

ANUsandhan



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PUBLICATION

namelogue

narratives on identity

NAMELOGUE

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to exploring identities ...

Acknowledgements

ANUsandhan, the first student-led journal of AnantU has been quite a personal journey so far. The overall experience has proven to be an excellent source of learning for our team of four editors-- Rashi, Sadhya Bhatnagar, Kanisha Shah and Sweta Bhushan, especially during the online scenario. It is with great pleasure and gratitude that we would like to acknowledge our mentors, contributors and the Anant Fellowship team. Without their constant support and guidance we would not have been able to successfully achieve this milestone.

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As with all such endeavours, it takes the support of an entire team to pull off the vision carried from conception. We thank Aanya Rohit Jain, Sneha Birur, Rishabh Vishwakarma and Aanya Jain for their contributions towards the making of this journal.

Last but not the least, we acknowledge the patronage and love extended by our family members and friends and their cooperation throughout the course of this online work during the pandemic.



Letter from the Provost

Anant National University is the collective of three Schools: Architecture, Design, and Creative Practices and Entrepreneurship. They come together focussed on excelling in built environment and as to how best appropriate education could build a better tomorrow for everyone. In this context if sustainability is about posterity, then Anant Fellows are the champions of it and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

ANUsandhan is the creative endeavour of the Anant Fellows. The first issue is appropriately titled *Nomelogue*. It is symbolic of the search for the sense of place and identity of the Fellows. It truly underlines the importance of culture in development, the centrality of creativity in our preferred futures. It is embedded with the genius of youth and their vision for intergenerational knowledge making as we envision the future built environment.

I am delighted to launch *Nomelogue*. It bodes well for the future issues of *ANUsandhan*. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Anant Fellows, their associates and everyone who worked together with the team in producing the first issue of *ANUsandhan*. Its artistic merit commends our attention. I present it to the AnantU community and its broader audiences.

Dr. Anunaya Chaubey

Provost, Anant National University



About ANUsandhan

ANUsandhan Publication | Issue 1 | 2021

We are pleased to introduce ANUsandhan-- a student enquiry showcase, to the AnantU community and beyond. It is a flagship initiative of the writing programme at AnantU. ANUsandhan aims to feature a selection of the best student writing. The word '*sandhan*' means enquiry and through this publication, we hope to research, collate and explore different themes every year. As we work towards building ANUsandhan, we hope that students will recognise it as a platform to showcase their unique voice through the text and art that they create-- focusing on an annual theme at a time.



Nomeologue: Narratives Exploring Identities

You might have wondered about the different aspects that build the identity of people, places and things. The 'Designer' tag on a person evolves over the years as their professional identity, whereas a tiny town becomes ephemeral because of its famous 'Fritters Stall'. Have you thought about how objects like 'Calculator' receive their names from their function, while experiences like 'Lightning' are defined by the outcomes they lead to? There may be many mediums of identity-making, but one prevails as the most fundamental. The name-- a humble word belonging to a person, object or project, given right at their birth. To think of it, the world is only an aggregation of names - of roads, people, buildings, forests, fruits and so on. The origins of the stories of their names remain in contrast - some are expected to have the most lasting impacts in the history of time, whereas the rest remain feeble and lost under the weight of others' expectations. This journal, fondly called *Nomeologue*, is a selection of explorations by authors, artists and photographers.

People

These stories document how the names of people inform their identity. Some of these describe their own while others describe people's tales. These pieces speak to the crucial essence of names in their lives, while others register how the idea of self surpasses the 'word'. The narratives encompass the finer aspects we often miss about names of people-- both others and ourselves. It records the identities we embody because of their presence or absence.

Places

Identities, places and names have robust and distinct interlinks. A 'Bombay' raises nostalgia in some hearts whereas a 'Mumbai' pulls in the lost essence of what was once just seven islets of local fisher people. These pieces venture into different scales of place making, encouraging you to look deeper into your surroundings.

Phenomena

Various phenomena like light, loneliness and time look different for all of us. Some dwell deeper into the elements that make up our worlds, cities and homes. These pieces record how culture is subjective to not just communities, but also individuals. They present windows to introspection.

We hope you enjoy this thoughtful journey of manuscripts, art and photographs on identities.



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Letter from the Editors

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Namelogue has a peculiar origin story and one which any professor would be fond of. The idea of *Namelogue* started much before any of the 2021 Anant Fellows had even joined. It began when Dr. Sood designed the first assignment for the module *Text, Context and Communication* that she was all set to teach us. This assignment required each one of us to describe the story of our name in hundred words. The responses were delightful! The class became a get together with each of us pouring over the first mark inscribing our identity.

Seldom do we stop to think about our names and how they shape our identity. Sometimes the spelling of a name meets an adamant foreign letter, seeing which, a slight irritation passes over the one whose name it is. Other times, we meet people that strongly abide by the classic, 'What's in a name?'. So when the four of us got together to conceptualise *Namelogue*, we began to wonder, 'Is Mumbai truly different from Bombay?'

This was it! A journal to document people's impressions, aspirations and fun around names and how they define identities. We started working towards this journal, first under Deepti and then Rutu to compose this collection of recordings provided by artists, authors and photographers. The working process was immensely gratifying both in terms of the creation of the journal and the relationships we built with each other. Every now and then we read a piece that made us think, wonder and discover a little more about people's perspectives on identity. We hope this selection lends you an experience that lasts long with you, as it does with us. Enjoy reading!

Kanisha
Rashi
Sadhya
Sweta



Rutu Shah
SUPERVISOR

Foreword

Building connections with stories of identity

Every student must remember the experience of jotting down an essay on a generic subject like ‘My Favourite Festival’ under 500 words, for a language exam, in under 15 minutes. Most secondary education and higher secondary education systems design such tests to gauge a students’ command over the language and their gift for writing lyrical prose under pressure. But writing under such circumstances would prove difficult for most students, some of whom would opt out of the section (and possibly distance themselves from an expression of this kind). In contrast, others would come prepared with a few chosen passages from their favourite reading material.

Few students would choose the format of the essay to share their close observations or their truth. The act of writing is also somewhat akin to making new friends: unless you are honest, you cannot make a life-long bond. But is honesty possible in the essay format so over-prescribed by our schools and colleges? What if each student could and would do the same? Then this would not be an exercise to test language skills or grammar but prove to be a journey to understand diverse contexts and experiences that every student collects.

We have discovered that with dogged patience and encouragement, each student reveals a unique potential to voice their thought journey (and sometimes literal journey). With ANUsandhan, Anant National University provides students with an opportunity to express freely – to use 15 minutes or 15 days, write on generic subjects or specialised, elaborate in prosaic or poetic forms -- to voice the important themes facing their generation.

For students who possess the correct tools of expression in their mother tongue, we have found that it is essential to encourage multi-lingual expressions. The process of conveying the hidden identity of themes and stories is not and should not be the burden of one language. And if writing is the tool with which we wish to equip ourselves to understand the world better, then such a broad scope requires insights from multiple perspectives and languages.

We hope that the first edition of the ANUsandhan journal – *Namelogue* -- has remained true to this intention. We hope that every student, teacher and reader may find at least one honest instance of connection.

contents





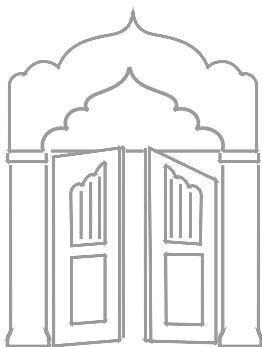
#phenomena

- The Agogo Experience **48**
Emmanuel Ntiamoah
- How Does It Feel? **58**
Parveen Fatimah
- Architecture: the Multifaceted Profession **74**
Rashi
- Three Sides of the Same Coin **89**
Samprati Kulkarni
- You, Me and Rain **104**
Divnoor Kaur
- Prakriti, Thy Name is Woman **14**
Prakriti Priya Singh
- What is in a Stage Name? **28**
Deep Thacker
- The Quest for her Identity **40**
Nitya Jois
- The Renaming **43**
Akansha Arya
- The Darkest Hours **44**
Parveen Fatimah
- Life: a Game of Gambling **94**
Suresh Patil
- The Evolving Identity of Art **12**
Nikita Teresa Sarkar
- My Culture is my Identity **16**
Ojas Mali
- Time Travel **24**
Mustafa Pratapgadwala
- The Niche of a Time **26**
Sadhya Bhatnagar
- Let there be Light **32**
Nikita Teresa Sarkar
- Taken for Granted **34**
Kriti Jalihal

#people



- Being Queer **56**
Garima
- What's in a Name? **62**
Rajvee Desai
- Mini Stories on Names **68**
Various Authors
- A Positive Idol **85**
Tithi Shah
- The King who brought Independence to Afghanistan **102**
Aimal Wajdee



#places

- An Unrequited Love **70**
Sadhya Bhatnagar
- City Portraits **76**
Pooja Gangwar
- Kabul Hills: Home for Colourful Houses **82**
Aimal Wajdee
- The Streets of Bengal **100**
Oleena Chaudhuri
- Kaka's Local Grocery Store **36**
Sweta Bhushan
- The Street of my Dreams **52**
Ishimwe Christian
- Life Amidst Chaos **54**
Parveen Fatimah
- Uttarakhand: a Mysterious Exploration, a Rich Heritage **64**
Rashi
- My Favourite Home: Towards Inclusive Boundaries **86**
Oleena Chaudhuri



nameologue



Photograph by Sadhya Bhatnagar

The Evolving Identity of Art

by Nikita Teresa Sarkar

In an era where social media is increasingly becoming the marker of identity and collapsing the globe into one platform or community, the performance of identities on social media becomes paramount. For a while now, I have been enamoured by the performance of identities on various social platforms like Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat and the multiple avatars in online gaming. These profiles are varied - having little or no resemblance to the real person. Thus not only creating multiple identities but also changing the meaning of identity itself.

There are many questions that the sudden surge in social media has raised. How does the existence of multiple identities in the virtual space affect human relationships? Does the loss or alteration of markers of individual identities affect the existing social apparatus? How is the performativity of daily life rituals changing due to this media influx? Is the human race moving towards yet another Darwinian evolution of becoming Human 'doings' from human 'beings'?

Coming to a definitive answer to these questions is not possible as we are only witnessing the beginning of a process. But the process does seem to redefine everything we've known until now, and its rate of growth is alarmingly impressive. Socially speaking, the emergence of a new 'technological' class that is



Illustration by Sneha Birur

constantly creating, altering and broadcasting artwork, has led us into a space where previously defined boundaries of arts are being questioned. The creation of memes, doodles, digitalisation of artwork, the easy digital imitation of folk art, and their redistribution - these are part of a social phenomenon that is changing our view of art and identity derived from it very drastically. Richard Schechner, a performance studies expert, predicted a couple of decades ago that soon the ownership of 'art' will become immaterial as the modifications made to a particular piece of artwork and its circulation will be done at such a rapid pace, that keeping track of every artist's contribution to the final artwork will be impossible. Moreover, the need to have the motive to reach a 'finished artwork' will no longer exist as the process will become more exciting and meaningful. 'Performances' will move more towards 'Experiences'. Hence, the term 'artist' will become broader to accommodate varying disciplines. Applications like Instagram and Snapchat where conversations, photographs and other media are constantly produced, altered and destroyed within 24 hours, is changing the youth's perception of what art may be.

This almost resembles the second wave of DADA-ism, one triggered by technology and its easy accessibility. Many will argue that this is resulting in

the quality of art being compromised and the term 'artist' being thrown around too casually. But art exists in co-relation to its audience. Perhaps it is time again to re-visit the basics of art - Who decides what art is? Who is it for? Who is an artist? But the mode of questioning requires an interactive quality as increasingly the youth is attracted towards impermanence. This may be a marker of other social changes happening around the globe. The possibility of multiple identities (mostly on the virtual platform) and the impermanent nature of it could be a contributing factor for increasing divorce rates all around the world. This is just one example, but other changes are occurring globally that have their roots in local identity formation. Today, a person can have more than just one identity as most of the interactions are virtual. Even relationships are increasingly becoming more virtual than real. For example, I can be a travel enthusiast on Facebook, a chef on Instagram, a social butterfly on Snapchat and whatever I want to be on the other 100 social platforms. This is leading to multiple projections of our 'ideal' self but how far the transmission of these projections to the 'real' self, is hard to decipher. Moreover, it is possible to have multiple versions of the ideal self. Other media content is pointing towards this phenomenon like the series 'Black Mirror' and several psychological journals. It feels like Jung and Freud's worst nightmares got mixed in Chomsky's dream!

Many questions raised in this article are speculative but the primary concern remains true - is this era of multiple possibilities bringing us closer to our ideal/aspirational self or encouraging the cloning (and possibly conning) of unreal selves? As I have written at the beginning of this article, I'm not inclined to take any sides, but the consciousness of what we choose for ourselves, or as markers of our identity, especially when access to information and technology is a click away, makes a difference to our awareness. Let me explain with an example: I am an avid gamer and the following is one of my avatars on a game:



Teresa, 32, Colored, Pan-Sexual, Poly Amorous

Apart from the image itself, 2 out of those 5 identity markers do not align with the real me, while the other 3 are true. But for this avatar of mine, they are all true. So, this is my primary premise - if all these avatars (including any anonymous accounts that I may have on Instagram, Facebook, Tinder etc.) are created by me to portray 'me' on a platform, is this then an aspirational self of mine? I have at least 10 such avatars online - each different and yet similar. Is my identity then branching out in the virtual space to all the 'could have been' possibilities? And since I exist as these avatars too - am I all of these identities?

While you mull over the first premise, let me present to you the second part of my argument - our avatars in virtual space are coded in artificial intelligence. So if my avatar in the Harry Potter game gets sorted into Gryffindor, I feel brave instantly. This may have nothing to do with my characteristics in real life, but the 'validation' of a personality trait may (and does) affect my real self. So the physical me is also being altered by the virtual versions of me. This phenomenon is so prevalent today that it has a recognised name - Internet Addiction Disorder (IAD). Our virtual lives may look perfect, even when in real life we may be in pieces. Alternately, our virtual profiles may be un-happening but in reality, we may be in total harmony. It is also a known fact that most companies today check our social media accounts before hiring. So who we portray to be on Twitter, Instagram etc. is as important (if not more) as our real self. Everyone remembers the one black face photograph that hampered the reputation of someone as influential as Justin Trudeau. So when we talk of these multiple branches of identity we create online - is one the creator of the content, or a victim of it?

I, or at least the self-writing this article, offer no answers. I am simply sharing my thoughts in an attempt to make meaning in growing chaos. Or perhaps this chaos is the new order. We are multiple selves in the same instant as being oneself - the true Renaissance Person. Perhaps the dissolving of categorizations is what true inclusivity entails. I can be (and am) an artist, activist, philosopher, chef, naturalist, writer, singer, poet, gardener, designer, manager and blah blah blah - all and none in the same breath.

Prakriti, Thy Name is Woman

by Prakriti Priya Singh

Shakespeare once said, “What’s in a name”. But every name has a beginning and a story behind it. I don’t know about the others, but my name, Prakriti, certainly has a story behind it.

My father, who teaches Hindi at a school, is the reason behind my unusual name. I call it ‘unusual’ because most people get my name wrong when pronouncing it. I am Pra’Kriti’, not Pragati or Parkirti or Pra ‘Kirti’, but I have stopped correcting people now. People might wonder why I keep insisting on the correct pronunciation of my name, as many have told me ‘bhavnaon ko samjho’ (understand the sentiment). Still, the meaning of a word can change when mispronounced. For example, while my name means nature, Pragati means development, Kriti implies creation, and Kirti fame. Why should I accept a pronunciation when it changes the complete meaning of the name, so intrinsically linked to my existence. Apart from that, my parents have given me this name, which defines me.

My father has been thoughtful about my name. While explaining the story behind my name, he refers to my nickname, Bulbul, a nightingale -- a small bird, best known for its powerful and beautiful singing. My father has been close to nature since his childhood. Coming from a village, he would sit in his farmland and listen to the singing of the nightingale, the beloved creatures of nature. And so I was named Prakriti Priya, one who is loved by nature. This is how my father confirmed the extent of his passion by calling me the exact Hindi word for nature. He often sings a song for me ‘ek tha gul aur ek thi bulbul, phool bagiya mein bulbul bole’ (There was a garden and a nightingale, and the bird would sing in the garden of flowers).

I don’t know whether my father’s story can go with the story of my name, but he once told me that while reading a book in his orchard, he had an encounter with a snake. He was so engrossed in

reading his book that he didn’t notice the snake sitting near him. He was alerted by my grandfather. My father was unaware of the snake sitting next to him, but the snake knew of his presence. Despite having a chance to attack, it didn’t. My father’s lesson from this incident was that nature is beautiful, and until humans try to harm, it mostly takes care of humans.

When it comes to my name, Philosophy has helped me understand it better. Samkhya Philosophy emphasises the importance of nature (Prakriti) as the basis of all creation. According to Samkhya Philosophy, all creations come from the two facets of Samkhya: Purusha and Prakriti. While Prakriti reflects the external world, i.e., nature, Purusha resembles the more inward pure consciousness, the soul, self, or knower. It means that Purusha and Prakriti are inseparable.

Knowing this, my father tells me that my name means that which Bulbul means for Prakriti -- inseparable. Names generally have some impact on you. At least I feel so. I don’t have any data to prove my observation; however, several studies have explored names. From my experience, I have learnt that my name has had a significant impact on me. I love nature. I love the mystery that surrounds it. The more you explore, the more baffled it leaves you.

Nature and my name intrigue me equally. Moreover, the wrong pronunciation of my name by people earlier irks me and still does. Still, gradually I have started accepting the ‘feel’, leaving behind the nuances of a language, including the pronunciation of the word.

All names are different, and so are the stories behind them. But as someone said, “Don’t overact the story of your name. Overact the story of your work”, and I would like my work to speak for myself. I can adjust with a little ‘Pra’, ‘Pri’, ‘Pa’, here and there and still hold a space in people’s hearts with some kindness and love. Isn’t it?



My Culture is my Identity

by Ojas Mali

Drunkard

It was a sunny afternoon; I was a part of a river coast cleanliness drive. While picking up some waste items, I saw this man lying under the sun. I went close to him but the strong smell didn't allow me to get closer to him. He was sweating and had a numb face, although his posture and the folded legs intrigued me to capture that moment. The cracks on his feet show his day's hard work while the position he lay in, portrays his state of comfort. As I was clicking the picture, a few people passed by and started laughing and asked me if I were crazy? Why would I be capturing a drunkard?

It takes an entire life to make an identity but just a bad habit to blame your identity.







Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom
- Aristotle

Farmer

A farm is more than just land and crops. It is a family's heritage and future. The kid was enjoying his identity of being a farmer and his joy is well- reflected in the picture. After clicking these images, I talked to the kid and discussed what he would like to do next in life. He happily answered he would like to spend most of his time on the farms because he enjoyed it so much.



Pattankodoli Series

My culture is my identity and my personality. It gives me spiritual, intellectual and emotional distraction from others and I'm proud of it.







Money has its own identity

Giving a warm shoulder





Time Travel

by Mustafa Pratapgadwala

I'm stuck at home, and you're stuck at home. We're all stuck at home. Jetting off to some fun-filled destination like we used to might not be in the cards for a little while yet. But what about travelling through time? I know it's off the theories, but we all travel forward in time, not in the dull manner of waiting for the future to arrive, one second at a time. What if you could zip through time at will, travelling forward to the future or backwards to the past as easily as pushing buttons on the dashboard of a souped-up DeLorean, just like in the movie *Back to the Future*?

We all have encountered movies that depict time travel and are familiar with the word 'Time Travel' and its theories. Travelling through time always excites us because of the possibility that we can witness the future, or can go back to the past to relive the memories that are close to us, but ever wondered from where the word Time Travel emerged? How did it come to be? What is its identity? Or how it turned from fantasy to a potential field of research?

One of the first times, the term 'Time Travel' was spoken of, was in the myths. Some ancient myths depict a character simply skipping forward in time. In Hindu mythology, the Mahabharata mentions the story of King Raivata Kakudmi, who travels to heaven to meet the creator Brahma and is surprised to learn when he returns to Earth that many ages have passed. The Payasi Sutta tells of one of the Buddha's chief disciples, Kumara

Kassapa, who explains to the sceptic Payasi that time in the Heavens passes differently than on Earth. The Japanese tale of "Urashima Taro", first described in the Manyoshu, tells of a young fisherman named Urashima-no-ko who visits an undersea palace. After three days, he returns home to his village and finds himself 300 years in the future, where he has been forgotten, his house is in ruins, and his family has died.

One of the first stories to feature time travel using a machine is "The Clock that Went Backward" by Edward Page Mitchell, which appeared in the New York Sun in 1881. However, the mechanism borders on fantasy. An unusual clock, when wound, runs backwards and transports people nearby back in time. The author does not explain the origin or properties of the clock.

Theoretically, Time travel refers to the idea of moving between points in time. It is analogous to movement between points in space by objects or people, usually with the help of a hypothetical device called a time machine.

It has been a fantasy for at least 125 years and it's something that physicists and philosophers have been writing serious papers about for almost a century.

The concept of Time Travel became popular among physicists when Albert Einstein came up with an idea about how time works. He called it

relativity, which proposes that time is an illusion that moves relative to an observer. An observer travelling near the speed of light will experience time, with all its aftereffects (boredom, ageing, etc.) much more slowly than an observer at rest. Einstein developed his theory of special relativity in 1905. Along with his later expansion, the theory of general relativity has become one of the foundational tenets of modern physics.

Sir Einstein's theory has inspired many scientists and among them is Ronald Mallett, also called the father of time travel is an American theoretical physicist, academic and author, who gained a bachelor's degree in physics, followed by a master's and a doctorate, specializing in Einstein's theory. Mallett posits that by twisting time into a loop, one could travel from the future back to the past -- and then back to the future. And this is the idea of a wormhole, a sort of tunnel with two openings. Mallett suggests that light could also be used to affect time via something called a ring laser and for quite some time, he has also been working on plans for a time machine. This technology would be based upon a ring laser's properties in the context of Einstein's general theory of relativity.

Further in the progression of time travel, different theories and paradoxes were proposed. Scientists use many of these paradoxes to discredit the idea of time travel. The grandfather paradox is perhaps the most well-known of all the temporal paradoxes. This problem would occur if you could travel back in time and kill your grandfather,

thereby preventing you from ever being born. This effectively ends your entire existence. You wouldn't have been able to travel back in time to murder your grandfather. This is called an inconsistent causal loop. This paradox can also be used to your advantage. If you can travel back to Hitler's death, then Hitler would not exist in the future. Therefore, there is no need to go back to history. This creates a huge problem because time travel cannot exist if it is incorporated with these issues. Time travel is a complex concept that tests our logic and the very laws of physics that this universe is built upon. Little evidence of time travel exists due to the extreme conditions (speed, etc.) required for it to take place.

Regardless of the scientific possibilities of time-travelling, there are many moral, economic and social factors to consider. In conclusion, I leave you here with a question.

If one-day time travel was practically possible, who could use it? The scientists and rich, or could it be made available for everyone?

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Illustration 'Epicenter' by Neha Arora



The Niche of a Time

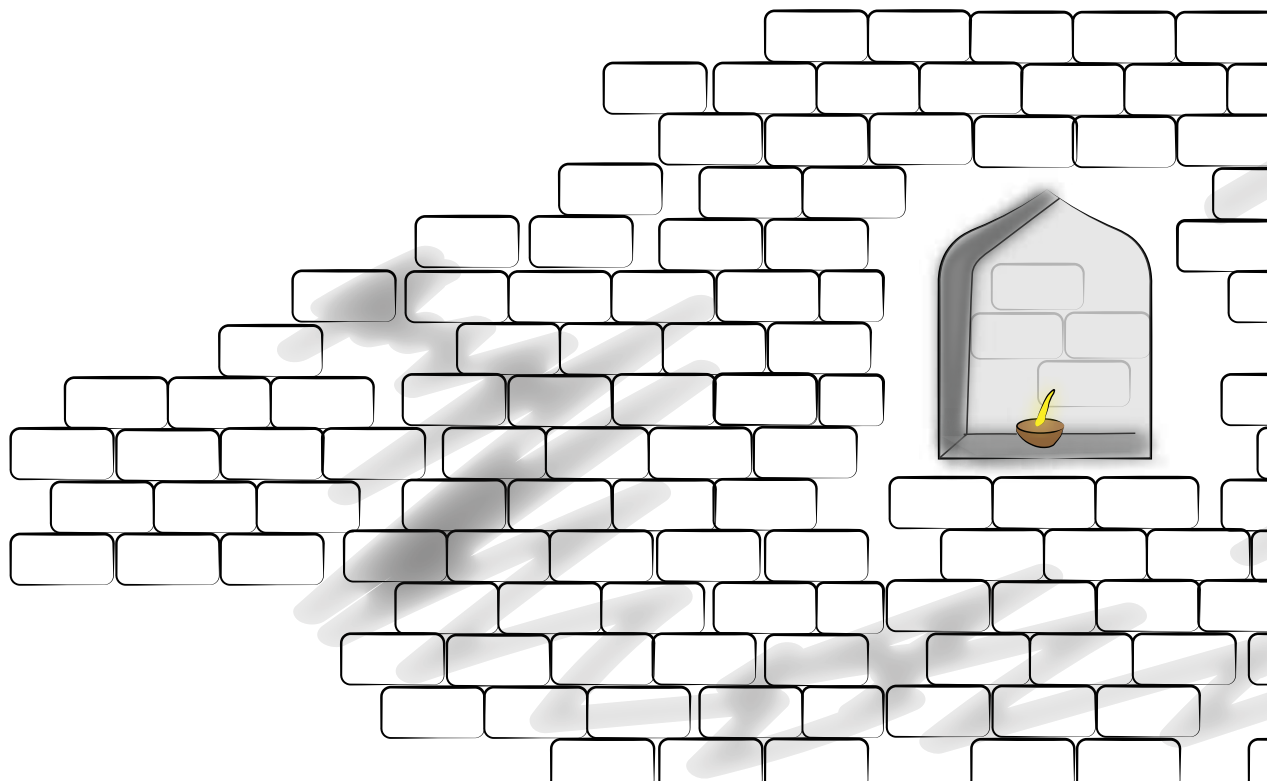
by Sadhya Bhatnagar

Some objects form an intrinsic part of daily lives, often becoming defining characteristics of a time or place. Elements from the built environment that we inhabit commonly fit these descriptions. These architectural or interior design elements might have transcended from their purposes of personal representations of taste into larger conventions found culturally. These object types then start to represent a time and a place within the culture and identify that specific epoch.

