

**A BENEFIT CONCERT IN HONOR OF  
UNDERPRIVILEGED WOMEN  
DIAGNOSED WITH OVARIAN CANCER**



**BETTER BANGLA**

**TOUCHING YOUR LIVES**

**OVARCOME**



**OVERCOMING CANCER  CELEBRATING LIFE!**

**Saturday 6th October 2012  
Sugar Land Auditorium  
Sugar Land, TX, USA**

**OVARIAN CANCER**  
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## Foreword

Partha S. Chatterjee

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It is always laudable when institutions and individuals come together for a worthy cause. Ovarcome is one such charitable cause, dedicated to raising awareness amongst women of the subcontinent for ovarian cancer. It is a deadly disease claiming many helpless women, which could have been prevented through early detection and treatment.

Better Bangla has stepped forward to partner with Ovarcome and educate us, while entertaining us through Brishti's Bangla rock and the melodious tunes of Dipayan Bhattacharya and Runa Zaman, two local accomplished artists. Better Bangla brings Bengal to Bayou City every weekend, helping us bridge the gap with motherland and its culture. Bengali is a rich language and culture – Better Bangle helps us taste that every week half a world away through innovative programs and discussion. They have helped with many community efforts, not only in the arts and entertainment area but also with charities, dedicated to causes like ovarian cancer.

We sincerely hope this serves as a clarion call to other institutions where they not only serve the local community but also deliver tangible benefits to the world at large. These causes need our whole-hearted support and other institutions just like Better Bangla or Ovarcome can become ambassadors for such good humanitarian causes. The afflicted do not have to fight alone – be it natural calamity or deadly scourge; as human beings, let's marshal our forces and join together.

Heartfelt kudos to all of you in making this truly an evening to remember as you enjoy the latest tunes of Brishti and rain your generosity for a worthy cause.

Your Saturday afternoon date...

...with

# Better Bangla

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

October 6, 2012

Dear Friends,

It gives me pleasure to congratulate Better Bangla Radio and Ovarcome, and the South Asian Community of Houston as a whole for promoting this noble cause to raise money to cure ovarian cancer. I commend you for organizing "OvarRock - Melody for Life Concert." I am confident the event will be a success. Please accept this letter as a token of my recognition of your outstanding service to the community.

We are truly blessed to live in a community where people can listen to a weekly radio program enjoying the days left behind of a far off land, as well as actively participate in efforts to assist underprivileged women suffering from ovarian cancer.

These community efforts are but one example of why the Houston area is such a wonderful place to live, work, raise a family and help our neighbors in need. Thank you again for your support for this effort. I am honored to serve you in the United States House of Representatives.

Please do not hesitate to contact me in the future if I can be of any assistance.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pete Olson".

Pete Olson  
Member of Congress

## আপনারা শুনছেন বেতার বাংলা

“আপনারা শুনছেন বেতার বাংলা – আমরা আবার ফিরে এসেছি আপনাদের সঙ্গে, সেই শনিবারের বিকেল বেলায়, যখন আপনি আপনার পরিবারের সঙ্গে বসে আরাম করে চায় চুমুক দিচ্ছেন আর আগামীকাল রবিবার ! সেটা ভেবে আরও ভাল লাগছে ! আগামী এক ঘন্টায় আপনাদের আমরা নিয়ে যাব সেই পুরনো দিনগুলিতে – ফিরে যাবেন হয়ত ঢাকা’র বুকু সেই ছাত্রজীবনে, বা কলকাতার অলিতে গলিতে কাটান সেই জীবন যুদ্ধ।” – অনুষ্ঠান শুরু করছেন গোপা – আপনার ব্যস্ত জীবনের মধ্যে এক ঘন্টার নির্মল আনন্দ উপহার দেবে বেতার বাংলা। নিশ্চয়ই ভাবছেন যে আজ ভাল ভাল গান ছাড়া আর কি হবে? নিশ্চয়ই কিছু একটা নতুন হবে – আজ কবি সুকান্ত’র জন্মদিন উপলক্ষে শুনবেন তাঁর লেখা কবিতা’র আবৃত্তি শিমুল মুস্তাফার কর্ণে। আপনারা ঠিক ধরেছেন, অনেক বড় মাপের গুণীজনের জন্ম শতবার্ষিকী বা দুই শতবার্ষিকীর মধ্যেও আমরা কিন্তু কবি সুকান্ত কে ভুলে যাই নি। বেতার বাংলা সবসময়ই একটু আলাদা। হস্টনে এসেছিলেন বলিউডের এক বড়সড় সঙ্গীত পরিচালক – তাঁর ভক্তদের বেড়া টপকে আমরা তাঁর সাক্ষাৎকার পেলাম না ! কিন্তু আমাদের স্টুডিও তে যিনি এসে আপনাদের সঙ্গে কথা বললেন – তিনি হলেন ‘মনের মানুষ’ ছবি’র পরিচালক – গৌতম ঘোষ। যার ছবি সাড়া জাগিয়েছে দুই বাংলায় একাধারে।

