

Deepalaya



The Dr. Deepa Martins

Memorial Lectures

Volume Two: 2010 - 2015





Ms. Vrinda Grover 2010 Ms. Kamla Bhasin 2011



Ms. Aruna Roy 2011 Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath 2012

*The lamps are different,
But the Light is the same.
- Rumi*

Deepalaya

The Dr. Deepa Martins Memorial Lectures
Volume Two : 2010-2015

AN INTRODUCTION TO DR. DEEPA MARTINS AND THE MEMORIAL LECTURES

असंभव तो कुछ भी नहीं यदि ठान लें हम,
हम ही करेंगे नवयुग का निर्माण ये जान लें हम

I would like to give an insight into the life and works of Dr. Deepa Martins by sharing some of her ideologies with you. Dr. Deepa Martins was born on April 5, 1951 in a Kumaoni Brahmin family in Ajmer. She was the youngest among seven brothers and three sisters and her father Shri Bhagwan Vallabh Pant, a teacher committed to the values of education and patriotism, had a deep impact on her right from the beginning. She adopted the simplicity and large-heartedness of her mother Laxmi Devi Pant and the magnanimity and righteousness of her father.

‘बेटी भी छूएगी आकाश, बस एक मौके की तलाश’

अपने घर में हमेशा शिक्षा व सौहार्द्र का वातावरण पाकर डॉ. दीपा प्रारंभ से ही अत्यंत मेधावी रहीं बचपन से ही उनके व्यक्तित्व ने अभिव्यक्ति के अनेक रूप ले लिए। वे बहुत प्रतिभाशाली थीं और पढ़ाई के अलावा स्कूल व कॉलेज स्तर पर वे सहशैक्षिक और सांस्कृतिक गतिविधियों में भी जुड़ी रहीं। वाद विवाद लेखन और नाट्य कला में उनकी विशेष रुचि थी। उन्होंने सावित्री स्कूल अजमेर से माध्यमिक व इन्टरमीडिएट कर सावित्री कॉलेज से बी.ए. किया। कॉलेज में तीनों साल उन्हें सर्वश्रेष्ठ अभिनेत्री का पुरस्कार मिला तथा वे छात्र संगठन की अध्यक्षा भी रहीं। अपने ही नहीं वरन् सभी के संपूर्ण विकास को समर्पित डॉ. दीपा आध्यात्मिक व रचनात्मक सरोकार से जुड़ी रहतीं और लोगों को प्रेरित करतीं। ओजस्विता व सकारात्मकता उनके व्यक्तित्व का मुखरित भाव था।

Mutual respect was also a governing force of her life and it reflected in every aspect of her being. She pursued her MA in English in 1972 and began her career as a lecturer in English at Shramjeevi College, Ajmer. Strengthening her deep-rooted faith in harmony, on 23 June 1973 she married Shri Gilroy Martins, her MA classmate and her companion of values, courage and vision. Marrying a Catholic in an era when even inter-caste marriages were unheard of in Ajmer, did not deter her strong will. She always believed in doing what was right and created a family atmosphere where values and cultures of both religions coexist.

समन्वय के इस भाव को कर्म क्षेत्र में भी आत्मसात कर उन्होंने अपनी भाषा हिन्दी में स्नातकोत्तर करते हुए हिंदी के अध्यापन को चुना तथा 1975 से वे सावित्री गर्ल्स कॉलेज में कार्यरत रहीं। उनके व्यक्तित्व के अनेक रूप थे और वे हर रूप

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www.ststephensajmer.com

Printed at:

Vikas Printing Press

Ajmer • M. 9829261177

में संपूर्ण थीं। एक गुरु के रूप में वह अपने विद्यार्थियों के व्यक्तित्व निर्माण के लिए पूर्ण रूप से समर्पित थीं। वे अपना समय और दीक्षा अपने विद्यार्थियों को देने के लिए हमेशा तत्पर रहतीं, चाहे वो कॉलेज में हों या उनके घर में। वे जीवन को सम्पूर्णता से जीने में विश्वास रखती थीं और अपने हर रूप में चाहे— वे गुरु, समाज सेवक, चिन्तक, कवयित्री, लेखिका या निजी रूप में एक दोस्त, बेटी, बहन, पत्नी तथा माँ — में परिपक्व व सम्पूर्ण थीं। उनके व्यक्तित्व का हर आयाम इतना सम्पूर्ण था कि यदि किसी का उनके एक आयाम से परिचय होता, तो वह उन्हें इतना पूर्ण लगता कि वे यह नहीं समझ पाते कि उनके अन्य आयाम भी उतने ही प्रबल तथा सम्पूर्ण हैं।

उनके शब्दों में — इस इन्द्रधनुषी जीवन के हर रंग का आनंद लेकर हम अपने जीवन को समरसता की ओर ले जाएं।

She believed that it is not enough to have aspirations and visions of a better society, it is also important to work towards changing it to reality and so she ensured through her work as a genuine, grassroots social worker, that harmonious co-existence and mutual respect enlighten her entire society. Her work in organizations like Mahila Samooch, that she co-founded, and Inter-Faith Fraternal Association, with which she was closely associated since its inception, are testimonies to this.

Many times, in the field of ideology-based work, there are differences of opinion. She believed that there can be differences of opinion, but the importance of dialogue should always be maintained and inter-personal relations should not be affected.

वे कहती थीं, “मतभेद कितने भी हों मनभेद नहीं होना चाहिए।” प्यार और आदर को अपनी शक्ति बना उन्होंने अपने सिद्धान्तों के क्षेत्र में अनेक कार्य किए। महिला सशक्तिकरण के क्षेत्र में वे सबसे पहले नारी के अस्तित्वबोध की बात करतीं। उन्होंने लिखा भी था कि, “नारी शक्ति जब जागती है तो सृजन होता है और सृष्टि रचनात्मकता की पुलक से भर उठती है।” आज आवश्यकता है कि नारी अपनी शक्ति पहचाने स्वयं जागे और फिर सारे विश्व को जगाए।

उनके साथियों के शब्दों में बहुत सारे लोग ऐसे थे जो मानते थे कि कोई और हो न हो दीपा है। अपनी संवेदशीलता के बल पर लोगों के एहसासों को छूकर वे उनके दिलों तक आसानी से अपनी पहुँच बना लेती थीं।

She was involved with many social, creative, cultural and literary organisations in Ajmer. She had a very special place at St. Stephen's. The effect of her talent and multi-dimensional personality could be seen in every aspect of the school. Not only did she extend her whole-hearted support to Shri Martins but she would be involved in every

small and big activity at St. Stephen's along with managing her multiple roles in society. Students of St. Stephen's were always inspired by her positivity, energy and her love that she showered on them.

“गति ही जीवन है”, वे कहती थीं और इसी लिए अपने दिन के हर क्षण को वे सार्थकता से व्यतीत करती थीं। उनको लगता था कि कोई एक भी क्षण ऐसा न हो जो खाली जाए।

जीवन के छोटे से छोटे दायित्वों को वे बहुत महत्व देती थीं। सहजता, आशावादिता, अस्तित्वबोध और विस्तार को उन्होंने अपना मूलमंत्र बनाया तथा कर्मों से दर्शाया भी — उन्हीं की पंक्तियों में :

अपने ही भीतर खोजना हर प्रश्न का उत्तर, हर समस्या का समाधान

और तुम पाओगे कि अंधेरे का गाढ़ापन उजाले को और भी उजलाता है।

प्रश्नों की उधेड़बुन से ही अंकुरित होते हैं जीवन सत्य

और अपने मन की ऊर्जा से अधिक सप्राण और कुछ नहीं होता।

संघर्ष और प्रेरणा को साथ रखते हुए उन्होंने जीवन को एक उत्सव की तरह मनाया, हर बार एक नई वजह खोज हर संघर्ष के अर्थ निकाले। जब उनके विद्यार्थियों को अपने घरों में माहौल व समय नहीं मिलता, तो वे उन्हें पढ़ने के लिए अपने घर आमंत्रित करतीं तथा उन्हें अपना समय देतीं। अपने अनेक विद्यार्थियों के लिए वे एक रोलमॉडल हैं। महिलाओं से जुड़े मुद्दों में भी वे आंदोलन के साथ संवाद का महत्व रखतीं। वे मोर्चे भी निकालतीं और नारे भी लगातीं लेकिन यदि किसी बात का हल परस्पर संवाद और शांति से निकलता हो तो वे उसे प्राथमिकता देतीं।

Positivity, happiness, completeness, the ability to reach out to everyone and the undetering will to stand for righteousness gave her a unique place in the hearts of people that lives on and continues to radiate vibrations of values and hope and the belief in reaching out and touching lives.

The Dr. Deepa Martins Memorial Lecture Series was initiated in April 2004 to mark her 53rd birth anniversary. Renowned personalities spanning the fields of literature, arts and activism are invited to deliver the keynote address to the students of St. Stephen's and the citizens of Ajmer. This Lecture series links the academic and artistic aspects of Dr. Deepa Martins with her passion for grassroot level social work, and hence celebrates her multi-dimensional contribution to society. Over the past 12 years, eminent speakers have shared their experiences

in various fields and subjects, which are linked to current issues and especially to causes close to Dr. Deepa's heart – inter-faith harmony and women empowerment. In this way, the lecture series has carried forward the legacy of Dr. Deepa Martins by bringing to her city annually something she reflected in her life — intelligent, informed conversation, rooted in a cause, with a bias towards action. The students, through these lectures, not only get first-hand information from people linked to various causes but also get ideas and ways to choose and apply their own contribution to their society, which indeed is a fitting tribute to Dr. Deepa Martins.

The Lecture series is successful through the efforts of the people associated with Dr. Deepa, especially her friend and co-worker Ms. Aruna Roy, who takes personal interest in inviting a suitable speaker each year.

This compilation is the second volume and we look forward to bringing these out at regular intervals. I invite you on behalf of all those who have been associated with these Lectures over the years to imbibe and cherish the light that “Deepalaya” brings.

Shefali Martins

April, 2016



ऊर्जस्विता मैं

सतयुग में शब्द-पुष्पों से मेरा बहुत गुणगान हुआ
जहाँ है नारी वहीं करते देवता रमण ऐसा यशोगान हुआ
किन्तु पुरुष के क्रूर हाथों तब भी मेरा अपमान हुआ
गौतम-प्रिया अहिल्या की परिणति प्रतीक्षारत पाषाण हुआ।

त्रेता-युग में धनुष-भंग कर युग पुरुष राम ने वरा मुझको
पर लंका के यातना शिविर के बाद भी देनी पड़ी अग्नि-परीक्षा मुझको
और फिर आसन्न प्रसवा को त्याग, दिया निर्मम वनवास मुझको
परित्यक्ता, दिशाहारा, धरासुता मैं-माँ धरती ने ही दिया आश्रय मुझको।

द्वापर के सर्व-समर्थ यशस्वी पांडवों की भार्या बनी मैं
अकिंचन भिक्षा की तरह पांच महारथियों में बांटी गयी मैं।
पति परमेश्वर के मनोविनोद के जुए में हारी गयी मैं
राजसभा में निर्वस्त्र करने को विजेताओं द्वारा उतारी गयी मैं।

कलयुग में और भी बढ़ते गये मुझ पर अत्याचार
दहेज, हिंसा, उत्पीड़न, अन्याय, हत्या और बलात्कार
हर ओर सुनाई दे रहा है शोषित नारी का चीत्कार
उपेक्षिता आधी आबादी का बढ़ता जा रहा है हाहाकार।

कभी राम कभी श्याम ने किया था मेरा उद्धार
पर अब मैं स्वयं ही बनूंगी अपनी नैया की खेवनहार
शक्ति को अपनी संचित कर जाऊँगी क्षितिज के पार
नयी सहस्राब्दी की ऊर्जस्विता मैं, अब नहीं मानूँगी हार ।।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स

CONTENTS

The Seventh Dr. Deepa Martins Memorial Lecture, 2010

1. Women's Movement and Legal Reform – A Few Reflections
Ms. Vrinda Grover, Keynote Speaker11

The Eighth Dr. Deepa Martins Memorial Lecture, 2011

2. Why Boys Must Cry and Girls Must Climb Trees
Ms. Kamla Bhasin, Keynote Speaker23

3. सत्यमेव जयते
Ms. Aruna Roy, Guest of Honour31

The Ninth Dr. Deepa Martins Memorial Lecture, 2012

4. Simple Abundance : An Interactive Session
Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Keynote Speaker33

The Tenth Dr. Deepa Martins Memorial Lecture, 2013

5. How the Arts can Change the World
Dr. Mallika Sarabhai, Keynote Speaker47

The Eleventh Dr. Deepa Martins Memorial Lecture, 2014

6. The Power of Imagination
Prof. Tripurari Sharma, Keynote Speaker57

The Twelfth Dr. Deepa Martins Memorial Lecture, 2015

7. Aazadi : We the People
**Ms. Charul Bharwada and Mr. Vinay Mahajan,
Keynote Speakers**69

कितनी सशक्तकृत हुई महिला सशक्तिकरण वर्ष में?

वर्ष 2001 को महिला सशक्तिकरण वर्ष घोषित किया गया था और यह कयास लगाया गया कि इस प्रकार की जोर-शोर की घोषणा से महिला की स्थिति में एकदम से क्रान्तिकारी परिवर्तन आ जाएगा और वह नई शताब्दी के साथ कदमताल मिलाकर चलने लगेगी।

किंतु वर्ष बीतते-बीतते घोषणाओं के छल के ऊपर वास्तविकता का सच हावी होने लगा था और आज हम उस वर्ष के बीतने के बाद यह आँकलन करने की स्थिति में हैं कि क्या मात्र किसी वर्ष के पहले कोई उपसर्ग जोड़ देने से स्थितियों में परिवर्तन आ जाता है सामाजिक, आर्थिक और कानूनी – इन तीन पक्षों की स्थितियों के अध्ययन से ही हम यथार्थ का बोध कर सकते हैं।

देश के सामाजिक ढाँचे ने अभी भी महिला को दायम दर्जा ही दिया है। आज भी उसे अपने बारे में निर्णय लेने का अधिकार नहीं है।

अपने वोट बैंक को समृद्ध करने के लिए देश का हर राजनीतिक दल महिला आरक्षण की बात करता है। पर क्या आज तक कोई भी राजनीतिक दल महिला विधेयक को पारित करवा पाया है? खौफनाक तथ्य तो यह है कि जुनून चाहे सांप्रदायिकता का हो या आर-पार के युद्ध का, उसकी शिकार होती हैं औरतें।

महिला सशक्तिकरण का ढोल पीटने भर से ही महिलाएँ अचानक किसी घोषित वर्ष में सशक्तकृत नहीं होतीं। यदि महिला को सचमुच ही सशक्तकृत होना है तो उसे संगठित होना पड़ेगा।

अपने सीमित दायरे में भी हिन्दुस्तानी औरत को अपने ऊपर अपना अधिकार कायम करने का तसलीमा नसरीन का आह्वान स्वीकार करना पड़ेगा और परिवार व समाज में अपने लिए जगह बनाने का भागीरथ प्रयास करना होगा। तब किसी सरकार या व्यवस्था को उसे सशक्तकृत करने के लिए महिला सशक्तिकरण वर्ष की कागजी घोषणा नहीं करनी पड़ेगी।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स



Ms. Vrinda Grover is a Human Rights lawyer and researcher, based in New Delhi. She obtained her Law degree from Delhi University and her Masters in Law from New York University's School of Law.

Ms. Grover is currently the Executive Director of the multiple action research group, Marg, which works towards the legal empowerment of marginalized communities. She has been active in the women's movement and in the human rights movement. She has been engaged in the drafting of laws related to violence against women. As a lawyer, she has represented victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence, communal massacre, custodial killing, sexual minorities and trade unions.

Ms. Grover's areas of research and writing include a critical examination of the role of law in the subordination of women, the criminal justice system, issues of impunity and State accountability for Human Rights violations.

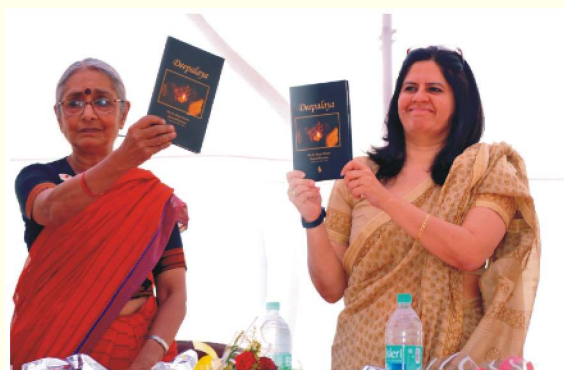
Ms. Grover is a Bureau member of South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR), member of the General Assembly of the OMCT, Geneva, member of the Advisory Board of the India Campaign for the International Criminal Court and a Founder Member of the Working Group on Human Rights in India and at the United Nations.



Lighting the lamp before the portrait of Dr. Deepa Martins



Ms. Vrinda Grover delivering the keynote address



Ms. Aruna Roy and Ms. Vrinda Grover releasing 'Deepalaya', Volume One

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND LEGAL REFORM: A FEW REFLECTIONS

I thank St. Stephen's School for giving me this opportunity and inviting me to Ajmer to have a conversation with the students, the faculty and my friends, some of whom have been fellow travelers in this journey of activism and change. I am not accustomed to talking to students and so it was a little difficult to try and figure out what I should present and what we could talk about. I have a daughter who is 16 years old and, as children of this age usually are of parents, she is extremely critical of what one has to say and do and she always maintains that as a human rights lawyer, as a criminal lawyer, I was a storehouse of horror stories which should never be told to any child! And so it was very challenging to decide on something which would deal with the facts and the reality of the world that we live in and yet at the same time be inspiring and motivating for us. As I was thinking about this, I received a compilation of the poems of Dr. Deepa Martins from Anupam and perhaps that is what settled my dilemma about what I would like to share with you all today: I decided to speak on a history that Dr. Deepa Martins would perhaps have liked her students to know of — a history that is not very often written about in school text books or discussed in classrooms, but a history that I think is very crucial in influencing our present and in shaping our future.

मैं आज आप लोगों के साथ कुछ ऐसी बातें साझा करूँगी कि पिछले 20-30 दशक से हमारे देश में जो महिला आंदोलन हो रहे हैं, उनसे कानून में क्या बदलाव आया है, कहाँ पर कानून बदला, क्यों बदला उनके पीछे की कहानियाँ क्या हैं? आज की तारीख में अगर आप में से कुछ बड़े होकर कानून का अध्ययन करते हैं, वकील बनते हैं तो आप लोगों को तो कानून आगे नजर आता है मगर उसके पीछे क्या आंदोलन रहा, क्या सोच रही, क्यों वे बदलाव लाये गये, कैसे वे बदलाव लाये गये। मुझे लगता है वे कहानियाँ बहुत जरूरी हैं जानने के लिए ताकि हम उस कानून को समझ सकें और उसको आगे कहाँ लेकर जाना है, उसके बारे में सोच सकें।

Very often when I am talking with younger lawyers, and I have a lot of young lawyers who come and work with me, they tell me that the government changed or passed a particular law in a particular year. Often they would be referring to laws that some of us had been actively campaigning to change. Yes, technically laws are passed by the Parliament or by the State Legislative Assembly. But how does a change come about? I would like to begin my story, in fact multiple

stories, somewhere in the late 70s when certain issues of violence against women became very, very crucial for all of us and for many of those who preceded me in women's movement.

We noticed that in newspapers and magazines there were discussions and reportings of women being killed due to stoves bursting. All of a sudden, it was almost like there was an epidemic of stoves bursting in kitchens and surprisingly it was always the daughter-in-law who was working at the time the stove burst and she would be engulfed by the flames and die. Then there were also stories of how women could not bear certain ailments and therefore had taken their own lives; or we would hear about how women were very sensitive and could therefore not deal with certain issues and complications that came up in their adult life.

What came out as a pattern from all those reports put together was that there was a very large number of young women who were dying after marriage in their matrimonial homes. This led to a lot of research; a lot of data was studied, a lot of analysis was done, fact findings were done by women's groups across the country and out of that analysis a new reality emerged, a truth emerged. What emerged was that the issue of dowry, which was not new to the 70s and had always existed in the country, had suddenly got a fresh lease at a time when a large number of consumer goods had become available in the market. Dowry became a means to acquire all kinds of consumer goods, be it a television or a radio or a fridge, without really having to work for it, without really having to earn money. A groom's family could just make a demand at the time of a wedding and anything that they wanted would arrive at their house along with the bride.

We began to analyse this and ask why those who were killing these women (and these were murders that were taking place and being passed off as accidents) were not being punished. When women went to police stations, they were told that it was a family matter and that the police does not intervene in that. And when the law was studied, we found that the law had no answers for situations like this.

Anupam just mentioned to us that Dr. Aruna Roy is from Indraprastha College for Women – in one of the first demonstrations that was held against the killing of a woman called Tarwinder Kaur, the college played a lead role. Plays were performed, particularly street plays. There was a very popular play at that time called *Om Swaha* which depicted how the greed for dowry was taking the lives of young

women. These plays were performed at every street corner, in the parks, and in the colonies, across Delhi. I think I was in the third generation of feminists who participated in those plays and performed them at numerous public places in Delhi. What was very fascinating about that campaign was that it went to the people. If a woman was killed in a particular colony, the play was performed in front of the homes in that colony, in front of the workplaces of those people who had taken the lives of their daughter-in-law or wife. Neighbours joined in that campaign. I recall when we performed the play, men would often come up to say that their daughters or sisters were facing similar issues.

Many people joined the movement. These movements were not movements of any extraordinary people. They were movements of very ordinary people. I was just a college student myself at that time. It was a movement and a campaign that grew from the people, led by women's groups. The women's groups gained this understanding from the people who came to them with those issues. Satya Rani Chaddha and Shahjahan Appa were two women who became a part of this movement in Delhi. Both of them had lost their daughters in similar circumstances — their daughters had been murdered for dowry. And both of them became leaders of this campaign that led to a demand for an entire change in law and that change did take place. In 1983, the Indian Penal Code was amended and two substantive provisions were brought in: Section 498 (A) of the Indian Penal Code and Section 304 (B) of the Indian Penal Code. For the first time there was a recognition that the violence that women face within the matrimonial home is of a different order. It cannot be covered under the general crimes that the Indian Penal Code recognizes. And the issue of physical cruelty and mental cruelty was a giant leap even within our criminal jurisprudence, particularly the aspect of mental cruelty as a criminal offence.

