

ଉତ୍କର୍ଷ Utkarsha

**Fall Edition
2024**

**Parivarttana
ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ**



THE ODISHA SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

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Seasons of Transformation

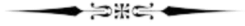
One of the most revolutionary figures of our time once said, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” Yet, many of us hold back, reluctant to take that crucial first step. It’s easy to understand why; change disrupts comfort and familiarity, often evoking fear and resistance. However, change isn’t merely an upheaval—it’s a powerful catalyst for growth. When we embrace it, change opens doors we may never have noticed, and it shifts our mindset in ways that physical transformation alone cannot.

I believe we, as immigrants, embody this transformative spirit. My parents, like others, made the monumental decision to leave their home country of India and settle in the United States, seeking opportunities to build a better life. That voyage necessitated adaptation to new cultural, social, and psychological landscapes in addition to a physical migration. We had to experience an entirely different way of life—one that prioritizes individualism over collectivism, where personal desires often takes precedence over community and familial bonds that are essential to our Indian values. This shift required a delicate balance between embracing American customs while honoring our own heritage. Additionally, this transition also involved shifting perspectives. Living in a place where identities are constantly evolving, they had to reconcile dual identities—a process that came with moments of inner conflict but ultimately strengthened their resilience. By embracing these challenges, we have helped lay a foundation upon which we continue to build. This journey of change, for us, isn’t just about adaptation; it’s about creating a legacy that bridges two worlds and enriches both.

Just as change transforms us, the season of fall bridges the warmth of summer with the onset of winter’s chill. The air grows crisper as gentle breezes carry the first hints of cold, while the sun, though beginning to wane, still bathes the landscape in a lingering warmth, casting a golden glow over the shorter days. Leaves on once-vibrant green trees begin their graceful transformation, shifting into deep shades of amber, crimson, and gold—nature’s way of marking the beginning of autumn. This transformation is slow but steady, a transition that allows nature to prepare for what lies ahead. In this seasonal dance, fall stands as a beautiful reminder that change, though gradual and sometimes bittersweet, brings its own beauty. The sounds of life begin to quiet, as if the world is entering a period of rest and reflection. The landscape itself embraces the necessity of letting go, teaching us that sometimes to move forward, we must release what no longer serves us. Autumn embodies both the warmth of what was and the anticipation of what’s to come, reminding us that transformation is essential. As the days grow

shorter and the nights longer, we are invited into a time of introspection, to consider what we need to shed in our own lives and how we can prepare for the future. Fall's gentle fading is both a celebration of what has been and a courageous step into what lies ahead, reminding us that change is not the end but a doorway to a new beginning.

Thank you,
OSA Utkarsha Editorial Team



President's Message



Leena Mishra

Namaskar,

We didn't realize that our term is just one Utkarsha away from ending. During our time, we focused on ensuring the smooth operation of the organization and tackling challenges to streamline processes and strengthen its foundation. To date, we have successfully added around 500 members. Additionally, we spent significant effort cleaning up expired memberships and updating our membership distribution lists.

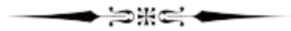
We worked diligently to educate the BOG members on their responsibilities, including timely conducting election, prioritizing OSA's brand, using the OSA logo for all events, and implementing a standardized certificate template for OSA-related activities. We improved our record-keeping processes and created a reusable OSA convention website. Additionally, we integrated the convention website with the membership database to streamline membership validation. We are currently working on securing liability insurance for the OSA Board of Directors. As the organization continues to grow, we recognize the increasing risks and the need for appropriate coverage.

On another note, we frequently receive concerns/feedback from regular members, BOG members, and visiting artists about the lack of a clear and consistent process for inviting artists to the OSA convention. This often leads to internal conflicts within chapters, particularly when chapter presidents are unaware of plans for visiting artists and choose not to host additional events disrupting the regular planned activities of the chapter. However, they face indirect

pressure from influential members of the community, further complicating the situation. These misaligned and poorly communicated events—whether at the convention or chapter level harms the organization's reputation, especially when artists encounter negative experiences during their stay in the country. For this OSA needs to take accountability of the visiting artists from visa sponsorship to their plan of programs in different chapters. We initiated this discussion with the convention teams since the beginning of our term however have not succeeded yet in this effort.

Upon diving deep, we also realize in some cases, the appointed convenor may or may not fully understand the true purpose and the need of the OSA convention, and views it simply as another annual event to make it as grand as possible. It is vital that the convenor aligns with OSA's core mission to preserve and promote Odia culture while providing ample opportunities for our members to showcase their talents on OSA's national stage. This understanding is essential in ensuring that the convention serves its primary purpose.

Lastly, we are gearing up for another election term. If you're passionate about serving the community and eager to help take the organization to greater heights, now is your opportunity. We encourage you to step forward and make a difference!



Vice President's Message



Saradakanta Panda

Namaskar,

First of all, wishing you all a Happy Navaratri & upcoming Dashahara. I take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of the OSA executive team for the last 14 months. I would also like to thank the 2024 Convention team and the Southern Chapter for a successful OSA Convention in Nashville, TN.

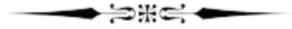
The OSA awards for the year 2024 has been updated with all the details in our OSA website at <https://www.odishasociety.org/award-winner-2024>. Please [click here](#) to see a detailed writeup for each winner.

I'm delighted to see the enthusiasm of the South-West Chapter team for the upcoming 2025 OSA convention in the DFW Metroplex area. The convention will be held at Embassy Suites by Hilton Dallas Frisco Hotel & Convention Center, 7600 John Q Hammons Dr, Frisco, TX 75034 from July 03 through July 06, 2025. Registration for the 2025 OSA Convention already started very early this year. Please visit the convention site to learn more at <https://osa2025.osaconventions.org/>

Starting in 2024, the convention website has been hosted within OSA's domain. Starting the 2025 convention the membership validation is integrated with the Convention website real-time. This will eliminate manual updates of membership data between these two sites. Also, it will eliminate manual reconciliation and update of new members for membership databases after the convention. This will help the OSA and Convention team tremendously.

OSA regular activities are in full swing as usual with Chapter events, Chapter Elections, weekly EC meetings, monthly BOG meetings, convention meetings, etc. We are also working tirelessly on streamlining many of the OSA processes, Guidelines, etc.

Let's work together and support our team to make OSA stronger and enhance OSA's ability to be a vibrant and attractive organization globally that will protect & nurture Odia culture & tradition.



Obituary



Sulochana Patnaik

(June 14, 1950-September 4, 2024).

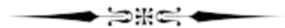


She served OSA as the Vice President from 2015-2017. She was the convener of historic OSA 2017 cruise convention. She was from Khurda. She married Dr. Jaygopal Mohanty. Not only was she a good writer but also a great community volunteer at OSA. She was caring and loving to her friends and OSA Washington Chapter members. A lover of Odia literature, she enjoyed leading poetry reading sessions, nicely introducing and summarizing each piece and insisting on a literary discussion at the end! She enthusiastically stepped into many different roles in many dramas, memorizing the dialogues well as several others struggled. Her love of Odia literature was immense.

Teena Roy



Teena Roy was an active member of the OSA Southwest chapter. She is remembered by many as a person with a golden heart. She was also a very brave person with strong principles and a belief system. She was a wonderful Mom and a very loving wife. She often goes beyond the miles to help her friends. Her contribution to the OSA Health & Wellness team can not be ignored.



Convention Report



The 55th OSA convention was held in Nashville, Tennessee from July 3rd to 7th. The theme of the OSA Convention was “TUNGA SHIKHARE KALINGA “. The annual convention of OSA is a vibrant celebration of Odisha’s rich cultural heritage, bringing together all the Odias from across the United States with enthusiasm and pride. This eagerly awaited event showcases the diversity and traditions that define our community, serving as a platform to promote and preserve our shared legacy. Spanning three days, the convention features a variety of activities, including the OSA’s business meeting, insightful seminars, a grand inauguration ceremony, captivating cultural programs, and the prestigious OSA awards. It is not just a gathering but a unifying experience, where participants immerse themselves in a journey of culture, camaraderie, and creativity.



(Inauguration program Convention 2024, Nashville)

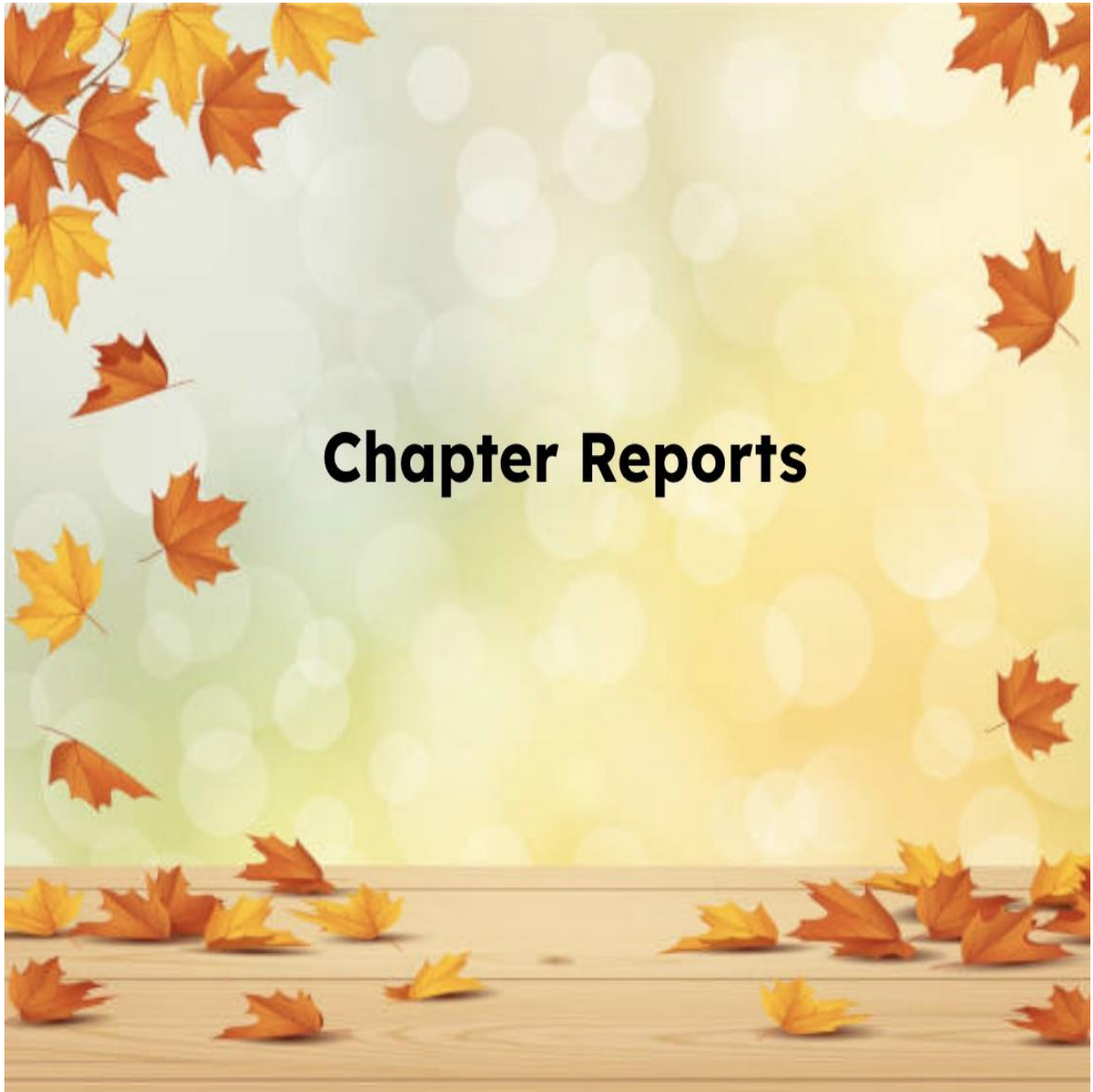


(Inauguration program Convention 2024, Nashville)



(BOG Meeting During Convention 2024, Nashville)

Chapter Reports



OSA New York-New Jersey Chapter

1. OSA Performance at Chef Vikas Khanna's Restaurant

We formed the Lata Mishra Virtual Chhanda Odissi (CCO) group to promote our dances and culture outside of the OSA platform. Artists from the NYNJPA chapter performed at the Diwali promotion event of Vikas Khanna's restaurant in NYC with Odissi dances. The dances were liked very much on Social Media.



