

# DURGA & KALI PUJA 2020



Wales Puja Committee      [www.pujainwales.com](http://www.pujainwales.com)

Registered Charity No 1050138





# Wales Puja Committee

## DURGA PUJA

Friday 23rd October

Shashti Puja: 4 PM - 5 PM

Saptami Puja: 6.30 PM - 8.30 PM

Saptami Anjali: 8.30 PM - 9 PM

Saturday 24th October

Ashtami Puja: 11 AM - 1.30 PM

Ashtami Anjali: 1.30 PM - 2 PM

Chandi Paath: 2 PM - 2.30 PM

Sandhi Puja: 3.30 PM - 6.30 PM

Sandhi Puja Anjali: 6.30 PM - 7 PM

Cultural Programme and Virtual Adda: 7 PM - 8.30 PM

Sunday 25th October

Nabami Puja: 11 AM - 12.30 PM

Nabami Anjali: 12.30 PM - 1 PM

Dashami Puja: 3 PM - 5 PM

Virtual Sindur Khela: 5 PM - 6 PM

Cultural Programme and Virtual Adda: 6 PM - 7.30 PM



**VIRTUAL PUJA ONLY!**

facebook  
LIVE Streaming

Page: Wales Puja Committee

YouTube  
LIVESTREAM

Channel: WPC Cultural

Please donate generously to WPC

Sort Code: 53-70-30

A/c No.: 14109204

Reference: Your Name

[www.walespujacommittee.com](http://www.walespujacommittee.com)







# Wales Puja Committee

## DURGA PUJA (23rd to 25th October)

### Virtual Anjali

WPC is exploring the idea of having a limited number of devotees on screen (from their homes) during the live Anjali sessions on all three days. We are gauging interest at the moment to work out logistics. If you are interested in taking part and would like to feature on screen during the live stream, please email us at [walespujacommittee@gmail.com](mailto:walespujacommittee@gmail.com). If WPC decides to go ahead with it, it will be based on 'first come first served' basis. Closing date for expression of interest is 21st October.

### Family Puja

**VIRTUAL PUJA ONLY!**

If you would like our Purohit Mr Anirban Mukherjee to perform a Puja in your family's name, please email us at [walespujacommittee@gmail.com](mailto:walespujacommittee@gmail.com) with your name (and family members' names) and Gotro. The day on which the Puja will be done will be decided as per WPC's convenience. Your request needs to reach WPC by 21st October.

### Children and Durga Puja

We would like to request parents to get their children to draw or write about Durga Puja with particular focus on current times. Please post them on Wales Puja Committee's facebook page.

**facebook**  
LIVE Streaming

Page: Wales Puja Committee

**You Tube**  
LIVESTREAM

Channel: WPC Cultural  
[www.walespujacommittee.com](http://www.walespujacommittee.com)





## From the Chairperson's Desk, Wales Puja Committee, October 2020

### Chairman's report: WPC 2020

Dear friends

First of all, I would like to welcome you all to the first ever virtual WPC Durga Puja. To say that this has been a difficult year is an understatement. The world as we knew it, has turned upside down. Instead, we are now accustomed to the world of lockdown and quarantine, face coverings and social distancing, working from home and Zoom meetings. Many of our members are medics and are fighting this dreadful pandemic in the frontline. Quite a few of our senior members were forced to self-isolate. All these take a heavy toll in the functioning of our daily life.

However, Wales Puja Committee and its members are known for their indomitable spirit and cohesiveness. Nothing seems to faze this wonderful family of Kakus & Kakimas, Dadas & Didis, Bhais & Bons.

So here we are ready with the first ever-virtual Durga Pujo. There seems to be a lot of excitement in the air. Anirban and Tamasree, understanding the limitations of lockdown, has taken upon themselves to do the entire Durga Pujo during the weekend of 23/10 to 25/10. Ofcourse the WPC family are helping them in every way possible, within the rules of lockdown. The Pujo will be streamed live for the benefit of our regular Pujo attendees. Arrangement has been made to accommodate virtual 'pushpanjali'.

Liza could not have taken over as the Cultural Officer in a more difficult year. She not only has to follow Sinjini's act but also has to run a virtual show! She has risen to the challenge and is putting on a stellar performance. We had a couple of virtual cultural programmes already, including one on 15<sup>th</sup> August to celebrate Indian Independence Day. We all are waiting eagerly for another super show during the Durga Pujo.

For a change, there will be no crowd thronging the Penyrheol Community Centre. The excitement and hard work of setting up and cleaning up will be missed. There will be no queue for the mouth-watering food served up by Krishna, Moon and the catering team. There will be no gathering of the 'usual suspects' outside the kitchen door in the evenings for the 'innocent spirit-ual' adda.

Yes, we will miss all those, yes we will do the Durga Pujo differently this year and yes we will have a virtual cultural programme. But the optimist that I am, I can see some positives. We will probably change the way we work in the future. We will work from home a lot more with enjoyable family time. We will probably do a lot of our meetings on the virtual platform too – with better attendance. And finally there is always light at the end of a tunnel. The dark cloud of this pandemic will lift to make way for the sunshine of happiness and optimism.

Enjoy the Durga Pujo 2020. Ma Durga's blessings to us all. Stay safe. See you till next time, hopefully in person.

**SHUBHO BIJOYA**

*Dr Kausik Mukherjee*



## Puja 2020

Blimey! What a catastrophe!  
A virus,  
The modern 'Asura'  
Slays all hopes of the  
Worshippers of 'Durga'.

The demon king  
With his Covid ring  
Has outclassed the Mother  
With 19 limbs.

Yet the 'Bong'  
Ever so strong  
With wily craft and full of art  
Will not give up.

He cannot sit back  
And let the Puja pass.  
Nor can he hold back  
And watch the demon laugh.

All over the world  
The Bengali 'Dhak'  
Beats with nostalgic rhythm of  
The virtual 'Dhak-er Naach'

And, the inimitable,  
'Kash Phul-er' saaj'  
Melts the emotions of  
The Bengali mass.

Always the winners  
And creators of dreams,  
Will stand together  
And face the wrath  
Of 'Mahisasura', the demon king.

Wales Puja Committee  
In desire earnest,  
Strives to share its joys  
That over the year it has harnessed.

**HAPPY DURGA PUJA & SHUBHO BIJOYA**

*Dr Ashok Mukherjee*





## From the Secretary's Desk, Wales Puja Committee, October 2020

### Secretary's report: WPC 2020

Dear friends!

Autumn has been and almost gone as has much of the year. An anus horribilis in every way one can imagine, 2020 was brought with it the fires of hell, famine and a worldwide pestilence. An increasingly diverse world has been brought together to its knees by a spiky little green monster that slays in the thousands with no heed to caste and creed.

This year's Durga Puja takes on a greater significance as we hope that as always, through the millennia, she will be victorious again in this mighty battle of good over evil. One wonders however, is SARS COVID 19 evil or is it simply doing its thing. Perhaps mankind itself has become the great evil, destroying and polluting without care or concern, our endless greed bringing our planet and all other living beings on it immense harm, perhaps we have now outlived our evolutionary niche.

Perhaps it is time for all of us to look at how we live our lives, re-evaluate, learn new ways of doing things, safer, clear, better.

Indeed that is exactly what this pandemic has made us try to do with our Durga Puja! We have had to completely reengineer how to run the Pujas without exposing anybody to risk amidst the shifting sands of everchanging regulations and vital threat.

I am very proud of our team's ability to do just that. The Executive Committee has put its wisdom together to bring these pujas to you, online, in the safe confines of your homes. Our amazing Cultural Officer has become the epitome of the Goddess of Streaming, a computer savvy explorer of the new, our priest wonderfully dedicated to the cause has stepped up to the immense challenge of doing it all with his wife, all by themselves, day after day with very little pause for rest and our amazing talents are preparing wonderful online entertainment for all.

It is not all doom and gloom. Last year we celebrated Durga Puja, Kali Puja and this year Saraswati Puja with great success. As ever, we had great attendance by so many from near and far, great food and fantastic cultural events whilst the mainstay the Pujas themselves were always immaculately held by our priests Kanai Chatterjee and Anirban Mukhopadhyay.

At short notice we held a fun filled Diwali Party which was as ever, sold out.

Our members were very generous in supporting our endeavours to bring relief to those devastated by Cyclone Amphan and a large collection was made in a very short time. Special mention must go to Dr Sankar Das who arranged the transfer of funds to bodies in India.

With the onset of Covid we had to look at a new way of doing things. To keep up cheer and bring our community together we organised two cultural extravaganzas, a pilot on Zoom followed by a celebration of India's Independence Day using new streaming technologies both meeting great approval. We also had the pleasure of Zooming an interview of Krishnendu Mazumdar, the President of BAFTA and the son of one of our founding fathers.

