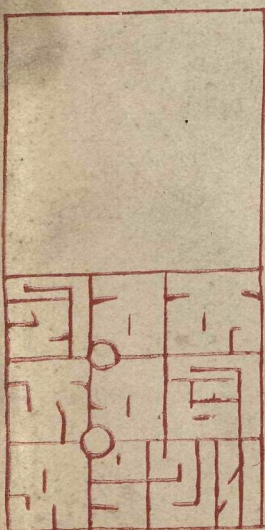


1974

প্রদ্বিভক্তি
ফলভি
পদ্মরা





হীরক জয়ন্তী সংখ্যা

ভারপ্রাপ্ত অধ্যাপক

অরুণকুমার দাশগুপ্ত

সম্পাদক

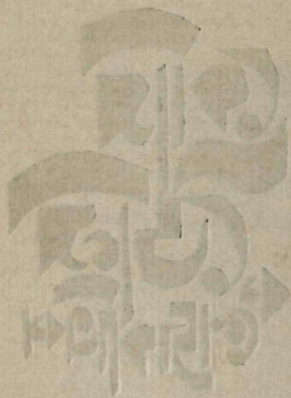
স্বপন চক্রবর্তী

কর্মসচিব

সুরঞ্জন দাস

শৌষ ১৩৮১

ডিসেম্বর ১৯৭৪



সিঙ্গার লিও কল

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নামপত্র ॥ সত্যজিৎ রায়

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আমাদের প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজ

নির্মলকান্তি মজুমদার

শ্রাবন সন্ধ্যায় যেমন গান ছাড়া আর কিছু ভালো লাগে না তেমনি জীবন সন্ধ্যায় পুরনো কথা ছাড়া আর কিছু ভালো লাগে না। তাই প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজ পত্রিকার হীরক জয়ন্তী সংখ্যায় স্মৃতিকথা লিখতে প্রবৃত্ত হয়েছি। এতে শুধু যে আনন্দ আছে তা নয়, গৌরবও আছে। অতীতের অতিরঞ্জন মানুষের চিরন্তন দুর্বলতা। হয়তো সে দুর্বলতা আমারও আছে। কিন্তু অনুক্ষণ অহুভব করি আমাদের চোখে ভবিষ্যতের যে স্বপ্ন ছিল, অন্তরে আদর্শের যে আলো ছিল, শিক্ষার প্রতি যে শ্রদ্ধা ছিল, জ্ঞানের জন্য যে আগ্রহ ছিল, আমাদের অভিভাবকদের যে উৎসাহ ছিল, অধ্যাপকদের যে প্রেরণা ছিল—সে সব যেন ক্রমে ক্রমে হারিয়ে যাচ্ছে।

প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজে আমার অধ্যয়নকাল ১৯২১-১৯২৭। তারপর অর্ধ শতাব্দী কেটেছে। কালের কুয়াশায় কত জিনিসই না ঢাকা পড়েছে। ছোট বড় যে অহুভূতি ও অভিজ্ঞতাগুলো মানস পটে আজও রিকমিক করছে দূর বনাস্তুর জোনাকির মতো শুধু সেগুলো বলা সম্ভব।

মফস্বল স্কুল থেকে পাস করে প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজে এসে প্রথমে মনে হয়েছিল ক্ষুদ্র জলাশয় থেকে সাগরে এসে পড়েছি। চারদিকে একটা গভীর গভীর সীমাহীন বিস্তৃতি। কেমন যেন দিশেহারা হয়ে গেলাম। ভাবতে লাগলাম এই ঐতিহ্যমণ্ডিত ভারতবিশ্রুত কলেজের উপযুক্ত হতে পারব তো। কয়েক মাস গেলে মনে হল আমার চরিত্রের বুঝি একটা নৈতিক পরিবর্তন হচ্ছে—একটা নতুন মর্যাদাবোধ, একটা নতুন দায়িত্বজ্ঞান, একটা নতুন নিয়ম নিষ্ঠা ভিতরে ভিতরে জেগে উঠেছে। কলেজে ভর্তি হবার কিছুদিন আগে হাতে এসেছিল এস্.কে. লাহিড়ী আণ্ড কোম্পানির ছাপা একখানি চটি বই—প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের মহামনা অধ্যক্ষ জেমস

(H. R. James) নবাগত ছাত্রদের স্বাগত জানিয়ে যেসব ভাষণ দিয়েছিলেন তার সংকলন। একটি ভাষণে কলেজ ও স্কুলের ছাত্রদের মধ্যে পার্থক্য নির্দেশ করে অধ্যক্ষ জেমস বলেছিলেন, “A college student is a moral being in a higher sense.” তাঁর উক্তিটির তাৎপর্য ধীরে ধীরে উপলব্ধি করতে লাগলাম।

আই. এ. ক্লাসে আমাদের ইংরাজী Prose Selections ও Poetical Selections পড়াতেন অধ্যাপক বীরেন্দ্রবিনোদ রায় আর New Testament এবং Rhetoric ও Prosody পড়াতেন অধ্যাপক দস্তুর (P. E. Dustoor)। এই দুজন তরুণ অধ্যাপক আমাদের ইংরাজী সাহিত্যের প্রতি অনুরাগ এনে দিয়েছিলেন। এঁরা টিউটোরিয়াল ক্লাসে এমন বিষয়ে রচনা লিখতে দিতেন যা রচনার বইয়ে পাওয়া যায় না। অধ্যাপক রায় বার বার বলতেন Thomas Hardyর উপন্যাস এবং Rupert Brooke এর কবিতা পড়তে।

অধ্যাপক শিবপ্রসাদ ভট্টাচার্য্য সপ্তাহে একদিন বাংলার ক্লাস নিতেন। তিনি বাড়িতে প্রবন্ধ লিখতে দিতেন এবং ক্লাসে সংক্ষেপে বাংলা সাহিত্যের ইতিহাস আলোচনা করতেন। বাংলার জন্য পাঠ্যপুস্তক নির্দিষ্ট ছিল না। অধ্যাপক ভট্টাচার্য্য রঘুবংশ পড়াতেন—ক্লাসের মধ্যে ঘুরে ঘুরে শ্লোক আবৃত্তি ও ব্যাখ্যা করে কালিদাসের কাব্য সম্পদের আভাস দিয়ে যেতেন। অধ্যাপক হরিহর বন্দোপাধ্যায় শান্তভাবে চেয়ারে বসে ভট্টির ব্যাকরণ বিভীষিকা কাটিয়ে দিয়ে ধীরে ধীরে কাব্যরস ফুটিয়ে তোলবার চেষ্টা করতেন।

Deductive Logic পড়িয়েছিলেন অধ্যাপক সুশীল চন্দ্র মিত্র। বিষয়টি আমাদের কাছে নতুন বলে খুব পরিষ্কার ভাবে বুঝিয়ে দেবার চেষ্টা করতেন। পরীক্ষায় প্রশ্নের উত্তর মনের মতো হলে খুব বেশী নম্বর দিতেন।

ফলে আমাদের উৎসাহ উত্তরোত্তর বেড়ে গিয়েছিল এবং নীরস বিষয়টি সরস হয়ে উঠেছিল। Inductive Logic পড়াতেন রাশভারী প্রবীণ অধ্যাপক আদিত্যনাথ মুখোপাধ্যায়। তাঁর ক্লাসে কেউ টু শব্দটি করত না— তন্ময় হয়ে শুনত আর লিখে নিত। তিনি কোন বই ধরে পড়াতেন না, নোটও দিতেন না। অক্লান্তভাবে বোর্ডে লিখে লিখে সমস্ত জিনিস জলের মতো সহজ করে দিতেন।

Solid Geometry, Conics ও Statics পড়িয়েছিলেন অধ্যাপক খগেন্দ্রনাথ চক্রবর্তী। চমৎকার পড়াতেন। সুন্দর হাতের লেখা। আর তেমনি সুন্দর নির্মিত চিত্র আঁকতেন বোর্ডে খড়ি ও বাঁড়নের সাহায্যে। কোন বিষয়ে কিছু জানবার থাকলে তাঁর অবসর সময়ে Astronomy Laboratoryতে যেতে বললেন। কতদিন যে তাঁকে বিরক্ত করেছি তার ঠিক নেই। Dynamics পড়িয়েছিলেন বিচক্ষণ অধ্যাপক সারদা-প্রসন্ন দাম। তাঁর ক্লাসের একটি বিশেষত্ব ছিল। একটি book proposition যে দিন বুঝিয়ে দিতেন পরের দিন ক্লাসে ঢুকেই সেটি আমাদের লিখতে বলতেন। Roll call শেষ করে খাতা দেখতেন। এইভাবে proposition গুলো অতি সহজে তৈরি হয়ে যেত, ফাঁকি চলত না। Trigonometry নিতেন অধ্যাপক জীবন মোহন বোস তিনি Todhunter এর ভক্ত ছিলেন, Loneyকে আদৌ আমল দিতেন না। অধ্যাপক করুণাময় খাশুগীরের Algebra ক্লাস আমাদের ভালো লাগত।

ফার্স্ট ইয়ারে সপ্তাহে একদিন Conversational English এর (আর্টিস ও সায়েন্স একসঙ্গে) ক্লাস নিতেন অধ্যাপক স্টার্লিং (T. S. Sterling)। কোন গল্প পড়ার পর তার moral, কোন passage পড়ার পর তার substance শুনতে চাইতেন। কোন কোন দিন হরেক রকম প্রশ্ন করতেন আমাদের দৈনন্দিন জীবনযাত্রা সম্পর্কে। তাঁর ক্লাস আমরা বেশ উপভোগ করতাম। এর মধ্যে দিয়ে তাঁর সঙ্গে আমাদের একটা মধুর সম্পর্ক গড়ে উঠেছিল—ঋদ্ধার দূরত্ব এবং প্রীতির নৈকট্য হাত মিলিয়েছিল। অধ্যাপক স্টার্লিং স্বল্পে একটি কথা

বিশেষ উল্লেখযোগ্য। তিনি মৃত্যুর পূর্বে তাঁর উইলে প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের দরিদ্র ছাত্রদের সাহায্যের জন্য ১, ৫৭, ৫৫১ টাকা দিয়ে গিয়েছেন। বিদেশী অধ্যাপকের এই বৃহৎ দানে তাঁর প্রাণের যে পরিচয় পেয়েছি তাতে আমরা সত্যিই অভিভূত। Lofty designs must close in like effects.

আমাদের বি. এ. ক্লাসে Othello ও The Comedy of Errors পড়িয়েছিলেন অধ্যাপক প্রফুল্লচন্দ্র ঘোষ। তিনি তো একটি কিংবদন্তী হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছেন। তিনি নাটক এমন ভাবে পড়াতেন যে মনে হত আমরা অভিনয় দেখছি—এমন একটি অভিনয় দেখছি যেখানে একজন অভিনেতা বিভিন্ন ভূমিকায় অবতীর্ণ। সে পরিবেশ অনুভব করবার, বর্ণনা করবার নয়। অধ্যাপক ঘোষ ছিলেন সর্বার্থসাধক; কোন কারণে কোন বিষয় পড়ানো বাকী থাকলে তাঁকে গিয়ে ধরলে তিনি পড়াতে রাজী হতেন। তবে তিনি সময় নিতেন, প্রস্তুত না হয়ে কিছুতেই পড়াবেন না। এই ঐকান্তিকতা ছিল তাঁর চারিত্রিক বৈশিষ্ট্য। অধ্যাপক দম্বর চলে যাওয়ায় Old Testament শেষ হয়নি। অধ্যাপক ঘোষ রবিবারে একটানা ৩-৪ ঘণ্টা ক্লাস নিয়ে অবশিষ্ট অংশ শেষ করে দেন। অধ্যাপক ঘোষ কয়েকটি টিউটোরিয়াল ক্লাস নিয়েছিলেন। সে এক অপূর্ণ অভিযুক্ত। তিনি ইউনিভার্সিটিতে ক্লাস নিয়ে হাঁপাতে হাঁপাতে এসে গ্লাডস্টোন ব্যাগটা টেবিলের ওপর রেখে Virgil-এর কথা বলতে শুরু করলেন। ঘণ্টা বাজলে বললেন পরের সপ্তাহে Virgil এর সংক্ষিপ্ত জীবনী লিখে আনবে। আর একদিন D. G. Rossettiর একটি কবিতার ভাবানুবাদ করতে বললেন। তৃতীয় দিনের ঘটনা আরও বিচিত্র। একখানা বাংলা বই দিয়ে বললেন—“দাগ দেওয়া প্যারাগ্রাফ দুটো একে একে লিখে নিয়ে ইংরাজীতে অনুবাদ কর। যা পার এখন কর, বাকীটুকু বাড়ি থেকে শেষ করে আনবে।” প্যারাগ্রাফ দুটোতে ছিল এলাচ, লবঙ্গ প্রভৃতি নানা রকম মসলার গাছের বর্ণনা। আমাদের ছেলেবেলায় পড়া Raj Bhasa আবার ঘাঁটতে হয়েছিল। Golden Treasury পড়াতেন

অধ্যাপক শ্রীকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়। বিশ্লেষণের গভীরতা ও সূক্ষ্মতা, ভাষার সৌন্দর্য ও মাধুর্য, romantic কবিদের মর্মগ্রহণ আমাদের মুগ্ধ করেছিল। তাঁর Immortality Ode এর ব্যাখ্যা ভুলবার নয়। Heroes and Heroworship পড়াতেন অধ্যাপক হিরণকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়। তাঁর পড়ানোয় ছিল আনন্দ ও সজীবতা। Modern Thought পড়িয়েছিলেন অধ্যাপক মঞ্জু-গোপাল ভট্টাচার্য্য। তিনি প্রত্যেকটি প্রবন্ধের একটি পরিচ্ছন্ন রূপরেখা দিতেন।

Economics department এর অধ্যাপক কয়াজী (J. C. Coyajee) ছিলেন প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের একটি স্তম্ভ। সরকারী কমিশন কমিটিতে প্রায়ই ডাক পড়ত তাঁর। Economic Theory ও Indian Economics পড়াতেন। শব্দ জিনিসগুলো অতি সহজভাবে বুঝিয়ে দিতেন। Indian Economics এ অনার্সের উপযোগী নির্ভরযোগ্য পাঠ্য পুস্তক ছিল না। তিনি আমাদের Imperial Gazetteer ও বিশেষ বিশেষ বইয়ের reference দিতেন। সব সময়ে ক্লাসে আনতেন চামড়ায় বাঁধানো একখানি মোটা খাতা—সজ্ঞ প্রকাশিত স্থলিখিত পুস্তকের জন্মপত্রিকায় ভরা। Political Theory ও Constitutions (Political Science তখন Economics এর অন্তর্ভুক্ত ছিল) পড়াতেন অধ্যাপক পঞ্চানন দাস মুখোপাধ্যায় ও অধ্যাপক তুর্গাংগতি চট্টোয়াজ। তাঁরা ছাত্রদের জন্য যথেষ্ট পরিশ্রম করতেন—কখনও কোন কোর্সে অসমাপ্ত থাকত না। Economics Honours এ ১০০ নম্বরের একটি essay লিখে আনতাম এবং তা নিয়ে আলোচনা করতাম। Seminar এর দায়িত্ব ছিল অধ্যাপক মুখোপাধ্যায়ের ওপর। Seminar এ বই নিতে আসতেন এম.এ. ক্লাসের ছাত্ররা। তাঁদের কাছ থেকে আমরা অনেক ভালো বইয়ের সন্ধান পেতাম।

আমাদের Elizabeth পড়িয়েছিলেন অধ্যাপক জ্যাকেরিয়া (K. Zachariah)। প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের আর একটি শক্তি, আর একটি প্রতিষ্ঠান। শাস্ত্র ধীর বিনম্র অধ্যাপক জ্যাকেরিয়া গল্পের মতো ইতিহাস পড়িয়ে

যেতেন। তাঁর কাছে অতীত ছিল বর্তমানের মতো জীবন্ত। কিছু দিন পরেই তিনি চলে গেলেন Hartog Committeeতে; Elizabeth সম্বন্ধে শেষ করলেন অধ্যাপক সুরেন্দ্রচন্দ্র মজুমদার। সবিস্তারে ও চিত্তাকর্ষকভাবে Modern Europe পড়িয়েছিলেন অধ্যাপক বিনয় কুমার সেন। Indian History ক্লাসে অধ্যাপক উপেন্দ্রনাথ ঘোষাল কোন রকমে নাম ডেকেই পড়াতে শুরু করতেন। তিনি প্রত্যেকটি বিষয়ের খুঁটিনাটি আলোচনা করতেন এবং অনেক নতুন কথা শোনাতেন।

কলেজে ক্লাস শুরু হওয়ার পর অধ্যাপকরা দোতলা তেতলার বারান্দায় মাঝে মাঝে পায়চারি করতেন। ক্লাসে যেতে দেরি করা একেবারেই সম্ভব ছিল না। অধ্যাপকরা সামনে এসে পড়লে আমরা নমস্কার করে সসন্ত্রমে সরে দাঁড়াইতাম। অধ্যাপকদের বিশ্রামের ঘরে বিরাজ করত একটা বৃহত্তর ভ্রাতৃহের আবহাওয়া।

কলেজে টেস্ট পরীক্ষা ছিল না; বার্ষিক পরীক্ষা ছিল ফার্স্ট ইয়ার থেকে সেকেন্ড ইয়ারে এবং থার্ড ইয়ার থেকে ফোর্থ ইয়ারে ওঠার সময়ে। মাসে মাসে প্রত্যেক বিষয়ে একটি করে surprise examination হত এবং সেই পরীক্ষার রেকর্ড ছাত্রদের বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পরীক্ষা দিতে পাঠানোর সময়ে বিশেষ ভাবে বিবেচনা করা হত। এই অত্যন্ত আক্রমণের সম্মুখীন হবার জন্য আমরা নিয়মিত পড়াশুনা করতাম। ব্যবস্থাটা কারও কাছে ছিল মজার ব্যাপার, কারও কাছে ছিল ভয়ের ব্যাপার। তখন অনার্স ক্লাস সম্পূর্ণ আলাদা হয়নি; কতকগুলো ক্লাস অনার্স ও পাস একসঙ্গে হত।

সে সময়ে আর্টসের ছাত্রদের জন্যে সায়েন্সের popular lecture দেবার একটা ব্যবস্থা হয়েছিল। অধ্যাপক সুবোধচন্দ্র মহলানবিস (Physiology), অধ্যাপক চারুচন্দ্র ভট্টাচার্য (Physics), অধ্যাপক পঞ্চানন নিয়োগী (Chemistry) এবং অধ্যাপক হেমচন্দ্র দাশগুপ্ত (Geology) কয়েকটি বক্তৃতা দিয়েছিলেন।

আর্টস লাইব্রেরিতে অনেক বই খোলা আলমারী ও তাকে থাকত। আমরা ইচ্ছা মতো সেগুলো পড়তে পারতাম। বর্ষাকালে বৃষ্টির ফলে কলেজ ফ্লীটে জল

দাঁড়ালে ট্রাম না চলা পর্যন্ত বাড়ি ফেরা যেত না। তখন আমরা পছন্দসই বই বেছে নিয়ে বসে বসে পড়তাম। এই অবসর বিনোদনের মধ্যে একটা হাওয়া বদলের স্বাদ ছিল। একটু জোরে কথা বললে সদা জাগ্রত লাইব্রেরিয়ান গোকুলনাথ ধর মশাই অপরাধীকে কাছে ডেকে শুধু দেয়ালে 'Silence Requested' লেখা কাঠের ফলকের দিকে দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করাতেন। এতেই অপরাধী যথেষ্ট লজ্জা পেত। লাইব্রেরিটি সত্যিই মনে হত একটি গীর্থাঙ্গন। কত প্রাচীন পুরুষের আলেখ্য! কত স্বদূর অতীতের স্মৃতি! কত মহাজ্ঞানীর আত্মা নিভৃত নিদ্রায় নিমগ্ন! এই পবিত্র স্থানের নিশ্চিন্ততা ভঙ্গ করা কেবল অপরাধ নয়, পাপ।

কলেজের সবচেয়ে স্মরণীয় দিন ছিল ২০শে জানুয়ারি। Founders' Day উপলক্ষে কয়েকদিনব্যাপী উৎসব চলত—খেলাধুলা, গান বাজনা, অভিনয় আবৃত্তি ইত্যাদি। শিশিরকুমার ভাট্টা ও নির্মলেন্দু লাহিড়ী আবৃত্তি করেছেন; চিত্তরঞ্জন গোস্বামী Comic Sketch করেছেন; গান করেছেন প্রাক্তন ছাত্র দিলীপ কুমার রায় ও হরেন্দ্রনাথ দত্ত; অভিনয় করেছে কলেজের তখনকার ছাত্ররা। Physics Theatre এ মাঝে মাঝে অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করা হত। একটি অনুষ্ঠানে রবীন্দ্রনাথ “নিরাশ্রের স্বপ্নভঙ্গ” কবিতাটির পটভূমিকা বর্ণনা করেছিলেন। একটি ঘরোয়া বৈঠকে অধ্যাপক খগেন্দ্রনাথ মিত্র ‘মম মানস মাধবী কুঞ্জে শ্যাম বিহর গো নিশিদিন’ গানটি গেয়েছিলেন আর অধ্যাপক শ্রীকুমার বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় গেয়েছিলেন ‘আমায় লোহারি বাঁধনে বেঁধেছে সংসার’ গানটি। অধ্যাপকদের গান শুনে সে দিন আমাদের কী আনন্দ, কী বিস্ময়! আর একটি সভায় অধ্যাপক প্রফুল্লচন্দ্র ঘোষ দিলীপ কুমার রায়কে ফরমাশ করলেন ‘রাঙা জবা কে দিল তোর পায় মুঠো মুঠো’ গানটি গাইতে। দিলীপকুমার অনেকক্ষণ ধরে গানটি করেছিলেন। সে সুরের বেশ আজও কানে রয়েছে।

তখনকার দিনে ইডেন হিন্দু হস্টেল ছিল একটি আদর্শ ছাত্রাবাস। প্রতি বছর বহু প্রতিভাবান ছাত্রের ভীড় হত এখানে ভর্তির জন্য। সহাধ্যায়ী আবাসিকদের

মুখে স্তন্যতাম এখানকার প্রত্যেকটি ঘরই ঐতিহ্যের দাবি করে। বিস্ময়কর নয় কি? হিন্দু হস্টেলের সরস্বতী পূজার খুব জাঁক জমক ছিল—প্রাক্তন আবাসিকদের সম্মেলন অনুষ্ঠান আনন্দমুখর হয়ে উঠত।

কলেজের পুরনো বাড়ির দোতলার সিঁড়ির ওপর যে ঘড়িটি ছিল সেটি আমাদের নিয়মানুবর্তিতা শিখিয়েছে। ঐ ঘড়িটি দেখে প্রতি পিরিয়ডে আমরা ক্লাসে যেতাম। লাইব্রেরি, কমনরুম, খাবার জলের ব্যবস্থা সবই এক তলায়। অফিসের হরচন্দ্রবাবু (মজুমদার) ভর্তির ব্যাপারে আমাদের আন্তরিক সাহায্য করেছিলেন। দরখাস্ত দেবার সময় পার হয়ে গিয়েছিল; কিন্তু তিনি আমাদের অধ্যক্ষ ওয়ার্ডস্যারের (W. C. Wordsworth) কাছে নিয়ে গিয়েছিলেন এবং শেষ পর্যন্ত আমাদের নিতে তাঁকে রাজী করিয়েছিলেন। দারোয়ান রামসিং ১৯২৬ সালের দাঙ্গার দুর্দিনে কলেজের গেট রক্ষা করতে গিয়ে দুর্ভাগ্যের হাতে প্রাণ দিয়েছিল। সিঁড়ির ঘড়ির বন্ধুতা, হরচন্দ্রবাবুর সহৃদয়তা এবং রামসিং এর কর্তব্যপরায়ণতা আজও ভুলিনি।

আমার সহপাঠীদের মধ্যে অনেকেই উত্তরজীবনে যশ ও প্রতিষ্ঠা অর্জন করেছেন। তাঁদের গৌরবে আমি গৌরবান্বিত। যারা অকালে পরলোক যাত্রা করেছেন তাঁদের জন্য ব্যথা পাই। একে একে নিবিছে দেউটী।

আমাদের প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের ছাত্র জীবনের সঙ্গে কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সেনেট হলের স্মৃতি বিশেষ ভাবে জড়িত। সেনেট হলে আমরা আই. এ. ও বি. এ. পরীক্ষা দিয়েছিলাম। এখানকার কতকগুলি অনুষ্ঠানে উপস্থিত হবার সুযোগ হয়েছিল। যখন একটি Special Convocation এ Lord Reading কে কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পক্ষ থেকে Doctor of Law (Honoris Causa) উপাধিতে ভূষিত করা হয় তখন স্যার আশুতোষ রুস্তিপ্রাণ্ড ছাত্রদের ঐ উৎসবে যোগদানের ব্যবস্থা করেছিলেন। স্যার আশুতোষের মৃত্যুর পর এখানেই শোকসভা হয়েছিল—রবীন্দ্রনাথ, বিপিনচন্দ্র, সুভাষচন্দ্র উপস্থিত ছিলেন। সে কী বিপুল জনতা! গোলদিঘির

সম্মুখ দিকটায় তিল ধারণের স্থান ছিল না। সেনেট হলে শ্রদ্ধেয় শ্রীনিবাস শাস্ত্রীর ‘কমলা লেকচার’ শুনবার সৌভাগ্য হয়েছিল। কোথায় গেল সেনেট হল। লম্বা লম্বা সিঁড়ি, উঁচু উঁচু থাম, প্রসন্নকুমার ঠাকুরের মর্মর মূর্তি, সমাবর্তন উৎসবের দিনে লাল পাগড়ি ও মিলিটারীর ভীড়, পরীক্ষার ফল টাঙানোর পূর্বে উদ্বিগ্ন অভিভাবকদের প্রতীক্ষা, পরীক্ষার সময় থেকে থেকে ভয় ও বিষাদ

মিশ্রিত ঘণ্টাধ্বনি, বাসিন্দা কপোতদের অনলস আনন্দ-কূজন—সব মিলিয়ে অপূর্ব, অদ্ভুত সেই সেনেট হল! তাঁর বহু বিচিত্র রূপের কোন চিহ্নই আর নেই।

Men are we, and must grieve when even the
shade

Of that which once was great is passed

away.

বিনে স্বদেশী ভাষা...

দীপক বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

মাতৃভাষায় লেখাপড়া করা যে ভাল সে সন্দেহে সন্দেহের অবকাশ অন্ততঃ আমার নেই। একথাটা প্রথমেই বলে রাখি, কারণ লক্ষ্য করেছি যে এ নিয়ে কোন আলোচনা শুরু করলে সেটা প্রায়ই বচসাতে পৌঁছতে চায়। শিক্ষাদীক্ষা নিয়ে যারা কথা বলেন তাঁদের অনেকেই দেখি স্লোগানের দাস, শিক্ষিতমাত্রেরই প্রধান পরিচয় যে সজ্জিবোধ ও সংযমে প্রকাশ সেটা অনেক মহারথীরই নেই, বা থাকলেও একান্ত আলোচনায় সীমাবদ্ধ।

মাতৃভাষায়, আমাদের কাছে বাংলায় বোঝা সোজা, বোঝানো আরও সহজ। আমাদের শিক্ষাব্যবস্থায় ইংরাজীভাষার অগ্রাধিকার অন্যায়াভাবে বজায় রয়েছে যার ফলে পরাধীন ভারতে যারা ইংরেজের হাতে গড়া শিক্ষায় সফল হয়েছিল তাদের ছেলের তুলনায় নিম্ন মধ্যবিত্ত বা তরুণ সামাজিক স্তর থেকে উঠে আসা আজও স্বাধীন ভারতে মোটেই সহজতর হয়নি। তাছাড়া ইংরেজীর মাধ্যমে শিক্ষা মানেই পরের মুখের ঝাল খাওয়া। ভাষা যেমন ভাবের বাহন, তেমনি অক্ষম সওয়ারের কাছে বন্ধনও বটে। যে দাসত্ববোধ আমাদের আজও শিল্প সংস্কৃতি বিজ্ঞানে পশ্চিমী সভ্যতার খাতক করে রাখছে স্বভাষায় স্ব-ভাবে প্রতিষ্ঠিত না হলে সেই বোধ চক্রবৃদ্ধি হারে আমাদের আরও ঋণে ডোবাবে।

শিক্ষা বলতে এই যে আজ সবাই মনে করছে পুঁথিগত বিজ্ঞা তার কারণ পুঁথি সেই ব্রাহ্মণদের কক্ষগত, ১২ বছর ব্যাকারণ ইত্যাদির আড়ালে লুকালো। লেখাপড়ায় যে সবারই অধিকার এবং সেই লেখাপড়া যে ঘুরে আবার জীবনে, সমাজে কাজে ব্যবহারের হাতিয়ারমাত্র এ উপলব্ধির একটা মোটা অন্তরায় বিজাতীয় ভাষার কায়েমাসিদ্ধ।

এ সবই আমার প্রাণের কথা। আমি তাই চাই যত শীঘ্র সম্ভব শিক্ষাব্যবস্থাকে মাতৃভাষার মাধ্যমে জনসাধারণের স্বাধিকারের মধ্যে প্রতিষ্ঠা করতে। ঠিক এমনটিই চান এরকম লোক অনেক, তাঁদের সম্মিলিত প্রতিবাদের জোরও অনেক। তাহলে বাধা কোথায়? সত্যিই কি বাধা আছে? এই তো বি এ অনার্স অবাধ বাংলায় পরীক্ষা দেওয়া আইন হয়ে গেছে, আর বাকি তো শুধু এম এ। সে বাধাই বা কতদিনের? বিশ্ব-বিদ্যালয়ের আর এক ভ্রূতটিতেই কি বাকি বাধা দূরে পালাবে না?

এই নিরক্ষর আশাবাদী ভঙ্গীটাতেই আমার আপত্তি এবং এইখানেই স্লোগানগুলোর মুখোমুখি হতে হয়। হঠাৎ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে হুকুমজারী হল বাংলায় লেখাপড়া হোক, আর সেই থেকে সবাই বাংলাতে লেখাপড়া করে স্বখেলাপাতিতে ঘরকন্না করতে থাকুক এই রূপকথায়

বিশ্বাসের ভরসা নেই; ছেলেমানুষির দিন আমার আপনার কারুরই নেই।

বাংলাতে লেখাপড়ার ব্যবস্থা ভালভাবে চালু হলেও আমাদের একটা বড় বাধা থেকে যাবে ভারতের অগাধ ভাষাভাষীদের মোকাবিলা করতে গেলে। এই প্রশ্নটি খুব বড় প্রশ্ন, সহজ উত্তর আছে মনে হয় না। আমি আপাতত প্রশ্নটিকে এড়িয়ে যাচ্ছি। অন্য আরও বড় প্রশ্ন এই যে ভালভাবে চালু বলতে কি বোঝায় এবং তার জন্তে কি কি করা প্রয়োজন। আশ্চর্যের কথা, এই প্রশ্নটি অনেকেই এড়িয়ে যান।

ধরুন বি এ পাস কোর্সে এখন বাংলায় লিখন পঠন দুইই চলছে। প্রায় কলেজের ছাত্রদের দাবী বাংলায় পড়াতে হবে। এমন কি বিশ্বস্ত সূত্রে জেনেছি ইংরেজীর অধ্যাপনাও অনেকে বাংলায় করেন। এর ফলে লেখাপড়ার প্রসার হয়েছে কি? ২০২৫ বছর আগের সাধারণ ভাবে পাসকোর্সে পাস এমন লোকদের সঙ্গে আজকের আনকোরা গ্র্যাজুয়েটের তুলনা করুন। ইংরেজী জ্ঞান নয় নাই দেখলাম, এই ধরুন ইতিহাস বা অর্থনীতি বা পদার্থবিদ্যা, যেমনটি চান তেমনই পরীক্ষা করতে আমি রাজী। আমার দৃঢ় ধারণা সবাই একবাক্যে রায় দেবেন যে এখনকার বি এ পাস বলতে শিক্ষিত একেবারেই বোঝায় না। পঁচিশ বছর আগেও সত্যিকারের শিক্ষা হত না বটে, তবে এখনকার তুলনায় কিছুটা অন্তত বেশী হত। অন্য প্রশ্নে যখনই যে কোন কলেজের অধ্যাপকের কাছে এখনকার সাধারণ ছাত্রের শিক্ষার কথা বলেছি তখনই সবাই একটি দুটি রোমহর্ষক গল্প বলেছেন ছাত্রদের প্রায় নিরক্ষরতার উদাহরণ হিসেবে। তাহলে আমাদের কি লাভ হল?

অবশ্য লেখাপড়ার এই অধোগতি ইংরেজীরচর্চার অধোগতির সাথে সাথে ঘটেছে বলে এতে কোন সোজা কার্যকারণ আরোপ করা ভুল হবে। আসলে নানা কারণে শিক্ষার মান নেমে বাচ্ছে, তাতে সব শিক্ষারই নিম্নগতি দেখতে পাব আমরা। সুতরাং বাংলায় লেখাপড়া করতে গিয়ে অবনতি হচ্ছে এরকম সিদ্ধান্ত সম্বন্ধে কোন প্রমাণ এই সহাবনতি থেকে পাওয়া যাবে না।

তবে আমি নিজে অধ্যাপনা করে থাকি, পাসের ছাত্ররা বেশ কয়েক বছর হল বাংলায় লিখছে পড়ছে দেখছি। এই কবছরের মধ্যে অনার্স ছাত্রদের লেখাপড়ার মান যতটা পড়েছে বলে মনে হয়—এবং খুব পড়েছে বলে মনে হয় না—পাসের ছাত্রদের মান যেন তার চেয়ে অনেকটা বেশী নেমে গেছে মনে হয়। এ দুই ধারার বিভিন্ন ফল নিশ্চয়ভাবে কোন একটা কারণের ওপর আরোপ না করেও বলতে পারি বাংলায় পড়ার নামে তারা যে বই পড়ে তাতে লেখাপড়া শেখার সহজাত যেটুকু সম্ভাবনা থাকে সেটার টুঁটি চেপে ধরা হয়। বাংলা বই এই নামে বেশীর ভাগই চতুর্থ শ্রেণীর বইতে আমরা তাদের আটকে ফেলেছি। পাস অর্থনীতি পড়তে ইংরেজীতে ইচ্ছে করলে স্যামুএলসনের বই পড়ানো যায়, বাংলায় তেমন বই খুঁজে পাব? (প্রসঙ্গত, ভাল বই এই একটির কথা জানি, ছেলেরা সেটা পছন্দ করে না কারণ প্রশ্নোত্তরের কাঠামোতে লেখা নয়, বুঝতে হয়। অধ্যাপকরা কেউ কেউ এবইটি নিজেরা পড়ে উপকার পেয়েছেন বলেন।) পদার্থবিদ্যায় আজকাল অনেক ভাল বই রয়েছে প্রতিলিপ্তরের শিক্ষার জন্তে, ফেইনম্যানের মত বিখ্যাত বৈজ্ঞানিকেরও ছাত্রপাঠ্য বই রয়েছে। মজার কথা এই, যে বিদেশী বইয়ের নাম করছি সেগুলি সম্বন্ধে অধিকাংশ ছাত্র ও অধ্যাপকের মত হবে এই যে সাধারণ ছাত্রছাত্রীর পক্ষে ঐ বইগুলি বড় কঠিন। অর্থাৎ নোটবই মুখস্থতেই আমাদের বেশীরভাগ কলেজের ছাত্রের অধিকার এর বেশী তাদের ওপর বোঝা হবে।

তাই যদি হবে তাহলে বাংলার মাধ্যমে শিক্ষাকে সাধারণের ও সমাজজীবনের মধ্যে ছড়িয়ে মিশিয়ে দেওয়ার উদ্দেশ্যের কি হল? লেখাপড়া যদি মধ্যবিত্তদেরই শেখার ক্ষমতা না থাকে তাহলে আরও হুড়াবার কথা যে বস্তু সম্বন্ধে বলছি সেটা কি? সেটার নাম যাই হোক তার প্রসার কি কাম্য? তার চেয়ে শুধু যোগ বিয়োগ আর হিন্দীতে আধো আধো কথা বলবার লেখবার শিক্ষাই যদি দেওয়া হয় বাংলাও সরিয়ে দিয়ে, অন্য সব বিষয় বাদ দিয়ে, তাহলে কি বেশী কাজের, এমন কি বেশী ভাল হয় না?

আমি মনে করি তাতে ভয়ানক ক্ষতি হবে। আমার বিশ্বাস যেকোন লোকই লেখাপড়া অনেকদূর শিখতে পারে। এ বিশ্বাসের ভিত্তি হিসেবে দাখিল করছি, আমেরিকা ও রাশিয়া এ দুই দেশের গত ৪০ বছরের ইতিহাস—যখন এ দুই দেশে শিক্ষা বিশেষত উচ্চশিক্ষার বহুগুণ প্রসার ঘটেছে। এই প্রসারের ফলে যত গুণ বেশি ছাত্র বেড়েছে, ভাল শিক্ষক, বৈজ্ঞানিক, এন্জিনিয়ার তত গুণ বাড়ছে তো বটেই, আরও বেশিগুণ বাড়ছে মনে করার যথেষ্ট কারণ আছে। তাছাড়া আস্তে আস্তে এ দুই দেশেই শিক্ষার সাধারণ মান অনেকটা উঠে যাচ্ছে।

তাই বলি আমাদের ছেলেমেয়েরা সুযোগ পেলে সত্যিই শিক্ষিত হবে। প্রায় সবাই অনেকটা এগুবে, বেশ কিছু বিদেশের ছাত্রছাত্রীর সমানে দাঁড়াতে পারবে। সুযোগ পেল, তবে সে সুযোগ বলতে যদি মনে করি বাংলায় নানা বিষয়ের নোটবই তাদের হাতে ধরিয়ে দিলে আমরা আমাদের কর্তব্য পালন করলাম তাহলে ভয়ানক অগ্রায় হবে। এখনকার চেয়ে কম লেখাপড়ার ব্যবস্থা সহজে করা যায় না, আমরা বাংলায় পড়ানোর নামে সেই মুখামির গল্পের দিকে দ্রুত চলেছি। আর দশবছর এই দিকে চললে আর দেখতে হবে না, শিক্ষা-ব্যবস্থার শিরদাঁড়া ভেঙ্গে দেওয়া যাবে।

তাহলে কি বাংলায় শিক্ষাদান বন্ধ করতে হবে? এই দেখুন সবসময়ে সাদাকালো হাঁ না এই খাঁচাতেই কি আলোচনা করতে হবে? আমি বলছি বাংলায় লেখাপড়ার কথা যাঁরা বলছেন তাঁদের বেশির ভাগই বাংলাতে যে লেখাপড়া এখন করা যায় সে সম্বন্ধে খুব নীচু ধারণা পোষন করেন। তাই যাচ্ছে তাই নোটবই মার্কা দুখানা বই বাংলাভাষায় লেখা থাকলেই তাঁরা বলেন এই তো, আর চিন্তা কি? এঁরা ভাবেন এই ছেলে মেয়েদের ঐ যথেষ্ট, আর বেশি ভাল বই তারা কি আর রাজা-উজ্জী হবে, আর বোধ্য বিষয় ভালভাবে না বুঝলেই বা কি ক্ষতি? এসব ছেলেমেয়েরা তো সত্যিই কিছু বুঝবার ক্ষমতা রাখে না।

বাংলাতেই শিক্ষাদান করতে হবে বললে কিন্তু আরও বেশি দায়িত্ব আমাদের ওপর এসে পড়ে। ইংরাজী

একটা বড় বাধা ছিল, সে বাধা তুলে দিলে এবার আরও খারাপ একটা ব্যবস্থার দিকে ঠেলে দেওয়ার মানে শেষ আশা নিমূল করা। বাংলায় ভাল বই আগে বেরোক তবেই আমরা ছেলেমেয়েদের বাংলায় পড়তে বলব। আর, এবার যেহেতু বাংলাতে পড়া যায় তাই এখন পরীক্ষার মান ওঠাতে হবে। ছাত্রদের বোধশক্তিকে খুঁচিয়ে জাগাতে হবে, এবং এসব এখনই করতে হবে, নাহলে পুরো জাতটা একবার লেখাপড়ার মর্ম কি সেটা ভুলে গেলে আর কিছুই করা যাবে না। আপনি যেদিন আমাকে অন্তত মাঝারি ভালো বিদেশী বইগুলির সমকক্ষ বাংলা বই দেখাবেন সেদিনই আমি সেই বই ছাত্রদের পড়তে জোর করব। কিন্তু দোহাই, পরীক্ষার ব্যবস্থা, ও জ্ঞানের যে অপ্রয়োজনীয়তা আজ লেখাপড়ার নামে চলছে সেটা না বদলালে ঐ মাঝারি বইও কেউ পড়ে উঠবে না। অবশ্য ইংরাজী রাখলেও হয়ত দিশী নোট-বইই চলবে, ইংরাজী বাংলা দুভাষাতেই অজ্ঞানান্ধকার ছড়ানো যায়, তবে ইংরাজী ভাষার সঙ্গে কিছুটা পরিচয়ই একটা ভেক্টিলেটর, ভান্সা ভান্সা ইংরাজীতেও সেদিকে এগোনা অসম্ভব নয়। সেটাকে পারতপক্ষে অসম্ভব করে তুলবার আগে ঘরে একটা মোমবাতি অন্তত জালি আমরা।

অনার্সের পড়া বা এম্ এ পড়া সম্বন্ধে এই একই যুক্তি খাটে, কিন্তু সেখানে সমাধান আরও শক্ত, কারণ বি. এ. পাসকোর্সের ওপরে যদি শিক্ষাব্যবস্থা রাখতেই হয় তাহলে সেই শিক্ষার মাধ্যমের প্রশ্নটা আরও একটু প্যাঁচালো হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। অনার্সকোর্স বা এম্ এ পড়ানোর ব্যবস্থা আছে কেন এবং থাকবে কেন? উত্তরটা বোধ হয় আমার আপনার একই—বিশেষজ্ঞ তৈরী করতে হলে আমাদের একটা এমন ব্যবস্থা রাখতে হবে যাতে সাধারণ শিক্ষার পর অনেক দূর অবধি এগোনো চলে। ভালমত একটা ব্যবস্থাতে এম্ এ পাস ছাত্র সত্ত্ব সত্ত্ব অন্যদের শিক্ষা দিতে প্রস্তুতি পাবে, যেমন অন্যদিকে তার হাতে প্রবেশপত্র থাকবে গবেষণার জগতে উঁকিঝুঁকি মারবার। অর্থাৎ কিনা যে কোন বিষয়ে এম্ এ ডিগ্রীধারী তার বিষয়ের চিন্তাধারণা জ্ঞানের

সব (?) সম্পদেরই ঠিকানা জানবে, এর অনেকাংশ হবে তার আয়ত্ত।

মুশকিল এই যে এসব চিন্তা ধারণা সবটাই প্রায় বিদেশীভাষ্য। এমন কি এর সমাক্ষ ব্যবহারও আমরা বিদেশীর অনুকরণে করি। বাংলাতে যদি সর্বশেষ স্তর পর্যন্ত লেখাপড়া করতে হয় তাহলে শুধু অনুকরণে চলবে না, আমাদের ভাষাকে এই সব চিন্তাধারণার বাহক করে তুলতে হবে, এবং সেই ভাষাতে পঠনপাঠনের উপযোগী বইয়ের একটা বড় গোছের সম্ভার গড়ে তুলতে হবে। এই প্রসঙ্গে প্রায় সবাই এখন অবোধ সাহস দেন, আর বলেন পরিভাষার একটা পাকা ব্যবস্থা হলেই প্রথমে অনুবাদ ও তার পরে মৌলিক লেখা বেরবে। একটু কোমর বেঁধে পাঁচজনে মিলে লাগলেই এটুকু বাধা আমরা সহজে অতিক্রম করব।

ঠিক এইখানেই আমরা গা জ্বালা করে ওঠে। এতটা দায়িত্বজ্ঞানবর্জিত কথা কখনও শুনি নি বলতে পারছি না, এই তো অনেকেই বলেন যে বস্তুতে যারা থাকে তারা বেশ আছে, আমাদের মত বাড়ীভাড়া গুণতে ফতুরা হচ্ছে না। বা বলেন যে পশ্চিমবঙ্গে যে সাক্ষরতা এত কম তাতে ক্ষতি কি? অগাধ রাজ্যের সাক্ষর তো ঢের দেখলাম, স্কুল কলেজে যা শেখে সে শিক্ষা দেশব্দ লোক পেলেই বা কি লাভ। বা এই রকমই আরও অনেক কথা। দুঃখের কথা যে আমাদের দায়িত্বজ্ঞানের অভাব অপরিণীত ও সর্ববিষয়ে বিস্তৃত। কিন্তু পরিভাষা ও অনুবাদের কথায় ফিরে যাওয়া যাক। প্রথমে অনুবাদের প্রসঙ্গটাই ধরি। অনার্স ও এম্ এতে এখন সব মিলিয়ে কত বই অবশ্যপাঠ্য, পঠনীয় ও আংশিক ভাবে পাঠ্য বলে ধরা হয়? বিষয় অনুসারে এ হিসেবে বেশি কম হবে, বিজ্ঞানে হয়ত একটু কম, অর্থনীতি, ইতিহাস বা দর্শনে হয়ত বা কিছু বেশি। অনার্সে অর্থনীতি পড়তে হলে আমাদের হিসেবে ২৬২৭টি বই অন্তত আংশিক পাঠ্য। এম্ এ পড়তে স্বভাবতই এর বেশি বই লাগে, আর লাগে অনেক মৌলিক লেখা যেগুলি বিভিন্ন পত্র পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত। এই সব অনুবাদ শেষ না হলে এম্ এ বা অনার্স বাংলাতে পড়বার কোনই সুব্যবস্থা হবে না যদি

না এই সুযোগে লেখাপড়ার মানটা অনেকটা নামিয়ে, “এক বিষয়—এক কিতাব” এই নিয়মে বড় জোর মাছি মারা কেরানী তৈরী করাকেই উচ্চশিক্ষার উদ্দেশ্য হিসেবে পাকা করি।

তাহলে প্রতিটি বিষয়ের জন্যে অনেকটা অনুবাদ না করে শুরু করলে চলবে না। অনুবাদে বাধা কি? প্রথম বাধা লোকবল ও সময়। দুরতিক্রম্য বাধা নয়, তবে তুড়ি মেড়ে ওড়ানোর মত সহজও নয়। যেখানে যেখানে অনুবাদ ছাড়াও চলবে অর্থাৎ মৌলিক বাংলা বই পাওয়া যাবে—এবং এরকম খুব বেশি পাব না—বাকি সব অংশের জন্য অংশপ্রতি গোটা দুই তিন বই দিয়ে তো শুরু করতে হবে, এবং এজ্ঞে ভাল মত ব্যবস্থা করতে হবে, আপনি আপনি হঠাৎ হবে না। এই ব্যবস্থা বাণী দিয়ে সভাসমিতিতে জোর হাততালি পাবার মত বক্তৃতা করে হবে না, অনেক অভিজ্ঞ অধ্যাপক যারা মৌলিক গবেষণার সংশ্লিষ্ট একেবারে ছাড়েন নি তাঁদের বছর দুয়েক সময় এই কাজে লাগাতে হবে। তাঁরা এই কাজ করবেন কেন? সাধারণতঃ উত্তর দেওয়া হয় যে দেশের কল্যাণের এত বড় সুযোগ। সবাই করতে রাজী হবেন। আমাদের রাজনৈতিক ও অর্থনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে যারা দেশের কল্যাণ করতে এগিয়ে এসেছেন তাঁদের দেখলে শিক্ষার এত বড় রূপান্তর সেই আশুমানদের হাতে রাখা যায় কি? আমি তো দেখি যে প্রকৃতশিক্ষিত তত্ত্বলোকে রা দেশের কল্যাণের কথা আউড়ে নিজের কোলে ঝোল টানার যে প্রতিযোগিতা চলে তাতে পেছপা, হয়ত বা অক্ষমও। শুধু দেশোদ্ধারের উদ্বেজনাতে যে লোকে কাজ করে না তা বলছি না, তবে বছর দুয়েক শাস্ত্র ভাবে মাথা ঘামিয়ে কাজ করার জন্যে সাধারণতঃ একটা পারিশ্রমিকের প্রয়োজন হয়। সে পারিশ্রমিক যে একটা মোটা টাকা হতে হবে তা নয়, হয়ত বা অনেকের ক্ষেত্রে ছাত্র-সাধারণের শ্রদ্ধার্জনই যথেষ্ট। কিন্তু শুধু অনুবাদে তো কোন অক্ষয় কীর্তি উপার্জন হয় না। সেখানে তাই টাকা পয়সার কথাটা এসে পড়ে। আর যেই টাকা পয়সার কথা এল সাথে সাথে গুড়ে মাছি পড়া গোছের একটা ব্যাপার ঘটে যাতে সজ্জন পেছু হাঁটেন।

তাই নয় এল, তাতে ক্ষতি কি? অনুবাদের শ্রেষ্ঠ মাথা ও সব চাইতে কর্তব্যনিষ্ঠ মনের প্রয়োজন কি? প্রয়োজন এই কারণে যে শুধু এ. টি. দেবের সাহায্যে যে অনুবাদ সম্ভব তাতে বাংলা হরফ পাব বটে কিন্তু বাংলাতে তত্ত্বগুলি আপন করে পাব না। সে অনুবাদ পড়ে বোঝা আমাদের ছাত্রদের পক্ষেও সহজতর হবে না, এবং বিষয়টির কঠিন অংশগুলি স্বদেশী পোষাকে আরও অচেনা ঠেকবে। ভাষান্তর সোজা জিনিস নয়, এক ভাষাতে যা স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত সেটাকে সম্পূর্ণ আত্মসাৎ করে তবে অন্য ভাষাতে সহজ করা যায়। অর্দ্ধেক দখল এখানে চলবে না, সেয়া হাত ছাড়া একাজ নুসম্পন্ন হবে না।

এছাড়াও একটা কথা আছে, বাংলা ভাষার এখন যে অবস্থা তাতে কোন সূক্ষ্ম ও গূঢ় আলোচনা কতদূর সম্ভব? ভাষা তো শুধু শব্দের সমষ্টি নয়, একটা জাতির ইতিহাস ও সমাজজীবনের মানসপুত্র (কন্যা?)। সেই জাতির সমগ্র চেতনা প্রতিফলিত হয় তার ভাষায়, তার সহজাত সংস্কার নির্ধারণ করে সে ভাষার চলন; যে মূলধারণা সে জাতির চিন্তার কাঠামো সে মূলধারণা ভাষাকে দেয় তার প্রকাশের ভঙ্গী। যে কারণে ইংরেজ সাদা কালোর মাঝামাঝি গ্রে রং এর ভক্ত সেই কারণেই তার ভাষাতে অনুভূতি বা ধারণার বিপরীত মেরুর মধ্যের জায়গাটা এত প্রশস্ত। আর আমরা ছাই রং বলে এক কথায় সারি, তাই বৈপরীত্য ও প্যারাডক্স প্রবণতা বাংলায় এত প্রধান, অনুভূতির কবিতা তাই আমাদের গর্ব, চিন্তাশীল গতের অভাব তাই আমাদের লজ্জা।

অবশ্য সংস্কৃত ভাষার সম্পদ যদি আমরা গুছিয়ে ধরে তুলতে পারি তাহলে এ লজ্জা কিছুটা ঘুচবে। কিন্তু সেও সময়সাপেক্ষ এবং সমস্ত শিক্ষিত সমাজের অংশগ্রহণের মুখাপেক্ষী। ঈঠাং সংস্কৃত শব্দ ব্যবহার শুরু করলে সে বোধ্য হবে কেন? বহুল ব্যবহারে শব্দের যে উপচ্ছায়া গড়ে ওঠে সেটা না পেলে শুধু সাদা কালোয় কতদূরই বা এগোনো চলে? এই প্রসঙ্গে পরিভাষা বিতর্কের গোঁগতা সহজেই বোঝা যায়। পরিভাষা যদি মুখস্থই করতে হল তাহলে রাষ্ট্রপতিকে প্রেসিডেন্ট লিখলে কি ক্ষতি? ক্ষতি তখনই যখন রাষ্ট্র সম্বন্ধে একটা সহজ

ধারণা ব্যবহারে সাধারণে চালু হয়ে গেছে। এই কথাটা অবশ্য চালু হয়েই গেছে, মনে হয়, মধ্যবিত্ত মানসে, কিন্তু এরকম আরও অনেক কথা তো হয়নি, হতে পাঁচ দশ বছর নেবে। যদি লেখাপড়ার অনেকটাই এরকম অপরিচিত শব্দের আড়ালে পড়ে যায় তাতে সার্থক পরিভাষার প্রান্তিক অবদান বিশাল কিছু হবে না। ভাষান্তর প্রসঙ্গে পরিভাষা প্রশ্নটি মুখ্য নয়, গোঁগ।

বৈজ্ঞানিক ভাবনা চিন্তা করতে তাই পরিভাষা ব্যবহার করি বা না করি আলোচনার ভাষার অক্ষমতা দূর করা বেশ সময়সাপেক্ষ অনুক্রম। শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালী মাত্রেই যতদিন প্রায় সব সময়ে বাংলাতে অন্য ভাষার মাধ্যমে শেখা ভাব প্রকাশ করছেন না ততদিন পাঁচটা অনুবাদ নাড়াচাড়া করে এই অনুক্রমের প্রথম পংক্তির বেশি এগোনো যাবে না। আর, তার আগেই যদি সব লেখাপড়া বাংলা ভাষার মাধ্যমে করার নীতি নিয়ে বসি তাহলে একটা অক্ষম ভাষার নিগড়ে সব চিন্তাধারা, সমস্ত বুদ্ধির বিকাশ আটকে ফেলা হবে। তাত্ত্বিক ভাষা আমি কোনদিনই যদি না দেখলাম আমার আশপাশের কোন লেখাতে তাহলে সূক্ষ্ম বিচারের বোধ আমার জাগবে না কখনও। যে পোড়ো ছুঁলে ছুঁলে আরুতি করে “চার কড়ায় এক গণ্ডা” তাকে দুই রাশিটির বর্গমূল যে একটি অমূলদ রাশি এই উপপাত্তটির প্রমাণের যে অলৌকিক সৌন্দর্য্য, কি ভাবে তার আভাস দেওয়া যাবে? আবার মনে করিয়ে দিই ভাষা একটা সমাজের সভ্যতার বহিঃপ্রকাশ, তাই বিদেশী ভাষা অবলম্বন করে আমরা একশ দেড়শ বছর লাফিয়ে আজকের জগতে পৌঁছতে পারি। বিদেশী পোষাকে স্বচ্ছন্দ না হলে বেশি দূর লাফাতে পারি না ঠিকই, কিন্তু বাঙ্গালীর অতিপ্রিয় এলোগায়ে পরিভাষার ফতুয়া আঁটলেই বিশ্বসভ্যতার সভায় যেতে পারব মনে করা বিষম ভুল হবে।

শিশুকে যদি কোন বিষয় শেখাতে হয় তাহলে শুরু করতে হবে তার পরিচিত সব কার্যকারণ সম্পর্ক থেকে, অর্থাৎ তার পরিচিত বিশ্বের সাধারণ রূপ থেকে। শুরু করেই এবার বিশ্বরহস্যের যতটা আমাদের জানা সবটা তাকে একবারে বলা যাবে না। আমাদের এগোতে

হবে ধীর পদক্ষেপে, প্রতি পদে একটু করে সামান্য রূপ থেকে জটিলতর বিশ্বজিজ্ঞাসার দিকে নিয়ে যেতে হবে। এক স্তর থেকে আর স্তরে আলোচনাকে তখনই নিয়ে যাওয়া যাবে যখন আগের স্তরের আলোচনা তার সহজ বোধের অন্তর্গত হয়ে গেছে। নইলে আশ্চর্যের ওপর আশ্চর্যের পাহাড় গড়ে তুললে শিক্ষকের পাণ্ডিত্যে সে মুগ্ধ হবে বটে কিন্তু মোহ থেকে বোধ অনেক দূর। স্তরবিহীন এই পদ্ধতির প্রয়োজন হয় কারণ সরলরেখায় যুক্তির পথ ধরে চলা শিক্ষা বা শিক্ষণের পথ নয়। সরল-রেখাতে যেতে পারি না কারণ কোথায় আছি এটা সব সময়ে চারিদিকে তাকিয়ে তবে নির্ধারণ করি, এই আশংকা চেনা আমাদের পথের নিশানার জন্য আবশ্যিক। এর ব্যতিক্রম নিশ্চয়ই পাওয়া যায়, বিশেষ করে যে শাস্ত্রে—যেমন গণিতশাস্ত্রে—যুক্তিই গোড়া, মধ্য ও শেষ। তাও একমাত্র অসাধারণ প্রতিভাশালী লোকেরাই সেই সরলরেখার পথে এগোতে পারেন। শোনা যায় আবুল ১২১৩ বছর বয়সে লাগ্রাঞ্জের বই রুদ্রশাস্ত্রে সাত দিনের মধ্যেই পড়ে ফেলেছিলেন প্রতি প্রমাণে উত্তরোত্তর রোমাঙ্কিত হতে হতে। কিন্তু অন্যান্য শাস্ত্রে, অন্যান্য লোকের শিক্ষায় একটা ধারণার সাথে ঘনিষ্ঠ পরিচয় না হলে তার সম্যক ব্যবহার সম্ভব হয় না, অর্থাৎ নতুন পথে এগোনো যায় না।

যে কোন ধারণাই ভাল করে আয়ত্ত করতে কাছাকাছি আর পাঁচটার পাশাপাশি দেখতে হয় (না, হেগেলের বয়েং আওড়াচ্ছি না) এবং সেই ধারণার প্রকৃত পরিচয় মেলে তার ব্যবহারে। যে জন্যে জ্ঞান বিজ্ঞানের অগ্রগতি অনেকটাই আমাদের অব্যবহিত বিদ্যুৎসমাজের চলতি সংস্কারের ওপর নির্ভর করে, যে জন্যে বিশ্লেষণের, আঙ্গিকের প্রাধান্য যে বিষয়ে সেখানেও প্লেটো বা নিউটন কেউই শেষ কথা বলে গেছেন মনে করাও পাপ। এ প্রসঙ্গে একটি উদাহরণ দেওয়ার লোভ সম্বরণ করতে পারছি না। বহুতলকদের সম্বন্ধে একটি পুরনো উপপাণ্ড বলে যে শীর্ষবিন্দুর সংখ্যার সাথে পার্শ্বগুলির সংখ্যা যোগ দিলে যে রাশি পাই তার চেয়ে পার্শ্বরেখার সংখ্যা দুই কম। এই উপপাণ্ড অয়লার থেকে শুরু করে ৭৮ জন

গণিতবিদ বিভিন্ন সময়ে প্রমাণ করেন। প্রত্যেকেই তাঁর সময়ে চলতি উপায় খাটিয়ে প্রমাণ উদ্ভাবন করেন, সে প্রমাণ তখনকার মত গ্রাহ্য ও হয়। কিন্তু কিছুদিন পরেই আর কেউ একটি প্রতিউদাহরণ উপস্থাপিত করেন; প্রমাণের মধ্যে কোন অংশে হয়ত স্বতঃসিদ্ধাকারে এমন কথা ধরা হয়েছিল যাতে এই প্রতিউদাহরণ সম্ভব হল। অর্থাৎ প্রমাণটি আপেক্ষিক, সম্পূর্ণ গ্রাহ্য নয়। পরের বারের প্রমাণ তাই আগের বারের দোষ কাটাতে অন্যভাবে বাঁধা হল, কিন্তু আবার সেই পুরণো ইতিহাসের পুনরাবৃত্তি। এইভাবে প্রতিউদাহরণের আধাতে আমরা যে ধারণা সহজ সংস্কারে দাঁড়িয়েছে তাকেও খোলা চোখে মুক্ত মনে পরীক্ষা করি এবং প্রমাণটি শুদ্ধ কিনা দেখতে গিয়ে প্রায়ই অনেক মূল ধারণার পরিবর্তন হয়। জ্ঞানবিজ্ঞানের একটা সমাজ আছে, সেই সমাজের প্রচলিত সংস্কার নির্ধারণ করে শুদ্ধ-অশুদ্ধের সংজ্ঞা, প্রধান ও অপ্রধান প্রশ্নের শ্রেণীবিভাগ। অতি বড় গুণীও এই সংস্কারে কিছুটা আবদ্ধ যদিও সেই বন্ধনযুক্তির চেফ্টাই তাঁর সাধনা। পরম সত্য কথাটা তাই জ্ঞানের সামাজিক প্রসঙ্গের বাইরে এমন কি শুদ্ধ গণিতশাস্ত্রেও স্থির করা যায় না। এবং নিঃসন্দেহে একথা সামাজিক শাস্ত্রাদিতে বা চিত্রসমালোচনায় আরও বেশি খাটবে। পাঁচজনের ব্যবহারে যে উপচ্ছায়া গড়ে ওঠে যে কোন ধারণার চারপাশে, সেই উপচ্ছায়াই আনে ব্যাপ্তি যার আওতায় আমরা খুঁজে পাই সূক্ষ্মতর বিশ্লেষণের উপাদান। জ্ঞানের ক্ষুরধার পথে একলা চলতে হয় বটে, কিন্তু পাঁচজনের পায়ে চলা যে পথ সেই পথে অনেকটা দূর এগোনোর পরই পাই এই একলা চলার পথ, নইলে তেপান্তরের মাঠে চরকি পাক খেতে থাকতে হবে।

এই পায়ে চলা পথটি বাংলাভাষায় তৈরী হয়নি। ঐ ২৫১২৬ বা ৭০৮০ বইতেও তৈরী হয় না, আরও অনেক সময় ও চেষ্টা লাগে। আমাদের শিক্ষা সভ্যতার দৈন্য আমাদের ভাষার অক্ষমতায় রূপ পায়, আবার ভাষার অভাব সভ্যতার প্রসার ও অগ্রগতিকে আটকে রাখে। ইংরেজী আঁকড়ে আমরা এই আবর্তচক্র থেকে কিছুটা

মুক্তি পাই, সেই আংশিক মুক্তির রাস্তা ছেড়ে সবটা আমাদের নিজের ভাষায় করতে গেলে এক দুই পুরুষ খরচের খাতায় লিখে দিতে হবে। কিন্তু তাতেই কি লাভ হবে? আগামী ২০ বছর না হয় আমরা সস্তার লেখাপড়াই করলাম, তার পরেই বা পৃথিবীর অগ্রাগ্র দেশের সমকক্ষ হয়ে উঠব কোন যাত্নে? লেখাপড়ায় আজকের উৎপাদনই আগামী কালের উৎপাদনী শক্তি। সেই শক্তিকে এখন দুর্বলভাবে গড়লে পরে কেন সুউৎপাদন সম্ভব হবে? এই যে আজ লেখাপড়ায় জগতে ভারতীয়রা ইন্দোনেশীয়দের মত অপাংক্তেয় হয়ে নেই, কেউ কেউ প্রথম শ্রেণীতেও স্থান পান এটা কি স্বভাষার নিগড়ে বন্ধ হয়ে যাবে না?

এখানে অনেকে চীন জাপান রাশিয়ার গল্প পাড়েন। চীন ও রাশিয়াতে শুরুটা হয়েছে সামাজিক বিপ্লব থেকে, শুধুমাত্র ভাষাসত্ত্বের প্রসঙ্গ থেকে নয়। আমাদের দেশেও বিপ্লব এলে তার পরের শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা আমূল পরিবর্তন হবে, আর সেরকম আমূল পরিবর্তন বিনা বিপ্লবে এখনই করা সম্ভব একথা আমি মানতে পারছি না। সুতরাং এই প্রসঙ্গে চীন বা রাশিয়ার দোহাইও মানা সম্ভব নয়। কিন্তু ধরুন জাপানের কথা, সেখানে শোনা যায় বিপ্লব কিছু ঘটিনি। না ঘটুক, জাপান বহু বছর ধরে গড়ে ১০% হারে বৈষয়িক অগ্রগতি বজায় রাখছে—ইতিহাসে এর তুলনা বেশি নেই। আর আমরা? তাহলে? তাছাড়া জাপান কমোডর পেরীর সময় থেকে ১৯৪৫ সাল অবধি বাহাদুরি দেখিয়েছে প্রধানত অনুকরণে, উদ্ভাবনে তত নয়। এখনও জাপানী সামাজিক প্রথা মধ্যযুগ কায়ম রয়েছে বহুলাংশে। আরও শুনি যে পশ্চিমের তুলনায় দর্শন, ইতিহাস, রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞানে জাপানীরা এখনও অনেক পেছনে পড়ে আছে। তাদের সাফল্য অনেকটাই প্রয়োগ-বিদ্যা ও গণিতে সীমাবদ্ধ। জাপানের উদাহরণ তাই মনে হয় এটাই প্রমাণ করে যে এ ব্যাপারে সহজ সাফল্য বলে কিছু নেই।

রুশ, চীনা, জাপানী শিক্ষকসমাজে, বৈজ্ঞানিকসমাজে স্বদেশী ভাষা ছাড়া অন্য একটি ইউরোপীয় ভাষায় অনেকটা অধিকার আবশ্যকীয়। এই সব দেশেও লেখাপড়ার ছুটি

জগৎ মেনে নেওয়া হয়েছে—সাধারণ ও উচ্চ। উচ্চশিক্ষা বলতেই বোঝা হয় অন্তর্দেশের লেখাপড়ার, চিন্তা ভাবনার সাথে সম্পূর্ণ সংযোগের ক্ষমতা রাখা। আরও বলি, রুশভাষা ১৮৪৮ সালেও যে ঐশ্বর্য্যের অধিকারী ছিল—শুধু সাহিত্যে নয়, বিশ্লেষণ ও বিচার ক্ষমতায়—তার তুলনায় আমরা পিছিয়ে আছি, এ দিকে জ্ঞান-বিজ্ঞানের অগ্রগতির হার এখন অনেক বেশি। এখন আমাদের সেরা মাথাগুলোকে যে বাংলা তাদের কাছে জীবন্ত, যাতে তারা চিন্তা করে সেই ভাষাতে আটকে দিলে আরও বড় বিচ্ছেদের পাঞ্জায় ফেলা হবে। ইয়োরোপে কি এ সমস্যা নেই? দেখবেন হল্যান্ড বা সুইডেনে শিক্ষিতমাত্রেরই ইংরেজী বা জার্মান ভাষা কিছুটা জানেন, উচ্চশিক্ষিতরা প্রায়ই এসব ভাষায় লিখে থাকেন। তাছাড়া গ্রীকদের সময় থেকে সপ্তদশ শতাব্দীর শেষ অবধি সাহিত্যবিজ্ঞানের যে অবিচ্ছিন্ন ইতিহাস এই মহাদেশের তার সম্ভাবনাও সর্বত্র ল্যাটিনের ১৪০০ বছর রাজত্বের উত্তরাধিকার। তবুও দেখুন জার্মান দার্শনিকদের চিন্তাধারা—তাদের নিজেদের এত পরস্পর বৈসাদৃশ্য থাকলেও—থেকে পাই এক স্বাদ, ইংরেজী দর্শন থেকে আর। তবে সাংস্কৃতিক সমগ্রকৃতি এদের অনেকদূর, সকলেই প্লেটো অ্যারিস্টটলের উত্তরাধিকারী, তাই ভাষাসত্ত্বের সমস্যাটা বড় নয়। কিন্তু জার্মান ভাষা বেশ ভাল আয়ত্ত না করে কেউ কি ইমানুয়েল কান্টের দর্শনের বিষয়ে পণ্ডিত খ্যাতি পেয়েছেন?

বিদেশী ভাষা ছাড়লে তাই আমাদের চলবে না। ঐতিহাসিক কারণে ফরাসী বা রুশভাষার চেয়ে ইংরেজী শেখা বা শেখাবার ব্যবস্থা করা আমাদের পক্ষে সহজ তাই ইংরেজীর কথাই বলছি। বাংলায় লেখাপড়া কিছু দূর নিশ্চয়ই ভালভাবেই করা যায়, সেটা করার চেষ্টা এখনই হোক। কিন্তু আমাদের সেরা বুদ্ধির অধিকারীদের জগ্রে যে লেখাপড়ার ব্যবস্থা থাকবে তাতে ইংরেজীর প্রাধান্য এখন রাখতেই হবে। ইংরেজী পড়ে বাংলা লিখে বাংলা ভাষার প্রসার করার চেষ্টা বিদ্যাসাগর বঙ্কিমচন্দ্ররা করতেন, সেই ঐতিহ্যকে পুনঃ প্রতিষ্ঠিত করে সম্ভ্রানে আমাদের ভাষার পরিধি বাড়াতে হবে যাতে

একদিন বাঙ্গালী সূক্ষ্ম বিমূর্ত তত্ত্বের আলোচনা যে ভাষাতে ভাবতে পারবে সে ভাষা তার সত্যিই মাতৃভাষা। নইলে সবটা আকাশকুসুমের পর্যবসিত হবে। এমনতেই আমরা জীবনবিমুখ জাতি, জ্ঞানের অভাব অলঙ্কার অহু-

প্রাসের ভেজাল দিয়ে ভরাতে চাই, বাঙানাকে যুক্তি মনে করি। উচ্চশিক্ষার ভাষা সম্বন্ধে আশাবাদী কল্পনা আমাদের আর মানায় না।

উনিশ শতকের ধর্মচিন্তা ও খ্রীশ্চীরামকর্ম

কমলকুমার ঘটক

শত শত বৎসর চলে গেল, ইতিহাসের পুরোগামিনী গতি হোল নিস্তরঙ্গ, ভারতবর্ষের মনোলোকে চিন্তার মহানদী গেল শুকিয়ে। তখন দেশ হয়ে পড়লো স্থবির, আপনাদের মধ্যে আপনি সংকীর্ণ, তার সজীব চিন্তার তেজ আর বিকীর্ণ হয় না দূর-দূরান্তরে। শুকনো নদীতে যখন জল চলে না, তখন তলাকার অচল পাথরগুলো পথ আগলে বসে; তারা অসংলগ্ন, তারা অর্থহীন, পথিকদের তারা বিঘ্ন। তেমনি দুর্দিন যখন এলো এই দেশে, তখন জ্ঞানের চলমান গতি হোল অবরুদ্ধ, নির্জীব হোল নবোন্মেষশালিনী বুদ্ধি, উদ্ধত হয়ে দেখা দিল নিশ্চল আচারপুঞ্জ, আনুষ্ঠানিক নিরর্থকতা মননহীন লোক-ব্যবহারের অভ্যস্ত পুনরাবৃত্তি। সর্বজনের প্রশস্ত রাজপথকে তারা বাধাগ্রস্ত করলে; খণ্ড খণ্ড সীমানার বাইরে বিচ্ছিন্ন করলে মানুষের সঙ্গে মানুষের সম্বন্ধকে।”

উনিশশতকের প্রথমে এদেশের ধর্ম ও সমাজ সম্বন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথ যে মন্তব্য করেছেন, তাকে ঐতিহাসিক সত্য বলে স্বীকার করতে কোনো বাধা নাই। বেদ ও উপনিষদের চর্চা দেশে লোপ পেতে বসেছিল। ধর্ম বলতে সাধারণ লোকে বুঝতো তেত্রিশ কোটি দেব-দেবীর প্রতিমা পূজা। পুরোহিত শ্রেণী লোকের অজ্ঞতার সুযোগ পুরোপুরি গ্রহণ করতে পেরেছিল। আচার অনুষ্ঠান, যাদুবিদ্যা, ভুতপ্রেতের ভয়, এই নিয়ে ছিল সাধারণ লোকের ধর্মজীবন। অল্প সংখ্যক শিক্ষিত লোক বেদ উপনিষদের সঙ্গে পরিচিত ছিল এবং ঈশ্বর এক,

একথাও জানতো। কিন্তু বিশ্বাস যাই থাক, দৈনন্দিন জীবনে যে ধর্ম প্রচলিত ছিলো তাতে শিক্ষিত আর অশিক্ষিত সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে কোনও তফাৎ ছিল, এমন কথা বলা চলে না।

এমন অবস্থায় ১৮১৩ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের Charter Act পাশ হল। খ্রীষ্টান মিশনারীদের উপর যে সব বাধানিষেধ ছিল, এই আইনে তা প্রত্যাহত হল। তাদের চার্চ প্রতিষ্ঠার সুযোগ দেওয়া হোল এবং ভারতের প্রথম বিশপ ডক্টর মিডলটন ১৮১৪ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে কলকাতায় এলেন। কলকাতা, চুঁচুড়া, খ্রীশ্চীরামপুর মিশনারীদের প্রধান প্রচারকেন্দ্র হয়ে উঠল। বলা বাহুল্য, খ্রীষ্টধর্মের প্রচারকার্যে মিশনারীরা সর্বশক্তি নিয়োগ করলেন। হাজারে হাজারে বাইবেল আর খ্রীষ্টের জীবনী সম্বলিত পুস্তিকা দেশের শহরে ও গ্রামে বিতরণ করা হল। শিক্ষিত এবং উচ্চবর্ণের হিন্দুরা এতে শংকিত বোধ করলেন। ১৮১৪ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের পর রাজা রামমোহন রায় রংপুর ছেড়ে কলকাতায় স্থায়ীভাবে বাস করতে লাগলেন। হিন্দুধর্মের অবস্থা এবং মিশনারীদের কার্য-কলাপ, দুইই রাজাকে বিচলিত করেছিল। ১৮১৫ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে রাজা তাঁর আত্মীয় সভা স্থাপন করলেন। উদ্দেশ্য ধর্ম ও সামাজিক সমস্যার আলোচনা। ১৮১৭ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে (২০শে জ্যৈষ্ঠবারী) সম্পূর্ণ বেসরকারী প্রচেষ্টায় স্থাপিত হল ইংরেজী শিক্ষার প্রথম বিশিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠান হিন্দু কলেজ (বর্তমান প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজ)। ১৮২৮

খ্রীষ্টাব্দ থেকে ১৮৩১ খ্রীষ্টাব্দ পর্যন্ত এ কলেজের বিখ্যাত শিক্ষক হেনরী ডিরোজিও তাঁর পাণ্ডিত্য, সত্যানিষ্ঠা ও স্বাধীন চিন্তা দ্বারা এক নবযুগের সূচনা করেন। ১৮২৮ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে রামমোহন তাঁর ব্রাহ্ম সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠা করলেন। ১৮৩০ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের শেষে রাজা বিলাত যাত্রা করেন, এবং তিন বৎসর পরে সেখানেই লোকান্তরিত হন।

১৮১৪-১৮৩১ খ্রীষ্টাব্দকে বাংলাদেশের ধর্ম আন্দোলনের প্রথম যুগ বলা যায়। এই আন্দোলন কলকাতার শিক্ষিত সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ ছিল। ধর্ম আন্দোলনের লক্ষ্যবস্তু প্রচলিত হিন্দুধর্ম। এর সমর্থকরা সাধারণতঃ ‘রক্ষণশীল’ নামে পরিচিত। যদিও এ বর্ণনা বিচারসাপেক্ষ। এদের বিরোধীরা একটি বিষয়ে একমত যে পৌত্তলিকতা ধর্ম নয়। তবে প্রকৃত ধর্ম কি এ বিষয়ে বিরোধীরা বিভক্ত এবং ভিন্ন ভিন্ন মতাবলম্বী। খ্রীষ্টান মিশনারীরা হিন্দুধর্মের ধ্বংসই এদেশের পক্ষে শুভ মনে করেছেন। ডিরোজিওর অনুগামী ও শিষ্যরা স্বাধীন চিন্তার সমর্থক। হিন্দু ও খ্রীষ্টান উভয় ধর্মেরই কঠোর সমালোচক। রাজা রামমোহন বেদান্ত ধর্মের সমর্থক এবং প্রচলিত হিন্দুধর্মের পরিবর্তনের পক্ষপাতী। প্রচলিত হিন্দুধর্মের নেতা রাজা রাধাকান্ত দেব ও তাঁর অনুগামীরা স্থিতিাবস্থা বজায় রাখতে বদ্ধপরিকর। তাঁদের রক্ষণশীল বলার আগে বোধহয় একথা ভেবে দেখা যেতে পারে যে সমাজের স্থিতির পক্ষে আর কোন বিকল্প তাঁরা খুঁজে পাননি।*

রাজা রামমোহন পৌত্তলিকতার নির্ময় সমালোচক ছিলেন। কিন্তু হিন্দুধর্ম ধ্বংসের কথা তিনি ভাবেন নি। আচার-অনুষ্ঠানসর্বস্ব প্রচলিত হিন্দুধর্ম দেশের সামাজিক ও রাজনৈতিক অগ্রগতির প্রতিবন্ধক একথা তিনি উপলব্ধি করেছিলেন। রাজা অসাধারণ পাণ্ডিত্য, দূরদর্শিতা, নিষ্ঠা ও সাহসের অধিকারী ছিলেন। কাজেই স্বাভাবিকভাবেই তিনি এই প্রথম যুগের ধর্ম আন্দোলনের নেতৃত্ব করেছিলেন। ১৮৩০ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের Trust Deed থেকে রাজার ধর্ম সম্বন্ধে উদার দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। “এই ভবন জাতি বর্ণ সম্প্রদায় নির্বিশেষে সকল শ্রেণীর মানবের ব্যবহারার্থ থাকিবে এবং সেখানে

একমাত্র নিরাকার সত্যস্বরূপ পরমেশ্বরের উপাসনা হইবে। তন্নিম্ন কোন পরিচিত দেবতার পূজা হইবে না।” ব্রাহ্ম-ধর্মের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা হিসাবে রামমোহন সমধিক পরিচিত। কিন্তু এ কথা অনেকেই বিস্মৃত হন যে রাজা নিজে কোন সাম্প্রদায়িক ধর্মপ্রচারের কথা ভাবেন নি। তিনি নিজেকে কোনদিন অহিন্দু বলে মনে করেন নি এবং শেষ দিন পর্যন্ত উপবীত ধারণ করেছেন। তিনি সম্ভবতঃ এ কথা বিশ্বাস করতেন যে অহিন্দু বলে পরিচিত হয়ে দেশের তৎকালীন অবস্থায় হিন্দুত্বের সংস্কার সম্ভব ছিল না। রামমোহন যুক্তিবাদী ছিলেন সন্দেহ নাই, কিন্তু তিনি শাস্ত্রকে একেবারে বাদ দেননি।

শাস্ত্র ও যুক্তির সাহায্যে রাজা এ কথা উপলব্ধি করেছিলেন যে ধর্মের মূল কথা দেশের লোকে বিস্মৃত হয়েছে। কাজেই ধর্মের প্রকৃত রূপ দেশকে না বোঝাতে পারলে অন্য কোন উন্নতি সম্ভব নয়। রাজার কাছে ধর্মের সংস্কার বৃহত্তর সংস্কারের অভিযুক্ত পদক্ষেপ। কিশোরীচাঁদ মিত্র রাজাকে Religious Benthamite বলে বর্ণনা করেছেন। ধর্ম বিষয়ে রাজার প্রথম কথা ঈশ্বর এক; নিরাকার নিগূর্ণ পরমব্রহ্মের উপাসনাই প্রকৃত ধর্ম। এই নিরাকার পরমেশ্বরের উপাসনায় গৃহী ও সন্ন্যাসীর সমান অধিকার। দ্বিতীয়তঃ পৌত্তলিকতা শাস্ত্রানুসারিত বিসৃষ্ট ধর্ম নয়। পুরান ও তন্ত্রে বহু দেবদেবীর প্রতীক উপাসনা কেবলমাত্র অজ্ঞ ব্যক্তিদের সহায়তা করেছে। তৃতীয়তঃ পৌত্তলিকতা ও বহু দেবদেবীর উপাসনা দেশের বিভিন্ন কুসংস্কার ও কুপ্রথার কারণ। একমাত্র নিরাকার পরমেশ্বরের উপাসনার মধ্য দিয়ে এই বহুধাভিভুক্ত সমাজের লোকদের একটা মিলনক্ষেত্র পাওয়া সম্ভব।

শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালী মাঝেই রামমোহনের এই বিসৃষ্ট ধর্মমতের দিকে আকৃষ্ট হয়েছিলেন। দেশে বেদান্ত চর্চার নতুন প্রয়াস দেখা যায়। সামাজিক সংস্কারের দিকেও লোকের দৃষ্টি আকৃষ্ট হয়। কিন্তু ১৮৩৩ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের বিসৃষ্ট ব্রাহ্মমত কলিকাতা ও শহরতলীর কিছু শিক্ষিত লোকের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ ছিল। সাধারণভাবে হিন্দু সমাজ সাময়িক ভাবে বিভ্রত হলেও চিরাচরিত ধর্মকে পরিত্যাগ করতে

পারে নি। সাধারণ ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের নেতা শিবনাথ শাস্ত্রী এর কারণ নির্দেশ করেছেন।^{১০} শাস্ত্র বিচার করে ব্রাহ্ম-মতের শ্রেষ্ঠতা প্রতিপন্ন করলেও রামমোহনকে এ কথা স্বীকার করতে হয় যে পৌত্তলিকতা নিকৃষ্ট অধিকারীর ধর্ম হিসাবে শাস্ত্রে অনুমোদিত। এমনকি ব্রাহ্ম সমাজে তাঁরা মিলিত হতেন তাঁরাও ব্যক্তিগত জীবনে পৌত্তলিকতা পরিত্যাগ করতে পারেননি। দ্বিতীয়তঃ প্রচলিত ধর্মের প্রভাব এত গভীর ছিল যে রামমোহনের এই স্বীকৃতি তাঁর বিরুদ্ধবাদীদের যুক্তিকে জোরদার করেছিল। তৃতীয়তঃ রামমোহনের জীবনে মোহসঞ্চারী এমন কিছু ছিল না, যাতে সাধারণ বিশ্বাসপ্রবন মানুষ আকৃষ্ট হতে পারে। “There was more of the spirit of a cautious philosopher than that of the consuming fire of prophet in him.”^{১১} ব্রাহ্ম আন্দোলনের স্বপক্ষে যে উৎসাহ পরে দেখা যায়, ১৮৩২-৩৩ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে তার একান্ত অভাব ছিল। আরও একটি কথা বলা যেতে পারে। হিন্দু ধর্মে বিভিন্ন আধ্যাত্মিক স্তরের মানুষের জন্য বিভিন্ন প্রকার উপাসনার পথ নির্দিষ্ট। পুরান স্মৃতি ও তন্ত্রে এ বিষয়ে বিভিন্ন নির্দেশ দেওয়া আছে। রামমোহন এগুলিকে পুরোপুরি উপেক্ষা করতে পারেন নি।^{১২}

হিন্দু ধর্মকে কেবল উপনিষদের নিগূর্ণ ব্রহ্মের উপাসনার মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ করা চলে কিনা এবিষয়ে যথেষ্ট বিতর্কের অবকাশ ছিল। রামমোহনের এ রকম প্রয়াস সাধারণ হিন্দু গ্রহণ করতে পারে নি।

হিন্দু কলেজের যে যুবকদল ডিরোজিওর আদর্শে অনুপ্রাণিত হয়েছিলেন তাঁরা অনেকেই রামমোহনের বিশুদ্ধ ধর্মমত গ্রহণ করতে পারেন নি। অন্য দিকে তাঁরা প্রচলিত ধর্ম ও সমাজকে স্বীকার করেন নি। ১৮৩১ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে ডিরোজিওর মৃত্যু হয়। তার পর ইয়ং বেঙ্গল নামে পরিচিত তাঁর শিষ্যরা দেশের নানা কাজে প্রগতিশীল ভূমিকা গ্রহণ করেছিলেন। কিন্তু কোন আন্দোলন বা আদর্শকে শেষ পর্যন্ত তাঁরা অনুসরণ করতে পারেন নি।^{১৩} ইয়ং বেঙ্গল গোষ্ঠীর নির্ভীক যুক্তিবাদ এবং পাশ্চাত্য ভাবধারা ব্রাহ্ম এবং রক্ষণশীল হিন্দু কেহই

ভাল চক্ষে দেখেন নি। ফলে সমাজ থেকে তাঁরা কোন সমর্থন পাননি। সাম্প্রতিক একটি গ্রন্থে ডিরোজিয়ানদের অত্যধিক স্বরাপানের কারণ হিসাবে বলা হয়েছে যে দেশের সামাজিক এবং সাংস্কৃতিক জীবন থেকে বিচ্ছেদই ছিল এর কারণ।^{১৪}

১৮৩০ খ্রীষ্টাব্দ পর্যন্ত খ্রীষ্টান মিশনারীরা প্রধানতঃ ধর্মাস্তরকরণের কার্যকলাপ ভাল চোখে দেখেন নি। ১৮৩০ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে আলেকজান্ডার ডাফ এদেশে আসেন। তিনি ইংরাজীভাষা ও উচ্চশিক্ষা বিস্তারকে মিশনের কাজের অন্তর্ভুক্ত করেন। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে হিন্দু ধর্মের উপর আক্রমণের কাজও চলতে থাকে এইভাবে ডাফ উচ্চ শ্রেণীর হিন্দুদের মধ্যে খ্রীষ্টধর্ম প্রচারের চেষ্টা করেন। ডাফের উৎসাহ তাঁর কথা এবং কাজে সমানভাবে দেখা যায়। হিন্দুধর্মকে তিনি “perverse product of the ingenuity of fallen men” বলে বর্ণনা করেন।^{১৫} বর্তমান Scottish Church College ডাফের একটি প্রধান কর্মকেন্দ্র রূপে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয় (১৮৩১)। ১৮৪৫ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে তিনি জোর করে উমেশচন্দ্র সরকার (১৪ বৎসর) ও তার স্ত্রীকে (১১ বৎসর) খ্রীষ্টধর্মে দীক্ষিত করেন। এতে হিন্দু সমাজে ভীষণ ত্রাসের সঞ্চার হয়। মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর তত্ত্বাবোধিনী সভার মাধ্যমে মিশনারী আন্দোলনকে বাধা দেবার চেষ্টা আগে থেকেই করছিলেন। ১৮৪৫ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের এই ঘটনার তীব্র সমালোচনা করে তত্ত্বাবোধিনী পত্রিকায় প্রবন্ধ প্রকাশিত হয়। দেবেন্দ্রনাথের চেষ্টায় সকল হিন্দু একত্রিত হল। একদিকে রাধাকান্ত দেব ও সত্যচরণ ঘোষাল, অন্যদিকে দেবেন্দ্রনাথ, রামগোপাল ঘোষ প্রভৃতি সকলে মিলে হিন্দু বালকদের বিনা বেতনে শিক্ষার জন্য হিন্দু হিতার্থী বিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠা করলেন। “ইহাতে ব্রহ্ম সভা ও ধর্ম সভার যে দলাদলি এবং যাহার সঙ্গে যে অর্নেক্য ছিল সকলি ভাঙ্গিয়া গেল।...সেই অবধি খ্রীষ্টান হইবার শ্রোত মন্দীভূত হইল। একেবারে মিশনারীদের মস্তকে কুঠার আঘাত পড়িল।”^{১৬}