2. OSA Participation in the India Independence Day Celebration at the Indian Consulate, NY

The Indian Consulate at NY celebrated India's Independence Day on Aug 15 at the Indian Consulate which was attended by Minister of State External Affairs Sh. Pabitra Margherita and Consul General Sh Binay S Pradhan apart from other Consulate officials. OSA was the only organization invited to perform a dance at the event. Dancers from our CCO group performed Jayatu Jayatu Bharatam which is themed on dances from various Indian states.



3. OSA Participation at the India Day Parade, NYC

After a gap of almost 2 decades, OSA participated in the India Day Parade in NYC. This isn't just a parade—it's a celebration of our roots, our culture, and our love for India. The members came together to design a float that proudly shared our heritage with the Indian-American community.



4. OSA Participation in PM Modi's NY Event

This was another first for us in terms of scale in performance where 23 dancers from our chapter coordinated by CCO Gurus performed on the big stage. Indian PM Sh. Narendra Modi visited the US in September and addressed a public event. OSA was one among the 16 groups who were selected to perform out of 167 applications. As it happens in such events where the lead time given to us was approximately 2 weeks but our CCO Gurus, Leads and the participants supported by parents worked together to make this happen. We received a lot of great feedback on our performance post the event. One of our chapter member's art work was also selected to be signed by PM Modi on his arrival in the US.



5. OSA NYNJPA Ganesh Puja and Nua Khai

Ganesh Puja is one of our core events that we have been celebrating for a long time and this year we celebrated Nuakhai along with Ganesh Puja for the second time in a row at the Wayme Temple. The day started with Ganesh Puja followed by Khadi Chhuan by kids and Pushpanjali. It was truly a family environment for the Nabanna grahana ritual that everyone participated in so diligently. The cultural programs were of great quality performed by adult members and kids. The Prasad lunch was prepared at the temple kitchen by our enthusiastic volunteers and was enjoyed by all.



6. 1st in-person class of OSA Odia Learning BidyaaMandira School



Our Odia School BidyaaMandira hosted its first in-person session on Sep 8 at Y2 Academy, Bridgwater which was attended by teachers, students, parents and EC team members. The students were very excited after attending the session and looking forward to the next session. A separate session with parents was conducted to explain the overall objective and roadmap of the BidyaaMandira school.

7. OSA NYNJPA 4H Fair Fundraiser

The 4 H organization in New Jersey organizes a county fair for 3 days every year that is attended by thousands of residents in Somerset County.

4H offers a lot of fun things to children:

- they can pet animals - goats, sheep, chickens, horses, pigs, and see dog shows
- they can see large excavation vehicles, climb on fire trucks
- they can see robotics, toy trains, etc.

OSA NYNJPA sets up a food booth in the fair as a fundraiser for the chapter and the net proceeds from the fundraiser is used for charity and promoting our culture & heritage in America. This year's event was impacted by inclement weather for 2 days but we still managed to win the best team for Sustainability Award.



OSA Georgia Chapter

OSA Georgia participation in the Indian Independence Day Celebrations in the Atlanta area in 2024		
3		2000+
Events by local Indian and American Organizations		Indian and International Audience
7	27	1500+
Dance performances	Dancers	Person Hours of practice
2		1
Parades representing Odisha		Odisha booth for tourism and crafts

Event 1: Colors of India by Stone Mountain Park

As a sign of prominence of the Indian diaspora in the local demography, for the first time the Stone Mountain Park hosted a festival "Colors of India" on August 10th and 11th. It was our extreme pride and honor to have been invited with all other local Indian communities to participate in the first ever Colors of India event where we showcased 2 folk dances and 1 Odissi dance at the historic Stone Mountain park. Our performances drew a lot of applause. We also participated in the parade in the evening with our Chaiti Ghodas and dancers adding color to our Odisha parade team.

Event 2: Festival of India (FOI) by India American Cultural Association (IACA)

As in the past years, this year too, we participated in the FOI event hosted by IACA on August 17th. Our members showcased our classical Odissi dance and Sambalpuri folk dance with our dance teams drawing a lot of accolades and awards. We also set up a booth at the venue featuring Odisha tourism, art and craft which attracted a lot of foot traffic. Even if a small percentage of the folks make Odisha a part of their itinerary during their next India trip, it will make our efforts very worthwhile.

Event 3: Freedom Mela by Indian Friends of Atlanta (IFA)

We participated in the Freedom Mela organized by IFA on August 17th. Having performed in the morning at IACA, the dancers went above and beyond to perform again in the evening at IFA to showcase our Odissi and Folk dances and keep our cultural flag flying high in the local Indian community. We also participated in the parade with our dancers and Ghodas adding the extra flavor to our parade.

The playlist here contains the OSA-GA performances in these three events. Please watch and share.

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgJD2FM3uGC6D_UDxC5nKwyWuvKWiHkQB&si=VBA595u7UX1NbOUD

Odisha Society of New England (OSNE)

Odisha Society of New England (OSNE) continues to celebrate our Odisha culture and parba parbani with great enthusiasm. We take pride in our roots and feel connected to our motherland by bringing our community together on occasions Like Ganesh puja , Kumar purnima, Saraswati puja, Utkala Divasa etc., to name a few.

Osne celebrated Ganesh puja on Sept 14, 2024 at Holliston Town Hall, MA with great pomp and grandeur. It was a packed event and everything was managed in a very timely fashion. The event started with Puja followed by Pushpanjali and prasad sevan. Apart from the usual Cultural performances lined up, we conducted the OSNE annual GBM successfully , where out of five proposals four were approved and the fifth one we put on hold for future discussions. We are very proud to introduce three new awards namely-

1. OSNE Lifetime Achievement Award
2. OSNE High School Senior Award
3. Avantika Memorial Odissi Dance Award

All the winners in each category were felicitated on the occasion. And as usual the evening ended with a sumptuous dinner home cooked by our very own volunteers.

Our next event was the 10th Kumar Purnima celebration on October 27, 2024 at Charles N Enes community center in CT. This time, being a milestone year, we celebrated it with even more fun and fervor with added elements like return gifts and raffles with attractive prizes.

The celebrations started with tulsi puja and Chanda puja followed by Puchi khelo, which not only attracted the young girls, who took part in with full enthusiasm, but even the ladies couldn't resist themselves and had a competition of their own. Winners in each group received attractive prizes. Traditional card games kept all the men engaged!

The Cultural line up kept all the audience entertained throughout the evening. From melodious songs to hilarious skits, from group dances to fashion show, we had it all to keep the audience engrossed. We were lucky to have kids as young as 4 years old to our respected seniors all performing on the same stage, which made it a unique event. The cherry on top was the delicious food line up with delicacies like home style Bara Gughuni, chilli chicken, traditional mutton curry, Alu potalo, kadai paneer, and rasagolla to name a few. We even had satvik options keeping the kartika masa in mind.

As always, it was yet another successful event organized by OSNE. The event was meticulously planned and executed by our dedicated team members and volunteers who strived to keep the event run smoothly keeping all the timelines in check.





OSA Washington DC Chapter

The Chapter celebrated Ganesh Puja and Kumar Purnima with overwhelming participation from OSA DC chapter members. Both events were successfully coordinated by DC chapter volunteers in various disciplines such as decorations, audio-visual, food preparation and catering. In Kumar Purnima celebration, we had Habisa preparation for those who observed Kartika month. All the food items were prepared by DC Chapter volunteers. In Kumar Purnima cultural programs, we introduced inclusion throughout the program.

We engaged the community in various programs leading up to the main events. We advertised our program through various flyers and teasers and through social media promotions to draw excitement and participation from the DC community. We are also implementing outreach activities through these events to encourage non members to join OSA.

[▶ OSA DC Chapter Kumar Purnima 2024 Highlights](#)





Committee Report

Regional Drama Festival (RDF)

2008: RDF was introduced by **Mr Sandip Dasverma** and **Dr Srigopal Mohanty**.

Four regions were identified, each led by one RDF Coordinator.

Initial RDFs:

Apr 4, 2009: Southwest (Southern)

Apr 18, 2009: Washington DC (Eastern)

April 25, 2009: Michigan (Northern)

2009 - 2019: More than 100 dramas were staged in all regions which attracted many new OSA members.

2020-2021: RDF was suspended due to COVID-19 pandemic.

2022: Resumption of RDF at few places.

2023: RDFs resumed at full strength.

2024: May 4- SouthWest RDF; May 11- NorthEast RDF

Nov 9- Midwest RDF - Toronto

2025: Southwest , April 2025 in Florida

National Drama Festival (NDF):

2020: NDF Concept by Dr Basant Mohapatra (RDF Chairman);

- *On a virtual platform using YouTube, Facebook live.*

2021: 1st NDF : May 30 : - 5 kids, 14 adults

2022: 2nd NDF: Mar 26 & 27 : - 6 kids, 14 adults

2023: 3rd NDF: Mar 25 : - 10 kids, 5 adults

2024: 4th NDF: March 25 : - 4 kids, 14 adults

2025: 5th NDF: March 22, 23

RDF Coordinators :

Basant Mohapatra - Chairman

Dilip Praharaj - Western

Ullasini Kar - South-East

Reema Mishra - North-East

Khitish Pradhan - South-west

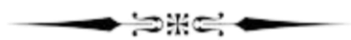
Pravat Singh - South-West

Basant Mohapatra - Midwest

Anil Patnaik

- Technical Coordinator





OSA 2024 Awards

Distinguished Odia Award 2024



DR. AJAYA K. MOHANTY

Dr. Mohanty is an internationally recognized technology executive with 30 plus years of experience at IBM and Deloitte. He has a PhD in Theoretical Physics from the University of Maryland, College Park. He graduated from BJB College (I.Sc.), Ravenshaw College (B.Sc. Physics – Hons) and Utkal University, Vani Vihar (PG).

He is the first Odia to head a strategic IBM executive position in Southeast

Asia in education and scientific research. Under its mandate, he established the first IBM Development Center in Odisha in Bhubaneswar in 1999. Through his relentless effort for IT & ITES development in Odisha, several multinational IT companies (Such-as: Deloitte, PwC, IBM and others) have made entry into Odisha.

He was the Associate Chair and Advisory Board Member for India's Mega Science Projects such as India Neutrino observatory, and the National Supercomputing Mission.

Dr. Mohanty initiated the very first Shared University Research Grant program by IBM in Asia Pacific, with grants to IISc, Bangalore, IIT Delhi and Kharagpur for parallel computing research work, in weather and climate modeling. He spearheaded the effort from IBM for the very first Petaflop supercomputers to be acquired by the Indian Meteorological Department in early 2000s, enabling reliable cyclone and monsoon prediction in India. Dr. Mohanty has been co-chair & steering committee member of HPC-Asia Conferences; hosted HPC Asia conferences in Bangalore, Taiwan, Tokyo and Beijing. He pioneered the adaption of HPC technology in Asia, in India, China, Thailand and Singapore

Dr. Mohanty is the author-and coauthor of over 35 research papers and publications and has several US patents to his credit. In collaboration with Prof. Durga Misra, Dr. Mohanty has initiated a series of global webinars on climate change and the role of technologies, since July 2022.