आप अगर किसी को परेशान करेंगे, इतना सताएँगे कि वो जी नहीं सके, अपनी जान लेने पर मजबूर हो जाए तो ये अपने आप में एक गुनाह है। दूसरे व्यक्ति जो आपके साथ में है, आपके घर में है, उनका भी उतना ही अधिकार है रहने के लिए। अगर आप इस तरह का व्यवहार करेंगे तो कोर्ट उसको एक गुनाह के रूप में देखेगा। पूरे देश में औरतों के खिलाफ हो रही हिंसा के दूसरे मुद्दे, जो इस अभियान के तहत बहुत अहम् हैं। वर्षों से हम देखते हैं कि औरतें यौन उत्पीड़न का शिकार होती हैं। हिंसा विशेष तौर पर अपराध का एक प्रकार है जो कि औरतों के विरुद्ध प्रतिबद्ध है। कानून यह स्वीकार करता है कि बलात्कार

एक बड़ा अपराध है। सन् 1978 व 1979 में दो केस जिन्होंने पूरे देश में हलचल मचाई— मथुरा नाम की एक लड़की जो 17-18 साल की आदिवासी महाराष्ट्र की रहने वाली थी, उसकी किसी लड़के के साथ दोस्ती थी, रिश्ता था और वो दोनों अपने घर से भाग निकले, मथुरा के भाई ने पुलिस थाने में जाकर कम्प्लेन्ट करवाई पुलिसवाले मथुरा और उसके दोस्त को पकड़ लाए। जब सब स्टेटमेंट रिकॉर्ड हो गए तो मथुरा का परिवार उसको घर ले जाने लगा। उस समय बाकी परिवार थाने के बाहर खड़ा था और मथुरा के साथ थाने के अन्दर पुलिस हवलदार ने बलात्कार किया। कोर्ट तक केस पहुँचा, सब पुलिस वालों को छोड़ दिया गया। सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने कहा इसमें पुलिस वालों की कोई गलती नहीं थी क्योंकि मथुरा ने शोर नहीं मचाया था। मथुरा का जब मेडिकल किया गया तो देखा गया कि कोई जोर—जबर्दस्ती का सबूत नहीं था और वैसे भी मथुरा की तो पहले भी किसी लड़के के साथ दोस्ती थी तो कैसे मान लें कि इसमें लड़की की अपनी मर्जी नहीं थी। बहुत गुस्सा आया, इस देश भर की औरतों को उन सब व्यक्तियों पर जिनकी समझ में सही—गलत, न्याय—अन्याय की एक पहचान नहीं है। दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय के एक कॉलेज में पढ़ाने वाले तीन अध्यापक— एक पुरुष और दो महिलाओं ने एक खुली चिट्ठी, दिल्ली में स्थित भारत के उच्चतम न्यायालय को लिखी। उन्होंने उस चिट्ठी में सुप्रीम कोर्ट के निर्णय को चुनौती दी और कहा कि ये निर्णय बिल्कुल गलत है। जब एक महिला, पुलिसवालों के कब्जे में है और वो उनकी हिरासत में है तो वहाँ पर किस तरह का दबाव होता है, क्या वहाँ पर महिला विरोध कर सकती है? किस तरह का कानूनी अधिकार इस देश के व्यक्ति के पास है, आपकी इस समझ से दूर, इस देश का कानून है। आपका जो निर्णय है पुलिसवालों को छोड़ने का, यह बिल्कुल गलत निर्णय है।

पूरे देश भर में इस पर एक आंदोलन छिड़ गया। यहाँ पर ध्यान रखने की एक बात है कि पढ़ाने वालों की एक अहम् भूमिका रही है, पढ़ने और पढ़ाने के जो संस्थान हैं उन्होंने हमेशा देश में बदलाव लाने के लिए एक अहम् भूमिका निभाई। देश में एक आंदोलन छेड़ा और बिल्कुल उसके आसपास के समय हैदराबाद में रमीजा बी, जो एक गरीब मुसलमान महिला थीं उसके साथ भी पुलिसवालों ने बलात्कार किया और उनके पति जो कि रिक्शा चालक थे वे उसका विरोध कर रहे थे और उसे बचा रहे थे। उनकी हत्या कर दी गई। पुलिसवालों के विरुद्ध बहुत बड़ा आंदोलन हैदराबाद में छिड़ गया। उस आंदोलन के बाद क्योंकि इतना हंगामा हुआ तो सरकार मजबूर हुई और जाँच आयोग बिठाना पड़ा। देखिए इसमें आखिर हुआ क्या है? बहुत हैरानी की बात है कि उस पूरी बात में पुलिसवाले जज साहब के सामने यही साबित करते रहे कि रमीजा बी एक बुरी औरत थीं उसकी बहुत सी शादियाँ हो रखी थीं, वो गलत काम करने वाली औरत थीं। किसी ने यह स्वीकार नहीं किया कि रमीजा बी के साथ बलात्कार पुलिसवालों ने किया था, क्योंकि इसकी जरूरत ही उनको महसूस नहीं हुई। औरत को बुरा बताकर उसके शरीर के साथ खिलवाड़ करना

जैसे कि पुलिस का अधिकार बन गया। जस्टिस मिधा आयोग को बैठाया गया। उन्होंने भी पुलिसवालों को छूट दे दी कि शायद कुछ गलत नहीं हुआ था। जो महिला समूह थे, महिला संगठन थे, उन सबने इस पर आंदोलन निकालना शुरू किया और उन्होंने कहा हमें अपनी समझ बनानी पड़ेगी। संरक्षक हिंसा क्या है? जब औरत इस तरह की निगरानी की एक परिस्थिति में होती है तो पुलिस हो, चाहे जेल हो या चाहे कोई हो, चाहे किसी भी तरह का हो, वहाँ पर उस समय वह क्या कर सकती है? किस तरह से अपनी बात को पेश कर सकती है? आखिर इस बात का क्या सबूत है कि वो सही है या मैं सही हूँ। यह कौन साबित करेगा? पुलिस वाले तो यह साबित कर ही देंगे कि जो रसोई घर में स्टोव फटा था, उसको छेड़ा गया था। जिसको आप बचाना चाहते हैं वह उस सबूत को मिटा देगा, क्योंकि वह क्षेत्र उसके नियंत्रण में है।

एक नई समझ को बनाया गया और बलात्कार जैसे शब्द जिनको कभी खुले में कहा नहीं जाता था, वह अब एक सार्वजनिक मुद्दा न होकर मानवाधिकार का विषय बन गया है। यह एक शर्मनाक दाग है, जो कि बलात्कार के साथ जुड़ा हुआ है और महिला आन्दोलन ने इसे हटाने की कोशिश की। ये पूरा एक प्रचार जिसमें खासकर हिन्दी फिल्मों ने एक बहुत ही बुरा किरदार पेश किया है। आंदोलन लड़की की जिन्दगी का अंत कहीं से नहीं है, ये वापस संघर्ष करने का, विरोध करने का एक मौका है अगर ऐसा हादसा हुआ है तो उससे लड़ने की जरूरत पड़ जाती है। यह क्षण उस संघर्ष का है, न कि उस स्त्री के जीवन का अंत है। यह मुद्दा पूरे देश के सामने अजीब ढंग से उठाया गया है। यह कई बार कानून को परिवर्तित करता है। एक अलग धारा जोड़ी गई है जहाँ यह समझा गया है कि औरत के साथ अगर यौन हिंसा होती है तो अपराधी को हिरासत में लिया जायेगा। जहाँ पर वो किसी की पावर के नीचे है जिसने वो बलात्कार किया है, वो कोई ओहदे पर है, तो उसके लिए कानून उसको अलग तरीके से देखेगा और वह महिला कहेगी कि उसके साथ ये बलात्कार हुआ है तो कोर्ट को उसको मानना पड़ेगा। साथ ही औरतों के बारे में कि उसका चरित्र कैसा है, उसका भूत कैसा है — ये बातें कोर्ट के मामले के बीच में नहीं लाई जाएँगी।

यह केस उस औरत पर नहीं चल रहा है, यह केस उस व्यक्ति पर चल रहा है— चाहे वह पुलिसवाला हो, जेल का रिमाण्ड बॉय हो, या अस्पताल का अफसर हो। जिसने यह कर्म किया हो, जिसने वह अपराध किया हो। एक और बदलाव लाया गया— हर आंदोलन में, महिला आंदोलन में हमेशा ऐसे तरीके इस्तेमाल किए, जिससे वे आंदोलन लोगों तक पहुँचें। चाहे वो गीत के माध्यम से, पोस्टर प्रदर्शनी, नारे या नाटक के माध्यम से हो। वे मुद्दे जिनकी बात, कभी घर के बाहर नहीं होती थी, उन मुद्दों को समाज के सामने रखा गया और समाज को मजबूर किया गया, उन पर बहस करने के लिए। कानून को मजबूर किया गया, उसे बदलने के लिए। 1987 में राजस्थान के देवराला गाँव में

रूपकँवर को मजबूर किया गया, उसे जिंदा जला दिया गया। पूरे देश में इसकी खबर फैल गई। रूपकँवर की हत्या – विधवा हत्या, दुर्भाग्यवश राजस्थान में पहली और आखिरी हत्या नहीं थी। उस हत्या को ‘सती परंपरा’ के नाम से दिखाया जा रहा था। कई महिला आंदोलन कर्मियों ने इस पर शोध किया, खोज की कि आखिर यह हो क्या रहा है? इसकी जड़ में क्या है? और जब इसका पूरा अध्ययन किया गया तो यह साफ नज़र आया कि इसके पीछे बहुत ही ठोस बातें हैं, जिनके कारण से औरतों को अपने पति के मरने पर, जबरन उनकी चिता पर जलाया जाता है और इसे पारंपरिक प्रथा (रूप) का नाम दे दिया जाता है, क्योंकि परंपरा को चुनौती देना और भी मुश्किल होता है। समाज को लगता है कि हमारे ऊपर वार हो रहा है। रूपकँवर का जिंदा सती होना असल में एक विधवा हत्या के अतिरिक्त और कुछ भी नहीं है। एक आंदोलन फिर शुरू हुआ। केवल रूपकँवर के मुद्दे को लेकर ही नहीं, बल्कि और भी सती मंदिर खड़े किए जाते हैं। जिनको इससे लाभ मिलता है। जहाँ पर स्त्री सती होती है वहाँ पर सती मेला लगता है, मंदिर बनते हैं, वहाँ मुनाफा होता है? किस तरह एक औरत की हत्या मुनाफा लेने का तरीका बन जाती है? कितना व्यापार वहाँ बढ़ने (विकसित होने) लगता है? औरत को कोई अधिकार नहीं देने पड़ते बल्कि जो परिवार में उसके हक हैं उन्हें भी, उसे छोड़ना पड़ता है। जब आप उसका इस प्रकार बहिष्कार कर देते हैं, तब ये मुद्दे केंद्र में रहते हैं और धार्मिक मान्यताओं से जोड़ दिये जाते हैं। जबकि प्रत्येक महिला को इसके खिलाफ आवाज़ उठाने के लिए प्रेरित किया जाना चाहिए। उसके साथ ही उसका एक नया कानून भी बनाया जाता है। अफसोस कि बहुत से ऐसे कानून, जिनका हम यहाँ जिक्र भी कर रहे हैं, जिनमें उन लोगों का हाथ था, जिन लोगों ने पूरी साजिश रचकर उस औरत की हत्या की वे आज भी कोर्ट में फँसे हुए हैं।

एक और परिस्थिति जो उठी, जिसका राजस्थान से भी और बाकी देश से भी जोड़ है वह है – कन्या भ्रूण हत्या का। लड़कियों को पैदा ही न होने दिया जाए। मैं इतिहास से परिचित हूँ कि जिसमें लड़कियों को पैदा होने के बाद कई तरीकों से मार दिया जाता था। कन्या भ्रूण हत्या पर जब शोध करके देखा गया तो सबसे ज्यादा हरियाणा, पंजाब, दिल्ली, चंडीगढ़, जो इस देश के सम्पन्न राज्य हैं, जहाँ पर अमीर लोग रहते हैं, वे लोग अपनी बच्चियों की हत्या करते हैं। यह नहीं कि आप बच्ची के पैदा होने से उसकी परवरिश नहीं कर सकते। आप सम्पन्न नहीं हैं। पर यह एक अलग प्रकार का पक्षपात है जिसे समझना पड़ेगा, जो उसके पैदा होने से पहले ही हटा दिया जाता, उसे समाप्त कर दिया जाता है। विज्ञान और तकनीक जिसमें हमेशा यह दिखाया गया कि मानवजाति की मदद के लिए है, उसी विज्ञान और तकनीक को लड़कियों के पैदा होने से रोकने के लिए काम में लिया गया। उस पर भी कानून बनाया गया। शुरू में जब वह कानून बनाया गया तो उस औरत को ही जिसकी बच्ची को मारा जा रहा था, उसे ही अपराधी घोषित करने की कोशिश की गई। महिला आंदोलन में बहुत बहस होकर उसे हटाया गया और आज वो कानून प्री-कन्सेप्शन एण्ड

प्री-नेटल डायग्नोस्टिक टेक्नीक्स एक्ट [PCPNDT Act.] के नाम से जाना जाता है। एक ऐसा कानून, जो किताबों में पढ़ा जाता है, उसका बहुत ही कम उपयोग होता है। 2011 की जनगणना होने वाली है। उसकी शुरुआत हो चुकी है। पिछले साल के आंकड़ों में जनगणना ने बहुत ही खौफनाक आँकड़े देश के सामने रखे थे। हरियाणा, जहाँ मैं और मेरी संस्था दो गाँवों में काम करते हैं, वहाँ आज की तारीख में शादी के लिए लड़कियाँ हरियाणा के बाहर से लाई जा रही हैं। भ्रूण हत्या का प्रभाव पूरे समाज पर होगा और उसके बहुत ही घातक सामाजिक, आर्थिक परिणाम होंगे। उसकी जड़ हमारी लड़कियों के प्रति हमारी सोच में है।

एक और कानून जिसकी शुरुआत फिर से राजस्थान से हुई। आप में से कई बच्चे भी भँवरी देवी काण्ड से परिचित होंगे। भँवरी देवी एक कार्यक्रम की सहयोगी थीं, एक ऐसा कार्यक्रम जो राजस्थान के लिए मील का पत्थर था, वह था—महिला विकास कार्यक्रम। उस पूरे कार्यक्रम का उद्देश्य था, गाँव की महिलाओं का सशक्तिकरण। भँवरी देवी ने गाँवों में होने वाले बालविवाह पर रोक लगाने का प्रयास किया, लेकिन हमें मालूम है कि उस पर रोक नहीं लगी है। उसे रोकने के लिए घर-घर जाना, लोगों को समझाना, उन सहयोगियों का काम था। भँवरी, अपना काम भली प्रकार कर रही थी, और वह समाज में इसके खिलाफ एक राय बनवा रही थी, अपना काम करने के लिए, वह काम जो सरकार ने उन्हें सौंपा था— गाँव के सवर्ण लोगों ने उसके साथ बलात्कार किया, क्योंकि उसने आवाज़ उठाई, और एक ऐसी परम्परा पर रोक लगाने की कोशिश की जो गलत थी। जिसे कानून भी गलत मानता है। भँवरी देवी, एक बहुत ही बहादुर महिला हैं। कई महिला आंदोलन कर्मी आज भी उन्हें न्याय दिलाने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं, मगर इससे एक नई सोच समझ में आई कि जब एक महिला काम करने के लिए जाती है तो उसके लिए वहाँ अलग प्रकार की परिस्थितियाँ होती हैं, जिनका उसको सामना करना पड़ता है। वह लिंग भेद के सामाजिक दबाव में कार्य करती है। क्या वहाँ पर महिलाओं को किसी और तरह के संरक्षण की आवश्यकता है, जो पुरुषों को नहीं है?

संविधान के अनुच्छेद 19 में उल्लेख है कि आप किसी भी कार्य करने के लिए स्वतंत्र हैं और जब आप उस स्वतंत्रता को व्यवहार में लाते हैं तो आपके साथ इस प्रकार की हिंसा हो सकती है, यदि आप महिला हैं। तब आप इस संवैधानिक अधिकार को किस प्रकार सिद्ध करेंगे? यह बात एक ‘पब्लिक इम्प्रेस लिटिगेशन’ के द्वारा सुप्रीम कोर्ट के सामने, एक जाने-माने केस विशाखा के केस से सामने आया। उस केस में कोर्ट ने यह समझा कि चाहे आप पुरुष हो, महिला हो, बच्चे हो, आप सभी के पास समान संवैधानिक अधिकार हैं, लेकिन जब आप उन्हें व्यवहार में लाने का प्रयास करते हैं तो समाज की आपके प्रति अलग प्रतिक्रिया होती है। वह संवैधानिक अधिकार चाहे वह जीने का अधिकार अनुच्छेद 21 हो, अनुच्छेद 14 हो या अनुच्छेद 19 हो जिसमें कार्य करने की स्वतंत्रता है। उनका

आप सही अर्थों में उपयोग नहीं कर पाते। कार्यस्थल पर यौन-उत्पीड़न से बचाव के लिए दिशा-निर्देश बनाए गए जिससे उसकी क्षतिपूर्ति की जाए। यह दिशा-निर्देश सिर्फ कार्यस्थल पर ही नहीं बल्कि प्रत्येक शिक्षण संस्था में अनिवार्य रूप से लागू हो चुके हैं। यह दिशा-निर्देश शायद इस साल कानून का रूप लेगा, क्योंकि कई वर्षों से सरकार इस पर विचार कर रही है। इस तरह से कई कानूनों को बनाया गया व बदला गया।

हर बार, जब एक मुद्दा उठा तो उस मुद्दे पर शोध किया गया। जिन महिलाओं का अनुभव था, उनके साथ एक रिश्ता बनाकर उस मुद्दे को समझा गया फिर समाज के बीच जाकर उस मुद्दे को उठाया गया और कहीं पर महिला आंदोलन ने एक साथ कानून में बदलाव लाने के लिए जोर दिया। अनुभव में यों दिखाया गया कि कानून किताबों में बहुत हद तक बदल चुका है। मगर आज भी चाहे वह रूपकेंवर का केस हो या भैंवरी देवी का केस हो, हम न्याय से बहुत दूर हैं और कानून में बदलाव न्याय के लिए किया जा रहा है। केवल कानून के अक्षरों में बदलाव लाना, महिला आंदोलन का उद्देश्य नहीं था।

उसके बहुत से कारण हैं। आज भी बहुत पक्षपात और भेदभाव हमें न्यायाधीशों में नजर आता है। वास्तव में वे जज न्याय से कोसों दूर रहते हैं। आज भी यह सोच है कि जो घर की बात है उसे घर में ही समाप्त कर दिया जाए। हम यहाँ हिंसा की बात कर रहे हैं न कि मतभेद की। हम यहाँ महिला अत्याचार, महिला उत्पीड़न की बात कर रहे हैं जो कि एक सभ्य समाज में सहन करने योग्य नहीं है तो इसलिए उसमें हस्तक्षेप करना, चाहे वो घर की चारदीवारी में हो या किसी थाने में हुआ हो तो वह कानून व समाज की जिम्मेदारी बन जाती है। बहुत से लिंग-संवेदनशीलता के कार्यक्रम आज जजों के साथ भी चल रहे हैं। एक और कारण है कि हम क्या सोचते हैं कि कानून में इस प्रकार के परिवर्तन को हम देखने में सक्षम क्यों नहीं हैं। वास्तव में न्याय के ऐसे बिंदु पर हम क्यों नहीं पहुँच रहे हैं जहाँ दोनों विधिकारी निकाय जिसमें संसद व कानून बनाने वाले सम्मिलित हों। जिसमें महिलाओं की संख्या बेहद कम है। आज भी जब महिला आरक्षण बिल की बात होती है तो हमें मालूम है कि उसमें कितने मतभेद हैं व कितनी अड़चनें डाली जा रही हैं। महिलाओं का अनुभव विधान मण्डल व निर्णय मण्डल में आना जरूरी है। आज तक सुप्रीम कोर्ट में केवल तीन महिला जज हुई हैं व पिछले तीन वर्षों से कोई महिला जज सुप्रीम कोर्ट ऑफ इण्डिया में नहीं है। महिला उत्थान आंदोलन की सोच केवल महिलाओं तक ही सीमित नहीं है बल्कि बहुत से पुरुष भी हैं जिन्होंने एक जुट होकर इस कार्य को आगे बढ़ाने में अपनी अहम भूमिका निभाई है।

यह केवल महिलाओं की समस्या नहीं है, बल्कि एक सामाजिक मुद्दा है, जिसमें सभी को सक्रिय भागीदारी निभाने की आवश्यकता है। इस पूरे आंदोलन में महिलाओं का ही नहीं, बहुत से पुरुषों का भी योगदान रहा है जो कि इस कानून

को सफल करने में सहायक है। हमारे सामने यह चुनौती है कि आज कानून में इतने बदलाव आने के बाद भी स्थिति दयनीय है। जैसे-जैसे हम आगे की ओर बढ़े हैं यह स्थिति और भी दयनीय होती जा रही है। हमने गुजरात में 2002 में और कंधमल में 2008 में कई भयानक यौन-उत्पीड़न के मामले देखे। महिला आंदोलन के सामने बहुत सी चुनौतियाँ आई हैं। जो महिला अल्पसंख्यक समुदाय की हैं, चाहे वो मुस्लिम समुदाय की हों या ईसाई समुदाय की हों, उनके साथ जिस तरह की हिंसा होती है उस चुनौती का जवाब हम कैसे देंगे? विशेषकर आदिवासी महिलाएँ यौन-उत्पीड़न की शिकार हो रही हैं।

आज बहुत से आदिवासी इलाकों में आंदोलन सामने हैं, जो अपनी जमीन, जल, जंगल छोड़ने के खिलाफ हैं। एक बार फिर महिलाओं व आदिवासी पुरुषों पर एक गंभीर हमला है। पिछले साल दिल्ली हाईकोर्ट का एक अहम निर्णय आया। उसमें साफ कहा गया कि अगर इस देश का संविधान समानता पर आधारित है तो वह समानता का अधिकार लिंग-भेद के आधार पर आप किसी से नहीं छीन सकते। जो बातें हमारे भीतर हलचल पैदा करती हैं, वे बहुत अच्छी होती हैं। वे मजबूर करती हैं, सोचने के लिए। या तो उनको सोचना बंद कर दीजिए या उनका विरोध कीजिए। देश, धर्म और समाज के नाम पर प्रत्येक वाद-विवाद को बंद कीजिए या जो बातें हमें परेशान करती हैं, चाहे घर पर हमारी बहिन के साथ छोटे-छोटे भेदभाव हों या हमारे माता-पिता के बीच मतभेद हों, या तो हम उन बातों को सोचना ही बंद कर दें या फिर उनके खिलाफ आवाज़ उठाएँ।

But I think an institution like St. Stephen's wants to provoke its students; your teachers, your Principal want you to think about the things that affect your life and the life of others too. I was told that in your school 1/3 of the students are girls and 2/3 are boys and yet I deliberately picked this topic because I think it is important for us to understand these histories, which collectively form the history of our society. You will never be put to a test or examination for knowing or not knowing the stories of these brave women who paid a very heavy price to raise these issues. But these stories can shape your future in ways that textbooks may not be able to do. The stories can inspire you, they can inspire all of us.

