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**THE  
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MAGAZINE**



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JUSTICE  
Kishore Guha  
3rd Year, Philosophy.



## Foreword

The role of Presidency College Magazine in the maintenance of high standard of attainment and culture of this institution is self-evident. This magazine which has celebrated its Silver Jubilee, has a special place due to the vision and imagination of the Student-Editors and Professors-in-charge and has always synthesised literary aspirations with joy of achievements. As in the past, so in the future, I expect the Magazine to continue to be the axis of intellectual thoughts and critical assessment of the varied aspects of life. I feel that this foreword will not be complete without referring to my predecessor Dr. S. K. Basu who ably administered this institution for long 8 years and handed over the reins of office in September last. Before I conclude, I congratulate the members, staff and students who worked hard for the Magazine and whose strenuous efforts, enthusiasm, I am confident, will lead to further growth and improvement of this esteemed Magazine.

R. L. Sen Gupta  
*Principal*



# U. S. A. IN VIETNAM : AN APPRAISAL

By

Debasis Chakrabarti

*3rd Year, History*

'The doctrine of non-intervention to be a great principle of morality, must be accepted by all Governments. The despots must consent to be bound by it as well as the Free States. Unless they do, the profession comes but to this : that the wrong side may help the wrong but the right must not help the right'. ( John Stuart Mill ).

How prophetic was the English utilitarian of the 19th century ! For, in these words Hubert Humphrey, the Vice-President of the United States sees the justification of American intervention in Vietnam. As he wrote, "Here is a clear Statement of why Americans are in Vietnam. It is not of our own volition, but by request, by treaty, by obligation and by commitment." Thus America is in Vietnam to uphold the right, to crush aggression and to build up a free-society. Before entering into the merits of the American policy in Vietnam, it would be worthwhile to know the history of this small state which has received the attention of the whole world.

The total population of the country, which formed a part of French Indo-China, despite 24 years of severe losses in war is to-day about 31 millions of whom  $16\frac{1}{2}$  million at present live north of the 17th Parallel ( the present dividing line between the two Vietnams ) and  $14\frac{1}{2}$  millions South of the Parallel. Of these, some 26 millions are ethnically homogeneous Vietnamese, speaking a common language with the usual dialective variations.<sup>1</sup> Vietnam along with Laos and Cambodia was under French colonial rule for nearly a century. During the second world war Japan occupied Vietnam. The resistance to Japanese occupation had been spearheaded by Ho Chi Minh and his National Independence Front which came to be known as the Viet Minh Front. Though it has been pointed out by many that the Front was essentially a Communist Guerrilla army, perhaps there is more truth in Edwin. O. Reischauer's statement that the 'whole history of the Communist Vietminh revolt... indicates that it rested more heavily on nationalism for its mass support than on Communist dialectics.<sup>2</sup>'

On 2 September 1945, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (D.R.V.)

under the Presidentship of Ho Chi Minh was proclaimed north of the 16th Parallel. But soon the British army, under the Postdam Settlement, entered South Vietnam and "reinstalled the discredited French authority South of the 16th Parallel thereby making themselves responsible for the war which followed in Vietnam."<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the French on 6 March, 1946, signed an agreement with the D. R. V. Government, granting her independence within the Union, subject to the retention of Small French forces in North Vietnam for a period of five years. But France gradually nibbled at Vietnam's territory from the South to the North and finally launched a war of colonial reconquest thereby leading to the outbreak of the Vietnamese peoples' nationwide resistance war on 19 December, 1946.

As the war was progressing in favour of the D. R. V. forces, America gradually intensified her intervention in Vietnam, first by setting up a military mission at Saigon, then by increased financial and military aid to the French troops. But despite this massive American aid, on 7 May, 1954, the D. R. V. forces scored a resounding victory over the French troops at Dienbienphu. On 8 May, 1954, the Geneva Conference on Indo-China held its opening session.

At the Geneva Conference which was expected to end the war in Indo-China, it was decided to divide Vietnam provisionally along the 17th Parallel between the French Union Forces High Command and the Peoples' Army of Vietnam and it was decided that general elections affecting the entire nation would be held before July, 1956 and it would be supervised by the International Control Commission consisting of India, Poland and Canada. The Geneva Agreement also prohibited the introduction of military men and materials into Vietnam. Above all, the establishment of military bases under the control of a foreign power was also forbidden.

With the exception of the representatives of the U. S. A. and the State of Vietnam ( South Vietnam ), all the other representatives present at the conference agreed to respect the Final Declaration. Badell Smith ( U. S. A. ) and Tran Van Do ( S. V. ), by refusing to adhere to the Declaration could not destroy its validity in International Law.<sup>4</sup> However, the former took note of the agreement and assured the conference of the desire of the United States not to use force with the intention of repudiating the Settlement.

Thus it is clear that the Vietnam problem could have been solved through the framework of the Geneva Agreement. Contrary to the agreement, however, no election has been held so far. The Americans

who had gradually replaced the French in South Vietnam regarded themselves as "the Godparents of little Vietnam" then headed by the Catholic Ngo Dinh Diem. They continued to pour into the country arms, advisers and finally their own troops. America's policy was to avoid a possible re-unification of the country under Ho Chi Minh. And yet Arthur Goldberg said, "We are not waging a holy war against Communism. We seek no American Empire or sphere of influence in Asia. ....We seek a negotiated political solution based on two points :

( i ) That the people of South Vietnam should have the same right of self-determination, the same right to choose their own future, free of force or external interference, that the U. N. Charter affirms for all people.

( ii ) That unification of all Vietnam shall be decided upon through a free choice by the peoples of both the North and the South without outside interference....."<sup>5</sup>

These points, resembling those already emphasised at Geneva have been repeatedly violated by the Americans who have been prompt enough to justify their intervention on various pretexts. First of all they think that the Communist countries, especially China, have violated the Agreement by sending military equipment to Hanoi. Secondly, they believe that the totalitarian regime of North Vietnam does not represent the people under its sway and the North Vietnamese have no right of free expression or free movement and finally that North Vietnam is guilty of committing aggression upon the South through the National Liberation Front which is initiated and controlled by Hanoi.

These allegations, however do not stand in the light of a scrutiny. As to the complaint that the North Vietnam army must have been armed with war-material imported from China, M. T. Desai the first Chairman of the ICC made it clear that the Commission was satisfied that the main routes through which war material could reach Hanoi were under effective control.<sup>6</sup> Regarding the restrictions on the people of North Vietnam, the ICC found no evidence of any person wishing to go South being obstructed or hindered by the authorities but on the contrary, received a great number of petitions alleging that the Church authorities had exercised pressure on certain persons to move to the South.

It has been pointed out by many, including the British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart that over a million displaced people from the North should be regarded as a strong evidence of the unpopularity of the Communist regime. But Mr. Murti in his "Vietnam Divided" has shown that the exodus was due to various other reasons. Many left the North

because their village-neighbours had already left and their leaders and priests had asked them to do likewise. Many others were afraid of American Bombing. Again, the temporary exodus of people to work in plantations in the South was an annual feature—followed by their return during the harvest season. Moreover the closure of several French concerns forced many people to leave North Vietnam. Politically, those who left had supported the French and the Bao Dai during the resistance movement and now felt that they could not stay in the D. R. V. Besides, many Catholics feared that under the D. R. V. regime their religious liberties would be at stake. The Western press made much of this last point, but one must remember that on 14th June, 1955, President Ho Chi Minh promulgated a decree granting freedom of religion. According to Article 15 of the same "freedom of conscience and freedom of worship are the rights of the people. The authorities of the D. R. V. always respected these rights and helped the people in the practice of these rights."

So much for the unpopularity of the Hanoi regime. Not content with it the Americans have found behind the National Liberation Front (N. L. F.) the long arm of Ho Chi Minh. According to them the members of N. L. F. are all North Vietnamese who had infiltrated into the South through the Ho Chi Minh Trail and thus North Vietnam is guilty of aggression on the South. But it is common knowledge that the N. L. F. consisted of former resistance members, leaders of political parties and Social organisations and intellectuals all driven to desperation by Diem's autocratic rule. Peasants who rejected the living death of the concentration camp villages extended the mass base of the Front along with members of the Hoa Hao, Cao Dai and Binh Xuyun—armed religious sects—who had escaped annihilation by Diem's army. Included also were Buddhist leaders persecuted as a result of Diem's fanatical Catholicism and representatives of minorities threatened with extinction.<sup>7</sup> William Warbey, the Labour M. P., during his visit to Vietnam in 1965 noted that while a few thousands of the Southern born who had been regrouped to the North in 1954 had probably by now gone South to fight, their assistance represented only a tiny fraction of the total war effort of the N. L. F. Even the American Senator Wayne Morse declared that "no new evidence has been offered to change the assessment that the great bulk of the Viet Cong rebels were local residents, that close to 90% of their weapons were captured from Government sources and that the Civil War would continue whether or not it received aid or leadership from North Vietnam."<sup>8</sup> Moreover, it must be noted that North and South Vietnam are not two nations but two zones of a single nation.<sup>9</sup>

Thus we find that none of the arguments advanced by America holds ground when confronted with the real situation. It remains to be seen how America and South Vietnam treated the Geneva Agreement.

Notwithstanding the provision for freedom of movement, those who wanted to leave for the North experienced, to say the least, certain difficulties. Moreover, Diem's government violated the principle of democratic liberty for all people and organizations by fostering 'Denounce Communist' campaigns ( 5th June, 1955 to 1st February, 1959 ) in which, as ICC reports confirmed, individual and mass murders, atrocities and wholesale arrests directed particularly against the old resistance army members took place. The sinister law of 6 May, 1959 ( Law 10/50 ) was aimed at eliminating the "Viet Cong"—the name arbitrarily given about that time to any one who opposed the regime. Under it, special military courts consisting of military personnel were set up by the Ministry of Defence. Proceedings took place without any preliminary enquiry ; the accused received his summons 24 hours before the Court sat ; there were only two types of punishment—death and life imprisonment.<sup>10</sup> The fact that N. L. F. was founded on 20 December, 1960, long after the enactment of this cruel law proves that the people of South Vietnam had no alternative but to live as concentration camp slaves, die under the guillotine ( assassination squads) or fight back. It was not surprising that they preferred resistance to oppression.

Commenting on the military situation, the ICC blamed Diem's Government for having violated the Geneva Agreement by receiving aid far in excess of what was contemplated by the agreement. It also pointed out that the South Vietnam Government had virtually entered into a military alliance with the U. S. A. in violation of the Geneva Agreement.<sup>11</sup> The setting up of U. S. air bases, the landing of 475000 U. S. troops and the ever-increasing American Commitment amply confirms the findings of the ICC. Another familiar U. S. argument is that she is bound by solemn treaties to help a Free Government. But none of the Governments from that of Ngo Dinh Diem to the present military Junta headed by Kao Cy can be called democratic. Regarding the referendum through which Diem became the head of the State, the 'Economist' of London observed ; "with the scales so weighted, it was surely unnecessary to make the gravitational pull of Mr. Diem doubly certain by dubious means and it seems a pity that the number who voted in the Saigon-Cholon area, is reported to have exceeded the total of names on the register by 150000". In fact it was the U. S., not the Vietnamese people, who decided that Ngo Dinh Diem would continue to be the Prime

Minister of South Vietnam.<sup>12</sup> Moreover the election was illegal since it was a virtual repudiation of the Geneva Agreement on a general and impartial election.<sup>13</sup>

Therefore, all these American pretensions do not explain the underlying motives of American involvement in Vietnam. It is generally believed that "no amount of American military assistance in Indo-China can conquer an enemy which is every where and at the same time nowhere." Yet the Americans have been committing themselves more and more, if only because of big power chauvinism which unfortunately is an intoxicating force.

We can only try to understand America's policy against the background of Indo-China's immense economic resources. Tin, Rubber, Rice, Key strategic raw materials are what the war is really about. President Eisenhower was frank enough when he said : "Let us assume that we lost Indo-China.....The tin and tungsten that we so greatly value from that area would cease coming,.....So when the United States votes 400 million dollars to help that war, we are not voting a give away programme. We are voting for the cheapest way that we can to prevent the occurrence of something that would be of a most terrible significance to the United States, our security, our power and ability to get certain things we need from the riches of the Indo-Chinese territory and South-east Asia."<sup>14</sup>

Equally worth considering is the geographical importance of Vietnam which stands at the hub of a vast area of the World—South East Asia—an area with a population of 249 million persons. ....He who holds or has influence in Vietnam can effect the future of the Philippines and Formosa to the East, Thailand and Burma with their huge rice surpluses to the West and Malaysia and Indonesia with their rubber, ore and tin to the South.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, according to many, behind the American determination to preserve South Vietnam's separate entity is the long range plan for the containment of Communist China. But no satisfactory explanation has been offered as to why the Chinese occupation of South Vietnam would have meant the fall of Malaya or Indonesia, any more than a Communist presence of the mainland had meant the fall of Taiwan. To one writer, the prospect of N. L. F. Victory constitutes a threat to the corrupt and unstable dictatorships like those in Thailand and South Korea.<sup>16</sup> Thus America is in Vietnam, not for the sake of democracy and freedom, but to preserve her own economic and military interests and also to protect the reactionary interests of the SEATO powers.

Therefore all the American peace initiatives are mere pretexts for further escalation of the war. Besides, while the U. S. A. goes on initiating peace proposals, she has rejected no less than six efforts to negotiate an end to the war. John Foster Dulles said on 20 June, 1955 that "U. S. believes that if there are conditions of a really free-election, there will be no serious risk that the Communists would win." But when the Hanoi Government proposed to end the war through a new Geneva Conference in 1965, America rejected it doubtlessly because she was afraid of a free-election in Vietnam. America knows that "had elections been held possibly 80 per cent of the population would have voted for Ho Chi Minh."<sup>17</sup>

Thus the war continues despite every effort to conceal it—essentially a war by the Vietnamese people against the military invasion of their country by the United States.<sup>18</sup> America goes on increasing her military strength in violation of the Geneva Agreement. She has 475000 troops and 31000 aircrafts in South Vietnam. She has used Napalm, Lazy dogs and fragmentation bombs. She has introduced poisonous gas on a wide scale. Her bombardment on the North are directed not only against military targets but also against hospitals, schools and sanatoria. The bombing has exceeded tonnages exploded during World War II and the Korean War, and approaches Hiroshima proportions. The result? It has exterminated, in addition to some 170,000 North Vietnamese-Vietcong, close to half-a-million civilian population of whom a minimal 200,000 were children and has left an incalculable number wounded or permanently disabled, the Americans have tortured, mutilated and murdered in their hundreds prisoners of war and Civilian internees. The U. S. forces have also chemically devastated vast areas of the country and left them unfit for cultivation ; they have destroyed the food-stocks of entire villages ; they have participated with their allies in the raping of an estimated 22,000 women and young girls ; they have transformed Saigon into a gigantic brothel and degraded Vietnamese womenhood and have totally subverted the people's right to self-determination.<sup>19</sup> Yet America is far from achieving a military victory. She has not been able to crush the freedom movement. The reason behind all these, as Mao Tse Tung has said, is the ignorance of the "decisive political fact that.....Government cut off from the Masses could not win against wars of liberation,"<sup>20</sup>

But then what is the ultimate solution? It rests on the American realization that "it is nationalism, not Communism, that animates the resistance movement in Vietnam against all foreigners, and now parti-

cularly against Americans.”<sup>21</sup> And so there is only one honourable course open to the U. S. in Vietnam and that course is unilateral, unconditional withdrawal. Only by its voluntary adoption of this honourable, if belated, course of action can the United States hope to replace with confidence and respect the mistrust and contempt in which she is now held by most of the rest of the world. If America does not do this but intensifies bombing on the North, increases her military strength in the South and at the same time goes on making peace proposals, it will be our duty, the duty of every freedom loving person to side with the Vietnamese people. As Bertrand Russel writes, the end of the war in Vietnam will depend on our capacity to speak and act clearly, alerting people to its origin and motive force. When people in Great Britain and America oppose Johnson effectively, then and only then will the war end. No other solution is possible.<sup>22</sup> It is heartening to notice the growing liberal opposition in the United States to the official policy on Vietnam.

### Notes

1. William Wareby, M. P—Vietnam : the truth page 13
2. E. O. Reischauer—Wanted An Asian Policy, page 253
3. B. S. N. Murty—Vietnam Divided, page 3
4. William Warbey—Vietnam : the truth, page 49
5. Arthur Goldburg in the Newsweek, July 10, 1967.
6. B. S. N. Murty—Vietnam Divided, page 54
7. Wilfred Burchet—The Furtive War, page 95
8. Quoted in I. F. Stone's weekly, 21st December, 1964.
9. Walter Lippman in New York Herald Tribune. April 20, 1965.
10. Wilfred Burchet—The Furtive War, page 44
11. B. S. N. Murty—Vietnam Divided, page 57
12. B. S. N. Murty—Vietnam Divided, page 145
13. The Times, London, October 24, 1955.
14. At a conference of State Governors at Seattle, August 4, 1953.
15. Henry Cabot Lodge in an address before the Middlesex club of Cambridge on February 28, 1965.
16. David Horowitz—From Yalta to Vietnam, pages 421—22.
17. Dwight Eisenhower—Mandate For Change. page 372
18. Felix Green—Vietnam ! Vietnam !
19. D. Howard Ady in the Now, August 4, 1967.
20. Conversation with Edger Snow, quoted in David Horowitz's From Yalta to Vietnam.
21. U. Thant at a speech in Greensboro, July 30, 1967. page 159
22. Lord Bertrand Russell in the Now, July 21, 1967.

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Our Homage

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A. Chanda

## THE LATE PRINCIPAL APURVAKUMAR CHANDA

Professor (and Head of the Department) of English, Presidency College, 1926-30, 1933-34; Principal, 1943-44. An M. A. of Oxford (where he came into close contact with men like Robert Bridges, G. K. Chesterton, Aldous Huxley, Herbert Read, etc.), he was, after a brief spell at the Calcutta University, appointed to the Indian Educational Service and posted as Principal, Dacca Intermediate College. Though he was at Presidency College only for short periods, his vivacious personality left quite a stamp on the College and he is still remembered with affection and esteem by his many pupils. In his subject he was especially interested at the two ends of it—Old English and twentieth-century English Literature. His Principalship of the College, though brief, was marked by important innovations that have come to stay—e.g., admission of girl students; making the Degree Courses Honours-oriented by stopping the admission of Pass students; marking attendance with figures instead of p's and a's as previously; promulgation of the present constitution of the Students' Union (which he drew up himself) based on the principle of proportional representation. He also served several other Government Colleges in undivided Bengal as their Principal, was the first Indian Director of Public Instruction of the province, officiated for some time as Additional Secretary to its Department of Education, and after retirement, was appointed Chairman of the newly set-up Board of Secondary Education. In 1936 he was a member of the Indian delegation to the League of Nations, and from 1936 to 1940, a nominated member of the Central Legislature; he was also a member of the Central Board of Film Censors. His life-long friendship with Sudhindranath Dutta and close association with Rabindranath Tagore and his circle (he accompanied the Poet as his private secretary during his visits to Canada and Japan) made him a well-known figure in literary circles in Bengal in his time. The Rabindra Parishad of Presidency College owes a great deal to him.

Our most respectful homage to the memory of the deceased.

## RODIN, THE SCULPTOR

Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty

6th Year, M. A. (Modern History)

'Here are figures that express the essential attitudes of a man's aspiration and interpret the whole law of his body. These illustrate the storms of desire, the calm of expectation, untiring hopes, eternal disillusionments, the grandeur as well as the desolation of his life, a thirst so great that all the waters of the world dry up in it like a single drop, a heroism so hopeless that its glory fades like a smile. Over this grand panorama of inanimate life, throbbing with still passion, looms the image of the Thinker; sitting silent and immobile; contemplating with all seriousness over the immensity of the spectacle unfolding under him.'

This is how Rene' Auguste Francois Rodin, the greatest sculptor since Michelangelo and the mightiest thinker in stone of modern times, would have described the nature of his art.

Rodin was a Parisian, born in 1840, in a working-class-quarter No. 3, Rue de La Arbalete. When a child of five, Aunt Therese gave him black drawing crayons with which he drew all and sundry on papers used for wrapping grocery and on walls of the dingy alley. His father, Tean Baptiste Rodin, a police messenger, pictured for his son a bright future as a minor police official and intensely disliked this perverse drawing habit of the child. He sent him to a Jesuit school and then to Brother Alexander's institution. In the Jesuit school where art was a taboo, Rodin secretly sketched the harsh and stiff features of the teachers with an unholy joy. Latin and Geography however were chaos in his mind and Brother Alexander sent him back as uneducable. Inspite of his father, Rodin finally got himself admitted into the Reu de L'ecole, a famous preparatory school of arts, with the help of Barnouvin, Sister Marie's friend. Professor Lecoq of the school, who befriended him throughout his life, was a remarkable and unorthodox teacher, who taught him to draw by training his memory. As he did not have the money to buy colours, Lecoq gave him stone with a warning that sculpture was hard and poor. since the only patron, the Government, was always changing. After some time he sought to enter into the official Beaux-Arts, but was rejected thrice.

About this time Barnouvin married another girl, and Marie in despair took the veil and pined away to death. Grieved at the loss of his emotional twin, his solace and confidante Rodin entered the monastery of the Eudistes as Brother Augustin. But his restless spirit found no consolation in solitude and austerity. Subjects for sculpture, Marie's head above all, struggled up in his mind like a great hungry mass against extinction. Father Eymard persuaded him to see that the order was not an way of escape but of fulfilment, that he could serve God better in the world by serving beauty with sacrifice and selfdenial. Six months later, therefore, Rodin returned and began to work for a livelihood, at first as an assistant with Carriere-Belleuse then as a partner with the Dutch Van Rasbourg. But this commercial drudgery tired him and Rodin decided to strike out on his own, whatever the cost. He visited the museums of Belgium, Holland and Italy and studied the great masters of painting and sculpture. He admired with an intense sense of participation Rembrandt who had made an undying world with his hands even as everything was dying around him and within him. He marvelled at the calm, graceful balance and reason of Phidias' sculpture. The Greek ideal of beauty which disdained the humble, the malformed and the witless, and was designed only for the affluent, the elect and the handsome had no appeal for him. But its perfect harmony between the thought and the matter captivated him. Above all, he gloried in Michelangelo's Gothic virility which had made him paint as if he was unable to endure his own puny body. Michelangelo's themes, the striving for eternity, the contention of soul against the bonds of matter, the sanctity of effort and suffering filled Rodin's mind with a sneering contempt for his own recent works. But Michelangelo's contempt for life did not attract him since he loved life for the intoxicating experiences it provided. All his life Rodin, by his own admission, swayed between Phidias and Michelangelo.

Rodin's work grew, misled neither by praise nor by blame, alone with itself and with nature. Long cradled in purity, it made its debut in the world like a triumphant, invincible reality which did not crave justification from the approval of the multitude. This thorough mastery over his medium, acquired in these early years, accounted for his unshakable confidence in later life.

Rodin's first important work was the Man Awakening to Nature, representing the first palpitation of reason in humanity still young. The legs of the youth, not yet fully awake, are still lax and almost racillating, but as our eyes mount up, we see the pose becoming firmer, the chest expanding, the face lifting itse l towards the sky and the arms stretching

in an effort to throw off the torpor. This realistic, sensuous and delicate figure was at first accepted by the Paris Salon but was subsequently removed by an embarrassed jury from public exhibition when it was attacked on all hands as obscene, as a hermaphrodite, as being cast on the flesh of the model. It was only by lodging a protest, sending photographs and casts of the model that Rodin could secure an equivocal rebuttal of the popular verdict from the jury.

In 1878 Rodin created John the Baptist. John advances with an earth-spanning stride, with arms agitated, fingers widespread, mouth agape. His features though rough, rugged and stark are yet the proud features of a man possessed of a passion beyond himself. The figure outraged all conventional ideas about how a saint should be seen. But the Salon accepted it and awarded it the third medal.

St. John won Rodin influential friends. The Ministry of Fine Arts now offered him the choice of a state command as an amende honourable for all that he had gone through and placed at his disposal a studio, free of charge, in the statemarble repository. Rodin decided to execute the scene of the Gate of Hell from the 3rd canto of Dante's Inferno on a door for the future museum of decorative Arts. From 1880 till almost 1917, Rodin remained fascinated and absorbed with the subject, spending on it all sides of his varied and stupendous genius.

The gate expressed Rodin's deep concern for France's fate as a nation and man's fate as man. For France it was an age of decadence and corruption. Napoleon III had gone, leaving a legacy of shame to the republican Government in the loss of Alsace-lorraine to Germany. In place of a democratic empire, there was now an empire of democracy and while France had been corrupt at the top before, now it was corrupt at the bottom. Religion was in disgrace and science had failed to bring the expected utopia. Men found virtue drab and boring, sin exciting and interesting. Art was dead and men had ceased to meditate, to dream or to contemplate. All they cared for was utility and physical pleasure. They had no love for their profession and regarded it as a frightful necessity, a cursed drudgery. Even the French Salons, which were once nurseries of art, were like spentup women who liked to be courted but were incapable of giving love. The Gate, Rodin decided, would be man's 'Valle'e de la misere'. Dante's 'Leave all hope, ye that enter' burnt itself into his brain.

So conceived, the Gate became a vast writhing sea of demoniac anguish, ferocity and carnality. There is Ugolin, the Pisan Count, bending over the flesh of his dead children in devouring hunger, but at the

same time, turning away his head in horror,—the centauress, yearning despairingly with her longing arms towards an unattainable end but her hind-hoofs grappling the soil, in a vain effort to kick free,—the three figures, bent downwards by the abysmal pressure, the thinker, bearing the tremendous pressure within himself, struggling to climb out of the brute into the thinker. Such was the Gate exhibiting in all 176 figures.

Rodin's hell is the earth, the human existence, a hell of compassion and suffering. There are no demons or devils to tempt or attack the sinners. The demons are their own flesh and thought, their love and hates. They are not wilful sinners. They are swept on inspite of themselves by degrading excess or by the law of time. Their gestures, failing to understand their own significance, are no longer resolute and direct as in ancient statues. They are much more distracted and hasty, impatient and nervous, hurried and abrupt. There is much more mourning for what is lost, much less courage in attacking obstacles, much more calculation, and much less spontaneity. This is a desolate world—born in the pity of the artist.

Though Rodin was still a suspect because of his heretical figures, there was a wave of public sympathy for the 'Gates' because of the rumours about a royalist-clerical plot to destroy them. Soon however the Ministry of Fine Arts, began prodding Rodin to finish the tomb which threatened to end up being his own. Rodin, however, manged to take his own time.

In 1884, the city of Calais asked him to execute a monument in honour of its heroic burghers, who, in 1347 had offered themselves up to Edward III of England in sacrifice to prevent the massacre of the rest of the inhabitants. Rodin at once felt that there was a point in this story in that great moment of the setting forth of the burghers, at which something sublime and simple had happened, something independent of circumstances. Six men rose up before him, each of whom stood ready to bear his life out of the city, with solemn rejoicing of spirit and suffering of the body and yet coming to his decision in his own way and living through the last hour in his own manner.

The men had laid aside all but their shirts, fastened rope around their necks and set out with the keys of the town and the fortress—followed by the retreating sounds of the wailing and weeping crowd. Rodin created the aged leader, Eustace de saint Pierre with the hanging, loose-jointed arms and the heavy, trailing step of an old man, weary with the privations of a long siege. He does not hesitate, he is not afraid. He advances steadily, his venerable head bowed with its long grey hair, his eyes half-closed in silent communion. To his right stands the burgher

holding the key which he must deliver to the English. He has not ear for his own fate, but he stiffens his whole body to muster the strength to bear the humiliation of the capitulation of his city. His lips are pursed together, his hands bite into the key and in his lean, straight frame defiance is set aflame. To the left, there is a man, bowing his head in submission as if already offering it to the executioner and walking almost too fast, as if, having decided upon the sacrifice, he longs to shorten the time separating him from his dread martyrdom. Behind them comes another burgher who, holding his bowed head in his hands, tries to collect himself, but then abandons himself to violent despair, thinking of those whom his going would leave destitute. A fifth burgher, younger than others turns back his head and makes a fatalistic gesture with his right hand. He is anxious, but resigned. Finally there is the man 'passing through life'. His right arm rises before his eyes as if to dissipate some frightful nightmare and opens in the air as if to let something go. He is taking leave of all uncertainty, all happiness unrealized, all suffering unfelt, all that the shining mornings of life might have brought with them, as also of the death which he had thought to meet after many, many days.

In 1895 the figures were dedicated and placed in the market place of Calais, the same spot from which the sad pilgrimage once began. They stood silent on a pedestal, a little above the daily life of the people, stark in the solitude of the wind and the sky, like a living chaplet of suffering and sacrifice. With the dedication they immediately became fellow citizens of all French men, who had yielded, yet not yielded, who were suffering, yet would endure, fragments as it were, of the French soil, impregnated with French spiritual dignity and heroism in the face of tragedy. Rodin was made an honorary citizen by the city of Calais.

In 1890 the Société des Gens des lettres de France commissioned Rodin to make a statue of Balzac to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his birth. Balzac was the first writer Rodin read who wrote about a world he knew, the world of 'La Comédie Humaine'. He visited Balzac's home, the landscape of Touraine, which constantly reappears in his works, read and reread his letters and works, living through Pére Goriot, Rastignac and thousand other characters created by Balzac. He studied all his existing portraits, pressed into his service the records of his contemporaries and got the exact measurements of Balzac from an aged tailor who had fitted him some 60 years ago. Finally he ferreted out a magnificent model, a short necked, strong chested, fat-ballied, stubby legged peasant from Touraine, Pierre Ralle the butcher.

The Balzac that was born was a broad, striding figure, lost in the shroud of a Dominican robe. The colossal body is strung with the enormous head by a huge neck. The face is fleshy, ravaged, pathetic, yet kindly lying back on a mass of disheveled hair. It is the face of an element, seething with creative power. The intoxicating glance, would have furnished the world, had it been empty. The flowing robe, the plaster cast gave the heavy body an amazing lightness, a sense of soaring. The figure appears correctly to answer La Martine's description,—'There was so much soul in him that it seemed to carry the weight lightly.' This was Balzac,—the man of abundant imagination, the founder of generations, the squanderer of destinies.

The Socie'te wanted the figure at the end of the stipulated 18 months but Rodin, as usual, could not finish. The hostile majority in the socie'te, decided to sue him in court, but moved by public opinion, postponed action till 1898 when Balzae was shown. The majority group rejected it as unfinished, since Rodin had cut off his arms as too powerful for the body. They condemned it as a snowman, a plaster scal, a satyr on a gross picnic, as an insult to human dignity, a slur on a great writer and a monstrosity. Even the Paris Municipal Council rejected the figure in horror. Rodin's friends wanted him to bring a suit against socie'te. Alarmed however at the prospect of losing his valuable time, Rodin withdrew the figure and returned the money to the socie'te.

In 1897 Rodin did a bust and a figure of Hugo. Hugo, already martyred by too many sculptors, refused to pose for him. But an opportunity came. Juliette Drouct, Hugo's mistress for 50 long years, was dying with cancer. Hugo visited her everyday. Juliette invited Rodin to model Hugo from the alcove overlooking the sickroom through heavy drapes, so that Hugo might not know about it. Resolved not to be over sympathetic to Hugo, Rodin yet saw Hugo's spirit pervading his work, the spirit that never admitted defeat, that refused to see ugliness in humanity, that kept a never-ending watch over his beloved France. Hugo came alive with a strong jaw, severe cheeklines, powerful brow, rugged beard, passionate eyes, close-cropped hair, a supercilious and combative look. Placed on a rock by the sea, undraped like the elements, he was holding converse with the ocean. Rodin thus chose what he took to be the peak of Hugo's life, his rebellion against Napoleon La Pe'tit and his exile in Guernsay.

Rodin created pairings of Orpheus and Eurydice, Adonis and Venus Cupid and Psyche, Satyr and Faun, Pan and Nymph. The groups are caresses in stone, without myth or relicence, modesty or shame. His

'Eternal Idol' shows a sunlit Adonis kissing a glistening nymph. The delicate and pliant body of the kneeling nymph leans gently backward and her halfclosed eyes gaze down with an expression of forbearance, majesty and patience as if from the height of some silent night, upon the man, whose face is buried in her breast as in a bed of flowers. He is kneeling in an attitude of devotion, lower down in the stone, his hands placed behind him like useless, helpless things. "There is something of the atmosphere of purgatorio in the work. A heaven is at hand, but not yet attained. A hell is near which is not yet forgotten. As so often with Rodin, one does not dare interpret its meaning. It has thousands'.

Rodin's first important bust 'The man with the broken nose' was made from the face of Bibi, a derelict beggar, in 1864. The features are ravaged by striving, the forehead is caved in, the beard is clotted and bristly, the eyes are sodden and troubled, the mouth is parched and dry, the nose is a ruin. The face makes no accusation, no appeal for sympathy. It seems to carry within itself its own justice, a patience great enough for all its burdens. Rodin did many other busts. There is the sculptor Dalou, whose face vibrates with jealous energy and nervous fatigue, Henri Rochefort a pugnacious insurgent, with a forehead full of bumps, a mad beard and a wild tuft of hair, Puvis de chavannes with a high forehead and calm glance betraying the sublime landscapist, Baudelaire — somber, intense, suspicious, with a prevailing air of corruption.

Finally, Rodin created numerous hands, 'Hand of God' and Devil, hands upright and angry, hands in motion, in slumber, hands tired and without desire.

In 1900 Rodin built a pavilion housing all his pieces near the 'Exposition Universelle' with which Paris was celebrating the advent of the 20th century. The exhibition was a roaring success and Rodin's fame long overdue, now pervaded the western world.

After the 1900 'World Fair' Rodin concentrated more and more on painting. When king Sisowath of Cambodia and his daughter Samphoudry, came to France with their suite of dancers and musicians, Rodin followed them all the way down from Paris to Marseilles simply to watch their movements. In them, he divined movements formerly unknown, in comparison with which even Michelangelo's movements appeared to be hardly more than static contortions. The additional colours which their costumes inspired, were immediately recorded in his drawings. In his washdrawings, dry-point etchings and the Les Aquarelles he traced the frenzied law of the sexes, man's most secret beauties of attitude. The

drawings reveal the unconscious effort, the trembling wonder, the patient analysis and the unhurried science of Rodin.

Rodin obeyed nature in everything and never sought to command or improve her. He never dictated to his models the attitude they should take. He watched them freely moving about and when a movement pleased him he seized the pose immediately. For him, everything in nature was beautiful, because everything in nature has character. He never sought to soften the grimace of pain, the shapelessness of age, the perversity of mind. He believed, above all, that in nature nothing has more character than the human body, even in debility, disease and deformity. So the constant familiarity with the human body, which the Greeks acquired in watching the games, Rodin acquired by keeping a continuous supply of models in movement.

Rodin's sculpture is never in repose. It is always in restless movement. In nature all is movement. In decomposition, which is also movement, even death is subordinated to life. The universe is a ever-widening circle of hurtling motions. The heart beats, the blood moves, the mind roams far and wide. Sculpture, if it wanted to represent nature, could not take as its ideal a non-existent calm. However, Rodin's movement never passes beyond the surface of the plastic object itself. It is contained within the piece of sculpture like a water within the walls of a vessel. The vibrant mobility, therefore, never disturbs architectural calm and stability.

The movement is created by capturing the transition from one attitude to another. The life of the modern man, which is spent in the transitional states, does not have a beginning or an end. Photographs reproduce all parts of a body simultaneously at some sixtieth of a second, creating an impression of a body petrified in mid-air. Time is thus abruptly suspended. Time, in reality, does not stop and Rodin's sculpture which represents the progressive development of a movement is, in this sense, more truthful than photographic representation.

In order to interpret the movement Rodin made the plastic objects take possession of light and use it as their own. The inclines of the surface were manifoldly varied so that light which fell on them might glide from one incline to another, now slowly, now in cascade, now gleaming, now dull. In order to collect the light within the object, Rodin united the figures and arranged the planes in such a way that the eye was not carried beyond the object into empty space. The objects themselves, instead of standing in stark isolation against the space, appear to melt into vast

distances, communing with a darkling, soaring, enduring life. This makes them visible from far off.

Rodin had the power of bestowing on any part of the body the independent vitality of the whole. His statues, often without arms or legs, are yet complete in their self sufficiency. Arms and legs, they give the impression, are a superfluous adornment—something for the affluent and self indulgent, not for those in pursuit of noble poverty.

Rodin's great achievement was to restore to the art of sculpture a sense of stylistic integrity lost since the death of Michelangelo in three centuries of mannerism and academicism. If anatomy or colour were false, he knew, the artist would only raise a laugh when he wanted to be the most touching. His craft consisted of volumes and voids, holes and lumps, mass and space, planes and contours, weights and blocks, arranged in perfect harmony with each other and the surroundings—creating a vast symphony. He conceived form in depth and thickness, never in length; regarded a surface not as flat but as the extremity of an interior volume and looked for life which surges from a centre, expanding outwards from within.

To parade pyrotechnics of craft without trying to reveal the soul beneath was, however, an anathema for Rodin. It was like polishing the plough-share instead of driving it into the earth. He did not mumble any creed or perform any ceremonies. His religion was the worship of the eternal verities, hidden under fleeting lines and colours. The 'Imitation of Christ' by Spinoza was his favourite book in which he read the word 'art' in place of the word 'God'. His vision of a universal law of form was clarified by Spinoza's God of immanence and extension. When he retraced his drawing, enclosing the particular and the universal in the unity of a single line, when he advanced from the undulations of flesh to their geometric repose, at that moment he experienced Spinoza's endeavour to unite his thinking soul with the great consciousness underlying nature as a whole. He also believed, for apprehending nature, in Spinoza's fourth manner of understanding by which a thing is said to be perceived through its own essence. His devotion was not to the apotheosis of Man's genius most common to the artists of his time, but to the impersonal source of art—nature. Man, he believed with humility, reveals but does not create. In a materialistic and secularized world which grinds away the personal, he celebrated in his sculpture the most intimate emotions of his soul, the joys and sorrows of private existence, asking men to live after the dictates of their heart and thus helping to erode the tyrannies of convention. And so he enriched the soul of humanity, discovering to them riches in them-

selves until then unknown, giving them new reasons for loving life, new lights to guide them. He united, therefore, in perfect and errorless balance, the softest mysteries of emotion with the implacable severities of science. 'It is a work of longing which makes an artist', he declared his final verdict. 'The main thing is to be moved, to hope, to live, to tremble. Be a man before being an artist.'

Rodin influenced later artists not by telling them to do as he did but by revealing their own genius to them and by pushing them to its full sway. The greatest debt of the 20th century sculptures is to Rodin, whether they were his studio assistants like Bourdelle or Despali, or came under his direct influence like Brandusi, Matisse, Malliol, Alberto Giacometti or whether they derived from the same tradition like Rosso, Martini and Epstein.

It is difficult to pigeonhole Rodin as an impressionist or a cubist. It is true that he exhibited with Monet, owned Vangogh's picture, rediscovered El Graco, that he tried to copy what he saw, capture the geometrical truth in creation and break up the planes to record the fleeting effects of light. But then, though, for him, form was revealed to sight, the inner truth was revealed to touch. Unlike impressionists, he never based his methods on the optical theories of physicists, or dissolved everything into dazzling atmospheric vibrations or forgot the material he worked with. He placed his reliance like the post-impressionists, on solidly constructed forms. In contrast to impressionists who took up still life and landscape as their primary genres, he regarded the human body as his central theme. Far from counterfeiting reality, like impressionists, with photographic or mimetic accuracy, he sought to endow it with the soul he divined under it. The suggestion in all his work that forms are never integral, but in the process of becoming something else, that moments are non-existent and time is one continuous flow without climaxes or pauses, does create a link with a Monet, a Pisarro, a Rosso, or a Seurat. But even cubism or impressionism has not been able to represent, like Rodin, the eroding action of time in all its tragic extent or to evaluate the eternal human hope for moral stability in a perpetually fluctuating world.

