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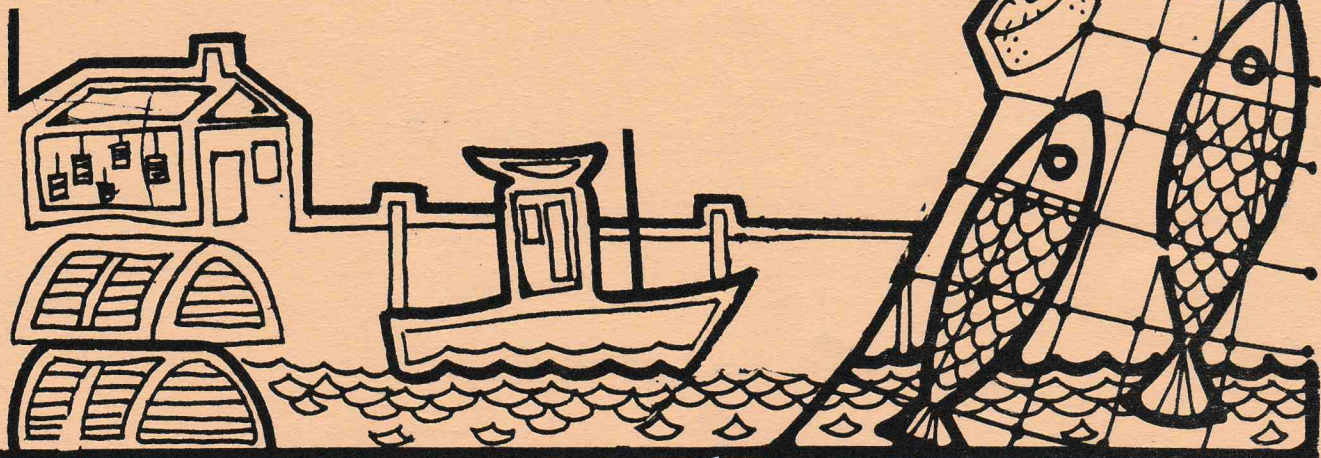
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# PROGRAMME

MAHASASTI: WEDNESDAY 15th OCTOBER	AMANTRAN	08:00 P.M.
MAHASAPTAMI: THURSDAY 16th OCTOBER	MAHASAPTAMI PUJA PUS HPANJALI SANDHYA-ARATI PRASAD BITARAN CULTURAL PROGRAM	09:30 A.M. 12:30 P.M. 08:00 P.M. 08:30 P.M. 09:00 P.M.
MAHASTAMI: FRIDAY 17th OCTOBER	MAHASTAMI PUJA PUSHPANJALI YOGYARAMBHA SANDHYA-ARATI SANDHI PUJA PRASAD BITARAN CULTURAL PROGRAM	09:30 A.M. 12:30 A.M. 02:00 P.M. 07:30 P.M. 08:00 P.M. 08:30 P.M. 09:00 P.M.
MAHANABAMI: SATURDAY 18th OCTOBER	MAHANABAMI PUJA PUSHPANJALI YOGYARAMBHA BHOG BITARAN SANDHYA-ARATI CULTURAL PROGRAM	09:30 A.M. 12:30 P.M. 01:00 P.M. 02:00 P.M. 07:00 P.M. 08:00 P.M.
BIJOYA DASHAMI: SUNDAY 19th OCTOBER	PUJA DARPAN BISARJAN DADHI KARMA SATSANGA PRASAD BITARAN SINDUR UTSAV BIJOYA SANMILANI & JALO JOG	09:00 A.M. 09:30 A.M. 09:30 A.M. 10:00 A.M. 01:00 P.M. 01:30 P.M. 07:00 P.M.
LAKSHMI PUJA: THURSDAY 23rd OCTOBER	PUJA SANDHYA-ARATI PRASAD BITARAN	08:00 P.M. 08:30 P.M. 09:00 P.M.

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THE HINDU SOCIETY OF MANITOBA;  
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WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL PATRONS & VOLUNTEERS FOR HAVING GIVEN US THEIR TIME AND SUPPORT IN THE AREAS OF PUBLISHING, FOOD, DECORATION AND ALL ASPECTS IN THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS GREAT FESTIVAL.

WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK ALL THE CHILDREN WHO HAVE WORKED HARD ALL THROUGHOUT THE DURJA PUJA CELEBRATIONS!!

