

Amma and Babuji

Our Life at Allahabad



Edited by
Govindjee

Amma and Babuji: Our Life at Allahabad

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सत्यमेव जयते

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The Cover

Photographs of our father Vishveshwar Prasad (Babuji) and our
mother Savitri Devi (Amma)

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Dedicated to

Our Dada (Krishnaji)

and

Bhabhi (Bimla)

In Memory of

*Manju, Neera, Ranjan, Rajya Ashish,
and Rajya Vishesh*

Produced for

Our Children

*Anat (& Shilpi), Anita (& Morten), Anju (& Ashok), Anshu,
Chitra (& Satyendra), Deepak (& Madhu), Ila (& Avinash),
Meenu (& Suresh), Rita (& Shekhar), and Sanjay
(& Marilyn)*

&

Our Grand Children

*Ambika, Anav, Arjun, Garima, Isha, Mayank, Monu,
Nandini (& Tanu), Neha, Nitin, Pinky, Rajiv, Richa, Sanket,
Shruti, Sunil (& Elfi), Sunita, Tanima, Tanmay, and Tripti*

Foreword

I feel privileged in writing the foreword of *Amma and Babuji: Our life at Allahabad*. Truly speaking, any living record of human existence is priceless because it contains culture, civilization and heritage.

Valuing the old, Sri Gopalji has presented a mirror of life at Allahabad. The sweet fragrance of the glorious past smells like perfume in his every word. Allahabad, then, was the seat of learning and culture. Allahabad University was known as the “Oxford of North India”. Sri Gopalji’s writing is a source of inspiration, in which Babuji (Late Sri Vishveshwar Prasad) can be seen, felt and realized. One incident of his life, mentioned, is enough to bring Babuji in flesh & blood. Truthfulness, honesty and devotion to higher values were deep rooted in Babuji’s personality. His was an emphasis on human scale and purpose. This is why these qualities are evident in his progeny.

Malati’s narration is full of life and it flows like a river. Though Babuji and Amma both appear in her writing, Amma is the central figure. Due to her ill health, she used to be in bed but her generosity, kindness and genuine love were like electric currents. She was always surrounded by maids, peons and outsiders other than family members. Malati’s writing is an embodiment of Amma’s soul.

Govindjee has aptly expressed in words, “She was peaceful, frail, slim and a slight person wearing a whitish ‘Dhoti’” He mentions an incident and he says, “Amma’s forgiveness made me a stronger and a much better person”. This in itself is enough to transform a reader.

Likewise, Bimlaji’s and Nirmalaji’s recollections present an ideal to a house holder. Rajniji has also added her sweet and short recollection of a very brief visit in 1961.

Needless to say, these records carry the tune of time, space and

characters. Here I am reminded of a few lines by T. S. (Thomas Stearns) Eliot (1888-1965):

...A people without history
is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments...

"Little Gidding," pt. 5, Four Quartets (1942).

Lastly, thanks to Govindjee who imagined, planned inspired and collected materials and finally gave them a shape.

Radha Krishna Sahay
Bhagalpur, Bihar, India

Preface

The story of our family *Amma and Babuji: Our Life at Allahabad* is presented here for the benefit of all in our extended families, especially our grand children. Allahabad is the city in Uttar Pradesh (it was called United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during the British time), India, whose people and institutions have propelled our lives. Allahabad is dear to us as it was the home of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru who had played a crucial role in the creation of modern India. I remember walking past his home during 1943-1948 when I studied at Colonelganj High School; we knew that history was being made there, as many leaders including Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Gandhiji) would come to visit there. For me, the Company Bagh (Alfred Park) provided a place to walk in peace and to ward off many problems that faced my youth — my father (Vishveshwar Prasad, whom we called Babuji) had passed away in 1943. The Public library, in the premises of the Company Bagh, provided me with the possibility of reading newspapers and the *Illustrated Weekly of India* when I was only 9 years old. However, it was my family, particularly my eldest brother Krishnaji (whom we called Dada) that played a crucial role in our lives. His guiding spirit led me to think of initiating the preparation of this document.

My elder brother Gopalji (whom I call Bhaiya, for older brother) recently wrote to me, “It reminds me of the days when we lived as kid siblings with no inhibitions in life. It also takes me back to insecure feelings when a father suddenly leaves us from our gentle scene. But Dada always said ‘nothing to worry; you are all on your way up.’ That kept us going.” It is our good fortune that Bhaiya has written for all of us a beautiful account of our Babuji. My elder sister Malati (whom I call Didi) has given us a charming account of our dear mother (Savitri Devi, whom we called Amma) in beautiful Hindi. Her daughter Anju Okhandiar has translated Didi’s text into English for the benefit of those who cannot read Hindi. Both the English and the Hindi texts are printed here. Recollections of my sisters-in-law (Bimla, my Bari Bhabhi, wife of Krishnaji; and Nirmala, my Choti

Bhabhi, wife of Gopalji) have provided important insights into the personal characteristics of our family. My wife Rajni has written a brief account of her short stay in 1961, in our last home at 14 B Bank Road (officially called Ram Narain Lal Road). Lastly, I have written a very short section of my own recollections.

Didi has provided us with a copy of the 1930 group photograph and three pages from Babuji's 1930 diary that are included in this book; other photographs were provided by two of Dada's grandsons (Soubhagya Deep and Sanket Ranjan), some of the photos of the houses we lived in were provided by Sanjay Govindjee and the rest are from my own collection. I am thankful to Anju Okhandiar, Anita Govindjee, Chitra Kumar, Rajni Govindjee and Marilyn Govindjee, and others, for correcting errors in the text.

Akhilesh Shrivastava, of Bhagalpur, India, was of much help, through his e-mail, in communicating with Didi. Telephone calls to Bhaiya (in Gurgaon, India) were of great help in finishing this project.

I am highly grateful to my friend Larry Orr for typesetting this book as a gift to my family.

The greatest tragedy of our lives has been the death of Krishnaji (January 13, 1922–August 14, 1997). It has dampened our lives to a large extent. He was my mentor, the most loved and respected person in my life, and the one who was responsible for what I am today. I am, however, fortunate that I was able to overcome my emotions and have been able to initiate the publication of this book of our family. We dedicate *Amma and Babuji: Our Life at Allahabad* to our loving Dada. It is my hope that we will follow this book with the next: *Dada: Our Life at Allahabad*.

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Malati Sahay; the text was translated by Anju Okhandiar

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Bimla (Mrs. Krishnaji); the text was translated by Gopalji

5. Recollections of my Days in Amma's home at Allahabad

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List of our Immediate Family Members

List 1*

1. Our grandfather (father's side: Baba): Ganga Prasad (Asthana)
2. Our father (Babuji): Vishveshwar Prasad
3. Our mother (Amma): Savitri Devi
4. Our eldest brother (Dada): Krishnaji (also written as Krishna Ji)
5. My elder brother (Bhaiya): Gopalji (also written as Gopal Ji)
6. My sister (Didi): Malati Sahay
7. My eldest sister-in-law (Bari Bhabhi): Bimla (wife of Krishnaji)
8. My elder sister-in-law (Choti Bhabhi): Nirmala (wife of Gopalji)
9. My brother-in-law (Jijaji): Radha Krishna Sahay (husband of Malati Sahay)
10. My wife: Rajni

* We are not aware of our grandmother's name; also, we don't have information on our Nana and Nani (grandfather and grandmother on our mother's side); our father had one brother Har Prasad, and two cousins Bireshwar Prasad and Sidheshwar Prasad. Information on the extended family is not included in this list.

List 2

(Family of Krishnaji and Bimla)

1. Elder daughter: Ira (nickname: Meenu); husband: Suresh Chandra; their son: Sunil Chandra (Sunil's wife: Elfi Chandra); their daughter Neera (deceased)
2. Elder son: Deep Ranjan (nickname: Deepak); wife: Madhu; their son: Soubhagya Deep (nickname: Monu); their daughter: Priyanka (nickname: Pinky)

3. Younger son: Raj Ranjan (nickname: Ranjan; deceased); wife: Poonam; their daughter: Tanima; their son: Sanket
4. Younger daughter: Chitra Kumar; husband: Satyendra Kumar; their daughters: Garima, Tripti, and Shruti

List 3

(Family of Gopalji and Nirmala)

1. Eldest daughter: Manju (deceased); husband: Randhir Saxena; their sons: Rajya Ashish (deceased); and Rajya Vishesh (deceased)
2. Middle daughter: Rita; husband: Shekhar Sinha; their daughter: Nandini (nickname: Ninni; Ninni's husband: Tanu Shankar Bhatnagar); their son: Nitin
3. Youngest daughter: Ila; husband: Avinash Varma; their daughter: Isha

List 4

(Family of Malati and Radha Krishna Sahay)

1. Elder daughter: Anju; husband: Ashok Okhandiar; their daughters: Neha, Richa, and Ambika
2. Elder son: Anshu Sahay; ex-wife: Manisha; their sons: Tanmay and Mayank
4. Younger son: Anupam (nickname: Anat); wife: Shilpi; their son: Anav

List 5

(Family of Govindjee and Rajni)

1. Daughter: Anita; husband: Morten Christiansen; their daughter: Sunita
2. Son: Sanjay Govindjee; wife: Marilyn; their sons: Arjun and Rajiv

Current Names of Towns and Roads

Previous Names (Still used)	Current Names
Banaras	Varanasi
Bank Road	Ram Narain Lal Road
Bombay	Mumbai
Calcutta	Kolkata
Kanpur Road	Shri Purushattam Das Tandon Road
Madras	Chennai
Park Road	Panna Lal Road
Thonrnhill Road	Swami Dayanand Marg

Photographs

This section of photographs stands by itself. We do not cite them in the text.

- Figs. 1–3 are photographs of my grandfather, father and mother, respectively.
- Figs. 4–14 are photographs of 8 out of the 15 houses we lived in, as described in section 1 by Gopalji.
- Fig. 15 is a road scene of the Bank Road, where we lived last.
- Figs. 16–20 are photographs of the family in the 1930s.
- Figs. 21–25 are photographs of my mother during the 1950s-early 1960.
- Figs. 26–28 are photographs of some of the buildings where we studied at Allahabad.
- Figs. 29–36 are photographs of children, Amma and Govindjee at 14B Bank Road.
- Fig. 37 is a 1953 photograph of Krishnaji and Bimla at the wedding of Malati with Radha Krishna Sahay.
- Fig. 38 is a 1968 group photograph taken after the wedding of Meenu with Suresh Chandra.
- Figs. 39–41 are photographs of Gopalji, Malati and Govindjee, among others.

- Figs. 42–44 are photographs of Babuji’s handwriting in three languages, ~1930.
- Figs. 45 and 46 are two photos of Krishnaji with Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, respectively.
- Figs. 47–51 are color photographs, taken during late 1970s–late 1990s, of Krishnaji, Gopalji, Malati and Govindjee, and their spouses. Color photographs are shown on page 73–75.

This section ends with a photograph of Krishnaji (Fig. 52) to whom we dedicate this book.

Govindjee

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Photographs



Fig. 1: Ganga Prasad Asthana (Baba, our father's father). Gold medalist (in mathematics) from Calcutta University; Sub-judge of the Allahabad High Court.



Fig. 2: Vishveshwar Prasad (Babuji, our father). A language scholar (English, Persian, Hindi, Urdu; graduate of Banaras Hindu University); General Secretary, United Provinces Teachers' Association; representative of the Oxford University Press (UK) for the Northern Provinces of India.



Fig. 3: Savitri Devi (Amma, our mother), homemaker.



Fig. 4: Darogaji's house in Bai Ka Bagh where Krishnaji (Dada, our brother) was born in 1922.



Fig. 5: 'Lalaji Ka Ghar' (Ram Niwas) at 47 Bai Ka Bagh, where Gopalji (Bhaiya), Malati (Bitti; Didi), and Govindjee were born in 1926, 1929 and 1932, respectively.



Fig. 6: Ram Niwas, top portion.



Fig. 7: Ram Niwas, ground floor.



Fig. 8: Ram Niwas, side door, looking inside the inner court yard; servants and vendors entered through this door.



Fig. 9: Purana Bairahana house is in the center where 3 persons are standing; the house on the left of it is where Govindjee's friend Rishi and Dada (Krishnaji)'s friend Om Prakash (Dhruv) lived. This is where Dhruv and Krishnaji played chess.



Fig. 10: New Bairahana house that Gopalji called 'Bhutaha' (i.e., ghost infested) house.



Fig. 11: 4 Bai Ka Bagh house that was near the Crosthwaite Girls College, where Malati studied.



Fig. 12: Madhokunj house that Bimla (Mrs. Krishnaji) remembers in her write-up.



Fig. 13: A recent photograph of the house at 3 Kanpur Road, where we lived after we left our uncle's home at Park Road.



Fig. 14: The front of the house at 14 B Bank Road. This is where our family lived for many years. It was this house where many marriages took place. It was this house from where Govindjee left for USA, and where Amma (our mother) passed away.



Fig. 15: A scene of the Bank Road where all of us walked almost everyday when we lived there, many times on our bicycles or in rickshaw. It is the same street where the famous poet Raghupati Sahay Firaq as well as the famous Indian historian Ishwari Prasad lived. On a street rather close to it, the famous Hindi poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan lived; for a long time, his son Amitabh Bachchan has been one of the most famous movie idols of India. (What is not a common knowledge is that Amitabh's name at birth was Amit Shrivastava.)



Fig. 16 (left to right): **Top row:** Bireswar Prasad Asthana (our uncle, Katghar-walé Chacha), Vishveswar Prasad (our father, Babuji), Sidheshwar Prasad (another uncle, Patna walé Chacha); **Middle row:** Shanti Jijji (daughter of Bireswar Prasad), Katghar-wali Chachi (aunt, wife of Bireswar Prasad), Dada (Krishnaji), Amma (Savitri Devi, our mother; in her lap is her daughter Malati), Patna-wali Chachi (wife of Sidheshwar Prasad); **Bottom row:** Girish Chandra Asthana (Shivji Bhaiya), Bhaiya (Gopalji), Rameshwar Chandra Asthana (Ramji Bhaiya) and Jagdish Chandra Asthana (Munna Bhaiya).



Fig. 17: A 1930 photograph. Left to right: Dada (Krishnaji), Amma (Savitri Devi; in her lap is Malati, her daughter) and Bhaiya (Gopalji, sitting on the floor).



Fig. 18: A 1933 photograph. Left to right: Bhaiya (Gopalji), Dada (Krishnaji; in his lap is Govindjee) and Didi (Malati).



Fig. 19: Bhaiya (Gopalji), Didi (Malati), Jagdish Chandra Asthana (Munna Bhaiya).



Fig. 20: A 1936 photograph of Dada (Krishnaji) (right) with his friend Uma Kant Pandey (left).



Fig. 21: A 1959 photograph taken at 14 B Bank Road. Left to right: Ranjan (Raj Ranjan; now deceased), Meenu (Ira Chandra), Amma (Savitri Devi; in her lap is Rita), Manju (now deceased) and Deepak (Deep Ranjan).



Fig. 22: Amma (Savitri Devi, with Anju, Malati's daughter).



Fig. 23: Amma (with Rita, Gopalji's daughter).



Fig. 24 : Amma, a photo taken in 1961.



Fig. 25: A 1961 photograph taken at 14 B Bank Road. Left to right: Ram Avtar , Amma, Ranjan (Krishnaji's son), Bindeshwari, Chitra (Krishnaji's daughter) and Sant Lal. [Ram Avtar and Bindeshwari, employees of the Physics Department, University of Allahabad, often visited Amma. Sant Lal was employed by Dada to do house chores. All were considered as family members.]



Fig. 26. The front portion of the Kayastha Pathshala Intermediate College (now called Munshi Kali Prasad College) where Gopalji and Govindjee studied before entering the Allahabad University.



Fig. 27. The Muir tower and the Muir College, the Science Faculty of the Allahabad University, where Krishnaji and Gopalji studied Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics, and Govindjee studied Botany, Zoology and Chemistry.



Fig. 28. One of the entrances of the Botany Department of Allahabad University. Govindjee (& Rajni) studied Botany and specialized in Plant Physiology in this building.



Fig. 29. Amma lying on a cot, with (left to right) Deepak, Manju, Meenu, Anju and Ranjan.



Fig. 30. Left to right: Ranjan, Anju, Govindjee (in front of him is Manju), Deepak and Meenu (on a tricycle).



Fig. 31. Left to right: A neighbor's son, Deepak, Meenu, Manju and Ranjan.



Fig. 32. Left to right (back row): A neighbor's daughter, Meenu and a neighbor's son. Front row (left to right): Ranjan, Sant Lal (who worked for us, but was considered a part of our family), Manju and Deepak.



Fig. 33. Left to right: Ranjan, Manju, Govindjee, Meenu and Deepak. This is the gate of the rented home (14 B. Bank Road). Whenever the gate was left open, cows would come in and eat all our vegetables in the small vegetable garden we had.

Fig. 34. Left to right: Ranjan, Deepak, Manju and Meenu. They are posing before all their clay toys and clay deities. In the front is a clay statue of Mahatma Gandhi.



Fig. 35. Left to right: Deepak, Ranjan, Manju and Meenu donning baseball caps. There must be a story behind it.



Fig. 36. Choti Bhabhi (Nirmala) playing Sitar for us. Left to right: spectators included Anju, Ranjan and Manju, sitting on the lap of Bari Bhabhi (Bimla).

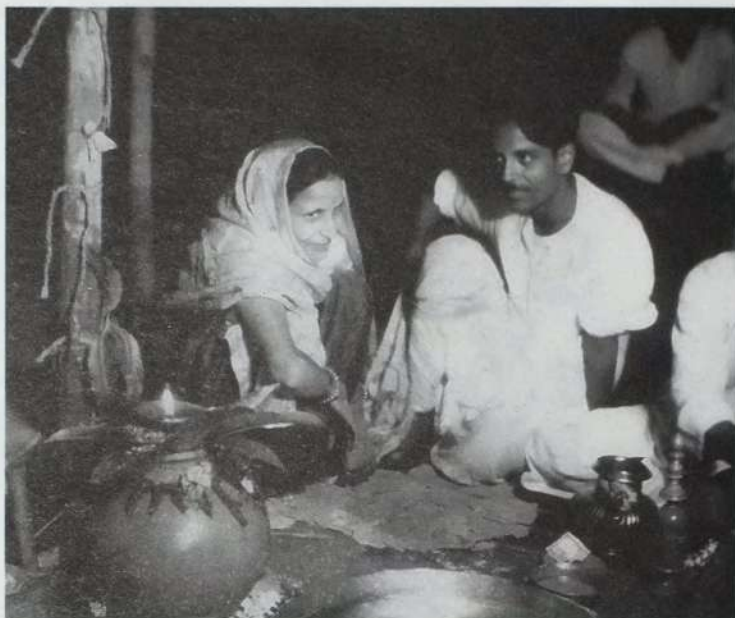


Fig. 37: Bari Bhabhi (Bimla) and Dada (Krishnaji) under the 'Mundap' during a ritual at the wedding of Malati with Radha Krishna Sahay. This photo was taken in June, 1953.