“আজকের প্রথম প্রশ্ন হল...” – এসে গেছেন কাকলি তার কুইজের ঝোলা নিয়ে! কাকলি কুইজ করছেন, “... বিশ্বের একমাত্র দেশ যাদের জাতীয় পতাকায় বাইবেল এর ছবি দেখা যায়?...ফোন করুন তাড়াতাড়ি... স্টুডিও’র ফোন...”। আশ্চর্য ! আপনারা নিশ্চয়ই ভাবেন যে এরা কোথা থেকে এসব প্রশ্ন খুঁজে নিয়ে আসে? হয়ত ভেবেছিলেন প্রশ্ন হবে অমুক গানে, ছবিতে কোন অভিনেতা অভিনয় করেছেন? – কিন্তু না! এরা তো বেতার বাংলা ! আমরা যথেষ্ট খাটা খাটি করে আপনাদের জন্য এমন কুইজ পরিবেশন করার চেষ্টা করি যেগুলি হবে আকর্ষণীয় এবং থাকবে কিছুটা তথ্য। শুনছিলাম জ্ঞানের কোন সীমা নেই!

ফোনের বাতিটা চমকচ্ছে! “বেতার বাংলা...আপনি এয়ারে আছেন, কে কথা বলছেন?”...” হ্যালো...ইয়েস...(হিন্দিতে) আমি বাংলা বুঝি না... কিন্তু বাংলা গান আমার ভাল লাগে। আমি কি একটা গানের অনুরোধ করতে পারি?” – “...নিশ্চয়ই পারেন...” “একটা রুনা’র গান শোনাবেন?...আর গানটা প্লীজ ডেডিকেট করবেন আমার ডাক্তারবাবু কে – উনি বাঙালী !” – অসাধারণ! “শুনতে থাকুন...আপনার গান আসছে একটু পরেই”

“এর পরের গান হল – কফি হাউসের সেই আড্ডাটা আজ আর নেই...গেয়েছেন...” – চমৎকার! এতক্ষণে আপনি হারিয়ে গেছেন সিলেট বা বীরভূমের গলিতে !

বেতার বাংলায় আমাদের বিশ্বাস বৈচিত্র বা বিভিন্নতায়। আমরা চাই সকলকে সঙ্গে নিয়ে চলতে – ছোট-বড়, নারী-পুরুষ, দেশী-বিদেশী, বাংলা ভাষী কি অন্য ভাষী – আমরা আনন্দ দিতে চাই সকলকে। আরও একটা কথা – মাঝে মাঝে হয়ত রেডিও তে বিজ্ঞাপনের বিরতি টা একটু বেশি মনে হয়, মনে হয় কতক্ষণে আবার ফিরে যাব গান-কবিতা-নাটকে। কিন্তু আমরা ভালবাসি আমাদের প্রত্যেকটি বিজ্ঞাপন দাতাকে – এরা ছাড়া কিন্তু আমরা আপনাদের কাছে পৌঁছতে পারব না ! তাই এই বিজ্ঞাপন দাতাদের ধন্যবাদ জানাই আমাদের ও আপনাদের তরফ থেকে।

এতক্ষণে বুঝেছেন নিশ্চয়ই বেতার বাংলা কেন বেতার বাংলা ? (বা বেহ-তর বাংলা!)

