



Dakshini

# Dakshini Presents



Durgotsav 2024

Sharodiya Shubhechha

Mehul

# **InnoSense Corporation**

**An Environmental Technology Firm to Promote  
Sustainable Life on Planet Earth**



**Kisholoy Goswami**  
President and CEO



**InnoSense Corporation**  
[www.innosensecorp.com](http://www.innosensecorp.com)



**Latika Goswami**  
Chief Operating Officer



# Greetings from the President



Dear Dakshini Family,

**Shubho Sharodiya and a heartfelt welcome** to each one of you! As we come together to celebrate **Durgotsav 2024**, it fills me with immense pride and joy to witness our vibrant Bengali community united in the spirit of festivity, tradition, and togetherness.

**Durga Puja** is more than a festival; it is a celebration of our rich culture, heritage, and values. It is a time to worship Maa Durga, the embodiment of strength, courage, and righteousness. It is also a time to reconnect with our roots and spread joy within our larger community.

Even though we are miles away from our homeland, through the beats of the dhaak, the fragrance of dhuno, and the vivid colors of our saris and dhotis, we recreate the magic of Durga Puja right here. Most importantly, we reaffirm the strong bonds that unite us, regardless of where we.

**Our organization is committed to preserving and promoting our culture**, and this Pujo is a testament to that dedication. Year after year, it is through your participation, support, and love that we can host such a grand event.

**I would like to take a moment to extend my deepest gratitude to the Executive Committee, our tireless volunteers, and all the families who have contributed their time, energy, and resources to make this celebration a success.** Without your unwavering dedication, none of this would have been possible. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

As we immerse ourselves in the festivities over the coming days—with cultural programs, prayers, music, and feasts—let us take a moment to reflect on the deeper meaning of this festival. Maa **Durga's triumph over Mahishasura is a powerful reminder that good always prevails over evil. Let JUSTICE prevail.**

I'm also proud to share that, **beyond these cultural celebrations, our organization is actively engaged in community-driven initiatives.** Through programs like Senior Engagement (JOY), Kids Development Programs (MILESTONE), Dakshini Foundation for Philanthropy and various **community service projects**, we are fostering greater connections and making a lasting impact on both our immediate community and the broader society.

Finally, I encourage everyone to fully enjoy the festivities, create lasting memories with your loved ones, and take pride in our shared heritage.

May Maa Durga bless us with happiness, prosperity, and peace.

**Best Regards,**

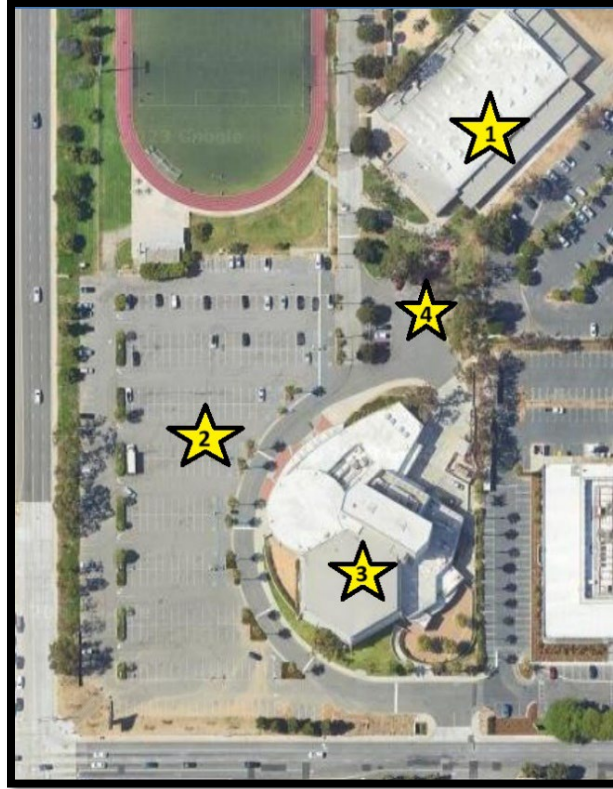
**Dipankar Biswas**

**President, Dakshini Bengali Association of California**

Cell: (310) 344-1804 / Email: [Communications@dakshini.org](mailto:Communications@dakshini.org)

[www.dakshini.org](http://www.dakshini.org)

# Map of Puja Venue



## 1935 Manhattan Beach Blvd, Redondo Beach, CA 90278

1. Puja location – Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center Gymnasium
  2. Parking
  3. Concert location - Redondo Beach Performing Arts Center Auditorium
  4. Grand Sponsors' Parking
- Enter through Manhattan Beach Blvd.
  - Park in the general parking lot.
  - Proceed to the Registration Booth at the puja location and collect food coupons.
  - All meals will be served outside the puja location.
  - The Concert location is close to the Puja location. Entry will be allowed only with a ticket with a QR code and seat number.

### **Special Acknowledgments**

**Priest:** Kamalendu Ganguly  
**Priest Assistant:** Pratima Ganguly  
**Pandal Credit:** Sudip Purakayastha & Team  
**Cover Page Art:** Mehul Mondal (15y)

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS – 2024-2026



**Dipankar Biswas**  
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**Dr. Arundhuti Biswas  
Ghosal**  
Vice President



**Dr. Bhaswati Moulik**  
Secretary



**Swapna Roy**  
Treasurer



**Soumen Ghosh**  
Executive Member



**Sudip Purkayastha**  
Executive Member



**Sampurna Dube**  
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**Sauvik Basu**  
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**Pratim Gupta**  
Executive Member



**Shayok Dutta**  
Adhoc Executive Member

# Dakshini Acknowledges Our Sponsors

***We are thankful and grateful to our sponsors, donors, and members\* for their unconditional support***

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- ❖ Sumana Majumder
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- ❖ Shima Joshi and Satish Joshi

## ***Platinum:***

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*\* The list is based on membership received as of midnight 09/30/2024.*



Soumen Ghosh – আমার দুর্গা

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1988-1990	DR. MALAY DAS	2008-2010	MR. ANUPAM SUKUL
1990-1992	MR. AJIT RAKSHIT	2010-2012	DR. SARNATH CHATTARAJ
1992-1994	MRS.MAITRAYEE MAZUMDAR	2013-2015	MR. ARNAB CHATTERJEE
1994-1996	MR. AJOY DUBE	2015-2017	MR. BIDHAN RAY
1996-1998	DR. KAMALESH SOM	2017-2019	MR. SHUBHAROOP GHOSH
1998-2000	MR. MOHIT CHATTERJEE	2019-2022	MRS.NIBEDITA LAHA
2000-2002	MRS.JAYASHREE DAS	2022-2024	MRS.RIDDHI CHAKRABORTY
2002-2004	MR. RANJIT DAS	2024-2026	MR. DIPANKAR BISWAS
2004-2006	MRS.PRATIMA DATTA		



# 2024 DURGA PUJA SUB-COMMITTEE (VOLUNTEERS)

## Communication:

Dipankar Biswas  
Debjani Dasgupta  
Aniket Dasgupta  
Daipayan Sen  
Riddhi Chakraborty  
Sharmila Dasgupta

## Décor & Aesthetics:

Sudip Purkayastha  
Payel Biswas  
Dhriti Bagchi  
Sohini Roy  
Soma Saha  
Sanjukta Dasgupta  
Puspita Roy Choudhury

## Kulo Décor:

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Sohini Roy  
Soma Saha  
Sanjukta Dasgupta  
Chaitali Banerjee  
Anusha Ghosal  
Debjani Dasgupta  
Sreerupa Ganguly  
Saurabhi Sen  
Sayanti Bera  
Siona Ghosh  
Indrani Sen  
Swapna Sen  
Avissh Banerjee  
Arik Ghosal

## Pandal Making:

Sudip Purakayastha  
Jayanta Purkayastha  
Payel Biswas  
Basanti Dey  
Sanjit Purkayastha

## Pandal Setup:

Sudip Purakayastha  
Jayanta Purkayastha  
Sujay Kar  
Ranjit Ganguly  
Ranjit Banerjee  
Sarnath Chattaraj

## Logistics:

Pratim Gupta  
Sauvik Basu  
Biswajoy Basak  
Pradipta Ray  
Swagata Ghosh  
Devashish Rudra  
Gautam Mukherjee  
Kunal Chakrabarti  
Arijit Majumder  
Arun Chakladar  
Mohua Roy  
Sayande Ghosh  
Sayantan Sinha

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Suchismita Ghosh  
Rupa Das  
Ranjit Das  
Somali Saha  
Rita Mallik Datta  
Sauvik Basu  
Devashish Rudra  
Anindita Rudra  
Biswarupa Dube  
Ayan Kar  
Rajasree Ganguli  
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Arun Chakladar  
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Chatterjee  
Sonali Saha  
Debashree Ghosh  
Roy  
Rupashree Goswami  
Biswarupa Dube  
Somali Saha

## Bodhon Co-ordinators:

## Food:

Arundhuti Biswas Ghosal  
Soumen Ghosh  
Bidhan Ray  
Pranjit Saha  
Sajal Debnath  
Siddharta Biswas  
Paulam Basu  
Pradipta Ray  
Puspita Roy Choudhury  
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Somali Saha  
Sonali Acharya  
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Suchismita Roy  
Ghosh  
Sumana Majumder  
Sweta  
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Ananya Dattagupta  
Biswarupa Dube



Samik Choudhury  
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Sharmila Dasgupta  
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Arik Ghosal  
Aviraj Ghosh  
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Saunak Ghosh  
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Bhattacharya  
Shirom Mukherjee  
Shreya Mukherjee  
Shreya Sanyal  
Siona Ghosh  
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Soujonnyo Saha  
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Paramita Chatterjee  
Rupashree Goswami  
Shawli Roy  
Sonali Saha  
Suman Saha  
Sumana Majumder

Debapriya Bhattacharya  
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Sonali Saha  
Ananya Dattagupta  
Pratishruti Sarkar  
Sumana Majumdar  
Paramita Dolui  
Sharmistha Ray

**RBPAC**

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Arundhuti Biswas Ghosal  
Reshmi Dutta  
Chumki Sen  
Poppy Dutta  
Saswati Bhattacharyay  
Soham Ray  
Swarna Das  
Anubhav Basak  
Ankita Chattaraj  
Soumitra Banerjee  
Subrata Das  
Suman Saha (Sr)  
Suparna Chakladar  
Satwik Banerjee  
Srijita Ghosh (Rani)

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Anusha Basak  
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Deshan Biswas  
Dhruba Bhattacharyay  
Sanjit Purkayastha  
Souhardyo Saha  
Tisya Choudhury

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Pradipta Ray  
Arpita Mukherjee

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Saurabh  
Chatterjee  
Arundhuti Biswas  
Ghosal  
Bhaswati Moulik  
Ananya  
DuttaGupta  
Pami Mukherjee  
Siddhartha  
DuttaGupta  
Subharoop Ghosh  
Sucharit Sarkar  
Sweta  
Bhattacharya

**Games/Raffles:**

Sampurna Dube  
Arundhuti Biswas  
Ghosal  
Abornita Das  
Kumar  
Indrani Sen

**Video &**

**Photography:**

Aniket Dasgupta  
Payel Biswas  
Paulam Basu  
Somali Saha  
Rajib Bhowal

**Dakshini**

**Foundation:**

Sourav Roy  
Pushkar Ghosh  
Choudhuri  
Sharmila Dasgupta  
Sauviri Roy (Toree)



# 2024 PUJA SCHEDULE



Dakshini

## Durgotsav 2024 Schedule



### Friday, October 11th

Bodhon : 5:30 pm  
Mahashasti Pujo : 6 pm  
Dinner : 6:30 pm  
Dipayan & Prashmita Concert : 8 pm



### Saturday, October 12th

Saptami Pujo and Pushpanjali : 10 am - 1 pm  
Astami & Sandhi Pujo : 1:30 pm  
Lunch : 12:30 pm to 2 pm  
Pujo Games : 2:30 pm to 4 pm  
Sandhya Aaroti : 5:30 pm  
Dinner: 6 pm  
Richa Sharma Concert : 8 pm



### Sunday, October 13th

Nabomi Pujo and Pushpanjali : 10 am - 1 pm  
Lunch : 12 PM to 1:30 pm  
Dashami Pujo : 2 pm  
Mukto Mancho ( Small Gym ) : 2 pm  
Mega Raffle Draw (Small Gym): 4 pm  
Bisarjan : 4:30 pm  
Bisarjan Dance : 5 pm  
Sidur Khela (Outside) : 5:15 pm  
Dinner (Boxed) : 6 pm



# 2024 PUJA FOOD MENU



## DAKSHINI PRESENTS

### DURGOTSAV 2024 - FOOD MENU

#### FRIDAY DINNER 11TH OCT

##### NONVEG

Basanti Pulao  
Mixed Veg Tawa Fry  
Mutton  
Chom Chom

##### VEG

Basanti Pulao  
Mixed Veg Tawa Fry  
Shahi Paneer  
Chom Chom

#### SATURDAY LUNCH 12TH OCT (VEG)

Khichuri | Mixed Veg Chochchori | Mixed Veg Pakora |  
Chutni (Tomato Khejur) | Papad | Payesh (Gobindo Bhog)

#### SATURDAY DINNER 12TH OCT

##### NONVEG

Goat Biryani  
Chicken  
Raita  
Rasomalai

##### VEG

Fried Rice  
Malai Kofta  
Kadai Paneer  
Rasomalai

#### SUNDAY LUNCH 13TH OCT

##### NONVEG

Rice  
Moong Daal  
Beguni  
Chyachra (Macher matha)  
Fish Kalia  
Chutni (Plastic) | Rosogolla

