

सुषम बेदी कृत क़तरा दर क़तरा (Drop by Drop)
का अँग्रेजी अनुवाद तथा उसकी समस्याएँ

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF SUSHAM BEDI'S
QATRA DAR QATRA & ITS PROBLEMS

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शोध निर्देशक
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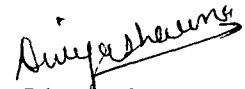
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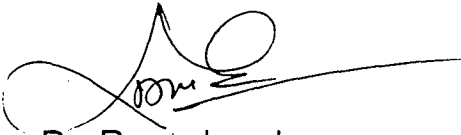
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research work done in this M.Phil Dissertation/PHD. Thesis entitled "**SUSHAM BEDI KRIT QATRA DAR QATRA (DROP BY DROP) KA ANGREZI ANUVAD TATHA USKI SAMSYAEN [ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF SUSHAM BEDI'S QATRA DAR QATRA AND ITS PROBLEMS]**" by me is the original research work and it has not been previously submitted for any other degree in this or any other University/Institution.


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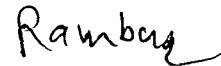
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भूमिका

प्रत्येक भाषा मानवीय चेतना और अभिव्यक्ति का अंश होते हुए भी एक स्वतंत्र भाषिक यथार्थ है। यह वस्तुतः वह सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक यथार्थ है जो कि उस भाषा के प्रयोक्ताओं ने विकसित किया है। इस प्रकार भाषा संस्कृति की वाहिका भी है और उसका उत्पाद भी। भाषा किसी समूह विशेष की विकास स्थिति का भी मापक होती है। आधुनिक भाषाएं विश्लेषणपरक हैं जबकि प्राचीन भाषाओं की प्रकृति संश्लिष्ट है। भाषा के विकास की शर्त यह भी है कि जो भाषा जितनी अधिक शब्द शक्तियों से संपन्न होगी, जितने उसके अर्थस्तर होंगे, जितनी प्रयुक्तियां होंगी, उसका प्रयोक्ता समान उतना ही उन्नत होगा।

प्रस्तुत लघु शोध प्रबंध का केंद्र सुषम बेदी रचित पुस्तक 'कतरा-दर-कतरा' है। इस औपन्यासिक कृति में आम लोगों की प्रमुख समस्याओं को उजागर किया गया है। सुषम बेदी के अन्य उपन्यासों की भांति यह भी स्त्री केंद्रित उपन्यास है जिसमें शशि एक सामान्य स्त्री की प्रतीक है जो जीवन की कठिनाईयों से हारती नहीं है बल्कि उनसे संघर्ष कर समाज में अपनी जगह बनाती है। वह हाशिए पर पड़ी स्त्री को तो मुख्यधारा में लाना ही चाहती है साथ ही उसके विचारों में समाज द्वारा अस्वीकृत कर दिए गए मानसिक अक्षम व्यक्ति को भी आत्मसम्मान से जीने का अधिकार होना चाहिए। शशि, परंपरागत व आधुनिक स्त्री की संक्रमणशील अवस्था को प्रतिबिंबित करती है। फलतः उपन्यास की ये विशेषताएं इसे रोचक बना देती हैं। रोचकता का यह पहलू मुझे चुनौतीपूर्ण लगा इसलिए इस कृति को लघु शोध प्रबंध का विषय बनाने में मुझे सहज ही प्रोत्साहन मिला।

इस लघु उपन्यास में, 20वीं सदी के अंत तथा 21वीं सदी के आरंभ के मध्यवर्गीय परिवारों के पीढ़ी अंतराल को दिखाया है। इन परिवारों के किशोर शारीरिक

व मानसिक परिवर्तनों का सामंजस्य अपने समाज व परिवार से नहीं बैठा पा रहे हैं। आधुनिक समाज व परिवार के परिवर्तित होने की दर शारीरिक परिवर्तनों की दर से कम होती जा रही है। किशोरवय मानसिकता के ईर्द-गिर्द रचे गए इस लघु उपन्यास के बारे में जब मैंने अपने गुरुवर आदरणीय चमनलाल से चर्चा की तो उन्होंने सहर्ष अनुमति प्रदान की। वास्तव में लेखिका का नाम तो आदरणीय गुरुजी ने ही सुझाया था। इसके अतिरिक्त समय-समय पर दिए गए अन्य सुझावों के लिए भी मैं उनकी आभारी हूँ।

भाषा का जन्म व्यक्तियों में आपसी विचार विनिमय के प्रयत्न से हुआ तो अनुवाद का जन्म दो भाषा-भाषी व्यक्तियों या समुदायों में विचार-विनिमय संभव बनाने के लिए। इसका प्रारंभ कदाचित ऐसे व्यक्तियों से हुआ होगा जो भाषा क्षेत्रों की सीमा पर रहने का कारण दो या अधिक भाषाओं के जानकार रहे होंगे तथा आवश्यकता पड़ने पर उन विभिन्न भाषाओं के व्यक्तियों के बीच दुभाषिए का काम करते रहे होंगे। इस बात का सहज ही अनुमान लगाया जा सकता है कि अनुवाद की प्राचीनतम परंपरा का प्रारंभ भाषा के जन्म के कुछ समय बाद हो गया होगा। यह भी अनुमानित किया जा सकता है कि अनुवाद की यह परंपरा बहुत दिनों तक मौखिक रही होगी तथा कालांतर में लिपि के प्रसार के बाद लिखित अनुवाद की परंपरा चल होगी।

मैंने 'कतरा-दर-कतरा' शीर्षक का अनुवाद 'Drop by Drop' किया है। हालांकि अनुवाद संबंधी समस्याएं प्रथम अध्याय में विवेचित की हैं लेकिन यह अंग्रेजी अनुवाद शब्द प्रतिशब्द अनुवाद नहीं है। इसका शाब्दिक अनुवाद करना इसके मर्म को मसलने जैसा होता। इसलिए भाव को बरकरार रखने में खासी मशक्कत करनी पड़ी। गुरुवर डॉ. रणजीत साहा तथा डॉ. रामचंद्र के सहयोग ने इसमें स्नेहक का काम किया जिसके लिए मैं उनकी आभारी रहूंगी। अनुवाद करने में अभी तक का अपना सर्वश्रेष्ठ देने के बावजूद कतिपय खामियां अवश्य होंगी जिनको मैं स्वीकार करती हूँ। इसके लिए मैं स्वयं को जिम्मेवार मानते हुए भविष्य में सुधारने का प्रयास करूंगी।

भारत देश में आधे से अधिक लोग मध्यवर्गीय तबके से ताल्लुक रखते हैं। इस देश को चुनिंदा अंग्रेजी भाषा-भाषी समुदाय की संवेदना को हिंदी की इस रचना से अंग्रेजी भाषा के माध्यम से झंकृत करने का मेरा यह लघु प्रयास है। अनुवाद के अतिरिक्त, अंग्रेजी भाषी समाज के हिंदी भाषा की कृति से परिचय कराने का अन्य माध्यम नजर नहीं आता। वास्तव में भाव को सुरक्षित रखने का पुरजोर प्रयास मेरे द्वारा किया गया है। हिंदी भाषी समुदाय तो इससे सहज ही जुड़ सकता है लेकिन अंग्रेजी भाषा में न होने के कारण अवश्य ही एक विशिष्ट समुदाय इससे वंचित रह सकता है।

लेखिका ने भले ही इस कृति को विदेशी जमीन पर आकार दिया है लेकिन इसकी कथावस्तु विशुद्ध भारतीय है। है। ककू का शारीरिक परिवर्तन अधिकांश मध्यवर्गीय पिताओं की पवित्रतावादी नजरों में घनघोर पाप होता है जबकि शशि इसको सहज परिवर्तन मानती है। 12 अध्यायों में विभाजित इस कृति में जब तक माता-पिता की महत्वाकांक्षाएं बच्चे पर हावी नहीं होती तब तक वह सामान्य बच्चे की तरह उछलता-खेलता रहता है। हाईस्कूल की परीक्षा के बाद जब परिणाम पिता के अनुरूप नहीं आता तब से पीड़ा शुरू होती है, जो अंत तक आते-आते बच्चे को मानसिक रूप से अस्थिर करके दम लेती है। प्रतिस्पर्धा का दमघोंटू वातावरण लेखिका ने बड़ी चतुराई से चित्रित किया है, जिस वातावरण में असफलता अपराध लगने लगती है।

20वीं सदी के अंतिम दशक के आरंभ से जिस तरह से गलाकाट प्रतिस्पर्धा का माहौल विकसित देशों में बना है उससे भारत भी अछूता नहीं रहा है। सही शब्दों में 'इंडिया' बनने की शुरुआत यहीं से मानी जा सकती है। इस कृति में इन परिस्थितियों की भीषणता का चित्रण किया गया है।

मेरा यह संपूर्ण लघु-शोध प्रबंध कुल चार अध्यायों में विभाजित है। प्रथम अध्याय में लेखिका के व्यक्तित्व एवं कृतित्व पर प्रकाश डाला गया है। इसमें लेखिका के जन्म से लेकर उनके समस्त लेखों तथा लेखन कर्म की चर्चा की गई है। अध्याय द्वितीय में संपूर्ण कृति का अंग्रेजी भाषा में अनुवाद किया गया है। अध्याय तृतीय में

कृति को अनूदित करते समय आने वाली समस्याओं से साक्षात्कार की चर्चा की गई है। अध्याय चार के अंतर्गत मूल पुस्तक की विशेषताओं की बात की गई है। इसके अतिरिक्त कई साक्षात्कारों को देखने तथा उनसे इंटरनेट के माध्यम से पत्र व्यवहार करने पर प्राप्त की गई जानकारी को साझा किया गया है। इन साक्षात्कारों तथा संवादों ने कृति के अनुवाद में मेरी विशेष सहायता की। इसके अतिरिक्त स्वयं लेखिका ने व्यक्तिगत रूप से बात करने के लिए समय निकाला, इसके लिए मैं उनकी कृतज्ञ हूं तथा धन्यवाद ज्ञापित करना चाहूंगी।

अंत में, अध्याय प्रथम आरंभ करने से पहले मैं अपने परिवारजनों को यह लघु-शोध प्रबंध समर्पित करना चाहूंगी जिनके बिना यह संभव नहीं हो पाता। इस लघु शोध प्रबंध को अंतिम आकार मैंने अपने मित्रों की सहायता से दिया जिसके लिए मैं धीरज, जयदेव, रौशनी तथा अन्य मित्रगणों को धन्यवाद देना चाहती हूं।

अध्याय प्रथम

लेखिका का व्यक्तित्व व कृतित्व

लेखिका का व्यक्तित्व व कृतित्व

सुषम बेदी का जन्म 1 जुलाई, 1945 में फिरोजपुर पंजाब में हुआ। इन्होंने इंद्रप्रस्थ कॉलेज से हिंदी में स्नातकोत्तर तथा दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय से डाक्टरेट की उपाधि हासिल की। ये दक्षिण एशियाई महत्वपूर्ण लेखिका हैं जिन्होंने कई कविताएं उपन्यास और लघु कहानियां लिखी हैं। ये कोलंबिया विश्वविद्यालय न्यूयार्क में मध्य-पूर्वी और एशियाई भाषा विभाग में हिंदी भाषा और साहित्य की प्रोफेसर रही हैं। सुषम बेदी दक्षिण एशियाई प्रवासी भारतीयों के अनुभव तथा आंतरिक संघर्षों को अपने लेखन में उजागर किया है। अन्य प्रमुख भारतीय उपन्यासकारों के विपरीत ये हिंदी में लिखती हैं। सुषम बेदी जी लेखिका के साथ अभिनेत्री भी रही हैं तथा बी.बी.सी. के कार्यक्रम 'लेटर्स फ्रॉम अब्रॉड' में भी काम कर चुकी हैं।

लेखिका को 2006 में साहित्य अकादमी पुरस्कार से भी सम्मानित किया जा चुका है। इनके प्रमुख उपन्यासों में आठ हिंदी के हैं। इनमें सबसे चर्चित 'हवन' हुआ है। इसका रचनाकाल 1998 है। इस कृति का अनुवाद 'डेविड रूबिन' द्वारा 'The Fire Sacrifice' नामक शीर्षक से किया गया है। इसका प्रकाशन 'Heinemann International' से हुआ। सुषम बेदी हिंदी कथा जगत में एक कहानीकार व उपन्यासकार के रूप में प्रसिद्ध हैं। लेकिन यह बात शायद बहुत कम लोग जानते हैं कि सुषम बेदी के हृदय में उमड़ते-घुमड़ते ख्वाबों का प्रस्फुटन सबसे पहले कविता के रूप में हुआ। ये दूसरी बात है कि लंबे समय तक ये कविताएं उनकी डायरी के पन्नों तक ही सिमटी रहीं। इन छोटी-मोटी कविताओं के भावार्थ कितने गहरे हैं इसका अहसास सुषम बेदी जी को लंबे समय के बाद हुआ तथा उनका पहला काव्य-संग्रह 'शब्दों की खिड़कियां' प्रकाशित हुआ। इस संग्रह की शिल्पगत अनंगदता देखकर यह कहने में कोई संकोच नहीं होता है कि जैसे प्यार कभी देह में कैद नहीं होता, उसी

तरह कविता शिल्प में कैद नहीं होती बल्कि शिल्प में कलात्मकता से मुक्त कविता ही जीवन के ज्यादा नजदीक होती है।

अपने उपन्यासों में भी सुषम बेदी ने अपना जादू-बिखेरा है। उनके उपन्यासों में रिश्तों का मेल और टकराव दोनों देखते हैं। उनके शब्दों में रिश्ते 'स्पेस' और 'वक्त' दोनों मांगते हैं। उन्हें न तो मुट्टी में कैद कर रखा जा सकता है न ही जोर जबर्दस्ती से चलाया जा सकता है। 'कतरा-दर-कतरा' उपन्यास पढ़ते हुए भी यह अहसास होता है कि रिश्ते केवल खून से नहीं बनते न ही वे किसी नाम के अथवा 'टैग' के मोहताज होते हैं। रिश्ते अहसास से बनते हैं, उन्हें महसूस करना बंद कर दिया जाए तो वे मर जाते हैं फिर चाहे वह रिश्ता माता-पिता और पुत्र का हो, भाई-बहन का हो या पति-पत्नी का हो। बिना अहसास के ये खोखले व बेजान रहते हैं।

लेखिका सुषम बेदी ने University of Texas at Austin द्वारा आयोजित 'Hindi-Urdu Flagship' कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत दिए गए अपने साक्षात्कार¹ में बताया कि हिंदी में इनकी रुचि आठवीं कक्षा से ही हो गई थी जब एक निबंध लिखने पर काफी सराहना मिली जिससे उत्साहित होकर उन्होंने नौवीं कक्षा से ही कविताएं लिखना आरंभ कर दिया। इन्होंने दसवीं कक्षा में एक उपन्यास भी लिखा। हालांकि अपने प्रौढ़ लेखन में उन्होंने ज्यादातर तकलीफों पर ही लिखा है उन्होंने ये भी माना है कि उनका लेखन थोड़ा सा 'एंटीरोमांटिक' है तथा कभी-कभी भावनाएं तकलीफ देती हैं। वे खुद में आजादी का भाव महसूस करती हैं तथा उनके चरित्र इसी भाव से परिपूर्ण हैं। उनके स्त्री चरित्र परिवर्तनकारी प्रक्रिया को सहन करने के लिए तैयार हैं उनकी नायिका न पूरी तरह पुरानी रूढ़ियों में फंसी है और न ही पूरी तरह आधुनिकता में रंगी है। उनकी नायिका इन दोनों का एक रोचक सा मिश्रण है।

सुषम बेदी कहती हैं कि उनको लोगों के बीच रहना अच्छा लगता है। इससे उनको लिखने के लिए विषय मिलता है तथा वे लेखन के लिए प्रोत्साहित होती हैं। वह

¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XkEdKfYbb8I>

लोगों से कटकर नहीं रहना चाहती बल्कि उन्हें “लोगों के साथ जीना, लोगों के साथ जिंदगी बांटना, उनकी जिंदगी को परखना, पहचानना तथा अपने आपको पहचानना इसके अलावा इंसानी अनुभूतियां व भावनाएं” ही इनका विषय है। इंसानी रिश्ते इन्हें आकर्षित करते हैं। कतरा-दर-कतरा में इंसानी रिश्तों की मार्मिक विवेचना व इनका सूक्ष्म मूल्यांकन किया है।

इन्होंने अभी तक आठ उपन्यास लिखे हैं। जो इस प्रकार हैं— हवन, लौटना, कतरा-दर-कतरा, चिड़िया और चील, इत्तर, गाथा, नवभूम की रसकथा, सड़क की लय। इसके अतिरिक्त लेखिका ने कई सांस्कृतिक व आलोचनात्मक लेख भी लिखे हैं। इन लेखों से कुछ का उल्लेख किया जा सकता है— कहां है मेरा घर (Calcutta), हिंदी भाषा का भूमण्डलीकरण (Globalization of Hindi), Dispur main Hindi Sahitya, Delhi ,Quest of Identity आदि।

इनकी रचनाएं कलाकारों, शिक्षाविदों और छात्रों द्वारा अंग्रेजी, फ्रेंच, डच और अन्य भाषाओं में अनूदित की गई हैं। भारत जिसमें आधे से ज्यादा लोग मध्यवर्गीय परिवार के हैं इसलिए हिन्दी भाषी समाज को इससे जुड़ने में ज्यादा वक्त नहीं लगेगा। इस कृति का अंग्रेजी अनुवाद करने का मुख्य कारण इस भाषा का अधिक चलन में होना है। अपने साक्षात्कार में वह खुद मानती हैं कि अंग्रेजी अनुवाद से न केवल हम पाश्चात्य समाज या अंग्रेजी भाषी लोगों से जुड़ पाते हैं बल्कि भारत की भी नई पीढ़ी को अपनी कृतियों के अंग्रेजी अनुवाद द्वारा अपनी बात पहुंचाई जा सकती है। फलतः नई पीढ़ी से संवाद कायम किया जा सकता है।

अध्याय द्वितीय
CHAPTER 2
Drop by Drop

Why things which are most painful in life tend to cling to the mind & memory, is not understandable. It is like involuntary movements of hand reaching time & again to scratch a healing wound, or a nauseating sight of a swarming beehive from a tree. Though eyesore, yet attractive gaze of unwilling eyes. The same is my state of mind towards oozing wounds of my life. The pain erupts & I rake it more instead of suppressing it. The venomous bees buzz around & intrinsic energies though strive desperately yet there is fixed stare on unpleasant scene.

The narration of this story perhaps should not begin in this way because this may not be the story of oozing wound only. The story is not of perishing drop by drop but also of building up in the same ways. The pain becomes two fold when one side is in the healing process & the other has deteriorated to incurable state.

Nobody ever advised that making somebody independent could be right and more important step rather helping others with obligations which ultimately results in silent death due to suffocation. You may be repenting upon your deeds of ruining your life without purpose. The other had to meet his destiny but you also met death without reason by grinding under the wheel along with the grains.

While the fact is that we make other person completely dependent on us by serving him all the times and this person becomes unable to muster up the courage & self confidence to do something on his own. The remaining strength also goes to dogs as time has taught me many things in this span. These last twenty five years, I have been suffering from this forming & perishing process.

But in both the context the matter was same. The only difference was between the place- or may be the depth of the pangs of pain or may be the confined limits of my understanding. An age comes where every dreadful thing appears to be more horrendous then it actually is in reality. Like when we are kids, at that time a midge appears as a big monster or on a canvas an average size dot emerge as big. And once we grow up, we believe that even we can cross big mountains. But was that dot actually small? Or because I was small so it appeared as big? But now when I have turned forty ... why that dot is keep on emerging as big & bigger... And that dot's shadow cover me this way that every part of mine begins to scream to get free. I am not able to understand whether this is a pain of present or from the past. But may be agony is agony, there is no present or past in it. The only thing one feels is the burden like the iron shackles or the flow of the dripping blood from the oozing wound which has been squeezed with the hand and its flow can not be stopped by bandages or ointment because in that case these will be chance of turning wound into canker.

Ashok told me- "This is just a piece of flesh, don't get attached to it." At that time, I felt that the shriek of agony could have cut the big strong mountain also. How can I describe him, by considering it mere piece of flesh, I feel myself lifeless . Every part of mine becomes lifeless. How can I consider myself dead? No I am not yet ready to become dead right now, so I have to keep him alive too.

And yes I do not want to repeat that story again. That part which has come in my lap, I can not let it remain fragile the ways it always was. I don't know what is better or what is correct to loose life the moment you are born,

or the rotten youth. I am fighting with both states & in both battles- before loosing life or after that .Ashok's both hands on my shoulders were not able to console me. Even before wiping out the tears from my eyes, I told Ashok-
“No Ashok he is my son, I will put every possible effort to save him ..may whatever comes.”

And incessantly same questions were posed to the doctor. Will he never be normal? And doctor used to give the same reply everytime but using different words. In such cases there is very less hope, its better if you admit him to the hospital of mental ailment of child psychiatry - may be his life won't last long. So you are just going to enhance yours agony by nurturing him yourself. Though a child gets love from his mother only, but it also depends on mother patience & courage. This kid needs care of 24*7. Your own life will become hell - “Are you ready for this? And also I cannot give you any assurance that your hard work will fructified. You have to do everything at your own risk. And yes, whatever I can help you, I will.”

Don't know after doctor inhibition, there was helplessness of my inner self to keep Anshu at home

“Didi, why don't they let me go to my home? I am fine di - please take me to home”.

I slightly look at Pitaji with a hope who coldly replied – “I will talk to the doctor”. And after replying this ,the deep wrinkled shadow of hopelessness flows on his face.

This hopelessness brings blatant angst & rebellious impression on Kakku's face. He starts considering Pitaji the very reason of not letting him come back to home. But he still confides in me and he looks at me

whiningly again says : “Didi! Do I look crazy? please ask pitaji to take me back to home”. Eyes are shimmering with tears with bowed head I replied “Today I’ll persuade dad for this & you will be back in few days”.

Kakku mumbles which I couldn't understand. The world inside me simmers - Is he my same younger brother with whom I have spent my childhood, the most crucial part of life? Is he the same or I have started believing what people consider him which is not true? Do these doctors actually know what actually has happened to him? Has actually anything happened to him? If something said by Kakku is not comprehensible to me or Pitaji, so It can only be understand by doctors and the ways doctor consider everybody birds of same feather flock together.

Is Kakku not becoming unnecessary victim of it? Don't know why those whining eyes of Kakku used to appear in sleepless nights & always felt that nothing has happened to him. But due to these clutches of doctors, we ourselves have become helpless? what exactly is this helplessness? losing trust in ourselves as well as others.... But still heart craves for believing any single ray of hope. Trying to catch every single straw like a drowning man & when this phantom of illusion of mirage overtakes our minds, we again start our best efforts to achieve it.

But there was something different in Kakku now. For a very long time, nobody even realized that changes are coming in him. I was already one who felt it first or might it was felt by Pitaji & if it would have been reached by maa, she never expressed it to anyone. But what changes even realized I don't consider that awkward, they are just seamless part of his growing age. Though it was an obnoxious sin the sanctified eyes of Pitaji.

For me it was just part of a regular life. But there were other changes too. when sometimes my heart considers a flight of fancy of his mind but that impossibilities of those fantasies, don't know what to call as them but whatever had been said, heart got shaken by that.

I always felt that I know Kakku the best. After all we were closest to each other. He was the youngest amongst all .Six kids in the family. I was just two years elder to him. My elder sister was four & half year elders to me. So we never share friendship like age-mates. Me & Kakku always used to play, eat & fight with each other whole day. Our antennas were always up & we were always busy in proceeding of constantly observing each other. The moment any one of us get a single mistake committed by other immediately we report this to our court house. Though there were many courts. The eldest didi's court, mother's court, & our supreme court was Pitaji. Only Supreme Court was in favour of me. But in wait of judge... that is Pitaji, either matter gets resolved or the culprit is not around to get punished. After my unilateral hearing Pitaji used to pat my back by awarding me title of very good girl and I use to get satisfied of thinking that the decision is in my favour as my voice has reached the right place. In Didi's & mother's court I always get scolded. May be because I was elder to him or he was dearest to all. His whitish complexion, his deep big eyes & his sharp features always made him attractive. Dimple on his right cheek, always bring smile on other faces. May be that ways everybody used to love him without reason, Everybody used to say that he will become lady killer once he grows up. Sometime I felt proud after listening to all this, sometime jealous.

When there is no body in the house, the final decision brings to the battle field. Whole house used to become battle field. From one room to the other, under the beds, behind the sofas, we used to make our house mess in our fights. Kakku pulls my hair with full force, & I with my long nails scratched his face & body. War never gets over till the moment I have started crying & then Kakku left me crying he never used to loose this fight. Because he was always favoured by all as he was a son & he was younger to me & yes he was stronger than me. Maximum fights happened in summer vacations when me & Kakku both were at home. Mostly we went to granny's place for our vacations. There Pitaji court was replaced by nani's court. And this court was opened whole day, I used to enjoy a lot that time. I was hardly Eight & Kakku was six. Whole day we had been playing card, & games – bluffing and only we were acquainted with these two games .When one bluffs the other, winner always kept on reminding the other who had been lost the game. And whosoever had lost never accepted it. And ultimately every game ended with fight. I in blubbering voice always used to complaint against Kakku. And when granny wheedles me the hiccups of my crying gets increased.