শুনতে থাকুন: বেতার বাংলা।

## You are tuned in to Better Bangla

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“You are tuned in to Better Bangla -- we are back with you on a Saturday afternoon, exactly when you are enjoying your favorite cup of tea, with your family, and generally feeling good about the coming Sunday. Yes – we will take you back to you student days in Dhaka or the days of your early struggle in life in the City of Joy – Kolkata for the next one hour” – the voice of Gopa with the opening remarks for another edition of Better Bangla’s Saturday show. You are now waiting to hear what else you will get to hear today, in addition to the great selection of songs. You will probably get to hear a poem of Kobi Sukanto, recited by Shimul Mustafa! We did not forget the genius of a poet and pride of Bengal, while celebrating the birth centenaries of more famous literary figures. At Better Bangla, it’s always a bit off beat. We could not manage our way in recording an interview with one of the music directors of Bollywood, while he was passing through Houston, but we had in our studio the director of the film ‘Moner Manush’ – Goutam Ghosh talking to you about a film which has built bridges between the two Bengals recently.

“Today’s first quiz is ...” – there goes Kakoli with her string of quizzes, “...which is the only country in the world to have a bible on its flag?” OMG! You are thinking: where on earth they find these quizzes? When you expect to hear a quiz like...” who was the actor dancing during this particular song in the film?” – Again, we are different – Better! We work hard to bring you the most interesting quiz, something which will enrich all of us with one more byte of information. Didn’t someone say that there is no end of knowledge?

The phone line is blinking! “This is Better Bangla and you are on air! Who is this?” ...”ya. Hello...hmm..you know I do not follow Bengali, but I love your songs...I want to request a song of Runa, and I want to dedicate it to my doctor sahab, who is a Bengali ..” Isn’t that interesting? Gopa and Kakoli are overwhelmed...”of course we will play your song and dedicate it to your doctor sahab....keep listening”

“Our next song is: Coffee house er sei adda ta aaj aar nei !” – by now you have plunged into the past and reminiscing your youth spent in Sylhet or Birbhum!

We at Better Bangla believe in diversity and wish to cater to various interest groups. We do our best to bring you quality entertainment for a short period of time every week. It may not be comprehensible that between three of us we spend at least 6-7 hours to prepare for the 1 hour program. And yes, sometimes, the string of commercials are more of an irritation than information. But we at Better Bangla sincerely appreciate each one of our advertisers for helping us to reach out to you every Saturday. So please join us in appreciating our sponsors and in turn sponsor their businesses.

By now you know what is Better Bangla all about and why it is BETTER Bangla (or Beh-tar Bangla !)

KEEP LISTENING.

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# Best Wishes

from  
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## Arna & Uttam Dasgupta



# OVARCOME

“Lets come out of it!”

Yes... the inspiration behind Ovarcome and its founder-President, Runsi are those words of her mother, Atashi, who eventually lost her battle with ovarian cancer.

Since that day, three years ago, Runsi and her friends have worked tirelessly to establish Ovarcome and now it's a challenge for them to see Ovarcome achieve its goals.

Ovarcome is a USA based ovarian cancer foundation envisioned to provide treatment support and options to underprivileged women suffering from ovarian cancer. We are guided by Ek Disha, a USA based non-profit organization that funds high impact humanitarian projects in the Indian subcontinent.

## **Ovarcome's mission is to :**

Build awareness among women around the world that consistent and regular checkups are a must for timely diagnosis – and ovarian cancer can be cured in early stages!

Provide treatment options and resources to underprivileged women suffering from ovarian cancer. Together we can save lives!

Our success and happiness will be measured by the number of women cured suffering from ovarian cancer or by prolonging the remission of cancer with advanced treatment options. At Ovarcome, we are inspired by the simple philosophy of support, love, and celebration of life.

Proud Partner Member of



2012

## WHAT WE DO

- Ovarcome is a non-profit organization created to support economically challenged ovarian cancer patients with treatment options.
- We are actively engaged in raising awareness for this disease among women worldwide.
- We focus on developing nations to provide our treatment services to women where it is most needed We are inspired by the simple philosophy of love, support and celebration of life!

## WHERE WE WORK

- Our current focus is India. We have partnered with Tata Medical Center, Kolkata.
- We are working with 2 other hospitals in India to extend our reach to underprivileged ovarian cancer patients.
- We plan to diversify into other regions of South Asia, Africa and other developing nations as a phase II of our expansion plan.