##### VEG

Rice  
Moong Daal  
Beguni  
Chyachra (Mixed Veg)  
Enchor r Tarkari  
Chutni (Plastic) | Rosogolla

#### SUNDAY DINNER 13TH OCT (BOXED, NONVEG)

Fried Rice | Chilli Chicken / Chilli Paneer | Milk Cake

#### LAKSHMI PUJA, SATURDAY 26TH OCT

(JORDAN HIGH SCHOOL, LONG BEACH)

LUNCH : Veg Pulao | Dhokar Dalna | Malai Kofta | Chom Chom

DINNER : Dal Puri | Aalur Dam | Raajbhog

REDONDO BEACH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER  
1935 MANHATTAN BEACH BLVD, REDONDO BEACH, CA 90278





# DAKSHINI DURGOTSAV 2024

## KID'S MENU



### FRIDAY

**Chicken / Veggie Burger, Brownie & Chips**



### SATURDAY

#### Lunch

**Pizza (Cheese), Juice & Nutella**



#### Dinner

**Fried Rice, Chowmein, Chicken / Tofu, Chocolate  
Chip Cookies, Juice**

### SUNDAY

#### Lunch

**Naan, Chicken Tikka Masala / Palak Paneer, Ras0  
Malai, Juice**

#### Dinner

**Fried Rice, Chilli Chicken / Paneer, Milk Cake**



**REDONDO BEACH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER  
1935 MANHATTAN BEACH BLVD, REDONDO BEACH, CA 90278**



# DAKSHINI PRESENTS

Dakshini

**Bodhon on Friday Oct 11th at 5:30 PM**

**Total Duration : 30 - 40 minutes**

[www.dakshini.org](http://www.dakshini.org)

## Join Us

### 1. Opening

**A minute of silence, with black ribbons worn, in solidarity with the RGKar Incident.**

**#JusticeforRGKarVictim NOW**



**Let's keep the momentum going and not give up!**

### 2. Chandi Path & Mayer Gaan

**A heartfelt song dedicated to the love and power of mothers.**



### 3. Chanting in front of Ma Durga

**A group chant invoking the blessings of Ma Durga, the embodiment of strength and power.**



**4. Participants will hold a tea candle Symbolizing light and hope, as a prayer for the power to combat all forms of violence against women.**

**REDONDO BEACH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (Gym)  
1935 MANHATTAN BEACH BLVD, REDONDO BEACH, CA 90278**





## 2024 PUJA ARTISTS/PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

**Prashmita** is the lead vocalist of her bands, "Udaan" and "Prashmita & Co.". Her first playback was the song "Sajna" under the music direction of Arindom from Raj Chakraborty's "Bojhena Shey Bojhena" which bagged the award of Best Upcoming Female Vocalist in Radio Mirchi Music Awards, 2014. She is



one of the pioneers behind the extremely successful series of Gaan Abohomaan concerts. She was also part of the Niharika music album by Nihar Naturals in collaboration with Chandrabindoo. She has sung title tracks for mega serials "Bodhu Boron" and "Thik Jeno Love Story" on Star Jalsha and "Rai Kishori" on Zee Bangla. Her other playbacks include "Parbo Na" and "Aasho Na" from the movie "Borbaad", "O Thakur" from "Bela Sheshe", "Mon Aamar" from "Katmundu", "Dekhete Bou Bou" from "Shudhu Tomari Jonyo", etc. Many more of her playback songs are lined up for release this year.

**Dipaayan** was one of the top performers of many reality shows, namely Zee Bangla Saregamapa (2012-13), Great Music Gurukul (2015) and Zee TV Saregamapa (2021-22). Besides doing playback singing in movies, Dipaayan also regularly performs in stage shows all over India and abroad. He has toured countries like Canada, USA, Bangladesh. He has worked with many music directors including Bollywood Biggies like Himesh Reshammiya. Dipaayan also frequently performs on TV channels like Zee Bangla, Zee TV, Akash Aath and many more.



**Richa Sharma** is an award-winning artist, celebrated for her outstanding renditions for numerous blockbuster films, including: Taal, Zubeida, Lajja, Kaante, Om Shanti Om, Baabul, Kal Ho Na Ho, Saathiya, Action Replay, My Name is Khan, Baghban, many more!

Out of many awards, Richa Sharma won the Bollywood Movie Award for Best Female Playback Singer for 'Mahi Ve' in Kaante, and Zee Cine Award for Best Female Playback Singer for 'Sajda' in My Name is Khan.

# 2024 PUJA ARTISTS/PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS – AACE DRAMA



Billions of blue blistering barnacles! Get ready to blast off on an out-of-this-world adventure with the talented crew of Dakshini kids who are bringing “The Adventures of Tintin” to life on stage. Nostalgia is sure to play a huge role in this AACE drama, with fans of the original Tintin comics reminiscing about their childhood adventures with the series.

These small astronauts have been training hard. From the fearless Tintin with his trusted sidekick Snowy, the genius Professor Calculus, to the crusty Captain Haddock embarking on a thrilling journey across the cosmos. And just wait until you see the dynamic duo of Thompson and Thomson, the nefarious Nestor, or the bumbling detectives on a thrilling chase across land, sea, and perhaps, the moon!

But the excitement doesn't stop there - this talented troupe also brings poetic flair to the high seas of espionage! Not to be outdone, a fabulous ensemble of dancers will shake things up, while the rest of the gang will take you on a journey across the stars, galaxies, and beyond!

Under the steady guidance of the intrepid director, everyone's favorite “Pami (Masi)” and dance director “Debapriya (Masi)” prepare to relive the magic of Hergé's work and witness the iconic moments that have shaped generations. From Haddock's comedic outbursts to Tintin's heroic feats, this play will have you cheering for the brave explorers, as they take you on a journey to the stars. In the words of Captain Haddock himself, “Ten thousand thundering typhoons!” — you won't want to miss this stellar adventure!

**Cast:**

<b>Nestor/Driver:</b> Rishaan Ray	<b>Tintin:</b> Siona GhoshRuhi)	<b>Dirac:</b> Aadrian Sensharma
<b>Ross:</b> Aditya Rudra	<b>Captain:</b> Soujonnyo Saha (Simba)	<b>Boris:</b> Deshan Biswas
<b>Webb:</b> Aunaiya D. Kumar	<b>Snowy:</b> Sumedha Sundaram	<b>Hubble:</b> Arrya Roy
<b>Wolff:</b> Arohi Das	<b>Professor:</b> Aviraj Ghosh	<b>Baxter:</b> Shirom Mukherjee
<b>Chief Spy:</b> Vivaan Kumar	<b>Thomson:</b> Rivaan Ray	<b>Officer:</b> Kahaan Chakrabarti
<b>Asst. Spy:</b> Srijan Dolui Golu)	<b>Thompson:</b> Spandan Ghosh	<b>Bohr:</b> Sanjit Purkayastha
<b>Holmes:</b> Vivaan Sensharma		<b>Armstrong:</b> Akash Purkayastha

### Dance Team:

Ipsita Saha	Pratishtha Barman	Shreya Sanyal (Kona)	Tisya Barua Choudhury
Nirajana Sarkar	Shreya Mukherjee	Shreyasmi Dolui (Rue)	Sauviri Roy (Toree)

### Poem Team:

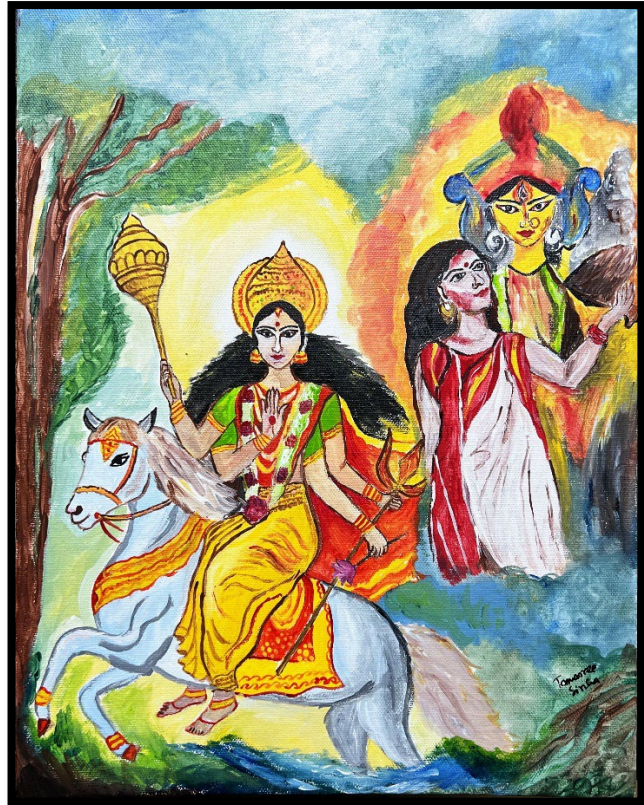
Kiash Mukherjee	Reyansh Basu (Rancho)	Aashi Sen Austin
Kiara Mukherjee	Wriddhi Bera	Aishani Sen Austin

### Crew:

<b>Vocal:</b> Surajit Basu	<b>Spotlight:</b> Subhajit Bera	<b>Props:</b> Subharoop Ghosh, Sanhita Biswas, Sharmistha Ray, Pradipto Ray, Sudip Purakayastha
<b>Dance Director:</b> Debapriya Bhattacharya	<b>Lapel:</b> Sonali Chakraborty, Arnab Chatterjee, Siddhartha Dattagupta	<b>Stage Managers:</b> Abornita Das Kumar, Sayanti Das Bera, Anindita Rudra, Arundhati Chakraborty, Puspita Roy Choudhury
<b>Dance Director (Support):</b> Ipsita Bhattacharya, Simran Bhattacharya	<b>Costume:</b> Mohua Roy	<b>Co-ordinators:</b> Sanhita Biswas, Sharmistha Ray
<b>Light:</b> Chameli Panja	<b>Costume (Support):</b> Poulomi Roy	<b>Script:</b> Sucharit Sarkar
<b>Sound:</b> Pranjit Saha	<b>Makeup:</b> Sweta Bhattacharya and team	<b>Director:</b> Pami Mukherjee



Basab Dasgupta



Tamasree Sinha

**BHUPEN BABU R BHARATE BIBHRAT**  
**A COMEDY DRAMA**  
**(LOKKHI Pujo)**



**DAKSHINI PRESENTS**



**BHUPEN BABU R BHARATE BIBHRAT**  
**A COMEDY DRAMA**

**Story written by : Narayan Gangopadhaya**  
**Adapted & Directed by : Siddhartha Dattagupta**

A Dakshini style comic story line with fun and frolic  
and a lot of good old memories of  
**"BANGALI O KOLKATA R PARAR GOLPO"**

**ON**  
**LOKKHI PUJO**  
**26TH OCTOBER, SATURDAY**  
**2:30PM - 4PM**



**VENUE : JORDAN HIGH SCHOOL**  
**6500 ATLANTIC AVE , LONG BEACH**  
**CA 90805**

It is this time of the year again when **দক্ষিণী পরিবার** is enjoying every moment of festivities. **কিছু নাটক পাগল** Dakshini members have prepared a comedy drama “**ভুপেন বাবুর ভাড়াটে বিদ্রাট**” to be staged on the day of “Lakshmi Pujo”. This drama is an adaptation of two hilarious dramas, “**ভাড়াটে চাই**” এবং “**ভীম বধ**” of our very own literary icon **নারায়ণ গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়**, the creator of famous “**টেনীদা**”.

**গাবলুর কাকা ভুপেন তলাপাত্র** একজন আমেরিকাবাসী প্রবাসী বাঙ্গালী | He came to **কলকাতা** to rent out his **পৈতৃক বাড়ী** | But things turned out to be very different with some weird and crazy potential renters and **ভুপেন কাকা** ultimately decided to donate the house to his nephew **গাবলা এবং তার পাড়ার বন্ধুরা** to set up a library. This brought a new life to the **পাড়া** | Pujo was around the corner and the library turned into a **ক্লাবঘর** hosting hilarious moments of **পুজার নাটক “মহাভারত”** | Finally, when the day of drama came, “**মহাভারত**” turns to a completely opposite hilarious climax (**ক্রমশঃ প্রকাশ্য, দক্ষিণীর নাটকের দিনে, গোলদার লেন এর পাড়ার আমেজে**)

This drama is about all of us reliving the moments of our erstwhile **পাড়ার হুসুখুল** when we were growing up in India, particularly in **কলকাতা, মফস্বল এবং প্রবাসী বাঙ্গালী মহল**. This adaptation brings the glimpses of our erstwhile **বাঙ্গালী পাড়া জীবন** with tons of comedy, fun and frolic. We will meet with our **পেছনে ফেলে আসা পাড়ার বন্ধুরা - গাবলু, নন্তু, সন্তু, কানাই, নিখিল, হারাধন, পান্নালাল, কাবুল এবং আর ও অনেকে** | We will meet our beloved **কালুদা এবং ভোস্বলদা**, who were our heroes and used to keep our lives filled with so much fun and youthfulness. Come and enjoy and relive all those **কৌতুকপূর্ণ খাঁটি বাঙ্গালী মুহূর্ত** |

#### Cast:

<b>Kabul (Bibek):</b> Sucharit Sarkar	<b>Kanai:</b> Pradipta Ray	<b>Gablu:</b> Swagata Ghosh
<b>Krishnadas Das:</b> R. S. Acharjee	<b>Pannalal (Duryodhon):</b> Suman Saha	<b>Bamacharan:</b> Sayan Ghosh
<b>Paresh:</b> Sarnath Chattaraj	<b>Bhupen Talapatra:</b> Dhruva Bhattacharyay	<b>Ramram Raha:</b> Kaushik Biswas
<b>Bishe Pagol:</b> Debajit Roy	<b>Nantu:</b> Sanjib Mukherjee	<b>Prompter:</b> Sudip Purkayastha
<b>Nikhil (Krishna):</b> Shubharoop Ghosh	<b>Kalu-da:</b> Siddhartha Dattagupta	<b>Naresh:</b> Daipayan Sen
<b>Shyamacharan/Nimai (Bhim):</b> Soumen Ghosh <b>Santu:</b> Amitava Banerjee	<b>Mr. Gupta/Haradhon(Prop Manager):</b> Arnab Dasgupta	<b>Swami Kalikananda Maharaj:</b> Siddhartha Biswas <b>Bishakha Dasi:</b> Rajashri Chakraborty

#### Crew:

<b>Music:</b> Ananya Dattagupta	<b>Makeup, Costume and Props:</b> Everyone	<b>Script Adaptation &amp; Direction:</b> Siddhartha Dattagupta
<b>Lights:</b> Chameli Biswas	<b>Stage Crew and Production Support:</b> Susmita Bhattacharya, Neelima Bhowmik, Sangita Chattaraj, Arnab Chatterjee, Pami Mukherjee	

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# **SUBHO SHARODIYA 2024**

**SHIMA JOSHI & SATISH JOSHI**

# A Memorable Journey with Dakshini

Sharmila Dasgupta



Every year we eagerly wait for the most important and the biggest religious/social festivities of the year—Durgapuja. It is a time of festivities, divinity, and reaffirmation of our sense of community that we collectively cultivate and cherish in our hearts. But, the heart and core of this religious ceremony where we all seek Ma Durga's blessings is in the sacred rites or the actual 'Puja' ceremony performed with dedication by the 'Purohit' or priest. Without the religious rituals performed and the sacred offerings appropriately made to the divine mother by the priest, the entire occasion remains just an outward show lacking the spiritual essence.