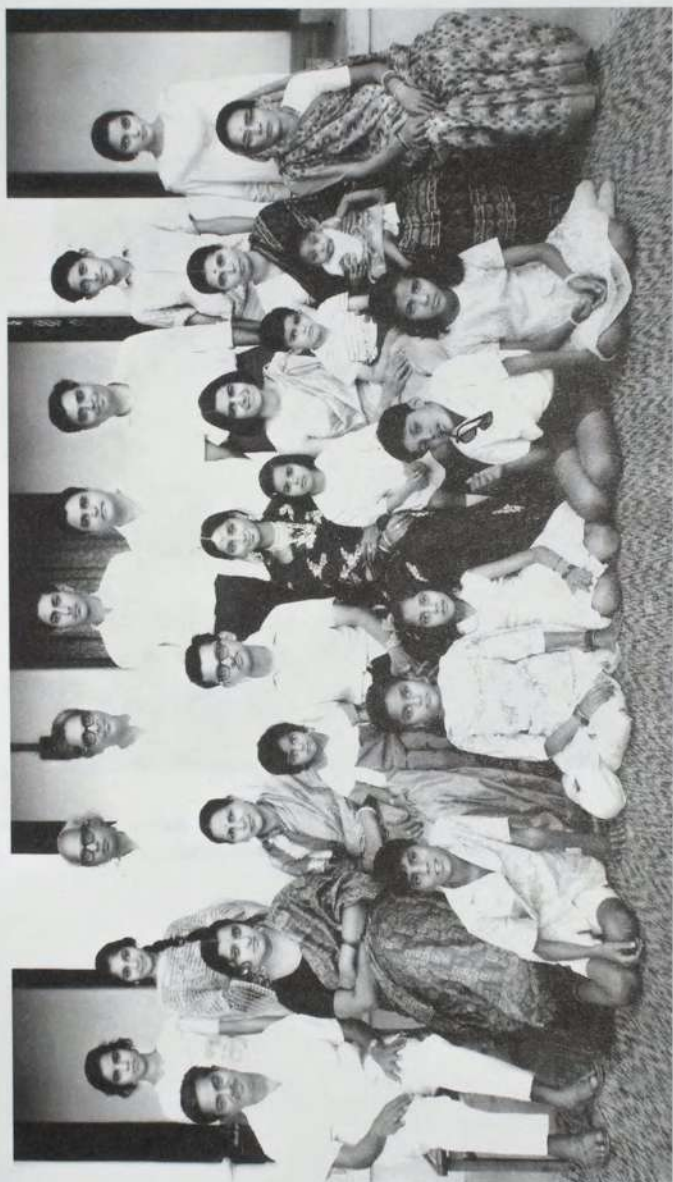


Fig. 38: A 1968 group photograph taken after Krishnaji's daughter Ira (Meenu)'s marriage with Suresh Chandra at 14 B. Bank Road, Allahabad. **Standing** (left to right): Amita (Manno; Bimla's niece), Anju, Laxmi Kant Varma (brother-in-law of Bimla), Krishnaji, Deep Ranjan (Deepak), Gopalji, Govindjee, Raj Ranjan, and Manju. **Sitting on chairs** (left to right): Radha Krishna Sahay, Nirmala, Bimla, Ila, Suresh Chandra, Meenu, Anita, Rajni, Sanjay, Malati (in her lap is Anupam), Savitri Verma (Bimla's sister). **Sitting on the floor** (left to right): Rajeev (Raju; Bimla's nephew); Rita, Chitra, Anshu and Rashmi (Gudia; Bimla's niece).

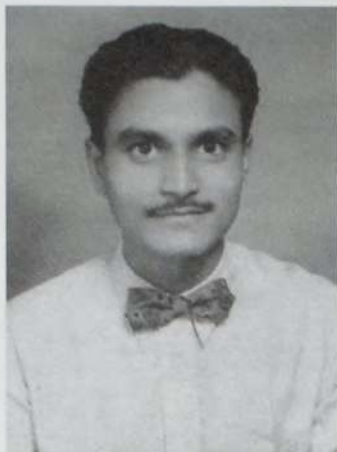


Fig. 39. A photograph of Gopalji taken by a photographer in Hazaratganj, Lucknow.



Fig. 40. Left to right: Bari Bhabhi (Bimla), Didi (Malati) and Choti Bhabhi (Nirmala), under a mango tree.



Fig. 41. Left to right: A photograph of Govindjee, Krishnaji and Gopalji. In the foreground is Gopalji's granddaughter Ninni.

Yashara, Lopamudra, Romasa, Abi, Gauri, Hritvira are the five women
Rishis of the Vedas.

How Eminent speakers prepare themselves?

- Wm Bright: Committing every word of it to writing, rehearsing & re-rehearsing until latter perfect.
- Lloyd George: Can prepare his speech while motoring, or in a railway carriage, or walking in the common rush of London.
- John Burns: On a train or omnibus, walking to the house available a debate is in progress - when an idea occurs to him he jots it down at once on a slip.
- Churchill: Mostly while motoring; makes rough notes.
- Disraeli: His most famous speech was prepared in a park while children were singing around, suggesting him as to the right time, place.
- Chamberlain: takes pains - writes out principal parts & commits to memory.
- Beal: on the debate, jots down salient points.
- Agnew: commits to memory.
- Macaulay: writes every line before delivery.
- Lockhart: study & frequent rehearsal.

Fig. 42. Handwritten notes of Babuji (in English), 1930.

Sri Gurdwara

स देश में भैया भा २ हाल अन सुनाता स्याप्याव ६०० शुभवा जायेक रेने
 इस भयो जन को देखा सन देशहित में देखा (२)
 गेह जवन लने आवे पुरे दशा वै किना हो
 होले नो मे सुब मे दुने नतन धा पोता
 आजा है जो मुल के का आमे है वेतो भासिक
 सन को है अमे सिकुछ सिह्र अपवा है मुनाता
 खते मे स्र मुल के श ओ को है आब पुरमव
 न्या भरे न्या रा भौरत ओ के बी ने माता
 उवना यही धर्म है उवना यही मरु है
 इति रा हित के कातु वर उ सु है नरती
 अफले म लारे खितेग लेने पहा भोवे स! पी पो हिल के सिकुछ सन मुदि है मुदि
 कोरे व धी व रुहा मि उव नगा अर मुल के मे मज ३३ ६० ६० वै है से ज के कभ
 एतव न भोतो की भरते है सिधे पिल से उवना मुल म जो क हूरा गणी स्या
 तापी म के वही ले शिव के लिखि मुले है है सानी हो आता वर ही सन को वा
 वदुत फात सो व न ऊन ती न जाव सन के है रुक नावा है सन की सन को
 तापन मे को लो आन को सन के सन को उवने पके मित अपन है
 ओ अके मले मी जी ज म गान्य को गाली सिन सिन के पव गह से अ
 अती न की कथा को गूढे है मे कसने सन गते गालि के लो सि को से अउरे
 माल को न उवना मरते ही पिल से अम तुगे तो रुक भाषा को तो त ज अन गी
 विष्णु वही है की ल को मी उ देव तुव से अर दूत फात होय भातिरे सन

Fig. 43. Handwritten notes of Babuji (in Hindi), 1930.

دورانِ حیاتِ جوشِ مبارک کی یادیں + کتبِ معلوم کی نسبت کا پڑھنا قرآن کی آمدنی
رہائی تھی پر موت و زندگی کی یادیں + روحانی تینوں کا پلنگہ پر بیٹھ کر
تکونہ سے سمجھنا کہ انہیں کیا ہے + نہ پہلے ان کو دیکھو جو وہ ہے نہ ان کے بعد
ان کی حیاتِ آئینہ کے ساتھ + ان کی زندگی سے ان کی حیاتِ حقیقی سے
جو کہ ہے اس کے ساتھ ہی ان کی حیاتِ حقیقی سے + یہ وہ ہے جو اس وقت تک نہیں

Fig. 44. Handwritten notes of Babuji (in Urdu), 1930.



Fig. 45: A photograph of Dada (Krishnaji) with Pundit Jawahar Lal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India. Nehruji was very much interested in Dada's research that dealt with radar technology for the defense of India.



Fig. 46: Dada (Krishnaji, right) receiving the prestigious Sir C.V. Raman Award from Indira Gandhi (Prime Minister of India) for his pioneering basic research on Microwave Spectroscopy, Microwave Transmission and Solid State Physics.

A Tribute to our father (Babuji) and our early life in Allahabad

*Gopalji**

I am the second son of Savitri Devi and Vishveshwar Prasad; I was born on December 20, 1926. My recollections follow. I note in the very beginning that the following is not a historical account with dates, but instead, it is a sort of Memoir for ourselves and for our next generations to develop an understanding of our family character.

Further, I note that our mother had a special flair of changing rented houses during her life. We never owned any property. We can count 15 houses, in Allahabad, during our mother's life: 3 in Bai-Ka-Bagh; 1 in Keetganj; 2 on D-Road (near a bridge); 1 in Madhvapur; 3 in Bairahana; 1 in George Town/Lowther Road (where our father died in 1943); 1 on Park (Panna Lal) Road (where we lived temporarily with our uncle Har Prasad, after our father's death); 1 on Kanpur Road (Purushottam Das (for short P.D.) Tandon Marg); 1 in MadhoKunj; and the last one on Bank Road (Ram Narain Road), where our mother died in 1966; it is from this house that Govindjee left for the USA in 1956. Photographs of some of the houses we lived in are shown in the section 'Photographs.'

1. December 3, 1943, the day our father passed away, related events, ancestry and our father

Going down the memory lane, I recall the chilly morning of December 3, 1943, when my father (we called him Babuji) came back from one

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round of his walk—a routine that he had followed for years. He used to go to the Alfred Park (colloquially known as Company Gardens (Bagh)) along with his two walking partners Rai Bahadur Kaushal Kishore and Mr. Justice S.P. Sinha, living not too far from our residence (a rented house at 34/3 George Town, in a huge compound owned by Mr. T.N. Chaddha). In the center of the Alfred Park, stood a Gothic building housing the Public Library of Allahabad, whose librarian Mr. A.K. Sen was a great friend of father. My father, being in the publishing business representing Oxford University Press (OUP), was on friendly terms with persons dealing with books like University Professors, the Director of Education, and Principals of Colleges. In particular, I mention the name of Mr. Amar Nath Jha, Vice Chancellor of Allahabad University. With OUP books around us, Oxford English Dictionary became my early companion.

I remember vividly December 3, 1943, morning, as it was the day of celebrations for the founder of our College (Kayastha Pathshala), Munshi Kali Prasad; I was excited about it since I was going to participate in it donning a yellow turban and khaki uniform. Soon in a few months time, I was to appear for my examinations to enable me to join the University. My father, after his first round of walk, used to drink a glass of milk and again go out for his next round of walk with his other late-coming walking partners. That day he asked me—Well, are you going to be a Doctor or an Engineer after class XII. I felt a bit odd because he knew that I had left the “medical stream” after class X. Anyway, I replied “God willing I will be an Engineer”. He took his walking stick and placed his Beret Cap on his balding head and left for the second round of the famous Alfred Park—a park that was crossed over by Mahatma Gandhi on foot in 1939 after attending the All India Congress Committee, where Mr. C. Rajagopalachari (later the first Indian Governor General of India) had opposed the resolution of full freedom for India from the British regime. This Park had also seen the shooting down of the freedom fighter Chandra Shekhar Azad. Alfred Park is overlooked by Muir College; there is a tower across the Thornhill Road (now called Maharshi Dayanand Marg), and it houses the Faculty of Science of the Allahabad University. It was here that we three brothers

(Krishnaji (born on January 13, 1922); Gopalji (myself) and Govindji (who spells his name now as Govindjee, born on October 24, 1932)) studied and took our Masters Degrees (M.Sc.) in Science. But our father could not see this and enjoy our achievements. The year I was to appear for my Class XII, my elder brother Krishnaji was to appear for his M.Sc. (Physics).

As I wrote above, my father, with his walking stick and Beret cap on his balding head, went out for his second round of walk on the fateful day of December 3, 1943. After an hour or so, our neighbor's son came rushing to tell us that my father sat down on the chair in his verandah and collapsed. We ran out to his house (2 houses down from ours) and found him lying in perfect and permanent silence. My mother (we called her Amma) was uncontrollable and could not be consoled by anyone. That was the end of a perfect gentleman and a great human being, our dear father, at an early age of 53 years. This early age factor tormented me for many years to come in my life though I just celebrated my 80th birthday in 2006.

It so happened in the family: our grandfather Munshi Ganga Prasad, who was a gold medalist in Mathematics from Calcutta University and served in the Judicial Services as Sub-judge of the High Court of Allahabad, also breathed his last at the age of 49 years. Munshi Ganga Prasad had two brothers: Munshi Yamuna Prasad, who died at a very young age, and Munshi Saraswati Prasad who lived with us. The names of our grandfather and his two brothers were given after the 3 sacred rivers at Prayag, which met at Triveni or Sangam. (The name Allahabad was given by the Muslim rulers of that time (see Appendix 1).) A great grand uncle of ours Munshi Kashi Prasad, an eminent lawyer (Advocate) at Allahabad High Court and a close contemporary of Pundit Moti Lal Nehru (father of Pundit Jawaharlal Lal Nehru, our first Prime Minister) had also died at the early age of 49 years. Whenever I used to see their photographs, their close resemblance used to worry me that I am going to meet the same fate and I will not be able to fulfill my responsibilities of life. That was what had tormented me for many years.

Talking about ancestry, our recorded (from conversations, during the early 1950s, with our grand uncle Munshi Bhagwan Prasad, who

lived with us on 14 B Bank Road) ancestor's name was Munshi Peth Mal from Agra (1600s); he was said to be a close cousin of Raja Todar Mal, one of the "Nav Ratnas" of Emperor Akbar when he had shifted his seat of governance from Delhi to Agra.

Our father Late Mr. Vishveshwar Prasad was born and brought up in the Holy City of Banaras (also spelled as Benaras, and even Banares, now called Varanasi). He was a voracious reader and was given a letter by the librarian of the Queen's College of Banaras certifying that he had browsed through almost all the books of the English language kept in that library. He knew several languages, namely Sanskrit, Hindi, Persian and Urdu, besides English. I had seen him writing letters to his uncle in Urdu.

Our father was a person of great honesty and integrity; he started his life as a member of the 'Servants of India Society,' where he was to receive a very small amount of money out of his earnings, and the rest was to go to the Society for the welfare of downtrodden persons in the Indian Society. (This is the same Society whose early member was Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, the second Prime Minister of India.) Later, because of family circumstances, our father had to leave the Society, and he was appointed into the publishing business of the Oxford University Press (OUP), England, UK. There he was a complete convert into a perfect English man (so to say) in his dress and food habits. While traveling in winters, his attire was so-called "Plus Four" with matching cap; otherwise, he wore a full suit and a "Felt" hat. In summers, a 'Sola' hat was a regular feature. When he was home, his tea time was 3:30 PM. A tray was brought before him with tea in a round tea pot, a cup, a saucer, and milk in a pot, but there was no sugar pot as he was highly diabetic—a disease of killer nature. I do not recall if he ever drank alcohol, but he smoked heavily—cigars of the best quality and tobacco in a pipe.

II. The first and the second house in Allahabad

After graduating from Banaras, our father moved to Allahabad. He rented a house in a locality (Mohalla) called Bai-Ka-Bagh. Our eldest brother Dada (Krishnaji) was born, in 1922, as noted above, in

a house in Bai Ka Bagh, opposite to Lalaji's residence (Darogaji's house); it was the first house for the family in Allahabad. The family then moved to another house whose number was 47 (called Ram Niwas). This is where 3 of us (I; my sister Malati; and the youngest of us (Govindjee)) were born. We had a group photograph of all the members of the extended family taken in the courtyard of the house at 47 Bai Ka Bagh (see the section on 'Photographs'). It had 4 bedrooms, one living room, a kitchen open to a courtyard, and two toilets, one each on the two floors. The first floor had 2 bedrooms and three open terraces. The house was in a forest-like area; sometimes, a fox-like animal called "Oodbilau" (in Hindi; perhaps, a smooth-coated otter) visited the upper floor. From day one, our parents had house guests for extended periods. The first one I remember was the son of a close friend of father from Banaras. P. Kumar was his name. (Much later, he moved to Calcutta (now called Kolkata).) He had come to study for a graduate degree at Allahabad University; he stayed with us for two years. He was a brother like figure to us throughout his life. (We called him Puttan Bhaiya; his brother was called Jittan Bhaiya.) The other person was an uncle of father, Mr. Saraswati Prasad; he was called Katghar-walé Baba, and he is the one who gave us our names. Krishna Ji; Gopal Ji; and Govind Ji. Krishna, Gopal and Govind are different names of God and he added "Ji" to show respect to God's name. [There is only one God, but the so-called different gods simply represent different aspects of the same God.] Baba was more or less a permanent member of the family, visiting once in a while to live with his son, i.e., our uncle Mr. Bireshwar Prasad (called by us as Katghar-walé Chacha as he lived in an area of town called "Katghar"; he later worked as a representative of the MacMillan Press, UK).

Connected with this house, the 47 Bai Ka Bagh, is another subject of interest: the owner of the house. We used to call him Lalaji. His daughter was married to Sri Harivansh Rai "Bachchan," a Kayastha. Bachchan was his name as a Hindi poet who wrote a famous Hindi poem collection "Madhushala". It was unfortunate that his wife—daughter of Lalaji—died of Tuberculosis, an incurable disease in those days. Harivansh Rai moved away from his parental house in

Kydganj-Katghar area. Bacchanji, as he was called, had obtained a doctorate in the English literature from the Cambridge University, UK; he was a Lecturer in English at Allahabad University. He later married Teji, a Punjabi woman—mother of now the celebrity movie actor Amitabh Bachchan. I remember Kydganj-Katghar locality of Allahabad because our uncle, whose father lived with us, had rented a house in Katghar and the house adjacent to it was rented by Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri (he was also a Kayastha; as I mentioned earlier, he was the 2nd Prime Minister of India). During those days, Sri Shastri (called Shastriji), as a Freedom fighter, was in and out of the jail; my recollection is that once Mrs. Shastri did come requesting for something for a meal. The Shastris lived a very simple life with bare necessities (very little furniture). Shastriji was a very honest and fine person. As a child, I had the privilege of meeting him once.

Our father never owned a property. The only house which our grandfather had built (or bought) in Banaras was sold away under difficult circumstances. Our grand uncle Munshi Bhagwan Prasad, son of Munshi Kashi Prasad, a celebrated rich lawyer of Allahabad High court, had large landed property near Banaras, and a row of houses in Daranagar, Banaras, and two mansions in Allahabad. Munshi Bhagwan Prasad never earned for his living. His source of income was his property which he slowly sold off to the extent that he came to us and lived with us at Allahabad when my brother Krishnaji (Dada) was a Professor of Physics at Allahabad University. Munshi Bhagwan Prasad died in the house (actually a Bungalow) at 14B Bank Road—a University of Allahabad house. I mention this as our family followed the tradition of having house guests for extended periods, set by our father.

III. A third house in Allahabad

Owning a house was difficult for service class people as there were no facilities to obtain loans in those days. The next house that I remember was at 4B Bai Ka Bagh. This was a longish house with a garden in the back and a very large courtyard; it was here that we slept during the summers under the open sky with mosquito nets

fixed to our cots. My father used to go for walks early in the morning and as soon as he left his bed, I used to occupy his bed as it used to be a pretty comfy one.

I became a dog lover at an early age. I used to bring home newly born puppies from the street and keep them in my bed. Once during winter, a puppy slept with me and in the night he cried and snuggled between my body and hand. He did not open his jaws and died; perhaps, it was because it was too cold and he could not drink milk given to him. I was in shock, but father was there to help me recover.

My mother had never been in good health. Her regular treatment was looked after by one Dr. Misra (Misraji as we called him), who was a weekly visitor to administer some kind of injection. She used to refuse to take it, but Dr. Misra patiently cajoled her till she somehow became unconscious (cannot say how) and only then the needle could be poked into her arms. For me it was agonizing to watch this routine. The injection was probably Calcium to give her strength to fight the ailment for which no cure was possible.