Rodin was a pitiless element susceptible only to sculpture and his life reduced itself to work, to planes and contours. So simple became his life, that he never went wrong. In this lay a certain renunciation of life, but in this renunciation lay his triumph, because life entered into his work. Immovably centred like Emerson's hero, he has acted as a signpost to all the arts in this confused age.

In his work he was sustained but slow, believing a hard work rather

than inspiration. Nature takes time over her creation. He could not hurry nature while interpreting it. He was a perfectionist who could never finish, who was never satisfied with a statue when it was finished, and who realized at the fag-end of his life that he was only beginning to learn the elementary principles of sculpture. By his love for his work for its own sake he established the truth in a benighted world, which regarded work as a mere means to existence, that the artist is the man who takes pleasure in what he does.

No matter with whom Rodin made love, a part of him always remained detached. In his life he came to care in different ways, for two women, Rose Beuret and Camille Claudel, but refused to marry either. Rose served him blindly, looked after his studio, cooked, cleansed and slaved. She believed in him even if she did not understand him. Her devotion was rewarded, accidentally though, by a marriage with Rodin two weeks before her death, 50 years after the birth of their only son. When after Rose's death, time came to close the coffin, Rodin kissed her gently on the lips and whispered 'what beautiful sculpture'. Camille, a beautiful, refined and a patrician woman was half his age when she came as a student. She loved him intensely. But she was not content with being compelled and subjugated. She wanted marriage. She had a desire to shatter the images he had made in her likeness, which he caressed with loving devotion, a devotion in which she felt an extraordinary humiliation. Her love interfered with Rodin, who was wedded to art. He refused to marry her. She left broken hearted, and lost her sanity. All Rodin could say was, 'France has lost a beautiful sculptress'.

Rodin had less faith in individuals than in general ideas and his friendship was limited to a tacit understanding of the essential objects. And yet a friend, whom he often visited, could write about him, 'when he goes, he leaves some quality of gentleness like twilight in the room, as if a woman had been there'.

Because of his undivided nature, Rodin did not take the slightest interest in politics. In the first world war he began hating the Germans only when they destroyed the Rheims Cathedral. He refused to sign a petition demanding retrial of Dreyfus, because it took all his time to fight for Balzac. He did not agree with the republicans that French history started in 1789, nor with the royalists that the French should return to Louis XIV or Bonaparte. He did not like to be called a royalist because he cared for Notre Dame and chartres and on the next day to be accused of revolution because he made the burghers humble men except for Saint-Pierre,

Gradually Rodin's energy began to seep away. In 1916 he signed over all his art to France in return for the establishment of the Rodin museum in Hotel Biron. Since the senate refused to accept his work as unholy when, being a bachelor, he had also granted a life annuity to one Rose, Rodin sanctified his gift by marrying Rose. Rose died and even Camille's beautiful face began slipping away from his memory like a dream. He felt as if sculpture was being alienated from him. He had a stroke of cerebral congestion ending in haemorrhage and on November 12, 1917, his 77th birth day, he lapsed into a dreamless sleep, looking like his sculpture.

In his own life time Rodin began by being suspected as a maverick, a rebel, a nonconformist. In his own time he saw a generation of sculptors, growing up who condemned him as a re-actionary, a minor impressionist, a mere modeler. Today he is worshipped as a demi-god, who can do no wrong.

Rodin belongs to those Olympians, who continue to excite, puzzle, disturb and enlighten men for all time. He raised the immense arc of his world above us and made it a part of nature. Well might Bourdelle, his greatest disciple say, "The air would be less sweet to breathe without the power and grace your work spreads abroad."

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## WHITHER OUR DEMOCRACY

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It is in the post-Nehru period that how far we are successful in our commitment to a democratic set-up has become an arena of controversy among political thinkers. The issue is, indeed, very pertinent particularly when our country has already witnessed four general elections in a more or less peaceful manner.

The days when, government of the people, for the people and by the people, would form the kernel of perfect democracy are gone, as democracy in modern times is being defined by many haphazard ways in order to suit different conditions prevailing in different countries. Thus England's parliamentary democracy, Pakistan's basic democracy

and Mao Tse Tung's new democracy all, though claiming to possess the same degree of democratic spirit, vary in their respective ideas. It is in this perspective that the world's biggest democracy of ours, however, following the Western concept of parliamentary democracy, may also be said to have formed a class by itself in its way of promoting general welfare and security of the people.

In our constitution we have given to ourselves a stable democratic form of government in the Western sense, and have, to some extent at least, fulfilled the high aspirations of Attlee when he described us as the "Light of Asia", for whereas almost all Afro-Asian Commonwealth countries introduced a parliamentary democratic form of government of the British type, only two,—India and Nigeria are still capable of running it, though with its effective sharpness blunt. In four general elections our people have freely exercised the democratic right of choosing their representatives to Parliament. The widespread reverses suffered by the Congress Party in the last general election have amply proved the futility of N. Maxwell's observation that, "Democracy in India is government of the politician, by the politician and for the politician;" even our illiterate people have shaken off their traditional habit of voting for the Congress blindly without considering anything, and have thus registered their voice of dissatisfaction with the maladministration of the ruling party. That the surprising results of the fourth general election have once again proved to all political parties in India that no one can bully a democratic people for ever is an outstanding blessing of democracy for our poor country. Again, we have also successfully got over the different problems of choosing successors to Nehru and Shastriji. Thus so far as our democracy in the constitutional sense is concerned, we are more or less on a victory stand.

But democracy is something more than a mere institutional expression. It is, in its true sense, a habit of mind permeating the social, cultural, political and economic life of a country. Thus as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan puts it, democracy is "more than adult suffrage; it is the institutional manifestation of a refined way of life, which exalts the individual and invests him with dignity." It is in our failure to realize the vital link between institutional democracy and the experience of our people with a democratic way of life that various anti-democratic forces have greatly cropped up with all their menacing problems.

During the British rule, all the progressive currents of transforming our culturally and economically outmoded society into a constructive fellowship were ruthlessly freezed with the inevitable result that the

existing social structure failed to prove itself to be a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of a new democratic order. Thus our democracy had a premature birth having no connexion with an organic growth in the gradual process of evolution of our society. It was, therefore, the sudden result of a democratic revolution that created our Parliament and political parties.

With the withdrawal of the British, various well-to-do classes in our country have been on the blind rush for filling the resultant power-vacuum. This has gradually led to a chaotic situation in which our political parties are found to prefer standing for safeguarding the interests of certain classes to being guided by their high sounding principles. The evidence of this will be found in the increasing popularity of a somewhat communally indoctrinated party like the Jana Sangh in some important states after the last general election.

One of the potential blows to our democratic constitution is that we have created our constitutional structure and institutions on the Western pattern suitable for a laissez-faire techno-democracy and middle-class leadership. This has tremendously harmed our intention to introduce a socialistic pattern of society along with economic controls and plans. The increasing accumulation of wealth in a few hands is an eye-opener to the fact that we are gradually escaping from the reality that our democracy is to be a creation of the poor peasantry rather than of the bourgeoisie. Our Third Five-Year Plan reached a very gloomy end, and no one knows when the Fourth will start even though the Planning Commission has recently been drastically reformed. The evil spirit of devaluation seems to be lurking in the soaring prices of essential commodities. In our country of chronic economic problems, we can no longer tolerate this "widespread incompetence and the gross mismanagement of our resources," to put in Dr. Radhakrishnan's words.

It is somewhat irksome to note that although our production of foodgrains has increased by 55 per cent since 1951, we have still to depend solely upon food imports from the USA through P. L. 480 to feed our people. A country bowed down by overpopulation, disease, drought, famine, floods, poverty and violent disturbances is the real picture of India today. Under such circumstances, it is no wonder that our people have already lost their confidence, courage and vigour.

The absence of any tradition of popular responsibility in our political life is another factor undermining our democratic strength. Our politics is mainly agitational; we can never think of any problem solved without raising some dreadful cry. Many of our sly political leaders take the

opportunity of the irresponsible character of the masses for their individual or party gains ; even in the age of aggressive nationalism, our outstanding leaders had acted merely as unifying forces with a callous indifference towards their prime responsibility to educate the masses in liberal democratic ways. In politics, miracles are impossible ; hence it is not surprising if such masses today are not prepared for sacrificing a little for their democratic country. Our democracy may be in peril if the present cult of anarchy and violence among the people continues and if the leaders always subscribe to give what the people want without teaching them what they should want.

‘Status Quo’ in our chauvinistic sentiments is a great impediment to our democratic progress. Equally obstructive is the blind love or regard of many for everything foreign. Besides, our patriotism is often imbued by narrow political interests ; thus whereas the Left Parties would resist any invasion of Western ideas and sentiments into our country, the Right Parties and the Congress would always see a sinister development in the spread of Communistic ideas which is posing a great realistic challenge to our faked democratic socialism.

Our country being a land of different religions, frequent frictions between certain religious cultures intensify our anxiety. Some authorities, who are in favour of secularizing the aggressive Hindu cultural tradition, would point out that it was only the religious-political weapon of the ‘Cow Slaughter Ban’ movement that enabled the Jana Sangh to rout the Congress in Delhi in the last general election ; it is, they hold, a dangerous trend to drag religion into the field of politics for party gains. There are also some who criticize the alleged pro-minority attitude of our Government and suspect that every case of enforcing democratic secularism has some hidden political motivation of assisting or harming the interests of a certain religious group.

For our nascent democracy the most naked evil is the mass inertia that primarily arises from large-scale passivity of our educated and middle-class people in political affairs. In the first three general elections, the percentage of valid votes cast were 60.3, 62.9 and 52.96 respectively ; this shows that our enthusiasm for active participation in the administration of our country is gradually turning shy.

It is a wonder that the Parliament of the world’s biggest democracy never represents the whole nation. In 1951-52 general election, the Congress received 44.4 per cent of the total votes cast but won 74 per cent of the seats of the Lok Sabha ; the Congress, ruling over our country for

20 years, can never claim to have bagged the votes of the majority of the electorate.

The increasing gap between Parliament and people, constitutional promises and actual happenings is an awful vice of our democracy. Corruption, nepotism, favouritism, jobbery, etc, have made many of our leaders so much debased that even the former President had to warn : "Our political leaders should have a clear vision of the future of the country and not be content with their own individual comfort and survival."

Our seemingly strong diplomatic policy has so far been quite successful in transforming our friends into foes and our enemies into more bitter ones. Thus, having lost real friendship with our neighbouring states, we have long been in a state of emergency for meeting any threat from the other side of our borders, even at the cost of our fundamental rights which may have the further possibility of being restricted seriously by an irresponsible Parliament through an amendment act by virtue of article 368 of our constitution. Unfortunately the Judiciary has not hesitated to take the opportunity of such circumstances and has tried to deprive Parliament of its amending power by declaring in a majority statement that Parliament has no power to take away or abridge any of the fundamental rights by way of constitutional amendment, as these rights are given a transcendental position and kept beyond the reach of parliamentary legislation. This declaration may be regarded as a kick of non-confidence by the Judiciary upon our sacred democratic institutions of Parliament and public opinion.

The constitution of every country is what it does, whereas our constitution is what it is. And so, whenever we face any extra-constitutional matter, we feel ourselves to be in a fix. Thus the actual position of the Governor of a State—neutral or partial to the political party ruling at the Centre—has come in for heated controversy, particularly after the last general election when many non-Congress States have emerged. There are cases like Rajasthan where the Governor, it is suspected by our press and public contrary, to the claims of the well-wishers of Dr. Sampurnanand, has deliberately played the role of a Congress stooge. Such extra-constitutional problems need a good looking into at once by our constitution experts so that the democratic health of our country may be protected without any delay.

The rapid growth of fissiparous tendencies is also cornering our democracy. Punjab has already been split ; Mizos are not taking with a satisfied mind the present reorganization of Assam on a regional basis ;

the problem of Nagaland is still out of control ; the border dispute between Maharashtra and Mysore is gradually worsening. The Chief Ministers of different States always place their sole emphasis upon the regional interests rather than on the national good, forgetting that there is a country named India. The language problem, aggravated by the zeal of the ultra Hindi lovers to drive away English immediately from our country, has already cost our democracy the co-existence among different languages in different States.

The Centre's unrealistic attitude towards the non-Congress States particularly in respect of supplying the promised quota of food grains to them is the breeding ground of a tense Centre-State relationship. Our constitutional provisions empowering the Centre to control and interfere with almost every legislative, administrative and financial activity of the States have already hampered the execution of the federal principle, as a result of which our democracy minus the minimum of federalism has failed to promote any democratic cohesion between the Centre and different States.

The absence of any effective opposition is perhaps the worst threat to the survival of our democracy. Contrary to the hopes of our constitution fathers, we have a multiparty system in which the opposition, consisting of various parties having different ideological affiliations and reflecting the tri-polar power politics of the world, is not generally heeded by the party in power which alone holds an all India status and is superior to all other parties in its quantitative strength. The failure of the opposition parties in their potential capacity to afford alternative policies to our people has indirectly helped the party in power to go on unchecked in its autocratic activities. Retrenchment, labour unrest, 'gheraos', 'bundhs', student indiscipline etc., often backed by power-seeking parties for political gains, have characterized our democratic life. The mean tactics of encouraging defection, followed first particularly by the Congress Party so as to regain the 'Paradise Lost' in some States which witnessed its fall in the last general election, has already worked as a boomerang, bringing a considerable discredit to our political democracy and popular consent.

A perusal of the foregoing vicious developments clearly unveils the real face of our democracy which seems to be gradually withering. Now, a question may naturally arise : What is the way out ? According to critics, the answer is threefold. First, we must return to the system of rule by the elite, like the middle class leadership of England. But this is neither desirable nor possible in our country under the present circumstances.

tances. Secondly, we must educate our masses in liberal democratic ways ; and thirdly, the peasantry of our country must be awakened. These are the ways which offer the most effective solution by which our collapsing democracy may be saved and even bettered. With a spirit of ardent hope about the future of our people, leaders and constitutional socialistic democracy, I conclude with the following words of Mr. C. Rajagopalachari : "We shall not turn the corner until we reach the darkest point of the night. The darkest hour is said to be the hour before dawn. Let us hope that then we shall be moving towards less and less pride and illusion, and towards greater faith in the principles which made us free, towards less and less confusion arising out of futile ambitions."

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## THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURE IN INDIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

By

AMIT RAHA

( *Third Year, Economics* )

Indian economic planning is unique in the sense that it is the first case of a country, wedded to the attainment of economic progress in a political set up that is essentially democratic in nature, and outside the Communist orb, having undertaken to plan its development. The goals of planning in India are three :—first, the attainment of a significant increase in per capita real income ; second, the reaching of the take-off stage, when expansion of output is self-sustaining ; and third, the obtaining of an equilibrium in the balance of payments ( or a slight edge of imports over exports).

Mention is required, in our context, of two doctrines of broad developmental strategy. The first, of which Albert Hirschman is a notable exponent, maintains that economic progress can be attained only by creating dislocations in certain sectors of the economy, which are made to thrust forward ahead of the others. This creates 'dynamic tensions' which induce the decisions that are necessary if other sectors are to catch up', to quote John P. Lewis. Then some of these latter sectors get ahead of the

rest, thus continuing the process. The strategy, then, should be to allocate adequate investment finance to a set of 'basic' industries, leaving the others as they are, in the first instance.

Such a strategy, at least in the Indian case, can create more problems than it is likely to solve. If top priority is given to the construction of certain industries, without developing industries to supply raw materials to feed the former, they run below capacity and, thus, the return on the capital invested is below expectations. Again, foreign exchange might be drained away due to the necessity of importing supplements to domestic output.

The other doctrine calls for a balanced development of all industries, i. e., a simultaneous development of all industries with no dislocations. This obviously is free from the defects of the unbalanced growth doctrine.

Unfortunately, the Second Plan (the first properly integrated and co-ordinated plan in the series) was built up, 'partially', on the 'unbalanced growth' doctrine, since the accent was more on industry, especially heavy industry. The logic of such a plan lay in the fact that India must build up a domestic industry capable of producing goods that could substitute the goods hitherto imported. Again, since India was steadily losing export markets for her traditional exports, partially due to the increased substitution by technological substitutes, it was imperative for her, in order to earn foreign exchange, to develop exportable engineering goods.

At the time of inauguration of planning in this country, food supply was just able to strike an uneasy balance with the population. Surprisingly enough, nothing was done, in the sphere of agricultural research, to ensure, by developing high-yielding varieties of grain, a food surplus so that, if the population projection went wrong, and the rate of its growth became higher, the economy would not be thrown out of gear. True, a few dams were built, but the primary purpose was to supply electricity to the increasing number of industries that were springing up. The provision of irrigation water to cultivators was a secondary aim.

The worst happened. As the 1961 Census proved, the growth rate of the population over the decade 1951-1961 has been 2·1%. The Second Plan, on the other hand, had assumed a growth rate of 1·25%. Again, as mentioned previously, there was virtually no effort to raise agricultural productivity per acre. With no food surplus to fall back on, this could be dangerous. Indeed, this was one of the mistakes of Indian planners. The Indian Second Planframe betrays the profound influence of development models of Russia (the first country to introduce planning) and, to

some extent, of those of Communist China. As Vakil and Brahmanand have pointed out, the Planning Commission ignored the fact that Russia had embarked on planning with a different 'composition of resources', particularly as regards the amount of land, which was much greater in its case, and as regards the agricultural output, of which there was a substantial surplus.

How did this affect economic development? The resulting food shortage led to a continuously rising ( demand-push ) inflationary spiral. Food is a basic necessity of people. With a major part of the urban consumer's income being drained away on the purchase of food, ( whose prices were the first to rise as a result of excess demand ), a demand deficiency occurred in the cases of the other consumers' goods. Ordinarily, the prices of the latter goods should fall. Actually, however, their prices rose. This is accounted for by two facts. The first is the tendency of wages to rise or to remain constant, but not fall, due mostly to the results of trade union activity. The other ( and probably, the more important ) was that demand rose continually in the rural areas. The agricultural producer today retains, for personal consumption, more food than he used to, formerly, according to the Report of the Foodgrain Enquiry Commission. The remainder he sells at a profit far above that he realised ever before. ( Middlemen who purchase grain can, no longer, deny the produces of an increased share of the profit the latter reaps. ) This money today is spent, almost totally, on goods the peasant could not dream of, say, in the forties or the early fifties. With ever-rising prices, purchasing power in the hands of such people have increased, thus increasing demand. Another cause of the inflation, is the elaborate system of Government controls, which do not allow prices to drop.

What, then, is the upshot of all this? Despite diversion of a substantial portion of money income to the purchase of food by the urban people, manufacturers, though operating below capacity, as pointed out by Kipping, yet find it profitable to produce, mainly because of the increased demand. Hence the struggle, amongst the various industries, to outbid each other in the purchase of raw materials and hiring of labour. This also pushes up the price of final product. Inflation, therefore, proceeds on both the agricultural and the industrial fronts.

A country in the grip of a runaway inflation cannot hope to attain any degree of economic progress. The continuous fall in the value of the unit of currency, as a result of price rise, makes planning for the future an extremely difficult task, since investment allocation figures are not true indicators of the actual investment undertaken. In the Indian case, it

defeats at least one of the three goals of planning,—the attainment of a substantial increase in real income per capita.

In such circumstances, India has had to import grain from foreign countries. The gravity of the situation can be gauged from two reports. The first is the official report of the Ford Foundation's Agricultural Production Team. Assuming a population of 480 million in 1965-66 and total requirements of 110 million tons of foodgrains, it has forecast a shortfall of 25% by that year at the then current (1959) rate of expansion of food output. This means that India's food deficit would be 28 million tons. Prof W. A. Lewis has forecast that, in the period 1955-80, Indian food output will rise by 45%, with population increasing at the same rate. He estimates that India will raise national income by 118% and demand for food by 90% in the same period. He envisages food imports worth 4 millions by that year. This has serious implications. There was already a heavy drain of foreign exchange in the beginning years of the Second Plan, when the entire quota of foreign exchange to the private sector for the five-year period was made available at once, and which led to the foreign exchange crisis of 1957-58. If again, the country has to pay in foreign currency for imports of food, a slow-down of development efforts is unavoidable, since the former entails a cut-back in the foreign exchange allocation to the private sector. (An aim of planning being the development of industries whose products can be substituted for imported goods, fulfilment of the foreign exchange allocation is essential, at least in the short run, though it might involve depletion of reserves, to avoid a deficit of far greater magnitude in the long run.) Along with the crisis of 1957-58, such food imports have adversely affected India's balance of payments further. This means that India is yet far from achieving equilibrium in her balance of payments, which the Plans set out to do.

Perhaps, India's planners were over-optimistic as regards the provision of grain aid among other countries, by the USA. As has been clearly demonstrated, this optimism can be dangerous and risky; aid depends on the non-vitiation of the friendly atmosphere that might exist when the plan is drawn up.

This reinforces the argument for the build-up of a substantial food surplus. This does not call for exceptionally large investment in research, as Japan has so clearly demonstrated. Small increases in investment produce large increases in output. But mere investment, however, in the absence of integrated, sincere and dedicated efforts to

raise agricultural output, produces negative results. In India, substantial investment has been made in dams, but this has not benefited the cultivator, because, as Malenbaum has pointed out, the canals to lead in the irrigation water into the fields from the main supply canals have not been built.

Agricultural surplus can aid economic development in more ways than one.

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### “FOR A POEM”

Subho Ranjan Das Gupta

*Third year Arts*

*English Honours*

That a *poem* may come into being.....

In frenzied anger,  
 The sky, like blue flame,  
 Flaps its wings against the sea ;  
 The wild storm, the cloud's smoky wreath,  
 Unfold their coils ;  
 And the forest shaken by the clamour of thunder  
 Doubles on its own roots in terror and agony.  
 The lightning pauses to glare back.  
 And in the blood-red mirror of that sweeping light  
 The Destroyer-Creator sees his own face—  
 That a *poem* may be written .....

That a *poem* may come into being  
 Posters on the wall announce  
 A day yet to arrive,  
 And they march on, those  
 Who have executed the fear of death on gibbets.

Their mighty music fill the sky and space ;  
 In the thunder of their roar  
 There is the promise,  
 The apocalypse of  
 A new world, endless peace, infinite love.  
 And so a poem is written.....

Translated from

সুভাষ মুখোপাধ্যায় : “একটি কবিতার জন্ম”

## THE PHILOSOPHERS' STONE

By

GAURI BANERJEE

3rd. Year, History

Pareshbabu had found the Philosophers' Stone. When and where he found it, how it came to be there, and whether more are available, does not concern us. However, here is the story.

Pareshbabu was a middle-aged, middle-class gentleman, who lived in his ancestral home and practised law. His income was just enough to support his family. One evening, while returning home from the Court, he came across a small pebble. He did not know what it was, but as it did not look like an ordinary stone, he picked it up from the roadside and put it in his pocket. Later, when he took out his key to open the locked study at home, he found to his surprise that the key had turned yellow in colour. He then thought that probably the original steel-key had been lost, and his wife had replaced it with a brass one without telling him, and it had escaped his notice so far.

Pareshbabu entered his study and emptied the contents of his pockets, with the exception of the money-bag, on the table. Then he went upstairs, forgetting all about the key. After about an hour's rest and refreshments, he came down to his study to look into his briefs. As he switched on the light, the first thing that came to his notice was the stone. It was a small, round, shining one, which he thought he would

give to his little son on the following morning to play marbles with. Pareshbabu opened a drawer, which contained a knife, a pair of scissors, papers, envelopes etc., and dropped the stone in. Then he stared in amazement. The knife and the Scissors had turned yellow. He touched his glass ink-pot with the stone, but nothing happened. Next, he touched a lead paper-weight which immediately became yellow and about twice as heavy. With a quavering voice, Pareshbabu called to his servant : 'Haria, bring my watch from upstairs.' The servant did as he was told, and left the room. It was a cheap, nickel-plated wrist-watch with leather straps. As soon as it came in contact with the stone, the watch as well as the buckles of the straps turned into gold. The watch stopped, no doubt due to a similar transmutation of the spring, which had lost tension.

Pareshbabu sat in stunned silence for a while. Then, he slowly came to realise that he had found a priceless and rare stone which turned all metals into gold on touch. He then repeatedly raised his folded hands to his forehead in prayer and supplication to the gods. He wondered if it was a dream. He pinched his left arm hard, to make sure that he was not asleep. When at last he was convinced that his unbelievable good fortune was indeed real, Pareshbabu's head began to spin, and his heart beat so hard that he was afraid it would stop. Like Sakuntala, he put his hand on his heart and exclaimed : 'Calm yourself, my heart. If you fail now, who is going to enjoy this fabulous gift of the gods ?' Pareshbabu had heard of a man, who, on hearing the news of winning a prize of four lakhs of rupees in a lottery, had given such a joyful leap that he had cracked his head against the roof-beam. Pareshbabu pressed both his hands on his head as a precaution against a similar possibility.

Time reconciles man to great joy as well as to profound sorrow. So Pareshbabu became himself soon again, and proceeded to reflect on his next course of action. He realised that it would be safer to keep the news of his good fortune a secret. He decided that only his wife, Giribala should be told, though he believed that women rarely can keep any secrets. He went upstairs, and after preparing her for the surprise, broke the news to his wife. Then he made her swear by the names of all the 330 million gods, not to let anyone know.

Although he cautioned his wife, Pareshbabu himself became rather indiscreet. He turned the iron beams of his bedroom into gold, with the result that the roof caved in. All the household utensils were also turned into gold, causing curiosity and astonishment among acquaintances.

who wondered why the utensils had been gilded. At last, being annoyed at the endless and persistent questions, Pareshbabu began to shun the society of people. His clients began to doubt his sanity.

After this, Pareshbabu decided to proceed slowly and cautiously, for a hasty step might lead to complications. He converted some gold into cash and deposited the money in a bank. He bought shares and company papers. He built a large house and a factory on a twenty-bigha site in Ballygunge. There was no difficulty in procuring bricks, cement and steel, for it was extremely easy for Pareshbabu to satisfy the people concerned. Then he discovered large masses of old, rusted iron scrap and parts of old cars lying in disuse. The honest owner, glad to get rid of the rubbish, asked for no price. Only, he added, he could pay no cartage. Pareshbabu had maunds of iron carried to his factory daily. There, in his private room, he turned the old iron into shining gold. He stationed ten Gurkha durwans and five fierce bull-dogs to guard the premises.

The manufacturing and selling of gold was an easy business, but such large scale dealings required more than one man. So Pareshbabu advertised in the papers for an assistant, and of the numerous applicants, chose to engage Priyatosh Henry Biswas, M. Sc., on a monthly salary of Rs. 150. Priyatosh was a young man with no close relatives, so he was to live in the factory itself. Soon, Pareshbabu realised that in Priyatosh, he had found another gem almost as precious as his stone. The assistant needed only an hour each day for his meals and personal requirement, slept for seven hours, worked in the factory for eight hours and spent the rest of the day in composing voluminous love-letters and poems dedicated to his former classmate, Hindola Majumdar, drinking tea and smoking in between. Priyatosh was not a gregarious person ; he did not even go to church on Sundays. And above all he had no curiosity to know where all the gold came from. He melted down the gold and converted it into heavy bars, which were sold to a Marwari Syndicate by Pareshbabu. The proceeds were deposited in his banks. His account kept growing steadily. Pareshbabu's wife displayed her ornaments in full glory, till at last she grew tired of gold. Her body ached under the burden of the numerous ornaments. She then discarded them all and took to wearing two conch bangles and a necklace of beads.

Pareshbabu's activities did not remain under cover for long. The police began investigations under orders from the Bengal Government. But owing to their uns familiarity with the ideals of Ramarajya, the police were easily taken care of. Their ardour cooled off with a few tolas of gold. Scientists began a series of frantic experiments, spending sleepless nights

and forgetting hunger. Had they been born 200 years earlier, they might easily have understood that Pareshbabu had found the Philosophers' stone. But in modern science, there is no place for such things. Consequently, the scientists came to the conclusion that Pareshbabu had invented some atom-smashing equipment, and was making gold by synthesizing broken atoms, more or less in the same way as torn clothes are used for the making of quilts. The difficulty was that Pareshbabu refused to reply to letters. And Priyatosh could only be considered a fool, who, when pressed for information, merely said that he melted the gold and denied all knowledge of its source. Foreign scientists had dismissed the matter lightly at first, taking it for a rumour. But in the end, even their composure was disturbed.

The Government of India, disturbed by the advice of experts, decided that Pareshbabu was a dangerous person. But they could do nothing about it, since Pareshbabu had done nothing illegal. There was even a proposal to pass an ordinance to arrest Pareshbabu and seize his factory, but it was dropped due to the opposition of powerful people from home and abroad. Ambassadors of Britain, France, America, Russia and other states, now kept a sharp and benevolent eye on Pareshbabu. There were frequent invitations to dinners. Pareshbabu quietly attended them, occasionally uttering yes or no, but nobody succeeded in eliciting any secret information from him, even under the influence of champagne. Some Congress leaders of Bengal advised him to reveal his secret to them for the welfare of the country. A few Communists cautioned him against listening to anyone's advice and asked him to proceed on his way for the good of the world.

The number of relatives, friends and admirers of Pareshbabu gradually began to increase. No one was satisfied although he treated them handsomely. His enemies, not knowing what to do, kept their own counsel. Pareshbabu did not make much change in his way of living even after his increase in wealth. And his wife too, being old-fashioned and conservative, was ignorant of the ways of squandering money. Inspite of this, Pareshbabu's name became world-famous, and it was said that he could employ four Nizams. His tastes in food and dress and his words, became headline news in the press of Europe and America. He even began to receive love-letters from all over the world. The letters usually ran as follows : 'Dearest Sir, I have no objection to your old wife, let her be. You are a broad-minded Hindu, so please purify me and include me in your harem. I will take poison if you refuse'. Numerous

letters of this kind began to pour in and Pareshbabu's wife, Giribala, snatched them away. She engaged a European secretary to translate the letters for her and to write replies at her dictation. Giribala, in a temper, had many harsh things to say, but the secretary, not being so well educated in such matters, usually replied in one expressive word: 'damn', meaning that they could go and hang themselves. Ten well-known European scientists wrote to Pareshbabu with the proposal that if he revealed his mystery to them, they would try to make him the recipient of the Nobel Prizes for Physics, Chemistry and Peace, together. Giribala, taking this letter too as one of the love-letters, replied through her secretary with the usual 'damn'.

Pareshbabu began to reduce the price of his gold. In the market, it came down from Rs. 115 per tola to Rs. 7 and 10 annas per tola. The British Government bought gold cheap and repaid the American dollar-loan. America was extremely annoyed, but could find no reasonable ground for protest. Britain also proposed to repay India's sterling balances in this manner, but the Indian Prime Minister replied that since India did not loan her gold or dollar, but supplied her with goods during the war, the loan should be repaid in kind.

The economic and political Pundits became very anxious, and could find no way out. Had this been the Satya, Treta or Dwapar era, they would have sat in meditation and invoked the aid of Brahma, Vishnu or Maheshwar against Pareshbabu. But this was not to be. Some experts suggested that platinum and silver should replace gold. Others argued that even these might depreciate, and suggested a radium or uranium standard, or even the primitive barter system.

Churchill was beginning to lose his patience. He announced his firm intention of not allowing the Commonwealth to be destroyed and said that he would not waste time by complaining to the U. N. O. The best thing should be to re-impose British rule on India. The British army should go and seize Pareshbabu, and keep him interned in the Isle of Wight. There, he could make as much gold as he liked, but the precious metal being Empire-product, would be marketed by Britain alone.

Bernard Shaw said that gold was a useless metal, as it was no good for making ploughs, scythes, axes or boiler engines. Pareshbabu had done well to expose the uselessness of gold. He should now try to make gold as hard and strong as steel. Shaw would be prepared to shave if a golden razor could be produced.

A spokesman of Russia wrote to Pareshbabu: 'Sir, we are cordially inviting you to come and live in our beautiful country. There is no

colour bar here, and you shall stay as an honoured citizen. You have been fortunate in attaining a strange power, but you will excuse our telling you that you do not know how to utilise your knowledge. We shall teach you. If you have any political aspiration, you shall be given the post of chief of the Soviet Presidium. We shall give you a handsome palace in Moscow on a hundred-acre site. If you prefer a quiet spot, you can have an entire city in Siberia. It is a beautiful country, which has been described as 'Uttarakuru' in your Shastras.' Taking this too for a love-letter, Giribala answered, 'damn.'

Pareshbabu gradually reduced the price of gold to four annas per tola. The world production of gold was 20,000 maunds per year, while Pareshbabu by himself was releasing 100,000 maunds per year in the market. There was no gold standard left. Severe inflation reigned in every country. Currency notes and coins had no more value than pieces of clay. Wages and salaries went up several times, but people were still in want. There was a sharp rise in prices, causing widespread unrest and acute distress.

Ten people from different parties resolved to fast unto death and took up their position at Pareshbabu's front gate. He occasionally received anonymous letters, threatening assassination as an enemy of mankind. Pareshbabu himself was getting tired of his riches. His wife began shedding tears and complaining that if they could not live in peace, what was the use of their wealth? She asked him to get rid of the disastrous stone, throw all his gold into the Ganges and retire to a secluded life in Benares.

Pareshbabu made up his mind. In the morning, he revealed the mystery of making gold to Priyatosh, who was undisturbed by the information. Pareshbabu gave him the stone and asked him to destroy it as soon as he could, by burning it, putting it into acid, or in any other way he fancied. Priyatosh answered : 'Right—O'.

That evening, one of his durwans came running to Pareshbabu with the news that 'Biswas Sahib' appeared to have gone out of his mind, and was calling for him. Pareshbabu hurried over and found Priyatosh in bed, weeping. On Pareshbabu's asking what the matter was, Priyatosh answered : 'Please read this letter, Sir'. Pareshbabu took the letter and read the following :

'Good bye, dearest. My father is not agreeable, and has raised many objections. You have no social status, you live in somebody else's house, and earn only one hundred and fifty rupees. Besides, you are a Christian and younger than I by a year. Father says marriage

with you is out of the question. There is further news. Have you heard of Gunjan Ghosh ? He sings beautifully, is very good-looking and has curly hair. He works with the Civil Supplies and earns Rs. 600. Moreover, he is an only son. His father is a contractor who is reported to have made a crore of rupees in business. My marriage has been settled with Gunjan. Please do not be unhappy. Do you know Bokul Mallik ? She is three years my junior and we studied together at Diocesan. Although she does not stand any comparison with me, even so she is a girl in a thousand. Marry her, and you will be happy. Darling, this is my last love-letter. From tomorrow, you will be my brother, and I your affectionate elder sister.

Yours till to-day.

Hindola.'

After reading the letter, Pareshbabu said : 'You are a fool, Priyatosh. Hindola is leaving you of her own accord. This should be good news. What have you got to be sorry for ? Since you can't offer thanksgiving prayer at Kalighat, I suggest that you light two candles at your church. Now come on, get up and wash your face, and let us go and have tea. By the way, have you got rid of the stone ?

Priyatosh replied in a tragic voice : 'I have swallowed it, Sir. I am determined to end this life, and I will carry your stone with me to my grave. Oh ! After all these days of love to go and marry Gunjan Ghosh !

Pareshbabu was surprised. 'But why did you swallow the stone ? Is it poisonous ?' he asked.

Priyatosh answered : 'I don't know its composition, sir, but I believe it is poisonous. Even if it is not and I don't die to-night, I will most certainly take ten grams of potassium cyanide tomorrow morning. I have it weighed and ready. You need not worry, sir, your stone shall remain buried with me till the Day of Judgement.'

Pareshbabu said : 'You must be out of your mind. You had better forgot these foolish ideas. I shall try and see that your marriage with Hindola goes through. Her father, Jagai Majumdar is my childhood friend. A shrewd man, if he hears that I intend to give you a considerable dowry, he may be prepared to give his daughter in marriage to you. But you are a Christian—'

'I shall become a Hindu, sir.'

'That is love. Now get up and let us go to Dr. Chatterjee. The stone has to be taken out of your stomach.'

Pareshbabu informed the doctor that Priyatosh had accidentally

swallowed a pebble. According to the doctor's advice, an X-Ray photograph was taken the next day. Looking at the photo, Dr. Chatterjee said : 'We rarely see such a case. I shall send a report of this to the Lancet tomorrow. From the side of his ascending colon, a small semi-colon has descended and the stone is lodged in it. It is possible that it will come down of its own accord. I see no harm in its staying as it is for the time being. If there is any trouble, then it has to be removed by an operation.'

Jagai Majumdar hurried to visit Pareshbabu on receipt of his letter. And after discussions, he told his daughter that Priyatosh had agreed to become a Hindu, and that she must marry him. He was eager that there should be no delay, insisting on the conversion taking place that very day and the wedding on the next.

Hindola was astonished. She remonstrated : 'But father, what are you saying ? Only the day before yesterday you mentioned Gunjan Ghosh, and now you say it must be Priyatosh ! See, Gunjan has given me this diamond-ring. What will the poor boy think ?

'We have given him our word, and we can't go back on it. Besides, Priyatosh is a nobody in comparison with Gunjan.'

Jagaibabu said—'Go on, you think you know everything. Priyatosh has now a gold mine in his stomach. Some day, the Philosophers' stone will come out, and it will be yours. Pareshbabu does not want it and has presented it to Priyatosh. Return that diamond ring. Priyatosh can buy you a thousand such rings. Before such an eligible groom, where is your Gunjan Ghosh and his contractor father ? I will hear no more objections.. You must marry Priyatosh.'

Hindola's voice was choked with tears. She answered, sobbing,— 'I did always love him. But he is so stupid.'

Her father said—'Of course he is, or he would not want to marry you. A man with the Philosophers' stone in his stomach can marry the most beautiful girl if he wants to.'

The mind of Priyatosh Henry Biswas was singularly free from touchiness. The conversion ceremony was completed in due course. One seer of vegetable ghee was used for sacrifice. Five Brahmins were fed sumptuously. Then, at an auspicious hour, Hindola and Priyatosh became man and wife. The cherished wish of Hindola and her father did not materialise. The philosophers' stone did not come out. Sometime later, an extraordinary thing took place. All the gold made by Pareshbabu began to lose their lustre. A month later, everything turned into iron,

The explanation is quite simple. It is common knowledge that disappointment in love leads to ill-health, and conversely, success in love sharpens the faculties and improves metabolism. Apparently, Priyatosh's digestive powers had improved beyond all expectations, digesting the stone in the process. X-ray showed no trace of it. With the dissolution of the Philosophers' stone, all Pareshbabu's gold got back to its original substance.

Hindola and her father became very annoyed, and accused Priyatosh of being a liar, a cheat and a fraud. All their high hopes had come to nothing. But digestion of the Philosophers' stone strengthened Priyatosh's mind and increased his intelligence. He ceased to pay attention to the tirades of his wife and father-in-law. He would not even consider cyanide when threatened with divorce by Hindola. He seemed to have realised the truth of the saying of St. Francis and Ramakrishna, that women (Kamini) and gold (Kanchan) are both rubbish, and nothing compares with iron. When last heard of, he was managing Pareshbabu's new iron-works and enjoying life.

