

# *Down the Memory Lane*

## *Yaadon ka Safarnama*

VOL 1

THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

VIVEKANANDA COLLEGE

### **I WILL FOREVER BE GRATEFUL**

Being a student of FYUP batch, I had experienced diverse things ranging from arbitrary change in curriculum and course duration and that too after completing one year with additional subjects that were not the part of three-year program. Completing three year's course in duration of two years was not easy but studying such a diverse array of subjects did enhance one's subject knowledge. Taking admission in Vivekananda College to pursue Psychology (H) was one of the best decisions of my life. So many memories are attached to the Department and I often feel nostalgic for the three years that I spent here. Based on my experience, I can proudly say that I completed my Bachelors from the Applied Psychology Department of VNC. The Faculty makes this Department one of the best in Delhi University. I was so fortunate to be a part of this Department. The Department enveloped me with a sense of belongingness and familial intimacy. Generally, people find their role models in celebrities or entrepreneurs but I found my role models among my teachers. Almost every teacher in Psychology Department left an indelible mark on my life, one that cannot be erased. Dr. Vanita Sondhi for her sincerity and motivation; Dr. Anita Kant for her lively and cheerful nature; Dr. Salma Seth for being a motherly figure to me; Dr. Arpana Beniwal for her humility and grace; Dr. Shivantika Sharad for instilling creativity and infusing passion in her lectures; Dr. Sunil Verma for his eagerness to explore experiences beyond the pages of textbooks; Dr. Chandra Prakash for always guiding me like a friend. Last but not the least, Dr. Saif Farooqi, for being my mentor, my friend, my teacher and a person with whom I can share my thoughts openly; from whom I can seek advice at any time I feel like. He has always shown trust in me and has always stood by my side to guide me, support me and to motivate me. I feel blessed to have known such remarkable people. Whatever I will achieve in life, I will owe to my VNC teachers.

**-ASHIMA JINDAL (BATCH OF 2016)**

### **WE ONLY PART WAYS TO MEET AGAIN**

What a pleasant feeling it is to get a chance to reconnect with my roots again- the place that carved a sensible woman out of a silly girl. Yes, my very own VNC, the place where I spent the most beautiful and memorable three years of my life. Although a lot has changed ever since I graduated in 2016, but the only thing that hasn't changed is my gratitude for the college and for all my Professors. I always said that I would never find such teachers again and now on retrospection, I feel so elated to discover that I was right. I never found the kind of holistic and positive environment this college had, anywhere else! But life has to go on, no matter how difficult it gets and nostalgia often makes us wistful and vulnerable. With time, we've to learn to be stronger, more independent and more self-sufficient. I know life is tough, but so are we. We have to realize our strengths, our potentials and work on them to bring out the best possible version of our Self. Always remember- We're not the victim of our situation, but warrior of the battle called Life. So live your life like the warrior you are!! Best wishes for the future.

