



# Prabha प्रभा

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The Prabha Khaitan Foundation Chronicle

## The Power of Young Minds

Can there be anything more potent or powerful than the imagination of a child? Indeed, there cannot; the visions of youth can move mountains, and change the world — much like all forms of literature, art, music and dance. In this issue of *Prabha*, let us celebrate the power of children's imagination, and all the conversations, and change, it can give rise to



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Prabha  
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## Giving Wings to Imagination

Human beings have always been fascinated by the idea of being extraordinary. But what does being extraordinary entail? Is it the ability to make everyone happy? Or is it the ability to lose oneself completely in the rhythm of music? Is it also the ability to travel to a different place with a divine deity, or the ability to travel back or forward in time with the help of a watch? Whatever it may be, the ability to achieve beyond the capacity of what is deemed to be 'human' has continued to baffle and intrigue people. The immense popularity of superhero movies as a genre is a testament to that preoccupation. This issue of *Prabha* explores these questions through the eyes of children who, at the **Muskaan** Summer Literary Meet, wrote intriguing essays about their perception of what constitutes the superhuman.

But when we speak of super-humans, it is always our parents that come to our minds. This Father's Day, children were asked to share how they planned to spend the day with their fathers or father figures. The write-ups from the children are bound to put a smile on everyone's faces!

Since its inception, the promotion of music, literature and culture has been at the centre of all of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation's** activities. We continually push ourselves to be able to represent and celebrate our heritage, art and artists, and take them to an even wider audience. Read on to find out how the **Aakhar** Chhattisgarh Festival celebrated the beautiful state's languages and culture with panellists and musicians from different fields. Our boutique initiatives, which have constantly engaged in stimulating conversations with literary stalwarts, didn't take a backseat either. Sessions of **An Author's Afternoon**, **The Write Circle** and **Kalam** were held with achievers and authors from myriad fields — read on to see what they had to say!

However, it is important to remember that our existence is only meaningful when it is coupled with the wellbeing of the planet. The celebration of World Nature Conservation Day in July is a timely reminder to everyone about their duty towards the planet. The Foundation, through its initiative **Muskaan**, sought to make children aware of the need to protect biodiversity and precious ecosystems.

We hope that you enjoy reading this edition of *Prabha*. Don't forget to write to us at [newsletter@pkfoundation.org](mailto:newsletter@pkfoundation.org)!

*Manisha Jain*

*Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors. They do not reflect the opinions or views of the Foundation or its members.*



[ SNAPSHOTS OF THE MONTH ]



## Jab Ehsaas Moms Met!

Mothers — be they one's own, or one's spouse's — are priceless. Recently, at a session of **Kalam** in Indore, the mother-in-law of Surbhi Dhupar, **Ehsaas Woman of Indore**, spent time with the mother of Preeti Mehta, **Ehsaas Woman of Jodhpur**



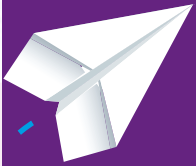
Archana Dalmia, Ehsaas Woman of Delhi (back row, centre), takes a selfie in Indore with the Ehsaas Women from the city, Unnati Singh (foreground), Surbhi Dhupar (back row, left) and Suchitra Sajid Dhanani (back row, right)



Preeti Mehta, Ehsaas Woman of Jodhpur (right), in Indore, in the company of the Ehsaas Women from the city, Unnati Singh (left) and Surbhi Dhupar (centre)



Abhikalp Foundation, an associate of Prabha Khaitan Foundation, had gone to the residence of the renowned Pandwani exponent, Teejan Bai, to invite her to launch the Aakhar Chhattisgarh Festival. Unfortunately, owing to some health complications that occurred at the last minute, Teejan Bai could not make it for the inauguration. (L-R) The Pandwani artist, Shanti Bai Chelak; founder of the Abhikalp Foundation, Gaurav Girija Shukla; Padma Bhushan awardee, Teejan Bai; Padma Shri awardee and founder of the Bastar Band, Anup Ranjan Pandey; and the Pandwani artist, Chetan Dewangan



## Changing the Universe with a Child's Mind



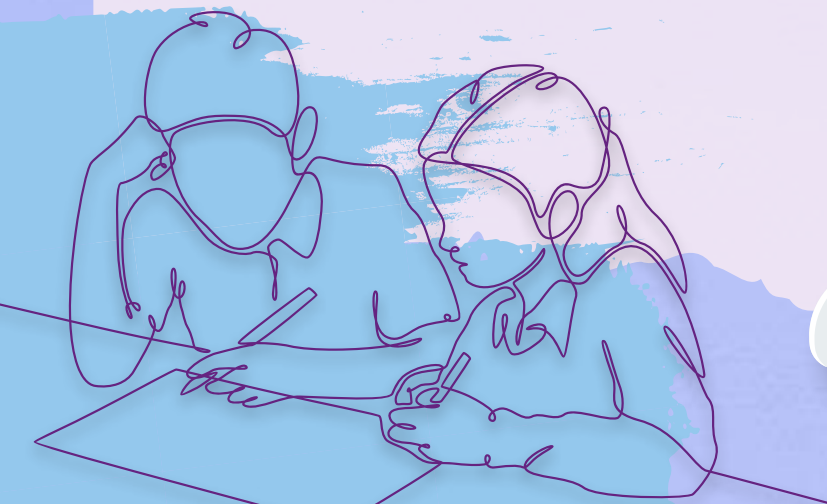
There are no limits to a child's imagination — and, therefore, by extension, there is nothing they cannot accomplish. And just because certain things may seem impossible in the physical realm we inhabit, who is to say that stupendous feats cannot be accomplished, or unknown worlds be explored, simply by the vast, endless power of a child's mind?

It was this premise that enabled **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** to give free reign to the imaginations of several talented children – all of them thinkers in their own right — at the **Muskaan** Summer Literary Meet, where some of the most enthusiastic young folks met the best minds in the world of art and literature, to learn about writing, storytelling, illustration and, overall, what their incredible imaginations can do. The young ones were asked a question: “Have you ever wished you could do something that is physically impossible in our current reality?”

For instance, have they ever wanted to travel through time, or stop it altogether? Have they ever wanted to put someone on mute? To be in multiple places at once? To immediately understand what people are saying, no matter what language they are speaking? If they could “hack” the universe, what changes would they make? What features would they add?

And, just like magic, the minds and imaginations of the young attendees came alive, like flowers in bloom: while some wrote about travelling through time to experience other eras and do good deeds, others spoke of exploring dreams; while some dreamt of communicating with nature, others pondered the power to witness the solar system and communicate with our Creators; while some aspired to be able to help entire nations in need, others reflected on the power and dangers that come with being able to stop time. In all their vivid thinking, one facet was clear: if superpowers could truly be harnessed, there is a world of good that these young ones would do — with their imagination, their words, and their actions.

Here are the 14 engrossing articles, on ‘hacking’ the universe for the greater good, by the next generation of India's talented writers. Read, enjoy, and watch out for them!





## World Peace: An Impossibility in Our Current Reality

Aarna Arora



Peace! Over the centuries, this word has become jargon used to win many battles — political and geographical, and let's not forget the contemporary memes revolving around the “personal”. Period. War! A three-letter word, yet dominant enough to intimidate the bravest of hearts. The prodigal antonym, “war”, which speaks of power and patriarchy, has smoothly passed the responsibility on to its sibling, “peace”. In a world where power rules, who wants to cradle peace? A distant dream! A rather unrealistic one!

As a child, I loved Cressida Cowell's *How To Train Your Dragon*. The book piqued my interest in our history. Soon enough, the movies were released. The films and books share some comical Vikings, and the ‘hero’, Hiccup. Both the films and books contain dragons. That's about the end of the similarities. In the film, the young Vikings are trained to kill the dragons, but in the book, the Vikings train dragons. This made me wonder how the ‘image of war’ was glorified in both art forms. Since that day, the thought of world peace has somehow pinched me. I have often wished to lead the world to peace. News articles, books and poems, such as George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and Nāzım Hikmet's ‘Hiroshima Child’ have often made me wonder what I can do to encourage peace. When I look at the larger picture, it is physically impossible in our current reality!

Jimi Hendrix said, “When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace.” Wars have occurred only because of the lust for power. Most scholars would concur that war, irrespective of its kind, is ultimately the struggle for strength. Conflicts around the world have led to women losing their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons. Children have suffered from the trauma of losing their loved ones and have witnessed blasts, gunshots and deaths, ruining their childhood.

As students, we have been taught about war strategies, the consequences of war and the causes of such disputes, but seldom have I learned about

“peace”. Every school organises a debate, speech competitions, poster-making competitions on saving water, the environment, and children from labour. But how often do we bring up the topic of ‘world peace’? Since it is only discussed in the larger perspective at decorated meets, we, the generation of the future, are too far away to even flinch about it, which, in turn, is making us ignorant about the consequences it has for every single soul on the planet. Modern man has brought this world to a sensational threshold of the future. He has made astonishing advancements in technology. He has produced machinery that works like the human brain. He has built bridges and skyscrapers and planes and satellites. This is a breathtaking overview of our world's progress.

Yet, despite these spectacular discoveries, something crucial yet basic is missing. There is a sort of emptiness; a black hole in our world, which stands in contrast to mankind's development. World peace prevails and humankind progresses towards a better tomorrow, but when war spreads, the world drowns in the depths of destruction — external and internal. Everyone from Woodrow Wilson and Nelson Mandela to Mahatma Gandhi and Chanakya have offered many larger solutions to attain peace and unity. Unfortunately, no one has come up with a solid and functional idea that may encourage world peace. Many philosophers and great thinkers such as Decartes have come to the conclusion that world peace, perhaps, was never meant to be achieved. We would all like to live in a world where unity replaces competition; however, this will never be accomplished because violence and conflict within mankind was manifested from the very beginning. Year after year, the melancholic truth of the new feuds that arise and change the old ones has jeopardised our world, making it witness various wars, terrorist activities and violence.

Despite countries paying the price by losing soldiers and land, humankind has not taken action. Wars are still being fought. Will it ever end? Will the

world ever witness peace? I have often thought of a peaceful world; countries living in harmony, children running around happily, people from different cultures bonding. More countries finding freedom over the years and becoming part of the global community. My friends and I often have discussions on problems around the world. We discuss global peace and how it must be understood. I opine that peace is not merely a state of non-violence, but a state of unity and harmony around the world. If I could help in securing world peace, our planet could be a happier place for our future generations. To achieve world peace, it is vital to understand that non-violence is an initial step in establishing peace. 'Acceptance' and 'tolerance' are the words that need to be emphasised and understood to bring an end to the war.

It would not be wrong to state that such feuds have led to a major impact on the people, who have lost hope and are now battling inner conflicts. When we think about the words 'war' or 'conflict', we picture weapons, soldiers, blood and patriotism, and often forget that people are now fighting inner conflicts. Wars around the world have taken a major toll on people's mental health. The fear of losing their loved ones or having to abandon their homeland drowns them in an ocean of dread. The consequences of war on laymen, such as inflation, lay-offs, depression, are often never discussed. If we can't maintain peace with ourselves, how can the world tend to global peace? During wars, people are exposed to many

diverse traumatic events. War has disastrous effects on the health and well-being of children, soldiers and women. These conflicts often lead to severe anxiety, hallucinations and even physical problems. In some disputes, children get separated from their families, leading to armed groups recruiting them as child soldiers. Owing to this, they witness or have to participate in killings. Wars also put people at risk of diseases, violence and exploitation.

But it's not just the wars at the political level that have jeopardised world peace. Look around! The tolerance levels of people in present times has stooped so low. The news channels are filled with agitation over the bills passed. For every little matter, we take to the roads and damage public property as if that is the only way to put across our point. Women are being killed for not cooking well; tenants are getting stabbed for arguing with the landlord. Body image issues, acceptance of gender, the dying spirit to sustain the competitions of the world, a sudden splurge on social media where influencers are promoting self-love and acceptance — people today are constantly at war with themselves. And all of this, to zero down on attaining the ultimate salvation to survive in this world — peace!

Now, more than ever, talking about peace has become physically impossible in our current reality, I wish I could do something about that — peace with oneself, if not with the world. Because that is how, someday, we'll achieve world peace!



## Record the Dreams You Don't Remember

Adeeba Riyaz



*I always wanted to perceive my dearest dreams with an eye that was awake enough. I wanted to reveal the episodes to my acquaintances. I shall do so in my imagination. Come, let's watch dreams."*

I have always wished that I could record the

dreams of people and play them on a screen, although it is physically impossible in our current reality. It has been a great inclination of mine to do something like that, because almost every time I have seen a dream, I mostly do not remember it, not in my heart of hearts.



I always wanted to narrate the dream to my parents and friends. Sadly, it was just the tidbits I could actually remember.

In my early juvenescence, I had dreams that were full of fantasy, swords and sorcery. Who could believe my reveries? The lice are ruling the world, and the rat is kicking the elephant. That was the time I wanted to prove it all. While I was growing up, my mother often complained that she had forgotten her dreams. As far as I'm concerned, I did forget them too. We forget 90% of our dreams just after 10 minutes, when they end. Once I asked my father to set the smartphone on the stand and fit the angle near my eye to actually record the dream I saw, but sadly, I didn't have a dream that night. This idea lingered in my mind, rushed through my veins, and flabbergasted my temperament. Then, suddenly, before a year or so had passed, I had framed a plan out of nowhere. This is a scientifically and logically impossible idea in present-day reality. But Sheldon Allan Silverstein said it well: "Listen to the Mustn'ts, child. Listen to the Don'ts. Listen to the Shouldn'ts, the Impossible, and the Won'ts. Listen to the Never Haves, then listen close to me. Anything can happen, child. Anything can be."

The eye is the receptor of vision and the labyrinth of images. A study conducted at the University of California saw rapid eye movement (REM). In this scenario, our eyes move under our eyelids while dreaming, and the brain thus interacts with the images. The signals may therefore exchange, and the eye may indirectly meet the images in the dream. Obviously, we say, "I saw a dream" and not, "I thought a dream." I planned recording dreams by fixing a camcorder at the retina. After doing so, I am supposed to project them on a screen. These concepts may or may not be defined in the science of vision and the human psyche, but we are talking about impossibles. For the next step, I am thinking of fitting a projector near any required spot in or out of the eye, and then the dream will be on the screen. Dreams are images, sounds, and every sub-branch contained therein. To show these images as a proper video recording on our screen, surely the concept of persistence of vision comes into play. So here you are, revisiting the day you met dinosaurs or found the Elixir of Life. They say that some researchers have come up with a wearable device called Targeted Dream Incubation (TDI). It is meant to be a tool for the trial and error of dream content, that is, how dreams work and what impacts it has on various parameters like memory, emotions and imagination. It is the kind of sleep-tracking device that signals changes in pitch. Theoretically, we should be able to do so. But in current reality, it's completely paradoxical. A number of researchers are

heading towards it. Someday, somewhere, they may lead it. But as far as the current scenario is concerned, researchers tend to only recognize the sleep cycle and the intervals to determine dream alerts and the like. These researchers can record the movement of our speech and expressions in dreams, but not the actual content of the story. The neuroscientist, Moran Cerf, said he is putting electrodes in the brains of people who undergo brain surgery as a shining parameter of his research to "listen to the activity of specific brain cells." This enables him to get a hint as to what individuals are thinking. "We may assume you dreamed about your mother and father," said Cerf, "however, we're not sure what your mother was wearing." But when we record the dream through a camcorder and project it, it will be a movie that will enable you to see everything, from the colour of the sock to the ribbon your mother is wearing.

Through my research, I came across the Japanese dream-reading machine. The Japanese, in order to decode the images during sleep, formulated a machine. We know that the hormones produced by the brain relate to what we have dreamed. All the objects we see in our brain have hormones that distinguish them. Scientists used two techniques. First, they ask the person to sleep in the magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) machine and dream, and then they use the readings to comprehend when the person begins the stage of dreaming. With adherence to the next stage, the person is woken up and asked to recall what he or she has dreamed. Then they repeat this procedure almost 200 times for each person. Now, scientists use a search engine to gather images that are similar to the objects from the person's dreams. But this process still doesn't reach the concept of dream recording. This Japanese technique tends to have a dependent nature, for the dreamer is asked to narrate the dream, which is contrary to our model, which allows the dreamer to watch the dream. "Impossible have the greatest possibilities of being yet more impossible." How is my model scientifically and logically impossible? Although our respective takes and contributions on human biology have stood the test of time, in this arena of getting into the functions performed directly or indirectly by the delicate organs, we are lagging behind. Storing images in the retina is against persistence. Having a projector and IR is even more illogical.

Though our eyes are closed at the time, we see dreams. I want to fit IR (infrared rays) so that they support my application to the theory of 'night vision equipment.' This is an impossible fantasy. Moreover, it is my personal belief that dreams have something to do with the subconscious state of mind, most of

which is currently unknown and not defined. This is nescience. But I firmly believe in all the lame concepts I coin, as I have understood Thomas Edison well when he said, “To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk”. This pile of junk gave birth to the bulb, primarily through the grace of which I am writing this piece and you are reading it. The aim of capturing the dreams and watching them like a story in a book or a movie in a cinema had no motives behind it when the idea actually came. But now I’m mature enough to understand that an invention is weak without an innovation. Without a purpose, it is a corpse. Firstly, recording dreams will not miss a detail. It will be the complete dream, which will help the dreamer watch the dream and recall every single detail they may have been deprived of during the sleep. After observing these dreams carefully, one can come up with solutions to everyday life situations. I have seen many people in life who actually jot down their dreams in the mornings; once I asked one of them, the answer was

obvious: “It gives me solutions and strategies; I seek utmost guidance from these images.” Sometimes dreams can be your sign; they can be the direction you are looking for. Dreams help you experience multiple lives, live in various situations, and live with various characters, which gives better insights into day-to-day life. Dreams that are well portrayed will help us imagine scenes and their consequences. We cry in some dreams and giggle in others. This is how dreams tend to process and help us move from one emotion to another in a considerably good fashion. In a nutshell, dreams let you dream.

Although all that I have wished I could do is physically impossible in current-day reality, maybe someday it will be possible. Isaac Asimov set one of his stories, *The Fun They Had*, in the future (2155), but it was written in 1951. He sensed it. It was utopia at the time, but almost a bygone reality today.

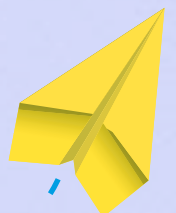
*“It’s the possibility that keeps me going, not the guarantee.”* — Nicholas Sparks

## The Power To Make Everyone Happy

Anhad Tej Kathuria



If I had one superpower that would let me change the world, I would like that to be the power to make everyone happy. Just by snapping your fingers, if they had a problem, it would be solved, and no one would be stressed ever again. We will be free. We will live a happy life. We will have fun every day. We will help everyone in the world. We will have to work together to make it happen. We will help everyone who doesn’t sound that good. What will happen? Just think about it. We will always be happy, and nothing will happen to us because we will stand together. Thank you!





## Ripples in the Epic, the Ramayana

Anushka Dalal



The city was alive with the sound of sirens, the wail of horns and the chatter of pedestrians rushing to and fro. But beneath the surface, there was a quiet desperation that simmered like a pot on a low flame.

While exploring ancient Indian history, one always wondered about the most glorious text of the epic, *Ramayana*; those hundreds of unbeatable and charismatic characters. Thinking about them day to night, food to water, school to sleep, was a great source of knowledge.

There is Lord Rama, who is often seen as an embodiment known as *Maryada Purushottam* or “the perfect human being” — an example of how to live a life of honour, integrity and devotion to Dharma — who is exiled from his kingdom and embarks on a quest to rescue his wife, Sita, from the King of Lanka, Ravana.

There was the character of Bharat, who excited me as the most ideal “brother figure” — a model of loyalty and selflessness in the *Ramayana*. He is also known for his kindness and compassion towards all living beings, a symbol of the ideal ruler who governs with empathy and fairness.

The ancient Indian text holds great importance in Indian culture, and is considered to be one of the most significant literary works in the world, but has anyone thought that if this text would have been changed or reversed, then what would have been the consequences of these drastic changes?

The sun setting behind the mountains casting long shadows across the valley, the air was crisp with a hint of wood smoke lingering on the breeze. I felt a sense of peace wash over me, like the world had finally settled into its rightful place. Reading the history book, I decided to step into the time machine and head back to the age of the *Ramayana*. I settled in the time machine, experienced the exposure like the famous cartoon character, Doraemon, my heart

racing with excitement and fear, as one who is not sure what to expect but knows that they are about to change history.

The machine hurtles through centuries of history at breakneck speed. I felt like a leaf on the wind; I closed my eyes and held on tight.

When I opened my eyes, I was standing in front of a palace with a silk draping; I was in 500 BCE, the *Ramayana Yug*. I wandered through the square, marvelling at the sights and sounds around me. It was like stepping into a different world — a world of knights and peasants, lords and ladies. I made my way to the castle with a heart pounding with excitement and anticipation. I quickly decided to hide somewhere so that I could not be seen by the *dwarvals* of that *yug*. Somehow I managed to get inside the palace, where one got to see the breakthrough in the mythological text, *Ramayana*, where Kaikeyi was about to ask King Dashrath to exile Lord Rama to the forest for 14 years and give the throne to Bharat.

I remember that I am not here just to sightsee, I have a mission — a purpose to save a life to prevent a tragedy that will have far-reaching consequences. And with the power to render anyone mute or to be at multiple places at once, I quickly decided to mute Kaikeyi and catch up with Bharat as soon as possible to stop that drastic consequence. I decided to visit Bharat, who was at his maternal place. Upon reaching Bharat and listening to the countless words of the ancient Sanskrit language, I was mesmerized and rendered still for a few minutes.

But then I recognised my power to understand what people are saying, irrespective of the language they are speaking. I quickly decided to divert the mind of Prince Bharat and make him head towards Ayodhya. As I watched him disappear into the distance, I felt a sense of satisfaction and relief at having done something good and meaningful to

change history for the better. I quickly made my way towards the castle of Ayodhya to unmutate Mata Kaikeyi.

Upon exiting the castle, my ears filled with the whispers of the people of Ayodhya, who were talking about the hazardous aftermath of the demons. For an instant, I ignored it, but the whole way back to the time machine, those whispers created clouds of fear in my mind. I was shaking with the feeling that something had gone wrong. I felt like I had created a ripple in Time, disturbing the history that will have far-reaching consequences. I had thought that calling Prince Bharat to Ayodhya would create change, as the throne would be given to Lord Rama, and he would neither be exiled to the forest, nor would Mata Sita be abducted by the king Ravana. Nor would any of the fights that are talked about from those ages by the sages happen, as Prince Bharat would have controlled everything and made his Mother Kaikeyi understand the consequences of making Lord Rama give up the throne.

My blood froze when I realized that I had truly

made a drastic change to ancient Indian history. I realised the significance of the *Ramayana*, which is ultimately nothing but the triumph of good over evil. The story of Rama serves as a model of ethical behaviour, which is used as a guide for personal and social conduct. The history is important, as it provides an insight into the social and political structures of Ancient India and the epic that has been passed down through generations.

I was not sure whether the ripples in time that I had made were for the better or the worse as I stepped back into the time machine and hurtled through the centuries once more. I wondered what other changes I had made. Time travel is a dangerous game, and I am not sure if I am ready to face the consequences. But one thing is for sure: I am hooked, and cannot wait to see where I end up next.

Will I meet Ravana, who was granted a boon by Lord Brahma that made him almost invincible? Will I meet *Maryada Purushottam*, our ideal, Lord Rama?



## A Power to be Blessed But Not to be Touched by All

Debangana Sengupta



Human life is extremely sedentary. It's complicated to its core: mankind serves the purpose for which it is born. If only man had gained the power for more greatness, who knows what the world would have come to. Some powers tend to be beneficial, while others are destructive in nature. As a human being, the utmost power required is to be kind and benevolent towards others.

Though there are powers which humans desire to make a breakthrough in history, I have always wondered what would happen if I gained the power to foresee death, or, for instance, predict what obstacles

lie ahead for a particular person. Everyone finds telekinesis, telepathy, time freezing and other sorts of physiological powers that can change the fate of the world to be engrossing. But for nature to continue within its grandeur, some humans desire powers that are contained in the sense that will help society. If I was to ever be so blessed as to gain a power that is physically impossible, I would have chosen to become a kind of soothsayer, but do more than what a soothsayer does.

A soothsayer may just predict one's future, but I would like to predict the exact day, date, and reason for



any kind of calamity that might happen in one's life. This makes life easier for those who have emotional attachments towards that person. Worldly ties are quite fascinating; they hold you back and don't let you see beyond them. That's where I come in to use my power. For instance, there is an elderly person, living in a huge old mansion, who is curious to know when she will die and when she will be free from the worldly drama. That's when I help her foresee her own death; even if it is a tragic one, she must learn to accept fate. Her death not only makes her aware of her life span, but also those connected to her. Maybe she has friends, grandchildren, people who care for her, but this leads to nothing but what is called *Maya*. The more you fall

for earthly relationships, the more you dwell into the force. Thus, my power that is physically impossible to conjure up can help change the way people live. I would solely use my power for the benefit of our society.

Just like the prediction of Caesar's death by the soothsayer and his decision to ignore it imply the conscience of the human mind, we overlook small details that may play intricate roles in our life. Our overly complicated lifestyle is the reason we can't find the keys to the lock of complexity. I will use my powers for the betterment of human minds. Because, as is often said, "We cannot escape life, but we can escape the way it binds us."



## Are you Really Living, If it's Not in **Music**?

**Devisha Malhotra**



To exist in your own song': what an intriguing thought. Have you ever thought about what would happen if this phrase could be lived by its actual meaning? A couple of nights ago, I was taking a walk in the park. I had my noise-cancelling headphones on, along with a Taylor Swift song. It was like nothing could ever separate me from the song. I could see the leaves sway. I could feel the pleasant breeze tickling my face, but for some reason, I wasn't present. I was everywhere at once, but at the same time, I wasn't. Everything was possible at that time. It all felt so real, like this was the life I was destined for. Do you know that indescribable feeling when listening to a particular song? Like you're present inside the song itself, and nothing could connect you back to reality again? Yes, I'm talking exactly about that feeling.

What if I told you, you could exist in a song? Wouldn't that be just phenomenal? Not just songs, but

movies and books too. I'm sure we've all dreamt of living in a fantasy world where no one could disturb us. What if that thought wasn't just a thought? What if it could be your reality?

If I could ever do something that was physically impossible in our current reality, it would be this. To exist in a song. Not just exist, but live. The various instruments behind every soundwave. The story behind it. The people behind it. In my undivided opinion, a song isn't just a song for me, it's a story. I only wish to be the main character of that story, caught up in my own small world. When you're disconnected from reality, anything is possible, and when you create something, you pour your heart and soul into it. If you write, your work shows your compassion. If you read, your books show your grace. And, if you produce, your songs show your affection. Similarly, who knows what went down behind the making of a book or movie? Wouldn't you like to

know? Yes, I admit. Living inside a song isn't exactly impossible, but it isn't the same. Each wave you feel going through your eardrum is a sign of so many different things. What I mean by 'existing' in a song is basically being in the studio with the artist, the drummer, the guitarist, the director, and everyone else. It gives you a feeling of closure. It makes you feel like you could live in that very moment forever. Time might not wait for anyone, but music does. Songs do. Movies do. Books do, and they always will. Just like everything has a story behind it, every person does too. Music has variety, just like this world. We all live in this world; shouldn't we get a chance to live in music as well? Every word you hear isn't just a word, it's a message trying to be conveyed. It depends on whether you want to understand that message or not. I want to experience everything; I want to get to know what life feels like living inside the music. Songs have such a strong chokehold on me. Books do too. Every time I read or put on my headphones; I enter a different timeline. I only want other people to experience that too. Have you ever noticed, whenever a beat drops, your body automatically starts moving, your skin instinctively gets goosebumps, and your head abruptly starts bobbing? If we feel that perpetual just listening to it, imagine how you'd feel if you were living inside your favourite song.

For some reason, music has been such a big part

of my life, I can't imagine myself without it. I'm so connected to every artist and song, I decided to exist in it. Isn't that absolutely mental of me? It's not. I know how every person feels nostalgia whenever they listen to a particular song or watch a particular movie. It takes you back to that phase of your life when only you know what you were doing or how you were doing. I know how every person wants to experience a certain moment of their life once again, because I've felt that too, many times. I know how music helps us cope during moments when we feel everything is unfair. The days where we stand in front of the mirror and scream out lyrics from our favourite song are the days I really look forward to.