[ From "ପରଶପାଥର" by Parashuram ]

## GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

A Short Study

By

SUKANTA CHAUDHURI

1st Year Arts ( English Hons )

When reading Gerard Manley Hopkins, it is a great temptation to regard him a monster of technique. The popular image of Hopkins is based entirely on his functional importance as a technical innovator. One critic calls him the John the Baptist of twentieth-century poetry, a voice crying in the Victorian wilderness. And he lives in our memories as a lonely and long-unfollowed pioneer in the liberation of poetry. His experiments in verse are given the highest importance, while his poetic spirit is regarded as of the second order. It is perhaps, inevitable that such emphasis should be laid on his technique.

And yet one wonders if the emphasis is not misplaced. Scholars analyse his metre in infinite detail, and ingeniously disentangle the knotty eccentric jargon of his notes and prefaces. In the process, have we lost—or at least obscured the man himself.

Hopkins's work yields returns when studied for its own sake altogether neglecting the technical aspect. For Hopkins embodied a poetic phenomenon—rare in the modern age, a fiercely passionate and sensuous spirit coupled with vigorous discipline and great personal austerity.

Using this conflict in Hopkins's personality as a frame of reference, I shall try to outline the mental structure—the 'motive'—of some of Hopkins's work. Let all purely technical considerations recede to the background ; working of the 'soul' of his poetry is a fascinating study in itself.

Hopkins, as I said, embodies a spiritual ambivalence—so much so that one may almost say there are two Hopkinses. There is the Pure Poet Hopkins ; cordial, sensuous, colour-drunk, whetted in appetite. It was this Hopkins that, at the age of seventeen, devised this lush gaudy imagery in a school prize poem :

Plum-purple was the West ; but spikes of light  
 Spear'd open lustrous gashes, crimson-white.....  
 Anon, across their swimming splendour strook,  
 An intense line of throbbing blood-light shook  
 A quivering pennon.....

This gaudiness, this luxuriance, survived into his maturity. I can think of no other poetry so deeply religious and at the same time so full of an almost pagan sensuousness. Consider the opening lines of *Spring* for instance, or those of *The Windhover*. 'The 'fresh firecoal chestnut-falls' : the skylark 'pouring and pelting music' ; the 'sheep-flock clouds like worlds of wool' ;...One could catalogue Hopkins's images for ever.

That is one Hopkins : the sensuous poet in love with physical beauty. But there is another Hopkins too, no less sincere, no less vital to his spiritual existence. It was this second Hopkins that turned Catholic at twenty-two, joined the Jesuits at twenty-four, and thought himself, for seven years, in duty bound to stifle his poetic gifts.

One cannot, of course, consider this aspect of Hopkins as a concession to orders, or a vigorous fanaticism whose effect was wholly destructive. The almost feverish spirituality of his poems rises from the very depths of his soul, No, the conflict in Hopkins is not between poetry and anti-poetry. It is between flesh and spirit, sense and soul,

aestheticism and spirituality—almost, one may say, between this world and the next; but both these elements are equally vital to him. They are warp and weft to the fabric of his poetry. This quality is the arch-thème of Hopkins's poetry; to resolve it, his great purpose.

The theoretical solution was there all right. I do not know exactly when Hopkins first propounded his concept of 'inscape', but certainly it ideally satisfies his spiritual requirements. The 'inscape' of an object is (I believe) the beauty behind its beauty, the 'self' of the thing, the unique distinctive spirit or essence of it—God as appearing in the object, one may say :

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame,...

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same :

Deals out that being indoors each one dwells ;

Here indeed was a concept uniting sensuous and spiritual beauty, common ground on which poet and priest could meet. But in experience Hopkins found no straight path out of the labyrinth of beauty. One cannot always live at the spiritual level, the 'inscape level' of existence. Much of existence is carried on at the sensuous, physical level, and a conflict between the two is inevitable.

Hence the struggle, years of that

... darkness I wretch lay wrestling with ( my God ! ) my God.

There had to be that 'naked encounter between sensuousness and asceticism' that Bridges found so distasteful in *The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo*, and which echoes through all of Hopkins's poetry.

Let us begin at the beginning : with *The wreck of the Deutschland* —the first poem in his distinctive style, and surely the noblest he composed. But though Hopkins never wrote a greater poem (as I think one may safely say), his spiritual attitude was to develop and mature after its composition. In the *Deutschland*, the elements of his attitude have been gathered, but they are yet to be integrated into final shape.

The poem was written 'To the happy memory of five Franciscan Nuns.....drowned between midnight and morning of Dec. 7th. 1875' : in the terror and pain of the shipwreck, they found their God. The theme of the poem is, accordingly, salvation through suffering. The image of crucifixion occurs time and again, and in the prologue-like First Part, the poet recounts his own painful journey to God.

This pain associated with the bliss of salvation appears as the predominant elements of the poem. Stanza 9 perhaps recounts this most vividly :

Wring thy rebel, dogged in den,

Man's malice, with wrecking and storm. ....

Thou art lightning and love, I found it, a winter and warm ;

Father and fondler of heart thou hast wrung :

Hast thy dark descending and most art merciful then.

All through, the theme of salvation glimmers, now bliss, now ordeal.

The sea where Christ comes to the nuns is also 'the widow-making unchilding unfathering deeps', I have already mentioned the recurring crucifixion-image. An undercurrent of pain runs also through the boldest image of the poem—the nun's "Immaculate Conception" of the Word in her soul :

...here was heart-throe, birth of a brain,

Word, that heard and kept thee and uttered thee outright.

The whole theme may be summed up in this line from Stanza 31 :

...is the shipwreck then a harvest, does tempest carry the grain  
for thee ?

Suffering is a prelude to salvation. In other words, the poet has found existence at the sensuous level so unspiritual that salvation can come only by a racking, terrifying ordeal where 'the faithful waver, the faithless fable and miss'. A *death of material existence* is necessary to salvation. And that is why, to quote T. S. Eliot, 'This Birth was/ Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.' Even as the joy of salvation fires us, there comes the agony of material loss and suffering, the death of our old selves—the pain that is 'the dark side of the bay of thy blessing'.

This, then, is the dominant spiritual structure of *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. It does not, I think, represent Hopkins at his ripest spiritually, for two reasons. First, in the *Deutschland*, the nun is a mere vessel of salvation, largely passive and receptive in function. She has her duty, of course—to prepare her soul for the state of grace, to suffer her trials with fortitude :

Well, she has thee for the pain, for the  
Patience ;...

But she is no more than the instrument of God :

He was to cure the extremity where he had cast her.  
Hopkins's later poetry shows a growth of the concept of will.

Secondly, Hopkins is occupied too much with the momentary pain of salvation. He has yet to acquire the broader vision by which the pain becomes but a subservient element in a grand design of resignation and restoration. It is this nature concept which make *The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo*—though as a poem far inferior to the *Deutschland*

—conceptually superior.

These are the two lines along which Hopkins's poetry was to develop ; and as these developments occur, the tone of the poems gradually changes. It becomes more joyous, more genial, the emancipation no longer a painful act of God but a willing effort of the human will.

But before tracing these developments, one must attend to the growth of Hopkins's perception of the unsullied holy 'inscape' of all objects of material beauty. This concept to whose theoretical genesis I have already referred, plays a vital role in Hopkins's spiritual development. It had already received explicit expression in Stanza 5 of the *Deutschland*. But it seems to have seized the poet passionately a year later, in the 'inscape sonnets' of 1877. I quote from the first one :

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

It will flame out, like shining from shook foil ;...

Generations have trod, have trod, have trod ;

And all is seared with trade ; bleared, smeared with toil ;...

And for all this, nature is never spent ;

There lives the dearest freshness deep down things ;...

This spirit of a very deep purity, a divinity deep down in things, breathes through much of Hopkins's poetry. And perception of this truly beautiful 'core' of material beauty was bound to modify the violent 'material death' deemed necessary in the *Deutschland*.

The overwhelming luxuriance expressed in the octave of *Spring* has its roots in a profound purity.

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning

In Eden garden...

Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

As the last line shows, the Immaculate Conception fascinated Hopkins for the same reason ; it gave to the creative powers a deep holiness and chastity. This appears in *The May Magnificat*, and in *The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe*. A few lines from the latter make the concept clearer than any paraphrase could.

She holds eigh motherhood  
Towards all our ghostiy good  
And plays in grace her part  
About man's beating heart,  
Laying, like air's fine flood,  
The deathdance in his blood ;  
Yet no part but what will  
Be Christ our Saviour still,

'Ghostly good' : the words beg to be paused on. Worldly beauty is to Hopkins a balance of these two elements : the good and the ghostly, the timeless and the transitory, the god and the brute. Mortal beauty is gendered by a fine balance of these two elements, the godly spirit and the sensory medium. It is this poised conflict that is symbolised in *The Windhover* : the kestrel-hawk, embodying the spirit of 'chevalier' Christ, riding with beautiful poise among winds great enough to engulf him.

Yes, it was beautiful, this

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume...

But it was

a billion

Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier !

The 'dangerous' draws us over eight years, to that most unconventional 1885 sonnet, *To what serves Mortal Beauty* ? :

To what serves mortal beauty—dangerous ; does set dancing blood—the O-seal-that-so feature, flung prouder form Than Purcell tune lends tread to ?...

The 'O-seal-that-so feature' is precisely what is dangerous about mortal beauty. It makes us look on this mortal life as the sole end of our existence, put permanent value on things impermanent, feed our eternal appetites on decaying and transitory pleasures. Hopkins could never have rested satisfied with the aestheticism so much in the air at the time. For this aestheticism was built on the sands of mortal beauty ; Hopkins desired deep eternal values, not a passing moment of grandeur :

...We, life's pride and cared-for crown,

Have lost that cheer and charm of earth's past prime :

Our make and making break, are breaking, down.

So in *The Sea and the Skylark*. And the description in *Andromeda* :

With not her either beauty's equal or

Her injury's...

Her flower, her piece of being, doomed dragon's food.

There is indeed an essence, a truth, a Christ in things of mortal beauty. And in one or two of the sonnets ( e. g. *To what serves Mortal Beauty* ? and *As kingfishers catch fire* ) Hopkins seems to say that to perceive this is enough. But its cage of flesh soon decays, and then the beauty and truth of it are lost for ever.

This very cage-metaphor is used in *The Caged Skylark* ; and also in that poem, Hopkins expounds his solution to the problem :

Man's spirit will be flesh-bound when found at best,

But unumbered :

In other words, mortal pleasures must be given up *at the sensory level*—to be enjoyed eternally in Heaven later on, like gold that has passed through the fire. Mortal beauty decays ; but the spiritual beauty at its core is eternal, and it is this that we must seek and treasure.

Thus, in several of Hopkins's poems, one finds a concept of parallel worlds of images—one temporal, one spiritual ; one to be given up that the other might be gained. *The Starlight Night*, I think, is the first poem where this is clearly exhibited. The poet looks up at the night sky, finds there a land of woods and lawns, farms and boroughs—an uncharted eternal country for our occupation, if we sacrifice our interests in the worldly territory we now occupy :

.. it is all a purchase, all is a prize.

Buy then ! Bid then !—What ?—Prayers, patience, alms, vows.

And again, in *Hurrahing in Harvest*, the poet, walking through rich autumn fields, looks up to Heaven and gathers spiritual harvest there :

I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,

Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour.

This call for asceticism, for renunciation of earthly pleasures, bears a resemblance to the wrench from mortal life desired in *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. But a change is apparent in both accent and attitude. The *Deutschland* was a dramatic presentation of the moment of emancipation, of Birth-in-Death. The poet was immersed in that moment's spiritual agony, with little leisure to look before and after. Now he has soared higher, and he takes a broader bird's-eye-view of the whole plan. The pain disappears. The moment of liberation is no longer clear-cut marked-out, emphasised as a violent breakaway from the old life to the new. Rather, one views the whole scheme as a sonorous progress from mortality to eternity. The emphasis rests where it logically should : on the prize we set our hearts on, the end that inspires our ordeal, the 'immortal diamond'—eternal, spiritual beauty.

Another, more important change has occurred. Hopkins has left all Hound-of-Heaven concepts behind him. For the first time, man is represented as master of his fate. 'Buy then ! Bid then !' It is a call to choice and action, to an exercise of will. The responsibility of the individual soul is even more explicitly stated in *Hurrahing in Harvest* :

These things, these things were here and but the beholder

Wanting ;... (Italics mine)

Thus, ( by the broadening of his view and the introduction of the function of the will, ) the spiritual concepts of the *Deutschland* were

coming to fruition. We may sum up Hopkins's final attitude thus. Mortal things have beauty, being manifestations of God's grace ; but this beauty is 'sullied and soured' by the ravages of time, the fevers of the flesh. We must, therefore, renounce our pleasures in earthly beauty by a voluntary act of will. We shall then have our pleasures restored to us in the next world, in all their spiritual beauty but without the mortal veil obscuring it.

The most elaborate exposition of this doctrine is to be found in *The Leaden Echo and the Echo*—the one successful fragment of Hopkins's unfinished play, *St. Winifred's Well*. *The Echoes* makes somewhat irritating reading, on account of its florid and obtrusive technique ; but there is no doubt that it expresses Hopkins's philosophy at its ripest.

The Leaden Echo speaks first. This works on a physical plane, wishing to keep back sensory beauty by the purely physical device of some 'bow or brooch or braid or brace, lace, latch, catch or key'. As such it inevitably concludes with a cry to

Despair, despair, despair, despair.

But the Golden Echo calls back :

Spare !

There is one, yes I have one.

And it answers the Leaden Echo's desire to 'keep/back beauty, keep it, beauty, beauty, beauty', with a plea to

Give beauty back, beauty, beauty, beauty, back to God, beauty's self and beauty's giver.

So give up beauty, 'early now, long before death'—return it to the bosom of God whence it came and where

See : not a hair is, not an eyelash, not the least lash lost ; every hair. Is hair of the head, numbered.

'Every hair is numbered' : what a startling, original, joyous meaning has been given to that ominous phrase ! We can renounce our 'lovelocks, gaygear, going gallant, girlgrace', confident of having them restored in eternity.

...it is an everlastingness of, O it is an all youth !

The qualities of Hopkins's maturer attitude are all apparent here. Note the appeal to individual will, though couched in such passionate persuasiveness that one almost inevitably joins Hopkins in 'We follow, now we follow'. Note also the joyousness of the piece, the prize of eternal beauty clearly in sight all the time. Nor is there any dwelling on pain, save the passing mention of 'soaring sighs'.

With the *Echoes*, I have almost completed my survey of Hopkins's

'archthème' of conflict between aesthete and ascetic. A new Hopkins appears in the subsequent 'dark sonnets' of 1885-9 : from *Carrion Comfort* onwards. A bitter, gloomy, depressed Hopkins reveals himself here—an unexpected development in the poet of the *Golden Echo*. In one of the 1885 sonnets (*No worst, there is none*) Hopkins reaches the nadir of desolation and despair.

Here ! creep,

Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind : all

Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

Or, at most, he summons patience and a grim optimism to his aid, as in *My own heart let me more have pity on*. Or, as in the magnificent *Carrion Comfort*, he snatches joy out of the very teeth of despair.

The causes of this acute depression have been debated at length ; probably pressure of duties and severe Jesuit discipline were less to blame than a personal collapse of both body and spirit. *I wake and feel the fell of dark* reveals an acute loneliness and absorption in self. In 1888 we find him writing to Robert Bridges. 'It seems to me I can not always last like this...'

Of course, Hopkins never quite lost his spiritual moorings. In *Carrion Comfort*, he talks of

...now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling...

And even in the bitterest of the dark sonnets, *I wake and feel the fell of dark*, he is sure that

The lost are like this.....but worse

But the deep melancholy was eating away his poetic spirit. In *To seem the stranger lies my lot*, he deplores a gradual falling of inspiration :

Only what word

Wisest my heart breeds dark heavens baffling ban

Bars or hells spell thwarts.

And in his last two sonnets, *Thou art indeed just, Lord and To R. B.* this feeling of sterility reaches a poignant climax.

...birds build—but not I build ; no, but strain,

Time's eunach, and not breed one work that wakes.

Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain.

Among these last poems, one at least is concerned with the 'archthème', *That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection*. The title is almost ominously long ; and the poem too (to me at least) seems, despite an indisputable nobility of expression, to mark a retrogression from the attitude of the *Golden Echo*. The last lines of the *Heraclitean Fire* give the clearest expression to Hopkins's Philosophy of

beauty : man is a conglomeration of 'poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond ; the dross must be removed and left only the immortal diamond'.

But the poem lacks the joyousness of the *Golden Echo*. There is absolutely no sensuous description of the next world. There are still many vivid 'nature' images, but a bitterness of spirit colours them : 'nature's bonfire burns on ; but

Enough ! the Resurrection,  
A heart's—clarion...  
Flesh fade, and mortal trash  
Fall to the residuary worm ;

There is a grim, hysterical humour in that 'residuary worm'—humour that one never found in the earlier, healthier Hopkins. The asceticism of this poem is fierce and lacking in sensuousness—quite unlike the somewhat genial asceticism of the *Golden Echo*.

The *Heraclitean Fire* was written in 1888 ; *To R. B.*, Hopkins's last poem, in 1889. In that year he died of typhoid.

Did his death, at the early age of forty five, cut off years of promise ? Or was Hopkins already dead to poetry ? One cannot say ; but only a complete rejuvenation—no traces of which can be found in his last poems—could have redeemed him. Temperament, experience and discipline had all tied him down to a narrow field of subject-matter ; he had to make up in intensity what he lacked in range. And it seems as though his intense spiritual experiences, that had hitherto supplied him with themes, was beginning to fail. This is however, not to say that a resurgence might not have occurred ! the depression may have been a mere couch for a spring.

In any case, rather than indulge in such vain speculation, one may more profitably assess the importance of what he did compose. In his major poems, from the *Deutschland* to the *Echoes* and trailing on to the *Heraclitean Fire*, he has left us a complete body of poems dealing with his 'arch-theme' ; it is the progress of this theme that I have attempted to trace.

The poetic spirit of Hopkins, as I tried to impress at the start, is as worthy of study as his original craftsmanship. Hopkins was in every way passionate, intense, unique. It was not only his poetic technique that was in revolt : the very spirit of the man was fretting in his monastery's narrow room. And the conflict was not merely with the external discipline imposed on him ; it rose from the depths of his soul, one half of the man striving towards a beauty that the other half spurned as untrue.

One may exhaust the deep well of sprung-rhythm, unravel all the knotty cross-alliterations and enjambment-rhymes, chase every elusive image to its source : there is still the soul of the poet to reckon with.

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## PRESIDENCY COLLEGE : A FRESHER'S IMPRESSION

Saumyendra Bhattacharya

*1st Year ( History )*

I had returned from my spree in Delhi with a 102 degree temperature and with this 'warm feeling', I approached my entrance examination at Presidency. As we trooped into the hall, we saw a tall, spry man with a definite air of authority which could only come from years of managing a motley crowd of turbulent boys and over-enthusiastic girls. The test, it looked, was to be an essay on "Calcutta without tramcars". I had a sudden, mad impulse to write down what I *really* thought of Calcutta ( at that time enjoying the full benefits of summer heat ) and tramcars in general. My experience with tramcars had been highly adventurous. About three months ago I had managed to take a most peculiar fall while alighting from one of these vehicles. Experience, I firmly maintain, causes a person to make new mistakes instead of the same old ones, and a month later I nearly succeeded in slipping underneath another tram ; this time while boarding it. All the same, realizing the gravity of the task given, I kept a straight face and scribbled away some pleasant thoughts on the topic, handed in my paper and walked out of the hall with an uneasy feeling of fatalism. I was immediately accosted by a horde of seniors who had made earlier incursions into our examination hall.

Now these boys started me on an initiation course. First, a vivid description of each teacher of our department-to-be : he is the only one who will give you your percentage if you want to see a cricket match, or never miss his classes, you'll miss some wonderful jokes. And so, my ears

ringing with good, free advice, I went home. Anxious enquiries would follow every two or three days and one day, a badly-typed list told me I was through.

So evidently were quite a few others. I can still feel the sense of anticipation and tension with which I approached the Office to sign and submit my admission papers. You could immediately recognize the new students by the question marks written all over their faces, their reticence and their hesitant ways. Feeling much the same myself, I managed to plough through all the legal clauses of the admission forms—‘Are you married? —Are you prepared to participate actively in the N. C. C.? (To this day, we’ve succeeded in not having a single parade). I can distinctly remember the sense of relief and achievement I felt as I withdrew my fee-book from the counter with my roll-number scribbled on it,—in glorious red! At last, I was IN.

Like all good boys and girls the world over, we too came to College with our minds made up—resolved to study hard right from the first day. We had, of course, a great time deciphering the cyclo-styled routine. It looked as if our first class in Presidency College was going to be taken by a professor represented by the magic initials,—“G. L. C.” Professor “G. L. C.” seemed a rather young man as he walked in briskly and without much ado, began calling out the rolls. He stopped only to ask if anyone had been left out. One boy, Abhik, who sat isolated from us on the third bench, said his name had not been called. Prof. “G. L. C.” sternly told him to check carefully with the Office and then fired his first question at us: “Why have you decided to take up history?” No one in the class seemed to venture an answer and so, thinking I’d make an impression, I stood up and expounded my views on the subject. The professor pointed out a few flaws in my argument and then proceeded to give us a series of stern warnings: that we were not school-going children any longer, that we’d have to learn to take notes really fast and that we should absolutely keep out of college politics. It was sometime at the end of this sermon that groups of senior boys began entering our classroom without anything as by your leave. Our friend sitting in the third bench suddenly got up and defected to their group. For a moment we were terribly confused but soon the pattern of the hoax became clear. With reddening ears we realized that our young “professor” was no professor at all but a deceptively good actor and a third year historian! We had fallen for the bait—hook, line and sinker!

I was more vigilant after this rather harrowing experience. The seniors were not going to get away with any more of their jokes. Into one

of our political science classes walked a virile young man, who introduced himself as our professor of Political Theory. I was quite certain that this was another of those rigged jokes and nearly shouted, "O.K. boy, you can come off it. We all know who you are!" when some sort of sixth sense held me back. I still blanch at the thought of what *would* have happened if I had done just that for as it turned out, the young man bursting with youth, was indeed our professor in Political Theory.

However, it must be said to the credit of the seniors that whenever they got a chance to advise us, they enthusiastically did so. After surveying our class, especially that part of it that occupied the front rows, they solicitously advised us not to try proxy because our class was too small,—we'd get caught and the consequences would be disastrous.

And so those first days passed : days when rooms, buildings and faces seemed so unfamiliar, days when all of us tried so hard to adjust ourselves to the peculiarities and the amazing range of college life. Days when the bells confused us, when our preconceived notions about College were shattered by what we saw and felt and experienced. Who were these prodigies who formed the vanguard of intellectual Bengal ? We saw them, met them and gradually came to know them.

But these were mainly the days when we searched for identity. No man is an island and I believe, deep down in every man there is an earnest desire to identify himself with a system or an institution, to make himself a member of a special group or 'clan'. Perhaps it is the gregarious element in us that makes us want to participate. For us, the first year students of '67, this identity must inevitably be with this system we call Presidency College—a system we will come to criticize and love and into which we will gradually but irrevocably merge.

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## THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Samar Roy ( 2nd Yr. History ) &

Shantanu Mukherjee ( 2nd Yr. English )

Post-renaissance Europe witnessed the growth of a new branch of learning, born of metaphysical speculations on man's past. Historians till the end of the middle ages were chiefly engaged in recording what we would call—'plain history'—simply a detailed chronicle of past events. Unlike their speculative or critical successors, never for once did they venture to go back consciously on the temporal scheme of things. Attempting to observe the flow of civilization, standing out of it—so to say—is something so recent and fundamentally novel as to be rightly termed 'Philosophy of History' as distinct from history proper.

The philosopher of history approaches history proper primarily as an epistemologist ; as Collingwood would say, "For the philosopher the fact demanding attention is neither the past by itself, as it is for the historian, nor the historian's thought about it by itself, as it is for the psychologist, but the two things in their mutual relation".

The credit for inventing philosophy of history would probably go to the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico ( 1668-1744 ), although the term itself was first used by Voltaire. In the development of this philosophy, all that goes before Vico is marked by the characteristic theocentric bias of the middle ages. History to the medieval mind was an unfolding of the 'Divine Plan', such a doctrine is so unscientific that it is irrelevant to dwell on this particular theme any longer.

To the pioneers in this field what was of utmost concern was to pass critical judgment on historical events and connect them not merely chronologically but causally as well. Gradually the new philosophy snapped its links with history proper, replacing it with concepts that widened the scope of the subject a thousandfold, and held out infinite possibilities to the whole intellectual world. The study of the subject now fell into the set pattern of philosophical investigations with emergence of various schools of thought—each with its distinctive interpretation of history, catering to the taste of its own select group of followers.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century to this field came G. W. F. Hegel who continued to dominate it till the arrival of

Positivism. Hegel felt that the progress of human history reflects the dialectical nature of the whole cosmic process. It might be said that Hegel's metaphysical excesses suited the Romantic temperament admirably and at the same time was indirectly instrumental in creating a new concept—positivism, that replaced his own metaphysics with science and thus flourished in the next phase. It was, in essence, the philosopher's struggle to keep up with the tremendous advance of the new science. Consequently, the nineteenth century accepted history as some sort of an incomplete scientific experiment, and explained it accordingly.

These mainly are the trends that the development of the subject has followed. Perhaps it is not very difficult to imagine that in future the subject will become infinitely more abstract and that historiographers will formulate history on the model of mathematical physics ; endless new suggestions and interpretations will keep coming in, and it is unlikely that the last word in this connection has been or is likely to be said. In fact since we cannot watch the flow of history from without, all our interpretations are part of history itself. All our theories in the last analysis do not expound history, but merely extend it.

Whatever the case may be, recognizing the immense possibilities of the subject is itself a conscious advance towards its critical appreciation. The appreciation proper constitutes the next maturer stage in its development. The various ways in which the finest minds have tried to do so will be our concern in the following lines.

In this connection, taking into account all the existing philosophies, we find that their developments have been along one of the two broad lines—Idealism and Naturalism. Chronologically it would be appropriate to start with the former.

The Idealist theory of history claims that history is concerned with human thoughts and experiences and that historical understanding is of a unique and immediate character. It denies empirical inference in the realm of thought. As one of its greatest exponents, Collingwood, says, "All history is essentially history of thought". To the Idealists, thought is not an end in itself, but it transcends 'Reality'. Idealism starts with the idea of the Absolute, the Eternal Self-Existent, and emphasizes that human life (and thus history) is to be understood in relation to Reality as a whole—something more than the transient experiences of the mundane. The Idealist point of view is essentially metaphysical and it conceives human history, never as a 'significant', concrete unity, but merely an intrinsic fragment of a single cosmic process. The theory has no place for pluralism ; the ultimate oneness of things is a

foregone conclusion accepted by all Idealists, a basic postulate too axiomatic to be questioned. Whatever seems to contradict the idea of this underlying unity, is but the manifestations of the Absolute to the finite mind. In this context, we might mention that the Idealist's manner of rejecting the plurality of things as ultimately illusory, is somewhat similar to that of the Vedantist. Nature in this theory is logically necessary ; all its processes are inevitable and uniform. We might draw a parallel between pluralism in the realm of thought and the irregularities of nature, and proceed to identify the ultimate illusiveness of the former with that of the latter.

Man, according to the Idealist, has the power to act in conformity with reason, and hence—although imperfect—is capable of attaining perfection. Man's craving for perfection, although apparently deliberate, is in fact an unconscious inevitability. The physical world is the stage on which we witness the unending drama that depicts the conflict of nature and human passions.

It might seem improper that we include a comparatively minor historiographer like Immanuel Kant ( 1724-1804 ) in this brief account. Nevertheless we do so as it seems to us that he adequately makes up through originality and a sheer touch of the genius what he lacks in gross quantity and concrete substance. He was the only important figure who approached the subject primarily from an ethical point of view. It would not exactly be far-fetched to compare Kant's application of ethics to human history with that of Spinoza to the individual man. In his famous essay entitled 'Idea of a Universal History on Cosmo-Political Plan', he stresses the fundamental relativity of values involved in human affairs. He believed in something radically evil in human nature ; hence the somewhat mystical and pessimistic view taken by Kant of the individual. He stressed the importance of political justice as essential to the establishment of a harmonious and stable society, to the elimination of discord between gregarious man and the alienated individual. This way only could the ultimate purpose behind creation be fulfilled. In certain respects Kant accepted a kind of dualism, and that is why certain strict Idealists are in the habit of criticising him.

The next important name in this field is J. G. Herder ( 1744-1803 ). His views are more optimistic compared with those of Kant. History, for Herder, is the resultant of the interplay of two sets of forces ; one constituting the human environment and the other the spirit within man. All through the twenty volumes of his book, 'Ideas for Philosophical History of Mankind', he was engaged in placing human history in its proper

perspective—that is, locating it against the background of the whole cosmic plan. Man, to him, was as intermediate between two worlds—one 'spiritual' and the other comprising inanimate matter and the animal kingdom. It was Herder who devolved the idea of 'a civilization' as opposed to civilization itself. This special civilization—so to say—is made up of the negative categories of the one that is real to us. Herder was fascinated by the imaginary interplay of the two civilizations and was of the view that the whole of history, not merely provides evidence of this struggle but is in fact the struggle itself.

He developed the concept of man's 'national character' and thus can rightly be called the forerunner of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. He went even to the extent of suggesting that Geography is of fundamental importance as a determinant in human affairs; Physiology is also given a privileged status.

Herder's views often sound more naive than in fact they are, and though he stood for immortality and determinism, both secularism and rationalism held places of honour in his theory. Finally, it is necessary to point out that Herder was the first of the Idealists who were intimately connected with the Romantic movement. Besides, his influence on Goethe was also considerable; Professor Cassirer remarks, "Goethe had arrived at the discovery of the special cultural value of philosophy of history through Herder."

Probably the most important figure among the Idealists, if not in the whole domain of philosophy of history, was G. F. W. Hegel. (1770-1831). Hegel started with an attempt towards a synthesis of Kant's scientific outlook and Herder's romantic aspirations and ended up ultimately with a philosophy of his own. Just as scholasticism admirably assimilated two mutually alien worlds—one of Aristotelian Logic and the other theistic, so did Hegel achieve an ideal compromise between science on one hand and mysticism on the other. His approach to philosophy of history was essentially that of a dispassionate logician; that is why his critics often mark him as an outsider to this field. But his theories are of such fundamental importance that it is absolutely ridiculous to call him that.

Hegel's philosophy of history has to be understood in a wider context; he felt that human history, as well as human thought itself, is adjusted to the dialectical structure of the Universe. In Hegel's Dialectics, the cosmic process (according to Schelling—the process in which the world comes to realize itself in self-consciousness as spirit) is a manifestation of the conflict between opposing categories in Nature; the universe is not merely a unity but a self-generating unity. The whole

scheme may be neatly broken into triads of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. In Hegel's plan of the 'super-triad' 'spirit' forms the thesis-concept, nature the antithesis-concept and 'Absolute Idea' the synthesis-concept.

"World-history", in the words of Hegel himself, "exhibits the development of the consciousness of freedom on the part of spirit, and of the consequent realization of that freedom." Hegel believed in the idea of progress just as Henri Bergson did after him. But where Bergson had his—what may be termed—impotent mysticism, Hegel had his dialectics; 'progress' was not merely 'there', but 'had to be there', for his theory to be water-tight. Hegel did not identify the individual man as the moving force behind all history. This 'moving force', to him, was 'the genius' of nations. What to Herder was the conflict of civilizations, was to Hegel the tussle among different nations; history is a record of this struggle. Hegel applied his dialectics to history and suggested that the Greek civilization (for example), coming into contact with the Roman—which was its exact antithesis, produced the Christian world that was the resultant synthesis of the two. It might be interesting here to contrast Hegel's notion with that of Oswald Spengler, who was always eager to apply to history—in place of Hegel's dialectics—his own "cyclical theory of cultures". Spengler said that each culture—that is civilization—in its birth, development and decay resembles the corresponding processes in a live organism. If the progress of civilizations could be plotted against a graph, then history—Spengler thought—could be represented by a chain of regular sine-curves (although this was not the precise term Spengler used, his concept, translated into more abstract diction, becomes identical with this).

We might round off this passage on Hegel with the remark that he recognized, paradoxically though, the roles of both the 'individual' and 'society' in his doctrine of 'progress'. 'Unity in diversity', to him, was not merely aesthetically satisfying but at the same time logically necessary.

The last important name among the Idealists is that of R. G. Collingwood (1891-1943). Collingwood started his major writings on this topic with dismissing the theory of 'Colligation' which claims that, since individual events in history can be linked up and separately interpreted, the whole of history is intelligible as a unity and is consequently superior to natural science. However, in his famous book 'Idea of History', Collingwood's dogmatism is much more prominent than his initial scepticism. As Professor T. M. Knox says, "This obtrusive dogmatism was not merely the obverse of his scepticism; nor did it merely colour the form of his later work; it affected its content, and it was linked up with a change in his attitude to religion—always one of his strongest

interests". It is to be noted that the sceptical strain in Collingwood's thought appears in his attitude to Christian doctrine, while it is the claims of his philosophy that tend to be dogmatic. To Collingwood, all history is the 'history of thought'. But even in saying so he differs fundamentally from the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey, who defined thought as 'first-degree intuition', whereas, to Collingwood, historical thought was necessarily speculation on this intuition. Professor Gilbert Ryle, in his book 'The Concept of Mind', attempted a kind of compromise between the two views in saying, "Overt intelligent performances are not clues to the working of minds ; they are those workings". 'Re-living past mental actions', according to Collingwood, is the essence of this philosophy ; in practising it himself, he arrived—in his later works—at something resembling the historicism of Dilthey and Croce. In the ultimate analysis, we might suggest, Collingwood's genius sought escape from scepticism in the shelter of "absolute presuppositions" and adopted a religious background. In some respects, his views were similar to those of Soren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth.

Detailed discussions on relatively minor Idealists like J. G. Fichte, K. C. F. Krause and F. W. J. Schelling is beyond the scope of the present article.

While conflicts were raging in Germany round 'Absolute Idealism', Auguste Comte (1795—1857) in France, was busy developing a 'scientific' and purely 'humanistic' view of history. His concept of 'Social Dynamics' became the essence of 'Positivism'—which, following the criteria of the natural sciences, insisted on the empirical nature of truth and emphasized the existence of 'necessary' laws in history. In his famous 'Law of Three Stages', Comte champions, with an echo of Condorcet, the idea of 'progress'. This 'progress' to him was not 'inevitable'—in the Idealist sense—but 'real' in the language of science. Comte maintains that history may be classified under three major 'stages'—the earliest comprising the Greek, Roman and Medieval civilizations, and marked by the transition from fetishism, through polytheism, to monotheism ; the Renaissance-world, with the growth of science, together with a metaphysical outlook—balanced between mysticism and rationalism,—constitutes the intermediate stage which ends with the French Revolution ; the third and final stage—as yet incomplete—is the 'Positivist' era, which would culminate in the creation of an ideal, scientific society—transferred, once and for all, from conditions of war to those of peace.

In a way Auguste Comte can be called the precursor of Darwin, for he prophetically anticipated the essentials of the latter's theory

—as expounded in his masterpiece ‘The Origin of Species’ (1859)—through his own ideas regarding ‘social evolution’.

A. Cournot and H. T. Buckle carried on Comte’s work in a fashion which would perhaps invest either with the title ‘neo-positivist’.

The decline of positivism, however, was as meteoric as its rise ; it reigned supreme, and practically unchallenged, for a short period before giving way to Karl Marx with his revolutionary theories grounded on Economics. As Croce observed, “The positivist movement in history was the obverse of the metaphysical movement” ; it was marked by an excess of the scientific spirit—so to say. Positivism attempted to identify history with natural science ; it failed to recognize the autonomy of history as a unique discipline, perhaps this caused its rather premature downfall.

“The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class-struggles”—these words, while ushering in a new era, remain not just an idea but have passed into a way of life. Karl Marx (1818—1883) underlined Economics as the moving force behind all history. He was the first to explain history, not from a metaphysical, but an entirely materialistic point of view. The point of view was not much of a novelty in itself—even collectivist thinkers like, Proudhon, Saint-Simon, Fourier and Robert Owen had all upheld ‘materialism’, in their attempts at ‘utopian socialism’. The distinctive credit of Marx lies in the fact that he extended Hegel’s dialectics to ‘mechanistic materialism’ and thus eliminated all discrepancies from the latter. But, whereas Hegel had given ‘mind’ precedence over ‘matter’, Marx did just the reverse—here lies their fundamental difference. The idea of history being an organic whole, composed of the political, economic and cultural lives of people, was replaced by Marx’s activistic doctrine which claimed that all apparently self-contained, independent unities in history are really outward reflections of the basic economic motif ; that their pseudo-continuity manifests their underlying unity. Marx insisted that social transition could be consciously brought about ; to him, human activity is always the sole agent behind such ‘changes’. As a matter of fact, never before Marx was so much emphasis placed on this concept of ‘change’. In his own words, ‘The philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways ; the point is, however, to alter it’. The germ of this ‘change’ lies within the inherent contradictions of human society ; all class-struggles are but manifestations of this change.

Coming from relatively abstract to more concrete terms, Marx analysed existing history as a continuous development from primitive

communism, via feudalism to capitalism. The process is only half-complete ; the decadence of the present capitalist epoch is epitomized in the sharp polarization between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Marx insisted that this existing struggle, passing through successive phases—first the proletarian revolution and then the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat'—shall culminate in an ideal synthesis of 'Labour' and 'Capital'—in a perfectly classless society, in which the 'state' shall cease to exist. Here, in Marx's own words, "Pre-history ends, and history begins".

When in 1955 Arnold J. Toynbee completed his monumental work, 'A Study of History', he had been thoroughly moulded into an idiosyncratic prophet—clinging dogmatically to his cherished theories—altogether, a pale ghost of the dispassionate empirical sociologist that had started writing the book twentyone years earlier. He did not any longer view history as an impartial spectator but was deeply conscious of his participation in it.

Originally his views were not, strictly speaking, totally foreign to those of Vico, and—to a certain extent—those of Oswald Spengler. Toynbee began by arguing that a civilization is the only intelligible unit in historiography and went on to identify twentyone such civilizations in history. In the process, he came to reject Spengler's use of the biological analogy and said that 'purpose' behind history was to be found in the synthesis of the 'four high religions'—Hinduism, Mahāyāna Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Nevertheless, Toynbee's view of history is not the traditionally orthodox Christian one—similar to those of St. Augustine, Von Schlegel and Reinhold Neibuhr. In short, we may sum up his ideas on history as those of a quasi-scientific mystic, with a profound ecclesiastical bias.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century certain European thinkers, with an idealistic bent of mind, started advocating the supremacy of history over natural science. They professed that the study of history, unlike natural science, provides a concrete and compact body of knowledge as is automatically the only province in the whole domain of human understanding that can effectively repulse constant attacks from scepticism. Accordingly, in sharp contrast to the abstract generalizations of science on the one hand and the endless deliberations of the speculative world on the other, historiography would henceforth follow an altogether new line of development. What followed was the inevitable tendency to ground everything on history. This tendency is 'historicism', its earliest exponents being Wilhelm Dilthey, Benedetto Croce, Rickert and

others. Professor Barraclough's definition of historicism is characterised by the assumption that "the whole Reality is one vast historical process... the nature of everything which exists is, so to say, in its historical development".