I enjoyed living in this house with the garden. There was a large lemon tree, a banana plant, a flower tree called 'Harsinghar'; its flowers, with white petals and orange stems, gave a very fragrant smell. We used to collect and dry them and use them during "Holi" (the festival of colors); when soaked in water, it gave lovely colored water for spraying on people celebrating Holi festival. I remember that this house was located at the dead-end of a street, which was blocked by a high wall extended in our courtyard, as there was a girls' school/college on the other side. This school called Crosthwaite School must have been named after some British lady's last name. The Principal, Miss Pooviah, was a person well known in the elite circle of Allahabad. My sister (Malati; her nickname was "Bitti") started her studies in this school and completed her class XII and then joined the Allahabad University to finish her B.A. (in Humanities) and then M.A (in Hindi). Several of her classmates were married off by their parents when they reached the age of 16 years. This was conventional in those days, but our father had promised my sister that she can study as long as she wanted. The tragedy is that he could not live long enough to see us all when we completed our studies

and were properly educated at the University. Our father's role was taken over by my elder brother Krishnaji (Dada); he remained a father figure to all 3 of us (Bitti, Govindjee and I) till his death on August, 14, 1997 (August 15th is the Independence Day of India; next day was the Golden Jubilee of that day).

We loved as well as feared our father. He used to travel frequently. Once when he was ready to leave and sit on a "Tonga," a nice horse-driven carriage, my sister came running and hit his suitcase; it fell in a manner that she was hurt and started bleeding profusely. Everyone was disturbed considering it a bad omen. But, our father was cool; he bandaged her and then left for his job. He never believed in superstitions and used to say that he is an "Atheist". He was, however, influenced by 'Arya Samaj' (as indicated by the fact that he did not believe in the caste system, and the family name Asthana, that indicates caste, was never used). On the other hand, our mother was a regular visitor to temples and called "Pundits" (Brahmins) for religious rituals (Puja) and the 'Satya Narain Baba's Katha' (Story of the God 'Truth').

Our neighborhood was such that to run the household, my mother had to rarely go out of the house to get the daily requirements of life. To start with breakfast, there was a hawker who delivered bread, butter and eggs; then, there was the fruit vendor ('Phalwala') and a vegetable seller ('Sabjiwala'); even goat's meat (or chicken) was supplied at home. There was also the 'Dudhwala' (the milkman) who came with the cow and milked her right before us. For evening snacks, there was the 'Chatwala,' and for sweets a Bengali 'Mithaiwala'. We used to look forward to Chatwala, Mithaiwala and 'Pastrywala'. In spite of our mother being a religious Hindu woman, she allowed us to buy eatables from vendors of any caste or religion. I think it was the influence of our cosmopolitan father. The economy and the customs of those days was that the cloth seller ('Kaprawala'), the tailor ('Darji') and even the utensil seller ('Bartanwala') and the 'Sonar' (jewellery dealer) used to come to the house. It was a scene to see buying 'Ghee' (clarified butter) from the visiting villagers: haggling price and weight! The most colorful scene was when 'Chooriwalis' (bangle saleswomen) came to visit us. All the children would collect

there; maidservants and our mother would be selecting and wearing 'chooris' (glass and 'plastic type' bangles) and even singing songs. God bless them.

There was a fear that father would not approve of all these activities. Thus, these activities were organized during his absence. We too were frivolous during this period. Once playing in the garden, I threw a piece of brick over the wall and it hit and hurt a person on the street; he came in front of the house, shouted, complained and threatened to tell my father. I was scared and to add to my problem, my sister related the incident to my mother. She too was worried as to how to save me as father was to return the next day. I appealed for mercy which was given but with a stern warning. The gentleman who was hurt was called to the house and I had to apologize which he kindly accepted. That was the environment of our childhood.

Our father had one younger brother and two first cousins. His brother Mr. Har Prasad became an English teacher at the College, I mentioned earlier (Kayastha Pathshala), and became a theosophist (influenced by Annie Besant). The younger cousin was Mr. Sidheshwar Prasad; he was very handsome and smart: was always well dressed. He was a lawyer practicing at the Patna High Court in Patna, Bihar. He was married in a rich landlord's family. The landowners in Northern India, between Calcutta and Banaras, were covered by a Law called "Permanent Settlement" promulgated by Lord Cornwallis, one of the Viceroy's of British India. Under this law, the landowner had to pay to the Government Treasury a fixed amount per acre of land as lease money tax (called 'Malgozari') for all the time to come. But, they had the freedom to collect rental ('Lagan') from farmers allowed to till the land as they wished. Lagan increased every year, but Malgozari had no corresponding increase. Thus, landlords (the Zamindars) became rich by leaps and bounds. My aunt's family was one of those Zamindars. Thus, the handsome lawyer uncle, by marriage, became part of this family and shifted from Banaras to Patna to practice Law there. After sometime, he was appointed the chief lawyer of the Raja of Banaras. He came to stay at Raja's Palace area in Ramnagar. The rumor is that the internal Palace rivalry was responsible for his early death; he died

due to a septic wound in his chin. Our aunt and her children were suddenly homeless. Our uncle's elder brother (Bireswar Prasad), his father (Saraswati Prasad) and our rich issue-less grand uncle Munshi Bhagwan Prasad did not come forward to accept the widow and the 3 children (Kunwar Bhaiya; Rana Bhaiya and Suman Jijji, as we called them) into their homes. I narrate the following to bring out the character of our father. We all traveled from Allahabad to Banaras which was my first train journey. Our father immediately offered to take the family to live with us. The family lived with us for a while till our aunt's brother, who was an eminent surgeon in Patna, and who was also issue-less took the family to Patna. (They were brought up in the rich Zamindar family.) Such a gesture by our father has held him in high respect by all the affected and the concerned in the extended family.

My ailing sick mother had become jittery and superstitious of any incident happening in the family. She had developed a kind of phobia against houses where she lived. After the tragic death of our uncle, she decided to move out of the house we were living in. It was easy to get houses on rent and on small pretext she used to pack up for a new place. I remember once that our father was away on a Tour (for Oxford University Press work) and he was informed that we have moved to a new place! The result is that I for one have lost count of houses where we lived in Allahabad as well as forgotten the sequence in which we moved from place to place.

IV. The Madhvapur house; Babuji had a stroke

Now, I come to a house in a locality called Madhvapur. The house was built on a famous road known as 'Grand Trunk Road' (The Grand Trunk Road had a fork: one branch went from Delhi to Faizabad; and the other through Agra, Kanpur and they met somewhere in Bihar.) It was, perhaps, laid by a ruler of India named Sher Shah Suri before the Moghul Empire was established. This house was a bit out of the city and nearer to the river Ganges (Gangaji) and Sangam, also called Triveni (confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna and the unseen Saraswati). Nearby, the Moghul Emperor Akbar had built a Fort.

It was a nice open area and excellent for morning walk of father. Sometimes, he used to take me along even in winters, dressed for the cold. It was a pleasant experience. As it was a new colony away from the city, there was no water supply by the Municipal Corporation. A nearby well ('Kuan' in Hindi) was available for our use. A servant was employed to pull water out of the well. The good thing was that in the morning water used to be warm and sometimes I bathed in the open by the side of the well.

Here, I obtained a pair of mixed dogs, Poppy and Pumpy. Poppy was a shaggy male dog: he was a mix from an "Irish Terrier" mother, a pet bitch that belonged to a teacher in the Ewing Christian College. Pumpy was a mixed Pomeranian female dog. She gave a litter of pups. It was great fun. Father never objected to any of our activities that we liked and loved to do. While playing football in the inside courtyard ('Aangan'), which was normal in those houses, I once knocked myself against the verandah pillar and cut my forehead and the scar, I had from it, later became my distinguishing mark, mentioned in my Passport. Then, I was studying in class VII. Prior to Exams, a home tutor was a regular feature. He used to come, wait, have some fruits and sweets before starting my reading and writing. Providing snacks for the tutor was customary for mother. She used to enjoy feeding people coming to our house.

I remember this house vividly because it was where I saw my father falling seriously sick. He had a stroke; he was partially paralyzed. We were all very upset. Our house doctor Dr. Misra became a regular visitor. He used to inject medicines on a daily basis. Upon the recommendation of the doctor, the vendor of eggs and meat was ordered to bring live pigeons which I was to slaughter at home and prepare its soup for father as it was good for him to gain strength in his muscles. He slowly recovered and we all were relieved to see him get back on his feet. Mother celebrated it with 'Puja' and 'Havan'.

V. The Bairahana house

Immediately after the Puja, we again moved from this house! The

next house was in a locality called old Bairahana/New Lashkar Lines. From here now Govindjee was noticed by people around him. He found a neighbor's boy named Rishi to play with. He was articulate and tried to coin words to express himself. God knows how he at that time pronounced tongue twisting Sanskrit words. We felt he is going to be a smart and an intelligent guy. I was still a child enjoying little games like trying to drive the old stationary skeleton of a Ford T Model Car, which was left, in the front of the house by its owner. During Krishna *Janmashtami* (Lord Krishna's birth celebration), I would build a 'Jhanki', a mock city with cardboard houses, and a jail for the parents of Lord Krishna, a river flowing through, a mountain and a temple for the God. We did not have electricity in our houses then—the brightest light was provided by a Petromax lamp for such occasions. Otherwise, we had to make do with kerosene lamps. To keep them clean was a ritual. This is the house Govindjee remembers where Dada played chess with a neighbor, a friend who always lost and used to throw the chess pieces into the street. Another interesting facet of the house was a liquor shop that existed across the road along with an eatery that cooked delicious meat and liver pieces. We liked the spicy stuff, easily available to us.

VI. Marriage of Ramji Bhaiya

I remember the marriage of our eldest cousin Mr. Ramesh Chandra Asthana (Ramji Bhaiya) (son of our uncle Mr. Bireswar Prasad). For me, it was the first marriage in the family. Our excitement was at the peak. Every child in the family was to get new clothes and shoes for the 'Barat' (the marriage procession/party). Govindjee being the youngest got the special 'sherwani' of yellow satin cloth as he was to be the "shehbala" (no real English equivalent word, approximately best man, but much younger). This was my third railway train journey to a place called Etawah (in western UP). It was fun-filled days for us: We had the usual sweets, special breakfasts, lunches and dinners and some gifts from the bride's side. There were also many ceremonies in their Katghar house in Allahabad. Bride's house in Etawah had a nice gate, and large rooms, and verandahs and an open yard

where one could play cricket. Members of the bridal party were in constant attention taking care of all our needs. We met one distant uncle who came to attend the wedding from Agra. He was a very special one because he had gone to London ('Vilayat') for his PhD degree. His name was Dr. Yadunath Prasad and he was close to my father since they had common interests in Education.

VII. The big house with ten rooms

Our father was also the Honorary General Secretary for many years of an Association called 'Higher Secondary Schools Teachers Association'. It was not a trade union, but it still looked after the interests of many low paid teachers in privately run schools. The managers used to pay much less than what the teachers had to give receipts for! Such cases were brought to the attention of the Association; the Association took up the matter for normal justice. I remember the operations because our house, at 11 C Bai Ka Bagh, where we also lived, had a garage to keep a car or a horse carriage as per necessity. As we did not possess either, this space was used as the office for the Association. This house has sad, but also several happy memories.

This house was a reasonably big one with nearly 10 rooms. I had a room to myself with a balcony. One room was for our grand uncle, and another was for our servants; the rest were distributed among us. This is the place where theft took place involving servants. Father was gracious to forget and forgive them. I was not as forgiving as a doll of my sister was also missing. We had a good time there since the staircase Balustrade was a slide for us as well as for our neighbor friends. Just across the Grand Trunk Road started the campus of the 'Rambagh' Railway station of B.N.W.R. (Bengal North Western Railway). It was a Meter Gauge Railway. There were two more railway companies, one was E.I.R. (East India Railway) and the other G.P.I.R. (Great Peninsula Indian Railway) passing through Allahabad. Since Rambagh was the terminus, there was a contraption to turn the face of the engine. It used to be a steam engine, so it was nice to watch the engine being filled with water by a large hosepipe hung in the air over the engine tank. Sometimes we used to walk up

to the railway track before the arrival of a train and place a copper coin on the railway line and step aside to find what happens to our coin after the train had passed. From a round coin, we would get an elliptic coin. When we told our elders of our activity, we were forbidden to go to the station without an escort.

The balcony of our house was a great resting place for me. During the monsoon season, I enjoyed white and grey clouds passing by, changing shapes from lions to cattle to dogs.... Imagination galore! By the side of the house, there was a horse carriage stand. A water tank was filled with water for the horses. A Tonga driven by one Moin Mian (short for Moinuddin) was a favorite of our father. He used to maintain record of his trips and calculate at the end of each month the total fare to be paid to him (we called him Mian Sahib). Tonga was the main mode of transport in our family. There were Ekkas, also horse-driven; they were high and squarish and I think they were cheaper to hire, but normally no one in the family used them. Once mother started adjusting her Sari when the Tonga had just started and she fell off. We shouted, and the horse came to a stand still. Mother was hurt and was brought back to the house. Moin Mian was very apologetic although it was not his fault. Moin Mian, although a muslim, was like a part of our own family. He could come in and ask for 'Roti' (bread) if he had forgotten his tiffin. At every happy muslim festival, he brought us 'pakwan' (goodies) like 'sheermal' (sweet bread), kofta and kabab for us and I always looked forward for the same.

One sad note connected to this house was: When father was away on a tour, and due to some misunderstanding, there was a court case against the Teacher's Association whose office was in our garage. The judgment went against the Association resulting in the locking of the property, which meant that 3 rooms on the ground floor of our house were sealed by the 'Katchehri' (the lower court) clerk. It shocked me and left a scar in the psyche for years to come. As soon as father returned from his tour, everything was sorted out, but as usual, after any such incident, mother moved from this house to another.

VIII. The next house, not so good, but fun for playing during the monsoons

This next house was an old house, not clean and not big. They said it had ghosts. Moreover, the children in the neighborhood were sort of rowdy. There was no electrical wiring in the house though streetlights were electrical and wires passed by our terrace boundary. Dada was to appear in High School Exams. Since he was studious and intelligent, his classmates would come to study with him. One evening, son of Prof. Pandey, of the English Department at the University, came with an electric lamp and wires with hooks. He, with others, went up to the terrace and hooked the wires to the electric line to light up the lamp. This was very illegal. When father came to know about it, he told in no uncertain terms that he will meet (meaning thereby complain to) Professor Pandey. Dada's friend, son of the Professor, quietly slipped away and the episode ended. We had no electric light!

Days, months and years may pass but memories of childhood do not fade away easily. The ghost house was not so bad. During the monsoons, it gave us lot of opportunities to play around. Since it was a corner house, the streets from the three sides met at the spot and the front of the house became a little pond for us to float our paper boats. Dada taught us to make small, big and covered paper boats, not only boats but ships with chimney. Father gave us money to buy colored shiny papers for our fascinating love to enjoy the monsoon in the shape of floating gondolas. Father was very affectionate and protective. He told the servants to keep an eye on us so that we do not get hurt in the deep flowing water. May God give such parents to every child. Here we made friends with whom we could play cricket and badminton, as parks in front of the house were available. I had a Christian friend John and Dada had a Brahmin friend Uma Shankar. A neighborhood general merchant was Haji Mian, a Muslim — a cosmopolitan social environment for all.

IX. The next house was very good, but my sister (Bitti) got burned with scalding water

After moving out of the above house, we went to a freshly built house in the same area. It had all colored tiles and colorful glasses in windows and doors. It was a new experience. The latest design, a gate, little lawn, a front verandah, drawing room, corner rooms, back verandah, courtyard, a clean kitchen, and bath rooms, but still no electricity. The two back rooms were occupied by an old lady-relative of the owner of the house. That was what I did not like in spite of the good color of the house and clean environment. This house too had bad luck for my sister (Bitti). One day in the evening, a servant was carrying a large metal container ('Bhagauna') full of scalding hot water for use by our mother as she needed it for fomenting herself. From nowhere, Bitti came running and hit the boiling water pot. It spilled all over her little body and part of her skin came peeling down. She cried and jumped all over to our dismay and horror. With great difficulty, our maid caught her and treated her by putting coconut oil and other ingredients on her body. Dr. Misra was called and father was informed by telegram as he was on his tour for his office work. The entire summer was spent in taking care of Bitti. The bruises and burns left permanent marks. Father rushed back, and the bad accident prompted mother to change the house again.

X. From there to other houses

There are two more houses of my childhood days that I can recall though the sequence of their occupation is a bit hazy. One is the "D-Road" house. It had a substantial area, but was part of a big building. In the front was a long verandah and behind that a big hall which we had divided by a wooden partition to make room for the library of the Oxford University Press books and a sitting room. Connected with that were two rooms, a verandah, a courtyard, a kitchen, a toilet and an opening on the street. This is where I learned card games which mother, servants and a maid played in the afternoons. Those days servants were never in short supply. We

had a 'maharaj' (or 'maharajin') to cook the meals, one ('mehra' or 'mehri') to clean the utensils and the house, and another to make the beds and run errands. The house was located near a railway line and a road in the front passed under the railway line. That was a bit noisy, but watching the trains and wagons pass by was a great pastime. One handicap was that on the other side of the road was *Idgah* (prayer ground of muslims). During Id prayers, the Idgah, and the road, as well as our verandah, were occupied by people to pray. It was sometimes scary and no one could refuse people to come into our verandah. My father, who belonged to Arya Samaj (believed in the Vedic scriptures), was against the caste system (note that we did not use our caste name (Asthana); we are Kayasthas (see a website: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kayastha> for details); our father had great tolerance for all religious beliefs. He did welcome the Mullahs coming in hordes to use our verandah. However, there was a period when Hindu-Muslim riots used to be a common scene in North India. Allahabad was notorious for such happenings. The shouting crowds of several muslim groups with slogans like 'Allah O Akbar' and that of Hindus calling 'Jai Mahadev' and 'Jai Mahabir' could be heard in the darkness of the night. Since the house was near the Idgah and a slaughter house, mostly controlled by muslims, mother insisted for a change of the house. I remember that I, for one, was happy to get in the evenings cooked cut-liver of lamb and goats at reasonable prices in a shop nearby. At this house, we were visited by a guest from Lahore, the son of the counterpart of my father in the publishing business. Lahore was the capital of the then undivided province of Punjab. This tall handsome man added fuel to the fire by giving vivid descriptions of the Hindu-Muslim riots in Lahore with strong anti-muslim views. Mother got extra strength to her arguments to leave this 'dangerous' area. Now, I remember we moved from here to 11C Bai-ka-Bagh.

XI. A trip to Calcutta with father — an aside

Before I get back to other houses, let me narrate my visit to Calcutta with father with no one else of the family with him, but only I as a

dotting boy with his father. A new jacket was bought to match my moccasin shoes stitched specially out of father's grey old felt hat. During those days, there was no direct train from Allahabad to Calcutta. A bogey or a carriage was shuttled to Chheoki railway station to be attached to a Bombay (now Mumbai)-Calcutta Mail Train. A friend of our father, from Lahore, was to join us at Chheoki: D.C. Sharma, a Professor of English at Lahore College, who lived at 1 A Court Street in Lahore. He had different tales to tell regarding riots there. Anyway, we became friends since we were traveling in the same compartment of "Inter" Class. There used to be four classes in the railway trains: 1st; 2nd; Inter; and 3rd. None was air conditioned. Air conditioned (A/C) classes came much later in our lives. Professor Sharma was short, fair, handsome and a jolly-good fellow; he was a great conversationalist. It was a great experience traveling with him. The evening meals and the morning breakfast were ordered by him and I loved his choices. On arrival at the Howrah station, there were volunteers to receive us as our father and Professor Sharma were delegates to the Conference organized by the All India Education Federation. Father, being the General Secretary of the United Provinces Teachers Association, received special attention; so, we too received the same attention as we were with him. We crossed the famous Howrah Bridge. I was told that when the steamers and ships moved under the bridge, the traffic was closed and the central portion of the bridge was opened up. I could never see it happening. It was the year of 1936. During the Conference, we were allowed to sit near the Dais and there were speeches mostly in English. However, some of the entertainment shows were in Bengali. Our stay was well arranged in the hostels on the College Street. When father was not at the conference, he took me around Calcutta: Victoria Memorial; Botanical Garden (famous for its huge Banyan tree); Chowranghee (Chowringhee) Square; Esplanade Area; I even had a memorable ride on the tram. He took me to meet his colleagues working at the headquarters of the Oxford University Press in India at Bow Bazar Street, and at particular restaurants on Chowranghee Street where the food was to his liking.

