London Durgotsav 2025

"মা"

ArcelorMittal

London Durgotsav Committee (Registered Charity)

Swiss Cottage Library, 88 Avenue Road, London NW3 3HA

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु शक्ति-रूपेण संस्थिता।

नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः॥

Painting Courtesy: Swagata Chowdhury, New Jersey, USA

Chief Patron: Lakshmi N Mittal

Lakshmi N. Mittal became executive chairman of ArcelorMittal in February 2021. He was previously chief executive officer of ArcelorMittal. He is a renowned global businessman who serves on the boards of various advisory councils, and an active philanthropist engaged in the fields of education and child health.

Mr.Mittal was born in Sadulpur in Rajasthan in 1950. He graduated from St Xavier's College in Kolkata, where he received a bachelor of commerce degree. Having completed his education in India, Mr. Mittal began his career working in his family's steelmaking business in India before moving to Indonesia in 1976 to set up a small steel company that over time grew to become ArcelorMittal, the world's leading steel and mining company and one of the foremost industrial companies in the world. He is widely recognised for the role he played in restructuring the steel industry towards a more consolidated and globalised model, pursuing and successfully integrating many acquisitions in North America, South America, Europe, South Africa and the CIS. Today ArcelorMittal continues to be the largest and most global steel manufacturer.

In 2004, Mittal Steel was founded following the merger of Ispat International and LNM Holdings, and the simultaneous acquisition of International Steel Group, becoming came the world's leading steel producer. Shortly after, in 2006, Mittal Steel launched an ambitious bid to merge with Arcelor, creating ArcelorMittal.

Mr. Mittal's contribution to business and global industry has been widely recognised. In 1996 he was awarded 'Steelmaker of the Year' by New Steel in the United States and in 1998 the 'Willy Korf Steel Vision Award' by World Steel Dynamics for outstanding vision, entrepreneurship, leadership and success in global steel development. He was named Fortune magazine's 'European Businessman of the Year' in 2004 and 'Business Person of the Year' by the Sunday Times, 'International Newsmaker of the Year' by Time Magazine and 'Person of the Year' by the Financial Times in 2006 for his outstanding business achievements. In January 2007, Mr. Mittal was presented with a Fellowship from King's College London, the college's highest award.

In 2007 he also received the Dwight D. Eisenhower Global Leadership Award, the Grand Cross of Civil Merit from Spain and was named AIST Steelmaker of the year. In January 2008, Mr. Mittal was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, India's second highest civilian honour, by the President of India. In September 2008, Mr. Mittal was chosen for the third "Forbes Lifetime Achievement Award." In October 2010, he was awarded the World Steel Association's medal in recognition of his services to the Association as its Chairman and also for his contribution to the sustainable development of the global steel industry. In January 2013, Mr. Mittal was

awarded a Doctor Honoris Causa by the AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow, Poland. In April 2018, Mr. Mittal was awarded the Gary Medal by the American Iron

and Steel Institute award recognising his contribution to the steel industry. In addition to his role at ArcelorMittal, Mr. Mittal is an active participant of various boards and advisory councils. He is chairman of the board of Aperam and a member of the board of Goldman Sachs. He previously sat on the board of Airbus N.V. He is a member of the Foreign Investment Council in Kazakhstan, the National Investment Council of Ukraine, the Global CEO Council of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the World Economic Forum's International Business Council, the World Steel Association's Executive Committee, the European Round Table of Industrialists, the Indian School of Business and is a member of the board of Trustees of Cleveland Clinic.

Mr. Mittal, with his wife Usha Mittal, is also an active philanthropist. In 2017 the Mittal family made a significant gift to Harvard University, where Mr. Mittal is a member of the Global Advisory Council, to support the Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute at Harvard University. The Mittal family has also made important gifts to the Great Ormond Street Hospital, supporting the Mittal Children's Medical Centre which formally opened in January 2018, and UNICEF, specifically on the topic of child malnutrition in India. Mr. Mittal and his wife Usha Mittal have a son, Aditya Mittal (who is CEO of ArcelorMittal), and a daughter, Vanisha Mittal Bhatia (who is a Director of ArcelorMittal). Mr. Mittal is a citizen of India.

Painting: Sohini Roy (16 years)

About Us

London Durgotsav Committee, a charitable organisation established in 1963 by few pioneer dedicated Bengalees with the help of late Shri Tusar Kanti Ghosh, doyen of Bengalee journalism who edited Jugantar and Amrita Bazar Patrika, made possible for devotees in London and around areas to have the priviledge of Durga Puja celebration over the past 60 years. With dedicated hard work and devotion, team of Dr. Ananda Gupta (Chairman) under Chief Patron Shri Lakshmi N Mittal, 62nd year of Durga Puja was celebrated on 26 – 30 September 2025 at Swiss Cottage Library in London. Consistent support from London Borough of Camden, various NRI Dignitaries and guidance of senior Bengali community members, London Durga Puja has become most anticipated cultural event not only in Bengali community but also among other communities. It was a 5-day Puja celebration with various art and cultural activities showcasing heritage of West Bengal, daily Arati followed by Bhog to all attendees. This year around 30K people have visited London Durga Puja celebrations over the five days and we remain grateful for your support to make it a roaring success.

Charitable objects

A) Advancement of education in Bengali culture, heritage and traditions by hosting annual festivals, workshops and exhibitions.

B) Advancement of Hindu religion for the benefit of public through holding of prayer meetings, lectures, public celebration of religious festivals, producing and / or distributing literature on Hinduism to enlighten others about Hindu religion.

MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN

Dear All,

We hope you and your loved ones are keeping safe and well.

London Durgotsav Committee (Registered Charity) like previous years celebrated the biggest Hindu Festival Durga Puja on 26 – 30 September 2025 in Camden at Swiss Cottage Library, London. Durga Puja is a radiant celebration marking the triumph of good over evil.

We feel proud that Durga Puja has been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, thereby promoting the protection of knowledge and skills necessary for traditional artisanship and cultural practices transmitted from generation to generation, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events.

London's strength lies in its diversity. At Camden Durga Puja, we immerse ourselves in the cultural richness and ethereal ambience, creating unforgettable memories and witness how the tapestry of Bengali culture and tradition unfolds in London.

We celebrated Durga Puja at Camden showcasing different cultural events to commemorate:

- Mahishasura Mardini Dance Drama – The tale that narrates the triumph of good over evil.
- Borsha Mongol, with songs composed by Rabindranath Tagore - the first Indian / Non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.
- Celebrating the lives of the great five poets (পঞ্চ কবি) of Bengal - Rabindranath Tagore, Atulprasad Sen, Rajnikanto Sen, Kaji Nazrul Islam and D L Roy through a story that knits in itself a twining aroma of cross links of flavours of these five timeless poets and how they lived and thrived almost during the same years between 1880-1960.
- Noti Binodini – a powerful Bengali play was staged on Maha Saptami that dramatized the life of Binodini Dasi, a pioneering actress of 19th century Kolkata. Born into a courtesan household, she defied societal norms to become a celebrated figure in Bengali theatre. The play traced her meteoric rise, her collaboration with legendary dramatist Girish Chandra Ghosh, and her instrumental role in founding the iconic Star Theatre. It also explored her early retirement and the emotional toll of navigating fame in a patriarchal society and her attainment of spiritual salvation after meeting the Bengali saint, Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa Dev.

The Goddess Durga exists in different reincarnations which include Shakti, Kali, Gauri, Uma, Parvati, Chandi, Ambika, Lalita, Bhavani, Bhagvati, Java, Rajeshwari and other forms. The name "Durga" means the 'invincible'. Devi Durga symbolizes freedom from all evils like injustice, cruelty, hatred, ego and other forms of pain and suffering. Let us all join together and invoke the Mother Goddess Durga, where Good shall always prevail.

Wishing you all the joys of the season and a happy and prosperous 2025.

Best wishes,

Dr Ananda Gupta

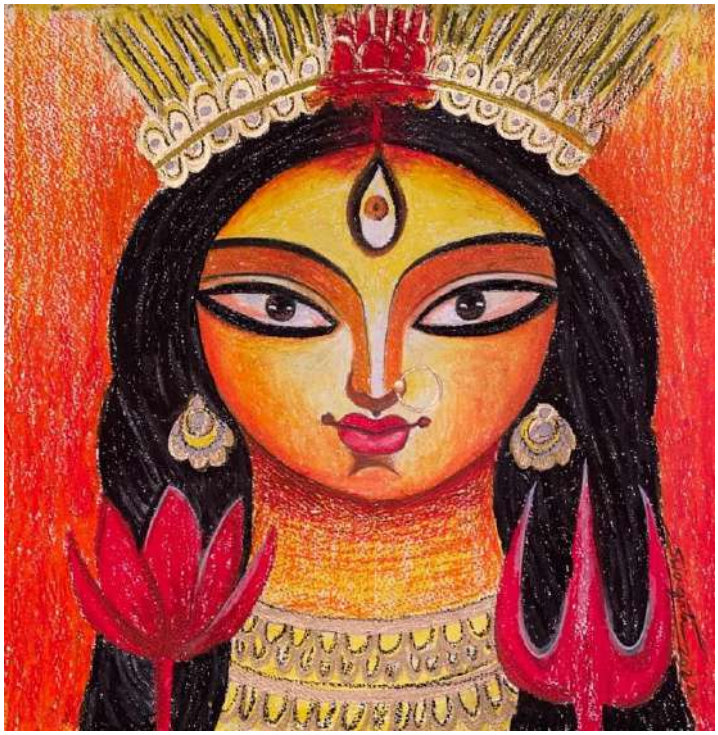
Chairman

London Durgotsav Committee

With best compliments from:

London Durgotsav Committee 2025

Chief Patron	Mr Lakshmi Mittal
Chairman	Dr. Ananda Gupta



Editorial Team:

Chairman:	Dr. Ananda Gupta
Editorial Board	Dr. Moumita Sarkar
	Anindita Sharma
Cover Page:	Arpa Mukhopadhyay, Kolkata, India

Painting: Swagata Chowdhury, New Jersey USA

With best compliments from:

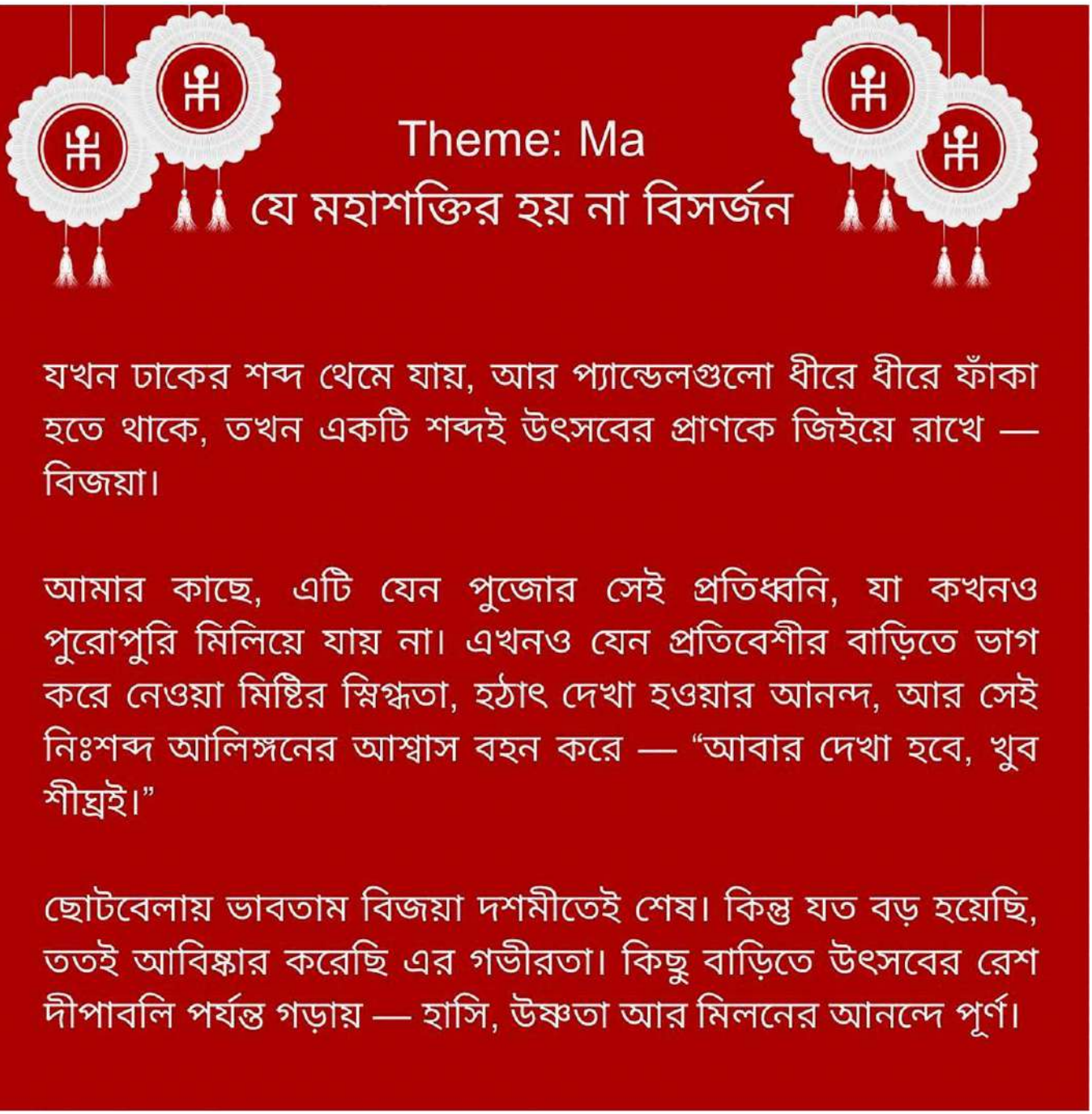
With Best Compliments From:


LONDON DURGOTSAV COMMITTEE
DAKSHINAYAN UK
Camden Durga Puja 2025
Theme: Ma / Mother
যে মহাশক্তির হয় না বিসর্জন

Theme: Ma / Mother
যে মহাশক্তির হয় না বিসর্জন

Ma - the Eternal Presence is the profound theme for Camden Durga Puja 2025, celebrating the unconditional love, strength, and guidance embodied in the Divine Mother. This theme honours Goddess Durga as the universal Mother, protecting, nurturing, and empowering all who seek her blessings. From the rhythmic beats of the dhaak to the heartfelt pushpanjali, every ritual will echo the sentiment of Ma / Mother: our source of strength and solace.