OSA convention attendance in 1979, 1988, 1995, 2005, 2009, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020,2021 2022... Co-Chair – OSA Public Library Initiative 2017-2023, OSA Public Library

Development Seminar – 2016-2022 Co-Chair – OSA Higher Education Committee 2019-2023, OSA Higher Education Seminar. – 2018-2023 Co- Chair - Odisha Development Seminar - 2018 & 2019

Awards & recognitions:

- Deloitte Outstanding Performance Award for Delivery Excellence 2011, 2012
- IBM CEO Invention Achievement Award 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998
- IBM Corporate One Hundred Percent Club Winner 2004-2005
- IBM Corporate Senior VP
- Award for LLNL-ASCI Blue Gene System Acceptance 2006: one of the the highest recognitions by IBM
- In recognition of his achievements in the field of information technology and innovation, Prabasi Odia Samanna was conferred on Dr. Ajaya K Mohanty in 2017 by the President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, and Union Petroleum Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan.

Utkalamani Gopabandhu Das Memorial Award 2024



DR. DEBENDRA DAS

Dr. Debendra Kumar Das lives in Fairbanks, Alaska, where he is Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Alaska. Hailing from Kendrapara in Odisha, he obtained his bachelor's in science degree in Mechanical Engineering from REC Rourkela, in 1972 (Best Graduate). He obtained his master's and PhD degrees from Brown University and the University of Rhode Island respectively.

Dr. Das is the founding board member of Northern Alaska American Society of Mechanical Engineers (NAK-ASME) and has held various leadership positions of ASME including Chair. Prof. Debendra Das is a board member & past President of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), Fairbanks chapter, Alaska. Has helped in fund raising for support of families affected by mental illness and in creating awareness on the taboo topic. He has authored articles on how to cope with the hardship of mental illness among families, relatives, and friends for the readers of the OSA journal. Dr. Das has provided decades-long outstanding humanitarian and philanthropic services to the underprivileged sections of society and needy students at various levels of education. Korua Kanyashram and orphanage are located about 20 miles from

Kendrapara town. For the last twenty years the Banchanidhi Das and Srimati Devi Trust created by Prof. Das has provided financial help to these two residential facilities for poor boys and girls, destitute and mentally ill women.

He has been involved with Lutheran Mahila Samity and its sister organization Nibedita Ashram in Kujanga area since 1992 by providing financial support to augment supply of their study materials, clothing, food and housing improvement. Dr. Das also helps provide clothing & other supplies to an orphanage in Gunupur, Rayagada district and clothing and educational materials to tribal children in the peripheral villages near Damanjodi, Koraput district.

The tribal families of Biribati & Patharapada Basti these laborers had come from their native villages from Mayurbhanj district during construction of Paradip expressway in the 1960s and have since settled there. They dwell in slums and have not assimilated with the locals. Prof. Das has been visiting them regularly and enquiring and helping with their well-being, providing clothing and other accessories.



Municipality Blind School & Muka & Badhira School, are two government institutions located near Kendrapara in the villages of Gopa and Kajala. The family trust set up by Prof. Das has been helping these schools since their inception. Although there is government support, the trust provides financial help to the school to meet the government support shortfall, in addition to providing nutritious lunches.

For the last 15 years the Banchanidhi Das and Srimati Das Trust has awarded annual scholarships to undergraduate students in rural colleges in Kendrapara. Every year, 6 to 10 students per college from about 60 rural campuses, primarily from the Kendrapara area, are recommended by their faculty members to the Trust board; about 80% of nominations received are for women. In 2024 alone about 400 students received these scholarships.

Scholarships/endowments enabled by Dr. Das:

➤ Dr. Debendra Das was instrumental in establishing two Endowment Chairs (one in Electrical Engineering and the other in Metallurgical Engineering Department) in NIT Rourkela to enhance research at his alma mater which included financial contribution. He conducted a fund-raising campaign to donate books in the 1990s to the erstwhile REC Rourkela library.

➤ Prof. Das has worked to set up scholarships for economically weaker students through

fundraising through his batchmates and NIT Rourkela Overseas Alumni Association (NITROAA). A total of about 100 deserving students have been recipients of these scholarships and are awarded every semester with the collected funds. Prof. Das has established two scholarships in the memory of his parents and wife by donating \$25,000 for each scholarship.

➤ Dr. Das has established Graduate Fellowship Endowment for Ph.D. students from low per capita income countries of the world at his alma mater, Brown University.

➤ He has also established two Graduate Fellowships at his alma mater, University of Rhode Island - one in English Literature and the other in Mechanical Engineering.

➤ He has also established scholarships at University of Alaska Fairbanks, 3 undergraduate (UG) and one graduate (G) scholarships: UG Visual Arts, UG Mechanical engineering, UG Alaska Native Student and G scholarship related to mental illness.

➤ Dr. Das has also funded two undergraduate scholarships at the alma mater of his late wife Katherine (Kate), Rhode Island College: one in English Literature and the other in journalism at their College Newspaper, Anchor.

Prof. Das loves and admires Odia culture; he has been an OSA member since 1973 when he was a student at RI and became a Patron member in the 1990s. He has attended about 30 OSA conventions and volunteered when called upon. He has regularly contributed to the OSA journal, authoring articles on charitable public services in Odisha and mental illness. His friends describe him as “compassionate and unassuming.” They speak of him traveling to India every year for various charitable endeavors and urge him to “spend some money on himself and travel by business class, so that he can live longer and do more for other people”

Arun Das Memorial Kalashree Award 2024

MRS. DIPTI MALLIK

Dipti holds a master's degree in Odissi dance from the Pracheen Kala Kendra, Chandigarh. She received Junior & Senior dance scholarships from the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, Govt of India. She is a Grade-A artist at Doordarshan Kendra, BBSR. Her dance journey began under the guidance of Guru Ramani Ranjan Jena and Guru Raghunath Dutta, both Odissi maestros, recipients of the Sangeet Natak Award and disciples of Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra.

Dipti holds MCA & MA in economics degrees from Ravenshaw College. She is a teacher at John Green Elementary school in Dublin, CA. Dipti also teaches Odissi and semiclassical dance in middle and elementary schools in the city of Dublin through the school district's after-school program.

Dipti is the founder and artistic director of Nrityalaya School of Odissi Dance. Under her guidance, many students have completed their Odissi *mancha pravesha*. She teaches the ancient dance form Mahari, semi-classical, and Indian folk dances in addition to Odissi. Dipti is a certified Odissi examiner for Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal, Mumbai, & Pracheen Kala Kendra, Chandigarh. She serves as a visiting professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz in the Anthropology department.

Dipti has been instrumental in promoting Odissi dance form across various places & different communities in the USA like Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, UP, Irish, Chinese. She has choreographed and performed in cultural events to integrate the South Asian community and showcase diversity. She has served in the City Art and Culture in Park Commission in Dublin. She has also collaborated with the Dublin Rotary and Dublin Christian Community, senior care to promote dance & culture. She has participated in multiple OSA conventions as a participant, performer, cultural lead and teacher of student participants. Dipti served as OSACAL President from 2021-23. During Dipti's leadership OSACAL organized multiple in-person & virtual events including new events such as Nuakhai; many OSACAL events were sold-out. She brought together members of the community to showcase their talents, grew OSA membership, invited & promoted several artists from India. As chapter president, she successfully brought the 2022 OSA convention to California after 12 years. This convention was a big event in terms of finance and number of attendees. In addition to other leadership roles at the convention she organized & choreographed various events as the cultural lead.

Dipti resides in Dublin with her husband who is also an active community volunteer and

their two sons. Dipti has instilled a love for Odissi music and culture in both her sons. She is also a board member of Chakradhar Mallik Foundation which promotes Odia cuisine in North America and beyond.

Charity is an important part of Dipti's life. Through Nrityatara, Dipti organizes charity events in senior care centers in the bay area where they teach Odissi to seniors and conducts sandwich seva & clothing drives for the homeless. The school has adopted two blind students and supports their education. Dipti taught free online classes during the pandemic for school children and teaches special needs kids in Dublin.

Awards & recognitions:

- Nrityalaya School of Dance recognized by the Consul General of India, San Francisco in 2019
- Best choreographer award by SEWA international
- Best teacher by SSP, Milpitas 2018
- NRITYA NIPUNA AWARD 2019
- Awarded bay area gurus by HCCC, Livermore CA
- Women's empowerment award by Dance Dill Se 2019
- Kalidas award by HCCC, Livermore 2019
- Best school recognition award for Nrityatara by Dublin Mayor in 2019 & 2021-22
- Best dance teacher by Dublin middle school for multiple years
- Best service award 2024 by Milpitas Mayor
- Dipti's Mahari dance group has won numerous awards and been recognized by CM Odisha
- Mahari group also won the Rang de Basanti (folk dance festival) by the Namah Foundation
- Best school award 2022 by Alamanda County Supervisor
- City recognition award 2021-22 for by Dublin Mayor
- Selected as a dance instructor for the 2024 summer & fall sessions in the Dublin City Center

Dipti's YouTube and FB Page

<https://youtu.be/v0dRQuwnYVw>, <https://www.youtube.com/@nrityataraodissi3608>

Subrina Biswal Award for Academic Excellence 2024



MR. TEJAS PATNAIK

<https://www.youngchangemakers.net/tejas>

Mr. Tejas Patnaik is the 2024 valedictorian (Rank 1 out of 730) at Bolingbrook High School (BHS), IL. Tejas has gained admission into many top-notch schools including IVYs with a perfect GPA, near perfect SAT, and almost perfect AP scores. He has chosen to join the Harvard College class of 2028. He will be studying “Computer Science with Natural Language Processing emphasis and use Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to bring about a positive change in the world.” Tejas has been the Associate Director/ Marketing Head for AI Youth Innovation Council since March 2021. His research accomplishments with Argonne National Laboratory are noteworthy. Tejas co founded a Robotics club at his high school while he was still in middle school (Brooks, Bolingbrook). His middle school team was regional & state champions. He was invited, along with his HS team, to attend the World VEX Robotics Championships (2022, Dallas). He won Student Ambassador for the VEX world of 2022. His team, Fox Valley Robotics, was also invited to World VEX Robotics Championships (2024, Dallas, Apr 25-28) through regional/State qualifications.

Tejas is the co-founder of Young Changemakers of North-South. During COVID, he worked to reduce the digital divide by crowdfunding campaigns as part of the Young Changemakers national team. This work generated about \$110K funding with additional company matching funds which was utilized to supply Chromebooks and digital devices to underserved kids, nationally (800 devices, 8-10 schools spread across 7-8 States in US). Non-profit organization Ashoka mentored Tejas to be a young changemaker in the community: <https://www.ashoka.org/en-us/story/trisha-and-tejas-changemaker-journey>

Tejas has worked with OSA as a volunteer and performed in local OSA activities, fundraisers, festivals and OSA conventions. He has participated in Odia learning, in Odia speech & vocabulary competition at OSA chapter and conventions and in Business Speech competitions in OSA conventions.

Tejas has been learning to play the Tabla in the style of Banaras Gharana since 2013 at

the Jugalbandi Academy of Tabla and Kathak Dance. He has received a Junior Diploma in Tabla (Level-2, 2017, Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Allahabad in cooperation with ANILA SINHA Foundation. Tejas has composed and performed music at various locations in the Chicago area. He has performed Group Tabla Jugalbandi at Elmhurst College as World Music Series Celebrations (2016). Tejas has completed 5-10 levels of the Illinois State Music Teacher Association AIM Certification Exam on the Piano, trained by Wheaton College since 2014. He is a student of Indian Classical Singing at the Manjusha Sangeet Academy.

Tejas is also an accomplished Chess player at BHS and is on the Varsity golf team as well as the Varsity tennis team. Tejas is the Vice President of finances at SkillsUSA and part of DECA, CTE club.