What I want might not be physically possible in our current reality, but it is possible mentally. The moment your brain re-joins its broken fragments, the moment your lips start syncing, the moment your leg starts moving. That right there is the power of music. I just know that when I would be living inside a book or a song, it would make me feel seen, heard, and valued. Unlike people, music and movies don't judge you. Is that why so many people find closure in being a musicophile? Whatever the reality might be, there's always another option, and, in my case, it was music. I know for a fact that living inside a song would be exactly like a rebirth just waiting to happen. If you don't believe me, try it for yourself.

## My Visit to Mount Kailash

Devyani Bharadwaj



I have been listening to a lot of discussions between my mother and Kamini Nehru *Naani*, who is a theosophist. They keep talking about Annie Besant, Charles Leadbeater and Madame Blavatsky. There are so many books by these authors at home. These names

are not new to me. I keep going through some pages, but don't understand much.

Once *Naani* asked me to read a small booklet, *Invisible Helpers*, to understand what theosophy is. I understand this is some kind of philosophy. Yet, many



parts of the discussion I am not able to understand. After reading *Invisible Helpers*, I understood that if we pray with a lot of positive energy and faith, then God will send angels to help us. But this will happen only if we have full faith and do not doubt anything. So I decided that I will pray to the invisible helpers and request them that I want to travel to the mysterious land of Tibet and the gateway to the paradise Shangri-La! I started my prayers with a lot of positive feelings. Suddenly, Ma Durga appeared in front of me with a brilliant white light surrounding her. She asked me why I wanted to go to Shangri-La. I told her that I wanted to see the tenth avatar of Vishnu – the great Kalki. I wanted to ask Kalki a lot of questions. Ma Durga laughed and said that the avatar of Kalki is not yet born.

“So then can I visit Mount Kailash?” I pleaded. “I know that no one has been able to conquer Mount Kailash.” Ma Durga asked me to sit on the lion. She laughed and cuddled me as she made me sit in front of her. The mighty lion roared, and we disappeared in thin air. We started descending to a flat land on a plateau in Tibet. Suddenly, a huge golden lion appeared from nowhere. He had gigantic wings studded with turquoise stones. I got scared, but Ma told me that the Divine Tibetan lion is our vehicle to go to Mount Kailash. We sat on this huge shining Golden Lion, which could fly. I saw a beautiful lake called Mansarovar, or the lake of the calm mind.

Finally, I saw the peak of the sacred mountain! Mount Kailash – the abode of Lord Shiva and Parvati. It looked like a pyramid from the top. We landed at the peak and suddenly went inside an invisible tunnel.

Suddenly, beautiful glittering golden binoculars appeared. Ma smiled and gave me the magical binoculars. They automatically stuck to my face like sunglasses. I could see through them for thousands of kilometres! I

was so happy. I could now see beyond the ice and rocks. It was the invisible underground world of Shangri-La! Durga Ma told me that I had three hours to be on Mount Kailash. She said that she would leave me alone there. “Oh, but I am so scared; what will I do alone?” I said. “Please do not abandon me. How will I come back?”

“The Divine Tibetan flying lion will escort you back home,” said Ma Durga. “Now beyond this is your own journey. I am going back, as I have fulfilled your wish. Best of luck for your journey. Always be good, kind, and gentle, and you will learn something.”

“If I see something amazing, can I tell the people

in the world what I saw?” I asked. “You can only write it down as a story afterwards,” said Ma Durga. “Then you will forget all the visuals.” I bowed down to her. She blessed me and kissed me on my forehead.

I started looking around, and suddenly realized that the ground underneath my feet had become transparent! I could see everything beyond the glass wall. It was a fantasy world for me. “What is this?” I asked myself. Suddenly, a bird-like, chirpy voice replied. I was surprised... it was the binoculars talking to me!

“Shambhala or Shangri-la is the land of peace and plenty in the Himalayas,” replied the chirpy binoculars. “This crystal mountain holds the treasure of truth. The gateway is very tough to enter. Only the kind and noble souls are allowed entry. The river goddess asks a question to those who reach till there. If the answer is correct, the river will freeze by itself and the lucky person can walk across the water as if walking on solid ground. Unfortunately, if the answer is incorrect, the swift waters can drown the unlucky person.”

Shambhala is highly advanced. The people staying in Shambhala use aircrafts and cars that can travel underground, unseen by people like us. I could see the people of Shambhala moving at great speed. They can appear and disappear at will. They can reappear at their destination. According to *Vishnu Purana*, the tenth avatar of Vishnu will be born there. Kalki will take birth at Shambhala and save the world from bad times. Until then, Shambhala is hidden under the icy mountains so that no one can reach it. When the world is about to end, Shangri-La will appear on Earth and save humankind.

I literally got a bird's eye view with a strong pair of speaking binoculars. I saw a wonderful world under the glass. The sight of fluorescent, shiny birds flying with joy and happiness filled my heart with peace. The sights I saw were lush green forests, crystal-clear waterfalls and streams and cute little shining angels with dazzling silver wings. The colours of the flowers were brilliant and intense.

The visuals of the great spiritual Masters who were planning about the future world surprised me. There were miniature models of the present and future world. I had never imagined anything like this even in my wildest dreams! I was awestruck to know that the great Masters knew everything about the future world. All the helpers were very happy and cheerful. Everyone knew their job and there was no confusion at all. So these are the invisible helpers I had prayed to! They were so kind and full of insight. The special angels were noting down something very important. “Oh, I wish I could

see what they are writing!” I thought. The chirpy bird magnified the picture, and I could clearly see what the angels were writing. They were planning for future civilizations which will be much more advanced in comparison to us.

After seeing such a bright, gleaming, exquisite world with no sorrows and no pain, I did not want to leave it! The binoculars suddenly turned into a bird with huge eyes. The eyes resembled the front lens of the binoculars. The Bird Binocular told me that

this experience will cleanse you of all your negative thoughts, negative energy and negative deeds.

Then, finally, the Tibetan lion appeared in the air. The bird told me to sit on its back. As soon as I was seated, the bird waved at me. Within a flash of a moment, I had returned home.

This was a phenomenal journey for me. I came back filled with emotions of happiness, peace, gratitude and positivity.



## Hacking the Universe!

Ram Shrivastav



**H**umans are evil. Deep down in our minds, we all know the truth. But, of course, we don't talk about it. We are the mighty human race, the race chosen by the Gods to be the greatest. We are the amazing human race that evolved from lowly apes to be the dominant species on this planet. But all this is a blatant lie. An over-exaggerated, empty falsehood to massage our egos.

The fact is the ice caps are melting, oceans are boiling, and the end of the world is near. Due to the staggering amount of air pollution, over 25,000 species of birds and animals are under imminent threat of extinction. But no one cares as we continue with our daily lives, as if the world's resources are infinite.

For me, a hack in the universe would be to interact with Gods or Aliens or whatever/whoever created us. I wish it could be as simple as talking to them like we speak with our own kind. Almost everyone prays to our Creators in one way or another, but do they hear us? We do not know. To them, I ask, “Why? What is the meaning of life?” This is a question that has been asked a million times all over the globe. At first it seems quite simple; everyone ought to know. Reality is

otherwise. It bugs me that we humans don't know the answer to something that questions our very existence.

Curiosity is an instinct that dates back to our genesis. Without the want to know and explore, humans wouldn't have reached this far. I need to know the secrets of the world, of the galaxy and the specifics of it. Perhaps we could finally get an answer to “Why”. Maybe we were an experiment gone wrong, or maybe we exceeded the expectations of our Creator.

From time to time, I feel our Creators still look over us and offer guidance. What I wish for is that our Creators, or whoever looks over us, would start actively guiding us in this world. Someone who would help us bring back the numerous species we lost owing to human exploitation, and could restrain us from going down the path of self-destruction.

Our world has always been a world of chaos, it started with chaos (the BIG BANG!) and remains in a constant state of chaos owing to conflict among worldly elements. This chaos causes destruction and creation at the same time. Chaos continues to rage across the universe. But in this world, our world, we



have now embodied a different form of chaos – the type that only causes destruction.

Our world is like an active volcano, constantly spewing lava and destroying species with no stable form. Even so, this is all because of us. There are governments, special interest groups and parties constantly fighting for power. We need someone or a group that is trustworthy, that can rise from the ashes in this free-for-all, chaotic world and encourage us to care for nature. If there were perfect leaders who could guide us, I feel there could be none better than our Creators. We need to have full faith in the Creators, as I believe they would value what they created and won't be bystanders as their creations destroy the very essence of life.

If the Creators were to pay attention to our world, it would give every living being — plants and animals, rivers and mountains — a voice to interact and shout out loud each time someone chops them or pollutes or poisons them. For instance, if nature were to have a voice, it would probably have cried at the plight of humans for the losses we suffered during the pandemic, as humans, too, are an integral part of nature. Or maybe, during the pandemic, it also felt a sense of relief as, after a period of exploitation, we had several days of less pollution, cleaner waters and our world actually cooled a little bit. Maybe it was happy for the two years it got to recover from us, the “apex creature” or, should I say, the “apex predator” of this world. The pandemic years were the perfect combination of righteousness and depression, as they showed us how important it was to end our sinful misdoings. During this period, it felt like the world around us had transformed into a more vibrant and lively place. For a short while, you could see the world as it should be, without human greed and interference. And what a wonderful world it was.

‘Not in my backyard’ is the latest fad in our society. Just the other day, our neighbour told my mom that she doesn't like trees near her house as they spoil lawns. What she didn't say was that she still wants clean air, and it is someone else's responsibility to ensure it. This someone else very conveniently tends to be the government. Don't we pay taxes?

Our Creators gave every living thing a thirst for survival. Sir Charles Darwin aptly classified this concept as the survival of the fittest in his epic book, *On the Origin of Species*. Over time, humans have over-stretched the survival instinct by pampering our unhinged greed and selfishness to exploit the very nature that gives us all we have, in a thirst to outdo

each other. This act has transformed us into parasites that destroy its hosts.

Humans are our Creators' prodigal child that I am sure they would like to counsel. Like our caring parents, our Creators would bring back the balance in nature and put an end to the suffering of the other living things in the world. We have a chance to bring about change and save what is left of nature and our planet. However, there is a small window of opportunity and an extremely high chance that it will close before we take actual steps to save our world, to save ourselves. Some of us may argue that there are certain corrective actions that we have already taken, and still many may say a lot is being done. Even so, it is too little too late.

Sadly, in our ideal world, a single human's comfort continues to be a higher priority over the lives of thousands of animals and plants. In our generation, the irony is that the amount of effort spent on writing essays on 'saving the environment' far exceeds the actual effort we put in to save our environment. Lip service is not actual work, it is just more of the feel-good factor that fails to address real-world challenges.

While we are on this topic, I haven't even mentioned the endless possibilities of what we could do with the help of our Creators. Maybe, with the active guidance of our Creators, when we find new life, we might start appreciating our own planet more. Maybe the new planet has apes or perhaps mosquitoes as the dominant species, and, in comparison to the new planet, our Earth is still a better place to fight for in spite of all its fallacies.

Don't get me wrong here. I am not stating that our Creator created us, and it is their responsibility to help us get back on track. All I am stating is that we need guidance to wriggle out of this rat race of showing off. We have become a race of chauvinists who are racing against time to eliminate everything around us for immediate comfort. When I talk to our Creators, I would request them to guide humankind to change our ways of life. Finally, it will all be on us to execute on their guidance and save the only inhabitable place we know in the world, Mother Earth.

In my opinion, this is the best hack anyone could wish for. I could have asked for myself to be turned into a superhero, or a hack to establish world peace, but all that sounds too Hollywood-ish — all fiction with no practical approach. My proposed hack, too, is wishful thinking. But if it could come true, it will save the environment and bring back peace to earth, take

humanity forward together, and, not to forget, help in overcoming world wars and feuds between nations.

Nevertheless, I wish our Creator would free us from this unnerving, downward spiral called Greed by interfering a little more often.

I am quoting here lyrics from one of the all-time great oldies that I recently heard with my parents — “Ae Malik Tere Bande Hum” from the movie, *Do Ankhen Barah Haath* - “...ये अँधेरा घना छा रहा, तेरा इंसान घबरा रहा, हो रहा बेखबर कुछ न आता नजर, सुख का सूरज छुपा जा रहा, हैतेरी रौशनी में जो दम”

## A Voice for the Voiceless

Rayaansh Pahwa



Have you ever wondered what plants might be thinking, what mysterious conversations they might be having amongst themselves?

We defenestrate the idea of the wise oak being incredibly powerful just because we can slice it in half with a few swings of a heavy axe. We forget that its scientific knowledge is way more than those who make terrifying machines to annihilate these humble beings. In a state of sheer arrogance, we *sapiens* have always considered ourselves to be superior to all other species; animals or plants. Imagine how it would be if we were endowed with the capability to converse and comprehend what the trees and plants around us have to say!

Science has proven that the roots of trees spread deep down into the muddy depths. However, they also spread out far and wide, around the tree, under the soil. They intertwine with the roots of other trees, sharing signals, knowledge and information. We humans think we are an incredibly advanced species, even more than the trees, just because we have the internet at our disposal; but that is not true.

Trees think, feel and express, albeit in a language

unknown to us, but some of us are gifted! Let me explain; this morning, I heard a howl, a scream of excruciating, torturous, unbearable pain. Flabbergasted, I listened closely and realised that it was the shout of a puny blade of golden grass from the savanna. Even though I heard it for just a fraction of a second, I could make out from miles away that this poor creature had been killed, crushed under the foot of an African elephant. Intrigued, I listened carefully, and could now hear tiny squeals. After a few moments, I realised these were the cries of thousands of blades of grass, near a lake, at the Masai Mara National Park in Kenya. They were aiding a famished lion, providing camouflage to enable it to pounce on an antelope which was quietly sipping water under the rising orange sun. The blades of grass were playing their role in facilitating the circle of life! Here it was again – this ability that I was endowed with, a truly singular and unique ability to hear and understand the plants.

I am earnestly grateful for this astounding ability, for this has allowed me to look at the world from an absolutely new perspective. As a result of this, it is my topmost priority to sensitise the world in order to save these naive beings. It was truly an extraordinary



and unbelievable moment when I realised that I could understand, hear and communicate with the members of the plant kingdom. I feel like the red pixie from *The Faraway Tree* who could understand all the ‘whooshes’ of the trees. To ordinary folk, this might sound like a soft rustle of leaves when the breeze passes through them. However, I can decipher these sounds as an aggressive argument between boisterous, loud politicians in a parliament! I feel that there is a deep connection between the plants and me; it seems as if our souls are conversing. It is my inner voice which speaks to me and a vivid visualisation of the entire event pops up my mind.

Coming back to India from the United Arab Emirates, I got a cactus plant with me as a keepsake of the enjoyable trip we had had. I placed it at a sunny spot on my windowsill. Everyday, without fail, the cactus tells me about its life in the arid, dry desert. It speaks about its experiences living under the blazing, savage sun, how it endured the howling winds carrying mountains of sand. It, like an elderly, loving grandfather, shares its incredible experiences, anecdotes and lessons, and I long to hear more. It tells me that I am unique, I am special and extremely fortunate to be able to understand what the plant kingdom has to say.

Last Christmas, I got a Christmas tree and placed it near the fireplace. A brilliant sight lay in front of everyone’s eyes. The tree was festooned with ornate decorations, the green contrasting and fitting harmoniously with the brown brick wall and the white marble fireplace. Despite the beauty and Christmas cheer, I started to feel extremely sorry for the tree, and was astonished when I heard it wailing, “You decorated me so beautifully, I thank you! But I am going to be no more in a few days! They snatched me from the forest, my home where I lived peacefully within my optimum environment, but now I am suffering. I am going to wilt and die. You will throw me in the garden where insects will devour me! So where is the Christmas cheer?” I vowed there, on that day, that I would never bring home a Christmas tree.

A few years ago, I went to Japan during the cherry fruiting season and witnessed a beautiful sight. Trees laden with exquisite fruit, gleaming like rubies, waiting to be picked from the trees. “Hello,” said a squeaky voice, “it is such a lovely time of the year

for you. You are witnessing a spectacular event, a marvel, something you will never forget. However, it is my earnest request, please take some of the fruit I am burdened with.” It further added, “I don’t take it as a punishment. No! It is a reward that you are lowering the burden on my branches and relishing the delectable fruit, and I would be delighted if you plant these tiny pits with extreme responsibility, for in a few years they will become a global spectacle.” I was incredibly touched by what this tree had to say. It gave an absolutely different and philosophical point of view that I carry with me to this day. The cherry tree was happy to share the fruits of its labour with whomever would partake of its generosity, and we, in turn, can help it to propagate. I was amazed and grateful!

There are times when I can tune into the collective melody produced by the trees in the rainforests of Australia. The patter of incessant raindrops on their canopy gets them to create music as if they are trained musicians in an orchestra. Home to unique species of animals, birds and insects, they are oblivious to the fact that they are nurturing life, and remain humble and dependable. The fact that plants can produce different frequencies of music is now being scientifically studied and understood.

I realised that I can delve deeper into the lives of these beauties and strive to make their lives better and happier. We ought to value and respect life, even that of a tree. They can feel, they can think, they can converse amongst themselves. They too have family; they have friends. It is extremely important for us to be compassionate with them and to treat them as our comrades. Just because they are voiceless, we are using them indiscriminately in order to benefit us, for the sake of our so-called progress.

I am extremely grateful to be blessed with this amazing ability, and shall not take it for granted. These beings carrying infinite wisdom have lived through and survived cataclysms, droughts, ice ages, earthquakes and more, every time shining like a beam of hope, giving help and happiness selflessly. How would it be if collective humanity could hear these voices just like me? Would that change everyone’s perspective towards them? Would it make us more compassionate towards them, or would we still carry on treating them ruthlessly?



## Go Back in Time to Do Good

Saina Sarin



Superpowers; there's something about them that I've always loved. As a kid, I grew up watching movies and series like *Avengers*, *Batman*, *Star Wars*... the list is technically endless. As a bookaholic, I've read many books about heroes associated with some sort of superpowers! I find these superpowers really magical and magnificent, but I personally look upon these powers to be utilized extremely wisely. Though superpowers don't actually exist, I really do wish for one superpower, and that is to travel back in time and control the most deadly incidents and events in history. Events which caused undesired pain and harm to innocent people; events which took away the loved ones of families; events which shattered the world.

The first thing on my agenda would date back to 1919, to control the ghastly Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Known as one of the most unpleasant events in the history of India — rather, the history of the world — this massacre leaves us all heavily shaken. On April 13, 1919, people from Amritsar had gathered at the field of Jallianwala Bagh to celebrate the occasion of Baisakhi on a pleasant, sunny morning. Everything was going well, until the terror started. General Dyer, the British officer, ordered his troops to open fire at the gathering in the field. That event, exploding with intense sounds of weapons and gunshots, took the lives of many, including toddlers and the youth. The 'reason' for the massacre was to create fear among the citizens of India so that they withdraw the nationalist movements and remain slaves to the British.

Many people jumped into a well to save their lives. From it, 120 dead bodies were found. Till date, this attack has not faded from the eyes of the world. How can one be so inhuman? If I had my superpowers, I'd travel back in time and try to change General Dyer's mindset which triggered him to commit such a deep and intense act. Not only this, I'd converse with the

British officials to reconsider their decisions and adopt peaceful as well as constitutional methods to sort out the relations with the Indian government, and reach a mutual conclusion.

Following this, the second dark moment I would want to control would be the Bhopal Gas Tragedy. This tragedy is known as the world's worst industrial disaster. Late night on December 2-3, 1984, nearly 40 tonnes of methyl isocyanate gas leaked from the Union Carbide India Factory in Bhopal. The factory had a lot of old equipment, and the workers thought it was a slight change in the pressure, but by the time everyone got to know about the highly toxic gas, it was too late. Around 2.45-3 AM, thousands and thousands of people were out in the lanes, violently coughing and with their eyes turning deep red and horribly itchy. Many got onto the nearest form of transport and started to leave Bhopal. Hundreds of people were admitted to local hospitals. The doctors and nurses were confused as well about the cure for such an immediate itch. Even though, by the end of the first week of December in 1984, the gas was eradicated, its effects are evident even today in their generations. I really wish that by using my superpowers, I could stop the leakage of the gas and upgrade the old and faulty equipment of the factory.

Moving on, one of the worst riots faced by independent India were the Godhra riots of 2002. These were horrible inter-communal riots between groups of Hindus and Muslims. Brutal killings, looting and destruction of property were seen. Hundreds of Hindus and Muslims were allegedly attacked. A train was set on fire which took away the lives of many. I would want to control these riots by travelling back in time and not letting the Partition of India happen in the first place. Owing to Partition, cultural and religious differences between Hindus and Muslims have always remained. If Partition had not



taken place, Indians would be able to see the beauty of the other side of the border, and *vice versa*. In my personal opinion, these small aspects deepen and strengthen bonds and intercultural ties. I wish that

such superpowers existed and were available so that I could make this nation and this world a peaceful and worthwhile place for living!



## When I Halted O'Clock

Sara Agrawal



**H**i, I am Sara, and before I narrate an intriguing incident or what we can call adventure, I would like to ask you all a question. Have you all ever wanted to pause time? Because I have.

Well, it all started with an usual day when my mom, her siblings and I were discussing schools. My aunt started praising her daughter's school, and told all of us how exceptional it is. My mom was overwhelmed after listening to all that, and wanted to put me in that school at the same moment. At first, I was not in favour of this, but the next day I had to, as I was left with no choice. To be honest, the plan didn't really sound that terrifying, because I just had to go there to study. I mean, how hard could that be? I wasn't really going there to climb a mountain. But who knew?

I was really excited. Let me repeat it – I *was* really excited. Because when I reached there, I didn't want my mom to leave; yet, she left me there, because that was what we went there for. I wanted to leave that place and go back with my mom, but could not. A few months after that, the day finally came when we all could go home for the holidays. Now I was at home, enjoying spending time with my family, even though I always had a fear of returning to the hostel. Just like always, the holidays went expeditiously. I wished to pause time and stay at home forever.

At that point I got really excited; what could I do if that were possible? It was the wildest dream of my

life. After a lot of thinking, I came to the conclusion that it wasn't really possible for me to do that. The next day, my mom had to go out somewhere, so she asked me to clean my room. While I was doing the chore, I found a wooden box under my bed. I was confused, because I had never seen it before. It looked appealing.

Being very curious, I opened it and found a lot of stuff that looked like it was from an ancient era. There were old coins, a crumpled map and a big, red, lustrous button. Suddenly I could hear my mom calling me for lunch. I was running towards my mom with the wooden box, but it fell down from my hands and everything inside it scattered. I slipped and accidentally pressed the red button. A bright yellow light from it filled the whole room. The light was so piercing that I could not even keep my eyes open. It was weird; however, I ignored it.

I went downstairs, sat at the table and asked mom what she was making for lunch. She did not reply. I looked at the clock; it was 2 PM. I thought she was busy making lunch, and so could not hear me. I thought it might take her some time to finish, so I planned to go outside and play for a while. When I went outside, everything seemed unusual. Everything seemed still, so I came back inside. My mom was still at the same place, and when I looked at the time, it was still 2 PM.

I was very confused, pondering the situation. Then

it clicked. I ran upstairs to my room, took the red button and came downstairs to the kitchen. Yes, I was right: when I pressed the button, my mom started to move again, and the clock also started to tick. I couldn't believe my eyes. I was shocked and thought that all this was just a dream, but no, I had actually found a way to pause time.

Isn't it exciting? For me it was. After that, it was like a game. I paused the time again so that I did not have to go to the hostel. Cool, right? The whole day I was busy doing this — pausing time, starting it, pausing it, starting it. I even went outside to the street and saw that I was the only one moving. I got excited and started messing around with people who were now still figures.

Evil quickly overcame me. I did not realize that it was already 11 PM at night. I jumped on the bed, took the red button, pressed it to make everything normal again, and then slept. In the morning, I went downstairs for breakfast, but my mom was not there. I went to her room to check. I found her standing in front of her bed, and when I looked at the clock to check the time — you won't believe it — it was still 11 PM. I ran to my room, took the button, pressed it again and went to check on my mom.

But everything was still the same: 'non-moving'. I started to panic, and kept on pressing the button. It did not take me long to realize that the button was not working, which meant I would not be able to get everything back to normal... which also meant that my mom would forever be standing in front of the bed like a statue. Not just my mom, but everybody else in the world.

I could not let that happen. I had to find a way to get things back to normal. I can't live alone like this; it is so boring and miserable. I ran to my room and took the old wooden box to see if I could find something in it that would help me fix this huge problem. I took the old map from the box to see if I could get some help from it — and yes, I was correct. I found the way to the place on the map where the button was made.

After gathering all the courage I had, I packed my stuff and prepared myself for the upcoming adventure. I was a little scared, but remembered that I had to bring everybody back to life, which would not be possible if I did not follow the map. Finally,

the intriguing adventure began. I started to walk from home following the trails on the map. It led me somewhere up in the mountains. It was freezing out there, and my hands and legs were almost numb. It was so difficult to climb that mountain, but somehow I made it to the top.

I kept moving. I looked at the map, but was not able to understand some of the trails on it. I could not seek help, as I had paused everything and everyone in the world. Soon I realized that messing around with time was no fun. I regretted my decision and broke down into tears. I was almost there when I fell down owing to a big piece of stone in front of me that I had not seen. My knee started to bleed.

In the end, I was in front of a big, enchanted castle made out of ice. I was joyous and thankful to the map. I entered that place, and was astonished. There were many little creatures who were pink in colour, with purple hair and a red hat with a white pom-pom on the top. They all looked so cute. Everybody was staring at me as if they had never seen a human before. Turning a blind eye, I walked forward and asked one of them to help me with that broken button. I felt apologetic about having done something so insensitive. They all were nice, and helped me fix the button.

After they returned it to me, I pressed it, confirming with them that everything will be normal again. I gave the button back to them and asked them to destroy it, since I did not want to repeat the mistake and did not want anybody else to get their hands on that button. They even helped me with my wounded knee, and gave me some food to eat. Then I rushed out of there in one of their coolest planes ever.

Yay, my mom was finally moving again! It was the end of my adventure, but I want to say that I have realized how important it is for everyone and everything to keep moving. I paused time so that I could spend more time with my parents and siblings, but it did not turn out as I wanted it to be. Imagine what would have happened if the button could not be fixed — I would have not been able to share with you all this compulsive adventure. My blood runs cold wondering, if I had really been unable to fix this, would I have been living all alone?





## Adventures of The Wanderer

Shivaranjani Bharadwaj



I always wanted to visit all the planets of the solar system. The word 'planet' in Greek means 'wanderer'. So I decided to name my spaceship, *Wanderer*. I was very excited and curious to know about these planets. The journey from the sun to the outer edge of the solar system is 15 billion kilometres!

The first important task was to get a spaceship which could endure very high and very low temperatures. I was helped by an ancient *rishi* who was also a big scientist – Maharshi Bharadwaj. He had written *Vaimanik Shastra*, or aeronautical science for ancient India, in Sanskrit. This contains the knowledge for making advanced flying machines. Maharshi Bharadwaj gave me a two-seater spaceship. I called it *Wanderer*.

My twin sister Devyani suggested that it would be proper if we took a gift for each planet. I loved her fantastic idea... but what could we take? Then Devyani came up with another brilliant idea: she said we could both write poems for the planets and gift those to them!

My sister decided to join me in this great adventure. The first planet we decided to meet was Mercury. Venus, Earth, Mars and Mercury are rocky planets, and therefore are called 'terrestrial planets'. We wore special space suits and put on our seatbelts in the fastest spaceship, *Wanderer*. We visited Mercury, a planet that is always zipping in a hurry. We decided to rush back as the prolonged heat could have melted our spaceship.

*Mercury is small,  
Among the planets all,  
Quick on the call,  
Is the red fiery ball,  
Always in a hurry,*

*In the space starry,  
This is a planet extraordinary,  
Whose name is Mercury.*

Mercury was very pleased with the poem and lovingly told us, "Never delay, never tarry. Do it now!"

Then we decided to visit planet Venus. Venus is named after the Roman goddess of love and beauty. When we landed, we felt as if we were in a giant greenhouse, as it is the hottest planet of the solar system. Venus moves from east to west, in the opposite direction. Then we took blessings from Lady Venus. She advised us that "beauty is in being different." Venus also said, "If one can dare to be different, then you are beautiful".

