

Bengali Association of Greater Chicago - Community Newsletter

সমাজ সংবাদ

Volume 38 Issue 1



Saraswati Puja

गाडाव राज्ञावाकारणा अध्यक्षात

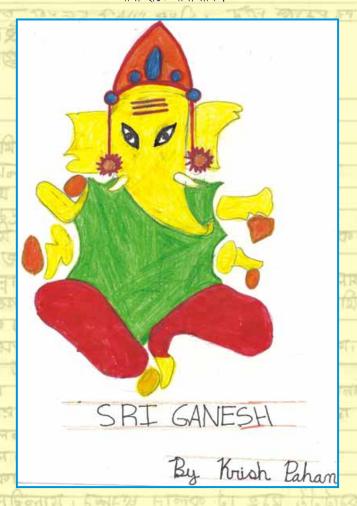
HRY ARA

S 44 75

আগামী ১৬**ই ফেব্রুয়ারী স্ট্রীমউড স্কুলে** আয়োজিত বাণী বন্দনায় বিএজিসির কার্যনির্বাহী সমিতির পক্ষ থেকে আপনাদের সকলকে সাদর আমন্ত্রণ জানাই।



''তুমি মানসের মাঝখানে আসি দাঁড়াও মধুর মুরতি বিকাশি, কুন্দবরণ সুন্দর হাসি বীণা হাতে বীণাপাণি।''









President's Message



Dear Members,

On behalf of 2013 BAGC Executive Committee I wish you good health, happiness and success throughout the year. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the 2012 Executive Committee for doing an outstanding job last year.

I am thankful to the Nomination Committee for giving me this opportunity to serve our community.

It is wonderful to receive support from a talented group of likeminded individuals who will work with me and we are excited to take this challenge to carry forward BAGC's mission.

This year we are in the process of merging the Banga Bhavan Committee with BAGC Executive Committee. The Board of Trustees (BOT) of BAGC is doing a tremendous job of overseeing this process. We are grateful to the people who worked continuously to make Banga Bhavan a reality. Banga Bhavan is part of our community and we know we will get support from every member to make Banga Bhavan thrive.

Last year we saw gun violence gripping our nation. Even small children had to bear the brunt of this mindless mayhem. It is difficult to get out of this sadness and madness that is engulfing us from every quarter. We hope that as a community we will try our utmost to work relentlessly for peace and harmony in the world around us. We also hope that our first event of this year, "Saraswati Puja", will surely lift our spirits by ushering in a warmer and brighter season. It will be held on 16th February, 2013 at Streamwood High School.

We know it is not an easy task, but success of BAGC depends not only on the effort of the committee members but through volunteer work of all members. Our team is committed to work hard with an open mind to embrace innovative ideas from all members of our community.

Sincerely,

Bitosh Sinha

2013 BAGC COMMITTEE			
President:			
Bitosh Sinha	3125158203 bitosh_s@yahoo.com		
Vice-President:			
Asim Gangopadhyay	6304180525 agangop@gmail.com		
Secretary:			
Sunayana Yang	3314426654 sunayana_y@yahoo.com		
Treasurer:			
	y 8472742079 ranit.chicago@gmail.com		
Cultural:	0.45(0.00.0.50		
	8476020353 bal_talukder@yahoo.com		
	6304012104 hravanidatta@yahoo.com		
Puja:	(20(541210		
Madhumita Banerjee	6306541219 mbanerjee@comcast.net 6304280527		
Suparna Gupta	gupta828@yahoo.com		
Food:	0.505.500.5		
Aloke Raj Banerjee Biswaroop Datta	8587528085 arscab@yahoo.com 6304008169		
Deep Bandyopadhyay	biswaroopd@yahoo.com		
d.bar	ndyopadhyay@gmail.com		
Newsletter:			
Dhiman Chakraborty	6307652788 dhiman@fnal.gov		
Ranjita Chattopadhya	y 6308988283 c_ranjita@yahoo.com		
Website/eMail:			
Rana Bose	8478437238 ranbose@gmail.com		
Facility:			
Sudip Maiti	8477222780 sudipmaiti@hotmail.com		
Tuhin Majumdar	3316259860 tuhin00@gmail.com		
Ads / Sponsorship:			
•	6304605537 rabortyworld@gmail.com		
Youth:			
Reemlee Dhorchowdl	reemlee.d@gmail.com		
Reshmee Dhorchowd	hury 8478584979 reshumee@yahoo.com		
Registration:			
Gokul Bose	8154829408 bose75rkm@yahoo.com		
Neel Saha	6308066724 neel_saha@yahoo.com		
BB Chairman :			
Monisha Datta	6308300851 monisha@yahoo.com		
BB Treasurer :			
Uditt Mukherjee ud	8152373545 litt@mukherjeefamily.net		

Saraswati Puja — Venue & Program

Date: Saturday, February 16, 2013

Venue: Streamwood High School

701 W Schaumburg Road, Streamwood, IL, 60107

Programme:

Registration Starts — 10:00AM

Puja — 10:30 AM

Anjali and Hathe Khori** — 12:30 PM

Prasad — 1:30 PM

Bisarjan — 1:30 PM

** Please bring your own slate and chalk or notebook with pencil for Hathe Khori

Direction from North / East -

Take I-90/94 Westbound, take IL-59 New Sutton Road Exit and turn left at W Schaumburg Road. School is on the right.

Direction from South / West -

Take IL-59 Sutton Road North, turn right at W Schaumburg Road. School is on the right.

Cultural Program

Saraswati Bandana will be performed by Lia Nandi, Bidula Sinha and possibly Smita Sarkar. (10 minutes)

Sudeshna Chakraborty will conduct a program with children from Bangla School. (20 minutes)

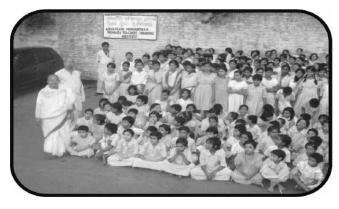
Reemlee Dharchowdhury will conduct a dance drama with children from age group 2 years to 17 years. This is a play highlighting relevance of education and influence of Saraswati on their lives. (25 minutes)

External Artist: Moonmita Ghosh: An evening of melody. (1 hour)

Born to a musically inclined family, Moonmita took her first lesson at a very tender age of 4 from her mother, Late Smt Krishna Ghosh. She has received valuable guidance in Hindusthani classical by Sri Ramkrishna Basu, a disciple of Ustad Amir Khan Saheb and light music by Maestro Sri Sukumar Mitra. Moonmita obtained a first class in Sangeet Pravakar and B.Mus degree in Nazrulgeeti. She trained herself in Indian classical music under the tutelage of Pandit Jayanto Basu since 1998.

Dakshineswar Ramkrishna Sangha Adyapeath





THESE KIDS ARE GROWING UP WITH YOUR HELP

Contact:

Mural Bhai 50-D.D. Mondal Ghat Road P.O.: Dakshineswar Kolkata - 700076, West Bengal, India muralbhaiadyapeath@rediffmail.com

Program Timing

Lunch for Children – 1 PM, Adult – 1:30 PM

Snacks – 4 PM

Cultural Program (Part 1) – 6 PM

Dinner for Children – 7:30 PM, Adult – 8 PM

Cultural Program (Part 2) – 9:15 PM

Acknowledgements

Cover Photographs

Saumen Chattopadhyay

Community Photographs

Malabika Palit, Sumanta Kodali, Manotosh and Basanti Banerjee

Cover Art

Ananya Bhattacharya (Age 15)

সম্পাদকীয়

ইংরাজী ২০১৩ সালে আপনাদের সকলকে স্বাগত। কেটে গোল আরও একটি বছর। অন্যান্য সব বছরের মতোই ২০১২-ও ছিল বাঙালীর জাতীয় জীবনে এবং ব্যক্তিগত জীবনে কিছু পাওয়া আর কিছু হারানোর বছর। তবে এখন কিছু ফিরে দেখার সময় নয় — এখন সময় নূতন করে স্বপ্ন দেখার, এখন সময় জীবনকে আবার নূতন করে পাওয়ার। ২০১৩ সালের 'বি এ জি সি'-র কার্যনির্বাহী সমিতির পক্ষ থেকে আপনাদের সকলকে জানাই নূতন বছরের আন্তরিক প্রীতি ও শুভেচ্ছা।

উৎসবপ্রিয় বাঙালীর 'বার মাসে তের পার্ব্যণে'র প্রথম যেটি বৃহত্তর শিকাগোর বাঙালীরা বিপুল উৎসাহের সঙ্গেপালন করে সেটি সরস্বতী পুজো। সরস্বতী কিসের দেবী তা নিয়ে শাস্ত্রীয় বিতর্কের অবকাশ থাকলেও সাধারণ বাঙালীমানসে জ্ঞানদায়িনী দেবীরূপেই মায়ের উজ্জ্বল অধিষ্ঠান। সরস্বতী পুজোকে ঘিরে তাই বোধহয় বিদ্যার্থীদের আনন্দ উদ্দীপনা সবসময়ই বেশী। পুজোর আগের দিন রাত জেগে প্রতিমা সাজান, পুজোর দিন ভোরবেলা স্নান করে অনভ্যস্ত ভঙ্গীতে হলুদ শাড়ী বা পাজামা পাঞ্জাবী পরে একঝাঁক তরুণ-তরুলীর হৈ হৈ করে নিজেদের স্কুলবাড়ীর দিকে পুশাঞ্জলি দিতে যাওয়া — আমাদের অনেকেরই সরস্বতী পুজোর স্মৃতির সঙ্গে বড় নিবিড়ভাবে জড়িয়ে আছে এই চিত্রগুলি।

নতুন প্রজন্মের তরুণ-তরুণীরা যারা এই দেশে জন্মগ্রহন করেছে তারা এই উত্তেজনার স্বাদ থেকে বঞ্চিত। কিন্তু তারাও তাদের মতো করে সামিল হয় মা সরস্বতীর আবাহনের আনন্দোৎসবে । আর এই আনন্দোৎসবের আয়োজনে তাদের সামিল করে নেওয়ার বেশ কিছুটা দায়িত্ব কিন্তু আমাদের মতো প্রবীণ-প্রবীণাদের। এই ভাবনা থেকেই আমাদের 'সমাজ সংবাদ'-এর প্রথম সংখ্যাটি 'বি এ জি সি'র শিশু, কিশোর এবং তরুণ সদস্যদের জন্য উৎসর্গ করা হল। তাদের অনেকের সৃজনী প্রতিভার স্বাক্ষরে সমৃদ্ধ এই সংখ্যাটি সকলের কাছেই উপভোগ্য হবে আশা করি । আমাদের আবেদনে সাড়া দিয়ে নিজেদের লেখা বা শিল্পকর্ম পাঠানোর জন্য তাদের সকলকে আমাদের আন্তরিক ভালবাসা ও শুভকামনা জানালাম। আশা করি তারা সকলে সারা বছর এইভাবেই আমাদের সঙ্গে থাকবে।

আপনাদের সকলের কাছে আমাদের বিশেষ অনুরোধ আপনারা সুস্থ থাকবেন, আনন্দে থাকবেন আর অবশ্যই আমাদের সঙ্গে থাকবেন । আপনাদের নিজেদের লেখা বা 'সমাজ সংবাদ' সম্পর্কে আপনাদের সুচিন্তিত অভিমত আমাদের কাছে সবসময়ই মূল্যবান । আপনাদের শুভেচ্ছা ও সহযোগিতা সারা বছর আমাদের চলার পথের পাথেয় রূপে পাব এই ভরসায় 'সমাজ সংবাদ' সম্পাদনার গুরুদায়িত্ব আমরা কাঁধে তুলে নিলাম ।

ধন্যবাদান্তে,

রঞ্জিতা চট্টোপাধ্যায় ধীমান চক্রবর্ত্তী

2013 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RATES

Annual Membership - \$50/family (not applicable for Emeritus members)

GFP:

Single adult : \$120

\$140 after February 10

Self-Supporting Students: \$100

Kids (Age 6-18) : \$60

\$65 after February 10

Annual Membership : \$35

\$50 after February 10

Saraswati Puja Rates:

Member

Adult	\$30
Self-Supporting Student	\$20
Kids (Age 6-18)	\$15

Non-member

Adult	\$35
Self-Supporting Student	\$25
Kids (Age 6-18)	\$20

- All rates stated above are for early registration (early registration cut off date is 10th February).
- Door premium all rates related to Saraswati Puja will be \$10+.

The Unique Achievement of Chicago's Banga Bhavan Monisha Datta

On Sep 9, 2012, BAGC celebrated the first anniversary of Banga Bhavan, which was inaugurated in August 2011. This is a unique achievement for a Bengali community anywhere in the USA.

There are 64 Bengali associations listed and registered in America; but none of them owns a building. Some Bengali associations are affiliated with a temple cum community center and you may be familiar with them—the Durgabari in Houston, the Ananda-mandir in NJ, and the Kali-mandir at NY. However, only BAGC owns a building!

In our first year of operation, we took some time to repair the building and make it convenient for events of 200 people or less. For our larger events like Saraswati Puja, Durga Puja, Kali Puja and Banga Divas, we continue to rent school buildings.

The advantage of having the Banga Bhavan is that now we can conduct events such as weekly pujas, cultural programs, Bangla School, rehearsals, and movies at BB. Also special events like Ananda Mela, and BAGC committee meetings are easily accommodated. Members welcomed the events and attended them enthusiastically. Some members of BAGC have formed





a Movie Club and a Kids Club. They rent the space for their events. Over time, more members are getting familiar with Banga Bhavan, more events and activities are being held, just as we anticipated before the purchase of this property.

