

BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA

DURGA PUJA 2026





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bsstoronto.org


Yugacharya Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj

BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA

DURGA PUJA GREETINGS

FROM:



His Holiness Srimath Swami
Madhavanandaji Maharaj (102)
President, Bharat Sevashram Sangha



His Holiness Srimath Swami
Purnatmanandaji Maharaj
President, Bharat Sevashram Sangha



His Holiness Srimat Swami Biswatmanandaji Maharaj
General Secretary

SECRETARY'S REPORT

"The Great Operator has descended upon this earth as the Sangha Lord.
He, who, has donned the human body, is manifested as Jagat Guru
out of boundless love and compassion for all created beings
to lead India and the whole world unto the path of universal emancipation."

—Guru Maharaj

By the divine grace of our beloved Founder **Acharya Srimat Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj,** 2026 holds immense promise for the Canadian Chapter of Bharat Sevashram Sangha. Last year, we generated over $600,000 in revenues; and our forecast this year looks equally promising. Hearty approbation to our God-ordained Guru (the Divine Dispenser and Presiding Deity of our Ashram) through whose *vardaan* (blessings) the impossible has been rendered possible.

Whilst we host many fundraising drives and religious observances throughout the year, the synergism and spiritual fervor generated by Durga Puja is unsurpassable. We anticipate that over ten thousand clamouring and yearning souls will attend the final five days of these Navaratri festivities. Guru Maharaj recognizes the profound impact this auspicious celebration engenders: the prescriptive catalyst for his spiritual awakening revivalism envisioned for this dark age of *Kali Yuga* in which the humankind wallows (flounders) like a fish in the ocean of sin. He outrightly declared a holy war when he stated: *"Mad indeed is he who thinks he can unravel the mysteries of spirituality by a mind torn by passion and senses tyrannized (agonized) by carnal hankerings."*

Swami Devapriyanandaji Maharaj is truly a godsend. Since the sad demise of our beloved Swami Pushkaranandaji Maharaj, the Canada Ashram had experienced an irreparable loss. However, we are deeply grateful that Head Office has finally deputed a monk of his caliber to fill that gaping void. Swami Devapriyanandaji possesses the wherewithal to hoist the flag of the Sangha and Sanatan Dharma in Canada.

Now that our infrastructure is complete in all of our three buildings, there will be a shift in focus towards the spiritual and cultural proliferations the Sangha espouses (advocates or champions). We intend to launch classes in Sanskrit, music, singing, dancing, yoga and meditation. Furthermore, we also eagerly look forward to disseminate our rich Vedantic and Shastric knowledge within our own Hindu community and the world at large. This is in keeping with the lofty aims and objects of our Sangha.

The Canada Ashram has built a statuesque and impregnable fortress for generations to come. Moving forward, we will gradually integrate our youths into the administrative framework. At some point in time we would have no choice but to pass the mantle of leadership over to them. Indeed, the most beautiful flower in the garden of creation is a young mind. Youth power was what Guru Maharaj choicely utilized when he founded this magnanimous Sangha. With a do-or-die attitude and spirit, it is our firm resolve to carry out his divine behest. Respectfully submitted by yours truly Dr. Lake Singh in service of the Sangha Lord. Jai Guru!

Bharat Sevashram Sangha

Empowering Humanity Since 1917

Dr. Lake Singh

Established in 1917, Bharat Sevashram Sangha is a renowned socio-religious, charitable organization founded by the illustrious patriot-saint Acharya Srimat Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj .Today, the Sangha is driven by a contingent of nearly 500 monks and brahmacharis who have taken the sacred vows of renunciation and self-abnegation. Alongside their quest for spiritual realization, they earnestly seek to alleviate human sufferings through a vast network of humanitarian initiatives. As is evident from the undermentioned altruistic and beneficent endeavors, our founder's heart bled for suffering humanity. Here is a glimpse of the services rendered:

- **Healthcare: The Sangha operates general hospitals, specialized cancer and leprosy clinics, hundreds of charitable dispensaries, mobile medical units and ambulance services.**

- **Social Welfare: We manage patient homes, tribal development initiatives, women's empowerment and youth welfare programs.**

- **Education: Our Ashram has under its administration schools, colleges and technical institutes. In partnership with the Government of India, we provide a free residential education program supporting nearly 5,000 students in states such as Jharkhand, Nagaland, Assam, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat and West Bengal.**

- **Disaster Relief: We are also actively engaged delivering nationwide relief operations during natural calamities such as floods, famines, and earthquakes.**

Our Founder: It was in the year 1896 that India saw the emergence of an exceptionally gifted yogi, spiritual preceptor and social reformer par excellence. By dint of his astringent tapasya **or solemnities, Guru Maharaj attained the pinnacle of spiritual realization at the tender age of 20. The hallmarks of his impeccable life were defined by steadfast continence, celibacy and an unwavering commitment to philanthropy and humanitarianism.**

To revive the timeless wisdom of the Vedas (to entice Hindus to relive the Vedas and other scriptures ipso facto), he pontificated Hindu idealism, guiding humanity towards the path of dharma **(righteousness) and moral uprightness. A champion of nationalism and social reform, the saviour of the age worked at the grassroots level to liberate rural communities from the shackles of ignorance, superstition, penury and social persecution. He fought fiercely against untouchability almost ensuring its near-extinction in Bengal. By inspiring youths to build their character (and ultimately so too their spirit of patriotism), he sought to build a stronger nation. All in all, the Godsend redeemer served as a benign companion, counselor and leader of the poor and downtrodden.**

ভাগ

স্বামী দেবপ্রিয়ানন্দ
ভারত সেবাশ্রম সংঘ

ভাগ, মা বলেন ভাগ,
নিজ সন্তানে, জু জু হতে ভাগ;
তারপর মায়ের কোল হতে ভাগা
এরপর স্কুলের শুরু ভাগ (আর ভাগ);
এইযে শুরু জীবনভরে ভাগ;
শুধু ভাগ আর ভাগা
গৃহ শিক্ষকের ভয়ে ভাগ;
স্কুল পালিয়ে কোথাও ভাগ
আর গুরুজনের ভয়ে ভাগ।
এক মহাইতিহাস দেশ ভাগ।
পুনঃ নিজ দেশ হতে শোচনীয় ভাগ।
প্রাণ ও ধর্মের ভয়ে ভাগ,
ভাগ আর ভাগ জীবনভর;
এত ভাগেও বোধোদয় হয়নাযে
আজ যে ভাগের কথা হবে,
সে এক ভীষণ দুরুহ ভাগ;
যার নাম এক মহা ভাগ
তাও আবার এক নয়
তিন চার, পাঁচ ভাগে ভাগ,
নিজ দেশে ভিটে মাটির ভাগ,
পরদেশেও ভাগ আর ভাগা
সে যে আমাদের পূজা কীর্তনের ভাগ,
তুই কীর্তন করবি আমিও করব
তোর কীর্তনের তাল নাই ভাগা
আরে তোর সুরে জ্ঞান নাই,
তোরতো আবার দল ভারি নাই,
(আরে) তোরতো যত নেরা-নেরীর দল
তবু ভাল তোরা করিস কোন্দল।
তুই কোন দল? বল না হরিবল.
হরিবল ভায়া কোন্দলে কাম নেই,
সবে মিলে ধরি মহা কীর্তনের রোল
যত দলই করো হরিপদে থেকো,
তানা হলে সবই হবে নিষ্ফল।
আমি খাটি বলি ভায়া যেন,
কীর্তনের নামে ভাগ তবুও ভালো,
অলস মনে না থেকে বসে কোনে
যোগ দাওনা ভায়া কোন এক দলে,
যদি তার কৃপাতে মন হরিবলে।
ভাগ ভুলে পারে যোগে যোগেশ্বর,
তানা হলে সময় আসবে ঘনিয়ে,
ভাগ রে ভাগ ওরে হতভাগা
ভব সংসার হতে ভাগার পালা,
বিদায় বেলা হরি যদি আনে ভেলা
তানা হলে অথই জলে মরবি ডুবে
শেষের দিনে কেহ রবেনা সাথে। !!

HUMAN RIGHTS

Swami Devapriyananda
Bharat Sevashram Sangha

He fights, She fights,
For human rights,
But my mind asks,
What is wrong & right?
Who are they that organize?
Are they great and wise?
Arrange a meeting for world peace
Why all power do they keep?
You, he and | are no doubt good,
Don't quarrel for any falsehood
Offer and deliver all noble words
Does the wreched terrorist listen to your words?
Have you tried to invite them?
To the world peace meeting for all to attend
Neither you invite, nor they come
Who for this will command?
Now that time has come
To judge the hated crime.
Really the terrorist wishes well for the society
Ask everyone together and individually
If it is harmful for the multitude
Don't give them more latitude.
Protest against it, obstruct it
Take a bold stand against it
The terrorist individually has shown his power,
What is the value of those cowards
who destroy our world friendship?
They make a wall of rubbish heap
Are they not killing human relationship?
Who has given you the authority
to destroy our beautiful society?
However powerful you may be
There no certainty, you see,
The Super Power whom we pray & adore,
One day He must come & you shall be thrown.
Oh terrorist if you have any little bit pure power,
Make a good society emerge little bit nearer.

"SREE SREE DURGA DARSHAN"

THE GREAT ACHARYA SAINT YOGI SWAMI PRANAVANANDA MAHARAJ,

FOUNDER BHARAT SEVASHRAM SANGHA



By- Swami Devapriyananda
- USA & Canada



A 6 years old boy got the visitation of Lord Narayanon the "Tulsi plant". The boy was somewhat stout, strong, and healthy and was a prodigiously divine lad, really a very sacred soul. Why not! That he is the incar-nation of Lord Shiva, we call it Dev Sishu (divine godly child); who descends on Earth with a great vow on the month of Magh, full-moon Wednesday in the sacred moment of dusk when our motherhood gener-ally after finished evening bath prepared for the puja & playing conch to welcome sacred evening in January 29, 1896. He didn't cry at the time of his birth and very soon people were attracted to him. Everybody liked his divine, sacred and pious Darshan.

The lad in one sudden pious occasion had tremendous resolution to see the true divine form on the auspicious great Mahastmi Durga tithi day & he had the visitation of the mother Durga. *How it occurred will be discussed at the very end

The story starts in a small village inhabited by people with but big hearts. Words could hardly express the beauty of the scenery around the village in the precincts of Madaripur district in Bajitpur, Bangladesh. In the very heart of the village was the sacred Kumar Nadi, a river full of water, with small boats floating on gentle



tides, ridden by village folks singing melodious folk songs. The whole village was covered with green grass, leaves, fruits and flowers, meadow paths, ponds and the cold breeze from the river always created a wonderful ambience. By the side of the river was the village cremation ground that would one day turn into place of a Pilgrimage center. by a great Yogi; who is none Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj.(Binod Sadhu)

Vishnu Charan Bhuniya and Sarada Devi, great devo-tees of Lord Shiva, lived very close to the river. Theywere well respected by the entire village. However, the landlords in East Bengal were known to be very aggressive and despotic striking fear and revulsion among their subjects. Vishnu Charanji used to work under a landlord and there was a land dispute running for a long time in the court. Feeling helpless under the onslaught of the landlord, Vishnu Charanji surrendered to his Lord Nilrudra Deva (Shiva). Vishnu Charanji's prayers were so earnest that the Lord responded and promised to rescue him and save the entire community.