ধর্ম আন্দোলনের দ্বিতীয় যুগে খ্রীষ্টান ধারা এবং ডিরোজিয়ান ধারা দুইই ক্রমশঃ ম্লান হয়ে আসে। ১৮৩১

থেকে ১৮৭৮ খ্রীষ্টাব্দ পর্য্যন্ত বিস্তৃত এই দ্বিতীয় যুগে ব্রাহ্ম মতবাদ এবং পৌরানিক হিন্দুধর্মের বিরোধই প্রধান ঘটনা। রামমোহনের বিলাত যাত্রার পর ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের অবস্থা শোচনীয় হয়ে ওঠে। প্রিন্স দ্বারকানাথ ঠাকুরের অর্থ সাহায্য এবং আচার্য্য রামচন্দ্র বিদ্যাবাগীশের ঐকান্তিক নিষ্ঠা এই যুগপ্রায় সমাজকে বাঁচিয়ে রেখেছিল। মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর এই অবস্থা থেকে ব্রাহ্ম সমাজকে উদ্ধার করেন। ১৮৩৯ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে মহর্ষি তত্ত্ববোধিনী সভা প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন। উপনিষদের চর্চা এবং একেশ্বরবাদ প্রচার এই সভার অন্যতম উদ্দেশ্য ছিল। ব্রাহ্ম, হিন্দু এবং ডিরেজিয়ান সকলেই এই সভায় যোগ দেন। এক কথায় এই সভা উনিশ শতকের শিক্ষিত সম্প্রদায়ের একটা মিলনকেন্দ্র রচনা করে।^{১২} ১৮৪৩ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে দেবেন্দ্রনাথ আত্মস্থানিকভাবে ব্রাহ্ম সমাজে প্রবেশ করেন। ঐ বৎসরই ব্রাহ্ম মত প্রচারের উদ্দেশ্যে তত্ত্ববোধিনী পত্রিকা প্রকাশিত হয়। এই সময় থেকে ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের ইতিহাসে এক নূতন যুগের সূচনা হয়। রামমোহনের যুগ থেকে এ যুগ একাধিক কারণে স্বতন্ত্র। প্রথমতঃ দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ও তাঁর সহকারীরা বিশেষ অনুষ্ঠান সহকারে ব্রাহ্মধর্ম গ্রহণ করেন (৭ই পৌষ ১৭৬৫ শক)। দ্বিতীয়তঃ ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের প্রত্যেক সভ্যের জন্ম নির্দিষ্ট নিয়ম ও উপাসনা পদ্ধতি প্রচলিত হয়। তৃতীয়তঃ দেবেন্দ্রনাথ বিশ্বাস করতেন যে নিগুণ ব্রহ্মের উপাসনা অসম্ভব। তাঁর উপাসনা পদ্ধতিতে উপাসক ভক্তি সহকারে গুণ ঈশ্বরের (Personal God) উপাসনা করবেন। কাজেই রামমোহন প্রদর্শিত অদ্বৈতবাদ ও জ্ঞানাত্মক ধর্ম থেকে এ মতবাদ স্বতন্ত্র। পরবর্তী ব্রাহ্ম নেতারাও এই বিষয়ে রামমোহনের আদর্শ থেকে বিচ্যুত। চতুর্থতঃ রামমোহন অনিচ্ছা সত্ত্বেও পৌত্তলিকতাকে অজ্ঞানের ধর্ম বলে স্বীকার করেছেন। এঁরা দুর্বল অধিকারীর জগৎ একে স্বীকার করতে অনিচ্ছুক। এঁরা সকলকে একেবারে পরিচিত দেবতার উপাসনা পরিত্যাগ করবার নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন।

১৮৫৯ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে কেশবচন্দ্র সেন ব্রাহ্ম সমাজে যোগ দেন। কেশবের নিষ্ঠা, প্রখর বুদ্ধি এবং ব্যক্তিত্ব সহজেই

মহর্ষির দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করে। ব্রাহ্ম সমাজে অচিরেই কেশব প্রতিষ্ঠা লাভ করেন। ১৮৬২ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে মহর্ষি কেশবচন্দ্রকে আচার্য্য রূপে নিয়োগ করেন এবং 'ব্রহ্মানন্দ' উপাধি দেন। কেশবের সহায়তায় মহর্ষি শাস্ত্র ও ধর্মচর্চার জন্য ব্রাহ্ম বিদ্যালয় স্থাপন করেন। কেশব দেশের সর্বত্র ভ্রমণ করে ব্রাহ্ম ধর্মকে জনপ্রিয় করে তোলেন। মাদ্রাজ ও বোম্বেতে ব্রাহ্ম সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়। বাংলাদেশে ৫০টি শাখা সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়। সমাজ সংস্কারের কাজে ব্রাহ্ম সমাজ অগ্রণী ভূমিকা গ্রহণ করে। মহর্ষির সাবধানী মনোবৃত্তি এবং মন্বন্তরগতি কেশবচন্দ্রের পছন্দ ছিল না। জাতিভেদ, বিধবাবিবাহ, বিভিন্ন বর্ণের বিবাহ প্রভৃতি কাজে কেশবচন্দ্র দ্রুত পরিবর্তনের পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন। ব্রাহ্মধর্মকে হিন্দুধর্মের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ রাখতেও কেশবের আপত্তি ছিল। খ্রীষ্টধর্ম ও পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষা দ্বারা কেশব বিশেষ প্রভাবিত ছিলেন। ১৮৬৫ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে তিনি "Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia" নামে যে বক্তৃতা দেন তাতে যীশুখ্রীষ্টের প্রতি গভীর শ্রদ্ধা প্রকাশ করেন। মহর্ষির কাছে এই মনোভাব স্বাভাবিক কারণেই দীর্ঘদিন গ্রহণযোগ্য ছিল না। অপরিমিত ব্রহ্মের উপাসনা ও পৌত্তলিকতা পরিত্যাগ ছিল মহর্ষির ধর্মের মূল কথা। বিগুণ ব্রাহ্ম ধর্ম প্রচারিত হলে সামাজিক পরিবর্তন সহজেই আসবে, এই ছিল মহর্ষির অভিমত। কাজেই কেশবচন্দ্র যখন আচার্য্যদের উপবীত ধারণ এবং স্ববর্ণের মধ্যে বিবাহ প্রথা উচ্ছেদের চেষ্টা করেন মহর্ষির সঙ্গে তাঁর বিচ্ছেদ অবশ্যম্ভাবী হয়ে ওঠে। ১৮৬৬ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে কেশব ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্ম সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন। দেবেন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর সমাজের নামকরণ করেন আদি ব্রাহ্ম সমাজ। মহর্ষির সঙ্গে কেশবচন্দ্রের মত-বিরোধের মধ্যে উনিশ শতকের ধর্ম অন্দোলনের দুটি ধারা স্পষ্ট। প্রথমটিতে ধর্মের পরিবর্তন মুখ্য, সমাজ সংস্কার গৌণ। দ্বিতীয়টিতে দ্রুত সামাজিক পরিবর্তন ভিন্ন ধর্মের পরিবর্তন নিরর্থক। ১৭৮৯ শকের ১১ই কার্তিক 'ব্রাহ্মদিগের ঐক্যস্থান' সম্বন্ধে মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ যে বক্তৃতা দেন তাতেই এ বিরোধের পূর্ণ পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়।^{১৩}

কেশববাবু আদি ব্রাহ্ম সমাজ ত্যাগ করবার পর

দেবেন্দ্রনাথ এক রকম ভগ্নোন্মত হয়ে পড়েন। প্রতি বুধবার সমাজগৃহে উপাসনা করা ও মাসিক তত্ত্ববোধিনী পত্রিকা প্রকাশ করা ছাড়া অন্য কাজে তাঁর উৎসাহ ছিল না। ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্ম সমাজে কতকগুলি ঘটনা ঘটে যাতে আদি সমাজের সঙ্গে তাঁদের বিবাদ তীব্রতর হয়। প্রথমতঃ কেশববাবু ভক্তি ও বৈরাগ্যের পথে সাধন আরম্ভ করেন। শিষ্যরা তাঁকে অবতার বলে ঘোষণা করেন। কেশবাবু এই ভক্তির শ্রোত বন্ধ করতে চাননি। দ্বিতীয়তঃ ব্রাহ্মদের মধ্যে নরপূজার আবির্ভাব হয়। “এই সময়ে ব্রাহ্মদিগের মধ্যে পরস্পরের পদধূলি লওয়ার প্রথা এমন প্রবল হইয়াছিল যে পা বাঁচান মুশ্কিল ছিল।”^{১৪} আদি ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের নেতা রাজনারায়ণ বসু এর বিরুদ্ধে Brahmic Advice, Caution and Help নামে একটি পুস্তিকা রচনা করেন। তৃতীয়তঃ কেশবচন্দ্রের চেষ্টায় সরকার ১৮৭২ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে Civil Marriage Act পাশ করলেন। বালিকাদের বিবাহের সর্বনিম্ন বয়স ১৪, বালকদের ১৮ করা হল। এই মতে যারা বিবাহ করবেন তাঁদের প্রচলিত কোন ধর্মে বিশ্বাস করেন না এ কথা জানাতে হবে। কেশববাবুর এতে সম্মতি ছিল। “বাহিরের লোকের মনে এই কথা দাঁড়াইল যে ব্রাহ্মরা বলিতেছে, আমরা হিন্দু নহি। আদি সমাজ এই কথার যোর প্রতিবাদ করিতে লাগিলেন। উন্নতিশীল ব্রাহ্মদল ও আপনাদের গুণ সমর্থন করিয়া দেখাইতে লাগিলেন যে তাঁহারা সামাজিকভাবে হিন্দু হইলেও তাঁহাদের ধর্ম উদার আধ্যাত্মিক ও সার্বজনীন একেশ্বরবাদ। সুতরাং তাহাকে ঠিক হিন্দু ধর্ম বলা যায় না।”^{১৫} সাধারণ হিন্দুদের মধ্যে কেশবচন্দ্রের যে জনপ্রিয়তা ছিল এর পর থেকে তা হ্রাস পেতে থাকে। অচিরে আর একটি কাজের জন্য কেশবের একান্ত অনুগত ভক্তরাও তাঁকে ত্যাগ করেন। ১৮৭৮ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে কেশবের কন্যা সুনীতি দেবীর (১৩) সঙ্গে কুচবিহার মহারাজের (১৫) বিবাহ হয়। এ বিবাহে ১৮৭২ খ্রীষ্টাব্দের আইন ভঙ্গ করা এবং ব্রাহ্ম বিবাহ পদ্ধতিও উপেক্ষিত হয়। শিবরাম শাস্ত্রী, আনন্দমোহন বসু প্রমুখ কেশবের শিষ্যরা এর প্রবল প্রতিবাদ করেন। কেশবচন্দ্র তাঁর এ কাজকে বিধাতার

“আদেশ” বলে ব্যাখ্যা করেন।^{১৬} কেশব বিরোধীরা ১৮৭৮ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে সাধারণ ব্রাহ্ম সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন। ১৮৮১ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে কেশবচন্দ্র নববিধান (New Dispensation) নাম দিয়ে তাঁর নূতন ধর্মমত প্রচার করেন। এতে সর্বধর্ম সমন্বয়ের কথা কেশবচন্দ্র চিন্তা করেছিলেন। তবে যোগ, ভক্তি, বৈরাগ্য সাধন ছিল কেশবের শেষ জীবনের মূল কথা। রামকৃষ্ণ পরমহংসের সঙ্গেও কেশবের ঘনিষ্ঠ যোগাযোগ হয়। কেশবের ধর্মজীবনে এ যোগাযোগ বিশেষ তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ।

ধর্ম আন্দোলনের তৃতীয় যুগে ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের প্রভাব ক্রমশঃ ক্ষীণ হয়ে আসে। ডিরোজি ধারা ও খ্রীষ্টানী প্রভাব ইতিমধ্যেই অবলুপ্ত বলা যায়। ১৮৭৮ থেকে ১৯০২ খ্রীষ্টাব্দ পর্য্যন্ত বিস্তৃত এ যুগকে রামকৃষ্ণ-বিবেকানন্দ যুগ, সমন্বয় যুগ, নব্য হিন্দু ধর্মের যুগ প্রভৃতি নানা নামে অভিহিত করা হয়েছে। প্রথম যুগে বিরোধীদের সমালোচনায় হিন্দুধর্ম বিপর্যস্ত হয়ে পড়ে। রাজা রাধাকান্ত দেব ধর্ম সভা (১৮৩০) স্থাপন করে প্রচলিত সমাজ ও ধর্মের স্থিতিবস্থা বজায় রাখতে চেষ্টা করেন। সতীদাহ নিবারণ আইনের প্রতিবাদ করে এঁরা রক্ষণশীল ও কুসংস্কারবাদী প্রভৃতি কুখ্যাতি অর্জন করেন। সাম্প্রতিক কালে কোন কোন ঐতিহাসিক এঁদের এই কুখ্যাতি থেকে মুক্ত করার চেষ্টা করেছেন। ধর্ম বিষয়ে এঁদের বক্তব্য ছিল এই যে পৌত্তলিকতা পাপ নয়, আধ্যাত্মিক জীবনের প্রথম স্তরে এর প্রয়োজন স্বীকার করতেই হবে। মৃত্যুঞ্জয় বিদ্যালংকার ১৮১৭ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে ‘বেদান্ত চন্দ্রিকা’ প্রকাশ করে এই মত প্রতিষ্ঠা করার চেষ্টা করেন। ভবানীচরণ বন্দোপাধ্যায় ‘সমাচার চন্দ্রিকা’ (১৮২২) প্রকাশ করে বিরুদ্ধ সমালোচনা থেকে হিন্দু সমাজকে রক্ষা করার চেষ্টা করেন। ইংরেজী শিক্ষিত যুবক দল এদের মতবাদকে হেয় জ্ঞান করেছেন। হিন্দু কলেজ থেকে ডিরোজিওকে অপসারণের পর (১৮৩১) এঁদের প্রতি যুবকদের অবজ্ঞা আরও বেড়ে যায়। তখন এ কথা কেউ ভেবে দেখেন নি যে ডিরোজিও শিষ্যদের নেতি বাচক মনোভাব হিন্দু সমাজ এবং হিন্দু কলেজের অস্তিত্বই বিপন্ন করেছিল।^{১৭} রাধাকান্ত দেব,

রামকমল সেন প্রভৃতি হিন্দু নেতারা ইংরাজী শিক্ষার বিপক্ষে ছিলেন না। কিন্তু সনাতন ধর্ম ও সমাজের উপর তাঁদের অবিচল আস্থা ছিল। ১৮২৩ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে শিক্ষা বিস্তারের উদ্দেশ্যে এঁরা গোড়ীয় সমাজ গঠন করেছিলেন। রামমোহনপন্থী প্রসন্নকুমার ঠাকুর, দ্বারকানাথ ঠাকুর, তারাচাঁদ চক্রবর্তী প্রভৃতি এ সভার সদস্যরূপে যোগ দেন।^{১৮} প্রথম যুগের হিন্দু নেতাদের নিষ্ঠার কোন অভাব ছিল না। কিন্তু ইংরেজী শিক্ষিত যুবকদের সামনে কোনও আদর্শ তাঁরা দিতে পারেন নি, কেবল মাত্র কঠোর দণ্ডের বিধান দিয়েছেন।

প্রকৃতপক্ষে আদি ব্রহ্ম সমাজের নেতারা হিন্দুধর্মকে এই অসহায় অবস্থা থেকে উদ্ধার করেন। দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ও রাজনারায়ন বসু নিরাকার ব্রহ্মের উপাসনাকে প্রকৃত হিন্দুধর্ম বলে স্বীকার করেন। ডাক্তার বিরুদ্ধে সংগ্রামে তাঁরা হিন্দু নেতাদের সহায়তা লাভ করেন। ভারত-বর্ষীয় ব্রহ্ম সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠার পর আদি সমাজের সঙ্গে প্রচলিত সমাজের যোগ ঘনিষ্ঠ হয়। হিন্দু যুবকদের আকৃষ্ট করবার জন্য ১৮৬৬ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে রাজনারায়ন বসু জাতীয় গৌরবোচ্ছাস সঞ্চারিণী সভার (A society for the promotion of national feeling among the educated natives of Bengal) অনুষ্ঠান পত্র রচনা করেন।^{১৯} এই প্রেরণা থেকে নবগোপাল মিত্র ১৮৬৭ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে বেলগাছিয়া উদ্যানে জাতীয় মেলার আয়োজন করেন। ১৮৭০ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে থেকে এই মেলা স্পর্কিত: হিন্দু-মেলা নামে পরিচিত হয়। হিন্দুমেলাতে প্রথম 'স্বজাতির উন্নতি সাধন, ঐক্য স্থাপন ও স্বাবলম্বন অভ্যাসের' চেষ্টা করা হয়। এ দিক থেকে এই মেলা আমাদের স্বাদেশিকতার প্রথম সূচনা।^{২০} ১৮৭১ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে রাজনারায়ণ বসু হিন্দুধর্মের শ্রেষ্ঠতা বিষয়ে বক্তৃতা দেন। মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ এ সভায় সভাপতিত্ব করেন। এই বক্তৃতায় উপনিষদের ধর্মকে শ্রেষ্ঠ ধর্ম বলা হয়। কিন্তু বক্তা স্বীকার করেন যে, 'পৌত্তলিকদের পৌত্তলিকতা পাপকর্ম নহে, তাহা কেবল ভ্রম মাত্র।'^{২১} আদি ব্রহ্ম সমাজের একজন প্রভাবশালী নেতার এ রকম স্বীকৃতি স্বাভাবত:ই আদি সমাজের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর পরিবর্তনের সূচনা

করে। নিরাকারবাদী এবং সাকারবাদী সমস্ত হিন্দুদের নিয়ে মহা হিন্দু সমিতি গঠনের এক প্রস্তাব ও রাজনারায়ন বসু করেন। এই প্রস্তাব ১৮৮৬ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে 'বৃদ্ধ হিন্দুর আশা' নামে নবজীবন পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত হয়।

১৮৭২ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে কেশব সেনের চেণ্ডায় Civil Marriage Act পাশ হলে আদি ব্রাহ্ম সমাজ এবং হিন্দু সমাজ একযোগে প্রতিবাদ করে। এদিকে পৌরাণিক হিন্দুধর্ম রক্ষার কাজে সর্বশক্তি নিয়োগ করেন পণ্ডিত শশধর তর্কচূড়ামনি (১৮৪০—১৯২৮)। তিনি হিন্দুধর্মের প্রতিটি আচার অনুষ্ঠানের বৈজ্ঞানিক ব্যাখ্যা দিতে শুরু করেন। এ ব্যাখ্যায় যুক্তির যথেষ্ট অভাব ছিল। কিন্তু শশধরের বক্তৃতা গ্রহণ করবার লোকের অভাব ছিল না।^{২২} অল্পদিনেই সাধারণ লোকের মধ্যে পণ্ডিত শশধর অসাধারণ জনপ্রিয়তা লাভ করেন। পৌরাণিক ধর্মকে সমর্থন করার কাজে আরও দুজন উল্লেখযোগ্য ভূমিকা গ্রহণ করেন। এঁরা হলেন শ্রীকৃষ্ণপ্রসন্ন সেন ও পণ্ডিত শিবচন্দ্র বিদ্যার্ণব।

উনিশ শতকের শেষে ধর্ম আন্দোলনের এই পরিবর্তিত অবস্থা সমকালীন সাহিত্যেও প্রতিফলিত হয়। সাহিত্যে এই নব্য হিন্দুধারার প্রবর্তক বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়। তিনি শশধরের মত স্থিতিবস্থায় সমর্থক ছিলেন না, অত্যা দিকে রামমোহন প্রবর্তিত উপনিষদের ধর্মকে শ্রেষ্ঠ ধর্ম মনে করেন নি। পৌরাণিক হিন্দু ধর্মের কুসংস্কার বাদ দিয়ে তিনি এক উন্নত ধর্মের কথা বলেছেন। তাঁর এই 'অল্পশীলন' ধর্মে মানুষের সমস্ত বৃত্তির পূর্ণ বিকাশের কথা বলা হয়েছে। বঙ্কিমের মতে মানবতার পূর্ণ প্রতীক শ্রীকৃষ্ণ এবং গীতার ধর্মই শ্রেষ্ঠ ধর্ম। উপনিষদের নিষ্ঠুর ব্রহ্মের উপাসনা বঙ্কিমের মতে অসম্পূর্ণ ধর্ম। সগুণ ঈশ্বরের উপাসনার মধ্য দিয়েই ভক্তির প্রকাশ সম্ভব। এই ভক্তির জন্য প্রয়োজন সমস্ত বৃত্তিগুলির উপযুক্ত অল্পশীলন এবং ঈশ্বরমুখীনতা। ভক্তির ফল চিত্তশুদ্ধি। সমস্ত ধর্মের শেষ কথা চিত্তশুদ্ধি। এ চিত্তশুদ্ধির জন্য সাধারণ বিষয়ী লোকের কাছে মূর্তিপূজার প্রয়োজন আছে। ঈশ্বরজ্ঞান হওয়ার পর মূর্তিপূজার সার্থকতা থাকে না।

বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র হিন্দুধর্মকে যুগোপযোগী করার প্রয়োজনীয়তা অনুভব করেন। ভূদেব মুখোপাধ্যায় তাঁর বিখ্যাত 'সামাজিক প্রবন্ধে' হিন্দুধর্মের অবস্থা এবং কর্তব্য বিশ্লেষণ করেন। ভূদেব ছিলেন শংকর প্রদর্শিত জ্ঞান মার্গের মতাবলম্বী। কাজেই সামাজিক সমস্যা তাঁকে বিচলিত করেনি। "তিনি মনে করেছিলেন সমাজের ভিত্তিটি অটুট আছে এবং এর শক্তিও অক্ষুন্ন।" ২৩ ভক্তি মার্গের বিস্তারকে তিনি দুর্বলতার চিহ্ন বলে মনে করেছেন। অন্ত্যদিকে নবীনচন্দ্র সেন ভক্তিমার্গকে জীবনের একটি 'নূতন স্বর্গ' বলে স্বীকার করেছেন। এই ভক্তির অনুপ্রেরণায় রচনা করেছেন তাঁর 'রৈবতক', 'প্রভাস' ও 'কুরুক্ষেত্র'। ২৪ মতবাদের পার্থক্য যাই থাক এই তিনজন লেখকই পৌরাণিক হিন্দুধর্মের দিকে শিক্ষিত সমাজের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেছেন। যোগেন্দ্রচন্দ্র বসুর 'বঙ্গবাসী,' বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের 'প্রচার,' অক্ষয় চন্দ্র সরকারের 'নবজীবন' নিজ নিজ দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী থেকে হিন্দুধর্ম আলোচনা করে বিরোধী সমালোচনার প্রত্যুত্তর দিয়েছে। সত্তরের দশকে পাঞ্জাবে পণ্ডিত দয়ানন্দ সরস্বতী আৰ্য সমাজ স্থাপন করেন, কর্নেল অলকট এবং মাদাম ব্লাভাংস্কি বিদেশ থেকে Theosophy-র বার্তা নিয়ে আসেন। মাদ্রাজে অ্যানি বেসান্ট পরে থিয়সফিক আন্দোলনের নেতৃত্ব করেন। দয়ানন্দ বেদের অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রচার করেন, থিয়সফি প্রচারকরা পৌরাণিক হিন্দুধর্ম পুরোপুরি সমর্থন করেন। আৰ্য সমাজের দিকে শিক্ষিত বাঙালী আকৃষ্ট হয়েছে। যে সমস্ত শিক্ষিত যুবক প্রচলিত হিন্দুধর্ম ও ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের বিশুদ্ধ মতবাদ ছুই এর মাঝখানে পড়ে দ্বিধাগ্রস্ত ও অশান্ত হয়েছিলেন, থিয়সফি তাঁদের কাছে মুক্তির বাণী রূপে দেখা দেয়। ২৫ নব্য হিন্দুধর্মের অনেক ধারার মধ্যে থিয়সফি একটি ধারা। স্বভাবতই এ ধারা ব্রাহ্ম সমাজের বিরোধীদেরই সহায়তা করেছে।

উনিশ শতকের শেষ পর্যায়ে নব্য হিন্দু ধর্ম সমস্ত বিরোধী শক্তিকে পরাভূত করে সগর্বে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়েছে। ধর্ম সম্বন্ধে সাধারণ দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর আমূল পরিবর্তন এ যুগে লক্ষ্য করা যায়। এই পরিবর্তনের প্রত্যক্ষ কারণ শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণের আবির্ভাব। স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ বলেছেন যে

শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণের অভ্যুদয়ের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বর্তমান ভারতের সূত্রপাত। ২৬ উনিশ শতকের অন্য কোন ধর্ম নেতার সঙ্গে রামকৃষ্ণের তুলনা চলে না। অধীত বিদ্যা, যুক্তিতর্কের বাইরে ছিল রামকৃষ্ণের জগৎ। পুঁথিতে বিদ্যা তাঁর কিছুই ছিল না। ১৮৫৫ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে তিনি দক্ষিণেশ্বরে রাণী রাসমনির কালীবাড়ীতে পূজারীর পদ গ্রহণ করেন। বেতন মাসিক পাঁচ টাকা, উপরি বরাদ্দ কাপড় তিন জোড়া (৪৮), খোরাকী সিদ্ধ চাউল আধ সের, ডাল আধ পোয়া, পাতা দুই খানা, তামাক এক ছটাক, কাঠ আড়াই সের (Deed of endowment executed by Rashmani on 18 th February 1861)। ২৭ রামমোহন, দেবেন্দ্রনাথ, ও কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবনযাত্রার সঙ্গে এ জীবনযাত্রার কোন তুলনা চলে না। কিন্তু এই গ্রাম্য, অশিক্ষিত দরিদ্র পূজারীর কাছে শিক্ষিত, অশিক্ষিত, ধনী, দরিদ্র সকলেই নীরব হয়েছেন। কেশবভক্ত সুপণ্ডিত প্রতাপচন্দ্র মজুমদার পণ্ডিত ম্যাক্স মুলারকে লিখছেন (সেপ্টেম্বর ১৮৯৫) : What is there common between him and me ? I, a Europeanised, civilised, self-centred, semi-sceptical, so called educated reasoner and he a poor, illiterate, shrunken, unpolished, diseased, half-dressed half-idolatrours, friendless Hindu devotee ? Why should I sit long hours to attend to him ? I who have listened to Disraeli and Fawcett, Stanley and Max Mueller and a whole host of European scholars and divines ?And it is not I only but dozens like me who do the same. ২৮

রামকৃষ্ণের জীবন আলোচনা করলে এই অলৌকিক শক্তির পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়, যুক্তিসিদ্ধ ব্যাখ্যা পাওয়া যায় না। রামকৃষ্ণ নিজেও ধর্মের ব্যাপারে বিশ্বাস এবং সাধনাকে মূল কথা বলেছেন। নরেন্দ্রনাথ প্রথম প্রথম সাকারবাদীদের অন্ধ বিশ্বাসের উপর কটাক্ষ করতেন। রামকৃষ্ণ তাঁকে বুঝিয়েছিলেন "বিশ্বাসের তো সবটাই অন্ধ, বিশ্বাসের আবার চক্ষু কি ? হয় বলু বিশ্বাস আর নয়

বলু জ্ঞান।” ২৯ দীর্ঘ ১২ বৎসর শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ অশেষ শারীরিক ক্লেশ সহ্য করে বিভিন্ন মতে ও বিভিন্ন পথে ঈশ্বর সাধনা করেছেন। তাতে তাঁর ধর্ম সম্বন্ধে দুটি সিদ্ধান্ত হয়েছে। প্রথম ‘শাস্ত্র পড়ে হৃদ অস্তি মাত্র বোধ হয়। কিন্তু নিজে ডুব না দিলে ঈশ্বর দেখা দেন না। ডুব দেবার পর তিনি নিজে জানিয়ে দিলে তবে সন্দেহ দূর হয়।’ ৩০ দ্বিতীয়, ঈশ্বর সম্বন্ধে এমন কথা জোর করে বলা চলে না যে তিনি সাকার অথবা নিরাকার, তিনি এই হতে পারেন আর এই হতে পারেন না। “একটা দৃঢ় করে তাঁর চিন্তা করলে তিনিই জানিয়ে দেবেন তিনি কেমন। শ্রামপুকুরে পৌঁছিলে তেলীপাড়াও জানতে পারবে। জানতে পারবে তিনি শুধু আছেন (অস্তিত্বাত্মক) তা নয়। তিনি তোমার কাছে এসে কথা কবেন, আমি যেমন তোমার সঙ্গে কথা কচ্ছি। বিশ্বাস করো সব হয়ে যাবে……মানুষের এক ছটাক বুদ্ধিতে ঈশ্বরের স্বরূপ কি বুঝা যায়? এক সের ঘটিতে কি চার সের দুধ ধরে? তিনি যদি কৃপা করে কখনও দর্শন দেন আর বুঝিয়ে দেন, তবে বুঝা যায় নচেৎ নয়। যিনি ব্রহ্ম, তিনিই শক্তি তিনিই মা।” (বিজয়কৃষ্ণ গোস্বামীকে উপদেশ, ১৯শে অক্টোবর ১৮৮৪) ৩১

শংকরের অদ্বৈতবাদ আর রামানুজের বিশিষ্টাদ্বৈতবাদ দুই-ই শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ সমান সত্য বলে মেনেছেন। আধুনিক বেদান্তবাদী ব্রাহ্মদের আর পৌরাণিক মতাবলম্বী হিন্দুদের বিবাদ তিনি নিরর্থক মনে করেছেন। জ্ঞানযোগ, কর্মযোগ, ভক্তিযোগ তিন পথেই সচ্চিদানন্দ ব্রহ্মের সাধনা ও উপলব্ধি সম্ভব। কিন্তু শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ ভক্তিপথে থেকে সগুণ ঈশ্বরের উপাসনাকে এ যুগে সহজ উপায় বলে নির্দেশ করছেন। ঈশ্বরলাভ না হলে অনাসক্ত হওয়া যায় না। দেহবুদ্ধি না গেলে জ্ঞান হওয়া সম্ভব নয়। “জ্ঞানী বলে, আমি সেই ব্রহ্ম। আমি শরীর নই, আমি ক্ষুধা তৃষ্ণা রোগ শোক জন্ম মৃত্যু সুখ দুঃখ এ সকলের পার। যদি রোগ শোক সুখ দুঃখ এ সব বোধ থাকে তুমি জ্ঞানী কেমন করে হবে?……তাই এ যুগের পক্ষে ভক্তিযোগ। এতে অগাধ পথের চেয়ে সহজে ঈশ্বরের কাছে যাওয়া যায়।” ৩২ অনন্ত ঈশ্বরকে জ্ঞান পথে জানা

যায় না এমন কথা শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ বলছেন না; সব পথের লক্ষ্যই এক। “যেন সচ্চিদানন্দ সমুদ্র কুলকিনারা নাই, ভক্তি হিমে মাঝে মাঝে জল বরফ হয়ে যায়, বরফ আকারে জমাট বাঁধে। অর্থাৎ ভক্তের কাছে তিনি ব্যক্তি ভাব কখন কখন সাকাররূপ ধরে থাকেন। জ্ঞানসূর্য্য উঠলে সে বরফ গলে যায়, তখন আর ঈশ্বরকে ব্যক্তি বলে বোধ হয় না, তাঁর রূপও দর্শন হয় না। কি তিনি মুখে বলা যায় না। যিনি বলবেন তিনিই নাই, তাঁর আমি আর খুঁজে পান না।……একটা নুনের পুতুল সমুদ্র মাপতে গিছিল, সমুদ্রে যেই নেমেছে অমনি মিশে গেল। তখন খবর কে দিবেক?” ৩৩

সগুণ ঈশ্বরের রূপ কল্পনা কোন দোষের নয়। রূপ রস বোধ থাকলে, ঈশ্বরকে একজন ব্যক্তি বলে বোধ থাকলে, তবেই তাঁকে ভক্তি করা যায়। অনন্তকে জানা একান্ত প্রয়োজন, এমন কথা শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ বলছেন না। তাঁর পাদপদ্মে ভক্তি রাখাই ধর্ম, তাতেই মহাযজ্ঞ সার্থক। “আমি আধ বোতল মদে মাতাল হয়ে যাই, শুঁড়ির দোকানে কত মন মদ আছে এ হিসাবে আমার কি দরকার? অনন্তকে জানার দরকারই বা কি?” ৩৪

শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণকে কোন কোন ঐতিহাসিক রামমোহনের উত্তরসাধক বলেছেন। ৩৫ আবার কেউ কেউ তাঁকে Hindu Revivalist বলতে নারাজ। ৩৬ এ সম্বন্ধে দুটি কথা বলা যায়। প্রথম রামমোহনের সঙ্গে শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণের মতের পার্থক্য মৌলিক। রামকৃষ্ণ হিন্দু ধর্মের কোন অংশ বর্জন করেন নি। সাধকের অনুভূতি দিয়ে ধর্মকে ব্যাখ্যা করেছেন। রামমোহন প্রধানতঃ সমাজ সংস্কারক। রামকৃষ্ণ সাধক; সামাজিক সমস্যা তাঁর কাছে গৌণ। দ্বিতীয়, রামকৃষ্ণ পৌরাণিক হিন্দুধর্মকে পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠিত করেছেন। প্রচলিত হিন্দু মতের সমর্থনে মৃত্যুঞ্জয় বিদ্যা-লংকারের ‘বেদান্ত চন্দ্রিকা’ যে কথা বলেছে, রামকৃষ্ণও সেই কথা বলেছেন। মৃত্যুঞ্জয় ছিলেন পণ্ডিত, রামকৃষ্ণ ভক্ত। কাজেই তাঁদের ব্যাখ্যাতে প্রভেদ থাকবেই। ভক্ত বা সাধকের স্থান চিরদিনই এ দেশে পণ্ডিতের উর্দ্ধে। উনিশ শতকের প্রথমে হিন্দু ধর্মের বিরোধীদের প্রধান লক্ষ্য ছিল পৌত্তলিকতা। রামকৃষ্ণের বক্তব্য এ বিষয়ে

পরিষ্কার। “প্রতিমা পূজাতে দোষ কি? বেদান্তে বলে যেখানে অস্তি ভাতি আর প্রিয় দেইখানেই তাঁর প্রকাশ। তাই তিনি ছাড়া কোন জিনিষই নাই। আবার দেখ ছোট ছোট মেয়েরা পুতুল খেলা কতদিন করে? যতদিন না বিবাহ হয়, আর যতদিন না স্বামী সহবাস করে। বিবাহ হলে পুতুলগুলি পেটরায় তুলে ফেলে। ঈশ্বর লাভ হলে আর প্রতিমা পূজার কি দরকার?”^{৩৭}

উনিশ শতকের শেষ তিন দশকে নানাভাবে হিন্দু ধর্মকে পুনরুজ্জীবিত করার চেষ্টা হয়। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের ধর্ম ব্যাখ্যা ও শশধর তর্কচূড়ামণির তথাকথিত ‘বৈজ্ঞানিক বিশ্লেষণ’ এর রকম এক একটি খণ্ডপ্রয়াস। কিন্তু সাধকের অনুভূতি বা প্রত্যক্ষদর্শীর অভিজ্ঞতা এঁদের ছিল না। এঁদের আলোচনা অনেক বিতর্কের সৃষ্টি করেছে। রামকৃষ্ণ যা বলেছেন তা প্রত্যক্ষ অভিজ্ঞতার কথা, সাধনা ও অহুভূতির কথা। তাঁর ধর্মচিন্তার একটা অখণ্ডরূপ আছে। তাই হিন্দুধর্ম সম্বন্ধে তাঁর কথা লোকে গভীর শ্রদ্ধার সঙ্গে শুনেছে। হিন্দুধর্মের আচার অহুষ্ঠানের তাৎপর্য আছে। এগুলি অবজ্ঞা বা উপহাসের বিষয় নয় এমন কথা লোকে বুঝতে শিখেছে। রামকৃষ্ণ হিন্দুধর্মের বর্তমান ও ভবিষ্যৎ সাফল্য নিশ্চিত করেছেন। তিনি স্পষ্টতঃই বলেছেন : “হিন্দুধর্মই সনাতন ধর্ম। ইদানীং যে সকল ধর্ম দেখছে এ সব তাঁর ইচ্ছাতে হবে যাবে, থাকবে না। তাই আমি বলি ইদানীং যে সকল ভক্ত তাদেরও চরনেভাঃ নমঃ। হিন্দুধর্ম বরাবর আছে আর বরাবর থাকবে।”^{৩৮}

সনাতন হিন্দুধর্মের মূল কথা পরমত সহিষ্ণুতা। উনিশ শতকের বাদ বিসম্বাদের মধ্যে এ কথাটাই সাধারণ লোকে ভুলতে বসেছিল। শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ ধর্ম বিষয়ে বিবেচনাপূর্ণ পরিচয় করতে বারবার উপদেশ দিয়েছেন। ধর্মের পথে সত্যতা ও নিষ্ঠার কথা ভক্তদের স্মরণ করিয়ে দিয়েছেন। “আন্তরিক হলে সব ধর্মের ভিতর দিয়েই ঈশ্বরকে পাওয়া যায়। বৈষ্ণবেরাও ঈশ্বরকে পাবে, শাক্তরাও পাবে, বেদান্তবাদীরাও পাবে, ব্রহ্মজ্ঞানীরাও পাবে; আবার মুসলমান খ্রীষ্টান এরাও পাবে। আন্তরিক হলে সবাই পাবে। কেউ কেউ ঝগড়া করে বসে...এ সব বুদ্ধির নাম মতুয়ার বুদ্ধি। অর্থাৎ আমার ধর্ম ঠিক,

আর সকলের মিথ্যা। এ বুদ্ধি খারাপ।”^{৩৯}

সহিষ্ণুতার অর্থ অবশ্য এই নয় যে নিত্য ধর্ম পরিচয় করতে হবে। শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ একটি মতকে প্রাণ চলে ভাল বাসতে বলেছেন। এরই নাম নিষ্ঠা ভক্তি।^{৪০} শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ এই নিষ্ঠা ভক্তি দিয়েছেন কালী বা আত্মশক্তিকে। এই কালী আর ব্রহ্ম অভেদ। তাঁর মতে লীলাও যেমন সত্য, নিত্যও তেমনি সত্য। হিন্দুধর্মে থেকে দুয়েরই সাধনা করা যায়। ধর্মের উচ্ছেদের কোন প্রয়োজন নাই, প্রয়োজন শুদ্ধা ভক্তির। নিরাকারবাদী আর সাকারবাদীদের দীর্ঘদিনের বিতর্কের শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ উত্তর দিয়েছেন। “যিনিই ব্রহ্ম তিনিই আত্মশক্তি। যখন নিষ্ক্রিয় তখন তাঁকে ব্রহ্ম বলি, পুরুষ বলি। যখন সৃষ্টি স্থিতি প্রলয় এই সব করেন তাঁকে শক্তি বলি, প্রকৃতি বলি। পুরুষ আর প্রকৃতি, যিনিই পুরুষ তিনিই প্রকৃতি। আনন্দময় আর আনন্দময়ী।”^{৪১} ‘পৌরাণিক হিন্দু ধর্মের এমন ব্যাখ্যাতে বিরোধীরাও অভিভূত হয়েছেন। কেশবচন্দ্র সেন ও বিজয়কৃষ্ণ গোস্বামী অজ্ঞাত আকর্ষণে শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণের কাছে বারবার গিয়েছেন, তাঁর উপদেশ শুনেছেন। প্রকৃতপক্ষে কেশব সেনের সঙ্গে সাক্ষাতের পূর্ব পর্যন্ত কলকাতার শিক্ষিত সমাজে শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ একরকম অজ্ঞাত ছিলেন। ১৮৭৫ খ্রীষ্টাব্দে শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণই প্রথম কেশবচন্দ্রের খ্যাতি শুনে বেলঘরিয়ায় তাঁর সঙ্গে দেখা করেন। পরে উভয়ের মধ্যে ঘনিষ্ঠ যোগাযোগ হয়। কেশবচন্দ্র Indian Mirror, ধর্মতত্ত্ব, সুলভ সমাচার প্রভৃতি পত্রিকায় রামকৃষ্ণের কথা প্রকাশ করেন। তারপর থেকেই কলকাতা শহরের অগণিত নরনারী রামকৃষ্ণের দর্শন ও উপদেশ লাভের জন্য দক্ষিণেশ্বরে যেতে আরম্ভ করেন।^{৪২} প্রকৃত পক্ষে উনিশ শতকের শেষে দেশের মধ্যে শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ যে খ্যাতি লাভ করেন তাতে কেশবচন্দ্রের অবদান উল্লেখযোগ্য।

দেশের বাইরে রামকৃষ্ণের পরিচিতি করেন স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ। এদিক থেকে বিবেকানন্দকে সেট পলের সঙ্গে তুলনা করা হয়েছে।^{৪৩} হিন্দুর আধ্যাত্মিক চিন্তার জীবন্ত প্রতীক শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ, একথা বিবেকানন্দ ইউরোপ ও আমেরিকাবাসীকে বোঝাতে পেরেছিলেন। বিদেশে তিনি

যে ধর্মের কথা প্রচার করেছেন তা কোন পরিশোধিত ধর্ম নয়, দেশের চিরাচরিত লৌকিক ধর্ম।^{৪৪} পৌত্তলিকতা এ ধর্মের একটি প্রধান অংশ। উনিশ শতকের প্রথমে এই পৌত্তলিকতা ছিল সমস্ত শিক্ষিত সমাজের নিন্দা এবং অবজ্ঞার বিষয়। শতাব্দীর শেষে এই সমাজই বিবেকানন্দের বাণী বিস্তৃত হয়ে শুনেছে : “যদি সেই মূর্তিপূজক ব্রাহ্মণের পদধূলি আমি না পাইতাম, তবে আমি কোথায় থাকিতাম? যে সকল সংস্কারক মূর্তিপূজার নিন্দা করিয়া থাকেন, তাঁহাদিগকে আমি বলি, ভাই, তুমি যদি নিরাকার উপাসনার যোগ্য হইয়া থাক, তাহা কর, কিন্তু অপরকে গালি দেও কেন?”^{৪৫}

সূত্রনির্দেশ

১। ভারতপথিক রামমোহন, রবীন্দ্রচন্দ্রাবলী, একাদশ খণ্ড, কলিকাতা ১৩৬৮, পৃ: ৩৫৬।

২। Amitava Mukherjee, *Reform and Regeneration in Bengal*, Calcutta 1968, পৃ: ১২৮

৩। ভবতোষ দত্ত, রাজা রাধাকান্ত দেব, ইতিহাস, কার্তিক, পৌষ ১৩৭৯

৪। শিবনাথ শাস্ত্রী, রামতনু লাহিড়ী ও তৎকালীন বঙ্গসমাজ, নিউ এজ্ সংস্করণ, কলিকাতা ১৩৬২, পৃ: ১৩০

৫। Sivanath Sastri, *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, Vol. I, Calcutta 1911, পৃ: ৭২-৭৩

৬। ঐ, পৃ: ৭৪

৭। Amitava Mukherjee, *Op. Cit.*, পৃ: ২০০

৮। A. C. Gupta (ed.), *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance*, Jadavpur 1958, পৃ: ৩১

৯। David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*, Cal. 1969, পৃ: ২৫৮

১০। N. K. Sinha (ed.), *History of Bengal*, C. U. 1967, পৃ: ৬০৩

১১। মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের স্বরচিত জীবন চরিত, দ্বিতীয় সংস্করণ ১৩১৮, পৃ ৪৩

১২। A. C. Gupta (ed.), *Op. Cit.*, পৃ: ৩৬

১৩। মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের স্বরচিত জীবন-

চরিত, দ্বিতীয় সংস্করণ, ১৩১৮ (পরিশিষ্ট, প্রিয়নাথ শাস্ত্রী লিখিত) পৃ: ৫৫

১৪। রাজনারায়ণ বসুর আত্মচরিত, ৩য় সংস্করণ, কলিকাতা ১৯৫২, পৃ: ১২৭

১৫। শিবনাথ শাস্ত্রী, রামতনু লাহিড়ী ও তৎকালীন বঙ্গসমাজ, নিউ এজ্ সং, কলিকাতা ১৩৬২, পৃ: ২৭৩

১৬। P. C. Mazoomdar, *The Life and Teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen*, 3rd edn. Navavidhan Trust 1931, পৃ: ২২৪

১৭। যোগেশচন্দ্র বাগল, রাধাকান্ত দেব, কলিকাতা ১৩৬৪, পৃ: ১২

১৮। N. S. Bose, *Indian Awakening and Bengal* (2nd edn.), Calcutta 1969, পৃ: ৫৭

১৯। যোগেশচন্দ্র বাগল, জাতীয়তার নবমন্ত্র (পরিশিষ্ট গ)

২০। শুভেন্দুশেখর মুখোপাধ্যায়, হিন্দু জেলার বিবরণ, সাহিত্য পরিষৎ পত্রিকা ১৩৬৭

২১। রাজনারায়ণ বসু, হিন্দুধর্মের শ্রেষ্ঠতা, কলিকাতা ১৭৯৪ শক

২২। J. N. Sarkar, *India through the Ages*, Calcutta 1928, পৃ: ১২২

২৩। ভবতোষ দত্ত, চিন্তানায়ক বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র, কলিকাতা ১৩৬৮, পৃ: ৪২

২৪। নবীনচন্দ্র সেন, আমার জীবন, ৩য় ভাগ, কলিকাতা ১৩১৭, পৃ: ৮২

২৫। B. C. Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times*, Vol. II, Calcutta 1951, পৃ: ৪৩

২৬। গিরিজাশংকর রায়চৌধুরী, স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ ও বাংলায় উনবিংশ শতাব্দী, কলিকাতা ১৯২৭, পৃ: ২৯

২৭। শ্রীশ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ কথায়ত, দ্বিতীয় ভাগ, কলিকাতা ১৩৫৯, পৃ: ৩৬০

২৮। ব্রজেন্দ্রনাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ও সজনীকান্ত দাস সমসাময়িক দৃষ্টিতে শ্রীশ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ পরমহংস, কলিকাতা ১৩৭৫, পৃ: ১৯৭

- ২৯। স্বামী সারদানন্দ, শ্রীশ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ লীলাপ্রসঙ্গ,
(৩য় খণ্ড, কলিকাতা ১৩৮, পৃ: ৯৩
- ৩০। শ্রীশ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ কথামৃত, প্রথমভাগ, কলিকাতা
১৩৫৮, পৃ: ১২৫
- ৩১। শ্রীশ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ কথামৃত, প্রথম ভাগ, কলিকাতা
১৩৫৮, পৃ: ২১১
- ৩২। ঐ, পৃ: ১৮২
- ৩৩। ঐ, পৃ: ৭৫
- ৩৪। ঐ, পৃ: ৭৮
- ৩৫। N. K. Sinha (ed.), *Op. Cit.*,
পৃ: ৫৫৬
- ৩৬। N. S. Bose, *Op. Cit.*, পৃ: ১৫৫

- ৩৭। শ্রীশ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ কথামৃত, দ্বিতীয় ভাগ, কলিকাতা
১৩৫৯, পৃ: ১২১
- ৩৮। ঐ, পৃ: ২৪৯
- ৩৯। ঐ, পৃ: ২৪
- ৪০। ঐ, তৃতীয় ভাগ, নবম সং ১৩৫৮, পৃ ৭৭
- ৪১। ঐ, দ্বিতীয় ভাগ, কলিকাতা ১৩৫৯, পৃ: ৯৯-১০০
- ৪২। F. Max Mueller, *Rammohan to Ramkrishna*, Calcutta 1952 পৃ: ১২৮
- ৪৩। B. C. Pal, *Op. Cit.*, পৃ: ১৩৬
- ৪৪। Nivedita, *The Master, as I saw Him*,
Calcutta 1910, পৃ: ২
- ৪৫। গিরিজাশংকর রায়চৌধুরী, স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ
ও বাংলায় ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দী, কলিকাতা ১৯২৭, পৃ: ১৮৯

বস্তু পরিসংখ্যান

বিখ্যাত বৈজ্ঞানিক সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ বসু ৪ঠা ফেব্রুয়ারী
(১৯৭৪) পরলোকগমন করেছেন। তিনি প্রেসিডেন্সি
কলেজের একজন কৃতী ছাত্র (১৯০৯-১৯১৫)। এদেশে
তঁার বৈজ্ঞানিক প্রতিভা সর্বজনস্বীকৃত, যদিও তঁার সব
গবেষণার ইতিবৃত্ত সহজলভ্য নয়। অধ্যাপক বসুর
বৈজ্ঞানিক প্রবন্ধ ইংরাজি, জার্মান ও ফরাসী ভাষার
প্রকাশিত হয়; তঁার গবেষণা গণিতভিত্তিক। সুতরাং
সাধারণ বাঙালী পাঠক মহলের কাছে তঁার গবেষণা
নিঃসন্দেহে দুর্লভগম্য।

এখানে আমরা প্রথমে অধ্যাপক বসুর বিশ্ববিশ্রুত
বস্তু-পরিসংখ্যানের উদ্ভাবনী প্রবন্ধটির একটি বাঙলা
অনুবাদ প্রকাশ করছি। শেষাংশে বসু আইনস্টাইন পরি-
সংখ্যান সংক্রান্ত কয়েকটি সমস্যার আলোচনা করা হবে।

এই বিখ্যাত প্রবন্ধটি আইনস্টাইন জার্মান ভাষায়
অনুবাদ করে জার্মান পদার্থবিজ্ঞান পত্রিকায় নিজ মন্তব্য-
সহ প্রকাশ করেন। ঘটনাটি বিচিত্র মনে হলেও গণিত-

চঞ্চলকুমার মজুমদার

শাস্ত্র এবং বিজ্ঞানের ইতিহাসে এই জাতীয় ঘটনা মোটেই
অপ্রতুল নয়, বিশেষতঃ আইনস্টাইনের মত প্রথম শ্রেণীর
বিজ্ঞানী-মহলে।^১

* * *

প্লাঙ্কের নিয়ম ও আলোককণা-প্রকল্প

বসু, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ভারতবর্ষ

(প্রাপ্তি স্বীকার ২রা জুলাই ১৯২৪)

(৭সাইট্রিশিফ্ট ফুর ফিজিক, ২৬ খণ্ড, ১৯২৪, পৃষ্ঠা
১৭৮-১৮১)

(সারাংশ : নির্দিষ্ট আয়তনের মধ্যে আবদ্ধ আলোক-
কণার দশা-নির্দেশক ছককে ছোটছোট ঘরে ভাঙা যায়
প্রত্যেক ঘরের ঘন h^3 । এই ঘরগুলির মধ্যে ইন্দ্রিয়গ্রাহ্য
বিকিরণের আলোককণার বর্টন সংখ্যা থেকে এনট্রোপি
পাওয়া যায় এবং তার থেকে বিকিরণের সব উষ্ণগতায়
গুণই বোঝা যায়।)

কৃষ্ণবর্ণ বস্তুর বিকিরণের মধ্যে শক্তিবর্টন সম্পর্কে প্লাঙ্কের

আইন থেকে কোয়ান্টাম তত্ত্ব বা কণাবাদের সৃষ্টি। গত কুড়ি বৎসরে এই তত্ত্বের বিকাশ হয়েছে এবং পদার্থ বিজ্ঞানের বিভিন্ন বিভাগে এই মতবাদ ফলপ্রসূ হয়েছে। ১৯০১ খৃষ্টাব্দে প্রস্তাবিত এই আইনটির বিভিন্ন অবরোহী প্রমাণ উপস্থাপিত হয়েছে। সর্ববাদিসম্মত অভিমত এই যে কণাবাদের মূল ধারণা প্রাচীন তড়িচ্চুম্বকতত্ত্বের ধারার সঙ্গে সঙ্গতিসম্পন্ন নয়। এ পর্যন্ত যে প্রমাণগুলি প্রস্তাবিত হয়েছে, সবকটিই এই সূত্রটি ব্যবহার করে।

$$\rho_{\nu} d\nu = \frac{8\pi\nu^2 d\nu}{c^3} E$$

এটাতে বিকিরণের ঘনত্ব এবং একটি গড়শক্তির সমতা স্থচিত হয়। সব প্রমাণেই ঐধারের স্বচ্ছন্দ গতিবিধির মাত্রা সম্পর্কে কয়েকটি ধারণা করা হয় (উপরের সমীকরণের দক্ষিণপক্ষের প্রথম গুণকটি)। এই গুণকটি একমাত্র প্রাচীন তড়িচ্চুম্বকতত্ত্ব থেকে পাওয়া যায়। এই অংশটি মোটেই সন্তোষজনক নয়। আশ্চর্য নয় যে এই যুক্তিবিভ্রম থেকে মূল একটি প্রমাণ আবিষ্কারের চেষ্টা প্রায়ই হচ্ছে।

আইনষ্টাইন একটি সুন্দর প্রমাণ দিয়েছেন। তিনি পূর্ব প্রচলিত প্রমাণগুলির অর্থোক্তিকতা উপলব্ধি করেছেন এবং প্রাচীন (অর্থাৎ প্রাককোয়ান্টাম) মতবাদ ছাড়াই একটি প্রমাণ দিতে চেষ্টা করেছেন। বস্তুকণা এবং বিকিরণ ক্ষেত্রের মধ্যে শক্তি বিনিময় সম্পর্কে কয়েকটি সরল স্বীকার্য থেকে তিনি পাচ্ছেন

$$\rho_{\nu} = \alpha_{mn} / \exp[(\epsilon_m - \epsilon_n) / k_{\beta} T]$$

এই সূত্রটির সঙ্গে প্ল্যাঙ্কের সূত্রের সঙ্গতি রাখার জন্তু তিনি ভীমের 'বিসরণ বিধি' এবং বোরের সামঞ্জস্যের নিয়ম ব্যবহার করেছেন। ভীমের বিধির ভিত্তি প্রাচীন তত্ত্ব। সামঞ্জস্যের নিয়মের বক্তব্য কণাবাদ এবং প্রাচীন তত্ত্ব কোন কোন সীমিত ক্ষেত্রে একই।

আমার মতে সর্বক্ষেত্রেই প্রমাণগুলি যুক্তির দিক থেকে তর্কাতীত নয়। আমার মনে হয় আলোককণার প্রস্তাবনা এবং পরিসাংখ্যিক বলবিজ্ঞা (অবশ্য কণাবাদের সঙ্গে

সামঞ্জস্য রাখতে হলে তাতে প্র্যাক্‌ক যে পরিবর্তন করেছেন তা পরিসাংখ্যিক বলবিজ্ঞাতেও আরোপ করতে হবে) থেকে প্রাচীন তত্ত্ব ছাড়াই প্ল্যাঙ্কের সূত্রটি বার করা সম্ভব। নীচে আমি এই পদ্ধতিটি সংক্ষেপে দেখাচ্ছি।

মনে করি বিকিরণ নির্দিষ্ট আয়তন V-তে আবদ্ধ এবং তার মোট শক্তির পরিমাণ E। তাতে বিভিন্ন কম্পন-সংখ্যার আলোককণা রয়েছে। তাদের সংখ্যা N_s এবং শক্তি $h\nu_s$ ($s=0$ থেকে ∞ পর্যন্ত যে কোন পূর্ণ সংখ্যা)। মোট শক্তি

$$E = \sum N_s h\nu_s = V \int \rho_{\nu} d\nu$$

আমাদের সমস্যার সমাধান হবে যদি আমরা N_s ও তার থেকে ρ_{ν} জানতে পারি। যদি কোন N_s সংখ্যা সম্বলিত বিকিরণের শক্তি বণ্টনের সম্ভাবনা জানা থাকে তবে আমাদের সমাধান নির্দিষ্ট হবে যখন সম্ভাবনা সর্বাধিক এবং সমীকরণ (১) বিধৃত অতিরিক্ত শর্তটি পূরণ করা হচ্ছে। আমরা এই সম্ভাবনা কষছি।

আলোককণা যে দিকে যাচ্ছে সেদিকে তার ভরবেগের পরিমাণ $h\nu_s/c$ । যে কোন মুহূর্তে একটি আলোককণাকে তার অবস্থান এবং ভরবেগ p_x, p_y, p_z দিয়ে নির্দিষ্ট করা যায়। এই ছটি সংখ্যা একটি ছয়মাত্রার জগৎ সৃষ্টি করছে যেখানে

$$p_x^2 + p_y^2 + p_z^2 = h^2 \nu_s^2 / c^2$$

সুতরাং আলোককণার অবস্থাননির্দেশক বিন্দুটি একটি স্তম্ভকের উপরে থাকছে। কম্পনসংখ্যা $d\nu_s$ -র মধ্যে দশানির্দেশক স্থানের আয়তন

$$\int dx dy dz dp_x dp_y dp_z = V 4\pi \left(\frac{h\nu_s}{c} \right)^2 \frac{hd\nu_s}{c} = \frac{4\pi h^3 \nu_s^2}{c^3} V d\nu_s$$

দশানির্দেশক ছকটিকে ক্ষুদ্র ক্ষুদ্র h^3 পরিমাপের ঘরে ভাগ করলে কম্পন সংখ্যা $d\nu_s$ -র মধ্যে যত ঘর পাওয়া যাবে তাদের সংখ্যা হল $4\pi \nu_s^2 V d\nu_s / c^3$ । এই বিভাগ পদ্ধতি সম্পর্কে সুনিশ্চিত কিছু বলা যাচ্ছে না। তবে ধরে নেওয়া যেতে পারে যে ঘরগুলির মোট সংখ্যা হচ্ছে একটি নির্দিষ্ট আয়তনের মধ্যে একটি কণাকে আবদ্ধ করে রাখার

যত রকম উপায় আছে তাদেরই সংখ্যা। আলোকের সমবর্তন আছে বলে উপরের সংখ্যাটিকে দুই দিয়ে গুণ করা দরকার কাজেই $d\nu_s$ -র মধ্যে মোট ঘরের সংখ্যা হল $8\pi\nu_s^2 d\nu_s V/c^3$ ।

এখন চাক্ষুষ বা ইন্দ্রিয়গ্রাহ্য অবস্থার উন্নয়নীয় সম্ভাবনা কষা যেতে পারে। কম্পনসংখ্যা $d\nu_s$ -র মধ্যে N_s সংখ্যক কণা আছে। তাদের কত রকমে $d\nu_s$ -র অন্তর্ভুক্ত ঘরগুলির ভিতরে ছড়িয়ে দেওয়া যায়? খালি ঘরের সংখ্যা p_0^s , একটি কণা সম্বলিত ঘরের সংখ্যা p_1^s , দুটি কণা সম্বলিত ঘরের সংখ্যা p_2^s , ইত্যাদি। তাহলে সম্ভবপর বিভাজনের সংখ্যা

$$A_s! / p_0^s! p_1^s! p_2^s! \dots$$

এখানে $A_s = 8\pi\nu_s^2 d\nu_s / c^3$ । এখন $d\nu_s$ পাল্লার মধ্যে কণা সংখ্যা দাঁড়াচ্ছে

$$N_s = 0p_0^s + 1p_1^s + 2p_2^s + \dots$$

এই p_r^s চিহ্নিত অবস্থার সম্ভাবনা হচ্ছে

$$\frac{1}{A_s} (A_s! / p_0^s! p_1^s! p_2^s! \dots)$$

p_r^s কে বড় সংখ্যা ধরলে

$$\ln W = \sum_s A_s \ln A_s - \sum_s \sum_r p_r^s \ln p_r^s$$

(এখানে $A_s = \sum_r p_r^s$)। দুটি অতিরিক্ত শর্ত

$$E = \sum_s N_s h\nu_s, \quad N_s = \sum_r p_r^s$$

পূরণ করে এই সম্ভাবনাকে সর্বোচ্চ করা দরকার। সংখ্যাগুলির সামান্য পরিবর্তনের ফলে আমরা পাই

$$\sum_r \delta p_r^s (1 + \ln p_r^s) = 0, \quad \sum_s \delta N_s h\nu_s = 0,$$

$$\sum_r \delta p_r^s = 0, \quad \delta N_s = \sum_r \delta p_r^s$$

সুতরাং

$$\sum_s \sum_r \delta p_r^s \left(1 + \ln p_r^s + \lambda^s \right) + \frac{1}{\beta} \sum_s h\nu_s$$

$$+ \sum_r r \delta p_r^s = 0$$

অতএব

$$p_r^s = B_s e^{-rh\nu_s/\beta}$$

কিন্তু

$$A_s = \sum_r B_s e^{-rh\nu_s/\beta} = B_s (1 - \exp(-h\nu_s/\beta))^{-1}$$

$$\text{অর্থাৎ } B_s = A_s (1 - e^{-h\nu_s/\beta})$$

তাছাড়া আমরা পাচ্ছি

$$N_s = \sum_r r p_r^s = \sum_r r A_s (1 - e^{-h\nu_s/\beta}) e^{-rh\nu_s/\beta} \\ = A_s e^{-h\nu_s/\beta} \left[1 - e^{-h\nu_s/\beta} \right]$$

A_s -র জানা পরিমাপ ব্যবহার করলে পাই

$$\dot{E} = \sum_s \frac{8\pi h\nu_s^3}{c^3} d\nu_s V \frac{e^{-h\nu_s/\beta}}{1 - e^{-h\nu_s/\beta}}$$

যেসব ফলাফল পাওয়া গেছে তাদের ব্যবহার করে পাই

$$S = k \left[E/\beta - \sum_s A_s \ln (1 - e^{-h\nu_s/\beta}) \right]$$

যেহেতু $\partial S / \partial E = 1/T$, আমরা পেলুম

$$\beta = kT$$

উপরের E সমীকরণে বসিয়ে আমরা পাচ্ছি

$$E = \sum_s \frac{8\pi h\nu_s^3}{c^3} V \frac{1}{e^{h\nu_s/kT} - 1} d\nu_s$$

এটাই প্ল্যাঙ্কের সূত্র।

অনুবাদের মন্তব্য

আমার মতে বস্তুর প্রমাণটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ প্রগতির সূচনা করছে। অতীত আমি দেখাতে চাই যে এখানে ব্যবহৃত পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগ করে কণাবাদসম্মত আদর্শ বায়বীয় পদার্থের তত্ত্ব পাওয়া যায়।

প্রবন্ধটিতে লক্ষ্য করা যেতে পারে যে উচ্চতর গণিতের প্রয়োগ নেই। শুধু বিজ্ঞান ও সময় সম্পর্কিত কয়েকটি প্রচলিত সূত্র, গরিষ্ঠ লম্বিষ্ঠ নিরূপণে অন্তরকলনসম্মত পদ্ধতি এবং তৎসংক্রান্ত লাগ্রাঞ্জের অনিদিষ্ট গুণকের প্রয়োগ করা হয়েছে। এছাড়া বোলৎসমানের বিখ্যাত বক্তব্য “এনট্রোপি বিশ্বজ্বলার পরিমাপ”—এই পদার্থবিজ্ঞানের ধারণা ব্যবহৃত হয়েছে।

আরও দুটি বৈশিষ্ট্য লক্ষ্যণীয়। প্রথমত লেখক $8\pi\nu_s^2 d\nu_s/c^3$ সংখ্যাটির নির্ধারণে বেশ গুরুত্ব দিয়েছেন। তাঁর বক্তব্য পরিষ্কার। আলোকের তরঙ্গরূপকে উপেক্ষা করে কণাধর্মিতা থেকেই তিনি এটা পেতে পারেন, তড়িৎচুম্বকত্বের প্রয়োজনীয়তা নেই। একথা স্মৃতি হচ্ছে বস্তুর দ্বৈত স্বভাব, কণাধর্মিতা ও তরঙ্গধর্মিতা

স্বীকার করতে হবে। কোয়াণ্টাম বলবিদ্যায় এই দ্বৈত সত্তাকে প্রথমেই অঙ্গীকার করা হয়, কাজেই এই সংখ্যাটি অতি সহজেই পাওয়া যায়। বলা বাহুল্য, অধ্যাপক বসুর প্রবন্ধটি কোয়াণ্টাম বলবিদ্যা আবিষ্কারের পূর্বে রচিত।

দ্বিতীয়তঃ, অধ্যাপক বসু কোথাও দাবী করেন নি যে, তিনি নূতন পরিসংখ্যান সৃষ্টি করেছেন। কোয়াণ্টাম পরিসংখ্যানের বহু প্রচলিত সূত্র—সমধর্মী বস্তুকণাকে পৃথক করে দেখা কোনক্ষেত্রেই সম্ভব নয়—একথা কোথাও উল্লিখিত হয়নি—এমনকি সমধর্মী বস্তুকণার কোন উল্লেখই নেই। প্রকৃত প্রস্তাবে সমধর্মী এককের সমষ্টির উপরেই পরিসংখ্যান প্রয়োগ করা সম্ভব একথা প্রাচীন তত্ত্বের জ্ঞান ছিল। অধ্যাপক বসুর বিশেষত্ব হচ্ছে যে, তাঁর দৃষ্টি বিশেষভাবে বস্তুর “অবস্থান” ভিত্তিক—এই দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি কোয়াণ্টাম বলবিদ্যার প্রচলিত দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি।

পারিসংখ্যিক বলবিদ্যায় কোন বহু একক-সমন্বিত পদার্থের দশাকে একটি বহুমাত্রিক জগতের বিন্দু দিয়ে নির্দিষ্ট করা হয়। হ্যামিল্টন প্রবর্তিত সমীকরণ বা ঐ জাতীয় সমীকরণ বিন্দুটির গতিবিধি নিয়ন্ত্রণ করে। গতিবিধির যদি কোন ধ্রুবক থাকে, তবে বিন্দুটি ঐ ধ্রুবক চিহ্নিত তলের উপরেই চলাফেরা করে। বহিঃ-সম্পর্কশূণ্য বস্তুসমষ্টির শক্তির পরিবর্তন হয় না। সুতরাং এই তলগুলির একটি সাধারণ ধ্রুবক হচ্ছে শক্তি—সাধারণতঃ বস্তুসামগ্রীর মোট শক্তি। কিন্তু আরও সরল পরিস্থিতি হওয়া সম্ভব। ধরা যাক মোট শক্তি প্রত্যেক এককের শক্তি যোগ করে পাওয়া যায়—যেমন আলোক-কণার ক্ষেত্রে। এমনও হতে পারে যে, বস্তুকণাগুলির মধ্যে পারস্পরিক সম্পর্ক এত ক্ষীণ যে প্রত্যেক এককের শক্তি নির্দিষ্ট করা যায় এবং এক্ষেত্রেও মোট শক্তি একক-গুলির শক্তির যোগফল, উদাহরণ আদর্শ বায়বীয় পদার্থ। এখানে শক্তি বন্টনের প্রশ্ন উঠলে অধ্যাপক বসুর পদ্ধতি খাটবে বস্তুকণার ভর থাক বা নাই থাক (আলোককণার ভর নেই)। আইনস্টাইন এই তথ্যটি উপলব্ধি করেন এবং আদর্শ বায়বীয় পদার্থের বেলায় বসু পরিসংখ্যান প্রয়োগ করে প্রাচীন তত্ত্বের থেকে সামান্য পার্থক্য দেখাতে সক্ষম হন। প্রকৃতিলব্ধ বায়বীয় পদার্থের মধ্যে

হিলিয়ামে এই নতুন তত্ত্বকে প্রয়োগ করা যায় এবং অতি নিম্ন তাপমাত্রায় হিলিয়ামের একটি বিচিত্র অবস্থান্তরের মোটামুটি ব্যাখ্যা পাওয়া যায়—এটাই হচ্ছে বসু আইন-স্টাইন ঘনীভবন।

এখন কোয়াণ্টাম তত্ত্বের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে বসু পরিসংখ্যানের আলোচনা করা যাক। পূর্বেই বলেছি, অধ্যাপক বসুর দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি বিশেষ ভাবেই নতুন কোয়াণ্টাম তত্ত্বের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি। প্রাচীন তত্ত্বে বস্তুকণার অবস্থা নিরূপণের উপর খুব জোর দেওয়া হত না। কোয়াণ্টাম বলবিদ্যায় এটা অপরিহার্য। বিশেষতঃ স্থির অবস্থা নির্ধারণ করাই এই বলবিদ্যায় একটা বিরাট অংশ। অবশ্য অধ্যাপক বসু একটি বিশেষ স্বতঃসিদ্ধ ধরে নিয়েছিলেন—প্রত্যেক অবস্থাতে শূণ্য এক, দুই, বা যে কোন সংখ্যার কণা থাকতে পারে। দেখা গেল এই স্বতঃসিদ্ধ সর্বত্র প্রযোজ্য নয়। পরমাণুর বর্ণালী বিশ্লেষণ করে পাউলি দেখিয়েছেন, একটি অবস্থাতে একাধিক ইলেকট্রন থাকা অসম্ভব। এই পরিবর্তন ধরে নিয়ে ইটালীয় বৈজ্ঞানিক ফার্মি একটি নতুন পরিসংখ্যান উদ্ভাবন করেন যার নাম ফার্মি পরিসংখ্যান।

যেহেতু সমধর্মী বস্তুকণাকে কোন ভাবেই পৃথক করা যায় না, সন্মিলিত পদার্থের অবস্থান নির্দেশক অপেক্ষকের কয়েকটি গুণ থাকবেই। দুটি সমধর্মী বস্তুকণার পক্ষান্তর করলে এই অপেক্ষকের কোন পরিবর্তন হয় না (বসু পরিসংখ্যান), অথবা এই অপেক্ষক চিহ্ন পরিবর্তন করে, যোগ থেকে বিয়োগ বা তার বিপরীত হয় (ফার্মি পরিসংখ্যান)। উভয় ক্ষেত্রেই সম্ভাবনা অপরিবর্তিত থাকে কারণ ঐ অপেক্ষকের বর্গ থেকে সম্ভাবনা কষা হয়। প্রথম ক্ষেত্রে অপেক্ষকটিকে পূর্ণসম, দ্বিতীয় ক্ষেত্রে বিপ্রতি-সম বলা হয়।

গত পঞ্চাশ বৎসরের পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষার দেখা গেছে যে, প্রাথমিক বস্তুকণাদের দুই শ্রেণীতে ভাগ করা যায়। হয় তারা বসু পরিসংখ্যান নয় ফার্মি পরিসংখ্যান মেনে চলে। আরও একটি বৈশিষ্ট্য আছে। প্রত্যেক বস্তুকণার নিজস্ব ‘ঘূর্ণন’ আছে! অর্থাৎ নিরীক্ষণের সময় পর্যবেক্ষকের অক্ষগুলিকে ঘুরিয়ে দিলে প্রত্যেক প্রাথমিক বস্তুকণা নিজ

বৈচিত্র্যে ঘুরে থাকে। এই ঘূর্ণনের পরিমাপ (প্লাঙ্কের সংখ্যা $h/2\pi$ কে একক ধরলে) $0, 1, 2, \dots$ (পূর্ণসংখ্যা) বা $1/2, 3/2, 5/2, \dots$ (পূর্ণার্ধসংখ্যা)। দেখা গেছে যে পূর্ণার্ধ ঘূর্ণনের বস্তুকণার ফার্মি পরিসংখ্যান এবং পূর্ণ সংখ্যা ঘূর্ণনের বস্তুকণার বসু-পরিসংখ্যান মেনে চলে। এই নিয়মটিকে “ঘূর্ণন ও পরিসংখ্যানের উপপাত্ত” বলা হয়।

এই উপপাত্তটির কোন বিতর্কহীন প্রমাণ আজও আবিষ্কৃত হয়নি, যদিও কোয়ান্টাম ফিল্ড বা কণাক্ষেত্রের তত্ত্বে এটি একটি অসাধারণ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সিদ্ধান্ত। এ সম্পর্কে যা জানা আছে, তা সংক্ষেপে বিবৃত হল।^২

(১) ফিয়ারবংস ও পাউলি দেখিয়েছেন যে, পারস্পরিক সংঘাতহীন (সংক্ষেপে নিমুক্ত) কণাক্ষেত্র প্রসঙ্গে আইনস্টাইনের বিশেষ আপেক্ষিক তত্ত্বের সঙ্গে সঙ্গতি রাখতে হলে পূর্ণসংখ্যা ঘূর্ণনবিশিষ্ট কণাক্ষেত্রে বসু-পরিসংখ্যান এবং পূর্ণার্ধসংখ্যা ঘূর্ণন সম্পন্ন কণাক্ষেত্রে ফার্মি পরিসংখ্যান মানতে হবে। এছাড়া মহাশূন্যে একটি নিমুক্ত কণাক্ষেত্রের প্রয়োগের ফলে যে সব অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হয় তারা হয় পূর্ণসম না হয় বিপ্রতিসম। ছুঃখের বিষয় কার্যকালে নিমুক্ত কণাক্ষেত্র পাওয়া যায় না।

(২) স্বতঃসিদ্ধান্তিক কণাক্ষেত্রের মতবাদে উপরিকথিত উপপাত্তটি প্রমাণ করা যায় বেশ সাধারণ ভাবেই। কিন্তু এ পর্যন্ত কেউই দেখাতে পারেননি যে, স্বতঃসিদ্ধগুলি নিমুক্ত ক্ষেত্র ছাড়া সংঘাতমূলক ক্ষেত্রেও কাজে লাগে। যদি ধরে নেওয়া যায় (হাগ ও ক্রয়েলের সংঘাতের তত্ত্ব) যে কোন সীমিত ক্ষেত্রে সংঘাতমূলক ক্ষেত্রেও নিমুক্ত হয়ে

ভায় তাহলে অবশ্য উপপাত্তটি প্রযোজ্য। কিন্তু বহু-বিতর্কিত কোয়ার্কের বেলায় ঐ নীমায় নাকি পৌঁছানই যায় না (অনেকের মতে প্রোটন, নিউট্রন ইত্যাদি পরিচিত প্রাথমিক বস্তুকণা কোয়ার্ক দিয়ে তৈরী)।

(৩) ১৯৫৯ খৃষ্টাব্দে গ্রাণের কাজ থেকে মিশ্র পরিসংখ্যান বা প্যারাস্ট্যাটিসটিকসের অস্তিত্ব প্রমাণিত হয়। আমরা অপেক্ষকটিকে পূর্ণসম বা বিপ্রতিসম ধরে থাকি। কিন্তু বিন্যাসের গাণিতিক আলোচনায় আরও বৈচিত্র্য-মূলক সমতা লক্ষ্য করা যায়। মিশ্র পরিসংখ্যান সম্বলিত কোন প্রাথমিক বস্তুকণা আছে কিনা তা অজ্ঞাত ও বিতর্কিত। কোয়ান্টাম তত্ত্বের স্বতঃসিদ্ধ থেকে মিশ্র-পরিসংখ্যানকে বাতিল করা যায় না।

(৪) প্রাথমিক বস্তুকণার যৌগগুলির পরিসংখ্যান কি ভাবে নিরূপিত হয়? উদাহরণ, হিলিয়ামের পরমাণুতে নিউক্লিয়াসে আছে ছুটি প্রোটন, ছুটি নিউট্রন, এবং বাইরে ছুটি ইলেকট্রন। প্রত্যেকটির ঘূর্ণন ২, সুতরাং ছুটি ফার্মি কণা রয়েছে। অথচ হিলিয়াম পরমাণুর ঘূর্ণন শূন্য ও তা বসু পরিসংখ্যান মানে (“বসুকণা”)। মোটামুটি বলা বলা যেতে পারে যে, আলোচ্য পরিস্থিতিতে হিলিয়ামের বন্ধন যদি শিথিল না হয় বা তার অন্তর্নিহিত গঠন ধরা না পড়ে, তাহলে যৌগ পরিসংখ্যান হবে পরমাণুর ঘূর্ণন নির্দিষ্ট পরিসংখ্যান।

আশা করা যায় যে ভবিষ্যতে এইসব অসম্পূর্ণ তথ্য-গুলির বিকাশ ও ব্যাখ্যা হবে।

১। ই. টি. বেল প্রণীত “মেন অফ ম্যাথেমেটিক্‌স্” দ্রষ্টব্য।

২। সহকর্মী ডক্টর দিবাকরণের দৌজ্ঞে প্রাপ্ত।

সত্যতার ইতিহাস—দুটি মৌল উপলব্ধির দ্বারা

পলাশবরণ পাল

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মানুষ প্রথম কবে গল্প বলতে শিখল তার যেমন হিসেব নেই, মানুষের প্রথম অংক করার দৃষ্টান্তটিও তেমনি নথিভুক্ত হয়নি। গল্পের জন্ম কবে, এ প্রশ্নের একটিমাত্রই জবাব আছে—মানুষের ইতিহাস যেদিন থেকে আরম্ভ, গল্পের জন্মও সেদিন থেকেই। অংকের জন্ম কবে, এ প্রশ্নেরও উত্তর একটিই—মানুষের ইতিহাস যেদিন থেকে আরম্ভ, অংকের জন্মও সেদিন থেকেই।

কারণ গল্পের আদিম রূপ, বর্ণনা, আর অংকের আদিম রূপ, গণনা—এ দুটিকে মানুষের মনে হয়েছিল পরস্পর-সম্পূরক। একটি ছাড়া অপরটি অসহায়। কোনো জিনিসের পরিচয় অর্ধেক মাত্র পাওয়া যায় কেবলমাত্র একটি উপায়ে সে পরিচয় উদ্ঘাটনের চেষ্টায়।

সেই থেকে বর্ণনা আর গণনা বস্তুর পয়িচয় পারার প্রধান চাবিকাঠি। কোনো জিনিসের পরিচয়, সে তো তার প্রকারগত এবং পরিমাণগত—এই দুই অবস্থার সম্যক উপলব্ধিতেই পাওয়া সম্ভব। আম খেতে পেলো আমরা উল্লসিত হই ঠিকই—তবে সেই সঙ্গে যদি বলা হয় যে আমটি যদিও বেশ বড় কিন্তু বড়ই টক, অথবা না, আমটা মিষ্টি ঠিকই, তবে আমাকে দেওয়া হয়েছে অধ-খানা পিঠি মাত্র, তবে সে উৎসাহের আগুনে ভিজ়ে কষল চাপা পড়ে। তাই আম পেলো তখনই উৎসাহী হই, যখন জানি যে আম মিষ্টি, এবং জানি যে তা যথেষ্ট বেশিই দেওয়া হয়েছে—অর্থাৎ আমার প্রকারগত এবং পরিমাণগত—দুই অবস্থার সঙ্গেই পরিচয়ে সন্তুষ্ট হই আমরা। বর্ণনা আর গণনা তাই একই মুদ্রার এপিঠ-ওপিঠ, একই জিনিসের পরিচয়ের এপাশ আর ওপাশ।

গণনা আর বর্ণনার অভিন্নতার এই উপলব্ধিকৃত্যেই বুদ্ধির প্রথম পরিচয় রেখেছিল মানুষ—সেই মানুষ, যে ক্রমশঃ জীবজগতের বিবর্তনের উচ্চতম ধাপে বহু

বহু দিনের জন্ম প্রতিষ্ঠিত হতে হলেছে—চিরদিনের জন্ম কিনা জানিনা।

অনেকেই মানুষের অসাধারণত্বের প্রথম পরিচয় হিসেবে দেখতে চেয়েছেন উন্নতধরণের হাতিয়ার তৈরী করার ঘটনাটিকে। কিন্তু যে কোনো জীবই তো আত্ম-রক্ষা এবং খাদ্যসংগ্রহের তাগিদে উন্নততর হাতিয়ারের দিকে হাত বাড়ায়। ব্যবহার শেষ পর্যন্ত করতে পারুক বা নাই পারুক, উন্নততর অস্ত্র ব্যবহারের প্রবণতাটুকু তো সব জীবেরই সহজাত। মানুষের এ ব্যাপারে রাতারাতি উন্নতি করার কারণ তার দৈহিক গঠন—অল্পভূমিক ফোরামেন ম্যাগনাম^১ এবং বিস্তৃত শ্রেণীচক্র^২—যার ফলে সে সোজা হয়ে দাঁড়াতে পেরেছিল, পেরেছিল তার দুটি প্রত্যঙ্গকে হাত হিসেবে ব্যবহার করতে। কিন্তু শরীরের এই গঠনে মানুষের বুদ্ধির কোনো পরিচয় পাওয়া যায় না। এ গঠন বিবর্তনের ধারায় পেয়েছে মানুষ। বিবর্তনেরই ধারায় মানুষের পরবর্তী কোনো জীব হয়ত এমন শারীরিক সুবিধা পাবে যাতে মানুষের কোটি বছরের উন্নতিকে সে পার হবে অবলীলায় হাজার বছরে।

হাতিয়ারের উন্নতি তাই মানুষের বুদ্ধির একটা আত্মমরি কোনো প্রকাশ নয়। তেমনি, কেবল বর্ণনা করতে, বা কেবল গণনা করতে শেখাও মানুষের পক্ষে কোনো অসাধারণ কাজ নয়।

পশু-পাখি সবাই-ই নিজেদের মধ্যে ভাবের আদান-প্রদান করে বর্ণনার সাহায্যে। প্রত্যেক জীবেরই প্রতি ডাকের একটা বিশিষ্ট অর্থ আছে, যা কেবল সেই জীব-ই বোঝে। তেমনি মানুষেরও বর্ণনা দেবার একটা নিজস্ব উপায় আছে, এই মাত্র।

তেমনি গণনার ক্ষেত্রেও। প্রত্যেক জীবই কিছুদূর পর্যন্ত গুণতে পারে। অবশ্যই বেশির ভাগ জীবের ক্ষেত্রে এই ক্ষমতা তিন-চারেই সীমাবদ্ধ, কিন্তু কোনো কোনো

জীব আশ্চর্যরকম বড় সংখ্যার হিসেব রাখতে পারে।^{১৩} আমরা তো হরদম সার্কাসে কুকুরের অংক কষার নমুনা দেখি। এক বাঁক যাঁঘাবর পাখি থেকে একটিও যে হারায় না, তাও জানি।

তাই এবার নিঃসংশয়ে আমরা বলতে পারছি যে, মানুষের বুদ্ধি যে অন্যান্য জীবের চেয়ে বেশি, তার প্রথম পরিচয়—হাতিয়ারের উন্নতিতে নয়, বর্ণনার প্রয়োগ নয়, গণনার ব্যবহারে নয়, বর্ণনা ও গণনার পরিপূরকত্বের উপলব্ধিতে।

এই পরিপূরকত্বটুকুই মানুষের মৌল আবিষ্কার, মানুষের প্রথম অসাধারণ সিদ্ধান্ত। এ সিদ্ধান্ত সচেতন বা অচেতন, যে কোনোভাবেই নেওয়া হতে পারে। নেহাৎ অনুমানের ওপর হলেও এ কথা বলা যায় যে, অচেতনভাবেই এসেছিল এ উপলব্ধি। কিন্তু বুদ্ধি, তার প্রকাশ অচেতনভাবে হলেও, চিরকালই নমস্।

কিন্তু মানুষের সিদ্ধান্ত ঐখানেই সীমাবদ্ধ থেকে যেত যদি মানুষ আর একটি অসাধারণ সিদ্ধান্ত না নিতে পারত। মানুষের বর্ণনাক্ষমতা সীমিত থেকে যেত তার খাছ শিকারের বর্ণনায়, গণনাক্ষমতা সীমা পেত সেই শিকার করা হরিণ বা খরগোশ গণনায়, যার সংখ্যা দুই-চারের বেশি হবার কোনো কারণই ছিল না। মারো আর খাও—এই নীতির অনুসরণে জীবন কাটাতে মানুষের এর চেয়ে বেশি আর কিছুই প্রয়োজনীয় ছিল না। বুদ্ধির বিকাশ, এবং বস্তুর পরিচয়দানের দুটি উপায়ের উন্নতি—এ দুয়ের জন্য তাই দ্বিতীয় সিদ্ধান্তটি ছিল অত্যন্ত প্রয়োজনীয়।

এই দ্বিতীয় সিদ্ধান্তটির বীজ নিহিত আছে সমাজ-গঠনে।

প্রশ্ন উঠতে পারে, সমাজগঠন-ও তো হাতিয়ারের উন্নতির মত, একটি বিশেষ অবস্থারই ফলশ্রুতি। এবং এর জন্যও তো দায়ী বিবর্তনের ইতিহাস। কারণ একথা যদি ধরে নেওয়া যায় যে মানুষ নিরাপত্তা এবং খাছ সম্পর্কিত নিশ্চয়তার তাগিদেই প্রথম সমাজ গঠন করেছিল—তবে বলা যায় যে, মানুষের নিরাপত্তার প্রয়োজন হবার কারণ তো এই যে বিবর্তনের ধারায়

প্রাইমেটরা শারীরিক-অস্ত্রসজ্জা বিশেষ পায়নি, আবার তারও মধ্যে মানুষ পেয়েছে সবচেয়ে কম। খাছসম্পর্কিত অনিশ্চয়তার কারণও তো তাই। তাহলে হাতিয়ারের উন্নতিকে আমরা যদি কোনো বিশেষ কৃতিত্বের পরিচায়ক না বলি, তবে সমাজগঠনকেই বা বলব কেন?

ঠিক, দুইটি বিশেষ কারণের ফলাফল, এবং কারণ দুটিও মোটামুটি এক। কিন্তু তফাৎটা এই যে, আত্মরক্ষার জন্য সব প্রাণীই হাতিয়ার বানাত, কিন্তু সমাজ বানাত না। হাতিয়ারের ক্ষেত্রে মানুষের কৃতিত্বটি তাই মৌল উদ্ভাবনের নয়, উন্নততর কাকশিল্পীর। কিন্তু মানুষের চেয়েও অসহায় হওয়া সত্ত্বেও ছাগল বা মুরগি সমাজ-গঠনে উদ্বুদ্ধ হয়নি। মানুষ হয়েছিল।

কিন্তু এতদুসত্ত্বেও একটি প্রশ্ন থেকেই যায়। আমরা তো পিঁপড়ের সমাজবদ্ধ জীবনের কথা শুনেছি, মৌমাছির-ও। তাহলে মানুষের সমাজ ব্যাপারটা আর নতুন কি?