Our fights become so disparaging in whole family that once I had to face embarrassment among all. In my childhood,when I was nine years old-at that time I had severe pain in my stomach. One day Pitaji said that he will take me to some specialist because general practitioner were not able to tell what exactly has happened to me. There was no specialist in our Jalandhar city, so I , Maa Pitaji, Kakku went to Amritsar for my treatment. Kakku was also with us because he was always used to stick with parents wherever they

go. And it was also one reason that I was jealous of Kakku. But this time I was liking it. We had been playing during whole journey. After reaching guesthouse we again did lot of ventures & enjoyment. The waters served us really well.

This was the first time we had come for outing like this. We did not even fight once. And even I did not feel any stomach ache. Blood, stool, urine all tests were conducted, but there was nothing wrong. Rather our appetite increased so much there & we all allot. The cook of guest housed packed such good breads that I ate 10 breads there & nothing had happened to stomach. In three days all the tests were done. When doctor did not find anything, he started asking my parents about my psychological history. Am I frustrated or something? Am I not happy persons as I always scribal the times? Maa started saying this- In general I am happy.... & added but as brothers, sisters, they always forget and competitions with each others.

And that,doctor got stick to it. May be for satisfaction of Maa, Pitajai, he wanted to give some reason. My physical growth was also quite well according to my age. That is why; he was not able to find some reason of my illness. Forthwith he said - Yes this is the reason. Whenever she feels jealous or insecurity due to her brother, so to attract the attention of yours, she complains about stomach ache. Otherwise there is no reason of stomach ache. Your daughter is perfectly fine. That doctor was England returned. Maa, Pitaji was really impressed by his diagnosis. And after that ,they really got a very good interesting topic of discussion. This thing was told to all the relatives while praising doctor. I felt that I am getting undressed in front of all.

Kakku also got an other device to tease me all the times. I was very angry at that doctor. I felt that all medical science had betrayed me.

Still I feel that medical sciences is betraying me again. The pain recurred again many times but I stopped complaining about it. And like before, I get well by my own. Don't understand how & whom should I trust. But without trust one can never find peace. We try to fill our incompleteness in others incompleteness & in consequentially that incompleteness enhances.

Apart from me, Kakku's domination was on maa also. He was dearest to maa as he was youngest among all. Though after having so many kids, pampering of kids was not so much left in maa. Many times she cribbed that Kakku irks a lot. But still he was dearest to maa & she never did anything against Kakku's wish. He immediately become angry if something is not according to his wish. I remember when I was in seventh and he was in fourth. I used to go to middle school & he was in primary school. His school got over at 1.30 pm. Mostly, at that time lunch was served at home. If sometimes lunch gets late, other family members could wait. We just got transferred to Lucknow so servants were not arranged in such short span. Sometimes it happened that cooking was delayed. But if it was delayed and Kakku was hungry, the whole house would be in havoc. Indeed - a havoc.

Once when I was coming back from school, I saw Kakku throwing stones towards the house. Maa while preparing food inside was yelling, "it will be prepared soon, please do not break the glasses of the house". Kakku did not stop & even nobody came out to stop him. When I ran towards him to beat

him up, he flew off from that place. Their Mother scolded me only, that I didn't let him had his food. In the evening, I wanted him to get bashed by father but then again mother scolded me to let it be. He has not eaten anything since morning. Don't create mess in the house.

I got very annoyed that how dare he was throwing stones on maa & still mother was siding him. But everybody used to say that he is short of temper. His these actions were considered as part of his attitude & he was never punished for that. Nobody even observed that there is something wrong in him. Actually being short of temper in not a big problem as such.

But we had great gelling together also. Outside the house, he was like a guard for me. Once a guy pushed me & I fall down. He beated that guy so badly that even the parents of that guy came for complaint.

Kakku was also good in studies. Everybody in the house dreamt of making him a doctor. He is brainy & talented so he should be doctor. I was jealous at that time. I used to say to myself that I am also going to be a doctor one day & will show everybody that Kakku is not the only one who is so talented. Though our school & levels both were poles apart. We both get praised when our mark sheets were out. Family used to praise us no matter how much we scored, might to encourage us. Though I felt sometimes that they were more happy about Kakku's numbers & just to save Kakku from my jealousy they praise me too. Don't know that it was true or not, but used to think like that when I was grown up yeah but anyway I dropped the idea of becoming a doctor. By that time it was instilled in the mind of Kakku that he has to become a doctor. Once I got down because of the flu. He was craving for our playful fight. It took me about one week to recover. He said

"When I will be a doctor, I am going to invent such medicine that will cure flue in one day." Then he stopped for a moment & said "But I think I should be a psychiatrist- then I'll be able to know the root cause of every disease - Right didi?" He never let me forget my stomach ache incident. Kakku's dream of becoming doctor was not now constraint only to his wish but expectation of the whole family, It had become dream of the whole family. And the pressure of the dream had become termite which was eating up his mind.

Those days Pitaji was just transferred to Delhi. I was studying in BA Ist year. Kakku High School result was about to end. He was busy in filling forms of IIT & Medical Institutes with full zeal. But precisely how tough & crude this competition will be, neither Kakku nor family had any idea about it. I was already out of this competition as I opted arts for my studies. Though Kakku become nervous sometimes that if he will not get admission then what he is going to do. Anyways, this thing was already in his heart that he is going to get admission almost somewhere. If not IIT then somewhere else once he said.

"What do you think didi, where am I going to get admission - medical or engineering?"

"What do you want?"

"Medical. Then I'll go to England for higher studies."

Doctor of Amritsar had still impact on his mind.

First time I felt relieved for being a girl. I had no worries like that. Nobody had any expectations from me. So no body was pressurising me either. As ... complaints since childhood ... came to an end. Nobody was

pressurizing for getting good scores in my studies. Nobody was even bothered about my career. We used to bunk our classes, going to CP, movies but nobody had any objection with that. But Kakku gets scolded by everybody if he is scoring less in the exam. Pitaji's retirement was near so he was worried. He wanted to settle Kakku before he gets retired from his job. A small flaw in Kakku was unbearable for him. That Pitaji who always pampered him so much, now Kakku was only receiving tensions & restlessness instead of his love. Both brothers with their families were settled in Assam & Bangalore. Pitaji had no expectations from them and to expect anything from a girl is not possible in this society. So Kakku had to achieve everything on his own.

Sometimes I wonder why Pitaji made us study. Though all the sisters had left their study in mid only as they got married whilst doing their MA and all their studies and knowledge had gone to the dogs. Everybody used to say, they educate girls so that they could get married to better guys as they demand educated girls and as soon Pitaji got suitable match for daughters, he made them marry. Nevertheless, when we scored good marks in school, undoubtedly he used to feel proud of us. He discussed with his friends also & openly with remorse he also repeats this - what if they are good in studies - ultimately they belong to somebody else - excellent should be boys. Still he liked to discuss our excellence with his friends I feel now when we have grown up & we are well educated, he must have felt, that his status has also been raised because of this. And it somehow indicates that where girls are so well educated & intelligent in the family, the boy must be super intelligent.

Might he has allowed us to complete our studies but maa was in big hurry to get us married as soon as possible.

It was beneficial for me from all sides. If I don't score very good marks in exams so ultimately I could get married & can get rid off everything or even If I performed well then also it was of no use. But off lately I realised its disadvantages. Even after scoring Ist division in the exam, Maa did not let me study further. After long debates & fights, father coaxed mother for my further studies. Maa also said yes because I actually had nothing to do before I get married so in meanwhile when they were in hunt of finding groom, I started studying. Maa always used to remain gloomy. Sometimes I felt maa is as far from our hearts as she seems close to our eyes. One hand she was worried about me. Kakku & my destiny was interconnected somehow. In his happiness lies my happiness & in his loss lies my loss of devastated unmarried life.

But Kakku was sweating blood in the exam. He left no stone unturned .Whenever I used to get up at late night, his table lamp was always on. Whenever I came close to see him, he was always studying. And sometimes when he was taking nap in between, I switch off the lights. He wakes up & always said –“ Let the lights on, I am studying”.

Kakku did not get 1st division because of 6 numbers. All sow with your hard work, the result is finally decided in those days that how much you are actually going to get harvested.

No matter how much one create hue & cry, but those stains cannot be removed for your whole life. You can be cautious in future but your past always follows you. But at that adolescent age, nobody knows that it is just a

mild stain on the vast life's chapter. Rather it looks like a large dark tunnel which ultimately opens to the door of hell. As if Kakku's life's screen was covered with black curtains. All efforts were put, took help from all our acquaintances & approaches. Might those approaches were not influential enough- Pitaji was not that high post officer so that his position could help Kakku. Especially in Delhi, where there are people like Prime Ministers other high officials. He could not get admission in either Engineering or Medical. Pitaji said with a cold sigh – “From those you have high hopes, you get worst of them” (they turn out to be hopeless ones) A big arrow of hopelessness was struck in the heart. “God knows what this boy will do?”

Kakku stopped talking to anybody. He started remaining out of the house, strolling like wanderers on the road----He never wanted to face Pitaji. When Pitaji used to come back, he always asked about him and we pretended his questions to be unheard. The whole house was mournful. My elder brother's letter also came, filled with mourn & disappointments- “It is very sad to know about Kakku's result. His whole life is spoilt. Apart from medical & engineering, only clerical jobs are left. Tell him to put his best efforts in BA- Only IAS chance is left, the competition is too tough. Don't know weather he will be able to crack it or not. Let Bygones be bygones yeah this is the only age where either you can study or waste your time. I always said that Kakku will be spoilt due to parents pamperize attitude but nobody listens to us”.

After reading the letter from bhaia, I got very scared about Kakku, as if somebody died in the house . Kakku's face, there was dark emptiness & silence on it like death. Though my heart was also filled with gloominess I

got more broken with Pitaji's disheartenedness. Really what dreams he had in his mind for Kakku- sixteen years of Kakku's life was like happiest of his life also. But now the whole face is changed. Not like seasons, seasons do change & come again- This change was like that if they have buried someone and putting painful efforts of trying to create new relation with that one. They had dreams to fly on Kakku's wings & now after slaughtering of those wings, they have to be bound to the soil.

He had not even submitted application for in the regular colleges. He took admission in a regular college so that his one year would not be wasted. As if it was compromise with circumstances. After taking admission in B.Sc. he could apply anywhere. Here he took admission, these colleges were opened by that time. Kakku started going to college regularly. My college was in campus of university only so I take university special bus in the morning. Kakku's college was in South Delhi so that he used to move university because it take only half an hour to reach your hostel. By that time all our brother sisters were married & settled. We were the only college going students left. After college, we used to exchange. our house too.

"Hey Kakku, how is your college going on?"

"All right!"

"What do you mean by all right? You are liking it?"

"Hmmm----

"What, you don't like it?"

"No, its all right

'-----'

'-----'

"How are the lecturers there?"

"They are ok. Classes are not yet started regularly"

"You know any acquaintances.... anybody from the school?"

"No, have not seen anybody yet, I was also trying to find someone. It is better not to see anyone - they will also be surprised?"

"Surprised why?"

"Yeah..... that he is also here"

"What do you mean?"

I pretend ignorant

"Didi- don't know why... but in school also everybody used to think like Maa, Pitaji- May be that's why, in these regular colleges, they treat me with contempt. It says that God takes revenge.

"Why are you talking like that?"

"Didi! - was not I too bright?"

"Why you are asking like that?"

"I thought I was bright - but why it had happened?"

"This is not the only yardstick of intelligence Kakku"

"But people consider so - can't I see you, maa- Pitaji brother everybody? Do you consider me the same? You really think I can't feel the difference in your eyes. In less than a month i can sense. That feelings in your heart is poles apart now from what it used to be earlier. You have started considering me a fool?"

He suddenly kept quite & went outside as if he did not want to talk about it .I could have felt his pain but it has new become like lacerated

wound in front of my eyes. Can I do something about it? I was thinking about it for a long time. Only sympathy is not remedy of this pain.

Though in the world of studies & friends, I used to forget all about it, but Kakku was always there in my mind. In heart of hearts, I wanted him to be happy. But Kakku was not fine at all. I wanted him to take to my friends houses but he denied we went for a movie together but after sometimes he refused for that also.

Once when I reached back home, he was already there, although his classes used to get finish very late after my classes.

"Today you have come so early?"

"just like that..."

"had no class"

"Its all boring there nothing happens there"

"You have not made any friends?"

"Nobody is even worth of becoming friends, everybody is too rustic"

"But somebody..."

"I do not feel like going (there)"

"Kakku, what are you doing? You know if you again going to get low grades, you will loose this chance also"

"No chance has left"

"But still don't give up like this"

"What to do didi - I don't like to be there"

He lied on the bed helplessly & with cold eyes he was staring at the floor blankly.

Then he openly started spending his time lying on the bed instead of attending his classes. When I used to come at 2.30 pm, I was openly seeing him lying in the bed only. Maa was quite upset with that.

Don't know what has happened to him. Every time he is lying on bed. doesn't even eatinfact takes breakfast at 4 o'clock in the evening.

When Pitaji used to come back, Kakku had already left. For some days Maa disguised the situation from Pitaji. She told me also to not to create scene in the house. Gradually we could see him lying on the bed in pitaji's presence. On Sunday, when Kakku, did not come to take for lunch, Pitaji asked in surprise "Why did not Kakku get up yet?"

Maa did not show any complaint & tension & answered very calmly "he does like this these days"

I could not understand the concern of maa for Kakku. She was disguising things from Pitaji & pretended that everything is right & fine - Why maa was doing it? Was she denying the reality or was there some other problem which maa was hiding from all of us? The silent blank face was always showing some hidden pain in her.

Pitaji was furious.

"What do you mean he sleeps all day when I go to office, he is sleeping at that time also.

He got up & roared loudly near his room.

"Get up & come on the table for food"

Without getting fresh when he came on table then maa scolded him- at least brush your teeth. How will your eat like this."

When Kakku came back after getting fresh. Everybody got up from the table by that time.

He came quietly and sat on the table. An expression of strange guilt & Fear was there on his face. Don't know how much time he could have sat like that if maa had not asked him.

"Wait, I'll heat up the food again, why don't you come outside and sit in sunlight .We all are here."

He just said.

"No, please give me here only."

Six monthly sessionals comes Kakku has no preparation. Pitaji, forces Kakku & make him go to college. Don't know what happens here. Kakku says that he attends all classes but his attendance is so low that he could not get permission to sit in the exam. But anyways with some adjustments, time is granted for the betterment of conduct.

After the exam, I went to the Buddha Jayanti gardens with friends. Kakku was roaming there, long heighted & good physique. A nice oval face with sharp features. The dimple of the cheek had become more deep. Light moustaches & few hair of beard on the face. But the face was pale & off as if he is lost somewhere else . I make him meet to all. With his bowed head he said hello. His clothes are untidy. I feel embarrassed in front of friends. He has no friends - roaming alone & if they ask me about his college then what will I say. Kakku waved bye to us & goes away. Sandhya out of curiosity asked "What your brother does?"

"Goes to college"

"Which college"

"Sanatan Dharm"

She doesn't ask anything else. Might because of my cut short answer or because she considers my brother as nothing. That day I kept on looking at the clouds in the sky.

After that the day I remember is of March when the heat was instilled with the fragrance of Mangoes. I was sitting outside in the lawn under the Mango tree & was preparing for my exams. This was my favourite place to study in this season. Though didn't get mangoes to eat but the dense cold shadow was very relaxing. Before the fruits get ripped, parrots used to eat up all mangoes or maa used it for pickles. Due to greenery of leaves, parrots were camouflaged when we used to throw stones on tree they used to fly in flocks. We only got left over & their shit which was fallen on our head. But still I wanted to sit there only. Because of this I could get rid of getting disturbed by chit chat of maa & maids. I could study with full concentration. I was reading dream theory of Freud in my psychology book. Suddenly Pitaji's voice like storm strikes hit my ear. Somebody, who else than Kakku, was getting trashed by Pitaji.

"Shameless! don't you feel ashamed of yourself? Now you have steep down to level of lechery & shamelessness."

I trembled with fear & went to bungalow.

Pitaji went to the bedroom of Kakku & brought him out of his bed. He was punching him badly on his stomach & back. When he used to stop him with his hands then he started kicking his stomach. Pitaji had gone crazy as if he had committed some murder. Maa did not even try to save him which was quite unusual. Kakku had committed something which was cross the

limits of forgiveness. But what actually he had done & he is behaviour like a small puppy in front of Pitaji I went to maa in nervousness.

"Why you are not stopping Pitaji? Why is he beating him like this"

"because of this deeds"

"What deed?"

"Whatever the boys do--"

"What ? holding in hand"

Something did strike me

"but beating like this- he has not committed any sin"

"Don't talk rubbish. He will manage. None of your business. You go outside & study:"

That was none of my business & I was the only one who was studying psychology that time so I could understand these things a bit. But Maa declared that I don't have any right to talk about it. It is beyond limit of my concern. I could not understand anything & came back disappointedly.

I could have understood Maa's point of view to some extent Maa-Pitaji life was very disciplined, sober & restrained. Pitaji never touched alcohol or any drugs in his whole life & never spare anyone if he dares to do that. Maa never use to eat anything before doing regular pooja. Winters-Summers, she used to take bath with cold water. Pitaji was also regular & disciplined in his life .After his father died, all the responsibility of his sibbling was on him. As he was the eldest brothers, he did his responsibility with full conviction & dedication & honesty. Earlier his brother sisters & then his kids - all his life spent in settling everybody in their life. He was proud of that. He was happy for doing something not disappointed with that.

Pitaji was instilled with all principles of Gandhiji (Aryasamaj and Sanatan Dharma). Maybe that is why such kind of behaviour of Kakku was unpardonable to him. Life's chief moral values were: early to rise, taking bath & keeping himself away from all kinds of vices. I never revolted openly but I was not very fond of his lifestyle.

After that, one day I saw myself. Kakku's room was open. Pitaji also had told him not to shut the door & warned him that if he dares to do that he will not be allowed to have single room. Till now, Kakku had always high status in the house & he got the biggest room of the house. Instead of not selecting in medical, room was not snatched from him. But now he had got warning of getting it snatched. He was very attached to his room - if I enter his room without knocking, he used to get offended.

Kakku was lying flat on the bed & pillow was down under his belly. He was rubbing his body against the pillow. He was holding bed edge with one hand and second hand was on his belly. He was shaking his body so badly that even the bed was shaking with that rhythm Kakku. He was unconscious & did not even realise that somebody is standing on the door or the noise which is coming due to banging of the bed to the wall could attract attention of the whole house. He was unconsciously in spell of some unknown crazily rustic power. As if somebody is under control of some spirit & gets disconnected from its surrounding unconsciously. His all senses are centered on some mysterious unseen, unknown direction & moves here there under that spell. He was in the same condition. Don't know from where Pitaji came. He held him from his early hairs, & started punching his hair. Kakku for sometime did not understand what is going on, he kept on bearing

that punches. Then he tried to save or defend him with pillow, Pitaji was abusing him in fit of anger. Whatever part was not covered with Pitaji, he was punching him. Suddenly like an injured elephant, he stumbled (roar) loudly.

Please forgive me! won't do it - wont ever do it again.

So helpless & drenched pain voice was that. Don't know, I somehow remember that sadist poets who celebrate the feeling of hindrance in the physical pleasure & everybody applauds for their creativity. But when that lack somebody tried to fill by the means of sexual pleasure, then it is considered as unpardonable & punishable offence. Are human emotions & needs should occur with the permission of society? Is the criteria of being a good human is to suppress & vanish them - definition of goodness? Kakku's pain & screaming was considered that he was deservant of it. Nobody felt sympathy with that pain. Those things, desires or behaviour which is unacceptable, even the pain occur due to all these is also unacceptable. The pleasure he was imagining, was so abominable that he got punished as culprit & that too brutally. I felt sudden storm inside. I went inside the room & tried to stop Pitaji's hand with my both hands.

"Please do not thrash him more. He is not a kid anymore. He is sixteen now.

"Don't you dare to do that again. This what you are learning in college. Shameless, this only you will do in your life.... don't know what sins I have committed in my previous life, so that I am suffering today. All her studies are useless.

He went outside the room & I whispered to Kakku.

“Why don't you take care? Get thrashed uselessly.....”

He lied down on the bed helplessly tired, turning his back towards me

One day, I was studying under the same Mango tree. He came & stood near by me. After many days he came alone to talk to me.

“How is everything going on, Kakku?”

“I wanted to ask you one thing didi ...”

“Yeah say”

he was hesitant a bit

then I said

“Yeah, please speak up”

“Didi--- that girl--- - don't remember her name which girl

That girl who was my friend in childhood”.

“Which friend?”

your some friend

“That girl - which you people used to tease me with her name.”

“You are talking about Guddi?”

“Yes- I am talking about her .Where is she these days”

“I do not know where are those folks these days. But it has been ages.

Why you remembering her today?”

“I want to meet her.”

I was bewildered. How Kakku is talking - long back childhood teasing - Is he talking seriously or in jest. But Kakku face expression was too serious. He told me again.

“Didi, It is very important for me to meet her. I have to discuss something very important with her.”

“What do you want to talk?”

One thing --- very important ----- want to talk to her only - he was repeating it.

This was so baseless, that I was completely answerless for it. Inquisitiveness of Kakku about it made me irksome.

I have no idea where those guys are purled - but that girl must have forgotten everything. That time she was merely three. And anyways it was unless, everybody was bidding.

I might was trivial to you all, not for me. I really want to meet her would you please help me.

It was actually a Herculean task but Kakku was not ready to accept this helplessness. According to him if didi wants it to happen, she can do this and I was wondering how come he remembers this girl. That time he was merely 5 years old kid. Yes, but we had been teasing him for a long period. And it was so normal I never felt that Kakku had ever taken it seriously. Sometimes Didi or Maa used to tease him --- This girl is so beautiful ---- we will marry her to you - And Kakku hides her face in lap of Didi or Maa in embarrassment - but its been ages. Such innocent thing - once they were transferred we all had forgotten them. They were just our neighbours. I could not understand how Kakku's memory has become so sharp. I told him “ Ok- I'll let you know” - But I don't think that anybody will have any idea of that.

“Please

No matter how didi....but please let me know.

When Kakku went away, I started reading my book of Psychology again. May be this way of teasing kids is not right - these things stay in their heart. I was unsuccessfully trying to sort out the tricky questions while reading my BA Psychology book.

I was thinking - I should talk to Pitaji. Off course I was bit hesitant, that might he will again start thrashing Kakku. But during those days the ultimate remedy was with Pitaji only. No matter things are right or wrong, they have to reach Pitaji.

I was trying to build an introduction that how to talk to Pitaji, again Kakku asked me -“ Did you enquire ...?”

I said suddenly - “yes I have to talk to Pitaji.”

Kakku trembled with fear & turned pale. “No didi please, don't talk to Pitaji about it”

I realised my mistake. I tried to make up.

“Who else will know about it Kakku other then Pitaji. He must be knowing where was Guddi's father got transferred. Pitaji will be knowing it or he can ask in his office also. I will not tell him that you have asked about it.

Then he got satisfied and than he said while going

“Didi please do it fast. Else it will be too late.”

I was stunned. Why is he in such a rush.

Kakku became more depressed in few days. When he was at home he will always be in his room otherwise he was strolling all day outside, God knows where. He also did not want to come to dining table for dinner at night. If somehow he comes on my or mother's request, he never used to look at anybody and ate silently. In fact meanwhile he was on the dinner

table, a kind of tension always prevailed. I had always seen maa staring at his face continuously. A weird transparent expression was on his face always. Don't know whether she was trying to catch the tension on Kakku's face or she was upset with something else.

Kakku was kind of now uncontrollable for everybody. The moments he got up, Pitaji told maa "Do something about him, how far will go like this."

What could she do? What anybody could do? He was changing but nothing was so abnormal.

One day, while going to college I saw maa talking to pitaji very seriously. That evening maa said - Get ready in the morning. Panditji is going to perform Yajna.

Yajna was performed for Kakku only. It was long. The offering of ghee in Yajna was performed by Kakku only. Pandit ji prayed for Kakku's rightful thinking & virtuous path . While going he said he will become doctor, going to roam the whole world & will bring good name to the family. An expression of relief was on the face instead of fear. Now atmosphere of prosperity & hope was prevailing in the house. I always tried to find joyful reffling from Kakku's frigid face. As if Kakku is in some other world sometimes he was not even listening to Panditji & then maa held his hand made him perform his offering. Those red shadows which were reflecting on Maa's face were bringing a great confidence on her face, as if Kakku is going to be all right definitely. That's why when Panditji blessed him & said may you become doctor in future, maa immediately offer 501 as

guru dakshina. Those days, it was almost like whole month's salary . I also knew this that she cherished all this to fulfill her unfulfilled wishes for ages.

After few days, a strange thing happened. He came to me & he was holding a fresh edition of picture weekly in his hand. There was a picture of queen of England. He showed me the picture & said – “I know her you remember, she used to come to our Firozpur mansion.”

