



THE OLIPHANT

No. 111

WELHAM BOYS' SCHOOL

7th March, 1991

THINK ABOUT IT

*With all its sham
and drudgery,
The world is still
a beautiful place.*

Editorial

Lord thou has brought us refreshed in mind and body to Welham. Help us to maintain the honour.....Allright ! alright ! so it's the beginning of another wonderful term. Awe! I'mon guys, I mean look at these jaws. Don't let them drop that low. By the way before I go any further..... 'Yours Truly' (very obviously Saurav Sinha) is on study leave and I have taken over office for the interim periodwell, let's just say I am your new Editor, for the time being at least.

The advent of a new term will forever be synonymous with weir hair do's, a small lecture (no sarcasm intended) at Assembly and the 'Desi' Rahul Roy's were seen hurrying to the barber shop. The barber mumbled angrily under his breath he made another one of those long tresses history (he's not too amused). When reports last came in he, that is the already over worked barber, was seriously contemplating handing in his resignation. Now that's getting really hairy!

The basketball courts are once again the centre of attraction. Whether the Welhamites throng to see the basketball matches or the sisters across the border is a debatable topic.(I am a dead man for this one). Honestly the presence of a large number of the fair sex has definitely worked wonders for our

basketball Captain. (when last seen he was busy trying to defy the law of gravity).

There's one thing that I'd like to include in this editorial, I know ! I know !, it's sick I mean only the thought of if, but then I can't help but mention. Its it about the I.S.C. (Guys, would you stop kicking me).The mood reflected by most stibble faced almost 'ex-Welhamites', is that of seriousness.That thing (I'm not taking any chaces)having been postponed has given them some more time at Welham (your'e supposed to be happy, remember) So here's wishing all of you(XIllites) a happy prolonged ! stay at Welham.

P.S. only the other day I was briefed on how handy the OLIPHANT comes after meals (I guess they meant their hands) Drop in suggestions. No promises but we will certainly make a genuine effort.

—Varun Bhaskar

Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed,

I used to think that the LRC was terrific for snoozing, now it's mind-bogglingly fabulous ! Imagine, comfy sofas to sleep on, complete with little bedside tables (I'll be moving in one day. I'll notify everyone of the change of address soon)

Yours Movingly,

—Thrilled

Dear Ed.

What is this some kind of Japanese take over? First an oversized, Bonsai-looking plant is placed in front of the LRC, then we get rock gardens near the new lab-block and under the tree in front of the tuckshop. Next thing you know we'll be saying 'Sayonara' instead of Good-Bye.

Yours etc,
Jap

Through the Key Hole

SS to a quivering student "You're an AIDS case—Incurable"

"I will write some notes on T.M.S.S. and post them to you but will you understand my handwriting."

Gurjot—"It's okay—we'll send it to the Survey of India to find out if the script belonged to the Mohanjodaro era"

Vikram—"It's probably older than that"

be told you don't seem any better educated than anyone else, and made to consider boarding a 'stinking waste of money'.

'Elitism' is not the catch-word for an anti-public school stance, as one did imagine. Most detractors realise the specious reasoning of most arguments put forth, but with 'Ignorance' and 'low-awareness' as key characteristics of boarders, they strike home.

I am reconciled to accepting that many of the guys at boarding schools (often called preppies) stay shockingly unaware of the world outside, in comparison with others from average Bombay or Delhi schools. However this is not something that cannot be helped.

I wish Welhamites would realise that the LRC is not a luxury, but given the circumstances, an absolute necessity. A hyper-active daily routine should not be at the cost of general reading/learning. Being widely read, is a mere prerequisite in this holy rat race.

I'd encourage the Principal to step up the video screening of various environmental and global-issue-related productions, in the audio-visual room. Talks by visiting professionals, and group discussions on assorted topics, would help.

Welhamites live right on campus, right among staff members, right next to a splendid resource centre, then how is it that they're great at charming babes, but when it comes to serious socio-economic, scientific, philosophical, literary or environmental discussions, they fail to impress?

—**Aresh Shirali ISC '89**

P.S. : Overheard. "It you want the right pronunciation, ask a preppie; don't ask him the meaning."