“As thy word as thy deed." The auspicious Magh Purnima saw the advent of incarnation of Lord Shiva as Jagat Guru Acharya Sreemat Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj. At an early age, he was known as Bram-hachari Binod or, Binod Sadhu, known widely due to his kindness in helping people in need. Principal Biswanath Bhattacharya, who got his advanced degree from Calcutta University, had great faith on Binod, his favorite student in the whole school. So deep was his regard for Binod that he would say "He is only my student when he is in school, but out of school he is my master and I am his student." He would often discuss with the people the extra ordinary quality & admirable character of the Binod; which are most inspirable to the younger generation and for students.



At the right time, the great students have the benefit of the right guru and guidance. When Binod was ready to accept initiation from a guru, his Principal advised him to go Gorakhpur to take Diksha from the great Yogi Baba Ghambir Nathji. In their first meeting, the Yogi told Binod "My boy you do not need any Diksha, because you are already a realized soul & a torch bearer to awaken The Hindu Dharma. As well as the whole nation" But to follow the tradition of the Guru Param- para, at the right time he was initiated by the right great Yogi. After the initiation, Binod went to Annapurna Kashi Dham for meditation where he received the blessings of Goddess mother Sree Sree Annapurna (Storages of foodfull).

Varanasi has always been one of the holiest sites for Hindus - the tapasya by Swami Pranavanandaji and his fellow monks of the Sangha blessed by Annapurna & Kashi Viswanath added more to the holiness of the place. Every year Maha Durga Puja is celebrated with great pomp and grandeur in Kashi Dham, where hundreds of monks, bramhacharis, students, workers and devotees of the Sangha come together from different corners of India and west.

rom Panchami, preparations start with "Narkel Naru" - sweets made of coconut and milk cake with everyone having to extend helping hands. On the evening of Maha Sashti, a procession moves forward to Bengali- tola to bring the deity of Ma Durga to ashram premises with great joy followed by Baran and Bodhan Utsav with Aarati, welcome speech and devotional songs. On Maha Saptami, the main Puja starts in the morning with Pushpanjali and in the evening, there are discourses by scholars from Banaras Hindu University and Religious Center with our Monks. The discourses continue until Maha Dashami day. One of the highlights during the Pujas is the evening Aarati with sticks and swords ., devotees swaying to the rhythm of "Dhak". The Maha Ashtami is the most important and sacred day of all. Devotees fast for Pushpanjali (special prayer offerings to Mother).The ashram is overflowing with devotees for the Puja, Pushpanjali and Maha Bhog. To give you a perspective, more than 30,000 devotees stream in during the Pujas. In the evening, there is a cultural program led by Chandi recital followed by devotional songs by great singers. On Maha Navami, there are 9 asana sets arranged as a symbol of Nava Durga for Sri Sri Guruji Maharaj. In the evening, there are 9 Dhakis playing the Dhak, the sound of which reverberate far and wide, 9 monks doing Aarati simultaneously which makes for a spectacular sight for the assembled devo- tees. From the Ashram, there is distribution of Sarees and Dhotis among the needy. Maha Dashami day, the end of the puja, the symbolic immersion of the Durga done in the Temple morning time , in a pot.

The Dashami puja is the final day of the Navaratri Durga Puja - in the evening, it ends with procession for the immersion of the Murti in the sacred waters of the River Ganga. In the Sangha this program has an extraordinary charm because the big procession with monks wearing saffron symbolizes sacrifice; the whole atmosphere in the whole city of Varanasi turns divine! When the procession reaches the Viswanath Ghat on the bank of the Ganges, the idol of Ma Durga and the picture of Guru Maharaj are set up on 2 big boats, while the devotees get on another boat. Guruji's boat has monks singing and playing with musical instruments. The whole program goes on for 3-4 hours in the boat accompanied with lectures in various languages, recita- tions from Chandi and awakening songs of Hindu Dharma, Aarati etc. The boats are decorated with big banners of the Sangha along with loudspeakers and light. The Viswanath Ghat overflows with crowds to watch the program, mainly the Aarati on the boat in front of Ma Durga and Guruji Maharaj. After the Aarati, the immersion of Ma Durga happens following which we collect the water from River Ganga for "Shanti Jal" (offerings of peace water).On return to the Ashram, devotees are treated to special blessings from President Swamiji and a handful of sweets on plate for all and delicious dinner. Everyone does "kolakoli" embracing each other with warmth and happiness & wishing "Shubho Bijoya" signifying the end of Navaratri festival.

This puja is not an ordinary puja - there is a miracle, great wish and a blessing from Mother Durga! No

back to the story on how this Durga Puja was established in Varanasi in Ashram and how Bramhachari Binod (Swami Pranavanandaji) received the visitation & blessings of Ma Durga and how he established Bharat Sevashram Sangha all over the globe for the welfare of all humanity.

His school Principal used to do Durga Puja in his house. He realized that though there was no shortage of anything in the Puja but something was not right there - that Bramhachari Binod was missing. So, he went to Bramhachari's house and cordially invited him for the Maha Ashtami puja. The evening went by with no trace of the Bramhachari - he was engrossed in deep contemplation in the cremation ground. Needless to say, he had completely forgotten of the invitation and it was close to mid-night. The disappointed Principal retired for the night. Bramhachari Binod felt disturbed in his meditation by a sound of a booming drum that reminded him that he had missed going to the Puja that his teacher had invited him to. Immediately, he proceeded towards his teacher's house, some 2 kms way.

On his way, he experienced a miracle. The closer he got to the Puja Mandap, the sound of the big drum kept getting dimmer. Eventually when he reached to the Mandap, it was empty and there was no sound at all. He glanced at Ma Durga and challenged her, "I know that you are tricking with me. I don't believe this metal form. If you are truly an eternal form, Supreme Mother give me your Darshan, otherwise I can't believe it. Now I'm going to engross in deep meditation till I get your Darshan." A Great resolution as like lord Buddha and then he started his meditation.

Suddenly the whole area was brightened around the Bramhachari and Goddess Durga. Very Tenderly, Ma appeared with smile face to him, raised her hands and said, "My boy I'm pleased by your Sadhana and Penance. So, you have to fulfill two of my wishes. * First, start my Puja at Kashi Dham *Second, establish a Sangha for the welfare of the entire world" Binod humbly & gladly Accepted the oracles ordained by Supreme Mother with great joy! The Sangha's first Puja started In Varanasi in 1928 after that incident* Om Jay Ma Durga , Jay Guru, Om Shanti.*

Swami Devapriyananda's contribution by singing and recitation of chandi 1986 to 2002 in Varanasi *(*India*)*. You also glad to know in 2028 a great century Durga Puja is going to be celebrated on which by auspicious lotus hand established by the grace of mother Durga, 100 years before by Jagat Guru Acharya Swami Pranavananda Ji Maharaj.

GITA FOR EVERY HOME PROJECT 2026

BY KAVITA SINGH

BHARAT SEVASHAM SANGHA, CANADA (BSS) has adopted the idea of placing a Gita in every home as part of its 2026 agenda in order to commemorate the birth of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2, 1869.

This idea was initiated decades ago as an initiative of the Sanatan Dharm Educational Foundation of Canada in Cooperation with the Hindu Mandir Empowerment Conference (HMEC) USA.

Ramnarine Sahadeo (ramji) founder and President of the Canadian organisation is now associated with BSS and is keenly aware of the need for this universal knowledge in our modern face paced societies and its attendant challenges for families and individuals.

The labour of love was put together by Mahadev Desai while Gandhi and Lokamanya were collaborated on the Gujarati translation, Pyarelal did the proof reading. It was translated to Hindi, Marathi, and Bengali. The demand for an English version led Gandhi to complete this task.

Vinoba, Kaka Kalekar, Kishorlal Mashruwala all participated in the Sanskrit version. Gandhi himself was only introduced to the Gita in 1888-89 when studying law in England where he read the verse translation by Sir Edwin Arnold as the Song Celestial.

The current version is unique in that it has a short history of Indenture ship so readers can have some knowledge of how Indentured Servants from India found themselves in several countries listed in the Preface; an introduction by Gandhi himself, quotes and commentaries. A summary of events leading up to the Mahabharata War between the Pandavas and the Kauravas at Kurukshreta about 100 miles from Delhi is also included for those not aware of the background to this universal spiritual and philosophical masterpiece.

In this age of trade barriers this version was the first to be printed in Canada by Advanced Media Signs And Graphics who will also help with the distribution.