The issue of violence against women continues to be a very urgent issue before us and it comes in numerous forms. It comes even in simple forms inside a classroom or in a home. It may be directly physical or it may be discriminatory, depriving a girl or a woman of opportunities. Law plays a very small but very important and crucial role in that. A landmark legislation was passed in 2005 and finally became operational in 2006: the protection of women from domestic violence law, which actually applies not only to women but also to

children under 18 years of age, that gives a comprehensive definition of domestic violence in that economic abuse, physical abuse, mental abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse and emotional abuse have all been included. The idea of that law is not simply that people should be rushing to courts. It gives a message to the society that any kind of domestic violence is now not acceptable in this society. That is the signal the law sends to us that what do we regard as correct and what do we think is unacceptable conduct. Any form of domestic violence, even an emotional or verbal abuse which hurts a woman's dignity, is today regarded as wrong in society. The law provides equal protection to young boys within the house. The fight for stopping violence against women is a fight for dignity.

This is not just a story of physical violence. When the law of domestic violence was in the process of being formulated, then the Private Member Bill was moved in Parliament. This Bill mentioned that if any woman was physically assaulted many times, then it would be termed as physical violence. This led to a discussion on what was meant by 'being physically assaulted many times'.

ये कुछ चोटों की शारीरिक तकलीफ की कहानी नहीं है। जब यह घरेलू हिंसा कानून बन रहा था तब 'प्राइवेट मेम्बर बिल' मूव किया गया, जिसमें लिखा था कि यदि एक औरत को कई बार पीटा जाएगा तो हम उसको घरेलू हिंसा मानेंगे। इस पर काफी बहस हुई कि 'कई बार पीटे जाने का क्या मतलब है।'

This is a fight for equality and dignity and therefore this fight must take into account the challenge that all women, men and children have equal rights to live, and to live as equal citizens in this country — which the constitution promises but does not deliver. But it is the principle that we have to live by in this country.

You may ask: what is the sense in my knowing all of this. You may say, I am not going to become a lawyer — this does not affect my life, so why are we discussing this. My answer to you is a question that if we live in a democracy, and we always proudly say that we live in the largest democracy in the world, then what is our role as a citizen? Is it to cast a vote every five years or vote at a State Assembly election? That is a very small part of what democracy offers us. What a democracy offers its children and its citizens is the right to question. You can raise your voice against an issue, you can question, and you can challenge anything you feel is not right. You can start a campaign against that.

Dr. Deepa Martins, in whose memory we are standing here today, lived her life that way, as an ideal citizen. What is just and what is unjust in the world is what democratic space offers us to challenge and to question. It is not simply to vote in a government of one kind or the other — it is the constant engagement with issues of justice at all levels. Whether it is justice for women, justice for children, justice for the adivasis who are struggling or for the minorities who are today being forced to live as second-class citizens in our country and on whom violence is unleashed periodically. It is these issues of justice that we have to engage with and that responsibility does not start when we turn eighteen — only the duty to cast a vote begins when we turn 18 — but the responsibility to question what is just and what is unjust is given to us when we start thinking.

I bring this address to a close by urging all my young friends here to take back from these brave stories and the experiences of brave women and be inspired to question, to challenge what is wrong and what is unjust, and to take public action for it, to standup in solidarity and support. You have the power to change. These changes were brought about by very ordinary women like us — and you have the power to change this society, to change our country into a more just country.

Vrinda Grover

April 5, 2010

नारी-जीवन

जननी वह पुरुष की फिर भी सहे इतनी यातना
घेर दिया गया है उसे प्रश्नचिन्हों की कंटीली बाढ़ से
और समाधान गढ़े ही नहीं जाते उसके लिए
बिंधकर, लहुलुहान होकर, आहत होकर भी।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स



A social scientist by training, Ms. Kamla Bhasin has been actively engaged with issues related to development, education, gender, media and several others for over 35 years. She began her work for the empowerment of the rural and urban poor in 1972, with a voluntary organization in Rajasthan, India. From 1976 to 2001, she worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN. Her work with FAO's Freedom from

Hunger Campaign/Action for Development was focused on supporting innovative NGO initiatives for development and empowerment of marginalized people, especially women, in South East Asia and South Asia. This entailed organizing trainings and workshops and facilitating networking between NGOs, women's organizations and people's organizations.

Currently, she works with Sangat — a South Asian feminist network, as an Advisor; with Jagori, Women's Resource and Training Centre, New Delhi and Jagori Grameen in Himachal Pradesh as an active member. She is co-chair of the worldwide network, Peace Women across the Globe and South Asia Coordinator of One Billion Rising.

Being deeply engaged with issues related to gender, development, peace, identity politics, militarization, human rights and democracy, Ms. Bhasin has explored, and continues to articulate, connections between different issues, and promotes synergies between different movements.

Over the years, Ms. Bhasin has been conducting participatory, experiential, capacity-building workshops for women and men, focused on gender, sustainable development and human rights. These workshops have been held at the local, national, and South Asian levels, for activists, senior policy makers, bureaucrats, Parliamentarians, police officers, U. N. staff etc. She has also documented her training experiences in comprehensive reports, and shared them widely.

Having written extensively on gender, women's empowerment, participatory and sustainable development, participatory training, media and communication, Ms. Bhasin has also written a large number of songs and slogans for the women's movement, books for children, and has created many posters and banners for various social movements.



Mr. Anupam Martins, Honorary Mentor, felicitating Ms. Kamla Bhasin



Ms. Kamla Bhasin delivering the keynote address



Ms. Kamla Bhasin, Ms. Aruna Roy and Mr. C. R. Chaudhary releasing 'Numerous Strings', the Silver Jubilee Souvenir

WHY BOYS MUST CRY AND GIRLS MUST CLIMB TREES

सेंट स्टीवन्ज़ स्कूल के स्टूडेंट, स्टाफ और मेहमानों को मेरा सलाम, नमस्ते!

मुझे बहुत खुशी है कि अनुपम मार्टिन्स, अरुणा रॉय और आप सब ने मुझे इस प्रतिष्ठित व्याख्यान के काबिल समझा और मुझे मौका दिया दो अच्छे इन्सानों को नजदीक से जानने और समझने का और सेंट स्टीवन्ज़ स्कूल को जानने का।

मैं दीपा मार्टिन्स और श्री गिलरॉय मार्टिन्स को अपनी श्रद्धाजंलि अर्पित करती हूँ। मेरी छोटी बहन बीना काक ने भी आप सब को सलाम भेजा है। एक बार फिर दीपा और गिलरॉय मार्टिन्स की शख्सियतों ने यह साबित कर दिया कि नेक और अच्छे लोग औरों के लिए जीने वाले लोग कभी मरते नहीं। वे अमर्त्य होते हैं। वे मौत को भी मात देते हैं क्योंकि वो हमारे दिलों में रहते हैं। जरूरी यह है कि हम केवल दीपा और गिलरॉय जी को याद न करें। हम उनके सिद्धांतों और मूल्यों को भी याद करें। दीपा बहुआयामी व्यक्तित्व की धनी थी, एक शिक्षाविद्, स्त्री अधिकारवादी कार्यकर्ता, मानवाधिकारवादी कार्यकर्ता और सामाजिक सामंजस्य की पक्षधर थी।

दीपा मुझ से पाँच साल छोटी थी और हम दोनों राजस्थान से जुड़े हुए थे और दोनों एक ही जैसे काम कर रहे थे। मुझे लगता है दीपा और मैं जरूर कहीं मिले होंगे पर अगर न भी मिले हों तो भी हम हमसफर हैं।

कल रात जब मैं दीपा की किताब 'कुरजा की टेर' पढ़ रही थी तो मैंने देखा कि उसमें एक जगह मेरे गीत की दो लाइनें इस्तेमाल की हैं। 'देश में बेटी अगर बेआबरू नाशाद है, दिल पे रख कर हाथ कहिए देश क्या आजाद है'।

मैं अनुपम और शेफाली को मुबारकबाद देती हूँ कि उन्हें इतने अच्छे वालदैन यानि माँ-बाप मिले। मैं सेंट स्टीवन्ज़ स्कूल के विद्यार्थियों और कर्मचारी वर्ग को भी मुबारकबाद देती हूँ कि आप सब दीपा और गिलरॉय जी के बनाये रास्तों पर चल रहे हैं। उनके बताए मूल्यों को अपनाने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं, उनके देखे सपनों को साकार करने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं।

मैं दीपा की दो पंक्तियाँ अपनी जुबान में दोहराती हूँ – 'मुश्किल तो कुछ भी नहीं है गर ठान लें हम, हम हीं रचेंगे नई दुनिया, बस जान लें हम'। मेरी प्रार्थना है, दुआएँ हैं कि इस स्कूल का हर एक बालक अच्छा नागरिक बने, एक ईमानदार और नेक इन्सान बने।

जब भी मैं शिक्षा के बारे में सोचती हूँ तो मुझे एक कहानी याद आती है। एक आश्रम के तीन लड़कों ने अपनी शिक्षा खत्म की। लड़कियों को आश्रमों में पढ़ने की इजाजत नहीं थी। समाज को हमेशा डर लगता है कि अगर लड़कियाँ पढ़ लिख गईं तो समाज उन पर राज कैसे करेगा। उन पर धौंस कैसे जमायेगा। सशक्त औरतों से बहुत डरता है यह समाज।

हाँ, तो उन तीनों छात्रों ने पढ़ाई खत्म कर ली। उन्हें सर्टिफिकेट देने से पहले उनके गुरु ने कहा कि तुम्हें दीक्षा मैं कल दूँगा। और यहाँ नहीं पास वाले गाँव में दूँगा। तुम तीनों को अलग-अलग उस गाँव में जाना है। एक दोपहर चार बजे जायेगा, दूसरा पाँच बजे और तीसरा छः बजे। तो श्रीमान 4 बजे निकले। कुछ मील जाने के बाद देखा सड़क बन्द है। सड़क पर काँटेदार झाड़ियाँ पड़ी हैं और सड़क पार करना नामुमकिन है। ये वाला छात्र धावक था। उसने सब कुछ ध्यान से देखा थोड़ा पीछे गया और ऊँची कूद लगाई और पार। खुशी-खुशी आगे बढ़ गया।

अब श्रीमान 5 बजे चला वो भी फँसा वहीं जा कर। वो धावक नहीं था। उसने सड़क के साइड से नीचे-ऊपर चढ़ चढ़ा कर सड़क पार की, और चला आगे।

श्रीमान 6 बजे भी पहुँचे उसी रूकावट पर। उन्होंने सड़क पर झाड़ियाँ देखी तो सोचा कि—यह तो बड़ी गड़बड़ है। आने जाने वालों को कितनी तकलीफ होगी और अब तो रात भी होने वाली है। अगर कोई बुजुर्ग यात्री आ गया, बच्चे आ गए और बच्चों वाली महिलाएँ आ गईं तो उन्हें मुश्किल होगी।

तो श्रीमान 6 ने अपना थैला एक तरफ रखा और रास्ता साफ करने में लग गये। काम कोई मुश्किल नहीं था। 10—15 मिनट में कर करा के उस साफ रास्ते से चल कर बढ़ गये आगे।

अगले दिन सुबह उनके गुरु जी भी वहाँ पहुँच गये थे। तीनों छात्र बेताबी से इन्तजार कर रहे थे अपनी दीक्षा का। गुरुजी ने पहले दो छात्रों से कहा — तुम दोनों ने किताबी ज्ञान तो लिया मगर तुम अच्छे इन्सान नहीं बन पाये। तुम्हें सिर्फ अपनी फिर्क है। जब तुम रास्ते की झाड़ियों को पार कर रहे थे तो मैं पेड़ के पीछे से तुम्हें देख रहा था। तुम दोनों अभी समाज में रहने लायक नहीं हो। तुम अभी सही मायने में शिक्षित नहीं हो। तुम्हें वापिस आश्रम चलना होगा।

तीसरे छात्र को गुरु जी ने छाती से लगाया और कहा, “तुम उत्तीर्ण हुए, पास हुए, तुम से समाज को कोई खतरा नहीं है।”

तो बोलो — सच्ची शिक्षा की जय

तो बोलो — अच्छी शिक्षा की जय।

मेरे भाषण का विषय है 'Why Boys Must Cry And Girls Must Climb Trees.'

दोस्तों! प्रकृति या कुदरत हमें इन्सान बनाती है। प्रकृति हमें ब्राह्मण, शूद्र, हिन्दू, मुसलमान सिक्ख ईसाई नहीं बनाती। प्रकृति नहीं कहती—लड़के रो नहीं सकते, औरों की सेवा नहीं कर सकते, ममतामयी नहीं हो सकते, बच्चे नहीं पाल सकते।

प्रकृति नहीं कहती लड़कियाँ पेड़ों पर नहीं चढ़ सकतीं, मोटरसाइकिल या जहाज नहीं चला सकतीं। रात को बाहर नहीं जा सकतीं, या सेंट स्टीवन्ज़ स्कूल में क्रिकेट, फुटबाल नहीं खेल सकतीं या सीटी नहीं बजा सकतीं। ये सारे भेद-भाव हमारे परिवार, समाज और कभी-कभी हमारे स्कूल बनाते हैं।

प्रकृति भेद बनाती है, विविधता या अनेकता बनाती है। वो भेदभाव नहीं बनाती। कोई पतला, कोई मोटा, कोई लम्बा, कोई छोटा, कोई गोरा, कोई काला, मगर प्रकृति यह नहीं कहती कि गोरे बेहतर हैं या कालों को फेयर एण्ड लवली रगड़-रगड़ कर गोरा बनना होगा।

प्रकृति नहीं कहती कि गुलाब, गेंदे से बेहतर है। हाथी, चींटी से बेहतर है।

ऊँच-नीच, असमानता ये सब हमारे बनाये हैं। इसी भेदभाव ने समाज में संघर्ष, हिंसा, दुख-दर्द फैलाये हैं। प्रकृति हमें विशाल बनाती है, एक इंसान, एक वैश्विक निवासी और हम बन जाते हैं हिंदू, मुस्लिम, क्रिश्चियन, पंजाबी, राजस्थानी, मराठी, जाट, गुर्जर।

समन्दर बनने की जगह हम एक कतरा बन जाते हैं।

समावेशी बनने की जगह हम विशिष्ट हो जाते हैं। अच्छा बताओ—पहले लड़के बताएँ क्या तुम्हें कभी कहा गया है—लड़के नहीं रोते लड़के बलवान हैं।

अब लड़कियाँ बतायें, — क्या तुम्हें कहा गया है कि लड़कियाँ पेड़ पर नहीं चढ़ती, लड़कियाँ रात को बाहर नहीं जातीं ?

अगर नहीं कहा गया तो किस्मत वाले हो। अगर कहा गया तो मेरी सलाह है इस तरह की बातों को तुम न मानो। सामाजिक लिंग पता है सामाजिक लिंग क्या है? सामाजिक लिंग समाज द्वारा दी गई लड़के लड़की औरत मर्द की परिभाषा। समाज कहता है — लड़का बेहतर है। बेहतर है। वह कुल का दीपक है।

लड़की, तो पराया धन है, भार है। प्रकृति ने एक सूक्ष्म भिन्नता बनाई है। इस तरह की सोच का असर पता है, क्या है? इसका असर वो है जो कल सब अखबारों में था। 2011 की जनगणना हमें बता रही है कि राजस्थान राज्य में लड़कियों की संख्या और गिर गई है। स्त्री-पुरुष अनुपात और भी कम हो गया है।

2010 में 909 लड़कियाँ थीं — 1000 लड़कों पर। 2011 में सिर्फ 883 लड़कियाँ हैं 1000 लड़कों पर। पंजाब में सिर्फ 830 है। कहाँ गई ये बच्चियाँ? उन्हें या तो पैदा ही नहीं होने दिया या पैदा होने के बाद उन्हें मार डाला।

More than 10% of the girls are missing. In economically advanced Punjab, close to 18% of the girls are missing. In some parts of Delhi there are 811 girls per 1000 boys. Almost 20% of the girls are missing. Dead and gone! Who kills them? Terrorists? Enemies? No — their own families kill them! Bright, young medical doctors kill them! Scientific clinics kill them! In India, over 35 million girls and women are missing.

इस विषय पर संसद में कभी हंगामा नहीं होता। 'यत्र नार्यस्तु पूजयन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवता।' हमारे देश में कहा गया है जहाँ नारियों की पूजा होती है वहाँ देवता बसते हैं। अब यहाँ नारियों का कत्ले आम होता है, यहाँ कौन बसता है? हैवान? दैत्य?

पता है, ये नरसंहार कौन कर रहे हैं? पढ़े लिखे और खाते-पीते, अमीर परिवार। पता है कहाँ पर लिंगानुपात बेहतर है? जहाँ आदिवासी रहते हैं। आदिवासी अपनी बेटियों को बोझ नहीं मानते। वो अपनी बेटियों की हत्या नहीं करते।

तो बताओ कौन है सच में शिक्षित, आदिवासी या अमीर, दिल्ली, जयपुर एवं अजमेर वासी?

“हिन्दुस्तानी बेटियों की खतरे में गर जान है

तो दिल पे रखकर हाथ कहिए — क्या हम इन्सान हैं ?

जो नहीं ललकारते शोषण को, अत्याचार को

लानत है उस देश को, उस देश की सरकार को।”

Friends, patriarchy or male domination is a horrible and destructive social system. Patriarchy considers men and boys to be superior and under patriarchy, men have more control over resources, decisions and ideology. It is because of patriarchy that men are considered to be heads of families. After marriage, girls change their homes, their names, and their ways of living. It is because of patriarchy that 40% of women face violence at home. It is because of patriarchy that we hear of rape every day; we see sexual harassment on roads, in buses, in offices and in homes. Usually, we speak of the way girls and women suffer due to patriarchy. But let us see what patriarchy does to boys and men.

पुरुष के आधिपत्य वाली सोच, लड़कों को कठोर और हिंसक बनाती है। उनकी संवेदनशीलता खत्म कर देती है। लड़कों को कहते हैं— ‘रोओ मत। कमजोरी मत दिखाओ, तुम मर्द हो।’ मर्दों की माँ भी मर जाती है तो रोते नहीं आत्महत्या कर लेते हैं, पर अपनी कमजोरी जाहिर नहीं करते।

छोटे-छोटे लड़कों को हम बन्दूकें देते हैं खेलने को। उन्हें अभ्यास कराते हैं हिंसा का। खिलौने वाली बंदूक से खेलते — खेलते वे असली बन्दूक उठाने से नहीं झिझकते। इसलिए हम देखते हैं 14-15 साल के लड़के हत्याएँ करते हैं। बलात्कार करते हैं। चोरी करते हैं। डाके डालते हैं।

‘वर्ल्ड रेसलिंग फ़ैडरेशन’ के दंगल देखें हैं टीवी पर ? किस बेरहमी से वे एक दूसरे को मारते हैं। वे हिंसा की विभिन्न प्रकार की भाषा को उपयोग में लाते हैं। हमारे छोटे मासूम लड़के उस कार्यक्रम को देखते हैं और फिर अपने से कमजोर पर इस हिंसा को आजमाते हैं। अभिभावक यह देखकर बहुत खुश होते हैं कि उनका लड़का हिंसा कर रहा है। क्यों? क्योंकि वो मर्द बन रहे हैं। बेटों को बिगाड़ा जाता है हमारे घरों में। उन्हें स्वार्थी बनाया जाता है। उनकी हर ख्वाहिश पूरी की जाती है। उनकी सेवा की जाती है। उन्हें औरों की सेवा करना नहीं सिखाया जाता। यही ‘बिगड़े नवाब’ समाज में हिंसा फैलाते हैं। 13-14

साल के लड़कों को मर्द बनने के लिए बीड़ी-सिगरेट पीना होता है। ड्रग्स और शराब आजमाते हैं। उनकी आजमाने-आजमाने के चक्कर में आदत पड़ जाती है।

मर्दानगी के नाम पर जोखिम उठाने के व्यवहार सिखाये जाते हैं। बिना लाइसेंस के 18 साल से पहले साहबजादे मोटरसाइकिल और कार चलाएंगे और लोगों को मार डालेंगे। यौन कार्यकर्त्ता के पास जाएंगे असुरक्षित यौन संबंध करेंगे और एस. आई. डी. एस. — एच. आई. वी. पाएंगे। जितने गुनाह होते हैं वो ज्यादातर लड़के और पुरुष करते हैं। क्यों? क्या वे हिंसक पैदा होते हैं? क्या प्रकृति उन्हें हिंसक बनाती है? नहीं।

A patriarchal society makes men and boys aggressive and violent. I believe this kind of violent mentality is responsible for most of the ills in society. Violence, terrorism, rape, domestic violence and unhealthy competition, all stem from this notion of patriarchy. What is unfortunate, is that to succeed in the present competitive world, some women are also becoming aggressive and masculine.

यही मर्दानगी ‘गलाकाट प्रतियोगिता’ को बढ़ावा दे रही है। लालच पैदा कर रही है। आज का मुनाफा लालच का ही नाम है। मुनाफे के लिए आदिवासियों की जमीनें बड़े बहुराष्ट्रों को दे दी जाती हैं।

मुनाफे के लिए कोकोकोला और जंकफूड बेचे जाते हैं जिसके कारण करोड़ों अमीर बच्चे मोटापे से पीड़ित हैं। गरीब बच्चे कमजोरी से पीड़ित हैं। बोलो है न विडम्बना?

मुनाफे के लिए अरबों डॉलर के हथियार बेचे जाते हैं। अश्लील साहित्य बनाए, बेचे जाते हैं दोस्तों, हिंसात्मक मर्दानगी पर काम करना जरूरी है। पिछले 15 साल से मेरा ज्यादा काम इसी पर है Exploring Masculinity —

एक कहानी सुनाती हूँ।

While the cousin represents masculinity, Gautam represents femininity. The MNCs and corporations are like the cousin. They only see dollars in forests, in mines, in agricultural fields. Gautam is like the adivasis, the farmers and fishermen who live in harmony with nature, who nurture nature. We need to think and decide on which side we are. Are we with Gautam or with his cousin? My young friends, you have many challenges. Your elders are not leaving a healthy world for you. You have to save Mother Earth to save yourselves. You have to protect human values to protect yourself.

I conclude with a poem in which a girl is speaking about her education.

क्योंकि मैं लड़की हूँ मुझे पढ़ना है।

तुम लड़की हो तुम्हें क्यों पढ़ना है?

बाप बेटी से –
पढ़ना है! पढ़ना है! क्यों पढ़ना है?
पढ़ने को बेटे काफी हैं, तुम्हें क्यों पढ़ना है?