Best Wishes

from

**Souvik, Aparna  
& Arnab Dutta**

# Meet the Artists

## Our Local Heart-throbs!

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### Dipayan Bhattacharya

Dipayan's musical talent was discovered by his friends in high school. He started singing for his classmates and friends, who became very fond of his singing. They encouraged him to take his singing talent forward and sing for larger audiences. Later, he sang in college, in night clubs in Park Street, Kolkata and in various festivals. He has also won at many singing competitions.

Dipayan, a resident of Houston, Texas, although has not received any formal training in music, has performed in many stage concerts in North America, and has enthralled audiences in the East Coast (New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Washington DC, Virginia), in North Carolina, Texas & Canada.

### Runa Zaman

Runa belongs to a family where music is cherished by all her family members. Since childhood Runa's passion was music, influenced by her two sisters whose main pursuit of life was music. Runa learnt throughout her childhood at home from her sisters. After finishing high school, in 1995 Runa joined Bulbul Lolita Kala Academy (BAFA) in Dhaka, Bangladesh- where she took training in Nazrul Geeti for three years. Her Father always encouraged Runa to pursue music to a level where she can become a profession singer. After getting married in 2010 Runa came to United States, and for past one year she is living in Houston. Her goal in life is to fulfill her father's dream which is to become a professional singer in the genre of modern Bengali song.



# BRISHTI



## **Somak Chattopadhyay**

A Software Engineer by profession, developed a deep passion for music in his spare time. He is one of the Founding members of Brishti and the creative force that drives Brishti to new heights year after year. His first music training was in Tabla when he was 6 yrs old. Mostly self-taught in vocals and guitar, he also loves to play his Khamak and Ek-tara.

## **Sandeep Mukherjee**

A Biologist by profession, is one of the renowned singers in the Seattle Indian music scene. Though Kishore Kumar was his early inspiration, he is equally adept at new era Bengali and Hindi songs. He is also an aspiring percussionist.



## **Susanta Paul**



A Program Manager by profession, had a hidden passion for drumming lying dormant in his heart. He has developed amazing drumming skills within a very short period of time. His drive and enthusiasm is a key asset for Brishti. He is one of the very early members of the group.

## **Suman Kar, a.k.a. Abhi**

A Software Engineer by profession, is a self-taught guitarist and singer. He loved to rock the stage from his college days with his vocal talents. He draws inspiration from great singers such as KK and Rupam Islam. His passionate renditions are sure to touch some hearts.





### **Shayon Ghosh**

A Software Engineer by profession, and shortly going to law school, is Brishti's bassist. He is also trained in Hindustani classical music as a vocalist. He developed his mastery in Bass guitar in record time after joining the group 3 years ago.

### **Prottush Hossain**

Studying at the University of Washington, is the youngest member of Brishti and plays lead guitar. He draws influence from a variety of different genres, including alternative and hard rock, as well as Eastern styles. He is self-taught musician, and a believer of the power of music.



### **Abhishek Mondal**

A Program Manager by profession, is deeply passionate about Tabla and Pakhoaj which he has been playing since childhood. He is also training in Hindustani classical music. In the past 2 years he has become an incredible handsonic player as well.



### **Bodhisatva Deb, Bodhi**

A Program Manager by profession, is one of the newer members of Brishti, but has been performing on stage since very young. At the age of 8 he started learning the Sitar but later picked up the keyboards and the guitar. He has been part of an Indian rendition of Andrew Lloyd Weber musical with the Delhi Symphonic Orchestra. Mostly self-taught, his musical interests range from classical to modern day jazz, and world music, but his strongest influence is perhaps blues and classic rock. He will be on the keyboards and vocals during this show.



### **Ruben Ray Chaudhuri**

The newest addition to the Brishti family, gained much of his knowledge and love for music from studying classical piano since an early age. In college, he picked up guitar and saxophone, and began playing with rock, jazz, and pop bands. When not playing with Brishti, Ruben is juggling his interest in music with his desire to enter the field of medicine.