Vishwajeet Walia (Ex 245) doing the Medical Course (1st year) at Dr. Ambedkar Dental College, Bangalore.

Obituary

Our heartfelt condolences to Mrs. V. Kapoor who lost her father during the holidays.

From the Old Boys' Desk

Dear Editor,

It's not my intention to harp on about priorities and values. I trust the Welham staff with such edifying talk. Every Welhamite, on joining college, will inevitably be hurried under a microscope, to be examined as a specimen of public school produce.

Public School chaps cannot be generalised in terms of behaviour, knowledge or outlook, but others seek a weird pleasure in trying to, all the same. You will find yourself being sneered at and stigmatized as 'snobs' pseudos', 'lollypop brats' and so on. You'll

The Literary Affairs of Welham Lucky People

Luck favours those who favour it,

Luck favours the brave,

Luck favours the men of tomorrow,

Luck favours all not living in a grave !!

*But leave aside these legend like words,
Just a piece of advice.*

Even if it costs you dear,
Never behave like defeated mice,

Show down your opponents,
Be rash and at times be nice,
It's better to live a day with happy moments
Than to live a life at a price.

Always fight for the innocent
Never cower before insolent might.
For honesty and truth are the essence of life
Care not about every plight !!

God is always with you,
The saviour himself is by your side
Give two hoots to anything wrong,
He himself will be a guide.

Believe in the almighty,
He's the only one you can actually trust,
He'll avert any calamity,
You should believe in him, you must !!

Luck favours men with God,
Luck favours men doing right,
You are no stranger to God,
In his big blue sky, a flying kite.

—Kirtiman Singh

Sounds of Silence

Hello darkness my old friend
I've come to talk with you again
Because the vision—softly creeping
Left its seed while I was sleeping
And the vision, that was planted in my brain
Still remains,
Within the sounds, of silence.

In restless dreams I walked alone,
Narrow streets of cobbled stone,
Beneath the halo of a street lamp,
I turned my collar to the cold and damp,
Then my eyes, were struck by the flash of a new light,
That split the night
And touched—
The sounds of silence.

And in the naked light I saw
Ten thousand people, maybe more
People talking without speaking
People hearing without listening
People writing songs, that voices would never share
No one dare disturb,
The sounds of silence.

"Fools" said I, "you do not know",
"Silence, like a cancer grows",
take my words, that I might teach you,
take my arms, that I might reach you,
But my words like silent raindrops fell,
And kissed the well,
Echoing,
In the wells of silence

And the people bowed and prayed,
 To the neon gods they made,
 And the sign, flashed out its warning,
 In the words that it was forming,
 And the sign said, the words of the prophet,
 are written on the subway walls,
 And tenement halls,
 And whispered—
 In the sounds of silence.

*Hello darkness my old friend
 I've come to talk with you again
 Because the vision—softly creeping
 Left its seed while I was sleeping.
 And the vision, that was planted in my brain
 Still remains,
 Within the sounds of silence.*

The Board Blues

Dark, circled, puffy eyes, Insomania. hallucinations, these are all symptoms of the dreadful carcinoma of the forth coming Board exams. Frantic project making. sleepless night spent worrying about the project marks. Yes, it's that time of the year again.

The tenthies are busy. Busy studying. Busy herding juniors to draw their flow-charts or complete their projects. Busy trying to bunk classes (busy bunking P.T. also until they were recently given official permission). Some are egoistic and think they are really studious. Some practically don't care.

The going gets a little tough for the House Prefects. They have to handle their houses and the ICSE ! But that is where the ninthies come in (that's a different story).

A mutual relationship is born between the teachers and the tenthies: the teachers do the hoping and the tenthies (try to) do the studying. All hope to pass some will, some won't. Only the Boards shall tell.....

—**Ashish N. Deb Roy**

Welham Now !!

- * We welcome to the school staff :
 Mrs. P. Chandra (Hindi Deptt.), Mr. Rana (P.T.I.), Miss A. Singh (Junior School)
- * Construction is going on in various parts of the school campus. The new lab block is on the verge of completion and the steps behind the Art School have also been renovated. The new games store is being renovated. Little noocks and crannies

of the campus have also been land-scaped.

* Mr. M. Seth, Mr. Sharma (sec. to Mr. Kandhari) and Mr. Gupta (Actt.) were married during the holidays. Our best wishes to them.