We are proud to declare that we have won two different grants. The first is a substantial fund to allow us to hold a special Durga Puja celebration which will now be next year and is something we will highlight next year rather than steal the thunder now. More recently we have bid for and won funding from BAWSO to allow us to hold regular streaming for our members, especially those more elderly and more likely to be stuck at home during the pandemic - this is to bring knowledge, succour in the form of meditation and yoga, health talks and a chance to socially interact. We will be using this money to buy new tech kit to allow us to do so seamlessly. Mr Neeleem Saha and Dr Sandip Raha are invaluable in their efforts in this regard.

The WPC is an amazingly inspired, stimulating, forward thinking inclusive body and I have had the great honour of serving it in various roles. After a series of personal setbacks during COVID I took a step back secure in the knowledge that a fantastic team of colleagues and friends would keep everything running perfectly.

I invite all of you to enjoy a fabulous and fabulously different Puja with us, a new venture where we will expect the odd setbacks but as ever I am sure the thrills will triumph in this fantastic journey.

**A WARM & SOCIALLY DISTANCED SUBHO BIJOYA FRIENDS**

*Dr Shiladitya Sinha*



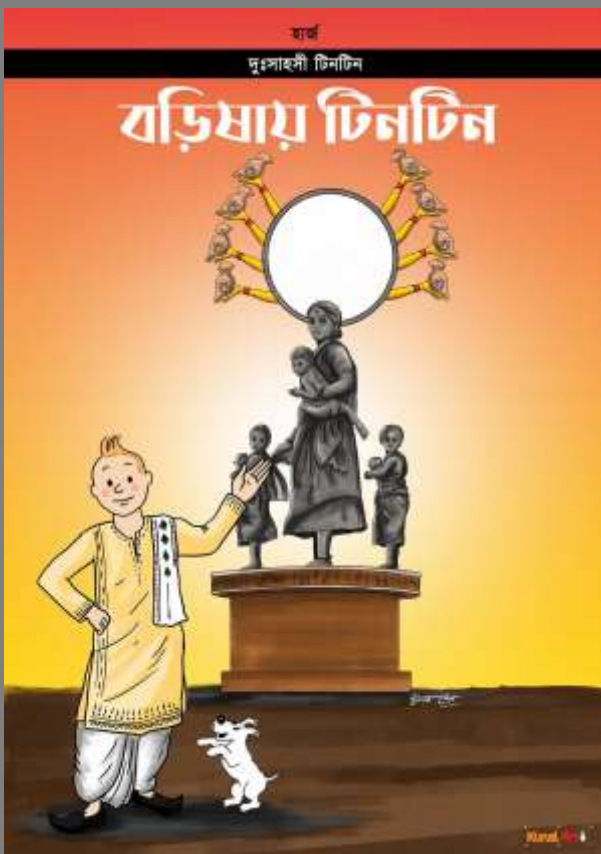


Durga as a migrant worker. Clay sculpture by Pallab Bhowmick, who has been doing socially relevant art. Inspired by Bikash Bhattacharya's stunning female subjects, with a signature look and smudged bindi. While the mother holds a naked child, the two girls hold a swan and an owl respectively, evoking mythology but have faces far older than their years.

The ten hands hold bags of grain. Yes, today people need nurture and food.

It's an eerie installation raising many questions. Are we celebrating the inner strength and resilience of the migrant mother? Are we making a socially relevant connection bringing the migrant/refugee centre stage? Or as Ashish Nandi wrote many years ago about compensatory glorification, are we ideologically elevating woman to a goddess only to fudge her lack of socio-economic-familial power?

**Photo and words: Sangeeta Datta**





## From the Treasurer's Desk, Wales Puja Committee, October 2020

Dear All.

I am pleased to present the Wales Puja Committee accounts for 2019-20. In our last accounting year, we organised four events; Durga Puja, Diwali Party, Kali Puja and Saraswati Puja. All our events were highly successful.

A significant amount was raised by Diwali Party raffle which has been spent in various charity works.

A big thank you to Mr. Neeleem Saha for his hard work and dedication which made Diwali event successful.

I am thankful to all who have donated generously throughout the year during different events including Amphun Cyclone charity activities.

I am grateful to Dr. Anjan Roy who has donated foods on Sawaraswati Puja. I am indebted to Mr. Neeleem Saha and real well wisher WPC executive members for their initiatives and hardwork to manage to get Community Funds, consequently we have ended with a surplus .

Hoping for your ever increasing patronage and with all my Best Sharadiya Wishes and Regards.



Pankaj Kumar  
Sarkar





## Wales Puja Committee Accounts 2019-20

Registered Charity No 1050138

DURGA PUJA	<u>Expenses (in £)</u>	<u>Income (in £)</u>
Hall hire	540	Donations 6105
Cooking Help & Blue Arrow	1329.3	Tea Sales 19.11
Groceries	921.36	Advertisement 500
Sweets	205	
Fruits /Flowers / Vegetables	371.62	
Admin/ Taxi Fare/Puja souvenir	511.6	
Protima Transport	360	
Stage Lighting service & Cultural program	436.48	
Puja Samagrec	137.58	
Food waste clearance by Smith.S	216	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5028.94</b>	<b>TOTAL 6624.11</b>
<b>SURPLUS</b>	<b>1595.17</b>	
<b>KALI PUJA</b>		
Hall hire	135	Donations 847
Fruits / Flowers/ veg	59.38	
Groceries	242.11	
Sweets	62.2	
Kitchen help	150	
Blue Arrow(Cleaner)	148.32	
Puja Samagrec	98.35	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>895.36</b>	<b>TOTAL 847</b>
<b>DEFICIT</b>	<b>48.36</b>	
<b>DIWALI</b>		
Food / Venue (Haveli)	1490	Tickets sale 1731
Admin stuffs/ Fireworks	75.63	Raffle sale 235
Gifts/ Hamper	141.31	
Hamper Bucket	11.98	
Decorations	31.56	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1750.48</b>	<b>TOTAL 1966</b>
<b>SURPLUS</b>	<b>215.52</b>	
<b>SARASWATI PUJA</b>		
PCC hall hire	195	Donations 1549.35
Blue Arrow	133.49	
Kitchen help	90	
Fruits/ Flowers	105.27	
Sweets	10	
Groceries	55.43	
Stage lighting service	114.12	
Paper Plates	150	
Puja Samagrec	45.7	
Ravi Caterer	470	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1369.01</b>	<b>TOTAL 1549.35</b>
<b>SURPLUS</b>	<b>180.34</b>	
<b>CHARITY</b>		
Amphun via Bharat Sevashram Sangha	5562	Donations 6293
Amphun via Ramkrishna Mission (£360 gone through WPC a/c)	1091	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6653</b>	<b>TOTAL 6293</b>
<b>GENERAL INCOME &amp; EXPENSES</b>		
Stationary	28.15	Interest from Bank
HCW membership	100	Charity & Reserve
Protima Storage in Intercity Removals	540	A/C for 2019-20 11.75
Inventory (speakers/ mixer cable/ Bio Bin)	1099.3	Sundries 2.86
Zoom video Call	28.78	
Insurance & website maintenance & Anti-virus	304.68	
Security deposit K.P & S.P to PCC	200	
Amazon shopping	29.52	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2330.43</b>	<b>TOTAL 14.61</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>18027.22</b>	<b>GRAND TOTAL 17294.1</b>
So overall Deficit during 2019-20 accounting year	£733.16	
Brought forward from 31/8/19	£19,532.26	
Total in Bank on 31/08/2020	£18,799.10	
Received Community Grant for D.P 2020	£7,150	
<b>Total in Bank on accounting year 2019-20</b>	<b>£25,949.10</b>	



## Members of Executive committee 2020-21

Chair –	Dr Kaushik Mukherjee
Vice Chair –	Mr Neeleem Saha
Secretary –	Dr Shiladitya Sinha
Treasurer –	Mr Pankaj Sarcar
Event Officer –	Dr Raja Biswas
Cultural Officer –	Dr Liza Mukhopadhyay Vacant Post
Catering Officer –	Dr Madhuporna Mukherjee Vacant Post



Puja Co Ordinator – Mrs Tamashree Mukherjee

### Members:

Dr Sandip Raha, Mr Dipak Kundu, Dr Ashok Mukherjee, Dr Kanti Nath, Mrs Shikha Nath, Dr Sankar Das, Mrs Maitreyi Das, Mrs Krishna Roy, Dr Anjan Roy, Mr Sayantan Das, Mrs Mahua Mukherjee, Mrs Abha Narayan, Dr Sudiptomohan Mukherjee, Mr Anirban Mukhopadhyay, Mrs Tamashree Mukherjee, Mrs Aditi Basu, D Chandana Banerjee, Mrs Sharada Sharma, Mr Niladri Chakraborty, Mrs Sinjini Chakraborty, Mr Rahul Aich, Dr Sakti Guha Niyogi, Dr Hashmukh Shah, Mrs Raktima Bhadra Sarcar, **Mrs Banani Sinha Ray**

### Honorary Members:

Mrs Jharna Majumdar, Dr Satya Kishore Sharma, Dr Mohan Nath, Mr T K Kar, Dr RD Narayan

### Trustees:

Dr Sankar Das, Dr Satya Kishore Sharma, Dr Ravi Narayan, Dr Ashok Mukherjee, Dr Sakti Guha Niyogi, Dr Sandip Raha, Mr Dipak Kundu, Dr Kanti Nath





*Few Words from Dr Sandip Raha (Trustee)*

We have been celebrating Durga Puja for 46 years in Wales and have been a pivotal group in celebration of Autumnal festival in South Wales. Wales Puja committee (name came into existence in late 1980's) was known as Bengali group in early 1970's and early 80's.