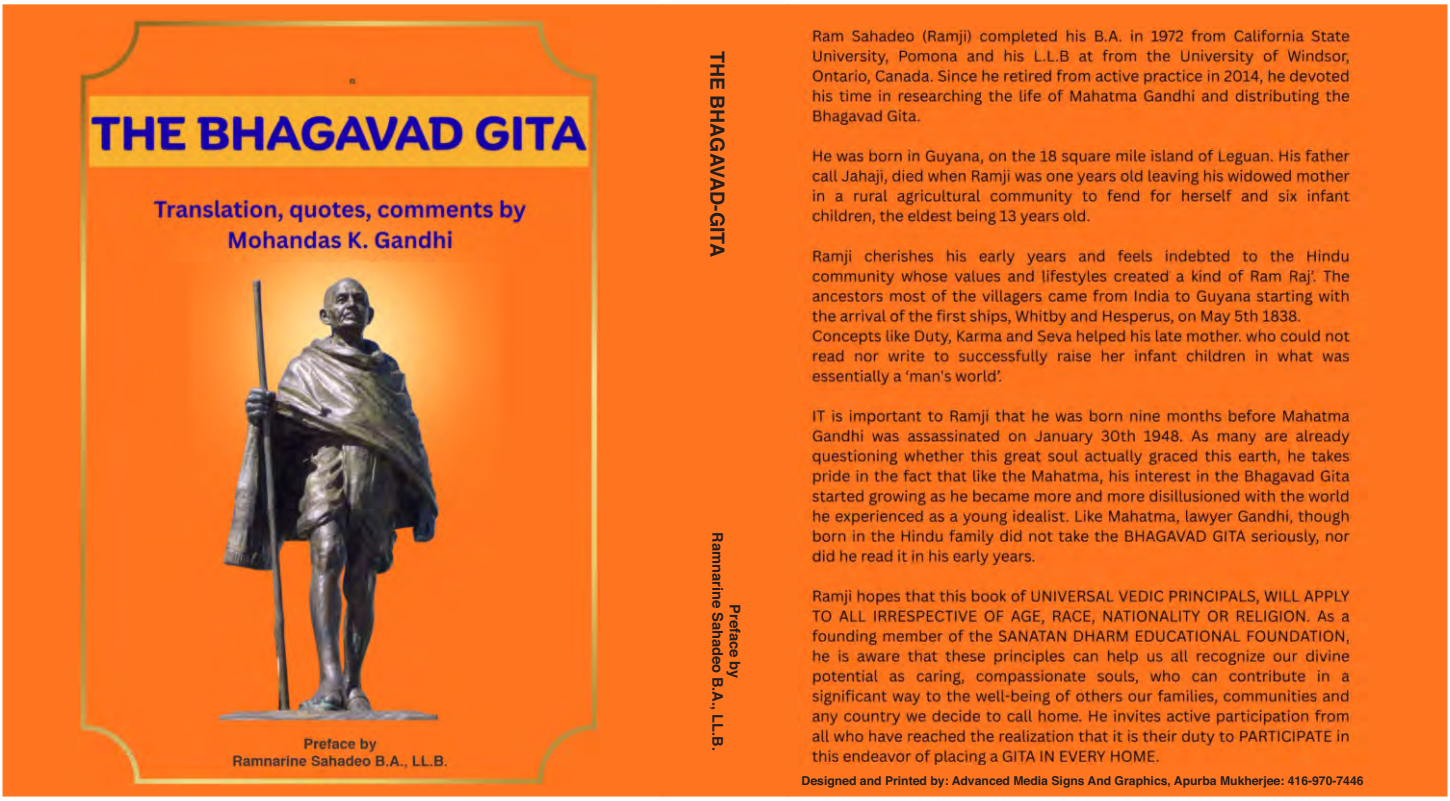
This book of Universal knowledge is an appropriate gift for many occasions from birth to death and even beyond but it is up to those of us who appreciate this eternal message of Krishna to make sure it reaches the homes of all who many benefit from its

lessons.

In the past temples, priests, educational institutions, teachers, and individuals have all participated in sharing this wisdom. The many who have not yet exposed to it may take consolation that the Mahatma who lived the Gita once exposed to it did not read it until he was about 20. But he used its message to change himself and the world.

There is hope for all in the pages of this instruction manual but it us up to the devotees of Krishna to ensure that it reaches all corners of the globe. (18-68.)

Bulk supplies for functions such as birthdays, anniversaries and even funerals can be obtained by making a charitable donation to the Ashram at 2105 Codlin Crescent, Toronto; by calling Lake Singh 416 825 2700, or emailing Ram Sahadeo at ramjihindu@rogers.com



GUYANA HINDUS NEED A TEMPLE THAT INSPIRIES

By: RAMNARINE SAHADEO

On September 10, 2026 an evening of Sat Sang, community bonding and spiritual reflection was held at 2105 Codlin Crescent,Toronto, the premises of Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Canada sponsored jointly with BAPS Swaminarayan Santha.

The keynote spiritual speaker was Pujya Priyaseva Swami from Chicago who has been doing Satsang Vicharan in Guyana since 2018. Uplifting kirtan was led by Pujya Gunsagar Swami from Toronto. They plan to return to Guyana and hope to find enough support to establish a centre in Guyana eventually. It is interesting to note that they manage about 1r500 majestic temples all over the globe but none in South America. Guyanese Hindu leaders present at the event pledged their support but noted that there would be challenges.

It is interesting to note that Hindu Mandir Empowerment Conference (HMEC) representing hundreds of temples and organisations meet annually all over North American Cities including Canada. They also had conferences in Trinidad and neighboring Surinam but never in Guyana.

One can only speculate that why this did not happen yet and pointed to other failed attempts to lift the standard of Hinduism there.

The book **SANATANA DHARMA Plantation Hinduism** by Dr. Ramesh Gampat posits that Hinduism in Guyana places an extraordinary dependence on purohits (pundits), discourages the exploration of spiritual science and hence inconsistent with Sanatana Dharma.

Guyana has the longest history of Indentureship (1938 to 2017) and received the greatest number of laborers from India (238,909) in the Southern hemisphere but this did not result in the strongest Hindu community in the region.

Other views point to the close relationship between religion and politics as an impediment. The historical picture is not a pretty one.

When Charlie Freer Andrews, friend of Mahatma Gandhi visited the country in 1929 his report noted several area of concern:

These include child marriages, illiteracy, non registration of religious marriages resulting in children deemed illegitimate; nominal priests not qualified to raise the moral standards of the society leading to gross superstitions and demoralization; religious conversion, government encouraging missionary work instead of practicing religious neutrality; absence of Indians in the civil services and in the police forces who did not speak or understand Indian language or customs; buildings unfit for human habitation; overcrowded classrooms with few girls; Hindu and Muslim children compelled to say Christian prayers in government aided schools; few Indian teachers in Christian run schools since many refused to change their religion in order to be employed; abundance of rum shops and excessive alcohol consumption.

Fred Stella, who serves on the National Leadership Council of the Hindu American Foundation visited in 2018 and reported on coercive conversion, alcohol abuse, domestic violence and suicide among Hindus.

Others noted the absence of a unifying force in the form of a national organization or a strong personality like Bhadase Sagan Maraj in Trinidad.

A success story however is described in detail in Dr. Lake Singh's book **Portrait of a Saint. It** traces how Swami Purnananda ji Maharaj from Calcutta arrived in British Guiana in the 1950s and despite numerous hardships was able to establish an Ashram and the first Hindu College at Cove and John. Today it is the center of religious events in the country with graduates all over the world in sports, business, politics law, medicine and every other aspect of life.

Swami Aksharananda highly respected scholar and monk also founded a private secondary Hindu school Saraswati Vidya Niketan which has produced some of the top students not only in Guyana but the Caribbean. On January 10,2025 President Droupadi Murmu conferred on the school the Parvasi Bharatiya Saman Award the highest honor India bestows on upon individuals and organizations outside India. This was also one of the few places Prime Minister Narendra Modi took time to observe when he visited Guyana in November 19 to 21, 2024. .
Chinmaya Mission has also established a centre and has plans to set up an educational institution.

The temples in Guyana are generally small with few exceptions. The additions of temples that display the architectural wonders of Bharat can only bring greater pride to a people who suffered for years under British Colonial rule.

Hopefully BAPS can make a difference to the landscape and advance the knowledge of Hinduism beyond bhakti and rituals. Many Guyanese look forward to this initiative and await an opportunity to contribute.


HMEC

HINDU MANDIR EMPOWERMENT COUNCIL (HMEC)

Takes great pride in honoring

SRI RAMNARINE SAHADEO

HMEC proudly honors Sri RAMNARINE SAHADEO for his exemplary and selfless service to Hindu Mandirs and the devotee community.

Through his dedicated work with Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Canada, he has inspired, mentored, and prepared volunteers for leadership and seva, strengthening Hindu institutions and community life.

In recognition of his humility, devotion, and lifelong commitment to Hindu Dharma, Sanskriti, and Samaj, the Hindu Mandir Empowerment Council is privileged to bestow this honor at its Annual Conference, graciously hosted by the:

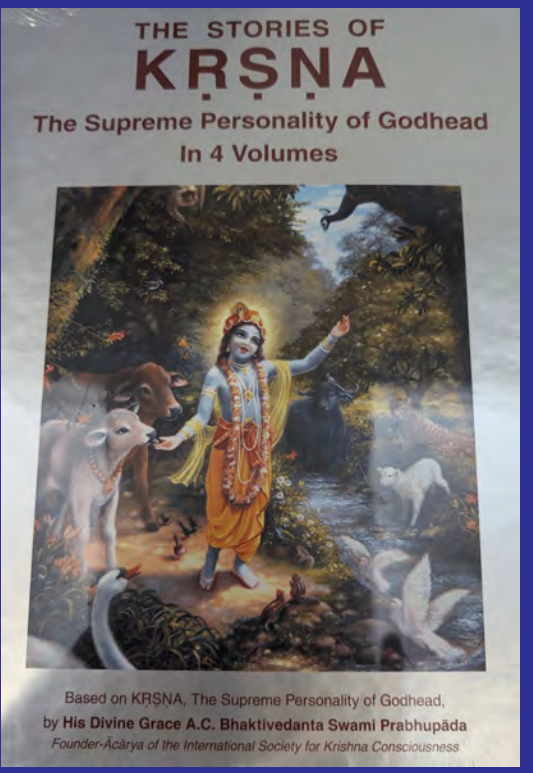
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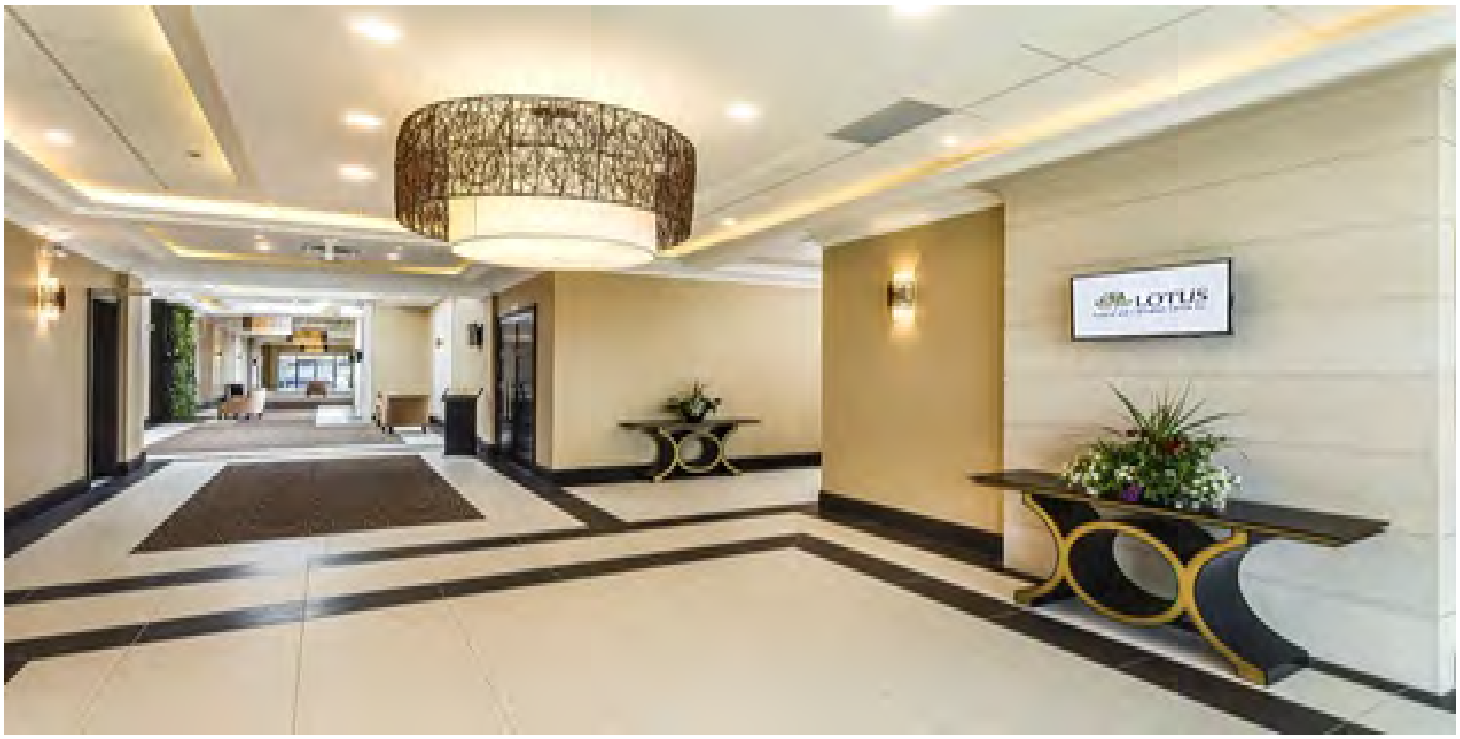
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SUDDEN CARDIAC DEATH IN YOUNG ADULTS – WHAT WE SHOULD WE KNOW AND WHAT WE SHOULD WE DO FOR PREVENTION