The person who has been performing the religious rites or the puja ceremony for Dakshini for over 35 years is our one and only beloved Kamalendu Ganguly or Kamalendu da as many call him with love and respect. Since Dakshini celebrated its first Durga Puja in 1985, Kamalendu da became the official Purohit, a responsibility he has taken up, and has been delivering with utmost dedication for all these years. In the last almost 30 years of his priesthood, he has not once been absent due to health reasons or pleaded unavailability due to any other cause. With commendable dedication and devotion, Kamalendu Ganguly has been rendering his services to the community and delivering his responsibilities as a priest with his life partner as well as Puja assistant Pratima Ganguly by his side, untiring and equally dedicated.

Kamalendu Ganguly was born in Dhaka (Narayanganj), and with his family migrated to India at a very young age. After graduating as a Mechanical Engineer from B.E. College, Kolkata, he moved to the United States, and proceeded to acquire a degree in Industrial Engineering from New York University. He enjoyed a successful career working for companies like General Dynamics, Northrop, and Boeing. Besides academic education, Kamalendu da has always been an avid learner of spiritual subjects, and took up in-depth reading of the Upanishad, Puran, and various forms and practices of pujas. Besides performing Durgapuja, Laxmi Puja and Saraswati Puja, Kamalendu Ganguly has performed a variety of social and family rituals like Weddings, Mukhe-bhaat, Shraddha, Upanayan etc. with equal love and dedication.

It will be an incomplete portrayal of Kamalendu da unless it is mentioned that besides his spiritual persona, he is a skilled bridge player, and is an ardent soccer fan.

Kamalendu Ganguly is a true stalworth, a pillar of this community, who is loved and respected univocally. He believes in the following five virtues of life as guiding stars of his life:

- Dedication
- Determination
- Discipline
- Devotion
- (No) Discrimination

May Maa Durga bestow her blessings upon the Ganguly family forever.



# পোস্টকার্ড (Postcard)

## মানস মণ্ডল

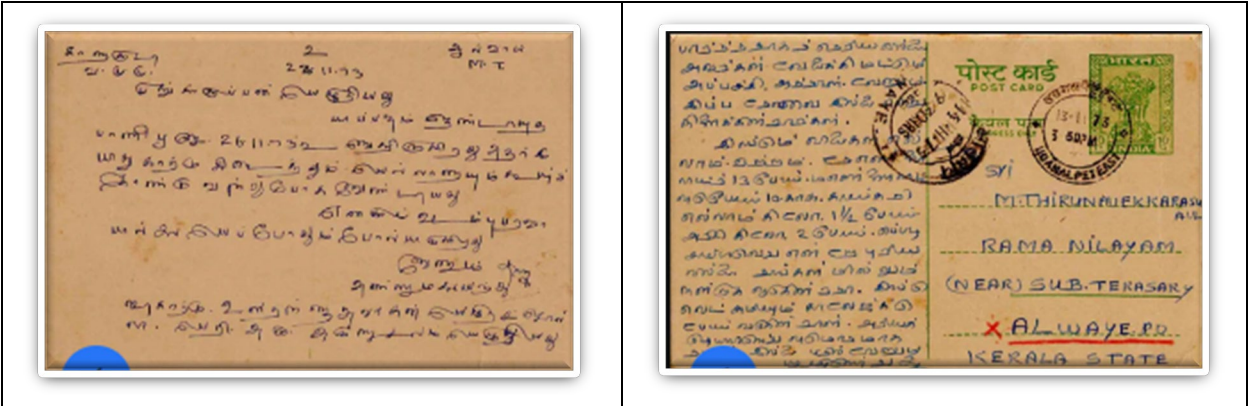
আমাদের ছোটবেলাতে "পোস্টকার্ড" ছিল যোগাযোগ এর সব থেকে সস্তা মাধ্যম। পোস্টকার্ড হল 14 cm লম্বা এবং 9 cm চওড়া একটা মোটা কাগজ যার মধ্যে চিঠি লেখা হত। যার হাতে থাকত সেই পড়তে পারত, কোন গোপনীয়তা ছিল না। মাত্র ১৫ পয়সা খরচ করে (এই ১৫ পয়সার আনুমানিক ডলার এর রূপান্তরকরণ প্রায় অসম্ভব) সমগ্র ভারত জুড়ে সংবাদ পাঠানো যেত। আমার মায়ের বাতিক ছিল চিঠি লেখার। বাপের বাড়ির সকল কে নিয়ম করে চিঠি পাঠাতো ফী মাসে। সেই চিঠির সারবত্তা ছিল নিতান্ত মামুলি, একঘেয়ে, আটপৌরে কিন্তু তার উত্তর এর অপেক্ষার প্রহর ছিল সীমাহীন। নির্নিমেষ চোখে পোস্টবাক্সের দিকে তাকিয়ে থাকা ছিল নিত্য পুজার মত আচার।

আমরা যে বাড়িতে ভাড়া থাকতাম সেই বাড়ির ছোট ছেলে ছিল কৌতূহল এর পরাকাষ্ঠা। লোকের হাঁড়ির খবর না পেলে তার বদহজম হত। আমরা তাকে মামা সন্বেধন করতাম, ভাড়াটে-বাড়ীওলা এই নৈতিক শ্রেণীবিভাগ চালু হয়নি তখনো। বাড়ীর উঠোনের শেষে এক পেলাই কালো রঙের কাঠের পোস্টবাক্সে সকলের চিঠি জমা হত। তাতে ঝুলত এক মস্ত তাল, যার চাবি থাকত মামার কাছে। কোন এক অজ্ঞাত সময়ে পোস্টবাক্স খালি হয়ে যেত আর সাঁঝবেলা সবার বাড়ী বাড়ী চিঠি গুলি বিতরণ হত। এই চিঠি বিতরণ এর সময় মামার মুখের হাসিটা ছিল দেখার মত, গোপন কথা জেনে ফেলার যে একটা নির্লজ্জ মজা সেটা তার সুন্দর ফর্সা মুখখানি আরও সুন্দর করে তুলত।

আমার মা চিঠির উত্তর লিখে মামা কেই পোস্ট করতে দিত। আমি মা কে বলতাম, ও তো সব পড়ে ফেলে তুমি জেনেও ওকে পোস্ট করতে দাও কেন? মা হেসে বলত আমার চিঠিতে যা থাকে সেটা পড়লে অসুবিধা নেই, বাপের বাড়ি থেকে উত্তর এলে যাতে অনুক্রম বুঝতে অসুবিধা না হয় তাই এই ব্যবস্থা। মায়ের প্রতি তার ভক্তি ছিল অগাধ, তার কারণ চিঠি পড়তে পারার একচেটিয়া মালিকানা কিনা সেটা জানি না।

দেখা হয়েছিল বেশ কয়েক বছর আগে। মাথার চুল সব সাদা, চোখে ভাল দেখে না কিন্তু কৌতূহল একই আছে। ওনার ছেলে "বদনপুস্তক" (Facebook) একটা অ্যাকাউন্ট খুলে দিয়েছে। দুঃখ করে বলছিল আর সেই মজা নেই রে। গোপন তো কিছুই নেই আজকাল, লুকিয়ে কিছু করতে হয়না। এত দেখনদারি, ঘেন্না, অসহিষ্ণুতা, অপ্ৰিয়তা, মোটেই ভাল লাগেনা। আড়াল ছিল বলে মজা ছিল, এখন সবই উগ্র। তাও সাগ্রহে সেই গুলোই পড়ে। অভ্যাস ছাড়তে পারেনি, নাকটা লম্বাই থেকে গেছে।

একটা সুগন্ধি যুক্ত রঙিন লেখার প্যাড কিনেছিলাম যদি কখন সুযোগ মেলে কোন বিশেষ কাউকে চিঠি লেখার। অর্থক্লিষ্ট বাপের ছেলের সুযোগ হয়ে ওঠেনি তার মধ্যে শব্দ যোতার কিন্তু চিঠি লেখার অমোঘ আকর্ষণে মন ভাল হয়ে উঠত নিমেষেই। এখনও ঘুমের মাঝে কখনও রঙিন সুগন্ধি পাতা, খাম, কালো পোস্টবাক্স, মায়ের হাতের পোস্টকার্ড, মামার মুখ ভেসে ওঠে। কতকগুলো মামুলি, গোপন বা ব্যক্তিগত কথা নিজের হাতের আঙ্গুলের স্পর্শে জীবন্ত হয়ে উঠত। মুঠোফোন (Smartphone), বদনপুস্তক কোনদিন সেই স্বভাব পূর্ণ করতে পারবে না।



Picture Courtesy: Google

## দেখি পিছু ফিরে

জীবনের সারোক্ষে এসে দেখি পিছু ফিরে  
বেটন হাতে নিয়ে একটার পর একটা  
রিলে রেসে দৌড়েছি শুধু

দেখা হয়নি ভোরের সূর্যোদয় কিম্বা  
বিকেলের সূর্যাস্তের শোভা  
লক্ষ্য করিনি আকাশে মেঘেদের আনাগোনা  
আলো-ছায়ার নুকোচুরি  
কিছা মেঘের তৈরী পশু-পাখি

উপভোগ করা হয়নি শিশির ভেজা  
সকালের সোঁদা গন্ধ  
পথের ধারে ফুটে থাকা ঋতুসের ফুল

চেয়ে দেখিনি ডিম্বা দিয়ে ডিথিরির মুখের দিকে  
কথা বলা হয়নি ট্যান্ড্রি কিছা রিক্সা চালকের সঙ্গে

যন্ত্রের যন্ত্রণায় জর্জরিত হয়েছি কিন্তু  
প্রাণভরে ফুসফুসে টেমে নেয়া হয়নি  
হাসমুহানা বা যুঁই ফুলের সুখাস

ভালো করে চেয়ে দেখিনি  
প্রিয়ার চুলে বেল ফুলের মালা  
দিনান্তে পড়া হয়নি তার চোখের ভাষা

হয়নি প্রাণ খুলে অকারপে হাসা  
লেখা হয়নি প্রেমপত্র নিবন্ধ আবেগের বশে

চোখ বুজে আরাম কেদারায় বাস  
শোনা হয়নি প্রিয় কোনো গান  
ভাবের ঘরে চুরি করে প্রবেশ করে  
করা হয়নি ভাবের আদান প্রদান

বাঁচবার জন্য নড়াই করতে করতে  
আর মরে মরে বেঁচে  
আজ ফিরে দেখি, বাঁচাই তো হয়নি ভালো করে

Sanjukta Dasgupta

## শেষ দিন, শেষ রাত, অন্তিম মুহূর্ত

আমিও বাঁচতে চাই,  
আমিও বাঁচতে চেয়েছিলাম।

ভোবের প্রথম সূর্য মেখে,  
এক আসমান স্বপ্ন দেখে,  
আমার সাপা কোট গায়ে চাপাতাম;  
আমি এগিয়ে যেতে চেয়েছিলাম।

চলছে মায়ের সেলাই মেশিন,  
দিল আলা আয়ে জীবন কঠিন,  
শুধু আর কটা বছর ধার চেয়েছিলাম;  
আমি আর একটু পথ চলতে চেয়েছিলাম।

এক চিলতে স্বপ্ন আমার ও ছিল,  
ঝাপসা ছবি মনের মানুষ; সবল, একটু ভাল,  
আমার ইচ্ছেগুলো সব উপুড় করে দিতাম;  
পোড়াকপালি, আমিও যে ভালবাসতে চেয়েছিলাম।

সেইদিন রাতের কাতর হাহাকাহ,  
আমার শেষ ইচ্ছে হত্যার চিংকার,  
অকেজ CCTV, বুদ্ধিজীবীদের কানে হেডফোন;  
বিশ্বাস কর, আমি শেষ অবধি চেষ্টা করেছিলাম।