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# DEVI DURGĀ

## PUJĀ AND FESTIVAL

**Dr. SUNU DAS**

Sultry heat of summer has been drenched and washed away with monsoon rains. The gangetic plain of Bengal is now lush green. Tall KĀS are swinging their heads and lotus are blossoming. Little white flowers with red stalks are strewn over green grass under the SUILI trees. Some fleeting clouds, here and there, are tracing their shadows upon the surface of clear rivers under the dome of deep blue sky. The doors of the HIMĀLAYAS are open. Nature has burst forth with joyous songs of ĀGAMANI'. There is a whisper in the crisp air, 'DEVI DURGA is descending on the earth'. The season is Sharat. In such a backdrop, the tiny hearts of little Bengali people are set in an uncontrollable emotional rhythm, that precipitates into the greatest celebration of all -- the DURGĀ PUJĀ.

The story has it that when king SURATHA having lost his kingdom was wandering in the forest he met RISI MĀRKANDEYA. MĀRKANDEYA consoled the king and narrated to him the creation of goddess DURGĀ which is depicted in our holy scriptures of CHANDI.

The earth was then trampled by ASURAS, the demons. They became so powerful that they even started to occupy the heavens. Gods were threatened and tormented. One day they went to Vishnu, who maintains all creations, to solicit his favour and help so that mighty ASURAS are subdued and peace returns to the heaven. VISHNU was embarrassed. Because the demon-king worshipped VISHNU, and VISHNU being satisfied with his prayer blessed him immortality. He cannot break his promise, Gods seeing themselves left helpless at the hands of ASURAS became furious with anger and revenge. The consolidated fury and wrath of gods transformed into a thunderous force that culminated into the most powerful and luminous image. GODESS DURGĀ emerged with ten hands, the third eye and divine beauty. The heavens trembled. Gods lowered their heads and prayed to the MAHASAKTI. One by one they armoured the hands of DURGĀ with their own invincible weapons, and sent her to conquer the demon-king. DURGĀ fought seven times with him. He was not only a great warrior but also a master illusionist. At the seventh time he made himself disappear inside a nearby buffalo. DURGĀ severed the buffalo's head and outcame the fierce demon-king. So he is called MAHISĀSURA or buffalo-demon. The demon-king, at last, surrendered himself at the feet of goddess DURGĀ and prayed for her mercy.

King SURATHA was the first who introduced DURGĀ PUJĀ on the earth. RĀMCHANDRA worshipped goddess DURGĀ before he went to rescue his wife SITĀ who was kidnapped by RĀVANA. This PUJĀ is called AKĀLBODHAN, and there is a story about it. RĀMA was worshipping with one hundred and eight blue lotus. DURGĀ, in order to test his truthfulness hid one lotus. RĀMA, undaunted and determined, thought to complement the lost lotus with one of his eyes. While he was about to pierce his eye with an arrow goddess DURGĀ appeared and held his hand.

RĀVANA too worshipped DURGĀ to achieve immortality, and that was in summer time before RĀMA did. In fact AKĀLBODHAN, RĀMA'S PUJĀ became traditional DURGĀ PUJĀ festival of Bengal whereas RĀVANA'S PUJĀ remained neglected as the unceremonious BĀSANTI PUJĀ.

RAVANA too worshipped DURGA to achieve immortality, and that was in summer time before RAMA did. In fact AKALBODHAN, RAMA'S PUJA became the traditional DURGA PUJA festival of Bengal whereas RAVANA'S PUJA remained neglected as the unceremonious BASANTI PUJA.

DURGĀ, the embodiment of power is the divine of all divinity. She, being endowed with strengths of different gods is the MAHASAKTI. This is what goes with Hindu mythology, and this is what we worship. Beside this aspect there is another side of DURGĀ PUJĀ festival. It is more of a Bengali culture rather than a facet of Hinduism.

We conceive DURGĀ not only as the Mother goddess but also as daughter UMĀ or GOURI -- other names of DURGĀ. In our daily lives before leaving home for going to work or for any important business or before we travel to some distant places we remember Mother goddess and utter 'DURGĀ, DURGĀ'. We name our daughters DURGĀ, UMĀ, or GOURI. We address our daughters Mā (Mother). This sublime concept has been blended in a unique way to DURGĀ PUJĀ, which has become the festival of all festivities to Bengali people. During this PUJA we imagine that DURGĀ has come to her parents' home from in-laws house for a visit. She has come with the whole family except her husband SHIVA. Her two daughters -- LAKSMI (goddess of wealth) and SARASWATI (goddess of learning), and two sons -- GANESHA (god of success) and KARTIKA (god of prowess) have come with their mother. That is why the image we install includes all those accessory deities in addition to that of lion astride goddess DURGĀ slaying the buffalo-demon. Consequently this is the time for our family re-union. Daughters who are married invariably come to father's home with their families, and sons who live away also join. Schools, colleges, universities and offices all remain closed during the festival. It is customary that all members of the family should wear new clothes during PUJĀ, and gifts to be given to near and dear ones. Naturally expenses go overboard making a hole in the pocket. But nobody minds. The occasion overrides the logic perhaps like any other big festival anywhere in the world.