Such is the case of the small niche found in the thick walls of old Indian houses. My mother recalls it as a standard feature in all the homes she visited in her early life. Fondly remembering those old houses, she calls this niche an '*aala*'. Usually found on a wall in the living area or bedroom, the arch-formation was typical of Indo-Islamic architecture. Often, the *aala* could be found on the external walls of the

house, carrying the odd lantern. No matter the region or architectural style, this alcove was found in most pre-colonial structures. The most customary use of the *aala* was to place a lit lamp within it. The inset walls then acted as a lampshade, reflecting the light from the flame into the room. It could also be used as a shelf to store everyday objects or hang something on a nail on the back wall. In more compact homes, it commonly held a small temple or religious books. For inhabitants of the house, this alcove existed in the background humdrum of their everyday lives, and only in its absence is it remembered as something that used to be.

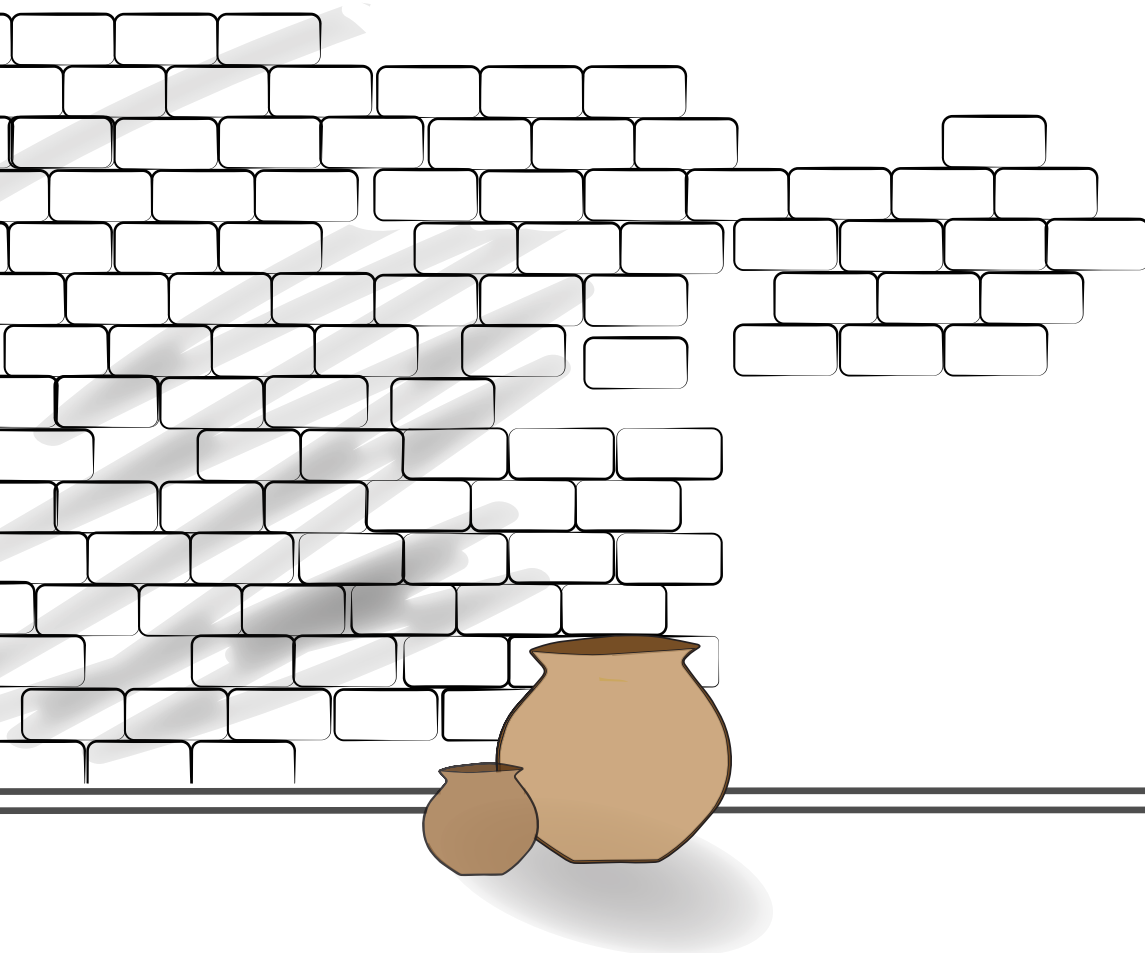
In the modern Delhi apartment we live in today, built in the late 1990's, this simple architectural element is absent. One of the possible reasons for the disappearance could be that the thickness of walls has reduced over time. The dimensions of the



old stone walls allowed for a deep arched niche that would not result in a hole in the wall or disturb the structure's integrity. Its primary function of holding an oil lamp also became obsolete with the electrification of light sources. The only other place I have come across where the aala is mentioned separately as an element is in the blog posts of a photographer named The Delhiwalla. In a 2017 article for the popular daily newspaper 'Hindustan Times', titled 'Delhiwale: Talking about Taakh', he calls this niche a '*taak*' and says that this is a feature that is now lost to history. However, structures frozen in time, or houses in villages still shadowed from contemporary architecture, contain these elements even today. The most exciting part of this article is the author talking about urban legends surrounding the *taak*. According to them, *taak*'s are supposed to be "the doors and corridors through which the *djinns* (spirits) travel from one house to

another". I doubt the legitimacy of this supernatural claim, but it is nonetheless exciting to imagine.

Sometimes we find these niches in modern homes that try to emulate a sense of Indian traditionality in them. Without the organic, unordered ways of the old aala, though, they just seem like a beautiful element, a wealthy homeowner who saw the design on holiday in Morocco and decided to replicate it inside their home. However, that just goes to further the universality of the humble little niche in the wall.



What is in a Stage Name?

by Deep Thacker

Names are not just words; they're synonymous with the identity of the person. Stage names carry the artist's identity in a similar sense and act as a mark for recognising the artist's style. EPR, one of the leading faces of Indian Hip-Hop currently, got his stage name from a combination of three related but distinct arts: emceeing, poetry, and rapping. He has created music throughout his fourteen-year journey that serves as an example of each of the three arts represented in his stage name. Stage names also carry great emotional and professional significance for the artists. These names sometimes come from fascinating incidents, often from their musical style. Sometimes they are chosen arbitrarily, but they always find their relevance in the artists' journey. I connected with some musical artists to see what was behind their stage name and how they came up with it.

Real Name: Vinay Vasani
Stage Name: vinayvvs / vinayvvseast
Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra
Genre Of Music: Hip Hop/ Rap
Instagram: @vinayvvseast
YouTube: vinayvvs



VINAYVVS

"The first half of my stage name is my first name, while the second half does have a variety of interpretations. 'vvs' bears the initials of my surname and is also a very uncommon type of diamond. It is also a reflection of my braggadocio style. I'm often also called 'vinayvvseast' as east reflects my ghetto, the place where I started making music, as well as my inspirations for music - Dave East and Vivian Divine (from Andheri East). All that said, my name takes my songs, my inspirations and my style with it everywhere."

Real Name: Abhinaba Paul
Stage Name: Toba
Location: Gurgaon, Haryana
Genre Of Music: Neoclassical / Modern (Piano),
Orchestral, Trap / Hip-Hop
Instagram: @_abhipaul
YouTube: Toba

“My stage name took birth in an improvisation game, got linked to an internal joke and then moved to a point where it becomes more recognisable than my real name. So when I decided to release music, I felt it right to honour my pet name and surprise my friends by using it as my stage name. The amusing thing is that in my neighbourhood, and even with my peers and family, I am called 'Toba' and not by my real name.”



Real Name: Shisir Abhijeet Marathey
Stage Name: CryGene
Location: Nagpur, Maharashtra
Genre Of Music: Hip Hop / Rap
Instagram: @crygene
YouTube: CryGene

“Mom's second marriage, step-father, rebellious blood, new house and new friends, along with a rough breakup, rendered my poetry into rap songs. It proved to be a medium that helped me articulate my sentiments at that time. After so much going down, my emotions were certainly not upbeat. I used to cry as if it was simply a part of my genes. So when I began rapping, I thought of combining these words and finally coming up with 'CryGene', as it will always have a context to where it all started for me in music.”

Real Name: Vishal Vashistha
Stage Name: Raja Billy
Location: Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh
Genre Of Music: Hip Hop / Rap
Instagram: @iamrajabilly
YouTube: RAJAOFFICIAL

“When I started as a rapper, my intention was not just to make music, but to make quality content and genuinely represent the scene. I felt that 'Raja' was a perfect term to justify this thought, representing the scene like a king. The second part of my stage name 'Billy' is what I only picked up because I wished to incorporate an English word into the stage name. From where I come, it is believed that English words bring respect and weight to the name. There wasn't much thought behind choosing specifically Billy.”





Real Name: Ravi Mishra
 Stage Name: Impulse
 Location: Boisar, Maharashtra
 Genre Of Music: Hip Hop / Rap
 Instagram: @_impulse_official_
 YouTube: impulse Tv

“I was in 12th grade, around 2015, when I was first introduced to Hip Hop and Rap music through the music channels. Soon after that, I learnt the concept of stage names. Around the same time, I planned to launch myself as an artist with a debut single. I was browsing for some decent stage names when I looked at a bike on my street -- Hero Impulse. It immediately struck me that I should have 'Impulse' as my stage name but it was long after that I recognised its meaning. I have never thought about changing it to anything else, as I found that it suited my style.”

Real Name : Raj Darekar
 Stage Name : RADA
 Location : Pune, Maharashtra
 Genre Of Music : Hip Hop/Rap
 Instagram : @radavishay
 YouTube : RadVishay

“In the early stage of my career my stage name was my first name 'Raj'. One evening, after a performance, one of my listeners came to me and said my music was 'bang bang' and that I should consider changing my stage name to 'Rada' which meant the same. I instantly knew he was right. So since that encounter my stage name is 'Rada'.”



Real Name: Mainak Ghosh
 Stage Name: Logarhythm
 Location: Mumbai, Maharashtra
 Genre Of Music: Hip Hop/Rap
 Instagram: @_logarhythm
 YouTube: Logarhythm

“I believe in the expression of ordinary people -- their experiences, beliefs and identity -- in my music. Keeping this thought in mind, my name splits into separate terms: 'Log' means people in Hindi, while 'Rhythm' represents a voice. These two merged to form Logarhythm - 'People's Voice' and thus indicate my commitment to bring forth the voice of the people through my music.”



Real Name: Ravi Baghel
Stage Name: Nakaab X RaCo
Location: Agra, Uttar Pradesh
Genre Of Music: Hip Hop/Rap
Instagram: @nakaabxraco
YouTube: Naam Nakaab

“The two different terms: Nakaab and RaCo, emerge from two different attitudes. I'm used to being quiet in front of my family, mainly because of my stammering issues. Although my friends know what I feel and what's going on in my mind - meaning I wear a mask of calmness everywhere else, adding the first word 'Nakaab' to my stage name. The second term 'RaCo' is a blend of Ravi and Coco, as my friends call me chocolate and coco because of brown skin, so it's a mixture of those terms. They all put together and gave me my stage name 'Nakaab X RaCo’.”



There is a well-established notion of dual identity in music culture. The number of exciting stories behind stage names only keeps growing. This amazes me since I frequently deal with several artists whose identities are not the same as their names. On stage, a real-life monk-like artist may provide a pumped-up performance and vice versa. This appears to be a significant justification for using stage names, which allows for creating two distinct personas that can be quite unlike.

All of these artists' music is one part of the tale, but I believe that the person who delves deeper and learns their origins and backgrounds will better understand his art and the artist himself.

Let there be Light

by Nikita Teresa Sarkar

I recently experienced a Brazilian wax for the first time, the waxing of hair in the most intimate and sensitive part of the female body. It was awkward, embarrassing, painful and tainted with a sense of shame. The room felt like it dissolved in my peripheral vision, and the only thing I remember vividly is the solid white light that shone above my head. It served a purpose greater than visibility - it calmed the mind and aided the experience. The feeling was very similar to lying on an operation table. I have had two operations till now in my 30 years of life, one of them involving local anaesthesia. I could see, but not feel, most of the bloody procedure.

Interestingly, the most vivid memory is the solid white light that lit above the operating table. It somehow made things better. I do not know how, but it did. Both the operation table and beautician's table are part of a very intimate process – one that requires us to strip our clothes – and it is curious how the bright lighting of the environment helps reduce the sense of shame or embarrassment.

It is undeniable that lighting sets the mood of a room. Whether it is the theatre, clubs, parks or a home, the lighting (or lack of it) contributes to the overall environment of a place and serves a purpose that is more than visibility. In theatre, for example, light design is considered a primary skill and serves as the source of visibility, mood, tone, ambience, era and energy in a scene. In our daily lives, the intensity of light decides the nature of activity too. Broad daylight is preferred for work productivity, whereas the dim moonlight of the night is reserved for leisurely, intimate or “shady” activities. Dimly lit public places like parks, under bridges, bus stops or even pedestrian walkways are also good sites to study the effect of light design in our built environment. One of our primary non-verbal communication is mediated through lights – the traffic signal. And one of the primary festivals of India is also dedicated to light – Diwali.

Before the invention of the electric bulb, oil lamps and furnace fires provided light and warmth after dusk. Bonfires were the site of community

engagement with food, music, rituals and storytelling. Some ancient civilisations, including the Mayan and Egyptian culture, worshipped the Sun as Earth's primary source of light and energy. There is evidence to suggest that the ancient Egyptians also studied the effect of different colours on emotion and mood. The biblical story about the origin of Earth even starts with ‘Let there be Light’. Vedic traditions, too, speak of the different coloured lights emanating from the seven chakras of the human body. In the early 1900s, Swiss psychologist Carl Jung did an extensive study on the effects of colour on mood and developed colour therapy that laid the foundation for art therapy. He is quoted as saying, “Colours are the mother tongue of the subconscious”. Therefore, historically light has been a symbol of hope, new beginnings, truth and life. With that context, the light design of spaces contributes to the psychological well-being of the inhabitants. In the 1780s, theatre-makers used coloured glass in oil lamps to create shades of lighting. Today, there are many different kinds of bulbs available in the market with varying intensity and colour.

However, the experience of the operation table and the beautician's table is etched in my mind because it calmed the mind in an otherwise awkwardly tense situation. I wondered if the source's brightness attracted the gaze and then blurred out most of the peripheral vision. Or perhaps it was due to the psychological displacement mechanism, wherein the discomfort of the situation calls for object-fixation for distraction. I could not stop myself from thinking that I have preferred dim lighting or partial darkness in other intimate encounters where I have taken off all my clothing. In a state of exposed nudity, light generally makes me uncomfortable. I think it is because I am culturally conditioned to associate body-nudity-shame-darkness in my mind. And so, the solid white light becomes the source of a sub-versed experience: an encounter where the source of discomfort (light) becomes a medium of comfort.

Illustration by Divnoor Kaur



Taken for Granted

by Kriti Jalihal



What does a door mean to you?

During the lockdown, when all of us were forced indoors and had to adjust to using a shared space 24X7, I understood the importance of it.

It is a door that makes it possible to have “space” and boundaries. It can signify security and privacy, challenges as well as opportunities; it can make one feel welcome, but also unwelcome. It creates partitions, yet unifies people.

We never really observe doors when they are kept open; it’s all about the other side than the entrance itself. It takes the closing of a door to make us take a step back and trace our footsteps.



Illustrations by Kriti Jalihal

Kaka's Local Grocery Store

by Sweta Bhushan



Photograph by Sweta Bhushan

How often have you wandered in your kitchen, looking for a crucial ingredient that you thought you had, while your food simmers away on the stove? A little stream of panic washes you over. You hastily switch off the stove and head to the local store to grab the missing ingredient. At the dinner table, you relish your food and tell your family if not for Kaka's local grocery store (uncle's local grocery store), there would have been no medley of flavours sitting on the table right now! After boasting, you get back to your delicious meal. But have you realised how pivotal Kaka's local grocery store can be in our daily life? Do we recognise the significance of this humble convenience store? The Kirana store (local grocery store) is reliable, sustainable and efficient. But it goes beyond that and shapes the identity of the neighbourhood in numerous guises.

Kaka's Local Grocery Store has multiple identities across the country, sometimes 'Mudir Doka', 'Rashan Dukan', other times the universal 'Kirana' stores. Having moved across numerous states during my childhood, I still remember Cheap and Best's ample

supplies from Powai, which turned from a humble "all items available" store to an airconditioned micro supermarket, but never without the local supplies! Manipal Stores' fancy snacks from my college days would be flocked with students, especially every year when they needed hostel supplies. We never pondered the name when I lived in Thane and later labelled it as 'the store downstairs'. Next to my Nani's house in Kolkata, the Kirana store was merely called 'Raju's Doka'. The Kirana store has withstood the test of time and continues to do so. But how their identities and the relationship they share with people are defined is distinctive for their customers. There is an identity of 'being perpetual' that the presence of a Kirana Store inevitably exhibits. There is a sense of accountability in the Kaka (or Kaki) presiding over the neighbourhood store. Even long after you've left the setting, the sense of familiarity that permeates is one of the most significant identities of a Kirana Store.

The identity of the Kirana Store evolves with every new connection, and a well-placed store enhances access and reach. These stores remain lively because

of the daily activity around them - an uncle coming to the store twice to buy a cigarette and sip on some chai or the cook picking up her daily supplies. This trait of the local stores translates well in terms of safety for women, especially when navigating through dark residential blocks during night hours.

The more emotional connections include the customer-seller relationships, which boast high trust levels. The habitual act of saying 'khatha me likh lijiye' (write the prices of the goods in the record) marks a strong indicator of faith and familiarity. Another favourable aspect of heading out to your local grocery store is the access to fresh goods every day. The comfort of being within walking distance to one or inquiring about home delivery is undeniable. How many times have we asked for something unavailable but gladly found it the next day? These eco-friendly neighbourhood stores are indeed our kitchens' best friends! After all, aren't the best friends the most reliable ones? Local sourcing of supplies encourages local markets and benefits the local community instantly. They also remain sustainable with the use of paper bags or parcels.

A striking element of their identity is their interdependent existence. Most communities are furnished with several local stores a couple of metres from each other. In this manner, they combine to form an ecosystem of their own in the built environment. Finding the bag of flaked rice in 'Neelnath Store' instead of the regular 'Maya Stores' has been a game-changer for the poha breakfast on

Sundays! This level of dependency rose to new heights during the 2020 and 2021 lockdown when they became our caretakers, providing for our needs and our only recreational spots.

Local grocery stores are convenient, reliable, efficient, and green stores and overlooked impact creators of their neighbourhoods. They work as agents of vigilance, quick chats, shoppers, etc. While they may seem to merge with residential buildings, they double as great lively corners, distributed throughout neighbourhoods. A decentralised system of consumer businesses can help not just the local providers but also the consumers. It cuts down on travel time and can help users greatly. The further dissipation of similar pockets leads to robust mini-ecosystems spread across cities, creating smaller circles of dependencies instead of larger ones. Therefore, this paves the way for a more sustainable and hopeful future. The identity of Kaka's local grocery store as the 'convenience store next door' is one of them, but it does not stop there. They fuse with our surroundings to create safer spaces, establish social relations and deeper connections with consumers. They are the closest, eco-friendly outlets for our needs but have also proven our only place for needs during tough times. They illustrate how Indian streets, towns and cities function by establishing simple human connections - sometimes lovely enough to let you take a free tea cake and sometimes slyly tattling about Sharmaji's son!



Hawker in cycle rickshaw carrying pots

Rajkumar Stabathy

Autoricksaw

<https://sketchindia.wordpress.com/2014/06/04/sketching-in-jayanagar/>

Cafe illustration

<https://mymodernmet.com/es/dibujos-en-acuarela-zhifang-shi/>

Calcutta Bungalow Photo

<https://creatorscult.com/calcutta-bungalow-where-heritage-greets-you-with-modernity/>

Vietnamese cafe illustration

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BLSxtzbheLG/>

Bird

<https://www.artfinder.com/product/barn-swallow-hirundo-rustica-9fe1/#/>

Cat

<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/a7/cf/bc/a7cf-bc3446ea3d8640f24eed1a7dac1.jpg>

Bird 2

https://www.pngitem.com/middle/iRixx_bird-flight-swallow-flock-transparent-birds-flying-silhouette/

Isolated Young tree



<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/isolated-young-tree-elena-eliseeva.html?product=art-print>

Bushes, trees

<https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-illustration-set-green-trees-bushes-hand-drawn-watercolor-illustration-various-pl>

Lady in Sari

<https://www.vishopper.com/cut-out-people/search/xjtbaw8vlf> Bread Cart

<https://imgur.com/gallery/J45Ah11>

Man with dog

Bhaskar Chitrakar - Kalighat Pattachitra (Jaypore)

Man sitting on a stool, window stall

<https://www.kaifineart.com/phamxuantrung>

Man selling fresh greens

<http://www.nonscandinavia.com/originals>

Building with cycle illustration

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BkrGHCohKYn/>

Foreground bush

https://disk.yandex.com/a/xfx9_p7O3WEPYg/5b015444edce9724d2b1a4b1

Digital Collage by Sweta Bhushan

place | 39

The Quest for her Identity

by Nitya Jois

Once upon a time, there lived a little girl. The girl was the apple of her parents' eyes and was also their lucky charm. They gave her everything that any child could need. They were a quintessential textbook family - healthy habits, loving ambience, wonderful birthdays and immense love. Despite the abundant love and care, the girl always felt that she was missing something. She was well aware that she should never complain. She was privy to all the sacrifices and troubles her parents went through to provide a good life for her. Concerning that, she kept leading her life happy and gay. But the feeling of something within her grasp but too far to grab never went away, and kept increasing as time went by. Finally, there came a time where she could not turn a blind eye to it and with little self-imposed choice, she started reflecting upon her life. Thus, she embarked on a long journey looking at milestones in the past. She hoped this would help her get answers to her current being and provide guidance in decision making for a fulfilling future.

At age 7, she realised that her childhood is quite different from her friends because they always had a younger or an older sibling. This made her realise that being an only child could have been a reason for her loneliness and disconnect with her friends. While her friends spoke about fighting and playing with their siblings, she only had stories to tell about the sister-sister games she played with her dolls Candy and Tweety. She remembered her friends telling her that they would love to trade places with her, so that everything their parents bought was for them alone, never to be shared. While her friends fancied that

idea, she longed to be able to share her things with anyone her age, older or younger. She wanted someone she could keep for herself all twenty-four hours and for seven days and even beyond! Having someone to tail behind or to tail one, seemed like the perfect relationship. Her young brain prayed hard to God to grant her that wish. Her naivety again brought to the forefront, emphasising that the reason she took the step was that her parents had instilled the belief in the almighty. Now, back to the present, she laughs at herself. Only if she could tell her 7-year-old self that children are a product of mating and not praying.

At age 11, she realised that the almighty doesn't always make every wish come true. In hindsight, it was during this age that she cultivated a sense of resilience. She remembered making a pact for herself, "If not a sibling, I will make my friends my family". And family did she make them! She imitated them, identified their likes and dislikes, ranging from clothing to TV entertainment to the type of food. She felt the only way she could get close to them was to act like them. Much to her chagrin, bound by the pact she made, she began adjusting and moulding herself according to her friends. She hates it, that unbeknownst to her, she entered a dark phase, where she almost forgot her roots, her identity and her aspirations, just for her hunger for acceptance to get satiated. The older her, now pities the younger confused self. If only she had someone to tell her then that self-acceptance comes from within and not from other people.