**- MEHREEN FATIMA (BATCH OF 2016)**

## **VOYAGE OF AN INGENIOUS MYSTIC**

One of the devastating things in life is when you get no one to stand beside you. Slave Trade was regularized by 1793 and many coasts were captured by Europeans for their commercial activities. Slaves or commodities sought by shippers were sold to resident traders on the coast. Same thing started happening in the coast of Siranj, this place cannot be located on a world map. It was a place which was never invaded by outsiders. But very soon by January 1797, one officer named Hawkins led an attack on Siranj. He duly secured seven hundred slaves. Some slaves didn't bow down to his demands. He sold six hundred and fifty slaves. But fifty ran away and started their own voyage; they started off on a voyage out into the Atlantic. They did not want to surrender. They wanted not only a physical liberty but also the liberty of mind and soul. They were in a search for the land of Amazing sunsets. It was always in their mind since the time they became slaves. The fleeting beauty of a sunset is not easy to describe. Of all the slaves' one of them was an ingenious mystic, a poet. Many slaves were losing patience, wherever they looked they only saw water but they were unable to drink it. Not even the hope of the land of amazing sunsets could fuel their passion to survive. The curtain of life fell for many of them. That poet slave who had a Talisman was the leader and he said it is better to die and melt in the arms of ocean than face degrading death in slavery. You can be liberated through death and choose a desired guardian animal to be born as in your next life. I will become a dolphin and at least not a slave, said one of them. As the time passed by only one slave was left. The slave who had the talisman still believed he could see the land of amazing sunsets. Where according to him all the souls merge and people have the freedom to choose their guardian animal for next life which is different from the life of slavery. Sky was always surrounded by the dark clouds. But that day, he was overtaken by a violent storm probably a hurricane, the fleet was blown deep into the Gulf of Mexico. He wanted to see amazing sunsets. He was losing consciousness and he could see from far, a small settlement, where a sunset could be seen he believed. But his eyes were wide open still in hope. He uttered his last word "I won" and died, his eyes were wide open but there was no breath left. European records don't mention this incident of slave revolt because maybe they feel ashamed to record this uncommon defeat in controlling the psyche of slave.

- PALLAVI ROY (BATCH OF 2016)

## **BEST DECISIONS OF MY LIFE**

Ever since I was a little kid I was a crazy fan of TV. I remember, we had to take mom's permission before switching on the TV and explain what show we wanted to watch. I was always fascinated with how it was a completely different world that did not exist anywhere near the real life. The actors came from a different world and were the only ones who made the film. Back then, according to "little" me, actors and actresses made the movies, nobody else. They were everything in the film.

Then came 12th standard and I developed an interest in writing. I realised that even though I was good in academics, I didn't want to fall in the trap and wanted to pursue arts and literature, which was one of the best decision I took in my life. This was also the time when I was introduced to good cinema and started understanding it. In college I thought of three different career paths but in the end it all fell apart. Despite being in love with literature, I did not want to pursue it in all its glory.

In the end, as every other college kid, I was filling every other admission form here and there and thought that I would probably now pursue what I somewhere somehow always wanted to, journalism. But it just was not enough. It was then, that I realised, it is now time to pursue my other love interest, films. It was the second best decision of my life. I got admission in the college I was dreaming about for three months. Yes, it was then I realised that dreams don't get bigger because of how long you have pursued them, but of how passionately you have wanted them. Film making made me realise that, I am pursuing an art which has emerged out of so many other art forms. It takes writing, music, management, visual art, designing and a lot more to put together one film. To decide and plan every single microsecond of your film, to tell a story with not just words but with everything around you, to look for stories and to look at the world differently, I guess being lost between too many things finally paid off. The "little" me thought that only people who work on one dream from childhood get somewhere in life. The present Me is now laughing at her past silliness. If only she would have known how things fit into their spaces. Oh! And the best decision of my life? I am yet to take it.

- SAUMYA TIWARI (BATCH OF 2016)

## LEARN TO BE SELFLESS

A lesson that should be learnt by all,

Love selflessly and fearlessly,

Expect nothing in return,

Ending up filling yourself in plenty.

Turning around in circles

Makes you fall in a trap,

Leading you nowhere.

Life can have no meaning

If it's only "I" "me" and "myself",

Learn to be selfless,

The more selfless you become

The closer you get to the self.

In selflessness and audaciousness,

We realize the real meaning of Life.

Love, truth, and harmony,

Are the three basic pillars,

That makes life harmonious.

Once these are attained,

Know, that you are wide awake.

Selflessness and doing away with ego,

Asks for a lot of courage

Creating a see-saw like situation.

The more you try to move forward,

The more problems will you face.

The real success is attained,

When you pass all the problems,

With a calm and a composed nature.

