

Sharodiya Durga Puja 2018

শারদীয়া



UK Hindu Cultural Association

Registered UK Charity No 1069932

New Venue: Swanley Town Hall

The Alexandra Suite, St Mary's Road, Swanley, Kent BR8 7BU

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UK Hindu Cultural Association Executive Committee

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Mrs Kalyani Banerjee, Mrs Krishna Baruah, Dr Sanjoy Basu, Mrs Krishna Datta, Mr Basudeb Dhar, Dr Sisir Ghosh, Dr Tapon Halder, Mrs Sunanda Sarkar, Mrs Pieu Chaudhuri, Mr Debashish Sarkar, Mr Tanuj Banerjee, Dr Ashis Sau, Mr Debanjan Mukherjee, Mrs Paramita Pandit

Priest: Dr Hirak Haldar

Sri Sri Durga Puja Time Table 2018

14th Oct. '18
Sunday

Sponsored by
Mrs Pieu Chaudhuri &
Mrs Sumona Chatterjee

**Maha
Sasthi**

2pm onwards: Lunch
5pm - 7pm: Kalparambha, Amantran
Adhibas, Puspanjali, Arati, Prosad Bitaran
7pm to 9pm: Cultural Programme
9pm onwards: Dinner

15th Oct. '18
Monday

Sponsored by
Dr Tapon Halder &
Mrs Jaba Halder

**Maha
Saptami**

12pm to 2pm: Saptami Puja, Puspanjali
Bhog, Arati, Prosad Bitaran, Chandi Path
2pm onwards: Lunch
5pm to 7:30pm: Puspanjali, Arati
Prosad Bitaran
7:30pm to 9pm: Cultural Programme
9pm onwards: Dinner

16th Oct. '18
Tuesday

Sponsored by
Mrs Alo Ray &
Mrs Mousumi Das

**Maha
Astami**

12pm to 2pm: Ashtami Puja, Puspanjali
Bhog, Balidaan, Arati, Prosad Bitaran
Chandi Path
2pm onwards: Lunch
6pm to 9pm: Sandhi Puja, Puspanjali
Dipa Mala, Arati & Dhunuchi Nritya
Prosad Bitaran
9pm onwards: Dinner

17th Oct. '18
Wednesday

Sponsored by
Dr Shashank Ranjan &
Dr Ashis Sau

**Maha
Nabami**

12pm to 2pm: Nabami Puja, Puspanjali
Balidaan, Arati, Prosad Bitaran
2pm onwards: Lunch
5pm to 7pm: Homa, Puspanjali, Arati
Chandi Path
7pm to 9pm: Cultural Programme
9pm onwards: Dinner

18th Oct. '18
Thursday

Sponsored by
Dr Jagadish Sarkar &
Mrs Shipra Roy

**Bijoya
Dashami**

12pm to 2pm: Dashami Puja, Puspanjali
Daikarma, Arati, Ghat Bisarjan, Sindur Khela
2pm onwards: Lunch
5pm to 7pm: Bijoya Sammiloni
Activities & Mistimukh
7pm to 9pm: Cultural Programme with
Sanchari Bose
9pm onwards: Dinner



Editor's Message

Dwaipayan Ray (Ayan)

The United Kingdom Hindu Cultural Association (UKHCA) was created to preserve and promote our Indian diaspora's culture. Societies are defined by its territory, its interaction with itself, and its culture. Our territory includes a memory of India. We interact because we are brought together by a common language and culture. And cyclically our beliefs and behaviours, our norms define us and our culture. Our society has a tradition of high culture, of sophisticated intellectual pursuits such as music and dance, literature and poetry. For us 'adda' (i.e. an intellectual exchange) is a pastime.

Our community is part of a pluralistic society; it is exposed to and shares ethical norms and cultures with different groups. Our community like all others will naturally adapt and evolve the way we think, appreciate things, and behave. Creating changes in the literature, music, and the thinking within and between generations. The UKHCA provides a bridge between our generations, allowing us to remember our norms and beliefs whilst we evolve. And in common with all festivals Durga and Kali Puja will allow us to make new friendships, and renew old ones, with the companionship of our current friends. It will let us immerse ourselves in our culture. It will allow us to showcase our culture to our friends and neighbours from other communities.

Enjoy the music, enjoy the theatre, enjoy the food. The UKHCA is an open house.

Cultural Programme 7-9 pm

Please look out for an exciting array of cultural activities on

Sasthi, Sunday 14th October 2018

Performance by Sandy Man, sponsored by Mrs Pieu Chaudhuri

Saptami, Monday 15th October 2018

Bengali Drama directed by Dr Shilajit Ghosh

Navami, Wednesday 17th October 2018

Musical Extravaganza by Aantarik and Mrs Bithi Purkayastha

Bijaya Sammilani, Thursday 18th October 2018

Great musical celebration by Mrs Sanchari Bose

(Decorated by Lata Mangeskar award, from Kolkata)

for upto date information visit www.ukhca.info



Sri Sri Durga Puja 2018 Sponsors:



Dr Sunil Roy, Dr Mihir Khan

Dr Sanjay Chatterjee

Professor Bimal Bhaduri



Kali Puja & Diwali 2018



Sponsored by Dr Sanjay Basu, Dr Jayonto Chowdhury

Tuesday, 6th November 2018

at Elite Venues, Dunkirk Close, Gravesend DA12 5ND

5pm to 7pm: Puja, Puspanjali, Bhog, Aarati, Bisarjan, Dakhinadan

7pm: Fireworks, 8pm: Dinner

Saraswati Puja: Saturday 9th February 2019, 2pm to 10pm



President's Message
Dr Jagadis Sarkar

Dear Friends

The United Kingdom Hindu Cultural Association are performing Durga Puja for our sixth consecutive year, a festival that every household celebrates with worship and merriment. With our united effort we hope to deliver our duties to your high expectations, offer our devotion with reverence and pray for Her guidance on the path of righteousness, strengthens our bond of brotherhood, brings peace, happiness and prosperity.

Over the years we have developed a strong community, by extending our participation in various religious, social, cultural and charitable events and hope that the UKHCA will continue to grow stronger year after year.

I thank all our volunteers who have helped to make our Durga Puja a great success. It is from our members and their families who have devoted so much of their time to this festival particularly the younger generation, who came and are coming forward to help organise, help and participate throughout the festivities. This is immensely encouraging observing their desire, dedication, sincerity and enthusiasm and I am glad to see that they are slowly taking over from my generation to continue the traditions of the UKHCA. I also welcome our new members and hope with their help to further raise our standards in future.

I also extend my thanks to all friends and visitors who came from local and distant areas to make our dream favourable and sincerely hope they enjoyed themselves. We have seen so many fresh new faces not only at Durga Puja but also at Kali and Saraswati Pujas, I cordially invite you to participate with us again at each and every function.

I further extend my thanks to our sponsors for helping us meet our financial commitments and also volunteering their time to work with us.

Let us take now a moment and pay tribute to our friends and members who have since departed since the inception of organisation and played an integral role in it's development. On behalf of the UKHCA I would like to express my sincere condolences to the family of our beloved member and brother, Nitesh Datta, who succumbed to cancer in the past month.

This Durga Puja, as with previous years, let us come together as friends to continue our work together with love and harmony to continue to make the UK Hindu Cultural Association an exemplary cultural and social organisation so that it may continue to serve our community for many future generations.

May Ma Durga shower us with Her blessings and enlightenment.

Warmest wishes to you for "Durga Puja" and Happy Bijoya Greetings!



Secretary's Message
Professor Bimal Bhaduri

Another year has gone by so quickly. This is the fourth Secretary's message I have the honour of writing. There have been so many celebrations and activities in the last few months. In addition to our annual pooja celebrations Holi Rangmilanti was especially memorable, and our youngsters were completely inspired by Honey Karalia. Our own artists also successfully performed and concluded the occasion on a high note.

This year Durga Puja will again showcase different aspects of our culture. This will include a Bengali drama and a singer from Kolkata will grace the Bijaya Sammilani on Thursday 18th October. And as in previous years we are planning to serve freshly home cooked food twice daily for all five days.

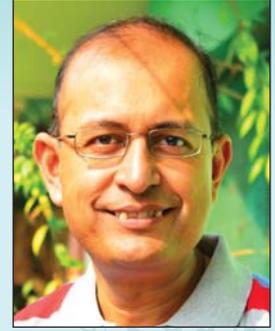
Due to your generous donations, UKHCA is on a stable financial footing and we can now explore other challenges like more charitable work home and abroad.

We have strived to find the best venue for our 5 day long Durga Puja festival. We hope that you all will like our new venue this year at Swanley Town Hall with ample car parking and easy access from the motorway.

When I became Secretary I only planned it to be for three years. This is now my fourth year. During this time I feel proud of the good work we have done, the friends we have made, and the new members we have attracted. I have only been able to lead our organisation with the help of our members, volunteers, and office bearers. We now need to look to the future, encourage others to come to the fore and lead the next generation. My thanks go to all of you.



Treasurers' Message
Dwaipayan Ray (Ayan) & Suman Das (Tim)



2017 was a transition year for us. We had to say goodbye to our friends at St Andrews Church, who are no longer able to accommodate us safely. In the short time available Elite Venues in Gravesend came to our rescue, providing us with a venue we could access for all five days of Durga Puja. Albeit there was an impact on our donations, and going to a private venue naturally increased our costs. However Gravesend proved a fantastic location for an

exciting and popular Kali Puja too. This year we have found another friend in Swanley Town Council, which is supporting us with Durga Puja. Elite Venues continues to support us for Kali Puja. We are immensely grateful.

Throughout 2017/18 we continued on a sound financial footing, generating a surplus in donations for the year. We have a healthy financial reserve which we can use to underwrite more cultural events. For example a group of our members organised a wonderful Holi event. We are eager to organise more cultural events and encourage our members and friends to bring more ideas and suggestions to us.

Once again we thank all those who are supporting us, both financially from the Executive Committee members (see page 3), the individuals sponsoring each day of Puja (please see pages 4, 5 and our flyers), and all our friends and members of the public. We are also indebted to our volunteers without whom it would be impossible to hold any events. From stage and sound management to shopping, artistic direction to Puja prep, collecting donations to serving food. Your roles are wide and varied, and their value priceless. The role of Joint Treasurers has worked very well. We have greater oversight over our finances and strategy. And the value of having more than one responsible person shows.