Over last 2 decades we have commissioned clay image making in Wales three times and preserved the heritage of Clay image making & Durga festival through publication of a book and film in 2016-17. Venue where our Puja is held (Penyrheol Community Centre, Caerphilly) is very well known to our friends and supporters.

Our Durga Puja traditionally held over 5 days have a unique atmosphere and ambience of all-inclusive and welcoming new faces and visitors from all walks of life & religion. Over the years we have joined hands with local schools, museums, voluntary organisations during our festival to promote our friendship, cultural diversity and inclusive motto.

This year World has changed due to COVID 19 Pandemic and we are forced to organise a very limited Durga Puja mainly symbolic way in a Private service apartment with our priest and his wife performing religious rituals for all of us and we are joining remotely. Our heart and spirit of Sharodutsav is muted this year and you all will notice that over this weekend of Puja.

We have tried our best to make it as virtual as possible (minus taste of Bhog prasad) including online Adda, live e- Anjali etc.

I am sure our friends and supporters will understand this predicament and continue to support us morally and financially.

We aim to revitalise our Durga Puja in Centre of Cardiff in International centre of Peace building in Museum street next year with far more participation and glamour.

Our team of volunteer has worked tirelessly even for this year's Pujo and more so our priest and family giving their whole extended weekend doing Pujo single handed. Our cultural officer has organised quality entertainment with rehearsals going back for months for virtual stream yard presentations.

This is world of Virtual interaction we are living in today and hope we all can feel each other's warmth and company next year.

Subho Bijoya to you all and stay safe, stay well.





## Trustees' responsibilities-WPC (1050138)

The trustees, as the guardian of the charity, have overall control of the charity and are responsible for making sure it's doing what it was set up to do. The trustees are the people who lead the charity and decide how it is run. The trustees are volunteers – they act out of a desire to help people and make positive changes. Volunteering as a trustee has to be selfless as well as rewarding and enjoyable.

WPC trustees delegate the day-to-day operations to the Executive Committee.

### Trustees role

WPC trustees make sure the charity is running well, is doing what it was set up to do and making sure it always endeavours strengthening the charity. This includes ensuring that:

- Charity is run based on the guidelines provided by the Charity Commission and its own Constitution
- Trustees are entrusted with the full responsibility of policies on social issues, finances and investments
- Trustees may intervene in any decision making within the Executive Committee, if they feel they need to
- Charity has the funds it needs and spends its funds sensibly, on the activities it was raised for
- Charity keeps the proper accounts, prepare reports & accounts once a year for all purposes
- Charity follows the law, doesn't break the rules specified in its governing document (the constitution)
- Trustees meet at least once a year, prepare an annual report every year and present it to the Executive Committee as well as send it to the charity commission

The trustees use their time-accrued skills and experience to make sure the charity runs efficiently. But trustees can get advice from external sources like solicitors or other experts if they need to. All trustees make decisions about their charity collectively, working as a team. Decisions don't usually need to be unanimous – so long it is agreed by most of the trustees.

The trustees' chair:

- helps plan trustee meetings
- may represent the charity at events
- might also work as a link between trustees and the Executive Committee

All trustees are equally responsible for finances, for example.

- Role description for chair of trustees – Constitution
- Role description for a charity treasurer – Constitution

### Legal responsibilities of trustees

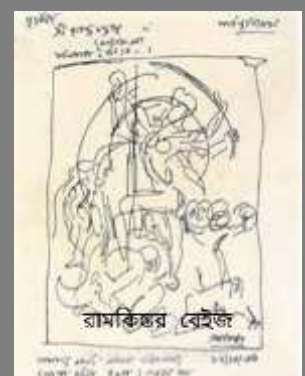
The trustees must:

- follow the law and the rules as per guidelines provided by the Charity Commission as well as its own constitution
- act responsibly and only in the interests of the charity
- use reasonable care and skill
- make well-informed & unbiased decisions, taking advice (external or internal) whenever they need to

### Becoming a trustee

Being a trustee means making decisions for making a difference to the local community or to society through the charity. Trustees use their skills and experience to support their charities, helping them achieve their aims. Trustees also often learn new skills and develop into new areas during their time. A new trustee can be chosen only by the permanent trustees (8) of this charity based on someone's long term contribution to the charity. Any new trustee should also explicitly declare if there is any conflict of interest of his/her joining the trustees. A trustee may give up the trusteeship during the tenure for any reason.

WPC trustees meet once a year and discuss health and well being of Wales Puja committee as well as any concerns and future directions. Chair of trustees also send annual report and accounts to Charity Commissioner.







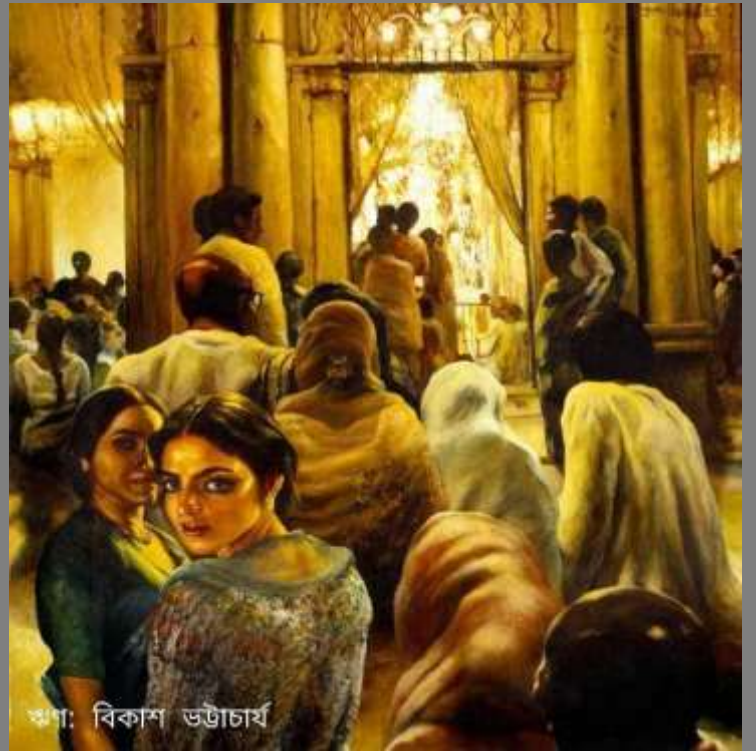
শানু লাহিড়ী



গগনেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর



নন্দলাল বসু



স্বপ্না: বিকাশ ভট্টাচার্য









## Amader Durga Pujo

Durga pujo mane bangali der utsav

Natun jhuto, natun poshak

Sasti te, luchi sujir ghondo thake mukhe lege

Saptami te, nach, gaan r abritri te bhore

Astami te, pushpanjoli sesh e prasad r naroo

Nabami te, khichuri bhog r sathe bhaja aloo

Dasami te, sidoor khela diye bisorjon.

Shubho Durga Pujo hok janai sharbojon.