* The following inductions have been made in the Board of the Oliphant as the former Board members are busy taking their respective Board exams (official revamping will be done in April) :

Varun Bhaskar	(acting Editor)
Ritesh Khanna	(The arena of sports)
Aviral Singh	(Hindi Section & Brain Teasers)

* The Council Basketball Tournament started on the 18th of Feb and ended on the 21st of Feb.

* Mrs. Torrcs (Matron of Woodseats) fractured her wrist. We wish her a speedy recovery.

* Mrs Ritu Sharma (daughter of the Bursar) is getting married on the 11th of March. We wish her a happy married life.

* The Cricket season has begun.

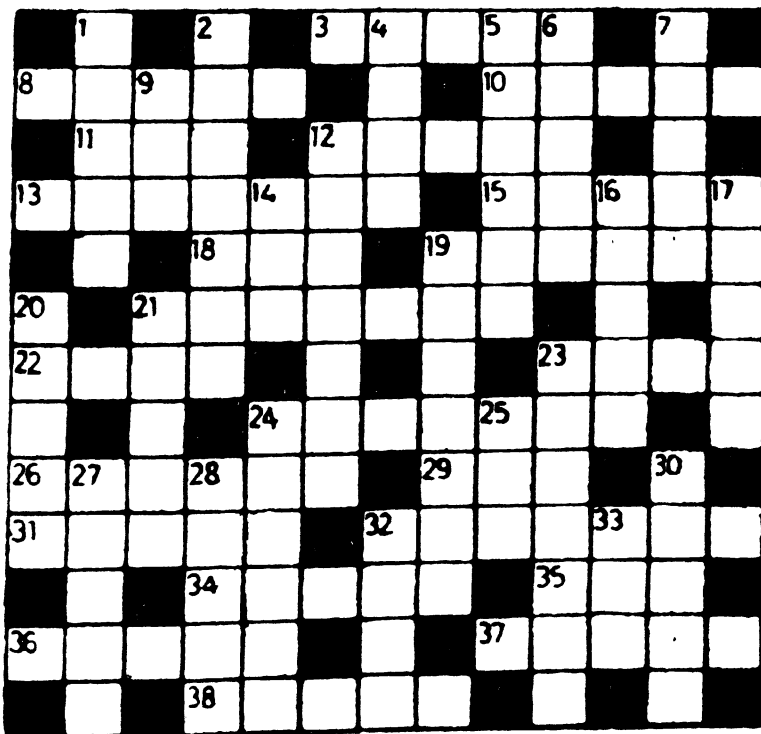
* Mr. A. Basu who was injured in an accident, will be resuming his duties soon.

* We wish closses 10 and 12 all the best for their board exams.

* Votes were cast for the new PrefectBody, and the following were appointed :

Ranjeet Bedi has been elected Secretary of the Commerce Society and Ashish Sharma as the Treasurer. Our congratulations to them.

- Anurag Kumar (School Captain)
- Kabeer Bajaj (Prefect)
- Deepak Kataria (Prefect)
- Udit Mittal (Prefect)
- Ritesh Khanna (Prefect)
- Ranjeet Bedi (Prefect)
- Rohit Sinha (Prefect)
- Shailendra Sharma (HC-Cauvery)
- Varun Bhaskar (HC-Ganga)
- Puneet Mahajan (HC-Krishna)
- Vishal Swaika (HC-Jamuna)



Across

- 3 Not fresh (5). 8 Ballots (5).
- 10 Roof edge (5). 11 Baked dish (3). 12 Small fish (5). 13 Facets (7). 15 Ancient remain (5).
- 13 Standard (3). 19 Year-book (6). 21 Relies. (7). 22 Den (4). 23 Feathered creature (4). 24 Twisted repeatedly (7). 26 Item of jewellery (6). 29 Rodent (3).
- 31 Eastern instrument (5). 32 Main (7). 34 Rescues (5). 35 Head of corn (3). 36 Undress (37). 37 Lover's meeting (5). 38 Vends (5).