*It is important to mention  
Venus spins in the opposite direction.  
With no moons and no rings,  
The hottest temperature it brings.*

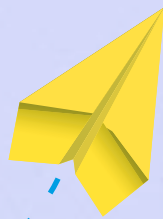
Then we decided to come back to Earth – our home sweet home. We were happy to see cool blue waters and air to breathe. "Saare jahan se achha! Earth hamara!"

*Our dear planet Earth,  
Where we took birth.  
Has water and air,  
Gives us life fair.*

*Earth has a lovely moon  
And the Sun is a big boon,  
Which gives us light  
Makes us happy and bright!*

The lesson we learnt from mother Earth was that life is beautiful. So live and let live.

Our next destination was Mars. As a mark of respect, we both draped red scarves for the red hot



planet. Mars is named after the Roman god of war. *Mission Mangal* is one of our favourite films on Mars. Perseverance is a robot sent on Mars to look for ice, water and various minerals. Mars told us, “Be a fighter and never accept injustice.”

*Mission Mangal went to Mars,  
In the space full of stars.  
Perseverance is the robot,  
Mars has a new mascot.*

Jupiter was like a gentle big brother. The planet Jupiter is the largest planet in the solar system. He welcomed us with open arms full of love and warmth. We decided to wear a yellow scarf and put red *bindis* on our foreheads. Jupiter was thrilled because it has a massive red spot 10,000 miles wide, and yellow is the favourite colour of this good-natured planet!

*Jupiter is a planet grand,  
With a big red spot on its land.  
With many many moons,  
The sky happily swoons.*

Like a guru, Jupiter blessed us and gave us gifts of precious stones. He told us to be kind and always help others.

Next was Saturn. We dressed up appropriately in blue and black scarves. We stood on the ring of the mighty Saturn and went round like a merry-go-round. It was so much fun.

*With many icy rings around,  
It looks like an emperor crowned,  
This is the spectacular Saturn,  
with moons shining like a lantern.*

Saturn was like an old grandfather, big and grey. He has more than 75 moons. Imagine a sky full of so many moons! If there were so many moons for Earth, we would not require any street lights! Saturn gifted us with gaseous rings and blessed us with affection. He gave us rings made up of multicoloured gases. We told Saturn that since he is so gaseous, he can never drown in a swimming pool. He laughed and laughed, calling us funny little girls. Happily, he told us, “Always be just and righteous in your behaviour”.

Uranus is a bit different – it smells bad, so we wore masks soaked in perfume, hoping Uranus would not feel offended. Uranus is funny, with a vertical equator. He smiled and told us that he had tilted after some silly asteroid that hit him hard 4 billion years ago. These asteroids do not follow any traffic rules! Uranus has 27 moons! Moony Moony Nights!

*Uranus rotates sideways,  
With 27 moons it plays.  
Lonely yet luminous,  
Is the planet Uranus.*

Then we asked for blessings from Uranus, and he gave us advice: “Be yourself.” We did not understand, and asked him to explain. He replied, “Each individual is different. So believe in yourself and do not judge others if they are not like you”.

Then we visited the planet Neptune. We were shivering with cold. Neptune is named after the Roman God of water. Cold and windy, we were scared of being blown away. Then we took blessings from Neptune and he said, “Look busy but take it easy!” He made us laugh and told us to avoid stress and balance everything in life.

*Dark and icy cold is Neptune,  
There is no life and no fortune,  
Speedy winds give a fright,  
Scary is Neptune’s night.*

Then we decided to meet the planet Pluto. Earlier it was known as a planet, but is now removed from the official list as it is called the dwarf planet. It is tiny, with a bit of an uncommon orbit. We took advice from the planet Pluto to “never let down your family and friends”. We guessed that Pluto was still feeling bad for being removed from the list of planets in our solar system.

*The last one is Pluto,  
Said to be a planet pseudo.  
It is very far and small,  
And looks like a tiny ball.*

The mighty Sun has a big influence on the galaxies, stars and planets. The Sun is the centre of all planets.

*The brilliant Sun is a star,  
The centre of our system solar.  
Like a mother looks after everyone,  
That is our shining beloved Sun.*

Even our own single moon — the *Chandamama* of the Earth — is very nice.

*Our dearest moon,  
Is a magnificent boon,  
Gives happiness to the mind,  
Makes us feel calm and kind.*

We came back from a journey which was unique, as no person had been on it before. We were feeling happy and blessed. The wise words of the planets will make us better persons. Bon voyage!





## Time on My Hand!

Shreyan Garg



Attempting to perform physical feats in real life sure feels surreal. Although many people achieve this feat by means of adventure sports or activities of the same nature, there are still many feats which humans can only imagine accomplishing. The Time Watch is one such endeavour that sounds impossible, and that humans still have their hopeful eyes on, in imagination at least. For me, the Time Watch is the most powerful watch in the world, made by me through means of creative imagination and a greater resolve to make the impossible come alive. It is a 35mm watch in size that has the power to travel to and fro through time. When it is on Watch Mode, it is practically a normal watch, but when you put it on SW Mode (smartwatch mode) then things start to get interesting.

When you put this *avant garde* gadget on, you are given an option to either travel to the Past or the Future. If you decide to go to the Past, then you can go back in time from an infinitieth microsecond all the way to infinity years ago. If you decide to go to the Future, then you can go into the future by an infinitieth of a microsecond all the way to infinity years into the future. Once you have chosen to travel into either of these options, the moment you click on the GO button after you have decided ‘when’ you want to go, a big bubble will form around you. This bubble will be so hot that if you touch it, that would be the last thing you ever do. The bubble’s temperature would be around infinite degrees — equivalent to the temperature of the Big Bang, the explosion that supposedly formed the universe, the stars that you see in the night sky such as our Sun, and, of course, our own planet Earth.

Once this bubble forms around you, the watch will confirm whether you want to go in or out of the time machine, that is, the bubble. The watch will ask you, “Do you want to go on this amazing journey through time or not?” If you click on the red button, the bubble will dissipate in the air, and if you want to try to go

back or forward in time again, you will have to set all the coordinates again. If you click on the light green button, then the bubble will start shrinking around you, and you will materialise into a speck of dust in the Present and dematerialise from a random dust speck in the Past or Future.

I experienced the Time Watch, the gem of an idea that sprung out of my sheer desire to travel through time. To swish through my past and wiggle into my future, to be able to zoom across the present reality. As soon as I decided to take a walk through history and touch upon my past deeds, I landed up in a heritage world where I revisited the beginning of time even. I also went back in time to the first cubing competition held in 1982. I like cubing because it relaxes my mind, and is very enjoyable. Given a day off, I can cube all day without eating or drinking or even snoozing. I cube in my free time, and that gives me a meaningful purpose. On June 5, 1982, the first world championship was held in Budapest, Hungary. It was the first time a cubing competition had been held and that was very unique. The Rubik’s Cube was the invention of the famous Ernő Rubik. Nobody knew that it would be the highest-selling toy in history, with over 450 million cubes sold.

In the future, I expect that I will become an astronomer in India where I get to know all the extraordinary happenings in the outer world. My current obsession with outer space, the debris, how the planets behave in a certain way, the asteroids, and various orbits will come true in the future. So here I took a leisurely walk to the future, wore my astronaut suit and flew into space in a specially-designed rocket with NASA’s young team of astronauts. Oh, what a journey it was! If ever there existed a heaven, this would be it. We walked the surface of the moon, orbited the Earth and came back safely on it.

When I think of how I can use my Time Watch for a

greater purpose, I would use it to help to explore our Past and Future. I would help to uncover the biggest mysteries of lost items of ancient civilizations and help explore what it is like to live in the future of our own. In my free time, I would use the watch to meet people who lived in the Past and also meet those who live in the Future. I might even explore myself in the Past while writing this essay right now!

Playing real-life hide-and-seek with my imaginary gadget gives me a certain intellectual pleasure. The ability to make time dance on my terms sure feels unearthly and so immensely powerful. The power lies in your hands to change any tiny bit of your unpleasant past or replay your most memorable

moments that you have cherished for long. What if we were always satisfied with our present and never ever thought of changing things? Would skills like innovative thinking and out-of-the box learning hold any meaning at all? Nobody can stop us from dreaming or discourage us. For dreams come true only when you dream of them and carry an innate desire to achieve the extraordinary. It was only because of my wishful thinking, my grit, my zeal and my creativity that I was able to accomplish this long-cherished endeavour of mine. I am really thankful to the watch itself for taking me on such amazing adventures in my mind. It has taught me lots of things and I will forever be grateful.



## Emergent Strong from a Dystopian Past

Tiara Kothari



We celebrate humankind's survival against all odds — the leaps and bounds of the development of this world that ensures that we are able to send people to the moon! But isn't that universal? Today, business tycoons like Elon Musk are spending billions to escape our Earth's atmosphere and colonise Mars while, on the same planet Earth, millions cannot escape their hellish country's borders. Where, might you ask? In Korea. No no, not that Korea with K-pop and melodramatic K-dramas. I'm talking about the Korea with people being denied their basic rights, where teenagers are being publicly executed for even watching 'foreign movies'. I am talking about the necrocratic state of North Korea. The only state in the world with a dead president, a type of government that sadly mirrors a dead and decaying system, where the God of Death is at large. In my opinion, as citizens of this world, we also do bear the responsibility of

shutting our eyes to the barbaric governance that is being inflicted on the North Koreans.

So, if I had a chance to 'hack' into the universe, I would not only ensure that North Korea survives as a 'democracy' but also thrives. Because, at the moment, only a miracle can help those poor people while the world turns a blind eye to the genocide. Fortunately, I have this miracle at my fingertips.

You may probably be thinking that the situation in North Korea just couldn't be that cruel, and that I'm just brewing up a pot of tall claims. After all, no big news company has covered the pitiful state of those residents, have they? Well, here's some tea to sip. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is North Korea's official name, which is ironic considering how even basic human rights are being denied. Another misnamed place in North Korea is the 'Demilitarized



Zone' which is one of the most heavily armed and mobilised land strips on Earth. In an attempt to escape The Hermit Kingdom, thousands have lost their lives as the border military has orders to shoot at the sight and shoot to kill. Trying to figure out what life is like in North Korea is a bit like trying to balance the light switch in the middle. But the defectors who somehow escaped tell us about how awful it really is there.

One such activist, Yeonmi Park, talks of a particular rule that is the most obnoxious rule I have ever heard. According to this rule, it is the duty of the family to keep the portraits of Kim Jong-un and Kim Jong-il clean at all times. Often, security officers come into your house even at midnight to check if any dust is on the portraits. The punishment of having dirty portraits is to be sent to a forced labour camp. Also, apparently, if a fire broke in your house, instead of saving your kids and family members, you have to first secure the portraits. North Korea maintains control over its citizens through a regimen of unabated and persistent indoctrination, isolation and hard-hearted subjugation.

Okay, now enough of criticising North Korea; let's talk about what I would do to help their poor state. The first two steps are quite predictable and simple. First, put Kim Jong-un and his supporters in jail; second, remove the necrocracy and the totalitarian government. Democracy will be established. I mean, that's basic, isn't it? Once I remove the horrible government, everything should be fine, right?

No, it is not. Nothing is 'fine'. Sure, the government is out of the way, but the scarred minds and bodies cannot be healed overnight. North Korea has been using up all its money on nuclear weapons and maintaining its army, and is unmoved by the growing famine in their country. From my point of view, they are intentionally depriving the common people of food so that they remain weak and won't try to fight for their freedom. So these people need good nourishment and urgent measures to improve their mental health. People imprisoned or stuck in labour camps need to be returned to their families. Their physical and mental health shall be tended to. I would take the help of neighbouring countries to provide food and therapy for them. Education and

employment would be my priorities.

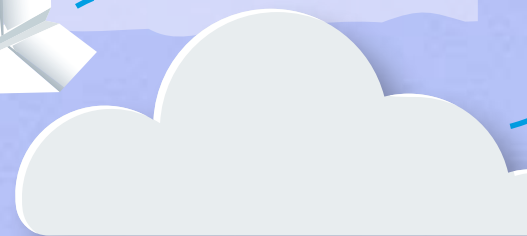
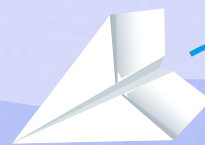
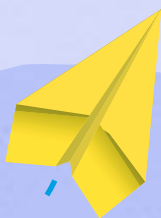
Schools, hospitals and connectivity are a no-brainer. They need a so-called normal life. So, there will be 'skill-identifying camps'. These camps would be present in different locations and would serve the purpose of identifying one's skills while also providing the opportunity to upskill. Representatives from different companies would interview the citizens, and I think about 90 per cent of the families would have at least one working member.

Art and artists will be given full liberty of expression. Spiritual and religious beliefs will be the choice of the people. The only mandatory ideals would be equality and tolerance.

A sense of security and safety will be the basis of all decisions. Women in Korea are also targets of sexual abuse, and many are kidnapped to turned into sex workers for the gratification of high-ranking officials in the Workers' Party. Even though there are laws enforcing women's rights, no one actually follows them. Women still get a lower salary than men. It is my mission to rehabilitate and empower women and make North Korea a safer place for them — rather, the safest of all — and set an example for other countries to follow.

Now that most of the so-called government officials are in jail, this country needs a government. This new democratic government would be formed by the people and the defectors would be given leadership roles. I chose them because they have the skills required to escape North Korea, and they have coped with their trauma and are already on the way to success. They are also the ones that inspired me, and hundreds of other people, to try to take action, so they would make good leaders. I also have the power to change the way the universe works, so I would offer the citizens of North Korea an opportunity to partially erase their memories. Basically, all their traumatic memories would be erased. My aim is to make a North Korea that people would be proud to live in. A utopian country which emerged strong from its dystopian past, with a little nudge from me.

My next stops — Afghanistan and Iran.



# Acting Before It's Too Late

Leaky taps, fans in an empty room whirring endlessly, lots of food dumped in a garbage bin, overgrazed lands, felled trees shrieking in silence as they are piled up carelessly, tonnes of plastics clogging a waterbody to the extent that the water from beneath cannot see the light of day anymore, someone lowering the car window to throw away an empty soft drink can surreptitiously (hoping that no one has seen it), buses and trucks emitting the blackest of smoke, cattle being worked to death or sent to slaughterhouses, new names being added to the list of near-extinct animals every year — we are so familiar with these scenarios that none of it causes us alarm or makes us concerned any longer. It is as if humans believe they are born with the birthright to exploit the Earth, its resources, and other species however they want. We are eating into this planet's resources too rapidly for it to ever recover.

Most humans tend to evade any exigency unless it hits home. Global warming still sounds like an abstract concept to many. And even those to whom its repercussions are palpable, often do not acknowledge the reasons behind the annual temperature rise and all the threats it poses. It is hard to accept that we are the architects of our destruction. We have been learning since primary school days that coal, petroleum and natural gas are non-renewable sources of energy. Yet, we do not bother to turn off the engines while waiting for a traffic signal to turn green. Or while pausing the vehicle to take a call. These unconscious actions stem from our understanding that we will always have infinite resources. Our knowledge of the harm we are causing to the environment — and ourselves — notwithstanding, we are recklessly using and disposing of plastics. Deforestation and poaching have pushed so many animals to the brink of extinction. In a reversal of order, tigers have fallen prey to human activities. The rampant cutting of trees has repercussions that need no explanation. Simultaneously, it causes an alarming



loss of habitat for many birds and animals. The Great Indian Bustard, the Bengal Florican, and the Red-Headed Vulture are only a few names in the long list of birds struggling to survive. The Chinese paddlefish, native to the Yangtze and Yellow River basins in China, was declared extinct last year — thanks to the construction of a host of dams that impacted their spawning migration. Not just animals and birds — injudicious human actions are also killing huge waterbodies, from the Adi Ganga in Kolkata to the Dead Sea in Jordan. These, along with many others, will be swept away from our memories sooner rather than later.

What makes humans so negligent of how their choices are impacting the environment? Awareness of sustainable use of natural resources is not built into the thought processes of many individuals, knowledgeable or otherwise. Capitalism also significantly sways all our decisions. It feeds into our hunger for more. The capitalist



economy thrives on selling anything and everything possible, and is, in turn, eating into the world's resources at a disastrous pace. People change their phones or laptops every year if it suits their pocket. Who cares about the landfill waste produced? Now more than ever, Gandhi's statement, "The world has enough for everyone's needs but not everyone's greed", holds water. The world population is nearing 8 billion, and scientists have predicted that it will exceed 9 billion by the end of the next decade. Only endless resources can sustain such a high population that only keeps on increasing, but endless resources do not exist. We are not saving anything for posterity.

To this end, July 28 is celebrated as World Nature Conservation Day every year by many countries. Ideas of conservation should enter common parlance. Alongside creating awareness about the limited availability and the need for sensible use of natural resources, this occasion impels individuals to initiate action at once. Many are of the opinion that the task of taking action, instituting new programmes, and bringing about changes lies with governments and policymakers only. They are, of course, greatly responsible for this. But World Nature Conservation Day explains that change begins with you. With us. The smallest of actions we take towards preserving what is still left is a stepping stone to greater changes. A healthy environment lies at the foundation of a thriving society, which, in turn, contributes to the holistic development of all species.

Is the destruction already caused to our environment reversible? Some of it can be, with conscious efforts. The three Rs — Reduce, Reuse and Recycle — have gained traction in recent times, but there is another R that is just as important — Refuse. Refusal of any unimportant item, no matter how attractive it seems, nips a lot of problems in the bud. Reusable items should be preferred

“What makes humans so negligent of how their choices are impacting the environment? Awareness of sustainable use of natural resources is not built into the thought processes of many individuals, knowledgeable or otherwise. Capitalism also significantly sways all our decisions. It feeds into our hunger for more. The capitalist economy thrives on selling anything and everything possible, and is in turn, eating into the world's resources at a disastrous pace. It causes no one any harm to change one's phone or laptop every year if it suits the pocket. Who cares about the e-waste produced? More than ever, Gandhi's statement, "The world has enough for everyone's needs but not everyone's greed" holds water now

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to single-use items. Organic products should be used as much as possible. Compostable waste is always a better source of natural fertilisers than the artificial ones that degrade the soil quality, alongside being detrimental to human health. To curb our carbon footprint, it is advisable to choose public transport over personal vehicles. We need to conserve critically endangered animals to maintain the ecological balance. Reduced usage of electricity can lower the strain on natural resources like coal and water. Another major threat to humankind and the animal world now is the scarcity of groundwater. From childhood, individuals should be made to think twice before wasting even a drop of water. The list of actions World Nature Conservation Day prompts is endless. But the need of the hour is to educate everyone about where we stand and where we might end up if our actions towards the environment are not prudent.



ARTWORK BY SUDIPTA KUNDU



## All of Us Live As One

The celebration of the musical pieces created by the multiple Grammy-winning musician, Ricky Kej, for **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, continues in the pages of this issue. The range of the 12 songs are kaleidoscopic: they explore the rivers Ganga and Cauvery, the mighty Himalayas, the Earth, Mahatma Gandhi, and the official Land Anthem of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Each song is a reflection of Kej's awareness of the natural world. His music calls attention to the urgency for implementing more sustainable practices in our lives and the impact of climate change. For the month of June, the musical piece explores the spirituality, and the philosophy of coexistence – *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, which means 'The World is One Family'.

## One Family



At the heart of India is a phrase, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. As human beings, we have to live in peaceful coexistence, not just with other members of our own species, but also with all other forms of life – the forests, the wildlife, and also the elements of nature, including the air we breathe, the land we walk on and the water we drink. Coexistence, after all, is key to our survival as a species. Ricky Kej's song for June, thus, honours this ideal.

ARTWORK BY **SUDIPTA KUNDU**





# अंतरिक्ष में गूँजता हिंदुस्तानी संगीत



Praveen Kumar Jha

यह किस्सा उन दिनों का है जब मनुष्य चाँद पर पहुँच चुका था, और अब सितारों से आगे का जहान तलाश रहा था। सौरमंडल से दूर की दुनिया। 1977 में अमरीका के नासा ने वोयेजर को आकाशगंगाओं की इस यात्रा के लिए तैयार किया। अब सवाल यह था कि इसमें आखिर कौन सा संदेश भेजा जाए। पृथ्वी की वह कौन सी ध्वनि हो, जो इसका प्रतिनिधित्व करती हो। दुनिया इतनी बड़ी है कि ऐसी कोई एक आवाज़ तो मुमकिन नहीं।

अमरीका के खगोलशास्त्री कार्ल सगान ने ऐसे संगीत के छोटे-छोटे टुकड़े तलाशने शुरू किए, जो पृथ्वी का एक ऑर्केस्ट्रा बन सके। भारत से भी ऐसे संगीत के कैप्सूल की खोज हुई, जो दो-तीन मिनट में ही दूरगामी प्रभाव छोड़ जाए। ऐसी बुलंद आवाज़ जो सदियों तक अंतरिक्ष में गूँजती रहे। इसके लिए चयन किया गया केसरबाई केरकर की 'जात कहाँ हो' का। यह राग भैरवी में गायी बंदिश है।

जब मैंने पहली बार यह प्रस्तुति सुनी, तो केसरबाई के 'कहाँ' कहते ही लगा कि राग और बंदिश का रस इस एक शब्द में समाहित हो गया। स्वर ठिठक कर एक सीढ़ी झट से यूँ उतरता है, जैसे विरह वेदना में नायिका के पैर फिसल गए हों।

केसरबाई की आवाज़ कभी-कभी बैरीटोन या पौरुष स्वर की लग सकती है। ऐसा संभवतः गंगूबाई हंगल और ढोंढूताई कुलकर्णी में भी नजर आए। लेकिन, यह उनके रेंज को ही दर्शाता है। केसरबाई उस दौर की थी जब महिला गायकों को ऊँचे मंचों पर लंबे खयाल गायन का मौका कम मिलता था। उनका दायरा तुमरी और उप-शास्त्रीय गायन तक सीमित था। लेकिन, केसरबाई केरकर और मोगूबाई कुर्दीकर सरीखों ने इन सीमाओं को तोड़ा। उन्होंने न सिर्फ मंच पर गाया, बल्कि उन्हें सुनने के लिए भीड़ भी आयी।

ऊपर बताए महिला गायकों में तीन नाम केसरबाई, मोगूबाई और ढोंढूताई काफ़ी हद तक एक घराने से जुड़े नाम हैं। यह अलादिया खान का घराना है, जिसे जयपुर-अतरौली घराना भी कहा जाता है। किशोरी अमोनकर मोगूबाई कुर्दीकर की पुत्री थी। अब तो महिला गायकों की लंबी फ़ेहरिस्त है, और ऐसा कोई मंच नहीं जहाँ महिला स्वर न हो।

## VINTAGE 78 RPM RECORDS

KESARBAI KERKAR



जाहिर है केसरबाई केरकर ने अपनी यह बुलंदी संघर्ष के बाद ही पायी होगी। अलादिया खान से गंडा-बंधन के लिए भी प्रचलित किस्से हैं कि यह इतना आसान नहीं था। जैसे एक किस्सा है कि सेठ विठ्ठलदास द्वारकादास ने केसरबाई के कहने पर झूठा टेलीग्राम भेज कर अलादिया खान को बंबई बुलवाया था। लेकिन एक बार जब वह शिष्य बन गयी तो वर्षों तक समर्पित हो गयी। जब सीख कर मंच पर लौटी तो यह आवाज़ एक मिसाल बन गयी।

केसरबाई को संगीत की रिकॉर्डिंग और उपकरणों से भी शिकायत थी। उस वक्त तो खैर माइक्रोफोन और स्पीकर आज की तरह नहीं थे। वह इनके बिना ही गाना पसंद करती। यह सोच कर भी ताज़ुब होता है कि सैकड़ों की भीड़ में भला बिना माइक के एक महिला गायक किस तरह गाती होंगी। क्या उनकी आवाज़ आखिरी पंक्ति में बैठे लोगों तक पहुँचती होगी? ढोंढूताई कुलकर्णी ने इस प्रश्न का उत्तर कुछ यूँ दिया है-

"आवाज़ तो नाभि से यूँ उछल कर आए कि आखिरी पंक्ति में बैठा श्रोता भी हर स्वर यूँ सुने जैसे कि पहली पंक्ति का श्रोता।"

पता नहीं आज के तकनीकी दुनिया में केसरबाई का रुख कैसा होता, जब रिकॉर्डिंग स्टूडियो बेसुरों को भी सुरीला बनाने की जुगत लगाते हैं। उनके ग्रामोफोन रिकॉर्ड का एक किस्सा है कि वह बंबई में तांगे से जा रही थी, तो फुटपाथ पर अपने रिकॉर्ड बिकते देखे। वह देख कर भड़क गयी कि उनका संगीत भला फुटपाथ पर कैसे आ गया।

उन्होंने भविष्य में अपनी रिकॉर्डिंग ही बंद करने का निर्णय ले लिया। अगर कोई छुप कर रिकॉर्ड कर लेता तो वह उसका रिकॉर्ड ही तोड़ देती। उन्होंने आकाशवाणी पर गाने से भी मना कर दिया कि उनकी आवाज़ किसी पान-बीड़ी की दुकान पर न बजे। पता नहीं यह सब आज के जमाने में किस तरह देखा जाए, जब हर आवाज़ यूट्यूब पर है, और मुझे भी इसी माध्यम से उन्हें सुनने का अवसर मिल रहा है। लेकिन, यह भी सच है कि आज उनकी आवाज़ उस ऊँचाई पर है, जहाँ भारत की कोई दूसरी आवाज़ नहीं।

इस पृथ्वी से दूर। तमाम ग्रहों से आगे। अंतरिक्ष में गूँज रही है- जात कहाँ हो अकेली गोरी...

प्रवीण कुमार झा संगीत प्रेमी और 'वाह उस्ताद' नामक पुस्तक के लेखक हैं। सम्प्रति नॉर्वे में चिकित्सक हैं





## A Bird Paradise In Rajasthan

### Daulat Singh Shaktawat



A flock of Greyleg geese in the lake area

Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur is locally known as 'Ghana' where the total area is nearly 29 square kilometres. Out of this, nearly 10 sq/km covers the lake area, which is in a shallow, saucer-like shape. During the monsoons, water is provided to the lake area through the main canal from Ajan Dam. Through a system of dykes and sluice gates, this rainwater is spread over to the lake's different areas. This rainwater remains throughout March and April, whereas some parts have water throughout the year.

In 1985, UNESCO deemed Keoladeo a world heritage site, as it has a unique ecosystem consisting of a diverse habitat — swamp, shrub, and wet and dry savannah — which attracts a variety of land birds, water birds and migratory birds, which arrive before departing to breeding grounds in the western region.

Today, Keoladeo National Park is one of India's most important sanctuaries. Keoladeo Ghana was initially developed and maintained as a shooting reserve by the rules of the erstwhile State of Bharatpur. This man-made wetland is built upon the natural environment, creating

a wetland including surrounding grasslands, resulting in the best kind of habitat especially for water birds, and a good breeding ground for residential birds. In the paradise called Keoladeo Ghana, different kinds of birds visit and reside, including the winter visitors known as waterfowl, raptors, land birds, night birds and long-distance migrants.

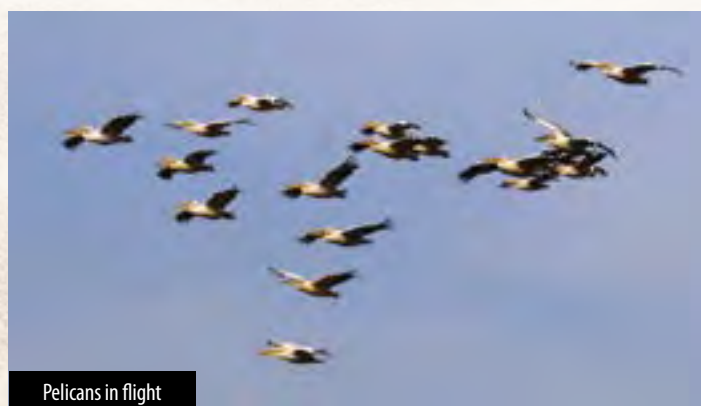
Keoladeo Ghana is the country's biggest congregation point for waterfowl, and has one of the world's most spectacular herons. It hosts a large number of resident water birds. The birds assemble here at the onset of monsoon, and start breeding activities as soon as the rains begin in the last week of June and the first week of July. The lakes are full and the birds are assured of water and, therefore, food. Keoladeo Ghana's herons are unparalleled not only in the Indian subcontinent, but also, probably, in the world. As mentioned before, this world heritage site is not wholly a natural wetland. Human intervention has played a significant role in shaping it.