Awards & Recognitions:

- Awarded the Presidential Service Gold Medal from the 46th US President and a White House commendation letter (2022, Joe Biden) for community service
- Bagged Bolingbrook High School (BHS) Academic Top 20 Award for 4-years in row
- IL State Scholar Certificate (IL Student Assistance Commission, 2024) & Certificate of Achievement, (VVSD board)
- National Merit Scholarship Program (Outstanding Performance, 2022 for SAT)
- Inducted into National English Honor Society (BHS), National Honor Society (BHS, 2021), National Junior Honor Society (Brooks Middle School, 2018).
- Selected National Junior Honor Society (NJHS, 2020, Brooks)
- Awarded AP Scholarship (2020, 2022), AP scholar award with Honors (2021), and AP Scholar with distinction (2022-2023) from Valley View School District and College Board.
- International Academic Competitions (IAC)
 - National Sports and Entertainment Bee 2020 - 3rd Place
 - Qualified & participated for National History Bee, Academic Bee, Geography Bee - Qualified for National Science Bee, US History & Political Science Bees in 2024 in Arlington, VA
- North South Foundation
 - Qualified for the National Science Bee and Essay Writing Competitions (2023)
 - Qualified for the Senior Science Bee National Finals at MIT (2019)
- Awarded many 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place finisher regional awards from North South Foundations (NSF) to qualify for the National Finals
- Recognized as Argonne Exemplary Student Researcher Program student for 4-years

(2020-2024)

- Completed Physics Program and awarded recognition from Fermi Laboratory, Batavia, IL (12/2019)
- Awarded Best design Trophy for EV3 Robot design in NASA 50th Anniversary Apollo Moon Landing Robotic Competition, Naperville, IL (07/20/2019)
- SkillsUSA State Championship (Indianapolis, 3rd place in Electronics Technology, IN, Apr 2023)
- Received Best VEX VRC Design Award for best Robotic design Processes (Team 355S) and documented in Engineering Design Notebook (Great Lakes VEX VRC Regional Tournament #1, Batavia, 2023)
- Recognized as “Pandemic Heroes of North South” for community work during COVID-19 timeframe
- Won VEX VRC High School Robotics Regional Champion-2022 (1st Place, Great Lakes Tournaments)
- Won the Best UNESCO Position Paper Award, Model UN Conference (Benedictine University, 2020)
 - Won 1st prize at Tabla (Percussion) Performance at International Indian Icon Competition, Chicago
- Bagged Scholastic Bowl Freshman/Sophomore Rising Star Award (BHS, 2020-21) ➤ Brooks Middle School, Bolingbrook, IL, Valedictorian, 2020 (05/21, 4.0/4.0), Brooks Middle School Outstanding Character Award (2020)
- First Lego League (FLL) State Qualification (2020, Elgin Community College, Qualification after 18 years)
- 1st prize in Indian Classical Music (solo and duet singing), Subrina Biswal Competitions for Performing Arts as part of OSA conventions (2018, 2019), and 3rd Prize in Percussion Instrument Tabla (2023). Won prizes in Odissi, Champu & Chhanda Music Competitions (Tabla) in OSA convention (Chicago, 2023)
- State Finalist in Entrepreneurship Competition at DECA, CTE
- AT BHS, Chess Team
 - Achieved All-Conference 3 consecutive years in a row
 - Undefeated Freshman Year, - 3-time State Qualifier

Youth Volunteer Award 2024

MR. ANISH MOHANTY



www.anishmohanty.com

Mr. Anish Mohanty majored in Information Systems & Business Analytics at the Loyola Marymount University where he was also Senator At-Large on Associated Student Government. He has also been a Tedx speaker on “how the purpose of knowledge is not for academic success, but for people to educate themselves to allow innovation to thrive...” His current experience includes...

- Communications Director at Gen Z for Change
- Communications Coordinator for Asm. Liz Ortega
- Elected Delegate to the California Democratic Party
- Steering Committee Member for Working Families Party
- Board Member at Project Super Bloom PAC
- Arts & Culture Commissioner for Union City, CA
- Sister Cities Committee Member for Union City, CA

In Anish’s own words, “At the age of 16, a transformative journey to Odisha, India revealed my life’s mission: to advocate tirelessly for marginalized communities. I visited Adruta, a foster home, where I encountered children whose resilience in the face of dire circumstances inspired me profoundly. Motivated to make a difference, I produced a documentary, which raised awareness and also facilitated substantial fundraising - over \$100K, enabling the construction of better facilities for these children.

This early experience solidified my commitment to social justice, guiding my subsequent endeavors in various advocacy and digital campaign roles. As Communications Director at Gen Z for Change, I developed content and strategies that highlighted issues affecting underrepresented groups, engaging a global audience in meaningful dialogues and action towards equity and justice.

I have produced digital content for U.S. Senator Ed Markey, California Treasurer Fiona Ma, CA Senator Aisha Wahab, Assemblymember Liz Ortega, LA Mayor Karen Bass, the Working Families Party, and others. In California, I further extended my activism with the Working Families Party, organizing and supporting candidates who champion the causes of those left behind by conventional politics. My work included close collaborations with historical

candidates, including efforts that led to the election of the first Afghan American woman to public office in the U.S. and advocating for the first Black woman to serve as District Attorney in Alameda County.

Through my experiences, I have facilitated and witnessed transformative change. I have used education, digital media, and robust advocacy to champion the cause of justice and equality. Each project, campaign, and role I have taken on embodies my deep-seated commitment to uplift those who are marginalized and to mobilize others toward a collective effort for a better, more just world."



English Section



Metamorphosis

desperately craving a sense of stability
can't handle my ever changing environment
going from one place to another
is simply not my cup of tea

the ceaseless flow of time whirls
I am ensnared in the fury of a storm.
Change becomes an unwelcome guest
knocking on my door at every opportunity

the turn of the tides constantly shift
with each movement they pull me back in
nothing exists to anchor me to shore
having to confront the unpredictable waves

I feel a tug of war at every turn,
pushing in vain, refusing the pull.
like a prisoner shackled, I wrestle and resist
seeking to strive for security in spite of chaos.
all of a sudden, a switch flipped in my head

unwillingly and slowly start to understand
that change constitutes freedom.
in its continual movement, I breathe.
accepting disarray, and finding repose.

each turbulence allows me to rise above
a sprout of strength born from suffering.
in the embers of change, I unearth my power,
a phoenix emerges from the ruins of the night.

although the force of my body repels it
its lessons liberate me, as I cherish them
I dance to the tunes of change to find my place
welcoming the journey grit and grace.



Sumedha Jena

Monotheism or Polytheism

By: Chinmayee Devi



We all believe that the almighty Lord has created and has been fostering the vast universe in which we exist with planets, billion stars, and living things. In this world we have around 4300 religions out of which there are 11 main religions. A lot of people also follow their own GURU. Therefore, this intrigues us that if there are so many religions and so many GODs then who is the ONE who is controlling everything. Some people believe that Lord Vishnu is the ONE. He is the ONE who set the soul free from sin. He is the ONE who saves everyone from disaster. At the same time there are others also who believe in Lord Shiva. They believe that he is the ONE who liberates everyone and is the supreme Lord. Even if we consider the chakras, Sahasrara is located at the top of the head. When a child is born, there is a soft spot. It is from this chakra that all others emanate. It relates to pure consciousness. In Hindu literature, it is “the supreme center of contact with God.” Here liberated ones abide in communion with the Self. This is also associated with Lord Shiva. Some people also believe in Lord Brahma as the creator. Nevertheless, many puranas narrate that the trinity is not different rather they eulogize each other. The trinity is superior, inferior and average. They are everything and nothing.

It is wise to worship GOD. It would have been discerning if we don't worship. People in this world think that they are worshipping different GODs as per the physical appearance of their GOD. However, in reality everyone worships the ONE. In different mythological books Lord Vishnu in the form of Shri Ram has worshiped Lord Shiva. Moreover, there are examples of Lord Shiva worshipping Lord Vishnu. Therefore, when we worship Lord Vishnu or Lord Shiva, do we worship the ONE or not? Then if this is true, then why do people of different religions think that their GOD is different. So the question comes: is it that GOD is different or the modes of our worship are different?

It is true that there has always been ONE since the inception of life on this earth. However, as the time passed by, people of different regions followed different principles as per their customs and living environment. Slowly people have started formulating religions out of these

practices and thus started to follow different beliefs. A lot of religious scriptures were created for better social welfare. To keep it very simple, if we do anything which can hurt others it is a sin.

So now the question comes that if the supreme lord is the ONE, then where is he? GOD is nowhere but within ourselves. GOD exists in the divine love, which binds human beings to each other. GOD exists in the freshness of a flower, the tranquility of water, the purity of fire, the light of the sun, the kindness of earth, and the movement of air.

I remembered a very nice incident, which once happened to me, and a little girl taught me a lot. Once I met a little girl in a temple and gave her holy water. As I was unsure that she might drop that water as her little palms could barely hold all the water, I told her to be careful with the water and told her that this water is the holy water given as the Prasad and it is very auspicious and powerful. Then the girl replied, if this water is so powerful, then why not the water I have in my bottle. I smiled after listening to her thinking that the little girl may not have understood the context in which I tried to warn her. So I just told her, No problem dear, just be careful with that holy water. Nevertheless, she was smart enough to understand my ignorance towards her question. Therefore, she repeated her question again to me. Please tell me why the water in my bottle is not equally powerful?

I was stunned by the way she asked me the question. I had no answer to this simple question. She realized that I am feeling embarrassed, so she calmed me down and said, don't worry. I know the answer. This has nothing to do with the water; it has to do with your belief in that water not with the water from the bottle. GOD is nothing but what you believe. You have faith in that water that it can cause miracles and it has a lot of blessings of the supreme. However, at the same time I also believe that my water also has a lot of power as it can help a thirsty people and save that person from death. If I can use this water on a seed, that can grow into a huge tree. So in this case water is GOD, it is not the source from where and how it is available to us.

That day after I came back home, I went to the prayer room in my house and looked at the deities and realized GOD is there in everyone. GOD is everywhere. At that time I only could really understand why GOD is ubiquitous. I realized that GOD is present in soil, water, air, fire, sky, flower and everywhere. GOD is nothing but our FAITH and BELIEVE. We should always

listen to our mind and heart. They will always show us the truth about our thinking. We should always help others as much as possible. Because when we help others, the GOD helps us. GOD is invisible and always present in our thoughts. So GOD Is not many, GOD is ONE. It is we the human beings have been born as different minds that create different GODS.



Seventy Years and Counting!

Part I

Dr. Balabhadra Mishra



The dollar was around three rupees and a few annas between 1947 and 1949. Three rupees and one anna, that was the exchange rate when I came to the United States. I look at the seventy rupees for a dollar and realize how much times have changed.

I was born in 1928 in Jemadeipur in Ganjam district, with the nearest towns being Purushottampur, Khalikot and Rambha. Taratarini temple, situated by the famous Rusikulya river was as far as we would go from home. I wonder how far I have come from home. Youngest of ten children, I was considered a brilliant student by my teachers. Born in 1928, to Sri. Gopal Krushna Bhatta Misra and Smt. Malati Bhatta Misra, I lost my father at a young age and was raised by my brother and mother. I matriculated in 1942 in British India. After completing my studies in Purushottampur, I moved to Paralakhemundi, graduating from the two-year Maharaja College in 1944. From 1944 to 1947, I studied Science with Chemistry honors at Ravenshaw College, graduating as the best graduate for 1947. Following that, I went to the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore to get a masters degree, but mid-way through the program, I was accepted into the MS program at Columbia University, in New York City. I landed on US soil in 1948, with an ambition to succeed in pre-civil rights America. As far as I am aware, I was the second Odia to come to New York. New York was won by local Republican Governor Thomas E. Dewey, who was running against the incumbent.