আমার ক্ষত বিক্ষত শরীরে আনাচে কানাচ,  
টুঁইয়ে পরা রক্তে, মবে যাওয়া ইচ্ছেগুলো আজ,  
তোমরা টাকা, শঙ্খ, কুস্তীরাক্ষ আর Follower নিয়ে,  
মেরুদণ্ডহীন মুখ লোকায় টিকিটের আশায়, বুলি হাঁকিয়ে।

আমিও স্বপ্ন দেখতাম,  
আমিও ভালবাসতে চেয়েছিলাম,  
আমি শুধু বাঁচতে চেয়েছিলাম,

আমি হয়ত এই নপুংসক সমাজে আনেক আগেই মবে গিয়েছিলাম।।

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আমাদের পূজো  
শ্রীরূপা গাঙ্গুলী

দুর্গাপূজোর সময় কেমন,  
মন খারাপের হাওয়া।  
থাকতে বুঝেই গেছি,  
হবেনা বাড়ী যাওয়া।  
দেশে থাকতে মামাবাড়ীর পূজোয় মজে ছিলাম  
তাই যে বছর প্রথম আমি, আমেরিকায় এলাম-  
ভীষণ দুঃখ পূজোর সময়, করার কিছু নাই  
সবার কথা শুনে শেষে, দক্ষিণীতে যাই॥  
এসে দেখি সে যেন এক, অন্য দুনিয়া-  
সাজুগুজু, খাওয়াদাওয়া, পূজোর ম্যানিয়া।  
এর পরেতে, এক পলকে দশটা বছর পার  
মাঝদরিয়ায় জীবন, অবকাশ নেই আর।  
মেলানকলি উড়ে গেছে সংসার নাগপাশে  
নতুন চ্যালেঞ্জ, প্রত্যেকদিন আসে।

ছোট করেই দুর্গাপূজো সেরে ফেলাই বেশ  
সারা বছর মনের মধ্যে থেকে যাবে রেশ।  
কিন্তু সময় অল্প হলেও চেটেপুটেই খাই-  
যতরকম পূজোর মজা, সবটা নেওয়া চাই।  
মহালয়া, ঠাকুরদালান, নতুন বেশভূষা  
ঢাকের বোলে, নৈবদ্যে, কাটে কদিন খাসা।

দু-তিন দিনের এই পূজোতে  
একটা কথাই ভাবি-  
সুখ দুঃখ, চাওয়া পাওয়া  
মনের ব্যাপার সবই।

পূজো কাটে বছর ঘোরে, নতুন পথ চলা-  
মা'কে শুধুই মনেই ডাকি, হয়না মুখে বলা।  
সবাই যেন ভালো থাকি, চলতে পারি পথ-  
যেমন আছি, ভালোই আছি, একটাই শপথ॥

Howna Tumi Phool  
Tapasri Dattaray

Howna tumi phool,  
Modhu gaye tultul,  
Bhromor hoye ghuri,  
Dei tomai sursuri,  
R jodi how, sagore veja baali,  
Nahoy ektu tomar saathe kheli,  
Bonyo, paahar, aronyo,  
Tomar pothe pa rekhe, aami hoyee dhonyo,  
Ki hote chao tumi?  
Girikhader jharna,  
Ga bhashiye holam aami, Rabi Thakurer Banya,  
Na go aami ragini,  
Pagol tomai bhabini,  
Kachhe eshe aalto chhunya,  
Chumbon tomar thote diye,  
Fish fishiye boli,  
Tomar preme pagol ogo, hey mor hridoy koli

POবিতা  
Basab Dasgupta

তুমি চলে গেছ - তার পরে কত দিন গেছে বয়ে  
I often see you in sleep, coming this way

তোমার ছবি এঁকেছি কত - দিয়ে রঙ এর ওপর রঙ  
filled my lonely nights with song after song

দাবার নেশায় ডুবে থাকি যেন সতরঞ্জ কে খিলাড়ি  
got engaged in politics, slamming Biden and Hillary

শূন্য বাড়িতে একা শুধু করেছি ওপর নীচ  
with memory of your kiss at sunset on the beach

তোমার ফেরার আশায় আমি গেঁথেছি ফুলের মালা  
made plans for dinner, dance and a festive gala

শুয়ে ভাবি বালিশের চেয়ে নরম তোমার কোল  
come back baby, mend this heart, fill up the hole.

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# Grandson – Thamma Symbiosis

Latika Datta-Goswami

Ishaan Goswami is my grandson, and let me tell you, he's been brightening our lives since he made his grand entrance on January 30, 2019. Starting from his toddler age, now at the ripe old age of 5 years and 5 months, he



has been our little bundle of joy with his curiosity and endless chatter. His conversations are so delightful that I just wanted to share them with my friends.

On January 30, 2021, we gathered to celebrate Ishaan's second birthday. His Uncle Suvro (Daddy's twin brother), Dadu (Grandpa Kisholoy), and I (Thamma) all went to his home in Playa Vista, LA. After a fun-filled day, we tucked him into bed before starting our dinner. But, within ten minutes, he was up and crying—not his usual behavior.

Perhaps he thought, "Hey, it is not fair! They are all having fun without me!" So, he joined us with a smile. After dinner, his dramatic performance began: he gently banged his head on the wall, making fake cries of "I bumped my head. Bump ... Bump... Bump." Then he would run to Mommy for a hug. Uncle Suvro declared, "He's a drama actor in LA!" We still laugh at that video.

At two years and two months old, Ishaan had a knack for starting conversations with a question. One evening, while I was feeding him dinner, he asked, "What boat does?" I replied, "Boat floats in the river." He promptly added, "Boat got stuck in the mud, they had to dig it out." It hit me—he must have heard about the Suez Canal incident. Clever boy!

By September 2021, at two years and seven months old, Ishaan was eating lunch before his nap. He loved stories, so I asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up? A doctor? An engineer? A scientist?" Without hesitation, he said, "Engineer." Since he loved toy trains, I said, "Great! Now you can dream about fast-moving trains." After his nap, I offered him a snack, saying, "It'll help you think." He replied, "The food will go to my stomach, not my brain. How will that help me think better, Thamma?"

Fast forward to mid-2022, Ishaan was about three and a half. One day, his mother told him to clean my kitchen. Waving a tiny broom, he declared, "Thamma, I can't clean your kitchen all the time. You have to clean your kitchen yourself."

At the start of 2023, nearing four years old, I asked Ishaan for a hug. He said, "I can't hug you all the time, Thamma!" After a pause, he added, "I will hug you before I go to school. I don't forget people." True to his word, he hugged me before heading to school, proving that he never forgets a promise.



By mid-2023, at four and a half, Ishaan's mother, Sfurti, mentioned that her best friend at work left the company. Ishaan, sitting nearby, asked, "Mummy, are you sad?" She replied, "Yes. Wouldn't you be sad if your best friend left your school?" Ishaan said, "No, I won't be sad, I'd follow her to the new school." Two days later, when his mother mentioned, "I planned a children's party at a park", Ishaan said, "Mummy, I just want to play with my best friend." His Mummy said, "Ishaan, I invited all the kids, how can you get to play only with your best friend?" Ishaan said, "Mummy, make a secret code to enter the park and give it to my best friend." Though his best friend had moved, Ishaan now had several best friends.

Ishaan turned five on January 30th this year. In early February, he came to LA from NJ to celebrate. A week later, I hugged him before he left for the airport, expecting another hug at the airport. But he said, "Thamma, I already hugged you." Clearly, he has a 'hug' quota, and he's strict about not exceeding it!

## As the World Unfolds

Anusha Ghosal, 7th Grade

The raindrops swirled through the drain, tapping the window in hopes of waking their friend. They slid off the leaves and peppered the grass. She woke.

In the early hours, she left her house, inhaling the grassy smell enveloping the community. As it wasn't time for school yet, she ventured out with a book before the sun stretched, her rays distracting the world's serene meditation.

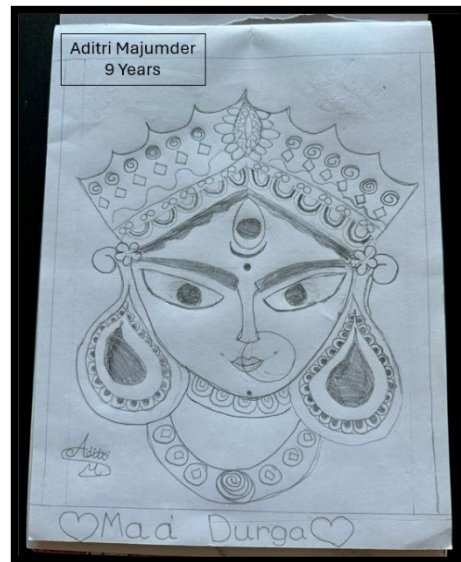
The girl jogged through the tranquil forest before the rivers awoke, teeming with golden fish gliding through the water like delicate bangles. Before the birds began their song, flitting about with the butterflies, and before the wind pranced around the trees, greeting the flowers the sound of leaves rustling at every swish, like anklets. The girl kept jogging.

She reached the peak of the hill, a mile from her family's cottage and large farm at the end of town, overlooking what she thought was the whole world. Perching herself on a stump, she watched as her small, perfect world awoke, one by one. First, the birds nudged each other, indicating it was time to unite in an elegant dance. Then the outgoing sun stretched, her rays reaching the far corners of the sky. She distracted the blue expanse from his silent meditation. The serene sky blushed at the sight of the sun.

Flowers unfurled at the command of their king. The curious mind immersed herself in a book, her soul's gentle music rippling through the air, accompanying the sound of the wind's anklets, the river's whispers, and the flower's gentle greetings. A gust of wind made her look up and witness the world unfolding. It was time to go now.



Abhyuday Sinha



Aditri Majumder

# Seeds of Discovery: A Journey Through Mendel's Brno

Chaitali Mukhopadhyay



Brno, nestled in the heart of the Czech Republic, welcomed me warmly. This city, with its rich tapestry of history and culture, instantly charmed me. Amidst its lively streets, I discovered a tranquil haven: the Mendel Museum and its famed experimental garden. This visit transported me back to my school days, where I first learned about Gregor Mendel, the father of genetics, and his groundbreaking work with pea plants.

The museum, dedicated to Mendel's life and work, was both educational and inspiring. Walking through the exhibits, I was reminded of Mendel's remarkable journey. Born in 1822, Mendel became a monk with a passion for science. In the 1860s, he

meticulously conducted experiments with pea plants to understand how traits were inherited, laying the groundwork for the field of genetics.

As I strolled through the garden, I felt a profound connection to the past, despite the absence of the pea plants that once thrived here. The small section of his experimental garden now stands as a silent tribute to Mendel's meticulous work. I could almost see him, patiently tending his plants, meticulously recording his observations, and unknowingly laying the foundation for modern genetics.

The garden's simplicity belied the profound impact of Mendel's discoveries. His principles of inheritance - dominant and recessive traits, segregation, and independent assortment—are now fundamental to genetics, impacting fields from biology to medicine. Yet, Mendel's genius was unrecognized in his lifetime, his work languishing in obscurity until the early 20th century. It wasn't until 1900, long after his death, that scientists finally acknowledged the significance of his experiments, recognizing Mendel as the true pioneer of genetics.

Wandering through the garden, each step felt like a journey through time, connecting the dots between past lessons and present understanding. The garden whispered stories of curiosity, perseverance, and the quiet dedication that drives scientific discovery. Mendel's work, painstakingly documented in his experiments, revolutionized modern science and continues to influence research and advancements today.

Departing the museum, I carried with me not just memories of Brno's beauty, but a renewed appreciation for the small, yet significant, seeds of knowledge that shape our world. This visit to Mendel's garden was a poignant highlight, blending history, science, and personal reflection into an unforgettable tapestry. It reminded me of the power of curiosity and perseverance, and how one man's quiet dedication could change the course of science forever.

As I boarded my flight back home, I felt a deep sense of gratitude. Brno had not only enriched my understanding of history and science but had also touched my heart in a way that few places ever have. The echoes of Mendel's quiet garden will stay with me, a reminder that sometimes, the most profound discoveries come from the simplest places.



# Introducing Mrittika

## Dhriti Bagchi

Mrittika – A South Asian Center for Language and Heritage – wishes to send its seasonal greetings to the office holders, members, and well-wishers of Dakshini on the occasion of Durga Puja 2024. We wish to convey our heartfelt thanks to Dakshini for recognizing our activities and supporting our projects.

Mrittika was established in New Jersey as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization in the year of 1989. After the Covid-scarred years of 2021-22, Mrittika relocated in Torrance, California. It is now registered as a non-profit organization in the state. All through the 35 years of its existence, Unity in Diversity through the Arts has been the consistent “mantra” of Mrittika.

Mrittika’s mission is to propagate the language and cultural heritage of India and Bangladesh, both to the second-generation immigrants from that region and to the people at large in the United States. We do this without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

Mrittika’s primary goal is to (a) promote the education and appreciation of South Asian languages and art; (b) preserve art forms and cultural history of the region through workshops, exhibitions, and dramatic performances; and (c) strive to create public awareness of our rich heritage and make it accessible to mainstream Americans.

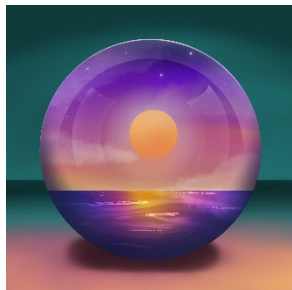
Mrittika’s artistic philosophy is to showcase the gamut of South Asian culture – from displays of the traditional, rural, indigenous artforms to their modern-day counterparts in various areas. Examples of the modes of presentation are: Enactments, Storytelling, Music, Dance, Rhythmic Exercises, Puppet Shows, and Workshops conducted by renowned artistes and artisans.