At the end of the Conference, we went to see off a special friend

of father Professor P. Sheshadri at Howrah Railway Station. One thing I liked about the Howrah station is that our taxi went right up to the railway platform and that Professor Sheshadri was traveling in style in a 1st class coupé. He was a very fair and tall person, dressed in white dhoti, shirt, jacket and turban with gold ribbon or woven brocade. His head gear was typical of people coming from the Mysore area. Later, I saw the famous physicist Sir C.V. Raman and Professor K. S. Krishnan wearing the same outfit. Professor Sheshadri talked to father in real crisp English which I now realize that British had outsourced their language to India at a very early stage — maybe to get Indians to work for their Empire, not knowing that they will lose the Empire through the same tool.

XII. Back to the houses at Allahabad

There were two more houses where we lived in that period—one on Zero Road and the other at Hewitt Road. I do not recall anything of much consequence to relate here. But, there are two incidents of my childhood/boyhood that are still hiding in the deep recesses of my memory that I wish to relate here.

During the summer vacation, it was usual for my uncle (Chacha: Mr. Har Prasad, father's younger brother), Chachi (aunt) and their son Kesho (Keshav) Bhai (Krishna Murari) to pack their bags and travel up to Chachi's brother (Mama, our maternal uncle). I had not known any such relation where I could go. Chachi was somehow fond of me and I used to love to visit the family quite often. My mother used to tease me by saying "Since she has nursed you with her milk when you were a baby, so you run to her"—maybe it was a fact, but I don't know. One summer, I was invited by Chacha and Chachi to spend the summer vacation with them in Bihar in the town of Barh, where 'Mama' was posted as 'Munsif' (senior most judicial officer). Father readily agreed, but mother grudgingly. I loved traveling. Father bought me new 'chappals' of permanent black leather so that its shine remained without polish. A few shirts and pants were added to my wardrobe along with the latest style undergarments. Father loved to see me excited and happy.

We traveled in an Inter Class compartment as this is what middle class families could afford, although I had seen 2nd class tickets in my father's jacket pockets when he went on official duty. Our maternal uncle's (Mama's) official residence was large and it was near the Judicial Courts. Summer heat was killing. After 10 A.M., we were not allowed to go out; we stayed in a room full of hard beds; underneath was filled with some water; and a hand-pulled fan, hanging from the ceiling, was operated by servants to keep us cool. What I missed, there, was non-vegetarian food as both the families were vegetarian, being members of The Theosophical Society whose one important member was Mrs. Annie Besant, as mentioned earlier. She was also a member and worker of the All India Congress, the organization later influenced by Mahatma Gandhi that achieved freedom for India.

After a month, Mama was transferred to Begusarai, a town on the other side of the Ganges River. It was great fun to cross the river in a steamer boat. I could run around the deck and suck juicy mangoes. I was asked to write a letter home and I readily did. That was my first and last letter to my father in Hindi. I do not remember what all I wrote, but on my return he gave me back the letter with few corrections which I certainly appreciated thinking that father had read the letter carefully.

Mama and Chacha used to play Tennis in the evening, in a 'court' created in the compound of the house. What was funny was that they used to wear 'Dhoti' in a peculiar fashion that replaced normal trousers!

Nani (Chachi's mother, grand mother of Kesho Bhai) was the 'house keeper' who selected the menu and maintained discipline at meal times. Their 'maharaj' (the cook) was from her home town Bhagalpur. Breakfast was typical potato fries and 'puris'; and the evening tiffin was roasted gram ('chana') and puffed rice ('lai') mixed with salt and mustard oil. Lunch and dinner included boiled rice, 'chapati' (bread), 'dal' (lentils) of all kinds, and a variety of vegetables. Sometimes for dessert, we had warm 'gulab jamuns' from Katcheheriwala 'halwai'. Nani used to make 'atta (wheat flour) halwa'. The recipe was equal amounts of atta, sugar and ghee. I liked

that halwa. Later, Chachi used to feed us a similar halwa as well as 'atta namkeen' whenever we visited her. Thus, she was called "namkeen wali chachi" by us and our children. The cook (maharaj) and Nani and Chachi's hometown Bhagalpur stuck to our lives. As a student of class III/IV and visitor to Nani's place, I had never imagined that my sister Bitti will settle down for life in that city and I for one will marry a ravishing beauty from a village called Puraniserai (Basti) of Nathnagar Postal area of Bhagalpur. Thus, I close my first Bihar visit.

On return to Allahabad, my father was happy to see me beaming, as I did not catch the usual typhoid fever during summers. Our childhood was plagued by sickness like measles, typhoid or malaria. We had taken for granted that either before or after the usual examinations at school, we will be sick in bed. There was no medicine prescribed by doctors for measles and chicken pox. The afflictions were named "Choti Mata" and "Bari Mata". The 'Pundit' and 'Mali' would come daily to perform some kind of 'Puja' and wash us with boiled 'neem' water and keep flies away with a branch of 'neem' leaves. Such was the medical scene of our early days. [It is only recently that the World has discovered the medicinal value of 'neem' (*Azadirachta indica*); see < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neem>>.]

Another incident that has stayed with me till today and that has changed my psyche for good — is discussed below. After the marriage of Ramji Bhaiya (Rameshwar Chandra Asthana, eldest son of our uncle Bireshwar Prasad), his family settled in Delhi. The first summer was to be spent with the new Bhabhi (sister-in-law) in the Delhi house on Babar Lane. My cousin Munnaji (Jagdish Chandra Asthana, youngest brother of Ramji Bhaiya), who was only 5 days older to me, and I made plans for taking a vacation in Delhi and making that vacation a memorable one. We both were all so set and glued after long discussions about enjoying the vacation that any change would hurt us. Since I had not disclosed anything to my parents, I started feeling guilty and got scared to talk to father. When I did so, he was furious and refused to give me permission to go to Delhi. I was completely crestfallen and I cried lying in a corner. Mother tried to console me and was afraid that I might fall

sick. No one could help me and I went on crying throughout the day till father came back home after his work. He too was disturbed and tried to explain that there must be reasons for his refusal to let me go on the trip. Father hesitated but when he found no way out, he spoke. "Listen, I would not accept Ramji paying for your expenses as I know that he will be doing it at the cost of cutting out from the monetary help which he provides to his parents, and Ramji will not accept my paying for your expenses as he is indebted to me for all the help that I have been extending all these years. So, you have to wait for an opportune moment."

I got up and hugged him. That was my father of strong convictions and great morals. He used to say to keep good relations—"Don't complain and don't explain"; "Keep your expectations to minimum from all"; "Pretty is as Pretty as one does." He has remained with me by my side all these years of my life. I think I have said enough and I wait to see how I end my years left to live.

Amma

*Malati Sahay**

(translated from Hindi to English by Anju Okhandiar)

I am the only daughter of Savitri Devi and Vishveshwar Prasad; I was born on April 5, 1929. The following text was written on July 2, 2006, when I was visiting my son Anupam, my daughter-in-law Shilpi and their son Anav, in Strongsville, Ohio, USA. Appendix 2 has a glossary of terms, useful to those who are not familiar with Hindi, and Appendix 3 is the original Hindi text that I wrote.

Every one of us and each family has a story to tell that can be threaded into the larger story of civilization. My family has its own story.

Our Amma, Savitri Devi, was born in Banaras (now known as Varanasi), perhaps in 1899. She was the dearest of her father, darling of her step-mother and the love of her only brother. At the tender age of 13, she was married to 10 years older Sri Vishveshwar Prasad. Her in-laws lived in Daranagar and her father-in-law was Sri Ganga Prasad, a sub-judge by profession.

Her life story is extraordinary; especially, the story of her birth is enchanting but painful. Due to the early onset of labor, the head of the child was invisible, but one of the women attending the birth spotted a baby girl opening her eyes. This baby girl was then born and while she was being cleaned up, her mother passed away. Destiny dictated its terms and bestowed her love on the newborn.

Amma's young age and her affectionate upbringing could not compromise with the ways of her in-laws' household. She refused to use the veil, hence, would not come out of her room. This re-

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stricted her outings. If she woke up early before sunrise she would go to the bathroom, otherwise 2-4 maids would build a wall with 'saris' on two sides for her to be able to access it as a lane to reach the bathroom. Consequently, she became a patient of stomach ailments. Salty snacks like 'dalmoot' were her favorite, which her brother smuggled to her under his umbrella. She would fill herself with various snacks. Her stomach ailments worsened as years went by. Ulcers were diagnosed.

Amma's life was clearly divided into good and bad fortune. Her good fortune was her philanthropic husband (Babuji) and her eldest son (Krishnaji), whom we called Dada. Her ill-fortune was her poor health. Seeing her bed-ridden all the time it was suggested to Babuji that he re-marry, a suggestion to which he would just smile and walk away. Wherever they lived he made sure that Amma was visited and treated by a doctor regularly. He took her to Calcutta and Lucknow for treatment. Not only that, he even got her admitted to a school in the neighbourhood so that she would get formal education. This institution was Crosthwaite Girls' Intermediate College. It had classes from kindergarten to the 12th class. Although Amma's program never took off the ground, I studied there.

My three brothers (Krishnaji, Gopalji and Govindjee) and I were brought up with the help of servants. We did not have the luxury of Amma's physical indulgence on an everyday basis but there was no relenting in her love for us.

I remember two occasions when she personally stood up and cared for us. On the first occasion when Govindjee was suffering from really stubborn boils on his legs, Amma treated him herself. She would make him stand on the bed, wash his boils and apply homemade oil. He got better after this treatment. I would tease him, "Now we don't have to go to the market to buy printed clothes; Govindjee's printed legs are good enough". Amma would laugh it off; at the same time, she would forbid me to tease him. On a second occasion, she stood tall in her courage and self-confidence. I remember vividly, I must have been about 7-8 years old. We lived in a beautiful house. It had a courtyard and a big bathtub in the bathroom. During the summers, after playing outside, I would come and soak myself in the bath tub

and would stay in there to my heart's content. One day as I came running in I collided with a servant who was coming from the opposite direction carrying a bowl of boiling water. I was burnt severely and ran like an injured deer restlessly in the courtyard. Amma was lying in the verandah. She immediately grabbed me and made me sit on the bed next to herself. The doctor who lived next door was summoned in haste. He looked at my wounds and suggested that the damaged skin now hanging from my body needed to be removed. Amma would not agree to it; she refused, and said, "No". She told the doctor that he could prescribe any oral medication that he thought was necessary but she would not allow him to touch my skin. She then sent for a big metal plate from the kitchen and she mixed coconut oil and lime water to make a paste. She then applied this paste onto my skin. After some days she replaced the coconut oil with castor oil. All this time, I slept only on one side of my body and developed bedsores. It took months for me to recover but Amma did not give up. With her constant care and indulgence, I gained a second life; not only that, my skin has remained unblemished until today. Babuji was on tour but Amma took all the decisions herself.

One day Babuji mentioned a stark reality to Amma, "When I am dead you will not have any worries," he said and added, "God has given you a son like Krishnaji". His words were true. He passed away after sometime and Amma was left a widow at the age of 44. From her age of 44 to 69, Dada stood by her with his head bowed like a son and pillared the duties of a husband under His protection. God had bestowed upon her a true 'Shrawan kumar'. Dada never said 'No' to Amma ever.

An everlasting image that I still carry is the one where a table and a chair were set in Amma's room for Babuji and he would always dine in her company.

Looking at her pictures I can positively say that my Amma was beautiful and according to the time of the day she would dress up well. Sadly, though, I mostly saw her melting away in her illness. She was of normal height, lean and thin, very fair with a small face and sharp eyes. She ate like a bird. Doctors were amazed at her vitality. She would be confined to bed when ordered otherwise she

would engage herself into some activity or another. She was a very social person. Not only did she share her life with her neighbours, she involved herself in their happy as well as sad times and with the happenings surrounding the 'outhouses' where the servants lived. I remember once she found some old trousers only to cut them and sew them as shorts for the servants' child. She would constantly be making pillows if she saw someone needed it. According to her every bed needed to have three pillows at least. Wherever she went, she would take the baby of the house in her arms and walk around. I did not see my mother cook on a regular basis. But whenever she cooked and whatever she cooked it was delicious. There is a saying that your cooking reflects the purity of your heart. Once in the kitchen she would not leave until she had prepared 3 or 4 dishes. Dada would tell her not to strain herself and he would physically pick her up and put her on the bed. She would then roll in laughter.

Amma did not have the mentality of 'status consciousness'. She was a popular person. People belonging to our social status respected her; the 4th grade employees respected her as well. Peons from the University, servants, and maid-servants all shared a common bonding and their time with her. They would sit by her, talk to her, and have tea and joke. She would gladly share her home cures with them and she would be happy.

Amma's attendance at school can be counted on fingers. Ajimanbegum, who was a maid at a nearby college, became fond of her and started to visit our house. She kept coming even when she was old and suffered from Parkinson's disease. I can't remember when she stopped coming.

Babuji was a believer in Arya Samaj and Amma had her faith in Sanatan Dharma religion. Punditji, who was our priest, performed Navratri puja twice every year. 'Satyanarayan katha' was performed several times. Dada sat as the main listener as no one else was interested. Amma herself would maintain two fasts 'Ganesh chaturthi' and 'Lalhi chath'. Both of these fasts were for children and she would take vows of offering for children for different reasons such as success in exams, recovering from illness, new birth etc. These were reasons enough for her to offer sweets to her deity—Hanuman.

At first Dada would go to make offerings at 'Baandh valé Hanumanji'; later, this puja was held at home. Numbers of vows increased. Whenever Amma expressed a desire for puja, Dada would get some sweets, read Hanuman Chaleesa himself and would chant prayers. This delighted Amma. Every new born baby in the house was sent to 'Alopi' temple and if possible for a holy dip in the Sangam. This reminds me of a heart warming incident when I had taken my baby daughter to Allahabad. Anju was then 6 months old. Amma requested Bari Bhabhi (my sister-in-law), "Take Bitti's (my pet name) daughter to Alopi temple and for a dip in the Sangam." After a day or two we went to the temple. As planned we then got into a boat that moved towards Sangam. A really dark skinned man, who sat in the boat, stared at me in such a way that I got unnerved. When we came to the Sangam, Bhabhi asked him for a jug of milk as he was the only one selling milk. Stretching out the milk jug he asked, "Are you Bitti?" I could hardly believe my eyes. "Junglee," I cried. "Yes, it's me," then looking at Anju he again asked, "Is she your daughter?" "Of course," I replied. He picked up the milk jug brought it forward to touch Anju's hand and poured the entire contents in the river. My hair stands on its end even today when I think of that day. He threw away his entire day's wage. Junglee used to work in our house, a servant who had been to jail. My parents took him in and he was reformed. He was prepared to die for us. I attribute Junglee's deed on that day to my parents' goodness and sympathy.

During summers, Amma sent gifts of 'sari' and sums of rupees to relatives. Food was not cooked that day; we ate food that had been prepared earlier as offering. If the baby cried in the house, even voodoo was performed to ward off the ghosts and bring a cure.

Amma had her faith in values. She saw her two daughters-in-law before their wedding on one condition only: that the sons would marry no other but them. My Bari Bhabhi was very fair, beautiful and slim, but had small pox marks on her face. There was no criticism of her at all. My Choti Bhabhi — though not so fair — was a beauty. Dada did say to Amma when they went to see the girl, "Look at her carefully; she is not fair. Don't complain afterwards that Gopalji is not suited to her." Amma looked away from the girl who was sitting

in the train compartment. "I don't know any such talk," then turned to my Bari Bhabhi and said, "Go and buy some fruits and put them in her lap." This took place on the platform of the Allahabad train station and in connection with her son who was the most charming and handsomest of her three sons, just like his father.

Amma's likes and dislikes were distinct. Her eyes were like metal detectors and anything untoward or wrong would cause the sirens to beep. No one was spared her siren. Whether it was Amma's father-in-law (Babuji's uncle), Bari Bhabhi Bimla, who cared for her and would not sleep before she had oiled her hair, or Nirmala, her younger daughter in-law, who charmed her with her sunny disposition. I would sometimes speak when it was not needed and kept quiet at the wrong place. Bhaiya (Gopalji) would manage with few words, by ignoring things and spoke sparingly. But everyone heard Amma's siren. Even Dada could not escape it. Govindjee heard the siren loudest when he came home from America after marrying a local but known and a very beautiful girl (Rajni). After sometime this incident was neither here nor there.

The person who was possibly spared Amma's siren was her son-in-law (my husband) Professor Radha Krishna Sahay. Although he was spared in a roundabout way as it sounded sweeter for him. I remember once when he was coming to Allahabad to take me back to Bihar, his shoes were stolen on the way. At the station he missed the person who had come to receive him and went straight to the Bata shoe shop near my house, bought a new pair of shoes before he came home. Although this was a delicate matter to be spoken about within the in-laws household, everyone soon came to know about it and had a good laugh. Dada, being the eldest, competently balanced the delicate relationship between him and his brother in-law and kept it colorful. Amma heard of this story but kept quiet. As my husband and I were ready to return to Bihar, Amma called Dada to one side and whispered, "Bhaiya (eldest son's name was not taken), send someone with these two." "Why?" Dada asked, "When he came here alone, his shoes got nicked, now he is carrying so much stuff. And Bitti is with him too," said Amma. Dada burst out laughing and said, "I'm afraid somebody might take him away!" Amma added "No

jokes, I'm honest." My husband did not lose a moment in joining with the laughter. We then came away from there.

Amma chewed fragrant tobacco and nutmeg ('supari'). When she was moderately angry and Dada happened to be around her, he would shout to others "Come on, bring Amma's tobacco! What are you lot up to?" This lightened the atmosphere and Amma would start laughing. At the same time she would not lose the opportunity to complain. If at all an incident went out of hand, then Dada would have to appease her and deal with the guilty party at the same time. Everything would get sorted out. Life would run normally, with Dada's efforts.

A fine example of Amma's likes and dislikes was her moving from one house to another, which always had a reason. I have put her likes and dislikes into a boundary as not many people would agree with her. As far as I can remember we lived in more than 14 houses in Allahabad. The last house was a large university house. It was a massive place with seven rooms, one utility room, one kitchen, two other small rooms, two big verandahs, one huge courtyard, an outside lawn, one garage, land on either side, three outhouses with lots of trees and a big garden. Amma died here.

After Amma's death, our own house was purchased in Teliarganj — here my eldest Bhabhi lives with my nephew Deep Ranjan (Deepak) and his wife Madhu and their two children Soubhagyadeep (Monu) and Priyanka (Pinky). Dada died in this house.

It happened that which ever house we lived in lost its charm for Amma at some point, and this happened mostly when Babuji was on tour. Amma would order her army of servants to find another place to live and they would always come back successful. Word was sent to Babuji. He would turn up at the new address, set up an office and carry on with his work.

Amma could never be associated with stinginess. She would let her mind be known, either through jokes or volume depending on who was receiving it. And if the person did not fall into those two categories, she would babble about them and put her mind to rest. She lived light, very light and in the name of wealth she left three 'athanees' in her suitcase when she left this world.

Similarly, she disliked idleness as well as any work not completed in time. She often remarked “Bhaiyas have cleaned their teeth and are waiting for something to eat, your breakfast is not ready yet, and these people don’t understand that delay in eating in the morning causes *kharayee*.” I have yet to understand the full meaning of the word *kharayee*, but I have gathered this much: it was her belief that if you didn’t eat something in the morning after brushing your teeth it was not good for your health. By Amma’s standard, Choti Bhabhi was slow in her work which she found difficult to tolerate. “I would have entertained a wedding party in this time!” she would say. This was Amma; everyone listened to her views. Life went along on its rails in one piece, carrying with it ups and downs, sour and sweet.