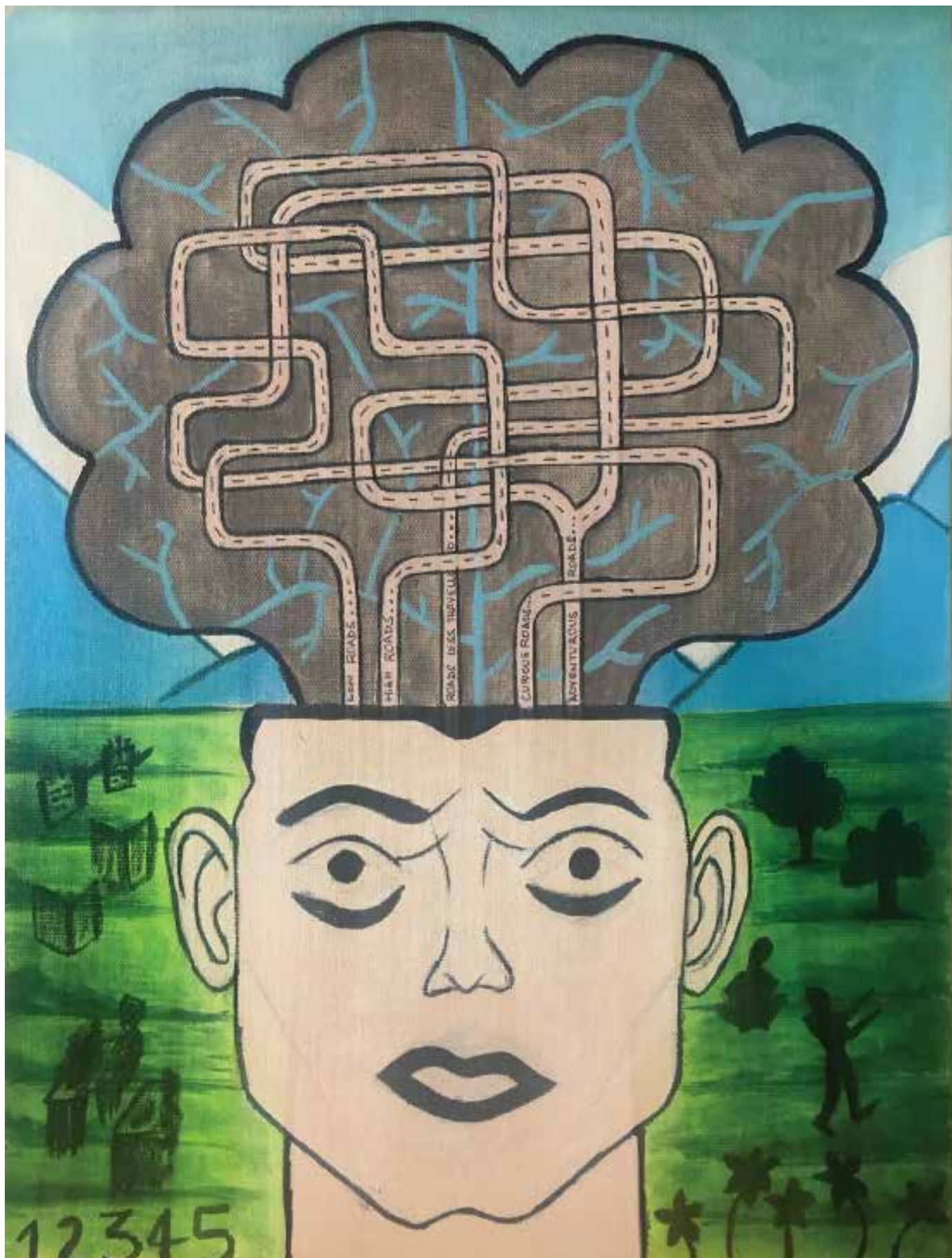


Illustration by Nitya Jois

At age 18, she found herself far from everything she previously knew. She got thrust into a very different social universe, where her years of self-training and adjustment run through multiple trials. She thinks this might have been a phase of growth. It is this phase that entirely made her unlearn and question everything about society and herself. She got to witness brawls happening between the northies and southies in the hostels, the groups between the seniors and juniors. She was made aware of the cultural gap between the international students and national students. Moreover, she realised the disparity in societal and cultural differences imposed on the male and female genders. She realised that the “privileged” world she was living in before, was the Dark age, sometimes self-imposed and sometimes due to over protection. The present her, now knows that this was the time that she started examining who she is culturally, demographically and humanely. What does she want to become, and where does she want to see herself? The present her is quite impressed by the innocent and scared but courageous self.

She struggled to answer questions directed towards her lineage. Her answer often used to be I am a Kannadiga, born in Bengaluru, brought up in Hyderabad and currently living in Mumbai. The reaction to such an answer would be “Oh! Because of your nature, we thought you were a Punjabi”, “Because of your hair, we thought you were a Malayali”, “Because of the way you look, we figured you were a Bengali”. She was tired of reactions like these. She would often wonder about how people had the authority to identify anyone as anyone except themselves just by their physical attributes. Was it wrong to prefer engaging in activities that were more “North Indian” than “South Indian” if you

were from the South? The current version of her understands that it was this curiosity of the inquisitive kid that made her unique. Her characteristics could and would never match up to anyone else and vice versa. It is her identity that is unique to her.

It was at this stage, with vigour and confidence like no other, that she started rebranding herself. She started believing in herself, and attempting all those activities that she always wanted to do, but never did because of her self-imposed adjustment criteria. She also gathered that she was a fool to have based her opinions and choices on what her friends and acquaintances deemed as acceptable. The present version is gleamingly proud of the journey she has had. Her inquiries with herself gave way for startling revelations, including the ones that were unexpected. Topping the list is her irresponsibility in neglecting and avoiding herself. Along with that also came a realisation that if she had not gone through those experiences, she would never have been able to carry herself with confidence in challenging situations. She would never have been able to recognise her X-factor, her versatility.

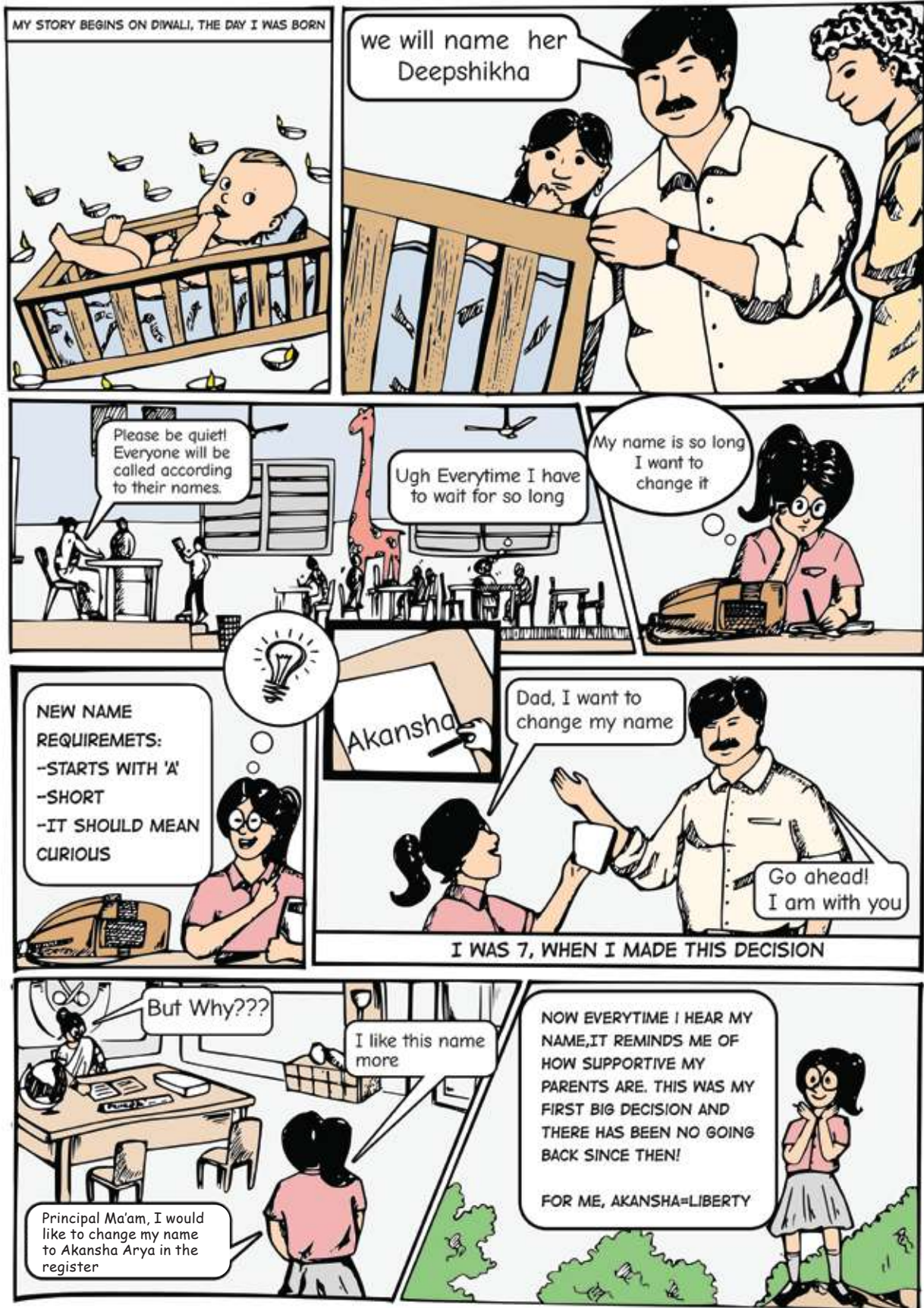
Now at the age of 26, with 9 years of self-reflection, learning and experimenting behind, the fact that her versatility and resilience is her core strength, has emerged. She also is now realising the influential role of her family in nurturing her. She knows now that a large part of who and what she is, is a result of the culture, discipline and way of life her family has embedded in her. From an unsure little girl with two ponytails to a confident woman who is clumsy at her very best, she shines bright with curiosity, positivity and happiness, ready to take on the world and go on adventures to further explore herself and her capabilities. The last 9 years were just the beginning, there is a whole future that lies in wait for her and she is determined to make the most of it!

The Renaming

Story by Akansha Arya

Comic by Rishabh Vishwakarma

Dialogues by Aanya Rohit Jain



The Darkest Hours

by Parveen Fatimah

Part I Fatimah

"There isn't a way to escape this Fatimah... It will get hold of me by any means. I am going to die."

I could feel his lips quiver as he talked to me on the phone. I couldn't wrap my head around what I had just heard. The news of the outbreak was disturbing, but more deafening were the words uttered by my friend Hussain. His terrifying sentences echoed in my head for the rest of the day. The sudden intrusion of this contagious mass of genes now known as Corona had ransacked our lives and left us in a total mess. Staying in Delhi for his IAS coaching hadn't been easy for my friend. He had always missed home, but this time the intensity of his struggle was more pronounced.

"Whenever you feel lonely, you can just say hello to your microbe friends... After all, your body has more microbes than human cells." I had once laughingly said while trying to cheer my homesick friend.

This quote was stuck to the wall of our microbiology lab - a place where sanitisers were not a novelty. I often prepared food for these microbes rather than killing them. I loved to watch these tiny tenants grow into colonies - colourful and colourless, shiny and matte, transparent and translucent, circular and concentric. This micro world has always amazed me and left me in awe.

I remember talking about microbes and their unique properties with *Ammi* while she added curd inoculums into the lukewarm milk. She didn't believe me when I said that curd was a product of microbial action. She had hated

microbes then, and the pandemic had just fueled the intensity with time. Since the news of the outbreak, *Ammi* had turned the house into a prison cell; nobody was allowed to leave the house. *Ammi* didn't even let *Abbu* go anywhere, not even to buy vegetables. I would see them arguing over small things in the beginning, but as days turned to weeks and weeks to months, father fell silent. He would watch the morning news and then spend his whole day upstairs alone in a room.

The pandemic didn't just change behaviours, but it had changed the whole atmosphere of places, be it roads, offices, mosques or homes. My otherwise quiet living room was now always brimming with the energetic voice of the media reporting news of death, poverty, and grief. The happy place of family gatherings had now transformed into an area with a tincture of fear and menace. I hated to be there, and I hated watching the news, but I stopped near the television one day and couldn't stop staring at the screen.

The reporter talking about the pandemic wasn't something new, but what caught my attention was the scoreboard on the screen. It was very similar to that of a cricket match. *What the hell was going on?* The news channel with a man versus virus scoreboard was so disturbing that I turned off the television. Mother scolded me for this and insisted on watching the news. Frustrated, I banged the door behind me and left.

My friend had a flight the very next day. I tried to sleep, but it was one of the many restless nights following the pandemic era. In the dim light of the night lamp, I kept thinking about the paranoid illusion of viruses that had

brewed up in the minds of people as a result of fear. They probably thought of viruses as some supernatural evil with, maybe, horns and tentacles used to suffocate people and leave them lifeless.

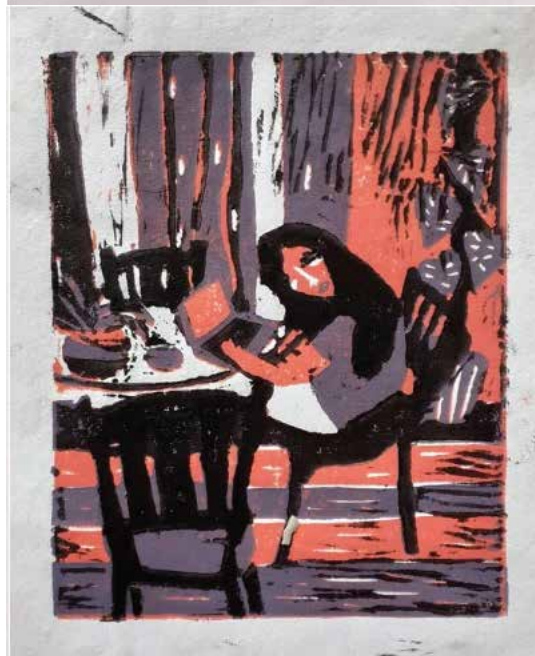
My mind and soul demanded tranquillity. I wanted to relive the good memories and thereby calm my mind. I thought of *Nigeeen* - a lake with ghats, at a walking distance from my home in Srinagar. It was a place blessed with serenity and peace where I fed fishes, red and gray. Their scales and my skin united with a touch so soft and therapeutic, arousing in me a feeling I would never be able to put in words. The technique worked. It took my soul away from a place of unrest to the shade of peace. With my eyes still closed the following morning, I moved my hands randomly through the mattress to find my phone. I grabbed it and dialed Hussain's number. I heard the voice of a lady speaking about pandemic safety and preventive measures. This was surely an awful start. I couldn't believe Hussain would use such a ringtone. Every event seemed like a conspiracy wanting to remind me of the crusader Covid-19, and stripping me of my sanity.

I sometimes felt getting infected would have been easier than these episodic tortures, that had become the new normal. I didn't fear the virus as much I feared the fear of the virus.

Part II Hussain

"Stop it!" Fatimah exclaimed. "Have faith in the Almighty. The Darkest Hours reveal a man's real strength, and I know you are a strong man."

Unable to hold back and conceal my emotional disturbance, I cried out my heart and expressed my fear of death to Fatimah. I could feel my voice trembling. She paused for a moment. My statement had left her bewildered. Finally, she spoke. Her words were



'Zoombied' by Kriti Jalihal
Medium: Linoleum sheet, carving
tool and printing inks

calm and consoling and motivated me to edge off my paranoia coupled with horror. After the phone call, I started to pack my stuff. A taxi driver had finally agreed to drop me at the airport. I would be boarding the flight to Srinagar the following afternoon. The driver had asked me to be ready at 3 am. This was probably due to the lockdown, which wouldn't allow the private vehicles to move during the day.

I had just finished packing and was tired and hungry. I had recently shifted to a new room and didn't prepare anything on my own. I used to eat from the *dhaba* nearby. Now that I wasn't left with many options, I unwrapped the last packet of biscuits and munched over it. It felt dry, and swallowing the bolus became difficult. I filled up my cup with water, which was the only utensil I had in the room. My eyes were burning with tears as I dipped the biscuit in the water. I was bursting with the desire to taste the food made by my mother.

I missed home.

I felt like an abandoned lamb waiting to be slaughtered by the mysterious virus disguised in human form. Death seemed to be wandering outside the door. I spent the entire night thinking about my family and friends in the valley.

I was ready with a mask on my face and gloves covering my hands. By 3:30 am, I was on the road waiting for the taxi to arrive. A taxi stopped by my side, and a short middle-aged man greeted me. He had covered his face with a dirty handkerchief. Wasn't he scared of the virus?

I was very cautious and avoided direct contact even while loading the luggage on the taxi roof. After loading the bags, I noticed my gloves had ripped off from one side when I opened the taxi door. I felt like a soldier entering the battlefield without a shield.

An eerie silence had befallen the streets. I felt as if I was hallucinating that a giant gulped up the inhabitants for dinner. I was yanked back from my imagination with a sudden jerk of the

vehicle. We had reached the airport. I had to pay 700 rupees, so I handed over two 500 rupees notes to the driver. As I forwarded my hand to receive the change, my eyes suddenly widened with terror. I saw the torn gloves and hesitantly stepped back. I asked the driver to keep the change and moved into the airport. I saw entirely different faces at the airport. To be more specific, I saw the faceless faces of humankind. Every single person was wearing a mask. Thrust with self-awareness, I realised that I was no different. I had also covered my bearded face to protect myself from the severe disease which was going rampant. Each person was restless and praying to reach their destinations as soon as possible.

I seated myself in one corner of the waiting room, that had the slightest possibility of human encounter. It was becoming difficult to breathe in the mask, especially with my beard.

I was just wandering in my thoughts when the phone rang. Fatimah was calling. Even though I was desperate to talk, I dared not to receive the call. I was wearing a mask and my gloves were torn. I was scared to even bring the cell phone near my face or mouth and removing the mask for talking or eating was the last thing I would do. I stuck to the mask even though I was hungry and almost breathless. My mind was brimming with tension and my stomach was twisted into knots. These were probably the darkest hours nourishing the fear—fear of the unseen.

Hussain craved for home, whereas Fatimah just wanted to break the cell and move out. He knew the pain of being lonely during the tough times, and she knew how hard it was to live with the arguments and the tantrums of the family members. The darkest hours provoked their emotional layers of strength and fragility. Both were battling the same pandemic in different circumstances, weaving within themselves the everlasting memory of their incomparable journeys.



Photographs by Parveen Fatimah

The Agogo Experience

by Emmanuel Adinkra Ntiamoah

Akwaaba. We are about to go on a journey to Agogo. This journey will mesmerise you. Agogo is a town in the Ashanti region of the country Ghana. The Ashanti area forms a significant part of the Asante Empire. The seat of the King, His Royal Highness Otumfour Osei Tutu II, is in Kumasi, the capital town of the Ashanti region. His representative in the town of Agogo is Nana Akuoku Sarpong, the Krotiene of the Agogo Township.



HRH Otumfour Osei Tutu II, King of the Ashanti Empire
Source: Ghana web



Nana Akuoku Sarpong,
Agogo Krotiene
Source: Harrison, 2020

About two hours drive from Kumasi is the small town Agogo Asante Akyem. This town is well known for its agricultural produce, especially plantain. Most of the people in the town are farmers or dealers of farming materials. The primary language of the people is Asante Twi.

Journeying to Agogo is an experience worth undertaking. In contrast to the capital cities, the serenity of the environment provides a healing touch. There is also a fresh, natural aura that embraces its visitors and inhabitants. When making a journey to Agogo from the capital Accra, it is prudent to take the state transport that is State Transport Corporation (STC), located a few minutes drive from the Central Business District. The vehicle then journeys through heavy traffic to leave the capital. The journey is mostly a smooth one. It takes about four hours to reach Konongo.

Konongo is a town that serves as a junction to Agogo on the Kumasi-Accra road. Before this, two hours into the journey, there is a rest stop to give the travellers time to stretch their legs, use the washroom, and get some snacks before the journey resumes. This is mainly at Linda Dhor, a private rest stop built along the road.

Back to Konongo, when you alight, taxis and trotro can be boarded to Agogo. When aboard any of these vehicles, they branch off the Kumasi-Accra road to the Agogo road. Immediately, the visitor is met with the meandering mountainous roads with forest vegetative cover that shoulders the road to the Agogo Township. This part of the journey always gives a first-time visitor the chills and zeal to make a return journey. The mountainous curves and

vegetation are also a beauty to behold. The air is also different from the capital, and the weather is colder compared to other parts of the country.

Smiles and the word “Akwaaba”, literally meaning “Welcome”, greet a person when they arrive. There is a high sense of community engagement in this township as everyone knows and communicates freely. Adults can send any child on an errand, and the parents would not fume over it. Most activities are done together. Going to the farm, for instance, is a collective activity. Before using vehicles as transportation to the farms, the locals would move together to their farms, sharing stories and taking family advice from each other. This served as a source of bonding for the families and a form of security while going to the farms. On their farms, they could shout out for help, and help would come from neighbouring farmers.

Funeral activities are highly revered in Agogo. It is said that what is done as a farewell to a family member who passed on shows the kind of life the person lived, the family's wealth, and how appreciative the family is to the deceased's life. A week after a person dies, a week-long celebration is organised. This is to announce the death formally and for family members to announce the date for the funeral. During this celebration, other persons such as sub-chiefs, clan heads and individuals arrive at the grounds to sympathise with the bereaved family. The bereaved family is not just the nuclear family but the extended family as well.

The funeral dates are generally set on weekends from Friday to Sunday. On Saturday morning, preparations by the bereaved family would have already been

Aerial view of Agogo Township and its mountains
Source: Facebook (Agogo Asante Akim), 2018



complete for the final funeral rites of the deceased to begin. Canopies, chairs, sound systems are hired for the activities. The whole town turns red and black - the colours for funeral ceremonies. Every family makes a conscious effort to visit every funeral ground whether they know the deceased or not.

Each family has the Abusua Panyin, and this person chairs all family ceremonies. This is the time each person exhibits their care, respect and support for each other. Even after the final rites and the deceased's body is buried, there is a sitting whereby individuals, organisations and families take turns to contribute to the funeral. This is called 'Nsaa bɔdeɛ'. This has been the lifeblood of the town and has kept it from falling apart. Funerals take place over three days. The first day is the final funeral rites and burial. On the second day, Sunday, the family continues sitting to collect the 'Nsaa bɔdeɛ'.

The final day Monday is used to account for the funeral and determine if there are any losses or profits. In either case, both are shared amongst the family members by the Abusua Panyin (family head). Disputes between family members and other pending issues in the family are also settled on this day. This serves as the local judicial service of the family. If this system fails to resolve the case, the town chief will take it to settle the matter.

The essence of this piece is to showcase the richness of the culture of my hometown. I started with journeying to the place to help environmental enthusiasts to come and enjoy the natural atmosphere. I believe nature has its therapeutic elements and that everyone reading this should plan a trip to Ghana and visit Agogo to experience the rich cultural and natural heritage.

Agogo holds a special place in my heart. I have learnt a great deal from my childhood interaction with my friends and family who reside there. Due to the togetherness and humanity inherent in the people, as children, we could go to our neighbours' houses,

play with the children, and eat from a dish served by the friend's family. To this day, although we do not reside in our hometown, this act of togetherness and communalism still lives with us. We accommodate neighbours and strangers alike in our house in the urban centre, as though we had known them for ages. People in the area we reside in now see us as unique people and often wonder why we behave that way. I believe this is due to the training and experience we have been privy to in Agogo.

In my hometown, there is a popular saying on everyone's lips i.e. "Nyame nti ɛbɛ yɛ yie", literally meaning "because of God everything will be fine". This optimism, I believe, comes from this phrase, and till now, I still see the positives with any given situation. I find myself in all these and realise that it is not by chance, but my being is a result of where I originate, and I am happy to be who I am.

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GLOSSARY

- Trotro: Trotro is a local transport bus that is a privately owned vehicle going short distances.
Akwaaba: This is a greeting in the Twi language which means Welcome.
Abusua Panyin: Abusua Panyin means family head.
Nsaa bɔdeɛ: Nsaa bɔdeɛ is the Twi name for the token and money paid by friends and family to the bereaved family as a token to help cover expenses for the funeral.