बेटी बाप से –
जब पूछा ही है तो सुनो
मुझे क्यों पढ़ना है
क्योंकि मैं लड़की हूँ मुझे पढ़ना है।
पढ़ने की मुझे मनाही है तो पढ़ना है
मुझ में भी तरुणाई है तो पढ़ना है
सपनों ने ली अंगड़ाई है सो पढ़ना है
कुछ करने की मन में आई है तो पढ़ना है
क्योंकि मैं लड़की हूँ मुझे पढ़ना है

मुझे दर-दर नहीं भटकना है सो पढ़ना है
मुझे अपने पाँवों चलना है सो पढ़ना है
मुझे अपने डर से लड़ना है सो पढ़ना है
मुझे अपना आप ही गढ़ना है सो पढ़ना है
क्योंकि मैं लड़की हूँ मुझे पढ़ना है

कई ज़ोर जुल्म से बचना है सो पढ़ना है
कई कानूनों को परखना है सो पढ़ना है
मुझे नए धर्मों को रचना है सो पढ़ना है
मुझे सब कुछ ही तो बदलना है सो पढ़ना है
क्योंकि मैं लड़की हूँ मुझे पढ़ना है

हर ज्ञानी से बतियाना है सो पढ़ना है
मीरा का गाना गाना है सो पढ़ना है
मुझे अपना राग बनाना है सो पढ़ना है
अनपढ़ का नहीं ज़माना है सो पढ़ना है
क्योंकि मैं लड़की हूँ मुझे पढ़ना है

Kamla Bhasin
April 6, 2011

मित्रता – जीवन की मुस्कान

केवल मंहगे उपहार ही मित्रता का मापदण्ड नहीं होते।
एक प्यार भरी छोटी सी पाती, एक स्नेह भरी मुस्कान, फूल या एक फोन
भी यदि हम यदा-कदा अपने आत्मीय मित्र तक संप्रेषित कर सकें तो
आपा-धापी और स्वरति से पीड़ित इस युग में हम बहुत सी सकारात्मक
भावनाओं को तरंगित कर सकेंगे जो हमारे परिवेश को स्नेह की सुगंधि से
महका देंगी।

– डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स

एकाकी जीवन

अकेले कवि की प्रेरणा पा, पंख लगा उड़ते हैं मेघदूत
और करते हैं उसकी एकाकिनी, विरहिणी को आहूत
अकेले हो फिर भी चले चलो – है यह संदेश रवीन्द्र का
क्यों एकाकीपन से व्यथित हो हम करें निरादर कवीन्द्र का
आओ अपने एकाकी जीवन को दें आज नये आयाम
संचित कर अपनी एकान्वित शक्ति छू लें कल आसमान ।।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स



A tireless campaigner for India's millions of villagers, Ms. Aruna Roy, has been fighting for over a quarter-century to improve living standards. Ms. Roy majored in English Literature from Indraprastha College in New Delhi and then took the Indian Administrative Services examinations in 1967. Of the one hundred people from all over India who qualified for the IAS that year, Ms. Roy was one of only 10 women.

She served as a civil servant in the Indian Administrative Services from 1968-1974, before resigning to become a social and political activist, working to empower villagers in Rajasthan. She joined the Social Work and Research Center in Tilonia, Rajasthan, and worked there until 1983. She then moved to Devdungri, a drought-prone, environmentally-degraded village in Rajasthan where along with Shanker Singh and Nikhil Dey, she set up the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan in 1990.

The MKSS is a grassroots movement, a working example of transparent organization, that triggered broad debate and a nationwide demand for the public's right to scrutinize official records – a crucial check against arbitrary governance. Leading the movement, Ms. Roy has worked for people's issues, looking at ways in which equality and justice can be claimed by the people as their right. The Sangathan was successful in building a broad-based demand for the Right to Information by linking it to survival and livelihood issues and defining a paradigm for transparency and openness in government functioning, specific to the Indian context. The fight for the Right to Information, which began in the early 1990s culminated with the passage of what is considered as one of the most robust transparency legislations in the world – the Right to Information Act 2005.

Prior to its enactment, in 2004, Ms. Aruna Roy was inducted into the National Advisory Committee to formulate the Act itself. Ms Roy is an active member of a number of campaigns including the National Employment Guarantee Council, the National Campaign for People's Right to Information, and NAPM, PUCL. She has authored Education of Out-of-school Children: Case Studies of Selected Non-formal Learning Programmes in South Asia.

The awards and honours received by Ms. Roy sufficiently illustrate the range of her grassroots-level developmental vision. She has received several awards for her group's commitment to social justice and rural workers' rights. Ms. Aruna Roy is a recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership and International Understanding. In 2005, she was amongst the 1000 peace-women from 150 countries, nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2009 Ms. Roy was honoured with the Nani Palkhivala Award for protection and preservation of civil liberties in India.



Ms. Aruna Roy inaugurating the Jubilee Block



Ms. Aruna Roy addressing the gathering



The gathering of students and citizens of Ajmer

सत्यमेव जयते

आज वास्तव में महिलाओं की स्थिति का जिम्मेदार समाज ही है, प्रकृति नहीं। स्वयं स्त्री द्वारा पुरुष/पति को स्वामी समझने के स्थान पर जीवन साथी समझना चाहिए तभी उनका दाम्पत्य जीवन सफल होगा।

आरम्भ से ही हमारा भारतवर्ष सत्यवादी देश माना जाता रहा है। हमारे राष्ट्रीय प्रतीक माने जाने वाले अशोक स्तम्भ में 'सत्यमेव जयते' अंकित होता है अर्थात् 'सत्य की ही विजय होती है।' प्राचीन समय तक यह सिद्धान्त सटीक था परन्तु आज इसकी परिभाषा व स्वरूप बदल गया है। आज सत्य बोलने वाले की पराजय निश्चित होती है तथा उसे बुरा व्यक्ति माना जाता है। हमें वर्तमान के इस सत्य-असत्य के सेतु को नये ढंग से परिभाषित कर उसे प्राचीन स्वरूप देना होगा। इसके लिए हम सब को मिलकर अपनी चुप्पी तोड़नी होगी व बोलना होगा कि हमें अन्याय पर आधारित सत्य नहीं चाहिए, हमें अन्याय सहन नहीं करना चाहिए। यदि हम 'सत्यमेव जयते' को पुनः जीवित करना चाहते हैं तो 'संवाद' की भूमिका को सर्वोपरि व सशक्त बनाने की प्रबल आवश्यकता है। हमें न्याय पर खरा उतरने वाला सत्य चाहिए, अन्याय पर आधारित सत्य नहीं।

उदाहरण: भारत व श्रीलंका के क्रिकेट मैच के समय मेरी स्थिति असमंजस की थी क्योंकि मेरा सम्बन्ध उत्तर भारत व दक्षिण भारत दोनों से ही है। ऐसे में मैं श्रीराम के भारत के विजय की दुआ करूँ या रावण की लंका की विजय की दुआ करूँ क्योंकि लंका में तो रावण ही हमारे भगवान हैं। मैं उस समय यह भी सोच रही थी कि हर व्यक्ति स्कोर बोर्ड पर अपने देश व खिलाड़ी के स्कोर को देख रहा है। वह यह नहीं देखना चाहता कि किस देश के खिलाड़ी ने अपना सर्वश्रेष्ठ प्रदर्शन दिया है उनके लिए तो केवल उनका देश ही सर्वश्रेष्ठ है उन्हें अन्य देश से कोई मतलब नहीं होता यह एक गलत बात है। हम अपने देश को जिताना चाहते हैं, जो उत्तम है, उसके लिए नहीं सोचते हैं।

*Aruna Roy
April 6, 2011*

लिंग आधारित हिंसा (घरेलू हिंसा)

महिला पर घरेलू हिंसा के आँकड़ों में निरन्तर वृद्धि होती जा रही है। इक्कीसवीं सदी में भी चौदहवीं शताब्दी की मानसिकता से हमारा समाज ग्रस्त है और राजनीतिक दल फिर से औरत को हाशिए पर ढकेल रहे हैं। ऐसे में जरूरत है संगठित होकर अपनी आवाज़ बुलन्द करने की।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स



Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath is currently Founder and Director of WISCOMP (Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace), an initiative that seeks to promote the leadership of South Asian women in the areas of peace, security and regional cooperation. She is also Principal Emerita of Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi. She was the first woman to serve as member of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) of India.

Dr. Gopinath is a member of multi-track peace initiatives in Kashmir and between India and Pakistan including the Neemrana Peace Initiative and the Pakistan India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy. She has authored among others Pakistan in Transition, and co-authored Conflict Resolution – Trends and Prospects, Transcending Conflict: A Resource Book on Conflict Transformation and Dialogic Engagement and has contributed to books and journals on Gandhi, the politics of Pakistan, the Arts, Conflict Resolution, Gender and Peace Building et al. In recognition of her contribution to the field of women's education and empowerment, she has received several awards including the Padma Shri Award, Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi Award, the Rajiv Gandhi Award for Excellence in Education and the Mahila Shiromani Award and the Delhi Citizen Forum Award and Qimpro Platinum Standard Award for Education and Celebrating Womanhood, South Asian Recognition Award for Social Harmony and International Lifetime Achievement Award – 2009 for outstanding work in the field of Justice, Equity, Peace and Progress, L. M. Singhvi fellowship Award at the David Davies Memorial Institute of International Studies (DDMI), University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Award of Honorary Doctorate Degree for significant contribution to the education, La Trobe University, Australia and Honorary Adjunct Professor, La Trobe Asia, La Trobe University, Australia, Distinguished Alumna Award, by Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi for meritorious contribution in the field of Education and Visiting Distinguished Scholar 2015, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

Dr. Gopinath serves on the Governing Boards of research institutes, NGOs, educational institutions and corporate bodies. She has been a Fulbright scholar and has received several fellowships including the Australian International Education Foundation Fellowship (1996-97) and the University Grants Commission Indo-Israel Exchange Fellowship (1994-1996) among others.



Lighting the lamp before the portrait of Dr. Deepa Martins



Ms. Shefali Martins giving an introduction to the life of Dr. Deepa Martins



Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath delivering the keynote address

SIMPLE ABUNDANCE: AN INTERACTIVE SESSION

Members of the Governing Council, Aruna Roy, Anupam and Shefali Martins, Principal Ms. Bharti Tolumbia, Renu Sharma, teachers, members of the community and dear young friends: the students who make this place come alive everyday with new ideas, new energy and new commitments.

I cannot even begin to share with you what a pleasure and honour it is to be here today. Dr. Deepa Martins' presence can be felt. It is palpable in this rejuvenating place, in this place of learning where she and her husband Mr. Gilroy Martins, poured their vision, their commitment, their love, aspiration, empathy, hope and indeed their dreams to build a school that strives ceaselessly to nurture the human spirit and that fosters the Five Minds of the Future: the Disciplined Mind, the Synthesizing Mind, the Creating Mind, the Respectful Mind and the Ethical Mind; a school that attempts to add its own string to the lute of cosmic harmony and paint its many canvases with a splash of a whole range of activities — academic, co-curricular, and outreach. This is indeed true leadership. My heartiest congratulations to all of you on being a part of the tapestry of this very special space. It is a delight and honour to be here.

The six core values that reflect the ethos of this school form the acronym SIMPLE: Self-discipline, Integrity, Mutual Respect, Pursuit of Excellence, Learning for Life and Environmental Management. I hope I have it right. Yes, at one level they are simple. But like everything that Dr. Deepa Martins stood for and touched, it was simplicity that was deeply profound. I personally never had the privilege of meeting Dr. Deepa Martins but I cannot but feel deeply inspired by her writing, her work, indeed her persona; a woman of substance who combined her engagement and zest for life with a rare fearlessness and a deep spiritual insight. In keeping with her vision I believe that the school seeks to do many things. Of course it seeks to build academic excellence and you are all a reflection of that, but primarily, it seeks to make despair unconvincing and hope practical. It believes in turning challenges into opportunities, to enable students to succeed without vying.

This is truly an innovative idea in today's academic environment: to succeed without vying and to overturn and to change conventional

notions of success. And more importantly I believe, to nurture a sensibility, or a philosophy or an approach to life that is as sensitive to the anguish of the world and the pain on the planet, as it is to the beauty of a bud unfolding. And it also believes that it is important to comfort the afflicted, those who are outside the pale of privilege. But it is also important, as our iconic friend and guide Aruna Roy has taught us, that it is equally important to afflict the comfortable especially when they are so comfortably wrong about many things that society should stand for.

I thought I would focus our conversation on what is very simple, nothing as profound as what previous speakers have shared with you, and I call it Simple Abundance because the true voyage of discovery is not really in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes. Simple Abundance is to be able to see the extraordinary in what seems to be the ordinary; to connect with the seemingly ordinary, to transform one's consciousness, to be rooted in today, but have a vision about tomorrow; to engage with whatever you do on a small scale but to link it with a larger canvas. And this is what many of the greats have learnt to do: to respond to the immediate but also link the particular with the universal. It is only then that our work in a sense, becomes an offering, a kind of benediction.

Many of you are profoundly knowledgeable in English Literature and so even at the cost of misquoting a famous poet, William Blake, he reminded us that it is important to develop a kind of consciousness which was able to see the whole world in a grain of sand and Heaven in a wild flower; to be able to hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour. I believe this school attempts that kind of transformation of consciousness. And when I look at Simple Abundance, I think of a phrase, 'Gosh, by Jove! Gosh, by Jove!' And what does that exemplify for me? It is a handy acronym for Gratitude, Order, Simplicity, Harmony, Beauty and Joy. And it is to be able not just to count how many seeds there might be in an apple. That is easily done, you can core the apple and you can count the seeds but what is more exciting and what is more important for education and educationists is to envisage how many apples there could be in a seed. That is always in the realm of mystery but it is also in the realm of possibility. It is also about transcending limits to engage with possibilities and I think this is what Dr. Deepa Martins empowered this wonderful community to do.

Now I just thought I might ask two basic questions before I go on and that is if any one of you young people here could tell me, who is your role model? Now whenever you ask anyone this question, you will find many young people coming up with two or three familiar names. They say President Abdul Kalam or they say Aruna Roy or Mother Teresa or they name a famous movie star. But if you really think about it, (and I would like you to ponder on this) because while your response to questions is important, it is also questioning the question that is equally important. You have always to be able to question the questions and I would like to submit to you that it is really important for us to remember who walks with us. And at any point of time it is not just one person, it is not just that one role model but it is the many people who stand for the best in the human spirit from whom you take different aspects of your personality.

The English poet Milton had said, "I am a part of all that I have seen." The Bird of Paradise is your school emblem and I would, in a sense, indigenize that a bit and talk of the Swan. What is particularly important about the metaphor of the swan is that the Cosmic Swan is endowed with the power in mythology of being able to separate milk from water, of removing the grain from the chaff. It is a bird that is at home in all realms: in water, on land, in the air. And it is also in a sense the flight of consciousness, the flight of learning. The swan is also in a way the vehicle of Saraswati, Goddess of Learning in Indian iconography.

If I were to look at all the people who have impacted my life and see who walks with me — one of the people who walks with me other than my own father is a gardener who worked in the college premises for many years before he died. His name was Seva Ram and he was truly immersed in seva or service. He would toil in the sun the whole day and would maintain a beautiful garden for the community. Year after year, the college would win the University cup for the best gardens and one day I went up to him and said, "Seva Ramji, what do you think, do you get happiness from the kind of work you do?" and he replied that there was no difference between him and his work. He never kept any distance between them and so every day he got immense happiness, and deep satisfaction in doing this work and in watching things grow. And in this sense all those who you think may be doing something extremely ordinary could, with the right attitude, do the most extraordinary things. He remains even today one of my most admired teachers.

The other question I do want to ask you is who built the Taj Mahal? Yes, Shah Jahan. Now suppose I were to ask you to look at the question differently and ask you, who were all the people who built the Taj Mahal? Did Shah Jahan actually go and stand in the sun and build it? It was the toiling masses and extraordinarily gifted and skilled artisans that created works of magnificence. Anonymous, unsung, even unheard of, they are the people who created it. So for the thousands of people who create for our contexts, so that we can be free and we can be educated and we can have access to the privilege of being in schools like St. Stephen's must make us sensitive to the fact that both the pain on the planet and the beauty of the bud unfolding very often co-exist and we have to carry that awareness as part of ourselves. These are the ideas that must walk with us all the time. Not just one human being who may have become visibly either a President or even an Aruna Roy. (She herself will always acknowledge the hundreds of people who have made her movement so rich, so vibrating, so pulsating.) So a good education is also not just having answers because none of us have answers to all the questions – but to have the questioning mind that questions the questions themselves. We very often ask the questions that exclude the real answers. We ask them in a way like a quiz as though everything is either black or white. But we know that life does not unfold in that way. So do ponder on this question of what it is that walks with you, and you will touch the core of one of the basic principles of Simple Abundance i.e. to find the extraordinary everyday unfolding in what seems to be the ordinary. Education means looking beyond what is immediately visible and also changing challenges into opportunities.

The other aspect of a good education is reconciling structure with space. Every beautiful building must reconcile structure with space. Great institutions like St. Stephen's are like that. It is also about how we harmonize what is called discipline with the freedom of the mind. How does that balance come through and how does that happen in our everyday life? How do we reconcile the so-called disciplinary protocols that our parents and our teachers hand on to us? How do we find the space to breathe, to sing, to articulate and indeed to make a difference, to be different from everybody else, if our heart and our mind so direct us to do? So, to reconcile *structure* with *space* is the greatest challenge for the educator. It is an even greater challenge for learners. Here there are three words that I would bring to you: The first is Synergy: where people come together and bring the best energies together. The next is Synchronicity: to be able to know the

correct moment and to be able to act at the particular moment. And above all Serendipity: being open to the unexpected and welcoming the unexpected.

If you expected to get 99 percent and wanted to study Physics but you got 85 percent then you could intuit that there must be a good reason why you did not receive those marks, maybe you did not answer the questions as they were meant to be answered; but maybe there is a different purpose for you. Aruna Roy joined the Indian Administrative Service but you know there was a larger, wider purpose behind it and she followed her heart. She did not stay on in the limiting environment of the Indian Administrative Services and she went on to have an impact on people who are meant to run the show and run policy in India today. So the whole idea is of being open to Serendipity. If an unexpected situation arrives in your life then try to look for the hidden meaning because there are connections everywhere. Sometimes, we just cannot see them. In retrospect, by the time you reach to my age, maybe you can make sense of some of the coincidences that happened in your life as patterns. What appears as coincidence in life is the unfolding of a larger plan. So to be able to be in tune with that larger plan you need a specific kind of education and I think St. Stephen's is providing you that.

I also wanted to share a story of a young girl waiting at the airport in Copenhagen. She was waiting to come home and meet her parents after having studied abroad. And finally at one moment she discovered that she had lost her ticket. There was an elderly couple that was sitting next to her and they tried to comfort her and said, "Don't worry dear, we will try to find a way out of this impasse for you." They went out, they fetched her water, they fetched her tea but she was absolutely inconsolable. She said, "How am I going to get home?" She kept weeping because now she could neither leave the country nor could she stay in and so she sobbed her heart out. The old couple told her, "Why don't you stand, stretch, take a break, breathe in and maybe things will happen." And they told her that when God shuts a door, somewhere He does open a window. And do you know what happened? She got up, she did her little stretching and she then discovered that she was sitting on her ticket! Now this is a very profound metaphor for many of us because most of us continue to sit on our tickets not knowing that right under our nose or right under our seat sits the opportunity for a new world to open.

I believe St. Stephen's attempts to make you redefine notions of success. Success is not just about being better adapted to this competitive world. It is not just being more conformist and doing everything that has been done before. I think it urges you, it exhorts you to look at success differently, to reinvent notions of success and reinvent them in terms of empathy, in terms of being able to work collectively. They call it Team Building but I think it is much more than team building. And to look at the fact that every young person is an artist. An artist is not a special kind of person; every person is a special kind of artist. And it is true education that brings out the particular artist that resides in each one of you.

I do not know how many of you know the story of Sparky. Well, Sparky was a chronic under achiever. He could not fly a kite, the girls would not go out with him for a floor dance, he could not play ball, and he just could not do his homework well. But there was one thing that Sparky knew he could do and that was that he could draw, he could paint, he could make little figures and he knew that that was the thing he loved to do. He knew that this is where his heart, his mind, his consciousness lay. And so, he just went on to do this, unconcerned by the ridicule that he sometimes faced. And he sent off his drawings to Walt Disney saying, "Dear Mr. Walt Disney, I think I can create characters. I think I can draw animals and people." When he wrote the first time, nobody responded. He wrote the second time, nobody responded. And finally someone in Walt Disney's office took note of him and Sparky finally went on to become Shultz, the famous creator of the *Peanuts* comic strip. And finally, Sparky was able to unleash the creativity hidden in him. So, failure is simply the opportunity to begin again more intelligently.

I also want to talk to you about another person who was regarded as a failure. He was John Pierpont. He belonged to a very rich family in the US in the late 1800s. He believed in the abolition of slavery. He stood for elections from the then Abolitionist party. He lost his election and went on to work as a curator. When he could not make it work, he became a lawyer. But he could not become a successful and wealthy lawyer because he would not charge a high fee from his clients. But he did one spectacular thing. He wrote a beautiful song called *Jingle Bells* which I am sure many of you have heard. And that song immortalized him beyond what he would have done as the representative, perhaps of the Abolitionist party or even as a lawyer. So there is one beautiful thing that each one of us can immortally contribute to our universe

and all of our education is really about recognizing what that could be, finding it, looking for it and then surrendering to it or offering it up to the larger community to enjoy.

I also have another story which I am sure must have been told to you. It is a story that shows you that *Winners do not quit and quitters do not win*. Each of us knows the story of the Hare and the Tortoise. The hare slept because he was over confident and the tortoise trundled up and won the race. But there is another aspect of the story. The hare could not bear that he was beaten by the tortoise. So he went to the tortoise again and said, "Let's refashion the game and let us run the race again." The hare this time was alert. He did not take a nap under the tree and was aware that he was not a born winner. Finally he beat the tortoise in the race. Now what does it demonstrate? Slow and steady is good but fast and steady is better.

The tortoise did not stop there. He thought, "No, I can't let the hare win like this. So, let me just get back and ask the hare to have another race." And the tortoise in a sense changed the rules of the game and even changed the route of the race. There was a little pond in the middle of the route. And so the hare came speeding up and reached the pond but then he did not know what to do. The tortoise came trundling along and crossed the pond and won the game. So, this shows that you have to identify and believe in your core competency and win the game even as you change the rules to take cognizance of broader skills and competencies. So it is not just looking at the accepting structures but utilizing the space that structures provide for you.