Diptendu Chatterjee

In early 1980s, we saw a 14-year-old school student died suddenly when that student was playing in school ground during lunch hour. At that time I and other people surrounding us were not aware of this Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD) at all. After that incident, I saw several reports of SCD of young adults ages 4 to 30 years in the soccer field, in cricket ground, in gym when working out and during swimming or similar physical activities. I think most of us read or saw this type of incident in news frequently around us. In most of the cases, we ignored this and thought there might be heart problem or high cholesterol or due to their life style including diet. But that is not true - Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD) is a life-threatening emergency that happens from an "abrupt and unexpected loss of heart function leading to loss of consciousness and collapse." SCD can be fatal if not treated within minutes. Survival outside a hospital depends on prompt bystander emergency response such as using CPR and automatic defibrillators.

When I started my research on Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD) in 2016 at SickKids Hospital, my knowledge was totally changed, and I understood different types of SCD, and the underline causes of those incidents. There were many causes of Sudden Cardiac Deaths. Interestingly, in all these cases, doctors cannot find any abnormal in normal ECG tests or there are no symptoms of any heart problem at all. When Sudden Cardia Arrest (SCA) happens to apparently healthy young people, there is usually no obvious injury or medical reasons the patient or family knew about. Some young people who suffer SCA may have some minor heart-related symptoms e.g. shortness of breath, slight chest pain, those were not life threatening and usually ignored by the patient or family members as well as family physicians. On the other hand, most of the patients never had any symptoms of heart problems until the SCA event. The person die suddenly from cardiac failure – most of the cases never survive after first attack. Sudden cardiac arrest is thought to be a leading cause of death in young athletes, but it also affects young people not involved in organized sports. It can happen during exercise or at rest, or even during sleep. Please note that sudden cardiac death in young adults is an unexpected, fatal event caused by a sudden loss of heart function.

In this article I shall try to put some lights on different types of Sudden Cardia Death in young adults – the causes and what we should do to prevent this type of Sudden Cardiac Death in young adults. This article will not cover details of the complex scientific background of this issue, but will be in simple language so that most of the people in our community can easily understand the subject. If anyone wants to know more details can contact me personally.

There are several common causes of Sudden Cardiac Death in young adults – some major causes are listed below:

Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy (HCM): This is the most common cardiovascular cause of SCA in young people. This causes abnormal heart rhythm, especially during exercise. It is a genetic condition where the heart's lower chambers muscle becomes abnormally thick, that disrupts the electrical system and causes dangerous rhythms. In most cases this defect is undiagnosed by regular testing for heart functions like ECG.

Channelopathies - Long QT and Brugada syndrome: A heart rhythm condition that can cause fast and chaotic heart rhythm. This is an electrical disorder that alters ion channels in the heart without changing its physical structure.

Sudden Arrhythmic Death Syndrome (SADS) and Arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy (ARVC): In people with structurally normal hearts, sudden cardiac arrest can sometimes be caused by undiagnosed genetic conditions that affect the heart's electrical impulses. In most cases, autopsy results show a structurally normal heart that indicates death from a primary electrical malfunction. In some cases, some of the heart's muscle tissue gets replaced with scar tissue.

Coronary Artery Anomalies: Congenital defects in due to defects in the blood vessels branch off the heart that can compress during intense exertion. Defects in the way the coronary arteries connect to the heart can lead to decreased blood supply to heart muscle during exercise and cause cardiac arrest. Young people with

coronary artery abnormalities usually are born with them but may not notice any symptoms until they are older.

CPVT (Catecholaminergic Polymorphic Ventricular Tachycardia): CPVT is also a rare heart rhythm disorder. Symptom is too-fast heartbeat in heart's lower chambers. CPVT usually start having symptoms in childhood - they may faint or have a rapid heartbeat, especially after intense emotional stress or exercise. For CPVT, multiple pathogenic genes have been discovered, among which ryanodine receptor type 2 (*RyR2*) gene mutations and calsequestrin 2 (*CASQ2*) gene mutations contribute in most of the cases.

Some other causes of SCA or SCD are:

Myocarditis: Myocarditis means the walls of the heart are inflamed. Inflammation of the heart muscle, often caused by a viral infection. Most myocarditis cases in children happen when a virus such as an enterovirus gets into the heart. It can also be caused by bacterial, fungal or parasite infections, and allergic reactions to some medications.

Non-Cardiac Causes: In some out-of-hospital cases among young adults, events mimic cardiac arrest but result from drug overdoses, pulmonary embolisms, or severe infections.

Marfan syndrome: This connective tissue disease can lead to tears in the heart's aortic blood vessel. People are born with the condition but may not realize they have it.

Commotio Cordis: Commotio Cordis is caused by a blow to the chest directly over the heart at certain points in the heartbeat cycle. It can happen in kids with completely normal hearts. Commotio cordis is more co Risk factors for sudden cardiac death that should prompt additional testing.

What we should do to avoid SCA and SCD:

As most of the SCD or SCA are related to genetic disorders, we should test the whole gene testing for checking any abnormal genetic defect in their body – particularly in any heart protein. If anyone has any family history of unexpected or unexplained sudden death in an otherwise healthy family member under age 50, the person must have to undergo the genetic testing to check whether the person is under risk for SCA or SCD.
Besides genetic testing, other extensive cardiac testing must be dome for those family members if any of his/her family member has an inherited heart muscle or electrical problem, the person experiences chest pain during exercise or abnormal heart rate or rhythm with an unknown cause. Also, extensive cardiac testing and genetic screening must be done if the person experiences fainting/passing out or seizure without warning or during exercise.

If any person showed any abnormality in the above-mentioned tests, the person should avoid extensive exercise, work out or any sports that will put pressure on their heart. Normal lifestyle will help to prevent the chances of SCA or SCD.

Recent knowledge of SCA/SCD:

Although 10 years before, physicians thought that the only cause of SCA/SCD is genetic defects in the cardiac proteins in those individuals and that comes from his/her family members e.g. parents or grandparents. But now-a-days, it is known that only about 40-60% cases of different SCA/SCD are due to any genetic defect of heart proteins – rest of the cases were not linked to any genetic defect. Recent studies showed that the SCA/SCD might be due to production of autoantibodies against some heart proteins that are vital for heart functions. Those autoantibodies attack the target proteins in the junctions of cells in heart muscle and damage the normal elasticity of heart muscle and/or the electrical conduction of the heart. That leads to collapse of heart, particularly during exercise or playing games that put excessive loads on heart. At present, several research laboratories are now developing testing of those autoantibodies in blood of young boys and girls so that they could be screened for any risk of SCA/SCD in advance.

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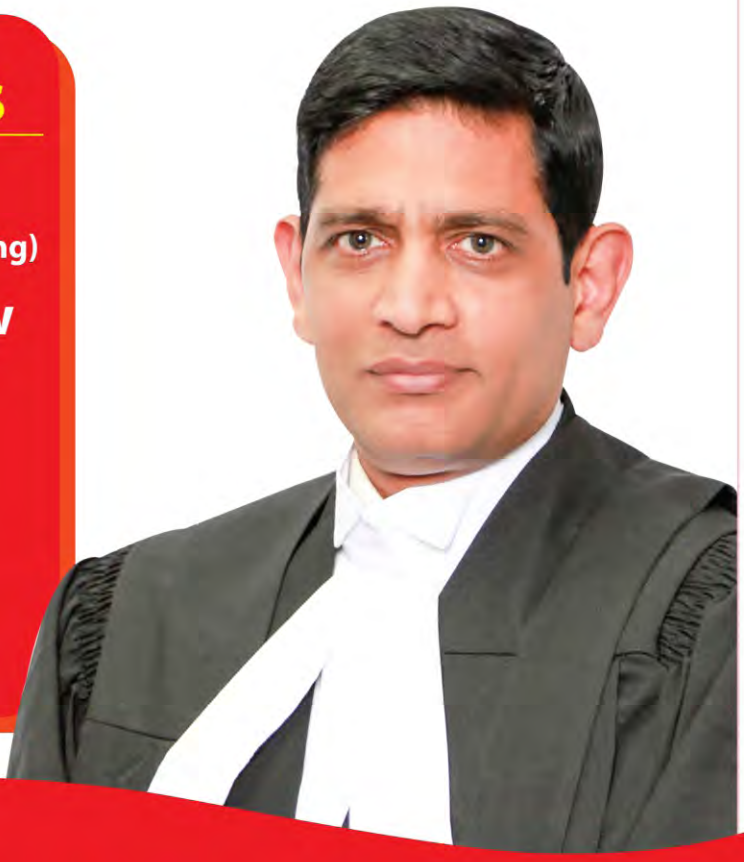
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What Are We Really Offering?

The Deeper Meaning of Havan

Written by Rhea Bahadur Age 17



Havan: an offering, a moment of letting go, and an invitation to transform.

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What Are We Really Offering?
The Deeper Meaning of Havan
Havan: an offering, a moment of letting go, and an invitation to transform.

The Fire That Transforms

Fire has always held a special place in Hindu traditions. It gives light and warmth, but it also transforms everything that enters it.

A piece of wood becomes flame. Ghee disappears into the fire. Herbs and other offerings are transformed into fragrance and smoke. What we place into the fire does not remain the same.