Clan heads and the Abusua Panyin of the Asene Clan in Agogo seated during a funeral of their deceased.
Source: Researcher, 2017

An in-law presenting gifts to the family of the deceased to sympathise with them
Source: Researcher, 2021



Kete dance on display at a funeral
Source: Researcher, 2021



Family and friends of the bereaved family greeting to the bereaved family
Source: Researcher, 2021

The Street of my Dreams

by Ishimwe Christian

What's life without happiness? I wonder.
What's happiness without freedom? I ponder.
What's freedom without justice? I ask.
Again, what's justice without peace? I mull.
That's what would influence the life of my dreams.

They say the only place where all wishes come true is in tales, but that won't halt me
from fighting for what I quarry,
a greater good that leads to people in both harmony and merry.
What a place would it be when hearts would be crowned with peace not sales,
That's certainly the city of my dreams.

I imagine myself sitting by the window,
gazing the elegance of the sun, beautiful as a rainbow,
I fancy looking outside and see happy folks singing,
Next to them, drums being beaten and people dancing,
That's obviously the street of my dreams.

I picture myself outside and see people sharing food with eagerness, no grudges, no
conflicts, no hatred, no racism with just respect. I conjure up seeing people laughing
with no anger, believing in a better life, singing with hope from what they expect,
that's definitely the street of my dreams.
I stepped outside, and saw people exquisitely greeting each other, young, old,
regardless of their background or wealth cuddling each other. I envision a society
gathered around to share the language of love, sharing the idea of what would
improve the community clean like a white dove, that's surely the street of my dreams.

Illustrations by Ishimwe Christian



Life Amidst Chaos

by Parveen Fatimah

*"Gar firdaus bar-rue zamin ast,
hami asto, hamin asto, hamin ast."*

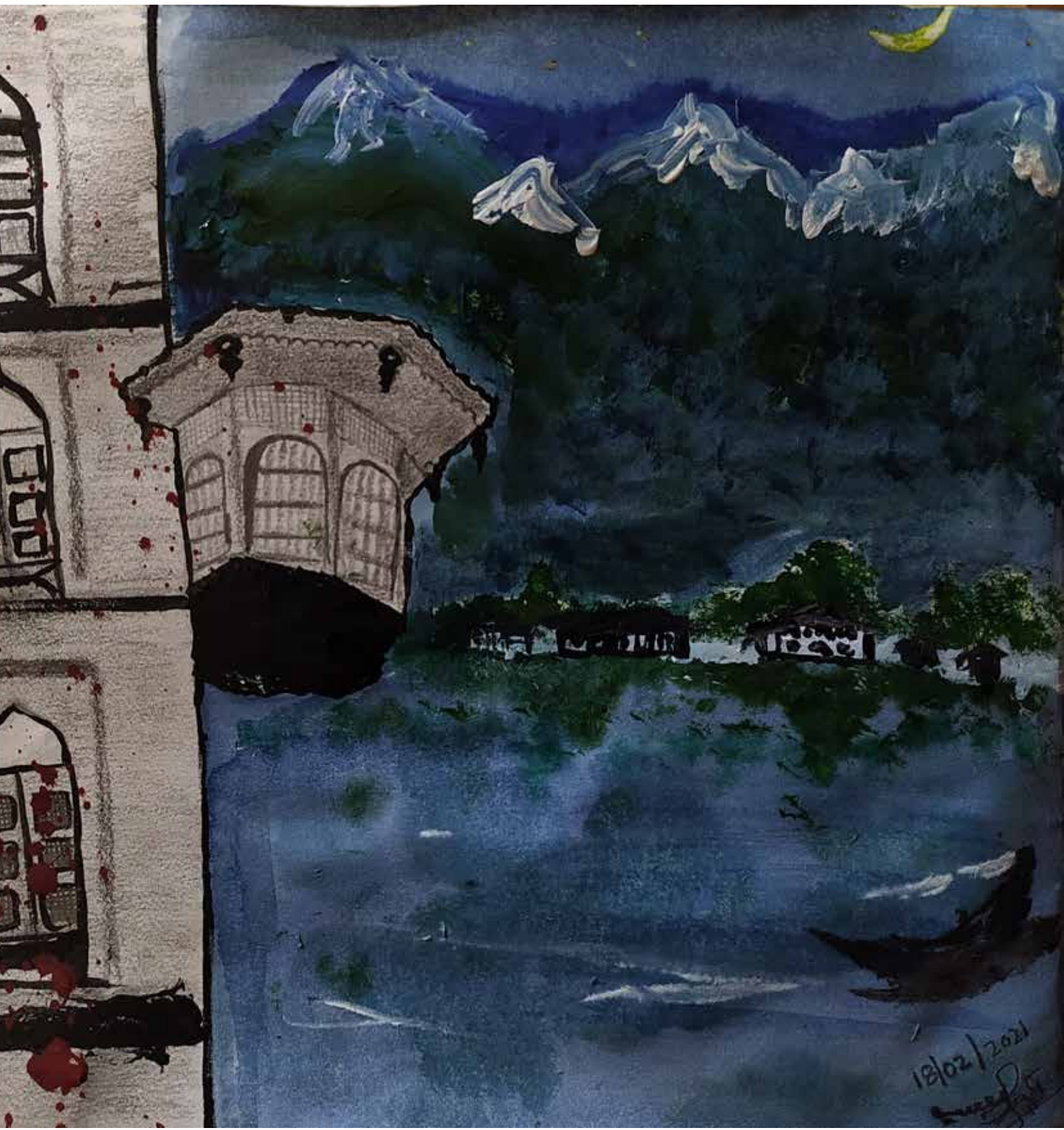
*"If there is a heaven on earth,
it's here, it's here, it's here."*

-Mughal Emperor Jehangir

The painting is themed around life in the valley of Kashmir. While the valley is known for its beautiful meadows and lakes, the bloodshed and chaos is a brutal reality that one cannot ignore. The closed windows and the blood-stained walls of the house narrate the story of the people who are trapped within their own houses during the chaos. However, the colors in the background in contrast to the black and white house signify the hope that one day the windows would open and the life would resume in the valley of stillness.

Illustration by Parveen Fatimah





18/02/2021
Suzanne P.

Being Queer

by Garima Kumari

Being in this heteronormative world never felt right to me. It always felt like there was a part of me I had to constantly underplay to fit in, and this was not just because of my sexuality. The dictionary meaning of the word queer is peculiar, strange, and that is just me. For as long as I can remember, I did not want to fit in, I always wanted to stand out, be it with my ideas, my way of talking, or anything.

The idea was certainly not welcomed in my conventional Indian family, and they constantly wanted me to be 'normal' (which meant obeying the authorities) so that I could have fewer shouting matches. I see myself as very fortunate that though such conditioning was there, my being was never un-queered. Their idea of 'normal' was accepting things without question, and I used to ask for logic in things. Like why can't we go to a temple during menstruation? Why not eat non-veg on Tuesdays?

You might be getting confused as to why am I talking about my personality, when queer is definitely used for sexuality. News flash: not for me. The word queer was used as a pejorative, for those having same sex desires in the 19th century, but by the early 20th century, people from the LGBT*QIA+ community started reclaiming the word.

For me, queer means something which is non-heteronormative, i.e., which does not really adhere to the boundaries limiting it. Even before I explored my gender and sexuality, I was queer in my mind. I really believe we all are born queer, but this human need of fitting everything in neat boxes is what diminishes our rainbow.

I don't want to advocate being queer or heterosexual, because there is a definite winner, but I really would want people to consider how differences can exist on a horizontal plane and don't have to be vertical and graded. For instance, I love pizza, but if I am made to eat a similar kind of pizza every day, I would get bored, and that is how I view homogeneity. While pizza toppings might be different, some things remain the same and the same is with people and their lives.

I do tend to become lost in thoughts while writing, I guess I just want to express that different words might mean different things to people, and that is absolutely fine, considering how language has inherent violence built into it, and a lot is lost while writing. Being queer for me has been an experience rather than just a label. It might be totally different for someone and that is their journey and totally valid too. We need to start looking at differences just as they are, and not by grading them.

This world has a lot of hate, let's try not to contribute to it further.

P.S.- The picture is my face when someone says anything about my story without knowing a darn thing

Positionality - Garima (she/her) is an agender pansexual person. The above experiences stem out of her positionality of being a savarna, middle-class, urban-dwelling queer. By no means are these statements generalizable.

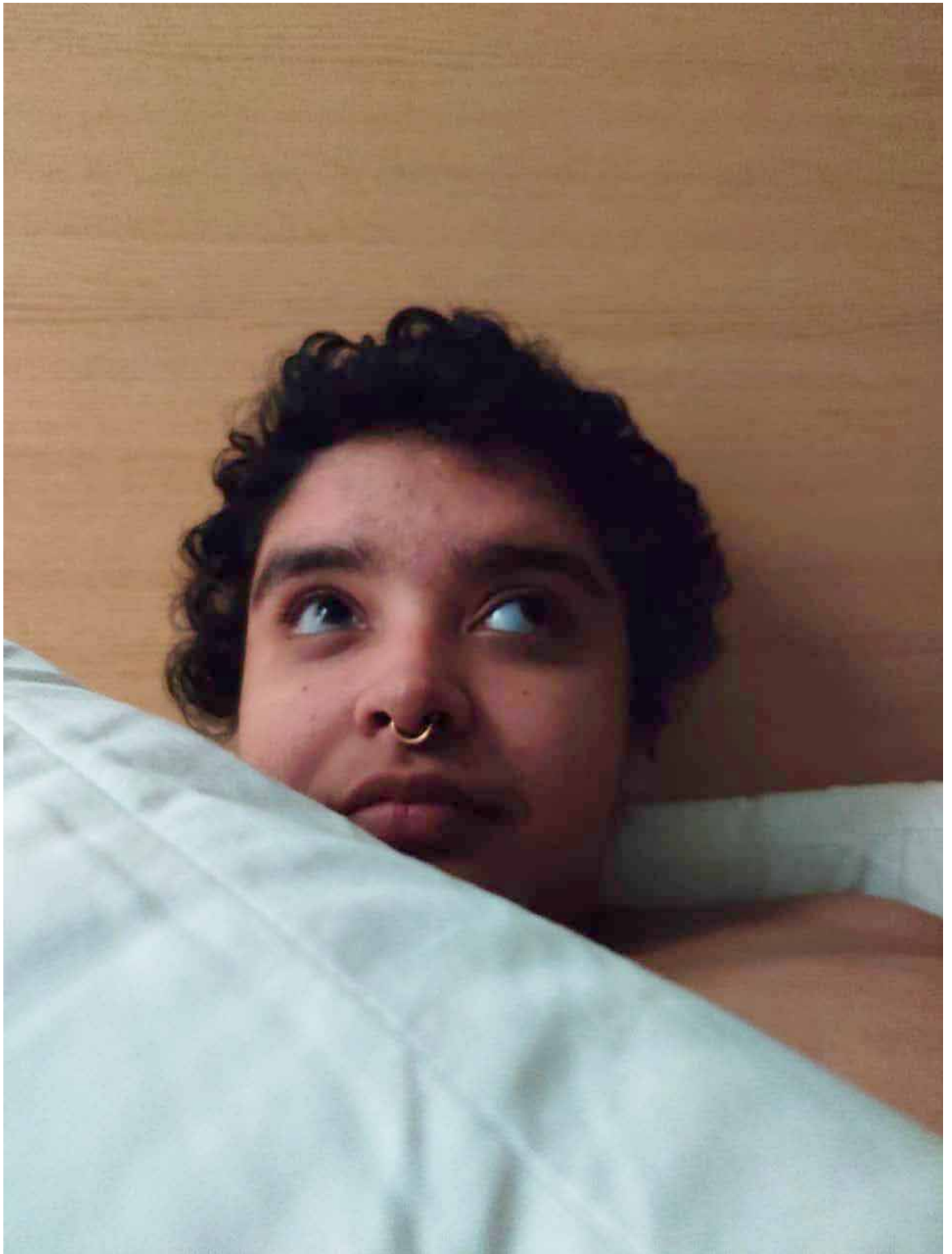
GLOSSARY

Queer - Strange, odd, and also used as a slang for homosexuals.

*LGBT*QIA+ Community* - Community of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans (which includes many gender non binary identities), Queer, Intersex, Asexual, + all the other sexual and gender diversities.

Agender - A person who does not associate with the gender they are assigned at birth.

Pansexual - A person who is attracted to people regardless of their gender identities.



How Does It Feel?

by Parveen Fatimah

The pictures presented in the document are from Kashmir . The focus of this work has been to explore the gendered use of places in the valley. How Does It feel?, provides a glimpse into the exclusiveness faced by women while travelling. The idea was to shoot the places I saw everyday while returning from university and convey some of the many emotions attached with them.



*Tujji- The barbeque
Hazratbal, Srinagar*

*Wet roads and weather of chills;
gathered man in smoke from grills.
Smell of seasoning and burning steak;
mouth-watered I watch them eat
It's their giggles and tickles and not just the meal,
I crave to walk in to know how does it feel.*



Rainawari, Srinagar
Taar- The wire

*With thudding heart I took the picture
of pointed muzzles of scary tincture,
with cold face and eyes burning with fire,
there stood a man behind the razored wire.
Terrified, I didn't know how to deal,
he would never know how does it feel*

*Nigeen Lake, Srinagar
The Ghat*

*On weekends when father travelled,
to beautiful Ghats, serene and gravelled,
stubbornly I would ask him to take me along,
to fishing where he thought I did not belong,
Sons had taken the land and also the waters
Was there no place on Earth for the daughters?
From distance I would watch the lake so Teal
trying to imagine, how does it feel.*

*Dargah road, Srinagar
Wath- The road*

*Each time, my drive is a new journey,
I see faces both warm and unfriendly
Some people still think women can't drive
With such community, will we ever thrive?
Seen but never heard,
every house has a caged bird
Will our wounded souls ever heal?
Empathise! you never know, how does it feel.*



Photographs by Parveen Fatimah

What's in a Name?

by Rajvee Desai

Everyone's story begins and ends with their name. The first thing you share with anyone about you is your name, and that directly or indirectly says a lot about you. It speaks of your religion, culture and language. I believe that people with unique names grab my attention and make me curious to know the meaning of their name and how they got it. This is one of the reasons why parents name their children with unique meanings, hoping for them to be one of a kind.

My name is Rajvee Dhiraj Kumar Desai. I belong to a Gujarati Hindu family, follow my first name, father's first name and last name. The last name is commonly a caste name. Just like every other Hindu family who commonly believe in giving names based on Rashi, sun signs. I was born on the 14th of August, 2002 – the first child of my parents and I have Tula (Libra) as my Rashi. My mom was very fond of Indian names that are posh and have a rich meaning. Rajvee means royal princess. She gave me this name because she loved how the name is pronounced and has rare chances of wrong pronunciation by Indians. She was very thoughtful while giving me this name, which I found only when people wrote my name wrong.

One day, a 9-year-old frustrated Rajvee walked to her mother, and said, "I have received the certificate of Good Conduct and Character, but my name has been written as 'Rajvi'. I'm tired of correcting them every single time. Are you sure you have chosen the correct spelling?"

My mom was confused about my question, so I tried to explain it to her. She told me to write my name in Hindi and then said that if I write my name in English, it should be written as 'Rajvee' and not 'Rajvi'. After that day, if anyone asks my name for them to write, I spell it out instead of leaving it for them to ruin with the wrong spelling.

Having lived in the United Kingdom for a couple of years, I have also experienced how wrongly the British pronounce my name. Perhaps it is because of certain consonants being pronounced differently, along with different intonation and stress in longer words. It is difficult for non-native speakers to say Indian words without carrying a certain amount of their accent into their speech. But I did meet people who were eager to learn how to pronounce my name correctly.

I was amazed to know that my mom changed my father's name in 2004. My dad was named 'Dhana Bhai Rabari' by my grandmother. Rabari is our sub-caste, which is socially and educationally backward, and many people who know Rabari, make such stereotypes. My mom was not convinced with how people treat us after only knowing our surname, and our surname doesn't match our actual lifestyle. Dhiraj means patience and she thought that our child Rajvee would love to carry the name 'Rajvee Dhiraj Kumar Desai' in future instead of 'Rajvee Dhana Bhai Rabari'. My dad appreciated my mother's viewpoint and was happily ready to change his name.

Since my birth, I have learned the importance of a person's name and I believe the change of one's name should be a deliberate decision.

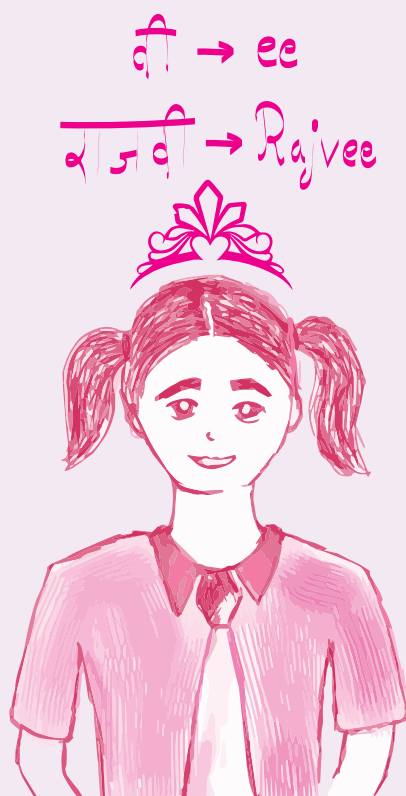
Rabaris tend to be nomadic pastoralists, traditionally cultivating camels. Only recently have they started maintaining goats and sheep also. We love our costumes, mythology, history and occupation but also lack adaptability. Rabari is a small community that is not ready to accept modern life. In this pursuit, Rabari became orthodox day by day, creating their philosophy. Some of them being -

perceiving men to be superior to women, undermining formal education and protesting against women empowerment. This is prevalent to date. There are so many things that I feel proud of about the community is that we have empathy and sympathy for our community people. We have unity within us, having survived with our art like language, costumes, embroidery etc and have transferred from generation to generation.

My mother is a daughter of an educated Rabari father who believed that his daughter should not follow the wrong teachings of the Samaj (cultural system). And she managed to incorporate the same beliefs. She wanted me to be courageous and powerful so none of the wrong practices of the community may affect my life, and that's why she named me Rajvee.

Growing up as a girl child, in a community that lacks faith in change, has been difficult. I've learnt many life lessons at a young age. Amidst all of it, my mother's faith in me, keeps me going. She repeats my name every time I am on the verge of giving up, reminding me that I am a queen who is born to have complete rule over my life. This is one of the main reasons for me getting annoyed when my name is pronounced and written wrong. It has shaped me in a way that I never feel like making fun of someone else's name. I make sure that I pronounce it right every single time.

What are the stories of our life? Who are we without these stories? The first story of my life that I didn't write is the 'Story of my name'. We don't write our own stories. Some of them play a big role in your life, without you having governed them. The best thing to do at these times is to accept them.





Uttarakhand: a Mysterious Exploration, a Rich Heritage

by Rashi

"It's always the same with mountains; once you have lived with them for any length of time, you belong to them; there is no escape."

-Ruskin Bond

Once in a lifetime, we experience something that creates a sense of longing and belonging simultaneously. Like an unfulfilled desire, we seek to go back to a place far from city chaos, where the mind and body find peace to pause and reflect.

But mountains are more than a casual getaway for me. Maybe the majestic mountains' mysterious identity generated a sense of curiosity within me. But having spent my childhood in Dehradun (located in Uttarakhand), one of the most beautiful cities of India, the landscape of mountains mesmerised me even as a child. I would capture them in my sketches or immerse myself in long walks through lush green forests. Ruskin Bond, whose writing focuses explicitly on mountainous regions, enhanced this enchantment. I naturally developed a strong connection with the

mountains with a prolonged stay in Dehradun for five years of undergraduate studies.

As destined, even my profession led me to the upper Himalayas where the remote village 'Kamad' resided in the laps of nature in a district named Uttarkashi. I had to work in that village while understanding the 'Garhwali' community by being a part of their day-to-day activities, observing their social, cultural, religious, political, heritage preservation and economic systems. All these perspectives shaped my personal and professional identity, and I was encouraged to discover hidden treks in the upper terrains of the Himalayas.

On one such exploration in the Kumarkot village, a small hamlet located in Uttarkashi, I learned about kumarkot caves from the locals. They mentioned that these caves could be found at the top of the village, tucked behind the bushes. Not many people knew about the caves, so I decided to explore and absorb their intrigue.



As per the stories narrated by one of the community's oldest members, tectonic movements created the Kumarkot caves. Another lore mentioned the 'Mahabharata' when the Pandavas ruled the village, and Lord Bheema paved the way leading from the caves to Uttarkashi. Storytelling holds an important place in the Garhwali community and culture. As a city girl, these stories seemed unrealistic. However, the intensity and honesty with which villagers narrated the stories changed my belief.

According to one of the stories, the cave stone 'Jasper' originates from one of the seven important holy sites in Vedic astrology, adding to the historical and heritage value of the Kumarkot village.

I saw a massive gathering of villagers sitting in groups and facing a 100-year-old temple with a generations-long legacy on my descent. Out of curiosity, I asked one of the villagers about the gathering and learnt they were engaged in an



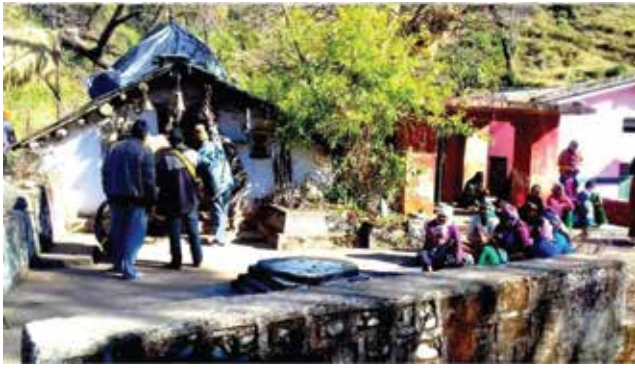
important ritual called "Devta pooja". Performed by the Garhwali community, it symbolises one of their strongest beliefs in the ultimate power of God/Devta for safeguarding their community. This scenario was new and unusual for a person like me, a partial atheist. Out of interest, I decided to capture this event. The villagers further explained that Devta is a form of their ancestor, and they worshipped the spirit – a custom exclusive to this community of Kumauni and Garhwal regions.

The pandit of the village led the rituals while chanting mantras to manifest the ultimate power in the human. The loud beating of the drum beats invoked the Devta inside the human. During this ritual, villagers often carry a holy tool such as a knife or a bow and arrow, and to pay homage, they perform a sacred dance in a circle right in front of the temple.

As a stranger to the pooja, it was hard for me to understand the strength of belief in the villagers, who consulted their 'Devta' before taking any decision. The power of belief resembled that of any political leader and system which controls and safeguards the village.

During the community building construction, a toilet block was proposed by us right next to the building, taking into account all the practical reasons. Per the design proposal, the toilet faced the temple, even though it was at a distance.

On further discussions with the villagers, they told us



to seek the permission of Devta for the construction of the toilet block. It did not matter to them; they believed in their God more. We abided since they were the leaders here.

The next day, after witnessing and documenting the Devta pooja, it was time for my colleague and I to manage and coordinate things at the construction site. The nature of work on-site was exhaustive, but at the end of the day, I would be treated to delicious traditional pahadi cuisine at the house of Nirmala Devi.

She would make 'Mandwe ki Roti' (a special kind of chapati made up of ragi wheat and baked on 'Chulah'), 'Laal Pahadi Chawal' and 'Laal Pahadi Rajma' (red rice and mountain kidney beans), all freshly collected from her kitchen garden. An essential highlight of the pahadi food is that it is baked and cooked using traditional methods, carefully preserved.

I was lucky to witness one of the traditional methods known as 'Gharat' as I made my way down the village path. A water-operated stone flour mill that uses the energy of running water to grind grains into flour, the 'Gharat' was propped over a gushing river. The method was most operational during the monsoon season when the flow of the water is maximum. After some memorable days in this tiny hamlet, it was time for me to head back into the chaotic life of the city. While moving down the roadside, I saw a lady from afar, carrying a huge basket of dry leaves, heavily loaded on her shoulders. One of the daily activities of



every hilly woman is to feed their domestic animals, a source of livelihood for them.

Due to this strenuous physical activity, a lot of hilly women face severe vulnerabilities. On average, a hilly woman works for 18 hours per day since most men migrate to the city side in search of work. They try their best to create a balance between domestic chores and outside activities.

