. She has her own Poetry Page on the Dallas-based Mad Swirl Magazine. She participated in the All India Young Writers' Meet organized by Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi in February, 2020, and delivered a talk there on Short Fiction in 2021. She edited the international short story anthology “The Mixed Fare” in 2021, and is Associate Editor of the ‘Muse of New Paradigm’ anthology (AuthorsPress, 2020). She is Joint Secretary of Proyas, a women’s NGO in Kolkata.

এয়ারলিফ্ট: শ্যামল ভট্টাচার্য

চারদিকে ঘূর্ণির মতন বরফের ওঁড়ো উড়িয়ে চিতা হেলিকপ্টার দু'টি আকাশে উড়তেই কারাকোরাম লম্বন করে প্রথম সূর্যকিরণ সুবেদার মেজর বাহাদুর সিংহের পাথরকঠিন চেহারাকে আলোকিত করে অজান্তেই। ফরোয়ার্ড বেস কমান্ডার, অ্যাডজুটেন্ট ও উপস্থিত সৈনিকরা পা ঠুকে রাউণ্ড স্যালুট জানায়। অসংখ্য সুইয়ের মতন বরফের কণারা ওদের গাল ও নাক বিন্দু করছে। শরীরের এই দু'টি অংশই শুধু আপাতত অসহায়। এখন তাপমান মাইনাস চলিশের থেকেও নিচে নেমে গেছে। দশমিনিট আগেই অলোক দেখেছে মাইনাস উনচলিশ ডিগ্রি। কিন্তু নিজস্ব অভিজ্ঞতা থেকে জানে রোদ ওঠার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আকাশে মেঘ না থাকলে এখানে তাপমান এক লাফে এক ডিগ্রি নেমে যায়।

অন্যসময় নিজের অজান্তেই গ্লেসিয়ার-গ্লাভস সহ সবার হাত উঠে আসতো নাক ও গালে। বারবার উঠে আসতো। এখনি হয়তো আবার উঠে আসবে। কিন্তু এই মুহূর্তে ফরোয়ার্ড বেসের সমস্ত সৈনিক হেলিপ্যাডে সারিবদ্ধ; কেউ কেউ বিক্ষিপ্ত দাঁড়িয়ে স্যালুট জানাচ্ছে। প্রত্যেকের নাক দিয়ে ঘন সাদা দীর্ঘনিঃশ্বাস, সুদূরতম কোষসমূহ থেকে এই নিঃশ্বাস; নাভিমূল থেকে এক প্রবল দুঃখবোধের তাড়নায় সমস্ত উত্তপ্তি নিওড়ে বেরিয়ে আসছে।

দেখতে দেখতে হেলিকপ্টারটি দূরে—বহু দূরে—সালতোরো ও কারাকোরামের উত্তুঙ্গ শৃঙ্গসমূহের মাঝে একটা প্রশ়্নবোধকের নিচে ঝুলে থাকা বিন্দুর মতন অলোক ও সমস্ত সৈনিকের মনে ঝুলতে অদৃশ্য হয়ে যায়। তারপর আর কোনো শব্দ নেই। শুধু শোঁ শোঁ হাওয়ার দাপট। সবাই ভারবাহী উটের মতন ঘপাঘ ঘপাঘ থপ থপ করে এগিয়ে যায় নিজস্ব গুহার দিকে। প্রবল ইচ্ছা থাকলেও সমুদ্রপৃষ্ঠ থেকে আর্টেরো হাজার ছ’শো ফিট উচ্চতার এই ফরোয়ার্ড বেসে এর চেয়ে জোরে চলার কোনো উপায় নেই। বাতাসে অক্সিজেনের স্বল্পতা আর দু'দিন ধরে তুষারপাত না হওয়ায় জায়গায় জায়গায় কঠিন নিরেট বরফ বেরিয়ে এসেছে। পাথরের মতন--এতে গুলি বিন্দু হয় না, শেল পড়লেও ফেটে চৌচির হয়ে যায়।—হায়!

জনশূন্য এই খামখেয়ালি প্রকৃতির রাক্ষুসে গতি ও শুশানসম স্থিতির কোনো নিশ্চয়তা নেই। সুবেদার মেজর বাহাদুর সিংহ তাঁর তেত্রিশ বছর চাকরিজীবনের শেষ কয়টি দিন পৃথিবীর সর্বোচ্চ এই যুদ্ধক্ষেত্রে কাটিয়ে গেলেন। দীর্ঘ একাত্তর দিন। একেকটা দিন এখানে একেক সপ্তাহের মতন দীর্ঘ।

আড়াই মাস ভাত খাননি, সবজি খাননি, ঝুটি খাননি, মাংস খাননি, এমনকি মদও খেতে পারেননি। তার মানে এই নয় যে, এই ফরোয়ার্ড বেসে এসব জিনিস দৃষ্টিপ্রাপ্ত। বাহাদুর সিংহ খাননি হজম হতো না বলে। খেয়েছেন শুধু দিনে কয়েকমুঠো কাঠবাদাম, কাজু কিশমিশ অথবা চিনেবাদাম। সঙ্গে মিষ্টমেডের কৌটোকেটে জলের বদলে স্টোভে প্রক্রিয়া বরফ গরম করে তৈরি করা দুধ।

গতকাল দুপুরে অলোক ওঁর গুহায় আজকের এয়ারলিফ্টের কনফার্মেশন দিতে গেলে জোর করে বসিয়ে দেন। গুহার ভেতরে সারিবদ্ধ জ্যারিকেনের পেটে ও ফাঁকে বরফ ঢুকিয়ে তৈরি উঁচু জায়গায় দুটি স্কোয়ার প্যারাসুট পেতে তৈরি বিছানায় বসে অলোক। সুবেদার মেজরের সহায়ক ওঁর নির্দেশ পেয়ে শুকনো পেঁয়াজের গুঁড়ো সামান্য গরম জলে ভিজিয়ে নিয়ে স্টোভের উপর মেসটিন বসিয়ে দেশি ঘিয়ে ভাজে। তার মধ্যে ভেজে নেয় আধ কেজিটাক কাজুবাদাম।

বাহাদুর সিংহ ওকে বিশেষ হরিয়ানি উচ্চারণে জিঞ্জেস করে, আচ্ছা মিত্রসাহেব, আপনি একটা প্রশ্নের জবাব দিন। এয়ারফোর্সের ফৌজিরা আমাদের তুলনায় বেশি লেখাপড়া জানে। এই গ্লেসিয়ারের নাম সিয়াচেন কেন?

অলোক অপ্রস্তুত হেসে বলে, কী যে বলেন! লেখাপড়ার নিরিখে তুলনা না করাই ভাল, কোনো ব্যক্তির চেয়ে অন্য কেউ দুটো ক্লাস বেশি পড়াশুনো করে থাকতে পারে। সে তো আপনার বাড়িতেও—

—আরে আরে ভুল বুঝবেন না। আপনিও আমার ছোট ভাইয়ের মতন, আর এই শেষদিনে যে উপকারটা করলেন। নাহলে এই বরফের পথে চারদিন ধরে কোমরে দড়িবাঁধা অবস্থায় লিঙ্কে চলতে হতো, সে যে কী কঢ়ের! —

—আসলে এতে আমার কোনই ক্রেডিট নেই। আগামীকাল দুটি হেলকপ্টার ড্রাই-র্যাশান আর মেইল নিয়ে আসবেই। ব্যাকলোড বলতে তো শুধু দু'জন পেশেন্ট। হ্যাপো হয়েছে গুলজারিলাল আর চিন্দি রেইন হয়েছে সুরক্ষানিয়মের।

—হ্যাঁ, গুলজারির ফুসফুসের রস বরফ হয়েছে। বাঁচবে কি না কে জানে! ডাক্তার ক্যাপ্টেনসাহেব আর নাসিং অ্যাসিস্টেন্ট দু'জন তো পালা করে হটওয়াটার ব্যাগ দিয়ে সেঁক দিয়ে যাচ্ছে, মালিশ চলছে অবিরাম। কাল সকাল সকাল চোতালা এলে হয়।

ଅଲୋକେର ହସି ପେଯେ ଯାଏ । ସମସ୍ତ ହରିଯାନି ସୈନିକଙ୍କ ଚିତାକେ ଚୌତାଳା ଆର ଏମ ଆଇ ୧୭ ହେଲିକପ୍ଟାରକେ ଦେବୀଲାଲ ବଲେ । ସୁବେଦାର ମେଜରେର ସହାୟକ ତାମିଲ ଛେଲେଟି କାଜୁବାଦାମ ଭାଜାର ଉପର ଗୋଲମରିଚେର ଗୁଡ଼ୋ ଆର ନୂନ ଛିଟିଯେ ବଲେ, ସୁରକ୍ଷାନିୟମେର ନାକଟା ନାକି କେଟେ ଫେଲତେ ହବେ ସାର?

ଓର ଆୟାଜ କାଁପୋ । ଆଧୋ ଆଧୋ ହିନ୍ଦିତେ ସଞ୍ଚମ ଓ ଉଦ୍ବେଗ ମେଶାନୋ । ବାହାଦୁର ସିଂହ ସେଟା ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀ କରେଇ ଓର କାଁଧେ ଆଲତୋ ହାତ ରେଖେ ପିତାର ମତନ ଦରଦୀ ଆୟାଜେ ବଲେନ, କୀ ଜାନି ବାବା! ଆମାର ଆର ଭାବତେ ଭାଲ ଲାଗେ ନା—ଛେଲେଟା ଏତ ଚୌକଶ; ଏଇ ବରକେର ସମୁଦ୍ର ନିଜେର ଉଦ୍ୟୋଗେ ଡିଶ ଅୟାନେଲା ଲାଗିଯାଇଛେ—ତୋରା ସବାଇ ଏଥିନ ବ୍ରିଫିଂର୍ସମେ ଗେଲେଇ ଏତ୍ତାଳି ଚ୍ୟାନେଲ ଦେଖତେ ପାଞ୍ଚିସ--

ଏକଟୁ ଥେମେ ଆନମନା ବାହାଦୁର ସିଂହ ବଲେନ, ଏମବ କରେଇ ଛେଲେଟା-- ।

ସହାୟକ ଛେଲେଟି ଗରମଜଲେର ଟିନ ଥେକେ ତୁଲେ ଓଦେର ଏକଟା ଝୁଟି ଦେଯ । ଲେହ-ଥ୍ୟେମେ ବେସକ୍ୟାମ୍ପେ ଅନେକବାରଇ ଏରକମ ଝୁଟି ଗରମ କରେ ଥେଯେଛେ ଅଲୋକ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଗୋଲମରିଚ-ଲବଣ ଛେଟାନେ କାଜୁବାଦାମ ଏଇ ପ୍ରଥମ । ମେ ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା କରେ, ସୁବେଦାର ମେଜର ସାହାବ ଆପନାର ଛେଲେ-ମେୟେ କ'ଜନ?

--ଏକ ଛେଲେ ଆର ଏକ ମେୟେ—ବ୍ୟମ ପରିବାର ନିଯୋଜନ, ହା-ହା-ହା-

--ତାଇ ଭାଲୋ । ମାନୁଷେର ପଦଭାବେ ପୃଥିବୀ ଏଥିନ କାଁପିଛେ! ଛେଲେ-ମେୟେ ଏଥିନାକୁ ପଡ଼ାଶୋନା କରେ?

--ଜି ହା । ମେଯେଟା ବାରୋ କ୍ଲାଶ ପାଶ କରେ ଏବାର କଲେଜେ ଭର୍ତ୍ତି ହେଯେଛେ । ଓର ଠାକୁର୍ଦୀ ପାତ୍ର ଦେଖେ, ଛେଲେ ବ୍ୟାକେ କ୍ଲାର୍କ!

--ବିମେ ଦିଯେ ଦେବେନ? ଆର ପଡ଼ାବେନ ନା?

--ଯଦି ଶ୍ଵଶରବାଡିରଲୋକେରା ରାଜି ଥାକେ, ପଡ଼ାବୋ । ନାହଲେ ପଡ଼େ-ଲିଖେ ଆମାର ମେୟେ ତୋ ଆର ବ୍ୟାରିସ୍ଟାର ହବେ ନା ।

--ଅଲୋକ ହେମେ ବଲେ, କେମନ କରେ ଜାନେନ, ହବେ ନା? ଚଢ଼ିବା କରତେ ଦୋଷ କୋଥାଯା?

ସୁବେଦାର ମେଜର ମାଥା ନାଡ଼େ । ଓର ଚୋଥ ଦୁ'ଟି ଟାଳା ଟାଳା, ବଡ଼ ବଡ଼ । ମୋଟା ପାକାନେ ଗୋଫେର ଉପର ରାଶଭାରି ଚେହରାଯ ଏଥିନ ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଏକଜନ ପ୍ରବାସୀ ପିତା ଛାଡ଼ା ଆର କେଉ ନେଇ । ପାଥି ହୋଇଥାଏ ଏହି ଦୃଷ୍ଟି ବଡ଼ ସଂକ୍ରମକ । ପାଶେ ବସେ ଥାକା ଅନ୍ୟ ପିତାରଙ୍କ ବୁକ କେମନ କରେ । ଅଲୋକେର ମେୟେର ବ୍ୟମ ସବେ ଦୁଇ । ଏଥିନ ଅନେକ କଥାଇ ବଲତେ ପାରେ । ଆଗରତଳା ଥେକେ ମାଯେର ଚିଠି, ବୋନେର ଚିଠି, ଭାଇୟେର ଚିଠି ଆସେ । ସବାର ଚିଠିତେ ଓକେ ନିଯେ କତ କଥା, କତ ଗଲ୍ଲା । ଶୁଦ୍ଧ କ ବର୍ଗେର ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣଟା ତ ବର୍ଗ ଦିଯେ

করে! অলোক ভাবে, আগামীকালের হেলিকপ্টারে যদি অন্তরার চির্ঠি আসে! লেহ থেকে রেডিও টেলিফোনিতে সহকর্মীরা চির্ঠির খবর জানিয়েছে।

--আপনি বললেন না মিত্রসাহেব--সিয়াচেন--ছেলেটা এখন আট ক্লাসে উঠেছে, গেলেই এসব প্রশ্ন করবে। সে নাকি এয়ারফোর্সের পাইলট হবে! --ছেলের কথা বলে বাহাদুর সিংহের চোখ চকচক করে। একটু আগের উদাস পিতা আর এ'মুহূর্তের গর্বিত পিতার আশান্বিত চেহারা আলাদা।

অলোক হেসে বলে, সিয়াচেন একটি তিরিতি শব্দ---যার অর্থ হলো গোলাপের বাগান। আসলে আকাশ থেকে এই হিমবাহের উচু-নিচু কালো বরফের টিলাগুলিকে গোলাপের পাপড়ির মতন দেখায় আর মাঝেমধ্যে সাদা বরফের আস্তরণ যেন পাপড়িগুলিকে আরোও স্পষ্ট করে তোলে--কল্পনাটা খারাপ না--আমরা থাকি, লড়াই করি, কষ্ট পাই বলে রাঙ্গুমে মনে হয়; আকাশ থেকে কিন্তু এই বিশাল অঞ্চল হিমবাহকে দারুণ লাগে! বাহাদুর সিংহ হেসে বলেন, তা তো বটেই। এইজনেই তো দু'দেশের বাবুরা আকাশ থেকে দেখে যায়, দিল্লি আর ইসলামাবাদে একের পর এক মিটিং করে, কোনো সুরাহ হয় না---যুদ্ধ চলতে থাকে। মরছে তো সাধারণ সৈনিক, মরছে কিষাণের সন্তান, খরচ হচ্ছে সাধারণ কিষাণের টাকা--গড়ে নাকি প্রতিদিন সাত কোটি--হায়!

অলোক বুখারির কাছে এগিয়ে বসে। হাত সেঁকে। ওরাও হাত সেঁকেন। ডাবল লেয়ার কোঁক্রিট জুতোর ভেতরে পা অবশ হয়ে আসছে। অলোক ভাবে, উঠতে হবে। নিজের গুহায় ফিরে জুতো খুলে পাগুলি সেঁকতে হবে। এইটুকু অসাবধান হলে কোন বিপদ নিমেষের মধ্যে ঝাঁপিয়ে পড়ে টুঁটি টিপে ধরবে কে জানে? তাছাড়া ভীষণ পেছাব পেয়েছে। অনেকক্ষণ ধরেই পেয়েছে।

অথচ বাহাদুর সিংহকে যেন কথায় পেয়েছে! কোনোদিন নিজের সম্পর্কে তাঁকে বলতে শোনা যায় না---আজকের মতন কথা তো তিনি কোনোদিনই বলেননি। গভীর প্রকৃতির অফিসার। অধীনস্থ সৈনিকদের সন্তানের মতন ভালবাসেন আবার শাসনও করেন। সবাই ওঁকে বেশ সমন্বে চলে। সামান্য ফাঁকি টের পেলে থাপ্পড় মারতেও কসুর করেন না। অ্যাডজুটেন্ট কিংবা কমান্ডার তাই ওঁর উপরেই সব ছেড়ে রেখেছেন। সপ্তাহখালেক আগে লিঙ্কে এসেছে ওঁর রিলিভার। বাহাদুর সিংহের মতন সাত ফুট না হলেও নতুন সুবেদার বেশ লম্বা-চওড়া রাশভারি, বাহাদুর সিংহেরই গ্রামের ছেলে রামফল। তিনি ওদের আলোচনা শুনছেন আর মিটিমিটি হাসছেন। চুপচাপ গরম ঝুঁটি আর কাজুবাদাম খাচ্ছেন। ওঁর এখনো দু'বছর চাকরি বাকি। বাহাদুর সিংহের মতন অসাবধান কথা বলে নিজের ওজন খোয়াতে চাল না। তার উপর এই প্রবল শৈত্য ও উচ্ছতায় নিজেকে এখনো মানিয়ে উঠতে পারেননি।

অবশ্য কেউই কোনোদিন সম্পূর্ণ মানিয়ে উঠতে পারে না। তবু নিজের পা দু'টিকে বিশ্বস্তভাবে সামনে-পিছনে নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা, হাত'দুটিকে বারবার নাক ও গালের সামনে নেওয়ার অভ্যাস রপ্ত করতে এখানে বেশ সময় লেগে যায়। সাধারণ জওয়ানদের কষ্ট অনেক বেশি। সময়মতন গোলা ছেঁড়া, শক্র গোলার জবাব দেওয়া ছাড়াও ওদের বিস্তর কাজ থাকে। ড্রপিংজোনে এ এন ১২ বিমান কিংবা এম আই ১৭ হেলিকপ্টার থেকে কেরোসিন, পেট্রোল বা অন্যান্য টিলফুড যা ড্রপ করে যায় সেগুলি সংগ্রহ করে গুদামজাত করা এখন হারকিউলান টাঙ্ক। চারজন সৈনিকের সারাদিন কেটে যায় এক একটা কেরোসিন কিংবা পেট্রোলের ব্যারেল ড্রপিংজোন থেকে টেনে হিঁচড়ে স্টোর অবধি আনতে। উঁচু-নিচু এবড়ো-থেবড়ো বরফের পথ। স্লো-ট্রাক এখানে অচল, স্লো-স্লুটারও সরখানে চলে না। এই কষ্টের পর সামান্য সুযোগ পেলেই অকাতরে ঘুমোয় একেকজন। এই শৈত্যের বাধ্যবাধকতা না থাকলে কে কাজ করতে চায়! তাই কড়া ডিসিপ্লিন এবং নিয়মিত দেশাঞ্চলবোধে প্রাণিত করা, শক্র প্রতি ঘৃণা জাগিয়ে রাখার দায়িত্ব সামলাতে হয় প্রত্যেক সিনিয়র জেসিও-কে। ওদের মুখে এরকম কথা মানায় না। বাহাদুর সিংহের চাকরি শেষ বলেই হয়তো অজান্তে কিছু মনের কথা বেরিয়ে এসেছে। সন্দেহ হয়ে এসেছে। অলোক উঠে দাঁড়িয়ে বলে, আসি আজ, কাল সকালে দেখা হবে।

দুই সুবেদার মেজরই উঠে দাঁড়িয়ে বলেন, ঠিক আছে স্যার!

বাহাদুর সিংহ দরজা খুলতে এগিয়ে যান। বাইরে প্রচণ্ড হাওয়ার দাপট। গুহার দরজায় তাই ভারী স্প্রিং লাগানো। একজন বেরিয়ে টেনে না ধরলে পরবর্তী জনের ব্যথা পাওয়ার আশঙ্কা থাকে। সুবেদার মেজর রামফল বলেন, বাহাদুর স্যার চলে গেলে আপনি আমাদের ভুলে যাবেন না, মাঝে মধ্যে আসবেন স্যার!

--অবশ্যই, অবশ্যই! আপনিও আসবেন, পঁচিশ-ত্রিশ কদম দূরেই তো থাকি। অবশ্য এখানে এটাই অনেক দূরস্থ!

--আমি দেখেছি, অবশ্যই যাব!

অলোক গুহার বাইরে পা রাখে। আর তখনই সালতেরোর দুই শৃঙ্গের মাঝখান দিয়ে একটা বিশাল আগন্তের গোলা প্রচণ্ড বেগে আছড়ে পড়ে দশ হাত সামনে। নিরেট বরফে ফেটে ছিটকে পড়ে চারপাশে। অলোকের কানের পাশ দিয়ে একটা স্প্লিন্টার পাশের বরফের টিলায় চুকে একটা চাঁই খুলে আনে। সুবেদার মেজর বাহাদুর সিংহ বলেন, হে রাম! তারপর অলোকের বাঁ হাতে লুটিয়ে পড়েন।

কিছুক্ষণের মধ্যেই ভারতীয় কামানগুলি গর্জে ওঠে। মুহূর্মুহু অগ্নিবর্ষণে সালতোরোর শৃঙ্গগুলি কাঁপে। ঘনঘন বরফের ধস্ নেমে আসে। সারা রাত থেমে থেমে গোলা বর্ষণ চলতে থাকে। সারা রাত পাহাড়ের অজানা সব খাঁজ থেকে অদৃশ্য কাকেরা ডাকতে থাকে ক্র্যাও-ক্র্যাও-ও !

অলোকের সহকর্মী সুরিন্দর বলে, আমি বলিনি স্যার, এরা আসলে কাক নয়; এরা সব দুই দেশের সাধারণ দুঃস্থ সৈনিকের অতুল্পন্ত আঘাত, বেঁচে থাকতে যারা সীমা পার করতে পারেনি; মরে গিয়েও তারা সেই সীমানা খুঁজে না পেয়ে এই প্রবল শৈত্যে ওড়াউড়ি করে। অন্যসময় একবারও ডাকে না, শুধু অহেতুক গোলাবর্ষণের প্রতিবাদে চিংকার করে অদ্ভুত ফাটা আওয়াজে---ক্র্যাও-ও-ও, ক্র্যাও-ও-ও-ও---গোলা থামাও---যুদ্ধ থামাও... ...।

আজ সাতকুট লম্বা মানুষটির লাশ হেলিকপ্টারে ঢোকানো যাবে না জেন একটা প্যারাসুটের ক্ষিডবোর্ডে শুইয়ে প্যারাসুটের স্ট্র্যাপ দিয়ে ভালমতন বেঁধে, ভারতের জাতীয় পতাকা দিয়ে মুড়ে হেলিকপ্টারের নিচে ঝুলিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে। এক সপ্তাহের মধ্যে পরপর দু'বার এরকম এয়ারলিফ্ট করলো চিতা হেলিকপ্টারগুলি। অলোক নামতে নামতে গ্লাভসের পিঠ দিয়ে গাল মোছে।

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**Translation****Airlift**

The instant the pair of Cheetah copters flew into the sky like a whirlpool blowing around ice dust, the first sunbeam crossing the Karakoram surreptitiously lit up the stony countenance of Subedar Major Bahadur Singh. The forward base Commander, Adjutant and all the soldiers present offered a round-salute, striking together their heels. Countless needle-like ice grains pierced their cheeks and noses. Only these two portions of the body were at present defenseless. The temperature had dropped now to below minus forty degrees. Just ten minutes ago, Aloke had seen that it was minus thirty-nine degrees. But Aloke knows from experience that a bright sun emerging in a cloudless sky causes a sharp drop in the temperature by at least a degree.

At any other time, everyone's hands, covered under glacier gloves, would have automatically reached the nose and cheeks to clear the ice grains. Again and again reached up. Perhaps they will do that again any moment. But at this instant, all the soldiers at the forward base are standing in a row at the helipad; those who are standing scattered here and there, are also raising a salute. The men blew dense clouds of frosted breath into the air from the deepest reserve of every cluster of cells, as if some intense grief was wringing out all the heat from the umbilicus.

Soon, the helicopter sped far - far away - through the middle of the lofty summits of Saltoro and Karakoram, and, still swinging in the minds of Aloke and other soldiers like the hanging dot at the bottom of the sign of interrogation, vanished into the distance. Afterwards, it was all quiet but for the raging wind. The soldiers thudded back to their tents like pack camels. At this forward base at an altitude of eighteen thousand and six hundred feet above sea level, in the freezing cold, there was no way one could walk faster than this, even if he desperately wanted to. Due to the general lack of oxygen and absence of snowfall over the past two days, solid ice had emerged at places. Even bullets could not pierce ice so solid, a striking shell would burst - alas!

There is no surety of the monstrous motion and funereal existence of this desolate and freakish stretch of nature. Subedar Major Bahadur Singh spent the last few days of his work life of thirty-three years on this highest battlefield of the world. Seventy-one long days. Each day here seems as long as a week.

For two and a half months, he had not eaten rice and vegetables, had not eaten mutton, and could not even drink alcohol. It was not that these things were scarce at the forward base. Bahadur Singh had avoided them because he suffered from indigestion. He was living on a daily ration of handfuls of almonds, cashews, raisins or peanuts. He also took milk, which was prepared by boiling ice in lieu of water mixed with milkmaid, on a camp stove.

Yesterday afternoon when Aloke went to his cavern to confirm today's airlift, Subedar had forced him to sit down for a while. Aloke had sat down on the bed made from two square parachutes on a raised platform created by placing ice inside and in-between the jerrycans lined up in series. Subedar Major's adjutant had followed orders and fried them some dried and powdered onion peels, soaked in a little hot water, in desi ghee in a mess tin, and added half a kg of cashews.

Bahadur Singh asked Aloke in a typical Haryanvi accent, "Well, Mitra Sahab, I've heard that the Airforce men are more educated than us. So tell me something, why is this glacier named Siachen?"

Embarrassed, Aloke had smiled and said, "How can you say so! It is better not to compare in terms of formal education; someone might manage to complete one or two classes more than another. It might as well be so in your family..."

"Ah, ah, please don't misunderstand, you are also like my younger brother. And on this last day, the kind of help you have rendered to me, but for which, I would have had to move in the link with the halter around my waist over this road of ice for four days...what an ordeal!"

“Truly, I do not deserve any credit for it. Tomorrow, in any case, two copters carrying dry ration and mail will fly in. As back-load, there are only two patients - Guljarilal, suffering from HAPO (High Altitude Pulmonary Oedema), and Subramaniam, suffering from chilblains,” says Aloke.

“Yes, Guljari’s lung-fluids have turned into ice, nobody knows if he will survive! Captain Doctor and the Nursing Assistant are applying hot water bags to him, and massaging him continuously, by turns. Hope Chowtala arrives early tomorrow morning,” replies Subedar.

Aloke felt inclined to smile. All the soldiers from the state of Haryana, he finds, call the Cheetah copters ‘Chowtala’ and the MI-17 copters ‘Devilal’.

The adjutant to Subedar Major, the Tamil lad, sprinkling salt and pepper on to the fried cashews, asked, “I hear Subramaniam’s nose will have to be cut off. Is it so, Sir?”

His voice, mixed with deference and concern in broken Hindi, quivered. Noticing it, Bahadur Singh puts his hand lightly on the lad’s shoulder and says in a fatherly affectionate tone, “I don’t know! I do not feel like even thinking about all this. The boy is so dexterous. He had fixed the dish antenna all by himself in this ocean of snow so that you all can now watch so many channels, whenever you go inside the briefing room.”

Pausing for a bit, Bahadur Singh unconsciously utters – “It is by doing all these things, that the boy...”

The adjutant lifted a Frooti from the hot water in the tin and offered it to them. Aloke had tasted Frootis, heated in this fashion, several times at the Leh-Thoise base-camp, but this was the first time he was having cashew seasoned with pepper and salt. He asked, “How many children have you got, Subedar Major Sahab?”

“One son and one daughter... no more, family planning, ha, ha, ha.”

“That’s good, Mother Earth is already trembling under the weight of population. Are your children still studying?”

“Yes, Sir. The daughter, having cleared Class Twelve examinations, has got herself admitted in a college. But her grandfather has arranged a bridegroom for her, who works as a clerk in a bank.”

“Will you let her be married off? Wouldn’t you let her continue with her studies?”

“If her in-laws agree, I will. In any case, my daughter is not going to become a barrister, is she? So why keep studying?”

With a smile, Aloke asked, “How do you know she will not? What’s the harm in trying?” Subedar Major shook his head. His eyes were long and large. At this moment he was, within this imposing figure donning heavy twirling moustaches, only a father living in an alien land. This bird-like detached look is very contagious. The other father sitting next to him, felt his mind wandering off. Aloke’s daughter is just two years old now. She can utter quite a few words already. Letters arrive from Agartala regularly, sent by his mother, sister and brother. They are full of anecdotes about his little daughter. She lisps over only the ‘k’ sound now. Aloke wonders if tomorrow’s copter would fetch Antara’s letter! His colleagues at Leh had informed him of its transit over wireless telephone.

“Didn’t you mention Siachen, Mitra Sahab? My son has been promoted to Class Eight. As soon as I get there, he will ask me these questions. He intends to be an Airforce pilot.” Bahadur Singh’s appearance of a distracted father just a while ago, and that of the proud hopeful father, now, were quite different.

With a generous smile, Aloke informed the group, “Siachen is a Tibetan word, meaning a rose garden. Actually, from the sky, the high and low mounds of black snow look like rose petals, and the snow coverlets in between supposedly make the

petals more prominent - not a bad description, only that we find it monstrous because we have to stay here, fight and survive the odds. From the sky, however, this vast unfathomable glacier looks great!" Laughing, Bahadur Singh says, "Just so. That is why the big shots from the two countries inspect from the sky, hold meetings one after another in Delhi and Islamabad, find no solution... and let the war go on. It is the ordinary soldiers who are dying, sons of peasants; the hard-earned money of these poor peasants is getting spent - on an average seven crores a day ...alas!"

Aloke sits closer to the *bukhari* (fire), warming his hands in the heat. The others, too, warm their hands. Inside the double layered Koflach shoes, their feet were becoming senseless. Aloke contemplated leaving for his own cavern where he could take his shoes off and warm his feet by the fire. Who knows even the slightest of carelessness could invite what kind of unknown danger, that would catch one at the throat? Also, he felt he had to relieve himself soon.

But Bahadur Singh is on a roll today. Bahadur Singh never spoke about himself usually, but it was different on this day. He was a reserved kind of officer who loved his subordinate soldiers like his own sons, and chastised them when needed. So people were cautious with him, because he did not hesitate even to slap when he sensed the slightest negligence. That was why the Adjutant or the Commander had left everything to him. About a week back, his reliever had arrived at the link. Though not a seven feet tall person like Bahadur Singh, the new Subedar has an impressive physique and personality. Ramphal is a man from Bahadur Singh's own village. He is listening to their conversation and smiling gently while silently consuming warm Frooti and cashew nuts. He still has two years of service left. He does not want to lose importance by indulging in unguarded utterances like Bahadur Singh. Additionally, he has not yet been able to get acclimatised with the severe cold and the altitude of this camp area.

Of course, no one can ever adjust fully. Nonetheless, it takes quite some time to master the habit of controlling the movements of one's legs forward and backward, and to bring the hands to the nose and cheeks repeatedly. In case of ordinary soldiers, the

hardships are much more. In addition to cannonading in time and responding to the enemy's cannon balls, they perform numerous other tasks. It is a Herculean task now to collect and store the kerosene, petrol and tinned food which are dropped at the dropping zone from AN-12 planes or MI-17 helicopters. A full day is needed for four soldiers to drag each barrel of kerosene or petrol from the dropping zone to the stores because of the undulating, rugged, ice-covered road. Snow-trucks are immobile here, snow-scooters cannot move everywhere either. After all these hardships, most of the soldiers grab any chance to get bountiful sleep. Who wants to voluntarily work in this cold! That is why each JCO has to shoulder the responsibility of maintaining strict discipline, and to transmit continuously a sense of nationalism that includes inculcating a permanent hatred towards the enemy. This kind of utterances do not quite go with their ranks. Possibly, because Bahadur Sing's term ends now, he spoke of some things from his heart, unconsciously. But the night was upon them now. Aloke stood up and said, "Goodbye for now, see you tomorrow morning."