DOWN

- 1 Small wood (5). 2 Rail support (7). 4 Strikes lightly (4). 5 Acquires knowledge (6). 6 Consumed (5). 7 TV, press, etc. (5). 9 Impudence (3). 12 Elongate (5).
- 14 surpass (3). 16 Sensa-

tional (5). Lumps of earth (5). 19 Sticks (7). 20 Card-suit (5). 21 Lump of turfg (7). 23 Superiors (7). 24 Abrade (6). 25 Pale (3). 27 Crowd disturbances (5). 28 Desert watering-place (5). 30 Bog (5). 32 Prison chamber (4). 33 Beam (3)

Baby Boom

Congratulations to:—

- * Mr. and Mrs. N. Bhattacharya on having a baby girl.
- * Mr. and Mrs. S.S. Khaira on having a baby boy.
- * Mr. and Mrs. M. Hannah on having a baby boy.

Obituary

Our heartfelt condolences to Sister Chawla, who lost her mother during the holidays.

Nature's Diary

The Brave and the Cowardly

Many stories and sayings make us believe that tiger and lions are very brave, lambs are very timid, rabbits are cowards, donkeys are fools and pigs very dirty, but these are either misconceptions or have been misinterpreted. These incidents of which I am giving an account support my statement.

Once in a zoo in Russia, a lamb strayed into the cage of a pair of tigers who had never seen a lamb before. On seeing that the lamb was moving towards them fearlessly, they retreated towards the wall with a cowed look. The lamb unaware of the danger carried on looking for his mother. Ultimately when the felines could retreat no further they waved their paws frantically in the air. The unfortunate lamb came too close to them and was struck dead by a blow but the tigers were still too scared to even touch its dead body. So you see how the powerful tigers, the lethal killers of the jungle were intimidated by a small, weak lamb.

The Bear which is thought to be a brutal killer can also be a coward at times. A hunter was once hunting in Lappland when he was suddenly caught by a bear from behind and in the struggle that ensued, the hunter

picked up his gun and taking aim, he pressed the trigger. It clicked on an empty chamber. The strange sound was enough to take the bear by surprise. He left the man alone and stood away thus giving the hunter time to shoot again.

Donkeys get rid of flies and other parasitic insects with the help of their tails or by scratching their bodies against other surfaces. A naughty boy once removed a big tick from a dog and placed it on a donkey's back. The donkey felt irritated and started rolling on the ground, trying to squeeze the insect under its weight. The boy found it quite amusing and took another tick in his hand and walked towards the donkey. The donkey saw the source of his misery and kicked the boy so hard that he landed up in a nearby drain I need not advocate, but a fool cannot show such intelligence.

Rabbits are called cowards because they run away on seeing their enemy but it is the only way they can save themselves from an enemy. They have no claws, no talons, no power, but swift nimble feet which make it difficult for even the fastest hunting hounds to catch up in a race for life. A Python would engulf a white pig instantly whenever it was fed with it in a cage, but if it was fed with a spotted or a piebald pig it would coil up and sit quietly in a very apprehensive manner.

By such instances I am trying to prove that it is instinctively for food or because of some fear that all animals act. An animal can be brave or a coward at times and under certain conditions. It is not necessary that every born tiger will be fearless and courageous, and every born rabbit will be a coward.

—**Gagan Gahlot**

We have in our midst a budding environmentalist. If a lesson is taken from his passionate piece of poetry, perhaps, we could succeed in making this area around us look much prettier with varying hues of green—this revolution could also possibly turn us into edified beings.

*I am a tree
I grow free*

*I am used as oil
for water to boil*

I grow over mountains
 I am planted beside fountains
 I give colour and joy
 To every little boy
 With my roots I hold the soil
 My bark gives you oil
 I grow in the plains
 And adorn city lanes
 For paper I am made into pulp
 And man my fruit does gulp
 To man I give resin and gum
 Who sells it for quite a sum
 For fodder I am used
 By man I am abused
 Oxygen I expire
 But man makes me retire
 My leaves give shade
 Then why cut me with your blade?

—Shwet Sabharwal

Our Caesescues

You may call it the Pigeon Hole, the expanded form of the letters P.H. P.H. rarely fits this as it certainly is a place where one can dump anything regardless of the order they are dumped in.

One may also replace PH with the Pest-infected House. Every outsider considers residents of PH pests, as they are ready to bore anyone with their wise 'iracks.'