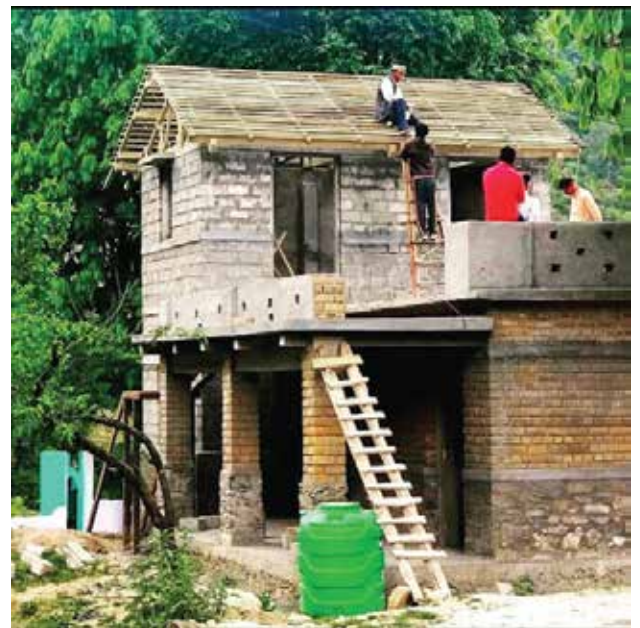
Furthermore, it's not just the hilly women but also the elderly, who work in harsh climatic conditions. They are simply unstoppable.

I captured one such scenario as I crossed this lady and walked down the hilly aisle. An aged person was weaving a beautiful basket out of bamboo, locally known as 'Ringal'. It is a special kind of Garhwali art that requires extraordinary skill and focus. On asking further, this person, Mr Satye Singh, makes around 50 big bamboo baskets that are huge and time-consuming. According to him, "God lies in the details".

In the end, this journey led to a series of events that made me learn a new perspective about the mountains and their people. They are a symbol of resilience, survival, bravery, and most importantly, they have the power of never giving up. The mountains have a significant role to play in shaping their identities. The city people temporarily searching for leisure will never understand this fact.

I was not the same person anymore after this journey. It gave me an opportunity for self-introspection. It made me realise that the mountains look beautiful from a distance, but only when I dug deeper I realised how much courage and willpower is required to live in the hills and perform daily activities.

When I reflect on my heritage, I visualise the course of my journey in life as the mountains -- that which can withstand and overcome any situation, never to quit.



All photos credits and copyright by Rashi

Mini Stories on Names

Hesha Shah

Two names were suggested by a Jain guru to my Grandmother. They were Devanshi and Hesha. My mother wanted to give her children a different name. So, she chose to name me Hesha and I am glad she didn't choose Devanshi as it is a very common girl name in Gujarat.

Hesha is a Japanese flower, and also in some languages, the laugh of a horse is known as Hesha. In my teenage years I searched the meaning of my name, and it said that Hesha means 'Love' in Hindi and in Sanskrit it means 'Complete'. Now, if anyone asks me what Hesha means, I add 'Love' and 'Complete' to the story.

People often misinterpret my name as Yesha, Aesha and Kesha, and even pronounce it as He-sha. It is very irritating when people don't get this simple beautiful name, and misspell it. So, when someone asks my name I always spell it out H-E-S-H-A and relate it with Hey+sha = Hesha.

Sweta Bhushan

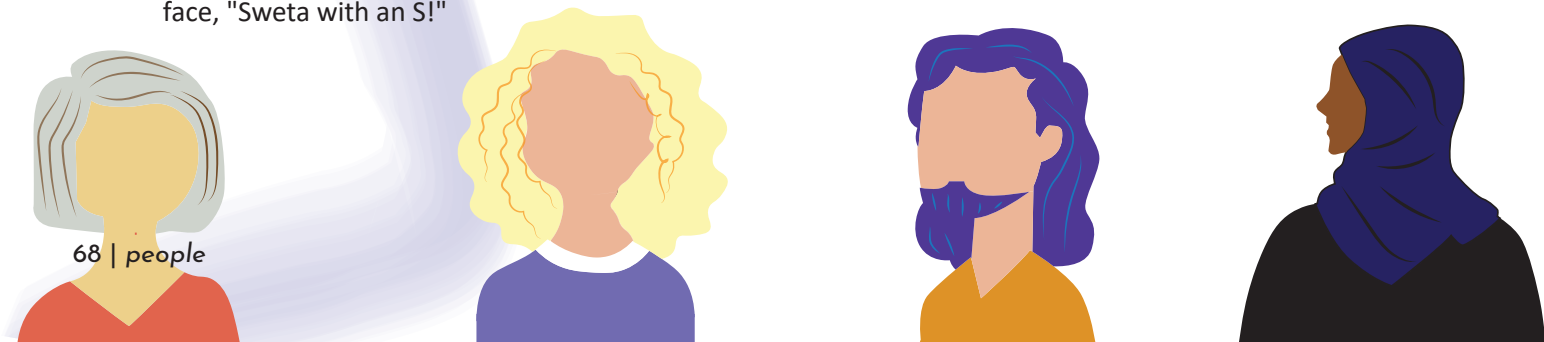
"What's your name?". As a first grade student, the most common question disheartened me. I always replied with a sulky face, "Sweta". I felt so because I had two other girls in my class with the same name. It almost did not feel like my own. Upon thinking, I realised, there indeed was a difference. My name spelt with an 'S' whereas the others' spelt it with a 'SH'. There it was, my unique factor! So the next time someone asked me what my name was, I proudly replied with a smile on my face, "Sweta with an S!"

Ojas Mali

The story behind my name is intriguing. My dad is an atheist, and he used to create awareness for the god-fearing people about the superstitious beliefs they had. So when I was born, in my *kundali*(horoscope) it was written that I should be named by the letter S. If not done so, it was considered to be a bad omen. At this point my father said that whatever may happen, he would not name his son with the letter S. He researched a bit for my name, and came up with the name Ojas which is unique and comes from a Christian domain. Breaking all the stereotypes set before in our family for naming a child, he convinced my mother for this name, and hence I was named Ojas.

Nikita Teresa Sarkar

20 days before the Summer Solstice in 1990, the Sarkar household crackled with the cry of a baby girl. While in India her mother drenched the delivery sweats in monsoon rains, the baby's father welcomed the sun's heat in Russia. The call was made exactly at 5.00am, 30 minutes after her arrival. The father picked up the hotel phone, half asleep and brimmed with joy at the announcement. He turned to his Russian roommate and announced 'Hey Nikita, I had a baby girl'. Now in Russia, Nikita is a common male name, like the Dictator Nikita Khrushchev. But the disturbed phone lines of the 90's, made the family back home think that the father wanted this as the name of his second child. And that is how I was named after a male Russian Dictator.



Parveen Fatimah

A very small creature, yet blessed with the flight to touch the sky. Moving from one flower to the other in the beautiful sunshine. It is in the darkness that she finds her beloved. She rejoices encircling him from every side and finally, it is the time to unite. Union of a beautiful moth and ablazed candle.

The union - a flare from the burning: wing of the moth burying herself inside the molten chest of her beloved as she breathes her last.

Moth - Parveen (*Parvana*); this is the story behind my name.

Oleena Chaudhuri

I was named Oleena after my mother revolted against the family norm of naming children after Buddha and the Mahabharata. She wanted a fusion of the East and the West, thus allowing my brother to be named, Arjun. She fell in love with this Polish name that she read in a book when she was expecting me. How does it feel to be named after a character in a book? Eternal! In context, Oleena means “bright and beautiful”, but for me, it is much more. To all the people who have asked me “Why such a name”, this is the answer. Indians without traditional Indian names, yes, we do exist!

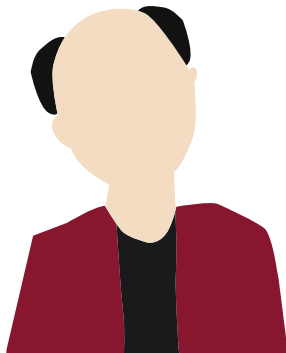
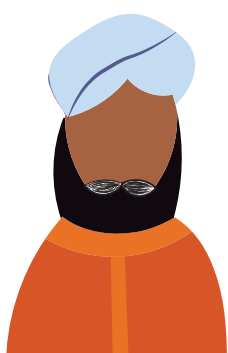
Vishakha Patil

Hi, I am Vishakha. My name was given to me by my grandfather and my mother together. They both had majors in History and were inclined toward Philosophy. In the name 'Vi-shakha', the later part of the name, 'Shakha', means the main branch (trunk), from where all the other small branches emerge. It supports the foliage of the tree. So my name means the one which holds on to various aspects of one's life. She is one who keeps everyone protected and holds everyone together.

Sadhya Bhatnagar

Having a name that you don't often find in movies, stories or roll calls in class is a mixed feeling. It oscillates between feeling special and feeling isolated. But for me, it has mostly rested at indifference through my adolescence. It also means chances of hearing the right pronunciation from first time name-hearers -- or even second timers -- is less than one tenth. Pretty ironic for someone whose name roughly means “aim”. I have grown to love my name over time for its individuality; maybe because it reminds me of my grandfather, who bestowed me with this name, and whom I lost too soon.

Illustrations by Sneha Birur



An Unrequited Love

by Sadhya Bhatnagar

It doesn't strike as a beautiful welcome to my sleep-deprived, breakfast-craving, luggage laden self as we step off the train and into the station at yet another unfamiliar Italian city. It is more challenging than usual to find the travel routes and timings, and we soon realise that they are erratic, unlike the other few towns we had visited and where we came to rely upon the public transport. While waiting for the bus that would take us to our Airbnb apartment in the heart of the city of Florence, two of us decided to go to the tourist help centre across the station and buy a travel guide.

As I sat on my suitcase reading the city map, scenes from American writer Dan Brown's novel 'Inferno' came back to me in vivid detail. New excitement and a sense of adventure set in as I traced my finger through the places the kind lady behind the counter had circled for us. Somehow, in all the eagerness of trip planning, this little connection had slipped my mind earlier. Places I had constructed in my mind years ago, as I traced the same finger along with the pages of the book, came back to me in a flash. An

added lens afforded by college-level architectural history lessons gave me exciting insights. This leg of our month-long travel quickly became one of my most treasured.

Finding a place to stay in the heart of the city turned out to be a massive advantage as it made it easier to reach downtown on foot, including the main attraction - Duomo di Firenze, or The Florence Cathedral. It saved time and allowed me to do some things I love most when in a new place - breathe in the city's air as I walk and explore its streets - a myriad of sights, smells and sounds to take in. I like to stop here and there to click pictures or buy a street snack, not precisely following the pre-planned route. These walks take me as close to the city's soul as one can go in a couple of days and enables treasure finding - little things one cannot find in tourist shops. I found the perfect pair of beautiful yet inexpensive drop earrings at a small shop tucked in between bigger stores on one such excursion through the city's market streets.



Firenze Duomo as seen from Michelangelo Hill



Michelangelo's David



Lovers locks on The Old Bridge

We spent the first evening similarly, eventually walking into Accademia Gallery, where we beheld Michelangelo's marvellous work - 'David'. By the end of the evening, though, it was clear that I wasn't too much of an art museum person. The following day as we left for Uffizi Gallery - house of the Botticelli painting, 'The Birth of Venus' - what attracted me was the view of the historic Vasari Corridor, where I could then re-imagine scenes as described in the book 'Inferno'. Conversely, I could spend hours inside a cathedral, soaking in the celestial vibes - as I did in both the Florence Cathedral and San Lorenzo Basilica.

At the towering Florence Cathedral, it was mutually agreed upon within the group that waiting in hour-long lines was the worst part of going anywhere. However, the insides offered a vast improvement, and a prohibition on photography

made me sit in the pews, not focused on anything yet enjoying my time to the fullest. After a tiring day of sightseeing, we spent a magical evening at Ponte Vecchio - or "The Old Bridge", listening to the local musicians play as I looked at iron locks that lovers had hung on iron bars, trying to guess their names from the initials.

The next day had us going confidently to the Boboli Gardens beyond the Palazzo Pitti, looking forward to a leisurely exploration of huge royal Italian gardens. Little did we realise that even though there was no indication on the map, the gardens were on an inclined hill. Our explorations had us huffing up and down winding paths between well-manicured hedges, which put to the test our Italian food fest from the previous night. The zenith of that hill, however, was worth reaching.



Sunset over the Arno River, Ponte Vecchio



Ponte Vecchio as seen from Uffizi Gallery

As much as this sounds like the dream vacation, it was far from that. The journey came with its mishaps, like all good things in life. The final morning I discovered the drop earrings had magically disappeared the day I wanted to wear them. The same day, we missed a train and had to wait four hours for the next train, which we almost missed, owing to a long wait on the wrong platform. In quite a comedic fashion (for the other passengers), we unknowingly recreated the famous ending scene from the Bollywood movie 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge', except I had to pull a male friend onto the train, just as the compartment doors closed.

In my short affair of three days with the city, I fell hopelessly in love with it - Brunelleschi's red dome of the cathedral, the Arno majestically shimmering in the evening sunlight, the vast expanse of the Boboli Gardens, and practically inhaling the history that came with all of this.

A high-end Indian restaurant that we found by chance as we looked for a budget-friendly lunch stop

served us delectable chicken curry at a discount, just as we were beginning to miss home. On the flip side, a shopkeeper of Indian descent, who we had immediately warmed to, ended up charging us much more than required on a small grocery bill.

As fate would have it, the city didn't love me back equally. It made me toil when I wanted to find my way through its streets. It confused me when I tried to understand its history further, almost as if it wanted to retain its charming mysteries. It didn't want me to leave, so it made me miss one train and nearly the next one as well. It made me trek up a long way so that when I finally arrived at Michelangelo Hill to behold the most magnificent view of the city, I had lost all my breath. I was never too satisfied with the photographs I took here, as I constantly felt I could not capture the beauty that I could see with my eyes.

I never found my drop earrings too. I like to think that the city of Florence kept them as a souvenir in my memory.



City of Florence from the Boboli Gardens vantage



Remembrance through a sketch



Photograph by Rashi

Architecture: the Multifaceted Profession

by Rashi

According to the author William W. Braham's article, *"A wall of Books: The Gender of Natural Colours in Modern Architecture"*, the writer comes across a thought-provoking aspect of modern Architecture - 'Importance of various shades and hues of a colour pallet' while practising Architecture as a profession both by males and females.

In Architecture, one of the ongoing stereotypical attitudes of our society is that females usually opt for interior architecture as a profession as a safe career option thereby avoiding site-related work, whereas males opt for construction design and technical projects involving on-ground work. Being an architect myself and having worked intensively at the grassroots and thus, I would like to address this particular gender-related bias within the field of Architecture.

I believe that somewhere between black and white, lies the truth. In my professional experience, the above point is not somewhat invalid. After my

graduation, I worked for two years in the upper terrains of the Himalayas in a remote village along with the local community and artisans. Community building was in implementation for which I was required to deal intensively with the site engineer. My job was to make him understand the typical construction designs and layouts produced by me amidst the harsh climatic conditions. At times they used to question me asking, "You are a young girl, why are you working on site with us?", "Are you sure you have made proper drawings?". All these pressing questions left a void in my heart and made me wonder why people think this way? Maybe it is our patriarchal society.

People tend to believe that due to differences in the masculine build, practising interior design could be a safer option for girls. According to our patriarchal society, females are expected to get married at a certain age, settle down and have a family. Therefore managing both the personal and professional needles of a beam balance.

Furthermore, it's also the mindset of people that women can't work with men on construction sites or even if they do, they can't deal effectively and communicate with the contractors, masons, workers etc on site.

On the other hand, men are expected to be the anchor of the family who should be financially stable hence taking major responsibilities on their shoulders. This was only the effect of the norms that are created and imposed by society on professionals practising Architecture or any other profession.

In one of the articles and talks showcased by the leading organisation "Learning from Women", Vice President, Zeenat Niazi, an architect by profession, who has been working intensively in the field of sustainable housing and habitat at the social enterprise firm Development Alternatives in New Delhi, India, quotes that *"Your personal responsibilities, beyond your profession, are equally important"*. To reinforce the idea further, Maria Isabel Quiroz Cisneros, an Architect and an organic farmer from Peru believe that *"I don't need to be a man to do what I like"*.

These are just a few examples. Not only have they managed to do a wonderful job as a mother, wife and daughter, but have also excelled immensely in their professional fields, creating a tremendous impact on the lives of people leaving behind remarkable footprints. Because that's their duty toward their profession and family. Hence breaking the chains and stereotypical mindset of this vicious society that force you to follow similar trends.

Another ironic point mentioned in Braham's article is that in the online background of people, generally what we see is the bookshelves loaded with various books which is a treat for the eyes to watch. We will never see the kitchen or pile of clothes lying in the background in today's online scenario.

Ever thought about why we are so fascinated to show the fancy background of books behind us? What's the reason? Are we trying to convey something to the audience? Is it a classy or royal symbol marking our intelligence? Or is it simply the fact that I am an avid reader?

These are a few thoughts that were generally in my subconscious mind, but never in the conscious state. Like I know the reason, but never thought or communicated about it to our peers or colleagues. Even though I am an Architect, the ironic part is that I too have a bookshelf in my background which is displayed every time to the audience during my ongoing online classes. Books are nicely aligned in a zig-zag manner showing off bright, dark and neutral colours in three layers.

During my online fellowship, I came across a module named "Writing for the Built Environment" in which we got introduced to 'why people do what they do', 'the importance of antique collections etc. I too was thinking 'why do I display this bookshelf as my background? Does this reveal something about my personality? I gave it a deep thought and what I received as an answer from myself was that my visual background tells a lot about my personal life and its identity. Also, via that, deep down I want to convey that even though I am an Architect, I read a lot of books based on different genres which should be arranged in a specific style and alignment. I want my background to be a decent one, and according to me, books are the best choice to do that.

You are continuously conveying a message to your audience by displaying a particular background, and believe it or not, this way people tend to remember you more often. For example, Rashi is that girl who always has the background of the bookshelf displayed behind next to the brightly coloured blue window. Leaving the audience curious and giving them a glimpse of your taste, lifestyle, your core nature, values, your profession etc.

To conclude, the colour palette, hues, shades, walls are a few of the aspects to name which tends to leave a very powerful impact on the mindset of people making them believe things about you and your identity which might be superficial.

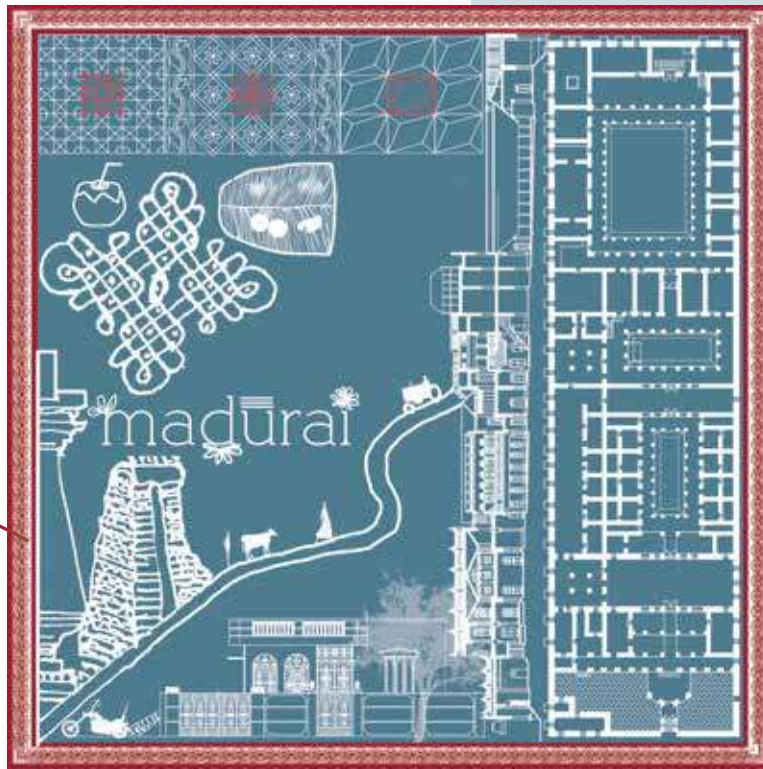
City Portraits

by Pooja Gangwar

The author has illustrated Indian cities as miniature representations of her most significant memories of those cities. Drawn by hand on paper, then composed digitally.



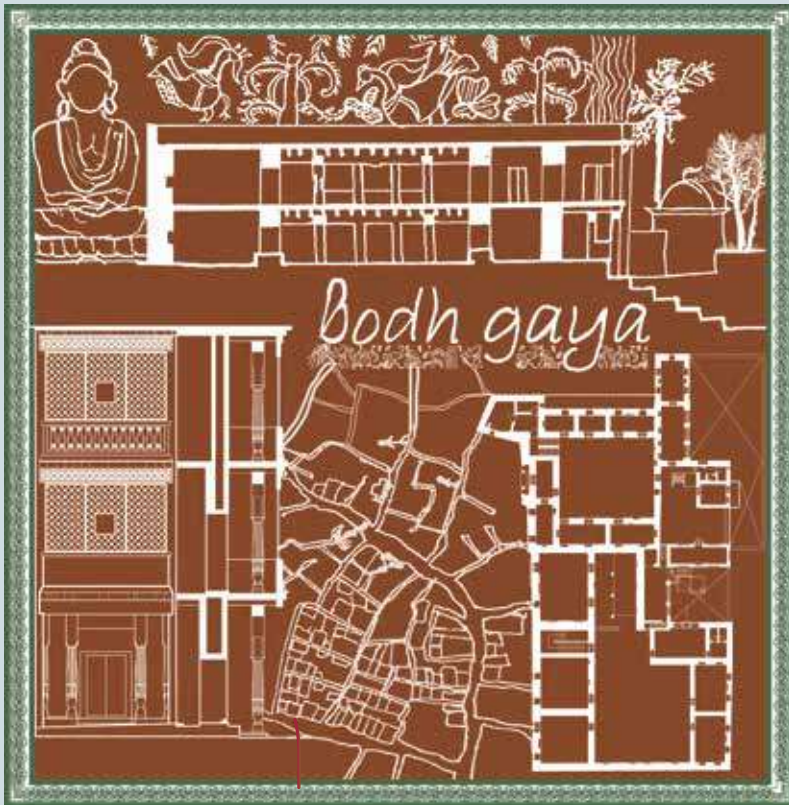
Patiala : Built around qila mubarak, this city is popularly called shahi sheher "the Royal City". It is celebrated for its rich culture, particularly known for 'Patiala turban, Patiala salwar, Phulkari work, paranda and Patiala peg.



Madurai : This city of temples, is the cultural capital of Tamil Nadu. It was planned on the ancient Indian town planning principles. Something that really catches ones attention in this place is street food on banana leaves and a drink called jigarthanda (cool heart) which gives instant relief in hot and humid weather. One can find multicolours everywhere- from buildings to people's daily attire to jewellery.



Gwalior : This city is the geographical centre of India. The fort, princely palace(Scindia palace), Jain caves, temples, are some of the remnants of its rich history. This city is also known for being the oldest centre of Hindustani classical music eg. Gwalior gharana, Tansen festival,



Bodhgaya : Known for Buddhist pilgrimage site, this place is culturally and spiritually rich. Mahabodhi Temple Complex falls under the UNESCO world heritage site and therefore attracts many visitors and tourists. Madhubani work (peculiar to the state of Bihar) and religious books, are some souvenirs people collect from here



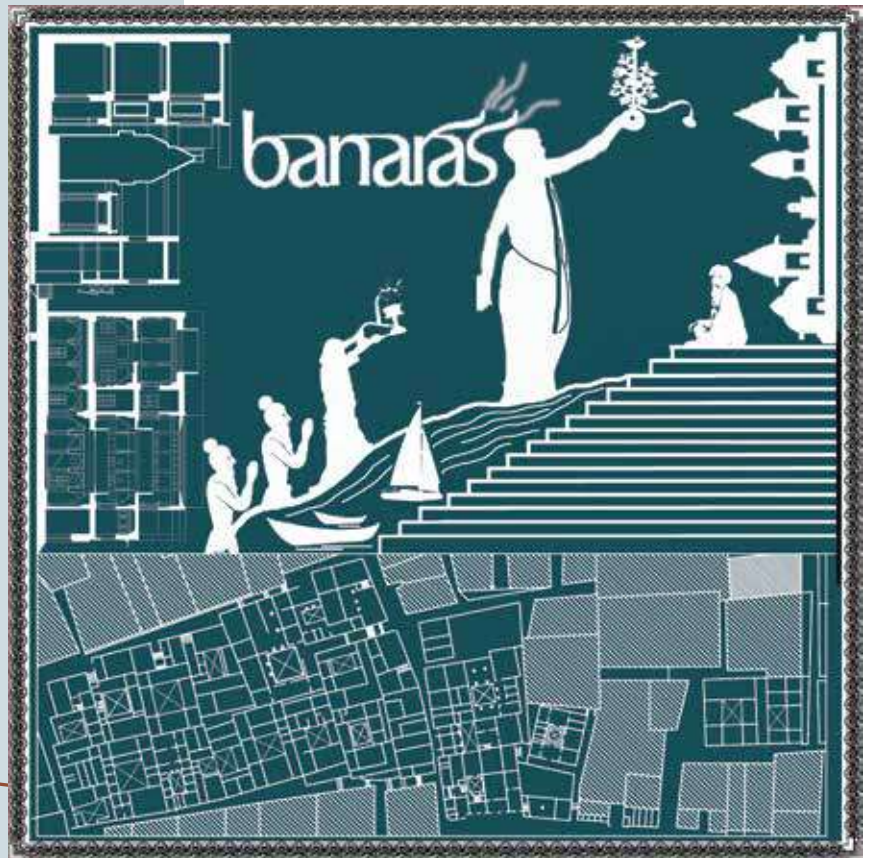
Jaipur : Known as the pink city, it is the capital of Rajasthan. It was the first planned city of India according to the 'prastara' planning type of Indian town planning and is widely celebrated for its architecture. The intricate jharokhas, jaalis, forts add to the beauty and the clothing, jewellery, food (kachodi) can make anyone fall in love with its culture



Delhi : The city of resilience, it was built and rebuilt many times. Its rich architectural heritage and culture is reminiscent of the stories of its many rulers and people. While one can find all cultures and communities here, ruins of *Purani Dilli* enjoys a special place in our hearts. The exquisite jewellery, crafts, food and language - takes you to a different era



Mumbai : A cosmopolitan palimpsest, this city is a hub of cultural heritage. From Ganesh festival, kala ghoda, bollywood, to the daily art and events it never fails to charm its people. One cannot imagine this city without auto rides, vada pao and rains. This city claims to never sleep and is also the commercial capital of India. The song 'ae dil hai mushkil jeena yahan, zara bachke zara hatke, ye hai Bombay meri jaan' rightly captures the spirit of this fast paced city



Banaras : It is known as a city which is older than history, older than tradition, older even than the legends. Celebrated for its ghats and rituals, it makes a person see human life as a spiritual journey. The galis, the food and the calm in chaos is something worth experiencing.