Finally by this time the hare and the tortoise had become very good friends and they said, "Look, let us run this race together and let's see what we can do, how can we make it work better for both of us." So they followed the route that the tortoise had set out. By the time they came to the edge of the pond the hare sat on the back of the tortoise and they swam through and then the hare held the tortoise and ran along. And together they beat their previous records together. And that was about true leadership, team building, about the joy of working together. You set your own standards and what you need is to set your rules to get your benchmarks because you are not vying for success. You are competing with your own proficiency and making yourself better. And you are doing it in concert with your peer group so that there are no hard feelings about somebody having won and

somebody having lost—everybody is a winner. St. Stephen's attempts to do that, to make each one of us here winners in the true and substantive sense of the term.

Have you ever seen geese fly? They fly in what is called a constellation. They fly in a V-configuration. And that is because the thermodynamic thrust of all of them flying in this configuration makes them go farther, much farther, than any one bird could do. If the bird in front gets tired, another goes down with him to help him regain his energy. Someone else moves to the top of the 'V' and then they come back and join the formation. It is called an exaltation of birds because it is truly an exalted experience. So if we can form V-formations in just about everything that we are being able to do here, just imagine the kind of joy and sheer buoyancy that this would result in.

When Roger Bannister ran the four minutes mile, it was perceived to be a record that nobody had done before. It was perceived to be something that nobody could have done before or even after him. But what is significant is, in that same year, three other people broke that barrier. So what did Roger Bannister do? He allowed us to think beyond the limits that society placed on us. If one person can do it, so can others. If someone could climb Everest, so could others. So, Bannister broke the mental barrier — it is not just the physical barrier that he broke but mental barrier and enabled people to push beyond limits and turn them into possibilities.

Another aspect of mental abundance is about active listening. We do a lot of this in peace work. Arunaji does it in her own work. Basically we have got so involved in debating and the whole business of *vaad* and *vivaad* that we have forgotten about *samvaad* and about active listening as a key to dialogue. Dialogue is not talking at people; dialogue is not even talking past people. Sometimes, we as teachers tend to do that, but dialogue involves active listening and dialogue is ever flowing, it's open ended. Today's truths can be contested tomorrow, there's no ego involved and there's a constant dynamic flow of thoughts, ideas because dialogue does not stand still. "The things that stand still shall fall but moving shall ever stay." This is the famous saying of Ramanujam, the famous saint.

The important thing is how we make our world safe for difference. In the morning when I went to some of the school classes, I asked the students, "How many of you can sing?" And there were almost all the hands up. But when we ask the same thing in a college or in a

congregation such as this, a few reluctant hands rise up. So what have we done to these young people in the course of school and college? Their spontaneity, their ability to be themselves has been schooled into submission. So I think we need to de-school that. And I am happy to know the process by which your school teachers are engaged to keep visiting their fundamentals almost on a day to day basis.

This morning I went to Class III and there were a lot of these young children, raring to go. In a similar setting in the U.S., a teacher had said to his class "OK, today we'll play a game and it's called Giants, Wizards and Dwarfs and each of you has to be one of the three." So everybody jumped into action. There was a lot of cutting of paper, using glue and some were making crowns other were making wings and so on and so forth. Suddenly a girl came to the teacher and said, "So where do the mermaids stand?" The teacher said, "There are no mermaids in this game. It's all about giants, wizards and dwarfs." The girl said, "No, I'm a mermaid and I'm going to play this game." So eventually she persuaded the class, that she had to find a place for herself. She wanted to play the game on her own terms. So where are the mermaids in our schools today? And where do they stand? On these questions Deepa Martins built, in a sense, or should I say, sowed a dream and I am sure this school will find enough space for all the mermaids because we have to be comfortable with difference. All those young students who do not look like us, do not dress like us, who do not speak like us but who come here with an aspiration that they too have a right to quality education. Our challenge is to see in them the little mermaids, the children who bring the toil, the struggle and the aspiration of a different kind of society. They will not wear Levis, they will not wear expensive labels, but they will bring with them their dreams. And it is up to all of us to be able to help that process of realization of those dreams and to celebrate and learn from that difference: How we celebrate that difference and draw on the wealth of being different, will depend on the kind of school we are and I believe you are up to the task here.

When we talk of success, I just want you to remember this one little story, I do not know if you have read the story about Jonathan Livingstone Seagull. It is about a seagull who was different and all his compatriots thought that he was doing strange things because he refused to be constrained by conventional expectations and sanctioned aspirations. He wished to explore other horizons, but then he reached the highest summit in the Antarctic that no other seagull

had reached, but that is a different story. I think it is very important for us to imagine that difference enhances our understanding of our social reality. It is just that we cloister ourselves, insulate ourselves, because our fundamental comfortableness may be shaken by accepting of differences. But far from that let me tell you that it will enrich you in every way. I know that the school is committed to the right to education. Here we just do not talk about the management; we do not talk just about the teachers but here we talk about the students. And you are committed to the right to education and all that it involves. It involves embracing the principles of Simple Abundance.

Now I would like to tell you about the Grandeur of Engagement. Let me tell you another story. There were three stone cutters in a quarry near Ajmer and on one hot day a passerby went to one of the three men and asked him, "What are you doing?" the man replied, "Can't you see I am breaking stones! It's so hot and I have been here for the whole day and I have to finish it soon and go back home." The passerby then went to the second stonecutter and repeated the same question. There was a certain sense of resignation and he said, "Well you know I have three children and I have to send them to school, I have a wife. I have these mouths to feed and so this is my livelihood. This is what I do for a living." And he went to the third stonecutter and from his forehead there shone a magical light. Though it was hot, he was working with great enthusiasm and interest and he looked the happiest of the three. When the passerby asked this stonecutter the same question, the stonecutter replied: "I am building a monument." The key of the story is to realize that whatever we do, we can leave a legacy. We must learn to throw ourselves into the heat and dust of society and make our voice count. We can make a difference.

Now, another little story about teachers. A teacher was invited to lunch by an ex-college mate who had become the CEO of a company and so she went there. The alumni of that particular batch were sitting there and having lunch in a very fancy restaurant which the CEO had organized, to call all of his old friends from school. So the conversation went around to what everybody was making. So, he told them that he was making a fat million dollar salary. And everybody around the room was happy with what they were doing and what they were making and the fact that they also had a Mercedes Benz and so on and so forth. They then turned around to the teacher who had come very elegantly but simply dressed, and asked her, "Sheila, what do you make?" So, she thought for a while and said, "Well, I make my

students sit still when their parents can't make them do that. I make them read, read, read and read. I make someone who may have got a C think that they had got a gold medal. I make them tell stories. I make them sing. I make them investigate their own truths." And then she cocked up her head and said, "Well you know I make a difference."

I would like to point to you the difference between fashion and style. Fashion fades but style endures. You never guild the lily. You walk in to any place like the teacher did to the CEO's lunch — she knew what she was about. She had dignity. She did not need any other embellishments. The fact that she was making a difference made her stand tall and all the Mercedes Benzes disappeared into the margins and she was truly the heroine of the day. That is what many teachers still do in our society.

So, please use your status and your influence and your advantage to dream of a different future, a different future for yourself, a different future for those around you, and of course through that different future indeed for our country which is at a very crucial juncture between opportunity and difficulty. This means engaging and recognizing that each one of us is connected by an invisible thread broadly called humanity. And so I would tell you to think about the lessons that you were taught in Kindergarten. They are, very important and useful lessons for life. In the 1980s there was a very popular book, a cult book written by Robert Fulghum. He titled the book *Everything I Really Needed to Know I Learnt at Kindergarten*. It became a best seller and in it he said a few simple things, among others:

- Live a balanced life
- Learn something: draw some, paint some, sing and dance and work and play some
- Hold hands, stay together
- Do not hit
- Have a wonder about the universe
- Be creative
- Pick up what you left, clean up your own mess, flush

All these are simple things but they are lessons for life. So what we learn at kindergarten including, the ability to sing spontaneously, can become a talisman for our life.

We become human beings by the choices we make. Arunaji has made choices, Deepa Martins made those choices. She made the choice to reach out and touch lives in significant ways. Because of people like her, many have become empowered, many have come out of bondage; many have experienced true freedom and true education. And she who reveled in empowerment and freedom especially for women would have exulted, would have been happy listening to the lines of a poem that I thought of sharing with you that reflect her own ideas in her collection *Jeene Do Mansi Hokar Mujhko*. It says do not deify women; give them their voice, give them freedom. Don't treat them like goddesses whom you lock up in temples and say that you are praying to them without letting them out to breathe, to laugh, to play, to dance, to sing and to touch lives. Free that spirit! I will end this address with a few lines of the poem — *Nangey Paaun* and I would offer it up to the spirit of Deepa Martins that I know is present here today with us, blessing us, smiling upon us wherever she is.

नंगे पाँव

कभी जो रहती थी चार दिवारी में
कभी जो सिसकती थी बन्द दरवाज़ों में
कभी जो धुटती थी पर्दों के पीछे
कभी जो मसली जाती थी पैरों के नीचे
कल तक जो थी एक झरोखे की मोहताज़
वही औरत आज तोड़कर दरवाज़े की अरगला
निकल आयी है बाहर
खड़ी है खुले आसमान के तले....आज़ाद ।

—अमीषा अनेजा

And I am sure you will make this happen.

Meenakshi Gopinath

April 9, 2012

यातना ने हमको निखारा है

देखा चट्टानों को बिखरते हुए ।
देखा झूठ का सैलाब उमड़ते हुए ।
देखा बनती को बिगड़ते हुए ।
फिर भी ये मन न हारा है ।
यातना ने हमको निखारा है ।।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स

विश्व— मैत्री संभावना

फिर क्यों इतना कटु विष पालें हम
क्यों न सहज मन के द्वार खोल डालें हम
दें परस्पर स्नेह, आस्था और विश्वास
और लाएं जीवन में पुनः हर्ष और उल्लास
जब होगी परस्पर मृदु भावना
तब ही बढ़ेगी विश्व मैत्री की संभावना ।।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स



Dr. Mallika Sarabhai, one of India's most well-known artistes, is a multi-dimensional personality. She is a leading choreographer, dancer and a prolific writer as well. An MBA from the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad, she has also done her PhD in Organizational Behaviour from Gujarat University. She has been the co-director of the prestigious Arts institution, the Darpana Academy of Performing Arts, for the past 30 years.

Dr. Sarabhai first made a name for herself in India as a film actress but was soon recognized as an exceptional young dancer in the classical forms of Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi. At 18, she won the first of many awards. She came to international prominence when she played the role of Draupadi in Peter Brook's The Mahabharata. She has given performances in France, North America, Australia, Japan and Scotland. Besides making a mark as a reputed and accomplished dancer and film actor, she also made herself count in the publication world and has many books to her credit.

In an effort to serve society, Dr. Sarabhai took up many developmental projects including the Acting Healthy Project. In addition, she has also played an active role in the UNICEF Peer Educators Project, the UNICEF Anandshala Project, the Fatehpura Model Village Project and the UNICEF Rural Health Project.

Dr. Sarabhai has won many awards including the Golden Star Award for the best dance soloist and the prestigious Padma Bhushan for her distinguished service in the field of Arts.



Dr. Mallika Sarabhai at the venue



Dr. Mallika Sarabhai being felicitated by Ms. Bharti Tolumbia, Principal



Dr. Mallika Sarabhai with Ms. Aruna Roy

HOW THE ARTS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

It is a great privilege to be here in St. Stephen's School. I was unfortunate not to have met Deepaji but whatever I have heard about her, she would have been one of my inner circle of beloved women friends. And I was telling Anupam yesterday that reading the names of the people who have given this lecture before me is like taking my most intimate diary pages because practically each one is somebody that I have great respect for and I say "Yes! That's the kind of Indians we need!" So I am sure all of you are very privileged to have listened to some of them.

An experiment was done about 30 years ago by the Harvard School of Neurosurgery. They went to two dairies, identical in every manner, with same number of cattle. In one dairy they started playing music round the clock and at the other dairy things went on as usual. At the end of three weeks they found that the cattle to whom the music was being played were putting on weight and had started consistently giving between 15 to 20 percent more milk.

Another interesting experiment was done in Latin America about 20 years ago at a communal farm where some maverick decided that if music could make him and his family work so much more cheerfully, then perhaps it was worth trying it on his crops. So he and his wife decided that they would play their favorite music to the crops and that they would allow their children to also decide what music they wanted. So they divided their farm into plots where different kinds of music were played. The children loved rock music, so they took rock music and went to one part of the farm. The wife was a great lover of Mozart, so she took Mozart's music to one part of the farm and the husband was a great lover of Schumann so he took Schumann's music to the other part. And sure enough, a few weeks later, the crops in the two farms where the classical music was being played seemed to be prospering and the crops growing in the plot where the metallic rock music was being played, seemed to be shriveling.

We did a similar experiment in a school. I was trying to find out what makes very young children violent, and what makes them calm or happy or positive. We were working in a school in Ahmedabad with five to seven year olds and we had them lying down on the floor with a piece of paper and a pencil. We told them that we would be playing them different kinds of music and instructed them to lie down with their eyes closed and to draw something when there was a pause in the

music. The interesting thing was that whenever classical Indian music was played, whether it was the flute or singing, or whenever bhajans were played, the visuals, were extremely rounded – with round lines and a sort of fluid movement; and whenever Bollywood or rock music was played, the pictures became very jagged. There was consistency seen in this pattern. What do all these experiments mean?

It means that in so many sub-conscious ways, in so many neural ways, not only the human kingdom or the animal kingdom, but the plant kingdom too reacts to music. And if plants react to music, then I am sure we react to many more things. I am sure all of you have noticed that certain colors make you feel very happy while other colors make you feel depressed. If most of us do not see the sun for many days, it somehow weighs down on us. So think of a country like Iceland where there is no sun for six months. Well, statistics have proved that in countries which have six months of sunlight and six months of darkness, suicide rates are very high. So whereas in today's context when you talk of the Arts you think of going to the movies, in fact the Arts have much more than the movies. Yes of course cinema is an art-form, but the art-form is something that all of us imbibe.

If you look at the history of civilization and take the most ancient civilizations, the one thing that has been constant is that every civilization in any part of the world has used art. There are rock paintings and rock carvings of the most ancient civilizations. There may not be other things — there were civilizations for instance that only ate raw food, there were other civilizations that did not grow crops — but there has not been a single civilization that has not painted or carved or crafted. What does this mean?

Today, we think that art is something that you do when you have some time from study. We tend to think of it as an extra-curricular activity and yet if you look at the history of civilization, it is the most intra-human activity. And when we look at it as an extra-curricular activity we are taking away that which makes us both human and humane, that literally makes us see what it is that we do today.

You are very privileged because you come from a school which was founded by two people who were extremely rounded in their approach to what the real stuff of life is about. Most of us look at school and look at our education as a way of getting through it. The funny thing about most of the education in this country is that the 10th and the 12th standard become big issues. So you will get parents telling you “*Nahi- nahi, mera bachcha to barvi mein hai; main kuchh nahi kar*

sakti is saal” and yet if you look at it in Hinduism, the two functions after the death of a person which have taken on the greatest importance are the Dasvaan or Barvaan. So what is this connection between what we do in 10th and 12th and what is this connection to life and what is this connection to post life?

Education, according to me, has to be about the fun of every single day. Not about getting through it, leaving it behind and getting on with the rest of your life. And the Arts similarly are something that we need to integrate into our lives. If you actually ask most people what they want to do, they will say “*Papa ne kaha hai hume ye karnaour family believes that we should go into such and such.*” So, if that is true, we need to ask ourselves (and the younger you are the better it is to ask yourself) what is that you want to be? Whose script do you want to live a life by? Because more and more people around you will, at some stage, realize that they have lived a script of their lives, scripted by somebody else. It is not their script. Taking good decisions is important especially in a country like India where family matters so much, where so-called duty matters so much, where the community matters so much. Each of you has a different way of flowering and you all need to take decisions to flower but you are often not allowed to take these decisions. You have not flowered because your flowering was defined by somebody else. And in most cases in life, by the time people realize this, it is too late. Why am I saying this? Because actually allowing yourself to indulge every day in something that we call the Arts, is a way of finding that flowering.

What is it that we call the Arts? Is it only singing and dancing and theatre? No, it is about life. The way you serve your food in your thali reveals your artistic sensibility; the way you arrange your *pallu*, the way you comb your hair — these are all parts of our art and our culture. And culture does not only mean the performances. Culture is the way in which a particular *matka* was made by a potter because it sat on a particular part of your body. If a *matka* was supposed to be carried on your hip, it had a different shape than if it had to be carried on your shoulder. That is an art sensibility. It is also a science sensibility because when they were talking artistically, they were also talking scientifically: they were talking of what we call ergonomics. They were asking what the best way was for the body to do a certain function. For instance we have special chairs for computers where you do not slouch and you do not get a backache; you do not have pain in your neck and you do not get a wrist problem because of using a mouse — this is called ergonomics.

If you actually look at it, Science and Art are not apart at all because what is artistically sensible also makes scientific sense. So when, for instance, a potter made a particular pot that sat on the hip and it was a pot to carry water, it had a particular kind of neck; if the pot was supposed to regulate the temperature of water, it had a different kind of neck and if it was supposed to be used to pour water, it had yet another type of neck. All these were both scientific and artistic decisions. But we have somehow separated the Arts into something that is a subject rather than a way of life when in fact, it is a way of life.

When for the first time I went to Japan, what intrigued me the most was that even when you went to a Japanese temple, there were a couple of old people who were giving *sewa* by arranging *chappals* outside the temple. The way those *chappals* were arranged was a work of art. If you go to a Zen temple in Japan, when food is served, the way something is arranged, even if it is a sprig of mint, is a way of art. In Japan, unlike in India where we have separated ourselves from our cultural reality, this is still considered the goal of that activity: not to slam down a plate of fruit in front of you so that you satiate your hunger, but in the seeing of that plate, in the smelling of that food, in the imbibing. All this is what we call *rasa*. When you serve food, it is not only to satisfy hunger. Why do we have *prasad* in so many temples? We have forgotten what it is. *Prasad* is supposed to be the indulging of all five senses in the imbibing of something that puts us at peace with ourselves and with the larger world. And yet we have forgotten this; everything has become something to finish and get ahead. Education has become like that, eating has become like that, dressing has become like that. It is not for the moment, it is not for the living now, for the satisfaction now, for the imbibing now, for the joy now, but it is about where we can get. And by the time we get to where we think we want to get, we are already looking at the next place so that is not the moment we enjoy either. So what does art do?

Every form of art actually allows you to be in and to savor that moment there. If you look at the Indian history, you will see in a temple there are sculptures, bhajans, storytelling and dancing. So in India as a culture, the Arts were never a source of entertainment. We have made them into entertainment, because we copy the West in everything. And in the West art is entertainment, but in India the Arts were a way of passing on values. Our stories were about teaching what was good and what was bad, what was right and what was wrong. The music, the bhajans were supposed to take you out of your mundane

self and transport you somewhere where you could remember not just the worries of the day: "*Homework khatam karna hai, ye karna hai, vo karna hai, mujhe deri ho rahi hai*", but beyond that to savor that *rasa*, to find joy in that moment. So why is it that we have separated these so that the Arts have become 'extra-curriculum'? Why is it that we do not try and refine that place that creates that space in us to be able to live the moment, to be able to enjoy what I am doing now? And with the competitiveness of our society today, how little has become pleasurable! How many of you actually play a game because you enjoy it? You play a game because you want to be in a team or because your team wants to win something. Everything is about something else; we need to find the time to do something just for the sake of doing it because we enjoy doing it, not because we are going to get a credit point for it, not because somebody is going to pat us on the shoulder.

Art is a language which can reach anybody through any blocks they have. You know, since Nirbhaya's rape in December in Delhi, I am sure most of the educated Indians have been talking about the issues of gender bias, about how girls should be treated. Most parents are now putting stricter limits on girls (*nahi, bahar mat jao* – it's not safe anymore) and this is a debate that needs to touch everybody. It needs to touch the boys as much as the girls. Because let me tell you something rather ironical: in our society women have lots and lots of limitations put on them by their families and by society. But the thing is that girls know they have limits placed on them and therefore they try and break those limits. But do you think that you guys are free? Do you think that you have personal choice? How many of you? I am addressing the boys here, I am addressing the men as well. How many of you have the freedom of doing what you really want to do? How many of you for instance, can go back to your parents or go to your teachers and say, "You know I am not that career guy; what I would really like to do is to find a wife who is the career type who would go and run the family, and I want to stay at home and I want to look after the children and paint." Do you think any of you would be allowed to do that? Of course not! So you think you do not have any limitations when in fact you have lots of limitations and I am not even only talking about being a house husband — I am even talking of being an artist today.

Zakhir Hussain, the famous tabla player, and son of Allah Rakha, an equally famous tabla player, went back home with the Grammy that he won, very successful by any terms, and his aunts said to him, "*Haan*

beta, ye sab to thik hai, lekin serious kaam kab karega?” Now think of this situation. Zakhir Hussain says, “I practise ten hours a day, I earn lots of money but being a tabla player is still not seen as a career for a man.” So if you have the courage, look inside yourself and ask that if I did not listen to my father, if I did not feel pressurized, if I was not told “*Yaar marad bano, kya aise soch rahe ho*”, then what would I want to be?

But it takes a lot of courage to actually ask yourself the question and to come up with the real truth because our society teaches men to be brutes. A three-year-old boy will be told, “*Arre tum to ladke ho, rote kyon ho*”, and a girl will be told, “*Chup karo, maarti kyon ho; chup karo awaaz uthati kyon ho!*” A man will be admired if he pushes an argument and a girl will be told, “*Itni aggressive kyun banti ho!*” So how do you break this gender type?

I want to narrate a short story that will explain to you how a lecture may or may not get through to you, but when the Arts are used interestingly to say the same thing, how the point hits. So let me tell you the story. There was once a princess who whistled. Her father, the king, said, “*Arre, beti whistle mat karo*”. Her mother, the queen, said “*Arre beti, whistle mat karona*”. But the princess continued whistling. The years went by and the princess grew up into a beautiful young woman, who whistled beautifully. Her father said, “*Arre whistle karne wali ladki se kaun shaadi karega?*” Then the mother said, “*Hai, who will marry my whistling princess?*” Then the father had an idea. He decided to call a *swayamwara*, and he said, “*Any prince who defeats my daughter at whistling shall have half my kingdom and her hand in marriage.*” So princes from all across the land came and they started whistling. Well, most of them whistled badly. Some of them whistled well, but nobody could defeat the princess. Now the king said, “*Ab kya karen?*”, and the queen said, “*Hai, ab kya karen?*” But the princess said, “Father, Mother don't worry. I am going to ask each of these young men a question and whoever answers correctly shall be my husband.” So she went up to each prince and asked, “Do you agree that I have defeated you fairly?” The princes refused and said, “No, no, no! How can a woman defeat us? That's impossible! No woman can defeat us!” Finally there was one prince who said, “Princess, you have defeated me fairly.” “Aha!” she said, “Father, Mother, this man shall be my wife!”