Democratic President Harry S. Truman, during the 1948 United States Presidential elections. I was fascinated by life in New York city and the many opportunities it provided. The city's imposing skyline and the opportunity to study at Columbia Engineering reminded me of all that I had dreamed of. By then, I was married to Nalini. I was named as Mayurbhanj Maharaj Gold Medalist and assured a seat in the prestigious Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, which only allotted two seats per state at that time. While all people I knew aimed to take the IAS exam, my dream was to go abroad. At the time everyone was going to United Kingdom for higher

studies but I had my heart set on America. Mr. Rasa Bihari Patnaik, who was my senior at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and Dr. Prasad, Principal of Ravenshaw College, encouraged me to come to the United States for higher studies. Mr. Patnaik had come to the United States to get MS in Chemistry and I planned to do the same, with the ultimate goal of building a fertilizer factory in Odisha when I went back. In the 1950s, the Odisha government was considering such a project, and they sent me to the United States with a full scholarship. I took the initiative to communicate with Columbia University, Carnegie Mellon University, and MIT and was accepted into all the schools. I was the favorite student and mentee of Dr. Prasad, then Principal of Ravenshaw college; I received a recommendation for full scholarship by the Government of Odisha, to study abroad. He was granted the scholarship to get a degree in Chemical Engineering at Columbia. Post Independent India and Odisha, in particular, were looking to build new industries at the time. During a short trip from Bangalore, I got married to Nalini, my dear wife.

Sri. Jagannath Padhi was my friend Madan Padhi's older brother. He knew Nalini's father Mr. Ananta Mishra as a successful publisher in Cuttack and introduced the families. Ananta Mishra, who established and ran the Cuttack Students store, was a successful publisher, and was from a well-off family in Cuttack. I took the train to Bhipur where I got married. Next morning, I went to Jamshedpur for a forty-five-day program at Tata Steel and then to the United States. Now it has been seventy years since we have been together. I was deputed to return back to Odisha to help build a new Odisha. Once I completed the Master program, I toured within the US, looking for factories that built fertilizer equipment for six months. At that time Odisha Govt decided not to build a fertilizer factory. Seeing no prospect of return with a secure engagement, I requested Professor Bonilla (from Spain) at Columbia, head of Chemistry Dept, for advice and he asked me to stay back and complete my PhD. He asked me to complete some research for him and I stayed up to create a summary for him that would fund my PhD in Chemical Engineering. Once my PhD was completed, I worked for the Pittsburgh Plate Glass company to study heat transfer through transparent materials like glass. Nalini joined me in the United States while I was working in the Plate Glass Company. We moved from the small private apartment we rented to housing provided by the University where our older son Bijoy was born. We took the Pullman from Buffalo to Los Angeles when we moved with one child, another on the way. At that time there were no Odia families that we knew of either in New York or in Los Angeles. After completing my PhD in 1955, I received an offer from Aerojet General Corporation, where I worked from 1959 to 1973. After completion of PhD, I was engaged in experiments in the

mechanism of transfer of heat through transparent materials like glass. Wanted to join the rocket company. While at Aerojet, Azusa, California, I got citizenship. While it was being done Russians launched Sputnik. Well, I wanted to join the Space program, that worked on manned lunar mission. You must be a citizen to join the program. I changed the student visa to a Resident Visa and become a US Citizen to go to California for a Rocket research company. The company had selected an oxidizer and was looking for a new rocket fuel option. My work at Aerojet led to the selection of Unsymmetrical Dimethylhydrazine (UDMH) as the rocket fuel. At Aerojet, I worked in the classified lunar landing program. I developed rocket fuel for a successful lunar landing. In 1950, their research into the rubber binder had led to much larger engines and then to the development of the Aerobee sounding rocket. Aerobee was the first US-designed rocket to reach space (albeit not in orbit) and completed over 1,000 flights before it was retired in 1985. Aerojet designed and built a total of 1,182 engines for all four incarnations of the Titan rockets, which were used for civilian projects ranging from Gemini's manned flights to solar system explorations including Viking, Voyager, and Cassini. The newly formed US Air Force used Aerojet as the primary supplier on a number of their ICBM projects, including the Titan and Minuteman missiles. A new plant was set up in Sacramento that took over most rocket construction, while the original Azusa offices returned primarily to research. One of Azusa's major projects was the development of the infra-red detectors for the Defense Support Program satellites, used to detect ICBM launches from space. The new research arm was formed as Aerojet Electro-Systems Corp. and a new umbrella organization oversaw the three major divisions, Aerojet General. President Kennedy's challenge to place a man on the Moon by the end of the 1960s led to increased civilian work at Aerojet. Previously, they had repeatedly lost contract bids for large engines for the Saturn and Nova boosters, being designed in the late 1950s, to their rival Rocketdyne, but in the end were selected to develop and build the main engine for the Apollo Command/Service Module. In 1962 they were also selected to design a new upper-stage engine to replace the cluster of five J-2s used on the Saturn second stage in the post-Apollo era, but work was ended sometime in late sixties after it became clear that the public's support for a massive space program was going down. After the success of the lunar landing, the scientific community in the space program started working on a manned mission to Mars using a nuclear rocket. There was significant criticism in the scientific community to put a nuclear rocket in earth's orbit, with heightened risk of nuclear contamination for people on earth in the case of a failure or accident. President Nixon canceled the initiative. At that time, in addition to nuclear work, the Argonne National laboratory had maintained a strong presence in basic research of physics and chemistry. I decided to move to Chicago to work as a scientist at

the Argonne National Laboratory from 1973 to 1995, when I retired. During my tenure at Argonne, I developed components for the Liquid Metal Fast Breeder Reactor (LMFBR) program and developed a system to remove carcinogenic sodium from the breeder reactor. I published close to hundred papers that are a part of the Science and Technology credited references maintained by the US Department of Energy office. After a successful pilot study, I was in the process of productionizing the venture when the program was shut down due to the massive dangers posed by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster in 1986 in the former Soviet Union. My groundbreaking work on "Feasibility of decontamination of LMFBR coolant by low-pressure distillation" was published in the Journal of American Nuclear Society, and my work presented at the 1978 winter meeting of the American Nuclear Society in Washington DC, USA was recognized. I was listed in the Who's Who of Science and Technology, 1985 World events like the launch of the Sputnik convinced him to join the ambitious space program during the 60s. I worked on experiments with the end goal of sending a manned mission to the moon, working on developing liquid fuels for rocket launches. Another inspirational person was my supervisor at Aerojet, from Caltech, Dr. Kazuhiko Sato. I was invited by the United Nations to return to India and advise the fledgling Indian government on building a breeder reactor for the Indian Atomic Research Center. The issue was how to remove sodium isotopes from sodium coolant. I was selected to advise the Nuclear Reactor team at Kalpakkam on safe building of a sodium pump, Sodium Isotope 62 is highly carcinogenic. Since my retirement, I have enjoyed my time reading scientific and trade magazines, stock trading and gardening. I have been associated with the Odisha Society of the Americas in Chicago since the very beginning. I was perhaps the second Odia to come to the United States. I believe that the Odia Society was a significant achievement by the Odia community in the United States. I have attended the first Odia meeting in Chicago in 1981 and Glassboro in 1984. During the early days of Odia society, there were very few Odia families in the United States and everyone knew everyone else. Odia families met at someone's home, had Odia guests whom they had never met, in their homes. Lifetime bonds between families initiated. Perhaps every older generation goes through this nostalgia. But times have changed. We have become a different generation as many new families have come to America and made it their home. We miss the OSA conventions of the early years, so full of life, our life. Then we were poorer, we stayed in inexpensive college residences, cooked our meals together, and had a grand time creating an illusion of being back in Odisha, eating odia food, talking in Odia, and enjoying the organized and disorganized chaos. By 1960 there were about twenty Odias in the US and Canada. It was common practice during those days to go through a printed phone directory and look for Odia surnames and then call

them when you visited a new city in the United States. Usually there is excitement and at the receiving end to hear another Odia voice, followed by a dinner invitation. Odias dispersed in small isolated pockets in the east and west, got to know each other and about each other. One by one, in city after city, the number of Odias in the US and Canada increased. Work on this next generation of fast reactors—clean, resource-efficient, waste-reducing reactors—was halted by Congress in September 1994 as the laboratory's mission was redirected by the Department of Energy into the development of electrometallurgical technology for DOE spent fuel treatment, reactor and fuel cycle safety, and decontamination and decommissioning technology. By then, Argonne's original mission—to provide safe nuclear energy for civilian purposes—had been achieved. Meanwhile, the laboratory was also helping to design the reactor for the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, the U.S.S. Nautilus, which I steamed for more than 513,550 nautical miles (951,090 km). In 1982, the Integral Fast Reactor concept — a revolutionary design that reprocessed its own fuel, reduced its atomic waste and withstood safety tests of the same failures that triggered the Chernobyl and Three Mile Island disasters. In 1994, however, the U.S. Congress terminated funding for the bulk of Argonne's nuclear programs.

Argonne National Laboratory test facilities involved in the conduct of the national LMFBR research and development program. The next generation reactor, the fast breeder reactor was a major initiative in advanced reactor concepts. The design allowed creation of energy from waste—not only its own waste, but also that produced in commercial reactors, as well as plutonium from dismantled nuclear weapons. The passive safety characteristics of metal fueled liquid metal reactors (LMRs) were clearly demonstrated and confirmed in 1986 with the conclusion of the Experimental Breeder Reactor II landmark testing program. Other technical accomplishments included: development of metal fuels for LMRs capable of very high burnup—up to 20 percent; development of electro-metallurgical technology for possible applications to spent nuclear fuels, weapons plutonium, and LMR fuels; and performance of a series of safety-related transient reactor experiments which established the failure mechanisms, failure limits.



Odia Section



ମନ ଭିତରର କଥା



ବିଜ୍ଞାନୀ ଦାସ

ମନ ଭିତରର ଅନେକ କଥା ଅକୁହା ହୋଇ ରହିଯାଇଛି । କେବେ କହି ହେବକି ନା, କିଏ ଜାଣେ? କେବେ ସେ ସମୟ ଆସିବ, କି ସମୟ ଆସିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଜୀବନ ଚାଲିଯିବ, ସେକଥା ବି କହିହେଉନି । ଦେହଟା ଆଜିକାଲି ଏମିତି ହେଉଛି ଯେ, ଆଉ କେତେ ବର୍ଷ ଏମିତି ହୋଇ ଜୀବନଟା ରହିବ, କି କେଉଁ ମୁହୂର୍ତ୍ତରେ କଣ ଘଟିଯିବ ସେକଥା ବି କହିହେଉନି । ଏମିତି ଭାବିଭାବି ଶୋଇପଡ଼ିଥିଲେ ନନ୍ଦା । ହଠାତ୍ ଦେହଟାରେ ଯେମିତି ବିଜୁଳି ମାରିଲା ଭଳି ହେଲା । ଏମିତି କାହିଁକି ହେଉଛି ? ଅତରୁଣୀ ହୋଇ ଅମରକୁ ଡାକ ପକେଇଲେ । ଅମର ରୋଷେଇ ଘରେ ସବୁ ସଫାସଫି କରୁଥିଲେ । ସିଏ ବି ଡରିକରି ଦୌଡ଼ିଆସିଲେ । ପଚାରିଲେ, “କଣ ହେଲା? ଏମିତି ଚିତ୍କାର କଲ କାହିଁକି ?”

ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ପାଟିରୁ କଥା ବାହାରୁନି । ଦେହରେ ବିଜୁଳି ଖେଳି ଯାଉଛି । ଯେମିତି ଲାଗୁଛି କିଏ ଜଣେ ଗରମ ଖତିକା ଫୋଡ଼ି ଦେଉଛି । ଅମରଙ୍କ ମୁହଁକୁ ବଲବଲ କରି ଚାହିଁଲେ । ଅମର ଆତଙ୍କିତ ହୋଇଉଠିଲେ । ନନ୍ଦା କଥା କହିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଥିଲେ । ହେଲେ ପାଟିରୁ କିଛି କଥା ବାହାରୁନି । କଣ କରିବେ ?