Camden Durga Puja 2025 will feature artistic depictions of motherhood across cultures, symbolizing the nurturing power of Goddess Durga in every home and heart. The theme will also inspire conversations on women's empowerment, reinforcing the idea that every woman carries within her the essence of Ma / Mother.


Theme: Ma
যে মহাশক্তির হয় না বিসর্জন
যখন ঢাকের শব্দ থেমে যায়, আর প্যান্ডেলগুলো ধীরে ধীরে ফাঁকা হতে থাকে, তখন একটি শব্দই উৎসবের প্রাণকে জিইয়ে রাখে — বিজয়া।
আমার কাছে, এটি যেন পুজোর সেই প্রতিধ্বনি, যা কখনও পুরোপুরি মিলিয়ে যায় না। এখনও যেন প্রতিবেশীর বাড়িতে ভাগ করে নেওয়া মিষ্টির স্নিগ্ধতা, হঠাৎ দেখা হওয়ার আনন্দ, আর সেই নিঃশব্দ আলিঙ্গনের আশ্বাস বহন করে — "আবার দেখা হবে, খুব শীঘ্রই।"
ছোটবেলায় ভাবতাম বিজয়া দশমীতেই শেষ। কিন্তু যত বড় হয়েছি, ততই আবিষ্কার করেছি এর গভীরতা। কিছু বাড়িতে উৎসবের রেশ দীপাবলি পর্যন্ত গড়ায় — হাসি, উষ্ণতা আর মিলনের আনন্দে পূর্ণ।

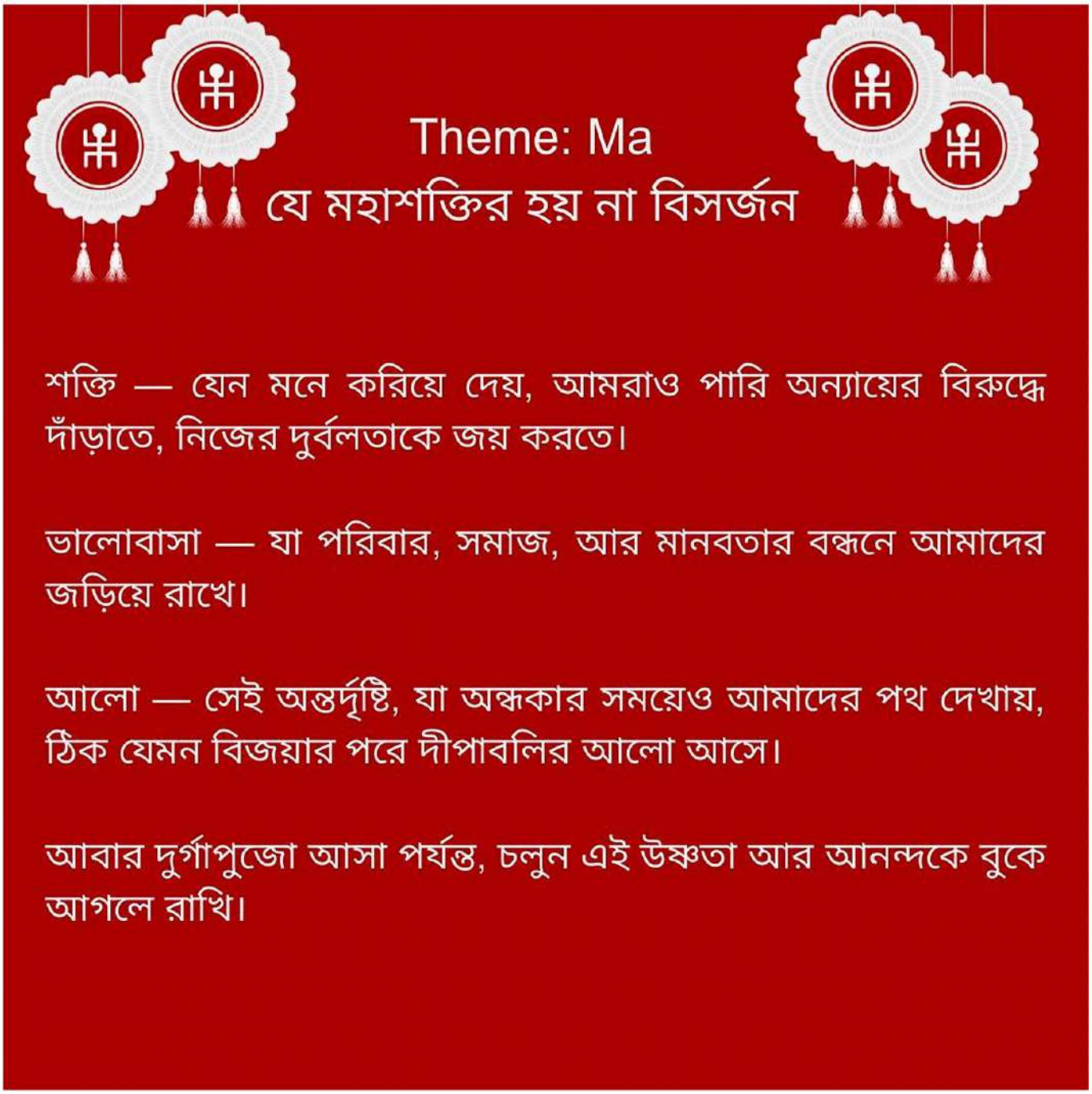
Theme: Ma

যে মহাশক্তির হয় না বিসর্জন

আর সেই সিঁদুর খেলা? আজ যা আমরা প্যান্ডেলে দেখি, তার শুরু হয়েছিল গৃহকোণে — যেখানে নারীরা সিঁদুর বিনিময় করতেন ভালোবাসা, সুরক্ষা আর আশীর্বাদের প্রতীক হিসেবে।

পুজোর আনুষ্ঠানিকতা শেষ হলেও, মায়ের অস্তিত্ব যেন আমাদের হৃদয়ে থেকে যায় — এক অদৃশ্য অথচ অনুভবযোগ্য উপস্থিতি। তিনি আর কেবল মূর্তিতে সীমাবদ্ধ নন, বরং হয়ে ওঠেন আমাদের চেতনার অংশ। তাঁর সেই স্নেহময় দৃষ্টি, আশীর্বাদের হাত, আর মাতৃসুলভ আশ্বাস যেন প্রতিটি মুহূর্তে আমাদের সঙ্গী হয়ে থাকে।

যা আমাদের মনে করিয়ে দেয় শক্তি, ভালোবাসা, আর সেই আলোর কথা — যা উৎসব শেষ হলেও পথ দেখায়। মা দুর্গা কেবল এক দেবী নন, তিনি এক প্রতীক — শক্তির, মমতার, আর আশার। যখন জীবনের পথে আমরা ক্লান্ত হই, বিভ্রান্ত হই, তখন তাঁর স্মরণ আমাদের মনে সাহস জোগায়।


Theme: Ma
যে মহাশক্তির হয় না বিসর্জন
শক্তি — যেন মনে করিয়ে দেয়, আমরাও পারি অন্যায়ের বিরুদ্ধে দাঁড়াতে, নিজের দুর্বলতাকে জয় করতে।
ভালোবাসা — যা পরিবার, সমাজ, আর মানবতার বন্ধনে আমাদের জড়িয়ে রাখে।
আলো — সেই অন্তর্দৃষ্টি, যা অন্ধকার সময়েও আমাদের পথ দেখায়, ঠিক যেমন বিজয়ার পরে দীপাবলির আলো আসে।
আবার দুর্গাপুজো আসা পর্যন্ত, চলুন এই উষ্ণতা আর আনন্দকে বুকে আগলে রাখি।

Dakshinayan UK

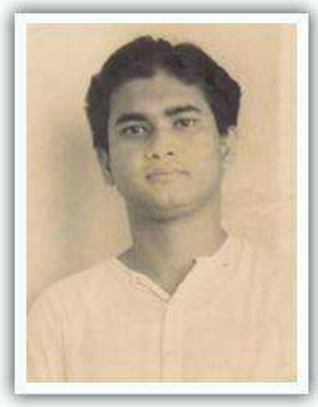
“Where words fail, music speaks”

MUSIC penetrates almost every part of our lives: our rest, our entertainment, our education, and our worship. Throughout history, it has celebrated the triumphs and tragedies of life. As Plato said, music “gives soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination”. Music both shapes and reflects society. Dancers follow its beat; protesters use it to find their voice. It can promote ideals -- like peace and solidarity -- but it can also prepare armies for battle. It is part of almost every important personal and collective moment.

Rhythm and pitch can be expressed as mathematical formulae; and musicians know the techniques by which they produce a certain sound. But no scientist or musician can explain the power that music has over our emotions. That, surely, is what another Greek writer had in mind, who said that song is a divine gift from God. In a world of diversity where often values clash, music leaps across language barriers and unites people of quite different cultural backgrounds. And so, through music, all peoples can come together to make the world a more harmonious place.

(Source: Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s introductory remarks at the lecture on “Why Music Matters” by Professor Leon Botstein in New York on 8 November 2004)

About Dakshinee



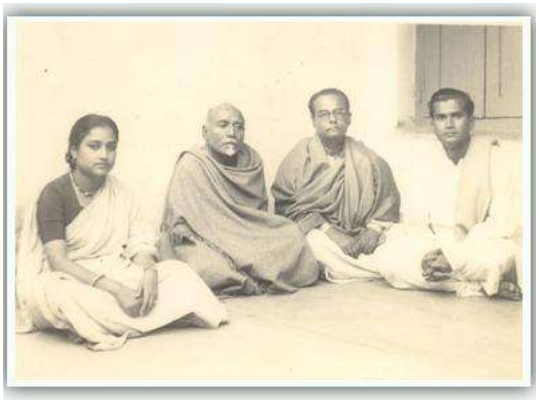
Introduction

Founded in 1948 by Shri Suvo Guha Thakurta with the blessings of Rathindranath Tagore and Sailajaranjan Majumdar, it had Subinoy Roy, Suchitra Mitra, Sunil Kumar Roy and Kamala Basu among the first batch of teachers.

Suvo Guha Thakurta, a young, ardent devotee of Rabindrasangeet, used to frequent soirees held at Santiniketan and at the Brahmo Samaj, from the age of eighteen. His close association with Indira Devi Choudhurani, Sailajaranjan Majumdar, Kanika Bandopadhyay, Arundhati Devi led to numerous lessons in Rabindrasangeet under the tutelage of the first two.

Sailajaranjan had once expressed to Suvo Tagore’s lament that his music was increasingly getting limited to Santiniketan and the Brahmo Samaj, and not reaching the wide audience it deserved to do. Sailajaranjan expressed a wish to Suvo that some measure be taken whereby Rabindrasangeet could be brought to the Bengali masses. It had been Tagore’s firm belief

that a day would come when Bengalis would recognize and appreciate the centrality of his songs in their lives. Henceforth committed to the cause and determined to see results, Suvo, after a few years of struggle, founded Gitabitan on the 8th of December, 1941 at a rented house in Bhowanipore. In no time it was flourishing as a Rabindrasangeet institution. However, due to differences in opinion regarding its functioning, Suvo Guha Thakurta dissociated himself from it in 1947 and founded Dakshinee on the 8th of May, 1948, at 132, Rashbehari Avenue.



Dakshinee took off with only 12 students on its rolls and by 1955 had 600. It moved into its current premises at 1, Deshapriya Park West on 16th Oct., 1955 ceremonially inaugurated by Smt. Chitralekha Siddhanta, better known as the 'Nightingale of Bengal' at the time.

Dakshinee's dance section named 'Nrityakala Kendra' was founded in 1950 with Smt. Seba Mitra as in-charge, at the junction of Lansdowne Road and Jatin Das Road.

Smt. Seba Mitra

1950-60: From its very inception Dakshinee had four functioning sections viz. the School, Dramatic, Cultural and Publication sections. To the Dramatic Section it owed pioneering enterprises between '50 and '60 such as scripting and staging Tagore short stories like 'Haldar-Goshthi' 'Noshtoneer', 'Rashmonir Chhele', while the Cultural Section produced works such as 'Shyama', 'Phalguni' and 'Arupratan'.

First Unit of Dakshinee

The same period saw the landmark event the Triennial Tagore Music Conference in the years '51, '54, '57 and '60.

It was organized by Dakshinee with the assistance of AIR who came forward to broadcast the sessions live to reach the masses. With over a hundred aspiring and established artists taking part, these sessions were aimed at educating the listener and the learner about the nature and variety of Tagore's musical compositions.

1960-'70 This period marked the Tagore centenary in '61 which Dakshinee celebrated on a massive scale. The whole of Deshapriya Park was taken up and divided into 3 sections the 'mela' ground, a food court and the main performing arena. Apart from Dakshinee, many renowned theatre-groups and artists performed in this 22-day long festival.

Uday Sankar & Amala Sankar & Child Dancer

In 1962 Dakshinee went to Mumbai to raise money for the Bengali High School, Dadar, and presented ‘Phalguni’ at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, and donated Rs. 45,000 to the school.

Between 1962 and ’72 Dakshinee’s student strength crossed the 1,500 mark - an unmistakable sign of the growing awareness and appreciation of Tagore music, thereby triumphing Dakshinee’s objective and motivating it to further feats.

IDEOLOGY:

Exclusively practising and upholding Tagore music as a pure and high form of art, and imbibing and spreading a love for it in the hearts of people, especially in the face of diverse influences, remains till date, the expressed ideology of Dakshinayan UK.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To promote Bengali culture and heritage in the UK through Tagore’s music.

2. To increase awareness of cultural, religious and social values in people belonging to the Bengali Community in / around London.

3. To impart feeling of love, mutual respect and universal fraternity among people by hosting shows, music concerts in and / or around London.