By **Onkon & Orchita Roy.**



### CULTURAL FESTIVAL ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

15TH AUGUST 2020  
6 PM UK TIME | 10.30 PM INDIAN TIME

1. Hey Mor Chitto - recitation by Sandip Raha
2. Covid Namahal - Shiladitya and Anoushka
3. Little Krishna Katha - a musical by Roop, Sharanya, Jishnu, Maharshi, Orchita, Aarjo, Megh, Aruni, Shivangi, Ashmit, Onkon and Ayush
4. 'Aye mere watan....' - songs by Atreyee Saha
5. Lockdown blues for lovers - contemporary dance by Sudipta Das
6. 'The Book of Answers' - shrutinatok (skit) by Madhuparna, Kausik, Sharmistha, Anirban, Liza and Sudiptamohan
7. Piano by Anish Choudhury



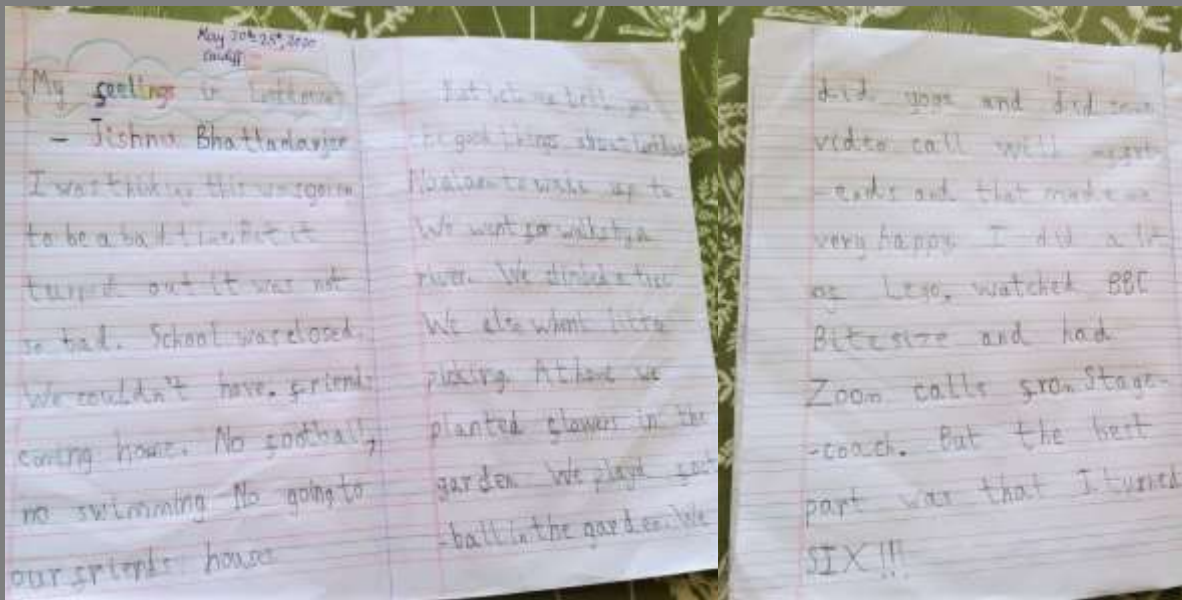
FREE FOR ALL TO WATCH AT  
[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/WALESPUJACOMMITTEE](https://www.facebook.com/WALESPUJACOMMITTEE)











Jishnu Bhattacharjee  
Age 6  
Pontprennau Primary School

BAME people have been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. This new helpline delivered by EYST, Women Connect First, Henna Foundation, ProMo Cymru and Wales TUC aims to offer a first port of call to individuals from BAME backgrounds.

- The helpline is running initially as a 6 month pilot funded by Welsh Government via the voluntary sector emergency fund.
- It is a multi-lingual helpline, between them the team speak 11 languages and interpretation can be arranged into other languages as required.
- Info is available relating to: health, work, welfare, education, housing; and personal safety.
- Not an advice line-predominantly signposting with exception of employment advice which will be delivered by Wales TUC.
- Helpline is available Mon-Fri 10.30am-2.30 pm
- Helpline number - 0300 2225720 (Local Rate calls)
- SMS text number - 07537 432416

Website - [www.bame.wales](http://www.bame.wales)

Email [bamehelpline@eyst.org.uk](mailto:bamehelpline@eyst.org.uk)





**Lein Gymorth BAME Cymru**

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**BAME Helpline Wales**

[www.bame.wales](http://www.bame.wales)

**BAME Helpline Wales is open now!!**

**Mon to Fri 10.30am to 2.30pm**

**Call 0300 2225720 (Local Rate number)**

**Text 07537 432416**

Our helpline advisors can:

- Signpost to relevant organisations and services in your area
- Provide specialist employment advice
- Signpost and refer to specialist organisations
- Provide information in a range of community languages
- Provide information in relation to:
  - Health
  - Education
  - Work
  - Housing
  - Welfare
  - Personal Safety
  - Entitlements



## Hinduism and Women: Glimpses from a Feminist Perspective

### Blog by Debanjali Bhattacharjee

It was Saraswati Puja this week – a day when Hindus in several parts of India and the world worship Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and arts. As several Hindu men and women seek blessings of this goddess, I take this opportunity to share a few glimpses of one of the oldest religions in human history, from a feminist perspective.

#### **The origin of Hinduism**

"Hinduism never originated as a religion. It simply referred to the way of life of people settled along the river Indus or 'Sindhu' as they called it".

Our first lecture in Political Geography at Delhi University twenty years ago was intriguing and myth-busting. If Hinduism was simply a 'way of life' over 5000 years ago, where and how do I fit in the rituals, the practices and the philosophies I hear in the name of this religion today? I started looking at my own life and the world around me to find some of the answers.

There is no one singular text or one single leader who founded Hinduism, not a one-size-fits-all code of practice. Among my extended family and friends, there are polytheists, monotheists and pantheists, ravenous carnivores as well as strict vegetarians, all of whom call themselves 'Hindu'. Heated debates on what is Hinduism and what is not are commonly heard; there are no fixed definitions of what makes a 'good Hindu', no strict guidelines defining a 'Hindu way of life'. It is this openness and flexibility I find liberating and empowering. I imbibe what inspires me, challenge and discard what I find unscientific, inappropriate or unsuitable for my life.

#### **Hinduism and its worship of the Feminine**

One of the most fascinating aspects in my eyes as a child was the concept of the divine in Hinduism. I saw worship of female and male idols as goddesses and gods. Durga, the Mother Goddess, is benevolent, protective, fierce and compassionate. Well-known for her symbolic ten hands which hold several weapons as well as a lotus and a conch shell, she destroys evils and protects the innocent. Durga Puja is the autumn festival celebrating mother goddess Durga; in several parts of India the festival is comparable to Christmas in the West.

Durga's two daughters- Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and all forms of arts- are worshiped too. As Hinduism spread over the vast, geographically diverse Indian sub-continent and beyond, various other forms of the feminine came to be worshiped. Some of them are delicate and pale, some bold, fearsome and dark. It is the worship of the female power in various forms, figures and colors I find unique, fascinating and empowering.

#### **Hindu Mythology and Epics**

I grew up listening to numerous stories from the Hindu mythology that, later in life, I could unpick, interpret and analyze in ways more than one. I learnt about the erudite women philosophers Gargi and Maitreyee from 6th-8th centuries BC who challenged the learned men for academic debates. I read and watched child-friendly, animated versions of the two famous Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata that centered around wars and victory of good over evil. Interwoven within the tales of the epics were narratives of women's lives within a complex structure of class and caste hierarchies. There was the '*swayamvar*' – the practice of princesses challenging, testing and finally choosing their husbands from a royal court filled with potential



suitors. Alongside, as in the narratives of Sita and Draupadi, were stories of insult, coercion and control of women, once their fairy-tale weddings were over.

Meandering through centuries and millennia, diverted by the confluence by invaders from middle east, far east and Europe, several religious practices in the name of Hinduism seem to have evolved, adapted, diversified or disappeared. Buddhism and Jainism were two separate religions born as protests to the upper-caste hierarchical structure of Hinduism about 2500 years ago. Both matriarchy and patriarchy prevailed within Hinduism, in differing timescales and sometimes contemporary in varied geographic locations within the Indian subcontinent.

### **The Medieval Era**

Within Hinduism itself the '*Bhakti* movement' originated from southern India in the 7th century AD. Based on the concept of '*bhakti*' or devotion to God who dwells within each individual, this movement challenged upper-caste patriarchy and empowered women to bypass gender rigidities through numerous strategies – refusing marriage to a human being, walking out of marriage or refusing motherhood. The roots of contemporary Indian feminism are often traced back to the Bhakti Movement within Hinduism 1300 years ago, just as patriarchy extended its reach and control.

As invasion and warfare continued in the Indo-Gangetic plains of northern India and beyond, patriarchy manifested itself in ways more than one. There evolved stronger gender stereotyping and a glorification of the sacrificial nature of women which, with distortion and patriarchal manipulation, created room for the heinous practice of '*Sati*' in the 12th-18th centuries AD predominantly in the northern and central parts of India. In the process of protecting their 'honour' from invaders, upper-class women in Rajasthan learnt warfare as well as were encouraged to take to '*Jauhar*', a practice of mass-suicide. In contrast, I also heard stories and read about some of the brave Hindu queens in parts of India during the medieval era – Queen Didda (958- 1003 CE), Rudrama Devi (13th century) and Rani Durgavati (16th century) are a few names that come to my mind.