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## Best Wishes

## from

# JAYDEB, MOUSHUMI & DEBANGSHU GOSWAMI

## *Let Us.....*

*Sabera Chowdry*

---

*Let us play and sing the melody of ups and downs  
A see-saw to laugh when up, and shed some tears when down.*

*Let us continue to be strong amidst this life in its tumultuous throng,  
To tread and till the future fields for folks born and yet unborn.*

*Let us enjoy the fruits and rewards of the efforts of a kind,  
As instruments to inculcate and cultivate the finery of mind.*

*Let us try to turn turtle the turmoil and tumble the unrest,  
So folly of mind be realized to carve out our journey with zest.*

*Let us come together and form a common bond of humanity,  
Foster at bay the belligerence and transform begrudging to sanity.*

*Let us assay, be astute, and allay our fears born out of myopia,  
Taking care to tread with wisdom and not go chasing a utopia.*

*Let us assemble with courage and gather our heritage with pride,  
Having traveled aeons cherish its efforts and not let it die.*

*Let us wake up and take a step to nurture and preserve,  
End this slumber, walk the path, and ensure what we deserve.*

*Let us not muzzle the voice to voice the good, the useful;  
Be a change maker, a searcher, a path finder.*

*Let us end this daredevil dance of global decadence,  
Take delight in reshaping the world with confidence.*

*Let reborn, unborn, and born generations rejoice,  
Revel in the life's wealth woven with careful choice.*

*Let the seas welcome water and night the darkness sans fear,  
To collect to encompass the whole and part in every sphere.*

*Let us join hands around the world to make a chain  
which no lash nor war can reduce it to a pile of pain.*

*Let sweet peace be the only shrieking sound  
To cure and end the wailing wounds all around.*

# Best Wishes from



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# হিউস্টনের আকাশ

রমা মুখোপাধ্যায়

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নির্মেঘ নির্মল নীল গগন ।

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এমনটি কবে দেখেছি

কোথায় দেখেছি ।

আমার কোলকাতায়

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**Sundeepan Sen**  
**Piyu Sen**

# A personal Encounter with Cancer

Srabani Roy Akilla

---

Fifteen years back, on one June afternoon it was raining heavily in a small town of South India. I was waiting outside the operation theatre of one of the most reputed hospitals in India, Christian Medical College & Hospital, Vellore. My mother was taken inside for her prolonged thyroid removal surgery. While waiting for any surgery updates, my incessant flow of tears were blending well with outside rain stream. That was the first time in my life I was truly hit by the word “Cancer”.

My mother was always frail with many health related issues. Hypothyroidism was one of them for which she was under the care of one renowned Endocrinologist in Kolkata. Still, a few of her symptoms were not normal and we decided to take her to CMC in Vellore. Upon arrival, within a week, we had come to know that she had Medullary Thyroid Cancer. Without any delay she was on surgery table for the removal of thyroid gland which was followed by radiotherapy, isotope treatment and several other clinical trials. Medullary was neither a life threatening type of cancer, nor a very ignorable one. Moreover her cancer had already spread to the neck lymph nodes and was in advance stage. We were devastated mentally, physically, and of course financially. To make it worse, doctors had informed us that it was familial cancer and several other members in our family might have inherited that cancerous gene. As a result, all our relatives in India and abroad were alerted to get a particular blood test done or to go through a genetic screening that would detect any future possibility of thyroid cancer. No sooner, quite a few relatives from nine to fifty years old, from uncles to cousins, were lined up for surgery. Suddenly ‘cancer’ became the talk of the family. We were discussing nothing but cancer. CMC Hospital had become our home away from home for treatment, follow ups, therapies taking over months and years. Meanwhile my mother started showing signs of improvement and we realized that we all were not that much frightened anymore with the very name of cancer. We were not asking our doctors the same question hundred times. We were not in a constant gloomy state of mind. We were sharing jokes while waiting outside the isotope department or going for long drives in Chennai, relishing sumptuous South Indian dishes or filling our shopping bags with gorgeous *Kanjivaram sarees*. My mother herself was constantly making fun of her post radiotherapy burnt looks.

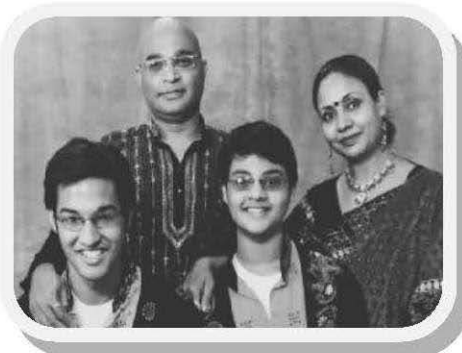
No doctor could predict my mother’s survival expectancy, nor did we hold out much hope. Fifteen years later my mother is still enjoying her life the way she always did by taking pleasure in the simple things like gardening, cooking, spending time with grandchildren or dancing with them on her favorite Bollywood tune “*Kajra re*”. All other relatives who had undergone thyroid removal surgery have recuperated as well. Uncles are cherishing their retired lives to the fullest by trekking in Kashmir or traveling abroad, while cousins are pursuing their studies, and planning for career, marriage.