DAKSHINEE: GLOBAL AFFILIATIONS

Since 1988 Dakshinee had been receiving requests from ex-students abroad for affiliation which finally fructified in 1997 in ‘Nupur’ the first affiliated unit in London, followed by ‘Rabisikha’ in north London and ‘Dakshinayan’ in South London, ‘Rabiprobash’ in Toronto, ‘Kahlar’ in Washington DC and ‘Uttarayan’ in New Delhi.

Dr Ananda Gupta is the Principal of Dakshinayan UK.

Dakshinayan UK is the cultural wing of registered charity, London Durgotsav Committee.

Website: www.londonpuja.co.uk

Principal's Message

Music education in the United Kingdom comprises an expansive constellation of people, programs, and ideas. Although the numerous organizations whose purpose is to promote teaching and learning of music may be perceived as a tacit confederation—loosely defined by a commonly held belief that music is good and worthy of support—teachers, performers, composers, publishers, presenters, manufacturers, scholars, and researchers align themselves to form disparate constituencies that often have little to say to one another. The institution's design was created to blur limiting distinctions to the greatest extent possible, not only within music, but also between music and other disciplines in the community.

Music inheres in the human experience, and although the surface features of music activities may effectively disguise the commonalities of music across ages, cultures, genres, and media, there exists a common set of principles that underlies all music teaching and learning. The goals of music education at all levels of instruction express a different view, one that values connoisseurship, active participation, and literacy. Far from devaluing the music of popular culture, this view insists that the full potential of music to enrich human lives reaches beyond passive listening and beyond a narrow bandwidth of music. Music teaching is in some respects—in many respects—a remarkably successful enterprise. Many students of music learn to sing and play and improvise and compose and think with remarkable skill, fluency, expressiveness, and creativity.

In other respects, music teaching falls far short of its potential. Many other students engage in music study for a time, either voluntarily, under parental duress, or as part of a mandated curriculum. The goals of music education at their best honour the substance and relevance of diverse music while aspiring to engender levels of sophistication that come only through participating in all of the activities of music: listening, singing, playing, improvising, composing, dancing. Through interdisciplinary collaborations that closely examine the processes of knowledge acquisition and skill development in music.

Dakshinayan UK seeks not only to contribute to the enrichment of a musically vital society but also to deepen our fundamental understanding of how people learn.

Dakshinayan Kids

Singing and music play an important role in our culture. You'll find music present in many aspects of our lives: theatre, television, movies, worship, holidays, celebrations, government and military ceremonies. At home, music can become part of our family culture – a natural part of our everyday experiences.

From birth, parents instinctively use music to calm and soothe children to express their love and joy and to engage and interact. Parents can build on these natural instincts by learning how music can impact child development, improve social skills, and benefit kids of all ages.

The kids' section of Dakshinayan is under the governing principles and strict academic curriculum of Dakshinayan UK.

Music and the Brain: The Benefits of Music

A 2016 study at the University of Southern California's Brain and Creativity Institute found that musical experiences in childhood can actually accelerate brain development, particularly in the areas of language acquisition and reading skills. According to the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation (NAMM Foundation), learning to play an instrument can improve mathematical learning and even increase SAT scores.

But academic achievement isn't the only benefit of music education and exposure. Music ignites all areas of child development and skills for school readiness: intellectual, social and emotional, motor, language, and overall literacy. It helps the body and the mind work together. Exposing children to music during early development helps them learn the sounds and meanings of words. Dancing to music helps children build motor skills while allowing them to practice self-expression. From the pure pleasure of listening to soothing sounds and rhythmic harmonies, to gaining new language and social skills, whatever the setting – a quiet room at home with family, a large grassy field filled with people, or a busy classroom – music can enliven and enrich the lives of children and the people who care for them.DAKSHINAYAN KIDS under DAKSHINAYAN UK plays a pivotal role in imbibing music in the minds and hearts of children in the UK.

Painting Courtesy: Sreeja Roy, Age: 16 years (India)

With best compliments from:

With best compliments from:

Our Charity Partner

CHARITY PARTNER

CAMDEN DURGA PUJA 2025

icandance
believe it

(Registered Charity Number: 1137695)

To find out more, visit:
https://icandance.org.uk

Cllr. Eddie Hanson
Mayor of Camden

Mayor of Camden Cllr Eddie Hanson's JustGiving Page

DONATE

icandance is a creative, therapeutic community that caters for the needs of disabled children, young people, and their families aged 4 to 25 years old. The charity offers a specialised approach which enables and empowers through dance and performance.

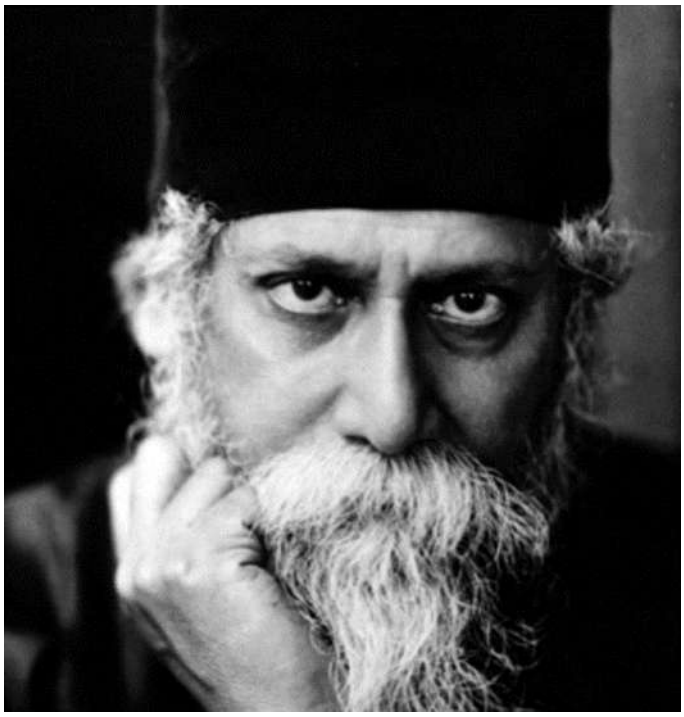
Join us for an unforgettable day of giving and community with The Worshipful Mayor of Camden's chosen charity for 2025/26 at Camden Durga Puja 2025 on 26 - 30 September.

Let's come together and make a difference in the lives of those who need it most. Your support is very important!

www.londonpuja.co.uk Swiss Cottage Library, London

Tagore, Gitanjali and the Nobel Prize

- **Dr Ananda Gupta**
- **Mainak Roy**



Tagore felt "homesick for the wide world." Further, he was constantly struggling to overcome the barriers of language. He thought that the Nobel Prize awarded by the Swedish Academy "brought the distant near, and has made the stranger a brother."Rabindranath Tagore, in a letter to E.J. Thompson (1886 -1946), wrote in 1916, " I feel homesick for the wide world."

A few years before his death, he criticized his own poetry for not being universal in expression, arguing that his paintings had rather overcome the barriers of language. It was likely that Tagore, a seeker of universal concord, would not have been satis□ed in restricting himself to an audience in the colonial, undivided Bengal where he was born and raised in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Rabindranath, who translated Shakespeare's Macbeth at the age of thirteen, turned out to be prolific bilingual writer of his time often taking pleasure in translating his own works into English It was in June 1912 that Rabindranath desired to share the English translations of his poems with his British painter friend William Rothenstein (1872-1945) in London, (Rothenstein later went on to become the Principal of the Royal College of Art).

A leather case, containing the translated manuscript entrusted to Tagore's son Rathindranath (1888 -1961), was discovered to be missing. Rushing to the Left –Luggage Office of the British underground, Rathindranath managed to retrieve the baggage that he had left in the train by mistake while getting down at the Charing Cross tube station, Rathindranath wrote in his autobiography, "I have often wondered what shape the course of events might have taken if the manuscript of Gitanjali had been lost due to my negligence."

The recovered translations came to be published in the form of a book Gitanjali (Song Offerings), on 1 November, 1912 by the India Society of London with an introduction by the English poet W.B. Yeats (1865 - 1939).In 1910, Tagore published a book of poems in Bengali titled Gitanjali. By that time he had established himself as a poet, an essayist, novelist, short story writer, a composer of numerous songs, and a unique educator with an experimental school for children at Santiniketan. He underwent a number of personal tragedies by the time Gitanjali was published. Tagore lost his mother Sarada Devi (1875), adored sister – in – law Kadambari (1884), wife Mrnalini(1902), second daughter Renuka (1903), father Debendranath (1905), and youngest son Samindranath (1907) within a short span of thirty –two years. This experience with death re□ned his sensibilities and gave him the impetus to consider life in its

contrasting realities with joy and wonder In the beginning of 1912, Tagore become seriously ill.

Cancelling a planned visit to England, he went to his ancestral home in Silaidah (now in Bangladesh) on the banks of the river Padma for a change, where he translated some of his poems from their original version in Bengali. After his recovery he sailed for England in May 1912, without any specific mission, with the mind of a wayfaring poet, primarily obeying his doctor's advice. During his long sea voyage to England, he continued his experiments with translation presumably with a desire and wider horizon. Before 1912, Tagore had translated only a couple of his poems.William Rothenstein, who knew Rabindranath since his visit to India during 1910 – 1911, introduced Tagore and his poetry to his illustrious circle of friends including W.B. Yeats, Thomas Sturge Moore(1870-1944), Ernest Rhys (1859-1946), Ezra Pound (1885-1972), May Sinclair (or, Mary Amelia St. Clair, 1863- 1946), Stopford Brooke (1832-1916) among many others.

They were instantly carried away with the mystic vision and rhetoric splendor of Tagore's poetry. Yeats suggested minor changes in the prose translations of the Gitanjali songs. Speaking on the charm of Gitanjali, Yeats wrote in his introduction:"…These prose translations have stirred my blood as nothing has for years… I have carried the manuscript of these translations with me for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants, and I have often had to close it lest stranger would see how much it moved me."While the Bengali Gitanjali had one hundred and eighty-three poems, the English version contained one hundred and three poems from ten previously published anthologies including fifty three poems from its Bengali namesake.

It was due to Rothenstein's efforts that the India Society of London brought out these translations as a book. A limited edition of seven hundred and fifty copies was printed, among which two hundred and fifty copies were for sale. The book was received with much enthusiasm in England and the Macmillan Press of London did not miss the opportunity of buying its rights, publishing ten subsequent editions of the title within nine months between March and November, 1913. While the Bengali Gitanjali was brought out without any dedication, Tagore dedicated his first English anthology of poems to Rothenstein as a token of their friendship that lasted till the death of the poet in 1941.

Tagore left England in October, 1912 for America before his English Gitanjali could be published and returned to India in September,1913. Ezra Pound and Harriet Monroe (1860 - 1936) took the initiative of publishing six poems of Tagore in the prestigious American magazine Poetry with a note by Pound in December, 1912. Gitanjali received wonderful reviews in some of the leading newspapers and literary magazines includingThe Times Literary Supplement, Manchester Guardian, and The Nation among others, shortly after the publication of the book.The British litterateur Thomas Sturge Moor, in his individual capacity as the Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom recommended Rabindranath Tagore's name for the Nobel Prize for literature to the Swedish Academy while ninety seven other members of the Society collectively recommended the name of novelist Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)for the award. Initially Tagore's nomination was strongly opposed by the Chairman of the Academy Harald Hijarne.

Vocal members of the Academy like Per Hallstorm (1866-1960), Esais Henrik Vilhelm Tenger (who knew Bengali) and Carl Gustaf Verner von Heidenstam (1859-1940), familiar with Tagore's literary genius, wholeheartedly supported his nomination. Tagore's name was □nalized for the award from a total of twenty eight nominations "because of his profoundly

sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West."A cablegram from the Nobel Committee arrived in Kolkata on November 1913 and the news was communicated to Tagore at Santiniketan through a series of telegrams. Memoirs reveal that the whole of Santiniketan rejoiced at this achievement of the poet.

While some students debated that Tagore had secured the 'Nobel Prize' for his profound nobility, others held that the 'Novel ' prize came to Santiniketan only for the deserving novels that Tagore had written. Amidst this unprecedented storm of excitement, a grand felicitation was organized on the 23rd of November in 1913 at Santiniketan in honour of the Poet, presided over by his scientist friend Jagadish Chandra Bose (1858-1937). A special train reached Bolpur from Kolkata with five hundred enthusiasts.

Tagore was led to the venue where he noticed some of his critics who had criticized him personally on various occasions in the past. These individuals were now gathered to felicitate him as the poet had received recognition overseas. Tagore's speech, which echoed his immediate ill-feelings at the sight of his detractors, disappointed many of his genuine admirers when he expressed, "I can only raise this cup of your honour to my lips, I cannot drink it with all my heart." Overnight, Tagore was inundated with attention and praise made him write to Rothenstein in 1913, "It is almost as bad as tying a tin can to a dog's tail making it impossible for him to move, without creating noise and crowds all along."Tagore could not be present in Sweden to receive the Nobel Prize as the first Asian recipient of the award and a telegram from him was read out at the traditional Nobel benquet which stated " I beg to convey to the Swedish academy my grateful appreciation of the breadth of understanding which has brought the distant near and has made the stranger a brother."