The celebration lasts for four days. There is life everywhere. There is crowd in every place of PUJĀ. Varieties of programs -- songs, music, dance, drama and gymnastics are staged to entertain people. Glittering lights and wonderful decors adorn every PUJĀMANDAP. The atmosphere turns hypnotic and enchanting. To see DURGĀ PUJĀ in Calcutta is to experience an event. During these four days we let our ego, our emotion, our love and hate all out. It is a kind of a rejuvenation -- a time to loof forward to.

The beating of drums, the playing of flute and the exhibition of fireworks come near their end on the last day of PUJĀ. It is VIJAYĀ DASAMI. The mementum stops. It is time for daughter DURGĀ to go back to in-laws. We touch the feet of DEVI DURGĀ, the Mother goddess, and pray -- 'Punaragamanaya cha' meaning come again. We hold the hands of daughter DURGĀ and with tearful eyes remind her, 'don't forget to come next year'. This juxtaposition of feeling and duality of personifying goddess DURGĀ are indeed unique derivatives of Bengali mind.

One of our poets Michael Madhusudan described the evening of VIJAYĀ as dim, glitterless and sad. Despite this palpable pathos it is an evening set aside for re-union. We gather our tired feet and with heavy hearts exchange greetings and embrace our friends. We perform special cultural function called VIJAYĀ SANMELANI'.

Oh! divine Mother, all pervading Power, I pray thee -----  
'lead us from darkness to the light'.



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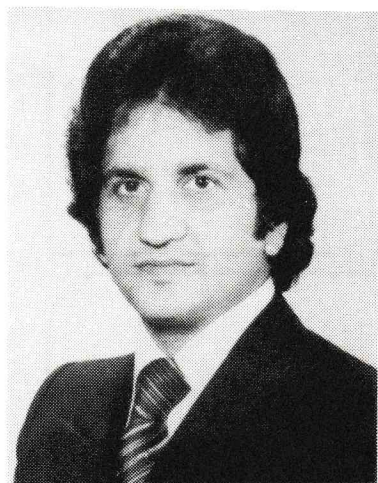
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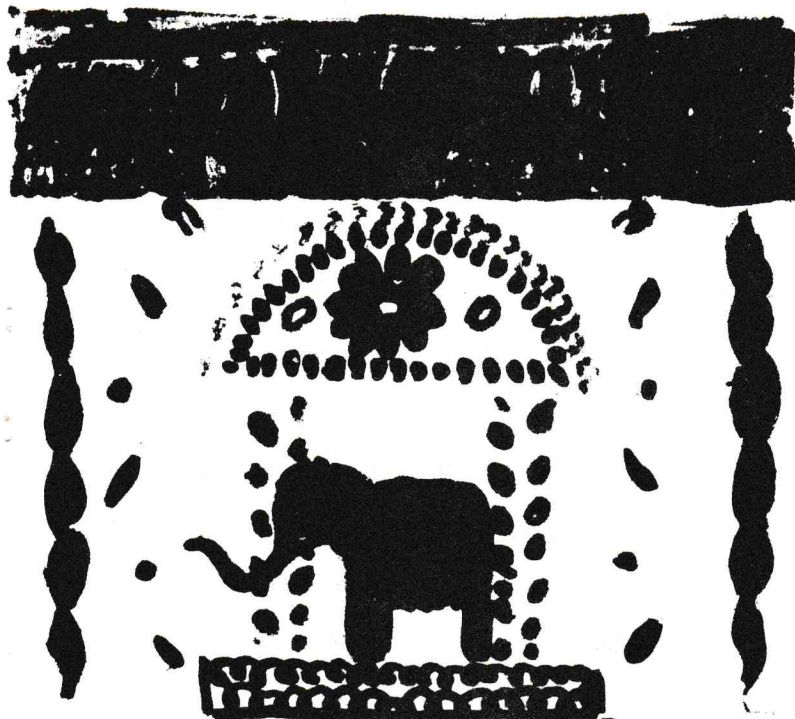
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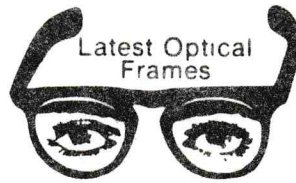
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 কিভাবে আহ্বান **করবে** তাতে জটিলতা। কিন্তু  
 'অগম্নী' শব্দ অকাই অামনি, **মাঝেও** মনে  
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~ প্রথম পূজা



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## THE NEVER-ENDING PATH

by PAMELA SINHA

I am writing on a piece of looseleaf. Mommy is talking to Auntie Anna and Daddy and Deb are probably cleaning the garage. It is simply an ordinary sequence of events in an average day.