Now the sting in the tale is that the princess, in spite of being so liberated, still thought that if a man could accept her as his superior,

then he became the wife and she became the husband. That is the paradigm we need to change: that a man does not necessarily equate with superiority and being a woman does not necessarily equate with accepting somebody else's superiority. What the Arts do is to make us think of these things. You are never going to forget this story. Even when you are sixty-five you will remember this story! You may not remember my name, but you will remember the story, because the next time a thought like that comes into your head, you will say, 'Oh! Oh!' and this is the power of the Arts and more than anything else this is what we need to use the Arts for. You say yes, but most artists do not find work.

Today, there are amazing varieties in the careers that are opened up because of the Arts. You do not have to become doctors and engineers and computer professionals. There are hundreds of avenues that have opened up where you can use your artistic sensibilities. This can be from creating recording studios, to writing music, to becoming biotechnologists who interpret musical phenomena, to becoming a cartoonist, to becoming people who develop video games — all of these are Arts related and all of these are today open as sure areas to take up professions.

What you need to find out is what your heart really sings about, what your heart sings for, what it is that moves you. And then to ask yourself: do I have the courage to allow myself to do this? Do I have the courage to actually say: I want to write my script, because I want to live my life. I am not living somebody else's life, I am living my life. It takes courage but then if you want to live life your way, if you want to live your life and not that of your parents, if you want to live your life and not that of your community — that takes courage too.

What I have believed always is that I would stand up and be stoned for what I believe in and what I have taken as my decisions. But to be stoned for what you did not want to do in the first place is not something that is very interesting. I was five years old when I went to my first school. On the first day of school, we were made to sit in a circle and we were asked to draw a face. Apparently I drew a face but I put the ears in the wrong place and a little boy who was sitting next to me, said, “*Tu to gadhi hai*”, and I got really upset. So when I went home, I said to my father, “*Main school nahi jaungi, iss school main nahi jaungi.*” So he said, “*Kyun nahi jaogi?*” I said, “*Ek ladka tha*, and he said: *tu gadhi hai.*” So my father sat me down on his lap and he

said, “*Mallika tu kya hai?*” So I said, “*Main ladki hun.*” So he said, “Mallika, you know that you are a girl but that poor boy doesn't know the difference between a *gadhi* and a girl. You should be feeling sorry for him. Why are you upset? If he can't tell the difference between a donkey and a girl, then he has a serious problem.”

In many ways, whatever I have done in my life has gone from there. If you think what you are doing is right, then stand by it. But don't stand by what others say. Yesterday somebody was saying, “Oh I felt very humiliated.” To this my father has said, “You can allow yourself to be humiliated or not — that depends on you. The other might say anything about you, but whether you get hurt or not depends on your sense of self-worth, your sense of security.” So if somebody says to me, “She is a liar,” I can be upset for a little while. But if I know that I am not lying then why should I be upset? Why is it that we allow ourselves to be defined by others? The root of the Arts is one of the ways that we can use to not only question this, but to also find out who we are and who we want to be, who we want to blossom into, and what we want our lives to be. So like the princess, take your tests, go through life, but then do not fall into the same rut.

Mallika Sarabhai
April 5, 2013

सकारात्मक सोच के सुपरिणाम

वस्तुतः मनुष्य का जीवन ही ईश्वर प्रदत्त वरदान है अतः हर समय दुखी रहना या स्वयं को कोसते रहना ईश्वर की इस अनुपम देन का निरादर करना है। यदि हम अपने पुराण उठाकर देखें तो पाएँगे कि जब ईश्वर को भी अवतार लेना पड़ा तो उसने मानव योनि को ही चुना। अतः यदि इस जीवन को हम भरपूर जियेंगे एवं अपने परिवेश से आनन्द का संग्रह करेंगे तभी हम अपने अस्तित्व के प्रति न्याय कर पाएँगे।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स

कभी जब

प्रश्नों की उधेड़बुन से ही
अंकुरित होते जीवन—सत्य
और अपने मन की उर्जा से अधिक
सप्राण कुछ नहीं होता ।
कुछ नहीं होता ।।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स



A luminary in the field of social activism and theatre in India today, Prof. Tripurari Sharma did her B.A. (Hons.) in English from Miranda House, New Delhi and a Diploma in Direction from the National School of Drama in 1979. She has served as Acting Director of National School of Drama and presently is Professor of acting at the school.

Prof. Sharma has directed and acted in numerous plays and also been associated with films including Mirch Masala, Hazar Chorasi Ki Maa, and Sanshodhan. She has been involved in the scripting of Swaraj and Armaan in addition to the scripts of many serials and co-directed Shakti, the first talk show in India on women's issues, for Zee TV. She has also worked extensively with traditional forms and rural artistes of Nautanki, Pandavani, Surabhi, Tamasha and Khayal. She is a founder member of Alarippu, a group committed to creative works at the grassroots level and with children. Her many publications include Bahu, Aks Paheli, Kaath Ki Gaadi, Reshmi Roomal, Azizum, Gift and Searching for a Voice.

Prof. Sharma has also been involved with theatre groups working in different parts of the country and connected to today's reality including the Mazdoor Kisaan Shakti Sangathan in Rajasthan and at the same time involved in seeing theatre at the national level searching for learning and performing methodologies answering to our times.

Prof. Tripurari Sharma was the India Representative in the First Women's Playwright Conference in Boston in 1988. She has also been awarded extensively for her work. Her awards include the Sangeet Natak Akadami Award for her contribution to theatre direction, the Sanskriti Award, the UPSNA Safdar Hasmi Award, the Bhartiya Natya Sangh Award, the Delhi Sahitya Kala Parishad Award as well as the First Woman Theatre Worker Award initiated by IPGA. Prof. Sharma was among the ninety-nine women from India nominated for the Thousand Women for Nobel Peace Prize by an international initiative.



Lighting the lamp before the portrait of Dr. Deepa Martins



Prof. Tripurai Sharma delivering the keynote address



Ms. Bharti Tolumbia, Principal, delivering the vote of thanks

THE POWER OF IMAGINATION

आज हमने सोचा था कि हम 'कल्पना शक्ति' के बारे में बात करेंगे। मैं भी आपसे यही पूछती हूँ कि आपने कभी आसमान की तरफ देखा है? जरूर देखा होगा। वहाँ पर इतने बादलों को देखा होगा, जो कभी सफेद हैं कभी सलेटी हैं।

सफेद ओर सलेटी जिनको आपने कई आकारों में देखा होगा। जैसे घोड़ा, डायनासोर, भालू, तितलियाँ, पक्षी आदि।

कभी आपने बारिश की बूँदों के गिरने में कितने सारे चित्रों को बनते, छटपटाते मिलते हुए देखा होगा।

You must have noticed that when you look closely at stones, you see so many dots, so many lines and when you look at them for a while, you focus and you concentrate and then they turn into so many images, so many shapes. There is so much to say all in the clouds, all in the stones. It is all in the mind: your mind, my mind — and that is imagination. We are all endowed with this imagination. When you look at a river and you imagine the course of the river through its topography, its various contours flowing through cliffs, plains, sand and then into the ocean — even if you have never seen an ocean, you can sense the ocean; that sensing is also your imagination.

The power of imagination is in all of us and belongs to all of us. This is the fundamental basis of all art; not only of all art but of all inventions, all endeavor, all enterprise. The great artist Pablo Picasso famously said, "Every child is an artist. The problem is staying an artist once you grow up." There has been research done on this and many researchers say that only 2% of adults have this capacity for imagination whereas 90% to 95% of children, specially younger children, have imaginative ability.

So, this is an ability, a talent, a quality that we all possess but as we grow, we gradually grow away from it. Children need imagination because they grow by it. When a child is fascinated by an adult, the child focuses on that adult. The child observes that adult and then the child visualizes the adult within him or her and in that visualization, the child emulates the adult, imbibes from the adult and in this process the child grows.

This is a way in which we visualize something before doing it. Visualization is a faculty that enables you to grow and to develop and as you grow, this imagination feeds you towards your growth. Individuals rely on this imagination. Not only individuals, societies have also used it. Anthropologists will tell you that how, when people

were still hunters they would make models in clay of the animal they wanted to hunt and then they would practise hunting on that model and then feel that they had imbibed the power of this animal, added to their own power and by this they became doubly strong and more confident of their victory. When clans fought or when they were at war, they had similar rituals. A lot of rituals have been created around us. This is a preparation for life — to put ourselves in a sense of readiness, to be able to approach and do something.

ये पूर्वाभ्यास, एक अभ्यास है, जो कि हमें आगे जिंदगी में करना है। हम इस तरह एक काल्पनिक तरीके से उसका अभ्यास करके, उसको जीने के बाद, हम फिर से उसको कार्य में बदल सकते हैं। तो यह जो तरीका है, यह पहले भी चलता रहा है और इसके कई रूप हैं जो कि कई तरह के संस्कारों में हम आज भी देखते हैं। जिसको हम वास्तविकता में लाना चाहते हैं, वास्तविकता में ढालना चाहते हैं उसके लिए हम अभ्यास करते हैं और उस अभ्यास को करने के लिए हम उस स्थिति की कल्पना करके उसको अपने में स्वीकार करते हैं, और उसको अपने में ढालते हैं। ये एक तरह की तैयारी है, जिसको हम जीवन के लिए तैयारी भी कह सकते हैं। जैसा कि आप शिक्षा से भी पा रहे हैं। जैसे-जैसे आप शिक्षा ग्रहण कर रहे हैं वो भी आपकी जिंदगी की तैयारी ही हो रही है। लगभग हर कला, कल्पना के साथ जुड़ी है और कल्पना का प्रयोग अपने में करती है। लेकिन जो रंगकर्म है उसकी दुनिया में तो इसके अलावा और कुछ है ही नहीं। आप जानते हैं, जैसा शेक्सपीयर ने कहा था — “सम्पूर्ण विश्व एक रंगमंच है।” मैं कहूँगी कि सिनेमा केवल कल्पना पर ही निर्भर नहीं करता है, वरन् सिनेमा तो खुद कल्पना में मौजूद है।

सिनेमा एक मंच है जहाँ पर आज हम खड़े हैं। अगर ये नाटक होता तो इस मंच पर कुछ और होता। यही जगह अपना रूप बदल लेती। इसी जगह पर कोई राजमहल का दृश्य भी हो सकता है। इसी जगह पर कोई नुक्कड़ नाटक भी हो सकता है और इसी जगह पर एक परिवार का दृश्य भी हो सकता है। जगह यही रहती है, स्थल यही रहता है, आप वहाँ रहते हैं पर यहाँ कुछ और होता है।

उस कुछ और के होने से इस स्थान का अर्थ ही बदल जाता। ये कल्पना का खेल है कि कहीं से भी आप कुछ भी इसमें बदल सकते हैं।

रंगमंच एक काल्पनिक स्थान है। यह कहीं भी, कुछ भी, किसी भी समय, किसी भी तरह से हो सकता है। आप जैसे चाहे इसे परिवर्तित कर सकते हैं। जैसे — यह एक कलम है, और कोई अगर यहाँ पर खड़ा होकर कोई इस कलम से कुछ करे तो लग सकता है कि यह कंधी है, लग सकता है कि यह एक दूरबीन है। कलम कलम ही है, लेकिन कल्पना के इस्तेमाल से यह एक दूरबीन, कंधी व कैमरा बन सकती है, वह कुछ भी बन सकती है। यह आपकी कल्पना की आज़ादी है।

इसलिए सिनेमा के बारे में रूचिपूर्ण तथ्य यह है कि इसका अभिनय अभी तक काल्पनिक है और इससे भी रूचिपूर्ण बात यह है कि इस कल्पना का हम सामूहिक रूप से हिस्सा बनते हैं।

क्योंकि, जब यहाँ पर कोई व्यक्ति राजमहल का दृश्य खेलेगा तो उसके लिए बहुत जरूरी है कि आप उसे राजमहल की तरह स्वीकार करें। जो कि आम तौर पर दर्शक कर लेते हैं। उस स्वीकृति से ही ये आगे बढ़ता है। यह समाज में कल्पना का खेल है जिसको केवल हम अकेले अपने घर में बैठकर, अपने विचारों में या अपने सपनों में देख रहे हैं, लोगों के बीच हिस्सेदारी कर रहे हैं, और लोग भी उसमें शामिल हो रहे हैं।

इसलिए इसमें भागीदारी के अतिरिक्त हर एक व्यक्ति अपनी कल्पना के अभिनय को निभा रहा है।

हम समाज को एक रंगमंच समझते हैं। जिससे हम समाज को एक मौका देते हैं कि थोड़ी देर के लिए वह कल्पना की इस दुनिया में आ सके, शामिल हो सके और उसको आगे ले जा सके। जैसा कि आप कुछ पारंपरिक नाटक देखते हों तो उसमें एक पात्र अभिनय करता है कि मैं उज्जैन में रहता हूँ, अब मैं पाटलिपुत्र जा रहा हूँ। और वह एक गोल चक्कर लेता है मंच का, और कहता है कि मैं पाटलिपुत्र पहुँच गया। तो सब मान लेते हैं कि हाँ वह पाटलिपुत्र पहुँच गया। उसके बाद वह कहता है कि देखो मैं राजमहल के बाहर खड़ा हूँ और यह एक राजमहल का फाटक है, कोई फाटक नहीं है वहाँ पर। तब भी लोग मान लेते हैं कि वहाँ फाटक है। जितने लोग वहाँ बैठे होंगे सबके लिए वह फाटक होते हुए भी अलग-अलग होगी। तो कई तरह के फाटक उस समय दर्शकों के मन में आयेंगे, लेकिन तब भी वह एक फाटक स्वीकार हो जाएगा और उसमें से जब कोई निकलेगा तो यह भी मान लेंगे कि यह राजा ही होगा क्योंकि यह राजमहल का फाटक है। तो हम जो स्वेच्छापूर्वक, कल्पना के जादू में आ जाते हैं और कल्पना के साथ खेलते हैं, जिससे हमारे सामने कई तरह की संभावनाएँ बनती हैं। कई बार जरूरी भी नहीं होता कि वह व्यक्ति मुकुट लगाये हुए हो या उसने बहुत राजसी पोशाक पहनी हो।

The crown and the regal attire are not necessary because we would still accept the king because we are in this make-believe world of magic which says that if this is the king then this is the king. We would imagine the costumes of the king; we would not weave the costumes of the king. For this reason you will find that many of our popular forms of theatre are so simple. Their simplicity is what enables us to practise our imagination. Had there been the whole clutter of a palace and the costume and everything, then it would have been what we see rather than what we imagine. On television you see what is given to you. But when what is given is left a little hazy, then we fill it in with our own

imagination and with our own participation in that. That is what makes the experience very rich. It makes it very special because we are also adding to it.

हम उसको जोड़ रहे हैं, जितना हम उसमें जोड़ रहे हैं, उतना ही हम उसमें से पा रहे हैं, उतना ही हम उसमें से निकाल रहे हैं। जब हम अभ्यास भी करते हैं तो हम अपने अभिनेता को एक बात कहते हैं कि कल्पना क्या होती है? अभिनेता की कल्पना यह होती है कि जब आप किसी चीज पर ध्यान दें तो वह हिलनी चाहिये, आपके अंदर। वह गतिहीन नहीं हो सकती क्योंकि अभिनेता का अर्थ ही होता है, अभिनय करने वाला।

उसमें ठहराव नहीं है, उसमें गति है। उस गति की तलाश में कल्पना के प्रयोग से कोई क्रिया दृढ़ते हैं। क्रिया का मतलब है कार्य करना, गतिशीलता। इसका मतलब यह नहीं कि आप एक ही स्थान से अभिनय करें।

जहाँ आप हैं, आप उस स्थान पर ही नहीं हैं और आप उससे कुछ आगे जाएँ। पहले कल्पना में आगे जाएँ, उसको दृष्टिगोचर करें और फिर आप उसको शकल दें और उस तक आप पहुँच जाएँ। यह तरीका है सिनेमा का, जो हर कला में है। क्योंकि आप ये पायेंगे कि अगर आपको किसी पेड़ का चित्र बनाना है तो आप वास्तविक पेड़ तो नहीं बना सकते, फिर क्यों ये जताया जाये कि आप वास्तविक पेड़ बना रहे हैं।

It is an abstraction of the tree, it is an imagined tree. The bird is not the real bird, but it is an imagined bird. The house is not the real house; it is the essence of the house, an imagined house. Everywhere what we find is that we take an abstraction and we imagine. All art does that because all art is a construct. You visualize, you sense, you create an image, and then you work and strive towards that image. For example, if there is a wooden block, then certainly there must be a carpenter. He looks at the block of wood and sees a table there. He sees a table lamp and he sees a vase there. And then he shapes that block of wood to create a vase, a table lamp or whatever he has seen in that block of wood. Similarly a sculptor would look at a block of stone and apart from the stone she would see something else there — a shape that she would work towards creating. She would chop and trim and chisel and create something which she has already imagined. So the beauty of it is when you say that you see something which is not there. You are seeing something that is not there but you are also seeing something that is there. You are seeing something beyond what is there in front of you. You are seeing something that is and also something that can be.

It is very similar when you are teaching somebody. The teacher would imagine where you can go up to and that vision is very important: not to accept just the level of what is, as the absolute or the final level, but to see the potential for something much more than that, and that seeing of that much more, that sensing of that much more, is what builds our capacity to move with it and to create that which we imagined.

We all know Einstein as a great scientist. One of the most beautiful things that he said was that imagination is more valuable, more important than knowledge, because once you have imagination, once your imagination is triggered, then this imagination will compel you to seek the knowledge. You will become a seeker if there is something which you are sensing and imagining, because to make it concrete, to make it real, you would seek the knowledge required. Once you have that knowledge, then your imagination will work on that knowledge to create more options. This is another very beautiful aspect of imagination — you do not accept only one way as the final way. There could be so many ways of doing just that one thing. That is living with imagination, living imaginatively in every moment. There can be so many ways of cooking, there can be so many ways of walking, so many ways of writing, so many ways of just lifting the pen, so many ways of wrapping a gift, so many ways of receiving a gift, so many ways of opening a book, so many ways of touching the paper of your book, so many ways of going through the leaves of the book. There is no one way but there are thousands of possibilities; there are thousands of options before us and once we move out of this restriction of just one way of doing something, we could find a whole universe, a whole world opening before us. It is like finding a door in the wall.

We imagine that there is a wall. It is possible that there is a door in the wall. If there is no door in the wall, then we can imagine and make a door there. Our imagination motivates us, encourages us, to build a door. So this gift of imagination is for all of us in our life. It is really disappointing that we are often deprived of it in society. There are several reasons for it. Either we do not estimate it properly, so we under value it or we put it aside; we put it in the corner and say that it is like a child's game and we do not follow it.

Another reason, particularly in our society, is that most of the arts, not all, but many of the art forms in our country have been nurtured by specific caste groups. These caste groups are the groups that had been traditionally placed very low in the caste hierarchy. And since we kept

the artist low in hierarchy of caste, we have not learnt to value art. The process of art can be so enriching but we have to know how to receive the richness of that process. And when we shun something as being inferior, as being below our dignity, then we lose out on what that capacity can give us. It is our loss. It is the loss of society. A society that does not value what there is in this exercise, in this process of art making, loses a lot. It loses out on its intrinsic, human qualities like aesthetic sense, appreciation of beauty and the beauty of relationships; without imagination, society loses out on its societal structure.

When we do not give importance to something when it exists and we do not value it, then it goes away from us and we lose that. Sometimes we do not even know what it is that we have lost as we are veering more towards materialism. In this present age we fill ourselves with so many other things. If you just look at life only in terms of materialistic success, materialistic gains and you forget the aesthetics, the beauty and the possibilities of life, you lose a lot. If we follow society, it cuts us into the hierarchy, it categorizes us, and it puts us into little compartments, into little boxes. Once you are in the box then you tell yourself that I am in this box and this is my world. You do not look out, you do not see, you miss out, you forget to look at the clouds; you forget to look at the river. You are in your box, you are in your narrow minded self and we all then tend to get into our selfish little cocoons, into our selfish little boxes, in our selfish little shells and we stop reaching out. That is disastrous. That makes our society very difficult to live in.

हम एक-दूसरे को सहन नहीं कर पाते हैं। हमें एक-दूसरे से उलझन होती है क्योंकि हम एक-दूसरे को समझ नहीं पाते हैं, हम एक-दूसरे को कई बार देखते भी नहीं हैं। जो हमसे अलग है और जो हमारी परिधि में नहीं है वो हमारे लिए बहुत अलग हो जाता है और हमारा दुश्मन हो जाता है। लेकिन जब हम कला के क्षेत्र में, सिनेमा के क्षेत्र में प्रवेश करते हैं, तब हम पाते हैं कि वहाँ और भी कुछ है, जो समान हो सकता है।

क्योंकि इतना तो आप समझ ही गये हैं कि जब आप कल्पना की दुनिया में विचरण करते हैं तो आप अपने 'मैं' से दूर चले जाते हैं। अगर आप को यहाँ कोई अभिनय करना है तो आप 'मैं' से बाहर निकलते हैं। जब आप 'मैं' से बाहर निकलते हैं तो दूसरे में प्रवेश करते हैं। आप यह समझने की कोशिश करते हैं कि दूसरा कैसा है? दूसरा कैसे चलता है, फिरता है या फिर क्या सोच रहा है? क्यों सोच रहा है? कैसे सोच रहा है? कहाँ से आया है? जब आप दूसरे के बारे में इतना चिंतन करते हैं।

When you reflect so much on the other, when you make space within yourself for the other, then the otherness of the other dissolves. The otherness of the other is no longer strange to you; it is part of you. Through the ability to imagine the other, and the exercise to empathize with the other, we develop compassion, tolerance, affection and love. We cross many barriers, many boundaries which we would never transgress if we stayed in our boxes. If you are a child and you play the role of an older person, you will understand the older person better.

Similarly, through this process of emotionally, mentally and imaginatively exchanging the sensing of each other, you would transcend even the limitations of gender. Because once you begin to empathize, once you begin to go beyond your boundaries, you find completeness. In that completeness, you are no longer just a man or a woman, a boy or a girl. The mask that society gives you, the box that society gives you, the compartment in which you are fitted in by society, that breaks, that dissolves. You dissolve it, you break it. You are then human!

And the imaginative process of art is one of the ways in which we cross these barriers, these boundaries and enter our humanness, often denied to us in our boxes of gender, profession or occupation. This is how we can make those boxes melt. This is more holistic because we often do not know what we are supposed to do – we just accept what we are told to do and this may not be our own answer. When we break these boxes then we discover something more substantial, which may be more meaningful to us.