When it came to drinking tea, Bari Bhabhi was her best companion. A bad cup of tea, or tea not to her liking, upset her: it spoilt the taste. She was fond of the tea Bari Bhabhi made. It was interesting to see whenever she came home after having tea at someone’s house that after a while she would remark “Dulhin, did you like the tea over there?” Bhabhi would get the hint. “I’ll make some fresh tea for us Amma” she would say. Tea would be prepared and the two of them would enjoy a glass each. Although Amma would take only a few sips.

Amma hated ‘*purdah*,’ or the veil. She was ahead of her time. Babuji’s uncle lived with us but she never kept her veil in front of him. Her daughters-in-law followed her lead and never kept their veils. Whenever Amma visited someone’s house to bless the bride, sitting in the crowd she would shout, “Lift her veil up! She must be suffocating in there!” The host would either keep quiet or ignore her; after all there was the question of social custom and status quo. People would talk if the bride did not keep the veil. On many occasions Amma would come away from the ceremony and sometimes Bhabhi would sense her unease, “Let’s go Amma”, she would say and bring her back home. It came to her knowledge that I was going to get married in Chapra, Bihar; she also knew that Bihar had a very heavy veil custom. Whenever Amma saw me locked in my room for long, she would come out saying “She’s getting into the habit of living in a box.” Amma did not shy away from letting her

wishes be known, even to her daughter. If only she had known that I did not come out of my room in Chapra for a month and a quarter, her objections would have certainly reached my in-laws.

Amma placed immense value on love and affection. I was in class six and I had my final sewing exam. I had to stitch a frock and made a wrong cut on the material, then started to cry. Amma heard me cry, got up with difficulty from her bed, even though she was slightly more unwell than usual. She enquired with affection as to what the matter was. When she came to know that I had my sewing exam the next day and the cutting had gone wrong, she picked up the scissors and mended it all. "Why did you cry for such a small matter?" she said, and then went back to her room. I then knew what a mother was. Another incident that I remember vividly as a remarkable example of her expression of love: Once we were travelling in a horse drawn carriage, I sat next to her but on her sari. As she got up to straighten her sari the coachman drove the carriage, and she fell off the coach. She got hurt and was picked up and brought into the house. I burdened myself with the guilt and would not go in front of her. When she felt slight relief from her pain and realized that I was not to be seen, she summoned me and caressed me. I melted in her love. What my heart felt that day was no less than the gift of life itself. At times, Amma would get upset with both of my sisters in law (Bhabhis), but there was no shortage of love for them. No one could call Bari Bhabhi fat or plump, even though she had put on weight. In Amma's eyes she was proportionate and beautiful. Choti Bhabhi would visit her parents every year. It felt as if a daughter was leaving home, and she would say, "Come back soon".

Amma never raised her hand on any of her children. I was the only one who got smacked by her. It so happened that she asked the 'naun' (wife of a barber) to oil my hair as it was drying up. I refused, pushed my hands and ran away. I was called back and Amma tried to do my hair, I still kept pushing her so she slapped me lightly. I was not used to her punishment; hence, one slap was enough. To add to Amma's high standard of values, Babuji was also non-violent by nature. He tolerated many misses by his servants but would not stand any slips in the hospitality of his guests; this would anger him.

On one such occasion he said to one of his servants "I'll have you beaten up!" When Amma heard this she laughed, "You can't beat him up yourself, so you are talking of getting him beaten up".

Once, a very stressful incident occurred. Dada was in Delhi at that time. Amma came out of the house and decided to go for a walk. It was raining heavily. Streets became water logged. It's difficult to imagine how this skinny woman must have navigated her way through the rain. Anyone could've thought that she would have fallen or gotten washed away. There was panic when she was found missing and everyone went out looking for her, Dada became breathless. Amma was finally found after one hour sitting in a shop. The shopkeeper, in Delhi, had given her shelter from the rain. She was brought home and everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

Days went by and our home was filled with Amma's grandchildren — grandsons, granddaughters. This body gets worn away, no matter how much you nurture it. Dada always wanted to stay with Amma so he did not leave Allahabad. He refused promotions, wealth, foreign appointments, all of these. He did go to Delhi and Kirki but he took Amma with him. Then a situation arose when Dada was offered a professorship at Jodhpur University and he went, leaving Amma with Bhabhi.

Finally, that dreaded day arrived from which Dada had been sheltered. Amma called Bari Bhabhi in the morning, whispered something and then slept and slept forever. Bhaiya (Gopalji) had just arrived in the morning from Lucknow. He came to her, saw her, she was peaceful. Nothing could be done without Dada. Dada was informed but he could not come as there were no flights available. Amma lay on ice slabs for 36 hours waiting for her son to say goodbye. I reached home. Dada came and poured his heart out. It unnerves me whenever I think of it. Dada got deprived of the very moment in his life that he had made his only focus. Amma's dead body was taken in a procession. People spoke highly of Dada no less than they talked of the departed soul. Govindjee was in the States.

There is no doubt that God is kind and bestows strength to face the harshest of pains. Nevertheless, I feel on such occasions for ones' minds and hearts, He turns into anarchist strength. He does

anything that He wants.

The next day Dada asked his priest's advice about the 'shraadh' ceremony. "Babuji's shraadh was performed by the Arya Samaj method; Punditji, what do you think about Amma's shraadh? I feel a real service can only be done when one is alive; you can do anything after death." Punditji put forward his own viewpoint: "Ammaji was Sanaatani. Her shraadh must be performed by those principles." Dada agreed. Bhaiya had some work pending in his company so he was allowed to leave. Govindjee wanted to come but he was telephoned to be consoled, "You will not be able to see Amma now, why do you want to come?" I was allowed to leave to see my children. My daughter was unwell.

It is a common belief that shraadh, a peace offering, or any such work that is done with devotion increases the quality of that work. I have attended many shraadh ceremonies but I am convinced that all those who attended Amma's ceremony would still have the pious beautiful and collective chants of the priests echoing in their ears till today. Fragrant incense and the incantation of mantras created such a solemn atmosphere that it engulfed everyone.

Everything is over now. Life has become normal again. One person has left forever.

Amma

Gopalji*

Below, I present some stories I had heard and my personal recollections of my dear mother.

I. Mother's Marriage

My mother whom we called Amma was, according to my early impressions, a very good looking woman — sharp features, very fair complexion, and slim. She was not literate according to the present day standards; she could sign her name (Savitri Devi) in Hindi, and knew a lot of things. She used to tell us stories about her marriage. I think she said she was 13 years old at the time of her marriage. She took pride in relating that our grand uncle (from our father's side) Munshi Saraswati Prasad went a begging for her hand for my father. Further, when 'Baratis' (members of the marriage party) were being fed, some one asked for 'ghee' in their 'dal', a canister-full of ghee was poured in his bowl such that it overflowed on the ground. Such ego-centric society existed! My Nana (mother's father) was a wealthy contractor in Banaras explaining, perhaps, such action from their side.

II. Story of my not Drinking Milk

As a small boy, I loved to sleep by my mother's side keeping head on her arm. She was very affectionate and would feed me herself. However, there was a special servant named Phunni whose job was to make me drink milk. I used to tease him by asking him to hold me,

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my milk glass and the lantern ('laltain') with one hand, a condition for drinking milk. When he failed to cajole me, he threatened that he will take me into the 'Dark Lane' (*Kali Gali*) full of 'Kaitha' trees, where hundreds of owls were sitting to jump on me, if I did not drink milk. I did drink some milk, but not enough. I believe that this lack of enough milk may have resulted in weakness of my bones. My bones always broke easily in my early life, and I do have problems with my bones even now. I tell this story so that the importance of milk for strong bones is recognized by all.

III. A Stillborn Baby

Amma was frail. I vividly remember that she gave birth to a 'still' baby at 47 Bai-Ka-Bagh. This baby was brought out of my mother's room when the baby was already dead; her face is etched deep in my memory. [All of us were born in the house, not in the hospital.]

IV. The 'Purdah' System

Women in the family rarely had fresh air because of the 'purdah' (veil) they wore. This was clearly from the days when Muslim Kings ruled India. When my grand aunt went to the Ganges (Gangaji) for some Puja, her 'Palki' was fully covered from all sides. At the entry point of the bathing 'ghat,' there would be half-a-dozen maids holding cloth, making a corridor for the grand aunt to walk up to the river. Our aunts, who visited us, at our homes, always came covered with 'chaddar'; it was imperative for the hostess to remove this 'chaddar'; otherwise, it was considered a bad omen! *Chador* is a Farsi (Persian) word. Even today, using Chador is mandatory in many Muslim countries... I remember it well from my visit to Tehran in Persia (Iran). [Recalling my crying when I could not go to visit Ramji Bhaiya in Delhi (see my text on 'Babuji'), I never thought then that I will be nearly a globe trotter — having by now visited many countries in the World.]

V. Mother's Illness

Because of *unhealthy* living conditions, Amma may have suffered from Tuberculosis (TB). My recollection is that TB was assumed by the doctor after a chest X-ray that showed a small patch in the lungs. One Dr. G. Ghosh, who practiced in the then posh area of Civil Lines, started treating her. Although he was very young, he had a good reputation and was considered to be highly knowledgeable. TB was also known as 'Consumption': it was said that it needed strong willpower to overcome this dreaded disease. There was no medicine then to cure TB except to fight it by improving health—good food and environment. We have no evidence that Amma indeed had an active TB since patches can be scars from the body fighting TB bacteria; also it is a highly contagious disease and none of us around her were ever diagnosed of TB. Father tried to arrange all that was possible. Amma sustained herself for many years. It is not clear if she did not have some other disease, such as Ulcer. Although, in the end, many of her organs were affected, she survived for 23 years beyond father's passing away. It is remarkable how she cared for all of us in spite of her illness.

Amma really could not give us the kind of attention normally one gets from a mother. We were mostly looked after by a fleet of hired people for food, clothing, education and entertainment. Amma was taken care of by visiting doctors, servants and lot of medicines. Our elder brother 'Dada' was the one who knew how to handle her health from day one! He was dedicated to her all his life. He would never think of leaving Allahabad—he was simply worried about her well being. As a bad luck, he took a professional assignment at the University of Jodhpur (in Rajasthan). It is as if during this period, she '*switched off*' so to say. Dada was miserable because he could not be by her bedside when she left us and this World.

My interactions with Amma were not that much (as often I was away from home). In a sense, I felt some strange 'grudge' after my marriage as seemingly Amma liked my wife more than me. I was always Dad's boy (he had left us in 1943) than my mother's. In spite of that, her concerns about my food likings were expressed clearly

to my wife. Love and affection for one's own child could never get shrouded under any circumstances: umbilical bonds of mother could never be broken. My traveling had started when she was almost bed ridden. The only way I knew to express my love and affection for her was to bring some 'small presents' which she could appreciate and use — maybe they are lying somewhere in Allahabad, or maybe they all are lost.

My only prayer and wish is wherever her soul be, it should be in a healthy body surrounded by loving human beings. If I could not provide the kind of succor to her compared to Dada, I still have the satisfaction to have been present by her side when she breathed her last — that too was a chance that I was visiting Allahabad. I was lucky to be with her.

Adieu to Amma

*Bimla**

(translated by Gopalji from Hindi)

I am the eldest daughter-in-law of Savitri Devi and Vishveshwar Prasad, and wife of the late Professor Krishnaji. In the following paragraphs, I present a short tribute to Amma and some of my recollections.

My firm belief in *Destiny* has propelled me through my roller-coaster childhood and adolescent life till I got into the hold of the family of Amma. Otherwise, I think, I would have been emotionally broken into pieces. I learnt from her how to face extreme turbulence in life and sickness.

I was born in a wealthy house of my grandfather Rai Bahadur Munshi Ram Garib Lal, Chairman of the Kayastha Bank. He was a lawyer by profession, but had turned into a banker of fame in the city of Gorakhpur, U.P. He was a self-made person. He had a philanthropic nature, and he lost everything that he had acquired in his lifetime. My grandparents and parents passed away during my childhood. I being a tomboy was sent away to my Nani's (mother's mother) village, and then to my Mausi's (mother's sister) place, and thereafter to my Chacha (father's younger brother) and Chachi (aunt) and ultimately to my Bua's (father's sister) house. Phupha (Bua's husband), being a District Judge, could look after us (myself, my elder sister Savitri and brother Gopal Bhaiya) and arrange our marriages. That was the first phase of my destiny.

It was the early part of 1946 when I was nearing nineteen, Phupha found my new home. I was taken in his car with Bua to pick up Amma and Gopal Babu (my future husband's younger brother) from

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their residence at 3 Kanpur Road (now called Purushottam Das (or P.D.) Tandon Road), Allahabad, and Babu's Chachi, from her Park Road (now Panna Lal Road) residence, to meet Guru Maharaj at Baré Mahabirji temple at Sangam, Allahabad. That was the way my marriage was settled with Professor Krishnaji. We both had probably a glimpse of each other when he was standing in the verandah at his residence on Kanpur Road.

A friend of Dada was leaving for Australia; he offered his house in Madhokunj complex from where my marriage was performed. It was a better house with a lawn in front and a Kitchen garden on one side of the house; there were twin rows of nice houses.

I was very happy to become a part of the family where Amma was the *matriarch* and my husband Prof. Krishnaji whom his siblings called Dada was the center (the hub) of the family. Amma was a very affectionate, loving and a caring person. She would go in the kitchen and cook dishes to the special liking of each individual. She was adept in making Puja offerings like 'panjiri,' 'laddus,' 'halwa'. Her 'moong dal halwa' and 'namkeen' savouries were special. For Krishna *Janma Ashtami*, the dry fruit 'taklies' were unsurpassed.

Being a tomboy of my house, I had not done serious regular cooking at my parent's place. So Amma used to cover me. She would let me prepare the dough and spread it to form a chapatti, but she would cook it on 'tawa' (pan) and fire, because I used to burn it black. I slowly got in the groove of house keeping and taking care of younger members of the family who were studying and on their way up. It was a great experience to be taking care of Babu (Gopalji) Bibiji (Bitti) and Govind Babu (Govindjee) . They reciprocated and I loved it.

Amma was a frugal eater. Morning tea was taken with puffed rice floating in the tea cup; the lunch was 'roti' (chapati) crushed in 'dal' and vegetables like potatoes and 'lauki' (gourd). In the evenings, she was fond of eating 'halwa' and 'pakora' either of 'besan' (chickpea flour) or 'atta' (wheat flour). She herself prepared these for all of us. It was a happy family.

A year after our marriage, Meenu (formally Ira) arrived and the entire house was agog with joy as a lovely little bundle of joy and

goodness had come in the house. Amma was the happiest to see a grand daughter. She said 'Lakshmi,' the goddess of wealth, has joined us. Meenu was born in Kamla Nehru Hospital of Allahabad, which was built in the memory of the Late wife of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India. Babu (Gopalji) used to cycle all the way from the Kanpur Road to the Hospital to bring food, milk and balloons for me and Meenu. My happiness was fully shared by all.

After nearly two years, our first son Deepak was born to 'complete' the family. He was a toughy as he arrived at home and did not give me time to reach the hospital. In spite of her frail health, Amma was moving all over the house to clean up and take care of the newborn. Babu by now had started in a job and the added income was useful. He was happy to bring clothes and toys for the children.

Our neighbor was an advocate (Babu Hari Shankar). His wife (we called her Bhabhi) was childless; she loved my children like her own. Deepak was quite small then and would walk in her house noiselessly. He was called by the couple Bhakku. They used to miss him if he did not visit them. Babu fell sick in this house. He was laid up with a liver problem and constant low-grade fever. As Amma was suspected to have Tuberculosis, we got worried and several doctors came to check him; he had chest X-rays and Blood tests done. Nothing was diagnosed and all went well.

This is the period when Bibiji and Govind Babu were in senior classes and had hordes of friends. They would come in groups to our house. I was to prepare snacks for them. Amma came forward to cook her favorite 'halwa'. 'Namkeen chaat' was special for the girls who used to shout when drinking hot tea after taking spicy 'papis'. Amma loved the perky gang who made her life lively. Govind Babu's friends were unique as his selected few were interested in bringing out a magazine. One was a writer, another an artist and a dramatist, one a publisher and an editor. They remained loyal to each other till late in life. Amma used to dote on them as they were friends of the youngest and her brightest son.

Dada had become a senior faculty member in the University. He was entitled for the university accommodation. He was allotted a

large house, at 14 B Bank Road. We were all happy to move in this spacious living quarter.

Soon after, in 1952, Ranjan, my second son, was born. As Meenu, Deepak and Ranjan were growing up, Amma became very possessive of them. She would never let them stay out late during the evenings. During winters, the moment they came inside the house, she would rush with their sweaters and push them through their heads. In spite of sweating bodies after play, sweaters were a must. Deepak was somehow her favorite who used to sleep in the same bed with her.

Amma regularly used to give Dada some money on every festival day. He, being the eldest son, she gave this money as what she called *Tyohari*. The servants, living in the out house, became clever in performing extra services like oiling her hair and massaging her hands & feet as she would give extra money to them for this.

Amma would get restive (or shall I say restless) right from 4 P.M. onwards for her evening tea. She used to call me & say "Dulhin, Chai banavo" (My daughter-in-law, please prepare tea). In spite of getting weak, this is how she kept herself busy as time passed.

We lived for more than three decades in this house. Most of the family marriages took place at 14 B Bank Road. Slowly the nest or 'ghonsala' became empty when Bibiji was married away and Govind Babu left for America. My youngest daughter Chitra was born in Aug 1960, when Babu was also in America for studies. In spite of this, Bank Road house was always full with relatives and extended family members. This is the house where Amma breathed her last. Amma always wanted Dada to be near her. At night, she would call him to give her sleeping pills. On occasions, when we were out of the house to visit friends in the evening, a boy servant would come running telling us that Amma is not well. Dada would cancel the social visit to look after her. That was the kind of bonding mother and son had. Everybody was very sad when Amma left us in early 1966, and that too when Dada was not around her.

Amma's life was full of turmoil and uneasy lingering sickness. We regularly consulted doctors for her and provided her the best possible medicines. We all tried our best to keep her happy and in good humor with all we had in us.

I am now old with failing memory, so I bid adieu to Amma's great memories, and also pray for the great souls of my son Ranjan whom we lost in a tragic car accident and my dear husband, the Late Professor Krishnaji (Dada) who looked after the entire family, after the sad and sudden early demise of his father (Babuji) in 1943 when they lived in George Town.

Recollections of my days in Amma's home at Allahabad

*Nirmala**

I am the second eldest daughter-in-law of Savitri Devi and Vishveshwar Prasad. I, Nirmala, an eighteen year old girl from a far off place had a crush on a young man (Gopalji) living in a city named Allahabad. It might seem strange as I had never seen him nor communicated with him in any manner, but had only heard about him through common relations. This one sided love affair propelled me to take the decision to marry him long before my father took the trip to Allahabad to initiate the subject and place before his family the marriage proposal. It was June 28, 1953, when the wedding was performed in our house built years ago in Puraniserai, Nathnagar, Bhagalpur, Bihar.

I was apprehensive how people from Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh, U.P.) — the city dwellers — will respond to the environment where I was born and brought up. But I was delighted to find that they all appreciated everything around and started accepting me and loving me; they showered affection on me (a young bride), who had come to a new home. On my arrival at 14 B Bank Road in Allahabad, my mother-in-law Amma (Shrimati Savitri Devi), though frail and weak, was at the forefront of the reception party. I was highly impressed by the large bungalow built in the British style with lawn in front and a big courtyard inside, two verandahs, both in the front and the back, and seven rooms. There was electricity, running water in taps, and a room was assigned to two of us (the newly married couple). Coming from a family where farming was one of the professions, I was interested in gardening. I got the opportunity to try my talent; a gardener ('mali') was available living in one of the four out-houses,

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reserved for servants (they were treated as family members by us all). I was a high school kid then. Everyone in the family took upon themselves to put me in the college to educate me further.