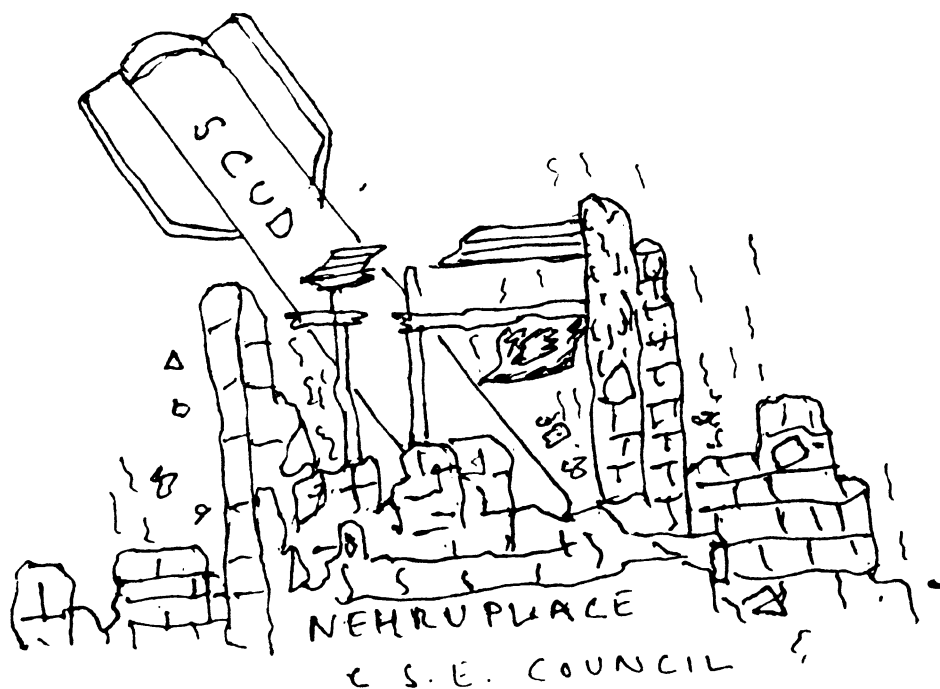
People more interested in what's happening around the world might refer to it as the Patriot House. Certainly PH's inhabitant's can destroy all the 'Scuds' fired from the other parts of the school.

Well now we come to the real name. What does PH actually stand for. Many people may still not know what it stands for. It stands for PRINCIP but wait ! Here too lies an ambiguity. It may be Principle House. It has its reason too. Boys of PH are seriously men of principles.

However I would like to tell you that it stands for PRINCIPAL HOUSE certainly this is the principal house as the principal people of this school dwell in this elite place.

Whatever it is, we are less bothered about its name. We are more interested in what goes on in this place. To an outsider (of PH) this place is a mystery. He is always eager to know what these cuirous looking beds-cum-study-cum-wardrobes (I mean the bunks) are. To a new comer these bunks are difficult to adjust to the longs for those beds of Triveni where one could just stump down Here it's different. If a person comes tired

IF WISHES WERE HORSES...



[Handwritten signature]

from a hard day's work he has to climb the vertical ladders to reach his place of rest (the bunks have ladders too). As a result boys who come fatigued generally convert them study to a make shift bed. Improvisation is common in PH.

PH is no place suffering from Acro phobia, courtsey-once again the bunks. Many a times new comers have been victims of the bunks. Unlike in Triveni where one had to just step down from his bed, over here he has to be more careful. One false step and there may be a case of broken bones.

PH very much is a mystery. A new comer might find it difficult to cope up with the various vagaries of PH. First of all he will have to adopt the PH concept which is very clean and crisp "BEG, BORROW or STEAL". He will have to get accustomed to the innumerable thefts in PH, that vary from shoes to tube light starters. One of the many privileges given to an inhabitant of PH is the MINI CANTEEN which I shall tell you about in the next article. That's all for now. —Ritesh

Obituary

Our heartfelt condolences to Mr. V. Painuli, who lost his father during the holidays.

The Arena of Sports

BASKETBALL—WELHAM WINS COUNCIL BASKETBALL AGAIN.