Both the Subedar Majors rose, and replied, "O.K., Sir!"

Bahadur Singh stepped forward to open the door. A terribly powerful wind was blowing outside. Heavy springs were attached to the door to counter such potent wind. Unless one, after getting out of the cavern, holds the door from outside, there is fear of the next person getting hurt. Subedar Major Ramphal chipped in, "Once Bahadur Sir goes away, don't forget us please, do visit us from time to time, Sir!"

"Surely, surely," assured Aloke, "You must come, too. My place is only twenty five to thirty steps away. Of course, even that is quite a distance here!"

"I have seen it. Certainly, I'll visit."

Aloke steps out of the cavern. Just then, from between the double peaks of Saltoro, a huge ball of fire dashes violently at a tremendous speed to the ground, only ten arm-lengths ahead. The solid ice breaks into splinters. Whizzing past Aloke's ear, a splinter

pierced an ice mound on his side, peeling off a chunk. Subedar Major Bahadur Singh utters, "Hey Ram!" Then he rolls down senseless over Aloke's left arm.

In a while, the cannons from the Indian side roar. Under the relentless firing of guns, the summits of Saltoro keep trembling. Landslides are frequent. Shelling goes on overnight with pauses, keeping the crows, otherwise invisible creatures, up all night. You can only hear their cawing from the cracks in the rocks at night.

Surender, Aloke's colleague, does not believe they were crows. He tells Aloke, "But didn't I tell you, Sir, these are not really crows? These are all the unsatisfied souls of ordinary wretched soldiers of both the nations - who could not cross the border. Even after death, they roam the mountains in this severe cold, looking for their way home. When it is quiet, they do not call even once, but they are sure to caw in a strange strained voice in protest against the meaningless cannonading...c-a-w-w- c-a-w-w- stop the cannon balls...stop the war....

Today, realizing that the dead body of the seven feet tall man could not be accommodated in the helicopter, it was laid down on a parachute skid-board, wrapped snugly with the national flag, tied firmly, and then suspended from the bottom of the copter. The Cheetah helicopters had carried out such airlifts twice within the past week. On his way back, Aloke wiped his cheeks with the back of his gloves.

Hindi  
MatruAkshar



### Neha Bhandarkar

Neha Bhandarkar is a trilingual author and translator. She is a columnist in various Marathi newspapers. Her 13 books in Marathi, Hindi, and English have been published. She is a recipient of many prestigious literary awards from India, like the State Hindi Sahitya Akademi, and bagged awards from foreign countries also. Largely anthologised, her many poetries and stories have been translated into several foreign languages i.e. French, Albanian, Philippines, Nepali, Greece, and English. As well as Indian languages like Odia, Assamese, Telugu, Bengali, Hindi, Brail, etc. Her poems and short stories have been broadcast on All India Radio, Akashwani, Hindi Radio, Chicago (U.S.A.), Radio France (FRANCE), etc. She's been honoured by many reputed literary institutions working in India and abroad ...

- Excellence Poetry Award from Poetry Planet, Philippines
- Honoured as 'an excellent writer' by Gaur Municipal Corporation, Nepal
- Letter of Honour from (WPF) World Poetry Forum, Daman
- Broadcast Hindi poetries on Radio Hindi, Chicago (USA).
- Poems translated from English to French, have been broadcast through France Radio
- An Appreciation Certificate bestowed from Literary Artistic Association, Prince Muzaka, Albania
- Rahim Karim Award from Kyrgyzstan

नींव

इतिहास नहीं होता है पक्षधर  
कसी भी व्यक्तिका  
इतिहासको होती हैं भूख  
घटनाओं की  
नहीं बुझती है तृष्णा कसीभी मरी चका से  
इतिहासकी

इतिहास काल का प्रहरी  
मानवजातीको देता रहता है भान  
वर्तमानमें भी  
वर्तमान की हवा जिस दिशामें रुख करेगी  
उस ओर बहते जाते हैं  
इतिहास के सपने  
कभी पूरे तो कभी रह जाते हैं आधे अधूरे

इतिहासकी पुनरावृत्तीसे मन होने लगता है भयभीत  
अनेक आशंकाओंके गहरे बादल उमड़ने लगते हैं मनःआसमान में

इतिहासके पन्ने  
हमेशाही नहीं होते हैं सुनहरे  
इतिहासकी कहानियाँ भी कहां होती हैं  
परिणामसफल?  
इतिहासमें घटी घटनायें  
जय-पराजय, अवमान,  
गलतफहमीयाँ, गलतियाँ, गलतियोंकी जड़ें  
इन तमाम औजारोंको भुलना  
महँगा पड़ता है वर्तमानको  
मगर वर्तमान हमेशाही नहीं करता कारण ममांसा,

भूतकालीन परिणामोंकी

बेहतर यहीं होता है  
इतिहासको याद रखकर  
निर्भीक रूपसे वर्तमान में जीना  
और भव्यके परिदृश्यकी नींव रखना....

शून्य स्थिति में एक नया इतिहास रचना....

MatruAkshar

**Translation:**

**FOUNDATION**

History is not biased  
toward any individual  
It craves for incidents  
no oasis can quench  
the thirst of history

History, the sentry of time  
gives sense to mankind  
even in the present.  
The dreams of history  
gets drifted with the  
winds of the present  
sometimes they come true  
sometimes they are left  
incomplete too  
The repetitions of history  
fills heart with fear  
The dense clouds of doubt  
begin to crowd in the sky of the mind

The pages of History  
are always not golden  
When are the anecdotes  
of the history always consequential  
Rationales for slavery  
Dedication for patriotism  
The sacrifices of our brave soldiers  
and their martyrdom

When do they let us forget  
our responsibilities towards our country?

The incidents of our history,  
filled with conquests-defeats, humiliations  
misunderstandings, mistakes  
and their root causes  
forgetting all these tools  
will lead the present to suffer  
But present always does not introspect  
the consequences of history.

It is obviously better  
to live undauntingly in the present  
in the awareness of our history  
and to build a foundation of  
the futuristic scenario.

To make a new History  
in a neutral mood...



## Teji Sethi

Poet/Food Scientist/ Researcher/Founder and Curator- TRIYA

### Bio

An awardee, bilingual poet who dabbles in Japanese short verse – haiku.

A nutritionist by profession, Teji Sethi transitioned from micronutrients to micro poetry. She now loves concocting a mix of emotions through her short verses. A poet at heart, she's charmed by the beauty and musicality in nature. Teji's bilingual poems in free verse, haikai verse, and works of art have found a home in numerous national and international venues.

One of her poignant creations on the throes of Partition of the Indian subcontinent, titled '**kapaas ke phool**' was awarded by the Partition Museum of India in 2019. She has authored and edited five books of poetry. Her latest book of haiku and senryu, '**Moss Laden Walls**' was published in August 2021. She is the founder and curator of a bilingual journal of haiku, tanka and micro poems - **Triya**. Teji currently resides in Bangalore and freelances in creative writing.

A nutritionist by profession, Teji Sethi transitioned from micronutrients to micro poetry. She now loves concocting a mix of emotions through her short verses. A poet at heart she's charmed by the beauty and musicality in nature. Teji's bilingual poems in free-verse, haikai verse, and works of art have found a home in numerous national and international venues — *The Kolkata Review*, *Under the Basho*, *Drifting Sands*, *Moonbathing Journal*, *Femku Mag*, *Humankind Journal*, *Cold Moon Journal*, *The Haiku Foundation*, *Ribbons— a Journal by Tanka Society of America*, *Narrow Road Journal*, *The Heron's Nest*, *Modern Haiku*, *Acorn*, *Sonic Boom*, *Setu Mag* (Pittsburgh, USA), *Usawa Literary Review* to name but a few.

पेशे से पोषण वशेषज्ञ और दिल से कवि तेजी, जापानी काव्य रूप की संक्षिप्तता और दोहा जैसे सार से मंत्रमुग्ध होकर, हाइकाई रूपों की शक्ति बन गई। जब कि उनकी अधिकांश

क वताएं उनके अनुभवों का एक मश्रण हैं, उनके दिल के करीब वषय भारत-पा कस्तान वभाजन की कथाएं हैं। मुक्त छंद व हाइकु में तेजी की द् वभाषी क वताओं को कई राष्ट्रीय और अंतर्राष्ट्रीय पत्रिकाओं में स्थान मला है; द कोलकता रिव्यू, अंडर द बाशो, इफिटंग सैंड्स, मूनबा थंग जर्नल, फेमकुमैग, हयूमनकाइंड जर्नल, कोल्ड मून जर्नल, द हाइकू फाउंडेशन, रिबन्स-तनका सोसाइटी ऑफ अमेरिका जर्नल, नैरो रोड जर्नल, द हेरोन नेस्ट, मॉडर्न हाइकू, एकोर्न, सोनिक बूम, सेतु मैग (पट्सबर्ग, यूएसए), उसावा लटरेरी रिव्यू द ईयरबुक ऑफ इंडयन पोएट्री इन इंग्लिश इत्यादि।

भारतीय उपमहाद्वीप के वभाजन पर उनकी मा र्मक रचनाओं में से एक, जिसका शीर्षक है 'कपास के फूल', को 2019 में भारत के पार्टिशन संग्रहालय द्वारा सम्मानित कया गया था। साहित्यिक लेख को बाद में पंजाबी में अनुवादित कया गया और रे डयो लाहौर पर प्रसारित कया गया। हाइकू और सेनरयु की उनकी नवीनतम पुस्तक, मॉस लेडन वॉल्स अगस्त 2021 में प्रका शत हुई थी। वह हाइकू, तनका और सूक्ष्म क वताओं के लए एक द् वभाषी पत्रिका, त्रिया की संस्थापक संपादक हैं - त्रिया। तेजी वर्तमान में बैंगलोर में रहती हैं और रचनात्मक लेखन में फ्रीलांस करती हैं।

रेफ्यूजी हैं मेरी क वताएँ

अगर मेरी क वताएँ

मेरे पता की तरह रावल पंडी में  
या मेरी माँ की तरह लाहोर में पैदा होती  
तो उनमें शायद  
चेनाब की मठास होती  
या फर होता रावी का नमक  
वो पैदा हो पाती उससे पहले रेफ्यूजी हो गयी  
ना वहाँ की ना यहाँ की  
पग पग फरती बंजारों की तरह वे  
आ पहुँची राजस्थान और फँस गयी  
भावनाओं के बवंडर में  
दादी, नानी की ज़ुबान से छलकते वहाँ के क्रस्से  
रोज़ सवेरे मेरी चोटी में गूँथी जाती अन गनत कहानियाँ  
वहाँ के खेत, वहाँ के मकान, चौबारे, चूल्हे और चादर  
वहीं रह गए सब  
मगर यादों में चली आयी वहाँ की शामें  
वहाँ के गीत, वहाँ की ख लश, वहाँ की खराश  
वो रातें, वो सौगातें  
जब भी कुछ लखने का जतन करती  
यह सब दबे पाँव चले आते  
मेरी क वता की पंक्तियों में  
जैसे बिना वीजा रोज मेरी दादी  
सरहदें पार करती हैं खयालों में  
और देख आती है अपनी गली, अपना मुहल्ला, अपना पीपल  
मल आती है अपनी सहेली से  
तंदूर भी ताप लेती है  
और गन लेती है मेरे दादा की घोड़ी के खुर  
उसे अभी भी याद हैं पंडी की सलवारों के पौँचों का नाप  
रेशमी नाड़ों की छुहन, दुपट्टों की कनारी  
वहाँ के सुरमों का चलन और हिना की महक  
रोज़ मेरे सर में तेल डालते लेती है चटखारे  
वहाँ के बेनज़ीर दही भल्लों का

और कहती है “पुत्र जिस लहोर नहीं वेख्या ओ जम्या ही नहीं”  
कैसे कहूँ उससे की मैंने उसकी आँखों से सब देखा है  
मेरी क वताएँ रोज़ जीती हैं जो उसने जिया है  
सहती हैं जो उसने सहा है  
एक रेफ्युजी का तमगा लटकाए  
वे रोज़ भटकती हैं  
कैसे कहूँ की उसके चेहरे की लकीरों  
मैं सब खुदा है – बँटवारा भी !

MatruAkshar

## Translation

### My Poems are Refugees

If my poems  
were born in Rawalpindi like my father  
or in Lahore like my mother  
they would have carried the sweetness of Chenab  
or the salt of Raavi  
they became refugees even before  
they were born  
they belonged neither here nor there  
like nomads they wandered on foot  
reached Rajasthan, entrapped in an emotional whirlpool

From the tongues of my grandmothers  
spilled tales of their towns  
countless stories got woven into my braid every morning  
the fields, the houses, the courtyards, the *chulha* and the *chaddars*  
were all left behind  
but soaked in memories, came the songs, the nights, the wounds  
the pain, the keepsakes

Whenever I tried to write something  
they came crawling into the lines of my poem  
just like my grandmother without a visa crosses borders  
in her thoughts every night  
she visits her street, her people, her friends  
warms up the *tandoor*  
and counts the hooves of my grandfather's mare  
she still remembers the size of Pindi's *salwars*  
the touch of silk cords, the hem of *dupattas*

the trends of *surma* and the smell of *henna*  
while pouring oil on my head every day,  
she relives the taste of *Benazir Dabi Bhalla*  
And says “*Puttar jis labor nabi vekhya o jamya hi nabi*”  
I wish I could tell her that I have seen everything through her eyes  
my poems have lived her days  
endured what she has endured  
they wear a badge of a refugee  
and wander everyday  
how do I tell her that in the lines on her face  
I see everything, engraved  
even Partition!

MatruAkshar



Neha Tyagi

A passionate poetess with strong urge to look far and beyond  
to what can be seen, heard or felt.

Her forte is writing strong poems in Hindi and English (mainly free verses, nazm, gazals etc). She is a feminist, who staunchly believes in equal opportunities and rights for women. She is a humanist who believes that a life's purpose should be serving humanity which will save the world from going into chaos one day. She focuses on penning down deep-rooted feelings and internal debates. Her wish is to stir consciences and initiate change in the mindsets through her sword with ink. Married to Olive Green, currently she is residing in Port Blair with her better-half and twin daughters.

संघर्ष की उपयोगता..

घर में खट्टी स्त्री  
और बाहर खट्टी स्त्री में  
बस दो ही बातें मलती हैं  
स्त्री और खटना!  
संघर्षरत को  
दिखने चाहिए  
दूसरी के संघर्ष भी..

संघर्ष,  
जीत हार का वषय नहीं  
महानता का परिचायक नहीं  
संघर्ष,  
संघर्षरत से जुड़ने में,  
उसे समझने में,  
और एक साथ सर उठाने में  
उपयोगी होना चाहिए..

## Translation

### Utility of Struggle

Slogging woman at home  
And slogging woman at work  
Have two things in common  
Women and slogging!  
One who struggles  
Should acknowledge  
Other's struggle as well...

Struggle,  
Isn't a matter of winning or losing  
Isn't to certify greatness  
Struggle,  
Should be utilised  
To cohere with the struggling  
To comprehend the struggle  
For standing tall together.

MatruAkshar  
**Manipuri**



## মৈশ্নাম ভগৎ সিংহ

Meishnam Bhagat Singha

মৈ ভগৎ হায়রগা হেন্না মীয়ান্না শকথঙ্গৰবা অইবা মৈশ্নাম ভগৎ সিংহ সেপ্টেম্বৰ ৫, ইং ১৯৮৪দা  
অসামগী হাইলাকান্দি দিস্ত্রিক্ট লেহৌপোকপী হায়রিবা খুঙ্গ অসিদা পোকথি। সিঙ্কিম মনিপাল  
যুনিভার্সিটিদগী এম বি এ(ফৈলান্জ) পাস তৌদুনা কোর্পোরেট হাউস্টা থবক তৌরি। হৌজীক ফাওবদা  
মশাগী শৈরেং লাইরিক ৪ ফোঁখ্রো। মহাকনা ইবা ‘অপাইবা তাঙোই’ হায়বসিদা এৱাৰ্দ ফংথিবা লৈৱে।  
লোয়ননা তোঙান তোঙানবা সাহিত্যগী মনাশিংসু ফঁখ্রো। মহাক ঝৈশে ময়েকসু ইৱি অদুগা ত্রান্সলেটোৱ  
অমসুনি।

**Shri Meishnam Bhagat Singha**, popularly known as Mei Bhagat, is a prolific Manipuri poet, lyricist and a translator having written four poetry books including his latest poetry book “Apaina Tangoi”. He has edited two anthology books, four Magazines /Souvenir and translated four text books of Assam, into Manipuri. Till date he has received five literary awards on his books. Mei Bhagat was born on 5 th September 1984 at Leihoupokpi, a village within Hailakandi district, Assam, India. He is an M.B.A. (Finance) and is presently working in a corporate house and is based in Guwahati.

Translator's Bio



**Misna Chanu**

Misna Chanu is a bilingual poetess, author, translator and an editor from India. She is a post-graduate in Botany. Writing is not her hobby or passion but a call of her soul. Since childhood, she has been writing poetry and has published two poetry books; "A Little Piece Of Melancholic Sky" and "Many Shades Of Love" and three International Anthologies "Under The Azure Sky", "May Love Heal the Love" and "Beyond The Language". Her works have been translated into 11 foreign languages and published in many national and international journals, anthologies and multilingual magazines.

## ମୁଖ୍ୟାକ୍ଷରବା ମୁଖ୍ୟ

ଅଙ୍ଗବା, ନାପୁଁ

ଅଶଂବା, ହିଗୋକ।

ଅଦୁଗା

ଅମୁବସୁ।

ତାରିବା ଥମ୍ଭୋଇଗୀ ମମି

ତଂଲିବା ପୁଣିଗୀ ମହାଉ

ଶଙ୍କଲିବା ମୁଖ୍ୟ ମଥଲଶିଂନି।

ହଞ୍ଜିନ ହଞ୍ଜିନ ତିନଶୀନବଦା

ହୌଜିକ୍ତି ଓହିରିଦଳା

ପିକଥବା କେନଭାସମିଦା

ମୁଖ୍ୟାକ୍ଷରବା ମୁଖ୍ୟ।

ମୁଖ୍ୟ ନାଇବା ନାଗି ପୁଣିସୁ

ଶାମଥିଗନି ନୋଂମଦି

ମଚୁନା ମଚୁଗୀ ହୌରକଫମଦା ତିନଥିବଦା।

ଚୂମ୍ବାଙ୍ଗି ମଚୁଶିଂ

ଅଦୁଗା ପୋଲୋଇଦା

ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଯାଉଦ୍ରବା ଅଞ୍ଜୋବା ।

**Translation:**

**Colourless Colour**

Red, yellow

Green, blue

And

Black, too.

The image of heart,

The taste of life,

Are the varieties of shade.

By mixing them again and again,

Now, it becomes a colourless colour

On that canvas.

A day will arrive

When the colours will be immersed with their origin,

The life of the coloured one,

Will also fade.

All the shades of rainbow

Then finally,

The colourless white !



### Laishram Romola Devi লাইশ্রম রোমোলা দেবী

লাইশ্রম রোমোলা দেবী ইং ১৯৬৬দা ইক্ষ্মালগী য়াইস্কুল হিরুহনবা লৈকায়দা লৈবা লাইশ্রম নৱেন্দ্র সিংহ অমদি লাইশ্রম ওংবী বিমোলা দেবী অনিগী মচা নিঙ্গোল ওইনা ফংজখি।জি পি ব্লুমেন্স কলেজতগী গ্রেজুয়েট লোইশিনথি। হোজিকনা সেন্ট জোর্জ হায় স্কুলদা সেনিয়ার টিচুর ওইরি।

জৈশে ময়েক ইদুনা জৈশেগী কন্ট ক্ষ পাঞ্চখোকুনা জৈশে ময়েক ৫০ হেন্না খুদোল তমঞ্চে।মনিপুরদা পাঞ্চখোকথিবা মরিণুবা মনিপুর ফিল্ম ফেস্টিভেলদা "থৰায়গী থৰায়" ফিচুর ফিল্মদা বেস্ত লিরিকস এৰ্বাড "খোয়ৱাংবা হেনমলি" হায়বা জৈশে ময়েক্ত এৰ্বাড পিৱকুনা ইকায় খুন্নথি।

টি ভি চেনেলশিংদা পাউচেশিংদা শৈৱেং, বারীমচা, বারেং পাদুনা অমদি ইদুনা মীয়ামদা সাহিত্যগী খুদোল তৌৰি। লৈকোল, মনিপুৱী লিটৱেৱী সোসাইটি, ইক্ষ্মাল, মনিপুৱী সাহিত্য পৱিষদ মেঘালয়নাচিংবগী মেঘৱ ওইদুনা ঝনেল অমদি এছোলোজিদা শৈৱেং অমদি বারেং হাম্পি।

#### Bio:

Laishram Romola Devi was born in 1966 at Hiruhanba Laikai, Imphal (Manipur) as a daughter of Laishram Narendra Singha and Laishram Bimola Devi. She did her graduation from G.P Women's College. Currently she is working as an educator at Saint George Highschool. She has written more than 50 lyrics and one of her lyrics "Khoirangba Henmalli" from the feature film "Thawai gi thawai" has been awarded as "Best Lyrics Award" during the fourth Manipur Film Festival. She has been participating in the literature events on Television and presenting her poems and short stories in the Newspapers, journals, magazines and anthologies time to time, she is a member of the literary organisations like "Leikol", "Manipuri Literary Society" "Manipuri Sahitya Parishad, Meghalaya and etc.

## Translator's Bio



### Tongbram Amarjit Singh Laishram Romola Devi লাইশ্রম রোমোলা দেবী

**Tongbram Amarjit Singh** was born at Thanga, Manipur. He is the founder member of Sahitya Thoupang Lup, Imphal and Loktak Khorjei Lup, Thanga and has been associated with many literary organizations in Manipur. He is the recipient of *Dharambir Literary Award* from the Cultural Forum Manipur for young creative writing, 2018. He has participated in many poets' meet both within and outside the state. His *Loubukki Manam* (The Aroma of the Paddy Field) an anthology of Manipuri poems won the *Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puruskar Award, 2018*. He worked as co-editor of the bilingual International Anthology. "Under the Azure Sky". His poems have been translated into English and Bangla and published in many literary journals and anthologies.

He is ardent enthusiast of oral literature and folklore and is also the founder of Loktak Folklore Museum.

তোংব্ৰম অমৱজিৎ সিংহ মনিপুৰগী থাঙ্গদা পোকখি। মহাক সাহিত্য থৌপাংলূপ, ইষ্ফাল অমসুং লোক্তাক খোর্জে লূপ, থাঙ্গগী ফাউন্ডৰ মেম্বৰনি অমসুং মনিপুৰদা লৈৱিবা সাহিত্যগী লূপ কয়াগসু পুন্না থবক কয়া তৌমিন্নি। দি কলচৱেল ফোৱম মনিপুৰনা পীৰা যং ক্ৰিএতিব রাইতিংগী ধৰমবীৱ লিটৱেৱি এৱাৰ্দ ২০১৮দা ফংখি। মনিপুৰ মনুং অমসুং মপান্দা পাঞ্চথোকপা কবি সমেলন কয়াদসু শৈৱেং পাথিবা লৈৱে। মহাকী শৈৱেংগী লাইৱিক “লৌবুক্কী মনম” হায়বসিদা সাহিত্য একাদেমিগী যুব পুৱুক্ষাৰ এৱাৰ্দ, ২০১৮সু ফংখিবা লৈৱে। ইন্ট্ৰনেটেল এন্ডোলোজি “অন্দৰ দি এজুৱ স্কাই”দসু কো এডিটৱ ওইখি।

চিনবুং সাহিত্য অমসুং ফোকলোৱৰ যান্না পামজবা অইবা অমসুনি অমদি মহাক লোক্তাক ফোকলোৱ ম্যজিয়মগীসু ফাউন্ডৰ অমনি।

## শিঙ্গনবা

লেংলদুনা লংলাসে যেৎতুমগী মচিন্দা  
অমমমত তাইশিল্পী ফোৎচিল্পী লেপ্তনা  
মতমগী ঈচেলদা শেগাইদুনা তাহৌরবা  
ময়ি চৎলবা থম্মাইগী ব্রানীশিং।

ফোৎচিল্পী মতৎ মতৎতো

শম্ভহল্পী মচৎ মকায়  
নুমিদাংরাইরমগী পুঙ্গিনা  
শিথরকপা থাজবু যেংদুনা  
থাবল যাওদ্রবা অহিংসিদা  
নিংশিংদুনা মতমগী খুদোলবু।

হল্পকলরোই খঙ্গনা খঙ্গনা  
ব্রানী চাঞ্চ চাঞ্চগী মরুমদা লোৎতুনা  
মোমোল্লবা মীলোল্লা পাউখুম গাইরি  
শিঙ্গনবনা অরোইবা ওইহল্দুনা  
মতমগী হনৱাইরমদাই মীৎকুম্ব।

**Translation:**

**Challenge**

Inserting the thread into the needle  
Ceaselessly stitching one after one,  
All the cracked stories of heart  
That have fallen down in the course of time.

This life of evening  
Has been stitching those tattered pieces  
Gazing the new moon,  
Remembering the gift of time  
In the night without moonlight.

Knowing it won't come again  
Hiding behind hundreds of stories  
Smiling a little and waiting for a reply  
Making a challenge as the last option  
To the moment of the last of time.

MatruAkshar  
**Marathi**

MatruAkshar  
Classics



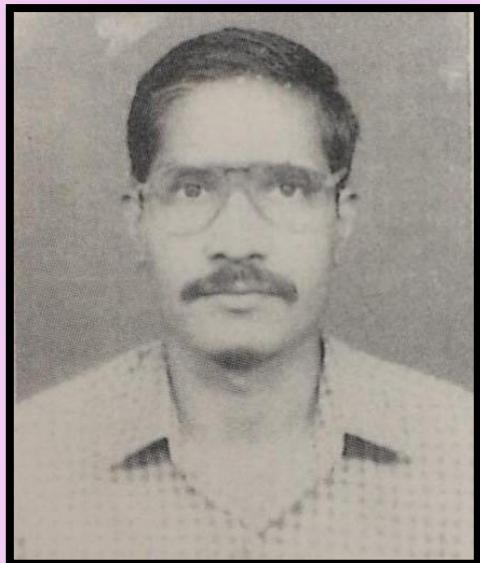
### Mr. Sudhakar Gaidhani

#### Bio of the Author

Mr. Sudhakar Gaidhani is M.A.M.F.A. from Nagpur University - Maharashtra - India. His mother tongue is Marathi. He knows three languages, Marathi, Hindi and English. His poems have been translated into 34 languages of the world. He has received many State, National and International awards including WILLIAM BLAKE INTERNATIONAL AWARD from Contact International Journal from Romania and "SILVER CROSS For CULTURE-- WORLD MEDAL from World Union of Poets- Italy. He has published his 6 collection of poems, 2 epic poems, 125 Short Radio Plays and 3 full-fledged dramas which have been staged. His poetry book was in his own MA study exam syllabus in Nagpur University.

Municipality Khapa City has opened a beautiful garden in two acres at Gaidhani's birthplace in his name and the honour-- "MAHAKAVI (Epic Poet) SUDHAKAR GAIDHANI GARDEN" in 2006. World Academy of Arts and Culture- USA/World Congress of Poets has conferred upon him The Honorary Degree of "DOCTOR OF LITERATURE (Litt.D.) held in 2017 in Mongolia.

DOCTER OF HONORIS CAUSA -2022 Honorary Doctorate



### DR. OM BIYANI

#### Translator's Bio:

Education and Experience: M.A. (English), Ph.D - Nagpur University (First Merit, Gold Medalist - 1980). HOD (English - Retd.). Teaching (18 years).

Languages known by him are English, Hindi, Marathi, Russian, German, French, Sanskrit, Urdu.

#### Awards and Honours:

Selected by Dutchess Community College, New York to teach English Govt. of India scholarship to study Russian for six years at Moscow (1975).

International Poetry Award (1986).

Original Writings: Dil-ke Foundation-se; Gulzaar-e-Ghazal; Orange City Muses 1997; Orange City Muses 1999; Business Communication; Business Ethics and Communication; Raamaayan for Bright Young Hearts.

Translations: Yoga for Health and Peace; Devdoot: The Angel; Vishwatmaa; Message of the Upanishads; Mook Maati (The Mute Clay)

देवदूतः महावाक्य २

या बेटावर

बोटावर मोजण्याइतक्याच राहिल्या आता

धुंद फुलांच्या कळ्या

माझ्याही पाकळ्या झडून जाण्यापूर्वी

माझे डोळे शोधून ठेवा

मला उडवून नेणार आहे रे

हसन्या फकिरांचा करुण थवा

सोनेरी स्वप्नाळू सौदागरांचे काफिले

याच रस्त्याने गाफील झाले

अजून त्यांचा पता नाही

नक्षत्रांचे रत्नस्खलन

येथल्याच दगडावर लिंपून गेले

डाग एकही पुसला नाही

हे वेताळ पंचक्रोशीतले

उदैवस्त शामियाने

या कबींच्या प्रेमात तबाह झाले

वासना त्यांच्याही शमल्या नाहीत

हे जुलूमखोरांचे खोरे आहे

चौफेर कफनफाड कल्लोळ

घनघोर युद्ध पेटले आहे

आणि माझ्या पायांतल्या

लाटांच्या शुंखला

किनान्याशी बेळूटपणे

रतिक्रीडा करिताहेत

पाखरांनो,

माझ्या दंगलगस्त चेहन्यावर

कैद्याचे तेज नाही म्हणून

भगवंतही दुखावला आहे !

पंखात पृथ्वी

मलाही लपविता येते

उडता येते, फडफडता येते

चारचौधांसारखे

येथल्या प्रत्येक डहाळीवर

माझ्याच नखांची

निशाणं आहेत

हे कब्रस्तान तर

मीच फकिरांना दान केले

आजही माझ्या पंखात

खिस्ताचे डोळे आणि बुद्ध्याचे स्मित

म्हणूनच या समुद्राने

सांभाळून आहे

मला कैद केले

पाखरांनो,

दूर तिथे माझ्या यातनांची गलबते

सागरगीते गाताहेत

त्यांना जरा सामोरे व्हा

त्यांनाही उडवून नेणार आहे रे

हसन्या फकिरांचा करुण थवा !!

दोस्तहो,

इथे फाशीचे दोर विणणाऱ्या

जल्लादांचे कबीले बदनाम आहेत

अपराध त्यांचा एवढाच आहे

ते भुकेचे गुलाम आहेत ...

त्यांच्या डोळ्यांच्या चुलीत

अजून एवढी आग आहे

की, या वस्तीवर जुलूम व्हावा

आणि हुकमतीचा एकेक इमला

जळून भस्म-खाक व्हावा...

अरे तुम्ही पण मला

वेडा तर नाहीना हो समजत?

तर अंधारात पिसे

मोजून घ्यावीत

चोचीवर चोच घासावी एकांती

रात्र उलटू द्यावी

मग उन्हें टोचून टोचून

बेजार करावी इतकी

की पुनः रात्र व्हावी

नुकतेच कुठे

आभाळ गहिवरुन आलेय्

थेंबामागून थेंब

थेंबांच्या धारा झाल्यायत्

विश्वातला सारा प्रलयंकारी कृपाउद्रेक

संपूर्ण चराचराच्या थर्थर्राटासकट

खदखदून आलाय्

स्वर्ग तारांकित सूर्य भयकंपित

कनवाळू संध्येच्या दारावर उभा

हाती क्षेतिजाचे -

भिक्षापात्र

घेऊन कळवळतोय् ...

"माते, ओ माते !!

ही रात्र माझी येथेच जाऊ दे,

कल्याण होईल

दिवस निघता निघता

निघून जाईन"

सावध असा रे

आता पराक्रमी पाऊस कोसळणार आहे

दर्याचे ऊर भरून येणार आहे पुनः

किनारा शोधणारे माझे

डोहागत खोल-खोल डोळे

शिंपल्यात गुंतलेल्या माझ्या प्राणासह

दूर-दूर फार दूर वाहून जाणार आहेत

भूकंपापूर्वीची ही अमानवी शांतता

माझ्यातून उफाळून येण्यापूर्वी

हे मरणा, मला मुक्त कर !