I felt that Kakku is going far from us somewhere. I tried to comfort him – “She is queen Elizabeth Kakku. How can she come to our house?”

"But she looks like I am acquainted with her?"

"Its, because you have seen her pictures many time before?"

"But its not about the picture only, I really know her. You at least ask"

"Whom should I ask?"

"From her only?"

"You mean from queen?"

"Yes you make call to her?"

"What has happened to you Kakku! She lives in England"

"It will be too costly to call her"

"Its not about money - she lives in a palace. You can't talk to her on phone."

"But didi, she can tell her address - she knew her also"

"Who"

"That girl - what is her name"

"Guddi."

"Yes, yes - that girl."

I felt weird inside - a kind of disappointment had fallen inside. Many things were change in front of my eyes & I was clenching my hand and was trying to hold water in my fist.

I have no idea that now to deal with Kakku's questions . I could see that he is not able to differentiate between reality & imagination. But it was my first time that somebody was talking to me like this. That too my real brother-----I did not want to show him my tears. I could not even call him now crazy in jest.

Kakku went away but suddenly tears dropped from my eyes in fear something inevitable. Things were out of hands now and I had to tell Pitaji . I had to tell him everything no matter what.

After listening to me, Pitaji became outrageous suddenly- He was more understanding than me - I felt ashamed of myself - how could I have thought that he will start thrashing after listening to me. Without experience we know so little about life and little the knowledge bigger the fear. But sometimes fear enhances after we get to know about the things. That is why, that time I trembled with fear when I saw that tension on Pitaji's face. He only said that "May be we should talk to some doctor. I'll talk to Pawan."

Pawan uncle was surgeon - Pitaji's cousin and close friend. Pitaji had regards for them. Although I like Uncle Aunt too. But there was a huge difference between our & their living standards. Their standards were too westernised as Aunt also stayed in England. In their presence, Maa looked very simple & homely who generally used to look very smart all the times. Their daughter was studying in convent & they used to cook continental food. Maa & Kakkku were not so comfortable with them. Often we went to

their home with parents only. Pitaji had built many forts of our intelligence in front of him. May be he wanted to show that though I have not achieved success in my life as you have become surgeon but my children will definitely achieve it. How shallow all these hopes & expectations have become for Pitaji. Now he has to take advice from him for Kakku only.

Uncle talked to somebody in his psychiatric department in his hospital. He told Pitaji that Kakku has examined by the doctor.

But who could persuade Kakku for going to the hospital Pitaji told me to convince him.

Kakku was still asking about Guddi from me. One day I snubbed him & said you are talking so weird these days that even Pawan uncle was saying that you should meet psychiatrist.

"What do you mean? Have I gone crazy? "

"Arrey! who is saying that you are crazy! But meeting psychiatrist is not a bad idea. You can ask him what ever you feel like.... You can also ask him why you don't want to go to college. Why don't you feel like studying - He will only help you. Nothing to worry.

He somehow liked my suggestion. These days he was trusting me only or might he felt its me only, who could understand him. He was scared while talking to Pitaji and he was not able to pierce the unassailable silence on Maa's face. Ma's silent continuous stare made him far away from her. He felt that she is not able to understand him - she is from some other world. Things which he has discussed it with me, If I would have told maa, she would have created hue & cry in the house. It is possible that I am taking her wrong. But nobody had talked to her about it & she had no idea how serious

was Kakku's condition. But without knowing, she was busting into tears for Kakku. That is why Kakku felt hesitated from her. That's why Kakku had considered me as the most trust worthy person in the family. Uncle came in his car. Pitaji made Kakku sit in such a way that as if he is going for some leisure trip. Earlier also we had travelled in uncle's car for such events only. Pitaji never had a car. We had so many sibblings that it was not possible to had it in one salary. But still he sometimes asked uncles' old car for our usual hangouts. But today uncle had brought his new American car. Kakku was not thinking anything else & was more excited about the drive. That time I felt as if I am betraying Kakku. As if I am poisoning him by the name of the medicine, though it was not like that after all uncle was renowned in his profession. According to his advice, there was no scope of doubts in it. And then he also said that you don't need to worry. Heart was full of fear.

When I was taking Anshu to the hospital this fear was far more wide - --that time there were very few chances of his survival. After falling from first floor of the building chances of survival must be very less. That too, two years old kid. All things happened in fraction of seconds in front of my eyes - the whole account of life of somebody and his whole responsibility was on me - nobody's else - no chance of blaming someone else. It was only my ignorance, my foolishness or my hard luck - so easily- it is so easy that somebody is ruined in less than fraction of seconds - could not believe it - but whatever has happened, to not to believe the reality is meaningless & filthy - its a hallow process- an incurable pains! If I would have known that a moment will bring such results - I would have abandon sleep forever. After all I have done it now I have not been slept since that day. If I would not

have been slept that time, the whole picture would have been different. My sweet little Anshu would have been playing the same. His tiny little shining eyes would have some recognition of our relation which was always there like cemented bricks in our foundation of relation. When I used to call, he whines & when I used to stare at him angrily, as if he was challenging me more & making much noise. Those all playful activities were frozen due to some unknown fear. Now I continuously hear my own voice time & again which is no unaffected in every way - No effect happened - no chances are left. That time I used to stop him from doing mischievousness and now I wait that he again creates world of mischievousness & I can lose myself in that. My eyes keep on waiting for his whines, for his eyes haughtiness even for his misdeeds. My heart longs for it. It is so weird that somebody so close - turns into complete stranger. No reminiscence left how exactly it was. And when eyes are so used to its old original form, it is really tough to accept its new changes. Then somewhere the pain of heart makes you feel that wish for the old original form. But you also feel that you have seen at least some part of original form - at least you have its sweet memories - the autumn brings the memories of spring, definitely have its importance. You can coax your heart by saying this.. it was not like that before - It cannot be like this forever - things will be better so I bear everything while holding this ray of hope lightly bear everything, earlier as well as now also I am bearing with it.

Kakku reached home at late hours. His face was completely pale as if he was wearing garb of some dead body. Eyes staring at emptiness, stoned with terror he looked at me as if he had not seen me, as if he was not seeing anything. Those eyes were there ---meaninglessly.

Pitaji's face was full of tension, eagerness, unsaid pain. He was also not looking at anybody as if this thing happened with his consent & still was against his wishes - & now he could not blame anybody. Uncle dropped them & went back. He turned and said to Pitaji "don't worry, everything will be all right, & took the car away".

I was standing stunned in the varanda watching all this. Maa was inside the kitchen. The moment, I hesitantly reached Pitaji Kakku ignored me & went to his room I asked very slowly! softly.

"What did doctor say?"

"Electric shock has given" - he said. The treatment should be started by today only. Otherwise conditions can be more worse.

"Then- -on.""

"What-- is there something?"

"His face is too quite - did not even talk to me."

"yes.. he is silent since that moment"

"Should I talk to him"

When I went to his room, he was lying on his bed

"What happened Kakku"

"It was very painful let me sleep"

A few days, one morning when Kakku woke up, no emptiness was there in his eyes, a calm smile was shining on his face - freshness was on his face.

"Lets go & watch movie Kakku? Devanand's new movies has come. "

Devanand was his favourite hero but Kakku did not pay any attention to what I said. He was looking himself in mirror of dressing table.

I'll take hair cut today. Hair have glow longer. He called maa & went to ask money from his. a kind of freshness was there on his face- from where its coming, why it is coming till where it is going on - completely incomprehensible.

In the evening he was fiddling with his notes.

“Didi do you have new notebook? Why you need it?”

“Want to go college tomorrow”

“Will you go to college tomorrow?”

“Yes... I have already missed it for past many days.”

A ray of hope scrambled. If Kakku's again starts going to college everything will be all right.

Next day he went to college. After that he even went to college for few days more. But he did not talk about college with us. When we asked him he could hoaxed by saying yes- no uninterestedly. One day, I was in mood of digging out.

“Did your classmates ask you where were you for so many days.”

“Which class fellows?”

Boys of your class: who else?

“I do not go to the class”

“so what do you do in the college?”

They stare at me in a weird ways.

“What do you mean?”

“Didi!They are not good.”

Kakku had mixed expressions of fear & pain in his eyes.

“Why do you say like that?”

“They are heartless, brutal people.”

“Have you met teachers?”

“No, they are very far”

Te answer was very weird.

“Should I come with you? In fact Pitaji can also come.”

No... no... absolutely not.. you don't go to them. But Kakku how far can go like this. We have to talk to the teacher. They will not let you sit in the exam.

All right I will talk to him. You don't go to college. Don't have any need of sending Pitaji also.

Kakku might not had gone even to the building of the college. Because next day, In between my classes, I went to his college. I saw him strolling far from main building in same deserted /desolated corner. He did not see me, neither did I want. Heart was so restless that day - kept on thinking - what to do.

Bfore I would have said or done something, Kakku already stopped pretending that he is going to college. Though it was meaningless. But not going anywhere meant to be locked in the room all day. An unwanted situation was again risen.

One day again he suddenly said- “Didi, did you talk to her on phone?”

“What phone?”

“that one... that girl...”

“Which girl?”

“That girl, that childhood friend.”

“which friend?”

I was deliberately trying to avoid the topic. "Didi, you only told me that she is my friend. She is going to get married to me. I love her".

"What nonsense. It was just a joke. You are taking it seriously anyways."

I snubbed Kakku so he kept quite.

Pitaji again caught him in the same condition he repeatedly said "Don't hit me, don't hit me" Won't ever repeat that again, won't repeat that again.

Pitaji reliable source was uncle (chacha) only so he talked to him only. Again decision was taken "Again electric shock will be given but the question was that who is going to convince Kakku. When Pitaji talked to Kakku, he plainly said No.

"He will again give me electric shocks, its very painful"

This time we will not let them give you any shocks. You please come.

This time when elder brother came in vacations so somehow he convinced Kakku & took him to psychiatrist. Again electric shocks were given.

Now he started fearing from bhaia & Pitaji, whenever I use to look at him, shadows of fear & doubts were always lying in his eyes.

Pitaji tried to convince him.

"Beta, once you get fine you can lead a normal life."

"I am already fine. What has happened to me."

"Doctor says that you have to go next week also."

"Doctor doesn't know anything. He gives such strange shocks I will not go."

"You have to go Kakku, no other remedy is there. I am taking appointment on Tuesday. Raghu bhaia will also be there.

Pitaji, declared his verdict. Whenever he used to be in such declaration tone, Kakku, remained quite with tears. This time again he did not rebel but yes he kept on staring at him with bewilderment.

Monday Evening, when i came back from college, that time Kakku was not at home. At night, everybody had food silently around dinning table but Kakku did not reach home. Maa started getting tensed. Pitaji was not feeling well. He said – "Apart from waiting, we don't have other choice."

It was 12 o'clock at night & nobody slept. Maa said that we should inform to the police. Then Bhaia adviced not to do that. Reasonlessly whole world will come to know about it, we should wait til the morning.

If he doesn't come till morning 9 'o-10 o'clock, then only we will investigate. Nobody slept properly that night. All night we could hear the sound of somebody going to washroom. The only fear I had... Kakku might have done some harm to himself. What could be the consequences as he had been living in fear, doubts & doubts. I could not have any courage to think anything positive in such circumstances.

That dried tear in Maa's eye was about to fallen down, suddenly phone rang Mausi told us that Kakku had reached there. Though he often go to her house but this kind of sudden arrival of Kakku bewildered her also. But she did not make any fuss about it. In morning, Kakku told her to not to tell to the parents then Aunt (Mausi) said that everybody will be tensed so she called us. Maa was relaxed but Pitaji was angry. Pitaji took leave from the office so that he could take him to the doctor. He told mausi to tell Kakku to

come back soon. But Kakku was neither ready to talk on phone nor he was ready to come back home. He told mausi don't tell anything to them. They will take me back.

Mausi did not know anything. She was surprised to see that what Kakku is saying. Where will they take him? She started sermonizing.

"It seems that you have beaten him badly this time... what is such a big issue... he is so scared. Poor chap. children commit mistakes. Why you beated him so brutally so that he ran away.

Maa or Pitaji did not say anything about it. In afternoon, Pitaji & Bhai both went to bring Kakku. Doctor & hospital was now a secret matter in home. Now we don't used to talk about Kakku in front of Kakku.

Kakku left in morning saying he was leaving for the college. Kakku always tried to not to come in front of Pitaji. Mostly he asked food in his room only by giving pretext that he is studying and this way he could get rid off seeing us on dinning table. Usually he caught repeating his mistake again & again that made Pitaji very paranoid & beated him. But it seemed that it was not in his control.

We all felt that something was not right somewhere. But also realized that going to doctor will be a futile exercise, matter will become more worse. Everybody was trying to do something according to their wisdom & capability. Maa gave mixture of almonds to Kakku to have so that his memory will be sharpen. When Pitaji gets very upset, he used to go to uncle's house so that he could get any suggestions. But he could not suggest anything apart from going to hospital .Pitaji was not feeling well these days. Every time he was tensed about Kakku.

On one hand, I somewhere believed that the root cause of this problem is his physical discontentment. Those days, I used to read psychology books with so much interest. The renowned psychologist Sigmund Freud were well known to everybody. I was also inspired by him. (He was my mentor too). on such criterias, I started believing that physical discontentment is a chief cause of his mental imbalance. Then I became very distressed because to spoil someone's life for such meager reason is sheer foolishness. However, I used to hesitate to discuss such things to myself even. But I could understand this thing that life is anytime bigger than any law, any restriction any rule and I have to save Kakku's life- Nothing is important than Kakku's life. Therefore, one day I talked to maa-Pitaji.

“Why don't you take him to same prostitute?”

Maa was aghast .”what? What the hell you are talking about.”

Then she turned to Pitaji & said "She has gone crazy.”

“Don't you feel ashamed of yourself? This what you learn in college. I can see that day by day you kids are becoming shameless . Don't know! What kind of time has come. What kind of attitude these kids have....

Maa was somewhere hurt because of me and said- "Shameless.. how dare you thought about your brother like this."

Only after taking name of prostitute maa started showing her contempt, her rage & her disgust against the profession of prostitution & awarded me with the degrees slut, whore, lunatic etc. Pitaji could understand my logic but didn't support me. He only said – “Beta, think before you speak.”

Then again I pressurized & said.

But I am completely sure that he will be all right after that. You go & don't talk much ...have read few books & considering yourself intelligent than a doctor.

When Pitaji also rejected my suggestion then i thought that this is a big gap between two generations & it's not easy to overcome for me alone. Though even I did not know that whatever I was saying was how much impractical or right.

But I got more distressed - I do not know how to make these people understand that such kind of discontentment can lead to what kind of consequences in somebody's life. I myself bear all those upheavals & somehow controlled and prepared myself for long wait of marriage. I know one cannot change the structure of the world but I could mould myself. How tender & soft we girls are! To talk about boys in college with friends, to tease each other with some guy's name, to enjoy guy's eve teasing on the road. In such thing, we used to find fulfillment of physical desires - But Kakku had no such group of friends - had to find this contentment through his body only.

Can I help my brother in any way - I always use to think like this. What is my responsibility? What are my limits? Can I make him meet any girl without telling her real condition? Would somebody be able to give her love after knowing his condition ?but how I can put some girl in trouble? Isn't it better if I serve myself instead of them? What brother sister relationship is? It it too immoral to use your body for saving your brother - Is there no other description or definition of this deed? However, I have thought like this, but

can I actually muster up my courage? Do I have the courage to break the norms and face those contemptuous eyes of family & society.

Though something had happened between me & Kakku I was merely four or five year old . Whatever happened between us, could happen only in darkness of ignorance & unconsciousness. I have blurred remembrance of that. But in that remembrance, there is innocence in it. No malice in it. No immorality involved. Everybody was slept. Suddenly in our playful mood we started touching each other's parts. A quaint kind of curiosity. Inquisitiveness was arisen for each other, to touch each other to find out the difference between us .We had bit realization that these things should not be done and that's why we were doing in noon time in a solitary place. Still I consider our deed very innocent & inoffensive. We understood the piousness of brother- sister relationship off lately. That time it was a mere inquisitiveness. That pure primitive charm of male female relationship, which were garbed & painted on the names of beauty & ugliness. For some eyes the deed was ugly. But I had no realisations of that ugliness at that time. That is very much natural. Isn't it useless to search for ugliness, immorality & impropriety?

But today... after my social conditioning can I consider this deed seamless? & can I be conducive after considering this deed seamless? may be no question of seamlessness can be arisen here. Because at this time only pain & sympathy is there in then heart. No inquisitives.. helplessness of affection ! Does this helplessness has this power to open up my social conditioning & break it down & make itself alive again.

Storm arose many time. Many times, I prepared to break it down into pieces. But it arose inside & got suppressed inside only. I was coward. I could not do anything. That house where taking name of prostitute could create such massive reaction, Don't know my this deed would have created what?

Pitaji sent Kakku to Shimla. Pitaji told Didi- 'He does not concentrate in studies. All day he is doing vagrancy. If you find some good college in Shimla. You make his admission in some boarding.

Didi was happy & her daughter was excited to see their uncle. Kakku was ready for Didi's place. Might, in his heart he also craved for change. Here in Didi's place, all facilities were there like Pitaji's house but without any restriction, that's why we all liked to go there. It was not like that didi was not disciplined but because we used to meet her rarely so she pampered us also. The responsibility of discipline was on Pitaji.

Didi didn't find anything abnormal about Kakku. He used to play with kids, He used to take them on bicycle to market & park. After few days, they started noticing that he gets lost in his own world. Sometimes she wrote letter to Pitaji - don't know what has happened to Kakku. Don't take care of his food or anything. I keep breakfast on the table, keep on calling him... he does not come, does not wake up till 11 o'clock. Doesn't take care of anything. -bathing, eating nothing oftenly I ask him something but he does not pay any attention. He keeps on working at me blankly as if he is not listening anything.

Does he do the same thing with you or is his problem with the place- I find his behaviour quite strange.

After this many things happened which she discussed us after meeting with us that Kakku did not sleep till 2 o'clock . One night she saw lights on in his room. Kakku was staring picture of a model in a magazine. After seeing he said –“ Didi's she is the same girl.”

“Which girl?”

“I know this girl. I met this girl in Delhi.”

Didi didn't get any clue of this. But she felt the expression of his face was really weird .Jijaji also got awake by the noise. After that night they did not let their daughters come close to Kakku. After hearing all things about her brother, she felt hurt. But for safety of her daughter, she started keeping eye on him. Anyhow she also remembered the excessive pampered behaviour of Maa-Pitaji for Kakku. That is why she said – “he has spoilt by Pitaji pampered behaviour, he used to take him to club, made him watch English movies- Because of English movies, so much of sex it instilled in his mind & cannot think anything else. If he had keep him in discipline since beginning nothing would have had happened .We were under strict discipline of Pitaji that is why we are well settled now.”

“He let Kakku's do whatever he wanted. It is very important to give right guidance to the children.”³³ We were brought up in the same family, but me & didi were poles apart in our ideology. May be because we had age gap of almost a decade but may be there were some facts in her statement.

We were too embarrassed after receiving didi's letter Pitaji said-
“After all she is our daughter. We should have told her.”

Maa said what to tell. Anyways nothing serious has happened to him.

Even I felt that what to tell about him. Pitaji though had cleared it earlier only that he is misled & lecher and for the change of environment he had been sent there.

Nobody among us wanted to believe that there is something wrong with Kakku. Somewhere we believed that there was something wrong in us only.... or in Pitaji... something wrong.. or in family's atmosphere... or something was wrong in city's atmosphere which was spoiling Kakku. If we made him away from all this atmosphere so may be everything will be all right when we sent him to Didi. We all had some similar kinds of hopes.

After receiving didi's letter we were more bogged in guilt & embarrassment.

And with this all our hopes & possibilities for Kakku's were also shattered.

When Kakku returned from didi's place he seemed quite weak as if some pain is lingering inside. He was not interested to talk to anybody. He was too lost in himself.

Now Pitaji maa had new tension of his health. Maa made him eat with her hands like small kid. His appetite was also reduced.

Chacha told about new Private Hospital in the city where patients of mental ailments were treated in more sensitive manner & where patients are not given any electric shocks. Through medicines, the

chemical imbalance of patients mind were treated. Chacha & Kakku persuaded Kakku with lot of love & he was convinced to go to hospital as he got rid of electric shocks.

Doctor of that hospital was studied from abroad & he become very well known in small span of time in a city.

When Pitaji took Kakku to the Doctor & when he came back, he was also quite happy.

This doctor talks very nicely like a friend After one two visits, doctor advised to admit Kakku in the hospital. Kakku needed close monitoring. Kakku liked Doctor's behaviour that is why he was easily convinced.

Though other patients of ward were in more worse condition as compare to Kakku. But he was ready to get admitted in hospital without any disconcert. The moment he entered inside the hospital he was hovered by other boys of ward. He was quite irritated by them. He looked as helpless & kept quite. As if he has decided inside, fine, you can try this also.

After three four weeks, Kakku seemed to be recovering. His apatite also came to normal & his cheeks also become plumpy. Though he was thin since childhood but he did not look meek any more. But he got perturbed by the presence of other patients around him every time he used to say.

"I am fine didi! Why don't you let me come to home? Do you find me crazy like these people? Take me to home please?"

I felt crying loud. Because I knew that doctor is not going to let him leave so soon.

After few days, when Kakku emphasised for his going back, doctor said if Kakku keeps on taking his medicine on time, he can go back home.

That time we did not realise that making him take the medicine is such a big task . Kakku hated having medicine everyday. We used to find new ways of making him have his medicine. But for him coming back to home was such a big boon. Such big boon that we used to threaten him of going back to hospital so that he can have his medicine. He used to get scared by name of hospital like a child & had his medicine quietly.

When Kakku was recovering & coming back to normal, I also started my regular life.

There are very few moments in my life which I can actually call as relaxed moments. After Anshu's birth, there is not a single moment which I can call as carefree. Initially I was playing role of mother but now I had become his nurse too which was of more responsibility. Ashok was never sympathetic towards this role. He always felt that this problem with me is more as compare to Anshu.

The moment we reached back home from hospital, Ashok started compelling me to get ready as we had a party that evening in a hotel. Ashok wore his silk shirt & Italian design black tie.

Its 8.30 and you are not getting up. You are sitting beside him as if he is going to be all right with your presence.

I don't feel like going. What is such a big issue? don't feel like leaving him alone. Ram singh is there in the house. Servant can not take care of sick child. What if he falls again? Now you are uselessly getting

worried that he will fall again. “Don't be silly. Now get up and get ready we are already late”.

“No Ashok, I am not going. If you want to, you can go I will not leave him alone.”

That was the first time when Ashok went to same party without me. Before going, he again asked me – “Would you get ready right now. We can reach there late.”

“No Ashok, Even if I go, I will keep on thinking about Anshu. I won't be able to talk to anybody properly so what use of going them.”

“As you wish. But I have to go. To be locked like this inside the house will lead to hamper by business.”

It happened once or twice again. Then Ashok got habituated of going alone. He stopped even asking me. We were no more together sharing our evenings. I had no complaints against him. The only thing pinching inside- the streak of pain which keeps on lingering inside – the way Ashok has called it mere piece of flesh so convenient. I could not have done that. The life which was endearing & important to me more than my life, that life has become of a piece of flesh for its bearer. Is this the difference because I am a mother? Is mother word indicates only helplessness? Might it was only helplessness. That is why when Kakku came home from hospital, I went on-trip with my friends to Agra, Jaipur to spent free leisure time. But maa never did this. Oftenly she said that – don't know what mistake we have committed... whose harm we have done... God everything is in your hands. Pitaji also blamed himself for not nurturing him well. Pitaji had great value for discipline, regularity, idealism, self sacrifice & self restraint.

He was the eldest one in the family. After dada's death, he took all the responsibility on his shoulders. He devoted all his life for his stepmother & step brother sisters. If his political role idol was Gandhiji then his family role idol was Lord Rama. He tried to be the same for his step brother- sisters. Pitaji sent chachaji (uncle) to England for studies and now he feels that he is at fault somewhere. There was some lack in his discipline, so that Kakku was spoilt. He could not think beyond that. May be that is why I don't want that I commit some other mistake or I keep on feeling some kind of lingering pain of fault consciousness .I started keeping an eye on Anshu all the times as if he will disappeared ifi keep my eyes away from him.

In Agra, actually I forgot everybody, maa, Pitaji, Kakku.

In that fairyland, there used to be a Prince. But right now, that prince was in deep slumber. On right time, he has to get up from his sleep & will hunt for his princess Princess unaware of this right time, kept on hunting her prince charming in God knows whichever places – Gulabi Mahal, Panch Mahal, Taj Mahal. But there was no prince charming anywhere.

In that trip we kept on dreaming about our fantasies. We did not land once on reality kept on floating on dream cloud when I came back, a kind of gloominess fallen in our heart. Just like that without any content I started talking about Kakku & Pitaji. I have not discussed about Kakku's condition with any friend ever before. I realised myself saying –“ Don't know what has happened to my brother. He always remained testy. I get more worried about Pitaji that something will happen to him in his tension.