At present, Mrittika is offering online workshops on Alpana or decorative floor paintings.

Mrittika is pleased to have an opportunity to display a selection of its art pieces and specimens of alpana works as part of decoration for Dakshini’s Durga Puja.

In the near-term future, Mrittika is planning to put up an Exhibition and Cultural Program in collaboration with other, like-minded organizations. As mentioned earlier, the focus will be on Unity in Diversity through the Arts.

For further information, please contact Dhriti Bagchi at 732-598-2287, or [dhritibagchi@yahoo.com](mailto:dhritibagchi@yahoo.com).



Sunset in Sphere



Arohi Das



# My Trip to India – Summer of ‘24

Rivaan Ray

We traveled as a family to India this summer after almost 5 years. We visited our extended family and friends across cities like Mumbai, Kolkata & Bengaluru.

LAX DXB BOM BLR CCU BOM DXB LAX – Yes, that’s how many flights we changed during our trip. India is a land of diverse cultures, people and the thing that I love the most – food. I wanted to take the opportunity to share some of the fun & interesting experiences this summer I had, with all of you.

Mumbai, with the new flashy Reliance Jio World malls, Bandra band stand, Marine Drive, Taj Hotel, Gateway of India, Bandra Worli Sea Link and my brother’s favorite actor Shah Rukh Khan’s House “Mannat” was dazzling as I had heard from my mom.

Kolkata, with its historic charm across Victoria Memorial, Park Street, the Museum, Princep ghat and my favorite – “The Rajbari Bawali” where we overnight to enjoy some “Raj-o-kiyo” ambience.

However, something which amazed me was how “App”- literate people India compared to what we see here in the USA. You have an app for everything now a days in India and people hardly go out to buy stuff like we do out here. What you see above is a small fraction of these apps we used during our stay there.

## The “BlinkIt” culture



Indian stayed

were in

Even though this summer was nothing like what I had experienced before with the heat & humidity, that did not stop me from experimenting with the food out there from street favorites such as Chaats, Pani Puri/ Phuchka, Vada Pav, Missal Pav, Biryanis, Rolls, Paratha’s and the list can go on & on. I wanted to provide my take on a couple of debates which my parents are very passionate about.

## Biryani Wars

As my dad says, you are not a Bengali unless you are in love with Biryani. During my stay I had Sindhi Biryani in Mumbai, the Awadhi/ Lucknawi style of Biryani from “Oudh 1590”, the Nizami biryani from “Arsalan” and my father’s hometown favorite “Dada Boudi” Biryani with big portions of meat and the melting aloo. I have a greater appreciation of the Biryani from my trip and miss the aromas & the taste that comes along with it. Alas, I must manage with the spicy Hyderabad biryani I get here in SoCal until my next trip to India.



I am a Bengali; We don't need inspirational quotes. A plate of warm mutton biryani with an almost melting aloo does the job for me.

## Phuchka vs Pani Puri

The East vs West debate on which one wins goes a long way at our home on this topic, but for me I love both the versions with the sweetness of the “meetha paani” in Mumbai and the extra spicy “phau” one that I get in Kolkata.

Alongside is a pic of me with Phuchka Kaku near Victoria Memorial @ Kolkata.

*Until my next travels.....*

# Bargaining, Tijuana Style

Amitabha Bagchi

I must say at the outset that I am no bargainer. My deficiency became clear to me in my early teens.

It was an evening in the late 1950's when I was in *Ghugudanga* bazar, right below Dum Dum station, to buy an undershirt (*genji*) for me. I found a Seller – a middle-aged man in a wooden stall. Fiddling among his wares, I found a *genji* that fitted my size. “How much?” I asked.

“One rupee two annas,” he replied. He spoke in a *bangal* accent. Must be a refugee from East Pakistan, I thought.

It was a time of transition in India from the old quaternary system of counting money to the new decimal system. Although the new *naya paisa* was quickly replacing the old *paisa*, the old system of counting coins or change – in annas, sikis, etc. – was still very much in use.

“Never accept the first price offered by a Seller!” That mantra from my elders kept ringing in my head. “Let me have it for fourteen annas,” I countered. I wished to make a reasonable but not an absurdly low offer.

The Seller smiled at me benignly. “I shall give it to you for twelve annas,” he said. “That price I quoted to you was for people who haggle too much.” The twinkle in his eye was unmistakable.

I was checkmated. How could I not buy something being offered to me at a price lower than my quote? But then, couldn't I have driven down the price some more?

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Fast forward some forty years. To Tijuana, Mexico in the early 1990's.

I was visiting Tijuana with some friends. We were ambling along, somewhat aimlessly, on a sidewalk when a well-dressed man accosted me.

“Want to buy some cuff links?” he began. “Sterling silver. Real good! Only twenty dollars. Here, take a look!” He held out his hand. There were two extra-large, silver cuff links.

I generally do not buy shirts that require cuff links. Back then, I had maybe two shirts that needed those. I was not going to spend a fortune on an unnecessary luxury, sterling silver or not. I ignored him and kept walking.

The man kept pace with me. And kept talking. “How much? How much? Give me a number. See the workmanship? How pretty! I'll give them to you for ten dollars.”

This time my interest was piqued. I had never seen a bargaining session where a Seller begins by dropping the asking price by a half.

I kept my composure. Showing no emotion, I said, “Sorry, I do not need them.”

“Come on, come on. Be reasonable. What about seven and a half dollars?”

How low will he go? My *Ghugudanga* experience flooded back to my mind. What is the true cost of the stuff anyway? I decided to adopt a bargaining technique I had seen my father use occasionally.

“Look, I know the links are valuable,” I began solicitously. “I do not wish you to sell them below cost. You should not take a loss. But I really do not want them.”

The guy would have none of my spiel. He kept on pressing. “Don’t be so tough. Five dollars?”

I did a bit of mental calculation. I had bought a pair of brass cuff links from Sears not too long before. It had cost me two dollars or less. I finally decided to make him an offer. “Two dollars.”

“C’mon! Be a pal! Let’s split the difference. Three and a half dollars.”

Split the difference? Was I in India or Mexico?

I bought the links. Such persistence must be rewarded, right? But this was a case where the Seller did all the haggling. Honestly, I am yet to figure out the art of bargaining.

## The Haunted House

Aditri Majumder, 9 years

The sisters, Lily, the eldest sister and Mia, the youngest, lived in a small cottage. The cottage was cramped but it was cozy. Lily and Mia's parents found a house to live in, little did they know, the neighborhood where the house was. All the people in that neighborhood say the house was abandoned, creepy and dusty. The family had to pack and ship until their cottage was empty. After checking for anything else they all headed off to their new home. Their long journey came to an end as they reached their new home.

Mia was a little scared because of the look of the house. It was abandoned anyway. They cleaned the house and placed the stuff in their places. However, Lily couldn't find Mia anywhere. So, she checked the attic and Mia was talking and stared at a broken mirror as if the mirror was Mia's friend. Lily also overheard Mia say, “We can meet up at night” “Midnight”. Lily ran to her new room planning to stay awake all night to see what her little sister was up to cause she didn't want anything bad to happen to her. The sister's parents were still trying to fix the electricity. Mia and Lily were eating their dinner in the dark.

After dinner the two sisters got ready for bed. While Lily was waiting for midnight, she explored her new room. She opened her closet and found a small box she had never seen before. So, she opened the box and there was a note saying, "I am coming!". Lily was frightened by the note. She saw a light going down the hallway. She peeked through the keyhole in her door and saw Mia using a torch light. Mia was also walking to the attic. Lily knew it was her chance to go and see what was going on! Once Mia was in the attic. Mia stared at the mirror, then Lily saw a girl in the mirror. But then, she heard her mom coming so she ran to bed. Since Lily was so tired she fell asleep. The next day, Lily woke up and checked her closet to see that the small box was not there. So, she thought maybe it was a dream. Lily told her mom everything. Then, Lily's mom checked the security cameras and saw it was true. She locked the attic and threw away the mirror. The ghost was never seen ever again.

# Durga Puja Memories

Tisya Barua Choudhury

During my early childhood, Durga Pujo aka Sharadotsav meant new dresses, gifts, family adda, Bhog and pandal hopping. Although Bengalis start their new year in April with Poila Baishakh, the following three months go quietly spent in exams, vacations, and school reopenings. After a lull of three months, somewhere in July/ August, I heard the words “Pujor Gondho eseche” in my family. I used to wonder if the festival had a fragrance too! As I grew up, I understood that it meant the start of preparations for the Durga Pujo. I also did a dance performance to the song “Pujor gondho eseche, Dham kur kur baddi bejeche, Gache shiuli futeche”, an essential childhood dance during this time of the year.

I remember my Baba waking me up at 4 a.m. to listen to the Mahalaya. My grandpa would tell me stories about the great Maa Durga while my grandma made us chai. Saptami to Navami were all about dressing up, Pandal hoppings, Bhogs and Adda. Walking around the streets of Kolkata with my family and friends is one of my fondest memories of Durga Puja. Each pandal had its theme and beauty. Stepping into a pandal after a stressful year has always been incredibly relaxing. During the Durga Pujo of 2021, my friends from abroad and other places gathered together, and we spent ten unforgettable days immersed in the celebrations held at our apartment community. I had my first attempt at “Dhunuchi naach”. It was a divine experience dancing to the resonance of the Dhak in front of Maa Durga, while balancing the earthen pot with burning coconut husks on hand.

On Dasami, we received blessings from Maa Durga, followed by Sindoor Khela. While I tried not to get too covered in red powder, my mom ensured everyone participated. I thought that it may be the Bengali version of Holi with dhak beats, Maa Durga, and sindoor. We wished “Shubho bijoya” while we shared sweets. We danced until our feet ache, and finally, when the moment comes, we bid farewell to Maa Durga, chanting 'Asche Bochor Abar Hobe'.

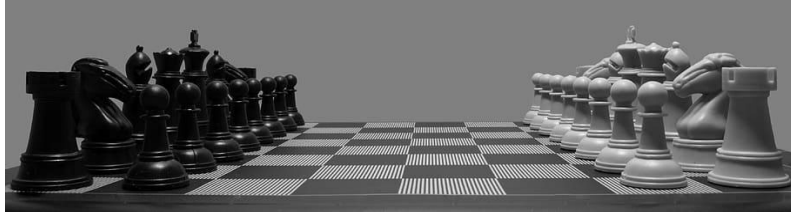
The next day, we scatter across the world, oceans apart. A cloud of blue sets in —'Pujo sesh,' sighs the soul. What struck me the most was how Durga Pujo exceeds not merely a religious festival but rather represents a deep-seated feeling —a sense of unity and identity that goes beyond tradition. For us, it's not just about rituals and festivities but an emotion connected deeply to our roots and each other. That's the true spirit of Durga Pujo: it's a celebration of being Bengali at heart.



Arik Ghosal  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade

# Chess Wonders

Yashasree Sabui



Chess is a very fascinating game. Its history is what makes the game so wonderful! Chess originated in India. Chaturanga, an Indian game that originated back in the 600s AD, during Gupta Empire, is considered the earliest known version of chess. In chaturanga, there were four divisions of an army or four arms. The arms

referred to elephants, horses, chariots and army on foot. Chaturanga spread across Asia and Europe over the centuries, taking on different names as it went. Finally, centuries later French called it "eches," which was later translated to "chess".

The earliest chess pieces from India were called Shah (King), Wazir (Counsellor), Fil/ Pil (bishop), Asp (Knight), Rukh (Rook) and Piyade (Pawn). These names were Persian words, countries of Western world translated the earliest names as closely as possible.

Seven ivory chess pieces dated 760 AD were found in modern day Uzbekistan. The rules of chess today are emerged in Europe at the end of 15th Century. Later with standardization and universal acceptance modern chess is in its present form by the end of 19th century. Today chess is one of the world's most popular game.

## The Third Leg

Aditya Palit



My granddaughter Rani Crosby just completed her freshman year of Environmental Science at UC San Diego. This story happened when she was about three years old. There is a photo of her, a few months old, in our computer room in which she is sitting in her mom's lap and sucking her toes.

I showed her the photo and asked, "Do you know what you were doing"? She said "What?" I said, "You were born with three legs. One day you were very hungry and ate your third leg. This photo shows you were eating your third leg." She, a three-year-old, was very much agitated but could not challenge me.

Next day she came back very angry and said to me, "Admit it Dadu, you lied to me. I asked mommy and she said I never had three legs." I said, "I am not going to admit anything. You will know the truth when you are ten years old." When she was eight years old, I reminded her asking how come she believed me. She sheepishly replied, "Well you told me, and I believed you."

I teased her when she was a baby and why not? I was teased by my uncles when I was about three years old. I swallowed a seed while eating an orange and was told that an orange tree will grow in my tummy and branches will come through my nose and years.

As a baby I often fell asleep on the concrete floor of the living room in my grandparents' house. Occasionally a centipede was seen crawling on the floor. I was told that the centipede will enter my brain through my ears and breed a colony inside my brain.