वणव्यात शिलगलेल्या

या कुवान्या रात्रीचा आक्रोश

मला सहन होत नाही

या देहावरचे यातनारण्य

पेटू लागले आहे रे

माझे रोम-रोम फुटू लागले आहे तडातड

अरे ही किनारवस्ती हटवा रे

दुनिया पेटत सुटली आहे रे

आग लागली आहे आग !

पृथ्वीच्या काळजावरच्या जखमांना

धुवून काढा भराभर

नाहीतर मर्त्यलोक

दुभंगून जाईल !

पक्षी अन् घरट्यातलं

अंतर न्याहाळणाऱ्या डोळ्यांनो,

माझी कर्णपटले  
का कंपायमान होत नाहीत?  
का ऐकू येत नाही मला  
माय हरविल्यांचा किलबिलाट?  
  
पंचतत्वातली चेतनमाया  
इतकी कशी बधिर झाली?  
की फोल ठरले  
देवदुतांचे पुनरागमन  
असे एकाएकी  
बंदिस्त माझ्या या विस्तीर्ण कायेवरचे  
कवच उंधऱ्युन काढताना  
सावध राहा व्यापाऱ्यांनो,  
हाहाकार माजून जाईल अलम वस्तीत  
वृक्षांचे जर्थे धावून येतील मुळांसकट  
कोसळून पडतील हिमदुर्ग धडाधड  
नद्या नागिणीगत धावत सुट्टील सैरावैरा  
आणि पृथ्वी  
थरथरू लागेल गायीच्या सर्वांगागत  
हे महाशब्दांनो,  
अशी आव्हानांवर आव्हाने करीत सुटू नका  
समुद्र उपसून काढावा लागतो  
- तळगाभ्यातून

जशी माउली आतडे उपसून

हलकी होते लेकरु पाहून !

या बेटावरचे रंगीबेरंगी दिवे

रात्रीच्या रोषणाईचे गुलाम नाहीत !

अरे हे तर वाट चुकलेल्या प्रवाशांचे

निखळून पडलेले डोळे आहेत !!

हे नागमण्यांच्या शोधात

वारुळं उदृथ्वस्त करणाऱ्यांनो,

ते पाहा चंदनगिरीला कवटाळून

भुजंग डोलताहेत

हे विषयविषारी सर्प मला

स्पर्श करायला धजत नाहीत

माझ्या हाडामांसाचा वास आता

त्यांना सहन होत नाही

ऋतू आठल्यावर भुई भेगाळून यावी

तशात फांद्या छाटलेल्या

झाडाचा देखावा

पतङ्गडीच्या रानात खुलून दिसावा

लिंगे गळून पडू नयेत

याची धारस्ती देहभर, रानभर आयुष्यभर

ऐका हो ऋषिपुत्रांनो,

या लतावलींची वल्कले सोलून

त्यांना नग्न करू नका

त्यांचे प्रत्यंग

तुमचे जपसामर्थ्य हिरावून घेईल

तेव्हा कोण गुन्हेगार ठरेल

हे मला कळत नाही

सूर्य माझ्या वयाचा आहे

असे अन्य ग्रह सांगतात

खरं सांगू का, मला काहीच कळत नाही

उगमाचे सिंहावलोकन प्रवाह करीत नाही

डबडवून आलेल्या डोळ्यांसारखा

सैल होत चाललेल्या

आयुष्यासारखा गतिमान

भोग सांभाळून गर्भ चिवडणाऱ्या

रात्रींच्या रम्यकथा सांगणारा

एकेक ढग

हा म्हातारा साक्षीदार मुलूख

द्या सर्व चिजा

कोंब फुटलेल्या फोडांसारख्या

जपाव्या म्हणता

तर परं फुटत्या पाखराला

पंखाआड दडवायचा

नाहक मोह का?  
या प्रश्नांची उत्तरे  
उधङ्न वाळू घातलेल्या  
अवयवांसारखी लोंबकळत असतील  
तर माझ्या प्रश्नांचे सामर्थ्य  
सलामत राहो !  
दिवस कसा टर्कन् उसवून जातो  
माणसं कशी भराभर ये-जा करतात  
काहींची हौस फिट नाही  
काहींना दुःख आवरत नाही  
शंखाशंखातून गजर उठतात  
नजरा चुकवून उडणारे अश्रू  
टच्च आभाळभर गोठतात  
पंख ढगांचे छाटणारे  
राईचे पर्वत अधांतरी पेटतात  
तर पथिकहो,  
पृथ्वीच्या गर्भाशयात  
माझा आत्मगाभा सङ्ग लागला होता  
तेव्हा मी मुक्ती आणि तकदिराला  
गर्भडोहात खुडून-खुडून  
पाकळ्यांगत विखरून टाकले होते  
देवाघरचे सक्त पहारेकरी

जागच्याजागी खिळवून टाकले होते

म्हणून हे चार दिवस बरे गेले

पिसं पिकायच्या मोसमात

सुरतीला असे बहर आले

पृथ्वीला ढकलत ढकलत नेता आले

तरी परत तिला अनंतात ठेवायचे कुठे ?

चंद्र-सूर्य समजा कैद करता आले

तरी त्यांना तुरुंगात घालायचे कुठे ?

अथांग एकांताचे पात्र ओलांडताना

एका आदिम अजस्त्र वाळवंटात

वाळूच्या हलव्या लाटा

चुर्चा होताना पाहिल्यात मी

पुढे तर पृथ्वी युगापासून

तहानेने ल्हा ल्हा झालेल्या

रेणीस्तानावरून

मोसमी वाज्यांना देशांतर करताना

पाहणाऱ्या डोळ्यांची

साक्ष कुरवाळणाऱ्यांचे

वध होताना पाहिलेत मी...

इतस्ततः विखुरलेल्या

पुरातन खलाशांच्या

दिशाभूल पावलांचे बेवारशी ठसे

रेतीच्या लोटात

अलगद दफन होताना

साज्या पार्थिव प्रार्थनांना

एका महावृद्ध कवितेत

लोटून दिले होते मी

मी तडे गेलेल्या

वधस्तंभाच्या सावलीत

गुन्हेगारांच्या थडग्यात बसून

त्यांना त्यांच्या एकेक

शौर्यकथा सांगताना

त्यांनी हरेकदा तलवारी उपसल्या

प्रत्येक पूर्णविरामावर ...

तेव्हा वधस्तंभावरची वृद्ध गिधाडे

माझ्यावर तुटून पडायला

भुकेने तडफडताना

त्याचे एकेक पंख

सावलीत कुठे गळून पडत होते

तेच मला कळत नव्हते !

आता तर सांज चढत होती

घुबडांच्या डोळांभर ...

मला पुढे सरकल्याशिवाय -

गत्यंतर नव्हते

माझ्या अंगावरच्या गर्भार जखमांना

उन्हाचे डोहाळे लागले होते

मला पुढे सरकल्याशिवाय -

गत्यंतर नव्हते !

पाखरांनो,

जो चालत असतो

त्याने निराश होऊ नये !

ज्या क्षणावर ब्रह्म थांबले

तिथे मुक्काम ठोकू नये !!

तर नभमार्गीनो,

येथून पुढे कामाक्षी वासनेच्या

महानगरीची सीमा सुरु होते

या पुढचे पलीकडचे

ते अंगुराचे घनदाट अरण्य ओलांडताना

तेथील विषयलोलूप माद्यांचे

पाठलाग करायची इल्लत मनात येते

आणि पक्षिभिन्न समागमानंतर

नकळत नरालाच गर्भधारणा होते

जरा जपून उडायचे असते

या प्रदेशांवरून

अजूनही ऐकू येताहेत मला  
ते ऋषिमुनींचे ओठबिलगे संवाद  
त्या परग्रहांवरून

"अशा या अंगुरबनीच्या  
एकांतात - निवांत देह धूत बसलेल्या  
हे इंद्रवनीच्या मदनमस्त अप्सरे,  
तुझ्या नितळ कायेवरून निथळणारं

स्वर्गसरोवरात  
आंघोळीचं चंदनपाणी  
मला या धोतन्याच्या द्रोणात  
जरा धरू देतेस का ?  
पंख माझे थकून आले बये ग  
मला तुझ्या धरतीवर उतरू देतेस का?"

MatruAkshar

"अहो पक्षिंद्र,  
तुमची फडफडती छिनाल नजर  
सरकन् माझ्या कोवळ्या  
काळजाला डसून गेली  
या घायाळ पक्षिणीची  
कीव तुम्हा नाही का वाटत?"

"चंद्रिके, स्वर्गरंडिके;  
तुझे गे चांद्रहास्य  
माझ्या ब्रह्मतेजाला स्पर्शन जाताहे

तुला माझ्या कामक्रोधाचे भय नाही का वाटत?

अगे, ओल्याचिंब हिव्यागर्द वेलीवरल्या

गव्हाळ नागिणे,

का अशी हुंगलेली ही फुले

पुनः पुन्हा फांदीला बिलगताहेत

आणि विषयबाधा झालेल्या

ऋतुकन्येसारखी ...

माझ्या झोळीतल्या ब्रह्मभोगाला

हरप्रकारे ललकारताहेत"

"अहो राजबैरागी,

हरेकच ऋतू ऊतू येतो

आपआपल्या मस्तीनं

अतृप्त तपानं मुक्ती गर्भारत

नाही रे राजा !

हे तपतान्यांनो,

आभाळ आटून गेल्यावर

बरसात होत नाही

देठं वाळू लागलीत

की कळ्या फुलत नाहीत

जेव्हा कधी पूर चढतो नदीला

ती बेलाशक जाऊन बिलगते दर्याला

तसे हे घनदाट अरण्य

ही रात्र मिठीतून सैल करण्याआधी

"पण महामाये,

ही काया दान केल्यावर

माझे प्राण कुठे ठेवू ?

या s या ss रे कामर्षीनो,

माझ्या गात्रागात्रात ही रात्र पेरून द्या

नक्षत्रांनो, आज मला तुमचे पेहराव द्या

वेदशब्दांनो,

माझ्या रोमरोमातले जपसामर्थ्य आज

यमलोकीच्या गुन्हेगारांना वाटून द्या "

"पाखरांनो,

कोरड्या जखमेला खाजवल्याने इजा होते

हे कुणाला ठाऊक नाही ?

पण तरीही खाजवायचे कुणी टाळत नाही

हे जसे खाजेला खाजवण्याचे

अपराधी सुख असते

तशी नराला मादीची

आणि मादीला नराची भूक असते भोगते हो !

अशीच एक मादी होती

ती मला खूप प्यारी होती

नक्षत्र होते नाकी तिच्या रत्ननथीसारखे

दोन बाजूला दोन चंद्र

दुर्घटपौर्णमेसारखे ...

ती जितकी भोळीभाबडी

तितकीच ती उनाड घोडी होती

दरदा प्रसवताना

ती हिव्या चिंचेप्रमाणे हसायची

आणि ऋतुमासात

सतरा चाहत्यांची परकरे नेसायची

मी तिला खूप वेळा उघड्यावर

नक्षत्रे गोंदताना पाहिले होते

मी तिच्यासाठी दर्याकडे गहाण राहून

पाचूंचे पैंजणही आणले होते

अखेर एके दिवशी

जीवाचा हिय्या करून

मी तिला माझ्या प्रेमाचे सांगून पाहिले

तिने मला तेवढ्यापुरते झाट्टदिशी

कामकुशीत घेऊन पाहिले

हे तो विषयाचे किडे ।

मग भोगाचे का वावडे ।

नखन्याचे कावळे । आत्मद्रोही ॥

तर हे सुदूरदेशच्या पक्षीराज,

अत्तरझन्याकाठी न्हात असलेल्या

घायाळ करून सोडणारे

लाजाळू ललनांना

आपले रंडीबाज डोळे

आणि हृदय थरारून टाकणारे

हर्षमिश्रित उमाळे

आणि कोणत्याही गर्वगर्भार मदनिकेला

गुदगुल्या करणारे आपले स्वप्नील व्यक्तिमत्त्व

या सर्व संभोगयुद्धाला आव्हान करणाऱ्या

आपल्यातील गुणवैशिष्ट्यांचा

मी जयजयकार करिताहे...

हे पक्षीराज,

मी कदर करतोय्

आपल्या अपौरुषेय राजसौंदर्याची

आपण गाजविलेल्या देवचिमण्यांच्या

देशावरील हकमतीची

आणि हिव्याकंकंच मिठूंच्या

आंबेरानातील घरट्यांवर

केलेल्या दरारेदार स्वान्यांची

पण हाय! हे पक्षीश्रेष्ठ,

चैत्रपौर्णिमेला चंद्रग्रहणाचे वेळी

आपण निकराची लढाई

जिंकत असताना पाहून

पराजितांच्या

हवालदिल झालेल्या

शेकडो दिलदार माद्यांना

असे नाकारायला नको होते

अमळ जरा रक्तलांछित

तलवार खाली ठेवून

एकेकीला भराभर चुंबून

घ्यायला हवे होते

'चिमणा चिमणी झागडते

अशानं जिन्दगी बिघडते

'चार दिनकी चाँदनी

फिर अंधेरी रात'

काजव्यांचे झाड

त्याचे चांदणीला मोठे लाड"

"हे पितामह,

मी अविरत आपुला बोध आचरेन

बोलेन ऊया जबानीने

तिचे पारखेन इमान मी

मी आपुल्या बोलांना राजाज्ञा बनवीन

मी तव शब्दान्शब्दा चर्चान

हरहुन्नरी कवी करवी

बरवे आपुले अवघे जान

चरित्रात मढवीन मी !  
मी बोलेन तैसा चालेन  
हे जर चालताना खटकेल  
तर खटकल्या खज्याचे मात्र  
खोटे करीन मी  
नाहीतर कसा होईन मी  
राजकारणे पूर्ण ?"

"राजकारणी वाज्याबरोबर  
उडत जाणारे अत्तराचे फाये  
नेमके कुठे पडतील  
याचा का अंदाज घेता येतो पक्षीराज ?  
पक्षीराज,  
वादळाचा अंदाज घेता आला तरी  
बर्बाद होणाऱ्यांची यादी  
आगावू तयार करता येत नाही  
सिंहासनावर बसण्याचा  
छंद लावून घेतल्याने  
चातुर्थ अंगी येते असे नाही  
चौकात तलवारी टांगत्या ठेवून

राज्य करणे कठीण नाही  
मानणारे मानतात तोवर बरे असते  
अन्यथा मानेवर वार करणारे थोडे नाहीत

माणूसच माणसावर जुलम करतो !

माणूसच माणसाला मलम लावतो दोस्तहो !!

हे पाचूप्रांतीच्या पक्षीवैभवा,

तुळे ज्ञान तुला लखलाभ होवो

जितुके कपट तयाचा मात्र

नाईनाट होवो

छिनालांच्या करामती तयांसवे जावोत

मनुष्य भाषेने पशुपक्षी बोलके होवोत

गुरांच्या खुंट्याला

अधून मधून माणूस येवो

पेटत्या घरावर सांत्वनाचा वर्षाव होवो

एका ताटात सतरा तौडे जेवोत

वांझोटीला रातोरात दिवस जावोत

'जो-जो वांछील' ज्याला त्याला

फटकाफटकी मरण येवो !!!

**Translation:**

**Devdoot: The Angel**

Translation of Canto - I of Mahavaakya

(The Great Utterance),

Original Marathi Epic Poem in five cantos

**Poem**

1

O seafaring birds hunting for pearl-feed!

Fill up your beaks

with the eternal youth of my wings

because I'll soon be flown off

by messenger-fakirs that weep while they laugh.

On this isle just a few buds remain

of intoxicating flowers;

so before I too shed my petals

search out and keep my eyes -

because I'll soon be flown off

by messenger-fakirs that weep while they laugh.

One hasn't yet found the caravans

of Sindbads with golden dreams

that were on this same way misled;

nor has one yet wiped

the stains,

on the stones,

of the jewels that the stars here shed.

The ruined pavilions

within a score of miles,

in this phantom's domain,  
were undone by their love of tombs,  
their passions yet unquenched.

It's a valley of tyrants where  
all hell has broken loose and where  
a war is on-a veritable wildfire -  
while the waves that girdle me in chains  
fornicate freely with the shore.

Fledglings!

Since He does not find on my riot-torn face  
the glow befitting a prisoner

God himself is pained.

I too can hide this earth  
under my wings outspread;

I too can soar can flap my wings

Like you and you; every branch here bears

The marks of my claws

It was I that gifted

This graveyard to those fakirs

To this day I cherish in my wings

the eyes of Christ

and the Buddha's smile

That's why this sea has made a captive of me.

Birds,

out at sea the boats of my agonies

are singing their sea-songs;

go and receive them please,

because even they will be flown off

by messenger-fakirs that weep while they laugh.

Friends,

the tribes of hangmen-weavers  
that pleat the ropes for their job  
have earned a bad name here;  
their only crime is this;  
they are slaves to hunger.

There is so much fire still  
in the kiln of their eyes  
that no sooner do the rulers become oppressive  
than will they reduce to ash  
every dictatorial structure.

Hey, is it that you, too,

consider me a madman?  
So, count your feathers in the dark,  
quietly sharpen your beaks  
by rubbing them on each other's  
and let the night pass  
And pester daylight  
so much with your beaks  
that night should come back fast.

It is only now that the sky  
is feeling chocked with compassion  
and is sending down rains -  
at first drop by drop  
and then in torrents

The benevolent cataclysmic forces  
of the universe, have burst out  
shaking up all that is quick or dead.

The sun, spangled with stars  
is shivering, seeking alms,  
with his begging-bowl of horizon

at the gentle evening's gate.  
And says in a piteous voice:  
"Mother, O mother,  
God will bless you -  
let me spend here this night.

I'll be on my way  
by break of daylight."

Beware all  
A mighty rain is about to fall.  
The river will be in full flood again  
and my deep, lake-deep eyes

that quest for the shore  
will be carried by the current  
with my oyster-trapped soul.  
Before this calm in me that  
anticipates an earthquake  
breaks loose, come, death,  
and set me free.

The cry of the virgin night  
scorched in a forest-fire  
in now more than I can bear

The jungle of sufferings on my body  
is ablaze, every cell in me  
is cracking, bursting,  
so, remove at once these houses on the shore -  
the world is in flames,  
the world is in flames.

Hurry up, wash these wounds  
on the earth's heart,  
lest it split into two -

because this planet is all  
that we mortals have got

You who can make out  
a bird from a nest,  
who don't my eardrums shudder,  
why can't I hear the anguished chirping  
of baby birds that can't find their mother?

How is it that the spirit  
that pervades the five elements  
has gone entirely deaf?  
Or is it bootless -  
the resurrection of us angels?

O merchants,  
beware when you tear off the armour  
on my vast captive body.

Terrified, everybody will scream and shout,  
jungles of trees will rush, roots and all,  
ice-forts will crumble like houses of cards,  
the rivers, like cobras, will slither here and there  
and the earth, like a frightened cow,  
will tremble in every limb.

O oracles,  
don't be so prodigal of declarations.

One has to bail a whole ocean  
from its fathomless depths:  
a mother has to wrench her belly  
to earn her relief and to see her babe.  
The parti-coloured lamps on this isle  
are not decorative lighting -  
they are the dropped-out eyes

of travellers who lost their way.

2

O you who dig up cobra holes  
in search of cobra-gems  
look how they sway  
entwining sandal trees.

These reptiles with their passion-poison  
dare not touch me:  
the stink of my flesh and bones  
is much too strong for them.

Like the earth cracked in the hot dry season  
like a tree with chopped off branches  
prominent in a bare wintry wood,  
a terror grips your whole body,  
it grips the whole jungle, all of life  
the terror of shedding off the member.

Children of rishis, listen.  
Don't remove the bark of these ivies,  
do not undrape them:  
every limb of theirs will rob you  
of the power gained through penance.

Who will be accounted guilty then,  
no one knows.

"The sun is my coeval",  
the planets assert  
I don't really know,  
because an Overview of the source  
is impossible to the flow.

Each cloud like lachrymose eyes  
speeding along like loosening life;

this country, aged witness,  
that relates entrancing tales of nights  
that probe the wombs while ensuring their pleasure:

such things, you say,  
should be guarded like a germinated sore.

Then why this vain temptation  
to hide, under the wings, that fledgling bird?

The answers to these questions  
will remain hanging like limbs  
split open and filled with sand.

Long live, therefore,  
the potency of my questions.

How quickly is the day ripped off ... !  
How swiftly do creatures come and go ... !

Some with desires unsatisfied,  
some with sorrows unconsoled.

Every conch is blowing  
The tears that fly off under cover  
freeze and crowd in the sky.

The molehill-mountains that chop off  
the wings of the clouds  
go up in flames halfway,

So friends,  
when my soul was rotting in the earth's womb

I tore off deliverance and destiny,  
scattering them like petals.

The vigilant guards of heaven  
I transfixed on the spot.

That's how my sojourn has been happy.

In the season of ripe feathers  
my face is in bloom.

Suppose you pushed the earth on-  
where would you park it in space ?

Suppose you captured the sun and the moon-  
where would you make their jail?

While fording the immense solitude  
of a vast primeval desert

I have seen gentle waves of sand crumble.

And later, from the age of the earth

I have witnessed the murders  
of those who cherished the sight  
of monsoon winds  
traversing a thirst-burnt desert

I dismissed in a superannuated dirge  
all those defunct prayers;  
while the forlorn footprints  
of the directionless sailors of old  
were being gently buried  
in a massive drift of sand.

In the shadow of the cracked scaffold,  
sitting in the criminals' tomb  
when I recounted heroic sagas  
they drew their swords  
at my every pause.

And then when the aged vultures  
patrolling the scaffold  
and convulsing with hunger  
made a sortie on me

I just didn't know where their feathers were  
dropping in the shade.

You could see the evening thickening

in the owl's eyes -

I had no choice but to move on.

My pregnant wounds were yearning for the sun -

I had no choice but to move on.

Fledglings,

he who marches

should never lose heart.

At a certain moment

just because the Creator has stopped

he shouldn't pitch his tent.

So, friends,

here we enter, the metropolis

of Venus-eyed lust.

While crossing the thick vineyard beyond

you will succumb to the caprice of chasing

the enchantresses there.

And when birds interbreed

somehow it is the male that conceives,

so look out when you fly

over this territory.

Even now I can hear

the lip-to-ear dialogues,

from alien planets,

of rishis and of saints.

"O you who are sitting alone

here in the celestial lake in this grape-garden

quietly washing your body,

O bewitching apsaras of Indra's forest

won't you let me collect

in a cone of thorn-apple leaves

the sandal-rich water

trickling off your soft skin?  
O lady, my wings are weary -  
won't you let me land on your grounds?"

"O best among birds,  
your fluttering promiscuous glance  
has stung my gentle heart.

Don't you pity  
this wounded lady-bird?"  
"O beautiful one, O harlot of heaven,  
your bright smile caresses  
my ascetic effulgence –  
aren't you scared of my lust and rage?

O luscious cobress<sup>5</sup>  
of a dripping-wet lush green ivy,  
why are these smelt flowers  
clinging so, again and again, to the branch?

And like a virgin in heat  
challenging in every way  
the divine food in my bag?"

"O excellent ascetic,  
every season comes of age  
intoxicated by its sap.

A hungering austerity  
won't beget deliverance, my dear.

O star among penitents,  
rains don't fall from a dry sky,  
and when the stem is desiccated  
buds won't bloom.

So, you say that  
as a river in flood rushes  
and clings to the sea,

I too should,  
before these dense woods loosen the night,  
cling to you? "

"But O bewitchment alive,  
after giving away my body  
where shall I posit my soul?

Come O rishis of lust,  
sow this night in my every limb.  
O stars, give me today your mantle.

Gift away, O great Vedas,  
this penance-born virtue in my every cell  
to the wretches condemned to hell."

Fledglings,  
everybody knows  
that it is injurious to scrabble a sore;  
and knowing this well  
they scrabble it evermore.  
Now just as one finds a guilty pleasure  
in scratching an itch,  
so does an Adam hunger for an Eve  
and she for him.

One such beauty there was,  
very dear to me.

The stars were like jewels in her nose-ring;"  
she had two autumn full moons on her two sides  
of hue they were milky white.

Now just as she was silly  
she acted like a filly.

In every childbirth

she laughed like a tamarind fat and green;  
and in season she again would flirt  
with admirers seventeen.

Often, I saw her  
getting stars tattooed in the open,  
I had bought her an emerald anklet  
by pledging myself with the ocean.

At last, one day  
I took courage in both hands  
and saw how it felt this lady to address.

Quickly, for that moment, she saw how  
it felt to hold me in her embrace.

For a worm of lust  
pleasure is a must:  
A crow of dandy taste-  
ruin of himself

O best among birds from far-off lands,  
I applaud your seducing eyes  
That injure shy maidens  
bathing by the side of perfume-runnels;  
applaud your heart-thrilling bursts of joy  
and your dream personality

that should tickle any conceited beauty;  
all these qualities that challenge a maiden  
to a bed battle, I applaud.

O crown among birds,  
I commend your superhuman charms,  
the rule you set up over the country of tits,  
and the fierce invasions of the nests  
of deep green parrots in mango forests.

But it's a pity to recall, O noblest of birds,  
that on that April full moon, during lunar eclipse  
you refused, aware that you were winning a close battle,

those hundreds of glum but sporting ladies  
of the loser's camp.

I wish you had put down for a moment  
your bloody swords  
and kissed them all quickly, one by one.

"The sparrow and his mate fight  
and this ruins their life."

A nine days' wonder-  
they say of our life  
Even so the moon  
adores fireflies.  
"O grandfather,  
always, always, shall I act as you taught;

I'll test the virtue of my tongue  
before I ever speak;

your sayings shall be royal edicts;  
I shall have a sage poet  
discuss every word of yours;

I shall have him sing  
through a song on your life  
all your dear teachings.

I shall act as I speak  
but if I stumble at some inconvenient truth

I shall play tricks -  
how shall I otherwise  
perfect my politics?"

"Where exactly will it drop  
a wisp of perfumed cotton

flying with political winds -  
can you tell, O royal bird?  
O royal bird,  
you can foresee a storm at some stage  
but can you fore list those who the storm will ravage?  
For years you have sat  
on your habitual throne -  
but does it mean you know  
the art of government?

It's easy to rule by terror -  
hanging swords in city squares.

This works  
as long as the people can be led  
or else there are many here who  
rise to sever their regent's head,  
Yes, man oppresses man all around -  
And it's man again that dresses his wounds.

O Eminent of the land of emeralds,  
I wish you the joy of your wisdom;  
may, howbeit, you bury your deceit;  
to the cow-peg may, at times, man be tethered;  
may solace shower on burning homes;  
may twenty dine off a single plate;  
may barren women conceive overnight;  
may a lightning death descend  
on all who long for it.

MatruAkshar  
POETRY



**Mr. Shivkumar S. Agrawal** श्री शिवकुमार एस् अग्रवाल

#### **Bio-Data**

Shivkumar S. Agrawal, an academician and a trilingual poet, is an Assistant Professor of English working in Dadasaheb Jotiram Godse Arts, Commerce, Science College, Vaduj, Dist. Satara, Maharashtra. The books to his credit are : A Prayer to My God, the Man (Poetry) (2019), A Word to Soul-mate ( Poems in English), Maanu, Mungi Aani Kavita (Poems in Marathi), Aaradhana (Devotional Songs in Hindi)

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## कविता

काय? तुमचं माझ्यावर प्रेम आहे?

काय ? तुझं माझ्यापर प्रेम आहे?

चान... मळत... मग चल लवकर.

घार्ड कश जशा

चाल भशाभशा

पळत ये पटकन

यिंवत्र हो चटकन

शादद शादद शादद आंबं नाही आके आषा

आंदा तुमचा घोडा आणि थोडा खेळ थांदा

हो हो ... उतकण कपडे फक्त तुझ्या कंकृतीचे

फाठून टाक लक्तां ही आज तुझ्या धर्माची

यिंवत्र जा आज तू ओळख तुझ्या जातीची

आणि तुझ्या शास्त्रीयत्वाची झूल ही फेकून ढे

क्षोड तुझा क्षार्थ

क्षोड तुझा आहं

ऐशाची शक्ती

देवाची भक्ती.

काबं काही त्यागून

ये माझ्या मागून.

ठाकून ढे त्या ढाली आन ती तलवारीची पाती

घे आषा ही मानवतेची मशाल तुळिया हाती

कपाळाला लाव तुझ्या ही पायाखालची माती

अंधश्रद्धेचा ढे अळी आन पेटव यिंवर्कवाती

मेर्किंवा यिंवत्र जा जा यिंवत्र नार्तीगोती

तुझी आज जी आहेत ती काल कुणाची होती ?

तू रक्ती अक्षलीक्ष तक्षी ये  
तू पुरुष अक्षलाक्ष तक्षी ये

माझ्याकडं येताना  
तू ठेव फक्त एकच जाण  
तळहातावशती पिये  
डोकं नक्षलेलं हृदय आण.

MatruAkshar

**Translation:**

**Do you want to love me?**

Do you want to love me?

Wow! Then come, come.

Come fast. Hurry up.

Don't waste time.

Yes, unclothe ye thyself.

No, no. No, my dear.

Only remove thy clothes of culture.

Wipe out thy national identities.

Clear off thy existence by religion.

Wash-out thy personal considerations.

Thy ego,

Thy respect,

Thy faiths,

Thy beliefs,

And all; all that you have put on

Remove it immediately and come on.

Be an absolute human being.

Be a child of Mother-Nature.

Free from doubts and beliefs,

And be a selfless born creature.

I know that you are a woman.

Or I know that you are a man.

But... but I want a true human

.....and I want, you see, none.

If you are one the kind I want,

Come fast.  
With thy arms. wide open,  
And thine eyes, but shut,  
Mind, free from all doubts,  
And with the heart without head.

MatruAkshar



### **Dr. Raghunath Kadakane**

#### **Bio:**

Dr Raghunath Kadakane works as the Head of the Department of English at Rajaram College, Kolhapur (Government of Maharashtra). He holds an additional charge as the Head of the Department of Marathi too.

Dr. Kadakane is a poet, novelist, translator, a Research Supervisor and a resource person as well. Besides academics, he is seriously engaged in creative writing in his mother-tongue, Marathi. He made a debut in this field by writing a novel entitled 1. "Maze Mithyache Prayog (My experiments with "Mithya") 2008. 2. "In Comparison: Bhalchandra Nemade's Kosla and J. D.Salinger's "The Catcher in the Rye" 2017. 3. A collection of poems in Marathi– entitled "Shwasochhwasanchya Madhyantaratil Kavita, 2019. 4. "Udaharanarth: Kosla and The Catcher in the Rye", 2021.

Dr Kadakane was invited as the Guest Author in the ACCRA international book festival officially organised by the Ghana – West African country – during 28 -30 October 2021. Expressed views in two sessions : 1) Writing in a Pandemic World: How to Conduct Creative Research as a Creative Writer" 2) 'Writing to heal in the Covid-19 world.' He is also engaged in Marathi translation of articles written in English by Dr. Yashwant Thorat (former chairman, NABARD) for various reputed newspapers like Sakal, Pudhari, Tarun Bharat.

एक होता कवी ...

एक होता कवी

कवी होता बरा

खांद्यांवर त्याच्या

संसाराची धुरा ...

एक होता कवी

कवी होता नोकर

साहेब म्हणले त्याला

आधी हे कर ते कर ...

एक होता कवी

कवी होता दुकानात

त्याच्या शब्दांचा अर्थ

बिलाच्या रकान्यात...

एक होता कवी

कवी होता गाडीवाला

तळलेल्या कविता

खाणारा जाडीवाला ...

एक होता कवी

कवी होता रद्दीवाला

किलोवर आशय

तोलणारा बुद्धीवाला ...

एक होता कवी

कवी होता भाजीवाला

शब्दांना तेजी त्याच्या

अर्थ मात्र मंदीवाला ...

एक होता कवी...

कवी होता कारखान्यात

कवितेची पोती

भरलेल्या गोदामात ...

एक होता कवी...

कवी होता शेतात

कवितेची नापिकी

तेजी मात्र बाजारात ...

एक होता कवी

कवी होता स्मशानात...

कवितेच्या कवित्वाला

कविता सुचेनात...

**Translation:**

**There was a Poet !**

**(Self-translated)**

There was a poet  
The poet was good  
But on his shoulders lay  
His family's heavy load!

There was a poet  
The poet was a servant  
his boss asked him  
Just to do this and do that!

There was a poet  
The poet was a shopkeeper  
and the meaning of his poetry  
figured in the bills!

There was a poet  
The poet was a street- hawker  
and he sold fried poems  
to feed the fat bellies!