### **Colonial oppressions and uprisings**

The arrival of European colonial powers – Dutch, French, Portuguese and English- into the Indian subcontinent since the 17th century seems to me to have had a few interesting impacts on the Hindu women in India. On one hand was the protest or uprising towards freedom from a 'common enemy'; notable Hindu queens such as Velu Nachiyar in southern India in the 18th century or Rani Lakshmi Bai in central India during the 19th century fought the British armed forces. It gained momentum in early 20th century in the anti-colonial movements as women actively cooperated with militant rebel men, participated in protest marches, joined the army or participated in Gandhi's famous non-violent movements.

On the other hand, we saw the establishment of infrastructure and academic institutions intended to serve colonial interests, and women from upper as well as middle classes left their protected domestic spaces. Women from privileged backgrounds are known to have traveled across the globe to study medicine and science as early as late 19th/ early 20th century.

Also worth mention here is the fact that practices such as '*Sati*' were challenged by the learned Hindu social reformers, and, empowered by support from colonial rulers, abolished altogether during the colonial rule. While child marriages could not be legally prohibited yet, the reformers ensured that young widows could be remarried, instead of being forced into a life of seclusion and austerity.



## **Independence and beyond**

Decolonization and the Partition of India into India and Pakistan in 1947 along religious lines was one of the greatest socio-political upheavals in South Asia. More than 10 million people were uprooted almost overnight, nearly a million people killed in the violence that was unleashed. It had a catastrophic impact on women from Hindu, Muslim and Sikh backgrounds alike. Rape, abduction, so-called honour-killing, forced marriage and several other atrocities comprise the gruesome tales we have grown up listening to from our grandparents.

It is important to note that by this time, the Indian sub-continent had become a melting pot of seven different religions – Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism. In post-colonial India during early 1950's, the birth of the Indian Constitution with its promise of a 'sovereign, secular, democratic republic' brought in universal adult franchise and the fundamental right to equality.

Hindu women, along with women from all other religious backgrounds in India studied medicine, engineering and mathematics, researched astronomy as well as anthropology, made their marks in history, politics, physics and the languages. Many women experimented with various forms of arts and literature, acted and directed in Bollywood and vernacular language films and have won international acclaim.

Women in post-colonial India flew aircrafts, joined the armed forces, swam across the English Channel and contested parliamentary elections. The famous Chipkomovement in northern India—where women hugged trees in their non-violent resistance against deforestation brought eco feminism to the forefront in global conversations.

Hinduism and Feminism in today's world

Against this vast, complex backdrop of the Hindu 'way of life', where do women like me position ourselves in today's world? How do we draw strength from Hinduism and all that it offers to strengthen our resolve to end violence against women? We raise voices against the objectification of women in media and its biases in reporting; we challenge everyday sexism and misogyny and demand strict legal measures for atrocities against women; we hold hands with our sisters from every other religion, just as Indian women are at this point of time, in one of the biggest political uprisings in India.

As Hindu women, we need to constantly remind ourselves of the symbolism of Durga with her ten arms, fiercely protective and delicately nurturing at the same time. While we strive to create an equal world, we look back at the ancient Hindu imagery of the "ardhha- narishwar" where the masculine and feminine are respected as two halves of one being, complimenting each other in a perfect balance.

Debanjali Bhattacharjee

January 2020

Deb is a Welsh Women's Aid supporter and volunteer





## **ZEAL FOR ZANSKAR**

### **JAGANNATH BHADRA**



Zanskar valley remains veiled and isolated from this human world for almost nine months in a year. But it touched and danced before my sleepless eyes in the dead of night from my early years of youth. In those days, William Wordsworth made me crazy with his YARROW poems: Yarrow unvisited, Yarrow visited and Yarrow revisited. I became restless to visit Zanskar, a powerful tributary to the river Indus. Yarrow is a small stream which was first visited by Wordsworth in September, 1814 and just after its bicentenary I visited my waking dream the Zanskar.

Kashmir, the paradise on Earth, had flown me to Srinagar from Kolkata. Even the heaven couldn't restrict my wanderlust. Here, not here; may move to somewhere else. So, started to shift, gradually to Sonmarg, Baltal, Zoji La and thereafter starts Ladakh. After 144 Kms from Srinagar, my better half reached Drass with me. It faces less than -30 degree Celsius in winter and it's the coldest habitat in India and the globally second coldest, just behind Varkhayanask in Siberia.

Another 60 Kms, and we reached the second largest city in Ladakh, that is Kargil. On the way visited KARGIL WAR MEMORIAL, the big boost to our patriotism reminding our glorious victory against Pak invaders who were attacking from their convenient mountain top in the millennium year. Our stay in Kargil Tourist Bungalow, 2nd time, was simply fantastic since the Indus tributary Suru ceaselessly sang within 15 feet from our first floor living-room.

At dawn, started for another 250 Kms to PADUM, the biggest city in the heart of Zanskar valley at an altitude of 12,037 feet. Padum is originated from the name of Padmasambhava, GURU RINPOCHE, 8th century Buddhist master and founder of Tibetan Buddhism. People of Padum are mainly Buddhist. Kargil's altitude is 8,780 feet and inhabitants are Muslim. Zanskar valley is the dreamland for adventure tourists and trekkers. Quarter of a year 4-wheelers move to Padum, but around 200 Kms there is nothing fit for the nomenclature ROAD. Sometimes we are to move through the rivulets, with more than knee deep water having strong current and maximum time on the uneven dangerous big or medium boulder and pebbles. Nothing great can be achieved at ease. After Kargil, till Panikhar, the border of the Suru valley at a distance of 40 Kms, road is good. In between, there is a historic habitat Karste Khar nearby Sankoo. There is massive 7 metre, 7th century ROCK - CUT MAITREYA, future Buddha of this world. Suru valley residents are 15th century converted Muslims from Tibetan Buddhists. It's a lush green valley of enormous beauty. Famous twin peaks, 23,409 feet Nun peak and 23,218 feet Kun peak are just at a stone throw distance. We just moved almost touching the huge Parkachik glacier. We were to cross 14,436 feet Penzi La pass to enter the Zanskar valley. Just before Penzi La, there is mammoth Drang Drung Glacier which is 23 Kms long river of ice and snow. This incredible glacier is just at the foot of 21,490 feet Doda peak. Drang Drung is the largest Ladakh glacier after Siachen. The Stod river originates from this Drang Drung Glacier and is a tributary to the Zanskar river.



Twin peaks Nun and Kun are really superb. Nun-Kun in Suru valley have the effect like the Kanchenjunga in Darjeeling or Peling, or like the Dhauladhar in Dharamsala in our mind. One who visits them can't forget them for the rest of life. Snow clad peak in enchanting green valley has multiplied its face value.

Penzi La is the highest point in Kargil Padum route. It has the most satisfying view as well. Drang Drung glacier overlooking the Penzi La is every tourist's LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT. Never ever anybody can expect such a spacious snow highway from the enormous altitude of the Doda peak may suddenly emerge in the horizon with all its grandeur and magnificence. The It's a breathtaking view.



Zaskar valley is full of historic Buddhist Gompas. Almost all villages have a Gompa of its own. Gompas are situated on mountain tops. Only Sani Gompa is an exception, which is on the valley plane near Padum. Other famous Gompas enroute Padum are Rangdum Gompa, Karsa village Gompa, Pibiting Gompa, Strongdy Gompa and Stakrimo Gompa. Besides these, Bardan Gompa is inside the Padum city and by the side of newly building Keylong Padum Road. Another Leh Padum road is being used built via Nimo which marks the confluence of the rivers Indus and Zaskar. Bardan Gompa has the unmatched uniqueness since situated on a cliff emerging from the bed of the Zaskar. The beauty of this virgin wonderland, cold rock desert of the Zaskar valley, is simply unimaginable and unparalleled in the world.



## WPC Presents The Krishnendu Majumdar Interview



Krishnendu Majumdar was recently confirmed as the new Chairperson of BAFTA.

He has become the first person of Black or Asian origin to be elected to this post in BAFTA'S 72 year history.

An EMMY winning, BAFTA nominated producer with numerous hits including Karl Pilkington's An Idiot Abroad and the mockumentary, Hoff the Record, he has carved a stellar niche in the world of TV and Films in Britain. His productions are hard hitting and hilarious at the same time.

Krishnendu's father was one of WPC'S founders and WPC is proud to celebrate his achievement with a ZOOM interview.

Please do join us.



Join us on Zoom for the interview on Sunday, 21st June at 7:30 pm

Duration: 40 minutes

Moderator: Dr Sandip Raha

Meeting ID: 2506369854

Password: Penyrheol1



# The Cyclone Amphan Appeal



West Bengal has been devastated by the recent Cyclone Amphan.

Whilst the state was struggling with the challenges of the COVID 19 Pandemic, this powerful storm formed in the Bay of Bengal before making landfall near Kolkata and leaving in its wake numerous deaths, immense destruction and untold misery.