The establishment of Banga Bhavan has only been possible through years of tenacity by BAGC members, and by the hard work of a dedicated team led by Sandeep Chaudhuri, the first Chairman of Banga Bhavan. They harmoniously guided the community through a long process of consensus building, researching, negotiating, purchase and repair. Their fund-raising efforts inspired an unprecedented amount of donations from our members, which qualified BAGC for a loan to buy this property.

On behalf of BAGC, I extend our heartfelt appreciation to Sandeep and his team for three years of tireless efforts. I will seek their advice during my term of Banga Bhavan management and operations. I look forward to seeing your continued involvement, support and enjoyment of this unique facility.

For more information, please visit https://sites.google.com/site/bangabhavan/

Banga Bhavan Committee				
Chairman	Monisha Dutta	630-830-0851		
Vice Chairman	Soma Sanyal	847-359-4930		
Secretary	Abhik Paul	630-523-5513		
Fund Raising	Sonali Biswas	847-392-7480		
Facility	Rahul Chatterjee	630-513-7580		

Announcement

Please mark your calendar for Poush Parbon celebration on January 27, 2013 and Shri Panchami Puja on February 15, 2013.



757

134 \ (11/2) gLEYA AYPYCS AFLES DIAGCHAD MIA 746, 747, 9114 CONCALD A RCA · CHISICHA 4 TY TELY পোনদ 2657 CO

Devanshi 201 (O.) SE

प्राफारक प्याचात्र मीज्यानित बुँ क्रिकृत रात्ना । प्राफारक प्याचात्र वनुत वार्ष याद्या । प्याचात्र द्या ध्याप्तमात्र क्रिक वानाव । प्याच्या भागिका भागिका भागिका व्यव नार्कत । प्राच्या भागिका व्यव नार्कत नाम व्यव प्रदेश क्रिका । वार्ष्य नाम व्यव प्रदेश क्रिका । प्राच्य भागिका अपना क्रिका । प्राच्य भागिका अपना क्रिका । प्राच्य भागिका अपना क्रिका । प्राच्य अपना अपना क्रिका । प्राच्य अपना अपना क्रिका । प्राच्या अपना क्रिका ।



প্ৰাষ্ট্ৰ 12/8/2012 দাৰাউড় age: 8

(বি প্র প্রাপ্তর

ब्युमिट्टरे निकारता भरे बहुत हम्मित्र है तिराह्म 15m7 1 मिंद्र उम्मी विभावति स्था (50) DILA भार्य तात्राक 46m3 उतामा। न(५ म्बर ५ ७ मिट्स द्वार्ट क्ता। जामि उ मामा मुखा छ मात्र द्वाल हमाउं प्रदेन हमाम व्यातिक ब्लोक ब्लोह मिल जारे मिला डाउ पर गार्ड अनाम। 17:1960 FOM आमा उत्यो रहाता उवामा ७०२ उ उमती २०५ रेज्यक देविन व्यक्ति भारती द्वार भारत है । उद्

নাম বাদি খুব খুপি। তাজে আমার জিটেন মারা আমার। জিটেন মারা আমার।
কুলথেক বল করে লনাম। তথালে
লিনকন পরিবারের মূর্তি দেখলামা
তারপর লিনকন মুদ্রীয়াম লেলামা
লিরকনের ওপর দুটো ভিউও
দেখলামা আমারা অনেক কিছু জানতে
পারলামা তারপর তামারা উপসারের
দোকান পোলামা। আমারা তামারা আনক
জিনিস কিনলামা। ত্যামারা তালাক
প্রমান মির্গালন মোরালিশন দেখলামা
সামার সির্গালন মোরালিশন দেখলামা
সামার সির্গালন মোরালিশন দেখলামা
সামার সির্গালন মোরালিশন দেখলামা
সামার সির্গালন মারা।
— অর্জুন পালা
— অর্জুন পালা

र्डेन ज्य न्मार्थ नामध्र भारते थादन ভাগ্না দেখি, অক্সকে নিল্ডে আদাভাগ্না का(ला आक्रास्त्र। वल्नाला जाता दक वानायुन भा वल GOD, आमि आरि GOD उरे बुद्धिर Use कर्व करता? द्वाष्ट्रे छापि अक्टा बडीन जाबा किंग् प्रमुख बाह्या.... एराला ३ अमे, मूर्व किक (५(४)हि-लाल इंस्ड छोड़े वर्ग वर्ष यहा इदिनामार क्षेत्र मा एक माठेन, (भर्म या ३ , अप्य- यात । अभा। अव (वे अहिंदू 2007 Aenoplane 28 WMM7! नाभाव क्षेत् श्रम हारिय ARTS, WITA GOD SIGN Coloning Per ता रमधाई 9/1/4

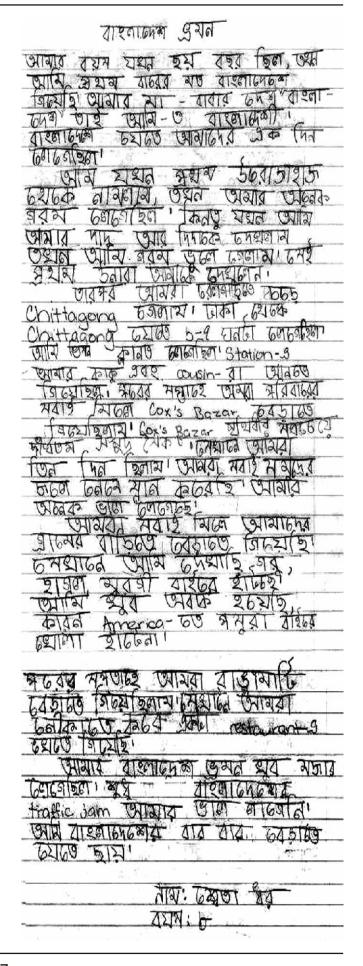
भविष्ठे मिर्केर मिर्केर मिर्केर में स्वास्त्र कार्या कार्या केर्या कार्या कार्

Spring Alo Chakravarty (Age 8)

Sunny weather, nice weather,
Not much wind, so I don't need a sweater.
Now I see the sun rise
Oh, what are those? they're butterflies!
The snow is melting,
Birds are chirping
Oh, stop that, Anand,
Please stop that burping!

Flowers blooming,
Plants growing,
Mother says,
Put down that ball you're throwing!
Everyone laughing,
Enjoying playing,
Now everyone is tired,
Now we are laying.

जाति जाता । जात



The Elephants

Suranjana Chattopadhyay (Age 15)

They sit in the room. Two shadows, hardly noticed in the clutter and confusion of a teenage life. Yet, they sit there day after day; guardians of something once precious and now forgotten. A reminder of the carefree days, when all that mattered was fairytales and the far away lands brought close through stories. A reminder of the days when the room was a castle and the world was something distant, far away. Now the world has caught up, the castle has gone away. Withered to nothing, except for the two shadows, they still stay.

But sometimes, on those nights when the sky is clear, and the stars shine through, when there are no clouds to block out the moonlight, the castle comes back again. On those nights when all that can be heard is the sound of the calm, pouring rain against the windowpane, instead of the un-ceasing hurricane of the mind, whose torrential winds bring cold, loneliness, and carry with them all the whispers of fear. On those nights when they talked, paid attention, and looked, bringing in the warmth and happiness of being wanted. On those nights when the notes of music crept in, just loud enough to block out all the thoughts that came with tomorrow. On those nights the world goes away, and finally dreams can reign. Then, they're no longer shadows at the edge of the bed anymore, but two stuffed animals! Elephants, gray and blue, withered down to just little pieces of cloth, stuffed with visions, wishes, and wonder.

The fur smells musty, not bad, but old and sweet. Several patches have waned away to nothing, exposing the white fluffy stuffing inside. White despite thousands of patiently tolerated falls, tight hugs, and tears. Many, many tears, and broken dreams, and frustrations. But yet, the stuffing stayed white. The color was almost an act of defiance. Rebelling against the negativity of it all, a firm supporter of almost extinct feelings of optimism, enthusiasm, and happiness. A monument dedicated to childhood dreams, a reminder of their strength, innocence, and wonder. The castle grew stronger.

The elephants' eyes are warm and understanding. Black, round, and shiny, they project a distorted reflection of whoever looks into them. However, sometimes the distortion is what makes everything fall into place. Sometimes reality has to be slightly bent, a little more flexible, in order to fit right. The eyes don't talk, they listen. To all the stories, to all the progress, to all the failures, to all the giddy happiness. They don't talk, but somewhere along the road, the reflection changes, somewhere along the road something is seen that was not noticed before. Sometimes the eyes caught the falsehood of the humor, the biting sarcasm of the words, the progress brought on by the failures, and the gaze not caught before.

They sit in the room. Melancholy in the way they awkwardly look on as storms pass by. Their eyes reflect the window across the bed, all the cars, all the people, and all their stories. However they are content with their place, never complaining of all they bear. These shadows, these guardians, these elephants are hardly noticed, but yet, never forgotten.



Note from editors:—

Thank you very much for your literary contributions to this issue. Hope you will continue sending your articles throughout the year. Please bear with us if we do minor editing of your article for formatting purpose. The deadline to submit any article for the next issue of Samaj Sambad is March 1st.

We are encouraging you to read Samaj Sambad online in order to save resources and join the green movement. Please send us an e-mail with "stop paper copy of Samaj Sambad" in the subject line, to newsletter@bagc.net if you would like to stop receiving paper copies of Samaj Sambad by postal mail. You can resume getting paper copies at any time if you change your mind in future.

Three...two...one...zero! Sangrag Ganguli (Age 17)

It rained all day long. The dark, gloomy sky was shedding its last few teardrops on mother earth. The people in the city were remarkably casual today, expressing apathy in every step they took. But the children sensed it. Many of them lacked the smile they usually have on. Others simply gazed at the tall skyscrapers around them, staring agape at the vastness of something so small.

And then it came. Came as the Mayans had predicted. And they knew. Knew that everything had an end. An end that was inescapable. Inescapable like the droplets of rain falling on this planet. This planet was something. Something we never realized.

But we did now. And of course, we would...when it was *this* close to obliteration.

The people panicked. And oh, it was one sight to see. Screams, cries, shrieks - all noises coalesced into this one continuous, yet sort of harmonic, tune. The tune that the birds sang stopped, perhaps perpetually, because the birds were no more. They were all subjected to the dark force that chased humanity into the corner of the world.

Blackness diffused. This massive cloud of darkness and unbearable heat started to envelope the planet. Enormous meteors fell on earth, hitting each and every house. And we knew that this was it. This was apocalypse.

People cursed at the event, at the blackness, at others, and, sadly, at themselves. Some ran only to get hit by a furious ball of fire. Others shed tears, holding their loved ones, reciting a few soft words of endearment and farewell, and humming their last prayers. Their eyes sparkled. Not like the one when someone is excited, but in fear and awe.

Blackness diffused. Spilling its dark magic on the face of this planet. It ran and ran and ran and ran and kept running. As if harnessed to these majestically powerful horses, the black clouds of apocalypse covered the entirety of the earth.

Finally, it was over. The entire planet was gone. Its inhabitants long dead. Its beauty long destroyed. The flowers, the birds, the bees, the ants, the tigers, the rocks - all gone. Transformed into ashes. And

sucked into this massive black ball that we once called Earth.

It all came back to the cliché saying: all good things come to an end. The Earth was a good thing, indeed. A good thing filled with dust, debauchery, dishonesty, distrust, and all these other goodness. But all those things were no more. It was one big black ball. Cold. Lifeless. Empty.

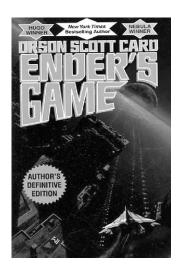
But it was this emptiness that made life so powerful. The ability to destroy is as important as, if not more than, the ability to create. This pursuit of success, fame, money, and all the luxurious goods...this enormous rat-race for wealth was no more. The apocalypse was a lesson that taught humanity how meaningless life truly is, especially when compared to the grand scheme of things. It was a cold lesson that imbued a dark print on this planet.

And so it happened. The whole hype about the end of the world was finally over. Over - just like all the corruption in this planet. Just like all the dishonesty and distrust between people. People wouldn't die anymore. No one would get murdered. No one would get robbed. No buildings would be brought down by planes. No elementary schools would be raided by lunatics. The world was a better place, now.

Yes, no one lived. But the apocalypse left one thing one this planet, rooted it deep down to the molten core of Earth. It was the thing that we all looked down upon. But it was the thing that we aimed to reach through meditation and isolating ourselves from society - sequestering ourselves from the corruption in this planet. Silly humans, we are. What the apocalypse left was this state of "nothingness" - this eternal peace, similar to a blank slate, a "tabula rasa" as John Locke described it, neat and clean, intolerant to any sort of metaphorical dust.

It was this nothingness that we always hated. It was this nothingness that we always wanted. It was this nothingness that was never really there. It was this nothingness that we wasted our time looking for. In essence, it was this nothingness that encompassed the real beauty of life.

Book Review Arpan Laha (Age 13)



Ender's Game

Ender's Game, written by Orson Scott Card, is a science fiction that appeals to many audiences, and there are actually many lessons we can pull from it.