লক্ষ্য করলে দেখা যাবে, প্রত্যেক প্রাণীরই সারাজীবন ধরে কাজ মাত্র দুটি—আত্মরক্ষা এবং বংশরক্ষা। সমস্ত জীবনব্যাপী এ দুটি কাজে সব প্রাণীই খোঁজে প্রকৃতির অনুকূলতা। প্রতিকূল পরিবেশে প্রকৃতির সঙ্গে আপোষ করে তারা। আমরা জানি সাপ বা ভালুক শীতকালে ঘুমায়, কৈচো বর্ষাকালের নরম মাটি না পেলে বাসা তৈরী করে না, বহু সাগরের মাছ ডিম পাড়তে আসে নদীর মিষ্টি জলে। মানুষের কাজ কিন্তু প্রকৃতির সঙ্গে আপোষ করতে গিয়ে থেমে থাকে না। প্রকৃতির প্রতি-কূলতার সঙ্গে সংগ্রাম করে তাকে বশে আনবার চেষ্টা করে মানুষ।

মানবসমাজের বৈশিষ্ট্য তার সামাজিক উৎপাদনের এই সংগ্রামী চরিত্রটিতে। এবং এই সংগ্রামী উপলব্ধি-টুকুই মানুষের দ্বিতীয় মৌল উপলব্ধি।

তাই সমাজগঠনের ঘটনাটি আনকোরা নতুন না হলেও মানুষ তাতে এক নতুন উপলব্ধি যোগ করে নতুন তাৎপর্য দিল। মানুষ যে সমাজ তৈরী করল তা তাই এক নতুন জিনিস।

সমাজ গঠিত হবার পরে, বিচিত্র নতুন বহু সামাজিক

অনুভূতির মুখোমুখি দাঁড়িয়ে মানুষ অনুভব করল যে, তার আবেগ এবং কৌতূহল, বা এক কথায় বলতে পারি চেতনা, কেবলমাত্র আত্মরক্ষা ও বংশবৃদ্ধির ন্যূনতম প্রয়োজনের দাবি মেটাতেই নিঃশেষিত হচ্ছে না। ঐ অবশিষ্ট চেতনাটুকু তখন তার প্রকাশের পথ খুঁজল। বর্ণনা তার গণনা এই দুই প্রাচীন পদ্ধতির ভাঁড়ারে তাই পড়ল টান। সামাজিক প্রয়োজনে উন্নতিসাধন করতে হল তাদের।

আমাদের আদিম যুগের পর্বত বা অরণ্যচারী পূর্ব-পুরুষদের হয়ত কেবল মুখভঙ্গি আর হাতের ইশারায় বর্ণনার কাজ চলে যেত, দু-একটা প্রাথমিক শব্দের প্রয়োজন বড়জোর অনুভূত হত। এ সবের উন্নতিসাধন করে তৈরী হল ভাষা। ভাষা ক্রমশ নানা স্থানে নানা রূপ নিল, আর আজ সভ্যতার অনেকগুলি স্তর পার হয়ে এসে দেখছি বর্ণনার বিচিত্র আয়োজন—অসংখ্য রূপে, অসংখ্য শব্দে চলছে এই বর্ণনা সম্পূর্ণ থেকে সম্পূর্ণতর করার কাজ।

তেমনি হাতের আঙুল, আর খুব বেশি হলে পাথরের গায়ে দু-একটা দাগ—এ দিয়েই গণনার কাজ মিটত আমাদের আদিমতম পূর্বপুরুষদের। তার কত উন্নতি হয়ে তৈরী হল গণিত। আর আজ দেখি গণিত অনেক প্রাগ্রসর, যাকে কোনোদিন দেখিনি তার সম্পর্কেও হাজারো তথ্য বার করে দিচ্ছে গণিত—নিত্যনতুন শাখা প্রশাখায় চলছে সেই গণনা সুক্ষ্ম সুক্ষ্মতর করার কাজ।

গণিত তাই ভাষার-ই পরিপূরক—কারণ বর্ণনা তার গণনার সম্পর্কেও তো তাই ছিল।

কথাটা আশ্চর্য লাগতে পারে, অদ্ভুত শোনাতে পারে, কিন্তু এর চেয়ে সহজ সরল স্বাভাবিক সত্যি কথা দুর্লভ। খুঁটিয়ে দেখলেই আমাদের চোখে পড়বে যে, একটি ভাষায় ভাবপ্রকাশের জন্য যে উপাদানগুলি থাকে, অংকের ক্ষেত্রেও তারা উপস্থিত। অক্ষর নামধারী কতকগুলি চিহ্নের মত এখানে আছে সংখ্যা নামক চিহ্নগুলি। কয়েকটি অক্ষরের সমন্বয়ে একটি শব্দ, কয়েকটি সংখ্যার সমন্বয়ে তেমনি রাশি। আর বাক্য যেমন একটি সম্পূর্ণ অর্থের বাহক, একটি সমীকরণ বা

অসমীকরণ-ও তেমনি। “ $2+2=8$ ”—এটি কি একটি সুস্পষ্ট অর্থযুক্ত সম্পূর্ণ বাক্য নয়? দুই আর দুইয়ে যোগ করলে চার হয়—এই তো এর অর্থ। যোগ চিহ্নটি তো ক্রিয়াপদ, কারণ দুই আর দুইয়ের মধ্যে কী কাজটি করা হচ্ছে, তা তো ঐ চিহ্নটিই বোঝাচ্ছে।*

চিন্তাটা খুব স্বাভাবিক হওয়া উচিত ছিল, কিন্তু দুর্ভাগ্য আমাদের, আদিম মানুষের মত আমরাও সচেতনভাবে এ চিন্তা করতে হিমশিম খাই। এর কারণ কি এই যে, আমাদের দৈনন্দিন জীবনের হাসি-কান্না জাতীয় দৈনিক-মেণ্টগুলি যাদের ভারে বোঝাই থাকে আমাদের ভাষা, তারা অংকের ক্ষেত্রে সম্পূর্ণ অনুপস্থিত? যে কারণেই হোক, অংকের ভাষাকে ‘ভাষা’ হিসেবে উপলব্ধিটা আমাদের স্বাভাবিক হয় না।

আমরা বললাম ‘অংকের ভাষা’। অর্থাৎ গত কিছুক্ষণের বক্তব্য রাখতে গিয়ে ‘ভাষা’ শব্দটিকে ব্যাপকতর অর্থদান করে ফেলেছি আমরা। ভাষা বলতে এখন থেকে বুঝছি বস্তুর পরিচয় প্রকাশে বর্ণনা বা গণনা যে মাধ্যম গ্রহণ করে, তাকে। এই নতুন অর্থের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে আমরা বলতে বাধ্য হচ্ছি যে গণিত-ও একরকমের ভাষা। প্রচলিত অর্থের ভাষা কেবলমাত্র প্রকারগত ভাষা, আর গণিত পরিমাণগত ভাষা।*

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অত্যন্ত স্বাভাবিকভাবেই আমরা ভাবতে শুরু করেছি যে, যে জীব অস্তিত্বের প্রায় আদিম পর্যায়ে এ ধরনের দুটি বিশিষ্ট ভাবনার জন্ম দিল, সে, সভ্যতার পরবর্তী ধাপ-গুলিতে এ জাতীয় অসাধারণত্বের দৃষ্টান্ত রাখবে রাশি রাশি।

কিন্তু বিশ্ব্বয়ের সঙ্গেই আমরা দেখি যে, তা হল না। মানুষের সভ্যতার পরবর্তী ইতিহাস, সমাজ ও ভাষা—এই দুইয়ের পারস্পরিক সহযোগিতা ও প্রভাবের মাধ্যমে ক্রমবিকশিত হবার ইতিহাস মাত্র।

এ উক্তিটির বিস্তৃত এবং উপযুক্ত প্রমাণ দিতে গেলে সভ্যতার সামগ্রিক ইতিহাসেরই উপস্থাপনা প্রয়োজন হয়ে পড়ে। সে বিস্তৃতির মধ্যে না গিয়ে আমরা কয়েকটি বিশিষ্ট সময়ের উদাহরণ আনতে চাই।

তার আগে দুটি কথা। প্রথমত, ভাষার সমস্ত প্রাচীন নিদর্শনই নানা কারণে নষ্ট হয়ে গেছে। স্লগসংখ্যক আবিষ্কৃত নিদর্শনেরও সবগুলির পাঠোদ্ধার হয়নি। অপরদিকে পরিমাণগত ভাষা প্রতি পদক্ষেপে চিহ্ন রেখে গেছে পূর্ববর্তী পদক্ষেপের। তাই পুরাকালীন সভ্যতার সঙ্গে ভাষার যোগাযোগ স্থাপন করতে গিয়ে দ্বিতীয় ধরণের ভাষার ওপরেই নির্ভর করতে হবে আমাদের। মাত্র গত কয়েক হাজার বছরের ইতিহাসেই আমরা দুই ভাষার সম্মিলিত রূপটি দেখতে পাবো।

দ্বিতীয় কথাটি এতক্ষণে বহু পাঠকের মনেই প্রশ্ন হিসেবে দানা বেঁধেছে। তা হল, চিত্রশিল্প বা ভাস্কর্য কেন ভাষার একটি রূপ নয়? তারাতো সুস্পষ্ট অর্থ বহন করে, ভাষার মতনই। এ প্রশ্নের উত্তর হল—শিল্প অবশ্যই ভাষার একটি রূপ, তবে আগেই আমরা যে দু রকমের ভাষার উল্লেখ করেছি, তার বাইরে তৃতীয় কোনো রূপ নয়। বস্তুত চিত্রশিল্প ভাস্কর্যও প্রকারগত ভাষারই একটি অংশ। এখানে লেখা ভাষার মনগড়া চিহ্ন, যাকে আমরা অক্ষর বলি, তা অল্পপস্থিত। তার বদলে এখানে চিহ্নগুলি বর্ণিতব্য বস্তুরই অবিকল অঙ্কিত।* পরিমাণগত ভাষার ক্ষেত্রেও এর একটি ছব্ব প্রতিক্রিয়া আছে—তা হল জ্যামিতি। এইটুকু মনে রেখেই আমরা পূর্বপ্রতিষ্ঠিত আলোচনার পথে পা বাড়াতে পারি।

মানবসভ্যতার ইতিহাসে প্রথম যে ক্ষণটি আমাদের আলোচ্য, তা পশুপালন যুগ।

সামাজিক কাঠামোর বদলের ক্ষেত্রে এই যুগটি চিহ্নিত করা যায়। আসলে, সমাজগঠনের ঘটনাটির দ্বারাই সম্ভবদ মানুষের সামাজিক রূপটি এই সময়েই প্রথম নিঃসংশয়ে প্রকাশিত হল।

তেমনি ভাষার কাঠামোর ক্ষেত্রেও এই যুগটি চিহ্নিত হচ্ছে বর্ণনা ও গণনা থেকে ভাষার উদ্ভবে। গোষা জন্তুর সংখ্যা গুণে রাখবার দরকার পড়ছে মানুষের, সম্পত্তি সম্পর্কিত সচেতনতাও আসছে, বিনিময় পদ্ধতির আভাস পাওয়া যাচ্ছে। এ সবকিছুর মিলিত ফলাফল হিসেবে এল পাটিগণিত। চার নিয়ম, যোগ-বিয়োগ-গুণ-ভাগ-ও এই সময়েরই সন্তান।

এককথায় বলতে পারি, পশুপালন যুগ হল সেই যুগ যখন মানুষের দুই মৌল উপলব্ধির দ্বারা পুষ্ট সভ্য দুটির বাস্তবায়িত রূপ দৃষ্টিগোচর হল।

পশুপালন যুগের পর কৃষি যুগে সভ্যতা আরেকবার বড় বাঁক নিল।

সমাজের ক্ষেত্রে এই বাঁক বিশাল, এবং তার গুরুত্বও অপরিমায়। এই যুগেই মানুষ প্রথম কর্মবিভাগের প্রয়োজন অনুভব করল। এতদিন সবাই ছিল পশুপালক। এবার কৃষিকারী শ্রেণীও তৈরী হল। এই দুই শ্রেণীর ওপর মাতব্বর করবার জন্য এল তৃতীয় একটি শ্রেণী। অর্থাৎ, শ্রেণীহীন সমাজে শ্রেণীবিভাগ হল।

এবং যেহেতু মানুষ এখন সম্পত্তিসচেতন, চাষ করতে গেলে সেই চাষের জমিও তার মেপে রাখা দরকার। পৃথিবী অর্থাৎ জ্যা-এর পরিমিতের জন্য তাই নতুন কৌশল বার হতে লাগল। তৈরী হল ভাষার একটি নতুন শাখা জ্যামিতি।

ধারাবাহিকতার অঙ্গীকার যেহেতু আমরা করিনি, তাই পরবর্তী সন্ধিক্ষণ হিসেবে বেছে নিচ্ছি খ্রীষ্টপূর্ব ষষ্ঠ থেকে তৃতীয় শতককে।

ভাষার সাম্রাজ্যে এই সন্ধিক্ষণের সাড়া পাওয়া গেল ত্রিকোণমিতির সূচনায়। আকাশের চাঁদ-সূর্য গ্রহদের আয়তন ও দূরত্ব নির্ণয়ের প্রচেষ্টায় গণিতের এই শাখাটি এই সময়েই উদ্ভূত ও বিকশিত হল। পিথাগোরাস ও তাঁর অনুগামীদের পেলাম আমরা। অ্যারিস্টার্কাস প্রচণ্ডভাবে নাড়া দিলেন ভূকেন্দ্রিক বিশ্বতত্ত্বকে, জানালেন সূর্যই বিশ্বের কেন্দ্রে। আর ত্রিকোণমিতির বাইরে এসেছিলেন দুই অবিস্মরণীয় প্রতিভা—থালেস, ইউক্লিড—যুক্তিবাদী চিন্তার জনক।

এখানেই শেষ নয়। এবার প্রকারগত ভাষার রূপটিও আমরা দেখতে পাচ্ছি। সূর্য চন্দ্র সম্পর্কিত নিশ্চিত জ্ঞানের ফলে নাড়া খেয়েছে তাদের দৈবী ভূমিকা। প্রকারগত ভাষার অগ্রতম সন্তান দর্শন তাই নতুন পথের সন্ধানী। এই সময়ের প্রচারিত ধর্ম—বুদ্ধ বা কনফুশিয়াসের ধর্ম—ঈশ্বরের কোনো স্থান নেই। দেববন্দনার গণ্ডি থেকে মুক্তি পেয়ে সাহিত্য এখন

মহাকাব্যের বিশাল ক্যানভাসে আঁকছে কোনো বিশাল মানবগোষ্ঠীর জীবনকে। ইলিয়াড ওডিসি থেকে রামায়ণ মহাভারত এই সময়েই লেখা।^৮

আর সামাজিক দিক থেকে এই যুগ অঙ্কুলিনির্দেশ করে একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ শ্রেণী বিরোধের দিকে। তা হল বুদ্ধিজীবী শ্রেণীর সঙ্গে শাসকশ্রেণী ও পুরোহিত শ্রেণীর। শোষিত দুই শ্রেণীর উদ্দেশ্য তখন পৃথক হলেও লক্ষ্য একই—রাজ্যবিস্তার—এক শ্রেণী অর্থের লালসায়, অপর শ্রেণী ধর্মপ্রচারের উন্মত্ততায়। এদের সঙ্গে বুদ্ধিজীবী শ্রেণীর যে সংঘাত অবশ্যস্বাভাবী ছিল তা হয়েছে শেষ পর্যন্ত—এই যুগের চৌহদ্দিতেই আলেক্সান্দ্রিয়ার পাঠাগার ভস্মীভূত হয়ে গেছে সীজারিয় বাহিনীর বর্বরতায়।

ভাষার ক্ষেত্রে এই যুগে যে নতুন সংযোজন ঘটল, তার চর্চা কিন্তু টিঁকল না বেশিদিন। অ্যারিস্টার্কাসের মতবাদ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হতে পারলনা প্লেটো-অ্যারিস্টটলের বিরাট প্রতিভার বিরোধিতায়। বৌদ্ধ বা কনফুশিয় ধর্মের আধিপত্যও স্তিমিত হয়ে এল। খ্রীষ্টিয় দ্বিতীয় শতকের সামান্য আলোকিত অংশের পরই সভ্যতার অন্ধকার যুগ শুরু হল। ভাষার নতুন কোনো বিকাশই হল না পরবর্তী প্রায় চোদ্দ শতাব্দীতে, একমাত্র ভারতবর্ষে ষষ্ঠ শতকের কিছু অবিস্মরণীয় প্রতিভার সমাবেশ ছাড়া। সমাজ-ও আটকে রইল এক জায়গায়—রাজতন্ত্রের নিরঙ্কুশ নিষ্ফলক আধিপত্য চলল।

ষোড়শ সপ্তদশ শতকে এই তমসা থেকে জ্যোতির দিকে গমনের চেষ্টায় সভ্যতার আর একটি সন্ধিক্ষণ সূচিত হল। নবজাগরণের এই বিশাল ও বহুবিস্তৃত কর্মকাণ্ড-ও কিন্তু, আর কিছুই নয়, অন্যান্য সন্ধিক্ষণের মতই, ভাষা ও সমাজের বিরাট পরিবর্তন।

ভাষার ক্ষেত্রে এই সময়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ লক্ষণ দেখা দিল। নতুন যুগের বাণী নিয়ে এলেন নতুন মনীষীরা। তার জন্ম টেলে সাজাতে হল ভাষাকেও। ভাষা হল বহু-বিস্তৃত। ইউরোপ থেকে যাত্রা করে রেনেসাঁসের ঢেউ পৌঁছলো পৃথিবীর সমস্ত প্রান্তে। ভাষার বিপুল বিস্তারের জন্ম জ্ঞানের নানা বিভাগ তৈরী হল। গণিত থেকে জন্ম নিল ভৌতবিজ্ঞান।^৯ প্রকারগত ভাষার অন্ততম ফসল

সাহিত্য অবশ্য আগেই বিভক্ত হয়েছিল গীতিকাব্য-মহাকাব্য-নাট্যকাব্যে, এখন উপন্যাস-ছোটগল্পের ভিত্তি-তৈরী হল।

এই বিভাগীয় পরিবর্তনের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে ভেতরের দিকেও একটা নাড়া পড়েছিল। দূরের জিনিস নয়, আবিস্কাঙ্কিত তো নয়ই—একবারে হাতের কাছে চোখের সামনে যারা আছে, তাদের সম্বন্ধে চিন্তা শুরু হল। পরিমাণগত ভাষা নতুন পথ খুঁজল পরীক্ষালব্ধ জ্ঞানকে মূলধন করে। প্রকারগত ভাষার বহিঃপ্রকাশেও চোখে পড়ল—ঈশ্বর নয়, দেবোত্তম মানুষ নয়, রাজা নয়—স্বাধারণ মানুষ।

সমাজের বদলটিও হল গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। যন্ত্রবিপ্লবের অনিবার্য ফলস্বরূপ এসেছে ক্যাপিটালিস্ট শ্রেণী, এসেছে শ্রমিক শ্রেণী। রাজতন্ত্রের শেষ দিন ঘোষণা করতে শোনা গেছে গণতন্ত্রের পদধ্বনি।

উদাহরণ বাড়ানো যায়, কিন্তু এতক্ষণের আলোচনায় একটা জিনিস প্রায় পরিষ্কার যে, একদিকে মানুষের সমাজবদ্ধ রূপটির পরিবর্তন ঘটছে, অন্যদিকে তার ভাষা নতুন নতুন বাঁক নিচ্ছে—সমস্ত সভ্যতার ইতিহাস এই ছুটি, এবং কেবলমাত্র এই ছুটি ঘটনার বিশ্লেষণেই আলোচনা করা সম্ভব।

শুধু সম্ভব নয়, সম্ভব-ও বটে। কারণ পরিবর্তন—যদি তা বিবর্তন না হয়—অবশ্যই চিন্তাপ্রসূত। সভ্যতার দিকপরিবর্তনগুলি, স্পষ্টতই, বিবর্তনের লক্ষণাক্রান্ত নয়, কারণ আমরা অত্যন্ত নিভুলভাবেই অঙ্কুলিনির্দেশ করতে পেরেছি এমন কিছু সময়ের দিকে, যখন সভ্যতা অকস্মাৎ প্রচণ্ড বাঁক নিয়েছে। তবে এই পরিবর্তনের মূলে জীবন সম্পর্কিত যে চিন্তা, তা এল কোথা থেকে?

ছুভাবে আসতে পারে এই চিন্তা—বিচ্ছিন্নভাবে কোনো একটি মানুষের মস্তিষ্কে, অথবা সামগ্রিকভাবে সমাজের কোনো একটি শ্রেণীর মধ্যে। প্রথম ক্ষেত্রে, সেই বিচ্ছিন্ন মানুষটি তাঁর চিন্তা ছড়িয়ে দিতে চাইবেন সবার মধ্যে, এবং যোগসূত্র খুঁজবেন। এই যোগসূত্র যেহেতু ভাষা, তাই আসলে তিনি সম্বন্ধ করবেন ভাষাকেই। দ্বিতীয় ক্ষেত্রে, অবশ্যই, চিন্তার ক্ষেত্র অত

জীব আশ্চর্যকর বড় সংখ্যার হিসেব রাখতে পারে।^৩ আমরা তো হরদম সার্কাসে কুকুরের অংক কষার নমুনা দেখি। এক বাঁক যাঁঘাবর পাখি থেকে একটিও ঘে হারায় না, তাও জানি।

তাই এবার নিঃসংশয়ে আমরা বলতে পারছি যে, মানুষের বুদ্ধি যে অন্যান্য জীবের চেয়ে বেশি, তার প্রথম পরিচয়—হাতিয়ারের উন্নতিতে নয়, বর্ণনার প্রয়োগ নয়, গণনার ব্যবহারে নয়, বর্ণনা ও গণনার পরিপূরকত্বের উপলব্ধিতে।

এই পরিপূরকত্বটুকুই মানুষের মৌল আবিষ্কার, মানুষের প্রথম অসাধারণ সিদ্ধান্ত। এ সিদ্ধান্ত সচেতন বা অচেতন, যে কোনোভাবেই নেওয়া হতে পারে। নেহাৎ অনুমানের ওপর হলেও এ কথা বলা যায় যে, অচেতনভাবেই এসেছিল এ উপলব্ধি। কিন্তু বুদ্ধি, তার প্রকাশ অচেতনভাবে হলেও, চিরকালই নম্র।

কিন্তু মানুষের সিদ্ধান্ত ঐখানেই সীমাবদ্ধ থেকে যেত যদি মানুষ আর একটি অসাধারণ সিদ্ধান্ত না নিতে পারত। মানুষের বর্ণনক্ষমতা সীমিত থেকে যেত তার খাড়া শিকারের বর্ণনায়, গণনক্ষমতা সীমা পেত সেই শিকার করা হরিণ বা খরগোশ গণনায়, যার সংখ্যা দুই-চারের বেশি হবার কোনো কারণই ছিল না। মারো আর খাও—এই নীতির অনুসরণে জীবন কাটাতে মানুষের এর চেয়ে বেশি আর কিছুই প্রয়োজনীয় ছিল না। বুদ্ধির বিকাশ, এবং বস্তুর পরিচয়দানের দুটি উপায়ের উন্নতি—এ দুয়ের জন্য তাই দ্বিতীয় সিদ্ধান্তটি ছিল অত্যন্ত প্রয়োজনীয়।

এই দ্বিতীয় সিদ্ধান্তটির বীজ নিহিত আছে সমাজ-গঠনে।

প্রশ্ন উঠতে পারে, সমাজগঠন-ও তো হাতিয়ারের উন্নতির মত, একটি বিশেষ অবস্থারই ফলশ্রুতি। এবং এর জন্যও তো দায়ী বিবর্তনের ইতিহাস। কারণ একথা যদি ধরে নেওয়া যায় যে মানুষ নিরাপত্তা এবং খাড়া সম্পর্কিত নিশ্চয়তার তাগিদেই প্রথম সমাজ গঠন করেছিল—তবে বলা যায় যে, মানুষের নিরাপত্তার প্রয়োজন হবার কারণ তো এই যে বিবর্তনের ধারায়

প্রাইমেটরা শারীরিক-অস্ত্রসজ্জা বিশেষ পায়নি, আবার তারও মধ্যে মানুষ পেয়েছে সবচেয়ে কম। খাড়া সম্পর্কিত অনিশ্চয়তার কারণও তো তাই। তাহলে হাতিয়ারের উন্নতিকে আমরা যদি কোনো বিশেষ কৃতিত্বের পরিচায়ক না বলি, তবে সমাজগঠনকেই বা বলব কেন?

ঠিক, দুইটি বিশেষ কারণের ফলাফল, এবং কারণ দুটিও মোটামুটি এক। কিন্তু তফাৎটা এই যে, আত্মরক্ষার জন্য সব প্রাণীই হাতিয়ার বানাত, কিন্তু সমাজ বানাত না। হাতিয়ারের ক্ষেত্রে মানুষের কৃতিত্বটি তাই মৌল উদ্ভাবনের নয়, উন্নততর কারুশিল্পীর। কিন্তু মানুষের চেয়েও অসহায় হওয়া সত্ত্বেও ছাগল বা মুরগি সমাজ-গঠনে উদ্বুদ্ধ হয়নি। মানুষ হয়েছিল।

কিন্তু এতদসত্ত্বেও একটি প্রশ্ন থেকেই যায়। আমরা তো পিঁপড়ের সমাজবদ্ধ জীবনের কথা শুনেছি, মৌমাছির-ও। তাহলে মানুষের সমাজ ব্যাপারটা আর নতুন কি?

লক্ষ্য করলে দেখা যাবে, প্রত্যেক প্রাণীরই সারাজীবন ধরে কাজ মাত্র দুটি—আত্মরক্ষা এবং বংশরক্ষা। সমস্ত জীবনব্যাপী এ দুটি কাজে সব প্রাণীই খোঁজে প্রকৃতির অনুকূলতা। প্রতিকূল পরিবেশে প্রকৃতির সঙ্গে আপোষ করে তারা। আমরা জানি সাপ বা ভালুক শীতকালে ঘুমায়, কেঁচো বর্ষাকালের নরম মাটি না পেলে বাসা তৈরী করে না, বহু সাগরের মাছ ডিম পাড়তে আসে নদীর মিষ্টি জলে। মানুষের কাজ কিন্তু প্রকৃতির সঙ্গে আপোষ করতে গিয়ে থেমে থাকে না। প্রকৃতির প্রতিকূলতার সঙ্গে সংগ্রাম করে তাকে বশে আনবার চেষ্টা করে মানুষ।

মানবসমাজের বৈশিষ্ট্য তার সামাজিক উৎপাদনের এই সংগ্রামী চরিত্রটিতে। এবং এই সংগ্রামী উপলব্ধিটুকুই মানুষের দ্বিতীয় মৌল উপলব্ধি।

তাই সমাজগঠনের ঘটনাটি আনকোরা নতুন না হলেও মানুষ তাতে এক নতুন উপলব্ধি যোগ করে নতুন তাৎপর্য দিল। মানুষ যে সমাজ তৈরী করল তা তাই এক নতুন জিনিস।

সমাজ গঠিত হবার পরে, বিচিত্র নতুন বহু সামাজিক

“জংশন ষ্টেশনে”

যতীন্দ্রমোহন সেনগুপ্তের একটি কবিতা

তপোব্রত ঘোষ

এক

কাচ বার্তা

মহাভারতে বনপর্বে বক্রপী ধর্ম যুধিষ্ঠিরকে প্রশ্ন করেছিলেন ‘কাচ বার্তা’, উত্তরে যুধিষ্ঠির বলেছিলেন :

“অস্মিন্ মহামোহময়ে কটাহে
সূর্য্যগ্নিনা রাত্রিদিনেন্ধনেন।
মাসাতু দর্বী পরিঘট্টনেন,
ভূতানি কালঃ পচতীতি বার্তা ॥”

অর্থাৎ, এই মহামোহময় কটাহে মহাকাল প্রাণীদের দহন করছে, সূর্য তার অগ্নি, রাত্রি ও দিন তার ইন্ধন, মাস ও ঋতু তার আলোড়নের হাতা,—এই বার্তা।

মরুপাথিক কবি যতীন্দ্রনাথ সেনগুপ্তের প্রথম পর্বের কাব্যে এই নির্ভুর, নির্মম ও নির্মায়িক মহাকাল হয়েছেন অশ্রুসাগরমুখ নীলকণ্ঠ শিব। সেই অগ্নিশীর্ষ রুদ্রপুরুষের সন্তোষাচন উচ্চারণ করে বিংশ শতকের দ্বিতীয় দশকে তাঁর কবিজীবনের সূত্রপাত। ‘মরীচিকা’, ‘মরুশিখা’ ও ‘মরুমায়ী’ তাঁর প্রথম পর্বের তিনটি কাব্যগ্রন্থ। কাব্যের এই নামকরণগুলিই যতীন্দ্রনাথের সিসৃক্ষৃষ্টি অনন্যতার প্রতীক। তাঁর আরাধ্য দেবতার ললাটবহ্নি জীবনের যে সংগতিসৌম্যমহীন ছিন্নভিন্ন রূপটিকে উদ্ভাসিত করে তোলে, বিশ্বসমুদ্রমহনের রূপকল্পের আধারে কবিতায় তারই ভাষ্য রচনা করেছেন তিনি :

“চলে মন্থন, চোখের উপরে আজও মন্থন চলে

ভীম-নর্ভনে গুরু-গর্জনে কল্লোল-কোলাহলে।

ভরিয়া আকাশ মহাগণ্ডুষ উচ্ছল নীল বিষ,

হাঁকে ধূর্জটি—‘কে কোথায় চিরদুখনিশা বঞ্চিস ?

তবু মন্থন চলে মন্থন অযাচিত অকারণ

জীব সাথে শিব বিষ-নির্জীব কেবা করে নিবারণ ?”

(‘সিন্ধুতীরে’ : ‘মরুশিখা’)

এই বিষমমুহুরান্ত কবিদৃষ্টিতে জীবনের সবটুকুই অর্থহীন, অকারণ, মিথ্যে মায়ামাত্র। জীবন সম্পর্কে কোনও ইতিবাচী প্রসন্ন ফলশ্রুতিই তাঁর কাছে স্বীকৃতি পায়নি :

‘জগৎ একটা হেঁয়ালি,

যত বা নিয়ম তত অনিয়ম, গোজামিল খামখেয়ালি।’

(‘ঘুমের ঘোরে’ : ‘মরীচিকা’)

মানুষের জীবন তাই এক অনিশেষ যন্ত্রণার ইতিহাস। ষাঁরা আনন্দবাদী তাঁদের উদ্দেশ্যে যতীন্দ্রনাথের বিখ্যাত শ্লেষোক্তি :

“চেরাপুঞ্জির থেকে

একখানি মেঘ ধার দিতে পার মরুসাহারার বুকে ?”

(‘ঘুমের ঘোরে’ : ‘মরীচিকা’)

রবীন্দ্রনাথ যেখানে বলেন সীমার সঙ্গে অসীমের মিলন সাধনের পালাই তাঁর কাব্যের একমাত্র পালা, যেখানে আকাশের অসীম ব্যাপকতায় তিনি আলোয় আলোয় মুক্তি লাভ করেন, সেখানে যতীন্দ্রনাথ ঐ অসীমকে সোজাশুজি অস্বীকার করেন। আকাশ তাঁর কাছে ‘চারিপাশে ঘেরা অসীমের বেড়া নীলের প্রাচীর খাড়া’। আত্মবাদীদের প্রতিও তিনি বিজ্ঞপ করেছেন তাঁর বহু কবিতায়। কবি সেই অগ্নিবাহির সমিধসংগ্রহ করেছেন যা দুঃখের নগ্নরূপকে অব্যবহৃত করবে যেখানে আমারও উপলব্ধি করব : “সকল আলাল সর দীপ্তির পরিণাম শুধু ছাই।”

দুই

কিমাশ্চর্যম

ধর্মের দ্বিতীয় প্রশ্ন ‘কিমাশ্চর্যম’; উত্তরে যুধিষ্ঠির বলেছিলেন :

“অহনুহনি ভূতানি গচ্ছন্তি যমমন্দিরং।

নোষাঃ স্থিরত্বমিচ্ছন্তি কিমাশ্চর্যমতঃ পরম ॥”

অর্থাৎ, মৃত্যু মানুষের দৈনন্দিন অভিজ্ঞতা অথচ লিপ্সু মানুষ অনন্ত জীবনের কামনা করে, এর চেয়ে বড়ো বিশ্বাসের বস্তু আর কি ?

যতীন্দ্রনাথের প্রথম পর্বের কাব্যত্রয়ী তাঁর যৌবন-দিনের সৃষ্টি। কিন্তু বিশ্বায়কভাবে প্রেমামুভবের কবিতা এই তিনটি কাব্যে প্রায় অনুপস্থিত। ঋতুরঙ্গের মধ্যে বৈশাখ আর পৌষ-মাঘই তাঁর প্রিয়, প্রেমিকার স্মৃতি আর মৃত্যু সতীর স্মৃতি দেখানে একই স্বত্রে জড়িত। সেখানে “রূপশ্রাশানে বসি চাইমাথা” রুদ্রদেবের ঐকুটি বাসন্তী প্রেমের সব চাপলাকে স্তব্ধ করে দিয়েছে। তাই ‘মিলন মালিকা’ পরিহিতা নারীও তাঁর কবিতায় মুহূর্তের মধ্যে “সগচ্ছিন্ন শিশুকুমুমের কচিমুণ্ডের মালা” পরিহিতা রক্তবিভূষণা মহাকালী হয়ে ওঠে।

কিন্তু এহ বাহ্য। কবিজীবনের দ্বিতীয় পর্যায়ের ফদল “সায়ম”, “ত্রিযামা” ও “নিশান্তিকা”য় কবিমনের একটি সুস্পষ্ট স্বরাস্তর ঘটে গেছে। ‘জীবন জিজ্ঞাসা’ গ্রন্থের “কবিতা ও বৈরাগ্য” শীর্ষক প্রবন্ধে মোহিতলাল লিখেছেন : “অনেক কাব্যে দেখা যায় কবি যেন সৃষ্টি চাতুরীর বিরুদ্ধে ক্রমাগত অভিযোগ করিয়াছেন—এ রূপের রস তাঁহার পানপাত্রে বিষকটু হইয়া উঠিয়াছে, এজন্য তাঁহার কাব্যে সৃষ্টি বিধানের প্রতি শ্লেষ বিদ্রূপের অবধি নাই। তাহা হইতে আমরা যেন মনে না করি, ইহাই কাব্যের বৈরাগ্যরস। যেন ভুলিয়া না যাই যে, আত্মনাদের কারণও প্রবল আদক্তি, তাহা না হইলে তিনি কবিতা লিখিতেন না;” যতীন্দ্রনাথের দ্বিতীয় পর্যায়ের কাব্যে ঐ “বিষকটু পানপাত্র” ধীরে ধীরে এক অনায়াসিতপূর্ব মাধুর্যের রস সুরভিত হয়ে উঠেছে। শিব নীলকণ্ঠ আবার শিব আত্মভোলা সদাহাস্যময়, চাঁপাফুল তাঁর পূজার উপচার। ‘সায়ম’এর প্রথম কবিতা ‘পারুলের আচ্ছানে’ কবি সেই চম্পার জাগরণ গীতি গেয়েছেন। ‘সায়ম’রচনাকালে কবির বয়স পঁয়তাল্লিশের কাছাকাছি। যৌবন কেটে গিয়ে প্রাবীণ্যের সীমায় কবি উত্তীর্ণ হয়েছেন। শুধু যে মানসীর যৌবনই বার্ষিকো শিথিল হয়েছে তা নয় কবির নিজের চিরদিনের সাথী দেহটিও বলি-রেখায় সমাকীর্ণ। অপগত যৌবনের অধিকাংশ কবিতাই

অবহেলিত দেহলাবণ্য ও নিষ্পেষিত প্রেমামুভবের বেদনাদীর্ঘ স্মৃতিসুধায় ভরা। মহাকালের বামমুখটি তিনি এককাল দেখেছিলেন, জীবনের বৈকালীতে অগ্নিষ্ট দক্ষিণ মুখটি দেখতে পেরে কবি নত হষেছেন আত্মনিবেদনে। ‘ত্রিযামা’র ‘সমাধান’ কবিতায় কবি অনুভব করেছেন নীলকণ্ঠ শিব আর তাঁর তপস্যাভঙ্গকারী মীনকেতু একই সত্যের দুটি দিক। যৌবনে যিনি এসেছিলেন ভাস্কর্য্য উদাসীন দুঃখী শিবের বেশে, সায়ম্বে তিনিই “পীত উত্তরী-পিনক্লতনু” ফুলধনুতে সাজিয়ে সূর্যাস্তের বিদায়ী আলোয় শেষ রঙের খেলা খেলছেন।

কিন্তু তত্ত্ব আর জীবন এক সূত্রে সংগৃহীত নয়। যে দেহটি ধীরে ধীরে কালের চক্রে পিষ্ট হচ্ছে, সেই দেহটিই একদিন যৌবন লাভণ্যে ভরে উঠেছিল, তাকে আর কোনদিন মানুষ পাবে না। যদি আত্মবাদীদের মতও স্বীকার করতে হয় যে দেহের মৃত্যু হলেও দেহী অমৃতায়-মান, তবু ঘোর কাটে না। কারণ এই বিশেষ দেহটিকে তো আর পাওয়া যাবে না। এই কাল্য মানুষের ‘অহং’ এর কাল্য। সেই কাল্য ঘনীভূত হয়েছে ‘সায়ম্’কাব্যের ‘জংশন স্টেশনে’ কবিতায়। মোহিতলালের ‘বিশ্বরঙ্গী’ কাব্যের ‘মৃত্যুশোক’ কবিতায় একটি বিশেষ দেহ হারানোর বেদনা অসামান্য রূপদী বাণীরূপ আশ্রয় করে আত্মপ্রকাশ করেছে। কিন্তু, ভূবিনয় না হলে বলি, যতীন্দ্রনাথের ‘জংশন স্টেশনে’ কবিতাটির কাছে ‘মৃত্যুশোক’ ও যেন ম্লান। একটিমাত্র মানবদেহ হারানোর বেদনা এই কবিতাটিতে রূপকল্পে, ইঙ্গিতে, উল্লেখনে ও অভিনব প্রতীকোৎসারণে রূপ ধরেছে, এবং যতীন্দ্রনাথের সমস্ত শ্রেষ্ঠ কবিতার মধ্যে একটি অন্যতম স্থান অধিকার করেছে। কবিতাটির শীর্ষনাম থেকেই অনুমেয় যে জীবনের নশ্বরতা ও চিরচলিফুত্তা কবিতাটিতে ভাষারূপ লাভ করেছে রেলস্টেশনের পটভূমিকায়।

তিন

চলচ্ছবির এই যে মূর্তিখানি

এখানে রবীন্দ্রনাথকে একটু স্মরণ করতে হয়। একটি স্টেশনে রাত্রি কাটিয়ে পথিক যেমন মধ্যপথে স্টেশনে

অপেক্ষা করে তারপর নতুন ট্রেনে নতুন ঠিকানায় যাত্রা করে কাঁজিত গন্তব্যে, তেমনি মানুষ এক দেহ থেকে দেহান্তরে জন্ম থেকে জন্মান্তরে কাল থেকে কালান্তরে ছুটে চলে। রবীন্দ্রনাথ ‘নবজাতক’ কাব্যের ‘ইন্টেশনে’ এবং ‘সেঁজুতি’ কাব্যের ‘তীর্থযাত্রিণী’ কবিতায় এই একই উপমা-সূত্রে ষ্টেশনের রূপকল্পটি গ্রহণ করেছেন। ‘তীর্থযাত্রিণী’ কবিতায় বলছেন :

“ভোর হতে ধৈর্য ধরি বসি ইন্টেশনে
অস্পষ্ট ভাবনা আসে মনে,
আর কোন ইন্টেশনে আছে যেন আর কোন ঠাই
যেথা সব বার্থতাই
আপনায়
হারানো অর্ধেরে ফিরে পায়,
যেথা গিয়ে ছায়।

কোন এক রূপ ধরি পায় যেন কোন এক কায়।’
জীবনের এই সন্ধিস্থলে যৌবন হারানোর বেদনাও অস্পষ্ট নয়। যে যৌবন একদা মধুমদিরার রসে স্নিগ্ধ ছিল, আজ :

“সে রসের রিক্তপাত্রে আজ শুষ্ক অবহেলা
মধুপশুজনহীন যেন ক্রান্ত হেমন্তের বেলা।”

১৯৩৭ সালে রচিত এই কবিতাটির সমকালে লেখা হয় ‘নবজাতকের’ ‘ইন্টেশন’ কবিতাটি। ষ্টেশনের প্রেক্ষাপটে এখানেও কবি জীবনের নিত্যপরিবর্তিত রূপটিকে লক্ষ্য করেছেন। এইসময়ে লেখা ‘সেঁজুতি’র ‘পরিচয়’ ও ‘পালের নৌকা’ কবিতায় সেই চলমান জীবনরূপ পরিষ্কৃত হ’য়েছে নৌকার রূপপ্রতীকে, নৌকা তখন ‘মহাকালের তরী’। ঐ গ্রন্থের ‘ঘরছাড়া’ কবিতায় ‘টাক্সি’ ও ‘ষ্টেশনের’ রূপক ছুটি একই উদ্দেশ্যে গৃহীত হ’য়েছে। স্বভাবতই মনে হয় যে রবীন্দ্রকাব্যের এই পর্যায়ে নশ্বর দেহজীবনের অনিবার্য ক্ষয় ভাবরূপ লাভ করেছে ‘ষ্টেশন’, ‘নৌকা’ ইত্যাদির রূপকল্পে। আর রবীন্দ্রকাব্যের শ্রদ্ধাশীল পাঠক যতীন্দ্রনাথের কবিতায় যে এই রূপকল্প সহজেই গৃহীত হ’বে, এ অনুমান অসংগত নয়। ‘জংশন ষ্টেশনে’ কবিতাটি লেখা হয় ১৩৪৬ সালের মাঘ মাসে।

চার

দেহ মোর ভেসে যায়

আগেই বলেছি শীত দুঃখবাদী কবির প্রিয় ঋতু। সেই প্রথম জীবনে ‘মরোচিকা’র ‘শেষ যাত্রী’ কবিতার কবি বলেছিলেন : “কনকনে এই শীতের হাওয়া/ অনেকটা মোর আছে সওয়া।” ‘শীত’ কবিতায় “কর্মহীন নির্মম নির্বেদ” ভরা শীত উপমিত হয়েছে কবির আরাধ্য শবাসনে সমাসীন তপঃক্লিষ্ট রুদ্রদেবের সঙ্গে। ‘জংশন ষ্টেশনে’ রচনার মাত্র দু’মাস আগে লেখা ‘কচিডাব’ কবিতায় বৃদ্ধ ফেরিওয়ালার বেশে কবির আরাধ্য নটরাজ এসেছেন ‘দারুণ শীতের সাঁঝে’। ‘জংশন ষ্টেশনে’ কবিতাটিও উন্মোচিত হয়েছে শীতের সকালে :

“মাঘের প্রভাত
উষান্নান সারি ছাড়িছে কুহেলিশাড়ি
পূর্বানদীতটে। চম্পাপীত ক্ষণনগ্ন বৃকে
ঘুরায়ে জড়িয়ে নীল জরির আঁচল,
স্মিতমুখে চলে গেল।”

হয়তো এই মাঘ মাসের সকাল প্রথমেই “শীর্ণ জরাজীর্ণ বিবর্ণ নির্বেদময়” রুদ্রদেবের একটি প্রতীকব্যাঞ্জনা সৃষ্টি করে যা পরে পরিস্ফুট হ’য়েছে ষ্টেশনের অনতিদূরের প্রান্তরে “নৃত্যপর নটেশের ডগ্বর”র মতো সাঁওতালী নাচে। হ’তে পারে এই শীত যৌবন-উত্তীর্ণ কবির বার্ষিক্যের প্রতীক, যা সমস্থানীয় পংক্তি, পূর্বে উদ্ধৃত ‘সেঁজুতি’র “মধুপশুজনহীন যেন ক্রান্ত হেমন্তের বেলা”র মধ্যে আভাসিত।

কিন্তু এহ বাহ্য। মাঘের প্রভাতের উপমান এখানে এক তরুণী নারী যাকে মোহিতলালের কবিভাষার প্রতিধ্বনি করে বলা যায় ‘মিথ্যা সনাতনী’। সেই তরুণী গত রাত্রির কুয়াশার শাড়িটিকে নির্মমভাবে তাগ করে নতুন শাড়ির আঁচল জড়িয়ে “স্মিতমুখে” চলে গেল। জীবনও তাই। বহুদিনের আশ্রয় দেহকে যে এই ভাবেই তাগ করে চলে যায় নতুনের উদ্দেশ্যে, ফিরেও তাকায় না। লক্ষণীয় “স্মিতমুখ” শব্দটি। ভাগ্যানিয়ন্তা এই নির্মমতা সম্পর্কে অচেতন, তাই তিনি স্মিতহাস্যে উজ্জল।

মানুষের বেদনার সঙ্গে তাঁর কোন সহমর্মিতার যোগসূত্র নেই।

এরপরেই কবির প্রশ্ন, যে ট্রেনকে তিনি ছেড়ে এলেন, সেই ট্রেনটির এক রাত্রির স্মৃতি কি তাঁকে বেদনা দেয়? বেদনা যে দেয়, তা ধ্বনিরূপেই প্রকাশিত:

“দুর্ঘট-বর্ধর-ঘৃষ্ট

রজনীর লোহপথে যেবা

গতির উৎক্ষেপ মাঝে

স্থিতির আরাম দিল মোরে,

বাথা কি বাজিছে বুকে ছাড়িতে তাহারে?”

“দুর্ঘট-বর্ধর-ঘৃষ্ট” বাক্যটিতে গতরাত্রির ট্রেনের যাত্রিক শব্দ স্পন্দিত, নির্দোষিত হয়েছে, তা কবির স্রুতির কাছে নিত্যসজীব। আর বিগতের স্মৃতির আলোয় কবি তাকিয়েছেন সমাগত পটভূমিকার দিকে:

“অথবা,—

লাগিয়াছে ভাল নিদ্রাহীন রাত্রিশেষে

যাত্রীময় জংশন ষ্টেশনে

কঠিন কঙ্করকীর্ণ এ অপরিচয়?

প্রান্তের কাঁটাতারে কুসুমাক্ত বিদেশিনী লতা।”

“কঠিনকঙ্করকীর্ণ” শব্দটির অনুপ্রাস বাংকারে ও দীর্ঘ রেশে মরুময় জীবনের প্রতিটি তীক্ষ্ণ উপলক্ষও আরও শাণিত হয়ে ওঠে, সেই কাঁটার মধ্য দিয়েই জড়িয়ে ওঠে একটি ফুলের লতা। এখানে আবার মনে পড়ে পূর্বে উদ্ধৃত ধর্মের দ্বিতীয় প্রশ্ন “কিমাশ্চর্যম্”—এর উত্তরে যুধিষ্ঠিরের বক্তব্যটি। বহু মৃত্যু প্রত্যক্ষ করার পরও মানুষ জিজীবিষু, ঠিক ঐ কণ্টকবিন্দু পুষ্পিত লতার মতই। পরমুহুর্তে কবি তাকিয়েছেন নৃত্যরতা সাঁওতালী মেয়ের দিকে। কবির কাছে সেই মেয়ে যেন “নৃত্যপর নটেশের ডম্বরু”। এই অভিনব উপমান আমাদের বিস্মিত করে। ‘মরীচিকা’র ‘শিবের গাজন’ কবিতায় কবি রুদ্রপুরুষের “ডম্বরু ডিমি মিশায় বিধাণে” ধ্বংসনৃত্যের চিত্র এঁকেছিলেন। প্রকৃতির সহজ সৌন্দর্যের মধ্যেও যে কবিত্বটি সেই ধ্বংস নৃত্যকে প্রত্যক্ষ করে, তার অসামান্যতা সম্পর্কে আমি নিঃসন্দেহ।

এই পটভূমিকায় দাঁড়িয়ে কবি উপলব্ধি করেছেন যে

তিনি এই সব সুন্দর কিন্তু খণ্ডিত দৃশ্যপর্যায়ের কোনটিকেই ভালোবাসেন নি। সব প্রেমই তাঁর সঞ্চিত হ’য়ে আছে বুকের গভীরে: “সে প্রেম কি কুপনের মত সঞ্চয় রাখিছ নিজ বুকে?” এরপরেই কবি বলেছেন:

“আমার ট্রেনের বার্তা নিঃশব্দ সংকেতে,

হয়তো বহিয়া আসে তড়িতের তার!

সে বার্তা জানেনা ঐ নীলকণ্ঠ পাখী

তারে বসি’ খেতেছে যে দোলা

পরম আরামে।”

আবার বলি কবিতাটিতে প্রতিটি দৃশ্যই, রূপকলক্ষণাক্রান্ত এক একটি বস্তু থেকে বিচ্ছুরিত হয় নানা ব্যঞ্জনার অর্থস্ফুট রহস্য। ট্রেনের নিঃশব্দ বার্তার মতই জীবনের আনন্দময় মুহূর্তটিতে হঠাৎ মৃত্যু তার গুণন মোচন করে এগিয়ে আসে। মানুষের এই সর্বনাশ প্রকৃতির প্রসন্নতাকে এতটুকুও স্মান করে না—তাই নীলকণ্ঠ পাখী পরম আরামে দোল খেয়ে যায়। কিন্তু “নীলকণ্ঠ” শব্দটির কি অর্থান্তর থাকতে পারে না? ‘মরীচিকা’র ‘প্রেমের স্পর্শ’ কবিতায় কবি বলেছেন: “অসীম ব্যাপিয়া নীল মরণের সাগরে/কে ডুবায় দিল রে জগৎ?” ‘ত্রিযামা’র ‘রোগশয্যা’র শেষ পংক্তিতেও কবির চোখে মৃত্যুমদমত্ত মহাজীবনের রূপ ফুটে উঠেছে: “আকাশ নিতান্ত নীল মৃত্যুমদিরায়,/জীবনের নেশা কাঁপে তারায় তারায়।” ‘ত্রিযামা’র ‘বিচ্ছেদ’ কবিতায় সত্ত্ববিপত্ত্বিক এক গ্রাম্য বুদ্ধ ভগ্নকণ্ঠে কবিকে জিজ্ঞাসা করেছে যে সে এখন কি করবে। উত্তরহীন এই আত্মির মধ্যেই কবি দেখেছেন “অকূর্ণ নীল অশেষ আকাশ,/উড়ে চলে নীলকণ্ঠ।” বোঝা যায় যে নীলরঙ কবির চোখে মৃত্যুর রঙ এবং “নীলকণ্ঠ” শব্দটি কবির উপাস্য মৃত্যুঞ্জয় শিবের একটি নিগূঢ় আভাস দান করে।

এরপরে জংশন ষ্টেশনের ওয়েটিংরূমে অপেক্ষমান কবি তাকান সামনের আয়নাটির দিকে। বহু নারীর ছায়া চকিতে ফুটে ওঠে আর মিলিয়ে যায়। কিন্তু কবির অস্বীকৃতি এই চকিতছায়াময়ীদের মধ্যে নেই। সে তবে কোথায়?

“সহসা সমুখে দেখি,

মুকুর হইতে মোর মুখপানে চেয়ে—

দাঁড়ায়ে সে রয়েছে একাকী,...

কবি নিজের মধ্যেই খুঁজে পেয়েছেন নিজের প্রিয়তমাকে। আরও স্পষ্ট করে বলতে গেলে বলতে হয় এই চির প্রেমের নায়ক কবির প্রাণ, নায়িকা কবিরই দেহ। দু’য়ের মিলনেই একটি সজীব মানুষের সৃষ্টি। কবির সমগ্র অন্তিমে দেহ ও প্রাণের ঐ অচিন্ত্য ভেদাভেদ তাঁকে বাঁচিয়ে রেখেছে:

“ওই তনু মম,

কখন প্রথম পেলু তারে—

জননীর জঠর আধারে,

নাহি পড়ে মনে।...

অন্ধ অনুরাগে

জড়ায়ে যে দিল কণ্ঠে মোর

সহস্র স্নায়ুর জালে রচিত জীবনমালা।

সেইক্ষণে

বুকে বুক মুখে মুখ

লভিলাম চিরপরিচয়।”

“বুকে বুক মুখে মুখ” পংক্তিটি স্মরণ করায় জ্ঞানদাসের অনুরাগের একটি পদ ;

“হিয়ার উপর হৈতে শেজে না ছোঁয়ায়।

বুকে বুকে মুখে মুখে রজনী গোঁড়ায় ॥”

রাধা ও কৃষ্ণের অনুরাগের অনুশঙ্গে বিধ্বত হওয়ায় দেহ ও প্রাণের এই নিবিড় আল্পেষ বিশাল মহিমা লাভ করে। এই প্রেম চলে এসেছে অনাদিকালের হৃদয়-উৎস থেকে :

“সেই হ’তে উভয়ের যাত্রা শুরু হ’ল

সুদীর্ঘ পথের।...

আজ মোরা অভিন্ন এমন এহেন তনুয়,

নিঃসাড় হইয়া গেছে প্রেম-অনুভূতি।

রূপহীন পিপাসিতে দিয়াছে সে রূপ,—

অজীবনে দিয়েছে জীবন,

তাই কি এমন ভালোবাসি?”

দেহ ও প্রাণ আজ এতই তনুয়ীভূত হয়ে গেছে যে

“নিঃসাড় হইয়া গেছে প্রেম-অনুভূতি।” এ হারানোর অর্থ নেতিবাচী নয়, এ হরণ পূরণেরই অগ্গতিক। তাই ভেদ-অভেদে লীলা ওঠে জমে—যার নাম বেঁচে থাকার লীলা। কিন্তু জীবনের উপাস্তে এসে প্রেমিক প্রাণ দেখছে তার ধানের ধন দেহখানি বয়সের জীর্ণতায় “গ্রামান্ত প্রান্তরে গরীবের গোরের মতন” হ’য়ে পড়েছে। তাকে কি তিনি ত্যাগ করবেন? ‘মরীচিকায়’ ঈষৎ ব্যঙ্গের সুরে যে কবি বলেছিলেন, “এ ধরা গোরস্থান, / মরণের ভিতে স্মরণের চিপি দু’দিনে ভুমিসমান।” আজ জীবনগোধূলির দিনে সেই কবিই স্বগতোক্তির মত বলে বসলেন সেই “গরীবের গোরের মতন” প্রেমই : “জ্বারে ভূষিত করে চিরসুন্দরের পাশে”। কিন্তু “তবু হ’য়ে হ’বে ছাড়াছাড়ি”। সেই ছাড়াছাড়িও কত মধুর, সেই মাধুর্যই ফুটে উঠেছে আবার বৈষ্ণব পদাবলীর অনুশঙ্গে :

“এই যে জীবনরাতি ক্ষীণ দীপ জালি,

কাটাই হুজনে

হুহু কোড়ে হুহু কাঁদি বিচ্ছেদ ভাবিয়া,—

এ রজনী হবে ভোর।”

তৃতীয় ছত্রটি চণ্ডীদাসের প্রেমবৈচিত্র্যের সেই বিখ্যাত পদটির কথা স্মরণ করায় :

“হুহু কোরে হুহু কাঁদে বিচ্ছেদ ভাবিয়া।

আধতিল না দেখিলে যায় যে মরিয়া ॥”

প্রেমবৈচিত্র্যের পরেই এসেছে মাধুর্যের রূপকল্প—কবিতায় তারই ভাস্কর্য্যনা করে কবি লিখলেন :

“সে রথের চক্রতলে

হতমান গতপ্রাণ প্রিয়া

যদি পড়ে রয় ধূলিধূসরিত...

তবে রথে চড়ি

একা মোরে যেতে হ’বে

ওপারের মধুপুরে?”

অবধারিত ভাবে স্মরণ করায় বিছাপতির সেই অসামান্য পদটি :

“হরি গেও মধুপুর হম কুলবালা।

বিপথে পড়ল যেছে মালতীর মালা ॥”

দেহকে বলতে পারি মালতীর মালা। রূপহীন প্রাণ

একদিন ঐ মালতীর মালা গলায় পরেছিল, আজ কালের স্বাক্ষরে জীর্ণ মালতীর মালাকে বিপথে ছুঁড়ে ফেলে সে চলে যাচ্ছে মথুরায়—নবদেহমালিকার সন্ধানে।

কিন্তু কবি এখানেই থামেন নি। থামাটা উচিতও নয়। সারাজীবন ধরে যে বিভূতিভূষণ, ভাস্করীট, নীলকণ্ঠ শিবের ধ্যান করেছেন কবি, বৈষ্ণবীয় রূপকল্প পরিত্যাগ করে তাঁর উপমানেই খুঁজে পেয়েছেন অভীষ্ট পথ :

“তার চেয়ে—

শঙ্করের মত সতীদেহ স্বন্ধে তুলি লব,

ভ্রমিয়া বেড়াব ত্রিভুবন...

যতদিন ক্রন্দনতপস্যা মম

সে সতীরে না পারে ফিরাতে।

দারুণ সে যজ্ঞপণ্ড দিনে

দেহহারা জীব হ’বে সতীহারি শিব।”

মৃত্যু সতীর দেহ নিয়ে কেঁদে যান বিশ্বের দেবাদিদেব। কান্না থেকে, মৃত্যুর গ্রাস থেকে তবে দেবতারও মুক্তি নেই? কবির ব্যক্তিগত দেহহারানোর বেদনা এই ভাবেই সতীহারি শিবের বেদনার মহাসংগমে মিলিত হয়ে বিশাল অর্থ লাভ করেছে।

কিন্তু, আবার বলি, তত্ত্ব আর জীবন এক নয়।

কবিতাটিও কোনও ইতিবাচী তত্ত্বের নিরাপদ আশ্রয়ে শাস্তিবারি নিষিক্ত হয় নি। যে কবি যৌবন লগ্নে মরু-চারণা শুরু করেছিলেন, উষায় দেখেছিলেন সূর্যের রক্ত-বমন, সন্ধ্যার নিসর্গে অনুভব করেছিলেন “রঙিন বারাজনা”কে তিনি কোনও তত্ত্বের আড়ালে শাস্তি পেতে পারেন না। মহাদেবের বিষজ্বালাই তাঁর চরম পুরস্কার। তাই এইসব চিন্তার মাঝখানেই কবির নতুন ট্রেন আসে। কবি ট্রেনে ওঠেন। সেই নতুন কামরায় “কুশন-কবোষণ গদি” কোন কিছুই অভাব নেই। এখানে যেন কবির ওঠে ব্যাঙ্গের বঙ্কিমরেখাটি সুস্পষ্ট হয়ে ওঠে। তার পরবর্তী পংক্তিওই সেই বাঙ্গ নিঃশব্দ অট্টহাসিতে পরিণতি পেয়েছে : “উড়ে গেছে নীলকণ্ঠ পাখী”। মানুষকে নতুন দেহের শৃঙ্খলে বন্দী করে সেই নির্মূর্ত্ত পাখী উড়ে গেছে মুক্ত আকাশে। কিন্তু আকাশ কি মুক্ত? ‘সায়ম্’ কাব্যের ‘প্রেমপিঞ্জর’ কবিতায় তিনিই কল্পনা করেছিলেন : “নীলিমা ভ’রে গেছে কনকশলাকায়”। সেই মহাশৃঙ্খল থেকে ঈশ্বরেরও মুক্তি নেই, নিজের সৃষ্টির জালে তিনি নিজেই মাথা ঠোকেন। আর এই দুই পক্ষের যন্ত্রণার মধ্য দিয়ে জীবন চলেছে অনির্দেশ্যের দিকে, শূন্য তার দিয়ে ট্রেনের বার্তা পৌঁছায় আগামী ষ্টেশনে।

মৃত্যুগ্রাসিত বিশ্ব জীবনের এই অন্তহীন শাস্ত্রত যন্ত্রণাই ‘জংশন ষ্টেশনে’ কবিতাটির ধ্রুপদ।

সাথী

থেকে থেকে ঝাপটা আসছিল বাদ্লাম হাওয়ার। কমলা ছোট ত্রিপলটাকে বুথাই টেনেটুনে ঢাকবার চেষ্টা করছিল পানের সরঞ্জামগুলোকে। পানের বাণ্ডিলে বৃষ্টি পড়ুক ক্ষতি নেই, সুগন্ধি মশলার কোঁটোগুলোকে কমলা আঁচলের তলায় উষা কাপড়ের এক ফালি দিয়ে ঢেকে নিল। ও নিজে ভিজে একশা। ভিজে ঘোমটা লেপটে গেছে মাথায়, টপ্-টপ্ করে জল পড়ছে নোংরা কালো ফিতে দিয়ে জড়ানো খোঁপার ছ’চারটে চুল

জয়া বসু

বেয়ে। এই বাদ্লাম সময়টা যা কষ্ট কম্‌লার। অগ্নি মাসগুলো ভালই কাটে, রোজগারও ভাল। বর্ষায় মাথা বাঁচাবার একটা বড় প্লাস্টিকের টুকরো যোগাড় করেছিল। তা তারাতাঁদ একদিন নিয়ে গিয়ে আর ফেরত নিয়ে এল না। ও লোকটা তো এমনিই। একটু বুঝের হলে আর কম্‌লার এ অবস্থা হোত নাকি। তবে এই বেশ, বেশ নিজের রোজগার। পরপর তিনটে বাচ্চা তো খেয়ে বাঁচছে। তার ওপর বুড়ো শাণ্ডীটাও আছে।

কমলা মুখ বাড়িয়ে দেখল সাইকেলওয়ালা রতন গাছের গুঁড়িটার সাথে লেপ্টে দাঁড়িয়ে আছে। এখনও তেমন জোর বৃষ্টি নেই, থাকলে কোথায় আশ্রয় পেত কে জানে! আশে পাশে মাথা গাঁজবার ঠাইও তো নেই, সেই অনেকটা দূরের স্কুল বিল্ডিং ছাড়া। তা ছুটে যেতে যেতে ভিজে কো'য়া হয়ে যাবে। কমলার সাথে চোখাচোখি হতে রতন মুখ ফিরিয়ে হাসল। ওর ভারী গোরা চেহারাটা ভিজে বেশ দেখাচ্ছে। কপালে এসে পড়া ভিজে টুকরো চুলগুলো মুখখানার সুরত বাড়িয়ে দিয়েছে যেন। এই রতনের সাথে ভাব কত এখন কমলার। দেখে চোখ টাটায় কেউ কেউ।

কিন্তু সেই প্রথম যখন এল কমলা, রতন কেমন হিংস্র আর অস্থির হয়ে উঠেছিল, তাবলে হাসি পায়। ছপরের রোদ্দুরে যখন চারদিক বাঁ বাঁ করে, বড় রাস্তাটার ওপর দিয়ে সাইকেলের আনাগোনা কমে আসে, কমলা ওর ছোট ছাউনিটার গায়ে ঠেসান দিয়ে কথা বলে। রতন গাছের তলায় জড়ো করা সাইকেলগুলোর এক একটার জুখুলে পাম্প করতে করতে কমলার কথার উত্তর দেয় হেসে, বেশ খোশ মেজাজে।

“বুড়োটার ক’দিন ধরে পাত্তা নেই যে?” কমলা রতনের চোখে চোখ রেখে অর্থপূর্ণ হাসি হাসল।

“তৈঁসে গেছে বোধহয়।” রতন পাম্প করতে করতেই ঠোঁট উল্টে জবাব দিলে।

“যাঃ মুখে তোর কিছু আটকায় না রতন। বুড়োটা মরলে আমার একটা রোজকার খন্দের কমবে জানিস্ তা?”

“আরে ঘাবড়াচ্ছি কেন? ক’দিন কেমন বাদলা চলেছে দেখছি না? শীতে বেরোয় নি। ধূপ উঠলেই দেখবি সুড়সুড় করে এসে গপ্ জমাবে।” রতন পাম্প দেওয়া সাইকেলের চাকাটাকে টিপে টিপে দেখলে।

কমলার একজন বুড়ো প্রেমিক আছে। ফ্যাক্টরীর লেবার সেক্সনে কাজ করে। অসম্ভব পান খায় লোকটা, দিনে চারটে তো বটেই। আর পান নিয়েই চলে যায় না, সাইকেল খাড়া করে প্রায় মিনিট দশেক বকর বকর করে, কমলার সংসারের খবর জানতে চায়। কমলা মনে মনে

বিরক্ত হলেও মিষ্টি হেসে কথা বলে চলে। দিনে তিন-চার খিলি পান—তিরিশ থেকে চল্লিশ বাঁধা পয়সা কম নয় ওর কাছে।

এইসব লোকদের জন্যে সম্ভা সিগারেটের প্যাকেটও ইদানীং রাখতে শুরু করেছে কমলা। সাহেবলোকরা কেনেন না, তবে অন্য অনেকেই বাড়ী থেকে খেয়ে-দেয়ে ফেরবার পথে দু’চারটে কেনেই। ছপূরবেলাটা সবচেয়ে বেশী বিক্রি কমলার। এক হাতে কুলিয়ে উঠতে পারে না। রতনও খুব ব্যস্ত। পরপর অনেক সাইকেল জমা হয় হাওয়া ভরাবার জন্যে। রতনের একটা বাচ্চা সহকারী আছে, মাঝে মাঝেই কামাই করে ছেলেটা। রতন বকা-বকি করলেও তাড়িয়ে দেয় নি। কমলা ভাবে তার মেজ ছেলেটা আর একটু বড় হলে কাছে নিয়ে বসাবে। হাতে হাতে যোগান—সেটুকুও কম স্বেচ্ছা নয়। বড়টা তো আজকাল পাঠশালায় যায়। করে বড় হবে শিউপ্রসাদ কে জানে! ততদিনে কমলা বুড়ো হয়ে যাবে হয়তো।

সে কতদিনের কথা, বছর খানেকের কিছু বেশী হবে বোধহয়। ভাগিস্ বুদ্ধি করে এই ছোট ছাউনিটা খুলে বসেছিল। তারাতাঁদ সি.ও.ডি.তে একটা কাঠের গুদোমে কাজ করতো। ভারী ভারী কাঠ চেরা, গুছোনার কাজ। তা হাতে টাকা কোনদিন কমলা দেখেনি। খালি মদ খেত তখন আর নেশায় বুদ্ধ হয়ে থাকতো মাসের প্রথম ক’টা দিন। তারপর টাকা ফুরোলেই কমলাকে অকথা গালাগালি আর মারধোর। অত কামাই দিত বলে কাঠগুদোমের চাকরীটা গেল। তার ওপর শরীরের ওপর অত্যাচার, তারাতাঁদ এখন পেটের যন্ত্রণায় অস্থির। ভাল থাকলে মিস্ত্রীর যোগানদারের কাজে ঢোকে তা না হলে ঘরেই। কমলাই বলতে গেলে একার রোজগারে সংসারটাকে ঠেকিয়ে রেখেছে। বুদ্ধিটা দিয়েছিল বড় বুনাই হরিচরণ। কমলার দিদি মারা গেছে অনেকদিন, ছেলেপুলে না রেখেই। ভগ্নীপতি আবার বিয়ে করে সংসার ধর্ম করছে, তবু কমলার ওপর টানের অন্ত নেই তার। কমলা প্রশ্রয় দেয় না বেশী, আর দিলেও বা কি, তারাতাঁদের চোখ আর আগের মত জ্বলজ্বলে হয়ে উঠবে না, সে তেজও নেই। তবু কমলার নিজের বাধে।

ও মিষ্টি কথা আর হাসি দিয়েই সমুদ্র রাখতে চেষ্টা করে হরিচরণকে। হরিচরণ চরম সংকটের দিনে কমলাকে বুদ্ধি দিয়েছিল, এস্টেটে বসবার লাইসেন্স আনিয়ে দিয়েছিল যোগাড়যন্ত্র করে আর সবচেয়ে বড় কথা দিয়েছিল কিছু টাকাও। কমলা সেসব শোধবোধ করে দিয়েছে কবে। তবু কৃতজ্ঞ সে হরিচরণের কাছে।

কমলার দেহে এখন যে আল্গা লাগণ্য, ওটা তার মনের শাস্তির জন্মে। ও সব খরচ চালিয়েও কিছু কিছু রাখতে পারে তারাটাদের চিকিৎসার জন্মে। একবার ফ্যাক্টরীর হাসপাতালে ডাক্তারবাবুকে দিয়ে পরীক্ষাও করিয়ে এনেছে। ডাক্তারবাবু ক্ষুণ্ণ করে হৃৎপুর্ন হাসপাতালে ফেরবার পথে গাড়ী ধামিয়ে কমলার হাতের পান খান রোজ এক খিলি। সেই সুবাদে কমলা গিয়ে ধরে পড়েছিল। ডাক্তারবাবু যত্ন করে দেখেছিলেন! গ্যাসট্রিকের ব্যথা। মাঝে মাঝে যার যন্ত্রণায় তারাটাদ মুচড়ে মুচড়ে ওঠে। প্রথম দফা দাওয়াই হাসপাতাল থেকে পেয়েছিল কমলা, তারপর রাজীর দোকান থেকে দু'একটা সে নিজেই কিনে আনে। শিউপ্রসাদটা সত্যি হীরের টুকরো হলে, কেমন পাশ করে করে ক্লাসে উঠছে। পাঁচ ক্লাশ হল এবার। শিউপ্রসাদটা কবে বড় হবে! কমলা হিসেব করে মনে মনে আর সুন্দর, ছিম্ছিম জীবনের স্বপ্ন দেখে বারবার।

শুধু এত করেও তারাটাদটাই কেমন হয়ে থাকে আজকাল। তেতরে তেতরে কেমন গুমরে থাকে চাপা রাগে। কমলা সহানুভূতি দেখাতে এলে চটে ওঠে। শুধু কোন কোন দিন রাতে রুগ্ন তারাটাদও যেন হঠাৎ শক্তির হয়। আর তখনই কমলা কেমন নিষ্পূহ হয়ে যায়। তারাটাদকে ঠেলে পাশ ফিরতে ফিরতে ঘুমকাতুরে স্বরে বিরক্তি প্রকাশ করে কাল সকালে ডিউটি আছে বলে।

তা ডিউটিই বলতে গেলে। সাজ-সরঞ্জাম নিয়ে রোজ সকাল সাতটার আগে হাজির হয় কমলা নিজের স্থানটিতে। সাড়ে সাতটার সিটি পড়লেই সাইকেলের প্রথম সারি চলতে শুরু করে কালো রাস্তা বেয়ে। আটটা অবধি অশেষ মানুষের আনাগোনা, ক্ষুণ্ণের গৌঁ গৌঁ শব্দ, সাইকেলের বেলের টুংটাং শব্দ। তারপর বড়

রাস্তাটা ফাঁকা অনেকক্ষণ, বেলা সাড়ে বারোটা অবধি। এই সারা সময়টাতে কেউ থামে না এমন নয়। মাঝে-মাঝে কমলার তন দু'জনের কাছেই লোক থামে। সাইকেলে হাওয়া ভরে নিতে গিয়ে কমলার হাতের সাজা পান মুখে ফেলে দেয় একটা, আবার পান খেতে এসে কারুর বা হঠাৎ মনে পড়ে সাইকেলের হাওয়া কমে গেছে।

পাশাপাশি রোদ-বৃষ্টি বড় কাটিয়ে কমলা রতনের মধ্যে বেশ একটা বন্ধুত্ব গড়ে উঠেছে। অবসর সময়ে যখন পান সাজার তাড়া থাকে না, রাস্তাটা লম্বালম্বি রোদের তাপে নিজেকে পুইয়ে নেয়, কমলা-রতন গল্প করে, সুখ-দুঃখ, ছোটখাট আনন্দের কথা বলে, কমলার হঠাৎ হঠাৎ হাদিতে চলকে ওঠে কালো রাস্তাটা। রতনটা বদমেজাজী, একটুতেই চটে যায়, অথচ কাজ ভাল করে। এজন্মে গাছতলাটার অস্থায়ী দোকানে সাইকেল পড়ে থাকে দু'চারটে সব সময়েই।

রতনকে ভাল লাগে কমলার; ওর বেপরোয়া ভঙ্গী আর বদমেজাজের জন্মে বোধহয় আরও বেশী। কবে থেকে এই ভাল লাগা আস্তে আস্তে জমতে শুরু করেছে, কমলা নিজেও জানে না। অথচ ও প্রথম যখন আস্তানা গাড়ে এখানে, রতন ভাল চোখে নেয় নি ব্যাপারটা। রতনের ব্যবসায় ও ভাগ বসায় নি, তবু ছেলেটা খরচাখে তাকিয়েছিল এই খুবসুরত, কালো কালো হাসিখুশী যুবতী পানওয়ালীর দিকে। তারপর কমলাই আস্তে আস্তে ভাব জমিয়েছে। অল্প অল্প করে জেনে নিয়েছে ছেলেটার নিঃসঙ্গ ইতিহাস। তিনকূলে কেউ নেই এক চাচা ছাড়া, তাও বেকার ভাই-পোকে আর ঠাই দিতে গরুরাজী হলেন চাচী। গাঁও ছেড়ে এদিক-ওদিক ঘুরে একটা সাইকেলের দোকানে কাজ পেয়েছিল সতের আঠেরো বছরের ছেলেটা। তারপর কাজ-টাজ শিখে অনেক পরে এই নিজস্ব ব্যবসা। এখন অবশ্য খাতিরই করে চাচী কখনও গেলে—কথটা খুব মজা করে বলেছিল রতন। তবে ও বেশী যায় না, একা একা ঘরে সাইকেলের টুকরো টাকরার মাঝে বাস করতেই ওর বেশ লাগে। 'সাদী কর না কেন এখন?' কথাটা জিজ্ঞেস করতেই এমন শাণিত চোখে তাকিয়েছিল কমলার

দিকে, আর দ্বিতীয়বার জিজ্ঞেস করে নিও। এমনিতে রতন বেশ ভাল, এক ওর বদমেজাজ ছাড়া। কমলার বাড়ীতে আজকাল যায় মাঝে মাঝে। ছেলেমেয়েদের জগে খাবার টাবার, সস্তার খেলনা দু'চারটে নিয়ে আসে সঙ্গে। আর সেদিন সেদিনই তারাটাদ ভয়ানক গুম্ব মেরে যায় আর রাত হলেই হিংস্র হয়ে ওঠে। কারণে অকারণে ধাঁই ধাঁই করে চড় কষায় বাচ্চাগুলোকে।

অথচ রতন এলেই কমলার মন খুশী হয়ে যায়। ও হালকা সুরে কথা বলে রতনের সাথে। শাশুড়ীর করা গরম রুটি আর টিনের গ্লাসে আনা চা উৎসাহ করে খাওয়ায়। রতনের চওড়া বুকটার দিকে তাকিয়ে চাপা নিঃশ্বাস ফেলে, ভাবে সাদী করে না কেন রতন। ওর বলিষ্ঠ বাহুর আলিঙ্গনে কোন মেয়েকে কল্পনা করে কমলা নিজেকে শিউরে ওঠে। তখন তারাটাদের কথা ওর মনে থাকে না। ভাবতেও ভাল লাগে না, শাশুড়ীর কোলে মেয়েটা পরিত্রাহি কান্না জুড়ে দিলে ও কথা বলতে বলতে উঠে নিয়ে আসে বাচ্চাটাকে। তারপর বৃকে চেপে ঘুম পাড়াতে পাড়াতে হঠাৎ করে নিজেকে অসম্ভব শান্ত হয়ে যায়।

হাওয়াটা চেপে এসেছে। রতনটা সাইকেল ছেড়ে মোটা গুঁড়িটার গায়ে ঠেস দিয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। চটপট শব্দে ফোঁটাগুলো চিড়বিড়িয়ে পড়ছে সাইকেলের ওপর। ছোট ত্রিপলের চারটে কোণ খান ইঁটের কঠিন বন্ধনে হাওয়ার দমকে কেঁপে কেঁপে উঠছে। “কিন্তু জম্কে হাওয়া চলতি দেখো,” কমলা ত্রিপলের কোন সাম্লামতে সাম্লামতে বললে। একটু দূরে কোথায় একটা টিনের চাল সশব্দে উল্টে পড়ল। কমলার একটু একটু ভয় করছিল, রাস্তাঘাট ফাঁকা একেবারে, কিরকম অন্ধকার করে এসেছে। তারাটাদ বাড়ী আছে না কোথাও বেরিয়েছে কে জানে! ক’দিন তো ভাল আছে একটু। বাচ্চাগুলো বুড়ী শাশুড়ীর কোলের কাছে আতঙ্কে কুঁকড়ে আছে হয়তো। কমলা আবার ত্রিপলের ফাঁক দিয়ে তাকিয়ে দেখল, হুহু করা হাওয়া ঝাপটা লাগাল মুখে চোখে। সাইক্লোনের মত প্রচণ্ড বলশালী হাওয়া ওর সবকিছু ভেঙে তছনছ করে মাটিতে লুটিয়ে দিতে

বন্ধপরিকর যেন। রতনটার মাথায় ঝমঝম করে জল পড়ছে। অল্প রুষ্টিতে ঝাঁকড়া মহুয়া গাছটা বাঁচায় কিন্তু এখন জল অঝোরধারে পাতার ফাঁক দিয়ে ঝরে পড়ছে। অনেকক্ষণ ধরে ভিজছে ছেলেটা, দূরের ইঁকুলবাড়ীটায় চলে গেলে পারতো। কমলার তো যাবার উপায় নেই। সব তছনছ হয়ে যাবে তাহলে। একার মত আস্তানাটার চার পাশে তাকিয়ে কমলা রতনকে ডাকলে একবার। হাওয়ার দমকে কথা ছড়িয়ে গেল। আবার ডাকলে জোরে, মাথা রুষ্টির মধ্যে বের করে, “ইধার আ যাও রতন, নেই তো অব্ বুখারমে পড়োগে।”

রতন প্রথমে উড়িয়ে দিলেও কমলার বারবার ডাকাডাকিতে এল। অন্ধকার হলে একা একাই পড়ে থাকতে হবে হয়তো, নিত্যসঙ্গী সাইকেলের টুকরো টাকরা সরঞ্জামের মাঝে। খোঁজ নিতেও আসবে না কেউ। অবশ্য ওর জমাট স্বাস্থ্যটা চট করে কাবু হয় না কখনও। তবু এতক্ষণ ভিজে ভিজে শরীরের মধ্যে কাঁপন ধরেছে। রতন গুটগুটি হয়ে বসলে কমলার গা ঘঁসে। বদমেজাজী রতনকে ভিজে ভিজে অদ্ভুত শান্ত লাগছে, কমলার দেহ শিউরে শিউরে ওঠে রতনের ভিজে ছোঁয়ায়, বাইরে শোঁ শোঁ আওয়াজে ঝড় উঠেছে। রুষ্টিতে বড় সরকারী নালটা দিয়ে ঘোলা জলের ঘুণিশোত কলকল গর্জনে শুকনো বনতুলসীর ডালগুলোকে সজোরে ঠেলে কেবলই সামনে নিয়ে চলেছে।

কমলার ছোট ছাউনিতে জায়গা হয় না দু'জনের। ঘেঁসাঘেঁসি করে বসে ওরা পরস্পরের গায়ের উত্তাপ নিচ্ছিল। ভিজে মাটি, রুষ্টির ছাঁট, সুগন্ধি মশলা, সোঁদা ত্রিপল—সব মিলিয়ে অদ্ভুত জমাট গন্ধ অন্ধকার নীচু ছাউনিটার ভেতরে।

প্রচণ্ড গর্জনে বাজ পড়ল খুব কাছেই। একটা নীল আলো ঝিলিক দিয়ে গেল। কমলা অস্ফুট শব্দ করে সজোরে জড়িয়ে ধরলে রতনকে। ওর চোখের সামনে রুগ্ন মাতাল তারাটাদ, তিনটে পরপর ছেলে, রুদ্ধ শাশুড়ী সব অস্পষ্ট হয়ে গেল—রতন আর ওর নিজেরও বৃকের দ্রুত হৃদস্পন্দন গুনতে গুনতে তৃষ্ণার্ত কমলা গভীর আবেশে চোখ বুজলে।

বাইরে রুষ্টির প্রচণ্ড দাপটে মাঠ ঘাট তখন সাদা একেবারে।

গবিত বিদায়

মণিকুন্তলা মুখোপাধ্যায়

সব কিছু ফেলে রেখে যাবো ।

সেই যে প্রথম দেখা
প্রার্থনাহীন ভালোবাসা,
কিশোরী বিশ্বাস কোন্
চঞ্চল আবেগ আর
উজ্জ্বল বেনামী প্রহর
প্রাপ্ততাহীন সেই কবে ফোটা
কোন্ ফুল পাতা—

সব কিছু ফেলে রেখে যাবো ।

এই যে মুহূর্ত আর
অবিশ্বাসী ভালোবাসাহীন
এই দুর্গ, এই বিজ্ঞা,
এই রুখা অহং-আধার
কিশোরী প্রাণের স্মৃতি
আকাজ্জিত প্রপঞ্চ মহান্—
ত্রিবর্ষের নির্বাসন শেষে,

সব আজ ফেলে দিয়ে যাবো ॥

পরিক্রমাস্তে

শুভ্রা সেনগুপ্ত

জানি, কক্ষান্তরে যেতে হ'বে
চেতনার তিনধুগী চৌধুগী
সম্পূর্ণে পার হয়ে পোষাবেড়ালের মত আমরা সবাই
রাত্রিশেষে চলে যাব সুখী বসবাসে
মিহি গলা উচ্ছে তুলে আমরা চৈচাবো কিস্তিমাং ।

কক্ষান্তরে যেতে হবে জানি
তবুও বিনয়ীভংগী এখনও মানিয়ে যায়
কোনও কোনও সাত্ত্বিক হাঁটুতে,
“ভালবাসা” এই বেলা মাপ করে দিও
ভালবাসা, তোমার জটিল খাঁচা ভেঙে দিয়ে
হীরামন তোতা উড়ে গেছে
আজকাল মুঠোভরা সুখ নিয়ে নিয়ে কাঁকুরে রাস্তায় ঘোরে
দুখী রমণীরা

যদিচ সবাই জানে পোষাবেড়ালীর মত
রাত্রিশেষে চলে যাবে সুখী বসবাসে ॥

জানি, কক্ষান্তরে যেতে হ'বে
তবু আশা রেখে যাই প্রাণপণে আশা
কল্পনার কটি চাকা অস্তিত্বের ফেনা
ফুঁ দিয়ে উড়িয়ে দিয়ে আকাশ নির্মেষ করে দেব
পদ্মনাভি নতনেত্রী ষোড়শী প্রেমিকা
চোখের মুক্তোয় পড়বে বাঞ্ছিত সৌরভ
পৃথিবীতে শেষবার অশ্রুধোয়া হয়ে যাবে জননী আনন
মনোলোভা ভালবাসা আবার খাঁচায় ফিরবে হীরামন তোতা
অকস্মাৎ মাঝরাতে ফিরে যাব স্বপ্ন ও আশ্বাসে
যদিচ সর্বদা জানি,
রাত্রিশেষে নিরুদ্বেগ পৌঁছে যাব সুখী বসবাসে ॥

স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ (১৮৬৩-১৯০২) ও উপাধ্যায় ব্রহ্মবাক্য (১৮৬১-১৯০৭) আধুনিক ভারতের দুই বিরাটতম পুরুষ। ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর শেষভাগে ও বিংশ শতাব্দীর সূচনায় প্রাচ্য-পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার সংঘর্ষে বাঙালীর তথা ভারতবাসীর জীবনে যে রূপান্তর সাধিত হয়, বিবেকানন্দ ও ব্রহ্মবাক্য ছিলেন তার দুই পথিকৃৎ ও প্রাণময় প্রতীক। বিদ্যা, বুদ্ধি, চরিত্রবৃত্তায় উভয়েই ছিলেন খাঁটি সোনা। বাংলার নবজাগরণের ইতিহাসে তাঁদের উভয়ের দান অসামান্য।

জাতীয় আন্দোলনে এই দুই যোদ্ধা-সন্ন্যাসীর অবদান সম্যকভাবে উপলব্ধি করতে গেলে প্রথমেই জাতীয় আন্দোলন সম্বন্ধে আমাদের কিঞ্চিৎ ধারণা আবশ্যক। জন্মভূমিকে জননী জ্ঞানে কল্পনা করা ভারতীয় ইতিহাসে সুপ্রাচীন। কিন্তু গোটা ভারতবর্ষকে জননী জন্মভূমি জ্ঞানে কল্পনা করা আধুনিক কালের ঘটনা। ঐক্যপ্রথিত, কেন্দ্র-শাসিত ভারতের যে মূর্তি আমরা ঊনবিংশ শতকের মধ্যভাগে এসে অবলোকন করি তা ইংরেজ শাসনের ও শিক্ষার পরিণতি। ঐক্য-প্রথিত, কেন্দ্র-শাসিত ভারতের রাষ্ট্রিক পরিবেশে আমরা প্রথম ঐক্যবদ্ধ ও অখণ্ড ভারতের মোহিনী মূর্তি কল্পনা করতে আরম্ভ করি। এই কল্পনাই ভারতীয় জাতীয়তাবাদ বিবর্তনের অত্যাশংক প্রাথমিক সোপান। স্বাভাবিকতা ও স্বজাতিপ্রীতি স্ফুরিত না হলে দেশপ্রেম জাগ্রত হয় না। অপরের অস্তিত্বের সম্মুখীন হয়েই আমরা নিজেদের স্বরূপ উপলব্ধি করি। অষ্টাদশ শতাব্দীর মধ্যভাগ থেকে পশ্চিমা জগৎ আমাদের হৃদয় ও মগজে ক্রমাগত ঘা দিতে থাকে। সেই আঘাতের সামনে সাময়িকভাবে হলেও আমরা নতজান্ন হতে বাধ্য হলাম। ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রারম্ভে পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষা-দীক্ষার হঠাৎ আলোর বলকানিতে আমাদের চোখ

বলসে যায়, মাটির প্রদীপের স্নিগ্ধালোক স্নান হয়ে আসে। পশ্চিমের আঘাতে আমাদের রাষ্ট্র, সমাজ, অর্থনীতি ভেঙে পড়লো। সাংস্কৃতিক জীবনেও দেখা দিল বিপর্যয়। নিজেদের উপর বিশ্বাসের বেগেও তাঁটার টান ধরলো। পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতার ও শিক্ষাদীক্ষার অন্ধ অনুকরণের এমন একটা মোহ তখন আমাদের মনকে আচ্ছন্ন করে ফেলেছিল যে আজ তা ভাবলে অবিশ্বাস্য বলে মনে হয়। মাতলামির ঘোর জীবনে দেখা দিলেও স্বভাবের নিয়মে তা চিরস্থায়ী হতে পারে না—প্রতিক্রিয়া অনিবার্য। যদি কখনও কোন ব্যক্তির জীবনে তা চিরস্থায়ী হয়ে ওঠে, তার অর্থ ও পরিণতি শুধু অপমৃত্যু। প্রকৃতিই চায় তার স্বাভাবিক নিয়মে অপ্রকৃতস্থ মানুষকে আত্মস্থ ও প্রকৃতস্থ করে তুলতে। কোনও সমাজও প্রকৃতির এই ইচ্ছাকে দীর্ঘদিন পরিহার করে চলতে পারে না। যে মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্ত যৌবনের প্রারম্ভে পশ্চিমা শিক্ষাদীক্ষার অন্ধ অনুকরণের মোহে একেবারে আবিষ্ট হয়ে পড়েছিলেন, তিনিই ষাটের দশকে ঐ অনুকরণের স্রোতের বিরুদ্ধে আপন ব্যক্তিত্বকে সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত করেছিলেন। তাঁর আত্ম-প্রতিষ্ঠার মধ্য দিয়ে আমাদের জাতীয় আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠার সঙ্কল্প বোধিত হয়েছিল।

ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর দ্বিতীয়ার্ধে আমরা ক্রমশঃ দেশান্ত্র-বোধের নতুন চেতনায় উদ্বুদ্ধ হতে থাকি। পশ্চিমা সভ্যতার দ্বারা মোহাচ্ছন্ন মনও বুদ্ধি ক্রমশঃ মুক্তির স্বাদ অনুভব করতে আরম্ভ করে। সিপাহী বিদ্রোহের ঐতিহ্য, নীলকর আন্দোলনের স্মৃতি, হিন্দু মেলার কাজকর্ম, পাশ্চাত্যজ্ঞানে উদ্বুদ্ধ স্বাধিকার সচেতন মধ্যবিত্ত শ্রেণীর জাগরণ, জাতীয় সাহিত্যের ক্রমবিকাশ, স্বাধীন স্বদেশী সংবাদপত্রের অভ্যুত্থান, ব্রাহ্মদমাজে সংগঠিত স্বাধীনতার আদর্শ, কেশব সেনের বিলাতে ধর্মপ্রচার অভিযান, “ভারত

সভার" প্রতিষ্ঠা ও সুরেন্দ্রনাথের ভারতজোড়া প্রচারকার্য, লালমোহন ঘোষের বিলাত সফর, ইলবার্ট বিল আন্দোলন, নবহিন্দুধর্মের বিকাশ—এই সমস্ত ঘটনার ঘাত-প্রতিঘাতে গত শতাব্দীর চতুর্থ পাদে এদেশে এক প্রকাণ্ড জাতীয়তাবাদী আন্দোলন গড়ে উঠে।

এই "জাতীয়" আন্দোলনের মূল লক্ষ্য বিগত জীর্ণ অতীতকে ফিরে পাওয়া নয়, অতীতের যা শ্রেষ্ঠ সম্পদ তা গ্রহণ করে নতুন-পুরাতনের সংমিশ্রণে জাতীয় চিত্তকে নবজীবনরসায়নে সঞ্জীবিত করাই ছিল এর লক্ষ্য। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র এই আন্দোলনের এক বিরাট প্রবর্তক, বিবেকানন্দ আর এক। যারা এই আন্দোলনকে রক্ষণশীল বলে মনে করেন, তাঁরা ভ্রান্ত। এই "জাতীয়" আন্দোলন ছিল ব্রাহ্মসমাজের সংস্কারবাদী আন্দোলনের থেকেও বেশী প্রগতিশীল ও গণতান্ত্রিক। এর মূল লক্ষ্য ছিল জাতীয় চেতনায় হারানো আত্মবিশ্বাস ও আত্মশ্রদ্ধা পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠিত করা। আমাদের অতীতকে নির্বিচারে অস্বীকার করার প্রবণতার বিরুদ্ধে এই আন্দোলন ছিল একটা প্রকাণ্ড প্রতিবাদ বিশেষ। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই প্রসঙ্গে সে মন্তব্য করেছিলেন তা প্রণিধানযোগ্য। তিনি লিখেছিলেন,

"The national movement was started to proclaim that we must not be indiscriminate in our rejection of the past. This was not a reactionary movement but a revolutionary one; because it set out with a great courage to deny and to oppose all pride in mere borrowings."