When we involve others, understand them, then we open doors for ourselves. We also come to know a few things about ourselves that we were not aware of before. This is an experience of completing ourselves. This is also an experience that gives us joy because when we live with imagination, we live creatively; we live with possibilities at every step. At every step, how you sit, how you walk, as I said earlier, is an act of imagination. It is a creative experience when you are full of joy, when you are happy and you know it as well as anyone else. You are generous and open hearted.

नये-नये विचार आते हैं, तब नये-नये गीत बनते हैं, तब कविताएँ बनती हैं। नई-नई कहानियाँ रची जाती हैं, और कहानियाँ ऐसी होती हैं जिनका अंत हमें नहीं मालूम होता है, जिनका अंत आगे जाकर भविष्य में पता चलता है। तो जो है वह केवल शुरुआत है, इसके आगे हमें जाना है, इसके आगे जब हम जाते हैं

तो हम उस भविष्य में कुछ और पाने की इच्छा भी रख सकते हैं, संभावना भी रख सकते हैं, उसकी जो बनने की क्षमता है, उस क्षमता को कहानी के माध्यम से हम देख सकते हैं, उस तक पहुँच सकते हैं या पहुँचा भी सकते हैं। दोनों में से कुछ भी कर सकते हैं। यह जो कहानी है कि आगे क्या होगा? हमें नहीं मालूम। आप जब नाटक देखते हैं, शुरू में क्या हो रहा है अंत में क्या हो रहा है, कई बार आपको नहीं मालूम होता है। हमें नहीं मालूम है और हम उसकी शुरुआत से जुड़ते हैं और अंत तक होते-होते वो बदलता जाता है यानि कि बहुत सी चीजें बदलती है, परिवर्तित होती है और किसी दूसरे ही बिंदु तक जाकर पहुँच जाती है।

To take it forward is very similar to your own search when you are here and when you are studying and how you are going to see yourself in the future. When you are imagining what you would do in future, it is doing an exercise that takes you to another level, to what you learn and what you do later in life. And the bridge to that is realizing your own capacity and potential, imagining your own goal in the future.

When a teacher teaches, the teacher creates a good citizen. When a doctor heals, the doctor helps our society. But when a doctor does not heal then the doctor may give death to the society. When a builder builds with material that can lead to the collapse of a building then the builder is not building for people to live in the building. He is not dreaming that people will live happily in what he is building. When the builder builds with the material which will lead to the collapse then, at that time, the builder is choosing not to imagine the consequence of what he or she is doing. That is why it is important to imagine the consequence of our actions. When we imagine the consequence of what we are doing, it leads us to one kind of existence. But when we choose not to imagine the consequences of our actions, then we are shirking the responsibility of what we are doing, we are becoming irresponsible and also being dishonest. Not imagining consequences means we do not care for the results of what we are doing and that is how corruption and decay set in.

Therefore this ability to imagine the consequences of what we are doing is very important not only for all artistic endeavor but also for good citizenship. I repeat that when you choose not to imagine the consequences, it is a very disastrous choice. People tend to make this choice when they choose to remain in their little boxes and to think only about their limited desires or what they would want of life. If we choose not to imagine the larger picture, we all face the disasters and we all face a reality which is similar. We are seeing it in many walks of

life today. It is very difficult for us to think of the situation where there would be less corruption. We all know it is around us. If we wanted, we could just walk into an office and get our work done without paying a bribe. It would take a lot of effort from us to imagine a situation where we could actually do it without paying a bribe. It is so difficult and yet this is the moment when we need to imagine such a situation. We need to imagine the possibilities of having that done or being able to do that today when it seems impossible.

Because when things seem to be impossible then it is the imagination that can make them possible, can take us ahead and prevent stagnation. So it is really very important to desire to build a door in the wall and also imagine that there can be a door in the wall and situations can change.

You know 40 years ago nobody would have thought that women would be working like this that in every household there would be a woman who works. When I was a child, it was not possible to think of that. When I was in college it was impossible to think of the situation where there would be many women travelling in a bus at night. It was impossible to even think of it. But today, this is a reality. So, in that impossibility, when you think of a possibility, when you desire a possibility, when you dream a possibility, then that possibility becomes true. Today, this is happening. There are hardships, there are difficulties but you can see it happening.

When it seems impossible, then it is this imagination that makes a bridge for us to move towards the possible. Imagination gives us the conviction, to carry it forward. If you have a dream, then follow the dream, trust the dream and the dream will take you far, it will take others far, the society far. It is worth putting a lot at stake, if you have a dream. If you can imagine something more beautiful and much better, then put yourself at stake. There will be many people who will not be with you. They will laugh at you, they will reject you. There will be a lot of logical arguments against what you dream, what you desire and what you imagine. Let it be! What is important is to dare to dream and imagine. Within us, there should be that daring, to see a door in the wall. If you believe that there is a wall, then there would be a door in the wall. That is the conviction. Fearlessness to live with that conviction, to move with that conviction — this imagination is an ability.

यह सिर्फ परियों की बात नहीं है, परियों के साथ-साथ हमारी बात भी है, हमारी

जिंदगी की बात भी है, हमारे आज की, आने वाले कल की बात भी है कि उसकी कल्पना कर सकना जो हमारे समाने अभी मौजूद नहीं है, वही हमको आगे ले जा सकता है और आगे भी ले जाएगा। उसके लिए निडर होकर उसमें विश्वास करना, उसको देख पाना, हमारे अंदर एक विश्वास की बात है। यह विश्वास और यह गुण ये दोनों बहुत कीमती हैं। इतने कीमती भी नहीं हैं कि इन्हें संभाल कर रखें और कहीं उठा कर तिजोरी में रख दें। हमारे सपने भी हमारे पास बने हुए हैं और हमारे अंदर हैं और हम भी इन्हें साकार कर सकते हैं।

It is precious, but not precious in a way that you keep it away like a piece of jewellery. It is something to be nurtured and nourished, something to be practised and only then you can take it forward. You practise it now with the arts, with empathy and by giving to others, reaching out to others and this becomes your own rehearsal for life, your own preparation for life. And when you grow up and you go into the world, then you practise it because by then you have visualized it so much that it becomes a part of you, something with which you will not compromise and something which you would like to take forward. Then, everything you want to see is there. It is all there in the sky, around us, it is there in each one of us. And with that I wish you all the best.

Tripurari Sharma
April 5, 2014

सहस्राब्दी के प्रथम मदर्स डे पर

माँ शब्द में ही इतनी मधुरता और कोमलता होती है कि इसका उच्चारण करते ही मन अपूर्व माधुर्य और मिठास से भर उठता है। जब सारी दुनिया हमसे घृणा करती है, हम पर व्यंग्य के कोड़े बरसाती है और अविश्वास के दंश से हमें आहत करती है तब किसकी ममत्व भरी शीतल गोद में सिर रखने का मन करता है? कौन है जिसका कोमल जादुई संस्पर्श हमारे सारे संतापों को हर लेता है और हममें नई ऊर्जा और प्राणशक्ति का संचार करता है? वह है माँ, हमारी वात्सल्यमयी माँ।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स

मृत्यु – बोध

क्यों न रहे जीवन में इतनी सहजता
और आती जाए व्यक्तित्व में इतनी अर्थवत्ता
कि जगत में आते हमारे पलों का हो यदि साक्षी एक
तो महाप्रयाण को जाते क्षणों के हों बंधु अनेक
हों बंधु अनेक ।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स



Ms. Charul Bharwada is an architect and a post graduate from the School of Planning (CEPT) Ahmedabad and was brought up in Mumbai. Mr. Vinay Mahajan is an agricultural engineer and a management post graduate from

the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. Moved and inspired by people's resistance movements across India, this highly qualified couple creates moving music as Loknaad (People's Voice).

Loknaad is a unique progressive band. For some, it is more than a band - a humbling space to understand and feel lost dignity and sensitivity. Loknaad's simple lyrics and minimalistic music with a dafla and ghungroo lend their presentation a unique earthy feel.

Communal violence and the hate campaigns, specifically in Gujarat, inspired some of the moving songs on peace and borders which led to Loknaad's first audio album Insaan Hain Hum. Their songs are born when the heart bleeds, the hope shines through the darkness and the dreams want to speak. The songs are also born out of their humbling field experiences during research studies and have inspired many people to look around, to reflect and to continue to struggle for a just world. Ms. Bharwada and Mr. Mahajan have written more than 50 songs. Be it the legendary Mandir-Masjid, the RTI song, Janane ka Haq, the right to work song, Haathon ka Kaam, the song on borders, Lakeerein Mita Dein.

Loknaad's songs are sung by people's campaigns and movements across the nation and often across borders. Their Janane ka Haq song has become part of Social and Political Life textbook for the seventh standard NCERT syllabus followed by CBSE and other schools. Through 500 plus performances across the country, they have touched the hearts of more than 3.5 lakh people.

Ms. Charul Bharwada and Mr. Vinay Mahajan have received several awards. These include, The Young Achievers Award by Gen Next, Pune, The Sanskriti Award for Outstanding Social Achievement, Delhi, The Neerubhai Desai Award, Ahmedabad, The Ambassador of Peace Award by the Universal Peace Federation, and citations from the Punjab Lok Sabha Charak Manch and the Sahyog Parivar Sabarkantha, Gujarat. They have also received the Sadbhavna Award for Peace and Harmony in Gujarat and the Sakshma Sanmaan by the MGM Institutes, Aurangabad, Maharashtra.



Mr. Vinay Mahajan and Ms. Charul Bharwada delivering the keynote address



The audience and the students at the lecture



Ms. Aruna Roy, Ms. Shefali Martins and Dr. Divya Singhal addressing the gathering

AAZADI: WE THE PEOPLE

15 अगस्त 1947 को हमारे देश में सपने देखने की आज़ादी मिली। सदियों से भरे आक्रोश और बेबसी के बाद आज़ाद होने की खुशी थी। पर इस आज़ादी के साथ लोगों का एक दर्द भी था, बँटवारे को लेकर। सबसे पहले हम, उन हज़ारों जाने अनजाने शहीदों को, बँटवारे में मारे गए उन सारे मासूम लोगों को याद करते हुए दो मिनट का मौन रखेंगे।

आज़ादी है फूल की खुशबू आज़ादी
आज़ादी है भोर की लाली आज़ादी
धरती अंबर आज पुकारे आज़ादी
आज़ादी है फूल की खुशबू आज़ादी
आज़ादी है भोर की लाली आज़ादी

आज़ाद भारत का पहला सपना था भूख से आज़ादी। 1947 से आज तक के सालों में हमने काफी कुछ पाया है, पर आज भी हमारे देश में हर रोज़ चार हज़ार से ज़्यादा बच्चे भूख से मर रहे हैं। शहर के फुटपाथ पर रहने वाले दो बच्चे। कई दिनों से कुछ भी खाया नहीं। एक बड़ा भाई है व एक छोटी बहन। भूख की वजह से बहन अर्द्धबेहोश सी हो गई है और उसका सिर अपनी गोद में रखकर यह भाई इस आज़ादी से कुछ पूछ रहा है।

बच्ची है नन्हीं सी सुन्दर है परियों सी
जिस दिन से भूखी है वो 14 नवम्बर थी

थोड़े चावल, एक रोटी बस इतना कहती
एक रंग की इक रोटी, तो तीन तिरंगे की।
क्या होती आज़ादी, वो मुझसे है कहती
बच्ची है नन्हीं सी

थोड़ा थोड़ा रोज़ मरे पर जीना है कहती
गोद में खेले वो मेरी दुनिया सपनों की
क्या ज़िंदा रहूँगी मैं वो मुझसे है कहती
क्या ज़िंदा रहूँगी मैं वो हमसे है कहती

एक बार हमें मौका मिला था मजदूरी करने वाले बच्चों के साथ 4 दिन रहने का। बहुत कुछ सिखाया उन बच्चों ने हमें।

पूरे गुजरात से लगभग चार सौ बच्चे थे। अलग-अलग क्षेत्रों में काम करने वाले, फैक्ट्रियों में काम करने वाले, ईंटों के भट्टे पर काम करने वाले, पत्थर की खदानों में काम करने वाले। इन सारे बच्चों के साथ रहकर विनय ने एक बहुत अच्छा गाना लिखा। जब यह गाना उन बच्चों को सुनाया गया, तो इनमें बहुत सारे

बच्चे पढ़े लिखे नहीं थे, पर इनको लगा कि हमारी जिंदगी के ऊपर पहली बार किसी ने गाना लिखा है। उन्हें बहुत अच्छा लगा। हमने इन बच्चों से पूछा कि चार दिन का जो यह कार्यक्रम हुआ उसमें आपको सबसे अच्छा क्या लगा। बहुत सारे मीडिया के लोग थे, देश भर से अलग अलग लोग आए थे, वकील आए थे, निर्णायक मंडल के सदस्य थे और बच्चे किसी प्रतिष्ठित व्यक्ति से हाथ मिलाते हुए अपनी फोटो रोज़ अखबारों में देखते थे। हम क्या क्या पसंद करते थे, हम सोचते थे उन जवाबों के बारे में कि किस प्रकार के जवाब वे देंगे। लेकिन इन बच्चों ने दो बातें कहीं — हममें से बहुत सारे लोग हैं जिनके पास सोने के लिए अलग अलग कमरा नहीं है, पर हम रात को जहाँ भी सोते हैं सुबह वहीं से उठते हैं।

इन बच्चों ने दो बातें कहीं — पहली बात — जिंदगी में पहली बार पूरी रात एक ही बिस्तर पर सोने का अहसास क्या होता है, आज हमें पता चला। क्योंकि हम अहमदाबाद के प्लेटफार्म पर रहते हैं, जहाँ रात को 12 बजे एक ट्रेन आती है, पुलिस आकर हमें डंडे मारती है, हम भागकर 4 नम्बर के प्लेटफार्म पर जाते हैं। फिर दो बजे दूसरी ट्रेन आती है, फिर हमें डंडे पड़ते हैं, फिर भागकर हम 6 नम्बर के प्लेटफार्म पर जाते हैं। तो ट्रेन के हिसाब से हम बिस्तर बदलते रहते हैं। पूरी रात बिना डंडा खाए सोने का हमारे लिए यह पहला मौका है।

दूसरी बात — जिंदगी में पहली बार एक पूरी थाली भरकर खाने का एहसास क्या होता है, आज हमें पता चला, क्योंकि हम प्लेटफार्म पर रहते हैं। हम तब नहीं खाते, जब हमें भूख लगती है। जब हमें कोई खाना मिल जाता है, तब खाते हैं।

बड़ौदा के प्लेटफार्म से कुछ बच्चे आए थे। हमारे कुछ दोस्त वहाँ रात्रिकालीन स्कूल चलाते हैं, तो उन्होंने कहा कि दीदी और भैया आपने इतना अच्छा गाना लिखा है, इसलिए हम आपको कुछ भेंट देना चाहेंगे। क्या आप आओगे बड़ौदा? हमने कहा जरूर, क्यों नहीं। तब वे बोले दीदी और भैया आप लोग राजधानी के टाइम पर आना। हमने पूछा क्यों? अरे राजधानी एक ट्रेन होती है लम्बी-लम्बी, अन्दर से एक दम ठंडी, जो दिल्ली से आती है। उस ट्रेन में बहुत अच्छा खाना मिलता है। लेकिन वो सेठ लोग उस खाने को ऐसे ही छोड़ देते हैं। उस ट्रेन में काम करने वाले लड़के, जब ट्रेन बड़ौदा स्टेशन पर पहुँचती है तो बचा हुआ सारा खाना हमें दे देते हैं। इसलिए आप राजधानी के समय पर आना जिससे हमारी अच्छी पार्टी होगी। विनय और मैं कुछ देर के लिए सोचने लगे क्योंकि हमें पहली बार समझ में आया कि इस देश के दो करोड़ बच्चों के लिए पार्टी का मतलब राजधानी का झूठा खाना। ये सारे बच्चे हम सबको कुछ कहना चाहते हैं —

मेरी बारी है

मेरे देश का बचपन लापता है,
थोड़ा मुझको थोड़ा तुमको भी पता है,
आओ मिल कर उसे ढूँढ़ें ज़रा,
मिल जाएगा वो मुझको पता है।

चाय किटली अब ना जाऊँ, मैं ना हाथ जलाऊँ,
झाड़ू, पोंछा, कपड़ा, बर्तन, कभी ना करने जाऊँ
छोटी छोटी उंगलियों से ना कारपेट बनाऊँ
कपड़े पर ना रंग लगाऊँ, ना जूते चमकाऊँ मेरी बारी है,
मजा मैं करने जाऊँ मेरी बारी है।

गाड़ी के डिब्बों में जा के, अब ना गाना गाऊँ,
दो नम्बर के प्लेटफार्म पर, भूखे ना सो जाऊँ,
सड़कों के रोलर पे चढ़के क्यूँ मैं खून बहाऊँ,
पुल जब टूटे नीचे आ के, अब ना जान गवाऊँ, मेरी बारी है,
मजा मैं करने जाऊँ मेरी बारी है।

शीशे की और पित्तल की भट्ठी में अब ना जाऊँ
ईंटों के भट्टे में जलके, मैं ना ईंट बनाऊँ
अब ना जाऊँ बांधकाम पे, पत्थर ना तुड़वाऊँ
ना बीड़ी, ना माचिस को, ना हीरे, मैं चमकाऊँ मेरी बारी है,
मजा मैं करने जाऊँ मेरी बारी है।

मेरे देश का बचपन लापता है ...

दे दो मेरी चार लखोटी, दे दो गिल्ली डंडा
हु तू तू तू रोज करूंगा, खेतों में दौड़ूंगा
रेती का वो ढेर भी दे दो, अपना महल करूंगा
बरसातों के पानी में मैं, छप छप खूब करूंगा मेरी बारी है,
मजा मैं ,खूब करूंगा मेरी बारी है।

ढेर किताबें दे दो मुझको, अब मैं खूब पढ़ूंगा,
मां बाबा और दादाजी को, चिट्ठी रोज लिखूंगा
चंदा से और सूरज से मैं बातें खूब करूंगा,
टिम टिम करते तारों से मैं, आंखे चार करूंगा मेरी बारी है,
मजा मैं खूब करूंगा मेरी बारी है।

ये बच्चे कह रहे थे, ढेर सारी किताबें दे दो मुझको अब मैं भी खूब पढ़ूँगा। आपको क्या लगता है ये बच्चे शहर के थे या गाँव के? कहाँ के थे ये बच्चे? शायद ऐसा लग रहा है कि ये बच्चे शहर के होंगे। हम एक बात जो सहजता से मान लेते हैं कि शायद ये जो पूरा ज्ञान है वो किताबों में हैं लेकिन किताबों के मानव इतिहास में आने से पूर्व दो मूलभूत चीज़ें होना ज़रूरी है।

Two things must be present in society, before we get the books. One thing is the printing press. There were many people including William Caxton who solved the problems related to the printing press. But, there is one more thing, which is very fundamental. What is that? It is the script.

If we do not have a script, we cannot write. We can talk, we can think and we can sing; we have knowledge — but a script is necessary for writing the book. So which is the oldest script? How old is the script in human history? Script is only around 6000 years old, but knowledge in human history is much, much older. How old are human beings? You must have heard about Charles Darwin.

हम चिंपांजी से इंसान बने हैं। धीरे-धीरे हमारा विकास हुआ है। कुछ एक को शर्म आती है कि हम चिंपांजी से इंसान कैसे बन सकते हैं? पर बने हैं धीरे-धीरे विकास के द्वारा। 40—50 लाख साल पहले हमारे बनने की शुरुआत हुई। पर उन्हें ज्ञान तो था। यानि ज्ञान पाने का इतिहास किताबों से कहीं ज़्यादा पुराना है। लाखों सालों तक हम इन्सानों ने ज्ञान किताबें आने से पहले ही पाया।

What I am going to share with you now, is not something you would easily find in books. Let us go back to the children of the song: *Meri Bari Hai*.

The children who starve, the children who labour, who are these children? Where do they come from? Most often, they are children of the parents who work with their hands. The parents are labourers, they are farmers, they are graziers, they are workers, and they are artisans. These are poorer communities in our country. When the parents cannot afford to feed them, the children go and work. So people work with their hands and hands have a beautiful history.

Human hands... what do you think? Are these hands simple or are they very valuable? I want to give you a perspective of what your hands are worth. Do not take your hands for granted. Where did we begin the journey of our hands? What are the things that our hands made? The Taj Mahal, the Great Wall of China, the Colosseum of Rome. The

earliest stone tools made by human hands that have been found are 23 lakh years old. Books are just 6000 years old; the stone tools go back 23 lakh years. There was the knowledge of which tool to be made by applying what amount of force and at what angle on a particular stone. Those tools were crafted by human hands and these are not ordinary hands; these were the hands of the first engineers of our society. They were the first engineers because they made certain objects which were useful to them in their context for their survival. Let us do an exercise.

हम लोग चिम्पांजी से बने हैं, क्या आपने चिम्पांजी का हाथ देखा है। बहुत से बच्चों ने देखा है। अब आप अपना हाथ ऊँचा करें और अपनी पहली अंगुली को अंगूठे से मिलाइये, दूसरी, तीसरी, चौथी, हम सारी अंगुलियों को अंगूठे से मिला सकते हैं। हम अंगूठे को 360° पर घुमा सकते हैं। हम ये सब कर सकते हैं पर चिंपांजी ये नहीं कर सकता है।

आप कहेंगे इसमें क्या बड़ी बात है कि हम कर सकते हैं और चिंपांजी नहीं कर सकता। बहुत बड़ी बात है। इसी ने हमें चिंपांजी से अलग कर दिया। चलो एक बार फिर हम उसी बारे में बात करें।

इंसान को अपने हाथ से कोई भी चीज़ अगर बनानी है तो यह ज़रूरी है कि आपकी अंगुलियाँ अंगूठे को छू सकें। अंगुलियों के बिना आप नहीं कर सकते। इसके बिना (अंगुलियों के बिना) आप कुछ नहीं पकड़ सकते। इसके बिना आप लिख नहीं सकते, आप किताब नहीं पकड़ सकते। मैं अपनी उँगली नहीं पकड़ सकता, अपना माइक्रोफोन नहीं पकड़ सकता।

In the language of Anthropology, it is called the opposability of thumb. Your thumb can be opposed to all your fingers and this gives you both a power grip and a precision grip. So unless you have a power grip and a precision grip, you cannot craft and create. Look at the picture showing the hands of a chimpanzee and human hands. The chimpanzee's fingers are longer than ours. The other difference is, the chimpanzee's thumb is smaller than ours. But we evolved from the chimpanzee. As human beings began holding things, crafting things, making objects, the human hands were also evolving slowly.