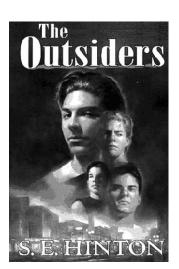
At some point in the future, humans have achieved the capability of interstellar travel and have come under attack

by the "Buggers", an alien race named so due to their appearance. Due to this problem, some of the Earth's ruling parties have come together to form the International Fleet to fight against the buggers. Ender Wiggin is the youngest of three children in his family. However, being a "third" child is considered to be a disgrace. His two siblings are Peter, who often torments Ender, and Valentine, the only person Ender truly loves. Soon after the story begins, Ender is transferred to Battle School, an orbital station that trains children for the International Fleet. At first, he is told to stay out of the combat "games", as he is much younger than the rest of the cadets. However, through these games, his peers and teachers soon realize that he is one of the most capable military leaders alive.

This novel has many elements of science fiction that make it appealing to younger readers, but it still has many underlying themes. It may take some time to read, but I really enjoyed reading it. Though there are many different "games" in the story, they often are much more than what they appear to be. There are three major games, the one he "plays" with Peter, which is actually an excuse to torment Ender, the simulated games at Battle School which tamper with his mind, and the battles themselves, which train the children for the war. I would definitely recommend reading Ender's Game if you have not already and have some patience with slightly longer books, as the different elements of the story can appeal to almost everyone.

The Outsiders

S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* is a tale about the boundaries between different societies — in this case the rich and the poor. The story is set in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in the year of 1965, when Hinton began writing it. Although the author was only 15 at the time, she wrote a very



powerful novel that many people can relate to.

Ponyboy Curtis is a "Greaser", meaning that he is an east-side middle class kid, often thought of as hoods. The richer west-side kids are known as the "Socs", short for Socials, and the two groups are constantly fighting against each other one way or another. Ponyboy lives with his two brothers, Sodapop and Darry, as his parents had died in a car crash. One day, when walking home alone from the movies, Ponyboy gets jumped by a group of Socs. Thankfully, the rest of his group arrives and drives them off before any major damage is done. Later, when Ponyboy runs away from home with his friend Johnny, the two get jumped by another gang of Socs, and the outcome changes both of their lives drastically.

What I really find interesting about this story is how Hinton based off of an event in her own life, showing how real people can relate to *The Outsiders*. I really enjoyed reading it because of how it portrayed a realistic situation while still appealing to a wide variety of audience. It can also teach us a little about how we look at other people, realizing we are not as different as we often like to think. Even though this may seem to some as just another boring classic, it is appealing to many teenagers. The majority of the readers in my school greatly enjoyed the book. *The Outsiders* is definitely the best of both worlds.

Remediate Religious Conflicts

Darshan Chakrabarti (Age 14)

Although our perspectives have changed over time, religion has remained a key tenet of life connecting humanity since antiquity. Even to this day, about 90 % of the world population has been found to either be affiliated with some religion or profess some belief in higher power, based on a report published by Pew Research Center. Each of the religion originated and evolved distinctly; nevertheless, there are more similarities than differences among the world's major religions. While the similarities lie in the common conviction in a higher power, the differences stem from the geopolitical and socioeconomic conditions in which each religion flourished. The minute differences that arise in the way the religion is practiced are inconsequential as compared to the common goal of each religion. All religions have the same purpose. They were created to provide happiness and meaning to life. The differences are simply illusions of the human mind and the reason for all the conflicts that occur between followers of different religions. We should be able to live in harmony with people regardless of the perceived differences of the religions they follow and the religion we follow.

One of the most noticeable similarities among the world's religions is in their basic beliefs. Morality and ethics are the basic underpinnings of all religions. The so-called Golden Rule appears in the Gospel of Luke (Christianity), in the Mahabharata (Hinduism), in the Torah (Judaism), in the Quran (Islam) and in several Buddhist texts, in more or less the same form even though these religions are "supposedly" different. All religions also are hopeful about the future. Some might indicate that humans initially face suffering but all religions are proponents of better life or a better environment in the future. Christianity states that people are inherently sinful but there is hope in going to heaven if one accepts Christ as their savior and asks for repentance. Buddhism's' noble truths state that life is suffering but that the suffering can be eradicated. All religions also believe in the existence of a supernatural power(s) that is omniscient, ubiquitous, and omnipotent, (Buddhism is the only religion that does not believe in a creator of the universe) and furthermore the creator of the universe.

The celebrations related to all the world's major religions are also very similar. Some form of fasting is involved in all five of the world's major religions: Lent for Christmas, Janmashtami and Ekadashi for Hindus, Ramadan for Muslims, Yom Kippur for Jews, and afternoon fasting for Buddhists. Another similarity among all religions is that people always receive justice when they die. In Hinduism and Buddhism, one is reincarnated into a lower life form when one has performed bad actions (bad karma) and reincarnated into a higher life form or even freed from suffering (salvation) when one has performed good actions (good karma). Reincarnation also occurs to some extent in Judaism (in some denominations) in a similar manner. In Christianity and Islam (and some denomination of Judaism) people are judged after death in order to see if they should be sent to heaven or hell. The idea of salvation is also important in these religions and is the end goal. So, it can be seen that religions are similar in the sense that they provide justice after death and regard salvation as an important goal.

On the negative side, followers of each religion believe that their religion is superior. They all fight and argue because of their loyalty towards their religion. People try to eradicate a certain religion from an area so that none of the followers of their own religions are even slightly influenced, or urged to convert.

As stated before, the differences arise in the specifics of the religion and the way it is practiced. Many Hindus are vegetarians and most refrain from eating beef because they consider the cow to be sacred. On the other hand, Islam allows the eating of all types of meat, except for pork, as long as the animal being slaughtered for consumption is halal (literally meaning allowed but referring to the procedure in which the animal has a slit made in its body and is bled to death). Judaism, in contrast, sets

many specific rules which are collectively referred to as kosher. In this sense, the way the religions are practiced is different. The views on sin are also very different among religions. Whereas Islam and Judaism do not believe humans are born with sin, Christianity advocates that people are inherently sinful. Hinduism and Buddhism approach the idea form a slightly different perspective believing that good deeds and bad deeds (sin) accumulate over previous lives (karma). In a more literal sense, the religions are all different in that they all have different key texts. However, these key texts all have information about the history of the religion as well as specific information on how to practice it. Most of the conflicts that occur in our daily lives over religions, if not all, are conflicts over claims to the same land or hyperbolic stereotypes. Based on some heinous acts of violence of a few irrational fanatics, an entire religion can be stigmatized. Also because many religions flourished in the same area in ancient times, they have disputes over regions of land. This not because the religions are different but because people like and enjoy preserving their culture and faith and worry if they lose control of their land, their culture and achievements will be lost and not have meaning any longer. Thus it is incorrect to state that conflict between two religions occurs because of the differences between religious ideals because there aren't very many

differences, but rather because of the perceived differences.

In conclusion, the religious conflicts which occur in the contemporary world are because of people's misconceptions. Hence it should be remediated at all costs. There are more similarities than differences among the world's religions and these differences are minor compared to the myriad of similarities. The "religious" conflicts that occur over the so-called differences should not be occurring and instead these "differences" should be embraced. The basic essence of each religion should be preserved and emphasized to bring people together. On viewing from an alternate standpoint, it is not a bad thing that there are so many religions that people on Earth follow instead of one. If there was only religion then life would be monotonous and no one would be open-minded. Just like in a corporation, we should embrace the different ideas people bring to the table so that we can widen our perspective. Famous spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda once made a statement which essentially stated that all streams small or big, large or crooked lead to the same destination: the ocean. It is important to remember that religious beliefs and faiths (the stream) are a means to an end (the ocean) not an end in itself.

So why does it matter what our path is (religion), when our end goal is the same?

Don't Count your Chickens before they Hatch

Aayush Chanda (Age 11)

The title given is a great proverb to warn someone not to plan ahead of time when the results depend on something that you think will happen in the future.

For example, say someone goes up to you and says that he will buy a car next month when Bob gives him enough money to do so. Should you take him seriously? Suddenly, Bob dies. Now no one will give him the money to buy the car. So you say, "You shouldn't have counted your chickens before they hatch."

You still want examples? Let's say, David goes to Jim and asks for a loan of \$10,000. David told Jim that he had a great chance of winning the lottery and that one guy gave him the "winning ticket." After David wins the lottery, Jim will get back his money from him. Apparently, David was tricked and there is no guarantee that he would win the lottery. So if Jim gives him the money, it would be appropriate to say "Don't count your chickens before they hatch."

So as you can see, this proverb is very important in our lives. Before making choices, ask yourself, are you counting your chickens before they hatch?

The Violinist Binita Gupta (Age 14)

She painted a picture of anger, confusion, and despair, The soft flitting of the bow across the strings. The scroll moved with her body and emotions, Creating the vision of loss through a dramatic decrescendo Transcending into a lasting C#.

The velvet notes that wove through the air Enveloped every audience member in rapture. Each accent, each flat, each trill Seamlessly flowing together.

Gone was the black-and-white sheet music,

Replaced by the music's true colors.

Deep maroons and ultramarines blending into a soothing lavender.

The colors painted themselves in the air,

Developing haunting images that flickered and morphed like

The sun's reflection on water.

Some saw floral gardens and smelled sweet roses,

Yet others saw a frozen winter with the sense of dying hope.

The child envisioned a sunken ship;

The mother saw a brilliant waterfall;

The violinist saw herself.

Her fingers fluttered across the fingerboard, producing a

Smooth, rich vibrato.

The buttery notes whispered secrets and wishes,

Dreams and memories in the ears of the listeners.

Quiet pianos, magnificent fortes

Built into the dark climax of the piece.

Her eyes stayed closed, her torso swaying in time with the music.

Conductor's baton waved softly and fluidly;

It gracefully carved patterns in the air like a painter's brush.

Enchanting sound filled the air

With the bittersweet presence of melancholy,

And the violinist was no longer there.

She had walked in the music, breathed the music,

And had silently become the music.

Like a rainbow melding back into the sky,

She had disappeared.

She stood before the audience

In her black gown that swept the floor.

The audience stared back at her,

The spitting image of music itself.

Each rose in silent respect and reverence

For the violinist.

Shine Brighter Ahona Mazumder (Age 16)

They say the worst things in life come free to us, But that's because the best things in life are worth fighting for.

Who are we to judge who is worse off, When we are all fighting our own secret battles, Hiding behind smiles, Walking in shadows, Until we are left broken and scarred.

Not wanting to mess with a good thing, We save our pain from tainting the world, Only to find that the world is already tainted.

Tragedy surrounds us,
So never take what you have for granted,
No matter what you have.
Rather appreciate that you don't have what they have,
And always say your goodbyes.
Because you never know which ones will be your last,
Until everything you're fighting for
Becomes part of the past.

It pains me to see suffering,
Futures disappearing,
Possibilities that never were.
Where all that's left is
No battle to be fought,
Nothing left that can be done,
A silent surrender.

But there is.

There is so much that can be done. For those lost, For those who have lost, And for those who are still here.

For in darkness we shine brightest, And now it is time for us to shed some light.

We are all fighting our secret battles, But they are only what we make of it.

When darkness falls and blinds the way, And you lose track of where you're going, Never forget where you come from Because that's what makes you who you are. Who *we* are.

Who we can be.

What we can be.

The worst things in life come free to us, Because the best things in life are worth fighting for. Never stop fighting.

Never surrender.

নদী, বোধি, প্রাণ – দেবী সরস্বতী

দেবীপ্রিয়া রায়

চায়ের পেয়ালা নিয়ে গুছিয়ে বসে চুমুক দিতে গিয়েও দেওয়া হল না। অনেকক্ষণ থেকেই দেখতে পাচ্ছি, হলঘরের কোণায় গুচ্ছের লোক জড়ো হয়ে গ্যাঞ্জাম করছে। প্রথমটা গুনগুন করে গল্প চলছিল, কিন্তু এখন তাদের চেঁচামেঁচিটা বাড়তে বাড়তে কানে তালা লাগার জোগাড়। এদিকে এখনও ঠাকুরের বেদীটা সাজানো গোছানো হয়নি। মা সরস্বতীর সাদা মূর্তি একপাশে ফ্যাকাশে অপেক্ষায় বসে, বীণাটা ওকোণে ঠেসান দেওয়া, পাশে হাঁস বাবাজী ভানা ছড়িয়ে কাৎ!

তাকিয়ে দেখি, সবার হাতে ফোমের কাপে চায়ের ধোঁয়া উড়ছে, হাবে ভাবে কাজ সারার কোন উদ্যোগ নেই। রাত পোহালে সরস্বতী পুজো, বেলা দশটার মধ্যে চন্দনদা, মানে আমাদের লোকাল পুরোহিত এসে পড়বেন বলে রেখেছেন। রোজকার জীবনে চন্দনদা সংখ্যাতত্ত্ববিদ, পুরোহিতগিরিটা তাঁর weekend এর side business। সংখ্যা নিয়ে কাজ করেন বলেই ছেঁদো কথায় সময় নম্ভ করা তিনি মোটেই পছন্দ করেন না এবং তাঁর সময়ানুবর্তিতা সাঙ্ঘাতিক। দশটায় পুজোর জোগাড় না থাকলে, ধুতি, নামাবলী টামাবলি গুছিয়ে নিয়ে ফেরৎ হাঁটা দেওয়া তাঁর পক্ষে বিচিত্র নয়। কিন্তু এদের দেখে মনে হচ্ছে কে কার কড়ি ধারে — গদাইলস্করি চালে কাজ এগুচ্ছে, কেবল কথার তুফান!