# Beyond the Surface: The Hidden Influence of 3.5%

Kisholoy Goswami



(Illustration generated by artificial intelligence)

The human face, though occupying just 3.5% of the body's total surface area, has shaped the course of human history and culture in profound ways. This seemingly small portion of the human form is, in reality, the epicenter of countless expressions, emotions, and stories that have driven art, literature, music, war, and even duels for centuries. Its influence is evident not only in Western traditions but also deeply rooted in Indian culture and history, where it plays a significant role in epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

## The Face as a Canvas of Emotion

The face is the most expressive part of the human body, capable of conveying an immense range of emotions—from joy to sorrow, anger to serenity, love to disdain. This expressiveness has made the face a central theme in artistic endeavors across cultures. In ancient India, the faces of deities were sculpted and painted with intricate detail to capture divinity, compassion, and power. Temples across India, from the grand temples of Khajuraho to the intricate carvings of Hampi, depict gods, goddesses, and human figures whose faces express a spectrum of divine emotions and human experiences. The Durga Puja in Bengal, for example, features the Pratima (idol) of Goddess Durga with a face that radiates both serenity and ferocity, embodying the dual aspects of nurturing motherhood and fierce protectiveness.

Similarly, in the epic narratives of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the face is often described to convey the inner states of the characters. Consider the description of Lord Rama's face, which is said to be radiant and composed even in times of great distress, reflecting his divine virtues and unwavering commitment to dharma (righteousness). Meanwhile, Draupadi's expressions in the Mahabharata—from her fiery anger in the court of Hastinapura to her sorrow and determination—are central to her character and pivotal to the unfolding of events that lead to the great war of Kurukshetra. These epics show how the face, with its subtle changes, can reveal complex layers of character and emotion, influencing the destiny of entire kingdoms.

Across the world, from ancient Greeks and Romans to the European Renaissance, artists sculpted and painted faces that captured the ideals of beauty, wisdom, and virtue. The Mona Lisa's enigmatic smile, painted by Leonardo da Vinci, has captivated viewers for over five centuries, reflecting not just her physical appearance but also the depth of her soul, making it one of the most studied and admired paintings in history.

### The Face in Literature and Drama

In literature, the face is often meticulously described to offer a window into the character's psyche. Indian epics provide rich examples of this. In the Mahabharata, Bhishma's noble face, even as he lies on a bed of arrows, is described in detail to reflect his steadfastness, dignity, and the pain of his complex moral choices. Shakespeare, in a similar vein, used facial expressions to reveal inner turmoil or passion. In "Othello," the Moor's countenance becomes a battleground of emotions—jealousy, love, and despair—ultimately leading to tragedy. The face, in its nuanced expressiveness, serves as the medium through which characters communicate their innermost thoughts and feelings, shaping narratives and driving plots.

### The Power of the Face in Music and War

Music, too, finds its muse in the face. Countless songs and compositions are inspired by the visage of a beloved. In Indian culture, the face has inspired poets and musicians for millennia. Bhakti (devotional) poets like Mirabai and Tulsidas have written verses that extol the divine beauty of Lord Krishna's face, with its captivating smile and eyes that convey compassion and love. Similarly, in Carnatic and Hindustani classical music, the face often symbolizes divine attributes or human emotions, inspiring compositions that express longing, devotion, or even separation.

However, the face has not only been a source of inspiration but also a cause of conflict. In Indian history, just as in many other cultures, the face has been the focal point of honor and disgrace. Dueling, both metaphorical and real, often began over facial expressions—an insult delivered through a mocking glance or a disdainful smirk. The Mahabharata recounts numerous instances where perceived affronts to honor, reflected in the expression of the face, led to battles. Draupadi's vow for vengeance after being insulted in the Kaurava court by Dushasana, who dragged her by her hair, is a classic example where an insult to her dignity, visible in her face's fury, catalyzed the epic war of Kurukshetra.

### The Face as a Symbol of Identity and Status

Faces have always been powerful symbols of identity and status. In Indian history, rulers like Ashoka and Akbar commissioned coins and artworks that bore their likeness, asserting their identity and authority. The tradition of portraiture in Indian miniatures, whether of Mughal emperors or Rajput kings, often emphasized facial features to convey divine right, wisdom, and noble lineage. Just as in ancient Egypt, where the pharaoh's face was idealized to signify divinity, Indian kings and emperors sought to immortalize their faces as symbols of power and legitimacy.

In the epics, the faces of revered characters like Rama, Krishna, Sita, and Arjuna are described with divine attributes, signifying their special roles in the cosmic order. Today, in a world increasingly dominated by digital interactions, the face remains central. Facial recognition technology is revolutionizing security, social media, and even art, underscoring the face's continued significance in human society.

### The Magic Endures

Despite being just 3.5% of the body's surface area, the human face continues to be a potent symbol of humanity's quest for connection, expression, and understanding. It is the focus of countless artworks, the subject of

innumerable songs and stories, and the catalyst for both love and conflict. From the divine expressions of deities in Indian temples to the portraits of European aristocrats, from the epic battles driven by facial insults to the devotional songs that celebrate a lover's face, the magic of the face—its ability to tell stories, evoke emotions, and inspire creation—remains undiminished. As long as humans exist, this small but powerful surface area will continue to shape our world in profound ways.

## My Trip to Olympic National Park

Abhyuday Sinha



We first went on a plane from Burbank all the way to Portland, then drove to Port Angeles, north of Olympic National Park which took around 4 hours.

The next day we went to Lake Crescent which was about 1 hour away. I went into the water to play for a bit with some rocks, throwing them in the water which was quite fun. Then we went on a trail to Marymere Falls which was about 4 miles back and forth! Next, we drove to Sol Duc Falls which was a 2-mile-long trail. Next, we went to Hurricane Ridge where I saw beautiful mountains and lots of deer.



The next day we went to Hoh Rain Forest which was about 2 hours away from our hotel, where we did a loop trail in the rainforest. We headed to Rialto beach next where we watched the sunset.



The next day we went to Neah Bay. The first place we went to was a Makah Culture Museum which had ancient statues. Next, we drove to Cape Flattery where we did a trail to a very scenic and beautiful ocean view.

On our last day we went to Quinault Rain Forest which took more than an hour. We did many trails and at the lake I got to swim and actually do back floats.

That ended our trip and the next day we flew back home from Portland.



## Places-An Integral Part of Me

Ryka Ray Pradhan

My home and the tennis court embody freedom and comfort in one place.

I can be myself and who I aspire to be.  
After a rough day it's always just there waiting for me to show my face.  
I feel as though I can be ME.

Home - my safe abode!  
Memories weaved with care and love.  
It's a safe place where I can live.  
So, let me toast to what I love the most.

Tennis court - a place where I can be alone with my thoughts.

It is just me, myself and I and I am in control of my own fate.

Swoosh comes the ball as I hit it and it picks up speed - a whole lot!

Win or lose, it's all on me so I might as well be great.

Discipline and orderliness exist in both the tennis court and my home.

That is why my home is so perfect in my eyes.  
The tennis court is a place for me to roam and explore.

Home provides me with everything I need - all the right supplies galore.

I feel lifted like I am walking on clouds being liberated and free.

In the comfort of my home, I can access all of my fond memories with glee.

I know the tennis court and my home like the back of my hand.

It has become a huge part of me and my life plan.

Home and the tennis court are both my destinations.

Filled with my coach, parents and friends.  
From them I learn and build my aspiration.

To be worthwhile and have fun in my young years filled with expectations.

**Dakshini is welcoming any Organization or Business to partner with us in our journey to serve the community and support philanthropic initiatives.**

**For Sponsorship or Partnership:**

**\*\*All Contributions to Dakshini is Tax Deductable \*\***

**Email: [communications@dakshini.org](mailto:communications@dakshini.org)**

**Call/Text: Dipankar Biswas | (310) 344-1804**

# Bouquet of Poems

Shekhor Bhattacharya

## Powerful Patience

The origin of the word *patience*  
Is not just “will”, but “composure” or “self-restraint”,  
As trees hold still through the most vicious of storms.  
Serenity arrives in its darkened  
cloak,  
Cast away from the burning minds.  
We often say:  
Our fire blurs the connections  
between,  
The hidden figure, too distant,  
In a haze.  
Fading away.  
What was thought, a chain structured  
through multiple links, broken through impulse.

Hurt rises above,  
We can't back away,  
Our eyes open one by one,  
A shadow of us left behind.

We fill our emptiness.  
Enter composure, enter restraint.

Those loved, this is for them  
Not for me, myself, or I  
Learn and take it in,  
Let calmness wash over the rugged exterior of mind.  
Now softer and softer  
Rocks begin to mold.

Power like no other,  
Yet lost it could be,  
By our own  
woe/loss/temper/absence of will.

Our patience makes us compassionate,  
It retains the bonds between those we love

Where once our fury terrorized our soul,  
Now we are free.  
The hooded cloak begins to fall,  
The haze clears, and we see again.

## Commentary on “Powerful Patience”:

The poem “Powerful Patience” implements abstract metaphors and detailed personification of serenity to portray that patience is an absolute necessity to retain a stronghold on one’s dearest relationships. To me, the absence of said patience has played a part in jeopardizing the relationships I have had, which led me towards a path of self-reflection and refinement. This journey of inner emotional turmoil to positive enlightenment directly correlates with the inspiration I got from the poem “Good Grief” by Amanda Gorman, as Gorman particularly establishes how the fruits of life can be attained through the experience of great sorrow and hardship. This particularly spoke to me, so when I decided to incorporate this style, I cleverly included abstract metaphors and personification to portray the importance of patience. The metaphor about how “fire blurs the connections between” signifies the destructive power of hostile anger, and lack of control, which expertly introduces the main conflict the individual (me) deals with. Furthermore, the use of the imagery and personification of “serenity” helps showcase patience as a catalyst to transform one’s thoughts and form of thinking, making it clearer, more visible, and a truly eye-opening experience. Through the combination of metaphors and personification, as well as the inspiration of a changed perspective taken from “Good Grief”, my poem “Powerful Patience” was born.bo

## On the Brink of Departure

Above the ground, I stand,  
where whispers linger in the twilight's grasp,  
where shadows softly sway.

A nest, once familiar, now feels distant, foreign,  
as the allure of distant lands pull me in.

The branches stretch, yearning for the  
sky's embrace, yet a pause,  
a tether binds me to closeness and love.

The fragrance blooms,  
days stumbling in their haste,  
our laughter shared and moments  
woven in the tapestry of time.

Listen, the unknown calls out,  
anticipation builds and builds,  
I await, longing for sweet scent  
coupled by melody for venture ahead.

The seasons dance, shifting through  
various hues, a cycle ever turning.  
This moment, seamlessly  
transitions, carrying me forward.

Oh, the warmth still radiates from  
this nest of mine, solace tagging  
along, a friend like no other. A tug  
at the tether, falling into the silence.

So far away ahead,  
a dream left to be fulfilled  
fulfills the promise of  
comfort left a ways away.  
So let the wind nudge me  
onward, the horizons beckon  
softly. As I prepare each cautious  
step, the nest of mine holds close to me.

### Commentary on "On the Brink of Departure":

The poem "On the Brink of Departure" displays the weighted feeling of leaving one's home behind for the desire of future adventures and improvements through naturalistic personification, vivid imagery, and emotional symbolism. The feeling of lack of time, and eventual need to step out of one's home to move forward in life has surfaced frequently, which led me to describe this emotion in relation to the intricacies of nature. In addition, Clint Smith's poem, "Above Ground", showcases the effect of growth and change, a bittersweet but needed vehicle people need to travel throughout their lives. In essence, this bittersweet tone was incorporated into my poem, where I addressed the strength of relational ties towards people and places through a nest, emphasizing the familiarity and comfort that a home offers. To top it off, the description of reaching for ambitions through the imagery of nature adds a feeling of progress and support that my family, my home has for me. Mother nature remains an important part of living in this world and tending to life, and this type of support gears me towards reaching for the future goals that require the bravery to "leave the nest". It is through the borrowing of inspiration from Smith's melancholy feeling of growth, and my creative experimentation with figurative language and nature that "On the Brink of Departure" was created.

## The Land of Dreams - Replication of “The Hill We Climb”

In the land where dreams are  
sown,  
We stand amidst a canvas of cultures  
Yet beneath the surface, a figment of  
Diversity’s promise meets silent cries.

We stumble upon shadows,  
Shrouded in plight, for  
though  
We boast of colors, hues, and creeds  
Division festers, choking our needs.

As voices unheard in ruptured sound  
For diversity a beacon so bright,  
Is dimmed by prejudice,  
By fear’s blight  
From the struggles of those who  
came before, cries of the marginalized,  
ignored, the melting pot, once grand  
Now sees cracks widen and expand.

Let it be known, let it be said,  
that in our diversity, lies our  
*greatest dread*  
For while we speak of inclusivity  
We fail to see,  
The systemic injustices  
That plague you and *Me*.

Let us rise in this era of reckoning,  
Confronting truths, tearing down lies  
For the problem with diversity,  
Lies not in our differences, but our dreams

In the new dawn, lies a chance  
A chance to heal the wounds  
Of our great nation’s past, where  
Justice reigns and all can thrive  
In the land where dreams are kept  
*Alive*.

### Commentary for “The Land of Dreams”:

“The Land of Dreams” resonates with the contemporary challenges and aspirations surrounding diversity and inclusion, employing vivid imagery and profound symbolism to navigate today’s societal struggles. In my personal journey as an Indian American, I have encountered both acceptance and prejudice, forcing me to uphold my values and identity amidst America’s diverse landscape. While strides have been made towards inclusivity, there persists a reluctance to fully embrace diversity and its beauty, leaving many minority groups marginalized and overlooked. Drawing inspiration from Amanda Gorman’s “The Hill We Climb”, my inaugural poem confronts the silence, fear, and division ingrained in our collective consciousness, weaving together my experiences of staying true to identity with the narrative of societal progress. In “The Land of Dreams”, the phrase “land where dreams are sown” serves as a powerful symbol representing both the potential for progress and the inherent challenges that are to be faced while shooting for such aspirations. Like how seeds are planted in fertile soil, the dreams symbolize hope and ambition, as well as the suggestion that this collective task as a nation will not be of ease but is essential for true growth.