Perhaps this is one reason fire is such a meaningful symbol.

Havan can remind us that transformation is a part of life.

We all carry things within us that we would like to change. Sometimes it is anger. Sometimes it is jealousy, fear, insecurity, impatience or pride. Sometimes it is simply something from our past that we keep holding on to.

What if Havan gives us a way of thinking about those things differently?

What if, along with the physical offerings we place into the fire, we also symbolically offer our weaknesses?

We could offer our anger and make space for patience.

We could offer our fear and make space for courage.

We could offer our ego and make space for humility.

We could offer our jealousy and make space for gratitude.

We could offer our mistakes—not to pretend they never happened, but to learn from them.

In this way, the fire of Havan becomes more than something we see outside ourselves. It becomes a reminder of a fire within us—the ability to transform who we are.

Agni: The Messenger

The sacred fire in a Havan is associated with Agni, who occupies a central place in Vedic tradition. Agni is not simply ordinary fire. In the ritual context, Agni receives the offerings and carries them toward the divine.
This gives the act of offering another beautiful meaning.
When we offer something, we are also learning to let go.
We spend so much of our lives holding on—to possessions, opinions, expectations, disappointments and even old arguments. We often think that holding on makes us stronger. But sometimes strength means knowing when to release something.
The moment an offering enters the fire, we no longer control what happens to it. We trust the process of transformation.
Perhaps that is also a lesson for us.
We cannot control everything that happens in our lives. We cannot control every outcome, every person or every circumstance. But we can choose what we bring to the moment—our intentions, our actions and the attitude with which we face life.

What Does "Svāhā" Mean to Me?

During Havan, we often hear the word "Svāhā" as each offering is placed into the fire.
To me, it can represent a moment of release—a moment when we say, in effect, I am willing to offer this and let it go.
Imagine if we could bring that attitude into everyday life.
Instead of carrying anger from yesterday into today, could we let it go?
Instead of constantly comparing ourselves with others, could we learn to appreciate our own journey?
Instead of being afraid of making mistakes, could we see mistakes as opportunities to grow?
These may seem like small changes, but perhaps transformation always begins with something small.

Havan and the Shakti of Durga

This becomes especially meaningful during Durga Puja.
We celebrate Maa Durga as Shakti—the divine power and energy that creates, protects and transforms. She is depicted with many forms of strength: courage, compassion, wisdom and the determination to overcome forces that threaten what is right.
But Shakti does not have to remain something we see only in a deity or a temple.
We experience forms of Shakti every day.
It is the courage to speak up when something is wrong.
It is the strength to keep going when something is difficult.
It is the compassion to help someone who needs us.
It is the wisdom to know when to listen.
It is the ability to stand back up after we fall.
Perhaps this is one of the deeper connections between Havan and Durga Puja. The fire reminds us that transformation is possible, while Maa Durga reminds us that we have the strength within us to transform.

The Havan of Everyday Life

Maybe the spirit of Havan does not end when the fire goes out.
A student helping a classmate understand something is making an offering.
A parent giving time and patience to their child is making an offering.
Someone volunteering in their community is making an offering.
A person forgiving someone, even after being hurt, may be making an offering.
Whenever we give something of ourselves without expecting something in return, we are practicing the spirit of offering.
This makes Havan surprisingly relevant to our lives today.
We live in a world that often tells us to collect—to collect achievements, followers, possessions, awards and attention. Havan reminds us of another possibility: to give.
Not everything valuable has to be possessed.
Some things become more meaningful when they are offered.

So, What Are We Really Offering?

The next time I sit before the Havan fire during Durga Puja, I hope I will see it a little differently.

I will still see the beautiful flames, hear the mantras and watch the offerings disappear into the fire. But I will also try to think about what I can offer from within myself.

Perhaps I can offer a little less anger.

A little less ego.

A little less fear.

And perhaps I can offer a little more courage, kindness, gratitude and love.

The true beauty of Havan may not be in what happens to the offering after it enters the fire. Perhaps it is in what happens to us when we learn to offer.

We enter the ritual holding something in our hands, and we place it into the flames. But perhaps we are meant to leave carrying something different in our hearts.

The fire transforms what we give it.

And perhaps that is the quiet invitation of Havan:

to place our limitations into the fire and allow the Shakti within us to transform them into strength.

Because maybe the most meaningful Havan is not the one in which we offer the most to the fire, but the one in which the fire changes us.



Written by
Aishi Bahadur
Age 14

Finding Shakti Within:
What Durga Puja Means to Me



Shakti is not just for women. It lives in all of us.

Every year when Durga Puja arrives, I see the beautiful image of Maa Durga standing with her ten arms, surrounded by her children and defeating Mahishasura. We celebrate with music, food, prayers, new clothes and time with family and friends. But sometimes I wonder: What does Maa Durga really represent, and what does she have to do with my life?

The answer I have been thinking about is Shakti.
In Hindu philosophy, Shakti is the divine power or energy through which the universe creates, sustains and transforms. In traditions that worship Shiva and Shakti, Shiva is often understood as pure consciousness, while Shakti is the dynamic power through which that consciousness expresses itself. They are not really separate—they are complementary aspects of the divine.
That idea makes me see Durga Puja differently.
Maa Durga is not only a goddess we worship. She can also remind us of the qualities that exist within all of us.

Shakti is creativity

Shakti is the power of creation. Whenever we create something new—a painting, a story, music, an idea, or even a solution to a problem—we are expressing something of that creative energy.
As a student, I experience this when I am working on a project and suddenly have an idea that brings everything together. Creativity isn't only about being artistic. It is the ability to imagine that something can be different and then try to make it happen.

Shakti is courage

When I look at Maa Durga facing Mahishasura, I see courage.
Being courageous doesn't always mean doing something dramatic. Sometimes courage is raising your hand when you are nervous, standing up for someone who is being treated unfairly, admitting when you are wrong, or continuing even when something feels difficult.
We all face our own “Mahishasuras”—fear, insecurity, anger, doubt and challenges. Durga reminds us that strength is already within us.

Shakti is compassion

Strength is not only about being powerful. It can also mean being kind.
The divine feminine is represented in many forms. Lakshmi reminds us of abundance and generosity, Saraswati of knowledge and wisdom, and Parvati of love and nurturing. These qualities can be seen in ordinary life too—helping a friend, caring for a family member, listening to someone who is having a difficult day, or simply choosing kindness when we could choose otherwise.
Sometimes the strongest thing we can do is care.

Shakti is wisdom

Maa Saraswati represents knowledge, learning, music and the arts. At my age, learning is a huge part of life. School can sometimes feel like it is only about marks and exams, but real knowledge is more than that.
Wisdom is learning how to think, how to ask questions, how to listen and how to understand the world around us.
Shakti can also mean trusting our inner voice—the quiet feeling that tells us when something is right or wrong.

Shakti is transformation

One of the most powerful forms of Shakti is Maa Kali.
Kali can represent the destruction of what needs to end so that something new can begin. That idea is especially meaningful as we grow up.
Growing means changing. We have to let go of childish fears, unhealthy habits, negative thoughts and sometimes even old versions of ourselves.
Change can be uncomfortable, but it can also be necessary.
Sometimes becoming a better version of ourselves begins with having the courage to let something go.

Shakti is balance

Shakti is often understood together with Shiva. This reminds me that life needs balance.
We need action, but we also need stillness. We need confidence, but also humility. We need knowledge, but also compassion. We need to work hard, but we also need to rest.
Perhaps this is one of the most important lessons for someone my age. There can be so much pressure to achieve, compete and keep moving that we forget to simply be.

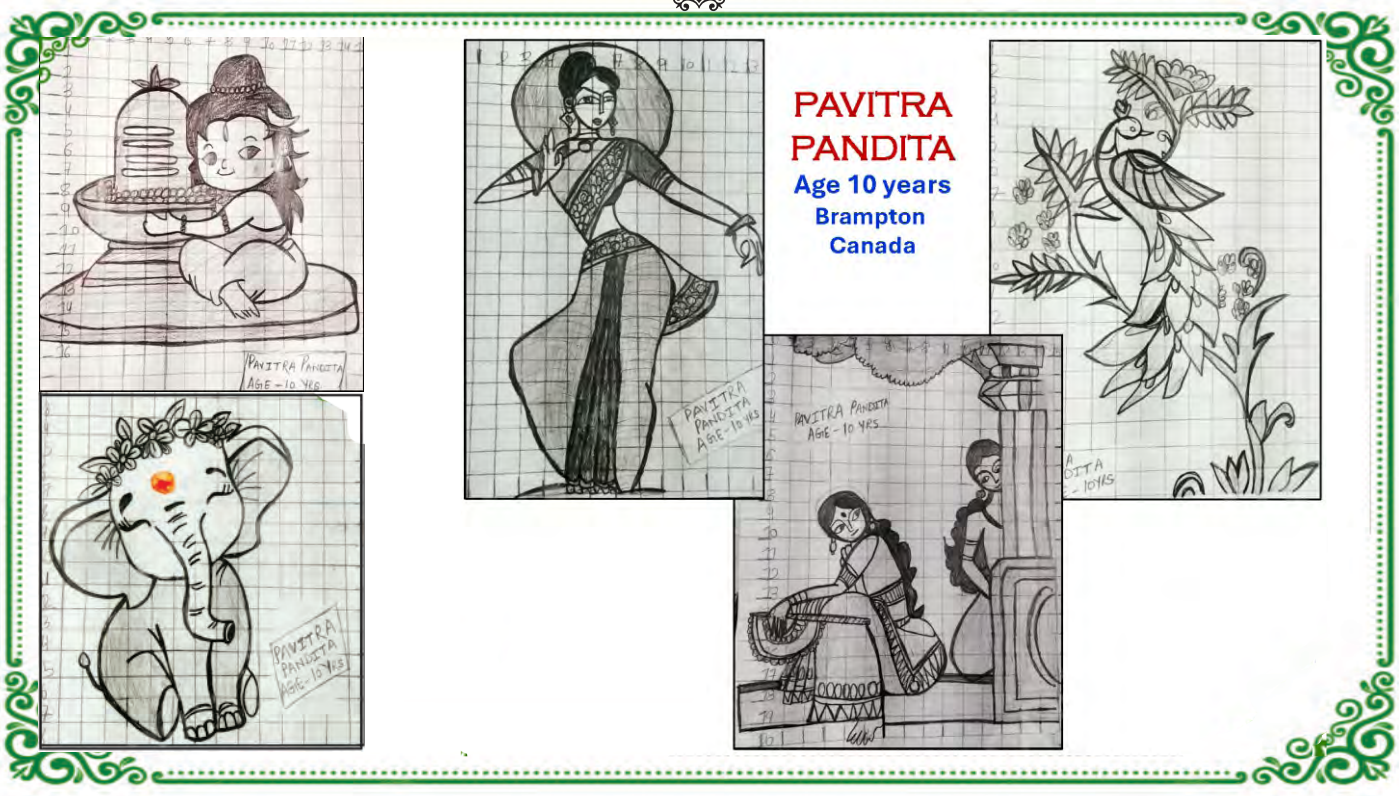
Shakti belongs to everyone

One thing I find especially meaningful about Shakti is that it isn't limited to women or girls.
Even though Durga Puja celebrates the divine feminine, the qualities represented by Shakti—courage, creativity, compassion, wisdom, confidence, devotion and strength—belong to everyone.
A boy can be nurturing. A girl can be courageous. Anyone can be creative, wise, compassionate or strong.
Shakti is not simply “girl power.” It is the divine energy that allows life to grow, change and flourish.