After a long holiday the Welhamites were back on the games fields. The 1991 Spring Term began on a high note for Welham. The Dehra Dun Council Basketball tournament was held in our school last fortnight. 7 teams; Raja Ram Mohan Roy Academy, St. Joseph's Academy, Cambrian Hall, Marshall's School, Children's

Academy, Moravian Institute and Welham Boys' School participated in the tournament.

The tournament was inaugurated by our principal Mr. Kandhari. Cambrian Hall outwitted Marshall's School in the inaugural match. RRRA had an excellent run to the finals demolishing Moravian Institute and SJA in the Semi-finals. The other finalists were Welham Boys School. Being the hol-

ders they were given a bye to the semi-finals in which they defeated Cambrian Hall.

The grand final was played on a Monday afternoon at the new basketball courts. It was presided over by the Commolt of RIMC. It seemed to be a very interesting and evenly balanced match in the opening minutes of the match. Welham could not convert many shots during the first quarter of the match. The captain complained that the new rings were hard, which foiled many attempts, with the arrival of our special dignitaries Welham pulled itself up and Durgesh moved the score board with a beautiful three pointer. Still it was the mid court game which had to be improved. Our two youngsters Rajesh and Sudhanshu unfortunately did not click on that day and once again Welham had to fall back on Durgesh and Sumeer. Anurag who was down with fever was dearly missed and he had to be content as a mute spectator WBS received a jolt when our skipper Durgesh fell and injured his hand, but he continued to play. Our three point man Sumeer became a victim of the hard rings and could convert only a couple of shots. Nevertheless he was like a rock in the Welham defense.

The opponents played in good spirit with apologies coming in when anyone committed an unintentional foul. Unfortunately they could not rise to the occasion. They were unaware of the counter to the man to man press tactics used by Welham. During the prize distribution Durgesh Bhatia was adjudged TOP SCORER OF THE TOURNAMENT. The final scores were.

RRRA	WBS	An Revoir
25	58	Ritesh
		Durgesh 29

Harinder Mann—The first boy to win the games scarf in Welham.

GAMES CAPTAINS

Last week the various games captains were appointed. All captains vow to raise the level of Welham Sport to greater heights. We wish them our very best.

Anurag Kumar was appointed Cricket Captain for the year 1991-92. Cricket practice is in full flow and the captain hopes to steer his team to a great season.

Udit Mittal, who becomes the new Hockey Captain hopes to continue the Welham tradition of winning the Council Hockey tournament. He also has plans to participate

in tournaments outside Dehra Dun.

Sanjay Paintal takes over from Suvig Sharma as School Soccer Captain. He hopes that Welham's performance in the various tournaments will be better than last year.

Rohit Sinha takes charge of Athletics and anticipates that Welham will perform much better in the coming year. Now he has the services of a full time coach and we hope they strike a winning combination.

Ashish Sharma leads the Basketball team. Last year Welham had an unprecedented 100% win record and Ashish is all set to consolidate our position. There is no dearth of talent in our school especially under the able guidance of Mr. Vachani. Abhishek Gupta and Ranjeet Bedi have been appointed Table Tennis and Lawn Tennis Captains respectively. They plan to acquire coaches to further improve their standard.

Shailendra Sharma takes over from Harinder Mann as Badminton captain. He hopes to make the sport a more popular game and continue the excellent record of



HARINDER MANN — The first boy to win the games scraf in Welham.

Welham.

Varun Bhaskar has been give sole charge of the swimming activities in our school, while Puneet Mahajan will marshall the proceedings on the Volleyball court.

Last but not the least, Prashant Kochar is the new chess captain. We hope that our school will produce some "Vishwanathan Anand's" in the near future.

Our felicitations to all.

—Ritesh Khanna

**तुम आए भी जिन्दगी में,
तो बरसात की तरह ।
और चल दिये तो,
खुली रात की तरह ।**

जिन्दगी में कुछ ऐसे अविस्मरणीय पल होते हैं, जो कभी भी, किसी भी चिर-परिस्थिति में भुलाए नहीं जा सकते । ऐसे क्षणों का स्मरण एकांत में हमारे मनो-मस्तिष्क को घेर कर जकड़ लेता है । मस्तिष्क बौखला उठता है । कण्ठ रुंध जाता है । बेदना की आंधी, अश्रु की सरिता में परिवर्तित हो, आँखों के उद्गम से अविरल गति से बहने लगती है ।

ऐसे में यदि किसी हमसफर की अश्रुधारा से संगम हो जाए तो, आसुओं की निर्झर धारा का प्रवाह धीमा पड़ जाता है । परन्तु.....कब तक ?