2017 Durga Puja Accounts		
DONATIONS		£15,832
EXPENSES		
Venue	£3,000	
Food & ancillary	£2,917	
Cooks & other support	£2,400	
Cultural programme	£1,380	
Other expenses	£3,290	
		<u>£12,987</u>
SURPLUS		<u><u>£2,845</u></u>



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আর্জি - শুনবে তো ?

-ঋতা রায়চৌধুরী

শরতের আকাশে শুভ্র মেঘের লুকোচুরি, কাশের বনে বাতাসের ছটোপুটি, বনে বনে গাছ গাছালীর পাতায় পাতায় ফিসফিসানি, প্রকৃতিতে মৃদু উত্তেজনা, চারিদিকে যেন এক সুর ও ছন্দের খেলা চলছে, কারন একটাই, মা আসছেন, মা এলেন বলে।

এই তো মোদের বিশিষ্টতা, সীমার মাঝে অসীম ধরা-
অনেক দূরের ঈশ্বরকে কাছের করে নেওয়া।
কখনও বা মায়ের মত, কখনও বা মেয়ের মত,
কখনও বা শিশুর মত জড়িয়ে ধরে গলা।
কখনও বা সখার মত বাঁশীর সুরে সাড়া দেওয়া,
কখনও বা চিদ্ আকাশে আপনাতেই বিলীন হওয়া,
মন্দিরে বা গৃহকোনে, বনে অথবা মনের কোনে,
যেমন করেই ডাক তাঁকে নেই কোন ফতেয়া।

তাই তো মাগো তুমি আমাদের বড় আপনার জন। আমাদের জীবনে তো দুর্ভোগ লেগেই আছে, কখনও প্রাকৃতিক, কখনও সামাজিক, আছে অভাব, আধি ব্যাধি, অত্যাচার ও অবিচার তবু বছরে পূজোর কটা দিন তোমার আগমনে আমরা সব ভুলে আনন্দে মেতে উঠি। আর আমাদের শিশুরা? তাদের বাঁধ ভাঙা আনন্দ আর খুশীর বন্যা দেখার মত, তাদের মধ্যে অনেকেরই হয়ত-

ফুটো ছাদ থেকে জল পড়ে পড়ে গিয়েছে বিছানা ভিজে-
বুড়ো দাদু ভাই কেঁদে কেঁদে মরে সঁয়াত সঁয়াতে ঘরে থেকে।
সাতবাড়ী কাজ করে মা এনছে, পূজোর পোষাক কিনে-
ছেলেমেয়েদের হাসিমুখ দেখে তৃপ্তিতে মন ভরে।

তারপর আলোবলমলে পূজো তলায় ঢাকের বাদ্যি, শিশির ভেজা শিউলির গন্ধ, পূজোর প্রসাদ, খিচুড়ী ভোগের আশ্বাদন, কি আনন্দ কি আনন্দ আমার শিশু দুর্গাদের। তবে এদের মধ্যে যে শিশু/কিশোরী দুর্গারা বোদ্ধা হয়েছে পরিস্থিতির চাপে, তাদের চোখে চাপা ক্ষোভ, চাপা নালিশ। তোমার কাছে তাদের প্রশ্ন - আদিভূতা সনাতনী মাগো তুমি নানারূপে কখনও মধুকৈটভঘাতিনী, কখনও চন্ডমুন্ড বধকারী, রক্তবীজ বিনাশিনী, কখনও বা দুর্গারূপে মহিষাসুর মর্দিনী। কিন্তু আজ তুমি কোথায়? তাই মাগো-

এবার পূজোয় তোমর কাছে আর্জি আছে বড়,
মহিষাসুরকে ছেড়ে এবার নরাসুরদের ধর।
ঘরে বাইরে ছড়িয়ে আছে নরাসুরদের দল,
আতঙ্কিত শিশু দুর্গার শোকায় চোখের জল,
পরিত্রাণ পরায়নী মা, তোমার ত্রিনয়নের রোষে,
'নরাসুর'দের ধংস করে বাঁচাও, সাধের সৃষ্টি টাকে।

আদিশক্তি তুমি মাগো, জগতে অশুভ শক্তি ধংস করে শুভশক্তি জাগরিত কর। শিব রূপে দাও 'চৈতন্য', গনপতি রূপে সেই চৈতন্যকে জনমানসে প্রতিফলিত কর, হোক জন 'জাগরণ'। স্বরসতী রূপে তামাম বুদ্ধিজীবির লেখনীতে স্ফুরিত হোক প্রতিবাদ অশুভ শক্তির বিরুদ্ধে। শিক্ষিত হোক মানুষ। লক্ষীরূপে তাদের মধ্যে আসুক স্থির ধীশক্তি, স্থির হোক তাদের লক্ষ্য, দূর হোক মানসিক দৈন্যতা, দাও তাদের মধ্যে কার্তিকের শৌর্য, আর সাহস। তারপর সেই সংঘবদ্ধ মানুষের মধ্যে দুর্গারূপে শক্তি সঞ্চারিত করে ধংস কর ওই সব নরাধম নরাসুরদের। সমাজের রক্তে রক্তে যারা ছড়িয়ে আছে নানা মুখোশের আড়ালে। শুধু নারীজাতি নয় তামাম মানব জাতির পক্ষ থেকে এবার পূজোয় এই একটাই আর্জি, একটাই প্রার্থনা মা তোমর কাছে- তুমি শুনবে তো?