# My First Bite of the Big Apple

Toree Roy



This summer's adventure was New York. It is a well-known fact that people love visiting New York and that it has a culture of its own, very different from where we come from, California. So, in the weeks leading up to this trip, I got quite excited about the city life I would experience for ten days.

On June 1st, we landed in Newark, New Jersey. As we drove into the city, my eyes widened and I saw how beautiful this new place was. And I hadn't even visited the best of it yet. The old, rustic, and tall buildings towered over us as we got to Long Island City in Queens where we stayed for the duration of our trip. That first night I ate dinner three times, including dishes like pizza, parmesan fries, dumplings, pork ribs, and delicious mac n cheese. We got back to our hotel at almost two o'clock in the morning!

The next couple of days we visited all the places you are told to go when you tell someone you are taking a trip to New York. And let me tell you, I fell in love with the city. There was a fast movement of people as they entered and exited the subway to their various occupations with deep stories of their origin. There was singing and dancing and the smells of different foods on the street. At Central Park, we got to go on a rickshaw ride, and seeing the park made a lightbulb go off in my head. Many of my favorite shows and movies took place right there, in the beautiful green lands of Central Park. The Metropolitan Museum of Art was surreal. The pieces of art in there with thousands of years of history were fascinating and the five hours we spent there will never feel like enough time. A landmark I really enjoyed was Times Square. It was so lively and colorful and people were out singing, dancing and just having a great time it was so beautiful to watch and take in. The city was so diverse and I learned more about that when we got to Ellis Island.

The day we went to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island was HOT but so worth it, because learning about the history of that beautiful statue and the stories behind it was so captivating. At Ellis Island, a museum explained immigration into New York and how it has become the melting pot it is today. The interactive information created an image in your head of how first the Europeans made their way to the new land and then slowly people from all over the world called New York their new home.

Toward the end of our time in New York, we visited the Empire State Building and Grand Central Station. I found both of these to be such vibrant places. The view from the Empire State Building was nothing like I had ever seen before. Watching the entire city of New York go from light to dark was so cool and an experience I will never forget. Grand Central has a special place in my heart because it is the beginning setting for one of my favorite TV shows, Gossip Girl. And it looked just the way I had imagined it and even more. I had no idea there were so many stores and restaurants and just places to roam around in the station. And the architecture was just flawless. You would never believe that that building was a train station. It was truly so spectacular.

Ever since we returned from our trip to the East Coast, the only thing I have wanted is to go back to the city and explore more. There is so much I still need to see and experience in magnificent New York. I can't wait to go back!

# Echoes of Dakshini Durga Puja – A Celebration of Togetherness

Avish Banerjee

When Summer turns to Fall,  
Maa Durga makes her call.

As the evening sun starts to set,  
We all settle down and start to reset.

For this weekend that is about to begin,  
Is welcomed back with a big grin.

As the sound of music and laughter fills the  
air,  
We are excited to be there.

In the concerts the melodies fill the room,  
The Singing and Dancing starts to resume.

The games we play with our friends,  
Our friendship only extends.

Durga Maa departs, but leaves behind,  
Strength and courage in every mind.  
For Maa Durga, our hearts remain,  
Until she returns to us again.

# A Song of A Firefly

Jayanta Kumar Chakrabarti

In the middle of the night  
you hold me tight,  
even tighter  
while the starry sky passes by.  
Hug me tight  
make it stronger,  
as the daylight hurls by!

Pour in my throat  
your burrows of toxic shames & rancid sorrows  
I will be your Neelkantha!  
You will never lose me again,  
I know the sheer agony of pain  
it flowed through my veins  
ripped me apart  
I too want you forever,  
it's simple as that.

In the silent night  
hold me tight,  
a lot tighter,  
as the glow of moonlight  
passes by.  
Clench me skintight,  
and hug me snugly  
as the warmth of sun  
rushes by!!

Around 6:30 PM as I was still working from home, I lifted my chin to look up across my table at the glass window in front of me. It was middle of winter and was completely dark outside. As I was staring at the outside darkness, all of a sudden, I see a firefly flew left to right across the window. It was strange, in the midst of shivering winter evening why the firefly showed up on my window? Was he frantically looking for his significant other? Had he lost her? Did she leave him in utter anguish? Hence, the idea of A Song of A Firefly came into my mind! – Jayanta C., Los Angeles, January 18, 2022

# Peru – An Enchanting Experience

Sharmila Dasgupta



As my LATAM flight took off for Lima, Peru, I was super charged with energy, excitement, and anticipation. The wanderlust in me was awakened and I could barely keep it under leash. Peru, especially the anecdotes about Machu Pichu put me in a restless mode for a while, and as a result—here I was.

My first destination was of course Lima, the capital of Peru. A vibrant, colorful metropolitan city of rich heritage, and the home of about 11 million residents captured my heart instantly.



One main reason was undoubtedly gastronomical satisfaction. Lima offered the best of Peruvian specialties like Ceviche (marinated seafood cocktail), Aji de Gallina (creamy chicken), combined with a variety of international fares to satisfy even the most critical taste buds.



Visiting Lima took me through a journey through time -- the pre-Hispanic, the colonial period, and the modern era. It was a city of opulence and enjoyment coexisting with its dark alleys and grim poverty.

I marveled at the pre-Inca ceremonial temple, the Archbishop's palace, the Convent of Santo Domingo, and last but not the least- the spooky catacombs at the San Francisco Church. The technological masterpiece of the Magical Water Fountains combined with the serene beachside of the city made it an unforgettable experience to cherish forever.

From Lima our flight took us to Cusco, the gateway to Machu Picchu--the newly added UNESCO site, also a contemporary member of the seven wonders of the world. Next day, from our quaint hotel in Sacred Valley, our 5 am shuttle took us to the train station where we embarked on a 2.5 hour train ride to Aguas Calientes, and then another shuttle to the entrance of Machu Picchu. My first glimpse of the sacred 'Lost City of the Incas' amidst the first rays of the golden sunlight left me speechless and awestruck. It was a sight beyond any imagination -- wonder to the eyes and soothing to the soul.



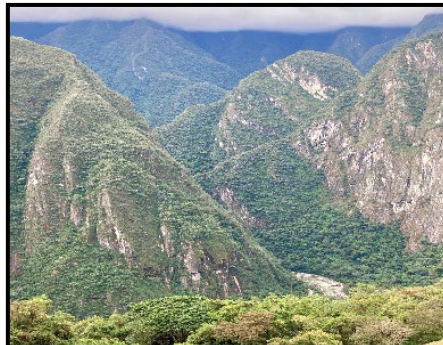
From Lima our flight took us to Cusco, the gateway to Machu Picchu--the newly added UNESCO site, also a contemporary member of the seven wonders of the world. Next day, from our quaint hotel in Sacred Valley, our 5 am shuttle took us to the train station where we embarked on a 2.5 hour train ride to Aguas Calientes, and then another shuttle to the entrance of Machu Picchu. My first glimpse of the sacred 'Lost City of the Incas' amidst the first rays of the golden sunlight left me speechless and awestruck. It was a sight beyond any imagination -- wonder to the eyes and soothing to the soul.



The fascinating yet mystical sites of this Inca citadel inspired a strange closeness to divinity, almost a spiritual experience as if the place was indeed a special creation of the almighty. Beyond the amazing beauty of the magnificent ruins surrounded by towering mountains and lush forests, it is quite astonishing to note the



precise geometric patterns and architecture of the stone monuments demonstrating the extent of scientific advancement and mathematical knowledge of the ancient civilization. In short, Machu Picchu is merely not a tourist masterpiece, it encompasses a touch of divinity combined with science and natural beauty.



The final destination was Cusco City, perched at a high altitude of almost 8000 feet. The ancient Inca capital is considered the archeological capital of South America with sites like the formidable Sacsayhuaman, Temple of Qoricancha, Puca Pucara (the red fort), the Plaza de Armas, and the famous Cathedral of Cusco. While it is considered the most cosmopolitan city in Peru bustling with colorful shopping delights, it retains the flavor of the ancient Inca culture in the somber atmosphere of the intimidating fortress of Sacsayhuaman and within the gold and silver laden walls of the Temple of the Sun God.

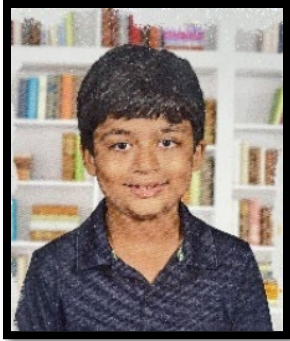
Peru was an enlightening experience taking me back to the times of the Inca culture, and the historical events that followed, resulting in a nation of a seamless transition to modernism.





# Space II

Akash Purkayastha



Space, or cosmology, has many interesting and amazing phenomenons. Over time, people have discovered a lot of facts about space. Here, I am going to talk about facts, phenomenons, and theories about space, enjoy!

## Quasars

In space, there are a few types of black holes, such as quasars. A quasar is an astronomical object of very high luminosity, which means it is extremely bright. They are known for being in the center of large galaxies and being the largest type, which does include mass. This makes them the heaviest type and the type of black hole with the strongest gravity. They have jets of plasma circulating into them at nearly the speed of light. They are extremely loud, which some are infamous due to their volume in scale of size and sound.

A fact about quasars is that quasi means unstable which does describe these black holes.

## Blazars

Blazars are one of many types of black holes and I am going to talk about them. A blazar is a black hole with an extreme amount of heat around them. The reason behind that is because matter pulled into it is traveling at near the speed of light. These black holes are located at the center of elliptical galaxies, which mean galaxies that are shaped like an oval.

A fact about blazars is that blaze means heat which does describe these black holes.

## Primordial Black Holes

Primordial black holes are black holes that are hypothetical. These black holes formed shortly after the Big Bang and are small. The reason behind that is that small amounts of matter were concentrated into a small black hole. There is a theory that these mysterious black holes might be dark matter which I will talk about later.

A fact about them is that primordial means small and old which does describe them.

## Stellar Black Holes

Stellar black holes are black holes that are the size of small cities, and the mass of a star. They are formed from a collapsing star. They form from heavy supergiant stars which I will talk about, when they explode in supernovae.

A fact about them is that stellar means, somewhere in space which does describe them.

## Supermassive Black Holes

A Supermassive black hole is a black hole that has an extreme amount of mass. They have the size of a few stars combined and the mass of 100,000 solar masses, which means the mass of 100,000 suns. The formation of these titans is unknown, but there is a theory. The theory is once there used to be stars called quasi stars that when they had a supernova, they would form one. Blazars and quasars could be supermassive black holes.

A fact about them is that super means very big which does describe them.

## Hypermassive Black Holes

Hyper massive black holes are the largest black holes in existence, they are the heaviest type of black holes. Most of them are blazars and quasars because they have extreme properties. They have the size of many systemic units which means the size of the solar system. They have the mass of 1,000,000,000 to 1,000,000,000,000 solar masses. There are very few of them to exist right now.

A fact about them is that hyper means extremely energetic which does describe them.

## Stars

Stars are luminous areas in space like our sun, they vary in size being some the size of cities and others the size of many suns. They vary in mass being some as heavy a fraction of the sun and others at a thousand times heavier.

## Neutron Stars

Neutron Stars are the remains of an extremely large star. If it's heavy it's a black hole, if it's light it is a neutron star. These stars are very small but heavy. Inside of them you will find hard sheets of reinforced iron, plasma, then the iron fuses even more hotter and hotter as you go down, the iron turns to heavy materials such as gold, platinum, uranium, and etcetera.

## The Big Bang

The big bang or the explosion that was caused by the universe's birth. This was when everything we know of was made, from protons, to neutrons, to atoms, and then into materials.



Aditri Mazumder



Palit

প্রথম পাণ্ডব ও পুথা এবং কিছু না বলা কথা

প্রণব কুমার মিশ্র

তোমায় প্রণাম করি মাগো

আমার বুকের কাছে

নেমে আসে

শুধু ভিড়

ভিড় করে আসে আর সরে যায়...

সরে যায়, সরে যায়

পাল্‌ব, কৌরব, দুর্ষোধন, ভীষ্ম, দ্রোণ, ধৃতরাষ্ট্রা.....সবাই

শুধু তুমি থেকে যাও

মিশে যাও

আলো.. অন্ধকারে...

মায়ের প্রতিফলার আভা নিতে.....

খুঁজে নিতে

শেষ উত্তর

তোমায় প্রণাম করি মাগো

এই রণভূমে

আভাময় পায়ে ছুঁয়ে

দুচোখ জলে ভিজ়ে যায়

নিভে যায়

এই গোথুলি

এই সূর্যাস্তের আলো

তোমার প্রথম এই মুখ

জলে ভেজ়া আশীর্বাদে

এলে

তুমি মাতা

মাগো

মা

এই নিরন্তর বনভূমে

দেরি করে এলে

কেন এতো দেরি?

মাগো

এই নিরন্তর কুরুক্ষেত্র রণাঙ্গণে

কেন এলে ?

আলোর বাহিরে যাই

দেখি প্রাণ যায় ঝরে

অন্ধের কুহরে যাই

সেখানেও সে চিৎকার

আত্মার অস্তিম আনাগোনা।

এই নিরন্তর কুরুক্ষেত্র রণাঙ্গণে

কেন এলে ?