One of Benedetto Croce's most significant comments in relation to historiography was "All history is contemporary history". He was for rejecting that part of the past which has no contemporary significance. He believed that history is philosophy in motion and that the historian's function is essentially to show nature and man, not in theory and abstraction, but in the actual flow and operation of causes and events. Elucidating this particular point, Croce made his famous remark, "History should be written by philosophers". In a necessary logical corollary to his theory, Croce came to discard the concept of 'abstract rationalism' or 'illuminism', a theory which holds that Reality can be divided, so to say, into 'History' and 'Super-History', the ideas and values of the latter being reflected on the former.

That history repeats itself used to be a favourite and axiomatic presupposition with all historiographers till modern times. Croce was probably the first to hit at the very foundation of this fallacious concept with his now-famous doctrine, "History never repeats itself and does not preserve itself intact". He stressed the 'private individuality' of each historical action ; "The invention of the typical, the constant and the recurring is essentially anti-historical", he said.

Wilhelm Dilthey was morally a sceptic regarding historicism. He, being a liberal humanist, believed that the individual is the real unit of history, and understanding of it provides the key to the interpretation of the subject. According to Dilthey, the 'relativity of values' is only the reverse of the "coin of man's creative freedom" ; for this reason, history is not the "orchestration of an eternally fixed theme", but is the story of the struggle of man, "to come to terms with Reality".

Dilthey's view is important, not so much for itself, but for the profound influence it has continued to exert on modern existentialists. Martin Heidegger, probably Germany's most influential modern philosopher, acknowledges this debt in his book 'Sein Und Zeit', "Fundamentally the following analysis of temporality and historicity is solely concerned with preparing the way for the assimilation of the researches of W. Dilthey which the present generation is yet to achieve".

One of the most brilliant critics of historicism in recent years is Karl Raimund Popper ; his book 'The Poverty of Historicism' has become an absolute must for the student of historiography today. The

attack that he unleashed has practically succeeded in relegating historicism to the level of a daydream of Idealists to a monstrous logical fallacy. Popper classified historicism into two broad divisions : (a) Pro-naturalistic and (b) Anti-naturalistic, and proceeded to point out the shortcomings of either. His argument against the first was that social science can never ultimately correspond to theoretical physics, the spatio-temporal determinants in the latter being inapplicable to the comparatively narrower dimensions of the former. Besides, drawing parallels from Heisenberg's 'Principle of Indeterminacy', Popper concluded that any kind of regular systematization based on hard and fast rules is impossible in history.

His main complaint against the second school was that an idealistic approach to history—if followed strictly logically—ultimately leads to Solipsism ; that discrepancies arose the moment generalizations—restricted to particular periods—were extended to fit the whole of existing history. Popper was against all kinds of historical predictions and approved of 'piecemeal social-engineering' instead. He was of the opinion that historicism is more a record of substantial change than of progress. He reminds us of Professor Carr when the latter referred to the necessity of "aims and purposes which will ultimately be derived from values which have their source outside history". History should be written from the distinctive point of view of each age ; in such re-writing, accompanied by a proper awareness of the bias that underlies it, an age becomes critically conscious of the past and the present. Historicism, on the other hand, carries alarming implications, for it raises the spectre of relativism which leads to nihilism.

What seems to be the crying need of the hour is a happy assimilation of both the artist and the scientist for the appreciation of history, the development of a proper sense of history. Throughout the discussion what stands out as the most characteristic feature of the historiographer is his inclination to 'direct' the flow of history, not so much to 'observe' it. Often we find him starting as an observer, but invariably ending up as a guide—a prophet professing to shape human destiny. But what strangely enough has eluded the historiographer is the impossibility of his task ; formulating history may be of academic interest, but is in the ultimate analysis a futile effort because of the infinite plasticity of the unit in history,—Man. Every single generalization regarding this unique entity Man has only succeeded in laying bare the various possibilities within him that are as yet untapped. We can gape in wonder at the immense diversities latent in human beings ;

man, from the indigene of Brazil to Newton and Henri Poincare, from the palaeolithic savage to the surrealists of Paris, has proved to himself time and again—that he is beyond the scope of a mere formula, an end in himself. The world of to-day, plagued by perpetual strife, where man seems bent on systematically annihilating his fellowmen, bears pathetic evidence of the folly of trying to dictate terms to history. Let us hope that in the world of to-morrow—where human existence will perhaps no longer be at a stake, man will be content to admire all that is in history with a rational indifference and a passionate interest as well.

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## COLOUR & CHEMICAL CONSTITUTION

By

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The history of artistic imagination is itself an history of colour. But it is only recently that colour has aroused in men not only an artistic appreciation of its potentials but also a scientific evaluation of its inner beauty.

In this particular treatment we shall attend to colours under two heads—Inorganic and Organic. Such a division of course does not necessarily imply a difference in the fundamental causes, but only quickens our understanding.

It is a matter of common knowledge that an incident beam of white light when refracted at the surface of the prism breaks up into several components, viz. Violet, Indigo, Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange and Red.

Light may become coloured again due to interference arising from the superposition of more than one wave or train. This phenomenon imparts colour to bird feather, soap bubbles etc.

Again the individual colours of white light may be separated by producing either an absorption spectrum or an emission spectrum. The former is obtained by passing white light through a suitably coloured

translucent material. This is the origin of the colours of most chemical substances. The same effect is obtained by scattering light from the surface of a solid material. If a certain proportion of light is reflected, the substance has the colour of the reflected light. If only a single band is absorbed the substance has the complementary colour as shown in the table :—

TABLE

° A	Colour absorbed	Visible colour	° A	Colour absorbed	Visible colour
4000-4350	Violet	Yellow Green	5600-5800	Yellow Green	Violet
4350-4800	Blue	Yellow	5800-5950	Yellow	Blue
4800-4900	Green Blue	Orange	5950-6050	Orange	Green Blue
4900-5000	Blue Green	Red	6050-7500	Red	Blue Green
5000-5600	Green	Purple			

An emission spectrum is obtained by suitably exciting an atom usually by heat, and electronic transitions occur which radiate light of a particular wave length. The energy required is given by the equation  $\Delta E = hv$  ( $h$ =Plancks constant,  $v$ =Frequency of radiation). Now human eye is sensitive to waves within the range of 4000—7500°A. A substance is coloured if it has the property of absorbing visible light. Transition metal ions containing unpaired d electrons are coloured both in solid state and in solution.

Such colours are reasonably intense but are modified by the presence of a variety of complex agents. This indicates further that transitions involving the d electrons present are responsible for the colours involved. A glance at the ionization energies reveal that the smallest of these ( 3.87 ev. for Caesium ) is still larger than the quantum corresponding to violet light ( 3.10 ev ). Hence we conclude that electron transitions involved in atomic spectra are intra-atomic.

COLOUR OF TRANSITION METAL ION HYDRATES  
IN SOLUTION

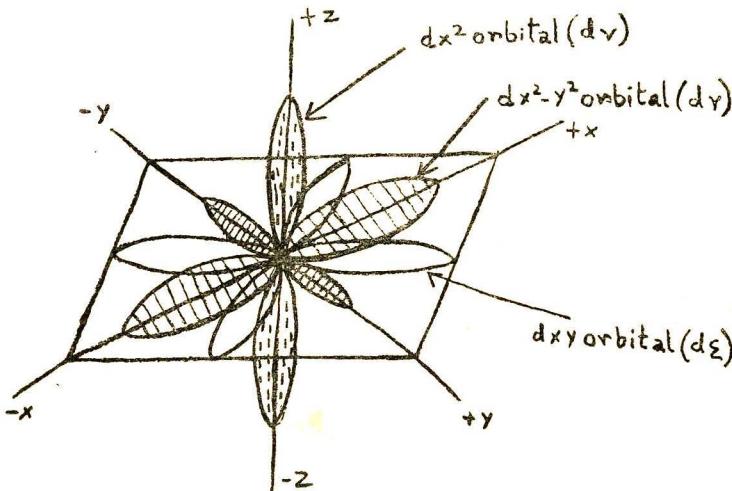
( Usually ions of the type  $[M(H_2O)_6]^{n+}$  )

Total no. of d electrons	No. of unpaired d electrons	Metal Ion	Colour
0	0	$K^+, Ca^{2+}, Sc^{3+}$	Colourless
1	1	$Ti^{3+}$	Pink-violet
2	2	$V^{3+}$	Green
3	3	$Cr^{3+}$	Violet
4	4	$Cr^{2+}$	Blue
5	5	$Mn^{2+}(Fe^{3+})$	Very pale pink (Violet)
6	4	$Fe^{2+}$	Green
7	3	$Co^{2+}$	Pink
8	2	$Ni^{2+}$	Green
9	1	$Cu^{2+}$	Blue
10	0	$Cu^+, Zn^{2+}, Ga^{3+}$	Colourless

Metallic compounds can be divided into two groups : those whose colours are dilute and those whose colours are concentrated. An example of the former type is  $[Co(H_2O)_6]SO_4 \cdot H_2O$ —Pink, whereas NiO and FeS—black serve examples of the latter type. A study of the table above shows clearly that for ions with closed shell configurations (18 electrons for  $K^+, Ca^{2+}, Sc^{3+}$  and 36 electrons for  $Cu^+, Zn^{2+}$  and  $Ga^{3+}$ ) no colour is observed. In all other cases the ions are coloured in aqueous solution. However the intensity of the colour in the cases of  $Fe^{2+}$  and  $Mn^{3+}$  is much less. The significant feature is that these elements have partially filled d orbitals, the unusually weak colours of  $Mn^{2+}$  and  $Fe^{3+}$  arising from half filled d shell.

Although the Bohr atom is convenient for the depiction of the electron positions, it does not give a true picture of the actual spacial

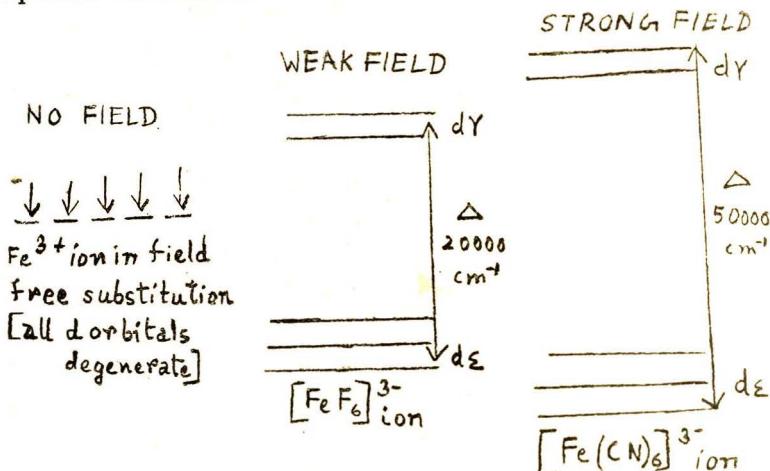
position. However the shape of the orbitals emerge from quantum mechanics. These five possible d orbitals are shown. ( cf. Fig. 1. )



Figure—1: The two  $d^2r$  orbitals and one of three  $d^2e$  orbitals ( the annular ring in the  $d^2z^2$  orbital is omitted. )

If we consider a free  $Ti^{3+}$  ion with one d electron then this electron does not distinguish between the five possible d orbitals since these are equal in energy i.e. degenerate. On bringing up six-ve charges ( eg. F ions ) or -ve electric dipoles ( eg.  $H_2O$  ) and dispersing these octahedrally along the  $Ti^{3+}$  ions along the x, y and z axes ( in Fig. 1 ), we destroy the degeneracy of these five d orbitals. It may be seen that the d orbitals are of two kinds, two so called  $d^2r$  orbitals which have lobes of electron density pointing towards the six ligands and three so called  $d^2e$  orbitals whose lobes of electron density point between the ligands. In Fig 1. only one  $d^2e$  orbital is shown (the  $dxy$ ). The energy splitting of the orbitals ( in an octahedral field ) is shown in Fig 2 ( see page 66 ) the separation between the levels  $\Delta$  being given in  $cm^{-1}$ . For  $[ Ti ( H_2O )_6 ]^{3+}$  the value of  $\Delta$  is  $20300\text{ cm}^{-1}$  which lies in the visible spectrum. Consider now the location of the single d electron in its lowest energy state ( ground state ). In these circumstances the electron will spend  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of its time in each of the ( equivalent )  $d^2\Sigma$  orbitals. However if sufficient energy be provided, eg. if the solution be illuminated with white light an absorption of energy at  $20300\text{ cm}^{-1}$  will provide the energy needed to drift the electron to a  $d^2r$  orbital. The laws of spectroscopy demand that for an allowed transition there must

be a change in the subsidiary quantum no.  $e$  of  $\pm 1$ . Since both  $d\Sigma$  and  $d\gamma$  orbitals have the same value of  $e$  the electron transition is said by spectroscopists to be 'Laporte forbidden.' In fact it does occur to a small extent because there are vibrations which perturb the pure  $d$  orbitals, nevertheless the transition takes place with a relatively low intensity ( $\Sigma \sim 1.5$ ) only. As a result Titanic ion in aqueous solution has a characteristic pinkish violet colour.



Figure—2. Energy levels for  $\text{Fe}^{+3}$ ,  $[\text{FeF}_6]^{-3}$  and  $[\text{Fe}(\text{CN})_6]^{-3}$ .

Actually speaking there are many other factors which are behind colour sensation. They may be summarised as follows.

(a) A change in the no. of  $d$  electrons owing to a change of the metal ion eg. in passing from  $[\text{Co}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_6]^{2+}$  ion ( $d^7$ ) to  $(\text{IN}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_6)^{2+}$  ion ( $d^8$ ) the value of  $\Delta$  changes from  $9700 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  to  $8500 \text{ cm}^{-1}$  and the colour of the complex ion changes from pink to green.

(b) A change in the no. of  $d$  electrons owing to a change of valency eg.  $[\text{Cr}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_6]^{2+}$  ( $d^4$ ) is blue but  $[\text{Cr}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_6]^{3+}$  is green.

(c) A change in the value of  $\Delta$  owing to the use of different attached groups (ligands) an effect due to the effect of the latter on the strength of the electric field. Thus  $[\text{Cu}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_4]^{2+}$  is pale blue but  $[\text{Cu}(\text{NH}_3)_4]^{2+}$  is violet. Indeed ligands can be put in a series in the order in which they increase  $\Delta$  viz.  $\text{H}_2\text{O} \angle \text{NCS}' \angle \text{NH}_3 \angle \text{ethylene diamine} \angle \text{NO}_2^- \angle \text{CN}'$ .

(d) A change in the value of  $\Delta$  owing to a different stereochemistry (usually with a change of the ligand). Thus whereas the octahedral  $[\text{Co}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_6]^{2+}$  has a pink colour the tetrahedral  $[\text{CoCl}_4]^{2-}$  is blue. The value of  $\Sigma$  for the latter is one hundred or 80 times that for the for-

mer. As discussed above for the  $[\text{CoCl}_4]^{2-}$  ion the electron transition is not of the simple d-d type as for the octahedral complex.

(e) Changes in  $\Delta$  owing to isomerism, the compound.  $[\text{Co}(\text{NH}_3)_4\text{Cl}_2]^{+}$  can exist in two forms, in one the two Cl atoms in the octahedron are adjacent (cis) and in the other opposite (trans). The first is violet the second is green owing to a different kind of splitting apart of the d orbitals in each case.

In the case of the inner transition elements the tripositive lanthanide ions are strikingly coloured both in crystalline compounds, and in solution. The remarkable periodicity of colours are.

M <sup>3+</sup> ion	No. of f electrons	Colour
La <sup>3+</sup>	0	Colourless
Ce <sup>3+</sup>	1	Colourless
Pr <sup>3+</sup>	2	Green
Nd <sup>3+</sup>	3	Red
Pm <sup>3+</sup>	4	Pink

High absorption characterises colour ; it is true the absorption spectrum of neodymium chloride is a very intricate one, but it may be regarded as a typical case only. The individual absorption bands are very sharp. A form of explanation is that the absorption bands arise from electronic transitions. The transitions are supposed to involve two energy states of the same  $\Delta f^n$  configuration. For these ions the unpaired electrons in the incomplete shell (f in this case) are deep inside the atom and the levels are only slightly effected by the electric fields arising from the anion. It should be noted how the colours are complementary for shells with n and  $(14 - n)$  electrons. Also the f<sup>0</sup> and f<sup>14</sup> shells are colourless and the half filled f' shell is also colourless.

*Charge Transfer Spectra* :—These arise either from electronic transitions between atoms or between different molecular orbitals in a molecule. Colour may arise in compounds which contain electropositive ions of very high polarizing power. Since the polarizing power rises as the charge on an ion increases and also as the ionic radius diminishes ions such as Cr<sup>6+</sup> ions in which both conditions are fulfilled have great polarizing power. In general the colour of a series of compounds become deeper as the polarizability of the anion is increased, viz.

Cation	F	Cl	Br	I	O	S
Ni <sup>++</sup>	Yellowish	Yellow	Dark Brown	Black	Dark Green	Black
Cu <sup>++</sup>	Colourless	„	„	—	Black	Blue Black

From all these facts it is reasonable to assume that it is the anion and not the cation which actually causes the colour of the compounds. A typical case for example is  $\text{AgI}$  which when concentrated is yellow. If this were a crystalline assembly of  $\text{Ag}^+$  and  $\text{I}^-$  ions we might expect it to be colourless since  $\text{Ag}^+$  has a  $d^{10}$  (closed shell) configuration. Although we can write the bond between the two atoms as ionic eg.  $\text{Ag}^+ \dots \text{I}^-$ , one can also envisage a covalent bond  $\text{Ag} : \text{I}$ . Now if the energy diff. between the two configurations corresponds with a quantum of energy in the visible spectrum, then absorption will occur and hence colour will result. Charge transfer spectra are responsible for the colour of many metal oxides and sulfides and of compounds such as the complex acids  $\text{K}_2\text{CrO}_4$   $\text{KMnO}_4$  which absorb very strongly. The latter are of special interest since Cr (vi) and Mn (vii) have  $d^0$  configurations.

Again many of the elements of the main groups of the periodic system form coloured anhydrous compounds of saltlike character (eg.  $\text{PbO}$ ,  $\text{PbS}$  etc) although the relevant cations are completely colourless in aqueous solution. It is therefore plausible that certain cations should polarise  $\text{O}^{2-}$  ions in oxide structures to the extent of giving charge transfer spectra but should not polarise  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  molecules to sufficient degree. In general the sub group elements being smaller in radius are capable of bringing about the necessary modification of energy levels, which is required for the hydrated or ammoniated ions to have excitation energies of about 1–3 volts so as to give charge transfer spectra in the visible region.

This phenomenon also occurs when mixed oxidation states are present (viz a mixture of  $\text{Fe(OH)}_2$  and  $\text{Fe(OH)}_3$  is black). The intense colour obtained when Potassium Ferricyanide is treated with  $\text{FeSO}_4$  solution is believed to arise from a kind of oscillation between the two possible configurations  $\text{KFe}^{\text{II}}[\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}(\text{CN})_6]$  and  $\text{KFe}^{\text{III}}[\text{Fe}^{\text{II}}(\text{CN})_6]$ .

### COLOUR AND CHEMICAL CONSTITUTION (ORGANIC)

The development of the relationship between colour and constitution in organic chemistry began when it was noticed that certain unsaturated groups in general manifested itself in colour. Such unsaturated groups were termed chromophores, viz— $\text{N} \leqslant \text{O}$ ;  $-\text{N}'=\text{O}$ ;  $-\text{N}=\text{N}-$  etc.

Compounds containing chromophores were termed chromogens. The depth of the colour of the chromogen was found to increase with the no. of chromophores eg.  $\text{CH}_2=\text{CH}_2$  is colourless but  $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}=\text{CH})_6\text{CH}_3$  is yellow.

Another group of compounds were found which deepened colour. They were termed Auxochromes eg.  $\text{OH}$ ,  $\text{NH}_2$ ,  $\text{NHR}$ ,  $\text{NR}_2$ .

Colour is said to be deepened in colour chemistry as per the following changes : Yellow→Orange→Red→Purple→Violet→Blue→Green→Black.

In 1879 Nietzki stated that increase in molecular weight, deepened colour, e.g. substitution of a naphthalene nucleus for Benzene in 20 dyes deepens the colour from yellow to red. Many exceptions were however found. Piccard first pointed out that in these cases the introduction of the heavier group introduced a second absorption band at the blue end of the spectrum.

Armstrong found that quinones (o and p) are coloured and suggested that all colouring matters in general can be represented by a quinonoid structure. It was however found that the theory could not be applied to the case of fulvenes.

Armstrong believed that the colour of nitrophenols was due to quinonoid structure. Hantzsch prepared two kinds of ethers. He therefore believed that a change in colour involved a change in structure.

At present the scientists believe that the absorption of ultraviolet or visible light results from electronic excitation. In molecules at ordinary temperatures the electrons are in orbitals having lowest possible energy (ground state). Higher orbitals are empty, but it requires energy to cause the transition of an electron from lower to higher level and the kinetic energy of the molecules is not sufficiently high to do this except at high temperatures. It happens however that electromagnetic vibrations having wave lengths between  $100 \text{ m}\mu$  and  $1300 \text{ m}\mu$  that is in the ultraviolet visible and near infrared region have just the right energy to cover the energy range of the lower electron transitions. Hence the energy of a light wave can be used to transfer an electron from its ground state to next higher orbital during which process light of that particular wave length is absorbed.

When an electron transition takes place in atoms, only a single wave length is absorbed which has just the right energy to bring about the transfer of an electron to a higher level. If  $E_1$  is the original energy content and  $E_2$  the final, then  $E_2 - E_1 = hv$  ( $h$  = plancks constant,  $v$  = frequency of radiation). The result is a line spectrum. For hydrogen atom for example the single electron in the ground state is in the  $1s$  orbital. The orbital of the next higher energy is  $2s$  orbital. But we know, for the transfer of light energy a quantum mechanical condition namely the existence of a non-vanishing transition dipole must be met by the occupied and the unoccupied orbitals. The more symmetrical the molecule, the less the

transition dipole. If the electric dipole is zero, absorption may still occur if the transition magnetic dipole is not zero.

Hydrogen for example can absorb light if the first possible transition  $1s \rightarrow 2s$  occurs. But because of the non-existence of the quantum mechanical condition, we have instead  $1s \rightarrow 2p$ . The energy associated with this change is 235 K cal/mole and accounts for the strong line at  $120 m\mu$ .

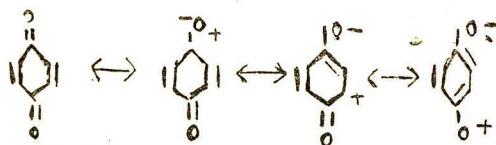
There are two approaches concerning these facts,—the Valence Bond theory and the Molecular Orbital theory. According to the V. B. theory when light is absorbed in a molecule there is an induced oscillation of the electron pair (in bonds) throughout the length of the molecule. Lewis, Calvin and Mulliken have assumed that the electrons are oscillating in the ground state of the molecule the character of oscillation being the same as that of the induced oscillation in the excited state. When the molecule is raised to its first excited state the absorption spectrum corresponding to this state will have the lowest possible frequency. If the molecule is raised to its second excited state, then the second absorption band will appear. For a long molecule which has an absorption band of low frequency the electron displacement must be small compared to the dimensions of the molecule and so the first two excited states occur close together. If the frequency of the absorption band is relatively high for a short molecule, the electron displacements are effectively those in the resonating structure and so the excited states are widely separated. The ease of excitation is  $N = > OC = S > N = N > C = O > C = N > C = C$ . Thus colour will deepen from right to left.

Again it has been shown that resonance among charged structures lowers the energies of both ground and excited states and since charged structures contribute more to the excited than to the ground state, the former will be coloured more than the latter. Thus in general the deeper the colour, the greater is the resonance among the various charged forms. All the above unsaturated groups are easily polarised, i. e. readily produce charged structures in the excited state. Hence their presence in a molecule tends to produce colour.

Benzene is a typical example. Its charged structures contribute little to the ground or excited states and so Benzene absorbs only in the ultraviolet and the absorption is weak due to symmetry of the molecule. Substituents viz. an amino or hydroxyl group not only greatly increases the intensity of absorption but also shifts the band to longer wave lengths because of the interaction of the unshared pair of electrons with the unsaturation electrons of the ring. That is the  $\pi$  orbitals now encompass the O or N atoms as well the  $C_6H_6$  ring and the no. of  $\pi$  orbitals

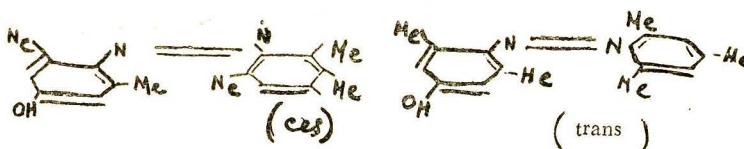
is increased from 3 to 4. For nitro groups the absorption is still more intense.

The colour of quinone may be explained by resonance among charged structures.



As the no. of double bonds in conjugation increases, the no. of  $\pi$  orbitals necessary to accommodate the unsaturated electrons does also increase. Since one electron can be transferred from any ground state orbital to that of the lowest excited state the no. of band systems equals the square of the no. of double bonds in conjugation. Moreover the difference in energy between the highest occupied  $\pi$  orbital in ground state and that for the 1st excited state decreases with each additional double bond and the longest wavelength absorption moves towards the red. A compound is colourless again if the band moves into the infrared unless, as usually happens, a new band moves into the visible. If two bands or more are sufficiently close together general may appear simultaneously and the colour depends on the remainder of the light that is transmitted or reflected.

Steric factor also influences colour viz. the cis form of following hydroxyazo compound is colourless whereas the trans form is coloured.

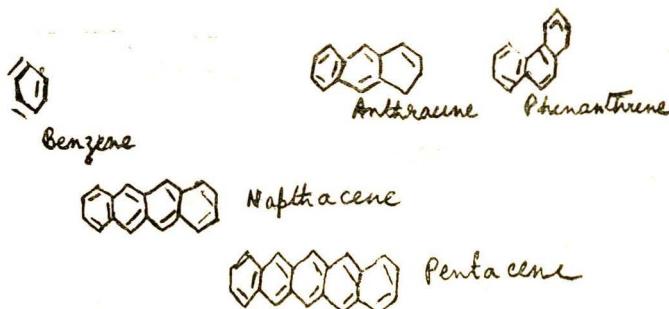


Increasing the no. of fused nuclei in condensed aromatic rings leads to all absorption of increasing wavelengths, viz. Long Band wavelength for Benzene—260 m $\mu$ ; Naphthalene—280 m $\mu$ ; Anthracene—375 m $\mu$ ; Naphthacene—450 m $\mu$ ; Pentacene—575 m $\mu$ .

Of these the first three are colourless, Naphthacene is orange and Pentacene purple.

However Phenanthrene has the same no. of fused rings as anthracene but absorbs at shorter wavelength (350 m $\mu$ ). This is due to the

more complete aromatic character (Higher Resonance Energy) of phenanthrene and consequently due to a lower energy level for the highest forced molecular orbital.



*Other forms of Colour* :—Reference should also be made of colours in certain crystals owing to defects or the presence of unurities. Thus irradiation of KCl imparts a blue colour to the crystal. This colour appears when the crystal is dissolved in water. It can be attributed to a very small no. of colour centres containing potassium atoms. The origin of colour here is essentially charge transfer. Finally attention should be drawn to a certain case of colour where the effect is due to scattering of light, the colour is affected by the concentration and the size of the suspended articles. Thus when a beam of white light is passed through a suspension of finely divided freshly precipitated sulphur particle the emerging beam is red, whereas the apparent colour of suspension at right angles to the beam is blue.

Also there is the case of fluorescence. Although energy of the absorbed electro-magnetic radiation in the range 100—1300  $m\mu$  is used to bring about electronic transitions, the molecules do not remain in the excited state, but, instantaneously to the ground. Ordinarily the mean life of the excited molecule is about  $10^{-8}$  sec. the energy liberated usually is converted by collision or other processes into heat; that is the material which absorbs light and becomes warmer. The energy may be dissipated also by photo-chemical reaction which accounts for the fading of the coloured substances in light. Some molecules are however resistant to deactivation by collision or by photo-chemical reaction and the energy is re-emitted as light, since some of the absorbed energy has been used to produce vibrational excitation, which is removed readily by collision. The re-emitted light is of lower energy (longer wavelength). Thus a colourless substance like anthracene fluoresces in the visible.

## Our Homage



Dr. Sushil Kumar Dey

Dr. Sushil Kumar De, M. A., B. L., P.R.S., D. Litt. (London), F. R. A. S. (London), (1890—1968), the doyen of Sanskrit and Bengali studies was a student of English at the Presidency College from 1905 to 1911. After he had passed B. A. (1909) and M. A. (1911) both with First class, he was appointed a temporary Professor of English at this College. Later he became a Lecturer in English, Calcutta University (1913—1919). He was a Griffith Memorial Prize winner (1915) and a Premchand Roychand Scholar (1917). At London School of Oriental Studies he worked on Sanskrit Poetics and got his D. Litt. degree (1921). He also studied linguistics at the University of Bonn, Germany (1921-22). He joined Dacca University as the Reader in English (1923). On the retirement of Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Shastri he was appointed Reader (1925) and then Professor of Sanskrit-Bengali Department. After his retirement (1947) he was appointed Professor of Sanskrit, Sanskrit College, Calcutta (1951-56). He was also Professor of Bengali, Jadavpur University (1956-59).

## OUR HOMAGE

Though Dr. De began his career as a teacher in English, he turned to Sanskrit and Bengali Studies in which he made some outstanding contributions. His most well-known work *Studies in Sanskrit Poetics* (Vol I, 1923 ; Vol II, 1925) appeared simultaneously with Mm. P. V. Kane's edition of *Sahitya Darpan*, and has yet remained unsurpassed. Dr. De edited a number of Sanskrit Texts in the best tradition built up by the European and Indian orientalists and made a comparative study of Western and Indian critical theories, in a number of papers. In recognition of his outstanding researches, he was invited to edit the *Mahabharata* with Dr. V. S. Sukthankar, a historic project undertaken and completed by the Bhandarkar Research Institute, Poona. Dr. De's another very important work is the *Early History of Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Bengal* (1942). The book was dedicated to his friend, Dr. Sukthankar.

Apart from the recognition he received as a great Sanskrit scholar all the world over, he will ever remain a model to the researchers of Bengali literature. His *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century, 1800—1825*, (1919), regarded as not only the pioneer work on that subject, is also the best assessment of Bengali literature of the early quarter of the nineteenth century. Another of his works, *Bānglā Prabād* (1954) shows his thorough mastery and deep insight into the middle Bengali literature.

Dr. De had a fine poetic sensibility too. Belonging once to the group of poets known as the Bharati-group, he was the author of four books of verse, *Prāktani*, *Lilāyitā*, *Adyatani* and *Ksana-Vidyut*.

He was connected with various learned institutions of India and abroad. He presided over the 1949 session of the All India Oriental Conference and was a member of the Sanskrit Commission set up by the Government of India (1956-57).

## SEMINAR REPORTS

[ I have again and again requested the seminar secretaries of different departments to submit their annual reports. It seems to me at this stage that self-effacement is the guiding principle with some of them. The result is obvious—Secretary. ]

Ours is the oldest of all the Geological Institutes in India. It was established in 1905. The function of this Institute is to arrange lectures, film shows, quiz competitions and exhibitions of Geological interest in the Department. The mouthpiece of the Institute, *Bhu-Vidya* is also published every year. This journal contains a number of articles of various Geological aspects written mainly by the students and the teachers of the department. The main object of this journal is to encourage the young students to express their Geological thoughts.

During this session, we arranged a number of brilliant lectures delivered by eminent geologists of this country and abroad, amongst whom were Mr. S. Sinha (G. S. I), Dr. S. V. P. Iyenger (G. S. I), Mr. P. K. Ghosh (G. S. I), Dr. T. Raychudhury (G. S. I) and Dr. A. Crawford (Australian National University, Canberra). Two films of geological interest were also shown in the department in collaboration with the G. S. I. Besides, the great Russian film show, "Battleship Potemkin" of S. M. Eisenstein was also arranged (by courtesy of ISCUS) in the Physics Lecture Theatre on behalf of the Institute to entertain all the students of the College.

This is to announce with great pleasure that, this year, on the eve of the 61st Annual Meeting, we observed the Diamond Jubilee function of our Institute with Dr. A. K. Banerjee, Head of this Department in the chair and Mr. P. C. Hazra, Director, G. S. I as the Guest-in-Chief. On this occasion, an outstanding exhibition was arranged, mainly organized by the undergraduate students. A special 'Diamond Jubilee Commemoration' volume of our beloved *Bhu-Vidya* was also published in this connection.

Before ending, I express my sincerest gratitude to Dr. A. K. Banerjee and other professors of the Department for their cordial co-operation. Thanks are also due to my fellow students of both post-graduate and under-graduate classes.

Nabakisor Dutta  
Hon. General Secretary  
Geological Institute.

## EDITORIAL :

### STUDENTS AND POLITICS

*Few people accept each other and most  
Will never do anything properly,  
But the crowd rejects no one, joining the crowd  
Is the only thing that all men can do.*

The year 1967-68 is, indeed, a turning-point in the annals of the Presidency College. It is a year in which the College, fortunately or unfortunately, for some reason or other, has featured in the head-line of the newspapers. The recent affairs in the College, citadel of the good, the well-behaved and the bookish, the very epitome of isolationism and non-involvement in politics and mass-movements, have raised again the age-old question in the mind of the people—whether the students should participate in active politics.

It is undeniable that Colleges exist for studies, not simply for party-politics or political movements. Anything that periodically stops classes, hampers studies and disrupts examinations goes against the very principle of academic education. Anything that damages laboratories, uses physical violence rather than reason to persuade is, simply, injurious by any political standards, to the interest of the student community.

Again it is equally undeniable that the precept that students should do nothing but study is unrealistic and perverse. The problems of life in the twentieth century are too complex and The Presidency College is no island separated by the ocean from the rest of the world. The students of our College like those of other Colleges are part of the society fighting the battle of life, seeking solutions to the problem of the day. Anything that affects the national life also concerns them.

And there is absolutely no reason why a student as a social being should not re-act to that situation. If he merely lives in the ivory tower of abstruse theory, he will be escapist and futile. The essence of any work is practice. And politics which, to a large extent, explains the pattern and problems of the individual and collective life, in its very nature, needs action, not disengagement, movement not stagnation, experience not speculation in the class-room and the coffee-house.

Thus the need of the hour is neither complete aversion to politics nor the thoughtless plunge into it. It should be rather an adjustment, a balance between studies and politics, a golden mean between attendance in classes and presence in the meetings and the processions at the Maidan.

Politics should be an everyday reality for the student community—a sensitive and progressive element in society. It does not mean farewell to studies but application of pragmatism to intellectual assessment. The students should occasionally demonstrate not to defy their teachers or play second fiddle to any unscrupulous person or party, but to raise their angry voices against political oppression, economic exploitation, and social injustice—three enemies obstructing the path of a brave new world. With courage, not bravado, regard for reason, not fanaticism, vision of future not insipid respect for traditionalism, they should strike at the system that is on its last leg.

A warning is, however, necessary. Active politics must be one but certainly not the only aspect of the manifold activities of student-life. Those can best be nourished by a true understanding of the significance of the academic life.

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The views expressed herein are exclusively of the writer.

#### CHRONICLE AND COMMENT :

The life is a chequered history of experiences—good, bad or mixed. To be the *de jure* secretary and the *de facto* editor of the College Magazine seems to me to give one a fair notion of this. At first comes elation for being associated with the distinguished names of the past. Elation is followed by fear—the fear of taking an enormous responsibility. Next comes dismay for having realised the inadequacies of our own capabilities. The tasks of a Secretary-cum-Editor are over-whelmingly complex; he must not only choose and edit but also coax and humour, do a lot of secretarial work, management, proof-reading and financial regulations. At last comes relief, a sense with which this 'Chronicle and Comment' is written.

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This issue of the College Magazine would show a marked change in the temperament of the College students. Their thought is centering more

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Due to certain unavoidable reasons, the Editorial and the 'Chronicle and Comment' are written by the Publication Secretary.

and more around politics, economics, history and science rather than on literature and the arts. Whether it is good or bad, a permanent or an ephemeral tendency, let posterity judge. All I have to say that the change in students' interests need not be deplored.

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It is our painful duty to note the untimely death of a student of our college—Shri Ashoke Pharikal of the 2nd year Physics class. We know not what word of consolation to offer his parents, relatives and friends.

During the past year we also mourned the death of some of the distinguished ex-students of our College—Principal Apurva Kumar Chanda ; Dr. Sushil Kumar Dey ; Professor Mohini Mohan Bhattacharya, Professor Priyanjan Sen ; Professor J. K. Chowdhuri ; Shri Kaliprasad Khaitan ; Shri Narendra Sing Singhi ; Shri Ramendranath Sirkar ; Shri Narendranath Sarkar.

The icy hand of death has snatched from us some of our honourable professors and members of the staff, past and present,—Professor Katyani Das Bhattacharja of Philosophy Department ; Professor Gurudas Bhar of Mathematics Department ; Sri Jatindralal Chowdhuri, the cataloguer of the library. We pay our respectful homage to the departed souls.

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Dr. Sanat Kumar Basu, the Principal of the College, has retired in this year and has joined the Louisiana University as a Professor of Mathematics. We wish him all success in future life. Dr. Rajendralal Sengupta, the Principal of Maulana Azad College has been appointed our new Principal. We welcome him in our midst.

Professor Nirupam Chatterjee of the English Department, Professor Bholanath Ghosh and Professor Arun Kumar Mukherjee of the Bengali Department, Professor Naresh Chandra Chakraborty of the Philosophy Department, Dr. Arundhati Ghosh of the Physics Department, Dr. S. N. Chakraborty of the Chemistry Department, Dr. A. K. Dutta of the Botany Department, Dr. S. N. Ray Chowdhuri of the Zoology Department have been transferred to other Colleges of West Bengal. We pay our warm respects and bid farewell to them with heavy hearts.

Shri Kalidas Basu of the English Department, Shri Saktibrata Ghosh and Shri Subodh Chandra Raychawdhuri of the Bengali Department, Dr. Jatil Mukherjee of the Philosophy Department, Prof. Jadav Basu

of the Political Science Department, Dr. Pratip Chowdhuri of the Physics Department, Dr. B. Sen of the Chemistry Department, Dr. S. K. Bhattacharya of the Botany Department, Dr. A. Banerjee of the Zoology Department are the new-comers to our College. We welcome them.

We note with pleasure that Professor Amal Bhattacharya of the English Department has returned from the Cambridge University and rejoined the College.

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Despite the closure of the College and consequent suspension of the classes for a few months, history repeats itself so far as the examination record of the College is concerned. Details are given below :

Pre-University	1st. Division—34
	Percentage 98.3%
Pre-University 1967	1st. Division—56
	Percentage—98.6%
B. A. 1965	1st. Class—12
	Percentage—99.1%
B. A. 1967	1st Class—7
	Percentage—99.7%
B. Sc. 1966	1st Class—42
	Percentage—92%
B. Sc. 1967	1st. Class—39
	Percentage—96.82%
M. A. 1965	1st Class—12

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We feel happy to be able to announce that two of our long-standing grievances are at long last removed. We have now more hours and more days at our disposal for depositing our tuition fees. And a cheap canteen has been started. This would show how students and authorities working together can achieve positive results.

The auditorium is ready. But for whom ? Is it likely to be proclaimed open in the foreseeable future ?

Things in the library testify to the extreme apathy of the authorities to the very purpose for which it exists. Books pile up year after year in heaps, no body knows when to be arranged and catalogued for the proper use of the students. Individual help, though offered, seems

to be of no avail. Immediate attention of the authorities is required urgently to avoid further deterioration.