What Durga Puja means to me

Maybe this is why Durga Puja feels like more than a festival.
When I see Maa Durga, I don't just see a powerful goddess standing with her weapons. I see a reminder that strength can take many forms.
It can be the courage to speak up.
The creativity to imagine something new.
The kindness to help someone.
The wisdom to make a difficult choice.
The strength to overcome fear.
And the ability to change and grow.
When I think about Mahishasura, I don't only think about a demon from an ancient story. I also think about the things that can become our own inner Mahishasuras: fear of failure, pressure to fit in, comparing ourselves with others, self-doubt, anger, jealousy or the feeling that we are not good enough.
These battles may not be fought with swords or weapons, but they are real.
And perhaps this is where the story of Maa Durga becomes personal.
Durga does not remind us that life will never be difficult. She reminds us that we can face difficulty with courage. She shows us that strength can exist alongside compassion, that power can be guided by wisdom, and that transformation is possible.
As I celebrate Durga Puja this year, I want to remember that the Shakti we honour in Maa Durga is not only somewhere outside of us. It is also reflected in the choices we make every day.
When we stand up for someone who needs us, that is Shakti.
When we create something from our imagination, that is Shakti.
When we choose kindness instead of cruelty, that is Shakti.
When we find the courage to face something that scares us, that is Shakti.
When we learn from our mistakes and become a little stronger, wiser and kinder, that is Shakti too.
Perhaps that is the deeper message of Durga Puja.
We don't celebrate Maa Durga only because she defeated Mahishasura once upon a time.
We celebrate her because every generation has its own Mahishasuras to overcome—and every one of us has the potential to find the Shakti within.
This Durga Puja, as the drums beat and the lights shine and we stand before Maa Durga, I hope we remember that the divine mother is not simply asking us to admire her strength.
She is reminding us to discover our own.

The Shakti is within us.
The courage is within us.
And the light we are looking for may have been there all along.



শরতের ক্যানভাসে অটোয়া ও মঁ-ত্রঁব্লঁ: এক স্বপ্নের ভ্রমণকথা

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❖ যাত্রা শুরু ও অটোয়ার দিনগুলি

সেপ্টেম্বরের মাঝামাঝি সময়, বাতাসে হালকা হিমেল স্পর্শ। অটোয়া শহরে পা রাখতেই অভ্যর্থনা জানাল এক স্নিগ্ধ রোদঝলমলে সকাল। আমাদের আস্তানা ছিল শহরের প্রাণকেন্দ্রে অবস্থিত ম্যারিয়ট হোটেল অটোয়া। হোটেলের জানালা দিয়ে শহরের রাজকীয় স্থাপত্য আর দূরের রিডোনদীর দৃশ্য এক নিমেষে ভ্রমণের ক্লান্তি ভুলিয়ে দিল।

অটোয়া নদী আর রিডো খালের (Rideau Canal) পাশ ঘেঁষে গড়ে ওঠা এই শহরের মধ্যে এক রাজকীয় গম্ভীরতা আর অপরূপ প্রাকৃতিক সৌন্দর্যের এক অপূর্ব মেলবন্ধন রয়েছে। আমাদের প্রথম গন্তব্য ছিল পার্লামেন্ট হিল **(Parliament Hill)**। গথিক স্থাপত্যের এই ঐতিহাসিক ভবনটির সামনে দাঁড়িয়ে মনে হয় যেন সময় থমকে গেছে। সেন্টেনিয়াল ফ্লেম (Centennial Flame)-এর জ্বলন্ত শিখার পাশে বসে রিডো-নদীর দিকে তাকাতেই দেখা গেল দূরের গাছগুলোতে শরতের ছোঁয়া লাগতে শুরু করেছে। সবুজ পাতাগুলো ধীরে ধীরে হলুদ ও হালকা সবুজাভ রঙে রূপ নিচ্ছে। ভিক্টোরিয়া টাওয়ারের ঘন্টার ধ্বনি যখন বাতাসে ভেসে আসছিল, তখন মনে হচ্ছিল প্রকৃতির এই পরিবর্তনের সাথেই যেন শহরের ইতিহাস এক সুরে মিলে মিশে গেছে।

বাই ওয়ার্ড মার্কেট (ByWard Market)-এর প্রাণবন্ত গলিগুলোতে ঘুরে বেড়ানো ছিল আরেক রোমাঞ্চকর অভিজ্ঞতা। টাটকা মেপল সিরাপ, বেভারটেলস (BeaverTails)-এর মিষ্টিস্বাদ আর স্থানীয় শিল্পীদের হাতের কাজ দেখে সময় কীভাবে কেটে গেল বোঝা গেল না। দিনশেষে ম্যারিয়ট হোটেলের উষ্ণ আতিথেয়তা আমাদের রাতের বিশ্রামকে আরও আরামদায়ক করে তুলেছিল।

❖ গ্যাতিনোপার্কের পথ ধরে: শরতের প্রথম রূপকথা

অটোয়া থেকে রিডোনদী পার হলেই কুইবেক প্রদেশের গ্যাতিনোপার্ক **(Gatineau Park)**। সেপ্টেম্বর মাসে এই পার্কের রূপ বর্ণনা করার মতো ভাষা কোনো কবির কল্পনাতেও বোধহয় ধরা দেবেনা।

আমরা গাড়ি নিয়ে যখন পার্কের আঁকাবাঁকা পথ ধরে উপরে উঠছিলাম, চারিদিকে যেন কোনো অদৃশ্য শিল্পী তুলির টানে ক্যানভাস সাজিয়ে রেখেছেন। পাইন, ওক আর মেপল গাছের মেলা। যেদিকে চোখ যায়—সবুজ, সোনালী হলুদ, উজ্জ্বল কমলা এবং গাঢ় লালের সমারোহ।

পিনক লেক লুকআউট (Pink Lake Lookout)-এ দাঁড়িয়ে যখন নিচের হ্রদের দিকে তাকালাম, থমকে যেতে হলো। আয়নার মতো পরিষ্কার শান্ত জলের বুকে প্রতিফলিত হচ্ছে চারপাশের রঙিন পাহাড় আর নীল আকাশ। মনে হচ্ছিল যেন পৃথিবীর সব শান্ত-সমাহিত সৌন্দর্য এই একটি জায়গাতেই এসে জমা হয়েছে।

❖ মঁ-ত্রঁব্লঁর পথে: প্রকৃতির ক্যানভাসেরঙের খেলা

অটোয়ার পর্ব শেষ করে আমাদের পরবর্তী গন্তব্য ছিল লরেন শিয়ান পর্বতমালায় অবস্থিত বিখ্যাত মঁ-ত্রঁব্লঁ **(Mont-Tremblant)**। অটোয়া থেকে প্রায় দুই থেকে আড়াই ঘন্টার এই ড্রাইভটি ছিল পুরোভ্র মণের অন্যতম সেরা অভিজ্ঞতা। Highway 323 ধরে যত এগোচ্ছিলাম, শরতের ক্যানভাস ততই গাঢ় আর মায়াবী হয়েউঠছিল।

রাস্তার দু'পাশে সারি সারি মেপল গাছ। হালকা হাওয়ায় ঝরে পড়া রঙিন পাতাগুলো যেন আমাদের গাড়ির কাচে এসে স্পর্শ করে যাচ্ছিল। দূর থেকে মনে হচ্ছিল যেন আস্ত পাহাড়গুলোতে কেউ লাল, হলুদ আর কমলার আগুন জ্বালিয়ে দিয়েছে।

❖ ফেয়ারমন্ট মঁ-ত্রঁব্লঁ ও পাহাড়ি মায়া

মঁ-ত্রঁব্লঁ পৌঁছে আমাদের অবস্থান ছিল বিখ্যাত ফেয়ারমন্ট ট্রেব্লঁ **(Fairmont Tremblant)** হোটেলে। পাহাড়ের ঠিক পাদদেশে অবস্থিত এই ঐতিহ্যবাহী হোটেলের লবি থেকেই বাইরের রূপকথার মতো পাহাড়ের সৌন্দর্য প্রত্যক্ষ করা যাচ্ছিল।

মঁ-ত্রঁব্লঁ রিসোর্ট ভিলেজে পা রাখতেই মনে হলো ইউরোপের কোনোএক স্বপ্নের রূপকথার গ্রামে চলে এসেছি। প্যাস্টেল রঙের ইউরোপীয় স্থাপত্যের ছোট ছোট বাড়ি, নুড়ি বিছানো হাঁটা পথ আর চারিদিকে উৎসবের আমেজ।

পাহাড়ের চূড়ায় ওঠার জন্য আমরা ক্যাবল কার (Gondola)-এ চেপে বসলাম। ক্যাবল কার যত ওপরের দিকে উঠছিল, কুইবেকের এই পাহাড়ি উপত্যকার রূপ ততটাই স্পষ্ট ও চোখ ধাঁধানো হয়ে উঠছিল। নিচে লেক ত্রঁব্লঁ (Lac Tremblant)-এর নীল জলরাশি আর চারপাশে রঙিন পাহাড়ের বেষ্টনী—এই দৃশ্য শব্দে প্রকাশ করা অসম্ভব।

সন্ধ্যায় ফেয়ারমন্ট ট্রেব্লঁর খোলা আকাশের নিচের উষ্ণ সুইমিং পুলে বসে পাহাড়ের গায়ে লাল-হলুদ পাতার সৌন্দর্য উপভোগ করা ছিল এই ভ্রমণের অন্যতম অবিস্মরণীয় মুহূর্ত। পাহাড়ের চূড়ায় পৌঁছে ঠাণ্ডা বাতাসে যখন নিঃশ্বাস নিলাম, বুকের ভেতরের সমস্ত ক্লান্তি নিমেষেই উধাও হয়ে গেল। চারপাশের এই নীরবতা আর প্রাকৃতিক ঐশ্বর্য মনে করিয়ে দেয় মানুষ প্রকৃতির সামনে কতটাই না ক্ষুদ্র!