Thus, cancer was a journey for us through which we learned not to ignore suspicious symptoms, not to delay its required treatment, most importantly not to kill our inner strength to fight against it and not to die before we actually die. Do you remember the famous song “*Tujhse naraz nehi zindegi, hayran hun main*”? One could be ‘*hayran*’ with cancer, but should not be “*naraz with zindegi*”!



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# OVARIAN CANCER – The Basics at a Glance

Abhik Mallick

---

Ovarian cancer is an affliction that affects over 15,000 women every year. It is a deadly disease that acts fast, which is why the human race needs to find a cure even faster. One of the main problems facing us in the battle against ovarian cancer is the fact that there is no reliable system for early detection for this deadly disease. Many women live for months without realizing that they have developed this cancer, and when they do realize it, it is often too late. It is for these reasons we, as human beings, must have a united front against this disease, the same way we did with polio or the smallpox virus. There are several organizations that dedicate themselves to the research and eventual elimination of ovarian cancer. One of the most prominent organizations is the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition. Other organizations that are generating awareness and raising funds are our very own Better Bangla and Ovarcome. There are several organizations that are active in this noble cause, and all one must do to get involved is to just simply ask. In conclusion, let me leave you with a few facts so it is easier to visualize the true nature of this affliction:

- Ovarian cancer accounts for approximately three percent of cancers among women. While the ninth most common cancer among women, ovarian cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer-related death among women, and is the deadliest of gynecologic cancers.
- A woman's lifetime risk of developing ovarian cancer is 1 in 71, while a woman's lifetime risk of dying from ovarian cancer is 1 in 95.
- Approximately 1.2% were diagnosed under the age of 20, 3.5% between 20 and 34, 7.3% between 35 and 44, 19.1% between 45 and 54, 23.1% between 55 and 64, 19.7% between 65 and 74, 18.2% between 75 and 84, and 8% were above the age of 85.

September was the National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, if you have been pre occupied with other things, now is the time to get up and help out!

*Statistics found from: <http://www.ovariancancer.org/about-ovarian-cancer/statistics/>*

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# AASCHI...

Urmi Mukerji

---

It's a bright and beautiful day, the sun shines through my window and I instantly turn my back to it. Today's the big day. I carry my SAT prep book along with me for some review, and call out absentmindedly to my mom, "bye". Immediately my mother runs behind me and starts to reprimand me for forgetting the golden rule.

In the small state of West Bengal in India, lies my parent's hometown, Kolkata. Kolkata sits on the shores of the holy distributaries of Ganges, a city rich in art and tradition, a city where the historic Victorian soul still survives. My family's rituals, traditions and customs are all traced back to these very rusty yet beautiful streets of Kolkata. One of these traditions has been a part of my life ever since my early childhood days. I was always told that whenever I was to leave, I was never to say goodbye. I was always to say "aaschi".

At first it seemed strange, I wondered why I wasn't taught to say goodbye, like all my other friends. You see "aaschi" represents the elegant concept that one must never forget his or her roots. We must always return to our origins, revert to our basic foundations; we must come back every time we leave. As Shakespeare brilliantly puts it "*But 'tis a common proof / that lowliness is young ambition's ladder, / whereto the climber-upward turns his face; / But when he once attains the utmost round, / He then unto the ladder turns his back.*" Success can only truly embrace us if and only if we learn to appreciate and value our roots. My culture, custom and traditions are mere vessels that have carried life changing lessons and essential morals and principals. My successes and failures are all attributed to my upbringing, to my principals of life, to my ethics and moral code. These necessities of a sincere and honest lifestyle have all been inscribed into my mind heart and soul by my Bengali culture. By simply remembering to say "aaschi (I'll be back)" I constantly renew the foundation of my being.

I ignore my mom's yelling. I think to myself, "it doesn't make a difference". I'm about to leave when I turn around. I call out: "Aaschi".