-AYUSHI KHERA (BATCH OF 2012)

## AND THEY SAID YOU CAN'T

And they said that you can't

empty roads and darkened sky,

They said you can't fly high,

A long enough lane and broken foot,

They said there's a shoe you can never put,

There's a colour black, just black I see,

They said there's a chalk i can never be,

I ask if there's so many things I can't be,

Then i would choose to be just me,

They said you can't just be want you are,

You need to change just like times are,

I said to the world..Let me be a writer  
today,

Let's unfold, rewind and create  
something today,

But then too pointing fingers at me  
they said

YOU CAN'T,

Let me try, try to be something..

An adventure is I need,

Don't stop me, because I Never will,  
Never shall and Never can,

I am river that will flow..

Timelessly, Boundlessly,

And continuously.....

- VINAYANA KHURANA

(BATCH OF 2016)

## MY UNFORTUNATE DARLING

-I-

Over the years, that day is remembered as the most unfortunate day any of our family members has ever lived. The day was so infuriating. More often than not it makes them realize that they are comparatively beating up a fairly better day. Hard to believe, it was a day straight tailored from a tragic movie. It was June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1999, a day etched in my memory. *It was getting late enough to be worried. I once again stepped into the balcony and looked down. Except for a drenched street dog that was lying down miserably near the gate, there was not a soul to be seen anywhere. Rain water had puddled under the lamp post. A breeze ruffled the mango tree in the courtyard and a few twigs fell down and broke. Thunder rumbled in the distance. Did I hear a soft knock at the door? I turned back, and there stood my husband with a grin on his face. My heart chuckled; he never goes out of his habit of disappointing me.*

“What?” I asked.

“It’s Sunday.”

“I know. I’ll cook something delicious for you.”

“Of course you should. But I just came to tell you that I’ve decided to repair my scooter myself.”

“Why would you do that? I told Amit to send a mechanic. He’ll be here by the evening.”

“Oh there wasn’t any need of doing that. Don’t you see a talented mechanic in me? I can take care of my vehicles.”

His over confidence had once amazed me. It still does. “Okay. Do anything on earth to keep yourself busy today.” My husband went away with the same grin. And I went into the kitchen slamming the door of the hopes of a cozy Sunday afternoon behind me. Just then the phone in my jeans pocket vibrated. *Beep Beep!* It was my maid’s message. It confirmed all my deadly fears of losing my Sunday sleep. Although I’m a Marxist professor, this attitude of working class doesn’t go easy with me. Disappointed, I slipped the phone back in my pocket. Just then, my phone vibrated again. Clearly a phone call. I answered.

“Hey Moushi. Upasana here! I want you to please cook my favourite dish of Chilli crabs. I’ll pick them up from you in the evening. I’ve very important guests coming tonight, and I can’t take risk with my experimental cooking”. I won’t be boasting, but I’m a sincerely good cook. And I enjoy cooking. So, I mostly oblige to such requests coming from my relatives, especially in the dishes of crabs, more so because my husband and son are highly allergic to them. Their bodies respond quickly, and rashes follow soon. And so I got busy preparing my crabs, as I overlooked my husband working on his scooter through my window. Standing few inches away from the glass door of our garage, it was a pleasant delight to see this forty year old man smeared with the passion of gasoline. Suddenly a loud noise of shattering was heard. The first play stroke of the day had been hit on the target. I ran to find my husband having cuts from shattered glass on his forehead and vest clad upper body and he was bleeding, not profusely though. As a matter of fact, his gasoline stained hands accidentally slipped the scooter into gear, while he was racing the engine. And my super talented mechanic husband didn’t let go of the handlebars, and was dragged along as it burst the glass door.

I called for an ambulance, and since our house was situated at hill top, I ran down few flights of stairs to escort the paramedics. While my husband went to the hospital, I stayed back to look after the house. And as the maid had taken such a wise decision to not turn up particularly that day, I singlehandedly managed to place the scooter right, and wipe off the spilled gasoline with paper towels and toss them in the nearby garage’s storeroom dustbin. I must admit it was painful to see the wounds of my husband’s chest, but the loss of glass door was intimidating as well.