Wait....there is a soothing tone reaching me from below, a steady drone; consistent in its melody; it's Sanskrit, a Sanskrit chant. Maybe it's symbolic, who knows? God's way of telling me that He is the cause of my existence; that he has put me here. That I am His.

I, ....., who am I, why am I....where am I? These questions, however strange they are, continually plague my mind. They say that you are here for a purpose; they say you are here for many years; they say that He has put you here, the Universal One.

And I think; I may not have a defined purpose; I may not be in existence for a long time; but of this I am certain: He has put me here, the Universal One.

My first gift, innocent and utterly dependent, I opened my eyes to the world. I opened them to wars, envy, jealousy, spite and horror. Yet I also opened them with trust and never-ending faith that someone will be there, .... will be there. I would not speak, nor understand, but I, like every other little child and baby born, had a depth of knowledge; an inconceivable gulf deep within me. For I know Him; as no other could.

As a small child, I knew no different from anyone else. My world evolved around me and only me, and, unaware of the perplexities of the human mind, I had escaped into a world of simplicity and youth everlasting. I had no knowledge of religions, morals or prejudices; all I knew was that thanking God was five minutes of my day.

Five years old; my first encounter with Jesus. Who is he? Someone I learned about in Sunday School. What? Oh, the Son of God. They put Him on a cross you know! Sort of like Krishna. This was my total comprehension of Christ. God of the Christians.

India--my first trip there that I could remember about at 9 years old. Oh sure, I knew about Hinduism; but Hinduism to me was simply all the stories about Krishna, Rama and all the hundreds of gods included, and it was then I came to the conclusion that we Hindus believe in everybody's gods.

There were even times when I wondered, how many of them could fit into heaven! After visiting India and Nigeria, my outlook changed. Here I saw Moslems and heard about Allah; I saw Hindus and heard about freedom of belief; and I saw Christians and heard about Jesus. So many people, all of the same nationality, yet all of them different. Why?

Why....it seems to be the universal question, never ending, never quenched and never sufficed ultimate purpose.

Now, as I become aware of my inner self, my horizons are broadened with every step and tread I make. I think now I can satisfy myself with an answer--an answer so simple and honest, yet sufficient; all religions are the different doors to the same house--that house being our God. Now I see that though God has put me here for a purpose, it is up to me to make that purpose a reality.

As a closing clause to this piece, one expects that now is the time for the happy ending. That I have now full prospective of my life, now; that I have indeed found myself, etc. etc.! This is an unreality.

I am not in control of my life; and I have not found an answer to all my questions. However, I do know that God has, God has put me here and has given me the tools to achieve my goals: which are His purpose. They are simply this: courage to stand up:

- "KNOW THYSELF"....

The Sanskrit music continues to play on in its steady consistent melody. The chanting is soothing; the chanting continues, and will play on for the rest of my life.

ଗୋବିନ୍ଦ ସାହିବେ ପାଠ୍ୟା ସ୍ମୃତି,

শ্রীমতী লিলি প্রাণসিং,

[illegible]

সংকলনকালে দ্রব্যাদিতে কালকর্মেতে পৌঁছ ২০১৫ সালের  
 বৈশাখমাসে ব্রাহ্মণ আশ্রম মনোরঞ্জন পুস্তক - শ্রীমতের  
 পুস্তক বৈশাখমাসে ব্রাহ্মণে উক্ত আশ্রম - বৈশাখমাসে উক্ত  
 পুস্তক সংগ্রহ করা হয়। গাঃ পুস্তকের কথা - আশ্রম মনোরঞ্জন  
 পুস্তক বৈশাখমাসে ব্রাহ্মণে উক্ত পুস্তকাদি কালে  
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୧୯୮୫- ଏକମା-ମାତୃର-ପ୍ରେକ୍ଷଣୀୟ-ଆତ୍ମାରେ-ଆର୍ଯ୍ୟ-ଆତ୍ମା-  
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 ବ୍ୟାସ-ଆତ୍ମା-ନିର୍ମାଣ-ଆତ୍ମା-ନିର୍ମାଣ-ଆତ୍ମା-ନିର୍ମାଣ-  
 ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ-ଆତ୍ମା-ନିର୍ମାଣ-ଆତ୍ମା-ନିର୍ମାଣ-ଆତ୍ମା-ନିର୍ମାଣ-  
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 ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣ-ଆତ୍ମା-ନିର୍ମାଣ-ଆତ୍ମା-ନିର୍ମାଣ-ଆତ୍ମା-ନିର୍ମାଣ-





~ বড়দিন সবে আর এই উৎসবমোহর  
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