এর মূল কথা হলো আমাদের নির্বিচারে অতীতকে অস্বীকার করলে চলবে না। অতীতের সঙ্গে নাড়ীর সংযোগ রক্ষা করেই আমাদের এগুতে হবে। প্রাচীনকাল থেকে ভারতীয় সংস্কৃতির সে গৌরবময় ঐতিহ্য তার বনিয়াদের উপরই গড়ে তুলতে হবে নতুন ভারতবর্ষ, আধুনিক বিশ্বের সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক ছিন্ন করে নয়, তার সঙ্গে নিবিড় বন্ধন দৃঢ় করে। কিন্তু মূল লক্ষ্য থাকবে জাতীয় ভাবের পুনরুদ্ধার, জাতীয় ব্যক্তিত্বের স্বাভাবিক প্রতি

এই আন্দোলনের প্রথম ক্ষুরণ ধর্ম ও সাহিত্য ক্ষেত্রে হলেও তা ধীরে ধীরে রাজনীতিক্ষেত্রে প্রসার লাভ করে। বিবেকানন্দ ও ব্রহ্মবান্ধব ভারতীয় জাতীয়তাবাদী আন্দোলনের একদিকে পরিণতি, অন্যদিকে কারণস্বরূপ। জাতীয় আন্দোলনে উভয়েই নতুন তেজ ও প্রাণের গতি সঞ্চারিত করেছিলেন।

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ভারতের জাতীয় আন্দোলনে বিবেকানন্দের স্থান কতটা উচ্চ তা আজও যথাযথভাবে লিপিবদ্ধ হয়েছে বলে মনে হয় না। বিবেকানন্দ একজন খাঁটি সন্ন্যাসী ছিলেন বা মস্তবড় বৈদান্তিক ছিলেন শুধু একথা বললেই তাঁর সম্বন্ধে বেশী কিছু বলা হয় না। ভারতবর্ষে কোনোদিনই সাধু-সন্ন্যাসীর বা সংসারতাগীর অভাব নেই। শাস্ত্রজ্ঞ মানুষ আজও এদেশে বিরল নয়। শুধু সন্ন্যাসবাদের গৌরবে বিবেকানন্দ জাতীয় চিন্তে এত বড় আসন লাভ করেন নি। তিনি যে জাতীয় জীবনে এমন অসাধারণ প্রভাব বিস্তার করতে পেরেছেন, তার মূল কারণ তাঁর অনগ্র ব্যক্তিত্ব। আধুনিক ভারতবর্ষে বিবেকানন্দই বোধ হয় প্রথম ব্যক্তি যিনি স্বদেশপ্রেমের আদর্শের সঙ্গে সন্ন্যাসবাদের আদর্শ মিলে জীবনে রূপায়িত করেছিলেন। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রের কল্পিত 'আনন্দমঠের' সন্ন্যাসীর আদর্শ বাস্তব রূপ পরিগ্রহণ করলো বিবেকানন্দের ব্যক্তিত্বে। নির্জন সাধনার দ্বারা আত্মমুক্তি তিনি কামনা করেন নি। তাঁর আদর্শ ছিল সমগ্র ভারতবর্ষের সর্বাঙ্গীন উন্নতি ও মুক্তি। যতদিন পর্যন্ত ভারতের একটি কুকুরও অজুস্ত থাকবে ততদিন আমার মুক্তি নেই—একথা যে সন্ন্যাসীর কণ্ঠ থেকে উচ্চারিত হয়েছিল তিনি যে সাধারণ স্তরের সন্ন্যাসী নন তা কে না বুঝতে পারে! অদৃশ্য-লোকে ভগবান নেই, তার জাগ্রত রূপ সম্মুখে দাঁড়ানো মানুষের মধ্যে। নরকে নারায়ণ জ্ঞানে সেবা করাই ছিল তাঁর জীবনবেদের গোড়ার কথা। যারা অজ্ঞ, অশিক্ষিত, ভীকু, দুর্বল, ক্ষুধার্ত, অধিকার বঞ্চিত সেই সব অনাদৃত মানুষদের তিনি চেয়েছিলেন অধিকারের বৃকে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করতে। তিনি দ্বিধাশূন্যচিত্তে ঘোষণা করলেন, "So long as the millions live in

hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who, having been educated at their expense, pay not the least heed to them.” অর্থাৎ যতদিন পর্যন্ত লক্ষ লক্ষ মানুষ ক্ষুধা ও অজ্ঞতার মধ্যে নিমজ্জিত থাকবে, ততদিন আমি সেই সব মানুষকে বিশ্বাসঘাতক বলবো যারা দরিদ্র জনগণের মূল্যে শিক্ষার গৌরব লাভ করে জনসাধারণের প্রতি বিন্দুমাত্রও দৃষ্টিপাত করে না। জাতিভেদহীন হিন্দুত্বের প্রবর্তক বিবেকানন্দের বৈপ্লবিক সমাজচিন্তা কতদূর অগ্রসর হয়েছিল, তাঁর প্রমাণ পাওয়া যায় তাঁর নিম্নলিখিত উক্তির মধ্যে : “I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.”

বিবেকানন্দ সারা জীবন বেদান্ত প্রচার করেছেন। এই প্রচারের সঙ্গে জাতীয় মুক্তি আন্দোলনের সম্পর্ক কি বা কতটুকু তা পরিষ্কার করে বুঝা চাই। বেদান্তের মূল বনিয়াদ জীবনবাদে, জীবন অস্বীকারে নয়। বিবেকানন্দ বেদান্তকে ব্যবহার করতে চাইলেন জাতীয় জাগরণের অমোঘ হাতিয়ার হিসাবে। বেদান্তের মৃত্যুহীন বাণী উচ্চারণ করে তিনি দেশের ভীক, দুর্বল, পুরাণুগ্রন্থপ্রিয়, আত্মবিশ্বাসহীন জাতির জীবনে এনেছেন নবযৌবনের প্রাণচাঞ্চল্য। এই প্রাণোন্মাদনাই অল্পদিনের মধ্যে জাতিকে ঠেলে নিয়ে গেল স্বরাজ সাধনার দুর্গম পথে। বিবেকানন্দ বেদান্ত দিয়ে পাশ্চাত্যকে জয় করেন নি, জয় করেছিলেন তাঁর ব্যক্তিত্ব দিয়ে। তাঁর শক্তিব্যোগের মন্ত্রে পরাধীন ভারতবর্ষ সন্ধান পেলে তার আপন আত্মার মর্মবাণীর বিবেকানন্দ বললেন, অশ্রান্ত সমস্ত দেবদেবী আজ নিদ্রিত। একমাত্র জাগ্রত দেবী দেশজননী; আগামী পঞ্চাশ বছর ধরে এই দেশজননীর আরাধনাই হোক ভারতবাসীদের একমাত্র সাধনা।

বিবেকানন্দ জানতেন যে জাতীয় মুক্তি কেবল আমাদের জাতিগত সংগঠনের মধ্য দিয়েই আসবে না। তার জন্ম চাই সংঘবদ্ধ ও নিরলস বৈদেশিক প্রচারকার্য। ১৮৯০ সনে চিকাগো ধর্মসম্মেলনে তাঁর দীর্ঘজয়ের মধ্যে যুবক ভারতের দীর্ঘজয় মূর্তিমস্ত হয়ে উঠলো। বহুদিন

পর আমরা আমাদের হারানো আত্মসংবিৎ আবার ফিরে পেলাম। সাম্প্রতিকতার আবরণে ঘোর তামসিকতায় নিমজ্জিত ভারতবাসী তার বৈজ্ঞানিক কশাঘাতে প্রাণচাঞ্চল্যে হলো অস্থির। বিবেকানন্দের “শক্তিব্যোগ”, “মা আমার মানুষ কর” মন্ত্রে যুবক ভারত শক্তি ও ত্যাগের ধর্মে দীক্ষা পেল। ফরাসী মনীষী রোমা রোলঁ বিবেকানন্দের জীবন পর্যালোচনা প্রসঙ্গে মন্তব্য করেছেন, “বিবেকানন্দের পর যারা এলেন, তাঁরা দেখলেন তাঁর মহাপ্রয়াণের তিন বছর বাদে বাংলায় এলো বিপ্লব। বাংলার এই বিপ্লব তিলক ও গান্ধীর বিরূপ আন্দোলনের ভূমিকা। বাংলার বিপ্লব যে সম্ভব হলো, আজ যে ভারতবর্ষ সংঘবদ্ধভাবে জনসাধারণকে নিয়ে একযোগে কাজ করতে পারছে তার মূলে রয়েছে স্বামীজীর মাদ্রাজে উচ্চারিত সেই বাণী—“যুগান্ত ভারতবর্ষ জাগো।”

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বিবেকানন্দ দেহরক্ষা করলেন ১৯০২ সনের জুলাই মাসে। তাঁর চিতাগ্নি থেকে যে ছুটি জ্বলন্ত শিখা বেরিয়ে এলো, তার একটি ভগিনী নিবেদিতা, আর একটি উপাধ্যায় ব্রহ্মবান্ধব। বিবেকানন্দের আরও সাধনা—ফিরিজি জয়ন্ত-উদ্‌যাপনের সাধনাকে সফল করে তুলবার জন্য ব্রহ্মবান্ধব শেষ জীবনে সর্বশক্তি প্রয়োগ করলেন। যে সন্ন্যাসী আজ থেকে সপ্তদশকেরও পূর্বে অক্সফোর্ড ও কেন্সিংটন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে মনোজ্ঞ বক্তৃতাবলী প্রদান করে ভারতবাসীর জন্য ঠিকানা কায়ম করেছিলেন, যে মনস্বী শান্তিনিকেতন ব্রহ্মচর্য বিদ্যালয়ের প্রতিষ্ঠায় ও সংগঠনে রবীন্দ্রনাথের ছিলেন মুখ্য অবলম্বন, যিনি স্বদেশী আন্দোলন ও স্বরাজ আন্দোলন আরম্ভ হবার উষ্মালয়ে সুপ্তিময় জাতির কানে অনাগত স্বরাজের বোধনশব্দ বাজিয়েছিলেন, সেই কীর্তিমান, ত্যাগী, নির্ভীক, অসাধারণশক্তিসম্পন্ন পুরুষসিংহকে বাঙালী আজ ভুলতে বসেছে।

উপাধ্যায় ব্রহ্মবান্ধবের পূর্বাশ্রমের নাম ভবানীচরণ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়। তাঁর ধর্মমতের বিবর্তন রীতিমত বিস্ময়কর। জন্মে ও কুলধর্মে গৌড়া ব্রাহ্মণ্যবাদী ও সনাতনী, যৌবনে কেশব সেনপন্থী নিষ্ঠাবান ব্রাহ্ম, তৎপর

প্রোটেষ্ট্যান্ট খ্রীষ্টান, তৎপর রোমান ক্যাথলিক বা “হিন্দু ক্যাথলিক”। সর্বশেষে বৈদান্তিক ও গ্রাশ্ণালিষ্ট। উনিশ শতকের শেষ দশকে বিবেকানন্দ যখন ফিরিঙ্গি-জয়ন্তে পাশ্চাত্যে প্রচারাভিযানে তন্ময়, এমন দিনে ব্রহ্মবান্ধব জাতীয় পুনরুজ্জীবন কামনা করলেন ভারতে খ্রীষ্টতত্ত্ব প্রচারের মাধ্যমে। নবহিন্দুধর্মের অভ্যুত্থানের আন্দোলনকে ব্রহ্মবান্ধব সুদূরত্ব দেখতে পারেন নি। জীবনের এই পর্বে তিনি স্পষ্টত বিবেকানন্দ বিরোধী।

কিন্তু অল্পদিনের মধ্যেই বিবেকানন্দ-বিরোধী ব্রহ্মবান্ধবের জীবনে এলো রূপান্তর। বিবেকানন্দের দেহরক্ষার পূর্বেই ব্রহ্মবান্ধব “বঙ্গদর্শনে” লিখলেন, “হিন্দুরা যদি হিন্দুত্ব ত্যাগ করে এবং যুরোপীয় হয় তাহা হইলে অচিরে মরিয়া যাইবে। কিন্তু যদি হিন্দুত্বের উপর, জাতীয়তার উপর, একনিষ্ঠতার উপর, বর্ণাশ্রম ধর্মের উপর দণ্ডায়মান হইয়া যুরোপীয় অনুশীলন গ্রহণ করে তাহা হইলে তাহাদের ইহপরকালে মঙ্গল হইবে। নিজের ঘর ছাড়িও না, অগ্রতিষ্ঠিত হইও না। গৃহস্থ হইয়া অভ্যাগতদিগকে সমাদর করিও।”

আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠা না থাকলে জাতীয় মনীষার সমাক বিকাশ-সাধন সম্ভবপর নয়। ধার-করা জিনিষ দিয়ে অঙ্গসাজ বর্ধন করা চলে, কিন্তু ব্যক্তিত্বের ক্ষুরণ হয় না। বিংশ শতকের সূচনায় ব্রহ্মবান্ধবের মনে যে আকাজ্জাতি ছিল প্রবলতম তা হলো হিন্দু সমাজের আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠার তাগিদ। ভারতবর্ষকে খ্রীষ্টান ধর্মের সপক্ষে আকর্ষণ করবার নেশার থেকেও হিন্দুসমাজের আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠার প্রবলতর নেশা তখন তাঁকে পেয়ে বসেছিল। সেই আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠার ভিত্তি হবে ভারতীয় শিক্ষা, সাধনা, ও সংস্কৃতি। স্বদেশী যুগের প্রাক্কালে এই আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠার আদর্শই তিনি জাতির সম্মুখে তুলে ধরলেন। ১৯০১ সনে বোলপুর ব্রহ্মচর্য বিদ্যালয় সংগঠনের পশ্চাতেও একই আদর্শের প্রেরণা সক্রিয় ছিল। স্বদেশী শিক্ষা প্রচার করে দেশেব যৌবনশক্তিকে স্বদেশী ভাবাপন্ন করে তোলাই ছিল তাঁর লক্ষ্য। ১৯০২ সনে জুলাই মাসে তিনি বোলপুর থেকে কলিকাতায় প্রত্যাবর্তনের পথে গুনলেন—বিবেকানন্দ নম্বর দেহ ত্যাগ করেছেন। একদা

বিবেকানন্দ বিরোধী ব্রহ্মবান্ধব এই সময় বিবেকানন্দী আদর্শে ও ভাবে কতটা অমুপ্রাণিত হয়ে উঠেছিলেন, সে প্রশ্নে তিনি নিজেই লিখেছেন,

“দিন কয়েকের জন্য আমি বোলপুর আশ্রমে বেড়াইতে গিয়াছিলাম। ফিরিয়া আসিয়া যখন হাবড়া ইন্সটিশনে পা দিলাম অমনি কে বলিল—কাল স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ মানবলীলা সম্বরণ করিয়াছেন।—শুনিবামাত্র আমার বুকের মাঝে—একটুও বাড়ানো কথা নয়—ঠিক যেন একখানি ছুরি বিঁধিয়া গেল। বেদনার গভীরতা কমিয়া গেলে আমার মনে হইল—বিবেকানন্দের কাজ কেমন করিয়া চলিবে। কেন—তাঁহার ত অনেক উপযুক্ত বিদ্বান গুরুভাই আছেন—তাঁহারা চালাইবেন। তবুও যেন একটা প্রেরণা হইল—তোমার যতটুকু শক্তি আছে ততটুকু তুমি কাজে লাগাও, বিবেকানন্দের ফিরিঙ্গিজয়ন্ত উদ্‌যাপন করিতে চেষ্টা কর। সেই মুহূর্তেই স্থির করিলাম যে বিলাত যাইব...বিলাতে গিয়া বেদান্তের প্রতিষ্ঠা করিব। তখন আমি বুঝিলাম—বিবেকানন্দ কে। যাহার প্রেরণাশক্তি সাদৃশ হীনজনকে সুদূর সাগর পারে লইয়া যায়—সে সোজা মানুষ নয়। তাহার কিছুদিন পরই সাতাশটি টাকা লইয়া বিলাত যাইবার জন্য কলিকাতার নগরী ত্যাগ করিলাম।”

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ব্রহ্মবান্ধবের জীবনের সর্বাপেক্ষা স্মরণীয় ঘটনা “সন্ধ্যা” পত্রের সম্পাদনা। ১৯০৪ সনের নভেম্বর মাসে “সন্ধ্যা” দৈনিক প্রতিষ্ঠাকালে অনুষ্ঠানপত্রে উপাধ্যায় লিখলেন, “রাজ্য স্লেচ্ছ।...উপজীবিকার জগ্য, মানসম্ভ্রমের জগ্য স্লেচ্ছ বিজ্ঞা শিখিতে হইবে।...রাজার সহিত সম্পর্ক রাখিতেই যাহা শিখ—যাহা কয়—হিন্দু থাকিও, বাঙ্গালী থাকিও। সখের জগ্য সাহেবি চং নকল করিলে আসল ভেসে যাবে।...আমরা যতই নিজেকে ভুলি না কেন, আমাদের হৃদয়ে এক পুরাতন সুর যুগযুগান্তর ধরিয়া বাজিতেছে।”

প্রতিদিন সন্ধ্যার সময় “সন্ধ্যা” পত্রিকা প্রকাশিত হতো। মূল্য ছিল মাত্র এক পয়সা। মেঠো, গ্রাম্য, সহজ সরস, সর্বজনবোধ্য ভাষায় এর প্রবন্ধাদি লিখিত হতো। “সন্ধ্যায়” উপাধ্যায় ক্রমশই উগ্র জাতীয়তাবাদের দিকে

অগ্রসর হতে লাগলেন। ফিরিজি সমাজ ও সভ্যতার কদর্য রূপ উদ্‌ঘাটনে তিনি তাঁর সর্বশক্তি প্রয়োগ করলেন। ব্রহ্মবান্ধব যুরোপীয়দিগকে “ফিরিজি” পরিভাষায় অভিহিত করতেন। ইংরেজনবীস বাঙালীবাবুকেও তিনি চাবুক লাগাতে সঙ্কোচ বোধ করেন নি। বিবেকানন্দের মত তিনিও স্পষ্টভাবে উপলব্ধি করলেন ধর্মের নামে সারা দেশটা ক্লৈব্য ও তামসিকতায় ভরপুর। বাঙালীবাবুদের অত্যন্ত নিরাপদ জীবনকে তিনি নিষ্করণভাবে আঘাত করলেন। বিবেকানন্দী বিক্রম নিয়েই তিনি সেদিন যোদ্ধার বেশে বাঙালীর জীবনমঞ্চে আবিভূত হয়েছিলেন। “সন্ধ্যা” পত্রে তিনি লিখলেন,

“তমোভাব আমাদেরকে আচ্ছন্ন করিয়াছে। রজো-গুণটা স্বভাবত : কিছু কড়া। তাই বাঁহারা নরম প্রকৃতির লোক, তাঁহাদের এই কড়া মেজাজটা ভাল লাগে না। যে আফিম খাইয়া মরিতে বসিয়াছে, তাহাকে না চাবুকাইলে তাহার সংজ্ঞা থাকিবে না।...দেশের রোগটা কিছু বিষম হইয়াছে, তাই মকরধ্বজেরও উপরে চট্টা খাওয়াইতে হইবে। দেশে চারিদিকে তমোভাব—অসাড়তা। এখন হাত ব্লাইলে চলিবে না।...রজোগুণের দ্বারা তমোভাব দূর হইলে সত্যের প্রতিষ্ঠা হইবে।”

উপধ্যায়ের যেমন সঙ্কল্প, তেমন কাজ। তাঁর “সন্ধ্যা” পত্রিকার চাবুক খেয়ে স্বদেশী যুগে বাঙালীর মোহভঙ্গ হয়েছিল। রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই প্রসঙ্গে ত্রিশের দশকে লিখেছিলেন,

“সেই সময় দেশবাসী চিন্তামথনে যে আবর্ত আলোড়িত হয়ে উঠল তারই মধ্যে একদিন দেখলুম এই সন্ন্যাসী ঝাঁপ দিয়ে পড়লেন। স্বয়ং বের করলেন ‘সন্ধ্যা’ কাগজ, তীব্র ভাষায় যে মন্দির রস ঢালতে লাগলেন তাতে সমস্ত দেশের রক্তে অগ্নিঝালা বইয়ে দিলে। এই কাগজেই প্রথমে দেখা গেল বাংলাদেশে আভাসে-ইঙ্গিতে বিভীষিকাপন্থার সূচনা। বৈদান্তিক সন্ন্যাসীর এতবড়ো প্রচণ্ড পরিবর্তন আমার কল্পনার অতীত ছিল।”

১৯০৭ সনের মধ্যভাগে “সন্ধ্যা” পত্রিকার বিরুদ্ধে রাজদ্রোহের অভিযোগ আনীত হলো। “সন্ধ্যা” পত্রিকা প্রকাশ ও পরিচালনার সমস্ত দায়িত্ব গ্রহণ করে ব্রহ্মবান্ধব

এক লিখিত বিবৃতিতে ইংরেজ ম্যাজিস্ট্রেটকে জানানলেন, “এই বিচারে আমি কোনরূপ অংশ গ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক নয়, কারণ বিধাতা-নির্দিষ্ট স্বরাজ-ত্রুত উদ্‌ঘাপনে আমার কোনো অংশের জন্ম আমি বিদেশী জাতির নিকট—যে জাতি বর্তমানে আমাদের শাসক এবং যার স্বার্থ আমাদের প্রকৃত জাতীয় আত্মবিকাশের পথে অন্তরায় স্বরূপ, তার নিকট—কোনো জবাবদিহি করতে বাধ্য নই।” ব্রহ্মবান্ধবের এই তেজঃদগ্ধ বলিষ্ঠ কণ্ঠস্বর সেদিন জাতীয় আন্দোলনে কি অপরিমিত শক্তি সঞ্চার করেছিল, তা আমাদের অনেকের পক্ষেই একালে ধারণা করা কঠিন। ১৯০৭ সনের অক্টোবর মাসে বিচারাধীন অবস্থায় ক্যাম্বেল হাসপাতালে তিনি অন্তিম নিঃশ্বাস ত্যাগ করলেন।

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ব্রহ্মবান্ধবের মহাপ্রয়াণে বাংলার জাতীয়তাবাদী দল (মডারেটপন্থী রাজনীতিকগণ যাদের ‘একট্রিমিস্ট’ পরিভাষায় চিহ্নিত করতেন সেই রাজনীতিক দল) স্বাধীনতা যুদ্ধের এক প্রধান পুরোহিত ও সেনাপতিকে হারালো। কিন্তু তাঁর বাণীর মধ্যে ও মহাপ্রয়াণের মধ্যে জাতীয়তাবাদীরা প্রত্যক্ষ করলেন জাতীয় আন্দোলনের সার্থক রূপায়ণ। “বন্দে মাতরম্” পত্রে শ্রীঅরবিন্দ উপাধ্যায় ব্রহ্মবান্ধবকে চিহ্নিত করলেন নব ভাবাদর্শের ঋত্বিক ও শহীদরূপে (“as a saint and martyr of the faith”)। ১৯০৮ সনের ১৪ই এপ্রিল “বন্দে মাতরম্” পত্রে শ্রীঅরবিন্দ Indian Resurgence and Europe (“ভারতীয় পুনরুজ্জীবন ও ইয়োরোপ”) শীর্ষক যে প্রবন্ধটি প্রকাশ করেন, জাতীয় আন্দোলনের স্বরূপ বুঝবার পক্ষে তা অপরিহার্য। ঐ প্রবন্ধে শ্রীঅরবিন্দ লিখলেন যে, ভারতীয় জাতীয়তাবাদের লক্ষ্য দ্বিবিধঃ। প্রথমত, ভারতের জন্ম স্বরাজ্যলাভ, যে স্বরাজ্যের মধ্য দিয়ে রাজনৈতিক জীবনের তৎকালীন অস্বাস্থ্যকর অবস্থার দূরীকরণ হবে সম্ভব; এবং দ্বিতীয়তঃ, এর উদ্দেশ্য হবে স্বদেশী স্বরাজ্য প্রতিষ্ঠা করা, ইউরোপীয় মতবাদের আমদানী করা নয়। এজন্যই এখানে স্বরাজ্য আন্দোলনের প্রথম প্রকাশ ঘটেছিল স্বদেশী ভাবের অভিব্যক্তিতে। এই অভিব্যক্তি শুধু বিদেশী পণ্যের বিরুদ্ধে ছিল না,

আচার-ব্যবহার, বিদেশী বেশভূষা, বিদেশী শিক্ষাদীক্ষার বিরুদ্ধে পরিচালিত হয়েছিল এবং এর মূলে ছিল এদেশবাসীকে তাদের স্বকীয় সভ্যতায় ফিরিয়ে আনা। সে সময় স্বদেশীয়ানার যে জোয়ার লাগলো তার মধ্যে কিছু আতিশয়া ও যুক্তিহীন উচ্ছ্বাস লক্ষ্যণীয় হয়েছিল সত্য, কিন্তু সমাজজীবনের বিষম অসুখই বিষম প্রতিক্রিয়া সৃষ্টি করেছিল। উপাধ্যায় ছিলেন জাতীয় আন্দোলনের এই বিশেষ ভাবাদর্শের প্রতীক। ইয়োরোপ থেকে আমদানী করা ভাবধারা ও আচার-ব্যবহার তিনি জাতীয় জীবনের সর্বাঙ্গ থেকে খসিয়ে ফেলতে চেয়েছিলেন এবং তিনি চেয়েছিলেন কটরপন্থী, আপোষ-বিহীন ভারতীয় হতে। এই দৃঢ়চরিত্রের মাহুঘটির বহিরঙ্গের ঢং বা চালচলন বাদ দিয়ে আমরা যখন তাঁর ব্যক্তিত্বের সারবস্তু সন্ধান করবো তখন

দেখবো এটাই ছিল তাঁর জীবনের আসল বাণী। ইয়োরোপীয় সভ্যতা ও ধর্মাদর্শের সর্বস্ব্তর পরিক্রমার পর তিনিও তাঁর জন্মভূমির মত প্রচণ্ডবেগে তাঁর পিতৃপুরুষদের ধর্ম সংস্কৃতিতে, ভাবনা-চিন্তায়, আচার-ব্যবহারে ও ভাষা-ছন্দে আবার প্রত্যাবর্তন করলেন। পুরানো বাংলা তার শক্তি, সাহস ও অকৃত্রিম আদর্শনিষ্ঠা নিয়ে তাঁর জীবনে মূর্তিমস্ত হলো। শ্রীঅরবিন্দ তাই মন্তব্য করলেন, “His (Upadhyay’s) declaration in Court and his death put a seal upon the meaning of his life and left his name stamped indelibly on the pages of history, as a saint and martyr of the new faith...we have to take up his work and incorporate the essence of it into the accomplished heritage of the nation.”

ওটেন সাহেবের কয়েকটি চিঠি

শ্রীবোধকুমার মজুমদার

“প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের ছাত্রদের সহিত কোনো কোনো ইউরোপীয় অধ্যাপকের যে বিরোধ ঘটয়াছে তাহা লইয়া কোন কথা বলিতে সংকোচ বোধ করি। তার কারণ এই ব্যাপারটি দেখিতে ভাল হয় নাই শুনিতে-ও ভাল নয়।” চৈত্র ১৩২২ খৃষ্টাব্দে “ছাত্র শাসনতন্ত্র” নামক প্রবন্ধে রবীন্দ্রনাথ এই কথাগুলি লিখেছিলেন। কলেজ প্রাঙ্গনে ওটেন-সুভাষচন্দ্রের সংঘর্ষের ঘটনাটি তাঁকে কতদূর বিচলিত করে উপরের উক্তিটি তারই প্রকৃষ্ট প্রমাণ। রবীন্দ্রনাথ ছাত্রদের আচরণকে সমর্থন করেননি কিন্তু বলেছিলেন যে তারা উত্তেজিত ও ক্রুদ্ধ হয়ে উঠতে পারে এমন কারণও যথেষ্ট ঘটেছিল। সুভাষচন্দ্রের এমন কোন প্রামাণিক জীবনচরিত্র আজও লেখা হয়নি, যার মধ্যে এই ঘটনার পুরো বিচার বিশ্লেষণ পাওয়া যাবে। হিউ টম্বের “দু শ্রিংগিং টাইগার”

একটি সুলিখিত বই কিন্তু তবু এটি পুরোপুরি আমাদের কৌতূহল মেটাতে পারে না। সুভাষচন্দ্রের ছাত্রাবস্থার এই ঘটনা নিয়ে অধিকাংশ বই-এষে সব তথ্য পরিবেশিত হয়েছে তা আদৌ বিশ্বাস যোগ্য নয়, যদিও লেখকরা কেউ কেউ তাঁর সতীর্ষ এবং প্রত্যক্ষভাবে ঘটনাটি জানতেন বলে দাবি করেছেন। ওটেন বরাবরই বলে এসেছেন ভারতে থাকাকালীন কোন অবস্থাতেই তিনি কোন ছাত্রের গাত্রস্পর্শ করেন নি। অধুনা প্রকাশিত “ইতিহাসের সন্ধানে”র লেখিকা শ্রীমতী কৃষ্ণা বসু ইণ্ডিয়া হাউসে ওটেন সংক্রান্ত কাগজপত্র দেখে ঘটনার যে বিবরণ দিয়েছেন তা সর্বাধিক যুক্তিসংগত মনে হয়েছে। ওটেন এক বিষয়ে ভাগ্যবান; সুভাষচন্দ্রের সঙ্গে সংঘাত হয়েছিল বলেই আজ তিনি ‘ইতিহাস’ হতে পেরেছেন, অন্যেরা তলিয়ে গেছেন বিস্মৃতির গর্ভে। বিগত দশ

বছরে ওটেন উপাধ্যায়ের নব মূল্যায়ন হয়েছে, যার ফলে কুখ্যাত ওটেন এদেশে প্রায় একটা লেজেণ্ড পরিণত হয়েছেন। বিভিন্ন পত্র পত্রিকায় তাঁর সম্পর্কে লেখা প্রবন্ধ সেই কথাই বেশী করে প্রমাণিত করে। বিশ বা তিরিশের দশকে ওটেন-প্রশস্তি প্রায় অসম্ভব ছিল। কারণ তিনি ছিলেন সর্বশক্তিমান ইংরাজ সরকারের প্রতীক। স্বাধীনতা প্রাপ্তির পরই নূতন দৃষ্টি নিয়ে তাঁর বিচার করা সম্ভব হয়েছে। ১৯৫৫ সালে প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের শতবার্ষিকী উৎসবের সময় যখন পূর্বতন ইংরাজ অধ্যাপকদের খোঁজ খবর নেওয়া হচ্ছিল সেই সময় ওটেন, গিলক্রিফ্ট, স্টার্লিং প্রভৃতির নূতন করে আবিষ্কৃত হলেন।

শতবার্ষিকী উৎসবের সময় কলেজ পত্রিকার যে বিশেষ সংখ্যাটি প্রকাশিত হয় তাতে ওটেন, কর্তৃপক্ষের অহুরোধে, একটি ছোট স্মৃতিকথা কলেজকে উপহার দেন। তাতে তিনি দুজন প্রিয় ছাত্রের কথা উল্লেখ করেছেন। প্রথম জন সে যুগে ইতিহাসের সেরা ছাত্র, কলেজ পত্রিকার প্রথম সম্পাদক, প্রমথনাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ও অন্যজন কলেজ ক্রিকেট টিমের অধিতীয় খেলোয়াড় কানু রায়। “Of all the students whom I knew in those days Kanu Roy on the cricket field and Pramathanath Banerji in the Seminar abide in my memory most clearly...Pramatha was outstanding. I remember mentioning him to the late Mr H.A.L. Fisher when he came to Calcutta, as a fine example of the intellectual calibre of our best Bengali college students.

কলিকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের প্রাক্তন উপাচার্য ও আইন

কলেজের অধ্যক্ষ ডঃ প্রমথনাথ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় যে ওটেন সাহেবের সর্বাধিক প্রিয় ছাত্র ছিলেন তার প্রমাণ আছে গুরু-শিষ্যের মতো সুদীর্ঘকালব্যাপী পত্রের আদান প্রদানে। ওটেন এদেশে থাকাকালীন বাংলা ভাষা শিখেছিলেন। ১৯১৪ সালে প্রথম মহাযুদ্ধের প্রাক্কালে, বাংলায় লেখা তাঁর একটি চিঠির কথা ডঃ বিমান বিহারী মজুমদারের লেখা “ওটেন ও সুভাষচন্দ্র” নামক প্রবন্ধে (“কালি ও কলম”, বৈশাখ, ১৩৭৬) প্রথম পড়ি। সাধু ভাষায় লেখা আন্তরিকতাপূর্ণ পত্রটি পরে আমারও দেখার সৌভাগ্য হয়েছিল। দুঃখের বিষয়, এ বছর যখন আবার ঐ পত্রের খোঁজ করি, তখন সেটি আর খুঁজে পাওয়া যায় নি। ডঃ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় অমৃত—তাকে বিরক্ত করা সঙ্গত মনে হয় নি। এই দুর্মূল্য লিপিটি সংগ্রহ করতে না পারলেও, ইংরাজীতে লেখা সাম্প্রতিক কালের ৮খানি সুদীর্ঘ চিঠি তাঁর কন্যা শ্রীমতী কৃষ্ণা বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় আমাকে ব্যবহার করতে দিয়েছেন। পত্রগুলির রচনাকাল ১৯৫৬-১৯৬৯। এগুলির মধ্যে প্রচুর ব্যক্তিগত ও পারিবারিক কথা আছে। সেগুলি বাদ দিয়ে সর্বসাধারণের উপভোগ্য হতে পারে এমন অংশগুলি আমি উদ্ধৃত করছি। চিঠিতে নানা বিচিত্র বিষয়ের অবতারণা দেখে আমাদের বুঝতে অসুবিধা হয় না যে পরিণত বয়সেও ওটেন সাহেবের মন সজাগ ও কৌতূহল জাগ্রত ছিল এবং ধীশক্তিতেও সামান্য ভাটা পড়েনি। প্রতিটি চিঠিই তাঁর বিদগ্ধ রুচিশীল মনের ছাপ বহন করছে। তাঁর উদার মনোভাব, ইতিহাস-চেতনা, ও ভারতপ্রীতি আমাদের মুগ্ধ করে। কিন্তু সর্বোপরি যা আমাদের অভিভূত করে তা হচ্ছে, তাঁর সুদূর অতীতের এক ছাত্রের প্রতি তাঁর অকৃত্রিম স্নেহ এবং অমায়িক নিরহঙ্কার মনোভাব।

Telephone

Popesgrove 1927

7 Amyand Park Gardens

Twickenham

Middlesex, England

28 October 1956

My dear Pramatha,

Your delightful letter reached me safely, and I now have the exquisite pleasure of answering it.

First as to mode of address. I suppose as members of the English Bar, we ought, following its etiquette to say "My dear Banerji" and "My dear Oaten." But I prefer to follow, with your consent, the old form, justified, I think and hope, by past usage and sufferances, (to use a phrase well known to you as an International lawyer) and by past and present affection. But from you to me, I hope that the formality of "My dear Sir", no longer necessary from the pupil who has outstripped his master, may be replaced by the surname, without prefix, in accordance with the custom of the Bar. I shall feel honoured, if you will so far honour me.

I am glad to know that the University of Calcutta will celebrate its centenary in Jan. 1957. I shall look forward to the centenary volume. I send my respectful good wishes to the university authorities upon this auspicious occasion. May the achievements of its second century crown the achievements of its first! When the profit and loss account of English dominion in India is made up, I think that the creation of Calcutta and other Universities must surely weigh somewhat in our favour.

I notice from your letter that the phrase "the Calcutta University" which I consider a linguistic solecism and against which I fought hard all my official life, still survives. A delicate English ear can tolerate only two ways of expressing this idea, one is "the University of Calcutta", The other is "Calcutta University" without 'the'. No one in England ever says, "The Oxford University". I remember once when Dacca University was about to be founded, the clauses of the Bill came to me for official noting. One clause ran: "The University shall sue and be sued under the style of the Dacca University." I noted something like this. "It will be a pity if a linguistic solecism is embedded in the very title by which the University of Dacca will sue and be sued." The hint was taken, and the University, I think, sues and is sued under the style of the University of Dacca. I do hope that, though I lost the battle for impeccable English in this respect, you will do your best to kill this horrible solecism. It is so sanctioned however by custom that it will be hard to kill.

You ask me about my life. I am afraid I am like the country of which it was said, "Blessed is the country that has no history!" I practised at the Bar in London and on assize for some years and held briefs in a few interesting cases, but I came to the conclusion that the hurly burly of the bar was not temperamentally to my liking and I eventually accepted a salaried legal post at the hands of the Lord Chief Justice Hewart. I retired in 1955, and now live a peaceful life in my 73rd year. My health is good. I live in the middle of my large library and am happy with my wife and my daughter. My son went

to Oxford and then deliberately chose celibacy and school mastering in one of our large schools. He is, I think destined to be a "Mr Chipps".

I was, like a good many Englishman, saddened when freedom had perforce to begin in a divided India. I was particularly sad that Bengal, my old charge, had to be cut into twin. I expressed myself in verse at that time, but it would be inadvisable to publish the lines till after my death. I send you however a specimen of my verse, of which I have written a good deal in the past twenty years, which was published and which you may care to see. I wrote it on the death of Sarojini Naidu, the Governor of Oude, but better known as a poet and patriot. It is on a separate sheet.

Finally, my sincerest thanks for the courtesy and kindness of your generous letter. I welcome it personally, but even more I welcome it because it confirms me in my belief and hope that Indians and Englishmen in spite of the shadow of domination and conquest that once divided them are natural friends and are destined by fate to be partners and allies in the great task which faces the world in the next half century, that of building up a system of Public International Law which all the world will accept and obey.

Yours affectionately

E. F. Oaten

Walton 24477

9 Beech close
Walton on Thames
Surrey, England
20 Sept, 1968

My dear Pramatha,

At last I can sit down and attempt to deal adequately with your long letter. First, I can give you the exact quotation of which I was thinking when I said you had used words similar to those of St Paul. In chapter VI verse II, he writes in the Epistle to the Galatians : "You see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand."

What has annoyed me most about the Subhas Bose incident is that Toye in his *Springing Tiger*, a life of Bose, says in his account of the incident, that at length the English lecturer concerned (not naming me, fortunately) laid his hand on a student. It is a cowardly phrase ; meaning whatever the reader likes to read into it. In the whole of my service in India I never at anytime laid my hand on any Indian. I wrote to Toye, who replied that he had written the best account he could compile from the available evidence.

You may care to know that one or two of our old staff at the Presidency College are still living. When I last heard Sterling was said to be "tottering about the United Service club" in London. Gilchrist is alive in his highland fastness in Aberdeen. Nearly all the European members have gone.....Some months back the official at India House gave me the melancholy news that Professor Zachariah was dead. What a pity ! Cut off so soon after his prime !

Yours affectionately

Farley

Dated 20 Oct, 1968

My dear Pramatha,

I have your letter dated 14th October...My book of poems is on its way to you by sea mail. I hope that you will like some of them...you will have one disappointment. There is no poem properly celebrating the freedom of India. In 1947, though I rejoiced in the coming of freedom, I was filled with doubts about the way it came. The splitting of old India and the unresolved problem of Cashmere, seemed to me to portend unending trouble and filled me with foreboding. That explains why in my poem "India, 1947" I gave way to my forebodings and expressed my fears.

The breaking up of the subcontinent into two hostile sections seemed to me an absolute disaster. The breaking up of the old Indian army, in which I had been proud to serve side by side with Moslems and Sikhs and Dogras, nearly broke my heart. The preservation of the old Indian army was the first essential to the safety of the sub-continent and it was a tragedy that passions of the zealots, religious bigots on both sides made this impossible. I blame Jinnah most of all, but there were Hindus as well, who were guilty. A little more time, and the essential—the maintenance of the great Indian army—might have been achieved. India now faces an enemy to the North West and an enemy allied with China with no natural boundaries to the North West and what seems to be a permanent bone of discord in Cashmere. When the brief war took place, my heart bled for both combatants. If only time could have been given and a federation worked out, which would have kept the Indian army, Sikh Moslem and Dogra, Mahratta Gurkha etc. But it was not to be. I suppose it was impossible. Statesmanship cannot solve all problems. I remember Lord Sinha in 1928 (February) coming up to me and Sir Prohash Mitter in the Calcutta Club and waving a book of Stuart Mill. He quoted quite excitedly a passage which said that an imperial power can rule different races and if it rules them long enough, a sentiment of joint nationality may grow up in the several races. But, he went on, "If the aspiration to self governments in the several races grows before the fusion is effected, the opportunity of union is gone and it will not be effected." As Lord Sinha died the same week, I have never forgotten his strange outburst. In it he proclaimed that a united Moslem & Hindu Federation was impossible.

I remember sometime after the Montagu Chelmsford announcement, signing a document, which stated that freedom should be given within a reasonable time, but stage by stage, as it became possible. We did not want a rushed freedom which would end in chaos. Many Englishmen thought like that (Do you know Bridges' poem England & India in 1918?)...I understand the urge to freedom and rejoiced in its coming, but I was left with grave forebodings which have not been resolved by time. Mountbatten's rush under Atlee's direction left insufficient time to solve the problems.

...You may not agree that freedom was rushed and many evils have resulted therefrom. I feel myself that the present situation with the Governor's gule in three provinces and a tendency to further breakdown, the linguistic muddle about Hindi which Bengalis and the Southern people cannot use, the frequency of shootings by the police and the various other creaking of the joints, including the breakdown of all democracy in

Pakistan, suggest that freedom came with too great a rush. Of course, as the famous Andrews (of Santiniketan) would have said, "No matter. Freedom is life, life life, no matter all the troubles it brings with it". I suppose he was right. But I wonder whether freedom has been such a blessing to the Nigerians. Whether the Vietnamese after twenty years of freedom from the French, with war unending think it such a blessing and whether the Nagas enjoy there 'freedom'. Are the East Bengalis happy? Do the West Pakistanis like autocracy? Ghana was ruined by freedom. So was Indonesia. Are the Hungarians, the Czechoslovaks and other Balkan races now happier that they were under the old Austro-Hungarian Empire? In other words, is freedom for small nations merely a transition between Empire and Empire? The answer to that question we may not know for fifty or hundred years, when the the ambitions of Russia and China have come to fruition or been checked. Meantime the present attitude of all nations seems to be, "Give me (however small) freedom or give me death, as in the case of the Biafrans and the Vietnamese.

I am sorry. I have been thinking aloud, and you have been perhaps unwillingly listening in. But to my mind the most remarkable feature of history is this. The old Empire was cruel, harsh and rigorous, Yet after the empire fell, and Europe went through the agonies of invasion plunder and rapine for nearly 400 years (the Dark Ages), the despairing peoples of Europe in 800 A D clung to the hope of its restoration and tried to reconstitute it under the guise of the Holy Roman Empire.

It did not work, but it was an early attempt to create a 'United Nations'.

I do not know what moral can be drawn from this. But freedom is not the only answer. Just now we have the absurd prospect of Wales, Scotland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands talking more or less seriously of becoming independent states. And a tiny island in the West Indies is talking of independence from its slightly larger neighbour. How stupid can mankind get?

With much affection
Farley

Letter posted on 25.11.68

My dear Pramatha

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 5th November, the day on which in this country small boys light bonfires and let off fireworks in celebration of the escape of Parliament from being blown up in 1625 by Guy Fawkes. Many of the celebrants have no idea of the history behind their antics, but on the other hand it is with some part of a ritual which remembers how bloody Queen Mary burnt some Protestant martyrs in the fifteen eighties for their anti Roman Catholic beliefs. The bonfires are very big in Lewes in Sussex where several martyrs were burnt. We English are a strange people and our history has some queer episodes.

You will remember that we were discussing the unfortunate division of the sub-continent in 1947. I enclose a cutting from the Daily Telegraph which reports a lecture recently delivered by Lord Mountbatten on Jawahar Nehru. He makes it quite clear that

Jinnah was the main culprit. Somehow I wish he could have lived to see his moth-eaten Pakistan. Perhaps the Sikhs were next in line as culprits. What do you think?

Mr. Powell is stirring up a lot of agitation against coloured settlers in this country. He will fail. The English are on the whole a tolerant people. But some of the immigrants are acting in such a way as to make us forget they are guests. A Sikh father whose unmarried daughter had become pregnant, killed her, chopped her up, and scattered her pieces along the railway line. Tariq Ali is to organise revolution in England. And thirdly, a number of African and Asian students seized Gray's Inn and had a sit-in to publicise their grievances. Some immigrants are behaving, as if they owned England, instead of being guests. Mr. Wilson, the Prime Minister had to say in the House the other day that "after all don't forget that Britain has regained her independence too". He referred to the fact that liberated countries are often saying to Britain, "You can't do that, you can't do this or we shall leave the commonwealth". Well, if they feel like that let them do so. Some have done so and come back asking to be readmitted.

I am so glad you deplore the attempt to erase history by getting rid of statues and other signs of English rule. Remember Britain has twice been conquered and occupied nation. What would we now give were there a statue of Julius Caesar or the Emperor Claudius at Ludgate Circus or an equestrian statue of William Bastard on Tower Hill? I know that the Ochterloney Monument has gone from Chowringhi. I wonder whether Lord Ripon has disappeared from the Maidan. After all he did something for India and is worth keeping. When if ever the anger of injury or mutilation by "patriots" has disappeared, they should in some future generation be brought out again. After all, for good or ill, they were the makers of India. Why not knock down all Maghul palaces as symbols of a past foreign rule?

Yours very affectionately
Farley

এই চিঠিগুলির সঙ্গে ওটেন একাধিক স্বরচিত কবিতা গেঁথে দিয়েছেন। স্থানানুসারে সেগুলি ছাপা গেল না। ওটেন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের কৃতী ছাত্র। ক্লাসিকসে সুপণ্ডিত ও ইংরাজী ভাষায় একজন স্বকবিও ছিলেন। Song of Aton and other verses নামক কাব্যগ্রন্থে তাঁর কবিতাগুলি সংকলিত হয়েছে। এই বইটি ১৯৬৭ সালের সেপ্টেম্বর মাসে শিবাজী প্রেস, সেকেন্দ্রাবাদ থেকে মুদ্রিত। ওটেন সাহেব ইংলণ্ডে বসবাস করতেন, অথচ বইটি কেন এদেশে ছাপা হ'ল তার কোন কারণ জানা গেল না। কাব্যগ্রন্থে সবশুদ্ধ ৩৪টি কবিতা স্থান পেয়েছে—তার মধ্যে অন্তত: ৮টি ভারতবিশয়ক। যে কোন ভারতবাসী তাঁর সুভাষচন্দ্র, সরোজিনী নাইডু, তরু দত্ত, ফতেপুর সিক্রী বা ইন্দিয়া ১৯৪৭ কবিতাগুলি পড়ে আনন্দ পাবেন। সুভাষচন্দ্র সম্পর্কে ওটেনের বিখ্যাত চতুর্দশপদী কবিতাটি নিম্নে উদ্ধৃত করছি—এতে সুভাষের প্রতি তাঁর যে অপরিসীম অমুরাগ ফুটে উঠেছে তা পাঠক মাত্রই অনুধাবন করবেন।

Subhas Chandra Bose

Obit 1945

Did I once suffer, Subhas, at your hand ?
 Your patriot heart is stilled ! I would forget !
 Let me recall but this, that while as yet
 The Raj that you once challenged in your land
 Was mighty, Icarus like your courage planned
 To mount the skies and storm in battle set
 The ramparts of high Heaven, to claim the debt
 Of freedom owed, on plain and rude demand.
 High heaven yielded, but in dignity
 Like Icarus, you sped towards the sea
 Your wings were melted from you by the Sun,
 The genial patriot fire, that brightly glowed
 In India's mighty heart and flamed and flowed
 Forth from her Army's thousand victories won !

ছাত্র সংসদের কথা

সুপ্রিয় হালদার

গত দুবছরের মত এবারও সংসদ নির্বাচনে জয়লাভ করল জাতীয়তাবাদী ছাত্র সংগঠন। প্রতিপক্ষ ছিল বাটের দশকের রাজনৈতিক আন্তার্কুণ্ড থেকে উঠে আসা কিছু স্ববিধাবাদী। পরণে তাদের অরাজনৈতিক মুখোশ, কিন্তু দুবছরের ব্যবহারে তার রং গিয়েছিল চটে। কলেজের ছাত্রছাত্রীরা তাই তাদের চিনতে ভুল করেন নি।

কিন্তু ছাত্রছাত্রীদের নির্বাচনী রায় নাকচের চেষ্ঠা এবারই প্রথম হয়। মধ্য কলকাতার কিছু সমাজ-বিরোধী সাহায্যে নির্বাচনে পরাস্ত সুবিধাবাদীরা কলেজ প্রাঙ্গণকে রণক্ষেত্রে পরিণত করেন। নির্বাচিত প্রতিনিধিদের কলেজে আসা বন্ধ হয় এবং উপনির্বাচনের নামে এক গ্রহসন অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। এরপরও চলে কলেজের বাইরে আলোচনা চলার সময় আমাদের উপর সশস্ত্র হামলা। এই ঘটনার পরে আমাদের প্রতিপক্ষ সংগঠনের

কিছু কর্মী বীতশ্রদ্ধ হয়ে দলত্যাগ করেন। এই সংকটের মুহূর্তে শ্রীমুত্রত মুখোপাধ্যায়, শ্রীসৌগত রায় ও কলেজের ছাত্রছাত্রীদের কাছে যে সাহায্য আমরা পেয়েছি তার জন্য আমরা তাঁদের কাছে কৃতজ্ঞ। আজ ভাবতে ভালো লাগে যে ঐ বিপদের মধ্যেও আমরা আমাদের আদর্শ আঁকড়ে থাকতে পেরেছি।

এই সব অসুবিধা সত্ত্বেও সংসদের কাজ সুসম্পন্ন করার আশ্রাণ চেষ্ঠা আমরা করেছি। এবছর ছাত্র সংসদ এক চলচ্চিত্র উৎসবের আয়োজন করে। উৎসবে সত্যজিৎ রায়ের 'পথের পাঁচালী' ও 'অপুর সংসার', ঋত্বিক ঘটকের 'অযান্ত্রিক' এবং মুনাল সেনের 'ভুবন মোম' প্রদর্শিত হয়। অনুষ্ঠানের প্রারম্ভে শ্রীমুনাল সেন চলচ্চিত্র সম্পর্কিত এক আলোচনায় কলেজের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের সঙ্গে মিলিত হন। উদ্বোধনী অনুষ্ঠানে সভাপতিত্ব করেন রাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শ্রীমুত্রত মুখোপাধ্যায়। তিনি

তার ভাষণে আশা প্রকাশ করেন যে নেপচুন শ্রীমালের মত কর্মীর ত্যাগের মূল্যে ফিরে পাওয়া শান্তি রক্ষার জন্য প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের ছাত্রছাত্রীরা সর্বদা প্রস্তুত থাকবেন। এই বছর ছাত্র সংসদের পক্ষ থেকে ভর্তির সময় কলেজ কর্মচারীদের সাহায্য করার চেষ্টা করা হয়। কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় স্থানীয় এক ‘নেতা’ প্রবেশিকা পরীক্ষায় অসুস্থীর্ণ একজন পরীক্ষার্থীকে অসাধু উপায়ে কলেজে ঢোকানোর চেষ্টা করেন। বাধা দেবার চেষ্টা করলে সংসদের একজন কর্মী নিগৃহীত হন। শেষ পর্যন্ত কর্তৃপক্ষের সহায়তায় অবস্থা আয়ত্তে আসে।

এ বছর নবীন বরণ উৎসবে কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের উপাচার্য সভাপতিত্ব করেন। কলেজের অধ্যক্ষ ডঃ প্রতুলচন্দ্র মুখোপাধ্যায় নবাগত ছাত্রছাত্রীদের অভ্যর্থনা জানান। প্রধান অতিথির ভাষণে শ্রীমোগত রায় প্রেসিডেন্সি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের দাবী আদায়ের জন্য লড়াই চালিয়ে যেতে অনুরোধ করেন। পরে বিচিত্রানুষ্ঠানে স্বপন গুপ্ত, ভক্তদাস বাউল, প্রাক্তন ছাত্র মুকুল দাস ও তার পুত্র সৌমিত্র দাস, খোকন মুখার্জি, সমীর খাসনবীস প্রমুখ অংশগ্রহণ করেন।

বছর বছর পরে কলেজের নাট্য সংস্থা আবার সক্রিয় হয়ে ওঠে। রবীন্দ্রনাথের ‘রাজা’ ও ইংরেজি নাটক ‘স্লীপওয়াকার্স’ এবং ‘শ্রী’ কলেজে মঞ্চস্থ হয়, একাঙ্ক নাটক প্রতিযোগিতায় যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ও দিল্লীর সেন্ট স্টিফেন্স কলেজে আমাদের অভিনেতা, অভিনেত্রী ও পরিচালকদের সাফল্য উল্লেখযোগ্য।

‘রক্তকরবী’ নাটক অভিনয় করে এবারে রবীন্দ্র পরিষদ রবীন্দ্রনাথের জন্মজয়ন্তী উদযাপন করে। অনুষ্ঠানে প্রদীপ ঘোষ আবৃত্তি করেন।

সংস্কৃতি পরিষৎ নামক এক সংস্থার সহযোগিতায় সংসদ Role of Ethics in Society সম্পর্কে এক আলোচনাসভার আয়োজন করে। বক্তা ছিলেন অধ্যাপক বরুণ দে এবং অধ্যাপক অম্লান দত্ত।

১৯৭৪ সাল আমাদের বিতর্কানুষ্ঠান সমিতির কাছে অগ্রগণ্য হয়ে থাকবে। কৃতিত্বগুণ অভিযানের শুরু সেন্ট জেভিয়াস কলেজের আন্তর্কলেজ বিতর্ক প্রতিযোগিতায়

জয়লাভের মধ্য দিয়ে। অতঃপর যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ‘ফাউন্টেনহেড’ প্রতিযোগিতা, কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় আয়োজিত দুটি বিতর্কসভায়, মুসলিম প্রোগ্রেসিভ সোসাইটি আয়োজিত প্রতিযোগিতার, লেডি ব্র্যাবোর্ন কলেজে, ও বিকাশ পাব্লিকেশন্স আয়োজিত বিতর্ক সভায় আমাদের বক্তারা রেখে এসেছেন সাফল্যের নজির। কিন্তু সবচেয়ে বড় সাফল্য বোধহয় ইণ্ডিয়ান টিউব ও ইণ্ডিয়ান ইনস্টিটিউট অফ ম্যানেজমেন্ট আয়োজিত নক্ আউট প্রতিযোগিতায় জয়লাভ। পর্যায়ক্রমে লেডি ব্র্যাবোর্ন, লোরেটো ও সেন্ট জেভিয়াস কলেজকে হারিয়ে আমাদের দল ইণ্ডিয়ান টিউব ট্রফি লাভ করে। রাউণ্ড টেবুল আয়োজিত নক্ আউট প্রতিযোগিতায় আমরা দ্বিতীয় স্থান লাভ করি। সেন্ট জেভিয়াস কলেজে বাংলা বিতর্ক প্রতিযোগিতায়ও আমরা শ্রেষ্ঠ দলের পুরস্কার পাই। ১৯৭৩ সালের পিছিয়ে দেওয়া প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজ চ্যালেঞ্জ শীল্ড বিতর্ক প্রতিযোগিতায় যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় শ্রেষ্ঠ দল হিসেবে পুরস্কৃত হয়। শ্রেষ্ঠ দুজন বক্তার পুরস্কার পান আমাদের প্রতিযোগীরাই। বিষয় ছিল ‘বিবেকের অপর নাম কাপুরুষতা’। ১৯৭৪ সালের প্রতিযোগিতায় ‘ব্যক্তিগত সম্পত্তি চুরির নামান্তর’ এই প্রস্তাবটির উপর বিতর্ক হয়। শ্রেষ্ঠ বক্তা হন আমাদের কলেজেরই প্রতিযোগী। দল হিসাবে শীল্ড লাভ করে সেন্ট জেভিয়াস কলেজ। আন্তর্বিভাগীয় বিতর্ক প্রতিযোগিতার বিষয় ছিল ‘সংগঠিত ধর্মের প্রয়োজন ফুরিয়েছে’; ইংরেজি বিভাগ শ্রেষ্ঠ দল বিবেচিত হয়। ‘রাজনৈতিক ক্ষমতা বন্ধুকের নল থেকে জন্ম নেয়’ এই বহুবিতর্কিত উক্তিটি ছিল এবছরের নবাগতদের বিতর্ক প্রতিযোগিতার বিষয়। প্রাক্তন ছাত্রদের সঙ্গে বর্তমান ছাত্রদের প্রদর্শনী বিতর্কসভায় এবছর প্রাক্তনদের মধ্যে উপস্থিত ছিলেন সুধাংশু দাশগুপ্ত, মণীশ নন্দী ও কল্যান চ্যাটার্জি। বিষয় ছিল ‘ভারতীয় হয়ে জন্মলাভ করা দুর্ভাগ্যজনক।’ এছাড়া এবছর একাধিক কুইজ প্রতিযোগিতায় আমাদের ছাত্রছাত্রীরা সাফল্যের সঙ্গে অংশগ্রহণ করেন। আন্তর্বিভাগীয় কুইজ প্রতিযোগিতায় জয়লাভ করে ইতিহাস বিভাগ।

ছাত্রদের ও ছাত্রীদের কমনরুমে যথারীতি টেবল টেনিস প্রতিযোগিতা অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। এছাড়া ছাত্রদের একটি আন্তর্বিভাগীয় প্রতিযোগিতা হয়; জয়লাভ করে অর্থনীতি বিভাগ। অনেকদিন পরে কলেজের জিমনাসিয়াম এ বছর খেলা হয়।

কলেজে যখন হাসি গানের ফোয়ারা, বাইরে তখন মেহনতী মানুষের মুখের হাসি মিলিয়ে গেছে কালো-বাকারী ও মুনাফাখোরের শোষণে। মজুতউদ্ধার আন্দোলনে যোগদান করে আমরা সমাজের শত্রুদের মোকাবিলা করার ভার তুলে নিলাম, আমাদের নেতা শ্রীকুমুদ ভট্টাচার্যের ডাকে সাড়া দিয়ে আমরা কলেজে এক চলচ্চিত্র প্রদর্শনীর আয়োজন করি। অনুষ্ঠানে সত্যজিৎ রায়ের ‘নায়ক’ ও ‘মহানগর’ দেখান হয়। অনুষ্ঠানের মোট সংগ্রহ ১১০৩ টাকা আমরা রাজ্যপালের বহুমুখী ত্রাণ তহবিলে দান করি।

এ ছাড়াও এক বিচিত্রানুষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে সংগৃহীত ১২০০ টাকা আমরা এক দুঃস্থ ছাত্রবন্ধুর হাতে তুলে দিতে সমর্থ হই। ক্রীড়া সংসদের দুই কর্মী মাত্র ১০৫ টাকার মাসোহারায় জীবনধারণ করছিলেন। এদের বাড়তি সুবিধাদানের দাবীতে আমরা অনশন করি। ফলে একজন কর্মীর পুত্র পদার্থবিজ্ঞান বিভাগে চাকরী পান। অপরজনকে জরুরী ব্যবস্থা হিসাবে ছবার অর্থসাহায্য করা হয়। কলেজের চীপ ফোরে আমরা দিয়েছি ১৮৫ টাকা। চীপ স্টোরের ব্যাপারে আমরা ছাত্রছাত্রীদের কাছে আরো সহযোগিতা প্রার্থনা করি।

ছাত্র সংসদের আর এক দৃঢ় পদক্ষেপ ক্যান্টিনের সুযোগ সুবিধা সম্প্রসারণ। আমলাতান্ত্রিক বেড়াজালের বিপত্তি সত্ত্বেও ক্যান্টিন আরো বড় জায়গায় স্থানান্তরিত করা হয়েছে। অনতিবিলম্বে আরো সুযোগ সুবিধার জন্য নূতন সংসদ প্রতিনিধিরা সংগ্রাম করবেন।

গত ২০শে জুন ছাত্র সংসদের তরফ থেকে কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের উপাচার্যের ঘরে ও সিণ্ডিকেট সদস্যদের কাঁধায়ে এক বিক্ষোভের আয়োজন করা হয়। মধ্য কলকাতার বিভিন্ন কলেজ থেকে তিন শতাধিক ছাত্রছাত্রী এই বিক্ষোভে যোগদান করেন। আমরা দাবী করি যে

১৯৭৪সালের পার্টওয়ান পরীক্ষার তারিখ অবিলম্বে ঘোষণা করতে হবে ও পরীক্ষার উত্তরপত্র মূল্যায়নের ব্যাপারে সমস্ত দুর্নীতি বন্ধ করতে হবে। ১৯৭৩ সালের পার্টওয়ান পরীক্ষায় শারীরবিজ্ঞান (সাম্প্রদায়িক) উত্তরপত্র মূল্যায়নে পরীক্ষকরা যে সব সময় সততার পরিচয় দেন নি তাও আমরা প্রমাণ করি। এই সমস্ত উত্তরপত্র আবার পরীক্ষা করতে হবে বলে আমরা দাবী জানাই। আমাদের সমস্ত শর্ত যেনে নেবার পর আমরা অবরোধ তুলে নিই।

কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের এই জাতীয় দুর্নীতি ও দায়িত্বজ্ঞানহীনতার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে ছাত্রছাত্রীদের মধ্যে প্রেসিডেন্সি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের দাবী আরো জোরদার হয়ে উঠেছে। আমরা আশা করি অচিরেই বর্তমান শিক্ষাব্যবস্থার গলদমুক্ত এক বিকল্প ব্যবস্থার বাস্তব রূপায়ন হবে প্রেসিডেন্সি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় স্থাপনের মধ্য দিয়ে।

সবশেষে অত্যন্ত দুঃখের সঙ্গে লিখতে বাধ্য হচ্ছি যে কিছুদিন যাবৎ কিছু ছাত্রছাত্রীর মধ্যে এক প্রবণতা দেখা যাচ্ছে যাকে কোনমতেই সুস্থ বলা চলে না। কলেজ কর্তৃপক্ষ যে সমস্ত দেয়াল পত্রিকার ব্যবস্থা করে দিয়েছেন এক শ্রেণীর ছাত্রছাত্রী অগ্নদের উদাসীনতার স্বেচ্ছায় নিয়ে সেগুলি রাজনৈতিক প্রচারের জন্য ব্যবহার করছেন। আমরা মনে করি, কলেজ পত্রিকার মত দেয়াল পত্রিকাগুলোরও এক নিজস্ব ঐতিহ্য আছে। এগুলোকে রাজনৈতিক প্রচারের জন্য ব্যবহার করা কোন ভাবেই ছাত্রছাত্রীদের মধ্যে গোহার্দ্য রক্ষার সহায়ক নয়। আমরা আশা করি ভবিষ্যতে এইসব দেওয়াল পত্রিকার সম্পাদকেরা নিজেদের বিভাগীয় পত্রিকাগুলিকে কোনো বিশেষ রাজনৈতিক মতবাদ প্রচারের হাতিয়ারে পরিণত করবেন না।

আমাদের প্রকল্প অধ্যক্ষ ডঃ প্রতুলচন্দ্র মুখোপাধ্যায় ও কোষাধ্যক্ষ ডঃ অমলেশ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের সহযোগিতা ছাড়া আমরা কোন কাজই সুসম্পন্ন করতে পারতাম না। ধন্যবাদ জানাই কলেজের সমস্ত অশিক্ষক কর্মচারীদের যাদের মধ্যে সর্বশ্রী শ্যামল মুখোপাধ্যায়, মনোরঞ্জন বসু, অনামী সেন, দিলীপ রায়, ও যুগেন দাসগুপ্তের নাম উল্লেখযোগ্য। এছাড়া আমাদের সঙ্কটের মুহূর্তেও সাধারণ কাজকর্মে আমরা শ্রীসুব্রত মুখোপাধ্যায়, শ্রীকুমুদ ভট্টাচার্য, শ্রীসৌগত রায়, শ্রীঅতনু মুখোপাধ্যায় ও শ্রীঅশোক দেবের কাছে যে সাহায্য পেয়েছি তার জন্য আমরা তাঁদের কাছে কৃতজ্ঞ।

অম সংশোধন :

৩৩ পৃষ্ঠায় প্রবন্ধের শিরোনামে ‘যতীন্দ্রমোহন সেনগুপ্ত’র পরিবর্তে ‘যতীন্দ্রনাথ সেনগুপ্তের’ পড়তে হবে।

পরিচিতি

কমলকুমার ঘটক ॥ পত্রিকার প্রাক্তন সম্পাদক । ইতিহাসের অধ্যাপক ।

গুঞ্জা সেনগুপ্ত ॥ তৃতীয় বর্ষ (বিদ্যায়ী) ইতিহাসের ছাত্রী ।

চঞ্চলকুমার মজুমদার ॥ প্রাক্তন ছাত্র । টাটা ইন্সটিটিউট অফ ফাণ্ডামেন্টাল রিসার্চের পদার্থবিজ্ঞান
রীডার ।

জয়া বসু ॥ স্নাতকোত্তর দ্বিতীয় বর্ষ (বিদ্যায়ী) ইতিহাসের ছাত্রী ।

তপোব্রত ঘোষ ॥ তৃতীয় বর্ষ বাংলার ছাত্র ।

দীপক বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ॥ অর্থনীতির বিভাগীয় প্রধান ।

নির্মলকান্তি মজুমদার ॥ প্রাক্তন ছাত্র । কলেজে রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান পড়াতেন ।

পলাশবরণ পাল ॥ তৃতীয় বর্ষ পদার্থবিজ্ঞান ছাত্র ।

মণিকুম্ভলা মুখোপাধ্যায় ॥ তৃতীয় বর্ষ (বিদ্যায়ী) ইতিহাসের ছাত্রী ।

হরিদাস মুখোপাধ্যায় ॥ ইতিহাসের অধ্যাপক ।

সুপ্রিয় হালদার ॥ তৃতীয় বর্ষ ইংরেজীর ছাত্র । ছাত্র সংসদের বিদ্যায়ী সাধারণ সম্পাদক ।

সুবোধকুমার মজুমদার ॥ প্রাক্তন ছাত্র ও অধ্যাপক । বর্তমানে মৌলানা আজাদ কলেজের ইতিহাসের
বিভাগীয় প্রধান ।

সোমক রায় ॥ তৃতীয় বর্ষ (বিদ্যায়ী) পদার্থবিজ্ঞান ছাত্র ।

दीर्घादीन्

1. विश्वविद्यालयी शिक्षण (विश्वविद्यालयी शिक्षण) 1. विश्वविद्यालयी शिक्षण 1. विश्वविद्यालयी शिक्षण

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

The College Library : Facts And Problems

The Presidency College Library is no less our problem than our pride. The Hindu College had a haphazard but now valuable collection of books. One still comes upon those venerable volumes, bearing the seal of "Hindu College" or "Anglo-Indian College". Even older specimens joined them in 1844, as gifts from the library of Fort William College. In 1858 there were already over 7,000 volumes; in 1927, nearly 45,000; in the centenary year of 1955, about 75,000; today over 1,31,000. This collection caters to undergraduate and postgraduate students of 17 departments and research workers in various faculties, whose numbers are increasing every day.

To meet this growth as far as possible, the Library has set up new quarters. In 1912-13, the science collection was transferred to the Baker Laboratories. In 1962, the Economics and Political Science Library was set up in the new annexe to the Baker Laboratories, and in 1970 the Science Library was shifted to more spacious premises in the same building. How inadequate such arrangements have proved, we shall presently see.

The value of the collection is if anything more impressive than its size. A glance at the rare-book shelves, or the collection of the late Professor Manomohan Ghosh, has staggered many learned visitors. Many titles are not to be found elsewhere in India. The tradition has been kept up in recent years—as far as our chronic poverty would permit. The late Professor Tarak Nath Sen sat up many nights planning the best possible selection of books to be ordered from abroad. Among his endless services to the Library, one particularly remembers the purchase of the British Museum catalogue (how many battles he fought for it!) and the splendid

collection of books on art. Scholars always gather at the feast: last year, nearly 18,000 volumes were used by outsiders alone, besides some 60,000 day-issues and 43,000 home-issues to the staff and students.

All this goes to show that the Presidency College Library is not just another college collection. It is one of the richest treasure-houses in the city for advanced scholars in all subjects, and particularly in the humanities, where there are few alternative collections. And for all the 18,000 issues to outsiders, it is a treasure-house largely untapped because of the absence of proper facilities. The country can scarcely afford this colossal waste of intellectual resources.

What should a library like ours provide? First of all, service from morning to night, and on holidays too. A scheme to this effect was submitted in 1952; another, more detailed, in 1958. There has of course been no response. As a result, old members of the college, at present attached to other institutions, have great difficulty in using the library. Our own students, with scarcely a free hour in their routine, cannot fully exploit their unique opportunity—certainly not enjoyed by any undergraduates elsewhere in the country. This accounts also for the unusually high proportion of home-issues to day-issues—which of course means greater wear and tear. Library discipline suffers if the reading room is not fully used for its proper purpose. It is most desirable in every way that library hours should be extended. Dare we live in hope?

A good library needs a good catalogue, which in turn needs men to prepare it. We have only one cataloguer, to cope with an average annual intake of 2,500 volumes. He might just have managed—if the general paucity of staff had not burdened him with other work. Ideally, the

library should have two card-catalogues and two file-catalogues. In fact, only one file-catalogue is somehow kept up to date; it has therefore been handled till it is almost falling to pieces and is so closely written that it takes months of initiation to decipher it. One copy of the card-catalogue is fitfully kept "in progress". The other catalogues are ludicrously out of date. The new, speedier "Carter system" was introduced a few years ago. Perhaps two cataloguers with at least three bearers between them, working whole time, could recatalogue the Arts collection on this system, and clear off all arrears, in a year and a half. Could not this staff be made available, at least temporarily? Meanwhile, our sole cataloguer plods on, and the third-year student sees for the first time books that entered the college almost at the same time as he did.

Talk of catalogues leads us to the Government Press, which is supposed to do our printing for us. In the intervals of other work, our staff have recatalogued a substantial part of our collection on the new system. Every year since 1971, this has been sent for printing—and every year returned. This year too, there has been no promise to print it—but nor, till the time of writing, has the typescript come back to us. Months of such patient labour deserved a better recompense than to be buried, and perhaps lost, among unattended files in a neglected office. The Press has even stopped supplying readers' tickets, requisition slips and other standard forms. These have to be cyclostyled in the library — a task of some difficulty, since though our library has been treated to a typewriter, a typist to work it was deemed superfluous.

The Government Press is also entrusted with binding our books. The last instalment of 100 volumes was sent in 1964; 78 returned in 1968, and the rest are still awaited. Nor have earlier instalments been cleared; in fact, we still inquire after thirteen volumes sent between 1942 and 1952! Endless applications have been made for money to bind our books elsewhere, to set up a

binding department, or at least to send our books to the binding department already functioning in the Sanskrit College Library. One binding grant was indeed made in two instalments in 1961 and 1962; it has done little to offset the increasing number of torn books and unbound periodicals, currently estimated at 12,000 volumes. The state of our periodicals is a librarian's nightmare. Unless substantial binding grants are soon received, many of the most valuable old books, and the most popular reference works, will be irretrievably lost.

The cramped, ill-ventilated, termite-infested stacks of the Arts Library work havoc with books. They lie in heaps on the floor, undusted (dusting bearers demanded since 1959), sometimes unsorted, almost visibly decaying. Even with some new racks that we expect to install this year, the Arts Library will be pitifully short of space — and with no room to put in any more racks. The new quarters of the Science Library have proved a boon; when will the new Arts Block be built, two stores of which are earmarked for the library? Planning and measuring have been going on for years. Nor does the P. W. D. seem keener on short-term measures. A proposal for new electrical installations has been lying unanswered for 14 years. To replace a bulb takes days, and to repair an exhaust fan months. So bad is the situation that the last annual library report warns that, without speedy improvement and expansion, we may soon have to *stop buying new books for the Arts Departments*. Anyone who thinks this an exaggerated fear should go and spend five minutes in the stacks — without an oxygen mask.

Ironically, this warning comes just when all departments badly want more grants. The normal grant stands at Rs. 13,735/- for seventeen departments. A prominent missionary college in Delhi allows each department Rs. 7,500/- a year. Another, in Calcutta, makes special arrangements to import books from abroad. Can we afford to lag so far behind? Admittedly, we get another Rs. 8,117/62p. for additional journals. We have

also got substantial, though fluctuating, development grants in recent years, and the U.G.C. has helped. Nor do we deny that many unfortunate colleges get much less. But our library has functions beyond most other college libraries, and in any case the simple truth is that our grants are just not enough to procure even the best titles from ever-lengthening publishers' lists.

Of making many books there is no end, and their prices have more than doubled in the last fifteen years. The subscription rates for journals have risen so fast as to nullify the benefits of the additional grant. The list of regular subscriptions keeps dwindling every year, even though many departments spend nearly their entire normal grant on journals. It is a sad falling-off from the days when Presidency College boasted one of the finest selections of new journals in the city. Moreover, the local book market is contracting, and orders abroad (through licensed importers) take a long time to be executed, often over a year. Such long-range ordering is not possible with uncertain development grants; the normal grant must be increased. The library contingency grant stands at Rs. 350/-, out of which come stationery, insecticides, minor equipment, odd repairs, a little binding material — and all costs are rising daily.

We therefore need money — badly, and for many purposes. We also need men, as we have been reminding higher authorities for over 20

years. Some details have been given in the course of this account; now for the overall picture. We have a library staff of 22, from the Senior Librarian to the bearers. Sanskrit College, with a much smaller collection, has 28. The University Central Library, with $3\frac{1}{2}$ times our collection, has 7 times our men. Many of our staff do a lot of work in addition to their scheduled duties; some of them carry nearly the whole catalogue in their heads; the bearers go groping with torches in stacks like mine shafts. It tells on their nerves — and ultimately on the welfare of the library.

We realise that money is not plentiful—but in many cases, all that is needed is co-operation and hard work from other government departments. And, with the library as with all other schemes to improve the status and working of the college, one very important principle must be grasped; that any extra expenditure will be trifling compared to the stakes involved. It will not mean fresh and uncertain investment, but expense necessary to get full returns from a heavy investment already made — and made to good effect. Presidency College deserves better tools for its task than a library in such dire straits. As has been said at the outset, great intellectual potential is wasted for every piece of neglect or opposition this college suffers. It may prove very bad economy to save a horseshoe nail.

College Memories And Portraits (1915—1921)

P. E. DUSTOOR

In June 1915 I managed, not without some difficulty, to get admission to Presidency College. I was not a matriculate of Calcutta University, having passed my Senior Cambridge Examination from St. Joseph's High School at Bow Bazaar. Accordingly, a gawky friendless adolescent of 17, I felt at first very much a fish out of water in my new environment. After ten years of Anglo-Indianization, during which I had lived in a Bengal that was not at all Bengali in its intellectual or its cultural climate, I found myself in an atmosphere that was charged not only with Bengali intellectualism and Bengali culture, but also with Bengali exclusiveness. Barring the Principal and the half a dozen other Englishmen on the staff, almost everybody here was a Bengali. Except during lectures I heard almost nothing but Bengali all day. And of Bengali I myself was almost completely ignorant; at most a phrase here and a phrase there were within my comprehension. As for speaking it, I dared not open my mouth.

To make matters worse, most of those around me had never met a Parsee; some of them did not know who a Parsee might be. Nor by this time was there any trace of the sartorial compromise that had in earlier years distinguished me from my Anglo-Indian school-fellows; I now sported a tie like any Anglo-Indian. Not unnaturally, therefore, I was looked upon as an Anglo-Indian by almost all my Bengali fellow collegians.

This was embarrassing in two different ways. The national self-respect that Mahatma Gandhi has since instilled into every Indian was, in 1915, far from widespread. Consequently, my Anglo-Indian attire and, perhaps, my accent too prompted some of my new class-mates to address me

slavishly as "Sir". On the other hand, the majority, belonging as they did to proud and wealthy *zamindari* families, looked down upon me, as they habitually did upon all Anglo-Indians, and studiously shunned my company.

My own aloofness contributed for a time to maintaining a distance between my Bengali contemporaries and myself. But before very long a thaw set in. As the word spread that I was not an Anglo-Indian but an Indian of however obscure a variety, and as I myself came out of my shell and learnt to respect, and even to admire, the intellect and culture of my Bengali fellow-students, I succeeded in winning the respect of most and even the friendship of a select few. Moreover, an unfortunate event occurred which, fortunately for me, blurred all differences of language and background between us and highlighted our common Indianness.

At the time it occurred I did not see it quite in that light, but it was clearly an expression of that growing self-respect which we had begun to acquire under the leadership of the Mahatma.

One afternoon during the first term, I was going up the central stone stairway of the college, on my way from the library on the ground floor to the lecture rooms above, when I was arrested in my ascent by a tremendous commotion on the second floor. Groups of students were agitatedly rushing hither and thither; some were hurtling down the stairs; others were hurrying up them. Every face bore mingled expression of shock and surprise. It was apparent that something extraordinary had happened.

For a while I could get no one to give me a coherent account of what the excitement was all

about; what I ultimately pieced together was that an unheard-of thing had happened; a student had risen against, and actually knocked down a British Professor, who had made disparaging remarks about Indians. The Professor was E. P. Oaten of the History Department, and the student was Subhas Bose, later to become a national hero and be venerated as Netaji.

This unhappy incident shook the college to its foundations. For weeks together work was disrupted; an inquiry was set afoot into the administration of the college. Presently a scapegoat was found in the person of the soft-spoken, scholarly, sympathetic Principal, Mr. H. R. James. His administrative impartiality and his closeness to his Bengali pupils had already made him unpopular with the white gods in the Secretariat; he was now made to resign. Subhas Bose was expelled. Professor Oaten disappeared on long leave, never to return to the college. Three or four years later, however, he was in a seat of power in the Secretariat; he was Director of Public Instruction for the whole of Bengal.

None of the British professors with whom I came into contact during my years at the college struck me personally as being arrogant or unsympathetic to us Indians. Perhaps even Mr. Oaten did not really mean to hurt Indian susceptibilities. No doubt, as a class, they were rather distant and somewhat cold in their bearing, but that was understandable in the circumstances; were they not all agents of the foreign power that ruled the country? They had all been recruited by the Secretary of State for India to serve the Government in its Indian Educational Service, a sister-service to the Indian Civil Service. Nevertheless, they all seemed to me to be tactful and courteous.

Principal W. C. Wordsworth, who succeeded Mr. H. R. James, was the most tactful of them all. He appeared to weigh every word he uttered and was the soul of discretion. Shrewd and diplomatic himself, he was quick to discern a like adroitness in others.

I had a personal experience of this. When Bal Gangadhar Tilak died I was Editor of the College Magazine and it fell to me to write an editorial note on him. In writing it I steered clear of the Scylla of commending activities subversive of the *raj* and the Charybdis of sycophancy to it. Some days after the issue containing my note came out. I happened to meet the Principal.

"Did you write that note on Tilak, Dustoor?" he asked me.

"Yes, sir,"

"Then you're a real diplomat and I congratulate you".

He was a double M.A. from Oxford and London and lectured on Economics and Politics. His lectures were, as might be expected of him, solid and well-informed but not exciting. Presently he drifted from teaching to journalism. When I last saw him he was sitting behind a large desk in the office of the "The Statesman". He was in his shirt sleeves and looked harassed and weary. Greetings over, he pointed to the sheets of paper that littered his table and half-filled the basket beside it.

"I'm struggling with an Editorial", he said, "and it won't come right. I haven't yet mastered the technique of my job here. You see, we academics want to put everything in, but the journalist must confine himself to one or two salient points and drive them home."

However, he rose in time to be Chief Editor and, till his death, steered his paper diplomatically and deftly through very difficult days.

Mr J. R. Barrow, who became Principal after Mr. Wordsworth, was more typically British in his aloofness. He was a capable administrator and at heart tolerant and understanding, but he was extremely shy and sensitive. He seemed to be living in constant communion with the spirits of the air, with his head slightly tilted to one side and an expression of complete detachment from the human beings around him. He was in fact so English that he hardly ever raised his voice when he lectured, so that, as Oscar Wilde is re-

ported to have observed about Walter Pater, we overheard him—if at all—rather than heard him.

One morning he went purple with horror and indignation when, during a lecture, one of my class-mates went up to a window and spat on the open ground below. The Englishman in him was shocked at this primitive way of voiding one's rheum. 'Haven't you a handkerchief?' he barked at the offending student. He would doubtless have been incredulous if he had been told that we in India think that the procedure he suggested was the more primitive, in the sense of being far less hygienic, than ours.

A man of few words, he had an original way of taking attendance. In his class we had to sit strictly in the order of our roll-numbers, and he didn't so much take our attendance as make us give it. We had, literally, to stand up and be counted: one after another we rose in our seats and called out our numbers. He sat silent, pen poised in hand, and merely entered "a's" against the numbers not called out.

Mr. Barrow, unlike Mr. Wordsworth, lectured on English literature, but the two seniormost men in the English Department were Professors T. S. Sterling and J. W. Holme.

Professor Sterling was a compact little man, with arms and legs disproportionately long for his short torso. Always very nattily attired and perfectly groomed, with his long, glossy black hair brushed back straight from his forehead, he looked very dignified as he walked the corridors with his long slow strides. He was a bachelor and lived in the United Services Club on Chowringhee and I recall with gratitude the many occasions on which, seeing me trudging college-wards along College Street, he stopped his taxi and gave me a lift. He was a pleasant person with a quiet sense of humour, but I wish I could speak as highly of his teaching as of his genial disposition. He was, in truth, a very poor teacher. For all his Master's degree from Oxford, he was no scholar; at least he gave no evidence of being one. When, for instance, he took us through a

Chaucer text, his comments and elucidations were reproduced verbatim from a note-book which contained nothing but Skeat's annotations in his six-volume edition of the poet's works.

By contrast and otherwise too, Professor Holme, though a product of one of the so-called red-brick universities, was a serious scholar and took pains over his seminars and lectures. Before he came out to India he had already edited the Arden edition of *As You Like It* and his lectures on the history of English Literature to his Honours classes were full of meat and well worth attending. With his pince-nez, his husky voice and his greying hair, he seemed more remote and less sociable than Professor Sterling, but he was never anything but gracious and courteous in his dealings with those who sought his advice or guidance.

Having been a teacher myself, I have, I dare say, been sat in judgement upon by some of those I have taught; I make no apology, therefore, for the observations I have just made on my British teachers, or for extending them to some of the Indian teachers whose lectures I attended.

Professor Sri Kumar Banerjee who later transferred his allegiance from English to his mother tongue and was long acknowledged as among the greatest authorities on Bengali literature, was one of my English teachers. He lectured to us on the Romantic Poets. He enthused over them, but I cannot say that he succeeded in infecting me with his enthusiasm. As a lecturer he struck me as rather pompous and self-conscious and he had an odd habit, when taking us through a poem, of repeating every observation he made, so that one felt cheated out of half the hour's teaching. Nor was his English accent very satisfying to my ears. I fancy I can still hear him intone in his sing-song Bengali manner and in his pronounced Bengali accent the lines from *The Ancient Mariner*:

Water, water everywhere,

And all the boards did shrink.

Water, water everywhere,

Nor any drop to drink.

Perhaps the poet's repetition in these lines, reminiscent of the professor's idiosyncrasy, makes them stand out through the years from among the hundreds he must have chanted and commented on in the class.