There was a poet  
The poet was a scrapper

And he weighed his poems in kilos  
To impress the scholarly critics!

There was a poet  
The poet was a veggie- vender  
His words were costly

But their meaning very cheap!

There was a poet  
The poet worked in the factory  
He filled his poetry in sacks  
And put it in the warehouse!

There was a poet  
The poet was a farmer  
He could not grow his poems  
while there was boom in the market!

And there was a poet  
The poet worked in the crematory  
and he could not write  
a single line of poetry!



### **Dr. Smita Ajgaonkar (Nayak)**

#### **Bio:**

DR SMITA NAYAK, working as Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, P. E.

S.'s RSN college of Arts & Science, Goa, is a bilingual poetess and has a keen interest in Indian writing in English and a big number of research papers published on variety of themes, in various national and international journals to her credit. She has also contributed a few books with her scholarly articles and so has she authored. She has compered many literary as well as non-literary events. She has also shouldered the role of a leading and active executive member of various associations like AESI. Writing poems is her contribution to a literary genre.



**Mr. Deepak N Pawar**

**Bio:**

Mr. Deepak N. Pawar has been teaching English passionately for 25 years. He writes in Marathi, English and Hindi. He believes in the goodness and grandeur of everything living or non-living alike. His area of interest is Indian Writing in English and has several research papers in the national as well as international journals to his credit. He has penned not many but a considerable number of poems and short stories (Marathi) encompassing sensible topics. His poems - Marathi, English and Hindi have contributed peer reviewed journals as well as anthologies. Lucidity of language and simplicity in projection of the theme are his aesthetic credentials. Editing, translation is his interest. He has been an active member of several online journals as an editor. He has translated several English poems into Marathi and vice versa.

खरंच शक्य आहे ?

सांग कसं शक्य आहे ?

खरंच शक्य आहे का ?

तुझ्या दृष्टीने ह्या शुल्लक (?)

गोष्टींच्या पल्ल्याड एक दैवी अन्

अलौकिक नातं जोउण तुझ्याशी

त्या सर्वच फुटकळ

अन् फारच खुज्या गोष्टींच्या पलिकडे ?

मी आपली म्हणत राहते

“तुला माझ्यासाठी वेळच नाही”

अन् “तू तर पार हरवलाय

तुझ्या एकटयाच्याच विश्वात”...

यण तुझ्या लेखी ह्या गोष्टी

खुज्याच तर आहेत

मला वेळ देण अन् माझ्यात गुंतून जाण ...

एकीकडे तू देतोस त्या सर्व गोष्टी

आयुष्याला बांधून टाकणाऱ्या.

अनुकूल वेदनेचा आभास.

भुकेल्याला अन्नाचं वा अनिकेताला छप्पराचं

कौतुक असावं तसं.

फार फार तर मखमली बिघान.

अन् आभळाकडं पाहून चालायला लावणारी श्रीमंती †

खरं तर सगळंच लौकिक अन् नश्वर.

पण रक्ताचं नातं विसरायला लावणारी  
ही भौतिक सुखाची वखवख  
माझ्याही ठायी असेल  
असं गृहित धरून  
माझ्या आयुष्याच्या पुर्णत्वाची  
व्याख्या करणारा  
अन् घडीभर मलाही हेच माझं विश्व  
असल्याचा आभास निर्माण  
करणारा तू....  
की ह्या अचेतन जगापलिकडे  
माझ्यात तुझं पुर्णत्व शोधणारा तू ?  
यातला मी कोणता समजु ?  
.....की अजूनही तू मैलोंमैल  
दूर आहेस माझ्यापासून  
मला अनभिज्ञ असणाऱ्या  
स्वप्नांच्या मागे धावत ?  
..... अडकलायस नकळत  
वा जाणीवपूर्वक  
तूच ठरविलेल्या मोठमोठ्या  
जबाबदाऱ्यांच्या श्रृंखलेत....?  
खरं सांगू....?  
आयुष्यातली ही फरफट  
अन् ताटातुट आता जगण्याचा भागच झालीये.

भंग पावलेलं सगळंच अस्तित्व

निखळलेल्या ताच्यागत

सोडून गेलंय प्रभासंडळ

दूर.....खूप दूर

इतकं की आता

एकमेकांना जोडणाऱ्या वाटा

धूसर झाल्यातच जमा.

अन् आपल्यात आलेल्या

दूराव्यांची भगदाडं बुजवणंही

वाटतोय आता एक वृथा प्रयत्न.

खरंच

आता जुन्या मान्यता बदलायची

वेळ आलीय ?

**Translation:**

**Is it possible?**

Going beyond petty  
Complaints and conditions as you call them?  
Is it possible?  
Is it possible, really...  
To connect with you divinely  
Like you don't have time  
For me' and 'you have become  
Very busy in your life'.  
Is that accommodativeness going to be the  
Completion of my life.....  
Going beyond worldliness.....  
Seeking your completion in me....  
Or are you still miles away from me....  
Chasing dreams unknown to me  
In chains of high positions in  
Various spheres of life?  
Dissociation and disintegration  
Has become the theme of life.  
And bridging up the cracks looks like  
A futile attempt.  
Time to change the beliefs!

MatruAkshar  
**Odia**

Short Story

MatruAkshar



Dr Manjubala Panda

**Bio:**

Dr Manjubala Panda is an Epidemiologist of unparalleled fame. She is known for engrossing readers in pages of her book redefining the world of literature. She has been the proud author of a millennium of books written in ingenuous way. She is the proud author of numerous best-read books including Biswarupa, Mahulaphula, Madhumagna, Paranani, Mugdha Mantra, Antaswara, Saunta Katha etc. She is known for her deep involvement in the stories as she animates the characters and makes them applicable to a reader's life, captivating him/her completely.



**Aadityaamlan Panda**

**Bio of Translator:**

Aadityaamlan Panda a B.Tech. first year student of IIT-Kanpur, from Odisha, is a poet, writer, critic and literary translator by passion and is obsessed with words. He has primarily crossed the border of his thought, that is why he became able to rule the dynasty of “Pen & Paper”. According to him “Poet is someone who fosters the barrier between reality and fantasy”. He has been the proud co-author of best-read books including Bliss, Polyphony of Women’s Odyssey, Money-War & Peace, Sandcastles & Paper boats etc. He prefers writing texts containing hidden messages for society. He is an ardent nature observer and loves thinking deeply even on miniature visions of nature.

## ମର୍କ\_ କୋ\_ ଦର୍ଦ୍ଦ\_ ନହଁ\_ ହୋ ତା

(ଆମ୍ବୁଡୁଟିର କଥା)

ଅଞ୍ଚଳ ଭାରତୀୟ ଆୟୁର୍ବିଜ୍ଞାନ ସଂସ୍କାନ, ଏମ୍ବୁ ମୁଆଦିଲ୍ଲୀ। ଭାରତର ସର୍ବବୃଦ୍ଧ ଓ ପ୍ରମଣ ଚିକିତ୍ସା ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନ। ଆଶା ଓ ଭରସାର ଅନ୍ୟ ଏକ ନାମ। ସଦାସର୍ବଦା କର୍ମଚଙ୍ଗଳ, ବ୍ୟସ୍ତବହୁଳ ଏଇ ଅନୁଷ୍ଠାନର ଯେ କୌଣସି ଏକ କୋଣରେ ମୁହଁର୍ତ୍ତ କେତୋଟି ଠିଆ ହେଇ ଏକ ଗୋଗୀକୁ କିମ୍ବା ତା'ର ଆମୀୟ ଅବା ସଂପର୍କୀୟମାନଙ୍କୁ ନିରୀକ୍ଷଣ କଲେ ସ୍ଵଷ୍ଟ ବାରି ହୁଏ ଯେ - ମଣିଷର ସବୁଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ ନିଶା ହେଲା ଜିଲ୍ଲାବାର ଆଶା।

ଘଟଣା କ୍ରମେ ବିତ୍ତୀୟ ଥର ପାଇଁ ଆମକୁ ଏମୟ ଯିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଲା - ଯାଙ୍କ କିନ୍ତୁ ଷ୍ଟୋନ୍ ର ଅପରେସନ୍ ପାଇଁ। ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅନେକ ତାତ୍ତ୍ଵର ବନ୍ଧୁ ସେଠି। ତେଣୁ ସେହି, ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା, ସାହାଯ୍ୟ, ସହାନୁଭୂତି ଓ ସହଦୟତାର ଅଭାବ ନାହିଁ। ଅଭାବ କେବଳ ଗୋଟିଏ କଥାରେ - ସେଣାଲ୍ କ୍ୟାବିନଟିଏ ସହଜରେ ମିଳେ ନାହିଁ। ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ବନ୍ଧୁମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକୀ ଯୋଗୁଁ ଆମକୁ ସହଜରେ କ୍ୟାବିନଟେ ମିଳିଥିଲା। ଦୈନିକ ଅଠର ଶହ ଟଙ୍କା ଭତ୍ତା ହେଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ କ୍ୟାବିନରେ କେବଳ ଏକାକୀଭ୍ୱାବେ ବ୍ୟତୀତ ଅନ୍ୟ ସମସ୍ତ ସୁବିଧା ଉପଲବ୍ଧ।

ଏଇ ଥର ଯେତେବେଳେ ତାତ୍ତ୍ଵର କହିଲେ ଯେ କ୍ୟାବିନ୍ ଯଦି ନିହାତି ଦରକାର ଆଉ କିଛି ଦିନ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିବ, କାରଣ ଗୋଟିଏ ବି କ୍ୟାବିନ୍ ଅନ୍ତରେ ଦଶ ଦିନ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଖାଲି ହବାର ନାହିଁ, ଆମେ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି କଲୁ - ଜେନେରାଲ୍ ଆର୍ଟରେ ରହିଯିବାକୁ। କାରଣ ଆମ ପକ୍ଷରେ ଏତେ ଦିନ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରିବା ସମ୍ଭବପର ନ ଥିଲା। ଏମ୍ବୁର ଜେନେରାଲ୍ ଆର୍ଟ କିନ୍ତୁ ଆମ ଏଠିକାର ଆର୍ଟ ପରି ନୁହେଁ। ସେଣ୍ଟ୍ରାଲ୍ ଏ.ସି। ଖୁବି ପରିଷାର, ପରିଛନ୍ତି। ଗୋଟିଏ ରୁମରେ ଚାରୋଟି ଲେଖାର୍ଥ ବେହି। ପ୍ରତି ରୁମ୍ ପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ଟଏଲେଟ୍ ଓ ଦୁଇଟି ଆସ୍ତି ବେସିନ୍। ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ମୁଖ୍ୟ ଅପରେସନ୍ ବେଳେ ତାତ୍ତ୍ଵରଖାନାରେ ଅର୍ଦେଇ ମାସ ରହିବାକୁ ପଡ଼ିଥିଲା। ଏଥର କିନ୍ତୁ ଛୋଟିଆ ପଥରଟିଏ ପରିସ୍ରାନଳୀରେ ଅଟକି ରହିଥିଲା। ତା'କୁ କେବଳ ବାହାର କରିବାର ଥିଲା। ତେଣୁ ମୋଟେ ଚାରି ପାଞ୍ଚ ଦିନର କଥା ଚଳିବ।

ଆମେ ରୁମ୍ ରେ ପାଦ ଦଉ ଦଉ ଧାଇଁ ଆସି ଆମକୁ ପାଞ୍ଜୋଟି ନେଲେ ଯେଉଁ ବନ୍ଧୁଙ୍କ ଭତ୍ତା ମହିଲା - ସେ ହେଲେ ଫୁଲଝକ୍ତ ଦିଦି। ଆମ ସାମା ବେହି ତାଙ୍କର। ତିନିଦିନ ପୂର୍ବରୁ ତାଙ୍କ ସ୍ବାମୀଙ୍କର ପିତାଙ୍କର ପଥର (ଗଲ୍ ଷ୍ଟୋନ୍) ଅପରେସନ୍ ସରିଥାଏ। ଏଇଟା ତାଙ୍କ ତୃତୀୟ ଥର ରହଣୀ ଏମ୍ବୁରେ। ଫୁଲଝକ୍ତ ଦିଦି ନିମିଷକରେ ମୋଟେ ସବୁ ବୁଝେଇ ଦେଲେ। ଏଇ ସମୟରେ ତାତ୍ତ୍ଵର ରାତର୍କୁ ଦିଆନ୍ତି, ଏଇ ସମୟରେ ସିଷ୍ଟର ଡିଷ୍ଟାର୍ଟିକ ଦିଆନ୍ତି, ଏଇଟା ଡ୍ରେସିଂ ରୁମ୍, ସେଇଟା କିଚେନ୍ ଇଟ୍ୟାଦି ଇଟ୍ୟାଦି। ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ କିଚେନରୁ କଟି ତିଆରି କରି ଆଣି ଆମକୁ ପିଆଇଲେ। ଆମ ବେହି ପାଖରେ ରଖାଯାଇଥିବା ଛୋଟିଆ ସେଲ୍କୁରେ ଆମ ବ୍ୟବହାର୍ୟ ଜିନିଷତକ ସଜେଇ ରଖିବାରେ ମୋଟେ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କଲେ। ଆମେ ଦୁହେଁ ତାତ୍ତ୍ଵର ଜାଣି ଭାରି ଖୁସି ହେଲେ। ତା'ପରେ କ'ଣ ଭାବି ହିତ ମୋଟେ କହିଲେ - ଆଛା, ଅନୁରୋଧଟିଏ କରିବି, ରଖିବ? ମୁଁ ତାଙ୍କ ମୁହଁର୍କୁ ଅନେଇଲି।

મો ઉત્તરકુ અપેક્ષા ન કરિ યે કહિલે - શુણ, તમે ઉત્તરણી હેલે મધ્ય એઠિ તમે મોાર

સાનુભ઻ણી। તેણુ મું તમકુ 'તમે' મુહ્સું - 'તુ' કહિબિ ઓ તમકુ નીં ધરિ તાકિબિ – રાજિ?

મોટે લાગુથૂલા મો સાઘારે ફૂલઅંદ્રુ દિદિ મુહ્સું, સુદૂર બ્રહ્મપુરરે થૃબા મો બયસા નાના હું

ઠિથાહેલેક્કિ। એટે અસ્ત્ર સમય મધ્યરે એટે આમૃયચા! એટે બેશી આન્તરિકચા!! ગેલ હેબાપાછું મન  
હેલે મું નાનાર બેકકુ ગુઢેલ ધરિલા ભલી દિદિઙ બેકકુ દિ' હાતરે ગુઢેલ ધરિ તાઙ કાન્નરે  
મુણુ રખ્યાંલિ। ખેલરે મો કપાલરે ચુમાચિએ દેલે યે।

ફૂલઅંદ્રુ દિદિ પ્રથમે તાઙુર બેદુ પાખકુ મોટે નેલ તાઙ સ્વામીઙ સહ મોાર પરિચય કરેલ  
દેલે। ચિન્હ ચિન્હ થર અપરેસન્ યોગું બેશ દુર્બલ ઓ શેથા દિશુથાંદ્રું। તા' પરે તાઙ કહરે થૃબા  
બેદુ પાખકુ ગલુ। શોઇથાએ તિરિશ બચિશ બર્ષર યુબકચિએ, સંજાબ। દુરારોગય ક્યાન્દુરરે પાંચું।  
ક્યાન્દુર અણુકોષરુ આરય હોઇ શરીરર અધ્યકાંશ છ્યાનકુ બ્યાપિગલાણિ। તા' પૂર્વ દિન હું તા'  
મેરુહાત તથા અન્યાન્ય અંશરે કિછિ અપરેસન્ હેલથાએ। દેહસારા બ્યાણેજુ। કેબળ મુહુંચુ  
દિશુથાએ। મણ્િમણ્િરે અસ્વષ્ટ ભાવરે યોઢુંએ શક કહુથાએ - ઓં ગઢુ। બાસુ એટિકિ। પાખરે જરીથાંદ્રુ  
દિ' જણ સાઙુ। અનબરચ, અબિશ્રાંત એવા કરુથાંદ્રુ। બેદુ પ્યાન્ રે ખાડુ કરેલબા સમયરે મધ્ય  
એમાને બિકારશુન્ય। એમાનું બન્ધુપ્રાંતુ દોહલેલ દેલા મો હૃદયકુ।

કિછિ સમય પરે સંજાબર પણ્ણું પુનમં આસિલા। પરા પરિ સુન્દર ચેહેરા, હેલે માંજલા ફૂલ પરિ  
બિષણુ મુહ્સું। પુનમર હાત ધરિથાએ તા'ર દિ' બર્ષર પુઅ। અબિકળ બાપર ચેહેરા। મનશા ખરાપ  
હેલગલા છોટ એલ પરિબારચુ પાછું। એલ ત એમાનું પારિબારિક જાબનર આરય માત્ર। કેટે  
રણન્ સ્વય દેશ ન થુબે! અથચ ગોચિએ સ્વયકુ સાકાર કરિબા પાછું બિ રાતિ નિઅણુ!! હે ઉગબાન!!!  
ચતુર્થ રોગા જણક આમ પાખ બેદુ રા। અણી પાર બૃદ્ધ જણો। તાઙ પ્રોણેણું અપરેસન્ દિ' દિન  
આગરુ સરિથાએ। દુલદિન પરે એ ડિશ્યુન્ હેલ ઘરકુ ફેરિયિબે। સાથુરે પ્રોણ પુઅ। બાપર  
સચુપ્રકાર એવા સયન્ને, સાદરે કરુથાંદ્રુ। એલથૂપાછું ત મણિષ સંસાર કરે! સન્તાન ખોજે!!  
રાતિ પ્રાય ન'ગા હબ। ખાલબા શેષ કરિ આમે સમષે શોઇબાર ઉપક્રમ કરુછુ। ઠિક એટિકિબેલે  
આમ કોઠરાંકુ પણી આસિલા પિલાચિએ। બયસ સાત કિ આં બર્ષ હબ। બાબાજાંઙ ભલી ઓસારિઆ  
ગામુછાચિએ ગુઢેલ હેલ બેક પછૈપટે ગણ્ણિચિએ પકેલેક્કિ। હાતરે ધરિછુ પરિશ્રાથલી (યુરોસેક)।  
૩૪ - બુઝુંલિ। એલથૂપાછું એમિટિકા અપૂર્વ બેશ!

તા'કુ દેખુદેખુ તા' પાખકુ દોઢિગલે ફૂલઅંદ્રુ દિદિ। તા'કુ ચિકે ગેલ કરિદેલ કહિલે - આરે  
બાબા, તુ આજિ એટે તેરિ કલુ યે!

ପୁଲଞ୍ଜି ଦିଦି ତା'କୁ ଚିହ୍ନେଇଦେଲେ ମୋତେ । ପିଲାଟି ପାଖ ରୁମରେ ରହେ । ତା'ର ମଧ୍ୟ କିଛି ଷ୍ଣୋନ୍  
ଅପରେସନ୍ ଆସନ୍ତାକାଳି ହେବ । ପ୍ରତି ରାତି ଶୋଇବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ କାଳେ ସେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବେଢ଼ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ  
ରୋଗୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଗୁଡ଼ ଝିସ୍ କରେ, ମଜା ମଜା କଥା କହି ଦିଲ ଖୁସ୍ତ କରେ ।

ତା'କୁ ସାମାନ୍ୟ କୋଳକୁ ଆଉଜେଇ ଆଣି ପଚାରିଲି - ତୋ ନାଁ' କ'ଣ ବାପା ।

ଏକ ଅଭ୍ରତ ଭଙ୍ଗୀ କରି ଠିଆହେଲା ସେ । ତାହାଣ ହାତରେ କପାଳ ଉପରକୁ ଝୁଙ୍କି ଆସିଥିବା ବାଳ କେରାକ  
ସଜାତ୍ର ସଜାତ୍ର ଏକ ଅପୂର୍ବ ଠାଣିରେ କହିଲା - ରିତିକ ରୋଶନ୍ ।

ହସିଲେ ସମସ୍ତେ । ରିତିକର ମା' କହିଲେ - ତା' ନାଁ ପ୍ରକୃତରେ ରିତିକ । କିନ୍ତୁ କିଏ ପଚାରିଲେ ସେ ତା'କୁ ବଢ଼େଇ  
ଚଢ଼େଇ ଏମିତି କହେ ।

: ସକାଳୁ ସମସ୍ତେ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ଜଣେ ସର୍ଜନ୍ ଆଜି ପେସେଷ୍ଟ ହେଇ ଆଡ଼ମିଶନ୍ ହେଇଛନ୍ତି - ଷ୍ଣୋନ୍ ଅପରେସନ୍  
ପାଇଁ । ଆପଣ ତା'ହେଲେ ସେଇ ସର୍ଜନ୍ ଅଙ୍କଲ୍ - ନାହିଁ? କହୁ କହୁ ରିତିକ ଏ ଭିତରେ ଯାଙ୍କ ବେଢ଼ ପାଖକୁ ଚାଲି  
ଆସିଥିଲା । ସେ ଯାଙ୍କୁ ଭଲକରି ଚାହିଁଲା । ତା' କୁନିକୁନି ହାତରେ ଯାଙ୍କର ଗୋଡ଼, ହାତ, ପେଟ ସବୁ ଆଉଁସି  
ପକେଇଲା । ତା' ପରେ କ'ଣ ଭାବି କହିଲା - ଆଛା ତଙ୍କର ଅଙ୍କଲ୍, ଆପଣ ତ ଏତେ ମୋଟା, ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ମଣିଷ,  
ଏତେ ଚିକିଏ ଗୋଡ଼ି କେମିତି ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଦେହକୁ ପଶିଲା

ଇଏ ହସିଲେ । ମୁଁ ଉଭର ଦେଲି ।

ରିତିକ, ତାତ୍ତ୍ଵରମାନେ ବି ଗୋଟିଏ ଗୋଟିଏ ମଣିଷ । ଆଉ ଯେ କୌଣସି ମଣିଷକୁ ଯେ କୌଣସି ରୋଗ  
ହେଇପାରେ । ଆଛା ତୁ ଏବେ କହ, ତୁ ତ ଏତିକି ଛୋଟ କୁନ୍ମୁନ ଛୁଆଚିଏ । ତୋ କିଛାରେ ପଥର ଥିବା କଥା  
କେମିତି ଜଣାପଦିଲା?

: ଆରେ ବାଟ, ମୋ ରୋଗର ଭାଏଗ୍ନେସିସ୍ ତ ମୁଁ ନିଜେ କରିଛି । କହିବି କେମିତି? ହଠାତ୍ ଦିନେ ସ୍କୁଲରେ ମୁଁ  
ଦେଖିଲି ମୋ ସୁସ୍ତ ଲାଲ ହଉଛି । ସୁସ୍ତର ରଙ୍ଗ ତ ସଫେଦ, କାହିଁକି ଲାଲ ହେଲା? ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଚିଚରଙ୍ଗୁ  
କହିଲି । ଚିଚର ନିଜେ ଆଣି ଘରେ ଛାଟିଦେଲେ ଓ ପାପା, ମନ୍ଦିଙ୍କୁ କହିଲେ । ସାଙ୍ଗେ ସାଙ୍ଗେ ତାତ୍ତ୍ଵରଙ୍ଗୁ  
ଦେଖାଗଲା । ସୁସ୍ତ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରାଗଲା । ଏହୁ-ରେ କରାଗଲା । ବାସ୍ତବ, ଜଣା ପଢ଼ିଗଲା ପଥର ଅଛି ।

ପୁଣି ଏକ ଅନୁପମ ଠାଣି । ପୁଣି ଏକ ଅନ୍ତର୍ମାନ୍ୟ ଚିର୍ଯ୍ୟକ ତାହାଣି । ଏବେ ସେ ମୁକ୍ତ ହସି କହିଲା - ହଁ, କଷ୍ଟ ହୁଏ, ପୁଣି  
ହୁଏନି । କାହିଁକି ଜାଣନ୍ତି? ମର୍ଦ୍ଦ କୋ ଦର୍ଦ୍ଦ ନହିଁ ହୋତା ।

ହସି ହସି ସମସ୍ତେ ବେଦମ୍ । ଅଣୀ ବର୍ଷର ବୁଢ଼ା ମଧ୍ୟ ପାକୁଆ ପାଟି ମେଲେଇ ହସୁଥୁଲେ । ଆମ  
ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଶୁଭରାତ୍ରୀ ଜଣେଇ ରିତିକ ଅନ୍ୟ ରୁମ ଆଡ଼କୁ ପାଦ ବଢ଼େଇଲା । ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଶୋଇବାକୁ ଗଲୁ ।

ରାତି ପାହିଲେ ଯାଙ୍କର ଅପରେସନ୍ । ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ଅପରେସନ୍ ବେଳର କଥା ମୋର ମନେ ପଡ଼ୁଥିଲା । ଜ୍ଞାନ ଶୋଇଗଲା ପରେ କ୍ୟାବିନରେ ମୁଁ ଏକା । ନାନା ଦୁଃଖିକ୍ଷା ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ପଶୁଆଏ । ଚେନସନ୍ ଯୋଗୁଁ ସାରା ରାତି ମୁଁ ଶୋଇ ପାରି ନ ଥିଲି । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଥମ ଥର ଅନୁଭୂତି ଥିବା ଯୋଗୁଁ ଏଥର କିଛି ପରିମାଣରେ ତର କମିଥିଲା ଓ ସାହସ ବରିଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ ସବୁଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ କଥା ହେଲା ଜେନେରାଲ ଆର୍ଟ୍, ଫୁଲଅଞ୍ଚି ଦିଦି, ରିଟିକ୍ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟମାନେ । ସେମାନେ ମୋତେ ଏକାକୀଭୋଧ ପାଇଁ ସୁଯୋଗ ହିଁ ଦେଇ ନ ଥିଲେ । ମୋତେ ଲାଗୁଥିଲା ଆପଦ ବିପଦରେ ମଣିଷ ହିଁ ମଣିଷର ସବୁଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ ବଳ । ସତରେ ମୁଁ ଜମା ଜାଣି ପାରିଲିନି - ମୋର ତମାମ ଦିନ କେମିତି ବିତିଲା ଓ ରାତି କେମିତି ପାହିଲା ।

ତା' ପରଦିନ ସକାଳୁ ଉଠି ଯାଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ କରି ମୁଁ ନିଜେ ବି ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ହେଇ ସାରିଆଏ । ଏମ୍ବରେ ଏକା ସାଙ୍ଗେ ଆଠଟି ଅପରେସନ୍ ଥୁଏଟର କାମ କରେ । ଅବିଶ୍ୱରମୀଯ ବ୍ୟସ୍ତତା ସଭୈ ସବୁ କାମ ଶୁଙ୍ଗିତ, ସୁସଙ୍ଗଠିତ, ସୁପରିଚାଳିତ । ଯାଙ୍କର ଓ ରିଟିକର ଷ୍ଟେଚର ଏକା ସାଙ୍ଗେ ପହଞ୍ଚିଲା ୩.୮ ସଂଲଗ୍ନ ବାରଣ୍ୟାରେ । କଣେଇ ଚାହିଁଲି । କୁନ୍ତି ମର୍ଦ୍ଦ ର ମୁହଁ ଆଜି ଶୁଖ୍ୟାଳଙ୍କି । କାନ୍ଦୁରା କାନ୍ଦୁରା ଭାବ । ତଥାପି ବି ସେ ଆମକୁ ଦେଖୁ ହସିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କଲା । ଶୋଇବା ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ହିଁ ଯାଙ୍କ ଆଡ଼କୁ ତା' କୁନ୍ତି ହାତଟି ବଢ଼େଇ ଦେଲା । ଦୁହେଁ ହାତ ମିଳେଇଲେ । ମୋ ଆଖି ଲୁହେଇ ଗଲା ।

ଏକ ନମ୍ବରରେ ଯାଙ୍କ ଅପରେସନ୍ । ୦୧କୁରଙ୍କ ଉଦ୍‌ଦେଶ୍ୟରେ ହାତ ଯୋଡ଼ିଲି । ଭଲରେ ଭଲରେ ଅପରେସନ୍ ସରିଲା । ତଥାପି ବି ଆମେ ବେଢ଼ କୁ ଆସୁ ଆସୁ ଦିନ ଦୁଇଟା । ତାହିଁ ବସିଥିଲେ ଫୁଲଅଞ୍ଚି ଦିଦି । ହାତ ବୁଲେଇ ଆଶିଲେ ଯାଙ୍କ କପାଳରେ । ମୁହଁ ଶୁଖେଇ କହିଲେ - ଜାଣିଛୁ, ରିଟିକର ଅପରେସନ୍ ଯାଇ ରାତି ଆଠଟାରେ ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବ । ତା' ବାପା, ମା' ଭାରି ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ । ଚାଲୁ - ଚିକେ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରୁ ଘେରାଏ ବୁଲି ଆସିବା ।

ଯାଙ୍କ ଅବସ୍ଥା ଛୁଇ ଥାଏ । ପୁନମକୁ ଯାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ନଜର ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ କହି ଦୁହେଁ ଗଲୁ ଆଠଟାଲାରେ ଥିବା ୩.୮ ମହିଳାକୁ । ରିଟିକର ମା'ଙ୍କର କାନ୍ଦୁଶୁଶୁ ମାନ୍ଦୁଶୁ ଅବସ୍ଥା । ତାଙ୍କୁ ସାନ୍ଦନା ଦେଇ କିଛି ସମୟ ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ରହି ଫେରି ଆସିଲୁ । ମୋ ଆଖି କେତେବେଳେ ଲାଗିଯାଇଛି । ମୋତେ ହଲେଇ ଉଠେଇ ଦେଲେ ଦିଦି - ଉଠ ଉଠ, ଚାଲୁ ଯିବା - ରିଟିକ ଫେରିଲାଣି । ଘଢ଼ି ଦେଖିଲି । ରାତି ଦୁଇଟା । ଧାଇଁଲୁ ସମସ୍ତେ । ସାରା ଆର୍ଟ୍ରିଭ ଚାଲିବୁଲି ପାରୁଥିବା ସମସ୍ତ ରୋଗୀ ତଥା ସେମାନଙ୍କର ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ମାନେ ସେଠି ହାଜର । ନିଷେଜ ହେଇ ଶୋଇଥାଏ ରିଟିକ । ଭାରି ଦୁର୍ବଳ ଦିଶୁଆଏ । ତା' ମା'ଙ୍କ ହାତରେ ରିଟିକ କିନ୍ତୁ ବାହାରିଥିବା ମେଆଏ ପଥର । ସମସ୍ତେ ତା' ପାଇଁ ଦୁଃଖୀ, ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ, ବିକ୍ରତ । ଏହି ସମୟରେ ରୋଗୀ ପାଖରେ ଏତେ ଗହଳି ଭଲ ନୁହେଁ । ମୁଁ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଅନୁରୋଧ କଲି ଗହଳି ନ କରିବାକୁ । ଯିଏ ଯାହା ବେଢ଼ ପାଖକୁ ଫେରିଗଲେ ।

ତା' ପରଦିନ ସକାଳୁ ସକାଳୁ ଫୁଲଅଞ୍ଚି ଦିଦି ଶୁଭ ଖବର ଦେଲେ - ଦେଖ, ସଂଜୀବ ଆଜି ଆଖି ଶୋଲିଛି । ଅନ୍ତରେ ଅନ୍ତରେ ହସୁଛି । କଥା କହିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରୁଛି । ପୁନମ ମୁହଁରେ ପ୍ରଥମ କରି ହସ ଧାରେ ଦେଖିଲି । ମୁଁ କିନ୍ତୁ ଖୁସି

ହେଇ ପାରିଲିନି । ହସି ପାରିଲିନି । କାରଣ ମୁଁ ଜାଣୁଥୁଲି ଲିଭିଯିବା ଆଗରୁ ଦୀପ କିଛି ସମୟ ପାଇଁ ଖୁବ ଜୋରରେ ଜଳିଛଠୋ ।

ଏଣେ ଦିନସାରା ବେହୋସ ହେଇ ପଡ଼ିଥିବା ରିତିକ ଚେତା ଫେରିବା କ୍ଷଣି ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣାରେ ଚିକାର କରୁଥାଏ । ତେଣୁ ପୁଣି ନିଶା ଲଙ୍ଘନେକସନ୍ ଦେଇ ତା'କୁ ଶୁଆଇ ଦିଆ ଯାଉଥାଏ । ଯାଙ୍କର ଅବସ୍ଥା ଏକବାର ସ୍ଥିର ଥିବାରୁ ଅଧିକାଂଶ ସମୟ ମୁଁ ରିତିକ ପାଖରେ ରହିଲି । ଜଣେ ଡାକ୍ତରକୁ ସବୁବେଳେ ପାଖରେ ପାଇବା ଯୋଗୁଁ ସେମାନେ ଆଶସ୍ତ ହେବା ସଂଗେ ସଂଗେ ଗଭୀର ଭାବରେ କୃତଜ୍ଞ ହେଇଥିଲେ ।

ଚତୁର୍ଥ ଦିନ ଆମ ପାଖ ବେଡ଼ର ବୁଢ଼ା ଟିଷ୍ଟାର୍ ହେଇ ଘରକୁ ଗଲେ । ସେମାନେ ବିହାରର ବାସିନ୍ଦା । ଗଲାବେଳେ ଆମକୁ ପାଇଶା ଗଲେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଘରକୁ ନିଶ୍ଚଯ ଯିବା ପାଇଁ ଆମନ୍ତରଣ କରି ଗଲେ । ବୁଢ଼ା ମୋ ହାତ ଧରି କୋହଭରା ସ୍ଵରରେ କହିଲେ - ଭଗବାନଙ୍କ ଅବିଚାର ଦେଖ ମା' । ବୟାଅଣୀ ବର୍ଷର ବୁଢ଼ା ମୁଁ । ଭଲ ହେଇ ଫେରୁଛି । ଅଥଚ ବତିଶ ବର୍ଷର ଏଇ ଜବାନ୍ ପିଲାଟା .... । ସଂଜୀବ ଆଡ଼କୁ ଅନେଇ ବୁଢ଼ା ଦୀର୍ଘଶ୍ଵାସ ଛାଡ଼ିଲେ । କଣ୍ଠରୁଦ୍ଧ ହେଲା । ଆଉ କିଛି କହିପାରିଲେନି । ଧୋତି କାନିରେ ପୁନମକୁ ଲୁଚେଇ ଆଖୁ ପୋଛିଲେ ।

ରାତି ପାହିଲେ ଆମେ ଯିବୁ । ଫୁଲଝକ୍ତି ଦିଦିଙ୍କ ଆଖରେ ନିଦ ନାହାଇଁ । ମୋତେ ପଚାରୁଥାନ୍ତି କେତେ କଥା । ଘର କଥା, ରୋଗୀଙ୍କ କଥା, ଓଡ଼ିଶା କଥା, ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ କଥା । ପାଖରେ ଆସି ଠିଆ ହେଲା ପୁନମ ।

: ଉଚ୍ଚର ଆଣ୍ଟି!