Naga tribes : Nagaland has 16 tribes- each with peculiar architectural styles. Something that is common among all is these tribes respect nature--they live with forests, mountains and animals. Their habitats are built using bamboos, timber and thatch.

Kabul Hills : Home for Colourful Houses

by Aimal Wajdee

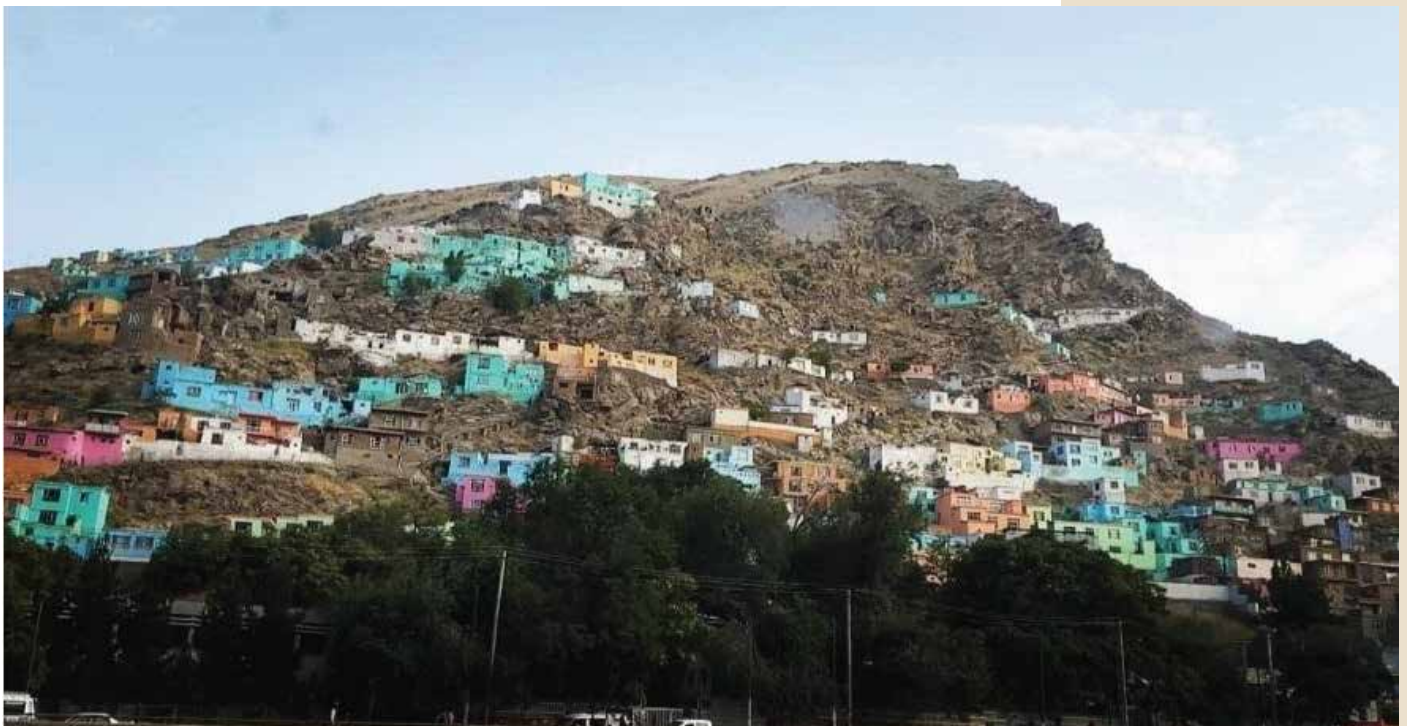
Afghanistan has been at war for the past decades. Many Afghans have become homeless; many have left their country, migrating to other neighbouring countries for refuge. After the fall of the Taliban Regime in 2001, a new democratic government was formed. Since a complete regime had fallen, there was no customary system with a very weak rule of law in Afghanistan. Almost half of the population had left Afghanistan.

After a few years of the newly formed government, Kabul was one of the major cities which was attracting many investments, with most of the public offices and organizations located in it. Kabul eventually became the business hub of Afghanistan, encouraging people from other provinces to move to Kabul for a better life. Most people from other provinces could rarely afford to rent or buy a house. Therefore they started building small huts in the hills of Kabul which later became residential areas. Since the population of Kabul was comparatively less, and the government was newly formed, there was a lack of rules and regulations to manage or stop illegal building along the hills.

As time passed, the number of houses increased and completely covered the hills which are located in the downtown of Kabul. The government was unable to eliminate thousands of these houses so the people were given permission to continue living in these homes. They were additionally provided with other necessities like electricity and water.

In an attempt to make the city beautiful, the government painted the homes on the Kabul Mountains with rainbow colours. This adorned the scapes of Kabul with organized, cherry homes, enlivening war-weary residents' localities. This seemed to aid their mental health too. While the houses on the mountain are some of the poorest in the city, the Kabul city municipality has continued to support the painting of these houses, in a humble hope to cheer up the war-struck citizens. Ever since there has been intense agony in Kabul leaving people perennially sad. The simple act of painting these houses has in actuality helped change the way people think.

Photo courtesy: Aimal Wajdee 2019



The Municipality's Project already seems to be having an impact on not just the people but also the identity of the village. These beautiful, different bright colours have brought beauty to the hills of Kabul. Before this initiative, the houses were brown and muddy which leave a poor visual for passersby. But now, when one passes by these hills, a sense of positive energy and hope for the future washes over.

Since these hills are in downtown Kabul city, everyone coming sees these hills, creating a positive effect as well as fostering their mental health. These colours are often bright, representing peace. Moreover, these colourful houses make the city, especially downtown, more beautiful and help the people mentally that Kabul will not return to those black days again.

At present, the government is trying to renovate all those buildings which were destroyed by previous wars and trying to bring huge changes in major cities so that the people feel hopeful and at peace. This project is one of them.

Most of the residents of the hills welcomed the initiative of painting their houses, the people's neighbourhoods became beautiful and colourful, their houses were painted without cost. Besides this, the Kabul city residents also welcomed this initiative, it makes the city look beautiful. Some people take pictures posing toward the hills and houses and some feel joyful and hopeful by just looking at it. It is a part of development in the city since Afghans have been at war for decades and when they see a little development in the city, they feel happy about it. Furthermore, these hills also give a different view at night which is very beautiful with all those different lights on it. When Afghans see these interventions, it affects their mental health and they become hopeful for a brighter tomorrow. Brighter than being in a situation wherein any sort of development in the country has been unheard of, for the past 40 years.



Photo courtesy: Social Media

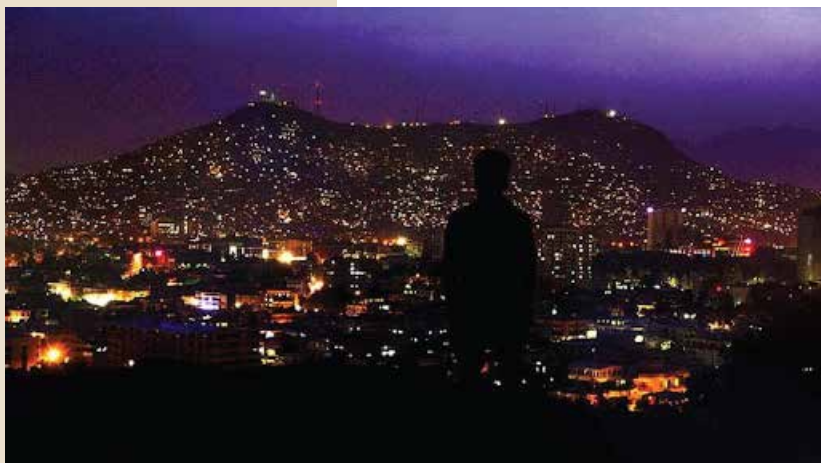


Photo courtesy: Social Media

A Positive Idol

By Tithi Shah

I am a showpiece. Small children play with my big tummy. They play with my bald head. Watching me laugh, they laugh. Are they enjoying themselves? Or are they making fun of me? I think they laugh because I have big, loose ears and a big tummy.

When visitors see me for the first time, they see the things in my hand and wonder what they are. They look into the bag I carry on my back. What is inside it?

Why is my upper body uncovered, they wonder? Why is only my lower body covered?

I feel happy to see that people laugh because of my appearance. Sometimes because of my open mouth, they try to feed me. I meet different kinds of people. Some come to me crying. They talk to me and feel better.

Sometimes, depressed people look at me and wonder, how am I always laughing?

Watching me laugh, sometimes they also started laughing. Some push me down in their anger.

To stay happy and positive in every bad moment is the best way to face it. Laughing is the best exercise.

Positive vibes spread from my idol. I am known as “Laughing Buddha”.





My Favourite Home: Towards Inclusive Boundaries

by *Oleena Chaudhuri*

Meandering through the unpaved roads of Bamunmura gave me a peculiar adrenaline rush as a child. I recall the distinct smell of fresh wet mud transfused with the scent of grass atypical to this little village. Bamunmura is a simple place inhabited by people leading even simpler lives. Here one can hear the rattle of cycle carts, an occasional halting screech and the mooing of cows grazing the fields. The village has houses made of concrete that are built alongside huts made of bamboo canes and straw-matting. The area is covered in vast green fields and coconut trees, and has thatched terraces covered with tangled masses of fresh blossoms. During the afternoon, the villagers go for a dip in the pond close to the fields. The pond was my favourite place to loiter in.

These common bathing spaces resemble the 'Great Bath' of the Mohenjo-Daro civilisation. Simply what was amiss were brick walls on the surroundings. Trees on one side heavily fortified the pond. From here, one could see weeds, water lilies, and lotuses, making the pond even more attractive. What was even more commendable was seeing how the villagers used the pond without harming the natural habitat around it. From the shallow side of the water body, the villagers constructed a wooden bridge for ease of travelling. They did not want to uproot the trees and create settlements by the side of the pond, so they simply constructed a bridge over it.



The village pond



My brother and I with the village kids



The Ramakrishna Math garden

The bridge was well-supported by bamboo canes from all sides dug deep into the river bed. It was often used as a platform by the village kids to dive into the pond. This bridge connected the pond to the other side of the river, which had a sandy pavement constructed on the side. The pavement served as an area for the women to sit and wash their clothes and dishes. Our guide had told us that the villagers themselves made the bricked pavement. This showed that in this village community participation was popular, as this added a personal indigenous element to the overall look of the area. It was as if nature and humans co-existed on a symbiotic relationship based on exchange. They were not architects, but the villagers created the space economically, only using abundant materials. After they cut and shaped the bricks, they put them by the sides of the streets to bake.

Thus, many times one could see the unpaved roads lined by muddy and ash-coloured bricks. Adding bits of straw to this mixture made the concrete even more challenging. This was used to create slabs that were used as seats. The elderly ladies would sieve rice, sitting on these slabs, while the men would often gather under the trees to smoke some tobacco and have some paan (betel leaves). A few meters away from the village pond was the famous Ramakrishna Math temple. Ramakrishna Paramhansa was a religious saint and leader of 19th century Bengal. The Ramakrishna Math was founded by his chief disciple, Swami Vivekananda, who set up various temples in his name as a symbol of reverence for his late Guru's teachings. The temple in Bamumura had its lodging facility. The plot also came with a prayer hall and a big flower garden. I fondly remember catching dragon flies with my brother there while our mother would run after us with khichuri in her hand (Khichuri is a popular meal in Bengali households prepared with lentils and rice). But strangely, the khichuri served at the Math was way tastier than that prepared at home. My grandmother would say that the temple khichuri was first offered to God, whose blessings made it more delicious.



The temple lodging where we put up

The Ramakrishna temple was home to a lot of people. There were Sadhus (Hindu saints) who would stop by the temple for a meal or two. Their homes were right behind the temple plot. A narrow courtyard typically accompanied these small shanties to hang a few washed clothes for drying. One could differentiate a Sadhu's home from an ordinary one by seeing the orange loins hanging on the clothesline. Their hermit life permitted no means of earning. So, they would wander near the Math lodgings to beg for alms from the visitors. It was here that I met a Sadhu, whom I lovingly started referring to as 'Sadhu Maharaj' (Maharaj is a term used for religious priests/leaders). And this meeting will never let me forget Bamunmura.

Sadhus generally have a traditional dressing and style—a long beard with long hair and orange attire. I remember being thoroughly petrified of them as a kid, for my elders told me they kidnapped naughty kids. One day I was playing in the garden and giving my mother a hard time. She called for me, and when I turned around, I saw an old, hunched Sadhu standing right behind me. His black-framed glasses rested at the tip of his nose. He had probably smiled at me, but I could not tell because of his bushy white beard. I screamed and ran inside. My parents came outside, greeted him and offered him some food. I then heard him asking for me. My mother laughed and told him I was too scared. I was hiding under a table, and when that did not seem enough, I ran out through the backdoor and took shelter under a sandalwood tree.

The lodge had two entry doors, one from the front and one at the back. Whitewashed walls, with an attached toilet, it was big enough for four people. The rooms also had small balconies in the front, with a porch and a flower garden. It could be utilised as a leisure or a reading area. So mostly, my father and grandfather would sit there and discuss politics. The prayer hall was just a few feet away. In the evening, when the priests at the temple would gather, they prayed and sang hymns. The calm and the quiet, the soft-blowing

breeze and the rhythmic melodies were enough to lull me to sleep on my grandmother's lap. But that day, I was so thankful that my favourite sandalwood tree had successfully saved me from getting kidnapped! When I finally returned home, my father handed me a small Batasha, a famous Bengali sweet. He said that Sadhu Maharaj had left that for me.

The next day Sadhu Maharaj came again to invite us to his home. His humble home had a small door, low enough for one to bend while entering. It had only one room and he had repurposed each corner of the room. Here, space was occupied economically, as the area occupied by the hut was minimal. In one corner, he would cook. And that left an odour of gas from the stove. In the others, he prayed, stacked his clothes, and stocked his cutlery. The room had no ventilation, or rather, Sadhu Maharaj had no money to get the room built in a way that would make it a more comfortable living space, for which he said he often had to keep the door open at night. He said he had been robbed a few times because of it. Privilege and money are two items we often take for granted. Still, from Sadhu Maharaj's story, we understand that deprivation may often force us to be in the most adverse circumstances. Our benevolent host hardly had anything to feed himself, yet he had saved us, sweets, from his lunch. From that day onwards, visiting him became a daily habit, and that one-roomed shanty became a space I will always cherish.

Never had I felt so free and liberated in such a tiny cottage as that. And that feeling is what helped me translate a "house" into a "home". Numerous people have a house to go to every day, offering food, shelter, and clothing. However, just a handful have a home to go home to every day, and I am lucky enough to be a part of that clan. A home is where lasting memories are made, the one that houses the best smiles, the giggling laughter, and probably the only place where the most love is felt. Bamunmura was designed

keeping in mind inclusive boundaries, and these made up for greater closeness. Or else, there would not be a city girl Oleena who would have met Sadhu Maharaj. While we spend most of our earnings creating and designing houses the way we want, the difference between a house and a home always lingers. And that is undoubtedly true for this home of mine, that I am so far away from now.

Sadhu Maharaj's small house had some broken light bulbs, stained floors, and some cracks on the walls. It was far from perfect or aesthetic, but that grounded my understanding of how all that is far less important than the feeling of being at home. It made me recognise that all the built architecture we see around us are judged as simple structures or systems. However, homes are a lot more as they remain untouched by judgement or the brutality of the world. Years later, when I had to move to the Netherlands, all by myself at just 21, I remember being very nervous – not because I was moving to a new house in a far-away distant land, but because I would have to try and create a new home for myself. To my advantage, Bamunmura taught me exactly what was needed – a little time, some friendships, beautiful experiences and lots of love - and soon, my new house became my new home. Nevertheless, life was not always a fairytale there, but Sadhu Maharaj's undaunting courage and Bamunmura's meandering roads had prepared me to bear any hardship that was to come my way. I acknowledge that my Bamunmura days probably may not have gifted me the most extravagant memories. But those were undoubtedly the most precious for me as I spent them with an angel, who taught me that a house becomes a home because of people.

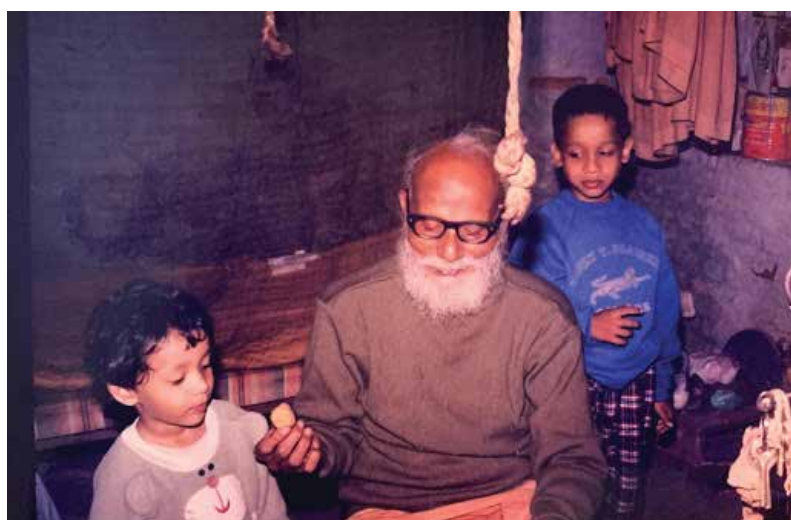
GLOSSARY

Maharaj : Accomplished practitioner of a specific skill/field

Khichudi : A Bengali lentil dish

Paan : Betel Leaves

Sadhu : An ascetic/monk



With Sadhu Maharaj at his home



Me pictured under my favourite sandalwood tree

Three Sides of the Same Coin

Id, Ego, Superego in Indian Mythology

by Samprati Kulkarni

There have been many influential kings and gurus in Indian mythology. Some were outright tyrannical, while some were intelligent and appealing to their subjects. These qualities were spurred on because of the way they thought, acted and were influenced by others. This paper will evaluate the role played by Id, Ego and Superego on the heavy weights in Indian mythology. The suggestion is to evaluate and study which one of the trait was in abundance in these personalities and how they accordingly acted in war like situations. Analysis on personalities in mythologies such as Ramayana, Mahabharata and some kings from ancient India such as Chandragupta Maurya will be done. This analysis will be the key in understanding how the mind of great kings works, how warfare and political strategies are formulated and how much they sacrificed for their kingdom.

From the beginning of your time you have had instinct, and you have acted upon that instinct. Crying when you came out of your mother's womb, flailing your arms or recognizing the need for nourishment. That survival instinct is inherited and exists within your mind. It is termed as ID. As you grow, you acquire the sense of how to control these instincts, how to neglect them or prolong them if they're not really important. This is termed as EGO. After some years you develop the sense of right and wrong, your personality starts developing. This is all affected by the society around you, your parents and friends. This part is called the SUPEREGO. Together the three of them make up one's psych.

Id consists of primal instincts and urges like hunger, safety, sex etc. Id wants to have its need, desire or want immediately fulfilled. If it is not fulfilled one may experience anger, anxiety or tension. Id is functioning unconsciously and therefore is sometimes also a reflex action. Ego's work is to control and harness the wants of

Id. It is responsible of making sure that the desires are fulfilled and yet they are portrayed as socially acceptable. It works on the principle of reality. Ego functions in the unconscious, subconscious and conscious mind. The Superego helps to make judgment. It could be described as the parent of the other two. It works towards ideal behavior instead of realistic behavior. All three are required to be in balance for a human to function properly.

Sigmund Freud, a neurologist who was trying to find effective treatment for his patients developed the theory of psychoanalysis in the 1890's. He proposed that "the human personality is composed by the interaction of three components of the mind- id, ego and superego." (Sigmund Freud, 1890). Through this theory Freud provided therapy for his patients by advising them to make their unconscious mind conscious. In the flow of time, this theory was criticized due to it being heavily based on sexual desires and mainly because instead of conducting scientific research on it, this theory is based on observation. This Freudian theory has gone through many changes post his time. Most prominent of them was – "the ego is independent of the instinctual drives" (Hartmann, 1950).

However, contradicting Hartmann, Maze, 1983 proposes that – "that it is the instinctual drives as knowers that constitute the ego." Even though Freud's work was criticized, it is still extensively used and researched upon.

Influenced by Freud's works, Girindrasekhar Bose was the first Indian to practice Psychoanalytical theory in the field. He blended Hindu values in Freudian principles and sent the thesis to Freud. This was an early work of his, and was named 'The concept of repression. This led to a correspondence between them and this led to the formation of Indian psychoanalytical society in 1922. One of his late works is re- conceptualizing Bhagvad Gita, classic Indian texts and epics, Greek tragedy and contemporary German texts through psychoanalysis. "My knowledge of Sanskrit is limited. However, even

with the limited knowledge, I shall write my interpretation of the Gita. I shall write it through a certain dependence on the dictionaries, on interpretation of existing interpretations, on perhaps extant bhasyas.”(Girindrasekhar Bose). Bose had an interest in reading and conveying all the ancient scripts through the lens of psychoanalysis. Even though Bose was influenced by Freud, they had their differences. These differences he conveys through a monograph - ‘A New Theory of Mental Life’ in Samiksha, Vol 2, No. 2 in 1948. According to Bose Oedipus complex and castration complex were of not much importance in his theory. This is where Bose and Freud clashed.

While ruling over a kingdom, the id, ego and superego should be in equilibrium. The ruler should have a grasp on their ego, and it should not fluctuate when subjected to manipulation. At the same time the advisors and mentors of the king should point out if the king is inclining towards any one side. By achieving balance, one can effortlessly formulate strategies to manipulate and win wars and ultimately achieve it. The rulers who are corrupted are mainly controlled by their Id. Even if their superego is channeling guilt, it is repressed and neglected. The ego is helpless and flimsy and bends down to the Id. Wars are the result of a bruised Id and the thirst for proving one to be more superior. While this scenario is quite common, a Ruler should be partial towards their superego. By doing that peace and safety of the subjects is ensured and there is no resource wastage.

Inspired by Girindrasekhar Bose’s work on the Bhagavad Gita, I will be conducting a similar analysis on Indian epics and kingdoms. This study will help understand how the mentality of the people then differed from the mentality of the people now.

Ramayana is considered one of the greatest epics in Indian mythology. Lord Rama always acted in a way which did not deter from karma and dharma. This act is not as easy as it sounds. It would have been so convenient to submit to Id and acquire what Lord Rama desired given his strength and capabilities. Even though his capabilities were superior than most beings, Lord Rama did not have a balanced mind. He let his superego

largely control his actions. He was selfless and often sacrificed the happiness of his close and trusted people for the greater good. We can observe such instances in situations such as accepting the 14 year exile, giving the throne to Bharata temporarily even though it was not well received. Killing Bali from behind even though it was against his morals, just to fulfill the promise he made to his friend..In the battle, we can observe that Lord Rama took the high road and often asked Ravana to surrender. This was influenced by the superego. He did everything that was suitable and accepted by the society then. There are also instances where this control slipped and he let his ego and id take over. When he was not given assistance by the sea god even after intense meditation, and when devi Sita was departing Earth when her time was up. Sigmund Freud, in his lecture of ‘Femininity’ says that “Women’s superego cannot attain the strength and independence which gives it its cultural significance.” In my opinion Devi Sita is an exception to this statement. Freud further states that “superego has three functions – to serve as conscience, to provide the power of self observation and judgment, to maintain an ideal.” Devi Sita was a paradigm of the definition set by Freud. I think Lord Rama and Devi Sita could attain such control was because they were considered divine.