After reaching Bus stand, I took auto instead of DTC bus. I was rushing back to home.

When scooter stopped near the gate, nobody even peeped outside as usual. It was dusk time. It was getting darker. A weird kind of disconcerting silent atmosphere was there in the house. Lights were off. No noise in the house. In fact the often coming voices from Kitchen made by Kisnu while cooking food was also not there. I opened the gate & reached varanda & saw the door locked. It was bit weird. Where everybody had gone. I didn't even have keys. House was always open. I stood still stunned for sometimes what to do... whom should I ask..... neighbour might know anything.

A taxi came & stopped near the gate at that time I started speculating about the thing, standing in varanda. It was bhaiya bhabhi in the taxi. I was bewildered. Bhaia Bhabhi had no plans to come. How it happened all of sudden. They did not took out their luggage from taxi so it was clear that they are not directly coming from station.

Perplexed & tensed, with my dried throat I asked – “When you have reached Bhaia? I had no clue that you are coming. Do you know where everybody is?”

Bhaia very calmly kept his hand on my shoulder & said – “let's go inside I will tell you. “

“Do you have keys?”

Bhaia's opened the lock & we entered the house.

“Where is Kakku? Pitaji, Maa... where is everybody?”

“Do not worry. They are in hospital but condition is under control.”

“Who is in the hospital?”

“Pitaji”

“What has happened to him?” My voice trembled while saying this.

“Got stabbed.”

“Stabbed! how?”

“Might he was forcing Kakku to drink medicine. In his rage, he stabbed knife in his stomach.”

“Injury is too deep”

“Some intestines got cut... got operated”

I started feeling great remorse & repentance. Why I went for vacations? If I was there, It would not had happened. Then I started feeling anger on me, maa & Pitaji only. If he was creating so much trouble in taking medicine so why did not they send him to hospital? I could not believe that Kakku can do that such things.. Though Pitaji had never revealed his true deep love for Kakku but he is there in his heart always. Had Kakku ever understood this deep feeling of love? Pitaji only brought him home by somehow persuading doctor why did Kakku do this?

Where is Kakku?

“Don't know, has been missing since morning”

“has he not done any harm to himself?”

“See Shashi. It's not the time to worry about Kakku that where he will go? He will come back home after wondering here and there.”

Two accidents happened together & I could not understand for which accident I was feeling more pain & disconcert. One hand I was worried about Pitaji on other hand, I was feeling rage, tension, gloominess & helpless love for Kakku.

Has he any idea, what he has done? I told you Shashi, don't worry about him. Have also informed to the police they will find him.

“Did you inform police?”

“Without police investigation they were not letting Pitaji admitted in emergency. Because of stabbing It had already become a police case.”

“So now will they put Kakku in lockup?”

My voice trembled.

“You don't need to worry. I'll manage.”

Though Bhaia has always blamed Pitaji for pampering Kakku but now when trouble has come ,he has taken all the responsibility on his shoulder like a big brother.

Bhabhi came to kitchen to take care of our meals. Maa & kisnu were there in the hospital to look after Pitaji. I was about to go to kitchen to help bhabhi, suddenly bell rang. Bhaia was in bathroom. I opened the door. Two cops were there.

“This incident happened in the morning?”

“Yes?”

“Culprit attempted to murder?”

“No, Pitaji got accidentally hit by knife”

“What relationship do you have with culprit?”

“He is my brother.”

“Were you present there at that time?”

“No, I was out of station that time?”

“Have you come some time back?Where is Kakku?”

“What is full name of culprit?”

“Kumud Sehgal.

“Where is he, Do you know?”

“He is in police station. IN lockup.”

I was already nervous seeing cops. I was aghast by the name of police station.

“Chap has no idea what he has done.”

“He can't do such things”

That cop looked at me as if it is useless to talk to women.

“Is there any male in the family?”

“Yes, my elder brother”

“Call him.”

“But he doesn't stay here. I stay here. I knew how is Kakku. He is not that kind of boy. These days his mental condition is....”

“All right. Tell all this to magistrate. We are here to take statement. Call your brother.”

They enquire more about Kakku & Pitaji from bhaia .When cops went bhaia said “I will take bail for Kakku from court. But it is not safe to keep him here. He can kill anybody.”

Kakku betrayed all of us & we wanted to punish him by not trusting him ever. But did he know that he has betrayed us?

It was very bitter fact revealed by bhaia's if he is talking about some strangers. But right now I myself was worried about Pitaji. Bhabhi cooked some food in hurry. Me & Bhaia got ready for hospital and took food for maa.

It was quite dark when I reached hospital. Vegetable & groundnut hawkers and shopkeepers were closing there stall. Though street lamps will on but I was feeling everything was in dark. Street of hospital were shining

with florescent light. I was getting more nervous while passing through street where I was smelling medicine and dampness we crossed those labyrinths of streets and varanda's then we reached Pitaji's ward.

Maa was chanting god's name with closed eyes in front of the door. Kisnu was sitting near her feet on the floor in a sleepy condition. I went near by them & called softly Maa got awake as if from a dream.

“When you people have come?”

“Where is Pitaji?”

They are about to bring him.

Then two nurses brought him on stretcher at that time. Maa was in attention pose. It was hard to recognise Pitaji. So many drips attached to his body on his left arm. Glucose drip was also fixed. Pitaji was not fully conscious. I kept on staring at him for long time, standing beside him when Pitaji opened his eyes, he firstly looked at me. He smiled & closed his eyes. When I called him, he again opened his eyes. His lips trembled.

“How is Kakku?”

“He is fine Pitaji.”

“Where is he?”

“At home.”

I turned my face immediately after answering this. Her nurse was screaming. Don't hover around patient. Please you go now.

Next it was bulletin on the news paper - Son killed his father (20th October 19...) In Delhi, a boy name Kumud Sehgal stabbed his father Ramesh Kumar and attempted to murder him. Ramesh Kumar is in critical condition in the hospital and Kumud is underarrest. According to family,

mental condition of Mr. Kumud is not right and he has already been to mental hospital, many times before the incident.

Now all secrets of our house were revealed to the world. I was praying that this news should be hidden from our acquaintances. When I went to hospital in the evening, Masi was already there. She was continuously saying this to maa "Such big blunder happened in the house and you did not tell me. Are we others for you? I felt something fishy when Kakku reached our home without informing us. But you people did not give single clue."

Pitaji was fully conscious till evening. It was hard to talk because his throat was choked due to insertion of pipe in his throat. He was coughing and due to having stitches in his stomach, he was having pain. He only said this much- "But I am only saved due to your karmas. I still have to marry you."

Then he said to bhaia – "please take care of Kakku. See nothing should happen to him till the moment I am alive."

Next day, Bhaia took bail for Kakku and brought him back home. Magistrate suggested admitting him to Shahdra Hospital where they keep violent mental patients and culprit victims and treat them.

Kakku's body was black and blue his left eye was swollen as if somebody has punched him. Arms, shoulders and back was scratched.

He said to me.

"Didi, see? They have beaten me so much."

He showed his body to me and showed his wound.

"Why they have beaten you?"

I felt anger and pain at the same time.

“They everybody beaten me up”

After sometime I said- “Where is Pitaji?”

“He is in hospital”

“Why?”

“ just like that. He is not well”

He remained quite for a moment and then said.

“Pitaji also beats me up.”

“He doesn't beat you. He loves you. Why you talk rubbish?”

“”But when you were not there, he did beat me a lot.

I silently tried to read something on his face. That face of somebody who was afraid, mock and exploited. Those eyes had nothing but fear and doubt.

That day I could not go to college. Next day when I went, friends already knew it. They did not read it in newspaper; some other girl told them whom we know.

That girl said, this news is might of my family only. Nevertheless, my best friend Smriti did not ask me much questions to save me from any more embarrassment - and only showed friendly sympathetic attitude. While returning from Agra, I told her some stuff about it. That's why she did not feel any need to ask about it .Though she asked Pitaji's whereabouts. But I had garb of shame and guilt on my heart and mind. Neither I could bear its burden nor It could save me from cold waves of troubles. All the time I keep on thinking that what will others think about us? As if everybody, who was

coming had this question in their eyes and I was trying to ignore them or hunting answer for it.

When I came in the afternoon, a car came and stopped outside the gate. I tried to identify them that whose car it was but could not identify it. Suddenly I saw two cops were pulling Kakku out of his room. He was trying his best to get out of their clutches – “leave me, leave me. Maa was crying out loud -Beware, Beware help me, help me. “

Bhaia was trying to persuade Kakku while helping cops – “They will not beat you? They are just taking you to hospital.” Kakku's scream were getting louder as if somebody is going to kill him –“ I don't w”ant to go. Its my house. Why are you taking me out?Leave me, leave me.

On our left side, neighbours were standing in their lawn and staring at us. Kakku screamed and was looking at bhaia – “This is my house. Don't take me out.”

I was standing still there. This was the final verdict of all. Kakku looked at me with pleading eyes and said—“Didi, please stop them. Please tell them I stay here. This is my house.”

Cops pulled him in the van from back of its side. One cop was holding his both hands towards his back. The other cop shut the door of van. As if somebody has put an animal into cage. Kakku also roared to his best.

Van got disappeared in the dust then I could hear his roars in dusty air.

Helplessness was there again when Anshu met with an accident. But don't know I have decided myself then, that I will not let myself become helpless. Tread according to other’s command was not my way anymore.

After achieving motherhood, these right was automatically became reserve for me. When I became mother a kind of confidence also came in me specially when you get all these rights or rather when you snatch it from others. And I also understood the fact that nobody serves your right. You have to get their acceptance by your right and meaningful decisions. Those rights also demand sacrifice.

When Ashok was busy in his business in days and busy in playing bridge at night I used to talk to Anshu for hours and hours. I kept on waiting then when he will listen to me! When he is going to open his eyes and answer me! when he is going to smile and will call me Maa! That time I often felt that I am banging my head on walls only. That five percent hope was left, I wanted to extract all of it. For a hurt and helpless mother, a single possibility becomes ray of hope for her.

When Anshu opened his eye, it seems like he has awoken from deep sleep. But that was like when a child opens his eyes first time, when he has no realization of any relationship. I had to restart my motherhood with Anshu. I always keep on realising him that I am his mother. Sometimes by my words, with my loving gestures, with my touches, to breaks the crust of trauma of old memories.

Anshu used to stare at me blankly. Then I felt that he can listen to everything but its just he does not respond - he can not react. I celebrated his third birthday, though sounds of Ma Pa I could heard only second time in my life. I felt immensely happy. My sacrifices, my devotion, my hard work had finally fructified, answered me. Then gradually we made a different world of

our words that can only be comprehended by me and Anshu. Ashok had no time to get acquainted with this language.

I showed different pictures of animals etc. to Anshu and used to repeat their names so that he can recall it. He roamed for hours and hours in gardens of flowers and vegetable and used to touch them with hands by telling their names. Pronouncing exactly what I tell him was not possible for him but still he tried. Bhaia brought different kind of blocks from America. By using those blocks, he made different shapes. Whenever I saw newness in those endeavors, it was just like a big achievement for me.

When Anshu turned six, I admitted him into school. He stammers as compare to other children. He used to achieve dexterity very easily by using different tangible equipments. He identified Hindi, English alphabets very easily. I thanked a lot that principal of Private school. Though he was older, they admitted him in nursery class. Anshu used to cheer up with the name of school.

After few months principal called me. Anshu could not match the students of the class. Principal said – “Your kid is good in painting but he does not respond in subject like maths. He does not get single idea what is going on.”

I was nervous.

I will make him work at home. Then he will be able to cover up.

At home, I taught him one plus one two - kept on make him cramming.

We made use of all solid things like coins, flowers for counting. But Anshu could not remember all that, he could remember the name of the

flower but could not remember number of flowers. I had to restart counting again.

I put my best efforts, but all were futile. One day principal directly said – “I am sorry Mrs Puri. Your kid cannot study here. Please admit him somewhere else.”

Wherever I admit him, same thing happened again and again. Initially things used to be all right, but gradually when weakness became acquainted with all, they used to throw him out.

I took him to school of handicap/differentially abled. But there the condition was worse. They never used to learn anything. They were just admitted their for time pass. Those who could play were playing with each other slumped worthlessness there. If I could have let him left like that, he will forget the things, which he remembered also. Nevertheless, it was kind of way to abandon him for whole of his life. He will be blemished forever. Therefore, I took all the responsibility of his studies on my shoulders.

Anshu became my companion, my fellow. He used to stay with me all day- used to cook, used to do gardening, used to dine, used to play badminton, football and used to read big books. Though this thing pinches me inside that he won't be a doctor, engineer ever like a regular child. But still if he leads a simple and sober self independent life, it was no way lesser for me. So I put my best efforts to made him independent, standing on his own.

Never thought about Kakku this way. Either we expected him to be normal and if he is not able to do that, he becomes somebody else. A weird kind of disturbance was there in his heart also. He felt his life more normal

and stable when he was at home. The moment he stepped out of the home in outside world, especially hospitals, he felt very strange ,weird and harsh. His helpless eyes could only say this that being in house is a greatest boon for me.

However, for us it was other way round. When Kakku stayed at home, whole house got merge in bog of gloominess and disconcertment as if some cursed shadow garb had covered the house. When he used to be outside, we all jump into our normal life style. Nobody talked about Kakku that time much. But he always remained in our sub conscience all the time- so many thing connected to him was there around us - his room - his clothes - his favourite dishes. The greatest presence was his absence he was the most pampered kid of the house. Center of everybody's love and affection when he was absent, it was like the absence of axis.

When Bhaia went to Shahadra to meet him in mental hospital so I also emphasized him to take me there but he did not agree.

“Girls do not go there.”

“But to meet your own brother is not a sin.”

“No, not now. Let me see, just don't know, what kind of atmosphere its going to be.”

When Bhaia came after meeting Kakku, he seemed very upset. A certain kind of shadow of guilt was making his face more blank and dull. He talked to me sadly.

“Do not know, It is a strange kind of place.”

“Why?”

“There are only crazy people”

“How is Kakku?”

“Very weak and meek. Completely depressed and dejected.”

“Can we bring him back here?”

“I asked Doctor. He said if he becomes better we can bring him back.”

“Can I go there to meet him?”

“You better don't go. That is not a kind of place to go. You will not be able to bear that.”

Bhaia had no idea that the bitter reality, which he wants to hide, had already came in front of my eyes, many times before... I could see that iron bars... Kakku screaming and pushing those walls... drawing with his hands, banging his head - and bleeding all over. Cops pulling him and taking him to some room - inside which is stinky, damped rooms - he puked - the plate remained untouched which is full of dry breads - he could not take single bite - nobody even asked him why he had not eaten his food. Then electric shocks had been given to him with his empty stomach. He is like dead lying on the floor.

Was he able to remember some of hazy faces in his conscious - Maa's affectionate face - as Pitaji's red face full of rage and sometimes his upset or disappointed face - Shashi didi's inquisitive eyes - shadow of mango tree and its fragrance - recognition of some faces - or home has become some imaginative thing as just has remained a word for him - or this feeling of home is completely vanish from him.

Had kakku been thinking about me? the ways I felt for him. Can not believe, that I am nowhere in Kakkku's memories or how he pleaded me

when he was going – “Didi please tell them its my house. He has forgotten home and family members completely.

After returning from the hospital, Pitaji took many days to recover. He kept on emphasize to meet Kakku in the hospital. Bhaia Bhabhi returned back nobody was there to take Pitaji there. One day when I came back from college Maa told me that Pitaji has gone to Shahadra on scooter.

When Pitaji returned back, his face became pale and black due to tiredness and tension. He told Maa he does not eat anything. He has been suffering from fever for past so many days. He had been coughing. They have made his condition more worse.

After sometime, he said – “you cook something in the morning. Might he will eat something from home cooked food. I will make him eat in front of me”.

Pitaji condition does not seem like that he will be able to go again but it was useless to stop him. It was ultimately question of Kakku.

Maa woke up at 5 o'clock and started cooking multiple cuisines. Kakku's favourite almond rice pudding (Badam Kheer), puris, Aalu curry and Baingan ka bharta. Pitaji got angry –“ he is suffering from fever. How would he eat all this.”

Maa prepared vegetable soup also.

You please take all this. Whatever he eats. If there all there four dishes, he will might feel like to eat something. If he does not eat, others can also have this ,or will be left out.. what's bad in taking that all.

Five boxes steel tiffin was packed. While holding it Pitaji said - you have made it so heavy. 40 miles...

Maa immediately objected and said –“you are not going to lift it on your shoulders. It will be carried by scooter only”.

This thing I could not understand of Pitaji. He himself does all possible efforts for Kakku but if Maa tries to do something more, he objects.

Kakku tasted everything but did not eat anything. He had soup only. When he brought full tiffin back, off course Maa was taken aback and felt disappointed .Then she said – “Ok, at least something he has eaten.”

I was thinking that had these tastes brought feeling of home to Kakku.

Pitaji on every second third day started taking food for Kakku. Now Sunday holidays meant for this thing only.

But Kakku did not recover from his fever and cough.

When condition become critical, doctor said – “we will not be able to look after him properly. You better take him home. You visit some other doctors also. He is very weak and not eating properly. Might change of atmosphere will make him better.

When I took last final exam of BA course, then I saw Maa was cleaning Kukku's room. Mahri was also dusting the room and Maa was also cleaning every nook and corner of the room. While doing this, she was instructing Mahri – “Make it clean inside the bed also, behind this box also. There should be no dust. He is already coughing.”

“Maa, is Kakku coming today?”

“Yes, you go and bring some fruits from the market. Tell Kisnu to cook - Don't know what he is going to like.”

Almost after nine months, son was coming back home. The atmosphere had become as if some newborn baby is coming but there was no happiness in this arrangement.

Chachaji and Pitaji went to bring Kakku.

He was walking with the support of Pitaji and Chachaji. He had no capacity to walk on his own. Shoulders were already bend in front. It was even hard to identify him.

Pale face - completely dull and strange. No recognition of any faces. A sad and gloomy- tired face, neither had he called me didi nor did he call Maa.

Maa without wasting time tried to kept him on bed. The moment they made him lie down, he started coughing all mucus came out. I ran and brought a tub. It was so much there as if he is suffering from TB he kept on spitting in the tub.

Chachaji seemed much tensed.

We should consult doctor as soon as possible. We should do some test these are symptoms of -

As if some lightening stuck our house. We could not even compromised with his initial condition so how will he able to bear this stroke.

We kept hanging in the air of tension and hope for his best till the moment we did not get the results of test. That doubt and fear. which was disturbing us ultimately proved to be right.

Kakku's result was positive.

Pitaji was completely broken with this news. He suffered from a heart attack with in this month only. Again there were rounds of hospitals - Kakku was at home. Pitaji who was hospitalised was worried about Kakku only. As if Pitaji has lost his smile forever. One day he said to me "I have been failure in my life."

"Why you say so?"

"It is all my fault. Due to my pampering, these circumstances have occurred ...otherwise Kakku had become something else.

I could not find any words in my lexicon to calm down that deep, sharp blade of repentance which had cut him into pieces.

Maa turned out to be a strong lady as she suffered so much hardships.

I did not ever see her so compact, standing high like a mountain and taking decision so wisely and calmly.

She never complained when she was running from hospital to home and home to hospital and serving them both. She never shed her tears like a weak, meak,useless person. She was busy in his work, day and night. Now she has to give orange juice to Kakku, now she has to give meat curry to Pitaji. When Shashi is going to stay with Pitaji in hospital, when Maa and when Kisnu and for how many days she has to call Bhaia-- Everybody was now decided by Maa only. She took all the responsibility of home without asking or telling anybody.

When Bhaia came - Maa said "you are already doing everything. You also start finding match for Shashi. She should get married in presence of her father only. And people are already talking weird about our family. Good things should not be lingered on much."

I felt very awkward about this thing. It was hue and cry in the house and she wants to get me married.

“If I am going to get married who will take care of Kakku.”

“We do not want you to take care of him. We will do it. Girls belong to other. We will not keep you at home because of Kakku.”

Maa told me point blankly one could not argue or requests for it. She was so firm in her rules/ decision. She herself followed these rules very strictly and she expected the same from others. Especially from my elder brother, Bhaia used to follow all her instruction book.

One day bhaia told Maa- “I have talked about Shashi in many places. There are two three boys. But the question is where to meet those families.”

“Why?”

Then she looked at Kakku's room and became quite. She took a long sign –“how will we do that?”

“I think we should wait. Nobody will say yes without seeing the house .Once Kakku will go to hospital, we can do that.”

“ But Kakku to the hospital... so soon.”

“Maa you can't keep him at home for a long time. TB is communicable we have to sent him to the hospital as soon as possible.”

After so many days I heard this soaing tone of Maa. His health is hardly recovered. Who will take care him in the hospital?

Kakku was actually looking better Maa made him drink juices, porridge, soup and boiled vegetable which were nutritious. His body also gained some weight. Face was also looking better.

Maa though knew it was communicable. So she never let me and bhai go near by him but she never took care of herself and kept on roaming around him.

So she thought she is not threat to any of other family members so why she cannot stay.

Anyways, though we had cut our self from social realm. No invitation to the others and we also had stopped going to others house. Certain kind of inferiority was there in our heart those days. As if the whole family was suffering from some canker. Bua, Mama, Masi when they used to enlist the achievements of their kids, Pitaji pain became intense and as if Kakku had become an embarrassing situation for everybody. Gradually this feeling of embarrassment became greater than his pain. Is he recovering or not?The most important thing had become how to get rid of this topic?

Though I knew the mental state of me and my family but I did not accept it till this condition, in its worse form appeared in front of us. But it happened when Bhai and Maa was in hunt of finding suitable match for me.

Bhai enquired and ultimately found a hospital. ?It was near by Delhi. ?It was at distance of thirty fifty miles from home where Kakku can get treated so in this way they had no need sent him too far and Maa Pitaji can go and meet him whenever they want to.

To send Kakku to the hospital was just the same to throw trash into trash box. When you throw garbage, you feel relaxed and with this you wait that when these municipality people will take it away so that it does not become eye sour for other.

When Kakku went, whole room made clean by burning campher in the room. Didi wrote to us "I will come to meet you with kids. He does not let me come because of Kakku."

Bhaia also said- "Now house has become disinfectant. Now we should search match for Shashi."

After few days he said – "One friend suggested me a boy. He is an engineer. His father is in business. They are rich family. Family is not that big. Both his sisters are married. He is the only son."

Maa Pitaji on one hand look helpless and weak, on other hand their consciousness and wisdom about the outside world was remarkable. Both said this – "it should be done". Pitaji was also about to retire. They had this wish to get me married in government bungalow only. Otherwise, we will have to leave bungalow and we had not yet constructed our own house. I wanted to do MA. Pitaji had no objections for Masters, Rather he wanted me to pursue my studies. But Maa was in rush that as soon they get suitable match, I should get married before spreading of Kakku news to all.

This whole match making game is always played in drawing room only. All the messy things remain stuffed under the couches of living room. Nobody would peep from half open doors so we put big thick curtains in the room. But are these stains and wounds can remain hidden from oneself?

The guy who came to see me was sitting right in between his parents. Maa and Bhaia was sitting opposite to them on a couch - Pitaji sat on left chair. Maa was instructing Kisnu in the kitchen about tea and snacks. There was a table between on which there were some showpieces of glasses but its transparency became blurred due to dust. Some scratches were also there on

them. I was feeling very awkward to look at them directly, especially the ways his parents were staring at me. I was pretending to be normal and was trying to be part of them. Suddenly his mother asked –“ how many siblings you have?”

I was about to answer but suddenly bhaia replied –“ Five, Shashi is the youngest one other two sister got married. My brother is also married.” I was startled and kept on looking at him. As if, Pitaji had not heard anything.

So from now Kakku is no more for us. This time sending him to the hospital was rejection of his existence. Is somebody's sickness is such an embarrassing thing that we are denying his personality. This hospital ward is considered as door of graveyard and with so much ease by reducing a single number. Not six only five brother sisters.

I knew bhai was doing it for my good only. Any flaw would lead to rejection of proposal. If people say that brother is mentally sick then might they consider sister the same. I knew everything still I found it brutal and equally brutal was my self-centeredness, my greed which did not object bhaia's statement that I could not say I have one younger brother who is sick he is in hospital.

How brutal we are and how brutal is our society who for decorating the outer appearance, and we deny our own blood.

I knew if Kakku's sickness is revealed, then other party will shoot many questions on us and we will remain answerless. If long time wound gets scratched once ,It takes time to recover or might won't get heal again. To hide one truth we have to garb it with several lies. Do not know what more we have to say about it and still things don't go right.

Anyways it did not work and that pain of denial of existence of Kakku is still there in the heart. May be that's why now with full confidence and right I accept the Anshu and with this I fight with others for the acceptance of his existence.

That is why me and Ashok has new different social circles now. Ashok was in company of those elites who party every night in five star hotels, earn black money and who are far from reality, doped in flashy lights of parties. In my society, there are those struggling mothers, with their kids. Anshu plays, he remains with them all the time. With them he giggles, laughs , cries. And those kids are also here who are rejected by their legacies .But we all have made our own world where we don't discriminate anyone,no helplessness dominates us . It is made up for them only and because of them, those innocent kids don't know what they have lost. So whatever moments we want to spend in this world, we can spend it like whole world belongs to them.