: ଆରେ ପୁନମ ବେଗା! ଆ ମା', କ'ଣ କହିବୁ?

: ଜୀ ଆଣ୍ଟି । ଗୋଟିଏ କଥା ପଚାରିଥାନ୍ତି । ଡାକ୍ତରମାନେ ରାଉଣ୍ଡ ଦେଲାବେଳେ ପଚାରିବାକୁ ଭାବେ - ହେଲେ ସାହସ ହୁଏନି । ତର ଲାଗେ । ଆପଣ ନିଜର ଲାଗୁଛନ୍ତି । ତେଣୁ... ।

ମୋ ଛାଡ଼ିରେ କ'ଣ ଗୋଟାଏ ଅଚକି ଗଲା ଯେମିତି । ମୁଁ ଜାଣେ ସେ କ'ଣ ପଚାରିବ । ହେଲେ କି ଉଭର ଦେବି ମୁଁ? ଯଦି ସତ କହିବି ମିଞ୍ଚି ମିଞ୍ଚି ଜଳୁଥୁବା ଆଶାର ଦୀପଟି ତା'ର ନିମିଷକରେ ଲିଭିଯିବ । ଆଉ ଯଦି ମିଛ କହେ, ଏ କଥାଙ୍କ ବୟସରେ ବିଚାରୀ ଏକ ମିଛ ବିଶାସକୁ ନେଇ ଅନାଗତ ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ସତ୍ୟକୁ ସାମ୍ବା କରିପାରିବ ତ?

ଡାକ୍ତର ଭାବରେ ଏମିଟିକା ପରିଷ୍ଠିତ ସାମ୍ବା କରିବା ମୋ ପାଇଁ ନୁଆ ନ ଥିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ କାହିଁକି କେଜାଣି ସେବିନ କଥାଙ୍କ ବୟସର ଏହି ଦି' ଜଣଙ୍କ ମାଯାରେ ମୁଁ ବାନ୍ଧି, ଛନ୍ଦି, ରୁନ୍ଧି ହେଇ ପଡ଼ୁଥୁଲି ।

ମୋ ଅନୁମାନ ନିର୍ଭର୍ତ୍ତଳ ଥିଲା ।

: ସତ କହିବେ ଉଚ୍ଚର ଆଣ୍ଟି, ସଂଜୀବ ଭଲ ହେଇ ଯିବେ ନା? ପ୍ଲିଜ୍ ଆଣ୍ଟି, ମୋତେ ତ ଲାଗୁଛି ସମସ୍ତେ ମୋତେ ମିଛରେ ମିଛରେ କହୁଛନ୍ତି ସେ ଭଲ ହେଇଯିବେ ବୋଲି । କେବଳ ସାନ୍ତ୍ବନା ଦବା ପାଇଁ କ୍ୟାନ୍ତ୍ରରୁ କ'ଣ କିଏ ... । ପୁନମର ମୁହଁ ବେଦନାରେ ଥମଥମା ।

ଅସହାୟ ଆଖରେ ଫୁଲଝକ୍ତି ଦିଦି ମୋତେ ଚାହିଁଥିଲେ ।

ଡାକ୍ତରକୁ ବେଳେ ବେଳେ କପଟୀ ହେବାକୁ ହୁଏ । ମୁଁ ତା' କାନ୍ତରେ ହାତ ରଖି କହିଲି - ଦେଖିମା', ତୁ ଏକଦମ୍ ସୁନା ଝାଅଟିଏ । ମୁଁ ଦେଖୁଛି ଦିନରାତି ତୁ ସ୍ଥାମୀର ସେବା କରୁଛୁ । ଆମେ ଆମ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ସିନା କରିବା, ଫଳ ତ ପରମେଶ୍ଵରଙ୍କ ହାତରେ । ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଜଣାରଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା କରିବା - ସେ ସଂଜୀବକୁ ଭଲ କରିଦିଅଛୁ ।

ଫୁଲଞ୍ଜି ଦିଦି ଚାଲାକ । କଥାର ମୋଡ଼ ବୁଲେଇବାକୁ ଯାଇ କହିଲେ - ଆରେ ପୁନମ୍, ସଂଜୀବ ଗୋଧେ ବେଢ଼ ପ୍ର୍ୟାନ ମାଗୁଛି । ଯା ବେଗା । ତରତର ହେଇ ଫେରିଗଲା ପୁନମ୍ ।

ପଞ୍ଚମ ଦିନ ଆମ ପାଇଁ ଏମ୍ବୁରେ ଶେଷ ଦିନ । ଆମକୁ ଛୁଟି ଦିଆଗଲା । ବିଲ୍ ପେମେଣ୍ଡ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଆନ୍ଦୁସଙ୍ଗିକ କାମ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସାରିଦେଲି । ଏଥର ବିଦାୟ ନେବାର ବେଳା । ଗୋଟି ଗୋଟି କରି ସବୁ ବେଢ଼ ପାଖକୁ ଯାଇ ଶୁଭେଛା ଓ ବିଦାୟ ଜଣେଇଲୁ ।

ରିଟିକ୍ ଏ ଭିତରେ ବିପଦମୁକ୍ତ ହେଇ ସାରିଥୁଲେ ମଧ୍ୟ ଭାରି ଦୁର୍ବଳ ଥିଲା । ଚଲାବୁଲା କରି ପାରୁ ନ ଥିଲା । ଶେଇବା ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ହିଁ କୁନି କୁନି ହାତ ଦୁଇଟି ଯୋଡ଼ି ଆମକୁ ନମସ୍କାର ଜଣେଇଲା । ସେହରେ ତା' କପାଳରେ ତୁମାଟିଏ ଦେଇ ଆଶ୍ଚର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଆଗମନା କଲୁ । ତା' ମା' ଲୁହ ଛଳଛଳ ଆଖରେ କୁଣ୍ଡେଇ ପକେଇଲେ ମୋତେ । ସାମାନ୍ୟ ସେହି ଓ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଟିକକର ପ୍ରତିଦାନ ଏତେ ବେଶୀ ହେଇପାରେ! ମୁଁ ଦ୍ରବୀଭୁତ ହେଇଯାଉଥିଲି ।

ସଞ୍ଚୀବ ପାଖକୁ ଗଲା । ଲୁହ ଜମା ମୋର ବୋଲ ମାନ୍ଦି ନ ଥାଏ । ପାଠି କଲେ ଫୁଲଞ୍ଜି ଦିଦି - ଏ କ'ଣ, ଡାକ୍ତରଟିଏ ହେଇ ତୁ ଏତେ ଦୁର୍ବଳ କେମିତି? କହିବାକୁ ଛଛା ହତଥିଲା - ଡାକ୍ତର ମାନେ ହିଁ ସଂସାରରେ ସବୁଠାରୁ ଦୁଃଖୀ, ସବୁଠାରୁ ଦୁର୍ବଳ - ଯେହେତୁ ଆସନ୍ତ ମୁହଁୟର ଆଗମନୀ ଶବ୍ଦ କେବଳ ସେମାନେ ହିଁ ଶୁଣିପାରନ୍ତି । ଲୁହ ଲୁହ ହେଇ ପୁନମ୍ ଆମ ପାଦ ଛୁଇଲା । ନମସ୍କାର କରୁ କରୁ ଅଛୁ ହସି ସଞ୍ଚୀବ କହିଲା - ତକ୍ତର ଆଣ୍ଟି! ଭଲ ହେଲା ପରେ ପୁନମକୁ ନେଇ ନିଶ୍ଚେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଯିବି । ଦେଖୁବେ, ଠିକଣା ଖୋଜି ଯାଇ ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଘରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବି ।

ନଈଁ ପଢ଼ି ତା' କପାଳରେ ହାତ ବୁଲେଇ ଆଣିଲି । ମୋର ସକଳ ସତର୍କତା ସବୁ ଅମାନିଆ ଲୁହ ଦୁଇ ବୁନ୍ଦା ତା' କପାଳରେ ଖସି ପଡ଼ିଲା ।

: ଆପଣଙ୍କ ଦି' ଜଣ ବହୁତ ଭଲ ମଣିଷ ଆଣ୍ଟି । ଆମକୁ ବହୁତ ଭଲପାଇବା ଦେଇ ଯାଉଛନ୍ତି । ବଞ୍ଚିଥୁଲେ ... । ତା' ୩୦ରେ ହାତ ଦେଲି ମୁଁ । ଶେଷଥର ପାଇଁ ତା'କୁ ପୁଣି ଥରେ ଅନେଇବା ଲୋଭ ସମ୍ବରଣ କରିପାରିଲିନି । ସଂଜୀବ ଆଖୁ କୋଣରେ ଟିକ୍ ଟିକ୍ କରୁଥିଲା ଦି' ବୁନ୍ଦା ଲୁହ ।

ସଞ୍ଚୀବ ପାଖରୁ ଫେରିଲା ବେଳକୁ ସ୍ଵଗତୋକ୍ତି କଲାପରି କହୁଥୁଲି - ହେ ଜଣାର! ଆମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଆୟୁଷରୁ କିଛି କିଛି ନେଇ ପିଲାଟିକୁ ଅନ୍ତରେ କିଛି ଜୀବନ ଜିଜ୍ଞାସାକୁ ଦିଆ । ହେ କରୁଣାମୟ!! ମୁଁ ଯଦି କିଛି ବି ପୁଣ୍ୟ କରିଛି ଜୀବନରେ, ତା' ବଦଳରେ ଏତିକି ପ୍ରତିଦାନ ମାଗୁଛି ପ୍ରତୋ!!!

ଶେଷରେ ଫୁଲଖଣ୍ଡି ଦିଦି । ମୋ ହସକୁରି ଫୁଲଖଣ୍ଡି ଦିଦିର ମୁହଁ ଶୁଣୁ ଯାଇଥିଲା । ମୁଁ ଲିଙ୍ଗରେ ଗୋଡ଼ ଦେବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ମୋତେ କୋଳକୁ ଆଉଜେଇ ଆଉସି ଦେଲେ ଚିକେ । ଭାରି ସ୍ଵରରେ କହିଲେ - ଯା' , ମୋ ଭାଇର ଯନ୍ତ୍ର ନେବୁ । ଭଲରେ ଭଲରେ ପହଂଚି ଖବର ଦେବୁ । ବହୁତ ସେହି ଦେଲ - ତେଣୁ କିଛି ଦିନ ତମକୁ ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଖୋଜିବୁ । କିନ୍ତୁ କ'ଣ ଆଉ କରାଯାଏ? ଲେ ତ ଦୁନିଆର ରୀଟି । ନିଜ ନିଜ ବାଟରେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଯିବାକୁ ହୁଏ । ତୋତେ ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ ତଳକୁ କିନ୍ତୁ ମୁଁ ଯିବିନି । ଆଖୁ ମୋର ହୁଏତ ଓଦା ହେଇଯିବ । ଯା' ... ଜଳିଯା' ।

ମୁହଁ ଫେରେଇ ଚାଲିଗଲେ ଦିଦି । ମୋ ଆଦରଣୀୟା, ଅବିସ୍ମରଣୀୟା, ପୁଜନୀୟା ଫୁଲଖଣ୍ଡି ଦିଦି । ଏମ୍ବୁର ପାଦ କାଢ଼ିବା ବେଳକୁ ମୋର ମନେ ହେଉଥିଲା - ଆମେ କୌଣସି ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନାରୁ ଛିପ୍ପାର୍କ ହେଇ ମୁହଁ, ଏକ ସେହି ପରିବାରରେ କିଛି ଦିନ ଛୁଟି କଟେଇ ଅନେକ ଅପାଶୋରା ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ସାଥୀରେ ନେଇ ଘରକୁ ଫେରୁଛି । ମୋ ପାଦ ବହୁଥିଲା ଆଗକୁ ଆଗକୁ - କିନ୍ତୁ ମନ ମୁକୁଳ ପାରୁ ନ ଥିଲା ଯୁଗୋଳଜି ବିଭାଗର ସେଇ ଜେନେରାଲ ଅର୍ତ୍ତରୁ ।

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**Translation:**

**“MARD KO DARD NAHI HOTA”**

(An Episode of Experience)

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, AIIMS, Delhi, India's largest and most worshipped medical institution. An epigram of hope, a symbol of faith. Exploring the ends of its lively, sprightly ambience and observing a patient, his/her relatives or near and dear ones, one would be unconditionally bound to realise that the whole of mankind is possessed by the sole passion, the desire to live.

We had to visit AIIMS for the second time, for his kidney stone surgery. Many of my acquainted doctors are established there. Thus love, dedication, assistance, sympathy and wholeheartedness discover no limits. The only existing limit is the exhaustion in the availability of a special cabin. Our friends' efforts helped us access to such a cabin during our last visit. Besides the rent of eight hundred per day, every facility is bestowed, except for the feeling of loneliness and the state of solitude.

This time when the doctor said that if a cabin is urgently needed, we need to wait a little longer, for not even a single cabin would be emptied before ten full days, we resolved to get admitted into the general ward, because we were not in a situation to wait.

However, AIIMS has a general ward, contrasting to what we see elsewhere. Central A.C. Immaculate and quite hygienic. Each room has a tetrad of beds, a toilet and two wash basins. Last time we had to remain admitted for two and a half months. This time a small stone was clogged in the urinary tract. Only that was to be operated. Just a matter of four to five days. It is fine.

On stepping into the room, an elderly pleasant woman rushed to fetch us in. She was Phulwanti Didi. We were assigned the bed opposite hers. Her husband's gall bladder operation had concluded just before three days. This being her third-time stay at AIIMS, Phulwanti Didi explained the tits and bits of everything there, like the visiting time of the doctor, when the sister provides us with medicine, the location of the dressing room, kitchen, etc. In no time she prepared and served us coffee. She help me arrange all our required utilities on a compact shelf placed adjacent to our bed.

Her happiness became out of bounds when she got to know that both of us were doctors. After a momentary thought, she suddenly said, "Okay, I will make a small request, will you accept it?"

I stared at her face.

Without expecting a reply, she said, "Listen, though you are a doctor, yet here you are my younger sister. On a familiar note, I will address you by your name. Do you agree?"

I felt as if she was not Phulwanti Didi, but my elder sister, who was residing in Berhampur then. So much intimacy! Such a degree of internality!! That too within this short time!!! As of being pampered by my sister, I cuddled my hands around Didi's neck and placed my head on her shoulder. She endearingly kissed my forehead.

She first led me to her bed and acquainted me with her husband. Undergoing the surgery thrice, he looked quite weary and tired. Then she guided me to the adjacent bed. There laid a thirty-two-year-old boy, Sanjeev, afflicted with incurable cancer. Originating from testicles, it had spread to most of his organs. Just the preceding day, he had undergone some surgery on his vertebral column and some other organs. Leaving his face visible, his body was dressed all over. He vaguely uttered only a pair of words- "Oh God", that too in intermissions. That was it. Beside him, guarded his two friends, serving him incessantly and interminably. They showed no signs of reluctance even while using the pan. Their friendship convulsed my heart.

After some time, Sanjeev's wife, Punam entered. The elegance of her countenance was in no way inferior to fairies. However, it looked faint and jaded like a desiccated flower. Her hands were clasped by her two-year-old son. He resembled his father in his countenance. My thoughts got aggrieved towards the condition of this small family. This was only the beginning of their marital life. How flamboyant the dreams encompassing their nights would have been! Yet to fulfil even one of them, their nights are insufficient!! Oh God!!!

The fourth patient was laid on our adjacent bed. An old man of more than eighty years of age. He was done with his prostate operation two days afore and was to be discharged within another two days. He was accompanied by his son, who earnestly and respectfully showered his care on his father. That is why a person marries! And he yearns for children!!

It would be around nine ‘o’clock at night. After having our dinner, we were preparing for sleep. Right at that time, a boy entered into the room. He might be aged between seven and eight. He was wrapped with a wide piece of cloth tied behind his neck, resembling the posture of a saint. He held a urosac in his hand. Oh- now I understood the reason for this unique outfit!

Seeing him, Phulwanti Didi rushed. She caressed him and said, “Dear, why are you late today”. Phulwanti Didi informed me that he lived in the adjacent room. He too would be undergoing his kidney operation the coming day. Every night, before going to bed, he spreads good wishes among all patients and cherishes them with his comical note.

I leaned him on my lap and asked, “what is your name, son?”

He took an amazing stance, dressed the hairs lowered on his temple and answered in a peculiar air, “Hrithik Roshan”.

This spread a spell of laughter all over. His mother told, “His actual name is Hrithik. But whenever asked, he exaggerates it”.

“Right from the morning, everybody is saying that a surgeon has admitted as a patient for stone operation. Then you are that Surgeon Uncle. Aren’t you?” Meanwhile, Hrithik had reached my husband’s bed. He peered at him meticulously. He patted his leg, hand, belly etc. with his small hands. Then he paused to think and said, “Then Doctor Uncle, you are so fat, so big a human, how could a small pebble enter into your body?”

He smiled. I answered.

“Listen Hrithik, doctors are also humans. Again, any person might get any disease. Okay, then you say, you are such a cute little kid. How did you get to know about your kidney stone?”

“Oh great, I diagnosed the disease myself. Will I tell you how? Suddenly one day, in school, I saw my urine hued red. Urine is generally white, why did it get red? In no time I informed my teacher. My teacher herself dropped me home and explained everything to Papa and Mummy. We consulted the doctor and a urinalysis was performed. Then followed X-rays which confirmed the presence of stones.”

He seemed witty and clever. His forethinking was beyond his age.

Oh my God, Kidney stone is accompanied by intermittent stomach aches. So small you are, you must be feeling intense pain son.”

Again, a pleasing style. Another sharp look. He simpered and said, “Yes, it pains, and then fades. Do you know why? Mard ko dard nahi hota (Man never feels pain).”

All grinned and then got mad with laughter. The Eighty-year-old man too laughed separating his hollow jaw. He wished Good Night to all and proceeded towards his room. We all went to sleep.

With the departure of night, will come my husband’s operation. I could recall all incidents of the last operation. He slept and I felt lonely in the cabin. Several pessimistic thoughts were occupying my mind. I spent a sleepless night due to tension. However, the experience of last time had served as condolence this time and empowered my courage. But the best thing was the general ward, Phulwanti Didi, Hrithik and others. They did not let solitude overcome me. I felt that during problems and disasters, man is man’s greatest strength. Really, I could not feel how the rest of the night passed away.

The next day, I prepared my husband and got prepared myself. Eight operation theatres work simultaneously at AIIMS. Besides the incredible system, all procedures were systematic, synchronized and well functioned. Stretcher reached simultaneously for him and Hrithik at the porch attached to O.T. I looked at Hrithik. The face of this little Mard (Man) looked faded. His face showed signs of silent sobs. Still, he was trying to smile, when he saw us. He stretched his hand towards my husband. Both did shake hands with each other. The scene drenched my eyes.

It began with my husband’s operation. I prayed to God’s intention. It all concluded well. Yet it took us two in the afternoon to reach our bed. Phulwanti Didi was waiting for us. She waved her hand on his forehead and expressed sadly, “Do you know, Hrithik’s operation is scheduled at eight ‘o’clock at night. His parents are quite tensed. Let’s visit them once”.

My husband’s health was quite stable. Asking Punam to keep an eye on him, we both went to the O.T. located on the eighth floor. His mother was in a condition of crying. We condoled her for some time and then returned.

I got asleep without my knowledge. Didi shook and woke me up, “Get up, let’s go, Hrithik has returned”. I turned towards the clock. Two ‘o’clock at night. All of us rushed. All those patients who were in a condition of locomoting, along with their relatives, had reached there. Hrithik

was unconscious. He looked feeble. His mother carried the bundle of stones that were extirpated from his kidney. All were sad, tensed and upset for him. At this moment so much hustle near the patient is not advised. I requested everybody not to assemble near him. All returned to their respective beds.

The next day Phulwanti Didi conveyed a piece of good news, "See Sanjeev has opened his eyes today. He is smiling a little, trying to speak". I noticed a ray of happiness and hope on Punam's face. But I could not join their happiness. For I knew, before extinguishing, a candle burns at its brightest.

After being unconscious throughout the day, when Hrithik's senses got restored, he wailed in pain. So, he was again treated with anaesthesia. My husband's condition was kind of fine. So, I stayed near Hrithik most of the time. Seeing a doctor near to them, they felt relieved and expressed their deep gratitude.

On the fourth day, the old man near our bed got discharged. They were inhabitants of Bihar. While departing, they invited us home, whenever we visit Patna. The man clasped my hand and spoke in a deep, saddened voice, "Daughter, Look at God's indecision. I am an old man of eighty-two years of age. Returning home after being cured. But this youth of thirty-two years of age..." Looking at Sanjeev, he gasped and breathed deeply. His voice got choked and he failed to utter any more words. He wiped his tears concealing them from Punam.

We would be departing after that night. Phulwanti Didi was not able to sleep. She went on asking me several topics. About home, patients, Odisha and Lord Jagannath. Punam came and stood near us.

"Doctor Aunty."

"Yes, Punam dear, want to say something?"

"Yeah, Aunty. I had a small query. I feel like asking doctors during their visitation, but I fail to gather courage. I fear. You seem very close to me. Then..."

As if something clogged in my chest. I knew what she was going to ask. But what will I answer? If I tell the truth, the tiny flickering flame of hope would evaporate. If I lie, will she, at this tender age, with this untrue faith, be able to face the uncertain harsh truth?

Being a doctor, facing such a situation in life, was not new to me. But I was not able to make out why I was getting trapped, entangled and suffocated in the illusion and bonding of these two tender kids.

My prediction was indeed correct.

"Be true to me Aunty, will Sanjeev get well? Please, Aunty, I am feeling that all are falsely expressing that he will get well. Just to calm and condole me. Can anybody from cancer..." Her face got palpitated with emotions.

Phulwanti Didi stared at me with aidless looks.

A doctor needs to be cunning at times. I placed my hands on her shoulder and said, "See daughter, you are precious. I am witnessing day and night that you are serving your husband. We can do our best, but the results are in God's hands. We all have to pray to God so that he restores Sanjeev his health."

Phulwanti Didi used her presence of mind to divert the topic. "Punam, I think Sanjeev is asking for the bedpan. Go daughter". Quickly, Punam returned.

The fifth day was our last day at AIIMS. We were granted leave. I first did away with the bill payments and other related tasks. Now it was time for departure. We approached every bed to bid goodbye and bestow good wishes.

Hrithik, by this time, was out of danger but still was very weak. He was not able to walk. Lying on his bed, he joined his hands to greet us. I kissed his forehead in storge and wished for his well-being. His mother hugged me with teary eyes. Only a minimal love and duty has such a lot of return! I was getting thawed.

We went near Sanjeev. I was not able to restrict my tears. Phulwanti Didi cried, "What is this? Being a doctor, how are you so weak?"

I was feeling to say, "Doctors are the saddest people in the universe - as only they are capable of comprehending the perilous dirge of advancing death." Punam, with wet eyes, touched our feet. While bidding us farewell, Sanjeev said, "Doctor Aunty! After recovering, along with Punam, I will surely come to Odisha. You see, inquiring about your address, I will reach your home.

I bent down and caressed his forehead. Even after holding it back, stubborn drops of tears slipped onto his forehead.

“Both of you are very good people, Aunty. You have bestowed so much love’ If I will be alive...”

I pressed against his lips. I could not control my longing to see him for the last time. Two drops of tears were occupying the corner of his eyes.

While returning from his end, I was confessing to God, “O God! Please take back some fragments of our life span and let the boy live a little more. O merciful!! If I have done some virtuous task in my life, then I am asking only this much in return, God!!!”

In the end, Phulwanti Didi. My happy Phuwanti Didi’s face looked blasé and jaded. Before stepping into the lift, she hugged and patted me. In a heavy tone, she said, “Go and take care of my brother. Inform us after returning home properly. You showered great affection. So we would be missing you for some days. But what can now be done? This is the law of nature. All have to tread on their pres-assigned paths. But I will not follow you downstairs to bid you adieu. My eyes might get drenched. Go...quickly”.

She turned away and walked off. My revered, unforgettable and worshipped Phulwanti Didi.

While walking out of AIIMS, I felt as if I was not reverting from the general ward, but after spending some days of holiday with an amicable and loving family, returning home with several abiding memories. My feet were advancing, but my thoughts remained captivated and imprisoned in the general ward of the urology department.

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PUNJABI  
MatruAkshar

## Short Story

MatruAkshar



### S. Baldev Singh Grewal

Bio:

Baldev Singh Grewal is an immigrant author who resides in New York, United States of America. He writes fiction and short stories and is published world-wide. His creative writings include *Parikarma Seete bullan da Sunehaan*, *Roshni di dastak* etc. His stories cast a magical spell upon the readers and his writings are titled as “bolanhaar” by Harchand Singh Bed i.e., the tales that speak. Although he has not written much yet his works are commendable as these leave no reader aloof from his reflective imagery. Presently he is the Editor “Sher-e-Punjab” Newspaper, East Medow, Newyork.

ਬਲਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਰੇਵਾਲ ਨਿਊਯਾਰਕ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਪਰਵਾਸੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਲੇਖਕ ਹਨ। ਉਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਨਾਵਲਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਕਹਾਣੀਕਾਰ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਿਰਜਣਾਤਮਕ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ

‘ਪ੍ਰਕਰਮਾ’, ‘ਸੀਤੇ ਬੁੱਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਨੇਹਾ’ ਅਤੇ ‘ਰੌਸ਼ਨੀ ਦੀ ਦਸਤਕ’ ਆਦਿ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੀਲ ਲੈਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਹਰਚੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਬੇਦੀ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ‘ਬੋਲਣਹਾਰ’ ਖਿਤਾਬ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਕੁਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਖਿਆ, ਪਰ ਜੋ ਵੀ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਉਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਬਿੰਬ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਮਾਨ ਹਨ। ਅੱਜ ਕੱਲ ਉਹ ਨਿਊਯਾਰਕ ਤੋਂ ਛਪਦੇ ਸ਼ੇਰੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅਖਬਾਰ ਦੇ ਸੰਪਾਦਕ ਵਜੋਂ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲ ਹਨ।

## Translator's Bio



**Dr. Sushmindarjeet Kaur**

Dr Sushmindarjeet Kaur is an Associate Professor and Head, PG Department of English at G.G.N. Khalsa College, Ludhiana, Punjab, and the coordinator of Department of Journalism. She has been teaching English literature to post-graduate students for twenty-three years and to undergraduates for the last thirty-four years. She acquired her M.Phil in Anthropological Linguistics and Ph.D degree from Punjabi University, Patiala in Indian English Literature. She writes short stories and poetry. Recently, her anthology of poetry under the title ***Voices From Within*** was published. Besides, she has edited ten books and has translated a book ***Sikh Soldiers in Italy: Second World War*** which was released in England. She has to her credit more than seventy poems and articles published in various anthologies and journals. Dr Sushmindarjeet Kaur was conferred with "Master of Creative Impulse," "Philosophique Poetica International Award" at World Poetry Conference in 2019. Besides, she has been awarded with the title of "Edifying Editor" at Poetic Confluence held at Hyderabad in September 2019. To write short stories and poetry is her passion since childhood.