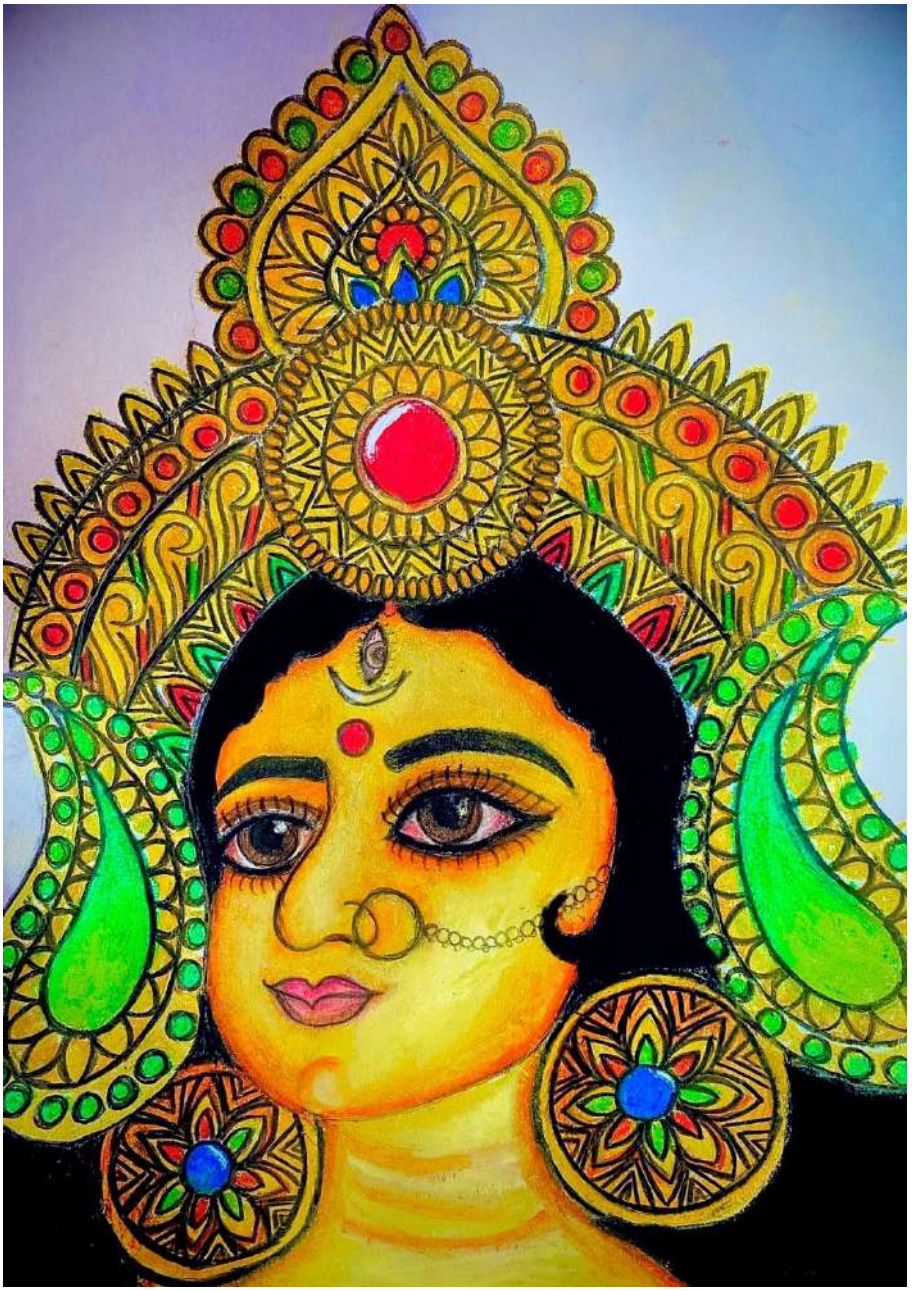
The Nobel medallion and the diploma were sent to Lord Carmichael (1859-1926), Governor of Bengal, who handed them over to the poet at a ceremony on 29 January, 1914 at the Governor's House in Kolkata.Gitangali and the Nobel Prize set Tagore on the world stage raising him to the glorified status of Visva-Kabi, the world poet, who could celebrate life beyond any boundaries:

I have had my invitation to this world's festival, and thus my life has been blessed.

My eyes have seen and my ears have heard. (Gitanjali, 16)

With best compliments from:

With best compliments from:



Ma Durga: By Sohini Roy (16 years)

Shiv-Shakti: timeless warriors

Shiva (the divine masculine) and aadi-shakti (the divine feminine) dances through eternity with their timeless love and the eternal bond. The dance-love-passion percolates through the cosmos, space, earth, families and our minds.

It is the balance of these two; the yin-yang, the purush-prakriti, the consciousness-power, the sun-moon, the ice-heat is the key to harmony.

Together, in divine harmony they shine bright to destroy the evil and uphold the virtue. They are residing as Chandrasekhar-Lalita in each harmonious family and as Rudra-Rudrakali in each power couple.

Dr Moumita Sarkar (London); Painting: Manjusree Sarkar (Kolkata, India)

লন্ডনে বাঙালির দুর্গোৎসব ও একতার অভিজ্ঞতা

Shankar Prasad Dutta (Kolkata, India)

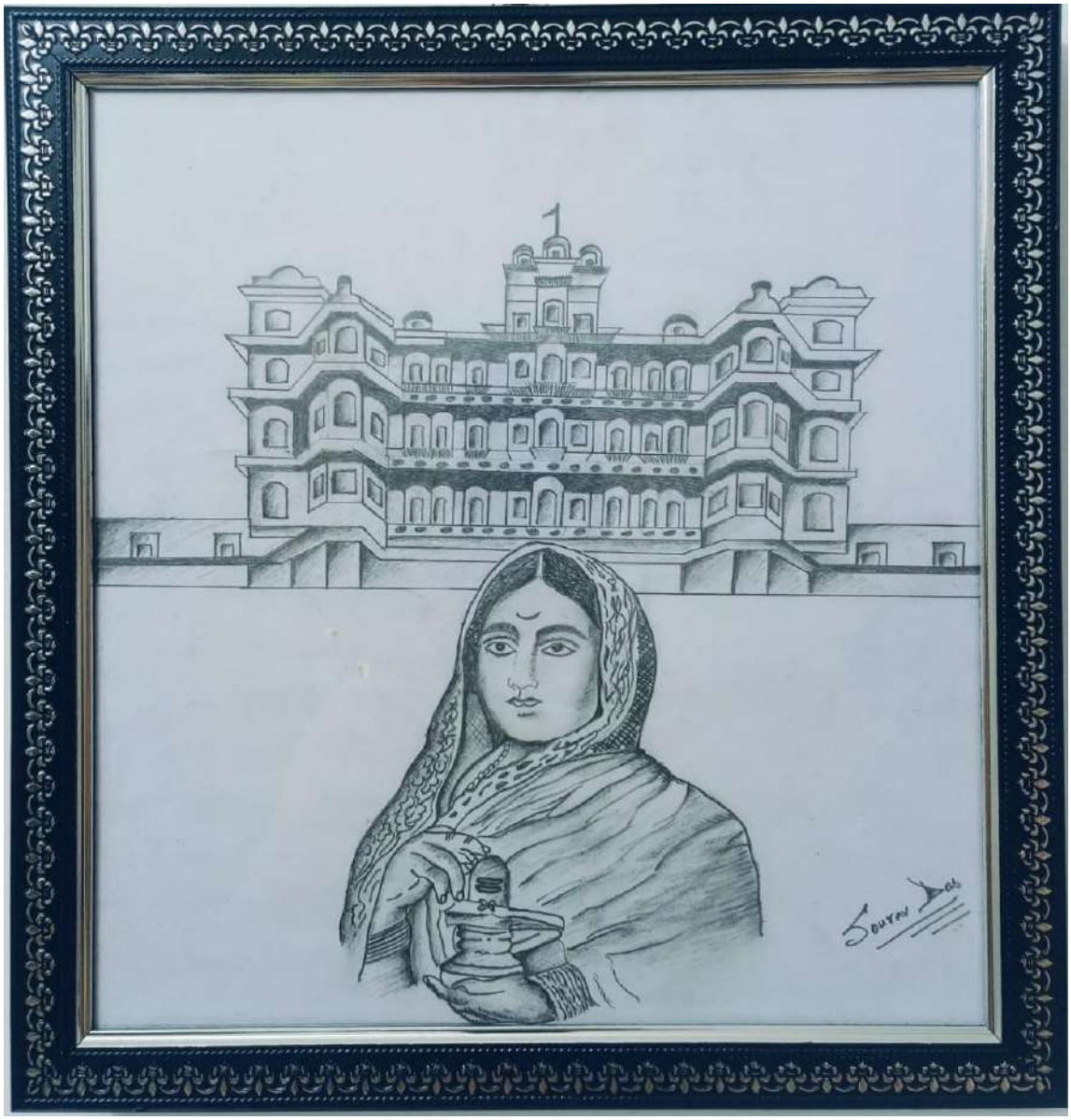
আমরা এই প্রথম লন্ডন এলাম, এবং বিদেশ যাত্রা ও আমার এই প্রথম| জীবনের বেশিরভাগ সময় কাটিয়েছি ভারতের বিহারের ছোট্ট একটা পাহাড় ঘেরা অঞ্চল| যার সামনে দিয়ে বয়ে যেত নদী যে নদী থাকতো শান্ত স্নিগ্ধ কিন্তু বর্ষার ভয়াভবতা সাক্ষী ও ছিলাম| অবসর গ্রহণের পরে আমরা কলকাতা বসবাস শুরু করি| মেয়ে ইন্ডিয়া ছেড়ে লন্ডনে আসার পর আমাদেরও বিদেশ যাত্রা এই প্রথম। সত্যি কথা বলতে লন্ডন সম্বন্ধে আমার অভিজ্ঞতা কিছুটা বই পড়ে আর কিছু লোক মুখে। লন্ডন এবং ইন্ডিয়ার আবহাওয়া, কালচার, রাস্তাঘাট সবকিছুই অনেকটাই আলাদা।

এখানে আমরা এসেছি মেয়ের বাড়িতে। আমি রিটায়ার্ড লোক, কাজ বাজ তেমন কিছু না থাকলেও অনেকদিন পর নাতিকে নিয়ে খেলা করা একটা সুমধুর অভিজ্ঞতা| বিকেলবেলায় পার্কে বেড়াতে যাবার সময় ওখানে আমাদের মতন আরও অনেক লোক ভারত থেকে এসেছেন চার পাঁচ মাসের মতন| ভারতীয় দেখা মাত্র কি একটা আকর্ষণ, কথাবার্তা ও আলাপ হয়ে যায়| সবাই একসাথে ওঠা-বসা, ঘোরাফেরা, কেউ নিউ দিল্লি, কেউবা রাজস্থান, কেউ মহারাষ্ট্র, কিন্তু এখানে আমরা সবাই ভারতীয়। এবং সেই নামেই আমাদের ইউনিটি এবং একতা। কিন্তু আমাদের নিজেদের দেশে সেটা যেন হারিয়ে যায়| বাঙালি-বিহারী, উত্তর-দক্ষিণ, হিন্দু-মুসলমান কত রকম অজুহাত| আবার এক ভাষা হলেও, যেমন এদেশীয়-ওদেশীয়, ঝগড়া করার কারণের কোন অভাব নেই| কিন্তু সেই অজুহাত, সমস্যা, সব এক ঝটকাতে উড়িয়ে দিয়ে আমরা ভারতীয়, এই পরিচয় আমাদের আলাপ আলোচনা এবং একতা| একদিন দেখা না পেলেই কেমন যেন মনটা হয়ে যায়, ফোন করে খবরা খবর নেওয়া হয়। এই একতা যদি আমাদের দেশে হয় তাহলে তো কোন লড়াই ঝগড়া থাকবেই না| পুলিশ, উকিল, কোর্ট, এর দরকারই হবে না| আহা! এটা কি চিন্তা, যেন সত্য যুগে পৌঁছে গিয়েছি! তা তো হতে পারে না, এটা তো কলিযুগ, এসব তো হতেই হবে|

এর মধ্যে, আমার মেয়ে সুমেধার কাছে শুনলাম, একটা দুর্গা পুজো সংস্থার সাথে এক বছর হল যুক্ত হয়েছে। পুজোতে as a ভলেন্টিয়ার হয়ে অনেক কাজ করেছে। এবং পুজোতে চার দিনই খুব ব্যস্ত ছিল। এবার এই বছর খুঁটি পুজো দিয়ে দুর্গাপুজো শুরু হচ্ছে। শুনে খুব ভালো লাগলো। এই লন্ডনে বাঙ্গালীদের মধ্যে একসাথে দুর্গাপুজো করা খুব আনন্দের বিষয়। এসে শুনলাম, এইরকম দুর্গাপুজো বাঙ্গালীদের এখানে আরো অনেক হয়| ক্যামডেন কাউন্সিলের সুইস কটেজ লাইব্রেরীর বাইরে খুঁটিপুজো হলো| অনেকে এখানে এসেছেন, সকলেই বাঙালি, প্রত্যেকে পারম্পরিক বাঙালি পোশাকে এসে পূজোতে বসেছেন| আমার তো মনে হচ্ছিল যেন কলকাতার যাদবপুরের পাড়ায় খুঁটি পুজোয় বসে আছি| এই লন্ডনে থেকেও সেই বেঙ্গলি কালচার ধরে রাখা খুবই আনন্দের বিষয়। খুঁটি পুজো শুরু হল সম্পূর্ণ নিয়ম মেনে সবাই, ধুতি-পাঞ্জাবি, লাল শাড়ি পড়ে পুজোতে বসে সম্পূর্ণ করলেন। না দেখলে বিশ্বাস করা যায় না। এই লন্ডনে এসে সম্পূর্ণ বাঙালি পরিবেশে পুজো দেখব চিন্তাই করতে পারিনি| পুজোর পর সবাইকে প্রসাদ দেওয়া হল, ফটো তোলা হলো, বেশ ভালো পরিবেশ|

ওখানে মৈনাক রায় মহাশয় বললেন সোমবার হাই কমিশনার অফ ইন্ডিয়ার, নেহেরু সেন্টার হলে, মহালয়ার উপলক্ষে, মহিষাসুরমর্দিনী প্রোগ্রামটা আমরা সবাই মিলে করব – "নিশ্চয়ই আসবেন" | সত্যি বলতে প্রোগ্রামটা এত ভালো হয়েছে বর্ণনা করার ভাষাই নেই| যেমন গান, নাচ এবং সংস্কৃত উচ্চারণ, সবই এক কথায় অপূর্ব। মনে হচ্ছে যেন কলকাতার নন্দনে বসে প্রোগ্রাম দেখছি। চোখ বন্ধ করে শুনলে মনে হয় যেন বীরেন্দ্রকৃষ্ণ ভদ্র মহাশয়ের ক্যাসেট শুনছি|

এত সব কিছু দেখে শুনে অধীর আগ্রহে বসে আছি, মা দুর্গার পুজো নিশ্চয়ই খুব ভালোভাবেই হবে। পুজোর সময় আমরা কলকাতা না থেকেও ওখানকার অনুপস্থিতি অনুভব হবে না নিশ্চয়ই।



Sourav Das (Kolkata, India)

The Little Cloud That Could

Aryan Saha, Age: 10 years (London)

Winner: Story Writing Competition, Saraswati Puja 2025, Age Group:5-10

Once upon a time, in the big, blue sky there was a little cloud named Fluffy. Fluffy was not as huge or cozy as the other clouds. In fact, he was small and a little shy. Every day, the other clouds would float by, casting enormous, shadowy spots on the ground. But Fluffy just drifted quietly, barely noticed by anyone below.