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A day at the beach

- Aadya Karmokar

বন্ধু

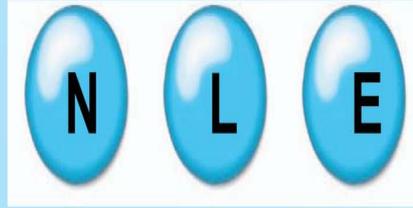
- লাবণ্য ঘোষ

ভালোবাসলেই বন্ধু পাওয়া যায়,
কজন ঠিক ভালোবাসতে পারে?
চোখের জলে বন্ধু কাছে আসে,
জল মুছিয়ে আদর করি তারে।
জীবন যখন জটিল হয়ে ওঠে,
বন্ধু তখন তোমার পাশে থাকে,
দুজনে তখন রাস্তা খুঁজে বেড়াই,
একটা সূত্র সামনে চলে আসে।
অবসরকে রাঙিয়ে দিয়ে যায়,
নতুন নতুন বইয়ের জানালা খুলে,
প্রতি মুহূর্ত জীবনকে করে সমৃদ্ধ,
বন্ধু আমার সেখানেই বেঁচে রয়।
মননকে মোর উজ্জীবিত করে,
দুয়ের ভবনা মিলে মিশে যায়,
পথ চলা মোর সহজ হয়ে যায়,
উত্তরণের পথটি সামনে আসে,
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The cow who flew to Mars

- Aritro Dhar

Mooley, the cow, is farmer Fly's favourite cow because he didn't smell like other cows and is easy to milk. Mooley is very small and lazy. His horns have a brown shade and they're immense. His body is huge with humongous black spots. His legs are strong and he has the most powerful kicks. Mooley's favourite hobbies are sleeping and eating. He is very fat. He lives in Windermere located in Lake District.

Farmer Fly is very grouchy. He is very tall, has a big black moustache that is so thick that you cannot see his mouth. He is very filthy. He is pongy. He bathes once a year and is very intelligent. He wears brown clothes and a thick green hat. However, he is aerobic and athletic. The farmer is rich and is fascinated with space. He owns two cars, a Henry Ford Model T and a Karl Benz. He has inherited them all from his great grandfather and grandfather.

One day Mooley ate some grass that had a bunch of dragonflies inside. He kept hearing the noise 'whoosh' inside his tummy. This baffled his tiny brain and he went asleep. When he woke up, he did his routine 25 metre run. He kept jumping up and down; and then started jumping very high and ended up flying towards Mars.

Farmer Fly called Mooley for milking time. Oh no! Mooley was not there. Farmer Fly travelled all around Cumbria but could not find Mooley. Farmer Fly took out his precious telescope. He couldn't find him anywhere around and then looked towards space. He saw Mooley flying towards Mars. "Aha Mars," mumbled Farmer Fly. He went to his friend and told him what happened. His friend told him to contact the European Space Agency (ESA). ESA were working on a project to send a space shuttle to Mars.

At Mars, Mooley started crying. There is no grass and everything is red. Mooley tried some burnt river, which was red in colour. He liked it. He nibbled a bit of Mars and thought it was tastier than grass and hay.

Farmer Fly spoke to ESA and they agreed to send Farmer Fly in the space shuttle to be launched to Mars. Farmer Fly was now astronaut Fly. After landing on Mars, farmer Fly looked out for Mooley and found him relaxing. He called Mooley to come along but he wouldn't budge. Mooley finally gave in and decided to go.

They both landed back safely. Farmer Fly was so tired that he went to sleep. Mooley did a poo and found lots of dragonflies in it. He then realised how he flew all the way to the red planet. He loved Mars but felt it was lonely there. Mooley made a resolution that he will be careful about what he eats and will be more active. Mooley changed to a disciplined cow. MOO MOO!