Looking at the congregation of birds here in the





Pintail and Coot, both of which are migratory bird species, in the lake area



Pelicans in flight

winter, the Maharaja of Bharatpur invited the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, for shooting. On December 2, 1902, the first royal shooting in Ghana was held. For this shoot, some walking trails and butts were made. The number of birds butchered in Ghana can be judged by looking at the date engraved in stone in front of the Keoladeo temple from 1902 to 1964, although it contains the list of birds killed by VIPs only. However, despite this spree of duck shooting, the forest officers have managed the situation beautifully and ensured that there is an addition to the number of birds that visit every year.

Keoladeo has varied flora compositions. The richness and diversity of plants inside this park are remarkable. The vegetation here can be divided into groups. Most of the area is under woodlands, savannah with shrubs, grass



A pair of painted storks at their nesting site





A Purple Moorhen



A Spotted Owlet in a tree hole



A silhouette of two white ibises





A snake bird, also called the Indian Darter, feeds on fish



Residential birds pictured at a nesting site against the backdrop of a sunset in the park



Deer spotted on the main road

savanna and low grassland. The flora consists of more than 377 species of flowering plants, of which 96 are wetland species. The 287 species of vegetation consist of 41 species of trees, 32 shrubs, 156 herbs, 24 climbers and 29 different types of grass.

The environment of this park is peaceful and tranquil, which makes it a paradise for the birds as well as the bird watchers, naturalists, wildlife photographers and biologists. The major group of birds that visit the lake area are egrets, herons, ducks, geese, teals, coots, cormorants, darters, storks, ibis, raptors, owls and more. These birds are the highest in number in the colder months of December and January, with the numbers dropping in summer. As soon as the migratory birds arrive in the park, the number and species of aquatic birds increase. Migratory birds come to the park in thousands.

The breeding of local aquatic birds follows the monsoon rains and continues till the end of September. With the first shower of the monsoon, the atmosphere becomes cool and pleasant. This is when water birds such as storks, cormorants and egrets breed.

Come August end, and Keoladeo Ghana is at its best. Plant growth is fresh and green, and bushes lining the shores of the lakes are lush with flowering climbers in

attractive red, pink, white and purple flowers. There are more butterflies, beetles and dragonflies now than at any other time of the year.

This is also when flocks of Rosy Starlings and Common Starlings arrive at Keoladeo from Eastern Europe. They are accompanied by the first of the waterfowl that will spend winter in the Park: the Garganey teal. This small duck heralds thousands upon thousands of migratory waterfowl that come to the park each winter before returning to their breeding grounds when the weather improves in March and April.



The main entry gate of the Keoladeo National Park



# Celebrating Shanu Lahiri



S.K. Agarwal and I.C. Sancheti with M.K. Narayanan as he hands over the award to Shanu Lahiri

An artist with a keen sense of social responsibility, Shanu Lahiri was known as the 'First Lady of Public Art'. Born in 1928 to a well-known family of artists, she was a part of one of the earliest batches of women students to have been trained at the Government College of Art and Crafts, from where she graduated in 1951. She was the recipient of the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society (AIFACS) President's gold medal. Soon after graduating, she held her first exhibition, and, in the same year, won a scholarship that allowed her to join the École du Louvre in Paris. Following her return, after a

brief period of inactivity, she restarted her painting career in the 1960s, and, in 1983, created The Group with artists Karuna Shaha, Meera Mukherjee, Santosh Rohatgi and Shyamasree Basu. From her position as a Reader in the Department of Painting at Rabindra Bharati University, Lahiri eventually became a Professor and Head of the Department, and then Dean of the Visual Arts Faculty in 1985.



M.K. Narayanan addresses the audience





Shanu Lahiri speaks at the award ceremony

Staunchly against the political sloganeering on the various walls of the city and the squalor that overwhelmed every nook and cranny, Lahiri took to painting the walls of La Martiniere for Girls School and other areas of North and South Kolkata. It was through her 'Love Calcutta' project that groups of school children, vendors and slum dwellers painted their own murals on several walls, while she also installed open-air sculptures in metal, concrete and fibreglass in various places as part of the project. Lahiri remained an ardent practitioner of her craft and an inspiration for women to pursue a career in the arts.



M.K. Narayanan lights the lamp accompanied by Sundeep Bhutoria, Bharati Ray and Alka Bangur

Since its inception, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** has been committed to the advancement of the performing arts, literature, gender equality and women's empowerment. It believes in supporting indigenous artists and celebrating the success of women achievers who have been trailblazers in their fields. To that end, the Foundation, in association with the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce (CCC), awarded Lahiri with the Prabha Khaitan Puraskar 2008 — a recognition that is bestowed upon women for their outstanding contribution to society and for furthering the cause of women in India. The event was held on June 22, 2010, and the former governor of West Bengal, M.K. Narayanan, presented Lahiri with a cash award of Rs 1 lakh in the presence of CCC President Sushil Kumar Agarwal. "Giving an award to women in the name of a woman is a true way to keep her memory alive," remarked Narayanan.



Sundeep Bhutoria congratulates Shanu Lahiri

# From Rags To Riches: The Journey Of A Journalist



Abhigyan Prakash

**A**bhigyan Prakash's inspiring journey began with overcoming numerous hurdles after the loss of his father at a young age. Despite starting out as an auto cleaner earning a meagre Rs 5 per day, he managed to defy the odds. To share his story, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a session of **The Write Circle** where Prakash, an award-winning senior journalist, columnist, and iconic frontline face of television news, spoke about his life and the intricacies of India.

Prakash's strong musical background propelled him to spend 18 years learning the tabla in Benaras and Lucknow. This musical foundation opened doors for him to write about music for publications such as the *Times of India* and *Pioneer* in Lucknow. However, it was his work as a lyricist for an Indian film that brought him recognition from NDTV, and eventually led him to Mumbai. The session was moderated by Ketki Bhatia, **Ehsaas** Woman of Mumbai. The speakers and audience were welcomed by Swati Agarwal, **Ehsaas** Woman of Mumbai and Udaipur.

During the session, Bhatia delved into Prakash's transition from political journalism to authoring the book, *From Lucknow to Lutyens: The Power and Plight of Uttar Pradesh*. She probed the significant role of the state in the Indian Parliament and the reasons behind its lagging development. Prakash responded, "A key factor is the urge to win the state politically". He pointed out that the British had "played games" by segregating undivided

India based on caste and religion. "That was where the seeds were sown," he said, "and after Independence, whether for UP or for all Indians, politicians forgot to undo it."

When asked about why no chief minister before Mayawati had completed a five-year term in office, Prakash shed light on the nuances of governance. "Anyone alternative to the Nehru family was not allowed to settle in the government in UP," said Prakash. "Imagine Yogi Adityanath succeeding Narendra Modi at the Centre; the people of Delhi would not allow this to settle for a long time."

Recalling an incident from 2003, Prakash talked about participating in the 'Me Mumbaikar' campaign, where he felt the pain of a UP resident for the first time. Quoting from the campaign, he said, "Having been only three days in Mumbai city, hearing about UP *bhaiyas*, I should be leaving the city. But no, I won't leave the city; I'm here to work." His words highlighted the challenges faced by migrants.

As the session went on, Prakash touched upon topics like the caste system, how India runs on the 3 Cs – casteism, corruption and communalism – and his hope for a positive impact after the launch of his book. The session concluded with Prakash voicing his worries about the future of India's politics and society. There was also a Q&A round, after which Karishma Mehta, **Ehsaas** Woman of Mumbai, delivered the vote of thanks on behalf of the Foundation, and Swati Agarwal felicitated the author.



Swati Agarwal, Ketki Bhatia and Karishma Mehta

*The Write Circle Mumbai was presented by Shree Cement Ltd with the support of Ehsaas Women of Mumbai*





Keshav Roy

Renu Roy

## Looking Back At The Times of Shakespeare

Known for encompassing various areas of socio-cultural welfare while promoting performing arts, culture, education, literature, gender equality and women's empowerment, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** recently hosted another edition of its famed theatrical offering, **Chalchitra Rangmanch**, in Kolkata. Theatre enthusiasts in the City of Culture got to watch a solo play titled *Simply Shakespeare* at the Calcutta Club. The director, Renu Roy, was felicitated by Deborshi Sadhan Billy Bose, the bakery and food chairman of Calcutta Club, along with other committee members, namely Kumar Shankar Datta, the senior most committee member, Snehasish Bhaumik, the sports and project chairman, and Shyamal Bhattacharya, the theatre director of the club. Bhowmik gave Renu Roy a memento.

After Ramaditya Ray, chairman of the social and cultural committee of Calcutta Club, delivered the introductory speech, Renu Roy took over and emphasised the significance of William Shakespeare's literary works, stating that they remain precious and relevant even in contemporary times. In his solo performance, Keshav Roy brought to life some of Shakespeare's most renowned plays, including *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, *Richard II*, *Othello*, *Merchant of Venice* and *Hamlet*. The narrative was infused with wit and anecdotes, providing insight into the Bard's compelling characters. Throughout his performance, Keshav Roy shared details about the legendary playwright. This, against the backdrop of the red-and-black setting, was a treat to watch.

William Shakespeare is widely revered as a legend of the theatre and literature. Initially, his masterpieces were mistakenly attributed to other writers like Christopher Marlowe and Francis Bacon. Even four centuries after his passing, people unknowingly

quote terms and phrases coined by him in everyday conversations. Appreciation for the play *Henry V* inspired him to script two more sequels.

Despite being one of Shakespeare's greatest and most controversial creations, *Merchant of Venice* has faced criticism for its portrayal of anti-Semitism. Keshav Roy portrayed the character of Shylock not only as a negative figure, but also as a tragic figure, whose sense of decency had been shattered by the persecution he endured. The actor unveiled the various facets of Shakespeare — the poet, the producer, the actor, the writer and the director — shedding light on both the known and lesser-known aspects of his life. He recited a sonnet, a eulogy often spoken or written during celebrations, and shared the story behind its composition. It was written when Shakespeare received the news of his youngest son, Hamnet, falling gravely ill. Although he rushed to Stratford, he arrived too late. That night, with a burning candle and a quill, Shakespeare did what he did best in times of heartache. The sonnet immortalised Hamnet in his father's mind.

In his closing remarks, Keshav Roy explained the character of Prospero, the protagonist of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Considered one of Shakespeare's final works, Prospero possesses magical abilities and uses illusions to manipulate people's behaviour. Critics identify Prospero as a fictional portrayal of Shakespeare himself, and through the character's epilogue, which is believed to be the maestro's last words to the public, Shakespeare expressed his beliefs about mankind, philosophy and religion without any dogma.

The performance of *Simply Shakespeare* left the audience with a deeper appreciation for the legacy of William Shakespeare and his insights into the human condition.

*This session of Chalchitra Rangmanch was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Calcutta Club*



Ramaditya Ray



Anirudh Kanisetti

# Exploring the Nature of Power



Saudamini Deo

An author, public historian and podcaster – Anirudh Kanisetti’s work covers a variety of areas, from history to networked societies and technology governance. He is currently an editor at the Museum of Art and Photography, Bengaluru, and has released his first book, *Lords of the Deccan: Southern India from the Chalukyas to the Cholas*. His writings have been published in *Mint*, *The Print*, *The Deccan Herald*, *The New Indian Express* and *Pragati*, and he hosts two podcasts titled *Echoes of India* and *Yuddha: The Indian Military History Podcast*. His work also earned him the Tata Literature Live! Best Non-Fiction Book of the Year Award in 2022. To share his insights, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** invited Kanisetti to a session of **The Write Circle** in Jaipur.

After Mita Kapur, CEO of Siyahi, kicked off the session and Deependra Rana, General Manager of ITC Rajputana, welcomed everyone present in the room, Kanisetti’s conversation took off with the moderator, Saudamini Deo, who is a writer, photographer, translator, and co-founding editor of *RIC Journal*. Kanisetti’s book delves into three prominent dynasties – the Cholas, the Chalukyas, and the Rashtrakutas – capturing their essence in detail. Through architecture, he provides the audience with insights into the history of the South. The medieval sculptures and walls of the temples of that era serve as storytellers to the modern world, showcasing the varied footprints of the imperial era.

While writing the book, Kanisetti aimed to present the dynasties in a realistic, believable and complex manner. He believes that history should challenge our biases. “If history doesn’t challenge our biases, then we are telling

it wrong,” he said. As an author, Kanisetti strives to make his readers experience the chaos, adrenaline rush



Mita Kapur



Deependra Rana

“If history doesn’t  
challenge our biases, then  
we are telling it wrong”

and delusion that characterised the medieval world. He stands out by not subscribing to the nationalistic narrative of history, which is often unquestioningly accepted as received wisdom in India.

Kanisetti seeks to expose the nature of power as a fascinating phenomenon, showcasing the extent of superiority asserted by the South Indian emperors. “The Rashtrakutas thought that they were fortune’s favourite and Earth’s beloved,” he proffered as an example. During the session, the author also explored the complexities and interconnectedness of the royal history of the Indian subcontinent. He addressed questions from the audience, reflecting on the modern narrative of history and the significance of questioning things in academic endeavours. The session came to an end with Rana felicitating the speakers with mementos.

*The Write Circle Jaipur was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Siyahi and Spagia Foundation, and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Jaipur*



# Saving The Planet One Step At A Time



To celebrate World Environment Day, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its **Muskaan** initiative, arranged an event for underprivileged children and young ones with special needs from organisations such as Prayas and other NGOs. The objective of the event was to educate the children about the importance of nature and our planet. Through interactive sessions and engaging activities, the children were taught about the significance of preserving our environment, and the role each individual plays in protecting the Earth. They were encouraged to learn about conserving natural resources, reducing waste and promoting sustainable practices.

Stories about plants and animals were shared with the children to emphasise the importance of biodiversity and maintaining a balance in ecosystems. The children were intrigued by the stories and illustrations, fostering their interest in the natural world. The event concluded with the kids pledging to actively protect the environment and to be more mindful about conserving natural resources in their daily lives. **Muskaan** plans to organise similar events regularly to sustain the children's interest in environmental issues. It aims to instill good habits and



awareness about caring for nature from a young age.

As a gesture of support, all the children were given plants for their homes, along with essential items such as food and other necessities. This act not only symbolised the connection between humans and nature, but also provided the children with a tangible reminder of their commitment to environmental stewardship.

*A joint initiative with **Education for All**, this session of **Muskaan** was presented by Shree Cement Limited*





# Sharing Leadership Tips With Leaders Of The Future



Shubha Vilas

Padmesh Gupta

Shubha Vilas is not only a former monk, but also a bestselling author. Known for his popular books on the *Ramayana* and his latest release, *Open-Eyed Meditations*, the author was invited to a session of **The Write Circle**, organised by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, to engage with students at the Oxford Business College on the topic of leadership in the modern world. Held in collaboration with the British Council, the initiative aims to bring accomplished authors, including journalists and media icons to the United Kingdom.

Padmesh Gupta, the managing director of Oxford Business College, talked of the significance of hosting renowned thought leaders like Vilas. “Hosting renowned thought-leaders like Shubha Vilas at Oxford Business College reaffirms our commitment to providing the best-in-class education in corporate

management and leadership,” he stated. “It is an honour to have him share his insights on *Open-Eyed Meditation*. We are excited to explore the principles outlined in his bestseller that can accelerate growth in all areas of life.”

Vilas holds a PhD in ‘Leadership Effectiveness from the Valmiki Ramayana’, which gives him a unique perspective in the field. His thesis is considered groundbreaking in modern leadership studies. With his vast experience, Vilas has delivered over 6,000 talks globally, inspiring more than 6,00,000 individuals in over 20 countries in the past decade alone. He has been invited as a guest speaker at esteemed American universities such as Stanford, Princeton and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



The audience at the session

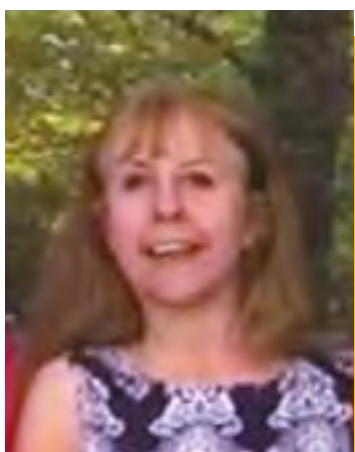


## Praise for Shubha Vilas



“I particularly loved the invisible leadership speaker, Shubha Vilas, and how he explained the different levels of leadership, particularly his usage of the military/army to explain how people with military experience, training and background always understand and exude the highest level of leadership because they are taught as part of the military doctrine. I hope we will now begin to understand how and why people who have military backgrounds make the best leaders, but, as he explained, it’s up to organisations to understand this, harness it and create the enabling environment for employees to understand this military pinnacle of leadership which epitomises leadership in organisations. The speaker was succinctly brilliant, especially in how he explained the lowest level of leadership as those leaders who just lead by creating fear and showing their subordinates they are the bosses — they always want to be visible by showing everybody what they are doing and what they have done and leading through fear and autocracy. I think we all understood how the military creates invisible leaders who always commit selflessly, are determined and always operate at the top of the leadership pyramid. I hope we all learnt how we should be leading. Succinctly stipulated. The speaker was brilliant.”

— Samuel Asante-Nnuro



“Shubha Vilas wove tales from history and culture into examples of wisdom, courage and loyalty to illustrate the importance of these characteristics in leadership. Using the characters from folklore and social history, he spoke of the role of a leader as one who helps others to reach a productive conclusion by means of judgement and experience in times of difficulty and decision-making. The use of storytelling as a mechanism for teaching leadership is profoundly effective, because the stories are both relatable and memorable. We are thus able to implement the strategies illustrated in the tales into our own lives and our own classrooms in a meaningful and authentic fashion. We were fortunate indeed to have this opportunity to hear Shubha Vilas speak. His stories will stay with us and encourage us in our academic leadership for some time to come.”

— Lynda Plenty

## मैं कई विधाओं में काम करता हूँ, पर कविता मेरी प्रिय विधा: विनोद भारद्वाज



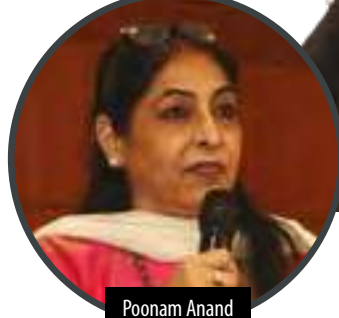
Vinod Bhardwaj

औरतों को हमारे समाज में ठीक से समझा नहीं गया है। मेरी किताब में उनकी दुनिया के वे सवाल हैं, जिन पर बात होनी चाहिए।" यह कहना है पत्रकार, चित्रकार, फोटोग्राफर और लेखक विनोद भारद्वाज का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन द्वारा आयोजित कलम रांची में बतौर अतिथि वक्ता बोल रहे थे। आयोजकों की ओर से अतिथियों का स्वागत डॉ सीमा सिंह ने किया। उन्होंने भारतीय भाषाओं को प्रोत्साहित करने और कला, साहित्य, संस्कृति और महिला सशक्तीकरण के क्षेत्र में फाउंडेशन द्वारा किए जा रहे कार्यक्रमों की चर्चा की और भारद्वाज का परिचय दिया।

सिंह ने बताया कि 1948 में लखनऊ में पैदा हुए भारद्वाज ने 1971 में लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय से मनोविज्ञान में एमए किया। आपने लेखन और पत्रकारिता की शुरुआत 'आरम्भ', 'धर्मयुग' और 'दिनमान' जैसी पत्रिकाओं से की और तब से आधुनिक जीवन, विचार, फिल्म और कला जैसे विषयों पर नियमित लेखन कर रहे हैं। आप नवभारत टाइम्स के फ्रीचर संपादक भी रहे हैं। आपकी प्रकाशित पुस्तकों में तीन कविता संग्रह 'जलता मकान', 'होशियारपुर', 'होशियारपुर और अन्य कविताएं'; कहानी संग्रह 'फेसबुकिया लव' और तीन उपन्यास 'सेप्पुकु', 'सच्चा झूठ' और 'एक सेक्स मरीज का रोगनामचा' काफी चर्चित रहे। आपने 'वृहद् आधुनिक कला कोश' भी तैयार किया है, जो बहुत महत्वपूर्ण काम है। कुछ कला-संबंधी प्रयोगधर्मी फिल्मों का निर्देशन करने वाले भारद्वाज भारतभूषण अग्रवाल सम्मान और श्रेष्ठ सर्जनात्मक लेखन के लिए संस्कृति पुरस्कार से सम्मानित हैं, और वर्तमान में स्वतंत्र पत्रकारिता, फिल्म निर्माण और आर्ट क्यूरेटर का काम करते हैं। सिंह ने आगे के संवाद के लिए अहसास वूमन रांची पूनम आनंद को आमंत्रित किया।

आनंद ने कहा कि मैं सवाल की अपेक्षा आपको सुनना चाहूंगी, फिर भी मैं यह जानना चाहती हूँ कि आपको पत्रकारिता, आर्ट क्रिटिक और आर्ट क्यूरेटर में सबसे अधिक क्या पसंद है? भारद्वाज का उत्तर था कि मैं कई विधाओं में काम करता हूँ, पर जो भी कविता लिखता हो, वह उसे ही अपनी प्रिय विधा कहेगा। तो आप कह सकती हैं, मेरी भी प्रिय विधा कविता ही है। कविता ऐसी चीज है, जिसे आप हमेशा बेचैन होकर लिखते हैं। मुझे विश्व सिनेमा पर काम करके भी आनंद आता है। इसी तरह कला में भी बहुत आनंद आता है, अभी मैंने प्रयाग शुक्ल जी के लिए भी पेंट किया है। हमने एक दूसरे के साथ बहुत समय बिताया है। मेरा लेखन आत्मकथात्मक है। मेरी बहुत सारी कहानियां भी आत्मकथात्मक हैं। एक सवाल के उत्तर में भारद्वाज ने कहा कि इंटरनेट ने जानकारी को आसान कर दिया है। लेकिन हमने जब शुरुआत की थी, तो वह बहुत कठिन समय है। सत्यजीत राय ने कभी सिनेमा और साहित्य के बारे में कहा था कि इसमें सबसे बड़ा अंतर यही है कि किताब में कोई चीज पसंद आने पर आप कभी भी उसे देखने के लिए पीछे जा सकते हैं, पर सिनेमा में यह संभव नहीं है। राय के जमाने में न सही पर तकनीक ने आज इसे भी सहज बना दिया है।

भारद्वाज ने विस्तार से बताया कि किस तरह उन्होंने विश्वविद्यालय की पढ़ाई के दौरान ही स्वाध्याय से कला को समझा और उस पर लिखना सीखा। मैंने ब्रिटिश काउंसिल और कुंवर नारायण से बहुत कुछ सीखा। उन्होंने बताया कि पुराने समय में मेरे सारे दोस्त बड़ी उम्र के थे। अब उल्टा हो गया है, अब मेरे सारे दोस्त युवा हैं। मेरा ये सिद्धांत है कि आप जब बुजुर्ग हो जाएं, तो बीमारी के बारे में बात न करिए। भारद्वाज ने अपने कहानी संग्रह 'फेसबुकिया



Poonam Anand

लव' से जुड़े सवाल पर कहा कि फेसबुक का इस्तेमाल अगर आप समझदारी से करें तो इसके बहुत लाभ हैं, अन्यथा इसके बहुत नुकसान भी हैं। उन्होंने बताया कि इसमें दो लोग मैसेंजर से बात करते हैं, और जब लड़का उस लड़की से मिलने आ जाता है तो पता चलता है कि वह पोलियो ग्रस्त है। तो फेसबुक एक रियलिटी है। मेरे कई दोस्त फेसबुक से बने हैं। कई युवा कवयित्रियां हैं। इस पुस्तक में स्त्री जीवन पर केंद्रित बहुत बातें हैं।

भारद्वाज ने नई तकनीक के विश्वव्यापी विस्तार और भाषा से जुड़े सवाल पर भी अपनी बात रखी। उन्होंने इस संग्रह में शामिल कुछ कहानियों के बारे में भी बताया। उन्होंने धर्मवीर भारती और कमलेश्वर का जिक्र करते हुए 'दूसरी पत्नी' कहानी के बारे में भी बताया। एक सवाल के उत्तर में भारद्वाज ने कहा कि स्त्रियां मर्द हो जाती हैं, तो वे भी उतनी ही खतरनाक हैं, जितने मर्द हैं। उन्होंने सिनेमा, स्त्री-पुरुष संबंध, कला जगत, कला-बाजार, आर्थिक-व्यापार, कला प्रदर्शनी, गैंगवार, पोस्टर, बुक कवर, पेंटिंग, पसंदीदा शहर, भारतीय चित्रकला, शिक्षा, घुमक्कड़ी प्रवृत्ति आदि से जुड़े सवाल पर खुल कर अपना विचार रखा। उन्होंने कहा कि अच्छे-अच्छे लोग अपने बच्चों को आर्टिस्ट नहीं बनाना चाहते थे। आज बड़े-बड़े लोग अपने बच्चों को आर्ट की शिक्षा दिलाना चाहते हैं। आज कलाकार की छवि बदल चुकी है। एक सवाल के उत्तर में भारद्वाज ने कहा कि मनी लांड्रिंग का सबसे बड़ा माध्यम ड्रग है और उसके बाद कला का नंबर आता है।

भारद्वाज ने सवाल-जवाब सत्र में जिज्ञासु श्रोताओं के उत्तर भी दिए। भारद्वाज ने कहा कि आज के युवा पर गर्व करना चाहिए और एक-दूसरे से सीखना चाहिए। साहित्य, संस्कृति की दुनिया में संवाद का उग्र से कोई संबंध नहीं होना चाहिए। एक सवाल के उत्तर में भारद्वाज ने कहा कि कला पर हिंदी में लिखना बहुत कठिन है, जबकि अंग्रेजी में लिखना आसान है। अंत में मुक्ति शाहदेव ने अतिथि वक्ता का अभिनंदन किया। रश्मि शर्मा ने धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया।

अहसास वूमन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम रांची के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। मीडिया पार्टनर दैनिक जागरण का सहयोग मिला



Rashmi Sharma



Seema Singh





Seema Puri



Sumitra Ray



# Learning the Art of Communication

It is no secret that a smile is worth a thousand words. But thanks to social media, forging genuine connections with people in reality has become a rare occurrence. Stuck to our phone screens, we have forgotten how to communicate effectively with the people around us. It therefore becomes imperative that children are taught the value of impactful communication that would help them to navigate life with greater ease.

**Prabha Khaitan Foundation** in association with **Education for All Trust** organised a virtual **Muskaan** session with Seema Puri, the founder of Evolve, and a leading name in the field of etiquette training and soft skills. Around 490 students from Classes VIII and IX were in attendance. Puri interacted with students and guided them on how to be smart and polished in conversations.

Elaborating on the strength of 'silent communication', she pointed out that 93% of communication happens without words. She highlighted that smiling, as a part of non-verbal communication, is the most important non-verbal activity. She advised the children to start their conversations with a smile in order to look confident, positive and approachable.

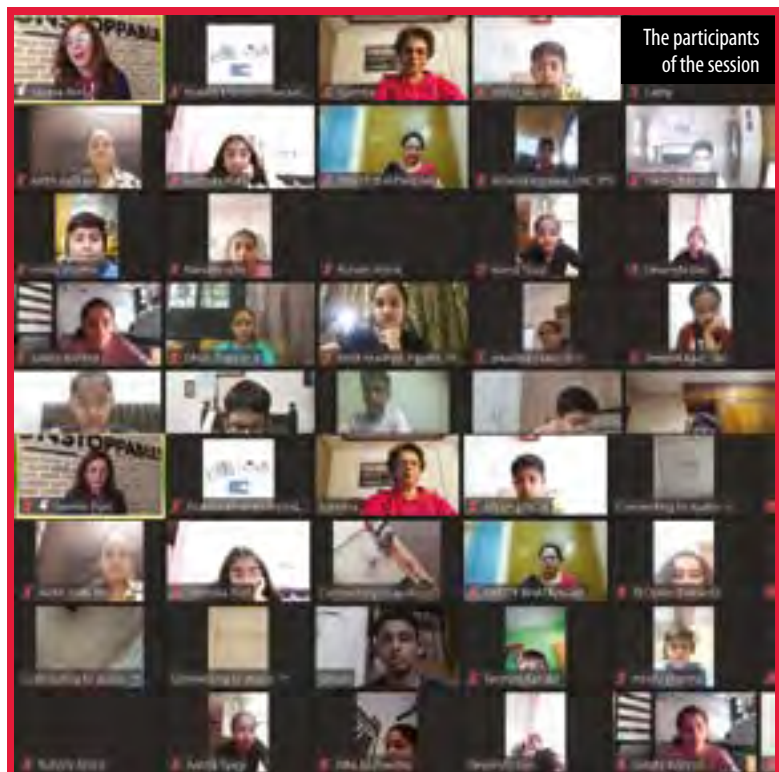
Eye contact came next as one of the most important non-verbal activities. Direct eye contact makes communication more satisfactory, as it shows that the communicator has depth and is confident. Similarly, a proper handshake is essential in showcasing conviction and reliance. Puri also mentioned that certain things such as absurd hand gestures, figure tip handshake, and keeping one hand in the pocket should be avoided while shaking hands. Moreover, postures where one's chin or shoulder is down show a lack of interest and low confidence.