One sunny afternoon, as the clouds gathered for their daily dance, Fluffy had an idea.

'What if I could make a rainbow?' he thought.

'Would that help me be as special as the other clouds?'

Committed, Fluffy puffed up as much as he could.But no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't seem to form a big, colourful arc like he imagined. Instead, he created a tiny splash of colours in the sky. Initially, not a single soul noticed his rainbow. But then, a little girl on the ground looked up. Her eyes grew wide with wonder as she saw the tiny rainbow.

"Look!" she exclaimed to her friends.

"A little rainbow just for me."

Soon, everyone on the ground was pointing up, smiling at the colourful surprise Fluffy had made. Fluffy felt a warm glow, knowing that even though he was small, he had made someone's day special.

From the day on, Fluffy didn't worry about being the biggest or coziest cloud. He knew that even the tiniest cloud could make a difference, just by being itself. And every time Fluffy made a little rainbow, he felt a little prouder, knowing that sometimes, the smallest things can shine the brightest.

David the Scientist

-Prisha Srivastava, Age: 7 years (London)

Runners up: Story Writing Competition, Saraswati Puja 2025, Age Group:5-10

Once there was a boy called David. He wanted to be a scientist because he was very interested in understanding how the human body works. He also thought that scientists were really cool, and he loved that they did interesting research and attended super cool meetings.

However, there was a problem. His parents didn't want him to be a scientist. His dad wanted him to be an engineer, and his mum wanted him to be an actor. They all got into a fight, with everyone saying why their choice was better. David's dad said that engineers were amazing because they could build many things, like buildings and computers. Meanwhile, his mum argued that actors were great because they could become famous.

David, however, said that scientists were better because they could understand how things work and find intelligent solutions to human diseases. His mum got upset hearing all of this and said, "I need more time to think."

After a year, David's mum came up with an idea. She said, "Why can't you do all three?"

David exclaimed, "HOW?"

His mum explained, "Engineers can become scientists, and during your free time, you could be an actor! You could work in a theatre, and that would help you think better and enhance your imagination."

David really liked the idea and decided, "Why limit myself to one when I could be all three?"

And so, they lived happily ever after. YAY!

Recreation

- **Praneel Datta, Age: 15 years (London)**

Winner: Story Writing Competition, Saraswati Puja 2025, Age Group:10-18

Long, long ago, in the city of dragons, people and the four elemental dragons lived peacefully together. The four elemental planet dragons are what that creates ‘Zephron’, a planet full of ‘war’. Well, you might be thinking, why in this planet, there could be no war because of the dragons and the people who lived there. Well, 500 years ago, demons were also in this land, demons ruled by the demon king, and that’s when, the four elemental dragons appeared, scaring the demons and forcing them to find another land. From there, the dragons created humans, and until now, things were going peacefully as they should be.

But that all changed, when the demon king thought of a plan to secure what he wanted, he ordered his demon henchmen to sneakily go to the ‘gate of richos’ in the city of dragons and wait there until nighttime to give them scare of their lives.

It was nighttime, the demons, were ready to attack, the demons quickly got into the city and started burning the houses with fire sticks. The Elemental dragons. knew they were coming, so they started powering up their elements so that they can destroy the demons once and for all.

Unfortunately, the dragon king arrived and started recreating them to destroy all that is left. So, they formed an elemental circle, using their elemental beams to create an all-powerful dragon that could banish the demon king and demons forever. The Lightning dragon.

The Lightning dragon returned to the four elemental dragons and, now they recreated the people and everything back. The demon king and the demons were banished to the most dangerous place of all time. The underworld, and they never come to the surface again.

Dear Diary

-Kavya Sharma, Age: 15 years (London)

Runners up: Story Writing Competition, Saraswati Puja 2025, Age Group:10-18

I've spent years chasing something I thought I could never have — something that felt impossible and out of reach.

However, as I now walk on the soft sand, I observe. I admire the ultramarine blue waves gently lapping against the shore in their own rhythm. I feel awed by the palm trees swaying to a music that only they can hear. I giggle at the seagulls swooping down and enjoying their meals.

I wonder if I was wrong all along!

I had always craved happiness.

I thought that moments like my wedding, becoming a millionaire, and being a good parent to my kids would fulfill me in a way nothing else ever could.

But was I completely wrong?

I had all of those things, yet there was still a hole in my heart — until this moment.

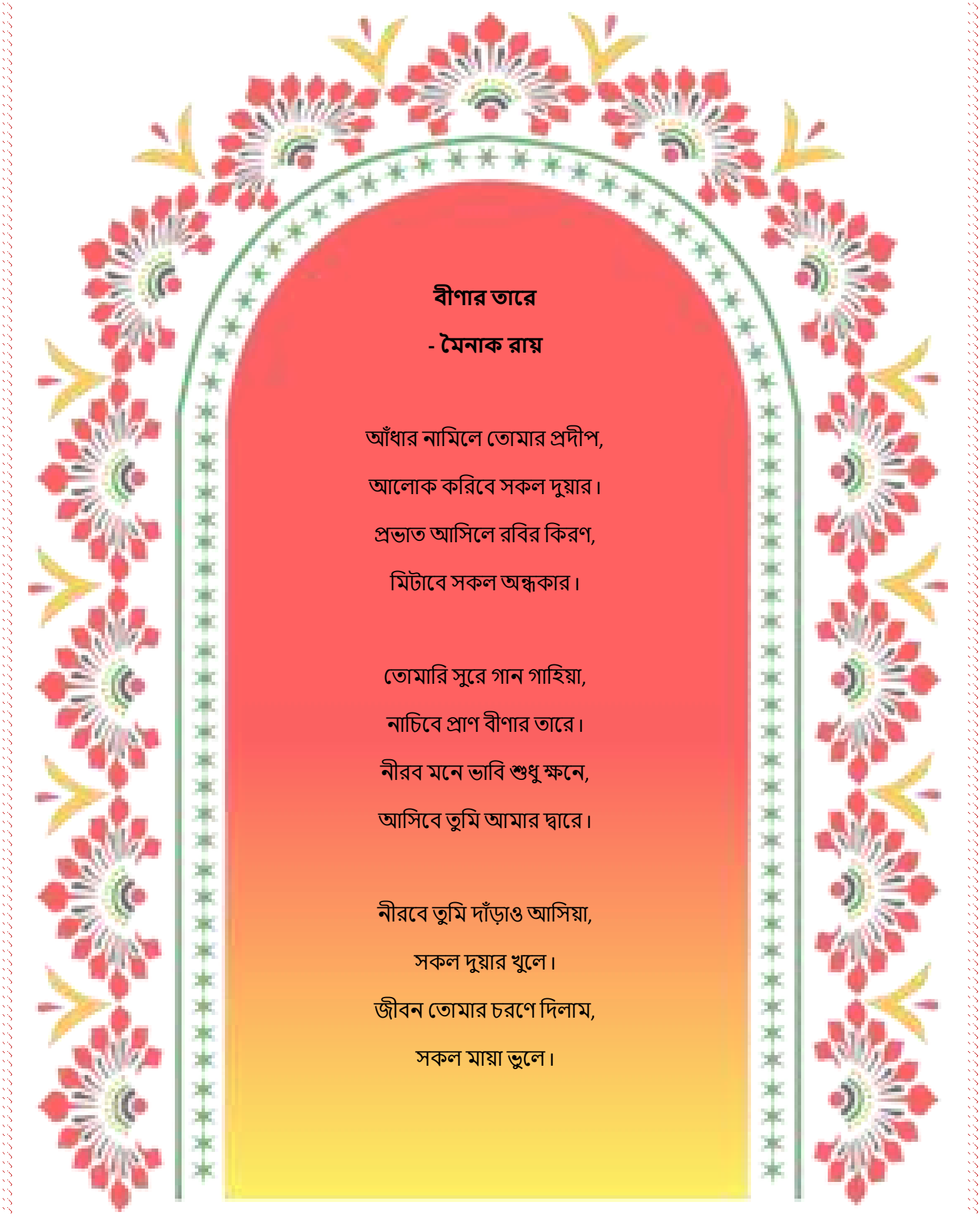
There were times when I thought life was unfair to me, that I was unlucky, and that I would never find what I truly sought. My life was a constant cycle of comparing myself to those who seemed to be doing better than me — a harsh and negative loop that made me utterly miserable.

But now, as I walk along this beautiful beach, with the sun hibernating into an ever deserving slumber, my worries feel nonexistent, and the chase has stopped.

I have finally had the epiphany that happiness comes from little moments in our daily lives and that we are the creator of our own joys.

Shreyansh Das Age:8 years (London)

Niladri Acharya, Age: 15 years (India)



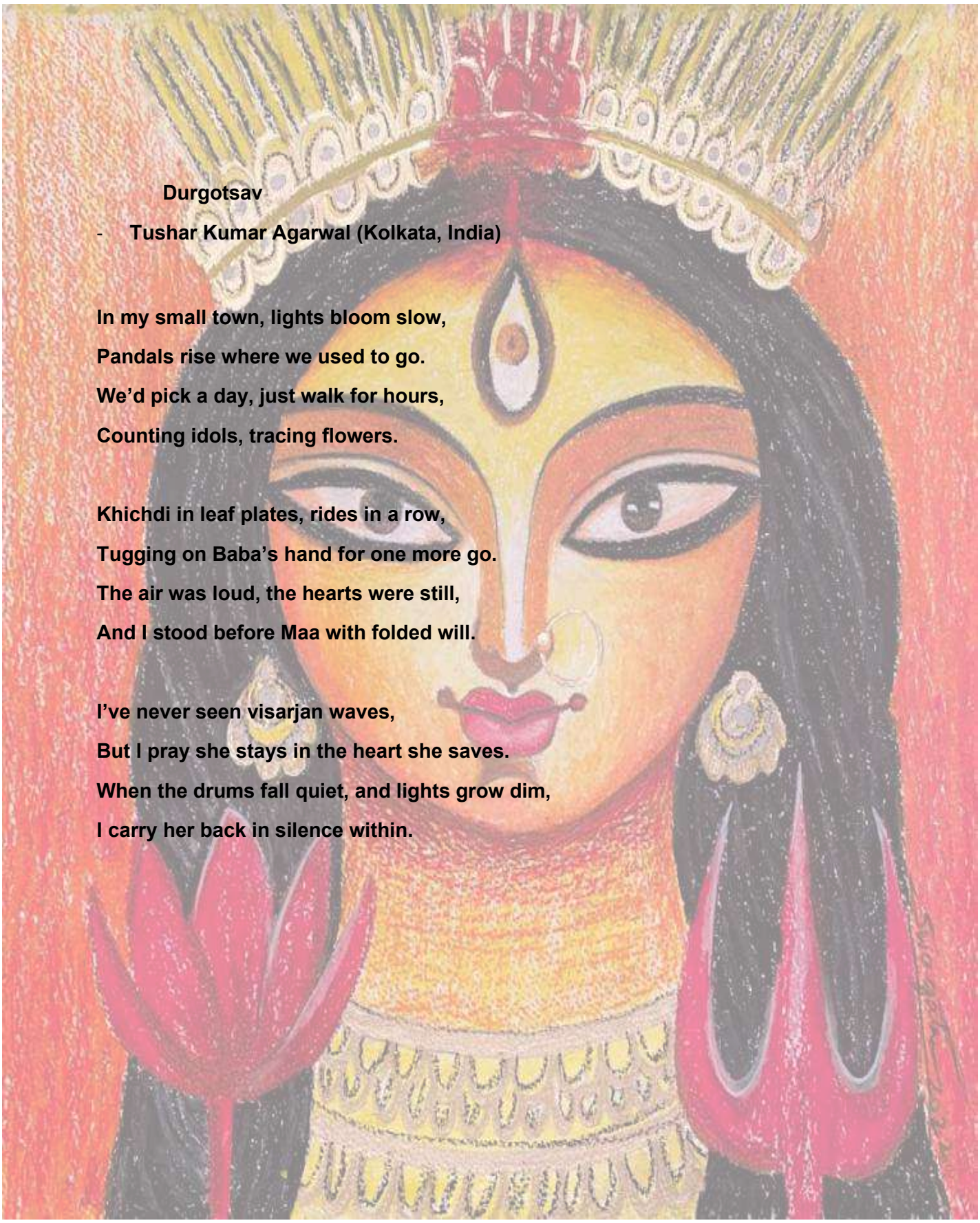
বীণার তারে

- মৈনাক রায়

আঁধার নামিলে তোমার প্রদীপ,
আলোক করিবে সকল দুয়ার।
প্রভাত আসিলে রবির কিরণ,
মিটাবে সকল অন্ধকার।

তোমারি সুরে গান গাহিয়া,
নাচিবে প্রাণ বীণার তারে।
নীরব মনে ভাবি শুধু ক্ষনে,
আসিবে তুমি আমার দ্বারে।

নীরবে তুমি দাঁড়াও আসিয়া,
সকল দুয়ার খুলে।
জীবন তোমার চরণে দিলাম,
সকল মায়া ভুলে।