I wish, I could had given same feeling to Kakku also. We had just thrown him out of the house... Where went wrong.... We did not even figure out. Don't know why? Though we were completely empathized with him but everything went wrong. What went wrong did not even know that. Once when we realised that he does not belong to our world or society so we completely denied him. As if somebody had lost his diamond in the sea and instead of jumping into the sea, one remains stand still on the shore in shock. One does not even remember that he knows swimming or not. He is just standing and watching his all wealth vanishing gradually. Then we accept this loss as his destily and become helpless in the end.

But this rejection did not give any riddance - rather it was burdensome. Burdon of guilt..... feeling of limitation of the capability and its guilt....A burden of an unawareness of mysterious ad strange world. And more painfully was the helplessness lifting this weight for whole life.

Maa Pitaji had this schedule on Sunday. They travelled miles and miles and used to go to Kingsway Camp. Maa used to fill fresh fruit juice in the bottle, hot chicken soup in thermos and food in tiffin. Then she used made him eat in front of him. Then whole week she spent like what she is going to cook next so that he can eat well.

However, Maa had also no less responsibility of taking care of Pitaji also. After heart attack, he had to take lot of precautions in his food habits. I felt tensed when Pitaji used to drive scooter so far. So much tension in this age. Moreover, he was getting retired so we had to evacuate the government bungalow. And Maa was in rush to get me married.

Again this game of match making played. Again denial of the existence of Kakku as if somebody had covered the lacerated wound and denying its pain also. Now this time things got fined and new burden of my marriage was there on the shoulders of Pitaji and Maa saw.

I pursued my Masters but I knew that I am going to get married before its completion. In our family history, every girl studied only previous year of her masters.

Now Pitaji was in great hurry to build his house. Though he could stay in government bungalow after his retirement for next six months. But after that we had to leave bungalow in every possible condition.

Maa always said this to Pitaji “I kept on telling you. We should have our own house. Now where will we go? it is not possible for us to have rented house in Delhi.”

Pitaji had this patent answer, “I kept on trying, but you don't like anything.”

He had already given application for the plot but that land was not developed yet. A part of that land was covered with forest and there was no water facility either. So it was getting delayed. Pitaji did not want to stay in some cheap crowded place in old Delhi. He had always this habit to be in open spacious places. In those days, buildings were constructed in the paush area of South Delhi.

The moment he got the plot, he involved like hell in construction of that house. Every day, he left house early in the morning used to come later in the evening - Cement, bricks, workers, architect, water don't know what more arrangement was there in his head. I could not understand that why Pitaji in so much rush. I asked – “After all, in what kind of hurry you are? it will eventually constructed. Why are you straining yourself? we can stay in rented house fore sometime.”

He replied – “No, no why will we shift again and again. House is getting constructed. When Kakku will come, how is he going to stay in rented house. And I want you to get married in a new house. Own house has its own charm.”

Don't' know why I always felt that something is straining him continuously inside. He always looked disconcerting. All the time he is in

rush. Every time he is here and there. He showed so much rush for everything as if tomorrow is never going to come.

One day I went on site of construction. I got headache in that scorching heat. Those labourers who were supposed to reach at 10 in the morning, they reached around 1.30 in the evening. Then the work was stopped because cement got finished. I felt even if Pitaji will not be there, work is going to be performed on same pace. I also told him even, if you don't go, work will not be stopped. Then why you take this futile tension?

Pitaji constructed a separate room and Bathroom in the map of the house.

“when I'll go at least he (kakku) is going to have some place to stay.”

He told bhaia –“ Kakku is my responsibility. I won't put his burden on your shoulders. But Kakku has rights in this house also. Give that backside of the house to him. He will stay there only.”

That Pitaji from whom Kakku always had this complaint that he doesn't let him stay at home, now he was constructing house for him.

It meant that Pitaji had somewhere this hope that Kakku is going to be all right, then he is going to stay in this house. We all had hopes after all. He went for treatment in the hospital then he has to come back.

House was getting constructed and Pitaji was getting dissolved inside. Nevertheless, yes when gradually it was being constructed, a certain kind of happiness was shimmering on his face. Every time he was very excited. We used to discuss about house only in those days. Today roof is constructed, floor is about to construct, drawing room's floor slander. Today fitting of sink was there in Kakku's washroom. Today filling of taps were there,

marble chips are placed on floor. Everyday he used to give such news and gets breathless while detailing it.

Though electric fitting and finishing touches were left but we got order of evacuating government flat. Pitaji decided why not directly shifting to new house - meager works can be done later. He did not want to take old stuff to new house. He wanted to buy everything new. but Maa packed almost all stuff of Kakku.

Maa Pitaji had taken sigh of satisfaction after shifting to new house. Maa did not like whole architecture of the house. She complained about something everyday.

Tap should not be here, it should be there. That room should be facing there. But then feeling of own home is out of the world. However, these were some works, which were left. All day some construction work kept on going. Those days we could not sleep even at the day time because of that. One or the other labourer always used to made some noise of hammering somewhere. After some days, we became habitual of it. We felt this construction will never end. That noise, sounds of hammers, ripping of nails, smoke of bidis in the air, this will keep on going like this. That rush of Pitaji of constructing house had turned to disconcertment. He could not sleep at night. When he used to get up at night for drinking water, I also got up at that time. When I asked him, he only said – “not feeling sleepy, you go and sleep.”

In morning, his face was sleepless and tired.

I also asked him, “why are you so worried? now house is already constructed.”

"Don't know, I always feel so restless. Don't know how much life is left? Everything is half done. I have spent all my money in this house. Don't know, how will we survive? Your Maa is not happy... Kakku... Don't know weather he will be all right or not... what will happen to him?"

"Why he will not be all right. He is getting treated. Where as money is concerned... I will do the job, why are you so worried?"

"No dear,how will you do? next month is your marriage anyways. Something has to be done I will search some job."

"This Sunday, I am going for picnic to Kutubminar with college girls." It was spring Feb morning.... a sunny morning.

Sky was clear, though there were patches of clouds somewhere, which was making sky all the ways more blue.

Pitaji planted tress of Mango, Jamun and flowers during construction of the house.

Pitaji planted trees in front of government bungalow also where we stayed and I asked him surprisingly.

"Why are you planting trees here?this house we are going to leave soon."

He smiled

"Dear, we reaped which was sowed by somebody. Somebody will have, what we have sowed."

While enjoying summers in spring, I was always thinking while seeing those small trees that when will they grow up. But when they will actually grow up, this house won't be mine. That is what life means "to carry on". ?House-- then shifting from that house to another house... New house

this process is ongoing. This pace only identifies this process. This process is completely unaware of feeling of being in home or outside without any emotional content in it. Completely heedless and uninterested.

Pitaji voice perturbed me.

I have no work; I will drop you to the college. Those days South Delhi was not much constructed and crowded. We could see only shambles of buildings from terrace. There was no bus facility from our colony. There were merely one two Taxi and Scooters. So he had to drop me all the way to bus stand.

“Why will you go so far. Drop me till bus stand.” Don't know why he was emphasizing so much. He dropped me till college.

When I waved bye to him on college gate, I found his face very sad and meek. There were wrinkles under his eyes, eyes merged inside. A restlessness emerging inside.

“What has happened, Pitaji? You seem very tired.”

“nothing. Did not sleep last night.”

A very restless tone was that.

“If I would have known, I would not have taken you so far. You please go home and take rest.”

“yes, yes I am going to take rest now. I have brought electrical fittings also. Nothing important is left.”

You will go to Kakku also?

“I will see. Today I will not able to meet him, I might take rest at home.”

When I got the consolation I again forget everything. The moment I met with my friends and got involved in my friends.

Buses were already there to take us to Quilts. Maximum girls already sat in the bus wearing colourful dresses, those girls were looking like spring flowers as if these were some facts how so much as if all sparrows are caged into but. I also got involved into the group of my friends. Spring songs which we started from our place continued till Qutub.

It was weird day of picnic. Symbol of life and death kept on playing in my subconscious - these flowers which only bloom in spring season, shambles of building living since ages. The wet green grass on which I was walking, seemed like very familiar one, far from its touch, there was extension of blue open sky. Green is the colour of life and happiness..... But the colour Shyam (blue) encompasses all colours. May be that is why the perception of the creation of this world is connected to this colour only. Death and life it combines both. True there is so less difference between death and life. They appear as two symbols, which can never meet each other like two ends of sea. Though one is assimilate inside other, like the depth is assimilated inside the sea, the blueness imbibes in the water.

My friends kept on teasing about my fiance. Our meeting alone, not a single family member was there, this though tickled. They keep on enjoying it by asking me weird questions. Infact, may be I also liked to talk about it, so I was also kind of exaggerated it. Talk about that untouched part of life is such an enjoyable task. That simple meeting made my virgin friends to think lot of special moments.

But my personal life was quite strange. Where on one hand, it was stimulating my senses where as on other hand my heart turned sad after thinking about ma, Kakku, Pitaji. I felt that they needed me as if some dark dangerous shadow was covering the house. That which I don't know weather I can bring remedy. But I felt my presence is essential there.

Shambles of building, playing with greenery, dancing. Don't know when dusk came over. Suddenly a disconcertment arose in the heart. End of celebration makes me sad always but I never felt this before. As my heart was sinking in cave, I could not understand what was happening to me. Such anxiety, nervousness as if some lightning has struck.

College bus dropped us on decided destination. From there I took a bus. Bus stand was quite far from house so I was thinking, If I would have told Pitaji, he could have come to pick me up. Then I thought it's good that I let him rest. When I asked auto rikshaw, he denied because the road was long by walk but shorter by rickshaw. So I decided to go by walking .I had a smile on my face while walking because I was talking to Pitaji inside. See your's daughter has come all the way on her own. I was also happy that I had not bothered Pitaji and reaching home safely and timely. Sun was already set but the sky was still fully orange.

When I took turn towards my house I saw my cousin Shammi standing there. I startled. I started asking from a distance only.

“Hey, how come you are here? I did not know that you are coming today.”

He did not show any reaction to my anxiety.

I repeated the question when I came close to him.

“When did you come?”

“Yes, I'll tell you.”

Then he hold me with his right hand and took me to the gate.

The door of drawing room was opened. Before we could have reached the room, he whispered in my ears.

“masad(uncle) is no more.”

When I step up the last stair, I saw the dead body of Pitaji covered with white sheet. Few moments back I was talking to Pitaji in my heart. So I was talking uselessly. So he was not even listening to it... has nothing actually reached him... so much I had to tell him ... My whole day experience. Now all of sudden such shrieking remembrance... a pain inside. Suddenly everything was shattered inside. So when I was talking to him , he was not even alive. It was hard for me to believe that. As if somebody has broken me inside completely into pieces. With a shriek, I tried to deny the preposterous reality lying in front of my eyes and then screaming, tears. Those tears made my pain more intense and that reality more crude and brutal.

I could hear the voices around me in bits and pieces. He had a heart attack. Nobody was at home. Maa told some labourer to bring taxi. The moment she was locking the door he got fainted labourer put him into taxi. Made him sit or laid down. He died before he could reach the hospital. Maa, uncles and Aunts and dont knew how many acquainted faces were there around us. But no face could have consoled us. One can also be so alone in the crowd when he is sad. I knew what I had lost, its pain could not be felt by others.

Both brother's flights couldn't have reach before morning. Pitaji dead body was laid on big ice(cubes)bed.

“Can somebody brought Kaaku from hospital ?”Mausi said.

“What he is going to feel about it. He would not even have recognized him.”

“But again he is a son after all. He should see his father last time.”

“I will bring him in the morning” - Mamaji said.

Maa was lying aghast in some corner. She was completely not in her senses. I did not hear her screaming and crying out loud - her agony was bigger than mine I had some future but what she had ultimately. Was Maa finding herself helpless to share her agony with anyone else? Completely silent! everybody bears and tackles with his/her own pain in their own way. I might never had seen Pitaji's face so closely, the way I was looking at that night. Others Presence brings slight difference but not much. But then it is so much important to have support of your loved ones.

Whole night I sat in drawing room. Every time mousi or mama came to made me sleep but I did not feel like getting up from that place. I kept on staring atthat place where the body was lying. And how it was deforming every moment. I wanted to capture this changing face for my whole life time. I might never had seen Pitaji face so closely, the ways I was looking at him that night. When somebody is too close to you, we do not pay much attention but the moment we loose them we feel immense regret and try to hold them for life. And any way this father daughter have this kind of relationship only that we can not stare at each other for long. And yes I had not any intense emotional moments with him so I could stare at him for long.

But now when he was lying completely unconsciously, I could not take my eyes off from him.

I wanted to create relationship with that peaceful but lifeless face to compensate all deprevations of ... but it was quite weird that Pitaji meant many things to me but not a body, had not awareness of his body. But now that lifeless body had become medium of my connection and my relation and my emotions which I feel for him .

Somebody made me lie down on bed . I was completely tired by that time. Ultimately tiredness makes you disconnected with everything. be it agony or happiness. Don't know when I slept off.

When I woke up, there was hustle bustle in the house. Both brothers also reached that time I could hear the crying noises, whispering sounds around me but I was lying like dead on my bed.

After sometime, I got up, washed my face and went to drawing room. Male members were arranging his bath. I hugged didi, bhaia, bhabhi and came to the lawn. Anyways while this bathing process was getting performed no female was allowed inside the room. Buckets were taken inside the room. Couches were already brought in varanda. New carpet was also brought out before his bath. Many relatives were sitting here and there. Many faces which I had not been seen since ages. Everybody has different kind of relationship with the dead. Today I saw that how Pitaji was connected to so many people in so many different ways. I also felt that I might will not see these faces again. When some acquainted person dies, the human's sudden anxiety for death gets raised. Then life loving creatures again forget everything easily and get involved in their work again. Then Mama came out

of the car and there was Kakku also who was walking behind him by taking his support.

His face was lost and pale. He gave a look on the crowd in the lawn. A strange weird kind of expression was there on his face. He came first time to our new house. He gave a glance look at house also. A confused glance .Kakku did not know anybody from the crowd. Not even his brother sisters also! No expression of acquaintances was there in his eyes.A striking pain hit me inside. I had no idea what my brother was thinking, what he was feeling about anything? Was he even aware that I am his sister? that we share such a close relationship between us. If I will keep the relationship or I break it up; Is it going to make any difference to him? My presence meant nothing to him.

Relationship are only alive till the moment our consciousness alive. Neither unconscious Pitaji have this realization of our relationship nor Kakku. I felt like is a game of defeat... All these relationship are such big lies. If I stop feeling all relationships through my senses, these are all meaningless. Those relationships which I considers more important than my life, how meek and meaningless they are. One strokes- and all relationships ..everything is finished.

Then I felt storm inside that I can not straight away deny all relationships. I walk towards Kakku and hold him from his shoulders and started crying.

“Pitaji is no more Kakku.”

Kakku kept on staring at me blankly for sometimes. Then suddenly he said , “What happened? What has happened to Pitaji? Where is he?”

“He is no more.”

I started crying more, Might when he saw me crying or I don't know because of what - a kind of sympathy and agony were also arose in his eyes. Then that gloominess, a dead dullness stayed in eyes for hours. He did not talk to anybody. He kept on staring at everybody with complete gloominess in his eyes.

Mama ji took him to the dead body.

He kept on staring at him with the same confused and scared expression. Then he sat there only and kept on staring at him.

Then suddenly he asked mamaji.

“What has happened to him? What has happened to him?”

He looked at our all relatives as if his eyes were searching something. Most of the people were looking at him that time. Then he posing the same question while facing towards relatives and felt he was not talking about Pitaji rather talking about relatives only.

What has happened to them? Tell me what has happened to them.

Situation was quite weird. I could made out sarcastic grin on the faces even in that sad state. Mama and Bhaia came embarrassed. Then they supported Kakku and took him to the room which Pitaji had constructed for Kakku. He seemed very tired. When they put him on bed, he slept off. They did not take him to cremation.

There were swarms of people for next thirteen days. Kakku was most of the time in his room only and one of us used to serve food in his room . Sometimes he used to come out so everybody stare at him with curiosity and fear as if some wild animal had come out from cage. He also sometimes

gave them glance look or sometimes was staring at everybody or sometime used to come to kitchen for asking water or something. I felt sometime that he had come to tell something but he had forgotten already. When somebody asks that “do you need water?” then he takes water and go back.

Out of curiosity Didi bhaia used to stroll around Kakku's room and peep inside. They found everything strange about Kakku and whatever he was doing, they found it quaint and they used to report each other as if they have discovered something big. As if he had come from some zoo. Didi's older daughter was bit mature one as kid .

She asked "why Kakku mama does not play with us?"

'Kakku mama is not well."

"But why he does not talk to us"

"When he came to Shimla, he used to play lot of games with us; lifting us on shoulders,rocking back and forth,gave piggi back rides, used to give chocolates, but now he does not do anything.”

“Sonu says that Kakku mama has gone crazy.”

“Who says?”

“Boy in our neighbourhood “

“He says crap”

“But sonu's mother said.”

“cut the crap”

Kakku first time entered the house and God knows from where neighbours took out the whole history of the house.

“Why you all bother Kakku so much - you keep on knocking /pushing his door, keep on peeping inside - what does that mean.”

“I don't do this. I feel scared of him. Don't know how he stares”.

“You are elder to other kids, tell them not to do that.”

“I have told her many times but nobody listens to me. But mausi, Is Kakku mamma really crazy?”

On one hand, how sweet is the innocence and ignorance of kids; on other other hand, it is brutal too. The thing, which is incomprehensible to their standards, its inquisitiveness, reaches the extent of brutality. The abnormality of Kakku was center of interest for kids and it was not possible to stop by scolding them. The whole atmosphere had become tensed. Maa was quite upset with the fact that daughters and daughter-in-laws, both had no concern for their brother and only bothered about their kids. Why don't they stop them and teach them manners. Kakku had just become a joke for everybody and how could they all bear that. The moment Maa came to her senses, she started serving food for Kakku. Though she could not see Kakku's face for hours due to hustle bustle in the house. It was because of the physical weakness which she was suffering after death of her husband and due to her involvement in formalities while dealing with the guests. But still she asked about Kakku's whereabouts and used to give responsibility to someone.

One, day don't know what happened- Kakku's meal came out untouched. Next day, happened the same thing- food remained untouched - Kakku did not eat anything. Maa herself went to serve him - but he did not eat anything. When Maa emphasised him so he said, “ you also don't eat. They have poisoned it.”

“Who has poisoned it?”

“them”

“Who? what they have poisoned”

“Telling you Maa... Somebody has poisoned it.”

“Who will try to poison you, what kind of things you are talking about? We all had this food only. Nothing has happened to us, you eat something.”

When Kakku did not convince after persuasion also, then bhaia came to the room.

“You try to convince him. He says somebody has poisoned his food. But if he is not going to eat then how will he survive? he is already so weak.”

Bhaia scolded him.

“You have gone crazy. Why will somebody poison your food you eat it. Don't bother Maa. she is already in pain... and now you.”

Bhaia took a spoon and put forcibly in his mouth.

Kakku ate that rice but he was not prepared for this. Therefore, he spewed it out immediately. Bhaia went mad in rage. If your are not going to eat, it is going to harm you only. Do you now its consequences. I will directly send you to the hospital. Now come and eat it up.”

Do not know, all of sudden what had happened to Kakku. He gave a hatred fearful look to bhaia. And then he said to Maa, “he is the one. He has poisoned my food.”

“Maa was completely aghast by it.”

“He is your brother don't say like that.”

“You are having misconception.”

“It is high time to send him back to the hospital. His condition has become worse bhaia went out after saying this.”

Kakku kept on staring at bhaia with his eyes full of hatred, anger and fear and the same expression remained in his eyes for long time.

Though Maa tried to stop him but he kept on saying this- “No, no. you don't know this, He has poisoned the food. You also beware. He will kill you also. I am telling the truth. I know, he is going to kill you also. He is too dangerous.”

Maa's worry turned into tears: I put my hand on Kakku's forehead and tried to calm him down "nobody will kill you. Don't get so scared. We all love you a lot. why are you so scared?”

He did not eat food. And again we got engaged in guests.

In afternoon, Maa told bhaia to bring samagri(goods) for Yajna which was going to perform next day. On het 10th day of death, when bhaia took out scooter from garage, its second tyre was puncture. Bhaia was changing the tyre in the lawn. We all were inside. Suddenly we heard heart wrenching voice of bhaia – “Oh! he killed me.”

I ran towards lawn. Kakku had knife in his hand drenched with blood. Bhai was in the lawn, holding his stomach. Blood was going through shirt to pantry and then to the floor. I cried out loud – “what have you done ,Kakku?”

All of sudden they all forgot the context of Pitaji's death and shifted their focus on Kakku. They were making comments according to their own convenience: that brother who has done everything for him, at least he killed him only. Don't know, why everybody wanted to bring him back. First, he

killed his father then brother. It was good if he were in hospital only. It was useless to bring him back. They create trouble for their self as well as for others also.

Do not know what does cost they have to pay of which birth. One who suppose to die, he is alive and others are in trouble. Everything is in god's hands.

Kakku was might scared of this hue and cry. He bolted his both doors. One door opened towards house and other towards garage. He went through garage to kill Bhaia. That is why nobody got any clue.

I continuously knocked Kakku's door. I was scared that might Kakku would harm himself as he had a knife. The knife was from our kitchen only but when did he pick up, we had no idea. Though one time mahri got a knife from his carpet during cleaning and she showed it to Maa. But that knife was not that big so Maa did not pay much attention to it. But today, knife was quite big, generally used in cutting fish.

Didi and younger brother was getting annoyed with Maa that why she emphasized to keep Kakku at home. Why she doesn't accept the fact that he is not normal so its not safe to keep him at home. Maa took everybody's suggestions and criticism silently. One day, I overheard when she was telling didi –“ you all are happy in your families, if I won't worry for him then who else will do. You all brother sisters have their own lives. For him, its me only. After all, this house belongs to him also. He possessed full right on this house and if nothing at least he has full right on me.”

She cried while saying this. Maybe she felt the absence of Pitaji around her.

Sometimes I also felt angry on Kakku but then I thought if he had realisation of his relationship with bhaia, he would never had done that. Then with defeated heart ,I had to believe that Kakku is not the same Kakku. And the acceptance of this brutal fact was really unbearable. If Maa would have also accepted that fact, the things would would have become easier. It is easy to break the relationship when somebody dies, then ultimately we accept his absence. Then we design a complete new way of relationship with him. When we build a relationship with living ones, we also keep our expectation with that. After that, we keep our expectation of being recognized. No matter, how much we deny but we all keep our expectations and we consider it right. That time we were swinging between belief and doubts.

Sometime I felt those brothers sisters who were not with us had comparatively easily broken up with Kakku, as it was easy for them. They already had broken up with Kakku and now they wanted Maa to abandon him. But Maa got hurt when anybody told her to do so. When didi pressurised Maa to do so; then Maa said-“ only shoe wearer knows where the shoe pinches. Everybody is taking care of elder brother. He will be all right in few days. He has family also. Only Maa understands Maa’s pain. The one who is getting spoilt completely, Maa has to take care of that kid also.”

Whole day Kakku remained locked. Half of the family was already busy in taking care of bhaia and everybody wasgoing to hospital. Everybody forgot Kakku as if they had abandon him to die only Maa was going

continuously to his room, knocking and asking him to take food but he did not open.

Next day Maa pleaded younger brother and said "You do something otherwise he will die without food."

Younger brother went to Kakku's room and started hitting his door with his boots. I got scared that, what if Kakku hit him with knife also. After all, knife was with him. I went and stood behind younger brother in nervousness.

As if somebody has cast some spell on him. He was continuously banging his door. He was hitting his door with boots and was pushing his door with full force to make it open. Kakku neither made any noise from inside and nor did he open the door. I started worrying. Something must had happened to Kakku. he had not been eaten for past three days. May be, he is fainted. "See I am your didi. I promise you that nobody will hit you. please open the door."

No show again.

And suddenly the door got opened due to continuous pushing.

Kakku was in a corner. His scared, dead cold eyes were looking at the door. When bhai advanced towards he contracted more towards corner. He had sadness and coldness like a ice wall which is hard and opaque. I went to him and asked , "why are you sitting like this Kakku? No need to get scared."

He kept looking at me blankly. Younger brother supported him with his hand and said plainly, "Eat something."

Plate embellished with food was already in the room. Bhaia made him sit on the chair. Bed was already hodge podge. Nobody cleaned it for past 2-

3 days. Maa put a bite in Kakku's mouth and he did not oppose and ate it. All he seemed contented while eating as if somebody has fed a starving child. His face seemed peaceful. He had no shadow of storm happened in the past.

Now it was essential to sent him back to the hospital because nobody could trust his behaviour. Maa still pressurizes, “why don't leave him to me? I will take care of him. Nobody has any need to come close to him.”

When bhaia came back from hospital, he spent one odd month in house only. And other people left after 13 days. But because bhaia was in hospital all rites of 10th and 13th day of death went very quietly. The absence of elder brother was felt and worried everyone but we could not blame Kakku also. Bhaia was trying to persuade Maa it is very essential to sent him to the hospital. Next month is Shashi's marriage. You are going to take care of Kakku or will do arrangements of the marriage. Anyways guests will come, how will you do with Kakku?”