তোমায় প্রণাম করি মাগো ।

সুষুমা ছিঁড়ে ভেঙে

নিয়ে এলে যেই প্রাণ

নির্বিকারে ছুঁড়ে ফেলে

নদীস্রোতে

চলে গেলে

চলাচল প্রাণের ঝঙ্কারে

মালো অন্ধকারের মাঝে ছুটে যেতে

প্রাণ দিয়ে কেড়ে নিতে

এলো না বিদ্রোহ?

রক্তময় হলো না ধমনী?

দেহ প্রাণ মন?

প্রথম আলোয় আনা

যেই প্রাণ

তার চোখের

অপার বিশ্বয়

তোমার

স্ববির পাঁজরে

কোনো

দিলো না আঘাত?

আজ এই গোথুলিবেলায়

শান্ত স্থির রণভূমি

সবাই ফিরে যায়

নিজের অস্ত্রের

নিজের ঘ্রানের,  
নিজের প্রাণের  
দূরত্বের শেষ সমুদ্রের কাছে  
আর  
তুমি দাঁড়িয়েছ এসে  
শুধু এক  
নিরন্তর মানুষের  
শেষ উত্তর চাইতে

তোমায় প্রণাম করি মাগো

কখনো প্রভাত এসেছে নেমে  
অবেলায়  
কখনো নিরন্তর আলোময় প্রপ্ন নিয়ে  
দাঁড়িয়েছে রাত  
খুঁজেছি তোমাকে  
চিন্তার ও অস্থিরতার ওপারে |

কে আমায় ডেকে যায়  
কথা বলে  
প্রবাল স্বীপের পাশে  
ধাক্কা লেগে ছিঁড়ে যায়  
মন আমার  
তন্ত্রীতে জেগে  
উঠেছে বিদ্রোহ  
কঠিন প্রপ্নের মুখে,

প্রাণদাও ওদের  
ওরা যে পাস্তব  
তোমার কনিষ্ঠ ভাই  
মা,  
আর অর্জুনের প্রাণদান?

তোমার কনিষ্ঠ ভাই  
প্রাণ দাও

তোমায় প্রণাম করি মাগো

বাদে, প্রতিবাদে, ভিড়ে, নির্জনতায়  
চলাচলে  
আসমুদ্র হিমাচলে  
তোমার খুঁজেছি মুখ  
সেকি এই মুখ  
মাগো  
শান্তির প্রশান্তিতে ভোরে উঠে যে  
মানুষ  
অভিমান মুছে নিয়ে  
চলে যায় পথ খুঁজে নিতে  
যুদ্ধে রণে জলে নির্জনতায়  
সেকি এই মুখ মাগো?

তবুও  
তোমাকে প্রণাম করি মাগো

তোমার আশীর্বাদ আকাশের আলো ছুঁয়ে  
একদিন  
মহাশূন্যে মিশে  
গিয়েছিলো  
মৃত্যুর শীতলতা নিয়ে  
সেই দীপ  
এসেছিলো আমার শিয়রে  
সেই শীতলতা-  
ঘুরিয়ে দিলো ঝরনাপথে-  
বাঁচিয়ে দিলো বাঁচিয়ে দিলো  
প্রাণ আমার

সূত অধিরথ  
ধাক্কা দিলো প্রাণে আমার  
নতুন করে জন্ম দিলো জন্ম নিলো  
ভেসে যাওয়া প্রাণ আমার

জীবন ভ্রষ্ট দৃশ্যে স্থানে  
অবদ্বৈত যে ভ্রাম্যমান  
কি কুড়োবে তার কাছে মা  
গুমরে ওঠে অশ্রুজল

সেই কথা সব  
নিশার জলে দৈব ভাষা  
মৃত্যু ভাষা কথা বলে  
নিরন্তর এ কুরুক্ষেত্র  
দেখছো না মা খাড়া পাহাড়?

কাছে থাকে সেই কথা সব  
আমার বুকের কাছে  
নেমে আসে  
শুধু ভিড়  
ভিড় করে আসে আর সরে যায়...  
পাস্তব, কৌরব, দুর্য়োধন, ভীষ্ম, দ্রোণ, ধৃতরাষ্ট্র্য.....সবাই  
শুধু তুমি থেকে যাও  
মিশে যাও  
আলো..অন্ধকারে...মায়ের প্রতিফলার আভা নিতে.....  
খুঁজে নিতে  
শেষ উত্তর

## দেবগণের ব্রহ্মানের পরিচয়প্রাপ্তি দীপক বাগচী (কেনোপনিষদে বর্ণিত আখ্যানের ভাবানুবাদ)

একদা ব্রহ্মান কৃপা করি' দেবগণে,  
অসুরগণের সাথে জিতালেন রণে।  
ব্রহ্মানের সহায়তা লভি দেবগণ  
জিনিয়া সেই মহাযুদ্ধে কহেন তখন,  
“আমরাই জিনিয়াছি নিজেদের বলে,  
সমরে নিধন করি শত্রুকে সদলে।

ব্রহ্মান বুঝিতে পারি' তাঁহাদের মন,  
শিক্ষা দিতে তিনি তবে আবির্ভূত হন  
তাঁহাদের সম্মুখেতে ধরি' জ্যোতির্ময়  
নমস্য যক্ষের রূপ; যা দেখি' বিশ্বয়  
মানিয়া দেবতাগণ একে অন্য জনে  
জিজ্ঞাসে, “কে হন ইনি জানিব কেমনে?”

দেবগণ অতঃপর অগ্নিদেবে কন,  
“হে জাতবেদ, যক্ষ কে?” জানিতে এখন  
হোথা যাও, নিরসন কর তো সবের  
জিজ্ঞাস্য, “কী পরিচয় নমস্য যক্ষের?”

আরাধ্য যক্ষের কাছে অগ্নিদেব যেতে  
পরিচয় চান তাঁর যক্ষ প্রথমতে।  
অগ্নি কন, “আমি অগ্নি, দক্ষ করি' দেই  
সমুখে যাহাই পড়ে, মোর শক্তিতেই।  
সম্মুখে ভাষার আত্মা এক কুটা রাখি,  
অগ্নিকে কহেন, “দেখি তুমি পার নাকি,  
তব বল দিয়া ইহা দিতে পুড়াইয়া।”  
দক্ষিতে না পারি' তাহা সর্বশক্তি দিয়া,

জাতবেদ = যে জীবিত সকলের বিষয়ে জানে।

মাতরিশ্বা = যাহা পৃথিবী মাতার বাহিরের শূন্যস্থান পূর্ণ করিয়া আছে; যাহা শূন্যে সকল  
বস্তুকে সরাইয়া দেয়।

মঘবন = বজ্র, বিদ্যুৎ ও বলের দেবতা।

নতশিরে অগ্নিদেব গেলেন সেথায় —  
দেবগণ যে বা স্থানে তাঁর অপেক্ষায়  
আছিলেন জানিবারে কী উৎকণ্ঠায়,  
‘কে বা আসি ফেলিলেন সবারে চিন্তায়?’

অগ্নি নিজ অক্ষমতা জানাতে সবারে  
দেবগণ বায়ুদেবে যাইয়া এবারে,  
অপরূপ এ যক্ষের কী বা পরিচয়,  
জানিয়া আসিতে কন, করিয়া নিশ্চয়।  
বায়ুদেব সম্মুখীন হ'লে সে যক্ষের,  
যক্ষ তাঁরে এক প্রশ্ন করিলেন ফের,  
“কে বা তুমি?” বায়ু কন, “বায়ু আমি, যাকে  
মাতরিশ্বাও কেহ বা কহিয়া তো থাকে।  
সকল দ্রব্যকে আমি অতি অনায়াসে  
উড়াইয়া দিতে পারি, আমার প্রয়াসে।  
যবে আমি বহি দ্রুত, সৃষ্টি করি ঝড়,  
যে ঝড়ের বেগ রোধ বড়ই দুষ্কর।  
ইহা শুনি সেই আত্মা বায়ুর সামনে  
এক খানি কুটা রাখি কন সেই ক্ষণে,  
“কত শক্তি আছে তব? উড়াও তো দেখি  
এই ক্ষুদ্র বস্তুটিকে; নিজ শক্তিতে কি  
পারিবে সরাতে এরে এর স্থান হ'তে?”  
আপ্রাণ শক্তিতে বহি' বায়ু কোন মতে  
না পারিয়া নড়াইতে ক্ষুদ্র কুটাখানি —  
অধোমুখে ফিরিলেন পরাজয় মানি।  
পরিচয় জানিবারে তিনি ব্যর্থ হ'য়ে  
দেবগণে সে সংবাদ দেন সেথা ক'য়ে।

অতঃপর দেবগণ ইন্দ্রদেবে কন,  
“আপনি সঠিক করি, তবে মঘবন,

কে এই আত্মাটি হন, করি' নিরূপন,  
মোদের সন্দেহ এবে করুন ভঞ্জন।  
“তাহাই হউক,” বলি ইন্দ্র সেথা গিয়া  
দেখেন সে যক্ষ নাই, অদৃশ্য হইয়া  
গিয়াছেন সেথা হ'তে, আর তাঁর স্থলে  
দৃশ্যমান সেই স্থানে আকাশ অঞ্চলে  
অদৃভূত দীদীপ্যমানা উমা, হৈমবতী;  
ইন্দ্র না পাইয়া আর অন্য কোন গতি  
তাঁহা'রেই জিজ্ঞাসেন কাটাতে সংশয়,  
“কে ওই মহান যক্ষ? কী বা পরিচয়?”  
উমা কহিলেন তাঁরে, “ইনিই ব্রহ্মান;  
যাঁর জয়লাভ দ্বারা তোমরা এখন  
করিয়াছ জয়লাভ;” করি তা' শ্রবন  
ইন্দ্র এবে জানিলেন, কে এই ব্রহ্মান।

ইন্দ্র, অগ্নি আর বায়ু, এই তিন জন  
ব্রহ্মানের অতিশয় নিকটস্থ হন,  
তাই শুধু তাঁহারা কেবল এখন  
দেবতাগণের মধ্যে অগ্রগণ্য হন।  
দেবগণ মাঝে শুধু তাঁহারা কেবল  
ব্রহ্মানকে জানিবারে হলেন সফল।  
সেরূপ যেহেতু ইন্দ্র সকল দেবের  
ভিতরে কেবল মাত্র এই ব্রহ্মানের  
অতিশয় সন্নিহিতে গিয়াছেন আর  
তাঁহাদের মধ্যে শুধু একমাত্র যাঁর  
ব্রহ্মানকে জানা হয় প্রথমে সফল,  
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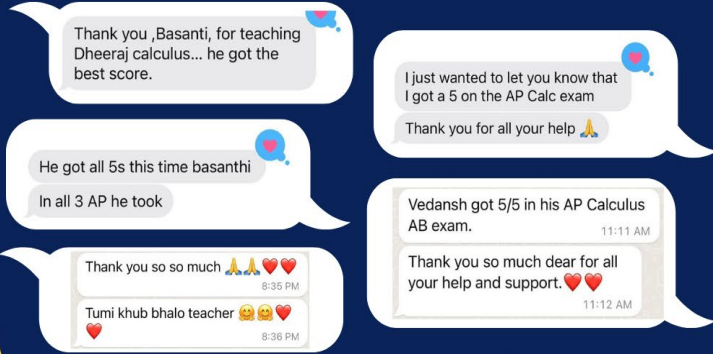


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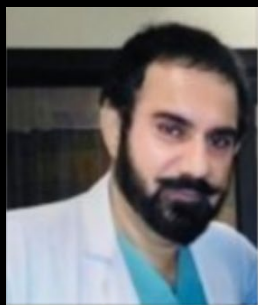
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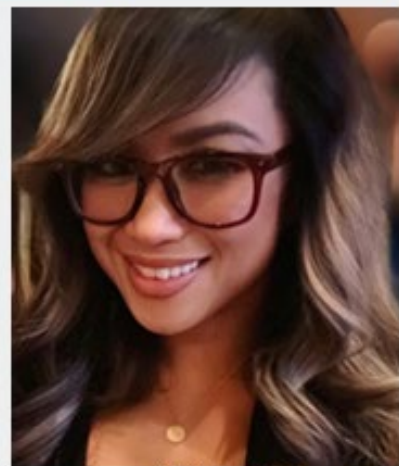
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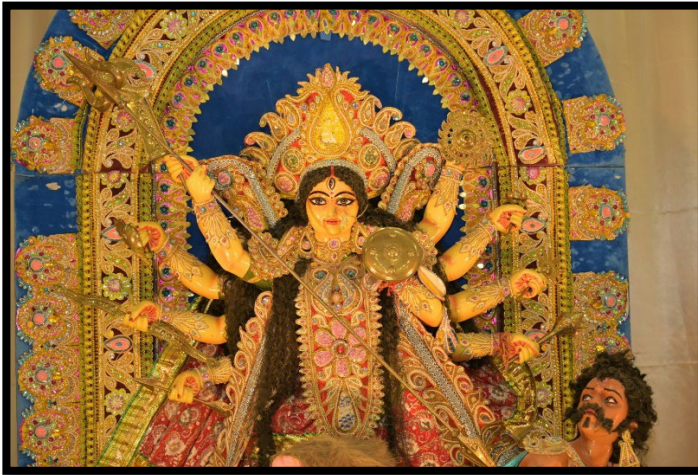


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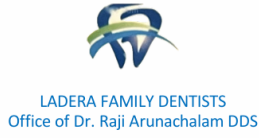


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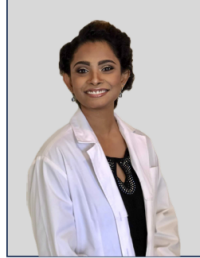
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