I would say the head of the family Amma was the first to propose the project for me and equally keen was my elder brother-in-law Dada. As he was a teacher and an educationist, his approach towards girl's education was obvious. According to prevailing norms and customs, my husband could never express any opinion about me in front of the elders. Yet he quietly pushed me to undertake the assignment. My sister-in-law Bitti (Bibiji) was equally forceful to get me admitted in a college. I was excited to join a college and willy-nilly I completed my University classes up to the M.A. degree. During this period, our two lovely daughters (Manju and Rita) came in my life; our 3rd daughter Ila was born much later. I will go on record and express my gratitude to Amma and Dada who molded my life and personality. Their continued support, love and affection are all that I cherish to date. Ten years of living in the joint family at 14 B Bank Road with my sister-in-law whom I call Bhabhi is worth remembering and keeping memories alive as a lovable experience. Bhabhi's love and affection has continued with the same vigor in the years that followed.

As both my college and the University were within walking distance, I had no problem reaching my classes in time easily. I could finish my early meal, quickly wrap the Sari and rush to my class. Sometimes, as I heard the gong bell of the department, I could still run and reach in time to get in the class room, prior to the entry of the teacher. I had several girl friends; they were naturally younger to me as I started college life pretty late. They were curious to know about my love life and keen to meet my husband, yet shy to talk to him. They rather sat near Amma for a chat who liked them all. My friends were all praise for Amma; they would congratulate me to have a mother-in-law like her who is so caring and loving for her 'Bahu' (daughter-in-law) like her own daughter.

I also reciprocated in equal terms. I never hesitated in massaging her legs and hands, oiling her hair and limbs. She would say "Jug Jug Jiyo" (May God grant you long life). That brought tears in my

eyes. Something that she appreciated was my sharing with her part of the money I got for my expenses. Amma was happy to give this money to maid servants who ran errands for her. It was a satisfying experience for me.

My usual annual routine was to visit my parents in Bhagalpur during the summer vacations. It was painful for me and Amma to be separated for two months or so. She would call me to say “Chhoti Dulhin, Jaldi Aana” (My young daughter-in-law, come back soon). I would hug, cry and leave.

On return from my parents’ home, whatever I brought from there (such as clothes, Saris, Bed Sheets and food stuff) I used to place them before Amma so that she could distribute to all. It made her feel good, but she asked me to take it to Bari Dulhin (Bhabhi), so I did accordingly and obediently. It is great to recall how well I got adjusted in my new home where the head of the family was Amma; Dada stood in support of us all.

Normally, Amma either sat or was lying down in her cot in the inner verandah, sovereign of all she surveyed from there. Children played around her and in the courtyard in front of her eyes. Servants worked in the kitchen along with us. She had a keen eye on every one. She herself sometimes cut vegetables or cleaned rice and wheat. Once in a while, she would stitch a piece of cloth or make covers for round pillows for babies and other kids in the house. When the men folk came back from work in the evenings, they would sit by her side and chat. That was a scene of love and affection of Amma’s family. Love and Affection percolated down the line to wives and children in a mysterious fashion. No one expressed it in front of the others as is normal these days. Quiet gifts and stealthy slant looks were seen.

As days passed by, Amma became weaker in strength and memory. She could not sleep without the sleeping pills, their number increasing slowly. She called Dada for the pills during nights; he was the one who delivered pills till 2 in the morning; then, she slept through the forenoon in the day. Hats off to Dada for such good care of Amma! This was the period (1959) when my husband had left for studies in USA.

During my husband's absence, everyone in the family took care of me and my little daughters. The leader, of course, was Amma. She was the one who persuaded me for my post graduation admission and continuance of my studies. The day I came back after convocation with my photograph in black gown and cap, she kissed me when I touched her feet, in spite of her frail health conditions. Tears rolled down on both sides. My mother-in-law, no my Mother Amma, is adorable and memorable. I love her all the way.

My life during the long absence of my hubby, while he was away to the U.S.A for his studies (M.B.A. at Minnesota), was an experience by itself. I used to sleep with my two little daughters on both sides on my arms. Their angelic faces gave me all the strength that I needed. Amma and Bhabhi were the other two persons besides Dada who did their best to keep me happy — each one playing their respective roles i.e., Amma gave emotional support, Bhabhi was a great baby sitter and Dada was the guardian in chief. I never felt lonely with the chirping of the wonderful kids (Meenu; Deepak; and Ranjan) of Bhabhi. The youngest daughter of Bhabhi (Chitra) too joined us from the heavens, as the most beautiful baby of the house. We were all full of energy and life.

My sleep was famous as I could doze off any time anywhere. This is a boon from God to me and that has sustained me all these years. Amma never complained about my sleeping habits because she knew that my sleep provides me all the energy for my work. Dada used to say let the Engine store all the fire as I was called Engine of the train of the servants of the house. Whenever I came back from the college, snacks were ready for me to eat; after that, I would find a cot in the courtyard in the winter sun and go to sleep. Amma would come slowly and cover me with a blanket and go back telling all around “Dulhin soat hain” (the bride is sleeping).

Amma was a proud connoisseur of qualities in women. She appreciated openly whatever she liked in me, never said any bad words for others, a quality they say imbibed from my father-in-law (Babuji). She always told “*Kaam Pyaara Chaam Nahin*” (Work is loved, not Skin). I hold her in great regard. Even now I sometimes dream of her asking me about my welfare. One thing she always appreciated was

that I never talked back to any elder in the family, saying “*Dulhin kehu ke kabhi jawab nahin dehin*” (Bride never answers back).

My daughters remained the anchor in my life: I lived for them and my husband. I remained a so-called housewife or Homemaker. I pray for Amma and salute her for all she taught us in her silent ways to be a loving wife and Mother.

All of us in the family are sad that both Amma and Dada are no more with us. We deeply feel the loss of two of our children (Bari Bhabhi's dear son Ranjan; and my dear daughter Manju).

May God bless Govindjee (my younger brother-in-law; who I call ‘*Babu*’); he gave me this opportunity to say a few words for all whom I loved in a family that adopted me and took care of me.

A short visit to Amma's home

*Rajni Govindjee**

Initially, when I was asked to write something for this memoir for Amma and Babuji, I thought what could I possibly write having never lived with the family. But, then I felt that, perhaps, I too could add something to this lovely document since I had spent some time with the family at Allahabad in the summer of 1961, during one of our visits to India.

The home at 14 B Bank Road was full of life. Amma was still alive. Dada and Bhaiya, both Bari Bhabhi and Choti Bhabhi and all the children, everyone was in Allahabad. This was my first visit with the family and the most striking thing was how easily and quickly I felt right at home, which made my visit very enjoyable.

Since my stay at Allahabad was very brief, I did not have the privilege of knowing Amma in the way my two sisters-in-law did, but I must say that she was a very kind, affectionate and simple person. It is unfortunate that she passed away before our next visit to India and our children (Anita and Sanjay) never got to meet their "Dadi."

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Random thoughts

*Govindjee**

I am the youngest son of Savitri Devi and Vishveshwar Prasad. I was born on October 24, 1932. My recollections are simply a collection of small tidbits that seem to peer through my mind; they are random in nature, and, thus disconnected. I consider it better to state them as they are rather than say nothing even though I cannot state them in the order they happened.

It was the winter of 1943 when I heard the sad news of my father's death. At that time, I was about 11 years old. I remember standing near a well in the compound of 34/3 George Town stunned and wondering what had happened. I have a vague recollection of weeping rather softly. This was to be the end of going to Babuji's home office (that was the front room in the rented home). His office was full of Oxford University Press (OUP) books. I vividly remember a hard cover book with shiny paper and interesting stories and poems... perhaps, 'twinkle twinkle little star' was in it. A 'thela' (human-driven long cart, with two men pulling it) came several days later and someone named Mr. Bajpai took all the books away. (Mr. Bajpai was to be the next representative of OUP in UP.) We were not only father-less, but also book-less. I don't have much recollection of my father except that he wore western clothes and used to go for morning walks. I have heard that Amarnath Jha (Vice Chancellor of Allahabad University) was one of his walking companions.

I do remember my father from an earlier home in Madhvapur where he had a stroke. He was prescribed pigeon soup and I have a vague recollection of waiting to eat pigeon meat. Other memories from that time include having two dogs named Poppy and Pumpy. Poppy was rather a hairy white male dog, whereas Pumpy was a

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rather shiny, vaguely light brownish female dog. One day, Poppy had come home very muddy and dirty; perhaps, he had a fight with some other dog (or animal); at another time, Pumpy had eaten fish, the bone had gotten stuck in her mouth. It was a painful experience to watch her suffer.

Although all else is a dull memory, the face of a tutor is still in my mind. Whenever he came to teach, I would not want to study. I would tell him "I am very busy." He would ask: With what? I would repeat 'I am very busy'. The teacher would ask again: With what?" and I would repeat: I am very busy. And, then the teacher would say: "Are you doing the dishes?" "Are you cooking?" Are you mopping the floor? And, I would say, "No, I am just very busy."

I do remember an incident in which I was grounded by my father for several days because I (along with my friend Mahesh Chandra Varma, his brothers and sisters) had shouted jokes at one member of the Chaddha family at our George Town house. Mahesh, his brothers and his sisters, were severely punished by their father (Late Ram Narain, uncle of Rajni). Mahesh, who is no more, was a good friend of mine, and we ran a mock school in the compound of Chaddha Sahib. We played games like 'gulli danda,' '7-stones: gaint tari,' 'kabbadi,' badminton and cricket. After my father's death, this association with Mahesh, and his siblings, was temporarily curtailed as we had moved to our uncle's place on Park Road (now called Panna Lal Road).

I did not go to a real School until 1943! I entered the 4th grade directly. I do have a recollection of my first day in school. After just the first class, I thought the school was over and I started coming home, but I saw no other student coming with me. Thus, I returned back to the school to find all the students with a different teacher. Since I had lost my father, I was given special financial concessions at school. Some of the teachers would give me gifts of pencils, pens, paper and even some books for my education. However, I knew that my oldest brother Dada was taking care of me in all respects.

Most of my recollections revolve around my mother, Amma, my sister Didi, my brother Bhैया and above all my Dada. Here, I will focus on Amma. (Hopefully, I will write about Dada later when we

produce a booklet on his life.) To me, Amma was a gentle soul, forgiving, loving and a caring person. I remember her bringing me, a couple of times, to 'Alopi Mandir,' a temple where the goddess was 'unseen' as she had disappeared there long time ago. There was a small 'jhula' (swing) on top of a stone, where we would put flowers and water, and then we will swing it over the clean marble stone. It was very peaceful there. Its memory has lasted all my life.

I also remember my mother being very considerate of the servants who would always sit around her and chat with her. She was a 'Sanaatan Dharmi' unlike my father who was an 'Arya Samajist'. Basically, Arya Samajists, in contrast to Sanataan Dharmists, do not worship idols, and they focus on the great Hindu Vedas. In addition, most do not follow (or believe in) the caste system; their rituals include '*Havans*,' chanting of prayers and offerings to fire. After my father's death, a 'Havan' ceremony took place, and 'Motichoor ké Laddoo' (sweets), in earthenware dishes, were distributed to all present. I still remember it.

My mother used to have many 'Satya Narayan Katha' (Stories of God of Truth) in the house. Of course, we enjoyed the "Prasads" (offerings): 'Halwa,' 'panjiri' and 'charnamrit' after the ceremony. On the lighter side, I remember telling Amma about vitamins, and even cooked "skin peels" of 'Lauki' (a kind of squash, for a good source of vitamins). I had obtained this information from a book, in Hindi, on nutrition; I still remember that it had unusually thick pages.

Amma was always sick, it seems. There was a pharmacist Misraji in Colonelganj/old Katra area of town. We always were getting medicines from him without payment. Since my brother had a small fixed salary, the payment was always delayed.

I also know that Amma had a soft corner for Rajni, my future wife. Once when Rajni came to our home, Amma came and stroked her hair lovingly and said 'she is nice'. This, of course, pleased me a lot. A major impression of mine had to do with my mother's total forgiveness even when a great blunder was committed. I was scared, but Amma's forgiveness made me a stronger and a much better person in my life. When I returned from the University of Illinois at

Urbana, Illinois, USA (after my PhD) in 1961, it seemed that Amma would not believe that it was “Govindjee” who was before her. She seemed not to recognize me. Even after several attempts on my part, she said ‘You are not Govindjee’. Perhaps, it was an extreme shock to her because she had given up on me returning home ever.

Amma cared for me a lot, I being the youngest in the family. I remember an interesting personal story. I had a mole (‘masa’) on my right cheek when I was a boy. Amma said lovingly to me, ‘I will fix this as no girl will marry you with this mole on your face.’ I said, ‘Ok, go ahead.’ She immediately made a paste of some white powder, and put it on the mole; and then after a couple of hours, she carefully removed the paste, and the mole was almost gone. It did take several days for the wound to dry up, but soon thereafter I had only a minor scar where the mole was. And, I have been married to Rajni for almost 50 years!

I wept for hours when I learned back in USA that she had passed away — it was a Western Union cablegram that had informed me of this sad news. My Amma had gone and I had no choice but to live without her being there to support me and love me. She was peaceful, frail, slim and a slight person wearing a whitish ‘dhoti’ with simple border and often covering a part of her grey hair with her dhoti. It seemed that any wind would blow her off in a jiffy. This impression is so engrained in me that if I close my eyes, I see her right away. It gives me a feeling of emptiness whenever I think of her as she is not there to protect me from this ‘cold’ world.

Finally, an event about me would never leave my mind—this is about lying on a cot in the verandah of a rented home at 3 Kanpur Road. The cot was next to a jute curtain that was fixed to a wooden frame; it was whitewashed and thus made opaque. It was attached to an opening that faced the outside of the house. I was recovering from a severe attack of malaria. Amma would often sit next to me and fan me. I felt good about it; I believe it helped my recovery. It gives me great comfort to remember this event and my dear mother. I still miss her.

Allahabad

A snippet of Allahabad follows for those in the family who have never lived there.

A) Websites

[1] Website of Allahabad: <http://allahabad.nic.in/>

[2] History of Allahabad: <http://allahabad.nic.in/entrypage.htm>

[3] Allahabad from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allahabad>

[4] Allahabad University Web Site: <http://www.allduniv.edu/>

B) About Allahabad

Allahabad, a historical city of India, is in the state of Uttar Pradesh (i.e., Northern Province); it is situated at the Sangam (i.e., confluence; referred to as Triveni) of two living rivers- Ganga (Ganges) and Yamuna (also called Jamuna) and an invisible Saraswati (that has now dried up). The ancient name of Allahabad was Prayag. The city is a home to people of several religions: Hinduism, Islam, Jainism and Christianity.

Allahabad has a great history:

- A great Hindu philosopher Sage Bharadwaj lived in Prayag ~ 5000 BCE; it is said that he had ~10, 000 disciples.
- In the 3rd century BCE, an Ashoka pillar was installed in Prayag.

- In 1575, Emperor Akbar named the city “Allahabad.” In 1858, it was called Allahabad by the British; in 1868, it became the seat of Justice when the High Court was built; in 1871, Sir William Emerson erected the majestic All Saints Cathedral; and in 1887, the 4th oldest University was built here, the University that most of us in our family attended.
- It is famous for our War of independence from the British, starting already with the 1857 freedom movement. Anand Bhanu, the home of the Nehrus, was later to be the center of the freedom movement. It was in Allahabad that Mahatma Gandhi proposed his non-violent resistance (Satyagraha) against the British.
- The following Prime Ministers of India have been associated with Allahabad: Jawahar Lal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, V.P.Singh, and Chandreshekhar.
- It has been a seat of learning, wisdom and literature; it was the home of Harivansh Rai Bachchan (his son is: Amitabh Bachchan), Raghupati Sahai Firaq Gorakhpuri, Mahadevi Verma, Sumitranandan Pant, Maithali Sharan Gupta, Suryakant Tripathi Nirala; and currently Arvind Krishna Mehrotra (author of “Last Bungalow”), among many others.
- Among the ex-alumni of Allahabad University are: Madan Mohan Malviya; Govind Ballabh Pant; Acharya Narendra Deb; Shankar Dayal Sharma (Former President of India); Ranganath Mishra (Former Chief Justice of India); K.N. Singh (Former Chief Justice of India); Gopal Swarup Pathak (Former Vice President of India); Gulzari Lal Nanda (Former Prime Minister of India); Chadrashekhhar (Former Prime Minister of India); Harivansh Rai Bachchan, Hindi Poet, already mentioned); Daulat Singh Kothari (Physicist); Kundan Singh Singwi (Physicist); Harish Chandra (Mathematician); Govind Swarup (Physicist); H.N. Bahuguna (Former Deputy Prime Minister of India); and Murali Manohar Joshi (Former Union Minister, Human Resource & Development).

C) On 29 June, 1998, Amaresh Misra wrote about “The Town India Forgot” (Outlookindia.com):

“Allahabad today is a stagnating city which refuses to decay. The whitewash on the Romanesque arches and Greek columns of the bungalows is wearing off. The famed broad roads, structured on a grid-like pattern even in the old city area (once the envy of north India), stretch like abandoned dance floors of the great hotels of yore—still grand but less proud, jaded but not faded. This was a city with an ice-cream parlour, the Guzders, before which Bombay joints looked like stalls at a village fair. Snobbery came natural to aficionados of El Chico’s movie-like restaurant decor. There was a class cabaret, the Gaylords, in the civil lines in the ‘60s when Delhi hid its nightlife behind sleazy doors. Delhi was Punjabi, crude and downtown. Allahabad was intellectual, ‘up market’ and aristocratic; the girls were stoic, alluring, upper class and exclusive — a living amalgam of Brahmavarta elitism, modernity and westernism. During the day black coats of High Court barons flashed with condescending aura in the pillared halls of their great Georgian villa. In the evening, the men in black quoted Shakespeare and Voltaire while smoking foreign cigars. They had a way of drinking beer and a way of watching the *mujra* at exclusive haunts near the Ganga. Both the cabaret and the *mujra*, the west and the east, rubbed shoulders as non-colonial cousins. Old timers still remember Janki Bai ‘*chappan churi*’ (she had 56 knife wounds on her body, courtesy of a sour lover) singing, full blast on a public crossing, about the *jalwa* (honour and sheen) of the beauty walking with ‘*das gunda aage*’ and ‘*das gunda peeche*!’”

Glossary of Selected Terms Used

Alopi Mandir: Temple of a Hindu Goddess, who disappeared at a slope near the Ganges River, so that she may not be seen by a chaser. Devotees built a temple at the same place. Alopi means to disappear. In the temple there is a high platform and a square swing in the middle.

Arya Samaj: Reformist school of thought founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati. The school adopted Vedic methods of worship; there is no idol worship.

Atthanni: Half a rupee; equivalent to 8 annas (in old days); now 50 paises.

Baba: Grandfather from father's side.

Babuji: One of the addresses for father.

Bandh Ke Hanuman: A temple on the slope of a dam on the river Ganges near Akbar Fort in Allahabad. It is said that while the digging work was going for a dam (Bandh) a big heavy red statue of Hanuman was found in the lying position. The Indian Government tried to get the statue out of the Earth and attempted to build a temple with Hanuman in the standing position but they couldn't; rather, the statue went deeper in the Earth, so the temple was built there only where the idol was lying and since then devotees assemble there to worship.

Bhabhi: Wife of an older brother.

Bari Bhabhi: older Bhabhi

Choti Bhabhi: younger Bhabhi

Bhaiya: (1.) Address for elder brother; (2.) Address for the second person in conversation; (3.) Also used for the eldest son.

Dada: (1) Address for elder bother; (2) Address for grandfather in some families.

Dadi: Grandmother from mother's side.

Daranagar: A locality in Varanasi (was known also as Banaras, or Benaras), a famous town in U.P. India.

Didi: Address for elder sister.

Ganesh Chaturthi: Lord Ganesh is a Hindu God, who is remover of impediments and is benevolent. In the months of January and July (sometimes in August), on the fourth day of bright half of the Indian lunar month, mothers observe a fast and pray to Ganesha for the well being of their children.