Puri also emphasised that listening skills should

be developed along with speaking. She noted that there lies a major difference between hearing and listening. Explaining the difference between the two, participant Aarna Tyagi said that hearing is solely physical while listening is related to mental activity. Listening is a holistic practice, and involves looking at the eyes and face of the other person, while keeping one's hands calm and without looking around.

Participants Sakshi Bishnoi, Amav Rastogi, Vanshika Rathode and Ansh Singh interacted with Puri and shared their views and insights during the session. The discussion was engaging and memorable as the children learnt valuable tips about communication strategies.

*This session of **Muskaan** was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with **Education for All***



## आखर छत्तीसगढ़ ने मनाया राज्य की भाषा, बोली, कला, साहित्य और संस्कृति का उत्सव



‘अपनी भाषा, अपने लोग’ का उत्सव ‘आखर’ इस बार छत्तीसगढ़ की राजधानी रायपुर में अपने पूरे शबाब पर था। प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से रायपुर में सर्किट हाउस के कन्वेंशन हॉल में आयोजित ‘आखर छत्तीसगढ़’ के इस एक दिवसीय आयोजन में छत्तीसगढ़ की राजभाषा छत्तीसगढ़ी और राज्य की अन्य आंचलिक बोलियों सरगुजिहा, हल्बी, गोंडी, कुडुक, सदरी आदि के साहित्यिक संरक्षण एवं संवर्धन पर संवाद और वैचारिक गोष्ठी हुई। फाउंडेशन की इस पहल को छत्तीसगढ़ राजभाषा आयोग एवं अभिकल्प फाउंडेशन का सहयोग मिला।

आखर छत्तीसगढ़ के दौरान अलग-अलग सत्रों में राज्य में प्रचलित 15 से अधिक बोलियों-भाषाओं पर केंद्रित संवाद हुआ। इनमें सरगुजा से लेकर बस्तर तक की बोलियां-भाषाएं शामिल थीं। छत्तीसगढ़ी कविता-कहानी, युवा लेखन और सोशल मीडिया पर केंद्रित 7 संवाद सत्र हुए, जिनमें 30 से अधिक साहित्यकार और 10 से अधिक छत्तीसगढ़ी कलाकारों ने शिरकत की। इस दौरान युवा लेखकों एवं डिजिटल माध्यम पर छत्तीसगढ़ी भाषा, साहित्य, संस्कृति, परंपरा और सभ्यता को बढ़ावा देने में जुटे डिजिटल क्रिएटर्स हेतु भी विशेष सत्र आयोजित हुआ।

प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की कार्यकारी न्यासी अनिदिता चटर्जी ने फाउंडेशन की गतिविधियों की संक्षेप में चर्चा की। उन्होंने बताया कि फाउंडेशन- प्रदर्शन कला, संस्कृति और साहित्य को बढ़ावा देता है, और भारत और विदेशों में लगभग 40 शहरों में इसके लिए प्रतिबद्ध व्यक्तियों, संरक्षकों और समान विचारधारा वाले संस्थानों के साथ सहयोग करता है। फाउंडेशन के कार्यक्रमों को श्री सीमेंट लिमिटेड की सीएसआर पहल का सहयोग मिलता है। सहयोगी अभिकल्प फाउंडेशन के संस्थापक गौरव गिरिजा शुक्ला ने आखर छत्तीसगढ़ को छत्तीसगढ़ी और आंचलिक बोलियों के साहित्य और संस्कृति से परिचित होने का बेहतरीन अवसर बताया।

आखर छत्तीसगढ़ का शुभारंभ पद्मश्री से सम्मानित उषा बारले, मदन चौहान, अनूप रंजन पाण्डेय के साथ मीर अली मीर, राहुल सिंह, अनिदिता चटर्जी और गौरव शुक्ला के द्वारा दीप प्रज्वलन द्वारा हुआ। इसके पश्चात रामनामी समुदाय द्वारा राम भजन की प्रस्तुति दी गयी। परिचर्चा के मध्यांतर में राज्य के मान्य कलाकारों ने पाम्परिक वाद्ययंत्र एवं गीत मोहरी बाजा तथा बांस गीत की प्रस्तुति दी।

आखर छत्तीसगढ़ की रिपोर्ट, आपके लिए।







Anindita Chatterjee with Gaurav Girija Shukla, Rahul Singh, Arun Kumar Nigam, Meer Ali Meer, and Padma Shri recipients Anup Ranjan Pandey, Usha Barle and Madan Singh Chauhan at the inauguration of the Aakhar Chhattisgarh festival

## यों हुआ छत्तीसगढ़ी भाषा और साहित्य के उत्सव 'आखर छत्तीसगढ़' का शुभारंभ



प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन द्वारा छत्तीसगढ़ प्रदेश की राजधानी रायपुर में एक दिवसीय कार्यक्रम 'आखर छत्तीसगढ़' का आयोजन हुआ। रायपुर के सर्किट हाउस स्थित कन्वेंशन हॉल में छत्तीसगढ़ राजभाषा आयोग एवं अभिकल्प फाउंडेशन के संयुक्त तत्वाधान में आयोजित 'आखर छत्तीसगढ़' का उद्देश्य छत्तीसगढ़ की राजभाषा छत्तीसगढ़ी और अन्य आंचलिक बोलियों जिनमें सरगुजिहा, हल्बी, गोंडी, कुडुक, सदरी आदि शामिल थीं के साहित्य, उसके संरक्षण एवं संवर्धन पर वैचारिक परिचर्चा करना था।

आखर छत्तीसगढ़ के शुभारंभ के अवसर पर पद्मश्री से सम्मानित पंडवानी गायिका उषा बारले, पद्मश्री से ही सम्मानित प्रसिद्ध भजन गायक मदन चौहान, पद्मश्री से सम्मानित बस्तर बैंड के संस्थापक अनूप रंजन पाण्डेय, साहित्यकार मीर अली मीर, पुरातत्वविद राहुल सिंह, प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की कार्यकारी

न्यासी अनिदिता चटर्जी और अभिकल्प फाउंडेशन के संस्थापक गौरव शुक्ला उपस्थित रहे। सभी मुख्य अतिथियों का 'Katha Uttoriyo' भेंट कर स्वागत सम्मान किया गया।

अतिथियों के दीप प्रज्वलन और प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन के एंथम से कार्यक्रम का शुभारंभ हुआ। अपने उद्बोधन में अतिथियों ने कार्यक्रम की सराहना की और छत्तीसगढ़ी साहित्य के संवर्धन और संरक्षण के लिए आखर जैसे आयोजनों को आवश्यक बताया। सभी ने इतने विशिष्ट कार्यक्रम के लिए आयोजक प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन, छत्तीसगढ़ राजभाषा आयोग एवं अभिकल्प फाउंडेशन के प्रति आभार व्यक्त किया।

कार्यक्रम के शुभारंभ अवसर पर रामनामी समुदाय द्वारा राम भजन की अद्भुत प्रस्तुति दी गई।



Anindita Chatterjee with Padma Shri recipients Usha Barle and Madan Singh Chauhan during the lamp lighting ceremony to signal the start of the festival



Madan Singh Chauhan



Aanchal Garcha



Gaurav Girija Shukla



Vijay Mishra



## रामनामी

आखर के दौरान छत्तीसगढ़ के प्रसिद्ध रामनामी समाज द्वारा भगवान राम की भक्ति में पैरों पर घुंघरू बांध उसी के थाप पर नृत्य करते हुए गुला राम एवं उनके दल ने अपनी प्रस्तुति दी।

छत्तीसगढ़ में एक रामनामी संप्रदाय है। इसे मानने वालों की श्री राम में अटूट आस्था है। ये मंदिर में पूजा नहीं करते। पीले वस्त्र धारण नहीं करते। सिर पर टीका भी नहीं लगाते और मूर्ति पूजा में भी बहुत यकीन नहीं करते। बल्कि, ये लोग अपने पूरे शरीर पर राम का नाम लिखवा लेते हैं। इनके घरों में, दीवारों पर, दरवाजे-खिड़कियों पर हर कहीं राम नाम लिखा होता है।

यह भगवान राम की भक्ति में नाचते हैं। यह कोई नृत्य नहीं है बल्कि एक भजन है जिसे भगवान राम की भक्ति में प्रस्तुत किया जाता है।

यह समाज भजन करते समय पैरों पर घुंघरू बांध कर उसी की थाप पर नाचता है।







Kirti Kirdatt, Deepali Bhasin, Archana Pathak and Aanchal Garcha with Sudheer Pathak, Shivvrat Singh Pawle and Vijay Singh Damali

## 'सरगुजा की बोली-भाषा और साहित्य' सत्र में उभरी सरगुजिहा और छत्तीसगढ़ी की समानता

आखर छत्तीसगढ़ का प्रथम सत्र 'सरगुजा की बोली-भाषा और साहित्य' पर केंद्रित रहा। इस सत्र में जाने-माने साहित्यकार शिवव्रत सिंह पावले, विजय सिंह दमाली और अर्चना पाठक से सूत्रधार पहली सरगुजिहा पत्रिका 'गागर' के संपादक डॉ सुधीर पाठक ने संवाद किया। परिचर्चा सरगुजिहा और छत्तीसगढ़ी भाषा के मध्य आंशिक भिन्नता और अधिक समानता पर केन्द्रित रही। शिवव्रत सिंह पावले ने सरगुजिहा और छत्तीसगढ़ी के समान उच्चारण वाले शब्दों के अर्थ में भिन्नता पर प्रकाश डाला। प्रसिद्ध सरगुजिहा गीत 'हाय रे सरगुजिहा नाचे....' और 'करमा कुहुकी गाबो मांदर के ताल म....' के गीतकार विजय सिंह दमाली ने सरगुजिहा भाषा के विकास में साहित्यिक रचना को बढ़ावा देने पर जोर दिया। उन्होंने सरगुजिहा और छत्तीसगढ़ी को एक-दूसरे के समीप बताते हुए वर्णों के अंतर को स्पष्ट किया।

अर्चना पाठक ने सरगुजिहा और छत्तीसगढ़ी के बीच मात्रा भेद बताते हुए

कुछ महत्वपूर्ण उदाहरण दिए। जैसे- छत्तीसगढ़ी में बेर के फल को बोइर कहा जाता है लेकिन सरगुजिहा में इसे बइल कहा जाता है। ऐसे ही राहल दाल को छत्तीसगढ़ी में रहेर दार तो सरगुजिहा में रहर दाएल कहा जाता है।

इस अवसर पर विजय सिंह दमाली ने अपना गीत- मोर सरगुजा के माटी, तोला करंव परनाम बार बार.... गुनगुनाया। शिवव्रत सिंह पावले ने अपने द्वारा रचित कहानी 'नोनी' का पाठ किया। परिचर्चा के सूत्रधार सुधीर पाठक ने भी अपनी लोकप्रिय रचना 'धक-धक जीवरा धड़केल धनिया....' का सुनाया।

पैनल में उपस्थित सभी वक्ता अतिथियों का अहसास वूमन गरिमा तिवारी, आंचल गरचा, कीर्ति कृदत्त, दीपाली भसीन और सृष्टि त्रिवेदी ने स्वागत और अभिनंदन किया।



Archana Pathak



Sudheer Pathak



Shivvrat Singh Pawle



Vijay Singh Damali





Kirti Kirdatt, Aanchal Garcha, Deepali Bhasin and Shrishti Trivedi with Rudra Kumar Panigrahi, Shakuntala Tarar, Shiv Kumar Pandey and Jayamati Kashyup

## बस्तर की बोली-भाषा का संरक्षण और संवर्धन आवश्यक

आखर छत्तीसगढ़ के दूसरे सत्र में 'बस्तर की बोली' विषय पर इस क्षेत्र के प्रबुद्ध साहित्यकार शिव कुमार पाण्डेय, जयमती कश्यप और शकुंतला तरार से सूत्रधार रुद्रनारायण पाणिग्रही ने संवाद किया। यह परिचर्चा बस्तर की बोली-भाषा के संरक्षण और संवर्धन पर केन्द्रित रही। रुद्रनारायण पाणिग्रही ने बताया कि बस्तर के लोगों को दो बोलियों, भाषाओं से जूझना पड़ता है। एक उनकी मातृ भाषा और दूसरी उनकी संपर्क भाषा। उन्होंने आगे कहा कि बस्तर में आर्य, द्रविड़ और मुंडा तीनों बोली-भाषाओं का संगम देखने को मिलता है, जिनमें से कुछ लगभग विलुप्त हो चुकी हैं। दुनिया में हर रोज कोई बोली-भाषा और सभ्यता विलुप्त होती है, जिसका बड़ा कारण मैं मानता हूँ कि जब कोई समाज एक स्थान से दूसरे स्थान पर स्थानांतरित होता है, तो सदियों से अर्जित उसका ज्ञान, उसकी परम्परा, संस्कृति, बोली-भाषा, लोक गीत नष्ट हो जाते हैं।

शिव कुमार पाण्डेय ने बस्तर क्षेत्र की बोली के विषय में कहा कि बस्तर की कई बोलियां आज विलुप्त हो चुकी हैं और इन बोलियों का स्थान हल्बी ने लिया है। बस्तर की हल्बी और गोंडी भाषा को व्याकरण की कसौटी में कसा गया है। इस लिए इसे भाषा की श्रेणी में रखा गया है। हल्बी भाषा में बहुत कार्य देखने को मिला है। रचनाकारों ने इस भाषा को समृद्ध किया है। रियासत काल में इसे राजभाषा का गौरव प्राप्त था। राजमहल से सभी आदेश हल्बी में ही पारित होते थे।

जयमती कश्यप ने गोंडी भाषा के विषय पर कहा कि बस्तर में गोंडी भाषी जनसंख्या 22 से 25 प्रतिशत है। गोंडी की अपनी संस्कृति, सभ्यता और साहित्य है, लिपि है, व्याकरण है। गोंडी की अपनी लोक परम्पराएं हैं, लोककथाएं हैं और लोकगीत हैं। अपने समाज के लोग मिलते हैं, चाहे वह कितने भी पढ़े-लिखें हों, लेकिन अपने देवता को जब मनाते हैं, तो अपनी ही भाषा में अर्जी-विनती करते हैं। लोग अपनी बोली-भाषा, संस्कृति से ही अपने देवता को मनाते हैं, तब लगता है कि जब ईश्वर वह भाषा समझ सकता है, तो लोगों के बीच भी यह भाषा समृद्ध हो ही सकती है। गोंडी भाषा में शब्द सीमित हैं, इसलिए इसके शब्दकोश को विस्तार की जरूरत है। गोंडी भाषा विलुप्ति की ओर है, इसलिए इसे बचाना बहुत आवश्यक है, क्योंकि इनकी संस्कृति बहुत विराट, विशाल और सक्षम हैं।

बस्तर की लोकभाषा और संस्कृति-सभ्यता पर हल्बी लघुकथा सुनाते हुए शकुंतला तरार ने कहा कि बस्तर की लोकभाषा बहुत मधुर है। लिखित साहित्य न होने के कारण हम उसकी प्राचीनता का दावा नहीं कर सकते। बस्तर के हर क्षेत्र में छोटे-छोटे भाषा समूह हैं।

सभी वक्ता अतिथियों और संवादकर्ता का स्वागत और अभिन्दन अहसास वूमन गरिमा तिवारी, आंचल गरचा, कीर्ति कृदत्त, दीपाली भसीन और सृष्टि त्रिवेदी ने किया।



Jayamati Kashyup



Rudra Kumar Panigrahi



Shakuntala Tarar



Shiv Kumar Pandey





## मोहरी-बाजा

आखर के दौरान छत्तीसगढ़ के प्रसिद्ध लोक कलाकार संजू कुमार सेन के दल द्वारा पारंपरिक वाद्ययंत्र 'मोहरी बाजा' की सुंदर प्रस्तुति दी गई।

बस्तर की परंपराओं में मोहरी-बाजा का महत्वपूर्ण स्थान है। इसके बिना किसी भी शुभ कार्य की कल्पना बस्तर में नहीं होती।

यह मोहरी- बाजा केवल बस्तर के ग्रामीण अंचलों में ही देखने को मिलता है, जो केवल शादी-ब्याह जैसे मांगलिक कार्यक्रमों में ही नहीं बल्कि बस्तर के प्राचीन मंदिरों, देवगुड़ियों में भी विशेष महत्व पाता है। ग्रामीण मोहरी बाजा की पूजा भी करते हैं। खास बात यह है कि इस मोहरी-बाजा को सुनकर देश के पूर्व राष्ट्रपति रामनाथ कोविंद ने भी इसकी जमकर तारीफ की थी. बस्तर में मोहरी बाजा वादन का कार्य परंपरागत रूप से माहरा समाज द्वारा किया जाता है।







Aanchal Garcha, Kirti Kirdatt and Garima Tiwari with Chitrnanjan Kar, Arun Kumar Nigam, Meer Ali Meer, Rameshwar Vaishnav and Pardesi Ram Verma

## छत्तीसगढ़ कहानी-कविता की शुरुआत और क्रमशः विकास

आखर छत्तीसगढ़ के तीसरे सत्र में परिचर्चा 'छत्तीसगढ़ी कहानी-कविता की शुरुआत और क्रमशः विकास' पर केन्द्रित रही। इस परिचर्चा में छत्तीसगढ़ के प्रसिद्ध साहित्यकार परदेशी राम वर्मा, रामेश्वर वैष्णव, मीर अली मीर, अरुण कुमार निगम से सूत्रधार चितरंजन कर ने बातचीत की।

चितरंजन कर ने कहा कि प्रमाणिक तौर पर हम कहानी की शुरुआत की बात करें, तो खैरागढ़ राज्य के लक्ष्मीनिधि राय के दरबारी राज्य कवि दलपत राव से हम इसे मानते हैं, इसके बाद क्रमशः इसका विकास हुआ। स्वराज की बात से माटी की महिमा, राष्ट्र की उन्नति, नारी उत्थान, और अब दलित विमर्श, स्त्री विमर्श और समकालीन कविता की आज बात होती है।

गीत के संदर्भ में उन्होंने कहा कि जब मां है तब तक ममता है, जब तक ममता है, तब तक लोरी है, जब तक लोरी है तब तक गीत है, जब तक गीत है तब तक संवेदना है और जब तक संवेदना है तब तक मनुष्यता है।

कविता और कहानी में विधा और रूप मात्र का अंतर बताते हुए चितरंजन ने कहा कि एक अच्छी कहानी एक अच्छी कविता का विस्तार होती है और एक अच्छी कविता एक अच्छी कहानी का सार होती है।

रामेश्वर वैष्णव ने कविता के विकास की विशेषता पर विस्तार से अपनी बात रखी और बताया कि पहले केवल दोहा, चौपाई का समय था। उसके बाद बड़े-बड़े साहित्यकारों ने इसे समृद्ध किया। आजादी के बाद कुछ शौकिया लोग इस क्षेत्र में टूट पड़े पर आज का जो स्वरूप बन रहा है इसमें छत्तीसगढ़ी काव्य क्षेत्र में हर विधा में लिखा जा रहा है। मैंने छत्तीसगढ़ी भाषा को समृद्ध करने के लिए इसमें पॉप सांग, माहिया, भांगड़ा भी लिखा है। आज अधिकतर रचनाएं छंद में हो रही हैं, लेकिन यह ध्यान रहे की छंद का पालन हो, लेकिन इससे पोएट्री गायब न हो।

छ के 'छंद' आन्दोलन के संचालक अरुण कुमार निगम ने कविता के संदर्भ में कहा कि मान्यता के अनुसार यह कहा जाता है कि तुरतुरिया जो लव-कुश की जन्मस्थली है, महर्षि वाल्मीकि जी के मुख से पहली कविता यहीं निकली। मैं मानता हूँ कि कविता और छंद दोनों का जन्म छत्तीसगढ़ में हुआ है। उन्होंने कहा कि मैंने छंद को आधार इसलिए बनाया क्योंकि छंद एक ऐसी विधा है जिसे बिना व्याकरण के लिखा नहीं जा सकता और कोई भी भाषा तभी समृद्ध हो सकती है, जब उसका व्याकरण पुरखा हो।

छत्तीसगढ़ी कविता-कहानी के सन्दर्भ में छत्तीसगढ़ के मान्य साहित्यकार मीर अली मीर ने कहा कि कविता प्रकृति के रंग में है, प्रकृति के संग में है। पहले कविता किसानों और मजदूरों की थकान दूर करने का साधन थी। एक लघु कहानी सुनाते हुए उन्होंने कहानी के स्थान को समाज में शिक्षा के केंद्र के रूप में बताया।

कहानी के संदर्भ में अपनी बात रखते हुए परदेशी राम वर्मा ने कहा कि लोग जो भाषा बनाते हैं, उसे आत्मसात करके साहित्यकार उसे साहित्य में लाता है। छत्तीसगढ़ में गद्य अभी किशोरावस्था में है, जबकि हिन्दी की पहली कहानी 'टोकरी भर मिट्टी' माधवराव सप्रे द्वारा लिखी गयी थी, जो छत्तीसगढ़ के बड़े साहित्यकार हैं। छत्तीसगढ़ में अन्य राज्यों से आए हुए साहित्यकारों ने अपना स्थान बनाया लेकिन यहां के साहित्यकार बाहर जाकर वो पद प्राप्त नहीं कर पाए। हालांकि छत्तीसगढ़ ने अन्य भाषाओं से आए साहित्यकारों को भी समृद्ध किया, क्योंकि यही यहां का संस्कार है।

सभी वक्ता अतिथियों और संवादकर्ता का स्वागत और अभिनंदन अहसास वूमन गरिमा तिवारी, आंचल गरचा, कीर्ति कृदत्त, दीपाली भसीन और सृष्टि त्रिवेदी ने किया।



Arun Kumar Nigam



Chitrnanjan Kar



Pardesi Ram Verma



Meer Ali Meer



Rameshwar Vaishnav





Aanchal Garcha and Shrishti Trivedi with Rahul Singh, Bharti Bandhu, Gaurav Girija Shukla, Madan Singh Chouhan and Kashiram Sahu

## छत्तीसगढ़ के चिन्हारी ने कहा कि यही हमारी पहचान



आखर छत्तीसगढ़ के चौथे सत्र में छत्तीसगढ़ के प्रसिद्ध लोक कलाकार और प्रदेश की पहचान, पद्मश्री से सम्मानित डॉ भारती बंधु, पद्मश्री से सम्मानित मदन चौहान, संगीत नाट्य अकादमी से सम्मानित काशीराम साहू से सूत्रधार राहुल सिंह ने परिचर्चा की।

भारती बंधु ने कहा कि लोग मेरा नाम पूछते हैं, लेकिन मेरा नाम विसर्जित हो चुका है, अब केवल भारती बंधु है। जो भी व्यक्ति नाम के पीछे भागता है, वो अपना नाम भी गंवा देता है और काम भी गंवा देता है। चिन्हारी शब्द से आप ने सम्बोधित कर दिया है। यह सच है कि हम कहीं जाते हैं तो बहुत सम्मान मिलता है। लोग हमें कहते हैं आप छत्तीसगढ़ की पहचान हो। हम जीवन भर छत्तीसगढ़ के इस ऋण से उर्रुण नहीं हो सकते। ये हमारी पहचान है। विदेशों से बुलावा आता है, लेकिन मैं जब जिन्दा हूँ तब तक छत्तीसगढ़ में ही रहूँगा और जब जाने का समय होगा तो साहेब का सिमरन करते जाऊँगा। मैं **प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन** और सभी सहयोगियों को धन्यवाद करता हूँ।

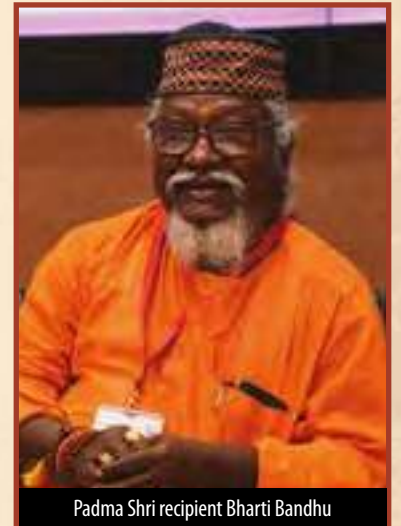
मदन चौहान ने 'खुद परस्ती खुदा परस्ती है, सामने आए किसकी हस्ती है' शेर से शुरुआत की और बताया कि हम उस मुकाम से गुजरे हैं, जहां हमें पहचान के लिए भटकना नहीं पड़ा। हम अपन काम में मशगूल रहे और आज आपने अपने चिन्हारी यानी पहचान के रूप में बैठाया है। मैंने अपने क्षेत्र को छोड़ा नहीं है और जब तक जिन्दा रहूँगा तब तक गीत, ग़ज़ल, भजन कहता रहूँगा।

संगीत नाट्य अकादमी से पुरस्कृत काशीराम साहू ने अपने बारे कहा कि मेरा सबसे पहला चिन्हारी 'नचकार' का है, बाद में मैंने 'रहस' नाट्य विधा में हर रस में स्त्री-पुरुष के पात्र का अभिनय किया है। मैंने रेडियो पर लक्ष्मण मस्तुरिहा और रामेश्वर वैष्णव सुन-सुन कर लिखना शुरू किया। रहस विधा में मैंने निबंध लिखा है।

सभी वक्ता अतिथियों और संवादकर्ता का स्वागत और अभिनंदन **अहसास** वृमन गरिमा तिवारी, आंचल गरचा, कीर्ति कृदत्त, दीपाली भसीन और सृष्टि त्रिवेदी ने किया।



Kashiram Sahu



Padma Shri recipient Bharti Bandhu



Padma Shri recipient Madan Singh Chauhan



Rahul Singh



## बांस गीत



आखर के दौरान छत्तीसगढ़ के प्रसिद्ध लोक कलाकार बलराम यादव के दल द्वारा पारंपरिक वाद्ययंत्र गीत 'बांस गीत' की बेहद सुंदर प्रस्तुति हुई।

छत्तीसगढ़ी लोक गीतों में बांस गीत की बहुत महत्वपूर्ण शैली है। बांस गीत में वाद्य का माध्यम है बांस, और उस बांस से जो धुन निकलती है, उसे कहते हैं बांस गीत।

इसका उपयोग प्रायः यादव समाज के लोग गाय चराते समय या किसी विशेष पारंपरिक पर्व के दौरान करते हैं।

महाभारत काल से ही इसे गाने और बजाने की परंपरा रही है। मान्यता है कि गोवर्धन पहाड़ उठाने के समय भगवान श्री कृष्ण ने इसे यादव जाति के लोगों को दिया था।

बांस गीत में एक गायक होता है, जिसके साथ बांस को फूंककर बजाने वाले दो वादक होते हैं। गायक के साथ और दो व्यक्ति होते हैं, जिन्हें रागी और डेही कहते हैं। मालिन प्रजाति के बांस को बांस गीत के लिए सबसे अच्छा माना जाता है।





## प्रकाशक के लिए छापना कठिन नहीं, बेचना कठिन है



आखर छत्तीसगढ़ का छांटां सत्र सरस्वती बुक्स के प्रकाशक आकाश महेश्वरी से अभिकल्प फाउंडेशन के संस्थापक गौरव गिरिजा शुक्ला के साथ संवाद पर केंद्रित था। इस परिचर्चा का विषय 'लोक भाषाओं की रचना के प्रकाशन की चुनौतियां' था।