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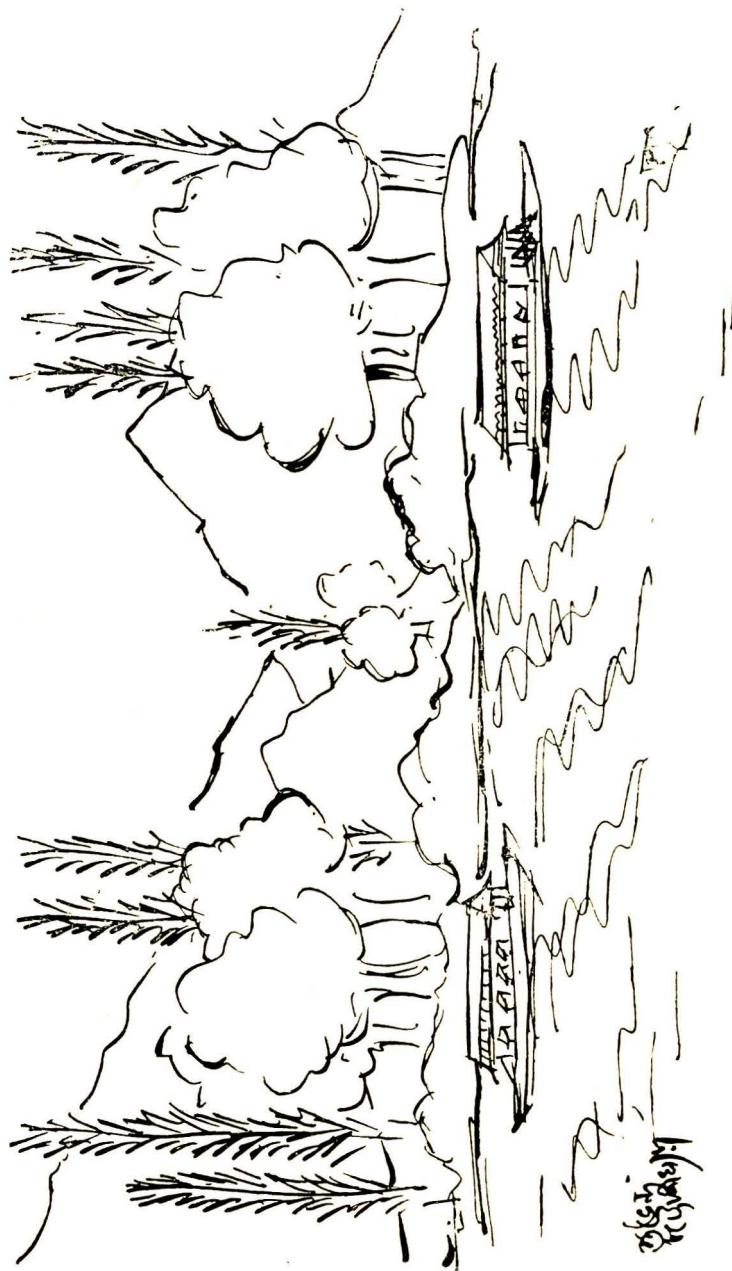
My thanks are due to Professor Bhudeb Chaudhuri of the Bengali Department for his guidance in every step of my work. I have gratefully accepted much valuable advice and many profitable suggestions from Professor Nirupam Chatterjee of the English Department. In the selection of articles I also owe much to Professor Dilip Kumar Biswas and Professor Ajay Banerjee of the History Department, Professor Mihir Rakshit and Professor Amaresh Bagchi of the Economics Department, Professor Manatosh Dasgupta of the Chemistry Department, Dr. S. N. Ghoshal of the Physics Department and Professor Kajal Sengupta of the English Department. I am also indebted to Shri Amitava Chowdhuri, the News Editor of the Ananda Bazar Patrika and Shri Ashim Dutta, the Principal of the Arts College, Jadavpur University for supplying blocks and photos of the late Dr. S. K. De. and Principal Apurva Kumar Chanda. I am also obliged to Professor Taraknath Sen of the English Department and Professor Bhabatosh Dutta of the Bengali Department for the obituary written respectively on Principal A. K. Chanda and Dr. S. K. Dey. I am grateful to my friends and class-mates [ of whom Shri Subid Chatterjee of the Third Year History Department deserves special mention ] for the encouragement they offered me in this strenuous task.

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My task is over. My best wishes to my successors. May the future editions of this magazine be improved upon year after year, both in quality and quantity.



বন  
ইঞ্জানী সেন  
৩য় বর্ষ, অর্থনৈতি।



ହୁମ  
ଅଭେଦ ଚାଟାଙ୍ଗୀ  
ଓସ ବର୍ଷ ପାଦପଥିତା ।

# প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজ পত্রিকা

পৌষ ১৩৭৪ ০ ০

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মনে মনে

দীপেশ চক্রবর্তী

২য় বর্ষ—বিজ্ঞান

মাঝে মাঝে অকারণে নিদারণ বিষণ্ণ

বিষণ্ণ ভাবনায়

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ছবি আঁকি ।

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মিথ্যে ভাবনা দিয়ে চেকে রাখি ॥

মাঝে মাঝে প্রচণ্ড রাগ হয়

রাগ হয়

রাগ হয়, নিজের ওপরেই ।

মনে মনে কী একটা পেতে চাই

পেতে চাই

ପ୍ରେସିଡେନ୍ସି କଲେଜ ପାତ୍ରିକା।

ପେତେ ଚାଇ, ଅଥଚ କୋଥାଓ ସେଟା ନେଇ !  
ମାଝେ ମାଝେ ମନ୍ତ୍ରାୟ ତୋଳପାଡ଼ ତୋଳପାଡ଼  
ଚେଟୁ ଚେଟୁ ବ୍ୟଥାଗ୍ରଲୋ ଭେଦେ ପଡ଼େ,  
ଆମାର ଅଭାବୀ ସର— ଅଚନ୍ଦ ବାଡ଼ ପଡ଼େ—  
ଚିରକାଳ କାପଛେଇ, କାପଛେଇ ॥

ସେ କେମନ ଚଟ୍ଟପ୍ଟ ରାସ୍ତାଯ ନେମେ ଏଲୋ,  
ନେମେ ଏସେ ଆମାକେଇ ଡାକଲୋ  
ଜୟନ୍ତ ଗନ୍ଧନେ ଶୂର୍ଯ୍ୟଟା ଦେଖିଯେ  
ଆକାଶର ପାନେ ଚୋଥ ରାଖଲୋ ।  
ମୂର୍ଖକେ ଭୟ କରି  
ଆକାଶକେ ଭୟ କରି  
ପାଲିଯେ, ପାଲିଯେ ଆଛି ତାଇ ।  
ଏତକାଳ ଅଭାବେର ସାଥେ ଆମି ସର କରି,  
ଏବାର ଆଁଧାର କିଛୁ ଥାକଲୋ ॥

ବେଦନାର ଦିକ ଥେକେ ଫିରିଯେ ନିଯେଛି ମୁଖ,  
ଜୟନ୍ତରେ ଯଦି ବୁକ, ଜଳବେ ।  
ମୋଦ୍ଦ କଥାଟା ଏଇ  
ଦିନଗ୍ରଲୋ ଚଲଛେଇ,  
ଚଲଛେଇ ଯଦି ଦିନ, ଚଲବେ ।  
ଆନମନେ କଥା କାଟି, ଛବି ଆକି—  
ମାଝେ ମାଝେ ଅକାରଣେ ନିଦାରଣ ବିଷକ୍ତ  
ବିଷକ୍ତ ଭାବନାୟ  
ତୁବେ ଥାକି ॥

## କୋନ୍ତ ଏକଜନେର ଶ୍ଵାରଣେ

ସୀମା ଚନ୍ଦ୍ରବତ୍ରୀ

୨ୟ ବର୍ଷ—ବିଜ୍ଞାନ

ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାବେଳୀ—

ଆକାଶେର ମେଘ ;

ସ୍ତର ତାଲଗାଛ,

ଜଲେର ଛାଯା,

ଡୁବନ୍ତ ଶୂର୍ଯ୍ୟର ଆଲୋ—

ମର ଛବିକେ ବିଦ୍ରପ କରଇ

ଏକ ଶକୁନିର ଆର୍ତ୍ତନାଦ ।

ବାସି ଫୁଲେର ଗନ୍ଧେର

ସାଥେ ଭେସେ ଏଲୋ—

ମରା ଲୋକେର କିମିମାନି—

‘ଆଗ୍ନ ଜ୍ଵାଳତେ ଭୁଲେ ଗେଲେ ?’

ମନେ ପଡ଼ିଲ ମୋକଟାକେ—

ଯାର ଭେତର ଛିଲ ତୀର ଜାଲ ।

ଯେ ଆମାଯ ବଲେଛିଲ—

‘ବୈଶାଖେର ଘଡ ଉଠିବେ—

ମେ ବଢ଼େର ମୂଳ୍ୟ ଦିତେ ହବେ,

ଆମାକେ-ତୋମାକେ ।’

ସଖନ ମେ ହଲ ନିଃଶେଷିତ—

ତାକେ କେଉ ଜାନଲ ନା ।

କେନ ମେ ଜଲଛିଲ

ତାଓ କେଉ ଜାନଲ ନା ।

କୟେକଜନ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ମାଝେ ମାଝେ

ବଲେ ଧାକେ—

ମେ ଚେଯେଛିଲ ବୁଁଚତେ,

ଏହି ଶୁନ୍ଦର ପୃଥିବୀତେ ।

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## পলাতকের ট্র্যাজেডি

অমিতাভ সরকার

প্রথম বর্ষ—অর্থনীতি

আমি পলাতক এলাম,  
পালিয়ে যাবার বার্তা নিয়ে ।

জীবনের গোলকধৰ্মায়,  
পৃথিবীর চিড়িয়াখানায়  
হয়েছিলাম শুধু প্রবক্ষিত ।

বাস্তবতার চশমা এঁটে,  
চোখের কোনে স্থপ্ত এঁকে,  
ভেবেছিলাম পৃথিবীটা বুঝি বেঁচে থাকার জন্তেই ;  
জাল বুনেছিলাম মানুষ বুঝি ভালবাসার জন্তেই ।  
আমার ‘আমিত্ব’ নিয়ে সেদিন করতাম বড়াই,  
মুখে রিয়ালিজমের বাণী নিয়ে বক্তৃতা দিতাম,—  
‘পৃথিবীটা সুন্দর,  
মানব-জীবনটা দুর্গত,  
বেঁচে থাকা মহৎ,  
ভালবাসাটা শিল্প ।’ আরো কত কি ।  
সেদিন ‘অমিতাভ’কে করেছিলাম উপেক্ষা,  
তাঁর মতকে করেছিলাম অবজ্ঞা,  
তাঁর ধর্মকে হেলায় হঠিয়েছিলাম  
হারাণ মিস্তিরের দর্শন দিয়ে ।  
ছ’টা গাড়ী, আর সাড়ে-চারটে বাড়ীর মালিক  
যে হারাণ মিস্তির এই তো সেদিন আমার চোখের সামনেই,  
ছটে। পয়সার ভিক্ষুক,—  
বুড়ো, খোড়া, চোখে কম দেখতে পাওয়া

বুধবারিকে দিয়েছিল গলা-ধাকা  
পাঁড়েকে ডেকে ।

হারাণ মিস্টিরের ইংরেজী স্কুলে পড়া মেঝে  
রিণা বলেছিল, ‘Nasty, isn’t it ?’  
সায় দিয়েছিলাম সেদিন ।

কিন্তু

সে বাস্তবতা যে ছিল নিতান্তই ঠুনকো,  
সে চশমার কাঁচ-ছুটোয় যে শুধুই ছিল ঘোলাটে জলের আন্তরণ,  
আমার ‘আমিত্ব’ যে সেদিন ছিল ফাঁকা ফালুদ্ মাত্র,  
আর তা’তে যে শুধু ফাঁবির প্রদীপ জেলে করতাম  
পৃথিবীর আকাশ-পরিক্রমা,  
সেদিন তা’ বুঝি নি ।

তবে বুঝেছি আজ,—

আজ পড়েছি আমি হারাণ-মিস্টিরের দর্শন,  
শিখেছি রিণা মিটার-এর ইংরেজী ;

তাই জেনেছি,—

পৃথিবীর দিনের আলোর সৌন্দর্যটা নিতান্তই বাইরের ও গৌণ,  
মুখ্য হ’ল তার ক্লেদ ও পক্ষিলতা ।

সেখানে রাতের অঙ্ককারের ছায়াপাতটাই আধিপত্য হ’লেও,  
তারই এবার রাজত্ব ;

দেখেছি,

তালবাসাটা শুধুই স্বার্থের মিলন,  
বিচ্ছেদটা স্বার্থের সংঘাত,  
তাই ‘বিরহ’ আজ ‘বিশুর’ নয়, নয় ‘মধুর’ও ।

তাই আমি আজ এসেছি,—

পলাতকের বার্তা নিয়ে,  
নেমেছি আজ ‘পালানো’র ক্যান্ডাসিঙ-এ ।  
আবার টেঁচিয়ে বলছি,

‘ଜୀବନଟା ଗୋଲକଥ୍ରାଧା, ପୃଥିବୀଟା ଚିତ୍ତିରାଖାନା’ ;  
 ତବେ ହିସାୟ ନୟ, —ନୟ ହାରିଯେ ଯାବାର ଭୟେଓ ।  
 ଉଦ୍ଦାତ୍କଟେ ଜାନିଯେଛି ଆହାନ,  
 ‘ଏସୋ ପାଲିଯେ ଏସୋ,  
 ବଞ୍ଚନାର ଫାଦେ ଦିଯୋ ନା ଧରା,  
 ତୁଲୋ ନା ଆୟାବିଲାପେର ରୋଲ ।  
 ଆମି ବାନିଯେଛି ସ୍ଵର୍ଗେର ସିଂଦି ତୋମାଦେର ଜନ୍ମେଇ,  
 ଆମି ମେଜେଛି ନତୁନ ବଶିଷ୍ଟ ତୋମାଦେର ଦୈକ୍ଷା ଦିତେ,  
 ଆମି ନତୁନ ‘ରବି’ ହେଁ ନତୁନ ଶୁଭକଳୀର ସୁରେ ଗାନ ଗେୟେଛି,  
 ‘ହେ ନୂତନ, ଦେଖା ଦିକ ଆରବାର,  
 ଜନମେର ପ୍ରଥମ ଶୁଭକଳ ।’  
 କିନ୍ତୁ ଆବାର ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଉଠେଛେ ।  
 ସେ ପଲାତକେର ସ୍ଵର୍ଗଟା କି ଦିନେର ଆଲୋଯ ସୁନ୍ଦର ନୟ ?  
 ସେ ସ୍ଵର୍ଗେର ସିଂଦିତେ ପଡ଼ିବେ ନା ମାନୁଷେର ଲାଇନ ?  
 କିଂବା ପା ପିଛଲାବାର କଲାର ଖୋସା ?  
 ମେଖାନେ କି ସବହି ଅଗ୍ରତ ଦିଯେ ଗଡ଼ା ?  
 କିଂବା ଅକୁତ୍ରିମ ଭାଲବାସା ଦିଯେ ମୋଡ଼ା ?  
 ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଏଲ,  
 ମେଖାନେ କି ‘ଆମିତ୍ର’ ହବେ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣତାଯ ଧନ୍ତ ?

ପ୍ରଶ୍ନ ଥେକେଇ ଗେଲ ।  
 ଖୁଜେ ପେଲାମ ନା ଏର ଉତ୍ତର ।  
 ଆମାର ପାଲିଯେ ଯାବାର ମନ୍ତ୍ର ହ’ଲ ବ୍ୟଥ,  
 ହାରାଣ ମିତିର ଆମାକେ ବଲଲ, ‘ନଚ୍ଛାର’,  
 ରିଣୀ ମିଟାର ଆଖ୍ୟା ଦିଲ, ‘Coward.’

ଆମାର ହ’ଲ ନା ପାଲିଯେ ଯାଓୟା,  
 ଆମାର ସ୍ଵର୍ଗେର ସିଂଦି ଗେଲ ଭେଦେ,  
 ଆମି ଆବାର ଥେକେ ଗେଲାମ ଏହି ପୃଥିବୀତେଇ,

তোমাকে এখন মনে পড়ছে  
আবার সেই পৃথিবীটাকেই বল্লাম 'মধুময়'।  
পলাতক আমার জীবনে  
ট্র্যাজেডি এন সেইখানেই।

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তোমাকে এখন মনে পড়ছে  
কৃষ্ণরূপ চক্রবর্তী  
চুতীয় বর্ষ—বাংলা

দরদালানের বাজারে ভিড় ঠেলে,  
গ্রাজাপতির স্বপ্ন-চিত্রে ভুলে,  
রঙীন শুড়ির নিশান ছেড়ে দিয়ে,  
তোমাকে এখন মনে পড়ছে।

মনে পড়ছে, মনে পড়ছে,  
তোমাকে এখন মনে পড়ছে,  
সঙ্কে-সকাল ছুঁয়ে যাচ্ছে,  
তোমার স্নোতগুলি।

উজান ঠেলে এ স্নোতের হায়  
নাবিক কি কোন তীর পেয়ে যায় ?  
তবুও রাতের দাঢ় বেয়ে যায়  
প্রতি মুহূর্তগুলি।

মনে পড়ছে, মনে পড়ছে,  
তোমাকে এখন মনে পড়ছে,  
সঙ্কে-সকাল ছুঁয়ে যাচ্ছে  
তোমার গানগুলি।

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## কফি হাউসে একষট্টী

জীবেন্দ্র কুমার রায়

তৃতীয় বর্ধ—বাংলা

### (১) বুজোঁয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথ…!!

“ভারতবর্ষ দারিদ্র্যের মধ্যেই নিজেকে পেয়েছে”—বার্ণাড় শ'র একটি materialistic statement-এর ওপর রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রতিবাদ। ‘রবীন্দ্রজীবনীর’ পাতা ওষ্টাতে ওষ্টাতে চোখে পড়ে গেল। সমস্ত ভেতরটা বিহিয়ে উঠল। কবিবরের সহস্র-কথিত লিরিক্যাল মিথ্যার অস্তর একটি বলে সুনিশ্চয়-রূপে প্রতিভাত হলো।

ভারতবর্ষ কি সত্যই দারিদ্র্যের মধ্যে নিজেকে পেয়েছে? সেকথা বিচার্য। নাকি এটা কবির একটি অন্তসারশৃঙ্গ আত্মপ্রশংসন! সচেতনভাবে হিসেব করলে বার্ণাড়শ'র সঙ্গে রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাঙ্কাঁৎ হয় তিনি এর দশকে, এসবাট আইনস্টাইন বা রোমা রেঁজার সঙ্গে তাঁর সাঙ্কাঁৎ ওই সময়েই হয়। তার মানে রবীন্দ্রনাথ তখন বিশ্বভ্রমণে বেরিয়েছিলেন। এই বিশ্বভ্রমণের ছুটি উদ্দেশ্য থাকতে পারে,—এক, কবির তখন প্রচণ্ড-অর্থাত্ব, অতএব টাকার সঙ্গানে দেশ দেশান্তরে গমন, অবশ্যই ভিক্ষা নয়, বক্তৃতার বিনিময়ে, দ্বিতীয়তঃ, গোণভাবে আত্মপ্রচার। কবির নিজেকে তখন ভারতের প্রতিনিধি বলে বন্দনা করবার মনোভাব জাগ্রত হয়েছিল, স্বতরাং ‘আমার এমন কথা বলা উচিত যা হবে চিরস্তন ভারতের বাণী’—তাঁর উপরে এধরণের আইডিয়ার কাল্পনিক আরোপণে সন্তুষ্ট: অযৌক্তিক কিছু নেই।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিজে ধনী ছিলেন। যে অর্থাত্বাবের কথা তাঁর জীবনীপাঠে আমরা পাই তার উৎস শান্তিনিকেতন; নিজের সংস্থানের জন্য তাঁকে কোনদিনই চিন্তা করতে হয়নি; দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ছেলেদের জন্য সে ব্যবস্থা রেখে গিয়েছিলেন।

কিন্তু তা সহেও কি করে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ভারতবর্ষকে ভুললেন! মুষ্টিমেয় ঝুঁকিকল্প ব্যক্তির লেখনী নিঃস্তুত বাণী ভারতাভ্যার সঙ্গে একাত্ম কখনই হতে পারে না, যদি তা দেশের সত্যরূপ না হয়। মুনি-ঝুঁকিদের লেখনীনিঃস্তুত বাণীকে সদস্তে সদর্পে উপেক্ষা করা যেতে পারে, কিন্তু অংশাভাবের ক্রন্দন যে দেশের মর্মস্থল থেকে উদ্গিরিত হচ্ছে তাকে উপেক্ষা করলে বিবেচনা বা যুক্তিসঙ্গতিকে

রক্ষা করা যাবে না ।

সমরেশ বলল—কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের দিক থেকেও কিছু বলার আছে । ধনী বলেই তিনি বুঝেছিলেন,—‘বিন্দের মধ্যে আমি চিন্তকে পাবো না, আমাকে যেতে হবে সেই নির্জনতার গহনে, ভোগবিলাস থেকে বহুদূরে !’ তাই হয়ত তাঁর অধিকাংশ সৃষ্টিই সন্তুষ্ট হয়েছিল ঠাকুরবাড়ীর মধ্যে নয়, ঠাকুরবাড়ীর বাইরে—দূরে ।

নিজে ভোগের মধ্যে ছিলেন বলেই এই সত্যকে বোঝা তাঁর পক্ষে সন্তুষ্ট হয়েছিল যে এর দ্বারা চিন্তাক্ষি সন্তুষ্ট নয় । আমাদের মত মধ্যবিত্তরা সেই সত্যোপলক্ষির নাগাল পাছিনা বলেই কি তাঁকে হেয় করতে হবে !

সুরজিৎ শিতভাবে বলে উঠল—তোমার শেষ কথাটা আমার ভারি সুন্দর নাগাল । কারো নাগাল না পেলে তাঁকে হেয় করা আমাদের স্বভাবধর্ম । একটা উদাহরণ ধরঃ—গত শতাব্দীতে রবীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতার বিরুদ্ধে এক উগ্র ধূমোদ্গিরণ করেছিলেন সমালোচকরা । ‘অস্পষ্ট’, ‘হেঁয়ালি’, ‘ছুর্ণীতিমূলক’ আখ্যায় অভিহিত হয়েছিল কবিবরের অমর কবিতাণ্ডলি ।

আসল কথা কবিতাণ্ডলির নাগাল পাওয়া তাঁদের পক্ষে সন্তুষ্ট হয়নি । তাই স্বভাবধর্মের অনাবৃত অভিব্যক্তি ঘটিয়েছিলেন তাঁরা । কালীপ্রসন্ন কাব্যবিশারদের ‘মিঠে কড়’ আর দ্বিজেন্দ্রলালের ‘আনন্দ-বিদায়’ নিশ্চয়ই পড়েছে । তাই বলছি, তুমি একটি মর্যাদার্থী স্তুলকথা বলে হয়ত রবীন্দ্রনাথের একটি মন্তব্যকে মসী-চিহ্নিত করতে চাইছ ; কিন্তু আমি যদি বলি কবির সত্যবাণীর নাগাল পাওয়া তোমার সীমিত রস-বিচারে সন্তুষ্ট হয়ে ওঠেনি, তাই ।

আমি যান হেসে বললাম—তুমি কিছু ঠিক বলেছ, কিছু আঘাত দিতে চেয়েছ । তোমার মতে আমি অরসিক । কিন্তু একটা অন্তঃসারশৃঙ্গ অহঃ-সর্বস্ব ভাবগ্রহণ যদি রসিকতার স্মারকচিহ্ন হয় তবে আমি অরসিকই থাকতে চাই । একটা কথা তুমি আর সমরেশ বারবার বলেছ, সে হ’ল চিন্তের কথা । খুবই ঠিক কথা যে, বিন্দের মধ্যে চিন্তাক্ষি ঘটেনা । কিন্তু প্রশ্ন, চিন্তের প্রতিষ্ঠা কিসের ওপর ! অন্নময় স্তুল রক্তমাংসের দেহটার ওপরেই তো তাঁর প্রতিষ্ঠা । সেই দেহটা যখন তাঁরের জন্য কেঁদে মরছে, দুয়ারে দুয়ারে ঘুরছে, পুলিশের বুলেট খাচ্ছে, রাস্তায় তিনদিমের অনশনের পর লুটিয়ে পড়ছে, মা তাঁর সবেধন নীলমনিটিকে সুদূর প্রবাসে পাঠিয়ে দিচ্ছে, সেখানে তোমাদের তথাকথিত চিন্তের স্থান কোথায় বলো !

সমরেশ বলল—কিন্তু প্রাচুর্যের মধ্যে মানুষ যে মানবত্ব অর্থাৎ তার শ্রেষ্ঠত্বকে পায়নি এটা তো এব। ভারতবাসী অন্নের জন্য কেঁদেছে, মরেছে, কিন্তু সেই ভারতবাসীই কি আবার সব ত্যাগ করে বনে যায়নি। বিবেকানন্দ অনাহারে থেকে কলকাতার রাস্তায় কলের জল খেয়ে জীবন কাটিয়েছেন, জেনেছেন, ‘মা আজ হয়ত ভাত রাখা করেছেন কিন্তু আমি গেলে কম পড়ে যাবে’, তাই বাড়ীতেই ঢেকেননি, মনুমেন্টের তলায় বসে দিন কাটিয়েছেন। ঈশ্বরের প্রতি চূড়ান্ত ঘৃণায় তৎকালিক অনশনক্লিষ্ট মানুষটির অন্তর জলে উঠেছে, কিন্তু বল, যেদিন সমন্বিত মুখ তিনি দেখলেন, সেদিন কোন্ প্রেরণায় সর্বস্ব বিসর্জন দিয়ে পথকে সাথী করলেন !!

কবিবর কি একেবারেই আন্ত !!

‘ভারতবর্ষ দারিদ্র্যের মধ্যেই নিজেকে পেয়েছে’ একথা তিনি লিখেছিলেন সত্য, কিন্তু চিংপুর রোডে যে মানুষগুলি অর্ধাহারে অনাহারে অর্ধেলঙ্ঘ অবস্থায় দিন কাটায় তাদের পরিচয় কি তাঁর মত ব্যক্তির পক্ষে অজ্ঞাত ছিল, একথা বিশ্বাস্য ! আসলে কবি অবগাহন করেছিলেন ভারত-আত্মার সরসীতলে—গ্রাজ-দৃষ্টিতে বুঝেছিলেন ভারত সব হারিয়েই সব পেয়েছে।

আমি বললাম—তোমার কথাটা স্মর্মধূর, কিন্তু অনেকটা বিবাহের দিনের বরবধূর পোষাকের মত, কাজে লাগে না। যে জীবনটা আমার চোখের সামনে তার প্রাণময় অস্তিত্ব নিয়ে বিরাজ করছে, হাসছে, কাঁদছে, বিরহমিলনে ছলছে, ব্যর্থতায় ফেটে মরে যাচ্ছে তাকে অস্বীকার যিনি করেন, যতই অন্তর্দৃষ্টি সম্পন্ন হোননা কেন, মানবদরদী তিনি নন। কবি যিনি, সাহিত্যিক যিনি, মানুষের চেয়ে বড় আর কিছু তাঁর কাছে স্থান পাবে না।

সুরজিং বললো—কবিকে শুধু মানবদরদী হলেই হয় না, তাঁকে সত্যদ্রষ্টাও হতে হয়। নগ চোখে আমরা যা দেখি তাই কি সব সময় সত্য। অফিসের পথে বাসে ঝুলতে গিয়ে একটা লোক চাঁকার তলায় পড়ে মরে গেলো, আমার কি বলতে হবে, জীবনসত্য গুটাই ! না, সে ক্রমশঃ ধীরে ধীরে তার আর্থিক উন্নতি করে স্ত্রী, সন্তান, মা, বাবা নিয়ে একটা স্বীকী নীড় গড়বে, তাদের চোখে মুখে আশার আলো ছালিয়ে তোলার স্বপ্ন দেখবে,—সেটা !

ভারতের মানুষ অনাহারে থাকে এটা বাহ সত্য। কিন্তু এও তো সত্য যে এক নিঃস্ব ভিক্ষুণী তার শেষ সম্মল বন্ধুদেবকে দান করেছিলেন, নিজেকে নগ

রেখেও ; বলতে পারো এ কবি-কল্পনা, কিন্তু সে ভাবতেরই, ইংলণ্ডের বা ফ্রান্সের নয় ।

আমি ঝষ্ট হয়ে বলে উঠলাম—কল্পনার মহল বাস্তব থেকে স্বতন্ত্র ; কবি-কল্পনার উচ্চগ্রাম আর যাই হোক বাস্তব সত্য নয় ।

সমরেশ বললো—দেখো, স্ববিরোধী কিছু কল্পনা করা যায় না । ভাবপ্রবণ, দার্শনিক মনোভাবসম্পন্ন বাঙালীসমাজে নাটকের যথার্থ উপকরণ নেই বলেই আমাদের সার্থক নাটক তৈরী হয়নি । Othelo-র যে প্রতিহিংসাময় অগ্নিশ্বাসী সংলাপ, তা কি আত্মশক্তিতে বিশ্বাসী, অমিতবীর্য প্রচণ্ড প্রাণপূর্ণ ইংরেজ জাতিরই সংলাপ নয় ? পারবো তাকে আমরা বাঙালী রূপ দিতে ? শ্রীরাধিকার প্রেমকথা কি ইংরেজীভাষায় ইংরেজীরূপ যিয়ে ইংরেজ রমণীর প্রেমকথায় অনুদিত হতে পারবে ? অভিমান আর মাথুরের ত ইংরেজী কোনো প্রতিশব্দই নেই । বাস্তবে হয়ত সত্যই ‘মস্তিষ্কবিকৃতি’ না ঘটলে কেউ পরিধেয় বন্ধুখানি দান করে না ; কিন্তু এটুকু তো মানা যেতে পারে যে ভিক্ষুণী হয়েও সর্বস্ব দান করবার পথ সে করেছিল । এইখানেই কি তার অহুরের সুবিশাল ঐশ্বর্যময় প্রাচুর্য প্রমাণিত হয়নি..... !

## (২) শরৎচন্দ্রের রেহাই

লক্ষণীয় যে আধুনিক ‘বিদঞ্চ’ পাঠক এবং সমালোচক মহলে শরৎচন্দ্র অবহেলিত, নিন্দিত । বিদঞ্চ বাঙালী এখন অনেক কিছুই সহ করতে পারে, কিন্তু শরৎচন্দ্রের ‘অকারণ উচ্ছ্বাস’, ‘শুধু অঙ্গজল’ তাদের কাছে অমার্জনীয় ।

সুরাজিং বলল—তুমি লক্ষ্য করে থাকবে, শরৎচন্দ্রকে নিন্দা করা একটা ফ্যাশান হয়ে দাঢ়িয়েছে আজকাল ।

জনসাধারণই শরৎসাহিত্যের সবচেয়ে সন্তুষ্ট পাঠক । আমি যে জনসাধারণের মত স্কুল নই, আমার চিন্তাধারা, রস-বিচার যে তাদের থেকে অনেক পরিশীলিত, তা শরৎচন্দ্রকে নিন্দা না করলে প্রতিপন্থ হবে কি করে ?...শরৎচন্দ্র যে ‘স্কুল জনসাধারণের’ (! !) প্রতিনিধি ।

শরৎ সাহিত্যের নব মূল্যায়ন শুরু হয়েছে । এবং দূরদর্শীর আত্মপ্রত্যয় যাঁর আছে, তিনিই উপলক্ষ করছেন শরৎচন্দ্রের আয়ু আর বেশীদিন নয় ।

তা হোক । যে সুবিশাল কালখণ্ডে শরৎচন্দ্র পাঠকের চিন্তদেশে আসীন রয়েছেন, যে তাবে পরবর্তী বাংলা কথাসাহিত্যকে তাঁরই পথ ধরে চলবার অন্ত্যেরণা দিয়েছেন তার মূল্য নেহাত কম নয় । শরৎচন্দ্র সেখানেই শরৎচন্দ্র ।

সমরেশ অন্ন একটু হেসে বলল—তোমার কথায় বিচার যত্থানি তার চেয়ে ভক্তির প্রাধান্ত অনেক বেশী। শরৎচন্দ্রের যে সত্যই অনেকগুলি ত্রুটি ছিল এবং কোনো কোনো ক্ষেত্রে সেগুলি যে অসহ তা তো তুমি কোনোমতেই অঙ্গীকার করতে পারবেনা। সমালোচকদের অহেতুক দোষারোপ করলে নিজেরই কি রসবিচারের দীনতা প্রতিপন্থ হবেনা ?

হেমচন্দ্র উনিশ শতকের বাঙালী কাব্য-পাঠককে প্রতারিত করেছিলেন, বিংশ শতাব্দীর সাধারণ বাঙালীও যে রসবিচারে খানিকটা আত্মবন্ধ হয়েছিল, একথা তো সাহিত্যের ছাত্র হিসাবে তোমাকে মানতেই হবে, তার প্রমাণ তো শরৎচন্দ্র।

সুরজিঃ আবেগ-মন্ত্র কর্তৃ বলে চলল—সাধারণ পাঠক সব ক্ষেত্রেই রসবিচার করেনা, শিল্পস্থষ্টি কর্ত্তব্য-সার্থক হল, তার প্রত্যাশা ও আমার মনে হয় অব্যন্তর। তারা আনন্দ চায়, হাসি চায়, বই পড়ে কেঁদেও সুখ পায়। তারা তাদের নাগালের মধ্যের জীবনটারই পরিচয় পেতে চায়।

শরৎচন্দ্র তাদের সেই ন্যূনতম বাসনা পূরণ করেছিলেন। জীবনের বিবর্ণ স্মৃতোয় যে সতেজ ফুলের মালা তিনি গেঁথেছিলেন, বাঙালী তাতেই সন্তুষ্ট হয়েছিল।

তুমি হয়ত বলবে, পাঠক আমার কাছে মুখ্য হবেনা, শিল্প আর রসই থাকবে লক্ষ্য বস্তু হিসাবে নির্ধারিত। আমার বক্তব্য, এ এক ধরণের আত্মপ্রবর্ধনা।

আমি বললাম—এটা শ্রবণ। প্রত্যেক লেখকই পাঠক চান, মুখে তিনি যাই বলুন, কলমে যাই লিখুন না কেন। উনিশ শতকের প্রার্থ্যাত জর্জ দার্শনিক ফ্রেডেরিক নীতশ্রে জীবিতকালে একটি সহদয় পাঠক পাননি, তাই উন্মাদ রোগগ্রস্ত হয়েছিলেন। দেশ আর জাতি যেদিন ফুলের মালা আর অভিনন্দন নিয়ে এল, বেচারী নীতশ্রে সেদিন আর এ পৃথিবীতে ছিলেন না।

সমরেশের কর্তৃ দৃঢ়তার ছাপ ফুটে উঠল। সুগভীর আত্মপ্রত্যয়ের স্বরে বলল—

এবার আমায় কিছু বলতে দাও। সাহিত্যের বিচারে আবেগটাকে যতদূর সন্তুষ্ট বাদ দিও। আমার বক্তব্য, শরৎচন্দ্র যে সম্মান পেয়ে থাকেন, তত্থানি প্রাপ্য তার নয়। সত্য কথা বলতে কি, বিধবা আর পতিতার প্রেম আর গফুরজোলার দুঃখ ছাড়া কোনো সত্যকারের সমস্তার উত্থাপন তিনি করতে পারেন নি। প্রকৃত সমস্তার উত্থাপন করেছিলেন স্বয়ং রবীন্দ্রনাথই। আশা করি এ কথা তুমি মানবে।

একটু হেসে জবাব দিলাম—সাহিত্য সমালোচনায় মানাটাই বড় কথা নয় ; বিচারই মুখ্য । তোমার মতে শরৎচন্দ্র কোনো সমস্তার উত্থাপন করেন নি, কিন্তু আমার বক্তব্য, গভীরতম মননজাত সমস্তাই কি কেবল সমস্তা ? প্রাত্যহিক জীবনের যে পথ, যার ওপর দিয়ে চলে যেতে হবে, তা যদি গুল্ম ফাঁচায় আচ্ছন্ন থাকে, তার দ্বারা যদি তুমি বারবার বাধ্যপ্রাপ্ত হও তাকে সমস্তা বলবে না !!

সমরেশ উত্তরে বলল—কিন্তু বিচারটা হবে তার শিল্পগত রূপায়ণের সার্থকতার ভিত্তিতে । পরিপূর্ণতায় রবীন্দ্রনাথ যত্থানি সফলকাম শরৎচন্দ্র তত্থানি কিছুতেই নন् ।

আমি বললাম—কিন্তু ভুলে যাচ্ছ কেন যে শরৎচন্দ্র ছিলেন কেবলই উপন্যাসিক । আভারেজ পাঠকগোষ্ঠীকে উপেক্ষা বা অবহেলা করতে তিনি পারেন নি । জনতার আবদার আর প্রকাশকের নীরব ফরমায়েস শরৎচন্দ্র কখনই অঙ্গীকার করতে পারেন নি, সে অধিকার তাঁর ছিল না ।

সমরেশ বলল—এটা তোমার ব্যক্তিগত সাফাই । আর্টের বিচার শুণলো বাদ দিয়েই করতে হবে । সরলীকৃণ শরৎচন্দ্রের প্রধানতম বৈশিষ্ট্য এবং বলতে পারো এটাই তাঁর প্রধানতম ক্রটি । তাই মদের মধ্যে জল প্রচুর পরিমাণে মিশিয়ে-ছিলেন । এটা শিল্পের ফাঁকি ।

শরৎচন্দ্র বুঝেছিলেন বাঙালী-চিন্তের সবচেয়ে দুর্বলতা স্নেহে । এই স্নেহের বন্ধা বইয়েই জনপ্রিয়তার কেল্লা দখল করে নিয়েছিলেন, কি বল ?

আমি বললাম—কিন্তু বিদ্রোহী শরৎচন্দ্র তোমার সমালোচনায় স্থান পেল না কেন বলত ? তুমি কেবল পণ্ডিতমশাই,, মেজদিদি, নিষ্ঠাতির শরৎচন্দ্রের কথাই বলেছ । কিন্তু চরিত্রহীন, শেষপ্রশ়া, শ্রীকান্ত আর গৃহদাহের সেই ধূমোদ্গিরিত সন্তানির কথা বিস্তৃত হলে কেন ?

নিঃসন্দেহে, এই চারটি মাত্র উপন্যাস লিখলেই শরৎচন্দ্র বাংলার শ্রেষ্ঠ কথাসাহিত্যিক হিসাবে পরিগণিত হতেন । শরৎচন্দ্রের মূল্যায়ন এদের দিয়েই করতে হবে । অগ্রগুল তাঁর প্রতিভার অপব্যয়িত দিক মাত্র ।

### (৩) রবীন্দ্রনাথের ট্র্যাজেডি

সমরেশ কথায় কথায় বলে উঠল—রবীন্দ্রনাথের ট্র্যাজেডী কোথায় জান ?

আমি বললাম—সে আবার কি ? ব্যক্তিগত জীবনের অনেক ট্র্যাজেডি তাঁর আছে, তুমি কি সেটাই বলতে চাইছ, না তান্ত কিছু...