दो वर्ष बीत गए उस अप्रत्याशित घटना को । परन्तु याद इतनी ताजा है कि, प्रतीत होता है, जैसे, दो दिवस पूर्व ही मेरा सम्पूर्ण संसार विलीन हो गया हो ।

हमारा कुटुम्ब छोटा था । मैं, मेरी सावित्री सी पत्नी तथा एक कुमुम सी कोमल, महिमामय मुखमण्डल वाली, दुहिता थी । हमें कभी भी किसी भी वस्तु विशेष की कमी न महसूस हुई थी । ऊपर वाले का दिया सब कुछ तो था ही । घनिष्ठता एंव प्रेम का असीम स्रोत सदा हमारे हृदयों में निश्छल भावना से बहता था ।

१९८८ की घटना है । प्रत्येक वर्ष की तरह, इस वर्ष भी मैं पश्चिमी घाट में अपनी खानों का निरीक्षण करने जा रहा था । तभी मेरी फूल सी नन्ही लाडली ने अपनी नुतलाती वाणी में मुझसे 'सपरिवार' जाने का आग्रह किया । मैं इन्कार तो कर ही नहीं सकता था । सो २० दिसम्बर की संध्या को, सप्ताह भर के लिए पश्चिमी घाट के भालवा जंगलों की सीमा के लिए प्रस्थान कर गए । यात्रा से थक जाने के उपरांत हम विश्रामगृह पहुंचते ही निद्रा-विलीन हो गए ।

संध्या के करीब छः बजे थे, दिवस.....हों
.....२१ दिसम्बर, १९८८.....वही तो मेरे
समस्त जीवनकाल का सर्वोपरि अस्वभाविक दिवस था

दिनचर्या के पश्चात, मैं आवश्यक कार्यों की सूची तैयार करने में मग्न था। अनायास ही मेरी पत्नी तथा सुपुत्री ने आकर, खानों की ओर वाली पहाड़ी के समीप भ्रमण करने तथा सूर्यास्त दर्शन का आग्रह किया। कार्य की व्यस्तता मैंने अनुमति दे दी, तथा यह वताना भूल गया कि पहाड़ियों में बारूद की सुरंगें विछी हुई थी, तथा साढे छः बजे उनमें विस्फोट आरम्भ होना था। मेरा माथा ठनका, प्रकाश की स्फूर्ति से मैं द्वार की ओर लपका, कुछ कर्मचारियों से विचार-विनिमय के पश्चात मुझे ज्ञात हुआ, मेरी पत्नी एवं पुत्री को बारूद वाले पहाड़ की ओर जाते देखा गया था। एक छण के लिए तो भेरे चक्षुओं के समक्ष अंधकार छा गया। चेतना सम्भालते ही मैं पहाड़ियों की दिशा में दौड़ गया। प्रकाश के अभाव के कारणवश न जाने मैं कितनी ही वस्तुओं को ठोकर मारे जा रहा था। परन्तु जो ठोकर जिन्दगी तथा समय मुझे मारने जा रहे थे, उमे विचारना, अथवा उसकी सत्यता को गहराई तक पट्टचना मेरी भावनाओं तथा पारिवारिक स्नेह को पराकाष्ठा से परे था। मैंने अपनी घड़ी पर दृष्टि डाली तो थण भर के लिए मैं अवाक् रह गया ठीक छः बजकर अट्ठाइस मिनट हो रहे थे। मिनट-भर मैं मुझे पहाड़ों के पश्चिमी छोर पर मेरी पत्नी एवं पुत्री नजर आईं। उन्हें देखते ही मैं चौख पड़ा। मेरी पत्नी ने धुमकर मेरी ओर प्रश्नात्मक भाव से देखा ही था, कि यकायक उसमे करीब सौ मीटर की दुरी पर एक भयावह विस्फोट हुआ। उस विस्फोट की घड़घड़ाहट से अधिक तेज मुझे दो मर्मयी चोख सुनाई दीं। मेरे कलेजे को चीर गईं। उस धमाके से चहुं ओर वातावरण धुमिल हो उठा, कुछ छणों पारान्त धुआँ फीका पड़ा तथा शन्-शन् मिट चला।