ছোট্ট কলেজ টাউনের ছোট্ট পূজা। দেশ থেকে দশ হাজার মাইল দূরে ছাত্র আর মাস্টাররাই মিলে মিশে জোগাড় যন্তর করে পূজা করি। শুক্রবারের বিকেলে এতগুলো বাঙালী একত্র হলে, খানিকটা গল্পগাছা তো হতেই পারে। কাজে কাজেই পূজার সব কাজই যে খুব সুষ্ঠু ভাবে হবে, এমন আশা করা হয় না। কিন্তু কাজ বাদ দিয়ে কেবল কলর বলর করে সময় কাটানোটা চলতে দেওয়া যায় না । কাছে গিয়ে একটা হাঁকাড় দেওয়ার জো করতেই ভিড়ের মধ্যে হতে গোটা কতক হাত টেনেমেনে আমাকে শুদ্ধু তাদের মাঝে বসিয়ে দিল। 'এই যে, এসে পড়েছো। দেখো দেখি হতভাগা উপমন্যু কি বলে চলেছে । ব্যাটাকে গণধোলাই দিতে হবে'। উপমন্যুর অবশ্য এতে কিছুই গেলো এলো না । মিটিমিটি শয়তানি হাসি হেসে বলল, 'কি, আবার বলেছি ? কর না রে বাবা তোরা পুজো। আমি তো অঞ্জলিও দেবো, লাফালাফি করে শান্তিজলও নেবো আর ভোগ তো খাবোই । তবে হ্যাঁ, আরতির সময় ঢাকটা বাজাতে পারবো না – ওটা আমার আসে না, নাচতেও পারিনা, কিন্তু তাছাড়া সব ব্যাপারেই তো – ' 'সব ব্যাপারেই ?' সমবেত একটা গর্জন উঠল – 'ব্যাটা বলিস্ নি এই মাত্র যে সরস্বতী ঠাকুর টাকুর কিছু নয়। বামুন পুরুতের দল তোদের বোকা বানিয়েছে – ' 'সে তো বানিয়েইছে । সরস্বতী হলো নদী, সে আবার ঠাকুর হলো কি করে ?' সেঁজুতি চেঁচিয়ে বলল, 'বটে বটে, কেন নদী আর ঠাকুর

দুজনেই সরস্বতী হতে পারে না বুঝি ?' এধার থেকে মাধবের গলা শোনা গেল, 'এই শোন্ তুই একাই কি সব খবর রাখিস ? সরস্বতী নদী একটা ছিল বোধহয় কোনকালে, ঐ প্রয়াগের কাছে ত্রিবেণী সঙ্গমে পিন্ড টিন্ড দিতে গিয়ে যার নাম বলা হয়, কিন্তু সে তো কবে কোন্কালে শুকিয়ে গিয়েছে'! 'তবেই বোঝ, কবে কোন্কালে যে नमी শুকিয়ে গেছে, তাকে দেবী বানিয়ে বামুনের দল দিব্যি দুটি চাল কলার জোগাড় করে ফেলেছে। আর তোরা আহামুকেরা তার ভয়ে সেই ছোটবেলা থেকে মন দিয়ে কুলটা পর্যন্ত খেতে পারিসনি ।' উপমন্য বীরের মত ঘোষণা করল । অন্যেরা তেড়ে ওঠার আগে আমিই বললাম, 'তোমার কথা কিছুটা ঠিক, কিন্তু সবটা বোধহয় ঠিক নয় উপমন্য সাহেব । সরস্বতী নদীও বটে, দেবীও বটে, তবে সে আলোচনায় পরে আসছি; আগে জিজ্ঞাসা করি যে শুকিয়ে যাওয়া সরস্বতী নদীর ধারা যে আবার খুঁজে পাওয়া গেছে, সে খবর নিশ্চয় রাখো।' 'হাাঁ, না' মিলিয়ে একটা গুঞ্জন উঠল । একজন বলল যে 'ঐ গুজরাতের মরুভূমির মধ্যে মার্কিনদের উদ্যোগে বালির তলায় বয়ে যাওয়া জলের ধারা পাওয়া গেছে, তার কথা বলছেন নাকি ? সে তো সিন্ধুসভ্যতার কিসব ব্যাপার স্যাপার, তার সাথে সরস্বতী ঠাকুরের কি ?' চায়ের কাপে আরামের চুমুক দিয়ে আমি উত্তর দিলাম, 'হাাঁ, তার কথাই বলছি। আসলে সিন্ধু সভ্যতা যে কেন ধ্বংস হয়ে গেল, তা নিয়ে তো পন্ডিতদের নানান্ জল্পনা কম্পনার শেষ ছিল না । ওদিকে আবার রাজস্থান গুজরাতের কতটা অংশ মরুভূমি জানোই তো ! প্রচন্ড খরা আর খাদ্যাভাব, তাই বালির তলায় সেই ১৯৭০ সন্ থেকে জল খোঁজা চলছিল। খুঁজতে খুঁজতে ১৯৮২ সালে সেখানে মার্কিন স্যাটেলাইট হঠাৎ এক বিশাল জলপ্রবাহের লুপ্তধারা দেখতে পায়, আর সে তল্লাটে খুঁড়ে টুঁড়ে প্ৰত্নতত্ত্ববিদরা বুঝতে পারেন যে এই সেই বেদে বর্ণিত হারিয়ে যাওয়া সরস্বতী নদী। তখন তাঁরা সিদ্ধান্ত করলেন যে তার মানে সিন্ধুসভ্যতাটি ছিল মূলতঃ নদীমাতৃক সভ্যতা; শুধু চাষবাস আর মাছ ধরে খেয়েপরে থাকাই নয়, সুতোর কাপড়, ধাতুর বাসন, শিল্পসামগ্রী আর অস্ত্র শস্ত্রের পসরা নিয়ে সেই নদীর জলে বড় বড় ডিঙা বেয়ে লোকেরা ব্যবসা বাণিজ্য করতো, যাতায়াত করতো নদীর ধারে গড়ে ওঠা অন্যান্য শহরে। নদী ছিল তাদের মা – তাদের জীবনদাত্রী। তাদের জ্ঞান, বিজ্ঞান, শিল্পের মূল অনুপ্রেরণা, তাই তাকে তারা দেবীরূপে বন্দনা করেছে। তারপর, সরস্বতীর জল যেমন যেমন শুকিয়ে গেল, সভ্যতাটিও আন্তে আন্তে মৃত্যুমুখে চলে গেল। আসলে শুধু তো একা সরস্বতী নদী নয়, তাকে কেন্দ্র করে নানান্ নদী উপনদীর এক বিশাল জাল বিছানো ছিল ঐ পুরো উপত্যকা জুড়ে। তারপর হয়তো ভূমিকম্পের জেরে আর তার সাথে ভূস্তরের (tectonic plate) ওঠাপড়ায় সরস্বতী ধীরে ধীরে পথ হারায়, তার মৃত্যুর সাথে সাথে অন্য নদী উপনদীদের ধারাও শুকিয়ে যায়

কিম্বা দিক্ বদলায়।' 'কোন্ উপত্যকার কথা বলছেন আপনি'? এবার প্রশ্ন করল মনোজ। অন্যদের চোখেমুখেও এখন প্রশ্ন জেগেছে। 'জায়গাটাকে ঘাঘর উপত্যকা বলা হয়। প্রাচীন সংস্কৃতে যাকে ঘর্ঘরা নদী বলা হত, ঐ অঞ্চলে আজকাল তাকেই বলে ঘাঘরা নদী – সেকালে বিপুল ছিল তার স্লোত – সেই নদীর উপত্যকা'। 'মানে ? মানে ? সেটাই সরস্বতী নদী ?' 'না, ঘর্ঘরা নয় – ' মোহরের প্রশ্লের উত্তরে আমি বললাম, 'সরস্বতী নদী জন্ম নিয়েছে মানসরোবরের কাছে তুষারের উপত্যকায়, স্বর্গারোহিনী গিরিখাত বেয়ে এসে শিবালিক পর্বতশ্রেণীর কাছ থেকে তার জলের ধারা ঢুকেছিল সেদিনের আর্যাবর্তের সমতলে। আজকের পাঞ্জাব, হরিয়ানা, রাজস্থানের বুকের উপর দিয়ে বয়ে গিয়ে গুজরাত উপত্যকাকে শস্যশ্যামল করে তুলে তা নেমে গিয়েছিল আরব সাগরের মাঝে।' 'Wait a minute! Wait a minute! আপনি যে জায়গাটার কথা বলছেন, সেটাকে সিন্ধু নদীর উপত্যকা বলা হয়, আমরা সবাই ইস্কুলে পড়ে এসেছি বরাবর । মোট পাঁচখানা নদী ছিল সেই লিস্টিতে – বিপাশা, ত্রিতস্তা, ইরাবতী, আর শতদু, চন্দ্রভাগা। সরস্বতী নদীর নামও তার মধ্যে নেই ।' – এতক্ষণ পরে মুখ খুলল উপমন্যু। 'তুমি যে সিন্ধুনদীর কথা বললে, তার নামটাও নেই। আসলে নদীতীরের বাসিন্দারা পবিত্র মনে করতেন ৭টি নদীকে। ঐ যে পাঁচটির নাম করলে তারা তো ছিলই, তার সাথে ছিল সিন্ধু ও সরস্বতী । ঋগ্বেদে একটি সূক্তে বলা হয়েছে, 'সরস্বতী সপ্তথী সিন্ধুমাতা ।' — সাতটি নদীর জন্মদাত্রী - তিনি সকলের অগ্রগন্যা, সিন্ধুর (সমুদ্রের) ও মাতৃস্বরূপা তিনি। মাধব এতক্ষণ মন দিয়ে শুনছিল, এবার বলল, 'আচ্ছা, বোঝা গেল কি করে এককালে সরস্বতী নদীকে মা বলে পূজা করা হত। কিন্তু দাদা, এটা ঠিক বোঝা গেলনা – এ যে নদী কি করে জ্ঞানের দেবী বলে পূজা পেতে লাগলেন। মানে এই যে আমরা হাঁসের পাশে পদাফুলের উপর বসা বই, জপের মালা, বীণা ধরে থাকা মূর্তিটিকে পূজো করি, সে কি কেবল সেই হারিয়ে যাওয়া নদীটির প্রতীক?' প্রতীক টতীক একটু কঠিন ব্যপার, তাই জবাব দিতে একটু সময় নিচ্ছিলাম, কিন্তু আমার আগেই এবার সেঁজুতি বলল, 'কেন, এই তো শুনলে যে জ্ঞান, বিজ্ঞান শিম্পের মূল বলে তাঁকে দেবী বলা হয়।' কৃতজ্ঞ হয়ে ওর দিকে মাথা নাড়লাম আমি। তারপর ভাবতে ভাবতে বললাম, 'জ্ঞান কথাটা বোধহয় এইখানে নানাভাবে বুঝতে হবে। চাষবাস, শিল্প এইসব তো বাস্তবজ্ঞান, যাকে বলে practical knowledge । এ জ্ঞান না থাকলে জীবন চলার নয়। সেই জন্যই, তোমরা জানো কিনা জানি না সরস্বতী নদীকে বেদের ঋষি বলেছেন 'বাজিনীবতী' অর্থাৎ অন্নপূর্ণা — যব উৎপন্ন করেন যিনি। জমি চষতে গিয়ে লাঙলের আগায় যে রেখা তৈরী হয়, তাকে বলা হয় 'সীতা' বা বাক, যা দেবী সরস্বতীর আরেক নাম। এই নদীর ধারে যখন আর্যরা বাসা বাঁধেন, তাঁদের ব্রাহ্মণ বগীয়েরাও এই নদীর মাছকে প্রসাদ ভেবে খেতে ভালবাসতেন । পরে তাঁরা গৌড়ে এসে বাসা বাঁধেন, তাদের কিছু যান দক্ষিণ ভারতে। গৌড় সারস্বত ব্রাহ্মণ বলে তাঁদের পরিচয় ।' 'ইয়াঃ' বলে উপমন্য লাফিয়ে উঠল ।'

গন্ডীর আলোচনার মধ্যে এই উল্লম্ফনে বাকিরা একটু অবাক্। সে তখন সোৎসাহে বলছে, 'এতদিনে বোঝা গেল সরস্বতী পূজার দিন জোড়া ইলিশ কেন খায়। বাঃ — বেঁচে থাকুন গৌড় সারস্বত ব্রাহ্মণেরা ।' অজয় রেগে বলল, 'ওরে ব্যাটা আবার এখন পন্ডিতি ফলাচ্ছো !' 'না, না, আরেঃ শুনলে না এটা কেবল practical knowledge । পন্ডিতি ফলাবো কি ? জ্ঞানের আরেকটা দিকের কথা এখনও জানাই হয়নি । বলুন দাদা বলুন – বেশ লাগছে।' বোঝাই যাচ্ছে একটা তর্কাতর্কি হলেই উপমন্যুটা এখন দিব্য খুশী হয়। তার দিকে মন না দিয়ে অন্যদের বললাম, 'আর্য ঋষিরা এই নদীর তীরে বসেই মনে হয় বেদ রচনা করেছিলেন, তাই ঋগ্বেদে এঁর স্তুতি বারবার আসে। বলা হয়েছে যে সরস্বতী মর্ত্যে আছেন নদীর্ন্নপে, আকাশে তিনিই বিদ্যুৎ রূপিণি, আর অন্তরে বা হৃদ্কমলে তিনি অদিতি বা দেবমাতা হয়ে চিরন্তন জ্ঞান জাগিয়ে তোলেন।' ও-হরি ! ভবি এত সহজে ভোলবার নয় – উপমনুটো আবার কুতর্ক জুড়ল, 'আর ঐ বীণার কথাটা বলুন'। 'দেখো, এগুলি তো রূপক গল্প — রূপক বোঝ তো ? বীণার ও একটা রূপক গল্প আছে। বলা হয়, যে বাক্ বা সরস্বতীদেবীর বিনিময়ে হিমালয়ের গন্ধর্বদের কাছ থেকে সোমলতা কেনা হয়, পরে গানের সুরে বাক্কে আবার দেবতাদের কাছে ফিরিয়ে আনা হয়। গন্ধর্বরা শিল্পপ্রেমী জাত, গান বাজনা ভালবাসে । ইশারাটা বোধহয় তাই চারুশিল্প বা গান বাজনার প্রতি সরস্বতীর আকর্ষণের দিকে।' 'ও – এবার বলুন দেখি ঠাকুরের হাতে কেন ঐ মালা আর হাঁসের সওয়াারি?' — আঃ, এ তো ভারি জ্বালা হলো। সংক্ষেপে সেরে দিতে বললাম 'অন্তরে যে বিদ্যা বা জ্ঞান জাগলে চারিদিক আলোয় ভরে যায়, তা তো চিরকালের। মালা হল সেই চিরন্তন অক্ষয় কাল। আর পরমহংস যে বিবেকের প্রতীক, সে কথাটা তো যে কোনো বাঙালী সন্তান জানে। দুধ থেকে জলের মতই সে মিথ্যা থেকে সত্যকে আলাদা করে চিনতে পারে ।'