Bhaia had no complaints or hatred against Kakku - had only responsibility on his shoulders. I felt touched. That is what called as clash of responsibilities and duties. From where do you get to know what is right and what is wrong. Was choosing me over Kakku, sending him back to the hospital for sake of my marriage; was it a right decision? How do you define the compatibility between Karma and Dharma? had bhaia chosen the right thing? Who will be going to decide? Can time decide that? Time that takes you ahead in life and leave circumstances behind. Time that can only analyse situations according to remembrances. It only poses question in the present. And its answer are generally exist either in womb of past or

somewhere in abyss of future. That what can somebody do. Life just like a knitted threads of weaving decisions -one way other ways. If we keep on weaving it on one way only, what kind of pattern its going to be.

I did not want to leave Maa alone. But everybody said that marriage should not be stopped. Auspicious events should not be hindered by anything. As if marriage is also as firm rule of nature like death. It's time can not be deferred.

I felt supported by the thought that at least Ashok is with me. But I felt marriage celebration as a big mountain of responsibility. I could not muster up the courage to cross it on my own. I had no zeal about any celebration in my heart, no longing for anything.

But now when it is decided for my marriage, so everybody got indulge in there work areas. Bhaia got engaged in barat arrangements, the arrangement for their warm welcome, catering etc. Maa had to arrange for ornaments, beddings quilts and utensils and other dowry arrangements. With great disinterest, I shopped for those heavy saree's for which I was keen since ages. Might be this was the only way to handle that pain. Maa took me sometimes to goldsmith, sometimes to the utensils shop for arrangements of my marriage gifts. That was the only way, she used to come out of the house otherwise she was always lost in memories of Pitaji and Kakku.

Again, guests clustered in the house. Didi and younger brother took only two days leave for marriage.

Nobody even talked about Kakku. He was there in the hospital during all customs of marriage. Maa told bhaia – “at least send him sweets of

marriage”. Bhaia scolded Maa “what kind of thing you are talking about. How will he digest sweets in sickness.”

“So what? at least he will taste. Its a shagun (Good omen).”

“All right I'll give him.”

This celebration was not so big as it can be in some normal circumstances. Only close relatives were invited. Minimum decoration and music was there. Low volume Shahnai and very simple and sober embellishment. Three centres of essence. Three points on the same line. They are as close, as far they are. One point does not touch the other but still one imbibes in other. Heart remained disconcerted. In every custom, whenever the realization of absence of Pitaji was felt, it was heartening.

I felt a bit guilty inside that I am leaving everybody in these hardships and going away. As if Maa and Kakku in mid stream and going to sail on some safe ship and going to reach a safe. Before sitting in Doli and while crossing the threshold, granny said while throwing wheat on me as a custom "now your life is yours and ours is ours. May you have a happy life ahead" I busted into tear. As if it was a formal announcement that I donot belong to this house anymore as if somebody has snatched this threshold also.

Maa would not go with bhaia. She would not leave this city. She wanted to be near Kakku only. How will she meet him? Offcourse it will take long time for transfer of bhaia to Ma's place. Just like this many questions and worries were arisen in that fragrant deep dark night, that knot which created all together a new relationship. But i couldn't leave the memories of threshold behind. However, I knew that now that threshold no longer belongs to me- my fate was now somebody else. But actually something else

had happened-- was Anshu a part of that remembrance of that threshold? Or he was part of my fate only? - my fate not even Ashok's --ideally he should be his part when you are with somebody you share life but it is not necessary that you share each other's fate. It was not about Ashok only. It was about me also. Was I not sharing Kakku's fate?

Ashok actually brought me into new world. The colourful, warbling, happening and shining world of Mumbai. The musical evenings, Theatrical evenings, celebrities evenings .Every evening had its own fragrance and charm, its own colour. Ashok always wanted me to be near by him - did not let me leave for a single moment. Infact, when he use to go for business meetings, he always took me along with him. He goes in some building for meeting and I used to sit in the car with driver waiting for him. When he goes for business meeting, it was like picnic or vacations for us. He used to say "you are like that diamond that can not be left at home."

"Why? What will happen at home?"

"Who knows, some devil will take you away?"

"Devil or Adam"

"I don't trust either"

My whole world revolved around Ashok only. There was no place for anyone else I could not find time to write a letter to Maa. Those Kakku and Maa with whom I shared my years of life now had no context and space in my day-to-day life. I had been in only one grip since morning till evening. Every time its only about him - to embellish myself for him, always thinking about him - planning for new cuisines in breakfast, Lunch and dinner. To make his clothes wash from washer man, to stitch buttons of his shirts

etc...etc. That house was actually extension of Ashok's part only. I always used to think about decorating house and keep on going to market for its shopping. Sometimes I had to change curtains, had to buy new bedcovers, sometimes had to buy new trendy shirt for Ashok and sometime had to buy new saree. By making myself beautiful, I was actually trying to make Ashok happy. If ever Ashok leaves me alone, the works related to him keep on revolving around me. As if life was plunged in some of revolving wheel and it is continuously going on like this. I was so damn busy- only pace, flowing with the flow, kept on going on. Before marriage my life was so slow that I could feel the speed, could smelt it, could see it. What else I had in my life that time -college, friends, Maa, Kakku, Pitaji. Other brother sisters were only shareholders of festivals and occasional letters That time there were very few people in my life. Where as here Ashok meant that parafernalia which includes his family, his lots of friends, friend's wives, clubs, parties, business contacts and do not know it also includes many suddenness.

It was about two years, I did not go to meet Maa once in this duration. Though in day time i remain busy in my consideration of new life but I used to get dreams at night of my past life that used to refresh my memory again. That time, that life used to come in entirely different shades, wired world of dreams. I had this reccuring dream - solitary and cold night. Snow covered hillock, moonlight in dark deep cold night; but there was no warmth in that moonlight. But if there was anything, it was only blue coldness there. I see Pitaji lying down on some snow-covered hillock and there is some trunk of old tree near his body. He is surrounded by whiteness of snow and silence of the dark. I look towards that trunk and its dry branches. I start shivering

unknowingly. When I woke up after that dream, I was trembling with fever and body was cold.

One other recurring dream was sad and gloomy face of maa in close-up. Sometimes she cried in that dream as if, somebody had died but for whom, It was not clear in the dream. I woke up nervously and keep on solving the riddle in the fearful darkness around me. Why Maa is crying? and for who's death? for what? had already happened... or something else is going to happen?.

One night suddenly bhaia's call came that Maa is not well. If I come for few days to meet her as she is missing me.

I was expecting Anshu that time. Ashok did not want me to leave alone. Today it is very weird to think about it, that time Ashok was the closed companion of mine but now we are so far under the same roof. Our life is entirely on different tracks. That Anshu, for his care, he was not letting me go alone, now he has become eye sour for him. After Anshu met an accident, he did not give so much heed to him so that he will not effect his business and his society. He always tried to keep himself away from him as if he does not exist. Or even if he exists, its all because of somebody's else bad deeds. How can anybody become such stone hearted? Is it right way to become heedless for this pain to save yourself from that pain? and this ways of protection is so weird that one builds several castles to camouflage themselves from pain. The process of protecting yourself makes this pain as less painful.

I still do not forget that incident, when Anshu started painting. Every time, he was into painting - every flat surface seemed like a canvas for

him and starts painting on it. I bought different types of colours, brushes and canvas papers for him. Sometime he makes pictures on varanda floor with chalk or sometimes with straws on damp soil of garden. I never stopped him while he was doing this because I thought he has got a medium of expression. If he had painted something interesting, I used to hang it on wall and keeps on appreciating it to encourage him. Ashok never liked these pictures on the wall. He wanted to have pictures of famous artists on the wall. One day, anshu spoiled some of the important papers of Ashok on his study table by his sketches. When Ashok saw that, he went mad with rage. He did not see anything and went to beat Anshu. Anshu was sitting in the lawn with me learning counting and numbers. He just started with the needle, Ashok pulled his right arm Anshu got scared and I screamed out loud. Ashok was about to say something bad to Kakku, I immediately hold s his hand with my both hands, “ don't you dare to hit him! his no mistake is that big that you need to hit him. You know his conditions.”

"you have spoilt him. I find you crazy too?"

"All right you can say whatever you want to?But if you want to hit him, hit me first" I challenged him.

Ashok went to his room in anger. He murmured while going, “the house had become crèche of kids. Wired things keep hanging on the wall and she says, you do not stay at home. The house has become assylum. Throwing colour doesn't mean painting. Own life has spoilt.. want to spoil mine too.”

I could hear the recurrence of one word in his speech “Asylum - Asylum”. She will turn me crazy too ?don't know when will I get rid of these

crazy people? That day I doubt for a moment, Is it true that I am actually getting crazy. You can not realise your own craziness. Then I shed off this feeling “If it is craziness then let it be.”

Don't know why but that day I keep on recalling the thrashing of Kakku by Pitaji and I became sad and worried. No, I will not let it happen. Ashok will not hit Anshu. He never touched Anshu with love how dare he can hit Anshu. And yes there is no right of anybody to harm somebody physically; be it his parents, the one who gives birth has responsibility of protection-- has no right to harm him. Though parents have right to rectify their kid's mistakes but it has its own limits So many questions were there. So brutally, but I could not muster up the courage to stop Pitaji. This change, power and courage has come after achieving motherhood. Was it result of the completeness? I achieved through motherhood or it was result of circumstances only? I had to protect my part. This power of motherhood hid that vulnerable tender Shashi. When Anshu was in my lap, I was not afraid of any of the man in the world. But I cannot understand till now if this power was already in me, could I save Kakku too? Or it was all game of circumstances.

Circumstances - nobody has any control over it. It happens in their own way. We either keep on lifting that burden or keep on watching it helplessly. On one hand, I also feel that the facilities today which we are blessed with be it knowledge, inventions, experiences; If it were there in that time, Kakku would also be fine. Or was Kakku in such a state that he couldn't be redeemed no matter how much efforts we had put... had to happened in this way only.

I always posed this question to my own ones and to others But never got any right answer. Everybody has its own personality, identity. Has its own story and its twists and turns. One story cannot be same. Still my confusion and my repentances was deep rooted inside my heart. Anshu and my relationship was extension of my relationship with Kakku. I could understand Anshu better when I think him in context of Kakku. If Kakku was not there I would not have understood Anshu at all. He would have also been rotten in same in some inhuman hospital. And the way Ashok has filled his blank spaces of life by other names and with other social activities, I would have done the same. But Now, it has become a whole sole aim of my life, my life's biggest challenge. Though I know due to focus on this, I have lost many important things of my life as well as relations too. I have detached myself from everything.

The exploitation because of this decision, I tolerated everything with a smile. I had to bear it when axis of my life is Anshu. So Ashok also had to find some axis. So what is she makes me feel helpless, no matter if I rebel or cry for it. He has all excuses for everything. Ashok's same reply, "you don't have time for me. "You want me to pay condolence every time, sitting near you. If I am spending some good time with others, what is bad in that?"

Ultimately, I was blamed for everything. "I have my own needs. Do you even care for me? A woman is not only mother, she has her responsibility of wife also. What you have done for me? tell me? what you have do?e. You want me to stay with you all the time at home only. My life belongs to me also, have not rented it for others."

Sometimes he said after getting pissed off, “whatever you doing either God can do this or devote I am nothing of them let me be a human.”

And he also "we have alternative also. Why don't you think about it?We both are capable. I felt shrieking pain inside.”

Might I have rented my life. First Ashok took it on rent. Now in that price only, somebody else has come to live in. And that someone has become so important that now landlord and the tenant both have forgotten what agreement they had in past.

I never met Ashok' girlfriend. Phone calls do come. When Ashok is at home, he keeps on talking to somebody on the phone for hours. Friends, Business, acquaintance- these days relationships can be tagged as per convenience. But who satisfies your physical and emotional needs, there is no name possible for such relationship. It's not your wife or beloved because wife or beloved only satisfies partially. So whosoever she is. She is satisfying Ashok physically as well as emotionally. So I accept her. When most of times, Ashok don't come at night so I don't even ask him, where was he? I knew that he is going to give excuses of bridge party and business meeting and I could make out in his eyes that he was telling me a fairy tales. Why should I blame Ashok? My own satisfaction is completely dependent on Anshu I have also find happiness somewhere else. However its roots are there in my strange circumstances. So if he finds his happiness somewhere else from his wife so it is also justified. Still Ashok feels this house belongs to him.... He has not talked about breaking up with me. And is it not sufficient that nobody else had compelled him to breaking up with me?through she has full right to ask for it. Ashok has also paid for it. And

anyways Ashok had no Kakku in the past. So how could he feel same for Anshu like I was feeling for him. His careless childhood wanted to be free as always. The way past experience prepared me for my coming future, it did not happen to Ashok. Ashok experiences must have prepared him for some other kind of future. What were they? I did not even try to find it out. I expected him to devote himself to Anshu like I did. Was not that unfair on my part? He also needed some support which could help him to forget the hurt ,which was given by me and Anshu. If that support is given by somebody else to him shouldn't I be thankful to her? I should be thankful to that person, who has given all the happiness and satisfactions which was actually snatched by me only.

Doctor said it was my fourth month so I can go through flight and all of sudden ,idea of going to back my own Delhi filled a certain kind of charm in me. As if I was waiting for so long to go there. If bhaia would not have called, I could not have gone to meet Maa. I always felt for my married sister that they have become someone else. After marriage their way of talking was also changed. Their behaviour was mixed with formalities, artificialities and some shadow of their in laws in them. Now I could feel more change in myself as compare to them or may be it was due to Ma's lesson you live happily in your home.

Bhaia came to receive me on airport. He seemed weak he looked aged too. He had some white hair near his temples. After Pitaji's death, bhaia took all responsibility on his shoulders. . The moment he saw me, his eyes started glowing with light of happiness. I forgot every change which hasd occurred in my body and became like their own Shashi.

“How's Maa?”

She has come back from hospital. But she is not allowed to exert herself.

“And bhabhi?”

“She is in Bangalore with kids. Their exams are about to come.”

“What about your transfer?”

“I am trying. May be it will happen next year.”

It was not possible to hide that raw nerve for long time.

“How's Kakku?”

“Maa used to go and meet him before. She was getting bothered in buses, that too in this age. She does not listen to me. What can anybody do in front of her obstinacy? That is why she got heart attack she even went in her sickness also. She is insisting me to bring him home, so that she can meet him.”

I remembered the advices given by Ashok so I kept quite. He got worried when I was going. He said, “See Shashi, I can understand your feeling but don't go with it too much. Keep yourself away from Kakku we cannot take any risk on account of our kid.”

I consoled him, “I will take care of myself completely.” Who knew what was his real intentions.

Maa was lying on the bed. She could not move much I had to bend to hug her.

“Oh! I feel so relaxed to see you. I felt that this girl has forgotten me no letter, no contact.”

“I wrote one two. Even you did not reply”.

“Here house, Kakku, did not get time from? Such mess. and I was not well too.”

“Now forget all the bitter memories. I have come all the way for you only.”

That time, a maid used to come for Maa to attend her all the time. She used to cook and clean. Maa was calling her loudly. I was surprised Maa was treating me as guest

“I am not a guest why are getting bothered so much. I do not need tea, snack, I already had it in plane. If I'll need it, I am going to ask for it.” But still everybody was treating me like a quest. Even bhaia also. Infact, I was also feeling awkward. House was also bit changed in these two years. Now it was no longer a brand new painted house. Walls had patches and somewhere dirt on it. Especially near switches and near bolts, these dirt patches were really dark. There was dirt on show pieces in window also. I was married from new painted house, but that shine was faded now. I was surprised on Maa. She was always busy in keeping the house clean. Untidiness was unbearable for her. She use to make the house painted on every Diwali, now the place was looking completelydeserted.

Life had become stagnant around. I was now used to the busy life of Mumbai. I felt my life became relaxed after coming to Maa. Life had become more compact. I had nothing much to do. From Maa's room to lawn, chatting with friends on phone or shopping from vegetable hawkers or to see new constriction around the house from terrace. To see those constructions brick by brick, I could feel high inside. Then suddenly I realized the sand, pebbles, market around me. And I could feel those

continuous face changing strong shadows floundering around me. Those shadows use to clinch me so badly that as if my identity is also getting dissolved in that.

When I came to home, Bhaia was relaxed . So he was planning to go back to Bangalore. Ma emphasized, “ I told you naa, make me meet Kakku . Then go.”

“You wanted to meet Shashi Now you are chanting Kakku's name”

“She will also meet her brother.”

“Maa, in such condition “

“ All right, he wont stay here. I will bring him in the morning and going to leave him back in the evening.”

“What so ever. You at least bring him. its been months.I could not see his face. Don't know weather he eats anything or not.”

When Kakku came, I felt that I am looking at his shadows. Body had really becomes so meek and weak that if somebody will apply force, he will break down into pieces. No flesh was left in his body. Only Skelton was there. Bones and only bones. As if he was some scare crow. Body and face had became dark. As if there was no blood drop in the body. That dimple cheeks were sunken inside. That 24 years young man was gradually spoiling day by day. He had not even shadow of that young man in him. He was more looking like scary skelton. He could not stand on his own. Bhaia directly took him to his room and made him lie down. Maa also started walking and moving in the house. In next six seven day she went to his room. I had fear in my mind for my expecting baby so I kept watching him at a distance. He did not reply in a single word when I greeted him, as if I

did not mean anything from him. Maa also got only replied of yes No only. He had no recognition of any relationship in his eyes. He did not recognise Maa also. He seemed so weak that may be he is having problem even while talking. He was anyways coughing again and again. The pain on his pale face became more prominent whenever he was coughing. Then with great pain, he spitted some mucus. Blood spots were also there in his mucus.

I felt depressed after seeing Kakku. I remembered that 15-16 years that young boy's shining face of whitish complexion and my heart sank in deep dig hole, whenever I used to see this Kakku. Once or twice, I cried in front of Maa only. See what suppose to happen and what happens in reality. From 15 to 25 or less than these years, golden year for anybody's life; In these years, one dreams, aims high the ambitions flourish. When all these things are in their highest spirit, at that very time if somebody life turns hellish that person becomes only a bleeding running sore.

When bhaia took him back in the evening Maa said- "Now he is not going to live more."

"Maa the pain his suffering from, It will be actually good for him .Don't know how I said that."

"I think you are right nothing is left in his body. TB has eaten up all his energy. Now his body is only filled with blood and mucus .Its all because of me, my fault."

"Why you say that Maa?"

“Yes, it is! I ate so many contraceptives. We did so much for abortion .We already had five kids. He also said that, “what is need of taking more burden .And because of that he got mental aliment.”

“Why are you blaming yourself Maa. It's not everything in our hand. It was destined.”

But while saying this I felt somewhere that whatever Ma had told, might was the reason of Kakku's condition. May be, Maa is responsible for it. I felt restlessness inside. An unsuccessful abortion can make somebody's life as hell. So who is responsible for it?

How ironical is that? Whatever happens, has to happen. No matter how much we try for it.

But Ma never said this before. Had she realized before or she felt it now. May be, she did not realize it earlier. That face of Maa was full of gloominess. Silent and that inquisitive face. He had that fear of answers on her face.

But who can say that it is true or not. He did not right condition to grow up in a right way. It something else would have happened to him. If he would have got selected in some medical college...his dreams of becoming a doctor... If everything could have happened according to his wish only.... Would thing have been same ?which circumstances can lead someone where?.... can somebod know that before.... Might it would have also happened... Kakku would have selected in some medical or engineering college and something would have happened to him there... what would be our plight then.... would Pitaji be hurt and broken... or he would be proud of his son's intelligence , that at least its proven to the people. Or his pain

would be enhanced because what was suppose to happened and what actually has happened. Life is what;to live drop by drop or drop by drop loosing it. We uselessly try to find reason for life and death. Circumstances get mould in such a way, that we keep on looking for truth and lies in such situations and remain far from reality. I think ideal truth is far from human reality. It can not be achieved like human love.It is desirable but not achievable.

I felt that as if we are suffering from same ulcer and its getting communicated to everybody.

It was around two months that I had been staying with Maa. One day we got a call from hospital "Kumud Sehgal condition is critical. Lungs have stopped working. Don't think he will last long. If you people want to meet him or want to take him back , you may."

I was aghast, what to do now? Maa still was very week. Bhaia went back to Bangalore. I was pregnant, so my body had also become quite heavy. I did not use to go anywhere much. And If I could! would I have been able to go to hospital? Mind become restless .But I could do anything I did not even tell Maa about it. I called bhaia. It was hard for bhaia to take off from office. But he said he will try to manage something. Maa felt something ... she said "It's been long time that I have seen Kakku."

"You get all right first. Then meet him."

" Yes, you are right don't know what disconcertment, I am feeling inside. Wish i could meet him. Then I thought of calling chachaji. However, I didn't call him. Don't know, know why! May be I was thinking, when

bhaia comes, he will take him. Chacha anyways considered it useless to meet him.

After two days again I got call from hospital. that scariest news which was expected, still heart was sinking inside. On one side I felt relieved that he got rid off this hellish life as well as as well as us also. But with this, there was a thought inside which was pushing me in painful darkest cave that I have lost him forever.

Maa fainted with the news. It was second dreadful shock for her within two and half years. But this shock did not give that much pain, that our everthing is lost; the way we felt during Pitaji's death. She was repeating this thing only . Why my kids suffered so much? God why? Why you put him in such pain? As if she was asking for justice from him. Justice, which he did not get when he was alive.

Bhaiya reached after twenty four hours of his death. No body else,only brother –sisters were informed about his death. The dead body was braught. When Bhaiya reached, It was stiff as stick. Immediately, all the ceremonies were performed. Washing the body and putting new clothes on it and took it to the crematorium place. Whosoever could reach, reached. We did not wait for anyone. As if kakku's whole identity was a kind of contagious, from which everbody wanted to wash their handsoff by finshing as soon as possible.

He always wanted to come back home. Now his dead body did not get full time to stay at home. Those rites which are actually the right of anybody, that were also performed hastily because ideally it was right. Maa was also broken inside. Otherwise who else was there in the house who could defend Kakku. I was myself worried for Anshu who was in my womb. Relatives came after fourth and tenth day of death. On the 13th day of death, Maa herself performed all the rites of yajna in living room.

One more layer of desertedness covered that house. As if that house has grown old in its youth. It was also vanishing drop by drop.

After four days, I was fiddling through Pitaji's papers in his almirah. Nobody got the time to look into his almirah after his death. It had been locked in locker as it is in his godrej almirah for past two years. However, almirah was in Maa's room only but she neither wanted to open it nor had any inquisitiveness. She also said, she had no knowledge about it.

All of sudden I saw envelop in a locker. When I opened it I saw a will inside it which was signed and stamped by lawyer. I read out all the will. It had reference of Kakku. It was written there that ultimately this house belongs to the two sons. But the moment Kakku is alive, he is main share holder of the house. He will stay here only. He also reserved some amount for his look after. He also gave instruction for his look after in the house

It was the big time irony Pitaji made this will keeping Kakku in his mind. Today after his death, first time this will was read out.

So that's why Pitaji was in hurry to build atleast a nest for Kakku to stay. On other side, Kakku consider Pitaji responsible for his chucking out of house. Pitaji put his best efforts to build this house. That house which he could not ever stay. If he were alive, would he be able to stay here?

Nobody wept on Kakku's death apart from Maa. Her tears were silent. Tears would have become rebel in front of those who were talking about riddance from him. She would have to muster of her courage for crying also. And Maa already shattered. Her life's big chunk was already wasted in this hustle-bustle. Tears were also got dried, because they were already shed in abundance when he was alive. There was not much difference when he was alive and now when he is dead.

Kakku already desolved drop by drop and was vanishing from the house.

And I was busy in building (filling) Anshu drop by drop to provide him the nest. When Anshu took birth, it was like Kakku was reborn. That sharp prominent features, that dimples in cheeks. But I was also scared inside, while accepting this similarity. Will Anshu's future be going to have

same tragic life, what Kakku suffered? I was scared even by the thought. But I never had that clue in my subconscious that something is going to happen like this. Not even that time When he fall down from first floor and got injury on his head. That time I had not any fear of losing him forever. But I kept on telling myself. I never try to abort him, though I prayed for him. Then why? Why it happened to me and my Anshu.

But nobody has any control over circumstances. You try to mould situation on your own. I am also trying to make those people aware about the needs of Anshu and his kind of kids, those who have money, power and those who have caliber to change the circumstances even if they don't have potential, atleast they pretend.

Ashok was also annoyed with my this effort. He also look down to those people who are associated with me due to Anshu. Either they were mothers of handicapped, school and those social activist in this field. Though, I have lost everything but I have found peace in one person he is actually extention of my feelings for Anshu. Ashok hates me. That day he said, "You people are doing so much politics. Leaders of handicapped. People can sell their pain also. You are using your sons disability. You should also fight election on the seat reserved for disable candidates."