The people of Bengal desperately need your support and they need it now.

The WPC is launching this fundraiser and will work with partners used in disaster relief before to deliver the aid where it is required such as Bharat Sevashram Sangha. We would be grateful for your donations.



Please transfer your donation to WPC Charity Account:

**Natwest Bank**

**Sort Code 53-70-30**

**AC No 75972972**

**AC Name: Wales Puja Committee**

**Ref: Amphan & your initials**

Please email us at

**walespuja1973@outlook.com**

So that we can keep track of your donation and keep you informed of how it has been used.

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Dated: 16.6.2020

Trustee:  
Wales Puja Committee,  
(Charitable Organisation)  
Richfield, 37, Llantrisant Road,  
Llanodoff,  
Cardiff - CF5 2PU,  
U.K.

Dear Sir,

We are very glad to acknowledge the receipt of your kind donation of Rs. 5,00,000/- (Rupees Five Lakhs only) for the flood affected people of West Bengal.

Your kind donation is being utilized for the flood affected villages of Hingolpur, Sandichikhal, Ghoga, Mukkon (Churi), Pocher Pratima, G. Poch, Bakhal, Mausam Dew, Goolda etc areas by way of distribution of cooked food, dry, foodstuffs, clothes, LPG, Tarpaulin etc.

Our monks and volunteers are directly reaching coastal areas and distributing relief materials.

Your kind donation from such a distant place in Europe for the Bengal brethren is warmly appreciated by us.

Hope your kind support & sympathy will continue in future also.

We will send you official Receipt a few days later.

May God Bless you.

Yours sincerely,

*Ashwini Bantwanda*  
(Swami Brahmavanantaji)  
General Secretary



## RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

P.O. Belur Math, Howrah, West Bengal 711202

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Cheques/drafts should be drawn in favour of RAMAKRISHNA MISSION, all remittances should be sent to the General Secretary. Donations are exempt from income tax under Section 80G(5)(vi) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 vide order no. DIT (E) /848 /BE /106/89-70 dated 12.01.2009, which has been further extended in perpetuity by letter no. DIT (E) 2823 /BE /109 /89-70 dated 26.06.2011. Our Income tax PAN is AAAR1077P.

Under Schedule 1, Article 53, Exemption (b) of the Indian Stamp Act, charitable institutions are not required to issue a stamped receipt for donation.





## Factcheck- Is there a case for vegetarianism?

(warning: this article has political content)

Mr Sudiptamohan Mukhopadhyay

I was sitting in a Church on a Christmas day, admiring the beautiful architecture, before the service began. Soon, The Bishop delivered his speech from his holy podium. I was listening and to my utter surprise the lecture soon turned into a political rhetoric, you know, Syria, Donald Trump etc. I was surprised because (I must admit, this was my first time in a Church on a Christmas day) I did not expect that! I was expecting something more of the holy scripture etc.

It occurred to me that every religion has a political narrative. However, in the context of the world politics, a wider and pressing issue to deal with is food. In a country of 1.4 billion people, Indians are collectively sharing a large part of the carbon footprint.

A few days after the COVID19 hit the world, I was on my way to work, listening to BBC radio 4. A fierce debate was going on regarding, whether British farmers and the government should transform the grasslands into forest. I came to know the fact that, before industrialisation there were roughly around 6 trillion trees on the planet, now we have three. The rapidly dropping bee population which drives the world's agricultural produce can lead to an extinction of human population!

By now we know, 85% share in primary energy consumption in the world comes from petroleum (34%), coal (27%), and natural gas (24%). We do not have an easy solution to tackle it. However, a large part of this fossil fuel and water consumption is due to food production and related transport.

Two years ago, Nature published an article emphasizing the need for shifting away from animal product consumption in relation to a projected world population of 10 billion by the middle of this century. By 2050 (that's only 30 years away!) we will need the equivalent of three planets resources to meet our current needs. An 8 oz chicken breast takes over 542 litres of water to produce. Enough to fill your bathtub 6.5 times. We are currently losing 800,000 hectares of mangrove every year, grazing occupies 26% of the earth's ice-free terrestrial surface, 2019 was the second warmest year on record, the atmospheric CO2 concentration is 418ppm as compared to an estimated 220ppm during the beginning of 18th century. The alarming fact is, however, The annual rate of increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide over the past 60 years is about 100 times faster than previous natural increases, such as those that occurred at the end of the last ice age 11,000-17,000 years ago. Have you heard about those hundreds of dead whales washing up on the shores of almost every coastal country, what is that all about?

Sorry to deliver the bad news to you. But I have some good news for you as well. By eating vegetarian food for a year, you could save the same amount of emissions as taking a small family car off the road for 6 months. A vegetarian diet requires two-and-a-half times less than the amount of land needed to grow food, compared to a meat-based diet. "After adjustment for sex and age, an average 2,000 kcal high meat diet had 2.5 times as many GHG emissions than an average 2,000 kcal vegan diet." (Climatic Change,2014).

UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) produced a document prepared by 107 scientists explaining how we can fight climate change by switching to vegetarianism or veganism. You will be pleased to know; numerous reforestation projects are under way worldwide. Under Paris climate agreement, India is planting trees at a rapid pace to fulfil the pledge of increasing her forestland by 99 million hectares by 2030. An 8000 km long 'wall of trees' being planted across Africa, from Senegal to Ethiopia. The Woodland trust in UK is planting 64 million trees in next 10 years. In Myanmar, drones are planting trees! Two people working with 10 drones theoretically can plant 400,000 trees a day! Tom Crowther at the Swiss university ETH Zürich estimated that with £240billion we can plant one trillion trees, that is by far the cheapest solution towards climate change. Artificial intelligence supported land topography studies suggests that two thirds of all land (8.7billion ha), could support forest. 5.5 billion of that already has got forest. Of the 3.2 billion hectares of treeless land, 1.5billion ha is used for growing food, leaving 1.7billion of potential forest land in areas that were previously degraded or sparsely vegetated. I am trying to do my part. We in our family started using vegan produces from the supermarket which we have never done before (Sohini and Josh, our young vegan stalwarts, would be very happy to know that). We rarely buy red meat these days, may be once a month. I know, that is still bad. But I am trying, it is difficult with growing kids at home.

My point is, there is a big political commitment to be made here. We do not have time. The mess that we have created so far must be fixed by us. We cannot leave that to our children. Social media trolls are downplaying the initiative, at their peril.



## Dipak Kundu

Nearing the Sunset of my life,  
Can I tell you something, dear wife?

*The rising Sun, with the ripples of fun,  
Five decades of scorching Sun,  
You kept me always in a spin.*

*Said many a things as easy as flying a kite;  
But NO, nothing at all if you are in my sight,  
'Cause you wouldn't let go without a fright.*

Your delicacies kept me away from the kitchen,  
Contented and happy;  
Never learnt how to cook, even a mere chicken.

You kept all the finances to yourself,  
Never I dared to dwell in that or delve;  
Everything I said was put on the shelf.

*The Sun, now subdued with a wiser know,  
But with the finesse of a crimson glow.  
Never agreed on whatever it was,  
How we kept together, I don't know.*

*Untold love is there I know;  
but I dare not to show.*

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07889522530 to receive an invite



## **Ananda Misra-as I knew him**

**12th July 1936 – 10th Nov 2019**

**Mr Dipak Kundu**

Our friendship with Mr & Mrs Misra goes back a long way and I am indebted to him for introducing me to the Durga Puja at The Parade in Cardiff in an early October evening of 1978.

Ananda babu was from Kulti, Burdwan district in West Bengal and his wife Manju was from Uttarpara in Howrah. He was a civil engineer by profession and came to Cardiff for study, as far as I remember. He then joined the engineering trade as a freelance Civil engineer, mostly in the construction area of work. He travelled around for his work, made Cardiff his home and never looked back since the 60s. At a later stage Manju also joined the work force as an assistant with a Pharmacist.



He and his wife were pretty amicable and easy-going people with two loving sons. They had limited number of friends but with strong bond with the ones they were very comfortable with. They never missed any event which had a 'Bengali' tag with it. Manju Misra used to arrange Puja affairs on the stage during Durga Puja and Kali puja and she learned all puja related rituals from Mrs Acharya.

They were very close to the Bengali community from the beginning and were attached to Bengali Society of Cardiff. He showed interest in the pujas, helped Acharyada (Dr H K Acharya) in performing Durga Pujas in the 90s. He used to go to Acharyada's home for learning about the puja rituals. He performed many Kali Pujas including the first one in 2001 and a few Saraswati Pujas for WPC. WPC always remains indebted to him for his contribution to WPC. His Pujas always involved members and particularly his Kali Pujo and "Boli" were the ones to remember.

Both were very strong supporter of Wales Puja committee and for years Ananda da took time off from his work to do Durga Puja with Dr Acharya and Kali puja on his own.