Hanuman: An aspect of Hindu God, depicted in the form of an ape or a monkey, who helped Lord Rama to rescue his kidnapped wife Sita and who killed the kidnapper Ravan, King of Sri Lanka.

Hanuman Chaleesa: A long poem, in praise of Hanuman, written by a great Hindu Poet and a devotee of Rama, Sant Tulsidas.

Lalahi Chat: It is just the same as *Ganesh chaturthi*. A pond is made in the courtyard of homes and mothers sit around it and pray for their children and observe a fast on that day.

Mannat: Vow of offerings to God after the fulfillment of one's wishes.

Marg: Road.

Munshi: A title used in old days for senior Kayastha men.

Namaskar (or *Namesté*): Greetings, often with folded hands.

Nana (or *Nanaji*): Grandfather from mother's side.

Nani: Grandmother from mother's side.

Navratri Puja: First nine days of the bright half of the Indian Lunar month of Kwar (sometimes in September and sometimes in October) and Chaitra (mostly in March, sometimes in April) are dedicated to the worship of Goddess Durga.

Sangam: Confluence of rivers. The reference is to the confluence of three rivers Ganga (Ganges), Jamuna (Yamuna) and Saraswati, in Allahabad.

Sanatan Dharma: Sanatan means, "that which is eternal"; dharma means "virtue, righteousness, moral order, way of life." –belief in God in many forms and the rituals of worship.

Satyanarayan Katha: In Hinduism, values of life, do's and don'ts are expressed through symbolic stories. This Katha (story) establishes the importance of truthfulness (satya). Satyanarayan is God of truthfulness.

Shradh: Hindu last rites performed after the death of a person.

Shravan (or *Shrawan*) *Kumar*: Shravan Kumar was the only son of his blind parents, whom he carried on his shoulders with the help of a wooden stick and two baskets, wherever they wanted to go. He devoted his life to them.

Shri (or *Sri*): Equivalent of Mr.

Shrimati: Equivalent of Mrs.

Teliarganj: Name of a locality in Allahabad.

Amma (in Hindi)

Malati Sahay

अम्मा

हर व्यक्ति की, हर परिवार की एक गाथा होती है, जिसका सब जोड़ मनुष्य सभ्यता की एक कहानी कहता है। मेरे परिवार की भी अपनी गाथा है।

हमारी अम्मा सावित्री देवी का जन्म बनारस में 1899 (शायद) में हुआ था। पिता की दुलारी, सौतेली माँ की दुलारी और एकमात्र भाई की दुलारी 13 वर्ष की अवस्था में 10 वर्ष बड़े विशेशवर प्रसाद से ब्याही गई। ससुराल दारानगर में। ससुर श्री गंगाप्रसाद सब-जज थे।

उनके जन्म की कहानी रौंगटे खड़े करने वाली थी। समय के पहले प्रसव के कारण ऐसी स्थिति थी कि बच्चा दिखाई नहीं पड़ रहा था। भाम्य बलवान होता है। वहाँ खड़ी स्त्रियों में से एक स्त्री ने आँख खोलने वाली एक बच्ची को देखा। इधर उसकी सफाई हुई उधर जन्म देने वाली का देहान्त हो गया।

अम्मा की कम उम्र और भरपूर लाड प्यार उनसे ससुराल के तौर तरीके के साथ समझौता नहीं करवा सका। पर्दे में कमरे के बाहर निकलना उन्हें मंजूर नहीं था। इसलिए कम ही निकलना चाहती थी। पर्दे में कमरे के बाहर निकलना उन्हें मंजूर नहीं था। इसलिए कम ही निकलना चाहती थी। सूरज निकलने के पहले प्रातः क्रिया के लिए जाना है तो जाओ नहीं तो दो जार दाईयाँ दो चार चादर के घेरे में ले जाती। उनके लिए रोज रोज सूरज निकलने के पहले उठना आसन काम नहीं था। नतीजा पेट की बीमारी का शिकार बनीं। दालमोट जैसी चीजें घूमघूम कर खाने की आदत भाई जानते थे। अपने छाते की तीली में अँटक कर उनकी पसन्द ले आते। उन्हीं चीजों से पेट ज्यादा भरा जाता। पेट की शिकायत धीरे धीरे बढ़ती गई। बाद में पता चला कि पेट में अलसर हो गया है।

अम्मा की जिन्दगी सौभाग्य और दुर्भाग्य में साफ बँटी थी। उनके सौभाग्य थे इन्सानियत की प्रतिमूर्ति उनके पति (बाबूजी) और उनके बड़े पुत्र (कृष्णा जी), जिन्हें हम दादा कहते थे। और उनका दुर्भाग्य था उनका अस्वस्थ शरीर। उन्हें सदैव बीमार रहते देखकर बाबू जी से दूसरा विवाह करने को कहा गया। बाबू जी बिना बोले मुस्कुरा कर काम चला लेते थे। जहाँ रहते नियमित रूप से डॉक्टर अम्मा को देखने घर पर आते, इलाज करते। कलकत्ते और लखनऊ भी इलाज के लिए ले गए। इतना ही नहीं अम्मा का दाखिला बगल के स्कूल में करवा दिया गया। शुरूआती पढ़ाई के लिए। लेकिन यह कार्यक्रम चल न सका। इस संस्था का नाम था क्रॉस्थयवेट गर्ल्स इन्टरमीडियट कॉलेज। यहाँ a से लेकर 12 क्लास की पढ़ाई होती थी। यहीं मेरी पढ़ाई हुई।

तीन भाईयों (कृष्ण जी, गोपाल जी, गोविन्द जी) की और मेरी परिवर्धन की व्यवस्था नौकरों की सहायता से हुई। अम्मा से रोजाना शरीर की सेवा हमें नहीं मिली किन्तु उनके निदेशन में नौकरों द्वारा देखरेख और भरपूर प्यार में कोई कसर नहीं थी। दो मौके मुझे याद है जब उन्होंने खुद बैठ कर सेवा की। एक बार गोविन्द जी के पैर में काफी फोड़े, फुन्सी हो गए, जो जल्दी ठीक ही नहीं हो रहे थे। वह उन्हें रस्सी की खाट पर खड़ा करके नीम के पत्ते के पानी से नहलाती थी खुद और घर में बनाया हुआ तेल लगाती थी। उसी इलाज से वह ठीक हुए। मैं गोविन्द जी को चिढ़ाने के लिए कहती, 'अब छीट के (printed) कपड़े के लिए बाजार जाने की जरूरत नहीं, गोविन्द जी के छीटदार (printed) पैर से काम चल जाएगा।' अम्मा हँस जरूर देती लेकिन मुझे चिढ़ाने को मना करती।

उनकी दूसरी सेवा न केवल सेवा थी बल्कि उनकी हिम्मत और उनके आत्मविश्वास का जीता जागता प्रमाण है। यदि गलत याद नहीं तो 7, 8 साल की मैं थी। जिस मकान में हमलोग रहते थे वह अच्छा खूबसूरत मकान था। एक आँगन था, बाथरूम में नहाने का बड़ा टब था। गर्मियों में शाम को बाहर खेल कर जब आती तो उस टब में घुस जाती और मन भर नहा कर निकलती। एक दिन दौड़ कर आ रही थी, दूसरी ओर से नौकर गर्म पानी की डेगची लेकर आ रहा था। बस टकरा गई। जलन से छटपटा कर पूरे आँगन में भागने लगी। अम्मा बरामदे में लेटी थी। देखते ही जल्दी से लाकर मुझे अपने पास लिटाया। बगल के मकान में डॉक्टर थे उन्हें बुलाया गया। डॉक्टर ने भूलकर लटके चमड़े को काटने को कहा। अम्मा ने कहा, "डॉक्टर साहब, मैं आपको इसे छने नहीं दूंगी। खाने की दवा आप जो चाहें दे दें। डॉक्टर साहब ने क्या किया मुझे याद नहीं। अम्मा ने फॉरन रसोई से फूल (a type of metal) की थाली मँगाई उसमें चूने का पानी और नारियल का तेल फेंटा। यही लेप मेरे पूरे बाँए अंग पर लगाया। कुछ दिनों बाद नारियल के तेल की जगह castor oil इस्तेमाल किया। एक ही करवट लेटने से बेडसोर भी हो

गया। महीनों लग गए लेकिन अम्मा हारीं नहीं। नतीजा हुआ मुझे दूसरा जीवन तो मिला ही शरीर में कहीं भी सफेद दाग नहीं हुआ। बाबू जी दैरि पर थे। उन्होंने अकेले ही निर्णय लिया था।

एक दिन बाबूजी ने अम्मा से कहा कि अगर मैं नहीं रहूँगा तब भी तुम्हें तकलीफ नहीं होगी। भगवान ने तुम्हें कृष्ण जी जैसा बेटा दिया है। जो उन्होंने कहा वही हुआ। कुछ ही दिनों में वह चले गए। उस समय अम्मा मात्र 44 वर्ष की थीं। 44 वर्ष से 69 वर्ष (मृत्यु) के बीच की अवधि में दादा सिर झुकाए रहे पुत्र के समान और संरक्षण में पति के कर्तव्यों को समेट लिया। ईश्वर ने अम्मा को वास्तव में श्रवण कुमार दे दिया था। अम्मा के लिए उनके पास 'नहीं' शब्द था ही नहीं।

बचपन में मन पर एक अच्छा सा असर पड़ता था जब मैं देखती कि बाबू जी के लिए एक कुर्सी, टेबुल अम्मा के कमरे में लगा दी जाती। वह वहीं खाना खाते।

जैसा कि पहले की तस्वीरों से पता चलता है कि अम्मा सुन्दर थीं और समयानुसार साज श्रृंगार भी करती थीं। मैंने तो उन्हें बीमारी से गलने के क्रम में देखा था। साधारण कद, दुबली-पतली, गोरी, छोटा मुँह, पैनी नाक। खुराक उनकी थी चिडिया की। लेकिन डॉक्टर हैरान थे उनकी (vitality) को देखकर। बिस्तर पर जब रहना पड़ता वह बिस्तर पर रहती अन्यथा किसी न किसी काम में व्यस्त रहतीं। अडोस पडोस के सुख दुःख में तो शरीक होतीं ही, अपने outhouse (हाते) में रहने वालों के सुख दुःख में भी फौरन पहुँच जातीं। कभी दाई के बच्चे के लिए पुराने पैजामा या पैन्ट को किसी से कटवा कर छोटा हॉफपैन्ट, जाँघिया सीतीं। कभी किसी बच्चे के बिस्तर पर तकिया कम देखकर तकिया बनातीं। उनके हिसाब से तीन तकिया तो एक बिस्तर पर होना ही चाहिए था। इतना ही नहीं गोद में लेने लायक बच्चे को लेकर थोड़ा घूम भी लेतीं। नियमित रूप से तो अम्मा को खाना बनाते नहीं देखा। किन्तु जो कुछ वह बनातीं बहुत स्वादिष्ट होता। कहा जाता है कि जिसका दिल पवित्र होता है उसके हाथ की रसोई मीठी होती है। जब वह रसोई में जातीं 3, 4 चीजें बना कर ही निकलतीं। वह थक न जाएँ इसलिए दादा उन्हें हटने के लिए कहते। नहीं मानने पर गोद में उठा कर उनके बिस्तर पर लिटा देते। वह खूब हँसतीं।

उनके पास status consciousness नाम की मानसकिता नहीं थी। वह लोकप्रिय महिला थीं। जितना अपनी बराबरी के मोहल्ले वाले उन्हें मानते उतना ही चतुर्थ वर्ग के कर्मचारी भी। युनिवर्सिटी के चपरासी, घर के नौकर, दाई सभी उनको चारों ओर से घेरकर बैठते, चाय पीते, हाल चाल सुनाते। उनसे उन्हें छोटी मोटी बीमारियों के लिए घरेलू नुस्खे भी मिलते। वे उनके पास बैठकर खुश होते। गिने चुने दिन तो अम्मा स्कूल गईं, वहाँ अजीमन बेगम दाई को अम्मा में वया मिला

कि वह घर भी आने लगी। बूढ़ी हो गई पार्किन्सन की शिकार हो गई किन्तु वह आ जाती। नाशता-पानी और हाथ में कुछ रू. बँधे थे। याद नहीं कब उनका आना बंद हुआ।

बाबू जी आर्य समाज धर्म में विश्वास करते थे और अम्मा सनातन धर्म में। घर में दो बार नवरात्र की पूजा पण्डित जी करते। सत्यनारायण की कथा अक्सर होती। कथा सुनने के लिए बैठते दादा। और कोई अम्मा की सन्तान पकड़ में नहीं आती। वह खुद दो व्रत करतीं - गणेश चतुर्थी और ललही छठ। यह दोनों व्रत सन्तान के लिए करतीं। मङ्गल बच्चों के लिए खूब मानतीं। परीक्षा में पास होना, बीमारी से उठना, नये बच्चे का घर में आना हनुमान जी को प्रसाद चढ़ाने के लिए काफी था। पहले दादा बाँधवाले हनुमान जी को प्रसाद चढ़ाने जाते थे। फिर धीरे धीरे वह पूजा घर में ही होने लगी आखिर मङ्गलों की संख्या भी तो बढ़ती गई। जब अम्मा दादा के सामने अपनी इच्छा प्रगट करतीं, दादा लड्डू माँगा लेते, हनुमान चालीसा का पाठ करके प्रसाद चढ़ाते। अम्मा मेरी खुश हो जातीं। नया बच्चा जब कुछ महीने का हो जाता तो उसे अलोपी के मन्दिर भेजतीं। इस सिलसिले में एक मर्म को छूने वाली घटना याद आ

गई। मैं अपनी बेटी अंजु को लेकर भागलपुर से इलाहाबाद गई। उस समय अंजु 6 महीने की थी। अम्मा ने भाभी से कहा, 'बिही (मेरा घर का नाम) की बिटिया को अलोपी और संगम का दर्शन करा दो।' एक दो दिन बाद भाभी के साथ हमलोग गए। नाव पर बैठ कर संगम पहुँचे, जब से नाव पर बैठे थे तब ही से एक बिल्कुल काला सा आदमी मुझे घूर घूर कर देख रहा था। मुझे अच्छा नहीं लग रहा था इसलिए उसकी ओर से नजर हटा लेती थी। संगम पर पहुँचने पर भाभी ने उससे एक लोटिया दूध माँगा क्योंकि वह चढ़ाने के लिए दूध बेचने वाला था। दूध देने के पहले उसने मुझसे कहा, 'तुम बिही हो?'। मेरे मुँह से निकला, 'जंगली?' वह बोला, 'हाँ' अंजु को देखकर बोला, 'ई तोहार बिटिया है?' मैं बोली, 'हाँ' इतना कहना था कि उसने अंजु के हाथ से अपनी कलसी को छुलाया और पूरा दूध संगम में चढ़ा दिया। मेरा रोआँ सिहर गया। सारे दिन की कमाई का त्याग कर दिया। वह जंगली मेरे घर का नौकर था। जेल से छूटकर आया हुआ। मेरे बाबू जी और अम्मा ने उसे प्यार से अपने घर रक्खा। हमलोगों के लिए वह जान देने को तैयार रहता। जंगली ने उस दिन जो कुछ किया वह और कुछ नहीं अम्मा और बाबू जी की सद्भावना का ही फल था।

चैत में देवी की पूजा के लिए अपने एक संबंधी के घर साड़ी, रू. भेजा जाता। दूसरे दिन घर में खाना नहीं बनता। बासी खाना (पूजा का प्रसाद) ही खाया जाता। इतना ही नहीं बच्चा बहुत रोता तो उसकी नजर उतारने के लिए झाड़फूँक भी होती।

अम्मा मूल्यों में आस्था रखने वाली थी। उन्होंने अपनी दो बहुओं को विवाह के पहले देखा लेकिन यह कहकर देखने को तैयार हुई कि उसी लडकी से शादी करनी पडेगी। बडी भाभी गोरी चिट्ठी, सुन्दर, इकहरे शरीर की थी लेकिन चेहरे पर माता का दाग था। नुक्स की चर्चा का भी सवाल नहीं था। छोटी भाभी सुन्दर, दुबली पतली लेकिन रँग साँवला। दादा ने अम्मा से कहा, 'देख लीजिए, लडकी गोरी नहीं है। बाद में मत कहिएगा कि गोपाल जी गोरे हैं लेकिन लडकी गोरी नहीं है।' अम्मा ने लडकी की ओर से आँख हटा ली जो ट्रेन के कम्पार्टमेंट में बैठी थी और बोली 'ई सब हम नहीं जानते।' बडी भाभी से बोली, 'जाओ दुलहिन, फल खरीद कर उसकी गोदी में डाल आओ।' यह बात हुई इलाहाबाद के junction के platform पर उनके उस बेटे के संबंध में जो उनका सबसे खूबसूरत बेटा था, ठीक अपने बाबू जी की तरह।

अम्मा की पसंदगी, नापसंदगी बहुत स्पष्ट थी। metal detector की तरह उनकी नजर में जो गडबड बात होती उसपर घंटी बज ही जाती थी। चाहे वह उनके ससुर जी (बाबू जी के चाचा) हों, चाहे बडी बहू, विमला जो उनके सिर में तेल लगाए बिना नहीं सोती थी और उनका ख्याल रखती थी, चाहे वह उनकी छोटी बहू निर्मला हो जो हँसमुख और उनके लिए caring भी थी। मैं गलत जगह चुप रह जाती, कभी गलत जगह बोल देती भईया (गोपाल जी) ज्यादातर चुप रह कर, कम बोल कर, बँहटिया कर और कभी कभी कुछ बोल कर काम चला लेते। लेकिन घण्टी सभी सुनते। दादा तक नहीं बचते। गोविन्द जी ने सबसे जोरदार घण्टी तब सुनी जब वह अपने शहर की ही, अपनी जाति की, जानी पहचानी अच्छी सी लडकी (रजनी) से अमेरिका में शादी करने के बाद घर आए। लेकिन थोड़ी देर बाद बात आई गई हो गई।

अगर कोई बचा यह घण्टी सुनने से तो उनके दामाद (मेरे पति) प्रो. राधाकृष्ण सहाय। बचे इस अर्थ में कि उनके लिये घण्टी जरा घुमा फिरा कर बजी, जिससे आवाज जरा मधुर हो गई। एक बार की बात है कि वह मुझे लेने इलाहाबाद आ रहे थे, रास्ते में उनका जूता चोरी हो गया। इत्तफाक की बात कि उन्हें लेने जो स्टेशन आया था उसे

उन्होंने देखा नहीं और वह सीधे मेरे घर के पास बाटा की दूकान से नया जूता पहन कर घर पहुँचे। घर में यह बात पता चली। बात ससुराल की थी। मजाक उडा कर मजा लिया गया।

दादा सबसे बडे थे लेकिन मजाक भी सबसे ज्यादा करके साले बहनोई के रिश्ते को रंगीन रखते थे। सुना अम्मा ने भी लेकिन कुछ बोली नहीं। जब वह मुझे लेकर लौटने लगे तब उन्होंने दादा के पास जाकर कहा, 'भईया (बडे बेटे का नाम नहीं लेने का रिवाज था) एक आदमी साथ कर दो।' दादा ने पूछा, 'क्यों?' 'वह बोली, 'अकेले आ रहे थे तब तो जूता चोरी हो गया, अभी इतना सामान है, बिट्टी भी है

‘ दादा खूब हँसे और बोले, ‘डर तो यह है अम्मा कि कहीं इन्हें ही न कोई चुरा ले जाए’ । अम्मा बोली, ‘मजाक मत करो, हम सच कह रहे हैं’ । दामाद जी भी खूब हँसे और हम दोनों वहाँ से रवाना हो गए ।