মঞ্জুষা কখন যে এসে একপাশে বসেছিল, দেখিনি । সে এদের থেকে ছোট, এই সদ্য কলেজে ভর্তি হয়েছে। এইবারে সে মন্তব্য করল, 'আমাদের হাঁস কিন্তু প্যাঁচার চেয়ে ভাল।' 'হঠাৎ আবার প্যাঁচা কেন ?' অজয় অবাক হল । 'না, মানে ঐ গ্রীক পুরাণে আছে তো যে জ্ঞানের দেবী Athena প্যাঁচায় চেপে ঘোরেন।' 'কিন্তু ইলিয়াডে তো দেখি Athena এলেই Eagle উড়ে যায়, তাহলে সে পাখীটাই বা ওনার বাহন কেন না হবে ?', মনোজ আপত্তি জানালো। জবাব দিলাম, 'আরে – ঐ একই হলো। Eagle উঁচুতে ওড়ে, সব দিকে তার তীক্ষ্ণ দৃষ্টি। কাজেই সে জ্ঞানের দেবীর বাহন । সরস্বতীকেও ভারতের অন্যান্য জায়গায় ময়ূর চাপিয়ে দেখানো হয় ।' 'তার মানেই গল্পগুলোতে বেশ কিছু গোলমাল আছে। ঐ Athena জন্ম নিয়েছিলেন মায়ের গর্ভ হতে নয়, নিজের বাবা জিউসের মাথা চিরে' – উপমন্যু ফিক্ করে হাসল । আমি আবার বললাম, 'প্রতীকী গল্পের ঐ এক মুশকিল, বড় ভুল বোঝা হয়। সরস্বতীও তো সৃষ্টিকর্তা ব্রহ্মার মানসপুত্রী, তবে তিনি জন্মান

ব্রহ্মার মুখের থেকে । তাঁর মা নেই ।' 'মোটেও নয়, তিনি তো শিব ঠাকুর আর মা দূর্গার মেয়ে, মা লক্ষ্মীর বোন' – মোহর কাঁদোকাঁদো সুরে আপত্তি জানালো। চেনা চেনা ঠাকুর দেবতা নিয়ে এত গোলমাল তার ভালো লাগছেনা মনে হল। আমি নরম সুরে বললাম, 'ওটা আমাদের বাংলা দেশের বিশ্বাস। কিন্তু এই বাংলা দেশেই কিছু বৈষ্ণবেরা গল্প করেন যে, বিষ্ণুর ছিল তিন বিয়ে — গঙ্গা, সরস্বতী আর লক্ষ্মী। তা গঙ্গা বড চপলা, তাই তাঁকে শিবের কাছে পার করে দেওয়া হল, সরস্বতীর জ্ঞানের গুমোর, তার সাথেও ঘর করা চলেনা, তাই তাঁকে ব্রহ্মার স্ত্রী করে দিয়ে বিষ্ণু নিস্তার পান। নরম সরম লক্ষ্মী রয়ে গেলেন তাঁর গিন্নিটি হয়ে।' 'ধ্যেৎ কিসব বাজে গল্প !' সেঁজুতি বেশ বেজার হয়ে পড়েছে দেখলাম। এদিকে মনোজ ও তার পেছনে লেগেছে, 'ওরে, এটার আবার একটা incestuous angle আছে, জানিস্ তো ? ব্রহ্মা বুড়ো সরস্বতীকে বানিয়ে এমনি মুগ্ধ হয়ে গেল, যে সে যেদিকে যায়, তার পানে ধেয়ে যায়। মেয়ে এদিকে বাপকে পাত্তা দেয়না – ঘুরে ঘুরে তার দিকে তাকাতে বুড়োর পাঁচখানা মাথা গজিয়ে উঠেছিল। শেষে আকাশে উঠে গিয়ে তবে মেয়ে রক্ষা পায়। 'এতই যখন শুনলে তবে এটাও শোনো, যে সূর্যের তেজ হিসাবে সে মেয়ের নাম হল সাবিত্রী, যাকে গায়ত্রী মন্ত্রে আবাহন করা হয়। তেজোময়ী জ্ঞানরূপিণি সে কন্যা তাই শুক্লা মানে সাদা, অমলিন। নদীর জলেও তো সব ময়লা ধুয়ে যায়, তাই সেই অর্থেও তিনি শুক্লা, কুমারী। কিন্তু আবার কেউ কেউ বলেন তিনি ব্রহ্মার শক্তি, তাই তাঁর স্ত্রী'। 'এবিষয়ে কিন্তু গ্রীক্রা পরিষ্কার মত রাখতেন, কি বলুন?' উপমন্যু ফুট কাটল । সেখানে Athena আগাগোড়া কুমারী ।' 'তা বটে, তবে Athena কিন্তু সেখানে চারুকলা বা সংগীতের দেবী নন্। তিনি যুদ্ধকালীন কলা কৌশলের দেবী। চারুকলা আর সংগীত হল তাঁর সংভাই Apollo র জগৎ, আর স্মৃতিশক্তি ও কাব্যের সাথে তাঁর কোন যোগই নেই। সেসবের অধিষ্ঠাত্রীরা আদপে দেবীই নন্, তাঁরা হলেন দুই ঐশী শক্তি বা Titaness – Mnemonem ও Muse ।" "উরে বাবাঃ, কি ঘোরপ্যাঁচ। আমার মাথা ঘুরছে।' — মোহর বলল। মনোজ বলল, 'কিন্তু দাদা, এইযে গ্রীক দেবীরা, এঁরা কি কেউ নদী ছিলেন ?' 'নাহে না । আরে গল্পগুলো তো তৈরী হয় সমাজ আর ভৌগোলিক অবস্থার উপর ভিত্তি করে, তা ছোট্ট কটি দ্বীপ আর দক্ষিণ পশ্চিম ইউরোপের একটুকরো জমি নিয়ে গ্রীস, তাতে তেমন বড় কোন নদী নদ কোথায়, যার জলধারা তাদের পুষ্টি এনে দেবে, জীবনের আস্বাদ জানাবে ? কাকে তবে দেবী করা হতো, বলো ? তবে হাাঁ মূলে নদী নাহলেও ক্রমে এতে একটু পরিবর্তন এল। রোমানেরা যখন গ্রীস জয় করে তাদের ঠাকুর দেবতাকে আত্মসাৎ করে ফেলল, তখন Athena হলেন Minerva । যিনি শুধু যুদ্ধের নন্, কলাকৌশলের ও গান বাজনারও অধিষ্ঠাত্রী । তিনিও কুমারী কিন্তু নিজের ভাই Hephasteus (আমাদের বিশ্বকর্মা ঠাকুরের মত) এর সাথে যন্ত্রপাতির বানানো টানানো তদারক করে থাকেন। এর পরের ঘটনা আবার জ্ঞানের দেবীর সাথে নদীর যোগ ঘটিয়ে দিল।'

'কিরকম, কি রকম ?' কে প্রশ্ন করল বোঝা গোলনা। রাত বাড়ছে – গুলতানি করার উৎসাহে এখন ভাঁটা পড়েছে। অনেকের চোখ এখন ঢুলুঢুলু। তবু প্রশ্নটার উত্তর দিতে চেষ্টা করলাম। রোমানদের সাম্রাজ্য যে পুরো ইউরোপ জুড়ে ছড়িয়ে পড়েছিল, সে তো জানো । স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই রোমান দেবী দেবতারাও অন্য জাতির কাছে পূজা পেতে লাগলেন। এদের মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য হল, জার্মান বংশোদ্ভূত গলেরা (Gaul) । এরা সে সময় উত্তর ইউরোপের নানান জায়গায় ছড়িয়ে পড়েছিল। ইংল্যান্ডে এবং ফ্রান্সে সেসময় দেবমাতা মার্নে নদীর সন্তান হিসাবে যাঁকে পূজা করা হতো, সেই মাপোনোস ছিলেন এমন সব ঝরনার দেবতা, যার জল নানান রোগ সারিয়ে তোলে । আয়ার্ল্যান্ডের কোণায় কোণায় ছিল গলেদের উপনিবেশ। যেখানে গড়ে ওঠে কেল্টিক সভ্যতা। মিনার্ভা মিশে গেলেন এই কেল্ট সভ্যতার দেবশ্রেষ্ঠ Draghda-র কন্যা Brighid-এর সঙ্গে – Brighid একাধারে কাব্য, বিদ্যা আর ভবিষ্যৎ দৃষ্টির দেবী আবার নদীর অধিষ্ঠাত্রী। পুরো ইংল্যান্ড আর আয়ার্ল্যান্ড জুড়ে Brighid বা Brent নামে অগুন্তি নদীর দেখা পাওয়া যায়। পরবর্তী কালে খ্রীস্টানরা এসে Brighid-কে তাঁদের ধর্ম হতে বাদ না দিয়ে, তাঁকে 'প্রথম সন্ন্যাসিনী' ঘোষণা করেন, ঠিক যেমন আমরা সরস্বতীকে ভেবে থাকি অপাপবিদ্ধা তরুণী রূপে ।' শেষ কথাকটা খালি আসরেই ঘুরে ফিরল খানিকক্ষণ । রাত গভীর হয়েছে, আসর ভেঙে উঠে পড়ছিল সবাই একে একে। এলোমেলো কোঁকড়া চুল হাত দিয়ে গুছিয়ে, চশমাটা চোখে তুলে চলে যাচ্ছিল সেঁজুতি, কি মনে করে থমকে পিছন ফিরে তাকাল, 'আচ্ছা দাদা, আপনি একবারও ইজিপ্টের কথা বললেন না তো ! দেবী আইসিসও তো জ্ঞান আর বিদ্যার দেবী – নয় কি?' 'ঠিক বলেছ – শেষট্ বা আইসিস লেখাপড়া, স্থপতি বিদ্যার দেবী, অনন্ত আকাশের গর্ভে সত্যের ঔরসে তাঁর জনা, মরুভূমি ঘেরা ইজিপ্টে তিনি নীলনদ রূপে বয়ে আনেন জল। তবে তিনি বিবাহিতা, ধর্মরাজ ওসাইরিসের স্ত্রী, হোরাস বা নবীন সূর্য তাঁর ছেলে। আসলে কি জানো ? মধ্যপ্রাচ্যের দেশে দেশেই জ্ঞানের মূর্ত প্রতীক হিসাবে কোন না কোন দেবী দেবতার পূজার প্রচলন আছে, অনেকেই তাঁরা নদী রূপে সে দেশের ইতিহাসে বর্ণিত । পুরানো কালের পারস্যেও পূজা হত অনাহিতার। নদীসমৃদ্ধ পারস্য ও কাবুল কান্দাহার তাঁকে 'হারহুতী' (সরস্বতী) নামে স্তুতি করত ।' উপমন্যু মিচক্ হাসল 'সোজা কথায় বললেই হয়, যে নদীটাই ঠাকুর হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। সেই সহজ কথাটাই আমি প্রথম থেকে বলে যাচ্ছি।' 'দূর তুই তো কি সব বিলিক ঝিলিক বলছিলিস, তার মানেই হয় না। তোর কথা শুনলে পূজা বন্ধ করে দিতে হয়।' নাকটাকে আকাশের দিকে তুলে মঞ্জুষাও সেঁজুতির পিছন পিছন চোখেমুখে জল দিতে গেল। আমি একবার উপমন্যুর দিকে তাকালাম, তারপর আন্তে বললাম যে, 'পূজা নদীর হয়না, মূর্তির হয়না, নামেরও হয়না । পূজা হয় এক জগৎজোড়া প্রাণশক্তির, যে পালন করে, লালন করে আর জ্ঞানের আলোয়, গানের মূর্চ্ছনায় সব কালো কলুষ মুছে নেয়'। উপমন্যু আমার কথা শুনতে পেলোনা।

Remembrances: Pandit Ravi Shankar (April 1920 – December 2012)

Debasish Gooptu



Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Zakir Hussein in concert Netaji Indoor Stadium, Calcutta 1992

December 2012 was a sad month for music lovers. Dave Brubeck, celebrated jazz pianist and composer, passed away on December 5, followed in quick succession by *sitar* maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar on December 11 and renowned Hindustani classical vocalist Pandit Manas Chakraborty on December 12. It was a great loss to me, Ravi Shankar's death particularly saddening, because I had attended his concerts on several occasions.