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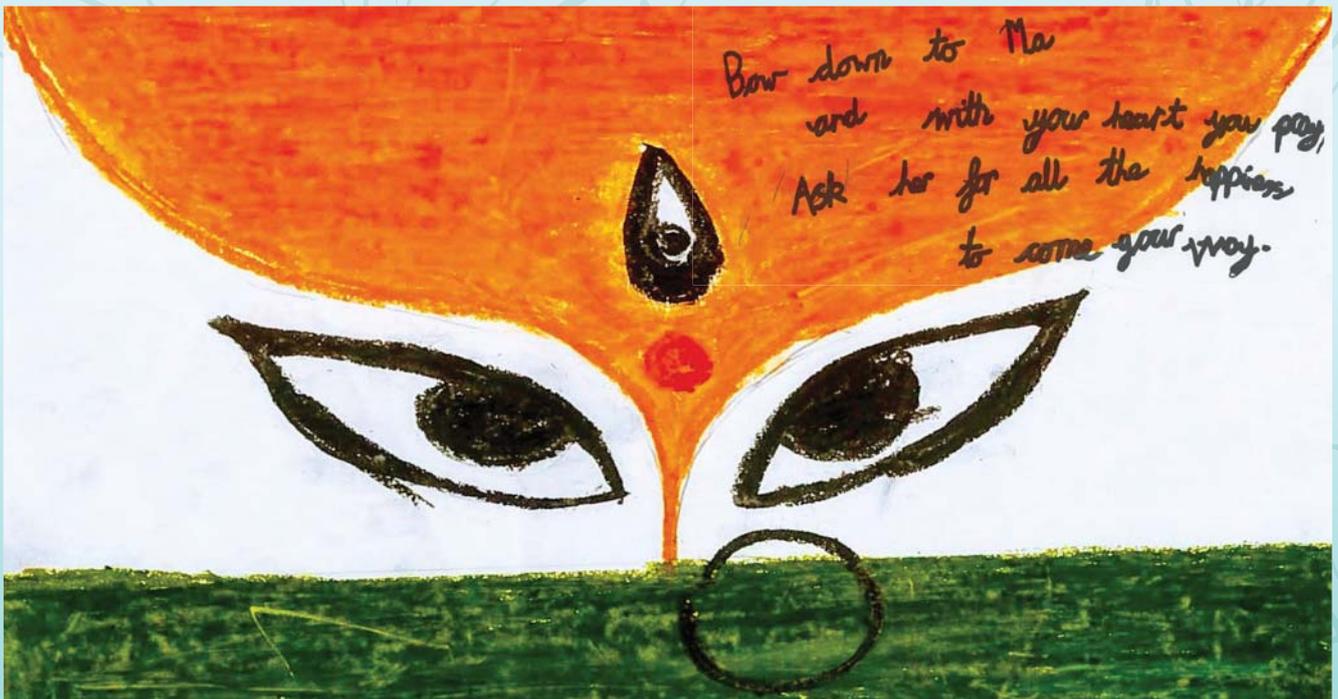
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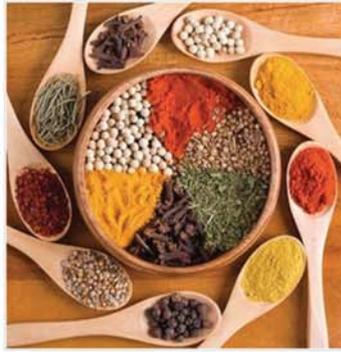
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The food battle!

- Aritro Dhar

There were 6 different groups of food. Their names were called Confectionery, Meat Fish, Fresh Fruit, Vegetables, Dairy and Carbohydrates. They all thought they were the best and wanted to be the greatest.

All the foods except confectionery agreed to hold a competition to see which one of them was the greatest. Confectionery didn't agree at first because they weren't good at anything. The FCC (Food Competition Committee) had a meeting about the greatest event in food history and all of them decided to participate. The FCC discussed about the final events and listed them together.

The events were;

- athletics • weight lifting • relay

Confectionery was not looking forward to the tournament at all. All of the others had been training hard; in fact very hard. They had been training for 10 hours a day.

The tournament will take place tomorrow. They had everything set up for it. They had lots of large stadia. The largest had a capacity of 100,067 and the next with 97651.

The opening ceremony had started. It was a big festival.

The FCC had organised a screen to show all the events that would happen. The tournament was held at Eat City which is the capital of Foodland. The mascots were called Pot.Tato and Chill.Eye. Pot.Tato looked like a big lump with heavy dots and looked yellow-brown. The other mascot was light and smooth but there was a problem. If you touch it, your hand will burn because it is too hot. The colour is red with a few green streaks.

The teams started with weightlifting. Whenever Confectionery lifted a weight over 10 kg they broke a crumb (bone). The Gold medal was won by the powerful Carbohydrates, Silver by Meat Fish, and bronze by Fruit.

It was athletics time. The Gold was won by the speedy Dairy, Silver by Meat Fish, and Bronze had joint winners named Fruit and Vegetables. In the athletics, Confectionery didn't participate and said that he was ill. He showed up but did not compete and in all the races he tried to trip the other contestants but instead they tread on him and broke his crumbs. Confectionery had to be in hospital for years.

The relay was a normal race. The Fungi judges decided to take a break to let Confectionery recover a bit. Fruit and Vegetables were joint winners yet again and swooped the Gold home. Silver was won by the Dairy and Bronze by Meat Fish.

And to wrap it up here is the table

Carbohydrates	1 Gold	0 Silver	0 Bronze
Dairy	1 Gold	1 Silver	0 Bronze
Fruit	1 Gold	0 Silver	2 Bronze
Vegetables	1 Gold	0 Silver	1 Bronze
Meat Fish	0 Gold	2 Silver	1 Bronze

Other than Confectionery, all of them won the medals. They now know they are all good in some or the other event. All of them have made the tournament and festival enjoyable.