महेश्वरी ने क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं की रचनाओं के प्रकाशन पर अपना मत रखते हुए कहा कि प्रकाशक के लिए छापना कठिन नहीं है बेचना कठिन है। अच्छी रचनाएं या किताबें आती हैं तो उन्हें सरकार और पाठक दोनों सहयोग करते हैं। आजकल के लेखक सोशल मीडिया में लिखते हैं, या अन्य ऑनलाइन माध्यमों में भी मुफ्त में उनका लेखन उपलब्ध है, इन लेखकों को कागज पर लिखना चाहिए सोशल मीडिया में नहीं।

रॉयल्टी के मुद्दे पर अपनी बात रखते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि लेखक को प्रकाशक से पूछने की जरूरत नहीं होती कि उनकी किताबों की कितनी प्रतियां बिक रही हैं। लेखक जानता है कि उसकी किताब बाजार में कितना चल रही है।

युवा लेखकों पर अपनी राय रखते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि जब तक आप लिखते हैं तब तक आप युवा रहते हैं। उन्होंने बताया कि वे जल्द ही युवा लेखक गीतेश अमरोहित के साथ मिलकर छत्तीसगढ़ पर इनसाइक्लोपीडिया लेकर आ रहे हैं।

अतिथि वक्ता महेश्वरी और अभिकल्प फाउंडेशन के संस्थापक सूत्रधार शुक्ला का स्वागत-अभिनंदन अहसास वूमेन डॉ गरिमा तिवारी ने किया।



Garima Tiwari with Aakash Maheshwari and Gaurav Girija Shukla



Aakash Maheshwari and Gaurav Girija Shukla





Shrishti Trivedi, Kirti Kirdatt, Aanchal Garcha, Deepali Bhasin and Garima Tiwari with Naveen Dewangan, Satish Jain, Minendra Chakrakar, Sanjeev Tiwari and Renuka Singh

## डिजिटल मीडिया से छत्तीसगढ़ी को मिली वैश्विक पहचान

आखर छत्तीसगढ़ का सातवां पैनल फिल्म निर्माता सतीश जैन, पत्रकार नवीन देवांगन, सोशल मीडिया इंफ्लुएंसर रेणुका सिंह, सोशल मीडिया इंफ्लुएंसर मिनेंद्र चंद्राकर के साथ सूत्रधार संजीव तिवारी की परिचर्चा के नाम रहा। संजीव तिवारी ने बताया कि यू-ट्यूब के आने से छत्तीसगढ़ी को वैश्विक पहचान मिली है।

फिल्म निर्माता सतीश जैन ने छत्तीसगढ़ी फिल्म उद्योग के विकास की चर्चा करते हुए कहा कि हिन्दी फिल्मों पूरे देश को केंद्रित करके बनाई जाती हैं लेकिन क्षेत्रीय फिल्म में क्षेत्र के लोगों के हिसाब से आपको विषय चुनना होता है, जिसमें क्षेत्र की बात हो। 'मोर छईहाँ भुइयाँ' उस समय के परिदृश्य से निर्मित फिल्म थी, जिसमें उनके पात्रों को उस जमाने के हिसाब से तय किया गया था। बाद में उसमें परिवर्तन होते रहे। जमाने के हिसाब से हमें फिल्म बनाना होता है। महिला दर्शकों को महत्वपूर्ण बताते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि हमारी फिल्मों के लिए महिला बेहद आवश्यक है क्योंकि वह अपने साथ परिवार के 4 लोग लेकर आती हैं।

नवीन देवांगन ने डिजिटल मीडिया में छत्तीसगढ़ी की चुनौतियों पर अपनी

बात रखते हुए कहा कि छत्तीसगढ़ी को हमें आत्मसात करना आवश्यक है। डिजिटल माध्यम में अधिक से अधिक कंटेंट शेयर करना चाहिए। हम छत्तीसगढ़ी बोलते हैं, सुनते हैं, पर लिखते और पढ़ते नहीं हैं, यह बड़ी चुनौती है।

डिजिटल क्रिएटर रेणुका सिंह ने मीर अली मीर की प्रसिद्ध रचना 'नंदा जाही का रे' का हल्बी रूपान्तरण सुनाया। रेणुका ने कहा कि साहित्य, भाषा और लेखक को प्रमोट करना क्रिएटर्स, विशेषकर डिजिटल क्रिएटर्स की जिम्मेदारी है।

डिजिटल क्रिएटर मिनेंद्र चंद्राकर ने अपने इन्स्टाग्राम पेज 'मोर भुइयाँ छत्तीसगढ़' के बारे में बताया कि नवंबर, 2017 में स्थापित, मोर भुइयाँ का उद्देश्य युवाओं को सोशल मीडिया का उपयोग करके हमारी संस्कृति और छत्तीसगढ़ी भाषा से जोड़ना है। यह पूरे छत्तीसगढ़ में संस्कृति, यात्रा, पर्यटन के उपर केंद्रित है, जो हमारे रीति-रिवाज, संस्कृति, त्यौहार, कहानी और इनसे जुड़ी जानकारी साझा करता है।

सभी वक्ता अतिथियों और संवादकर्ता का स्वागत और अभिन्नंदन अहसास वूमन गरिमा तिवारी, आंचल गरचा, कीर्ति कृदत्त, दीपाली भसीन और सृष्टि त्रिवेदी ने किया



Minendra Chakrakar



Naveen Dewangan



Renuka Singh



Sanjeev Tiwari



Satish Jain



## पंडवानी

आखर के दौरान छत्तीसगढ़ के प्रसिद्ध लोक कलाकार चेतन देवांगन के दल द्वारा पारंपरिक लोक-गायन शैली 'पंडवानी' की सुंदर प्रस्तुति दी गई।

पंडवानी छत्तीसगढ़ का वह प्रसिद्ध एकल नाट्य है, जिसके बारे में विदेशी लोगों को भी जानकारी है। प्रख्यात कलाकार तीजन बाई ने पंडवानी को आज के संदर्भ में न केवल देशव्यापी, बल्कि विश्वव्यापी ख्याति दिलाई।

पंडवानी छत्तीसगढ़ में मुख्य रूप से प्रदर्शित किया जाने वाला लोक गाथा नाट्य-गीत है। यह महाकाव्य महाभारत के प्रमुख पात्र पांडवों की कहानी दर्शाता है। इसे इतने जीवंत रूप में वर्णित किया जाता है, कि यह दर्शकों के मन में तत्कालीन दृश्यों का निर्माण करता है।





Mrityunjay Kumar Singh

## How Languages Are Connected



Prabal Kumar Basu

The relationship between the Hindi and Bengali languages has been fostered over decades. The first ever novel in any Indian language was *Durgeshnandini* by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and ever since then, Bengal's art and culture have served as an inspiration for writers in different Indian languages, including Hindi.



Soumitra Mitra

This interdependence between Hindi and Bengali was extensively discussed in a recent session of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation's** initiative **Aakhar**, held in association with Purba Paschim. Contemporary Bengali poet Prabal Kumar Basu and Hindi poet and IPS officer Mrityunjay Kumar Singh were the guests of the session. Soumitra Mitra, director of Purba Paschim and the Foundation's Advisor for Bengali Language, Theatre and Film Programmes, delivered the welcome speech. An enthralling session that explored the linkages between the two languages followed.

Basu, who is fluent in both Hindi and Bengali, spoke about how the Bengali poet Shakti Chattopadhyay inspired him to stay motivated in his journey as a poet. "There is no winner or runner's up," he said, while elaborating upon Chattopadhyay's influence on him. "A poet's life is similar to a marathon, and the poet has to complete the race."

The conversation also focused on *Yapanchitra*, a little magazine in Bengali started by Basu to promote poetry that doesn't seek to advocate or critique any political ideology. First published in 2004, it has slowly emerged as a platform for budding writers to publish their



Saiful Islam

work. *Signposts* was yet another innovative literary initiative by Basu. An anthology of Bengali poetry since Independence, it has been translated into English and edited by Basu and published by Lotus Feet Book Publication Ltd in 2019. Illustrations by five of the most prominent artists – Ganesh Pyne, Jogen Chowdhury, K.G.

Subramanyan, Ganesh Haloi and Somnath Hore – accompanied the translated poetry collection.

The conversation veered towards examining the influence of Bengali literature on Hindi literature. Singh added that the poet Suryakant Tripathi "Nirala" was born and brought up in Bengal. Infact, Raja Ram Mohan Roy's newspaper, *Bangadoot*, published in Bengali, English, French and Hindi, spoke against social evils and also helped to inspire a patriotic fervour.

The session wound down with both poets discussing the neo-realistic trend of poetry. Basu highlighted the importance of aesthetics in any kind of art form. Poetry also should not deviate from it, as vivid imagery adds meaning to poetry. Without this, a poem would be a mere slogan. Singh noted that although modern poetry is devoid of rhyme, it is essential to keep the underlying rhythm and philosophy of the poem intact. The scintillating discussion came to an end with a vote of thanks by Saiful Islam of Purba Paschim.

*This session of Aakhar Kolkata was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with Anandabazar Patrika and Purba Paschim*





Aalok Shrivastav

## वे नेत्र सूर्य देवता का चंद्रमा का भाल हैं, विलय भी वे प्रलय भी वे...

### आलोक श्रीवास्तव



Deepa Mishra

तुम सोच रहे हो बस, बादल की उड़ानों तक,  
मेरी तो निगाहें हैं सूरज के ठिकानों तक।

खुशबू सा जो बिखरा है, सब उसका करिश्मा है

मंदिर का तरन्नुम है, मस्जिद की अजानों तक....” प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन द्वारा आयोजित कलम कोलकाता में अहसास वूमन लखनऊ दीपा मिश्रा ने कवि, गीतकार और टीवी पत्रकार आलोक श्रीवास्तव के इन शेरों के साथ उनसे संवाद की शुरुआत की। आरंभ में आयोजकों की ओर से ताजा टीवी के निदेशक विशंभर नेवर ने अतिथियों का स्वागत किया और फाउंडेशन की गतिविधियों, कलम और अतिथि वक्ता श्रीवास्तव का परिचय दिया।

उन्होंने बताया कि कविता संग्रह ‘आमीन’ और कहानी संग्रह ‘आफरीन’ से लोकप्रिय श्रीवास्तव की रचनाओं के अनुवाद गुजराती, मराठी, पंजाबी सहित रूसी भाषाओं में हो चुके हैं। आपकी रचनाओं को जगजीत सिंह, पंकज उधास, उस्ताद राशिद खान, शुभा मुद्गल आदि बड़े गायकों और अमिताभ बच्चन जैसे महानायक की आवाज मिल चुकी है। शिव तांडव स्तोत्र के आप द्वारा किए सरल हिंदी भावानुवाद को आशुतोष राना ने अपना स्वर दिया है, जो काफी लोकप्रिय हुआ। श्रीवास्तव को न्यूयॉर्क और लंदन में मिले पुरस्कारों का जिक्र करते हुए उन्होंने आगे की बातचीत के लिए अहसास वूमन लखनऊ दीपा मिश्रा को आमंत्रित किया।

मिश्रा ने बातचीत की शुरुआत ही श्रीवास्तव द्वारा शिव तांडव स्तोत्र के भावानुवाद के प्रशंसा की और आशुतोष राना के स्तुति पाठ का उल्लेख के साथ इसकी अनुवाद प्रक्रिया के बारे में जानना चाहा। श्रीवास्तव ने उत्तर देने से पहले अपना यह शेर सुनाया—  
तुम्हारे पास आते हैं तो सांसें भीग जाती हैं  
मोहब्बत इतनी मिलती है कि आंखें भीग जाती हैं  
तिरे एहसास की खुशबू हमेशा ताजा रहती है  
तिरी रहमत की बारिश से मुरादे भीग जाती हैं...

श्रीवास्तव ने बताया कि शुरुआत कहा कि कोविड के दौरान जब सभी लोग घरों में कैद थे, उस समय मैंने एक ग़ज़ल लिखी थी। ग़ज़ल में कोई चुभने वाली बात नहीं कही जाती, बल्कि जो भी बात है वह इशारे में कही जाती है। तो मैंने देश के राजनीतिक परिदृश्य पर हिंदी में जो ग़ज़ल लिखी थी, वह थी—  
जो दिख रहा है सामने वो दृश्य मात्र है,  
लिखी रखी है पटकथा, मनुष्य पात्र है।  
घिरा हुआ है पार्थ-पुत्र चक्रव्यूह में,  
असत्य सात और सत्य एक मात्र है।  
कहीं कबीर, सूर की, कहीं नजीर की,  
परम्परा से धन्य ये ग़ज़ल का छात्र है।

मैंने जब इसे सोशल मीडिया पर शेयर किया तो मेरे बड़े भाई सद्दुश आशुतोष राना ने इसे पढ़ने की इजाजत मांगी। इसको पढ़ने के बाद एक दिन उन्होंने मुझे शिव तांडव स्तोत्र को हिंदी में भावानुवाद करने का अनुरोध किया। श्रीवास्तव ने उसके बाद इस रचना की अनुवाद प्रक्रिया का पूरा वाकिआ सुनाया। उन्होंने शिव तांडव स्तोत्र की कुछ पंक्तियां भी सुनाई—  
जटाओं से है जिनके जल प्रवाह मात गंग का,  
गले में जिन के सज रहा है हार विष भुजंग का।  
डमड्ड मड्ड मड्ड डमरु कह रहा शिवः शिवम्,

तरल, अनल, गगन, पवन, धरा धरा  
शिवः शिवम्॥

श्रीवास्तव ने अपनी इस रचना में वह अंश भी सुनाया, जो शिव तांडव का अंश नहीं है। लेकिन भगवान शिव क्या हैं, इसे लेकर जो लिखा, उसे भी सुनाया—  
वे शेष हैं, अशेष हैं, प्रशेष हैं, विशेष हैं,  
जो उनको जैसा धार ले वे उसके जैसा भेष हैं।  
वे नेत्र सूर्य देवता का चंद्रमा का भाल हैं,  
विलय भी वे प्रलय भी वे, अकाल, महाकाल हैं॥  
उसी के नाथ हो लिए, जो उनके साथ हो लिया,  
वहीं के हो गये हैं वे जहां सुना शिवः शिवम्  
तरल, अनल, गगन, पवन, धरा धरा शिवः शिवम् ॥

मिश्रा ने कहा कि हिंदी ग़ज़ल की परंपरा को दुष्यंत कुमार ने पुख्ता जमीन दी, उसी हिंदी ग़ज़ल को आपने इनसानी रिश्तों को जोड़कर नया आयाम दे दिया। आप उन रिश्तों के बारे में बताएं। श्रीवास्तव ने उत्तर में अपने बचपन, विदिशा, भोपाल, उर्दू के माहौल, अपने माता-पिता, भाई आनंद श्रीवास्तव और पारिवारिक पृष्ठभूमि के बारे में बताया कि किस तरह से बचपन में ही फरीदा खानम, जगजीत सिंह, मेहंदी हसन की लौ लग गई। उन्होंने एक बड़ा मुशायरा सुनने के बाद पिताजी से हुई पिटाई का जिक्र किया और कहा कि मैंने जब अपनी मां से कहा कि चाहे जो हो मैं बड़ा होकर बनूंगा लेखक ही और एक दिन ऐसा होगा कि मेरी ग़ज़लें जगजीत सिंह गाएंगे, तो मां ने कहा आमीन। बाद में वही मेरी इस किताब का नाम बना।

श्रीवास्तव ने कहा कि उन्हें इल्म की तरफ उनके मित्रों ने आगे बढ़ाया। फिर विदिशा की तहजीबी अबोहवा, बाबा नागार्जुन, श्रीराम सिंह शलभ, कैफ भोपाली के अलावा बचपन में सुने गए ‘तुम बदलोगे, जग बदलेगा’ ने असर डाला और मैं रिश्तों के बारे में लिखने लगा। मिश्रा के अनुरोध पर उन्होंने ‘अम्मा’ और ‘बाबूजी’ कविता भी सुनाई। हिंदी ग़ज़ल लिखने से जुड़े सवाल पर उन्होंने कहा कि मैं लिख अच्छा सकता हूं। गीत के वातावरण में पला-बढ़ा। उन्होंने गद्य लेखन से जुड़े सवाल का भी उत्तर दिया और कहा कि कहानी एक गहरा चिंतन मांगती है। मेरी कहानियां भी 1995 से 2000 के बीच लिखी। श्रीवास्तव ने पुरस्कार, सिनेमा जगत, फिल्म गीत लेखन, बड़े लोगों से जुड़े अपने अनुभव के भी बारे में बताया और अनुरोध पर कई ग़ज़लें, शेर और कविताएं सुनाई। उन्होंने सवाल-जवाब सत्र में श्रोताओं के सवालों के भी उत्तर दिए। अंत में विक्रम नेवर ने आभार प्रकट किया और एषा दत्ता ने अभिनंदन किया।

अहसास वूमन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम कोलकाता के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। मीडिया पार्टनर ताजा टीवी का सहयोग मिला।



Bishambhar Newar



Vikram Newar



Esha Dutta felicitates Aalok Shrivastav



Sushil Doshi

## उपलब्धियां आदमी को विनम्र बनाती हैं: क्रिकेट कमेंट्री की 'ईमानदार आवाज' सुशील दोशी



Surbhi Dhupar

अगर मेरी जिंदगी से क्रिकेट कमेंट्री को निकाल दिया जाए तो बचता क्या है?" यह कहना है जानेमाने हिंदी क्रिकेट कमेंटरी सुशील दोशी का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित कलम जोधपुर में बतौर अतिथि वक्ता बोल रहे थे। आरंभ में ताज हरिमहल की ओर से उनका स्वागत सचिन ने किया। अहसास वूमन प्रीति मेहता ने अपनी सहयोगी सुषमा नीरज सेठिया और शैलजा सिंह की ओर से स्वागत वक्तव्य के साथ देश और दुनिया भर में कला, संस्कृति, साहित्य और महिला सशक्तीकरण से जुड़ी फाउंडेशन की गतिविधियों की जानकारी दी। हिंदी क्रिकेट कमेंट्री के जनक दोशी का विस्तार से परिचय देते हुए उन्होंने बताया कि दोशी ने पांच से भी अधिक दशक से क्रिकेट की नई शब्दावली गढ़ जन-जन में अपनी पहचान बनाई है। आपने 500 से अधिक एक दिवसीय, टी-20 तथा 87 से अधिक टेस्ट मैचों की कमेंट्री की है। कई पुरस्कारों से सम्मानित दोशी लेखक भी हैं। आपसे संवाद प्रमुख खेल प्रेमी परिवार से जुड़ी अहसास वूमन इंद्रोर सुरभी धूप करेगी।



Sachin Kulkarni

विरासतों से तय नहीं होते किस्मतों के फैसले

ये तो उड़ान तय करेगी कि आसमान किसका है... पढ़ धूपर ने दोशी से पूछा, हिंदी कमेंट्री की शुरुआत कैसे हुई? जॉर्ज बर्नार्ड शॉ की इस उक्ति, 'क्रिकेट ऐसा खेल है जिसे 11 मूर्ख खेलते हैं, 50 हजार मूर्ख देखते हैं, 2 मूर्ख कमेंट्री करते हैं और करोड़ों मूर्ख सुनते हैं,' के साथ दोशी ने आयोजकों का आभार व्यक्त किया और राजस्थान से अपने रिश्ते के बारे में बताया। उन्होंने बचपन से क्रिकेट को लेकर अपनी दीवानगी की चर्चा की कि कैसे मैं अखबार से खिलाड़ियों की फोटो बटोरा करता था। यह 1959-60 की बात होगी जब आस्ट्रेलिया के रिची बेनो टीम भारत के दौरे पर आई थी। मैं वह मैच देखने के लिए अड़ गया। मध्यमवर्गीय परिवार में हम चार भाई थे। पिता के पास पैसे नहीं थे, न ही उन्हें क्रिकेट से प्रेम था। फिर भी उन्हें बेटे से प्रेम था। दोशी ने मुंबई स्टेडियम का दौरा, वहां की मुश्किलें और तेरह साल की उम्र में कमेंट्री बाक्स से जुड़ी हसरत कि क्या कभी यहां से मुझे भी कमेंट्री करने का मौका मिल सकता है, के बारे में बताया और कहा कि कभी-कभी जंगली सपने भी सच होते हैं। मैंने उसी ब्रेबोर्न स्टेडियम से 1973 में अपनी जिंदगी की पहली बड़ी कमेंट्री की।

धूपर ने पूछा कि भारत के पहले कमेंटरी, जिन्होंने दस विश्व कप मैचों की हिंदी कमेंट्री की, जिनके नाम पर अंतरराष्ट्रीय क्रिकेट स्टेडियम का कमेंट्री बाँक्स है, जो पञ्चश्री से सम्मानित हैं, आखिर

इतनी सारी महसूस करते ये सब चीजें बनाती हैं। कई उपलब्धियों पर आप कैसे हैं? दोशी ने कहा कि आदमी को विनम्र बनाती हैं। कई बार मैं सोचता हूँ



Lokendra Singh felicitates Sushil Doshi

मैं इस लायक हूँ भी कि नहीं। आप उन लोगों को याद करते हैं, जो इसका आधार बने थे। आप माता-पिता को याद करते हैं, दोस्तों को याद करते हैं, जिन्होंने आपकी मदद की। अतीत में उतरते हुए दोशी ने हिंदी में क्रिकेट कमेंट्री की मुश्किलों के बारे में विस्तार से बताया। उन्होंने कहा कि लोगों के दिलों में घर करने की जो हमारी योजना थी, उसे लोगों ने स्वीकार किया। दोशी ने बताया कि यह कमेंट्री का जादू था कि लोग रेडियो पर कान लगाकर सुनते थे। उस समय तारीफ और शिकायतों की हजारों चिट्ठियां आकाशवाणी में पहुंच जाती थी।

दोशी ने अपने जीवन पर मां और पिता के प्रभाव के बारे में भी बताया। उन्होंने कहा मां संस्कार देती है, पिता जमाने से लड़ने की प्रेरणा देते हैं। उन्होंने बताया कि मैं 18 साल का था, जब हिंदी कमेंट्री शुरू होनी थी। उन्होंने उस दौर का अनुभव भी साझा किया और अपनी शब्दावली, भाषा और शब्दों के बारे में बताया। दोशी ने कमेंट्री में अपने दो दोस्तों 'केवल' और 'संतोष' के नाम का इस्तेमाल, क्रिकेटर कीथ मिलर से मिली तारीफ, और खुद को मिले 'ईमानदार आवाज' जैसी प्रशंसा के बारे में भी बताया। एक सवाल के उत्तर में कहा कि आत्मकथा तभी लिखनी चाहिए जब उसमें सच बोलने का साहस हो। मैंने 53 साल की कमेंट्री में जो देखा, समझा उसे किताब '*आंखों देखा हाल*' में उतार दिया। एक तरह से यह 50 साल में भारतीय क्रिकेट के मेरे योगदान के साथ क्रिकेट के बढ़ने की कथा है। '*आंखों देखा हाल*' में वह भी लिखा जो मेरे पक्ष में नहीं था। मेरा शुरु से यही उद्देश्य रहा है कि दिल से बोलो, दिलों को छुओ, तो मैंने यही कोशिश की। यह किताब कई किस्सों से भरी है, मैदान के भी और उसके बाहर के भी। उन्होंने कहा, 1982 में टीवी आया तो क्रिकेट खिलाड़ी हिंदी कमेंट्री करने लगे लेकिन भाषा की कम समझ के चलते कई बार हास्यास्पद बातें भी माइक पर बोल दी गईं।

उन्होंने कहा, संजय इस पृथ्वी के पहले कमेंटरी थे जिन्होंने धृतराष्ट्र को कुरुक्षेत्र का आंखों देखा हाल सुनाया था। कमेंट्री कहने की कला सीखनी है तो तकनीकी रूप से शब्दों पर पकड़ बनानी जरूरी है। मैं बहुत पढ़ता था। जयशंकर प्रसाद, सुमित्रानंदन पंत, धर्मवीर भारती सहित छायावाद के कवियों को खूब पढ़ा तो शब्द और वाक्यों का गठन बेहतर हुआ। इसी से '*आंखों देखा हाल*' गांव-ढाणी के फैंस के दिलों तक छू गया। दोशी ने सवाल-जवाब सत्र में श्रोताओं के सवालों के उत्तर भी दिए। आखिर में दोशी का अभिनंदन जोधपुर के वरिष्ठ रणजी खिलाड़ी लोकेंद्र सिंह शक्तावत ने किया। अहसास वूमन शैलजा सिंह धन्यवाद ज्ञापित किया।

अहसास वूमन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम जोधपुर के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर ताज हरि महल जोधपुर का सहयोग मिला।



Sushma Sethia and Preeti Mehta



Shelja Singh



# Sharing The Wonderful Positivity Of Yoga



On the occasion of World Yoga Day, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, under its **Muskaan** initiative, brought together children with special needs and those from underprivileged backgrounds from various NGOs, with the objective to introduce them to the advantages of yoga. The event involved teaching them discipline, promoting well-being, and fostering unity and joy.

Amit Shaw, a dancer and yoga instructor, guided the children through the fundamentals of yoga. He skillfully adapted the session to meet the diverse needs and abilities of the participants. With patience and understanding, he led them through gentle *asanas* and breathing exercises, teaching them the importance of discipline, self-control and focus. These practices helped the children become more aware of their bodies and minds, experiencing the calming effects of yoga firsthand.

After the yoga session, Dorothy Shaw, a dancer,

led the children in a fun and energetic dance session. The rhythmic beats and joyful movements created an atmosphere of celebration, allowing the children to freely express themselves and experience the sheer delight of movement. The celebration of World Yoga Day had a profound impact on everyone involved. The children experienced the transformative benefits of yoga, learnt valuable life skills and developed a deeper connection with their bodies and minds. The event also emphasized the power of unity, compassion and inclusivity in creating a supportive and nurturing environment for all. Additionally, the children were provided with nourishing food packets, ensuring their overall well-being and adding to the day's festivities.

*A joint initiative with **Education for All**, this session of **Muskaan** was presented by Shree Cement Limited*

Amit and Dorothy Shaw with the children



Amit Shaw demonstrates yoga postures



The enthusiastic young participants





Muzaffar Ali



## Into the Mind of a Multifaceted Filmmaker



Shinjini Kulkarni

**U**mrao Jaan, a remarkable feat of Bollywood, was brought to life by Muzaffar Ali, a multifaceted artist whose expertise spans filmmaking, poetry, fashion designing, Sufism, art, cultural revival and social work. To celebrate his talents, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** organised a session of **The Write Circle** with Ali at the Holiday Inn New Delhi Mayur Vihar Noida. The event aimed to create an informal and engaging setting where authors and readers could come together. Dipali Bhasin, **Ehsaas** Woman of Delhi, greeted the attendees with a warm welcome.

Ali's latest book, *Zikr: In the Light and Shade of Time*, artistically explores the practical aspects of life. The book delves into themes of pathos, melancholy, longing and separation that reverberate through his films. When the moderator, Shinjini Kulkarni, **Ehsaas** Woman of Noida, asked about a recurring phrase in the book, "Looking for the lost Qaisar Bagh in me", Ali said, "An artist is always looking for something, and for me, it was always this city of Lucknow." His early years spent in Lucknow subtly influenced all his works.

Reflecting on his connection to the village, Ali emphasized that true appreciation and acceptance of other cultures can only come when one is rooted in their own culture. He credited his aristocratic lineage and upbringing in Lucknow for shaping his character. "Jab tak aap mein tehzeeb nahi hogi, tab tak aap doosre tehzeebon ko pehchaan and pasand nahi kar sakte hai," he said.

Sufism and its teachings have deeply influenced Ali as well, which is evident in his creative output. He expressed his Left-leaning thoughts openly, emphasising the importance of humanistic values in Sufism. Ali's father, Raja Syed Sajid Husain Ali, played a significant role in his upbringing, fighting against the Muslim League's divisive ideology during the Indian independence movement. Ali inherited the title of 'Raja' from his father, but he

believes that true royalty lies in serving humanity.

As an artist, Ali cherishes his roots and beginnings while embracing a boundless mindset. He shared his belief that "an *avant-garde* artist can dream and combine the delicate intricacies of life like Kathak, *shayris* and *jhumri* with a warp and weft of a fabric which is vulnerable yet beautiful." Ali's personality encompasses both an appreciation for aristocratic aesthetics like horses, vintage cars and leather seats, as well as a deep connection to Sufism. His journey as an artist took shape in Kolkata, where he initially felt dwarfed by the talents of Subhash Mukhopadhyay and Satyajit Ray. However, he found his artistic identity through painting and later became involved with promoting Indian artists internationally while working with Air India.