It was a recital by Ravi Shankar during my freshman year in college that serendipitously introduced me to the world of Hindustani classical music. Before graduating from high school, I had not come into contact with anyone interested in Indian classical music. My access to music during my school days was limited to the radio and the few gramophone records we had at home. Like many of my peers in the westernized missionary school I attended, I mostly listened to light western music and the standard Hindi film music of the day. When I entered college, I became close friends with someone with a passion for dhrupadi music. One day in the fall of 1975 he managed to secure two free passes to a Hindustani classical music soiree arranged by the Ballygunge Cultural Music Society and invited me to accompany him. More out of curiosity I agreed. The experience was a turning point in my life. It was a two-night program arranged in a mid-size *pandal* near Ekdalia Road and the special passes allowed us sit on the sofas in the very first row. On those two evenings, the brilliant performances of two artists sowed in me a deep and abiding love for Indian classical music.

On the first night, the program featured a *sarod* recital by Ustad Amjad Ali Khan. He was not yet thirty years old, undoubtedly one of the most handsome and courteous persons I have met in my life. Princely in a black silk *kurta* embroidered expansively in cobalt blue, he gave a spellbinding rendition of *Raga Shree* followed by a lilting *Bhatiyali*.

On the second night, the main item on the program was a *sitar* recital by Pandit Ravi Shankar, accompanied by Pandit Kishan Maharaj on the *tabla*. The legendary *sitarist* had a charming stage presence. He was dressed in a high-collared *kurta* of maroon silk and white *churidars*, his aristocratic features accentuated by thinning back-brushed locks and counterbalanced by a disarming smile. Although he was then in his mid-fifties, he projected the energy of a young man. Lithe and upright, he strode briskly

to the stage and launched into an unhurried alap in Raga Khamaj, using progressive musical phrases poignant with the unabashed yearning of the evensongs of padavali kirtan. Even to my untrained ear, there was something mesmerizing in the deep resonating bass tone of his *sitar*, in the exquisitely modulated strokes of the mezrab on his right index finger, in the lyrical meends and gamaks that he coaxed out with his left hand. He played for more than two hours, following the *alap* section with *jod*, vilambit bandish, drut bandish and jhala. After a brief intermission, he concluded his program with an energetic rendition of Raga Hameer. Although at that time I did not understand its nuances, I was captivated by the music. Thereafter, I started in earnest to listen to Hindustani classical music, which over the years has enriched the quality of my life.

I possess neither the training and nor the experience to judge the musicianship of such an eminent luminary as Ravi Shankar. Instead, I would like in this article to elaborate on a few reasons why I enjoyed his music.

First, Ravi Shankar's systematic exposition of a raga had a way of ingraining itself into my awareness so that I once I heard it I could identify the raga ever afterwards. This holds true for every raga I have heard him play. For instance, up until recently I had not heard a recital of Raga Hameer since that first concert of Ravi Shankar in 1975. Yet ten years later, when I heard Sagar Sen's recording of the Rabindra Sangeet, "Aro Koto Dure Aachey Se Anandadhaam", I could instantly recognize that it was based on Hameer.

Second, I found a buoyancy in his music that I have rarely noted elsewhere. This quality, expressed as nrityachhanda in Bengali, cannot be articulated in a single word in English. It represents the dynamic qualities of dance - a combination of vibratory, percussive, sustained, swinging, suspenseful, and collapsing movements. Through his use of intricate beats and his mastery of plucking the sitar strings, Ravi Shankar had a way of making the notes seem to dance before my eyes. Along with fluctuations in modulation, he could weave infinite variations with the combination of the basic bols (strokes) Da, Ra, Diri, Drit. It is a lesser known fact that, prior to becoming a full-time student of music under Ustad Alauddin Khan, Ravi Shankar had been a promising dancer in the dance troupe of his brother, Uday Shankar. Possibly it was this affinity for dance running in the family that manifested itself in the rhythmic excellence of his music.

A prime example of this *nrityachhanda* is his composition in *Pather Panchali* when Srinibas, the sweet-seller, arrives to sell sweetmeats. The melody is a simple repetitive tune in *teental* played on the *sitar*, accompanied by the tinkling of *nupur* bells and the percussive twanging of the *gubgubi*, a one-stringed folk instrument used by *Baul* musicians. It is the syncopated variations in the way Ravi Shankar plucked with his right hand that brought out the swaying dance-like quality in the music: "*Diri Diri Da Ra Da Ra Ra*, *Drit Da Ra Da Ra Ra*."

You can observe on YouTube how the variations of *bols* makes this simple tune, combined with the beat of the *gubgubi* and the tinkling bells, blend completely with the three swaying motions on the screen the vertical motion of the pots of sweets, the horizontal forward motion of the sweet seller, and the lateral waddling of the accompanying geese. Another example is the music he composed for Norman McLaren's short film, *A Chairy Tale*, where he synchronized the notes of his *sitar* with the rambunctious movements of a playful wooden chair.

The third quality that always impressed me was his mastery of layakari, the intricacies of rhythm. He frequently used unusually complex beats in his music, rendering the same melody line in an astounding variety of movements, scale patterns, rhythms, and speed. A scintillating example of this is his "Improvisations on the Theme from Pather Panchali" in collaboration with the jazz flautist Bud Shank, a piece that reminds me of Mozart's intricate variations on a simple French melody "Ah, vous diraj-je Maman", more familiar to us as "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star". While Shank repeats on the flute the haunting air of the famous soundtrack, Ravi Shankar improvises with three different rhythmic patterns of the melody, including a *jhala* in stunning prestissimo.

Many years ago, I had a rare first-hand experience of hearing Ravi Shankar play for nine hours at a stretch, including a dazzling display of *layakari*. In December 1976, I was attending an overnight concert at the Rabindra Sadan in Calcutta, featuring Pandit Bhimsen Joshi in the first half, to be followed by Ravi Shankar. Unfortunately soon after taking the stage, Bhimsen Joshi fell sick and had to be taken away, much to the chagrin of the irate audience. The organizers had to fall back on Ravi Shankar to play for the whole night.

He started with *Raga Behag*. Since he had the whole night at hand, he took his time to play all the different movements, starting with a leisurely *alap*.

In a short while, we could see that he had immersed himself in a meditative mood that engulfed us in the audience as well. The meends and gamaks he played that night made the raga come to life with all its romantic nuances. After the intermission, he continued with an elaborate exposition of the sublime Raga Bhatiyar. He followed the alap and jod sections with a soulful madhya laya section in jhaptaal, a 10-beat pattern in four divisions of 2-3-2-3. It was then that we got a demonstration of what a master he was of rhythm. Gradually, the tempo got faster, until he was playing at twice the original speed without missing a single beat. Ustad Alla Rakha, who was playing the tabla, was equally superb in his accompaniment. We in the audience struggled to keep the beat with our fingers or hand claps, but at one point we had to give up. Dawn was just breaking as I walked out of the auditorium at the end of the concert and the exalted melody of Bhatiyar, coupled with those rapturous rhythmic patterns, made me feel one with nature. To this day, this marathon nine-hour recital stands out in my memory as the best concert I have attended.

Finally, he consistently impressed me with his charismatic stage-presence and showmanship. Between the years of 1975 and 1993, I attended at least six of his concerts, where the audience varied in size and musical maturity. On each occasion, I saw him tailor his presentation to the maturity of the audience and to the time allotted. His performance of his sitar concerto with Zubin Mehta and his orchestra at the Netaji Indoor Stadium in Calcutta in the late 1980's, for example, was much less improvisational than the concert I described in the preceding paragraph. Another hall-mark of his was his punctuality in taking the stage, a trait usually wanting in Indian artists. Ravi Shankar also elevated the role of the tabalchi from a mere accompanist to a co-artist, recognizing that the dynamic interplay

between the two resulted in a more satisfying experience for the audience. He would allot large tracts of time to the tabalchi to provide a solo elaboration, followed by a "point-counterpoint" passage where the sitar responded to a bol on the tabla and vice versa, concluding in a section when they came together. One of the most brilliant instances of such dual interplay that I saw was in his concert with Ustad Zakir Hussein in the Netaji Indoor Stadium in Calcutta in 1992, where he encouraged Zakir to express the full range of his percussive genius. I have a hunch that Ravi Shankar might have borrowed this idea of interplay of melody and percussion from jazz. As he himself has admitted in his autobiography, Ravi Shankar received his training in stage-presentation and general showmanship from his brother, Uday Shankar, during their extensive touring of Europe and US in the 1930's. From a very young age, Ravi Shankar was introduced during these tours to both Western classical music and jazz, including concerts by legendary musicians and conductors, such as Pablo Casals, Segovia, Stravinsky, and Toscanini in Europe and Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie in the US. In the 1930's, Uday Shankar was the world's most famous icon of oriental performing arts and a close associate of such personages as Anna Pavlova, Gertrude Stein, Cole Porter, James Joyce, and Ernest Hemmingway - in other words the avant garde set depicted in Woody Allen's recent film, "Midnight in Paris". Young Ravi Shankar, then barely in his teens, would often accompany his brother to such gatherings. That invaluable experience, combined with his undisputed innate genius and the rigorous training he received from his illustrious guru Baba Alauddin Khan, resulted in his long reign as one of the greatest exponents of Indian classical music in recent times.



Announcement

Our very own community singer Mrs. Indrani Joshi will be offering vocal music lessons at Banga Bhavan starting from March 2013. If you are interested please contact her at 847-854-4462(H) or 847-529-7662(Cell) for further details.

Fertile Ground for Swami Vivekananda's Teachings

Robert D. Evans

The speeches of Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions in 1893 and his subsequent lecture tours across the United States substantially increased the understanding and appreciation of Hinduism among the American public in the late nineteenth century. Even before the Parliament, there was an interest and curiosity about Hinduism that had been developing in the American awareness throughout most of the nineteenth century. This interest had a number of sources.

Transcendentalism was a literary and philosophical movement that originated in the 1830s on the East Coast. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau were prominent authors in this movement. Although not knowing Sanskrit or any of the vernacular languages of India, they made use of Hindu texts and ideas in their writings, taking advantage of the English translations of Hindu scriptures made by Orientalists in Kolkata. For example, in Walden, Thoreau wrote:

In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonal philosophy of the Bhagavad-Gita, in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seems puny and trivial.

The books and writings of the Transcendentalists were widely circulated in the popular media of their time. Through these compositions, Hindu concepts spread beyond the circles of "Boston Brahmins" that made up the bulk of the Transcendentalists.

During the nineteenth century, a number of Protestant churches began missions in India. These missions were mostly monologues in which the Christians proclaimed the tenets of their faith and reported back to the faithful about the religious practices of the Hindu "heathens." Lurid accounts circulated in the popular press about yogis, ruby-eyed idols, blood sacrifices, and other tales of the missionary misunderstands about Hinduism. These sensational stories aroused the public interest.

In contrast to other Protestant groups, the Unitarians entered into a genuine dialogue with Hindus. They influenced and were influenced by reform movements, such as the Brahmo Samaj. In addition, the Unitarians began to bring so-called "converts" to the United States. In 1859, Joguth Chunder Gangooly came to the United States under the auspices of the Unitarian Church. In addition to lecturing at churches, he wrote a book entitled "Life and Religion of the Hindoos" which also contained an autobiographical account of his life and conversion.

Perhaps the most influential participant of this Hindu-Unitarian dialogue was Protap Chunder Mozoomdar. Sunrit Mullick persuasively argues that Protap Chunder Mozoomdar was Hinduism's first missionary to the United States. (Page 80). Protapji made three visits to the United States. The first trip was in 1883, during which he lectured widely and spoke with leading Christian theologians. He wrote a book entitled "The Oriental Christ" which was widely read, reviewed and discussed. As a result of the contacts made during the first trip, Protapji was formally invited to speak by the organizers of the Parliament of Religions in 1893. He shared the podium with Swamiji and gave a number of much appreciated lectures. His final visit to America was in 1900,

Near the end of the nineteenth century, there was a growing interest in the Occult, including the rituals of secret societies such as the Masons. In 1875, the American branch of the Theosophical Society was founded in New York City. People were willing to augment their traditional religious practices with borrowings from other faiths. A famous example of this openness was Pierre Bernard, the "Great Oom." In 1889, Bernard met a Hindu guru from Kolkata named Sylvais Hamati in Lincoln, Nebraska. With Hamati as his guide, Bernard began the serious study of Hatha Yoga and Tantra. Bernard went on to found yoga schools throughout the United States. He also established secret Tantric "lodges" where serious practitioners took up the controversial practices of Tantra. He promoted the academic study of Sanskrit as well. He was so successful that he was a wealthy man for most of his life.

It was a rare opportunity for a teacher of Swami Vivekananda's caliber to bring the teachings of Hinduism to the American public. Fortunately, there were a number of disparate developments in American popular culture that contributed to making the American public fertile ground for what Swamiji came to give.

References

Gangooly, Joguth Chunder <u>Life and Religion of the Hindoos</u>. London/Boston:Crosby, Nichols, Lee and Company, 1860.

Love, Robert. <u>The Great Oom</u>. New York: Viking Penguin, 2010.

Mullick, Sunrit. <u>The First Hindu Mission to America</u>. New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 2010.

The House on Stilts Bakul Banerjee

"Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold, And many goodly states and kingdoms seen; Round many western islands have I been . . ."

— On first looking into Chapman's Homer; John Keats.