Lately his wife Manju became unwell with memory problems and she had to go in a care home. Ananda da went to visit her every day even after he stopped driving and got public transport. Sometimes I found him walking on Albany Road for his shopping. I stopped a few times, had coffee with him before dropping him at his Rhiwbina home.



Both Ananda da & Manju in their final months needed prolonged hospital treatments for their illness. Unfortunately, Mr Misra expired in November 2019 and then Mrs Misra in April 2020. We lost a good friend and hope they find their peace in their heavenly abode.







## The leading lights of WPC



# DURGA PUJA 2019

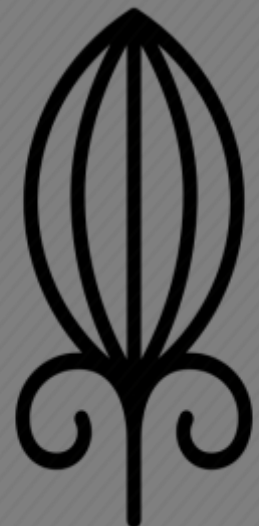
















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**DIWALI PARTY**  
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KALI PUJA 2019









# SARASWATI PUJA 2020

WALES PUJA COMMITTEE



SARASWATI PUJA  
PENYRHEOL COMMUNITY  
CENTRE  
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SUNDAY ;2ND FEBRUARY 2020



PUJA - 2-3.30PM. AGM -- 4-4.30 PM.  
5-6 PM - CULTURAL PROGRAMME  
6.30 PM - REFRESHMENT







## Heritage Lottery Celebrations



Dr Susupta Chaudhuri





## ম্যাজিশিয়ান।

(‘ম্যাজিক জানে মা’ কথাবন্ধনীটি কবি কৌশিক দাসের থেকে চুরি করা। যারা কৌশিককে পড়েছেন তাঁরা জানেন কেমন স্নিগ্ধ ছন্দে মন নিঙড়ানো কবিতা লেখেন তিনি। তাঁর বিত্তময় কথার জগৎ থেকে সিঁদ কেটে নিয়ে এলাম কথা ত্রয়ীকে)

এক লহমায় খিদের হৃদিশ, কখন গরম গা,  
কি হয়েছে বুঝতে পারে বিনা কাড়া রা।  
যতই লুকাই ব্যথার কথা, গোপন থাকে না,  
হাত বোলালেই অসুখ উধাও, ম্যাজিক জানে মা।

ঠোকর খাওয়া ভগ্ন জাহাজ নোঙর করার মাটি,  
ভেজাল ভরা এই দুনিয়ায় ষোলোআনা খাঁটি।  
কাজের মাঝে ফোনের ধমক ‘আগে কিছু খা!’  
বস বোঝে না মা ঠিক বোঝে, ম্যাজিক জানে মা।

হৃদয় যখন ফুটছে লাভায় নষ্টপ্রেমের ক্ষোভে,  
একটা আঁচল অপেক্ষাতে কখন বাছা শোবে।  
সামলে নেওয়ার অটুট খুঁটি বেচাল হলে পা,  
সব ভুলে ফের সামনে দেখি, ম্যাজিক জানে মা।

আজকে যে ফ্রেস, কাল আনফ্রেস, সমকালের রীতি,  
মত অমিলে গ্রুপ থেকে ‘লেফ্ট’ রোজের পরিস্থিতি।  
বিকেলবেলায় ভীষণ বকে সন্ধ্যাবেলায় চা,  
একজনই দেয়, রাগ কমানোর ম্যাজিক জানে মা।

ছোটবেলায় রোদের ছায়া, বড়’র বাতিঘর,  
ওই কোলে ফের ভরসা ফেরে ভীষণ ঝড়ের পর।  
শর্তবিহীন হাতের প্রলেপ সময় দিলে ঘা,  
কেমন করে ‘ঠিক হবে সব’, ম্যাজিক জানে মা।

স্মৃতির দেশে চলে গেলেও আঁচল পাতাই থাকে,  
হাত বাড়ালেই টের পাওয়া যায় না ছেঁওয়া সেই মা’কে।  
হাজার দোষেও বলে না যে অন্য কোথাও যা,  
সবকিছুতেই ভালো দেখার ম্যাজিক জানে মা।

ভগবানের চেয়েও বেশি ম্যাজিক জানে মা।

## আর্থতীর্থ

## ভারতবর্ষ

কেশব মিশ্র টিকি নেড়ে সুর লাগালো গলায়  
ভোরের আলো আকাশ জুড়ে রঙের তুলি বোলায়  
গোলাম হোসেন দাঁড়িয়ে আছেন মন্ত্র সপ্তকে  
সুর মিলিয়ে ভোরের পাখি উঠলো তখন ডেকে  
ওস্তাদজী আলাপ করেন বিলাসখানি টোড়ী  
আকাশ বাতাস ডরল সুরে আহা মরি মরি  
শিষ্য কেশব মধ্যলয়ে বন্দিশ যেই ধরে  
গাছের পাতায় রাতের শিশির টুপ করে ওই পড়ে  
ওস্তাদজী ডেরবীতে পঞ্চমহুর বোনে  
গুরুশিষ্যের যুগলবন্দী নদী কেবল শোনে  
তালিম শেষে ওস্তাদজী বলেন-বেটা জিও  
এই আমাদের ভারতবর্ষ একেই চিনে নিও।

- শর্মিষ্ঠা দাশগুপ্ত

## মাতৃঋণ

তোমায় দেবার কথা ছিল রইল মনে খেদ  
লক্ষ আমার স্থির ছিল না হয়নি লক্ষভেদ  
লক্ষব্রষ্ট আমি পাপিষ্ঠ পথের ধারে তুমি  
ধুলোয় পড়ে কাঁদছে মাগো আমার জন্মভূমি  
মাগো আমার দুঃখিনী মা তোমায় দিলাম কি  
মাতৃঋণের দায় মেটাতে তোমায় বেচেছি  
কেউ বা নিল বনস্পতি কেউ বা নিল মাটি  
খাদের মুখে দাঁড়িয়ে আছি কোন রাস্তায় হাটি  
কেউ কিনেছে জাতপাত আর কেউ কিনেছে ধর্ম  
কেউ বা হেঁকে নিলাম ডাকে বুদ্ধি না তার মর্ম  
এবার তবে মিটিয়ে দেব মাতৃঋণের দায়  
যা বেচেছি কিনে নিয়ে রাখবো তোমার পায়ে।

- শর্মিষ্ঠা দাশগুপ্ত

## পূজোর ছড়া - ১

কি যে আছে বরাতে  
একমাস পরে নাকি  
আসবে মা ধরাতে

মা এলো না কোথা থেকে

এসে গেল মলমাস  
আস্থানে কি গরম  
মানুষেরা হাঁসফাস

কোথাও বন্যা হ’য়ে  
জনপদ তুবাছে  
পাহাড়ে বরফ গলে  
সকলেই ভুগছে

কোন বনে জঙ্গলে  
দাবানল জ্বলেছে  
পশুপাখি জীবকুল  
ব্রাহ্মি ব্রাহ্মি বলছে

মহালয়া হ’ল শেষ  
আকাশ তো ফরসা  
মর্তে আসতে তবু  
পায় না মা ডরসা

শিব বলে রোসো উমা  
একমাস পরে যাও  
করোনার প্রকোপটা  
কি দাঁড়ায় বুঝে নাও।

- শর্মিষ্ঠা দাশগুপ্ত

## পূজোর ছড়া - ২

এ বছরে পঞ্জিকা  
জানিয়েছে নাকি  
শারদীয় উৎসব  
একমাস বাকি

আস্থিন মলমাস  
শুভকাজ নাস্তি  
যা হবার পরে হোক  
হৈ চৈ মস্তি

হৈ চৈ সেরে নিই  
পূজো পরে হোক না  
তখন মস্তি হবে  
যে পারে সে রোখ না

ক্রমবে কে আমাদের  
নেই কারো সাধ্য  
পেটো বোমা আছে জমা  
মেনে নিতে বাধ্য

মেনে নেবে দুগ্ধাও  
জানিস তো সকলে  
মায়ের অস্ত্রগুলো  
আমাদের মখলে।

- শর্মিষ্ঠা দাশগুপ্ত

## পূজোর ছড়া - ৩

দুগ্ধাপূজোর কেনাকাটা  
সেরেছি অন-লাইনে  
মুখে নাকে ঠুলি এঁটে  
দোকান পাটে যাই-নে

পূজো স্পেশাল রান্নাগুলো  
ইউটিউবে দেখেছি  
পূজোর ক দিন রাঁধবো কি কি  
ভেবেচিন্তে রেখেছি

দেখবো ঠাকুর টি.ভি. স্ক্রিনে  
ষষ্ঠী থেকে নবমী  
ডাবছ নাকি ছাড়ব কিছু  
সে রান্না তো নই আমি

দশমীতে মনে মনেই  
কোলাকুলি সেরে নেব  
ইচ্ছেমতো মিষ্টি যত  
ডার্চুয়ালে খাইয়ে দেব।

- শর্মিষ্ঠা দাশগুপ্ত

POETRY CORNER

## । বন্দী।

মাঝরাত। কবি অবশ্য জেগে পড়ছেন।  
ভুলে যাওয়া মানুষের নিভস্ত জীবনের খেই ধরছেন।  
নিখাদ ঘামের কথা, নিরস গদ্যে লেখা,  
কিছু কিছু কষ্টেরা এতই বিষাদে একা,  
কবিতা তাদের কাছে যেতে ভয় পায়।  
এমন সময়.. খট খট খট.. তার সাথে বুটের আওয়াজ,  
অ-তিথিতে ওরা কারা এলো দরজায়?