Although Ali briefly ventured into politics, running for elections in 2018, he acknowledged that politics did not offer the genuine connections he sought. He aimed to protect the composite culture of Hindu and Muslim communities, but cautioned against the challenges and compromises inherent in politics.

The discussion concluded with a Q&A session with the audience, followed by a formal vote of thanks from Bhasin on behalf of the foundation. In conclusion, Ali was felicitated by Santosh Verma.

*The Write Circle Noida, supported by Ehsaas Women of NCR, was presented by Shree Cement Ltd*



Dipali Bhasin



Muzaffar Ali is felicitated by Santosh Verma





Rahul Rawail

Suchitra Sajid Dhanani

## राज कपूर जैसा कोई दूसरा निर्देशक नहीं हो सकता: राहुल रवैल

तनाव को खत्म करने का मेरा एक आसान फार्मूला है कि मेरे मन में जो आता है, उसे बोल देता हूँ। तनाव बहुत बड़ी चीज है, लेकिन आपको उससे डील करना पड़ेगा।" यह कहना है कलम इंदौर के अतिथि वक्ता राहुल रवैल का। वे प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित कलम इंदौर में बोल रहे थे। आरंभ में अहसास वूमेन सुरभि धूपर ने फाउंडेशन का विस्तार से परिचय दिया। उन्होंने कला, साहित्य, संस्कृति और महिला सशक्तीकरण की दिशा में फाउंडेशन के कार्यक्रमों और गतिविधियों का जिक्र किया, जो भारत और दुनियाभर के चालीस से भी अधिक शहरों में लगातार चल रही हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि 'कलम' अपनी भाषा अपने लोग के विचार को बढ़ावा देने वाला कार्यक्रम है, जिसमें हम लेखकों, कलाकारों को उनके प्रशंसकों से सीधे जोड़ते हैं।

अतिथि वक्ता रवैल का परिचय देते हुए धूपर ने कहा कि आपने प्रख्यात निर्माता, निर्देशक राज कपूर के सहयोगी के रूप में अपने करियर की शुरुआत की और 'लव स्टोरी', 'बेताब', 'अर्जुन', 'डकैत', 'अंजाम' और 'अर्जुन पंडित' जैसी कई सफल फिल्मों के लिए जाने जाते हैं। आपने कुमार गौरव और विजयेता पंडित को 'लव स्टोरी' में, सनी देओल और अमृता सिंह को 'बेताब' में, परेश रावल को 'अर्जुन पंडित' में, काजोल को 'बेखुदी' में तथा ऐश्वर्या राय को 'और प्यार हो गया' में बड़े परदे पर इंट्रोड्यूस किया। आपने सत्रह फिल्मों और दो टेलीविजन सीरीज का निर्देशन भी किया है। आपने अपनी पुस्तक 'राज कपूर: द मास्टर एट वर्क' में अपने अमर गुरु, महान फिल्मकार की स्मृतियों को दर्ज किया है। उन्होंने रवैल से आगे के संवाद के लिए सुचित्रा साजिद धनानी को आमंत्रित किया।

धनानी ने मुंबई की अपनी पुरानी यात्राओं के साथ शूटिंग देखने के अपने अनुभवों का जिक्र किया और रवैल से जानना चाहा कि उन्होंने राजकपूर के साथ कैसे और कब काम की शुरुआत की? रवैल ने बताया कि ऋषि कपूर 'चिट्टू' मेरा बचपन का दोस्त था। हम नर्सरी स्कूल से साथ थे। तब मैं पंद्रह साल का रहा होऊंगा जब एक दिन मुझे चिट्टू का फोन आया कि तेरे इजाम खत्म हो गए हैं। पापा आजाद मैदान में 'मेरा नाम जोकर' के सर्कस की शूटिंग कर रहे हैं। वहां चलते हैं। वहां रशियन लड़कियां आई हुई हैं, छोटे-छोटे कपड़े पहने हुए हैं, तो उन्हें देखने में मजा आएगा। जब मैं सेट पर गया, तो वहां राज साहब को काम करते हुए देखा। वहां मैं देखा कि एक आदमी कैसे पांच हजार आदमियों को, भीड़ को, कलाकारों को एक साथ निर्देशित कर रहा है। लड़कियों को तो मैं भूल ही गया। मैं रोज वहां जाने लगा। मैं कनाडा जाने वाला था न्यूक्लियर फिजिक्स पढ़ने। पर छः महीने की छुट्टियां थीं। तो मैंने मां से कहा कि मैं राज साहब के साथ कुछ दिन काम कर लूं, और तब से आज तक मैं यही कर रहा।

रवैल ने कहा कि राजजी जैसा कोई दूसरा डायरेक्टर नहीं हो सकता, उन्हें हर चीज का ज्ञान था। उनके काम करने का तरीका बहुत अलग था। वे हर छोटी से छोटी चीज का ध्यान रखते थे। फिल्म के एक-एक सीन को बेहद बारीकी से शूट करते थे। मुझे उन्होंने एक मंत्र सिखाया था, जो मैं आज भी फॉलो करता हूँ। वह यह कि आपके दिल में जो भी सवाल आए, उसका जवाब जरूर पूछ लेना, क्योंकि अगर पूछोगे नहीं तो बाद में सोचोगे कि इसका उत्तर पूछ लेना चाहिए था। खाने को लेकर राज कपूर की दीवानगी

का जिक्र करते हुए रवैल ने कहा कि राज साहब खाने के बहुत शौकीन थे और खाने के मामले में वे प्रयोग भी बहुत करते थे। एक बार वे मक्खन लगे पाव के बीच जलेबी रखकर उसे टोमैटो सास में डुबोकर खा रहे थे। मैं चौंका तो बोले, ये नहीं करना है ऐसा कहीं लिखा है क्या? वे हर रात चेंबूर स्टेशन जाकर इडली, बड़ा पाव, भजिए आदि खाते थे। किसी को रात में उनसे मिलना होता था, तो वह चेंबूर स्टेशन पहुंच जाता था।

रवैल ने राजकपूर के साथ काम के अपने अनुभवों के साथ 'मेरा नाम जोकर' और 'बॉबी' फिल्म के अपने अनुभवों की विस्तार से चर्चा की। रवैल ने म्यूजिक स्टूडियो से जुड़ी एक मजेदार घटना भी सुनाई, जो 'मेरा नाम जोकर' के गीत रिकॉर्डिंग के

दौरान राजकपूर, शंकर, जयकिशन, हसरत, शैलेंद्र और मुकेश की उपस्थिति में बनाई गई ट्युन के डमी वर्ड्स से जुड़ी थी। उन्होंने कहा कि मैंने आज तक उस तरह की गालियां नहीं सुनी है, जो इतने बड़े दिग्गज बोल रहे थे। मैंने यह सीखा कि उन्हें



Surbhi Dhupar and Unnati Singh

इससे फर्क नहीं पड़ता था। रवैल ने संगीत से राज साहब के लगाव का जिक्र किया और बताया कि कैसे राज साहब और उनकी पियानो बजाने वाली बेटी रीतू ने 'झूठ बोले कौआ काटे...' और 'सुन साहिबा सुन...' की धुन बनाई थी। रवैल ने इस मजेदार सवाल कि राज कपूर और यश चोपड़ा दोनों ही लव स्टोरी पर फिल्में बनाते थे, पर उनके बीच क्या अंतर था? का भी रोचक उत्तर दिया कि राज कपूर की फिल्मों में सोशल कंटेंट होता था, जबकि यश चोपड़ा शुद्ध रोमांटिक फिल्म बनाते थे। रवैल ने राज साहब के जीवन के कई रोचक और भावुक किस्से भी सुनाए। सवाल-जवाब सत्र में श्रोताओं के प्रश्नों के भी उत्तर दिए। आभार अहसास वूमेन उन्नति सिंह ने दिया।

अहसास वूमेन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम इंदौर के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर होटल शेराटन ग्रैंड पैलेस इंदौर और मीडिया पार्टनर नई दुनिया का सहयोग मिला।



The audience

# Hearing Stories Come Alive



Isha Gupta Vaish

Satyarth Nayak

Gracing the occasion of **An Author's Afternoon**, a venerable initiative of **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, author Satyarth Nayak spoke extensively on the route he embarked upon towards writing. The engaging conversation, moderated by Isha Gupta Vaish, **Ehsaas** Woman of Mussoorie, allowed the audience to understand how and why Nayak has come to be a literary force to be reckoned with.

Nayak revealed how his childhood shaped his literary career, recalling how his grandfather's love for reading and various literary forms seeped into him, and was combined with his mother's encouragement of his reading habit. Nayak went on to pursue a Master's degree in English literature and work with CNN-IBN. All of his written work is research-based, and Nayak attributes this

discipline to journalism, which has stood him in good stead over the years.

I know if I write again and again in the same genre, I'll keep repeating myself creatively. It's not about the market ultimately, because every book has its own destiny and you cannot predict such things. As a writer, the only thing one can do is write with full honesty and integrity

During a sabbatical, Nayak's rereading of Dan Brown's *Angels and Demons* sparked in him a consuming curiosity to research a historical equivalent in India. He was so consumed with the process because he found Ashoka, the Kalinga war, legends, and the stories to be really fascinating. This was the beginning of the process that would result in him writing *The Emperor's Riddles*.

Although Nayak confessed that he had always been partial to thrillers since his childhood, his *oeuvre* encompasses a wide range of genres,

diverging into biography, mythology, and screenwriting, despite being advised by his publishers to invest in a singular genre and create a dedicated readership for it. Nayak is however governed by the belief that a writer should be at liberty to write whatever he chooses to, and not be bound by parameters; with the ultimate aim of being the best vehicle of the story for his readers. "I know if I write again and again in the same genre, I'll keep repeating myself creatively," he said. "It's not about the market ultimately, because every book has its own destiny and you cannot predict such things. As a writer, the only thing one can do is write with full honesty and integrity."

His much acclaimed *Sridevi: The Eternal Screen Goddess* was a culmination of a series of thoughts that ended up in him realising that there



Anindita Chatterjee



K. Mohanchandran



had been no book dedicated to the iconic actress. The publication of the book, however, took a laborious route. In a conversation, Sridevi had asked Nayak to wait till Jahnvi Kapoor's debut film, *Dhadak*, was released. But tragedy struck, with Sridevi's untimely demise, and Nayak was left spiralling in shock. It wasn't until a friend reminded him that it was only the inclusion of the last chapter of the book that he might struggle with, that Nayak got back to writing it. "A friend told me that I owed the book to her because I had spoken to her about it and had told her how much I loved her," he recalled.

The conversation then segued into *Mahagatha*, Nayak's latest book and a national bestseller. Comprising a hundred tales from the *Vedas* and *Puranas*, the book spans across a wide time period, taking readers from *satyug* to *kalyug*. For the younger generation, *Mahagatha* makes the world of Hindu mythology accessible. Nayak elaborated that he had got positive feedback from the older generation as well, saying that the stories they were told as kids are now being read back to their parents from his books. "This means it [the book] is cutting across generations!" he said.

Discussions of contemporary feminist struggles found their way into the conversation as well. Nayak revealed that the *Puranas* and *Vedas* place women in superior positions, explaining by example how it is often the male heroes who realise their shortcomings and apologise, thereby making these texts frontrunners for reading material on feminism. Furthermore, Nayak illuminated how the concept of LGBTQIA++ dates way back to the fifth century, locating stories of transgender individuals, thereby providing historical sources of support for the modern world's fight for equal rights.

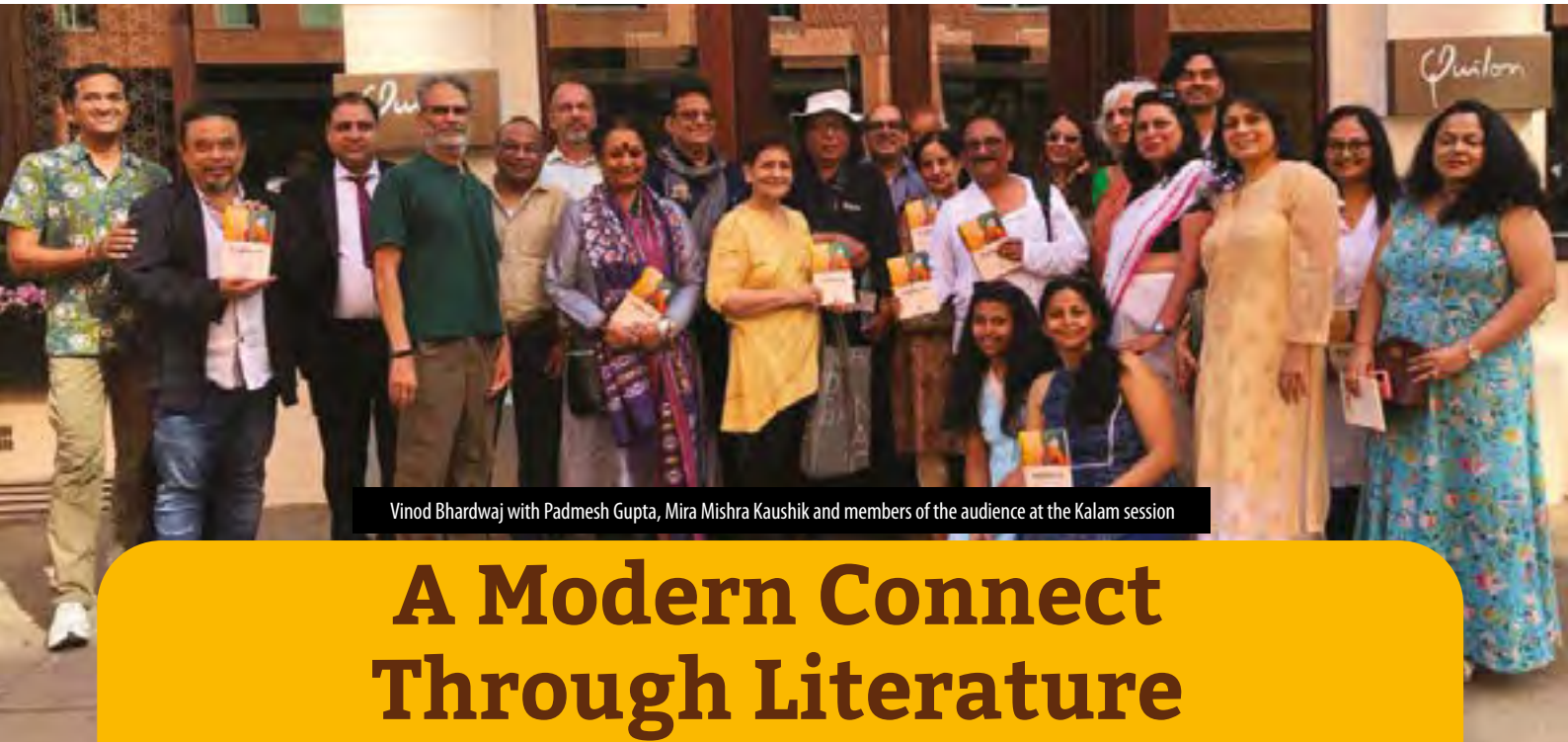
The *Puranas* and *Vedas* place women in superior positions... Furthermore, the concept of LGBTQIA++ dates way back to the fifth century, locating stories of transgender individuals, thereby providing historical sources of support for the modern world's fight for equal rights

The engaging exchange of ideas concluded with a Q&A session with the audience. Nayak addressed a multitude of thoughts about his take on the multiverse, different writing styles, and how some stories eventually zone out to the cinematic world. The session drew to a close with Vineeta Moore felicitating the esteemed author.

*An Author's Afternoon*, presented by Shree Cement Ltd, was organised in association with Taj Bengal Kolkata and The Telegraph Online—My Kolkata



The audience at the event



Vinod Bhardwaj with Padmesh Gupta, Mira Mishra Kaushik and members of the audience at the Kalam session

## A Modern Connect Through Literature

A journalist and film critic, Vinod Bhardwaj, is a prolific writer known for his diverse literary contributions. He has published two collections of poetry, namely *Jalta Makan* and *Hoshiarpur*, along with a collection of short stories titled *Chiteri*. In addition to these, Bhardwaj has authored over ten books focusing on art and cinema. One of his notable achievements includes the compilation and publication of a highly-regarded encyclopedia of modern art in Hindi. Bhardwaj's extensive body of work showcases his expertise and passion for various forms of artistic expression.

To speak of these achievements, Bhardwaj was invited to a session of **Kalam** hosted by **Prabha Khaitan Foundation**, at the Quilon Restaurant, St James' Court, A Taj Hotel, in London. In conversation with Mira Mishra Kaushik, OBE, Bhardwaj talked about his

journey involving literature, journalism, art and cinema. He gave credit to the British Council's small branch in Lucknow, where he spent his youth studying international arts and cinema. His popular book, *Facebukiya Love*, a trilogy of short stories, brought out by Vani Publishers,

was introduced and discussed. "The printing culture of literary magazines has been going down from the last few years; however, social media platforms such as Facebook have taken over much more readership than printed versions," said the author.

Introducing the event, Padmesh Gupta, director of Oxford Business College, expressed his gratitude to the British Council and the Foundation

for allowing international audiences in London to meet the author. "It is my absolute pleasure to introduce Vinod Bhardwaj, a renowned journalist, filmmaker, poet, and art curator," said Gupta. "With over four decades of experience in the field of journalism, he

“The printing culture of literary magazines has been going down from the last few years; however, social media platforms such as Facebook have taken over much more readership than printed versions – Vinod Bhardwaj”



Mira Mishra Kaushik and Vinod Bhardwaj



has contributed significantly to Hindi publications across the world. He is probably the only Hindi writer who comes from the generation of writers of the 1960s and connects to today's youth of the 21st century by writing on topics such as Facebook, TikTok, and smartphones."

VatayanUK and UK Hindi Samiti organised the 'Meet the Author' event in partnership with the British Council. A good number of book lovers, artists, writers and poets from London attended this Kalam event. Here are what some of them had to say.



Vinod Bhardwaj with Padmesh Gupta



The author signs a copy of his book for a guest

"It was my singular pleasure to meet the eminent writer, editor, journalist, filmmaker and art critic, Vinod Bhardwaj thanks to the Foundation's **Kalam** series. It was a full house! It was a revelation to listen to Bhardwaj being interviewed by none less than VatayanUK's chairperson, art creator and strategic consultant, Mira Mishra Kaushik, who knew him at close quarters. She delved into his literary and personal history, his Lucknow connections, his famous contemporaries, eminent editors, including some of our favourites like Raghuvir Sahai, Kunwar Narain, Vishnu Khare, Kanhaiya Lal Nandan and so on. It was a very interesting evening. Time flew by and we could only listen to one of Bhardwaj's poems about our close friend, Rakesh Mathur, the well-known, London-based journalist who died a few months ago. It was a pleasant end to the evening to get an autographed copy *Facebukiya Love*, which has some very enjoyable, mature stories about modern women."

- Divya Mathur

"आयोजन ताज होटल में 'कलम लंदन' का था। जहां विनोद भारद्वाज जी से मीरा कौशिक जी ने संवाद किया। डेढ़ घंटे के इस कार्यक्रम में विनोद जी के कृतित्व के साथ ही व्यक्तित्व पर भी बात हुई। उन्होंने अपने दिनमान और धर्मयुग के समय के दिलचस्प किस्से भी सुनाए और अपनी नई पुस्तक 'फेसबुकिया लव' भी साइन कर के दी। इस तरह लंदन का एक बेहद गर्म दिन, बेहद खुशनुमा बीता। आने वाले दिनों में कई और आयोजन होने वाले हैं। बहुत आनंद आने वाला है।"

- Shikha Varshney

Vinod Bhardwaj is probably the only Hindi writer who comes from the generation of writers of the 1960s and connects to today's youth of the 21st century by writing on topics such as Facebook, TikTok, and smartphones

- Padmesh Gupta

*This session of Kalam London is presented in association with Quilon, in partnership with VatayanUK, UK Hindi Samiti, Vani Foundation and the British Council*



Sujata Sabnis

## A Rather Extraordinary Journey



Abhigyan Prakash

Abhigyan Prakash has been a household name over the past three decades. A journalist *par excellence*, he has been at the forefront of breaking several investigative news pieces, and was responsible for the launch of NDTV as one of the most prominent media houses in the country. Known for breaking the Telgi fake stamp racket, Prakash has since been a trailblazer and an inspiration for several in his field. **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** invited the journalist to a recent session of **The Write Circle** for an engaging discussion which allowed the audience a glimpse into Prakash's life and works. Sujata Sabnis, **Ehsaas** Woman of Pune, was the moderator of the session, and Neelam Seolekar, **Ehsaas** Woman of Pune, delivered the welcome note on behalf of the Foundation.



Neelam Seolekar

Speaking of his experience of breaking the Telgi scam, Prakash said, "It was a huge, strong story". Afraid that he would somehow be prevented from carrying the story, he used to sleep using the report as his pillow to "protect it at all costs". In the process of investigation, he had to build bridges with police officers and to ingratiate himself with Mumbai's seamy underworld. His efforts paid off, and the story went on to win him several accolades. It decided his career as a TV journalist, given that he had begun his career with newspapers like the *Times of India* and *The Pioneer*.

The shift from the print to the visual medium was easy for him as a young professional. "At that time, I was just a young guy full of passion, and kept doing things because I was good at it and at the peak of power," said Prakash. His shows such as *Jai Jawan*, *India Rocks*, *Newspoint* and *Maha Mukabala*, among others, were popular and received various awards.



Sunita Kalyani felicitates the author

But a hiatus from journalism also made him contemplate his choices, given their impact on his mental health. "Now, after having taken a four-year break, I understand how things could have been done differently," said Prakash.

Reminiscing about his early days in Mumbai as a young professional who had been born and brought up in Uttar Pradesh, he noted how the difference in the accent of the Hindi language stood out for him. "In Lucknow, the Hindi spoken is influenced by Urdu; when I came to

Mumbai, Hindi was inclined more towards Punjabi, and I was astonished by the way people used to speak. Both men and women cursed a lot!" he laughed.

In his latest book, *From Lucknow to Lutyens: The Power and Plight of Uttar Pradesh*, the author explores why Uttar Pradesh, with its large population and powerful political hold on the country, lags behind on various development parameters. "One of the arguments presented in the book is that if each and every politician would have developed their own area, UP would have been far more developed," said Prakash. According to him, both social and governmental systems in UP need highlighting. "That is exactly why I've written the book."

The discussion came to a close with a Q&A session with the audience. Amita Munot, **Ehsaas** Woman of Pune, delivered the vote of thanks, and Sunita Kalyani felicitated the author.

*The Write Circle Pune was presented by Shree Cement Ltd in association with O Hotel and Lokmat, and with the support of Ehsaas Women of Pune*



The audience





Ajay Brahmaj

## सच्ची खबरों से ज्यादा रोचक कोई दूसरी बात नहीं होती: अजय ब्रह्मात्मज



Aanchal Garcha

हा उस हर्बैंड जैसी कोई बात उस दौर में नहीं थी, पर बांबे जैसे शहर में अगर आपका कोई सपोर्ट सिस्टम न हो, तब यह बहुत जरूरी हो जाता है कि बच्चों की देखभाल के लिए कोई एक घर पर ही रहे। मेरी पत्नी की नौकरी अच्छी थी, तो मैंने फ्रीलांसिंग का तरीका चुना। मैं घर पर रहता था। मेरी बेटी जब आठ साल की हो गई तब मैंने नौकरी की।" फिल्म समीक्षक, पत्रकार अजय ब्रह्मात्मज ने प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित कलम नागपुर में बतौर अतिथि वक्ता यह बात कही। आयोजकों की ओर से अहसास वूमन प्रियंका कोठारी ने स्वागत और धन्यवाद वक्तव्य दिया। उन्होंने लोकप्रिय सिनेमा पर पिछले तीन दशकों से लेखन कर रहे ब्रह्मात्मज का परिचय दिया।

कोठारी ने बताया कि ब्रह्मात्मज ने फिल्म पत्रकारिता को गॉसिप से इतर एक गंभीर रूप दिया। आप बिहार में पैदा हुए और दिल्ली से होते हुए मुंबई पहुंचे। 'ऐसे बनी लगान', 'समकालीन सिनेमा', 'सिनेमा की सोच' जैसी कई चर्चित किताबों के लेखक ब्रह्मात्मज का ब्लॉग 'चवन्नी चैप' और यूट्यूब चैनल 'सिनेमाहौल' काफी लोकप्रिय है। आपकी नई पुस्तक 'इरफान... और कुछ पन्ने कोरे रह गए' हमारे लिए इसलिए भी खास है कि इसका प्रकाशन छत्तीसगढ़ में हुआ है। उन्होंने कार्यक्रम में उपस्थित सरस्वती पब्लिकेशन के प्रकाशक आकाश महेश्वरी का भी स्वागत किया और आगे के संवाद के लिए अहसास वूमन रायपुर आंचल गरचा को आमंत्रित कर उनका भी विस्तार से परिचय दिया। उन्होंने बताया कि गरचा बच्चों के लिए 'बडिंग बुक फार्म', महिलाओं के लिए 'उर्जा' और 'लिटराटी' जैसे मंचों से जुड़ी हैं।

गरचा ने ब्रह्मात्मज से उनके बचपन और कॉलेज के किस्से जानने चाहे। ब्रह्मात्मज ने कहा कि बचपन सभी का रोचक होता है। मैं छोटा था, तभी घर छोड़कर भाग गया। कुछ हफ्ते भटकने के बाद मुझे लगा कि घर बाहर से ज्यादा बेहतर है, तो मैं लौट आया। मेरी जिंदगी थोड़ी अस्त-व्यस्त रही। शायद पेरेंट्स का दबाव इसकी वजह रहा हो। जब मैं ग्रेजुएशन में आया तो मुझे कुछ अच्छे दोस्त बने। शिक्षक रामधारी सिंह दिवाकर के संसर्ग में आने के बाद मुझमें तब्दीली आई। इसके बाद मेरे लिए आसमान खुला, तो लगा बिहार मेरे लिए बहुत छोटा है। मैं दिल्ली आया, जेएनयू में पढ़ाई की। उन्होंने कहा कि तमाम बदनामियों के बावजूद जेएनयू हर व्यक्ति को जाना चाहिए। वहां पढ़िए या नहीं पर वहां रुकिए, देखिए जरूर। अभी भी चीजें बदली नहीं हैं।

ब्रह्मात्मज ने जेएनयू से पेइचिंग के अनुभव पर विस्तार से अपनी बात रखी और

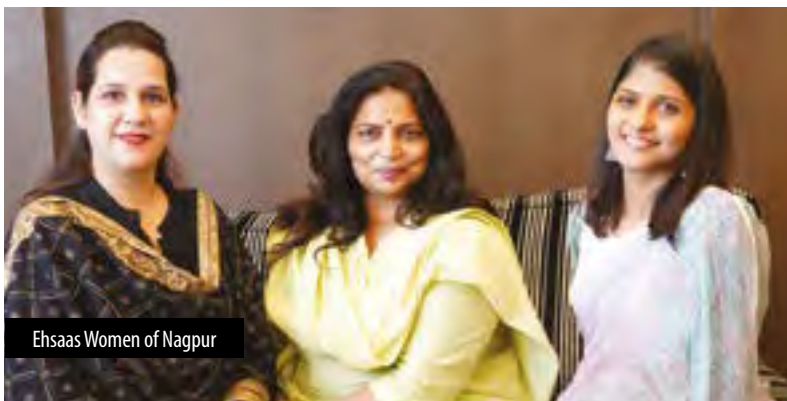
वामपंथ से अपने लगाव के बारे में बताया। उन्होंने कहा कि चीन या पाकिस्तान को लेकर हमारे मन में जो छवि है, वह आम लोगों की छवि नहीं है। चीनियों के लिए बौद्धिज्म की वजह से बिहार तीर्थ की तरह है। वे श्रद्धा से पांव छूते थे। इस तरह मैं छः साल वहां रह गया और फिर लौटकर जीरो से शुरुआत की। मैंने चीन में प्रवास के दौरान 13 पुस्तकों का अनुवाद किया। दो-तिहाई चीन में घूम चुका हूँ। 'हमें जिस हाल में रखोगे, हम जी लेंगे, हमें जीना आता है।' आपकी इस सोच के पीछे की क्या वजह है? ब्रह्मात्मज ने कहा इस पर पूरी किताब लिखी जा सकती है। एक जिजीविषा हम सबके अंदर होती है। जीने की इच्छा शक्ति सबमें रहती है। लेकिन हालात हमारे कंट्रोल में नहीं होते।