Such bitterness, so much sarcasm. This is all because I put my best effort to raised Anshu. But that energy has made me strong,

independent woman, not even dependent on Ashok. His ego could not digest it. That Shashi who used to be in four walls of house is gradually facing the whole world with high head. Because of his fifteen years old son Anshu is learning way of life on his own in a school situated on a hill top. Now we don't have to make him learn the meager households stuff. Because he has become efficient enough to be independent. His independent gave me a kind of freedom so that I can path to others also. To hold those mothers in sharing pain, he was calling it politics. Was It not essential for me to accept this society and to be part of it? Was Ashok's society going to accept Anshu ever? Was he just going to be only embarrassment state for them? the thing which happened to Kakku. I just had to choose Anshu at the cost of losing the world of Ashok or had to choose Ashok's world at the cost of Anshu, and that's what exactly happen. I had to lose Ashok for it. Was it not destined to happen?

But it happened gradually by keeping everything in disguise. Or I was lost in light of Anshu that everything around him was blurred to my eyes. My own carelessness, detachment. Might be I would not have realised it yet if somebody had not pointed me to towards it. And once you see it, you can well imagine in eyes what other things are going on. Then we get surrounded by ghosts of pain

Many times heart cries out. Hand advances towards phone's cradle. Want to tell that stranger, can you set free my husband? would you be able to return my Ashok. But Ashok went on my wish only, now will he

again come back on my wish? When I lost my control and cried in front of him then he labeled it as politics. I only possess right this much. I am not one of those people whose both arms are for welcoming only. I have to hold so many things at the same time. And with one minor carelessness, these tender things can fall apart. I can recollect the broken pieces but is it possible to reshape it as it was? While reshaping it, those cracks and freckles will remain on its face. And all efforts of building all chunks together have always been vain. So what else is left in my life?

Anshu had sent his two pictures from his school which is situated in the hill top. There is similarity between the two sheds which he has used in his painting- one is royal blue resembling the huge Mediterranean sea and the other is scarlet red resembling the sky in dawn time in the morning. In one picture, there is only play of these two sheds. Somewhere light and somewhere deep impressions of these two sheds. There is a blue line in the middle which is being intersected by a red line going vertically. In the second picture there is an impression of a man also in it. Sunken cheeks, sharp nose and a meek body which is almost looking like a skeleton. Don't know what happens to my body whenever I see this picture. I always see Kakku in it. Struggling with life and death and this skeleton appears in front of my eyes.

But Anshu ...but how come he has this image in his mind. Was he living with Kakku inside his heart like me? I have always kept him in my heart. If Kakku could have painted, would he have painted the same? Or if Kakku would have painted, he would have been saved from that hell. But

what Kakku could have done and what he could not, nobody even tried to find out. No matter it was because of the circumstances or it was destined. But Kakku might have made me so strong that I could save Anshu. And there is another possibility that like Maa said everybody suffers according to their fate. The circumstances in which Kakku took birth and in what situation he had been brought up- can be also call it his mere fate?

Questions! Questions! Questions! We always keep on suffering with questions. Not a single answer. Or we can again call it destiny or fate. Are questions also get affected by circumstances? However, we get answer from our destiny only. Or fate is only the question and the only answer is circumstances. Those circumstances which are drinking blood and having flesh scratched by sharp nails of facts and reality. Where the destiny become the only remedy for relief like a useless whore searching for its clients. Ready to be with any one who so ever is going to ticket.

Maa is completely settered. That person whose waiting for death, his life becomes worse than death. She wanders alone in that house like her own shadow. She says that house has become deserted after Kakku left. Kakku barely stayed in that house. That house which is still waiting eagerly to welcome him. As if some ready bride will not able to go with groom. For Maa, his presence only could bring liveliness in her life. No matter that presence was useless for others or no matter how painful his presence for Maa also. His absence give the meaning of his presence. Though, this presence lost its meaning when he was alive

I showed those pictures to Maa painted by Anshu, I talked about Kakku “I have never talked about Kakku with Anshu... Never have shown his pictures. Then how come this picture?”

Maa did not pay much attention to my statement and said “it can be somebody in your subconscious. That’s why you are thinking so. And whereas Kakku is concerned, what ever had happened to him, it was destined, even God could not rectified it.”

I kept staring at Maa.

When Kakku was in my womb, I had this fear in my mind. Why?

Maa got bit hesitated. The eyes in that wrinkled face tried to hide from themselves only. It drooped down and then she started staring at some blank space.

Your doctor uncle said... “You know one year after your birth, I suffered from diabetes. But thank God! you were born. He said, a child born from a diabetic mother, he can be mentally challenged.

Maa’s throat became choked with tears but still I asked mercilessly.
“So you knew about Kakku?”

“What if I knew..... pain remain same. I tried to abort him. But anyways who knows everything. He was talking about possibility. I did not know that it is going to happen. I prayed alot. Had this belief in my heart that God will listen to our prayers... on hopes only...”

The eyes in that wrinkled face shimmered with tears. I kept on thinking while staring at that skeleton impressons in shades of red blue colour. Maa also struggled on her part. her strutggle with destiny. In that struggle, her defeat was almost destined. And my struggle was with circumstances. Have I actually won the battle? I have lost Ashok in front of my eyes. Was it because of circumstances ? But pain has different faces. What happens ultimately? What actually is there? We give different definitions according to our own convenience and wisdom. Maa left everything in hands of destiny and I have left everything to me only. Pain is on one side. No matter how it looks and what its consequences going to be? It has its relationship with each individual only...one who suffers, one who gets squeezed by every single carat, one who gets tear apart by them..... one who vanishes drop by drop.

अध्याय तृतीय

हिंदी अनुवाद के दौरान आने वाली समस्याएं

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आधुनिक उपन्यास और कहानी की सबसे बड़ी विशिष्टता उसकी यथार्थपरकता और जीवन के साथ उसका प्रत्यक्ष जुड़ाव है। उपन्यास के अनेक सूत्रों में व्यक्ति अथवा समष्टि जीवन के विभिन्न स्तरों का उसके विस्तार और व्यापकता में प्रतिफलन होता है। वस्तुतः उपन्यास को लेखक और पाठक दोनों उसके माध्यम से अपने आपको पाने का प्रयत्न करते हैं। जो लोग यह मानते हैं कि उपन्यास का जन्म केवल कल्पना के आधार पर होता है, जिसमें जीवन के कुछ अलग-अलग हिस्सों को उठाकर जोड़ दिया जाता है और इसका उद्देश्य केवल मनोरंजन करना ही होता है वह उपन्यास को बड़ी उथली नजर से देखते हैं। जैसा कि महेन्द्र चतुर्वेदी¹ कहते हैं इसका लक्ष्य भी आत्म तत्व की उपलब्धि है— साक्षात्कार है। मानव जीवन की उच्चतम साधना है।

ए. गॉर्डन ने लिखा है :

² विश्लेषणात्मक दृष्टि से देखें तो उपन्यास में गद्य की चार सारणियां दृष्टिगोचर होती हैं : संवाद, कथाख्यान, वर्णन विवरण तथा व्याख्या—विश्लेषण।

किसी भी उपन्यास का अनुवाद करना हो तो जो सबसे बड़ी समस्या सामने आती है, वह है मूल कृति की सांस्कृतिक पृष्ठभूमि को आत्मसात करना और साथ ही साथ उपन्यासकार की मनोभूमि को भी समझना। इसके बिना अनुवाद तो संभव है परन्तु वह अनुवाद की कृति देह बिना आत्मा समान होगी।

¹ उपन्यास का अनुवाद— महेन्द्र चतुर्वेदी, काव्यानुवाद की समस्याएं (साहित्य का अनुवाद) भोलानाथ तिवारी महेन्द्र चतुर्वेदी

² उपन्यास का अनुवाद— महेन्द्र चतुर्वेदी, काव्यानुवाद की समस्याएं (साहित्य का अनुवाद) भोलानाथ तिवारी महेन्द्र चतुर्वेदी

कतरा-दर-कतरा का अनुवाद करते समय मुझे जो समस्याएं आई, उन पर थोड़ा सा प्रकाश डालना चाहूंगी। भाषा ज्ञानी तो यह मानते हैं कि दो शब्द एक दूसरे के पर्याय नहीं होते हैं। उपन्यास के वातावरण परिवेश, रचना शैली, विषय वस्तु आदि के रूपान्तरण की इन समस्याओं के साथ ही अनुवाद का वास्तविक कार्य भी अपने आप में अनेक समस्याओं से ग्रस्त होता है। अनुवाद केवल शब्द या वाक्यों तक ही सीमित नहीं होता, बल्कि संवेदनाओं और विचारों का भी होता है।

कतरा-दर-कतरा में आंचलिक शब्दों से लेकर हिन्दुस्तानी, उर्दू और फारसी शब्दों का प्रयोग किया है। कतरा-दर-कतरा शीर्षक मूलतः उर्दू भाषा के ही शब्दों से बना है। इसलिए इस कृति का अनुवाद करते समय इसे अलग-अलग ढांचे में ढाला गया है। सबसे पहले तो यह उपन्यास भारतीय मूलके मध्यवर्गीय परिवार का चित्रण करता है। उनकी समस्याएं, उनसे जुड़ते रिश्ते, भावनाओं और संवेदनाओं को समझते हुए इन रिश्तों का अनुवाद नहीं किया है। मां तथा पिता का अनुवाद **Mother and Father** नहीं किया है। अंग्रेजी में मौसी, बुआ, चाची सबके लिए आंटी (**Aunty**) शब्द का प्रयोग होता है। परन्तु केवल इन रिश्तों को **Aunty** का नाम देने से, इनका व्यक्ति से जो वास्तविक संबंध है, जो भावनाएं और संवेदनाएं जुड़ी हुई हैं, यह अंग्रेजी अनुवाद में स्पष्ट नहीं होता।

लेखिका ने कहीं-कहीं जीवन को बहुत ही दार्शनिक या कहें तो **Philosophical Style** में अपने शब्दों में उतारा है। जैसे कि :

¹“जब हम छोटे होते हैं तो कोई टिगना आदमी भी दानव समान लगता है या एक छोटे कैनवास पर एक मध्यम आकार का बिन्दु भी बड़ा लगने लगता है और एक बार खुद बड़े हो जाने पर पहाड़ भी पार करने लायक मालूम देने लगता है—

¹ Page no. 2, Qatra dar Qatra, Susham Bedi

पर क्या सच में वह बिंदु छोटा था?"

इसका अनुवाद करते हुए मैंने Monster, Midge, big mountain, horrendous आदि शब्दों का प्रयोग किया है।

एक और जगह लेखिका की दार्शनिकता का उदाहरण मिलता है, वह लिखती हैं "हरियाली जिंदगी का, खुशी का प्रतीक होता है।... नीलापन मौत का जहर का। फिर भी एक ही शब्द 'श्याम' दोनों रंगों को अपने में समेटे हैं।"

जिसका अनुवाद मैंने इस प्रकार किया है

"Green is the colour of life & happiness but the colour 'Shyam' (blue) encompasses all colours. That is why the perception of the creation of this world is connected to this colour only. Death & life, it combines both.

जहां उन्होंने लिखा है जीवन का नाम कतरा-दर-कतरा, मिटना ही नहीं, कतरा-दर-कतरा बनना भी है। यहां मैंने इसका अनुवाद इस प्रकार किया है :

"The story is not of perishing drop by drop but also of building up in the same way."

इस तरह जीवन के गूढ़ तत्त्वों का या लेखिका की दार्शनिक व्याख्याओं का वर्णन यदि मैं इनका मर्म समझे बिना कर देती तो या तो अर्थ का अनर्थ हो जाता या जो रस हिंदी में पढ़ते हुए पाठक ग्रहण करते हुए, वह रस अंग्रेजी के पाठक नहीं ले पाते। इसलिए मैंने अनुवाद करते हुए थोड़ा बहुत शब्दों का फेर बदल किया है और लेखिका के अर्थों व उनके रस को पाठकों तक पहुंचाने का यथार्थ समर्थ प्रयास

¹ Page no. 65, Qatra dar Qatra, Susham Bedi

किया है।

लेखिका ने उपन्यास लिखते समय कई हिंदी लोकोक्तियों एवं मुहावरों का प्रयोग किया है। जैसे कि :

एक ही थाली के चट्टे बट्टे, पल पल के साथी, तिनके का एक ही सहारा, घुन पिसना, भीगी बिल्ली, आकाश के तारे तोड़ना, पानी को मुट्टियों में भींचना, आसमान सर पर उठाना, आंखें सूनी सी शून्य को- ताकती, चेहरा सफेद पड़ गया, उड़ती सी निगाह, भूत सवार होना, रास्ते से हटाना, आगबबूला होना, आव देखा न ताव आदि।

जिनका अनुवाद मैंने इस प्रकार किया है।

Birds of same feather flock together, companion of my life, herculean task, I was clenching my fist & was trying to hold water in it, make hue & cry, face completely pale, grinding under the wheel, heart was sinking in the cave, disconcerted, turn into pieces, glance look mad is rage etc.

मैंने अंग्रेजी अनुवाद करते हुए अंग्रेजी और हिंदी पाठकों दोनों का ध्यान रखा है। आकाश से तारे तोड़ना अपने में एक असाधारण या नामुमकिन काम है। इस मुहावरे का अनुवाद अंग्रेजी पाठकों के लिए मैंने Hercules task किया है। Hercules एक यूनानी Mythology का वीर योद्धा था जो नामुमकिन को मुमकिन किया करता था। इस प्रकार मैंने "Law of Possibility & Probability" लगाकर हिन्दी मुहावरों का अंग्रेजी अनुवाद किया है।

लेखिका ने जगह-जगह अपने लेखन में पाठकों को प्रकृति दर्शन भी करवाया है और जिनके भावों व उनकी सौंदर्य में थोड़ी सी समस्या आई। लेखिका लिखती है

कि जब शशि अपनी सहेलियों के साथ पिकनिक पर जाती है और आस-पास की प्रकृति को निहारती हुई सोचती है :

¹“कार्तिक की चांदनी में रूई के फाहों से हल्के हो आए ताजमहल की रूमानियत के साथ ख्यालों की उड़ान भरते हम किसी परियों के देश में पहुंच गए थे।”

इसका अनुवाद मैंने इस प्रकार किया है।

In moonlight of November, Tajmahal became whiter & lighter than cotton swabs and with its charm, we had reached some fantasy land on our dream chariot.

हालांकि इस अनुवाद में मैंने कुछ अंग्रेजी शब्दों को स्वयं जोड़ा है और कार्तिक माह के लिए मैंने Month of November का प्रयोग किया है।

एक और जगह लेखिका अपने शब्दों में प्रकृति दर्शन करवाती हुई लिखती हैं

²सूनी और सर्द रात, बर्फ से ढके टीले... बर्फ की सफेद घुप्प अंधेरी रात में चांदनी सी बिछी दिखती! पर उस उजियारी में मिठास या गर्माहट नहीं थी।

जिसका अनुवाद मैंने इस प्रकार किया है।

Solitary & cold night... snow covered hillock. moonlight in dark deep cold night but there was no warmth in that cold night.

हो सकता है इसका इससे बेहतर अनुवाद या Alternative Translation हो परन्तु यह मेरा पहला अनुवाद है और मैंने यथासमय इसे बेहतर बनाने का प्रयास

¹ Page no. 41, Qatra-dar-Qatra, Susham Bedi

² Page no.80, Qatra-dar-Qatra, Susham Bedi

किया है।

एक और बहुत महत्वपूर्ण पक्ष जो लेखिका ने इस उपन्यास में उजागर किया है, वह है चरित्रों का मनोवैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण। लेखिका जो विदुषी हैं, मुझे लगता है कि उपन्यास लिखते समय उन्होंने Sigmund Freud की Psychoanalytical Theory तथा Dreams theory को जरूर ध्यान में रखा होगा। इसका अनुवाद समस्यापूर्ण कम तथा चुनौतीपूर्ण एवं रोचक ज्यादा रहा। उपन्यास में विभिन्न पात्र अपनी-अपनी विषम परिस्थितियों से लड़ रहे हैं और उन परिस्थितियों का उन चरित्रों की मानसिकता पर अलग-अलग प्रभाव पड़ता है। सबसे पहले तो इन पात्रों को पढ़कर अनुभव करना रोचक था फिर अंग्रेजी पाठकों के लिए ग्राह्य बनाना चुनौतीपूर्ण था।

उपन्यास का पात्र कक्कू (कुमुद सहगल) 12वीं की परीक्षा में 1st Division नहीं ला पाता और इस कारण उसका मेडिकल या इंजीनियरिंग में दाखिला नहीं हो पाता। सारे परिवार की उम्मीदें उसी पर टिकी थी। उसके नम्बर कम आने पर घर में मातम का माहौल बन जाता है। उसके माता-पिता बहुत ही आदर्शवादी विचारधारा वाले लोग हैं। रिश्तेदारों और भाई-बहनों की तरफ से भी उसे मानसिक तौर पर प्रताड़ित किया जाता है और यह दबाव वह नहीं सह पाता है। दूसरी ओर उसकी यौन अतृप्तियों की बात भी कही गई है। जो बढ़ती उम्र में बच्चे महसूस करते हैं, उसको समझने एवं समझाने के बजाए, उसे आदर्शवाद की लाठी से मारा पीटा जाता है। 'Social conditioning' के कारण हम अपनी repressed diseases छुपा लेते हैं परन्तु जब बच्चा बड़ा हो रहा होता है तो उसके लिए यह सब नया होता है। लेखिका ने Freud की 'Libido diseases' का भी उल्लेख किया है। उपन्यास की वर्णनकर्ता (Narrator) शशि है जो अपने भाई कक्कू और

बेटे अंशु की कहानी सुना रही है। बचपन में एक दिन शशि और कक्कू के बीच अज्ञानता और अचेतनता में कुछ घटता है। वह एक दूसरे को छूकर जानने का प्रयास करते हैं। वह आकर्षण नर मादा का है। उसमें कहीं भी अनैतिकता की भावना नहीं है।

लेखिका ने शशि के माध्यम से Freud की Dream Interpretation की Theory का भी प्रयोग किया है। शशि को बार-बार पिताजी और कक्कू के सपने आते हैं और जैसा कि Freud ने लिखा है

Dreams are successions of images, emotions & sensations that occur involuntarily in the mind during stages of sleep.

मैंने उन सपनों का अनुवाद कुछ इस प्रकार किया है

I see Pitaji lying down on some snow-covered hillock & there is some trunk of old tree near his body. He is surrounded by whiteness of snow & silence of dark I look towards that trunk & its day branches.

यहां पर सूखे पेड़ का मतलब शायद कतरा दर कतरा मरते कक्कू से है।

मुझे इन सबके अनुवाद का अनुभव उपन्यास में सबसे रोचक लगा। शब्दों को शब्दशः अनुवाद नहीं किया गया है। भावों को समझकर और चरित्रों की मानसिकता को महसूस कर अनुवाद किया गया है। मूल भाषा में लेखिका ने कम शब्दों में बहुत से भावों का अनुभव पाठकों को करवाया है। अंग्रेजी अनुवाद करते हुए मैंने Concise और Precise शब्दों में वही भाव उतारने का प्रयास किया है।

उपन्यास का अनुवाद करने में इतनी समस्या उत्पन्न इसलिए नहीं हुई क्योंकि लेखिका ने कई सामान्य अंग्रेजी के बोलचाल के शब्द इस उपन्यास में शामिल किए हैं जैसे कि :

शशि के पिताजी शशि से कहते हैं- "I have been failure in my life" शशि के भईया कक्कू के लिए कहते हैं "It is time to send him back to the hospital" इसके अलावा भी उपन्यास में अंग्रेजी शब्दों की भरमार है। जैसे :

It is very painful fantasy England, returned, flue posted, psychiatrist, Bright, risk, social conditioning, First division, tough competition, notes exchange shift, plot, transfer, respond, I am sorry, westernised appointment, shock, program, desk, canvas, paper, brush, business parties, alternatives, bridge parties blocks, acquaintances आदि।

लेखिका ने उपन्यास में जिस प्रकार उर्दू-फारसी शब्दावली का प्रयोग किया है, उससे उनकी और भाषाओं में भी दक्षता का प्रमाण मिलता है। उन्होंने कई उर्दू फारसी शब्दों का प्रयोग किया है जैसे तकल्लुफ, लाईलाज, शिद्दत, खौफनाक, कहर, मुमकिन, एकबारगी, मातमपुरसी, गुंजाइश, नजरिया, बेफिक्र, हादसा, इल्जता, कशमकश, बेखबर, बेवास्ता, बेसरोकार आदि। हालांकि मेरा उर्दू फारसी में इतना ज्ञान नहीं है परन्तु यह शब्दावली कुछ हिन्दुस्तानी भी प्रतीत होती है। इसलिए मैंने इंटरनेट व अपनी समझ के अनुसार इसका अनुवाद करने का प्रयास किया है।

जब कक्कू अस्वस्थ हो जाता है तो उसकी बहन की बेटी शशि से पूछती है कि अब कक्कू पहले जैसा क्यों नहीं है। वह कुछ खेलों के नाम बोलती है जो कक्कू उनके साथ खेला करता था। झूठे भाईयां कराता था या घोड़ा बनकर उन्हें

पीठ पर घुमाया करता था जिसका अनुवाद मैंने **Piggi back ride** तथा **Rocking back & forth placing on seat** किया है। यह शब्द आंचलिक थे जिनका अनुवाद करना कठिन प्रतीत हुआ। इसका अनुवाद करते समय यह विशेष ध्यान दिया गया कि भाव का हनन न हो। इसी तरह जब कक्कू बीमार होता तो उसकी मां, पिताजी के हाथ कई तरह के पकवान बनाकर भिजवाती है। बादाम की खीर, पूरियां, रसमिलाई आलू की तरकारी और बैंगन का भर्ता आदि। हालांकि खीर का अनुवाद मैंने **Rice Pudding** किया है और बाकी व्यंजन जैसे ही अनुवाद में उतार दिए हैं क्योंकि यह सब एक तरह से भारतीय व्यंजन हैं (**Indian cuisine**) तो इसका अनुवाद करना मुझे उचित नहीं लगा। जैसे ही मैंने भारतीय रीति रिवाजों का भी अनुवाद कुछ जगह किया है और कुछ जगह जैसे ही उतार दिया है। अगर हम देखें तो तेहरवीं के लिए **13th day after the death**, अनुवाद तो किया जा सकता है परन्तु उतना भाव नहीं स्थापित हो पाया जितना तेहरवीं से स्पष्ट होता है। हवन का अनुवाद **Yajna** और आहूति का अनुवाद **Perform his offerings** किया है। इसका इससे बेहतर अनुवाद हो सकता था या **alternative translation** का भी **Scope** है, परन्तु मैंने यथासमर्थ इसका भावानुवाद करने का प्रयास किया है।

उपन्यास में कोई भी चरित्र लेखिका ने बुरा नहीं दिखाया है। परिस्थितियों के वशीभूत व जीवन की विषमताओं से लड़ते हुए वह समाज में अपना स्थान बनाने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं। माता-पिता कक्कू को इसलिए समझ नहीं पाते क्योंकि वह आदर्श जीवन जीते हुए बड़े हुए थे। वह बहुत ही साधारण जीवन व्यतीत करने वाले मध्यवर्गीय गांधीवादी विचारधारा के लोग थे। कक्कू का बदलाव उनके लिए समझ पाना संभव नहीं था इसलिए उसका आचरण उनके लिए सही नहीं था। कक्कू

शारीरिक व मानसिक तौर पर एक द्वंद्व से जूझ रहा था। उसकी पढ़ाई को लेकर सबका दबाव और बाद में हाथ आई असफलता को वह झेल नहीं पाया। शशि और अशोक का रिश्ता भी अजीब से भंवर का शिकार है। कहीं न कहीं उपन्यास पढ़ते हुए महसूस होता है कि शायद अशोक के चरित्र से पूरी तरह न्याय नहीं हो पाया है। उसे केवल एक ही लैन्स से देखा गया है। उसका चरित्र grey shade वाला है। उपन्यास में पहले तो वह अपनी पत्नी शशि से बहुत प्रेम करता है। उसकी हर सुख सुविधा का ख्याल रखता है। बाद में परिस्थितियां बदलती हैं। अंशु वाली दुर्घटना के बाद उसके और शशि के बीच मतभेद उत्पन्न होते हैं। पहले झगड़े और फिर दोनों अपनी-अपनी दुनिया में मग्न होकर, साथ रहते हुए भी अलग हो जाते हैं। दोनों की दुनिया एक दूसरे से अलग बस जाती है।

शशि अशोक की महिला मित्र की भी बात करती है। अशोक का चरित्र चित्रण एक पत्नी द्वारा किया गया ज्यादा लगता है। असल में अशोक की परिस्थितियां क्या रहती है, इसका ज्यादा ब्यौरा नहीं मिलता। सिवाय इसके कि उसका बचपन आरामदेह था और वह जीवन से कुछ और चाहता था। यह चरित्र जब बातचीत करते हैं या अपनी भावनाओं का एक दूसरे के प्रति प्रकट करते हैं तो उनके शब्दों को दूसरी भाषा में उतारकर पाठकों के सामने वही भाव प्रकट करना अपने में चुनौतीपूर्ण और रोचक दोनों था। एक जगह शशि अपनी भावनाओं को प्रकट करती हुई स्वयं से ही बात करते हुए या कहा जा सकता है पाठकों से साझा कर रही है :

¹ "मैं अशोक की महिला मित्र से कभी मिली नहीं... फोन आते हैं.... जब अशोक घर पर रहता है तो घंटों फोन पर किसी से बातें भी होती हैं... मित्र, बिजनेस, एक्वेंटेंस... आजकल रिश्तों के बहुत सारे नाम हैं... शरीर की या भावना की

¹ Page no. 84, Qatra-dar-Qatra, Susham Bedi

जिससे तृप्ति हो उस रिश्ते का शायद कोई एक नाम है भी नहीं... पत्नी या प्रिया भी वह नहीं है... क्योंकि पत्नी या प्रेमिका भी आंशिक रूप से वह तृप्ति दे पाती है... तब वह जो कोई भी हो... अशोक को मानसिक-शारीरिक रूप से तृप्ति देने वाला है... इसलिए मुझे स्वीकार है।

इन पंक्तियों में तीन भाव स्पष्ट होते हैं : एक स्त्री का संघर्ष न केवल समाज से बल्कि अपने से तथा अपनों से भी, दूसरी यह एक ओर पत्नी की शिकायत और उसके जीवन के खालीपन को भी दर्शाता है कि जब उसे अपनी पति की सबसे ज्यादा जरूरत है, वह किसी और के साथ है। तीसरा भाव है परिस्थितियों की स्वीकार्यता (Acceptance) का। वह पति की तृप्ति से संतुष्ट है फिर चाहे वह कहीं किसी और से भी मिल रहा हो।

अब इन भावों को एक भाषा से दूसरी भाषा में उतारना और वह भी इस कला से कि एक भी भाव का हनन न हो, काफी चुनौतीपूर्ण था। इसका अनुवाद मैंने इस प्रकार किया है :

I never met Ashok's girlfriend ever... phone calls do come... when Ashok is at home, he keeps on talking to somebody on phone for hours. Friends, acquaintance... these days relationship can be tagged as per convenience ... but who satisfies your physical & emotional needs... there is no name possible for such relationship... It's not your beloved or wife... because wife or beloved only satisfies partially.... so who so ever she is... she is satisfying Ashok physically as well as emotionally ... so I accept her...