Our family of four moved to the mystic hill-town of Shillong, India when I was about nine years old. Our home was propped on a set of tall wooden stilts, leaning against the side of a freshly excavated hill in the sparsely populated neighborhood of Polo Hills. Walls were made of reeds arranged inside black wooden lattice frames and covered with white plasters. Since earthquakes were common in that part of the country, houses were made of lightweight material. Most of the west- and north-facing sides of the house were covered by glass windows and a verandah wrapped the rest of the front side of the house. My mother made sure that the panes were always spotless. The Shillong Buddhist Temple was perched on the side of the opposite hill facing our home. The stairway to the temple was a mirror image to that of our home. On windy days, the house swayed gently and the porous walls made an ethereal, flute-like music as the air passed through the reeds. After Ma told us the story of Gautama Buddha, I used to imagine that the music actually came from Kapilabastu, Gautama's birthplace, although that town was hundreds of miles northwest of Shillong.

My father, who cared much for solitude, chose to rent this brand new, but remote place when he was transferred to Shillong. It could only be accessed by the set of steep, narrow, and open stairs up the hill. There were other houses on the hill, but it required climbing up and down several other sets of stairs, or narrow ledges. Our most frequent visitors were stray dogs. We befriended some of them. My brother and I walked about two miles to go to school and my father's office was probably two and half miles away. Motorized transportation was non-existent in that part of the town. During the first year of our stay, whenever it rained, which happened often in Shillong, a river of ochre mud would wash away from our yard and flow down the steps, making them almost unusable. However, we, my brother and I, both being skinny children, managed to tiptoe our way up and down through the mud with sandals in our hand. Swishing our feet in puddles and creeks nearby solved the problem of muddy feet. I do not remember how my parents managed. This disaster was partially solved during the second year as wild plants and creepers took their hold on the loose earth eliminating mud runs.

Looking back, it was probably one of the most inconvenient homes we ever lived in, but my mother glowed in that sparse home. She hung stiffly starched white cotton curtains on windows using taut spring lines. Her dining table was covered with a white table cloth. She stitched them all by hand. On our way back from school, my brother and I would walk along winding hilly roads, always facing our strange home on stilts with white curtains, visible most of the way. The best view was from the bridge over the Umtru, a fast moving, bubbling mountain river. During certain months, the setting sun would light up the windows in colors of gold and Alizarin Crimson giving the impression of a house on fire.

On most days, our pretty mother would wait for us on the wrap-around veranda. Her tall, strong figure wrapped in a plain white sari, often tinged with the crimson glow of the sun, seemed like a character out of the hardbound fairy tale books in the school library. However, my imagination usually evaporated by the time I stepped on to the veranda. After a brief snack break, she would interrogate us about our school activities and homework. Then, we could go out and play for a couple of hours as long as both of us stayed together. It worked out well as my brother was a shy person and I was the big sister. We were used to entertaining each other, except for the occasional fights. Since my father was an officer employed by the Central Government of India, he was often transferred and we did not stay at the same place for long to make other friends

Our favorite entertainment was to explore hills lined with pine trees and bamboo groves. We rolled on the meadows dotted with Lantana bushes. We came to know a few people who lived there. A little general store sat at the foot of the hill. The storekeeper became our friend. There were several Bengali families nearby who lived for multiple generations in homes with established gardens and gatekeepers. When we really craved adventures we would visit an abandoned shack two hills away and pretended that it was a sacrificial place for a long-lost man-eating tribe.

Our parents often visited the Buddhist temple, particularly on festival days. They knew senior monks well. Recently, I found out that the temple was formally inaugurated in 1947. As a child, I actually visited a relatively new temple compared to most temples and churches that I visited throughout the world later in life. It seems that the temple is still thriving. We, my brother and I, were allowed to visit the temple by ourselves.

As was the custom, there were many preteen novice monks in the temple. We played hide and seek with them around the compound which was always in some kind of construction. Going to the temple was not easy. There was a long, safe way, but we preferred the short, unsafe one. Ma always warned us not to take the short path. For the short route, we had to cross a creek that flowed through the valley between two hills. Usually there was a planked crossway over the creek. One day, we arrived there after a heavy rain and discovered that the crossway had disappeared. Somebody threw a log over the swollen creek. The log itself was partially submerged in the water and slippery. Neither of us knew how to swim. In spite of my protests, my brother decided to cross the creek by walking on the log. I was certain that he would be swept away by the creek if he fell over. However, he froze with fear when he reached the midpoint of the log and would not move an inch either way even after several minutes of encouragement. Finally, I had to muster my courage and walk halfway on the log to hold his hand and guide him back. I was furious and yelled at him throughout our way back home. That evening, I stared at the Buddha statue for a long time wondering how the ancient prince managed to be calm in spite of the troubles he had to go through in life.

In the evenings, monks would light candles on a long tray in front the giant golden sitting Buddha. We could clearly see Buddha's calming face from our bedroom window. We were supposed to return home before the first candle was lit on the table. Usually, I would linger around the bottom of the hill and run up the stairs as the monk on duty entered the room with a lamp in his hand.

Before bedtime, my mother had the ritual of storytelling. During the first two years of our stay in Shillong, she narrated to us the epic stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata in great detail. She told us the story of

Buddha as well. Occasionally, my father would also tell us stories. I still remember the first time he introduced me to the Gift of Magi, the famous short story by O'Henry about Christmas gifts. It was the time to go to bed when the last candle died down in front of the golden Buddha and a trusting peace descended on the hills.

On a very cold morning during the third year, my mother had to go to the hospital in a hurry. Later that evening, we went to visit her at the hospital. She was in bed, but looked fine otherwise.

"I have a big surprise for both of you." She smiled after a while. At the same time, a uniformed nurse wheeled a baby carriage next to her bed.

"This is your baby sister!" She announced. I was speechless and clueless about how she materialized so suddenly. My brother and I were absolutely thrilled. Later, I realized that my mother became very sick during the childbirth and had to stay in the hospital for more than a month. My father took care of us. My idyllic life changed toward the end of our stay in Shillong. We had to help Ma with chores after school and had little time to play. The inconvenient home became a burden to all of us. However, I took a geometry class for the first time that year and fell in love with it.

We lived in Shillong for another ten months before we went down to the plains and crossed two giant rivers, Ganga and Brahmaputra, to return to the big city of Calcutta and its troubles. By then, our baby sister twirled all of us around her little finger, except my mother.

During that eventful last year, our landlord wrapped the stilts with walls and created two first floor apartments. It became just another house, no longer a house on magical stilts.



আর একটি বছর

বানী ভট্টাচার্য্য

নতুন বছর আমি, ইংরিজীর দুহাজার তেরো সাল, ব্যবহার করেনি আমায় কেউ, লাগেনি আমার গালে কালো দাগ, তাইতো আমি আজ আর একটি নতুন বছর। থাকবো আমি তিনশো পঁয়ষট্টি দিন বদলে দেব জীবনের প্রতিটি পাতা থাকবে তাতে শুধু তোমাদেরই আবেগ অনুভূতি আর হাসিকান্নার খেলা।

> চলে যাবো যবে, রেখে যাবো শুধু একটিই সত্যের সাক্ষর, তোমাদের সকলেরই মনে, আমি এসেছিলাম।

চলচ্চিত্র সমালোচনা

জয়া মৈত্র

'হেমলক সোসাইটি'

অভিনয়ে - পরমত্রত চ্যাটাজ্জী, কোয়েল মল্লিক, দীপঙ্কর দে, রুপা গাঙ্গুলী, শিলাজিৎ এবং আরো অনেকে।

পরিচালক - শ্রীজিৎ মুখার্জী ও সঙ্গীত নির্দেশক - অনুপম রায় 'অটোগ্রাফ' এবং 'বাইশে শ্রাবণ'-এর পরে শ্রীজিৎ মুখার্জী আমাদের আরেকটি ভালো চলচ্চিত্র উপহার দিলেন। অন্যান্য বারের মতো এবারেও শ্রীজিৎ বেছে নিয়েছেন গতানুগতিক গলেপর বাইরে ভিন্ন ধরনের গলপ।

বড়লোক বাবার একমাত্র সন্তান মেঘনা (কোয়েল মল্লিক), মা মারা যাবার পর বাবা (দীপঙ্কর দে)-র জীবনে অন্য নারী (রূপা গাঙ্গুলী)-র উপস্থিতি নিয়ে মনোকস্টে ভোগে । মেঘনার বহু বছরের প্রেমের সম্পর্ক ভেঙ্গে যায়, তার পরেই খবর আসে চাকরি হারাবার । ডিপ্রেশন-এর শিকার হয় মেঘনা, চেম্বা করে আত্মহত্যার । সেই পরিস্থিতিতে আনন্দ কর (পরমত্রত)-এর আবির্ভাব, যিনি একটি ওয়ার্কশপ চালান নাম 'হেমলক সোসাইটি' । সেই ওয়ার্কশপ-এ সুস্থ ভাবে, ঠান্ডা মাথায় আত্মহত্যার পদ্ধতি শেখানো হয় । আনন্দ বিভিন্ন উপায়ে রাজী করান মেঘনাকে 'হেমলক সোসাইটি'-তে ক্লাস নেবার । সেখানে ক্লাস নেবার পরে মেঘনার বোধদয় হয় য়ে, মানুষ কত কঠিন পরিস্থিতির মধ্যে জীবনযাপন করে এবং হেমলক সোসাইটি আসলে মানুষকে বাচঁতে অনুপ্রাণিত করে । মেঘনা আরো জানতে পারে, যে মানুষটি তাকে বাঁচতে শেখাল সে নিজে এইরকম রোগের শিকার ।

সম্পর্ক নিয়ে কিছু আশঙ্কা, জীবনযাপন নিয়ে কিছু প্রশ্ন, গভীর কিছু সমস্যার সঙ্গে হাস্যরসের সংমিশ্রনে সাবলীল ভাবে গল্প তৈরী করেছেন শ্রীজিৎ। এই গল্পের সব চেয়ে জোরালো এবং তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ বক্তব্য হলো জীবনকে উদ্যাপন করা। কোয়েল মল্লিক, পরমত্রত এবং অন্যান্য কুশীলবরা যে যার ভূমিকায় জীবন্ত। অনুপম রায়ের গান অপূর্ব।

সিনেমাটির গল্প, ডায়লগ, অভিনয়, উদ্দেশ্য সবই সাধারণের মাত্রা ছাড়িয়ে যায়, তবে আমার মনে হয়েছে, প্রয়োজনের অতিরিক্ত দৈর্ঘ্য বিরক্তির উদ্রেক করে। মেঘনার মতো মেয়ের হঠাৎ আনন্দকে বিশ্বাস করে তার সাথে বেরিয়ে পড়াটা কিছুটা অবাস্তব মনে হলেও হতে পারে। এক কথায় 'হেমলক সোসাইটি' একটি ভিন্ন স্বাদের, সমকালীন সমস্যা এবং সমাধানের গল্প।

Life of Pi: A Must See Movie Bhaswati Roy

Based on an award winning novel by Canadian author Yann Martel, Taiwanese-born, Illinoiseducated (graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign with a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts in 1980, before moving to New York for his Master's degree) Ang Lee presented yet another spectacular movie, this time on a young Indian boy Pi, strangely named after Piscine Monitor, and a Bengal Tiger in a boat, the only survivors of a sea storm. The story begins at Pondicherry, a former French colony in Southern India, where Pi's father (Adil Hussain) owned a Zoo. Maintaining a privately owned zoo became difficult economically, hence the family decided to sell the property and migrate to Canada with a ship-full of animals, which includes a Bengal Tiger, namely Richard Parker. Lee, who already has two Oscars in his pocket, showed his talent narrating the story while on the open vast sea with a Bengal Tiger and the boy on a boat struggling to survive. The boy learns to survive on a makeshift raft made out of plastics and ropes, and sometimes sleeping in a life buoy hanging dangerously outside the boat, away from the reach of the tiger. One must watch the movie to see how the boy survived, tamed the tiger, came ashore and how masterly Lee can be with creating a parable about life and death and the whole significance of our existence. Ang Lee is not an ordinary film director. He won the Oscar in 1995 as the best director for his movie 'Brokeback Mountain'. Earlier, his movie 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon' brought him the Oscar in 2000 as the Best Foreign Language Film. In Pi, Suraj Sharma as Pi (Junior) and Irfan Khan as Pi (Senior), Assam-born (from Goalpara) Adil Hussain as the father and Tabu as the mother acted very well. Renowned French actor Gerard Depardieu also appeared in this movie in a brief role. The movie is a welcome exception from most of the commercial movies out in the market. It will be a miracle if Life of Pi does not win an Oscar.

Remembering Tushar Bhadury - 1969 - 2012



On October 23, 2012, Tushar Bhadury, the only offspring of Ruby and Tapen Bhadury, passed away at the age of 43. He was born in Montreal, Canada and moved to Wheaton, Illinois, with his parents as a child. After high school, he graduated from University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, in Accounting (cum laude). He joined the Board of Equalization, a State of California organization and moved to Los Angeles area. He continued his successful career with the Department of Health Care Services, State of California. At the funeral, his friends and colleagues from Illinois and California eulogized him for his sunny personality, deep curiosity and compassion about the world at large, friendship and hard work. He is survived by his parents. Both Ruby and Tapen Bhadury are long time members of the Chicago area Bengali community.

Announcements

Sanjay, son of Samir and Juthika (Dolly) Basu of Naperville, was married to Palav, daughter of Dr. Ashok and Dr. Usha Babaria of New Jersey on July 16, 2012. Sanjay is currently an Asst. Professor of Medicine at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California. Palav is completing her fellowship at UCSF. The couple will be residing in their new home in Mission Bay, San Francisco.



Congratulation

We congratulate Prashant Banerjee and Molly Banerjee for celebrating the silver jubilee of their married life.