সুরজিং আলোচনার দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীকে সামান্য একটু ঘূরিয়ে দিয়ে বললো—প্রত্যেক মানুষের জীবনেই ট্র্যাজেডি থাকে, সব ক্ষেত্রেই সেটা অপ্রাপ্তির, বিছেদের কিছু বা শূন্যতাবোধের, তার কোনো বিশিষ্টতা থাকলেও তা নিয়ে বিশেষ উৎসাহিত বোধ করা যায় না, কারণ গুটা common।

আস্তে আস্তে সমরেশ বললে—আমি সামগ্রিক রবীন্দ্রনাথের ট্র্যাজেডির কথাই বলছি।

আমরা সমস্বরে বলে উঠলাম—elaborate, elaborate।

—কবি রবীন্দ্রনাথ আর বাঙালী জাতের পক্ষে সবচেয়ে মর্মান্তিক ব্যাপার হ'ল যে, রবীন্দ্রনাথ আর বাঙালী হয়ে জন্মাতে চাননি। একটা চিঠিতে তাই বোধহয় অতিথুঃখেই বলেছিলেন, ধর্মের দেশে জন্মানোর নেশা আমার কেটে গেছে, আমার যেন সেই দেশেই জন্ম হয়, যেখানে আচার ধর্মসঙ্গত নয়, কিন্তু বিচার অ্যায়সঙ্গত। আর এই উক্তি তারগোর উত্তেজনাবশতঃ মনে করে ভুল কোরো না, যখন তিনি এই মন্তব্যটি করেন তখন তাঁর বয়স ৭৩।

খানিকটা উষ্ণ হয়ে বললাম—এ জানা কথা, তারপর!

সমরেশ বলল—এর পর একটা গল্প শোনো। মেডিকেল কলেজ থেকে এক সত্ত্ব পাশ-করা যুবক শান্তিনিকেতনে রবীন্দ্রনাথের সঙ্গে দেখা করতে গিয়েছেন। অনেক গল্প-সন্ধি হল, হঠাৎ রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলে উঠলেন আচ্ছা তুমি মেডিকেল বইগুলো বাংলায় লিখতে পারো না? যুবকটি যেন খানিকটা বিশ্বিত হয়েই বলল—সে কি গুরুদেব, সে কি করে সন্তুষ্ট!

উত্তরকালে সেই ভদ্রলোকটি লিখেছেন, ‘আমার কথায় তাঁর মুখে যে মলিনতার ছাপ সেদিন পড়েছিল তা ভোলবার নয়।’

সুরজিং বললে—আচ্ছা সমরেশ এই গল্পের উদ্দেশ্য কি?

উদ্দেশ্য? একটু থেমে সমরেশ বলল—রবীন্দ্রনাথ চেয়েছিলেন জীবনের সর্বত্র বাংলাকে ব্যবহাৰ কৰতে, দেখেছিলেন কেবল সন্তুষ-ভাবের কথায় জাতিৰ পেট ভৱে না। কৃটি আসবে না, তাই চেয়েছিলেন সব কিছুই যেন বাংলাতে পড়ান হয়। তাতে বাংলাভাষাৰ শক্তি বাড়বে, সামৰ্থ্য বাড়বে, সর্বোপৰি জাতিৰ জীবনে বাংলা ‘Bread earning Language’ হিসাবে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হবে। বলাই বাহল্য ১৯৬৭ সালেও আমরা সব কিছুই ইংৰাজীতে পড়ছি।

একটু থেমে সমরেশ বলে চলল, আমরা বাস কৱি বাংলাদেশে। কিন্তু বলতো

সরকারী কাজে বাংলা কি আজও গৃহীত হয়েছে? আমাদের দরখাস্ত দিতে হয় ইংরেজীতে, ‘ফর্ম-ফিলাপ’ করতে হয় ইংরেজীতে, সব কিছুই বিদেশী ভাষায়। বাংলাদেশেও বাংলার কোনো মর্যাদা নেই। বল, তুমি কি এটাকে অস্বীকার কর?

বললাম—অস্বীকার করবো কোন্ মুখে। সাহিত্যের ছাত্র হিসাবে এই মর্মান্তিক সত্যটা উপলব্ধি করেছি যে, বাংলাদেশে অনাদৃত সবচেয়ে তারাটি, যারা রবীন্দ্রনাথের ভাষায় অনাস্ম পড়ে।

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## জনতায় নির্জনতায় জীবনানন্দ

অভিজিৎ সেন

তৃতীয় বর্ষ—অর্থনীতি

॥ এক ॥

উনিশশো চুয়ান্ন সালের তেইশে অকটোবর তারিখে ক'লকাতার কয়েকটা দৈনিক খবরের কাগজে ট্রাম-হুর্টনায় আহত কবি জীবনানন্দ দাশের মৃত্যুর খবর ছেপে বেরিয়েছিলো। ছোট খবর; অনেকে খেয়ালই করেন নি। যাঁরা করেছিলেন, তাঁদের মধ্যে অনেকেই বিশেষ একটা গা’ করেননি। এর পর কয়েকদিন একটু আলোড়ন জেগেছে; ‘আহা রে, ভালো লোকটা ম’রে গেলো’—বলে চায়ের দোকানে ব’সৈ ব’সৈ কেউ বা আক্ষেপ করেছেন। বেশিদিন করেন নি অবশ্য; জলের বলয়ের ঢেউ আস্তে আস্তে দুর্বল হ’তে হতে জলেই মিলিয়ে গেছে।

অবশ্য বাংলাদেশের সত্যিকারের কাব্যরসিক যাঁরা, জীবনানন্দের মৃত্যুতে তাঁরা যে কতোখানি অভিভূত হয়েছিলেন তার আসল গ্রন্থাগ পাঁওয়া যায় সেদিনকার নানা সাহিত্যিক পত্রপত্রিকার পাতায়। জীবনানন্দ স্মরণে বহু ছোটোবড়ো সাহিত্যপত্র বিশেষ সংখ্যা বার করেছে; জানা-অজানা বহু লেখক ও কবি তাঁর

স্মৃতিকে শ্রদ্ধা জানিয়ে লিখেছেন ; সত্তা সমিতি হয়েছে ; জীবনানন্দের কাব্যের সত্যিকারের রূপ নির্ণয় করবার জন্য, তাঁর প্রতিভাকে স্বীকৃতি দেবার জন্য বহু সু-ভাষণ ভাষিত হয়েছে । বাংলাদেশের কাব্যরসিকেরা অকৃতজ্ঞ নন् ।

কিন্তু সামগ্রিকভাবে জীবনানন্দ আমাদের কাছে আজও কুয়াশাস্থন, হুরহতি-হুরোধ্যতার (?) জালের অন্তরালে, অচুভূতিরাজ্যের স্বহস্ত্র ব্যবধানে জীবনানন্দ এখনো অধিকাংশ শিক্ষিত বাঙালীর কাছেও শুধুই এক স্বদূর শ্রদ্ধার মানুষ মাত্র । আমাদের এ অঙ্গতা আশ্চর্য । রবীন্দ্রনাথ সারাজীবনে লিখেছেন প্রচুর ; তবু তাঁর সম্পর্কে আজ অবধি যতো লেখা বেরিয়েছে সব একসঙ্গে জড়ে করলে তাঁর চেয়েও যে কতোগুণ বেশি হবে, সে হিসেবের জন্য কম্পিউটর দরকার । আর জীবনানন্দের প্রকাশিত কবিতার বই মাত্র সাতখানা ; একখানা প্রবন্ধ-সংকলন । তবু জীবনানন্দ-চর্চার ফসল হিসেবে আজ অবধি আমরা যা পেয়েছি, তাঁর পরিমাণ কতো ! শুধু কম নয়, বলা উচিত বিশ্বায়করভাবে কম ।

অথচ ইদানীংকালে নকল-না-করা ধ্যানধারণার পসরা নিয়ে মাত্র যে ক'জন কবি আমাদের মনকে নাড়া দিতে পেরেছেন, তাঁদের মধ্যে সবচেয়ে মোহম্মদ ব'লে মনে হয়েছে কাকে ? জীবনানন্দ দাশ ছাড়া আর কোনো নাম চঠ ক'রে মনে আসে কি ?

শুধীন্দ্রনাথ দন্তের গুরগন্তীর বাঁকচাতুর্য আমরা দূরে দাঁড়িয়ে সশ্রদ্ধ বিশ্বায়ে লক্ষ্য ক'রেছি । বৃক্ষদেব বশুর কবিতার সর্বজয়ী প্রেম আমাদের হাতয়ে ঘেমনি দিয়েছে শক্তি, তাঁর উগ্র দেহ-সচেতনা তেমনি আমাদের রচিবোধকে কখনো বা ক'রেছে পীড়িত । বিষু দে আর অমিয় চক্রবর্তীর বিপুল বৈদ্যন্ত আমাদের সম্ম উদ্বেক ক'রেছে । সমর সেন, সুভাষ মুখোপাধ্যায়েরা আমাদের মাটিতে পা ফেলে ইঁটিতে শিথিয়েছেন । কিন্তু সব চেয়ে বেশী মন কেড়ে নিয়েছেন একজনই—তিনি জীবনানন্দ দাশ ।

...না, জীবনানন্দের কবিতার মূল্যায়ন করবার উদ্দেশ্য নিয়ে এ লেখা আমি লিখতে বসিনি । সে স্পর্ধাও আমার নেই । জীবনানন্দকে বুঝতে গেলে তাঁর সমান্ধমৰ্ম প্রতিভার দরকার । সে রকম প্রতিভার অধিকারী কেউ যদি কখনো এগিয়ে এসে একাজের ভার নেন, তবেই জীবনানন্দের প্রতি স্বিচার করা হ'বে । আমার উদ্দেশ্য শুধু আজ জীবনানন্দের মৃত্যুর তেরো বছর পরে মনের ভেতরে তৈরী করা তাঁর ছবিটার মুখোমুখি একবার স্তুত হয়ে দাঢ়ানো ; সমস্ত কোলাহলের

ওপারে ঘটানৈশক্ষের লোকে যে অনুইন শান্তির কোলে তিনি ঘুমিয়ে আছেন, কোনো ক্ষুদ্র বাতায়ন-পথে তারই একটুখানি স্বাদ পেতে চেষ্টা করা।

॥ দ্রষ্ট ॥

রবীন্দ্রনাথের উত্তরসূরীদের গড়ে তোলা কাব্যজগৎকে নির্দেশ করবার জন্য আমরা সংক্ষেপে বলি : রবীন্দ্রোত্তর যুগের কবিতা। এখন কথা হচ্ছে, এই রবীন্দ্রোত্তর যুগের শুরু কোন্ধান থেকে। ১৯৪১-এর পর থেকে নিশ্চয়ই নয়, কারণ সাহিত্যে কেউ কালের বিচারে যুগনির্ধারণ করে না, সে পরিমাপ হয় রসের বিচারে। রবীন্দ্রীয় রোমান্টিসিজ্মের বিরুদ্ধে বিদ্রোহ শুরু হয়েছিলো ১৯৪১-এর অনেক আগেই। ডক্টর শশিভূষণ দাশগুপ্ত এই বিদ্রোহের জন্মতারিখ হিসেবে ১৯১০ সালকে নির্দেশ ক'রেছেন—যে বছর যতীন্দ্রনাথ সেনগুপ্তের “মরীচিকা” প্রকাশিত হয়।

ব্যাপারটা আরো একটু পরিষ্কার ক'রে বলা দরকার। গত শতকের মধ্য-পর্বেই সারা পশ্চিম জুড়ে এক বিরাট সাহিত্যিক আন্দোলন শুরু হয়ে গিয়েছিলো। এ আন্দোলন রোমান্টিকতার বিরুদ্ধে। ভিক্টোরীয় যুগের পশ্চিমী কবিতা। তাঁদের কাব্যে যে অতীন্দ্রিয় সৌন্দর্য আর শার্শত চিরায়ত প্রেমের রাজ্য গ'ড়ে তুলেছিলেন, এই নতুন আন্দোলনের উদ্গাতারা তাকে একেবারে নষ্টাং ক'রে দিলেন। তাঁরা বললেন, ওসব চলবে না। শুধু ‘চান্দ-ফুল-হায়’ আর ‘তুমি-আমি’ নিয়ে কাব্যরচনার দিন চ'লে গেছে। দিনকাল গেছে পাল্টে। এখন সেই নতুন যুগের কবিতাই রচনা ক'রতে হ'বে। গোলাপফুল আর কোকিলের ডাকের পাশাপাশি স্থান দিতে হ'বে নর্দমা, ভিথিকী, কুষ্ঠরোগী, খিদে, মৃত্যু, ঘোনলালসা, মানসিক ব্যাধি—সব-কিছুকে। শুধু তাই নয়। যা নোংরা তাকে নোংরা করেই প্রকাশ করতে হবে, যা কুৎসিত তাকে কুৎসিতরূপেই তুলে ধ'রতে হ'বে।

বাংলাদেশে এ আন্দোলনের চেতু এসে পৌছলো। চল্লিত শতকের গোড়ায়। প্রথম মহাযুদ্ধ তাতে ইঙ্গুন জোগালো। মাঝুদের মনোরাজ্যে দেখা দিলো এক বিরাট পরিবর্তন। জন্ম-মৃত্যু-ভালোবাসা পাপ-পুণ্য-ধর্ম সবকিছু সম্বন্ধে ধারণা গেল একেবারে বদলে। জীবনের কঢ়ক কঠিন কর্কশ দিক্ট। হঠাং যেন নগ্ন হ'য়ে গিয়ে দাঁত নোখ বার করে দাড়ালো। ফলে দেখা দিলো এক অন্তুত সমস্ত। বাংলা সাহিত্যের দিগন্ত তখন রবীন্দ্র-স্থরের স্বতীত্ব রশ্মিচ্ছাটায় একেবারে আচ্ছন্ন হয়ে আছে। অথচ রবীন্দ্রনাথের সারা জীবনের সাধনা স্তো সবরকম কুৎসিতকে এড়িয়ে

কেবল আবনম্বর সৌন্দর্যের মাঝে ডুবে থাকবার মন্ত্রই উচ্চারণ ক'রে আসছে। তবে? 'কিং কর্তব্য?'?

কিন্তু এ প্রশ্নের উত্তর খুঁজে নিতে বাংলাসাহিত্যের খুব বেশী দেরি হলো না। নতুনের আহ্বান ধারা শুনলেন, তাঁরা বুঝে নিলেন,—রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রদর্শিত পথে উপস্থিত লক্ষ্যে তাঁরা কোনোদিন পৌছতে পারবেন না। নতুন পথ চাই। চাই নতুন দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী। এই নতুনের অভ্যন্তর যে মুহূর্তে শুরু হ'লো সেই মুহূর্তেই হ'লো রবীন্দ্রনাথের যুগের সূচনা।

এই বাঁকের মুখে বাংলাসাহিত্যের শ্রোতকে আরো তীব্র ক'রে তুললো "কল্লোল।" প্রথম প্রকাশ ১৯২৩-এ হ'লেও কল্লোলের গর্জন স্পষ্ট ক'রে শুনতে পাওয়া গেলো। ১৯৩০-এর পর থেকে। একদিকে নজরুল ইসলামের 'অগ্নিবীণা' তারে তারে কাঁপতে-থাকা প্রচণ্ড বিদ্রোহ আর বিদ্রবের সংহারস্তুর, অন্যদিকে মোহিতলাল আর যতীন্দ্রনাথের নগ্ন দেহবাদ আর বীভৎস দুঃখদারিদ্যের অস্ত্র হাতে নিয়ে শুরু হলো রোমান্টিকতা-মেধ ঘজ। অতিক্রান্ত হ'তে লাগলো বাংলা সাহিত্যের উত্তরপথের সবচেয়ে উন্নেজনা মাখানো দিনগুলো।

'কল্লোলের' সম্পাদকেরা হঠাতে একটা কবিতা হাতে পেলেন—'নীলিমা'। রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রভাব আছে, তবু স্বাতন্ত্র্যে বিশিষ্ট, যেন শরৎকালের একটুকরো নিরদেশ মেঘ। মুঢ় হ'য়ে গেলেন তাঁরা। কল্লোলের পক্ষ থেকে অচিহ্নিকুমার সেনগুপ্ত তো আলাপ করবার ইচ্ছেয় একেবারে গিয়ে হাজির কবির বাড়িতেই। কড়া নাড়তেই দরজা খুলে গেলো। বেরিয়ে এলেন কবি স্বয়ং, পরিচয় পেয়েই সাগ্রহ হাত বাড়িয়ে ধরলেন আগন্তুকের দিকে, একেবারে টেনে নিয়ে গেলেন নিজের ঘরের ভেতরে। প্রথম পরিচয়েই জীবনানন্দ চিনলেন 'কল্লোলকে,' 'কল্লোল' চিনলো জীবনানন্দকে।

### ॥ তিম ॥

একটুকরো পাথর গুপ্ত দিকে ছুঁড়ে দিলে মেটা কতদূর পর্যন্ত উঠতে পারে? আমার চেয়ে তুমি হয়তো একটু বেশী গঠাতে পারো; তোমার চেয়ে সে আরো একটু। কিন্তু শেষ অবধি একটা সীমা আছে—তার বেশি উত্তরণ সম্ভব নয়। সে সীমা লজ্জন করতে গেলে চাই ভূমির পরিবর্তন। যেখান থেকে ঘাজা, তার জায়গা বদল হওয়া চাই। সাহিত্যের ক্ষেত্রে কথাটা খুব বেশি খাটে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের আশ্চর্য কলমের রেখায় রেখায় তাঁর কাব্য এতো উঁচুতে পৌছেছিলো যে সেই পথ ধরে

তার চেয়ে বড়ো কিছু সষ্টি করা আর সন্তুষ্টি ছিলো না । করণানিধান, কালিদাস রায়, কুমুদরঞ্জনেরা সেই অসাধ্যসাধন করতে চেয়েছিলেন । পারেন নি । স্বাভাবিক ।

‘কল্লোল’র লেখকরা বুঝেছিলেন, দিন বদলের পালা এসে গেছে । কিন্তু কোনু পথে সেই পরিবর্তন আসবে, সে গোশের ব্যাপারে তাঁরা প্রত্যেকে ছিলেন নিজস্ব মত্তাবলম্বী । কল্লোল গোষ্ঠী হয়ে পড়েছিলো কতকটা যেন ‘সম্মিলিত বিরোধী সরকার’-এর মতো । পুরনো বীতিনীতির বদল ঘটাতে সবাই উদ্গীব, অথচ পথনির্দেশের বেলায় নানা মুনির নানা মত । নজরল দেখালেন এক পথ ; মোহিতলাল, আর এক ; যতীন্দ্রনাথ নতুন আর এক । ‘কষ্টে দেবায় হবিষ্য বিধেম’ ? সষ্টি হলো নতুন এক অন্তর্দৰ্শ । এলো বিক্ষোভ, এলো অস্থিরতা ।

কিন্তু জীবনানন্দ কোনোদিন এই অস্থিরতার ফাঁদে পা ফেলেন নি । ‘ধূসর পাণ্ডুলিপি’ থেকেই জীবনানন্দ সম্পূর্ণ, পরিণত ; এই একই চিহ্নিধারা জীবনের শেষ কবিতাটি পর্যন্ত তিনি বয়ে নিয়ে গেছেন । হয়তো কালের প্রভাবে তাতে পালিশ পড়েছে, কিন্তু মূলে তারা রয়ে গেছে অনড় । ‘ঘরা পালক’-এর জীবনানন্দ পঞ্চলেখক, কিন্তু ‘ধূসর পাণ্ডুলিপি’র জীবনানন্দ কবি । ‘ঘরা পালকে’ জীবনানন্দ তাঁর অনুভূতিরাজ্যের গভীরে পৌঁছতে পারেন নি, বদ্ধ সিংদরজায় শুধু মাথা কুটেছেন । ‘ধূসর পাণ্ডুলিপি’র আঘাতে সেই দরজার কপাট গেছে খুলে, অন্দরমহলে শুরু হয়েছে কবি জীবনানন্দের স্পন্দারণের পালা ।

নিজের কবিতা সম্পর্কে জীবনানন্দের বক্তব্য :

“আমার কবিতাকে বা এ কাব্যের কবিকে নির্জন বা নির্জনতম আখ্যা দেওয়া হয়েছে ; কেউ বলেছেন, এ কবিতা প্রধানত প্রকৃতির বা প্রধানত ইতিহাস ও সমাজচেতনার, অগ্রমতে নিশ্চেতনার ; কারো মীমাংসায় এ কাব্য একান্তই প্রতীকী ; সম্পূর্ণ অবচেতনার ; স্মৃতিরেয়ালিস্ট । আরো নানারকম ব্যাখ্যা চোখে পড়েছে । প্রায় সবই আংশিকভাবে সত্য—কোনো কোনো কবিতা বা কাব্যের কোনো কোনো অধ্যায় সম্বন্ধে খাটে ; সমগ্র কাব্যের ব্যাখ্যা হিসেবে নয় ।”

তাহলে জীবনানন্দের কাব্য মূলত কী ? যেহেতু এই সব কটি আখ্যাই “আংশিকভাবে সত্য”, সেহেতু কোনো একটি দিয়ে জীবনানন্দের কবিতাকে চিহ্নিত করা যাবে না । তবে যে ছুটি বৈশিষ্ট্যে জীবনানন্দ অন্ত, তাদের সম্পর্কে ছ-একটা কথা বলা যেতে পারে । প্রথমত, তাঁর নির্জনতাপ্রিয়তা ; দ্বিতীয়ত, তাঁর অতীন্দ্রিয়তা —সমালোচকের ভাষায়, স্মৃতিরিয়ালিজম ।

নজরল ইস্লাম আৰ জীবনানন্দ—ছজনেই রচনাকালেৰ দিক থেকে সমসাময়িক। অথচ এঁদেৱ ছজনেৱ কবিসত্ত্বৰ অবস্থান একেবাবে হই বিপৰীত কোটিতে, এটাই সবচেয়ে আশ্চৰ্য ঘটনা। নজরল যেখানে মানুষেৱ বিপুল মিছলেৰ আগে আগে দৃশ্য পদক্ষেপে ঘোৰনেৱ জয়গান গৈয়ে এগিয়ে গৈছেন, সেখানে জীবনানন্দ এক নিভৃত কোণে একা দাঁড়িয়ে থেকে বেদনাভৰা চোখে তাকিয়ে তাকিয়ে সেই শোভাযাত্রা দেখেছেন।

কী ব্যক্তিজীবনে, কী কবিজীবনে—সৰ্বত্র এবং সৰ্বদা জীবনানন্দ নিৰ্জনতাপ্রিয়। নিজেৰ অন্তৱ্রাজ্যেৰ অতল গভীৰ শীতলতায় ডুব দিয়েই তাঁৰ আনন্দ। তীব্রতা, প্রথৰতা, তিৰ্যকতা—এসবেৱ পথ জীবনানন্দেৱ নয়। চিৰকালেৰ একা তিনি। অচিন্ত্যকুমাৰ সেনগুপ্ত লিখেছেন, “জোৱ কৱে তাকে ছ একদিন কল্লোল আপিসে টেনে নিয়ে গৈছি, কিন্তু একটুও আৱাম পায়নি, সুৱ মেলাতে পাৱেনি সেই সপ্তৰ্ষে। যেখানে অনাহত ধৰনি ও অলিখিত রং, জীবনানন্দেৱ আড়া সেইখানে।” ছেলেবেলা থেকেই জীবনানন্দ লাজুক প্ৰকৃতিৰ—আত্মগ়, একক, স্তুক। উন্তৱজীবনে এ স্বভাৱ এতটুকুও বদলায়নি। রোজ একা একা বেড়াতে বেৱোত্তেন; সময়েৱ কোনো টিক ছিলো না। চুপচাপ কী যেন ভাবতে ভাবতে পথ বেয়ে হঁটে চলে যেতেন। কঠিকে সঙ্গে নিতেন না কখনো। নিলে হয়তো সেই চৰম সৰ্বনাশকে আৱো কিছুদিন ঠেকিয়ে রাখা যেতো।

কিন্তু তাই বলে কি জীবনানন্দ বিচ্ছিন্ন, সাধাৰণ মানুষেৱ সঙ্গে যোগস্থুত্বীন? কখনো নয়। বৱং তাদেৱ সঙ্গে নজৱলেৰ চেয়েও জীবনানন্দেৱ হন্দয়েৱ যোগ গভীৰতৰ। নজৱল শুধু মানুষেৱ বহিৱাপ্তিক দুঃখদুৰ্শা দেখেই আলোড়িত হয়েছেন। আৱ জীবনানন্দ ডুব দিয়েছেন মনোৱাজ্যেৱ গভীৰে, অন্তৱ্রেৱ সঙ্গে অন্তৱ্রেৱ সেহুবক্ষমে উদ্ঘোষী হয়েছেন। কিন্তু সেই চেষ্টা কৱতে গিয়ে প্ৰচণ্ড ঘা খেয়েছেন কবি। ছই চোখ মেলে তাকিয়ে দেখেছেন—পৃথিবীতে আলো নেই, প্ৰেম নেই, ভালোবাসা নেই; সুন্দৰ শাশ্বত যা কিছু সব বিপুল আধাৱেৱ মীচে ডুবে গৈছে। মানুষেৱ মন দেউলৈ হ'য়ে গৈছে। এ যুগকে কবিৰ মনে হয়েছে “ব্যাঘ-যুগ।” গভীৰ বেদনায় কবি উপলক্ষি কৱেছেন: “বসন্তেৱ জ্যোৎস্নায় অই মৃত মৃগদেৱ মত। আমৱা সবাট।” উদ্ভ্রান্ত বিপৰ্যস্ত কবি শেষ পৰ্যন্ত অন্ধকাৰেৱ আশ্রয় খুঁজেছেন, পালিয়ে যেতে চেয়েছেন এই অভিশপ্ত পৃথিবী ছেড়ে; অন্তৱ্র দিয়ে চেয়েছেন নিৰ্জনতা। বেসব সমালোচক জীবনানন্দকে লক্ষ্য কৱে “পলায়নবাদী”

বলে হক্কার ছাড়েন তাঁরা বুঝতে চেষ্টা করেন না যে এ পলায়ন কবির স্মেচ্ছাবিদায়—  
নিজের হৃদয়কে “শ্বাস ও শেয়ালের খাতু” হতে না দেবার একমাত্র পদ্ধা।

কিন্তু এ স্থবিরতা কবিকে গ্রাস করতে পারেনি। ‘সাতটি তারার তিমির’  
আবার নতুন চেতনার উন্মেষ ঘটালো। কবি উপলব্ধি করলেন, পার্থিব এই দুঃখ,  
বেদনা, অপূর্ণতা, ক্লেদ-গ্লানির মধ্য দিয়েই একদিন সূর্যোদয়ের রক্তিম উল্লাস উদ্ভাসিত  
হ’য়ে উঠবে। তাই কবি গাইলেন ‘তিমিরহননের গান’ এবং সব সংশয়ের  
অবসানে তিনি নিশ্চিত হলেনঃ

“ত্বরণ নক্ষত্র নদী সূর্য নারী সোনার ফসল মিথ্যা নয়।  
মাহুয়ের কাছ থেকে মাহুয়ের হৃদয়ের বিবর্ণতা ভয়  
শেষ হ’বে ; তৃতীয়, চতুর্থ, আরো সব  
আন্তর্জাতিক গড়ে ভেঙে গড়ে দীপ্তিমান কৃষিজ্ঞাত  
জাতক মানব ॥”

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“সুররিয়ালিজম্”-এর বাংলা কী হ’বে ? শ্রদ্ধেয় শ্রীআবু সয়ীদ আইয়ুব  
বলেছেন, “পরাবস্ত্ববাদ !” কিন্তু এতে ধেঁয়া ধেঁয়াই থেকে যাচ্ছে। আসল  
ব্যাপারটা বুঝবার জন্য একটা উপমার আশ্রয় নেওয়া যাক। একটা নীরেট বস্তু যদি  
জলে ভাসে, তাহলে তার একটা অংশ থাকে জলের ওপরে, কিন্তু অধিকাংশই থাকে  
জলের নীচে। মাহুয়ের মন অনেকটা এরকম। এর দৃশ্যমান অংশটি নিয়ে কারবার  
তর্কবিজ্ঞান বা লজিকের। কিন্তু যে অংশটি অদৃশ্য, তার কী গতি হ’বে ? এই  
অতিচেতনার রাজ্যকে তো লজিকের অন্তর্দিশে দিয়ে জয় করা যাবে না ! সে ভার পড়লো  
পরাবস্ত্ববাদীদের ওপর। তাঁদের কাজ হলো, মনোরাজ্যের ঐ রহস্যময় নিমজ্জিত  
অংশটির ওপর আলো ফেলা, তাকে রূপ দেওয়া এবং সেজন্ত নানারকম প্রতীকের  
আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করা।

পরাবস্ত্ববাদীদের মূল লক্ষ্য, চেতনা-অতিচেতনার মধ্যে সমস্ত ব্যবধান মুছে  
ফেলা। তাঁরা বিশ্বাস করেন, মাহুয়ের চিন্তা, বোধ, অনুভূতি সর্বদা পরিবর্তিত  
হচ্ছে ; এতো দ্রুত হচ্ছে যে আমাদের আটপৌরে ভাষায় তাকে বর্ণনা করা চলে  
না। সুতরাং এজন্য কবিকে একটি নিজস্ব পরিভাষার আশ্রয় নিতে হ’বে। সেই  
পরিভাষাকে ব্যাকরণ দিয়ে বুঝতে গেলে ঠিকতে হ’বে ; তার আবেদন হৃদয়ের কাছে,  
অনুভূতির পথে। কিন্তু যেহেতু অতীন্দ্রিয় কোনো জগতের ধারণা আমাদের নেই,

সেহেতু পার্থিব জগতের মধ্যেই সেই অপার্থিবত্তার আবির্ভাব ঘটাতে হ'বে, সীমার মধ্যেই অসীমকে বেঁধে রাখতে হ'বে। এই মতবাদ নিয়ে পরাবস্তবাদীরা পশ্চিমী সাহিত্যের আসরে নামলেন,—এ আন্দোলনের জন্ম গত শতকের মাঝামাঝি, ফ্রান্সে।

দ্বিতীয় যুদ্ধের আগেই বাংলাদেশে এই পরাবস্তবাদের হাওয়া বইতে শুরু করেছিলো। কিন্তু সেই তরঙ্গের মধ্যে বিকার ছিলো যতোটা, ততোটা ছিলো না সার্থক স্থষ্টির উদাহরণ। কারণ স্পষ্ট। জিনিসটা ছুরুহ এবং স্বৰোধ্য নয়; সুতরাং যেমন খুশি একটা কিছু করেও বাহবা পেয়ে যাবার সুবিধে আছে। একটা মজার গল্প এ প্রসঙ্গে মনে পড়তে পারে—কে একজন নাকি একবার তাঁর পোষা বাঁদরের ল্যাজে রঙে ভেজানো তুলি বেঁধে তাঁকে এক টুকরো সাদা কাগজের সামনে দাঢ় করিয়ে আচ্ছা করে পিটিয়েছিলেন, আর তাঁরপরে সেই রঙ-ছিটানো কাগজখানা নিয়ে শহরে-চল্লে-থাকা কোনো এক আর্ট এক্জিবিসানে রেখে এসেছিলেন। সেই কাগজখানাই নাকি পরে শ্রেষ্ঠ ছবির পুরস্কার পেয়েছিলো! এটা একেবারে নিছক 'গল্প' নয়, এর মধ্যে বড়ো বেদনা আছে। ...একই ঘটনার পুনরাবৃত্তি এসময় এদেশেও বহুবার দেখা গেছে। কিন্তু এই সমস্ত বিহুত জিনিসের মিছিলেও তু-একটি সার্থক স্থষ্টি আচম্ভকা ঝলমলিয়ে উঠেছে। এদের অষ্টাদের পুরোধা জীবনানন্দ। বাংলাদেশে সুস্থ স্বরবিয়ালিস্ট্ আন্দোলনের জনক হিসেবে সমালোচকেরা জীবনানন্দকেই হাজির করে থাকেন। 'ধূসর পাঁচলিপি'র সময় থেকেই পরাবস্তবাদ জীবনানন্দকে প্রভাবিত করতে শুরু করেছে, যার চরম উৎকর্ষ ঘটেছে 'সাতটি তারার তিমির'-এ।

জীবনানন্দের এই শ্রেণীর কবিতার গুরুতম বৈশিষ্ট্য হচ্ছে, এদের আবেদন শব্দে বা ব্যাকরণে নয়, রসে, হাদয়ে। শব্দের-অর্থ বুঝে পড়তে গেলে এদের নিছক পাগলের প্রলাপ ব'লৈ মনে হ'বে। কিন্তু কবিতাটি পড়ে শেষ করবার পর আস্তে আস্তে মনের মধ্যে এক আশ্চর্য বোধ জন্ম নিতে থাকবে; অশ্রীরী চিন্তা শরীরী হ'তে শুরু করবে। এমনি করে একসময়ে অবাক পাঠক দেখবেন, কী ক'রে যেন একটা অতীন্দ্রিয় ভাবনা তাঁর মনের মধ্যে আকার নিয়েছে। শব্দার্থের মধ্য দিয়ে রসগ্রহণ করে অনুভূতির এ রাজ্য পৌছনো বখনে সন্তুব নয়। কবির নিজের বক্তব্য জগনবুদ্ধিযুক্তিকে অতিক্রম করে কখন আমাদের অভ্যরে জায়গা করে নেবে, আমরা বুঝতেই পারবো না। এখানেই জীবনানন্দের স্বকীয়তা। 'ঘোড়া', 'স্থষ্টির তীরে' প্রভৃতি কবিতাঙ্গলো পড়ে প্রথমটা কিছুই বোঝা যায় না, কিন্তু

আমাদের অহিত্তির ওপর এদের ক্রিয়া অব্যর্থ, যার ফলে কবির উদ্দেশ্য সাধিত হতে এতটুকু দেরী হয় না।

পরাবর্ষবাদের বড়ো লক্ষণ এর প্রতীকধর্মিতা। জীবনানন্দ তাঁর কবিতায় অজস্র চিত্রকল এঁকে গেছেন। একটা আশ্চর্য সৌন্দর্যের রাজ্য সৃষ্টি হয়েছে এদের ঘিরে—অনায়াস ব্যঙ্গনায় এরা নিঃশব্দ মুখের। এতো সহজ আর স্বাভাবিকভাবে এরা এমেছে যে বিন্দুমাত্র অস্বস্তিকর ব'লে মনে হয় না একটিকেও। তাই বলে' এরা হঠাৎ-আলোর ঝল্কানিও নয়, রসিকের অন্তরে চিরকাল সফলে রেখে দেবার মতো স্বরূপীয় উপহার। এদের রাশি রাশি উদাহরণ ছড়িয়ে আছে 'মহাপৃথিবী' 'সাতটি তারার তিমির' আর 'বেলা-অবেলা-কালবেলা'-র পাতায় পাতায়—ফুলদানিতে সাজানোর চেষ্টা শুধু অনাবশ্যকই নয়, অসম্ভব।

এই জীবনানন্দ! নির্জনতার কবি, আত্মগতার কবি, রহস্যময়তার কবি। ভুল করে পৃথিবীতে এসে পড়েছিলেন যেন, এর স্থূলতা আর কুশ্চিতা তাঁর জন্য নয়। তাই যেন ইচ্ছে করেই চলে গেলেন। আমাদের জন্য রেখে গেলেন যা', তা বুঝবার মতো শক্তি আজও হয়তো আমরা অর্জন করতে পারিনি। শুধু বিশ্ব ছাড়া আমাদের ভাঙ্গারে আজো তাঁর জন্য কিছুই নেই।

### ॥ চার ॥

আর অল্প কিছু বক্তব্য আছে।

জীবনানন্দ আমাদের কী দিয়েছেন আর কী দেন নি, সে প্রশ্ন থাক। কিন্তু আমরা, তাঁর দেশবাসীরা তাঁকে কী দিতে পেরেছি?

আজ পর্যন্ত জীবনানন্দের ব্যক্তিগত জীবন সম্পর্কে বিশেষ কিছুই জানা যায় নি। এবং বিশ্বায়কর হলেও সত্য,—জীবনানন্দকে ভিত্তি করে আজ অবধি বাংলাভাষ্য লেখা বইয়ের সংখ্যা মাত্র একখানা। উদ্দেশ্যে জীবনানন্দ এবং তাঁর কবিতা নিয়ে কিছু কিছু লেখা বেরিয়েছে এবং বেরোচ্ছে। অথচ নিজের দেশে জীবনানন্দ সেই তুলনায় আজও প্রায় উপেক্ষিত। বুদ্ধদেব বস্তু, দীপ্তি ত্রিপাটী, গ্রাম্য কয়েকজনকে বাদ দিলে আর কোনো বাঙালী সমালোচক এখনো পর্যন্ত জীবনানন্দের ওপর স্বনির্দিষ্টভাবে একটা প্রবন্ধ লিখবার চেষ্টাও করেন নি।

যাকগে সেজন্ত শোক করে লাভ নেই। কিন্তু সময় তো শেষ হ'য়ে যায় নি। আমরা কি এখনো কিছু করতে পারি না?

আমার মনে হয়, সবচেয়ে প্রথম কাজ হওয়া। উচিত জীবনানন্দের একখানা।

পূর্ণাঙ্গ জীবনী রচনা করা। জীবনী না জেনে শুধু কবিতার মধ্যে দিয়ে কবিকে চিনবার চেষ্টা করতে গেলে অনেক বিপদের সম্ভাবনা আছে। তাছাড়া এ কাজের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যগুলো ক্রমশই লুপ্ত হ'য়ে যাচ্ছে। তাড়াতাড়ি আসরে নামতে না পারলে শেষপর্যন্ত হয়তো কতকগুলো অর্ধসত্য আর বিকৃত খবর ছাড়া আর কিছুই পাওয়া যাবে না। আমরা বাঙালীরা আবার গল্পজব খুব ভালোবাসি কিনা !

আর একটা কাজ হচ্ছে, জীবনানন্দের অপ্রাপ্যিত সমস্ত রচনার একটা সংকলন প্রকাশ করা। 'দেশ' পত্রিকায় পড়েছিলাম, ঘৃত্যুর মাত্র কয়েকদিন আগে নাকি জীবনানন্দ অস্থিরভাবে 'দেশে'র সহ-সম্পাদককে এসে অমুরোধ করেছিলেন, —তাকে এবার গল্প-উপন্যাস লিখতে দেওয়া হোক, কবিতা লিখে তাঁর আর কিছু হলো না। (এ ধারণা কবির কেন হয়েছিলো ?) কিছু কিছু গল্পউপন্যাস জীবনানন্দ লিখেওছিলেন। প্রকাশিত হয় নি ব'লে সেগুলো পড়তে পারার সৌভাগ্য হয় নি ; কিন্তু যাঁরা পড়েছেন তাঁরা বলেন, তাদের ভাষা চমৎকার, বক্তব্য স্বচ্ছ, উপস্থাপনায় প্রবীণতার আভা। এগুলোকে আলোতে নিয়ে আসার চেষ্টা করা কি আমাদের একটা অবশ্যকর্তব্য কাজ ব'লে গণ্য হওয়া উচিত নয় ?

সবশেষে আর একটা কথা। জীবনানন্দের কবিতাকে বাইরের পৃথিবীতে ছড়িয়ে দেবার জন্য আজ অবধি আমাদের দেশে প্রায় কিছুই করা হয় নি। অথচ ওদেশের সাহিত্য-স্মূক বহু সংস্থা এবং পত্রপত্রিকা একক এবং যৌথভাবে আবুনিক বাংলা কবিতা একের পর এক অমুরোধ করে চলেছে। জীবনানন্দের তো বটেই আরো কনিষ্ঠ অনেক কবির কবিতাও তাঁদের হাতে নতুন সাজে সেজে উঠেছে। এঁদের সঙ্গে সহযোগিতা ক'রে চ'লেছেন এমন স্বদেশবাসী জীবনানন্দ এখনো পর্যন্ত এতো কম পেয়েছেন যে সে সংখ্যার উল্লেখ না করাই ভালো। কবে আমরা কুয়োর অন্ধকার গহবর থেকে বেরিয়ে এসে মহাসাগরে ঝাপিয়ে পড়ার শক্তি অর্জন করতে পারবো ? যুম ভাঙ্গার সময় কি এখনো আসে নি ?