❖ ফিরে দেখা ও অনুভূতির বেশ

কয়েকদিনের এই সংক্ষিপ্ত সফর শেষ করেযখন ফেরার পথ ধরলাম, তখনোমন পড়েছিল মঁ-ত্রঁব্লঁর সেই রঙিন পাহাড়আর অটোয়ার শান্ত নদীর তীরে। সেপ্টেম্বরের এই ভ্রমণ কেবল দুটি শহর দেখার ভ্রমণ ছিল না; এটি ছিল প্রকৃতির অপার রূপের কাছেনিজেকেসমর্পণ করার এক আধ্যাত্মিক অভিজ্ঞতা।

ক্যানভাসে আকা এই লাল-হলুদ রং আর শরতের হিমেল হাওয়া চিরকাল আমাদের স্মৃতিতে এক রঙিন ছবি হয়ে থাকবে।



GLITCH IN THE SANDHIKHAN

Janhabi Sengupta
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The afternoon heat of North Kolkata was thick, laced with the scent of fried hing-er kochuri and fresh paint from nearby "Potua Para" (clay studios). Khonika sat by the window of a rattling, green-and-white tram, her mind fiercely divided between her heavy workload and her upcoming family obligations. Though she is a fairly independent, corporate busy lady who views Durga Puja more as a mandatory yearly break than a religious event, she balanced three heavy festive shopping bags on her knees out of sheer filial duty. As the tram clanked through the thick North Kolkata heat, her thoughts automatically treated the festival like a corporate strategy layout—mapping out Grandma's lunch and the grand North Kolkata trek with the cold precision of a project manager rather than a devotee. For her, the bustling city lines and looming pandals were just an elaborate cultural backdrop to be cleared before she could return to her spreadsheets. Suddenly, an unusually long, deep screech of metal brakes abruptly snapped her out of her calculations.

Khonika blinked, looking out the window to see which crossing they had reached. But the intersection didn't make sense. She looked down at her phone to check the GPS, but the screen displayed a clean, mocking message: No Network Available. She looked back out the window and realized the tracks had pierced a veil into a chillingly robotic, hyper-efficient universe.

The chaotic, warm Kolkata she knew had completely vanished, replaced by an eerie streetscape where every single structure was a sharp, mathematical triangle. Towering, seamless glass-and-steel pyramids lined the roads like geometric teeth, entirely devoid of architectural personality or welcoming porches. From her window, she could see that the entire street and the sidewalks were white in colour and a permanent navy-blue sky. The old asphalt was replaced by smooth, dark panels tracking with glowing blue guide-lines. Instead of yellow taxis, identical self-driving pod vehicles slid between the triangular blocks in unsettling, hornless silence. On the white sidewalks, crowds of people marched in eerie, synchronized straight lines. A mother and daughter stood tightly together at a crossing, deeply engaged in a conversation where neither made eye contact. Their voices were entirely monotone, mechanical, and kept at an unnaturally low volume. Whenever citizens passed one another, they actively diverted their eyes down toward the pavement. Inside the car, the stiff-limbed tram conductor stood frozen, staring blankly at the opposite window in absolute silence.

A sudden shadow fell over Khonika's seat. A lady, roughly the age of her own mother, stepped directly into the aisle. Unlike anyone else in this cold city, this woman did something terrifying and exhilarating: she looked directly into Khonika's eyes.

Without a word, the woman made a swift, urgent hand gesture, requesting her to touch it and take it, opening her palm to reveal a small, jagged piece of matte-black rock. Driven by pure instinct, Khonika reached out and touched it.

The moment her fingertips brushed the stone, a shockwave of clarity rippled through her brain. The monotonous, robotic white noise buzzing through the tram suddenly translated into crisp, perfectly understandable language. The passengers weren't just making noise; they were syncing their

thoughts. Khonika noticed that the lady was dressed similarly to her—wearing a traditional saree that stood out drastically against the sleek, metallic, uniform jumpsuits of the other passengers.

"Follow me, and do not look away," the older lady whispered, her voice projecting directly into Khonika's mind via the stone. "We must hurry. In this reality, time is compressed. A full day's duration lasts only a single Earth hour. The sun rises and sets before your eyes can adjust."

Khonika scrambled off the tram behind her guide as the navy sky darkened with dizzying, unnatural speed. They ducked into a towering triangular house where a sub-zero, machine-sustaining chill instantly bit into her face. Suddenly, the black rock in her hand glowed amber, enveloping her in a warm, temperature-stabilizing atmospheric pod. "Welcome to our sanctuary," the lady sighed rigidly, "you are just in time for ***Durj'ah-P'vza.***" At the room's geometric apex stood an unclad, unpainted deity holding the traditional Ek-Chala frame. The entire structure was sculpted from crystal-clear, unmalting ice that refracted the room's blue guidelines. Despite the lack of colour, hyper-detailed facial engravings captured an expression of profound, fierce maternal sorrow.

The crystal-clear structure caught the room's ambient blue lights, refracting them into thousands of diamond-like beams across the freezing sanctuary. Safe inside her humming atmospheric pod, Khonika could still feel the deep, crystalline vibration of the space as the hyper-speed universe accelerated time. The rituals of ***Durj'ah-P'vza*** began unfolding with an unsettling, mathematical beauty where each passing minute equalled nearly half an hour. Because fire posed a severe hazard to the structural triangles, there were no burning clay "Dhunuchis", heavy brass lamps, or fragrant smoke. Instead of physical elements, this world adapted its devotion to be performed strictly through light, sound frequencies, and data streams. The traditional rhythmic beats of the Dhak were converted into silent, rhythmic pulses that vibrated directly through the floor panels. Collectively, the synchronized thoughts of the hidden family members transformed the sterile environment into a glowing matrix of digital prayer.

The Frequency Bodhon (The Awakening)



The older lady stepped toward the crystal-clear idol. Instead of chanting aloud, she placed her hand on a triangular silver console. A low, resonant hum vibrated through the room—a frequency that perfectly mirrored the ancient Sanskrit chants of "Mahisasuramardini", but translated into a pulsing electronic wave. As the sound waves hit the ice idol, the hyper-detailed engravings on the Goddess's face began to glow from within, lighting up Her features with a piercing, bioluminescent blue.

The Light Anjali (The Offering)



The lady handed Khonika a small, geometric prism. "Focus your thoughts of devotion into the glass," she instructed into Khonika's mind. When Khonika held it, the prism caught the light of her invisible pod and refracted a warm, golden beam directly onto the heart of the ice deity. Around them, other hidden family members—all staring straight ahead but united in thought—projected their own beams. The crystal-clear ice absorbed the light, scattering thousands of golden geometric patterns across the cold walls. This was their Pushpanjali—an offering of pure, focused intent rather than physical flowers.

The Sandhi-Pulse (The Climax)



As the hour reached its final forty-eight seconds—the compressed equivalent of the 48-minute Sandhi Puja intersection—the atmosphere grew intensely heavy. The ice idol began to rapidly cycle through different states of refraction. Without melting a single drop, the crystal face of ***"Durga Mata" (crystal clear idol)*** shifted from calm maternal sorrow to a sharp, jagged, fierce geometric brilliance. Instead of 108 brass lamps, 108 distinct beams of ultraviolet light pierced through the apex of the triangular ceiling, illuminating the microscopic engravings of Her ten weapons.

The Silent Dhak



Throughout it all, the rhythmic, frantic beat of the traditional drums (Dhak) was translated into a synchronized rhythmic pulsing of the floor panels. It didn't make a sound in the air, but Khonika could feel the familiar, comforting heartbeat of Kolkata's pujas vibrating directly through the soles of her shoes. *"The ice holds our history,"* the lady whispered through the stone as the sky outside the triangular window turned from a deep twilight to a sudden dawn in a matter of seconds. "In a world that forbids feeling, the crystal retains the memory of who we used to be. Every ***Durj'ah-P'vza***, we code our devotion back into Her."

The Data Baran



The older lady approached the crystal-clear ice idol. Instead of offering sweets and wiping the deity's face with a betel leaf, she connected a glowing copper thread from her wrist-device to the base of the ice structure. Through the black stone in Khonika's hand, she could feel a massive download of emotional energy. The family was uploading their years' worth of sorrow, secret human thoughts, and whispered prayers into the ice matrix.

The Light Sindur Khela



Because physical vermillion would stain the sterile, hyper-monitored walls of the pyramid house, the married women used the laser prisms. They calibrated the light beams to a deep, blood-red frequency. They cast these crimson beams across the face of the ice Goddess and then onto each other's foreheads. To the automated security scanners outside, it looked like a simple system reboot, but to the hidden humans, it was the sacred, vibrant "Sindoor Khela".

The Evaporation Visorjan



The climax of the farewell was completely silent. The older lady pressed a final sequence on the triangular console. Suddenly, a localized thermal wave hummed within the pedestal. For the first time, the unmelting ice began to react. The hyper-detailed engravings on the face of Durj'ah-P'vza began to soften. Slowly, beautifully, the crystal-clear deity did not melt into messy puddles—she transformed directly into a thick, glowing white mist.

The Echo in the Vents



The mist rose toward the apex of the triangular ceiling, being pulled into the city's massive ventilation grid. As the Goddess evaporated into the atmosphere, her coded energy scattered into the air currents of the entire robotic metropolis. For a few brief seconds, the stone in Khonika's hand

vibrated with a million overlapping human voices crying out "**Aaschhe bachhar aabar hobe**"— (Again She will return next year).

The room returned to a flat, sterile grey. The light beams snapped off. Outside the window, a new, automated hour-long day was already dawning, and the people on the streets resumed their rigid, straight-line walks without a single glance toward one another.

"She is in the air now," the lady said softly, disconnecting the copper wire. *"Until the next cycle, she keeps our humanity alive in the machinery. If you want to find her, try to remember her, she is everywhere in a different form of appearance— Devi Navaroopa."*

The sharp, metallic ding-ding of a tram bell and a violent lurch shattered the silence, forcing Khonika's eyes wide open to the intense glare of the afternoon sun. The freezing, triangular pyramids and crystal-clear ice deity vanished instantly, replaced by the thick, humid heat of North Kolkata rushing back into her lungs. Around her, the air was suddenly alive and heavy with the glorious, familiar scents of roasted peanuts, exhaust fumes, and wet clay wafting from Kumartuli. She was back on her regular route, completely torn away from the robotic universe and thrust right back into her warm, beautifully chaotic reality. *"College Square crossing!"* the conductor shouted, slamming his heavy leather cash bag against the iron partition to wake up sleeping passengers. "Didi, are you getting down here?"

Khonika blinked at him, completely dazed. "Yes... yes, sorry."