ଅମର ୯୧୧ ଡାକିଲେ । ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କର ଏମିତି ହଠାତ୍ ଦେହ ଖରାପ ହୋଇଯିବା ଓ ତାଙ୍କର ୯୧୧ ଡାକିବା ପୂରା ଦେହସୁହା ହୋଇଗଲାଣି । ସେପଟେ ୯୧୧ ନମ୍ବରରେ ଧରିଥିବା ମହିଳା ଜଣକ ଅନେକ କଥା ପଚାରିଗଲେ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଉତ୍ତର ଦେବା ପରେ ୧୫ ମିନିଟ୍ ଭିତରେ ଏମରଜେନ୍ସୀ ଗାଡ଼ି ଆସି ଘର ଆଗରେ ହାଜର ହୋଇଗଲା । ସେଥିରୁ ଦୁଇଜଣ କର୍ମୀ ଆସି ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କୁ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରି ହଠାତ୍ ତାଙ୍କ ଦେହରେ ସାଲାଇନ୍ ଲଗେଇଦେଲେ ଓ ଅନ୍ୟ କର୍ମୀ ମାନେ ଷ୍ଟେଟର୍ ଆଣି ତାଙ୍କୁ ବୋହିବୋହି ନେଇଗଲେ । ସେମାନେ ଯିବା ପରେ ତାଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତ ଔଷଧ ପତ୍ର ଓ କିଛି ନିତିଦିନିଆ ବ୍ୟବହାରୀୟ ଜିନିଷପତ୍ର ପ୍ୟାକ୍ କରି ଅମର ନିଜ ଗାଡ଼ି ଧରି ଏମରଜେନ୍ସୀ ଗଲେ ।

ଏମିତି ପ୍ରାୟ ତିନି ବର୍ଷ ଧରି ଚାଲିଛି । ତା' ପୂର୍ବରୁ ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କର ଏମିତି ବେଳେବେଳେ ଦେହ ଖରାପ ହେଉଥିଲା, କିନ୍ତୁ ସେସବୁ ପୁଣି ଭଲ ହୋଇଯାଉଥିଲା । ବୟସ ହେଲେ ଦେହରେ ହରମୋନ ବଦଳେ । ମାଂସପେଶୀ ସଙ୍କୁଚିତ ହୁଏ । ଶରୀରରେ ନାନା ରୋଗ ବାହାରେ । ସେସବୁ ଜାଣିବା କଥା । ଅନୁଭବର କଥା । ନିଜ ଅନୁଭବ ନ ହେଲେ କଣ ହେଲା, ନିଜ ପିତାମାତାଙ୍କର ବୟସ ଜନିତ ରୋଗରୁ,

ନିଜ ଠାରୁ ବଡ଼ ବୟସ୍କ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଙ୍କ ଅନୁଭବରୁ ସେସବୁ ଜ୍ଞାନ ସହଜରେ ମିଳିଯାଏ । ହେଲେ ଏବେ ନିଜେ ସେସବୁ ଅନୁଭବ କରିବା ଆଉ ଏକ ରକମର କଥା । ତିନି ବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ହଠାତ୍ ନନ୍ଦା ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଲେ । ରକ୍ତଚାପ ଅଧିକ ହୋଇ ରହିଲା । କମିବାର ନାମ ନେଲାନି । ଏମରଜେନ୍ସୀରେ ଯାଇ ଚିକିତ୍ସିତ ହେଲେ । ଦୁଇଦିନ ପରେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିଲେ । ହେଲେ ଘରକୁ ଫେରିବା ଦିନ ରାତିରେ ପୁଣି ସେମିତି ହେଲା । ରକ୍ତଚାପ ବଢ଼ିଗଲା । ପୁଣି ୯୧୧ ଡକାଗଲା ଓ ସିଏ ପୁଣି ଏମରଜେନ୍ସୀରେ ଯାଇ ଆଡମିଟ୍ ହେଲେ । ସେଇଦିନରୁ ଅମରଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ବି ବଦଳିଗଲା । ଡାକ୍ତର ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦେଲେ, “ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ଜଣେ କେହି ସବୁ ସମୟରେ ରହିବା ଦରକାର ।” କିଏ ରହିବ ? ଅମର ଭାବିଲେ । ବଡ଼ ପୁଅ ରବି । ରବିନ୍ଦ୍ର ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ । ଯଦିଓ ସିଏ ଛଅଘଣ୍ଟା ଡ୍ରାଇଭିଙ୍ଗ୍ ଦୂରତାରେ ରହେ, ତେବେ ତାକୁ କଣ ସମୟ ଅଛି ? ନିଜର ଚାକିରି, ପିଲା ଦୁଇଟି; ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ସିଏ କଣ ଆସି ମାଆ ପାଖରେ ରହନ୍ତା, ନା ବାପା, ମା ସେସବୁ ଚାହାନ୍ତେ ? ରବି ଓ ସେ ବୋହୂ କିନ୍ତୁ କହିଲେ, “ବାବା, ତମେ ମାଆଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ଆମ ପାଖକୁ ଚାଲିଆସ । ଆମ ପାଖରେ ରୁହ । ତାହେଲେ ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ କିଛି କିଛି ସମୟ ଦେଇ ମାଆଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ରହିପାରିବୁ ।”

ନନ୍ଦା ସେକଥା କିନ୍ତୁ ପସନ୍ଦ କଲେନି । କହିଲେ, “ସେ ଥଣ୍ଡା ଜାଗାକୁ ଯିବାକୁ କହନାରେ ରବି । ଏଠି ମେରୀଲାଣ୍ଡର ଏ ଥଣ୍ଡାକୁ ଦେଖି ଛାନିଆ ଲାଗୁଛି । ତୁ ପୁଣି ଡାକୁଛୁ ବୋଷ୍ଟନ ଯିବାକୁ । କିଛି ବ୍ୟସ୍ତ ହୋନା । ତୋ ବାବା ଅଛନ୍ତି । ଏଠି ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀ ଅଛନ୍ତି । ଆମେ ଚଳେଇନେବୁ ।”

ସାନ ପୁଅ ଦେବୀ । ଦେବେନ୍ଦ୍ର ପଟ୍ଟନାୟକ । ସିଏ ଯାଇ ରହେ କାଲିଫର୍ଣ୍ଣିଆରେ । ଗତ ଦୁଇବର୍ଷ ତଳେ ତାର ବାହାଘର ହୋଇଥିଲା । ସିଏ ଡାକ୍ତର । ତାର ପିଲାଛୁଆ ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କିଛି ହୋଇନି । ସିଏ ବି ସେମିତି କହିଲା । “ବାବା, ତମେ ଚାକିରି ଛାଡ଼ିଦିଅ । ମାଆଙ୍କୁ ଧରି ଆମ ପାଖକୁ ଚାଲିଆସ ।”

ସେକଥା ବି ନନ୍ଦା କାଟିଦେଲେ । “ନିଜେ ତ ଦିନରାତି ଚବିଶି ଘଣ୍ଟା କାମ କରୁଛି । ତାକୁ କେତେବେଳେ ସମୟ ମିଳିବ ? ମିଛଟାରେ ବୋହୂଟା ଧରି ହେବ । ତାର ପୁଣି ଚାକିରି ଅଛି ନା । ଆମେ କାହିଁକି ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ବୋଧ ହେବା ?”

ସେତେବେଳେ କୋଭିଡ୍-୧୯ର ପ୍ରକୋପ ତଥାପି ଚାଲିଥିଲା । ସମସ୍ତେ ଟୀକା ନେଇଥିଲେ ସତ, ହେଲେ କୋଭିଡ୍‌ର ଆଉ ଏକ ପ୍ରତିରୂପ ଓମିକ୍ରନ୍ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ଛାନିଆ କରିଦେଇଥିଲା । ଯେଉଁ କେତେ ଜଣ ଟୀକା ନେଇ ସାରି ବାହାରକୁ ବାହାରିବାକୁ ସାହସ କରିଥିଲେ, ସେମାନେ ସବୁ ପୁଣି ଘର ଭିତରେ ପଶି ରହିଲେ । ସେ ସମୟରେ ପୁଣି ସ୍ଥାନ ବଦଳେଇ କୁଆଡେ କାହିଁକି ବା ସେମାନେ ଯିବେ ?

ନନ୍ଦା କହିଲେ, “ଏ ଜାଗାରେ ତ ଆମେ ୧୫ ବର୍ଷରୁ ଅଧିକ ରହିଲେଣି । କେତେ ସାଙ୍ଗ, ସାଥୀ, କେତେ ସ୍ମୃତି । ଏଠି ଆମର ସବୁକିଛି ଚିହ୍ନା, ସବୁକିଛି ଜଣା । ଅବଶ୍ୟ କୋଭିଡ୍ ପାଇଁ କେହି ଘରୁ ବାହାରୁ ନାହାନ୍ତି, ତଥାପି ଏ କୋଭିଡ୍ ତ ଦିନେ ଯିବ ନା । ଗବେଷକ ମାନେ ବର୍ଷକ ଭିତରେ ଟୀକା ବାହାର କରିଦେଲେ । ଆଉ ବର୍ଷକ ଭିତରେ ବଟିକା ବି ବାହାର କରିଦେବେ । ଦେଖିବ, ଏ କୋଭିଡ୍ ଭୟ ଦିନେ ଦୂରେଇ ଯିବ । ଆମେ ଏଇଠି ହିଁ ରହିବା ।”

ଏମିତି ଚିନ୍ତା କରି ସେମାନେ ରହିଥିଲେ । ତେବେ ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ଦେହ ଆଉ ଭଲ ହେଲାନି । ବାଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ଅମରଙ୍କୁ ଚାକିରି ଛାଡ଼ିବାକୁ

ପଡ଼ିଲା । ବଡ଼ପୁଅ, ଓ ବୋହୂ ସପ୍ତାହ ଶେଷରେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ଆସି ବୁଲି ଯାଉଥିଲେ ସତ, ହେଲେ ସବୁ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ଅମରଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ହିଁ ପଡ଼ିଲା ।

ନନ୍ଦା ବେଳେବେଳେ ହସନ୍ତି । କୁହନ୍ତି, “ଦେଖ ତ ଅମର । ଆମେମାନେ ଆସି ଏତେ ଦୂରରେ ରହିଲେ । ତମ ବାପା, ବୋଉ କି ମୋ ବାପା, ବୋଉ, ସେମାନଙ୍କର ପରିଶିତ ବୟସରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ପାଖରେ ରହିପାରିନଥିଲେ । ଆମେ ଆଉ କଣ ଆଶା କରିବା ? ଆମ ପିଲାମାନେ ଆସି ଆମ ପାଖରେ ରହିବେ ? ସେକଥା ନୁହେଁ । ତମ ଉପରେ ବୋଝ ହୋଇ ରହିବା ମୋର ପସନ୍ଦ ନୁହେଁ । ତମେ ଭଗବାନଙ୍କୁ ଡାକ, ମୋ ରୋଗ ଭଲ ହୋଇଯାଉ । ମୁଁ ପୁଣି ପୂର୍ବ ତେଜ ପାଏ । ପୂର୍ବ ଭଳି ସକ୍ଷମ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ଆଉ ଯଦି ଭଗବାନ ମତେ ସକ୍ଷମ ନ କରିବେ ବୋଲି ଇଚ୍ଛାକରନ୍ତି, ତେବେ ମତେ ଯେତେ ଶୀଘ୍ର ହେବ, ତାଙ୍କ ପାଖକୁ ନେଇଯାଆନ୍ତୁ ।”

ଅମର ହଠାତ୍ ଅଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହୋଇଯାଆନ୍ତି । ପରେ ପୁଣି ଭାବନ୍ତି, ଅଧୈର୍ଯ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ଲାଭ କଣ ? ଏମିତି ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ କିଛି ନା କିଛି ଚାଲିଛି । ତାଙ୍କ ସାଙ୍ଗ ବିପିନ ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ ପାର୍କିନ୍‌ସନ୍ସ ରୋଗ କବ୍‌ଜା କରିନେଲା । ବୟସ ବେଳେ କେତେ ଦର୍ପ, କେତେ ଦମ୍ଭ, ସବୁ ଯେମିତି ତୁର୍କମାର୍ ହୋଇଗଲା । ତାଙ୍କୁ ହୁଇଲଚେୟାରରେ ବସିଥିବାର ଦେଖି, ନିଜ ଆଖିର ଲୁହକୁ ଅଟକାଇ ପାରିନଥିଲେ ସେ । ସେମିତି ଦେଖ ହୃଦାନନ୍ଦ ବାବୁଙ୍କୁ । ଡାୟାଲିସିସ୍ ଚାଲିଛି । କିଡ୍‌ନୀ କାମ କରୁନି । କୁଆଡେ ଆଉ ଯିବାଆସିବା କରିପାରୁନାହାନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ପତ୍ନୀ ତାଙ୍କର ସେବା କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ତାଙ୍କ ପତ୍ନୀ ବି ଆଉ କୁଆଡେ ଯାଉନାହାନ୍ତି । ସେଇ ଘରଟାରେ ପଡ଼ି ରହିଛନ୍ତି ।