Professor Manmohan Ghose's style was very different. For one thing, unlike Mr. Banerjee, who always lectured standing, he sat huddled and humped in his chair, stooping short-sightedly over his book. Nor did he ever declaim or orate; he just talked, sometimes only mumbled. He had a reputation as a classical scholar from Oxford and as a poet whose English poems had won the acclaim of Laurence Binyon and other English men of letters. Moreover, he was the brother of no less a national figure than Shri Aurobindo, the mystic of Pondicherry.

We were predisposed to admire him and, in fact, as members of his class, basked in reflected glory. We scrambled for front seats at his lectures in order to catch every word that fell from his lips—his feeble lips. We were eager to gather useful knowledge and new insights from him, but the notebook we so hopefully opened at the beginning of a lecture were often open at the same page at the end of it. For, apart from occasionally pausing to communicate a flash of poetic insight or to throw light on an obscure classical allusion, he did little more than read through the poetry text—Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* or whatever it was. No doubt his reading of it with a poet's sensitivity contributed to our appreciation of it, but we could not help feeling that it was hardly calculated to butter our academic parsnips; we were hungry sheep who looked up, and were not fed as full as we expected to be.

Nevertheless, he remained to the last a magnet of universal respect and affection. He was every inch a don—soft of speech, retiring, preoccupied with his own thoughts and constantly engaged in brushing away wisps of stray, long greying hair from over his right eye. He died while I was still at the college, though by then

I was a teacher and the youngest of his colleagues. Everybody—colleagues and students alike—felt that there had passed away a glory from their midst.

There were, however, other glories in our midst. We could boast such eminent men on our staff as—to mention only three—the world-renowned botanist, Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, who was then Head of the Department of Physics, the widely-respected and well-beloved Sir Praphulla Chandra Ray of the Department of Chemistry, and the versatile and highly-esteemed economist, Sir J. C. Coyajee.

Not so eminent, in the sense of having a reputation far beyond the walls of the college, but a name to conjure with within it, was the other Professor Ghosh of the English Department, Praphulla Chandra Ghosh. No one who was ever a student of his can think of him without the utmost affection and admiration. To this day—though he has been dead some thirty years now—it establishes a peculiar bond of fellowship between former students of the college when they discover that they had at one time or another sat at the feet of this most inspiring and interesting of teachers.

The admiration Professor P. C. Ghosh inspired in his students had been inspired in him by his own teacher, the almost-legendary H. M. Percival. He had been that Professor's favourite pupil; I think I can claim to have become in time his favourite pupil. However that may be, I doubt if any other of his numerous pupils can claim to have been more profoundly influenced by him than I was. I can claim that almost everything I have achieved in my academic life has been a direct or indirect consequence of my having come under his spell and gained his personal attention and encouragement.

My first impression of Professor Ghosh, whom I consider my *guru* above all others, is that of a stodgy, plump figure with long locks reaching right down to, and curling at his neck, and a round chubby face with a small well-formed

mouth and prominent, bespectacled eyes that seemed to be turned inwards rather than on the scene around him. There was something distinctly eccentric about his appearance and his walk as he strode through the college gates and made briskly for the central stairway. He was clad in a tight-fitting longish short-coat, buttoned up to the neck, and equally tight-fitting trousers, which, one suspected, had been pulled over his *dhoti*. With every step he took his long locks bobbed up and down and his massive head, inclined slightly right to the perpendicular, jerked in unison. His progress was rapid in spite of a couple of impedimenta: in one hand, a fair-sized and well-loaded attache case whose gravitational pull doubtless accounted for the inclination of his head—and, in the other, a flapping umbrella, serving at once as a walking-stick and a counterpoise.

In later years his Samson-like mane was shorn to more or less conventional proportions; sartorially, too, he appeared to have reverted to the current Bengali norm of *dhoti-and-shirt*. But his attachment to his attache case was permanent and persistent. Even when he moved from classroom to classroom on the upper floors of the college, his attache case, like Mary's little lamb in the nursery rhyme, was sure to go wherever he went. For me that ubiquitous attache case came before long to symbolize his complete dedication to his calling.

He would enter his classroom with a briskness that was almost military, and his speech, whether inside or outside the classroom, was clipped and rapid. He seemed to be as obsessed with the passage of time as was Marvell's lover, who complained:

But at my back I always hear

Time's winged chariot hurrying near.

It was typical of him that he always lectured up to the last syllable of his allotted time—and often a little beyond. He lectured, likewise, to the very end of the final term—and a little be-

yond. For, formal lectures came to an end a couple of months before the year's university examinations were scheduled to begin, but he would invariably hold informal extra classes for days together and for hours at a time. And, though attendance at these was entirely voluntary, they would be packed, and we would daily sit on the hard classroom benches for three or four hours at a stretch, enthralled by his teaching and enjoying and profiting by every minute of it. For his lecturing style was intimate and conversational, and his matter substantial and often original.

He was nothing if not thorough and painstaking, both in his preparation and in his method of instructing. Years later, when I was a lecturer at Allahabad University, we happened to compare notes on our teaching techniques. He regretted that he had never economized his time by writing out his notes. "I have never done that," he lamented; "I have always prepared the day's work afresh." Whatever the drawbacks of his mode of *ad hoc* preparation it surely accounted for the freshness and fascination of his teaching. On the other hand, if he had been more economical of his time and a little more methodical in his habits, he would doubtless have left behind a mass of scholarly work. As it is, beyond a short article or two in a scholarly journal, what he has left behind him is little more than the memory of a deeply respected and admired scholar whose epitaph in the words of his favourite Chaucer, might well read:

"Sowning to moral vertu was his speche

And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche".

To say that I came under the spell of Professor Praphulla Chandra Ghosh—or Phraphulla Babu, as we affectionately called him—is to say what almost all his students must say. His influence on me went deeper. He helped me to discover myself. In my third year at College, after two years of fascinated attendance at his lectures—for he taught Rhetoric and Prosody to the lowest classes as well as Chaucer, Shakespeare and

Philology to the highest—I discovered that I wanted to be a teacher like him. True that on the first day I went to school, I am reported to have said that I wanted to be a lawyer when I grew up. I recall too that, towards the end of my school days, I was urged by my elders to become a doctor; they looked forward to having me as a doctor in the house. But in June 1915 I was definite only about not wanting to be either a lawyer or a doctor. I had no positive goal in view. Now I had one: I would be a teacher.

Accordingly, I decided to take a Master's degree in English and, if possible, take it so creditably that I should qualify for a college lectureship. Accordingly, after graduation, when many of my class-fellows worked simultaneously for their M.A. and LL.B. in the naive belief that two degrees are better than one, I refused to dissipate my time and energy in the pursuit of empty academic glories. I concentrated on working for the single, necessary triumph that would place my feet on the professional ladder I had now determined to mount.

Teaching Of English at Presidency College In My Time (1914--1918)

Phanibhusan Chakravartti

On taking up my pen at last, after putting off the task again and again, to write an account of the teaching of English at Presidency College in my time, I realise that in undertaking to contribute an article on the subject to the Diamond Jubilee number of the **Presidency College Magazine**, I acted rashly. For several reasons, as I now find, it will not be possible for me to do the job as well as it ought to be done. My first handicap is that the story belongs to a time, lying over half a century in the past and many of its details which might make it lively if they could be recalled have faded away from my mind. But the main difficulty is fundamental. To divine accurately the aim of the English syllabus prescribed for us; to present the class-room teaching as directed towards that aim which it undoubtedly was; to distinguish between the individual styles

of the different teachers and the respective levels for their teaching; and to combine all these and other incidental matters into a survey of the whole field of the teaching, is a task requiring deeper insights and greater powers of expression than I can claim to possess. There is also a further disadvantage under which I labour. Long years of intensive pre-occupation with problems of law and political science have dulled whatever literary sensibilities I might once have possessed. Such pre-occupation has created in me a type of mind which is perhaps not unsuited for a textual study of works of literature, but which is plainly not suited for a consideration of their artistic qualities or making a just assessment of the methods of their communication.

But the undertaking given must be honoured and some kind of an account produced, however un-

satisfactory it may be even to myself. It will be, I imagine, not so much an account of what the English teaching seemed to me to be like at the time I was exposed to it as an account of what it now seems to me to have been like.

I would first explain what the time I am speaking of was. In the heading of this article, I have given my time at Presidency College as 1914—18, but actually it was longer than that period by two years. I entered Presidency College as a First Year student early in 1914 and left it at the end of my Sixth Year in 1920. But I have excluded the last two years, because those were years of my post-graduate studies, for which I had to attend classes at the University. By the time I had graduated, University education had been re-organised and all post-graduate teaching taken over by the University into its own hands. It is true that four of our teachers at Presidency College were also on the English staff of the University, but they were a small minority in a large crowd of very ordinary people, collected from all corners of the country, save, perhaps, one teacher. It is also true that even when we were attending classes at the University for our M.A. degree, seminars continued to be held at our own college under the guidance of our old teachers. But the main teaching was teaching at the university, not teaching at Presidency College. Taken as a whole, it was teaching of a far inferior standard and it would give me no pleasure to write an account of that teaching.

To revert to Presidency College. We went to the college, fairly well-prepared for receiving collegiate education in English. The college taught us English literature, not the English language, except that we were taught a little of elementary philology in our B.A. Honours classes. The language part of English had been well taken care of by our school teachers. They had acquainted us with the mechanics of the language in its ordinary forms; given us a fairly good grounding in its grammar and idioms; cured us of our love of long words by their drastic excision from our weekly compo-

sitions; and rid us, to a certain extent at least, of our proneness to imposing on our English sentences the structure of a Bengali sentence. They had also taught us the invaluable lesson that we must always bear the primary meaning of words in mind, when tempted to use them figuratively, or we would be led to commit ridiculous mistakes. In training us up in that manner, our teachers were helped by the text-books prescribed for us. The Text Book Committee of those days knew that young learners of a foreign language must not be given to read any writing in that language which was written by a person whose mother-tongue was not that language or who, although a native writer, did not command a flawless diction. This is because even persons who have acquired some standing as a writer of distinction in a foreign language, are apt to commit minor lapses here and there or use, occasionally, turns of expression which a native writer would never use. The Text Book Committee of the language therefore, very wisely saw to it that our contacts, at least at school, were only with an Englishman's English and, to that end prescribed for our English studies books written by English writers of ability or selections from recognised authors. Since the medium of instruction was English, text books prescribed for other subjects were also well-chosen books by English authors, such as Blackman's Geography, written in a terse, objective style and E. Marsden's *History of India* written in simple, fluent and elegant prose. Those monstrosities which are now found strutting proudly in the field of text-books under the label of 'By an Experienced Headmaster', had not yet made their appearance. Even if any such production had appeared at that time, it would not have the slightest chance of being admitted by the Text Book Committee to the reading list of school students. I do not certainly claim that the precautions thus taken and the efforts of our school teachers have enabled us to avoid in later life a foreigner's errors in our own writings, parti-

cularly such errors of the Indian variety. Indeed, of such errors, the present piece of writing will perhaps itself provide abundant evidence. All I want to say is that before we entered college, we had received very careful schooling in the proper use of the English language and had also been brought into contact with writings of recognised merit which provided an easy and natural entrance to the world of masterpieces, revealed subsequently to us by the college text-books. Our teachers had also given us some taste of the flavour of words and made us see that in poetry or other imaginative writing, words could have meanings, other and deeper than the meanings they ordinarily carried. When, therefore, our first confrontation with a college lecture on English occurred, we did not find the teachers speaking a language which we did not understand or telling us of things which we had not suspected could ever exist.

The syllabus prescribed for both our Intermediate and B. A. courses (Pass and Honours) was conservative. It included only writings by established writers which had become major or minor classics. I now read in the overseas papers that teachers of English literature at both British and continental universities are facing a difficulty which has taken away all zest from their teaching duties. The difficulty has arisen out of a conflict between what the universities provide and what the students want. There is a wide gap of difference between the kind of books which the students are required to read at the universities as compulsory texts and the kind of books which they read for themselves at their own choice and for the satisfaction of their own intellectual and emotional needs. The university text-books are drawn mostly from the pre-twentieth century literature, extending as far back as the sixteenth, but the preference of the present-day students is for the works of contemporary authors which are entirely different in spirit and outlook on life and, often, even in technique. The teachers, charged with the duty of putting across English literature

with books of older times as their tools, are baffled at every step, for they find that far from being able to rouse the curiosity of their students, they cannot even gain their attention. On the other hand they provoke resistance. The reason for this is not far to seek. The literature, represented by the University text-books, is literature of a society where the rule of God prevails, where the approved ways of life are those guided by the principles of Christian ethics, where certain values are taken to be immutable and where, but for some mild social criticism and some religious controversy, it is all order and harmony. Looking around themselves, the students see no sign of any such society, but see instead a society of another kind, of which they themselves are a part, a society troubled by doubt and despair, questioning the values so long considered to be abiding and convulsed by a desire to subvert the established order, from which it feels itself to be entirely alienated. Works of most of the contemporary writers reflect that prevailing mood half-despairing and half-revolutionary and the students naturally lean towards them, as they find in their pages depictions of their own feelings. It might be thought that students of the English Faculty in continental universities would not feel the pull of contemporary writers, at least feel it to the same degree, because English being a foreign language to them, their acquaintance with works in that language would be limited and in particular, works by contemporary authors would not be known amongst them widely. Actually, however, the position is different. It is so, because any British or American author, who has produced literary works of some distinction, is promptly translated into all the major European languages, so that the students come to know their works in translation before they have seen or have been able to read the originals. It is therefore that when they are at the university, continental students of English literature, equally with their brethren of the British universities, long for the contemporary authors, with whom they feel

a kinship of spirit; and if they are to read prescribed text-books, they want the originals of those works by those writers which they have already read in translation or other works by the same writers. But, we, in our time at Presidency College, were immune from solicitation by the then contemporary writers. It is true that by 1914, winds of change had begun to blow in the West, but they had not yet reached the Indian shores, at least not any powerful blasts, and had not begun to rock the minds of the Indian youth. We heard the names of some modern writers being bandied about in the conversation of our elders, most of whom had not really read them, but of direct acquaintance with their works, we had none. No modern English or American author had been translated into Bengali and paperbacks had not yet made their appearance. The present habit of falling in love at first sight with any continental writer, bearing an unpronounceable name and writing obscurely or any British or American author, writing in a spirit of cynicism or revolt, had not yet come into vogue. For us, English literature meant the established writers and till we had our horizon widened by a study of the history of English literature, it could be summed up by about twenty names. If the University had prescribed text-books for us only from the works of those writers, we were content and did not long for anything outside them. I do not know what the position now is, for, works by modern and even contemporary writers have become easily available and they have acquired considerable currency among the reading public of India, particularly the young and perhaps also those not so young. If the University has not included some books by modern writers among the text-books prescribed, it may be that present-day teachers of English at Presidency College are having to reckon with the pressure of those writers in the minds of their students and contend against forces trying to pull them away from literature in the creative

tradition to literature of nihilistic trends. Our teachers had no such problem with us. Teaching us was, for them smooth sailing in placid and sheltered waters under conditions of perfect accord between passengers and crew.

It may surprise the present-day students to hear that the teaching of English at Presidency College in our time was not examination-oriented at all. None of our teachers conducted his class in the manner of coaching for the University examinations. They took their business to be only to awake our literary sensibilities and help us in cultivating them by revealing to us the techniques and beauties of the literary art, as exemplified in the great works that we had to read as our text-books. What account we would be able to give of our achievements before an external body of examiners was entirely our own business and a matter between the University and ourselves. From that our teachers stood apart. So it was that to ask anyone of our teachers to mark important passages or suggest probable questions was simply inconceivable. Nobody could think of doing any such thing and, in fact, no such thing was ever done. But though our teachers did not make the examinations their primary concern, no grievance was felt against them on that account. We had come to realise from our experience of their teaching that literature was worth studying only if it was studied for its own sake and if teaching of literature was harnessed to some such utilitarian incentive as the need to get the students through their examinations, it could not be presented as a form of art, but would have to be presented as a communicable body of facts and formulae which could be comfortably memorised and reproduced in the examination hall. We preferred to take from our teachers real teaching of literature and, for the examinations, to depend on ourselves.

Nowadays, I read in the papers very often of angry complaints by students on the eve of an examination that the courses had not been finish-

ed and of complaints after an examination that questions had been set from portions of the courses not covered by class lectures. To people of my generation, such complaints seem strange. Courses were not finished in our time either, but nobody complained. In fact, if the teaching is good, courses cannot be finished in the classes. If one will only take the trouble of doing a simple sum of the rule of three, taking into account the volume and the length of a course, the number of teaching hours available during the two or three pre-examination academic years and the number of teachers employed to do the teaching, one will realise at once that to finish the course within the time given is not humanly possible, unless it is trifled with, hurried over and not properly taught at all. Nor is it necessary that the courses should be finished, if the teaching is thorough and serious, as it ought to be. We heard our teachers say that if, after they had read three-fourths of a book with the students of a class, the latter could not read the rest for themselves, they would count their teaching as a failure. That was a very proper and sensible observation. Taking the case of English literature, by the time three-fourths of a book have been properly gone through, the qualities peculiar to the poet, if it is a book of poems, or the structure of the story, the mode of its telling and the individualities of the main characters, if it is a work of fiction, will all have been revealed and the rest of the book will be found to contain only further illustrations of the same poetic qualities or a continuation of the same individualities of the characters. They should present no problem of comprehension, even if no teaching aid is available. That was at least how we felt and we did not think that by not finishing the text-books in class, our teachers had let us down.

I must state, however, that one of our teachers, Prof. P. C. Ghosh, insisted on finishing the Shakespearean dramas that he had to read with us. He was able to finish them only by taking extra

classes—six-hours-long classes on Saturdays for the Pass B.A. students, which were held at the college and four-hours-long classes on Sundays for those reading for Honours, which were held at his house. But Prof. Ghosh did not subject himself to such arduous labour with our examinations in view. The fact was that a Shakespeare-infatuated man, he simply could not abandon a Shakespearean play in the middle after its overwhelming power had caught his soul in its grip, although he might be teaching it for the thirtieth or the fortieth time. And, since he enjoyed reading the plays in company, that is, with us, he would not, till we also had gone up with him to the end, let us go. Later in this article, I shall have to say a few more words about those extra lectures of Prof. P. C. Ghosh.

So, no menacing cloud of examinations hung over the class-rooms in our time and if a book of poems or essays or a drama or a novel was not finished in class, nobody worried. But in that climate of free enterprise, what was the teaching like? I shall have to speak of the teaching in some detail when dealing with the individual teachers and would limit myself here to a few observations of a general character. We had deep reason to be grateful to our teachers that their teaching of literature had no didactic slant and that by the manner of their treatment of literary subjects, they enabled us to see what the proper approach to a work of creative or imaginative literature was. Such literature can be taught to some purpose only when it is taught as what it really is, viz—to speak in broad terms—an expression in language, simple or dressed-up, but in either case of great artistry, of the response of sensitive souls to their environment and experiences of life as well as to the general human condition and also, in certain cases, of their longings and yearnings. All else is foreign to the true province of literature, except of course, literature of mere knowledge. It may be that literature has a social function as Matthew Arnold insisted, but if it has any such function, it per-

forms it, not by preaching, but by civilising and liberalising the thoughts and emotions of men by its refining influence, so that, since society is made up of individuals, the influence of literature conduces to some social good. The true function of literature, however, is aesthetic, not ethical; and its effect is entertainment, exhortation and extension of the mind, not its edification. In their teaching, all our teachers kept the true aim and function of literature steadily in view. We did not find anyone of them praising a particular work for its morally nutritive properties or speaking of a writer's Message or Philosophy of Life, or such other ponderous things, totally irrelevant to a consideration of the work as a work of the literary art. Their gaze was fixed on the literary excellence of a work and on that alone. Today, I can say with truth—and I shall say it with feelings of deep gratitude—that by the kind of instruction in English literature we received at Presidency College, we were immensely benefited. What opinion we were led to form of a particular work or a particular author or of English literature in general, was going to be of no practical importance to us in later life, unless we too became teachers of that literature. But our lasting gain from the teaching was that our literary taste was educated. We learnt the true criteria by which works of literature are to be judged and we can now apply those criteria in judging works of our own literature and taking their true measure.

Although English literature was taught to us as a thing of beauty and a thing in which pleasures of the mind were to be sought, to master so much of it as was included in our curriculum was no light work for us at all. Students, taking up a course of studies in the literature of their own vernacular, perhaps do not find the labour of mastering it too taxing, except that linguistics, if that also is included in the course, may cause them some strain. A young Englishman, for example, studying for a degree in English, will presumably not find his task daunting and may

feel some pressure only if he has to tackle Anglo-Saxon and Middle English. But the case of a student, studying a foreign literature, is different. There are also degrees of foreignness. English literature, for example, is a foreign literature to all peoples, whose mother-tongue is not English, but it is more foreign to some than it is to others. We belonged to the former category, because English literature is the product of a type of racial mind which is radically different from ours and the social, moral and economic background, from which it derives its sustenance and special character, is also different. The sense of the alienness English literature will be less strong in the case of a French or a German student who, in his culture and upbringing, belongs to the same European tradition as the British. We, as Indians, are outside that tradition and we found that the greater the Englishness of a particular work, the greater was the effort required of us to understand its facts and comprehend its spirit. The same must be the case with our successors of today. But fortunately, the teaching of our teachers brooked no compromise or evasion. It faced the difficulties squarely and enabled us to overcome them, explaining in meticulous detail the hidden allusions, the peculiarly English ironies, covert references to the English social order, the disguise of the thoughts looking deceptively simple and all other features which were apt to obscure to the vision of a foreigner the true image of a particular work. But even with such assistance, we found it hard work to achieve a full comprehension of the works studied and perhaps we never succeeded. D. N. Enright has made famous the story of the Japanese student of English literature, a devotee of Wordsworth, who, during a visit to England, went to an English meadow and knelt before a bank of dandelions in the belief that they were daffodils. The mistake of that student was not so much literary as horticultural, but it does show that not having seen either daffodils or dandelions, particularly in an English setting, he had not been

able to grasp the cause of the emotion that daffodils, in particular, had roused in Wordsworth, not the exact nature of those emotions, and therefore he could associate those emotions, with flowers like dandelions. In a student studying a foreign literature, such confusions are natural and can be avoided only by expert guidance and hard labour. I suppose an English reader of Indian poetry, coming across invocations to lotuses and admiring the beauty of the verbal tributes, may, on coming to India, make the mistake of taking water-lilies to be lotuses and fall to apostrophising them. We too had difficulties, arising out of lack of experience of English conditions, from which we helped out—or we thought we were being helped out—by our teachers. Still, the process entailed on us hard labour and, in undergoing that labour, we realised why, in academic parlance, a course of studies at a university was called a 'discipline'.

Because the class-room teaching was so thorough, we, in our time, did not require the aid of anything beyond the class-lectures for our understanding of the text-books. If one would only attend to the class-lectures closely and take full notes, one would have complete commentaries on all the text-books at the end of the course. The annotated editions of the text-books that we used, were by English editors and the notes contained in them were spare. Though used as college text-books in India, they were really intended for the British schools, to be used by the Fifth and the Sixth Formers and were adjusted to their needs. Many things in the books of English literature which require to be explained to Indian students, need no explanation in the case of British boys and they were not explained in the annotations. That deficiency was amply made good by our teachers. By the time I had reached the Fourth Year Class, annotated editions of the English literature text-books by and often erroneous paraphrases of the original Indian editors, containing loose, voluminous texts, had begun to appear. Their number gradually multiplied and we came to know

that they were in extensive use. But we, at Presidency College, did not use them and had no need to. We regarded them as shaky crutches for the handicapped and the disabled which we, being able-bodied persons, did not require.

Besides that they were so thorough, class-lectures at Presidency College in my time were marked by a unique characteristic. Whatever our teachers said to us by way of elucidation or interpretation of a text, they said in accents of a personal conviction which made us feel that the opinions they were expressing were their own, based on their own responses to the original text and not second-hand opinions borrowed from books of criticism. That characteristic of the lectures had a striking effect on our minds and roused our own sense of literature and powers of judgement. It was our supreme good fortune that our teachers could do without the opinions of the literary mandarins and did not seek to overlay our minds with stale and readymade opinions of third parties. By the way of their lecturing, they brought their own minds into contact with ours and out of the conjunction arose a joint understanding, as it were, of the texts lectured on. Since the early part of the twentieth century, the chief obstacle to the formation of independent opinions about books of English literature has been a proliferation of books of literary criticism. Books about books now far outnumber the books about which they speak and they tell the reading public with an air of all-knowingness what to think about which books and what to say about it. Weak minds, not among the taught alone, but among teachers as well, to which every opinion encountered by them appears to be correct, and empty minds, not furnished with any literary sense of their own, eagerly seize the readymade opinions they find and store them away in their inner chambers, for use, when occasion arises, as their own opinions. The majority of the minds of the readers, young or old, are of that character, for,

the capacity to appreciate great works of literature to the extent of being able to write or speak about them sensitively and individually, is as rare as the capacity to produce them. So we have among us the Professor of English literature, by no means an uncommon figure; who has an astounding knowledge of, say, Shakespearean, or Chaucerian criticism, but no adequate knowledge of Shakespeare or Chaucer. F. R. Leavis has said somewhere — but it requires no saying — that there is no more futile a study of literature than that which ends with only collection of information about literature itself. Teaching by a teacher who has not felt the power and the beauty of what he teaches in his own soul, but who merely doles out borrowed opinions, can never appeal to the students and inspire them. A teacher cannot ignite the students unless he himself catches fire. But the phenomenon of the quotative teacher and, necessarily, the quotative student, is not peculiar to India. I remember having read some years ago a book by C. S. Lewis, the distinguished writer and teacher of English, in which he deplors the increasing tendency in the British universities to see books wholly through the spectacles of other books. Nor is the snuffing out of the reader's own sense of literature the only vice of the books of literary criticism of the common type. Often, they put forward views which are fanciful or perverse in the extreme and attribute to a work of literature meanings which would make the author gasp in wonder and which he could never think of himself. The gibe contained in the doggerel which laments that in an examination on his own tragedies, Shakespeare did badly/Because he hadn't read Bradley—(I am not sure that I am quoting the exact words)—is not pointless, but has a spike, aimed unmistakably at the tribe of literary critics. I may also give an example from our own country. Some people have discovered a deep philosophical meaning in Tagore's celebrated poem, *Sonar Tari* and

have written pages and pages of arrant nonsense about it. Other people have contended for other meanings, also philosophical and equally ridiculous. The story goes that after the debate had gone on for some time, someone asked Tagore himself what the underlying meaning of the poem was, to which the poet replied that he had heard that the meaning was very profound, but he did not know what it was. Dependence on second-hand opinions, derived from books of literary criticism thus makes the teacher ineffective and if such dependence is transmitted to the students, it does them considerable harm in as much as it stifles the growth of a power of independent judgment and may even fill their minds with absurd views. But in the case of our teachers, we felt that they themselves had a living touch with the literature on which they discoursed. During all the years I was a student at Presidency College, I do not remember any teacher referring for once to the views of any literary critic. But if our teachers did not impose on us second-hand views borrowed from others, neither did they seek to impose their own views. They allowed us to contest their views which we often did in the tutorial classes. No one except critics of the Marxist school of literary criticism like Luckaks will ever contend that of every literary text, there must be only one and an absolute view, exclusive of all others. At Presidency College in my time there was no such obduracy of attitudes. Confrontations between the views of our teachers and our own immature views were allowed and, altogether, we had the benefit of a highly constructive mode of teaching.

I am afraid I have devoted too much space to general remarks, many of which will perhaps appear to be amateurish and some even presumptuous. I must therefore desist from making more of them and proceed to say a few words about our teachers of English individually and their modes of teaching. But one prefatory remark I must make about the text-books used by

us. The college insisted that we must provide ourselves with accurate editions, i.e., editions which gave the correct text, as established by the latest research upto that time, and contained dependable notes. The approved editions were named for us. I do not remember at this distance of time what editions were singled out for our text-books from Milton, Byron, Keats, Tennyson, Addison, Swift and others, but about the plays of Shakespeare I remember that of the two editions current in India, Deighton's was frowned upon and Verity's recommended. Verity was a stiff and somewhat highbrow editor. His notes were terse, but highly accurate and valuable and they were couched in language of definitiveness and authority. Imagine, therefore, our delight when we found in one instance Verity giving the generally accepted interpretation of a phrase—whether in *Macbeth* or *The Merchant of Venice*, I do not remember—and then adding that an alternative interpretation suggested by Kamal Chunder Chunder, a student of Presidency College, Calcutta, seemed preferable. Mr. Kamal Chunder Chunder, better known as Mr. K. C. Chunder, who was senior to me by a few years, subsequently entered the Indian Civil Service and after serving in various judicial posts in the districts, ultimately became a judge of the High Court. He was one of the judges when I was the Chief Justice. I asked him one day about that note in Verity and he very candidly said that he claimed no credit for the interpretation he had suggested. He had only communicated in his own name what Prof. P. C. Ghosh had said in the class-room.

It is time now that I speak of our teachers of English. In doing so, I shall exclude those who came for a few months to fill temporary vacancies and went away when their limited assignment was over. They were an undistinguished lot. Towards the end of my time in the undergraduate classes, two teachers, besides a new Principal who taught English, came on transfer to be appointed in permanent vacancies.

They were certainly not of the Presidency College class, but one of them, Prof. Nripendra Chandra Banerjee, had certain qualities and, of him, I shall speak later. The other, an old and seedy person, who seemed to think that teaching of English literature meant giving dictionary meanings of the words of the text, was insufferable and we found to our horror that he had the vile habit of dictating notes. Since I am not speaking well of him, he shall be nameless.

As I have said, I shall speak mainly only of those of our teachers of English whom we got with us as permanent members of the staff from the beginning upto the end, except that Principal H. R. James, who became a casualty of the unfortunate Oaten incident, had to leave when I was in my Third Year class. Those teachers were a mixed body of Indians and Britishers. The Indian teachers taught a literature which was to them, as much as to the pupils they were teaching, a foreign literature. Their British colleagues taught a literature which was their own. In between the two classes stood Prof. Manmohan Ghose who, though an Indian, had received his entire education in the best institutions of England from the age of seven and hardly knew a word of Bengali when he returned to India. Since such had been his education and upbringing and since he was also a poet of a high order in the English language, belonging to the set of Oscar Wilde, Laurence Binyon, Lionel Johnson and other poets and writers coming up in his time at Oxford, he was more at home in English and English literature than most Englishmen. The rest of our Indian teachers were all 'made in India'. The difference that English literature was a foreign literature to them, whereas, to their British colleagues, it was their own literature, could not but be reflected in the modes of teaching of the two classes of teachers and it was in fact reflected. The Indian teachers had had to learn their English literature in the same hard way as the way of their pupils and when teaching their classes, they must have had

present to their minds the difficulties, peculiar to a foreigner, which they had had to contend against and overcome before they acquired their present mastery. They, therefore, adopted for their teaching an expanded manner and were given to a little over-explaining. Their British colleagues, on the other hand, did not seem to be conscious that they had before them a class of young foreigners and lectured to us, as if they were teaching British students at a British university. There were many things, such as implied allusions, social contexts and occasional colloquialisms which required to be explained to us, but, speaking generally, our British teachers took our knowledge of them for granted, obviously because of their impression of a British student who would understand such matters without any explanation. The result was that in spite of the high quality of their teaching of the purely literary aspects of a poem or a novel, some gaps in our comprehension of it remained even after the teaching of it had been finished. Another difference between the teaching of the Indian and the British teachers may also be mentioned. There could be no question about the width and the depth of the learning of the Indian teachers and the high standard of their teaching ability. Indeed, two of them at least were vastly superior to any of their British colleagues. But barring Prof. Manmohan Ghose, they were, in one respect, at a slight disadvantage in having to explain certain ingredients of certain types of literary works in English. They had not sprung from the British people and therefore had no direct knowledge or spontaneous perception of things like the national traits of the British, the British manners and customs and the British attitude towards life. Those also were reflected in English literature. Literature does not speak to us of beauty alone, not only of things which have a universal appeal, not affected in any way by the exigencies of race or history or clime. It speaks also, implicitly, if not directly, of other

things, such as religious attitudes and moral or emotional values, not of those things, in the abstract, but of what they feel like in actual life in the experience of a particular people. Our Indian teachers had the fullest knowledge of such implications of works of English literature, but it was acquired knowledge of the nature of information. The British teachers knew those implications instinctively, for they were a part of national consciousness of the British which they shared and which they might be said to have imbibed with their mothers' milk. The result of that difference was—or, so at least it seemed to me—that in the case of the Indian teachers, the teaching of such matters took the form of pleading a cause, or trying to establish a fact by argument and evidence, whereas, in the case of the British teachers, it took the form of simply stating established facts. There was an accent of self-assurance in their statements of such facts which was missing in the case of statements by Indian teachers. But, on the whole, we benefited more by the teaching of even such matters by our Indian teachers, because their presentation was fuller and supplied more knowledge of the backgrounds, without which such matters could not be fully understood. The two differences I have mentioned were only differences of method. The purpose intended to be served by the teaching provided for us at the college was improvement of our acquaintance with English literature and stimulation of our literary sensibilities. That purpose was constantly kept in view by our teachers, both Indian and British, whom I may now proceed to name and briefly discuss.

The syllabus for our Intermediate course included Milton—not the titanic Milton of the epics whom we met later in our B.A. classes, but the homely and more human Milton of the Sonnets. The Sonnets were taught by Principal H. R. James. He was a classical scholar, with some reputation for scholarship in his own country—for, he was the editor of the works of a Greek

writer, (whose name I have forgotten), in Loeb's classical authors series. It was somewhat unusual that the Principal of the college should himself come down to teach a First Year class of callow adolescents, mostly hailing from villages and district towns, but Mr. James thought, as he told us, that foreign learners of English literature should be afforded the earliest opportunity for hearing the sound of English, as spoken and read by an educated Englishman, so that they might acquire correct accents and develop an ear for the rhythm of the English language. That was certainly a very practical view to take of the right way of teaching English literature when the students were foreigners. A distinguished Japanese Professor of English literature, Taketoshi Furomoto, is on record as saying that although he had made the study of English literature his life's sole business, it was only when he heard visiting Professors like William Empson, Edmund Blunden and Anthony Thwaite read pieces of English poetry and prose that the charm of the sound of English and the vigour of the English of conversation were first revealed to him. Mr. James read to us copiously and some charm of the sound of English verse was revealed even to our beginners' ears. His method of teaching was like this. He would take up a particular sonnet and first give us briefly the occasion of its composition and a gist of its contents. Next, he would read aloud the whole sonnet, sometimes twice reading it with paves and tilts of the voice, at poetry ought to be read. Thereafter, he would give us the rhyme-scheme and that done, he would apply himself to explaining the lines, giving meanings of words and clearing up allusions. Finally, he would read the whole sonnet aloud again and ask us if we could then sense its cadences and follow its meaning. It was a very thorough kind of teaching. When I saw in some recent numbers of the *Times Literary Supplement* a controversy about what Milton had meant by 'talent' when he spoke in

one of his sonnets of "that one talent which is death to hide", I was reminded at once of Principal James' teaching of the sonnet which contained the phrase. He had given his interpretation of the word 'talent' by reference to the Parable of the Talents in the Bible and connecting the word with 'light' which also appeared in the same sonnet and which he traced to the *Psalms*, told us why the sonnet should be taken to be a poem on the poet's blindness, although it was not expressly so designated. That principal James' exposition should have lasted so long in my mind is evidence of how effective his teaching was.

In complete contrast to Principal James' reading of English poetry was Prof. Sreekumar Banerjee's. He was then a new entrant into the teaching profession and far away from his subsequent Doctorate and wide fame as a pioneer of literary criticism in Bengali in the Western manner. His pronunciation of English was most unEnglish and he read English poetry in a sing-song tone and a droning voice which had, if anything, a soporific effect. But who would mind those oddities of manner, if the substance of what the young Professor dealt out to us was aesthetic appreciation of a rare quality? Prof. Banerjee's perceptiveness of the true excellences of a poem was extraordinarily acute and as he went on revealing them to his class, the students forgot his deficiencies of manner and gave up their minds to him entirely, which he filled with enjoyment and delight. It is true that the language he used was bombastic, consisting in long-winded sentences, teeming with multi-syllable words. As a consequence, the light he shed on a poem had some difficulty in piercing the covering of verbiage and coming up to the surface. But pierce it did and when it caught our eyes, we found the whole area of the poem illuminated. Today, I recall with some sense of shame that, amongst ourselves, we at times indulged in a linguistic game of trying to convert simple English sentences into

what we called 'Sreekumarese'. He who achieved the highest degree of grandiloquence and circumlocution received the loudest applause. Those frolics of ours were certainly coarse and in extremely bad taste, but how such delicate and refined sensibilities of Prof. Bannerjee had, could co-exist with a wordy style is a question. Perhaps the answer is that he had read extensively the sonorous prose of the late 18th century writers like Gibbon and that prose had left its mark on him. Such things happen. Anyone can see it in the overlong and involved sentences of Tagore's English prose—the effect of his reading Sir Thomas Browne in early life under Henry Morley at the London University. Be that as it may, Prof. Sreekumar Banerjee was, even in my time, an exceptionally perceptive teacher of poetry and had very special powers of drawing out the latent beauties of a poem, though he did so in a commentator's way. To read poetry under him was to be educated in reading poetry as a connoisseur.

Prof. J. W. Holme taught us the history of English literature in the B.A. Honours classes. He enjoyed a certain prestige among the students, for, he was known to have edited *As You Like It* for the Arden Shakespeare series and contributed a number of articles to the Cambridge History of English Literature. The prestige was not undeserved. He was a true scholar of the austere type, as much aloof from his colleagues as he was from the students, and was always absorbed in his studies, beyond which he seem to have no interests. Another Professor once remarked to us that Prof. Holme was always investigating some point in order to track it down to its origin and seeing him, one realised why study and research had been called 'pursuit' of knowledge. But in spite of his pre-occupation with his own studies, Prof. Holme was a very painstaking and conscientious teacher. The method he followed in teaching us the history of English literature was, so far as I can judge, best calculated to give us

some real grip of the subject, for, he made us write our own histories. Beginning from the beginning of the history, he would narrate a portion of it each day and require us to take full notes, as he spoke on, ourselves. Those we were to take home and write up in the form of a narrative, which we were to bring to the class on the next day for him to see. On the next day, he would, after finishing the roll-call, step down from the platform and go round the whole class, stopping at each student and glancing through what he had written. His quick eye hardly ever failed to detect an error or omission. He told us that if, when transcribing and enlarging the notes taken in class, we found that some link had been missed, we might look up the *Short History of English Literature* by W. T. Young who had been a pupil of Oliver Elton like himself and whose approach to the subject was the same as his. As he had to cover the whole history by a single weekly lecture in two academic years, Prof. Holme could not tarry long over any particular author or book, however distinguished or important, and had to confine himself to bold outlines, the characteristics and the backgrounds. Nevertheless, we had, at the end of the course, complete histories of the period covered, written, as it might be said, by ourselves. Unfortunately, I have lost my own notes. Had they been in my possession today, I might well have published them under the name and style of *A Short History of English Literature: By P. Chakravartti Based on the lectures of Prof. J. W. Holme* and the book might not prove a commercial failure. Though his teaching of the history of English literature was highly competent, we got the real Prof. Holme in the tutorial classes. There we found how great his learning was and how exact his scholarship.

Prof. T. S. Sterling, the Head of the English Department, was a very different type of teacher. Extremely youthful-looking and always very

fashionably deemed, he was a gay person and wanted to be chummy with his students. He had a good degree and wrote a good style, but did not seem to take his teaching very seriously. For that manner of discharging his teaching duties, he gave us one day the reason in a private conversation. He said that, in his opinion, Indian students, who were not going to specialise in English literature, would profit more by reading widely and lightly than by reading narrowly and intensively. If they read only a few books closely and critically, all that they would acquire would be a limited knowledge, confined to those books; but if they read extensively without any particular academic aim, a sense of correct English and some sense of the beauties of form and manner, peculiar to works of English literature, would automatically get into their systems without their knowing it. For practical purposes, they would be in a better position as to their English than laborious scholars. There is a great deal to be said in favour of that view but that Prof. Sterling held it, does not perhaps wholly explain the light-hearted manner of his teaching. Whatever his attainments, he seemed to be not made for hard work. He taught us one of Scott's novels in the B.A. Pass classes. The method of his teaching was that he would not read a single sentence himself, but would get thirty or forty pages of the book read by the students everyday by calling upon a few of them one after another to read some paragraphs. As each student read his quota, Prof. Sterling would correct his pronunciation of words or articulation of sentences and give such explanations of the text as he thought necessary. But he was generous of praise when he thought praise was due. I remember particularly one incident. In our time, we had to take our seats in the class-room in the order of our roll-numbers. Two seats before mine, was the seat of Tulsi, famous in later life as T. C. Goswami. On the first day that he was called upon to read from the book, he had hardly read two sen-

tences when Prof. Sterling asked him to stop and enquired where he had learnt his English. Tulsi had come straight to the Third Year class after passing the Senior Cambridge examination without going through the Intermediate course of the Calcutta University. He named the institution where he had studied and then Prof. Sterling told him that he should keep up his reading and speaking of English and if he did so, he would go far. Far Tulsi did go, but, unfortunately, not far enough for his exceptional gifts and early promise, for, to the great regret of those who knew and loved him, he badly mismanaged his life. To come back to Prof. Sterling, though the general impression about him was that he was a superficial person, we discovered on one occasion that he was really not what he seemed to be. In connection with the Foundation Day celebrations one year, we staged a few scenes from *As You Like It* and Prof. Sterling took great pains to coach the actors of all the parts. Then we found that he knew his Shakespeare very well indeed and had a fine sense of the dramatic. Personally, I have a reason to remember him with some affection. As I used to declaim frequently at meetings held at the college, whether students' meetings or meetings of other kinds, he nicknamed me 'Orator' and even when he wrote to me occasionally from Hongkong University which he had joined after leaving the Indian Educational Service, he addressed me by the same appellation. His letters began as 'My dear Orator'.

During the time Prof. Sterling was teaching at Presidency College, he showed no signs of entertaining feelings of any particular attachment for the institution. But who can know what is lying at the bottom of the heart of a man? It was greatly surprising and moving to a degree to find that when recently he died at his home in far-away England almost half a century since his days at Presidency College, he remembered the students of the college in his will and left a large part of his estate to

them for their benefit. Many must have learnt from a letter of the present Principal of the college, published in *The Statesman*, that a very considerable sum had already been received and further sums were expected. Has any Indian teacher of the college done anything for its students like what this occasionally-maligned foreigner had done?

Of the two giants of the Department of English in my time, Prof. P. C. Ghosh and Prof. Manmohan Ghose, I have written before—of Prof. P. C. Ghosh, once, briefly and in Bengali, and of Prof. Manmohan Ghose twice, once briefly in Bengali and once, earlier, in English in an extended form. Shortly after I had finished my studies and when I was myself teaching at Dacca, I contributed an article on Prof. Manmohan Ghose to this magazine at the request of its then editor, Mr. (now Dr.) Subodh Chandra Sen Gupta. Were I to revise that article today, I would perhaps clip off some extravagances of language and delete my poetisings, but of the substantive statements I made about Prof. Ghose and his teaching, I would not withdraw one word. But of him, more later.

Prof. P. C. Ghosh was a perfect example of a man of letters who is also a man of the world, the latter, not in the sense of worldliness.—for, he was the most unworldly of men—but in the sense of being wide-awake about the world around him and knowing it thoroughly from his keen-eyed, and often amused, observation of men and things. As a teacher, he had two personalities, somewhat different from each other. One of them was revealed in his teaching of serious prose and epic or other poetry in the grand manner. Literary works of that kind are to be read with the eyes and comprehended by the mind. In teaching them, there can be no question of the teacher identifying himself with the author or with the characters, if there be any characters in the book taught. He stands apart, as a third party, and has only to act as an

interpreter between the author and the students, interpreting to the students the author's language and his meaning. So, when he taught us books like *Xenophon*, *Bacon's Essays* or *Paradise Lost*, we found in Prof. Ghosh a scholar-teacher, the range of whose knowledge seemed to be limitless and who used his immense learning to elucidate every difficult point in the text with perfect ease and without the slightest air of pedantry. It might be some allusion, literary or historical or mythological or religious or theological or even scientific; it might be some point of old geography or old astronomy; it might be some manner of speech, peculiar to a particular period of English history or a particular social class; it might be some word which had acquired new meanings and shed old ones several times in the course of its use in literature till it reached its present ambiguous connotation; it might be some expression, the genealogy of which had to be traced through several languages, if its full meaning was to be understood; it might be some prosodic device which contributed to the stateliness of the verse; or it might be any other recondite thing—and Prof. Ghosh was there to explain it to us in the easiest of manners, as if its meaning or significance was a matter of common knowledge. He had a ready-made key for every lock which had appeared to us to be particularly stubborn. Only, he had not much love for the type of poetry which has no objective basis or concrete content, but consists in musings and fancies about intangibles. When he had to teach that kind of poetry, we felt that he was struggling against some inner distaste and that his heart was not in his work. But when he was in his element, as when he was teaching great works of prose or epic poetry or poetry of the nature of criticism of life, his manner of presentation of even the most difficult things was so lively and joyous that it established a relationship of intimacy with us and we followed him delightedly like members of

a party, out on a literary excursion, of which he was the guide and the leader. That was one of the teaching personalities of Prof. P. C. Ghosh.

The other personality was revealed in his teaching of Shakespearean drama where he was absolutely unique. I hesitate to undertake a description of that teaching, because no one can describe the undecidable. I have heard of the great teaching of Shakespeare by the legendary H. M. Percival, a former Principal of Presidency College, but unfortunately I could have no experience of it myself. He had retired and left the college long before my time. But having attended the classes of Prof. P. C. Ghosh, who, by the way, was a student Percival. I cannot imagine how any teaching of Shakespeare could be superior to his. Prof. Ghosh taught the dramas *as drama*. There are certain works which, though written in the form of a drama and also so called, can only be read as literature, as they are wholly unsuitable for presentation on the stage. But a work which is a drama proper, intends that it shall be acted on the stage, that its characters shall be seen by a body of spectators and that their speeches shall be heard and therefore it is so constructed as to be adapted to that purpose. As the Sanskrit designation of a drama correctly and expressively says, it is a *drishyakavya*, that is, a visible (or, seeable) poem. Shakespeare's dramas are of the actable class—indeed, they are the most actable dramas in the world—and they were written for performance by Shakespeare's own company. To teach them as dramas, the teacher should be able to make the characters visible and audible to the students and not merely that, he should also be able to make them act and speak exactly as they, in the conception of the dramatist, acted and spoke in their imagined lives portrayed in the drama. That was the exceptionally difficult task which Prof. P. C. Ghosh took it upon himself to perform and he performed it with extraordinary success. In

teaching a Shakespearean drama, he gave explanations a secondary place, though when he gave them, they were full. Primarily, he would identify himself completely with the characters of the play and act by turns the part of each, as he or she appeared on the scene and do it with such vividness that it appeared to us that the characters themselves were present before our eyes and speaking in his voice. That voice sometimes trembled with rage, sometimes throbbed with passion, sometimes became a plaintive cry and sometimes soft and lyrical and sometimes, again, convulsed with merriment, just as the occasion demanded. It was truly marvellous how, without the advantage of the scenic background changing from time to time and without any make-up, he could create the atmosphere of the story and personate the characters truly to life by mere gestures and modulations of voice so that they seemed to rise from the printed page and stand before us in flesh and blood. Not only did he identify himself with all the characters of the play by turns, but he did also, by the magic of his presentation, ingratiate us into the same kind of identity with the characters. So powerfully did the presentation possess us that we felt as if we also were being turned into characters presented. The result was that at the end of the play, we felt as if all the joys and sorrows and hopes and passions and fears of all the characters had swept through our own souls and left us purged of all emotions and chastened. The impression created by Prof. Ghosh's reading of a play in the manner of acting the parts of the characters took a firmer hold of our minds when his elucidations followed with their penetrating insights. But the dominant impression was that created by his reading and acting. I have read somewhere that in the early days of the Bengali stage, some of its gifted actors, notably Ardhendu Sekhar Mustafi, used to appear in several roles, much unlike one another, in the same play. But surely, no actor ever played all the roles in a

drama, as Prof. Ghosh did. I may add that when I was in London a few years ago, I made it my special business to visit the theatre and was fortunate in being able to see some of the greatest of the contemporary actors—Olivier, Gielgud and Redgrave—appear in leading roles in Shakespearean plays. To me at least, it did not seem that the characters they represented came alive more in their acting than in the presentation of the same characters by Prof. P. C. Ghosh. Indeed, at times it seemed to me that their personation was less vivid and less in character.

But although Prof. P. C. Ghosh taught us Shakespearean drama by the method of acting the parts of the *dramatis personae*, he did not confine himself to a single version of the characters. One of my most vivid memories of his teaching of Shakespeare is that of his presentation of the different ways in which the same character in the same situation had been acted by different actors or actresses according to their respective conceptions of the character. He used to tell us that those Shakespearians of the theatre world were not to be despised, though everyone of them might not have written *Prefaces to Shakespeare* like Granville Barker. It was in the hands of actors and actresses and their director that a drama was put to the supreme test of stageworthiness and its characters to the test of functional cogency, naturalness and credibility. A literary critic, basing himself solely on the written record of what a character did or said, might form some conception of its personality, but it would be a speculative conception, not tested by throwing the character into action along with the other characters of the play and seeing how the conception worked. On the other hand, producers of a play assigned the parts to living beings and found out by arduous rehearsals of the parts, both individually and in combination, what version of the characters would fit in best with the scheme of the play and bring out its essence with the maximum effect. Before appearing on the stage to personate a

character, a great Shakespearean actor would ponder deeply and long over the scheme of the play, the place of the character he is going to personate in that scheme, its relationship with the other characters and the devices of voice and gesture that would be the most appropriate for bringing out its individualities. He would then submit his tentative conception of the character to the test of group rehearsals and out of that experiment would emerge his ultimate conception to which his impersonation of the character on the stage will conform. The conception of a character arrived at by an actor or actress in that practical manner was far more valuable than a theoretical conception by a mere literary critic. Necessarily, in the case of great actors, the conception of a character would vary from actor to actor. Of the many instances that come to my mind of different interpretations of a particular character by different actors, presented to us by Prof. P. C. Ghosh, I may mention one. In *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock, after his encounter with Portia in which he was badly mauled and after receiving the sentence that one half of his estate shall be forfeited to the State and while he might retain the use of the other half for the duration of his life, he must sign away whatever properties he might die possessed of in favour of his daughter's suitor Lorenzo, pleads before the court that he is feeling unwell and asks for the Court's leave to go home. He prays further that the bond may be sent after him to his house for his signature. His prayer is granted and he then leaves the court. The stage-direction at this point in *Players' Shakespeare* is, 'Shylock turns his face to the audience'. As Shylock does not appear in the play again, the look on his face, as he turns it to the audience, would be the only evidence before them of his reaction to the total disaster that had befallen him. What kind of look would it have to be in order to be appropriate to the occasion and in character? Would it be the distracted look of a man overwhelmed by a catastrophe and

utterly crushed (Henry Irving)? Or, the grim look of a man convulsed within himself by an uncontrollable rage at the failure of his designs against Antonio and his own ruin (Ralph Richardson)? Or, the dark and sinister look of a man, beaten but not broken, and thinking of plans for wreaking vengeance on his tormentors (William Macready)? Prof. P. C. Ghosh presented to us all those variants of the look and gave us his opinion as to which of them fitted best with his own conception of Shylock's character. It was like turning the character over and over and looking into it from different sides in order to obtain a view of its real shape. Could any other method of teaching teach so much?

I have mentioned before the Saturday and Sunday classes of Prof. Ghosh. After commencing his teaching of a Shakespearean play, he simply could not find it in his heart to leave it unfinished. As it could not be finished in the regular classes, he held extra classes for the Pass students from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. on Saturdays and for the Honours students for their play on Sundays from 12 noon to 4 P.M. Attendance at those lectures was optional and to those who attended, no 'percentage', i.e., credit for attendance, was given. Yet, not a single student was found absent, nor would anyone leave the class before the lecture came to an end for the day. Who could keep away from a lecture on Shakespeare which was really a Shakespeare festival?

Before closing my observations on Prof. P. C. Ghosh, I would like to mention that the Shakespeare he presented before us, was Shakespeare of the orthodox conception, of Hazlitt, Coleridge and Dr. Johnson among the literary critics and, among the histrionic interpreters, of the actors Garrick, Irving, Beerbohm Tree, Forbes Robertson and Edmund Kean and the actresses, Mrs. Siddons, Sarah Bernhardt, Ellen Terry and Sybil Thorndike. But that was only his general frame of reference. The interpretations of situation and character, with which he filled the frame-

work, were his own, though, in them, he followed the traditional line of approach. He would certainly have no patience with the modern perversions of Shakespeare, such as those of the Polish critic Jan Kott, who reads Shakespeare in the light of Bertolt Brecht and Samuel Beckett and who made quite a noise a few years ago with his book *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. Nor would he be able, I think, to stand productions of Shakespearean plays like those of Peter Brook who, so far as I can judge by the accounts I have read of his productions, seems to think that Shakespeare wrote his plays for the Theatre of the Absurd. But it is perhaps proof of the universality of Shakespeare that literary or other cranks can read back into his plays idiosyncrasies of a recent origin and yet claim some plausibility.

The other giant among our teachers of English was Prof. Manmohan Ghose. The teaching we received from him is even more undescribable than Prof. P. C. Ghosh's, if there can be degrees of undescribability. It was a different kind of teaching, if teaching it was. He too taught us Shakespeare, *The Tempest* and Raleigh's book on the bard in the English Men of Letters series; and besides Shakespeare, keeping myself to the undergraduate classes, he taught Keats and Landor, the *Odes* of the former and *Imaginary Conversations* of the latter. He was himself a poet of a high order, as I have already said, of which ample evidence will be found in early numbers of this magazine. It is an infinite pity that of the considerable body of writings left by him, numerous lyrical poems and an epic, which I was privileged to see once, only a tiny fraction has been published. After he had obtained his degree from Oxford, he was compelled to come away from England for financial reasons. Had he been able to stay on and pursue his creative activities in the congenial literary climate of that country, he might have risen to be a poet of the first rank, as many competent critics, themselves poets and writers of distinction, have observed.

Unlike Prof. P. C. Ghosh, he was not a man of the world at all. His was a lonely soul, withdrawn into itself and ever wrapped up in its own thoughts and yearnings. Outwardly also, he looked self-absorbed and sad. The teaching we received from him was not teaching, as it is commonly understood. Indeed, when he was lecturing, it did not seem that he was engaged in instructing us or anybody else. Once he opened his Shakespeare or Keats or Landor, he apparently forgot that he was teaching a class and seemed to be no longer conscious that anybody was listening to his words. He was then alone with the author who was enough company for him. Soon he dived into the depths of the text he was teaching, but his entrance there was not an entrance by a mere observer, but was like an entrance by one artist into the workshop of another. It seemed to us that being a poet himself, he could not be content with regarding the poem or the drama he was teaching with merely a reader's eye and savouring its beauties of form, thought and language from outside. The artist in him was roused and with an artist's curiosity as to what the inspiration was which had moved a fellow-artist, though a much greater one, to create the particular poem or drama, he wanted to establish an identity with that artist and catch his inspiration himself. That done, he would take up the same tools that the creator of the poem or drama had used and with them, he would re-create the poem or drama before our eyes (or rather ears) slowly, lovingly and bit by bit. As he went on doing so in his own mind, he would also go on saying in words what he was doing and how the poem or the drama was being constructed, elucidating the reasons for its particular structure, the deployment of the characters, if it was a drama, and the beauty and the appositeness of the decorative details. That elucidation took the form of an inspired soliloquy and it was the soliloquy that we heard as his lecture. The soliloquy was not made up of disjointed utterances thrown out from time to

time. It was a continuous stream of pellucid comments flowing, in the joy of its flowing, out of his poetic soul and shining all over its surface with an ineffable glow. The elucidations were given in language of such utter beauty and a voice so pleasingly musical that as Prof. Ghose went on speaking, though he was speaking to himself, the whole class sat still, entranced. We felt as if we were witnessing the birth of a masterpiece. In Prof. P. C. Ghosh, when he taught a drama, we saw the characters of the drama, incarnate; in Prof. Manmohan Ghose, when he taught a poem or drama, we saw the poet or the dramatist incarnate. Those who have visited the Louvre museum in Paris and have been to the paintings section, must have seen at the foot of some of the masterpieces one or two artists, trying to make copies of the originals hanging on the walls. They appear to be entirely absorbed in their work and insensible of their surroundings, trying intensely to capture the inspiration and the mood of the creators of the originals so that they may reproduce their productions with some success. It is a fascinating experience to stand by them and see the lines and colours of the original pictures appear gradually on their canvases and take shape there, as they apply the careful strokes of their brushes. Listening to a class-lecture of Prof. Manmohan Ghose was an experience of that kind since one found, as one listened, a replica of the original poem or drama, taking shape in his hands, with all its beauties preserved, if not enhanced, because of a clearer view emerging from the superbly revelatory exposition. The experience was simply unique and could not be had, I believe, anywhere else.

Prof. Ghose also taught us Raleigh's book on Shakespeare. Reading that book with him, we discovered how extensive and intimate his knowledge of Shakespearean drama was and how deep and poetical were his insights. I have read a considerable body of Shakespearean criticism, by both old critics and critics of modern times,

but I do not think I found anything anywhere to equal the criticism offered by Prof. Ghose in brilliance of analysis, perceptiveness of the judgments and felicity of language. When teaching *Raleigh on Shakespeare*, he modified to a certain extent his method of speaking to himself, as if for his own pleasure, which he employed when teaching poetry. He engaged himself in a mental dialogue, as it were, with Raleigh and went on approving of what he had said or reproving him for some opinion or rejecting his interpretation of some Shakespearean device altogether. I have a vivid recollection of how he would, on occasions, lift his face from the book and with just a suspicion of a smile on his lips and a twinkle in his eyes, say, "Here, Sir Walter Raleigh has forgotten his Greek."

I owe it to Prof. Manmohan Ghose to say a word about his reading of poetry. To hear him read English poetry, whether Shakespearean verse or other poetry, was a sheer aesthetic delight. His pronunciation of English was absolutely pure and better than that of most Englishmen, who, coming from the northern or southern parts of England and not perhaps having received any Public School education, cannot wholly get rid of their regional accents. It is only the English coming from the upper classes of central England and receiving first Public School and then Oxbridge education, who can achieve the standard pronunciation of English. We heard it in the speaking of Principal James. But even Englishmen, who can command the standard pronunciation of English, would not generally be able to confer on their reading of poetry the musical quality which Prof. Ghose conferred on his reading with his mellifluous voice, without doing the slightest violence to the characteristically English accents of the language.

Besides the teachers I have so far mentioned, we were also taught by two other teachers who were late entrants into the permanent English staff of the college and minor figures. Of them, I have already mentioned. Prof. Nripendra

Chandra Banerjee. He came from Rajshahi College when I was in my Third Year class. We did not find him to be a profound scholar or to have an ordered notion of English literature. Besides, his mind was already in turmoil by reason of his beginning to take an active interest in the tumultuous politics of the time. But it was clear that he read the literature of the Romantic period extensively, if somewhat haphazardly, and had developed certain literary enthusiasms of the right kind. But, unfortunately, he could not keep his enthusiasms under control and would, at times, burst out from the constraints of academic propriety and become demonstrative, which jarred on our sensibilities, trained by other teachers to some degree of refinement. But, on the whole, we received his lectures in a spirit of acceptance. One notable feature of his teaching was that he would occasionally recite parallel passages from the Bengali poetry of Rabindranath Tagore—an unusual and courageous thing to do in those days. Some years later, when serving as Vice-Principal of Chittagong College, Prof. Banerjee resigned his post and joined the non-cooperation movement.

The other of the two minor figures was Principal J. R. Barrow, who succeeded Principal W. C. Wordsworth who had succeeded Principal James. His teaching was more visible than audible and not very clearly visible either. We saw him moving his lips and thought he was saying something which, however, only he could hear or, at most, the few students sitting very near him. But he had a certain aesthetic sense, of which we had other evidence. I was much struck by an article contributed by him to this magazine in which he gave his impressions of the Taj Mahal. He said that the Taj Mahal, with its arresting beauty of the outer form and its opulence of interior decorations, had no air of mournfulness about it and it did not look to him at all like a symbol of an emperor's grief for the loss of his consort, but looked rather like a

symbol of his self-love and vanity, standing there glamorously and calling out to the world to see what a magnificent memorial he, Shahjahan, had built for the woman he had loved. That was a point of view, not to be dismissed straightaway as unworthy of consideration.

I am afraid I have already created a problem for the editor by the size of this article and therefore must not add further to its length. But, in fact, I have come to the end of my story. At the end of it, a question naturally arises: great as the teaching of English at Presidency College in my time was, how much did we, on our part, profit by it? To that question, I do not know the answer, except what I have given casually here and there in the course of this article. But I can say in the words of the heroes of *Treasure Island* "we all had each an ample share of the treasures and used it well or ill, according to our natures".

That is about ourselves, the students. But what about the teachers who dealt out to us those ample shares of treasures? What rewards could they expect or did they get? I am afraid nothing more than the enjoyment they derived from their teaching and the gratitude of their students and that also perhaps of not all of them. It is a great tragedy of the life of a teacher that however outstanding the quality of his work, its results are foredoomed to impermanence, even as his personal fame is foredoomed to be transitory. Unless he is also an author of some books of abiding value, a teacher can at most hope to build a place for himself in the hearts of the students who may come to learn from him year after year and it may also be that even after they have passed out and entered life, he will live in their memories so long as they are alive. But when they too are at last gone, the teacher will inevitably be consigned to the limbo of total oblivion. Such used to be the sad destiny of even actors and musicians till recent times, but now, with the invention of the devices for recording sights and

sounds, the best of them can expect a limited form of immortality. Vocal recitals by singers and concerts by instrumentalists can be recorded and dramatic performances can be filmed. A singer or an instrumentalist can be heard on records even after he is dead and an actor can be both seen and heard in films of the vocalised variety, the talkies. They may thus continue to live after death, although it will be an attenuated form of existence. In the absence of the impact of their living presence, actors and musicians, as seen and heard in records or films, will be but pale shadows of what they were in actual life. Still, they will, to a certain extent, live on. But teachers cannot expect a continuation of their teaching lives even in such a secondary and mechanical form, for, it is hardly probable that a class lecture by a teacher, however eminent, will ever be recorded or filmed or televised. So it must be that the memories of the teachers of English at Presidency College in my time will endure only as the last of the students, whose lives were touched by their teaching, does not die.

But so long as that eventuality does not come to happen and the multitudinous body of students, to be counted by tens of thousands, who had received their education in English at the hands of those teachers, does not become extinct, there will always be some who will be carrying the images of those teachers lovingly on the tablets of their hearts. They will be carrying them, because whether or not they had been able to profit by the teaching of those teachers or profit adequately, the fascination cast by that teaching on their minds has lasted. Speaking for myself I can say—and I say it honestly—that if those great teachers, at whose feet we had the privilege of sitting, reappeared today and resumed their teaching at Presidency College, I, for one, could easily go and take my seat humbly on one of the back benches in their class rooms and I would not feel in the least out of place. The moment I took my seat there, all the excrescences that have grown on my

mind since my college days out of my concern with law and political science and out of my adult contacts with life, would drop off at once; and with the uncluttered mind of my seventeenth or eighteenth year thus restored to me, I would be able to surrender myself wholly, as in the old days, to the rapture of hearing, as it might be, Milton bemoan his blindness in the pure, English voice of Principal James or Tennyson intone the magical lines of *The Lady of Shalott* in the languorous voice of Prof. Sreekumar

Banerjee or Keats apostrophise a nightingale or a Grecian Urn in the dulcet tones of Prof. Manmohan Ghose or Shakespeare make his characters rage and storm or growl or laugh or lyricise in the superbly variable voice of Prof. P. C. Ghosh. And, when the elucidations would come after recitals, my mind, now parched and shrivelled, would receive them joyfully like showers of life-giving rain.

But that such an experience I shall ever have is, I know, only an idle fancy.

Memories of Old Days

Anil Chandra Banerjee

When I was asked to contribute an article to the Diamond Jubilee number of the **Presidency College Magazine** I secured a copy of the Silver Jubilee number just to refresh my memory about some of the early stalwarts who made this great institution a more than worthy successor of its predecessor, the Hindu College, established by the pioneers of Western Education in India. But I felt very uneasy when I read the following lines in an article on **College Magazines** by Mr. Kuruvilla Zachariah, the greatest teacher at whose feet I had the privilege to sit.

"There is a third point for the college magazine—that nobody reads it.... Old students write to extol their own days, but their self-deception deceives no one, for no one reads them. Those only read the college magazine who write for it."

Is it really necessary, then, that I, as an old student of the College, should indulge in 'self-deception' and write an article of which I shall be the solitary reader? I thought over the matter and then decided to accept this futile task for one simple reason. While writing a few lines about some of my old teachers in the College

I could renew my link with them in spirit and pay once again my humble but earnest tribute to their memory. For a few fleeting hours they would come back to life, at least so far as I was concerned, and this would be no small gain for me when I find all around me the collapse of those values which they cherished and fostered by their learning and character, by their affection for students and devotion to duty.

I came to the Presidency College in July 1928 from an obscure college in East Bengal and joined the 3rd Year B.A. Class with Honours in History. I took my B.A. in 1930 and joined the post-graduate classes in History in the University as a student of the Presidency College. During the period of my post-graduate studies (1930-32) my contact with College was more or less formal, confined mainly to the use of the College Library and to the attendance at some meetings of the College literary societies and the History Seminar. No post-graduate class in History was held in the College. The only teacher of the College who taught History students in the University was Professor Santosh Kumar Chatterjee who succeeded Professor

Zachariah as Head of the Department of History in July 1930. Post-graduate students of the college (except Ward Prefects) were allowed to stay in the Eden Hindu Hostel.

During the session 1928-29 our Principal was Mr. R. B. Ramsbotham, who came from Hooghly, and, after a brief one-year term, left for Chittagong. He was a warm-hearted Englishman; writing in the Silver Jubilee number under the caption **In Retirement** he described himself as one of 'those foster-children (of India) who love her much and to whom she owes, also, something'. As a Professor of History in the Dacca College (which had post-graduate classes in those days) for many years he had made his mark as a teacher of modern European and British constitutional history and trained many distinguished pupils among whom I would mention my teachers in the University, Dr. Surendra Nath Sen and Dr. Indubhusan Banerjee, the first two occupants of the Asutosh Professorship of Medieval and Modern Indian History. Mr. Ramsbotham's scholarship extended to the field of Indian history as well. His book, **Studies in the Land Revenue History of Bengal 1769-1787** was published in 1926. To the first volume [of "The Cambridge History of India"] he contributed a 24-page chapter on **The Revenue administration of Bengal, 1765-1885**. The **Presidency College Magazine** received from him two articles: **The Munsifs (Vol. XV): Origin of an Administrative Service in India.** (Vol. XVI). Mr. M. E. Stapleton, who was his immediate predecessor as Principal, was originally a Professor of Chemistry, but he made important contributions to the history of the Muslim Sultans of Bengal. Mr. E. F. Oaten, Professor of History in the Presidency College in the second decade of the present century, was the author of a well-known book, **European Travellers in India**. Indian history attracted these European teachers at a time when historical research was in its infancy in our country.

Mr Ramsbotham came from Oxford. His

successor, Mr. J. R. Barrow, came from Cambridge. His subject was English. Dr. Indubhusan Banerjee, who had been Mr Barrow's pupil in the Dacca College, told me that his lectures on Shakespeare were stimulating and thought-provoking, but students who came to the class without some preliminary acquaintance with the text found his exposition too difficult to follow. Professor B. B. Roy, who was Mr. Barrow's pupil in the Presidency College, wrote in the Silver Jubilee number: "A somewhat cynical and forbidding exterior concealed a good heart. His teaching was for the select; it reached high quality like his English which, in diction and phrasing, had both suppleness and distinction."

Mr. Barrow had two terms of Principalship in the Presidency College: 1917-1923, 1929-30. He was the last European Principal of the College. His successor was Sir J. C. Coyajee, an economist of international reputation and a Professor in the College since 1911. On his retirement in 1931 Mr. Bhupati Mohan Sen, a distinguished scholar in the field of Mathematics, took charge of the College as Principal. Both Sir J. C. Coyajee and Mr. B. M. Sen were Cambridge alumni.

Of the four Principals of my days only two were actually my teachers with whom I had some contact; the other two I saw only from a distance, and I do not recall any occasion when I had a chance to speak to either of them. But I distinctly remember the majestic figure of Sir J. C. Coyajee, moving slowly up the steps of the great staircase or walking in a leisurely manner across the corridor to the class-room. I also remember Professor B. M. Sen (as he was in my undergraduate days) who appeared to outsiders as a shy and silent scholar, perpetually sunk in his own thoughts.

Mr. Barrow took a weekly Pass class on the **Selections from the Bible** which was a prescribed text for English (Paper II: Prose).

I was then in my fourth-year class. I cannot say I was in any way impressed by his teaching. He always appeared to be morose and without any sense of humour. During the whole session I found him smiling in the class only on one occasion. Perhaps the subject which he had taken up had no intrinsic interest for his pupils: extracts from the *New Testament* had neither the captivating lyrical flavour of nineteenth-century poems (which we had the privilege of reading with Professor Srikumar Banerjee) or the sparkling beauty of the fairy land in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (which Professor Prafulla Chandra Ghosh painted through an inimitable imagery of words before a spell-bound group of 125 young men as yet untouched by the furious tempest of life). Perhaps long and dreary years outside class-rooms (he was for several years Divisional Inspector of Schools) had weakened Mr. Barrow's zest for teaching.

But if Mr. Barrow did not shine as a teacher in the closing year of his long service in Bengal, he deserves to be remembered as a great educational administrator for the manner in which he dealt with a serious and protracted students' strike in September 1929. It is unnecessary to recount the details of that unfortunate episode. I have vivid recollections of those days of trouble, for as a student of the College and an inmate of the Eden Hostel I was personally affected by it. It was at that time that I saw Mr. Barrow from close quarters, and what impressed me most was the unique combination of firmness with genuine affection for students which marked his approach to what at that time was an unprecedented problem for a college administration. He sought appeasement, he punished those whom he considered to be guilty; but punishment never degenerated into vindictiveness, and justice was tempered by mercy—or, perhaps, long-term interest in the welfare of the accused. There were ugly incidents, but he never thought of calling in the police. This

was something very unusual—and very bold—in the political situation prevailing at the time. The crisis subsided; Mr. Barrow retired a year later. Sir J. C. Coyajee wrote in the Silver Jubilee number: "I was so convinced of the merits of Mr. Barrow as an administrator that I implored him to continue in his position as Principal in spite of some difficulties." As his successor the veteran economist found it, as he himself said, 'no easy task to take over the reins from such experienced and firm yet tactful hands'. In later years, when I found myself caught in the whirlpool of educational administration, I often remembered Mr. Barrow and felt that his College—as also the University—needed men of his type.

In our days the Principals of colleges were not too busy to take classes. Mr. Ramsbotham took two Honours classes per week with the third-year History students. His subject was: History of England in the reign of George III (1760-1820). This was the second Honour's paper, and he had to finish it within one session. When he found that the time allotted in the routine was inadequate, he began to take one extra class per week. As he did not want to disturb the routine he took this extra class at 10 a.m. (when we had no other class), and instead of requisitioning a class-room he took this class in the Principal's room (although he took the other two classes in Room No. 2). There was a long table in the Principal's room (apart from the small table which the Principal used for his office work); it was big enough to accommodate Mr. Ramsbotham and all of us (numbering about 20). Here the class began exactly at 10 a.m.; the customary respite of 7 minutes at the beginning of a period was not allowed. Mr. Ramsbotham told us that it was better to have a few extra minutes for work. He was very punctilious about attendance; he would make no secret of his displeasure if any one came late, and absence even for a day would make him angry.

Mr. Ramsbotham's method of teaching was peculiar. The text-book prescribed by the University was Grant Robertson's **England under the Hanoverians**; it had to be supplemented by Rosebery's **Pitt**. Instead of delivering lectures of the usual type he called upon the students in the order of their names to stand up and read aloud passages from Grant Robertson's book so that the whole class could hear them. He noted in the Attendance Register which students had done their tasks on a particular day and on the next occasion started from the next name in the Register. I find in Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar's article in the Silver Jubilee volume that this was the method followed by Mr. C. H. Tawney when he took up Skeat's **Anglo-Saxon Primer**. But I have never heard of any Professor of History adopting such a method.

Mr. Ramsbotham took three steps to guide us. First, as Grant Robertson's book was written in a difficult language and contained references and allusions unintelligible to undergraduates whose knowledge of British history was derived from **The Groundwork of British History** by Warner and Marten, he gave copious oral explanations which helped us much to understand the text. Secondly, he dictated brief notes which were usually supplementary to Grant Robertson's narrative. Thirdly, he insisted on our close study of Lecky's ponderous volumes on **History of England in the Eighteenth Century** to which he appeared to attach almost biblical sanctity. I purchased those volumes, although I was by no means in affluent circumstances, and profited immensely from my careful study of a masterly work. Mr. Ramsbotham's method was certainly dull and mechanical; but in retrospect it appears to me that it had the great merit of directing the attention of the beginners to a good text-book which, if read thoroughly, would serve as an excellent introduction to the subject and provide a strong foundation for a superstructure. Insistence on the careful read-

ing of a single text-book—Lodge's **Modern Europe**, for instance—was the mode favoured by well-known Professors of History in those days.

Against this time-honoured method a clear and firm protest came from Professor Zachariah; his approach to historical teaching introduced us to a new world of thought and imagination. An exceptionally brilliant performance at Oxford was followed by his appointment to the Indian Educational Service. He joined the Presidency College in 1916 as Professor in the Department of Political Economy and Political Philosophy; soon, however, he came over to the Department of History which he left in July 1930 on his appointment as Principal of the Hooghly College. From Hooghly he came to the Islamia (now Maulana Azad) College. This was followed by a term as Director of Public Instruction in undivided Bengal. Then he went to New Delhi as Member of the Federal Republic Service Commission. After Independence he organised the Historical Division of the Ministry of External Affairs.

Mr. Zachariah was a Christian. He belonged to Kerala. For many years he was a bachelor. In my under-graduate days I found him living in a Hostel attached to St. Paul's College. He was deeply interested in bird-life, and I found in his room many beautifully illustrated books on the subject. He married in 1930 and soon afterwards left for Hooghly.

The subjects which Mr. Zachariah taught in the Presidency College in our days were: British history in the 1st Year I.A. class, Greek history (479-404 B.C.) in the 3rd Year Honours class, and Medieval European history (usually the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) in the 4th Year Honours class. In the University he took British Constitutional History (from the earliest times to 1485). I had the privilege of reading Greek history and Medieval European history with him for two sessions (1928-30), with a brief interruption due to his deputation

in 1928 to the Hartog Committee attached to the Simon Commission. He discontinued his classes at the University on his transfer to Hooghly and this coincided with my promotion to the fifth-year class.

Professor B. B. Roy wrote about Professor Zachariah in the Silver Jubilee number: "He got himself liked the moment he came, although his lectures were in the beginning a little difficult to follow. His English was much like that of a cultured Englishman; it had its charm but unsophisticated ears had to get used to it. He immediately created the impression of one who prepared his lectures carefully and took his life as a teacher seriously. His very shyness was pleasing, but nobody dared 'rag' him."

Professor Zachariah never dictated notes; he delivered lectures in his quiet but distinct voice. Sir J. C. Coyajee wrote in the Silver Jubilee number: ".....only a few of us have noted how his coat pockets used to bulge with the multiplicity of quarter-sheets which conveyed his historical erudition to the class-room." He did indeed bring those quarter-sheets to the class-room and put them on the table; but he never read them to the class. Sometimes he glanced over the pages, presumably to refresh his memory, while the lecture continued uninterrupted. The care he took in writing and typing these sheets indicated how laboriously he prepared his lectures even on subjects which he had been teaching for years.

The first lesson which he gave us was: "Don't read books, read subjects." This apparently enigmatic sentence had a deep meaning. He did not want us to master the contents of any single book; his advice was to read carefully selected portions of different books so as to get the best possible account of every branch or aspect of the subject of study. No single book, however comprehensive and authoritative, can give us everything which we should know

about, say, the Greeks or the medieval Church. Scattered reading, however, has its dangers. Therefore reading is to be guided by competent and watchful teachers. Such guidance he gave us in his lectures and tutorials.

Knowledge acquired through reading is useless if it cannot be communicated in correct and precise words; vagueness and superfluity of all kinds are to be scrupulously avoided. The power of expression is a necessary complement to the capacity of collecting facts and to the power of thinking. This is the most precious lesson which I have drawn from Professor Zachariah's teaching. If I have failed to adhere to his very rigid standard, the fault is entirely mine.

As the College routine could not provide adequate time for tutorials, Professor Zachariah asked if any one was prepared to go to his room in the St. Paul's College Hostel where better work could be done. My friend, Golap Chandra Roy Chaudhuri (who rose to be Registrar of the University), and myself eagerly availed ourselves of this opportunity of coming into closer contact with him. It was there that I really understood the importance of precision in thought and expression. It was there that I glimpsed the depth of his scholarship, the catholicity of his views, and the diversity of his interests.

For the present generation of History students the name 'Kuruvilla Zachariah' means little. Who has read his educational reports which Sir J. C. Coyajee 'admired'? Who has read his **History of the Hooghly College**, or his contributions to this Magazine (Vols. IV, VII, VIII, IX, XI, CIX, XV)? But he lives in the memory of the old and fast vanishing generation of History students, men for whom life now means nothing but a retrospect; their lingering remembrance is the most meaningful recognition of Kuruvilla Zachariah's services to History.

My College Days

Nirmal Chandra Sengupta

When I received the invitation from the Editor and the Secretary of the **Presidency College Magazine** to contribute an article for the diamond jubilee of the magazine, my immediate reaction was: how time flies! It seems almost the other day when I was editing the Silver Jubilee number of the **Presidency College Magazine**.

I joined Presidency College in July, 1934 in the Intermediate Arts class. My two elder brothers had studied in the Presidency College. Moreover, I had done the last six years of my schooling in Calcutta and was thoroughly familiar with the reputation as an educational institution which Presidency College has always enjoyed. I was on the rolls of the College till June, 1940.

I should, at the outset, state that my college days were very enjoyable. I had the good fortune of securing the favourable opinions of my teachers. I enjoyed good health throughout my college days and had opportunities of participating in the corporate life of the college. Principal B. M. Sen and Professor Surendra Nath Mazumdar treated me very kindly and I had the opportunity of acting as Secretary (Social) of the College Union in 1936-37 and also as Editor of the Silver Jubilee number of the College Magazine in 1939. I was a regular member of the college gymnasium and became Secretary of the gymnasium in the year 1939-40.

Those were the days of nominations. The College Union office-bearers were not elected. That is why it was useful to attract the attention of the teachers and particularly of the Principal if one wanted to play some part in the social life of the college. The easiest way of attracting such attention was of course

through proficiency in studies. I had considerable luck in this respect. I was bracketed tenth in the Intermediate Examination along with Shri Sadhan Chandra Gupta who made his mark subsequently as a Communist legislator in spite of the great handicap of blindness. In my B. A. examination in honours in Economics, I was bracketed first in the first class with Shri Atul Mukherjee who had topped the list in our matriculation examination and who subsequently had a brilliant career as a Commissioner of Income-tax.

I was particularly lucky in editing the Silver Jubilee number. Shri Pratap Chandra Sen, a very brilliant student of History, was originally appointed Editor for the year but after editing the first number he decided to take advantage of a seat that had been offered to him in Cambridge and he went away. A fresh appointment thus became necessary and Principal B. M. Sen gave me the nomination. Usually in those days the magazine used to be published once every four months. Pratap, who subsequently became one of the senior officers in Burmah Shell and whose untimely death is mourned by numerous friends even now, published the first issue for the year 1938-39. When I took over I found that the work for the Silver Jubilee number had become extremely urgent and that the funds available were not adequate. I decided to merge the remaining two numbers into one Silver Jubilee commemorative volume and also obtained the Principal's permission to draw on about one-third of the next year's magazine fees on the promise that students coming into college next year would also receive a copy of the Silver Jubilee number. The result was that by mer-

ging the expenses earmarked for three numbers I was able to publish the Silver Jubilee number with a small additional grant. Perhaps, even in those days I was unconsciously training myself for a banking job!

Every year a General Secretary used to be appointed for the magazine. Shri Abu Syed Chaudhury was the General Secretary for 1938-39 and served both with Pratap and with me. I was impressed with his competence but I never realised that he was destined to become the President of the Sovereign Republic of Bangladesh.

I read up all the previous volumes of the magazines in writing my editorial **Twenty Five Years On**. When I re-read this recently I was pleasantly surprised with the wealth of details and past references which I had succeeded in incorporating. Professor Taraknath Sen, who had been one of the dynamic editors of the magazine himself, had very kindly, as I acknowledged, gone through the editorial in manuscript and, suggested improvements. As a commemorative volume, the Silver Jubilee number contained a large number of reminiscences from members of the staff as well as well-established former students. The founder of the magazine, Principal H. R. James had contributed an 'Introduction to the **Presidency College Magazine** in the very first number of the magazine in 1914. This article was reproduced in the Silver Jubilee number. I find Mr. K. Zachariah, who had been one of the most brilliant teachers of History in the college and who had gone over to Hooghly Mohsin College as Principal, contributed an article on **College Magazines** in the Silver Jubilee number. I cannot check the temptation of quoting the first three sentences:

"A college magazine is, in many ways, one of the most harmless of our public institutions. This may seem faint praise, especially in a Jubilee Number, but I mean it as high commendation. When we con-

sider how often even the well-meant acts of well-meaning men result in evil rather than in good, how mixed are the issues of human endeavour and how powerless we are to separate the tares from the wheat, we shall be thankful for anything that does not hurt, even if it cannot heal."

Nobody can doubt the utility of running a college magazine after reading this.

I had taken a decision that only people connected with the college would be invited to contribute to the Silver Jubilee number. Fortunately I came to know that Rabindranath had been a student of the college for a day and I exploited that fact in contacting him directly and asking for a poem in his own hand-writing. He was then near the end of his glorious life. He said that if I insisted on an original composition I would have to wait till he could dictate something but if I would be satisfied with his handwriting, he could copy out then and there one of his older poems. After some hesitation I opted for the latter as I felt that an additional new poem from the composer of thousands would not be a more valuable acquisition than to get the poet's hand-writing at a time when he was rather advanced in age. For the frontispiece I decided to contact the late O. C. Ganguly, Solicitor, Professor of Arts and famous editor of "Roopam". He gave me a re-print of a painting depicting the first portrait of Buddha, the original of which had been purchased by Lord Zetland when he was Governor of Bengal as Lord Ronaldshay. At the time of the Silver Jubilee number, Lord Zetland was Secretary of State for India. I wrote to him for permission to reproduce the painting and received a civil reply from his private secretary. An index of all the articles in the college magazine was published: the English index having been prepared by Shri Debdas Sen, who now belongs to the Faculty of English in Calcutta University, and the Bengali index by Shri Alak Chandra Gupta, now a Judge in the Supreme Court.

In the College Union, the two General Secretaries during my period were Purnendu Banerjee (subsequently Ambassador of India) and Prantosh Roy (presently Deputy Chief Election Commissioner). When I was looking after the social side, Pratap was the Secretary in-charge of debates. I recall with pleasure the busy time we spent making arrangements for the Founder's Day, and organising a river trip, besides. In the gymnasium Bishweshwar Chatterjee who recently retired as an Inspector General of Police, was my partner; he had been Secretary of the gymnasium one year earlier. I

once competed in the inter-collegiate muscle-posing competition.

Those were days of comparative stability and quiet. The employment situation was not so bad. A good degree was useful in the employment market and examinations used to be held according to schedule. I was fortunate in having the opportunity of studying Shakespeare with Professors P. C. Ghosh and Humphry House, English composition with Professors Subodh Sen Gupta and Taraknath Sen, Logic with Professor M. N. Sarkar, Sanskrit with Professors Ashoknath Shastri and Gaurinath Shastri and Economics with Professor J. C. Sinha.

The Simla Convention 1914 : A Chinese Puzzle

Nirmal Chandra Sinha

I

Among the important events of 1914 is the Simla Convention dated the 3rd July 1914. Three parties participated in a conference in Simla which ended in a tripartite agreement in draft form in March-April 1914. The three parties were India, China and Tibet.

After the draft agreement was ready, disputes between China and Tibet cropped up on two points: (1) the borders between China and Tibet and (2) the degree and nature of Chinese suzerainty over the Dalai Lama's government. These disputes were not solved in protracted consultations through the summer months of 1914. The British and the Tibetan delegates even then wanted to sign and ratify the draft agreed previously. The Chinese delegate, Ivan Chen, refused to sign and wanted further authorization from Peking for signature. Ivan Chen walked out of the conference on 3rd July, 1914 and proceeded to Calcutta en route to

China. The British and Tibetan delegates signed the agreement and by further affirmative documents ratified the Convention as binding between the British Government in India and the Dalai Lama's Government in Tibet. Though the original draft for the agreement describing the three parties and detailing the rights and privileges of the three parties was retained, a declaration was added that China would not be entitled to any rights and privileges as a suzerain power in Tibet if she failed to sign or ratify the tripartite agreement.

The war of 1914 followed the Simla Convention in a matter of weeks and since Great Britain and China were on the same side as allies, neither Great Britain nor China made any positive declarations about China's rights and privileges outside the Simla Convention. China, however, informally questioned the validity of the Simla Convention, but never pressed the point for clarification. The same position was

continued later by KMT China. During the Second World War, China would more often refer to the provisions of the Simla Convention and put pressure on the Allies, particularly, Britain and America, for recognition of China's suzerainty over Tibet. The question of borders between India and Tibet was not pressed so much. The British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, was even persuaded to make a statement at the Pacific Council in Washington (May 1943) that "no one contests the Chinese suzerainty in Tibet". The British Foreign Office did not find this statement of the British P.M. to be wrong. But their subordinates in the Government of India, namely, the British officials in the Indian Civil Service, pointed out in secret communications to Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Minister, that China had no rights in Tibet unless China signed or otherwise accepted the provisions about Sino-Tibetan relations in the Simla Convention. In short, according to the British Officers in India, China could not have unqualified control over Tibet without any proper treaty or agreement between Tibet and China. This point of view could not be altogether rejected by the British Foreign Office and shortly afterwards (July 1943) Anthony Eden made a statement in answer to Chinese request for clarification, that the Chinese suzerainty in Tibet was conditional and in no case unlimited. At the end of the war, KMT China again raised this question and was given hearing in the Press outside China simply because China had been admitted into the club of the Four Great Powers which destroyed the three Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Japan). In 1947 March, an Asian Relations Conference was held in New Delhi. There were delegations from different Asian countries which included the Moslem republics of USSR and Tibet. In the conference hall was a big map of Asia which depicted Tibet as quite separate from China. The delegates from China protested against the presence of Tibetan delegates as a distinct group and the map of Asia

as on the wall of the conference room. The map had to be removed though the Tibetan delegates continued. Ever since that event, the Chinese point of view about Tibet and about the Simla Convention has been circulating wider and wider and when the People's Republic of China took over from the corrupt KMT regime, the former also took over all the antique claims of China about neighbouring countries. An important claim was based on the Chinese objection to the Simla Convention.