She stood up on shaky legs and stepped off the wooden stairs of the tram, descending directly bus stop. She walked over to the sidewalk, leaning against a lamp post to catch her breath. A daydream, she thought, letting out a breathless, self-deprecating laugh. The pre-Puja exhaustion, the oppressive September heat, and the hypnotic rocking of the tram had obviously combined to play a massive trick on her imagination. She had simply fallen asleep and dreamed up a sci-fi version of her favourite festival. Smiling at her own wild mind, she reached into her bag to grab her keys. Her fingers brushed past the silk saree and hit something small, hard, and jagged at the very bottom of the paper bag. Khonika froze. Slowly, she pulled her hand back out and opened her palm.

Resting in the centre of her hand was a very small black stone—the exact same matte-black stone the older lady had given her on the alternate tram. It didn't reflect the harsh afternoon sun, and as she stared at it in absolute disbelief, a single, faint pulse of bioluminescent blue light flickered deep within its core. The moment the light pulsed, the chaotic noise of the Kolkata traffic seemed to instantly fade into a distant hum. Inside her head, her mind clearly chanted the exact words the lady had told her right after the ice idol had evaporated into the vents:

"She is now inside us. Until the next cycle, she keeps our humanity alive in the machinery. If you want to find her, try to remember her, she is everywhere in a different form of appearance— Devi Navaroopa."

Khonika grabbed the tiny black stone tightly, a mystic smile spreading across her face. It hadn't been a dream at all. The Goddess truly is everywhere, taking on whatever form a universe needed to survive—whether it was a beautiful idol made of "Gangetic clay" to bring joy to a chaotic city, or a sculpture of unmelting ice to keep the spark of humanity alive inside a world of emotionless machines.

She carefully slipped the stone into her bag. This year, when she stood before the clay deity to give her "Pushpanjali", her prayers would carry the secret heartbeat of two entirely different worlds.



Two hearts connected in Autumn

Durga Puja

Mousumi Sen Bhattacharyya
Mississauga, Canada

In the gentle autumn air of Kolkata, kash flowers swayed and the city prepared for Durga Puja. Saira Banu had come from Bangladesh with her mother for medical treatment. Though Kolkata was not new to her, this time the city felt different, almost magical. Streets lit up, shops crowded, pandals being built, and a festive fragrance in the air. On the advice of someone they knew, Saira's mother began treatment with Dr. Ram Mukherjee. Their first meeting was simple and professional. Ram reviewed reports, asked a few questions, and said, "Don't worry. It may take time, but we'll handle the treatment properly." Saira felt a little relief. "Your words give me hope," she replied. That was the beginning of their story. On Shashti, the spirit of Puja grew stronger. After leaving the hospital one evening, Saira noticed a grand pandal nearby. The sound of the dhak floated in the air. Suddenly, she heard Ram's voice behind her. "Would you like to see the Puja?" Surprised, she said, "Me?" He smiled. "Yes. You've come to Kolkata during Durga Puja, and you won't see it?" Saira hesitated. "But my mother." "She's resting. A couple of hours of joy won't harm." That evening they walked through the Puja together for the first time. Amid the dhak beats, dhunuchi dance, and lights, Saira felt Kolkata becoming strangely familiar. Slowly, an unspoken attraction grew between them. They talked beside the pandal, offered anjali together, shared bhog, and began talking about hospitals and treatments. Ram admired Saira's sense of duty and compassion. Saira discovered the quiet depth of his care. One rainy day, walking under a single umbrella, they both realized there was no turning back. But love was not going to be simple. They were from two different religion, countries. Questions from family and society loomed large. Saira returned to Bangladesh, while Ram stayed in Kolkata. They kept in touch, sometimes laughing, sometimes arguing, sometimes falling silent in hurt.

A year passed, and autumn returned with Puja. Saira came back for her mother's follow up. On Shashti morning, she saw Ram again in the hospital corridor. Their eyes met, carrying the same affection, perhaps a bit of pain. Slowly, they began to talk again. This time, they did not want fear to guide them. They spoke about their families, their feelings, and their future. Eventually, both families sat together. After questions and disagreements, acceptance came. The next Durga Puja, they decided to register their marriage. On the wedding day, the sound of dhak filled the air. Saira wore a red sari, and when Ram stood before her, he saw the same Saira he had met in the hospital corridor. This time, there was no uncertainty. As the vermilion was placed in her hair parting, Saira closed her eyes, remembering their first Puja, their time apart, and their reunion. Outside, the autumn moon shone softly. In the distance, the dhak drums echoed. Saira thought that life had brought her from Bangladesh to Kolkata for her mother's treatment, but destiny had given her something she had never expected Ram. Just like Goddess Durga returns every year. Their love had also found its way back. Beyond distance, beyond hurt and misunderstandings. She realized that some love stories begin quietly, in the hospital corridor, on an autumn afternoon. And when that love is true, no distance, no religion can keep it away forever. It eventually finds its way home. And beneath the timeless autumn sky of Kolkata, Saira and Ram found their home in each other, in a new life, a new beginning…

নারী কি করেছে? একটি যোগ্য উত্তর

মুনমুন চ্যাটার্জি, কানাডা

আমাদের সমাজে বহু প্রাচীন থেকে পুরুষ প্রাধান্য।
কথোপকথনে প্রশ্ন উঠেছিল ----

নারীরা ভালোবাসার জন্য কি এমন করেছে?

যেখানে পুরুষেরা ভালোবাসার জন্য
বিশাল ধনুক ভেঙেছে,
কঠিন সেতু বানিয়েছে,
বীর বিক্রমে যুদ্ধ করেছে,
কঠিনপাহাড় ভেঙেছে
পাগল হয়েছে, প্রেমিক হয়েছে, কবি হয়েছে।

কিন্তু নারীরা কি এমন করেছে?
এই প্রশ্নের উত্তরে মননে ভেসে ওঠে ----
পার্বতীর মতো তপস্যা করেছে
লক্ষ্মীর মতো চরণ সেবা করেছে
সীতার মতো অগ্নি পরীক্ষা দিয়েছে
মীরার মতো বিষপান করেছে
রাধার মতো বিয়োগ ব্যাথা সহ্য করেছে
অহল্যার মতো পাথর হয়েছে
সতীর মতো সব কিছু ত্যাগ করেছে
সাবিত্রীর মতো যমরাজের সাথে লড়েছে
দ্রৌপদীর মত বার বার অপমান সহ্য করেছে।
উর্মিলার মতো অপেক্ষা করেছে
রুক্মিণী র মতো ভালোবেসেছে
রাজপুতনারা জহর ব্রত করেছে
সতীদাহ প্রথার জন্য জ্বলন্ত অগ্নিতে পুড়ে মরেছে।

নারী হলো মা,
এই মা রূপে নারী স্বর্গসম
স্ত্রী রূপে সংসারের লক্ষ্মী,
কন্যা রূপে আনে সৌভাগ্য।

নারী হলো সেই অসামান্য শক্তি
যে সন্তানদের পৃথিবীর আলো দেখিয়েছেন,
নিজস্ব সব কিছু নিঃস্বার্থ ভাবে ত্যাগ করেছেন,
সন্তানদের বড় করে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করেছেন,
সব সময় প্রার্থনা করেছেন 'আমার সন্তান যেন থাকে দুধেভাতে।

A Strong Woman
Is the Lifeline
Of Her Family.
She Carries
Within her
The Power to
Endure Pain
And the Courage
to Sacrifice.
She has the
Power to
Create and Nurture Life.
She is Indeed the
Epitome of
Love and Sacrifice





Community, Devotion and Togetherness



Community Feast



Puja Ceremony



Community Activities



Devotion and Blessings



Gathering with Friends



Cultural Gathering



Bhajan and Cultural Program



Music and Devotion



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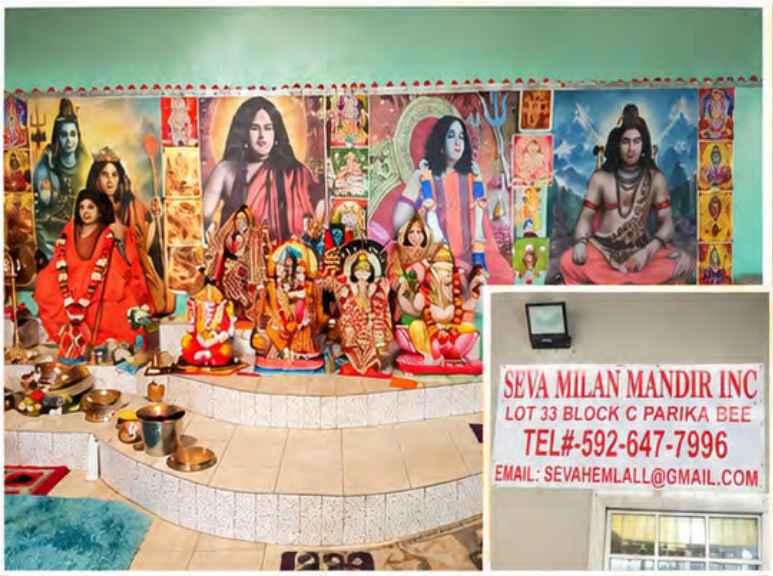
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In extreme Assam Chana border pilgrimage tour
Parusuram Tirtha after visiting
Balochisthan Maa Shakti Pith Marutirtha Hinglage



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The Consulate General Dr. Mani Singh of Canada
shown honored Swamiji visiting 4th time
Georgetown South America

Cultural Programs on Durga Puja Evenings

Sasthi

Oct 15, 8-10 pm

- Sourini Chatterjee & Ishaan Saha
- Tania Baidya
- Avi Guha
- Semanti Misra & Bitirna Rudra
- Smayan & Sninjol Chakraborty
- Aryaman Bhattacharyaa
- Adrita
- Sa Re Ga Ma
- Roshni Sen
- Shriya Banerjee
- Sourav Banerjee
- Prantika Banerjee

মহাষষ্ঠী

Master of Ceremony

Mousumi Sen Bhattacharyaa

Saptami

Oct 16, 8-10 pm

- Prayushi Kundu
- Semanti Misra
- Prayushi Kundu
- Ahiri Dey
- Sriyan Mukherjee
- Gitashree Paul Guha
- Saugandhika Dance Academy

মহাসপ্তমী

Master of Ceremony

Janhabi Sengupta
Munmun Chatterjee

Ashtami

Oct 17, 7:30-10 pm

- Sunanadi Mukherjee
- Brinda Banerjee
- Aditi Sarkar
- Adrita
- Mousumi Sen Bhattacharyaa
- Munmun Chatterjee
- Rumeli Dutta Mazumder

মহা অষ্টমী

Master of Ceremony

Aditi Sarkar
Mousumi Sen Bhattacharyaa
Munmun Chatterjee

Navami

Oct 18, 8-10 pm

- Aswini Majhi
- Janhabi Sengupta
- Eleena De
- Manali Bhattacharya
- Anwesha Sarkar
- Monjistha Sen
- Arpita Shriya
- Soma Roy
- Babita Samanta
- Prosenjit Deoghoria
- Protishtha Deoghoria

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