ਡਾ. ਸੁਸ਼ਮਿੰਦਰਜੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਜੀ.ਜੀ.ਐਨ. ਕਾਲਜ ਵਿਖੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਦੇ ਪੀਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਐਸੋਸੀਏਟ ਪ੍ਰੈਫੈਸਰ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਖੀ ਹਨ। ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ, ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ, ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਪੱਤਰਕਾਰੀ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਦੇ ਕੋਆਰਡੀਨੇਟਰ ਵੀ ਹਨ। ਉਹ 23 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੇਸਟ-ਗ੍ਰੈਜੂਏਟ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਤੇ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਚੌਤੇ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਅੰਡਰ-ਗ੍ਰੈਜੂਏਟ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਪੜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਤੋਂ ਮਾਨਵ-ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਗਿਆਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਐਮ.ਫਿਲ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਤੋਂ ਪੀਐਚ.ਡੀ ਦੀ ਡਿਗਰੀ ਹਾਸਲ ਕੀਤੀ। ਉਹ ਡੋਟੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਈਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਵਿਤਾਵਾਂ ਲਿਖਦੀ ਹਨ। ਹਾਲ ਹੀ ਵਿੱਚ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਦਾ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿ "ਵੈਂਇਸਸ ਫਰਾਮ ਵਿਦਿਨ" ਸਿਰਲੇਖ ਹੇਠ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਦਸ ਕਿਤਾਬਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਪਾਦਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇੱਕ ਕਿਤਾਬ "ਸਿੱਖ ਸੋਲਜਰਜ਼ ਇਨ ਇਟਲੀ: ਸੈਕਿੰਡ ਵਰਲਡ ਵਾਰ" ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਿਲੀਜ਼ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ 70 ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਕਵਿਤਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਰਸਾਲਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਲੇਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਿਹਰਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਡਾ. ਸੁਸ਼ਮਿੰਦਰਜੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਨੂੰ 2019 ਵਿੱਚ

ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਕਵਿਤਾ ਸੰਮੇਲਨ ਵਿੱਚ "ਮਾਸਟਰ ਆਫ਼ ਕ੍ਰਿਏਟਿਵ ਇੰਪਲਸ," "ਫਿਲਾਸਫਿਕ ਪੈਏਟਿਕਾ ਇੰਟਰਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਅਵਾਰਡ" ਨਾਲ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ, ਸਤੰਬਰ 2019 ਵਿੱਚ ਹੈਦਰਾਬਾਦ ਵਿਖੇ ਹੋਏ ਪੈਏਟਿਕ ਕੋਨਫਲੈਂਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ "ਐਡੀਟਾਇੰਗ ਐਡੀਟਰ" ਦੇ ਖਿਤਾਬ ਨਾਲ ਸਨਮਾਨਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਕਈ ਅੰਤਰਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨਫਰੰਸਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਖੋਜ ਪੱਤਰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ। ਛੋਟੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਵਿਤਾਵਾਂ ਲਿਖਣਾ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਬਚਪਨ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ੈਕ ਹੈ।

MatruAkshar

## ਸੁਪਨ ਸੰਸਾਰ

ਅਸੀਂ ਤਿੰਨੋਂ ਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠਕੇ ਉਥੋਂ ਤੁਰਨ ਹੀ ਲੱਗੇ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਉਹੋ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਕੁੜੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਵੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਭੱਜੀ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਬਾਂਹ ਉੱਚੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਰੁਕਣ ਦਾ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਵੀ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਰੁੱਕ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਉਡੀਕਣ ਲੱਗ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਅੱਜ ਸਾਡਾ ਲਗਪਗ ਪੂਰਾ ਦਿਨ ਇਸੇ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਵਿਚ ਬੀਤਿਆ ਹੈ... ਸਵੇਰੇ ਲੌਂਗ ਆਈਲੈਂਡ ਵਿੱਚ, ਮੇਰੀ ਨੇਬਰਹੁਡ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਿੱਤਰ, ਨਵਤੇਜ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਫੋਨ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਦੇ ਮਰਸੀਡੀਜ ਐਸ ਯੂ ਵੀ ਦਾ, ਬੈਕ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਐਕਸੀਡੈਂਟ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਰੀਅਰ ਵਿੰਡਸਕਰੀਨ ਟੁੱਟ ਗਈ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਡੈਂਟ ਪੈ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਫੋਨ ਉਪਰ, ਕੁਈਨਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਮਕੈਨਿਕ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਐਸਟੀਮੇਟ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਦੋ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਡਾਲਰ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਰ ਠੀਕ ਕਰ ਦੇਣ ਦਾ ਐਸਟੀਮੇਟ ਦਿਤਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਮੇਰਾ ਦੋਸਤ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪੁੱਛ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ, ਕੀ ਮੈਂ ਉਸਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਕੁਈਨਜ਼ ਚੱਲਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਗਾ। ਅਸੀਂ ਲਗਭਗ ਰਿਟਾਇਰਡ ਹਾਂ, ਪੁੱਤਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਾਰ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਲਏ ਹਨ। ਕੋਵਿਡ ਐਪੀਡੈਮਿਕ ਕਾਰਣ, ਅਸੀਂ ਘਰਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੀ ਡੇੜ ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਸੀਮਤ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ। ਹੁਣ ਜਦ ਕੋਵਿਡ ਥੋੜਾ ਘਟਿਆ ਹੈ, ਅਸੀਂ ਦੋਸਤ ਮਿਤਰ ਮਿਲਣ ਅਤੇ ਘੁੰਮਣ ਫਿਰਨ ਦੇ ਬਹਾਨੇ ਢੂਡਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਆਨੀ ਬਹਾਨੀ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਗੱਪਾਂ ਮਾਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਹਸਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਮਨੋਰੰਜਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਸੋ ਮੈਂ ਨਵਤੇਜ ਨੂੰ ਯੈਸ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਰਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਲ ਦੀ ਕਾਉਂਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ, ਆਪਣੇ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਦੋਸਤ ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਲਿਆ। ਉਝ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਕੇ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਪਰਵਾਸੀ ਮੁੱਢੋਂ ਸੁੱਢੋਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਸੁਰੂ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸ਼ਨ ਜਾਂ ਰੁਤਬੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਏਥੇ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਥੇ ਯੋਗਤਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਗੋਂ ਜੋ ਵੀ ਕੰਮ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹੋ ਸੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਨਵਤੇਜ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਸੀ, ਇਥੇ ਉਹ ਕੰਸਟ੍ਰਕਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਵਡਾ ਕੰਟਰੈਕਟਰ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਇਥੇ ਵੀ ਉਹ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਹੀ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਉਥੇ ਛੌਜ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ, ਇਥੇ ਰੀਅਲ ਅਸਟੇਟ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ, ਪਰ ਸਭ ਛੌਜੀ ਹੀ ਆਖਦੇ ਹਨ। ਗੁਲਜ਼ਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਥੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਰਿਟਾਇਰ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਪਾਂਸਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਥੇ ਬੁਲਾ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਇਥੇ ਵੀ ਸਾਡਾ ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਕੁਈਨਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਆਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੇ ਸੁਝਾਅ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਇਸ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਵਿਚ ਪਤਾ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਡੀਮ ਲੈਂਡ/ ਬਲਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਰੇਵਾਲ ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸੁਝਾਅ ਦਾ ਮਜ਼ਾਕ ਉਡਾਇਆ ਸੀ। ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ - ਪੁਲਸੀਏ ਨੂੰ ਇਥੇ ਵੀ ਚੋਰ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਹੀ ਪਸੰਦ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਕਈ ਲੋਕ ਇਸ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਦੇ ਚੋਰ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਵਰਗਾ ਹੀ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪਰ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੂੰ ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਦਾ ਸੁਝਾਅ ਚੰਗਾ ਲਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਕੋਲ ਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਫੁੱਲ ਇੰਸ਼ੂਰੈਸ ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕਾਰ ਰਿਪੋਅਰ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਬਿਲ ਉਹਨੂੰ ਪੱਲਿਉਂ ਦੇਣਾ ਪੈਣਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਵਿਚ ਕੰਮ ਸਸਤਾ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਥੇ ਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਹੋ

ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਆਇਆ। ਇੰਝ ਲਗਦਾ ਸੀ, ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਕਹਿਣਾ, ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੀ ਹੇਠੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਟੁੱਟੀ-ਭੱਜੀ ਸੜਕ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਕੱਚੇ ਰਾਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਗਈ ਗੁਜ਼ਰੀ। ਦੋਹੀਂ ਪਾਸੀਂ ਸਟੋਰ। ਸਟੋਰ ਘੱਟ, ਟੀਨ ਦੇ ਖੋਬੇ ਵੱਧ ਲੱਗਦੇ ਸਨ। ਹਰ ਪਾਸੇ ਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੁਰਜੇ ਤੇ ਡੁਲ੍ਹੇ ਤੇਲ ਦੇ ਦਾਗ। ਤੇਲ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਲਖ ਰੰਗੇ ਕੱਪੜਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਮਕੈਨਿਕ। ਕੜਕਦੀ ਧੁੱਪ ਵਿਚ ਰੇਡੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਭਾਰੀ ਭਰਕਮ ਪਾਰਟ ਧਕਦੇ ਪਸੀਨੇ ਪਸੀਨੀ ਹੋਏ ਮਜਦੂਰ...। ਕੋਈ 30 ਸਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਜਦ ਮੈਂ ਫਲੱਸਿੰਗ (ਕੁਈਨਜ) ਇਲਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਰੋਜ਼ 7 ਨੰਬਰ ਸਬਵੇ ਟਰੇਨ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਥੋਂ ਦੀ ਬਰੌਂਕਸ ਜਾਇਆ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਦੋਂ ਫਲੱਸਿੰਗ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਕੀ ਕੁਈਨਜ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖ ਕਰਦਾ ਰਿਵਰ, ਕਾਫੀ ਸੁੱਕ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਸੀ। ਸੋ ਇੱਥੋਂ ਵੈਟ ਲੈਂਡ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਦਿਭ ਉਗੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਕਿਧਰੇ ਛੱਪੜੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਤੱਰਕਿਆ ਪਾਣੀ ਖਲੋਤਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਇਕ ਪਾਸੇ ‘ਜੰਕ ਯਾਰਡ’ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ, ਜਿਥੇ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਟੁੱਟੀਆਂ ਭੱਜੀਆਂ ਕਾਰਾਂ ਪ੍ਰੈਸ ਕਰਕੇ, ਉਪਰ ਦੇ ਉਪਰ ਰੱਖੀਆਂ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਰਟ ਚਿਣ ਕੇ ਰਖੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਕਾਫੀ ਹਟਵਾਂ ਰੂਜਵੈਲਟ ਐਵਿਨਿਊ’ਤੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੀਆ ਸਟੇਡੀਅਮ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸ਼੍ਰੀਆ ਸਟੇਡੀਅਮ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ, ਹੁਣ ਸਿਟੀ ਫੀਲਡ ਸਟੇਡੀਅਮ ਉਸਰ ਚੁਕਾ ਹੈ। ਵੈਟਲੈਂਡ ਵਾਲੀ ਥਾਂ ਇਹ ਉਬੜ ਖਾਬੜ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਹੋਂਦ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਨਿਊਯਾਰਕ ਦੇ ਮੈਪ’ਤੇ ਅਜੇ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਂਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਅਜੇ ਵੀ ਵੈਟਲੈਂਡ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਬਾਰਾਂ ਕੁ ਵਜੇ ਇਥੇ ਪੁੱਜ ਗਏ ਸੀ। ਇਕ ਦੋ ਦੁਕਾਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪੁਛਿਆ। ਇਕ ਦੁਕਾਨ ਵਾਲਾ ਸੱਤ ਸੌ ਡਾਲਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੰਨ ਗਿਆ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਰ ਦੇਕੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਰਾਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਥਾਂ ਢੂੰਡਣ ਲਗ ਪਏ, ਪਰ ਪੂਰੀ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਠੰਢੀ ਥਾਂ, ਆਰਾਮ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਨਾ ਲਭ ਸਕੀ। ਗਰਮੀਂ ਵੀ ਅੱਤ ਦੀ ਸੀ। ਸਵੇਰੇ ਹੀ ਟੈਂਪਰੇਚਰ 92 ਡਿਗਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਟੱਧ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਭਠੀ ਬਣੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਘੁੰਮ ਫਿਰ ਕੇ ਦੇਖਿਆ, ਕੋਈ ਦੁਕਾਨ ਏਅਰਕੰਡੀਸ਼ਨਡ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਗੱਲ ਹੀ ਛੱਡੋ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠਣ ਲਈ ਕੁਰਸੀ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਦੂਰ ਤਕ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਦਰਖਤ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਛਾਵੇਂ ਖੜ੍ਹ ਸਕੀਏ। ਮਕੈਨਿਕ ਨੇ ਪੰਜ ਵਜੇ ਤੱਕ ਕਾਰ ਠੀਕ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਭਰੋਸਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਪੰਜ ਘੰਟੇ ਇਸੇ ਭਠੀ ਵਰਗੇ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਜ਼ਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰੀ ਬਣ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਇਕ ਤਾਂ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਦਾ ਖਿਆਲ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਾਰ ’ਤੇ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਰੱਖੀ ਜਾਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਦੂਜਾ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਇੱਥੋਂ ਘਟੋ ਘਟ ਤਿੰਨ ਚਾਰ ਮੀਲ ਦੂਰ ਸੀ। ਏਨੀ ਗਰਮੀਂ ਵਿਚ ਏਨਾ ਤੁਰਨ ਦੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਮਤ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਜਦ ਇਹ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਨਕਸ਼ੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਉਬੜ ਸਰਵਿਸ ਇਥੇ ਆਉਂਣੁੰ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਲ ਹੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਅਸੀਂ ਕੜਕਦੀ ਧੁੱਪ ਵਿਚ ਸੜਦੇ ਭੁੱਜਦੇ, ਇਥੇ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਰੈਸਟੋਰੈਂਟ ਢੂੰਡਣ ਲਗੇ। ਇਕ ‘ਡੇਲੀ’ ਦਾ ਸਾਈਨ ਦਿਸਿਆ, ਤੁਰਦੇ ਤੁਰਦੇ ਆਸ ਨਾਲ ਉਥੇ ਪੁੱਜੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੰਦ ਪਈ ਜਾਪੀ। ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਇਕ ਮਿੰਟ ਕਟਣਾ ਅੱਖਾ ਹੋਈ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਅਖੀਰ ਘੁਮਦੇ ਫਿਰਦਿਆਂ ਇਕ ਦੁਕਾਨ ਦਾ

ਤਿੰਨ ਕੁ ਛੁੱਟ ਚੌੜਾ ਪਰਛਾਵਾਂ ਦਿਸਿਆ, ਅਸੀਂ ਉਥੇ ਹੀ ਜਾ ਖੜ੍ਹੇ ਹੋਏ। ਇੰਝ ਲਗ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਰੇਗਿਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਭਟਕ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਸੁਕੀ ਸੜੀ ਕਿਕਰ ਦੀ ਤਿਤਰ ਖੰਭੀ ਛਾਂਅ ਹੇਠ ਆ ਖਲੋਤੇ ਹਾਂ। ਪਸੀਨੇ ਨਾਲ ਭਿੱਜ ਗਏ ਸੀ। ਬੁਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਪਿਆਸ ਨਾਲ ਸਿਕੜੀ ਜੰਮਣ ਲਗ ਪਈ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਦੋਹਾਂ ਦੋਸਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਸ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੂੰ ਇਥੋਂ ਦਾ ਸੁਝਾਅ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੂੰ ਬੱਚਤ ਦਾ ਲਾਲਚ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ। ਪਰ ਹੁਣ ਗਰਮੀਂ ਬਰਦਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਵਾ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਚਾਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਕਹਿਣ ਲਗਾ- ਫੌਜੀਆਂ, ਕਿਉਂ ਮਰਦਾ ਜਾਨਾਂ, ਵਾਢੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਚੇਤਾ ਭੁੱਲ ਗਿਆ? ਜੇਠ ਹਾੜ੍ਹ ਦੀਆਂ ਤੱਪਦੀਆਂ ਧੁੱਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਣਕਾਂ ਵਚਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸੀ। ਸਾਰਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਦਿਨ ਪਿਠ ਲੂਹ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਵਾਢੀਆਂ ਚੇਤੇ ਆਉਂਣ ਨਾਲ, ਗਰਮੀਂ ਸਹਿਣ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਕਤੀ ਜਿਹੀ ਆ ਗਈ। ਵਾਢੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਗਲਾਂ ਯਾਦ ਆਉਂਣ ਲਗ ਪਈਆਂ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੇ ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੂੰ ਟਿੱਚਰ ਕੀਤੀ - ਤੇਰੇ ਵਰਗੇ ਭੁਖੜ ਕਣਕਾਂ ਮੂਹਰੇ ਜਾਲ ਵੀ ਲਗਾ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਸੀ, ਤਿਤਰ ਬਟੇਰ ਫੜਨ ਲਈ। -ਏਹਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਮਾੜੀ ਗਲ ਕੀ ਸੀ? ਨਾਲੇ ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ, ਨਾਲੇ ਮੁੰਜ ਬਗੜ। ਬੰਦ ਕਮਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਆਣੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਂਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਾਸਟਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਏਹਨਾਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੀ ਪਤਾ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੇ ਜਵਾਬ ਦਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਦੇ ਗਿਟਿਆਂ ‘ਚ ਵੀ ਲਾ ਦਿਤੀ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਤੇ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਦੀ ਨੋਕ ਝੋਕ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਹੀ ਲਗਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਇਕ ਕੁੜੀ ਬਕਸਾ ਨੁਮਾ ਰੇੜ੍ਹੀ ਧਕਦੀ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਸ ਵੱਲ ਦੇਖਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਏ। ਬੀਹ ਬਾਈ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਰ ਜਵਾਨ ਸਪੈਨਿਸ਼ ਕੁੜੀ। ਗੇਰਾ ਦਗ ਦਗ ਕਰਦਾ ਰੰਗ। ਪੰਜਾਬਣਾਂ ਵਰਗੇ ਤਿਖੇ ਨੈਣ ਨਕਸ਼। ਗੁਦਗੁਦਾ ਭਰਵਾਂ ਸਰੀਰ। ਧੁੱਪ ਨਾਲ ਮੂਹ ਲਾਲ ਸੂਹਾ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਸ ਵੱਲ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹੀ ਰਹਿ ਗਏ। ਮਿੰਟ ਦੀ ਮਿੰਟ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਗਰਮੀਂ ਭੁਲ ਗਈ। ਕੋਲ ਆਈ ਤਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਲਗਾ, ਉਹ ਆਈਸ ਕਰੀਮ ਵੇਚ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਸ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਆਈਸ ਕਰੀਮ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਚੁਸਣ ਲਗ ਪਏ। ਆਈਸ ਕਰੀਮ ਕਾਹਦੀ, ਨਿਰਾ ਮਿਠਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਹੀ ਜਮਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਉਹ ਆਈਸ ਕਰੀਮ ਵੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਨਿਆਮਤ ਹੋ ਨਿਬੜੀ। ਪਿਆਸ ਬੁਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੁਝ ਤਾਂ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਕੁੜੀ ਪੈਸੇ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਰੇੜ੍ਹੀ ਧਕਦੀ ਅਗੇ ਤੁਰ ਗਈ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਦੇਖੀ ਗਿਆ। ਕਹਿਣ ਲਗਾ - ਮਾਸਟਰ, ਇਹ ਕੁੜੀ ਦਿਹਾੜੀ ਦੇ ਕਿੰਨੇ ਕੁ ਬਣਾ ਲੈਂਦੀ ਹਉ? -ਬਣਾ ਲੈਂਦੀ ਹਉ ਪੰਜਾਹ ਸੱਠ ਡਾਲਰ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ। - ਸਿਰਫ਼! ਇਹਨੂੰ ਕਹਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਕ ਘੰਟੇ ਲਈ ਮੋਟਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਲੇ, ਸੌ ਡਾਲਰ ਦਉਂ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੇ ਭੁਖੀਆਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੁੜੀ ਵਲ ਦੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ। - ਸੁਰਮ ਕਰ, ਐਸ.ਪੀ.। ਆਪਣੀ ਧੋਲੀ ਦਾਹੜੀ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਸੁਰਮ ਕਰ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਾਰੀ। -ਯਾਰ, ਏਹਦਾ ਹੱਕ ਐ। ਵਿਚਾਰਾ ਛੜਾ ਜੂੰ ਹੋਇਆ। ਮੈਂ ਸੁਆਦ ਲੈਂਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ। ਕੋਵਿਡ ਮਹਾਂਮਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਹੱਲੇ ਹੀ ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਦੀ ਪਤਨੀ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਉਦੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਦੇ ਗੁਮ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ। ਵਿਚਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਕਿਰਿਆ ਕਰਮ ਵੀ ‘ਆਨ ਲਾਈਨ ਲਾਈਵ’ ਦੇਖਿਆ ਸੀ। ਹੁਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੁਖਮ ਭਰ ਚੁਕੇ ਹਨ। ਹੁਣ ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਸਾਡੇ ਮਜਾਕ ਲਈ ਛੜਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਜਦ ਤੱਕ ਉਹ ਕੁੜੀ ਦਿਸਦੀ

ਰਹੀ, ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਉਸ ਕੜੀ ਨੂੰ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਦੇਖੀ ਗਿਆ। ਜਦ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਹਲੇ ਹੋ ਗਈ, ਸੁਆਦ ਲੈ ਲੈ ਆਈਸ ਕਰੀਮ ਚੁਸਣ ਲਗ ਪਿਆ। -ਐਸ.ਪੀ, ਆਈਸ ਕਰੀਮ ਈ ਚੁਸਦਾਂ ਕਿ.....। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਵਲ ਦੇਖਦਿਆਂ, ਫਿਰ ਟਕੋਰ ਮਾਰੀ। -ਮਾਸਟਰ, ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਲੋਕ ਕਲਾਸਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਆਣੇ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਲਪਨਾਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂਨੂੰ ਕਲਪਨਾ ਦੰਦੀਆਂ ਵਢਦੀ ਆ? ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੇ ਜਵਾਬੀ ਹਮਲਾ ਕਰ ਦਿਤਾ। ਇਸ ਚੁੰਝ ਚਰਚਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਗਰਮੀਂ ਭੁਲੀ ਰਹੀ। ਜਦ ਤੱਕ ਆਈਸ ਕਰੀਮ ਮੁੱਕੀ, ਸਾਡੇ ਸਿਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਛਾਂ ਵੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਲਗੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਫੇਰ ਉੱਥੋਂ ਤੁਰ ਪਏ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਟਿਕਾਣਾ ਢੂਢਣ। ਇਧਰ ਉਧਰ ਫਿਰਦਿਆਂ ਢਾਈ ਤਿੰਨ ਘੰਟੇ ਬੀਤ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਅਸੀਂ ਕਾਰ ਵਾਲੀ ਦੁਕਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਗਏ। ਮਕੈਨਿਕ ਨੇ ਅਜੇ ਕਾਰ ਉਪਰ ਕੰਮ ਵੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕੀਤਾ। ਅਸੀਂ ਬੋੜਾ ਤਲਖ ਹੋਏ। ਦੁਕਾਨਦਾਰ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਮਕੈਨਿਕ ਕਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਲਗਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਅਸੀਂ ਫਿਰ ਉੱਥੋਂ ਤੁਰ ਪਏ। ਹੁਣ ਭੁੱਖ ਵੀ ਆਪਣਾ ਕਮਾਲ ਦਿਖਾਉਣਾ ਲੱਗ ਪਈ! ਪਰ ਖਾਣਾ ਮਿਲਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗਾ - ਯਾਰ, ਇਹਨਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੁੱਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਗਦੀ? ਏਥੇ ਇਕ ਵੀ ਰੈਸਟੋਰੈਂਟ ਨਹੀਂ ਨੇੜੇ-ਤੇੜੇ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਆਇਆ, ਜਦ ਮੈਂ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਨਵਾਂ ਨਵਾਂ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ, ਇਕ ਫੁਲ ਸਰਵਿਸ ਗੈਸ ਸਟੇਸ਼ਨ 'ਤੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਲੱਗ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਦੋਂ ਅਪਾਰਟਮੈਂਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਜ ਜਣੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਹੀ ਕੱਚੇ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਰਾਤ ਦੀ ਰੋਟੀ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੇ ਹੋਏ, ਅਗਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਦੁਪਹਿਰ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਰੋਟੀ ਬਣਾ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਕੰਮ 'ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਸੀ। ਕਦੇ ਮੁੱਲ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਖਾਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਖਾਧਾ। ਉਦੋਂ ਪੀਜੇ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਸਲਾਈਸ ਲੈਂਣ ਲਈ ਵੀ ਡਾਲਰ ਖਰਚਣ ਦੀ ਹਿੰਮਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਪੈਂਦੀ। ਡਾਲਰ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਡੀਅਨ ਰੁਪੱਈਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਏਨੀ ਰਕਮ ਖਰਚਣ ਤੋਂ ਡਰ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸੀ। ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਮੈਂ ਰੋਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਨਾ ਲਿਆ ਸਕਿਆ, ਦੁਪਹਿਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਦ ਉਸ ਪਾਸੇ ਫੂਡ ਟਰੱਕ ਆਇਆ, ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਭੱਜ ਕੇ ਸੈਡਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣ ਗਿਆ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਆਲੇ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਦੇ ਸਟੋਰਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆ ਨੇ ਰੌਲਾ ਪਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ - ਓ ਗੁਡਨਿਊਜ, ਟੂਡੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਜ਼ ਹੈਵਿੰਗ ਲੰਚ! ਮੈਂ ਸੁਰਮਿਦਾ ਜਿਹਾ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਸੈਡਵਿੱਚ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਮੁੜ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਯਾਦ ਆਉਂਦਿਆਂ ਹੀ, ਮੈਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੁਕਾਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮਕੈਨਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਰਗੇ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਗ ਪਿਆ। ਇਹ ਲੋਕ ਵੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਹੀ ਅਜੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਹੋਣਗੇ...। ਡਾਲਰ ਖਰਚਣ ਤੋਂ ਡਰਦੇ ਹੋਣਗੇ। ਮੈਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਾਤਾ ਜਿਹਾ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਨ ਲੱਗ ਪਿਆ। ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਨੂੰ ਪਰਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਦੇਸੁ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਭਰ ਤੋਂ ਲੋਕ ਔਖੇ ਹਾਲੀਂ ਇਥੇ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮਿਹਨਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਸਫਲ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਫਿਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਨਵੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਸੀ ਆ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਮਿਹਨਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਆਪ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਦੇਸ ਵੀ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਚਲਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਸੋਚਦਾ ਹਾਂ, ਜਦ ਮੈਂ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ, ਲੋਂਗਆਈਲੈਂਡ ਦਾ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਲੈਣਾ ਵੀ ਔਖੀ ਗੱਲ ਲਗਦੀ ਸੀ। ਅੱਜ ਮੈਂ ਉਸੇ ਲੋਂਗਆਈਲੈਂਡ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ। ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਭ ਲੋਕ ਵੀ ਕਿਤੇ ਦਾ ਕਿਤੇ ਪੁੱਜ ਜਾਣਗੇ... ਗਰਮੀ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਪਿੱਠਾਂ ਸੜਨ ਲੱਗ ਪਈਆਂ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਕਿਧਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਛਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ। ਬੈਠਣ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਥਾਂ

ਨਹੀਂ। ਦੁਕਾਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਕੈਨਿਕ, ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ ਸਭ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮਸਰੂਫ ਹਨ। ਪਸੀਨਾ ਵਹਿ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਗਰਮੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਕੁੱਝ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ ਨੰਗੇ ਪਿੰਡੇ ਟਰਾਲੀਆਂ ਉੱਪਰ ਭਾਰੇ-ਭਾਰੇ ਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਰਟ ਧੱਕਦੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਕ ਮਾੜਚੂ ਜਿਹਾ ਭਾਰ ਧੱਕਦਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਕੁੜੀ ਫਿਰ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆ ਗਈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਸ ਕੋਲ ਗਏ। ਫਿਰ ਆਈਸ ਕਰੀਮ ਲਈ। ਸੋਚਿਆ, ਘੜੀ ਪਲ ਤਾਂ ਠੰਡਕ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ। ਤੁਰੇ ਜਾਂਦਿਆਂ, ਸੜਕ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਕਿਨਾਰੇ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਸੀਮੈਂਟ ਤੇ ਕੰਕ੍ਰੀਟ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਲੈਬਾਂ ਖਲੋਤੀਆਂ ਦਿਸ ਪਈਆਂ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਥੋੜਾ ਆਰਾਮ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕੀਤਾ। ਲੱਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਲੱਗਾ। ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ - ਯਾਰ, ਇਹਨਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ‘ਵੈਟ ਲੈਂਡ’ ਨੂੰ ‘ਸਵੈਟ ਲੈਂਡ’ ਬਣਾ ਰਖਿਆ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਕਹਿਣ ਲੱਗਾ - ਹਾਂ ਯਾਰ, ਇਹ ਲੋਕ ਧੰਨ ਦੇ ਹਨ। ਏਨੀ ਗਰਮੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰੁਝੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੇ ਜੁਆਬ ਦਿੱਤਾ - ਜਦੋਂ ਸਾਉਣ ਭਾਦੋਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੜਕਦੀਆਂ ਹੁੰਮਸ ਭਰੀਆਂ ਧੁੱਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜੱਟ ਮੱਕੀ ਦੀ ਗੁਡਾਈ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਧੰਨ ਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹੁੰਦੇ? ਮੈਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਆਇਆ, ਮੈਂ ਗੈਸ ਸਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ 12 ਘੰਟੇ ਦੀ ਡਿਊਟੀ ਦਿਆ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸਰਦੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਫੇਰੇ ਬਰਫ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੈੜ ਲੱਗੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਮੈਂ ਸਵੇਰ ਦਾ ਗੈਸ ਪੰਪ ਕਰਨ ਲਗ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਨੋਜ਼ਲਾਂ ਬਰਫ਼ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਠੰਡੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਫੜਦਿਆਂ ਹਥ ਠੰਢ ਨਾਲ ਢੁੱਖਣ ਲਗ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸੀ। ਦਸਤਾਨੇ ਪਹਿਨ ਕੇ ਪੈਸੇ ਗਿਣਨੇ ਔਖੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਜਦ ਵੀ ਵਿਹਲ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਸੀ, ਜੇਬਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਥ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਨਿੱਘੇ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸ਼ਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਹਵਾ ਤੇਜ਼ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ ਬੂੰਦਾਂ ਬਾਂਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਟੈਂਪਰੇਚਰ ਮਾਈਨਸ ਬਾਈ ਤੱਕ ਚਲਾ ਗਿਆ। ਉਧਰ ਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੰਮੀਆਂ ਲਾਈਨਾਂ ਲਗ ਗਈਆਂ। ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਭੈੜੇ ਮੌਸਮ ਵਿਚ ਲੋਕ ‘ਸੈਲਫ ਸਰਵਿਸ’ ਦੀ ਵਜਾਏ, ‘ਫੁਲ ਸਰਵਿਸ ਗੈਸ ਸਟੇਸ਼ਨ’ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਗੈਸ ਲੈਣ ਭਜ ਪੈਦੇ ਹਨ। ਗੈਸ ਵੀ ਸਿਰਫ਼ ਡਾਲਰ ਦੋ ਡਾਲਰ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਖਰੀਦਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮੈਂ ਨੱਸ ਨੱਸ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ। ਅਚਾਨਕ ਮੇਰੇ ਹੱਥ ਮੁੜਨੇ ਹਟ ਗਏ। ਨੋਜ਼ਲ ਫੜੀ ਹੀ ਨਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਉੱਗਲਾਂ ਮੁੜ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਰਹੀਆਂ। ਮੈਂ ਘਬਰਾ ਗਿਆ। ਕੰਮ ਵਿਚੇ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਨੂੰ ਭੱਜਾ। ਦਫਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਘਦੇ ਹੀਟਰ ਉਪਰ ਹੀ ਹੱਥ ਰਖ ਦਿੱਤੇ। ਕਿੰਨੇ ਹੀ ਸਿੰਟਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਗਰਮੀਂ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੀ ਨਾ ਹੋਈ। ਬਾਹਰ ਕਾਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਹਾਰਨ ਮਾਰੀ ਜਾਣ। ਜਦੋਂ ਹਥ ਥੋੜੇ ਨਿੱਘੇ ਹੋਏ, ਮੈਂ ਫਿਰ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਗੈਸ ਪੰਪ ਕਰਨ ਲਗ ਪਿਆ ਸੀ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਦੀ ਗਲ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਬੀਤੇ ਵਿਚ ਲੈ ਗਈ ਸੀ, ਮੇਰੇ ਮੂੰਹੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ - ਮਾਸਟਰ, ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰੀ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਬਰਦਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਹਿੰਮਤ ਦੇ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। -ਫੌਜੀਆ, ਬੰਦ ਕਮਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਆਣੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਗਲਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੀ ਜਾਨਣ? ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੇ ਫਿਰ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੂੰ ਧਰ ਲਿਆ। - ਓਏ ਵਡਿਆ ਐਸ.ਪੀ., ਮੈਂ ਸਿਧਾ ਕੰਸਟਰੈਕਟਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ! ਨਿਊਯਾਰਕ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੜਕਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਸੀਮੈਂਟ ਰੇਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਘਾਣੀਆਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾਂ। ਸਕਾਫਲਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਟੰਗ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਰਿਆਂ। ਤੇਰੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਮੈਂ ਕੋਈ ਪੁਤਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ਇਥੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਇਆ ਤੇ ਮੁਫਤ ਦੀ ਪੈਨਸ਼ਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੁੱਟਦਾ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਜਵਾਬੀ ਹਮਲਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਮੈਂ ਗਲ ਦਾ ਰਖ ਬਦਲਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ - ਉੱ