The chimpanzee walks on four legs. We walk on two legs. And we do this through an evolutionary process of over 32-35 lakh years! That means it took about 12 lakh years for our hands, these beautiful hands, to evolve from the hands of a chimpanzee before we made our first tools. It took Nature many more years to make the beautiful hands which sculptured the Taj Mahal, the Pyramids, the Colosseum, the Great Wall of China and so many other wonders.

As we humans began crafting things with our hands, our brain also developed. Today we do not see the relation between our brain and our hands. Let us see the difference between a chimpanzee's brain that is 400cc and human brain that is 1200cc. Human brain (present) evolved only one-and-a-half lakh years ago; that means it took around 30 lakh years to turn a chimpanzee's brain into our brains and hands had a critical role to play in that evolution. Today the relation between hands and brains is totally unequal. Those who work with their brain, they are enjoying almost everything in life. The people who are working with their hands are suffering in indignities, even though in the development of the brain, hands have played a fundamental role. So this is an inequality of hands and brain. Human hands over a period of 30 lakh years, have created so many beautiful things and this song is about the history of human hands and about what they are doing and where are they now in the society.

हाथों को काम

इन्साँ पैरों पे खड़े हुये, दो हाथ तभी आज़ाद हुए,
इन दो हाथों की मेहनत से, धीरे धीरे आबाद हुए।
इन हाथों ने फल तोड़े थे, इन से ही गुफा के घर बने,
फिर पत्थर के औज़ार बने और लोहे के हथियार बने।
हाथों ने फसलें बोई थीं, हाथों से चूल्हे आग बने,
लाखों सालों की मेहनत से, कितने सुंदर ये हाथ बने।
बीथोवन का संगीत बना, विन्दी जैसे फनकार बने,
बुल्लेशाहों की कलम चली सूफी संतों के दोहे बने,
पर हाथ यहीं अब खाली हैं,
क्योंकि इनको कोई काम नहीं . . .

हल चला के खेतों को, मैंने ही सजाया रे,
गेहूँ चावल, मक्के के, दानों को उगाया रे,
चूल्हा भी बनाया मैंने, धान भी पकाया रे,
रहूँ क्यों भूखे पेट रे, कि मेरे लिये काम नहीं . . .

मिट्टी की खुदाई की, भट्टी को जलाया रे,
ईंटों को पकाया मैंने, बंगला बनाया रे,
संसद का हरेक खंभा, मैंने ही उठाया रे,
सोऊँ क्यों फुटपाथ पे, कि मेरे लिये काम नहीं . . .

धागे को बनाया मैंने, मिलों को चलाया रे,
तानाबाना जोड़ के, कपड़ा बनाया रे,
सपनों के रंगों से, उनको सजाया रे,
मुझे कफन नहीं रे, कि मेरे लिये काम नहीं . . .

रेल को बनाया मैंने, सड़कों को बिछाया रे,
हवा में उड़ाया रे, चँदा से मिलाया रे,
नाव को बनाया मैंने, पानी पे चलाया रे,
मेरी ना जिंदगी चले, कि मेरे लिये काम नहीं . . .

शाहजहाँ के ताज को, मैंने ही बनाया है,
मंदिरों को, मस्जिदों को, मैंने ही सजाया रे,
बांसुरी, सितार को, मादल को बजाया रे,
मेरा संगीत कहाँ रे, कि मेरे लिये काम नहीं . . .

सपने सजायेंगे, जिंदगी बनायेंगे,
उँगलियों को मोड़ के, हाथों को उठायेंगे
आसमाँ को छूयेंगे जिंदाबाद गायेंगे,
गायेंगे तब तक रे, कि जब तक काम नहीं . . .
लड़ेंगे तब तक रे, कि जब तक काम नहीं . . .

All of us are aware of the kind of problems which our nation is facing. Some of those things we have talked about just now. And when there are problems, the most important thing we feel is that we should collectively fight those problems. We do not fight among ourselves; we collectivize. For example, if St. Stephen's is facing some problem today, would you all fight with each other or would you sit together and talk how St. Stephen's should solve that problem?

Our nation is facing very serious problems today: all those problems that we did not want at the time of Independence. One of the problem is continuously increasing and you often read about it in the newspapers. In the name of religion, we are continuously inciting hatred among ourselves. So many innocent people have been killed, Parliamentary sessions have been stopped, Assemblies have been stopped, many religious places have been broken, human beings have been burnt alive – all in the name of religion.

How old is fire in the human history? The earliest evidence related to fire in human history has been 14 lakh years old in a place called Chasowanja in Kenya where the earliest evidence, ash has been found. When we human beings had fire we began cooking and there was light, we could eat better, we could eat a variety of things and this was

also a light against darkness. With the warmth of fire, we began migrating to colder climates, and we spread across the continents. So fire played a very important role in all these. Fire was essential and life-giving and surely the early people never imagined that a day would come when in the name of religion, we human beings would burn each other, in the fire that we used 14 lakh years ago. So much violence has passed before our eyes. There was a poet from Rajkot, whose words I am translating from Gujarati to Hindi:

न हिन्दू निकला, न क्रिश्चियन, न मुसलमान निकला, कबरें खोलकर देखा तो
इंसान निकला।

मंदिर मस्जिद

मंदिर—मस्जिद गिरजाघर ने बाँट लिया भगवान को
धरती बाँटी, सागर बाँटा, मत बाँटो इन्सान को

हिंदु कहता मंदिर मेरा, मंदिर मेरा धाम है
मुस्लिम कहता मस्जिद मेरा, अल्ला का ही नाम है
हिंदु कहता . . . ओम नमः शिवाय
मुस्लिम कहता . . . अल्ला हो . . . अकबर
दोनों लड़ते, लड़ लड़ मरते, लड़ते लड़ते खत्म हुए
दोनों ने इक दूजे पर ना जानें क्या क्या जुल्म किये
किसका है ये मकसद और किसकी चाल है ये सब जान लो
धरती बाँटी . . .

नेता ने सत्ता की खातिर कौमवाद से काम लिया
धरम के ठेकेदार से मिल के लोगों को नाकाम किया
साथी बंटे टुकड़े—टुकड़े में, नेता तो बेईमान था
वोट मिले और नेता जीता शोषण को आसान किया
वक्त नहीं बीता है अब भी वक्त की कीमत जान लो
धरती बाँटी . . .

प्रजातंत्र में प्रजा को लूटे कैसी यह सरकार है
लाठी, गोली, ईश्वर, अल्ला यह सारे हथियार हैं
मिलके रहो और इनसे लड़ो
और लड़के इनको जीत लो
हक है हमारा चैन से जीना, अपने हक को छीन लो
अगर हो तुम शैतानी से तंग, दूर करो शैतान को
धरती बाँटी . . .

देश की जनता भूख से मरती, देखो भ्रष्टाचार ये
बेरोजगारी, ठेकेदारी, मँहगाई की मार ये
धरम—धरम चिल्लाने वाले, खून बहायें देश में
शैतानों ने डेरे डाले, इन्सानों के भेस में
कैसे कहेंगे सारे जहाँ से अच्छा हिन्दोस्तान को
धरती बाँटी . . .

There is a global recession today but there is one industry which is continuously growing and that is the industry of weapons! We are making something which is so destructive and that industry is growing continuously. If weapons are used, they are used against innocent people. If weapons are not used it is anyway a wasteful expenditure. It has no meaning. It does not serve any purpose to make weapons. We have been making more and more lethal weapons, leading to more and more killing and there is now a climate of war. You look at Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Israel... the entire world. The whole world seems to be going through so much of pain and violence.

There was a person named Francis Bacon who lived about 400 years ago. He gave us many things like the method of induction. He was a very good geologist. He was a priest and he was also a fantastic philosopher. Bacon said that the times of peace are better than the 'times of war' because he said that in the times of peace, children take their parents to the graveyards and in the times of war it is the parents who take their children to the graveyards. You can see the fear in the eyes of the children in the war zones. There was a photographer who wanted to shoot a picture of a girl and that girl thought that the camera was a weapon. As soon as he wanted to shoot, she raised her hands, with so much fear in the eyes. So this is a song which says —

आसमान से जब हम धरती को देखते हैं तो यह धरती समुन्दर में फँसे हुए
खूबसूरत जहाज जैसी दिखती है सुंदर व शांत। पर जैसे ही हम पास आने
लगते हैं, हमें कुदरत द्वारा बनाई गई लकीरें दिखाई देती हैं। जिसको हम
रेगिस्तान, बर्फीले इलाकों, जंगलों, नदियों, झरनों के नामों से जानते हैं।
जिसको हम सरहद के नाम से जानते हैं। इन सरहदों के अंदर अगर हम एक
बार आ जाएँ, तो जिसको हम देश कहते हैं, फिर वैसी कोई लकीरें नहीं दिखती
हैं। पर हम सब जानते हैं कि कितनी सारी लकीरें हम महसूस करते हैं। कभी
भाषा के नाम पर, कभी जाति के नाम पर। ऐसी कितनी सारी लकीरें, हमने अपने
आस—पास खींच रखी हैं। हमें लगता है कि जब तक हम इन लकीरों से ऊपर
नहीं उठेंगे, तब तक हमने जैसा देश बनाने का सपना देखा था, वैसा देश बनाना
मुश्किल है।

लकीरें मिटा दें

इन लकीरों ने हमको सताया बहुत
इन लकीरों ने हमको लड़ाया बहुत
इन लकीरों ने हमको जलाया बहुत
इन लकीरों ने हमको रूलाया बहुत
आओ लकीरें मिटा दें, आओ लकीरें मिटा दें

ये तो पाक और भारत में जैसे पड़ीं
हिंदु, मुस्लिम, सिख, की चढ़ाई बलि
ये तो अमृतसरों में लाहौरों में भी
ये तो बंगाल बंगला पे बिजली पड़ी
ये तो बहनों की इज्जत को ले के रही
ये तो मासूम बच्चों को फांसी हुई
ये तो हिंसा में जलती लकीरें, आओ लकीरें मिटा दें

इन लकीरों ने उन्नीस सौ बासठ किया
इन लकीरों ने पैसठ, इकहत्तर किया
इजराइल किया और फिलिस्तीन भी
बोसनीया, ईरान, ईराक भी
नागासाकी किया और हिरोशिमा भी
इन लकीरों से हिटलर, वियतनाम भी
प्यासी सी धरती बचा लें, आओ लकीरें मिटा दें

ये लकीरें जो मिट जायें इक बार भी
फिर ना देशी विदेशी की बातें कहीं
ना फौजों का डर हो, ना गोली, ना बम
फूलों के दरिया में खेलेंगे हम
बढ़ के सबको गले से लगायेंगे हम
सारी दुनिया में झूमेंगे गायेंगे हम
मासूम सपने सजायें, आओ लकीरें मिटा दें

हमने बर्लिन की दीवार तोड़ी ही थी,
फिर लकीरें मिटाना मुश्किल नहीं
आओ अपने ही घर से शुरू हम करें
इन लकीरों में प्यारे से रंग भरें
पाक, भारत, बंगला में गा दें, आओ लकीरें मिटा दें

इस दुनिया को बेहतर बना दें, आओ लकीरें मिटा दें

We wrote a beautiful Constitution. Our Constituent Assembly took two years, 11 months and 18 days to write such a beautiful Constitution. Its Preamble is so grand. This constitution holds all the dreams of our martyrs, it holds the dreams of all those people who fought for our independence.

We will be singing the last song and we will be learning it all together –

This song is our promise to ourselves, a commitment to ourselves and a mission statement of our nation that this is the kind of nation we want to make.

हम लोग We the People

हमने कहा आजाद हैं, अब दिल की सुनेंगे यहाँ
राहें बनाएँ, हम ही हमारी, मंज़िल चुनेंगे यहाँ
कोई ना छोटा, कोई बड़ा ना मिलके चलेंगे यहाँ
अधिकार सबको जीने का हो, सर ना झुकेंगे यहाँ

हम लोग We the People
हमने कहा चूल्हे सभी के जलते रहेंगे यहाँ
सब का जहाँ, हर आशियां बसते रहेंगे यहाँ
अंगूठों के लाखों निशां, लगते ना होंगे यहाँ

हम लोग We the People
हमने कहा मेहनतकशों के सम्मान होंगे यहाँ
जंगल, ज़मीं, खाने, नदी लुटते न होंगे यहाँ
खेतों में आँसू नहीं, फसलें उगें यहाँ

हम लोग We the People
हमने कहा बरसों लगे ना न्याय होंगे यहाँ
कानून से, फौजों से हम, डरते न होंगे यहाँ
जेलों में साँसें रुकें ना, भोपाल ना हों यहाँ

हम लोग We the People
हमने कहा जाति, धर्म, जलते न होंगे यहाँ
चारों दिशाएँ, भाषा बोली, आबाद होंगे यहाँ
माटी हमारी, लोग हमारे आजाद होंगे यहाँ

हम लोग We the People
आपणें We the People
असीं लोकी We the People
नम्मल We the People

नाबू जनारू We the People
आमर We the People
आंमीं ज़ाकालो We the People
आस लूख We the People
आम्ही लोक We the People
आमु आखा We the People
We the People

Charul Bharwada and Vinay Mahajan
April 4, 2015

जब आप सैर को जाएं

अच्छे स्वास्थ्य के लिए नियमित रूप से सैर पर जाना अत्यन्त लाभदायक होता है। अपनी व्यस्त जीवनचर्या में यदि सुबह समय न मिले तो शाम को समय निकाला जा सकता है। चिकित्सकों के अनुसार प्रतिदिन प्रातःकाल तीन से पाँच किलोमीटर पैदल चलने से शरीर निरोग रहता है एवं दिन भर स्फूर्ति बनी रहती है क्योंकि इस समय सड़कों पर दौड़ते वाहन प्रदूषण नहीं फैलाते। प्रकृति के शांत, सौम्य रूप का भी साक्षात्कार इस समय किया जा सकता है। यूँ भी हमारे पुराणों में ब्रह्म मुहूर्त को सर्वोत्तम समय माना जाता है।

अतः जब हम सैर को जाएं हमें इन बातों का विशेष ध्यान रखना चाहिए। एक जिम्मेदार नागरिक हैं अतः हमें अपनी नागरिकता का कर्तव्य निभाना चाहिए। सैर पर जाते समय हम अपनी दिनचर्या की समय-सारिणी बना सकते हैं। किसी रचनात्मक विषय पर चिन्तन कर सकते हैं। यदि धार्मिक प्रकृति है तो नाम-स्मरण कर सकते हैं। हमारे जीवन में हमारे आसपास सुबह से शाम तक कभी ध्वनि विस्तारक यंत्रों का, कभी दूरदर्शन का, कभी वाहनों का इतना शोरगुल रहता है कि हमें सुबह भ्रमण के लिए जाते समय इससे यथासंभव बचने का प्रयास करना चाहिए। आंखों की ज्योति बनाए रखने के लिए हरी घास पर कुछ समय नंगे पैर चलना भी लाभदायक होता है। युवा लोग जॉगिंग करने या धीरे-धीरे भागकर भी अपनी ऊर्जा को बढ़ा सकते हैं। प्रातः काल प्रकृति भी मौन होकर अपनी सुषमा बिखेरती है।

हम प्रकृति से इतना कुछ पाते हैं किन्तु उसे देते क्या हैं जबकि हमारे जीवन में प्रकृति की एकछत्र सत्ता है। अतः अब, जब हम भ्रमण को जाएं तो प्रकृति के विराज अद्भुत रूप का साक्षात्कार करें। अपने जीवन में प्रकृति के सुंदर रंगों की छत को सहेजने का प्रयास करें। तभी हमारा भ्रमण सार्थक हो सकेगा।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स

राष्ट्रीय एकता और सांप्रदायिकता

हमारी भारतीय संस्कृति आज से नहीं वरन् युगों पूर्व से सांप्रदायिक सद्भाव से ओतप्रोत है। इतिहास से हम कुछ उदाहरण ले सकते हैं क्योंकि इतिहास बार-बार अपने आप को दोहराता है। यही इतिहास व ऐतिहासिक तथ्य हमें बताते हैं कि मथुरा-वृन्दावन क्षेत्र के मंदिरों के लिए एक हजार बीघा जमीन का दान सम्राट अकबर ने किया था और फतहपुर सीकरी में इबादतखाना बनवाया था। महाभारत का पहला फारसी अनुवाद भी अकबर ने ही फैजी कवि की देखरेख में करवाया था। वीर शिवाजी आध्यात्मिक प्रेरणा के लिए वेल्सी के बाबा चाकूत के पास जाते थे।

मध्यकालीन बंगाल में कई ऐसे मुस्लिम कवि थे जिन्होंने वैष्णव गीत लिखे।

प्रख्यात कृष्णभक्त कवि रसखान स्वयं पठान परिवार से थे जिन्होंने, “मानुष हों तो वही रसखानि जो बसौ ब्रज गोकुल गांव के ग्वालन ” में कृष्ण के प्रति पूर्ण समर्पण भाव दर्शाया।

हमारी विरासत साझी रही है। हमारे साहित्य, संगीत, स्थापत्य, खानपान सभी पर इस मिश्रित संस्कृति का प्रभाव स्पष्ट रूप से देखा जा सकता है। मध्यकालीन भक्ति आंदोलन सांप्रदायिक सद्भावना का जीता जागता उदाहरण है। गुरुनानक, तुलसी, सूर, कबीर, तुकाराम, दादू, मीरा रैदास ने जो सांस्कृतिक पुनर्जागरण प्रारंभ किया उसमें सांप्रदायिकता के लिए कहीं कोई स्थान ही नहीं था।

सांप्रदायिक उन्माद क्यों भड़काता है? आइए हम इस प्रश्न पर विचार करें। अक्सर ऐसा होता है कि बात का बतंगड़ बना दिया जाता है और अफवाहों का जाल बिछा दिया जाता है। जो नहीं है उसे प्रचारित किया जाता है तो लोग अपना सन्तुलन खो बैठते हैं। आमतौर पर इंसान शांति और प्रेम से रहना चाहता है। कौन चाहता है कि उसका चैन मिट जाए, सुकून छिन जाए?

आम आदमी, जो न हिंदु होता है न मुसलमान, न सिख न ईसाई। वह सिर्फ इंसान होता है जो बिना किसी अपराध के सजा भोगता है। जब बच्चा जन्म लेता है तो उसे कहाँ पता होता है कि उसका धर्म क्या है, उसका संप्रदाय क्या है। वह तो एकदम निष्पाद होता है।

जिस प्रकार की शिक्षा बच्चे को दी जाएगी उसी प्रकार का व्यक्तित्व होगा।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स

कौमी एकता

आज हम एक अत्यंत विडम्बनापूर्ण वातावरण में जी रहे हैं। रोज़ समाचारपत्र उठाने पर हमें जहाँ एक ओर पंजाब में सांप्रदायिक दंगों के समाचार मिलते हैं तो दूसरी ओर दिवराला के सती कांड के पक्ष और विपक्ष में लंबे-चौड़े वक्तव्य पढ़ने को मिलते हैं। सत्य तो यह है कि इतिहास स्वयं को दुहराता है क्योंकि लोग वैसी ही गलतियाँ दुबारा करते हैं। दुर्भाग्यवश हम उस सीख को भूल से गए हैं जो इतिहास हमें सदियों से बार-बार देता रहा है।

हम बारूद के एक ऐसे ढेर पर बैठे हैं जिसे भड़काने के लिए एक हल्की सी चिंगारी ही काफी है।

आवश्यकता यह है कि हम अपनी भूमिका को पहचानें और प्रण करें कि हम अपने रोज के व्यवहार में संप्रदाय को स्थान नहीं देंगे। नौकरी में भी अपने संप्रदाय की भर्ती की जाती है और जाति को मित्रता का आधार बनाया जाता है। यदि हम आपसी व्यवहार में कौमी एकता व्यावहारिक रूप से अपना लेंगे तो हमारी कई समस्याएं खुदबखुद मिट जाएँगी।

सभी धर्म एक ही मार्ग को दिखाते हैं। हिन्दु धर्म ने ‘वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्’ की अवधारणा को स्वीकार किया था तो पैगम्बर मुहम्मद ने कहा ‘सारा संसार एक ऐसी खूबसूरत मस्जिद है जहाँ लोग एक ही काम के लिए इकट्ठे होते हैं।’ कुरान की एक आयत में लिखा है ‘आप मुँह पूरब की तरफ करें या पश्चिम की तरफ अल्लाह हर तरफ मौजूद है।’ ईसाई धर्म का कहना है कि जो शहर या घर बँट गया वह ज्यादा देर टिक नहीं सकता। वैदिक उक्ति है ‘समानो मंत्र समिति समान समानम् मतम् सहचित्त्वम्।’

अतः हमें चाहिए कि हम एक सुंदर सद्भावना संजोएँ, सद्भाव से जिएँ और भारत को फिर विश्व का नेता सिद्ध करें।

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स

नारी पुरुष

तुम्हारे पास शक्ति है
मेरे पास भक्ति
तुममें है अधिकार गर्व
मुझमें है ममता
तुमने सृष्टि को अपने चरणों तले रौंदा है
मैंने मंदाकिनी बन उसे सींचा है
तुमने सदा विध्वंस किया है
और मैंने हर विध्वंस के बाद
नए सिरे से टूटे को जोड़ने का प्रयास किया है

— डॉ. दीपा मार्टिन्स



Dr. Mallika Sarabhai 2013



Prof. Tripurari Sharma 2014



Mr. Vinay Mahajan Ms. Charul Bharwada 2015



Dr. Deepa Martins
1951 - 2003

Dr. Deepa Martins, a teacher, grassroots social activist and litterateur was the first Secretary of the Governing Body of St. Stephen's Senior Secondary School, Ajmer. She was a gifted teacher, nurturer, institution builder and a passionate social activist. In addition to giving unflinching support to her husband, Shri Gilroy Martins, in the educational pursuit of providing Ajmer a much-needed English medium school, she also dedicated much of her time to social issues in Rajasthan at the grassroots-level through the 'Mahila Samooh' — a women's self-help group she co-founded, and the Inter-Faith Fraternal Association — a group that promotes inter-religious harmony in Ajmer. Dr. Deepa Martins was also involved in several other voluntary and NGO efforts in Rajasthan while being a model friend, parent and wife. Her life reflected the values of hard work, improving knowledge with a career goal, serving family, society, the nation and humanity as a whole — all being complimentary, and starting with education.

To celebrate these dimensions of Dr. Deepa Martins' life, and to carry forward her unique legacy, each year the School invites stalwarts from various fields to address, inspire and motivate the students and the faculty to foster the values of secularism, communal harmony, civil liberty and gender equality. This second volume of the Memorial lectures is a compilation of the thoughts and values that Ms. Vrinda Grover, Ms. Kamla Bhasin, Ms. Aruna Roy, Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Dr. Mallika Sarabhai, Prof. Tripurari Sharma and Ms. Charul Bharwada and Mr. Vinay Mahajan, shared with the St. Stephen's School Family.