Mahabharata was an epic which created many contrasting opinions. There are many interpretations on the cause of Mahabharata, how guilty the Kauravas were etc.

Contradictory to Girindrasekhar Bose’ opinion, one can observe the Oedipus complex in the sense that the eldest brother takes the place as honorary father. In the dice game, Yudhishtira acts purely influenced by his Id. As the game carries on and he is losing everything he kept on stake his ego regains control. Twice this happens and the second time they were forced into exile due to the conditions of the game.

During the time of war, both Yudhishtira and Duryodhana went to ask help from Lord Krishna. When given the choice between lord Krishna and his army, Yudhishtira choose Lord Krishna himself. That time his Id was urging him for the army, while his superego for the lord himself. His ego compromised and went with his superego convincing himself that no army will be equivalent to the superior power and intellect of Lord Krishna. Mahabharata is filled with rash decisions, cunning mind games and vengeance. Id mostly controlled the psych of many in this war, but the ones who let their ego takeover and balanced themselves ultimately won.

Around 3 BC, a guru – Vishnugupta, flipped Indian history upside down with the help of his own resourcefulness. Vishnugupta (also known as Chanakya or Kautilya) used his ego to the maximum. He was confident enough to know what he wanted yet cunning enough to know how to acquire what he wanted. He wanted to strengthen the borders on the Indian subcontinent and wanted to drive away any ruler who did not consider Indian soil to be their mother. He was the paragon of perfect balance in mind, and that's how he turned the course of history around. He appointed his student Chandragupta Maurya as the ruler of Magadha, and was a advisor and philosopher himself. He was aware what his ego was guiding him to do and acted as such.

According to my understanding a balanced psych has always given fruitful results. I have written this paper according to my understanding and research of the topic. I am aware that opinions may vary. A comical interpretation of the Id, ego and superego would be the devil and angel perched on the shoulder of a cartoon/protagonist in a film, telling them to do a selfish deed or not to do it. The protagonist (being the ego) decides upon a solution through which his needs are met and it was also not frowned upon.

According to the analysis, the Freudian theory falls short in some areas (superego of women) and even the Bose theory falls short (Oedipus complex). We can all agree that Indian epics are far too complex to abide by any one theory. By combining all of the works we can get a satisfactory analysis of these epics.

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native languages

Photograph by Ojas Mali



जीवन हे एक जुगारीचा खेळ आहे

सुरेश पाटील यांच्या कडून.

ही एक ग्रामीण पार्श्वभूमीतून आलेल्या मध्यमवर्गीय मुलाची स्वतःची ओळख आणण आत्मशोध घेण्याची ही कथा आहे. ही ती एक ग्रामीण भारतात उत्स्फूर्तवपणे उदयास येणाऱ्या सामाजिक बदलावर केंद्रित एका नविन मनुष्या विनाच्या संघर्षाची वणवण करणारी कहाणी आहे. तिच्या स्पष्टावत्मक गवेषणात स्वतःला नसदध करण्यासाठी दरूवर साटपडुयाच्या मुशीत आणण तापीच्या कुशीत वसलेल्या महाराष्ट्राच्या आपल्या छोट्याश्या रगावापासूनच्या सड्डे झालेला प्रवासाचे वणवण करीत आहे. मी बालपणापासून नशकक्षणाचा एक प्रभावशाली आणण शणशाली शस्त्र म्हणून वापर करीत नबकट आणण प्रणतकूल पररणस्थीत गवेषणाचा सांघर्षात नटकाव धरत उभा आहे. मी एक नवीन भारतीय नपडीतील ग्रामीण यवुकांचा प्रणतननध आहे. तिच्या विनात धोके पतकरण्यास नघाबरता साहसी नननवय घेवून नवणवध क्पेत्रामध्ये आपलेशक्ति मोर्तब करीत आहे. एलबीएसएनए (लाल बहादूर शास्त्री राष्ट्रीय प्रशासकीय प्रणशक्षण प्रबोधनी) आणण (भारतीय ननवडणकू आयोर्ग) यांच्या मते, आर्मीच्या संख्येने नोकरशहा आणण राज्यकर्ते, धोरणकर्ते ग्रामीण पार्श्वभूमीतून आलेले आहेत. ते अक्षरशः देशाच्या शीर्षस्थानी सकारात्मक पद्धतीने बदल करण्याचा प्रयत्न करीत आहेत. की माझे छोटेसे रगाव या तकावचे सवोत्तम असे उदाहरण आहे. माझ्या लहान, संदुर, डोंगराळ रगावाचे प्रणतननधी आपल्या "कठोर पररणम, समपवण आणण तिखीम घेण्याची क्षमता" या तीनच महत्त्वपूर्ण विनरगुणांच्या मदतीने देशाच्या नवणवध क्पेत्रात सि - डॉक्टर, अणभयंते, नोकरशहा, नशक्षणतज्ञ आणण पत्रकार मानून यशस्वी होऊन रिगभरात आपले कौशल्याने नाव कमावत आहेत. मी १९ वर्षांचा नवयवुक असताना माझा वैयक्तिक प्रवास एका छोट्या रगावापासून ते आयएफ (भारतीय हवाई दल) प्रणशक्षण केंद्र बेंगळूर, कनावटक पयांतचा कसं राणहले

त्याचे वणवण करु एणच्छतो. माझा निम ग्रामीण भारतातील अनेक मनुष्यांप्रमाणे एका छोट्या रगावात राहणाऱ्या मध्यमवर्गीय संरक्षण सेवेच्या कुटुंबात झाला. माझे आईबा आणण काका भारतीय सैन्यात होते. मी शाळेत असल्यापासूनच इंग्लंडीय एक्सप्रेस हा एंक्रमेव इंग्रं ति राष्ट्रीय दैनिक रगावात माझ्यासाठी एंक्रमेव बाहेरील नवर्शाचे ज्ञानाचे माध्यम असे. नकिं ट हा एंक्रमेव सज्जिचा खेळ त्याने मला नेतृत्व, सांघक भावना, नखलाडूवत्ती, नशस्त्र आणण विनात तंदुरुस्तीचे महत्त्व नशकवले, यांसारखे मौल्यवान विन कौशल्य नशकवले. माझे औपचारिक नशक्षण नशकवण्यात अपयशी ठरले, लहानपणापासून शालेय नकिं ट संघाच्या कणवधारापासून ते नवद्यापीठ संघाच्या खेळाडूपयांत नकिं ट हा माझा रशास होता. माझे आईबा, नलियातील पणहले आणण सवोत्कृष्ट व्यावसायिक वणकलांपैकी एक, माझे एंक्रमेव प्रकारे नवद्यापीथक होते. त्यांनी मला सामाजिक नवज्ञान, इणतहास, आंतरराष्ट्रीय राकारण आणण स्वतःची ओळख याबद्दल प्राथमिक ज्ञान नशकवले. अतुलनीय होते. मी आणण माझा मोठा भाऊ लहानपणापासून संरक्षण सेवेमध्ये सामील होण्यासाठी खपू मेहनत घेत होते. पदवीनंतर तो इटॅलनिस ब्युरोच्या कायावल्यात (आयबीओ) रुझाला. त्याच वेळी माझी माझ्या उच्च माध्यमिक महाणवद्यालयानंतर एअरमन मणु भारतीय हवाई दला आयएफमध्ये ननवड झाली. "आकाशाला वैभवाने सपशकरा" हे भारतीय हवाई दलाचे ब्रीदवाक्य लहानपणापासून माझ्यासाठी एक प्रेरणास्रोत आहे - बालपणापासून मला हवाई दलाच्या लढाऊ नवमानाने मी मोणहत के लेले. वयाच्या १९ वर्षांत मला प्रथमच एअरफोर्सच्या नवमानात बसण्याची संधी नमळाली. मी प्रथमच माझी राज्याची भौगोलिक सीमा ओलांडताना प्रथमच माझ्या मराठी अणसमतेचा नवचार मनात येवू लागला. - "मी नेमका कोण आहे?". मध्ययुगीन काळातील महान मराठा योद्धा 'छत्रपती नशवाळी भोसले' यांचा मराठा कुळाचा की नहंद, भारतीय की मराठी भाणसक. प्रथमच माझ्यात विनमध्ये माझ्या स्वतःच्या

ओळखीबद्दल माझ्या मराठी अणस्मतेचा प्रश्न जनमावण झाला. श्री शशी थरूर यांनी आपल्या "द बॅटल ऑफ सणचंरग: ऑन नॅशनलझम, पॅणरयण्टझम आणण व्हाट इट मीन्स टूबी इण्डियन" या अणभाति संदुर पसुतकामध्येसिा स्पष्टपणेयणुविाद के ला आहे. का काही भारतीय इतरांपेक्षा सिा राष्ट्रवादी भारतीय आहेत? पसुतकामध्येमुख्य यणुविाद हा आधणुनक प्रसित्ताक असलेल्या भारताच्या प्रत्येक पुरुर, स्त्री आणण मलुची ओळख ही समान असली पाणर्ही. भारतासारख्या वैणवधयपणूवदेशात बहुआयामी स्वयं-अणस्मताना मान्यता देणेहीच खरी भरतची कल्पना होय. मी एक भारतीय हवाई दलाच्या सैणनक मणनु मला खरी भारतीयत्व काय आहेयाची चौकशी करायची होती. आणिकणवसाव्या शतकात खरा देशर्भा आणण राष्ट्रवादी नार्गररक होण्याचा अथव काय आहे? माझ्या २०० हवाई सैणनकांच्या र्गटामध्ये बहुसांस्कृतक णवणवधता होती आणण संपणूवउपखंडातनू समान प्रणतणनणधत्व होते. अक्षरशःमिमूकाश्मीरच्या उत्तर णहमालयीन मकुटापासनू तेताणमळनाडूच्या दणक्षण सार्गरी टोकापयांत; बंगालच्या पवूवदवीपकल्पापासनू ते पणमि र्गुरितमधील कच्छचा पयवन्त. माझ्या हवाईदलाच्या र्गटात अतलुय भारताची अनोखी अशी संदुर भौरगोणलक आणण सांस्कृतक णवणवधटेणेनटलेली णवणवधतेत एकता कोणालाही णिवूशकली असती. मला नेहमीच आयिव वाटत असेविहा मी माझ्या णवणवध सहकमी कडेपाहत असे, तेव्हा त्यांची सांस्कृतक, प्रादेणशक आणण भाणर्क ओळख कशी वेर्गळी आहे,रिा आम्ही सहनार्गररक आहोत, राष्ट्रीय णतरंर्गा ला सलाम करतो, राष्ट्रर्गीत र्गातो, समान नार्गररकत्व, भौरगोणलक सीमा ची रक्षण करतो. देशाच्या समान संणवधानाचा आदर करतो.वेर्गवेर्गळ्या अणस्मतामुळेआम्ही वेर्गळेअसनू ही समान होतो. आणण सामान सांस्कृतक आणण भाणर्क अणस्मतेमुळे, अर्गदी वेर्गवेर्गळ्या राष्ट्रीयत्व असनूही तणमळ भारक बंधू आपल्या शरीलंकेच्या तणमळ बांधवांच्या णकती विळचे वाटतात. त्याचप्रमाणे माझे पंिबी, काणश्मरी आणण बंगाली णमत्र एकच राष्ट्रीयत्वमुळेमाझ्याशी समान वाटतात.परंतुअणवभाणति

ओळख, अणस्थर वैभवशाली इणतहास आणण त्यांच्या पवूवीचा णनणवववाद वारसा यामळे तेआपल्या सामाणयक इणतहास, संस्कृती आणण अणस्मतेमुळेपूवीच्या पाणकस्तानी भार्गाणतल पंिबी, काश्मीर आणण बंगालच्य लोकंसारखेच वाटत. शेवटी मला माझेउत्तर सापडले की भारताची खरी कल्पना म्हणर्णोआमच्या णवणवधता एकतेचा उत्सव आहे. हा खरी "आयणडया ऑफ इण्डया" भारताची सांकल्पना होय. आकिलचे एक लोकणप्रय वाक्य प्रथम र्गुरुदवे रवीनाथ टार्गोर यांनी वीसव्या शतकमध्ये के लेहोते. काश्मीरमधील आयबीच्या कारवाईत माझ्या भावाच्या मत्यूमळे मी हवाईदलाचा राणिनामा णदल्यानंतर णशक्षण पणूवकरण्यासाठी मंबुईला स्थलांतरत झालो. हवाई दलाचेमाझेस्वप्न हरवनू र्गेले. माझ्या णिवनाचा ध्येय हरवलेकारण मला माझ्या आयषट्यात या पढेकाय करावेहेमाणहत नव्हते. माझ्या कुटुंबाबद्दलच्या मुख्य कतवयेआणण बिाबदार्या पणूवकारण्याच्या णकंमतीवर सवापणांच णित्यार्ग मला सहन करावा लार्गला, तेफांक मध्यमवर्गीय मुलर्गाच समूशिकतो आणण सहानभु ती दाखवूशकतो. मी त्याच मानणस्थतथ मंबुईत दाखल झालो, मंबुई स्वप्नांचेशहर, मायानर्गरी, सकुतूमेहता यांची "मणक्षणमु णसणट " अथावत कमाल शहर ही वास्तणवक रिगातील आव्हानेसोडणण्यासाठी खरोखरच एक उत्तम प्रयोर्गशाळा होय. तथाणप, देशाच्या सवावत र्गणतमान, चैतन्यशील, आणण आणथवक राधिनीतील अनकूलन हेमाझ्यासाठी खर्या अथावनेमहतत्वाचेआव्हान होते. या न्यनूर्गंडच्या मध्ये, मला ँक प्राचीन तणमळ कवी णतरुवल्लवूर यांचा आध्याणतमक डोहा - 'शहाणपण म्हणर्णोबिदलत्या रिगाच्या पदधतीशी ससुंर्गत राहणे' - मला मदत के ली. मंबुई शहरानेमला वेळ, व्यावहारकता, र्गणतशीलता, तत्परता, लवणचकता आणण प्रणतकूल पररणस्थतीशी ळिवनू घेण्याचेमूलय णशकवले. मंबुईकर होण्याच्या प्रवासात मी आयषट्याशी वाटाघाटी करायला णशकतो. कारण एक अमेररकन म्हण म्हणते, की "आयषट्यात तमुहाला णोग्य आहेतेकधीच णमळत नाही; तमुही वाटाघाटी करता तेतमुहाला णमळते". मला शहराच्या वैणर्शक स्वरूपाबद्दल णिणू

घेण्याची संधी णमळाली आणण माझ्या दनैणदन प्रवासात लोकांच्या वेरगेरगळ्या संस्कृती आणण भारा णशकण्याची संणध णमळाली. मला आठवतेकी महाणवद्यालयीन णवद्याथी म्हणून मंबुईतील रगदीच्या रेनमध्येफोटवकॉलेमिध्येमाझ्या वर्गावत णियासाठी चार तास पहाटेप्रवास करत असे. त्या संधीनेमाझ्या आयष्ट्याची णदशा बदलली. मला समाितील णवणवध घटकांना भेटण्यासाठी, त्यांच्या कथा ऐकणेची , त्यांच्याकडून णशकणेची संणध णमळाली. या स्वपनातील शहरातील सवावत शरीमंत, सवावत शणशिली, कुणटल आणण प्रणतभावान लोक तमुही सहशोधूशकतात. मंबुई कधीच झोपत नाही. मला वाटतेकी आपण कोठून आला आहात णकंवा आपली पार्श्वभमी काय आहेयाची लोकांना येथे पवावनाही . तमुचा कठोर पररश्रम आणण प्रामाणणकपणा महत्त्वाचा. मी माझी पडुची पाच वरेसतत वाचण्यात, णलणहण्यात घालवली. मी रसायनशास्त्रात पदवीउत्तर झालो. आणण त्यानंतर राज्यसेवा लि णवभारगात साववणिक सेवेत सामील झालो. एक र्गोष्ट माझ्या यात लक्षात आली की कॉले सिंपलेतरी णशकणेकधीच संपणार नाही. शेवटच्या रशासापयांत हा माझ्या आयष्ट्याचा एक भारग आहे. माझा णवर्शास आहेकी, काही महान पुर म्हणतात त्याप्रमाणे "कठीण रिगले आणण उंच पववत पूणव करताना, विहा आपण शेवटचेणशखर णकिता, विहा आपल्याला असेवाटतेकी आपल्यात आणण तुमच्याकडेअसलेल्या दरगडांच्या खडबडीतपणात कोणताही फरक उरलेला नाही, विहा आपल्या कपाळावर बफावचेपणहलेवादळ सहन कराल आणण आपण थरथरणार नाही. हीच वेळ आहेविहा तमुहाला हेणिवेल की सवव काही णकिण्यात आणण शेवटपयांत आशा न रगमावण्यामध्येकोणताही फरक नाही." वरील अनभुवामळेमी वास्तणवक रिगात कोणत्याही आवहानाचा सामना करण्यासाठी आकिठोर खंबीर णवचारसरणीचा बनतो कारण मला आता विनातील काहीतरी रगमावण्याची भीती नाहीशी झाली आहे. महान मनअसलेल्या एका महान णवचारवंताने म्हटल्याप्रमाणे काळाच्या मार्गेणि आणण र्गोष्टी सामान्य करणे, नव्यानेसरुवात करणेही रिगातली अत्यंत कठीण र्गोष्ट असते." मला विनाची अनभुवाचे बिरदस्त आवड आणण व्यसन आहे. एका महान मन म्हणते, विहा तमुही विनाचेहेव्यसन रगमावता तेव्हा तमुही एक प्रबद्ध, एकक्वन्न, भव्य आणण

अथवणूव व्यणबिनतात. आपण एखाद्या कणलपत णवर्शात आहोत असेआनभूती होते. मला माझ्या आयष्ट्यात असंख्य अपयशांचा सामना करावा लागला. पण मी कधीही हार मानली नाही अपयश स्वीकारून पदेरगेलो . मी माझ्या आयष्ट्यातील अपयशाचा सन्मानाचा णबल्ला म्हणून परीदान के ला आणण सकारात्मक दृष्टीकोन ठेवून पदेरगेलो .मला वाटतेहाच खरा विनाचा प्रवास आहे. तमुचीविन रिगाला संदशे आहे- तेपरेरणादायक आहेयाची खात्री आपण करायला हवी . इतरांना अनसुरण करण्यासाठी आपण कोणत्या प्रकारच्या पाऊलखण्णु मार्गेठेवूइणच्छता हेपणूवपणेआपल्यावर अवलंबून आहे. शेवटी, मी असा यणुविद करेन की विन हेआपल्या स्वतः चेछोटेछोटेआनभुव , इतरांचे अनभुव, अपयश आणण यशातनू णशवण्याची रगाथा आहे. आणण आपण आपल्या स्वतःच्या आणण इतरांच्या चकुंपासून कोणता धडा घेता हेआपल्या व्यणमित्त्वाची व्याख्या ठरवत असते. कारण १९७० च्या दशकाच्या उत्तराधावत एका अमेररकन हास्य कलाकार ग्रोचो माक्सवयांच्याप्रमाणे, "इतरांच्या चकुंपासून णशका. तमुही त्या सवांना स्वतः करण्यासाठी कधीही सिस्त काळ रिगूशकत नाही." मला फा अनभुवांच्या, णवलक्षण प्रवासाचा आनंद घ्यायचा आहे- णशकण्याची आणण आत्मणवर्शासाने विनातील चढउतारांचा सामना करण्याची मंत्रमगुध करणारी प्रणयाचा भारग बनून रहायचेआहे. आदिशातील सहा लाखांहून अणधक रगावामध्येअभूतपवूनवीन सकारात्मक ऊवि, रगणतशीलता आणण नवीन महत्त्वाकांक्षी, सकारात्मक तरुणांचा प्रवाह उत्सफूतवउदय होतो आहे. १९९० च्या दशकाच्या उत्तराधावत झालेल्या आणथवक सुधारणांनंतर तरुणांच्या विनाकडेपाहण्याच्या दृष्टीकोनात आमलूग्र बदल झाला आहे. तरुण लोक रिखीम घेण्यास आणण नवीन मार्गवशोधण्यास घाबरत नाहीत. दोंदिर णशक्षण घेऊन समद्धी आणण आणथवक णवकासाची णशडी चढण्याचा मार्गव लणुटयन्स णदल्लीच्या खान माके टमध्येबसून समूशिकत नाही त्यासाठी तमुहाला ग्रामीण भारतात णहडं वि लागेल.



Illustration 'The Melt' by Chandraneel Sen

Life: a Game of Gambling

by Suresh Patil

(Translated from Marathi)

This is a story of self-identity and self-exploration of a middle-class village boy focusing on the social change which spontaneously emerges in rural India. It's a narrative of a stubborn boy who strives to satisfy his personal ego using education as a powerful equalizer weapon against odds and adverse circumstances in his village to prove himself as somebody.

According to the LBSNAA (Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration) and ECI (Election Commission of India), a considerable number of Bureaucrats and Policy Makers are from rural backgrounds. They are literally trying to rule the country in a positive manner such that they are at the helm of it. My little village is the best entity of this corollary. Representatives of my tiny, beautiful, hilly village in different walks of life -- doctors, engineers, bureaucrats, academicians and journalists are wandering across the world. With the help of only three crucial life qualities: "hard work, dedication and risk-taking ability".

I would like to narrate my personal journey from a small village to the IAF (Indian Air Force) training centre Belgaum, Karnataka as a 19-year old boy. I was born and brought up in a middle-class defence service family residing in a small village like many children of the countryside. My maternal grandfather and uncles served in the Indian army. We were the only family who subscribed to English standard national dailies, like the Indian Express and English magazines as a learning source since I was in school. That was decent enough to expose me to various skills and other co-curricular activities. Since childhood, cricket has been my passion, from school team captain to university team player. Cricket, a gentleman's game, teaches me precious life skills like leadership, team spirit, sportsmanship, discipline, and the importance of fitness in life, which formal education failed to teach. My grandfather, one of the first and best professional lawyers in the district, was my biggest asset in education and personal growth. He taught me elementary knowledge about Civics, History, Politics and Self-Identity that was unparalleled. My elder brother and I had been working hard to join the Defence services since childhood. He joined the Intelligence Bureau office (IBO) after graduation. At the same time, I got selected as an airmen in IAF after my Higher Secondary College

The Indian Airforce's motto "Touch the sky with glory" is another source of inspiration — resonating in my ears since childhood. The Air Force fighter plane fascinated me as a 19 year old boy, and for the first time, I got the opportunity to sit in an Airforce plane. While crossing my state border, I thought about my identity — "Who am I?".

I am a descendant of the medieval era great Maratha warrior 'Chhatrapati Shivaji Bhosale', a Hindu, Indian or Marathi speaker. For the first time in my life I felt conscious about my self-identity. As Shashi Tharoor eloquently argues in his classic nonfiction "The Battle Of Belonging: On Nationalism, Patriotism, And What It Means To Be Indian." Whether some Indians are more Indian than others? The central argument is the identity of every man, woman, and child who belongs to the newly republic of India. [U]nity in a country as diverse as India is only achieved by encompassing its multiple sub-identities within an overarching national identity that does not invalidate current linguistic, religious, or regional sub-identities but include them within the broad spectrum multi-identity idea of India."

Similarly, I am struggling with a multifaceted and multi-vector self-identity dilemma. As an ex-airman of the Indian Air Force, I want to probe what real Indian-ness is. What does it mean to be a patriotic and nationalistic citizen in the 21st century? There was multi-cultural diversity in my cohort of 200 airmen, and equal representation from across the subcontinent. Literally from the northern Himalayan crown of Jammu Kashmir up to the southern littoral tip of Tamil Nadu; from the eastern peninsula of Bengal to the Rann of Kutch in western Gujarat. Anyone could sense the unique, beautiful geographic and cultural diversity of Incredible India in my cohort. I always wondered when I look at my fellow diverse batchmates, how is their cultural, regional & linguistic identity different from mine? Although we are fellow citizens, salute the same national tricolour, sing the same national anthem, share the same legal citizenship, geographic boundary and respect the same law of the land i.e. Constitution we are different because of different self-identities. And because of common cultural and linguistic identity, even from different nationalities, Tamil speakers seem close to our Sri Lankan Tamils brothers. Similarly, my Punjabi, Kashmiri and Bengali friends as fellow citizens shared a common nationality with me, but due to undivided identity, unsettled glorious history and undeniable heritage of their ancestors, they seemed similar to the erstwhile Pakistani part of Punjab, Kashmir and Bengal because of our common shared history, culture, heritage and identity. In the end, I found the answer that the true Idea of India is our celebration of unity in diversity. This is the real "Idea of India" a popular phrase nowadays was first coined by Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore in the twenty century.