यहां अंग्रेजी अनुवाद में एक स्त्री व पत्नी की पीड़ा दोनों को शब्दों में उतारने का प्रयास किया है। परन्तु इसका अनुवाद समस्या या चुनौती से ज्यादा शब्दों का एक नया अनुभव सा प्रतीत होता है। जिसका अंग्रेजी अनुवाद करना काफी रोचक रहा।

लेखिका ने अपने साक्षात्कार में कहा था कि किसी भी उपन्यास या कृति का अंग्रेजी अनुवाद इसलिए आवश्यक है क्योंकि न केवल यह अंग्रेजी पाठकों के लिए ग्राह्य बनती है बल्कि आजकल की पीढ़ी से जुड़ने में भी सहायता करती है। आजकल का यूथ या नई पीढ़ी में अंग्रेजी पाठकों की संख्या में काफी बढ़ोतरी हुई है इसलिए इसका अंग्रेजी अनुवाद कृति को सब तक पहुंचाता है।

उपन्यास में सभी प्रकार के चरित्रों का मिश्रण मिलता है। कुछ पढ़े लिखे **Well educated** चरित्र हैं तो कुछ चरित्र अनपढ़ या आधुनिकता से काफी परे हैं। अगर माता-पिता का चरित्र देखा जाए तो पिताजी पढ़े लिखे होने के बावजूद उनकी जड़े आदर्शवादिता व गांधीवादी विचारधारा से जुड़े हैं, तो उनकी बोलचाल में भी वही प्रदर्शित होता है। मां का चरित्र बहुत पढ़ा-लिखा नहीं है। उनकी मानसिकता भी उसी के अनुसार दिखाई गई है। वह चाहती है कि शशि की जल्दी से जल्दी शादी हो जाए। उसकी पढ़ाई मां के लिए उतनी जरूरी नहीं है। शशि के सुझाव पर कि कक्कू को वेश्या के पास ले जाना चाहिए क्योंकि उसकी तकलीफ मानसिक व शारीरिक अतृप्तियों के कारण है। यह सुनकर मां भड़क जाती है और उसे गंदी-गंदी गालियां देने लगती है और दूसरी ओर कक्कू शशि और दूसरे भाई बहन हैं। उनकी भाषा **refined** या सुथरी है। उनकी भाषा से यह साफ होता है कि कोई पढ़ा-लिखा बात कर रहा है। जब इन चरित्रों की भाषा का अनुवाद करना था तो साथ ही साथ इन चरित्रों का अनुवाद भी हो रहा था। केवल शब्दों का अनुवाद करना, चरित्रों को उचित रूप से उजागर नहीं हो पाता। इसलिए मैंने शब्दों के

चयन में यह ध्यान रखा है कि शब्द चरित्र को पाठक पूरी तरह समझ पाए और जो रस हिंदी पाठकों ने उपन्यास पढ़ते समय लिया, उतना ही अंग्रेजी पाठक भी उन चरित्रों से जुड़ पाए।

अगर हम बच्चों के वार्तालाप पर ध्यान दें तो उनकी भाषा भी उतनी ही सरल प्रतीत होती है। उनकी भाषा कहीं-कहीं ज्यादा क्रूर भी लगती है परन्तु उनके शब्दों में कहीं मिलावट नहीं दिखती। लेखिका ने जिस भी चरित्र को लिया है; उसकी उम्र, उसके वातावरण, शैक्षणिक योग्यता एवं उसकी परिस्थितियों का खास ख्याल रखा है। कक्कू और शशि के बचपन की लड़ाईयां, लेखिका ने शब्दों के चित्रों से आंखों के सामने जीवंत कर दिया है। उनके खेल, उनकी लड़ाईयां व बचपन में होने वाली आशंकाएं, चीजों को जानने की उत्सुकता और उस कौतूहल के वशीभूत हुई गलतियां जो असल में निर्विकार है क्योंकि उसके पीछे कोई मैल नहीं छिपा। बच्चों के वार्तालाप को बिना मिलावट के पेश किया गया है तो कभी-कभी वह क्रूर प्रतीत होती है। दीदी की बड़ी बेटी जब शशि से पूछती है

“सोनु कहता है कक्कू मामा पागल हो गए हैं” और बाद में शशि सोचती है कि बच्चों की नासमझी, उनका भोलापन इतना मीठा होता है उतना ही क्रूर भी। “जो बातें जहन के दायरे में ठीक से नहीं अंटती, उसे जानने का कौतूहल कुरेदता कुरेदता क्रूरता की हदों पर पहुंच जाता है।”

इसका अंग्रेजी अनुवाद कुछ इस प्रकार किया है :

On one hand, how sweet is the innocence & ignorance of kids but on other hand it is brutal too. The thing which is incomprehensible to their standards, its inquisitiveness reaches

¹ Page No. 71, Qatra-dar-Qatra, Susham Bedi

the extent of brutality.

इसका अनुवाद करने की समस्या यह थी कि शब्दशः अंग्रेजी अनुवाद तो बच्चों की नहीं किसी दानव की वृत्ति का वर्णन लगा उसमें उनकी मासूमियत व अनभिज्ञता का चित्रण नहीं हो पाता है। इसलिए शब्दों के थोड़े हेर-फेर से अंग्रेजी अनुवाद में बच्चों की मानसिकता का सटीक वर्णन करने का प्रयास किया है। जिस कुशलता से लेखिका ने बच्चों के चरित्र को उनके वार्तालाप से पाठकों के सामने चित्रित किया है, अनुवाद प्रक्रिया में भी उन चरित्रों को वही स्थान मिले, इसका विशेष ध्यान रखने का प्रयास किया गया है।

अनुवाद प्रक्रिया में सबसे सरल, चरित्रों के वार्तालाप का अनुवाद था, जिसे करने में कोई बड़ी समस्या नहीं आई और लेखिका ने चरित्रों की भाषा में आम बोलचाल के ही शब्दों का प्रयोग किया है। इसके अंग्रेजी अनुवाद में भी Colloquial language का ही प्रयोग किया है। जैसे

“क्या कहा डाक्टर ने...”

“इलेक्ट्रिक शॉक दिया है... कहने लगा कि आज ही इलाज शुरू हो जाना चाहिए... देरी करने से हालत बिगड़ सकती है।”

“तो ओह...”

“क्या... कुछ...?”

“उसका चेहरा बड़ा चुपचुप सा लगा... बात भी नहीं की मुझसे”

“हां... तब से चुप ही है”

“मैं जरा बात करूं उससे”

¹ Page no. 28, Qatra-dar-Qatra, Susham Bedi

मैं उसके कमरे में गई तो वह बिस्तर पर लेटा हुआ था।

“क्या बात है कक्कू...”

“इट वॉज वैरी पेनफुल! सोने दो मुझे।”

इसमें पीड़ा उदासी, चिंता और संवेदनाओं के भावा ज्यादा हैं और शब्द कम। अंग्रेजी में कहे तो language of expressions है। ऐसे भागों के अनुवादों में भाषा एक लय में बहती प्रतीत होती है और जबकि यहां पहले से ही अंग्रेजी के शब्दों की भरमार है तो इसका अंग्रेजी अनुवाद समस्या कैसे हो सकता है? इसका अनुवाद कुछ इस प्रकार किया है।

"What did doctor say...

Electric shock has given... he said the treatment should be started today only.... only otherwise condition can be more worse."

Then... oh...

"What...? Is there something...?"

"his face is too quite... did not even talk to me. Yes, he is silent since that moment"

"Should I talk to him?"

When I went to his room, he was lying on the bed.

"What happened Kakku?"

It was very painful let me sleep.

इस पूरी अनुवाद प्रक्रिया को अनुवाद यात्रा कहना मैं ज्यादा उचित समझूंगी। अनुवाद करते समय समस्याएं कम और रोचक अनुभव ज्यादा रहे। समस्याएं चाहे सांस्कृतिक अनुवाद को लेकर रही हो, आंचलिक शब्दों को लेकर रही हो, मुहावरों को लेकर आई हो, चरित्रों के अनुवाद को लेकर आई हैं। अनुवाद यात्रा के दौरान इन समस्याओं को सुलझाने की प्रक्रिया में न केवल अनुवाद विज्ञान बढ़ा, साथ ही साथ नए-नए शब्दों के बेहतर वैकल्पिक शब्द हो सकते हैं परन्तु भाषा केवल शब्दों तक सीमित नहीं होती। शब्द तो उसका बाह्य विधान है, प्रमुख है भाव और अर्थ जो उस भाषा में व्यक्त होता है। तो फिर एक भाषा का अनुवाद दूसरी भाषा में व्यक्त करना वो ऐसी भाषा में अनुवाद करना जो अपनी जैविक और सांस्कृतिक दोनों स्तरों पर मूल कृति की भाषा से नितान्त भिन्न है। यह कार्य अपने में चुनौतीपूर्ण था जिसे हम समस्या का नाम दे सकते हैं।

अनुवाद में शब्दों को जानने के लिए मुझे कई Thesauras की सहायता से कई नए शब्दों की पहचान हुई। शब्दों का आम बोलचाल का होना अपने में एक वरदान था। ऐसा नहीं है कि अनुवाद करते समय शब्द आसानी से मिलते हैं परन्तु यह भी सत्य है कि अनुवाद होने पर भाषा प्रवाहमई प्रतीत होती है। उपन्यास में अस्तित्व की पहचान की खोज थी कि किस तरह मध्यवर्गीय समाज में अपनी पहचान के लिए लड़ता है। (Quest of Identity) और थोड़ी सी भी कमी उन्हें संपूर्ण समाज का हिस्सा बनने से रोक देती है।

उपन्यास में स्त्रीवादी दृष्टिकोण (Feminism) की भी झलक मिलती है कि किस तरह एक स्त्री, पुरुष प्रधान समाज में अपने और अपने बच्चे के अस्तित्व की पहचान के लिए संघर्ष करती है। इन भावों का अनुवाद, केवल शब्दशः अनुवाद कर

दर्शाया नहीं जा सकता है। भाषा की अभिव्यक्ति संप्रेषणीय भी होनी चाहिए। ऐसी अभिव्यक्ति जो पाठकों तक पहुंचे, महसूस हो सके तभी भाषिक अभिव्यक्ति की सार्थकता मानी जा सकती है।

जैसे अंग्रेजी के अपने मुहावरे हैं और हिंदी के अपने और, इनकी अपनी-अपनी संरचना है। इसके हिंदी अनुवाद के लिए हिंदी की अपनी प्रकृति का ध्यान जब तक नहीं रखा जाएगा तब तक हिंदी अनुवाद की ही भाषा बनी रहेगी, इसमें मौलिकता नहीं आ सकती है। अब जैसे हिंदी भाषा का मुहावरा है : 'एक ही थाली के चट्टे-बट्टे और इसका अनुवाद मैंने **Birds of same feather flock together** किया है। परन्तु अगर मैं इसका शब्दशः अनुवाद करती तो इसका अभिप्राय तो समझ आ जाता परन्तु भाव स्पष्ट नहीं होता। इसलिए अंग्रेजी भाषा का यह मुहावरा उपयुक्त लगा है।

अनुवाद के लिए केवल मूल वस्तु के विचार और रूप तत्व का ही परिचय काफी नहीं, उसके भाव और व्यंग्यार्थ तक भी पहुंचाना होता है और यही मैंने अपने अनुवाद में करने का प्रयास किया है।

उपन्यास पढ़ते हुए कभी यह उखड़े हुए लोगों की गाथा भी प्रतीत होती है। लेखिका ने एक अपने साक्षात्कार में बताया है कि उन्होंने एक जगह कहा है "हम ही हैं जो रंग उगाती मिट्टी को पैरों तले रौंदते हैं।" उन्हें लोगों से प्रोत्साहन मिलता है तथा इंसानी भावनाएं, रिश्ते, अनुभूति उन्हें लिखने के लिए और प्रोत्साहित करती है। उनकी प्रेरणा का स्रोत ही प्रवाहमयी जीवन है और वह इस उपन्यास में पूरी तरह से दृष्टिगोचर होता है। यह ठीक है कि जैविक और संवेदनात्मक धरातल पर मनुष्य के सुख-दुख की अनुभूति एक ही है, किन्तु इसे व्यक्त करने वाली भाषाएं अनेक हैं।

मनुष्य के सुख-दुख के अनुभवों और मानदंडों ने अलग-अलग संस्कृतियों का रूप धारण किया है। भाषा इसी संस्कृति का उत्पाद एवं परिवाहक है। अतएव एक भाषा को दूसरी भाषा में अंतरित करना, एक भाषा में निहित संस्कृति को दूसरी भाषा में प्रत्यारोपित करना है। 'यज्ञ' का स्थान Bonfire नहीं ले सकता, मासी, बुआ के दोनों स्थानों पर केवल Aunty नहीं हो सकता। 'आहूति का स्थान 'To throw something in fire' नहीं हो सकता तथा 'दक्षिणा' के स्थान पर 'Charity' नहीं आ सकता। यह समस्या हिंदी अंग्रेजी अनुवाद में आती ही है क्योंकि यहां एक शब्द के कई पर्याय होते हैं और उन्हीं में सबसे उचित का चुनाव अनुवादक की कार्य कुशलता पर निर्भर करता है जिसे मैंने गुरुवर की मदद तथा Thesauras आदि की सहायता से अनूदित करने का प्रयास किया है।

अंत में यही कहना चाहूंगी कि यह अनुवाद यात्रा जो कई पड़ावों से होकर गुजरी है फिर चाहे वे मुहावरे हों, Freud का मनोविज्ञानिक पक्ष हो, सांस्कृतिक भिन्नताएं हो या फिर चरित्रों की आपसी भिन्नताएं, सबका अनुवाद करना न केवल ज्ञानवर्धक था बल्कि बहुत रोचक भी था। मैंने यथा सामर्थ्य अंग्रेजी पाठकों को एक बेहतर कृति देने का प्रयास किया है। मैं मानती हूं कि यह कृति अपने में उत्कृष्ट नहीं होगी और अभी भी इसमें सुधार की काफी गुंजाइश है परन्तु अगर यह कृति पढ़ते समय अंग्रेजी पाठक स्वयं को इस कृति से जोड़ पाएं तो अपने द्वारा किया गया छोटा सा प्रयास सफल मानूंगी।

अध्याय चतुर्थ

उपसंहार

उपसंहार

भारतीय मध्यवर्गीय परिवार को आधार बनाकर लिखा गया कतरा दर कतरा उपन्यास इस वर्ग विशेष की विशेषताओं को दिखाने में सफल हुआ है। जैसे कि लेखिका सुषम बेदी ने अपने एक साक्षात्कार में कहा था कि उनकी रचना में कई बार कोई विशिष्ट या स्पष्ट संदेश नहीं होता या फिर वह किसी उपदेश वृत्ति की शिकार नहीं बनना चाहती। वह केवल कहती है कि जो वे महसूस कर रही है, वही पाठक तक भी पहुंचे। कतरा-दर-कतरा उपन्यास को पढ़ते समय पाठक उसके चरित्रों को महसूस करता है। हालांकि हर पाठक किसी भी कृति को अपने ढंग से आत्मसात करता है फिर भी जो लेखिका ने खोजा है वो पाठकों तक पहुंचाने में सफल हुई हैं।

उपन्यास के पहले ही पाठ में लेखिका ने कहा है कि यह उपन्यास सिर्फ एक रिसते हुए घाव की कहानी नहीं है। मुझे उपन्यास पढ़ते हुए भी यही महसूस हुआ कि उपन्यास कतरा-दर-कतरा मरने की नहीं बल्कि कतरा कतरा इकट्ठा कर जीवन के संघर्ष से लड़ने और उसे जीतने के जज़्बे की कहानी है।

लेखिका की इस कृति को चुनने का सुझाव मेरे गाइड चमन लाल सर ने दिया था और उन्हीं के द्वारा मैं उनसे बात कर सकी। उनका लेखन जितना सरल और सुलझा हुआ दिखता है, वे स्वयं भी वैसी ही हैं और इस लघु शोध प्रबंध को सफल बनाने में उनका सबसे बड़ा योगदान है।

जैसे कि पहले भी उल्लेख किया गया है कि यह कहानी अस्तित्व की खोज की है। उपन्यास का अनुवाद इसे अंग्रेजी पाठकों से भी जोड़ पाएगा। अंग्रेजी का वर्चस्व लेखिका भी मानती है और अपने साक्षात्कार में कहती है कि अंग्रेजी अनुवाद कृति को नई पीढ़ी के साथ जोड़ने में सहायक होता है। उन्होंने अपने लेख *Growing up with India these fifty years* में भी लिखा है :

Even after fifty years, English, remains the language of elite, those who are 'in' & those who 'have'.

इसलिए अंग्रेजी अनुवाद कृतियों को ज्यादा व्यापक बना लेता है और सब श्रेणी के पाठक इससे जुड़ पाते हैं। साथ ही साथ यह उपन्यास एक संघर्ष की कहानी है जिसमें मध्यवर्गीय समाज का हर व्यक्ति अपनी जगह बनाने के लिए संघर्षरत है। लेखिका का ऐसा लेखन कहीं न कहीं परिस्थितियों के कारण भी है। वह स्वयं लिखती हैं :

My generation was full of fears, doubts & uncertainty. Everyone talked about nepotism, bribery, corruption & a frozen bureaucracy.

वही, डर, वही शंकाएं, वही अनिश्चितताएं लेखिका के चरित्रों में भी दिखाई देती है। इस उपन्यास में दो पीढ़ियों की सोच में जो अंतर है और उसके कारण जो उनके बीच मतभेद उत्पन्न होते हैं; उसे बड़ी ही संवेदनशीलता से प्रदर्शित किया है।

उनकी और कृतियों में प्रवासी भारतीयों का भी चित्रण है परन्तु प्रस्तुत उपन्यास में केवल भारतीय मध्यवर्गीय परिवार को ही दर्शाया गया है। फिर भी दोनों में जो सबसे बड़ी समानता है वह है ऐसे चरित्रों का चित्रण, जो अपनी जड़ों और परम्पराओं से जुड़े हुए हैं और जिनकी कहानी भावनाओं और पीड़ा से जुड़ी हुई है। लेखिका को स्वयं लोगों की भीड़ में रहना अच्छा लगता है तथा उनका प्रवाहमयी जीवन उन्हें प्रोत्साहित करता है। इसलिए उनकी कोई भी कृति समाज से कटी नहीं होती।

यह उपन्यास आरम्भ से अंत तक ऐसे लोगों की गाथा बताता है जो जीवन और समाज से अपने और अपनों के अस्तित्व के लिए संघर्ष कर रहे हैं। दो कहानियां एक साथ चल रही हैं। उपन्यास की नायिका शशि का भाई तथा पुत्र दोनों ही मानसिक रूप से अक्षम होते हैं। परन्तु शशि अपने भाई के समय में कुछ विशेष सहायता नहीं कर पाती है और इस सबका कारण था, एक तो वह लड़की थी और दूसरा परिवार में छोटी थी। कक्कू, जो शशि का भाई था किसी कारण परीक्षा में अच्छे अंक नहीं ला पाता और उसका मेडिकल-इंजीनियरिंग में कहीं दाखिला नहीं हो पाता। इस कारण

उसे समाज से और यहां तक अपने परिवार से मानसिक प्रताड़ना सहनी पड़ती है और कुछ दबाव तथा यौन अतृप्तियों के कारण वह अंत में मानसिक रोगी बन जाता है। उसका अंत अस्पताल में मौत से दिखा गया है। इन सबके दौरान शशि चाहकर भी उसकी मदद नहीं कर पाती।

फिर दूसरी बार शशि के खुद के बेटे के साथ दुर्घटना घट जाती है। पहली मजिल से गिरकर उसके सिर पर चोट आती है और वह मानसिक संतुलन खो देता है। परन्तु इस बार शशि हार नहीं मानती। वह उसके अस्तित्व के लिए समाज के साथ अपने पति से भी लड़ती है और उसे आत्मनिर्भर बनाती है। इसके अंत में बताया गया है कि शशि का बेटा अंशु किसी स्कूल में पढ़ता है और जहां अपने सब काम स्वयं करता है और फिर वह शशि को अपने स्कूल से दो पेंटिंग्स भिजवाता है जो उसने स्वयं बनाई हैं। एक पेंटिंग में जो मानवीय शरीर उसने चित्रित किया है, उसके पिचके हुए गाल है, तथा उसके जिस्म का आकार इतना क्षीण है मानो हड्डियों का ढांचा हो। उसे चित्र देख अपने भाई कक्कू की याद आती है। वह महसूस करती है कि कक्कू को शायद उसके साथ-साथ अंशु भी अपने अंदर जी रहा था। वह सोचती है कि शायद कक्कू को भी सही मार्गदर्शन मिला होता तो उसे उस नरक से बचाया जा सकता था।

कहानी की शुरुआत पीड़ा, संवेदना और घावों की चर्चा से होती है। पर यह उपन्यास पीड़ा की नहीं बल्कि पीड़ाओं को परास्त करने की कहानी है। उपन्यास में शशि कहती है :

“क्या पीड़ा से बचने के लिए खुद को उसके उत्स के प्रति आक्रामक या निर्दय बना लेना सही रुख है और यह बचना क्या इतना ज्यादा अहम है कि आदमी अनेकों तरह के किले बनाता जाए छिपने बचने के लिए कि पीड़ा से ज्यादा पीड़ाकर हो जाए उसकी यह भाग दौड़। उसका यह किलों का निर्माण। यह अपने और अपनों से बचने की कोशिश।”

उपन्यास का अंत होता है एक सवाल से जो नायिका स्वयं से पूछती है... ¹और मेरी लड़ाई थी परिस्थितियों से... क्या मैंने सच में जीती है यह लड़ाई। वह कहती है कि पीड़ा का संबंध केवल उसे भोगने वाले से होता है। परन्तु तकलीफ को परिस्थितियों का नाम देना कायरता है। उनसे लड़कर विजय प्राप्त करना ही जीवन है। जीवन का अर्थ है हर अंश का अपने अस्तित्व और पहचान के लिए लड़ना, ना कि उन अंशों का नष्ट हो जाना।

स्रोत भाषा की पुस्तक की शुरुआत लेखिका के दर्शनपरक दृष्टिकोण से होती है। मूल पाठ के पूर्ण अर्थ को अनूदित पाठ में अंतरित करने की तमाम कोशिशों के बावजूद कुछ स्थानों पर अपनी अंग्रेजी ज्ञान की सीमा का एहसास हुआ। लेखिका के द्वारा टेढ देशज शब्दों का प्रयोग इसका मुख्य कारण रहा। स्रोत व लक्ष्य भाषा की समुल्यता किसी भी अनुवाद का केन्द्र होती है। सफल अनुवादक वही हो सकता है जो लेखक की भावभूमि में पहुंचकर उसके हृदयगत संप्रेक्ष्य को लक्ष्य भाषा के पाठक तक पहुंचा सके।

¹ Page no. 95, Qatra-dar-Qatra, Susham Bedi

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