Condolence

We offer our heart-felt condolence to

- Dipak Chatterjee who lost his brother.
- Jasendu Chakraborty who lost his father.
- Bitosh Sinha and Sunanda Bose who lost their brother.



We would like to thank the Bengali community of Chicagoland area for your support

www.biswas.com

"Investing is Simple, but not Easy" - Warren Buffet

Are you investing successfully for the long term?

Despite making enough money, most people struggle to achieve their long term financial goals. They employ trial and error investment strategies, trying to pick the next hot stock or mutual fund. Lacking a clear investment plan and execution strategy, they often assume more risk than necessary and thereby diminish their chances of achieving their goals.

What does it take to invest successfully?

Successful investors have a well thought out investment plan and strategy, which they execute consistently over the long haul. Just as successful athletes have a plan and strategy in place and achieve success with the help of a coach, successful investors need a good investment plan and strategy that they can execute with the help of a good investment adviser.

V2 Financial Group, an Independent fee-only advisor, provides sophisticated advice and manages your investment accounts on your behalf

Our Services

- ▶ Portfolio management (manage your IRA's, 401(k)'s and other investment accounts)
- ▶ Planning (Insurance planning, Retirement & College projections and planning) Why V2?
- Fiduciary (unlike brokers), operating with your best interests in mind
- Individualized portfolio management Unbiased product selection. No Commissions. Conflict-free advice Sophisticated, holistic approach

VENKAT KRISHNAMURTHY & VENKATA VEDAM



V2 FINANCIAL GROUP, LLC

1536 East Bailey Road Naperville IL 60565 (630) 364-4529 (Phone) (630) 839-6169 (Fax)

Www.v2financialgroup.com

Please contact us for a no-obligation consultation venkat@v2financialgroup.com / vedam@v2financialgroup.com

DISCLOSURES

Registration as an investment adviser does not constitute an endorsement of the firm by securities regulators nor does it indicate that the adviser has attained a particular level of skill or ability, Information presented does not involve the rendering of personalized investment advice, but is limited to the dissemination of general information on products and services. This information should not be construed as an offer to buy or sell, or a solicitation of any offer to buy or sell the securities mentioned herein. All investment strategies have the potential for profit or loss. Changes in investment strategies, contributions or withdrawals may materially alter the performance and results of your portfolio. We only transact business in states where we are properly registered, or are excluded or exempted from registration requirements.

ফিরে দেখা – সুরে, তালে, ছন্দে ২০১২



















Bengali Association of Greater Chicago - Community Newsletter

সমাজ সংবাদ

From: Bengali Association of Greater Chicago

1148 N Main Street Glendale Heights, IL 60139 http://www.bagc.net

To:

Disclaimer –

Articles in *Samaj Sambad* are obtained from individual members. The editors are not responsible for the content of these articles. The opinions expressed in these articles are solely those of the contributors and are not necessarily representative of BAGC.

From Banga Bhavan Committee 2008 - 2012

The journey from 2008 to 2012 has been a long one. BAGC finally has a home. As we hand over the job to the next committee we would like to thank all the BAGC Members for their support and assistance in making this venture a success. Banga Bhavan is fulfilling the purpose for which it was created, a religious and cultural center for the Chicago Bengali Community. As the years progress we are sure BAGC Members will be utilizing Banga Bhavan for many new ventures.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve the community and wish the BAGC Executive and Banga Bhavan Committee 2013 good luck and much success.

We are publishing the Donors list (as of 12/27/12) below with a deep sense of gratitude and pride.

Atanu Mazumder – Facilities Director O Shubham Sanyal; Achintya Ray; Pratik Chakraborty – Fundraising Director O Manisha Bose; Debasish Gooptu – Treasurer O Shanku Ghosh; Shouvik Dutta – Secretary O Malabika Palit – Vice-Chairperson O Sandeep Chaudhuri – Chairperson

Banga Bhavan Donors

Our heartiest thanks to everyone who donated monetarily and with in kind donations to make **Banga Bhavan** a viable and vibrant religious and heritage center.

\$50 K and above

BAGC General Body Ghosh, Parthasarathi & Gitti

\$25 K to \$50K

Banerji, Manatosh & Basanti Chakrabarty, Ananda & Krishna Das, Amitava & Adrija Ray, Asok & Mira

\$10K to \$25K

Bose , Shyamal & Manisha Saigal, Rahul & Rosi

\$5K to \$10 K

Banerjee, Dipankar & Dipali Bhattacherjee, Sailen & Arpita Bhattacharjee, Debanshu & Deepa Chakroborty, Ram & Debalina Chatterjee, Chiranjeeb & Manju Deb, Amitava & Khona Dewanjee, Bikramjit & Arpita Mondal, Jyoti & Indrani Mukherjee, Ashish & Sonali Nag, Prabhas & Ila

Roy, Prabir & Mukul

Das, Narayan & Rina

\$2500 to \$5K

Bandopadhyay, Bhaskar & Ratna Bhattacharya, Mondira, Trilling, Jett Bhattacharya, Shantinath Chakrabarty, Kaberi Chatterjee, Shoma Chaudhuri, Sandeep & Rupali De, Kalyan & Kajal Dutta, Showvik & Aindrila Gangopadhyay, Ranjit & Ilora Ghosh, Prasanta & Sreeti ISC Global Solutions Sarkar, Shankar& Mallika Sen, Prabir & Rajashree

\$ 1000 to \$ 2500

Acharya, Prabir & Meera Baidya, Milan Banerjee, Durga S & Mita Banerjee, Prashant & Molly Banerjee, Prithiviraj& Swati Banerjee, Rajib & Aparajita Bangla School Parents Basu, Biswajit & Rajashree Basu, Prabir & Madhumita Basu, Subhash & Manju Bhattacharya, Utpal & Sandhya Bhattacharyya, Alak & Anjali Bhaumik, Dulal & Runa Biswas, Arup & Sonali Bose, Subhas & Aloka Chakrabarti, Bhaskar & Arpita Chakraborty, Amit & Tanima Chakraborty, Pratik & Mohua Chatterjee, Probir K. & Sunanda Chatterjee, Dipak & Nelly Chowdhury, Sanjib & Das, Madhuchhanda

Das, Arup & Sumitra

Dasgupta, Ranjan & Neeta Dasgupta, Tapas & Kathakali Dutta, Abhijit & Shilpa Desai, Virendra & Rani Dey, Basudev & Jayashree Dey, Saikat & Sheila Dey Subhas Dhar, Dilip & Ratna Dutta, Dipak & Tamisra Dutta, Samir & China Ghosh, Amitava & Chittarupa Ghosh, Dipak & Anulekha Ghosh, Nirmalya & Ronti Ghosh, Poulomi Gooptu, Debasish & Chandrima Karpurkayastha, Subrata & Manjula Kundu, Samar & Amita Laha, Subhasis & Bhaswati Maiti, Sudip & Pratima Majumder, Amalendu & Purabi

Majumder, Dibyen & Rupasree Mazumder, Atanu & Ajanta Mukherjee, Amal & Nibedita Mukherjee, Biman & Chhabi Mukherjee, Soma & Ghose Dastidar, Ashok Mukherjee, Subrota & Joyita Palit, Nina Palit, Tapan& Malabika Paul, Ajit & Priti Paul, Mira Paul, Tarak & Amita Ray, Achintya & Shikha Ray, Biswamay Ray, Sanjit & Rina Roy, Girindra & Gauri Roy, Ranjit & Esha Roy, Subir & Devipriya S K Ghosh Associated Inc. Sanyal, Subrahmanya & Soma Sen, Anjan Sengupta, Amalendu & Bijoya

Suniti Medical Corp.

Contd.

\$ 500 to \$1000

Agarwala, Brojendra & Rita Bagchi, Ash & Malanie Bagchi, Kallol & Suchismita Banerjee, Chandan Banerjee, Milan & Punam Banerjee, S

Banerjee, Santimoy & Mekhla Banerjee, Sourav & Suparna Banerji, Subrata & Bakul

Basu, Saunak & Banerjee Sarmistha

Bhadury, Tapen & Ruby Bhattacharya Leena

Bhattacharya, Ramanuj & Mahuya Biswas, Amitava & Indrani

Chakrabarty, Abhijeet

Chakraborty, Debashis & Sanam, Shabnam

Chakraborty, Jasendu & Soma Chakraborty, Parijat & Sanchita Chatterjea, Rahul and Bose, Sharmishta Chatterjee, Angshuman & Anusri Chatterjee, Pijush & Manju Chattopadhyay, Satyansu & Suchitra

Chattopathyay, Satyansu & Chowdhury, Tarun & Reba Das, Ajay & Sanjna Dasgupta, Rubai Dev, Rahul & Sanchita

Dhorchowdhury, Ranjit & Jonaki

Dutta, Surya & Mahuya

Gangopadhyay, Ashok & Subhra Ghosh, Partha and Devdutta Ghosh, Tapashankar Misra, Tapan & Lilly

Mukherjee, Sabyasachi & Minati Mustafi, Devkumar & Reba Pal, Pralay & Shanta Patel, Ankur & Roy, Soma Roy, Aninda & Piyali Roy, Anjan & Bhaswati Roy, Sumit k. & Mallika Roy Chowdhury, Indranil

Saha, Dibyendu

Saha, Gautam & Chitralekha Saha, Shouvik & Samarpita Talukder, Shaibal & Sushmita Taparia, Badri & Pramita Yang, Ming. Jen & Sunayana

Up to \$500

Bandopadhyay, Deep & Manisha Bandopadhyay, Dipankar and Geeta

Bandyopadhay, Saptarshi

Banerjee, Raja

Basu, Prasenjit and Mukherjee, Soma Basu, Rana & Mukherjee, Misti Basu, Samir & Juthika Bhattacharya, Alok & Priyanka Bhattacharya, Pradeep K. Bhattacharyya, Uma

Big Suchir

Biswas, Partha & Sampa

Biswas, Pravanshu & Mahakal, Shilpa

Bose, Sunanda Busch, Sabita Chanda, Debasis Chatterjea, Surjamukhi

Chatterjee, Bishwanath & Shameeta

Chatterjee, Deb & Pratima

Chatterjee, Jayita Chatterjee, Sunil

Chattopadhyay, Ramakrishna

Chattopadhyay, Saumen & Ranjita Chattopadhyay, Soma & Parua, Nirmalya Chaudhuri, Dipika S. Chaudhuri, Rajib & Debleena

Chaudhury, Kanishka & Sanchita Das, Anirban & Suchandra Das, Makhanlal & Suparna Das, Prasanta & Subhalaxmi

Das, Prasenjit & Chatterjee, Shravani Dasgupta, Subhendu & Kakali

Datta, Biswaroop Datta, Pinaki & Rini

Datta-Chakravarti, Mini & Chakravarti, D.

De, Subrata & Anita Dhali, Bikash Dhar, Shantanu & Mita

Dutt, Debanjan & Shergill, Himika Ganguli, Ranajoy & Rupa Gangwal, Mukesh & Nita

Ghosh, Ananta Ram & Manjushree

Ghosh, Ashish & Sampa Ghosh, Richik & Mini Ghosh, Satyantu Gooptu, Angshuman Gooptu, Ishani

Majumdar, Partha & Ruma Majumdar, Rajdeep Majumdar, Saurin & Leslie

Mitra, Aparajita

Mukherjee, Biswajeet & Sarkar, Sanchita

Mukherjee, Mahitosh & Kalpana

Mukherjee, S. M.

Mukhopadhya, S. & Ruma

Mukhopadhyay, Supriya & Nandini Munshi, Susim K. & Nanda Nath, Biswaprasad & Rebecca Pahan, Kalipada & Swarupa Purakayastha. Siddhartha & Suiata

Roy, Sumit & Chandrima

Roychowdhury, Shounak & Debasmita

Saha, Narayan & Lily Saha, Samir & Dipali Sarma, Manoj & Kajal Vilekar, Nilesh & Sainee

Undisclosed Amounts

Banerjee, Anup & Indrani Banerjee, Ashis & Amita Bardhan, Ananta & Sarmistha Bhattacharya, Benoyendu & Bani Bhattacharya, Indraneel & Aparna Bhattacharya, Soumya & Shompita

Chakraborty, Dhiman & Sudeshna Das, Subhasis & Janice Datta, Sanatan & Sanchayita Dutta, Ronojoy & Moonmoon Gangopadhyaya, Asim & Alpana Gupta, Abhijit & Suparna Majumder, Pradip & Srabani Mondal, Somsubhra & Rubina Mukhopadhyay, Dipankar & Alpana Mukhopadhyay, Kajal & Aditi Nandy, Dibyendu & Kundu, Rupa Sarkar, Sauparna & Samita

In-Kind Donations

Banerji, Manatosh & Basanti	Furniture, Office Equipment	10,000\$
Kundu, Rupa	Architectural Services	5,000\$
Mazumder, Atanu & Ajanta	A/V Equipment	3,000\$
Ghosh, Parthasarathi & Geeti	Furniture	2,000\$
Bangla School Parents	Furniture, A/V Equipment	1,000\$
Ghosh, Shanku & Ronti	Appliances, Furniture	1,000\$
Das, Adija	Furniture	800\$
Dey, Jayasree	Catering	500\$
Dharchowdhury, Jonaki	Catering	500\$
Mazumder, Mono	Appliances, Furniture	500\$
Aian Mazumder	Game Tables	400\$
Banerjee, Milan	A/V Equipment	400\$
Datta, Pradip	Appliances, Furniture	200\$
Mukherjee, Uditt	Appliances	125\$