ତେବେ ସେମିତି ଘଟଣା ତାଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ବି ଘଟିଲା । ଏବେ ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ କିଡ୍‌ନୀ ବି ଠିକ୍ ଭାବେ କାମ କରିବା ବନ୍ଦ କରିଦେଲା । ତାଙ୍କର ଡାୟାଲିସିସ୍ ଆରମ୍ଭହେଲା । ପ୍ରଥମେ ପ୍ରଥମେ ସେସବୁକୁ କ୍ଷଣସ୍ଥାୟୀ ଭାବି ନିଜକୁ ସାନ୍ତୁନା ଦେଉଥିଲେ ଅମର । ହେଲେ ସେ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ କ୍ଷଣସ୍ଥାୟୀ ନଥିଲା, ଚିରସ୍ଥାୟୀ ଥିଲା । ଅମରଙ୍କୁ ସବୁ ଯେମିତି ଅନ୍ଧାର ଦିଶୁଥିଲା । ଏସବୁ ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ସିଏ ଏକା ତୁଲେଇ ପାରିବେ ତ ? ଧୀରେଧୀରେ ଜୀବନରେ ସେସବୁ ନିତିଦିନିଆ କାମ ହୋଇଗଲା । ଚାକିରିରୁ ଅବସର ନେଲେ ସିଏ । ଏବେ ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସବୁ ସମୟ ଦେଲେ ।

ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ହିଁ ତ ଜୀବନ । ଦିନ ପରେ ରାତି ହୁଏ, ପୁଣି ରାତି ପରେ ଦିନ । କେବେ ଖରା ହୁଏ ତ କେତେବେଳେ ବର୍ଷା । ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ ଋତୁ ବଦଳି ବର୍ଷା ଋତୁ ହୁଏ । ତାପରେ ଶରତ, ହେମନ୍ତ, ଶୀତ, ବସନ୍ତ ହୋଇ ପୁଣି ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ ହୁଏ । ଏସବୁ ଋତୁ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଦୁଇମାସରେ ହୋଇଯାଏ । ହେଲେ ମଣିଷ ଜୀବନର ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କେତେ କେତେ ସ୍ତର ଦେଇ ଗତି କରେ । ଛୋଟ ଶିଶୁଟିଏ ଅସହାୟ ହୋଇ ଜନ୍ମ ନିଏ । ଧୀରେଧୀରେ ସିଏ ଶିଶୁରୁ କିଶୋର ହୋଇଯାଏ, କିଶୋରରୁ ଯୁବକ, ଯୁବକରୁ ପ୍ରାପ୍ତବୟସ୍କ ଓ ତାପରେ ବୃଦ୍ଧ । ଏସବୁ ପାଇଁ କାହା ଜୀବନରେ ସାଠିଏ ବର୍ଷ ଲାଗେ ତ କାହା ଜୀବନରେ ନବେ ବର୍ଷ ଲାଗେ । ତେବେ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଆସେ ତ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ । କେହିକେହି ଅପମୃତ୍ୟୁର ଶିକାର ହୁଅନ୍ତି । କେହିକେହି ରୋଗରେ ଘାଣ୍ଟି ହୁଅନ୍ତି । କେହିକେହି ଶତାଧିକ ବର୍ଷ ବଞ୍ଚିରୁହନ୍ତି । ହେଲେ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରାଣତ୍ୟାଗ କରିବାକୁ ପଡେ । କେହି ଏ ଧରାଧାମରେ ଅମର ହୋଇ ଚିରକାଳ ରହେ ନାହିଁ ।

ଏସବୁ ନନ୍ଦା ବୁଝନ୍ତି, ହେଲେ ଈଶ୍ଵରଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଅଭିମାନ କରନ୍ତି । ଜଗତର ଈଶ୍ଵର ଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କର ଏତେ ସେବା ସିଏ କରିଛନ୍ତି, ତାଙ୍କର କଣ ଚିକେ ଦୟା ହେଲାନି ? ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏତେ ବଡ଼ ରୋଗ ଦେଇଦେଲେ । ଅମର ବୁଝନ୍ତି, ହେଲେ ବିଶ୍ଵାସ ରଖନ୍ତି, ଏ ପରୀକ୍ଷାରୁ ଈଶ୍ଵର ତାଙ୍କୁ ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଉଦ୍ଧାର କରେଇଦେବେ ।

ନନ୍ଦା ବେଳେବେଳେ ଛିଗୁଲେଇ କରି କୁହନ୍ତି, “ମତେ କେତେ ମାନସିକ ଅଶାନ୍ତି ଦେଇଛି ତ ଭାବ । ଏବେ ଭଗବାନ ତମ ଉପରେ ମୋ ଭାର ସବୁ ଲଦିଦେଲେ । ମତେ ଯେତେ ସନ୍ତାପିତ କରିଛି, ଏବେ ମୋ ପାଇଁ ସେମିତି ସନ୍ତାପିତ ହେବ । ଇଏ ହେଲା ସେଇ ପାପର ଫଳ ।”

“କି ପାପ ମୁଁ କରିଥିଲି କି ? ତମେ ବି ତ ସେମିତି ରୁକ୍ଷ ହେଉଥିଲ । ମୋର ଯେଉଁ ସାଙ୍ଗମାନଙ୍କ ସହିତ ଖରାପ ସଂପର୍କ ହୋଇଥିଲା, ତମେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଘର ସହିତ ସ୍ନେହ ଜୋଡ଼ି ଦେଉଥିଲ । ସେମାନେ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ କଲେ ଯାଇ ହାଜର । ତେଣିକି ସ୍ତ୍ରୀମାନ ଯାଉ କି ନ ଯାଉ, ମିସେସ୍ ନନ୍ଦା ବେଶଭୂଷା ହୋଇ ପହଞ୍ଚିଯିବେ । ଆଉ ମୁଁ ରାଗିନିଆଣି ।”

“ରାଗିଆଣି । ମୁଁ ମନାକରୁନି । ତେବେ ଏମିତି ଅସଭ୍ୟ ଭାଷାରେ ଗାଳିଦେବାର କଣ ଦରକାର ଥିଲା ? ତମେ ମୋ ଚରିତ୍ରକୁ ନେଇ ଏମିତି ଆକ୍ଷେପ କରିଛ ଯେ ମରିଲେ ବି ମୁଁ ତମକୁ କ୍ଷମା କରିପାରିବିନି । କି ବାକ୍ୟେ ଭାଷାରେ ମତେ ଗାଳି ନ ଦେଇଛ ? ସେସବୁର ସତରେ କଣ ଆବଶ୍ୟକତା ଥିଲା ।”

“ତମେ ତ ଜାଣିଛ ମୁଁ ରାଗୀ । ତେଣୁ ତମେ ସେସବୁ ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ ରକ୍ଷା ନ କରିଥିଲେ କଣ ବେଦ ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇଯାଇଥାଆନ୍ତା ? ହେଲେ ମୁଁ ଯାହା ନ ଚାହୁଁଥିବି, ତମେ ସେମିତି କରିବ । ରାଗୀ ନିଆଣି କେମିତି ?”

“ମୁଁ ଜାଣିଛି, ତମେ ଜଣେ ଅତି ଅହଙ୍କାରୀ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି । ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବି ସେଇ ଅହଙ୍କାର ନେଇ ରହିଛ । ରୁହ । ସେ ସମୟରେ ବେଳେବେଳେ ମୁଁ ତମଠାରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଯିବାକୁ ଚାହୁଁଛି । ଏମିତିକି ଆତ୍ମହତ୍ୟା ଭଳି ଜୟନ୍ତ୍ୟ କାମ କରିବାକୁ ବି ମନରେ ଭାବିଛି । ତେବେ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ କଥା ଚିନ୍ତା କରି ସେମିତି କରିନି । ଏବେ ଦେଖ, ଭଗବାନ ମତେ ତମଠାରୁ ଦୂରେଇ ଦେବା ପାଇଁ ନିଜେନିଜେ ବିଚାର କରିଛନ୍ତି । ଯେହେତୁ ତମେ ମତେ ଏତେ ଦୁଃଖ ଦେଇଛ, ତମେ ଏବେ ବାଧ୍ୟ ହୋଇ ମୋର ସେବା କରୁଛ । ମୋ ଲାଗି ଚିନ୍ତିତ ରହୁଛ । ମୋ ଲାଗି ଧ୍ୟାନ ହେଉଛ । ହେଲେ ମତେ ତ ଆଉ ଜାଣିଜାଣି ମାରିଦେବନି । ନହେଲେ ଲୋକେ ବୋଲିବେ କଣ ? ସତ କହିଲି ନା ।”

ଅମରଙ୍କ ରକ୍ତ ତାତି ଉଠେ । ପୁଣି କ୍ଷଣକରେ ଥଣ୍ଡା ପଡ଼ିଯାଏ । ଡାକ୍ତରଙ୍କ କଥା ମନେପଡ଼େ । “ରୋଗୀକୁ ସବୁ ସମୟରେ ଖୁସି ରଖିବାକୁ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରିବେ । ଯେମିତି କୌଣସି କାରଣକୁ ନେଇ ତାଙ୍କ ମନରେ ଅଶାନ୍ତି ସୃଷ୍ଟି ନହୁଏ । ତାହେଲେ ତାଙ୍କର ବଞ୍ଚିବା ପାଇଁ ଆଗ୍ରହ ରହିବ ନାହିଁ । ସେ ରକମର ମାନସିକତାର ପ୍ରଭାବ ତାଙ୍କ ଦେହ ଉପରେ ପଡ଼ିବ, ଯେଉଁଟାକି ତାଙ୍କ ଅବସ୍ଥା ଶୋଚନୀୟ କରିପାରେ ।”

ଅମର ମୁହଁରେ ହସ ପୁଟେଇ କୁହନ୍ତି, “ସେସବୁ ଦିନ ଅଲଗା ଥିଲା ନନ୍ଦା । ଏବେ ଆମେ ବୟସ୍କ । ଏବେ ଆମେ ଅନୁଭବୀ । ଏବେ ଆମର ସଂସାର ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧୀୟ ଜ୍ଞାନ ମାର୍ଜିତ ହୋଇଛି । ତମେ ସେସବୁ ପୁରୁଣା କଥା କାହିଁକି ଭାବୁଛ ?”