In the absence of this door, the rodents can enter our house assuming as their own. And I don't want to think about how they would disrupt our house activities.

It was exact four o' clock, when he returned. Bruised and used by the bandage, he looked pitiful. Looking mournfully on his bruises he suddenly realized that the watch on his wrist was missing. It was a gifted watch from a distant uncle, certainly the concern was justified. He got up to go and check in the store room of garage. Probably he must have had removed it and kept it there while beginning his accomplished practice of repairing vehicles. Suddenly I heard a loud explosion. Did you guess right? Yes, the second play stroke of the day. And there I saw my husband, lying down as a half cooked fish. I called for an ambulance. The same paramedical team turned up to take him for the treatment of his burn injuries. As he went away, I explored the black, smoky walls of our garage store room. The electricity meter had also blown off, leaving me alone in the hot, dark house. I searched for the cause of explosion, and my eyes rested on the tattered pieces of the dustbin where I had thrown off the gasoline wiped paper towels. The bells of my head started ringing louder. "He was smoking again." The head shook in another disappointment and bewilderment. How can a person think of smoking when so badly bruised? But then the heart came with a reply. Probably, one's fate follows one's habits. I had called for the electrician, but it seemed he too was involved in the conspiracy with the universe to ruin our day. Although my home housed many intentionally hidden lighters under the cushions of sofas, or in garage etc, but I realized that day, that we didn't have any candles for emergency periods, except a tiny one. This tiny soldier stood at the gateway of my kitchen, and tried hard to fight off the darkness. My husband returned by that time. Fortunately enough he wasn't badly burnt, but it was too much for the morning wounds to taste the fire. My heart was already overflowing with sympathy for him. He hadn't eaten anything from a long time, and the best word that could have summed up this hunger was 'rare'. Till then Amit also returned along with the mechanic. I went outside to attend them. "I called on your office phone so many times today, Amit. Where have you been?". "I was in the office but our phone lines went dead. The office is working on it." Recalling that conversation now, I wish that era also had smart phones. At least now a person might go dead, but the phone lines live on.

"Oh! You have no idea what all happened today...."

And with that I narrated the two weird accidents his father suffered, while the mechanic also listened intently. And just then, we heard a loud banging from the kitchen. My God!

-II-

"Yes Upasana. I called you to tell that I'm in the hospital with your Moushaji."

"What happened Moushi? Is he okay?"

"I sincerely hope he will survive. He couldn't resist from responding to his rare hunger, Upasana.

And even with the help of my tiny light, he got deceived by the cursed darkness."

"What in the world are you talking about Moushi? What about my crabs?"

"You'll know once you come here. As per your crabs, your Moushaji ate them."

- PANKHURI MITTAL (BATCH OF 2015)

### THE LEGACY LIVES ON

A legacy, a tradition as it has been and will always be, of passing the flame of passion and knowledge from seniors to juniors remains eternal, I was a witness to it once. I was passed on the responsibility of being the Alumni Head of Psychology Department in 2016, and am still carrying the blazing torch of ethics and wisdom I garnered from college, though have walked out of its gates. The subject that now runs in my blood, was injected in the right amount by the Best Doctors (Professors) in my consciousness. Graduation has not just been three years of college life but an irretrievable and unquantifiable experience. I entered the corridors with a blank slate and everyday a new psychological terminology was instilled and different schools of psychology were taught. It is that very gracious guidance, that knowledge passed unto me which has helped me pursue a career in the same discipline. I now realise that education was a transference of ethical and epistemological consciousness between the teacher and student; and without the teacher's selfless caregiving, reading and learning can become orphaned pursuits. I missed classes at times and now if I could go back in time, I wish I could have missed none. A legacy, a tradition as it has been and will always be, is not just a severance from past but illumination of the pathway of future by leaving behind those lit candles which even if flicker, will have many hands that would encircle them and help them glow. Years will pass and these shielding hands will nurture many young Prernas and developing minds who will have their own story to tell, about "the good old days."