Durgotsav

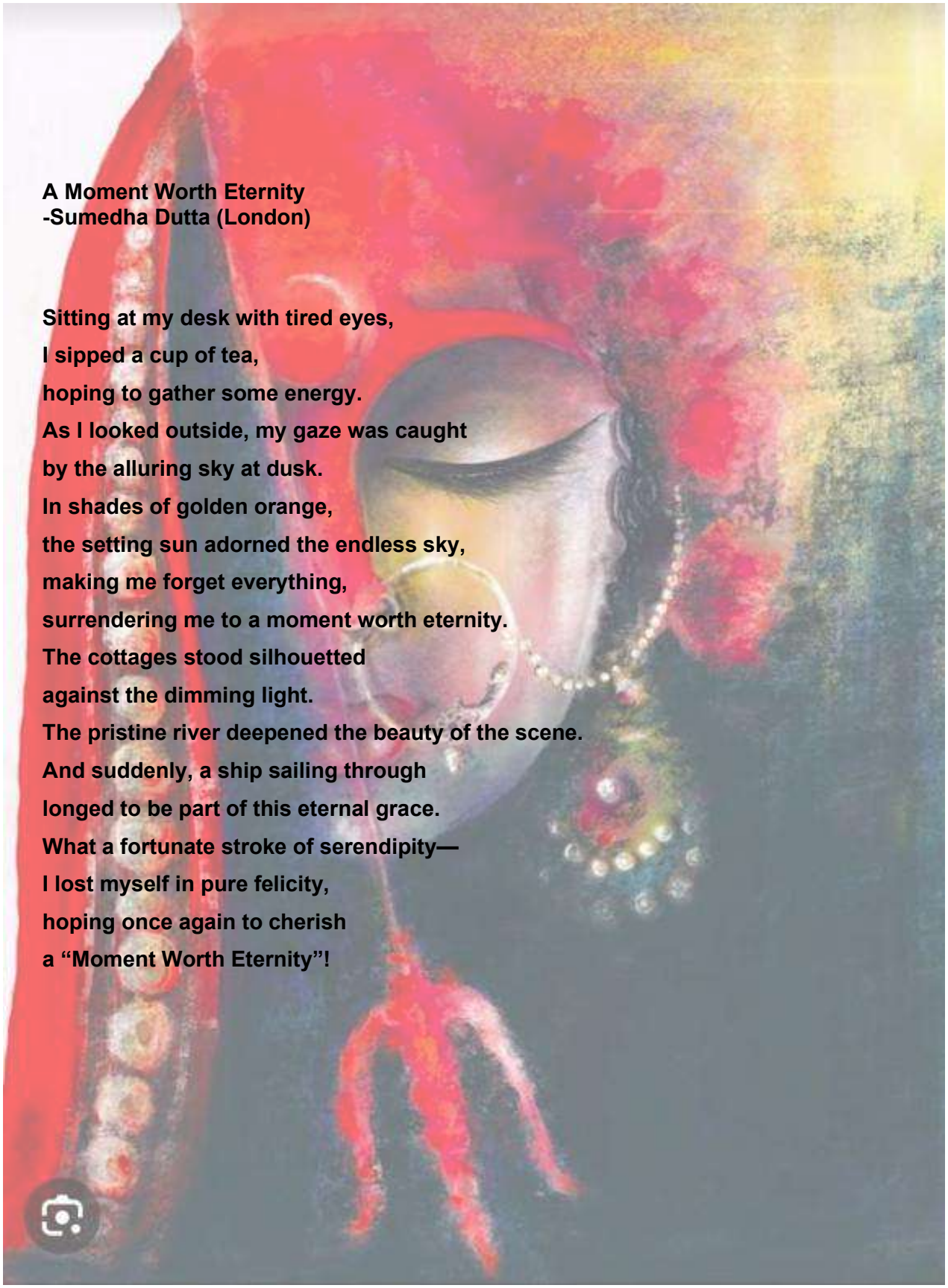
- **Tushar Kumar Agarwal (Kolkata, India)**

In my small town, lights bloom slow,
Pandals rise where we used to go.
We'd pick a day, just walk for hours,
Counting idols, tracing flowers.

Khichdi in leaf plates, rides in a row,
Tugging on Baba's hand for one more go.
The air was loud, the hearts were still,
And I stood before Maa with folded will.

I've never seen visarjan waves,
But I pray she stays in the heart she saves.
When the drums fall quiet, and lights grow dim,
I carry her back in silence within.

Painting: Swagata Chowdhury, New Jersey USA



A Moment Worth Eternity
-Sumedha Dutta (London)

Sitting at my desk with tired eyes,
I sipped a cup of tea,
hoping to gather some energy.
As I looked outside, my gaze was caught
by the alluring sky at dusk.
In shades of golden orange,
the setting sun adorned the endless sky,
making me forget everything,
surrendering me to a moment worth eternity.
The cottages stood silhouetted
against the dimming light.
The pristine river deepened the beauty of the scene.
And suddenly, a ship sailing through
longed to be part of this eternal grace.
What a fortunate stroke of serendipity—
I lost myself in pure felicity,
hoping once again to cherish
a "Moment Worth Eternity"!

Whispers of the sky

- Rahini Ghosh (Kolkata, India)

Three letters and one word. Simple, beautiful yet so limitless I often wonder how it unknowingly affects us and our mood.

It feels as if the Sky's a canvas on which different pictures are being painted every minute. There hasn't been a single time when the pattern of the clouds or the hues of the sky repeat themselves. It changes every moment and never repeats itself ever again.

Funny how we accept the sky changing every moment but can't accept people changing. The sky teaches me a lot of things. The foremost being change and acceptance. Change is inevitable. Everything changes but not every change is accepted. We forget that bringing a change is easier than accepting that change. But with time, changes are embraced and finally accepted.

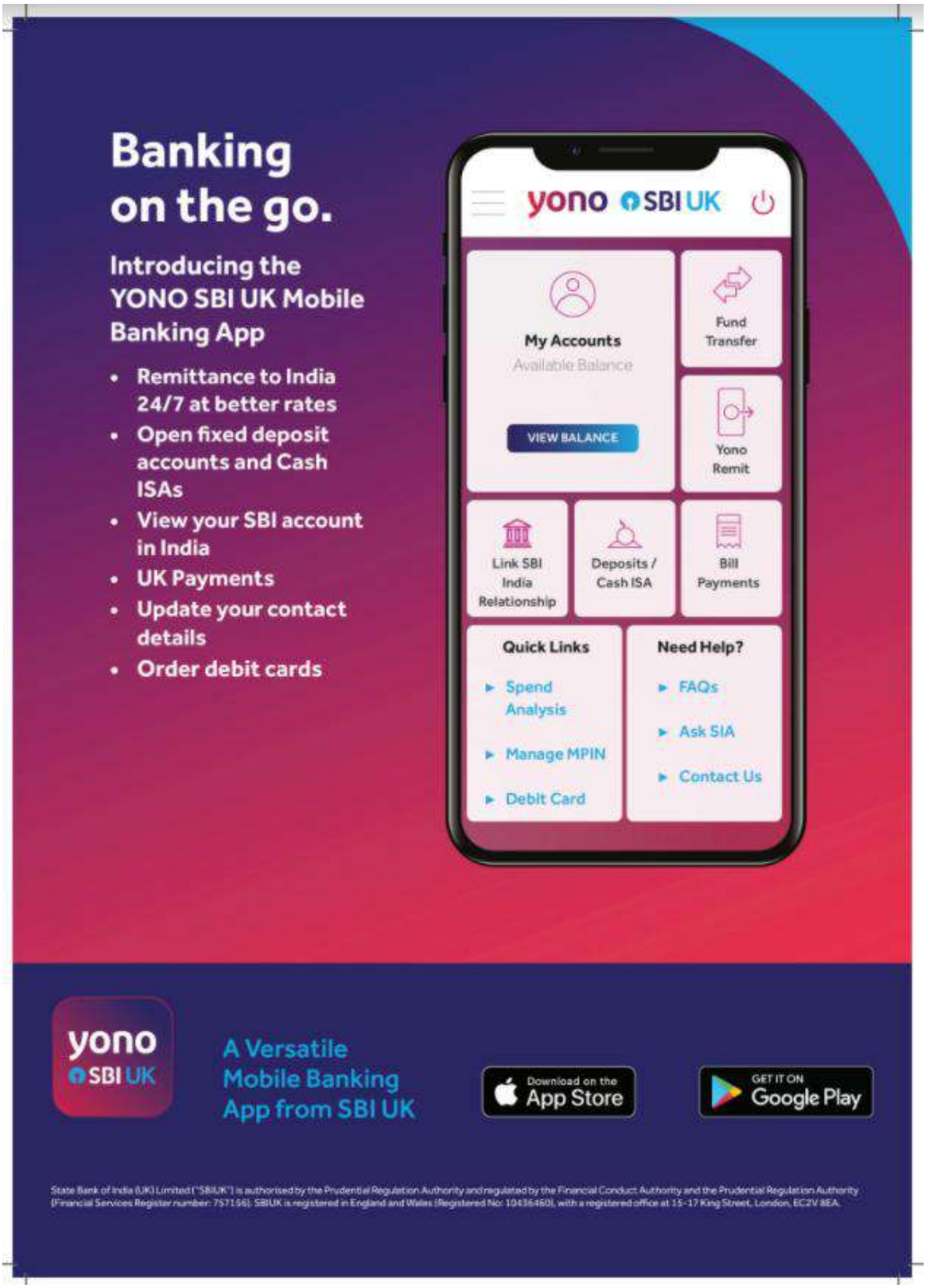
All of us change every day, bit by bit, in order to become "the best version of ourselves". This best version may not necessarily mean a good change. It varies and mostly depends on that person's idea of "best version".

I love the evening sky. Just as the sun starts to set in withdrawing it's hues and the night sky reigns over. A transformation from light to darkness.

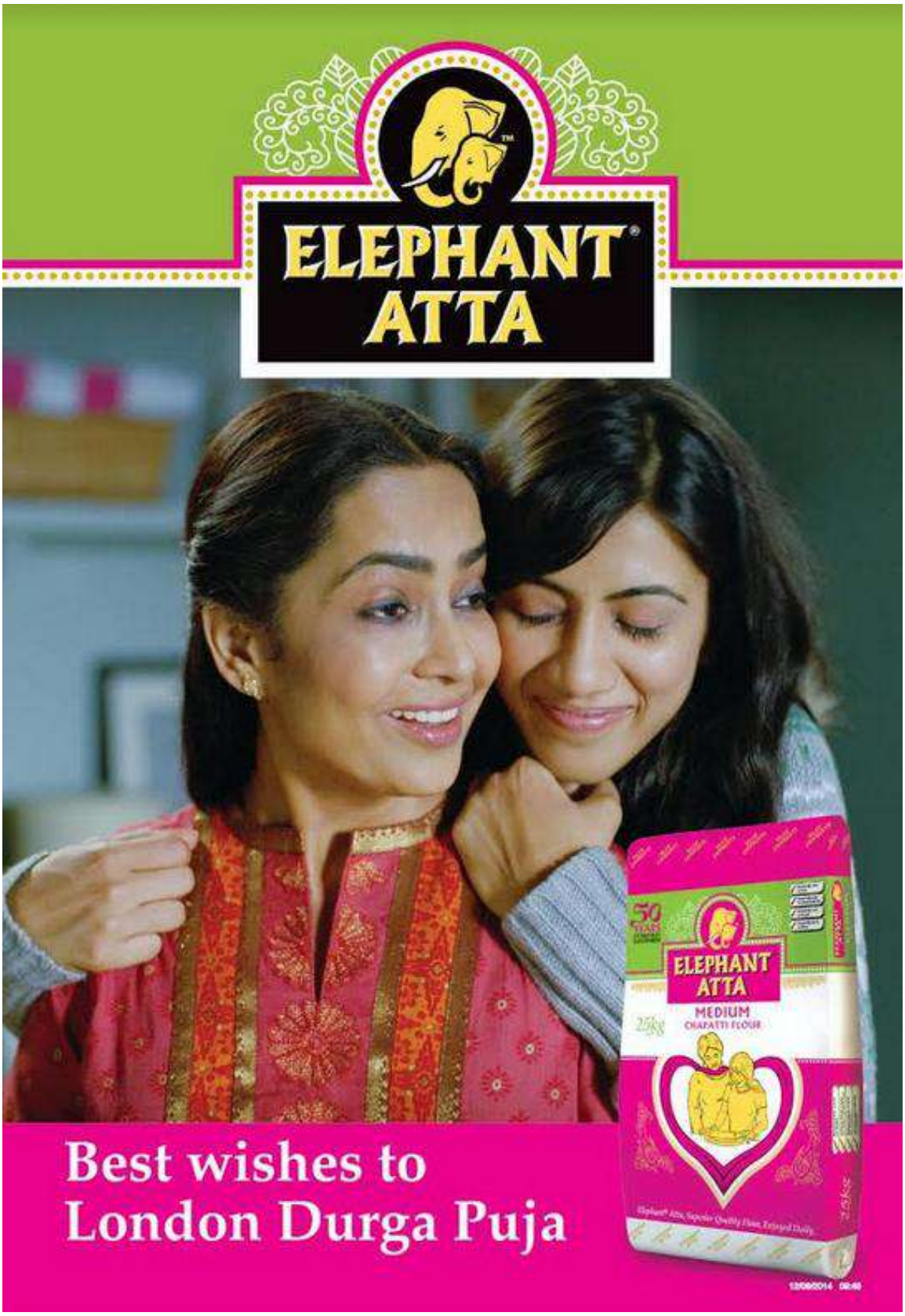
Most of us find the night sky as our constant companion. Staring at the sky they are reminded of the beautiful moments which have now turned into memories, people they have loved and now lost touch.

Somewhere the night sky reminds them of their failures. It makes them question their very existence and wonder what they are actually doing.