After resigning from the IAF, I migrated to Mumbai to continue my studies. With a sense of loss due to my brother's death in an IB operation in Kashmir, my dream was lost and forgotten. I felt aimless because I did not

know what to do next in my life. Only a middle-class boy can relate, understand and sympathize with me the pain and sacrifices that have been made at the cost of prime duties and responsibilities towards my family. Since then, I have been a wounded soul of grief.

Mumbai, a city of dreams, Mayanagri, Suketu Mehta's "Maximum City" is a really great life-learning laboratory to solve real world challenges. However, adaptation in the dynamic, vibrant, cosmopolitan and financial capital of the country was the key challenge for me. In the midst of an inferiority complex, a philosophical couplet from Thiruvalluvar, the ancient Tamil poet -- 'Wisdom is to live in tune with the mode of the changing world' -- helped me out. The city taught me the value of time, pragmatism, dynamism, nimbleness, promptness, resilience and adaptability to adverse situations. In my journey to become a Mumbaikar, I learn to negotiate with life. Because as an American proverb says, "In life you never get what you deserve; you get what you negotiate".

I also got the opportunity to learn about the cosmopolitan nature of the city, and liked the different cultures and languages of people during my daily commute. I remember as a college student jumping into a crowded train in Mumbai and travelling in the early morning for four hours to attend my classes at Fort college. That opportunity changed the course of my life. To meet the different sections of society, listen to their stories, learn from them. One can easily find out the richest, most powerful, crooked and talented people in this dream city. Mumbai never sleeps. I think people didn't care where you came from or what your background was. What mattered was hard work and honesty. I spent my five years persistently reading, writing practicals and exams. I secured an MS in Chemistry, and subsequently cleared the state civil services and joined public service in the water department. One thing that I realized was that even if college ends, learning will never end. It's a part of my life up to the last breath.

I do believe, as some great men say "While accomplishing difficult jungles and high mountains, when you win the last peak, when you feel there is no difference left between you and the roughness of those stones that you have won, when you will bear the first storm of ice on your forehead and you will not tremble. That is the time when you will realize that there is no difference in winning everything and not losing hope till the end."

I became tough-minded to face any challenge in the real world because I have no fear of loss. But while securing this attitude, I sacrificed many near and dear ones like my brother, friends, and relationships due to the rat race of my career. As someone with a great bright mind says "It is so easy to keep moving on if we would realize how it feels when everything is still and you are constantly moving forward. Your friends, family, relationships etc all are at stake. It's extremely difficult to go back in time and make things normal, starting anew."

I have passion and addiction to life. A great mind says, when you lose this addiction to life, it becomes enlightened, equanimous, splendid and meaningful. It appears as if we are in some utopian universe.

I faced numerous failures in my life and in my career. But I never gave up and let it go. I wear my life's failures as a badge of honour and move on with a positive approach. That's exactly what the journey of life is all about.

Your life is a message to the world — make sure it is inspiring. It is entirely up to you as to what kind of footprints you want to leave behind for others to follow.

In conclusion, I would argue that life is all about the saga of stitching little bits and pieces of your own and others experiences, failures, and success. What lesson you take away from your own and other's mistakes defines your persona. As late 1970s American comic Groucho Marx said, "Learn from the mistakes of others. You can never live long enough to make them all yourself." I just want to enjoy the fantastic journey of experiences -- the mesmerizing process of learning and confidently encountering the ups and downs of life.

There is a spontaneous emergence of unprecedented new positive energy, dynamism and flow of new aspirational, positive youths in more than six lakh villages of the country. A paradigm shift in the youth's approach towards life after the economic reforms of the late 1990s. Young people are not scared to take risks and explore new paths. The way they climb the ladder of prosperity and economic growth by acquiring quality education cannot be sensed by sitting in Khan Market of Lutyens Delhi.

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নসির্গশোভা ঘরে ফরোর অঙ্গীকার

মাযরে কাঁখে মাথা রেখে কল্পনারই দশে
মনকে নযি়ে ছুটে গেলোম আজ এক নতুন বশে
মঘেমুলুকরে কারখানাত, বজ্রপাতরে খলো
ভাবসায়রে তাই দখে আমভিসাই নজিরে ভলো
চোখদুটি আজ ছুটুটে চলে দূরে কোন পথে
তুষারচাদর বহিযি়ে দযিছে অদৃশ্য কোন হাতে
হন্যে হয় খুঁজি আমরিং লাল, সবুজ আর নীল
ধরৈয়চ্যুত গোধূলি-আলয়ে পাই না কোন মলি
চায়রে ভাঁড়, প্রকৃতির রং আঁকবিঁককরি
খামখ্যোলি সৃষ্টিগুলিকে বাংলা বলই ধরি
ঢাকরে ধ্বনতি ঘুম ভাঙলে, রবীন্দ্রগীতগাওয়া
চা সহযোগে রসগোল্লার ঘ্রান, এইটুকু শুধু চাওয়া
হাওড়া ব্রীজ আর গঙ্গার শোভা প্রকৃতির বড় জয়
বঙ্গগর্ভে বকিশতি হয় আমাদরে পরচিয়
রকমারি সাজে বঙ্গললনা অপ্সরারূপে জাগে
দুর্গা মাযরে আগমনী তাই স্বপ্নরে মত লাগে
শঙ্খধ্বনি বিজে ওঠে আজ পাড়ায় পাড়ায় রব
মন মযুরী পথেম তুলে জাগায় কলরব
এটাই কসিই স্বপ্নরে গলি, যাকে প্রতদিনি খুঁজি
এই তো আমার সোনার বাংলা, যাকে আমি এত বুঝি
এই রাস্তায় বড় হওয়া, সৃজনশীলতা পাওয়া
সুদীর্ঘ এবং প্রসারতি তাই আসে মষিটি হাওয়া
পরশিষে বলি বাংলার বধি সিব্দা শরিয়োধার্য
মহাবশিবরে চত্রিপটে তার অপবুপ কারুকার্য



The Streets of Bengal

by Oleena Chaudhuri
(Translated from Bengali)

With my head on my mother's lap,
My busy mind slowly begins to unwrap.
As the grey clouds gather, I hear sounds of thunder;
It puts me into deep thought, oh mind, what do you wonder?
Far away, I could see a street,
But it looks like a white sheet.
I scramble for some colors, green, red, white, it's a must,
I get impatient, and start seeking for some twilight dust.
Green trees, people, tea cups, I draw them all,
And this will be the streets of Bengal.
Waking up to the sound of "dhaak", singing Tagore,
A hot cup of "chaa", a rasgulla, need I ask for more?
The beauty of Howrah Bridge, and Ganga's serenity,
All forms a part of our Bengal's own identity.
Women in Saris, vermilion in their parting, adorned with red
bangles in hand,
Its Durga Puja time already, and I'm in my own sweet
dreamland.
Suddenly I hear the sound of a conch shell, from the
neighboring house,
And straight from my deep sleep, lazily I arouse.
Was that my dream street that I just saw?
Yes it was, and I'm totally in awe.
A Street that I could draw on, and let my creations flow,
It is not expensive, not big, but just enough to make me glow.
Oh Streets of Bengal,
Here they call.

"غازي امان الله خان" هغه څوک چې افغانستان ته يې

خپلواکي راوړه

ليکونکی ايمل وجدی

غازي امان الله خان د اصلاحاتو په لور يو څه ښه گامونه پورته کړل ، چې ترټولو مهم يې د قوانينو تسويد او پلي کول و ، د هغه تمرکز د تعليمي پروسې پرمختگ و ، د لسگونو مجلو او جريدو جوړول او خپرول و ، په اقتصادي سکتور او نړۍ بازارونو کې گڼ شمير پروژې پيل کړي د افغاني صنعتونو ته لاره هواره کړله او په هيواد کې د نوي ښارونو جوړول شامل دي.

امان الله خان د سپيڅلي او قوي ارادې ، هود ، زغم او هوسيار سړی و. د خبرو ښه مهارتونه درلود او کله چې هغه خبرې کړلې ، نو بل خوا به ژوره اغيزه لندي شو . امان الله خان يو ځوان وطنپال و چې د افغانستان د پرمختگ لپاره يې ډير کار وکړ ، په اقتصادي برخه کې يې د صنعتونو پراختيا او د بهرني تجارت په برخه کې تمرکز وکړ ، افغاني محصولاتو يې نړيوال بازارونو ته لاره وموندله. نوي ښارونه جوړ شول او کابل پراخه ښار شو. په ولاياتو کې سړکونه بيارغول شول او د مسافرينو د اسانتيا لپاره په هوټلونو جوړ شول. افغانستان د نړۍ له نورو هيوادونو سره قوي اړيکې رامېنځته کړي له همدې امله انگليس خپله ماته ومنله او افغانستان يې د 1919 اگست په 19 د خپلواک دولت په توگه په رسميت وپيژند. هغه په 1926 کال کې له امير څخه پادشاه (پاچا) ته خپل لقب بدل کړ. امان الله خان افغانستان يو مدرن او پرمختللي هيواد هود درلود خو د امان الله مدرن پلانونو په افغانستان کې د هرچا لخوا دومره تود هرکلی ونه شو ، فرصت ته په کتو ، انگليس د ځينو افغانانو په مرسته د هغه پروراندې ودرېده او په پايله کې ، ډيری قومونه د بریتانیا په مرسته پاڅون وکړ. په نهايت کې ، پاڅون د امان الله خان د تخت بيللو لامل شو. هغه افغانستان پرېښود او په ايټاليا او سويسرلينډ کې ژوند کاوه. هغه په 1960 کې ومړ ، او په جلال آباد

کې د خپل پلار قبر ته نژدې ښخ سو

امان الله خان په کال 1892 کې د کابل ولايت په پغمان ولسوالۍ کې زيږيدلی ، هغه د امير حبيب الله خان زوی دی ، حبيب الله خان له 1901 څخه تر 1919 پورې د افغانستان امير و. امان الله خان په 1919 کال کې د هغه د پلار له وژل کيدو وروسته د افغانستان امير شو. امان الله خان د انگليس ضد و او غوښتل يې چې افغانستان د انگليس له واکمنۍ څخه آزاد کړي. له همدې امله هغه د بریتانیا له واک څخه خپلواکي وغوښته او افغانستان يې د نړۍ د نورو خپلواکو هيوادونو په څير آزاد هيواد وباله. کله چې هغه د انگليس له واکمنۍ څخه د خپلواکۍ غوښتنه وکړه د کابل مرادخاني سيمې ته لار چې په هغه وخت کې د کابل مرکز و ، امان الله خپله توره د کابل په مرادخاني سيمه کې د آسونو د سوارولو پرمهال رابښکته کړه او اعلان يې وکړ چې افغانستان د نړۍ د نورو هيوادونو په څير يو خپلواک هيواد دی. انگليس فکر کاوه چې هيڅوک به ورسره يوځای نه شي ، ځکه چې ډير نور مشران هم خپلواکي غواړي ، مگر خلکو ورسره همکاري ونکړه ، نو له دې امله هيڅوک به هم امان الله خان سره گډون ونکړي. مگر دا ځل ډيری خلکو هلته غږونه راپورته کړل او د انگليس په وړاندې ودرېدل. کله چې امان الله خان انگریزانو ته د افغانستان خپلواکي اعلان کړه ، انگليسانو هغه ته غوږ ونه نيو ، نو هغه اړ شو چې د انگليس په وړاندې د جنگ او جهاد اعلان وکړي. افغان ملت کم وخت کې انگریزانو ته ماتې ورکړه. برتانيې د سولې خبرو په پيل کولو او د افغان غږ د لا نور پرمختگ په مخنيوي سره د دوی شرموونکي ماتې پټولو لپاره پيل کړي. برتانيا دې خبرو ته اړ ایستل شوې وه او په نهايت کې يې د افغانستان پر بهرني تگلاره خپل کنترول تسليم کړ.

وروسته ، امان الله يو ملي اتل شو ، او د غازي لقب ورکړل شو.



Photos by kabul press and Aljazera



The King who brought Independence to Afghanistan

by Aimal Wajdee

(Translated from Pashto)

(The author wrote the article before the take-over of Afghanistan by the Taliban, on 15th August 2021)

Born in 1892 in the Paghman district of Kabul province, King Amanullah Khan was the son of Amir Habibullah Khan, who was the Emir of Afghanistan from 1901 until 1919. Crowned the Emir of Afghanistan after his father was assassinated in 1919, Amanullah Khan was against British rule and wanted to see a free Afghanistan. He called for an independent Afghanistan, like any other free country in the world.

One day he rode to the Muradkhani Area of Kabul (which was downtown Kabul at that time) and took out his sword in open defiance of the British, who thought that no one would join him. But to their surprise, many people slowly and gradually raised their voices and stood with Amanullah Khan.

When Amanullah Khan declared independence, the British ignored him, so he was forced to declare jihad against the British (the literal meaning of jihad is struggle or effort, but here it means Holy War. When Muslims or their faith or territory are under attack, Islam permits the waging of a military war). The Afghan nation defeated the British after a long struggle. The British attempted to cover up their embarrassing defeat by initiating peace talks and preventing further development of the Afghan voice. The British were forced to negotiate but surrendered their control over to Afghanistan's foreign policy. Afterwards, Amanullah became a national hero and anointed with the title Ghazi.

Ghazi Amanullah Khan took some good steps towards reform, the most important of which were the drafting and implementing laws. His focus was more on the development of the educational process, the creation and publication of dozens of magazines and journals, the implementation of numerous projects in the economic sector and world markets. This included paving the way for Afghan industries and building new cities within the country. Amanullah Khan is still a famous figure in Afghans. The place where he got independence is printed on the Afghani currency. His pictures in the presidential palace show that Afghans love him, holding special value in every Afghan life. Today, Afghans are learning from their history about how their leaders were betrayed and, most importantly, their thoughts and value system. Every year on independence day, youths gather around in Afghanistan to pay tribute to the sacrifices most people gave to keep this country independent. Government officials still remember King Amanullah Khan in their official speeches. Amanullah Khan believed that Afghans should not bow down to anyone except God and that martyrdom would be preferable

over any form of slavery. He dreamt of a modern Afghanistan with Islamic laws, but unfortunately, the British didn't allow him to work. The youth, elders and officials still follow his thinking and values of modernisation of Afghanistan with the Islamic law. Amanullah Khan was a man of pure and strong will, determination, forbearance and prudence. Good speech skills, and when he spoke, the other side would be deeply affected. Amanullah Khan was a young patriot who worked hard for the development of Afghanistan. In the economic sphere, he focused on developing industries and in foreign trade, Afghan products found their way to world markets. In terms of development, he built new cities, expanded Kabul, rebuilt inter-provincial roads and hotels for the convenience of weary travellers. Afghanistan made strong relationships with other countries of the world; therefore, the British accepted their defeat and recognised Afghanistan as an independent state on the 19 of August 1919. He then turned his attention to modernising Afghanistan. He changed his title from Amir to Padshah (King) in 1926. King Amanullah's modernisation plans were not greeted so warmly by everyone in Afghanistan. Seizing this opportunity, the British allied with a few Afghan tribes, who revolted against him. In the end, the revolt cost Amanullah Khan the throne. He left Afghanistan and lived in exile in Italy and Switzerland. He died in 1960 and was buried in Jalalabad, near his father's tomb.

Afghanistan was essential to the British empire, for they wanted to conquer and hold Afghanistan to prevent the Russians from invading south Asia through the mountainous regions into British India. After losing Afghanistan, they also lost British India. Afghanistan had a strategic place for the British, who called it the heart of Asia. They feared that if they lost Afghanistan it would cost them all of Asia. There were three Afghan Anglo wars between the British and the Afghans, and in all the three wars, the British lost.

The book 'Baghdadi Peer', written by a British spy who helped the British empire bring Amanullah Khan down from power and stop him, narrated the admittance (by the spy) that Amanullah Khan worked hard for his land and people. The people were happy under his rule, but the British empire sent me and few others to start working for his destruction. A good lesson that gleaned through his life was that the people of Afghanistan must unite and not fall prey to the proxies of other countries. Afghanistan is still paying the cost for a nation that is not united.

ਤੂੰ, ਮੈਂ ਤੇ ਮੀਰ

ਦਵਿਨੁਰ ਕੌਰ

ਵੈਸੇ ਤਾਂ ਏਥੇ ਗਰਮੀ ਦਾ ਮੌਸਮ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਮਸਤਾਨਿਆਂ ਲਈ ਮੀਰ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ,
ਮੀਰ - ਮੋਹੱਬਤ, ਜਜ਼ਬਾਤ ਤੇ ਕਸਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਯਾਦਾਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ।
ਕੁਛ ਪੰਕਤੀਆਂ ਤੇਰੀ ਯਾਦ ਵੱਚਿ।

ਅੱਜ ਮੈਂ ਵੇਖਿਆ- ਕਤਿ ਬੱਦਲ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ
ਭੁੱਲੀਆਂ ਉਹ, ਫੇਰ ਤੋਂ ਯਾਦਾਂ ਵੱਚਿ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ।
ਅੱਜ ਤਾਂ ਸਵੇਰ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਮੀਰ ਪੈ ਰਹਿਾ ਹੈ,
ਪੱਕਾ ਤੂੰ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਣਾ।
ਜਦੋਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਵਹਿੜੇ ਵੱਚਿ ਮੀਰ ਪਿਆ,
ਉਹ ਗੱਲੀ ਗੱਲੀ ਮੀਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਤੇਰੀ ਖੁਸ਼ਬੂ ਆਈ ਹੈ।
ਗੱਲੇ ਪਤੀਆਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਮਹਕਿ ਰਹਿਾ ਹੈ,
ਏਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਮੋਹੱਬਤ ਹੈ ਕੀ ਮੀਰ?
ਬਾਹਰ ਗਰੀਬਾਂ ਮੀਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਾਛਡਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਵਾਜ਼ਾਂ,
ਲੱਗੇ ਏਦਾਂ ਕੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕੁੱਝ ਕਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਹੋ।
ਮੈਨੂੰ ਭਰੋਸਾ ਹੈ ਕੀ ਓਥੇ ਵੀ ਮੀਰ ਪੈ ਰਹਿਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੈ (ਤੇਰੇ ਕੋਲ),
ਕਉਂਕਿ ਏਥੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਸਹਿਤ ਠੰਡੀ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ।

ਏਹ ਕੁੱਝ ਤੇਰੇ ਲਈ ਜੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।
ਹੁੱਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੁੜ ਵਾਪਸ ਆ ਗਈਆਂ ਨੇ,
ਲੋਕਨਿ ਹੁਣ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਤੂੰ ਇਸ ਲੋਕ ਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ।
ਹੁਣ ਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਮੀਰ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਨਾ ਤੂੰ ਏਥੇ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।
ਹੁਣ ਤਾਂ ਬਦਲਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਗਰਜਣਾ ਛੱਡ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ।
ਕਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਨਾਲ ਬੈਠਿਆ ਕਰਦੇ ਸੀ,
ਹੁਣ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਵੱਚਿ ਉਹ ਜਹਿਾ ਮੀਰ ਕੱਥੇ?

ਕੀਨੀ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਸੀ ਉਹ ਮੀਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਾਛਡਾਂ,
ਭੀਜੀਆਂ ਇੱਛਾਵਾਂ, ਭੀਜੇ ਜਜ਼ਬਾਤ, ਭੀਜੀ ਮੈਂ, ਤੇ ਭਜਿਆ ਤੂੰ।

ਹੁਣ ਤੇ ਮੈਂ ਮੀਰ ਚ ਭੀਜਣਾ ਛੱਡ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ,
ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਲੋਕੀ ਸਮਝਣਗੇ ਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਹੁਣ ਵੀ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਮਲਿਦੀ ਹਾਂ
ਕਉਂਕਿ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਮਲਿ ਕੇ ਭੀਜੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਸੀ ਮੈਂ।
ਤੇ ਲੋਕੀ ਸੋਚਦੇ ਸੀ ਕੀ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਮੀਰ ਪਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਅੱਜ ਇੱਥੇ ਬੱਦਲ ਹੈ, ਮੀਰ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਠੰਡੀਆਂ ਹਵਾਵਾਂ ਵੀ ਨੇ,
ਫਰਿ ਵੀ ਨਾਂ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਨਾਂ ਹੀ ਉਹ ਰਾਤਾਂ।

ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਦੀ ਕੀ ਕੌਣ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਬੇਵਫ਼ਾ ਹੈ?
- ਏਹ ਮੀਰ ਕੇ ਮੈਂ?
ਕਉਂਕਿ ਤੇਰੇ ਬਗੈਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਦੋਨੋਂ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਹਾਂ।

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਤੇ ਹਰ ਮੀਰ ਚ ਤੇਰੀ ਯਾਦ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ।
ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ।

You, Me and Rain

by *Divnoor Kaur*

(Translated from Punjabi)

Accidently it's the summer season. But for lovers it is always raining.
Whenever rain comes, it brings love, emotions and someone's memory along.
In your memory.

Today I saw a cloud came by,
It brought back the memories I had of you.
It's been raining since morning,
I am sure you must have remembered me.
When it rained in my courtyard,
That wet soil gave me the fragrance of yours.
Wet leaves gave freshness to those memories with you,
Is this your love or is it rain?
The tiny little droplets of rain are singing a song for me,
Makes me feel you are saying something to me.
I am sure that it must be raining there at your place,
Because I am feeling the cold shiver I used to feel when you were here.

This is something for you that has been separated from me.

The seasons are back,
But I think you are no more a part of this world now.
Now there is no more rain, there is no you staying here.
Now even clouds have stopped talking to me like they used to.
There was a time we used to sit together in this rain,
But now where is that rain in this city without you?

How beautiful was those tiny splashes of rain ,
Soaked in feelings, wishes, soaked in love feelings, soaked me and soaked you.

Now I have stopped dancing in the rain,
Or else people will think I still meet you,
Because after meeting you, people see me soaked,
And know that today, it rained.

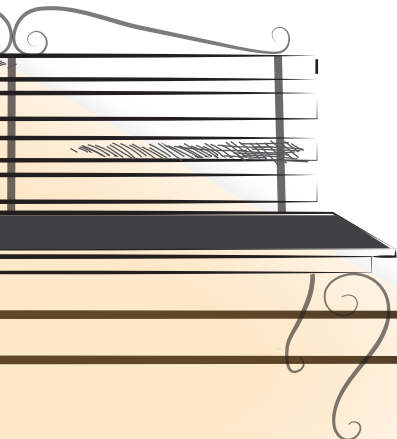
Today there is cloud, there is rain and cold breeze too,
But you are not there, neither those nights.

I don't know who is more unfaithful?

This rain or me?

Because except you, we both are here.

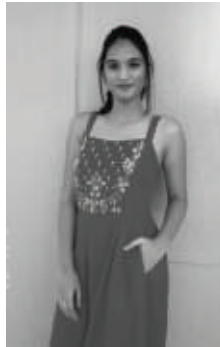
I miss you in every rain. Maybe you too.



The Volunteer Team



Aanya Rohit Jain



Sneha Birur



Rishabh Vishwakarma



Aanya Jain

DESIGN VOLUNTEERS

EDITORIAL VOLUNTEER



Afterword

Niches and idols that could occupy them. Doors and city icons. Missives from Kabul and meditations about time travel. Reflections on queerness and expositions about stage names. A walk in Srinagar, the light at the end of a tunnel, the act of naming. Unforgettable images from small-town India, virtual personas, memories of childhood. A renaming. A visit to Agogo and a journey to a dream city. Kirana stores and stories. Multi-lingual offerings in Marathi, Punjabi, Bangla, Pashto and Persian. All this and so much more in this inaugural edition of *ANUsandhan* is a testament to the energies of the Anant Fellows and Anant National University undergraduate students. It is a compendium of their signed contributions but also their long hours of work behind the scenes, poring over typos and composing pages.

Nomeologue is a student-envisioned and student-led initiative. It is also an education about design, teamwork, the quest for perfection and the certainty of error. It is a lesson in civics and translation and what it takes to enrich the public domain. It is also the best gift a teacher could receive.

Thank you, Editors Rashi, Sadhya Bhatnagar, Sweta Bhushan and Kanisha Shah, Mentors Deepti Sreeram and Rutu Shah, Volunteers Sneha Birur, Aanya Rohit Jain, Rishabh Vishwakarma, and Aanya Jain. Thank you to the Self Development and Personal Growth Initiative team at the Anant Fellowship – Bharath Kumar and Richa Tripathi. Thank you, faculty advisors, and guides Sunandan Roy Chowdhury, Abhishek Kumar, Ashima Banker, Amareswar Galla, Snehal Nagarsheth and Provost Anunaya Chaudhary for your timely support and steadfast encouragement. And thank you, dear reader, for completing the journey that started over a year ago with a simple prompt: What is the story of your name?

Dr. Ashima Sood

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