“ସେସବୁ କେବଳ ଧରେ ନୁହେଁ କି ଦୁଇଥର ନୁହେଁ । ତମେ ମତେ ବାରମ୍ବାର ବର୍ଷବର୍ଷ ଧରି ମୌଖିକ ଅପବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଆସିଛ ।

ମତେ କେତେବେଳେ ବେଶ୍ୟା କହିଛ ତ, କେତେବେଳେ କାହା ସହିତ ଯୋଡ଼ି ଅନେକ ରକମର ଅସଭ୍ୟ କଥା କହିଛ । ମୁଁ ସେସବୁ ବର୍ଷବର୍ଷ ଧରି ସହିଛି । ବର୍ଷବର୍ଷ ଧରି ମାନସିକ ଅଶାନ୍ତିରେ ଦିନ କାଟିଛି । ହୁଏତ ସେ ମାନସିକ ଅଶାନ୍ତି ପାଇଁ ମୋ ଭିତରର ହରମୋନ ସବୁ ଖରାପ ହୋଇଗଲେ । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ମୋ ଶରୀରର ଯନ୍ତ୍ର ସବୁକୁ ଏମିତି ଖରାପ କଲେ । ତାଲବେଟିସ୍ କୁହ କି ବୁଡ଼ ପ୍ରେସର୍ କୁହ, ସବୁ ସେଇ ହରମୋନର କଥା । ସବୁ ତମର ସେ ଅପବ୍ୟବହାରର କଥା । ମୋ ଦେହ ଖରାପର ମୂଳରେ ତମେ ହିଁ ଅଛ ।”

ମନ କଥା ଖୋଲି କହିଦେଇ ନନ୍ଦା ସ୍ଵସ୍ଥିର ନିଶ୍ଵାସ ମାରିଲେ । ଗୋଟିଏ ସମୟରେ ସିଏ ଏସବୁ କହିପାରୁନଥିଲେ । କହିଥିଲେ, ଅମର ସହିନଥାନ୍ତେ । ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ତାଙ୍କ ଅପବ୍ୟବହାର ଆହୁରି ବଢ଼ିଥାନ୍ତା । ନନ୍ଦା ଏକୁଟିଆ ଛଟପଟ ହେଉଥାନ୍ତେ । ଅଜାଗା ଘା ଦେଖୁ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ କି ଦେଖେଇ ହୁଏ ନାହିଁ । ସ୍ଵାମୀର ଅପବ୍ୟବହାରର କାହାଣୀ କାହାକୁ କହି ହୁଏନାହିଁ । ଏମିତି କି ଅତି ନିଜର କାହା ଆଗରେ ବି ମନ ଖୋଲି ଦେଇପାରନ୍ତିନି ସେ । ନିଜ ପୁଅମାନଙ୍କୁ ଦେଖୁ ଗର୍ବ କରନ୍ତି । ସେମାନଙ୍କୁ ସିଏ ସ୍ନେହ ଶିଖାଇଛନ୍ତି । ଅନ୍ୟ ଜଣେ ମଝିଷକୁ କେମିତି ମଝିଷ ଭଳି ସମ୍ମାନ ଦେବା ଉଚିତ୍, ସେସବୁ ଶିଖାଇଛନ୍ତି । ସେ ମଝିଷ ନିଜ ବନ୍ଧୁ ହେଉ, ସ୍ତ୍ରୀ ହେଉ କି କେଉଁ ସଂପର୍କୀୟ ହେଉ, ରବି ଓ ଦେବୀଙ୍କର ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସୌଜନ୍ୟମୂଳକ ବ୍ୟବହାର ଦେଖୁ ନନ୍ଦା ଖୁସି ହୁଅନ୍ତି । ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ତାଙ୍କ ପୁଅମାନେ ବାପାଙ୍କ ଭଳି ଅହଙ୍କାରୀ କି କ୍ରୋଧୀ ହୋଇନାହାନ୍ତି ।

ମନ ଭିତରେ ଆହୁରି ଅନେକ କଥା ଅଛି । ସେସବୁ କହିବେ କି ନ କହିବେ, କିଛି ଭାବି ପାରନ୍ତିନି ନନ୍ଦା । ଅମର ଯାହା ବି ଥିଲେ କଣ ହେଲା, ଏବେ ବିଚରା ସବୁ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ରୋଷେଇବାସ ଠାରୁ ଆରମ୍ଭ କରି ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କର ପ୍ରତିଦିନର ଯତ୍ନ ନେବା ଦାୟିତ୍ଵ ବି ସମ୍ପନ୍ନ କରୁଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଦିନରାତି ବିଶ୍ରାମ ନାହିଁ । ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସିଏ କୁଆଡ଼େ ଯାଇପାରୁନାହାନ୍ତି । କେତେ ସାଙ୍ଗସାଥୀଙ୍କର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କର ବିବାହ, ବ୍ରତ, ଗ୍ରାହ୍ୟସନ୍ ସବୁ ହେଉଛି । ନନ୍ଦା ତ ଯିବେନି । ଆଉ ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କୁ ଛାଡ଼ି ଅମର କଣ ଯାଆନ୍ତେ ? ସେଥିପାଇଁ ନନ୍ଦା କିଛି କଥା କହିପାରନ୍ତିନି । କହୁକହୁ ଅଟକିଯାଆନ୍ତି । ସେସବୁ କଥା ମନ ଭିତରେ ରହିଯାଏ । “ହଉ, ଯେଉଁ କଥା କହିଲେ ଅନ୍ୟ ଜଣେ ଅଶାନ୍ତି ପାଇବ, ସେକଥା କହି ଲାଭ କଣ ?”

ତେବେ ସେସବୁ କଥା ତାଙ୍କ ମନକୁ ଆନ୍ଦୋଳିତ କରେ ।

ସେଦିନ ଏମରଜେନସୀରେ ତାଲର ତାଙ୍କୁ ଔଷଧ ଦେଇ ତାଙ୍କ ଅସ୍ଥିର ଶରୀରକୁ ସ୍ଥିର କରାଇଲେ । ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ପାଟି ଖୋଲିଲା । କିନ୍ତୁ କ୍ଷୀଣ ସ୍ଵର ହିଁ ବାହାରିଲା । ସ୍ଵର ଆଉ ବଢ଼ିଲାନି । ମନ ଭିତରର ବାକି ସବୁ ଅକୁହା କଥା କଣ ମନ ଭିତରେ ସେମିତି ରହିଯିବ ? ନା, ସିଏ ସେ କଥା ନ କହି ଏ ସଂସାରରୁ ବିଦାୟ ନେବେ ?

କହିଦେବେକି ଶାଶୁ କେମିତି ତାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ନିଷ୍ଠୁର ବ୍ୟବହାର କରିଛନ୍ତି । ତାଙ୍କ ନାଆଁରେ ଲଗେଇକୁଟେଇ କହି ଅମରଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ କାନ୍ଦିଛନ୍ତି । ସେତେବେଳେ ନନ୍ଦା ନୁଆ ବୋହୂ, ରୁପ୍ ରହିଥିଲେ । ଅମର ସେଥିପାଇଁ ଗୋଟିଏ ସପ୍ତାହ ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ସହିତ କଥା କହିନାଆନ୍ତି ଓ ନନ୍ଦା କାନ୍ଦିଛନ୍ତି । ଏକଥା କହିଲେ ଅମରଙ୍କର ନିଜ ମାଆଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଥିବା ସମ୍ମାନ କାଳେ ହ୍ରାସ ହେବ । ସେଇଆ ଭାବି ସିଏ ଏପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ରୁପ୍ ଥିଲେ । ହେଲେ ସେଇଟା ଯେ ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ଦୋଷ ନୁହେଁ ସେସବୁ ପରିଷ୍କାର ହୋଇଯିବା ଉଚିତ୍ ନା ନାହିଁ ।

କହିଦେବେକି ନନ୍ଦା ଯେ ସିଏ କେବେ ବି ଅମରଙ୍କୁ ଲୁଚେଇ ନିଜ ଭାଇକୁ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରରେ ଘର ତୋଳିବା ପାଇଁ ଟଙ୍କା ପଠେଇ ନାହାନ୍ତି ବୋଲି । ବରଂ ସେବର୍ଷ ସେମାନେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଯାଇଥିବା ବେଳେ ଭାଇ ନିଜ ହାତରୁ କେତେକେତେ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିଦେଇଥିଲା । ସେଥିପାଇଁ ନନ୍ଦା ନିଜ ରୋଜଗାରରୁ ୨୦ ହଜାର ଡଲାର ଭାଇ ପାଖକୁ ପଠେଇଥିଲେ । ସେଥର ଅମର ତାଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଅନେକ ରାଗିଥିଲେ । ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କର କଣ ତାଙ୍କ ନିଜ ରୋଜଗାରର ଅର୍ଥ ଉପରେ ଅଧିକାର ନଥିଲା ? ନିଜ ଉପାର୍ଜିତ ଅର୍ଥ ନିଜ ମନ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ କରିବାକୁ ତାଙ୍କର କଣ ଅଧିକାର ନଥିଲା ? ତେବେ ଅମରଙ୍କର ସେଦିନ ତାଙ୍କୁ ଏମିତି ଭଲମନ୍ଦ ଶୁଣେଇବାଟା କଣ ଉଚିତ ହେଲା ? ନନ୍ଦାର ପରିବାରକୁ ଭିକାରୀ ପରିବାର କହି ଆକ୍ଷେପ କରିବାଟା କଣ ଉଚିତ ହେଲା ?

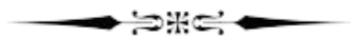
ଘରେ ଅଶାନ୍ତି ନହେଉ । ସେକଥା ଭାବି ନନ୍ଦା ଅନେକ କଥା କହିପାରନ୍ତିନି । ବିଶେଷତଃ କାଳେ ବାପା, ମାଆଙ୍କର ଝଗଡ଼ା ଖବର ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କ ଉପରେ ଖରାପ ପ୍ରଭାବ ପକେଇବ, ସେକଥା ଭାବି ସିଏ ଅନେକ ସହିଯାଆନ୍ତି । ମନକଥା ମନରେ ରଖି ଏକୃଷ୍ଟିଆ ବେଳେ ଠାକୁରଙ୍କ ଆଗରେ ଅଶ୍ରୁ ଝରାନ୍ତି । “ଅମରଙ୍କୁ ସଦ୍‌ବୁଦ୍ଧି ଦିଅ ପ୍ରଭୁ । ତାଙ୍କୁ ଜ୍ଞାନ ମାର୍ଗ ଦେଖାଅ । ମନରେ ଅହଙ୍କାର ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ସହାନୁଭୂତି ଜାଗ୍ରତ କରାଅ ।”

ସାରା ଜୀବନ ସିଏ ଅମରଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅସୁଖୀ ଦାମ୍ପତ୍ୟ ଜୀବନ ବିତାଇଛନ୍ତି । କହିଦେବେକି ସିଏ ଯେ ଯେତିକି ଦିନ ଜୀବନ ଧରି ରହିବେ, ଅମର ନିଜ ବ୍ୟବହାରକୁ ମାର୍ଜିତ କରନ୍ତୁ; ଅନ୍ୟମାନଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି କଠୋର ନ ହୋଇ ମିଷ୍ଟଭାଷୀ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ । ତେବେ ନନ୍ଦାର ଆତ୍ମା ତାଙ୍କୁ ପରପାରିରେ କ୍ଷମା କରିଦେବ । ହେଲେ ଏ ଜୀବ ଥିବା ଯାଏ, ସେସବୁ ସମ୍ଭବ ନୁହେଁ ।

ଏତେ କଥା ସିନା ମନରେ ଭାବୁଥିଲେ, ହେଲେ ଯେତେବେଳେ ଅମର ଆସି ତାଙ୍କ ହାତ ଧରି ପଚାରିଲେ, “କିଛି କହିବ ?”, ସେତେବେଳେ ନନ୍ଦାଙ୍କ ପାଟିରୁ କିଛି ଆଉ ବାହାରିଲାଣି । ସିଏ କେବଳ କାନ୍ଦିବାକୁ ଲାଗିଲେ । କ୍ଷୀଣ କଣ୍ଠରେ କହିଲେ, “ମୁଁ ଆଉ ବଞ୍ଚିବିନି । ମୋ ବିନା ତମେ ଏକା କେମିତି ରହିବ ?”

ଅମରଙ୍କ ଆଖିରେ ଲୁହ ଜକେଇ ଆସିଲା ।

ଏହାର କିଛି କ୍ଷଣ ପରେ ନନ୍ଦା ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଆଖି ବୁଜିଦେଲେ । ତାଙ୍କ ମନ ଭିତରର କଥା ମନ ଭିତରେ ସବୁଦିନ ପାଇଁ ଅକୁହା ରହିଗଲା ।



**May the light of
Deepavali
always shine
bright on your
days.**