The Government of India did not care to assess the implications of Chinese claims, and, on the other hand, were too friendly towards China as a country which was the victim of Western imperialism as much as India. Thus in 1954 when India made a fresh treaty about trade and pilgrimage in Tibet, the Government of India, deliberately or carelessly, ignored the Simla Convention as "a relic of British imperialism". The Simla Convention and the documents attached to this agreement not only provided for trade and pilgrimage but also laid down the frontiers between India and Tibet in the east. This frontier is the so-called McMahon Line named after Sir Arthur Henry McMahon who was the chief delegate of the British government and was also the Chairman of the Tripartite Conference. Years later, when China disputed India's northern borders both in the east and in the west and when the Government of India referred to the eastern border as finally settled in the Simla Conference, China simply refused to acknowledge the validity or legality of the Simla Convention. China indirectly demanded to know why India had not referred to the Simla Convention or the McMahon Line in the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954.

II

The Simla Convention has been criticised on several grounds: (1) a tripartite agreement signed by two parties is invalid *ab initio*; (2) the Simla

Convention was not signed by the Tibetan delegate; (3) the Simla Convention was merely initialled by the British and Tibetan delegates; and (4) Tibet had no right to sign the agreement when China had walked out.

We now reply to these arguments one by one.

(1) A tripartite agreement signed by two parties is not necessarily invalid *ab initio*. If there is nothing repugnant or contradictory in the text of a tripartite agreement, such agreement is fully enforceable between two signatory parties so far as the liabilities and rights of the two parties are concerned. In the text of the Simla Convention the rights and liabilities of the two parties are very clearly stated: and the fact of third party having left the conference table could not and did not affect the position of the other two parties.

(2) The Simla Convention was signed by the Tibetan delegate even though the Chinese delegate advised the Tibetan delegate not to proceed further. The contention of the Tibetan delegate was that Tibet was represented at the Simla Conference on Tibet's own rights as a treaty-making state. Tibet did not come to the conference as a subordinate and subsidiary authority under the new Republic of China. Therefore Tibet had the right to sign or refuse to sign an agreement on Tibet's own jurisdiction. The full signature of Lonchen Shatra, the Tibetan delegate, is on the Simla Agreement for anybody's inspection even in 1974.

(3) It is true that the British plenipotentiary, Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, put his initials — A.H.M.—and desired that the Tibetan plenipotentiary should also put his initials in Tibetan. But since initialling is not only difficult but also impolite in Tibetan usage, the Tibetan plenipotentiary Lonchen Shatra put his full signature describing his lineage even. After the signature, the British delegate put a note: initial and added at the bottom "owing to it not being possible to write initials in Tibetan, the mark of

the Lonchen at this place is his signature". This was to ensure that the two signatories should follow one uniform practice. Why the British wanted initials in place of signature is a quite different matter which is discussed later. Here it is only noted that uniformity in the procedure of signature is very much obligatory in treaties and agreements between two or more countries.

Initials can very much be good substitute for signature if followed by the seal of the country concerned. And, in fact, in a rule regarding interpretation of conventions much later, the League of Nations had given its considered judgment that initials could be as much valid as full signatures in documents and treaties. [Geneva Convention on the Law of Treaties, Art.12(2)]

The British delegate was asking for the initials for the simple reason that the Chinese delegate was also asked to put his initials and to report to Peking for ratification. The Chinese delegate, Ivan Chen, was perhaps in the earlier stage inclined to adopt this procedure, but later with the opening of the month of July, he could smell sulphur in the atmosphere and he very much anticipated that the British would be involved in a war with Germany before the month was out and, therefore, the British who happened to be patrons of the Chinese Republic, would not much bother about this. However, it became an obsession later on with the Chinese authorities during the KMT period when they could not reestablish their suzerainty over Tibet. After World War II, pro-Chinese scholars in Britain took over this obsession with initials. A brilliant young scholar, Alastair Lamb, straightway rejected the authority of initials and conveniently ignoring the Geneva Convention on the Law of Treaties wrote a number of research papers on the Simla Convention and later on produced the famous book called **The McMahon Line** (1966). In this book as well as in his earlier papers, he consistently spelt "initialed" for "initialled". His first publications were from England and the spelling with single 'l' was undoubtedly most

unEnglish. Lamb insisted on spelling like this to condemn the whole affair of initialling. When his famous **McMahon Line** in two volumes came out from North America there was justification for this American spelling. Meanwhile, much mischief has been caused to the claims of both India and Tibet by this argument about initials. The argument, unfortunately, was followed by many scholars in Indian universities.

(4) Thus we come to the only positive argument against the Simla Convention that Tibet had no right to sign independent of China or in the absence of China. In fact, this is the only argument which has been officially advanced by the People's Republic of China. It is a mark of Chinese diplomacy that in their non-official publications as also in the writings of sponsored scholars, the legality of the signature is not much discussed. There is a heavy and noisy propaganda in the non-official and demiofficial writings that the treaty was not signed at all and that initials were not good enough to make these as strong as signatures. Some scholars, later on, had even made researches to prove that the Simla Convention being not properly signed and ratified between India and Tibet, was later on put into cold storage in the British Foreign Office and that a considerable section of opinion in the British Foreign Office considered the Simla Convention as dead and defunct. Interesting sidelights on this point can be found in Neville Maxwell's **India's China War** (1970).

In Chinese official statements, they admit that the Simla Convention was signed by the Tibetan delegate. But they reject the right of the Tibetan delegate to sign or ratify such an agreement without authority from Peking. The most important document is found in the Indian White Paper containing the **Report of the Officials of the Governments of India and the People's Republic of China on the Boundary Question** (New Delhi, 1961) and in the Chinese Red Paper containing **Report of the Officials of the Government of the People's Republic of China and the**

Government of India on the Boundary Question, (Peking n.d.—1962).

"Premier Chou En-lai and Chinese officials do not deny the fact that the then Tibet local representative signed the Simla Convention, but that they have always clearly pointed out at the same time that this is illegal and that Tibet has no right to conclude treaties separately." **Indian White Paper** page CR 26; **Chinese Red Paper**, page 30.]

III

In the 1930s when the Government of India was revising and bringing up to date the official publication known as **Aitchison's Treaties and Engagements**, during the first stage of compilation the Simla Convention was dropped. This was because the British Government in India, under informal instructions of the Home Government, i.e., the British Foreign Office, was out to pamper China and fondly expected China to come to the conference table and sign the Simla Convention. The Republic of China was facing systematic invasions from Japan and it was in the interests of British Power in Asia to prop up the weak and corrupt Republic. The British were even willing to let China come back to Tibet as the suzerain Power and this could be possible only if China signed the Simla Convention.

While waiting for China's ratification or signature was no doubt good diplomacy, the fact of the Simla Convention between India and Tibet could not be ignored without serious consequences. The two signatory parties, India and Tibet, were carrying on trade and pilgrimage under the terms of the Simla Convention; and if the agreement was defunct, all transactions between India and Tibet would be illegal. Besides, one solid gain out of the Simla conference, that is, the affirmation of the customary boundary between India and Tibet in the east, would be lost. Therefore, British officials in India,

particularly, Olaf Caroe and Hugh Richardson, advised strongly for the inclusion of the Simla Convention in the forthcoming edition of **Aitchison's Treaties**. The relevant volume had however been printed off. The print was called back and a fresh print made in which the Simla Convention and the connected documents were included. There was nothing secret in this matter. Besides British officials, Indian and Tibetan officials on either side knew about it.

In the 1960's the pro-Chinese scholars of Britain and India made much out of the fact of the cancelled print of **Aitchison's Treaties**: relevant volume. In 1969-70, Neville Maxwell raised a hue and cry over this affair which, in the words of Maxwell and his Indian friends, came to be described variously as "mysterious", "conspiratorial", "afterthought", "fraudulent", "fake" and even "spurious". Now the whole matter boils down to a tempest in a teapot when we remember that the People's Republic of China and that Prime Minister Chou En-lai, have officially, on several occasions, admitted not only the existence of the Simla Convention as a signed document but also that Tibet had signed the agreement. It is therefore, not necessary to argue further whether the Simla Convention was a "fraud", "fake" or "spurious".

When the new generation of British scholars, like Alastair Lamb and Neville Maxwell, speak about the imperialistic designs of British officials in Asia and name Olaf Caroe and Hugh Richardson as imperialists there is a touch of the British sense of justice in the researches of the new generation. The Indian scholars are easily misled to accept the researches and conclusions of Lamb or Maxwell as innocent protests. The Indian scholars are yet to realize that Lamb and Maxwell are also Britons and they may also have their interests in creating further

discord and disagreement between India and China.

The truth of the matter lies in the uncomfortable fact of Tibet's claims to independence. If Tibet could sign an agreement in July 1914, Tibet was no doubt an independent country on that day. The scholars as well as diplomats of the People's Republic of China very much want the agreement to be accepted as a document of history but a document with "illegal signature". It serves the cause of China as the suzerain Power if China's contention is admitted by India that Tibet signed the document without any authority or jurisdiction. Thus even if Sir Olaf Caroe from his retirement or the late Sir Arthur Henry McMahon from his grave would come to New Delhi or Peking and say that the Simla Convention was not a fact, the People's Republic of China will call it a fact of history. In short, if the Simla Convention is legal, it serves the cause of Tibet; if the Simla Convention is illegal, it serves the cause of China.

From this one can easily notice the great diplomatic blunder on the part of the Government of India, when in 1954 India surrendered all special rights and privileges in the Tibet Region of China without referring to the document under which the Republic of India was enjoying these special rights and privileges as the successor to the British empire in India. Indian scholars toeing the line of Lamb and Maxwell condone the crime by denying the historic fact of the Simla Convention. And our eastern Himalayan frontier called the McMahon Line are disputed by the new generation of British scholars professing to atone for the sins of their forbears; a profession which no doubt deeply influence the fellow travellers all over the former British Empire in the East.

The Pakistan Phenomenon

Sugata Bose

I

In the north-western region of the Indian sub-continent there exists today an ambiguous political entity called Pakistan. The creation of this theocratic state in 1947 was apparently the vindication of the claim that Muslims in India constituted a separate nation. Besides the common religion Islam and the fear of being swallowed up by a powerful, predominantly Hindu neighbour, Pakistan has no other unifying bond. The secession of its eastern wing has at least left the state one geographic whole, but has also greatly impaired the fundamental ideology on which the Pakistan concept rests. Even the inhabitants of this truncated Pakistan are of diverse ethnic origin and speak many different languages. Whether Muslim 'nationalism' with hardly any secure historical roots can override deep-rooted contradictions in the Pakistan body politic is an intriguing '?' of future political developments in the Indian sub-continent.

Muslim 'nationalism', as it manifested itself in the late nineteenth century, was in the form of Muslim antagonism to the other major community in India — the Hindus. No less a person than Gandhi asserted that the conflict between Hindus and Muslims was "coeval with the British advent" in India. The nationalists put forward the sweeping claim that the Hindu-Muslim rift was not merely exploited, but, in fact, created by British imperialism to serve its own ends. This view is difficult to accept. The theme of inherent Hindu-Muslim antipathy, dotted with occasional outbursts of open hostility, runs through the six relevant centuries of Muslim rule in India. Unfortunately, however, it is some-

times taken for granted, without any attempt being made to analyse the roots of this antipathy, that the two religious communities must be at daggers' ends. It is only in the background of the existing Hindu-Muslim antipathy that the Muslim separatist tendency under British rule and its culmination in the emergence of a theocratic state, can be properly understood. It will be my purpose and endeavour to search for a plausible cause of the antagonism between Hindus and Muslims, which has often reached heights of irrational frenzy in recent years, to give an analytical historical outline of the movement for Pakistan, and finally, to speculate on the future of Islamic theocracy in the Indian sub-continent.

II

The contrariness of their respective religious doctrines could not be the real cause of the difference between Hindus and Muslims. That the roots of this antipathy lie in Hinduism representing polytheism and Islam monotheism is an over-simplified and fallacious view. A believer in one almighty God, a worshipper of thirty-three crores of gods, and even a person without any religious belief at all, may be accepted within the fold of the Hindu community. Hinduism is not a religion in the usual sense of the term but is more of a social philosophy. A conquered people, it has also been suggested, feels a natural resentment towards the conqueror. Since 712 A.D. the armies of Islam inflicted a series of catastrophic defeats on the Hindus, until in the thirteenth century the Muslim warlords founded a theocratic state in India with Delhi as capital. The sense of shame associated with

military defeat cannot adequately explain the deep and lasting antipathy which was engendered in the Hindu mind against the Muslims. Innumerable foreign invaders had come to India earlier and all of them had been assimilated into the Indian society. Why were the Muslims the first exception? The answer to this question may be found in the contrary social systems of the Hindu and Muslim communities.

The basic principle of Hindu social philosophy is inequality. The Hindus recognized a biological fact that men were not born equal, and logically therefore, they could not enjoy equal status in society. Hindu society was systematically divided into castes and sub-castes. The original basis of this division was 'Varna' or the colour complex of the fair-skinned Aryan conquerors. The classification into four castes had an occupational character (as in the Gita

“চাতুৰ্ভণ্যং যন্না সৃষ্টং গুণকৰ্মবিভাগশঃ”);

the Brahmanas formed the sacerdotal class, the Kshatriyas were the warriors, the Vaishyas the merchants and the Sudras the common labourers. The off-springs of intercaste marriages became members of various sub-castes and each sub-caste was assigned a specific occupation. The Brahmanas, i.e. the priests, supposed to be having divine communications, were, as in many other ancient societies, most privileged in Hindu society. The position of the Sudras, traditionally believed to have sprung from the feet of the 'Purusha', was deplorable. A quite plausible justification of this social inequality was found in the eschatological doctrine of 'Karmavada' and cycle of births. A person's present rank or status was determined by his deeds in a previous birth. It was best to conform to the social milieu and hope to be born into a higher caste next time. The first revolution against Brahmana domination in a caste-ridden society occurred with the rise of Buddhism in the sixth century B.C., but, in the long run, it failed. The Brahmana vested interests had re-asserted themselves by the fourth

century. Inequality continued to be the fundamental base of Hindu society.

The social philosophy of equality of men inculcated by Islam was the complete antithesis of that of the Hindus. Islam was proclaimed by its flag bearers to be a brotherhood open to all mankind and it was essentially a proselytizing force. The Hindu intellectual elite found the alien social philosophy striking at the very root of their existence. Attracted by the greater social mobility within the Muslim community, the downtrodden, lower-caste Hindus were converted in large numbers. Hinduism, however, developed an astonishing resilience to Muslim onslaughts by devising an ingenious tactic. The cream of the Hindu community withdrew into a shell—adopted what was called "Kamathabritti", the habit of a tortoise,—as one Nrisinghacharya asked the Hindus to do at a Kumbhamela about the 12th or 13th century. Interestingly, in the process of wholesale Islamicization of the entire belt from North-West Africa to South-East Asia, India stood out as the sole exception. The Hindus isolated themselves to such an extent that if one studies only the Sanskrit books or Hindu Dharmashastras of the period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, one will not even come to know that such a community as the Muslim existed in India at the time! The rift of the Hindus with the indigenous Muslim population was aggravated, when men of the soil adopted exotic names and customs. The divergence between the Hindus and Muslims was most visible in their social life—in eating, marriage, inheritance and even in dress. The fact that Muslims wore their buttons on the left side, and Hindus on the right, is a symptom of their contrariness! Although some form of combined Hindu-Muslim culture existed under the enlightened Mughal emperors and Hindus took administrative office under their Muslim masters, in all social matters they remained total aliens. Like oil and water, the Hindu and the Muslim would not mix. The two socio-

religious systems functioned tolerantly alongside each other over long periods, but in mutually exclusive compartments. This unique cleavage was noticeable till the end of Muslim rule in India.

III

When the British seized sovereignty in India in the latter half of the eighteenth century, it was the Muslims' turn to withdraw into a shell. The Muslims were very conscious of the fact that not long ago they had been the rulers of India. A somewhat superstitious belief that deviation from the true path of Islam had caused their downfall only deepened their dogmatism (e.g. the Wahabi movement). Not only had British rule made its first impact on Hindu majority areas, Cornwallis's policy in the 1780's also indirectly helped the Hindus to take a lead economically. When Bentinck promulgated the new educational policy in 1835, the Hindus took to the learning of English with great enthusiasm. The Muslims sulked and kept aloof from all kinds of European influence and were soon supplanted by Hindus in most administrative and judicial offices. Sir Percival Griffiths points out, "From having monopolised the posts of pleaders of the High Court even as late as 1851, out of 240 natives admitted between 1852 and 1869, there was only one Muslim." Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the remarkable personality who arrested the degeneration of the whole Muslim community in the 1870's. But the Muslims were already lagging behind the Hindus in political consciousness and economic development by a simple time-gap of nearly half-a-century.

Towards the close of the nineteenth century, there emerged a strange unity of interests between the British and the Muslims. A few outstanding books written during this period by Syed Ahmad, Ameer Ali and Altaf Hussain Hali, all from a modernist standpoint, made the Indian Muslims

aware of a separate identity and a future full of hope if only they discarded their ignorance and acted unitedly. The British rulers, who had taken unnecessarily harsh reprisals against the Muslim community after the 1857 Revolt, now felt that the Hindus were becoming too dominant. Their policy consisted in cautious acceptance of persistent Hindu demands and playing up to Muslim interests, including full support to Syed Ahmad's attempts at Muslim revival. The Hindu-Muslim antipathy, which was rooted in differences of social philosophy in mediaeval times took the form of political competition and conflict when the British placed prospects of representative government on the counter. The Hindu leaders of the Indian National Congress were optimistic about the introduction of western parliamentary institutions in India. Syed Ahmad, however, sounded a note of warning: "The system of election, pure and simple, cannot be safely adopted; the larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller." During the 1887 controversy he speculated on the event of the English leaving India: "Is it possible that two nations—the Mohammedan and Hindu—could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not." As Keith Callard remarks, this question may have been mainly academic at the time of its posing, but it contained within it the seeds of Pakistan.

After representative institutions became a settled fact in Indian political life, the Aga Khan led a Muslim deputation to Lord Minto in October 1906, demanding separate electorates at all levels of government for Muslims. The same year the Muslim League was founded to protect Muslim interests. Separate electorates as well as weightage in representation for Muslims were granted statutory recognition in the Indian Councils Act of 1909 by the British as a matter of policy. True to the character of imperialists, the British tried through separate electorates to drive a wedge between the Hindus and Muslims and

divide the nationalist movement. As for the Muslim League leadership, it was composed of, firstly, the land owners of Delhi, Punjab and other areas of northern India, and secondly, the lawyer class. It is interesting to note that the alliance of the British civil servants was with the Muslim landed gentry and not with the lawyers. The Minto-Morley papers reveal that the British were apprehensive of a 'Vakilraj' where the educated middle class of both communities, bred in the tradition of western liberal and nationalist ideals, might unite in taking an anti-British stance.

The much feared alliance between the educated middle classes of the Hindus and the Muslims was struck in the Lucknow Pact (1916), by which the Congress conceded separate electorates to the Muslims. In the wake of World War I, a wonderful opportunity came to build up Hindu-Muslim unity at the grass-roots level by linking the issues of the Punjab atrocities and the Khilafat problem of Turkey in a mass movement. During the early 20's, the All India Khilafat Committee led by the Ali brothers and the Indian National Congress put the communal Muslim League organization completely into the shade. The Khilafat movement, however, could not retain its original anti-British character, and with the Moplah rebellion in the Malabar, took a violently anti-Hindu turn. Gandhi abruptly called off the nationwide movement for reasons of the conscience and finally, the astonishing secular renaissance in Turkey left the Indian Khilafatists embarrassed. The Khilafat agitation was the first, but not quite the last political movement in which Hindus and Muslims played a joint role on a mass scale. It was during the Second World War, that Hindus and Muslims cast off all differences and lived, dined and fought together in a genuine, revolutionary movement, namely, Netaji's Indian National Army. The I.N.A. ideal was perhaps the only deterrent to the Pakistan idea in 1945, but in the absence

of its great leader it could not be exploited effectively enough.

With the collapse of the Khilafat movement, Hindu-Muslim relations took a turn for the worse. Khalid B. Sayeed aptly comments, "Progressive realization of responsible government turned out to be progressive aggravation of the Hindu-Muslim conflict." Between 1922 and 1937, the Muslims' concern about self-government shifted from the provincial legislatures to the Centre. Two important steps towards the creation of Pakistan also deserve mention. At the Allahabad session of the Muslim League in 1930, the poet Sir Muhammad Iqbal in his Presidential address described the Muslims of India as a nation and outlined the Pakistan concept: "I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-west Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of North-West India." In 1933, a Punjabi student of Cambridge called Choudhury Rahmat Ali coined the name Pakistan, formed from the initials of the component units—P for the Punjab, A for Afghan provinces, K for Kashmir, S for Sind and TAN for Baluchistan, and etymologically the word meant 'the land of the pure'. The idea was to form a Muslim state independent of the rest of India and allied to the Islamic states of the Middle East. The League, however, at that time considered the plan to be 'chimerical and impracticable' and denied that it was the work of any responsible Muslim.

The sweeping victories of the Congress and the Muslim League's dismal showing in the 1937 provincial elections alarmed Jinnah. In U.P., the League had campaigned jointly with the Congress and expected to be taken into the provincial cabinet. The Congress leadership, however, took a hard line and asked the U.P. Leaguers to become members of the Congress.

if they wished to join the ministry. The President of the Congress for that year was Jawaharlal Nehru, a man with Fabian socialist ideals. He denounced the Muslim League as dominated by reactionary, landowning classes and launched a 'mass contact' campaign with the Muslim poor in U.P. Criticizing Jinnah's inflexibility and defending Nehru, B. R. Nanda writes, "Some critics have suggested that Nehru was on occasions too theoretical, too proud and impatient to deal with Jinnah successfully. It is well to remember that the patience and humility of Gandhi, the cool calculation of Rajagopalachari, the militant radicalism of Subhas Chandra Bose, the sedate realism of Abul Kalam Azad and the gentleness of Rajendra Prasad equally failed to work on the League leader." In Bengal, the Congress decision to form only one-party cabinets proved to be a tactical blunder in a different way. The Congress High Command refused to allow their provincial committee to make a coalition with the Fazlul Huq-led Krishak Praja Party. Thus, the political field was left open to the Muslim League in a state where the Muslim tenants could easily be instigated against the tyrannizing Hindu zamindars. The Pirpur Report (1938) contains the Muslim League's charges against the Congress governments of having flouted Muslim opinion and interfered with their religious and social life. The allegations were probably "absolutely unfounded" as the Congress asserted, since the League did not accept the Congress offer to have them investigated by the Chief Justice of the Federal Court. But the point is that a large number of Muslims were taken in by the propaganda. When, on December 22 1939, the Congress governments resigned, the Muslim League celebrated 'a day of deliverance'.

In March, 1940, at Lahore, the Muslim League resolved: "The areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent states." It is doubtful whether the Muslim League was really serious

about the demand for a separate state organization, as the Quaid-i-Azam is on record saying that he never expected to see Pakistan in his lifetime. But the so-called 'Pakistan Resolution' was henceforth treated as a bargaining counter by Jinnah in his dialogues with the Congress. The Cripps Mission Plan (1942), the Wavell Plan (1945) and the Cabinet Mission Plan (1946) failed to provide a solution acceptable to both parties, particularly to the adamant Jinnah. In March 1947, there occurred a change of viceroys. The partition of India was obviously necessary for British Imperialism in order to neutralize the transfer of power. Lord Mountbatten's bustling tactics were successful in carrying the Congress leaders off their feet. While the Muslim League lay low, the Congress hurriedly accepted partition. Vallabh Patel stated that it was impossible to work with the Muslim League. Jawaharlal Nehru believed that partition was wrong by nature, but found no other alternative. In an interview with Taya Zinkin he explained. "We were old and tired." Gandhi had declared. "If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body." But, according to Azad, after having a series of talks with Mountbatten even he no longer spoke vehemently against partition. The Sarat Bose-Suhrawardy Plan for a United Independent Bengal, a final attempt to save Bengal from partition on a religious basis, was agreed to by Jinnah and Gandhi. But, the scheme was turned down by the Congress High Command, and Gandhi said in one of his speeches that he "had been taken to task for supporting Sarat Babu's move". Between 3 June and 14 August, the technicalities of Pakistan were worked out more or less on the lines of the partition formula drawn up in 1944 by Rajagopalachari, a consistent champion of reactionary causes. Pakistan emerged on the world map soaked in blood. The partition of 1947 had left about 500,000 persons dead and 14,000,000 homeless.

IV

Pakistan lingers on as something of an enigma in the modern, twentieth century world. It was established as a theocratic state to embody an Islamic ideology. Western apologists of Pakistan would have it that this was not the puritanic form of the Prophet's Islam, but a modern re-interpretation. As Callard remarks, "The background of the men who organized the campaign (for Pakistan) was not theology and Islamic law, but politics and the common law; not Deoband, but Cambridge and the Inns-of-Court." Syed Ahmad, Ameer Ali, Iqbal and Jinnah were all unorthodox men, not at all over-scrupulous about religious observances. There was also a group of Muslim socialists who, in 1945-46, put more stress on economic planning, land reforms and equitable distribution of wealth than on the issue of an Islamic state.

The Pakistan-concept, throughout its evolution, may have been modernist in leadership, but certainly not in spirit. Pakistan was born with the stamp of theocracy. While other Muslim countries, such as the Arab countries of the Middle East or Indonesia, can take Islam for granted, Pakistanis find it necessary to invoke the name of Islam to emphasise their national identity vis-a-vis India. In fact, the Constitution of 1956 described Pakistan as an 'Islamic Republic'. Even Ian Stephens, a clearly pro-Pakistani writer, makes a fine distinction between Islam being the State religion in many predominantly Muslim countries and the theological implications of dubbing the country 'Islamic'.

Pakistan is, of course, not unique as a state embodying a theory or a doctrine. Two prominent twentieth-century examples of ideological states are the Soviet Union and Israel. Only ten months after the Pakistan-concept was given a concrete form, Zionism became the ideological basis of a small, independent state in the Middle East. But in contrast with Islam, Zionism is inspired, in addition to a religious

and cultural spirit, by an identity of race. A predominant feature of this modern age is the withering away of religion. In a world where traditional religion has ceased to have any influence on state organization, the theocratic state of Pakistan is an anachronism.

Islam in the Indian subcontinent is today in a peculiar state, Islam in Pakistan, in spite of its latent aggressive nature, is not a proselytizing force, but rather on the defensive. With or without basis, Pakistan considers itself under constant threat from India. Among the Muslim community in India, there is a small progressive section which is in the mainstream of national life. But, a large number of Muslims in independent India live in isolation, as in the early years of British rule in the country. The fact that nearly 15,000 delegates attended the conference of a purely communal organization—the Jamaat-e-Islamia Hind—held at New Delhi in November 1974, shows that Indian Muslims have not become reconciled to the secularism of the Indian state. A move to modernize Muslim personal law by legislation was dropped, even though the Indian Parliament legislates for Hindus, Sikhs and Christians, as Muslim M.P.s felt it would be misunderstood as Hindu interference in Muslim social and cultural life. Communal riots, though less frequent nowadays, still occur in India. It is a pity that even enlightened sections of both the Hindu and Muslim communities have in the past appealed to the superstitious instincts of the masses for political purposes. No rational basis for Hindu-Muslim disharmony exists today. Only when enlightened and forward-looking Hindus resolutely combat Hindu communalism and like-minded Muslims combat Muslim communalism will the gulf between Hindus and Muslims be bridged.

In any case, the myth of the viability of a separate state based purely on religion has already been exploded by the Bangladesh independence movement. The "independent foreign policy" (Bhutto) of Pakistan, so eminently suc-

cessful in relation to the big powers like America and China has failed to develop any cordiality with important Muslim countries like the U.A.R. The Islamic bond also proved to be of no avail in Pakistan's difference with Afghanistan over the Pakhtunistan issue. Ian Stephens believes that in the modern ideological states including Pakistan, nationalism is proving stronger than doctrine. For instance, under the practical Stalinist and Krushchev regimes in the U.S.S.R., old-style patriotic sentiment has been allowed to

revive in place of Marxist-Leninist dogma. But, Pakistan is a unique phenomenon. In Pakistan, 'nationalism' and 'doctrine' are quite synonymous, Pakistani nationalism means essentially a belief in a separate Muslim identity. Theocratic states are completely out of tune with the times, and hence, Pakistan cannot survive. Of course, the Hindu-Muslim 'problem' persists in the Indian subcontinent awaiting a lasting solution, but given the will and determination, the challenge can be met.

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The Statistics of Birth

Atindra Mohan Goon

The book of Genesis in the Old Testament gives an account of the way the earth was created and also tells us how various forms of life appeared on earth. The modern man, however, places greater trust in what is told him by the sciences. There are the "big-bang theory" and the "solid-state theory" to explain, albeit quite differently, the mode of creation of the universe. And for an account of the origin of life in its various forms, he has Darwin's theory of evolution to go by. The biologist tells him of the process of reproduction—of the fertilization—of an egg cell by a sperm cell, and of the way the fertilized egg cell divides into two and each of these into two and so on, until there are formed the millions and millions of cells that make up the body of a new living being. But much of the process of birth still remains a mystery, and the modern man looks upon it with almost as much wonder as did his forbears. The birth of a human being especially has been always regarded as a great gift of Nature. Hence the rituals that precede and follow a birth in every society. To the mother, the whole process of conception, with its pleasure and pain, with a period of anxious waiting followed generally by one of unalloyed delight, is a thrilling experience. Even the obstetrician gets a thrill out of delivering a baby: to him "it is a gorgeous, glorious things".

In this essay, however, we are not going to be concerned with the biological processes involved in the birth of a human being, nor with the thrill that the parents or the attending physician may get out of it. Our subject-matter will instead be the statistics of birth. Almost every country in our time maintain such statistics in

the form of birth registers, where each birth occurring in the community is supposed to be recorded, together with the names of the parents, their ages, occupations, place of dwelling, levels of education and so on. Certain types of birth data are also obtainable from hospital records, periodic population censuses and occasional sample surveys. To planners and demographers birth statistics are indispensable tools; but they may convey interesting information even to laymen. In this essay we place before the reader the salient features of the world's statistics of birth.

Live birth and foetal death

Not all products of conception are born alive. Every manufacturing process has to allow for the rejection of defective items. So does Nature provide for the rejection of defectives in the great manufacturing process that is reproduction.

A product of conception that shows some evidence of life (e.g. breathing, beating of the heart, pulsation of the umbilical cord, etc.) after separation from its mother is called a live birth, while one that shows no sign of life after separation is called a foetal death. Again, a product of conception that gets separated from its mother within 28 weeks of gestation is regarded as an early foetal death (also called a miscarriage or abortion). On the other hand, a product that gets separated after 28 weeks of gestation and shows no sign of life on such separation is called a late foetal death or a still birth (and the baby is then said to be still-born). Thus the element that distinguishes still births from early foetal deaths is the criterion of viability, which has to do with the ability of a foetus to be born

alive but not necessarily to survive.

To give an idea of the rate of rejection in the reproductive processes, we may cite the example of Japan, for which the **late foetal death ratios** for the year 1963 are given in Table 1, according

to age of mother and also according to birth order. Such a ratio represents the number of late foetal deaths during the period per 1,000 live births in the same ages and birth-order group.

Table 1: Late foetal death ratios specific for age of mother and birth order for Japan, 1963

Age of mother	Birth order									
	All orders	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th 10th +
All ages	27.0	28.8	19.8	28.6	45.3	61.3	63.3	73.6	79.6	69.4 84.8
— 19	53.3	51.0	68.4	339.6	1000.0	—	—	—	—	—
20 — 24	26.9	26.0	27.0	48.7	87.7	173.1	76.9	500.0	—	—
25 — 29	23.8	27.9	17.3	27.0	46.5	61.8	84.6	104.8	233.3	—
30 — 34	28.4	38.1	19.2	25.7	40.4	55.2	59.9	66.1	99.4	87.4 162.8
35 — 39	43.3	45.7	30.8	36.1	49.4	61.4	53.6	69.4	64.0	54.1 94.3
40 — 44	73.7	69.6	51.8	68.4	63.2	93.5	82.8	82.2	86.9	88.2 72.4
45 —	122.5	111.1	114.8	155.6	160.0	75.8	223.0	145.2	108.7	25.0 74.1

The table illustrates certain points that would be valid for most countries of the world. First, as a rule, the proportion of still births rises with the age of mother, except for mothers below 20. Indeed, it may be said that the younger the mother, the more likely is she to give birth to a normal, healthy baby. But then she should not be below 20, for in that case too there is a high probability for the child to be still-born. Second, the proportion of (late) foetal deaths generally rises with the birth order, and it may be said that, in general, the lower the birth order the more likely is it that the product will be live-born.

One argument that is advanced by advocates of family planning is that children born to aged parents or those of a high order tend to be of poor constitution. The above figures would seem to support this contention.

A rough indication of the efficiency of the reproductive process for Japan may be had by noting that in 1963 there occurred about 27 late foetal deaths for every 1,000 live births in the country. A fuller picture would be found if the figures for early foetal deaths were also available.

Generally in demographic studies of fertility,

live births alone are taken into account. This is because few countries maintain statistics of foetal deaths, and also because it is a live birth alone among products of conception that represents a genuine addition to the existing population.

Multiple births

A distinction has to be made between the number of mothers confined during a period referred to as the number of maternities, and the number of births (both live and still births) during the period. This is in view of the occurrence of twins, triplets and higher orders of multiple births. Table 2 gives figures relating to different types of multiple births for a number of countries.

Table 2: Frequencies of twins and other maternities per 10,000 maternities in some countries.

Country and year	Type of Maternity		
	Single	Twins	Others
South Africa			
Asiatic population, 1961	9801	196	3
Coloured „ „ 1962	9838	160	2
White „ „ 1962	9807	187	6
Japan, 1963	9893	106	1

Country and year	Single	Twins	Others
Australia, 1963	9782	215	3
Chile, 1962	9786	212	2
United States, 1964	9801	196	3
Sweden, 1964	9809	189	2
United Kingdom			
England & Wales, 1963	9774	223	3
North Ireland, 1962	9753	246	1
Scotland, 1961	9760	235	5

The table points to possible racial differences in the proportion of multiple births. For the proportion of such births is lowest for Japan and is highest for the United States, the value for the coloured population of Africa lying midway between the two.

Sex-ratio at birth

It is generally supposed that in big communities male births and female births occur in equal proportions. In other words, one would take the probability for a new born being male, as well as that for a newborn being female, to be $1/2$. However, the statistics of birth are found to indicate otherwise.

The point is well illustrated by Table 3, which gives the figures for the sex-ratio at birth, here defined as the number of male births per 100 female births, for a number of countries.

Table 3: Sex-ratio at birth for some countries in 1963 and 1964.

Country	Sex-ratio at birth		Country	Sex-ratio at birth	
	in 1963	in 1964		in 1963	in 1964
Mauritius	103	103	United States	105	105
Mozambique	105	108	India	111	112
Barbados	106	105	Japan	106	106
Canada	105	106	Sweden	107	106
Guatemala	105	—	England & Wales	106	106
Mexico	106	—	Ireland	108	105
Puerto Rico	106	105	Scotland	105	107
Argentina	104	104	Yugoslavia	106	106

Indeed, for every country included here, male births are seen to have occurred in a higher proportion of cases than female births. The same is found to be true for other countries and other years as well. In other words, the probability for a newborn being male (female) is to be considered slightly higher (lower) than $1/2$ in every community. In the case of the USA, for instance, the probabilities for being male and for being female may be supposed to be about $105/205$, and $100/205$, or 0.51 and 0.49 , respectively. We may look at the situation from a different angle. If one assumes that in deciding upon the sex of a new member of our species, God (or, if one likes, Nature) makes a random experiment involving the toss of a coin, taking head for a male birth and tail for a female, then this coin must be slightly biased in favour of head. As the above table shows, the bias must be rather small in the case of Mauritius but quite high in the case of India. (Actually, however, the very high sex-ratio figures for India are likely to be due to a greater degree of under-registration of female births, as compared to male births. This, again, may be explained by the fact that most Indian parents dislike having daughters, so that they would be reluctant to publicize, and to report to the registration authorities, the birth of a female child.)

Marked seasonal variation

Again, one may think that there is no reason why Nature should favour some parts of the year, compared to any other part of equal length, with a higher number of births. Hence in considering the birthday of a person, one would suppose that the probability that the birthday falls in any given month is about $1/12$. However, birth data would seem to belie this assumption.

We present in Table 4 the birth figures by month for the Union territory of Delhi for the years 1961 and 1962. It will be seen that in each year the months from July to December had a greater quota of births than did the other

months. While the number of births in one of the later months of a year is likely to be higher than that in one of the earlier months, because of population growth and the resulting rise in the number of females of reproductive age, the observed increase cannot be explained solely by this phenomenon. When the birth figures for the two years are considered together, a definite seasonal variation is noticed.

Table 4: Live births by month in Delhi during 1961 and 1962.

Month	1961		1962	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
January	5,113	6.5	6,902	8.0
February	5,096	6.5	5,078	5.9
March	4,839	6.1	5,398	6.3
April	4,014	5.1	5,136	6.0
May	4,334	5.5	5,315	6.2
June	4,710	6.0	5,248	6.1
July	6,085	7.7	7,171	8.3
August	8,924	11.3	9,178	10.7
September	10,483	13.3	9,121	10.6
October	8,632	10.9	9,897	11.5
November	8,503	10.8	9,040	10.5
December	8,087	10.3	8,568	9.9

For lower animals there are specific mating and breeding seasons. While this is not exactly the case with *Homo sapiens*, a vestige of the same animal instinct, in the process of evolution, stays on. For *Homo sapiens* seem to have a marked preference for the months from July to December in the matter of breeding. And if we remember that for the species the normal period of gestation is about 40 weeks, it would become clear why poetry and fiction of a bygone era associated the months of spring with love

and all that. But the months of winter should have had the same distinction.

Legitimate and illegitimate births

In demographic studies concerning fertility, i.e. the actual reproductive performance as evidenced by the number of offspring, we have to relate the total number of children born during a calendar period to the total number of women in the reproductive period of life (generally taken to comprise the years of age 15 to 49 last birthday). But for this it is proper to classify the births as legitimate and illegitimate and to relate the former to the number of married women of reproductive age and the latter to the number of the unmarried and the widowed of the same age-group. Since in countries like India, births of the second type are very rare and so of little statistical importance, we may feel inclined to ignore them altogether and consider only legitimate births and married women. However, standards of morality differ from country to country, and, as Table 5 indicates, in some communities the proportion of illegitimate births may be very high indeed.

Table 5 : Percentage of illegitimate births for some countries in 1963

Country	Percentage	Country	Percentage
Mauritius	0.6	Denmark	8.9
Mozambique	30.5	France	5.9
Barbados	63.8	East Germany	9.1
Canada	5.3	West Germany	5.1
United States	6.3	Iceland	27.3
Argentina	24.9	Italy	2.2
Guatemala	67.9	Norway	3.9

Country	Percentage	Country	Percentage
Mexico	24.9	Sweden	12.6
Japan	1.1	England &	
Philippines	1.6	Wales	6.9
Australia	5.7	North Ireland	2.6
New Zealand	8.8	Scotland	5.2
Austria	11.6	Finland	4.2

We may say that the percentages are very small for Asian countries, of moderate magnitude for most countries of Europe, Oceania and North America, and very high for the countries of Africa and Latin America as well as for Austria, Sweden and Iceland.

Clearly, for the countries of the third group, illegitimate births cannot be ignored; and since in demographic studies comparability of measures is important they are taken into account, together with legitimate births, in the case of all countries.

Declining birth rate

The number of births occurring in a community during a given period will be of interest to the Government for purposes of planning; but taken alone, this will be of no interest to a demographer. He will rather be concerned with the prevailing level of fertility, and will like to know as well at least the total size of the population during the period. For the simplest (although not a very satisfactory) measure of fertility is the (crude) birth rate, which represents the number of (live) births per 1,000 persons in the community during the given period.

A rough idea about the trend of fertility may be had from Table 6, where we give the birth rates for certain countries of the world as observed in different parts of this century.

Table 6: Crude birth rates for certain countries of the world for 1920-24, 1940-44, 1950, 1960 and 1964.

Country	Period				
	1920-24	1940-44	1950	1960	1964
Mauritius	.. 37.3	34.0	49.7	38.5	37.9
Guatemala	.. 62.6	47.2	50.9	48.9	44.4
Canada	.. 28.1	23.2	27.1	26.7	23.5
United States	.. 22.8	19.9	23.5	23.7	21.0
Japan	.. 35.0	30.1	28.2	17.2	17.7
India	.. 46.4	45.0	42.0	38.9	38.4
Sweden	.. 20.3	17.7	16.5	13.7	16.0
United Kingdom	.. 21.7	15.9	16.3	17.5	18.8
USSR	.. —	31.4	26.7	24.9	19.6

Each of the countries in the table is showing, by and large, a declining trend of birth rate. (Indeed, this has been the general experience for other countries, too.) Secondly, the table illustrates the fact that for some countries the curves of birth rate have been consistently at a higher level than those for some others. In the first group would be the economically backward countries, including most countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The second group would comprise the economically prosperous nations—those of Europe, North America and Oceania, and also Japan.

Fertility and age of mother

The crude birth rate is avowedly a crude measure of fertility, taking as it does all members of the community, irrespective of sex and age, to be contributing to the fertility performance of the community. A clearer picture emerges if, in the first place, males are excluded altogether from the number exposed to the risk of child-birth (i.e. from the denominator of the rate) and, in the second, the variation of fertility with age of females is studied by determining separate measures of fertility for

successive age-groups in the reproductive period of life of females. The **Demographic Year Book** gives such improved rates of fertility, called the **age-specific fertility rates**, and each defined as

$$\text{number of live births to women, in age-group}$$

$$1,000 \times \frac{\text{total number of women in age-group}}{\text{for the following broad divisions of the female reproductive age-range: 15-19, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44 and 45-49.}}$$

Consider then the following table based on data supplied by the **Year Book**, which gives us a good idea about the way fertility varies with age of mother. Of course, it would be still better to have one set of rates for legitimate births where the number of married women in an age-group would form the denominator of a rate, and another set of rates for illegitimate births, the number of unmarried, divorced or widowed females in an age-group now forming the denominator of a rate. However, very few countries maintain statistics on the marital status of women, so that in most cases we have to do with just one set of rates, like that in Table 7.

Table 7: Variation of fertility according to age of mother for some countries of the world.

Country and year	Age of mother						
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
South Africa, 1961							
coloured population	.. 54.2	331.3	307.2	239.6	177.9	81.9	21.3
white population	.. 21.2	220.3	213.7	123.1	63.5	20.1	2.0
Argentina, 1961	.. 26.7	149.6	146.6	111.5	69.5	24.3	5.4
Japan, 1963	.. 1.8	98.1	191.0	80.8	18.7	3.5	0.2
England & Wales, 1964	.. 22.4	179.5	185.1	107.1	50.0	13.1	0.8
Sweden, 1963	.. 22.4	136.1	149.5	87.2	39.2	10.7	0.8

For any country, we may draw a curve on graph paper with rectangular axes of co-ordinates, the horizontal axis being taken for the age of mother and the vertical for the corresponding age-specific fertility rate. This curve, called the fertility curve of this country, will have certain special features that are indicated by the above table. For one thing, the curve will be highly asymmetrical; for another, it will have a single maximum. Female fertility starts from a very low level around the age 15 l.b.d., then rises sharply and attains a maximum somewhere in the age-group 20-29 l.b.d. Thereafter it declines gradually and falls off to zero around the age 49 l.b.d. As such, the fertility curve will have a longer tail towards the later part of the reproductive age-range than towards the earlier. The pattern will be about the same for all countries; but the curve for an economically backward country will generally remain higher, and will have its peak at a lower age of mothers, than the curve for a prosperous one. Moreover for the same country, the curve for a more recent calendar period will generally be found to lie below that for a more remote period in the past.

Fertility and age of father

Age-specific fertility rates may also be computed according to the age of father. Such

rates are available for some countries, such as the USA, each of the rates being based on the total male population, married and unmarried, of the relevant age-group. In this case the fertility rate remains practically zero till the age of 20 years l.b.d., then rises sharply to reach a maximum between age 25 and 29 years l.b.d. Thereafter the rate tapers off gradually, with a non-zero value even at age 55 and over. There is thus a marked contrast between the behaviour of the female age-specific fertility rate and that of the male rate. For females the peak rate comes about five years earlier, between age 20 and age 24. Thereafter, the female rate falls below that for males and nearly reach the zero level at ages 45 to 49 years.

Fertility for urban and rural populations

Differential fertility, i.e. the way fertility varies from the urban population to the rural, from one occupation group to another, from one socio-economic group to another, or with the level of education of the parents, makes an interesting subject of study.

In the course of an investigation of the variation of fertility from the urban population to the rural, the number of children under 5 years of age during a 5-year period was noted together with the number of males and the num-

ber of females. For each of a number of age-groups of parents, the number of children under 5 per 1,000 males in the age-group and also the number of such children per 1,000 females in the age-group were then worked out. The detailed findings are shown in Table 8. The figures relate to a particular country, viz., the USA, and also to a period that may not be regarded as recent. Yet the general pattern may be supposed to be the same in all countries and also to be somewhat the same even for recent times.

Table 8. Urban and rural fertility in USA, 1947-1952 (number of children under 5 years per 1,000 population by sex)*

Age-group (years)	Urban	Rural non-farm	Rural farm
Per 1,000 males			
20-29	910	1,178	1,214
30-34	843	973	1,089
35-44	415	505	673
45-59	71	130	194

*Data relate to males or females married with spouses present.

Age-group (years)	Urban	Rural non-farm	Rural farm
Per 1,000 females			
15-24	857	1,089	1,190
25-29	961	1,157	1,164
30-39	523	611	784
40-49	103	136	238

It is seen from this table that the urban population is subject to a markedly lower level of fertility than the rural. As to the rural population itself, the non-farm sector is seen to be liable to a lower level of fertility than the farm sector.

Table 9, that gives figure for a number of countries and for more recent periods, though in a less elaborate form, tells a similar tale. The rate of fertility considered here is given by 1,000 times the ratio of the total number of live births to the total female population in the child-bearing ages and is called the **general fertility rate**. Here too, a higher level of fertility is indicated for the rural population than for the urban in the case of all countries, with the sole exception of Sweden. The difference between the two, however, varies a great deal: while the difference is only slight for UK or Japan, it may be very large for a country like Austria or Israel.

Table 9: Urban and rural fertility in a number of countries (general fertility rates).

Country and year	Urban	Rural	Country and year	Urban	Rural
Israel 1961	86.8	151.4	Austria 1961	52.6	84.5
USA, 1960	41.1	60.7	Rumania 1964	40.4	56.1
Japan, 1960	50.5	55.8	Norway, 1960	52.6	69.5
UK, 1961	64.6	65.4	Sweden, 1960	49.6	47.0

Fertility and occupation

Considerable interest also attaches to the way fertility varies with the occupation of parents. Data on this point are however, scanty and difficult to come by. We give in Table 10 certain figures for the USA based on the 1950 census data. For the purpose of comparison of fertility, the number of children ever born per 1,000 married white women in the age-group 45-49, and with husbands in the occupation group, was first determined for each occupation group. At the next step, each of these figures was expressed as a percentage of the total number of children ever born per 1,000 married white women with husbands irrespective of occupation group. The fertility indices obtained in this manner and shown in Table 10 provide a sound comparison among the occupation groups.

Table 10: Fertility indices for different occupation groups, USA, 1950

Occupation group of husband	Index	Occupation group of husband	Index
All occupation	100	5. Craftsmen, foremen and kindred workers	98
1. Professional, technical and kindred workers	69	6. Operatives and kindred workers	109
2. Managers, officials and proprietors ..	78	7. Labourers, except farm and mine labourers ..	133
3. Clerical, sales and kindred workers	76	8. Farmers and farm managers ..	139
4. Services (including private household) workers	96	9. Farm labourers and foremen ..	167

The table indicates that fertility is lowest among professional people, proprietors, managers, salesmen and clerical and kindred workers. Fertility is highest among farm labourers, but it is also seen to be relatively high among independent farmers, farm managers and non-farm labourers. Intermediate in fertility level are skilled and unskilled workers.

We do not know of any large-scale survey

of a similar type being conducted in India. But the findings of such an investigation are expected to follow, by and large, the same pattern. Capitalists, big traders and farmers in India do have big families, but very poor sections of the community tend to have still bigger ones. Professional men, on the other hand seem to follow the family-planning slogan, that exhorts people to have no more than three children, very literally. Doctors, engineers, high officials and college or university teachers have, as a rule, just one or two (mostly pampered) children.

Fertility and level of education

One may like to know how fertility is affected by the level of education of parents. Table 11 presents some figures on this point, again in respect of, the USA, 1950. Here too, the

number of children ever born to 1,000 women in the age-group 45-49 was determined for each of the six levels of education (of mother) envisaged in the study. Each of these figures was then expressed as a fertility index on division by the number of children born to women in the age-group and in the highest category (i.e. with 4 years in college or still higher education).

Table 11: Fertility indices by level of education for USA, 1950

Level of Education	White	Non-white
4 years college or more ..	100	100
1-3 years college ..	140	171
4 years high school ..	152	173
1-3 years high school ..	199	222
8 years elementary school ..	230	237
Less than 8 years elementary school ..	300	270

The two series of indices, for whites and non-whites, vary in about the same manner. In each case we find that the higher the level of education, the lower is the level of fertility. And a mother with 1-3 years of high-school education bears, on the average, twice as many children as one with 4 years of collegiate education or with still higher education, while a mother in the lowest level of education bears thrice as many.

Some small-scale surveys on somewhat similar lines have been carried out in India in recent times, and here too the findings point to a similar inverse relationship between level of education and level of fertility.

Concluding remarks

It may be said that, on the whole, the poorer countries of the world are liable to a higher level of fertility than the richer ones. Within any given country, again, fertility remains at a comparatively high level among the less-favoured

socio-economic groups. We are thus in the midst of a paradox: the section of the population that tends to have the highest fertility is the one that can least afford to have big families.

It is the general view among demographers that fertility differentials are mainly the result of the fact that certain sections of the community have a stronger motivation to limit their families and at the same time possess better facilities to effectively control conception. The very negligible impact of the family planning campaign in India may be explained in the same way. The means of controlling conception have been made available, virtually gratis, to all sections of the community. But those who have taken more readily to family planning belong to the higher strata of society and are in a position to have big families. While their response has led to some decline in the over-all fertility of the community, their own goal has been to further raise their already high standard of living. On the contrary, the response from people who badly need to restrict the size of their families, those in the lower socio-economic strata, has been slow and feeble. A small family may, indeed, be a happy family; but people who have been the underdogs of the community for generations and do not know what happiness is would not care less. They must be given a taste of material prosperity before they may have the right motivation for family planning that they now badly lack. It is this idea that was sought to be conveyed by our Health Minister at a recent conference in Bucharest through the comment that "(economic) development is the best contraceptive".

Scientific Knowledge and Reality

Kalyan Chatterjee

"How comes it that human beings, whose contacts with the world are brief and personal and limited, are nevertheless able to know as much as they do know?" With this question began Bertrand Russell's last major philosophical work, but it was by no means a new question in the history of philosophy. Russell himself had wrestled with it for nearly forty years, and generations of philosophers before him had sought to answer it.

Two broad streams of thought have emerged from the various attempts to tackle this question. One stream has emphasised the part played by reason and the intellect, while the other has believed that knowledge can only be obtained through the senses. It is misleading to label these two schools 'idealist' and 'materialist', because the battle lines are not as clearly drawn as these terms would suggest. Uncompromising votaries of the second viewpoint like Berkeley and Hume came very close to idealism when they wrote about the matter-mind controversy.

The second viewpoint is intimately connected with the rise of science, and will, therefore, be the main concern of this article. The 'intellectualist' creed will be referred to only in passing.

There is a third approach to the problem, one which has become popular of late. This is to deny the reality of the problem which is being posed. This is always the easiest way to resolve our doubts; to pretend that they do not exist and never did—but such heroic escapism is best left to ostriches and linguistic analysts.

I

The school of thought which believed that the

truth was manifest in nature',¹ and that all we had to do in order to obtain it was to free our minds from the shackles of pre-judgments, hypotheses and theories, made two assertions regarding scientific laws. These laws were, according to them, generalisations from observations and they could be further verified only through observation. This gave rise to the famous 'problem of induction'. The laws of science purported to be absolutely general propositions applying to all points in space-time, yet observations could only be singular statements. "General truths cannot be inferred from particular truths alone, but must, if they are to be known, be either self-evident or inferred from premises of which at least one is a general statement"². Thus, if scientific laws were to be known, a general principle was required. This was the famous principle of induction. The question then arises, how is this principle known. It "cannot be a purely logical truth like a tautology or an analytic statement. Indeed, if there were such a thing as a purely logical principle of induction.....all inductive inferences would have to be regarded as purely tautological transformations just like inferences in deductive logic. Thus the principle of induction must be a synthetic statement, that is a statement whose contradiction is logically possible..... If we try to regard its truth as known from experience then the very same problems which occasioned its introduction will arise all over again. To justify it, we should have to employ inductive inferences; and to justify these we should have to assume a principle of a higher order, and so on"³ ad infinitum. Nor is it possible to argue that induction only renders scientific

laws 'probable', for to assign probability numbers to a statement would require a general principle, and this must then be open to the same criticism as made above by Popper.

Popper makes two further remarks about the principle of induction. If it were empirical, then the first instance of falsification of a theory would prove the principle false. The observed facts are assumed to be true, and if these facts in conjunction with the principle of induction give us a false theory, then obviously the principle of induction is falsified. If the principle of induction performed the function of making an inference probable, it was unnecessary. For the most vacuous statements are the most probable ones; for instance, the statement 'It is raining or it is not raining' has a probability of unity.

For inductivists, therefore, science has to be based on an 'a priori' or self-evident statement—the principle of induction, or it must be regarded as a vast tautology. The second alternative has been chosen by people like Eddington. He considers Einstein's law of gravitation to be tautology, and states this law as follows: The directed radius of every three dimensional space-time section is the same in empty space. This is because, says Eddington, the standard metre rod occupies a constant fraction of the length of the directed radius. Hence his conviction that the "whole thing is a vicious circle—a put-up job"⁴.

Eddington's law of gravitation (which is not a put-up job and which appears to have escaped his notice) is: Every measuring apparatus changes itself so that it remains a constant fraction of the directed radius. This statement is equivalent to the earlier one, but this does not make either tautological.

The basic problem with regarding science as either a priori or analytic in nature, is that its growth and development is rendered inexplicable (and mysterious). The work of Popper has sought to explain this aspect of sci-

entific knowledge—the fact that it is continuously progressing and building on its past failures. I shall consider this issue later.

For the moment, I wish to discuss an entirely different problem—the problem of the relation between the world of physics and the world of sense. Neither Popper nor Thomas Kuhn (the other influential contemporary philosopher of science) regards this as interesting. Both have committed themselves to a 'third-person' view of the physical world in which every object is as it seems. This is the view characterised by Russell as 'naive realism', and it certainly has no foundation in modern science. The world of physics is a world of transitory events connected by mathematical laws. The solid tables and chairs of naive realism find no place in the physicist's universe (though, of course, he believes in them in his unprofessional moments).

Here the best answer I have come across is the one given by 'the causal theory of perception', as expounded by Russell in his **Analysis of Matter**. According to this theory, a stream of light photons from the perceived object flows to the eyes of the perceiving person causing certain electrical impulses to be generated. These impulses are carried to the brain where they are converted by some means into percepts. These percepts therefore belong to a person's private space—as Russell puts it, "I wish to advocate the shocking view that peoples' thoughts are in their heads." However, the space of perception (which forms a single perspective) is causally connected with the space of physics. "These spaces are not identical but if physics is an experimental science then these spaces must have the same logical properties."

In particular, Russell develops the important notion of 'structure'. A similarity between cause and effect implies a certain structural similarity. "Suppose we have two relations R, R', each n — adic. Suppose there is a one to one relation S which relates all the terms in the field of R to to all the terms in the

field of R' ; let x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n be n terms which have the relation R , and let x'_1, x'_2, \dots, x'_n be the terms correlated with them by the relation S . Then R and R' are 'similar' if there is a one-to-one relation S such that when the above conditions are fulfilled, x'_1, x'_2, \dots, x'_n have the relation R' , and conversely".⁵

When two relations are 'similar', all their logical properties are identical.⁶ Thus, because of the causal link between the physical object and the percept, the logical properties of the private space must be identical with those of the public space.

"The only difference must lie in just that essence of individuality which always eludes words and baffles description, but which, for that very reason, is irrelevant to science"⁷. This explains why physics can only deal with the mathematical (or logical) structure of the physical world, and it is therefore not too surprising that physics is mathematical.

The difference between the worlds of physics and sense is explained by Russell as follows: If the difference between A and C is perceivable, there is no reason to believe that the differences between A and B , and B and C must also be percepts. "Some relations are perceivable, and must be inferred. All this leads us to the view that the structure of the physical world is too fine grained to be fully perceived. We invert the maxim, 'Same cause, same effect', and get 'Different effects, different causes'". Thus we cannot stop at our percepts and hope to be correct. Thus physics is more nearly 'correct' than common sense.

It will be noted that the notion of degrees of correctness does not involve the notion of degrees of truth. The objective truth is not dynamic or relative. What does change is the proximity of the latest theory to the truth. Some ardent would-be relativists have forgotten this rather obvious difference and plunged into verbose exaltation of the so-called dialectical nature of truth. One such is Maurice Cornforth⁸ whose remarks

on the theory expounded above are illuminating for reasons different from those intended by their author. After a clear exposition of early empiricist philosophy (which held, like Russell, that the essence of things was unknowable), Cornforth talks about "that dilemma which has troubled bourgeois philosophy—how to follow the paths of science without abandoning bourgeois illusions. Either you take your stand by the sciences and sacrifice your illusions or you take your stand by your illusions and sacrifice the sciences. They are prepared to do neither one nor the other". Presumably the 'illusions' are what empiricists call percepts, and the science refers to the objective world. I do not know why Cornforth regards percepts as illusory. I cannot believe that he suffers from hallucinations all the time. If you "take your stand by the sciences" you must be prepared according to Cornforth, to make assertions about what things 'really' are. In other words, we are called on by Cornforth either to assume that things are what they seem, or to make excursions into the realm of fantasy. The first is socially conservative (as Gellner has pointed out), and the second is best reserved for people like Brian Aldiss who can, at least, put down their fantasies on paper in an entertaining manner.

Popper's criticism of empiricism is more clearly expressed. Empiricism, according to him, would lead us to believe that physics is, subjectively known, when actually it is objective and public. This appears to me to be a misconception. The physical world is public, even in Russell, and statements about the physical world are inter-subjectively testable. (All the private spaces have the same structure.) Popper himself quotes Kaut as defining 'objective' as 'inter-subjectively testable', so I do not quite see the grounds for his criticism.

II

Let us now turn to the growth of scientific knowledge, and the differing moral imperatives contained in the thought of Popper and Kuhn.

Popper's theory begins with an attack on two positivist theories. One is the principle of induction, and the other is the theory of meaning. The second is rejected for much the same reasons as the first.

The earlier variance of the theory of meaning is to be found in Wittgenstein's logical atomism. Wittgenstein considers natural science to be the 'totality of true propositions', and believes that they are meaningful only because they are derivable from simple, 'atomic' propositions which are directly verifiable by observation. Any statement which is not so decomposable is meaningless. Hence the demarcation line between meaningful and meaningless statements coincides with that between science and metaphysics.

If science were the totality of 'true' statements, it would never develop, and if scientific statements are nothing but a combination of atomic observation statements, then the principle of induction must be assumed to hold. If we reject this principle, and acknowledge that science has developed, then we must also reject Wittgenstein.

The later variant of Schlick, Carnap and Ayer, also assumes that the demarcation between science and metaphysics must be the same as that between sense and non-sense. Meaningful statements are those which are verifiable. Adopting this criterion would mean consigning science to the realm of meaninglessness, or accepting induction. (General statements are never verifiable.) There are valid reasons for rejecting induction, and hence the verifiability doctrine.

Popper's solution is to substitute falsifiability for verifiability as the criterion of demarcation between science and non-science. The problem of meaning is a futile one to pursue, for meanings can only be conventions.

Ayer⁹ points out that a conclusive falsification is also impossible, because we can always introduce arbitrary auxiliary hypotheses to save a theory, or impugn the honesty of the experimen-

ter who has obtained the falsifying evidence. Popper accepts this, and introduces a number of methodological rules into his criterion. Auxiliary hypotheses will only be introduced when they increase the testability and hence the empirical content of a theory.¹⁰

The 'moral imperative' incorporated into the criterion is the necessity of a critical attitude. Theories must be formulated in such a way that they can be severely criticised, and the objectivity of science consists in its public nature which make criticism possible. The much misunderstood 'social relations of science' is therefore linked to objectivity and the possibility of critical evaluation. This 'moral imperative' has wide ranging social consequences; for instance, dogma, though it plays a role in making the most of a particular theory, is considered inherently foreign to science.¹¹

The logical basis is, of course, the asymmetry of the concepts of verifiability and falsifiability with respect to a single observation.

Popper's solution to the problem of induction is, therefore, to discard the principle of induction. New theories are not obtained by induction from observed facts; they contain an entirely new element going beyond observation. They are scientific only if they are falsifiable, they cannot be verifiable.

I shall not here consider the various difficulties in Popper's theory especially in connection with quantum theory, because Popper's own exposition would be hard to better, and because of constraints of space, time, and knowledge.

However, the basic framework of the Popperian view of science is not affected by the details regarding probability. I wish to contract with it the views of Kuhn whose book on *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. I have unfortunately not been able to obtain.

Kuhn summarises his thesis in the first paper in the book *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*¹².

According to Kuhn, "Sir Karl knows every-

thing that I know about scientific development and has somewhere or the other said it." The difference between Kuhn's views and Popper's is 'a gestalt switch rather than a disagreement'. This peculiar phrase evidently refers to a difference in emphasis. While Popper emphasises the role of criticism, Kuhn stresses that of dogma—of 'normal science' as he calls it. 'Normal Science' consists, in brief, of attempts to solve puzzles by applying existing theory. If an individual fails to apply it successfully, only his own ability is questioned, not the tools he uses. Occasionally the number of such failures mounts, and if an 'oppositional' theory (like Einstein's) is available it is adopted instead as the new paradigm. This latter is 'extraordinary science' or a 'scientific revolution'.

According to Kuhn, critical discourse is characteristic of philosophy, not of science. It is only when the transition has been made from critical discourse to a 'paradigm' that philosophy becomes science.

Kuhn's criticism of Popper continues by doubting whether his criterion can distinguish between science and pseudo-sciences like astrology. Astrology records many examples of falsified predictions.

Further Kuhn disputes whether a scientist can specify in advance what will falsify his theory.

It is not quite clear what Kuhn intends as a replacement for Popper's criterion. There are a few remarks on 'puzzle-solving' and some pleas for "group unanimity as a paramount value", since it enables the group to "reunite quickly about a single set of rules for puzzle-solving even at the price of subdividing the speciality".

Kuhn concludes with an invitation to Popper to join him in investigating the psychological characteristics of the scientific group.

Before considering Popper's reactions (published in the same volume), it might be useful to clear up a few Kuhnian confusions.

First, any and every falsified prediction does not form part of science, even superseded science. Those prophets of doom who from time to time forecast the end of the world on specific days and give divine revelation as the source of the information are certainly not scientists. The predictions have to be in relation to a scientific theory which has already explained all the results of the theory which is to be superseded. Kuhn identifies astrology as a pseudo-science because it has no 'puzzles' to solve. This seems to me to be an extremely vague statement.

Secondly, even if the scientist who proposes a theory is unable to specify tests, it is unlikely that his theory will be accepted until suitable tests are devised which can prove him wrong or right. Sudasrhan's theory of tachyons has not yet been tested—it does not form part of accepted doctrine.

Popper's own criticism of Kuhn is of the concept of 'normal science'. 'Normal Science' is "the activity of the science student who accepts the ruling dogma of the day". The normal scientist "has learned a technique which can be applied without asking the reason why he has become an applied scientist, content to solve 'puzzles'".

Kuhn supposes "that the rationality of science presupposes the acceptance of a common framework. He suggests that rationality depends on a common language and a common set of assumptions. He suggests that rational discussion, and rational criticism is only possible if we have agreed on a fundamental framework".

This is the old approach of the sociology of knowledge which Popper considered and rejected in his **Open Society and its Enemies**. A fundamental framework does exist—the framework of our 'background knowledge'¹³. However, this framework is not beyond criticism and beyond change. When it becomes impossible to solve problems within the framework, it becomes necessary to change the framework. Such changes have taken place throughout the history of science.

The difference between Popper and Kuhn appears to lie in the moral imperatives they prescribe. Kuhn believes in orderly, stable accretion of results within a theory, Popper in growth through criticism. Speaking for myself, I much prefer critical rationalism to dogma.

III

One question still remains to be considered. This has been mentioned briefly once before, but has not been fully discussed, and concerns the fact that scientific theories are liable to be proved untrue by new tests. Does this mean that truth is 'relative', either to the paradigm or to the social structure or to both? Or is the whole question of truth irrelevant; and is the purpose of science then only to "devise research techniques" or to acquire mastery "over the processes of transformation and development" as Cornforth would have us believe?

A compound of the last two viewpoints was put forward in an astonishingly naive manner by Sumit Ranjan Das in the **Presidency College Magazine of 1973**.¹⁴ Das believes "that truth can never be static". (His own statement is believed by him to represent an unchanging truth, but the paradox never seems to have occurred to him.)

Das's entire thesis springs from taking the old adage of necessity being the mother of invention a little too seriously. Because knowledge will not arise until there is a need for it does not mean that it must arise because such a need exists. There is no 'inner necessity' in scientific development. For hundreds of years after the Greeks there was no scientific progress, though the necessary conditions were assured in a large part of the Roman empire. The only necessity in science is logical necessity as for example in the following three line exercise

1. $(x) (P_x \supset Q_x)$
2. Pa
3. Qa

If a is a P , and if the general law holds, a is necessarily a Q .

Das, like many others, appears to think that the use of the word 'social' implies determination by class origins. The social nature of science is the reason for its objectivity, not for its class-relativism. As a matter of fact, Das's attempt to draw parallels between scientific revolutions and social ones is little short of ridiculous. "The coincidence of the Quantum and Relativistic Revolutions with the Proletarian Revolution is not an accident." I agree, for there was no such coincidence. If the world proletarian revolution had taken place in 1905, when Einstein published his papers on the quantum theory of the photoelectric effect and the specific heats of solids, as well as the special theory of relativity, then we would all be living in the socialist paradise by now. According to Das, the two revolutions reflect the presence of two ruling classes under socialism and capitalism. Presumably one would therefore expect to find the Russians championing quantum theory and the Americans taking up arms for God and Relativity, but no such event has been recorded in the history books.

I would not have devoted so much space to Das, had he not performed the signal service of making evident the absurdity of the vulgar Marxist approach to science. Let me now return to the two approaches mentioned at the beginning of this section.

Acceptance of relativism will have destructive consequences for the whole of science, for since the truth is constantly supposed to be changing, we cannot know when we are in error. At the most we can know when we deviate from the current 'truth' which is usually identified with the current fashion (or 'paradigm'). As we have already seen that we cannot know the absolute truth or the truth at any time either, we shall be unable to distinguish between false theories and unfalsified ones, and

arbitrary selection of theories will be the only way out. I do not think that any sane person can believe that science has proceeded through the ages by the arbitrary choice of scientific groups.

The instrumental view of scientific theories states that these are instruments for transforming matters of fact to other matters of fact. In other words theories are just rules of computation. However, as Popper points out,¹⁵ such a view would be unable to explain the progress of science. Instruments cannot be refuted; they can only be shown to have different ranges of application. Within a particular range of application, there is no way to choose between instruments other than ease of computation.

This is why engineers use Newtonian mechanics in their calculations. However, science does not recognise the superiority of Newtonian mechanics even on a macro-scale and at velocities small compared with light. Even in these ranges, the newer theory is considered as better than the older one. This is precisely because successful theories are more than instruments or research techniques; they are the closest approximations to the objective truth available on the evidence.

So it is not illegitimate to answer Russell's question "How can we know?" by saying, "Through scientific endeavour". Science is the only way to objective knowledge about the physical world that man has discovered.

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The Copernican Revolution Reviewed

Sumit Ranjan Das

"Learning about the present in the light of the past also means to learn about the past in the light of the present"¹.

This is, in a nutshell, the basic theme of the present essay. The choice of the topic is governed by several reasons. First, the Copernican Revolution in astronomy marks the starting point of the modern conception of the universe². Secondly, it is the beginning of the one of the most complete and typical scientific revolutions. Thirdly, it is widely known, but very often misrepresented and misinterpreted.

Learning-about-the-present-from-the-past part of the essay shall consist of knowing about the essence of modern science, and about the structure of scientific revolutions in general. Learning-about-the-past-from-the-present part of the essay shall consist of an attempt to interpret the revolution in the light of the present knowledge about the science of science, and in the perspective of the modern world outlook.

The science of science is a second order discipline of the first order importance. This is because historians of science are becoming more and more aware of the fact that the growth of science cannot be fully understood entirely in terms of science alone. As regards this aspect, the following points must be noted.

First, the word "science" cannot possess a rigid meaning invariant with time. There is no reason why Galileo is to be called a scientist, but Aristotle not one. Aristotelian science, however, differs from Galilean science in its area of interest, in its methodology and in its outlook. Hence the science of any period is to

be interpreted with reference to the period concerned.

Secondly, normal science is not a simple course of fact-hunting, data-collecting, and generalising. Rather, scientists of a given historical period base their research on a commitment provided by a general world outlook, an ideology belonging to the extra-scientific world. The intertwined body of theoretical and methodological belief, derived from an ideology, I call a *paradigm*³.

Thirdly, science is basically a social product and a social activity. The interaction between science and society is bi-directional, and we shall examine some aspects of this interaction in the course of the following discussion.

I

In view of the above observations it is not improper to commence our discussion with a brief survey of the social structure in Copernicus' age.

The dominant social system in Medieval Europe was feudalism. This involved two aspects. First, it was a mode of production, predominantly agricultural, involving "an obligation laid on the producer by force and independent of his own volition to fulfil certain economic demands of an overlord"⁴. Secondly, it involved a particular relation of production, serfdom. Fourthly, it involved a rigid hierarchy, starting

from the King down to the serf. One's position in the hierarchy was determined uniquely by heredity.

With the marked increase of foreign trade in the Mediterranean, Baltic and North Seas, and the organisation of frequent trade fairs, towns grew and flourished in the 12th century. Signs of an embryonic form of money economy were already manifest. The new class of merchants antagonised the feudal lords, and with them, feudalism. Organised in "guilds" they fought against the feudal lords for freedom, and as a result towns acquired autonomy. If the revival of trade and the growth of towns were fire to the stack, the stack itself was the inherent contradictions within the feudal system⁵. And when the fire broke out manorialism was crumbling down to pieces. Peasants burst their bonds and migrated to the "free" towns.

In the process the very nature of economic production underwent a radical change. Already in the guild system of craftsmen, journeymen and apprentices, where the workers themselves owned their means of production, production was being carried out partly for profit and partly for immediate use. With the growth of the class of middlemen, men whose job was to see whether goods made by workers reached the consumer, production was organised entirely on the profit-motive. These middlemen owned the means of production, and employed craftsmen to perform their job; and they appropriated the entire profit. These middlemen, and also some of the craftsmen, formed the fore-runners of the modern bourgeoisie. In the process most of the apprentices and journeymen were forced to the rank of wage-labourers, the seeds of the modern proletariat. Owing to obvious advantages, the new relations of production, gained dominance and the mode of production called capitalism came into existence.

The period ranging from the 13th to the 16th centuries was thus a period of socio-economic revolution that saw the disintegration of feu-

dalism and the growth of capitalism as the dominant mode of production. An economy of use was being replaced by an economy of exchange and profit, and bourgeois "freedom" was in the air.

II

Between Ptolemy who died in the 2nd Century A.D., and Copernicus, European astronomy was predominated by Aristotle and Ptolemy.

The self-contained and consistent body of Aristotelian cosmology derives from the laws of Aristotelian dynamics, according to which all bodies have "natural places" to which they tend to move unless held back by constraints. Conversely, to displace a body from its "natural place" needs the exertion of a 'force'. These "natural places" were ascribed by mere common sense: the earth's natural place was at the centre of the universe; water rested on the surface of the spherical earth; fire, the lightest element, had its natural place just below the moon while air filled the region between water and fire.

From the idea of "natural place", earth's stability and immobility was a simple corollary, for there seemed to be no source of the force needed to keep it away from the centre of the universe and to maintain its motion. There were other specific arguments for the earth's immobility. In Aristotelian dynamics, motion of a body is a function of space alone. A stone thrown up in the air returns to its point of projection in a straight line fixed once and for all. Hence if the earth moved, how could it return to its point of projection? This argument was not adequately refuted even by Copernicus, and the debate ended only with Galileo.

The Aristotelian universe was completely filled—a plenum. Nature abhors vacuum. The entire universe was contained within the sphere of the fixed stars having a centre in the earth. To account for the diurnal rotation of the celestial bodies, the sphere of the stars was given

a diurnal rotation about a fixed axis. The majority of the universe is filled with a crystalline, weightless solid—the aether, aggregating in a set of homocentric shells containing the planets. The shells all touched each other and the planetary spheres were thus set into motion by mere contact. Innermost is the sphere of the moon. The sublunary region, containing the four elements, fire, air, water, earth, mixed up owing to the motion of the moon, is “imperfect” and in a process of growth and decay, while the celestial region is “perfect”, changeless and eternal.

This scheme, coupled with the Aristotelian doctrine that space and matter are two sides of the same coin⁶, leads us to the other basic tenet of Aristotelian cosmology, the finiteness of the universe. Beyond the sphere of the stars there is no matter, hence no space. Moreover, an infinite universe does not contain any preferred or special point, and the whole structure of Aristotelian dynamics crumbles down.

Aristotle was more of a philosopher-physicist than an astronomer and he stressed qualitative explanations rather than mathematical descriptions. Ptolemaic astronomy, the final product of Hellenistic culture, was Aristotelian in essence, but not so in form. Ptolemy laid stress on mathematical description rather than on cosmology, being evidently influenced by Plato. The result was a detailed and accurate scheme of the heavens. The bias for circles and other perfect forms was retained from Plato. The planets were made to move in circles simply because the circle was the most perfect of closed figures. This did not, however, explain planetary behaviour fully. To explain the annual eastward motion of planets as distinct from their diurnal motion⁷, the retrograde motions in some cases, and other similar deviations, mathematical devices like the epicycle (a combination of circles), the equant (a shifted centre)⁸ were used. These made the system exceedingly complex and

Ptolemy needed some eighty epicycles to describe his whole system. There was no attempt, however, to explain epicycles and equants physically. Yet Ptolemaic astronomy did remain in the Aristotelian paradigm, and when Copernicus entered the stage, this paradigm was in supreme power.

III

With the decline of the Roman empire, scientific activity in Europe virtually ceased. The Islamic invasions shifted the cultural foci of Europe from the Mediterranean towards the North, and by the 7th century A.D., none of the ancient works were available.

However, with increasing trade activity in the 12th century, links with the Islamic world were reestablished and Arabic versions of Greek classical text trickled into Europe. Most of these were translated into Latin, including Ptolemy's “Almagest”. In the process of reading, re-reading and translating Aristotle during the 12th century Renaissance, Aristotle's inconsistencies were profitably overlooked. Moreover, the differences of outlook between Aristotle and Ptolemy were ignored and they both formed a single, coherent, system called “ancient philosophy”⁹.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, the Church was formidably opposed to science. But in the later Middle Ages, the trend was reversed and science was fused with Christian religion to form an intellectual trend called Scholasticism. In the process Aristotle was rendered orthodox and religious. The Aristotelian universe was given an allegorical interpretation, as is evident in Dante's “Divine Comedy”. The celestial region with all its perfectness was relegated to the position of Heaven, while the centre of the earth rolled down to Hell. The epicycles and deferents of Ptolemy were moved by divine angels and the entire universe was constructed to satisfy God's cause.

Aristotelian cosmology was, however, opposed to the Scriptures in many important respects;

viz. the infinite age of the universe and the non-existence of void. In fact, Aristotelianism could be fused with the Bible only when it was suitably tailored and edited. The reasons why the fusion took place were mainly social. In the feudal structure of the Middle Ages, the Church played a powerful role, and the Churchmen obviously tried to perpetuate the prevailing system. Feudalism involved a fixed and rigid hierarchy where the position of a man was fixed once and for all. For a scientist who is himself well aware of his own "natural place" in society and who tries to justify this system, it is not unusual to believe in Aristotle's dynamics and cosmology involving a rigid hierarchy. Feudalism was based on personal relations, and the feudal 'man' was fixed and rigid. The Churchmen, therefore, opted for Aristotle since he granted man a central but rigid importance by making the earth static. And in an economy of use, the quality of product was more important than quantity, and it is evident that Aristotle's qualitative theory received more attention than Ptolemy. Ptolemaic astronomy was consequently regarded as a mere practical tool deducible from Aristotelianism.

Paradoxically, the scholastic attempts to solidify Aristotelianism bred the germs of its downfall. Critical and intensified studies of Aristotle revealed his inconsistencies. Some, like Oresme,¹⁰ demonstrated logically that the earth need neither be unique nor immobile. Aristotle's dynamics was being challenged by Impetus dynamics. Buridan suggested that the heavens obeyed the same laws as the earth. The Aristotelian paradigm was already breaking down.

IV

Copernicus was essentially a mathematician-astronomer rather, than a cosmologer-physicist. All the earlier Scholastic debates about Aristotle were conducted on the philosophical planes, and Ptolemy escaped unhurt.

In spite of its tremendous power, Ptolemaic astronomy never worked meticulously well. Throughout the Middle Ages, new observations failed to obey the Ptolemaic scheme scrupulously and "epicycles" were added here and there to "save the phenomena". As is usual in normal science research, these deviations from the Ptolemaic scheme were regarded by most astronomers as mere puzzles to be solved within the Aristotelian framework. Copernicus' chief scientific achievement lay in his ability to recognise these deviations as anomalies. To him, the increasing complexity of the Ptolemaic system indicated a crisis. Ptolemaic astronomy, says Copernicus, has created a "monster", and the "monster" is not likely to submit to its master.

In his epoch-making work *De Revolutionibus*, Copernicus found that the heliocentric system of some of the earlier Greek philosophers was the key to the solution of the problem. Accordingly, he transferred the centre of the universe from the earth to the sun, and granted the earth a two-fold motion: a diurnal rotation about its own axis, and an annual rotation around the sun in a circle. Of this, the diurnal rotation was already advocated by Oresme. Copernicus' chief innovation lay in his assertion of an annual motion.

In everything else, Copernicus was conservative. He accepted the data of his predecessors, and used none of his own. He retained the structure of Aristotelian dynamics, the usual difference between terrestrial and celestial laws. He still believed in the absolute necessity of circular motion owing to its symmetry and justified the earth's annual motion by the fact that the earth is a sphere and the "natural" motion of a sphere is a circle¹¹.

Neither was Copernicus' motive for innovation convincing. He opposed Ptolemaic astronomy mainly because it was "asymmetric" and not enough harmonious and simple. He objected to the equant on the ground that it violated

the symmetry of circular motion. He preferred the heliostatic system because

"In this most beautiful temple could we place this luminary in any better position from which he can illuminate the whole at once?"¹²

The new system was not even more accurate than the Ptolemaic one. The few cases in which it gave slightly better results are negligible. Thus, so far as observational data are concerned, the Copernican system was merely an alternative to the Ptolemaic one; there is no reason to call it a better one.

The main advantages of the Copernican system were its "simplicity" and harmony. And this is the main argument that Copernicus gives in advocating his system. Qualitatively, this system explained the retrograde motion of the planets without the use of epicycles or other devices. The equant was totally dispensed with. All the planets, their orbits, their periodic times were knitted together into a harmonious whole. The behaviour of Mercury and Venus could be explained in a simpler fashion. The Copernican system allowed unique determinations of the sizes of planetary orbits. Yet, the main arguments in favour of the system were its "admirable symmetry" and its "clear bond of harmony"¹³.

On the other hand, the Copernican system had several serious drawbacks. Copernican astronomy was inexplicable in the framework of Aristotelian dynamics. It demanded a new physics and a new cosmology which Copernicus failed to supply. The old problem of a stone thrown up returning to its point of projection remained unsolved. The annual parallax of the fixed stars demanded by Copernicus' system could not be detected till 1838¹⁴. The absence of such a parallax implied the necessity of attributing a ridiculously immense distance from the earth. Copernicus went definitely against the

testimony of the senses with no major advantage, except the purely aesthetic advantage of beauty and harmony. In such circumstances, it is highly improbable for an empiricist to reject an old time-tested Aristotelian paradigm and accept a weak and inconsistent Copernican doctrine.

Apparently, the Copernican innovation seems to be a simple heresy with no revolutionary character. But, Copernicus' work was revolutionary in implication rather than in itself.

We have seen how the entire Aristotelian paradigm rested on the assumption of a fixed and immobile earth at the centre of the universe. To make the earth move round the sun renders the very hierarchy of natural places invalid. The Copernican universe was still finite, but it was immensely larger than the Aristotelian one; and Copernicus' successors made it infinite. The sphere of the stars was made immobile, thus depriving it of any physical function. Defying Aristotle in such important respects required immense courage, for defying Aristotle in the Middle Ages meant defying the Church. Once Aristotle was opposed in one aspect, it was obvious that attacks from other directions were likely to follow. Copernicus himself tried to maintain the Aristotelian structure, but once he had set the ball rolling, none could possibly stop it.

The Copernican doctrine was immediately opposed by the Church. Scriptures were quoted against him as early as 1539 i.e. even before the publication of *De Revolutionibus*. The book was finally banned in 1633. Yet the Copernican doctrine could attract quite a large number of astronomers and scientists by its mere appeal to the aesthetic concern for beauty and simplicity. The result was the beginning of an entirely new and different research tradition based on Copernicanism. The questions that were raised, and the problems that were set to be solved were of an entirely different nature from those of Ptolemaic astronomy. The Copernican theory thus acquired the status of a

paradigm of research. Herein lies the revolutionary implications of the Copernican innovation. As distinct from other heresies of the later Middle Ages the Copernican theory could establish a paradigm that could fight against the Aristotelian paradigm and strengthen its position.

The Copernican doctrine was opposed, besides the Church, by other "scientific doctrines", like that of Tycho Brahe. Brahe, the founder of the modern world's first scientific institute at Uraniborg, observed all star and planet positions with tremendous accuracy, and his data played a direct role in the later stages of the Copernican Revolution through his colleague, Kepler. Brahe was, however, a staunch anti-Copernican, and his system, in which the sun rotated round the earth while the other planets rotated round the sun, was an exact representation of what a terrestrial observer saw. His system was as accurate as the Copernican one, and did not contain the difficulties that Copernicus faced in making the earth move.

Yet it was Copernicus who won. Paradoxically, the very drawbacks of the Copernican doctrine led to its development. The part of the theory that became a paradigm was the idea of a planetary earth. All the rest was profitably overlooked. Neither were the incongruities that arose out of the assumption of the earth's motion observed. The assumption was taken almost a priori, and the actual calculation of planetary orbits became a puzzle to be solved within the framework of the new astronomy. This task was performed by Kepler, using Brahe's data, and some of his own. Kepler was the first to deny the absolute necessity of circular orbits owing to their symmetry. He too believed in the harmony of the universe, but he found that elliptical planetary orbits could explain their motion with the greatest simplicity. The cumbrous system of epicycles was dispensed with, and a truly simple and accurate theory emerged. The system was made even more harmonious: a new

kind of uniformity of planetary motion was found, and all the planetary orbits and periodic times were bound together by Kepler's Third Law, in a "clear bond of harmony".

It is, however, doubtful whether Kepler would have succeeded if he had not been a Copernican beforehand. There was still no physical basis for the earth's motion. This demanded a new dynamics. This was supplied by Galileo Galilei. The telescope was already invented somewhere in Holland, and Galileo himself made one. Now, Galileo was a convinced Copernican when he turned the telescope towards the heavens. The results were fascinating, the moon, instead of being perfect, was covered with seas and mountains, Venus showed phases like the moon, and Jupiter was found to have three moons. The moons of Jupiter themselves provided a small-scale model of the Copernican universe. All these discoveries were enough for an observational proof of the Copernican theory. Galileo went further to formulate a new dynamics that could render the Copernican model physically plausible.

Copernicus thus succeeded by simply appealing to the sense of beauty. As we have seen, he retained the entire structure of Aristotelian dynamics while propounding a hypothesis that went definitely against it. Moreover, the form of astronomy remained unchanged until Kepler changed it. The methods of science also remained the same until Galileo and Newton innovated the new method of science. The Copernican Revolution was, by no means a revolution of the methodology of science. It was a revolution of content rather than of form.

V

It is interesting to inquire why the Copernican Revolution took place when it did and how could the Copernican doctrine, in the absence of any 'significant' superiority over the Ptolemaic scheme, succeed in establishing a paradigm of

research tradition.

The question of the timing of the revolution has a special importance because Copernicus' work was not 'original'. Heliocentric systems were propounded in Hindu astronomy, and Aristarchus advocated a system almost similar to the Copernican one. Yet, in the Middle Ages, even when Aristarchus was known, Aristotle was dominant. The Scholastic critics of Aristotle were brushed aside as mere heretics in the Middle Ages, though Scholasticism had a positive contribution to the outbreak of the Copernican Revolution. Moreover, while the Scholastics attacked Aristotle on the philosophical-cosmological plane, Copernicus rose primarily against Ptolemy and his astronomy.

The reason for Copernicus' emphasis on astronomy rather than on cosmology is to be sought for in social factors. As we observed earlier, the December-days of feudalism were ushered in by extensive foreign trade. The newly rising merchant class was frantically searching for new markets. A series of great voyages resulted in the striking of new lands and rediscovering of old ones. Navigation was thus a primary preoccupation of the period. Hence, it is not an accident that astronomy, a subject indispensable to navigation, received emphasis. This is one of the cases where social necessity determined the area of scientific research. Coupled with this was the demand for calendar reform¹⁵. The Ptolemaic calendar and other tables were out of joint, and tides and other phenomena could not be predicted. It is, therefore, evident why Ptolemy was held in doubt in this particular period of history. The deviations from the Ptolemaic scheme, formerly regarded as minor discrepancies, assumed the dimensions of a monster in Copernicus.