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Happy Durga Puja*

**Arun, Ratna**  
**Disha & Anisha Roy**



# My thoughts.....

Anusha De (13 years)

---

It was a Saturday morning, maybe a year ago, and I had just woken up. I came downstairs, when I stopped for a moment. I heard music, the kind of music my father used to play in the morning when I was little. I thought that he turned the music on but then found out that it was playing on the radio. It was a Bangla radio program. This was the first time I heard 'Better Bangla'. It made me very happy, as I could relate to it. It was like making an instant connection with something common in my life!

'Better Bangla' has now become a very familiar name to me. It means listening to good music and interesting quiz questions. I look forward to listening to it more or less every Saturday afternoon. My favorite part, of course, is answering the challenging quiz questions by Rajib Kaku on the radio program. Even if I don't always get them right, I still end up learning something. And if I get them right, I win movie tickets or restaurant coupons. So I try to be a little bold and pick up the phone! Another part of the show that I really like is the music that Gopa Mashi plays. The music is based on a particular theme which makes it very interesting and unique. Since I understand the Bangla language quite well, I enjoy and understand the program including the conversations quite well.

I wish Better Bangla success in all its future endeavors, and hope that it continues to entertain the listeners for many many years!

শান্তি শুভেচ্ছা

*Best Wishes for the festive season*

**Salil & Maya Banerjee**

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# My Life changed...!

Auritro Mallick

---

I recently had the chance to stay at an Ashram in Goa, India for 5 months. The experience is still hard for me to understand though I feel it has changed me in a permanent way. One thing that is interesting about the experience is that I do not have any complaints about it. Yes it was hot, but the Ashram was surprisingly clean. I even found that if I wore traditional Indian clothes, the heat bothered me less than if I wore western attire.

Perhaps this is because I went to India with an entirely different purpose than most abroad Indians visiting their homeland. I went to get closer to God.

So why did I go to India to get closer to God? To make a long story short I have been doing spiritual practice with an organization named the Spiritual Science Research Foundation (SSRF) for 2 years now, and this spiritual practice has changed my life. I cannot begin to describe the internal changes this has brought about...and I do not think I really could. I learned a lot at all levels, physical, psychological, and spiritual. Below are some of the things I have carried back with me.

One of the things I learned at the Ashram was just how wasteful we as Americans have become. We not only waste in gross (food, paper, fuel, etc.) but we even waste things that are not material like time. At the Ashram, we were told to conserve everything as much as possible, and this meant we turned lights and fans off when we left the room, made sure to save paper, and even made sure to try to come closer to God at every moment. For an example of how to use time wisely, consider that eating too can be spiritual practice if we pray and try to feel God's presence while doing it.

I have always been a calm person, but I find I am calmer now because I feel like I am in the present more. Before going to the Ashram, I always wanted things to go my way. But when you are at an Ashram, you learn to adjust. I went through many situations where things did not go my way, and this taught me to live more in the present and accept.

Overall, I just feel more connected to God. I cannot describe what this means, but it is wonderful. It is hard to explain something spiritual in words.

I do not have a negative impression of India at all. In fact, I feel there is much India has to offer that most of us do not even try to understand. The ancient wisdom of India can help us to understand and develop ourselves much more than a life based on materialism can. If we are always out to get each other and win for ourselves, we do not develop the love for others that brings true happiness. I feel we can all benefit by studying ourselves and seeing how to change ourselves for the better. The world would be a completely different place if we lived this way.

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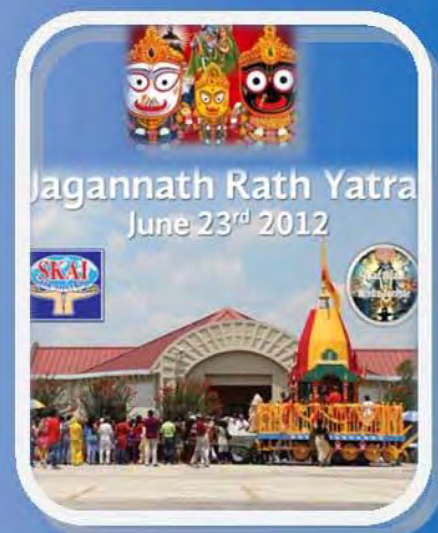
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