ਯਾਰ, ਇਸ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਲ ਐ। ਮਿਹਨਤ ਨਾਲ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਅਗੇ ਵਧ ਸਕਦਾ। ਇੰਡੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ, ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਹੀ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ...। -ਤਾਂ ਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਰੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਏਥੇ ਨੂੰ ਭਜਦੀ ਐ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ। - ਜਿਹੜੇ ਆਪ ਨਹੀਂ ਭਜਦੇ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੁੱਤ ਬੁਲਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਆ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੇ ਫਿਰ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਗਿੱਟਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਲਗਾ ਦਿਤੀ। ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਗਲ ਜਾਰੀ ਰਖੀ - ਅੱਜ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ 'ਵੈਟ ਲੈਂਡ' ਨੂੰ 'ਸਵੈਟ ਲੈਂਡ' ਬਣਾਇਆ, ਕਲ ਨੂੰ 'ਡ੍ਰੀਮ ਲੈਂਡ' ਵੀ ਬਣਾ ਦੇਣਗੇ। ਅਜੇ ਇਹ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਨਿਉ ਯਾਰਕ ਦੇ ਨਕਸੇ 'ਤੇ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਕਲ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਟੀ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਸ਼ ਆਈ ਜਾਣੀ ਆ। ਇਹ ਏਰੀਆ ਵੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਡਿਵੈਲਪਮੈਂਟ ਪਲੈਨ ਹੇਠ ਆਏ ਜਾਣਾ। ਏਥੇ ਵੀ ਵਧੀਆ ਸਟੋਰ ਤੇ ਵਰਕਸ਼ਾਪਾਂ ਉਸਰ ਜਾਣੀਆਂ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਂ ਮਿਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ - ਏਹਨਾਂ ਮਕੈਨਿਕਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਟੋਰਾਂ ਵਰਕਸ਼ਾਪਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਹੋਣੈ। -ਹਾਂ, ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲੀਅਨ ਡਾਲਰ ਪ੍ਰੋਪਰਟੀ ਟੈਕਸ, ਸੇਲ ਟੈਕਸ ਤੇ ਆਮਦਨ ਟੈਕਸ ਆਉਣਾ ਸੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਜਾਣੈ। ਬਿਜਲੀ, ਫੋਨ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਸਹੂਲਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਿਲ ਵਖਰੇ.. ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ ਨੇ ਜਵਾਬ ਦਿਤਾ - ਫਿਰ ਏਥੇ ਵੀ ਸੱਤ ਸੌ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ, ਦੋ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਣ ਲਗ ਪੈਣਾ। ਸਲੈਬਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਬੈਠਿਆਂ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਲੱਤਾਂ ਅਕਲਕਾਨ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਨ ਲਗ ਪਈਆਂ। ਸਾਡੇ ਪੈਰ ਧਰਤੀ ਉਪਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਲਗ ਰਹੇ। ਲੱਟਕਦੀਆਂ ਲੱਤਾਂ ਔਖ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਨ ਲਗ ਪਈਆਂ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਠ ਕੇ ਖੜ੍ਹੇ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਇੰਝ ਹੀ ਇਧਰ ਉਪਰ ਭਟਕਦਿਆਂ, ਸਾਢੇ ਪੰਜ ਵੱਜ ਗਏ। ਭੁੱਖ ਵੀ ਲਗ ਕੇ ਮਰ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਕਾਰ ਦੇਖਣ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਫਿਰ ਉਸ ਦੁਕਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਗਏ। ਮਕੈਨਿਕ ਡੈਂਟ ਕਢ ਕੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਈਮਰ ਮਾਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਅਜੇ ਘਟੇ ਘੱਟ ਇਕ ਘੰਟਾ ਹੋਰ ਲਗ ਜਾਣਾ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਦੁਕਾਨ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਕੁੜੀ ਫਿਰ ਦਿਸ ਪਈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਸ ਕੋਲ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ। ਦੇਖਿਆ, ਉਹ ਕੋਕ ਵੀ ਵੇਚ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਕੋਕ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੋਤਲਾਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਫਿਰ ਸੜਕੇ ਸੜਕ ਤੁਰ ਪਏ। ਹੁਣ ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੇ ਉਸ ਕੁੜੀ ਵੱਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਲਲਚਾਈਆਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਦੇਖਿਆ। ਕਹਿਣ ਲਗਾਵੈਜੀ, ਯਾਦ ਐ ਜਦ ਵਾਛੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਪਿੰਡ ਦਾ ਝਿਊਰ ਵਹਿੰਗੀ ਉਪਰ ਘੜੇ ਲੱਦੀ, ਖੇਤ ਖੇਤ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਿਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ? - ਹਾਂ ਯਾਰ, ਇਹ ਕੁੜੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਹੋ ਹੀ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ। - ਬੜੀ ਮਿਹਨਤੀ ਕੁੜੀ ਐ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਦੀ ਹੁਣ ਉਸ ਕੁੜੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਰਾਇ ਬਦਲ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਸੀ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਦਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਜਦ ਕਦੀ ਇਥੇ ਆਧੁਨਿਕ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਬਣੇਗਾ, ਇਸ ਕੁੜੀ ਦਾ ਏਥੇ ਰੈਸਟੋਰੈਂਟ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। - ਇਸ ਦਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਦੀ ਰੀਝ ਕਦੇ ਪੁਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਣੀ? ਮੈਂ ਫਿਰ ਗਲ ਮਜ਼ਾਕ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹੀ। - ਛਡ ਯਾਰ, ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਮਿਹਨਤੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਹਮਦਰਦੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਗੰਭੀਰ ਸੀ। - ਜੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਕੱਲ ਸਾਂ, ਇਹ ਅੱਜ ਨੇ। ਮੈਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਲਗਦੇ ਨੇ। ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਸੰਜੀਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ। - ਹੁਣ ਸਵਾਲ ਇਹ ਐ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਘੰਟਾ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਦਾਂ ਕਟਣਾ? ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਥਕਾਵਟ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦਾ ਬੋਲਿਆ। - ਪੂਰੇ ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਚੱਕਰ ਫਿਰ ਕਢਦੇ ਅਂ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਆਪਣਾ ਕੱਲ ਯਾਦ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਵੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਹਿਮਤ ਹੋ

ਗਿਆ। ਕੋਕ ਨਾਲ ਢਿਡਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਫੀ ਆਸਰਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਗਰਮੀ ਦਾ ਡੰਗ ਵੀ ਖੁੰਡਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਸੀ। ਟੀਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੁਕਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਭ ਲੋਕ ਮਸਰੂਫ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਗਰਮੀ ਸਰਦੀ ਦੇ ਕੋਈ ਅਰਥ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ। ਮੈਂ ਸੋਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ, ਉਹ ਵੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਖਾਲੀ ਜੇਬਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਇਥੇ ਪੁੱਜੇ ਹੋਣਗੇ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਵੀ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਦਾ ਇਕੋ ਇਕ ਸਰਮਾਇਆ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਗੇੜਾ ਕਢ ਕੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸੱਤ ਕੁ ਵਜੇ ਫਿਰ ਉਸ ਦੁਕਾਨ 'ਤੇ ਆਏ। ਕਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਪਾਲਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਸੀ। ਐਕਸੀਡੈਂਟ ਦੇ ਪੂਰੇ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਮਿਟ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਸਨ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਮਕੈਨਿਕ ਦਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਸੀ, ਅਜੇ ਪਾਲਿਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਧਾ ਘੰਟਾ ਹੋਰ ਸੁੱਕ ਲੈਣ ਦਿਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਹੁਣ ਇਹ ਅੱਧਾ ਘੰਟਾ ਹੋਰ, ਸਾਡੇ ਸਿਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਦਾਣ ਵਾਂਗ ਵੱਜਾ। ਸਰੀਰਾਂ ਚੋਂ ਸਤਿਆ ਲਗਪਗ ਮੁੱਕ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਇੰਤਜ਼ਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਹੋਰ ਚਾਰਾ ਵੀ ਕੀ ਸੀ? ਅੱਖੇ ਸੌਖੇ ਸਰੀਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ ਇਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਹੋ ਤੁਰ ਪਏ? ਗਨੀਮਤ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਗਰਮੀ ਘੱਟ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਠੰਢੀ ਹਵਾ ਆਉਣ ਲਗ ਪਈ ਸੀ। ਬਹੁਤੀਆਂ ਦੁਕਾਨਾਂ ਬੰਦ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਹੁਣ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਅਗੇ ਚੱਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਕਹਿਣ ਲਗਾ - ਹੁਣ ਦੇਖ ਕਿਦਾਂ ਬਗਲੇ ਵਾਂਗ ਲੱਤਾਂ ਟਿਕਾ ਟਿਕਾ ਕੇ ਤੁਰਦਾ। ਤੇਰਾਂ ਸੌ ਢਾਲਰ ਜੂੰ ਬਚ ਗਿਆ। - ਪੂਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਘਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣ ਦਿੰਦੇ। ਸਿੰਗਲ ਮਾਲਟ ਤੇ ਮਛੀ ਤੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਇਹਦੀ ਜਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡਦੇ ਅਜ। ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ। ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਜੀਭਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਸਕਾਚ ਤੇ ਮਛੀ ਦਾ ਸੁਆਦ ਤੈਰ ਗਿਆ। ਫਰਲਾਂਗ ਕੁ ਚਲੇ ਹੋਵਾਂਗੇ ਕਿ ਸੜਕ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਪੰਜ ਛੇ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਹਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੀਅਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੋਤਲਾਂ ਫੜੀ, ਪੀਂਦੇ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਏ। ਬੀਅਰ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਸਾਡੀ ਪਿਆਸ ਇੰਝ ਜਾਗ ਪਈ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਵਾਚੀਆਂ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ, ਦੁਪੱਹਿਰੇ ਲੱਸੀ ਦੇਖਕੇ, ਕਾਹਲੇ ਪੈ ਜਾਈਦਾ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਮੁੰਡਿਆਂ ਵੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਤੁਰ ਪਏ। ਕੋਲ ਪੁੱਜੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਕ ਮੁੰਡਾ ਰੱਲਾ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਗ ਪਿਆ - ਤਾਲਿਬਾਨ ਆਰ ਕਮਿਂਗ... ਤਿੰਨ ਦਾੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਦਸਤਾਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਹਨੀਂ ਤਾਲਿਬਾਨ ਸਮਝ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਜਿਸ ਦਿਨ ਤੋਂ ਅਫਗਾਨਿਸਤਾਨ ਉਪਰ ਤਾਲਿਬਾਨ ਦਾ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਚਰਚਾ ਹੈ। ਟੀ ਵੀ, ਰੇਡੀਓ ਤੇ ਅਖਬਾਰਾਂ, ਸਭ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਖਬਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਰਜੀਹ ਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਸਾਨੂੰ ਤਾਲਿਬਾਨ ਕਰੇ ਜਾਣ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਵਧਾਨ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਤਿੰਨੋਂ ਹੱਸ ਪਏ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਤੁਰੀ ਗਏ। ਕੋਲ ਜਾਕੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਇੰਡੀਅਨ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਾਂ, ਤਾਲਿਬਾਨ ਨਹੀਂ। - ਓ ਯੂ ਆਰ ਸਿੰਘ। ਇਕ ਕਾਲਾ ਮੁੰਡਾ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੋਕੇ ਬੋਲਿਆ। ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਿੱਘ ਦੇ ਸਟੋਰ 'ਤੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਸੀ। ਛੇਤੀ ਹੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਘੁੱਲ ਮਿਲ ਗਏ। ਅਸੀਂ ਪੁਛਿਆ ਕਿ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਬੀਅਰਾਂ ਕਿਥੋਂ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ? ਇਕ ਸਪੈਨਿਸ਼ ਮੁੰਡਾ, ਆਪਣੇ ਲਈ ਰਖੀਆਂ, ਤਿੰਨ ਬੀਅਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੰਦ ਬੋਤਲਾਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਲਗ ਪਿਆ। ਅਸੀਂ ਲੈਣ ਤੋਂ ਪੰਨਵਾਦ ਸਹਿਤ ਨਾਹ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਤੇ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਬੀਅਰ ਖਰੀਦਣੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਮੁੰਡਾ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇੰਤਜ਼ਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਨੂੰ

ਭੱਜ ਗਿਆ। ਕੁਝ ਦੇਰ ਬਾਅਦ ਜੱਦ ਪਰਤਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਮਗਰ ਉਹੋ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਕੁੜੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਰੇੜ੍ਹੀ ਪੱਕਦੀ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਹੁਣ ਉਹ ਕੁੜੀ ਬੀਅਰਾਂ ਵੇਚ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਮਕੈਨਿਕ, ਮਜ਼ਦੂਰ ਵਿਹਲੇ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੇ ਸਨ। ਹੁਣ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੀਅਰ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਸ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਬੀਅਰਾਂ ਲਈਆਂ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੇ ਫਟਾਫਟ ਸੌ ਢਾਲਰ ਦਾ ਨੋਟ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਫੜਾ ਦਿਤਾ। ਕੁੜੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਮੁੰਡਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਗਲੀਂ ਪਈ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਅਜੇ ਨੋਟ ਵੱਲ ਧਿਆਨ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਦਿਤਾ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਉਥੋਂ ਤੁਰ ਪਏ। ਅਸੀਂ ਉਸ ਮਿਹਨਤੀ ਕੁੜੀ ਦੀ ਸਮਝ ਤੇ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਗਲਾਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਕਾਰ ਵੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਤੁਰ ਪਏ। ਕਾਰ ਤਿਆਰ ਸੀ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਸੱਤ ਸੌ ਢਾਲਰ ਦੁਕਾਨਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਮਕੈਨਿਕ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਹ ਢਾਲਰ ਟਿੱਪ ਦਿਤੀ ਤੇ ਚਾਬੀਆਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਕਾਰ ਕੋਲ ਆਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠਣ ਹੀ ਲਗੇ ਸੀ। -ਸਿੰਘ...ਸਿੰਘ... ਉਚੀ ਉਚੀ ਆਵਾਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਉਹੋ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਕੁੜੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਵੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਭਜੀ ਆ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਬਾਂਹ ਚੁੱਕ ਚੁੱਕ ਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਰੁਕਣ ਦਾ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਵੀ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਰੁੱਕ ਗਏ। ਕੁੜੀ ਹਫਦੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਆਈ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੂੰ ਪੈਸੇ ਫੜਾਉਂਦੀ ਕਹਿਣ ਲਗੀ, - ਸਿੰਘ, ਯੂਅਰ ਚੇਂਜ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੇ ਪੈਸੇ ਫੜਨ ਲਈ ਕਿੰਨੀ ਦੇਰ ਹੱਥ ਅਗੇ ਨਾ ਵਧਾਇਆ। ਕੁੜੀ ਨੇ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਹਥ ਅਗੇ ਕਰੀ ਰਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਪੈਸੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਵਾਰ ਵਾਰ ਜੋਰ ਦੇ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਐਸ.ਪੀ. ਨੇ ਹਥ ਅਗੇ ਕੀਤਾ, ਸਾਨੂੰ ਲਗਾ, ਪੈਸੇ ਫੜਨ ਲਗਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਹਥ ਉਪਰ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕੁੜੀ ਦੇ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰ ਹਥ ਰਖ ਦਿਤਾ। ਏਨਾ ਹੀ ਕਿਹਾ - ਕੀਪ ਦ ਚੇਂਜ, ਯੰਗ ਲੇਡੀ। ਕੁੜੀ ਹੱਕੀ ਬੱਕੀ ਜਿਹੀ ਉਸ ਵੱਲ ਦੇਖ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਹੱਥ ਹਿਲਾ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਲਵਿਦਾ ਆਖੀ ਤੇ 'ਕੀਪ ਦ ਚੇਂਜ' ਆਖ ਕੇ ਗਡੀ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠ ਗਿਆ। ਅਸੀਂ ਵੀ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ 'ਬਾਈ, ਬਾਈ' ਕਰਦੇ ਕਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠ ਗਏ। ਕੁੜੀ ਸਾਡੀ ਵੱਲ ਹੈਰਾਨ ਜਿਹੀ ਹੋਈ ਦੇਖੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਮਾਸਟਰ ਨੇ ਕਾਰ ਤੋਰ ਲਈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਰਹੇ, ਉਹ ਕੁੜੀ ਉਸੇ ਥਾਂ ਖੜੀ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਬਾਹਾਂ ਹਿਲਾ ਕੇ ਅਲਵਿਦਾ ਆਖ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇੰਝ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ..। ਆਪਣੇ ਹੀ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀ ਫੇਰੀ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਮੁੜ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ।

**Translation:****DREAM LAND**

All three of us sat in the car and were starting to move when suddenly we noticed the same beautiful girl rushing towards us. Rather, she raised her hand to stop us. We stopped and waited for her to come.

Throughout the day, we had to spend our time there in the market that day. My friend Navtej, who was putting up in my neighborhood too, in Long Island, called me in the morning. His Mercedes SUV hit and met with an accident while he was reversing. The rear windscreen was broken. There were also some dents on the rear side of car. To get a repair done, he had taken an estimate on phone from a mechanic in Queens. And the mechanic said that it would cost him two thousand dollars to repair the car. Navtej was enquiring from me whether I would like to accompany him to Queens.

We are retired approximately as our sons have taken hold of the works which we used to do earlier. We were confined to our homes for one and a half years due to Covid Pandemic. And now when the situation was becoming a bit better, all of us (myself and my friends) were always in search of roaming around. We used to meet on one or another pretext and spend our time together. We enjoyed each other's company and often gossiped together. I gave my consent to Navtej. While going to get the car repaired, we took our friend S.P. too who lived in the nearby County, along with us .

Most of the immigrants, who come to this country, start their lives from the beginning. They have to affirm their roots but their status or profession while in India, nonetheless, come along with them. The work which is available has to be done and eligibility as well as qualification doesn't matter in this country. So the work has to be started, whatsoever it is. Navtej was a teacher while in India but in America, he is a big construction contractor, still he is known a master as he was in India. I was in army over there though I work in real estate but all call me *Fauji* even here. Gulzar Singh retired as a S.P. from Punjab Police. His sons sponsored him. But he is still our S.P.

Moving towards Queens, S.P. suggested that firstly they should enquire from that market. I made fun of him saying that as he was a policeman, he liked only *Chor Bazaar* though he was in America. Many people consider this market as a *Chor Bazaar* of India.

But master liked S.P.'s suggestion. He didn't have the complete insurance of car; hence the whole amount of repair was to be paid from his pocket. This market was cheaper than others. It was

decided to get the repair done from there.

I had never been to that market ever before. Rather, it couldn't be called a market. The broken road. Worse than the off roads of Punjab even. Stores on both sides and the stores seemed the stalls made of tin only. The spare parts of cars were scattered everywhere. Spare parts and the stains of oil. The clothes of mechanics were full of oil and black stains of spare parts. And there were mechanics and laborers, full of sweat, pushing the heavy parts of cars in scorching heat.

When I used to live in Flushing (Queens) about thirty years back, I was a daily traveler to Bronx through subway train number 7. The river, which separated Flushing from Queens, had become almost dry and was wet land only. There was unwanted grass all over there. Besides, there was stagnant water in small ponds. There was a junk yard on one side where thousands of cars were stacked in broken condition and spare parts of cars were kept in an organized manner.

A bit far from Roosevelt Avenue, was Shea stadium. But now, here is City Field Stadium instead of Shea Stadium. There this bumpy market has evolved in place of Wetland. Still this place and market don't not exist in any map of New York rather it is known as Wetland only.

We reached there at approximately twelve o' clock. Tried a few shops. One shop keeper agreed to work for seven hundred dollars. We gave him the car and started to search a place where we could find a shelter to save ourselves from this scorching heat. Some shady place. But there was no such place in the whole of the market where we could sit and relax. And the weather! It was very, very hot. The temperature was already above 92 degrees even in the morning. The market was simmering like an oven. We were having a round of the market. What to talk of any shop being air conditioned, there was no chair even to sit in any of the shops. Neither was there any tree for the people like us which could provide shade.

We had no option but to stay there for five hours in that hot weather as the mechanic had promised to repair the car till five o' clock. Besides, Master was of the

opinion that we should be present there to take care of our car. Secondly, no market was nearby and the minimum distance to any other market was three to four miles. We were so tired that it was not possible to walk that much and this market was not shown in any map, hence there can't be any Uber which we could have called.

Exhausted and weary, we started searching for a restaurant in that sweltering heat. Suddenly we came across a sign of Deli but when moved to the place, it seemed as if the store had been closed since ages. It was becoming very hard and tough for us to spend time over there. Suddenly we came across a shadow of a shop which was approximately three feet and we moved there to rest.

We were feeling as if we were roving in a desert and have got a shelter under some **Babool** tree which is providing some shade and solace to the tired travelers. We were drenched with sweat. The lips were parched and we were extremely thirsty. I was cursing both of my friends. I was cursing S.P. as he suggested this place and I was cursing Master as he came here to save the money. He was a miser and economy was his wont. But we didn't have any other option now save to tolerate the boiling heat.

**"Faujia,** why are you worried? Have you forgotten the times when we reaped the harvest? Have you forgotten the times when we used to reap the harvest of wheat during the months of **Jeth** and **Haar** (June & July)? Have you forgotten how our backs used to be red due to work in the boiling heat?"

We got the strength to bear the heat when the memories of harvesting season came to our minds. And many more memories filled the vacuum of our mind when we were reminded of Indian, rather Punjab's harvesting season. Master ridiculed S.P. saying, "Some hungry and greedy people like you used to attach nets to catch grouse and quails with wheat too."

"What is bad in that? We used to kill two birds with one stone. How the teachers like you, who teach in closed rooms, could know such things?" S.P. answered in the same manner and completely made him speechless.

I was just going to enter into this light hearted discussion between S.P. and Master when suddenly we noticed a girl with a stroller which was in the shape of a box. We started to look at her. She was a young Spanish girl of twenty or twenty-two years of age. Fair complexion with a redness on the face. Sharp featured like Punjabi girls. Her face

was also red because of heat. We were awestruck with her beauty. We forgot about the scorching heat. When she came nearby, we came to know that she was selling ice cream.

We bought ice cream from her. When we tasted, it was not at all ice cream. Only the sweet frozen water. But at that time, when we were there at a far off place and the weather was very hot, this ice cream proved a treasure for us. At least we got something to quench our thirst.

The girl took the money and moved ahead. S.P. didn't turn his glance from her. He kept on gazing at her even when she was going. Then asked, "Master, how much she may earn in a day like this?"

Master replied, "At the maximum, fifty-sixty dollars."

"What? Only this much. Ask her to accompany me to a motel. I'll pay her hundred dollars",

and there was a hunger in his eyes.

Master bit him, "S.P., Have some shame. At least, think of your grey beard and have some shame."

I, too, was enjoying and said, "He has the right. He is a bachelor."

His wife became a victim of Covid Pandemic and we could not go to him as there was lock down. We could watch her last rites only "online live." But now time had healed his wounds. He had become a bachelor so that we could tease him.

S.P. stared the girl continuously till she was visible to our eyes. When she was out of sight, he started with the ice cream again. Looking at him, Master again teased him, "S.P., Do you suck Ice cream like this or--?"

S.P. reciprocated, "Master, if the people like you, while teaching kids, imagine about their mothers, why can't I imagine?"

We forgot the hot weather in such light discussion. When our ice cream was finished, the shade was also gone from our heads. We again started to find some other place where we could spend our time and rest. Two and a half hours or probably three hours have passed strolling like this. We went to the shop where car was to be repaired. And to our shock, the mechanic had not started the work even. We talked to him a bit rudely. The shopkeeper deputed a mechanic upon the repair of car on our being rude with him. We again started from there.

Our stomachs were empty as it was the meal time yet there was no sign of food being available there.

S.P. asked, "Don't these people feel hungry? There is not even a single restaurant here."

I suddenly remembered the time when I came to America; I started working upon a service gas station. We were five people then living in an apartment. All of us were not permanent residents at that time. When we used to cook our dinner, we also used to cook the lunch of next day and bring that along with us on our work. We never bought the food and never dared to buy a slice of pizza even by spending dollars. We used to count the money by multiplying the dollar to rupee and never wished to spend so many rupees. Once I could not carry meals. When a food truck came in the afternoon, I rushed to buy a sandwich. The workers on the stores nearby stared shrieking, "O! Good news. Today Singh is having lunch." Feeling shy, I came back after taking sandwich.

I started considering these mechanics and laborers like me when I was reminded of the incident of sandwich. These people also might be new comers to America. They might also not be wishing to spend dollars. I started to have a feeling of bondage with them.

America is known as a country of immigrants. The people come to America from across the globe. They come with difficulty, they work hard, and they succeed. Then new immigrants come, they also work hard and become prosperous. The country also becomes happy and prosperous.

Suddenly, I am reminded that when I came to America, I couldn't even dream of Long Island. And now I reside in Long Island. These people will also rise in the time to come.

We were feeling blisters due to heat but there was no shade anywhere. No place to sit even. The laborers and mechanics in the shops were busy in their work. They don't feel hot though they are sweating. Some laborers, who are not wearing shirts even, are keeping the heavy spare parts upon trolleys. One weakling also is pushing the burden.

We again saw that girl. And went to her to buy ice cream again thinking of the coolness and comfort which will be provided by eating ice cream, at least for a few moments. While walking, we noticed a few slabs of cement and concrete on the side of the road. O! It was such a relief that we got something to sit. We sat and undoubtedly, it was a great respite to the legs.

I said, "See! These people have converted the wet land to sweat land."

Master replied, "Yes, my friend, these people are truly great. How are they working in such a hot weather, is unbelievable."

S.P. also spoke, "When the **Jatts** dig up the soil in the months of **Saavan** and **Bhadon**(July & August) in so much of humidity, aren't they also great?

I was reminded of my work. I used to work on the Gas Station for twelve hours. There used to be snow all around. I have been pumping the gas pump since morning. Nozzles were as cold as snow and the hands used to pain as soon as these were touched in cold weather. It was difficult to count the amount wearing gloves. I used to warm up my hands by putting in the pockets as and when I got time. The evening became windy and it started drizzling. Temperature went down to minus twenty-two. There were long queues of cars. People used to fetch gas from "Full Service Gas Station" instead of "Self-Service" in such a bad weather. And they buy gas of only one or two dollars. I kept on working. Suddenly, my hands were reluctant to bend. I was unable to hold nozzle. My fingers were not able to bend. I became panicky. I left the work and ran inside the office. I kept my hands upon the heater. No warmth was felt for a long time. The people with cars were blowing horns. But I was unable to work and started working only when the hands again became warm and were able to work.

The words of Master made me nostalgic and I replied, "Master, the compulsions of life teach us the courage to tolerate everything."

"**Faujia**, how the Masters who teach in closed rooms, can be aware of these things?"

Master again left no chance to speak.

"O! You! S.P., I didn't become construction contractor directly. I too, used to mix cement and sand on the roads of New York. I used to be hanged upon the scuffles. My sons didn't sponsor me like yours. Moreover, I am not entitled to free pension," Master reverted.

I tried to divert and said, "See, this country respects hard work. And hard work takes a man to heights. But in India, a laborer always remains a laborer."

"That's why, everyone rushes to America, said S.P.

Master again ridiculed, "Those who don't rush, are invited and sponsored by their sons."

I continued, "They have converted wet land into sweat land and they will convert it to dream land too. This market is not yet visible on the map of New York even. When the city administration will wake up, this area will also be included in some development plan. Decent stores and workshops will also be built here."

Master also endorsed my point of view and said, "These mechanics and laborers will be the owners of those stores and workshops."

"Yes, and then the government would start acquiring million-dollar property tax, sales tax and income tax etc. Electricity, telephone bills and bills of other comforts and conveniences too."

We were too exhausted sitting upon the cemented slabs and our legs were aching. Our feet were not able to touch the ground as the slabs were high, hence legs started aching and were uncomfortable. So, we stood up. Strolling purposelessly, the time passed and it was 5.30 pm now. Even our hunger died as we were late for food and could not get food at the meal time. Once again, we went to the shop to have a look at the car. The mechanic was applying primer on the car after removing dent. Still it was to take one more hour.

When we came out of the shop, we noticed that beautiful girl again. We went to her. She was selling coke. We bought coke bottles and started walking on the road.

S.P. was looking at the girl but not with greedy eyes now. He started narrating, "*Fauji*, Do you remember when we used to reap the harvest, and the sweeper, carrying earthen pots on his shoulders, used to serve water in all fields?"

"Yes, my dear. This girl is also doing the same job."

"She is very laborious," S.P.'s opinion about the girl had completely been changed now.

Master said that when a modern market would develop here, this girl will definitely have a restaurant there. I again said in a lighter vein, "That means, the desire of our S.P. will always remain incomplete."

But S.P. was serious. He said, "Leave it dear. Rather, we should be compassionate with such hard-working people."

I too became serious and said, "I feel them close to my heart. They are now what we were yesterday."

S.P. was feeling exhausted. He asked, "Now the question is how we are to spend one more hour here?"

I suggested, "Let's have a round of the whole market once again. Let's observe these people. Let's remember our past."

Master also agreed with me. We were satisfied with coke and were not feeling hungry. The sting of heat was also not very sharp then.

All people were busy under the tin roofs. The weather, whether it was cold or hot, didn't matter to them. I thought that they might also had reached here with no money, with empty pockets. The only treasure with them, like it was to us, was hard work.

After a round of the market, we reached at the shop at 7pm. The car was already polished and there was no sign of accident. Master was too happy to be explained. But the mechanic told that the car should be dried for more half an hour. Still more half an hour? we became dejected and we were very exhausted.

But we couldn't help waiting. There was no way out. We gathered the courage, got up again and started walking. Fortunately, the weather was cool and cool breeze started blowing from sea side. Most of the shops were closed. Master was walking ahead of all.

S.P. said, "See, he is walking now like a duck. He has saved a big amount, thirteen hundred dollars."

I added, "We will not let him escape. He will have to party us with Single Malt and fish." And our mouth watered thinking of Scotch and fish.

Hardly had we walked a furlong that five-six boys were visible holding beer bottles in hands. We again started feeling thirsty after seeing the beer bottles as we used to be, having seen **Lassi** while reaping the harvest and we used to be eager to have it. We moved towards those boys.

When we reached near them, one of them shouted, "Taliban are coming."

They took the three bearded and turbaned Sardars as Taliban. Taliban is a common topic of discussion in America since the day it has captured Afghanistan. All are eager to listen to the news regarding Taliban on T.V., Radio and newspaper. We should have been cautious having been addressed so but still, we kept on moving towards them. We approached near them and told that we were Indian Sikhs and not Taliban.

"O! You are Singh?" One black boy became glad. He had worked upon a store which

belonged to a Singh.

Very soon, we became familiar and asked them from where could get beer. One of them, a Spanish boy, offered us three bottles which they had kept for themselves. We thanked and refused to accept as they had bought these for themselves. And again we asked them about the availability of these bottles.

One of the boys told us to wait and went running. When he came back, the same beautiful girl was following him, bringing her stroller along with.

Now that girl was selling beer bottles. Mechanics and laborers were free by this time and they were in need of beer. We bought three bottles from her. S.P. gave her a hundred dollar note hurriedly. The girl was in conversation with those boys. She didn't pay heed to the note and we started back. We were discussing about her; her wisdom, understanding and hard work. and we came to our car.

The car was repaired and ready. Master handed over seven hundred dollars gladly to the shopkeeper and fifty dollars to the mechanic as a tip. He held the keys in his hands and we were about to sit in the car----

“Singh----Singh” the beautiful girl was running towards us. She was waving towards us to stop. We stopped. She was breathless because of running. “Singh, your change.”

S.P. refused to take the money back. She kept on insisting but S.P. didn't take. Then he moved forward his hand and we thought he was going to accept but his hand went to her head and he blessed her. He said, “Keep the change, Young Lady.”

The girl was gazing at him and was stunned. Master too waved goodbye to her and sat in the car telling her to keep the change. Both of us too waved her goodbye.

Master started the car. We kept on looking at the girl who was waving us goodbye standing over there. We were leaving with the feeling as if we were there to meet our own people and were returning after the round of our own village.

## Poetry

MatruAkshar



### DR. NEETU VAID SHARMA

Dr. Neetu Vaid Sharma, a recipient of the World Poetic Star Award by the World Nations Writers Union in Kazakhstan (2019) and the Creativity Award by Naji Naaman Literary Prizes 2020 (Lebanon), is a contemporary Indian English love poet. She is a published author and poet with eleven books to her credit. Her power-packed poetry has been featured in an anthology of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Indian Women Poets entitled Vibrant Voices published by the Sahitya Academy(2022).