কবি দোর খুলে দেন। দাঁড়িয়ে পেয়াদা,  
যাদের কাজেই সব বাধাদের বাঁধা,  
কাজে ও কথায় যারা শাসকের অনুসারী নয়।  
কবি যে বাধ্য নয়, কথারা স্রোতের ঠিক বিপরীতে বয়,  
সে খবর সর্ববিদিত। ভীত রাষ্ট্র তাই মাঝরাতিরে,  
তুলতে এসেছে তাঁকে গোটা বাড়ি ঘিরে।

কবি হাসলেন। মুদু নয়, হো হো আওয়াজে,  
যেন এসে পড়েছেন একদল জোকায়ের মাঝে।

রাইফেল বোমা কিছু মেলেনি সে ঘরে,  
তবে বই পান্ডুলিপি.. কিছু গদ্য আর কিছু কবিতার,  
পাওয়া গেছে। বারণ না মানা সেই খাজু ইস্তেহার,  
গ্রেপ্তারির পক্ষে যথেষ্ট প্রমাণ। কাজেই হাতকড়া হাতে,  
যদিও অনাবশ্যক ছিলো সেই ব্যবস্থাপনা  
কবি বাধা দেননি, বচসা হয়নি কোনো সেই মাঝরাতে,  
যদ্যপি বহু বই ছিড়ে গিয়েছিলো সেই খানাতল্লাশে।

কালো ভ্যানে তোলা হলো কবিকে হাঁচড়ে।  
ড্রাইভার ভাবছিলো,  
কি পাগল লোক, অ্যারেস্টে গলা খুলে হাসে!

দেশ জুড়ে লকডাউন, কবিটি লকআপে,  
পেয়াদারা রোজ এসে শিরদাঁড়া মাপে।  
কবির পরোয়া নেই বারে বারে জিজ্ঞাসাবাদে,  
এ যেন বৈঠকখানা, গারদে কাটান দিন হাসি আল্লাদে,  
সন্ধানী কূট চোখ সন্দেহে হয়ে ওঠে আগুন-গরম,  
কবি চলেছেন হেসে।  
একদিন সহ্যের পেরোলো তাদের সীমা,  
বিরক্তি রাগ আর হিংসামাখানো গলা চড়িয়ে চরম,  
তারা জিজ্ঞেস করে  
'রাষ্ট্রের দ্রোহী তুমি। এইখানে একেবারে একা,  
হাত পা ও ভাঙি যদি,  
আশরীর ভরে দিই সিগারেট ছাঁকা,  
কিংবা সুইসাইড বলে সিলিং এর থেকে দিই বডি বুলিয়ে,  
আমাদের কেউ কিছু বলবে না।  
বরং ঘুরতে পারি বুক ফুলিয়ে,  
পদোন্নতিও হবে তুরন্ত গতিতে। কত ঘটে, ঘটেছে অদূর অতীতে,  
সেই সব মনে করে তবু হাসি আসে?  
পাস না কি সীমাহীন ভয়?'

প্রশ্নটা শুনে কবি প্রথমেই হেসে নেন গলা খুলে।  
তারপর স্বরে এনে দৃঢ় প্রত্যয়,  
বলে দেন...

'আমাকে বন্দী করেছেন আপনারা।  
আমার কবিতাকে নয়।  
তারা তো বাইরে আছে,  
মাটিঘেঁষা মানুষের যন্ত্রণার সাথী হয়ে..'

জানলাবিহীন ঘরে দমকা হাসির হাওয়া ফের যায় বয়ে।

## আর্যতীর্থ

## । বর্ষাতি।

ফিরতে হবে তোমার কাছে ফেরত আসার কথার খোঁজে,  
অশান্ত মন যুগের সাথে উপায়বিহীন একলা যোবে  
অস্ত্রবিহীন, বর্ম ফুটো, ঠুটো কলম, ভিতু কালি,  
ধর্ম যখন শক্তিশালীর ভয় দেখাবার চাবুক খালি,  
অন্যরকম বলা তো দূর, ঠোঁটের মুদু নড়াও বারণ,  
দেশকে ভালোবাসাই যখন রাষ্ট্রদ্রোহের প্রধান কারণ,  
বলছে কারা জন্মভূমির যা জানো তা সবই মিছা,  
দেগে দিয়ে কাঁটাতারে, পাল্টাবো তার খোলনলিচা,  
বিকৃত সে অবয়বে আনখশির ধর্ম লেখা,  
আলোর খোঁজে কোথায় যাবো, এই কুয়াশায় যায়না দেখা,  
শিরদাঁড়া ঠিক রাখতে গেলে পড়ছে যখন লাথি পেটে,  
তখন শুধু তুমিই আছো, যার ভরসায় চলছি হেঁটে,  
অন্ধজনে দেহ আলো, প্রায়মৃত দেশ বাড়াচ্ছে হাত,  
বোবা ধরা এই প্রহরে, কথা জোগাও রবীন্দ্রনাথ।

মারীর কোপে দেশে যখন উর্ধ্বতম রোজের শিকার,  
শত্রুমাফিক মন্ত্রে তখন দেশ ছিড়ে যায় ধর্মবিকার।  
ঈশ্বরও যে মানুষ-অধীন, সময় এখন সেটাই ভোলে,  
পূণ্যতিথির অতিথিদের নিস্পৃহ কান কান্নারোলে,  
ভাতের চেয়ে অতীত বড়, এমন দাবী দাবায় থিদে  
বেঁকছে তেমন ইতিহাসও, বর্তমানের যা সুবিধে,  
ডেমোক্রেসির ডেমন ক্রেজি ধ্বংস করে স্তম্ভগুলো,  
সাহিত্য আজ লালার জুগুৎ, সাবেক কলম চূপ ও নুলো।  
এমন সময় দাঁড়িয়ে যদি কারোর কথা সত্যি লেখে  
রাষ্ট্র ঠিকই টের পেয়ে যায়, মশাল ধরার ফুলকি দেখে,  
ফল যে সেটার হয় না ভালো, জ্ঞাতব্য তা সাম্প্রতিকই,  
খারাপ থেকেও যায়না লেখা, এখন আমার দেশ ভালো নেই।  
ফুরিয়ে যাওয়া কথায় কি আজ মুড়িয়ে যাবো নটের মতন,  
অষ্টপ্রহর সমঝোতাতে বেঁচে থাকাই হয় জ্বালাতন,  
আশার কুটো পাচ্ছি না যে, অন্ধ করা এমন ঝড়ে,  
আমায় শেখাও আবার তুমি, প্রদীপ জ্বালায় কেমন করে।  
সত্যিগুলো ভাসিয়ে নিতে নামছে যখন মিছের প্রপাত,  
কলম যেন না ভিজে যায়, বর্ষাতি হও রবীন্দ্রনাথ!

## আর্যতীর্থ

শুধু তুমি  
এই তুমি আর আমি,  
তার মাঝে তিস্তা,  
ওঠা সূর্য জাগে আমার মাঝে,  
শেষ সম্বল নিয়ে চলে যায়, তোমার সাঁঝের পরিবেশটা।

মনের নিভতে,  
বসে এক মন,  
তুমি ছাড়া কেউ নয়,  
এত আপন।

সঙ্গ সখে সঙ্গী তুমি,  
মন কেড়েছিলে এক বিকেলে,  
দেখে ছিলাম তোমায় আগুন রঙে,  
ভালোবাসার সাতকাহনে।

যে সমপানে চেয়েছি তোমায়,  
ছলাক ছলাক তালে,  
কোথায় তুমি হারিয়ে গেলে,  
অজানা হওয়ার পালে।

নিভতে তুমি আজ ও আছো,  
মন মাঝে তুমিই আপন,  
শুকনো আকাশ ভিজে গেল,  
তোমার দিন বদলে।।