जब मैं घटना स्थल पर पहुँचा, तो मुझे अपनी पुत्री की मृतात्मा के भयावह दर्शन हुए। मेरी पत्नी अधमृत अयस्था में थी। वे दोनों लहलुहान थीं। अनायास मेरे मुख से एक वेदनापूर्ण स्वर उच्चारित हुआ। इस चोख को मुनकर तो यमराज भी भालविहल हो उठे। तभी मेरी पत्नी ने कहराते स्वर में मुझे बुलाया। अपनी नन्हीं मृत वच्ची को सीने में लगाकर मैं पत्नी के समीप पहुँचा। मेरे चक्षुओं पर अश्रुओं का आवरण छा गया मेरे दिन में वेदना तथा आश्चर्य ज्वार उमड़ पड़ा। पल-पल मेरा मस्तिक फटा जा रहा था। जैसे ही मैंने अपनी पत्नी का सर अपनी गोद में

रखा, वह मेरे अश्रु पोंछते हुए बोली, “कही..... सुनी माफ.....करना,.....हमें भूल जाना..... सुखी.....रहना।हे.....ईश्वर।” इतना कहते ही वो काल की अति विलासपूर्ण चिर-निन्द्रा की अथाह मखमली गोद में शीश नवा कर सदा के लिए निद्रित हो गई। मैं विलाप तथा पश्चात्ताप के सिवा कर भी क्या सकता था।

अम्बर के पोलेपन पर लालिमा छाने लगी। देखते ही देखते निशा की लालिमा तथा नीरवता ने आकाश पर अधिकार जमा लिया। ठीक इसी प्रकार मेरी जिम्दगी का भास्कर भी, मेरी पत्नी तथा पुत्री के देहान्त पर सदा के लिए ढल गया। उस तमोरात्रि के नीरस वातावरण में मेरे जीवनपर्यन्त में अंधकार छा गया। न जाने कितनी देर, मैं वहाँ एक निर्जीव प्रतीमा समान बैठा रहा। परमात्मा भी मुझे किन पापों की सजा दे रहा था।

कई घंटों के कालान्तर के पश्चात जब कुछ कर्मचारी टार्च लिए, हमें ढूँढते हुए वहाँ पहुँचे तो मेरे नून को देखकर कहने लगे.....“उफ.....क्या सदमा पहुँचा होगा।कैसे सहम गए हैं..... जैसे कुछ जानते ही न हों।दिल छूकर देखो घड़कन न रुक गई हों।

परन्तु नहीं, मैं इतनी शीघ्र सदमाग्रस्त नहीं हो सकता था। ईश्वर की कुदरत जो थी। न जाने क्यों, उसने मेरे भावुक दिल को पत्थर पर आधारित किया था। दिल रुक ही जाता तो क्या बुरा था। इस भावना और शोक की तूपाग्नि का सामना तो न करना पड़ता। मैं अपने समक्ष के घोर अंधकार में झूठा, घंटों शून्य में शंकाता रहा। जीने का आसरा मिट गया था, परन्तु मुझे जीना था, किसके लिए, यह मालूम नहीं।

मैं आज भी मर-मर के जी रहा हूँ, क्यों, किसलिए किस आधार पर, यह आज भी मालूम नहीं !

‘घर हो गया मैखाना है, हाथ में अधभरा पैमाना है। अरे, रोने का आलम ही, तो यस जमाना है।।

आज मेरे नीरस घर को दर दीवार से मुझे, मेरी पत्नी तथा बेटी की आवाजें पुकारती हैं। कभी-कभी ख्याल आता है कि—

अकेला घर है, क्यों रहते हो यहां ? क्या कहती ? ! क्या देती हैं ? ये दिवारे ! अरे इनको क्या है, हंसने वालों को भी, रुला देती हैं, दीवारें !!

अविरल सिंह

९-अ

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