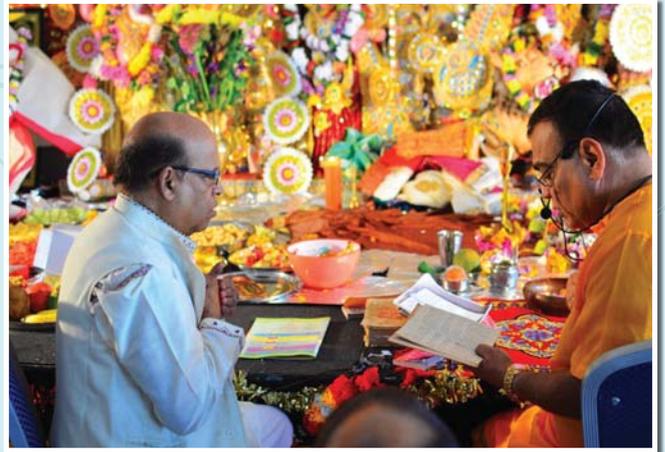


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সেই ছোটবেলায় প্যাণ্ডেলে ঘুরে ঘুরে দেখা ঠাকুর,ভিড়, নতুন জুতোর ফোঁসাতেও এক অদ্ভুত
আনন্দ! রোল, ফুচকা টক জলে বিশ্বাদ জীবনে ভরে নেয়া স্বাদ গোটা একবছরের! এখানে সেগুলো
নেই! নেই বলেই হয়তো আরও বেশি করে ছুঁতে যাওয়া। প্রাণপণ সংগ্রহে দেশকে প্রবাসী রিইউনিয়নে
কোলাজে সাজিয়ে রাখা। হয়তো কলকাতার মতো আলোয় ডুবে যাওয়া শহরটা এখানে অনুপস্থিত!
হয়তো, অনুজ্জ্বল কিছুটা! বৈভবের তোরণ পেরিয়ে নেই থিম পুজোর বিলাসীতা! কিন্তু আছে আরও
বেশি কিছু!

আন্তরিক চেষ্টা, অন্তর থেকে অন্তরের দীর্ঘ দূরত্বে বসেও আত্মীয়, বন্ধু, স্বজনকে মনের কাছে টেনে
নেয়া। পুজোর ভোগ প্রসাদে, মনোচ্চারণে শুদ্ধ হওয়া শ্বাস, যোগাযোগের সুতোয় ধরে রাখা এক সুর।
ষষ্ঠীর বোধন থেকে দশমীর বিসর্জনে ফিরে যাওয়া ফেলে আসা ফেরারি সময়! সিঁদুর ভরতি গাল,
শাড়ির বেশে বিদেশী হাওয়ায় নিজের নিয়মরীতির পূর্ণ সংস্কার! কোথাও মনে হয়না দূরে আছি! কখনও
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Shakti: the feminine aspect of divinity

- Aurorupa Dhar

During the evolutionary process, from primates to modern man, humans have always dwelled in a community. During the prehistoric and stone age, humans lived in groups as hunters inside caves. With passage of time and with invention of fire and tools, man progressed with improved hunting and cooking methods. With time, man learned to tame animals and farming originated.

Looking at the timeline there is an evident truth and that is dependency of human community on nature to survive. Man has since acknowledged this truth and this has given birth to the belief that nature is Supreme. Man identifies nature as one who is giving, progressive and productive, fertile, bountiful and looks after the cycle of birth – rebirth (what goes to earth is reborn in a certain form).

Archaeological excavations has revealed through cave paintings and artefacts that every civilisation has regarded and worshipped nature in certain form as Divine. Every civilisation has evidence of worshipping certain form of nature as Goddess. For example, Demeter (Greece), Isis (Egypt), Freya (Norse mythology), Sedna (Eskimos), Amaterasu (Japan), Artemis (Roman), Coatlicue (Mexico), Tara (Tibet), Ishtar (Babylonian) and in India as Shakti.

In Sanskrit, Shakti means force or energy; power of the Divine. According to Sri Aurobindo, Shakti is manifested in everything around us. Sri Aurobindo's theory on Integral yoga is based on manifestation of Shakti (Divine force to attain Consciousness). Sri Aurobindo says it is the cosmic Maha Shakti that creates and contains everything. It is the Divine force (Shakti) that is needed to manifest the Supreme. It is the Divine force we pray and worship to help us look at life within.

So, is Shakti different from Brahman (the absolute truth)?

To answer the question, Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa has said, "Brahman and Shakti are identical like fire and its power to burn. When we talk of fire, we automatically mean also its power to burn. Again the fire's power to burn implies the fire itself". "What the Vedas call Supreme Brahman, we call Kali" (Shakti).