গত বছর আমার সহপাঠী শুভরঞ্জন কলেজ পত্রিকার পাতাতেই জীবনানন্দের কবিতার ইংরেজী অনুবাদ করেছিলেন। দোষ-গুণ বিচারের প্রশ্ন অবান্তর। কিন্তু এ প্রচেষ্টাকে কি আমাদের স্বাগত জানানো উচিত নয় ? উচিত নয় কি এখন থেকেই এ রকম আরো অনেক প্রচেষ্টা চালানো, বাংলাভাষার খাঁচার দরজা খুলে দিয়ে জীবনানন্দের প্রাণ-চক্র কবিতা-পাঠিটিকে মহাবিশ্বে মহাকাশে মুক্তির পথে উড়িয়ে দেওয়া ?

## ନାୟକ, ନାୟିକା ଓ ଲେଖକ

(ଛେଟି ଗତ୍ତ)

ଅରଣ୍ୟୋଦୟ ସାହା ।

୩ୟ ବର୍ଷ—ଅର୍ଥନୀତି

### ॥ ନାୟକେବଳ କଥା ॥

ଖୁବ୍ବର ! ନିକୁଟି କରେଛେ ! ଏହି ଛଦ୍ମିନେ କୋଥାଯ ଆମି ହୁ-ହଶ' ଟାକାର ଚାକ୍ରୀ ପାଇ । ଦିନକାଳ ଯା ପଡ଼େଛେ ଟିକେ ଥାକାଇ ଦାୟ । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଡିଗ୍ରୀ ସଥନ ଏକଟା ରଯେଛେ ତଥନ ଆଜ ନା ହୟ ତୋ କାଳ, ଏକଟା ନା ଏକଟା ଚାକ୍ରୀ ଜୁଟେ ଯାବେଇ । ବେକାର ତୋ ଆର ଚିରଦିନ ଥାକୁଛି ନେ । ଟୁଇଶାନି କରେ ନିଜେର ପକେଟ ଖରଚ ଚାଲିଯେ ଯାବାର ପରେଓ 'ଟୁ-ପାଇସ' ଥିକେ ଯାଚେ । ମାଧୁରୀ ନିଜେଓ କିଛୁ ଏକଟା କରଛେ । ହଜନେର ଏକଟା ଛୋଟ ସଂସାରେ ଆର କି ହାତି-ଘୋଡ଼ା ଲାଗେ ବଲ୍ଲ ତୋ ? ଅର୍ଥଚ ସତୀନାଥବାବୁ ବୁଝଛେନ ନା । ବଲହେଲ, 'ବାଛା, ଚାକ୍ରୀର ଚେଷ୍ଟା କର । ମେଯେର ଆମାର ଏକେବାରେ ଫେଲେ ଦେବାର ବୟମ ହୟେ ଯାଯ ନି । ଅବଶ୍ୟ ପାତ୍ର ହିସାବେ ତୋମାକେ ମନ୍ଦ ବଲଛିଲେ, ତବେ ଏ ମୟେ ଚାକ୍ରୀ-କରା ମୟେର ଜନ୍ମ ସୁପାତ୍ର ପେତେ ବିଶେଷ କଷ୍ଟ ହବେ ନା ।' ବୁଡୋର ଚୋଥା ଚୋଥା କଥାଗୁଲୋ ଆମାର ମୋଟେଇ ସହ ହୟ ନା । କି ମେଜାଜ ! ସୁପାତ୍ର ଅତ ସନ୍ତା ନୟ ହେ !

ବୁଡୋର ମତଳବ ଆମି ବୁଝିତେ ପାରି । ମେଯେକେ ବିଯେ ଦିଯେ ଦିଲେ ମେଯେର ଉପାର୍ଜନ ସେ ହାତଛାଡ଼ା ହୟେ ଯାଯ । ମାଧୁରୀର ଦିକେ ଚେଯେ ଏତୋଦିନ ଅପେକ୍ଷା କରେଛିଲାମ, ଏ ଫାଲ୍କନେ କିଛୁ ଏକଟା ନା ହଲେ ଲଡ଼ାଇଯେଇ ଚଲେ ଯାବ ।

### ॥ ନାୟିକାର କଥା ॥

ଆମି ଆର କତ କରତେ ପାରି ! ବୁଡୋ ମା-ବାପ, ଏତଗୁଲୋ ଭାଇବୋନେର ସଂସାରେ ଘାନି ଘୋରାତେ ଆର ପାରଛି ନେ । ଆମିଓ ତୋ ରକ୍ତମାଂସେର ଗଡ଼ା ଏକଟା ଜୀବ ! ମେଘେ ମେଘେ ତୋ ବେଳା କମ ହଲ ନା, ଆଇବୁଡ଼ିତେଇ ବୁଡ଼ି ହତେ ଚଲାମ । ଆୟନାତେ

নিজেকে দেখে আর চেনা যায় না। করবী, রীতা, মঙ্গুলাদের কবে বিয়ে হয়ে গেছে ! ঘর সংসার করে কেমন গিলীবানীও হয়ে গেছে এতদিনে। বান্ধবীদের কাছে আর মুখ দেখাতে পারছি নে।

প্রেমাংশুও কেমন যেন অন্যমন হয়ে গিয়েছে এখন। রাগ করে হয়তো একদিন সত্ত্বি সত্ত্বিই লড়াইয়ে চলে যাবে। ঈশ্বর, তুমি কি একবার মুখ তুলে তাকাতে পার না ? কবে ছেট্টি ভাইটা পাশ করে চাকরী পাবে, আর সংসারের হাল ধরবে !—ততদিনও প্রেমাংশু কী আমার জন্য অপেক্ষা করে থাকবে ? নাঃ—আমি বেঁচে থাকতে বুঝি এ সমস্তার সমাধান হবে না। বিষ খেয়েই মরতে হবে আমাকে !

### ॥ লেখকের কথা ॥

নায়ক ! তোমাকে লড়াইয়ে যেতে হবে না। চাকুরী করিয়ে দেব আমি। শোনো নায়িকা ! তোমাকেও আত্মহত্যা করতে হবে না ! আমি তো রয়েছি ! —আমি তোমাদের মিলনের জন্য যা কিছু প্রয়োজন, সুন্দর সংসার গড়তে যা কিছু দরকার সব ব্যবস্থা করে দেব। আমি তো বিধাতার মত কৃপণ নই। তোমাদের ছজনকে এক অজানা রাজ্যে পাঠিয়ে দেব। তুমি হবে রাজা, আর, নায়িকা, তুমি হবে রাণী। তোমাদের রাজ্যে থাকবে কেবল শান্তি আর শান্তি—সেখানে থাকবে না কোনো অভাব, অভিযোগ, অশান্তির বালাই !—কেবল আনন্দ !—তোমরা ছজনে কেবল আনন্দসাগরে তরী বেয়ে যাবে……[ দীর্ঘ-নিশ্চাস ফেলে ]

ওদের ছজনকে তো আমি স্বর্খের রাজ্যে পাঠিয়ে দিলাম। কিন্তু আমি ? আমাকে কোথায় ভাসিয়ে নিয়ে চলেছে আমার অদৃষ্ট ! ঈশ্বর ! তুমি আমাকে নিয়ে একটা গল্প লিখে দিও।

## ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ରସାହିତ୍ୟ ଓ ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଅବଦାନ [‘ଅବଦାନଶତକ’ ଓ ତିନାଟି ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ର-କବିତା]

ଗୋତମ ଭଦ୍ର

ତୃତୀୟ ବର୍ଷ—ଇତିହାସ

ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ସାହିତ୍ୟର ଝପଦୀ ମହିମା ପ୍ରାୟ ପ୍ରତିଯୁଗେର ଶିଳ୍ପିମାନଙ୍କେ ନବତର ଚାରିତାର୍ଥତାର ପ୍ରେରଣା ବହନ କରେ । ଏହି ପ୍ରେରଣାମୁଦ୍ରାରେ ବିଶେର ସାହିତ୍ୟ ପୁରାତନ ମୂଳ୍ୟଚେତନାର ନବୀନନ ସଟେଛେ ମୂଳତଃ ଦୁଇ ଶାଖାନ ଧାରାଯାଇ । କୋଥାଓ ପୁରାକଥାର ନୂତନ ଭାଷ୍ୟରଚନା କରେଛେ ପରାଗତ ଶିଳ୍ପିମାନଙ୍କ । ‘ଓଡ଼ିସି’ ମହାକାବ୍ୟେର ନାୟକ ଇଉଲିସିମ କିଂବା ସଫୋଲିସିର ନାୟିକା ଆନ୍ତିଗୋମେର ବିଚିତ୍ର ଅଭିଜ୍ଞତାକେ ନିଜେର ମନେର ‘ଜୀବକ ରସେ ଜୀବିତ କରେ’ ଟେନିସନ ବା ଆମୁଲିଯା ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରେଛେନ ନବତର ଉପଭୋଗ୍ୟତା । ହୋମାରେ ଏବଂ ସଫୋଲିସି ଆଛେ ତମିଯତା ଓ ମହଦ୍ଵ—ଟେନିସନେ ଏବଂ ଆମୁଲିଯାଯ ମମ୍ମ ନୈକଟ୍ୟ । ଅନ୍ତର ଦେଖି ନୂତନ ଭାଷ୍ୟ ନୟ, ପୁରାଶୃଷ୍ଟିର ଯୁଗୋପଯୋଗୀ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ, ପରିବର୍ଜନ ଓ ସଂଯୋଜନେର ସହସ୍ରାଗେ ଗଡ଼େ ଓଟେ ନୂତନ ଶିଳ୍ପମୂର୍ତ୍ତି । ଟମାସ ମାନେର ‘ଜୋଦେଫ ଏଣ୍ ଥି ରାଦାସ’ କିଂବା ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ରନାଥେର ‘କଥା’ କାବ୍ୟଗ୍ରହ୍ୟ ତାର ଉର୍କୁଷ୍ଟ ଉଦାହରଣ । ମାନ୍ ବାଇବେଳ ଥିକେ, ଆର ବୌଦ୍ଧ-ଅବଦାନ ଥିକେ ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ରନାଥ ଶୁଦ୍ଧ ଅବଯବରୁ ନିଯେଛେନ, ମୃତ୍ତିକା ଏବଂ ବର୍ଣେର ସଂଯୋଜନ ସଟେଛେ ଶିଳ୍ପ-ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଦେର ଆକାଙ୍କ୍ଷା ଏବଂ ପ୍ରବନ୍ଧତାର ଅଭ୍ୟସାରେ ।

ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ର-ରଚନାଯ ବୌଦ୍ଧ ପୁରାସାହିତ୍ୟର ପ୍ରଭାବ ଓ ପ୍ରେରଣା ନାନାଦିକ ଥିକେଇ ଉପଭୋଗ୍ୟ ଓ କୌତୁଳ୍ୟାଦୀପକ । ମେଥାନେ ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଉପାଖ୍ୟାନେର ନବୀନ ସଟେଛେ ପୂର୍ବ-କଥିତ ଦୁଇ ଧାରାତେଇ ; ଆର ତାର ପ୍ରୟୁକ୍ତିଓ ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ରସାହିତ୍ୟର ବିଚିତ୍ର ଶାଖା-ପ୍ରଶାଖାଯ । ‘କଥା’ କାବ୍ୟେର ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଅବଦାନାନ୍ତିତ ଗାଥାଗୁଲିତେ କାହିନୀ ଓ ଭାଷ୍ୟ ଛରେଇ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ସଟେଛେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ କ୍ଷରେ ; ଅନ୍ୟପକ୍ଷେ ‘ରାଜା’ କିଂବା ‘ଚଞ୍ଚାଲିକା’ ନାଟକେ ପୁରାକାହିନୀକେ ମୋଟାମୁଣ୍ଡ ବିଶ୍ଵସଭାବେ ଅଭୁକରଣ କରେଇ ନବୀନ ଭାଷ୍ୟ ରଚନା କରେଛେନ

কবি। রবীন্দ্র-রচনায় বৌদ্ধ অবদান রূপকথার ফিনিক্স পাখীর মত সাহিত্যিক নবজন্ম লাভ করেছে বারে বারে।

বৌদ্ধসাহিত্য সম্পর্কে রবীন্দ্রনাথের অবধানের একাধিক কারণ ছিল। বুদ্ধদেবের মানবিকতা ও বিশ্বজনীনতার প্রতি কবির অনুরাগ ছিল আন্তরিক। অন্যপক্ষে আঙ্গ পরিবেশে আজন্ম পরিবর্ধিত রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঔপনিষদিক জ্ঞানকাণ্ডের পূর্ণতর পরিণতি হয়ত বৌদ্ধসাহিত্য এবং ধর্ম-দর্শনেই আবিষ্কার করেছিলেন। তাছাড়া কবি হিসেবে তিনি ছিলেন 'জন্ম-রোমান্টিক'। সমকালীন জীবনের কৃত সংকীর্ণ বস্তুত্বসম্মত থেকে উজ্জীবনের আগ্রহেও তাঁর অতীতচারী মন অন্তরধর্মের তাগিদে বৌদ্ধভারতের ভাবলোকে পরিভ্রমণে উৎসুক হয়েছিল। সর্বোপরি জাতীয় আন্দোলনের উল্লাসময় যুগে স্বরাজলাভেরও পূর্বে আত্মশক্তিতে জাতির প্রবোধনষ্ঠ ছিল কবির শ্রেষ্ঠ কাম্য। সেইস্মূলে শ্রমণচরিত্রের সততা, সরলতা ও বলিষ্ঠতা যেমন তাঁকে আকর্ষণ করেছে, তেমনি সম্পূর্ণ জীবন-বিবিক্ততা কিংবা অন্ধ জীবনলুক্তার মধ্যপন্থায় আন্দোলিত বৌদ্ধসাহিত্যের জীবন-প্রেরণা তাঁর স্বদেশান্তরক্ত চিত্তকে অনুপ্রেরিত করেছে সমধিক। 'রাজা' 'চণ্ডালিকা' 'মালিনী' 'আচলায়তন' কিংবা 'কথা' গ্রন্থের বিভিন্ন অংশে রবীন্দ্রমানসের বৌদ্ধ-কথান্তরক্তির এই বিচিত্র রহস্যসূত্র অনুস্ম্যত হয়ে রয়েছে। এই সকল দিক থেকে বৌদ্ধ সাহিত্য-কথা নিয়ে শ্রষ্টা রবীন্দ্রনাথের গ্রহণ, বর্জন ও নৃতন নির্মিতির শিল্পালীলা সামগ্রিকভাবে সবিশেষ অনুসন্ধান ও কৌতুহলের বিষয় হতে বাধা নেই; বর্তমান পত্রিকার সংক্ষিপ্ত পরিধিতে একটিমাত্র তথ্যস্মূহের অনুসরণ করে মূল বিষয়ের প্রতি গ্রাথমিক অবিষ্টাই স্ফুলি করা যেতে পারে কেবল। এই উদ্দেশ্যবশেষেই 'অবদানশতক' ও তিনটি রবীন্দ্র-কবিতা আমাদের মুখ্য আলোচ্য।

'অবদানশতক' নামেই প্রকাশ এটি শত গল্পের সংকলন ও বৌদ্ধসাহিত্যে 'অবদান' নামক বিশিষ্ট ধারার অন্তর্গত। দণ্ডী, কালিদাস প্রমুখ সাহিত্যিকদের রচনাবলীর টীকাকারদের সময় থেকে মোক্ষমূল, বুরুষ, স্পেয়ার, টাইন্টারনীংস, পুঁস্যা, বীস্ ডেভিস্ প্রমুখ প্রতীচ্য ভারতবিদ্যাবিশারদদের মধ্যে 'অবদানের' প্রকৃত অর্থ নিয়ে বিতর্ক অন্তঃইন। প্রবক্ষের প্রাসঙ্গিকতা ও পরিসরের কথা স্মরণ করে শুধু সাধারণ সিদ্ধান্তগুলিই লিপিবদ্ধ করা সম্ভব। বৌদ্ধসাহিত্যে অবদানের অর্থ গৌরবজনক কর্ম। লোকশিক্ষার্থ ও ধর্মপ্রচারের জন্য বুদ্ধদেব ও তাঁর শিষ্যদের নানাবিধ কার্যকে কেন্দ্র করে এই কথাসাহিত্য রচিত হয়। 'অবদান'

ଓ 'ଜାତକେ'ର ମଧ୍ୟେ ପାର୍କକ୍ୟ ତ୍ରିବିଧ । ପ୍ରଥମତଃ 'ଜାତକେ'ର ନାୟକ ହବେନ ବୋଧିସତ୍ତ୍ଵ, କିନ୍ତୁ 'ଅବଦାନେ' ବୋଧିସତ୍ତ୍ଵ ଛାଡ଼ାଓ ଅର୍ହ ବା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବୁଦ୍ଧ ବିଭିନ୍ନ କାହିନୀର ନାୟକ ହତେ ପାରେ । ସେଦିକ ଥେକେ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ 'ଜାତକ'ଙ୍କ ଅବଦାନ କିନ୍ତୁ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ 'ଅବଦାନ'ଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ନାହିଁ । 'ଜାତକେ'ର ବୋଧିସତ୍ତ୍ଵ ସର୍ବଦା ବୁଦ୍ଧର ଜମ୍ଭେର ପ୍ରାତିନ ଅବଶ୍ଵା । ମହାଯାନେ ବୋଧିସତ୍ତ୍ଵ ଶବ୍ଦେର ଅର୍ଥ ଆଲାଦା । ସେଇ ଅର୍ଥେ 'ଅବଦାନ'-ମାହିତ୍ୟେ 'ବୋଧିସତ୍ତ୍ଵ' ଶବ୍ଦେର ପ୍ରୟୋଗ ଆଛେ । ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟତଃ 'ଜାତକେ'ର ଛୁଟି ଭାଗ—'ବର୍ତମାନ ବନ୍ତ' ଅର୍ଥାଏ ସେଥାନେ ବୁଦ୍ଧ ବା ଅଗ୍ନ କେଟେ କାହିନୀଟି ବଲଛେନ ଓ କାହିନୀ ଶେଷେ ବର୍ତମାନ ସମୟେର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପାତ୍ର-ପାତ୍ରୀର ସାଥେ ଅତୀତ ସମୟେର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପାତ୍ର-ପାତ୍ରୀର ସମ୍ପର୍କ ସ୍ଥାପନ କରଛେନ ; ଆରେକଟି ହଲ 'ଅତୀତ ବନ୍ତ' ବା ମୂଳ କାହିନୀ । କିନ୍ତୁ 'ଅବଦାନେ' ଅନେକ ସମୟ 'ଅତୀତ ବନ୍ତ' ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତେ ଭବିଷ୍ୟ-ବାଣୀ ଥାକେ । ତୃତୀୟତଃ 'ଅବଦାନେ' ସଂକାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଅର୍ଥ ଶୁଦ୍ଧମାତ୍ର ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଧର୍ମ, ସଂସ ବା ଶ୍ରମଗଦେର ପ୍ରତି ଦାନ, ଧ୍ୟାନ ଇତ୍ୟାଦି । କିନ୍ତୁ କାହିନୀତେ ସଂକାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ବୃଦ୍ଧତର ଅର୍ଥେ ବ୍ୟବହାତ ହ୍ୟ, ଓ ସମଗ୍ର ମାନବଜୀବିତର ଜନ୍ମ ଆତ୍ମୋଂଶଗ୍ରେ ବୋବାଯାଇ ।

ବୌଦ୍ଧମାହିତ୍ୟେ 'ଅବଦାନ' ତିନଟି ଶ୍ରେଣୀତେ ବିଭିନ୍ନ । ପ୍ରଥମଟି ଶାନ୍ତ୍ରୀଯୋତ୍ତର । ପ୍ରଥମଟି ସୂତ୍ର ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟାର୍ଥ ଲିପିବନ୍ଦ ଓ ମୋଟାମୁଟିଭାବେ 'ବିନ୍ୟ-ପିଟକେ'ର ଅନ୍ତଭୁର୍ତ୍ତ । 'ଦିବ୍ୟାବଦାନ' ଏହି ଜାତୀୟ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ । ଆବାର କତକଗୁଲି 'ଶୁତ୍ପିଟକେ'ର ମଧ୍ୟେ ସଂକଳିତ । 'ଅବଦାନଶତକ' ଏହି ଜାତୀୟ ଗ୍ରନ୍ଥ । ଆବାର ବାକି 'ଅବଦାନଗୁଲି' ପ୍ରଧାନତଃ କାବ୍ୟମାହିତ୍ୟେର ଅନ୍ତଭୁର୍ତ୍ତ । 'ବୋଧିସତ୍ତ୍ଵାବଦାନ କଲାତା' ଏହି ଶ୍ରେଣୀର ରଚନା ।

ମୋଟାମୁଟିଭାବେ ଏହି କଥାଗୁଲି ମନେ ରାଖଲେ 'ଅବଦାନ-ଶତକେ'ର ସାଧାରଣ ଲକ୍ଷଣଗୁଲି ଉପଲବ୍ଧି କରା ଯେତେ ପାରେ । ବିଶେଷ ଚରିତ୍ର ଆଲୋଚନା ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗେ

୧ ବୋଧିସତ୍ତ୍ଵ—ବୌଦ୍ଧଧର୍ମେ ଓ ମାହିତ୍ୟେ ଦୃଢ଼ଚରିତ୍ର ମଞ୍ଚର ତିନ ପ୍ରକାର ବୌଦ୍ଧ ଶାଖାର ଆମରା ପରିଚ୍ୟ ପାଇ । ଅର୍ହ, ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବୁଦ୍ଧ ଓ ବୋଧିସତ୍ତ୍ଵ । ଅର୍ହ ଓ ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବୁଦ୍ଧ ଶୁଦ୍ଧମାତ୍ର ନିଜେର ମୁକ୍ତିଲାଭେର ଜନ୍ମ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରବେନ ଓ ନିର୍ବାଗ ଲାଭ କରେ ପୃଥିବୀତେ ନା ଆସାଇ ତାଦେର ପ୍ରଧାନ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ । କିନ୍ତୁ ବୋଧିସତ୍ତ୍ଵ ନିଜେ ଜାନଲାଭ କରେବ ଓ ଜଗତେର ଅପର ସକଳେର ମୁକ୍ତିର ଜନ୍ମ ଚେଷ୍ଟା କରବେନ ଏବଂ ଆଧିଭୌତିକ, ଆଧିଦୈବିକ ଓ ପାର୍ଥିବ ଦୁଃଖ ମହ କରବେନ । ଶୁଦ୍ଧମାତ୍ର ନିଜେର ମୁକ୍ତିଲାଭଟି ତାର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ ବଲେ ତିନି ଅର୍ହ ବା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବୁଦ୍ଧର ଚେଷ୍ଟେ ଶେଷ । ଏବଂ ବୋଧିସତ୍ତ୍ଵଙ୍କ ହବେନ ଭବିଷ୍ୟ-ବୁଦ୍ଧ ବା ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ଜାନୀ । ଦ୍ଵିତୀୟତଃ ଅର୍ହ ବୁଦ୍ଧର ମୁଖ ଥେକେ ଶତ ଜାନ ଲାଭ କରବେନ । ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ବୁଦ୍ଧ ନିଜେର ପ୍ରଚ୍ଛାଯ ଜାନ ଲାଭ କରିଲେ ଓ ଧର୍ମପ୍ରଚାରର ଅଧିକାରୀ ନମ । ବୋଧିସତ୍ତ୍ଵ ନିଜେଇ ଜାନଲାଭ କରବେନ ଏବଂ ଧର୍ମପ୍ରଚାର ଓ କରବେନ ।

বলা যায়, 'অবদান শতকে'র ৮৩ সংখ্যক গল্লে দিনারের (রোমান Denarius) নামাঙ্কিত মুদ্রা-প্রসঙ্গের উল্লেখ দেখে এই গল্ল-সংকলনের কাল ত্রৈয় প্রথম শতকের পূর্ববর্তী বলে মনে করা চলে না; প্রথম থেকে তৃতীয় শতকই সম্ভবত মূল সংকলনের সময়। মূল গ্রন্থ অবশ্য পাওয়া যায় নি। তিব্বতীয় অনুবাদটি 'অবদানশতক' সম্পর্কিত আধুনিক জ্ঞানের ভিত্তি। সবশেষ দশটি পৃথক বর্গে গল্লগুলি সন্নিবিষ্ট; প্রতি বর্গে গল্লসংখ্যা আবার দশ। গল্লের উদ্দিষ্ট বিভিন্ন বিষয় ও পরিগাম অনুসারেই কাহিনীর স্বাতন্ত্র্য কল্পিত হয়েছে। প্রথম ও তৃতীয় বর্গে রয়েছে ভাবিষ্যৎ বৃক্ষ সম্পর্কে ভাবিষ্যদ্বাণী। চতুর্থ বর্গে বুদ্ধের পূর্বতন জন্মের ত্রিয়া-কলাপের বিবৃতি আছে। পঞ্চম বর্গে প্রেতকাহিনী; ষষ্ঠিবর্গ 'স্বর্ণভাগ' গৃহিকুলের গল্ল; সপ্তম থেকে দশম বর্গের নায়ক-নায়িকারা সকলেই অর্হৎ।

অপেক্ষাকৃত গ্রামীন রচনা বলেই 'অবদান শতকে'র আঙ্গিকও সর্বাপেক্ষা সরল,—বিষয় ও শব্দের পুনরাবৃত্তি ও গতাত্ত্বগতিকতা এক সাধারণ লক্ষণ; সংক্ষিপ্তিভিত্তি বাগ্বিস্তাৰ এৰ আৱ এক বৈশিষ্ট্য। বিষয়ের দিক থেকে মহাযান নয়, হীনযান মানসিকতাই এই গল্লাবলীৰ উপজীব্য। 'সর্বাস্তিবাদ'<sup>২</sup> নামক হীনযান-মতাবলম্বী শ্রমণদেৱেই রচিত গ্রন্থ হল 'অবদানশতক'। বৰীদ্বন্দ্ব এই গ্রাথমিক সাহিত্য-স্মৃতি অবলম্বনে ধৰ্মনিরপেক্ষ সর্বমানবিক রসমস্পূর্ণ সার্থক তিনটি কবিতা রচনা কৰেছেন 'কথা' কাব্যে—'শ্রেষ্ঠভিক্ষা,' 'পুজারিনী' আৱ 'মূল্যপ্রাপ্তি'।

'শ্রেষ্ঠভিক্ষা' কবিতাটি 'অবদানশতকে'র ৫৫-তম কাহিনী 'বন্ধ' থেকে নেওয়া। বৃক্ষ বখন অনাথপিণ্ডেৰ অতিথিৰূপে জেতবনে অবস্থান কৰছিলেন, অনাথপিণ্ড তখন চিন্তা কৰলেন যে, বুদ্ধেৰ সেবা কৰে এককভাবে পুণ্যার্জন কৰা তাঁৰ পক্ষে উচিত নয়, অন্তকেও সেই পুণ্যলাভেৰ অংশীদার কৰা উচিত। 'তদ্সংঘে'ৰ প্রয়োজন মেটাৰাব উদ্দেশ্যে শ্রাবস্তীৰ নাগরিকদেৱ কাছে ভিক্ষা সংগ্ৰহ কৰতে যাবাৰ সিদ্ধান্ত কৰলেন তিনি। রাজাকে তাঁৰ অভিলাষ জ্ঞাপন কৰলে রাজা সমস্ত নগৰে

২ সর্বাস্তিবাদ—বৌদ্ধধর্মেৰ ১৮টি শাখাৰ মধ্যে সর্বাস্তিবাদ অস্তিত্ব। এঁৰা স্থিতধাৰে বিদ্ধাসৌ। এই মতবাদ সৰ্ব প্রথম গোড়া 'থেৰবাদ' মতবাদেৰ বিৱৰণে সংগ্রাম ঘোষণা কৰে। অশোকেৰ সময়ে আহুত ও মৌগলিপুত্র তিয়েৰ সভাপতিত্বে অছৃষ্টিত তৃতীয় বৌদ্ধ মহাসংগীতিতে এই মতবাদেৰ জন্ম হয়। থেৰবাদেৰ সঙ্গে প্ৰধানতঃ তিনটি প্ৰশ্নে এঁদেৱ বিভেদ সৃষ্টি—(ক) প্ৰতোক বস্ত কি স্থিত? (খ) অর্হৎ কখনো কি অৰ্হৎ থেকে বিচৃষ্ট হতে পাৰে? (গ) সমাধিৰ অবশ্য কি চিৰহাস্তী? থেৰবাদে এই প্ৰশ্নগুলিৰ উত্তৰ মেতিবাচক মেখানে সর্বাস্তিবাদে এন্ডেলিৰ উত্তৰ ইতিবাচক।

ଭିକ୍ଷାର୍ଥ ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡେର ନଗର-ପାରିଭ୍ରମଗେର କଥା ଘୋଷଣା କରଲେନ । ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡ ତାଁର ଇଚ୍ଛାମତ କାର୍ଯେ ବହିର୍ଗତ ହଲେନ ।

“ଯାବଦ ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦେ ଦିବସେ ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡେ ଗୃହପତିର୍ହିଷ୍ଟିସ୍ଫନ୍ଦାଭିରୁତ୍ତଃ ତଥାଗତତ୍ସ୍ତ  
ସଞ୍ଚାବକସଂସ୍ୟାର୍ଥୀୟ ଚଞ୍ଚଳକଭିକ୍ଷଣଃ କର୍ତ୍ତୁଂ ପ୍ରବୃତ୍ତଃ ।”

ଯାର ଯେରକମ ବିଭବ ଆଛେ, ସେ ସେଇ ଅନୁଯାୟୀ ଦାନ କରଲ । କେଉ କେୟୁର,  
କେଉ ମାଲ୍ୟ, କେଉ ଶୀରକ, କେଉ ସୋନା, କେଉ ବା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟପଣ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରଲ । ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡ  
ସବ କିଛୁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରଲେନ ।

“କେଚି୍ କେୟୁରମ, କେଚି୍ ଜାତକପାମାଲାମ, କେଚିଦଙ୍ଗୁଲିମୁଦ୍ରାମ, କେଚିନୁକ୍ତାହାରମ,  
କେଚିଦ ହିରଗ୍ୟମ, କେଚିଦମୃଶଃ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟପଣମ, ଗୃହପତିରପି ପରାନୁଗ୍ରହାର୍ଥ ପ୍ରତିଜ୍ଞାତି ।”

ଏକଜନ ଦ୍ଵୀ ଅତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଦାରିଦ୍ର ଛିଲ । ସେ ତିନମାସ କୁଚ୍ଛୁସାଧନ ଦ୍ଵାରା ଏକଟି  
ବଞ୍ଚିଲାଭ କରେଛିଲ । ଶଞ୍ଚାବାନ୍ତପଟିହେର ଦ୍ଵାରା ଘୋଷିତ ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡେର  
ଆଗମନ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ କରେ ଉପାସକଦେର ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା କରଲ—“ଏହି ଗୃହପତି ଧନୀ । ତିନି କେନ  
ଭିକ୍ଷା କରଛେ ?” ଉପାସକ ବଲଲେନ—“ପରେର ଅନୁଗ୍ରହେର ଜନ୍ମ । ସେ ଏକା  
ଭଗବାନେର ସଂଘକେ ଖାତ୍ ପ୍ରଦାନେ ଅମର୍ଥ ମେ କିଛୁ ଅର୍ଥ ସାହାଯ୍ୟ କରତେ ପାରେ ।”  
ଏକାକୀ ସଂଘେର ଭାର ବହନେ ଅକ୍ଷମତା ଉପଲକ୍ଷି କରେ ସୁକ୍ଷେର ପରେ ଆରୋହଣ କରେ  
ତାର ଏକଟି ମାତ୍ର ସମ୍ପଦ ବଞ୍ଚିଟ ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡେର ହଣ୍ଟୀର ଉପରେ କ୍ଷେପଣ କରଲ । ଅନାଥ-  
ପିଣ୍ଡ ସକଳ ବିଷୟ ଜେମେ ଆଶ୍ଚାର୍ଯ୍ୟବିତ ହଲେନ ଏବଂ ନାରୀକେ ବିଚିତ୍ର ଆଭରଣ ପ୍ରଦାନ  
କରଲେନ ।

“ତେବେଇନାଥପିଣ୍ଡେନ ଗୃହପତିନା ପରମବିଶ୍ୟାଯଜାତେନ ମା ଦାରିକା ବିଚିତ୍ରେ-  
ବିଶ୍ରେବାଭରଣେଶ୍ଚାଚ୍ଛାଦିତା ।” ପରେ ସେଇ ନାରୀ ଦେବବୋନି ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ହଲ ।

ଏହି ମୂଳ କାହିଁନିର ପ୍ରତି ଆରୁଗତ୍ୟ ମୋଟାମୁଟିଭାବେ ରଙ୍ଗା କରେଓ ବୈନ୍ଦ୍ରନାଥ  
ଆପନ ଭାବକଳାନୁଯାୟୀ ଅନ୍ନବିସ୍ତର ସ୍ଵଚ୍ଛ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ସାଧନ କରେଛେ ତାଁର କବିତାତେ ।  
ବୈନ୍ଦ୍ର-କବିତାଯ ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡେର ଆବିର୍ଭାବ ରାଜକୀୟ ବୈଭବଯୋଗେ ନଯ, ଏକାନ୍ତ  
ସାଧାରଣଭାବେ । ଆଯୋଜନ ବା ଆତ୍ମର-ବାହୁଳ୍ୟ ନିଯେ ତିନି ଭିକ୍ଷା ଚାଇତେ ଆସେନ ନି ;  
ମାନୁଷେର ଅନ୍ତରମୂଳେ ତିନି ଆହ୍ସାନ ପାଠିଯେଛେନ.....