It is doubtful whether the awareness of such a "crisis", and the response to the crisis in the form of a revolutionary innovation would have taken place in the absence of the general revolutionary climate that prevailed. As noted be-

fore, the period was one of socio-economic revolution marking the first phase of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Not only the feudal economy, but also feudal culture was disintegrating, and a new culture, basically bourgeois in essence, began to emerge. The social revolution was subsequently backed up by a cultural movement known as the Renaissance.

The Renaissance scholars opposed every aspect of medieval life and culture and strove to create a cultural pattern closer to Greek antiquity. Greek sources were studied extensively, not in their Arabic versions, but in the original. What were, however, appreciated were the beauty of expression and nobility of sentiment rather than the subtleties of logic. In the resulting intellectual trend, called Humanism, a rudimentary form of individualism began to emerge. Humanist education strove to develop the human personality to its fulfilment¹⁶. Individualism in culture was, however, a result of the cult of individualism prominent in the thought patterns of the rising bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie demanded freedom for trade. The feudal concept of 'man', as we have seen, was static, confined and rigid. The bourgeois 'man' was dynamic, free and powerful. There was no "natural place" in the emerging bourgeois society. Bourgeois freedom was basically negative in content: it meant absence of restrictions. Yet the bourgeois 'man' was powerful enough to conquer the entire universe—an idea derived from the great success of the "explorations". Greek antiquity thus acquired a decidedly bourgeois content in the hands of the Renaissance scholars.

All this does not imply that the Renaissance scholars were all men from the bourgeoisie. What is important is the trend that is reflected in their works. The basic tune of the movement was bourgeois in essence and it is not improbable that scholars from other classes were influenced by this trend.

It is obvious that in the movement, Aristotle

was subjected to severe scorn. First, Aristotle with his natural science could not attract Renaissance men primarily interested in beauty. Secondly, Aristotelian philosophy with its strict hierarchy and the Aristotelian universe with its rigid restrictions and immobility were definitely opposed to the bourgeois spirit. Thirdly, Aristotle in the Middle Ages was associated with the official Church philosophy. In a process when everything feudal was being challenged, it is highly improbable that Aristotle would be spared. Renaissance giants like Petrarch rose against the cult of Aristotle's dialectic and promoted the revival of Ciceronian style¹⁷. The Copernican Revolution was only a part of this general war against Aristotle, and it is because of this basically anti-Aristotelian climate that the deviations from Ptolemy were given extraordinary weightage.

The excessive emphasis on beauty and harmony led the Humanists to scorn science in general. Art and Literature were regarded as the means of perfection, and university science was ridiculed. The Humanists could find their dream world of no restrictions in the idealism of Plato. Plato was thus revived enthusiastically and humanist thought acquired a remarkably otherworldly stress.

Paradoxically, this otherworldly strain lent science the most powerful impetus. This happened primarily because in the revival of Plato the Pythagorean element in him was brought to focus. Pythagorus asserted that the entire world was mathematical and hence pure mathematics is the basis of all knowledge. The world of mathematics is perfect and harmonious: the triangles and circles of plane geometry were the archetypes of Platonic forms. The Neoplatonists, therefore, believed that the world is perfect and harmonious and some of them even went to the extent of asserting that the world of mathematics was more real than the world of matter.

The effects of this mystical trend were fasci-

nating. Mathematics was perused with renewed vigour and the process of mathematical reduction¹⁸ was carried out in algebra and geometry. Astronomy was regarded as a branch of mathematics; and this is yet another reason why it received attention. If astronomy was mathematics, there seemed to be no reason why mathematical reduction could not be applied in this case. Copernicus' performed precisely this task of mathematical reduction¹⁹. Being a Neoplatonist in essence, he little bothered whether his system was physically plausible; its mathematical beauty was enough for its justification.

If Neoplatonism was a dominant trend in the period, it is quite natural that Copernicus could succeed by a mere appeal to aesthetic sense rather than to logic. Both Kepler and Galileo had this Neoplatonic bias and hence they could appreciate the beauty of the Copernican system.

In the basic structure of the Copernican system, the Neoplatonic conception of God played an important role. The God of the Middle Ages was rigid and fixed; the universe was finite but perfect. The Neoplatonist God was, however, a self-duplicating machine possessing immense power²⁰. This idea had two consequences. First, this meant that a finite universe implied God's limitation. Hence some Neoplatonists postulated an infinite universe created by an infinitely powerful God. Secondly, this conception could breed a form of sun-worship. In the visible world, none but the sun could be ascribed with the immense power which God possessed. This sun-worship was present both in Copernicus and Kepler.

The Neoplatonic movement was thus in tune with the age. It is easy to guess why the Pythagorean element was strong. In an economy of exchange based on money it is not unusual that quantity and quantitative assessments are elements of bourgeois thought. Moreover, the Neoplatonic God was an abstracted form of the ideal bourgeois 'man'—free and powerful. It may be argued that Copernicus was an extremely

conservative man of the Church; but as we have mentioned earlier, a man need not be a burgher to be influenced by bourgeois culture and ethics, particularly so when the bourgeois form the most progressive class of society.

The effect of society on the Copernican Revolution is thus twofold. First, socio-economic necessity regulated the timing of the revolution. Secondly, the progressive bourgeois ideology supplied the metaphysical basis of the Copernican doctrine. Reciprocally, the Copernican Revolution made possible improvements in navigation techniques and also gave birth to a new science and technology which eased the spread of capitalism. The Copernican Revolution illustrates one aspect of the bi-directional interaction between science and society.

Like all other scientific revolutions, the Copernican Revolution began with the awareness of a crisis. Yet the crisis was not owing to any novelty of observation that put the existing theory in doubt. Rather the crisis was owing to a contradiction between the existing science and the dominant intellectual trend. The

Copernican theory could provide scientists with a system of beliefs, predominantly metaphysical, a paradigm which could serve as a useful base for research. This does not, however, justify Koestler's "sleepwalker"²¹ conception of the scientist. The scientist is definitely not a man who gropes through darkness in a chaotic fashion. Rather he is systematic and concerted in his effort to know the world. Such an act of knowing may involve commitment to a paradigm. Copernicus' paradigmatic belief was metaphysical. But that does not mean that all such belief was metaphysical and that science ultimately boils down to religion.

On the other hand, the Copernican system was neither more accurate, nor more logically consistent than the Ptolemaic system. Compared to the Tychonic system it was definitely weak. It was simply more at par with the zeitgeist of the age; and this is precisely why it emerged successful. If science progressed linearly and in a cumulative fashion, moved only by the necessity of logical consistency and parity with empirical data, the Copernican Revolution would never have taken place.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. The use of the term 'modern' in the essay refers to the pre-Einsteinian conceptions since Einsteinian ideas have not yet changed popular belief significantly.
3. See T. S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, (Chicago 1965).
4. Maurice Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, (London, 1946) p. 35.
5. Ibid.
6. Kuhn. *The Copernican Revolution*, (Harvard 1957), p. 87.
7. Ibid p. 47-48.
8. Ibid p. 71.
9. Ibid p. 104.

10. A. R. Hall, *The Scientific Revolution* (London 1962), p. 20-21.
11. Copernicus, *De Revolutionibus*. Quoted in Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution*, p. 146.
12. Copernicus, *De Revolutionibus*. See *The Philosophers of Science* in the series, *The world's greatest thinkers* (New York, 1947).
13. Ibid.
14. See Burt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science* (London 1950), p. 25.
15. See J. D. Bernal, *Science in History* (London, 1965).
16. See Coppleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. III (London, 1968) Amongst other educators were Vittorino Da Feltre and Guarino.
17. J. D. Bernal, *op. cit.*, Vol. II (Pelican) p. 384.
18. Burt, *op. cit.* p. 34.
19. Ibid p. 36.
20. Kuhn, *The Copernican Revolution*, p. 129.
21. Arthur Koestler, *The Sleepwalkers* (London 1962). In this book, the author, using the same facts that have been used here, reaches a mystical conclusion. For example, Koestler rightly points out that Copernicus actually increased the total number of epicycles, but concludes, almost in a mechanical way, that this means a loss of simplicity. He ignores the fact that in the new system, qualitative explanations of a large number of phenomena could be given without the use of epicycles.

Leonardo and the Dream of Wisdom

Sukanto Chaudhuri

In 1927, the scholar-philosopher Ernst Cassirer published a German book that is today recognised as one of the classic guides to Renaissance thought. Its importance was confirmed by the appearance in 1963 of an English version, entitled **The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy**. Today, all students of the period are familiar with Cassirer's account of a new world-view evolved in the Renaissance, subtler and more comprehensive than any

obtaining in the Middle Ages.

Medieval thought developed an abstract, eternally imposed universal system that dismissed or neglected the individuality of each element within it. The system was spiritually oriented, a "great chain" leading up to God. A thing took on function simply in relation to this ultimate spiritual end: its existence could not be justified simply by realizing its particular nature, in and for itself. The Renaissance, on

the contrary, granted every object its own particular fulfilment, and formed a universal law so as to incorporate the distinct function of every entity to which it referred.

Thus, while medieval order was abstract and static, the Renaissance order reflected the dynamic interaction of changing, opposing, evolving entities. It united abstract with concrete, universal with particular. And one of the finest achievements of this new synthesis lies, for Cassirer, in the work of Leonardo da Vinci:

The decisive point in Leonardo's thought is precisely that a dualism between the abstract and the concrete, between 'reason' and 'experience', can no longer exist. Both moments are related and bound to one another; experience completes itself only in mathematics, just as mathematics first 'comes to its fruition' in experience. There is no competition, let alone a conflict; there is only a purely complementary relationship.

This ideal of knowledge is surely superior to Bacon's, whose more celebrated innovations have been seen to incline towards the old medieval emphasis on the nature of things rather than the laws governing them. Moreover, Leonardo actually embodies this ideal in the substantial researches into natural phenomena that one finds in his notebooks. But these investigations only provide materials for a projected synthesis of knowledge in the sphere of art. His *Paragone* declares the superiority of painting to the other arts, sculpture in particular. In the process, he celebrates art as the mirror of beauty which is at the same time the mirror of truth. The painter's ideal is the highly philosophic one of "seeing wisely". The more one investigates the concrete and individual, the more clearly does one grasp the general—one must not say abstract—principles controlling them:

...because the painter's mind must of necessity enter into nature's mind in order to act as an interpreter between nature

and art; it must be able to expound the causes of the manifestations of her laws

But when one considers the full implications of Leonardo's artistic theory, and still more his practice, this brilliant ideal appears to be threatened by doubt, fear and humility. This has been noted repeatedly by scholars more concerned than Cassirer with Leonardo as an artist—among them such authorities as Sir Kenneth Clark, Lionello Venturi and André Chastel. One need not dispute the supreme, indeed revolutionary importance of Leonardo's "idea and definition of the law of nature itself", on which Cassirer lays such stress; nor that these very concepts provided the basis for the growth of the empirical sciences in later centuries. But one may well argue that in Leonardo's own life and times, the triumph of the innovation was obscured by the problems it involved. Between the particular and the universal, the flux of appearance and the stability of law, there existed a tension that not only frustrated the ideal synthesis, but threatened to deny the possibility of any knowledge at all.

One of the most obvious obstacles to any simple formulation of a general principle is Leonardo's overriding sense of individual variation—one may almost say the uniqueness of the individual. With Leonardo, we have progressed far beyond all naive specification of the single set of "ideal" human proportions such as Alberti, his predecessor in art theory, seems to propose. Instead, Leonardo holds that

A man can be well proportioned if he is thick and short, or tall and thin, or medium; and whoever does not observe this variety will always make his figures on a single model, so that they will all look like brothers, which is greatly to be condemned. (Institut de France MS. G, 5v)

This agrees with the account in Vasari, the Renaissance artist-biographer, of Leonardo's

habit of following about people of unusual appearance and sketching them when he got home. It is hardly surprising that, as the critic Panofsky feels, he "unfortunately" failed to synthesise "the prodigious amount of visual material which he collected". And not the human body alone: the same wealth of variety existed in all created things.

Do you not see how many different animals there are, and how many trees, plants, flowers, and how great is the variety of mountainous places and of plains, springs, rivers, cities, public and private edifices, instruments meet for human usage, and of different kinds of dress, ornaments, and crafts? All these things must be executed with skill and excellently well when depicted by one who deserves to be called master.

(Bibliothèque Nationale MS. 2038, 25v)

The sense of the universal law working in each object is thus countered by a celebration of its individuality. It may not be out of place to quote here Leonardo's famous stricture on abbreviators :

...you do not realise that your error is to strip trees of their ornament, of their branches covered with leaves and sprinkled with fragrant flowers and fruit, but seem to think that you must make bare planks of them.

(Windsor Drawings 19084 r.)

Up to this point, Leonardo does not seem so very different from other theorists who stress the need for variety and individual detail in painting. Alberti has many similar remarks. In fact, in his more carefree moments, Leonardo may cut off the individual detail from its actual place in nature and put it into a strange composite form—a product of fancy, not imagination, to make anachronistic use of Coleridge's terms. Hence the grotesque heads among Leonardo's drawings; hence his prescription for a monster with

the nose of a greyhound, the eyebrows of

a lion, the temples of an old cock, and the neck of a water tortoise. (Bibliothèque Nationale MS. 2038, 29r).

One also recalls Vasari's account of the fearsome shield and the doctored lizard, created by the same weird collage, with which Leonardo frightened his friends. The painter can in fact create anything he chooses to please his fancy:

If the painter wishes to see beauties that charm him it lies in his power to create them, and if he wishes to see monstrosities that are frightful, buffoonish, or ridiculous, or pitiable, he can be lord and God thereof...

(Paragone: Codex Urbinas)

However, one must admit that this spirit of relaxed, wilful creation is uncharacteristic of Leonardo. Even the artist's original creations of landscapes etc. must be in accordance with natural principles, as Leonardo goes on to say in the passage just quoted. The individual detail is realised to be subject to a synthesising force...but a force too great to be grasped:

The lying interpreters of nature affirm that quicksilver is the semen common to all metals, but they forget that nature varies her semen according to the diversity of the things that she wishes to bring forth into the world.

(Codex Atlanticus, 76v)

The universe is not a "box of toys" but a mysterious mechanism too complex to be formulated. There are laws holding the entire structure together, but one can gauge only the most immediate context of a phenomenon and not its total function in the scheme.

This is best seen from the fact that the laws which Leonardo grasps in greatest detail, and which he primarily tries to express in his art, are those of motion, change and situation, the immediate spatial and temporal context:

Therefore painting is philosophy, because philosophy deals with the increase and de-

crease (in the size of objects) through motion (i.e., as they recede from the eye).

(Paragone: Codex Urbinas 3v)

or, even more radically,

Painting extends to the surfaces, colours and shapes of all things created by nature: while philosophy penetrates below the surface to arrive at the inherent properties, but it does not carry the same conviction, and in this is unlike the work of the painter who apprehends the foremost truth of these bodies, as the eye errs less.

(Paragone: Codex Urbinas 4r)

However Leonardo may distinguish philosophy from painting, he is clearly admitting here the limits of painting as a vehicle of knowledge. In human figures, it is the mood, the expression, the gesture that occupies him, with the momentary configuration of muscles that it requires. And with every object, he is most concerned with the play of light and shadow upon it, and the way it reflects the colours of the objects surrounding it—at a given moment, in a given situation:

No object will ever show its true colour if the light that illuminates it is not of exactly the same colour.

(Codex Urbinas 66v)

Any knowledge embodied in art will therefore be of a purely relative nature. Chastel may be going too far in saying that the original, absolute form underlying these appearances is for Leonardo merely an artistic fiction for use in his theoretical writings; but it is an entity beyond, or almost beyond, all appearances, and it is only these appearances that a naturalistic art can express.

We may venture further if we consider the paucity of finished paintings by Leonardo, and the proliferation of sketches, especially in his later life. No doubt this is partly due to his impatience with trivial details of execution after he had worked out the basic technical problems. But one wonders how far such an explanation will serve: would an artist so sensitive to colour,

for instance, have so commonly forgone the opportunity of embodying his researches on colour-reflections?

It may reasonably be suggested that as Leonardo grew old, he became increasingly impatient even of the temporary equilibrium of forces demanded by the standard "historical" painting of Renaissance art. The late sketches are full above all else of action, movement, flux—not even the "context" of a single action that he had earlier advocated, but the suggestion of a continuous shift of context. Critics have noted such preoccupations in Leonardo from the start—in particular, the notable cluster of associations by which the abstract scheme of the spiral or interlace provides a link between tortuous movements of the human body, leaves on a stem, the pattern of tributaries flowing into a river, the movement of flowing water, and wavy hair. A scheme of "correspondences" indeed, but suggesting a state of flux, objects merging and losing their identities, rather than an ordered, meaningful development let alone a firm stratified structure like the old medieval world-image.

There are other mysteries in Leonardo too. His chiaroscuro has attracted attention since the earliest times. "Eventually", writes Vasari, "his paintings were wholly devoid of light and subjects looked as if they were being seen by night rather than clearly defined by daylight." The technical requirements of "modelling"—the use of light and shade for a three-dimensional effect—can hardly account for the subtle shadows on the face of Mona Lisa or of St. Anne in the group of *Virgin and Child with St. Anne*, now in the Louvre at Paris. (The latter face, however, may not be Leonardo's own work.) Leonardo painted two *Madonnas of the Rocks*. The latter in the National Gallery at London, has far deeper shadows than the earlier, in the Louvre. Again Chastel seems to overstate the truth when he attributes the "triumph of chiaroscuro" to the "uneasiness of knowledge, or rather the confusion of thought". The second

expression is patently unsuitable, but the first is suggestive though inadequate. One is tempted to emulate the lyrical tones of Pater's **The Renaissance**: it would not be inappropriate in the context, for all Leonardo's major works are full of a profound sense of mystery, the "troubled beauty" that haunted Pater. Mona Lisa might understand this mystery, but the painter can only feel its awesome presence—all the way from the early **Adoration of the Magi** in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence to the late **St. John the Baptist** in the Louvre.

This means that the great "law" or force of universal necessity cannot be defined through paintings; one can only suggest its existence in expressive fashion. Shadow is used not to define forms but to dissolve them: it expresses not the forces that are understood, but the forces that are not. Kenneth Clark has a suggestive passage on the opposition of "scientific" and "expressive" tendencies in Leonardo, and and in fact I have drawn much upon Clark's suggestions for my account of Leonardo generally. I may venture to add that these opposed tendencies may not be merely contradictory but consecutive: the quest for order, remaining unfulfilled, ultimately leads to the sense of mystery. One wonders how far the **Mona Lisa** can be associated with the brooding, Saturnine figures of "Melancholy" so common in Renaissance art and best known from Dürer's famous engraving. Some ten years after the **Mona Lisa**, Leonardo himself drew an **Old Man Meditating** on one of the sheets now in the Windsor Collection. Its affinities with the "Melancholia" figures are obvious.

The sense of mystery seems to lead to an implicit reversal of the basic principles of Leonardo's scientific naturalism. Cassirer observes, and correctly, that Leonardo admits no occultism, no *a priori* principles of natural affinity that cannot be empirically proved. Yet what, if not a sort of pictorial occultism, can we call that sense of a mysterious affinity that links Mona Lisa or the Madonna to their rocky back-

grounds, and thus connects them still more unexpectedly with the St. Jerome in the Vatican? What gives so much more than a merely sensational air of mystery to the darkness from which emerge the disturbing, unsatisfying figures of the Louvre St. John?

One thinks also of the unexplained figures that crowd the background of a work as early as the Uffizi **Adoration**, rendered half-grotesque by the force of the questions they both ask and inspire. (And one connects with them the sketch-like, contorted forms of horses in the background, suggestive of movement and flux). Even more disturbing visions haunt Leonardo's imagination but find expression only in words; his late-life fears of a universal deluge, for instance, or his narrative of the giant from the Lybian desert:

I know not what to say or do. I seem to find myself swimming, head bent, within the mighty throat, and dead, I will be swallowed up, indistinguishably, in the huge belly. (Codex Atlanticus, 311r)

Most terrifying of all is the famous vision of a dark cave before which the artist stands in mingled fear and desire, "stupefied by such an unknown thing" (British Museum MS. Arundel 263, 155r).

To this sense of general mystery in comprehending the world is added the special difficulty of the artist, who must express not only the abstract but the totally incomprehensible in visual terms. Not only is the ultimate force of necessity unknowable; even such glimpses of it as we do receive are (despite the arguments of the **Paragone**) doubly difficult to express in art, which can analyse principles only to the extent that they are embodied in appearance—that is to say, it cannot, strictly speaking, formulate the principle at all, but only record a single application of it.

A finished painting worthy of Leonardo's ideal would thus have to achieve an almost, perhaps, quite, impossible synthesis of principle and appearance. As we have seen, Leonardo himself

often had to resort to expressive methods to cut the Gordian knot and project something of his interior vision. It is significant that his ideal of knowledge came to flower not in his own works, still less in that of any later artist, but in the achievements of mathematizing scientists from Galileo onward. Unlike the artist, the mathematician could leave the appearance behind him when he had apprehended the principle.

Leonardo's ideal was thwarted by two obstacles: the limits of knowledge, and the virtual impossibility of its artistic expression. As Lionello Venturi observes,

The painter's task was to represent not man

alone but the universe in all its manifestations; not merely the anatomy of man and the horse but the basic principles of movement and the mystery of the soul. And, in fact, Leonardo bequeathed to the world some amazingly pregnant works in which no aspect of movement and the soul was left unexplored; yet he failed to express the **whole** nature of movement and the **whole** human soul.

It was perhaps a wild and noble dream even to demand of himself that he should do so; but the impossibility of the task makes it all the more imperative that we should not attempt to record as a success this most glorious frustration in the intellectual history of western man.

NOTE

All the paintings and drawings I have mentioned are reproduced in *Leonardo da Vinci: the Artist*, ed. Ludwig Goldscheider (5th edition, New York & London, 1954), available in the Presidency College Library. Most of the works are very famous and often reproduced elsewhere.

I have indicated the manuscript sources of all quotations from the Notebooks—and therefore refrained from noting the particular translation used in each case.

In deference to the spirit of a college magazine, I have also refrained from littering my essay with numbered references to critical works. These are the books I have referred to:

1. Walter Pater, *The Renaissance* (1873; ed. Kenneth Clark, London, 1961). The essay entitled "Leonardo da Vinci" was first published in 1869.
2. Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*. First published in German

in 1927; English translation by Mario Domandi, Oxford, 1963.

3. Kenneth Clark, *Leonardo da Vinci* (1939; revised edition, Harmondsworth 1961).
4. *Italian Painting: Critical Studies* by Lionello Venturi, Historical Surveys by Rosabianca Skira-Venturi; trans. Gilbert Stuart. (Geneva, 1951).
5. André Chastel (ed.), *The Genius of Leonardo da Vinci*: trans. Ellen Callmann. (New York, 1961).
6. Erwin Panofsky, "The History of the Theory of Human Proportions as a Reflection of the History of Styles", *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (1955; Harmondsworth, 1970).. This essay was first published in German in 1921.

Vasari is most easily accessible in the Penguin selection translated by George Bull (Harmondsworth, 1965). This is the edition I have used.

Time, Helen and Cleopatra

A Note on *Antony and Cleopatra*,

V, ii, 294-5 & 308-9

Arun Kumar Dasgupta

This note attempts to interpret Shakespeare's use of the figure of death first as a lover and then, more daringly, as 'my baby at my breast' in Cleopatra's dying speeches in *Antony and Cleopatra* V, ii, 294-5 and 308-9 respectively, in the light of Titian's treatment of the theme of Time and of Leonardo da Vinci's reflections on the same theme.

I begin with a highly evocative picture, *A Young Girl Doing Her Hair* by Titian, as interpreted by E. Panofsky¹. Titian doubles the mirrors here: One in front, and one at the back, both held by the admiring lover of the young girl. By this device he creates at once a dual meaning of the mirror and a dual presence of her lover. The one you can see is seen but dimly, like one overshadowed, a figure "steeped in a shadow" which hides another. The mysterious, hardly perceptible overlapping of the visible and the invisible is effected by the fine gloom thrown like a cloak around the man in the picture. Who is the other lover, the one whom we cannot see, the one who throws the shadow, the engulfing shadow? It is Time who will devour her flesh and her lover's. The latter's presence in this attitude, admiringly holding her mirror for her, gives her own fragile beauty the illusion of a deceptive strength that is shattered by what she can see in the other mirror held behind her head. This second mirror redoubles her image but, in the process, judging by her pensive, far-away, abstracted

gaze, reveals the overhanging shadow of Time, of decay and death.

Titian's fine treatment of the theme of Time recalls, as Panofsky observes, some of Shakespeare's sonnets, e.g. Nos. 3 and 77². Let me quote, however, from Leonardo's "Reflections on Life":

"O Time, consumer of all things! O envious age, thou destroyest all things and devourest all things with the hard teeth of the years little by little, in slow death. Helen, when she looked in her mirror and saw the withered wrinkles which old age had made in her face wept and wondered why she had been twice carried away. O Time, consumer of all things! O envious age, whereby all things are consumed!"³

Leonardo is referring to a passage in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, XV. 228-33:

"Helen also weeps when she sees her aged wrinkles in the looking glass, and tearfully asks herself why she should twice have been a lover's prey.

O Time, thou great devourer, and thou envious Age, / Together you destroy all things; and slowly gnawing with your teeth you finally consume all things in lingering death." (tr. Loeb.)⁴.

The young woman in Titian's picture may, one is tempted to say, be symbolically identified with Helen. The use of a single figure, sometimes explicitly mythological, sometimes one in disguise, for the purpose of suggesting, often

ironically, contradictory aspects of a single theme was common in Renaissance art. In the portrait of Diane de Poitiers⁵, for example, we seem to have Diana portrayed as Venus⁶. In the portrait of the Young Girl by Titian we have so to speak, Helen or Beauty as **La Vecchia** ('The Old Woman' as portrayed by Giorgione): that is how Panofsky interprets the heroine of the painting, "as a kind of 'La Vecchia' in reverse"⁷.

In connection with the passages quoted above from Leonardo and Ovid, I am tempted to refer to two passages from **Antony and Cleopatra**:

(i) If thou and nature can so gently part.
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
Which hurts and is desir'd.

V, ii, 293—5.

(ii) Peace, peace!

Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?

V, ii, 308—9.

Both, especially, the latter, are examples of the complete transformation in Shakespeare's hand, of conventional figures, resulting in an immeasurable enrichment of vision. Death here is first visualised, with characteristically erotic longing, as a lover whose pinch is **desired**. Then in the course of a few lines, comes the unexpected and daringly imaginative transition, the aspic at her breast being imagined by Cleopatra as the baby at her breast. We should note the subtle difference here in Cleopatra's vision of death from the more conventional one, say, in Titian's picture. It is, first, self-embraced and, then, self-nourished. It is she who embraces Death and, by the very intensity of her longing—by her intense eroticism, one might say—she transforms the gaunt aspect of Death. Again, it is she who feeds Death, not Death that feeds on her. One only has to set this beside the reverberations of the passage, fine in its own way, from Leonardo's **Notebooks** to see the difference.

"Where is the mirror of Cleopatra?" One

may ask, looking for a connection between Shakespeare's passages on the one hand and the Titian painting and Leonardo's reflections on the other. Though the connection is indirect, I have made use of the latter to understand what Cleopatra is doing here. It is true she is not looking at a mirror. Yet, figuratively, perhaps, one could say: here, too, we have a beautiful woman looking at herself in a mirror. She is neither young, nor old: she is ageless;⁸ and the mirror is the impalpable mirror of death. At the beginning of her great speech (v, ii, 279 ff.), it is clear that her sole aim is to make us see her as she would wish to be seen—what else is a mirror for?—stoicwise, may be, to make a spectacle of herself⁹. To do that she needs such a mirror¹⁰, one in which she can not only see herself, regal, almost immortal, but, in the process, her love, too, magically elevated, extending to and beyond death. She begins by declaring that she has 'immortal longings'.¹¹ In the first of these passages (v, ii, 294—5) we have one of these 'immortal longings': characteristically, it has a smack of her carnal ones. The transition noticed in the second passage (v, ii, 308—9) is, as stated, highly significant. Here, too, the senses are clung to, not abandoned by any means. The attitude also is clearly indicated: "Dost thou not see my baby at my breast....?" In that magic mirror which she makes Death hold up to her¹², death itself is transformed: the aspic, even as it bites, becomes a baby at her breast; a symbol of death becomes a symbol of life. She feeds it in the sense that she lends Death something of her own beauty just as, earlier, she had lent him her own erotic appeal without losing any of her own.

In these passages of Shakespeare, then, Death is so transformed as to become a mirror across which pass visions in which life is heroically enlarged, rendered clear and transparent as only the highly polished surface of a mirror can render it¹³. The image it reflects is, in its immediacy, almost an intuition, or **vision**, the

'surmised shape' of something that endures beyond death, something exquisite and fragile, yet

somehow carrying a promise of permanence in its sheer radiance, clarity and depth¹⁴.

NOTES & REFERENCES

1. E. Panofsky: *Problems in Titian mostly iconographic*, Ch. IV, p. 91 *et. seq.*, London, 1969. The picture is in the Louvre (Fig. 108 in Panofsky's book).
2. E. Panofsky: *Op. Cit.*, p. 93. Queen Christina, we are informed, had a mirror, designed by Bernini, "where the glass is being unveiled by Time himself in order to 'reveal..... the decay of the viewer's beauty and youth'."
3. *Selections from the Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. I.A. Richter (World's Classics), Section VI, pp. 273-274, London, 1955.
4. As quoted in *Selections from Notebooks*, ed. cit., p. 274.
5. School of Fontainebleau. Pl. 304 in *Encyclopaedia of World Art* (McGraw-Hill,...), Vol. IX. Re: the cycle of portraits in honour of Diana from the French School of Fontainebleau, see *Encyclopaedia of World Art*, Vol. XI, p. 491, Vol. V (pl. 392), Vol. XII (pl. 103).
6. See E. Wind: *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance*, p. 77.
7. E. Panofsky: *op. cit.* p. 92.
8. This reveals, I think, the full significance of Enobarbus' encomium (II, ii, 234). "I am again for Cydnus" (v. ii, 227) is a clear pointer, recalling II, ii, 186-7.
9. Earlier in this scene (v. ii, 207-220) she portrays vividly her dread of being seen otherwise. We can see how her feelings are worked up, and also how her thoughts begin to take shape. See 1.207 ("Thou, an Egyptian puppet, shall be shown"), 11.209-10 (... and hammers shall Uplift us to the view"), 11. 218-20. ("and I shall see.... I' the posture of a whore"), and, finally, Iras' assertion ("I'll never see't, 1. 222) followed by her own resolution "Show me, my women, like a queen" (1. 226).
10. Thus a fortuitous necessity is transmuted into an overwhelmingly personal need, as imperious as her own self.
11. A striking example of telescopic compression of meaning: she not merely longs for immortality but also wants to make her 'longings' immortal. The mood evoked is reminiscent of an earlier assertion ("Eternity was in our lips, and eyes", I, iii, 35): there, too, eternity embraces sense as well as sight. Carnal rapture, in other words, is made eternal by the way the lovers choose to look at it. There is no question of submission or even sublimation: it is a triumph of co-existence.

12. Death, we may say, holds the mirror up to her, as art holds the mirror up to nature.
13. Leonardo's observations on the mind of a painter may be of some interest in this connection. See *Selections from Notebooks*, ed. cit., Section IV, Subsection IV ("The Artist's Life"), pp. 216-28. See also E. Cassirer: *An Essay on Man*, Yale University Press, 1944, p. 147.
14. The contents of this article (excluding the last two paragraphs) formed part of a paper entitled "The Eye as a Mirror: the Mirror and the Eye", written as an appendix to the lectures given at the R.K.M. Institute of Culture, Calcutta during March-April, 1973 (*The Intellectual Foundations of the Renaissance: Amal Bhattacharjji Memorial Lecture for 1973*).

A Note on Vaughan's *The Retreate*

Lopamudra Chatterjee

"But (ah!) my soul with too much stay
Is drunk and staggers in the way."

The idea of the soul being corrupted by "too much stay" on earth is fairly traditional. It has parallels in Hermetic, Platonic and in Christian thought, each having influenced Vaughan in one way or the other.

In Hermetic philosophy, the notion is presented in terms of alchemy:

"Things were originally good but are made evil by lasting on, just as rust forms on metals and dirt collect on a man's body — and that is why God has subjected Man to change: for by transmutation things are purged of evil."

[Scott: *Hermetica*, Oxford 1924, xiv].

This explains, though partially, Vaughan's desire for a change of state:

"And when this dust falls to the urn

In that state I came return".

The Hermetic explanation is partial because here the period of "too much stay" is not given an ethical significance. Stagnation in itself

inevitably corrupts the original purity of the soul; the process of gradual degeneration of the soul does not indicate a moral depravity in man. In effect, the argument for a change of state in Hermetic terms is not unlike Donne's light hearted argument in **Defence of Women's Inconstancie**: "Gold that lyeth still rusteth, water corrupteth, aire that moveth not poysoneth". Death, in this context, is an inevitable alchemical reaction. It is not, so to say, the wages of sin.

In Platonic philosophy, the idea of "lasting on" is linked with the idea of the grossness of matter which gradually corrupts the original purity of the soul. Indeed, Vaughan's description of his drunk and staggering soul is almost an echo of the following passage from **Phaedo**:

"And were we not saying long ago, says Socrates, that the soul of man when using the body as an instrument of perception were we not saying that the soul too is dragged by the body into the region of the changeable, and wanders and is confused, the world spins around her and

she is like a drunkard when she touches change?"

[Phaedo. 79]

It is obvious that here good and evil are presented in terms of the matter/spirit dichotomy. The body (being matter) corrupts the purity of the soul (or spirit). Death, which connotes for Platonists a separation of the body and the soul, therefore liberates the soul from the "fleshly gaol". The influence of Platonism on Vaughan cannot be denied. The word "stagger" (implying a load) does seem to suggest the "fleshly burden" thus described by Plato:

"And this corporeal element, my friend, is heavy and weighty and earthy, and is that element of sight by which a soul is dragged down into the visible world..."

[Phaedo. 81]

But, as a careful reading of the poem will show, Platonism does not explain its total significance. That matter corrupts the soul is, according to Vaughan, part of the truth and not the whole truth. Thus, he

"Felt through all this fleshly dresse
Bright shootes of everlastingnesse".

Matter is not evil per se—Nature thus expresses "shadows of eternity". And so we come to the Christian plane of the idea of the soul's drunkenness.

In Christian thought worldly life is often described in terms of drunkenness. Thus, in *Rex Humanitas*, the worldly king Rex is portrayed as drunk with temporal power. Bacon, while describing Man's life on earth, remarked "— the more a man drinketh of the world, the more it intoxicateth". Milton, while describing the effects of Comus' magic pation on his victims, also expresses a similar notion:

"They all their friends and native homes forget
To roll in pleasure in a sensual sty".

[Comus, ll. 76-77]

And

"The soul grows clotted with contagion
Imbodies and imbrutes itself till she quite
lose

The divine property of her first being".

[Comus, ll. 467-469]

Considered in this light, it becomes fairly obvious that Vaughan's desire for a change of state is, in effect, a denial of wordly life, thus stated elsewhere by Vaughan:

"Let sensual natures judge as they please,
for my part I shall hold it no paradox
to affirme, there are no pleasures in this
world."

[Man in Darkness or a
Discourse of Death]

The lines

"And when this dust falls to the urn
In that state I came return".

express a spirit of withdrawal, for, to quote Whichcote:

"No man that is immersed in a sensual life
can have any true notion of Heaven or
of Glory".

[Select Sermons, 1618, p. 38]

It is interesting to note that Milton also uses the image of drunkenness to portray Adam and Eve's behaviour after the Fall:

"As with new wine intoxicateth, both
They swim in mirth".

The soul's drunkenness, in these, suggest the spiritual degeneration of wordly man. Hence, Vaughan's reiterated stress on the concept of Individual Responsibility:

"Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinfull sound
Or had the black art to dispence
A sev'rall sinne to ev'ry sence".

The reference to "conscience" (traditionally regarded as the voice of God) and to "a sev'rall sinne to ev'ry sence" (suggestive of the seven deadly sins of the morality tradition) makes explicit Vaughan's belief in the Christian assertion that "man is betrayed by what is false within" [Meredith, **Modern Love**, XLIII].

Christian thinkers further assert human existence, or our life on earth, derives its direction from the soul's gradual progress towards God. To quote Donne:

"(life) is but a sojourning.. here we are but viatores, passengers, wayfaring men, this life is but a highway, and thou canst not build any hopes here".

[*Sermons*, ed. Sparrow, xxxix]

And Everdene:

"As the sun riseth not to stand still but to goe forward, not to darken but to enlighten the earth, so thou wast born not to continue a child but to encrease in the true knowledge of Creator.

[Humphrey Everdene, **A Brother's Gift** 1623. p. 14]

In **The Retreate**, therefore, the image of the soul's drunkenness when linked with the traditional metaphor of life as a journey ("when yet I had not walk'd above/A mile or two from my first love") conveys an almost absolute picture of his spiritual degeneration. But Vaughan, even while recognizing the fallen state of his soul asserts his belief in the efficacy of Divine Mercy; whereby "the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into

the glorious liberty of the children of God" [Rom. 8: 21]. This promise, however, was not made unconditionally — "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of Heaven, neither can corruption inherit incorruption" [I Cor. 15: 50], explaining Vaughan's desire to be reduced to quintessential dust. It is a fundamental claim of the Christian faith that Death, the terror introduced into the world after Man's first disobedience (dust to dust), is transformed by an act of Grace into a moment of infinite joy, with "a shaking of hands with God" [Donne, Sermon IX]. Donne therefore advises:

"When thou comest to the Gate of Death (be) glad, for it is but one step from thy Jerusalem".

[*Sermons*, ed. Sparrow, p. 295]

Vaughan's "shady city of palm trees" is, of course, Jerusalem by another name.

The theme of **The Retreate** is ultimately Christian in its emphasis. It expresses the Christian belief in the soul's cyclic progress from God to God, thus stated by Richard Sibbes:

"As a circle begins and ends in one point so all comes from God and ends is God".

[**A Christian Portion** 1638, p. 6]

The intermediary life on earth is only a period of exile. After death (which is regarded as a prelude to an act of mercy) the lost and wandering soul of man is restored to its original Home and Keeper:

"For ye were as sheep gone astray but now are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls".

[I Peter, 2, 25]

Modern Political Poetry : An Achievement in Synthesis

Gautam Basu

"In our times the destiny of man presents its meaning in political terms".—Thomas Mann.

It was beneath this quotation that Yeats once wrote: "How can I, that girl standing there, /My attention fix /On Roman or on Russian/Or on Spanish politics?"¹. Considering his deep involvement, however, (which of course, was due to his unrequited love for Maud Gonne as much as it was due to his reverence towards Ireland), he could hardly have questioned himself about Irish politics. In point of fact, if art is considered to be an instrument which attempts to visualise, examine and then interpret life (or any of its aspects), there are no ways of justifying a forced segregation of politics, because however surprising or illogical it may seem in certain instances, politics is, and will perhaps continue to be, one of the main forces influencing the human situation. The artist has, primarily, to rely on a subjective reaction to events and, there is no reason why they should not be political in nature. Undue cynicism about politics speaks of prejudice, and, in a limited sense, it can even be "the aggressive face of ignorance"².

The flourishing world of political art, however is not without its problems. Very often politics, being a sort of imposition, has distorted artistic content. For instance, over the years, Red China, greatly influenced by European classical music has attempted to synthesise it with politics and the Chinese condition in general; what has often emerged though repre-

sents Wagnerian inferno minus the integral beauty of the original form. That however, hardly states the entire case, for as successful and universally accepted attempts like 'The Yellow River Concerto' prove, all generalizations, including this one, are dangerous. Provided therefore, artistic essence is retained, any art form can be meaningfully matched with politics and the social condition. Because art must have its roots in life, a sensitive application of politics to poetry, while widening the scope of the latter, will give deeper significance to the former.

Just as any state can choose its functional position between "collective scoundrelism"³ and the establishment of socio-economic goals of prosperity and equity, political poetry, including its modern variety, faces a spectrum, at the two extremes of which lie, propaganda, and the demand for social justice. The only snag is that, the closer it is to propaganda, the sooner it will reach a befitting abode—the dustbin, or being euphemistic, the melting pot of contemporary civilisation.

Within this range of modern political poetry, there is a section which cannot be dubbed as propaganda, but is of no permanent poetic value either. D. H. Lawrence's "How Beastly The Bourgeois Is —"⁴ has scathing criticism and rich imagery, but the poet is so obsessed in his fury and is so frantic in his search for a beast in the bourgeois, that he forgets to write a good poem. But then, Lawrence is an enigma. It is painful indeed to observe how a maturity that can create "Bavarian Gentians"⁵ or "A

Ship of Death"⁶, is squandered almost half-jestingly among flashes of brilliance in a vast section of his poetical works.

Politics, as such, represents a vast field of human activity and so, for convenience the present author mainly deals with Socialist verse. This is also because, the political poetry discussed is confined to the modern era during which Socialism has influenced most poets involved in politics (excepting a few like Ezra Pound) and, therefore, accounts for a large proportion of political verse. Thirdly, and this may well be an extension of the second reason, Socialism, having in it a humane element, is perfectly suited to poetic temperament. It is to be noted however, that no disrespect towards Pound is intended. He will, in his own right, be remembered in literary history irrespective of his fascist leanings.

In the broadest sense, the poet's ability to reflect the human condition is related to both calibre and circumstance. Poetry springs, as it were, from the interaction of dual stimuli. In some cases however, one stimulus sets the other into motion, that is, either circumstances force the poet to take to his pen, or his sensitivity serves as the basic impetus. The following lines by Mayakovsky indicate the relation between the two forces, here, the poet's sensitivity induces him to identify himself with a particular situation: "But I,/from poetry's skies/plunge into communism,/because/without it/I feel no love"⁷. The next example, this time from Pablo Neruda's 'Heights of Macchu Picchu', indicates the very opposite. The poet wants the situation to take an active role by using him as a medium of expression: "Come quickly to my veins, and to my mouth/Speak through my speech and through my blood"⁸.

Poetry confined to sectarian matrices presents a dubious prospect. Only when it discards a peripheral existence for an identification with human experience (of which politics cannot but be a part) and is tempered by the misery of

mankind, will it be a true representation of life. There is no need to worry about the 'literary' offal that accumulates incidentally, because the insubstantial will certainly perish.

II

Modern political poetry, as mentioned before, is not without problems, and an important one is that of a receptive audience. Some readers harbour the prejudice that politics defiles an otherwise pure art, while others, armed with clinical insensitivity, consider the entire matter an irrelevant botheration. And, in between lies the generally lean body of readers, who, though free from prejudice, are meticulous about quality. Reception varies from place to place and over time. Neruda was optimistic about Chile. "We feel supported and understood by our people. . . . As poets we are really in touch with the people. . . . I read my poetry everywhere in my country. . . and I feel it is my duty to do it"⁹. The tragedy, however, is that even this massive support stands helpless in the face of more obvious force—Chile's present condition being an instance in point.

Where the public is insensitive to poetry, the situation is much worse. Apathy, in this case, emanates from the fact that people tend to think in grooves. The philosopher Schopenhauer had the habit of placing a gold coin, in full view, on the table during meals and pocketing it (much to the waiter's dismay) after he finished dining. This apparent eccentricity did not go unnoticed and eventually, when asked about it, he declared that the coin would go to the poor whenever he heard the officers at the table discussing anything more serious than "women, dogs and horses"¹⁰.

The essence of disturbing this stagnation consists of providing society with the best of a literature that is not its own; the injection tending to stimulate creativity. Transmission can be mainly of two types; firstly, of the

vertical variety¹¹, when the literature of a previous generation, neglected so long, is re-introduced, and secondly, of the lateral variety¹² when translations of a foreign contemporary literature act as the stimulus. Plekhanov holds that in the latter case, influence is directly proportional to the similarity of social relations between the borrower and the lender. Besides stimulating dormant creativity, this transmission may affect a breakdown of geographical constraints and lay the foundations of an international literature. A situation may develop where, though the utterances are very much his own, the poet speaks for many besides himself.

Once public acceptance is ensured, the problems change to those of a technical nature. Translation, for instance, can be an extremely difficult business, and if poorly performed, can lead to incorrect evaluation. Modern political poetry stands on the broad base of many languages and this demands translation. Pound is renowned for his translation of Provencal, early Italian and ancient Chinese poetry; and someone like him would be very much of a boon if involved in political poetry. Criticism also can be difficult in the sense that it is most accurate when the original language is known; and in this event, a few more critics like Bowra¹³ could tone down the scale of the problem.

Thirdly, in the process of enlightening the public, a balance between elevation and popularisation is to be struck¹⁴. The problem with elevation is that without some degree of popularisation, it tends to stimulate a few isolated individuals while leaving the broad base wallowing in ignorance. On the other hand, popularisation without elevation has even more disastrous consequences: it creates an inconsequential literature.

In no event, however, is it to be assumed that popularisation necessarily implies an inferior art. Much of the early political verse, mainly by Heine, the lesser known Thomas Hood (1799-1845) and others were simple work songs which

had, to say the least, a lasting impact on contemporary life and future poets. This theme was later taken up by many, but probably only Eugène Pottier (1816-87), Paul Eluard (1895-1952) and Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) have been successful.

As far as success is concerned, *L' Internationale*, written by Pottier to music of a march tune, still holds its ground at the summit. The song, originally dedicated to one Gustave Le Francais, member of the French Commune, is memorable for its sustained fury, threatening to burst in every line that leads to the ground finalé: So march, march the fury/Of the final fight to find! / The International's glory / Belongs to all mankind¹⁵. Characteristically enough, this poem, has not with time, lost its fire, for it was the most popular song in the political upheaval in France which ultimately led to De Gaulle's downfall in 1968. But then, sadly enough, only songs do not usher in Socialism, and France, at least for the present, has proved it.

Yet another implication which probably not even Pottier himself imagined transmitting to future generations is that the poem is a veritable scourge for arm-chair Socialists. There is present a constant reminder that the final and only true commitment is to the downtrodden commoner, somebody perhaps incapable of intellectual acrobatics and sophisticated philosophising, but somebody who has suffered the most and known the worst, and above all, somebody who needs that marginal inspiration to transform the short end of the stick which has been given to him for so long into a weapon.

III

One of the most interesting features of modern political poetry is its association with personalities and their personal views. Strictly speaking, association can harm evaluation, but on the other hand it does succeed in infusing

deeper meaning, or even breathing life into the lines. Does not poetry achieve a new dimension with the knowledge of Wordsworth's country tours with Dorothy or his relationship with Coleridge, or even with the fact that both Hopkins and Eliot were essentially deeply religious men? If no eyebrows are raised when the influence of the French Revolution on Wordsworth is discussed, why then discriminate against modern political poetry as is done in certain quarters?

The stories of Heinrich Heine's life (1797-1856), his lasting influence on Marx and above all, his explosive poetry, are too popular to deserve repetition. This association has been constantly enriched, whether it be with the Auden-Spender-Day Lewis trio, Brecht, Neruda or with certain major political figures of the century. These names are oft repeated, but the story of one ill-fated man, though out of public focus (except in a few book review columns), seems particularly moving.

Osip Mandelstamm (1891-1938), the son of a wealthy Jewish merchant in Russia, took to a literary career in spite of having been disinherited, and by 1917, had firmly established himself as an influential poet¹⁵. Basically of an independent nature, with fearlessness to justify it, he was quick to note the oppressive elements in the Bolshevik régime. The first clash with the authorities brought no immediate harm, because Trotsky's sister (an admirer of Mandelstamm's Verse) saved his life—but from then on he was a marked man living on the brink of starvation. He dragged on for a few years more, but a fiery temperament can hardly be subdued for long and in 1934, he committed the blunder of reciting a satirical piece on Stalin at Boris Pasternak's apartment. There could be no danger from Pasternak and Mandelstamm knew it, but his enthusiasm had not allowed him to consider betrayal from the four other acquaintances present. Here is a version of the poem: "His thick fingers are as fat as worms,

/his words reliable as ten pound weights./His boot tops shine,/his cockroach moustache is laughing./About him, the great, his thin-necked, drained advisors,/He plays with them. He is happy with the half-men around him./They make touching and funny animal sounds./He alone talks Russian"¹¹.

Stalin reacted soon after. Sent to Siberia during the same year, Mandelstamm was exposed to conditions which permanently damaged his weak constitution. After a brief spell of 'freedom' in 1937, he was soon sent back. The second deportation proved fatal. "Under the delusion that his own food was poisoned he began to steal food from other prisoners. Time and again his fellow prisoners caught him and beat him cruelly. In the end they threw him out of the barracks into the thirty-below-zero cold. Filthy, emaciated, dressed in rags, he lived on for several weeks, sleeping in sheds and eating garbage. And then he died."¹⁸ But perhaps, it will take more than death to kill this man.

A total absence of compromise, and an unusual poetic calibre has brought Mandelstamm immortality, and he must have visualised it long before: "...I too, from ugly/Harsh heaviness shall build shining Beauty"¹⁰.

A generation after Mandelstamm came a man who was to be a legend in his lifetime and history in death—Ernesto Ché Guevara (1928-67). Even in his comparatively short and hectic life which ended soon after his capture²⁰ in Quebrada del Yuro, a ravine deep in the jungles of Bolivia, he found time for poetry—and it is a poetry deeply characteristic of him. An indomitable spirit, selflessness, belligerence and political conviction—all shine, not unlike coloured lights on the stage of the Latin American jungle. The entire effect is one of complete integration; the union of the personal element and circumstance.

The link between man and verse is still too strong for Guevara's poetry and hence, the

time for a proper evaluation has not as yet arrived. When it does, there will still remain an image—and it will be the image of a man who could say so much in the restrained beauty of these lines: “and if iron stands in our way/we ask for a sheet of Cuban tears/to cover our guerilla bones/on the journey to American history./Nothing more”²¹.

IV

In the ultimate analysis, all great poetry transcends to planes where the original context, in spite of having given deeper meaning, becomes secondary. For, Jure Kastelan, a Serbo Croat poet dealing mainly with the German occupation and civil war, the context has perhaps dimmed with time but the lines remain: “If out of breath/the horse returns/from the hill,/give him to drink, mother, trim his bridle/for a horse-man new”²². This rather delicate concept must have been born out of a particular circumstance, but who would say that it has been confined there? As the poet moves on, an undercurrent pervades and links numerous events all along history, perhaps, still in anticipation of the triumph of the insulted man. “If tears have dimmed your eyes/and wounds have marred your face/search not, mother for my grave”²³. Drawing a parallel to Rabindranath's statement that a rose is a great deal more than a blushing apology for its thorn, it might be said that the best in political poetry is more than the initial reaction to the stab of oppression. Initially, perhaps, it does crystallise from the pain relevant to a particular context, but only if the poetry is great, does it succeed in rising above it and eventually becomes a world in itself. On the one hand, it fondly encircles private sensations and on the other, it speaks for, and identifies itself with, all humanity.

Mao Tse-tung's verse has for long been associated with the expression ‘revolutionary romanticism’. This is questionable however, because

poetry cannot (or should not) ever be written to suit the cages of terminology, and secondly, over-use has eroded all but the skeletons of the words ‘revolution’ and ‘romanticism’. Another prevalent notion, that he was a pioneer in Chinese political poetry, has little basis because history records that Chu Yuan (340-270 B.C.)²⁴ dealt with political poetry implicitly, while Tu Fu (712-770 A.D.)²⁵ did so, explicitly. Mao's credit lies in using the tradition to impart deeper meaning to contemporary life.

Mao's poetry often reveals certain phases; some of it written in admiration of Nature, is astoundingly beautiful: ‘Alone in the autumn cold/I scan the river/that flows northward/Past the Orange Islet/And the mountains crimson/with the red leaves of the woods’²⁶. Sometimes, his work stimulates what may be inadequately described as, the revolutionary aspect of his poetry: “How many urgent tasks/have arisen after one another/Heaven and earth revolve,/Time presses,/Ten thousand years is too long,/We must seize the day”²⁷. He is however, most effective when he disrupts Nature's isolation and brings her down to the affairs of man. “The lonely goddess in the moon spreads her ample sleeves/To dance for these faithful souls in the sky/Of a sudden comes word of the Tiger's defeat on earth,/And they break into tears of torrential rain”²⁸. Politics appears towards the latter part where he imagines that news of the Tiger's (this allusion is of particular importance) defeat brings tears of joy, but because it is so perfectly blended with the poet's compassion for deceased comrades and the influence of Nature, it can never be akin to infiltration.

Very often however, a poet can fail. Writing political poetry is fairly similar to skilful navigation, and frequently enough, poets run aground. A political association cannot be accused for any such debacle, because it is the poet's ability at stake. He is free to use politics either as a pair of wings or as a pair of crutches and is bound to face the correspond-

ing consequences. Whether he draws the world into his canvas or lets his private sensations overflow, the poet must never lose sight of the fact that if his verse illuminates, it must enlighten the world at large; if it fails to do so, it is no light at all. After all, good political poetry is good, not because it is political, but because it is good. This tautology is unavoidable, because goodness is both relative and indefinable—man can at best, embody it, but perfect knowledge (at least for the present) is beyond him.

In the event of evaluation, political poetry can expect no priority treatment because of its having dealt with contemporary life. Many hypotheses for poetic appraisal have been forwarded, but Eliot's is most clear-cut: "... a poet's work may proceed along two lines on an imaginary graph; one of the lines being his conscious and continuous effort in technical excellence... The other line is just his normal course of development, his accumulation and digestion of experience... Now and then the two lines may converge at a high peak, so that we get a masterpiece. That is to say, an accumulation of experience has crystallised to form material of art, and years of work in technique have prepared an adequate medium; and something results in which medium and material.. are indistinguishable"²⁹.

V

The fact that political poetry is very much of a living art is proved by the crops of verse that almost every major political event produces. The Vietnam war for instance, has given rise to a poetry which (though too topical in certain cases) will stand the test of time because of a deep sensitivity below the expressed bitterness: "A volley of shots. Ten U.S. slugs/ You fell. But again, you rose /Your voice rang: 'Long live Vietnam'/Blood reddened your earthen bed./You died. Not a moan from your breast/You died like an angel lying down to rest"³¹.

Fortunately enough, in spite of bitter repressions that the immediate past has seen, the poet continues to speak out against injustice, irrespective of the prevailing social order. After all, history proves too firmly that the poet can be attacked, ignored, isolated or even be frightened—but he can never be silenced. He tends to react as spontaneously to the roar of American bombers over Vietnam as he does to Soviet shell-fire in the streets of Prague.

Every incident strikes a chord in the human heart where there are demarcations, one's very own, between different values like good and evil, but only the artist is able to attach to the frame of his creation, a seal of relative permanence on fleeting sensations. For him, his sense of values are like touchstones which examine the human predicament and hence, he can only find his truer and larger self in wider human relationships. And when he is totally disillusioned, he projects feelers into the future: "From the mines of Swaziland to the factories of Europe /Spring will be reborn under bright steps"³¹.

Disillusionment has however, no foundations of truth, because even if the poet leaves his task unaccomplished there will be future generations to follow. And what is more, they may well be poet-studded generations. Michael Baldwin has compiled a brilliant anthology of poems by children and even here politics seems to be popular enough. Peter Hinsley (aged thirteen years at the time of composition) shows a surprisingly powerful hold over the art of satire: " You may say what you like they said,/if you do as you're told,/So keep off the grass my friend/In case the grass is sold"³². In 'The Dictator'³³, another youngster gives a mature touch to his concern about 'forgotten' post-revolutionary promises and switches of power from one autocrat to another as disappointment slowly gathers momentum.

There can be little doubt that these lines have little value except that of forecasting.

Provided these children enjoy conditions conducive to poetic maturity and provided they fully exploit them, it can be justifiably expected that there will be sufficient reason to be proud of the future of political poetry, just as is true of its heritage.

VI

In the perspective of internationalism, nationalism is parochial; in the shape of chauvinism its record of harm is surpassed only by that of 'religious' fanaticism. But nationalism does not necessarily imply chauvinism. It is precisely when the mature individual's roots are firmly planted in his own soil that he is able to spread out his receptivity into all situations. Without this basis, he is bound to realize painfully the consequences of a rootless existence.

The central theme of any reaction to insulted humanity is almost always compassion. And since compassion for one's immediate surroundings is most intense, the poet's personal treatment of public themes regarding his own country is often the strongest. This is how Salvatore Quasimodo reacted to Hitler's occupation of Italy: "And how were we able to sing/with the stranger's foot upon our hearts,/among the dead abandoned in the squares/on the grass hard with ice, to the lament/like a lamb's, of the children, to the black howl/of the mother, who went to meet her son/crucified on the telegraph-pole?"³⁴ The pain is bitter to the point of self-destruction, but queerly enough, the verse it produces is immortal.

Quasimodo's experience may have varied in degree because it involved Hitler, but it is by no means unique. Times have change and so have men, but on shifting the scene from Italy to Vietnam and from Quasimodo to To Huu, it is found that the basic character of oppression and reaction is much the same: "Why are my days of joy so fraught with terror?/Why am I

forever confused, why should I be haunted/by a promise not yet honoured? Why does my throat/constrict, when I try to eat rice? Because you, my country/suffer and struggle alone, Our invaded South./Look, my friend, at the small dark round eyes of the children,/those jet-black apples that glitter behind barbed wire,/glitter with tears as they watch the flames around them..."³⁵

On the day of the 'Vietnamese Festival of The Children', U.S. bombers, on a good-will mission dropped toys. Ironically, these very villages had been bombed earlier on, and when the toys arrived, all that remained of the children were squashed bones amidst splattered blood. The poet's reaction is so moving, because the dimension of his bitterness is far deeper than hot-headed anger: "If the aeroplane/had dropped the toys/a fortnight ago and only now the bombs/my two children/thanks to your kindness/would have had something to play with/ for those two weeks"³⁶. This poem, also shows, among other things that the greatest boon of true nationalism is a situation where the individual is able to accept the tragedy of any nation as his own. The poet happens to be no Vietnamese, but an Austrian who has spent most of his days in London; in spite of his very different background, the involvement is so complete that no rightful cause or tragedy is alien, such that the line "my two children" flows spontaneously. The absence of war cries should not be mistaken for weakness, for there is no weakness in the still eyes of a dead child lying in the rubble. Sometimes, foreign reaction lacks such a tragic dimension, but compensates with a bitterness which protests against the falsehood and hypocrisy that has come to be associated with modern expansionism. "You put your bombers in, and put your conscience out./You take the human being and you twist it all about/So scrub my skin with women/Chain my tongue with whisky /Stuff my nose with garlic/Coat my eyes with

butter/Fill my ears with silver/Stick my legs in plaster/Tell me lies about Vietnam"³⁷.

Political poetry, though very painful in some cases, can be heart-warming also. Korean nationalistic poetry has in it something that can be understated as 'feverish ecstasy': "If that day comes before I perish./I will soar like a crow at night/and pound the Chongno-bell with my head./The bones of my skull/will scatter, but I shall die in joy." As the poet, Sim Hun (1904-37), carries on, it seems that his feeling is so intense that he completely obliterates the difference between life and death "and if joy stifles within my breast/I'll take a knife/and skin my body and make/a magical drum and march with it/in the vanguard. O procession!/let me once hear the thundering shout,/my eyes can close then"³⁸. Not even the implacable tyranny of the Japanese could stifle Hun's and many others' voices.

But sometimes, independence can bring with it the gloom of tragedy. Perhaps, there is no better example of this than the Indian case. Torn apart and bleeding even now, this tragedy can be seldom understood by a foreigner. Reaction of the inhabitants of what came to be known as 'India' is familiar. It need not be represented here, but this is how Faiz Ahmed Faiz a Pakistani, reacted: "This leprous daybreak, dawn night's fangs have mangled./—This is not that

long-looked-for break of day. Not that clear dawn inquest of which our comrades/Set out believing that in heaven's wide void/Somewhere must be the stars' last halting place,/Somewhere the verge of night's slow-washing tide,/Somewhere the anchorage of the ship of sorrow"³⁹. This Urdu poet (1911—), considered to be the greatest since Iqbal, fell into disfavour, was imprisoned after independence because of his communist and secular aspirations and hated because he had the courage to attend Gandhi's funeral.

Wherever he is, and whatever he writes about, the political poet's role is that of a social reformer. The exposure of evil paves the way for the good; this is perhaps the central thought that he has in mind. What he deserves is not a mocking foot-note in a learned essay, but some degree of compassion for a life studded with prison-terms and poverty, and occasionally capped with a suicide or a Nobel prize. After all, it is he who speaks for the dumb, and it is he who, seeing bomb-craters amidst lush green fields and hearing in the mortal groans of the dying the strains of some devilish symphony, says "If in the warmth of confidence shared you ask me/Friend, from the thousands of words the people say,/which one of all makes you most deeply grieve?/Out of my heart's core comes there just but one answer:/The South my invaded South...."⁴⁰.

NOTES

1. W. B. Yeats in 'Politics': *Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats* (Macmillan 1963), p. 392.
2. Alan Rold (ed.) *The Penguin Book of Socialist Verse* (Penguin, 1970), p. 30. The author is especially indebted to this anthology.
3. George Bernard Shaw: *Everybody's Political What's What* (Constable and Co. Ltd., London), p. 332.
4. D. H. Lawrence: *Complete Works* (Vol. II): (William Heineman, 1957), p. 159.
5. D. H. Lawrence. 'Bavarian Gentians':

- Oscar Williams (ed.) *The Pocket Book of Modern Verse* (Washington Square Press, 1964), p. 299.
6. *ibid.*, p. 301.
7. Vladimir Mayakovsky in 'Back home' Alan Bold (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 186. For reasons of space the poet's characteristic staircase-like typography has not been reproduced.
8. Pablo Neruda: *Heights of Macchu Picchu* (Cape, 1966).
9. Pablo Neruda: *Twenty Poems* (Rapp and Whiting, 1967).
10. Henry and Dana Lee Thomas: *Living Biographies of Great Philosophers* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, 1954), p. 195.
11. Alexander Solzhenitsyn: *Nobel Lecture* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1972), p. 19.
12. G. Plekhanov: *The Development of The Monist View of History* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1956), p. 181.
13. Sir C. M. Bowra: *Poetry and Politics 1900-60* (Cambridge, 1966).
14. Anne Freemantle (ed.): *Mao Tse-tung: An Anthology of His Writings* (Mentor Paperbacks, 1962). See *Talks at the Yen-an*: Forum Art and Literature, p. 252-257.
15. Eugène Pottier in *L' Internationale*: A. Bold (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 72.
16. *Time, The Weekly Magazine*, Vol. 87 No. 1, dated Jan. 7, 1966, p. 58.
17. *ibid.*
18. *ibid.*
19. Osip Mandelstamm in 'Notre Dame': A. Bold (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 144.
20. *Time*, Vol. 90 No. 16, dated Oct. 20, 1967, p. 22.
21. Ernesto Ché Guevara in 'Song to Fidel': A. Bold (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 378.
22. Jure Kastelan in 'The nameless': A. Bold (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 278.
23. *ibid.*
24. *An Outline History of China* (Peking Foreign Languages Press 1958), p. 35.
25. *ibid.*, p. 130.
26. Mao Tse-tung in 'Cha'ngsha': A. Bold (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 170.
27. Mao Tse-tung in *Problems of Communism*, Sept. Oct., 1964.
28. Mao Tse-tung: *Nineteen Poems* (Peking Foreign Languages Press, 1958), p. 30.
29. T. S. Eliot in 'Introduction: 1928' *Ezra Pound — Selected Poems* (Faber), p. 17.
30. To Huu in 'Remember my words': A. Bold (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 280. This poem was written in remembrance of Nguyen Van Troi, a 24-year old electrician, who was put to death in Saigon (1964) for allegedly at-

tempting to assassinate Robert McNamara.

31. David Diop in 'The Vultures': A. Bold (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 440.
32. P. Tinsley in 'Please Keep off The Grass': Michael Baldwin (ed.) *Poems By Children 1950-61* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1962), p. 89.
33. H. Bailey in 'The Dictator', *ibid.*, p. 115.
34. Quoted by Sir C. M. Bowra, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
35. To Huu in 'Invaded South': A. Bold (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 382.
36. Erich Fried in 'Toy on target'; *ibid.*, p. 394.
37. Adrian Mitchell in 'To whom it may concern'; *ibid.*, p. 469.
38. Peter H. Lee, *Anthology of Korean Poetry* (John Day, New York, 1964), p. 166.
39. Faiz Ahmad Faiz in 'Freedom's dawn': A. Bold (ed.) *op. cit.*, p. 345.
40. See 36.

Presidency College 1955-1974

In 1955, Presidency College celebrated its centenary in a gratifying atmosphere of fulfilment and appreciation. The twenty years since then have seen swifter changes in the fortunes of the College than earlier generations could have dreamt possible. It may not be too early to assess the importance of this period in the history of the College.

During this time, the most radical change in academic life was surely the introduction of the three-year degree course. Under the old two-year course, with two years of the Intermediate course preceding it, the number of students had risen from 1323 in 1955 to 1572 in 1962. Ever since the introduction of the new course, we pressed for withdrawal of the Pre-University and Pre-Medical classes. The demand was finally granted in 1971. Since then, the student strength has remained

in the desirable region of 1200. Postgraduate enrolment has increased considerably in these twenty years. Undergraduate admission is more carefully regulated. Even during the gravest crises of the late 1960's, some departments continued to hold admission tests, as all do at present. This must be one of the few attempts in recent years to maintain a sustained level of merit among students in an age of failing norms. In a word, the growth of the College has been regulated in a planned way to provide a quality undergraduate education and an expanding range of courses at the post-graduate level. We shall soon cite more facts to substantiate this claim.

The number of girl students rose from 182 in 1955 to 497 in 1962, and has remained fairly steady since. In the humanities departments, girls far outnumber boys—and often outshine

them. This makes it the more unfortunate that officially we remain a men's college. Our first lady teacher was appointed in 1959. Even today, there are only six—in a staff of 150. We are thus deprived of the services of many brilliant alumnae, while the high transferability of posts in the Men's Branch prevents many of our men students from returning to teach here, and thus discourages them from joining the Educational Service at all.

Yet the number of teaching posts has increased considerably in these years, including several new professorships in the Senior Educational Service. Research students, attached in ever-increasing numbers to the science and social science departments, provide some teaching strength and an intangible enriching of the academic atmosphere. Over 100 research students attached to this College have been awarded doctorates during this period. Our field of work has grown to match the additional staff. The first batch of Zoology Honours students was sent up in 1955. The same year, the Physics Department introduced several important new branches of study, including Nuclear Physics. The Economics and Political Science Departments were separated in 1962. Ten years later, the Centre for Advanced Studies in Economics was set up, and has already established itself as a leading institute in the field. The science departments have sponsored a wide range of research projects. In particular, important research schools have grown up in Chemistry, Physics, Geology and Zoology.

One must admit, though, that research work has yet to get off the mark in the Humanities Departments. (Economics can hardly be ranked among the Humanities today). Without fully exonerating ourselves, we must point out that a great obstacle lies in the complete collapse of the M.A. courses at Calcutta University. The vital link is thus snapped between our strong tradition of undergraduate

teaching and the possible development of research work. One may also lament in passing—as our Magazine editor did in 1959—the relegation of Sanskrit to our sister institution across the road. We can no longer profit from the civilising influence of classical studies. On a minor key, we mourn the replacement of our old iron fencing by a new brick wall. This was needed for security and efficiency; but we, no less than our critics, miss the familiar look of the stall-lined railings.

The new wall is, of course, only a tiny adjunct to an impressive building scheme, inaugurated by the late Principal Sanat Kumar Basu. The land to the north-west of the playing-field was acquired for over a lakh of rupees. By 1960, the Science Building had been extended to accommodate the Botany, Geology, Economics and Political Science Departments. A more ambitious project was fulfilled in 1968 when the new auditorium was opened. The Science Library and the Chemistry Department were shifted to new quarters above it in 1971. It is now necessary to complete the building scheme by erecting the new Arts Wing—above all to meet the growing needs of the Arts Library. So pressing are these needs that a special article has been devoted to them in this number. Every year, the Librarian has voiced his problems in the *Prasangiki*: one cannot but conclude that government action has been perfunctory and pitifully inadequate. Yet the Library has grown impressively in spite of these difficulties: the special report gives the full picture.

The library impasse is only one symptom of the biggest general problem of the College: the urgent need for more funds and more freedom to utilise them. We are greatly hampered by the complex and tardy procedures for appointing teachers and purchasing equipment, and by the lamentable lack of

support from the Government Press. We need immediate relief in these respects even to maintain the present establishment at a high level of efficiency. We shall need it still more if we succeed in our prolonged efforts to win autonomous or degree-granting status for the College. The Calcutta University Act of 1951 recognised Presidency as a constituent college; but we are still struggling for the rights of postgraduate teaching and research that constituent status might be thought to bestow.

Early in 1962, our College was visited by Sir John Sargent, former Education Commissioner of India, and by a delegation from the Commonwealth Education Ministers' Conference, in connection with schemes for the extension of university and technical education. The members of the Education Commission came here on 24 August 1965. The special claims indicated by these visits were crystallised into a firm programme of demands by our present principal, Dr. P. C. Mukharji, soon after he took charge in November, 1970. Through these fresh efforts, the government was persuaded to approach the University to permit full-course postgraduate teaching at our College. Teams of experts came in July 1973 and delivered largely favourable reports. It is unfortunate that the University authorities should have delayed their decision till September, 1974, and then hedged about their consent with many provisos that we cannot but hesitate to accept. When a U. G. C. Commission was appointed to investigate the affairs of Calcutta University, we strongly pleaded for full autonomy at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It is reported that the Commission has fully conceded our case.

The alumni, staff and students are unanimous in the demand for autonomy, which was clearly presented in the College Magazine of

1972. Such an autonomous institution is imperative in an age of collapsing values and standards. Yet there seems to be little chance of immediate action, and the future affords uncertain hopes at best. Must we indeed conclude that our educational authorities are incapable of the change in outlook and boldness in execution needed to sanction this indispensable reform?

Undeniably, Presidency in the 1960's was a storm-centre for this collapse of values. In 1966-67, the College was closed for four months following disturbances in the Eden Hindu Hostel. This agitation was soon drawn into the radical politics of the time, and the steadily worsening situation reached its nadir in 1970-71. All through these years, principals came and went, classes were seriously disrupted, and violence pervaded the campus. Property was shockingly destroyed in the library and laboratories. One cannot forget those days. But neither should we overlook because of the disproportionate publicity we received, that the same violence had engulfed the entire state and even the nation. And perhaps we can in justice demand some appreciation of the effective measures taken since 1971 to restore order in the College, to a degree yet to be attained by many other institutions. College examinations are held regularly; applications for admission are more numerous than ever before; and most important, we are making every effort to supplement the routine administration by a planned programme of development.

The Presidency tradition has survived all dangers with remarkable vitality. It remains to fulfil that tradition by winning for ourselves an independent academic status befitting our efforts. Our society owes this both to us and to itself.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

How many universities and colleges does a country have that are known outside it? The U.S.A., England, France, Germany, any country? It is good for one, anywhere, to know that one has been educated or teaches in a college that, traditionally, has a reputation for quality and is known in the whole academic world. Of the Departments which have built up the reputation of Presidency College over many decades, the Department of English can claim that it has adequately met the obligation to impart education of a standard appreciably higher than that provided by Indian universities and colleges of the usual type, and to set standard, in the teaching of a modern foreign literature. The Department's Annual Report for 1972-73 explained that the aim has always been "to enable students to develop the habit of independent thinking and acquiring wide firsthand acquaintance with original works, as far as possible, disregarding the limited requirements of the gradually dwindling syllabus prescribed by the University [of Calcutta]". A sense of quality in all academic work is fostered. Seminars are expected to be more than a routine activity. College tests are made more exacting than the university examination at the end of a course. Tutorials are so planned that they are real exercises in self-improvement. In 1963 Professor Taraknath Sen introduced the system of providing a tutor for each single student, following the practice in Oxford University, so that each may have his individual needs understood and attended to and honest efforts at self-improvement may be guided at every step. No other Indian University or College was then (or is?) known to provide such imaginative tutorial assistance.

Sessions of record recitals of Shakespeare's plays and English poetry are held. The Department offers its students the use of three different libraries: the Arts Library of the College; the Seminar Library; and the one started by the Department in 1926 under the guidance and inspiration of Professor Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and administered by it through a student Secretary and now called the English Honours Library, which has a useful collection of books bought with money raised by subscription among students or presented.

The Department has during the entire period under report been well served by distinguished teachers and scholars, and it has had some great teachers whom their admiring pupils would compare with humanist teachers and scholars of the Revival of Learning like William Grocyn and John Cheke. H. M. Percival was still teaching in 1911. Manmohan Ghosh, the poet, who was his younger contemporary, was teaching till the early twenties, and wrote *Songs of Love and Death*, posthumously published. H. R. James was one of the finest classical scholars Europe had in his time. J. W. Holme's *Arden As You Like It* was edited here, as was later A. Humphry House's *The Note-Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. H. M. Percival, Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and Taraknath Sen, successively, created a tradition of teaching which may not have a parallel, reading Shakespeare and English poets with a class of (undergraduate or postgraduate) students for hours together, day after day, each week, for whole sessions. That tradition is a precious memory now, it may be the most remarkable individual contribution the Department of English has made to academic life in Bengal.

Prof. Taraknath Sen's cubicle adjoining the Arts Library Hall on the ground floor of the main building was during the fifties and sixties one of those spots—rare always, rarer now-a-days—which people (students and others) frequent, seeking only knowledge and self-improvement. He was appointed Professor Emeritus of English on his retirement in 1969: the second Professor Emeritus at this college and the first Professor Emeritus of English was Prafulla Chandra Ghosh whose pupil he was and whose place in the Department, left void on his death in 1948, he adequately filled.

Around 1910, Presidency College students were reading English literature with H. R. James, H. M. Percival Manmohan Ghosh, J. W. Holme and Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, to meet even one of whom would be a proud privilege. Harinath De had left in 1906. Rabindranarayan Ghosh was teaching in 1915. In the middle and late thirties, a student would have, as the present writer had, the experience of listening to and the benefit of learning from Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Srikumar Bandopadhyay, Hiron Kumar Bandopadhyay and Somnath Maitra (who were then the elders), and Subodhchandra Sen Gupta, Tarapada Mukhopadhyay and Taraknath Sen (three outstanding men associated together in the work of the Department for twenty-five years from then). The present writer's brilliant contemporary Amal Bhattacharya was teaching here in the fifties and sixties, and his premature death in 1970 was a tragedy. The Department has able teachers now, struggling to maintain standards, some of whom as students have known and loved it.

The college first had a lady teacher on its staff in February 1959, when Kajal Basu (Sen Gupta) joined this Department.

T. S. Sterling, Professor of English and Principal, who left this college and India's

shores nearly fifty years' ago, has bequeathed by his will a part (valued at Rupees Three Lakhs of his estate) to "the poor students of Presidency College". This action provides a measure of the deep love the college can inspire, long after active association has ceased: indeed many who belong to it or have belonged to it feel that the institution has a personality.

Contributions by members of the Department—original theses, books and papers—have been well received. Published by Oxford University Press (London and Calcutta), Basil Blackwell (Oxford), Methuen & Co. (London), Routledge & Kegan Paul (London), Calcutta University Press; or, presented in international journals (*Modern Language Review*, Cambridge, *Anglia*, Leipzig, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, New York, *Modern Language Quarterly*, Washington, *Notes and Queries* London, *The Times Literary Supplement*, etc.) the Department's contributions to English studies have scores of mention in standard bibliographies (*Shakespeare Survey*, Cambridge, *The Year's Work in English Studies*, London, *Philological Quarterly*, Iowa, etc.), in select bibliographies of work on particular authors or in particular areas of scholarship, in authoritative general bibliographies like the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* or the *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* (now being published). They have been noticed in discussions in standard critical and scholarly works and the *New Arden* and the *New Cambridge Shakespeare*; cited for reference in standard handbooks like F. E. Halliday's *A Shakespeare Companion*; are represented in well-known critical anthologies. Published works had good reviews in learned English and American journals (have sometimes been mentioned as contributions to knowledge). Professor Subodhchandra Sen Gupta may be the only Shakespearean now living, all whose three works on the principal

divisions of the Canon, Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies (and written in that order) have won scholarly acceptance. Professor Taraknath Sen's collection of essays, published posthumously in 1972 under the title *A Literary Miscellany*, was edited by him.

The Department brought out to mark the occasion of the Quartercentenary (1964) a *Shakespeare Commemoration Volume*, consisting of essays and studies by present and former teachers and some brilliant ex-students and edited by Professor Taraknath Sen.

Our students' performances in university examinations show a consistently high average, besides that they get most of the top places. Since 1960, some twelve of our students have graduated from the English honours school in the University of Oxford; three or four others from Cambridge and American Universities. Few Indian students at Oxford, fewer than one may think, ever **had there** the distinction of graduating with first class honours: two students from this college have this distinction, one getting a "congratulatory" first, which is perhaps for an Indian student of English literature a unique distinction.

Postgraduate seminar classes have been an important part of the Department's work-routine. Recently, a decline of interest in these classes has been noticed: our own bright students after graduation are effectively dissuaded by conditions in Calcutta University from pursuing postgraduate studies here and drift away to other universities or merely abandon postgraduate studies for good careers.

What is the outlook for the future? The Department should have a small, compact block of class-rooms—a facility which big and small science Departments enjoy—for efficient functioning. It may have rather more money for the purchase of books and journals. Authorities which control the selection, posting and transfer of teachers are requested to

remember the needs of our good Honours and postgraduate students.

It is a matter of utmost concern to *each* Department that the survival of Presidency College as the community has known it for one hundred years is now in question. The University of Calcutta—an institution which was an object of national pride and is now collapsing under the weight of its huge bulk—and the State Government owe it to the community that they move swiftly in this matter, by conferring on Presidency College autonomous status in both undergraduate and postgraduate stages. "It is a national necessity", Prof. Taraknath Sen wrote in the College Magazine ("Degree-Awarding Status for Presidency College") 1966, that the country "should have proper provision for adequate training of its talented youth"; and that in the east zone Presidency College, if liberated "from an affiliation that tends constantly to pull it down," could educate talented students "to the right standard," and would then be the only non-technological institution in West Bengal to do so. Professor T. N. Sen was contemplating conditions in 1966: everyone knows that the picture now is much more depressing. University examinations are delayed by months or years, and when held, are not properly conducted, and examiners cannot sort honest, unaided work which consequently goes unrewarded; the publication of results involves an indefinite wait (a year's wait sometimes) and enforced idleness; and the three-year Bachelor's and the two-year Master's Degree course may together take eight-years or more. The University has scores of thousands of students on the rolls of its affiliated colleges; (by the remorseless operation of the law of majority) syllabi are framed and evaluation standards fixed to suit the convenience and capabilities of weak and indolent students, and the few hundred good students who alone can benefit by a University education are forgotten

or ignored. Realising that little is expected of them, they learn to do less and less. Standards are progressively debased, it is a miracle that work in a few undergraduate colleges still shows some concern for quality. Something can yet be salvaged by these colleges from the present chaos, when they are free to frame syllabi and curricula, hold examinations and

fix valuation norms; perhaps more than a little can be salvaged, for the success of their efforts may stimulate the competitive spirit and raise the general standard of teaching and examination. Posterity will not forgive Calcutta University and the State Government, nor us, if the chaos engulfs Presidency College.

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS

It is no exaggeration to say that the last sixty years of the Department of Mathematics of this College is a period of glorious achievements and fulfilments. It had a very auspicious beginning during this period as about this time Prof. Satyendra Nath Bose and Prof. Meghnath Saha, had their education as Mathematics Honours students in this great Institution. The contributions made later by these two eminent students to Science are very outstanding.

The Department is fortunate in getting the service of a number of brilliant teachers. Among them special mention may be made of Dr. D. N. Mallick, Prof. S. P. Das, Prof. B. B. Sen and Prof. B. C. Das, of whom the first three were sometime Heads of the Department.

So far as is known, no teacher of the Department has officially served as a guide to any of its research students or scholars except Dr. N. L. Ghosh who admitted under him several research scholars in the Department and guided their research activities for about a decade. Dr. Ghosh along with his research students attempted some investigations on the resistance of perfect fluids to the motion of solids. It may be noted that Prof. B. B. Sen and Dr. N. K. Chakravarty have served here as very successful research guides of a number of candidates (three of them being under Dr. Chakravarty) who, however, were not research

students or scholars of this Department and all of them have been awarded Ph.D. (Sc.) degree of Calcutta University or of some other University; the subject matter of thesis of each of Prof. Sen's candidates being elasticity broadly speaking and the dissertations of Dr. Chakravarty's candidates being on Eigenfunction Expansions and Integral Transforms.

It is gratifying to note that during their tenure of service in this Institution many of the teachers of this Department had to their credit publications of original papers in Indian and foreign journals, a good many of which for their high quality of researches have added to the reputation of this College as a research centre.

As regards Seminar activities, the Department held regular seminar meetings in which senior students sometimes took active part in the discussions. But unfortunately due to certain difficulties engulfing the whole College sometime back, these activities had to be discontinued. Attempts are being made to revive these activities so that the same kind of enthusiasm may be displayed as before with regard to seminar meetings and discussions.

Owing to the existence of so many types of courses, the College programme for classes is usually so packed now-a-days that it is difficult to get the students free for enough tutorial work. In spite of this, steps are being taken

for tutorial classes for Honours students to meet their individual needs.

The results of our students in the University Examinations are very satisfactory in most of the years and very often the top places in both the B.Sc. and B.A. Honours Examinations were secured by our students. The conspicuous success of some of our students in the

University Examinations are worth mentioning. Shri Sitangshu Mitra and Shri Murari Chakravarty won the coveted Eshan Scholarship in 1957 and 1967 respectively and Shri Arunabha Bagchi by securing 93 per cent marks in 1966 established a record for the University.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

From the year 1914 when the *Presidency College Magazine* was first published under the editorship of Pramatha Nath Banerji, a post-graduate student of History, to 1974, its Diamond Jubilee, the Department of History passed through many phases in its growth and development.

It may be pertinent to mention at the outset that the gentleman who succeeded the renowned Henry Roshier James in 1916 as Principal—W. C. Wordsworth—was himself a teacher of History. In the succeeding period the Department was adorned by such teachers as Upendranath Ghoshal and Hemchandra Ray Chaudhuri, both notable authorities on Ancient India, being the authors of *Agrarian System in Ancient India*, and the monumental *Political History of Ancient India*. Dr. Raychaudhuri later joined the University of Calcutta, became its Professor and was the joint author of *Advanced History of India*. In 1916 the celebrated Kuruvillah Zachariah joined this department. He was here for fourteen years. Then he became Principal, Hoogly College and later, Director of Public Instruction. A teacher of profound erudition, Professor Zachariah has been a source of inspiration to his students. Mention may also be made of Edward F. Oaten, Kiran Shankar Ray, Sachchidananda Bhattacharyya and also of Surendranath Majumdar.

In 1933 the Department of History was

enriched by the inclusion of Susobhanchandra Sarkar, an ex-student of the College. His fame and success as a teacher, the spell he cast on his students and his towering personality are indeed unrivalled. Senior Professor of History for about a decade, Professor Sarkar made valuable contributions to historical thought by his many articles and by his books including the famous one on Bengal Renaissance.

Those who had the privilege to work with Professor Sarkar include Charuchandra Das Gupta, Bhupeshchandra Mukherji, Abdul Wahabad Mahmood, Sasibhushan Chaudhuri, Chandikaprasad Banerji and Amales Tripathi. Dr. Chaudhuri achieved reputation by his authorship of such books as *Civil Disturbances during British Rule in India* (1955) and *Theories of the Indian Mutiny* (1965) and subsequently became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Burdwan, while Dr. Charuchandra Das Gupta wrote a valuable book on Kharosthi script.

Dr. Tripathi, an ex-student of the College, was Head of the Department of History from 1957 to 1969. During his tenure of work in this College Dr. Tripathi wrote several notable works such as *Evolution of Historiography in America* (1956), *Trade and Finance in Bengal Presidency* (1956) and *The Extremist Challenge* (1967). In 1958 he was deputed to England for advanced research work; in 1959

he presided over the Modern History Section of the Indian History Congress held in Gauhati and in 1960 he was appointed editor of the *Itihasa Patrika*. One distinctive feature of Dr. Tripathi's work in this college was the promotion of research among students, one of whom, Sabyasachi Bhattacharyya, won a doctoral degree under his guidance. In January 1969, he left the college to join the University of Calcutta as Head of the Department of History (Ashutosh Professor). Others who served the Department of History in this period were Dilip Kumar Biswas, a keen research worker on Raja Rammohan, Sudhir Kumar Pal, Nirmal Sinha, Prasanta Kumar Chatterji, Sankar Datta, Subodh Kumar Majumdar, Ajoy Chandra Banerji, all ex-students, and Dr. Sunil Choudhuri.

Dr. Asinranjan Dasgupta, an outstanding alumnus, succeeded Dr. Tripathi as Head of the Department in 1919. Dr. Dasgupta was appointed Research Fellow at St. Anthony's College, Oxford, in 1965 and in 1972 he went on leave on his appointment as Visiting Professor at Heidelberg (West Germany) and Virginia (U.S.A.) Universities. Dr. Dasgupta left government service in 1973 and joined Viswabharati University as Head of the Department of History. Chandikaprasad Banerji succeeded Dr. Dasgupta in 1972.

Among those who served the Department in recent years were Gopal Lal Chakrabarti and Dr. Hirendranath Chakrabarti, an ex-student.

Dr. Chakrabarti's work on Bengal Revolutionaries is in press (Oxford University Press). He left this College on transfer by promotion in January 1973. Prof. Gopal Lal Chakrabarti served the Department with distinction from 1959 to 1974 and has recently retired.

At present, apart from Chandikaprasad Banerji, who previously served the Department, the following are on the teaching staff—Kamal Kumar Ghatak, Haridas Mukherji, Sunil Kumar Chatterji and Ajoy Chandra Banerji.

During this period (1914—1973) the first place in the B.A. Honours Examination, Calcutta University has been occupied by students of this College except for a few years. Between 1921 and 1970 forty-seven students were placed in Class I.

Original thinking among students is encouraged through the activities of the History Seminar, especially through discussion of papers and addresses by eminent scholars. The Seminar maintains two libraries, one for undergraduate and the other for postgraduate students.

Two proposals were put forward in 1973-74, one for introducing an independent postgraduate course and the other for the grant of autonomy by the University Grants Commission, both in the undergraduate and postgraduate stages. The outcome is eagerly awaited.

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

The Chemistry Department of this college is reputed as a centre for carrying out original research and it has encouraged many bright boys to take up teaching and research work. 32 research workers of this department have been admitted to the D.Phil. degree of Calcutta University during the last ten years. Members

of this department have made original contributions in the various fields of Chemistry. The main fields of their investigations are Analytical Chemistry, Bio-Inorganics and Catalysis of metal ions, Synthetic Organic Chemistry, Soil Science, Optical and Magneto-Optical Properties of Compounds, and Theoretical Chemistry.