ब्रह्मात्मज ने कहा कि हम किस परिवार में पैदा होंगे, किस समाज में रहेंगे, यह बड़े होने के बाद हम चुन सकते हैं, इसे हम बाद में गढ़ते हैं। लेकिन किशोर उम्र तक यह हमारे हाथ में नहीं होता। उन्होंने कहा कि जो मैं बोलता हूँ, जो मेरे विचार हैं, वैसा ही मैं जीता भी हूँ। ब्रह्मात्मज ने यादगार साक्षात्कार के बारे में पूछे जाने पर इरफान खान, अमिताभ बच्चन, शाहरुख खान, आमिर खान, ऐश्वर्या राय, विद्या बालन, कंगना राणावत, तापसी पन्नू, ऋचा चड्ढा से अच्छे संबंध रहे हैं। बहुत सारे कलाकारों के पहले साक्षात्कार मैंने किया है। उन्होंने ऐश्वर्या राय, अमिताभ बच्चन, शाहरुख खान के मानवीय पहलू और इरफान खान और मनोज वाजपेयी की ऐक्टिंग से जुड़ी कई बातें शेयर की। उन्होंने माधुरी दीक्षित को लेकर अपने आकर्षण और 'दिल तो पागल है' की शूटिंग के दौरान किए गए साक्षात्कार का मजेदार अनुभव बांटा।

ब्रह्मात्मज ने फिल्म पत्रकारिता से जुड़े सवाल पर राजनीतिक पत्रकारिता के प्रति अपने झुकाव के बारे में विस्तार से बताया और कहा कि एक फ्रीलांसर की कोई च्वाइस नहीं होती। उन्होंने संतोष जाहिर किया कि तमाम अपमानों और तिरस्कारों से गुजरने के बाद अब हिंदी पत्रकारों की स्थिति आज वह नहीं है। हालांकि डिजिटल दुनिया ने नई तरह की चुनौतियां पत्रकारों के सामने हैं। फिल्मी गॉसिप पर बहुत विस्तार से अपनी बात रखते हुए ब्रह्मात्मज ने फिल्म पत्रकारिता को क्लॉस स्ट्रगल से जोड़ा और कहा कि सच्ची खबरों से ज्यादा रोचक कोई दूसरी बात नहीं होती। औरत चाहे जिस वर्ग की हो उसके व्यवहार, पहरावे और संबंधों को लेकर ढेर सारी बात होती है। जबकि बॉल्ड होने का संबंध पहरावे से नहीं निर्णय लेने की क्षमता से है। अपनी इस समझ से मैं फिल्म को, उसके क्राफ्ट को, कलाकारों को समझ सका।

ब्रह्मात्मज ने इरफान पर अपने संस्मरण, उन पर लिखी अपनी किताब, इस किताब के उर्दू, पंजाबी, गुजराती, मराठी और अंग्रेजी अनुवाद के बारे में बताया। उन्होंने बताया कि मेरे लिए यह संतोष की बात है 'हिंदी वाला' होकर भी उन्होंने एक पीढ़ी को फिल्म पत्रकारिता की तरफ प्रेरित भी किया। ब्रह्मात्मज ने सवाल-जवाब सत्र में श्रोताओं की जिज्ञासा पर भी अपनी बात रखी। आयोजकों की ओर से रेडिसन ब्लू की पायल ने अतिथि का अभिनंदन किया।

अहसास वूमन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम नागपुर के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट। हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर होटल रेडिसन ब्लू नागपुर और मीडिया पार्टनर लोकमत का सहयोग मिला



Hsaas Women of Nagpur



Raima Sen and Esha Dutta along with the team of Furrfolks and the new ambulance

## Saving Our Furry Friends: An Animal Ambulance To The Rescue!

Under its **Karuna** initiative, **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** donated an animal ambulance to Furrfolks, a prominent organisation in Kolkata recognised for its exceptional work in rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming animals. The ambulance, which aims to bolster animal welfare efforts, will significantly contribute to the timely

transportation of injured, sick, or stranded animals to veterinary hospitals, ensuring prompt medical attention and care. This particular donation aligns with the Foundation's commitment to all social causes, including animal welfare, education, healthcare, art and culture, and women's empowerment. This collaboration has been an active effort to make a

“

This animal ambulance will play a pivotal role in saving precious lives and providing timely medical assistance to animals in need. I applaud **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** and Furrfolks for their commitment and compassion

– Raima Sen

”





positive impact and empower marginalised communities.

An extension of the quality of kindness inherent in humans, animal welfare is the expression of lingering humanity that remains unsuppressed. In an urban community, there is an increasing trend of animal lovers who are desperately attempting to ensure a dignified life for animals in and around the city. Included in these efforts are caring for animals that require urgent medical care, and the noble intentions of the caregivers often fall short due to a paucity of timely resources. This collaboration of Furrfolks and the Foundation becomes a significant step towards bridging the existing gap and ensuring that animal rights are upheld, as well as providing aid to those furry friends who need it desperately.

The unveiling ceremony witnessed the presence of esteemed members from the Foundation and Furrfolks who wholeheartedly supported the cause. It was also graced by the presence of the well-known actor, Raima Sen, an ardent animal lover and advocate of

commitment and compassion.”

Esha Dutta, **Ehsaas** Woman of Kolkata, expressed her gratitude on behalf of the Foundation for the opportunity to assist Furrfolks’ noble cause. She enumerated that the donation of the pet ambulance was a reflection of their commitment to fostering a compassionate society and ensuring that no animal is left untreated owing to a lack of transportation. She said that the ambulance is intended to support Furrfolks’ remarkable efforts to safeguard and uplift the lives of animals. Additionally, she thanked Sen for her presence to mark this occasion.

S.K. Basit, co-founder of Furrfolks, emphasised the significance of the pet ambulance in expanding their rescue operations. “We are immensely grateful to **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** for their unwavering support,” he said. “This pet ambulance will enable us to reach animals in need swiftly, ensuring they receive timely medical assistance.”

The collective efforts of the Foundation and Furrfolks to ensure a dignified life for animals signify the importance of community collaboration in championing animal welfare and creating a compassionate society. Should you ever find yourself in need of assistance or have any queries related to your furry friends, don’t hesitate to reach out to Furrfolks Helpline at 7003850003!

animal rights. She expressed her delight at being part of this noble initiative. “I am honoured to be associated with **Prabha Khaitan Foundation** and Furrfolks in their dedicated efforts towards animal welfare,” said Sen. “This pet ambulance will play a pivotal role in saving precious lives and providing timely medical assistance to animals in need. I applaud both organisations for their



Raima Sen and her furry friend next to the ambulance





## Dads Are The Best!

The importance of having a loving, nurturing and inspirational father cannot be overstated. Fathers who make their children feel valued, understood and loved deserve to be celebrated, for they play a crucial role in raising good people and upright citizens. To honour such amazing fathers on Father's Day, Prabha Khaitan Foundation, under its **Muskaan** initiative, celebrated the special bond between fathers and their children. Young ones were invited to write short stories or share short, recorded videos describing how they planned to spend Father's Day with their fathers or father figures this year. Take a look at the five winning entries, all from kids below the age of 10!

A joint initiative with Education for All,  
**Muskaan** is presented by Shree Cement Limited




Amayra Dhingra

DAV Public School,  
Sector 49, Gurugram

My father's and my favourite pastime is exploring nature together. Every Sunday, we would venture into the nearby forest, armed with binoculars and a sense of adventure. He taught me how to identify different bird species and their unique calls. Sometimes, we would spot a rare bird. My father would teach me about the trees, plants and animals we encountered. He showed me how to recognize animal tracks and shared fascinating facts about each creature we saw. I would giggle with joy as I carefully observed tiny insects and colourful butterflies. Our nature excursions are not just educational; they are moments of bonding and shared happiness. I felt safe and loved in my father's presence, and he treasured these precious moments with his daughter.

As Father's Day approached, I decided to create a scrapbook for my father, capturing our adventures in vivid detail. I spent hours selecting photos, drawing pictures, and writing heartfelt notes of gratitude. On the morning of Father's Day, I gave him the scrapbook. Tears welled up in his eyes as he flipped through the pages, reliving the cherished memories. We hugged tightly, our hearts overflowing with love and appreciation. From that day, my father and I have continued our nature explorations, building a bond that will last a lifetime. Our shared love for the outdoors created a beautiful tapestry of father-daughter moments, woven with laughter, learning, and unbreakable love.







## Riyansh Arora

Invictus International School,  
Amritsar

My all-time favourite day of the year is Fathers' Day! Every year, this day is full of mesmerising moments and awesome memories that my dad and I cherish together, from playing sports to enjoying a barbeque with music. This year, we have decided to spend our day on a family adventure vacation on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Swimming amongst colourful fishes while snorkelling with my dad will be the experience of a lifetime. I'll explore the rich mangroves and caves, and together we will go kayaking. Once we return, we plan to play music and decorate our room with beautiful sea decorations, balloons, candles and cupcakes. After our dinner, we hug, take photographs and say a few lines about each other, since we have always been so special to each other ever since I was born!



## Aaradhya Bhatnagar

Blue Bells Model School,  
Gurugram





## Yatee Bahl

DAV Public School,  
Sector 49, Gurugram

My father loves to have a cup of tea while reading the newspaper in the morning, so I will keep a Father's Day card with the newspaper to surprise him. He will hug me with a big smile on his face. I will make tea for him with my mother's help. I would like to celebrate this special day at home, to pamper him and give him much-needed rest, because he's the one who takes me to play areas and gardens, and on trips and picnics whenever I ask. We will watch the movie *Fatherhood* while enjoying our favourite snacks and homemade soft drinks. I attended baking classes during my summer vacation, so I will make a small chocolate cake for him in the evening. He has a sweet tooth, so I am sure he will like the treat! We will take pictures of the Father's Day celebration to cherish forever. I have bought a planner for him, and made a picture collage by hand. After we have dinner together, I would love to hear his childhood stories and sleep on time with happy hearts! Happy Father's Day!



## Ranvir Singh

Army Public School,  
Ambala Cantt





# Taking Action to Save the City



Among the calamities that threaten the human race, the environmental crisis is the foremost. From global warming, loss of biodiversity, air, water and plastic pollution to improper waste management, deforestation, fast fashion and textile wastage, overfishing and cobalt mining — human actions and their consequences are pushing us towards an imminent danger each passing day. Climate change, especially, is of central importance when it comes to how its effects have started to show on the material reality of people across the world. Floods, fires, and extreme temperatures are becoming the new norm for all of us. While some are better equipped to deal with it, the most vulnerable are the socially and economically marginalised. India unfortunately, is one of the countries that stands to lose the most if the climate crisis is not averted. The city of Kolkata, especially, runs the risk of being completely submerged if sea levels keep rising. The city itself and its hinterland are affected by a number of environmental problems. The pollution in the city is the second highest in the country and extreme weather conditions are becoming more frequent and intense. Thus, it becomes imperative that actions are taken immediately to protect this beautiful and historic city.

To that end, with the assistance of **Prabha Khaitan**

**Foundation** and The Telegraph Online — My Kolkata, the non-profit organisation, Environment Governed Integrated Organisation (EnGIO), organised a session on World Environment Day at the Press Club, Kolkata. The session witnessed the acknowledging of Green Puja Juries and the publication of the report on Green Puja, the awarding of the winners of UNICEF- EnGIO – Press



Club, the launching of the Work on Loss and Damage assessment, and the launch of the Work on Kolkata Climate Action Plan.

Firhad Hakim, Minister and Mayor of Kolkata, Javed Khan, Disaster Management Minister (West Bengal), Debasish Kumar, MLA and Mayor-in-council (Kolkata Municipal Corporation), Kalyan Rudra, Chairman, State Pollution Control Board, and Mohammed Mohiuddin, Chief of Field Office UNICEF (West Bengal) were in attendance, among other dignitaries and guests.

# Exploring the Beauty of Chilika Lake on the Garuda Houseboat: A Travelogue

Nidhi Garg



Nidhi Garg

Chilika Lake, the largest lagoon in India, located in the state of Odisha, is a natural wonder that is brimming with life. It is known for its unique ecosystem, rich biodiversity and cultural significance. The Garuda House Boat offers a luxurious way to explore this serene body of water.

## **The Enchanting Chilika Lake: A Natural Wonder**

Chilika Lake is a captivating place that is home to many species of birds, fish and marine life. It is also an important stopover for migratory birds flying to and from Siberia. The tranquil water and the surrounding lush greenery make Chilika Lake a stunning natural marvel that must be experienced at least once in a lifetime.

## **The Rich Biodiversity of Chilika Lake**

The lagoon is home to over 200 species of fish, 400 species of plants, and more than 800 species of animals. The magnificent Irrawaddy dolphin, a rare and endangered marine mammal, can also be spotted here. As

you cruise through the lake, you will see various aquatic creatures swimming beside the boat, and if you're lucky, you may even catch a glimpse of an elusive otter.

One of the most fascinating creatures that can be found in Chilika Lake is the horseshoe crab. These ancient creatures have been around for over 450 million years and are considered living fossils. They are a crucial part of the ecosystem as they help keep the water clean by feeding on dead organisms and other detritus.

The lake is also home to several species of birds, including the Indian roller, the painted stork, and the black-winged stilt. The lake is a birdwatcher's paradise as it provides an ideal habitat for both resident and migratory birds.

## **The Unique Ecosystem of the Lake**

Chilika Lake is a brackish water lagoon that is fed by several small rivers and is connected to the Bay of Bengal by a narrow channel. The salinity of the water varies from



the mouth to the upper regions of the lagoon, which creates a unique ecosystem. The shallow areas of the lake are covered by submerged plants, which provide shelter to various organisms and support the native fish population.

The lake is also an important breeding ground for several species of fish, including the famous Chilika prawn. The prawn is considered a delicacy in the region and is an important source of livelihood for the local fishermen.

The lake is also home to the largest population of Irrawaddy dolphins in India. These gentle creatures are a rare sight and are a delight to watch as they swim and play in the water.

### **The History and Cultural Significance of Chilika Lake**

The lake holds a significant place in Hindu mythology. It is believed that Lord Rama visited Chilika during his 14-year exile, and the lake is named after the demon king Chilika, who was defeated by Lord Krishna. The lake is also mentioned in several ancient texts like the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*. Chilika has also played a crucial role in the region's history, as it was an important maritime centre for trade and commerce.

The lake is surrounded by several small villages, each with its unique culture and traditions. The villagers depend on the lake for their livelihood, and fishing is the primary occupation. The local cuisine is dominated by seafood, and the famous Chilika prawn is a must-try delicacy.

Chilika Lake is not just a natural wonder but also a cultural and historical landmark that is worth exploring. So, pack your bags and head to this enchanting destination for an unforgettable experience.

### **The Garuda Houseboat: A Luxurious Experience**

Gazing at the serene beauty of Chilika Lake from the comfort of a luxurious houseboat is an experience you will cherish forever. The Garuda Houseboat is an elegant vessel designed to provide you with a comfortable and unforgettable journey.

### **The Elegant Design and Comfortable Accommodations**

The Garuda Houseboat is equipped with spacious rooms and modern amenities that offer a comfortable stay. It has two suites and four deluxe rooms. The rooms have large windows that provide a stunning view of the lake and the surrounding area. The houseboat also has a sundeck, a dining area, and a lounge where you can relax and enjoy the beauty of the lagoon.

The interior of the houseboat is tastefully decorated with a blend of modern and traditional elements. The comfortable furnishings and warm lighting create a cozy ambience that will make you feel right at home. The spacious rooms are designed to provide you with a comfortable and restful sleep, so you wake up refreshed and ready to take on the day.

### **The Delectable Cuisine on Board**

The houseboat offers a delectable cuisine experience that includes a variety of local and traditional delicacies.



The menu is carefully curated to provide you with the best culinary experience possible, and you can also request customised meals according to your preferences.

The onboard kitchen is equipped with modern appliances and utensils, and the experienced chefs use only the freshest and highest quality ingredients to prepare your meals. From savoury seafood dishes to mouth-watering vegetarian options, there is something for everyone to enjoy. We requested food without onion and garlic for my mother, and these requests were noted and duly paid heed to.

### **The Attentive and Friendly Crew**

The crew members of the Garuda Houseboat are attentive and friendly. They are always ready to assist you and ensure that your journey is smooth and comfortable. Their knowledge of the lake and the surrounding areas will help you appreciate the beauty and uniqueness of Chilika Lake even more.

The crew members are highly-trained professionals who are dedicated to providing you with the best possible service. They are always available to answer your questions and address any concerns you may have. Whether you need help with your luggage or want to



Nidhi Garg aboard the Garuda Houseboat



learn more about the local culture and history, the crew members are always happy to help.

The evening and early morning tea is served on the deck, which is an unforgettable experience. The boat is parked around 6 PM, and then, early in the morning, they take you for sailing again.

Overall, the Garuda Houseboat is the perfect way to experience the beauty and tranquility of Chilika Lake. With its elegant design, comfortable accommodations, delectable cuisine and attentive crew, you are sure to have an unforgettable journey that will stay with you for a lifetime.

### **Excursions and Activities around Chilika Lake**

Exploring the beauty of Chilika Lake on the Garuda Houseboat is just the beginning of the adventure. There are several other fascinating excursions and activities that you can indulge in to make your trip even more memorable.

### **Bird Watching and Wildlife Spotting**

Chilika Lake is a haven for bird enthusiasts and wildlife lovers. The lake is home to several resident and migratory birds, and you can see them up close during your excursion. You can also spot several species of marine





life, like crabs, the afore-mentioned horseshoe crabs, and clams that inhabit the lake's shallow areas.

Then there are, of course, the endangered Irrawaddy dolphins I had mentioned, which can be spotted in the Satpada area. You can take a boat ride to the area and watch these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat.

### Visiting the Local Fishing Villages

There are several fishing villages around Chilika Lake that you can visit to get a glimpse of local life and culture. Many of these villages have a rich history and offer a unique perspective into the people's way of life. You can also taste some of the freshest seafood dishes here.

One such village is Barkul, which is known for its prawn cultivation. You can visit the prawn farms and learn about the process of cultivation. You can also taste some of the delicious prawn dishes prepared by the locals.

### Exploring the Nearby Temples and Attractions

The region around Chilika Lake is dotted with several temples and attractions that offer a glimpse into the area's rich history and culture. You can visit the Kalijai Temple — this is included in the houseboat trip — located on a small island in the lagoon, and the Narayani Temple, which is built in a scenic location surrounded by hills.

Another attraction worth visiting is the Rambha Bay, which is known for its scenic beauty and tranquil surroundings. You can take a boat ride to the bay and enjoy the serene beauty of the place.

Chilika Lake is a place that offers a unique blend of natural beauty, cultural richness, and adventure. With so much to explore and



experience, your trip to this magical lake is sure to be a memorable one.

### The Best Time to Visit Chilika Lake

The best time to visit Chilika Lake is during the winter months, between November and February, when the weather is pleasant, and the migratory birds arrive.

### How to Reach Chilika Lake and the Garuda Houseboat

Chilika Lake can be accessed *via* road and rail. The nearest railway station is in Balugaon, located 32 kilometres from the lake. The nearest airport is in Bhubaneswar, which is 120 km away. The Garuda Houseboat can be booked in advance through various travel agencies and online platforms.

### What to Pack for Your Trip

It is advisable to carry comfortable clothing, sunscreen, sunglasses, a hat, and insect repellent. Also, carry a camera to capture the breathtaking views and the myriad wonders of Chilika Lake!

Exploring the Beauty of Chilika Lake on the Garuda Houseboat is a journey of a lifetime that promises to leave you enchanted and mesmerized. Book your trip today and make memories that will last a lifetime.



Nidhi Garg pictured on the Garuda Houseboat





## राज कपूर का प्रैंक भी उनकी ट्रेनिंग का हिस्सा था: राहुल रवैल

राज कपूर का मानना था कि अगर आपका कंटेंट सही हो तो दर्शक को कोई भी दूसरी चीज याद नहीं रहती। मुझे लगता है कि उनकी यह बात सही थी।" यह बात प्रभा खेतान फाउंडेशन की ओर से आयोजित कलम चंडीगढ़ में अतिथि वक्ता राहुल रवैल ने कही। अहसास वूमन चंडीगढ़ शालू गोयल आरंभ में अतिथियों का स्वागत किया और विस्तार से फाउंडेशन और कलम का परिचय दिया। अतिथि वक्ता रवैल का परिचय देते हुए उन्होंने कहा कि प्रख्यात निर्माता, निर्देशक राज कपूर के सहयोगी के रूप में करियर की शुरुआत करने वाले रवैल 'लव स्टोरी', 'बेताब', 'अर्जुन', 'डकैत', 'अंजाम' और 'अर्जुन पंडित' जैसी फिल्मों के लिए जाने जाते हैं। आपने कुमार गौरव और विजयेता पंडित को 'लव स्टोरी' में, सनी देओल और अमृता सिंह को 'बेताब' में, परेश रावल को 'अर्जुन पंडित' में, काजोल को 'बेखुदी' में तथा ऐश्वर्या राय को 'और प्यार हो गया' में बड़े परदे पर इंद्रोच्च्युस किया। आपने सत्रह फिल्मों और दो टेलीविजन सीरीज का निर्देशन भी किया है। आपने अपनी पुस्तक 'राज कपूर: द मास्टर एट वर्क' में अपने अमर गुरु, महान फिल्मकार की स्मृतियों को दर्ज किया है।

रवैल से आगे का संवाद अहसास वूमन लुधियाना दीपिका भल्ला ने किया। भल्ला ने रवैल की किताब को सच्ची, ईमानदार और प्रेरणादायक बताते हुए पूछा कि आपकी 'चिट्ठू' यानी ऋषि कपूर जी से कब दोस्ती हुई? रवैल ने कहा कि हमारा पारिवारिक रिश्ता था। हम एक नर्सरी स्कूल पढ़ने गए, बाद में हमारे स्कूल बदल गए, पर एक संपर्क बना रहा। जब 'चिट्ठू' गए, तब तक हमारे रिश्ते को 62-63 साल हो गया था। इस बीच कोई ऐसा दिन नहीं था, जब हमने बात न की हो। यह क्रम तभी रुकता था, जब हममें कोई झगड़ा हो गया हो। तब भी कोई तीसरा पूछ ही लेता था। 'मेरा नाम जोकर' से जुड़े सवाल पर रवैल ने बताया कि मेरे पिताजी भी फिल्मकार थे। वे चाहते थे कि मेरा बेटा फिल्मों से जुड़े, पर मैं साइंस का स्टूडेंट था। न्यूक्लियर फिजिक्स पढ़ने के लिए मैं कनाडा जाने वाला था। पर उस बीच छः महीने की छुट्टियां थीं। तब मैं पंद्रह साल का रहा होऊंगा। एक दिन मुझे चिट्ठू का फोन आया कि पापा आजाद मैदान में 'मेरा नाम जोकर' के सर्कस की शूटिंग कर रहे हैं। वहां रशियन लड़कियां आई हुई हैं, शूटिंग देखने वहां चलते हैं। जब मैं सेट पर गया, तो वहां राज साहब को काम करते हुए देखा। वहां मैं देखा कि एक आदमी कैसे पांच हजार आदमियों को, भीड़ को, कलाकारों को एक साथ निर्देशित कर रहा है।

इसके बाद मैं रोज वहां जाने लगा। एक दिन मैंने मां से कहा कि मैं राज साहब



Deepika Bhalla

Rahul Rawail

के साथ कुछ दिन काम कर लूं। पापा मुझे वहां लेकर गए। राज साहब ने बताया कि मैं इसे रोज देखता हूं, तो आ जाए मेरे साथ काम करे। पर मैं एक बात बता दूं कि इस इंडस्ट्री में जो एक बार आ गया, वह फिर वापस नहीं गया। वाकई इसके बाद से मैं फिजिक्स भूल गया और तब से आज तक यही कर रहा। रवैल ने बताया कि वे राज साहब से बहुत डरते थे। उनका जो प्रैंक होता था, वह भी उनकी ट्रेनिंग का हिस्सा है। उनका कहना था कि अगर तुम हीरो से कोई काम कराना चाहते हो, तो तुम्हें यह पता होना चाहिए कि यह काम कैसे होगा। रवैल ने कश्मीर की लोकेशन में शूट हुए पहले फिल्मी गीत 'हवा में उड़ता जाए...' से जुड़े सवाल का उत्तर देते हुए बताया कि कश्मीर उस समय बहुत दूर था। वहां उस तरह का इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर भी तब नहीं था। केवल इंडियन एयर फोर्स का जहाज जाता था। राज जी ने उसके लिए एक स्पेशल कैमरा खरीदा था।

रवैल ने राज साहब के जीवन से जुड़े कई किस्से सुनाए। जिनमें 'बांबी' के एक डिस्ट्रीब्यूटर रामू के घर देर रात पहुंचने और फिल्म का प्रॉफिट मांगने का किस्सा और फिर उसकी लुंगी खोलकर ले जाने की घटना सुनाई। उन्होंने कहा कि वे अपने काम के लिए दीवाने थे। रवैल ने 'मेरा नाम जोकर' के गीत 'जीना यहां मरना यहां....' की शूटिंग से जुड़ा किस्सा भी सुनाया। रवैल ने खाने के लिए राज साहब की दीवानगी को लेकर भी कई दिलचस्प वाकिए सुनाए। रवैल ने राज कपूर की वजन घटाने के लिए ली गई नेचुरल थेरेपी के दौरान दो किलो ज्यादा वजन बढ़ा लेने वाला किस्सा भी सुनाया।

रवैल ने म्यूजिक स्टूडियो से जुड़ी एक मजेदार घटना भी सुनाई, जो 'मेरा नाम जोकर' के गीत रिकॉर्डिंग के दौरान राजकपूर, शंकर, जयकिशन, हसरत, शैलेंद्र और मुकेश की उपस्थिति में बनाई गई ट्युन के डमी वर्ड्स में शामिल गालियों से जुड़ी थी। 'आ अब लौट चलें...' गीत की शूटिंग, आर्केस्ट्रा, 'एक राधा एक मीरा...', 'राम तेरी गंगा मैली हो गई...', 'मेरा जूता है जापानी...' के संगीत, लोकेशन, स्टोरी, एक्टिंग आदि के परफेक्शन को लेकर रवैल ने राज साहब से जुड़ी कई यादों को साझा किया। उन्होंने 'झूठ बोले कौआ काटे...' और 'सुन साहिबा सुन...' से जुड़ी याद भी शेयर किया और 1972 में रात के

दो बजे उनके घर आने, बस स्टैंड पर जाने का वाकिआ सुनाया। रवैल ने सवाल-जवाब सत्र में भी हिस्सा लिया। धन्यवाद ज्ञापन दिया अहसास वूमन चंडीगढ़ शर्मिता भिंडर ने। दो प्रश्नकर्ताओं को बुकमार्क दिया गया। डॉ रंजना मलिक ने स्मृति चिह्न देकर अतिथि का अभिन्नंदन किया।

अहसास वूमन के सौजन्य से आयोजित कलम चंडीगढ़ के प्रायोजक हैं श्री सीमेंट और हॉस्पिटैलिटी पार्टनर ताज चंडीगढ़ का सहयोग मिला।



Ranjana Malik felicitates Rahul Rawail



Shalu Goel and Sharmita Bhinder

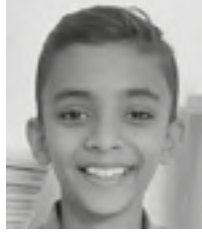
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Ashutosh Bharadwaj



Atul Tiwari



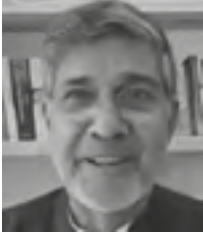
Aviraj Singhvi



Binayak  
Bandyopadhyay



Harsh More



Kailash Satyarthi



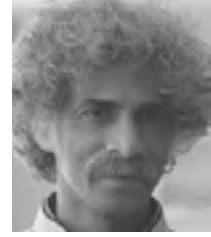
Kiran Manral



Koral Dasgupta



Krishna Kalpit



Makarand  
Deshpande



Nila Madhab Panda



Pavan K. Varma



Pratyaksha



Prem Prakash



Rahul Rawail



Rohan Chakravarty



Samantha Kochharr



Satyarth Nayak



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Siniwali Sharma



Suchita Maheshwari



Tripurari Sharan



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Vani Tripathi Tikoo

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