“କୈଲାମଶିଖର ହତେ ଦୂରାଗତ  
ଭୈରବେର ମହାସଙ୍ଗିତେର ମତ,  
ସେ ବାଣୀ ମନ୍ଦିଲ ସୁଖତନ୍ଦ୍ରାରତ  
ଭବନେ ।

রাজা জাগি ভাবে বৃথা রাজাধন ;  
 গৃহী ভাবে মিছা তুচ্ছ আয়োজন ;  
 অশ্রু অকারণ করে বিসর্জন  
 বালিকা।”

এখানে অন্তর্বলে বলীয়ান অনাথপিণ্ড যে আহ্বান-বাণী বয়ে পথে নির্গত হয়েছেন, তার সমর্থনের জন্য পূর্ব থেকে কোনো রাজকীয় সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয় নি ; অথবা কোনো বহুল্যেরও আবশ্যক ছিল না।

মূল বৌদ্ধকাহিনী ও রবীন্দ্র-কবিতায় জনসাধারণের দানের ব্যাকুলতা একই ভাবে প্রকাশ পেয়েছে। কিন্তু মূল কাহিনীতে অনাথপিণ্ড সকল দান নির্বিচারে গ্রহণ করেছেন। অন্যপক্ষে ‘শ্রেষ্ঠভিক্ষা’ কবিতায় তিনি বহুমূল্য দানসমূহ স্পর্শণ করেন নি—

“ফেলি দিল পথে ধনিক বশিকা,  
 মুঠি মুঠি তুলি রতন কণিকা,  
 কেহ কঠহার, মাথার মণিকা।  
 কেহ গো।

সাধু নাহি চাহে, পড়ে থাকে দুরে।  
 ভিক্ষু কহে—‘ভিক্ষা আমার প্রভুকে  
 দেহো গো।’”

বুদ্ধদেব মাছিদের আড়ম্বরের চেয়ে অন্তরের সৌন্দর্যকে অনেক বেশী মর্যাদা দিয়েছেন। যিনি সমস্ত রাজসম্পদকে পরিত্যাগ করে এসেছেন জগতের কল্যাণ-সক্ষান্তের মানসে, তাঁকে স্মরণ বা হিরণ্য দেওয়া মৃচ্ছা। তিনি রাজভিখারী, জীবনের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ ধনই তাঁর কাম্য। অনাথপিণ্ডদের আহ্বান ও ব্যবহারের মধ্য দিয়ে এই সত্যই প্রকাশিত হয়েছে, এবং মূল কাহিনী অপেক্ষা বুদ্ধ-চরিত্রের সঙ্গে অনাথপিণ্ডদের আচরণ অনেক বেশী সুসম্পত্ত হয়েছে।

দীনা নারীর চারিত্রিক মহসু বা ত্যাগেছা মূল কাহিনী এবং রবীন্দ্র-কবিতায় একই ভাবে প্রকাশিত হয়েছে। তাহলে-ও মূল কাহিনীতে অনাথ-পিণ্ড ঐ নারীকে বহুমূল্য বস্ত্র ও আভরণ প্রদান করে দানের মর্যাদা রেখেছেন, এবং পরে সেই রমণী দেবঘোনি প্রাপ্ত হয়েছেন।

কিন্তু রবীন্দ্রনাথের সূক্ষ্ম কবি-মন এমন পরিগতিকে স্বীকার করতে পারে নি। দীনা

ନାରୀର ଦାନ ବାହିକ ଦିକ ଥେକେ ସାମାନ୍ୟ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଅନ୍ତରେ ଦିକ ଦିଯେ ଏଇ ମୂଲ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ତାଧାରଣ । ନାରୀର ପ୍ରଧାନ ସମ୍ପଦ ଲଜ୍ଜା । ସେଇ ଲଜ୍ଜାନିବାରଣେର ଜନ୍ୟ ରକ୍ଷିତ ଏକଟି ମାତ୍ର ବନ୍ଦ୍ରଦାନେ ସେ ମହିଳା ପ୍ରକାଶ ପୋଯେଛେ ତାର ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା ବହୁମୂଳ୍ୟ ବନ୍ଦ୍ରାଳଙ୍କାର ଦାନେର ମଧ୍ୟେ ଦିଯେ କିଛିତେଇ ସମର୍ପିତ ହେତେ ପାରେ ନା । ଅନ୍ତରେ ସମ୍ପଦକେ ବାହିରେ ସମ୍ପଦ ଦିଯେ ସମ୍ମାନିତ କରା ଯାଯା ନା । ତାଇ କବିତାଯ ଭିକ୍ଷୁ ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡ ସମନ୍ତ ଧନ-ସମ୍ପଦ ପରିତ୍ୟାଗ କରେ ଶୁଦ୍ଧମାତ୍ର ଜୀର୍ଣ୍ଣଚୀର ଗ୍ରହଣେର ମଧ୍ୟ ଦିଯେଇ ସେଇ ନାରୀର ଦାନକେ ପ୍ରକୃତ ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଦା ଦେଖିଯେଛେ ।

“ଭିକ୍ଷୁ ଉତ୍ସର୍ଭୁଜେ କରେ ଜୟନାଦ  
କହେ ‘ଧନ୍ୟ ମାତଃ, କରି ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ  
ମହାଭିକ୍ଷୁକେର ପୁରାଇଲେ ସାଧ  
ପଲକେ ।’

ଚଲିଲ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାସୀ ତ୍ୟଜିଯା ନଗର,  
ଛିନ୍ନ ଚୀରଖାନି ଲାୟେ ଶିରପର  
ସଂପିତେ ବୁଦ୍ଧେର ଚରଣ-ନଥର-  
ଆଲୋକେ ।”

ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠ ଭିକ୍ଷାକେ ଶ୍ରେଷ୍ଠତମ ଶିଳ୍ପ-ମହିମାତେଇ କବିତାଟିତେ ସ୍ମୀକାର କରେ ନେଇଯା ହେଯେଛେ । ଏଥାନେଇ ମୂଳ କାହିଁଲୀର ଖଣ୍ଡତା ଥେକେ ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ର-କବିତାର ଉତ୍ସର୍ଗ ସଟେଇଁଛେ ଚିରାଚରିତ ଜୀବନମୂଳ୍ୟବୋଧେର ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟ-ଲୋକେ ।

ଆରେକଟି ପ୍ରଭେଦ-ଓ ଏଥାନେ ସବିଶେଷ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖଯୋଗ୍ୟ । ମୂଳ କାହିଁଲୀତେ ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡ ଗୃହପତି, କିନ୍ତୁ କବିତାଯ ତିନି ଭିକ୍ଷୁ । କାହିଁଲୀର ଗୃହପତି ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡ ତଥାନେ ସଂସାରେ ଆବଦ୍ଧ ; ତାଇ ନିଛକ ବନ୍ଦପୁଞ୍ଜେର ମାଯାଯ ଚିନ୍ତ ତାର ଆବିଷ୍ଟ । କିନ୍ତୁ କବିତାଯ ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାସୀ ; ତିନି ସର୍ବତ୍ୟାଗୀ । ବାହିକ ସମ୍ପଦେର ପ୍ରତି ତାର ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତା ଏକାନ୍ତିକ । ଏମନି କରେ ବୌଦ୍ଧ ପୁରାକଥାର ଧର୍ମୀୟ ଉପାଖ୍ୟାନ ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ର-ଭାବନାସାରିଥେ ଆଶ୍ୱନିକ ଭାବରମ ମଣିତ ମାନବିକ କଳାରସବୋଧେ ନବଜନ୍ମ ଲାଭ କରଲ ।

‘ଆବଦାନଶତକ’-ନିର୍ଭର ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ରନାଥେର ଆରେକଟି କବିତା ‘ପୂଜାରିଣୀ’ । ଏଟିଓ ସଠିବର୍ଗେର ଅନ୍ତର୍ଗତ,—ଶତକେର ୫୪ତମ କାହିଁଲୀ ‘ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ’ ଥେକେ ଗୃହୀତ । ରାଜୀ ବିଷ୍ଣୁସାରକେ ତାର ଅନ୍ତଃପୁରିକାଂଗ ଅନୁରୋଧ ଜାନାଲେନ, “ଆମରା ପ୍ରତ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଭଗବାନ ବୁଦ୍ଧକେ ଉପାସନା କରତେ ପାରି ନା । ଅତଏବ ମହାରାଜ ବୁଦ୍ଧଦେବେର କେଶ-ନଥେର ଉପର

স্তুপ নির্মাণ বাতে আমরা পুষ্প, গুৰু, মাল্য, বিলেপন, ছত্রবজা ও পতাকা দিয়ে অর্চনা করতে পারি।” রাজা বুদ্ধকে এই প্রার্থনা নিবেদন করলেন এবং তাঁর কাছ থেকে কেশ ও নথকণি গ্রহণ করে অন্তঃপুরিকাদের আকাঙ্ক্ষা পূরণের ব্যবস্থা করে দিলেন। অন্তঃপুরিকারাও যথাবিহিত উপচার সহযোগে পূজা আরম্ভ করলেন।

দেবদত্তের পরামর্শে অজাতশত্রু পিতাকে নিহত করলেন, রাজ্য অধিকার করলেন এবং প্রকৃত ধর্মের উচ্ছেদসাধন করলেন। তিনি স্তুপেও পূজা নিষিদ্ধ করলেন।

“ক্রিয়া কারণ কারিতো ন কেনচিং তথাগতস্তুপে কারাঃ কর্তব্য়া ইতি।” স্তুপে পরিমার্জন বন্ধ থাকল। সকল অন্তঃপুরিকা ত্রুট্য করতে লাগল, “হায়! ধর্মরাজের বিয়োগে আমরা পুণ্যরহিত হলাম। তখন শ্রীমতী নামে এক অন্তঃপুরিকা বুদ্ধের গুণাবলী অনুসরণ করে স্তুপ সংমৰ্জন করল ও দীপমালা প্রচলিত করল। অজাতশত্রু সব অবগত হয়ে শ্রীমতীকে আহ্বান করে জিজ্ঞাসা করলেন—“কি জ্যে রাজাদেশ লজ্জন করেছ?” শ্রীমতী উত্তর দিল “আমি তোমার আদেশ লজ্জন করলেও ধর্মরাজ বিস্মিলারের আদেশ অমান্য করি নি।”

“তথা শ্রীমতীমাহুয় কথ্যতি ‘কিমৰ্থ রাজশাসনমত্ত্বমসীতি’। সা কথ্যতি—‘যদ্যপি ময়া তব শাসনমত্ত্বমসীতি কিং তু ধর্মরাজস্য বিস্মিলারস্য শাসনং নাত্ত্বমসীতি’।” এই কথা শুনে কিন্তু অজাতশত্রু চক্রক্ষেপণের দ্বারা শ্রীমতীকে বধ করলেন।

এই ‘শ্রীমতী’ উপাখ্যান নিয়ে গড়ে উঠেছে ‘কথা’ কাব্যের একটি শ্রেষ্ঠ কবিতা। স্তুপ নির্মাণ বা অজাতশত্রুর চরিত্রচিত্রণ বিষয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ মূল কাহিনীকে অনুসরণ করেছেন। কিন্তু সেই সঙ্গে রাজমাতা, বধু অনিতা ও কুমারী শুঙ্গার চরিত্রকে সংযোজন করে কাহিনীর নাটকীয়তা বর্ধিত করেছেন। তিনজনের মুখ দিয়েই কবি শ্রীমতীকে তাঁর পরমব্রত উদ্ঘাপনে নিয়ে জ্ঞাপন করার চেষ্টা করেছেন; কিন্তু শ্রীমতীর প্রতি আচরণে তাঁদের আশঙ্কা প্রকাশ করেছেন তিনটি পৃথক ভঙ্গীতে।

রাজমহিষী বয়স্কা, ঘৃত্যুর আশঙ্কা তাঁর সর্বাধিক। তাই তাঁর কর্তৃ স্পষ্টই শাস্তির কথা সোচ্চার হয়ে উঠে—

“ଏ କଥା ନାହିଁ କି ମନେ,  
ଅଜାତଶକ୍ତି କରେଛେ ରଟନା,  
ସ୍ତ୍ରୀପେ ସେ କରିବେ ଆର୍ଥରଚନା  
ଶୁଲେର ଉପର ମରିବେ ମେ ଜନା,  
ଅଥବା ନିର୍ବାସନେ ।”

ବ୍ୟା ଅମିତା ଯୌବନେର ପ୍ରଥମ ମଧ୍ୟାହେ ! ଦୀପ୍ତ ବାସନା-ସମୁଦ୍ରଲ ଭୋଗସ୍ପୃହାତୁର  
ତାର ନାରୀମାନମ୍, ତାଇ ମେ ସାଜମଜ୍ଜାରତା । ସ୍ଵଭାବତିଇ ମେ ଅପେକ୍ଷାକୃତ ଗର୍ବିତାଓ ।  
ମେଇ ଗର୍ବମିଶ୍ରିତ ଆଶକ୍ତାର କଥାଇ ଧ୍ୱନିତ ହେଲେ ତାର ଉଚ୍ଚାରଣେ—

“.....ଅବୋଧ, କି ସାହସ ବଲେ  
ଏନେହିସ ପୂଜା, ଏଥିନି ଯା ଚଲେ ।  
କେ କୋଥା ଦେଖିବେ, ସଟିବେ ତାହଲେ  
ବିବମ ବିପଦପାତ ।”

ଅନ୍ତପକ୍ଷେ କୁମାରୀ ଶୁର୍କା କିଶୋରୀ । ରତ୍ନିନ କଞ୍ଚଳାୟ ମେ ବିଭୋର । କାବ୍ୟପାଠ  
ତାର ଅବସର-ବିନୋଦନେର ମହାରତ । କାବ୍ୟରମ-ସଂବେଦନଶିଳ ମନ ସର୍ବାପେକ୍ଷା ମହାଦୟ,—  
ଶ୍ରୀମତୀର ପ୍ରତି ଶୁର୍କାର ବ୍ୟବହାରର ଅନ୍ତଦେର ଚାହିତେ ମହାଭୂତିପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ।

“ଶ୍ରୀମତୀର ହେରି ପୁଁଥି ରାଖି ଭୂମେ,  
କ୍ରତୁପଦେ ଗେଲ କାହେ,  
କହେ ସାବଧାନେ ତାର କାନେ କାନେ  
“ରାଜାର ଆଦେଶ ଆଜି କେ ନା ଜାନେ  
ଏମନ କରେ କି ମରଣେର ପାନେ  
ଛୁଟିଆ ଚଲିତେ ଆହେ ?”

ରବିନ୍ଦ୍ରନାଥ ଏହିଭାବେ ତୁଲିର କୀଟ ସ୍ପର୍ଶେ ଏକଟି ଏକଟି ଚରିତ୍ରକେ ଜୀବନ୍ତ କରେ  
ତୁଲେ ‘ଅବଦାନଶତକେ’ର ଗତାନୁଗ୍ରହିତିକ ତଥ୍ୟ-ବିବୃତିକେ ସାର୍ଥକ କବିତା-ରସେ ସଞ୍ଜୀବିତ  
କରେ ତୁଲେହେନ ! ଏହି ଚିତ୍ରଣ ଓ ଚରିତ୍ରାୟଗ ଗାଥା କବିତାର ନାଟକିଯତ୍ବ ଏବଂ ସୌନ୍ଦର୍ଯ୍ୟରେ  
କେବଳ ବୃଦ୍ଧି କରେ ନି, ଶ୍ରୀମତୀର ଚରିତ୍ରମହିମାର ଉପରର ସାର୍ଥକ ଆଲୋକ-ସମ୍ପାଦନ  
କରେଛେ । ବୁଦ୍ଧେର ପୂଜାୟ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ଏକକ । ରାଜପୁରବାସିନୀ ବା ଅନ୍ୟ କେଉ ଘୃତ୍ୟଭୟେ

সঙ্গনী হতে চায় নি। এই বৈপরীত্যের পটভূমিতে বুদ্ধের প্রতি শ্রীমতীর একনিষ্ঠতাকে উজ্জল করে এঁকেছেন বৈদ্যনাথ।

মূলস্থিত অজাতশক্তি ও শ্রীমতীর কথোপকথন অংশ বৈদ্যন্ত-কবিতায় বর্জিত হয়েছে। শ্রীমতী কবির নিকট উপাসিকা। বুদ্ধের চরণেষী সে উৎসর্গীকৃত-প্রাণ। বুদ্ধকে সে পূজার জন্যই পূজা করে, কোনো আচার ধর্মের প্রেরণায় নয়। নব্রতা ও আত্মবিলোপই উপাসিকার চরিত্র-লক্ষণ। শ্রীমতীর আত্মনিবেদন তাই মূক; সমগ্র কবিতার কল্পলোকে যেন সে “নীরবে দাঁড়াল আসি।” যেহেতু সব কাজই নিঃশব্দে অনুষ্ঠিত হয়েছে, সেইহেতু অজাতশক্তির সঙ্গে কথোপকথন অংশ বর্জন কাব্যধর্মের প্রয়োজন সিদ্ধ করেছে। শ্রীমতীর প্রতিবাদ নয়, তার বুদ্ধ তদ্বাত প্রাণের শান্ত মাধুর্য রূপায়িত হয়েছে কঠি ছত্রে—

“মুক্ত কৃপাণে পুরুষক  
তখনি চুটিয়া আসি  
শুধালো “কে তুই ওরে দুর্মতি  
মরিবার তরে করিস আরতি।”  
মধুর কঠে শুনিল—“আমি শ্রীমতী,  
বুদ্ধের দাসী।”

বৈদ্যনাথের দৃষ্টিতে ঘৃত্য চিরকালই স্বন্দর। মোহন ঘৃত্যকে তিনি রমণীরভাবে প্রকাশ করেছেন এখানে, মূল কাহিনীর গহ্যায়ত প্রকৃতি তাতে বিলুপ্ত। শ্রীমতীর ঘৃত্য তার পবিত্র জীবনের সঙ্গে, সম্পূর্ণ সংগতি রক্ষা করে অপরূপ করণ মহিমা নিয়ে ব্যঙ্গিত হয়েছে কঠি মাত্র পংক্তিতে—

“সেদিন শুভ পাদান ফলকে  
পড়িল রক্তলিখা।  
সেদিন শারদ স্বচ্ছ নিশ্চিথে  
প্রাসাদকাননে নীরবে নিভৃতে।  
সূপপাদমূলে নিভিল চকিতে  
শেষ আরতির শিখা।”

প্রতিভার স্পর্শে সাধারণ কাহিনীও রূপ-রস-গন্ধ-স্পর্শে ভরপুর একটি অসাধারণ কবিতায় পরিণত হয়েছে।

‘অবদানশক্তক’ অবলম্বনে কথার শেষ আলোচ্য কবিতা ‘মূল্যপ্রাপ্তি’

ପ୍ରଥମ ବର୍ଗେର ସମ୍ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଗଲ୍ଲ 'ପଦ୍ମ' ଏର ଟ୍ରେସ । ଉତ୍ତାନରଙ୍କକ ନୃତ୍ୟ ପଦ୍ମ ନିଯେ ପ୍ରସେନଜିତେର ଜନ୍ୟ ଶ୍ରାବନ୍ତୀତେ ପ୍ରବେଶ କରିଲ । ପଥେ ତୀର୍ଥାଭିଲାଷୀ ଏକ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା କରଲ—“ଏହି ପଦ୍ମ କି ବିକ୍ରଯ କରବେ ?” ଉତ୍ତାନରଙ୍କକ ଉତ୍ତର ଦିଲ—“ହ୍ୟା ।” ପଥିକଟି ଯେ ମୁହଁରେ ପଦ୍ମଟି କିନତେ ଯାବେ ତଥନ୍ତି ମେଥାନେ ଏସେ ଉପସ୍ଥିତ ହଲେନ—

“ସ କ୍ରେତୁକାମୋ ଯାବଦନାଥପିଣ୍ଡୋ ଗୃହପତିତ୍ସଂ ପ୍ରଦେଶମହୁପ୍ରାପ୍ତଃ ।”

ଅପରାପ ପଦ୍ମଟିର ଜନ୍ୟ ତିନି ଦିଗ୍ନଣ ମୂଲ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରତେ ଚାଇଲେନ । ତଥନ ପଥିକ ଆର ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡ ପରମ୍ପରା ଦର କ୍ଷାକ୍ଷି କରତେ କରତେ ପଦ୍ମେର ଦାମ ସହନ୍ତି ମୁହଁରେ ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ବର୍ଧିତ ହଲ । ଉଦ୍ୟାନରଙ୍କକ ତଥନ ଚିନ୍ତା କରଲ, “ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡ ଖୁବ୍ ସ୍ଥିର ବୁଦ୍ଧି ସମ୍ପଦ ମାତ୍ରାବୁଦ୍ଧି । ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ଏର କୋନୋ କାରଣ ଆଛେ ?” ଏଇକାପେ ସଂଶୟାଲ୍ଲିଙ୍ଗ ମନ ନିଯେ ସେ ତୀର୍ଥ୍ୟାତ୍ମୀକେ ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା କରଲ—“କାକେ ଦେବାର ଜନ୍ୟ ଏହି ରକମ ଦାମ ବାଡ଼ାଚେହେନ ?” ସେ ଉତ୍ତର ଦିଲ “ନାରାୟଣକେ ଦେବାର ଜନ୍ୟ ।”

“ସ ଆହ—ଆହ ଭଗବତୋ ନାରାୟଣମାର୍ତ୍ତାର୍ଥେ ଇତି ।”

ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡ ଉତ୍ତର ଦିଲେନ “ଭଗବାନ ବୁଦ୍ଧେର ଜନ୍ୟ ।” ଉଦ୍ୟାନରଙ୍କକ ଜିଜ୍ଞାସା କରଲ—“ବୁଦ୍ଧ କେ ?” ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡ ବୁଦ୍ଧେର ଗୁଣାବଳୀ ତାର କାହେ ଜୀବାତେଇ ମେ ନିଜେଇ ବୁଦ୍ଧକେ ପୂଜା କରାର ଇଚ୍ଛା ପ୍ରକାଶ କରଲ ।

“ତତ ଆରାମିକୋହିନାଥପିଣ୍ଡମାହ ଗୃହପତେ ଆହ ସ୍ଵୟମେବ ତ୍ରେ

ଭଗବତ୍ମର୍ଯ୍ୟାଚ୍ୟନ୍ତି ଇତି ।”

ବୁଦ୍ଧଦେବେର ସମୀପେ ଗମନ କରେ ତାର ହାତ୍ସ ଓ ମହାପୁରୁଷାକୃତି ଲକ୍ଷଣ ଦେଖେ ଉତ୍ତାନରଙ୍କକ ତାର ଶିରେ ପଦ୍ମ ସମର୍ପଣ କରଲ ଓ ନିର୍ବାଗଳାଭେର ଜନ୍ୟ କାମନା କରଲ ।

ବୀଜ୍ଞାନାଥ ଏହି କବିତାଯ ମୂଳ କାହିନୀ ଥେକେ ସାମାନ୍ୟାର୍ଥୀ ବିଚ୍ୟୁତ ହେବାନେ । ତାହିଁ କବିତାଯ ପ୍ରସେନଜିଂ ଓ ପଥିକେର ମଧ୍ୟେ ଦର-ଦାମେର କଥା ଆଛେ ; ମୂଳ କାହିନୀତେ ଆଛେନ ଅନାଥପିଣ୍ଡ । କିନ୍ତୁ ଏହି ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ କୋନୋ ସାହିତ୍ୟକ ପ୍ରଯୋଜନେର ତାଗିଦେ ହେବାନେ ।

କବିତାଯ ଯେଥାନେ ପଥିକ ଓ ପ୍ରସେନଜିଂ ହୁଜନେଇ ବୁଦ୍ଧଦର୍ଶନପ୍ରାର୍ଥୀ ମେଥାନେ ମୂଳ କାହିନୀତେ ତୀର୍ଥ୍ୟାତ୍ମୀ ନାରାୟଣେର ଉପାସକ । ବୁଦ୍ଧେର ପ୍ରତି ଉତ୍ତାନରଙ୍କକେର ଆଗ୍ରହ ପ୍ରକାଶ ଓ ତାର କାହେ ଯାବାର ଇଚ୍ଛାର ମାଧ୍ୟମେ ବୌଦ୍ଧଲେଖକ ହିନ୍ଦୁ ଦେବ-ଦେବୀ ଆପେକ୍ଷା ମାତ୍ରମେର ଉପର ବୁଦ୍ଧେର ପ୍ରବଳତର ପ୍ରଭାବେର ଇନ୍ଦ୍ରିୟ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତ କରତେ ଚେଯେଛିଲେନ । କବି ଏହି ପ୍ରଚାରଧର୍ମିତା ମୟଜ୍ଞେ ପରିହାର କରେଛେ ।

କବିତାଟିତେ ମବଚୟେ ସାର୍ଥକ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ସାଧିତ ହେବେ ଅବଶ୍ୟ ଅନ୍ତାତ୍ ।

বৌদ্ধ কাঠিনীতে উত্থানরক্ষক পূর্বাবধি অনাথপিণ্ডের কাছ থেকে বুদ্ধ-মহিমা সম্পর্কে তথ্য ও উপদেশ সংগ্রহ করেছে; এবং তাকে ভক্তিপূর্ণ চিত্তে নিজেই পূজা করতে চলেছে। কিন্তু কবিতায় স্বদাস মালীর চিহ্ন অন্যরূপ। সে পদের বিনিময়ে অধিক অর্থের লোভেই কেবল বুদ্ধের সমীপবর্তী হয়েছে।

“মালি ভাবে, ধাঁর তরে      এ দোহে বিবাদ করে,  
তারে দিলে আরো কত পাব।”

কিন্তু বুদ্ধকে দেখে তার হৃদয়ভাবের পরিবর্তন হয়েছে। সে তখন আর অর্থ চায় নি, সম্পদ চায় নি। এ পৃথিবীর সবই তার কাছে তুচ্ছ। শুধু বুদ্ধের আশীর্বাদই তার কাম্য।

“বরবি অমৃতরাশি      বুদ্ধ শুধালেন হাসি  
“কহো, বৎস কি তব গ্রার্থনা।”  
ব্যাকুল স্বদাস কহে,      ‘গ্রু আর কিছু নহে  
চরণের ধূলি এক কগা।’”

এই আকস্মিক হৃদয়-পরিবর্তন ও সমাপ্তিতেই কবিতার সব সাহিত্যিক সৌন্দর্য উপ্ত আছে।

পুরাতন ও নৃতনের মধ্যে ভিন্নতা থাকলেও বিচ্ছেদ নেই। কারণ দেশ, কাল ও পাত্রের পরিবর্তনকে স্বীকার করেও মানব-মন চিরস্থনকেই অমুসন্ধান করে; সত্য, শিব ও সুন্দরের ধ্যান থাকে তার চক্ষে। সেই চিরস্থনকে প্রকাশ করাই সাহিত্যের উদ্দেশ্য, আর সেই উদ্দেশ্য-সাধনে রবীন্দ্রনাথ চিরসচেতন। এই সচেতনতার জন্মট বৌদ্ধধর্ম উপাখ্যানের মর্মমূলে কবিকল্পনার অনুপ্রবেশে নবীনতর কাব্যরস সঞ্চাত হতে পেরেছে—কেবল তথ্যসজ্ঞার শক্তি বলেই নয়, নৃতন জীবনপ্রত্যয়ের সফল সংগ্রামেও। পুরাতনের এই নবায়ন কেবল সাহিত্য-রসিকের উপভোগ্য নয়,—ইতিহাসের তথ্য সন্ধানীরও মহান সম্পদ, কারণ এখানেও তিনি বাংলা সাহিত্যকে অশেষের স্পর্শে সংজীবিত করে গেছেন।

## আ মা দে র ক থা

[ বহুবার অন্তরোধ করা সত্ত্বেও বিভিন্ন বিভাগের সেমিনার রিপোর্ট এখনো হাতে আসে নি। অবশ্যস্তবী কারণের জন্য গত বছরের ছাত্র সংসদ-এর বিভিন্ন কার্যাবলীর বিবরণ পাঞ্চাং-ও সন্তুষ্ট হয় নি। অনিচ্ছাকৃত ক্ষটির জন্য আমি বিশেষ দুঃখিত। —প্রকাশন-সম্পাদক ]

### বাংলা সেমিনার পাঠ্যাগারের বার্ষিক বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলা সেমিনার পাঠ্যাগার গত ৮ই আগস্ট (১৯৬৬) পুনর্গঠিত হয়। গ্রন্থাগারে বর্তমানে সর্বসমেত ২১০টি গ্রন্থ আছে। এগুলির মধ্যে ৪৭টি গ্রন্থ কলেজের প্রাক্তন ছাত্র শ্রী আর, সি, ঘোষের দান। শ্রীহরিচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় সম্পাদিত বঙ্গীয় শব্দকোষের পাঁচটি খণ্ড গ্রন্থাগারের মূল্যবান সম্পদ। নিয়মিতভাবে সপ্তাহে একদিন করে বিভাগীয় ছাত্রছাত্রীদের একসঙ্গে দুখানি করে বই দেওয়া হয়।

বর্তমান বৎসরে বাংলা সেমিনারের উচ্চোগে ছুটি বিদায় সম্বর্ধনা সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। ১লা মার্চ (১৯৬৭) অধ্যাপক শ্রীভোলামাথ ঘোষকে এবং ১১ই এপ্রিল (১৯৬৭) ডঃ আরণ কুমার মুখোপাধ্যায়কে বিদায় সম্বর্ধনা জানানো হয়। বিভাগীয় প্রধান ডঃ হরপ্রসাদ মিত্রের সভাপতিত্বে ছুটি অনুষ্ঠানই আড়ম্বরহীন আন্তরিকতার সহিত অনুষ্ঠিত হয়।

বাংলা সেমিনারের প্রাচীর পত্রটি শীঘ্রই প্রকাশের ব্যবস্থা করা হচ্ছে।

অরুণ কুমার শুণ্ঠ

সম্পাদক, বাংলা সেমিনার পাঠ্যাগার

### ইউ. জি. সি. টেক্সটবুক লাইব্রেরীর কথা

ইউ. জি. সি. টেক্সট-বুক লাইব্রেরীটি ১৯৬৬ শ্রীষ্টিসন্নের আগস্ট মাসে খোলা হয়। মোট ৩৭ খানি বই এই লাইব্রেরীতে আছে। সপ্তাহে একদিন একখানা করে বই নিতে পারে বাংলা অনাম্বের ছাত্র-ছাত্রী। ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের প্রয়োজনের তুলনায় বইয়ের সংখ্যা অন্যত্থই কম। সিলেবাস দেখে, ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের প্রয়োজনমত মতো আরো অনেক বই আনানো দরকার। এ বিষয়ে সংশ্লিষ্ট কর্তৃপক্ষের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করা হয়েছে।

নির্মলেন্দু শৌগিক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত অধ্যাপক),

ইউ. জি. সি. টেক্সটবুক লাইব্রেরী

## ভূ-বিজ্ঞান পরিষদ

আমাদের ভূ-বিজ্ঞান পরিষদ এবার পানেরো বছরে পড়লো। সেপ্টেম্বরে ১৯৬৬ সালের ছাত্রদের বিদায় অনুষ্ঠানে আমাদের গতবছরের কাজের শুরু। পুরো ছুটিতে আমরা অন্যান্য বারের মতো এবারেও ‘ফিল্ড ট্রেইন’ বেরিয়েছিলাম। প্রথমবর্ষের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরা অধ্যাপক ডক্টর অমিত্যুভূষণ চট্টোপাধ্যায় ও অধ্যাপক সত্যব্রত গোস্বামীর পরিচালনায় মাটিথন ও পার্শ্ববর্তী অঞ্চলসমূহ এবং দ্বিতীয় বর্ষের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরা অধ্যাপক ডক্টর সত্যেন চক্রবর্তী ও অধ্যাপক অভিজিৎ শুণ্ঠের পরিচালনায় রাজস্থান সফর করেছিলেন। গত মার্চ মাসে ডক্টর এস. দেবের সভাপতিত্বে আমাদের পরিষদের পুনর্মিলন উৎসব সাফল্যের সঙ্গে অনুষ্ঠিত হয়; এই দিনটি পরিষদের নৃতন পরিচালকমণ্ডলী নির্বাচিত হন। এগ্রিমের প্রথমদিকে চৰিশ পরগণার কালিনগর অঞ্চলে একদিনের ভ্রমণে অংশগ্রহণ করেছিলেন প্রথমবর্ষ থেকে স্নাতকোত্তর বর্ষের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরা। এই জুলাইয়ে লঙ্ঘন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধ্যাপক ওয়াইজ. আমাদের বিভাগ পরিদর্শনে এসেছিলেন এবং আমাদের সঙ্গে ‘চা-চক্রে’ মিলিত হয়েছিলেন। এ বছরের আমাদের পরিষদের নৃতন পরিচালকবর্গের তত্ত্বাবধানে অধ্যাপক অভিজিৎ শুণ্ঠের (ভারপ্রাপ্ত) উচ্চাগে পশ্চিমবঙ্গের ভূ-বিজ্ঞানের নামা বিষয়ে প্রথ্যাত ভৌগোলিক ও ভূতাত্ত্বিকদের দ্বারা ১৮টি বক্তৃতাৰ ব্যবস্থা কৰা হয়েছে। ইতিমধ্যে ৫টি বক্তৃতা সম্পন্ন হয়েছে।

১য়—Geological framework of Southern Bengal—ডঃ সুপ্রিয় সেনগুপ্ত। ২য়—Some characteristics of Physiography of Bengal—ডঃ সত্যেন চক্রবর্তী। ৩য়—Characteristics of Bengal Rivers—অধ্যাপক কাননগোপাল বাগচী। ৪র্থ—Urbanisation of West Bengal—শ্রীতরণবিকাশ লাহিড়ী। ৫ম—Geological framework of Sub-Himalayan foot-hills, North Bengal—শ্রীএস. আচার্য। ৬ষ্ঠ—Influence of Drainage on Agriculture of West Bengal—ডঃ সত্যকাম সেন।

এই বক্তৃতাগুলি নিঃসন্দেহে আমাদের উপকার করছে। প্রদৰ্শকমে উল্লেখযোগ্য যে আমাদের বিভাগের অধ্যাপক শ্রীসত্যব্রত গোস্বামী গত বছরের নভেম্বরে কানাড়া গেছেন।

যুগ্ম-সম্পাদক  
জ্যোতির্ঘৰ্য গুরুপাধ্যায়—  
সুধীরঞ্জন সেনগুপ্ত

## ইতিহাস সেমিনার

তিনি মাসেরও বেশীকাল কলেজ বন্ধ থাকা সত্ত্বেও ১৯৬৬ খ্রীষ্টাব্দ ইতিহাস সেমিনারের পক্ষে একটি ঘটনাবহুল বছর ছিল। ২৬শে জুন তৃতীয় ও দ্বিতীয় বার্ষিক শ্রেণীর ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরা দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়ায় মার্কিন নীতির উপর একটি আলোচনায় যোগ দেন। প্রধান বকাদের মধ্যে ছিলেন পীঘূঘকান্তি চক্রবর্তী, আশিস রাহা, চম্পক চ্যাটার্জি, সুদীপ রায়, দেবাশিস চক্রবর্তী, কল্যাণ মুখার্জী অমিতাভ ত্রিপাঠী ও জয়ন্তি মুখার্জি।

১১ই আগস্টে অনুষ্ঠিত 'The Treaty of Versailles ( 1919 ) contained in it the germs of the Second World War'-এর উপর আলোচনাটি বিশেষ উদ্দীপনার স্থষ্টি করে। বকাদের মধ্যে ছিলেন চম্পক চ্যাটার্জি, পীঘূঘকান্তি চক্রবর্তী, রজতকান্তি রায়, অমিতাভ ত্রিপাঠী ও গৌতম ভদ্র।

২২শে আগস্ট দ্বিতীয় বার্ষিক শ্রেণীর ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরা অধ্যাপক শ্রী সুবোধ কুমার মজুমদারের সঙ্গে আঁটপুর বেড়াতে ঘান। সেখানে একটি হিন্দুমন্দিরের গায়ে কিছু ইউরোপীয়ের ও সারমেয়ের প্রতিকৃতি খোদিত দেখে তাঁরা বিস্মিত হন। পবিত্র মন্দিরগাত্রে ম্লেচ্ছ ও অস্পৃশ্য পশুর আলেখ্য থাকা নিঃসন্দেহেই চমকপ্রদ।

৪ঠা ফেব্রুয়ারী প্রথ্যাত জার্মান রাষ্ট্রনীতিবিদ বিসমার্কের উপর একটি মনোজ্ঞ প্রবন্ধ পড়ে শোনান জার্মান অধ্যাপক উল্টলি মিংসলার ( Willi Metzler )। অধ্যাপক টেলর ও অধ্যাপক আইকের পরম্পর বিরুদ্ধ মন্তব্য তিনি বিস্তৃতভাবে আলোচনা করেন ও মিনেথের মতামত উদ্বৃত্ত করে বিসমার্ককে মোটামুটিভাবে জার্মান উদারনৈতিক গণতন্ত্রের শক্ত বলে স্বীকার করেন। বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে আলোচনা ছাড়াও এই বৎসর আমাদের দেয়াল পত্রিকায় কয়েকটি রচনা প্রকাশিত হয়। লেখকদের মধ্যে ছিলেন অমিতাভ ত্রিপাঠী, কল্যাণকুমার চক্রবর্তী, আশিস রাহা, গৌতম ভদ্র, প্রীতীশ চক্রবর্তী, দেবাশিস চক্রবর্তী।

পরিশেষে আমাদের প্রতি কাজে অকুণ্ঠ উৎসাহ দানের জন্য অধ্যাপকবৃন্দকে

আন্তরিক শ্রদ্ধা ও কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাই ; আর সহযোগিতার জন্য বন্ধুবান্ধবদের জানাই ধন্যবাদ ।

শ্রীঅমিতাল্প ত্রিপাঠী  
সম্পাদক

### রাশিবিজ্ঞান সেমিনার

রাশিবিজ্ঞান বিভাগের সেমিনার সম্পাদক হিসেবে আমাদের ওপর যে দায়িত্ব অর্পিত হয়েছিল তা সুস্থুতাবেই পালন করা হয়েছে । আমাদের সেমিনার গ্রন্থাগার থেকে এই বিভাগের ছাত্রছাত্রীদের নিয়মিত ভাবেই বই সরবরাহ করা হয়েছে ।

আমাদের সেমিনার মারফৎ আমরা একটি প্রাচীর পত্রিকা প্রকাশের ব্যবস্থা করেছিলাম এবং এই পত্রিকা প্রকাশনের ব্যাপারে আমাদের বিভাগীয় অধ্যাপকমণ্ডলী ও ছাত্রবন্ধুগণ যথেষ্ট সাহায্য করেছেন । অনিবার্য কারণ বশতঃ অনেকদিন যাবৎ আমাদের এই পত্রিকার পুনঃপ্রকাশ হয় নি । তবে শীত্বার যাতে পত্রিকাটি প্রকাশিত হয় সেজন্য আমরা সচেষ্ট আছি ।

প্রত্যেক বছরই আমাদের বিভাগ থেকে শিক্ষামূলক ভ্রমণের ব্যবস্থা করা হয় । গত বৎসর জানুয়ারী মাসে স্থানীয় ভ্রমণ হিসেবে Indian Statistical Institute ও Haringhata Dairy Firm-এ নিয়ে যাওয়া হয়েছিল । এবং এই বছরই অক্টোবর মাসে আমাদের দলীলতে Central Statistical Organisation ও Indian Council of Agricultural Research-এ নিয়ে যাওয়া হয় । এই দুটি প্রতিষ্ঠানে দুটি সেমিনার হয়েছিল এবং তাতে আমাদের রাশিবিজ্ঞান বিভাগের ছাত্রবন্ধুগণ যোগদান করেছিলেন ।

আমাদের সেমিনারকে বিভিন্ন বক্তৃতামালা, আলোচনাচক্র এবং অধ্যাপক ও ছাত্রছাত্রীদের সহযোগিতার মাধ্যমে সাফল্যমণ্ডিত করে তুলতে আমরা সচেষ্ট আছি ।

পরিশেষে রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান বিভাগীয় প্রধান শ্রদ্ধেয় অধ্যাপক শ্রীঅনিল ভট্টাচার্য ও অপরাপর অধ্যাপকবৃন্দকে অসীম শ্রদ্ধা ও কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাই প্রতিটি কাজে তাদের উৎসাহদানের জন্য, আর ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের আন্তরিক সহযোগিতার জন্য জানাই অকৃষ্ট ধন্যবাদ।

অমুন্নমাথ রায়  
পার্থসারথি চট্টোপাধ্যায়  
যুগ্ম সম্পাদক

### রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান সেমিনার

রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান বিভাগকে এ-বছরেও তাৰ অধ্যাপকমণ্ডলীৰ একজনকে বিদায় জানাতে হয়েছে। অধ্যাপক শ্রীবাংধুরমণ চক্ৰবৰ্তী উচ্চশিক্ষাৰ জন্য ইংলণ্ড যাত্ৰা কৱেন গত আগষ্ট মাসে; তাঁৰ বিদেশযাত্ৰা উপলক্ষে শুভ কামনা জানানোৰ জন্য সেমিনারেৰ পক্ষ থেকে এক অনুষ্ঠানেৰ আয়োজন কৰা হয়।

জুলাই মাসে বিদায়ী তৃতীয় বার্ষিক শ্ৰেণীৰ ছাত্রছাত্রীদেৰ সেমিনারেৰ পক্ষ থেকে বিদায় জানানো হয়। কিন্তু বিশেষ দুঃখেৰ বিষয়, নানা অনুবিধা ও জটিলতাৰ মধ্যে নবাগত ছাত্রছাত্রীদেৰ প্ৰথামত স্বাগত জানানো আৱ হয়ে গঠেনি। নবাগতদেৰ কাছে আমৱা ক্ষমা চেয়ে নিছি।

প্রতি বছৱই সেমিনারেৰ পক্ষ থেকে নানা বিষয়ে নানা বিশেষজ্ঞেৰ বক্তৃতাৰ ব্যবস্থা কৰা হয়ে থাকে। এবাৰেও যুক্তৰাষ্ট্ৰ থেকে এসেছিলেন অধ্যাপক বার্গার্ড গোল্ডস্টাইন। ইনি 'সামাজিক আন্দোলন' সমষ্টে এক প্ৰাঞ্জল বক্তৃতা দেন।

ছাত্রদেৰ নিয়ে বিতৰকসভা টিক্যাদিৰ আয়োজন কৰা সেমিনারেৰ কৰ্তব্য। এবাৰে এক বিশেষ উপভোগ্য বিতৰকেৰ আয়োজন কৰা হয়েছিল গত সেপ্টেম্বৰ মাসে। বিষয় ছিল: 'সাম্প্রতিক খাদ্যসমস্যাৰ জন্য কংগ্ৰেস সৱকাৰ দায়ী'। বক্তা ছিলেন শ্রীঅমিত মিত্র, শ্রীরণবীৰ সমাদাৰ, শ্রীউদয়ন মুখোপাধ্যায়, শ্রীদীপক চক্ৰবৰ্তী, শ্রীপ্ৰবীৰ বসু, শ্রীসনৎ মুখোপাধ্যায়, শ্রীশিবৱৰঞ্জন চট্টোপাধ্যায়, শ্রীসুবীৰ রায়, শ্রীমতী স্বাগতা চৌধুৱী ও শ্রীমতী বাবলি সেন। এই বিতৰক শুধু বিভাগীয়

ছাত্রছাত্রীদের মধ্যেই সীমাবদ্ধ ছিল না। সমগ্র কলেজেই এনিয়ে বিশেষ উদ্দীপনা পরিলক্ষিত হয়।

বিতর্ক ছাড়াও ছাত্রদের মধ্যে কিছু আলোচনা-সভার আয়োজন করা হয়। এর মধ্যে একটি উপভোগ্য আলোচনা-সভার বিষয় ছিল 'ভারতীয় গণতন্ত্রের ওপর সাম্প্রতিক নির্বাচনের প্রভাব।' এতেও অন্যান্য বিভাগের ছাত্রছাত্রীরা অংশগ্রহণ করেন।

সেমিনারের জন্য অনেক অসম্পূর্ণ পরিকল্পনার মধ্যে একটি ছিল বিভাগের নিজস্ব একটি দেয়ালপত্র প্রকাশ। আশা করি পরবর্তী ছাত্রছাত্রীরা এর ব্যবস্থা করতে সক্ষম হবেন।

সেমিনারের কাজ সুষ্ঠুভাবে সম্পন্ন করার চেষ্টায় আমাদের বিভাগীয় প্রধান শ্রদ্ধেয় ডঃ নির্মলচন্দ্র বসু রায়চৌধুরী এবং বিভাগের অন্যান্য অধ্যাপকদের কাছ থেকেও পেয়েছি অকৃষ্ণ উৎসাহ ও সাহায্য। তাঁদের সকলকে আমাদের শুন্দা ও কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাই।

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