The number of research publications from this department during the last ten years comes to 80.

The Chemical Laboratory of this college is famous as it has produced many renowned scientists. During the past few years, the laboratory has been equipped with modern instruments and has been thoroughly re-

organised much to the benefit of students and research workers.

Every year an educational excursion is organised by this department. Students under the guidance of teachers visit chemical laboratories and industrial concerns in various parts of the country.

Seminar lectures, by both teachers and students, are arranged periodically.

DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGY

Founded in the year 1892, the Geology Department has the distinction of being the earliest department in India where teaching of Geology was independently undertaken upto the Master's Degree level. Many illustrious names have been associated with this department. The department is particularly indebted to the late Prof. H. C. Dasgupta (1903-32) and Prof. S. Ray (1944-65), whose vision and dedicated services have shaped this department to a great extent during its earlier and later phases respectively, and also to a number of eminent geologists from the Geological Survey of India who acted as part-time Professors since its foundation (till 1954).

It is significant that this department had to assume the responsibility of both Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate teaching since its inception. It was in 1917 that P. G. teaching was taken over by the Calcutta University. The University Dept. was housed in the premises of the Geology Dept. of Presidency College for a long period (1917-1964). With the shifting of the University Dept. to its own premises in 1964, Presidency College resumed independent P. G. teaching in respect of practical classes, field work and research work.

Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that the Geography Dept. of this college was also originally attached to this department during the period 1932-52.

In the early years Geology teaching received rather poor care and patronage in comparison with other basic sciences. The department was under-staffed; the number of students was small, teaching and research facilities were meagre and the space available was far from adequate. However, the picture has changed since the early fifties and the department, with its manifold activities, has had a phenomenal growth and development during the last two decades. At present there are sixteen members on the teaching staff (three Professors, five Asstt. Professors, six Lecturers and two Demonstrators) and a number of technical and non-technical personnel. The size of the classes has increased over the years, the annual intake of students of the U. G. (Honours) and P. G. classes being twenty and ten respectively. Shifted from the main College Building to its present location in the Baker Laboratories in 1913, this department has undergone two phases of expansion—one in the late fifties and another in the early seventies to Units I and II extensions to the Baker Laboratories. With the total space available at present (21,000 sq. ft.), it has been possible to reorganise the department and establish separate well-equipped laboratories for U.G. and P.G. classes and for research work. The department has set up a Laboratories for U.G. and P.G. classes and for improved teaching and advanced research

work, a spacious Seminar Library with a sizable stock of text books, reference books and scientific periodicals, and a big Museum with rare and valuable collections.

The tradition of teaching in this department has maintained its high standard. The primary aim has been to provide a sound and comprehensive training in the fundamental aspects of earth sciences at the U.G. level. Geological field work, which has been made compulsory since the early forties, is carefully organised in areas of geological interest in different parts of the country. Performance of students in University examinations and various U.P.S.C. and professional examinations has always been brilliant.

Since the days of the late Prof. H. C. Dasgupta, this department has maintained its reputation as a centre of research work. Quite a number of pioneer research projects, especially in specialised branches of Palaeontology, Economic Geology, Igneous and Metamorphic Petrology and Structural Geology with special reference to areas in the Eastern Himalayas, Singhbhum and Chotonagpur (in Bihar), Rajasthan and Mysore, have been completed in this department, and these have been incorporated in geological literature. The department receives research grants and fellowships offered by the U.G.C., C.S.I.R., Indian National Science Academy, Wadia Institute of Geology, West Bengal Govt. etc. About ten research workers from this department have been admitted to higher degree (one D.Sc. and nine Ph.D.) during the last ten years. A large number of technical publications have been published every year in various scientific journals by teachers and research scholars. Members of the staff have participated from time to time in a number of scientific conferences and seminars including the International

Geological Congress held in India and abroad.

Many members are associated with a number of scientific societies and learned bodies. Dr. A. K. Saha, Professor, has been associated with the Indian National Science Academy for the last several years. Dr. Saha, it may be mentioned here, was a recipient of the National Mineral Award in 1971 for his outstanding contribution to Indian Geology.

Some members of this department, starting with the great Prof. H. C. Dasgupta have carried out important geological field studies in difficult terrains in the Himalayas and have also participated in scientific expeditions. Recently Shri P. K. Dasgupta, Lecturer, led an expedition to the Spiti area in June-July, 1974.

The Geology Dept. has to its credit a scientific association run by students, the Geological Institute, which completes its 69th year in October, 1974 and is perhaps the only of its kind with such a long tradition. The Institute has all along served as a useful forum for establishing contact between the present and past students and for promoting geological thinking and various extra-academic faculties among the students. A special feature has been the regular publication by the Institute of its journal, 'Bhu-Vidya', since 1936-37.

A commendable endeavour on the part of this department has been the publication of a new bi-annual journal of international standard, named the Indian Journal of Earth Sciences, initiated this year (1974). The first two issues published have won wide acclamation in India and abroad.

The department expects to be entrusted with independent P.G. teaching in the near future. With competent members of the staff at its disposal as well as equipment and laboratory space the department looks forward confidently to the future.

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

The first batch of students with Honours in Political Economy and Political Philosophy graduated from this College in 1909. Teachers in the History Department had helped these students to prepare for their examinations. With the appointment of Jahangir C. Coyajee as the Professor of Political Economy, a new department was born; the Department of Economics. Political Economy and Political Philosophy were both contained in this one department till 1960 when a separate Department of Political Science was created.

The academic record of the Department of Economics has been remarkable. Over 65 years students from the Department secured over ninety per cent of all first classes in Economics Honours (Economics & Politics Honours under the old system) in the University of Calcutta. That very good students come to this department has been its good fortune; that exceptionally gifted teachers were available has been its strength. In this respect Sir Jahangir Coyajee begins a tradition ably upheld by Professors J. C. Sinha, U. N. Ghosal, Bhabatosh Datta, Tapas Majumdar and Sukhamoy Chakravarti, to mention only a few names. It is gratifying to report that the same tradition of excellence is being maintained today by our teachers as well as our students.

The record is remarkable in another respect: our students, always a major source of academic staff for universities all over India, have during the last twenty years broken the national barrier. Several have achieved a substantial standing in the international community of scholars. Our alumni have held (and some currently hold) distinguished academic appointments at the universities of London, Cambridge, Harvard, the M.I.T. and at other well-known centres of learning. That nearly all of them eventually come back to

India is a matter of great satisfaction and pride for the Department.

Since 1965 a major change has taken place in the scope and organisation of the Department. While the teachers of the Department had always wedded teaching to research, such union was not given official recognition till August 1965 when a Research Wing was created in the Department with one additional Professor and other staff including three Research Fellowships. The best-known professors in the Department were all well-known for their contributions to economics, applied and theoretical; but their work, undertaken on a personal basis, would not benefit from team-work which is often important in applied economic problems today. Nor could young research scholars take full advantage of the continuous guidance from experts, especially in the first stages of their work. With the establishment of the Research Wing all these now became feasible.

In March 1972, the University Grants Commission recognised the special merits of the Department by awarding it Special Assistance under the Centres of Advanced Study Scheme for 5 years. This award led to the institution of the Centre for Economic Studies in the Department wherein the Research Wing was merged. It may be mentioned that there are now only five Centres in Economics recognised in India and assisted by the U.G.C. and this Department is the only non-university department to be selected for such distinction.

The Centre for Economic Studies now has ten research fellows and one Research Associate. A sizable research project "Problems of Planning for Investment in the Indian Iron and Steel Industry: The Hindustan Steel Ltd. —A Case Study" is being undertaken currently by the Centre, apart from small, individual research projects. The Centre has sponsored

and held symposia and seminars with well-known economists from all parts of India participating; in some cases the Centre has co-operated with other institutions of research such as the Indian Statistical Institute, the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences for promoting such symposia.

The Department has always given priority to teaching; research work has been regarded as a complementary activity, necessary to keep our intellectual sinews from growing flabby. It is

very pleasant to report that the new Centre has strengthened teaching, in particular the tutorial system, so demanding of man-power. Our research fellows participate with enthusiasm in our constant attempt to inculcate the foundations of economics into our students at the earliest possible stage. Economics has expanded a lot during the last sixty years, but in this department we have not fallen behind. With luck the next sixty years would show an even better record.

DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY

Originally at the Presidency College there was no separate Department for Botany. This subject was taught with Physiology in the Department of Biology with one teacher, Prof. S. C. Mahalanabis till 1913; then the Department of Botany was opened at the newly constructed Baker Laboratories. Sir J. C. Bose retired from service in 1915 and was made Emeritus Professor for his researches in Physics and Plant Physiology.

which Sri P. N. Majumdar, became the first winner.

There were facilities in honours teaching and M.A. classes in Biology in 1900, but affiliation in Intermediate Botany was obtained not earlier than 1918. In the same year Excursion facilities were sanctioned by the Government.

The staff of this Department was enriched in later years by such teachers as Dr. B. C. Kundu, Dr. H. L. Chakrabarti, Dr. J. C. Saha, Dr. H. C. Gangulee, Dr. Nirode Kumar Sen, Dr. S. N. Bhaduri, Dr. J. K. Chaudhuri, Dr. P. N. Bhaduri, Dr. A. K. Chakravarti, Dr. A. K. Kar, Dr. S. K. Pain, Dr. Sumitra Talukdar, Prof. S. K. Bhattacharyya, Dr. N. Pal and Sri J. N. Mitra.

The teaching staff during the first 25 years consisted of:—

The research activity of this Department was initiated by Prof. G. P. Majumdar, Prof. J. C. Sengupta and Prof. B. C. Kundu, and in later years was enriched by the contributions of Prof. S. C. Gangulee, Dr. J. C. Saha, Dr. H. L. Chakravarty, Dr. N. K. Sen, Dr. S. N. Bhaduri, Dr. J. K. Chaudhuri, Dr. S. K. Pain, Dr. S. Talukdar, Dr. G. C. Mitra, Dr. N. Pal, Sri J. N. Mitra and others. Upto the year 1954, these workers from the teaching staff published about 125 original research papers in different branches of Botany. The research activity of this Department came into lime-light after 1966, when Prof. P. N. Bhaduri joined this Department as Professor and Head. The number of research scholars and workers in the Department rose to about 25, and there were three Scientific Pool Officers. Schemes

Prof. S. C. Mahalanabis

Prof. J. C. Nag

Prof. S. C. Sinha

Prof. S. C. Banerjee

Dr. G. P. Majumdar

Dr. K. D. Bagchi

Dr. J. C. Sengupta

After the sudden demise of Prof. J. C. Nag, a memorial fund was started with the patronage of the Late Principal, J. R. Barrow, and the award of a memorial medal was started of

and research projects sponsored by the C.S.I.R., I.C.A.R., Atomic Energy Commission, Government of India Research Training, Department of Agriculture, (West Bengal Government), Manpower Scheme etc. were run besides two PL-480 United States Department of Agriculture Schemes. Research projects were drawn in practically all major fields of Botany, keeping the recent trends in Biological research. A number of visitors from foreign countries visited the laboratory and inspected the research work carried out in this Department. Such modern equipment as Fluorescence and Phase Contrast Microscopy Micromanipulator, etc. were utilised. A Heavy duty X-ray machine was installed in this Department by the Agriculture Department, Government of West Bengal to facilitate research projects involving irradiation. During the past twenty years no fewer than twelve research workers got their Doctorate degree from this Department; three under the guidance of each of Prof. P. N. Bhaduri, Prof. M. C. Gangulee and Prof. A. K. Kar. At present under the guidance of Prof. A. K. Chakravarti one worker is preparing her D.Phil. thesis and one member of the teaching staff has already submitted his thesis for the degree. The number of original research paper published in India and abroad by the member of the teaching staff during the last twenty years is about 200. Prof. H. C. Gangulee has published 3 volumes of his monograph on Indian Mosses which is a classic work of international reputation. This Department further possesses an internationally reputed Herbarium on Polypores donated by its creator, Late Prof. S. R. Bose. There are 2 "type specimens" in the Angiosperm Herbarium of this Department.

The research wing, as well as practical classes of this Department suffered a great handicap owing to the loss of its experimental garden. Further, the increase in teaching load has created acute shortage of space and expansion of research is seriously handicapped.

The Department of Botany has a very good collection of text books and periodicals, charts, epidioscopes, museums and laboratory specimens, for a high standard of teaching, besides several highly sophisticated modern equipment for advanced research.

The independent Post-graduate teaching in practical was introduced in this Department from the year 1952 and in the very first year all the students got passed (one with first class). Since then, our Post-graduate students are doing fairly well, with occasional first classes. It is to be mentioned that we never get good students from the Honours stream in our Post-graduate classes, as the better students are always admitted to Calcutta University and we only get the trailing members from the list, who do not get any chance of being admitted to Calcutta University. With the introduction of the 3-Year Degree Course, the examination results have definitely improved and most of the students getting first class in the University examinations have appeared from this College.

This Department arranges from time to time Seminar lectures on different aspects of Botany and allied subjects, and scientists from different Institutions are invited to deliver lectures. Such discussions prove very useful to the advanced students. Further, our Post-graduate students participate in discussions broadcast by the All India Radio, Calcutta. Our students regularly take part in the excursions, local and long, arranged by this Department.

DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS

The Department of Statistics of Presidency College is a comparatively recent feature of this premier seat of learning. Started in 1944, it owes its origin, as do many other developments in the field of Statistics in India, to the vision and zeal of the late Professor P. C. Mahalanobis. The association of this College with the development of statistical methods, however, dates from a much earlier period. For it was in this College, while he was a teacher of Physics, that Professor Mahalanobis started his work in Statistics in the thirties, assisted by a group of young and very able scientists. The Indian Statistical Institute, too, was housed in a part of the College till 1951, the year in which it was shifted to its present site at Baranagore. The College may, indeed, feel proud to have helped in a significant way in the introduction and development of Statistics in this country.

The Department has suffered since its inception from a number of handicaps, an inadequate accommodation being the most notable among them. Nevertheless, it may look back with pride on some aspects of its 30-year history. It had the good fortune to have on its faculty some very outstanding teachers of the subject, like Professors A. Bhattacharyya, B. N. Ghosh and P. K. Banerji, and some who have in after-life become very famous in the academic world, like Professor P. K. Bose, the present Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) of Calcutta University and Professor M. Mukherji, the present Director of the Indian Statistical Institute. At the same time, it played a significant part in training up some of the most brilliant Indian statisticians. They may be found on the faculties of universities and research institutions, in Government bureaux and in private firms.

The Department has been solely occupied, with undergraduate teaching in Statistics. It

offers an Honours course as well as a subsidiary course in the subject.

The Department has always strived to maintain high standards in teaching, in keeping with the glorious traditions of the College. Through class lectures, laboratory work, tutorials and discussions, the students are given a thorough grounding in the subject.

The teachers scrupulously cover the syllabi prescribed by the University of Calcutta. At the same time, they point out to the students the link that connects one topic of the course to another. In this way, the students are trained to view the different topics of the course as parts of the same whole. An attempt is made to develop in them a capacity for independent thinking through problem-assignment. They are encouraged to consult source material, rather than being satisfied with what they get in the text-books and class lectures. Seminars are arranged from time to time, where eminent statisticians speak on their researches or professional experience. Educational tours are also arranged and the students are made familiar with the problems that one may face in applying statistical methods to real-life situations.

The effectiveness of the teaching method may perhaps be judged by the performance of the students of Statistics at the University examinations. This has been uniformly good, except during a short period that was marked by intense political unrest in the State.

The Department does not impart post-graduate teaching, not even partially, as is done by some of the other science Departments of the College. However, a number of teachers of the Department have been engaged in post-graduate teaching, on a part-time basis, in the Universities of Calcutta and Burdwan.

The Department has never been able to take in research scholars for lack of funds and

accommodation. The teachers of the Department, burdened as they are with a heavy teaching load, try to carry out researches of their own on a small scale. Some of their works have gained recognition in learned circles. We should mention, in particular, the contributions made by Professor A. Bhattacharyya to the theory of distributions and the theory of estimation, and also the contributions of Professor B. N. Ghosh to the theory of sampling. The areas in which the present members of the staff are working are statistical inference, probability theory and demography. Their research papers, though not too numerous, have been published in recognised journals in India and abroad.

A few teachers of the Department have brought out a number of text-books on Statistics that have met a long-felt need of Indian students of the subject. Some have been helping, in various capacities, in the preparation of text-books on Statistics in Bengali as part of a project sponsored by the Government of India.

As has been noted earlier, the Department is in need of greater accommodation and additional teaching staff so that it may do justice to its responsibilities. The services of a Draughtsman and a Computer are also needed. As in most universities in India and abroad, the teachers of the Department may be provided with secretarial assistance so that the time they now spend on clerical work may be utilised more fruitfully. Funds for recruiting a few research scholars may be placed at the disposal of the Department. More funds for books and journals are also needed. So are funds for a small-scale sample survey, that must form a feature of any worth-while course in Statistics.

It is felt that in order to cater to the needs of the students of a high calibre that come to this

College, the College should be accorded full autonomy in drawing up syllabi, in teaching and in holding examinations.

The present syllabi for Statistics Honours and Statistics Pass, in particular, should be subjected to a thorough revision, incorporating all recent and important developments in the field. For Statistics Pass there should be at least three syllabi: one for students (with Honours in any) of the physical sciences, one for those of the biological sciences and one for those of the social sciences. Similarly, the present Mathematics Pass syllabus should undergo a thorough change. It should be such that a Statistics Honours student may learn subjects like analysis, matrix algebra and measure theory which are more important to him for a proper grasp of his Honours subject, rather than subjects like astronomy and hydrostatics. Again, instead of offering a Statistics Honours student a course in Physics or Chemistry Pass, as at present, he should be offered one in General Science (including methods of science).

It has been the experience in advanced countries that there is no point in separating undergraduate teaching from post-graduate teaching. In an institution like Presidency College, especially, the two should go hand in hand. In other words, post-graduate teaching should be regarded just as a continuation of undergraduate teaching. The absence of a post-graduate curriculum in Presidency College is one reason why it has become difficult to retain the services of highly qualified and competent teachers and to build up the research side of the College on a sound footing.

The demand for making Presidency College an autonomous institution, deemed to be a university, assumes significance on such considerations.

DEPARTMENT OF BENGALI

The Bengali Department with nine teachers (1 Professor, 3 Assistant Professors, 5 lecturers) on its staff, taking more than 160 lecture-hours per week in 1974-75, passed its period of struggle to emerge as a full-fledged Department between 1927 and 1944. Earlier, Bengali was taught at this college under the guardianship of the Department of Sanskrit. The last of the renowned teachers of the subject during that period were the late Asokenath Sastri, Sadananda Chakraborty and Dr. Gaurinath Sastri among others.

The college had the privilege of listening to both Rabindranath Tagore and Saratchandra Chattopadhyaya on more than one occasion when they came on invitation and talked about aspects of our language and literature including topics connected with the theories of literature as well. The late Professors Surendranath Dasgupta, Somenath Maitra, Charuchandra Bhattacharya were associated with those memorable occasions. The *Rabindra-Parishad* which started functioning in 1927 and the *Bankim-Sarat-Samity* which did not live long are names which evoke unforgettable memories.

In 1945, Bengali as a separate Department came into existence. There has been strengthening of the staff from time to time since then, with the increase of demands in respect of teaching, according to the growing needs of the syllabi.

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

The Department of Geography, since its inception in 1950, has tried to develop its activities towards an organic harmony. Within the existing frame and available resources, every effort has been made to maintain a high standard of teaching and a favourable climate of study and research.

The standard of teaching has been distinctive and not just what is visible in colleges and universities of the usual type. Besides attending to the individual needs of our Honours students in general, the Department extends its help and guidance to research activities, seminar work and post-graduate teaching of the subject. Since the present Professor and Head of the Department took over charge in 1958, some post-graduate classes continue to be held informally in the subject in the college.

The late Chintaharan Chakrabarty and other eminent persons memorable for their contributions to the study of Bengali literature and culture were teachers in the Department.

The Bengali-Seminar library and the U.G.C. Text Book Library (Bengali) have more than 1000 books on the shelves for the use of our students. These are run by the Department with the assistance of students, there being one Professor-in-charge for each.

There are a few prizes for students showing proficiency in the subject, but more financial assistance for the specially talented students is very much awaited. We want more space, more teachers, further upgrading of staff,—at least one clerk, one Bengali typist, a Bengali typewriter and suitable money to be utilised towards educational excursions. We want more seats for the Honours courses. The number of students have been tending to increase.

Facilities of teaching aids within the department have constantly been improved so that to-day a large number of maps, charts, illustrations, models, slides are utilized by teachers in the class rooms. Restricted admission has always been an advantage for establishing the essential contact between teacher and student,

especially by holding tutorial classes regularly with a small number of students. Moreover, the students participate in lectures, seminars and symposia arranged by the department. Every year at least a few internationally reputed Geographers or Scholars in allied fields are invited and the students get exposed to very high standards of academic work.

Since direct observation and study in the field constitute an important part of geographic study, field work is arranged for the students every year, and the reports are published by members of the staff and students as scientific contributions.

The laboratories of the department have been equipped for research in several branches of Geography, like Soil Geography, Fluvial Geomorphology, Climatology, and Urban, Social and Economic Geographies. A large library consisting of books, journals, atlases, maps, and reference materials has been built up and scholars from Indian and other universities use the library for research work. Similarly, equipment for numerical data analysis, map drawing, copying etc. have gradually been acquired by the department.

The efforts of the department in maintaining the standard of teaching and research are reflected in the consistently good performance of the students at University examinations and the high standard of the publications. Seminar activities of the department have made possible the production of the following:

1. Chatterjee, A.B. and others (ed.)
"West Bengal", a publication of the
Geographical Institute, 1970.

2. Chatterjee, A.B. and others (ed.)
"Proceedings of the Symposium on
Humid Tropics", 21st International
Geographical Congress, 1968.

In spite of our best efforts certain constraints still exist. They may be considered in the following order of importance:—

1. Lack of space is now probably the most important problem. It is sometimes forgotten that Geography is a science in spite of the location of the Department in the Arts Building. Most of the special topics taught in terms of the syllabi of the Calcutta University need separate laboratories.

2. Some expansion of teaching and non-teaching staff is immediately necessary: teaching staff for extending the department's programme in newer fields of specialization, and non-teaching staff (like a librarian, a photographer-cum-photocopying machine operator, and at least one more laboratory assistant) for smooth running of the department.

3. Another hindrance to a better way of teaching, evolving a better curriculum and improving the examination system, is the lack of independence. A more purposeful approach would be independence of the teachers in framing courses, and in formulating an evaluation system, as suggested in the Autonomous College Scheme of the U.G.C.

It may be mentioned here that within the department a mode of thinking in terms of an integrated and inter-departmental teaching has already developed, and this can be purposefully oriented towards practical application of what is taught.

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY

The Department of Zoology was started in this College in July, 1953. The Biology section which had previously functioned as subsidiary to the Physiology department, provided the

nucleus of the new department. The department of Zoology was subsequently housed in the second floor of the western wing of the 'Baker Laboratories'. Since its inception, the

department became the centre of active research and advance studies on the basic problems in Biology. To accommodate more students and to provide research facilities, the new extension block of the 'Baker Laboratories' (third floor) was made available to the department. The department has now ample space and adequate facilities to improve the standards of teaching and research.

Dr. Sivatosh Mookerjee took charge of the new department as Professor in 1953 from Prof. B. K. Mitra, who had been officiating in the post. Dr. Mookerjee continued as Head of the Department till June, 1972, except for one year, when Prof. B. K. Chatterjee officiated. Dr. B. Dasgupta, took charge of the department in December, 1972.

The department was originally meant to teach the students upto the degree level. The question of having a full-fledged Post-graduate Laboratory here is to be taken up without any further delay, although the department has provision to admit a few students to the M.Sc. classes of the University of Calcutta.

The teachers and students of the department organise seminar lectures regularly to discuss scientific problems. The first seminar

meeting was held in 1954 with Dr. Julian Huxley as speaker. The departmental seminar is a platform for a lively discussion by members of the staff and students on topics of zoological interest. Distinguished scientists and speakers are invited as guest speakers to deliver talks on the topics in which they specialize.

Educational excursion to places of zoological interest is a routine feature. Students and members of the staff organise excursions especially to sea shores to make faunastic survey.

The department magazine 'Spandan' was started in 1954 and has been functioning as a medium for popularisation of science without sacrificing scientific accuracy.

The department has been organised in such a way that it will be able to function both as a teaching body and a research centre. A cell research laboratory was started in the department in 1954 to study problems of cellular differentiation and received financial help from C.S.I.R., I.C.M.R., New Delhi. About twenty students obtained their Ph.D. degrees from this department and about two hundred scientific papers have been published in scientific journals in India and abroad.

The reports have been arranged in the order in which the departments emerged. Only those departments that sent in their reports could be represented. It has not been possible to publish the lists of publication which accompanied the reports of some departments.

—Editor.

Revolution in an Age of Imperialism and Social Imperialism

Debashish Gangopadhyaya

[This article is the concluding chapter of an essay entitled *Imperialism, Social Imperialism and Revolution*. The title of the two earlier chapters were *The Role of Western Imperialism* and *The Rise of Social Imperialism*. We regret that we do not have space to publish the entire essay.—Editor].

The year 1971 has been a turning point in world history. With it has begun a distinctively new phase, the age of Imperialism and Social Imperialism. Hitherto we have seen the effectiveness of Imperialism in thwarting revolution and the relatively weaker role of Social Imperialism in sabotaging revolution (e.g. Ceylon, 1971). We shall now briefly dwell on the nature of revolution in an age when imperialism is more desperate and social imperialism has blossomed forth into its malignant youth. In short, we shall try to examine the nature of revolution in the near future.

The Two Lines

There are two distinct lines in all revolutionary struggles today. One is the 'Latin American line', the other is the 'Mass line'. The ultimate goal of both is the same i.e. human emancipation. The means are also basically the same viz. armed struggle. Both claim absolute loyalty to Marxism-Leninism and both incur the same amount of hostility among the ruling classes. In spite of these similarities there is a difference in the theoretical formulations leading to differences also on the practical plane.

The 'Latin American line' or Fidelism is "an

a posteriori synthesis of two currents, national and international, nationalist and communist . . . Fidelism is only the concrete process of the regeneration of Marxism and Leninism in Latin American conditions and according to the historic traditions of each country. It will never be the same from one country to the next; it can only conquer through originality Though the mode of its appearance may vary in each Latin American country it has nonetheless irreversibly achieved a certain organic link between armed struggle and mass struggle, expressed by the 'foco' theory." According to the 'foco' theory (the Spanish word 'foco' refers to a centre of guerrilla operations, but in the usual sense 'foco' means a military base), special stress must be given on the formation of a revolutionary army rather than the creation of a revolutionary party. Fidelism therefore lays primary importance on the formation of guerilla squads; it subordinates mass struggle to armed struggle and the people's party to the people's army.

On the other hand, the historically tested 'Mass line' represents the classical line which lays primary importance on the formation of a revolutionary party out of which the revolutionary army is supposed to grow. According to this line: "the party commands the gun, the gun does not command the party"—implying a subordination of the people's army to the people's party. The spirit of the 'Mass line' has been brought out picturesquely by Mao: "from the masses to the masses through the leadership."

Without actively participating in any political movement, I do not profess to have the audacity

to dictate which line is right and which line is wrong. I shall only relate certain historical facts and from them try to arrive at certain conclusions.

The correctness of the 'Mass line' has been proved in the Russian Revolution, the Chinese Revolution and the Vietnamese Revolution. The present struggles in Thailand, Malaya, Cambodia and Laos all express the inherent formidable power of this line. In spite of the massive U.S. military line-up in Cambodia, Lol Nol is sensing disaster at any moment and desperately centralizing and concentrating his forces to save his capital. The communist guerrillas of Thailand have already built up a solid base in the mountains of Chiang Mai and is posing a dangerous threat to American imperialism and its puppet government. Invulnerability of this line is strikingly revealed in this fact: to put down the Malayan guerrillas in the 'fifties, the British adopted the 'strategic hamlets' policy. By this entire villages were burnt down or destroyed and the people were herded into 'new villages' which were nothing but disguised concentration camps. This strategy was utilised to "dry up the waters in which the fishes live"—i.e. to separate the guerrillas from their sympathisers. The British were successful indeed: it took 300,000 troops to suppress 8,000—12,000 communist guerrillas roughly 14 years. The 'strategic hamlets' strategy has been a total failure in Vietnam and applied with limited success in Nagaland and Mizoram.

The 'Latin American line' has met with decisive success in Cuba only, in other Latin American countries, like Bolivia, it has been ineffective. The 'Che Guevarist' uprising in Ceylon also met with tragic failure. At the present there is no country where this line can promise immediate results. The Palestine Liberation Movement is also suffering setbacks because it has a close resemblance to this line.

Hence, it appears that the 'Mass line' will be more effective in revolutionary struggles in the near future.

A word of warning. Some profess that there

is yet a 'third way'. That is the way of 'peaceful transition to socialism'. This absurd formulation was first provided by the arch renegade Khrushchev. This myth has been thrown skyhigh by the counter-revolution in Chile. Salvador Allende was a Socialist President who was elected parliamentarily. He wanted to bring about socialism by peaceful means and met with his tragic fate. When the workers demonstrated their massive support for his coalition government in the face of the reactionary lorry-owners' strike, he failed to seize the opportunity of arming the workers. Instead, to restore stability, he made 'adjustments' in his cabinet. He "practised legality while professing revolution" and was accordingly paid. All revisionist roads lead to Chile.

War and Revolution

"With regard to the question of world war, there are but two possibilities: one is that the war will give rise to revolution and the other is that revolution will prevent the war."

"... The danger of a third world war still exists, but revolution is the main trend in the world today."

These two famous sayings of Mao are the logical outcomes of the laws of historical and dialectical materialism. However, we shall not examine their theoretical derivations. We shall only illustrate the truth of these statements.

The truth of the first part of the first statement has been overwhelmingly demonstrated by historical events. There are countless instances where war has brought revolution, out of which I mention two :

- (i) The Russian Revolution of 1917 came in the dying phase of the First World War.
- (ii) The Chinese Revolution of 1949 came with the bloody sunset of the Second World War.

The truth of the second part of the first statement has also been provided by history. We shall consider only some of those cases.

The Western powers, particularly the U.S.A., were poised for an attack on the Soviet Union at the end of the Second World War (confer the infuriated confession of Churchill and the statements of the American general Patton). But the tremendous revolution in China frightened them and restrained their desires. As a result the Western powers gave up their aggressive plans for the moment—although they began the Cold War with full vigour.

On the other hand, failure of revolutionary forces has often led to the intensification of imperialist aggressive plans. It was in the period following the suppression of the Indonesian communists that the Americans escalated the war in Vietnam. Again, as long as the Arabs were quiescent, tensions mounted between the imperialist powers in the region i.e. between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. But with the flare-up of united Arab resistance, the USA and the Soviet Union entered a devious course of collusion in the October War of 1973 so as to 'stabilize' the situation i.e. restore the Arabs into passivity. All these instances illustrate the truth of the second part of the first statement.

The truth of the second statement is obvious in the context of the magnitude and dimensions of the present day revolutionary struggles throughout the world. Hence we may infer that wars are less likely in the near future and even if they occur, they will be localized wars. The idea of the entire world plunged into a devastating war is unrealistic. The imperialists and social imperialists will never risk all in one venture.

Here it may be remembered that when we speak of wars in the future we mean:

- (i) inter-imperialist wars and wars between imperialist and social imperialist powers
- (ii) wars between imperialists and/or social imperialists on the one hand and the socialist countries on the other.

Nationalism

One of the prominent features of all strug-

gles today is the element of nationalism. Vietnam represents the bastion of revolutionary nationalism and the great love of the Vietnamese for their country and all that it stands for has been a major factor in determining the course of the Vietnamese Revolution. The struggles in the various African countries against colonial exploitation also have a remarkably nationalist content. Peoples in the Third World are gradually waking up to the realisation that they have been subjected to economic exploitation for decades and the vast natural resources of their countries have been ravaged by the imperialist powers. With this awakening has come an urge for revival of the traditional cultures in such a way so as to save themselves from the distortions of decadent capitalism. This urge for cultural revival has added to the nationalist longing to shake off the imperialist yoke. Nationalist sentiments in all Third World countries are very high and if given the correct orientation, nationalism will greatly boost the morale of the future revolutionary. Hence, nationalism will be a major factor in determining the course of revolutions in the near future.

Regarding the nature of revolution in an age of Imperialism and Social Imperialism we thus arrive at the following generalizations:

- (a) *The 'Mass Line' will be more effective in revolutionary struggles in the near future.*
- (b) *The occurrence of revolutions in the near future has a higher probability than that of wars. Even if a war does break out it will be a localised war or a localised nuclear war, as the case may be.*
- (c) *Nationalism will be a major factor in determining the course of revolutions in the near future.*

Metamorphosis of an Indian Godfather

Arupratan Banerjee

A new Godfather has arrived on the Indian horizon. He is none other than Jayprakash Narayan, who promises an instant solution to all the major problems of our country only if the 'Indira Hatao' programme he has launched with so much vengeance is carried to a successful conclusion.

The Indo-Pak war of 1971 has taken its toll—the country is faced with an acute economic crisis. Draughts and floods has worsened the situation, prices of essential commodities have increased by leaps and bounds. Dissatisfaction lurks in every Indian mind except in the minds of those who see in this crisis an opportunity to topple the Indira Government.

It is in such an opportune moment that Jayprakash has staged his comeback to Indian politics. When the turmoil in Gujarat had just simmered down, JP gave a timely call to the people of Bihar to fight corruption and inflation, to struggle for electoral and educational reforms. It is strange that corruption started pricking JP's conscience only after the dissolution of the Gujarat Assembly. It is impossible to believe that for the last twenty seven years, he was so engrossed in the Sarvodaya movement that he could not spare a single thought for corruption in the country. On the contrary, the movement should have given him scope for fighting corruption in the villages. Unfortunately, JP had never raised a whisper against a hoarder or a Jotedar.

JP's smoke-bomb, containing an indigenous mixture of anti-corruption, electoral reforms and the like, succeeded in stirring the ultra-rightist section of students in Bihar. Thereafter, JP shrewdly channelized the movement against the Gafoor Ministry, and mobilised the students

to demand the dissolution of the Bihar Assembly. To make sure that he was on firm ground, JP next linked arms with the ultra-rightist parties, like the Jana Sangh, the BLD, the Swatantra, the Congress (O) and the RSS, whose interests coincided with his own. At the same time, JP formed the Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti. The Samiti, JP claimed, would be non-political and its movement non-violent.

Neither of the promises were kept. The Samiti consists mostly of members who are active workers of the Jana Sangh. The Samiti's cadres made an armed raid on CPI members going to attend the mass rally on December 11 1974, burnt down private and public property, derailed trains, attacked some Congress MLAs and carried out lootage in parts of Patna.

JP is contradiction personified. He claims to be a Gandhian while acknowledging as his ally the RSS, which, as is known, engineered Bapuji's assassination. He is suddenly all praise for the Chinese system although he had lashed out against the Maoist regime when the Dalai Lama was granted political asylum in India. However, in view of the shift of balance in America's foreign policy, J.P.'s radical change of attitude towards China is understandable. What is even more interesting is that in extolling the Chinese system, he has once blurted out that he would not hesitate to launch an armed revolution, should his non-violent methods fail.

The contradictions do not end here. He first speaks of fighting corruption. Then he says that the resignation of the Gafoor Ministry is the only way to remove corruption, making clear at the same time that this is not in any way directed against Indira Gandhi. Finally,

realisation dawns on him that Mrs Gandhi's ministry is the root of all corruption.

JP aims at eradicating corruption with a bunch of corrupt lieutenants aiding him. One of his closest associates is Ramnath Goenka, an Independent MP from Bihar. The CBI has charged Goenka, as also his son and daughter-in-law, for procuring funds from the Punjab National Bank by submitting statements of non-existent stocks of newsprint. The money was used in share-market operations. Another associate is Biju Patnaik whose residence yielded crates of foreign liquor during a recent raid by the CBI.

Again, one of the principal issues in JP's movement is electoral reforms. But the unfortunate contradiction is that he is seriously preparing to contest the coming elections. One may infer that the whole agitation is motivated to reinstate the rightist parties in power.

If JP had not entered the crazy race for power, he could have done the country much good. The present Government has always advocated basic changes in our educational, administrative and legal structures. But such changes, which dislocate the lives of millions, cannot be implemented when a chaotic state of affairs is undermining national strength.

Nineteenth Century Bengal : A Profile

Suranjan Das

The validity of the term "Renaissance" as applied to Nineteenth Century Bengal has recently been critically examined. Modern Indian historians are becoming more and more aware of the necessity of a scientific analysis of the historiographic concept of "renaissance" for a systematic study of nineteenth century Bengal. This paper seeks to examine the results of this awareness.

In the European context, the term **Renaissance** "connotes the period of the transformation of feudalism into absolutist forms of governance, and on the development of new types of urban thought based on the re-discovery of their traditional values"¹. This transformation does not necessarily involve any total destruction of feudal modes of production. But it witnesses the birth of capitalistic tendencies. Marx scientifically discussed the stages involved in the transition from feudalism to "civil society". But he never claimed absolute generality of his model. Rather, he referred to

certain special instances which he called the 'Asiatic forms of government'. India may be taken as one of such instances. Taking all these factors into consideration, Dr. Barun De has aptly remarked, "Problems of transition from medievalism to contemporary life in India cannot be analysed on one particular, simply Marxian model, i.e., Renaissance—rise of civil society—middle-class hegemony-bourgeois capitalism, since this is based on the West European transitional experience alone"². The term Renaissance, as used above, was definitely not the trend in nineteenth century Bengal.

Generally, the historians who talk about a Renaissance in the nineteenth century draw their conclusions mainly from two premises—the positive aspect of British Rule and the 'dark' period of the Eighteenth Century. But both these premises are subject to critical examination.

The developments of the nineteenth century were directly derived from the establishment of

an alien absolutism or what has been called the British benevolent despotism. "The vision of utopia was fractured by a sense of communal and competitive parallelism and separation among Hindus and Muslims",³ who were far from generating a nation state as had been the case in the European Renaissance.

The glorification of the nineteenth century in the background of the eighteenth century degradation is hardly justifiable. Painting the eighteenth century in the blackest hue was undertaken either in cases like J. N. Sarkar's imperialist historiography or in Mazumdar's Hindu revivalism or in both. Centralising tendencies may have been at a low ebb in the latter half of the eighteenth century. But under such leaders like Ali Bardi in Bengal and Tipu Sultan in Mysore Indian traditional mode of life continued as usual in the provinces. Hence, the attempts of some historians to prove the civilising influence of the British in the context of the eighteenth century need careful and critical study.

Similarly, those who tend to glorify the nineteenth century out of their antipathy for Islam fail to appreciate the dynamism of Islam. They undermine the impact of the Islamic system of jurisprudence and the work of great Islamic theologians. What is more, the identification of the eighteenth century or precisely Mughal India as the Islamic period is of little relevance. It is dangerous to distinguish a period purely on religious grounds. This is evident when we see the eruptions of Sultan Mahmud prompted by a predatory zeal rather than a proselytising intention; the Deccan invasions of the most imperialist Sultan Alauddin Khalji resulting from a love of plunder; the recurring conflicts during the Delhi Sultanate between the nobility and the ruler and the Ulema; the employment of the Hindus under Muhammad-bin-Tughluq or the Hindu alliance of an avowed bigot like Firuz Tughluq in a campaign against the Mughal claimant to the throne of Bengal.⁴ The identification of the eighteenth century

with 'Islamic Period' may well imply that all members of the ruling class of that period were Muslims and all the subjects were Hindus. But Dr. Athar Ali's analysis of the Mughal nobility in which we find the existence of 26.9% Hindus even in 1701 has invalidated this presumption. The key to the problem is that the rulers—whether Hindus or Muslims—exploited their Hindu and Muslim subjects alike.

Leaving aside the theoretical formulations of the Renaissance we find the reformist activities of the nineteenth century confined to a limited class. This is true even of the Indian reforming activities like those of the Brahmos. The greater part of the Hindu society remained as it was and the Brahmos enjoyed the advantages all by themselves. Even the Brahmo Samaj was confined to a paltry middle class and failed to penetrate into the lower classes. The small number of nineteenth century literate men were confined to the three higher castes. In 1901 the higher castes formed 20% of the populace and of them 50% were illiterate. The conditions of women and the Muslims were all the more worse. The latter formed 33% of the inhabitants and according to the 1871 India Census there were only 15% Muslim students in schools and 5% in colleges. In 1901 90% male and 99% female remained illiterate⁵. Imparted in foreign language, the education hardly affected the bigger section of the society and thus tended to be negligible. In such circumstances, one is inclined to note that the British introduced education not for the moral elevation of the people but to create a 'compradore class' through which the whites would be able to rule the blacks. Macaulay's famous Education Minute testifies to this fact. He expected the educated Indians to be the "interpreters between us (English) and the millions whom we govern—a class of persons Indian in colour and blood but English in taste, in opinions, in morale and in intellect."⁶ Even Rammohan's role should be placed in the background of the establishment of British colonialism. In a paper

presented at the Nehru Memorial Museum in October 1972 (The Bengal Economy and Rammohan Roy), Prof. Asok Sen has shown that Rammohan's ideals of modernity and his determination to lead his land away from medieval decay were considerably exposed to the influence of that colonial beginning and its necessary inaptitude, both material and ideological, for sound and sustained modernization.

The conditions in rural Bengal were the same, if not worse. Despite instances of social mobility, the caste system remained the corner-stone of Bengali rural life. It is interesting to note that even in 1871 S. N. Banerjee was excommunicated in his native village after his return from England. Commenting on this event, Pradip Sinha notes, even in the 70s rural Bengal attached great importance to these matters while in urban Bengal the attitude was generally one of connivance.⁷ Referring to the growth of a number of English schools, Sinha claims that the "the rural response to English education was spectacular".⁸ Yet, a critical mind cannot escape the judgement that the education influenced a relatively smaller professional rather than the landed class of the gentry. Some have claimed that the agrarian Bengali society seems to be chiefly influenced by the external pressure of the introduction of new legal concepts in society. But even if there be any, the extent and nature of the modifications in agrarian relations is hard to determine.

Considered from these angles, it is not proper to designate the nineteenth century as a period of Bengali Renaissance. David Kopf⁹ traces the origin of our 'renaissance' to the Orientalist activity, a revival of our own heritage. Yet, the true impulse lay not in a 'rediscovery' of the remote past, but the 'discovery' of the recent new which implied English education, Western science, the liberal thought of Europe. In fact, it marked an attempt of the implantation of the British bourgeois culture on our country as one of the instruments of English colonialism.¹⁰

The compradore class that was created had

been one of the stumbling blocks to the progress of our nation. Appreciation of everything 'British' inherent in the present middle-class psychology may be attributed to the influence of this class. British language, first patronised during the nineteenth century and still an insignia of prestige, had perhaps the most harmful effects on Indian polity. It has till today linked us to the British hegemony and stultified the indigenous tissues of growth. If nineteenth century enlightenment effected some minor reforms within the colonial framework, it did more harm by enabling the British to leave behind the trail of colonialism even after their departure. Carried out under the colonial framework, nineteenth century developments cannot be termed a Renaissance, a change from the shackles of medievalism to forces of modernity.

Dr. De is inclined to call the period 'an epoch of enlightenment under the aegis of alien despotism'.¹¹ Such a dependent cultural achievement, says he, cannot be entitled Renaissance. But some points may be raised against this contention.

If we cannot call the nineteenth century a 'renaissance' on the ground that it did not present the same characteristics as in the European case, neither can we describe it as a period of enlightenment. The Age of Enlightenment in Europe (roughly speaking 18th-19th century) saw the stabilisation of the capitalistic regime, at least more so than the period of Renaissance. But in the nineteenth century it is hard to refer to an indigenous capitalist class or a 'civil society'. India was then under the full aegis of British colonialism, our country being used as markets for English manufactured goods and as a source of raw materials for the capitalist industry of the metropolis. For the export of capital to dependent countries, as Lenin wrote, certain possibilities or pre-requisites had to be created in those countries themselves—namely, they had to be drawn into world capitalist intercourse, railways had to be built, etc. The Indian Railways was likewise established not for common

good but primarily for colonial exploitation, i.e., for the extraction of raw materials for the British manufacturers.¹² To quote Lenin, "Imperialism means among other things export of capital".¹³

Sometimes it is emphasised that in the course of colonial exploitation by new methods characteristic of finance capital, the capitalist system began to develop in this country. Yet, despite the fact that development of modern industry and capitalism in India started in the course of imperialist colonial exploitation, the entire system of imperial domination soon blocked the development of these branches of industry, especially those producing capital goods, which would affect the economic dependence of India on foreign capital. Indian economy continued to serve the needs of British colonialism. Lenin made the classic remark, "Britain strangles the industry of that country (India)".¹⁴ Hence, if we cannot call the nineteenth century a period of Renaissance, it is also hard to call

it a period of Enlightenment. What is more, in the European scene we witnessed the Enlightenment following the Renaissance and not vice versa.

But the fact remains, as Dr. De aptly points out, that "What is necessary for a revitalisation of Indian history is a new theory of colonialism: of transition of the mode of production from pre-colonialism through colonialism to forms of stultified and dependent capitalism. When such a theory is available, the intellectual consequences of the transition can be stated with greater clarity than is now possible".¹⁵ There is no doubt that there was some sort of awakening in the nineteenth century and that it had both positive and negative sides. But the fact is that it happened under the aegis of British colonialism. This is a phenomenon unknown to Europe. We have to examine nineteenth century Bengal in the light of this phenomenon.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Quoted from Dr. Barun De's paper presented to the Indo-Soviet symposium on Economic and Social Development of India and Russia from the 17th to the 19th century, held at the USSR. I should thank Dr. De for presenting me a copy of his paper.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Thanks are due to Prof. N. Guha for discussing with me some of these events.
5. I am grateful to Prof. Hiren Chakravarty for having supplied me with these statistics
6. Quoted by A. Tripathy in *The Extremist Challenge*.
7. P. Sinha, *Nineteenth Century Bengal : Aspect of Social History*, Cal. 1952.
8. Ibid.
9. D. Kopf, *British Orientalism and Bengal Renaissance*.
10. See Prof. S. C. Sarkar's Presidential Address to the Indian History Congress held at Muzaffarpore in 1972.
11. Dr. B. De, *op. cit.*
12. See Dipesh Chakrabarty's article on 'The Colonial Content Of The Bengal Renaissance : A Note On Early Railway-Thinking In Bengal', in *The Indian Economic And Social History Review*. Vol. Eleven, Number One, March 1974.
13. V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Moscow)—Quoted by E. N. Komorov in his article in *India & Lenin* (New Delhi).
14. Ibid.
15. Dr. B. De. *op. cit.*

The Paradox of Definition

Arindam Chakrabarty

I

" the first difficulty is to see that the problem is difficult."

—Bertrand Russell (*An Enquiry into Meaning and Truth*—Introduction).

Man's use of definition is at least as old as that of language. Even if there was a period when men communicated their ideas through gestures, the new learner of the standard gesticulations must have needed to be instructed what meant what; and this is precisely the task of a definition. Thus when the hypothetical primitive language-teacher makes a peculiar movement of his fingers, eyes and mouth and subsequently points out a (thing, say, some peculiar herb or animal, or an event, say, the falling of rain, or the hunting of beasts—he defines.¹

At the very beginning of our learning a language we do not raise the question: why such and such objects are to be always called by such and such names only?² We then just try to associate a particular name with a particular class of objects. It makes no sense for a tiro to ask: why should we use the word "kind" in German, to mean a child, instead of any other name? The arbitrariness of the process of giving one name (rather than another) to a class of objects is, in this stage, taken for granted. The basic problem, however, remains which is not so much about the semantic relation but about the difficulty of the very concept of "class". At the time of instruction (natural, spontaneous or artificial) we see only

one or a few instances of the class denoted by a name and other instances of it can and do widely differ from that or those seen instances. Yet we feel assured that we shall be able to apply the name correctly, i.e., to all objects of the denoted class, and to no objects of any other class. It is not true that we never make mistakes due to superfluous particularities of the initial instances. It is rather strange how, in most cases, we seem not to make such mistakes. Sometimes it is hard to convince a child who has learnt the meaning of the word "cat" through the demonstrative instance of a white cat, that a black one is also to be included into the denotation of that word. Nevertheless, what is usually known as the correct use of words, we seem to adopt by this very precarious method of demonstrative definitions. It is astonishing what occult sense of universality tells us that the vulture and the sparrow both belong to the same class from which bats are to be excluded and the denotability of which by the term "bird" we might have learnt from the demonstrative instance of a cock. Now that familiarity has blunted our feeling of strangeness, we find so ample resemblance among them. But is it not really difficult to see at a glance what is common between Rugby and Patience or between Cricket and Bubble-blowing so that both should be called games? This, however, is not the problem we here wish to discuss. This is a much deeper issue arising from the truth that every existent thing is at the same time similar to every other, so that how much similarity makes for a class and how much dissimilarity mark it off from other classes is a problem:

it is one of those irksome ruggednesses that lie beneath the workably smooth surface of untroubled because unthinking commonsense.

The problem that we shall here discuss is an allied, though a bit shallower, one. It shares with the above issue the feature of not being felt by us in our daily life. And like the other one, if it were felt and not solved, a major ground of our daily life namely 'communication' would have been impossible. For communication to be possible it is presupposed that all of us should understand more or less same things by the same words. If A asked B, "Are you doing Politics?" meaning by the question whether B has entered some party, and B answers "Yes" meaning that he is doing the subject "Politics" for his examination, the misunderstanding would be dangerous, because it will be concealed from both by the verbal show of sameness. Conversely, a verbal difference very often creates a phony quarrel between two persons (most often philosophers) whose real views are in perfect amity with each other. The history of philosophy is full of such fatuous disputes with words. Agreement about definitions is therefore the prerequisite of both technical and non-technical discourse. On the face of it such an agreement is nothing difficult to achieve. Just we are to start with saying **expressly**, in what sense we are going to use our terms. But there is, in fact (though I don't know why there should be) a limit to the user's freedom about 'senses'. Often objections arise against the very validity of a definition. When we **define** our terms in one way and use them in another, our fault is obvious, namely, we violate our own rules. But with what warrant can we question the validity of the rules themselves? Things do not (unless we admit the theological explanation that words and things are ontologically connected by God) bear any metaphysical necessity to be called by a particular name in a particular language and not by any other name so that there can be no metaphysical ground of questioning any

particular semantic rule as "inaccurate", "invalid" or "incorrect". Yet, unlike the unprotesting beginner, the sophisticated speakers of a language often ask each other: "Why define in terms of X and not in terms Y? Why include **this** property in your definition or exclude **that other** one?" The only logical answer would be: "I have resolved to define A in terms of X and not in terms of Y, to include **this** property to the exclusion of **that**. This is my own sweet will." But that will not satisfy an enquirer. That is not the sort of answer he expected when he put the question. Perhaps he wants his friend to answer in the following way: "I have studied all A's and found that X is the essential property among them, not Y, that **this** is found in all of them while **that** is absent from some instances." To robust commonsense this seems a satisfactory answer. But there is a great loophole which renders it possible for this second and satisfying answer to be no better than a disguised form of the first dissatisfying answer. When you say "I have studied all 'A's", it may be the case that you call 'A' only that which suits your definition and perhaps in a wider, narrower or different sense of the term 'A'. Y, instead of X and **that other** property also besides **this** would have seemed essential. Thus this "I have made up my mind to mean **this** by A"—and the latter answer proves to be equally arbitrary at bottom.

Yet such arbitrariness when overtly advertised would repel us as anarchy. If anybody understands "a beautiful tall and old gentleman" by the term "God" he will be patted on the shoulder as childish notwithstanding the fact that this meaning will **not** differ from other **standard** meanings of the term "God" any more than those differ from each other. In fact the word "God" is admittedly Protean, yet **something** stops us from using it for a violin. Now what precisely is the standard by which we distinguish right or nearly right definitions

from wrong ones or good definitions from bad ones?

To the logician this is a particularly naive question. From the time of Aristotle logicians have been stipulating conditions for the validity of a definition. Namely that a definition should not be too wide, too narrow, unnecessarily lengthy or verbose, not, when avoidable, in negative terms, that it should not be phrased in words lexically derivable from the word (whose meaning is to be) defined and so on. Thus, when we ask: which of the various definitions of "poetry" is acceptable? The logician without having an inkling of what poetry is can say in his usual 'topic-neutral' tone: that will be the correct definition of poetry which contains two and only two things, viz

- (a) that which is common amongst all poetry (Genus)
- (b) that which distinguishes poetry from all other things of its kind (Differentia).

But these conditions presuppose that we are acquainted with all or at least all kinds of poetry. In other words such a stipulation requires that we shall know what poetry is and what it is not, for otherwise we could not have found what is common and distinguishing among poetries (we might have mistaken other things for poetries or poetries for other things). Now if we already know what poetry is and what it is not, we know the definition of it. Consequently the above condition of a good definition states the impossible paradox (or exasperating tautology) that in order to give a correct definition of a word, what we first of all need is a correct definition of that word.

To make the problem clear I shall state it abstractly. The logical process of definition of a term requires first of all collection of instances of things denoted by the term, in order to find out what is common among them and them alone. These instances must be as varied as possible within the scope of the meaning

of that term; otherwise we should see only what is common to a section of the entire class denoted and our definition would be too narrow. But this, in its turn, would require that we know the whole of the scope of the term and also the limits of its scope. Only then can our common searching comparison be carried on among all the members and only the members of that class. But to know the whole of and the limits of the scope of the meaning of a term is nothing short of knowing the definition of it. Thus the logician begs the question when he says that a definition is *per genus et differentium*.

After the analogy of the Paradox of Induction which is the problem that induction is based upon the law of uniformity of nature which again is an induction itself, I shall call this indirect self-presupposition of logical definitions the Paradox of Definition.

It is due to this paradox that agreement concerning definition is so hard to reach. How the paradox of definition vitiates different fields may be shown by an illustration from the theory of art. What is the definition of art? Suppose we get the following two answers:

1. Art is the reproduction of what is beautiful in nature.
2. Art is rhythmic combination of forms and colours.

The second answer is much wider inasmuch as it includes much that will be excluded by the first. Let us call the first the 'traditional' and the second the 'modern' definition of art. It is likely, then, that the traditionalist will charge the modernist of being too wide in including positively inartistic scribbles or colourspots of the contemporary American painters; whereas the modernist will charge the traditionalist of being too narrow since his definition leaves out Picasso from its scope. The only cause of this definitional controversy lies in the fact that the two parties understand different things by the term "artistic", so that when they collect

their instances (among which to carry on the common-searching comparison) they are guided by two different notions of art. Thus their definitions of art differ because their definitions of art differ. The one can never persuade the other of one's own correctness. Similar disagreements may arise and did actually arise concerning the definition of poetry. The same definition was accepted and rejected accordingly as some people recognised one set of writings as poetic while others did not. It took a long time to persuade the Bengalee orthodoxes that there could be poems without metre or rhyme. On the other hand, through this slackening of criterion much unpoetic matter has already entered our literature under the name of poetry—I say 'unpoetic', of course, with a particular definition of poetry in mind. What is responsible for all this is the vicious circle in which we, definers, move. We define in order to know, and show what things fall within the extension of a term, but in order to define (or to justify our definition) we require to know and show what things fall within the extension of that term.

In this way these seems to be no rational way to convince a man that so-and-so is the definition of a term. At best I can declare that I choose to define the term as so-and-so, and subsequently appeal to others to accept my definition for that will help us in the way of clarity, economy, convenience etc. But in that case I must also admit that anybody else must have the right to define that very term in a different way. The resulting situation should be chaotic. How is it that instead of chaos we often reach an agreement about definitions? How is it that in order to justify a definition we need instances but in order to recognise those instances as exhaustively and exclusively instances of the very thing we are defining we seem to need no further definition?

II

"Philosophers have fought and wrangled
And mickle Greek and Latin mangled,
Till, wi' their logic jargon tired
And in the depths of Science mired,
To commonsense they now appeal—
That wives and Wabsters see and feel."

—(Quoted by Laird in his

Study in Realism)

The Paradox of Induction has been attempted to be solved in two alternative ways.

(a) Mill has maintained that the axiom that nature is uniform or that the causal relation is invariable is, like all other axioms, an inductive generalisation. But this is not a methodical scientific induction like that which depends upon it. So that we can partly get rid of the paradox in so far as a scientific induction will not justify itself by another scientific induction but by an unscientific (simple enumerative) induction. Thus our belief in scientific induction will be based on a principle (e.g., nature is uniform) which does not need itself to justify itself, but which is self-justifying because spontaneous. This way to solve the paradox is nearer to commonsense but it seems to be still partly vitiated by the fact that one induction depends upon another (be it of a different kind) induction. Secondly it makes a rational process be based upon an irrational one.

(b) The second way completely gets rid of the paradox by making the ground of induction no longer inductive but a self-evident axiom. The fact remains that the causal axiom being synthetic, its self-evidence may be and has been questioned but once you fix it up arbitrarily as a necessary truth and base induction upon it, the paradox of induction disappears for good. The second demerit, namely of basing a rational process upon an irrational ground, is still there. But it is hardly a demerit. All rational processes are bound to be ultimately

grounded in irrationalities. A system of beliefs can be rational, i.e. self-consistent in the middle, the beliefs at the extreme fringes must be irrational there remaining nothing by which their consistency can be judged.

Taking our clue from the Paradox of Induction we may try to deal with the Paradox of Definition in an analogous manner.

As the situation stands there are two possible ways to salvage the case, i.e. to show that what a definition presupposes is not a definition, in the same sense.

(i) Convention-Solution

We may, refer to common usage (which, we must be conscious, is sufficiently impressive and elastic) and select instances on its basis.

(ii) Stipulation-Solution

We may, as has been already indicated, take definitions as arbitrary (personal) determinations fixed by the speaker and also understood and (provisionally, at any rate) accepted by the listener.

If the first way is taken, the process of definition will consist of first, collecting most varied instances of things that are "usually called" by the name to be defined, and second, finding out what is common among them and only among them. It will presuppose no doubt, a general acquaintance with common usage but not (as was said in the statement of the paradox) a preconceived definition of the name. We shall have to know beforehand what things are usually called by the name but not what things are really its denotations. The latter is what the definition shows, and the former is the ground of the definition. Acquaintance with convention also, doubtless postulates acquaintance with a definition (namely the definition of convention) but it does not postulate the definition of the very term to be defined. Thus by distinguishing the ground-definition from the product-definition we can partly get rid of the self-presupposing paradox.

If, on the other hand, we take the second alternative we need not presuppose even this acquaintance with standard language (and for that matter, with the definition of standard). For, then, our definition still simply record our resolution to use certain phonetic or visible symbols for a particular class of objects. The requirements of this second solution being far lesser, it does really dispense with the paradox, but (like the second solution of the Paradox of Induction) its application and acceptability is likely to be very limited.³ For communication's sake more or less uniform definitions need to be taken and if everybody gets the right to redefine terms, this uniformity cannot be expected to be attained.

Nevertheless, the two ways of solving the paradox of definition were already hinted at by Mill when he defined a definition as "a proposition declaratory of the meaning of a word; namely either the meaning it bears in common acceptance, or that which the speaker or writer, for the purpose of his discourse, intends to annex to it" (*System of Logic*, Chapter viii, Section 1). The first of the disjuncts refers to what we have called the convention-solution and the second to the stipulation-solution of the paradox of definition.

The case for stipulation-solution is sufficiently clear. It does not care about what actually the name means but says simply: I shall use the name to mean **this**. But this is not how ordinarily agreement is reached in matters of definition. The more usual way is to consider some definition as nearer to the **actual** meaning from the **usually attached** meaning, with the tacit major premise that that meaning **must** be proper which is grasped by the general **intuition** of the **standard** users of the term. There are three salient defects of the inference. First, the 'must' may be quite illogical there being no good reason why all **standard** users and only those will catch the **proper** meaning. Second, the 'intuition' here cannot have any truth-claim, because corresponding to the word itself (i.e.,

its sonic and visual reality) there is nothing in actual things that would reserve **that** word for a particular class of things alone. What we call general intuition must have been once just the 'intuition' of a few, and the reason **why** it gained ground cannot lie in the thing nor in the word, nor in their relation (if any), but perhaps in the popularity of those few individuals who threw this particular definition in vogue. Thirdly, it is by no means easy to determine who are **standard** users.

Yet, this is the rough-and-ready method of judging whether a definition is 'correct', i.e., whether the instances compared are **really** exhaustively and exclusively instances of the class denoted by the name. Even though there is no clear-cut criterion of an 'expert' and neither any reason why experts will be infallible, still, we cannot deny that there is some common essence (and we see no harm in calling this **the** essence) which intuitively enables the experts to recognise true poetry from false and also widely differing pieces as all equally poetic and thus to reach a more or less definite de-

finition of poetry—a definition for which they **can** demand assent from others by re-enacting the process by which they reached it. We conclude, therefore, that the only sense in which the semantic rule "We shall mean 'rational animal' by 'Man'" is more **accurate** than the semantic rule "We shall mean 'a peculiar mixture of carbon and water' by 'Man'", is that (though both are equally reasonless determinations) the former rule is in fact obeyed by a larger number of people while the latter happens to be personal idiosyncrasy.

Snubbing the unwondering commonsense, the philosopher discovers a disturbing perplexity in the so frequently undertaken process of definition. But eventually the perplexity has to be solved in the way of commonsense itself, of course with this small but vital difference that while in the earlier stage the process undergone was unavoidably irrational but not known to be so, after the scrutiny of the philosopher, the process will remain equally unavoidably irrational and also **known to be so**.

NOTES

- (1) Here the word 'definition' is used in a rather stretched sense. [It definitely does not mean logical definition with which the pre-linguistic people could have had little to do. But the statement of (or the act of stating) the meaning of a symbol or a group of symbols is also most generally called 'definition'. It is in this wider sense that I have taken it in the above passage.]
- (2) Characteristically enough, for the philosopher, the apparent naivete of this question is pregnant with large philosophical possibilities. This very question has received different answers both in Indian and Western Seman-

tics. The "Principia Mathematica" is said to advocate the theory that the only reason why certain objects are called by certain names is that somebody wishes, for some special purpose of his own, to call them by those names. Whereas, the Naiyayikas used to say that it is a sort of Divine will that certain words should stand for certain things and argued elaborately for the view.

In our discussion, however, we have not dealt exactly with *this* problem.

- (3) In fact, when a writer avowedly uses a term in a 'new' sense, he keeps some close connection with the 'old' sense. The mathematician's redefinition of

the term "function"—however remote it may be from the "function" of ordinary usage—has an inner link with the latter. We do not *usually* go violently against the common usage even when we 'stipulate'. Thus, to make our stipulations 'persuasive' the shifts of meaning are carefully

made bit by bit—so that people accept it and soon it becomes the common usage. In this way the 'stipulation-solution' of the paradox may be shown to be 'potentially' identical with the 'convention-solution' in as much as conventions are stipulations largely accepted.

Jalpa or Disputation

Jatilcoomar Mookerjee D.Lit.(Cal.)

Jalpa or disputation is the second variety of **Katha** or legitimate discourse as adumbrated in Nyaya literature. It is a discourse, where two parties, proponent or opponent engage themselves in establishment or otherwise of a thesis by means of a free use of the accredited means of knowing and its accessories. **Aksapada** defines it as being endowed with the very same characteristics as one finds in **Vada**, and besides these, the establishment as well as overthrow of the thesis and the antithesis is done by **Chala** or casuistry, **jati** or sophistical rejoinders and **nigrahasthanas** or various clinchers. The underlying purpose of this form of debate lies in the establishment of one's position after vanquishing the opposite viewpoint.¹

Before a discussion of this definition is undertaken, we propose to reproduce the definition of **Vada** to show its relevance to the present form of discourse. **Vada**, as has already been pointed out, is a permissible form of discourse in which acceptance or rejection of a position or its opposite is done by means of knowledge, five-membered argument and the process of the **reductio ad absurdum** and the deliverance of all these will be in accordance

with the accepted positions of the school, **Jalpa** besides being endowed with these very characteristics has its diversion to casuistry, sophistical rejoinders and clinchers. This last characterisation is important for **jalpa**, since it distinguishes it from the **Vada** a form of discourse.

Vada differs from **jalpa** both in respect of its general aim as also in the specific procedure pursued for its fulfilment. The characters assigned to **Vada** describe its general form and also the rules controlling it, suggesting by all these the names of various fallacies and clinchers that may arise when the rules are violated. And Vatsyayana accordingly maintains that only some of the various clinchers as adumbrated in the Nyaya School find their easy applicability to **vada**. A question arises, if **jalpa** has *ex hypothesi* the sanction to use casuistry, sophistical rejoinders and clinchers freely, a reference in the body of its definition to the characteristics of **Vada**, meaning the relevance of some of the many clinchers, is a sheer repetition. In other words, when **jalpa** has its freedom to use any of the foul means of casuistry and unfair rejoinders, the mention of the characteristics of **Vada**, suggesting only

the names of the various aberrations and their bearing on the context, unnecessarily makes the situation cumbrous. Udyotakara anticipates all these and suggests in reply that reference to the characters of **vada** in the definition of **jalpa** should not be understood to mean that all of them are necessary for it. On the contrary it shows that the characters necessary for **jalpa** only are to be taken into consideration as being relevant to it. Vatsyayana's explicit statement of all the characters of **Vada** in the body of the definition of **jalpa** seems to be for the purpose of ready reference.

It may be pointed out however that casuistry, sophistical rejoinders and the various clinchers are used only for purpose of rejection or overthrow of a particular position or its opposite. The acceptance or establishment of a thesis is never done by these. And this is also in agreement with their general definitions as also their specific formulation as made in the Nyaya literature. Casuistry is an attempt to overthrow a proposition by ascribing to it a meaning other than the intended one.² Sophistical rejoinder is opposing an assertion on the basis of mere similarity and dissimilarity.³ A clincher consists in showing the disputant's misunderstanding or his failure to understand a particular position.⁴ The specific formulations and the detailed classifications of each of these also indicate that they are so many missiles used for condemnation of a particular position or its opposite. In short, casuistry, sophistical rejoinders and clinchers never bother about the establishment of a position or its opposite. Their placement in the definition of **jalpa** and construing them as means both to the establishment and overthrow of a position are therefore suspect cases from the standpoint of Nyaya literature. The plea that casuistry, etc., aim at or imply a positive establishment of a thesis only after a negative overthrow of its contrary seems out of place, as *ex hypothesi* they have only the

negative function of overthrowing a position.

Vatsyayana suggests in reply that the establishment and overthrow of a particular thesis are done by the accredited means of valid knowledge, and casuistry, sophistical rejoinders and clinchers are necessary for guarding one's view. They are so many non-independent auxiliaries, by themselves incapable of establishing a position. When the means of knowledge establish a particular proposition, these foul means of casuistry and unfair rejoinders are resorted to for further fortification of one's position. In other words whenever they are used, they are used with a view to strengthening one's view by smashing the logic of the opponent. This also seems to be in agreement with the offices of wrangling and disputation as defined by Aksapada. **Jalpa** and **vitanda** are necessary for protection of truth, just as the thorny boughs are necessary for fencing the seedlings.⁵ Further when a person overthrows a position by means of the sources of knowledge he may use casuistry, sophistical rejoinders and clinchers for ruling out the possibility of future attacks against this condemnation. Thus they are subsidiaries to the various means of knowing and hence necessary for establishing or otherwise of a particular proposition or its opposite.

Udyotakara takes exception to this whole procedure as outlined by Vatsyayana, and maintains that casuistry, sophistical rejoinders and clinchers are all unfair rejoinders and cannot conduce to the establishment of a position or its opposite. The disputants jealous of each other rush for these and introducing ambiguities create a misunderstanding, and anyhow try to win the debate. These are unfair practices which have nothing to do with either acceptance or rejection of a particular position.

Granted that casuistry, sophism and clinchers are all unfair practices and cannot establish or overthrow any position, yet their role in the situation cannot be underestimated. They are

contributory factors, and their contributions towards the determination of truth are certainly of no mean order. Logic simply demonstrates arguments which establish a position, and casuistry, sophisms etc., ruling out the possibility of future attacks as also sources of confusions that make such positions invulnerable. Although they cannot by themselves determine a truth, yet they are factors undoubtedly necessary for making our determination unwavering. This seems the reason why Aksapada and Vatsyayana have kept them in view and have included them in the body of the definition of **jalpa**.

Further the Neo-Naiyayaikas explain the definition in a different manner. They have explained that casuistry etc., are directed towards condemnation of a proposition, and condemnation is always with a view to its establishment. In short the attacking is for purpose of supporting.⁶ If this part of the definition be construed in this way it may end all controversies as regards the function of casuistry, sophistical rejoinders and clinchers and their role in a **jalpa** debate.

It should be noted in this connection that this form of debate takes place in an assembly of learned people. It is a debate the sole purpose of which is victory. In the assembly there must exist an umpire, who must be a learned man and occupy a neutral position. The scholarship as well as neutrality of the umpire should be unquestioned, and must be acknowledged as such by both the parties in the debate. The assemblage of people where there is a king, or a powerful man or a proper person and which is attended by many distinguished scholars is called an assembly. It must have a body of canons as to the procedure of a debate, and this debate will proceed in the following manner.

In the first place the proponent seeks to establish his proposition by the various sources of knowledge, five-membered argument and the process of the **reductio**. He adduces valid reason as the ground of his proposition. In

other words, he visualises the possible objections as regards the ground and refuting them shows that the reason adduced is valid reason, validly establishing without doubt the thesis in question. Then the opponent steps in. His first task is to present faithfully the proponent's position with a view to proving that he has not misunderstood it. After this faithful presentation the opponent shows the vulnerable points attaching to the procedure adopted by the proponent. In case this is difficult or not possible he directs himself to show the fallacies of the grounds of the proponent's proposition, and after all these the opponent establishes his position as against his rivals. The proponent in his turn first of all presents an unbiased account of the opponent's position before the assembly and shows that he has understood the opponent's standpoint fully. After this he proceeds to show that the fallacies proposed by the adversary as regards his ground do not really belong to it, and that his ground is not a **pseudo** ground but a valid one. The proponent then turns himself towards the opponent's position, finds out the points which are vulnerable, and if this is not possible, he finds fault with the **probans** which the opponent has put forward in support of his position. In this way the proponent and the opponent move in a debate and proceed towards the establishment or overthrow of each other's viewpoints. Whenever any one of these two parties fails to make his position clear of all the defects as urged by the adversary, and in turn fails to disprove the opponent's position, it acknowledges defect. Deviations from any of these rules are properly dealt with by the umpire and the board of members, whose number is unequal. If anybody, either proponent or opponent, goes off this procedure and fails to point out the defects in the adversary's position in time, he stands to lose. The time factor seems important in a debate. If anybody fails to point out defects in the oppo-

ment's position just at the right hour, he is regarded as being defeated even though his position is based on sound and faultless logic. The president or the umpire proclaims his defeat, and the debate terminates.

It may be interesting however if we note below the procedure of a **jalpa** debate with reference to a concrete illustration. Consider, for example, that the subject of the debate is perceptibility of air. 'Is air perceptible or not?' is, in short, the question set before the parties participating in the debate by the board of distinguished judges and scholars. The Mimamsaka and the Naiyayika, who are here the two parties, hold different views as regards the question. The Mimamsaka maintains that air is perceptible and the Naiyayika holds the contrary view that it is inferred. In the first place the Mimamsaka posits his thesis, that air is perceived, since it is the substrate of tactile qualities, whatever is the substrate of touch is perceived, for example, a jar. Thereafter the Mimamsaka proponent turns to prove the validity of the ground which he adduces in support of his proposition — this being known as the process of extricating the thorns.

In the second place the Naiyayika opponent who opposes this position steps in and maintains that the substrate of tactile qualities (which the Mimamsaka proponent puts forward as the **probans** of his position) is a **pseudo** probans, only a simulating one, and that it fails to prove the perceivability of air, the proban-

dum in question. In other words the quality of being the substrate of touch is not a sure ground of the perceptibility of air. After this the Naiyayika opponent proceeds to posit that air is imperceptible, because it is a colourless external object, whatever is colourless and external is imperceptible, e.g., ether, the situation is possessed of being external and colourless which are concomitant of imperceptibility, hence air is imperceptible. The Naiyayika then begins the process of extricating the thorns consisting in showing the validity of the grounds.

In the third place the Mimamsaka proponent in his turn tries to reinstate his ground as the unfailing **probans** of his **probandum**, and to state that the Naiyayika position stands condemned. The Naiyayika ground of being external and colourless is not a proper and valid ground of imperceptibility, since it is conditioned by touchlessness, and conditioned probans, as is known, cannot establish the probandum. In the Naiyayika argument **air** is the subject of inference, **ether** is the example. Touchlessness is existent in ether and non-existent in the subject of inference. Whatever exists in the example and does not exist in the subject is called a limitation, which when present in this situation limits the scope or the **extension** of the universal proposition. The debate thus goes on, till clinchers and other remarks rush in and decide the issue in favour of one or the other.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Yathoktopapanna (i.e. pramāna-tarka-sādhanopālambhah siddhāntā-viduddhab pancavayavopanna pakṣa-pratipakṣa-parigraho) —chala-jati-nigrahas-thanasadhanopalambho jalpah—*The Nyāyasūtra*, Chapter I, Sutra 43.
2. Vacana - vighato'rtha-vikalpopapattya chalamiti—ibid 1/2/10.
3. Sādharmya-vaidharmyābhyām jati—ibid 1/2/18.
4. Vipratipattirapritipattisca nigrahas-thanam—ibid 1 /2/19.
5. ibid 4/2/50.
6. Sādhanāya upālambhah—*The Nyaya-sūtravivarana*—1/2/3.

The Report of the Publication Secretary

The **Presidency College Magazine** steps into its 60th year. The College itself has completed 119 years of its life-span, most of it distinguished. Like other years, 1974 also witnessed a further enrichment of our college tradition.

The academic reputation of our college continues unblemished. Out of 1033 students 634 secured different governmental scholarships. Our college has once again swept the board clean of medals and prizes at the last University examinations. Our compatriots have brought fresh laurels to the college by their success at the All India Competitive Examinations.

The unsettled academic environment prevented many of our best students from pursuing post-graduate studies at Calcutta University. But we note with pride their very good performance in other Universities like the J.N.U and Delhi School of Economics.

Some of our distinguished students who have gone abroad for higher studies have held high the name of our college. Recently, Rajit Mitter came out as the first Bengali to secure a First Class in History at the University of Cambridge. Supriya Das Gupta the state scholar for English, has proved her worth at Oxford. Our warmest congratulations to them.

Different departments carried out their co-curricular activities as usual. The Under-Graduate History Seminar hosted a well-attended symposium on Indian Nationalism. Dr. T. K. Raichaudhury (Oxford) and Dr. B. De (Centre For Studies in Social Sciences, Cal.) were the main speakers. This was followed by a thought-provoking talk on Eighteenth Century India by Dr. B. De. Dr. A. Guha (C.F.S.I.S.S.) also spoke on that occasion. A number of discussions on varied historical problems were also organised by the students themselves.

In collaboration with the Indian Science Congress Association, the Physics Department arranged a series of discussions on Recent Researches in Physics.

The Department of Geography heard an interesting discourse on Modern Japan by Dr. B. Banerjee (Calcutta).

The Department of Philosophy arranged for several weighty discussions on comparative religion, personality and B. Russell. The lectures were delivered by Dr. P. Chatterjee, Prof. S. Bhattacharya and Dr. P. Sen. Profs. P. Bhattacharya, D. Sen, and R. Das also spoke.

The Physiology Department did not lag behind. Dr. S. P. Raichoudhury (B.H.U.) spoke on Genetics. Among others who spoke in other discussions were Dr. A. Das Gupta and Dr. A. Mukherjee (S.U.), Dr. N. C. Bhattacharya (School of Tropical Medicine) and Dr. P. Roy (Siliguri Govt. College).

The Department of Bengali invited Dr. B. Mullick to speak on Bengali language among the criminals.

With the assistance of Hindusthan Steel Ltd. the Economics Department has undertaken a project entitled: Problems of Planning for Investment in the Indian Iron and Steel Industry: the Hindusthan Steel Ltd.—A case study. We appreciate the undertaking of the project.

The Department of Geology was active in explorations and field investigations. Prof. Pradeep Das Gupta has been working on the Palaeozoics of the Central Himalayas. Recently, he was injured in an accident in the Ladakh region. The mule on which he was riding ran astray and he was dragged along and overthrown at the inner edge of a precipice. He was brought to Calcutta via Simla and operated upon for deep-seated gangrene on the

left thigh. But he has now recovered and has resumed normal duties. We are really proud of Prof. Das Gupta's courage and devotion to research. We hope that the specimens collected during his recent venture will yield interesting results.

The Physics Association, an organisation of undergraduate Physics students, held regular seminars, discussions and scientific filmshows. A wall-magazine, mainly containing scientific articles, was also published. The Association took the initiative in arranging the departmental Reunion after a lapse of five years. On that occasion was published a souvenir that included valuable scientific articles, mostly in Bengali. Such scientific articles, we are told, in Bengali are rare. We hope students of other subjects will institute a similar Renaissance in their departments.

Dr. P. C. Mukharji, who was Principal of the college, has just joined his new assignment as the Vice-Chancellor of Kalyani University. We wish him all success. The students are indebted to Prof. Mukharji for restoring the academic and peaceful atmosphere in the college after a period of chronic unrest. His interest in extra and co-curricular activities of the students is amply attested by his initiative which enabled us to get an extra governmental grant without which this Magazine could not have been published. May Prof. Mukharji's successors keep up this example. We also take the opportunity of welcoming among our midst the new Principal, Dr. S. C. Shome of the Chemistry Department.

After a long teaching career from Jan. 1959 in this college, Prof. G. L. Chakrovarty of the History Department retired from service this year. The renowned statistician Prof. Anil Bhattacharya also retired this year. We pay our warm respects and bid farewell to them with heavy hearts.

During the past year we lost some of our illustrious ex-students: O. C. Ganguli, the ex-Bageswari Professor of Fine Arts at Calcutta University and a noted art critic;

Soumyendra Nath Tagore, the renowned intellectual and philosopher; and Prof. N. K. Sinha, the former Ashutosh Professor of Medieval and Modern History of Calcutta University and a man of profound learning. Their deaths have created a hiatus in the cultural life of Bengal. We only hope that this gap will be duly filled up in the near future, probably by the students of this college.

The death of our colleague Sanjiban Ghosh (Geology) came as a rude blow. We have no adequate word of consolation for his family.

Among the ex-students who won distinctions in public life was Dr. P. C. Gupta, the Vice-Chancellor of Viswa-Bharati University. His contributions to Indian history and to the advancement of education in our country have been aptly rewarded by the Government of India with Padmabhusan. We offer him our felicitations.

We note with happiness the formation of the Presidency College Alumni Association of Delhi. We are particularly thankful to it for having published in its souvenir the appeal for funds made by the Publication Secretary of the last issue. The formation of this association will certainly strengthen the fraternity among the Presidentians. We look forward to such Associations in other parts of India.

We shall only follow our predecessors if we utilise the Magazine columns to voice our grievances. We note with concern the recent bureaucratic whims in transferring some of our distinguished teachers. As students of the premier college in the state we are justified in demanding the right to be taught by the best. Even in socialist countries like the U.S.S.R. the best brains receive the highest privilege. But Presidentians are denied this right. Unfortunately, the History Department is the worst victim of this bureaucratic affront. For instance, the students of the department have been denied the right to hear the lectures of Prof. H. C. Chakrovarty who has been transferred to Hooghly. M. College where very few students take up History honours. Is this not a waste

of talent? We fervently appeal to the good sense of the government—particularly the Hon'ble Chief Minister and Education Minister—both of whom are ex-students of our college—to look into the matter and see justice done.

Some departments of the college carry out periodic excursions, ostensibly for educational purposes. There are also specified governmental funds for these purposes. But unfortunately enough, these funds are inadequate and the students generally find it difficult to get even this paltry sum from the government. We fear that unless the government intervenes timely, a day will come when there will be no excursions for Presidentians.

We also condemn, in passing, the imitation of the 'individualistic Yankee' culture, a relic of colonialism, in the College, evident in the dress, speech and thought of a certain section of the students. We deplore the poor attendance of this particular section of students in College debates, seminars and cultural functions and we can only say that this shows the lack of a genuine attachment to the college.

It is our duty to express our gratitude to the West Bengal Government, particularly to our Hon'ble Chief Minister Mr. S. S. Ray, for providing us with the 'special grant' for the publication of this number. By his liberality Mr. Ray has shown that he has not forgotten his links with his alma mater.

The importance of this issue need hardly be stressed. Prof. Arun Dasgupta gave us all help and advice without which it would not have been possible to bring out a Jubilee Number worth its name. Owing to soaring prices and our shrinking resources we had to face serious difficulties. To a great extent this accounts for a fairly large number of printing errors. Nevertheless, the Editor performed his task with utmost devotion and sincerity of purpose. In tune with the democratic spirit of sacrificing private interests to public cause, he has brought out a number that can call comparison not only with its predecessors but, we hope, also with its successors.

SURANJAN DAS

Editorial

The editor of a jubilee number is expected to recall the achievements and failures of the magazine during the last fifty or sixty years as the case is. The present editor considers it rather more important to draw the reader's notice to one or two significant developments that have taken place in the recent history of the magazine and then relate them to present problems.

Even during the late 'fifties, the magazine used to be published more than once a year. It was then a registered journal and had its volumes numbered. Since then, cost of paper and printing has multiplied nearly tenfold, but the funds available have shown no sign of increasing. The college had to be satisfied with only one issue a year, and that too grew slimmer with each number. Between 1967 and 1972 when the college was rocked by the radical politics of the time, the magazine could be published only once. Whether that number, which was used for blatant political pamphleteering, will now be disowned, is a separate question. But the point is that it was a shocking assault on all that the **Presidency College Magazine** stood for and on the values so long held sacrosanct. Matters have improved since then, and owing principally to the efforts of the newly elected Students' Union and of Dr. Pratul Chandra Mukharji, who was by then Principal, the magazine was revived in 1972-73. The documents concerning registration were meanwhile lost or destroyed, and this explains why from 1972 onward, the volumes were not numbered. However, a restoration of faith in the worth of our forbears' endeavours was, to the relief of oldtimers, evident.

I have so long been trying to draw attention to two major problems that afflict the magazine: one concerns funds, the other tradition and

quality. The crisis that at present endangers the survival of the magazine consists primarily of these two problems.

To understate the first problem, the annual collection from students for the magazine at present is not adequate enough even for publishing a slender volume with a fairly tolerable standard of paper and printing. The solution lies not merely in raising the Magazine Fee 'marginally, which seems imperative, anyway. A better way out could be to fix a price for each number and to sell it, if possible, even outside the college. But then, the price will have to be higher than other journals of the type since the latter have the advantage of procuring money from advertisers. I, meanwhile, enviously look forward to the future editor who may have at his disposal the services of the Presidency University Press. That is the only lasting solution that I can foresee. As for the present number, the money came largely from a special grant arranged for by the Chief Minister Sri Siddharta Shankar Ray, thanks to the initiative of Dr. P. C. Mukharji in this respect.

The second problem is of far greater magnitude since it has to do with the collapse of values all round. Editors have been repeatedly accused of being high-brow and of giving undue priority to contributions from teachers and ex-students. The founder of the magazine, Henry Rosher James, made it amply clear in the very first number that its primary purpose is to publish contributions from students of this college. But that does not imply that it is just another college magazine in which any student may have his longing to see his own name in print gratified. The excellence of this journal has been built up by the honest labour and dedication of generations, and it is the

sacred charge of the editor to preserve this standard against pressures that tend to pull it down. The office bearers of the Union should see to it that popular demand is not motivated by hearsay or warped reasoning. It is indeed distressing to watch the sad disproportion between the enthusiasm with which such unmerited claims are sponsored and the almost total absence of interest in reading the back numbers of the magazine. I cannot imagine a happier situation than one in which ninety per cent of the contents of a number is the work of students. But before that happens, students should willingly strive to deserve such honour. It is only in this way that they may honour themselves.

It is also unfortunate that students seem to have queer notions as to what is meant by standard and quality. I have often seen students who can write well on, say, birds and animals, on trees and flowers, on mountains and city streets, on sport and travelling, strangely diffident about sending in such articles for the magazine. They try their hands at learned dissertations instead, scattering their ponderous essays with numbered references and, most often, failing miserably. The editor has merely to pick out the better of these articles. For the rest, he has to fall back on teachers and ex-students. Incidentally, not all contributions from former students and professors are published. At least, this has not been so in this issue.

However, the emphasis of a jubilee number

must be on reminiscences and past students must be invited to record their impressions. Such reminiscences serve as reminders of what the Presidency tradition means to those who have known it for long and the devotion and sacrifice that have gone into its making. As I read these memoirs, I feel it my duty to reassure their authors that all is not lost. Having read the accounts of what past students have seen and enjoyed, I still find around me ample reason why I should feel fortunate. When we have seen how miraculously a handful of scholars in Presidency College have struggled for, and have maintained, a standard that demands an attitude and quality of mind now alarmingly rare, when we have seen how students risk their careers for enlightenment no longer considered worthwhile, when we have seen how selflessly students strive to guard the college from the chaotic state that perennially threatens to engulf it, the institution turns into a source of profound solace and inspiration. To us, more than to students of any other former period, the Presidency tradition means a challenge. When other institutions have already accepted degeneration as their unalterable destiny, we in Presidency College have at least learnt to abhor such fatal complacency. For this, on behalf of a generation of students who are the worst sufferers of the present state of things and who are, nevertheless, thoughtlessly made responsible for it, I humbly record my feeling of deepest gratitude.

SWAPAN CHAKRAVORTY

Our Contributors

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- Sumit Ranjan Das* : student of 3rd year, Physics.
- Suranjan Das* : student of 3rd year (outgoing), History.
- Swapna Chakravorty* : student of 3rd year, English.

Errata

Quite a large number of mistakes have been made in printing the article *Teaching of English in Presidency College in My Time*. This Errata seeks to correct the major ones.

- p. 9 l. 20 for *fo their teaching* read
of their teaching.
- p. 12 l. 42 for *in their minds* read
on their minds.
- p. 14 l. 58 for *alienness English literature*
read *alienness of English literature ..*
- p. 15 l. 15 for *helped out* read
were helped out
- p. 15 l. 41-42 read *Indian editors, containing.*
loose voluminous and often
erroneous paraphrases of
of the original texts....
- p. 19 l. 33 for *paves and tilts* read
pauses and tilts.
- l. 80 for *multi-syllable* read
multi-syllabic.
- p. 20 l. 6 for *of Prof. Bannerjee* read
as Prof. Bannerjee.
- p. 21 l. 1 for *fashionably deamed* read
fashionably dressed.
- p. 23 l. 16 for *student Percival* read
student of Percival.
- p. 28 l. 66 for *only as* read *only so long as*

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