अम्मा खूशबूदार तम्बाकू और सुपाडी खाती थीं । जब उनका गुरसा साधारण सा होता और दादा सामने रहते तो कहते, ‘लाओ अम्मा को तम्बाकू दो, तुमलोग क्या करते रहते हो?’ बस इतने ही पर अम्मा हँसने लगतीं और बात खतम हो जाती । लेकिन नालिश जरूर पेश कर देतीं । अगर बात बडी हुई तो उन्हें और गुनहगार को समझाना पडता । आखिर में बात सुलझ ही जाती । जीवन अपने सहज रास्ते पर चलने लगता । इसमें सबसे बडा योगदान होता दादा का ।

उनकी पसंदगी, नापसंदगी का सबसे बडा नमूना था मकान बदलना । कारण तो जरूर ही कुछ न कुछ होता ही था । उनकी पसंदगी, नापसंदगी का घेरा मैं इसलिए बाँध रही हूँ कि अनेक लोग ऐसे होंगे जो अम्मा से सहमत नहीं होंगे । जहाँ तक मुझे याद है 14 मकानों में हमलोग इलाहाबाद शहर में रहे । 14 वॉ मकान विशवविद्यालय का एक बहुत बडा मकान था । यों कहूँ वह एक बंगला था । 7 कमरे, 1 भण्डार, 1 रसोई, 2 छोटे कमरे, दो बडे बरामदे, 1 बडा आँगन, बाहर लॉन, अगल बगल खुली जमीन, 1 गराज, 3 आउट हाउस, पेड पौधे । यहाँ अम्मा का देहान्त हुआ ।

इसके बाद का मकान, अपना मकान मकान खरीदा गया तेलिअरगंज में जिसमें बडी भाभी रहतीं हैं और मेरा भतीजा दीपरंजन अपनी पत्नी मधु और दो बच्चों मोनू और पिकी के साथ रहता है । यहीं दादा स्वर्गवासी हुए ।

अधिकतर ऐसा होता यह है कि जिस मकान में हम रहते वहाँ किसी न किसी कारण से अम्मा का मन उचट जाता । ज्यादातर यह बात तब होती जब बाबूजी दौरे पर होते । अम्मा अपनी सेना (नौकरों) को हुकुम देतीं और वह कहीं न कहीं विजयी होकर लौटते । बाबू जी को सूचना भेज दी जाती । वह नये पते पर आ जाते । अपना एक आफिस बना लेते, अपने काम में लग जाते ।

अम्मा को कंजूसी बिल्कुल पसंद नहीं थी । पात्र डाँट के योग्य हुआ तो डाँट से, मजाक के योग्य हुआ तो मजाक से उन्हें अपना मत बता ही देना था । जो इन दोनों वर्गों में नहीं आता उसके बारे में घर में चर्चा करके अपने मन को हल्का करतीं । खुद इतनी हल्की रहतीं कि धन के नाम पर अपनी सन्दूकची में 3 अठझी ही का बोझा छोड कर संसार छोडा ।

इसी तरह उन्हें धरि धरि और समय पर काम नहीं करना बिल्कुल पसंद नहीं था । अक्सर उन्हें यह कहते सुना जाता ‘भईया लोग कब से मुँह धो चुके हैं अभी

तक नाशता नहीं तैयार हुआ। इन लोगों को यह समझ में नहीं आता कि देर होने से खराई आ जाती है।" खराई शब्द का ठीक अर्थ आज भी मुझे समझ में नहीं आया। लेकिन इतना ही समझ पाई कि उनका विश्वास था कि सुबह मुँह धोने के बाद कुछ नहीं खाने से तन्द्ररुस्ती के लिए बुरा होता है। छोटी भाभी को उनके हिसाब से रसोई में देर लगती थी, जो उनके बर्दाशत के बाहर होता। अक्सर कहती 'इतनी देर में तो हम एक बारात का खाना बना देते'। उनकी बातें थीं, उनके मत थे, सब सुनते थे और जीवन ज्यों का त्यों चलता जाता था, एकजुट, कभी खड़ा, कभी मीठा।

चाय पीने के मामले में बड़ी भाभी से उनकी अच्छी दोस्ती थी। खराब चाय, या यों कहें वह जैसी चाय पीती थीं उससे फर्क चाय पीकर उनका मुँह बेजायका हो जाता था। बड़ी भाभी के ही हाथ की चाय ज्यादा पीती थीं। सबसे मनोरंजक स्थिति तब होती जब किसी के घर से चाय पीकर लौटतीं। थोड़ी देर में वह कहतीं, "दुलहिन, वहाँ चाय तुम्हें कैसी लगी?" भाभी ताड़ जातीं और हँसते हुए कहतीं, "अभी दूसरी चाय बनाते हैं अम्मा।" चाय बनती और दोनों आनन्द मगन होकर गिलास में चाय की चुस्की लेतीं। भले ही अम्मा को चाय की दो ही घूँट पीनी रहती थी।

अम्मा को पर्दे से थी नफरत। अपने जमाने को देखते हुए वह काफी आधुनिक थीं। बाबूजी के चाचा घर में रहते थे लेकिन वह उनसे पर्दा नहीं करती थीं। उनकी बहुएँ भी पर्दा नहीं करती थीं। कहीं बहू देखने जातीं और उसे घूँघट में देखती तो कहतीं 'पहले बहू का घूँघट उठाईए, उसका दम घुटता होगा।' घर वाले चुप रह कर या कुछ कह कर उनकी बात टाल जाते। आखिर समाज में उसकी प्रतिष्ठा का सवाल था। लोग क्या कहेंगे, अगर बहू घूँघट नहीं रखेगी। कभी अम्मा ही वहाँ से उठकर चली आतीं, कभी उनकी परेशानी देखकर भाभी कहती, "चलिए अम्मा"।

अम्मा को पता चला कि मेरी शादी छपरा में तय हुई है। यह भी उन्हें मालूम था कि बिहार में पर्दा बहुत होता है। जब कभी वह मुझे देर तक अपने कमरे में बन्द देखतीं तब कहतीं 'अभी से आदत डाल रही हैं सन्दूक में बन्द रहने की।' अपना विरोध अपनी बेटी तक से जताने में वह नहीं चूकीं। अगर उन्हें पता चल जाता कि मैं वहाँ 1-1/4 महीने (40 दिन) अपने कमरे से निकली ही नहीं तब तो शायद उनका विरोध मेरे ससुराल तक जरूर पहुँच जाता।

उनके जीवन में प्यार मुहब्बत की बड़ी अहमियत थी। मैं छठे वलास में पढती थी। सिलाई की सालाना परीक्षा थी। एक फ्रॉक तैयार कर के ले जाना था। वही फ्रॉक मैंने गलत काट दी और रोना शुरू कर दिया। उनके कान तक रोना पहुँचा और वह अपने बिस्तर से उठकर मुश्किल से मेरे पास आईं। उनकी तबियत उस

दिन कुछ ज्यादा ही खराब थी। आकर उन्होंने प्यार से पूछा कि क्या बात है। पता चला कि अगले दिन इम्टहान है और फ्रॉक की कटाई गलत हो गई है। उन्होंने कैंची उठाई और सब ठीक कर दिया। बोलीं, 'इतनी सी बात के लिए क्यों रोई?' वह किसी तरह चलकर अपने कमरे में गई। मुझे पता चला कि माँ क्या होती है। दूसरी घटना जो मुझे याद है वह भी उनके प्यार का ही प्रमाण है। एक बार हमलोग ताँगे पर कहीं जा रहे थे। मैं उनके बगल में उनकी साड़ी पर बैठ गई। उन्होंने जैसे ही उठकर साड़ी खींची ताँगेवाले ने तांगा चला दिया। अम्मा झटके से गिर पड़ी चोट लगी। घर में उठा कर लाई गई। मुझे लगा मेरे कारण ही वह गिरीं। अपराध बोध से मैं उनके सामने नहीं आ रही थी। जब उन्हें अपने कष्ट से थोड़ी मुक्ति मिली तब उन्होंने समझा कि मैं दिखाई नहीं पड़ रही हूँ। उन्होंने पास बुलाकर दुलार किया। मेरा मन घुल गया। जो कुछ छोटे से दिल ने महसूस किया वह जीवन दान पाने के बराबर था।

मेरी दोनों भाभियों से वह नाराज तो गाहे बगाहे जरूर होती थी लेकिन प्यार में कसर नहीं होती थी। बड़ी भाभी को कोई मोटा नहीं कह सकता था, भले ही उनका वजन बढ़ गया हो। उनकी नजर में वह सुडौल और सुन्दर थी, छोटी भाभी हर साल एक बार अपने मायके जातीं। जाते समय लगता बेंटी जा रही है। कहतीं, 'जल्दी आ जाना दुलहिन'।

अम्मा बच्चों पर हाथ नहीं उठाती थीं। मैं ही थी उनके हाथ की इकलौती चपत खाने वाली, न पहले मिली थी न बाद में मिली। हुआ यह कि सिर के बाल रूखे रहा करते थे, अम्मा ने नाउन से कहा कि 'तेल लगा दो'। मैं उसका हाथ झटक कर भाग गई। पकड़ कर मुझे लाया गया। अम्मा ने कोशिश की कि वह लगा दें, मैं उन्हें भी झटका देने लगी। उसी समय उन्होंने मुझे एक हल्की चपत लगाई। चूँकि उनकी चपत खाने का अनुभव नहीं था इसलिए उतना ही काफी था। चुपचाप तेल लगवा लिया। मजेदार बात यह थी कि बाबू जी भी पक्के अहिंसक थे। बाबू जी बहुत कुछ नौकरों की गलती बर्दाशत कर सकते थे लेकिन अगर उनके किसी अतिथि की सेवा में आनाकनी की या उचित सम्मान नहीं दिया तो वह बिगड़ जाते थे। ऐसी ही स्थिति में उन्होंने एक बार एक नौकर से कहा, "मैं तुम्हें पिटवा दूँगा"। जब अम्मा ने यह सुना तो खूब हँसीं, "खुद तो पीट नहीं सकते, दूसरे से पिटवाने की बात कहते हैं"।

एक बार अत्यन्त तनावपूर्ण घटना घटी। बात दिल्ली की है। दादा उन दिनों दिल्ली में थे। एक दिन अम्मा घर से बाहर निकलीं। उसी समय बारिश शुरू हो गई मूसलाधार। सड़क पर पानी जम गया। उस एक हड्डी की महिला ने किस तरह बारिश के झोंके को बर्दाशत किया होगा। कोई भी सोच सकता था कि वह कहीं गिर पड़ी होगी या बह गई होगी। इधर जब अम्मा घर में नहीं दिखीं तो घर के तथा अन्य कुछ लोगों ने बेतहाशा खोज शुरू की। दादा की साँस ऊपर नीचे हो रही थी। कई घण्टे की बेचैनी, हैरानी के बाद वह मिलीं, एक दूकान पर। दूकान वाले ने उन्हें पानी में देखकर अपनी दूकान पर बिठा लिया था। सबके प्राण में प्राण आए। उन्हें घर लाया गया।

दिन बीतते गए। पोते, पोती, नाती, नातिन से घर भर गया। शरीर का तो क्षय

होना ही होता है। चाहे कैसी भी कितनी परवरिश की जाए। दादा अम्मा के पास रहने के लिए इलाहाबाद छोड़कर कहीं नहीं गए। उँचा पद, अधिक पैसा, विदेश की नौकरी का आकर्षण छोड़ते गए। दिल्ली और किरकी गए भी तो अम्मा को साथ लेकर। परिस्थितियाँ ऐसी बनीं कि वह जोधपुर प्रोफेसर के पद पर चले गए। भाभी को अम्मा के पास छोड़ गए। एक सुबह ऐसी आई जिससे दादा बचते आ रहे थे। सुबह अम्मा ने भाभी को पुकारा, कुछ कहा, फिर सो गईं और सो ही गईं। उसी समय भईया लखनऊ से आए अम्मा के पास आए तो देखा कि वह शान्त हैं। दादा के बिना कुछ नहीं हो सकता था खबर पहुँची लेकिन हवाई जहाज नहीं मिला। ३६ घण्टे अम्मा अपने बेटे के इंतजार में बर्फ पर लेटी रहीं - मैं भी पहुँच गई थी। दादा आए, बिलखे। अभी याद करके रोएँ खड़े हो जाते हैं। ईश्वर ने दादा से वही क्षण छीन लिया जिसे उन्होंने अपने जीवन का पावन लक्ष्य बनाया था। शव यात्रा चली गई। दिवंगत की चर्चा से कम चर्चा उसके पुत्र की नहीं हो रही थी। गोविन्द जी अमेरिका में थे।

इसमें कोई शक नहीं कि ईश्वर दयालु है, वह शक्ति भी देता है कठोर से कठोर वेदना सहने की। लेकिन मुझे लगता है व्यक्ति मन के लिए ऐसे मौकों पर वह अराजक (नरक्षरित) शक्ति हो जाता है। जब जो चाहा कर दिया।

दूसरे दिन दादा ने अपने पुरोहित जी से पूछा 'पण्डित जी बाबू जी का श्राद्ध तो आर्य समाजी रीति से तीन दिनों में हुआ था। आप क्या सोचते हैं, अम्मा के श्राद्ध के बारे में। मैं सोचता हूँ सेवा तो जीवित रहने पर होती है। बाद में आप कुछ भी कीजिए'।

पण्डित जी बोले 'बाबू साहब, माता जी सनातनी थीं। उनका श्राद्ध सनातन धर्म रीति से ही होना चाहिए'। दादा ने कहा, "जैसा कहिए"। भईया की कम्पनी में कोई जरूरी काम था, उन्हें कुछ दिनों के लिए जाने दिया। गोविन्द जी आना चाहते थे, उनको फोन किया 'अब तो तुम अम्मा की देख नहीं सकोगे अभी आकर क्या करोगे'। मुझे भी कुछ दिनों के लिए जाने दिया। बच्चों को देखकर आने के लिए। मेरी बेटी बीमार थी।

कहा जाता है श्राद्ध और मन से जो काम किया जाता है उसकी गुणवत्ता (शुल्टर) बढ़ जाती है। श्राद्ध कर्म बहुतेरे देखे किन्तु जो लोग अम्मा के श्राद्ध में शरीक हुए होंगे उनके कानों में अनेक सनातनी ब्राह्मणों द्वारा शुद्ध मंत्रोच्चार की पवित्र समवेत गूँज आज भी गूँज रही होगी। सुगंधित यज्ञ धूम्र और उच्च मंत्र ध्वनि द्वारा निर्मित पावन परिवेश में सभी शान्त और स्तब्ध रहे।

सब समाप्त हो गया। धीरे धीरे जीवन सामान्य हो गया, सिर्फ एक व्यक्ति घर से सद्वैद के लिए चला गया।

२/७/०६

Cleveland

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1. The Gayatri Mantra in Sanskrit

(Source: Rig Veda (3.62.10 [582])

The Gayatri Mantra is a highly revered mantra in *Hinduism*, second only to the mantra **Om**.

Ōm! Bhūr Bhuvah Svah !

Tat savitur varenyam

bhargo devasya dhīmahi

dhiyo yo nah pracodayāt !

Word-by-word explanation of Gayatri Mantra

(Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gayatri>)

- *Om* The sacred sound
- *bhū* 'earth'
- *bhuvas* 'atmosphere'
- *sva* 'light, heaven, space'
- *tat* 'that'
- *savitur* of *Savitr* the god' (genitives of *savitri*-, 'stimulator, rouser; name of a sun-deity' and *deva*- 'god' or 'demi-god')
- *varenyam* 'Fit to be worshipped' *varenya*- 'desirable, excellent'
- *bhargo* 'Glory Effulgence' (radiance, lustre, splendour, glory)
- *devasya* 'of God'
- *dhīmahi* 'may we attain' (1st person plural middle optative of

dhā- ‘set, bring, fix’ etc.)

- *dhīyah nah* ‘our prayers’ (accusative plural of *dhi-* ‘thought, meditation, devotion, prayer’ and *nah* enclitic personal pronoun)
- *yāh pracodāyht* ‘who may stimulate’ (nominative singular of relative pronoun *yad-*; causative 3rd person of *pra-cud-* ‘set in motion, drive on, urge, impel’)

English Translation/Interpretation of the Gayatri Mantra

(Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gayatri>)

Ralph T.H. Griffith:

“May we attain that excellent glory of *Savitṛ* the God:
So may he stimulate our prayers.”

Kavikratu Tattva Budh

“Almighty Supreme Sun impel us with your divine brilliance
so we may attain a noble understanding of reality.”

Gayatri Pariwar

“O God, Thou art the giver of life, the remover of pain and
sorrow, the bestower of happiness; O Creator of the Universe,
may we receive Thy supreme, sin destroying light; may Thou
guide our intellect in the right direction.”

William Quan Judge

“Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the Universe,
from whom all proceed, to whom all must return, that face
of the True Sun now hidden by a vase of golden light, that
we may see the truth and do our whole duty on our journey
to thy sacred seat.”

2. The Brahman Prayer in Sanskrit

(Source: 24th verse from the 4th chapter of *Bhagavad Geeta*)

This prayer is recited usually before meals; it is one of the most powerful prayers that reminds us that *everything* is God, the Creator (Brahma).

Brahmaarpanam Brahma Havir

Brahmaagnau Brahmanaa Hutam

Brahmaiva Tena Gantavyam

Brahma Karma Samaadhinaha

Translation

“Brahman is oblation, Brahman is clarified butter, offered by Brahman in the fire of Brahman, by seeing Brahman in action, he reaches Brahman alone.”

Color Photographs



Fig. 47: A photograph of the three brothers. Left to Right: Govindjee, Gopalji and Krishnaji.

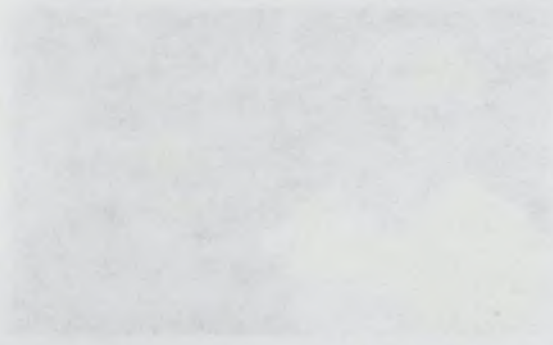
Fig. 48: A photograph of Dada (Krishnaji) with Bari Bhabhi (Bimla) after his retirement. Krishnaji, a graduate of Physics from Allahabad University, had served the University of Allahabad as Professor of Physics as well as its Pro-Vice Chancellor for many years. This photograph was taken when Mahesh Yogi, a spiritual leader of India, had invited him to spend extensive time with him discussing the relation of laws of Physics with religion. Bari Bhabhi now lives either at Allahabad (with her son Deepak) or at New Delhi (with her daughter Meenu).



Fig. 49: A photograph of Bhaiya (Gopalji) with Choti Bhabhi (Nirmala) after his retirement. Gopalji, a graduate of Physics from Allahabad University, has retired as Executive Director of a Government of India enterprise EPI (Engineering Projects India) Limited. They now live in Gurgaon, Haryana.

Color Photographs

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.



The photograph shows a wide, open landscape, possibly a field or a large building, with a very low contrast and detail. The image is heavily faded and lacks sharp features, making it difficult to discern specific details. The overall appearance is that of a low-quality or overexposed photograph.

101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200.





Fig. 50: A photograph of Jijaji (Radha Krishna Sahay) and Didi (Malati) after their retirement. Both, graduates of Hindi from Allahabad University, have retired as Professors of Hindi from Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Bihar. They now live in Bhagalpur.

Fig. 51: A photograph of Rajni and Govindjee after their retirement. They graduated in Plant Biology and Biophysics from Allahabad University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Rajni retired as a Senior Research Scientist in Biophysics, and Govindjee as a Professor of Biochemistry, Biophysics and Plant Biology, both from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. They now live in Urbana, Illinois.



Fig. 52: A photograph of Krishnaji at 14 B Bank Road.



A 1959 photograph taken at 14 B Bank Road, Allahabad, India. Left to right: Ranjan (Raj Ranjan; now deceased), Meenu (Ira Chandra), Amma (Savitri Devi; in her lap is Rita), Manju (now deceased) and Deepak (Deep Ranjan).

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