Artwork

- Aurorupa Dhar



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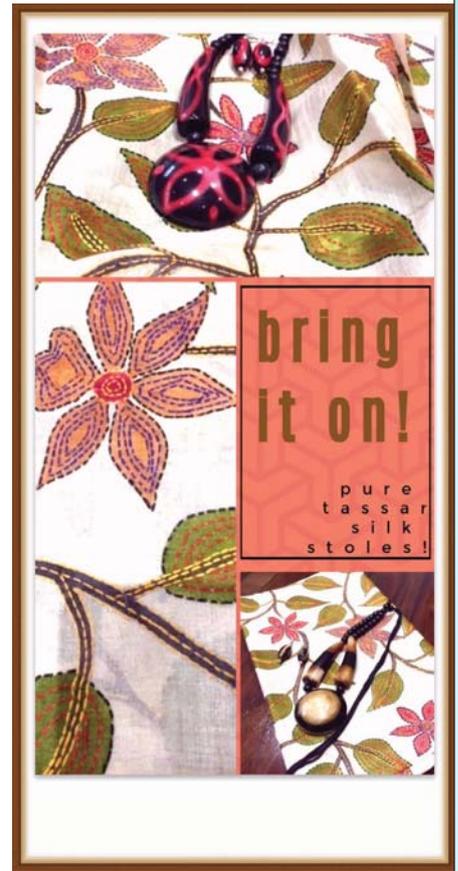
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Memories of Puja in rural India

– Alo Ray

Bengal has six Rreeto (seasons) - Grisha (summer - April to June), Borsha (the rainy season - June to August), Sharat (autumn - August to October), Hemonto (dry season - October to December), Sheet (winter - December to February), Borsanto (spring - February to April). Rabindranath Tagor expressed the beauty of these rreeto beautifully in his poetry. And there is a proverb which says Bengalis celebrate 13 Pujas in 12 months. Memories of Sharat keep me company in my Third Age.

My family was the largest landowner in the district and hosted the Durga and Lakshmi Puja. It was celebrated in grand style. Our village was small, surrounded by a natural beauty that only grows as I get older. During Sharat so many different flowers blossom and vegetables were ready for harvest. There was a wonderful buzz around, people bustling across village paths anticipating and preparing for Puja. It is difficult to explain the joy and excitement of growing up in that environment, that unique feel of a rural Puja. Durga Puja was celebrated in Sharat. Two or three months before Puja the Ganatkar (craftsmen) came to our home and start to build the idols. First the wooden frame, which were then given shape with straw, and formed with clay. These statues were then coloured, glazed, and elaborately decorated.

This was before electricity came to our home. So at night the room where the idols were placed was brightly illuminated from chandeliers lit with candles and large hazak lamps. My family hosted anyone from the neighbouring villages for six days, feeding everyone twice a day. Notable guests were invited. And local business men would bring their stalls to our home because our Puja was the most prominent in the district and everyone came.

Durga Puja was also the time for entertainment. Kobial (poets) and 'jatra' (traditional dramatic societies in which men played all the roles, male and female) would be invited months in advance from Kolkata. They would perform 'kobier topa', poetic battles the current generation will recognise as 'Rap battles', where the participant unable to reply to the others lyrical challenge lost the prize money and their pride. I remember adult women were expected to sit behind a veiled curtain and watch the entertainment.

After six days the idols were processioned by bullock cart to the Bonshi River and immersed. There was dhinuchi and other dancing, dhaks and kashies played. After the idols were submerged (which traditionally women were also not allowed to attend) the next day everyone would play 'kola koli' and there would be a great feast. All the food provided throughout Puja, from Sasthi to Dashami, was grown and produced on our farms. From the rice and meat to 'misti dhoi' (sweet yoghurt) and other foods.

Every year my grandfather would donate new clothes amongst our tenant farmers and proja, people whose families provided us trades (e.g. hairdressers, clothes washers etc) for generations in exchange for the gift of the land they worked and lived on. I remember bags of clothes would arrive from Kolkata to great curiosity and excitement. After Durga Puja came Laxshmi Puja. I vividly remember the beautiful idols, Lakshmi on her chariot flanked by her maidservants Joya and Bijoya. Once again we celebrated, this time for only two days and the local villagers would perform the 'kobier topa' and 'jatra'.

After all these years, and so many miles from where I started, it is nice to see our traditions and culture continuing, and how the mechanics of organising a modern Puja remain the same. Although thank the gods our society has progressed since those times, for example we women are no longer hidden behind curtains. And although what we have now can never bring back the joy of my youth, my youth could never provide the adventures, celebrations, and friendships London and the UKHCA has provided to me. Happy Durga Puja to all.





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Chicken আমাদের সবারই খুবই প্রিয় খাবার এর মধ্যে অন্যতম সেরা একটি। মুরগির মাংস বাড়িতে এলে সাধারণত আলু দিয়ে ঝোল বা কষা চিকেন এর সাথে লুচি অথবা আজকাল এর নতুন পছন্দ চিলি চিকেন এর কথাই মনে আসে।

কিন্তু রেস্টুরেন্টে গিয়ে আমরা অনেক রকম চিকেন অর্ডার করে থাকি, বেচারা মুরগী রাই কি জানতো এতো নাম আছে ওদের। এই যেমন butter chicken, চিকিন দো peyaja, অথবা chicken কোরমা। চিকেন এর মেনু এর লিস্ট আর না বারিয়ে এর থেকেই একটি মুরগী বানিয়ে ফেলি

আমার মনে হয় আজকাল অনেকেই হয়তো butter চিকেন এবং চিলি চিকেন বানিয়ে থাকেন অথচ শাহী চিকেন কোরমা টা রেস্টুরেন্টে এই বেশি চলে। তাই আর সময় নষ্ট না করে ঝটপট রেসিপি টা লিখেই ফেলি.....