Neetu is an Assistant Professor, a foreign language (French) instructor, and a web columnist too. Her seven books, all published in the US, are available on famous websites like Lulu, Amazon, Flipcart, and Barnes & Noble. Her latest book of short stories entitled Noblest Nora has received positive reviews profusely. Her seventh book comprising only quotes has already seen the light of day. Neetu Vaid Sharma is often featured in Wildfire Publications Magazine - an international magazine. She was also jewelled with the title of Author of the Month in May 2017 in Wildfire Publication magazine. She is a proud contributor to many renowned literary anthologies, magazines, and coffee table books. The list of awards goes as follows: Bronze Award and for her poem. By Wildfire Publication Magazine, USA (2017), Author of the Month in May 2017 by Wildfire Publication magazine, GOLDEN BOOK AWARD by English Hub, Jalandhar 2018, Excellence Award by PAGE3 Punjab 2019, Star Ambassador of World Poetry by Philosophique Poetica and Grand Productions Canada 2019, IOI Icons of India 2019, Iconic Contemporary English Poetess Award, Best Research Paper Award 2019, Literary Colonel by Story Mirror 2020. Neetu Vaid's poetry is multi-layered in meaning and rich in experience having the fragrance of spring and the coolness of clouds.

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ਕੋਈ ਕਵੀ?

ਜੋ ਪਰੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਜਜ਼ਬਾਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੋਤੀ  
ਖਿਆਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੁੱਚੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਅੰਦਰ  
ਕਵੀ, ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਇਸ਼ਕ ਹੈ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਲਮ ਨਾਲ

ਜਾਂ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਛੜੀ ਰੂਹ ?

ਜੋ ਵਿਛੜੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ ਪਿਛਲੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਜੂਨੇ  
ਹੈ ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਲਾਲਸਾ ਮੁਕੰਮਲ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ  
ਰੂਹ ਜੋ ਤਲਾਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸਦੀ ਭਟਕਣ ਮੁੱਕੇ  
ਮਿਲੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਖਾਮੋਸ਼ ਰੂਹਾਨੀ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਨਾਲ ।

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਲਗਦੈ,

ਮੈਂ ਸੀ ਇੱਕ ਪੰਛੀ

ਜਿਸਨੂੰ ਮੁਹੱਬਤ ਸੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਨਾਲ  
ਜੋ ਇਸ ਤਾਂਘ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੈ  
ਕਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਹਿਬੂਬ ਨੂੰ  
ਜਿਸਤੋਂ ਵਿਛਿਆ ਸੀ, ਪਿਛਲੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਜੂਨੇ ।

**Translation:**

**Who Am I ?**

Who am I ?

Why can't it be asked

Who am I ?

Some bird ?

Who wishes to be free

And flies away the boundaries of the cage.

The bird, who is forwarding fearlessly towards light.

Some poet ?

Who is making a rosary of beads,

In the pure thread of his thoughts.

The poet, who loves his pen.

Or some separated soul ?

Who separated a long time back,

In some previous birth,

One soul, who is in search of merging itself

And mingle with some silent eternal bliss !

I feel

I was a bird

Who loved a poet

Who is in the desire of meeting his beloved

From whom he was separated

Somewhere in the previous birth !

MatruAkshar  
**Sindhi**



**Dr Vinod Asudani**

Bio:

Well-Known Poet, Writer, Academician, Thinker, Psychologist, Motivator and Life Coach. Ph. D English, Ph. D Psychology, D. Litt from university of South America. He has authored 34 Books to his credit.

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1. .

अजु थोरो वेही थकु भजबो वंण हेठां  
को झूनो हुनजो खतु पढबो वंण हेठां

छांव हथन में कान अचे थी अरसे खां  
को छांवेरो गोल्हे कढबो वंण हेठां

रेत ततल ते डोडी डोडी थकजी पयुस  
हिक पेरे ई बीठो हुजबो वंण हेठां

को खडको डेजारे न विझे, तरसु ज़रा  
सन्नाटे में हुनसां मिलबो वंण हेठां

प्यार असांजे जो शाहिदु आ चंडु पिरीं  
होरियां तुहिंजो नालो वठबो वंण हेठां  
दिल जी सावक लुडिकन सांणु वही वेंदी  
होरियां होरियां सुडको भरबो वंण हेठां

गुम थियो हो वेसहु कहिं मंदिर, मस्जिद वट  
कुर्बु, करामत जीअरो रहबो वंण हेठां

का त तम्मना ईदड जनमन में बि रहे  
हिकडो सुपनो पूरे छडबो वंण हेठां

रात असांसां घारे का शल पिरीं कडुहिं  
आस इनहीअ में वेठो लुछबो वंण हेठां ।

2.

ਖੁਸ਼ੀਅ ਖੇ ਕਿਆਂ ਸਡੁ ਅਚੇ ਥੀ ਤਦਾਸੀ

ਬਿਨਾ ਕੋਠ ਈ ਘਰ ਟਿਕੇ ਥੀ ਤਦਾਸੀ

ਘਣਾਈ ਕਸ਼ਾਲਾ ਕਿਆ ਮੂੰ ਬਿ ਆਹਿਨ

ਕਡੁਹਿਂ ਕੀਨ ਤਨਹਾ ਛਡੇ ਥੀ ਤਦਾਸੀ

ਕਡੁਹਿਂ ਤ੍ਰੂ ਕਡੁਹਿਂ ਯਾਦ ਤੁਹਿੰਜੀ ਰਹੇ ਸਾਂਣੁ

ਖਣਾ ਨਾਂਤ ਤੁਹਿੰਜੋ ਫਿੜ੍ਹੇ ਥੀ ਤਦਾਸੀ

ਲਗੇ ਪਾਲਤੂ ਕਹਿਂ ਬਿਲੀਅ ਜਿਧਾਂ ਤਦਾਸੀ

ਧਿਕੇ ਕਢੁ, ਵਰੀ ਘਰ ਘਿੜੇ ਥੀ ਤਦਾਸੀ

ਖਣੀ ਅਖ ਭਿਸਾਂ ਰੋੜ ਆਕਾਸ਼ ਡੇ ਥੋ

ਪਰੀ ਕਾ ਲਹੇ ਪਰ, ਲਹੇ ਥੀ ਤਦਾਸੀ

ਪਿਰੀ ਪਰਭਰੋ ਥਾ ਵਠਨ ਜਾਇ ਹਰਦਮ

ਅਚੀ ਭਰ ਮੌਂ ਵੇਹੀ ਰਹੇ ਥੀ ਤਦਾਸੀ

ਜਡੁਹਿਂ ਮੁਹਿੰਜੇ ਘਰ ਤ੍ਰੂ ਅਚੀਂ ਪੇਰ ਪਾਏ

ਵਜੋਂ ਕੁੱਡ ਕਹਿਂ ਮੌਂ ਲਿਕੇ ਥੀ ਤਦਾਸੀ

ਕਢੀ ਪੇਰੁ ਬਾਹਿਰ ਅੰਡਣ ਮੁਹਿੰਜੇ ਮਾਂ ਮਸ

ਦਰੀ ਦਰ ਮਾਂ ਧੂਕੇ ਅਚੇ ਥੀ ਤਦਾਸੀ

ਤਦਾਸੀਅ ਮੌਂ ਪਿੰਣੁ ਆ ਤਸ਼ਸਵਰ ਪਿਰੀਅ ਜੋ

ਕਡੁਹਿਂ ਦਿਲਰੂਬਾ ਜਿਧਾਂ ਵਣੇ ਥੀ ਤਦਾਸੀ

ਕਡੁਹਿਂ ਬੰਦ ਘਰ ਜੋ ਕਿਆਂ ਕੀਨ ਦਰੁ ਮਾਂ

अचे थी उदासी, वजे थी उदासी

अजा याद आहे पिरींअ जे चुमण जी

पिरींअ जियां लबन सां चुमे थी उदासी

गऱ्याल नाहें मूळ वट, पिरीं नाहें मूळ वट

भरे मूळे भाकुर रुए थी उदासी

पिरीं याद आयो जड़हिं मूळे होरियां

हथन में डुई हथु छुहे थी उदासी

पखियुन खां पुछां मां, वणन खां पुछां मां

पिरींअ सां मिलण लै लुछे थी उदासी

अकेलो मां जीअरो , मरंण खां बि बदतर

हियांव मुहिंजो डारे छडे थी उदासी।

**Translation:**

1.

Today I'll take some rest under a tree

I'll read her old letter under a tree

I couldn't lay my hands on shadow for ages

Some shadow i would find under a tree

I'm so tired of running on hot sand

Let me stand on one foot under a tree

Be cautious, some sound may frighten us away

I'll meet her in silence under a tree

Ohh beloved, witness to our love is moon

Softly I'll utter your name under a tree

Greenery of heart would be washed away with tears

Softly, softly, I'll sigh under a tree

Faith has been lost near temple and mosque

Love miracle, keeps us alive under a tree

May some desires be left for future births

Surely, I'll bury a dream under a tree

May beloved sometimes spend a night with me

Hope would keep me restless under a tree.

2.

Whenever I call joy, but comes sorrow  
Always unasked stays in house sorrow

I have tried each and every way  
But has never left me alone sorrow

You or your memory dwells with me  
Uttering your name alone frightens sorrow

Sorrow seems like some homely cat  
Drive it out from home comes back sorrow

Each day I gaze at sky with eyes  
May some fairy but descends sorrow

Takes seat beloved always at bay  
Seat takes always beside me sorrow

Whenever you visit my house dear  
To some corner does retreat sorrow

Hardly thou step out from courtyard  
Through door and window gushes in sorrow

Even in sorrow thought of beloved  
Sometimes like beloved I love's sorrow

Never shut I, door of my house  
Sorrow does come and then goes out sorrow

Memory of her kiss still in mind  
Like dear, with her lips kisses me sorrow

Neither gazal nor dear is with me  
holding me in embrace weeps sorrow

Faintly when her thought comes to mind  
placing her hand in mind touches sorrow

Let me ask birds, let me ask trees  
restless to meet her beloved sorrow

Lonely lonesome life, worse than death  
you know not how breaks my heart sorrow.

MatruAkshar

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Tamil

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Research

## விடுதலை வேள்வியில் மகா கவி சுப்பிரமணிய பாரதி

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### முன்னுரை

உலகில் பிறந்த ஜீவராசிகள் அனைத்தும் சுதந்திரமாக வாழவே விரும்புகின்றன. அதில் மனிதன் ஒருபடி மேலே சென்று விடுதலைக்கு வேண்டி தன் உடல், பொருள், ஆவி அனைத்தையும் இழக்க / துறக்கத் தயாராக இருப்பவன் 'சுதந்திரம் எனது பிறப்புரிமை' என்று உரக்கக் குரல் கொடுத்தவர்.

இந்தியா 1947 ஆகஸ்ட் 15ல் விடுதலை பெற்றது. இந்த விடுதலை பெற கணக்கில் அடங்கா இந்தியர்கள் தன் இன்னுயிரை ஈந்து பெற்றனர். அந்த தியாகிகளை, தேசப்பற்றாளர்களை நினைவுகூர்வதே எதிர்வரும் இளைய சமுதாயத்திற்கு வழிகாட்டியாக இருக்க வேண்டும். அவர்களில் முதன்மை வகிப்பவர் மகாகவி சுப்பிரமணிய பாரதியார்.

இளமைகாலம் : 1882 டிசம்பர் 11ல் சின்னசாமி - இலக்குமி இணையருக்கு மகவாக எட்டயபுரத்தில் பிறந்தவர். 11-வது வயதிலேயே 'பாரதி' என்ற பட்டத்தை எட்டையபுரம் மகாராஜா வழங்கினார் என்றால் பாரதியின் புலமையை சொல்லவும் வேண்டுமோ?

பன்முக ஆற்றல் : பாரதி கவிஞர், எழுத்தாளர், ஊடகவியலாளர், 39 ஆண்டுகளே வாழ்ந்த இவர் என்னிலடங்கா கவிதைகள், கட்டுரைகள், நாடகங்கள் எனத் தன் எண்ண அலைகளை பதிவு செய்துள்ளார். சுதேசமித்திரன் என்ற நாளிதழுக்குத் துணை ஆசிரியராகவும், இந்தியா என்ற வார இதழை நடத்தியதோடு சமஸ்கிருதம், ஆங்கிலம் மொழி பெயர்ப்பும் செய்துள்ளார்.

### 1. பாரதியின் தேசியம்

பாரதி இந்த நாட்டுக்குக் கிடைத்த பெரும் புதையல். தமது கவித்திறமையால் மக்களின் நெஞ்சங்களில் விடுதலை வேட்கையை தன் பாட்டின் மூலம் விதைத்தவர். சமுதாய எழுச்சி செய்த சமுதாய சிற்பி.

அடிமைதனத்தின் அவலத்தையும் விடுதலையின் பெருமையையும் தன் பாட்டின் திறத்தால் அரைக்கவல் விடுக்கிறார்.

'பாரத நாடு பழம் பெரும் நாடு  
நீரதன் புதல்வர் நினைவில் கொள்'

என்றும், சொந்த நாட்டில் பிறந்த நீ பிறருக்கு அடிமையில்லை துணிந்து நில் என்கிறார். அதுமட்டுமா? மலைக்கும் ஆற்றுக்கும் சொந்தம் கொண்டாடியவன் பாரதி.

'மண்ணும் இமய மலை எங்கள் மலையே'

என்றும்,

'கங்கை ஆறெறங்கள் ஆறே'

என்று பாடியதோடு நில்லாமல் இந்தியா விடுதலை பெற்றுவிட்டால்

'வங்கத்தில் ஓடிவரும் நீரின் மிகையால் மையத்து நாடுகளில் பயிரிடுவோம்' என்று நதிநீர் இணைப்பைப் பற்றி அன்றே தீர்க்கதரிசனத்தோடு கனவு கண்டுள்ளார். இன்று நதிநீர் இணைப்பைப் பற்றி பேசிக்கொண்டு இருக்கிறோம். அன்றே பாரதத்தை பொன்விளையும் பூமியாக்க எண்ணி பாமர மக்களையும் தட்டி எழுப்பியவன் பாரதி.

2. பாரதியின் தொலைநோக்கு

பாரதி ஒரு ரிஷி, பாரதி ஒரு சித்தர் என்றால் அது மிகையாகாது. பாரதம் விடுதலை பெறுவதற்கு சுமார் 25 ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்னதாக,

'தாயின் மணிக்கொடி பட்டொளி வீசிப் பறப்பதைப் பாரீர்'

என்றதோடு நிற்காமல்,

'ஆடுவோமே பள்ளு பாடுவோமே

ஆனந்த சுதந்திரம் அடைந்து விட்டோமென்று'

ஆனந்த தாண்டவம் ஆடியவன் பாரதி. அதோடு நின்றானா, விடுதலை பெற்றபின் எங்கள் தாய் திருநாட்டில்,

'ஆயுதம் செய்வோம் நல்ல காகிதம் செய்வோம்

ஆலைகள் வைப்போம் கல்விச் சாலைகள் வைப்போம்'

என்றும்,

'வானையளப்போம் கடல் மீனையளப்போம்

சந்திர மண்டலத்தியல் கண்டு தெளிவோம்'

என்று பாடிய பாரதியின் தொலைநோக்குப் பார்வையை எப்படிப் பாராட்டினாலும் ஈடுசெய்ய முடியாது நம்மால்.

3. பாரதி கண்ட பாரதப் பெண்கள்

ஓவ்வொரு குடும்பமும் உயர்ந்தால் தான் அந்த ஊரே உயரும், ஊர் உயர்ந்தால் தான் அந்த நாடு உயரும், நாடு உயர்ந்தால் தான் உலகம் சமநிலை பெரும், உயர்வு தாழ்விலா நிலை பெரும். இவை அனைத்துக்கும் அச்சாணியாக இருப்பவள் பெண் என்று பாரதி போற்றுகின்றான். பெண்களை பராசக்தியின் வடிவாக காண்கிறான் பாரதி.

4. பாஞ்சாலி சபதம்

இந்திய தேசத்தில் இருபெரும் காவியங்களில் மகாபாரதம் ஒன்று. அதில் பாஞ்சாலிக்கு ஏற்பட்ட துன்பமும் துயரமும், அதர்மம் தழைத்து தர்மத்தைத் துறந்த ஆட்சியாளர்களின் அடிமைபோக்கை விளக்குவது என்பது நாம் அறிந்த செய்தியே. அதை மையக்கருத்தாகக் கொண்டு நமது சுதந்திர தேவியின் அவல நிலையை எடுத்தியம்புவதற்காகவும், ஆங்கில ஏகாதிபத்திய அடிமைத்தளையிலிருந்து விடுபட சுதந்திர வேட்கையை பாஞ்சாலி சபதம் மூலம் படைத்தவன் பாரதி.

#### 5. பாரதநாடு வீரர்கள் வாழும் வீடு

வீரம் விளை நிலமாக உள்ள நாடே பாரத நாடு. இந்நாட்டில் நீ அவதரித்துள்ளாய். 'பாரதம் பாருக்கெல்லாம் திலகம், நீ அதன் புதல்வன் என்பதை உள்ளத்தில் பதிய வை' என்கிறார். உறுதியோடும், உரத்தோடும் உயர்ந்த நோக்கத்தோடும் விடுதலை விரும்பிகளை அழைக்கிறார்,

'ஓளிபடைத்த கண்ணினாய் வா வா வா  
உறுதி கொண்ட நெஞ்சினாய் வா வா வா'

என்று மக்களின் அடிமைத்தனத்தை ஓழிக்கும் வழியைக் கூறி அவர்தம் வீரத்தைத் தட்டி எழுப்புகிறார். தாயின்மணிக்கொடியைக் காக்க அன்னையின் அடிமை விலங்கை தகர்க்க ஓடிவந்த வீரர்கள் எத்தனை எத்தனை பேர்கள்.

ஓ, வீரனே தன்மானம் காக்க தளர்ச்சிக்கொள்ளாதே, எத்தனை தீமைகள், இடர்கள் வந்தாலும் அச்சம் கொள்ளாது எதிர்த்து நில் துணிவுடன்,

'அச்சமில்லை அச்சமில்லை அச்சமென்பதில்லையே  
உச்சி மீது வானிடிந்து வீழுகின்றபோதிலும் அச்சமில்லை'

என்றும்,

'என்று தணியும் எங்கள் சுதந்திர தாகம்

என்றும்,

'காலா, உனை நான் சிறு புல்லென மதிக்கிறேன்'

என்றும், விடுதலை விரும்பிகளை மரணத்தை ஏற்க வேண்டிய நிலை வந்தாலும், எமனே நம் எதிரில் வந்தாலும் அவனை எதிர்க்கும் துணிவு கொள்ள வேண்டுமென இளைஞர்களையும் விடுதலை விரும்பிகளையும் தன் பாட்டின் மூலம் ஊக்கமளித்தவன் பாரதி. ஆங்கிலத்தில் ஒரு பழமொழி.

#### 6. பாரதி ஒரு புரட்சியாளன்

'பாட்டுக்கொரு புலவன் பாரதி  
தமிழ்நாட்டுக்குத் தவப்புதல்வன் பாரதி'

39 ஆண்டுகளே வாழ்ந்தவன் பாரதி. 125-வது நினைவுநாளைக் கொண்டாடிக் கொண்டு இருக்கிறோம். மேடைதோறும் சாதிமத பேதமின்றி

ஆட்சியாளர்களும், அரசியல்வாதிகளும், ஆன்மீகவாதிகளும் அவன் பெயரை உச்சரிக்காமல் விழா நிறைவேறாது.

'ஊர் உள்ளளவும் உலகு உள்ளளவும் நீர், நிலம் உள்ளளவும் என் பெயர் உள்ளளவும் இலங்கையை ஆட்சி செய்வாயாக' என இராமன் சொல்வதாக கம்பன் காவியம் படைத்தான்.

அதுபோல் தமிழரும், தமிழும் உள்ளவரை எட்டுத்திக்கும் அவன் ஒரு புரட்சியாளன் என்று பாடிக்கொண்டிருக்கும்.

காரணம் அவன் பல மொழிகளைக் கற்றவன். ஷல்லியை ரசித்தவன். கம்பனையும், இளங்கோவையும், வள்ளுவனையும் வானுயரப் புகழ்ந்தவன். (செந்தமிழ்நாடு)

உலக சமுதாயமே உயர வேண்டுமென்று ஓங்கிக் குரல் கொடுத்தவன். 'தனி ஒருவனுக்கு உணவில்லை என்றால் இந்த ஐகத்தினை அழித்திடுவோம்' என்ற புரட்சிக் கருத்தாளன்.

தெருவெங்கும் தமிழ் முழுக்கம் செழித்திட கனவு கண்டவன். பழம் பெருமை பேசி காலத்தை வீணாடிக்காமல் எட்டுத்திக்கும் சென்று கலைச்செல்வங்கள் கொண்டு வந்து சேருங்கள் என்று கட்டளையிட்ட புரட்சியாளன்.

பாப்பா பாட்டு, கண்ணன் பாட்டு, குயில்பாட்டு என்று பாடியதோடு நில்லாமல் காக்கை குருவி எங்கள் சாதி என்று சொந்தம் கொண்டாடியவன்.

பராசக்தியை (Lord Durga) நாட்டு விடுதலைக்கும் வளமான பாரதம் செழிக்க வல்லமைத் தரவேண்டும் என்று ஆணையிடுகிறான். (சுடர்மிகு அறிவுடன் படைத்துவிட்டாய் வல்லமை தாராயோ)

பாரதநாடு பழம் பெரும் நாடு. இந்த நாட்டில் நாம் மட்டும் பிறக்கவில்லை, நம் தந்தையும் தாயும் கொஞ்சி குழாவிய நாடு ஆயிரம் ஆயிரம் ஆண்டுகளாக நம் மூத்தோர்கள் வாழ்ந்த நாடு இந்நாட்டில் அந்நியர்கள் நம்மை அடிமைப்படுத்த விடலாமா? . (மோதி மிதித்துவிடு பாப்பா).

அச்சம் கொள்ளல் ஆகாது பாப்பா, மோதி மிதித்துவிடு பாப்பா, காரி உமிழ்ந்துவிடு பாப்பா, என்று சிறுவருக்கு அறிவுரை சொன்ன பாரதி இளைய சமுதாயத்துக்கு நிமிர்ந்த நன்னடை நேர்கொண்ட பார்வையுடன் ஞானச் செருக்கோடு இருக்க ஆணையிடுகிறான். பராசக்தி அன்னையின் உருவில் பாரதத் தாயைக் கண்டான். அடிமை என்ற சங்கிலியை அறுத்தெறிய விடுதலை உணர்வையும், மொழிப்பற்றையும், தேசப்பற்றையும் மனதில் உறுதிகொள்ள வேண்டுமென்று வித்திட்டவன் பாரதி என்றால் அதுமிகையாகாது.

துணிச்சல் மிக்கவன் பாரதி. எழுத்துக்கும் செயலுக்கும் இடைவெளி இருக்கக் கூடாது என வாழ்ந்து காட்டியவன் பாரதி. சாதி வெறியால் சிதறுண்ட

சமுதாயத்தை ஒன்று சேர்க்க போராடியவன் பாரதி. அக்காலத்தில் தெருக்களில் நடந்தாலே தீட்டு என்ற நிலை இருந்ததை சாடுகிறான் பாரதி.

ஜாதிகள் இல்லையடி பாப்பா என்று பாடியதோடு நிற்காமல் தாழ்த்தப்பட்ட இனத்தைச் சேர்ந்த கனகலிங்கத்தை தன் இல்லத்துக்கு அழைத்து நடுவீட்டில் அமர்த்தி அந்தணர் அணிகின்ற பூணுலை அணிவித்து இனி யாரும் உன் பெயர் என்னவென்று கேட்டால் 'என் பெயர் கனகலிங்கம் ஜயர்' எனச் சொல் என வாழ்ந்து காட்டியவன். துணிச்சல் மிக்கவன் பாரதி.

விடுதலை உணர்வை தட்டி எழுப்பியவன் பாரதி. அந்நியர் ஆட்சியிலிருந்து விடுதலை பெற வேண்டும் என்று மக்களின் மனதில் பசுமரத்தாணிபோல் பதிய வைத்தவன் பாரதி. இதற்கு ஒரு எடுத்துக்காட்டு. தீரன் வாஞ்சிநாதன். கொடுங்கோல் ஆட்சிபுரிந்த வெள்ளையன் ஆஷி துரையை துப்பாக்கியால் சுட்டுக் கொன்றான். வழக்கு நீதிமன்றத்திற்குச் சென்றது. வாஞ்சிநாதனை இந்த அளவுக்கு தூண்டிய சக்திகள் எவை எவை என்ற நீதிபதியின் கேள்விக்கு,

'அச்சமில்லை அச்சமில்லை  
அச்சமென்பதில்லையே'

என்றும்,

'என்று தணியும் எங்கள் சுதந்திர தாகம்'

என்று கனல் தெறிக்கும் கவிஞர் பாடல்கள் தான் விடுதலை வேட்கையைத் தூண்டின என ஆதாரமாக வைக்கப்பட்டது.

தமிழரும், தமிழும் உள்ளவரை தரணி எங்கும் பாரதி விதைத்த விதை தழைத்தோங்கும் என்பது திண்ணைம்.

முடிவுரை

பாரதியார் தான் கொண்ட கொள்கையினை எப்பொழுதும், யாருக்காகவும் விட்டுக் கொடுத்தது இல்லை. சொல்லுக்கும் செயலக்கும் இடைவெளி இல்லாமல் வாழ்ந்த மகா புருஷன். இந்த நாடு / உலகம் உள்ளவரை அவர் புகழ் ஒலித்துக் கொண்டே இருக்கும்.

'வாழிய செந்தமிழ் வாழ்க நற்றமிழன்  
வாழிய பாரத மணித்திரு நாடு'

## "Freedom voice of Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharathiyar"

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### Introduction:-

Those who born in this world would like to live with freedom to breath. The thread of life of Bal Gangadhar Tilak had been "Freedom is my birth right". Former American President Abraham Lincoln has been against apartheid and sacrificed his life fighting for equal rights to black people to the hilt.

We attained Independence on **15 Aug 1947**. Thousands of Indian freedom fighters, sacrificed their lives for the noble cause. It becomes our paramount duty to remember those remarkable patriots/freedom fighters. One among them was Maha Kavi Subramaniya Bharathiyar.

### Early Life (Childhood)

Subramaniyam was born on **11 Dec 1882** at Ettaiyapuram (near Thoothukudi) to Chinasamy and Lakshmi. At the age of **11** he was awarded the title "Bharathi (blessed by Saraswathi)" by Maharaja of Ettaiyapuram on observing his cleverness and intelligence.

### Journalist/ Writer/Poet

Mahakavi (Great Poet) Subramaniya Bharathi lived only **39** years in this world. During this short duration he wrote/compiled many poems, plays and essays (write- ups). He was crowned with laurels for his achievements. He was a eminent Tamil writer, poet and polygot. He was a cartoonist and Journalist. He was Assistant Editor for Tamil Daily "Swadesa Mithran" for sometime (**1904-05**). He translated certain Sanskrit plays into Tamil language. In **1906**, with M.P.T. Acharya, he started editing Tamil weekly "India" and English News-paper "Bala Bharatham". Bharathi published his poems regularly in

these publications. Certain Articles openly supported resistance against British. The proprietor of Journal India was arrested.

When British government initiated a case and arrest is imminent, Bharathi escaped to Pondicherry (French territory). He had a chance to meet Aurobindo during his exile.

### Independence Movement

He took active part with his lyrics (fiery songs) during "Indian Independence movement". With his thought-provoking poems and write ups, Mahakavi Bharathi stimulated and aroused patriotism among people to long for "Independent India". He has chosen the words that has so much common with Sanskrit, with the aim to make learned men and laymen alike to understand (Perceive) his ideas/thoughts.

Indeed, he was a pioneer in Tamil modern literature. It was he who had used contemporary common words in his works so that his ideas are conveyed to the public easily without distortion. Epic "Panchali Sabatham" stands great example. Certain poems reveal the pathetic condition of the slavery during British Regime and the dire need to have an urge for freedom.

In one of his poems he asserted that

"Oh young men, You are Sons of soil. The mighty Himalayas and river Ganges And Yamuna are our Prime assets"

Perhaps he was the first prominent writer /poet to suggest linking of rivers flowing in North India (Ganges, Yamuna and Brahmaputra) with the rivers flowing in South (Cauvery, Godavary and Krishna)

### Patriotism

Resistance against British Raj in India started when British had planned to expand their empire. Nationalist movement had been in progress during **19th century**. Freedom fighters were divided into moderate and extremists. In **1906** at the Surat session of the "Indian National congress" - the split between the moderates and extremist took place.

Bharathiyan and V.O. Chidambaram Pillai gave their support to Indian extremist "Bal Gangadhar Tilak". He attended All India congress session held in Benaras **1905** (with V.O. Chidambaram Pillai). He also attended India national congress session held at Calcutta.

His influence in Tamil literature is commendable. He is capable to handle more than **10** Indian languages and **3** foreign languages. He was acclaimed as "Prominent Tamil Poet". His reputation would last as long as Tamil language survives. He was praised as guardian of Tamil language during his life time.

### **Reformist:**

He was a reformist. "Sister Nivedita" spiritual heir to Swami Vivekananda was instrumental in mending Bharathi to get involved him to recognise the privilege of women and emancipation of women. Bharathi saw women Shakthi as goddess "Parashakthi" for Independent India. Bharathi had realised that the women empowerment would sure to raise the level of society. Enhanced society in turn would raise the level of environment and it would trigger improvement of Nation at all levels.

### **Predictions**

We had been importing weaponry and explosives from foreign countries till early **60s**. Bharathi predicted that we would indigenously manufacture weapons, firearms and explosives required for Indian Defence.

### **Epic: Panchali Sabatham**

Magna carta of Bharathi is "Panchali Sabatham". (Droupadi's Pledge). Any write up about Bharathi would be incomplete without mentioning this epic. Subnamanya Bharathiyan cautiously selected the words and placed them in this epic. He spoke about the denigration caused to Panchali (Droupadi) in great detail. She was dragged into court hall and subjected to intolerable deed. In this aspect he indirectly points out the pathetic condition of people who became slave and also of slavery. He invited aspiring youths of India to contribute and to free India from the clutches of Britain.

"Oli Padaitha kanninai va va va Uruthi konda nenjinai va va va"

He encouraged youth to maintain discipline and to have a mindset" I dare to face any problem -- come what ever may":

Achamillai, achamillai, acham enbadhu illaye, Uchi meedhu vaan idinthu  
veezkindra podhilum, Achamillai, achamillai, acha~~1~~n enbadhu illaye  
Endru thaniyum intha suthanthira thagam? Endru madiyum engal adimayin  
moham?

He also advised youngsters to face the grim reaper (kala) boldly when they happened to fight for common noble cause.

He is certainly a revolutionary poet and daring writer/Journalist. He refused to dwell upon the past (bygone) glory of India. He blames and curses the nation if it is unable to fulfil the basis needs of a solitary citizen.

Thani Oruvanuku unavu illai yenil jaththinai azhithiduvom

#### **On caste system:**

Bharathi was born in an orthodox Brahmin family. But he treated all living beings to be equal.

"Child There is no caste system. It is a sin to divide people on caste basis.  
The ones who are really of a Superior class are the ones, exceling is being just, Wise, educated and loving."

He curtly said human being should not consider caste as an aspect or factor for anything.

#### **Revolutionist:**

He composed, Poems - "Pappa Pattu" , "Kuyil Pattu", and "Kannan Pattu". He declared that birds like crow and pigeon are our colleagues/ class. He advised the society not to have wide gap between words and their action. He lived his life without leaving gap between his words and his action and led an exemplary life. He invited a Dalit (kanaga lingam) made him to sit in center of his house. He performed a religious ceremony; made him wear sacred thread, (Poonoul) and declared him a Brahmin. Though it was a taboo in those days Bharathi ignored the criticism and went on to respect all human beings (from all walks of lives) alike.

**Conclusion:**

Bharathiyar was man of principles. He lived a exemplary life. He was a daring revolutionist till his last breath. He will be remembered forever for his contribution to the freedom of India. His contribution to society in terms of literature will also be remembered by entire nation.

Vazhiya senthamil vazhga Nartramizhar!

Vazhiya Bharatha Manithiru Nadu!

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