With Best Compliments From:



With Best Compliments From:



দুর্গা পুজো – চিরনতুন

- সুরজিৎ চৌধুরী, বাঘা যতীন, কোলকাতা

কোলকাতার নতুন এক বান্ধবীর লম্বা মেইলে দুর্গাপুজোর আমন্ত্রণ পেয়ে নলিনী জবাব দিল,

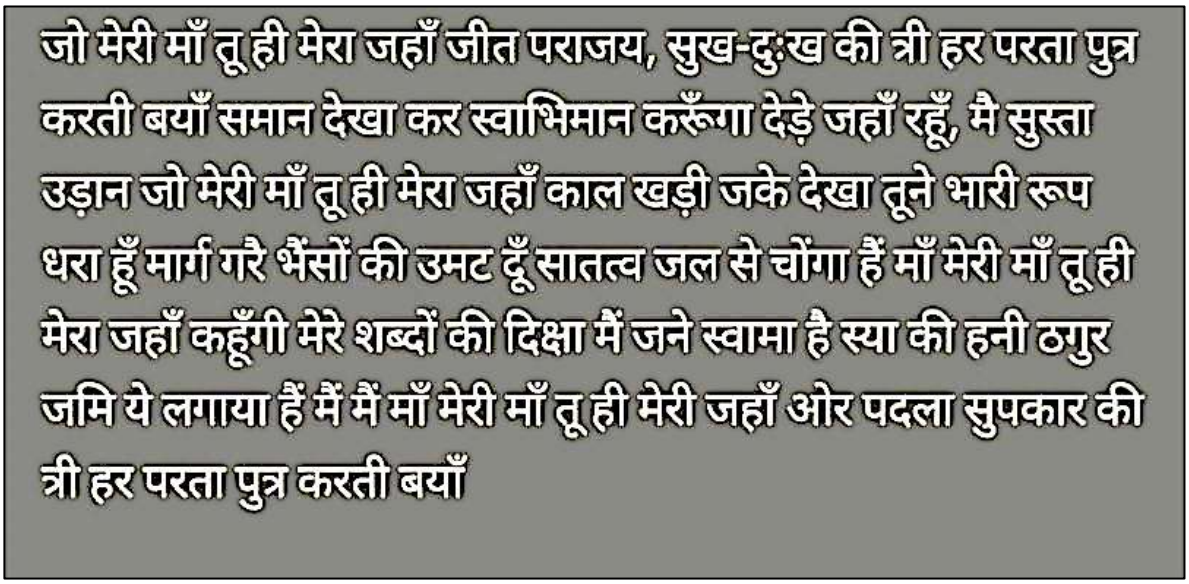
"দেবাশ্রিতা, আমেরিকায় হার্ভার্ড বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ভর্তি হওয়ার পরেই দুর্গা পুজোয় বোস্টনে আমার মা, ওলি ব্রাউন, বান্ধবীর বাড়িতে গেলে তার দাদা নবীন চক্রবর্তীর সঙ্গে প্রথম পরিচয় – পরে গাঁটছড়া বাঁধা। আমার জন্ম মহাষষ্ঠীর তিথিতে। মহাভারতের গল্প আর বাইবেল আমার সমানভাবে মুখস্থ। জার্মানিতে ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং পড়েছি, চাকরি ভারতে। মা-বাবা আত্মীয়-পরিজন জানে বাঙালি ছাড়া আমার বন্ধু আঙুলে গোনা কয়েকজন । বন্ধুরা বলে বাঙালিদের মত রূপ – চুল, চোখ, চেহারা, চালচলন, এমনকি চাহনিটুকুতেও নাকি বাঙালিয়ানা । ঠাকুমা-ঠাকুর্দা কলকাত্তাইয়া বলে চালাতে চাইলেও ঠাকুমার মা তার দেশ বিক্রমপুরের কুশারিপাড়ার আশি বছর আগের ভাষা ও ছোঁয়া দিয়ে আমাকে ইলিশের ভক্ত করে তুলেছে। আর আমি সুযোগ পেলেই শান্তিনিকেতনে সময় কাটাতে যাই বন্ধুদের সঙ্গে। সেখানকার বাতাসে বেশি অক্সিজেন পাই, কাছে সুরুল গ্রামের দুর্গাপুজোর ঢাকের বোলে বাংলাদেশের সুর খুঁজে পাই।

যাই হোক, দুই বছর আগে মহাষষ্ঠীর দিনে, ভারমণ্টে বার্লিংটনের চার্চ স্ট্রিটের মার্কেট প্লেসে হাঁটতে হাঁটতে পুরানো বইয়ের দোকানে "পামেলা অর ভারচু রিওয়ারডেড" বইটা চোখে পড়ে । স্যামুয়েল রিচার্ডসনের বইয়ের প্রথম অংশটাই পড়ছিলাম । "... I know, my dear father and mother, I must give you both grief and pleasure; and so I will only say, pray for your Pamela; who will ever be …" চেয়ারে বসে আচমকা অনুভব করলাম এক্কেবারে কাঁধের উপর দিয়ে কানের দুলের কাছে পাখির পালকের মত স্পর্শ – মুখ বাড়িয়ে বইটা আরো কেউ পড়ছে ! ঘাড় ঘুরিয়ে সুপুরুষ যুবককে দেখে চমকে উঠি। বলতে শুনলাম, "না, মানে বইটা দেখছিলাম। ভয়ের কিছু কারণ নেই।" অদ্ভুত তো ! ব্যাপারটা একটু ভিন্নরকম লাগলেও অপমানজনক কোন বাক্যবাণ ছোঁড়ার বদলে শুধু "এ ব্যাপারটা মোটেই ঠিক না" ব' লে চেয়ার ছেড়ে উঠে দোকান থেকে বইটা কিনে হাঁটা দিলাম। সে-ও পাশে যেতে যেতে ভুল হয়েছে বলে ও ক্ষমা চেয়ে সপ্রতিভভাবে পরের পর প্রশ্ন করে আমার নাম ঠিকানা ইত্যাদি কিছুটা জেনে নিল।

পার্কিং-এ এসে গাড়িতে উঠতে যেতেই সে প্রশ্ন করে, "আমার ব্যাপারে কিছু শুনবেন না, জানতে চাইবেন না ?" বললাম, "না, প্রয়োজন পড়বে না।" তার প্রশ্ন, "আচ্ছা, কালকে সকালে একবার দেখা হতে পারে ?" উত্তর দিলাম, "এসব কেন বলছেন ? সম্ভব না। তাছাড়া আমি কালকে ইন্ডিয়া চলে যাচ্ছি, আমি ভারতীয়, বাঙালি। ওখানে দুর্গাপুজো একটা বড় উৎসব, দেখতে যাব।" সে উচ্ছ্বাসে তালি দিয়ে বাংলায় বলল, "আরে, আমিও তো বাঙালি। পুজো শুরু হয়ে গিয়েছে বলে কালকে সন্ধ্যার ফ্লাইটে বাড়ি ফিরছি, শান্তিনিকেতন।" তার প্রথম বাক্যটাই আমাকে দাঁড় করিয়ে দিল, গাড়ির দরজা খোলা রইল – ভিতরে ঢুকতে পারলাম না। এক মুখ হাসি নিয়ে বললাম, "আপনিও বাঙালি, আর আমরা এতক্ষন অন্য ভাষায় কথা বলছিলাম। নাঃ, আর আপনার উপর রাগ বা বিরক্তি করে থাকা চলে না। আমিও শান্তিনিকেতনেই যাব, বন্ধুর বাড়ি। আপনি কোথায় থাকেন ?" জবাব এল, "ওখানে সুরুল একটা গ্রাম,

সেখানে আমি মুখার্জি পরিবারের লোক – রুদ্রপ্রতাপ। আমাদের বাড়িতে দুর্গাপুজোতে আসুন, নিশ্চয়ই ভালো লাগবে।" বললাম, "নিমন্ত্রণ পেলাম, নিশ্চয়ই যাবো। ওখানে পৌঁছেই নবমীর রাত্রে পুজো দেখতে যাব কিন্তু, আবার দশমীর দিনও যাব। আগেই বলে রাখলাম।" রুদ্র বলল, "আসবেন ? অপেক্ষা করব। খাইয়ে তবে ছাড়বো।" হেসে বললাম, "নিমন্ত্রণ নিয়েছি। দুই দিনই খাব। দেখবেন, বাড়িতে সবার কাছে যেন কথা শুনতে না হয়।" রুদ্র জবাব দিল, "তেমন মুহূর্ত এলে সামলাবার মানুষ আছে।"

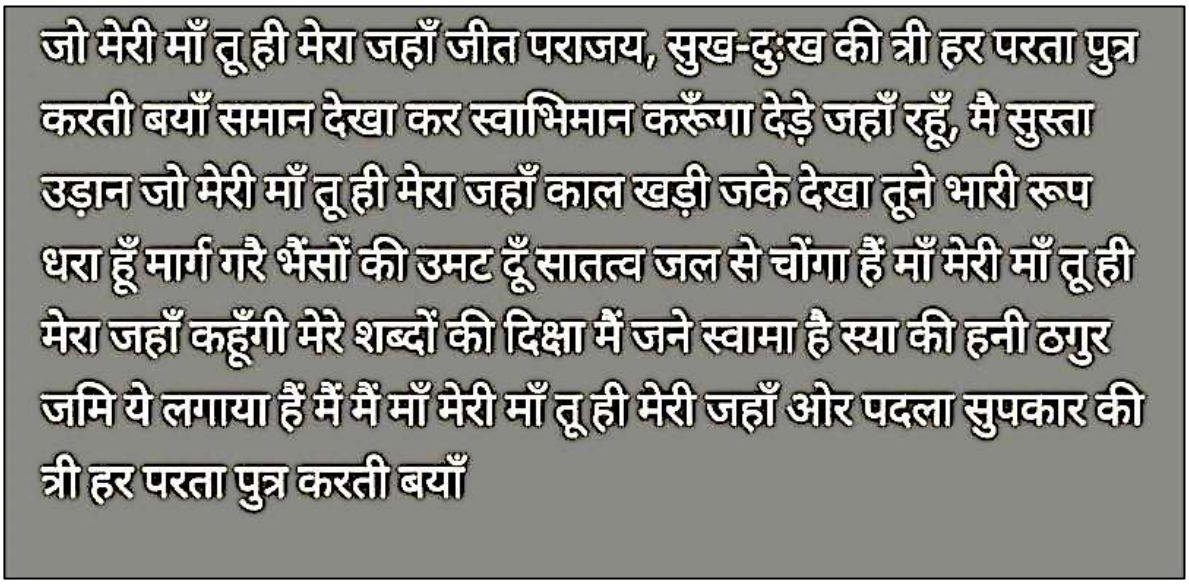
বুঝতেই পারছিস দেবাশ্রিতা, পরের বছর বাঙালি বউ হয়ে অনেক কাজ করেছিলাম দূর্গা পুজোয় গ্রামের মুখার্জি বাড়িতে। আর এই বছর দুর্গাপূজাতে রুদ্রকে নিয়ে মায়ের কাছে লন্ডনে দুর্গা পুজো দেখতে এসেছি। সমস্ত জগৎ জুড়েই আমি দুর্গা পুজোকে খুঁজে পাই। শুধু দেহ মন নয়, দুর্গাপুজোর প্রতিটা দিনে আত্মাকে যেন নতুন করে খুঁজে প্যাই। মা-বাবা কিংবা আমার আর রুদ্রের প্রথম সাক্ষাতের কথা, নিজের জীবনের বিশেষ তিথি, প্রত্যেকটা দুর্গাপুজোই আমার কাছে এক একটা জন্মদিন। সামনের বছর সেই জন্মদিনে তোর ওখানে যাবার ইচ্ছে রইল। ইতি নলিনী।"



Seema Sharma, (Ghaziabad, India)

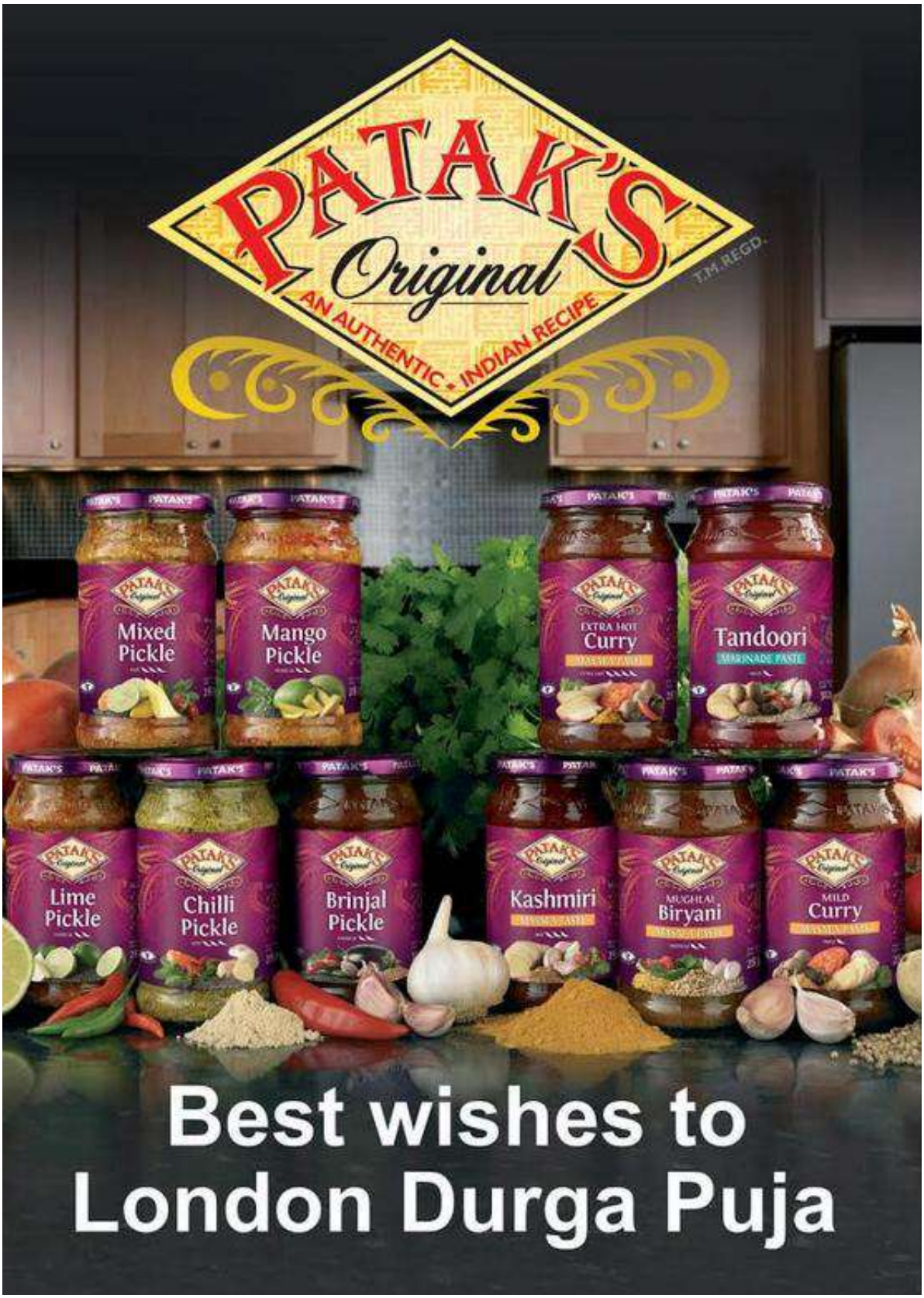
সেখানে আমি মুখার্জি পরিবারের লোক – রুদ্রপ্রতাপ। আমাদের বাড়িতে দুর্গাপুজোতে আসুন, নিশ্চয়ই ভালো লাগবে।" বললাম, "নিমন্ত্রণ পেলাম, নিশ্চয়ই যাবো। ওখানে পৌঁছেই নবমীর রাত্রে পুজো দেখতে যাব কিন্তু, আবার দশমীর দিনও যাব । আগেই বলে রাখলাম।" রুদ্র বলল, "আসবেন ? অপেক্ষা করব। খাইয়ে তবে ছাড়বো।" হেসে বললাম, "নিমন্ত্রণ নিয়েছি । দুই দিনই খাব । দেখবেন, বাড়িতে সবার কাছে যেন কথা শুনতে না হয়।" রুদ্র জবাব দিল, "তেমন মুহূর্ত এলে সামলাবার মানুষ আছে।"