উপাদান



1. 1kg chicken
2. 2 big size Onion
3. Thick Yogurt
4. 8-10 clove garlic
5. 4-5 Green Chili
6. Kashmiri Chili Powder
7. 2 Sticks of Cardamom
8. 2 Sticks of Cinnamon
9. 50 grams of Cashew Nuts
10. 4tsp of Poppy Seeds
11. 1 cup of Coconut Milk
12. 1 1/2 tsp ginger paste
13. 15-20 Raisins

মেথড

প্রথমে, চিকেন টাকে আদা আর রসুন পেস্ট আর দুই দিয়ে এক ঘন্টার জন্য ম্যারিনেট করে রাখতে হবে। আর অন্যদিকে কাজু, পোস্ত পেস্ট করে নারকেল দুধ এর সাথে ভালো করে মিশিয়ে রাখতে হবে। এরপর করাই তে তেল দিয়ে তার মধ্যে গোটা দারচিনি দুই টুকরো এবং বড়ো এলাচ দুটো দিয়ে একটু নেড়ে পেঁয়াজ পেস্ট দিতে হবে। ওর মধ্য কাশ্মীরি চিলি গুঁড়ো 2 চামচ দিয়ে আর ম্যারিনেট করা চিকেন টা দিয়ে 15 মিনিট ভাজতে হবে। আর স্বাদ অনুযায়ী নুন, কাঁচা লঙ্কা পেস্ট ও দেওয়া যেতে পারে। এবার এটিতে নারকেল এর দুধ, পোস্ত পেস্ট, আর কাজু পেস্ট ওর মধ্যে দিয়ে 15 মিনিট হাল্কা আঁচে ঢেকে রাখতে হবে। নামানোর আগে ওর ওপর কিসমিস ছড়িয়ে নামাতে হবে। এবং গরম গরম রুটি বা নান এর সাথে পরিবেশন করতে হবে।

খাওয়া এর পরে কেমন লাগলো জানাতে ভুলবেন না যেন.....

Zucchini r Bahar

- Aurorupa Dhar

Ingredients - serves two

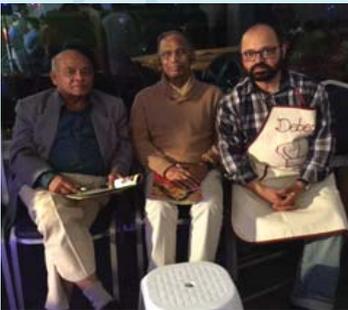
For filling: Black mustard seeds - 2 tbsp
Grated coconut (1/2 cup), Olive oil 1 tbsp
Green chilli 1, 1 tsp sugar, Salt as per taste.

For Batter: Besan/ gram flour 3/4 cup
Chat masala 1tsp, Onion seeds 1 tsp, Sal as per taste

Method:

1. For the filling, grind mustard seeds, olive oil, grated coconut, green chilli, salt and sugar. Keep it aside.
2. Cut thin slices of zucchini/courgette. Make a sandwich of zucchini slices with the mustard filling in between.
3. For the batter, mix besan (gram flour), salt, chat masala and onion seeds with water. The batter should not be very pouring but thick enough to have fine coat around zucchini when dipped in it
4. Dip the zucchini sandwich in the batter and deep fry them.
5. Serve it hot with any dip of your choice.





Nitish Ranjan Datta - "Our Dad"

On Sunday 16th September 2018, our Dad left us peacefully, surrounded by his family, at the Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice. For the past two and a half years he had been suffering from metastatic sarcoma, a rare form of muscle cancer. It was a difficult time for him and us, but now he is at peace and no longer suffering.

Dad was born in Dhaka, East Bengal (now Bangladesh), on 16th July 1939, the seventh child of a family of eight. During Partition his family moved to India and temporarily settled in North Kolkata. He grew up and did his schooling in Goabagan, in Kolkata. After doing his BSc degree he came to England in 1963 to study further and completed a degree in Mechanical Engineering, then specialised in air conditioning and refrigeration engineering. For most of his career he worked as a project manager in large British companies.

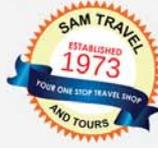
His association with UKHCA goes a long way back. Due to insistence of Tarun-da (Banerjee) he and our mum Krishna became involved in 1998; from then, until his recent illness, he was an active member of the organisation. The UKHCA was very close to his heart and he always worked hard for its success. Dad was a silent worker and preferred to help behind the scenes. As a consequence, his presence and contribution were not always noticed. But those who knew him well were always aware. He never wanted to hold any position or post for his work, saying "I will do my best anyway, I am happy as I am".

We feel sorrow that he cannot not be with us for this year's Durga Puja but we know he will be with us in spirit.

He was kind, quiet, well-spoken, a true gentleman, while leading a simple life. He was a wonderful son, brother, husband, father and grandfather and we will miss him greatly. We wish him well on his next journey to Heaven.

He is survived by his wife Krishna, children Pallav and Jhumur, son in law Richard and granddaughter Anya.

- Pallav Datta & Jhumur Moir



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