- PRERNA GUPTA (BATCH OF 2016)

## THE BLAME GAME

The other day I was going somewhere with a friend. On the congested road we nearly collided with another car that tried to overtake us. I cautioned my friend to drive carefully and pat came the reply "Not my fault! That man was driving rashly". If there had been an accident and we landed with broken bones; would it have made a difference, who was responsible? We tend mostly to blame others for whatever happens in our lives – even to the extent of blaming God for discrimination and injustice. This attitude is at the base of sibling rivalry and leads to depression when one starts believing oneself to be more sinned against than sinning. That is why, communicating with oneself is important. Give yourself time to face responsibility for your actions. Finding excuses for your action does not absolve you from blame. Unless we face up to our actions we are miles away from reforming ourselves. We tend to blame everyone except ourselves when we suffer in life – but this attitude is farcical and unrealistic. It creates an aura of pretence and fallaciousness around us – an aura which our will power is unable to break through. Destiny is another thing that we blame. "I am poor", it's my destiny or the Karmas of my previous birth! It is never our unwillingness to work or our pathetic emotional attitude or our reluctance to do physical labour or our lack of respect for the social graces. It is always "God who ordained it so", or destiny which is at strife, or past Karmas which have come to the forefront. Open your eyes to the reality; face up to the truth that whatever is happening in your life is a direct repercussion of your actions and thoughts. Therefore to have a straight and happy life, keep your actions strong and true. Constructive thoughts and actions bring happiness in life and life becomes worth living. Happiness or Sadness does not come from above – it is inherent in our thoughts and attitudes. It is therefore you alone who can make a conscious effort to cure your own depression. Be less critical of others and lend tinge of positivity to everything you come in contact with. Life would gain colour and the will to live would come from within yourself.

JYOTI GUPTA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH (Retd.)

## PROSAIC SPECULATIONS ON POETRY

I observe to my dismay, a tremendous splurge as never before in creative writing today. Budding poets/poetesses are in an insane hurry to write and get published. The enthusiasm to "outpour" all of one's musings overtakes other lexical and structural concerns. True, Omar Khayam believed, "The moving finger writes/ And having writ moves on." And yet, creative works, (poems) are the outcome of minutely crafted writing, behind which there is a very self-conscious effort at perfected compositions with the most carefully chosen diction and structures of poetry. The Roman poet, Horace returned to one of his poems after a gap of seven years and refashioned it completely. Dissatisfaction with one's creative writing is a healthy sign. It echoes the poet's self-imposed demand for perfection. T.S. Eliot was reprimanded by his friend cum mentor, the master imagist Ezra Pound, for making parts of *THE WASTELAND* sound "too tumpum." Eliot drove himself to madness rephrasing expressions, refashioning the structures of lines he had written. And what the world read in the 1922 publication of *THE WASTELAND* was an incredible work of art, a work for which Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. It became Eliot's magnum opus. Wordsworth's emphasis on "spontaneity" and "overflow" notwithstanding, the writing of poetry is a very deliberate exercise. It throws up huge challenges before the aspiring poet/ poetess. Words very, carefully selected, painstakingly arranged and silences cautiously introduced coalesce to create the most desired effect in any poem. Randomly penned poems beggar the notion of great poetry. For a poem to leave a dent in anyone's psyche, for it to surmount the restrictions of time, space and geography, for it to last forever, it has to be perfectly sculpted. And so, to quote W.B. Yeats, "a line will take us hours maybe," if we set up for ourselves, standards of excellence while writing a poem. Each poet's objective is to eternalise a given moment, an experience. While in the throes of creativity, he/she must set up demands to achieve the effect of "an instant made eternity." Such demands can never be too exacting for anyone who is genuinely creative and who wishes to give to the world a creative piece which, through its brief space will weave magic.

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