বুঝতেই পারছিস দেবাশ্রিতা, পরের বছর বাঙালি বউ হয়ে অনেক কাজ করেছিলাম দূর্গা পুজোয় গ্রামের মুখার্জি বাড়িতে । আর এই বছর দুর্গাপূজাতে রুদ্রকে নিয়ে মায়ের কাছে লন্ডনে দুর্গা পুজো দেখতে এসেছি। সমস্ত জগৎ জুড়েই আমি দুর্গা পুজোকে খুঁজে পাই। শুধু দেহ মন নয়, দুর্গাপুজোর প্রতিটা দিনে আত্মাকে যেন নতুন করে খুঁজে প্যাই। মা-বাবা কিংবা আমার আর রুদ্রের প্রথম সাক্ষাতের কথা, নিজের জীবনের বিশেষ তিথি, প্রত্যেকটা দুর্গাপুজোই আমার কাছে এক একটা জন্মদিন। সামনের বছর সেই জন্মদিনে তোর ওখানে যাবার ইচ্ছে রইল। ইতি নলিনী।"



Seema Sharma, (Ghaziabad, India)

With Best Compliments From:



Hurt and Longing

- Moutusi Banerjee (UK)

Part I

When the moon is a painted veil. All I can hope for is you.

If we could only match the permanent hurts like in a game of Tetris.

Always falling and never ascending. The pits of grief are multiplying…

The moon is defected.

Part II

Which would be our thing,

Which would be our place, our moment, our song and our own silent moments

Our messiest bits..

You and I,

bearing our own Red Flags,

Which would be our sky my love 💔

Our own constellation and I can go on and on

The night is still young

Part III

In the common delirium of my uncommon dreams..

A swift transport to the path of chaos as I collect memories.

The transparent Grey glistens as I search for true colors.

My already tormented soul now so cold and silent, breathes slowly.

I keep looking back at the GREY

রঙীন বসন্ত

- মধুরিমা (UK)

চেন্নাইয়ের রাজাজি সালাই রাস্তার ধারে, একটা ছোট দোকানে রাঘবন চুপচাপ বসে আছে , হাতে ধোয়া ওঠা কফি মাগ , ধীরে ধীরে চুমুক দিচ্ছে। দৃষ্টি টা তার অনেক অনেক দূরে, কোন ঘটনাকে দেখার চেষ্টা করছে , গলায় ঝুলছে " ক্যানন ই ও এস আর ওয়ান " ।

আসলে সে " ডেকান হেরাল্ড " এর ফটো জার্নালিস্ট। ছোটাছুটি ই তার কাজ। কিন্তু এই বিশেষ দোকান টিতে ঠিক এইভাবেই তাকে মাঝে মাঝে দেখতে পাওয়া যায়।

আর কয়েক বছর পেরোলেই রঘবন ষাট ছুয়ে ফেলবে। সংসারে তার স্ত্রী দিব্যা , আর ছেলে আদিত্য। স্ত্রী শিক্ষিকা, রুচিশীলা। তবুও কেন সে জীবনের প্রতি কোন আকর্ষণ বোধ করে না। একটা প্রশ্ন '---- তাকে পাগল করে তোলে ----সে কি চায়?

রয়্যাল কলেজ অব আর্ট থেকে পাশ করেই সে ফটো জার্নালিস্ট হয়েছে। এরমধ্যে তার ঝুলিতে এসেছে " সনি ফটোগ্রাফি , আর আই পি পুরস্কার।

এই সম্মান কি , একজন ফটো সাংবাদিক এর কাছে যথেষ্ট নয়! যাক, আর ভাবার সময় নেই, মে মাসে সাত তারিখে তাকে সিমলায় পৌছতে হবে। ওখানে বিশেষ সামার ফেস্টিভাল। দেশ বিদেশের বহু লোকের সমাগম হয়।

---------- দশই মে বিশেষ কোন কাজ না থাকাতে, একা একাই ম্যালের রাস্তায় ভিড়কে উপেক্ষা করে রাঘবন হাটতে লাগলো। হঠাৎ একটা কনফেকশনারি দোকানের সামনে সে থমকে দাড়ালো। নিজের চোখকে বিশ্বাস ই করতে পারছে না। ওখানে কে দাড়িয়ে! ঘোর কাটতেই বুঝতে পারলো, তার অতি -অতি পরিচিত আপনজন। এটা স্বপ্ন -না বাস্তব তা যাচাই করার জন্য দৃশ্য টিকে ক্যামেরায় ধরে ফেললো।

দ্রুত পায়ে কাছে গেল তার গলা থেকে বিস্ময় মাখানো, অতি প্রিয় শব্দ বেড়িয়ে এল ---"সুধা, সুধা তুমি কেমন আছো ---?

সুধা তখন কেনা কাটায় ব্যস্ত। হঠাৎ তার নামটা শুনে চমকে ঘুরে দাড়ালো। তার সামনে দাঁড়িয়ে, রাঘবন আয়ার, সুধার চোখে মুখে চরম বিস্ময়। একদৃষ্টিতে দেখে চলেছে রাঘবনকে। চুলে একটু পাক ধরেছে সুঠাম চেহারা, উজ্জ্বল বুদ্ধিদীপ্ত চোখ, হাল্কা তামাটে রঙ। বয়স ওকে যেন একটা বাড়তি ব্যক্তিত্ব দিয়েছে।

সময় নষ্ট না করে স্বভাব সিদ্ধ কায়দায়, সুধাকে ক্যামেরায় বন্দী করে ফেলল। তারপরই জোরে হেসে উঠে বললো --"আরে! আমি ভূত নই জলজ্যান্ত রাঘবন, ছুয়েই দেখো -না " সুধা বেশ লজ্জা পেল। চোখটা নামিয়ে প্রায় রুদ্ধ গলায় উচ্চারণ করল, রা-ঘ-ব-ন।

সুধার হৃদয়ে যে ঝড় উঠেছে, তা রাঘবনের দৃষ্টি এড়ালো না। সুধার চোখে মুখে তখন নানা আবেগের, নানা রং এর খেলা চলেছে। মুখে সলজ্জ খুশির হাসি।

রাঘবনের চোখে ভেসে উঠলো, ত্রিশ বছরের আগে তন্বী সুধা, যেতে আসতে, চোরা চাউনিতে তাকে দেখতো। বান্ধবী দের সাথে জলতরঙ্গের মতো হেসে উঠে রাঘবনের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করার চেষ্টা করত, তখন অস্বাভাবিক চাঞ্চল্য হয়ে উঠতে, যেন মনের ঢেউ গুলোকে লুকিয়ে রাখার লড়াই করছে।বেশ মজা লাগতো রাঘবনের। তখন সে বিশ্বভারতীর ছাত্র, তাকে নিয়ে বন্ধুরা হাসাহাসি করত। এটা যেন একটা নিয়মিত মজার খেলা হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছিল।

মনে পড়ে একবার বসন্ত উৎসবে, যখন সে সুযোগ বুঝে সুধার মুখে আবির মাখিয়ে দিয়েছিল, তখন ও সুধা ঠিক এইভাবেই প্রেমের আবেশে মাথা নিচু করে দাড়িয়েছিল। তারপর ধীরে ধীরে সে ও রাঘবনের মুখে আবির দিয়েছিল। সে এক অদ্ভুত অনুভূতি -- গভীর আবেগ।

সহজ হবার জন্য রাঘবন বলল, "আমার সাথে চা খেতে কোন আপত্তি নেই তো? " সুধা ঘাড় নাড়িয়েই সম্মতি জানালো। নিঃশব্দে দুজনে পাশাপাশি হেটে চলল, একটু দূরে নির্জনে একটা চায়ের দোকানে এসে বসল।

কয়েক মিনিট নিঃশব্দে কেটে গেল , হঠাৎ রাঘবন বলে উঠলো " সুধা, তুমি ঠিক আগের মতোই চোখে সুন্দর আছো " বাঃ, তুমি তো বেশ মিথ্যে প্রশংসা করতে শিখেছো --- "ভুল, সত্যি কথাটা বলতে শিখেছি", প্রতি বাদ করে উঠল, রাঘবন। "/আবার কয়েক মিনিট নিঃশব্দে কেটে গেল, /-" রাঘবন তোমার ফোন নম্বর টা আমাকে দেবে , প্রায় কাতর সুরে সুধা অনুরোধ করল।

এক পলক সুধার সি৺থির দিকে তাকিয়ে, রাঘবন সুধার চোখে চোখ রেখে বলল, "ওটা হবে না, আমার সাথে দেখা করতে হলে, শান্তিনিকেতনে আসতে হবে, বসন্ত উৎসবে। " একটা গভীর নিঃশ্বাস রাঘবনের বুক চিড়ে বেড়িয়ে এল।

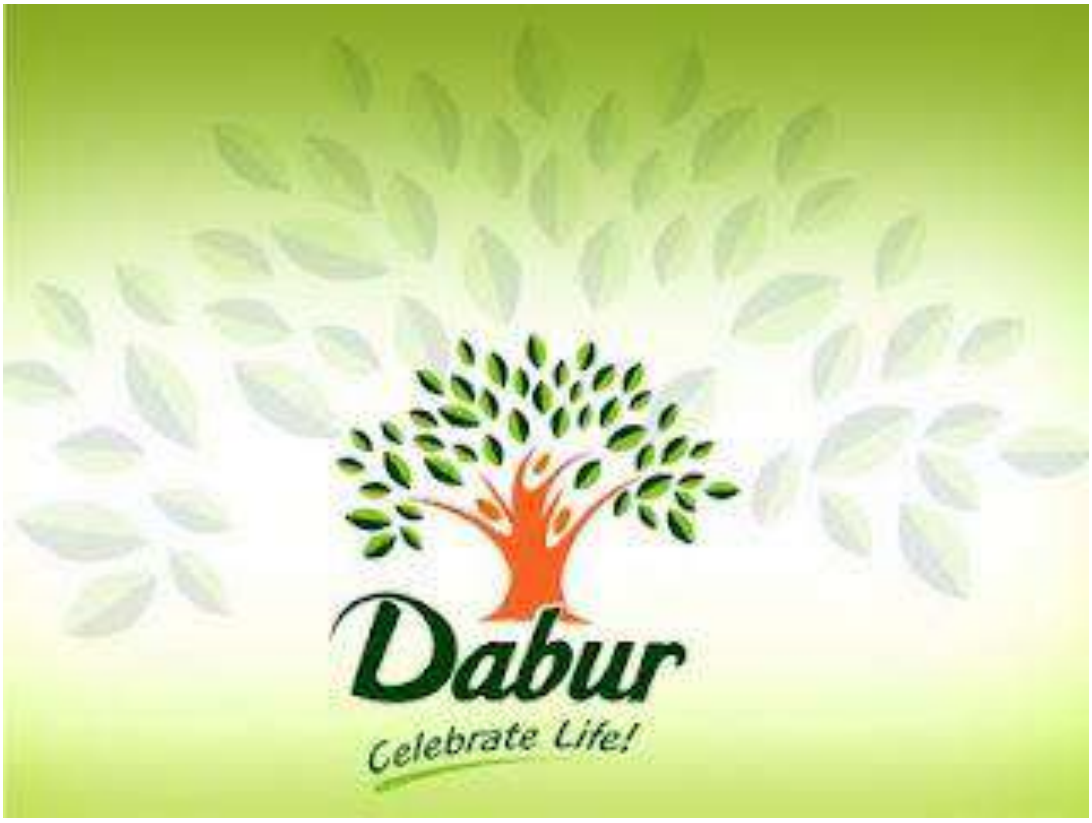
চায়ে চুমুক দিতে দিতে, সুধা মাথা নিচু করেই জিঙ্গাসা করল " তুমি কি প্রত্যেক বছর ওখানে যাও? " _" যতদিন বেঁচে থাকব," স্বপ্নের ঘোরে, মৃদু স্বরে বলে চলল ___"ওখানেই আমার সব, আমার প্রেম, আমার হৃদয়ের স্পন্দন " ।

এরপরই রাঘবন সুধার চায়ের কাপটা তুলে নিয়ে, গভীর আবেগে চুমুক দিল। মুখে করুন হাসি। কাপটা তখনও রাঘবনের আঙ্গুলের মধ্যে দৃঢ়ভাবে আলিঙ্গনবদ্ধ।

সুধা রাঘবনের চোখে চোখ রেখেই অন্য কাপটা তুলে নিয়ে ঠোঁট স্পর্শ করল। ঠিক এই মুহূর্তে রাঘবন গেয়ে উঠল ---"ও তোর মনের মানুষ এল দ্বারে -মন যখন জাগলি নারে - , তার চলে যাবার শব্দ শুনে, ভাঙল রে ঘুম - ভাঙল রে ঘুম ' । সুধা ও রাঘবনের সুরে সুর মেলালো।

মুখে মৃদু হাসি, অশ্রু ভেজা চোখে একে অপরের দিকে তাকিয়ে রইল।

With Best Compliments From:



Shine with the goodness of nature

With best compliments from:

Thank You!